



# **Livability For All**

in

# **Fort Worth**

**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 Fort Worth, the most important age-friendly community features center around three areas: healthcare facilities, services and professionals; street safety; and well-maintained properties and public spaces.**

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 Age-Friendly Community Survey of Fort Worth, TX AARP Members Age 50-plus**" was commissioned to help Fort Worth decision makers achieve the goal of an age-friendly livable community.

Survey results show that Fort Worth AARP members age 50-plus have deep roots in their community. About half (49%) have lived in their community for over 25 years. Most do not plan to move, and eight in ten (83%) 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 Fort Worth:



On average, **Health and Wellness** features are rated most important. Specifically, AARP members in Fort Worth consider it important to have well-maintained and convenient hospitals, clinics and emergency care centers; as well as to have the professionals and service providers that can deliver quality and affordable care both in homes and at facilities. It is also considered highly important to be able to access health services and information that is respectful, helpful and easy.



**Transportation** features rank as a close second in overall importance on average. Items that top the list in this area of community life relate primarily to street safety and include well-maintained streets, easy to read traffic signs, enforced speed limits, and intersections that are safe for all users such as pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers.



Additional community features ranked in the top tier of importance come from the **Outdoor Spaces & Buildings** and **Housing** domains: having well-maintained public buildings that are accessible to people of all abilities, sidewalks that are in good condition, and well-maintained homes and properties.

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.

## The top reported need gaps in Fort Worth are concentrated in the areas of Job Opportunities, Community Information, and Volunteer Engagement

In order to identify the needs of Fort Worth 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. Responses to these questions were then paired together to identify community needs or "gaps."

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



**Job Opportunities** for older adults is one of the largest unmet needs for 50-plus adults in Fort Worth according to survey results. Job training, job flexibility and jobs adapted to needs of the disabled 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. Making information on volunteer opportunities easy to find, and providing volunteer training opportunities are also important and relatively unmet features of supporting community volunteering.



Disseminating **Community Information** in ways that ensure it is friendly to older and potentially home-bound residents is another area of potential improvement in Fort Worth. Survey respondents identify needs for community information that is delivered in person, printed in large lettering and automated.



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. Fort Worth AARP members are no different.

# Community Experience

**About half (49%) of Fort Worth 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.**

Fort Worth AARP members age 50-plus have deep roots in their community. About half (49%) have lived in their community for over 25 years. One in five (20%) has lived in their community between 15 and 25 years, and three in ten (30%) have lived in their community between 0 and 15 years.

**How would you rate Fort Worth as a place for people to live as they age?**



More than eight in ten (84%) AARP members in Fort Worth say their community is an excellent (19%), very good (35%) or good (30%) place for older people to live as they age. Fourteen percent (14%) give it an assessment of fair or poor.

**Most Fort Worth AARP members say they are unlikely to move into a different home during their retirement years.**

Fort Worth AARP members age 50-plus want to continue to live in their community and their home for as long they can. About half (48%) say it is extremely or very important to stay in their community as they age. Nearly all respondents (86%), 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**

**86%**

**Important to age in your own community**

**48%**

**Unlikely to move to a different home in the same community**

**66%**

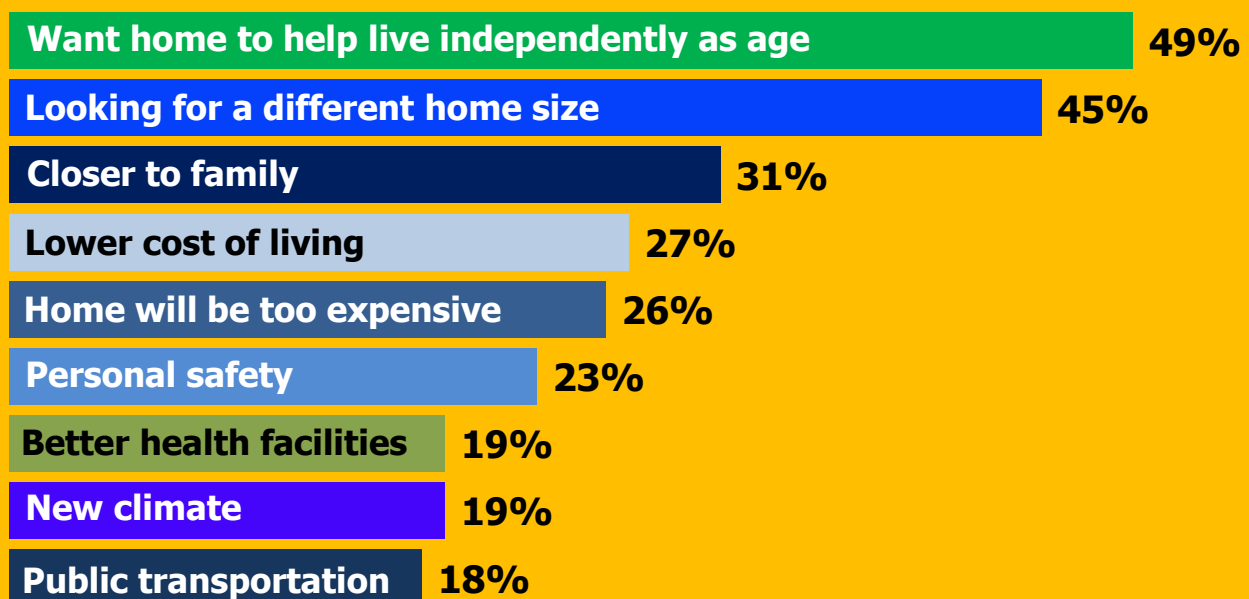
**Unlikely to move to a different home in a new community**

**61%**

# Community Experience

**The needs for age-friendly housing and right-sized housing are most likely to impact the decision of AARP members to move out of Fort Worth.**

If Fort Worth 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 (49%) or a different sized home that will meet their needs (45%).

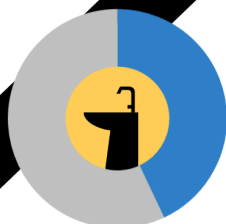


**Most Fort Worth AARP members age 50-plus own single family homes which will require modification to support aging-in-place preferences.**

Most respondents (81%) own their homes while about one in seven (13%) rent. The majority lives in a single family home (82%). Almost one in ten lives in an apartment (8%) and fewer than one in ten lives in a townhouse or condominium (2%). While most say they want to age-in-place, many will need to make home modifications in order to do so.

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

**64%** At Least 1 Home Modification Needed



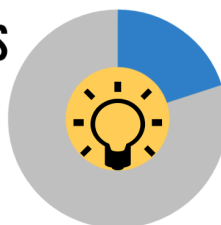
**43%**  
Bathroom  
modifications



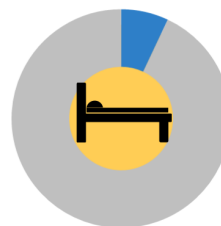
**30%**  
Install medical  
emergency  
response system



**21%**  
Accommodations  
for easier home  
entry and access



**20%**  
Improve  
lighting



**7%**  
Add room to  
first floor

## Home Modifications

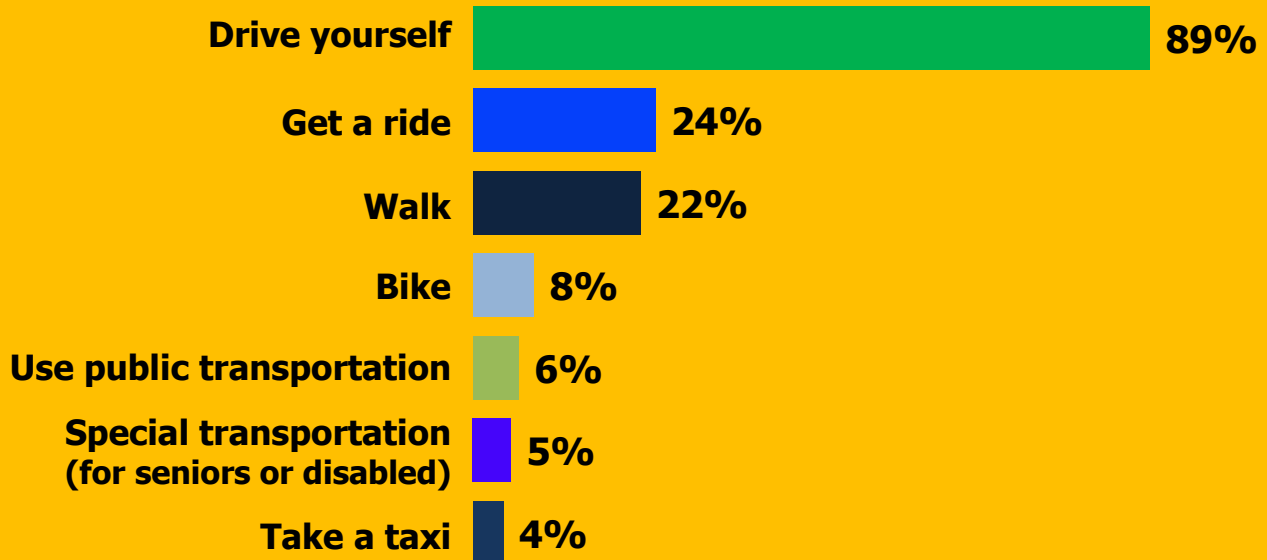
Over two in five of Fort Worth residents age 50+ say the top home modifications they will need to make in order to stay in their home as they age are bathroom modifications such as installing grab bars, handrails, high toilet seats or non-slip tile. Installing emergency response systems are a likely modification for three in ten. One in five says they will need to add things like ramps or chairlifts for easier access into and within their home or improve lighting. Only 7 percent say they will need to make structural changes like adding a bedroom or bathroom on the first floor.



# Community Experience

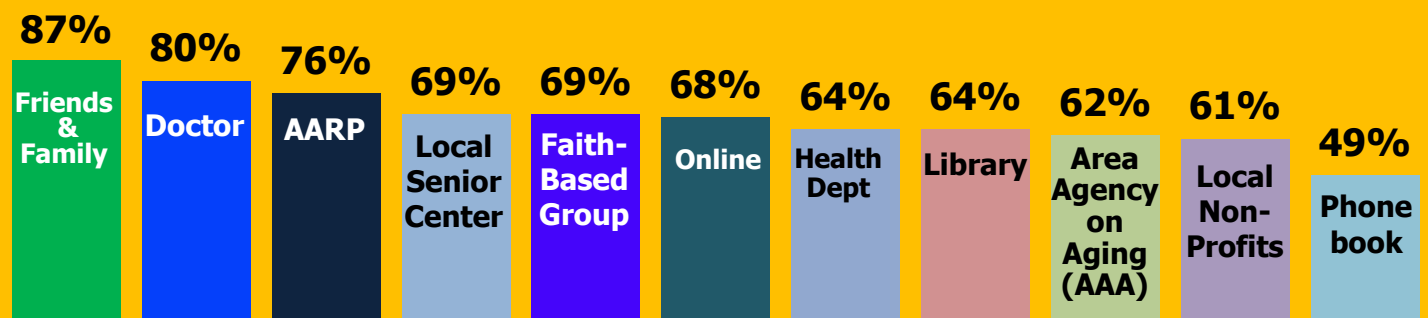
## Most drive themselves when they need to get around.

Nine in ten (89%) 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. Slightly more than one-fifth (22%) use walking as a means of transportation for daily destinations.



## Fort Worth AARP members say they would mostly turn to people they know for information on services for older adults.

The most common sources of information about services for older adults such as caregiving, home delivered meals, home repair, medical transport, or social activities are family, friends or neighbors (87%) or a local doctor (80%). About seven in ten would turn to either AARP, a local senior center, a faith-based organization, or simply search the internet. Six in ten would seek out information at the library, consult the Area Agency on Aging or other local non-profits.





# 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.

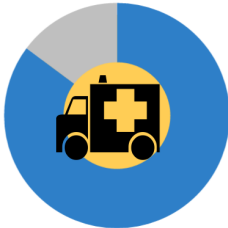
Fort Worth AARP members rated their community on 66 characteristics across eight domains (*Health and Wellness, Transportation, Housing, Outdoor Spaces, Social Participation, Volunteering and Civic Engagement, Community Information, and Job Opportunities*) in order to identify important and available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

# Summary of Importance: 8 Age-Friendly Community Domains



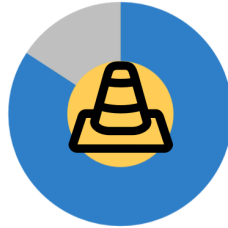
Average Importance Rating of Community Features within Each Domain  
(on a 5 point scale where 5 = Extremely Important and 1= Not At All Important)

## Health and Wellness



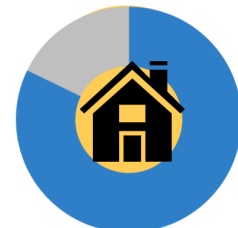
**4.26**

## Transportation



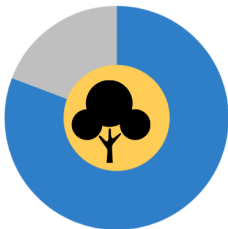
**4.21**

## Housing



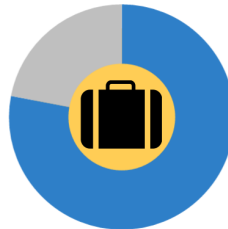
**4.11**

## Outdoor Spaces



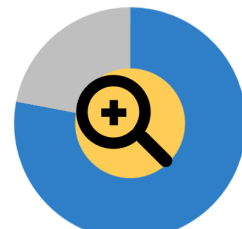
**4.04**

## Job Opportunities



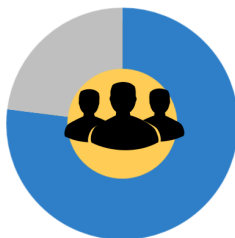
**3.93**

## Community Info



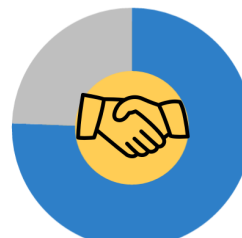
**3.88**

## Social Participation



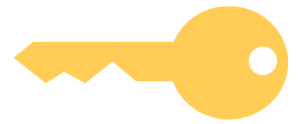
**3.85**

## Volunteer & Civic Engagement



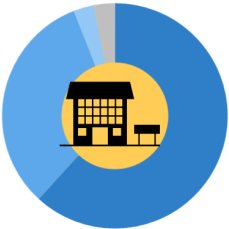
**3.78**

# Summary of Importance: Community Features by Domain



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

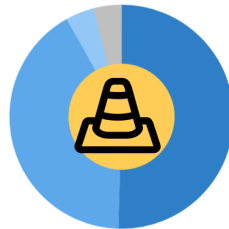
## Health and Wellness



**97%**

Well-maintained  
hospitals

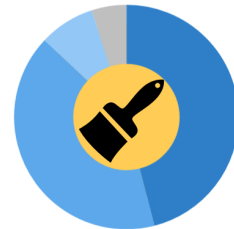
## Transportation



**96%**

Well-maintained  
streets and roads

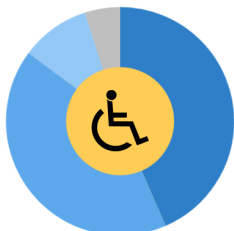
## Housing



**95%**

Well-maintained homes  
and properties

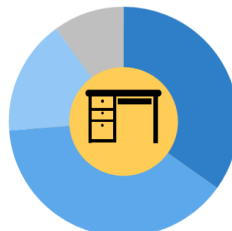
## Outdoor Spaces



**95%**

Well-maintained public  
buildings accessible to all

## Job Opportunities



**90%**

Jobs adapted for people  
with disabilities

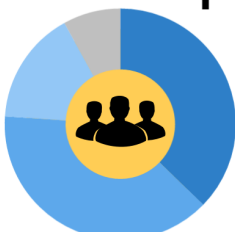
## Community Info



**90%**

Clearly displayed printed  
community information

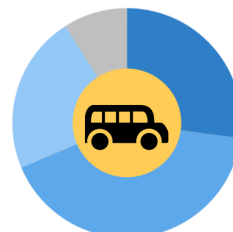
## Social Participation



**92%**

Senior discounts for  
activities

## Volunteer & Civic Engagement



**91%**

Transportation to and  
from activities



# Top Tier 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 hospitals and health care facilities	97%	Health and Wellness
A variety of health care professionals	96%	Health and Wellness
Well-maintained streets	96%	Transportation
Respectful and helpful hospital and clinic staff	96%	Health and Wellness
Easy to read traffic signs	95%	Transportation
Well-lit, safe streets and intersections for all users	95%	Transportation
Enforced speed limits	95%	Transportation
Well-maintained public buildings that are accessible to people of all abilities	95%	Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
Sidewalks that are in good condition	95%	Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
Conveniently located emergency care centers	95%	Health and Wellness
Affordable home health care providers	95%	Health and Wellness
Well-trained certified health care providers	95%	Health and Wellness
Easily understandable and helpful hospital answering services	95%	Health and Wellness
Easy to find information on local health and supportive services	95%	Health and Wellness
Home care services including health, personal care and housekeeping	95%	Health and Wellness
Well-maintained homes and properties	95%	Housing

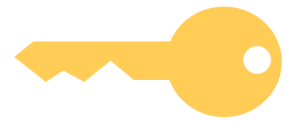


# Community Needs

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 Fort Worth 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.

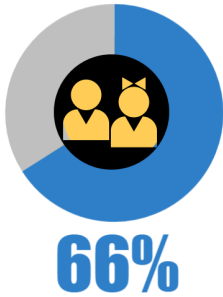
To compare these questions, respondents who said a feature or service is extremely, very, or somewhat important were aggregated and then compared to respondents who said whether or not the feature or service existed in their community.

# Summary of Needs: Community Features by Domain



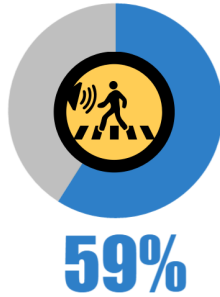
Top Community Need Gap Within Each Domain  
(Need Gap = % Extremely/Very/Somewhat Important - % Present)

## Health and Wellness



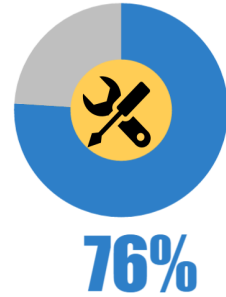
Affordable home health  
care providers

## Transportation



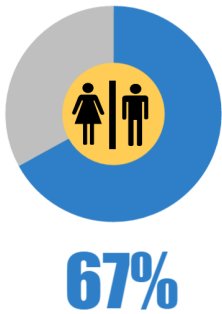
Audio/visual  
pedestrian crossing

## Housing



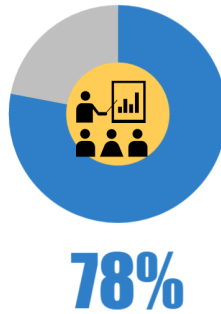
Home repair service for low-  
income and older adults

## Outdoor Spaces



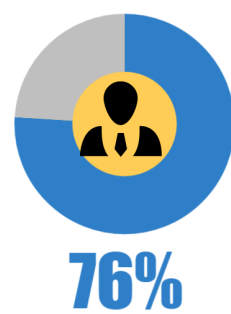
Well-maintained public  
restrooms accessible to all

## Job Opportunities



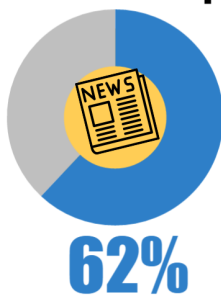
Job training opportunities  
for older adults

## Community Info



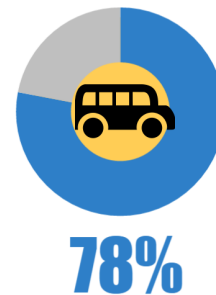
Information delivered  
in person

## Social Participation



Publicized info  
about activities

## Volunteer & Civic Engagement



Transportation to  
and from activities

# Top Community Need Gaps



## Top Tier of 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
Job training opportunities for older adults	78%	Job Opportunities
Transportation to and from volunteer activities	78%	Volunteer & Civic Engagement
Information delivered in person to people who have difficulty leaving their home	76%	Community Information
Home repair services for low-income and older adults that help with repairs	76%	Housing
Printed information that has large lettering and is clearly displayed	75%	Community Information
Jobs that are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities	74%	Job Opportunities
A range of flexible job opportunities for older adults	72%	Job Opportunities
An automated community information source	71%	Community Information
Easy to find information on available local volunteer opportunities	69%	Volunteer & Civic Engagement
Volunteer training opportunities to help better perform volunteer roles	69%	Volunteer & Civic Engagement





# Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Well-maintained public buildings that are accessible to people of different physical abilities	95%	46%
Sidewalks that are in good condition	95%	39%
Neighborhood watch programs	94%	54%
Well-maintained public restrooms that are accessible to people of different physical abilities	92%	25%
Well-maintained and safe public parks	89%	50%
Public parks with enough benches	87%	38%
Separate pathways for bicyclists and pedestrians	87%	28%

The largest unmet need in outdoor spaces and buildings is



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

**67%**

**92%** 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 **67%**.

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



# Housing Features

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Well-maintained homes and properties	95%	73%
Home repair contractors who are trustworthy and affordable	94%	44%
Home repair service for low-income and older adults that help with repairs	90%	14%
Seasonal services such as lawn work	90%	32%
Affordable home prices for residents of varying income levels	87%	31%
Well-maintained and safe low-income housing	87%	22%
Homes that are equipped with things like a no step entrance, wider doorways, etc.	85%	28%



The largest unmet need in housing features is

**Home repair service for low-income and older adults**

**76%**

**90%** say it is important to have a repair service for low-income and older adults that helps with things like roof or window repair. Only **14%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **76%**.

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



# Transportation and Streets

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Well-maintained streets and roads	96%	56%
Easy to read traffic signs	95%	75%
Well-lit, safe streets and intersections for all users	95%	51%
Enforced speed limits	95%	64%
Special transportation services for seniors or people with disabilities	93%	52%
Public parking lots and areas to park	93%	53%
Accessible and convenient public transportation	93%	48%
Well-maintained public transportation vehicles	92%	43%
Reliable public transportation	92%	44%



# Transportation and Streets, cont.

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Affordable public transportation	92%	44%
Affordable public parking	91%	40%
Safe public transportation stops or areas	91%	35%
Audio/visual pedestrian crossings	91%	32%
Driver education/ refresher course	85%	28%

The largest unmet need in transportation features is

**59%**

**Audio/visual pedestrian crossings**



**91%** say it is important to have audio and visual pedestrian crossings. Only **32%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **59%**.

(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	90%	16%
Job training opportunities for older adults	89%	11%
A range of flexible job opportunities for older adults	85%	13%



The largest unmet need in employment features is



**Job training opportunities for older adults**

**78%**

**89%** say it is important to have job training opportunities for older adults who want to learn new job skills within their job or get training in a different field of work. Only **11%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **78%**.

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



# Community Information

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Printed information that has large lettering and is clearly displayed	90%	15%
Information delivered in person to people who have difficulty leaving their home	90%	14%
Access to information in one central location	89%	21%
An automated community information source	89%	18%
Free access to computers and the internet in public places	88%	58%
Information that is available in different languages	80%	21%

## NEWS NOW

The largest unmet need in communication and information is

Information delivered to people who have difficulty leaving their home

76%

90% say it is important to have information delivered in person to people who have difficulty leaving their home. Only 14% say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of 76%.

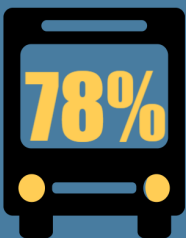
(Need Gap = % Extremely/Very/Somewhat Important - % Present )



# Volunteering and Civic Engagement

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Transportation to and from volunteer activities for those who need it	91%	13%
Opportunities for older adults to participate in decision making roles	91%	28%
A range of volunteer activities to choose from	90%	33%
Easy to find information on available local volunteer opportunities	89%	20%
Volunteer training opportunities to help better perform volunteer role	89%	20%



The largest unmet need in volunteering and civic engagement is

## Transportation to and from volunteer activities



**91%** say it is important to have transportation to and from volunteer activities for those who need it. Only **13%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **78%**.

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



# Social Participation, Inclusion, and Education Opportunities

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Activities that offer senior discounts	92%	42%
Widely publicized reliable information about activities	91%	29%
Activities specifically geared towards older adults	90%	35%
Activities that are affordable to all residents	90%	33%
Conveniently located venues for entertainment	87%	46%
A variety of cultural activities for diverse populations	86%	30%
Social clubs such as book, gardening, craft or hobby	85%	37%
Continuing education classes	83%	40%
Local schools that involve older adults in events and activities	81%	22%
Activities that involve both younger and older people	68%	34%

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



**Accurate and widely publicized information about social activities**

**62%**

**91%** say it is important to have accurate and widely publicized information about social activities. Only **29%** 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	97%	70%
Respectful and helpful hospital and clinic staff	96%	61%
A variety of health care professionals	96%	64%
Conveniently located emergency care centers	95%	59%
Affordable home health care providers	95%	29%
Well-trained certified home health care providers	95%	38%
Easily understandable and helpful hospital answering services	95%	45%
Easy to find information on local health and supportive services	95%	35%
Home care services including health, personal care, and housekeeping	95%	40%



# Health and Wellness, cont.

Items Ranked by Importance

Features	% Important	% Present
Conveniently located health and social services	94%	43%
A service that helps seniors find and access health services	94%	28%
Fitness activities specifically geared towards older adults	94%	43%
Health and wellness programs and classes	92%	32%
Health care professionals who speak different languages	83%	42%

**The largest unmet need in health services is**



**Affordable home health care providers**

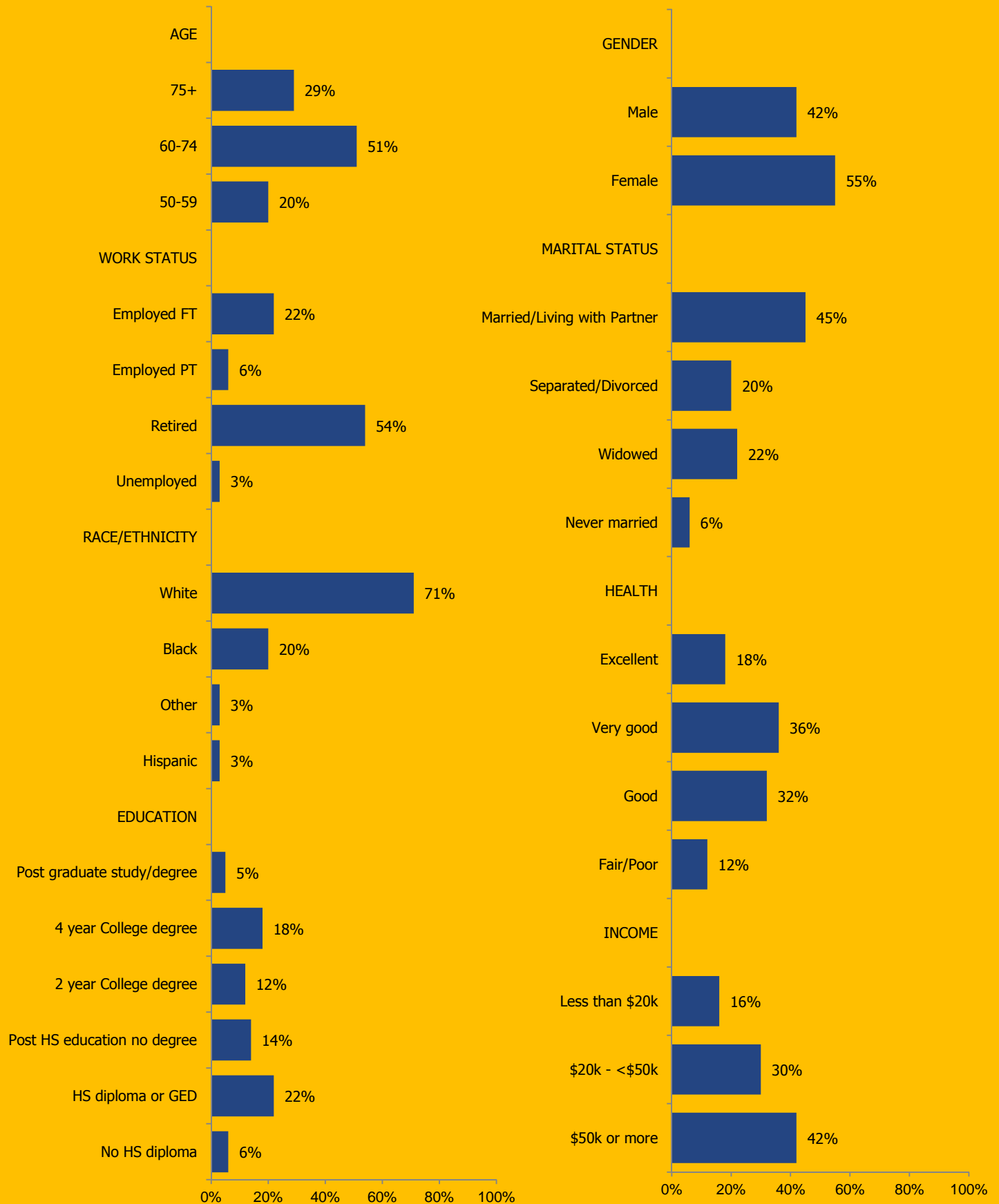
**66%**

**95%** say it is important to have affordable home health care providers. Only **29%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **66%**.

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

# Demographics

n= 613



# Survey Methodology

This report is based on data from a mail survey of AARP members age 50-plus living in Fort Worth, Texas. The sample was drawn from AARP's membership database. Surveys were mailed to 2,000 member households in Fort Worth. 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 7 addresses was returned as undeliverable. A total of 613 completed surveys were returned by the cutoff date of August 20, 2015 for a margin of error of +/- 4.0 percent.

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

The sample was weighted by age and gender to reflect the actual distribution of AARP members age 50-plus in Fort Worth, Texas.

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.

## Acknowledgments

Brittne M. Nelson, PhD managed this survey in Fort Worth and prepared the report. Additional staff in AARP Research were instrumental in completing this project including Joanne Binette, Eowna Young Harrison, Kadeem Thorpe, Angela Houghton, Sibora Gjecovi, Cheryl Barnes and Rachelle Cummins. The authors would like to thank Bob Jackson and Carmel Snyder, AARP Texas; Rodney Harrell PhD, AARP Public Policy Institute; Randle Harwood, Director of Planning & Development, Dana Burghdoff, Assistant Director of Planning & Development, and Mayor Betsy Price, City of Fort Worth, Texas.

Photos courtesy of AARP Texas.

For more information, contact:

Angela Houghton

Senior Research Advisor

AARP Research

[ahoughton@aarp.org](mailto:ahoughton@aarp.org)





# 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).

Copyright © 2016 AARP  
AARP Research  
601 E Street NW Washington, DC 20049  
[www.aarp.org/research](http://www.aarp.org/research)