



# **Livability For All** **in** **Dallas**

**An Age-Friendly Community Survey  
of AARP Members Age 50-plus**



**2016**

# Background

The World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Age-Friendly Cities and Communities project was created to help cities prepare for the rapid aging of populations and the increase in urbanization.<sup>1</sup> The program targets the environmental, social, and economic factors that influence the health and well-being of older adults.

The WHO has identified eight areas that influence the quality of life of those in a community, particularly older adults. The eight areas or domains are: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Housing, Transportation, Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation and Employment, Communication and Information, and Community and Health Services.

AARP Research developed a survey instrument that captures the WHO eight areas of age-friendly community in order to help communities: (1) establish a baseline with regards to older adults being able to age in place, and (2) conduct a community needs assessment to identify and prioritize areas of focus.

To minimize the survey length as well as respondent burden, the AARP survey encapsulates the WHO eight areas of livability in a slightly different structure.

According to the AARP survey and for the purposes of this report, the eight domains of age-friendly community are:

1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
2. Housing Features
3. Transportation and Streets
4. Job Opportunities
5. Community Information
6. Volunteering and Civic Engagement
7. Social Participation, Inclusion, and Education Opportunities
8. Health and Wellness

These survey findings reflect individual preferences and help policymakers, planners and others better understand the needs of an aging population in order to begin to brainstorm steps and policies that can be taken to improve livability for all.



<sup>1</sup> Learn more at [www.agefriendlyworld.org](http://www.agefriendlyworld.org)

# Executive Summary

**For AARP Members in Dallas, the most important age-friendly community features center around street maintenance and safety for all users, quality and convenient healthcare services, and well-maintained properties.**

A livable community provides resources that allow residents to age-in-place, and fosters residents' engagement in their community's civic, economic, and social life. The **"2016 AARP Age-Friendly Community Survey of Dallas, Texas AARP members"** was commissioned to help Dallas decision makers achieve the goal of livability.

Survey results show that Dallas AARP members age 50-plus have deep roots in their community. Half (52%) have lived in their community for over 25 years. Most do not plan to move, and eight in ten (84%) say their community is a good, very good or excellent place for older people to live.

Based on the eight domains of age-friendly community, survey findings also help identify the community features that are most important in Dallas:



On average, **Transportation** features are rated the most important among livable community domains for Dallas AARP members. Specifically, survey respondents consider it important to have special transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities. It is also considered highly important to ensure streets are well-maintained, intersections are well-lit and safe for all users, and traffic signs are easy to read.



**Health and Wellness** overall ranks a close second area of importance. Items that top the list in this area of community life relate primarily to accessibility and quality of health services. It is highly important to have hospitals and facilities that are well-maintained, and emergency centers that are convenient; as well as to have the professionals and staff that can deliver health services and information that is respectful, helpful and easy.



Additional community features ranking in the top tier of importance come from the **Outdoor Spaces & Buildings** and **Housing** domains: having well-maintained homes and properties, and sidewalks that are in good condition.

More information on the importance of community features by each of the eight age-friendly community domains can be found in the following pages of this report.

# Executive Summary cont.

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**The top reported need gaps in Dallas are concentrated in the areas of Community Information and Job Opportunities. Home repair services and volunteer transportation also rank highly.**

In order to identify the needs of Dallas AARP members age 50-plus, survey respondents were asked about the importance of a community feature and service, then they were asked if these features and services existed in their community. These questions were then paired together to identify community needs or "gaps."

While features of Transportation and Health dominate the list of what is important for an age-friendly Dallas according to AARP members, the largest community need gaps are concentrated primarily in the areas of Community Information and Job Opportunities. Additional needs are identified for Volunteer and Civic Engagement, and Housing.



Disseminating **Community Information** in ways that is friendly to older and potentially home-bound residents is a need. Survey responses identify salient gaps in having community information that is delivered in person, from a centralized source, automated and printed in large lettering.



**Job Opportunities** for older adults is an area of unmet need for 50-plus adults in Dallas. Job training specifically for older workers, jobs adapted to needs of the disabled, and job flexibility are all among the largest need gaps.



The chief need for connecting older residents to **Volunteer and Engagement** opportunities is providing transportation to and from volunteer activities for those who need it.



One feature of the **Housing** domain rises to the top of unmet needs that would help residents stay in their own homes: home repair services for low income and older adults.

More information on the community need gaps by each of the eight age-friendly community domains can be found in the following pages of this report.





# Community Experience

From a simple perspective, a "livable community" is a place that allows individuals to age-in-place. A comprehensive definition of a livable community is one that is "safe and secure, has affordable and appropriate housing and transportation options, and offers supportive community features and services. Once in place, those resources enhance personal independence; allow residents to age in place; and foster residents' engagement in the community's civic, economic, and social life."

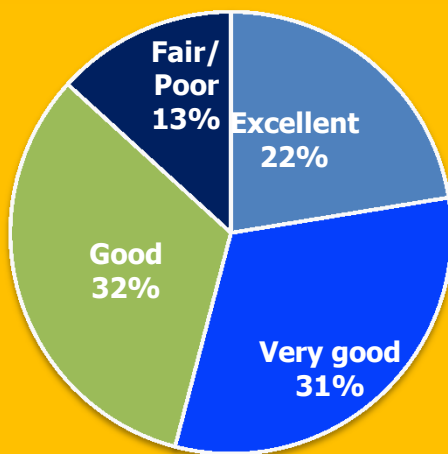
Across the nation, individuals make connections and commitments to homes, friendships, community organizations, and local social ties within their community and want to age-in-place. Dallas residents are no different.

# Community Experience

About half (52%) of Dallas AARP members age 50-plus have lived in their community for over 25 years and most say their community is a good place to age in place.

Dallas AARP members have deep roots in their community. One in every two have lived in their community for over 25 years. One in five (19%) has lived in their community between 15 and 25 years, and three in ten (29%) have lived in their community between 0 and 15 years.

How would you rate Dallas as a place for people to live as they age?



Four in five (84%) AARP members in Dallas say their community is an excellent (22%), very good (31%) or good (32%) place for older people to live as they age. Thirteen percent (13%) give it an assessment of fair or poor.

**Most Dallas AARP members say living independently in their own home is more important than living in their community, and most are unlikely to move anytime soon.**

Dallas AARP members want to live independently in their own home for as long they can. While about half (48%) say it is extremely or very important to stay in their community as they age, nearly all respondents (84%), say it is extremely or very important to stay in their own home as they age.



Important to stay in your own home as you age

84%

Important to age in your own community

48%

Unlikely to move to a different home in the same community

61%

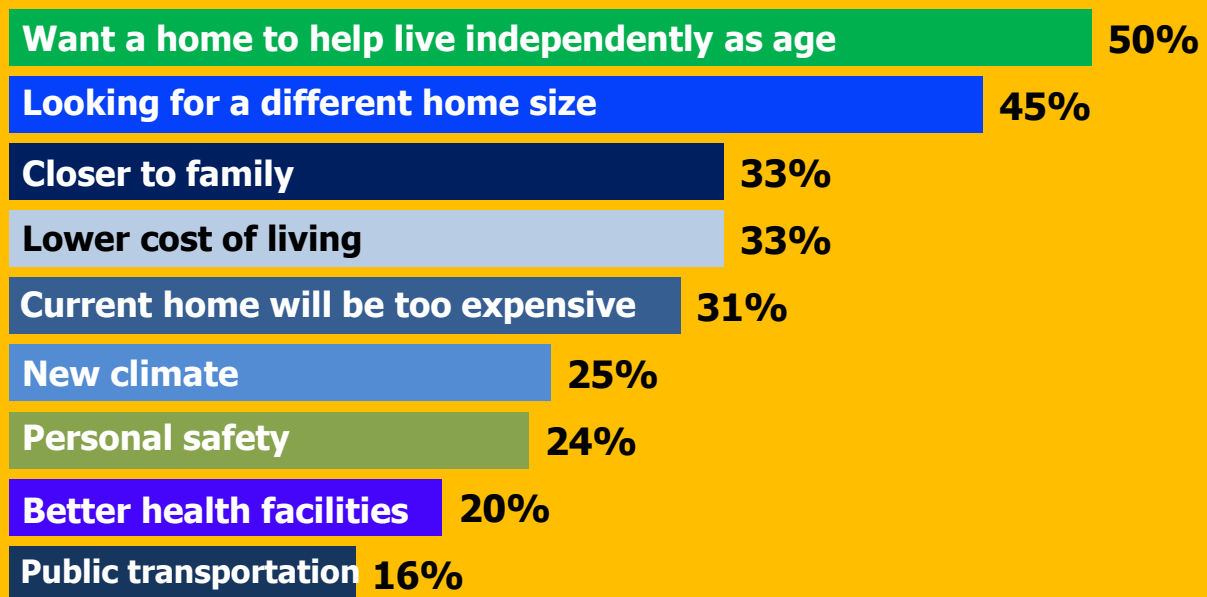
Unlikely to move to a different home in a new community

60%

# Community Experience

**A desire for age-friendly housing and right-sized housing is most likely to impact the decision of AARP members to move out of Dallas.**

If Dallas AARP members were to consider moving during retirement, housing would be the most likely influencing factors. About half say that they would move because they want a home that would help them live independently as they age (50%) or a different sized home (45%) or a different sized home that will meet their needs (45%).

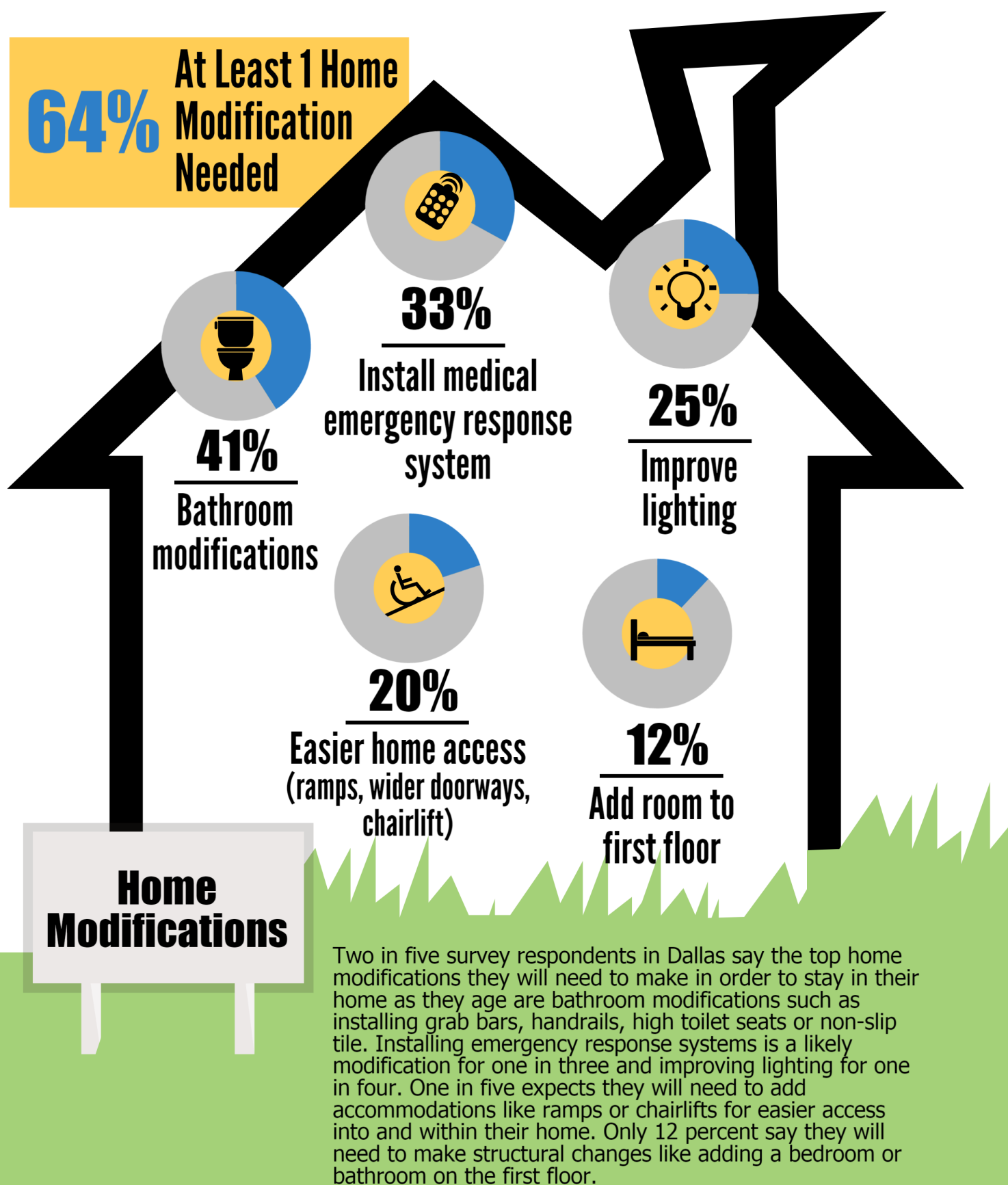


**Most Dallas AARP members age 50-plus own single family homes which may require modification to support aging-in-place.**

Most respondents (74%) own their homes while about one in six (18%) rents. The majority live in a single family home (67%). One in seven lives in an apartment (14%) and one in eight lives in an townhouse or condominium (12%). While most say they want to age-in-place, many will need to make home modifications in order to do so.

Type of Home	
Single Family Home	67%
Apartment	14%
Townhouse/Duplex	6%
Coop/Condo	6%
Mobile home	1%

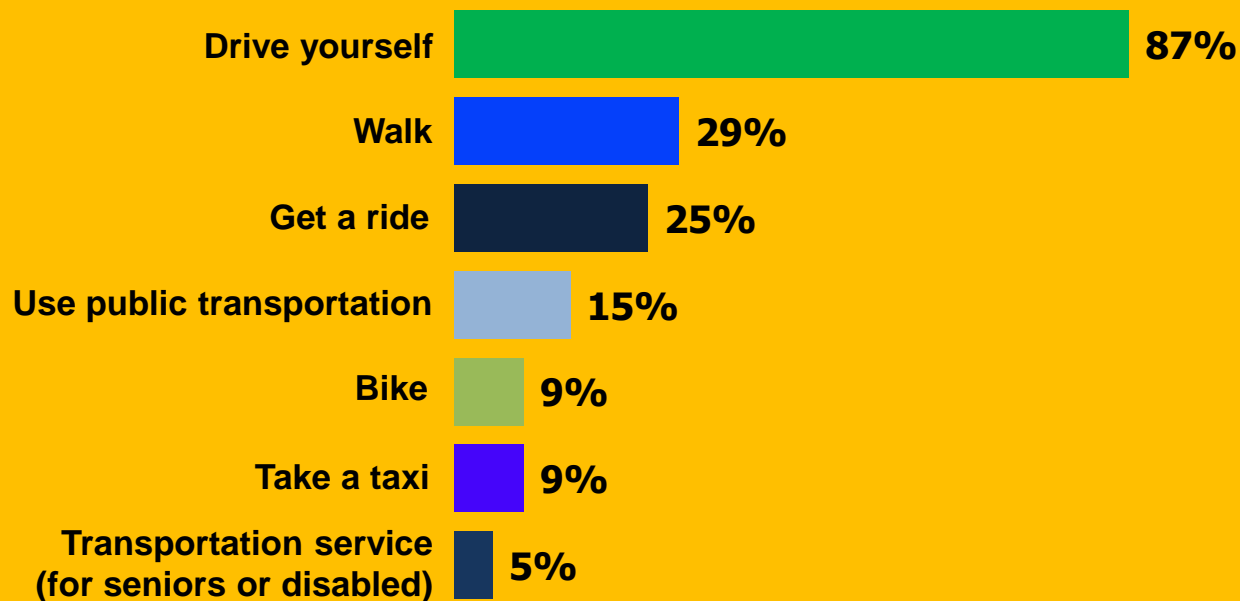
# Many Dallas homes will need modifications to enable aging in place.



# Community Experience

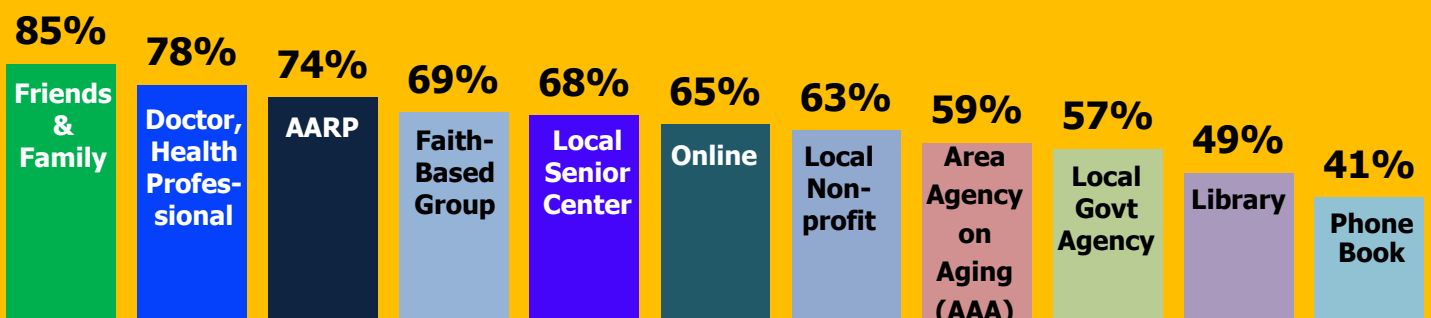
## Most drive themselves when they need to get around.

Nearly nine in ten (87%) say they drive themselves when they need to get around for things like shopping, visiting the doctor, or running errands and one in four will get a ride. Almost one in three (29%) use walking as a means of transportation for daily destinations.



## Dallas AARP members are most likely to turn to people they know for information on services for older adults.

Eight in ten say they would turn to family, friends, neighbors (85%) or their doctor or health professional (78%) for information about services for older adults such as caregiving, home delivered meals, home repair, medical transport, or social activities. About seven in ten would turn to AARP, a local senior center, a faith-based organization, or simply search the internet. About six in ten would consult the Area Agency on Aging or a local government agency such as the Health Department.





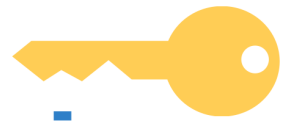


# Community Features

The formula for what makes a community livable isn't particularly complex. For the most part, the features are fairly simple. In a livable community, people of all ages can go for a walk, safely cross the street, ride a bike, get around without a car, live comfortably, work or volunteer, enjoy public places, socialize, spend time outdoors, be entertained, go shopping, buy healthy food, find the services they need, and make their city, town, or neighborhood a lifelong home. A community that includes all of these livable community features can be great for people of all ages.

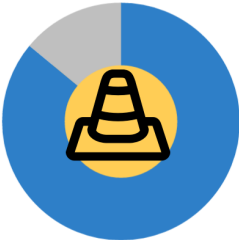
Dallas AARP members rated their community on 66 characteristics across eight domains (*Health and Wellness, Transportation, Housing, Outdoor Spaces, Social Participation, Volunteering and Civic Engagement, Community Information, and Job Opportunities*) in order to identify important and available community features.

# Summary of Importance: 8 Age-Friendly Community Domains



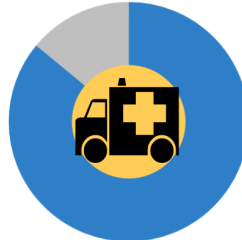
Average Importance Rating of Community Features within Each Domain  
(on a 5 point scale where 5 = Extremely Important and 1 = Not At All Important)

## Transportation



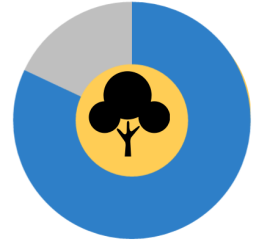
**4.29**

## Health and Wellness



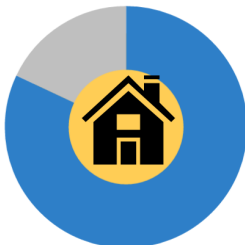
**4.27**

## Outdoor Spaces



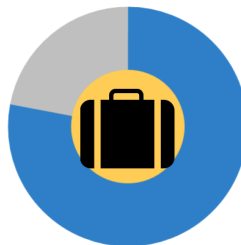
**4.10**

## Housing



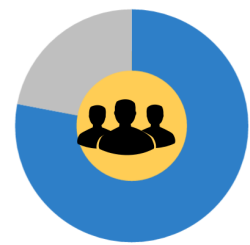
**4.07**

## Job Opportunities



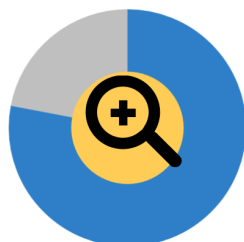
**3.93**

## Social Participation



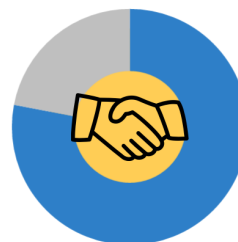
**3.89**

## Community Info



**3.87**

## Volunteer & Civic Engagement



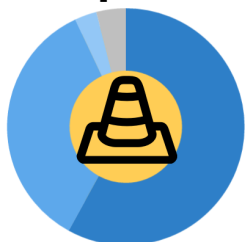
**3.86**

# Summary of Importance: Community Features by Domain



Top Important Feature Within Each Community Domain  
(% of respondents who rated feature ■ Extremely ■ Very ■ Somewhat Important)

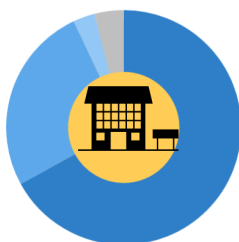
## Transportation



**96%**

Well-maintained streets

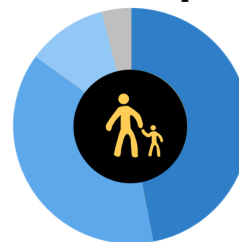
## Health and Wellness



**96%**

Well-maintained hospitals and facilities

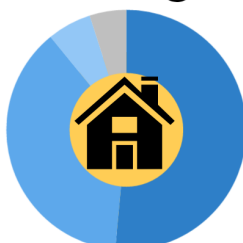
## Outdoor Spaces



**96%**

Sidewalks that are in good condition

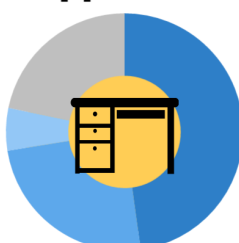
## Housing



**96%**

Well-maintained homes and properties

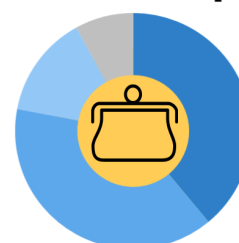
## Job Opportunities



**86%**

Jobs that meet the needs of people with disabilities

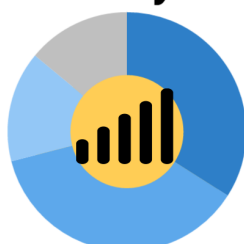
## Social Participation



**92%**

Affordable social activities

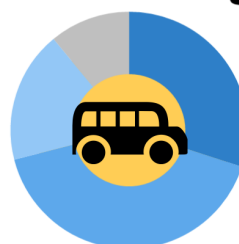
## Community Info



**87%**

Free internet in public spaces

## Volunteer & Civic Engagement



**88%**

Transportation to and from activities



# Top Important Community Features

## Top Tier of Important Items Among All 66 Features in 8 Domains

(Percent of respondents who rated the item as Extremely/Very/Somewhat Important)

Top Overall Community Features	Importance	Domain
Well-maintained streets	96%	Transportation
Well-lit, safe streets and intersections	96%	Transportation
Easy to read traffic signs	96%	Transportation
Special transportation services for people with disabilities and older adults	96%	Transportation
Well-maintained hospitals and health care facilities	96%	Health and Wellness
A variety of health care professionals	96%	Health and Wellness
Respectful and helpful hospital and clinic staff	96%	Health and Wellness
Conveniently located emergency care centers	96%	Health and Wellness
Easy to find information on local health and supportive services	96%	Health and Wellness
Well-maintained homes and properties	96%	Housing
Sidewalks that are in good condition	96%	Outdoor Spaces and Buildings





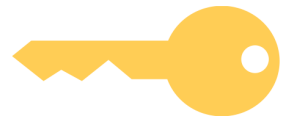
# Community Needs

Every community has its own culture, social structure, traditions, history, and needs. A community needs assessment is a tool to understand and identify community needs defined as the gap between what is and what should be. In order to identify the needs of Dallas AARP members, survey respondents were asked how important community features and services were to them. Then, they were asked if these features and services existed in their community. These questions were then paired together to identify community needs or “gaps” between the importance of a feature or service and its existence in the community.

To compare these questions, respondents who said a feature or service is extremely, very, or somewhat important were aggregated and then compared to respondents who said whether or not the feature or service existed in their community.

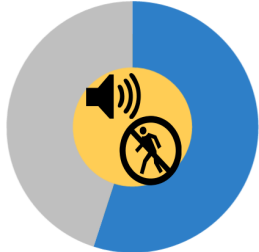


# Summary of Needs: Community Features by Domain



Top Community Need Gap Within Each Domain  
(Need Gap = % Extremely/Very/Somewhat Important - % Present )

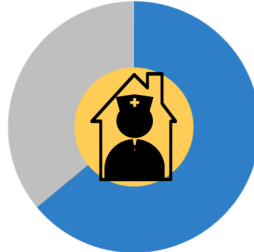
## Transportation



**55%**

Audio/visual  
pedestrian crossings

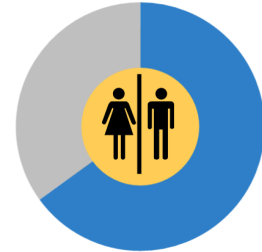
## Health and Wellness



**64%**

Affordable home health  
care providers

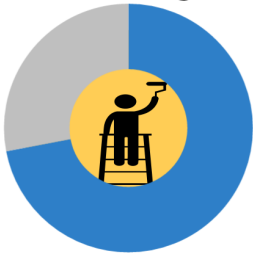
## Outdoor Spaces



**66%**

Well-maintained public  
restrooms accessible for all

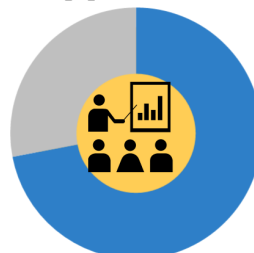
## Housing



**72%**

Home repair service for low-  
income and elderly

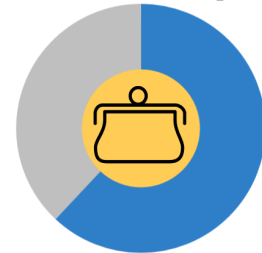
## Job Opportunities



**73%**

Job training for  
older adults

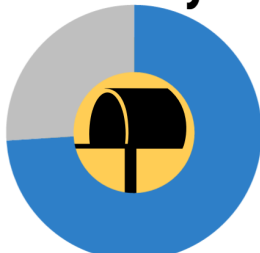
## Social Participation



**62%**

Affordable social  
activities

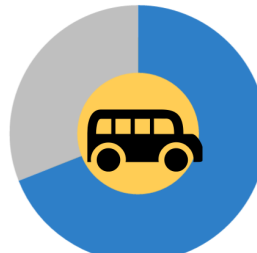
## Community Info



**74%**

Information delivered  
in person, at home

## Volunteer & Civic Engagement



**69%**

Transportation to and  
from volunteer activities



# Top Community Need Gaps

## Top Need Gaps Among All 66 Features in 8 Domains

(Need Gap is the difference between Importance and Present:  
% Extremely/Very/Somewhat Important - % Present)

Top Overall Gaps	Gap	Domain
Information delivered in person to people who have difficulty leaving their home	74%	Community Information
Access to information in one central location	73%	Community Information
An automated community information source	73%	Community Information
Clearly displayed printed community information with large lettering	73%	Community Information
Job training opportunities for older adults	73%	Jobs
Home repair service for low-income and older adults	72%	Housing
Jobs that are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities	70%	Jobs
Transportation to and from volunteer activities	69%	Volunteer & Civic Engagement
A range of flexible job opportunities for older adults	67%	Jobs



# Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Sidewalks that are in good condition	96%	41%
Well-maintained public buildings that are accessible to people of different physical abilities	95%	47%
Neighborhood watch programs	94%	65%
Well-maintained public restrooms that are accessible to people of different physical abilities	91%	25%
Well-maintained and safe public parks	90%	53%
Separate pathways for bicyclists and pedestrians	89%	24%
Public parks with enough benches	88%	37%



RESTROOM

The largest unmet need in outdoor spaces and buildings is

**Well-maintained public restrooms that are accessible to people of different physical abilities**

**66%**

**91%** say it is important to have well-maintained public restrooms that are accessible to people of different physical abilities. Only **25%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **66%**.

(Need Gap = % Extremely/Very/Somewhat Important - % Present )



# Housing Features

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Well-maintained homes and properties	96%	76%
Home repair contractors who are trustworthy and affordable	93%	47%
Home repair service for low-income and older adults	88%	16%
Affordable home prices for residents of varying income levels	87%	30%
Seasonal services such as lawn work	86%	36%
Homes that are equipped with things like a no step entrance, wider doorways, etc.	86%	30%
Well-maintained and safe low-income housing	81%	20%



The largest unmet need in housing features is  
**Home repair service for low-income and older adults**

**72%**

**88%** say it is important to have home repair service for low-income and older adults that helps with roof and window repairs. Only **16%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **72%**.

(Need Gap = % Extremely/Very/Somewhat Important - % Present )



# Transportation and Streets

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Well-maintained streets and roads	96%	47%
Well-lit, safe streets and intersections for all users	96%	49%
Easy to read traffic signs	96%	76%
Special transportation services for seniors or people with disabilities	96%	58%
Enforced speed limits	95%	57%
Well-maintained public transportation vehicles	94%	60%
Accessible and convenient public transportation	94%	73%
Public parking lots and areas to park	94%	58%
Reliable public transportation	93%	64%





# Transportation and Streets, cont.

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Affordable public transportation	93%	68%
Safe public transportation stops or areas	93%	51%
Affordable public parking	92%	47%
Audio/visual pedestrian crossings	88%	33%
Driver education/ refresher course	83%	30%

**The largest unmet need in transportation features is**

**55%**

**Audio/visual pedestrian crossings**



**88%** say it is important to have audio and visual pedestrian crossings. Only **33%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **55%**.

(Need Gap = % Extremely/Very/Somewhat Important - % Present )



# Job Opportunities

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Jobs that are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities	86%	16%
Job training opportunities for older adults	86%	13%
A range of flexible job opportunities for older adults	82%	15%



The largest unmet need in employment features is

**Job training opportunities for older adults** **73%**

**86%** say it is important to have job training opportunities for older adults who want to learn new skills or get training in a different field. Only **13%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **73%**.

(Need Gap = % Extremely/Very/Somewhat Important - % Present )



# Community Information

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Free access to computers and the internet in public places	87%	51%
Information delivered in person to people who have difficulty leaving their home	87%	13%
Access to information in one central location	87%	14%
An automated community information source	87%	14%
Clearly displayed printed community information with large lettering	85%	12%
Information that is available in different languages	78%	18%



The largest unmet need in communication and information is

Information delivered in person to people who have difficulty leaving their home

74%

87% say it is important to have information delivered in person to people who have difficulty leaving their home. Only 13% say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of 74%.

(Need Gap = % Extremely/Very/Somewhat Important - % Present )



# Volunteering and Civic Engagement

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Transportation to and from volunteer activities for those who need it	88%	19%
Easy to find information on available local volunteer opportunities	88%	25%
A range of volunteer activities to choose from	88%	38%
Opportunities for older adults to participate in decision making roles	88%	26%
Volunteer training opportunities to help better perform volunteer role	88%	23%

The largest unmet need in volunteering and civic engagement is



## Transportation to and from volunteer activities



**88%** say it is important to have transportation to and from volunteer activities for those who need it. Only **19%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **69%**.

(Need Gap = % Extremely/Very/Somewhat Important - % Present )



# Social Participation, Inclusion, and Education Opportunities

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Activities that are affordable to all residents	92%	30%
Activities that offer senior discounts	91%	45%
Widely publicized reliable information about activities	88%	32%
Activities that involve both younger and older people	89%	36%
Activities specifically geared towards older adults	88%	32%
Conveniently located venues for entertainment	87%	49%
Social clubs such as book, gardening, craft or hobby	86%	42%
A variety of cultural activities for diverse populations	85%	36%
Continuing education classes	84%	45%
Local schools that involve older adults in events and activities	82%	23%

The largest unmet need in social participation, inclusion, and education opportunities is



**Activities that are affordable to all residents 62%**

**92%** say it is important to have activities that are affordable to all residents. Only **30%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **62%**.

(Need Gap = % Extremely/Very/Somewhat Important - % Present )





# Health and Wellness

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Well-maintained hospitals and health care facilities	96%	79%
A variety of health care professionals	96%	71%
Respectful and helpful hospital and clinic staff	96%	71%
Conveniently located emergency care centers	96%	70%
Easy to find information on local health and supportive services	96%	37%
Home care services including health, personal care, and housekeeping	95%	42%
Well-trained certified home health care providers	95%	37%
Fitness activities specifically geared towards older adults	95%	46%
A service that helps seniors find and access health services	95%	32%



## Health and Wellness, cont.

Features	% Important	% Present
Affordable home health care provider	95%	31%
Easily understandable and helpful hospital answering services	94%	48%
Conveniently located health and social services	94%	49%
Health and wellness programs and classes	92%	38%
Health care professionals who speak different languages	83%	49%



The largest unmet need in health services is

**Affordable home health care providers**

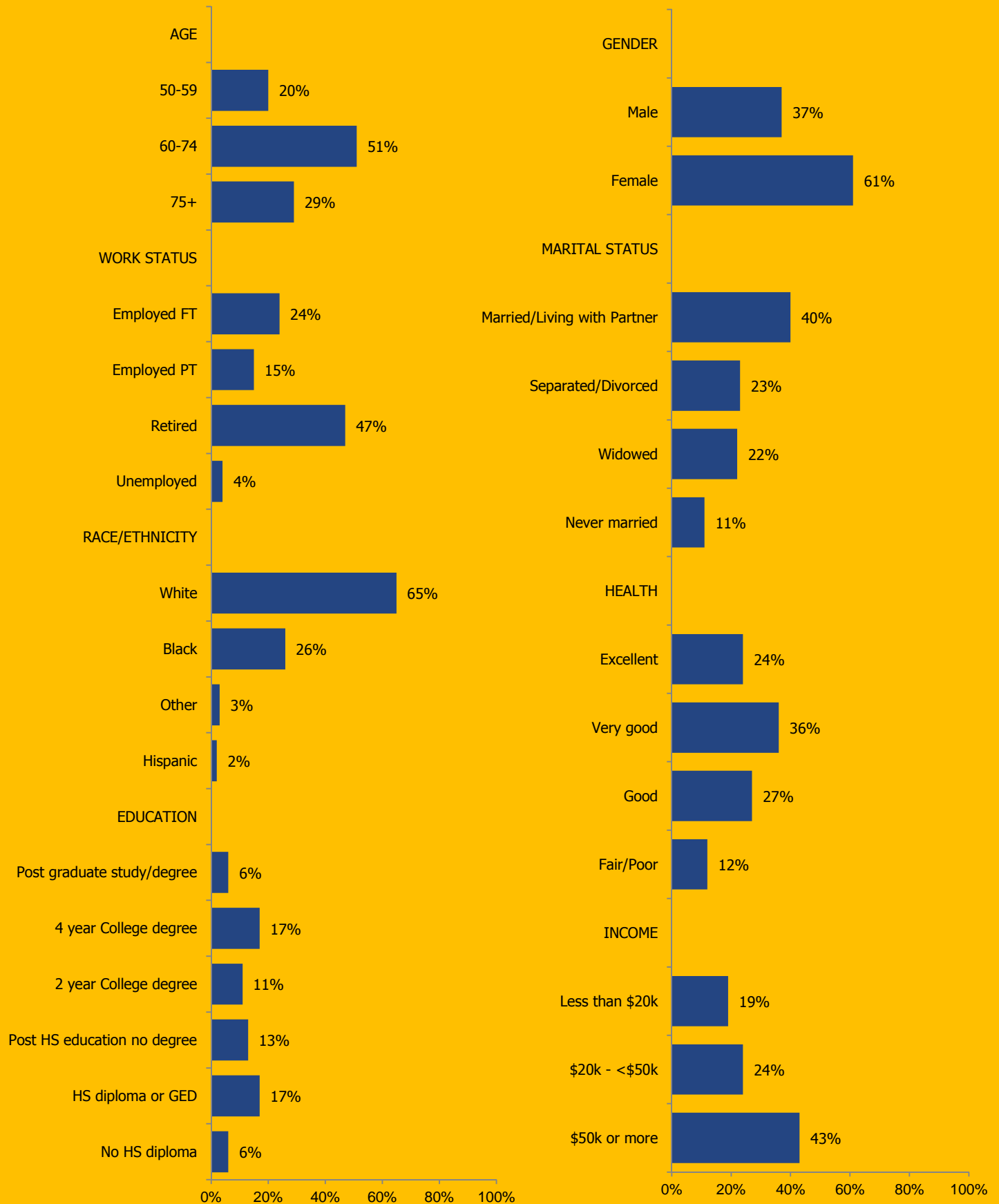
**64%**

**95%** say it is important to have affordable home health care providers. Only **31%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **64%**.

(Need Gap = % Extremely/Very/Somewhat Important - % Present )

# Demographics

n= 553



# Survey Methodology

This report is based on data from a mail survey of 2,000 AARP members age 50-plus living in Dallas, Texas. The sample was drawn from AARP's membership database. Each sampled member was contacted four times receiving the following pieces of mail: pre-notification postcard, the first survey, a reminder postcard, and a second survey. Mail sent to 28 addresses was returned as undeliverable.

A total of 553 completed surveys were returned by the cutoff date of August 21, 2015. The sample has a margin of error of +/- 4.2 percent. Age and gender weights were applied to the data to reflect the sampled population of AARP members age 50-plus in Dallas, Texas. Data in this report represents the opinions of AARP members and is not projectable to the total 50-plus population in Dallas.

Vupoint Research was commissioned to enter and tabulate the data from returned surveys.

An annotated questionnaire and addendum tables are available upon request. Percentages in this report may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding. Also due to rounding, the percentages reported in the text may vary slightly from those in the annotation or in graphs.

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# Real Possibilities

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org); AARP TV Et Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Espanol, a Spanish-language website addressing the interests and needs of Hispanics. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org).

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