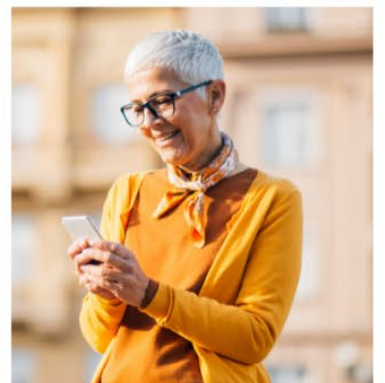


2023



# Livable Cuyahoga Needs Assessment





In April 2022, Cuyahoga County joined the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities and launched the Livable Cuyahoga initiative.

This initiative supports Cuyahoga County's cities and towns in becoming great places for people of all ages; one with a healthy community, economy and government. Successful aging is a life-long process, and the Cuyahoga County Department of Senior and Adult Services (DSAS) believes that Cuyahoga County's older adults should have opportunities, options and environments in which to stay active, engaged, and healthy. Livable communities provide connection, health and economic vitality contribute to our well-being in all stages of life.

Livable Cuyahoga's mission is to provide safe, walkable streets; age-friendly housing and transportation options; access to needed services; and opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in community life. This will be accomplished by addressing eight domains of livability that influence the health and quality of life of for us as we age:

- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Social Participation
- Respect and Social Inclusion
- Work and Civic Engagement
- Communication and Information
- Community and Health Services

Livable Cuyahoga is committed to values of diversity, equity and inclusion. A Livable Community is inclusive of residents from all walks of life. Cuyahoga County's strength draws from the ability to fully integrate all residents into both the day to day activities of the community and the long-term vision of the community. Throughout the assessment process, extra efforts were made opportunities were identified and pursued to include the voices of residents across the age span, income distribution, race and ethnicity, ability and sexual orientation. As Livable Cuyahoga moves from assessment and into planning and implementation, decisions will be centered to be inclusive of all residents and will continue to create opportunities for **all** residents to contribute ideas, desires and preferences.

Improvements that will ultimately come from the Livable Cuyahoga initiative will continue to move older adult programs and services in a forward direction. Data from this assessment provides the information necessary to determine the actions that can be taken to improve all aspects of life related to growing older in Cuyahoga County. Future action may include increasing affordable housing options, reducing barriers to public transportation or supporting neighborhood-based delivery of older adult services, as examples. This assessment provides a rich data source that lays the foundation to create new and innovative opportunities to meet the needs of residents as they age and remain in the community.

While the Cuyahoga County Division of Senior and Adult Services will continue to serve as the leader of the Livable Cuyahoga initiative, the collective work of the community will propel it forward. The assessment process relied on the contributions of older adults living in the community and the organizations they trust. Both the planning and implementation of Livable Cuyahoga will empower community members, organizations that serve older adults and those that have expertise in each of the eight domain areas to propose and implement solutions to the identified needs.

The following report is the first of step in the Livable Cuyahoga initiative; assessing the needs of the community. With the release of this report, Livable Cuyahoga will move swiftly into the planning phase. The planning phase will draw on the assessment findings to develop an action plan with the goal of making the county a more livable community for people of all ages. Following the development of an action plan, Livable Cuyahoga will begin a multi-year implementation phase.

We would like to acknowledge the many residents from across Cuyahoga County who shared their experiences with the research team and without whom this assessment would not have been possible.

## Table of Contents

Methodology.....	7
Secondary Data .....	7
Focus Groups.....	7
Survey Distribution and Analysis.....	8
Demographic Profile .....	10
Age Distribution .....	12
Race and Ethnicity.....	13
Limited English Proficiency .....	13
Housing Tenure and Family Structure .....	13
Other Demographic Indicators .....	14
Economic and Social Needs in Cuyahoga County .....	14
Poverty .....	15
Basic Needs: Food and Shelter.....	17
Health Coverage and Disability .....	17
Community & Health Services .....	19
Health Insurance .....	20
Disability.....	23
Access to Care .....	26
Current Health .....	27
Nutrition.....	28
Focus group findings .....	30
Outdoor Spaces.....	31
Walkability .....	32
Parks.....	33
Challenges .....	33
Open-ended Question.....	34
Focus Group Findings.....	34
Transportation .....	35
Household Transportation Costs .....	36
Safety .....	38
Getting Around .....	39

Transportation Challenges .....	40
Transit Stops.....	41
Open Ended Question .....	41
Focus Group Findings .....	41
Housing .....	43
Aging in Place .....	44
Home Maintenance.....	45
Housing Costs.....	46
Adapting to needs.....	47
Open Ended Questions .....	48
Focus Group Findings .....	48
Social Participation.....	49
Living Alone .....	50
Social Isolation .....	51
Social Activity .....	53
Focus Group Findings.....	55
Respect and Social Inclusion .....	56
Respect.....	57
Community Connection .....	59
Elder Abuse .....	60
Open Ended Questions .....	60
Focus Group Findings.....	60
Work and Civic Engagement .....	61
Labor Force Participation.....	62
Employment Opportunities .....	63
Employment Supports .....	64
Volunteerism.....	64
Civic Engagement.....	66
Voting.....	66
Communication & Information.....	68
Service Information.....	69
Information Source .....	70
Consumer Experience and Access.....	72
Internet .....	73

Focus Group Findings.....	75
Appendix: Inner and Outer Ring Community Map .....	76
Appendix: Survey Demographics .....	77

## Methodology

Engaging the community of older adults living in Cuyahoga County was the top priority of this assessment. Understanding how residents aged 50 and over interact with the eight domains of livability provides the knowledge necessary to move towards improving the livability of Cuyahoga County. To gain this understanding a thorough review of secondary data was conducted, focus groups were held and the community was surveyed.

### ***Secondary Data***

A demographic profile of older residents of Cuyahoga County was developed by examining publicly available data from various sources including the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census, the Ohio Department of Development, Feeding America, America's Health Rankings, United Way, and AARP. The most recent available data was used from each of the sources. In addition to the demographic profile, secondary data can also be found in some of the domain sections. When available, data was examined by municipalities. Data for municipalities with populations smaller than 1000 were not analyzed as the margin of error is too high to consider the data reliable. For some data indicators, municipalities were grouped into inner ring, outer ring, and Cleveland categories. The map for determining the inner and outer ring communities can be found in the appendix.

### ***Focus Groups***

Over two months, between October 2022 and December 2022, The Center for Community Solutions conducted twelve focus groups with seniors across Cuyahoga County. Eleven of these focus groups were held in person. One focus group was conducted virtually. Focus groups were held within Cleveland as well as the suburbs, on the west side as well as the east side, and in nine of the eleven county council districts. One focus group was held at the LGBT Community Center, and another was held at St. Clair Place using a Mandarin interpreter. Locations for focus groups were chosen based on the availability of public transit to get to the location and accessibility for people of all abilities. Experience has shown that focus group participation increases if it is with a group that already meets regularly, so when possible The Center for Community Solutions joined existing group meetings. Focus group facilitators provided refreshments and a gift card to raffle at each session to encourage participation. Each focus group worked from the same facilitation guide which asked questions on topics that parallel the sections in this report. Focus groups were limited to an hour. Across the focus groups, more time was spent on certain topics due to the level of engagement by participants. The eleven in person focus groups included 152 participants. The virtual focus group reached 40 participants, and utilized four virtual breakout rooms to hold smaller conversations. In all, 192 seniors took part in focus groups.

Date	Location	Participants
10/5	Fairhill Partners - Cleveland	15
10/19	Westlake Community Center - Westlake	17
10/25	West Side Community House - Cleveland	11
10/26	Berea Recreation Center - Berea	15
10/26	CMHA Bohn Tower - Cleveland	18
10/26	Solon Community Center - Solon	17
10/27	Imani Church UCC - Euclid	12
10/28	Parma Senior Center - Parma	16
11/9	Cleveland Heights Parks & Recreation - Cleveland Heights	4
11/16	SAGE/LGBT Community Center - Cleveland	7
11/30	Virtual	40
12/8	St. Clair Place – Cleveland with Asia Services Inc.	11

### ***Survey Distribution and Analysis***

A survey was developed to measure the current livability of Cuyahoga County based on the eight domains of livability; Health and Community Services, Outdoor Spaces, Transportation, Housing, Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Work and Civic Engagement, and Communication and Information. The survey was developed through collaboration of staff from The Center for Community Solutions, Department of Senior and Adult Services (DSAS) and the DSAS Advisory Board.

Using publicly available voting records, the survey was distributed to a random sample of 4,000 Cuyahoga County residents over the age of 50. In order to achieve a representative sample and hear from voices all across the county, a proportional number of surveys were sent to ZIP codes by population. This means that ZIP codes with larger numbers of older adults had more addresses randomly selected. Similarly, in order to hear from traditionally harder to reach groups, residents over the age of 75, and residents from ZIP codes that had higher rates of households living below the federal poverty line were oversampled.

In addition to the randomized mailed survey, a shorter survey was developed for outreach events and for use online. The survey included 16 questions. The questions replicated the randomized mail sample and the answer from those surveys were combined during survey analysis.

A third survey was created specifically for distribution at Cleveland Senior Day, an event hosted annually by the Cleveland Department of Aging. The survey included one question about each domain.

Survey	Number Completed
Randomized Mail Survey	379
Outreach Survey	99
Senior Day Survey	154



The survey analysis plan incorporated a series of procedures best suited for the different kinds of data that was collected in the survey.

For all descriptive statistics, basic frequency counts were conducted, typically reporting percentages without missing data; checks were made during this process to make sure missing data was not systemic.

For data in which two group responses were compared to each other, such as when comparing responses between household annual incomes below \$30,000 to above \$30,000, and when the variables of interest were interval-like data (such as *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neither agree nor disagree*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree*), both independent samples t-tests and Welch's t-tests were utilized. Significance was determined at a p value of .05. Levene's test for homogeneity of variance, also at a p value of .05, was utilized to determine whether an independent samples t-test was used (if  $>.05$ ), or a Welch's t-test was used (if  $<.05$ ). These tests provide evidence to whether the difference between two groups was due to chance variability, or if the difference was significantly different.

Effect size for these tests was calculated using Cohen's d.

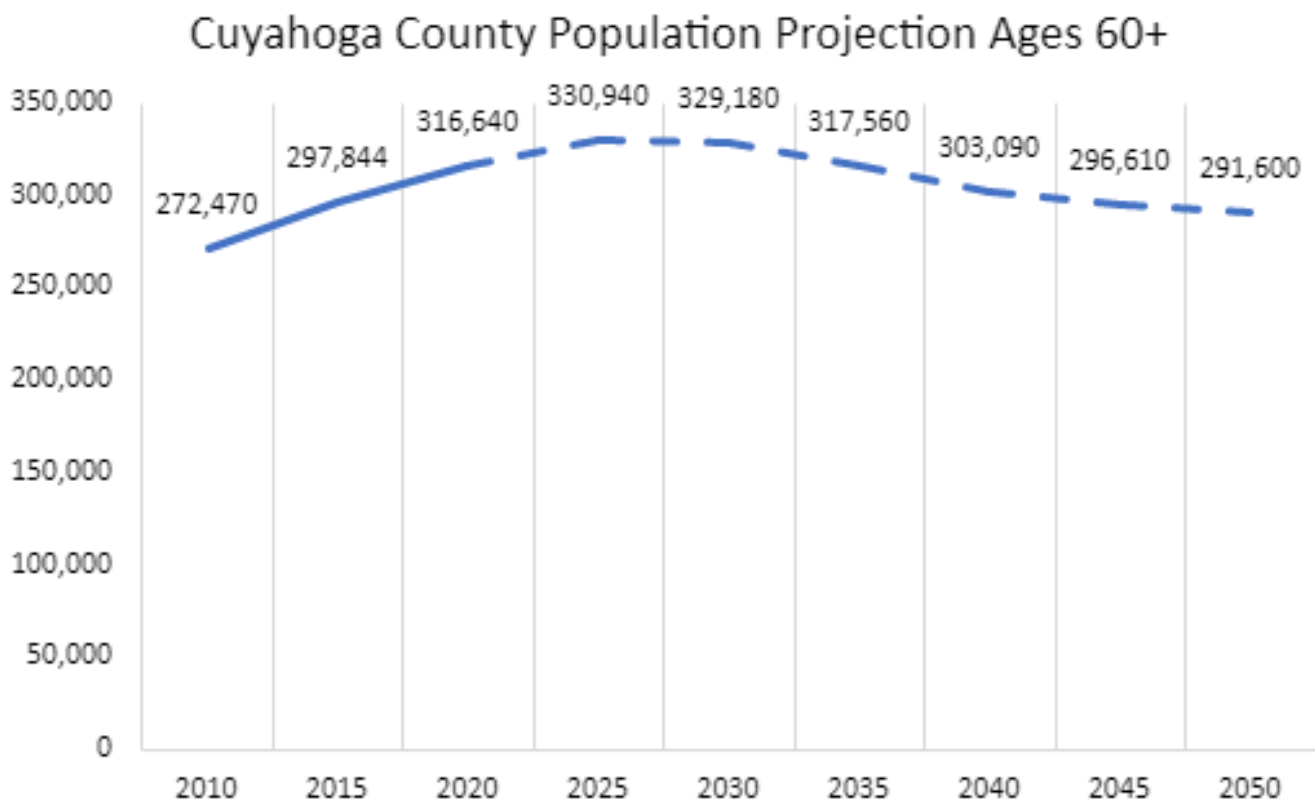
For data in which the proportion of group responses were compared to variables of interest that were not interval, such as a response series of: *Yes*; *Not Sure*; *No*, Chi-Square analysis was utilized. Significance was determined at a p value of .05. At no point during the analysis did 25 percent of the crosstabulation cells have less than 5 responses, and therefore Pearson Chi-Square was used consistently when testing for significance. This test provides evidence for whether the proportion of group members (such as individuals aged 50-64) who answer a question a certain way, is similar to members of a different group (such as individuals aged 65-74), or if their answers vary significantly differently.

Effect size for these tests was calculated using Phi or Cramer's V, depending on the size of the comparison variables.

For data in which there were three groups of comparison (such as ages 50-64, 65-74, and 75+), and the variables of interest was interval-like, Analysis of Variance tests, or ANOVAs, were utilized. Significance was determined at a p-value of .05. Games Howell post-hoc testing was utilized in order to determine specific significant differences between two members of the three group comparisons, also at a p level of .05. This test provides evidence to whether the difference between three groups was due to chance variability, or if the difference was significantly different. The post-hoc test then allows us to find evidence for which of the three groups are significantly different from each other.

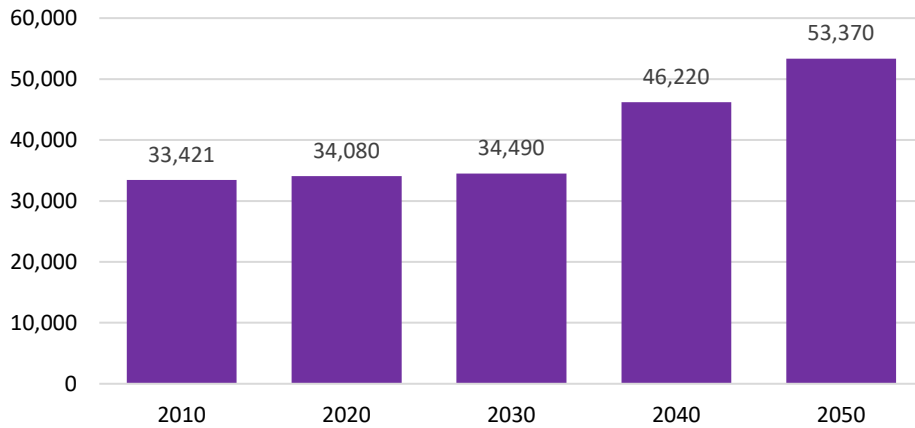
## Demographic Profile

The Cuyahoga County Department of Senior and Adult Services provides services for the entire county encompassing 41 cities, villages, and townships. The area is home to 312,525 older adults over the age of 60, accounting for 25.2 percent of the total population of the county. Following state and national trends, the number and share of older adults has been growing in the county and is expected to continue to increase for the next several decades. This increase is the result of generational demographics and the fact that people are living longer lives and remaining in their homes and communities as they age. The growth is particularly pronounced among the population ages 85 and above. Increasing numbers of the oldest residents is expected to increase demand for supportive services including home-delivered meals, housekeeping, home modification, in-home care, and social connectedness. The entire community will need to adapt to these changes.



Source: Ohio Department of Development

### Cuyahoga County Population Projections Ages 85+



Secondary data analysis for this assessment was compiled by The Center for Community Solutions. We relied on the latest available data for the civilian, non-institutionalized population. Unless otherwise noted, the data source is the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 2020 5-Year estimates. Wherever possible, data is reported for ages 60 and older. However, due to data availability, many indicators are for the population ages 65 and older. All the data carry margins of error. For smaller geographies and subpopulations, margins of error can be substantial, and differences should be interpreted with caution.

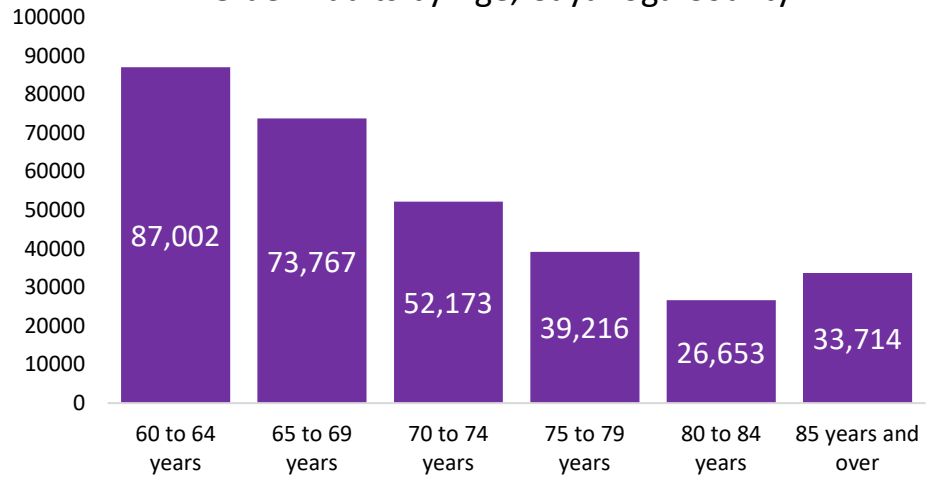
The indicators selected for examination provide an overview of the social, economic, and demographic characteristics of the older adult population in the county with special emphasis on older individuals with greatest economic need, greatest social need, low-income minority older individuals, and those with limited English proficiency.

## Age Distribution

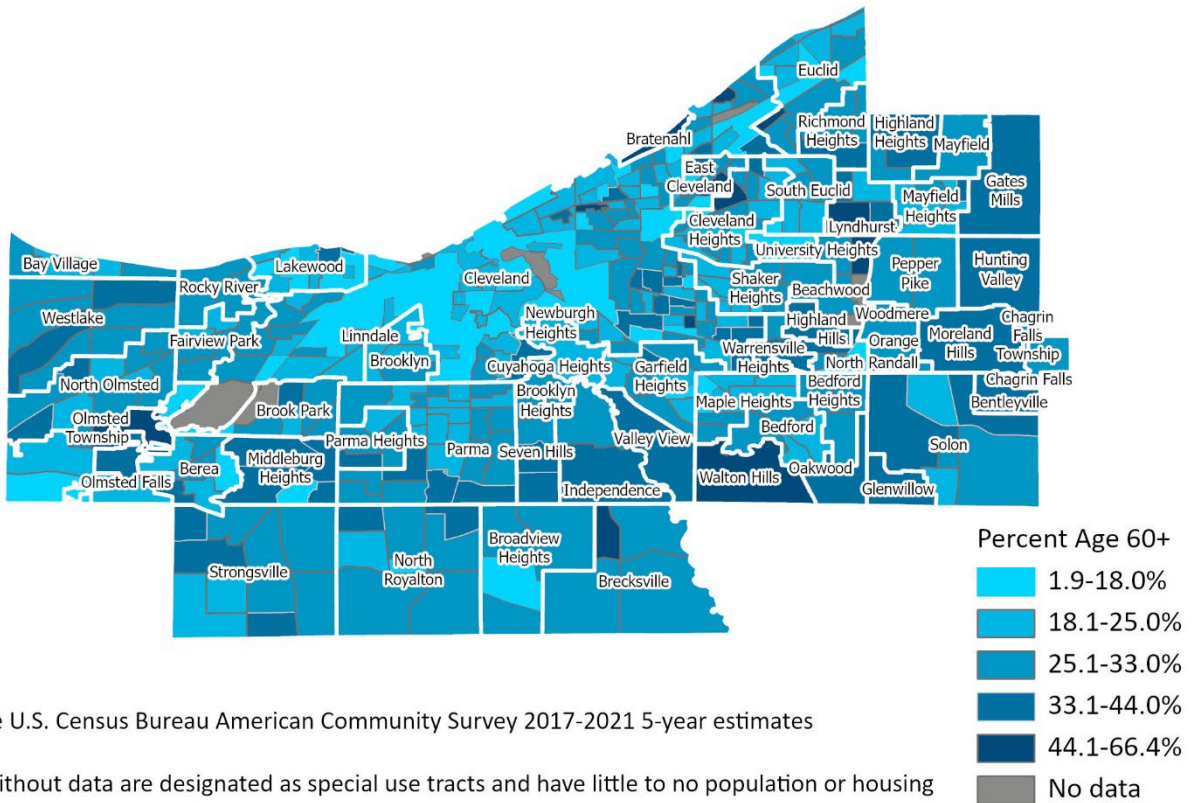
Over 312,000 adults aged 60 and over live in the county. This includes 33,714 people who are 85 and older, accounting for 10.7 percent of older adults in the region. Around 56 percent of residents over the age of 60 are female.

The map below shows the percent of the population by census tract who are over the age of 60.

### Older Adults by Age, Cuyahoga County



### Cuyahoga County Percent of Population Older Adults Age 60+ by Census Tract



Data is from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2017-2021 5-year estimates

Census tracts without data are designated as special use tracts and have little to no population or housing

## Race and Ethnicity

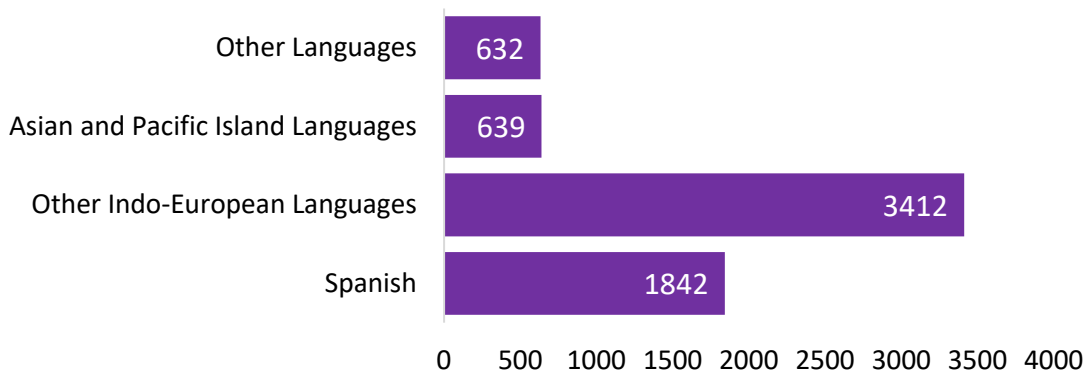
Cuyahoga County is one of the most racially and ethnically diverse counties in Ohio, and 30 percent of the population over age 65 are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC). More detailed breakdowns of racial and ethnic makeup of the population are provided in the table below:

	Cuyahoga County		Ohio
<b>Total Number of Older Adults (Age 65+)</b>	225,523		1,990,621
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>White</i>	160,895	71.3%	88.2%
<i>Black/African American</i>	53,382	23.7%	8.9%
<i>American Indian and Alaskan Native</i>	352	0.2%	0.1%
<i>Asian/Asian American</i>	4,494	2%	1.2%
<i>Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander</i>	29	-	0.0%
<i>Other Race</i>	3,604	1.6%	0.7%
<i>More than One Race</i>	2,767	1.2%	0.9%
<i>Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity</i>	5,284	2.3%	1.4%

## Limited English Proficiency

While most older adults over age 65 in the county speak only English (89.2 percent), there are 6,525 individuals over the age of 65 in the county who do not speak English at all or do not speak it well. As shown in the chart below, the most common languages spoken by people who have limited English proficiency are Indo-European Languages, Asian and Pacific Island Languages, and Spanish.

Language Spoken, Older Adults who Speak English Not Well or Not At All, Cuyahoga County  
U.S. Census



## Housing Tenure and Family Structure

According to data from the 2020 Decennial Census, there were 10,147 people in the county of all ages living in nursing facilities or skilled nursing facilities. Among older adults living in the community, most own their

homes. Around three quarters are owners and 29 percent are renters. In fact, although people ages 60 and above make up only 25 percent of the population, 71.3 percent of all people who own their homes in county are older adults.

In Cuyahoga County, 79,820 people (35.4 percent) over the age of 65 live alone. Living alone can contribute to social isolation and vulnerability.

In the county as a whole, there are 7,934 grandparents who are responsible for their own grandchildren under 18 years. However, fewer than half (47 percent) of the grandparents raising grandchildren are older adults aged 65 and above, a total of 3,747 individuals.

### ***Other Demographic Indicators***

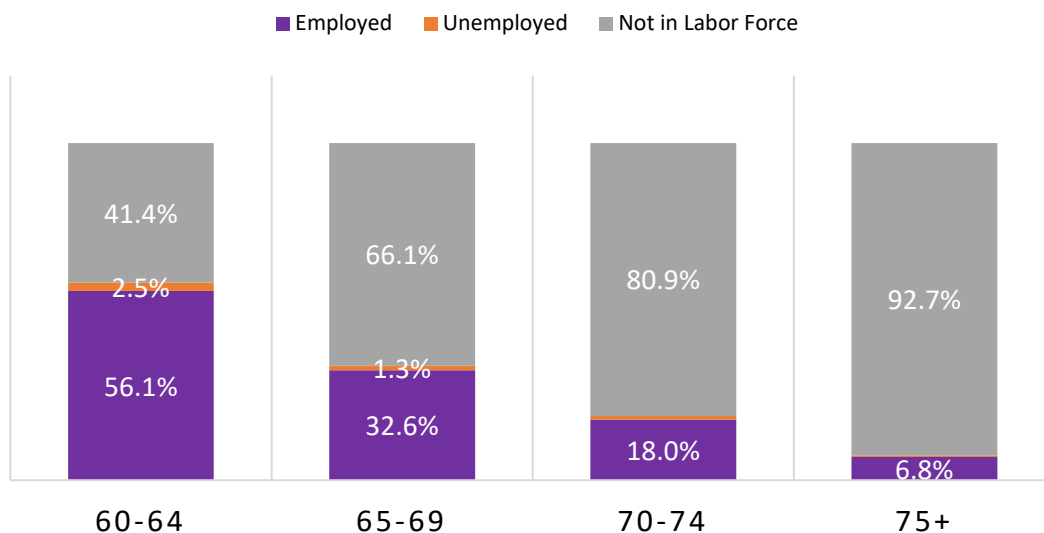
One out of every six people over the age of 65 in the region are veterans, accounting for 15.7 percent of the total. Men are much more likely to report having served in the military than women.

In recent years, the number of older adults who have access to the internet has increased. Around 71 percent of people over the age of 65 report that they have a broadband subscription. On the other hand, 43,873 older adult households have no computer at all.

### ***Economic and Social Needs in Cuyahoga County***

Nationwide trends show that people are delaying retirement and remaining in the workforce longer than in previous generations. Over 93,000 people over the age of 60 are in the labor force, including 89,106 who are employed and 4,066 who are unemployed but actively looking for work. According to this data, the unemployment rate for older adults in the county overall was 3.8 percent. As shown in the chart below, labor force participation drops substantially after age 70, as people retire either by choice or by necessity.

**LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY AGE**



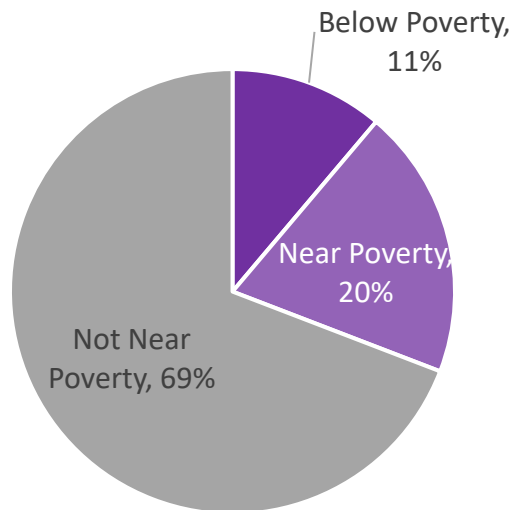
In Cuyahoga County, most older adult households receive Social Security, and many have income from earnings or retirement. Retirement income is also common. Public benefits programs such as SSI, cash assistance, and SNAP provide fewer resources on average than private retirement funds and earnings.

Older Adult (60+) Households		
Income Source	Share of Households	Regional Average, Annual Income
Social Security	70.2%	\$19,294
Retirement	46.8%	\$27,839
Earnings	46.9%	\$69,701
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	13.6%	<i>Not Applicable</i>
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	8.2%	\$10,244
Cash Public Assistance	2.6%	\$2,498

### Poverty

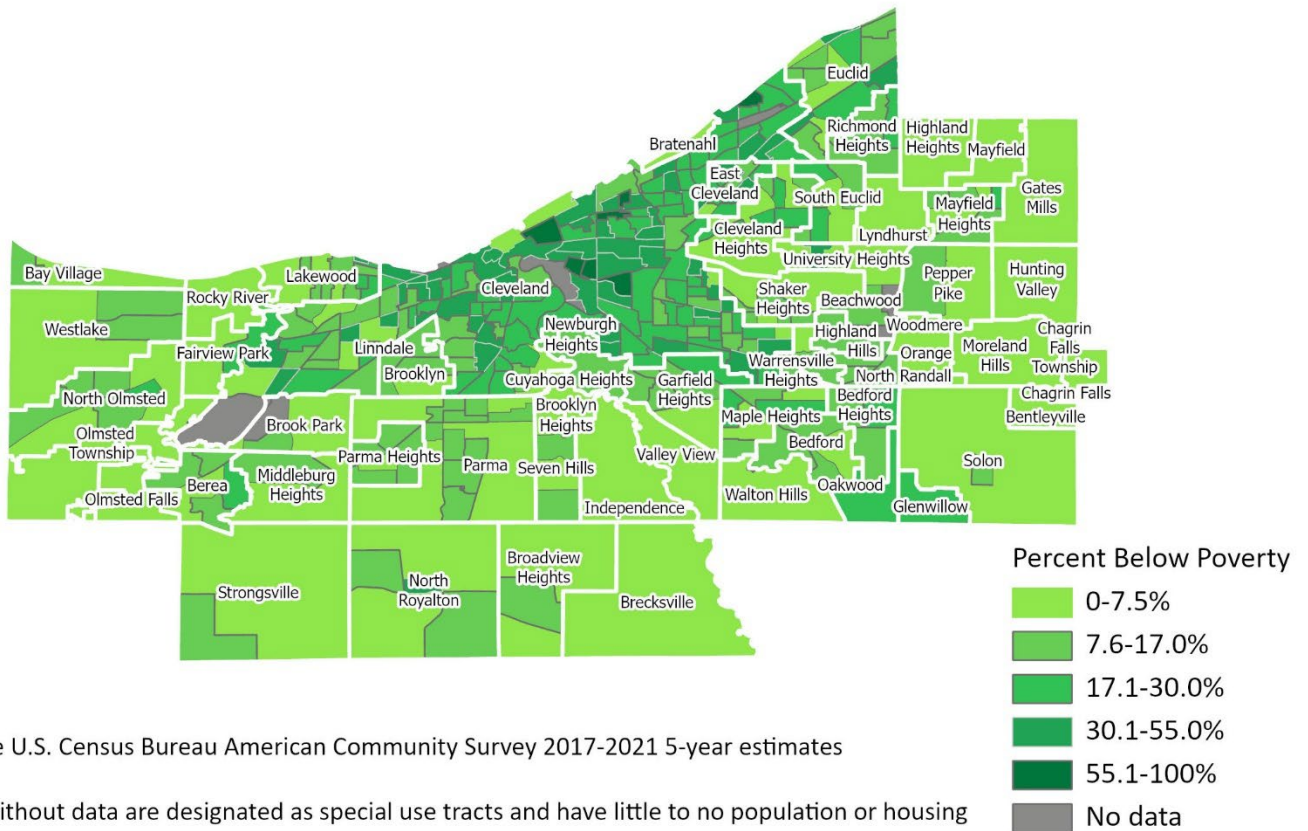
Even with the increases in labor force participation, many older adults in the county still struggle to make ends meet. At 11.2 percent, the poverty rate for adults over the age of 65 in the region is higher than the state average of 8.2 percent. Over 21,500 people over age 65 are living in poverty, including 7,860 people who are in deep poverty, defined as having total household income that is less than 50 percent of the poverty threshold. An even greater number of older adults are considered “near poor” with incomes between 100 and 199 percent of poverty.

Older Adults (65+) at Specified Levels of Poverty  
Cuyahoga County  
U.S. Census



Poverty is not spread evenly throughout the county. The map below shows the concentration of older adults living in poverty in various parts of the county.

Cuyahoga County Percent of Older Adults Age 60+ Below Poverty by Census Tract

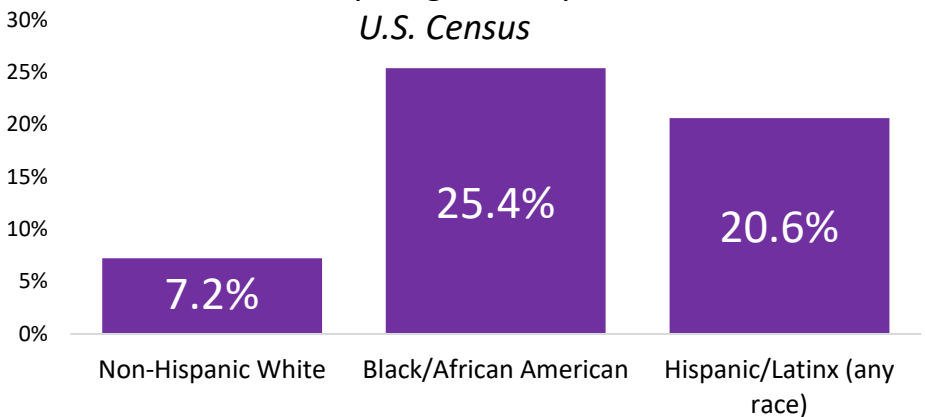


Data is from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2017-2021 5-year estimates

Census tracts without data are designated as special use tracts and have little to no population or housing

There are also racial disparities in poverty. As shown in the chart, people over age 65 who are Black or African American were four times more likely to live in poverty than non-Hispanic White older adults, and the poverty rate for Hispanic or Latinx people over age 65 was nearly triple the poverty rate for non-Hispanic Whites.

Poverty Rate, Ages 65+, By Race/Ethnicity, Cuyahoga County  
U.S. Census





### **Basic Needs: Food and Shelter**

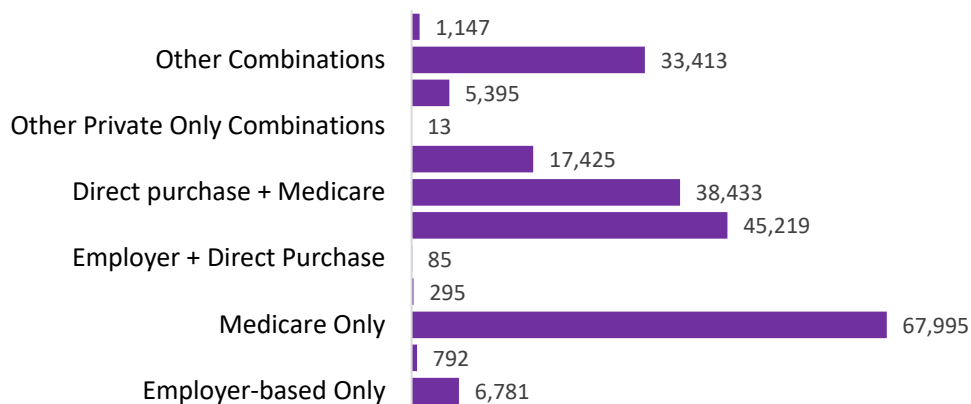
Although they are fewer in number, older adults who rent are more likely to struggle to afford their housing. Over 55 percent of renters over age 65 pay 30 percent or more of their total income for housing costs, compared to 26.6 percent of owners. In total, 52,357 older adults are in unaffordable housing situations. When housing costs account for a large portion of a household’s total income, it is more difficult for them to afford other necessities.

A large number of older adults experience food insecurity. Across Ohio, 7.2 percent of older adults are food insecure, and 2.0 percent have very low food security, according to the latest data from Feeding America<sup>1</sup>. Applying the state average to the population of the region, The Center for Community Solutions estimates that 37,500 older adults are food insecure, defined as having “a lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy lifestyle.”<sup>2</sup> Some of these individuals struggle even more with hunger, including 10,500 older adults who have very low food security. As defined by the US Department of Agriculture, individuals with very low food security report “multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.”<sup>3</sup> Many older adults rely on benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their basic needs. Over 32,000 households with at least one older adult in the county reported receiving SNAP.

### **Health Coverage and Disability**

While the vast majority of adults over the age of 65 in the county have at least some health insurance coverage, 1,147 older adults are uninsured. Over 99 percent of non-institutionalized insured older adults have at least some public coverage. As shown below, Medicare is the most common source, either alone or in combination with other types of insurance. Most people covered by Medicare supplement it with private coverage, either purchased directly or through their employer. There are also 17,425 dually enrolled

Type of Health Insurance Coverage, Ages 65+, Cuyahoga County  
*U.S. Census*



<sup>1</sup> Ziliak, James P. and Craig Gunderson, “The State of Senior Hunger in America in 2019”, *Feeding America*, August 2021. Available at <https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/2021%20-%20State%20of%20Senior%20Hunger%20in%202019.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> “Hunger and Food Insecurity”, Feeding America, <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/food-insecurity>

<sup>3</sup> “Definitions of Food Security”, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/definitions-of-food-security/>

individuals who are covered by both Medicare and Medicaid. Just over 33 percent of all non-institutionalized older adults over age 65, or 73,234 people, had one or more disabilities. This includes 22.8 percent of those ages 65-74 and 46.4 percent who are 75 and older. As shown below, ambulatory difficulties, defined as having serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs, were most common, followed by independent living difficulties, where a person has difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem and hearing difficulty.<sup>4</sup>

<b>Older Adults 65+ With One or More Disabilities</b>	<b>73,234</b>
With a <b>Hearing</b> Difficulty <i>Having serious difficulty hearing</i>	24,502
With a <b>Vision</b> Difficulty <i>Blind or having serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses</i>	13,731
With a <b>Cognitive</b> Difficulty <i>Because of a physical mental, or emotional problem, having difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions</i>	16,043
With an <b>Ambulatory</b> Difficulty <i>Having serious difficult walking or climbing stairs</i>	49,136
With a <b>self-care</b> difficulty <i>Having difficulty bathing or dressing</i>	16,830
With an <b>Independent Living</b> Difficulty <i>Because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, having difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping</i>	32,590

Census data shows that 16,043 older adults in the region have a cognitive difficulty or face challenges remembering, concentrating, or making decisions because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem. Dementia is one type of cognitive difficulty. Research by the Alzheimer’s Association shows that the share of people with Alzheimer’s dementia increases with age, from 5.0 percent among people ages 65 to 74, to 13.1 percent of people ages 75 to 84, rising to around one third (33.2 percent) among people aged 85 and older. Utilizing these statistics, The Center for Community Solutions estimates that as many as 40,000 people ages 65 and older in the county may be living with Alzheimer’s dementia. As the population ages, these numbers are growing rapidly. Across Ohio, the number of people over age 65 who have Alzheimer’s is projected to increase 13.6 percent between 2020 and 2025.

<sup>4</sup> “How Disability Data are Collected from The American Community Survey”, U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/topics/health/disability/guidance/data-collection-ac.html>

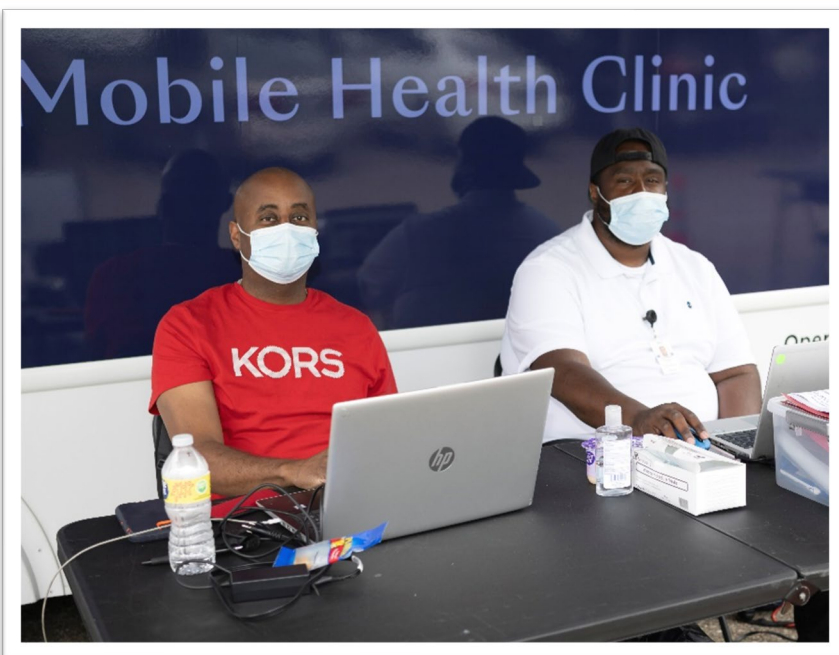
# Community & Health Services



## Community & Health Services

### *Attributes of a livable community*

- Well distributed health and social services locations
- Health services integrated into residential areas
- Coordinated delivery of services
- Choice of service providers
- Home care services offered
- Well trained workforce
- Emergency planning includes older adults



### **Key Findings in Cuyahoga County**

- The highest incidence and rates of disability among older adults within the county occur in the city of Cleveland
- Access to doctor and hospital visits are high, but other barriers to health exist
- Black and low-income residents are more likely to rate their mental health as fair or poor

Rating of **mental** and **physical** health  
*Resident Survey*

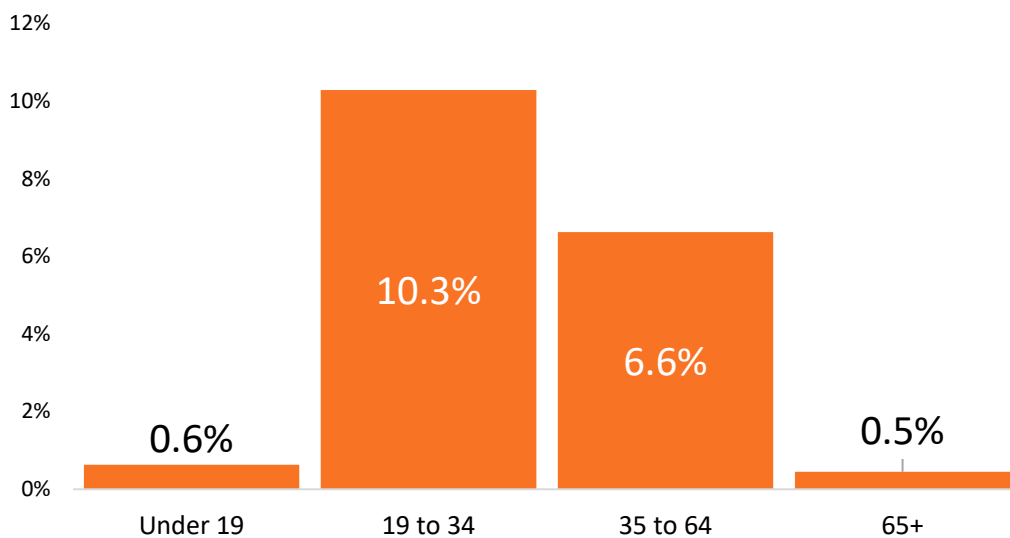
	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Mental Health	26%	42%	22%	9%	1%
Physical Health	15%	35%	29%	18%	4%

*Older residents of Cuyahoga County generally reported high access to community and health related services, though some areas of the county have higher health needs than others.*

## Health Insurance

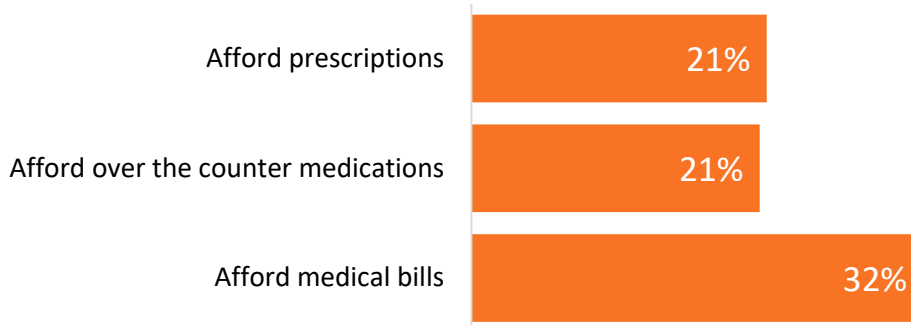
Residents aged 65 and older are the age group most likely to have insurance in Cuyahoga County. Less than one percent of residents in this age group do not have any form of insurance. Younger adults, those below the age of 64, are less likely to have health insurance. Just under seven percent of those between 35 and 64 and ten percent of those between 19 and 34 do not have any type of health insurance. This represents nearly 60,000 residents. Without health insurance, these residents are more likely to skip preventative care than their peers who have health insurance. Lack of access to preventative care during young and middle adult ages can lead to poor health outcomes and increased health needs in older age.

Percentage of Cuyahoga Residents **without health insurance** by age  
*U.S. Census*



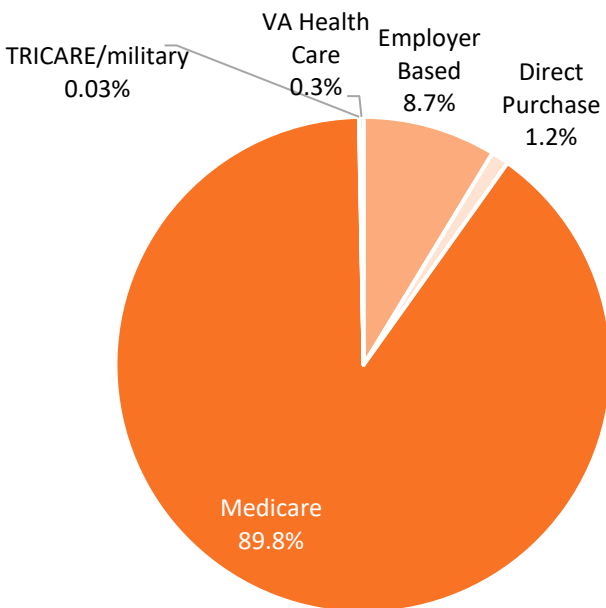
With nearly universal access to health insurance, most older adults can access some level of health care. Though even with health insurance, many older adults may still struggle with costs related to medical bills, prescription drugs, co-pays and premiums. Survey results show that nearly a third have trouble paying their medical bills and over 20 percent struggle with always being able to afford medications. Just 15 percent of survey respondents indicated they had help paying medical bills when they need it. 61 percent are not sure if they would have help paying medical bills if they needed it and 23 percent are confident they would not have help if needed. Residents of all ages had similar experiences in affording medical costs, however, lower-income residents (with incomes less than \$30,000) reported significantly more difficulty in affording prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, and medical bills compared to residents with incomes over \$30,000.

Percent of residents who **cannot always afford** medical costs  
*Resident Survey*

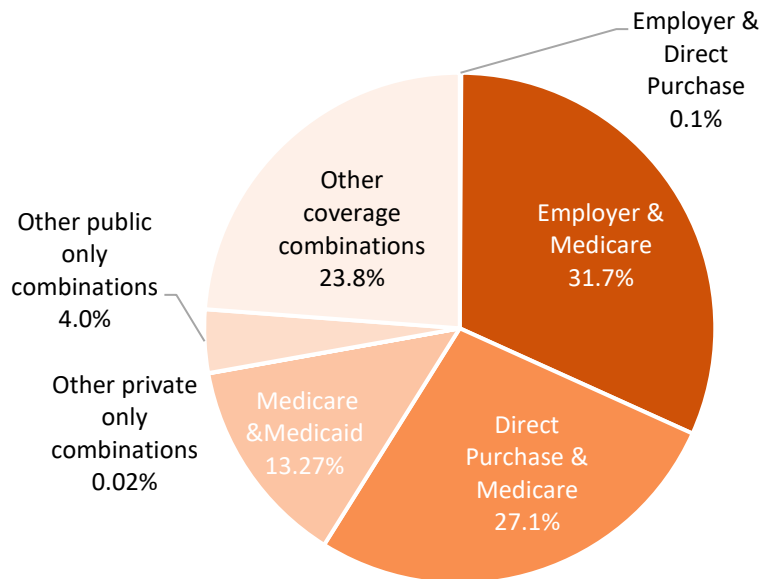


Nearly two thirds of residents in this age group have two types of insurance with the combination employer-based insurance and Medicare (31.7%) being the most common followed by the direct purchase and Medicare combination (27.1%). An estimated 13 percent of Cuyahoga County residents are enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid, often referred to as “dual eligible.”

80,00 residents 65+ with **one type** of health insurance



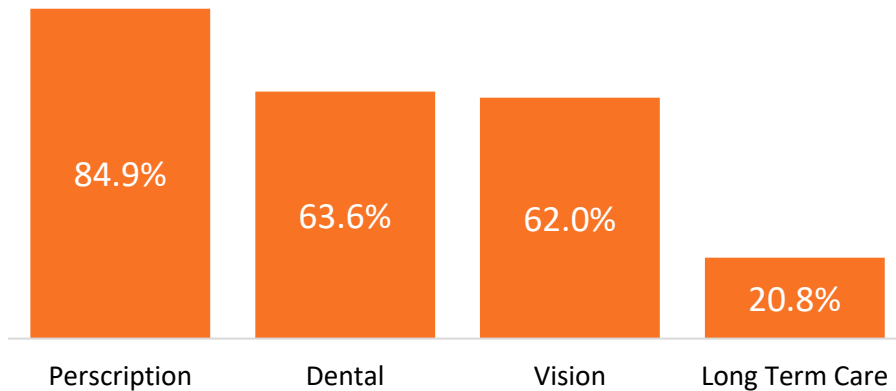
140,200 residents 65+ with **two types** of health insurance



Source: U.S. Census

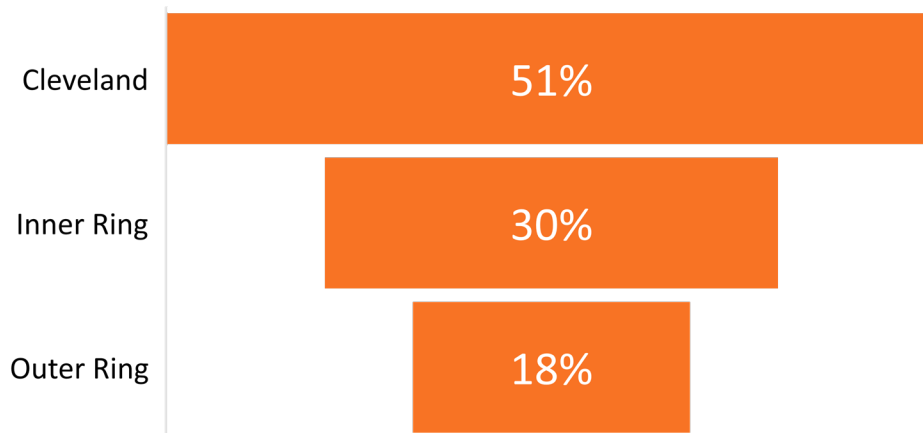
Survey results indicate that even though the large majority of older adults carry at least one, if not two, types of health insurance, a sizable group does not have access to other types of health insurance. 15 percent of survey takers do not have prescription insurance, just under 40 percent do not have dental or vision and 80 percent do not have long term care insurance.

Percent of residents who have each type of insurance  
*Resident Survey*



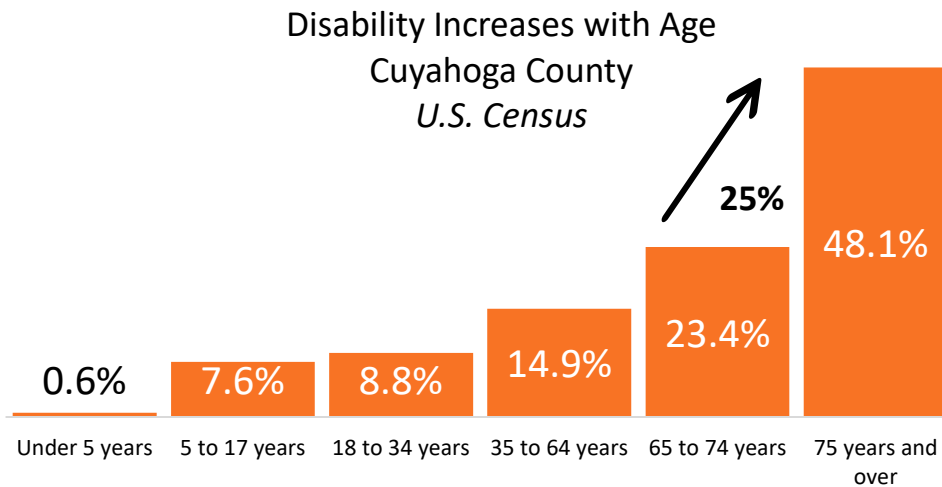
Approximately 17,400 residents of Cuyahoga County aged 65 and over are enrolled in both Medicaid and Medicare. To qualify for Medicaid, individuals must meet financial eligibility requirements which include both income and resource limits. More than half of dual eligible residents live in the city of Cleveland, 30 percent live in the inner ring suburbs and just under 20 percent live in the outer ring suburbs.

Dual Eligibles area of residence within Cuyahoga County  
*U.S. Census*

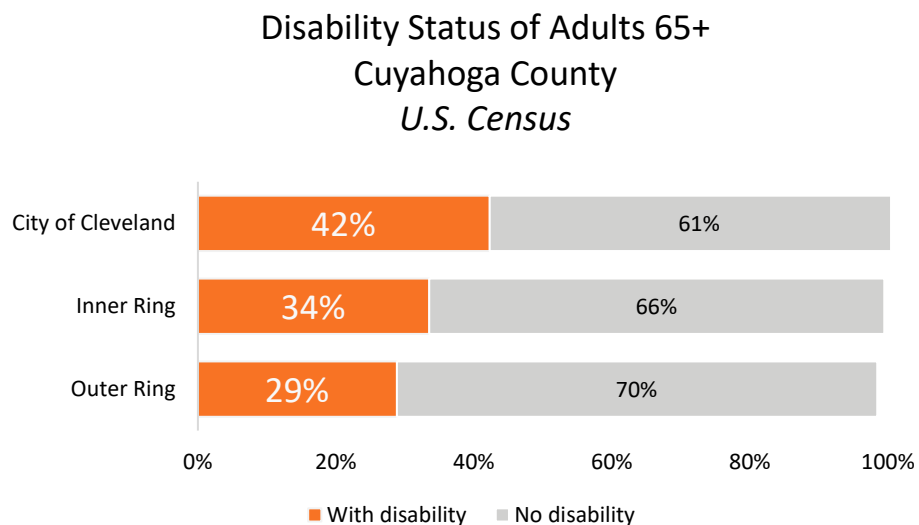


## Disability

Approximately 186,000 residents of Cuyahoga County are living with a disability. As the age of the population increases so do the incidence of disabilities. The percent of the population with a disability doubles from the 65 to 74 age group to the 75 and older age group. Almost half of residents aged 75 and older are living with some type of disability. Individuals in this age group living independently are more likely to need home and community-based supports than those under 75.



Approximately 73,200 residents over the age of 65 in Cuyahoga County are living with a disability. The city of Cleveland has the highest rate of disability with 42 percent of residents over 65 years of age living with some type of disability. About 34 percent of residents aged 65 and over in inner ring suburbs are living with a disability and 29 percent of those in the outer ring suburbs are living with a disability. Although the percentage

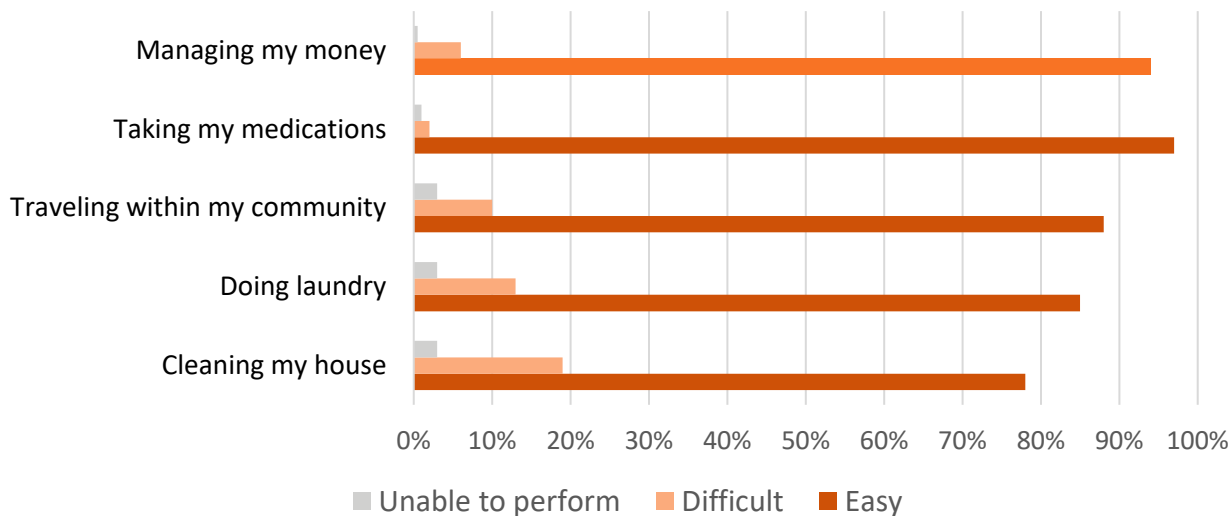


of older adults with a disability is higher in Cleveland, the actual number of residents with a disability is lower than those in the inner ring outer ring suburbs, which have about the same number of older adult residents with a disability.

US Census	Total	With disability	No disability
Outer Ring	88,058	<b>25,382</b>	61,284
Inner Ring	75,914	<b>25,435</b>	50,061
City of Cleveland	53,021	<b>22,417</b>	32,223

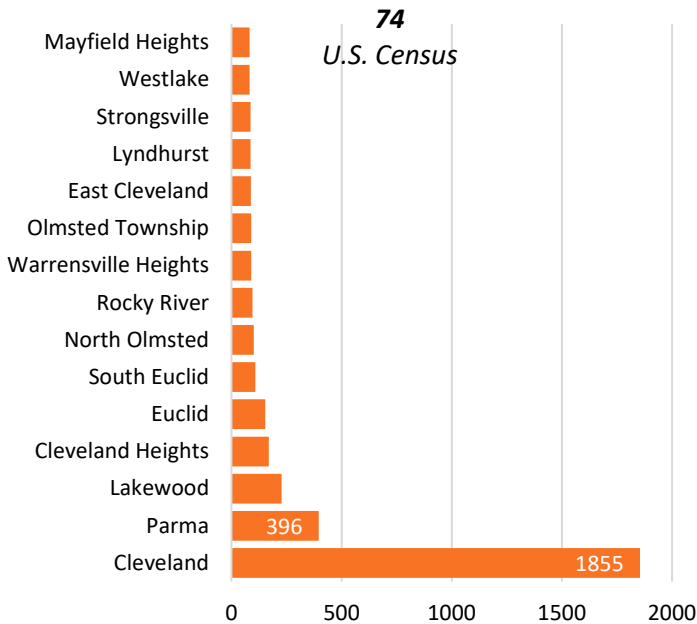
Looking at specific disabilities, particularly those highly associated with aging; self-care and independent living difficulties Cleveland has the highest number of individuals with these types of difficulties. With about a quarter of the number of Cleveland, Parma has the next highest number of residents with these types of difficulties. The following charts include the communities with the highest number of individuals with self-care and independent living difficulties by age group. When asked about specific activities, survey respondents had the most difficulty with cleaning their houses and doing laundry and reported the least difficulty with taking medications and managing their money.

Ease of completing daily tasks  
*Resident Survey*

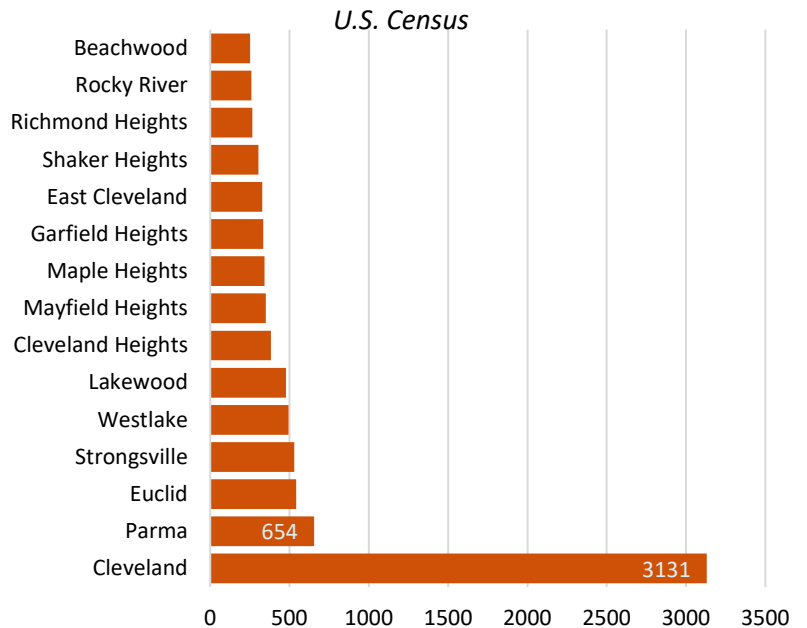




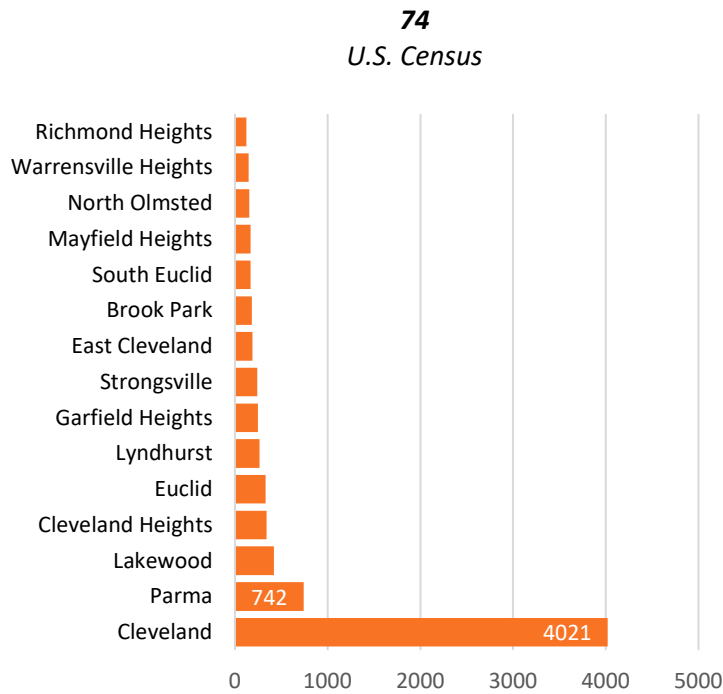
Communities with highest number of residents with a *self care difficulty, aged 65-*



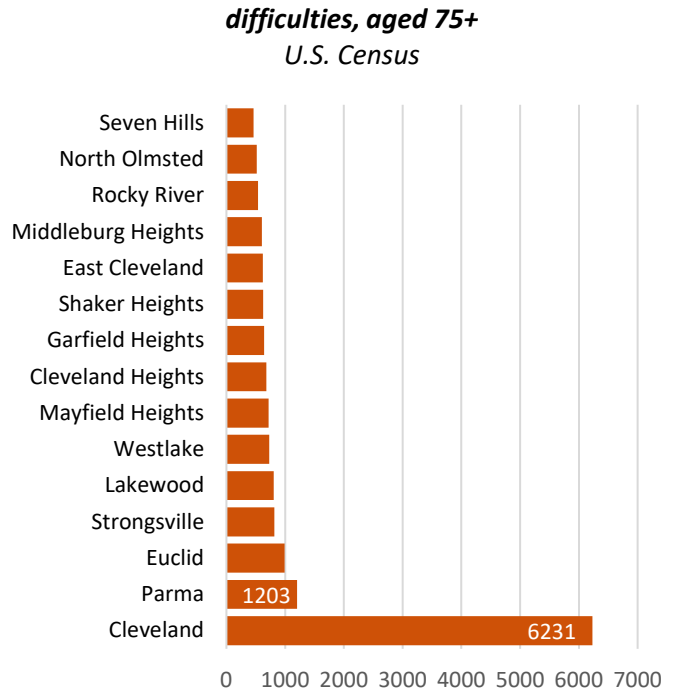
Communities with highest number of residents with a *self care difficulty, aged 75+*



Communities with highest number of residents with *independent living difficulties, aged 65 -*



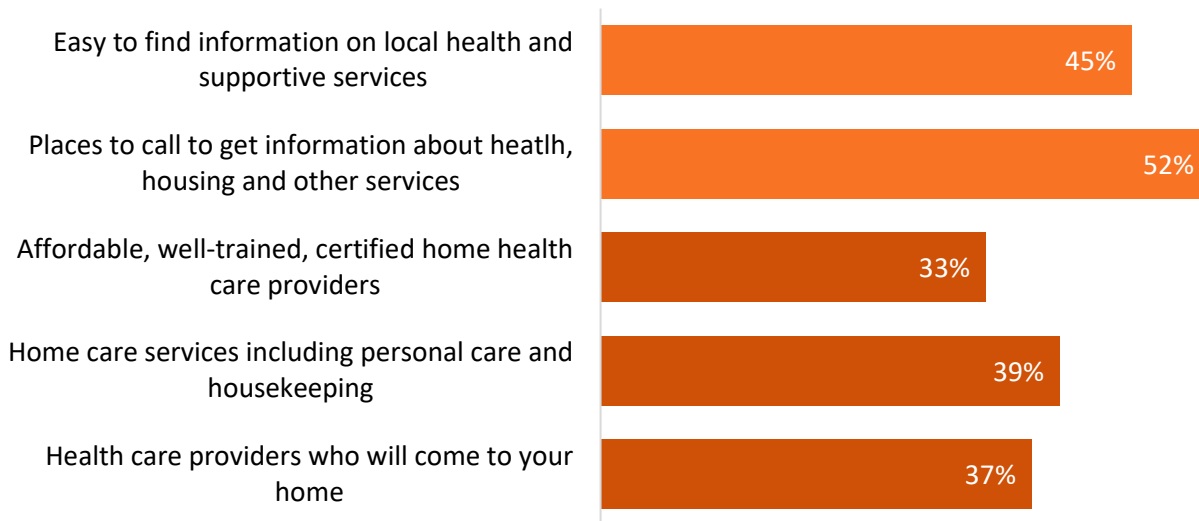
Communities with the highest number of residents with *independent living difficulties, aged 75+*



## Access to Care

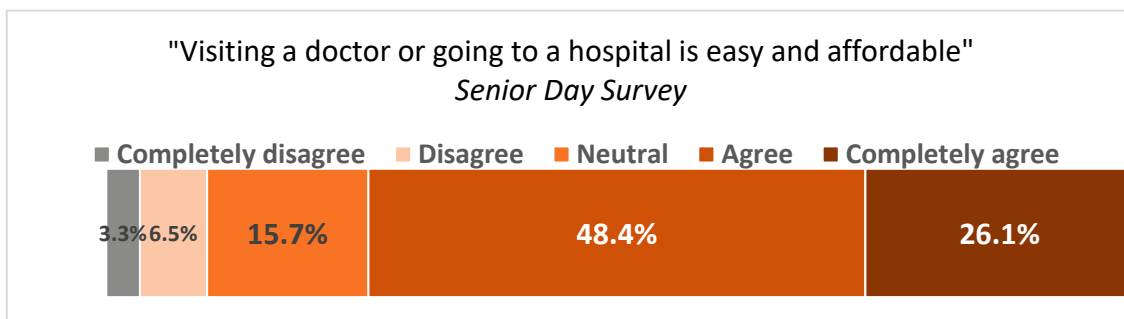
Older adult residents of Cuyahoga County report limited access to health and health information services with fewer than half indicating this information is easy to find. Just over half of survey takers can identify places to call to get information about health, housing and other services. When asked about home health services, including health care providers, personal care and housekeeping, about a third indicated they had access to these types of services. The ability to find and utilize home and community-based services allows people to maintain independence in their own homes.

### Have access to health information & services *Resident Survey*



Access to health and wellness services can both address current health issues and can prevent more serious medical conditions. According to the resident survey, 2 out of 3 older adults have access to fitness activities geared specifically towards them.

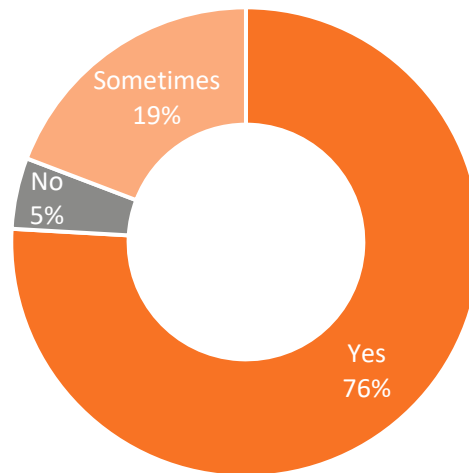
Nine out of ten survey respondents indicated they had conveniently located urgent care or emergency rooms. Quick access to care when a medical crisis is suspected can ease anxiety of those seeking care and can reduce complications that may arise if care is delayed. Continued access to emergency medical facilities is vital for the health of older adults in the county.



Twelve percent of residents indicated they did not have access to medical equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, and hospital beds. Forty-two percent said they did have access while 45 percent were not sure. It is quite likely those who are not sure if they have access have not had the need for medical equipment.

Over 75 percent of older residents of Cuyahoga County indicated that they can always get a medical appointment when needed, and 19 percent can sometimes get an appointment when they need it. A small portion, five percent indicate they are not able to get appointments.

Can you get an appointment with your doctor when you need to?  
*Resident Survey*

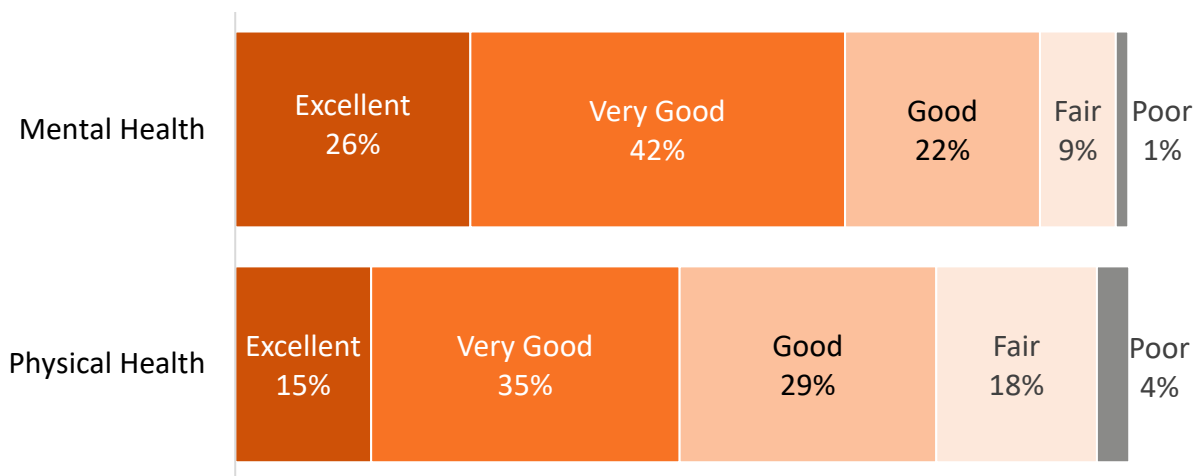


Over the past two years, telehealth appointments have become more accessible and widely used by the general population. 45 percent of older county residents reported having a telehealth appointment in the past 24 months.

Primary care (43%) as the most common type of appointment followed by specialists (30%) and mental health (7%). Of those who had a telehealth appointment, 72 percent would recommend it to a friend or family members. 95 percent of survey respondents report no difficulty with communicating by telephone.

**Current Health**

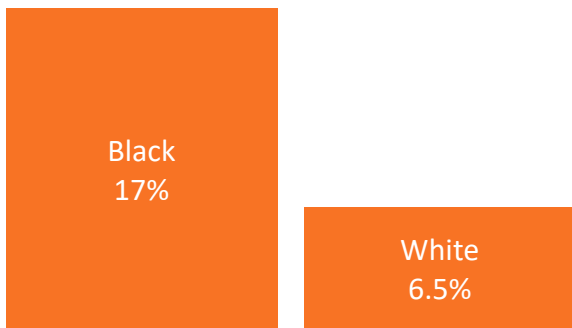
Rating of *mental* and *physical* health  
*Resident Survey*



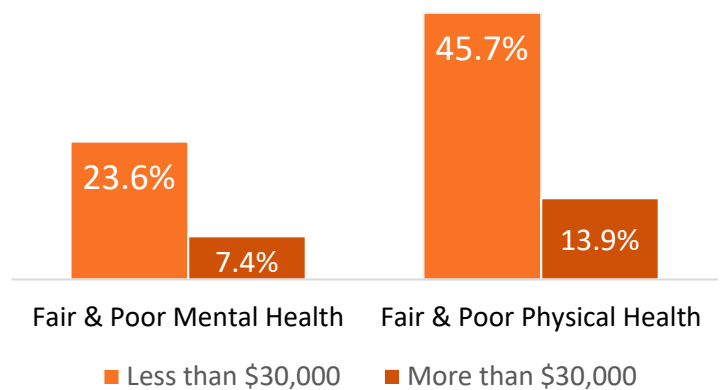
Residents of Cuyahoga County rate their mental health higher than their physical health. Ninety percent of residents rate their mental health as good, very good or excellent. Just 78 percent of residents reported their physical health at the same level. There is no significant difference between age groups in how they rate their health. A significant difference exists when one groups answers are substantially different from another groups as determined by statistical tests.

However, there is a significant difference in mental health by race. Black residents were more likely to rate their mental as fair or poor than their white peers. Significant differences exist for both mental and physical health for lower and higher income earners. Older residents with incomes lower than \$30,000 are also more likely to rate both their physical and mental health as fair or poor.

**Mental health** rated as fair or poor  
Resident Survey



Residents with **lower incomes** are more likely to have **worse health**  
Resident Survey



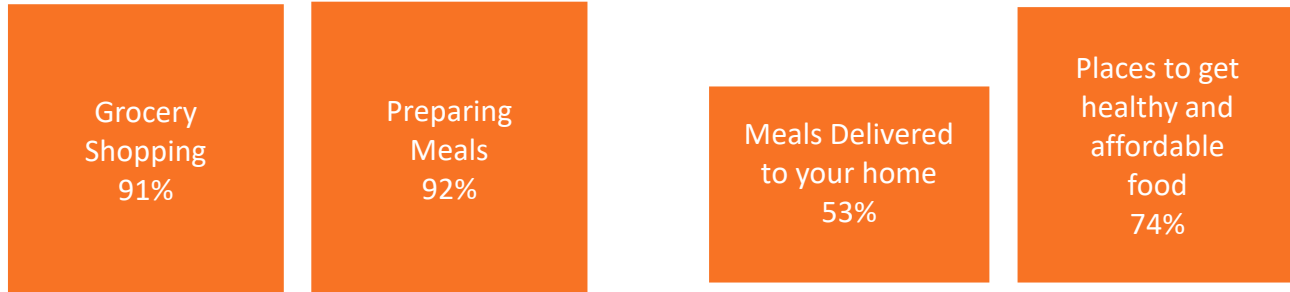
**Nutrition**

According to Feeding America’s Map the Meal Gap 2020 report, 15 percent of Cuyahoga County experiences food insecurity. Approximately 185,900 residents lack access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life. Rates of food insecurity within the county vary by race. Ten percent of white residents experience food insecurity, while 26 percent of Black and 22 percent of Latin(a)(o)(x) residents live with food insecurity. Historic disinvestment in communities of color have contributed to the lack of many basic services, which include access to food. The State of Senior Hunger 2020 report indicates the metropolitan statistical area of Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor has a food insecurity rate of 8.1% with 3.9% of the population over 60 being very low in food security.

Survey respondents were asked questions about their ability to access and perform nutrition related service and tasks. Over half of the residents indicate they have access to meals delivered to their homes and three quarters have places they can get healthy and affordable foods. Just under ten percent indicated difficulty performing nutrition related tasks such as grocery shopping (9%) and preparing meals (8%).

Have ability to perform nutrition related tasks  
*Resident Survey*

Access to nutrition  
*Resident Survey*



One effective way to reduce food insecurity is through participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP (formerly referred to as food stamps). Sixteen percent of Cuyahoga County households that house at least one resident over the age of 60 are currently enrolled in the SNAP program. Five communities have higher rates of enrollment than the county among this age group including East Cleveland (36%), Cleveland (28%), Euclid (22%), Oakwood Village (18%) and Brooklyn (18%). Communities with less than 1000 total households were not included this analysis, due to high margin of error.

Municipality	Percent of Households with someone 60+ receiving SNAP	Municipality	Percent of Households with someone 60+ receiving SNAP	Municipality	Percent of Households with someone 60+ receiving SNAP
East Cleveland	36%	Bedford Heights	9%	North Royalton	4%
Cleveland	28%	Shaker Heights	9%	Fairview Park	4%
Euclid	22%	Brook Park	7%	Rocky River	4%
Oakwood Village	18%	Bedford	7%	Bay Village	3%
Brooklyn	18%	South Euclid	6%	Solon	3%
Cuyahoga County	16%	Richmond Heights	6%	Pepper Pike	2%
Mayfield Heights	15%	Olmsted	6%	Olmsted Falls	2%
Lakewood	14%	Strongsville	5%	Westlake	2%
Parma Heights	13%	Berea	5%	Mayfield	1%
Cleveland Heights	12%	North Olmsted	5%	Beachwood	1%
Warrensville Heights	12%	Lyndhurst	4%	Brecksville	1%
Maple Heights	11%	Moreland Hills	4%	Highland Heights	1%
University Heights	11%	Broadview Heights	4%	Chagrin Falls	0%
Parma	11%	Middleburg Heights	4%	Independence	0%
Garfield Heights	10%	Seven Hills	4%	Orange	0%

### ***Focus group findings***

Multiple participants shared that they would like to see eligibility guidelines for public benefits expand to include more individuals. Some participants wanted to see more lunches offered by community centers, and fresh food programs offered by the Greater Cleveland Food Bank more often to help curb food insecurity in their community.

Many shared that doctors and hospitals are close by, and getting an appointment is fairly easy. However, there were several complaints among groups about feeling that doctors often do not listen to older adults and show a frustration or disdain for patients on Medicare. Some shared that they often feel rushed during appointments and that doctors do not take the time to explain things to them, as well as a lack of empathy from providers.

One group shared that seniors who are confined to their homes are the most disadvantaged because they are not connected to a center or other resources to assist them. Ideas shared for improved services included a place to donate or borrow medical supplies like crutches or wheelchairs. Another group shared an idea for the availability of mental health professionals who are dedicated to assisting older adults. Several participants in multiple groups felt that having a home lockbox service for emergency services to be able to have access to homes and help older adults without having to damage the home would be helpful.

Several participants felt that all Cuyahoga County residents should have access to the same health and community services with the same level of quality. There was some frustration that some cities received services that others do not. Additionally, many older adults are often not eligible for services offered on a sliding scale, and feel they are punished for “doing well for themselves” even when they still need assistance. It was suggested that there be a tier payment system for these services so that those with slightly higher income can still qualify but pay a little more than their neighbors with lower income.

Overall, residents want to see agencies do more to help them know what services and programs are available to them. They’d like to see them be more patient with them on phone calls to receive services, and more mindful of things that can help improve the application process for programs, such as larger print on applications.

# Outdoor Spaces



## Outdoor Spaces

### *Attributes of a livable community*

- Clean & well-lit public spaces
- Green spaces, walkways & cycle paths
- Ample outdoor seating
- Well maintained pavement
- Roads accessible to both pedestrians and motorists
- Traffic enforcement
- Accessible buildings
- Well maintained public restrooms
- Services clustered near residential areas

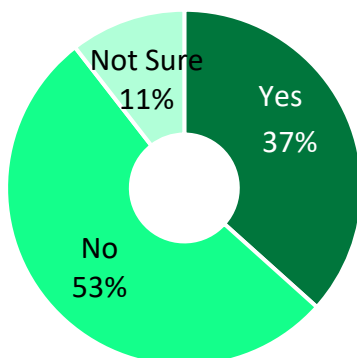


### *Key Findings in Cuyahoga County*

- Well maintained sidewalks are connections to the community
- Parks are highly valued by older adults in Cuyahoga County
- Safety is top of mind

Are sidewalks and walkways plowed consistently during snowy months?

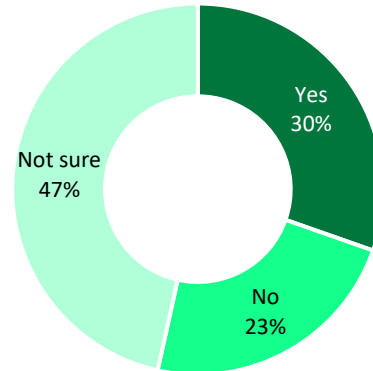
*Resident Survey*



*Older adults value the parks located within the community and often mentioned Cleveland Metroparks as an asset. Good lighting and clear walking pathways are highly valued by community members.*

The vast majority of older residents in Cuyahoga County wish to remain in their homes and the region as the age. In order to do so, the environment around them will need to meet their needs. Feeling safe within one’s community is vital to being an active participant in that community. Safety includes both feeling safe from crime and injury. While 30 percent of residents have connections to a neighborhood watch, block club or police district meeting, about a quarter do not and just under half are not sure if these are available in their communities.

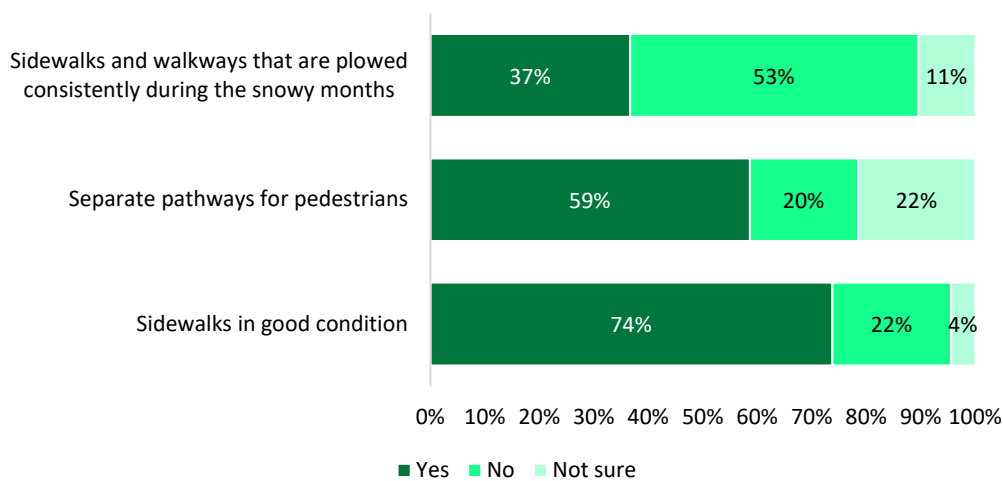
Access to neighborhood watch programs, block clubs, ward or police district meetings  
*Resident Survey*



**Walkability**

According to the AARP Livability Index, households within Cuyahoga County have an estimated .79 walking trips per day. Being about to walk in one’s community provides both connection to others and physical activity. Both social connections and physical activity improve health outcomes. Pedestrian infrastructure greatly influences the willingness of residents to take walking trips. Winter months in Cuyahoga County bring snow and ice that require maintenance to keep walkways clear. More than half of residents reported that sidewalks are not consistently plowed and just thirty-seven percent indicated they do have consistently cleared sidewalks. In general, 74 percent of residents feel that the sidewalks are in good condition. Forty percent of residents do not have or are not sure if they have access to separate pathways for pedestrians.

Status of Pedestrian Infrastructure  
*Resident Survey*





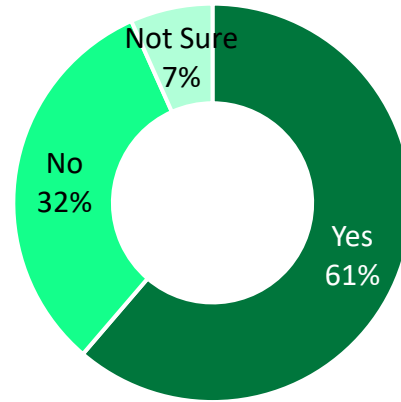
## Parks

Focus group participants often mentioned the value of having outdoor spaces they could enjoy without having to take a car ride or public transportation in order to access them. Just over sixty percent of survey respondents have access to parks within walking distance of their homes while seven percent of survey respondents were not sure if they did.

This leaves about a third of residents who do not have a well-maintained and safe park that within walking distance of their home. In addition to lack of proximity to one's home, residents face other difficulties when spending time in their communities. The most common barrier identified by residents were sidewalks

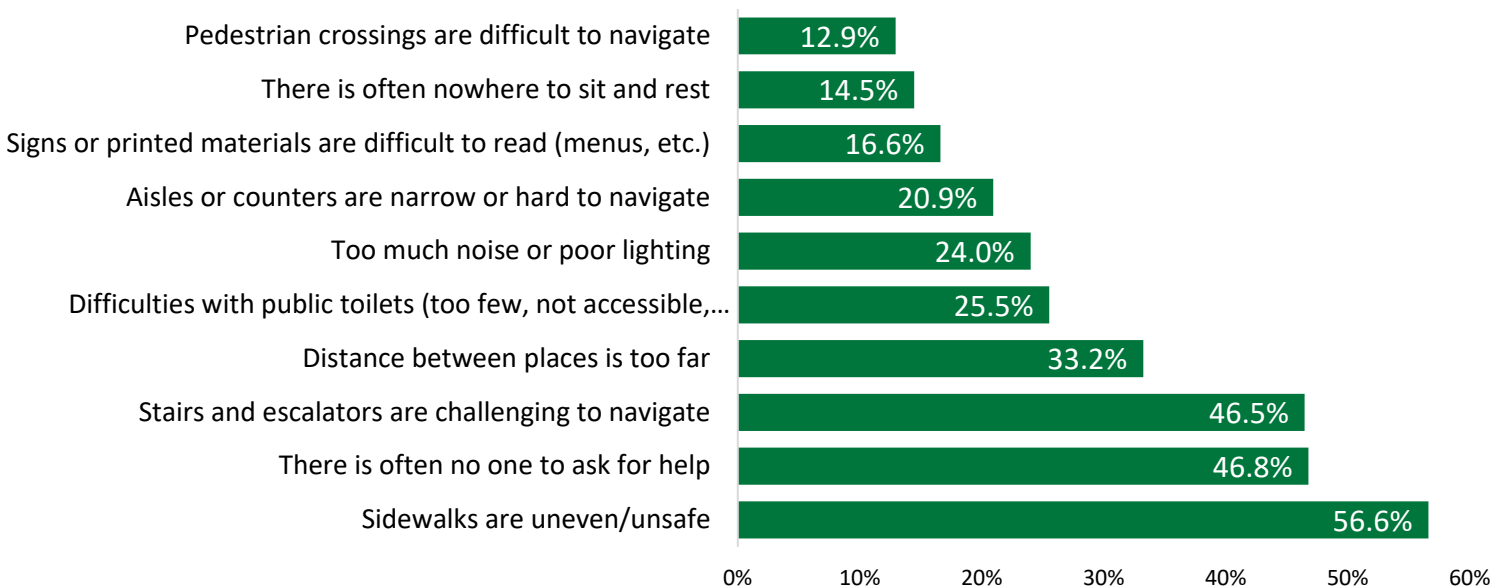
that are safe and uneven. Other commonly identified barriers included having no one to ask for help when navigating public spaces and finding stairs and escalators challenging to navigate. Few people selected pedestrian crossings or lack of places to sit and rest as barriers.

Are well-maintained and safe parks are within walking distance to your home?  
*Resident Survey*

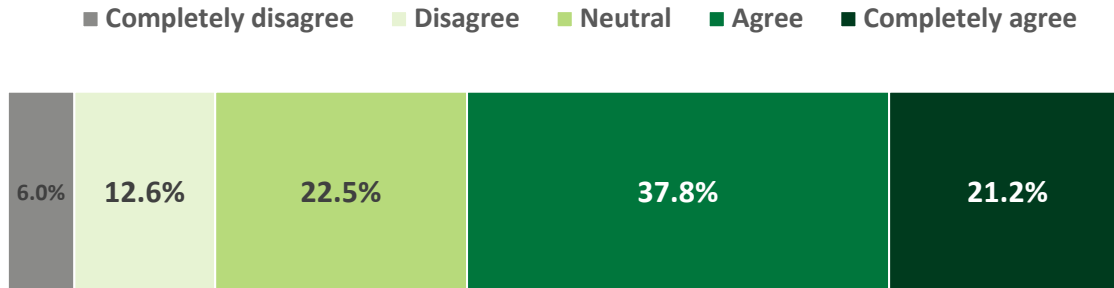


## Challenges

Do you experience any of the difficulties listed when spending time outdoors or indoors?  
*Resident Survey*



"Sidewalks, parks, and public buildings where I live are clean, safe, and easy to get to."  
*Senior Day Survey*



### ***Open-ended Question***

*What do you like most about where you live?*

Respondents had many great things to say about what they liked most about where they lived in Cuyahoga County. The most common responses were about how friendly their neighbors and community in general were. In terms of built environment, many were grateful for how walkable their neighborhoods were, and their convenient proximity to things like shopping; restaurants; the doctor; entertainment; church; and the freeway. Other responses mentioned loving the trees in their neighborhood, the proximity to Lake Erie, and the changing of the seasons in Northeast Ohio. The Cleveland Metroparks were also frequently mentioned as another great part about where they lived.

Many respondents also felt that their neighborhoods were safe, and they appreciated the diversity of their community. There was an appreciation for city services, which were described as both responsive and helpful.

*What do you hope changes about where you live?*

On the issue of safety and crime, common responses included wishing there were more police, or that police were more effective, wishing there were less guns in the community, and wishing for more street lights to deter crime. Some other reported concerns included: wishing there was more diversity/inclusivity; more places to buy food in specific neighborhoods which are food deserts; better animal control.

### ***Focus Group Findings***

Some communities shared they have access to parks and recreation centers, and would like to see more investment in them. West side communities in Cuyahoga also shared that Edgewater is close by but that they would not walk there. Other residents want to see more accessibility to lakefront areas.

The Cleveland Metroparks locations including the Zoo were identified as locations that people enjoy spending time. They feel safe in these spaces and appreciate the beauty of their surroundings. One group emphasized the importance of trees within the community. The tree canopy provides shade and contributes to clean air.

# Transportation



## Transportation

### *Attributes of a livable community*

- Affordability
- Reliability and frequency of public transit
- Public transit stops at key travel destinations
- Specialized services
- Priority seating
- Courteous and competent transport drivers
- Accessible, convenient & safe transport stops and stations
- Easily accessible transportation schedules
- Availability of ride share services
- Well maintained roads and highways
- Priority parking
- Affordable parking

### *Key Findings in Cuyahoga County*

- Cost and access to safe transportation varies by municipality
- Getting around the county is easy for those that drive
- Increased access to medical transportation is desired



**2 out of 3** residents have access to **safe pedestrian crossings**



**3 out of 5** residents have access to **protected bike lines**



**1 out of 3** residents have access to **bike lanes that connect locations**

*Focus group attendees shared that bus routes and the distance to get to bus stops have also changed in some places, making it more difficult to get to, especially in the winter.*

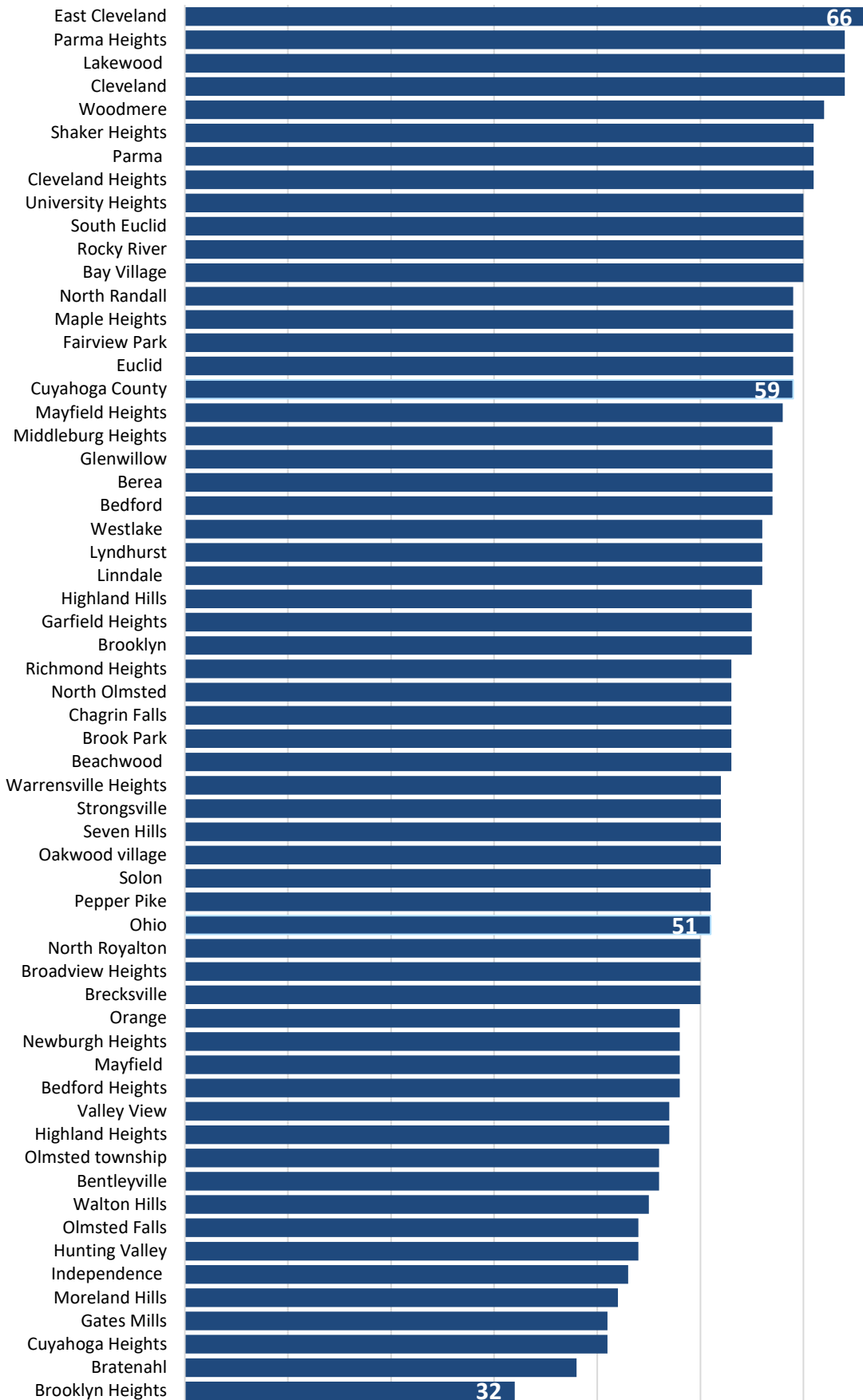
Being able to navigate around one’s community allows people to access services, meet their basic needs, participate in social gatherings and generally be an active member of the community. Without an ability to move around the community, a person’s world shrinks to the boundaries of their home or neighborhood. While a shrinking world does not necessarily have to lead to negative outcomes, most older adults prefer to maintain their community mobility and the independence that comes with access to transportation.

The AARP Livable Communities Index includes a metric for transportation related to convenience, safety and options. The metrics include frequency of local transit service, ADA-accessible stations and vehicles, walk trips, congestion, household transportation costs, speed limits and crash rate. Scores are provided that range between 0 and 100, with a higher score being better. The transportation score for Ohio is 51, slightly higher than the national average of 50. The transportation score for Cuyahoga County is 59. Frequency of local transit, lower transportation costs and fewer traffic fatalities raise the county transportation score higher than the state. There is great variation within the county with the lowest score in Brooklyn Heights at 32 and the highest score in East Cleveland at 66. The chart on the following page includes the score for each municipality, the county and the state.

<i>Household Transportation Costs</i>				
Highest Ten			Lowest Ten	
Hunting Valley	\$18,152		Mayfield Heights	\$13,886
Gates Mills	\$18,098		Brooklyn	\$13,817
Moreland Hills	\$18,084		Warrensville Heights	\$13,632
Walton Hills	\$17,597		Woodmere	\$13,608
Bentleyville	\$17,543		Highland Hills	\$13,522
Pepper Pike	\$17,270		Lakewood	\$13,371
Brecksville	\$17,022		East Cleveland	\$13,275
Independence	\$16,968		Cleveland	\$13,209
Solon	\$16,740		North Randall	\$13,052
Broadview Heights	\$16,610		Linndale	\$12,821
Cuyahoga County			\$14,456	

Estimated household transportation costs are included in the transportation metric and vary by community. AARP uses data from the Location Affordability Index created by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The average cost for the county is \$14,456 which is lower than national average. There is over \$5,000 different between the lowest and highest transportation costs within the county, with Linndale having the lowest cost and Hunting Valley having the highest. Seven percent of survey respondents listed cost as a barrier to transportation.

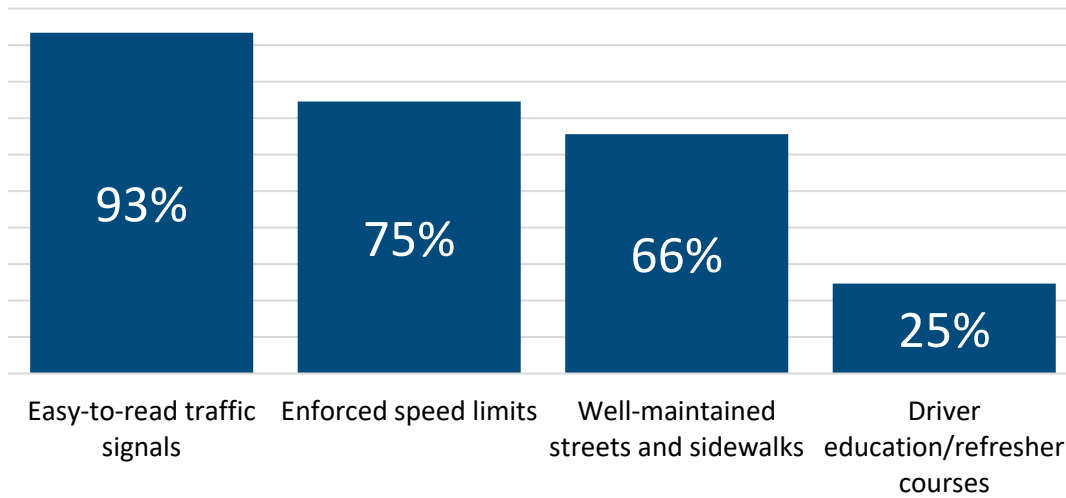
## AARP Livability Index Transportation Score 2022



## Safety

Safety while driving is a top concern for all drivers, including older drivers. Infrastructure impacts the ability of a driver to safely navigate their community. Ninety-three percent of residents indicate they have easy-to-read traffic signals in their communities, while just 75 percent reported that speed limits were enforced. About a third of residents indicated they have access to well-maintained streets and just one in four have access to drivers' education or refresher courses to improve their driving skills as they age.

Transportation Safety Features  
Resident Survey



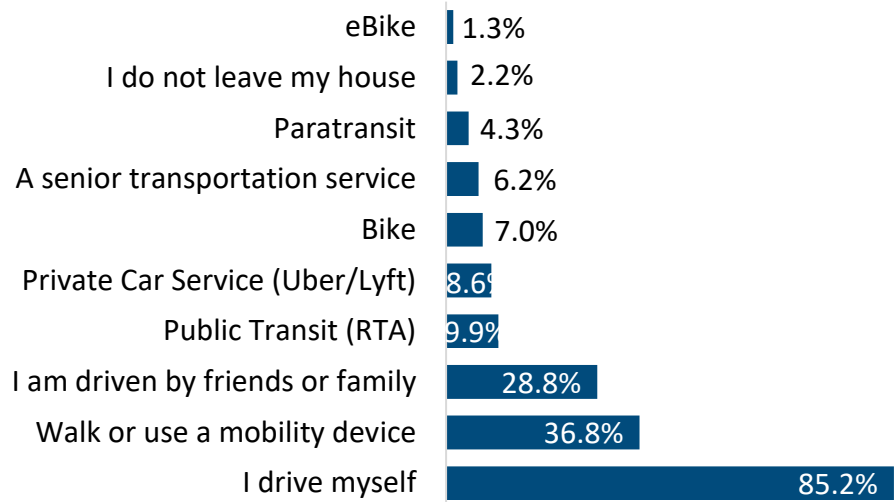
The AARP transportation index provides a measure for the rate of fatal crashes per 100,000 people. Cuyahoga County has a rate of 6.3 fatal crashes per 100,000 people each year. This rate has increased since 2015, when it was 5.4 fatal crashes per 100,000 people. The fatal crash rate among municipalities ranges from 1.9 in Bay Village to 10.9 in Newburgh Heights. Since 2015, the communities with the lowest rates have seen a decrease while the communities with the highest fatal crash rates have seen an increase in rates.

Fatal Crash Rate Per 100,000 people					
Ten Lowest Fatal Crash Rates		Since 2015	Ten Highest Fatal Crash Rates		Since 2015
Bay Village	1.9	↓	Newburgh Heights	10.9	↑
North Royalton	2.3		Bratenahl	10.3	
Westlake	2.3		Cuyahoga Heights	10.3	
Strongsville	2.6		Garfield Heights	9.5	
Broadview Heights	2.8		East Cleveland	9.3	
Olmsted township	2.8		Cleveland Heights	9.1	
North Olmsted	2.8		Cleveland	9	
Berea	3.0		Brooklyn Heights	8.2	
Olmsted Falls	3.1		Maple Heights	8.2	
Middleburg Heights	3.2		Shaker Heights	7.9	
Cuyahoga County			6.3		

## Getting Around

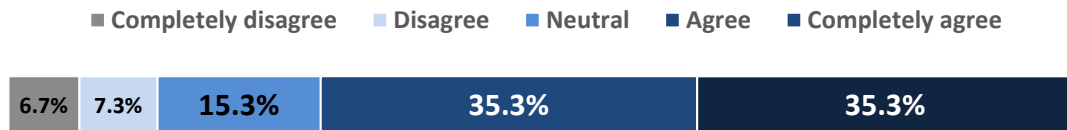
Most older residents in Cuyahoga County, 85 percent, drive themselves to get around when running errands, visiting friends or family and going to medical appointments. The second most frequent method of traveling is by walking or using a mobility device, followed by being driven by friends or family. Just under ten percent use public transportation as their usual way of getting around. Less than ten percent of residents use private car services, bike, or specialized senior transportation services.

### How do you usually get around? Resident Survey



### "I am always able to find a ride when I need to go somewhere"

#### Senior Day Survey



Walking, using a mobility device (like a walker or wheelchair) and biking safely rely on well-designed features of the built environment. About seventy-five percent of residents reported well-lit streets and safe intersections.



Two out of three residents have access to pedestrian crossings with countdown or beeping crosswalks.



Two out of five residents have access to protected bike lines in their communities.



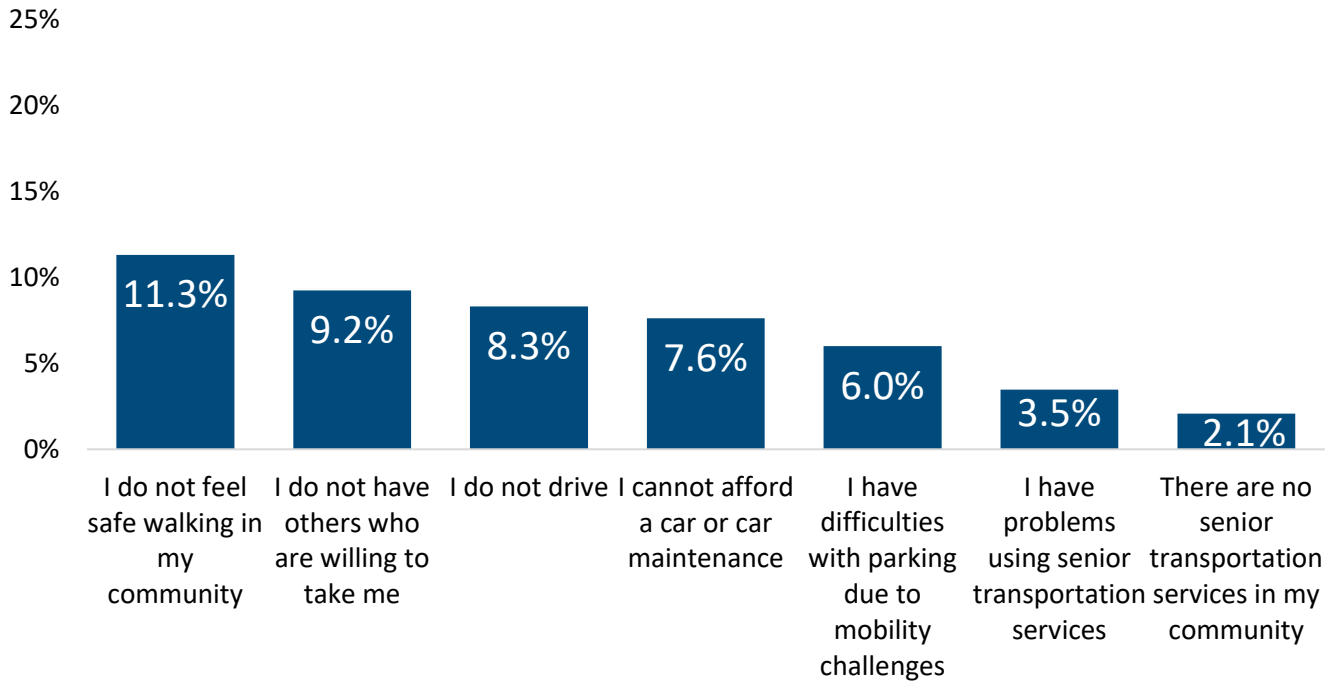
One in three residents have access to bike routes that connect multiple locations

## Transportation Challenges

Eighty-one percent of older adults living in Cuyahoga County have no problems getting around the community for appointments, events or general locations. Of those who do experience challenges the mostly commonly selected challenge was not feeling safe walking in their community. Safety while walking can be improved by adding sidewalks and lighting and removing barriers like snow, ice and overgrown greenage.

Do you face any of the challenges listed below when traveling to an appointment, event or community location?

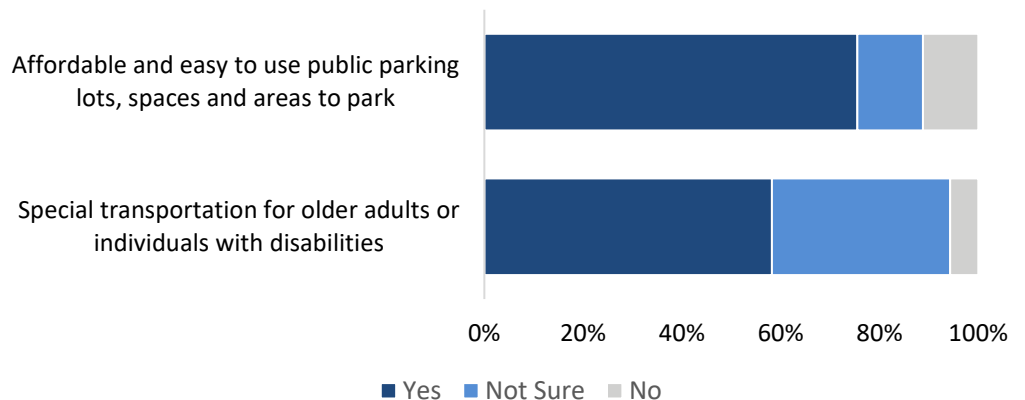
*Resident Survey*



A majority, seventy-five percent, of residents report that public parking is both easy to use and affordable. With eighty-five percent of people driving themselves places, accessible parking with an adequate number of accessible parking spaces. Very residents, less than one percent, did not have access to special transportation for older adults or individuals with disabilities. Over half do have access to special transportation and about forty percent are not sure, likely because they have not had a need for the service and therefore not researched their options.

Where you live do you have access to the following?

*Resident Survey*





## Transit Stops

Frequency of Transportation Stops	
East Cleveland	16
Bratenahl	12
Cleveland	11
Highland Hills	10
Shaker Heights	8
North Randall	8
Glenwillow	7
Rocky River	7
Warrensville Heights	6
Euclid	6
Lakewood	6
Cleveland Heights	5
Oakwood village	5
Parma Heights	5

The AARP Livability Index metric for transportation includes the total number of buses and trains per hour in both directions for all stops within a quarter-mile. East Cleveland, Bratenahl, Cleveland and Highland Hills all have more than ten transit vehicles running per hour in their communities, making public transit more accessible to the residents of these communities and for those that wish to travel within these communities. Based on the AARP Livability transportation metric, a number of communities did not have any public transit presence including Brooklyn Heights, Moreland Hills, Chagrin Falls, Gates Mills, Bentleyville, Hunting Valley, Olmsted Falls, Olmsted Village and North Royalton. For the 15 percent of residents who do not drive themselves, access to public transportation is a good option for staying connected to their communities. Older adults living with little to no transit access may find themselves disconnected, particularly if they have a sudden change in their ability to drive themselves.

### Open Ended Question

*What do you hope to change about where you live?*

Multiple respondents lamented the lack of transportation options, and older adult specific transit options in Cuyahoga County as well. A few answers specified the need for safer transit options. A handful mentioned wishing there were more bike lanes as well.

With regard to traffic control, complaints were typically around speeding, but some also complained that the traffic was too noisy. On the issue of better roads and sidewalks, respondents felt that the roads and sidewalks in Cleveland were both under plowed and were in disrepair. A few wished their neighborhoods had sidewalks and were more walkable.

### Focus Group Findings

Older adults shared various ways of getting around: driving, taking a bus, using transportation services provided in the community or through health insurance, and asking friends for help. Paratransit and Senior Transportation Connection were shared in many groups as a frequent option used by older adults. Some expressed feeling uncomfortable or unsafe walking alone in the community.

Getting to places in the area was seen as convenient for some, especially those who still have the ability to drive, but others shared that they have trouble accessing transportation. Some communities felt that more accessible options were needed, while others were satisfied with the options their community offered. Paratransit was an option used by many, but there were some reservations about some difficulties with

applying, or having to get to the facility to receive an I.D. to use for the bus. A majority of service providers only offer medical transportation, and older adults shared that they often find themselves in need of options that help them get to other places like grocery stores, other important non-medical appointments or errands. Also, while medical transportation may be available to some, it is often seen as inconvenient due to long waiting times for rides or miscommunication with service providers. Residents in Cleveland Heights shared that they wanted to see more options for medical transportation that take you to main hospitals downtown or the new MetroHealth facility nearby. Participants with language barriers expressed that they find it difficult to arrange transportation to appointments.

Some older adults expressed discomfort with using ridesharing options because of safety, lack of affordability, or the inconvenience of having to use a debit or credit card for payment.

Anywhere requiring a highway was seen as difficult to get to by one group. Another shared that places that require more than one bus are inconvenient for some to get to. Bus routes and the distance to get to bus stops have also changed in some places, making it more difficult to get to, especially in the winter.

The Senior Wheels program in Berea was highlighted as a helpful option for those over the age of 60 or who are living with a disability because it takes individuals anywhere they need to go during weekdays within Berea, Middleburg Heights, or Strongsville.

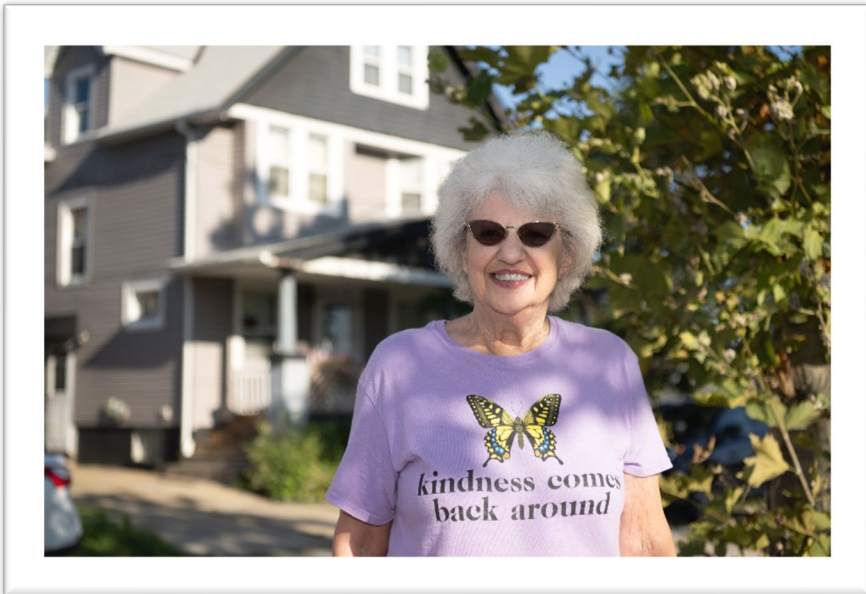
# Housing



## Housing

### ***Attributes of a livable community***

- Affordable
- Well designed for changing mobility
- All weather comfort
- Financial assistance for home modifications
- Home maintenance programs and services
- Options to age in place
- Community integration
- Range of housing options
- Safely constructed structures



### ***Key Findings in Cuyahoga County***

- Older adults in Cuyahoga County wish to remain in Cuyahoga County as they age
- Renters experience higher housing cost burdens than homeowners
- Residents needing to move or modify their homes to meet mobility needs will need assistance finding the right housing fit



**97%**

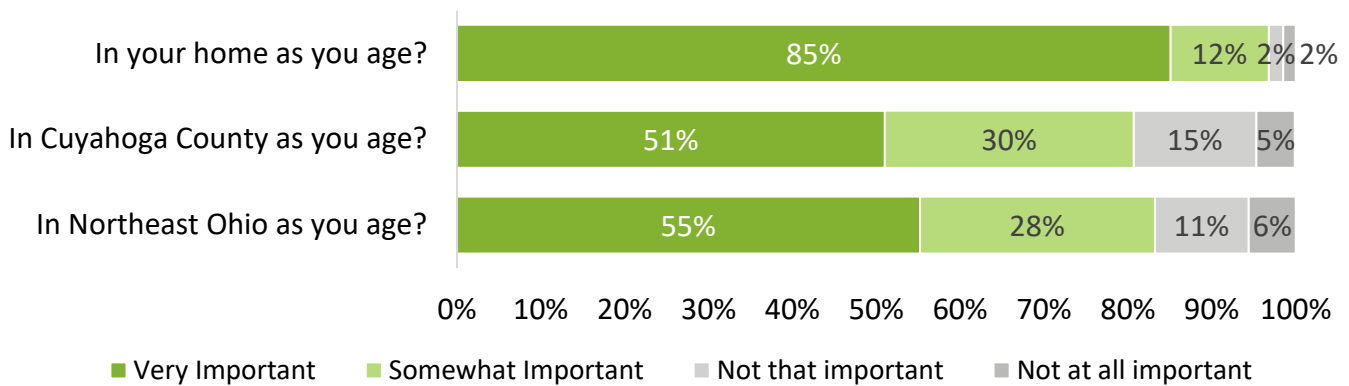
***of Cuyahoga County residents wish to remain in their homes as they age***

*Residents across the county, across income groups and across age groups desire options in housing. Many are eager to stay in their communities but may be living in a home that no longer meets their needs. Smaller homes built to accommodate mobility devices are of high interest to many older adults. Homes with less maintenance, including outdoor seasonal chores are attractive to many older adults.*

## Aging in Place

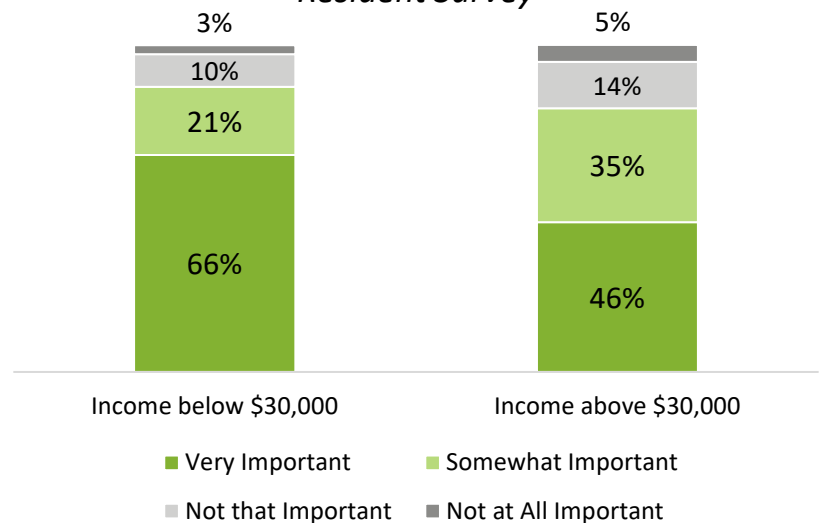
Overwhelmingly, older adults in Cuyahoga County wish to remain in their homes as the age. It is very important to 85 percent of residents and somewhat important to 12 percent of residents to remain in their homes as the age. There was no difference in the desire to stay in their own home among race or income group. A slightly smaller majority expressed the importance of staying in Cuyahoga County with a total of 81 percent saying it was very or somewhat important to remain within the county. Slightly more, 83 percent, felt it was important to stay within the region.

Most older adults wish to **remain in their homes & communities** as they age  
*Resident Survey*

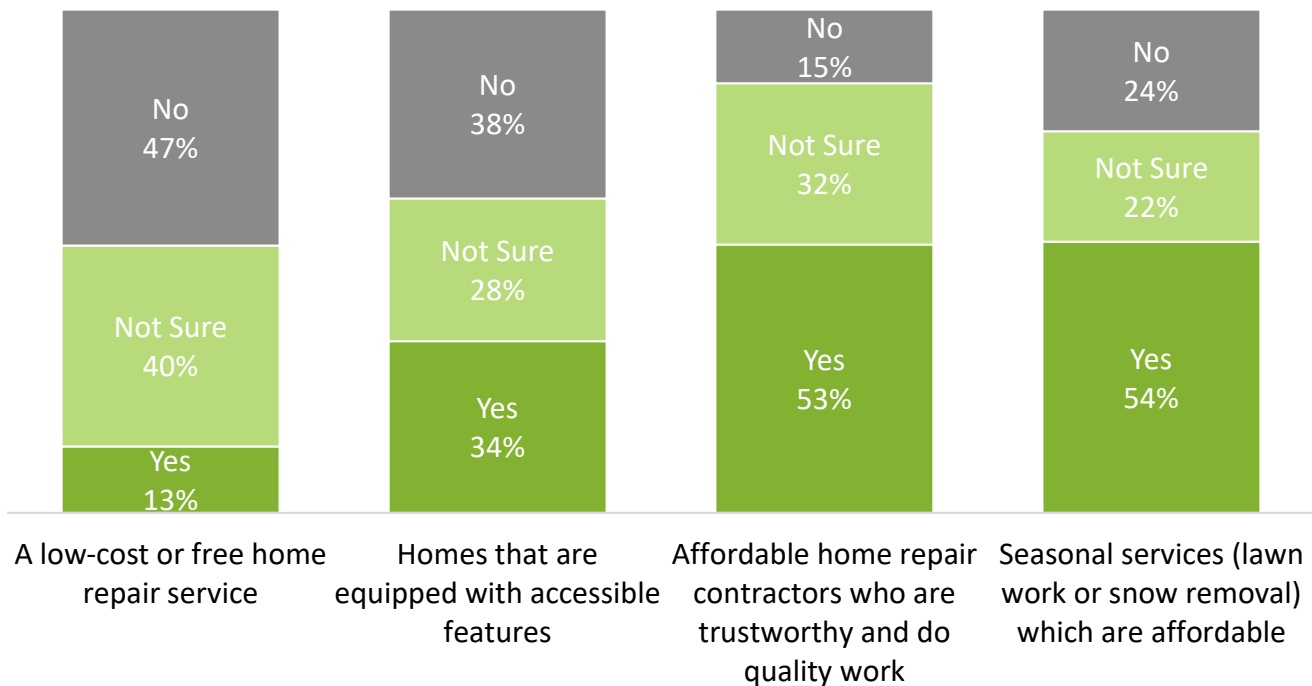


Residents with incomes lower than \$30,000 per year were significantly more likely to identify staying in Cuyahoga County as important to them. This likely reflects their existing connections to high quality supportive services that exist within their communities. Sixty-six percent of lower income residents place a very high value on remaining within the county while just 46 percent of their peers with higher incomes felt it very important to stay within the county as they age

Importance of staying in Cuyahoga County as you age, by income  
*Resident Survey*

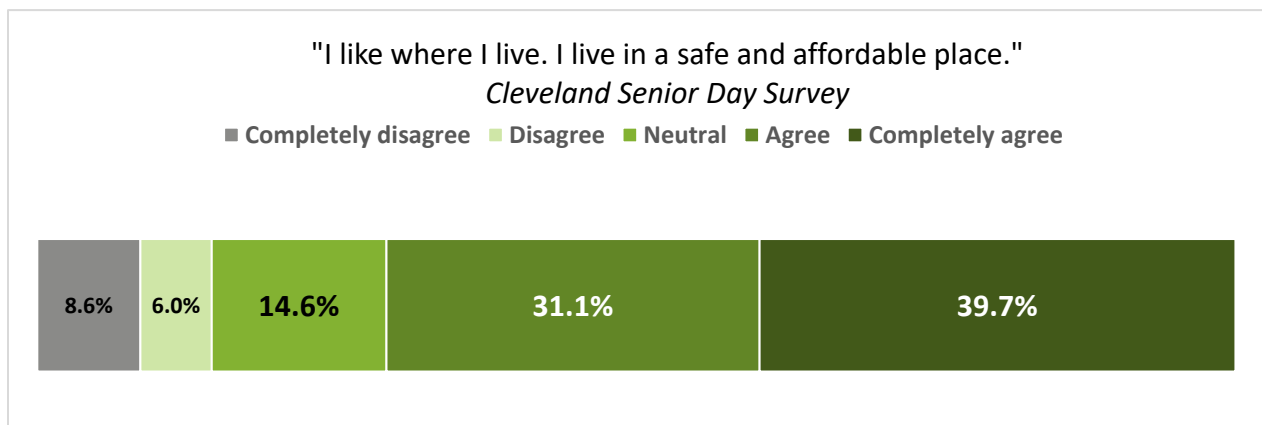


Where you live do you have access to the following?  
*Resident Survey*



**Home Maintenance**

A major contributing factor to being able to remain in one’s home as they age is the ability to maintain that home. Older residents of Cuyahoga County have varying degrees of access to programs and services that allow them to keep up their homes in a way that ensures their safety. Just 13 percent of residents have access to low-cost or free home repairs services. A little more than half report they are able to find affordable home repair contractors who are trustworthy and do quality work. Currently about a third of residents have homes that are equipped with accessible features. More than half of resident are able to access affordable snow removal and lawn maintenance services.



### Housing Costs

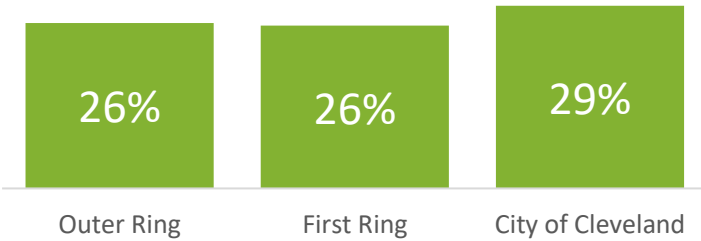
Older adult households that rent in Cuyahoga County have a much higher rate of being housing cost burdened than their peers who own their homes. Twenty seven percent of older adult households that own their homes contribute more than 30 percent of their incomes towards housing costs whereas 56 percent of renters in the county are in a similar situation.

### Housing Cost Burdened in Cuyahoga County 65+ U.S. Census

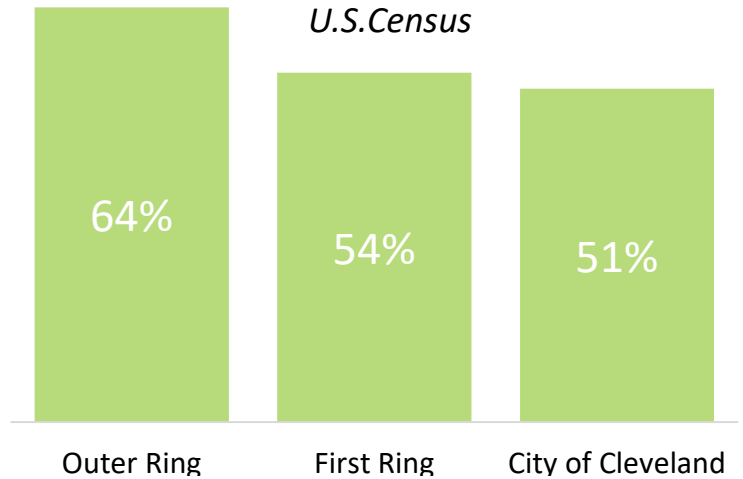


Homeowners in both the inner ring and outer ring suburbs have slightly lower rates of being housing cost burdened and the City of Cleveland has slightly higher rates. High housing costs can lead to both housing instability and financial instability for older adults. Just over five percent of survey takers indicate they are concerned about not having stable housing in the next two months. Among survey respondents less than two percent have experienced homelessness in the past year.

### More than 30% of income goes towards housing cost Owners 65+, Cuyahoga County U.S. Census



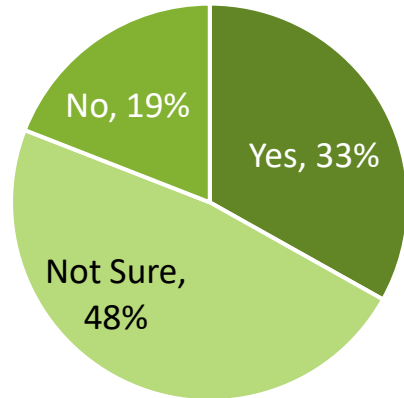
### More than 30% of income goes towards housing cost Renters 65+, Cuyahoga County U.S. Census



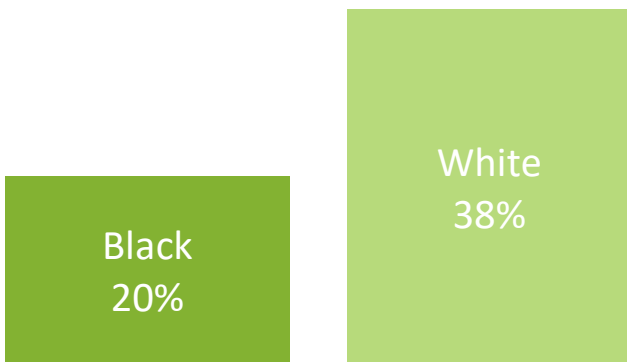
**Adapting to needs**

Nearly 20 percent of respondents have had to cut back on spending money on necessities like medication and food due to housing costs. Only a third of respondents are confident they could find alternative housing if health or mobility needs changed. About half of residents are not sure if they could find alternative housing and just under 20 percent do not think they could find alternative housing. There is no significant difference among age groups when it comes to confidence in finding alternative housing. There is, however, a significant difference between Black and white residents. A higher percentage of white residents feel confident they would be able to find a new place to live if they could no longer manage the home they were currently living in. There is also a significant difference in how higher and lower income residents answered the question about alternative housing. Households with incomes over \$30,000 were twice as likely to feel confident in being able to move to housing that better fit their health and mobility needs.

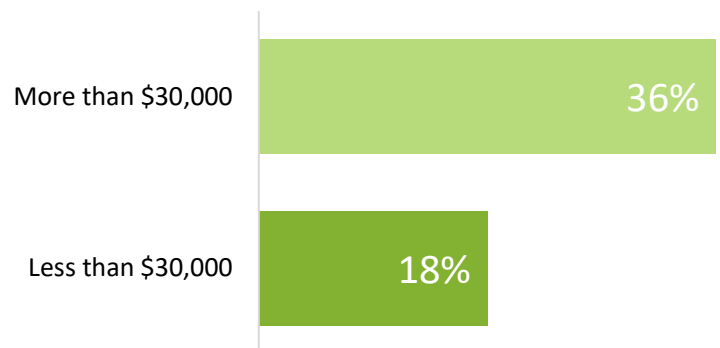
If you had to leave your home due to health or mobility issues, do you feel confident that you could find alternative housing to meet your needs?  
*Resident Survey*



Confident in ability to find alternative housing due to changing health/mobility needs  
*Resident Survey*



Confident in ability to find alternative housing due to changing health/mobility needs  
*Resident Survey*



## ***Open Ended Questions***

*What do you like most about where you live?*

Many respondents mentioned the affordability of where they live, including low taxes and the capability to own their homes as a positive. They acknowledged that Cuyahoga County is much more affordable than many other parts of the country.

*What do you hope changes about where you live?*

A common theme that emerged was affordability of housing. Many respondents were frustrated with increasing costs of housing, and there were hopes for more affordable senior housing that was low maintenance and easy to maneuver. Cost of living in general becoming too high was mentioned as well.

## ***Focus Group Findings***

Several groups expressed a need for more affordable housing options for older adults. Many feel pushed out of housing due to cost, and feel it is hard to qualify for subsidized options that are available. Older adults want to see more rent controls. Additionally, some communities have high property taxes that make it difficult for some to afford housing. Groups also shared that having more options for single story units would be helpful.

Many residents see a need for better maintenance of apartment buildings and housing from landlords or property managers. They feel there is often a lack of responsiveness to requests or that repairs are never addressed. Several shared that they have had unaddressed issues in their apartments or homes for years. Others shared that affordable maintenance and repair services are needed. Several expressed that older adults who own homes often encounter issues with housing repairs going unaddressed because they cannot find affordable help, and that respective city departments may cite them without offering assistance. If those individuals are forced to move, the next occupant has to address residual issues, and cities do not help with bringing properties back up to code. Participants felt that many housing programs are offered in Cleveland, but not for homeowners who live in the surrounding suburbs and need help. One individual felt that residents in some neighborhoods feel “trapped” because they cannot afford upkeep on their home, but cannot sell it to move to better housing.

For those who are able to access programs to help with maintenance or repairs, there are long waits that sometimes span across years, and individuals have to meet various paperwork requirements but do not see the work completed. One individual experienced this issue with the Senior Housing Assistance Program. Participants wanted to see a list of vetted contractors offered by government for older adults to be able to use when needed. However, there was some uncertainty about whether this was already offered in some communities.

Residents shared that there is also a growing population of homeless older adults in Cuyahoga who are unable to find stable housing because of past evictions. Programs that specifically offer senior housing are few and far between, and cannot allow individuals to stay beyond a certain timeline due to grant compliance. Older adults want to see a program that offers supports to help this population become more stable and sufficient. They felt more support is offered after having experienced chronic homelessness and sometimes when having specific diagnoses. However, residents want to see all individuals experiencing being unhoused to have the support they need without having to experience it on multiple occasions.

Still some others have experienced challenges with landlords when they have children in the home. Participants also expressed that they are not comfortable with their family wanting to place them in group home settings.



# Social Participation



## Social Participation *Attributes of a livable community*

- Accessible events and activities
- Prioritizes affordability
- Well-promoted activities and events
- Addresses isolation
- Fosters community integration

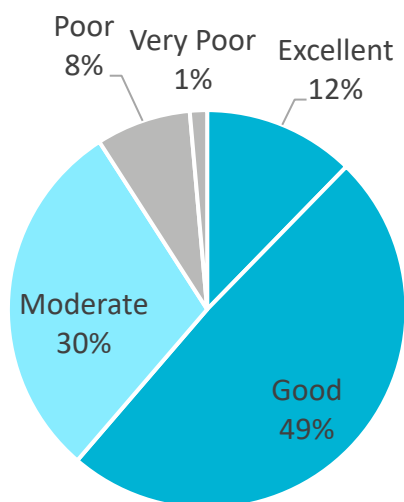


### **Key Findings in Cuyahoga County**

- Thirty percent of residents lack companionship
- Older residents are most interested in socializing at restaurants, museums and libraries
- Adults between the ages of 50-64 are less likely to socialize with friend and family than those aged over 65

How would you rate Cuyahoga County as a place for people to live as they age?

*Resident Survey*

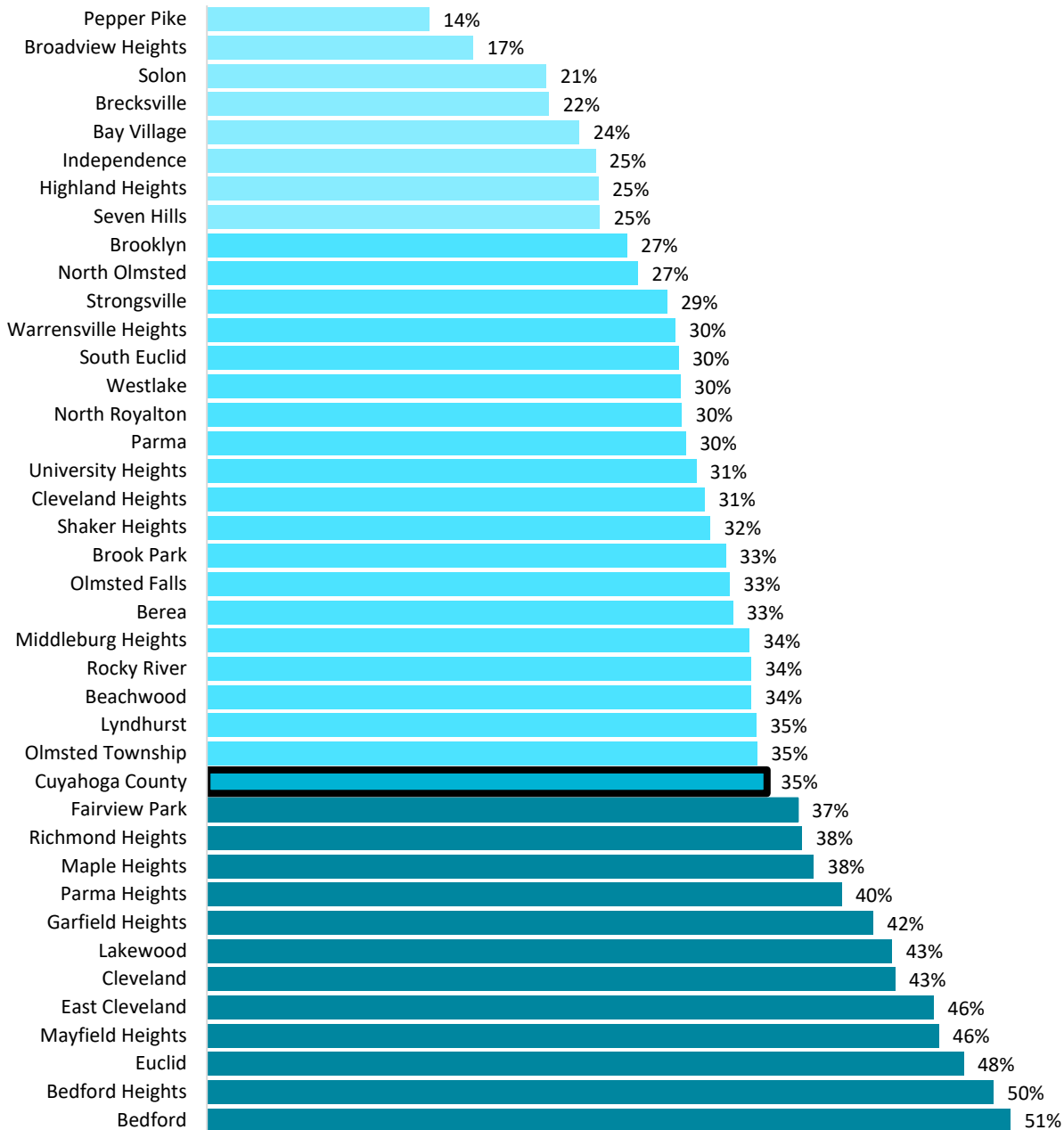


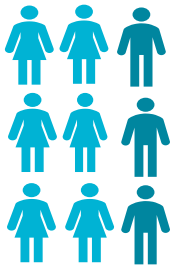
*In focus groups, residents overwhelmingly expressed a desire to return to regularly scheduled activities to socialize, particularly to activities that had been put on hold due to Covid-19*

## Living Alone

In Cuyahoga County, approximately 35 percent of the population aged 65 and older lives alone. Among the municipalities with older adult (65+) total populations over one thousand people, twelve communities have higher rates of older adults living alone including Bedford (51%), Bedford Heights (51%) and Euclid (48%). Communities with the lowest rates of older adults living alone are Pepper Pike (14%), Broadview Heights (17%) and Solon (21%).

Percent of 65+ Living Alone  
U.S. Census





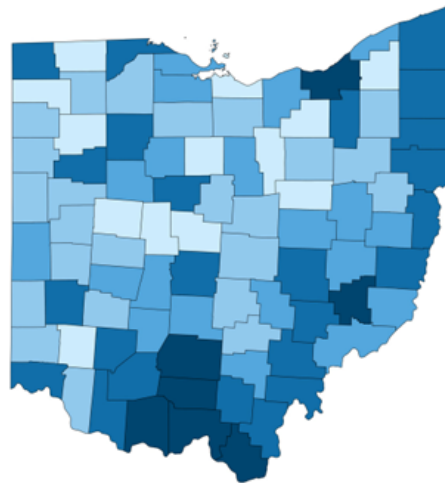
Among older adults living alone in Cuyahoga County, two thirds are females and one third are males. While most municipalities mirror the county male/female ratio for living alone a few communities are noticeably different. In Olmstead township, East Cleveland, Middleburg Heights, Olmstead Falls and Bedford Heights less than sixty percent of those living alone are females whereas in Lyndhurst, Westlake, South Euclid and Highland Heights more than eighty percent of older adults living alone are females.

### Social Isolation

In the Senior Report 2022 produced by America’s Health Rankings, Cuyahoga County was one of seven counties in the state of Ohio that scored at the highest level in their social isolation index. The index includes measurements of poverty, living alone, marital status, and disability.

## Ohio

Risk of Social Isolation by County

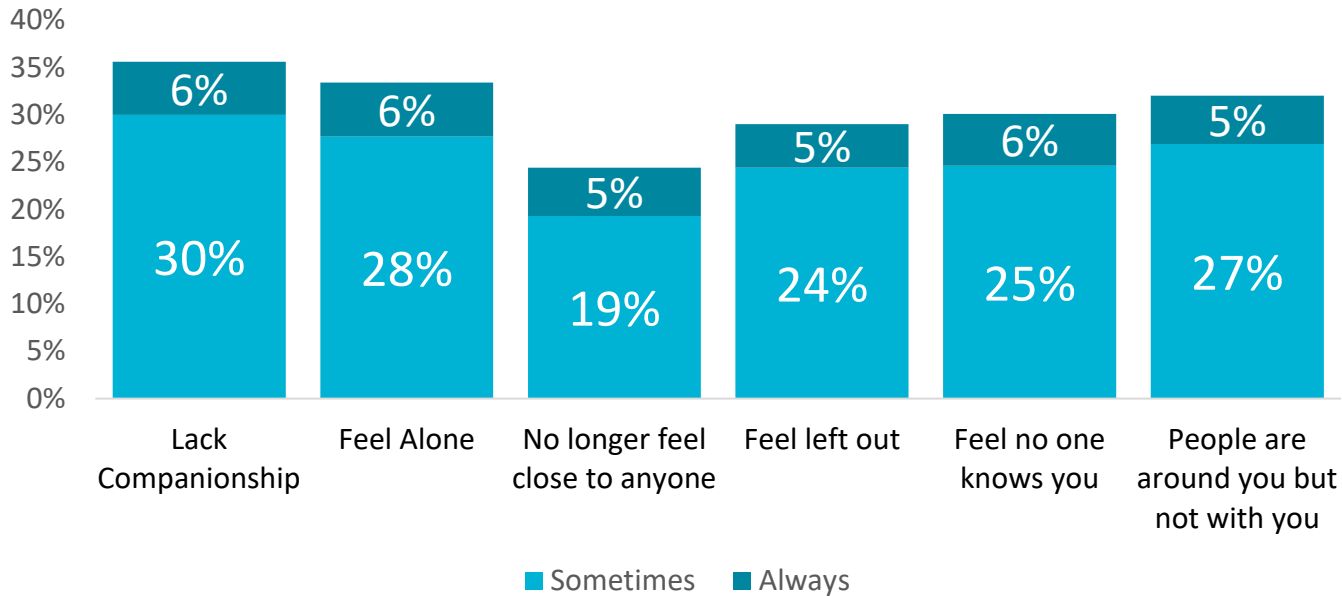


Index of social isolation risk factors: poverty; living alone; divorced, separated or widowed; never married; disability; and independent living difficulty among adults ages 65 and older, relative to all U.S. counties; normalized values are 1 to 100, with a higher value indicating greater risk.

■ <= 39  
 ■ 40 to 44  
 ■ 45 to 49  
 ■ 50 to 56  
 ■ >= 57

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016-2020

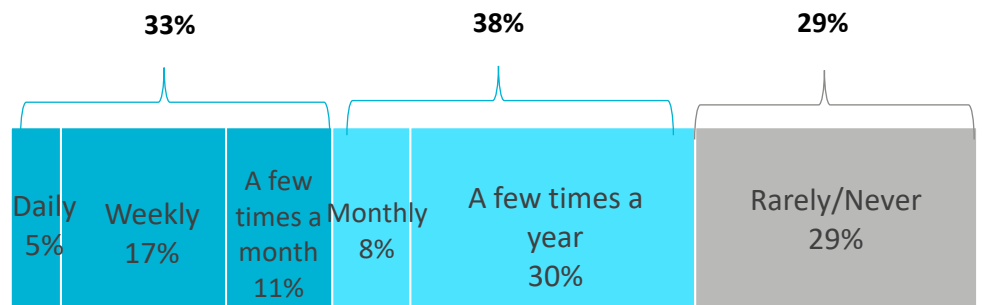
**Sometimes or Always** experience feelings related to **loneliness** and **social isolation**  
*Resident Survey*



Between five and six percent of Cuyahoga County older residents always experience feelings related to loneliness and social isolation. These feelings including lacking companionship, feeling alone, left out, not being close to anyone, that no one knows them and being around people but not with people. Between 19 and 30 percent of older residents feel this way sometimes. Lack of companionship is the most often selected indicator of loneliness followed by feeling alone. Participating in social activities, can ease these feelings of loneliness. Accessible activities and events designed with older adults in mind are more likely to draw out older adults who currently feel disconnected.

According to the resident survey, just under 30 percent of older adult residents rarely or never participate in social or community events. Another 38 percent participate infrequently, a few times a year or one a month. This leaves just a third of older adults in the county regularly engaging in activities and events that can act as a preventative measure to feelings of loneliness and becoming socially isolated.

**How often do you participate in social/community events?**  
*Resident Survey*

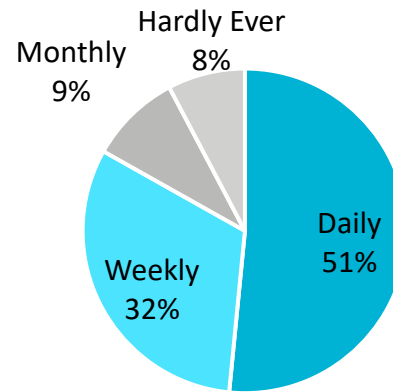


## Social Activity

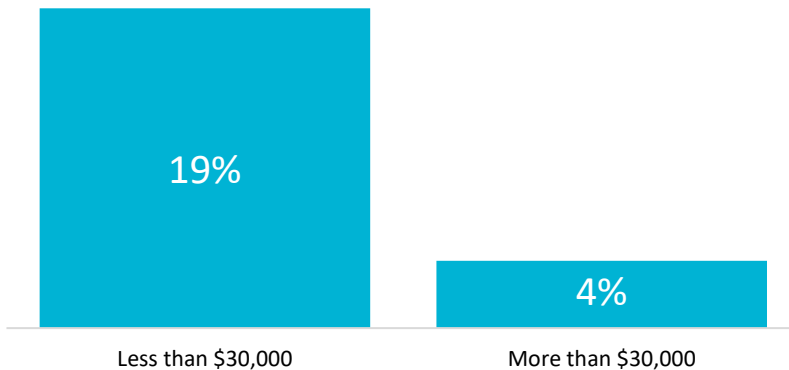
About half of older adults in Cuyahoga County socialize with friends or family on a daily basis. A third are socializing at least weekly. This leaves nine percent interacting with friends or family monthly and eight percent hardly ever socializing with other people. There is no significant difference between the frequency of socializing among Black and white residents. There are however, significant differences in socialization frequency among age groups and income groups.

**How often** do you **socialize** with family or friends?

*Resident Survey*



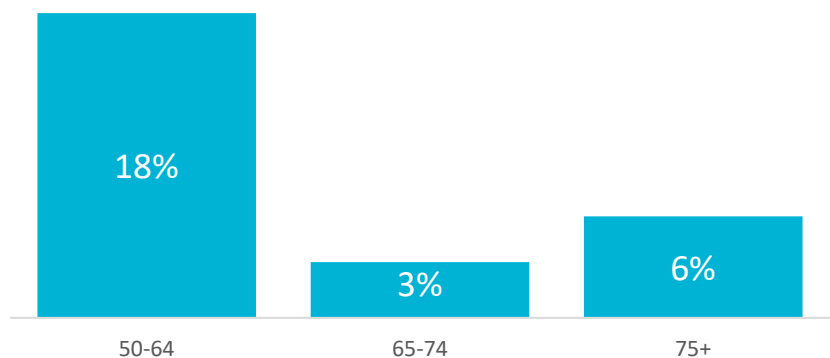
**Hardly Ever** socialize with family or friends, by income  
*Resident survey*



Residents whose incomes are less than \$30,000 a year are significantly more likely to report that the “hardly ever” socialize with friends or family. Possible reasons for decreased socialization among those with lower incomes includes barriers related to costs of transportation, social events and methods of communication.

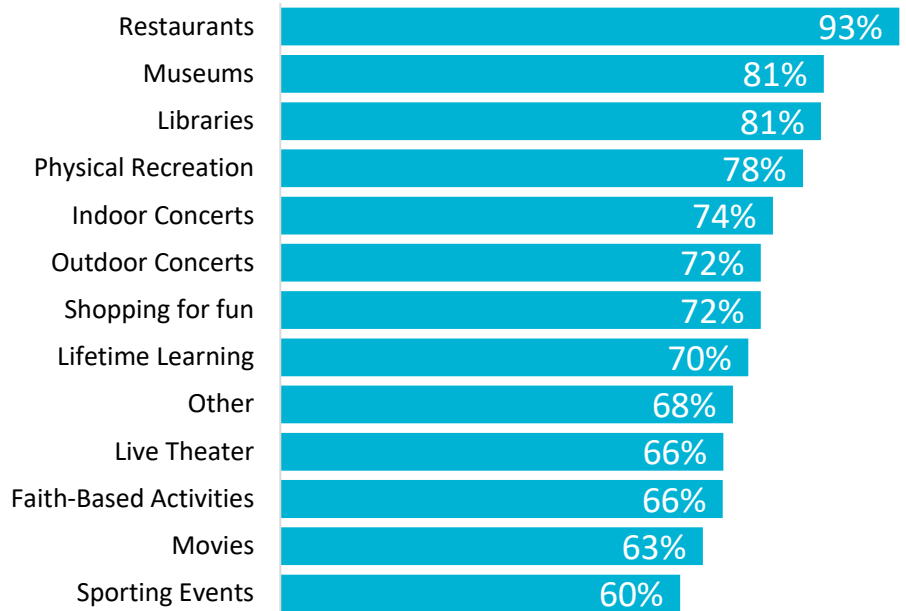
**Hardly Ever** socialize with friends or family, by age  
*Resident Survey*

Cuyahoga County residents between the ages of 50 and 64 are three times as likely as those over 75 to report that they hardly ever socialize with friends or family. This younger group is six times more likely than residents between the ages of 65 and 74 to hardly ever socialize. Members of this age group may still be working and have less time to socialize than those who are older.

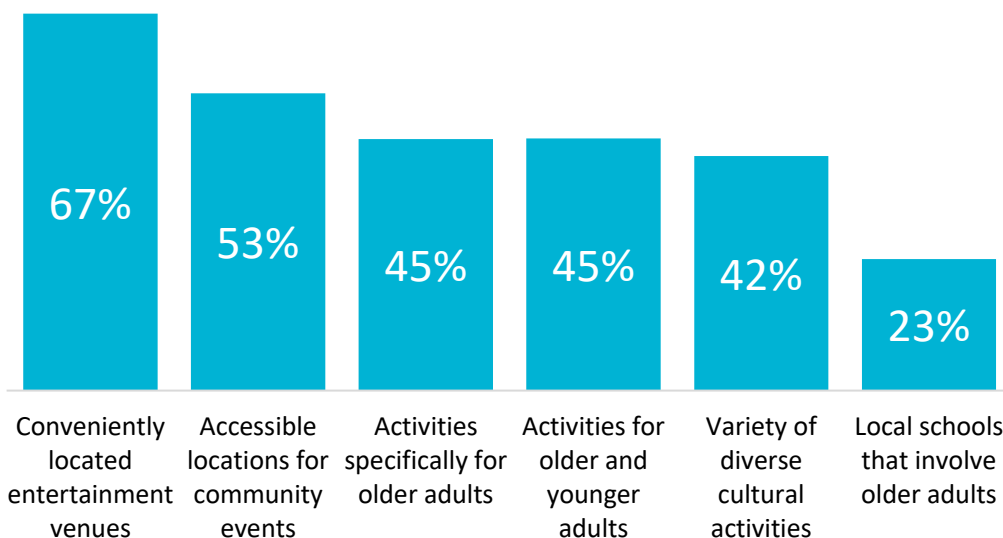


When asked about what type of activities and events residents are interested in participating, the most commonly selected activity was going out to eat at restaurants. Visiting museums and libraries were also a popular activity as was engaging in physical recreation. Less popular activities were attending sporting events, movies and faith-based activities. Agencies or groups that organize events for older adults may find higher participation rates by selecting the types of activities where the interest of older adults in Cuyahoga County lies.

### Interest in participating in common activities *Resident Survey*



### Do you have access to the following when participating in activities? *Resident Survey*

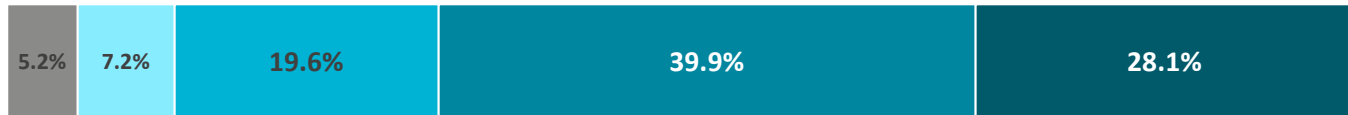


In addition to interest, access is a key factor in how older adults decide to spend their time. Two thirds of survey respondents indicated that entertainment venues were conveniently located while just over half felt that community events were in accessible locations. Less than half of residents report having access to activities designed specifically for them, intergenerational events or diversity within cultural activities. Enhancing access and activities designed with older adults in mind is likely to improve participation among older adults.

"It was easy to go to social events in my community"

Senior Day Survey

■ Completely disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Completely agree



### Focus Group Findings

Participants had a wide variety of things that they enjoy doing for fun, including: volunteering, going on bus trips provided in the community, working part-time, attending church, exercising, playing games, going to local parks, the zoo, libraries, craft shows, attending shows at Playhouse Square or Cain Park, and spending time with friends. However, some felt that there are not enough options for entertainment in their community, and others would like to see a central community directory of events in their area. Still some other residents have found that programming has changed for some events since the pandemic. For example, transportation was no longer offered for Severance Hall events. Participants shared that they felt additional transportation options could help to increase connection across communities. They stated this would allow residents to go to other places that they cannot always get to due to restrictions on current service areas offered in transportation programs.

Groups mentioned wanting to see more affordable options for entertainment or socialization, including more free options for exercise. One group shared an interest in seeing more creative options like a community dance. A common theme among focus group attendees was wanting to see a return to the frequency and variety of social activities that were available prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. They shared that while some activities had returned, they have not fully returned to pre-2020 levels.

There was a mixed response on whether individuals felt their community was connected. Things that helped communities feel connected included newsletters that inform them of events and activities to participate in. Social events were highlighted as necessary to bring people together. Older adults expressed wanting to see opportunities for neighboring communities to come together and cited the Senior Day event held in Cleveland as an example.

Participants suggested community centers, church, and work as recommendations of places to make new friends. Older adults who are part of the Asian community expressed that the closing of the Goodrich Gannet neighborhood center left their community without a meeting place. They suggested repurposing a shuttered supermarket near the closed neighborhood center into a gathering place for the Asian older adult community.

# Respect & Social Inclusion

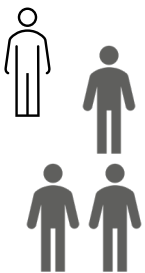


## Respect and Social Inclusion *Attributes of a livable community*

- Respectful and inclusive services
- Positive public images of aging
- Intergenerational and family interactions
- Opportunities for lifelong learning
- Community Inclusion
- Economic Inclusion

### **Key Findings in Cuyahoga County**

- Residents aged 75 and older report feeling more respected than those in younger age groups
- Having knowledge and awareness of community events is the top way to feel connected to community
- Lower income residents are significantly more likely to feel disconnected to their communities.



---

## **One in Four**

*older Cuyahoga County residents feels disconnected from their community*

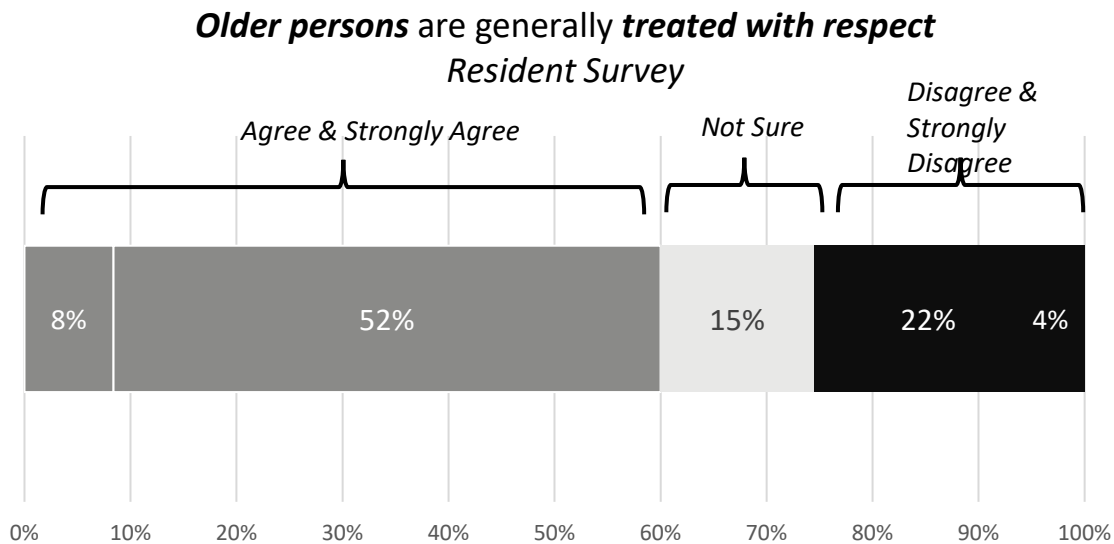
---

*Older adults feel respected when younger residents include them in activities and consider their needs when planning community events.*



## Respect

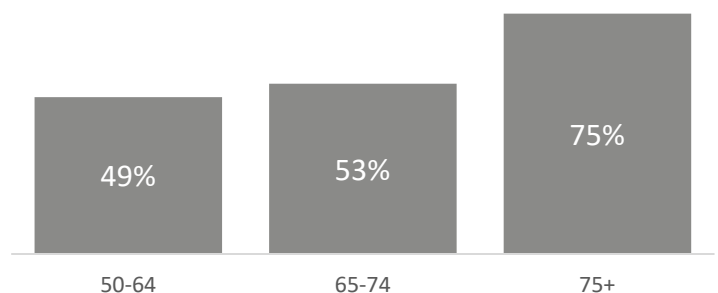
Being treated respectfully by members of their community strengthens older adults' desire to remain active within that community. When asked in focus groups, one-way residents identified being treated respectfully as being noticed and cared for by their neighbors. A few people shared that it felt good to have people around them who waved, smiled or stopped by to chat when seeing them in the neighborhood. Others shared that being treated with respect meant younger people held doors for them or offering up seats and spoken to in a polite manner. Not being rushed and treated kindly in places of business was also a way people felt respected. Sixty percent of all survey takers agreed or strongly agreed that older persons are generally treated with respect. Fifteen percent were not sure if that was true and 26 percent do not feel older persons are treated respectfully.



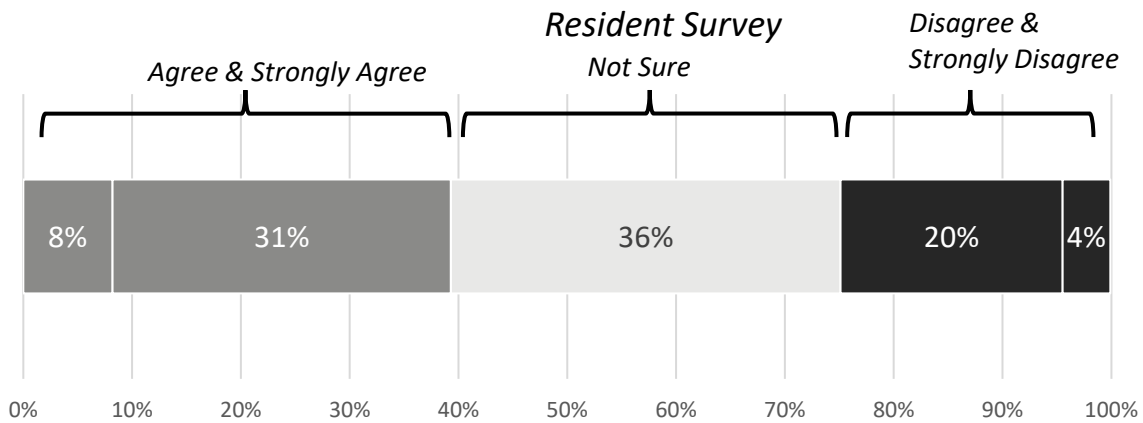
While there is no difference among race or income in whether older adults felt respected, there is a significant difference among younger and older residents. Residents over the age of seventy-five were significantly more likely to agree or strongly agree that older adults are treated with respect. Seventy-five percent of this age group agreed with the statement where only 49 percent of those aged 50-64 and 53 percent of those aged 65-74 agreed with the statement. This is likely a reflection of more respect being offered to those who visibly appear older. As people age and their physical abilities and appearance change to reflect what society traditionally considers an “elder” more deference and kindness are expressed from younger members of the community.

## Older adults are treated with respect by age

Agree & Strongly Agree  
Resident Survey

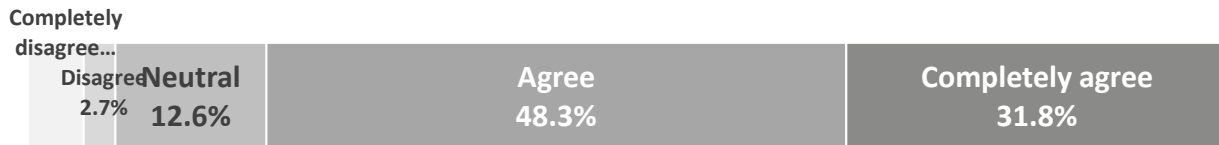


**People with disabilities are generally treated with respect**



Fewer people are sure if people with disabilities are treated with respect but about the same number who do not think older persons are treated respectfully also believe people with disabilities are not treated respectfully.

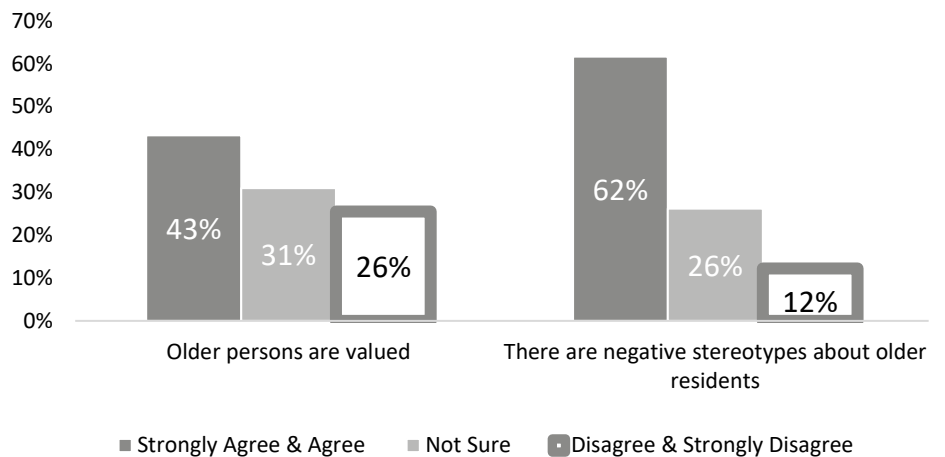
**"I feel respected by the people in my community"**  
*Cleveland Senior Day Survey*



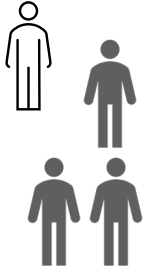
Residents of Cleveland who attended Cleveland Senior Day reported a high rate of feeling respected by people in their community. Eighty percent of Cleveland residents agreed or completely agreed that they felt respected. Twelve percent had a neutral feeling about being respected and just seven percent do not feel respected.

About two thirds of residents believe negative stereotypes of older adults exist in the community and 43 percent feel that older adults are valued in Cuyahoga County.

**Values & Stereotypes**  
*Resident Survey*

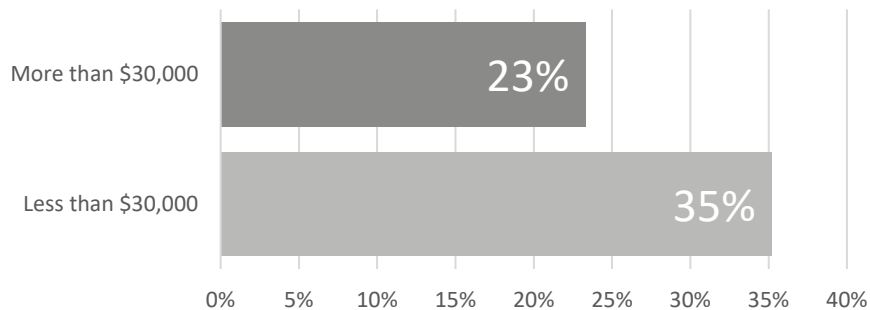


## Community Connection



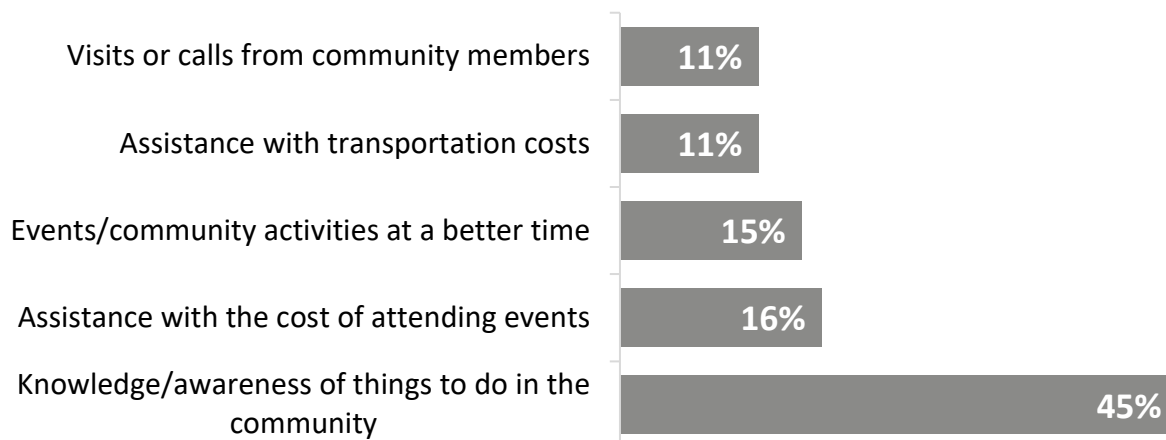
One in four residents feels disconnected from their community and another 15 percent are not sure if they feel disconnected. No significant difference in feelings of disconnection exists between race or age groups, however those who earn less than \$30,000 a year feel more disconnected from the community than their peers who earn more than \$30,000 a year. Twelve percent more of the lower income group feel disconnected from their communities than the higher income group.

**Feeling disconnected** from community  
**by Income**  
Strongly Agree & Agree



When asked what would make them feel more connected to their community the top answer from older residents of Cuyahoga County was having more knowledge and awareness of things to do in the community. Knowing what is happening with adequate notice allows residents to make plans to attend events. Assistance with cost and having events at better times were also identified as ways to help strengthen community connections.

### What would **make you feel more connected** to your community? *Resident Survey*

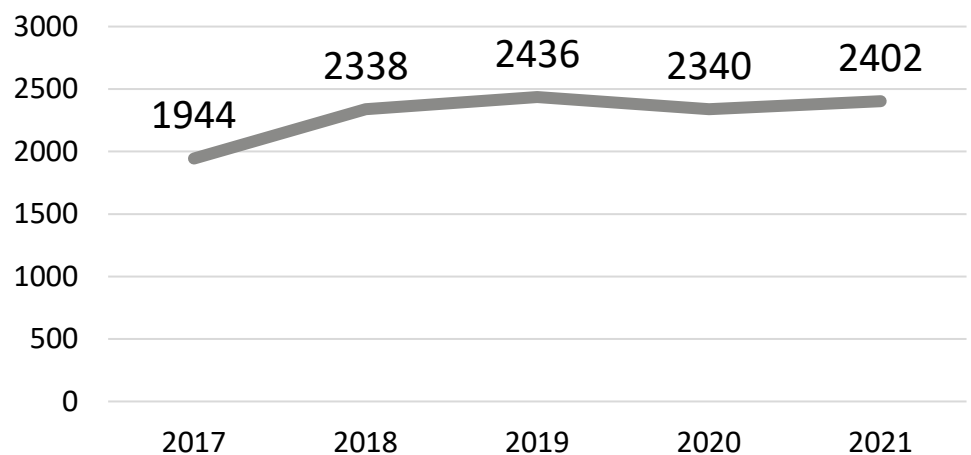


## **Elder Abuse**

A very small portion of survey takers, four percent, reported they had experienced elder abuse. Of those who had experienced abuse, the top three most reported experiences were; someone who was supposed to be helping me with my needs did not, someone has tried to control, threaten, humiliate or isolate me from others and someone tricked me into spending money I didn't want to spend.

The Cuyahoga County Department of Senior and Adult Services manages Adult Protective Services (APS) for the county which investigates claims of elder abuse. The number of unduplicated clients increased by nearly 400 cases from 2017 to 2018. Since that increase, the count has remained fairly steady between 2,300 and 2,400 clients each year. Of these clients, 45 percent of the allegations were related to self-neglect, 19 percent each to neglect and exploitation and 17 percent were related to abuse.

Adult Protective Service Clients  
Department of Senior and Adult Services  
2017-2022



## **Open Ended Questions**

*What do you hope changes about where you live?*

Respondents were concerned with what is felt like disrespectful you in their neighborhood. But of interest, multiple respondents also reported wishing they saw more children in their neighborhoods.

There was some frustration with local governments, with some feeling like local government is corrupt, or not doing enough for older adults. Some of these respondents wished there were more assistance programs for older adults, or just stuff for older adults to do in general.

## **Focus Group Findings**

Residents had various feelings on whether older adults are respected in communities in Cuyahoga County. Many stated that they feel more respected when younger generations show consideration and when activities and services are available for them. Many felt older adults were a target for scams. There was also an expressed desire to be more included in communities, and to have the ability to be able to be independent.

Some communities also want to see better security and safety measures put in place for older adults because they are often vulnerable to scams and other crimes, as well as familial abuse. One group shared that they would like to see programming supports in place for seniors who have experienced family abuse, especially because they may often be too fearful to reach out for helpful or do not want to get their family members in trouble.

# Work & Civic Engagement



## Work and Civic Engagement *Attributes of a livable community*

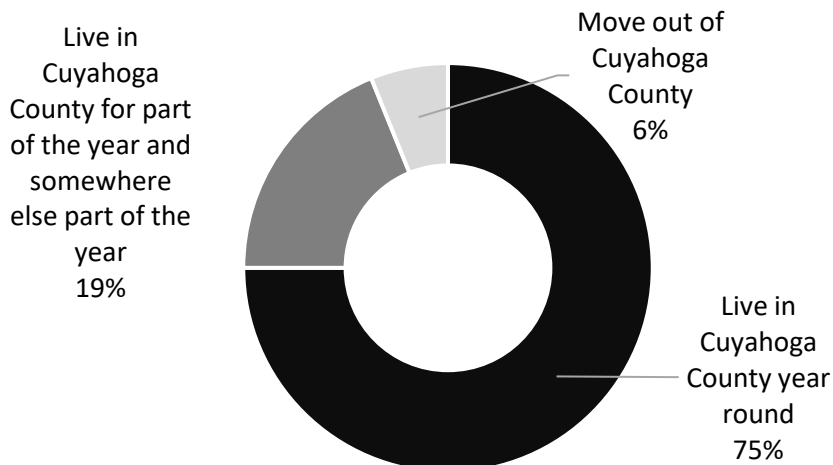
- Variety of volunteer options
- Well-organized and accessible volunteer opportunities
- Range of employment opportunities
- Job training programs for older adults
- Accessible work and volunteer spaces
- Opportunities for civic participation
- Value older adult contributions
- Support for entrepreneurship
- Fair pay

### **Key Findings in Cuyahoga County**

- Older adults seeking work in Cuyahoga County face barriers related to ageism and technology
- Most residents plan to stay in Cuyahoga part or full time after they retire
- Voting accessibility is impacted by race and income.

Percent who plan to **live in Cuyahoga upon retirement**

*Resident Survey*



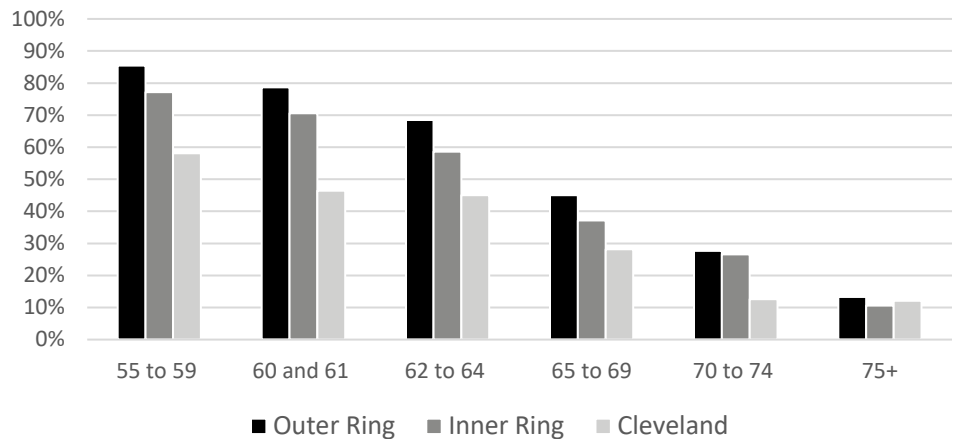
*In focus groups some older adults felt that politicians often engage their community, but do not make changes*

## Labor Force Participation

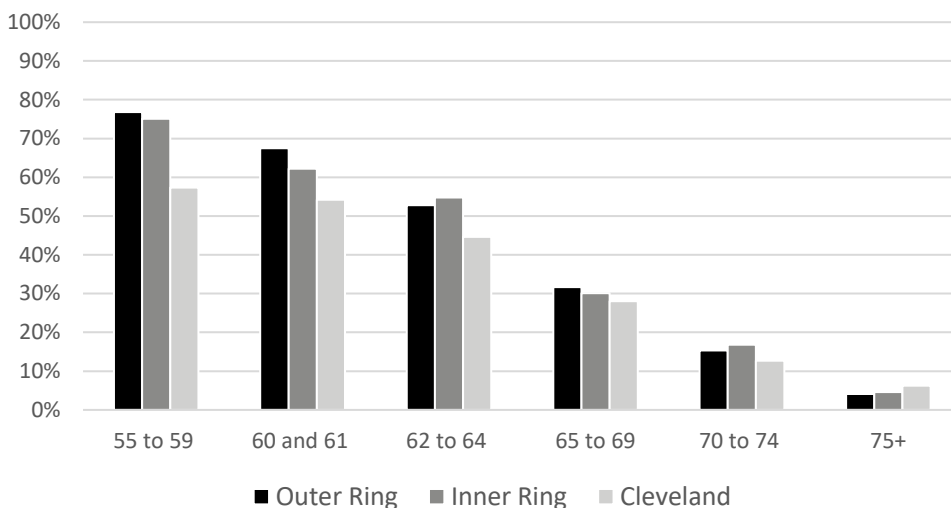
As people age, their relationship to employment often changes. For many this means leaving the labor force and transitioning the time they once spent working for income into other activities including volunteering and other civic minded engagements. Labor force participation data from the U.S. Census includes individuals who are working or seeking work; it therefore includes both the employed and unemployed. Those not counted in the labor force are individuals who are not working and not seeking work. In Cuyahoga County, labor force participation decreases with age at a steady rate.

Across all age groups, males have a higher labor force participation rate than females. For males in all age groups except those aged 75 and older, outer ring residents have a higher labor force participation rate, followed by inner ring residents and Cleveland residents. Among the oldest male group, slightly more Cleveland residents are in the labor force compared to the inner ring residents.

**Male Labor Force Participation in Cuyahoga County**  
U.S. Census



**Female Labor Force Participation in Cuyahoga County**  
U.S. Census



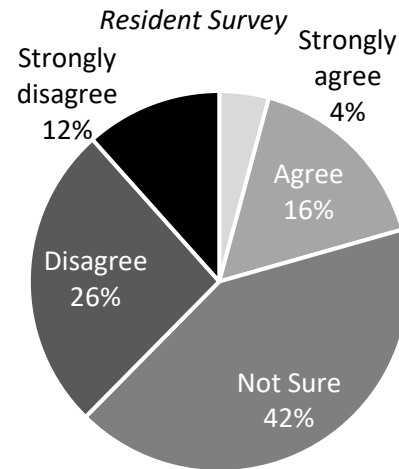
Among females in Cuyahoga County, labor force participation rate is highest among the outer ring, followed by inner ring and Cleveland for females between the ages of 55 and 61 and between 65 and 69. More women are working in the inner ring communities between the ages of 62 and 64 and ages 70 to 74. Among the oldest group, those aged 75 and over, Cleveland female residents have the highest rate of participation in the labor force with six percent working or actively looking for work.

## Employment Opportunities

Among survey takers, about ten percent are looking for work, some are currently unemployed and seeking work and others are retired and seeking work. Just 20 percent of residents agreed or strongly agreed that jobs are equally as available for older residents as younger residents. While 43 percent are not sure, 38 percent disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. Those seeking work were asked to identify the barriers they experience while seeking employment. The most common barrier people reported

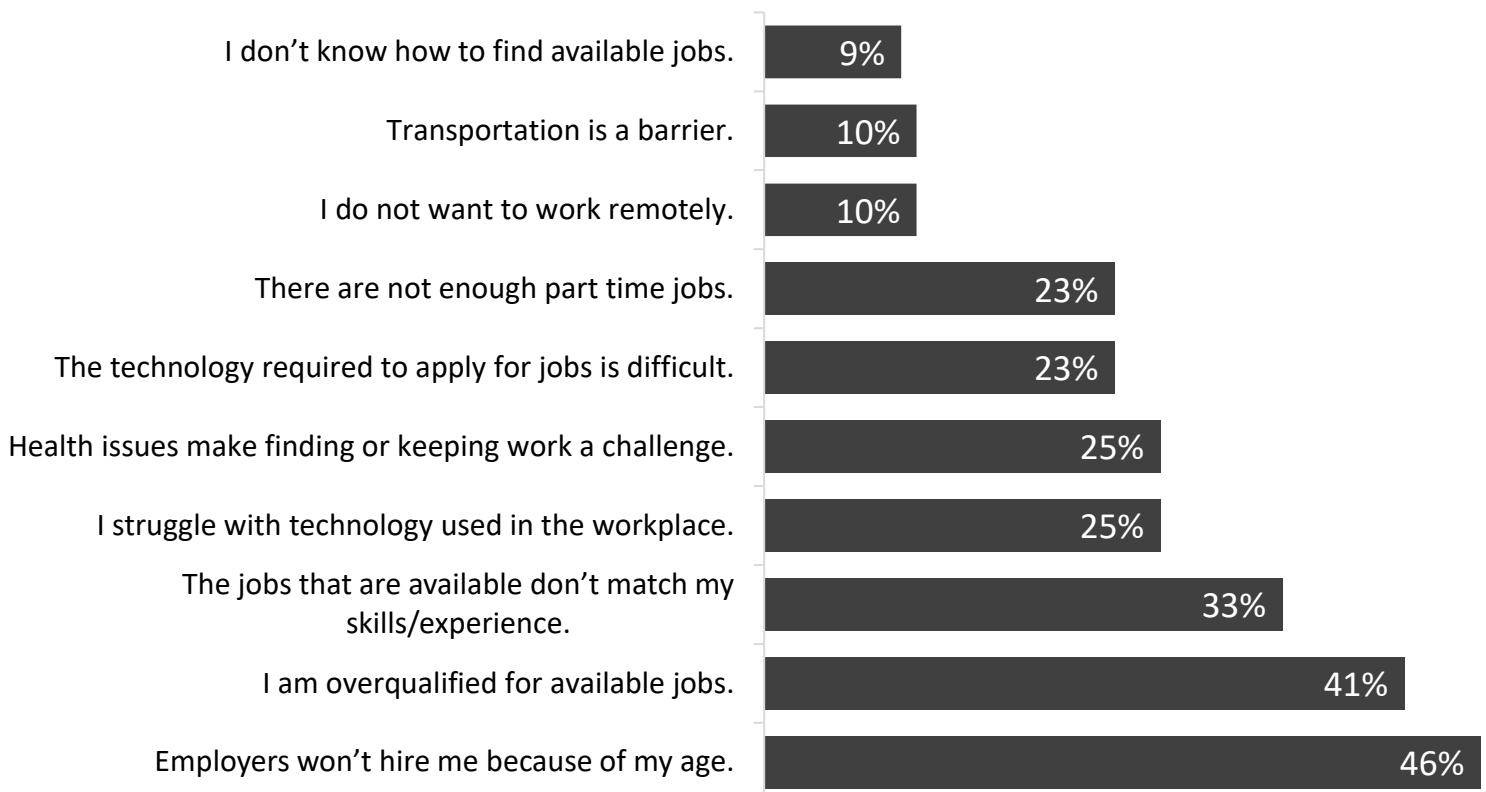
experiencing was not being hired due to their age. Forty one percent found that they were overqualified for available jobs and a third reported that available jobs do not match their skills or experience. Between 23-25% indicated had challenges with technology, their health or too few part-time jobs. Ten percent find transportation to be a barrier and the same percent are not interested in working remotely. Ten percent find transportation to be a barrier and the same percent are not interested in working remotely. Nine percent of respondents do not know how to find available jobs.

Do you agree that **jobs are equally available for older adults** as for younger people?



## Experiences when seeking employment

*Resident Survey*



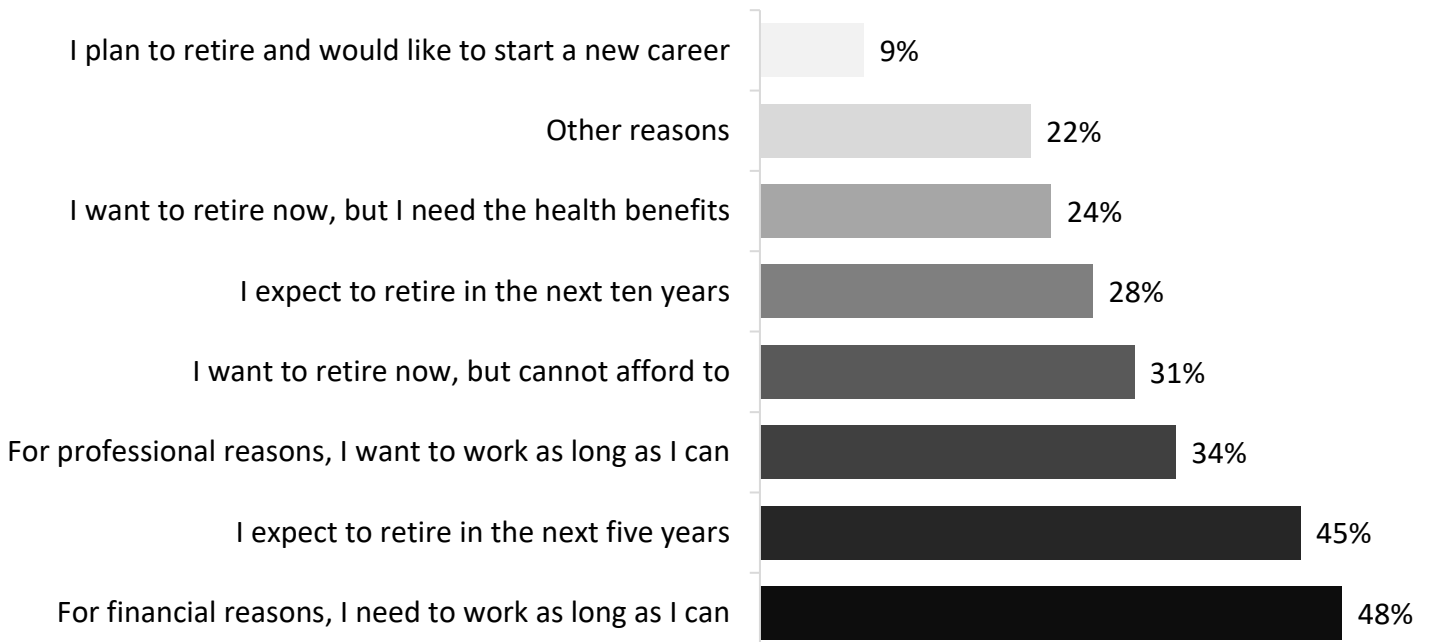
## Employment Supports

A small portion of respondents report having access to employment supports that could assist them in finding employment. Just 15 percent have access to professional networking opportunities for older adults. Slightly more, 18 percent, can get help with resume writing, online applications and interview practice. Nineteen percent are aware of jobs that are a good fit for their skills and abilities. The employment support that had the highest rated access among older residents was knowing about places to find out about available jobs.

Percent who have access to employment supports  
*Resident Survey*



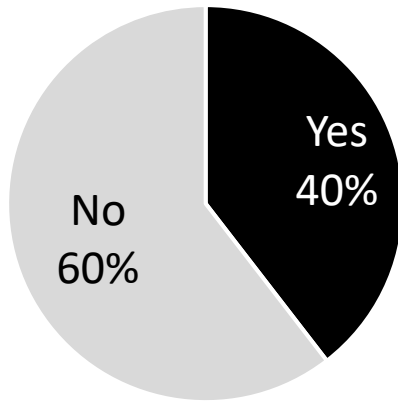
What are your plans for retirement?  
*Resident Survey*



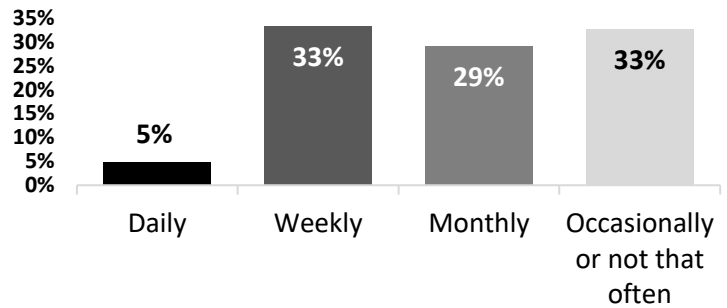


## Volunteerism

Do you **volunteer**?  
Resident Survey

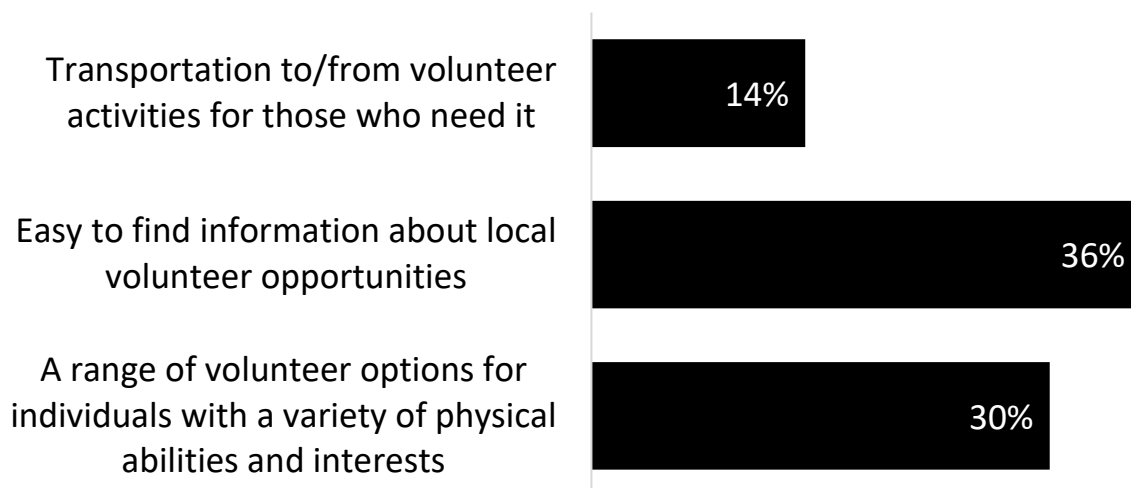


Frequency of volunteering  
Resident Survey



Volunteering is often an effective way to stay connected to one's community. It allows for a person to provide value to their community and is often done with other people which creates and strengthens social ties. Forty percent of older adult residents who responded to the survey indicate they volunteer. Of that group, five percent volunteer daily, 33 percent volunteer weekly, 29 percent volunteer monthly and a third volunteer occasionally. Very few residents, just 14 percent, have access to transportation to and from volunteer activities. Thirty percent report that a range of volunteer options exists within their communities and 36 percent say they have easy to find information about local volunteer opportunities.

Percent who have access to volunteer support  
Resident Survey

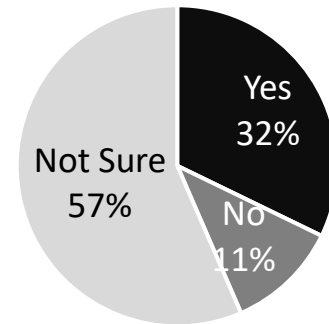


## Civic Engagement

Thirty-two percent of older adults living in Cuyahoga indicated they had opportunities for older adults to participate in decision making bodies such as community councils or committees. Eleven percent did not have those opportunities and more than half were not sure if those type of opportunities exist. There were no significant differences in having access to opportunities related to decision making by race, age or income. While 64 percent of residents were not sure if they had opportunities to discuss issues that impact older adults, 21 percent said they did have access to such opportunities.

## Do you have access to opportunities for older adults to participate in decision making bodies?

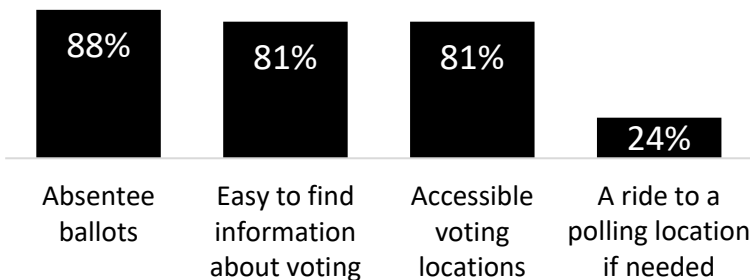
*Resident Survey*



## Voting

### Percent that have **access to voting** activities

*Resident Survey*

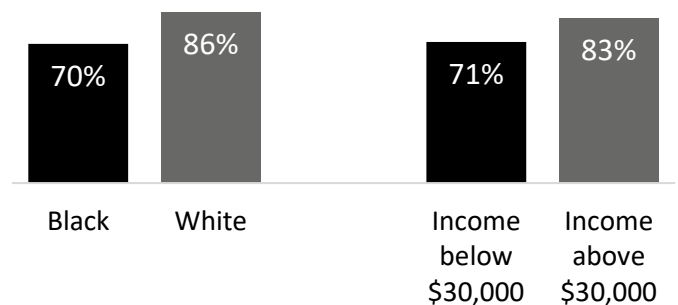


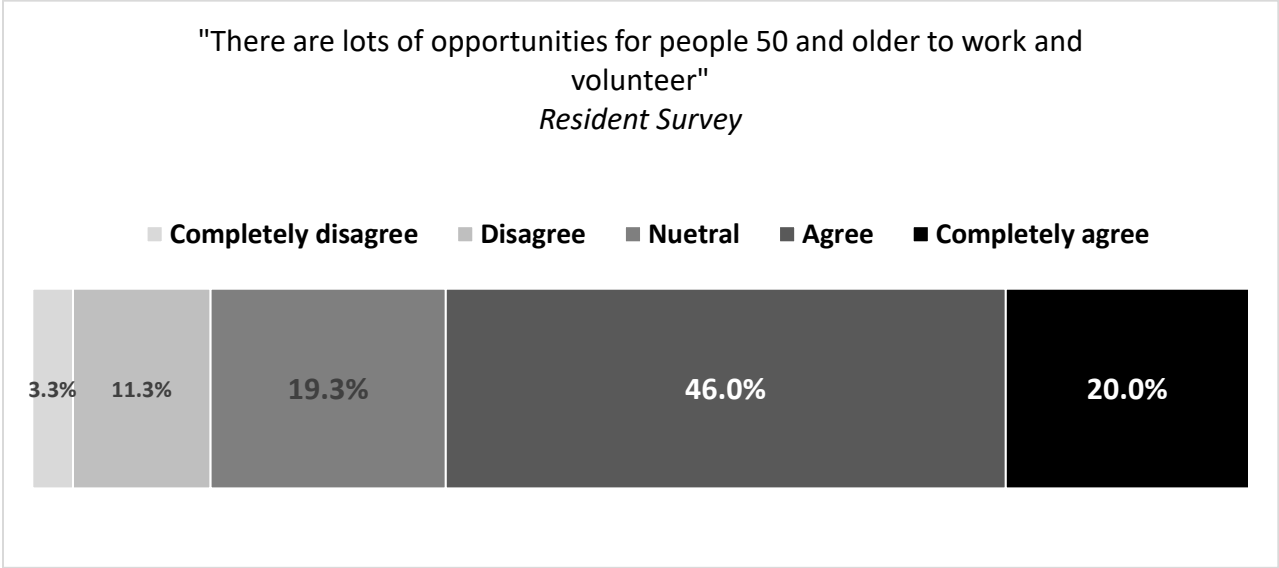
Generally speaking, activities related to voting are accessible to the community. Eighty-eight percent have access to absentee ballots and 81 percent report access to information about voting and accessible voting locations. The accessibility exception when it comes to voting is related to transportation. Under a quarter of residents indicated they would have a ride to a polling location if need.

There is no significant difference among race, age or income when it comes to accessing information about voting. There is however, a significant difference by both race and income when considering accessible voting locations. Significantly greater proportion of white residents and higher income residents have accessible voting locations. Regarding absentee ballots, a significantly lower percentage of Black residents (83%) report having access compared to white residents (91%).

### **Accessible voting** locations by race and income

*Resident Survey*





**Focus Group Findings**

Overall, older adults felt it was difficult to obtain employment due to age, and that available options were not a good match for their skillset or availability. The National Caucus and Center on Black Aging (NCBA) and Encore Employment Enterprise were cited as options for seniors to find employment.

Participants had mixed responses about whether older adults were included in decision-making in the community. Some shared positive remarks about their local mayor, while others felt that politicians often engage their community, but do not make changes, thereafter.

Some shared that they enjoy the opportunity to be involved in civic engagement through AARP.

# Communication & Information



## Communication & Information *Attributes of a livable community*

Universal system of communication that can reach all

Available in multiple languages

Coordinated information dissemination

Printed information uses large text and high contrast

Plain, easily understood language

Limited use of automated communication

Wide public access to high-speed internet

## *Key Findings in Cuyahoga County*

- Finding information on services is less accessible for Black residents and residents between ages of 50 and 64
- A majority of older residents have access to a computer and high-speed internet within their homes
- Communicating with friends and family is the most common use of the internet among older adults

## Top 3 ways Cuyahoga older adults find services



Phone



Websites



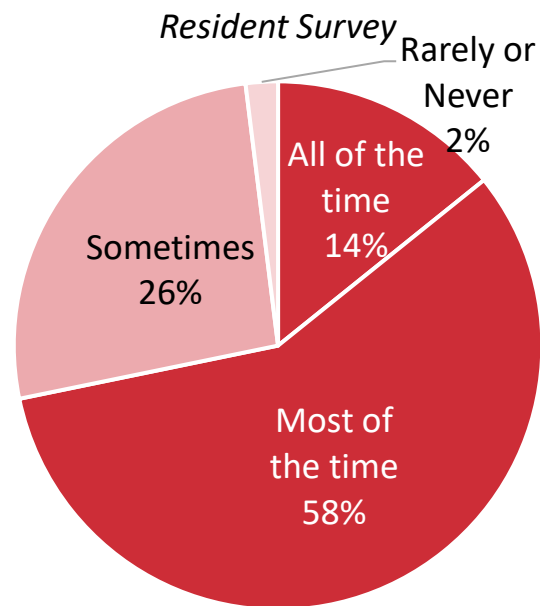
Word of Mouth

*In focus groups older adults shared that they would prefer to speak to a live person to get information rather than use the internet.*

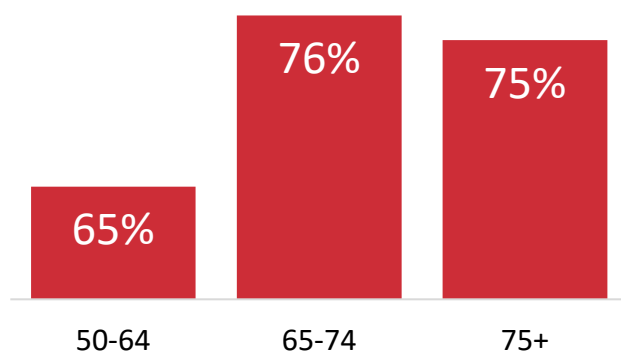
## Service Information

There is a vast array of programs and services available to older adults in Cuyahoga County and a strong interest among older adults to participate in community-based activities. Knowing when, where, and how to access programs and services reduces barriers to participation. Very few (2%) residents indicated they rarely or never are able to find the information on services they needed. Seventy-two percent of respondents were able to find the information all or most of the time and a quarter of respondents could find information sometimes. There is no significant difference between lower and higher-income older adults when it comes to finding information about services. There are, however, significant differences by both race and age. Interestingly, the youngest age group of survey takers reported more difficulty finding information on services. This may be a result of aging services being communicated in more traditional media. It could also be that the older groups have had additional years searching for the information they need and have discovered reliable sources. Black residents were less likely than their white peers to indicate they were always or mostly able to find information. Additional outreach efforts to Black residents, along with younger residents could increase their ability to find information.

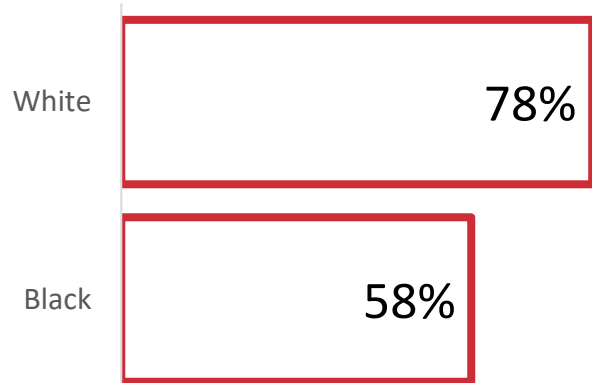
### Are you able to find the information on the services that you need?



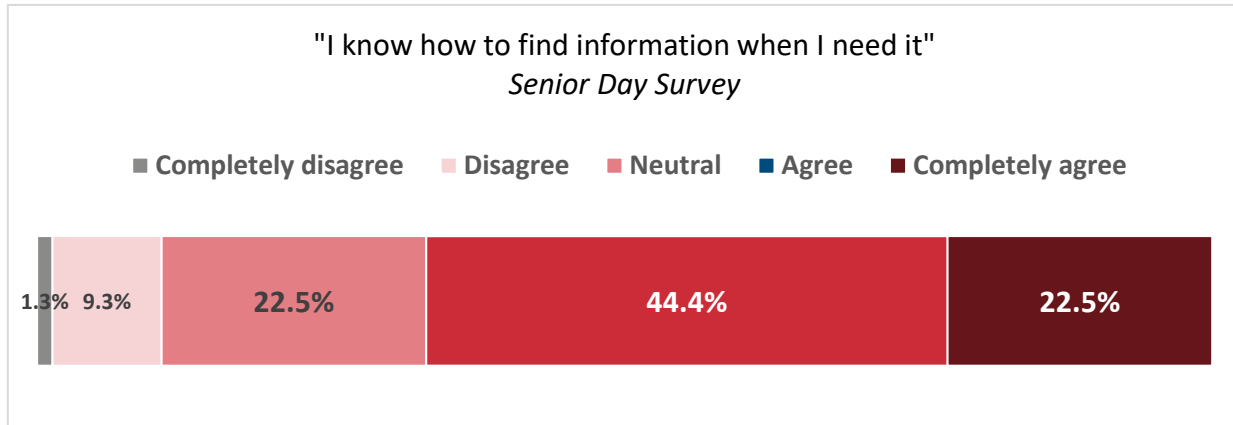
Able to **find information** on services by **age**  
*Resident Survey*



Able to **find information** on services by **race**  
*Resident Survey*



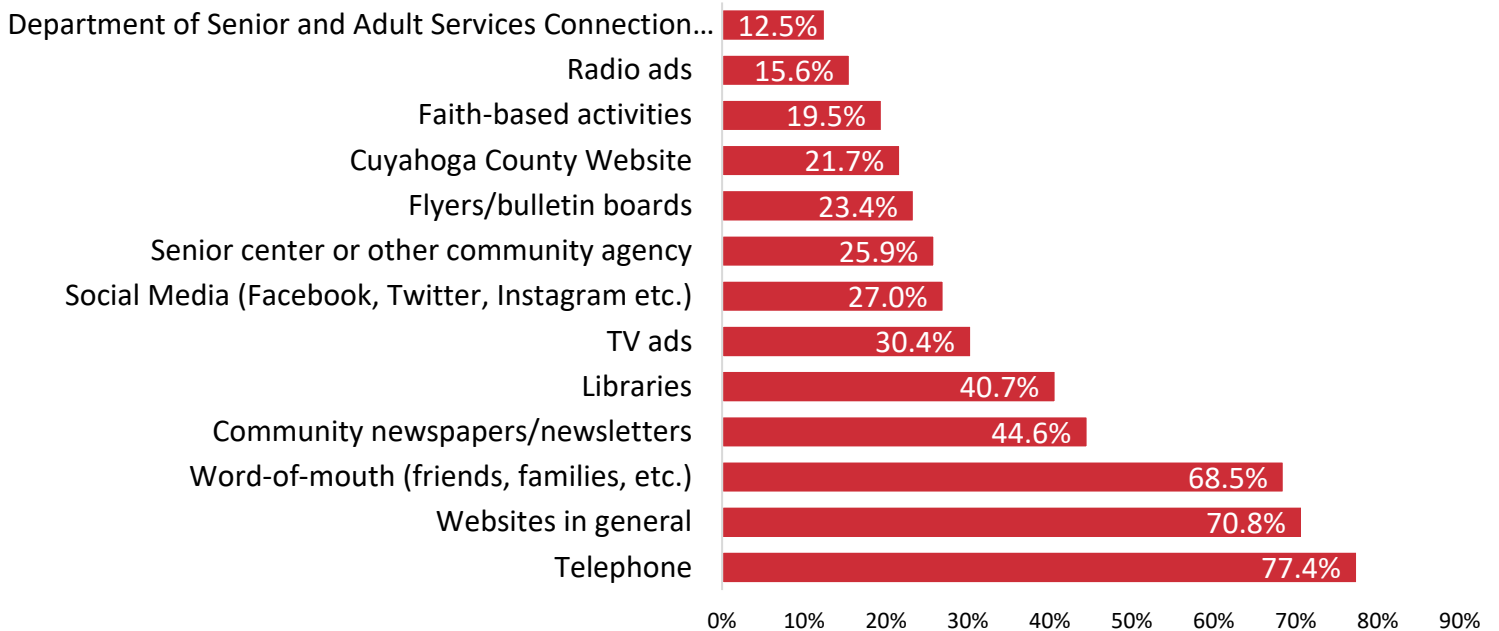
Cleveland older adults who attended Senior Day reported they were generally able to find the information they needed, with just ten percent unable to find information.



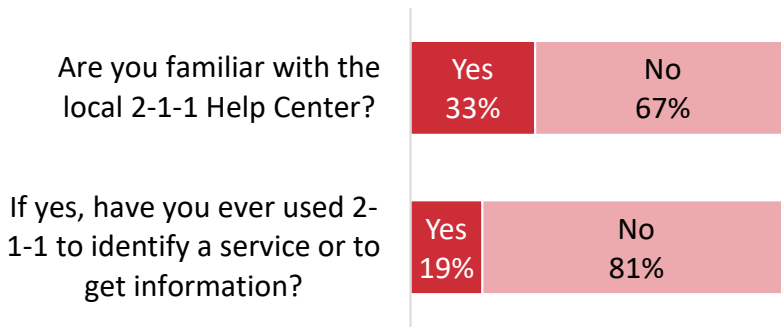
**Information Source**

The telephone is the most commonly selected method for identifying and accessing community services by older residents of Cuyahoga County. Using websites is the second most popular answer followed by word-of-mouth. Less popular answers including through the Department of Senior and Adults Services Connection Center, radio ads and through faith-based activities.

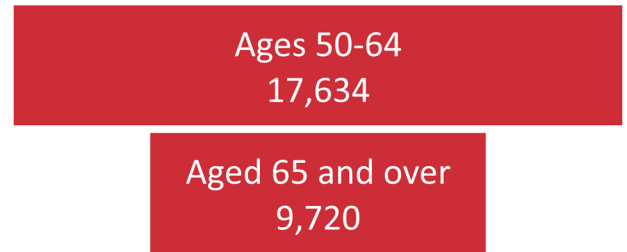
**What sources do you use to identify and access community services?**  
*Resident Survey*



## 2-1-1 Help Center Resident Survey



## Number of 211 requests by age group Cuyahoga County, 2021



United Way’s 2-1-1 help center provides an information and referral service available at no cost to any resident of Cuyahoga County. One in three older residents are familiar with 2-1-1 services and just under 20 percent indicated they had used 2-1-1 to identify service or get information. United Way tracks service request trends for their help center. In 2021, 32 percent of all calls came from people between the ages of fifty and sixty-four and 23 percent of calls are from those over the age of sixty-five. Nearly twice as many calls came from those between 50-64 compared to those over the age of 65. The top three requests of the younger age group were related to housing related costs; rent, electric and gas payment assistance. The older age group were most interested in assistance with vaccine information, electric service assistance and assistance with tax preparation.

Ages 50-64	
Rent Payment Assistance	18%
Electric Payment Assistance	17%
Gas Service Payment Assistance	16%
Food Pantries	13%
Tax Preparation Assistance	8%
Home Rental Listings	7%
Percentage of Income Utility Payment Plans	5%
Low Income/Subsidized Private Rental Housing	5%
Vaccine Information	5%
Food Stamps/SNAP	4%

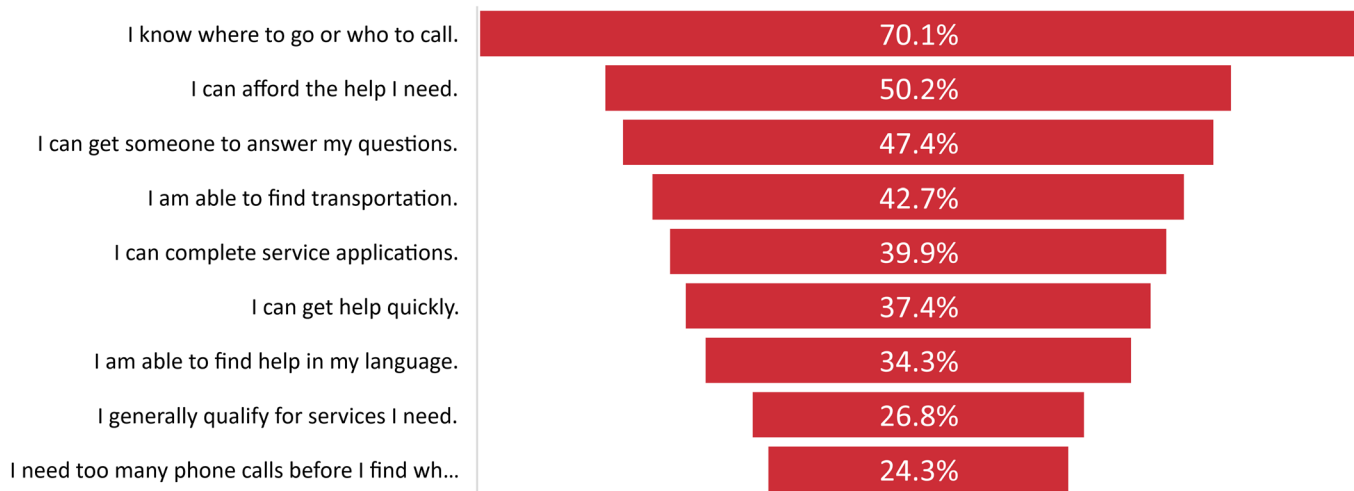
Aged 65 and over	
Vaccine Information	22%
Electric Service Payment Assistance	13%
Tax Preparation Assistance	13%
Gas Service Payment Assistance	12%
Rent Payment Assistance	8%
Food Pantries	8%
Home Rehabilitation Services	7%
Percentage of Income Utility Payment Plans	7%
Home Rehabilitation Grants	5%
Home Rental Listings	5%

## Consumer Experience and Access

When seeking help for issues related to health, financial or housing issues 70 percent of residents know where to go or who to call in order to find that help. Around half of residents can afford they help the need and slightly less than half are able to get someone to answer their questions. One in four residents find that it requires many phone calls to find the assistance they are looking for.

What is ***your experience when seeking help*** for health, financial, or housing issues?

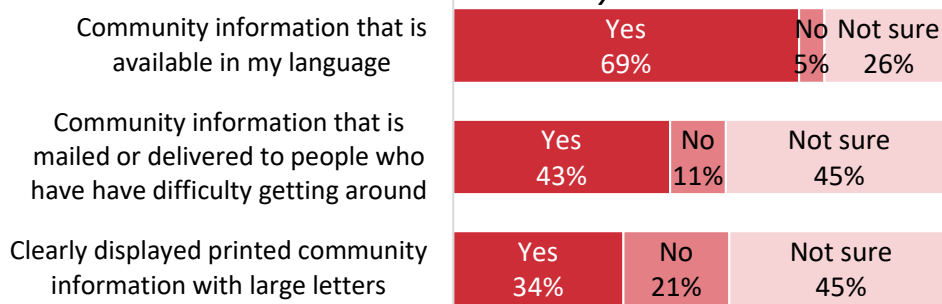
### Resident Survey



Having access to communication designed for ease of consumer access improves the usability of that method of communication. While sixty-nine percent of residents have access to information in their own language, five percent do not. Though a small percentage, it is likely quite difficult for that five percent of older adults in Cuyahoga County to find and use information. Slightly less than half of residents indicate community information is mailed or delivered to those who have difficulty getting around. Only a third of residents indicate access to clearly displayed community information in large print.

Where you live, ***do you have access*** to the following?

### Resident Survey



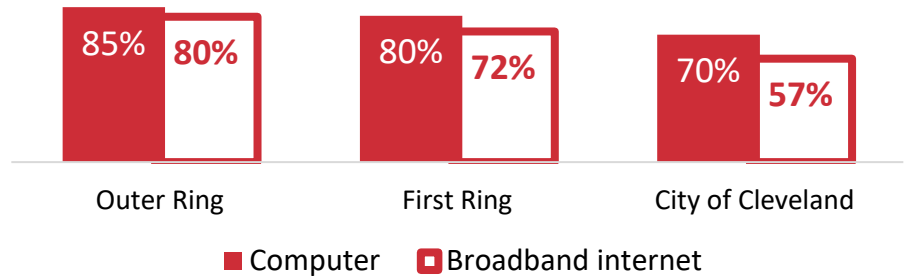


## Internet

Seventy-eight percent of survey respondents indicated they had access to free public computers and internet usage. According to data collected by the U.S. Census, 80 percent of Cuyahoga County residents over the age of sixty-five have a computer in their household and 71 percent have high-speed internet through a broadband subscription. There are, however, variations by geography. Inner ring suburbs mirror the county rates for both computer and internet access while the outer ring suburbs have higher rates of access and households in City of Cleveland have lower rates of access.

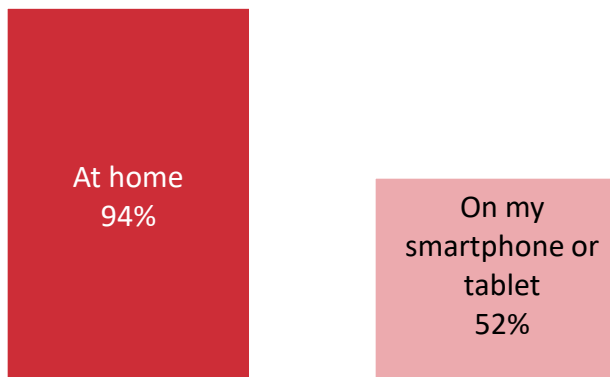
### Households with access to **computer & high speed internet**

Aged 65 and over  
U.S. Census



According to the resident survey results, access to the internet does not vary by age but it does vary by income and race. Overall 90 percent of residents indicated they had a way to access the internet on a regular basis. However Black residents (87%) are significantly less likely to have access to the internet compared to white residents (94%). Digital redlining has been well documented in the region and has been demonstrated to have a more adverse impact on Black residents of all ages. This pattern holds true with older Black residents as well. Similar disparities exist when comparing older adults households with incomes less than \$30,000 to households with incomes over \$30,000. Lower-income households are significantly less likely to have access to the internet.

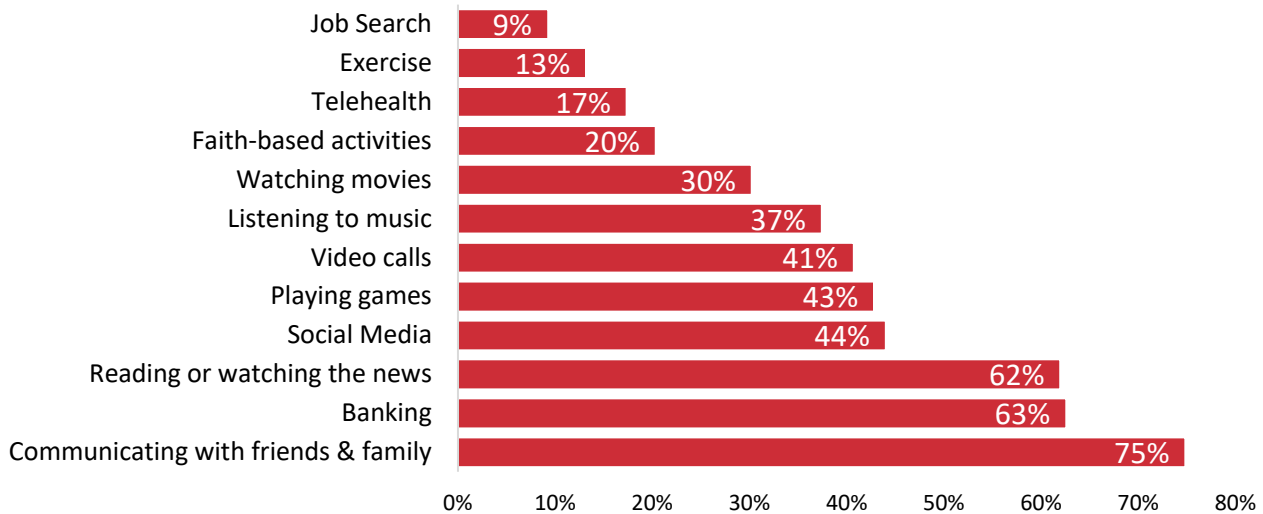
### If you have internet, where do you use it? Resident Survey



Most older residents indicate they use the internet at their home and more than half are using their smartphones or tablets to access the internet. Nearly ten percent use the library and less than one percent indicated they used the internet at a community or senior center. For just under half of residents, internet usage has not changed over the past two years. For seven percent, usage has decreased while it has increased for 44 percent of residents.

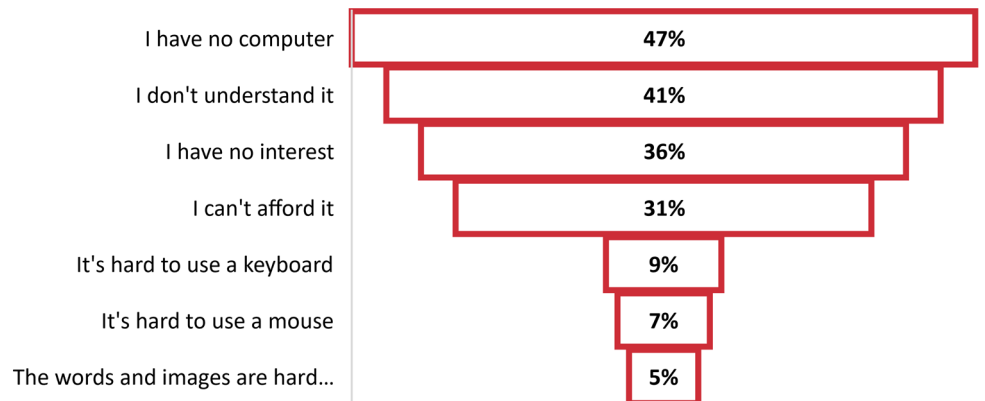
According to the resident survey, about 75 percent of older adults in the county are using the internet multiple times per day. About ten percent use the internet daily and ten percent use it a few times a week. Around two percent use it about once a week and four percent access the internet monthly or less. The most common use of the internet among older adults in the community is to communicate with family or friends. Banking and accessing news round out the second and third most popular uses of the internet. Less popular ways to use the internet by older Cuyahoga County residents include to search for jobs, to exercise and to access telehealth.

What do you use the internet for?  
*Resident Survey*



Of those who do not use the internet, 47 percent said they do not have a computer and 41 percent do not understand the internet. Just over a third have no interest in the internet and just under a third cannot afford internet service. Less than ten percent had accessibility issues; nine percent had difficulty using a keyboard, seven percent had difficulty using a mouse, and five percent find the words and images hard to see.

If you do not use the internet, why not?  
*Resident Survey*



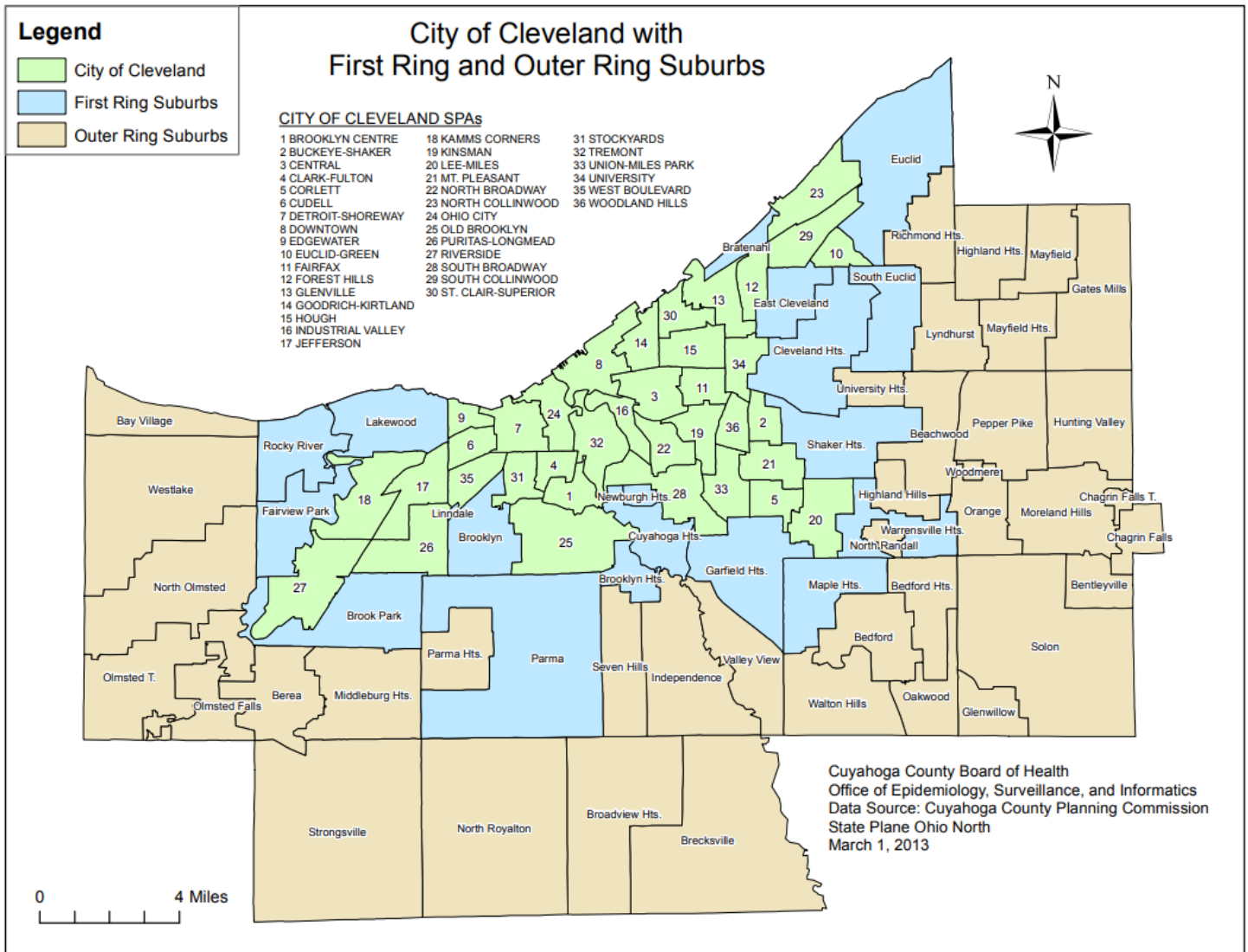
## ***Focus Group Findings***

Many older adults use the internet to some degree to stay in touch with loved ones through social media platforms like Facebook, play games, exercise, and engage in socialization through Zoom. Many others are still uncomfortable with using the internet. Some shared that computer classes are offered in their community, but that they are not interested in taking them. Additionally, some participants felt that technology is changing so fast that it becomes hard to keep up with, can be intimidating to use, and is often expensive. Some expressed confusion on how to access current programs offering free or low-cost internet or Wi-Fi.

Various methods are used to access local information and news, including: local newspaper, television, community newsletters, fliers, word-of-mouth, and social media. Generally, older adults shared that they would prefer to speak to a live person to get information rather than use the internet. However, some do use the internet for various things such as, banking, shopping, recipes, and entertainment.

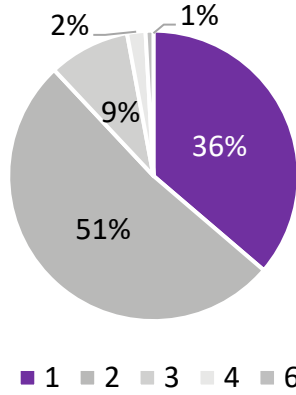
Many felt getting information on resources in Cuyahoga County is difficult and frustrating. Some also shared that there are options available, but that many older adults are not aware of services or how to find out about them. There were also concerns for older adults living with disabilities that make communicating over the telephone to get necessary information more difficult.

# Appendix: Inner and Outer Ring Community Map

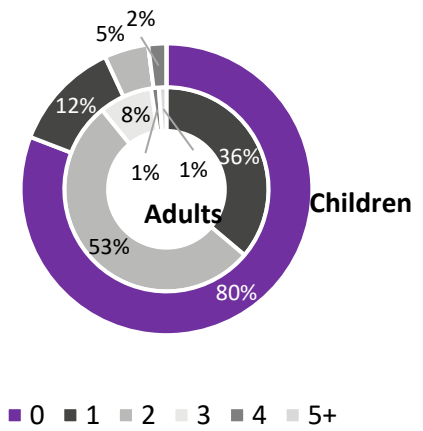


## Appendix: Survey Demographics

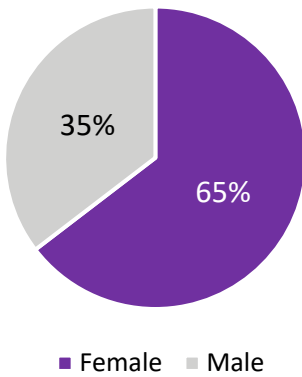
How many people live in your household?



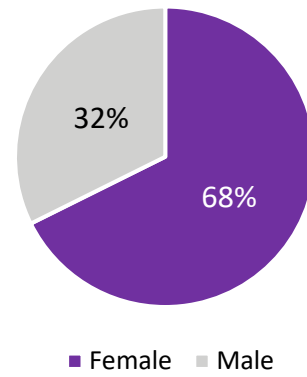
Adults and Children in Households



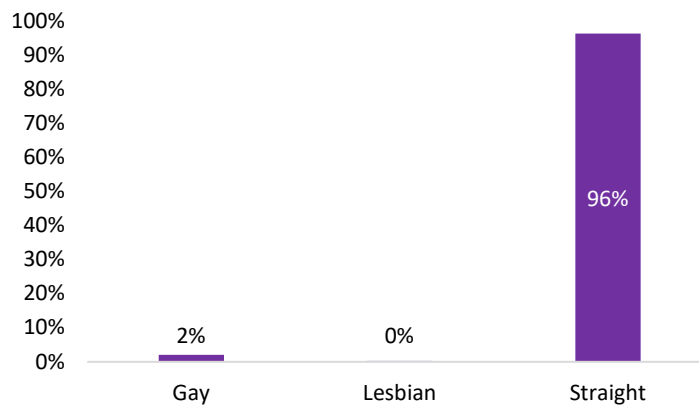
Gender Assigned at Birth



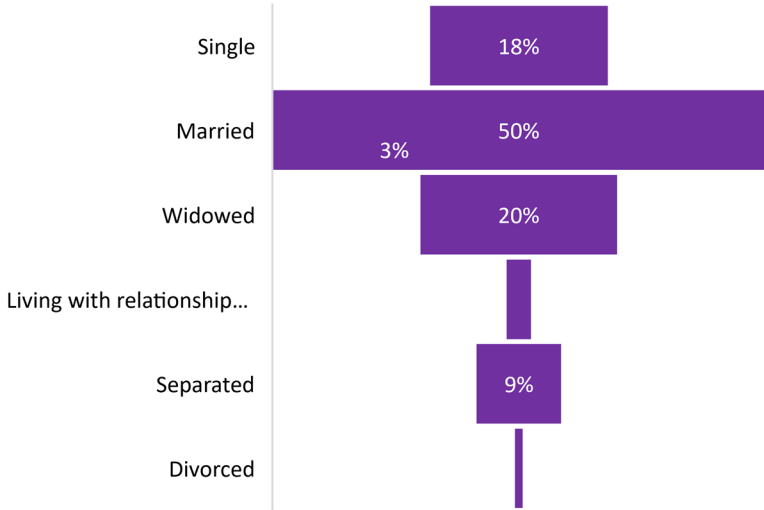
Current Gender Identity



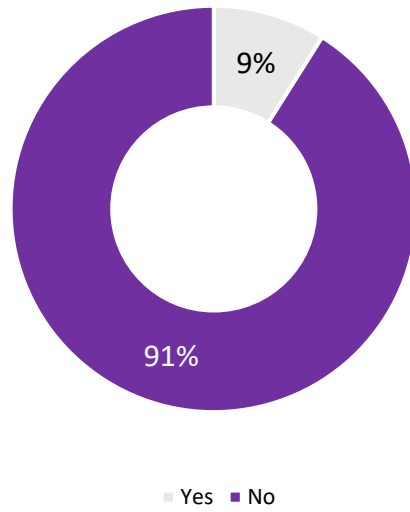
Sexual Orientation



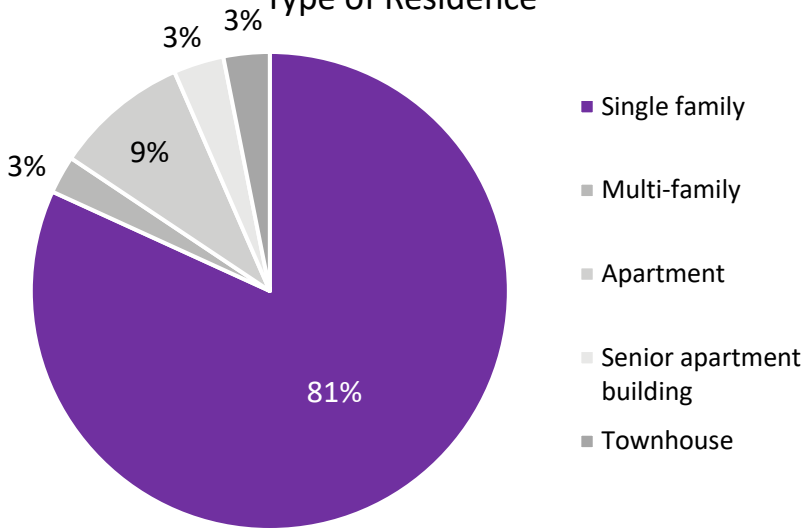
### Marital Status



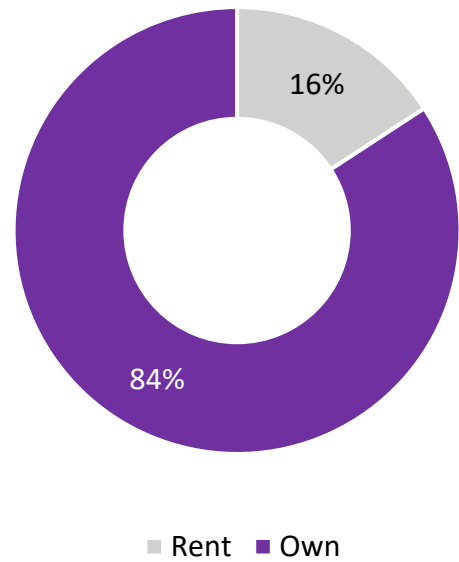
### Do you have a caregiver?



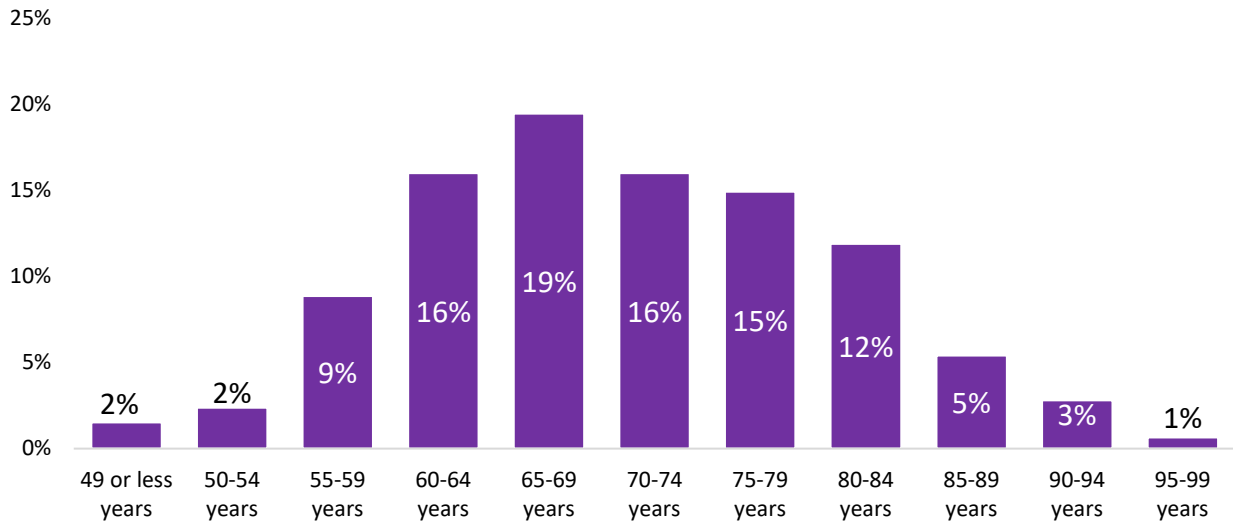
### Type of Residence



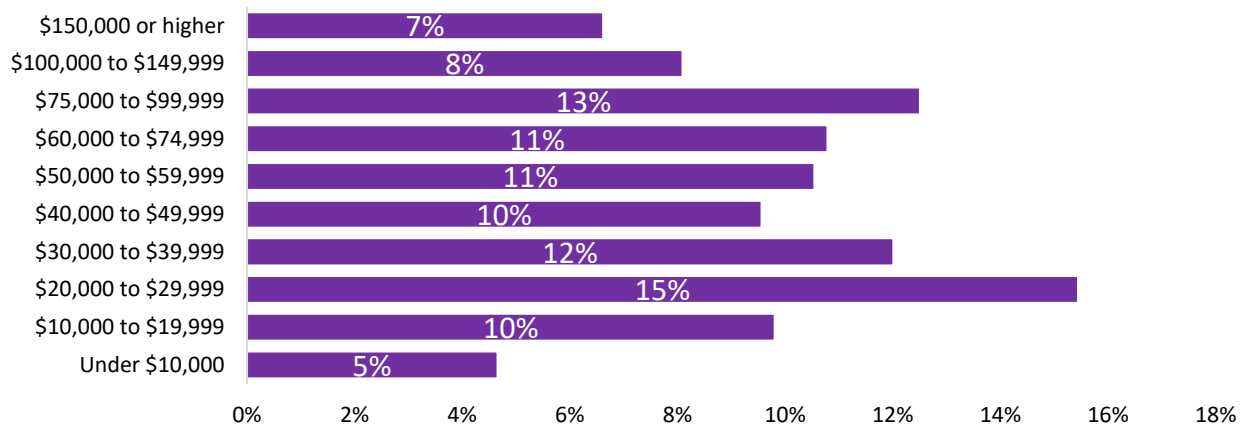
### Homeownership



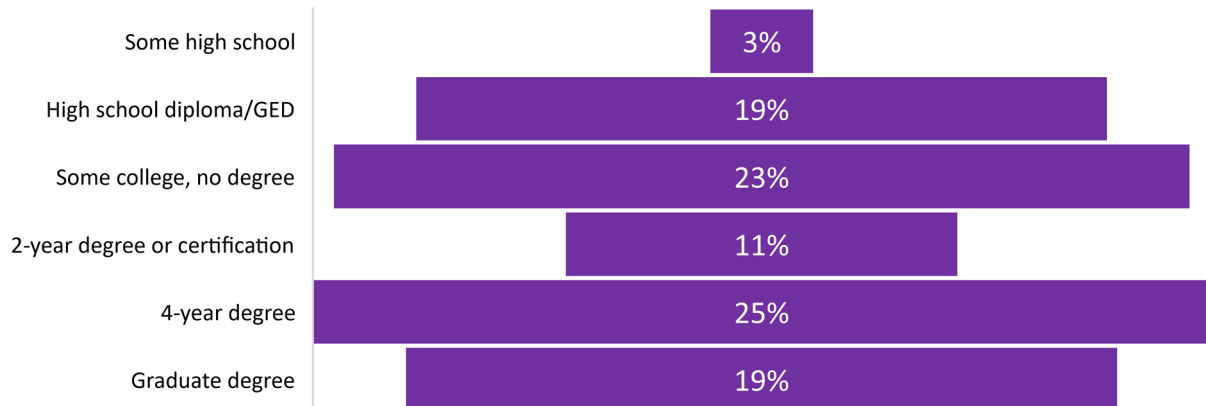
### Age

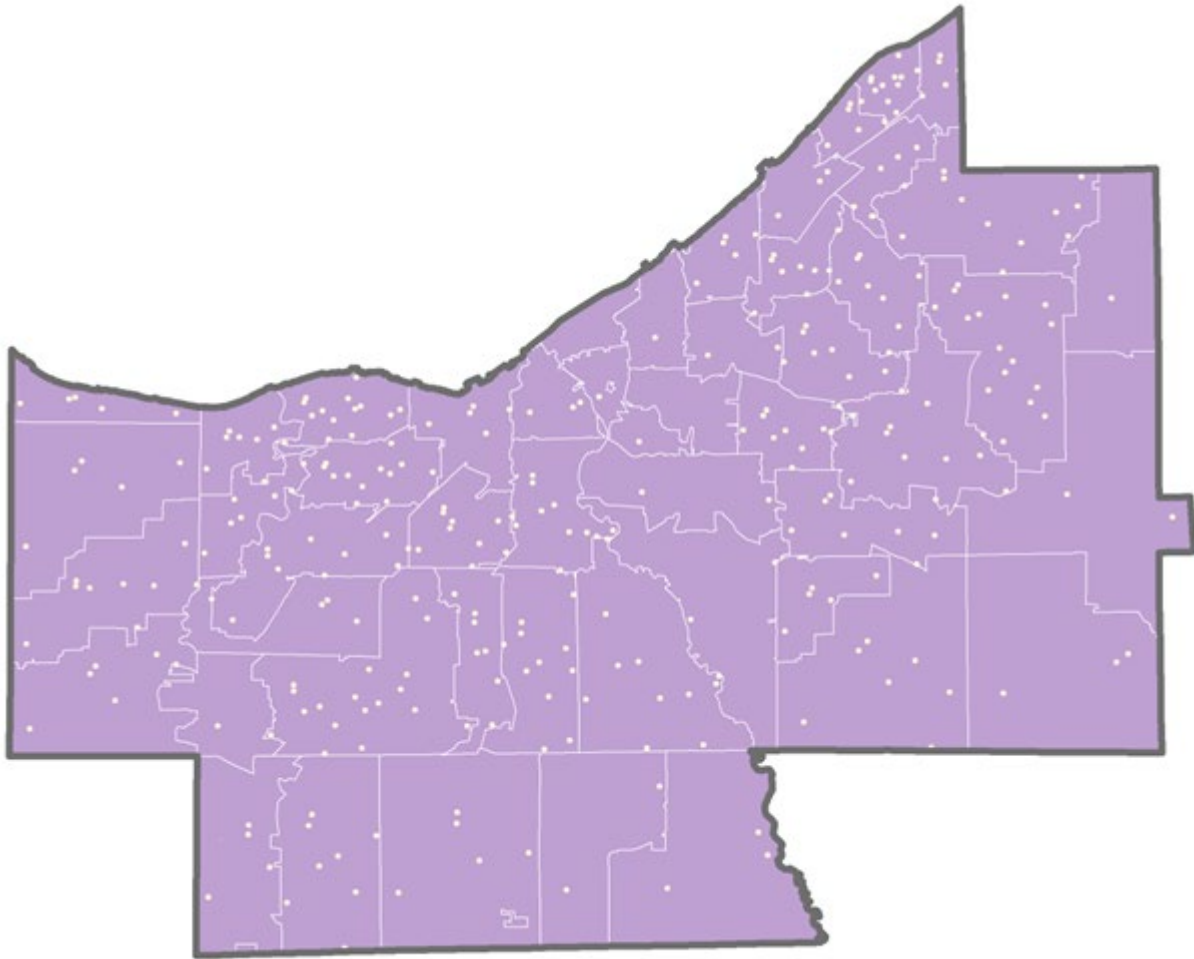


### Annual Household Income



### Educational Attainment





---

**Survey Respondents Mapped by ZIP Code**

1 Dot = 1 Participant

Note: Of the 478 respondents, 323 (67.6%) provided their ZIP Code. Locations are approximate by ZIP code and do not represent exact locations