

CASOA™

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT SURVEY
FOR OLDER ADULTS™

Commonwealth of Virginia

Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults

December 2022



8001 Terrace Ave Middleton, WI 53562
info.polco.us • 608-709-8683

Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction	1
Section 2: Key Findings	7
Section 3: Understanding the Report	13
Section 4: Community Readiness	14
Section 5: Community Livability Topics	17
Section 6: Economic Contribution	19
Section 7: Community Needs	22

Section 1: Introduction




About the Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults®

The Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults (CASOA)® provides a statistically valid survey of the strengths and needs of older adults as reported by older adults themselves. This report is intended to enable local governments, community-based organizations, the private sector and other community members to understand more thoroughly and predict more accurately the services and resources required to serve an aging population. With this data, community stakeholders can shape public policy, educate the public and assist communities and organizations in their efforts to sustain a high quality of life for older adults.



The results of this exploration will provide useful information for planning and resource development as well as strengths advocacy efforts and stakeholder engagement. The ultimate goal of the assessment is to create empowered communities that support vibrant older adult populations.

This report summarizes how older residents view their community and its success in creating a thriving environment for older adults. Aspects of livability are explored within six community dimensions: Community Design, Employment and Finances, Equity and Inclusivity, Health and Wellness, Information and Assistance, and Productive Activities. Overall community quality also is assessed.

Domain of Community Livability	Description	Community Livability Topics
 Overall Community Quality	Measuring community livability starts with assessing the quality of life of those who live there, and ensuring that the community is attractive, accessible, and welcoming to residents of all ages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place to Live and Retire • Recommend and Remain in Community
 Community Design	A well-designed community enhances the quality of life for its residents by encouraging smart land use and zoning, ensuring that affordable housing is accessible to all, and providing mobility options to support residents aging in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Mobility • Land Use
 Employment and Finances	Communities that work to foster sustainable growth, create jobs and workforce training for persons of all ages, and promote equitable economies ensure older adults are able to sustain their financial well-being through retirement and not outlive their life investments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Finances
 Equity and Inclusivity	A community is often greater than the sum of its parts. Having a sense of community entails not only a sense of membership and belonging, but also feelings of safety and trust in the other members of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity • Community Inclusivity
 Health and Wellness	The amenities available in the communities have a direct impact on the health and wellness of residents, and thus, on their quality of life overall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Physical Health • Mental Health • Health Care • Independent Living
 Information and Assistance	Government programs, policies and information assistance can support successful aging initiatives allowing older residents to remain independent contributors to community quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Older Adult Services • Information on Available Older Adult Services
 Productive Activities	Productivity is the touchstone of a thriving old age. Older adults' engagement and contribution to the community can be determined by their time spent in civic meetings and social activities or providing help to others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic Engagement • Social Engagement • Caregiving

Survey Methods

The CASOA survey instrument and its administration are standardized to assure high-quality survey methods and comparable results across communities. Households with an adult member 60 years or older were selected at random. Multiple mailed contacts gave each household more than one prompt to participate. A total of 86,940 older adult households were randomly selected to receive the survey. These households first received a half-page postcard inviting them to complete the survey online, followed by a mailed hard copy survey packet which included a cover letter, a copy of the questionnaire and a postage-paid return envelope. A total of 7,117 completed surveys was

obtained, providing an overall response rate of 8.4% and a margin of error plus or minus 1.16% around any given percent and one point around any given average rating for the entire sample (e.g., average number of caregiving hours). Results were statistically weighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of older adults in the entire community.

In addition to the random sample "probability" survey, an open participation survey was conducted, in which all older adults 60 years or older were invited to participate. The open participation survey instrument was identical to the probability sample survey. This survey was conducted entirely online. A total of 1,725 surveys were completed by open participation survey respondents. The open participation survey results were combined with responses from the probability sample survey, for a total of 8,843 completed surveys. With the inclusion of the open participation survey participants, it is likely that the precision of the responses would be even greater (and thus the margin of error smaller).

Results were statistically weighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of older adults in the entire community.

Because Commonwealth of Virginia doesn't have any prior measurements, trends aren't available. Trends will be available after this survey has been conducted a second time. Differences in responses between the survey administrations will be tested for statistical significance, and statistically significant differences are noted in the charts. Trend data represent important comparisons and should be examined for improvements or declines.

For additional details on the survey methodology, see the Methods section.

How the Results Are Reported

Don't Know Responses and Rounding

On many of the questions in the survey, respondents could provide an answer of don't know. The proportion of residents giving this reply can be seen in Responses. However, these responses have been removed from the analyses presented in the body of the report, unless otherwise indicated. In other words, the majority of the tables and graphs in the body of the report display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

For some questions, respondents were permitted to select multiple responses. When the total exceeds 100% in a table for a multiple response question, it is because some respondents are counted in multiple categories. When a table for a question that only permitted a single response does not total to exactly 100%, it is due to the customary practice of rounding percentages to the nearest whole number.

Benchmark Comparison Data

National Research Center at Polco has developed a database that collates responses to CASOA and related surveys administered in other communities, which allows the results from Commonwealth of Virginia to be compared against a set of national benchmarks. This benchmarking database includes responses from more than 35,000 older adults (age 55 and over) in over 328 communities across the nation.

Ratings are compared when similar questions are included in Polco's database and when there are at least five other communities in which the question was asked. Where comparisons for ratings are available, Commonwealth of Virginia's results are shown as more favorable than the benchmark, less favorable than the benchmark or similar to the benchmark. In instances where ratings are considerably more or less

favorable than the benchmark, these ratings have been further demarcated by the attribute of "much" (for example, much more favorable or much less favorable).

Section 2: Key Findings

Background

Most older adults desire to age in place. Communities that assist older adults in remaining or becoming active community participants must provide the requisite opportunities for recreation, transportation, culture, education, communication, social connection, spiritual enrichment and health care.

To better understand the strengths and challenges of Virginia communities aging in place, the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) partnered with Polco to administer The Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults (CASOA®) across all Area Agencies on Aging across the state. Data in this report focus specifically on older residents in Commonwealth of Virginia.

Survey participants rated the overall quality of life in their community. They also evaluated their communities as livable communities for older adults within six domains:

- Community Design
- Employment and Finances
- Equity and Inclusivity
- Health and Wellness
- Information and Assistance
- Productive Activities.

The extent to which older adults experience challenges within these domains is also described.

Overall Community Quality

Measuring community livability for older adults starts with assessing the quality of life of those who live there, and ensuring that the community is attractive, accessible, and welcoming to all. Exploring how older residents view their community overall and how likely they are to recommend and remain in their communities can provide a high-level overview of the quality and livability of the community.

- About 79% of older residents living in the state rated their overall quality of life as excellent or good. Most of the older respondents scored their communities positively as a place to live and would recommend their communities to others. About 76% residents planned to stay in their community throughout their retirement.
- Positive scores were given to their communities as places to retire by 69% of older residents.

Overall Scores of Community Livability

The Community Assessment Survey of Older Adults (CASOA) is designed to examine the status of older adults and the community around many (17) topics of livability within six domains: Community Design, Employment and Finances, Equity and Inclusivity, Health and Wellness, Information and Assistance, and Productive Activities. Summary scores of community livability were created through the aggregation of a series of resident ratings within each of these different livability aspects and domains. Of the 17 aspects of livability examined, the aspects found to be strongest in the state related to areas of Safety (average positive score of 77%), Physical Health (61%), and Community Inclusivity (57%). The areas showing the greatest need for improvement related to Employment (27%), Independent Living (27%) and Housing and Mental Health (28%). More detailed information about each livability domain follows.

Community Design

Livable communities (which include those with mixed-use neighborhoods, higher-density development, increased connections, shared community spaces and more human-scale design) will become a necessity for communities to age successfully. Communities that have planned and been designed for older adults tend to emphasize access, helping to facilitate movement and participation.

- About 46% of respondents rated the overall quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus) in their community as excellent or good. In many communities, ease of travel by walking or bicycling is given lower ratings than travel by

car. Here, ease of travel by car was considered excellent or good by 81% of respondents, while ease of travel by walking and bicycling was considered excellent or good by 52% and 44% of respondents, respectively.

- When considering aspects of housing (affordability and variety) and community features of new urbanism (where people can live close to places where they can eat, shop, work, and receive services), relatively lower scores were given by older adults compared to many other items on the survey. Only 28% of respondents gave a positive score to the availability of affordable quality housing in their communities, and only about 30% older adults gave excellent or good ratings to the availability of mixed-use neighborhoods.
- About 45% of older residents in the state reported experiencing housing needs and 24% reported mobility needs.

Employment and Finances

The life expectancy for those born between 1940 and 1960 has increased dramatically due to advances in health care and lifestyle changes. While this is a very positive trend overall, it also highlights both the importance of communities providing employment opportunities for older adults and the need for older adults to plan well for their retirement years.

- About 69% of older residents rated the overall economic health of their communities positively, although the cost of living was rated as excellent or good by only 27%.
- Employment opportunities for older adults (quality and variety) received low ratings (24% and 22% positive, respectively), and the opportunity to build work skills also was found to be lacking (22% excellent or good).
- About 30% older adults reported financial challenges and 20% reported employment needs.

Equity and Inclusion

A community is often greater than the sum of its parts. Having a sense of community entails not only a sense of membership and belonging, but also feelings of equity and trust in the other members of the community.

- About 62% of older residents rated the sense of community in their towns as excellent or good, and neighborliness was rated positively by 55% of residents.
- About 54% of the respondents positively rated their community's openness and acceptance toward older residents of diverse backgrounds, and 49% indicated that their community valued older residents.
- Inclusion challenges were reported by about 20% of older residents and equity challenges by 8%.

Health and Wellness

Of all the attributes of aging, health poses the greatest risk and the biggest opportunity for communities to ensure the independence and contributions of their aging populations. Health and wellness, for the purposes of this study, included not only physical and mental health, but issues of safety, independent living and health care.

- About 77% older residents in the state rated their overall physical health as excellent or good and 87% rated their mental health as excellent or good.
- In most places, opportunities for health and wellness receive higher ratings from older adults than do health care ratings. Here, community opportunities for health and wellness were scored positively by 62% residents, while the percent giving ratings of excellent or good to the availability of physical health care was 43%, to mental health care 28%, and to long term care options 31%.
- Health-related problems were some of the most common challenges listed by older adults in the survey, with 37% reporting physical health challenges and 26% reporting mental

health challenges. Health care was also a challenge for about 36% of older residents.

Information and Assistance

The older adult service network, while strong, is under-resourced and unable to single-handedly meet the needs of the continuously growing population of older adults. Providing useful and well-designed programs, as well as informing residents about other assistance resources, is an important way that government agencies can help residents age in place.

- The overall services provided to older adults in the state were rated as excellent or good by 47% of survey respondents.
- About 56% of survey respondents reported being somewhat informed or very informed about services and activities available to older adults. The availability of information about resources for older adults was rated positively by 29% of older residents and the availability of financial or legal planning services was rated positively by 32% of older residents.
- About 42% of older adults were found to have information access challenges in the state.

Productive Activities

Productive activities outside of work (such as volunteerism and social activity) promote quality of life and contribute to active aging. This domain examines the extent of older adults' participation in social and leisure programs and their time spent attending or viewing civic meetings, volunteering or providing help to others.

- About 60% of older adults surveyed felt they had excellent or good opportunities to volunteer, and 51% participated in some kind of volunteer work.
- The caregiving contribution of older adults was substantial in the state. About 36% of older residents reported providing care to individuals 55 and older, 15% to individuals 18-54 and 19% to individuals under 18.
- Older adults in the state reported challenges with being civically engaged 26%, being socially engaged 27% and caregiving 14%.

The Economic Contribution of Older Adults

The contribution older adults make through employment, volunteerism and caregiving was calculated for all older adults living in the state. It is estimated that older residents contribute \$38,508,493,401 annually to their community through paid and unpaid work.

Older Resident Needs

Through the survey, more than 40 challenges commonly facing older adults were assessed by respondents. These challenges were grouped into 15 larger categories of needs. In the state, the largest challenges were in the areas of housing, mental health, and physical health. At least 45%% of older residents reported at least one item in these categories was a major or moderate problem in the 12 months prior to taking the survey.

Comparison to National Benchmarks

Community Characteristics Benchmarks

To better provide context to the survey data, resident responses for the state were compared to Polco's national benchmark database or older adult opinion. Of the 52 assessments of community livability that were compared to the benchmark database, 52 were similar, 0 above, and 0 below the benchmark comparisons.




Older Adult Challenges Benchmarks

Comparisons to the benchmark database can also be made for the proportion of residents experiencing a variety of challenges. In the state, there was a lower proportion of older adults experiencing challenges for 0 item(s), a greater proportion of older adults experiencing challenges for 0 item(s), and a similar proportion experiencing challenges for 42 item(s).






Section 3: Understanding the Report

Throughout this report, iconography is used to denote trends and benchmarks. While some pages will show the legend, others won't for the sake of space. Keep this page handy for reference.

Trends

-  **Favorably**
At least 7 percentage points more favorable than last measure
-  **Similar**
No statistically significant difference
-  **Unfavorably**
At least 7 percentage points less favorable than last measure

Benchmarks

-  **Much more favorable**
At least 20 points more favorable than benchmark
-  **More favorable**
10-20 points more favorable than benchmark
-  **Similar**
No statistically significant difference
-  **Less favorable**
10-20 points less favorable than benchmark
-  **Much less favorable**
At least 20 points less favorable than benchmark

Section 4: Community Readiness

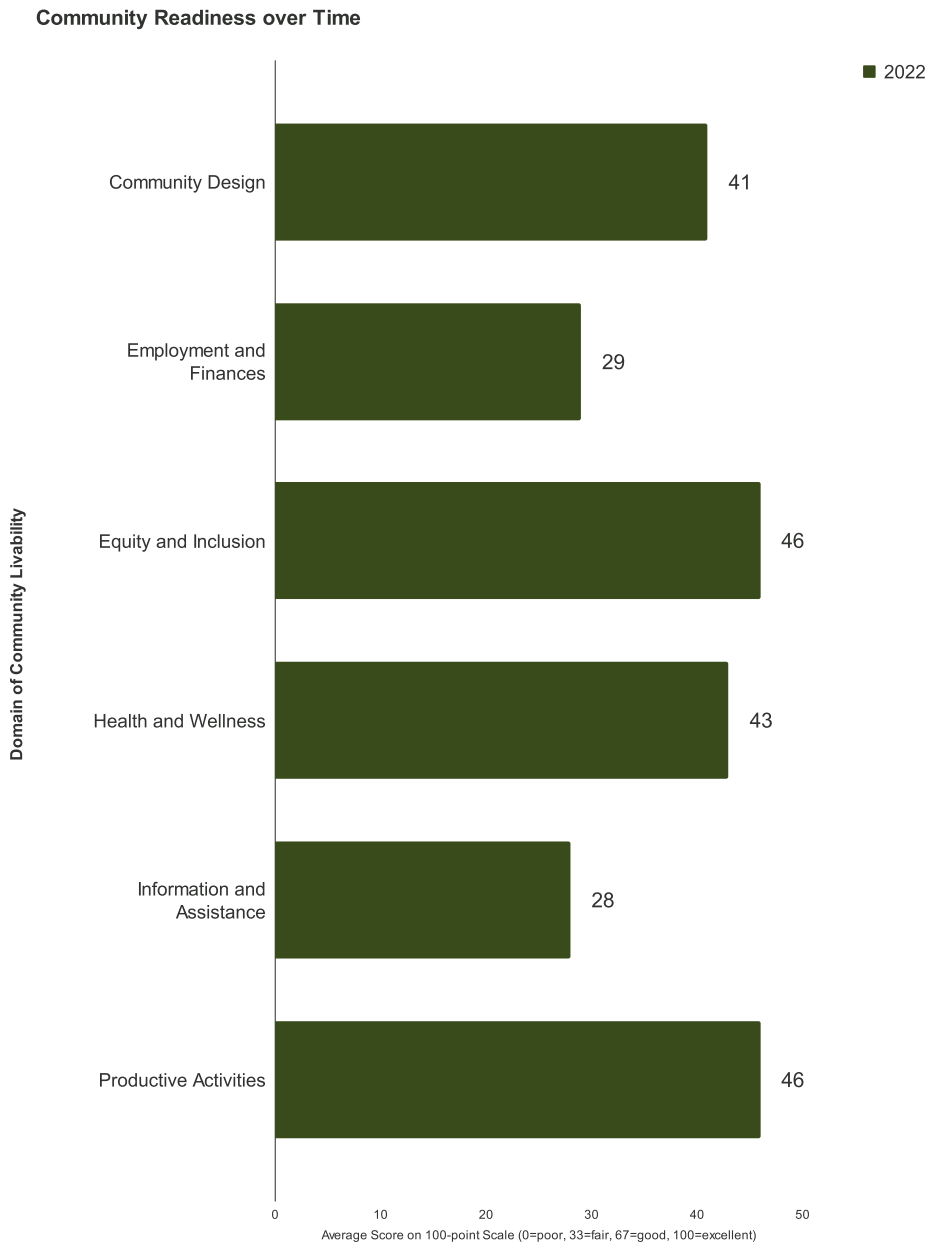
Communities that assist older adults to remain or become active community participants must provide the requisite opportunities for recreation, transportation, culture, education, communication, social connection, spiritual enrichment and health care. Because every community is different, each must identify what its older adults value most and what the community offers its older residents. The judgments of these residents provide the elements used to calculate the overall community quality in Commonwealth of Virginia.

Survey respondents were asked to rate a number of aspects of the community. These ratings were converted to an average scale of 0 (the lowest rating, such as poor) to 100 (the highest rating, such as excellent) and then combined to provide one overall rating (index¹) for each of the six dimensions of Community Readiness, as well as an overall rating of the Quality of the Community. If trend data prior to 2022 are shown, it should be noted that community readiness scores have been updated from previous reports to improve these metrics. Readiness scores for past surveys were recalculated using the new dimensions to make them comparable to the current structure.

Community Readiness Chart

Dimension	Community Livability Topics	Score (out of 100)
Overall Community Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Place to Live and Retire• Recommend and Remain in Community	67
Community Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing• Mobility• Land Use	41
Employment and Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employment• Finances	29

Dimension	Community Livability Topics	Score (out of 100)
Equity and Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equity• Community Inclusivity	46
Health and Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety• Physical Health• Mental Health• Health Care• Independent Living	43
Information and Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality of Older Adult Services• Information on Available Older Adult Services	28
Productive Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Civic Engagement• Social Engagement• Caregiving	46

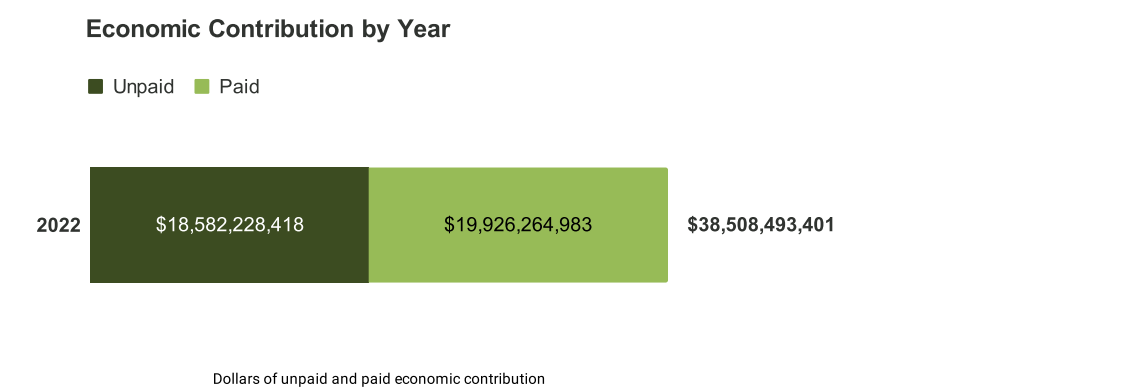


¹These ratings are not to be understood like ratings from school tests, because they are summaries of several questions that range from 0 as poor, 33 as fair, 67 as good and 100 as excellent. For example, a score of 58 should be interpreted as closer to good than to fair (with the midpoint of the scale, 50, representing equidistance between good and fair).

Section 13: Economic Contribution

Productive behavior is “any activity, paid or unpaid, that generates goods or services of economic value.”¹ Productive activities include many types of paid and unpaid work, as well as services provided to friends, family or neighbors. Older adults make significant contributions (paid and unpaid) to the communities in which they live. In addition to their paid work, older adults contribute to the economy through volunteering, providing informal help to family and friends, and caregiving.

Economic Contribution of Older Adults in Commonwealth of Virginia



The calculations of the economic contributions of older adults in Commonwealth of Virginia were rough estimates using data from the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics (Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Area Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates).

Economic Contribution of Older Adults

	% of older adults	# of older adults*	Average # of hours**	Average hourly rate***	Annual total
Providing care to older adult(s)	37%	673,923	10.6	\$11.23	\$4,169,794,523

Providing care to adult(s)	16%	299,227	8.27	\$11.23	\$1,444,570,680
Providing care to child(ren)	20%	371,608	8.73	\$12.67	\$2,138,541,164
Providing help to family and friends	81%	1,496,167	5.65	\$15.01	\$6,593,986,591
Volunteering	52%	960,184	4.73	\$17.94	\$4,235,335,459
Subtotal unpaid					\$18,582,228,418
Working part time	10%	185,712	15	\$28.92	\$4,189,217,011
Working full time	18%	327,018	32	\$28.92	\$15,737,047,972
Subtotal paid					\$19,926,264,983
Total contribution					\$38,508,493,401

¹Rowe JW, Kahn RL. Successful Aging. New York: Pantheon Books; 1998.

* Based on U.S. Census Bureau - 2019 American Community Survey; about 1,838,379 adults age 60 and over in the state.

** Respondents were asked to select a range of hours. The average number of hours was calculated from the mid-point of the response scale. For example, a response of 1 to 3 hours equated to 2 hours and a response of never was assumed to be zero hours. In cases where the respondent chose a response that indicated 11 or more hours or 20 or more hours, the number of hours was calculated as 125% of 11 and 125% of 20 (i.e., 13.75 and 25 respectively). Working full time was assumed to be 32 hours per week and working part time was assumed to be 15 hours per week.

*** The economic value of an hour worked was assumed to be the same as the average hourly wage as calculated by the Bureau of Labor statistics for similar types of work in undefined. Providing care for older adults and adults was assumed to be the equivalent of “Personal and Home Care Aides.” Providing care for children was assumed to be the equivalent of “Child Care Workers.” Providing help to family and friends was assumed to be the equivalent of “Personal Care and Service Occupations.” Volunteering was assumed to be the equivalent of “Office Clerks, General.” Working full time and part time was assumed to be the equivalent of “All Occupations.”

Section 14: Community Needs

The individual survey questions about specific problems faced by older community members were summarized into the 17 larger categories to provide a broad picture of older resident needs in Commonwealth of Virginia. The figure below shows the percent of respondents who reported that one or more items within each of these 17 areas was a major or moderate problem. (See Methods for more information on the items included in each area.)

Typically, it is understood that the self-reported needs of older adults represent a minimum level, a conservative estimate attenuated by respondents' strong desire to feel and appear self-reliant and further reduced by the silent voice of some older adults who, no matter how sensitive the attempt, are too frail to participate in any survey enterprise.

Percent and Estimated Number of Older Adults With a Need

	Percent with need	Number affected (N=1,838,379)*
Housing	45%	823,961
Mobility	24%	448,762
Employment	20%	371,175
Finances	30%	558,586
Equity	8%	139,383
Community Inclusivity	20%	367,946
Safety	13%	236,196
Physical Health	37%	687,231
Mental Health	26%	484,625
Health Care	36%	664,127
Independent Living	11%	193,558

	Percent with need	Number affected (N=1,838,379)*
Housing	45%	823,961
Mobility	24%	448,762
Information on Available Older Adult Services	42%	764,707
Civic Engagement	26%	482,039
Social Engagement	27%	498,537
Caregiving	14%	266,584

Populations at Higher Risk

As people age, many learn to take better care of themselves, to plan for retirement and, generally, to move more deliberately. Aging builds wisdom but can sap resources — physical, emotional and financial. Even those blessed by good luck or prescient enough to plan comprehensively for the best future may find themselves with unanticipated needs or with physical, emotional or financial strengths that could endure only with help. Some people age better than others, and aging well requires certain strengths that are inherent and others that can be supported by assistance from the private sector and government.

The tables below show the reported needs within each category of livability of Commonwealth of Virginia's older adult population, by demographic subgroup. This information can help identify which groups are at higher risk in the community and account for sociodemographic disparities when addressing these needs.

Percent Needs of Older Population by Sociodemographic Characteristics, (1,838,379)*

The sociodemographic characteristics examined included Gender, Age, Race, Ethnicity, Annual Household Income, Housing Tenure (Rent or Own), and Household Composition (Lives alone or Lives with others)

	Housing	Mobility	Employment	Finances	Equity
Female	50%	25%	20%	32%	7%
Male	39%	23%	21%	28%	8%
60 to 64 years	42%	22%	21%	36%	9%
65 to 74 years	42%	23%	21%	30%	8%
75 or over	51%	29%	19%	25%	6%
White	42%	23%	18%	27%	6%
Not white	56%	28%	26%	42%	12%
Hispanic	44%	32%	23%	36%	10%
Not Hispanic	45%	24%	20%	30%	8%
Less than \$25,000	70%	38%	37%	69%	13%
\$25,000 to \$74,999	49%	26%	23%	37%	8%
\$75,000 or more	51%	29%	19%	25%	6%
Rent	62%	36%	31%	52%	15%
Own	41%	22%	18%	25%	6%
Lives alone	50%	26%	22%	34%	9%
Lives with others	42%	24%	19%	29%	7%
Overall	45%	24%	20%	30%	8%

	Community Inclusivity	Safety	Physical Health	Mental Health	Health Care	Independent Living
Female	20%	13%	39%	28%	37%	11%

Male	20%	13%	36%	25%	35%	10%
60 to 64 years	22%	14%	37%	27%	42%	10%
65 to 74 years	20%	12%	36%	25%	36%	10%
75 or over	18%	13%	41%	28%	31%	12%
White	20%	11%	37%	25%	35%	10%
Not white	20%	19%	41%	31%	39%	14%
Hispanic	26%	12%	42%	25%	42%	6%
Not Hispanic	20%	13%	37%	26%	36%	11%
Less than \$25,000	37%	23%	62%	43%	59%	21%
\$25,000 to \$74,999	21%	14%	42%	29%	42%	10%
\$75,000 or more	18%	13%	41%	28%	31%	12%
Rent	28%	20%	53%	34%	50%	18%
Own	18%	11%	34%	25%	33%	9%
Lives alone	26%	15%	42%	32%	38%	13%
Lives with others	17%	12%	35%	24%	35%	10%
Overall	20%	13%	37%	26%	36%	11%

	Information on Available Older Adult Services	Civic Engagement	Social Engagement	Caregiving
Female	42%	25%	28%	15%
Male	41%	27%	26%	15%
60 to 64 years	45%	27%	28%	17%
65 to 74 years	42%	28%	28%	15%
75 or over	37%	22%	25%	11%
White	40%	24%	25%	14%
Not white	47%	33%	33%	17%
Hispanic	52%	39%	35%	19%
Not Hispanic	41%	26%	27%	14%
Less than \$25,000	56%	40%	44%	16%
\$25,000 to \$74,999	46%	28%	30%	17%
\$75,000 or more	37%	22%	25%	11%
Rent	50%	37%	37%	18%
Own	40%	24%	25%	14%
Lives alone	43%	30%	33%	10%
Lives with others	41%	25%	25%	17%
Overall	42%	26%	27%	14%

* Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates