VITAL VOICES
Issues That Impact Alabama Adults Age 45 and Older, October 2021

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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 Alabama-Health Questions

Issues That Impact Alabama Adults Age 45 and Older
Alabama residents age 45+ think many healthcare issues are important, with having adequate health insurance coverage and staying mentally sharp topping the list.

### Important Healthcare Issues

- Having adequate health insurance coverage: 94%
- Staying mentally sharp: 94%
- Staying physically healthy: 92%
- Having Medicare benefits available to you in the future: 91%
- Paying for health care 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=734)
One-quarter (28%) of Alabama residents age 45+ are currently providing unpaid help to an adult relative or friend.

Percent Providing Unpaid Adult Care

- Yes: 28%
- No: 71%
- Don't know/ refused: 0%
Nearly half (45%) of Alabama residents age 45+ who are not currently unpaid caregivers have provided this type of care in the past.

Percent Providing Unpaid Adult Care in The Past

- Yes: 45%
- No: 54%
- Don't know/ refused: 

CARE1_A. Have you ever provided this type of unpaid help in the past? (n=528)
As of October 2021, 30% of Alabama residents age 45+ are extremely or very worried about getting COVID-19 in the next year.
Two-thirds (67%) of Alabama residents age 45+ think nursing homes should require all visitors to be vaccinated for COVID-19.
Long-Term Care

One in ten (11%) Alabama residents age 45+ currently serves as an adult guardian or conservator.

Currently Serving as a Guardian or Conservator

- Yes: 89%
- No: 11%

ADM-1. Adult guardianship is a process by which a judge appoints an individual to care for the well-being, and possibly finances, of another person who is unable to make decisions for him- or herself. Guardians, also known as conservators, can be family members, friends, or non-related professionals appointed by a judge. Do you currently serve as a guardian or conservator for someone who is unable to manage his or her own affairs? (n=734)
LONG-TERM CARE

One in five (21%) Alabama residents age 45+ said it is extremely or very likely that they will serve as an adult guardian or conservator in the future.

Likelihood of Serving as a Guardian or Conservator in the Future

- Extremely likely/ very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not very likely/ not at all likely
- Don't know/ refused

ADM-2. How likely is it that you will serve as a guardian or conservator for someone in the future? (n=734)
Three-quarters (79%) of Alabama residents age 45+ think it is extremely or very important to make a policy change that would require judges to investigate multiple options for care before appointing a guardian.

Importance of Making a Policy Change to Require Exploration of Options for Guardianship

- Extremely important/very important: 79%
- Somewhat important: 4%
- Not very important/not important at all: 3%
- Don’t know/refused: 14%

ADM-4. Currently in Alabama, in cases where an individual has been declared incompetent, the law allows judges to appoint a guardian without looking for other options. How important do you think it is for Alabama to make a policy change to require judges to look at each case to see if other options are available so the individual can have input or make decisions about their care and finances when they are able? (n=734)
Survey Results for Alabama-Wealth Questions

Issues That Impact Alabama Adults Age 45 and Older
Alabama residents age 45+ find many economic issues important, particularly those related to financial security in retirement— including Social Security benefits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important Economic Issues</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having adequate Social Security benefits</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having enough income or savings to retire</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting yourself against unfair financial practices</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting yourself against consumer fraud</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to stop working for pay at the age you want</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having online security</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection from age discrimination</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having good employment opportunities in your community</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining relevant job skills and experience</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey Results for Alabama - Self Questions

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

Aging in place is extremely or very important to a majority (90%) of Alabama residents age 45+

Important Independent Living Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staying in your own home as you get older</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting to the places you need to go independently</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring for a loved one</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having high quality long-term care in your community</td>
<td>82%</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’) (n=734)
Three-quarters (79%) of Alabama residents age 45+ have access to high-speed Internet at home.
BROADBAND

Over one-quarter (29%) of Alabama residents age 45+ who have high-speed Internet at home said they do not feel it is affordable.
Among Alabama residents age 45+ who do not have high-speed Internet at home, nearly half (45%) said the reason is affordability.
Two-thirds (69%) of Alabama residents age 45+ use the Internet several times a day.

**Frequency of Internet Use**

- **Several times a day**: 69%
- **About once a day**: 7%
- **A few times a week**: 7%
- **A few times a month**: 4%
- **Less than a few times a month**: 2%
- **Never**: 11%

**TECH2.** About how often do you go online or use the Internet? This includes access from home, work, a mobile device such as a smartphone, or somewhere else. (n=734) Chart does not equal one-hundred percent due to removal of small cells; see annotation for all categories.
BROADBAND

Quality of Internet access is always or often an issue for 16% of Alabama residents age 45+ who have high-speed Internet at home.

Factors Limiting Home Internet Use

- Quality of Internet access: 16%
- Cost of Internet access: 10%
Only half (50%) of Alabama residents age 45+ know of a place in their community where they can access high-speed Internet easily, affordably, and privately.

Access to High-Speed Internet in the Community

- Yes: 50%
- No: 29%
- Don’t know/ refused: 21%
BROADBAND

Over three-quarters (83%) of Alabama residents age 45+ have Internet access at home, in addition to a variety of other places.

Places Where Internet is Available

- At home: 83%
- Library or school: 56%
- Coffee shop or business other than your workplace: 43%
- At work: 34%
- Community center or senior center: 28%
- Place of worship: 24%
- None of these: 5%
- Somewhere else: 1%
BROADBAND

Among Alabama residents age 45+ with high-speed Internet at home, 18% said they always or often have connectivity problems.

Frequency of Problems with Home High-Speed Internet

- 43% Always
- 28% Often
- 13% Sometimes
- 5% Rarely
- 9% Never
- 0% Don’t know/ refused

TECH8. Thinking again about your Internet connection at home, how often do you experience problems with the Internet connection, such as trouble connecting, disconnects, slow service, or other problems? (n=578)
In the past 12 months, when you needed help with using the Internet, where or to whom did you turn for answers? (n=651)

Alabama Internet users age 45+ have sought assistance from a wide variety of sources when they needed help using the Internet, including a child/grandchild (24%) or their service provider (19%).

Sources of Internet Help

- Child/grandchild: 24%
- Service provider/manufacturer: 19%
- Spouse: 13%
- Other family member: 11%
- Friend: 10%
- Online search: 8%
- Neighbor: 2%
- Co-worker: 2%
- Does not apply/haven't needed help: 28%
Alabama residents age 45+ think that investing in development of high-speed Internet across the state is important for a variety of reasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To ensure people can access educational resources to further their education</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ensure older adults, especially those with health challenges, aren't isolated from family/ friends</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ensure people can access healthcare in a timely manner</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural communities need it to thrive economically</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income communities need it to thrive economically</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businesses need it to be competitive</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers/ ranchers need it to be competitive</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**TECH15.** The following are reasons why some people believe that high-speed Internet should be available to everyone. For each, please tell me whether you personally feel it’s an important reason or not an important reason to invest in developing high-speed Internet across Alabama. (Percent ‘important reason’) (n=734)
BROADBAND

Eight in ten (83%) Alabama residents age 45+ support state action to develop fair policies related to expanding high-speed Internet service in the state.

Support for Developing Policies to Plan for High-Speed Internet in Alabama

- Strongly support: 52%
- Somewhat support: 31%
- Somewhat oppose: 6%
- Strongly oppose: 4%
- Don’t know/refused: 7%

TECH16. Do you support or oppose the following policies that may be proposed in Alabama? State action to develop policies to plan for high-speed Internet activities in partnership with state government, providers, local nonprofits and the business community and establish proper procurement processes to ensure all interested entities receive fair treatment and equal opportunity to expand high-speed Internet services in Alabama (n=734)
In September 2021, AARP engaged ANR Market Research Consultants to conduct a quantitative research study among Alabama residents age 45 and older. Topics included healthcare, the economy, financial issues, independent living, long-term care, caregiving, and retirement issues.

734 Interviews
Alabama Adults Age 45+
Fielded in September-October 2021

ANR completed a total of 734 interviews (333 via landline telephone, 184 via cell phone, and 217 online). Respondents were screened to meet the following criteria:

- Age 45+
- Resident of Alabama

Survey length averaged 20.0 minutes by telephone and 18.1 minutes online.
Sampling Procedure

Landline, cell phone, and online sampling were used for this research, with the telephone sample drawn randomly from a list of Alabama residents age 45 and older, purchased from Aristotle, and online sample provided by Fulcrum. A total of 30,156 records were utilized. The list of 2,115,042 Alabama residents age 45 and older was randomly divided into 2,116 replicates of 1,000 records for telephone dialing. Initially, 20 replicates were released for calling, with additional replicates being opened as necessary. In all, 31 replicates representing a total of 30,156 records were dialed to complete the telephone portion of this study.

The base sample of 734 respondents yields a maximum statistical error of ±3.6% 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 ±3.6 percentage points of the results obtained had everyone in the population been interviewed.)

Interview Methodology

The survey was launched on September 16, 2021 and closed on October 3, 2021.

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.
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](http://www.aarp.org) or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.
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This research was designed and executed by AARP Research.