2018 HOME AND COMMUNITY PREFERENCES SURVEY: A NATIONAL SURVEY OF ADULTS AGE 18-PLUS
A LOOK AT RURAL COMMUNITIES

June 2019
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Objective

AARP commissioned a survey to assess public opinion across the nation among adults age 18 and older on their preferences with regards to their homes and communities. The focus of this survey is specifically on housing, transportation, outdoor spaces and social engagement and isolation. The purpose of this survey is provide data and insights to raise awareness about the importance of making communities “great places for all ages” and to be a tool for change in communities.

Methodology

This report deck presents an analysis of rural communities through a comparison of the survey responses of rural residents and the survey responses of urban and suburban residents. Survey respondents were classified as living in a rural, urban or suburban area based on their responses to survey question D26 below. For the purposes of this analysis rural residents are those who say they are currently living in a small town or rural area. The survey sample sizes for each group of residents are: rural=492; urban=687; suburban=753. These proportions are similar to the U.S. Census Bureau proportions for rural, urban and suburban areas. Although comparisons are made between rural, urban and suburban residents in this analysis, all comparisons among demographics groups are made for rural residents only.

D26. Which best describes the community where you live?
1. Urban near mix of offices, apartments and shops
2. Urban and mostly residential
3. Suburban with a mix of offices, apartments and shops
4. Suburban and mostly residential
5. Small town
6. Rural area
Methodology continued

Data for this study was collected from March 21st to April 2nd, 2018 by NORC using its online AmeriSpeak Panel that is representative of the U.S. population. NORC conducted a total of 1,947 interviews of a 23 minute (median) survey that consisted of a nationally representative sample of adults age 18 and older. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish.

NORC conducted 1,761 interviews online and 186 by telephone for those respondents who preferred telephone over online. The data were weighted to reflect the U.S. population of adults age 18 and older. The data were weighted by age, gender, Census region, race/ethnicity, income and education. The variables used for weighting were obtained from the 2017 Current Population Survey. Additionally, the data were weighted by AARP membership using statistics from the AARP membership database. The margin of error for this national survey sample is +/-3.53%.
Key Findings: Home and Community

Rural adults have a strong desire and likelihood to stay in their home and community as they age and are making plans to do so, including consideration of alternative housing options. Both the desire and likelihood to stay in their home and community is even greater among rural adults age 50 and older.

- Nearly three-quarters of rural adults say they want to remain in their communities and homes as they age.
- Almost half of rural adults report that they will stay in their current home and never move compared to only a third or less of urban and suburban adults who say they will never move from their current home.
- About three-quarters of rural adults own their own homes, and nearly two in five report that major modifications to their home are needed to accommodate aging needs.
- The presence of accessory dwelling units is low among rural adults, but eight in ten say they would consider building one for a loved one who needs care.
- About half of rural adults already share or would be willing to share a home as they age, with a major consideration being if they needed help with daily activities.
- About half of rural adults would be interested in joining a village to help them stay in their community and are willing to pay an annual fee, a slightly lower proportion than urban and suburban residents.
Key Findings: Transportation

Most rural adults drive to get around their community. Nearly all rural adults have heard of ride share services; however, far fewer are using them on a regular basis and current usage and willingness to use ride share in the future is especially low among rural adults age 50 and older.

- The large majority of rural adults (89%) drive themselves to get around their communities.
- Other popular modes of transportation include walking and having someone else drive them.
- Approximately nine in ten rural adults have heard of ride sharing companies.
- Only just over a quarter of rural adults report having used a ride share company and nearly seven in ten are unlikely to use these services in the future.
- The majority of rural adults have heard of self-driving cars and are somewhat familiar with them but are not willing to ride in them.
Key Findings: Community Features

The most important community features for rural adults center around the built environment specifically relating to outdoor spaces and buildings and streets and sidewalks.

• Street and sidewalk features that rank high in importance are well-maintained streets and easy to read traffic signs.

• When it comes to outdoor spaces and buildings, well-maintained and conveniently located hospitals and health care facilities as well as safe parks are features identified as the most important in the community.
HOME & COMMUNITY
Rural adults are more likely to say they want to stay in their community or current home for as long as possible.

“What I’d really like to do is remain in my community for as long as possible.”

Q1: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: What I’d really like to do is remain in my community for as long as possible?

Q2: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: What I’d really like to do is stay in my current residence for as long as possible?

**Rural**
- Strongly agree: 72%
- Somewhat agree: 22%

**Urban**
- Strongly agree: 67%
- Somewhat agree: 30%

**Suburban**
- Strongly agree: 67%
- Somewhat agree: 29%

**Rural**
- Strongly agree: 73%
- Somewhat agree: 16%

**Urban**
- Strongly agree: 59%
- Somewhat agree: 26%

**Suburban**
- Strongly agree: 58%
- Somewhat agree: 25%
Preference to remain in their community or current residence is stronger among older rural adults.

Q1: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: What I’d really like to do is remain in my community for as long as possible? Q2: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: What I’d really like to do is stay in my current residence for as long as possible?

*Note that for the purposes of this analysis demographic comparisons are made for rural adults only.
Rural adults are much more likely to say they expect to stay in their current home as they get older.

Q3: Thinking about your future years are you more likely to …? Move to a different community; Move into a different residence within your current community; Stay in your current residence and never move?
Likelihood of staying in their current residence and never moving increases with age among rural adults.

Q3: Thinking about your future years, are you more likely to …? Move to a different community; Move into a different residence within your current community; Stay in your current residence and never move?

*Note that for the purposes of this analysis demographic comparisons are made for rural adults only.
Rural adults are less likely than urban residents to want to join a village and pay an annual membership fee.

A "village" is a **community-based, non-profit, member organization** dedicated to doing what is needed for people to **stay in their own homes independently as they age**. For a fee, a village gives members access to social and educational activities, health and wellness programs, trustworthy businesses for outside services, medical services, volunteer services and transportation to help members stay in their home.

Q28: How interested would you be in joining a village in your area? Q29: How willing would you be to pay an annual fee based on income for access to services offered through a village organization?
Regardless of where people live, few currently have accessory dwelling units; however, a third would consider building one.

An Accessory Dwelling Unit, or ADU, is a residential unit built on the same lot as an existing single family home and may be attached or detached to the home. It can be commonly referred to as a “granny flat” or “in-law quarters.” ADUs provide complete separate living quarters, including a kitchen and bathroom, that can allow older adults to age in their existing home with live-in care, make it possible for adults to assist their aging parents, other relatives and loved ones, or be used for rental income.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>% Who have an ADU</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</table>

Q9: Do you currently have an ADU on your property? Q10: [Respondents who do not have an ADU on their property.] If you had the space to create an ADU within your home or on your property, would you consider doing that?
The most compelling reason adults would consider living in an ADU is to live near others but still have their own space, regardless of what type of community they live in.

Q13: Would you consider living in an ADU…?
- To lower your housing costs: 65% Rural, 71% Urban, 68% Suburban
- If you needed help with everyday activities such as household chores or transportation to places like the grocery store or doctor’s office: 62% Rural, 63% Urban, 64% Suburban
- To live close by to someone but still live in your own separate space: 52% Rural, 61% Urban, 52% Suburban
Rural adults with higher incomes are more likely to say they would live in an ADU to live near others but still have their own space or if they needed help.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Higher</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Similar</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Live Close by in Own Space*</td>
<td>&gt;$75,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with Daily Activities*</td>
<td>&gt;$50,000 Whites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic Reasons*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Gender
Race/Ethnicity
Age

*Note that for the purposes of this analysis demographic comparisons are made for rural adults only.

Q13: Would you consider living in an ADU...? To lower your housing costs; If you needed help with everyday activities such as household chores or transportation to places like the grocery store or doctor’s office; To live close by to someone but still live in your own separate space.
Rural adults who have or would consider building an ADU are most willing to build one to provide space for those they care about.

To have a place for a loved one to stay who needs care
- Major reason: 64%
- Minor reason: 17%
- Not a reason: 19%

To provide a home for family members or friends
- Major reason: 54%
- Minor reason: 24%
- Not a reason: 21%

To have a place for guests to stay
- Major reason: 31%
- Minor reason: 46%
- Not a reason: 23%

To have a place for a caregiver to stay
- Major reason: 31%
- Minor reason: 34%
- Not a reason: 35%

To have someone living close by and feel more secure
- Major reason: 31%
- Minor reason: 26%
- Not a reason: 44%

To earn extra income from rent
- Major reason: 23%
- Minor reason: 24%
- Not a reason: 51%

To increase the value of your home
- Major reason: 21%
- Minor reason: 43%
- Not a reason: 34%

To provide affordable housing in your community
- Major reason: 9%
- Minor reason: 26%
- Not a reason: 64%

Q11: [Respondents who have an ADU on their property or would consider building an ADU on their property.] For each of the following reasons choose whether each one is a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason for building an ADU on your property.
Regardless of where people live, approximately half already share or would consider sharing their homes as they age.

Q14: As you grow older would you consider sharing your home with another person?
Rural and suburban adults who are uninterested or less certain about home sharing, are more likely to consider it if they needed help with everyday activities compared to urban adults.

Q15: [Respondents who are unsure or indicate they would not consider sharing their home] Would sharing your home with another person be something you would consider if...? You needed extra income; You needed help with everyday activities such as household chores or transportation to places like the grocery store or doctor’s office; You found yourself not wanting to live alone and wanting companionship.

Q15: [Respondents who are unsure or indicate they would not consider sharing their home] Would sharing your home with another person be something you would consider if...? You needed extra income; You needed help with everyday activities such as household chores or transportation to places like the grocery store or doctor’s office; You found yourself not wanting to live alone and wanting companionship.
Considerations for home sharing differ by demographics.

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<th>In General*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
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<td>LGBT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adults 18-49 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>$50,000-$74,999</td>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
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<td></td>
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<table>
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<th>Help with Daily Activities*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBT</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Wanting to Live Alone*</th>
<th>Higher</th>
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<th>Similar</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q14: As you grow older would you consider sharing your home with another person? Q15: Would sharing your home with another person be something you would consider if...? You needed extra income; You needed help with everyday activities such as household chores or transportation to places like the grocery store or doctor's office; You found yourself not wanting to live alone and wanting companionship.

*Note that for the purposes of this analysis demographic comparisons are made for rural adults only.
Most adults drive to get around their community regardless of where they live.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drive</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have others drive them</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transportation</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ride share service</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special transportation</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q23: How do you usually get around your community for things like shopping, visiting the doctor, running errands, or other things?
Transportation modes differ by age and disability status among rural adults.

- **Rural adults age 50 and older and 65 and older report greater frequencies of driving**; while adults age 18-49 report greater frequencies of almost all other forms of transportation*

- **Rural adults with a disability are less likely to walk**, more likely to have others drive them, and are **more likely to use other forms of transportation***

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Q23: How do you usually get around your community for things like shopping, visiting the doctor, running errands, or other things?

*Note that for the purposes of this analysis demographic comparisons are made for rural adults only.*
Among those rural adults who have heard of ride share, far fewer have ever used it and are less likely to use these services in the next year.

Q16: Have you ever heard of ride share companies such as Uber or Lyft? Q17: [Respondents who have heard of ride share companies.] Have you ever used a ride share company such as Uber or Lyft? Q21: How likely are you to use ride-share companies such as Uber or Lyft in the next year?
Previous use and likelihood of future use of ride-share services differ by demographics among rural adults.

Q17: Have you ever used a ride-share company such as Uber or Lyft? Q21: How likely are you to use ride-share companies such as Uber or Lyft in the next year?

*Note that for the purposes of this analysis demographic comparisons are made for rural adults only.
A lack of need, perceived availability and concerns about privacy and safety are the top reasons for not using ride-share among those rural adults who are non-users or infrequent users.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Major reason</th>
<th>Minor reason</th>
<th>Not a reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have no need for these types of services</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live in a rural area and do not think it is available where I live</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t trust the privacy or security of my personal information</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t trust the privacy or security of my financial information</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am concerned about my personal safety or being physically hurt</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t trust the driver will be a safe driver</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know enough about these services</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t understand how to use these services</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have the technology needed to get these services</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am disabled and do not think the driver will be able to assist me</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q22: [Respondents who haven’t heard of ride-share, never uses ride-share, or uses ride-share a few times per year or less often] Following is a list of reasons why some people might NOT use ride-share services such as Uber or Lyft. For you personally, choose whether each reason is a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason.
Rural adults who have heard of self-driving cars are slightly less familiar with them.

“How familiar would you say you are with driverless or self-driving cars?”

88% of rural residents have heard of self-driving cars

Q24: Have you ever heard of driverless or self-driving cars? Q25: [Respondents who have heard of self-driving cars] How familiar would you say you are with driverless or self-driving cars?
Despite high awareness rural adults are less willing to ride in self-driving cars.

“If driverless or self-driving cars were available in your area today, how willing would you be to ride in a driverless or self-driving car?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very/Somewhat willing</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very/Not at all willing</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q26: If driverless or self-driving cars were available in your area today, how willing would you be to ride in a driverless or self-driving car?
Willingness to use driverless cars is higher among rural adults with a disability.

- Adults indicating a disability are more willing to ride in a driverless or self-driving car than those without a disability.*

Q26: If driverless or self-driving cars were available in your area today, how willing would you be to ride in a driverless or self-driving car?

*Note that for the purposes of this analysis demographic comparisons are made for rural adults only.
Top Community Features for Rural Adults

(% Extremely/Very Important)

- **87%** Streets & Sidewalks: Well-maintained streets
- **86%** Outdoor Spaces & Buildings: Well-maintained hospitals and health care facilities
- **83%** Outdoor Spaces & Buildings: Safe parks
- **81%** Outdoor Spaces & Buildings: Conveniently located hospitals and health care facilities
- **79%** Streets & Sidewalks: Easy to read traffic signs

Q27: How important is it to you personally to have the following in your community right now?
SOCIAL PARTICIPATION
Three in ten rural adults report lacking companionship, feeling left out, and feeling isolated from others.

94% of rural residents have either family or friends they could call on day or night if they were in trouble.

These findings are similar to previous AARP research on loneliness, which found 43% of adults age 45 and older feel they lack companionship, 36% feel left out, and 30% feel isolated from others.

QD9: How often do you feel the following? I lack companionship; I feel left out; I feel isolated from others; QD10: If you were in trouble, do you have friends or family who can help you at any time of the day or night?

Younger rural adults are more likely to experience feelings of social isolation.

### Feelings of Social Isolation*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Similar</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults 18-49 years</td>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;$25,000</td>
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### Having Someone to Call if in Trouble*

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<th>Lower</th>
<th>Similar</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$25,000</td>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td>Gender</td>
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</table>

QD9: How often do you feel the following? I lack companionship; I feel left out; I feel isolated from others; QD10: If you were in trouble, do you have friends or family who can help you at any time of the day or night?

*Note that for the purposes of this analysis demographic comparisons are made for rural adults only.
IMPLICATIONS
Implications

Rural adults want to stay in their communities and homes as they grow older especially when considering life after their working years. People spend years making connections and commitments to homes, friendships, community organizations, and local social ties within their community. **Communities become a source of support and engagement for its residents, particularly older adults who have an even stronger desire to age in place.**

Although most rural adults want to grow old in their communities, many of them do not see themselves staying in their current environment as they age. **Alternatives like home sharing, accessory dwelling units and villages are things many are willing to consider, and would give people more choice in how and where they want to age.**

Although most adults drive to get around their community, the ability to continue driving in later years could decline putting one’s health and well-being at risk. **Having alternative modes of transportation, like ride share, is key to ensuring that all residents can continue to have access to the community supports and services they need.** While nearly all adults have heard of ride share services far fewer are willing to use them, particularly older adults. **Educating people on the benefits and use of ride share services can help people maintain their independence and ensure they stay actively engaged in community life.**
## Definitions

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<th>Generation</th>
<th>Birth Years</th>
<th>Ages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen Z</td>
<td>1995-2000</td>
<td>18-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Y</td>
<td>1980-1994</td>
<td>24-38</td>
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<td>Gen X</td>
<td>1965-1979</td>
<td>39-53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>1946-1964</td>
<td>54-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Silent Generation</td>
<td>1925-1945</td>
<td>73-93</td>
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Page 21: Getty Images/BrianAJackson; Getty Images/ FatCamera; Getty Images/ HerolImages
Page 22: iStock.com/AGrigorjeva
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About AARP

AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With nearly 38 million members and offices in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also works for individuals in the marketplace by sparking new solutions and allowing carefully chosen, high-quality products and services to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and information, AARP produces the nation's largest circulation publications, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.
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This deck, annotated survey, infographics and methodology report can be accessed at www.aarp.org/livablesurvey2018.