



Livability For All: The 2016 AARP Age-Friendly Community Survey of Phoenix, Arizona Residents Age 50-plus

Report Prepared by
Aisha Bonner Cozad PhD, Eowna Young Harrison, and Kadeem Thorpe
March 2016

Background and Methodology

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. 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 of livability that influence the quality of life of those in a community, particularly older adults. The eight domains, or areas of livability, are: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Transportation, Housing, 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 livability in order to: (1) help communities establish a baseline with regards to older adults being able to age in place, and (2) conduct a community needs/gap analysis to identify and prioritize areas of focus. To minimize the survey length as well as respondent burden the 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 areas are:

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

To identify needs/gaps, survey respondents were asked how important community features and services were to them and whether or not these features and services exist. 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 the feature or service was present in their community.

The present report is based on data from a mail survey of 3,000 residents age 50-plus living in Phoenix, Arizona. The survey was fielded from July 22 to September 2, 2015. Resident addresses were provided by Survey Sampling International's (SSI) proprietary database. Each sampled resident was contacted four times receiving the following pieces of mail: pre-notification postcard, the first survey, a reminder postcard, and a second survey. A total of 323 completed surveys were returned by the cutoff date of September 2nd. There were 570 undeliverable surveys.

This survey has a margin of error of +/- 5.5 percent. This means that if 95 out of 100 samples of this same size and population were given the same survey, the responses to the questions would fall within a range of plus or minus 5.5 percentage points of what would have been obtained if every resident age 50-plus in the sampled area were asked the same questions. The sample was weighted by age and gender to reflect the actual distribution of residents age 50-plus in Phoenix, Arizona. The weighted number of respondents is 300.

An annotated survey and addendum tables are available upon request. Percentages 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 graphs or the annotated survey.

Executive Summary

The Top Reported Phoenix Important Community Features Are Concentrated In Three Domains: Transportation and Streets, Housing, and Health and Wellness

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 Phoenix, Arizona Residents Age 50-plus"*** was commissioned to help Phoenix decision makers achieve the goal of livability. Using an operationalization of the World Health Organization's eight areas of livable community, the findings show:

- Phoenix residents age 50-plus have deep roots in their community. Nearly two-thirds (65%) have lived in their community for 15 years or more. Most do not plan to move, and almost nine in ten (86%) say their community is a good place for older people to live.
- Overall, Transportation and Streets, Housing, and Health and Wellness, are rated as the most important livable community features/domains for Phoenix residents age 50-plus among all eight areas. The item within Transportation is well-maintained streets and roads (99%). The top rated item in the Housing domain is well-maintained homes and properties (98%). The Health and Wellness items relate to convenient and well-maintained health facilities with a variety of respectful health care professionals (98%).
- Well-maintained streets and roads (99%), easy to read traffic signs (98%), and well-maintained homes and properties (98%) are the top three important community features for Phoenix residents.

Executive Summary cont.

The Top Reported Phoenix Community Needs Are Concentrated In Four Areas: Job Opportunities, Volunteering and Civic Engagement, Community Information, And Housing

- In order to identify the needs of Phoenix residents 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 Transportation, Housing, and Health dominated the list of important features, the top community needs gaps are spread across the areas of Job Opportunities, Volunteering and Civic Engagement, Community Information, and Housing.
- Job training opportunities for older adults was the top community needs gap (80%) followed by transportation to and from volunteer activities for those who need it (76%), community information that is delivered in person to people who have difficulty or may not be able to leave their home (75%), and a range of flexible job opportunities for older adults (75%). Refer to the Key Findings for a summary of the top 10 community needs by WHO Areas.
- An important element of creating livability for all must be individual preferences. These survey findings 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.





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."

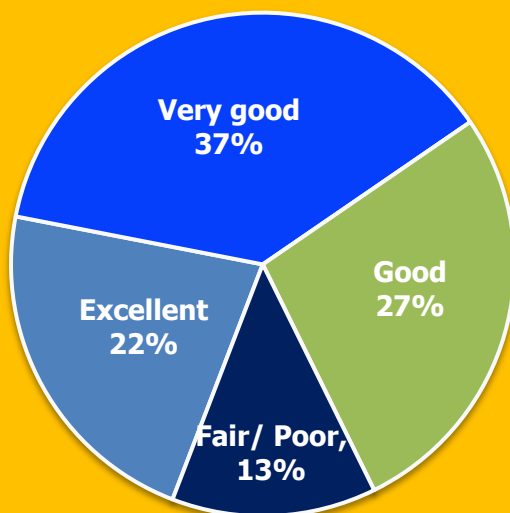
Across the nation, individuals make connections and commitments to homes, friendships, community organizations, and local social ties within their community and want to age-in-place. Phoenix residents are no different.

Community Experience

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Phoenix residents age 50-plus have lived in their community for at least 15 years and most say their community is a good place to age in place.

Phoenix residents age 50-plus have deep roots in their community. Nearly two-thirds (65%) have lived in their community for at least 15 years. Two in ten (22%) have lived in their community between 5 and 15 years, and more than a tenth (13%) has lived in their community for less than 5 years.

Rate Community as Place to Age in Place



More than eight in ten (86%) say their community is an excellent, very good or good place for older people to live. This high rating of their community is likely influenced by the fact that nearly two-thirds have lived there for at least 15 years and desire to remain there as they get older.

Most Phoenix residents age 50-plus are unlikely to move into a different home within their community (57%) or move outside their community (52%) in their retirement years.

Phoenix residents age 50-plus want to continue to live in their community and their home for as long they can. Two in five (39%) say it is extremely or very important to stay in their community as they age. More than twice as many 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 stay in your own community as you age

39%

Not likely to move to a different home in the same community

57%

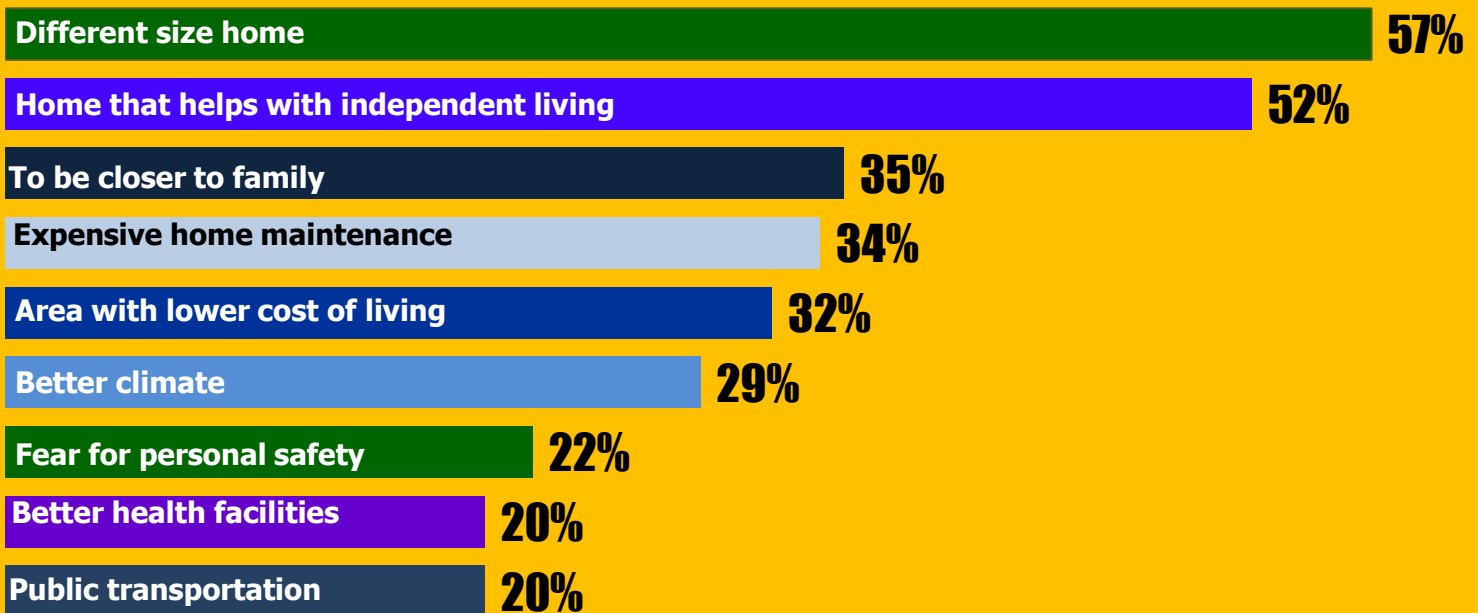
Not likely to move to a different home in a new community

52%

Community Experience

Residents say the top factors that would impact their decision to move out of the area are finding a home that is an appropriate size for their needs and helps them live independently.

While it is important for most (70%) respondents to remain in their community as they age, if Phoenix residents were to consider moving when they retire and do not work, over half say that they would move because they want a home that will be a more suitable size (57%) or help them live independently (52%) as they age

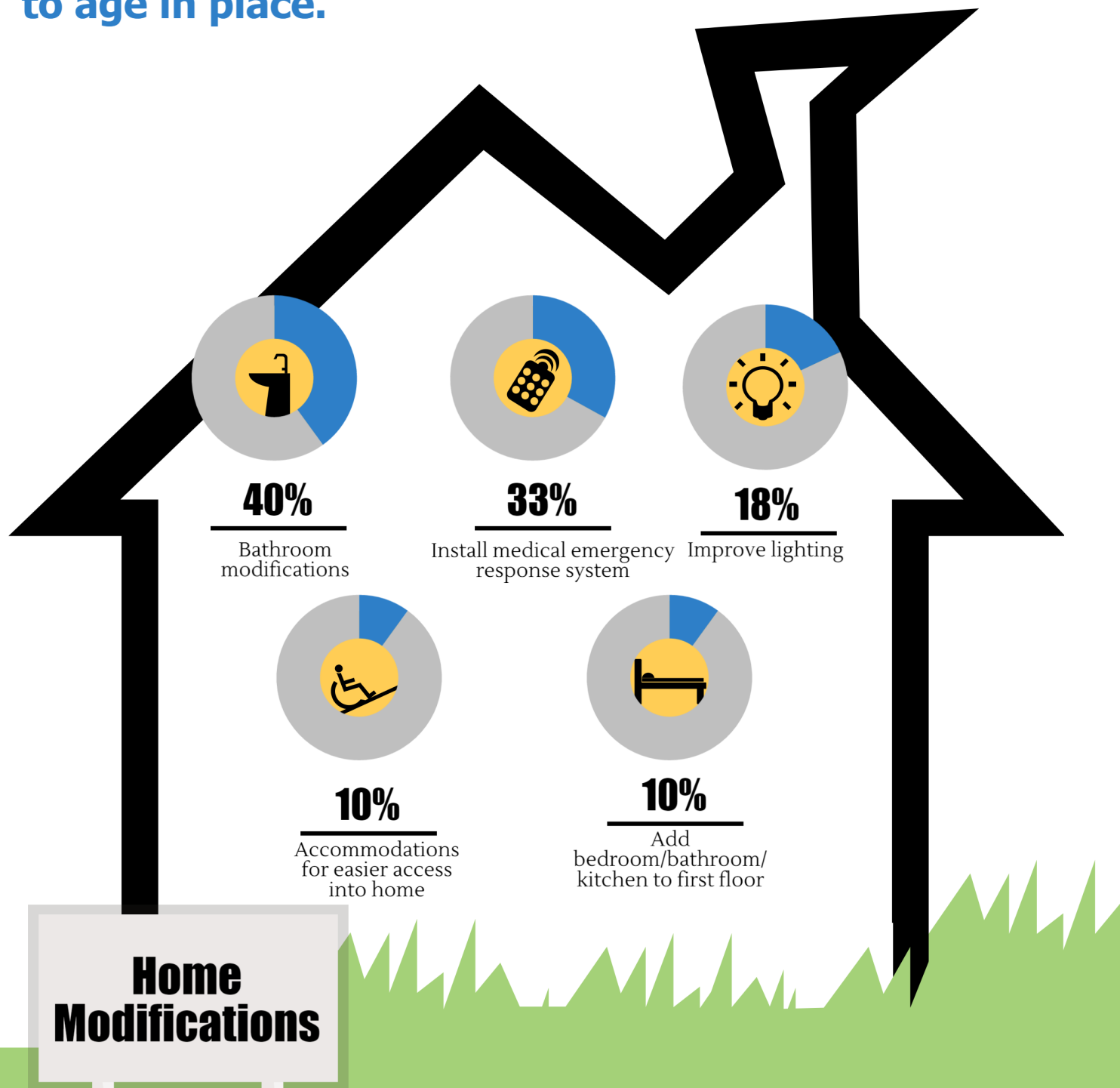


The majority of Phoenix residents age 50-plus own their own homes, and live in a single family home.

Four in five respondents (83%) own their homes, while about one in ten (10%) rents. Nearly eight in ten live in a single family home. Six percent lives in a townhome or duplex and fewer lives in an apartment, condominium, or mobile home. 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	79%
Townhouse/Duplex	6%
Apartment	5%
Condominium	4%
Mobile home	3%

Many Phoenix residents age 50-plus say they will need to make home modifications to enable them to age in place.

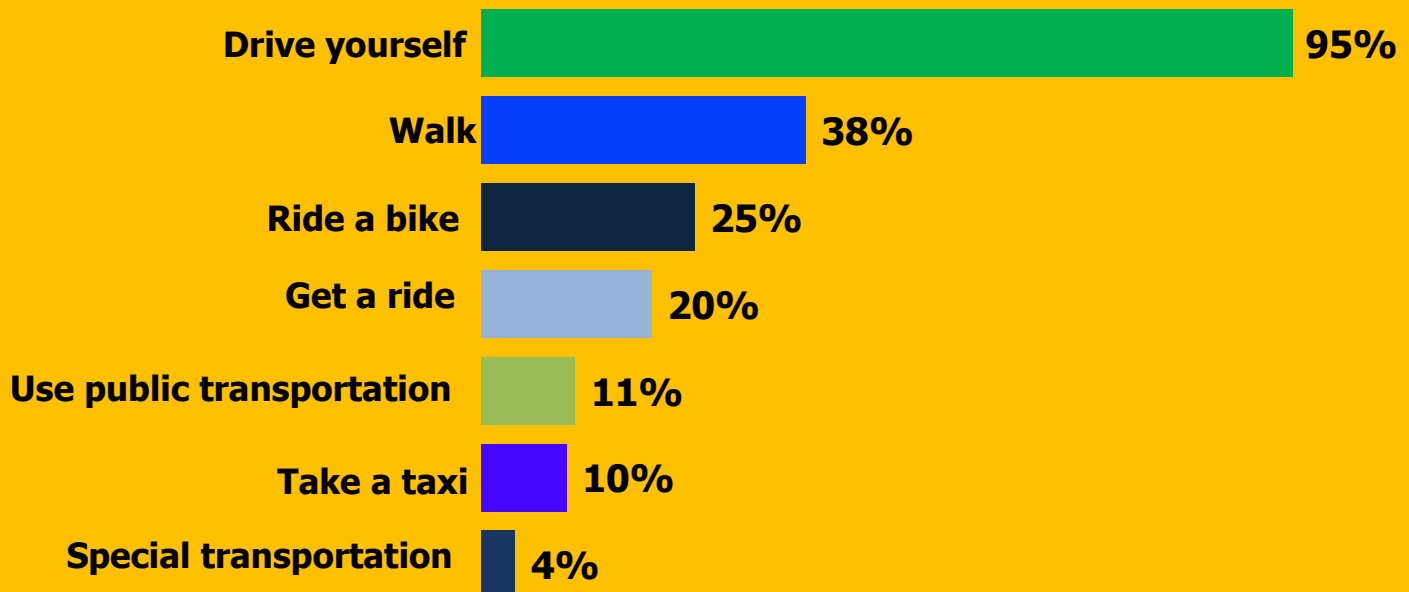


Two in five Phoenix residents age 50-plus say the top home modifications they will need to make in order to stay in their home as they age are bathroom modifications such as installing grab bars, handrails, high toilet seats or non-slip tile. Installing emergency systems is a likely home modification for one-third of respondents. One in ten says they will need to add things like ramps or chairlifts for easier access into and within their home and 18% say they will improve lighting. One in ten say they will need to make structural changes like adding a bedroom or bathroom on the first floor.

Community Experience

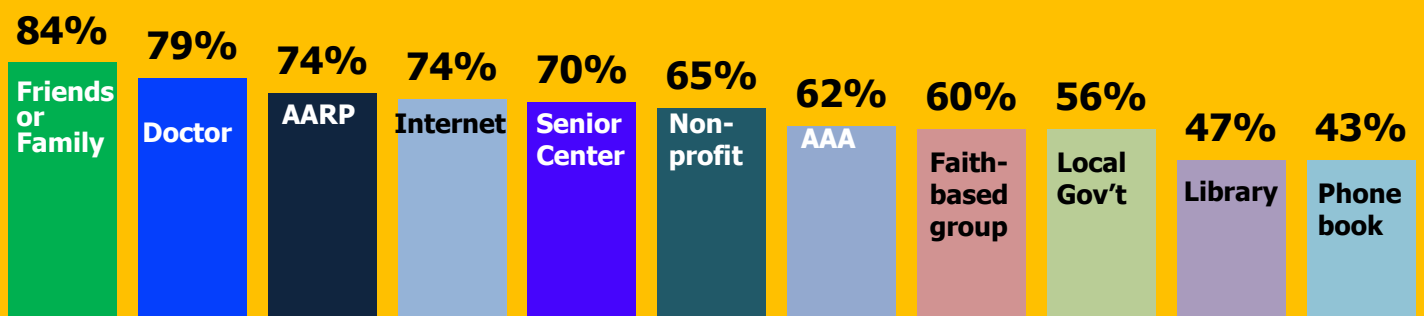
Most Phoenix residents drive themselves when they need to get around. Many also walk, use public transportation, or get a ride.

Nearly all (95%) say when they need to get around for things like shopping, visiting the doctor, or running errands they drive themselves.



Residents in Phoenix say they would turn most to family, friends, or their doctor for information on services for older adults.

Four in five say they would turn to family or friends, or their doctor or other health care professional for information about services for older adults such as caregiving, home delivered meals, home repair, medical transport, or social activities. More than seven in ten would turn to AARP, the Internet, or their a local senior center for this type of information. About six in ten would look to the local non-profits, the local Area Agency on Aging (AAA), or faith-based organizations. Over half would turn to the local government. Four in ten would go to a library or look in a phone book.



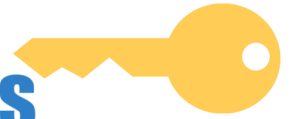


Community Features

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.

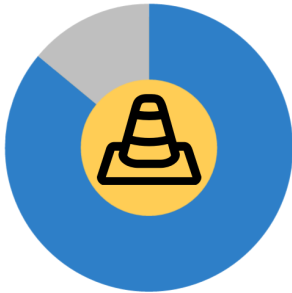
Phoenix residents rated their community on 66 characteristics across eight domains (Health and Wellness, Transportation, Housing, Outdoor Spaces, Social Participation, Volunteering and Civic Engagement, Job Opportunities, and Community Information) in order to identify important and available community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

Summary of Importance 8 Age-Friendly Community Domains



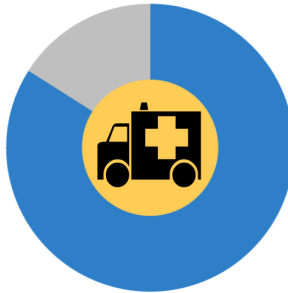
Average Importance Rating of Community Features within Each Domain
(on a 5 point scale where 5 = Extremely Important and 1 = Not At All Important)

Transportation



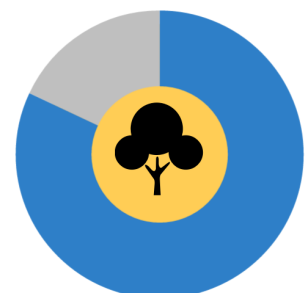
4.32

Health and Wellness



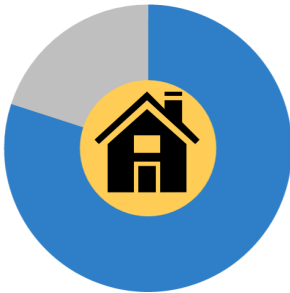
4.18

Outdoor Spaces



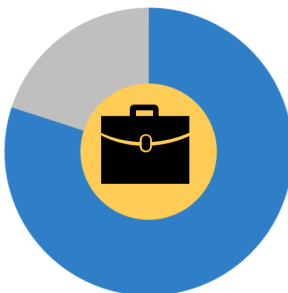
4.13

Housing



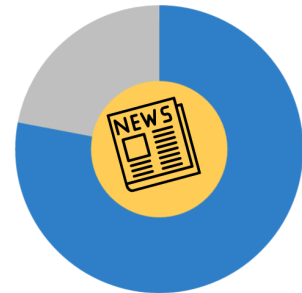
4.04

Job Opportunities



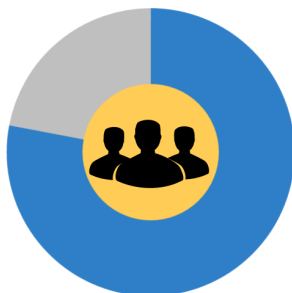
4.00

Community Info



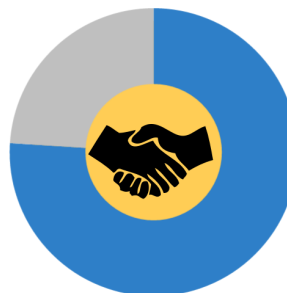
3.87

Social Participation



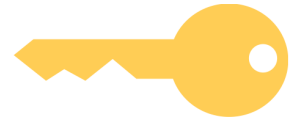
3.87

Volunteer and Civic Engagement



3.84

Summary of Importance Community Features by Domain



Top Important Feature Within Each Community Domain
(% of respondents who rated the item as Extremely/Very/Somewhat Important)

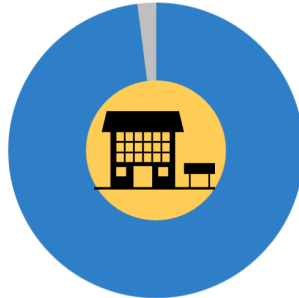
Transportation



99%

Well-maintained
streets and roads

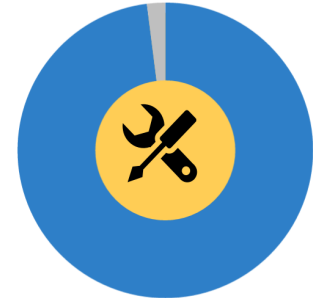
Health and Wellness



98%

Well-maintained
hospitals

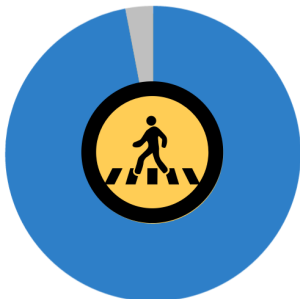
Housing



98%

Well-maintained
homes

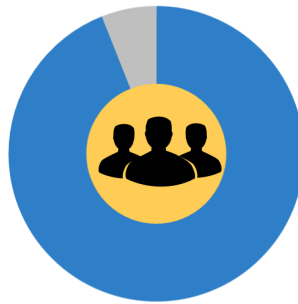
Outdoor Spaces



97%

Sidewalks in
good condition

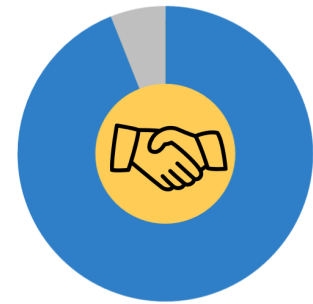
Social Participation



94%

Affordable activities
to all residents

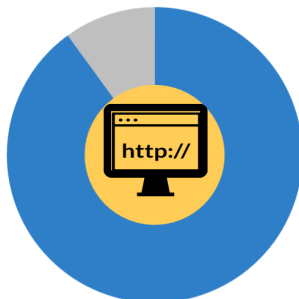
Volunteer and Civic Engagement



94%

Range of volunteer
activities

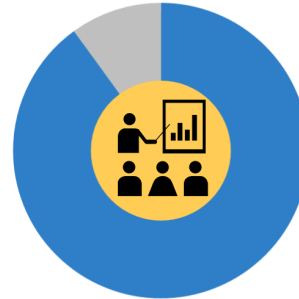
Community Info



90%

Access to information in one
central location

Job Opportunities



90%

Job training opportunities
for older adults

Top Important Community Features



Top Phoenix Important Community Items Across All 66 Features/8 Domains
(Percent of respondents who rated the item as Extremely/Very/Somewhat Important)

Top 10 Overall Community Items	Importance	Feature/ Domain
Well-maintained streets and roads	99%	Transportation and Streets
Easy to read traffic signs	98%	Transportation and Streets
Well-maintained homes and properties	98%	Housing
Well-maintained hospitals and health facilities	98%	Health and Wellness
Conveniently located emergency care centers	98%	Health and Wellness
Variety of health care professionals	98%	Health and Wellness
Respectful and helpful hospital and clinic staff	98%	Health and Wellness
Well-lit, safe streets and intersections	98%	Transportation and Streets
Home repair contractors who are trustworthy and affordable	97%	Housing
Easy to find information on local health and supportive services	97%	Health and Wellness



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 Phoenix residents age 50-plus, 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.

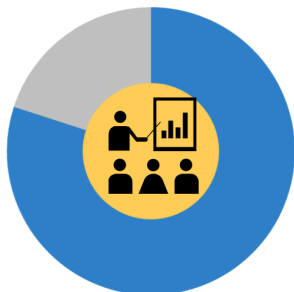
To compare these questions, respondents who said a feature or service is extremely, very, or somewhat important were aggregated and then compared to respondents who said whether or not the feature or service existed in their community.

Summary of Community Needs Gap by Domain



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

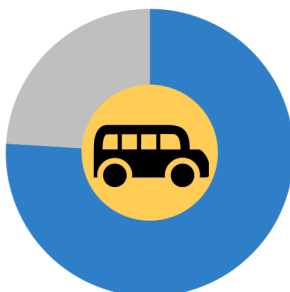
Job Opportunities



80%

Job training opportunities for older adults

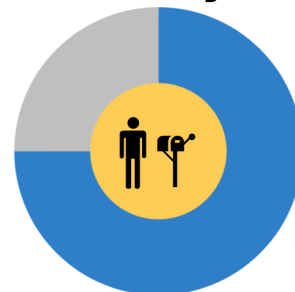
Volunteer and Civic Engagement



76%

Transportation to and from activities

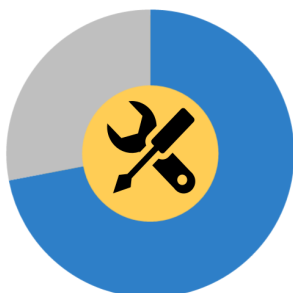
Community Info



75%

Information delivered in person

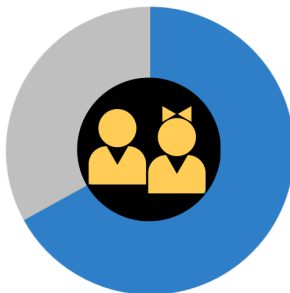
Housing



72%

A repair service for low-income and older adults

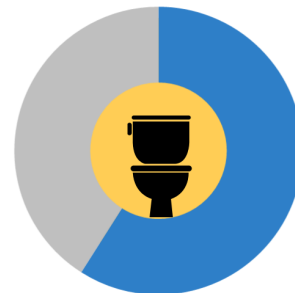
Health and Wellness



67%

Affordable home health care providers

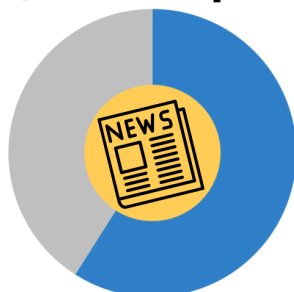
Outdoor Spaces



59%

Well-maintained public restrooms

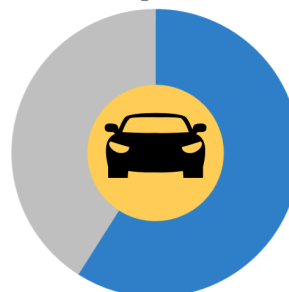
Social Participation



59%

Publicized info about activities

Transportation



59%

Driver education/refresher course

Top Community Needs Gaps



Top Phoenix Community Needs Gap Item Across All 66 Features/8 Domains

(Needs gap = % Extremely/Very/Somewhat Important - % Present)

Top 10 Overall Gaps	Gap	Feature/ Domain
Job training opportunities for older adults	80%	Job Opportunities
Transportation to and from volunteer activities for those who need it	76%	Volunteering and Civic Engagement
Community information that is delivered in person to people who have difficulty or may not be able to leave their home	75%	Community Information
A range of flexible job opportunities for older adults	75%	Job Opportunities
An automated community information source that is easy to understand	74%	Community Information
Easy to find information on local volunteer opportunities	73%	Volunteering and Civic Engagement
Access to community information in one central source	73%	Community Information
Home repair services for low-income and older adults that help with repairs	72%	Housing
Clearly displayed printed community information with large lettering	72%	Community Information
Volunteer training opportunities	71%	Volunteering and Civic Engagement



Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Features	% Important	% Present
Sidewalks that are in good condition	97%	69%
Well-maintained public buildings that are accessible to people of different physical abilities	96%	59%
Well-maintained and safe public parks	95%	65%
Public parks with enough benches	94%	48%
Neighborhood watch programs	93%	50%
Well-maintained public restrooms that are accessible to people of different physical abilities	93%	34%
Separate pathways for bicyclists and pedestrians	92%	48%



The largest unmet need in outdoor spaces and buildings is

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

59%

93% say it is important to have well-maintained public restrooms that are accessible to people of different physical abilities. Only **34%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **59%**.

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



Housing Features

Features	% Important	% Present
Well-maintained homes and properties	98%	78%
Home repair contractors who are trustworthy and affordable	97%	49%
Home repair service for low-income and older adults that help with repairs	91%	19%
Affordable home prices for residents of varying income levels	90%	31%
Homes that are equipped with things like a no step entrance, wider doorways, etc.	88%	35%
Well-maintained and safe low-income housing	84%	19%
Seasonal services such as lawn work	82%	42%



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

72%

91% 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 19% say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of 72%.

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



Transportation and Streets

Features	% Important	% Present
Well-maintained streets and roads	99%	71%
Easy to read traffic signs	98%	81%
Well-lit, safe streets and intersections for all users	98%	64%
Public parking lots and areas to park	97%	66%
Safe public transportation stops or areas	97%	51%
Enforced speed limits	96%	62%
Accessible and convenient public transportation	96%	61%
Affordable public transportation	96%	60%
Well-maintained public transportation vehicles	96%	57%



Transportation and Streets, cont.

Features	% Important	% Present
Special transportation services for seniors or people with disabilities	95%	52%
Affordable public parking	95%	50%
Audio/visual pedestrian crossings	95%	49%
Reliable public transportation	94%	54%
Driver education/ refresher course	86%	27%

The largest unmet need in transportation features is

59%

Driver education/refresher course



86% say it is important to have driver education and refresher course. Only **27%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **59%**.

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



Job Opportunities

Features	% Important	% Present
Job training opportunities for older adults	90%	10%
Jobs that are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities	89%	18%
A range of flexible job opportunities for older adults	87%	12%



The largest unmet need in employment features is

Job training opportunities for older adults

80%

90% 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 **10%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **80%**.

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



Community Information

Features	% Important	% Present
Access to information in one central location	90%	17%
Free access to computers and the internet in public places	89%	56%
An automated community information source	89%	15%
Information delivered in person to people who have difficulty leaving their home	89%	14%
Printed information that has large lettering and is clearly displayed	88%	16%
Information that is available in different languages	72%	19%



The largest unmet need in communication and information is

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

75%

89% 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 **75%**.

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



Volunteering and Civic Engagement

Features	% Important	% Present
A range of volunteer activities to choose from	94%	31%
Easy to find information on available local volunteer opportunities	94%	21%
Opportunities for older adults to participate in decision making roles	93%	31%
Volunteer training opportunities to help better perform volunteer role	92%	21%
Transportation to and from volunteer activities for those who need it	92%	16%

The largest unmet need in volunteering and civic engagement is



Transportation to and from volunteer activities



92% say it is important to have transportation to and from volunteer activities for those who need it. Only **16%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **76%**.

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



Social Participation, Inclusion, and Education Opportunities

Features	% Important	% Present
Activities that are affordable to all residents	94%	38%
Widely publicized reliable information about activities	93%	34%
Activities that offer senior discounts	92%	50%
Activities that involve both younger and older people	92%	40%
Conveniently located venues for entertainment	91%	54%
Activities specifically geared towards older adults	88%	35%
Social clubs such as book, gardening, craft or hobby	85%	33%
Continuing education classes	84%	42%
A variety of cultural activities for diverse populations	84%	36%
Local schools that involve older adults in events and activities	83%	26%

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



Accurate and widely publicized information about social activities

59%

93% say it is important to have accurate and widely publicized information about social activities. Only **34%** say this is present in their community; resulting in a gap of **59%**.

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



Health and Wellness

Features	% Important	% Present
Well-maintained hospitals and health care facilities	98%	77%
Conveniently located emergency care centers	98%	73%
A variety of health care professionals	98%	70%
Respectful and helpful hospital and clinic staff	98%	64%
Easy to find information on local health and supportive services	97%	40%
Well-trained certified home health care providers	96%	35%
A service that helps seniors find and access health services	96%	33%
Affordable home health care providers	96%	29%
Easily understandable and helpful hospital answering services	95%	44%



Health and Wellness, cont.

Features	% Important	% Present
Home care services including health, personal care, and housekeeping	95%	40%
Conveniently located health and social services	93%	51%
Fitness activities specifically geared towards older adults	93%	40%
Health and wellness programs and classes	91%	35%
Health care professionals who speak different languages	76%	44%



The largest unmet need in health services is

Affordable home health care providers

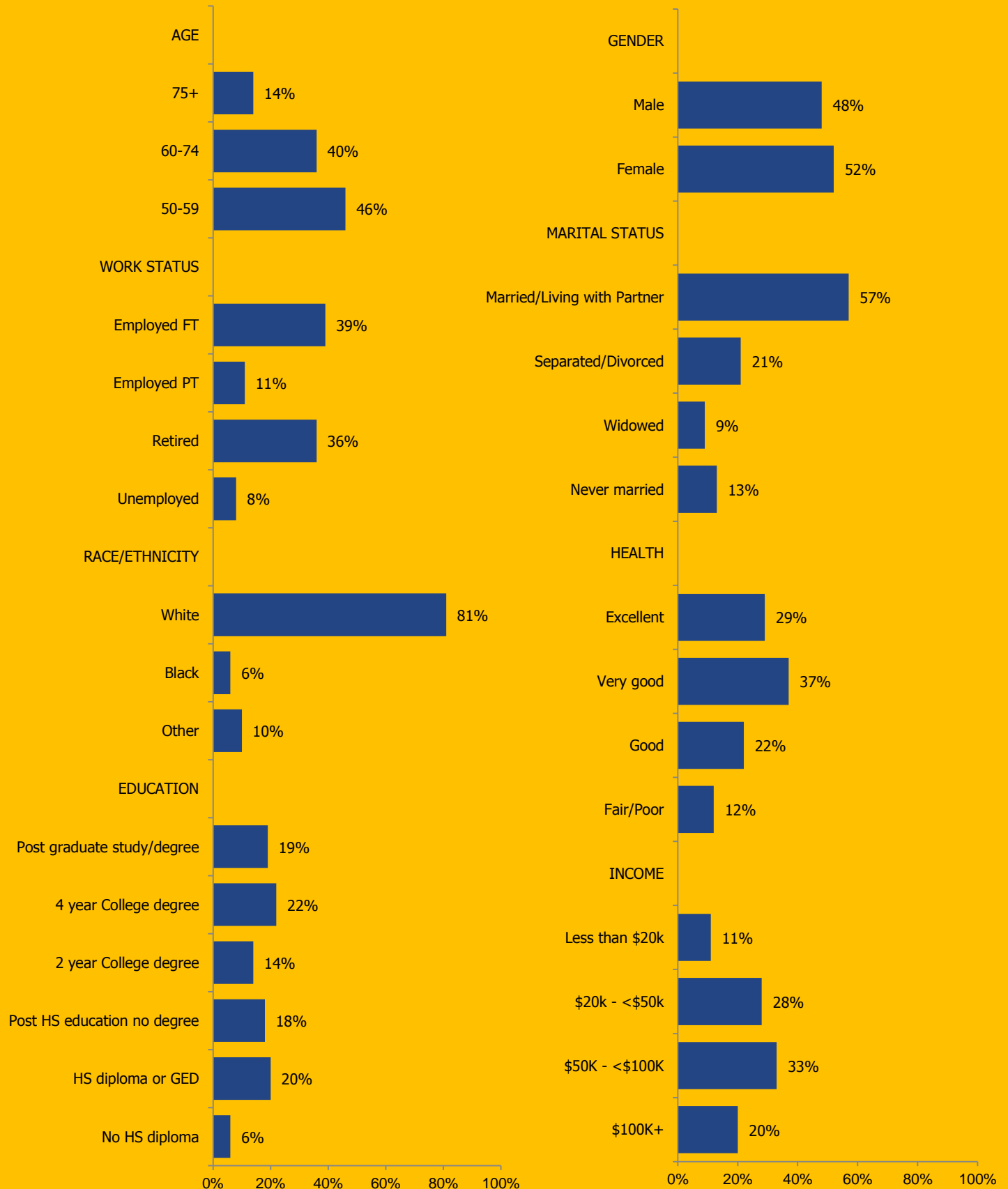
67%

96% 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 **67%**.

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

Demographics

n= 300





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 health care, 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; 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.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Cheryl Barnes, Rachelle Cummins, Joanne Binette, Eowna Young Harrison, and Kadeem Thorpe AARP Research; Steve Jennings, AARP Arizona; Jeanne Anthony, AARP Community, State and National Affairs; and Connie Nero, AARP State and Community Engagement.

Photos courtesy of AARP Arizona.

Copyright © 2016 AARP
AARP Research
601 E Street NW Washington, DC 20049
www.aarp.org/research