VITAL VOICES

Issues that Impact West Virginia Adults Age 45 and Older, July 2020

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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 essential 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 critical, 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 particular 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, hoping that it will significantly impact the work you do.
Survey Results for West Virginia-Health Questions

Issues that Impact West Virginia Adults Age 45 and Older
West Virginia residents age 45+ think many healthcare issues are important, with staying mentally sharp topping the list.

**Important Healthcare Issues**

- Staying mentally sharp: 95%
- Staying physically healthy: 94%
- Having adequate health insurance coverage: 94%
- Having Medicare benefits available to you in the future: 94%
- Paying for healthcare expenses: 87%
- Paying for prescription drugs: 84%

**Note:** For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=707)

*Vital Voices question asked in all markets*
One-third (30%) of West Virginia residents age 45+ are currently providing unpaid help to an adult relative or friend.
Almost half (46%) of West Virginia residents age 45+ who are not currently unpaid caregivers have provided this type of care in the past.
CARE25. Thinking about the adult loved one you most recently provided care to, did you ever have to [ITEM]?
(Percent 'yes') (n=441)

Three-quarters (74%) of West Virginia caregivers age 45+ have used their own money to help provide care.

Impact of Caregiving

- 74% use their own money to help provide care
- 40% make changes to their home for the loved one in their care
- 19% move into another home to accommodate the loved one in their care
Most (87%) West Virginia residents age 45+ would strongly or somewhat support a state income tax credit for family caregivers who incur caregiving expenses.
West Virginia residents age 45+ have been impacted by COVID-19 in a variety of ways.

Ways Impacted by COVID-19

- Wearing a mask in public: 90%
- Sheltering at home to avoid contact with others: 74%
- Unable to see family members: 61%
- Unable to attend religious gatherings: 56%
- Canceled travel plans: 54%
- Canceled plans to attend large gatherings: 50%
- Worrying about the coronavirus: 38%
- Working from home (if not retired): 29%
- Canceled plans to volunteer: 24%
- Not having high-speed internet access: 23%
- Got tested for coronavirus: 18%
- Filed for unemployment: 15%
- Lost a job: 9%
- Need to be tested, but unable to get a test: 9%
- Moved to a new location: 6%
- Officially diagnosed with coronavirus: 3%
- CVD-1. Have you been affected by the coronavirus in any of the following ways? (Percent ‘yes’) (n=707)
COVID-19 has made it hard for West Virginia residents age 45+ to attend religious services (73%) and spend time with family members (72%), among other difficulties.

### Difficulties Related to COVID-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Difficulty Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend religious services</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend time with family members</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deal with worries about the coronavirus</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get access to high-speed internet</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancel travel plans</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move to a new location</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancel plans to attend large gatherings</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File for unemployment</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter at home to avoid contact with others</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wear a mask in public</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work from home</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get tested for coronavirus</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with health providers using telehealth technology</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_CVD-2. How easy or difficult would you say it has been for you to ____? (Percent ‘very hard’ or ‘somewhat hard’) (n=varies)
Obtaining household items such as toilet paper, soap, and hand sanitizer has been described as somewhat hard or very hard by half (50%) of West Virginia residents age 45+.
To help others during the COVID-19 pandemic, West Virginia residents age 45+ have supported local businesses more often (68%) and helped friends, family, and neighbors in a variety of ways.

**Actions Taken To Help Others During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

- Supported local businesses more often: 68%
- Talked more often with friends or family: 64%
- Ran errands for family, friends, or neighbors: 56%
- Financially helping family, friends, or neighbors: 40%
- Helped children’s education: 29%
- Donated more to charity: 25%
- Helped family/friends get connected to healthcare providers: 21%
- Volunteered with a local organization: 12%

*CVD-4. What actions have you taken to help family, friends, or your community members cope with the coronavirus pandemic? (Percent ‘yes’) (n=707)
Survey Results for West Virginia-Wealth Questions

Issues that Impact West Virginia Adults Age 45 and Older
West Virginia residents age 45+ agree that Social Security benefits, retirement, and financial security are among the most important economic issues for them personally.

**Important Economic Issues**

- Having adequate Social Security benefits: 94%
- Having enough income or savings to retire: 94%
- Having financial security throughout your life: 94%
- Being able to afford groceries or other household necessities: 93%
- Having affordable utilities: 90%
- Being able to afford household expenses: 89%
- Protecting yourself against unfair financial practices: 86%
- Protecting yourself against consumer fraud: 85%
- Being able to stop working for pay at the age you want: 75%
- Having online security: 73%
- Having good employment opportunities in your community: 71%
- Protection from age discrimination: 69%
- Having access to high-speed internet: 64%
- Having access to affordable high-speed internet: 61%
- Maintaining relevant job skills and experience: 58%

**Notes:**

1. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=707)

_Vital Voices question asked in all markets_
Survey Results for West Virginia-Self Questions

Issues that Impact West Virginia Adults Age 45 and Older
Most (88%) West Virginia residents age 45+ agree that staying in their own home as they get older is extremely or very important to them.

Important Independent Living Issues

- Staying in your own home as you get older: 88%
- Getting to the places you need to go independently: 88%
- Caring for a loved one: 87%
- Having high quality long-term care in your community: 85%
- Improvements to WV's long-term care services: 82%
- Having affordable housing options in your community: 76%
- Having flexibility in your schedule for caregiving: 75%
- Staying in your community as you get older: 73%
- Having paid time off for self or caregiving: 62%

11. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=707)

Vital Voices question asked in all markets
West Virginia residents age 45+ find many community features important, with safe streets topping the list.

Important Livable Community Features

- Safe streets: 84%
- Outdoor recreation: 53%
- Sidewalks: 48%
- Public transportation: 39%
- Bike lanes: 19%

II. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=707)
In July 2020, AARP engaged ANR Market Research Consultants to conduct a quantitative research study among West Virginia residents age 45 and older. Topics included healthcare, the economy, financial issues, independent living, long-term care, caregiving, retirement issues, and opinions of AARP.

ANR completed a total of 707 interviews (338 via landline telephone, 182 via cell phone, and 187 online). Respondents were screened to meet the following criteria:

- Age 45+
- Resident of West Virginia

Survey length averaged 19.2 minutes by telephone and 18.1 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 West Virginia residents age 45 and older, purchased from Aristotle, and online sample provided by Fulcrum. A total of 32,253 records were utilized to achieve a sample of 707 respondents. The list of 853,074 residents of West Virginia age 45 and older was randomly divided into 853 replicates of 1,000 records for telephone dialing. Initially, 20 replicates were released for calling, with additional replicates being opened as necessary. In all, 33 replicates representing a total of 32,253 resident records were dialed to complete the telephone portion of this study.

The total sample of 707 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 July 23, 2020 and closed on July 29, 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 West Virginia.
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.
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This research was designed and executed by AARP Research.