VITAL VOICES

Issues That Impact Connecticut Adults Age 45 and Older

DOI: https://doi.org/10.26419/res.00351.102
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction to Vital Voices Surveys 3
- Health Questions 4
- Wealth Questions 12
- Livable Community Questions 18
- Methodology 22
- About AARP 24
- Contact 25
INTRODUCTION

There are currently about 117 million Americans who are 50 and older; this number will grow to 157 million by 2050. The 50 and older population is, and will continue to be, an important contributor to American society. Understanding the needs and opinions of older Americans is critical to ensuring they live longer and healthier lives.

Vital Voices is a new and exciting program of research undertaken by AARP. Through this research program we are launching a new initiative that will deliver vital, current, and state-specific data to 53 states on a rolling three-year schedule between 2019 and 2021. We are making this data available to the public to assist with the development of programs, products, and policies for older adults. This data will allow those in leadership positions to:

• Predict the need for a specific program or interest in a specific issue.
• Enhance program and product innovation and development.
• Track issues and attitudes over time to assess shifts in public opinion.
• Take action on critical advocacy issues.

Never before has AARP launched a research program of this size and with this much promise. We give it to you with the hope that it will have a great impact on the work that you do.
Survey Results for Connecticut-Health Questions

Issues That Impact Connecticut Adults Age 45 and Older
In addition to having adequate health insurance coverage, staying mentally sharp and physically healthy are extremely or very important to most Connecticut residents age 45+.

Important Healthcare Issues

- Staying mentally sharp: 96%
- Having adequate health insurance coverage: 96%
- Staying physically healthy: 96%
- Having Medicare benefits available to you in the future: 93%
- Paying for healthcare expenses: 87%
- Paying for prescription drugs: 83%

I1. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=702)
One-quarter (23%) of Connecticut residents age 45+ are currently providing unpaid help to an adult relative or friend.

Percent Providing Unpaid Adult Care

- Yes, 23%
- No, 77%

CARE1. Are you currently providing unpaid help to a relative or friend 18 years or older to help them take care of themselves? This would include doing things for them such as grocery shopping, providing transportation, managing finances, arranging for healthcare or other services, or preparing meals. (n=702)
One-third (32%) of Connecticut residents age 45+ who are not currently providing unpaid help have provided this type of care in the past.
CARE1-1. Has the coronavirus made it more difficult for you to provide care to your relative or friend? (n=164) (Interviews conducted August 2020)

The coronavirus has made providing care more difficult for half (51%) of Connecticut caregivers age 45+.

Percent Reporting that the Coronavirus has Made Caregiving More Difficult

- Yes, 51%
- No, 49%
If you or a loved one needed help when the basic tasks of life become more difficult due to aging or illness, where would you prefer to receive that care or help for yourself or a loved one? (n=702)

Chart does not equal one-hundred percent due to removal of small cells; see annotation for all categories

Connecticut residents age 45+ would largely prefer care provided at home with caregiver assistance instead of an assisted living or nursing home facility.

Preferred Long-Term Care Setting

- At home with caregiver assistance: 81%
- In an assisted living facility or group home: 10%
- In a nursing home: 1%
As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, more than half (56%) of Connecticut residents age 45+ would be less likely to want care in a group setting.

CVD-CG1. As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, how has your opinion changed about having care for yourself or a loved one being provided in a group setting, such as a nursing home or assisted living facility? (n=702) (Interviews conducted August 2020)
The coronavirus has made it hard for Connecticut residents age 45+ to obtain products and services, particularly dental and medical care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Somewhat hard</th>
<th>Very hard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dental services</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical care</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh produce and meats</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staple foods</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health services</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescription drugs</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CVD-3. How easy or difficult would you say it has been for you to get each of the following due to the coronavirus? (Percent 'somewhat hard' or 'very hard') (n=702) (Interviews conducted August 2020)
Survey Results for Connecticut-Financial Questions

Issues That Impact Connecticut Adults Age 45 and Older
Connecticut residents age 45+ find many economic issues important, with financial security and retirement savings topping the list.

Important Economic Issues

- Having financial security throughout your life: 96%
- Having enough income or savings to retire: 95%
- Being able to afford groceries or other household necessities: 93%
- Having adequate Social Security benefits: 91%
- Having affordable utilities: 90%
- Protecting yourself against unfair financial practices: 82%
- Protecting yourself against consumer fraud: 82%
- Being able to stop working for pay at the age you want: 79%
- Having online security: 77%
- Protection from age discrimination: 74%
- Having access to high-speed internet: 68%
- Having good employment opportunities in your community: 66%
- Maintaining relevant job skills and experience: 56%

*For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=702)*
Nearly three in five (58%) Connecticut residents age 45+ expect that in the next 12 months their personal financial situation will stay the same.

Outlook on Personal Financial Situation

- Improve, 22%
- Stay the same, 58%
- Get worse, 18%

Q703. In the next 12 months, do you think your personal financial situation will improve, get worse, or stay the same? (n=702)
Connecticut residents age 45+ have varying levels of confidence about having enough money to live comfortably throughout their retirement years.

Confidence in Retirement Money Lasting

- Ratings of 1-3, 15%
- Ratings of 4-7, 44%
- Ratings of 8-10, 39%

**RET3. Overall, how confident are you that you will have enough money to live comfortably throughout your retirement years? Please use a 1 to 10 scale, where 1 means you are not confident at all and 10 means you are extremely confident. (n=702)**
A majority (81%) of Connecticut residents age 45+ currently (or plan to) rely on Social Security as a source of income as they get older.

### Sources of Income Relied On or Planning to Rely On

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Income</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401(k) or other defined contribution program</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer paid pension</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time work</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time work</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public assistance such as SSI, SNAP, etc.</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting your own business</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freelancing or working in the 'gig' economy</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans benefits</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q728. Which, if any, of the following sources of income do you currently rely on or plan to rely on as you get older? (Percent ‘yes’) (n=702)
Connecticut residents age 45+ have mixed interest in various work-related opportunities.

### Interest in Work-Related Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Extremely interested/ very interested</th>
<th>Somewhat interested</th>
<th>Not very interested/ not at all interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having flexible work arrangements</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping up with technology to maintain job skills</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding new ways to make money</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancing in your job or career (if not retired)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about other types of jobs</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining new job-related skills or experiences</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staring or running your own business</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting a new job or career</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WORK2.** How interested are you in...? (n=702)

Chart does not equal one-hundred percent due to removal of small cells; see annotation for all categories.
Survey Results for Connecticut-Livable Community Questions

Issues that Impact Connecticut Adults Age 45 and Older
Connecticut residents age 45+ find many independent living issues important, including being able to get around independently (88%) and staying in their home as they age (84%).

### Important Independent Living Issues

- Getting to the places you need to go independently: 88%
- Staying in your own home as you get older: 84%
- Caring for a loved one: 82%
- Having high quality long-term care in your community: 80%
- Improvements to CT’s long-term care services: 78%
- Having flexibility in your schedule for caregiving: 71%
- Staying in your community as you get older: 70%
- Having affordable housing options in your community: 69%
- Having paid time off for self or caregiving: 61%

I1. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=702)
Safe streets are important to most (87%) Connecticut residents age 45+.

### Important Livable Community Features

- **Safe streets**: 87%
- **Outdoor recreation**: 53%
- **Sidewalks**: 50%
- **Public transportation**: 35%
- **Bike lanes**: 23%

11. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=702)
INTERNET ACCESS

The majority of Connecticut residents age 45+ reported that the Internet has been accessible over the past few months but barely half of those making less than $50k said they had affordable access to it.

Access to Internet Service During the Pandemic

- Available when needed: 83%
- Fast enough: 78%
- Affordable: 64%
- $<50k Available when needed: 77%
- $<50k Fast enough: 69%
- $<50k Affordable: 52%

CVD-5. Over the past few months, would you say you have had access to internet services that were [ITEM]? (Percent ‘most of the time’) (n=702) (Interviews conducted August 2020)
In July 2020, AARP engaged ANR Market Research Consultants to conduct a quantitative research study among Connecticut residents age 45 and older. Topics included healthcare, the economy, financial issues, independent living, long-term care, caregiving, retirement issues, and opinions of AARP.

**702 Interviews**
Connecticut Residents Age 45+
Fielded in August 2020

ANR completed a total of 702 interviews (363 via landline telephone, 164 via cell phone, and 175 online). Respondents were screened to meet the following criteria:

- Age 45+
- Resident of Connecticut

Survey length averaged 20.1 minutes by telephone and 18.7 minutes online.
METHODOLOGY

Sampling Procedure
Landline, cell phone, and online sampling were used for this research, with the telephone sample drawn randomly from a list of Connecticut residents age 45 and older, purchased from Aristotle, and online sample provided by Fulcrum. A total of 36,879 records were utilized to achieve a sample of 702 respondents. The list of 1,610,838 residents of Connecticut age 45 and older was randomly divided into 1,611 replicates of 1,000 records for telephone dialing. Initially, 20 replicates were released for calling, with additional replicates being opened as necessary. In all, 37 replicates representing a total of 36,879 resident records were dialed to complete the telephone portion of this study.

The sample of 702 respondents yields a maximum statistical error of ±3.7% at the 95% level of confidence. (This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size, the results obtained in the sample would be within ±3.7 percentage points of the results obtained had everyone in the population been interviewed.)

Interview Methodology
The survey was launched on August 1, 2020 and closed on August 10, 2020.

Telephone interviewing was active between 5:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m., with some additional calling done between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. If necessary, up to 8 call attempts per telephone number were made to reach an eligible respondent. All numbers were called at multiple times of the day as well as days of the week to maximize each resident’s opportunity for inclusion in the study.

Percentages of some questions may exceed 100% due to rounding or the use of multiple response question formats.

All data have been weighted by age, gender, and race/ethnicity according to 2018 U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey (CPS) statistics for Connecticut.
ABOUT AARP

AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With nearly 38 million members and offices in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also works for individuals in the marketplace by sparking new solutions and allowing carefully chosen, high-quality products and services to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and information, AARP produces the nation’s largest circulation publications, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.
CONTACT

Kate Bridges,
KBRidges@aarp.org

This research was designed and executed by AARP Research.