VITAL VOICES
Issues That Impact California Adults Age 45 and Older, December 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. California’s over-60 population is projected to diversify and grow faster than any other age group. By 2030, 10.8 million Californians will be an older adult, making up one-quarter of the state’s population. 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.

1 https://mpa.aging.ca.gov/
Survey Results for California-Health Questions

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

### Important Healthcare Issues

- Staying mentally sharp: 93%
- Having adequate health insurance coverage: 93%
- Staying physically healthy: 93%
- Having Medicare benefits available to you in the future: 88%
- Paying for health care expenses: 82%
- Paying for prescription drugs: 76%
- Being able to access health care providers remotely by computer or phone: 60%

I1. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent 'extremely important' or 'very important') (n=1,000)
California residents age 45+ feel it is very important to have help navigating a variety of life experiences as they age, particularly those related to health changes (70%).

**Importance of Help Navigating Life Transitions**

- Health changes: 70%
- Caregiving for an adult loved one: 67%
- Enrolling in Medicare and Social Security: 66%
- Changes in finances: 66%
- End of life planning: 55%
- Social challenges like age, gender, or race discrimination: 50%
- Changes in family structure, including additions and losses: 50%
- Changes in driving or using new transportation options: 49%
- Housing changes, such as moving to a new home or making renovations: 46%
- Employment changes, such as starting a new job or business: 35%
- Making new friends and social connections: 33%

**LET1.** For each of the following life experiences, how important do you think it would be to have help navigating each, if you were to experience it? (Percent 'very important') (n=1,000)
COVID-19

The majority (86%) of California residents age 45+ have already gotten the COVID-19 vaccine (or plan to get it).

COVID-19 Vaccination Status (as of November 2021)

- Yes (already got) 83%
- Yes (plan to) 4%
- No 10%
- Don't know/ refused 3%

CVD-11. Have you gotten or do you plan to get the COVID-19 vaccine? (n=1,000)
Nearly a third (31%) of California residents age 45+ are currently providing unpaid help to an adult relative or friend.
Four in ten (41%) California residents age 45+ who are not currently caregivers have provided this type of care in the past.
Four in ten (41%) California residents age 45+ would be extremely or very interested in using telehealth services for themselves or a loved one.

**Interest in Telehealth for Self or Loved One**

- Extremely interested/ very interested: 41%
- Somewhat interested: 30%
- Not very interested/ not at all interested: 26%
- Don’t know/ refused: 4%

HEAL5. How interested are you in using tele-health services for yourself or a loved one if needed? (n=1,000)
QCA3. Do you or a family member have a health condition that is made worse due to extreme weather, like hotter days or bad air quality? (n=1,000)

CLIMATE CHANGE

More than one-third (37%) of California residents age 45+ have a health condition that is made worse due to extreme weather (or have a family member who does).

Health Condition Made Worse by Extreme Weather

- Yes: 37%
- No: 63%
- Don't know/ refused
Survey Results for California-Livability Questions

Issues That Impact California Adults Age 45 and Older
Independent living is extremely or very important to a majority of California residents age 45+.

**Important Independent Living Issues**

- Staying in your own home as you get older: 87%
- Getting to the places you need to go independently: 86%
- Caring for a loved one: 83%
- Having high quality long-term care in your community: 77%

11. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent 'extremely important' or 'very important') (n=1,000)
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1. Safe sidewalks and streets are extremely or very important to seven in ten (72%) California residents age 45+.

- Safe, walkable sidewalks, and safe, bikeable streets
  - 72%

- Access to outdoor parks and recreation
  - 59%

- Public transportation
  - 49%
Nearly three-quarters (73%) of California residents age 45+ reside in a single-family home.
Seven in ten (69%) California residents age 45+ are homeowners.
About half of California residents age 45+ agree that several factors would considerably impact their ability to remain in their home as they age.

Factors That May Impact the Ability to Age in Place

- Being able to make the necessary repairs and modifications to your home so you can continue to live there safely: 55%
- Being close to goods and services: 53%
- Heating and cooling costs: 49%
- Increasing maintenance costs: 47%

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=1,000)
GEN-1. Have you or someone you know had to move from their neighborhood in the past 5 years due to price changes in the housing market? (n=1,000)

About one-third (32%) of California residents age 45+ have moved in the past 5 years due to price changes in the housing market (or know someone else who has).

Moved in the Past 5 Years Due to Price Changes in the Housing Market

- Yes: 32%
- No: 65%
- Don't know: 3%
Nearly two out of five (38%) California residents age 45+ have considered moving from the state in the past year.
The top reason for considering moving from California is lower overall cost of living (89%), followed by lower taxes (85%) and lower housing costs (84%).

**Reasons for Considering Moving from California**

- Lower overall cost of living: 89%
- Lower taxes: 85%
- Lower housing costs: 84%
- A safer community or lower crime rate: 54%
- Climate concerns: 36%
- Natural disasters: 34%
- Better job opportunities: 33%
- To be with or live closer to other family members: 32%
- Other: 35%

**MIG-2.** What are your reasons for considering moving from California? (Percent ‘yes’) (n=381)
California residents age 45+ have been impacted by a variety of climate conditions in the past year, including bad air quality (54%).

Impact of Climate Change in California in the Past Year

- Bad air quality: 54%
- Water restrictions from drought: 52%
- Higher energy bills during extreme heat events: 50%
- Wildfires: 45%
- Flooding: 8%
- None of these: 15%

QCA2. Which of the following climate change impacts have affected you, your family, or your friends living in California, during the past year? (Percent ‘yes’) (n=1,000)
Six in ten (62%) California residents age 45+ are extremely or very concerned about the changing climate in California.

Concern about Climate Change in California

- Extremely concerned: 34%
- Very concerned: 21%
- Somewhat concerned: 28%
- Not very concerned: 7%
- Not at all concerned: 9%

QCA1. How concerned are you about the changing climate in California, specifically the extreme heat and drought, affecting your life today, as well as the lives of future generations? (n=1,000)
NATURAL DISASTERS

Nearly half (48%) of California residents age 45+ are extremely or very concerned about being impacted by natural disasters.

Concern about Being Impacted by Natural Disasters

- Extremely concerned: 22%
- Very concerned: 33%
- Somewhat concerned: 26%
- Not very concerned: 8%
- Not at all concerned: 11%

NPD9. How concerned are you about being impacted by natural disasters that is, earthquakes, floods, or wildfires? (n=1,000)
One in five (23%) California residents age 45+ reported having seen or experienced racism very often or often.

**Observed or Experienced Discrimination**

- **Racism**: 23%
- **Ageism, in general, which is the stereotyping or discrimination against people on the basis of their age**: 19%
- **Sexism**: 17%
- **Age discrimination in the workplace**: 16%

**FP16.** Discrimination can take a variety of forms in society. How often do you personally see or experience the following types of discrimination? (Percent ‘very often’ or ‘often’) (n=1,000)
Survey Results for California-Wealth Questions

Issues That Impact California Adults Age 45 and Older
California residents age 45+ find many economic issues important, particularly those related to retirement and financial security.

**Important Economic Issues**

- Having enough income or savings to retire: 93%
- Having financial security throughout your life: 92%
- Being able to afford groceries or other household necessities: 91%
- Having adequate Social Security benefits: 88%
- Having affordable utilities: 85%
- Protecting yourself against consumer fraud: 84%
- Protecting yourself against unfair financial practices: 83%
- Being able to stop working for pay at the age you want: 77%
- Having online security: 73%
- Protection from age discrimination: 69%
- Having good employment opportunities in your community: 63%
- Maintaining relevant job skills and experience: 56%

*Note: For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=1,000)*
UTILITIES

An increase in utility bills would be a major problem for over two out of five (41%) California residents age 45+.

Impact of an Increase in Utility Costs

- Major problem: 41%
- Minor problem: 38%
- Not a problem: 19%
- Don't know/refused: 27%

GUTIL1. Thinking about your monthly costs for household utilities including heating, cooling, electricity, and natural gas, would an increase in your utility bill be a major problem, minor problem, or not a problem for you? (n=1,000)
Only 30 percent of California residents age 45+ feel that they understand their utility rates and fees very well.

CAUT-1. How well do you understand the rates and fees you are being charged for your utilities? (n=1,000)

- Very well: 47%
- Somewhat well: 22%
- Not well at all: 30%
- Not applicable: 0%

Understanding of Utility Rates and Fees
Six in ten (61%) California residents age 45+ do not believe state elected officials are doing enough to keep utilities affordable.
In November 2021, AARP engaged ANR Market Research Consultants to conduct a quantitative research study among California residents age 45 and older. Topics included healthcare, the economy, financial issues, independent living, long-term care, caregiving, and retirement issues.

1,000 Interviews
California Adults Age 45+
Fielded in November 2021

ANR completed a total of 1,000 interviews (403 via landline telephone, 215 via cell phone, and 382 online). Respondents were screened to meet the following criteria:

- Age 45+
- Resident of California

Survey length averaged 23.0 minutes by telephone and 20.4 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 California residents age 45 and older, purchased from Aristotle, and online sample provided by Fulcrum. A total of 62,074 records were utilized. The list of 15,708,017 California residents age 45 and older was randomly divided into 15,709 replicates of 1,000 records for telephone dialing. Initially, 20 replicates were released for calling, with additional replicates being opened as necessary. In all, 56 replicates representing a total of 55,361 records were dialed to complete the telephone portion of this study.

The study’s sample of 1,000 respondents yields a maximum statistical error of ±3.1% 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 ±3.1 percentage points of the results obtained had everyone in the population been interviewed.)

Interview Methodology

The survey was launched on November 10, 2021 and closed on November 19, 2021, offered in English, Spanish, and Mandarin.

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.
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.