

# New York Mills

## Key Demographics<sup>1</sup>

- Pop. 1294.
- Median Income: \$51,696 (NYM) vs. \$85,086 (MN) .
- Poverty: 11.4% (NYM) vs. 9.3% (MN)
- Racial-ethnic makeup: 91.9% white only; 1.2% American Indian/Alaska Native only; 5.64% 2 or more races; 2.9% Hispanic/Latinx of any race.
- English only is spoken in 96% of homes. Spanish speakers make up 2.6% of NYM residents.
- Population of <18: 23.4% (NYM) vs. 22.6% (MN).
- Households with children: 27.1%; of these, 51.2% are married couples, 11.9% are co-habiting, 20.8% are single mother, 7.7% are single father, 1.8% are grandparent(s) responsible for kids.

## Most Needed Family Support Services in New York Mills

This info was not recorded at the NYM discussion as we ran out of time – sorry!



<sup>1</sup> [https://data.census.gov/profile/New\\_York\\_Mills\\_city\\_Minnesota?g=160XX00US2746060](https://data.census.gov/profile/New_York_Mills_city_Minnesota?g=160XX00US2746060)

## How Services in New York Mills, Perham, and Richville Match Up with Protective Factors<sup>2,3</sup>

Protective Factor	Services Available in New York Mills, Perham, and Richville
<b>Parental resilience</b>	Lakeland Mental Health Center, private therapists, mobile crisis response, REWIND Center, Productive Alternatives, Al-Anon, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous.
<b>Social connections</b>	Parent support groups, Rotary, Lions, Woman Aid, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Ladies' Auxiliary, community events, bowling alley, movie theater, pool/aquatic center/splash pad, trails, parks, fitness center, Puppet Pageant, community garden, Community Education, Public Library, Bookmobile, PTA/PTO, Tot Time.
<b>Knowledge of parenting and child development</b>	ECFE, family home visiting, preschool screening.
<b>Concrete support in times of need</b>	MAHUBE-OTWA, Otter Tail County Human Services and Public Health, Salvation Army, Otter Express, WIC, thrift stores, clothes closet/free store, food shelf, backpack food program, Love INC, Calvary Community Church Outreach, Perham 180, private dental offices, medical clinics, Pregnancy Resource Center, Children's Dental Service, Apple Tree Dental, chiropractic, MAHUBE-OTWA Family Health Clinic, Adult Education/ESL, Baby Bin, Someplace Safe, City police department, Rural MN CEP.
<b>Social and emotional competence of children</b>	School-based mental health; Empowering Kids; clubs such as: 4H, Future Farmers of America, Scouting, Girl Scouts; activities such as: dance, music, summer camps, youth book club, BIO girls, Boys and Girls' Club, church youth groups, gymnastics, Tae Kwon Do; schools; school-age care; afterschool tutoring; ECSE; preschool; Follow-Along Program; Early Head Start; Head Start; childcare centers; School Resource Officer.

<sup>2</sup> This is not a complete or perfect listing of all services available on the ground in New York Mills, Perham, or Richville. Also, an individual service or provider can potentially match multiple protective factors. An effort was made to match the service or provider with the best fit.

<sup>3</sup> Since initial focus groups were held in both New York Mills and Perham, and they are both in the NE quadrant of Otter Tail County, existing services for both areas are included in the table as well as in the focus group results below.

## Family Resource Centers Focus Group Notes

### New York Mills – January 24, 2024

1. *Thinking about people you know who are currently parents living in OTC (or from your personal experience) what was the biggest surprise about becoming a parent?*
  - How expensive kids are.
  - Shocked that you can't find childcare. Have to line it up before you get pregnant.
  - Lack of and also the cost of childcare.
  - Early childcare – hours need to start when work shifts start.
  - Not getting enough parental leave. Going back to work 6-8 weeks after having a baby is very difficult. Bonding with baby, breastfeeding – not enough time.
  - How quickly the drama starts, depending on the year in school, depends on the home. Age inappropriate things happening at home.
  - Screens have been really challenging – so much is available at the touch of a finger. It's so hard to keep up.
  - It can be a way for kids to socialize but it's difficult to navigate.
  - Where is the line between isolating your kid and protecting them?
  - Obsessive behavior can happen with any toy.
  
2. *On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the least and 10 being the most, how stressed out do you think OTC parents are currently?*
  - Food shelf – you do not have to prove your need.
  - Puppet Pageant – same thing – just ask for scholarship.
  - Incorrect perception that people take advantage of these programs. Freeloading is not really a problem.
  - Just started a PTO this summer, a lot of people don't know how to make “mom friends.”
  - Book club! Friends with people who you went to high school but also all ages.
  - Access to dental care and pediatricians and specialists. Lack of access in this area.
  - People going to Fargo, Deer Creek, etc. to get speech therapy, OT.
  - Lack of access and lack of knowing how to access, health literacy.

- Lack of annual checkups.
3. So many more kids seem to have special needs – whatever that means.
- Anxiety is a huge problem. There are not enough counselors, and they are not accessible.
  - Empowering Kids closing their preschool.
  - Respite and support for parents with kids with disabilities.
  - Sandwich generation.
4. *Based on the parents you know and talk to, what are the top sources/types of stress they are facing?*
- Great extracurricular activities for kids – broad options. Athletics and arts. The community is good about helping provide scholarships.
  - Transportation can be an issue.
  - Access to be part of school athletics is a screamin’ deal!
  - Lots of community orgs, businesses, etc. that support activities
  - FFA, 4H, BPA, FCCLA
  - 5 churches – St. Peters and Trinity have preschools and are flexible.
  - Youth groups/get togethers after football games
  - Biogirls.org
5. *What are our strengths as an OTC community that support and protect children and their families?*
- Food shelf – also have furniture and fixtures.
  - Richville is closest clothing closet – Mission
  - Really good prenatal care in Wadena, good outreach. And in Perham
  - Baby massage, etc. WACC pregnancy swimming, etc. also at PACC, also a small fitness center in Mills.
  - ECFE – but the people who need it most maybe don’t access it. May or may not have morning and evening options. Not well attended
  - Used to be a mom’s group at Trinity. No longer.
  - Some things cater only to stay at home parents

- Great school age childcare program at school. Do the people who need it most access it? Still good but not as good as it used to be.
6. *What are some of the existing resources that support and protect children and families? Where are they located?*
- Learning gap due to COVID, what are bright kids to do?
  - Parents learning about how to access resources
  - No more moms group
  - Knowing about healthy child development
  - No parenting classes now but attempted by ECFE in the past.
7. *Thinking about services and supports for children and families, what gaps are there and where in OTC are the gaps located?*
- Preschool assessments
  - Basic knowledge
  - Lots of information coming at us at all times, we can't digest it.
  - Mistrust of government and other institutions may be more the issue.
  - The "commune"
8. *What can we do to increase support to children and their families?*
- There needs to be things to do in a small town for those who do not participate in sports, especially for winter.
  - We haven't had an active Community Ed here. We have a new Community Ed Director...maybe have a meeting and see what we would like to have.
  - Community open meetings for information/feedback.
  - How can we do this in each community without needing to rent space – want to make resources available in every community? There are a lot of people who can't drive.
  - Transportation for people without cars – there is none -- at least offer something more central.
9. *Is there anything we didn't ask that you want us to know about families and children in OTC?*
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- Not in Fergus Falls, further toward this direction.
- NE part of the county needs resource.
- Space in City Center in NYM
- Building 60-unit apartment building – market rate.
- Welcoming communities program

## Perham – January 24, 2024

1. *Thinking about people you know who are currently parents living in OTC (or from your personal experience) what was the biggest surprise about becoming a parent?*
  - How hard it is to get help, especially in a rural area, or if your kid is not neurotypical.
  - In the hospital, nobody tells you the next steps.
  - They make sure you have the car seat, but don't help you with it.
  - No car seat clinic here. If there is a pop-up clinic, you don't always know about it, or it's far away in FF.
  - How siloed everything is – for example doctor, occupational therapy, schools, the County, and the State can all help, but it's not connected and nobody talks. You struggle to figure out things on your own.
  - Lack of day care is a big one. Having to leave a position if you have a child with special needs. Or leaving because there are no infant spots. And the expense of it and the schedules don't always fit with work schedules
2. *On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the least and 10 being the most, how stressed out do you think OTC parents are currently?*
  - Seven.
  - Seven. Eight if your kid has special needs.
  - Nine.
  - At least 7.
3. *Based on the parents you know and talk to, what are the top sources/types of stress they are facing?*
  - Kids struggling with learning and behaviors.
  - Parents not being listened to – change is very slow.
  - Not having help and not knowing what to do.
  - When you figure out you are under water, you don't have the ability to search for services because they are not easily accessible. Everything is a fight. It's exhausting.
  - Kids are under pressure at school and adults are not listening. They talk about mental health of kids, but they don't act. IEP supports are not put in place.

- Non-English speaking parents: in the healthcare system, there are not adequate translators (or any), so you can't figure out what you need because there is nobody to tell.
- Same issue in schools: not enough support for kids who are still learning English.
- Waitlists at specialty providers, for occupational therapy, other therapies, ARMHS, but you are drowning while you are waiting. You can't get on one waitlist until you are on another, and there are long drives to get to services -- if you have a car and the weather cooperates.
- Maintaining cars is so expensive: Insurance, gas, maintenance.
- Financial stresses.
- Jobs – schedules, especially for single parents, to work around kid schedules. Or they will fire you if you are out sick a lot with kids.
- Kinship or big buddies are needed for kids.

4. *What are our strengths as an OTC community that support and protect children and their families?*

- Strong church families.
- Perham is a really giving community. Being there to sit with you while you cry or talk. People try to be there for emotional support.
- Strengths in the resources offered, such as Empowering Kids, but there is just not enough supply. You would have to know about them too. Sometimes you have to get CPS involved in order to get somebody to pay for it.
- Minnesota took away the parental fee last year -- to get on MA. We had been one of the only states in the entire country who charged parents. You have to go through the SMRT (state medical review team) to get on it. You need the disability certification.
- Our area is clean, with lots of parks. It's safe overall and family friendly.
- We have lots to do for a small community. Our businesses and the strong economics of the town make this possible – the businesses give back.

5. *What are some of the existing resources that support and protect children and families? Where are they located?*

- Food shelf -- The Bridge
- HRA Housing
- Head Start
- Empowering Kids
- Grants to parents for Head Start
- The PACC is helpful and lower income families can receive free memberships.
- When kids are in sports through there, there are scholarships available.
- Love, Inc. is the consortium of churches to let you know what might be out there and which church to go to for which type of help.
- Sports equipment, shoes etc. are available in Perham – they provide for families.

- Richville “Free Store”
  - A lot of places would be open to hosting parent support groups. There are existing parent support groups.
  - Alano club on the edge of town.
6. *Thinking about services and supports for children and families, what gaps are there and where in OTC are the gaps located?*
- There are a lot of unmet mental health needs and addictions, but the waitlists to get help are long.
  - You might have to travel to the Cities or Fargo to get assistance, or you could fall between the cracks. For example, the time between inpatient hospitalization and follow up appointments can be long.
  - Sometimes you have to sit in the Emergency Room for a long time before getting admitted.
  - For kids under 6, there has to be a special license for psychiatry.
  - It would be nice for kids with special needs to have a kids’ group so they can see they are not the only ones struggling.
  - The biggest gap is trying to find resources. It’s so hard to find because everything is so siloed.
  - Family counseling – there are waitlists for that also. They will help you while you are in the office, but often you need help in the home.
  - They do offer family resource workers – in home treatment through LSS or Pathways of Hope through Salvation Army.
  - If things are centered in Fergus Falls, it’s hard to get there.
  - More parenting groups.
7. *What can we do to increase support to children and their families?*
- When the child is born, give the parent the resources up front when they leave from the hospital, so they know where to call if they need to ask for help later on. Tell people it’s ok to call if they don’t know.
  - Parenting groups and classes especially for those who didn’t have a positive parenting experience themselves.
  - Same for parents of neurodivergent kids who may be neurodivergent themselves but didn’t learn coping skills.
  - A big binder of resources to give to parents that is updated yearly.
  - Respite care
  - HeadStart has a book like this, and a person who keeps it updated. But you still learn about new stuff all the time on the WCCAC website.
  - Help filling out paperwork – need to walk people through the process.
  - Advocates for parents at IEP meetings or meetings with the County, or doctors’ office – a 2<sup>nd</sup> pair of eyes/ears.
  - Parents can help each other. For example, one parent has a “neurodiverse friendly” list of dentists, haircuts, etc.
  - If parents have gone through stuff themselves, they may be willing to speak to a large group about their experiences and how to get the help you need for your family.

- Child to child support – knowing you are not alone.
  - Schools need more supports. Helps students with special needs, but also everyone can learn better.
  - Tutors – making it easier to access.
  - Practical education rather than theoretical math.
  - Homeschool resources/kits as some parents turn to this when their kids can't get their needs met at formal school.
  - Otter Cove – can we have something like that here.
  - Helping parents learn to teach their kids without losing everything in the process – to keep their own employment.
8. *Is there anything we didn't ask that you want us to know about families and children in OTC?*
- For parents who have child protection involvement, we need a step after that. When CPS closes your case, the supports leave also. Can you drop down a level, so somebody comes as you need it -- on a voluntary basis?
  - Wish there was a way for all this info to get to physicians, so they know all the resources, so they know where to refer you when your child is not meeting developmental stages. Overall, we need better wellness check-ups.
  - Schools need this info as well.
  - Teach grandparents also.