VITAL VOICES

Issues That Impact Washington Adults Age 45 and Older, November 2022

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INTRODUCTION

There are currently about 115 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, launched in 2019, is an exciting program of research undertaken by AARP. Through this research program, we have the ability to once again deliver critical, current, and state-specific data to 53 states and territories on a rolling three-year schedule between 2022 and 2024. We are making this data available to the public to assist with the development of programs, products, and policies for older adults. Beginning in Cycle 2 of the program, we look forward to uncovering trends that can guide your areas of focus. Specifically, 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 conducted 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 Washington-Health and Caregiving Questions

Issues That Impact Washington Adults Age 45 and Older
Washington residents age 45+ think many healthcare issues are important, with staying mentally sharp topping the list. Compared to 2019, significantly more said being able to afford health care expenses (88%) and being able to pay for prescription drugs (84%) is important in 2022.

### Important Healthcare Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>2019 (%)</th>
<th>2022 (%)</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staying mentally sharp</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>↑↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having adequate health insurance coverage</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to afford health care expenses, including premiums and co-pays</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>88%↑</td>
<td>↑↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having Medicare benefits available to you in the future</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to pay for prescription drugs</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>84%↑</td>
<td>↑↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to access health care providers remotely</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

↑ ↓ indicates a significantly higher/lower percentage compared to the prior wave at the 95% confidence level.
One-quarter (27%) of Washington residents age 45+ are currently providing care to an adult relative or friend.

- Yes, I am currently providing care
- Yes, I have provided care in the past
- No
- Don't know/ refused

C2_CARE1. Are you currently or have you ever provided unpaid help to a relative or friend 18 years or older to help them take care of themselves? (n=704)
CARE8. Have you ever been employed either full- or part-time while providing care to your adult friend or relative? (n=186)

Three-quarters (75%) of Washington caregivers age 45+ have been employed while also providing care to their friend or relative.
Among Washington residents age 45+ who are employed while caregiving, three-quarters (75%) had to go to work early/late or take time off work to provide care.

**Impact of Caregiving on Work**

- Go into work early or late, or take time off to provide care: 75%
- Take a leave of absence from your job to provide care: 55%
- Go from working full-time to part-time to provide care: 51%
- Give up working entirely to provide care: 39%

*CARE9. As a working caregiver, did you ever have to [ITEM]? (Percent ‘yes’) (n=139)*
Nearly half (48%) of Washington caregivers age 45+ said that being a caregiver has had a major impact on their own financial situation.
Among Washington caregivers age 45+, eight in ten (80%) had to use their own money to help provide care, and half (51%) had to make changes to their home for the adult in their care.

Impact of Caregiving

- Use your own money to help provide care: 80%
- Make changes to your home for the adult in your care: 51%
- Move into another home to accommodate the adult in your care: 33%

CARE11. Now thinking again about the adult relative or friend you are currently providing care to, did you ever have to [ITEM]? (Percent ‘yes’) (n=186)
Washington caregivers age 45+ face a variety of difficulties due to their caregiving responsibilities, including emotional stress and lack of rest.

Difficulties That Impact Caregivers

- Feel stressed emotionally due to your caregiving responsibilities: 67%
- Find it difficult to get enough rest: 61%
- Feel stressed in trying to balance your job and family: 60%
- Find it difficult to exercise regularly: 60%
- Find it difficult to take care of your household responsibilities: 53%
- Experience problems with your health: 49%
- Find it difficult to maintain a healthy diet: 43%
- Find it difficult to make time to visit your doctor: 39%
Washington residents age 45+ have a variety of long-term care and aging concerns, with aging in place topping the list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long Term Care and Aging Concerns</th>
<th>Concerned Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staying in your own home as you get older</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having long-term care or home health services available when needed</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of care in Washington nursing homes</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of healthcare services available to you</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying for long-term care such as nursing home or home health services</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing to drive or get around as you get older</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing support, help, or caregiving for a loved one</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not having personal care services to help you with housekeeping, rides to the doctor, and food shopping</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not having assistance with personal hygiene</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling isolated or lonely</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GLTC1. How concerned are you about the following? (Percent ‘extremely concerned’ or ‘very concerned’) (n=704)
Survey Results for Washington-Wealth Questions

Issues That Impact Washington Adults Age 45 and Older
Washington residents age 45+ find many economic issues important, particularly those related to retirement and Social Security benefits. Additionally, the importance of having protection from both consumer fraud and age discrimination has increased since 2019.

### Important Economic and Financial Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>2019 (%)</th>
<th>2022 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having enough income or savings to retire</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having adequate Social Security benefits</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting yourself against consumer fraud</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>84%↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having protection from age discrimination</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>65%↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having access to affordable high-speed Internet</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

↑ † † indicates a significantly higher/lower percentage compared to the prior wave at the 95% confidence level.

11. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent 'extremely important' or 'very important')
A variety of factors would impact the ability of Washington residents age 45+ to remain at home as they age, with increasing property taxes topping the list.

**Factors Impacting Ability to Age in Place**

- **Increasing property taxes**: 55%
- **Heating and cooling costs**: 45%
- **Increasing maintenance costs**: 44%
- **Being able to make the necessary repairs and modifications to your home**: 41%
- **Safety in your neighborhood**: 38%
- **Being close to goods and services**: 37%
- **Increasing rent**: 34%
- **Safety in your home**: 33%
- **Size of your property**: 24%
- **Size of your home**: 20%

**HOME-1.** How much do you think each of the following would impact your ability to remain in your home as you age? (Percent ‘a lot’) (n=704)
Eight in ten (81%) Washington residents age 45+ think that housing affordability is a problem in the area where they live.
Among Washington residents age 45+ who think housing affordability is a problem in their area, nearly two-thirds (65%) reported that the problem is very serious.
As a result of higher costs of living, two in five (41%) Washington residents age 45+ have taken money out of savings and 38% have stopped saving for retirement in the past 12 months.

Financial Issues in Last 12 Months:

- Taken money out of savings due to higher costs of living: 41%
- Stopped saving for retirement due to higher costs of living: 38%
- Accumulated more credit card debt: 27%
- Been unable to pay other bills: 26%
- Taken on an additional job or worked more at your current job to bring in more income: 23%
- Had problems affording food: 23%
- Postponed or skipped medical care due to cost: 23%
- Skipped or went without medications due to cost: 16%
- Been unable to pay rent or mortgage: 13%

C2_ECON5. In the past 12 months, how often have you [ITEM]? (Percent ‘often’ or ‘sometimes’) (n=704)
Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Washington residents age 45+ know how to access energy assistance, but only 38% know how to access Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, or Children (EAEDC).
Survey Results for Washington-Livable Communities Questions

Issues That Impact Washington Adults Age 45 and Older
ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE

Getting around independently (85%) and aging in place (84%) remain extremely or very important to four out of five Washington residents age 45+ in 2022 and are significantly more important than in 2019.

Important Independent Living Issues

- Getting to the places you need to go independently: 80% (2019), 85% (2022)
- Staying in your own home as you get older: 80% (2019), 84% (2022)
- Having high quality long-term care in your community: 76% (2019), 74% (2022)
- Having affordable housing options in your community: 72% (2022)
- Having flexibility in your schedule to care for a loved one: 71% (2022)
- Having paid time off to care for yourself/family member: N/A (2019), 62% (2022)
- Having ways to be connected to your community and socialize as you age: 54% (2022)

11. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) ↑↓ indicates a significantly higher/lower percentage compared to the prior wave at the 95% confidence level.
DIGITAL LITERACY

While three-quarters (78%) of Washington residents age 45+ feel that they know how to find helpful resources on the Internet, only 63% can tell high quality from low quality resources on the Internet.

Percent of Respondents who Agree

- I can tell high quality from low quality resources on the Internet: 63%
- I feel confident in using information from the Internet to make decisions: 69%
- I know how to find helpful resources on the Internet: 78%

C2_DL1. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements related to the Internet? (Percent who 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree') (n=704)
Nearly one-third (29%) of Washington residents age 45+ feel that they need training on digital devices.
If you needed help learning how to use a digital device, would you know where to go to get that help? (n=704)

Three-quarters (75%) of Washington residents age 45+ feel that they know where to go for digital device assistance.
In November 2022, AARP engaged ANR Market Research Consultants to conduct a quantitative research study among Washington residents age 45 and older. Topics included healthcare, the economy, financial issues, independent living, long-term care, caregiving, digital literacy, and retirement issues.

ANR completed a total of 704 interviews (260 via landline telephone, 155 via cell phone, 255 online, and 34 utilizing text-to-web (TTW) methodology). (Note that TTW was introduced mid-fielding on November 10, 2022.) Respondents were screened to meet the following criteria:

- Age 45+
- Resident of Washington

Survey length averaged 20.5 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 Washington residents age 45 and older, purchased from Aristotle, and online sample provided by Fulcrum. A total of 38,730 records were utilized. The list of 3,050,371 Washington residents age 45 and older was randomly divided into 3,051 replicates of 1,000 records for telephone dialing. Initially, 20 replicates were released for calling, with additional replicates being opened as necessary. In all, 39 replicates representing a total of 38,730 records were dialed to complete the telephone portion of this study.

The sample of 704 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 November 3, 2022 and closed on November 22, 2022.

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 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates.
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.