VITAL VOICES

Issues That Impact North Carolina Adults Age 45 and Older, November 2021

DOI: https://doi.org/10.26419/res.00351.255
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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 North Carolina-Health Questions

Issues That Impact North Carolina Adults Age 45 and Older
ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE

North Carolina residents age 45+ think many healthcare issues are important, with staying mentally sharp topping the list.

### Important Healthcare Issues

- Staying mentally sharp: 95%
- Having adequate health insurance coverage: 94%
- Staying physically healthy: 93%
- Having Medicare benefits available to you in the future: 88%
- Paying for health care expenses: 85%
- Paying for prescription drugs: 79%

I1. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=802)
CARE1. Are you currently providing unpaid help to a relative or friend 18 years or older to help them take care of themselves? (n=802)

One-quarter (31%) of North Carolina residents age 45+ are currently providing unpaid help to an adult relative or friend.

Percent Providing Unpaid Adult Care

- Yes: 31%
- No: 69%
Over one-third (41%) of North Carolina residents age 45+ who are not currently unpaid caregivers have provided this type of care in the past.
As of November 2021, over three-quarters (82%) of North Carolina residents age 45+ had gotten the COVID-19 vaccine (or plan to get it).

COVID-19 Vaccination Status (as of November 2021)

- Yes (already got): 79%
- Yes (plan to): 15%
- No: 3%
- Don't know/ refused: 3%
COVID-19

As of November 2021, 82% of vaccinated North Carolina residents age 45+ also have received the COVID-19 booster (or plan to get it).

COVID-19 Booster Shot Status
(as of November 2021)

- Yes (already got): 42%
- Yes (plan to): 40%
- No: 9%
- Not sure: 9%

CVD-11a. Have you gotten, or do you plan to get the booster when available? (n=660)
Survey Results for North Carolina-Wealth Questions

Issues That Impact North Carolina Adults Age 45 and Older
North Carolina residents age 45+ find many economic issues important, particularly those related to retirement and Social Security.

**Important Economic Issues**

- Having enough income or savings to retire: 91%
- Having adequate Social Security benefits: 90%
- Protecting yourself against unfair financial practices: 86%
- Protecting yourself against consumer fraud: 86%
- Being able to stop working for pay at the age you want: 78%
- Having online security: 74%
- Protection from age discrimination: 69%
- Having good employment opportunities in your community: 66%
- Maintaining relevant job skills and experience: 53%

**Note:** For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=802)
As of November 2021, 23% of North Carolina residents age 45+ have tapped into their savings or 401(k) as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Retirement Plans

- Tapped into savings or a 401(k) since March 2020: 23%
- Stopped contributions to investments: 21%
- Delayed retirement: 16%
- Put off buying or selling your home: 10%

RET23. Has the COVID pandemic caused you to make any changes to your retirement plans, like...? (Percent 'yes') (n=434)
LTCC1. The cost of nursing home care in North Carolina is around $150,000 a year. Knowing this, how confident are you that you would be able to afford nursing home care for one year, if you needed it? (n=802)

About half (49%) of North Carolina residents age 45+ are not confident at all about being able to afford nursing home care for one year if needed.

Confidence in Being Able to Afford Nursing Home Care for One Year

- Very confident/ somewhat confident 49%
- Not very confident 32%
- Not confident at all 16%
- Don't know/ refused 4%
LTCC2. Which of the following do you think you would rely on to pay for nursing home care if you become sick, disabled, or unable to care for yourself? Would you rely on [ITEM]?
(Percent ‘yes’) (n=802)

Over half (62%) of North Carolina residents age 45+ would rely on state government programs to pay for nursing home care if they needed it.

Means to Pay for Nursing Home Care, if Needed

- State government programs: 62%
- Medicaid: 59%
- Your savings: 53%
- Your income: 51%
- Long-term care insurance: 44%
- Assistance from family members: 39%
Survey Results for North Carolina-Self Questions

Issues That Impact North Carolina Adults Age 45 and Older
Getting around independently is extremely or very important to a majority (87%) of North Carolina residents age 45+.

### Important Independent Living Issues

- Getting to the places you need to go independently: 87%
- Staying in your own home as you get older: 86%
- Caring for a loved one: 85%
- Having high quality long-term care in your community: 80%
- Living in a community that meets your needs as you get older: 75%
- Staying in your own community as you get older: 71%

11. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=802)
North Carolina residents age 45+ have a variety of long-term care and aging concerns.

Long-Term Care and Aging Concerns

- Having long-term care or home health services available: 69%
- Providing support, help, or caregiving for a loved one: 68%
- Continuing to drive or get around as you get older: 67%

**GLTC1.** How concerned are you about the following? (Percent ‘extremely concerned’ or ‘very concerned’) (n=802)
A majority (84%) of North Carolina residents age 45+ agree that having a purpose in life keeps you engaged and fulfilled.

**Views on Aging**

- Having a purpose in life keeps you engaged and fulfilled. 84%
- Aging isn’t good or bad, it’s just a natural part of life. 82%
- People should not let age define how they live. 80%
- People should feel good about their age. 79%
- It is a privilege to grow old. 74%
- Old age is a depressing stage of life. 18%

FP7. To what degree do each of the following statements describe your personal view? (Percent ‘describes my view perfectly’ or ‘describes my view very well’) (n=802)
MENTAL HEALTH

Over one-third (40%) of North Carolina residents age 45+ have experienced financial problems in the past year.

Life Stressors in the Past Year

- Money problems not related to loss of income or a new expense. Money is just tight: 40%
- A major personal injury, illness, or disease diagnosis or personal health problem—not including a disability: 28%
- Stress related to your job: 25%
- Major family conflict: 20%
- Went from living with someone to living on your own: 11%
- Another major life stressor in the last year [SPECIFY]: 20%

ISO11. Have you experienced any of the following in the past year, since November 2020? (Percent ‘yes’) (n=802)
Twelve percent (12%) of North Carolina residents age 45+ feel that they lack companionship very often.

Frequency of Feeling Isolated

- Lacking companionship: 12%
- Feeling left out: 8%
- Feeling isolated from others: 8%
LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

One-third (33%) of North Carolina residents age 45+ rate their community as excellent or very good for having continuing education or social clubs to pursue new interests, hobbies, or passions.

Quality of Community Activities

- Continuing education classes or social clubs to pursue new interests, hobbies, or passions: 33%
- A variety of cultural activities for diverse populations: 30%
- Activities that involve both younger and older people: 29%
- Activities that offer senior discounts: 28%
- Activities geared specifically toward older adults: 28%

ISO6. Would you rate your community as excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor on having the following? (Percent 'excellent' or 'very good') (n=802)
INTEREST IN EVENTS

Over two-thirds (71%) of North Carolina residents age 45+ would be interested in attending events or workshops on learning and staying mentally sharp.

Topics of Interest

- Learning and staying mentally sharp: 71%
- Health or wellness: 59%
- Culture: 57%
- Issue or policy areas: 54%
- Media or entertainment: 52%
- Food or cooking: 51%
- Technology: 49%
- What’s going on in your local community: 48%
- Connecting with others in person or online: 42%
- Environmental issues: 41%
- Politics or current affairs: 41%
- Personal finances: 40%
- Parenting, family, children, or grandchildren: 37%
- Lifestyle, such as fashion, shopping, or sports: 36%
- Employment trends, job opportunities, or career growth: 24%

ISO51. Different people have different passions in life, or topics that interest them. How about you? Would you be interested in attending events or workshops on the following? (Percent ‘yes’) (n=802)
In November 2021, AARP engaged ANR Market Research Consultants to conduct a quantitative research study among North Carolina residents age 45 and older. Topics included healthcare, the economy, financial issues, independent living, long-term care, caregiving, and retirement issues.

**804 Interviews**
**North Carolina Adults Age 45+**
**Fielded in November 2021**

ANR completed a total of 802 interviews (355 via landline telephone, 230 via cell phone, and 217 online). Respondents were screened to meet the following criteria:

- Age 45+
- Resident of North Carolina

Survey length averaged 22.0 minutes by telephone and 18.2 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 North Carolina residents age 45 and older, purchased from Aristotle, and online sample provided by Fulcrum. A total of 50,209 records were utilized. The list of 4,535,877 North Carolina residents age 45 and older was randomly divided into 4,539 replicates of 1,000 records for telephone dialing. Initially, 20 replicates were released for calling, with additional replicates being opened as necessary. In all, 46 replicates representing a total of 45,008 records were dialed to complete the telephone portion of this study.

The study’s sample of 802 respondents yields a maximum statistical error of ±3.5% 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 ±3.5 percentage points of the results obtained had everyone in the population been interviewed.)

Interview Methodology

The survey was launched on November 15, 2021 and closed on November 30, 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 or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.
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This research was designed and executed by AARP Research.