VITAL VOICES

Issues That Impact Rhode Island 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. 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 Rhode Island - Health Questions

Issues That Impact Rhode Island Adults Age 45 and Older
ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE

Rhode Island residents age 45+ think many healthcare issues are important, with staying mentally sharp and having adequate health insurance coverage topping the list.

Important Healthcare Issues

- Staying mentally sharp: 93%
- Having adequate health insurance coverage: 93%
- Staying physically healthy: 92%
- Having Medicare benefits available to you in the future: 91%
- Paying for health care expenses: 86%
- Paying for prescription drugs: 76%

I1. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=705)
CAREGIVING

About one-third (34%) of Rhode Island residents age 45+ are currently providing unpaid help to an adult relative or friend.

Percent Providing Unpaid Adult Care

- **Yes**: 34%
- **No**: 66%

CARE1. Are you currently providing unpaid help to a relative or friend 18 years or older to help them take care of themselves? (n=705)
More than two out of five (44%) Rhode Island residents age 45+ who are not currently unpaid caregivers have provided this type of care in the past.
Providing care for a loved one is extremely or very important to the majority (86%) of Rhode Island residents age 45+.

Importance of Providing Care for a Loved One

- Extremely/very important: 86%
- Somewhat important: 7%
- Not very/not at all important: 2%
- Don't know/refused: 0%

CARE37. If you or a loved one needed help when the basic tasks of life become more difficult due to aging or illness, where would you prefer to receive that care or help for yourself or a loved one? (n=705)
LONG-TERM CARE

The majority (87%) of Rhode Island residents age 45+ would prefer to receive care or help for themselves or loved ones at home with caregiver assistance.

Preferred Long-Term Care Setting

- At home with caregiver assistance
- In an assisted living facility or group home
- In a nursing home
- Don't know/ refused

CARE37. If you or a loved one needed help when the basic tasks of life become more difficult due to aging or illness, where would you prefer to receive that care or help for yourself or a loved one? (n=705)
LONG-TERM CARE

Nearly all (94%) of Rhode Island residents age 45+ strongly or somewhat support the state reallocating funds so that more people can be cared for in their homes.

Support For State Reallocation of Long-Term Care Funds

- Strongly support/ somewhat support: 94%
- Somewhat oppose/ strongly oppose: 4%
- Don't know/ refused: 3%

LTC-TX. Currently, Rhode Island spends about one-quarter of its long-term care funds on home care services and about three-quarters of its funds on nursing home care. How strongly would you support or oppose the state reallocating some of its long-term care funds so that more people could be cared for in their homes instead of nursing homes? (n=705)
In the last two years, two in ten (20%) Rhode Island residents age 45+ either considered not filling or decided not to fill a prescription because of its cost.

Considered Not Filling (or Decided Not to Fill) a Prescription Due to Cost

- Yes: 80%
- No: 20%
- Don’t know/ refused: 0%
Nine in ten (90%) Rhode Island residents age 45+ either strongly or somewhat agree that drug prices can be lowered without harming innovation.

Agreement That Drug Prices Can Be Lowered Without Harming Innovation

- Strongly agree/ somewhat agree
- Don't know/ refused
- Somewhat disagree/ strongly disagree

PER-RI2. People say that drug prices in the U.S., which are 3 times higher than those in other countries, can be lowered without harming innovation of new medicines. Do you agree or disagree that prices could be lowered without harming innovation? (n=705)
CVD-11. Have you gotten or do you plan to get the COVID-19 vaccine? (n=705)

As of December 2021, 87% of Rhode Island residents age 45+ have gotten the COVID-19 vaccine (or plan to get it).

COVID-19 Vaccination Status (as of December 2021)

- Yes (already got): 86%
- Yes (plan to): 4%
- No: 9%
- Don’t know/ refused: 4%
Survey Results for Rhode Island-Wealth Questions

Issues That Impact Rhode Island Adults Age 45 and Older
Rhode Island 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: 93%
- Having adequate Social Security benefits: 89%
- Protecting yourself against consumer fraud: 81%
- Protecting yourself against unfair financial practices: 81%
- Being able to stop working for pay at the age you want: 76%
- Having online security: 68%
- Being able to save money for retirement through an employer: 64%
- Protection from age discrimination: 63%
- Having good employment opportunities in your community: 58%
- Maintaining relevant job skills and experience: 50%

\( \text{Note: For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent 'extremely important' or 'very important') (n=varies)} \)
Rhode Island residents age 45+ have mixed levels of confidence regarding having enough money to live comfortably throughout their retirement years.

**Confidence in Retirement Money Lasting**

- Ratings of 1-3: 38%
- Ratings of 4-7: 14%
- Ratings of 8-10: 47%
- Don't know/ refused

**RET3.** Overall, how confident are you that you will have enough money to live comfortably throughout your retirement years? Please use a 1 to 10 scale, where 1 means you are not confident at all and 10 means you are extremely confident. (n=705)
RET15. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Rhode Island elected officials should support legislation that makes it easier for workers, especially the self-employed and small business employees, to save their own money for retirement so they can take care of themselves in their later years.” (n=705)

The vast majority (88%) of Rhode Island residents age 45+ strongly or somewhat agree that state officials should support retirement savings legislation.

Agreement that State Officials Should Support Retirement Savings Legislation

- Strongly agree/ somewhat agree: 88%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 2%
- Somewhat disagree/ strongly disagree: 8%
- Don’t know/ refused: 2%
Survey Results for Rhode Island-Livable Community Questions

Issues That Impact Rhode Island Adults Age 45 and Older
Independent living is extremely or very important to most Rhode Island residents age 45+.

**Important Independent Living Issues**

- Staying in your own home as you get older: 85%
- Getting to the places you need to go independently: 82%
- Having high quality long-term care in your community: 80%

11. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=705)
Eight in ten (80%) Rhode Island residents age 45+ are homeowners.
PROBLEMS FACING RHODE ISLANDERS

The availability of affordable housing is considered a very serious problem by nearly half (49%) of Rhode Island residents age 45+.

AF. How serious a problem do you think each of the following issues are for Rhode Islanders like you? (Percent ‘very serious problem’) (n=705)
HOUSING

Over half (54%) of Rhode Island residents age 45+ would consider creating an ADU if the space was available.

Consider Creating an ADU

- Yes: 54%
- No: 37%
- Already have one: 7%
- Don't know/ refused: 2%

ADU-RI. If you had the space to create an ADU within your home or on your property, would you consider doing that, or do you already have one? (n=705)
A strong majority (84%) of Rhode Island residents age 45+ strongly or somewhat support town ordinances that make it easier for property owners to create an ADU.

Support for Town Ordinances That Make It Easier to Create an ADU

- Strongly support/ somewhat support: 84%
- Somewhat oppose/ strongly oppose: 10%
- Neither: 4%
- Don’t know/ refused: 2%

ADU-3. Do you support or oppose town ordinances that make it easier for property owners to create an ADU on their property? (n=705)
Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Rhode Island residents age 45+ are extremely or very concerned about having streets that are safe for everyone to use.

**Community Concerns**

- Having streets that are safe for everyone to use: 64%
- Being able to afford to remain in your home as you age: 55%
- Being able to find affordable housing if you needed to move: 55%
- Having access to transportation if you are not able to drive: 52%
- Being able to afford modifications to your home so that it is easier to live in as you age: 41%
- Being connected with others in your community and having opportunities to socialize as you age: 30%

LIVCOMM1. How concerned are you about the following? (Percent ‘extremely concerned’ or ‘very concerned’) (n=705)
A variety of factors may impact the ability of Rhode Island residents age 45+ to age in place, including increasing rent and property taxes.

**Factors Impacting the Ability to Age in Place**

- Increasing rent (n=129): 60%
- Increasing property taxes (n=562): 49%
- Heating and cooling costs: 41%
- Increasing maintenance costs: 33%
- Repairs and modifications that are needed so you can continue to live there safely: 32%

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=705)
In the past six months, one-third (36%) of Rhode Island residents age 45+ have had contact with family, friends, or neighbors only once a week (or less often).

Frequency of Contact with Family, Friends, or Neighbors

- Every day: 33%
- Several times a week: 32%
- Once a week: 17%
- Once every 2 or 3 weeks: 7%
- Once a month: 6%
- Less than monthly: 5%
- Never: 1%
- Don’t know/ refused: 1%

ISO1_1A. During the last six months, how often did you have contact with family, friends, or neighbors who do not live with you? (n=705)
One in ten (10%) Rhode Island residents age 45+ reported that they often feel isolated from others.

Frequency of Feeling Isolated From Others

- Hardly ever: 65%
- Some of the time: 25%
- Often: 10%
As of December 2021, Rhode Island residents age 45+ reported a variety of barriers that prevent them from socializing and connecting with others.

**Barriers to Connecting With Others**

- Not feeling comfortable going: 28%
- Finding events and places to go that interest you: 26%
- Cost of going out: 25%
- Your health or other physical limitation: 24%
- Not having someone to go with: 19%
- Lack of transportation: 11%
- Not knowing how to use Facebook or other social media to connect with others online: 9%

*ISO-RI. Do any of the following prevent you from socializing and connecting to others? (Percent ‘yes’) (n=705)*
Eight in ten (82%) Rhode Island residents age 45+ feel they are very or somewhat prepared to get through a natural disaster safely.
Half (54%) of Rhode Island residents age 45+ have emergency plans in place, in the event of a natural disaster.
Two in ten (20%) Rhode Island residents age 45+ very often or often personally see or experience ageism.

<table>
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<th>Frequency of Personally Seeing or Experiencing Age Discrimination</th>
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<td>Ageism, in general, which is the stereotyping or discrimination against people on the basis of their age</td>
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<td>Age discrimination in the workplace</td>
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**FP16.** Discrimination can take a variety of forms in society. How often do you personally see or experience...? (Percent ‘very often’ or ‘often’) (n=705)
VOTER ACCESS

95% of the Rhode Island residents age 45+ report they are registered to vote.

Registered to Vote in Rhode Island

- Yes: 95%
- No: 5%
- Don't know/ refused:

S4. Are you registered to vote in Rhode Island? (n=705)
About half (55%) of Rhode Island registered voters age 45+ prefer to vote at their polling place on election day in general elections while 43% prefer to vote early.
Nearly equal percentages of Rhode Island voters 45+ voted early in November 2020 as did in-person on election day.

Voting in the November 2020 Election

- 48% In-person ON election day
- 29% In-person BEFORE election day
- 18% By mailing or dropping off an absentee ballot before election day
- 4% Did not vote
- 4% Don't know/ refused

P-E1. In the November 2020 election, did you vote…?
(n=670)
RI-1. In 2020, the state of Rhode Island made temporary provisions to allow voters to vote early, in-person and by mail. Would you support or oppose making these changes permanently so that voters have more choices in the way they can vote? (n=670)

Two-thirds (66%) of Rhode Island voters age 45+ strongly or somewhat support making permanent provisions to allow voters more choices in the way they can vote.

- Strongly support/somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose/strongly oppose
- Don’t know/refused
In December 2021, AARP engaged ANR Market Research Consultants to conduct a quantitative research study among Rhode Island residents age 45 and older. Topics included healthcare, the economy, financial issues, independent living, long-term care, caregiving, and retirement issues.

705 Interviews
Rhode Island Adults Age 45+
Fielded in December 2021

ANR completed a total of 705 interviews (390 via landline telephone, 225 via cell phone, and 90 online). Respondents were screened to meet the following criteria:

• Age 45+
• Resident of Rhode Island

Survey length averaged 22.1 minutes by telephone and 18.7 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 Rhode Island residents age 45 and older, purchased from Aristotle, and online sample provided by Fulcrum. A total of 25,712 records were utilized. The list of 469,829 Rhode Island residents age 45 and older was randomly divided into 470 replicates of 1,000 records for telephone dialing. Initially, 20 replicates were released for calling, with additional replicates being opened as necessary. In all, 24 replicates representing a total of 23,386 records were dialed to complete the telephone portion of this study.

The study’s sample of 705 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 December 8, 2021 and closed on December 15, 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.