VITAL VOICES

Issues that Impact Vermont Adults Age 45 and Older

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For the past two decades, AARP has provided state offices with data to support planning and advocacy. As the breadth of our work has expanded, AARP Research and our national partners have responded by creating a tool that will empower state offices and staff to do more for their local constituents.

As part of our transition from National to Nationwide, AARP is launching a new research initiative that will deliver vital, current, and state-specific data to every state office on a rolling three-year schedule. The name of this nationwide initiative is Vital Voices, and we will use it to ensure that each individual state has access to the data they need for local advocacy, outreach, and education efforts. States can use the data in numerous ways:

- Predict the need for a specific program or interest in a specific issue.
- Enhance all communications with current data.
- Track issues and attitudes over time to assess shifts in public opinion.

Bringing Vital Voices to the states has been an enterprise-wide initiative. 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 this data will inform better decisions for Vermont adults age 45 and older.
Survey Results for Vermont-Core Questions

Issues that Impact Vermont Adults Age 45 and Older
Vermont residents age 45+ think many health care issues are important, with ‘staying mentally sharp’ topping the list.

### Percent Rating Health Care Issues Extremely or Very Important

- **Staying mentally sharp**: 94%
- **Staying physically healthy**: 93%
- **Having adequate health insurance coverage**: 92%
- **Having Medicare benefits available to you in the future**: 90%
- **Paying for health care expenses, including premiums and co-pays**: 82%
- **Paying for prescription drugs**: 74%

11. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Health Care) (n=701)
*not all charts equal one-hundred percent due to removal of small cells, see annotation for all categories
Having enough retirement savings and income, including Social Security, is extremely or very important to nearly all Vermont residents age 45+.

### Important Economic Issues

- **Having enough income or savings to retire**: 93%
- **Having adequate Social Security benefits available to you in the future**: 89%
- **Having affordable utilities**: 80%
- **Protecting yourself against unfair financial practices**: 76%
- **Protecting yourself against consumer fraud**: 75%
- **Being able to stop working for pay at the age you want**: 72%
- **Having online security**: 67%
- **Having good employment opportunities in your community**: 65%
- **Protection from age discrimination**: 57%
- **Having access to high-speed Internet**: 53%
- **Maintaining relevant job skills and experience**: 49%

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I1. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Economic/Financial) (n=701)

*not all charts equal one-hundred percent due to removal of small cells, see annotation for all categories*
‘Caring for a loved one’ and ‘staying in your own home as you get older’ are at least very important to four out of five Vermont residents age 45+.

### Important Independent Living Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Importance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring for a loved one</td>
<td>81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staying in your own home as you get older</td>
<td>79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting to the places you need to go independently</td>
<td>77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having high quality long-term care in your community</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having affordable housing options in your community</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying in your community as you get older</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Independent Living and Long-Term Care) (n=701)

*not all charts equal one-hundred percent due to removal of small cells, see annotation for all categories*
Three in five Vermont residents age 45+ agree that having help navigating caregiving (61%), enrolling in Medicare (59%), and enrolling in Social Security (57%) are very important.

Percent Agreeing Help Navigating Each Life Experience Would Be Very or Somewhat Important

- Caregiving for an adult loved one: 61% very important, 29% somewhat important
- Enrolling in Medicare: 59% very important, 27% somewhat important
- Enrolling in Social Security: 57% very important, 26% somewhat important
- Changes in finances: 48% very important, 40% somewhat important
- Housing changes, such as moving to a new home or making renovations: 36% very important, 41% somewhat important
- Changes in driving or using new transportation options: 36% very important, 43% somewhat important
- Changes in family structure, including additions and losses: 35% very important, 44% somewhat important
- Employment changes, such as starting a new job or business: 27% very important, 39% somewhat important
- Making new friends and social connections: 26% very important, 45% somewhat important

LET1. For each of the following life experiences, please indicate how important you think it would be to have help navigating each, if you were to experience it. (n=701) *not all charts equal one-hundred percent due to removal of small cells, see annotation for all categories.
Survey Results for Vermont-Health and Caregiving Questions

Issues that Impact Vermont Adults Age 45 and Older
About half of Vermont residents age 45+ are concerned about being able to afford needed prescriptions over the next two years.

**Concern About Affording Prescription Drugs Over Next 2 Years**

- Extremely concerned: 18%
- Very concerned: 14%
- Somewhat concerned: 23%
- Not very concerned: 19%
- Not concerned at all: 26%

PER5_5pt. How concerned are you about being able to afford the cost of needed prescription drugs over the next two years? (n=701)
Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Vermont residents age 45+ think that Vermont should be able to set drug prices for prescription drugs sold in the state.

Opinion of Whether State Should Regulate Drug Prices

- Yes, 64%
- No, 18%
- Don’t know, 17%

RX-VT1. Do you think Vermont should be able to set prescription drug prices for those sold in the state? (n=701)
PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Nearly all (92%) Vermont residents age 45+ believe it should be legal for people in the U.S. to buy drugs from Canada.

Opinion on Importation of Prescription Drugs

Yes, should be legal, 92%

Don't know 3%

No, should not be legal 5%
The majority of Vermont residents age 45+ think prescription drug companies have a lot of influence over state elected officials.

Opinion on Amount of Influence Drug Companies Have Over State Officials

- 52% A lot of influence
- 27% Some influence
- 9% Only a little influence
- 4% No influence at all
- 8% Don't know

RX-3a. How much influence do you think prescription drug companies have over state elected officials? (n=701)
The vast majority (91%) of Vermont residents age 45+ think that prescription drug companies have at least some influence over federal elected officials.

Opinion on Amount of Influence Drug Companies Have Over Federal Officials

- **75%** A lot of influence
- **16%** Some influence
- **3%** Only a little influence
- **1%** No influence at all
- **4%** Don't know
One-quarter (24%) of Vermont residents age 45+ are currently providing unpaid care to an adult relative or friend.

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=701)
Two in five (40%) Vermont residents age 45+ who are not currently providing unpaid care have provided this type of care in the past.
Are you or someone you know in Vermont providing primary care and financial support for a grandchild? (n=701)

One in five (19%) Vermont residents age 45+ is a primary care and financial provider for a grandchild or knows someone who is.

Percent with Primary Care of Grandchild

- Yes, I am, 4%
- Yes, someone I know is, 15%
- No, 80%
The vast majority of Vermont residents age 45+ support a change in law that would permit caregiving grandparents to have temporary access to their grandchild’s records.

Support for Access to Grandchild’s Medical and School Records

- Strongly support, 74%
- Somewhat support, 19%
- Oppose, 6%

**GRP-2.** Would you support or oppose a change in Vermont law so that grandparents who are providing primary care and financial support for their grandchildren could have temporary access to their grandchild’s medical and school records the same way their parents do? (n=701)
GRANDPARENTING

The vast majority of Vermont residents age 45+ support extending parental income tax credit to grandparents who support their grandchildren financially.

Support for Access to Grandchild’s Medical and School Records

- Strongly support, 74%
- Somewhat support, 19%
- Oppose, 6%

GRP-3. Would you support or oppose extending the state’s parental income tax credit to grandparents to help offset part of the expenses they incur while providing primary care and financial support to their grandchildren? (n=701)
Survey Results for Vermont-Livable Communities

Issues that Impact Vermont Adults Age 45 and Older
The majority (85%) of Vermont residents age 45+ are homeowners.

Home Ownership Among 45+

- Own, 85%
- Rent, 15%
LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Half (51%) of Vermont’s residents age 45+ describe their community as a rural area.

Type of Community Among 45+

- Rural area, 51%
- Town, 28%
- Small city, 21%

**LIV-COMM2.** How would you describe where you live? Would you say you live in a small city, a town, or in a rural area? (n=701)
ISO1. How often do you have contact with family, friends, or neighbors who do not live with you? (n=701)

One-quarter of (24%) of Vermont residents age 45+ have contact with family, friends, or neighbors once a week or less.
**ISOLATION**

About one-quarter of Vermont residents age 45+ report feelings of isolation at least some of the time.

**Frequency of Feelings of Isolation**

- **I lack companionship.**
  - Very often: 5%
  - Often: 6%
  - Sometimes: 14%
  - Rarely: 22%
  - Never: 53%

- **I feel left out.**
  - Very often: 4%
  - Often: 4%
  - Sometimes: 15%
  - Rarely: 28%
  - Never: 49%

- **I feel isolated from others.**
  - Very often: 3%
  - Often: 7%
  - Sometimes: 13%
  - Rarely: 25%
  - Never: 51%

ISO2. How often do you feel the following? (n=701)
Among Vermont residents age 45+, costs (property taxes, utilities, maintenance) and safety modifications are the main factors they see as impacting their ability to remain in their homes as they age.
ADU-1. An Accessory Dwelling Unit, or ADU, is a residential unit built on the same lot as an existing single family home and may be attached or detached to the home. It is commonly referred to as a “granny flat” or “in-law quarters.” ADUs provide complete separate living quarters, including a kitchen and bathroom, that can allow older adults to age in their existing home with live-in care, make it possible for adults to assist their aging parents, other relatives and loved ones, or be used for rental income. Do you currently have an ADU on your property? (n=701)

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Only 6% of Vermont residents age 45+ report having an Accessory Dwelling Unity on their property.

Whether Residents 45+ Have an ADU on Their Property

- Yes, 6%
- No, 94%
Among Vermont residents age 45+ without an ADU on their property, nearly half (44%) would consider building one if they had the space to do so.

**Whether 45+ Would Consider Building an ADU**

- **Yes, 44%**
- **No, 53%**
- **Don't know, 3%**
The majority (82%) of Vermont residents age 45+ support town ordinances that would make it easier for property owners to create an ADU on their property.
The top reasons for Vermont residents age 45+ opposing ADU ordinances are being opposed to government regulation generally (18%) and not wanting too much crowding (15%).

Reasons Given for Opposition to ADU Ordinances

- Do not want government regulation: 18%
- Do not want too much crowding/building: 15%
- Concerned about financing/taxes: 9%
- Personally am not interested in it for myself: 6%
- Other (record): 44%
- Don't know/refused: 14%
Vermont residents age 45+ are split in terms of rating livability in their communities.

### Rating of Community Livability Aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Streets and paths that allow people of all ages and ability levels to walk safely</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforced speed limits</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public bus services</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate protected bike lanes for bicyclists</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible and well-maintained bus stops</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable housing options that are in walking distance to your downtown or village center</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ALT-TRAN-1A. Would you support a 15 cent increase in vehicle gas prices if the additional money is used to expand transportation options, such as bus service, in your community? (n=701)

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

About half of Vermont residents age 45+ would support a 5-cent increase in vehicle gas prices to expand transportation options in their community.

Percent Supporting Levels of Vehicle Gas Tax

- $0.05
  - 51%
- $0.10
  - 41%
- $0.15
  - 35%
In September 2019, AARP engaged Alan Newman Research (ANR) to conduct a quantitative research study among Vermont residents age 45+. Topics included healthcare, including prescription drugs and isolation; the economy and financial issues, livable communities, and caregiving.

ANR completed a total of 701 interviews (363 via landline telephone, 179 via cell phone, and 159 online). Respondents were screened to meet the following criteria:

- Age 45+
- Resident of Vermont

Survey length averaged 21.1 minutes by telephone and 19.3 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 residents age 45+ of Vermont, purchased from Aristotle, and online sample provided by Fulcrum. A total of 23,283 records were utilized to achieve a sample of 701 respondents. The list of 299,026 residents of Vermont age 45+ was randomly divided into 299 replicates of 1,000 records for telephone dialing. Initially, 20 replicates were released for calling, with additional replicates being opened as necessary. In all, 23 replicates representing a total of 22,700 resident records were dialed to complete the telephone portion of this study.

The total sample of 701 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 October 5, 2019 and closed on October 16, 2019.

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 2019 U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey (CPS) statistics for Vermont.
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.
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This research was designed and executed by AARP Research.