



Sullivan County
Office for the Aging
**SENIOR NEEDS
ASSESSMENT AND
GAPS ANALYSIS**



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HUDSON VALLEY
PATTERN
for
PROGRESS

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Section 1: INTRODUCTION

SULLIVAN COUNTY SENIORS: A PORTRAIT OF TODAY

In 2023, the Sullivan County Office for the Aging (SCOFA) contracted with Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress to conduct a Senior Needs Assessment and Gaps Analysis. The primary purpose of this study is to guide the office in its efforts to provide high-quality, relevant services and to improve conditions for seniors in the county.

This is the first senior needs assessment in Sullivan County since the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to mandatory quarantine and other challenging circumstances, many of the county’s existing senior programs and services were interrupted or discontinued at the time, highlighting the critical relationship between the senior community, an active workforce, and community wellbeing. Prior to the pandemic, for example, there were 11 congregate lunch sites actively providing meals and gathering spaces for seniors; as of the writing of this report, only two remain, as the pandemic prompted a shift from congregate lunches to home delivery services. Since these closures, SCOFA has struggled to rebuild the infrastructure of staff and volunteers that would be necessary to reopen the congregate sites.

For a variety of reasons, seniors were an especially vulnerable group during the peak of the pandemic. Many seniors continue to struggle with lingering impacts. The closure of congregate lunch sites is only one example of how pandemic-induced isolation remains a significant challenge for seniors across Sullivan County. In addition, a large portion of seniors have fixed incomes, through pensions or social security payments, and therefore have struggled to meet the rising costs of goods and services sparked by the pandemic. The increasing cost of housing has been an especially notable burden for seniors on fixed incomes, whether they rent or own their homes. With a heavy shift to online virtual communications during the pandemic, some seniors also faced technological barriers and were unable to participate in programs, access online information, or utilize websites to find resources that may traditionally have been provided in-person.

Even prior to the pandemic, seniors in Sullivan County faced unique challenges due to conditions related to living in a rural setting with limited resources. Of particular concern for the wellbeing of senior residents is the fact that the county has some of the lowest health rankings in the state, due in part to a severely constrained healthcare system. Seniors are also more likely to have ambulatory challenges or other disabilities that prevent them from driving, making them more dependent on ride services, public transportation, family, and friends. As a mostly rural county with limited public transit and long drive times to service destinations, accessing existing services and programs is a critical challenge for seniors. Compounding these challenges is the issue of earnings: senior households tend to have significantly lower incomes compared to the general population.¹

To unearth the scope of these challenges, and their tangible impacts, our team executed a detailed survey, through which we engaged more than 600 seniors age 55+ across Sullivan County. Of those who responded:

- 36% have difficulty walking.
- 14% have difficulty driving.
- 22% have difficulty hearing.
- 12% have difficulty seeing.
- 21% have difficulty with technology.
- 16% have difficulty with memory.
- 10% have difficulty having enough food.
- 50% have a household income of less than \$40,000.
- 9% have a household income of \$10,000 or less.

For the 4,100+ single seniors age 65+ who live alone in Sullivan County, difficulties such as isolation, access to resources, and transportation are often exacerbated. Many seniors are themselves caretakers living with a dependent, while over 1,200 Sullivan senior householders live with their grandchildren. These differences in household composition trigger different types of need for supportive interventions on behalf of service providers.

Homeownership status also affects a senior's needs. Renters, who account for 15% of Sullivan senior households, typically have less housing security and may struggle to make housing payments. Homeowners, on the other hand, have the responsibility to keep up with the maintenance of their homes, which can be more difficult for people as they age and confront additional physical and financial limitations.

It is important to note that the "senior" age group is not a monolith, and includes younger, more active seniors as well as people in their 100s. At 55 years of age, many people may still be working and raising children. Those in their 70s and 80s may be less likely to work but are often still active and involved in their communities. Those most senior in age – people over the age 85 – are themselves a diverse group engaged in varying degrees of activity. That said, the likelihood of disability increases with age: 21% of people aged 65 to 74 in Sullivan County have at least one disability, while that number increases to 35% for people 75 years or older.

¹ As of 2021, the median household income in Sullivan County for householders 65 years and over was \$49,283 versus \$63,393 for all county households. (U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates)

A CALL TO ACTION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

As is true across the United States and much of the world, the population in Sullivan County is aging. Members of the large Baby Boomer generation, born between 1946 and 1964, are now over the age of 55. With longer lifespans, there are more people in the oldest age groups than ever before. These demographic shifts create pressure on the healthcare system, social services, and the workforce as residents retire and seek to age in place. In Sullivan County, the population aged 55 years and older grew from 2016 to 2021 by over 2,700 people, with the largest increase among people aged 65-74.

According to projections, the 55+ community will continue to grow before it begins to level off. By 2040, there will be approximately 800 fewer residents aged 55+ in the county;² however, the number of people over 75 years of age is expected to rise beyond 2040. Because people in the most elderly age groups typically have the highest levels of need, SCOFA must carefully consider how to sustain support for residents aging in place for decades to come.

Certain areas of the county have an especially high number of seniors. The Town of Highland has the highest percentage of people aged 55+, making up 48% of the population. The Town of Thompson has the greatest absolute number of seniors, with 5,748 people. When planning services and programs, it is important to consider these local differences. A full table with these data are available in the appendices on page 43.

As a county government agency with limited funding, SCOFA must identify priorities and be strategic about the design and implementation of programs and services to meet the growing needs of senior communities. SCOFA has a dedicated staff that already works to provide numerous programs to help seniors with a range of needs including:

- Information, referrals, outreach & legal services³
- Expanded in-home services for the elderly (EISEP)
- Health insurance information counseling
- Home energy assistance and equipment loans
- Sullivan NY Connects
- Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
- Caregiver Resource Center⁴
- Nutrition Program
- Medical and Shopping Transportation⁵

This report begins with a comprehensive assessment of senior needs in Sullivan County, intended to help SCOFA identify gaps and strategic opportunities for new and expanded programming. Following the needs assessment, we present a series of recommendations that are based on best practices from around the country and beyond. In addition to our recommendations for direct local interventions, we also outline issues that are better addressed at the state or federal level. In these cases, SCOFA, along with local elected officials, should advocate for legislative and policy changes for the desired results.

² Cornell Program on Applied Demographics, Sullivan County Projection (Retrieved August 2023)

³ By contract with Rural Law Center of New York

⁴ By contract with Cornell Cooperative Extension

⁵ By contract with Sullivan County Transportation

SUMMARY OF NEEDS

- Housing that is attainable, accessible, and close to services
- Home maintenance and repairs
- Health access, services, and providers
- Transportation
- Social opportunities
- Improved communication about existing programs and services
- Access to technology and training assistance
- Emergency preparedness
- Food assistance

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Advocate for housing.
- Directly support senior housing solutions.
- Advocate for improved health services.
- Directly support senior health solutions.
- Increase efficacy of existing public transportation.
- Support alternatives to public transportation.
- Offer engaging social programs and activities such as day trips and intergenerational programming.
- Create a county-run centralized senior center.
- Improve communications about existing services and programs.
- Increase broadband access.
- Create new technology assistance programs for seniors.
- Continue to support emergency preparedness for seniors.
- Support continued and expanded food assistance.





Section 2: METHODOLOGY

This report is based on analysis from a variety of quantitative and qualitative inputs. The following sections detail the methodology and data sources used for this study.

REVIEW OF RECENT AND RELEVANT PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Recent and relevant planning documents and activities were reviewed to gain a foundational understanding of Sullivan County and issues related to seniors. Summaries of these previous studies are as follows:

Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults, New York State Office for the Aging August 2023

The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) conducted a survey in mid-2023, in part to inform the state's Master Plan for Aging. Surveys were mailed at random to households with at least one member 60 years or older in Sullivan County. In total, the NYSOFA collected 372 survey responses in Sullivan County.

Results from the 2023 NYSOFA survey showed that the issues with the highest need for support were employment, availability of adult services, information on available services for older adults, and housing. Of all respondents:

- 46% indicated that they had housing needs;
- 32% had mobility needs;
- 49% reported physical health problems;
- 29% reported mental health problems; and
- 49% rated the sense of community as less than good.

Sullivan County ranked lower than statewide benchmark comparisons on several criteria, many of which are related to the fact that the county is sparsely populated and mostly rural. Rankings pertain to considerations such as: the quality of transportation systems; access to education, culture, and arts; quality of infrastructure; and the availability of mixed-use neighborhoods, including access to employment and services.

While housing was a reported need across demographics, it was reported by a larger portion of female respondents than male: 54% versus 39% respectively. A higher portion of Hispanic respondents expressed needs around housing, finances, mobility health, mental health. The demographic groupings identified through the NYOFA survey may be useful for SCOFA to determine resource allocation and service provision.

Mid-Hudson Region Community Health Assessment 2022-2024

The Community Health Assessment uses a combination of data and community input to identify important health issues in Sullivan County. One notable finding from the report is that the number of primary care physicians is significantly lower in Sullivan County than across New York State: 34 as compared to 84 per 100,000 people. Another key finding is that obesity, which contributes to many leading causes of death—including cancer, heart disease, unintentional injury, chronic lower respiratory disease, and diabetes—occurs at a higher rate in Sullivan County than statewide. Sullivan County has the highest rate of unintentional injury mortality rates in the state at 75.4 per 100,000 as of 2019, which may be related to the high rates of deaths from drug overdoses.

A focus group of healthcare providers was convened as part of the Community Health Assessment. The focus group listed the top three health issues in Sullivan County as: access to medical and mental health providers; access to affordable and quality housing; and access to affordable and reliable public transportation. Barriers to health and wellbeing identified through the study were: drug and alcohol use; public knowledge about existing resources; and the rural nature of the county. Another concern reported was the lack of medical providers, exacerbated by consolidation that has left some areas without healthcare services.

Tusten Social - Listening Sessions

Since its formation in 2021, Tusten Social hosts community and social events and helps coordinate the efforts of different organizations working in the county. Along with the River Reporter, Growing Older Together, and the Sullivan County Office for the Aging, Tusten Social hosted two listening sessions in 2023, one focused on the needs of children and one on the needs of seniors. In the seniors' session, healthcare, transportation, and socialization were the top concerns among participants. Rising costs of living and housing were also noted.

Sullivan Hands4Health Network Disparities Report

The Hands4Health Network Disparities Report summarizes input from Sullivan County residents with social and economic challenges who are at high risk for poor health outcomes. Participants offered input through conversations and through a survey, which was available in Spanish and English. Over 2,000 people participated in the survey with approximately half of participants identifying as Hispanic/Latino.

Transportation was identified as a critical need in this report, especially as a means to access healthcare. While there is a public transportation system in the county, it does not serve people in the more rural areas.

According to input from community members, the system is also inaccessible for some people with physical disabilities, however the reason for this was not made clear. In recognition of these needs, the county has dedicated significant resources to short and long-term expansion of the public transportation system. In the 2024 budget, \$470 thousand dollars were authorized toward the system.

Food security was also identified as a concern, partly due to the cost of food and partly because food stores and pantries are only accessible by vehicle, again raising the issue of transportation. Other issues included the cost of living and the need for more social activities.

One significant finding was that 54% of survey participants reported that they use urgent care or emergency room services for their healthcare, “reflecting that more than half of the people responding either do not have a primary care provider or have barriers to using them. For example, one barrier might be no paid time off for medical visits, requiring use of facilities that are open on evenings and on weekends.” A total of 18% of respondents reported that they do not own a computer. This percentage was higher for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino respondents.

Sullivan County Comprehensive Housing Study

[SullivanCountyComprehensiveHousingBook.pdf | Powered by Box](#)

The 2022 Comprehensive Housing Study includes data on housing needs for different sub-geographies across the county. According to the study, 44% of housing units are used as vacation homes, impacting the housing market countywide. Home prices in Sullivan County had been declining in Sullivan County since 2010 until they rose significantly during the pandemic.

The villages of Monticello and Liberty have the most housing opportunities with a higher number of multi-family units, and a majority of units being used as rentals. These villages also have a higher level of vacancy, at around 10% of units. Some of these vacancies are a result of poor housing quality and uninhabitability. Housing needs and conditions in more rural areas vary, with higher housing prices in the rural southeast part of the county versus the northwest part. The housing study found that there are not enough quality rentals that are available in locations where people need them.

A survey of residents was conducted as part of the housing study. Respondents indicated that utility costs, property taxes, and blighted or vacant properties were top housing concerns. Of the survey participants, 55% reported that they are housing cost burdened, spending 30% or more of their household income on housing costs.

The report includes strategies for meeting housing needs of different income groups. For very-low-income households ($\leq \$20,000$) there is a recommendation to improve the conditions of existing units. For low-income households ($\$20,000-\$35,000$) it is recommended to develop new rental units using Low Income Housing Tax Credits. An increase in downsizing opportunities for seniors is also listed as a strategy to open up housing units that would be more appropriate for larger households.

DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative data component of this Senior Needs Assessment utilizes a wide variety of sources including federal, state, and local data, as well as data from various other independent sources, to understand existing conditions and trends that affect seniors in Sullivan County. These data pertain to demographics, population projections, housing, disability status, economic indicators, and other measures and indicators. Some data were analyzed through the lens of race and ethnicity, age, income, and gender to identify groups that may face unique challenges. Complete quantitative data are available in the appendices of this report on page 41.

SURVEY

A significant element of this report was a community-wide survey conducted to solicit input directly from seniors in Sullivan County. The survey included 24 questions relating to demographics, household composition, housing, income, and various needs. The survey was conducted from August through the middle of November 2023. Available in Spanish and English, the survey was available online and in print. Online links were published through the SCOFA monthly newsletter, *The Monthly Hoot*; social media; local newspapers; county communications; and through partner organizations. Print versions of the survey were widely distributed and made available through the following programs, organizations, and locations:

- Sullivan Fresh Community Cupboard delivered surveys to food box recipients
- Senior Day at the Hurleyville Performing Arts Center
- Bethel Woods Harvest Fest
- Tusten Social Sage Session
- Sullivan Senior Clubs
- Congregate lunch sites
- Farmers markets

The survey was also shared by:

- Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Caregiver Resource Center
- Sullivan 180
- Tusten Social
- Growing Older Together
- Reverend Lopez, Monticello
- Assemblymember Aileen Gunther
- Pat Pomeroy, former Town of Rockland Supervisor
- Simmie Williams, Fallsburg Police Chief

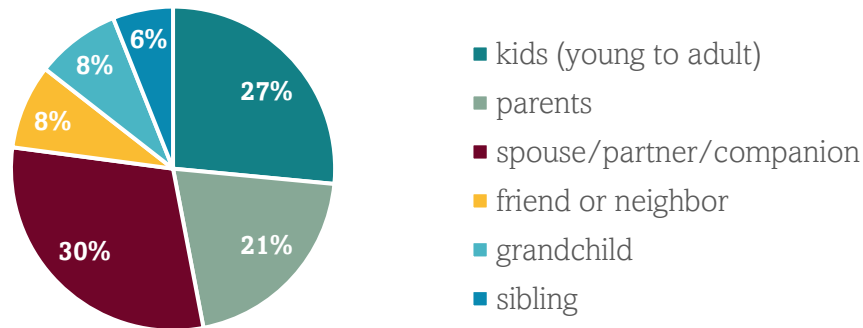
Participation was also solicited from residents at the following senior housing developments:

- Golden Park Apartments I, Liberty
- John Crawford Apartments, Monticello
- Monticello Housing Authority, Monticello
- Liberty Street Senior Housing, Monticello
- Laurel Gardens, South Fallsburg
- Beverly Gardens, South Fallsburg

There were 610 survey responses, 11 of which were completed in Spanish. The survey results are foundational to the analysis and recommendations outlined in Section 4 below. Primary concerns that arose through the survey include:

- **Low income levels:** 58% of respondents have a household income of less than \$40,000 and 35% reported an income of less than \$20,000. As the cost of goods, services, housing, and other necessary items rise, seniors are likely to struggle to afford their costs of living.
- **Caretaker status:** Many Sullivan seniors are themselves caretakers. While the most common caretaker relation listed by survey respondents was that of a spouse, a senior caretaker may be responsible for an adult child who has mental health issues or a disability, a sibling, a grandchild, a parent, or even a friend. Caretakers may find it difficult to engage in community life due to their responsibilities and, depending on the needs of their dependents, may face additional financial, emotional, and other challenges.

Dependents Relation to Caretakers



- **Difficulty walking:** With 36% of survey respondents reporting that they have difficulty walking, this was the most marked challenge in the survey. Census data for the county show that 15% of people over 65 years, 12% of people 65 to 74 years, and 19% of people over the age 75 have an ambulatory disability, impairing regular daily functions, ability to hold a job, ability to work around their homes, or ability to exercise.
- **Difficulty hearing:** Hearing was the second most marked challenge on the survey at 22% of respondents. Hearing loss is linked with cognitive decline if left untreated. Hearing impairment can negatively impact someone’s ability to use a phone, listen to audio media, or follow conversations.
- **Using technology:** A total of 21% of survey respondents said that they have difficulty using technology. This can be a barrier to accessing online resources and services.
- **Remembering things:** 16% of respondents said that remembering things is a challenge for them. Memory loss is normal with aging but memory loss due to dementia can be debilitating and affect an individual’s ability to participate in activities and to take care of themselves.
- **Seeing:** A total of 12% of respondents said that they have a difficult time seeing things. Census data show that 4% of people 65 years and over, 5% of people 65 to 74 years, and 3% of people 75 years and over have a vision disability. Like with hearing loss, vision loss can impair a person’s ability to work, do things around the house, to drive, and to participate in activities such as doing sports or going to the movies.

Complete findings from the survey are in the appendices on page 70.

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups provide a unique opportunity for participants to discuss a topic in depth. As with a natural conversation, input from one participant often leads to ideas and thought sharing among the group. As part of the qualitative input for this needs assessment, three focus group meetings were held, described here:

Library Directors

For the first focus group, Pattern staff sat in on a regularly occurring meeting of public library directors serving in Sullivan County. The directors discussed senior needs, services, and programming within the library system.

Faith And Community Leaders

Pattern invited 30 different faith and community leaders to participate in a focus group meeting, identified with the support of Sullivan 180 and SCOFA. An internet search was also performed; however, many of the contact information listed online for places of worship were not working, and in some cases calls and emails were not returned. The following clergy and community leaders were in attendance at the meeting:

- Sandra Johnson-Fields, NAACP - Sullivan
- Yakov Mandelovics, Hasidic Jewish community in Monticello
- Denise Patti, Hispanic community contact, leads the Fun Group at Sullivan 180
- Father Ed Bader, Saint Peters
- Pastor Carl Caskey, Calvary Baptist Church of Loch Sheldrake

Professionals In Service Provision

Based on the identification of needs from the other focus groups, Pattern reached out to professionals with expertise in key focus areas: housing, transportation, healthcare, and case management. Pattern invited these professionals to examine senior needs from the perspective of service providers, who tend to have both hands-on experience with the community as well as an understanding of systemic and institutional operations.

In addition to a conversation about needs, challenges, and existing services, the group was asked to participate in an alternative future visioning session. Half of the group was asked to imagine a future where current challenges continue, and the other half a future where challenges are resolved. Both groups then discussed what actions, policies, or programs would lead to the different futures. In addition to SCOFA staff, the following people participated in the discussion:

- Linda Kleingardner, Operations Manager, Rolling V Bus Corp.
- Rachel Innella, Department of Social Services
- Deborah L. Worden, Executive Director, Action Toward Independence

A summary of input from the focus groups is provided on page 65.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with a diverse group of local social service providers and other community leaders to gain an understanding of senior challenges, needs, existing resources, and gaps. The following people were interviewed for this assessment:

- Aimee Parks, Lower Hudson Valley Director of Regional Resources, Westchester Independent Living Center
- Carrie Smith, Sullivan County Field Staff, Westchester Independent Living Center
- Colleen Monaghan, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension Sullivan County
- Donna Davies, Program Volunteerism and Health Systems, Alzheimer's Association, Hudson Valley
- Doug Hovey, President and Chief Executive Officer, Independent Living, Inc.
- Greta Knutzen, Founder and Vice Chair, Tusten Social
- Martin Colavito, Sullivan Fresh Community Cupboard Program Coordinator, Cornell Cooperative Extension Sullivan County
- Moreen Lerner, Manager, Bethel Local Development Corporation
- Nancy McGraw, Caregiver Resource Center Program Coordinator, Cornell Cooperative Extension Sullivan County
- Tilly Huizinga, Director of Nursing, Hospice of Orange and Sullivan
- Thoman Cambridge, Executive Director, Growing Older Together



Section 3: SUMMARY OF NEEDS

The challenges facing seniors in Sullivan County range from tangible issues, such as financial stress and attainable housing, to emotional and psychological issues like isolation and mental health struggles. Many of the needs revealed through this study can be directly impacted by programs and services through SCOFA. It is important to note, however, that some needs reflect a broader systemic context, such as dramatically escalating housing prices, healthcare consolidations resulting in fewer providers and services, and an insufficient number of home care workers due to low wages. Although SCOFA does not have the power to solve systemic issues single-handedly, it can work to inform legislators and advocate for policies and legislative action that support sustainable models for aging in place.

The key needs highlighted throughout the remainder of this section were identified based on:

- An analysis of quantifiable data;
- An assessment of significance according to whether the need was expressed by a substantial number of people during interviews, focus groups, and in the survey;
- A determination of whether the need has a significant impact on overall quality of life for seniors in the community.

HOUSING

SURVEY SAYS...

“I worry that the building I live in is not safe.”

“(I’m) scared of homelessness.”

“Our “community” has been negatively impacted by Air BnB.”

“(I have difficulty with) keeping up with home maintenance and repairs.”

Affordable and High-Quality Rentals

One of the most frequently mentioned needs in interviews and surveys conducted for the purposes of this study was the need for attainable and accessible housing, located near healthcare and supportive services, shops and supermarkets, and various other destinations.

Housing costs have increased dramatically in recent years, according to numerous quantitative sources. For example, from Q3 of 2017 to Q3 of 2023 the median sale price of a home in Sullivan County went up by 139%.

As compared to homeowners, renters tend to be more likely to be housing cost burdened and to face housing insecurity. Approximately one in three senior renter households are housing cost burdened, paying more than 30% of their income for housing costs.

From the survey, 27% of respondents overall were renters; however, when categorized by race, 64% of respondents who identified as Black or African American were renters,⁶ and 59% of Hispanic/Latino respondents were renters.⁷ In Sullivan County, as in the rest of the state and country, people from historically disadvantaged groups are more likely to face housing challenges pertaining to both affordability and quality.

Quality of housing is also a pressing issue for seniors. Interviewees and survey participants reported housing issues such as sewer backup, heat not being turned on, and various other problems. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 92% of the lowest income renter households in Sullivan County lack complete kitchen facilities, lack proper plumbing facilities, live in housing that is overcrowded, are cost burdened, or some combination of the above.⁸

⁶ According to the U.S. Census, American Community Survey for 2021, In New York State, 68% of householders that identify as Black or African American are renters. In the United States this percentage is 57%.

⁷ According to the U.S. Census, American Community Survey for 2021, In In New York State, 73% of Hispanic or Latino householders are renters. In the United States this percentage is 51%.

⁸ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) 2015-2019. Low-income include households with a household income of 30% or less of the area median income.

The need for more attainable and accessible housing options is especially acute for the most vulnerable people: those who have low-income levels, are aging, and have disabilities. People who work with this community report a rise in the number of community members who have been priced out of their homes, where they had been living for decades, and who cannot find affordable alternatives. It was reported by one interviewee that the number of evictions is on the rise, which has caused some seniors to resort to living out of their cars, sleeping on couches, and living in motels.

To address these housing challenges, there is a need for a combination of affordable and high-quality housing units, long-term care, and assisted living facilities for seniors.

Maintenance and Repairs for Homeowners

The need for help with home maintenance and repairs was repeatedly expressed during interviews, focus groups, and in survey comments. From mowing the lawn and shoveling snow to roof replacements, homeowners must invest a lot of work and money into keeping up their home so that it is safe and habitable. As people age, they are often less physically able to do minor repairs or maintenance work on their homes. Those on fixed incomes often have a difficult time affording the costs of paying someone to do the work. Many home service providers are only found online, making it difficult for seniors to connect with these services if they do not have access to the internet or good digital skills.

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES AND PROVIDERS

SURVEY SAYS...

“(I have) no family or friends and consistently have to go to Orange County for medical care.”

“(There is) no local pharmacy, or doctors within 15-20 miles.”

“I have medical providers, but it's frustrating sometimes to not get answers. Sometimes they don't return phone calls. And other times they want to send you to more and more doctors. It's tiring and frustrating.”

“(I am) in pain 24 hours a day.”

Access to healthcare is critical to maintain good health, prevent sickness and disease, reduce unnecessary suffering, and support overall quality of life. Unsurprisingly, healthcare was raised as one of the most common concerns for seniors in Sullivan County and was mentioned in almost every interview conducted for this study. A total of 12% of survey respondents reported difficulty accessing healthcare.

Our analysis indicates that the top critical concerns related to healthcare in Sullivan County are:

- There is an insufficient number of providers and health facilities in the county. To see a specialist, residents often must leave the county. There tend to be long wait times for appointments.
- Services continue to be reduced with consolidation of healthcare providers.
- Home care workers are paid too little and there are too few people in this profession to meet the need.
- Pharmacies are difficult to access. Residents living in some of the more remote parts of the county have very long drive times just to pick up their prescriptions.
- Healthcare costs are high, and seniors are foregoing prescription drugs due to costs.
- Some seniors struggle to navigate the healthcare system and are unaware of how to access benefits to which they may be entitled.
- Mental health needs are going unmet for a variety of reasons including:
 - the need for diagnosis to receive services,
 - lack of coverage under some insurance plans,
 - a lack of providers,
 - and people not knowing what services they are eligible for.
- Long-term care is unaffordable to seniors who do not qualify for Medicaid.
- Lack of transportation is a barrier to accessing healthcare, especially for seniors who do not drive.

These needs are in line with data that show Sullivan County is one of the least healthy counties in the state.⁹ The ratio of primary care providers to residents is low, with only 1 provider for 2,710 people. Similarly, the ratio of mental health providers is very low in the county, at 1 provider for every 490 people, whereas statewide this ratio is 1 to 300. It is important to note that, while the Sullivan County health ranking is low as compared to other counties, by no means are the challenges listed above unique to Sullivan County. Many of these issues stem from federal and state-level healthcare policies that impact communities across the state and the nation.

⁹ The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings, 2023

TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY SAYS...

“I don't have a driver's license, so I depend on my husband.”

“(I need) transportation to health care, (and for) groceries in the river area.”

“(I need) rides to my doctor appointments some outside of the county with a specialist.”

“My parents are getting too old to drive so we're going to need to look into transportation options for medical care and shopping for them.”

The county has made tremendous strides in the provision of public transportation with the launch of the Move Sullivan public bus system. In 2022 there were over 29,000 riders, the addition of two new routes, and over 500 para-transit rides.¹⁰ In 2023, the system provided over 90,000 rides, and more expansions of service are planned for 2024 and beyond. Still, an increase in transportation options is a top concern for seniors. The existing system doesn't serve the whole county and many seniors are left without service. Additionally, according to community input for this study, the county's medical transport must be booked far in advance and rides are not always available.

Importantly, many of the other needs identified in this study are related to the challenge of transportation, including healthcare access, social opportunities, and food access.

Among Sullivan County renter householders who are 65 years or older, 39% do not have access to a vehicle.¹¹ From the survey, 14% of respondents said they have a difficult time driving; for people 85 years or older, this percentage doubles to 28%. A total of 13% of all survey respondents, and 19% of respondents who identify as Black or African American, reported having difficulty accessing transportation.

Participants in one focus group raised the issue that there is now only a single cab company operating in the county. There was consensus that this company alone cannot meet the needs of the community, and that people using this service often had very long wait times or were told they could not be served.

¹⁰ Potosek, Joshua A., Sullivan County Manager, *Sullivan County 2022 Annual Report*.

¹¹ U.S. Census, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate, 2022

SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

SURVEY SAYS...

“(I am) feeling useless.”

“(I feel) occasional isolation and related mild melancholy.”

I am curious about lunches at the Senior Center. I found them helpful and enjoyable. Are they gone for good?”

“(There is a) need for more areas/towns where we can access classes, socialize etc.”

“(There is a need for a) room where we can get together and play games”

There is an unequivocal need to combat social isolation for seniors of various ages and abilities. A total of 28% of Sullivan seniors 65 years and older live alone.¹² In more senior age groups, this percentage is likely higher since people are more likely to be widowed as they age. Approximately 17% of survey respondents (102 people) reported feeling isolated or bored as a constant challenge.

Socializing is a basic human need and a core factor in maintaining mental health. Socializing keeps people active and engaged in their communities and can create a stronger social safety net through which people can count on one another in times of need. In focus groups and interviews, discussions pointed to loneliness as a critical issue that affects overall wellbeing for many seniors. A social service provider who participated in one of the focus groups said that it is not uncommon for lonely seniors to call service providers just because they need someone to talk to.

Conversations and surveys also indicated another basic human need: **the need to feel needed**. Many people’s identity and sense of purpose are centered around their work or their children. As people age into senior years, they may retire or no longer have childrearing responsibilities. Additionally, as people’s mobility becomes more limited, they have less opportunity to be involved in their communities through volunteer work or otherwise. We heard from several seniors that their mental and physical wellbeing are linked to their sense of being needed in some way.

To meet this need, efforts must be made to increase opportunities for seniors to volunteer and to work. The SCOFA RSVP program connects seniors to volunteer opportunities, but many seniors who gave input for this study were unaware of the program. It was also noted during community input that some seniors would like to work part time, but they face discrimination from potential employers because of their age.

¹² U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021

IMPROVED COMMUNICATION ABOUT EXISTING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

SURVEY SAYS...

In response to the question:

“What community resources, services, activities, or clubs do you use on a regular basis?”

Responses included:

“None. Unaware of what’s available.”

“What community resources???”

“None” – noted by 27 survey respondents

Several people interviewed for this study stated that outreach and communication about existing services and programs is limited. One key barrier to accessing services is that people simply are unaware that many programs exist. There is a need to develop outreach and communication efforts to reach a wider audience, and especially to reach more vulnerable and/or isolated groups. Participants in focus groups specifically expressed a concern for undocumented seniors who may not ask for help due to fear, pride, or cultural reasons. Communications should consider senior-specific challenges such as technological access and use, disability, and preferences for print and phone communications.

ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY AND TRAINING ASSISTANCE

SURVEY SAYS...

“(I need) help with the computer to get on internet, to complete applications for services, for work, etc.”

Accessing and using the internet has become a needed skill for employment, social connection, finding out about news and events, accessing services, paying bills, and other aspects of everyday life. For seniors, keeping up with technology can be a severe challenge.

A total of 14% of Sullivan County households do not have internet access.¹³ Within the population that is 65 years and older, 15% of people do not own a computer. Only 62% of survey respondents said they use the internet, while 21% of survey respondents indicated they experience technological challenges. Several respondents suggested that educational programs around technology use would be helpful. There were also comments about the lack of access to broadband in parts of the county and the high cost of internet subscriptions.

The need for increased internet access is not unique to seniors. Infrastructure investments are imperative to ensure that residents across the county have broadband access. Access to broadband infrastructure in Sullivan County is below the New York State average: 95.3% versus 97.5%, respectively.¹⁴

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The impacts of climate change in the Hudson Valley include an increase in the number of disruptive storm events. In recent years, communities across the region have experienced frequent flooding events and power outages.¹⁵ In addition to weather related events, there are numerous other types of emergencies that county residents could face. Social networks are critical to ensure community resilience in the face of disaster.

Seniors are an especially vulnerable group during emergencies because of the increased likelihood that a senior will have a disability, a health condition, difficulty driving, technological challenges, or lower income levels. Lower-income households are less likely to have emergency supplies and backup systems in place since there is a financial cost for these things.

A total of 24% of survey respondents said they do not feel prepared in the case of an emergency, and 9% said their home is not easily accessible in the case of an emergency. During interviews and focus groups, there was also discussion about how some seniors struggle to get through everyday tasks like preparing food, cleaning, and managing other activities, much less dealing with the challenge of an emergency. Homebound seniors who have little contact with the outside world could go unnoticed for days if their support systems were disrupted by an emergency. There is a critical need to continue to focus on this population's unique needs with regards to emergency preparedness, and the county's role in disaster response.

¹³ U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2021

¹⁴ New York State PSC Broadband Map, Accessed December 14th, 2023

¹⁵ [Wet earth, hot air fuel Hudson Valley flash floods. 1 graphic shows it \(lohud.com\)](https://www.lohud.com/story/news/local/2023/09/15/wet-earth-hot-air-fuel-hudson-valley-flash-floods-1-graphic-shows-it/1040000001)

FOOD ASSISTANCE

SURVEY SAYS...

“(I need help knowing) how can seniors receive affordable farm food, health food for fixed income?”

“(I need) more food stamps. The recommended (benefit) only last 2 weeks, (the) other 2 weeks is on me.”

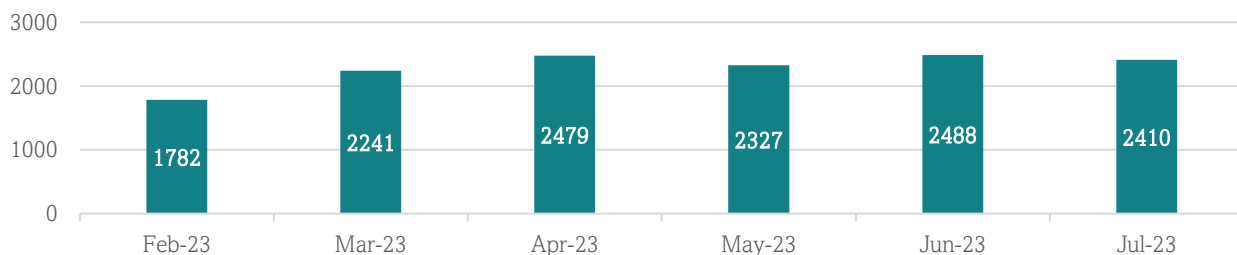
With the rising costs of living, it is not surprising that many seniors are having a difficult time affording the cost of food. A total of 11% of survey respondents reported that they have a difficult time getting to the grocery store or accessing food, and 10% indicated they do not have enough food. Among survey respondents who identified as Hispanic/Latino, 25% said they have difficulty having enough food. The quickly rising cost of food and difficulty getting to food stores both contribute to this challenge for seniors.

A total of 14% of Sullivan County households with one or more people 60 years or older receive SNAP benefits.¹⁶ Within the past year, SNAP benefits were reduced because pandemic-related extensions reached expiration; meanwhile, the need for assistance has not decreased. Due to income thresholds for the SNAP program, some households do not qualify for the benefit despite their financial strain.

During the pandemic, the Sullivan Fresh Community Cupboard Program began delivering food boxes to people in need around the county. The program has scaled up from around 50 box deliveries per week to approximately 700. The chart below shows the number of boxes delivered through the program over the course of 6 months in early 2023. These numbers indicate a high need for food assistance.

Sullivan County benefits from the fact that it has an agricultural economy and fresh food is grown locally. Through the farmers market nutrition program, income-eligible seniors can use coupons to purchase fresh produce at a network of 12 markets across the county. However, as illustrated above, transportation to and from the markets is a barrier for some people who want to utilize this program. Especially in rural areas of the county, markets and grocery stores tend to be located far from people’s homes. For householders ages 65 and above, 39% of renter households and 5% of owner households do not own a vehicle. These households are more likely to struggle with food access due to a lack of transportation options.

Sullivan Fresh Community Cupboard Pogram
Number of People Served - Februray 2023-July 2023



¹⁶ U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2021



SECTION 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, we propose a series of interventions and strategies based on a review of best practices from across the country, and input from community members, leaders, and professionals. The recommendations directly respond to the needs and gaps identified in this study. We assessed feasibility based on what we know about existing programs in the county, SCOFA's capacity, and the potential for collaboration with other organizations and government agencies.

HOUSING

Housing needs for seniors in Sullivan County are varied, depending on factors like age, household composition, tenure, disability status, and transportation access. That said, there are foundational principles to follow when addressing these needs. Specifically, interventions should focus on increasing housing opportunities that are:

- priced for moderate- to very-low-income;
- accessible for people with disabilities;
- close to services and other important destinations like food stores;
- high quality and safe.

There is also a need for more assisted living options in the county. In general, SCOFA should support the creation and maintenance of attainable, quality, accessible housing located near services and other destinations. The following subsections outline the actions SCOFA should pursue in order to help meet senior housing needs.

Legislative and Planning Advocacy:

SCOFA should advocate for more senior housing by supporting pro-housing legislation and planning actions at local, county, and state levels. One important step SCOFA should initiate is to meet with the Sullivan County Planning Department to discuss how the office can support county-led housing efforts already underway.

SCOFA's policy and planning advocacy efforts should focus on:

Accessory Dwelling Units

One critical legislative focus should be in support of **enabling legislation to allow for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)**. Also known as “mother in-law apartments,” ADUs are small housing units on the property of a larger home. ADUs may be built attached or unattached to the main home and can be used by seniors in several ways. Seniors who own their own home may have an ADU for rental income to offset their housing costs, or as housing for a caretaker or family member. ADUs may also be the primary residence of a senior tenant who wishes to live near a neighbor or family member but wants to maintain some independence. As of 2023, there are many Sullivan communities that do not allow ADUs as of right. Where ADUs are allowed, the approval process may discourage their development, especially for seniors who are unfamiliar with navigating bureaucracy and land use boards. SCOFA should communicate with local planning authorities about the benefits of ADUs as a housing option for seniors and should express support for statewide ADU policies whenever possible. Clear and concise information about the benefits of ADUs for seniors is available on the AARP website.¹⁷

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

ADUs in the City of Kingston and Ulster County

Ulster County received funding through the New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) **Plus One ADU Program** in 2023. The program offers income-qualifying homeowners with cost assistance to build a new ADU on their property. In collaboration with the nonprofit housing developer and service provider, RUPCO, Ulster County is now issuing grants to selected homeowners. The City of Kingston recently updated its zoning code to allow ADUs as of right in all residential districts. To create inspiring ADU examples, Kingston also held a design competition. The winning firm created pre-approved ADU plans and designs, which will be available for homeowners who wish to use them to make the approval process easier and more expedient. The competition was funded with the city's ARPA allocation.

¹⁷ <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/housing/info-2023/slideshow-abcs-of-adus.html>

Intergenerational Housing

For new housing developments, SCOFA should support the development of intergenerational housing, rather than seniors-only facilities, with the goal of intentionally mixing seniors with people of other age groups. Intergenerational housing is considered to promote wellbeing for seniors more effectively than senior-exclusive housing because it supports seniors in continuing to be active and connected to the greater community, and creates opportunities for cross-generational relationships that benefit people of all ages.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

Some great **examples of what intergenerational housing can look like** include...

Cully Grove and Cully Green¹⁸

Townhome condos built within a cohousing community in Portland, OR. Residents benefit from shared resources such as a common room, gardens, and covered patio areas. Decisions are made under a consensus making process.

Bridge Meadows^{19 20}

Supportive intergenerational housing for people over 55 and families with children who have been in the foster care system. Seniors pay below market rents in exchange for being mentors, and caregivers to the children.

Hope and a Future²¹

A “Therapeutic Interactive Intergenerational Neighborhood” in Madison, WI that includes housing and community spaces to encourage interaction and relationships. Residents of the community as well as those from the outside have access to classes, activities, entertainments, and other activities.

Housing Opportunities and Maintenance for the Elderly (H.O.M.E.)²²

Multifamily intergenerational housing in Chicago designed with the belief that seniors should continue to be integrated with the community and not be segregated from people of other ages. Within the communities, senior residents have access to social services and engagement activities. Younger residents pay very low rents in exchange for cooking meals or spending time with senior residents each week.

Affordable and Accessible Units Near Transit and Services:

SCOFA should explicitly support new housing projects that include affordable and accessible units, especially if they are close to existing services and community hubs.

New housing should be built following Universal Design standards. “Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.²⁰ For housing, this means units are

¹⁸ [Cully Grove – A solar-powered cohousing community in NE Portland](#)

¹⁹ [Bridge Meadows - A Multigenerational Housing Community](#)

²⁰ [Foster families find and share support with elders at Oregon housing community | PBS NewsHour](#)

²¹ [Hope And A future, Inc. 501\(c\)\(3\) \(hopeandafutureinc.org\)](#)

²² [Intergenerational Housing Model — H.O.M.E. - Housing Opportunities & Maintenance for the Elderly. H.O.M.E. \(homeseniors.org\)](#)

designed with all levels of ability in mind, in order to meet the needs of those with physical or cognitive disabilities.”²³

The location of new housing is a very important consideration. Transportation is a significant challenge in a rural county like Sullivan (see transportation need on page 19) and locating housing near services, food stores, and other everyday destinations will minimize transportation requirements for residents of the new housing.

Work with existing assisted living providers from the region to expand into Sullivan County.

There is a need for more assisted living facilities in the county. SCOFA should work with the County Planning Department to assemble a list of suitable sites and solicit proposals for this type of housing from regional providers.

Direct Housing Support for Seniors

The advocacy efforts described above require patience, as it can take years for the planning and development environment to adapt and change in the ways our communities need. Accordingly, it is critical to also take immediate steps that can address some of the housing needs that are urgent and pressing. The following are recommendations for steps SCOFA can take to directly assist seniors in the near term.

Create Roommate Opportunities for Seniors.

There are many seniors in the county who struggle to find housing and who would benefit from the company of a roommate. SCOFA could serve as a matchmaker between seniors who are looking for housing and others who are looking for a roommate in their homes. This service could also be contracted out to a third party.

SCOFA could create a classifieds space in *The Monthly Hoot* where seniors could list if they have a room to rent or if they are looking to rent a room. SCOFA could also share pre-existing online services newsletter and on the office’s website to encourage seniors to seek roommates such as www.spareroom.com, www.roomers4boomers.com, or www.silvernest.com.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

Family of Woodstock HomeShare²⁴ in Ulster County is a newly launched program that connects homeowners with people in need of an affordable housing opportunities. In exchange for lower rent, renters assist the homeowner with housework, transportation, and other daily tasks.

The **New York Foundation for Senior Citizens (NYFSC)**²⁵ is a New York City-based organization that provides a matchmaking service between adults who have space in their homes to rent to other adults who may be seeking housing, where at least one of the parties must be a senior citizen.

The goal of the program is to **promote affordability for both the homeowner and the renter.**

There is an additional option within the program for suitable hosts to provide housing opportunities to developmentally disabled independent seniors.

HOME MAINTENANCE
PROGRAM FUNDING

In addition to the potential of tapping into the county’s Housing Trust Fund, there are several other existing funding channels that could be pursued, including:

- **The Residential Emergency Services to Offer** (Home) Repairs to the Elderly (RESTORE)²⁶ program, through NYS HCR, helps seniors cover the cost of repairs necessary due to code violations or other emergencies. The program serves homeowners over 60 years old with income levels below AMI.
- Another HCR grant is through the **Access to Home Program**²⁷, which helps seniors at or below 80% AMI make modifications to their homes that allow them to age in place.
- **USDA**²⁸ has a similar program for senior homeowners who are very-low-income in rural areas. It is likely that many Sullivan County Seniors would qualify. Grants are up to \$10,000 while loans are up to \$40,000 at a 1% interest rate.
- **Rural Sullivan Housing Corporation** (RSHCO), a subsidiary of RUPCO, provides grants up to \$35,000 to cover home repairs for income-eligible homeowners in Sullivan County.²⁹ While these are not age-specific, seniors would still qualify for the program. SCOFA should refer seniors in need of home repairs to this program. RSHSCO could also be an excellent partner for a new repair program as described in the Best Practice Spotlight, below, in the absence of a local Habitat affiliate.
- **US HUD offers the Older Adult Home Modification Program**, which provides funding to nonprofit organizations and state and local governments to facilitate modification interventions for seniors looking to age in place. The 2023 cycle is already midway through its application process, but next year’s grant might be a good fit for the Sullivan Office for the Aging.³⁰
- **GrantWatch** lists grants that can be used for home modifications that allow seniors to age in place.³¹

²³ [About our Centre for Excellence in Universal Design | - National Disability Authority \(nda.ie\)](#)

²⁴ [HomeShare Woodstock – Family of Woodstock \(familyofwoodstockinc.org\)](#)

²⁵ <https://www.nyfsc.org/home-sharing/>

²⁶ <https://hcr.ny.gov/restore-program>

²⁷ <https://hcr.ny.gov/access-home>

²⁸ <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-programs/single-family-housing-repair-loans-grants/ny>

²⁹ <https://www.ruralsullivanhousing.org/services>

³⁰ https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/cfo/gmomgmt/grantsinfo/fundingopps/fy2023_oahmp

³¹ [Senior Caregivers Help with Aging in Place Grants \(grantwatch.com\)](#)

The county is currently developing a Housing Trust Fund with assistance from Pattern for Progress. SCOFA should communicate with the county planning department on whether a portion of dollars from the fund could be set aside for a senior maintenance, repairs, and home modification for accessibility program. If it is possible to allocate funds to this end, SCOFA could serve as an intermediary to refer seniors in need to the fund and to help them complete the application for funds. To be eligible for the program seniors would have to meet income and age qualifications and be homeowners.

**BEST PRACTICE
SPOTLIGHT**

The **Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services (INHS) Minor Repair Program**³² in Ithaca, NY is for senior residents who are low-income homeowners and individuals with disabilities or single person households. Under the program the client pays the material costs, but labor is covered. The program prioritizes accessibility modifications such as grab bars and repairs to steps.

Some **Habitat for Humanity**³³ affiliates have low-cost home repair programs that offer workforce training and could be replicated, such as a **Brush with Kindness**.

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES

The primary role that SCOFA should take with regards to healthcare is to continue to provide the comprehensive services it already offers, such as health insurance information counseling and connecting seniors to resources through NY Connects. SCOFA should also continue to advocate at the state level for changes to improve healthcare options within the county. The following are detailed actions that SCOFA should pursue to support senior access to healthcare services across the county.

Legislative Advocacy

SCOFA's legislative advocacy should focus on the following policy areas:

Regulation On the Consolidation of Healthcare Providers.

Professionals interviewed for this study said that the consolidation of healthcare providers has resulted in higher costs and in a decrease of services in the county. This challenge is common across the Hudson Valley region and even the United States. Recent legislation³⁴ in New York requires notice of health care transactions such as mergers in order to increase oversight. There are proposals in other states for regulations to limit contracting terms that are anti-competitive, and rules around price transparency to support competition in the market. SCOFA should engage with policymakers to track what bills are being proposed and lend support when it is deemed beneficial to do so on behalf of seniors.

³² [Minor Repairs - Ithaca Neighborhood Housing \(ithacanhhs.org\)](http://ithacanhhs.org)

³³ <https://www.habitat.org/volunteer/near-you/home-preservation>

³⁴ [Required Reporting of Material Transactions \(ny.gov\)](http://ny.gov)

Continued Reimbursement for Telehealth.

During the Covid pandemic telehealth became a reimbursable health service. In a rural county like Sullivan, telehealth offers the means for seniors to access care providers from the comfort of their home. Telehealth is not appropriate for all care but for certain chronic conditions doctors can easily provide check-ups via a virtual visit and save patients the trip to the doctor.

Increased Pay for Healthcare Workers Through Medicaid.

For people who need it, long-term care is a key component to being able to age in place. People interviewed for this study purported that an increase in public spending on home healthcare would lead to public savings because of a reduced need to pay for institutional care.

Direct Health Support for Seniors

This study has pointed to a severe shortage of home care workers in Sullivan County. To address this challenge, SCOFA and other county agencies have banded together increase access to home care. One outcome of this is that Sullivan County Certified Home Health Agency has added two dedicated home health aide positions. There are other actions that can be taken at the county level including:

Work with the Sullivan County Center for Workforce Development on Home Care Worker Training and Recruitment

The Sullivan County Center for Workforce Development, SCOFA, home care agencies, and training institutions should continually assess the need for home health aides and develop strategies to attract more people into training programs and jobs in this industry.

Help an Existing Home Care Agency to Adopt an Employee-Owned Model

Employee-owned agencies provide workers with equity in the company, training, and education, and often provide higher quality services because of employee job satisfaction. For these reasons, transition into an employee ownership model may increase the number of people who are willing to work in home care, which in turn can help meet the demand for these essential workers.

**BEST PRACTICE
SPOTLIGHT**

The **Cooperative Home Care Associates** (CHCA³⁵) in the Bronx employs around 2,000 workers who receive peer mentoring and easy communications with the leadership team.

Golden Steps³⁶ is another home care worker co-op in Brooklyn. Employees have access to training and education.

³⁵ [Cooperative Home Care Associates \(chcany.org\)](http://chcany.org)

³⁶ [Golden Steps](#)

Implement a Vehicle Donation Program

With low wages set by Medicare and Medicaid, home care workers often do not make enough to cover the cost of owning a vehicle alongside all other necessary life expenses. In a rural county like Sullivan, with long drive times and limited public transportation, the shortage of home care workers is especially acute. SCOFA could start a vehicle donation program where seniors and other county residents can donate their old vehicles to be given to home care workers.

Establish an Employee-Owned Ride Share Program in Sullivan County.

The county should think creatively about expanding transportation options to help alleviate the shortage of home care workers. Unlike the more well-known ride share platforms, an employee-owned ride share group offers its drivers more flexibility, an opportunity to build equity through ownership, and influence regarding how the company is run. This can make employment as a driver more sustainable and economically feasible. With more drivers, there are more options for people who do not have access to a vehicle. Recommendations regarding transportation are explored in more detail in the next subsection.

TRANSPORTATION

As mentioned previously in this report, survey respondents noted that existing transit options do not meet their needs, especially to access healthcare appointments and grocery stores. The county-provided medical transport service, specifically, was described as having long wait times and requiring significant lead time to set up a ride request. Move Sullivan was described as successful, as service routes were doubled in 2022; some respondents still noted that routes did not reach the more rural areas, such that more isolated seniors do not benefit from this recently increased service.

Good transportation services can address many of the other issues that seniors face in the county by providing access to healthcare, food shopping, and community gatherings. This section explores two strategic focus areas: bolstering existing public transit and promoting accessible alternatives that augment public transit.

Increase Efficacy of Existing Public Transit

Expand Existing Services

As the Sullivan County Transportation Department develops its transit plan for the expansion of the Move Sullivan Public Bus System, community members' input should be used to identify gaps in transportation service and reimagine routes and schedules in accordance with needs. This process should also include participation of different county agencies such as SCOFA; Sullivan County Partnership for Economic Development; the Department of Planning, Community Development and Environmental Management; and others. The process and plan should align with other planning efforts in the county including land use plans to account for existing and new development. Based on input, transit should be designed to reach underserved areas, both through the expansion of existing bus service and the support of transit alternatives such as smaller vans and on-demand services.

Transit Development Plan Guidebook³⁷ Oregon State’s Department of Transportation offers clear guidance for transit providers looking to develop transit plans. The guidebook describes the purpose of a transit development plan and the process of developing a plan including public involvement and assessing existing conditions.

The Guidebook on what a Transit Development Plan should do:

- “Identify and prioritize public transit investments
- Assess the potential for transit (and investments in transit) to support a range of community and regional goals (e.g., promoting economic development and tourism)
- Establish a goal-based framework for identifying transit needs and improvement options
- Objectively and transparently explore alternatives for addressing transit needs
- Identify opportunities to improve connectivity between transit stops, other transportation modes, multiple transit providers, and riders’ origins and destinations (local and regional)
- Be linked to performance measures and targets
- Include a financially constrained plan for transit improvements
- Provide the basis for the transit element of the community’s (transit system plan)”

Improve Communications for Existing Services

Even in the most robust transportation networks, ridership can be inhibited due to a lack of access to information about routes, station locations, and schedules. The transportation department has made considerable effort to improve information and outreach regarding existing services with the wide distribution of route brochures, hanging of route information in businesses next to bus stops, and with the recently awarded grant for bus stop signage. In addition to these efforts, the transportation department should ask other county agencies to assist in getting this information out. Currently schedules and routes are on the Move Sullivan website, but other agencies should also link to this information. Schedules could also be printed in *The Monthly Hoot* and sent out in other county communications.

Use Technology to Coordinate On-Demand Service

As a more long-term effort, the county transportation department should implement technology that improves access to services and improves rider experience. For example, there are apps that allow riders to track where buses are along routes and to receive service delays. The department should also build out the system that matches ride requests with ride services.

³⁷ [TDP-Guidebook.pdf \(oregon.gov\)](#)

**BEST PRACTICE
SPOTLIGHT**

Metro Now³⁸ is an on-demand ride service within the Cincinnati, Ohio public transportation system. Rides are available in areas that are not otherwise served by public transportation and make connections to fixed bus routes.

FlexDanmark³⁹ is a software that is shared by different regional transport authorities across the country to provide transportation for older adults, people with disabilities and rural residents. The online service coordinates rides based on service requests and riders are matched with nearby drivers.

Spare CapMetro⁴⁰ provides other technology-based transportation solutions. For example, in Austin Texas, an automated ADA paratransit service allows riders to receive real-time notifications about their trips.

Support Alternatives to Public Transit

Promote And Support Vehicle-Pooling Programs.

The county should work with local communities and major employers to promote local transportation options. Vehicle-pooling is a low-cost solution to help meet the demand for transportation where public transit ridership is low, such as in rural areas. In a carpooling program, individuals who live close to one another and have similar transit needs can easily coordinate rides with each other. Employers and local government agencies can help organize a carpooling program. Alternatively, through vanpooling, riders pay a low monthly fare for access to the service. Possible funding options include the New York State Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)⁴¹ which offers funds to plan a ride share program, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds are available for “travel demand management/planning for rideshare programs.”

**BEST PRACTICE
SPOTLIGHT**

With **Share the Ride North Carolina (STRNC)**⁴², commuters enter their home address on an online platform and are then matched with other commuters. Riders receive a list of other commuters who they have the option of sharing a ride with. Through the program commuters can select to either participate in a private vehicle carpool or in a vanpool. The same online platform also offers single trip matching if a rider needs a trip to somewhere other than work.

³⁸ [MetroNow! - Go Metro \(go-metro.com\)](http://go-metro.com)

³⁹ [FlexDanmark Optimizes Scandinavian Software Solution to Deliver Efficient, High Quality Transportation to Its Citizens \(aarpinternational.org\)](http://aarpinternational.org)

⁴⁰ [Spare - Build more efficient mobility services with Spare \(sparelabs.com\)](http://sparelabs.com)

⁴¹ <https://www.dot.ny.gov/TAP-CMAQ>

⁴² ShareTheRideNC.org

Create A Reimbursement Program for Ride Sharing.

One way to improve senior access to transportation is by reducing the financial barriers to ride-sharing programs or taxis. The county currently provides medical transportation for the senior population in Sullivan County; however, this service is not meeting the need according to input from this study. The county could augment this service by providing a partial reimbursement for seniors who use a ride share program for medical transportation. If the county were to do this, it should consider working with the Drivers Cooperative, noted below, a driver-owned ride share program from NYC, on expanding services to Sullivan County.

**BEST PRACTICE
SPOTLIGHT**

The Drivers Cooperative⁴³ is a driver-owned company that offers the public ride services and also specializes in paratransit and non-emergency medical transportation. The Drivers Cooperative, an alternative to larger ride share companies, offers drivers better pay, equity in the company, and other local economic benefits.

The **Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS)**, a statewide Medicaid agency, will reimburse for medical transportation from ride-share companies. Riders can use this program if they do not need personal assistance, which reduces the amount of training drivers need to be in the program and their costs⁴⁴. In its advocacy vis-à-vis New York State government, Sullivan County agencies could include a focus on ride share reimbursement as a legitimate cost for state-issued Medicaid.

Promote and Support Volunteer Ride Programs.

Volunteer ride programs are a common low-cost component of meeting transportation needs for seniors. Through the SCOFA RSVP program, volunteers provide non-emergency medical transport for seniors. This program could better meet the need which currently exceeds the program if it were expanded and better advertised. RSVP is currently developing a promotional campaign to this end. SCOFA and RSVP should also focus efforts on recruiting driver volunteers and on advertising the program to seniors who need this type of transportation assistance.

**BEST PRACTICE
SPOTLIGHT**

RideConnect⁴⁵ **Westchester** is a volunteer service that connects volunteer drivers to seniors who need rides to doctors' visits, grocery stores, and other places they need to go. This group also offers a weekly shopping bus for group trips to grocery stores and other places for seniors to access their life staples.

Catholic Charities Faith in Action⁴⁶ program in Livingston County, NY, offers seniors free volunteer-supported transportation to medical appointments and grocery stores. The program also connects seniors to other transportation services.

⁴³ [The Drivers Cooperative](#)

⁴⁴ [State-Strategies-to-Support-Older-Adults-Aging-in-Place-in-Rural-Areas_9_13_2019-1.pdf \(nashp.org\)](#)

⁴⁵ <https://www.rideconnectwestchester.org/>

⁴⁶ <https://ccsteubenlivingston.org/our-services-2/help-for-elderly-disabled/transportation-support-for-elderly-disabled/>

SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

There are many ways for SCOFA to increase social opportunities in the county. The office could expand existing programs such as the congregate lunch program, create and implement new programs, or partner with other government agencies or organizations such as the public libraries. A centralized county senior center would allow SCOFA to optimally provide such programs. However, it is crucial to consider the transportation to and from such a center, as per the previous recommendation.

Offer Engaging Programs and Activities

Plan Activities and Programs that Seniors Want

When asked what services or programs they would like, survey respondents suggested some of the following:

- Games such as bingo, chess, mahjong, and scrabble.
- Indoor water activities such as swimming and water aerobics.
- Gentle movement classes such as chair yoga.
- Other exercise opportunities like walking and hiking groups, pickleball, a senior gym, and kayaking.
- Cultural activities like movies, music, dancing, historical events, and cooking classes.
- Bus day trips to sites like the zoo or museums.
- Mixed generational activities.
- Meditation classes.

Plan Day Trips

There are many exciting destinations within a two-hour drive of Sullivan County. Excursions to museums, music venues, the zoo and other places would give seniors a chance to get out and experience the amenities of the area with other seniors.

To easily meet the needs of increased social opportunities, SCOFA should consider purchasing an additional bus to be used for senior field trips and to bring seniors to and from other county social programs.

Develop Intergenerational Programming

Young people have a lot to offer seniors, and seniors have a lot to offer to youth. Youth can offer assistance with technology (described in more detail in the next recommendation) or help around the house, while seniors can be mentors or tutors for younger people. SCOFA should consider developing a local Surrogate or Foster Grandparent program and should also work with schools to regularly connect youth and seniors in intergenerational communities.

Example senior/youth programs:

AARP Foundation Experience Corps⁴⁷ This program pairs seniors with school-age children as tutors to improve student reading levels. This AARP program is not active in the Hudson Valley, but Sullivan County could draw inspiration from it.

Adopt-a-Bubby/Zaidy⁴⁸, high school students are paired with seniors for regular visits.

GaGa Sisterhood of Grandmas⁴⁹

Create a Centralized Senior Center

The importance of public gathering spaces for community building and cohesion, social opportunities, mental health, sharing of information and ideas, and delivery of services cannot be overstated. For seniors, who often experience isolation and loneliness, a centralized senior center would provide numerous benefits. It would be a community gathering space, a place to participate in activities, and a place to learn about existing programs and services offered by SCOFA and other agencies and organizations.

The center should be inviting and accessible to all, and have the following amenities:

- Community room for games, cultural programs, historical events, meditation classes, retirement planning, etc.
- Fitness room with exercise equipment and where movement classes are held.
- Community kitchen where food is prepared and where cooking classes are held.
- Technology room with computers and internet access.
- If it is within the budget, the center would ideally include an indoor swimming pool for water aerobics and other water activities.

As a revenue source, the center could have a rental space for events. Fees for rentals can help offset the cost of operating the center. Relevant nonprofits might rent office space at the center, providing another revenue source.

It is also worth considering that the center could be run in conjunction with the Youth Bureau and serve both senior and young people. This type of place would create ample opportunities for intergenerational programming, of which the benefits are described above. A shared community space for people of all ages may also be a more financially feasible option.

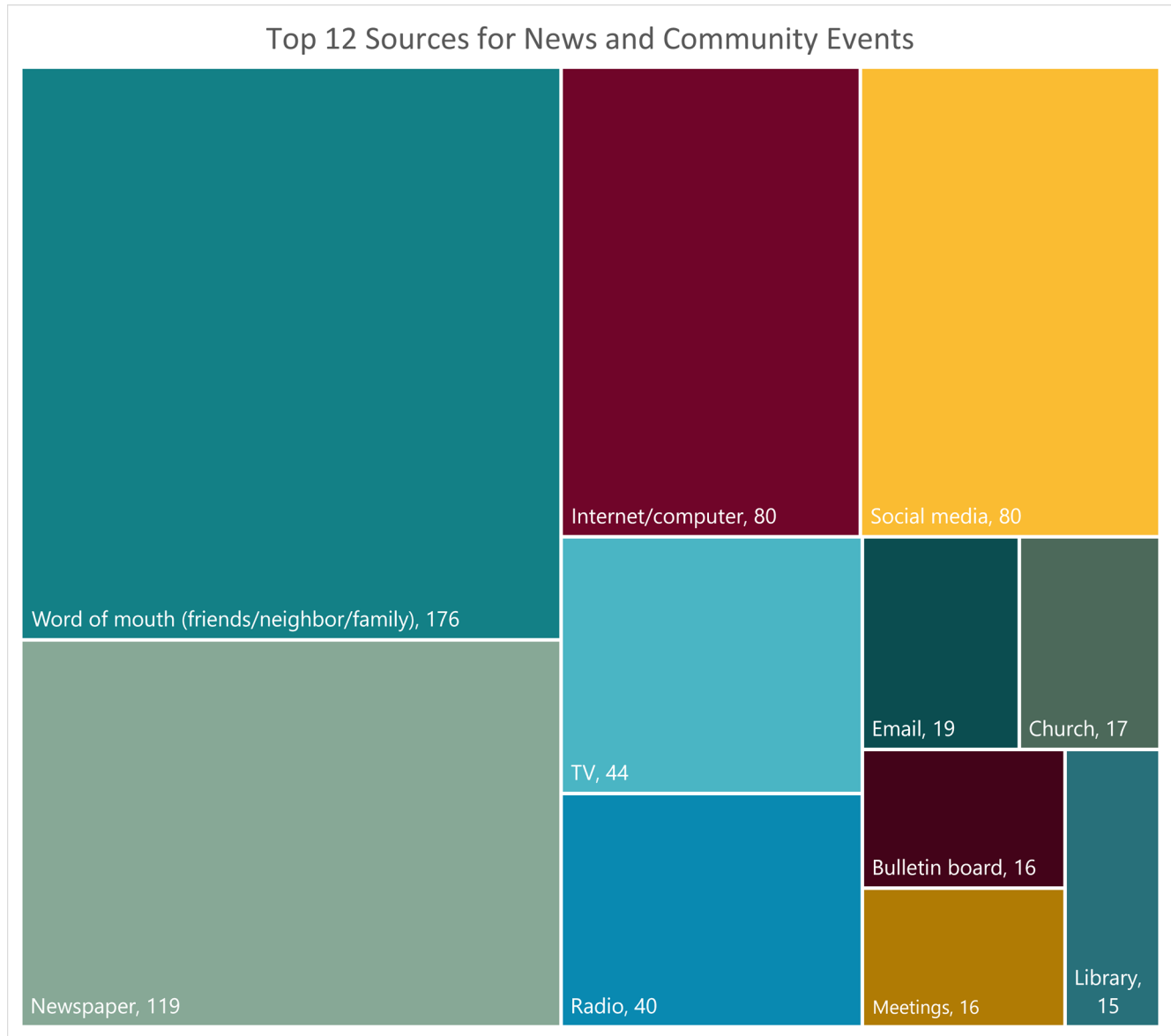
⁴⁷ <https://www.aarp.org/experience-corps/>

⁴⁸ https://www.unitedjewishgenerations.com/templates/articlecco_cdo/aid/883921/jewish/Adopt-A-BubbyZeidy.htm

⁴⁹ <https://www.gagasisterhood.com/>

IMPROVED COMMUNICATION ABOUT EXISTING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Communications should be strategic and account for difficulties accessing and using technology, hearing and visual disabilities, and preferences for different types of media. Outreach efforts should also take into account the channels through which seniors learn about news and events in their community, as documented in the survey.



Many seniors in Sullivan County depend on word of mouth to find out about what is going on. For this reason, SCOFA should develop a list of community leaders who can share information directly with community members.

Since newspapers and the internet were also listed sources in the survey, SCOFA should continue to use these sources to share important information. A more detailed breakdown of sources is available in the survey results section in the Appendices of this report on page 80.

SCOFA's monthly newsletter, *The Monthly Hoot*, contains much of the information that needs to be shared. However, many seniors are not aware of this newsletter. Only two survey respondents indicated it as a source of news and community information. In discussions about this newsletter people made comments that it is not widely read. There were suggestions to improve the cover design to make it clearer that it contained important information for seniors. There are other actions SCOFA could take to increase readership of *The Monthly Hoot* including:

- Talk to partner organizations about where the newsletter is made available. For example, at libraries, the newsletter could be handed to people at they check out books rather than just left it in a pile among other newsletters where it may go unnoticed.
- The RSVP program could create a volunteer opportunity where a volunteer goes door-to-door and delivers the newsletter to seniors in senior living facilities and apartment complexes.
- A digital version of the newsletter could be sent out on social media, through email, and through other digital outreach efforts.
- Include a mail request form in the newsletter where seniors can request to have the newsletter sent directly to their email or home address. To avoid having newsletters mailed to a home where a senior no longer lives, make it clear that mailings will go out for one year and will have to be renewed after that time.
- Ask the senior clubs throughout the county to pass the newsletter out to participants.
- Each month include a list of all the services offered by SCOFA and description of each in the newsletter. Some seniors who read *The Monthly Hoot* may be unaware of these services and the newsletter is an opportunity to get this information out there.
- Include a suggestion mail-in within the newsletter. The readers of *The Monthly Hoot* may have ideas about what could be in the newsletter, or of programs and services they would like to see from SCOFA.
- Create a classified section in the newsletter. Categories might include housing, transportation, social opportunities, and items for sale. For seniors who rely on print media as their primary source of information, the classifieds section would create a space to learn about opportunities that could be very helpful. A classifieds section may also drive-up readership if it proves to be an information resource.
- Continue to list volunteer opportunities in the newsletter.

TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNET ACCESS

There are two senior needs related to technology in Sullivan County. There is a lack of consistent broadband access in certain areas of the county, and seniors sometimes struggle with technical skills for using computers, phones, and other electronic devices. Recommendations to address these needs are outlined in this section.

Increase Broadband Access

The Sullivan Broadband Local Development Corporation is tasked with improving high speed internet access across the county. The county should continue to support efforts to expand service infrastructure to all county residents.

Create New Technology Assistance Programs

SCOFA, in partnership with the county public library system and the Sullivan County Youth Bureau, should create technical assistance programs for seniors. As part of this initiative, the organizations should create an ongoing class in which teens give seniors technical assistance. Intergenerational programs offer benefits to people of different ages and leverage knowledge and generational strengths.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

Tech Support for Seniors⁵⁰ is a startup organization where teens are matched with seniors for tech training. Teens receive a payment for their help and according to the founder, "The intergenerational learning experience is really remarkable and that's why I always say the main service we provide is not tech support. It is human connection."

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

During the 2023 annual SCOFA public hearing there was a presentation on emergency preparedness by officers from the Liberty and Fallsburg Police Departments. SCOFA should continue to work with partners to offer this type of program to senior audiences. SCOFA should also consider working with partners to produce informational materials on emergency preparedness to hand out at events, make available at the office, and publish in *The Monthly Hoot* and other county communications.

Additionally, during expanded in-home services for the elderly (EISEP) home visits, SCOFA staff should assess emergency preparedness and inform emergency responders if there are concerns about an individual's preparedness.

RESOURCES

Center for Disease Control: "Identifying Vulnerable Older Adults and Legal Options for Increasing Their Protection During All-Hazards Emergencies: A Cross-Sector Guide for States and Communities"⁵¹

American Red Cross: "Disaster and Emergency Preparedness for Older Adults: A Practical Guide to Help Plan, Respond and Recover"⁵²

⁵⁰ [Teeniors®: \(505\) 600-1297 - Tech Support for Seniors](#)

⁵¹ [aging.pdf \(cdc.gov\)](#)

⁵² [Older Adults Disaster Prep Booklet 07272020.pdf \(redcross.org\)](#)

FOOD ASSISTANCE

Food security is a growing concern for seniors in Sullivan County. SCOFA should continue to offer home-delivered and congregate meals, and to connect seniors in need with other programs such as the Sullivan Fresh Community Cupboard Program, Single Bite + Catskills Food Hub, various food pantries, and others.

One way to expand existing food assistance organizational capacity is to enhance the coordination of those involved in this effort. The Sullivan Catskills Food Security Coalition meets regularly as a network. The Coalition works to organize efforts through regular communications and sharing of data. They are also conducting surveys to identify gaps within the food system.

Those involved in this important work should consider the **development of a strategic plan** to:

- **Identify organizational vulnerabilities and strategize to fill gaps.** Organizations should ask whether they have enough volunteers? Are there unmet needs in the community that the organization would like to address? What other vulnerabilities does the organization have and how can they reduce these vulnerabilities?
- **Identify what capital improvements would increase organizational capacity.**
- **Create a volunteer opportunity list for the entire food support network.** The list should also be available on paper for people who do not have access to a computer.
- **Actively recruit volunteers** at community events and through community communications.
- **Continue to support the delivery of food to homebound residents.**
- **Promote local production of fresh food.** Sullivan County has numerous working farms. This is a strength that should be leveraged to ensure people in need of food support have access to fresh and healthy food. Grant funding could be used to support local farm production of food for food support organizations.
- **Develop a paid coordinator position.** The role and responsibilities of the coordinator would be defined in the strategic plan.
- **Identify and apply for reoccurring funding resources to support these efforts.**

Additionally, increased transportation services are key in addressing some of the food access issues seniors face. By expanding transportation options as well as volunteer programs, as described in previous recommendations, the county can also increase food security for seniors.

APPENDICES

Quantitative Data

The following quantitative data are for senior demographics, population and projections, disability status, measures of housing needs, and health statistics. Data for people in the senior age group are for 55 years and older, or 65 years and older, depending on data availability. Data points are for the following geographies based on availability: Sullivan County, all Sullivan County towns and villages, and New York State for comparison. Towns include incorporated parts (a village or hamlet within a town is included in the town numbers).

Data sources include:

- U.S. 2020 Decennial Census
- U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2021 and 2022, 5-Year and 1-Year Estimates
- U.S. Census, Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI) 2018-2022
- Cornell Program on Applied Demographics, Sullivan County Projection
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) 2015-2019
- New York State Unified Court System, Statewide Eviction Information
- New York State Balance of State of Continuum of Care (NYS BoS CoC), Annual Point-In-Time (PIT) Count of Homeless
- Economic Policy Institute, Budget Calculator Sullivan County, NY 2022
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings, Sullivan County

Senior demographics

Seniors by age group and sub-geography

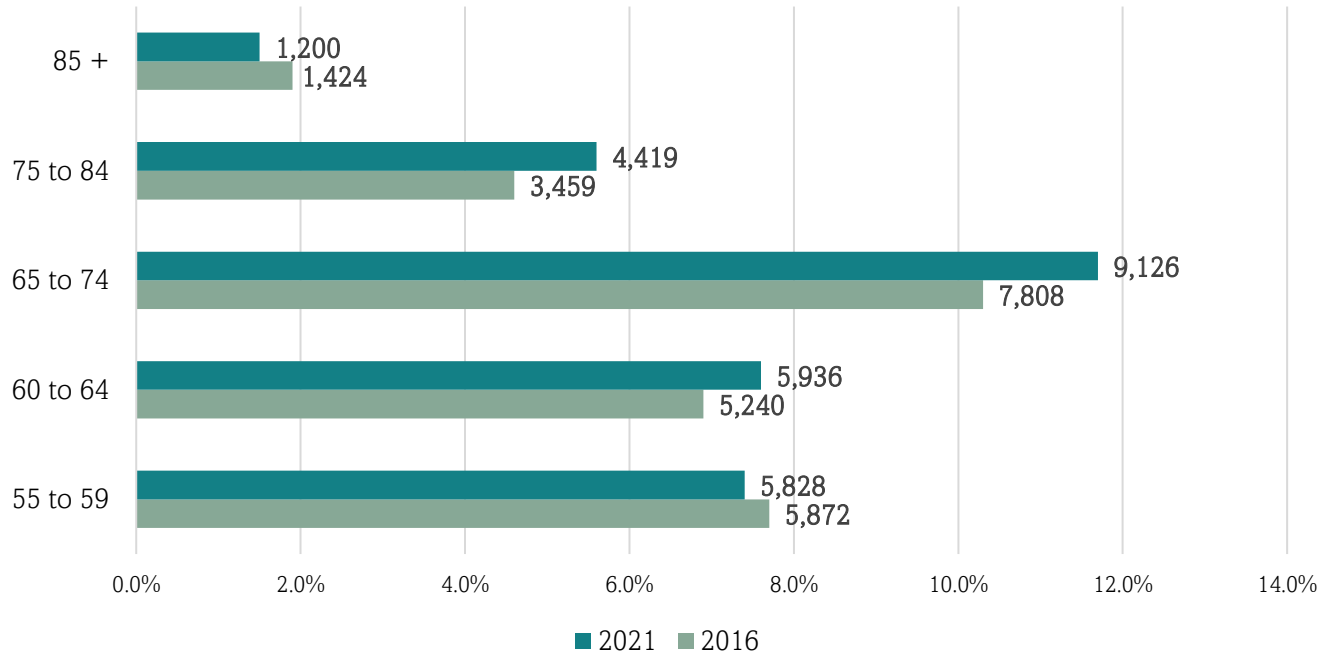
As is true across most communities in the United States, the aging of the Baby Boomer generation means Sullivan County is experiencing an increase in the number of people who are over the age 55 and the percentage of the total population that is in these older age groups. As of 2021 there were 26,509 people aged 55+ in Sullivan County.

The following chart shows the percentage of Sullivan County's total population in each of the senior age groups according to U.S. Census American Community Survey data for years 2016 and 2021.

The percentage of the total population in the age groups 60-64, 65-74, and 75-84 increased from 2016 to 2021.

However, the percentage of the total population in the age group 85 years or older decreased slightly from 2016 to 2021. In 2016 this age group made up 1.9% of the total population and in 2021 it made up 1.5%.

Sullivan County Seniors
Population by Age Groups
2016 and 2021



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey,

Senior Population by Age Groups Number and % of Total Population							
		55 to 59	60 to 64	65 to 74	75 to 84	85 +	55 +
Sullivan County	#	5,828	5,936	9,126	4,419	1,200	26,509
	%	7.4%	7.6%	11.7%	5.6%	1.5%	33.8%
New York	#	1,392,050	1,311,628	1,929,865	948,788	451,506	6,033,837
	%	6.9%	6.5%	9.6%	4.7%	2.2%	29.9%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2021

These tables show the number of people and the percentage of the total population in senior age groups for Sullivan County, for New York State, and for the towns and villages within the county.

As compared to New York State, Sullivan County has a larger percentage of the population that is over that age 55 at 33.8% of the county’s total population whereas in New York State this percentage is 29.9%.

People in the age group 65 to 74 make up 11.7% of the total county population. This is higher than in New York State where only 9.6% of the total population is in this age group.

Across the different senior age groups, Sullivan County has a higher percentage of people in each group than New York State except for 85 years of older. In Sullivan County 1.5% of the total population is in this oldest age group whereas in the state 2.2% of the population is in this group.

The percentage of the population that is over 55 years varies between the different Sullivan County towns. In the Town of Fallsburg, the 55+ population makes up 25.6% of the total population whereas in the Town

of Highland 47.7% of the population is 55+. The Town of Thompson has the greatest number of individuals who are 55 years or age or older with 5,748 people in this age group.

The Town of Highland also has the highest percentage of the population that is in the older age group of people aged 85 years or older at 5.1%. Forestburgh follows Highland with 4.1% of the total town population in this age group. However, in actual numbers, the Town of Thompson has the greatest number of people in this age group with 358 people.

Of the villages in Sullivan County, Wurtsboro has the highest percentage of people over the age 55 at 39.2% of the total population.

The Village of Monticello has the highest number of people over the aged 55 with 1,953 people.

Senior Population by Age Groups Number and % of Total Population Sullivan County TOWNS							
		55 to 59	60 to 64	65 to 74	75 to 84	85 +	55 +
Bethel	#	263	449	790	282	33	1,817
	%	6.6%	11.2%	19.8%	7.1%	0.8%	45.5%
Callicoon	#	231	262	340	381	38	1,252
	%	7.7%	8.7%	11.3%	12.7%	1.3%	41.7%
Cochecton	#	155	128	196	123	15	617
	%	11.4%	9.4%	14.4%	9.0%	1.1%	45.3%
Delaware	#	242	228	340	81	37	928
	%	10.8%	10.1%	15.1%	3.6%	1.6%	41.2%
Fallsburg	#	829	894	1057	564	173	3,517
	%	6.0%	6.5%	7.7%	4.1%	1.3%	25.6%
Forestburgh	#	65	894	142	80	37	375
	%	7.2%	5.6%	15.6%	8.8%	4.1%	41.3%
Fremont	#	81	127	162	142	32	544
	%	6.7%	10.6%	13.5%	11.8%	2.7%	45.3%
Highland	#	222	248	325	133	110	1,038
	%	10.2%	11.4%	14.9%	6.1%	5.1%	47.7%
Liberty	#	980	606	898	478	177	3,139
	%	9.7%	6.0%	8.9%	4.7%	1.7%	31%
Lumberland	#	180	178	178	134	33	703
	%	8.0%	7.9%	7.9%	5.9%	1.5%	31.2%
Mamakating	#	1,001	895	1,139	549	57	3,641
	%	7.9%	7.1%	9.0%	4.4%	0.5%	28.9%
Neversink	#	287	438	316	172	23	1,236
	%	8.5%	12.9%	9.3%	5.1%	0.7%	36.5%
Rockland	#	200	203	734	227	55	1,419
	%	6.0%	6.1%	21.9%	6.8%	1.6%	42.4%
Thompson	#	966	1,108	2,344	972	358	5,748
	%	5.9%	6.8%	14.3%	5.9%	2.2%	35.1%
Tusten	#	126	121	165	101	22	535
	%	8.7%	8.3%	11.3%	6.9%	1.5%	36.7%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2021

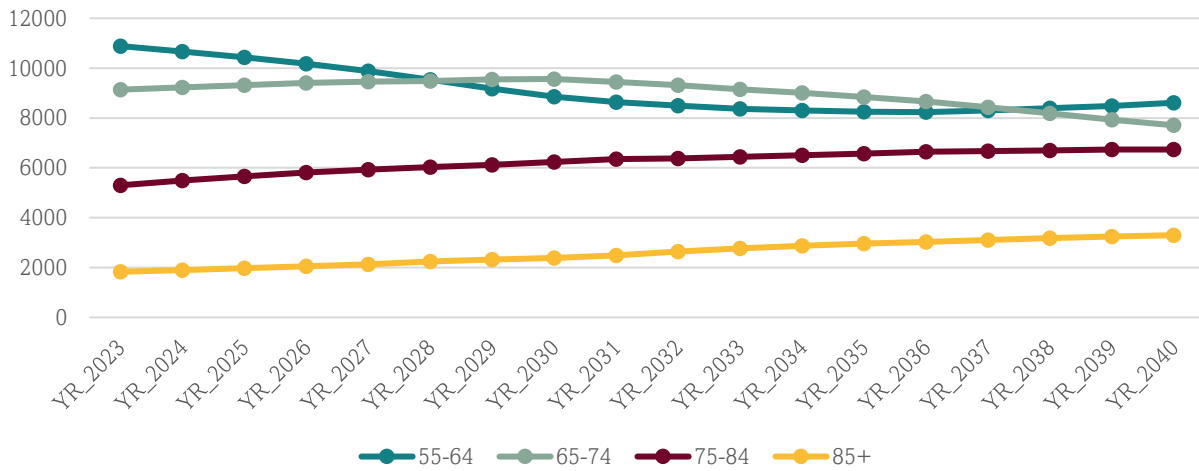
Senior Population by Age Groups Number and % of Total Population Sullivan County VILLAGES							
		55 to 59	60 to 64	65 to 74	75 to 84	85 +	55 +
Jeffersonville	#	42	24	30	23	11	130
	%	10.4%	6.0%	7.4%	5.7%	2.7%	32.2%
Liberty	#	332	267	385	212	80	1,276
	%	6.7%	5.4%	7.8%	4.3%	1.6%	25.8%
Monticello	#	291	411	819	302	130	1,953
	%	4.0%	5.7%	11.4%	4.2%	1.8%	27.1%
Woodridge	#	48	24	51	57	9	189
	%	6.5%	3.3%	6.9%	7.7%	1.2%	25.6%
Wurtsboro	#	89	106	176	100	9	480
	%	7.3%	8.6%	14.4%	8.2%	0.7%	39.2%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2021

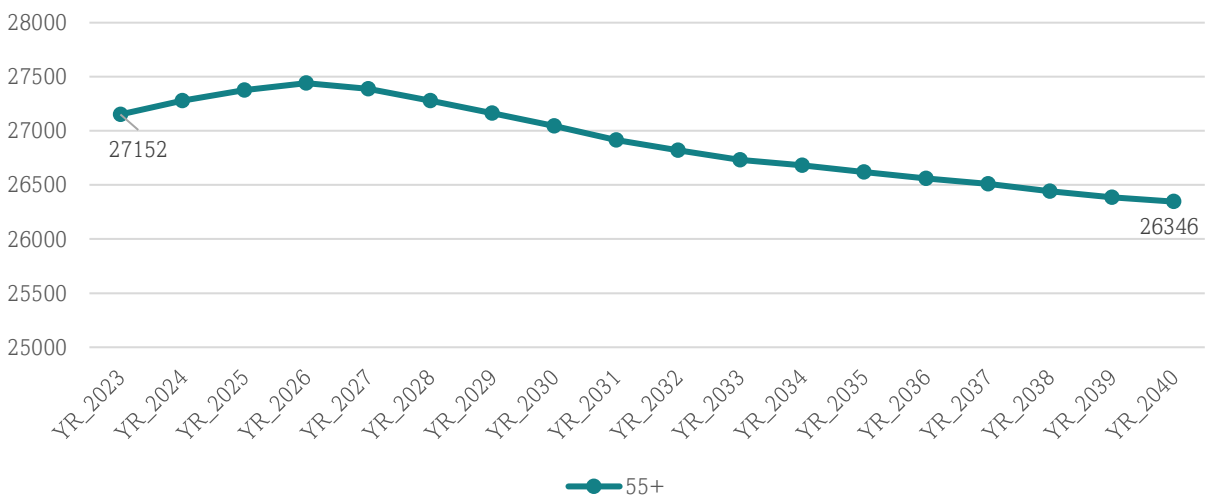
Sullivan County Population 55+ Projections

In planning for senior needs, it is important to consider what the senior population will look like in the coming decades. The Cornell Program on Applied Demographics projects an increase Sullivan’s population that is 85 years or older over the next two decades. According to the projections there will also be an increase in the population that is aged 75-84. However, the population that will be in the age groups 55-64 and 65-74 is expected to decrease over the next two decades. There will be a total decrease of around 800 people 55+ over the period according to the projections.

Projections for Sullivan County's Population in 55+ Age Groups
2023-2040



Projections for Sullivan County's Population in 55+
2023-2040



Source: Cornell Program on Applied Demographics, Sullivan County Projection (Retrieved August 2023)

Seniors by race and ethnicity

Age Groups 55 Years and Older by Race and Ethnicity			
Sullivan County			
	Age Groups	Number of People	% of 55+ population
White alone	55 to 64	9,815	37.0%
	65 to 74	7,934	29.9%
	75 to 84	4,066	15.3%
	85 years+	1,093	4.1%
Black or African American alone	55 to 64	785	3.0%
	65 to 74	582	2.2%
	75 to 84	149	0.6%
	85 years+	69	0.3%
Asian alone	55 to 64	266	1.0%
	65 to 74	124	0.5%
	75 to 84	65	0.2%
	85 years+	15	0.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native	55 to 64	102	0.4%
	65 to 74	30	0.1%
	75 to 84	4	0.0%
	85 years+	0	0.0%
Some other race alone	55 to 64	366	1.4%
	65 to 74	321	1.2%
	75 to 84	34	0.1%
	85 years+	0	0.0%
Two or more races	55 to 64	430	1.6%
	65 to 74	135	0.5%
	75 to 84	101	0.4%
	85 years+	23	0.1%
Hispanic or Latino*	55 to 64	1,121	4.2%
	65 to 74	617	2.3%
	75 to 84	342	1.3%
	85 years+	27	0.1%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2021

*People of any race may identify as Hispanic or Latino

The table on this page shows people in age groups 55 years or older by race and ethnicity. People who identify as white alone account for the majority of people in these age groups. People who identify as Hispanic or Latino make up the second largest group followed by Black or African American alone.

Seniors by sex

Population 65 Years + by Sex Number and %			
		Female	Male
Sullivan County	#	7,569	7,176
	%	51.3%	48.7%
New York	#	1,878,372	1,451,787
	%	56.4%	43.6%

The table to the left includes data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey for year 2021 and shows the population that is 65 years and older by sex. Data are for Sullivan County and for New York State.

In both the county and the state, there is a greater percentage of people who are female.

Seniors 65 Years and Older Living Alone

The following tables include data from the U.S. Decennial Census for year 2020 and show people 65 years or older living alone by sex.

In both Sullivan County and New York State there is a greater number (2,416) of single females 65 years and older living alone than males (1,766).

Across all municipalities Sullivan County except for the Town of Tusten, there is a greater percentage and number of female people over the age 65 living alone than males.

Seniors 65+ Living Alone Number and % of Total Population			
		Female	Male
Sullivan County	#	2,416	1,766
	%	8%	5.9
New York	#	625,541	302,815
	%	8.1%	3.9%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2020

Seniors 65+ Living Alone Number and % of Total Population Sullivan County TOWNS			
		Female	Male
Bethel	#	162	127
	%	9.2%	7.2%
Callicoon	#	123	79
	%	9.6%	6.2%
Cochecton	#	53	41
	%	8.1%	6.3%
Delaware	#	105	70
	%	11.3%	7.6%
Fallsburg	#	243	201
	%	5.9%	4.8%
Forestburgh	#	28	18
	%	8.1%	5.2%
Fremont	#	49	38
	%	9.1%	7.1%
Highland	#	89	72
	%	8.9%	7.2%
Liberty	#	343	213
	%	8.8%	5.4%
Lumberland	#	53	51
	%	5.8%	5.6%
Mamakating	#	308	212
	%	6.5%	4.5%
Neversink	#	124	85
	%	8.8%	6%
Rockland	#	133	96
	%	9.4%	6.8%
Thompson	#	548	399
	%	8.5%	6.2%
Tusten	#	55	64
	%	8.4%	9.8%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2020

Seniors 65+ Living Alone Number and % of Total Population Sullivan County VILLAGES			
		Female	Male
Jeffersonville	#	14	9
	%	10.3%	6.6%
Liberty	#	194	99
	%	10.3%	5.2%
Monticello	#	270	172
	%	9.4%	6%
Woodridge	#	25	14
	%	9%	5.1%
Wurtsboro	#	64	39
	%	12.6%	7.7%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2020

Grandchildren Living with Grandparents

The tables on this page show the number of grandparent householders by the age of the grandchildren they live with.

As of the 2020 U.S. Decennial Census there were 1,267 grandparent householders living with their grandchildren. Most of these householders (444) had children over the age of six.

Number of Grandparent Householders with Grandchildren Under 18 Years of Age Living with Them					
	< 3 years	3 and 4 years	5 years	6 to 11 years	12 to 17 years
Sullivan County	251	165	86	444	321
Sullivan County TOWNS					
Bethel	13	9	3	17	23
Callicoon	4	1	2	3	15
Cochecton	0	3	1	6	5
Delaware	3	2	0	14	10
Fallsburg	57	27	24	64	45
Forestburgh	3	1	0	8	5
Fremont	0	2	0	4	0
Highland	8	7	3	7	10
Liberty	42	21	5	60	42
Lumberland	2	7	5	7	9
Mamakating	47	32	27	87	55
Neversink	9	1	2	22	12
Rockland	6	6	2	23	26
Thompson	51	42	12	114	61
Tusten	6	4	0	8	3
Sullivan County VILLAGES					
Jeffersonville	0	0	0	0	3
Liberty	8	7	5	27	18
Monticello	22	31	5	54	32
Woodridge	7	1	0	11	2
Wurtsboro	3	5	3	3	7

Source: U.S. Census, Decennial Census 2020

Seniors and Disabilities

The following tables show data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey for year 2021. The tables show the number of people with disabilities by senior age groups.

10% of people in Sullivan County aged 65 to 74 have one type of disability and 11% have two or more types of disability.

Of people in the county 75 years or older, 23% have one disability and 12% have two or more disabilities.

Number of People With Disabilities by Senior Age Group and Number of Disabilities Sullivan County		
65 to 74 years	#	%
With one type of disability	844	10%
With two or more types of disability	924	11%
No disability	7,020	80%
75 years and over		
With one type of disability	1,312	23%
With two or more types of disability	663	12%
No disability	3,669	65%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimate 2021

Disability Status by Poverty Status By Senior Age Group Sullivan County				
65 to 74 years				
	#	%		
Income in the past 12 months:	With a Disability:	1,768	20%	
	below poverty level	161	9%	
	at or above poverty level	1,607	91%	
	No Disability:	7,020	80%	
	below poverty level	527	8%	
	at or above poverty level	6,493	92%	
	75 years and over			
	With a Disability:	1,975	35%	
	below poverty level	265	13%	
	at or above poverty level	1,710	87%	
	No Disability:	3,669	65%	
	below poverty level	228	6%	
at or above poverty level	3441	94%		

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimate

The adjacent and following tables show disability by poverty status by senior age group, disability by health insurance coverage by senior age group, and disability type.

In Sullivan County, 9% of people (161 people) who are between the ages 64 and 74 years and have a disability are below the poverty line. 13% (265 people) age 75 years or older who have a disability are below the poverty line.

According to the data, of people in Sullivan County who are 65 years or older with a disability, 100% (3,743 people) have health insurance. 56% (2,113) of these people have private health insurance coverage in addition to public health insurance.

For all age groups over 65 years, the most common disability type is ambulatory: 14.5% of people over the age 65, 11.7% of people aged 65 to 74, and 18.7% of the population over 75 years.

Disability Status by Health Insurance Coverage Senior Population 65 Years and Over Sullivan County		
65 years and over		
With a Disability:	3,743	26%
With health insurance coverage:	3,743	100%
With private health insurance coverage	2,113	56%
With public health coverage	3,743	100%
No health insurance coverage	0	0%
No Disability:	10,689	74%
With health insurance coverage:	10,689	100%
With private health insurance coverage	8,654	81%
With public health coverage	9,890	114%
No health insurance coverage	0	0%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimate 2021

Disability Type Senior Population 65 Years and Over Sullivan County		
With Vision Difficulty	#	%
Population 65 years and over	581	4.0%
Population 65 to 74 years	400	4.6%
Population 75 years and over	181	3.2%
With a Cognitive Difficulty		
Population 65 years and over	652	4.5%
Population 65 to 74 years	207	2.4%
Population 75 years and over	445	7.9%
With an Ambulatory Difficulty		
Population 65 years and over	2,087	14.5%
Population 65 to 74 years	1,030	11.7%
Population 75 years and over	1,057	18.7%
With Self-Care Difficulty		
Population 65 years and over	524	3.6%
Population 65 to 74 years	286	3.3%
Population 75 years and over	238	4.2%
With Independent Living Difficulty		
Population 65 years and over	524	3.6%
Population 65 to 74 years	286	3.3%
Population 75 years and over	238	4.2%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimate 2021

Senior Vehicle Availability

Persons without access to a vehicle may be dependent on public transportation, paratransit, friends or family, or other sources of transportation to reach their destinations. The following tables show vehicular access for householders 65 years and older by tenure.

Householder 65 Years of Older Vehicle Availability by Tenure			
Household		#	%
Owner	No Vehicle	354	5%
	With Vehicle Access	7,314	95%
Renter	No Vehicle	529	39%
	With Vehicle Access	828	61%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2021

According to data from 2021, around 5% of senior owner households do not have access to a vehicle. For renters this percentage is much higher at around 39%. Renters are typically lower income than homeowners and therefore are more likely to not be able to afford the high cost of owning a vehicle.

Internet Subscriptions

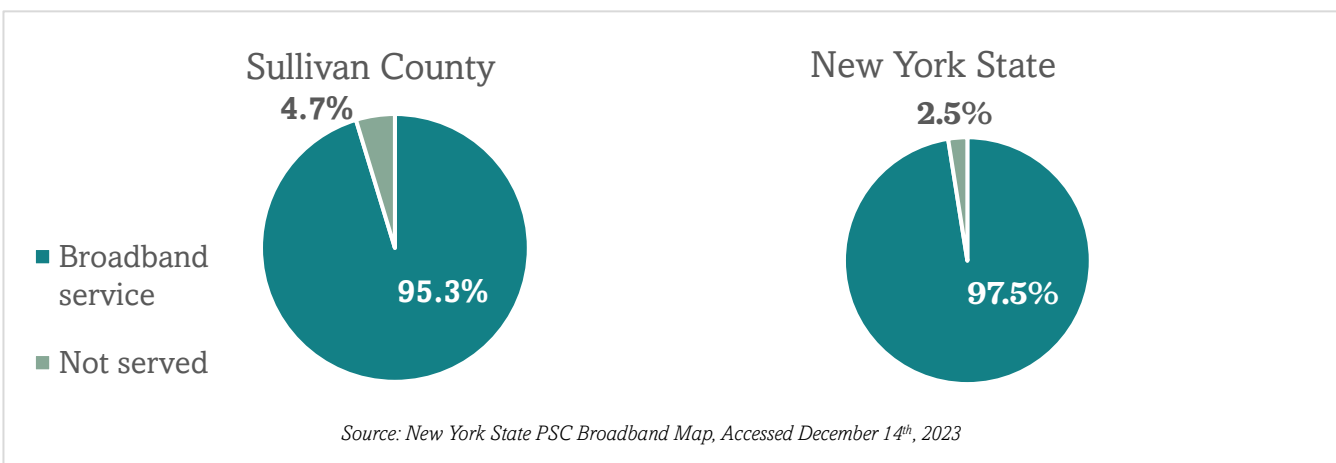
The following table shows the type of internet subscription for people 65 years and older in Sullivan County. According to the 2021 American Community Survey data, In the population of people 65 years and older, 15% do not own a computer and 6% of computer owners do not have an internet subscription. Not shown in the table, 14% of all Sullivan County households, regardless of the householder's age, have no internet access, according to data for 2021.

Type of Internet Subscription - People 65 Years and Older Sullivan County		
	#	%
People 65 years and over	14,094	100%
Has a computer:	11,973	85%
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	182	1%
With a broadband Internet subscription	10,915	77%
Without an Internet subscription	876	6%
Does not have a computer	2,121	15%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates 2021

The following chart shows the percentage of households that have broadband access. Broadband access is different than internet subscriptions because it refers to whether the infrastructure exists to have internet but not whether a household has a subscription. AS of 2023, 4.7% of Sullivan households did not have broadband access. This percentage of households is about twice as many as for the state.

Percentage of Households that have Broadband Access

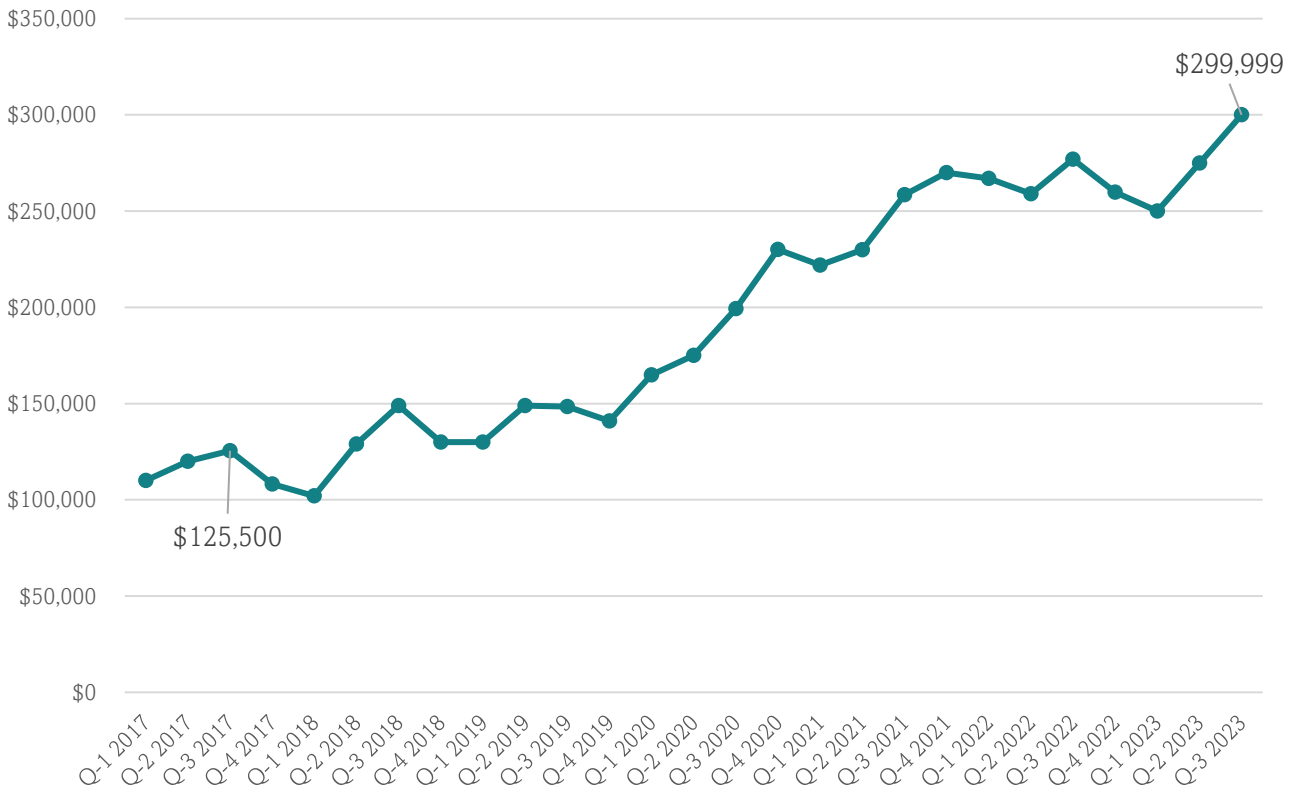


Seniors and Housing Measures

Median Sales Prices

The following chart shows the median sales price of homes in Sullivan County from 2017 to 2023 by quarter year. The cost of buying a home in Sullivan County has risen significantly in the last several years. From Q3 of 2017 to Q3 of 2023 the median sale price of a home went up by 139%.

Median Sales Price
Sullivan County - 2017-2023



Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income for Householders 65 Years and Older

The following chart and tables show the percentage of household income that renters 65 years and older pay toward gross rent. The data are for Sullivan County and New York State for comparison. Tables also include data for Sullivan County towns and villages.

As compared to New York State, a smaller percentage of renter households are paying 30% or more of their household income toward rent. Households paying 30% or more of income are considered housing cost burdened.



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2021

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income- Shown by Number of Householders 65 Years +						
	<20% of Income	20.0% to 24.9% of Income	25.0% to 29.9% of Income	30.0% to 34.9% of Income	35.0 % + of Income	Not Computed
Sullivan County	367	196	156	135	284	219
New York	126,415	58,479	72,970	70,779	327,762	44,330
Sullivan County TOWNS						
Bethel	99	0	35	0	12	0
Callicoon	15	15	0	0	0	0
Cochecton	11	6	0	1	0	4
Delaware	41	21	0	14	0	6
Fallsburg	160	44	25	34	10	36
Forestburgh	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fremont	24	6	0	4	0	0
Highland	18	6	0	7	5	0
Liberty	177	15	65	30	21	22
Lumberland	7	0	0	7	0	0
Mamakating	88	19	13	4	4	48
Neversink	52	0	0	0	0	39
Rockland	46	29	0	0	0	0
Thompson	595	196	55	55	83	121
Tusten	24	10	3	0	0	8
Sullivan County VILLAGES						
Jeffersonville	15	15	0	0	0	0
Liberty	148	15	65	30	21	0
Monticello	306	161	8	29	41	28
Woodridge	13	0	1	9	0	3
Wurtsboro	43	1	4	0	4	34

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2021

Tenure

The following tables include data from the U.S. Census, American Community Survey for 2021 and show tenure for Sullivan County householders over the age 65. The majority (85%) of county households are owners while 15% of householders are renters.

The percentage of householders who are renters varies by town and village. In the Town of Forestburgh, for example, 100% of householders over the age 65 are owners whereas in the Town of Thompson, 71.7% are owners and 28.3% are renters.

All of Sullivan County’s villages have a higher percentage of renters than do the towns. The Village of Monticello has the largest percentage of renter households over 65 at 49.3%.

Tenure status is important in understanding needs. Renters typically have lower incomes and much less housing security than owners. Whereas owners have the responsibility and cost of maintaining a home.

Tenure for Householders 65 Years +				
	Owners		Renters	
	#	%	#	%
Sullivan County	7,668	85.0%	1,357	15.0%
New York	1,345,131	65.7%	700,735	34.3%
Sullivan County TOWNS				
Bethel	610	86.0%	99	14.0%
Callicoon	456	96.8%	15	3.2%
Cochecton	198	94.7%	11	5.3%
Delaware	250	85.9%	41	14.1%
Fallsburg	885	84.7%	160	15.3%
Forestburgh	165	100.0%	0	0.0%
Fremont	164	87.2%	24	12.8%
Highland	388	95.6%	18	4.4%
Liberty	646	78.5%	177	21.5%
Lumberland	212	96.8%	7	3.2%
Mamakating	1,051	92.3%	88	7.7%
Neversink	293	84.9%	52	15.1%
Rockland	699	93.8%	46	6.2%
Thompson	1,505	71.7%	595	28.3%
Tusten	146	85.9%	24	14.1%
Sullivan County VILLAGES				
Jeffersonville	27	64.3%	15	35.7%
Liberty	205	58.1%	148	41.9%
Monticello	315	50.7%	306	49.3%
Woodridge	69	84.1%	13	15.9%
Wurtsboro	148	77.5%	43	22.5%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2021

Year Moved In

Year Householder Moved In - Householders 65 Years or Older				
Sullivan County				
	OWNERS		RENTERS	
	#	%	#	%
Householders 65 years and over	7,668		1,357	
Moved in 2019 or later	34	0.4%	39	2.9%
Moved in 2015 to 2018	480	6.3%	440	32.4%
Moved in 2010 to 2014	551	7.2%	263	19.4%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	1,593	20.8%	381	28.1%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	1,477	19.3%	152	11.2%
Moved in 1989 or earlier	3,533	46.1%	82	6.0%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2021

The table above shows householders 65 years and older and when they moved into their home by tenure.

The majority of householders 65 years or older who own their home (65%) moved in at least thirty years ago (prior to 1990) and almost half of owner households moved in before 1989. Whereas of renter householders 65 years or older only 17.2% have been in their homes for at least 30 years.

Age of Housing by Tenure

Year Home Built by Tenure for Householders 65 Years +								
	OWNERS				RENTERS			
	Sullivan County		New York		Sullivan County		New York	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Householder 65 years and over	7,668		1,345,131		1,357		700,735	
Built 2020 or later	0	0.0%	562	0.0%	0	0.0%	257	0.0%
Built 2010 to 2019	112	1.5%	21,032	1.6%	4	0.3%	25,538	3.6%
Built 2000 to 2009	670	8.7%	60,522	4.5%	224	16.5%	38,234	5.5%
Built 1990 to 1999	781	10.2%	73,712	5.5%	139	10.2%	40,976	5.8%
Built 1980 to 1989	1,129	14.7%	114,782	8.5%	197	14.5%	44,139	6.3%
Built 1970 to 1979	1,142	14.9%	148,087	11.0%	156	11.5%	81,028	11.6%
Built 1960 to 1969	1,172	15.3%	199,503	14.8%	195	14.4%	98,460	14.1%
Built 1950 to 1959	919	12.0%	245,645	18.3%	116	8.5%	87,601	12.5%
Built 1940 to 1949	350	4.6%	108,976	8.1%	102	7.5%	65,792	9.4%
Built 1939 or earlier	1,393	18.2%	372,310	27.7%	224	16.5%	218,710	31.2%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2021

The table above left shows the age of housing in Sullivan County by tenure. Older housing typically has higher maintenance and energy costs.

65% of owner-occupied housing units and 58.4% of renter housing units were built before 1979. As compared to New York State, a greater percentage of housing units in Sullivan County were built within the last 30 years.

Housing Unit Problems by Tenure

The data in the following tables comes from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy survey for years 2015-2019. The tables show Sullivan County householders 62 years and older by % of Area Median Income and those who have one of four of the following housing problems:

- 1) housing unit lacks complete kitchen facilities;
- 2) housing unit lacks complete plumbing facilities;
- 3) household is overcrowded; and
- 4) household is cost burdened.

The tables also include households that have none of the four problems. The first table is for Owners and the second is for Renters.

Most owners with incomes below 80% of the AMI have at least one of the housing problems described above. Almost all (470 out of 474) owner households with incomes less than or equal to 30% of the AMI have one or more of the four housing unit problems.

As with owner households, the majority of renters with incomes below 80% of the AMI have at least one of the housing problems described above. 1,425 renter households with incomes less than or equal to 30% of the AMI (92% of these low-income households) have one or more of the four housing unit problems.

Sullivan County Age 62+				
% of Area Median Income	OWNERS		RENTERS	
	1 or more of the 4 housing unit problems	None of the 4 housing unit problems	1 or more of the 4 housing unit problems	None of the 4 housing unit problems
less than or equal to 30%	470	4	1,425	120
>30% <= 50%	395	255	795	190
>50% <= 80%	780	420	895	535
>80% <= 100%	320	540	160	660
> 100%	505	6,315	95	1,710

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) 2015-2019

Evictions

Sullivan County Yearly Eviction Filings	
Year	Evictions
2019	511
2020	118
2021	127
2022	736
2023 (through 8/13)	425

The table on the left shows the number of evictions in Sullivan County from year 2019 through August of 2023. The number of evictions went down during the years of the pandemic due to a statewide eviction moratorium. After the expiration of this moratorium in 2022 the number of evictions rose above the number in 2019.

Source: New York State Unified Court System, Statewide Eviction Information

Homelessness

The Point-In-Time (PIT) count is of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night of each year. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires Continuums of Care conduct the annual count of homeless persons who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and in Safe Havens.

PIT Count				
Program	2019	2020	2021	2022
DSS Temporary Housing	162	121	86	159
Sullivan Code Blue	NA	NA	NA	27
Unsheltered	0	14	0	0
Total	162	135	86	186

Sullivan County is part of the New York State Balance of State of Continuum of Care (NYS BoS CoC). The NYS BoS CoC conducts an annual point-in-time (PIT) count of homeless persons in each of its eight counties, including Sullivan County.

The homeless count decreased significantly in 2021, likely as a result of the Covid-pandemic but then increased by more than 100% from 2021 to 2022. There were no unsheltered people in the 2021 or 2022 count. These counts do not include people who are homeless but are living in a friend or relation's home.

Senior Economic and Income Measures

Household Income for Householders 65 Years and Older

Householder Income for Householders 65 Years and Older	Sullivan County		New York	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Householders 65 years and over	9,025	-	2,045,866	-
Less than \$10,000	330	3.7%	135,235	6.6%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	736	8.2%	153,317	7.5%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	493	5.5%	133,899	6.5%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	550	6.1%	121,019	5.9%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	556	6.2%	110,292	5.4%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	561	6.2%	94,082	4.6%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	461	5.1%	88,107	4.3%
\$40,000 to \$44,999	362	4.0%	84,645	4.1%
\$45,000 to \$49,999	522	5.8%	74,181	3.6%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	658	7.3%	140,977	6.9%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	1,158	12.8%	174,914	8.5%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1,038	11.5%	216,261	10.6%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	610	6.8%	148,607	7.3%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	296	3.3%	98,842	4.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	339	3.8%	116,285	5.7%
\$200,000 or more	355	3.9%	155,203	7.6%

The table to the left shows householders in Sullivan County who are 65 years or older by household income groups. For comparison the table also includes data for New York State.

40.9% of householders 65 years and older have a household income of \$39,999 or less.

As compared to New York State, there is a smaller percentage of Sullivan County households with a householder 65 years or older in the highest income groups of over \$100,000, 7.6% versus 3.9% respectively.

Also, in comparison to New York State, there is a smaller percentage of households in Sullivan County in the lowest income group of less than \$10,000, 6.6% versus 3.7% respectively.

U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2021

Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months - Different Age Groups Including Householders 65 Years and Over

The following tables show median household income by age groups for Sullivan County, New York State, and Sullivan County towns and villages.

Householders 65 years and over have a lower median household income than all households in the county. This is true across all towns in the county except for in Tusten where householder 65 years and older actually have a higher median household income than the general population. Similarly, in all of the villages except for Liberty, householders 65 years and older have a lower median household income than all households.

Median Household Income Householders by Age Groups Including 65 Years +					
	Total	under 25 years	25 to 44 years	45 to 64 years	65 years and over
Sullivan County and New York State					
Sullivan County	\$63,393	\$50,543	\$66,555	\$78,248	\$49,283
New York	\$75,157	\$39,366	\$85,570	\$88,827	\$51,837
Sullivan County TOWNS					
Bethel	\$66,611	-	\$72,690	\$121,719	\$59,343
Callicoon	\$64,813	-	\$143,500	\$65,074	\$50,990
Cochecton	\$53,333	-	\$52,750	\$77,750	\$34,750
Delaware	\$72,833	-	\$95,341	\$86,382	\$47,438
Fallsburg	\$53,625	\$34,077	\$63,613	\$59,531	\$46,506
Forestburgh	\$122,083	-	\$126,667	\$126,667	\$90,625
Fremont	\$63,333	-	\$90,750	\$79,107	\$49,722
Highland	\$56,361	-	\$69,044	\$76,597	\$46,964
Liberty	\$52,134	\$71,912	\$55,744	\$55,833	\$45,745
Lumberland	\$94,063	-	\$107,244	\$90,833	\$59,926
Mamakating	\$80,971	-	\$87,554	\$105,326	\$53,150
Neversink	\$77,292	-	\$95,521	\$82,275	\$40,475
Rockland	\$44,712	-	\$71,406	-	\$34,263
Thompson	\$54,321	-	\$43,950	\$81,375	\$49,825
Tusten	\$51,636	-	\$50,368	\$49,904	\$65,278
Sullivan County VILLAGES					
Jeffersonville	\$63,125	-	\$63,750	\$118,125	\$48,636
Liberty	\$34,651	-	\$34,104	\$33,589	\$46,139
Monticello	\$38,885	-	-	\$63,864	\$29,880
Woodridge	\$54,583	-	\$67,500	-	-
Wurtsboro	\$75,469	-	\$79,211	\$95,500	\$47,292

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2021

Households receiving food stamps/SNAP

The following table shows the percentage of Sullivan County households with one or more people in the household 60 years and over that are receiving food stamps/SNAP benefits. 14% of households receive this benefit as compared to 16% statewide.

Households with one or more people in the household 60 years and over receiving Food Stamps/SNAP		
	# of households 60 years+	% of households 60 years+
Sullivan County	2,011	14%
New York	508,021	16%

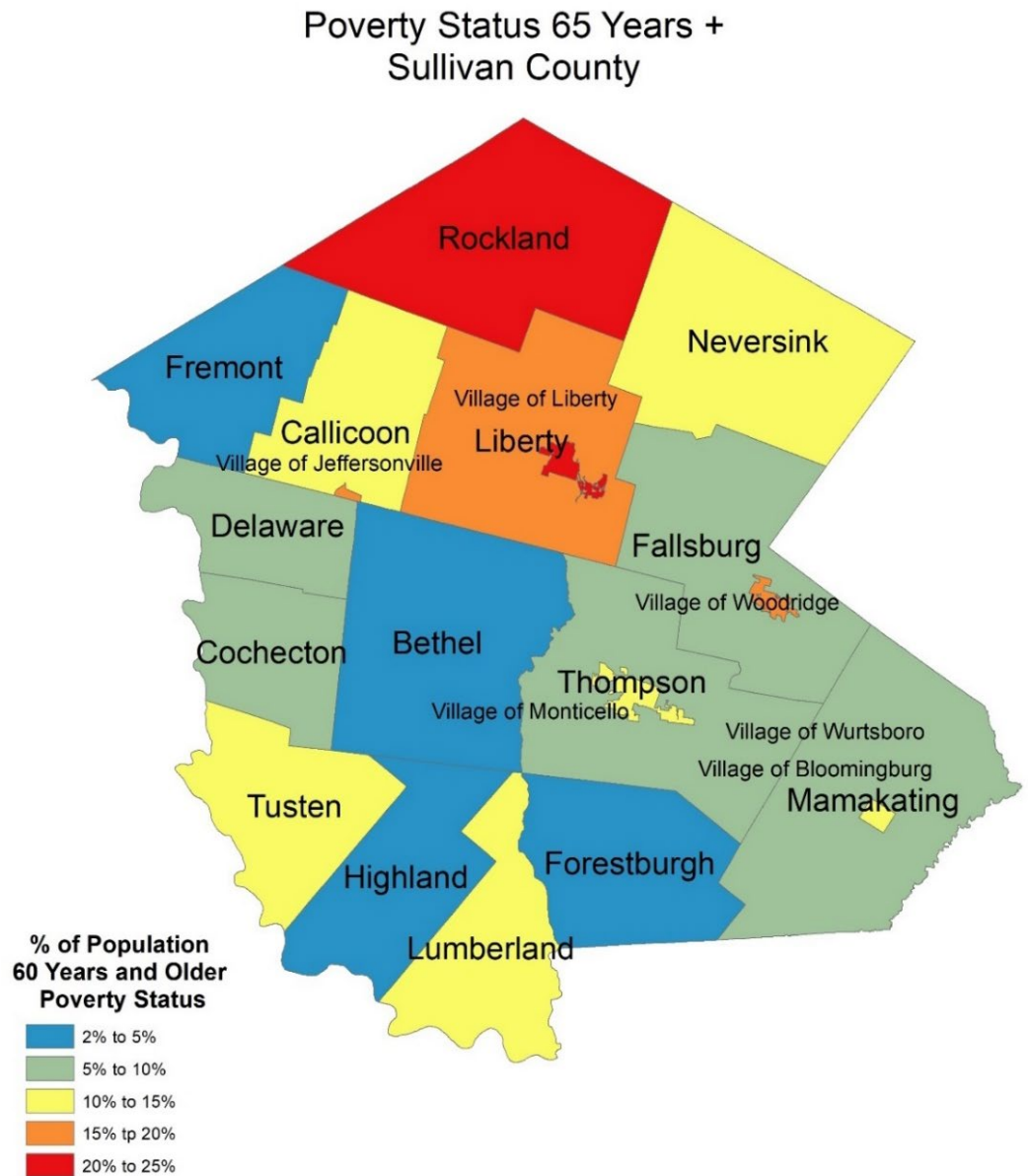
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2021

Poverty Status

The map on this page includes data from the U.S. Census, American Community Survey for 2021 and shows the percentage of the population 65 years and over with poverty status.

The Town of Rockland has the highest percentage of people in this group at 25%. The Village of Liberty also has a high percentage at 24%.

The Towns of Fremont, Bethel, Highland and Forestburgh all have a lower percentage at between 2% and 5%.



Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months

The following charts show the ratio of income to poverty which is the total household income divided by the poverty threshold. The larger the number, the further the household is from the poverty level. A number of less than one indicates a household's income is less than the poverty level.

10.8% of Sullivan County householders aged 55 to 64 have an income to poverty ratio that is less than 1. In New York State this percentage is 11%.

For householders aged 65 to 74 years, 10% have an income to poverty ratio below 1. New York State has a slightly higher percentage at 10.6%.

For Sullivan householders age 75 years or older, 9.7% have an income to poverty ratio below 1.

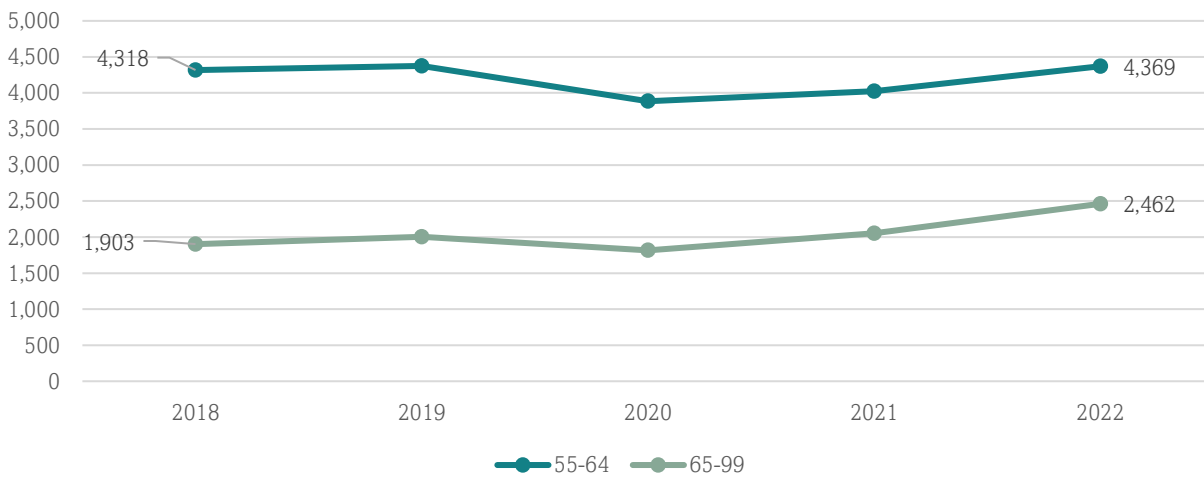
Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months												
By Age Groups 55 Years and Over												
	Under .50	.50 to .74	.75 to .99	1.00 to 1.24	1.25 to 1.49	1.50 to 1.74	1.75 to 1.84	1.85 to 1.99	2.00 to 2.99	3.00 to 3.99	4.00 to 4.99	5.00 and over
55 to 64 years												
New York	132,244	76,933	87,063	77,864	74,826	72,942	30,202	49,649	311,118	314,673	280,455	1,175,385
	4.9%	2.9%	3.2%	2.9%	2.8%	2.7%	1.1%	1.9%	11.6%	11.7%	10.5%	43.8%
Sullivan County	486	220	488	384	482	375	285	2960	1,392	1,466	1,265	3,967
	4.4%	2.0%	4.4%	2.5%	4.3%	3.4%	2.6%	2.6%	12.5%	13.2%	11.4%	35.7%
65 to 74 years												
New York	68,157	48,692	86,026	71,051	66,025	69,034	24,533	40,154	246,247	231,766	202,925	751,891
	3.6%	2.6%	4.5%	3.7%	3.5%	3.6%	1.3%	2.1%	12.9%	12.2%	10.6%	39.4%
Sullivan County	204	156	540	571	177	454	84	209	1572	1064	1031	2956
	2.3%	1.7%	6.0%	6.3%	2.0%	5.0%	0.9%	2.3%	17.4%	11.8%	11.4%	32.8%
75 years and over												
New York	54,651	38,516	81,503	68,085	73,371	71,127	27,432	39,323	221,811	166,934	125,711	362,068
	4.1%	2.9%	6.1%	5.1%	5.5%	5.3%	2.1%	3.0%	16.7%	12.5%	9.4%	27.2%
Sullivan County	163	155	197	197	230	396	89	130	1393	511	604	1277
	3.1%	2.9%	3.7%	3.7%	4.3%	7.4%	1.7%	2.4%	26.1%	9.6%	11.3%	23.9%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2021

Total Employed Sullivan County Age Groups 55+

The following table from the U.S. Census Quarterly Workforce Indicators shows employed people by age groups 55-64 and 65-99 in Sullivan County. Across all age groups, many people dropped out of the workforce during the pandemic year of 2020. This trend can be seen in these tables for the senior population, but in the following two years (2021 and 2022) the number of employed people went back up. From 2018 to 2022 there was a 29% increase in the number of people aged 65-99 who were employed.

Total Employed People in
Age Groups 55-64 and 65-99
Sullivan County 2018-2022 Q4*



Source: U.S. Census, Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI)
*2022 data are from Q3

Household Budget

The Economic Policy Institute produces a family budget at the county level which is based on local costs and includes estimates for housing, food, childcare, transportation, health care, other necessities, and taxes.

The following table shows the estimated budget for two adults and no children as of March 2022.

Monthly Household Costs 2 Adults	
Housing	\$823
Food	\$468
Transportation	\$1,069
Health Care	\$1,026
Other Necessities	\$468
Taxes	\$653
Monthly Total	\$4,506
Annual Total	\$54,074

Source: Economic Policy Institute, Budget Calculator Sullivan County, NY 2022

According to this budget, a household of two adults would need over \$54,000 to meet basic needs. Around 50% of senior households (householder is 65 years or older) have a household income of less than \$50,000 (see table “Householder Income for Householders 65 Years and Older” on [page 59](#)).

The addition of a child to a household would increase monthly costs to \$6,423, with \$748 of those costs going toward childcare.

Health Measures

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings measures health at the county level on health outcomes and health factors. The rankings do not include measures based on age, however, give an overall picture of health in the county. Sullivan is ranked as one of the least healthy counties in New York State. The following table shows some health factors and clinical care that contribute to poor health outcomes in Sullivan County alongside New York State and the United States for comparison.

	Sullivan County	New York	United States
Health behaviors			
Adult smoking	18%	12%	16%
Adult obesity	33%	27%	32%
Food Environment Index	82	8.9	7.0
Physical Inactivity	25%	25%	22%
Access to Exercise Opportunities	53%	93%	84%
Excessive drinking	21%	18%	19%
Alcohol-Impaired driving deaths (% of driving deaths with alcohol involvement)	24%	20%	27%
Clinical Care			
Primary Care Physicians (Ratio of population to primary care physicians.)	2,710 to 1	1,170 to 1	1,310 to 1
Mental Health Providers (Ratio of population to mental health providers.)	490:1	300:1	340:1
Preventable Hospital Stays (Rate of hospital stays for ambulatory-care sensitive conditions per 100,000 Medicare enrollees.)	2,641	2,586	2,809
Mammography Screening (Percentage of female Medicare enrollees ages 65-74 that received an annual mammography screening.)	32%	37%	37%

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings, 2023

Summary of Community Input

Focus Groups

The three focus group discussions are summarized below.

LIBRARY DIRECTORS

The group of library directors highlighted a need for more technological support and training. The libraries currently offer some technical support classes and services but there was a consensus that many seniors still struggle with using cellphones and computers. Some seniors cannot access online resources and services due to this technical barrier. In addition to needing help with the basic functions of a computer or phone, there is a need for guidance about cyber security and phone scams. The idea of youth helping seniors with technology came up as a potential program that would benefit people in both age groups.

The library directors reported that gentle movement classes such as chair yoga are very popular but that the libraries must be careful not to compete with local providers of these services. Knitting and crocheting groups are another popular activity at libraries. The directors reflected on how, in general, women utilize library services and programs more than men.

Getting the word out about existing services and programs is a constant challenge for the libraries. One library director made the point that successful outreach means doing everything from hanging up paper flyers to putting out press releases and using social media. Still, with the end of delivery of the Times Herald Record and other printed media, promotion to people in the senior age group is difficult. The idea of more cross promotion with SCOFA was mentioned.

The group also discussed transportation challenges for seniors. The point was made that programs that are offered during daylight hours are better since many elderly people cannot drive at night. One of the directors mentioned that she had recently learned about the county transportation service for trips to medical appointments and had used this service. She said the program should better advertised because it was so helpful for her personally.

FAITH AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Participants in this group were given the following prompts:

- What challenges do seniors face in your community?
- What services or programs would help the seniors you work with?
- What are the barriers seniors face in accessing existing services or programs?

Participants raised needs such as health challenges, the rising cost of goods and related economic issues, food security, housing affordability and quality, access to caregiving for seniors at home, access to technology, and access to services in general.

One of the participants runs a food pantry and said that the number of people who now rely on this service has increased significantly since the Covid pandemic. The pantry served approximately 900 people in the month of October and about half of that number were over the age 65. Participants discussed how new federal limits on food stamps have also contributed to an increased need.

Housing conditions for low-income seniors were described as “abysmal” and “criminal”, especially in the village of Liberty. Some of the housing complaints were that water comes from lead pipes and that raw sewage backs up into the units. Safety conditions of housing was another concern brought up by the group. The group discussed how there are a few senior apartment options concentrated in the villages but that the wait lists are years long. Much of the county lacks senior housing options, much less affordable senior housing.

The group discussed a long list of issues related to caregiving in the home. Some people are unable to access existing services because of the requirement to navigate complex medical systems and to complete a lot of paperwork. There was a concern that there are seniors with developmental disabilities who do not have a case manager and rely on the help of neighbors and family members. There is a high need for home care workers, but they are either unaffordable to many people or unavailable due to staffing challenges. One participant mentioned that even people in hospice are put on wait lists for home care.

Concern was expressed for undocumented seniors who may not ask for help because of fear, pride, or cultural reasons. Other underrepresented groups may not use existing services because they do not know about them. The specific needs expressed for the Hasidic community were transportation for doctor’s appointments and similar destinations, and exercise groups at a senior center. The idea of a liaison-like person for each community was discussed. During regularly occurring forums with SCOFA community leaders would learn about existing services and programs and could then disseminate information to their respective communities.

One participant raised the point that people have a fundamental need to be needed and that for seniors who have retired it is often difficult for them to meet this need. There was discussion about how volunteering is one way people continue to feel that they are contributing to their communities.

The group also discussed the need for grief counseling and bereavement programs, end of life planning, financial planning, and other educational workshops. The point was made that in the winter seniors may feel especially isolated and transportation to and from social events during these months would help a lot of people.

PROFESSIONALS FOCUS GROUP

Participants in this group were given the following prompts:

- What challenges do you see in the senior communities in which you work?
- What existing services or programs are serving seniors in the community?

Participants discussed how isolation and a lack of family support are serious issues for many seniors. Seniors will sometimes call service providers to talk because of their loneliness.

Participants identified home maintenance as a challenge for seniors who own their homes but are unable to keep up with repairs. Participants said that a list of home contractors would be helpful. One participant mentioned that hoarding is a common problem among seniors in the community and that it poses safety risks since emergency responders may not have easy access in a home crowded with things.

Other issues mentioned were the difficulty in finding home care workers, the general fragility of the rural healthcare system, and a need for on-demand transportation. Participants discussed how there is only one

cab company still in operation in the county and that the need for this service exceeds the capacity of this company.

The program application process acts as a barrier for seniors to receive the services they need. The requirement to get a doctor recommendation is a hurdle for some people. One participant said she has a pile of incomplete applications on her desk.

Participants discussed how Action Toward Independence is now operating the digital platform Unite Us which coordinates the different service providers and agencies in the county and manages referrals. Participants were optimistic that this technology would improve service delivery but said there is still a need for service provider staff to be trained in the program. Move Sullivan and paratransit are other services that were said to be helpful.

Participants were then asked to imagine two futures: one where the greatest challenges for seniors persist and one where they are resolved. Participants considered what policies, programs, or lack thereof would lead to each future scenario. The discussion that followed was about how there are systemic barriers in terms of the delivery of social services such as the practice of imposing sanctions on people so that they are unable to receive services they need if they don't adhere to some rule. It was suggested that there should be a working group that looks at local regulations to address systemic issues in the delivery of services. Participants also discussed how there needs to be a bigger public investment in transportation, and an effort to increase digital access across the county.

Interviews

Healthcare was the most discussed topic in the interviews. Interviewees reported that there has always been a dearth of health services in the county but that in recent years the consolidation of providers has led to further cutbacks. As a result, residents must travel to Middletown for specialized care or for hospitalization and it is difficult to find home care workers to fill the need. Interviewees explained that telehealth alleviates some of these issues and that it should remain a reimbursable option. According to interviewees, Medicaid spending rules are the source of many healthcare shortages.

For seniors who are not wealthy but also do not meet the income threshold for Medicaid, affording home care is a real challenge. These seniors cannot afford this necessary cost and receive no benefit to help pay for it. One interviewee explained that a "Medicaid pooled trust" allows people to protect their assets and receive Medicaid but not enough people know about this option.

There was consensus that home care workers are grossly underpaid. According to interviewees, Medicaid reimbursement for home care worker wages is insufficient to attract people to this profession. Illustrative of the issue, the Alzheimer's Association offers a \$1000 caretaker reprieve grant to hire home care workers, but the grant goes unused because there are no workers to hire. There was a suggestion that restructuring these low-paid positions would provide workers with a career track with possibilities of growth.

According to interviewees, supporting caregivers is a key component of allowing people to age in place. There are existing services for caregivers but some do not know about the services, and others are unable to access them because their responsibilities prevent them from doing so.

Reflecting a regional challenge, housing tops the list of needs for seniors. Most interviewees mentioned this concern stating that there is no affordable and accessible housing. Interviewees shared stories of people priced out of the homes they have been living in for decades who cannot find anything that they can afford.

One interviewee reported that the number of evictions is on the rise and that there are seniors living out of their cars, sleeping on couches, and living in motels. In one anecdote, an elderly man with disabilities was living in a motel room but because of his ambulatory disability was unable to use the bathroom. Interviewees emphasized that there is a need for long-term care and assisted living facilities for seniors in the county.

Transportation was another often-raised need. People stated repeatedly that the county has done a lot to increase transportation options and that things are better than they used to be but that there are still people unserved by the existing transportation system. The point was made that people who are unable get to medical appointments and preventative care often resort to calling emergency services when things reach a crisis level. This has a high public cost. To address transportation needs, one interviewee said the county should be working to create walkable communities where seniors can live and access services without a car. A housing complex next to a ShopRite grocery store was identified as the type of housing that there is a need for more of.

There was a recommendation that the county invest in software that connects volunteers to people who need help with transportation.

Interviewees said food access is an issue related to transportation because some residents are unable to access food stores or other food sources without a vehicle. The delivery of food is necessary for some homebound seniors. It was reported that there are seniors in the county who typically run out of funds from their fixed income toward the end of the month and then eat very little food for one week each month. One interviewee described seniors calling in for food assistance because they do not have anything to eat at all and said that increasing investment in Meals on Wheels would allow the program to serve more seniors.

Food access is increasingly an issue due to the rising cost of food. One interviewee made the point that seniors who are on limited fixed incomes live very close to the margins and may be only \$20 away from a crisis such as homelessness.

Social isolation was another need mentioned by several of the interviewees. This challenge has become worse since the Covid pandemic when some services and programs, such as the congregate lunches came to an end. It was reported that the senior centers are valued by the community but that there are places in the county that are not well served by any senior center. The suggestion was made that if SCOFA ran senior centers then they would be better distributed throughout the county.

A couple of people interviewed discussed how older adults who are Hispanic, Spanish speaking, Black, or immigrants are often underserved by the services in the county.

There are organizations including SCOFA working in the county that provide information, assistance, and referrals for people seeking services for Medicaid, SNAP and HEAP benefits, home care, and access to medical providers. Still, several interviewees said knowing about existing programs and services is a huge barrier and a public education campaign would be helpful.

Systemic issues around how social services are structured is another issue raised in the interviews. State and local service infrastructure are siloed and so people are not able to access the services they need even when the services exist. For example, many services are accessed based on diagnosis and if an individual doesn't meet the diagnosis requirements, even if they need the service, they are unable to use it. Additionally, because of the siloes between different service providers, clients must navigate a complex system to access all the different services they need.

More than one interviewee suggested the county have a phone number that people could call to find out about existing services and programs available to them. The person who answers this phone would be a paid county staff person who could direct people to where they need to get help with anything from signing up for Medicaid to accessing transportation to the grocery store.

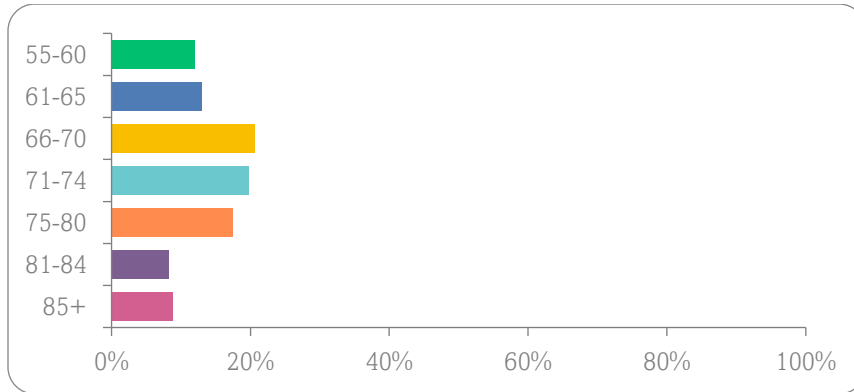
One interviewee who is involved in senior social programming said that more free programming is needed. Access to these free programs would have mental health benefits for seniors. Related to this was a suggestion that public transportation should be coordinated with the programming. There was a suggestion that the chamber of commerce could work with businesses and have them offer a senior discount day on the same day as the shopping bus. There was also a suggestion for movement classes like Tai Chi or gentle yoga. Online programming options are also important as some seniors are still nervous about in-person gatherings and Covid exposure.

Survey Results

There were 610 responses to the survey. Summary charts and tables below show survey results:

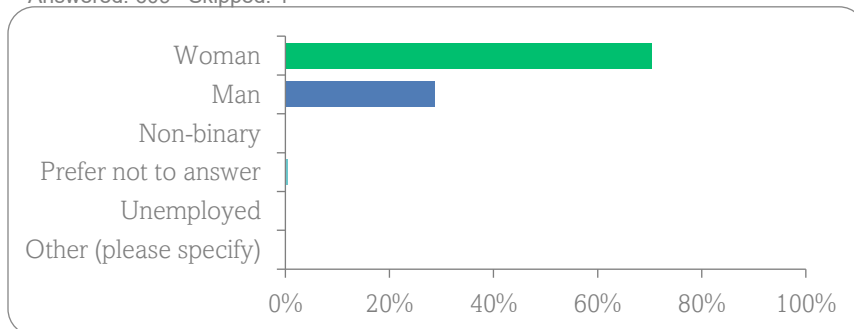
Q1: What is your age range? (you must be 55 or older to complete the survey)

Answered: 610 Skipped: 0



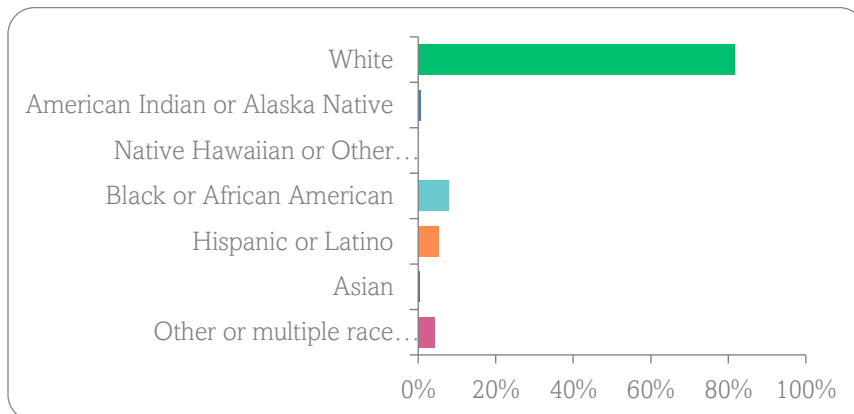
Q2: What is your gender identity?

Answered: 609 Skipped: 1



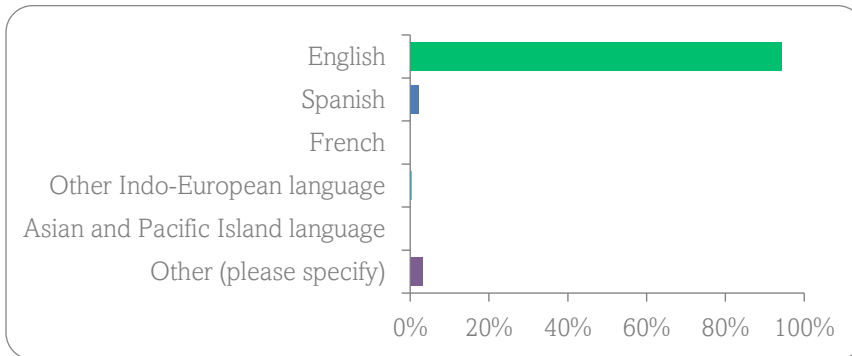
Q3: What is your race or ethnicity?

Answered: 601 Skipped: 9



Q4: What is the primary language spoken at home?

Answered: 601 Skipped: 9



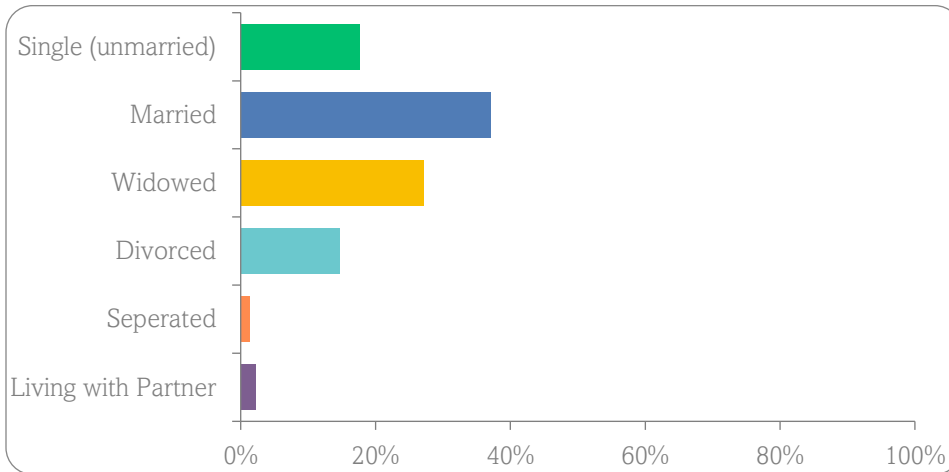
Q5: What is your zip code?

In the columns to the right of the listed zip codes there is a number which indicates the number of survey respondents from each zip code.

zip	#	zip	#	zip	#	zip	#
12483	1	12756	1	12736	1	12777	5
12518	1	12758	63	12737	1	12778	17
12701	106	12759	7	12738	1	12779	6
12702	1	12760	3	12740	3	12780	1
12704	1	12762	2	12741	3	12783	12
12719	2	12763	6	12742	3	12784	1
12720	2	12764	23	12743	1	12786	5
12721	2	12765	5	12745	1	12787	8
12722	2	12766	5	12747	11	12788	11
12723	6	12767	1	12748	20	12789	9
12724	4	12768	8	12749	5	12790	23
12725	1	12769	3	12750	1	12791	5
12726	9	12771	1	12751	7	12792	2
12732	1	12774	1	12752	3	12754	2
12733	1	12775	16	12753	87	12764	1
12734	4	12776	15	12755	1	12740	1

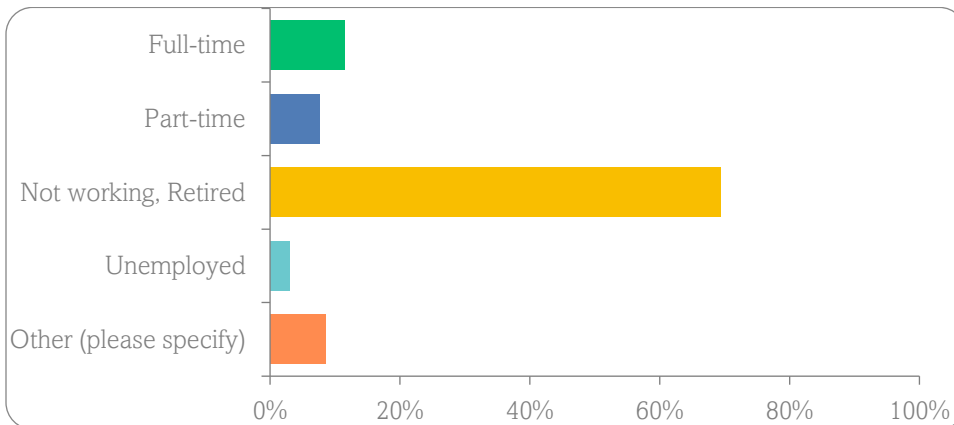
Q6: What is your marital status?

Answered: 594 Skipped: 16

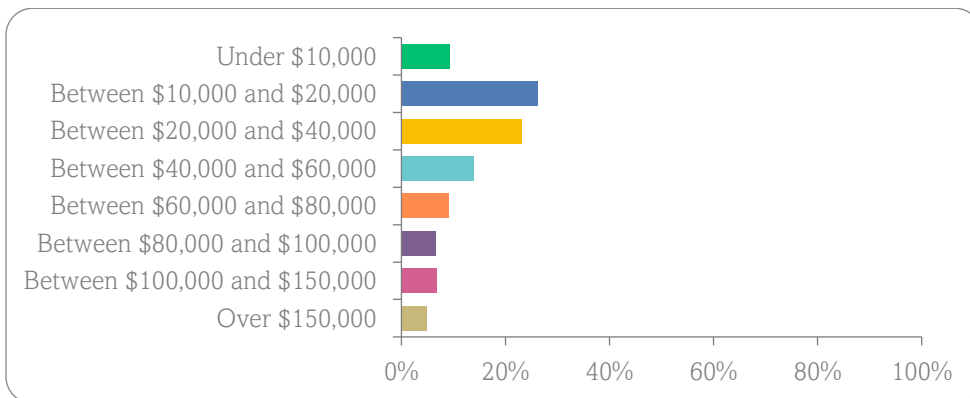


Q7: Are you currently working?

Answered: 587 Skipped: 23

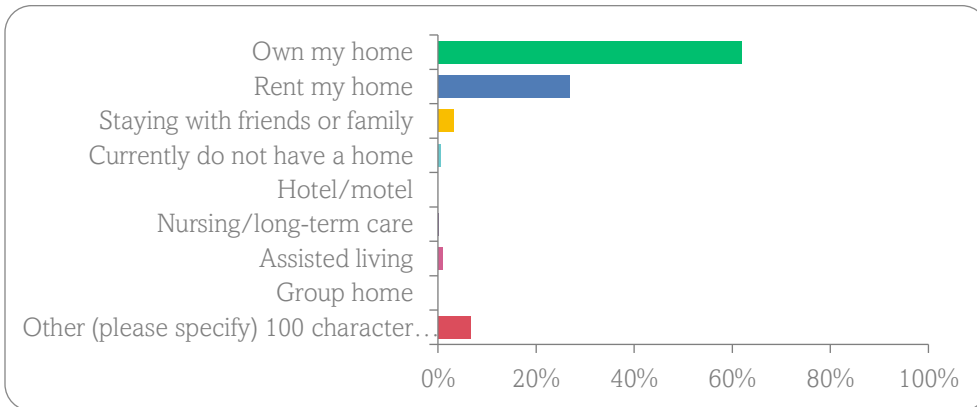


Q8: What is your annual household income range (total all household members income together)?



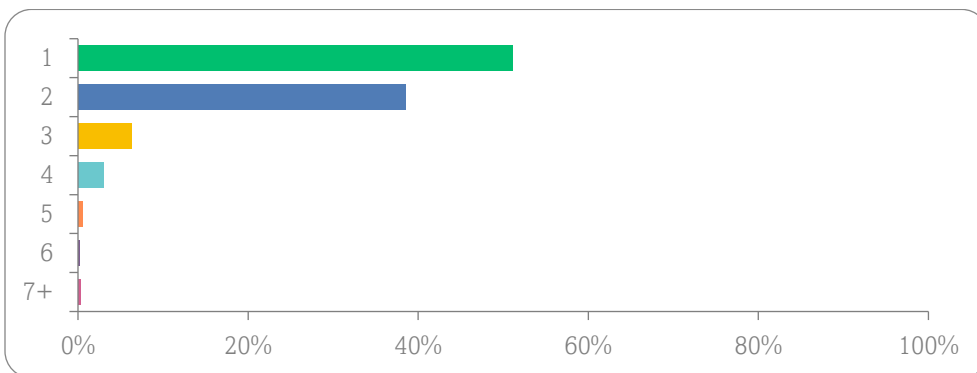
Q9: What is your housing status?

Answered: 597 Skipped: 13



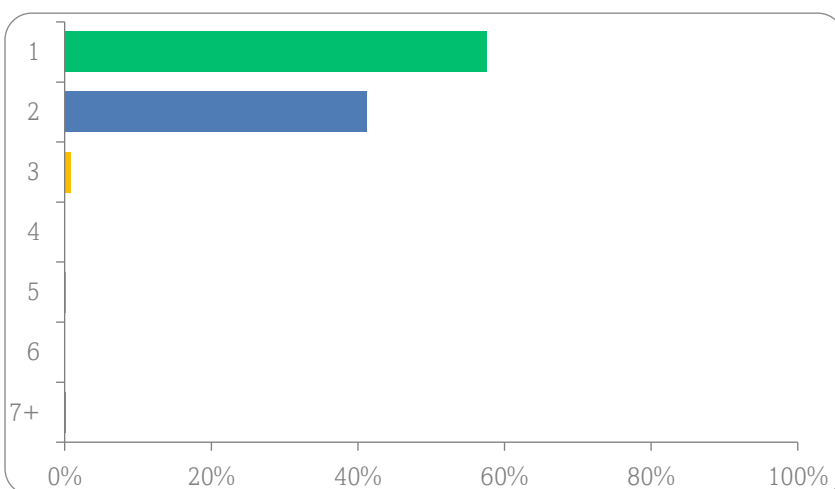
Q10: How many people (including yourself) are in your household?

Answered: 599 Skipped: 11



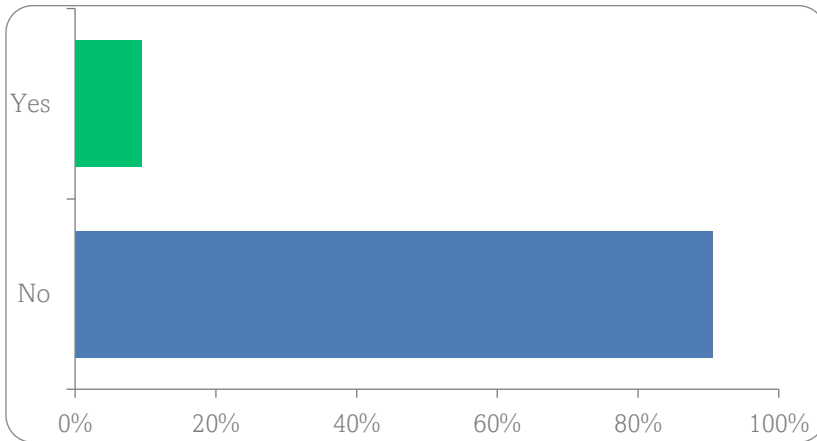
Q11: How many people in your household (including yourself) are over 55?

Answered: 582 Skipped: 28



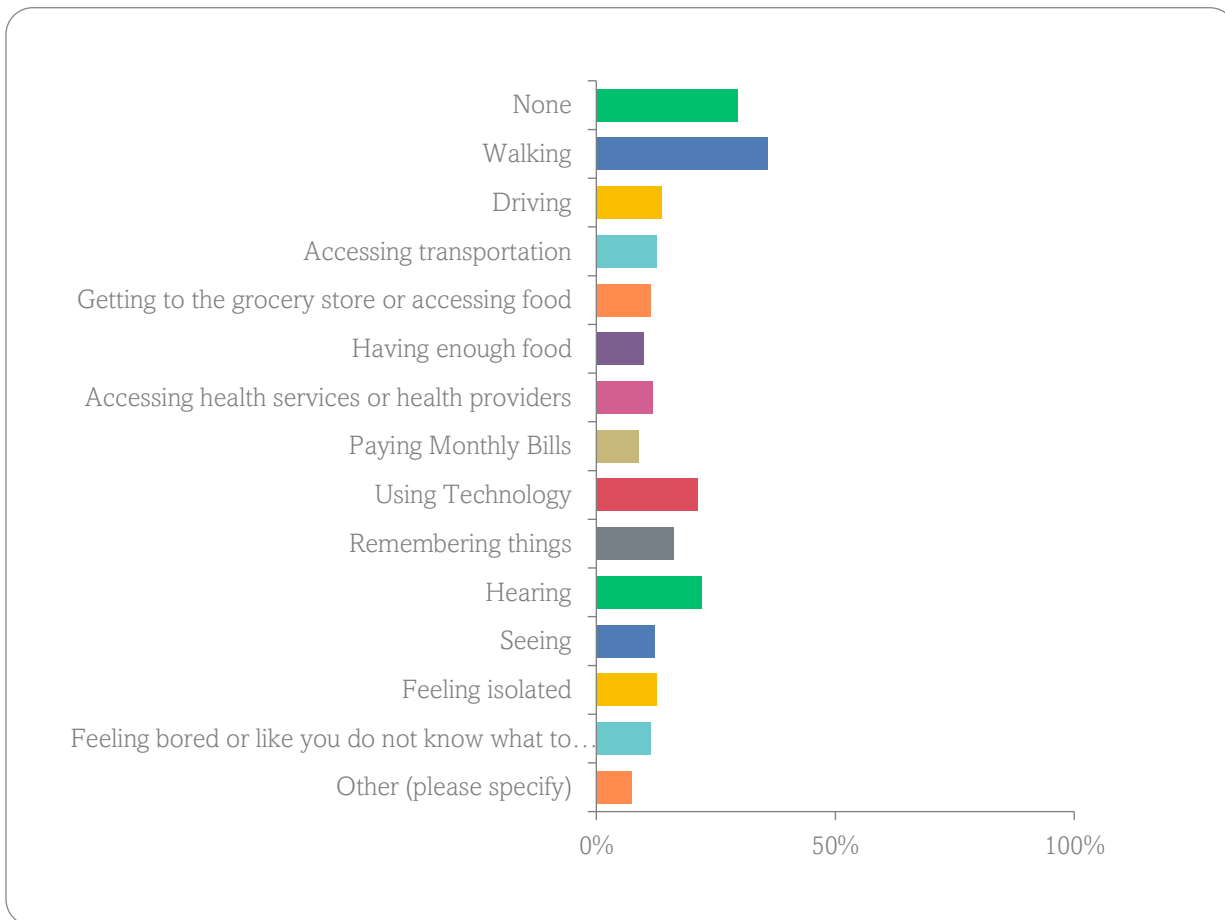
Q12: Did you serve in the military?

Answered: 597 Skipped: 13



Q13: Do you have difficulty with any of the following? (Please select all that apply)

Answered: 557 Skipped: 53

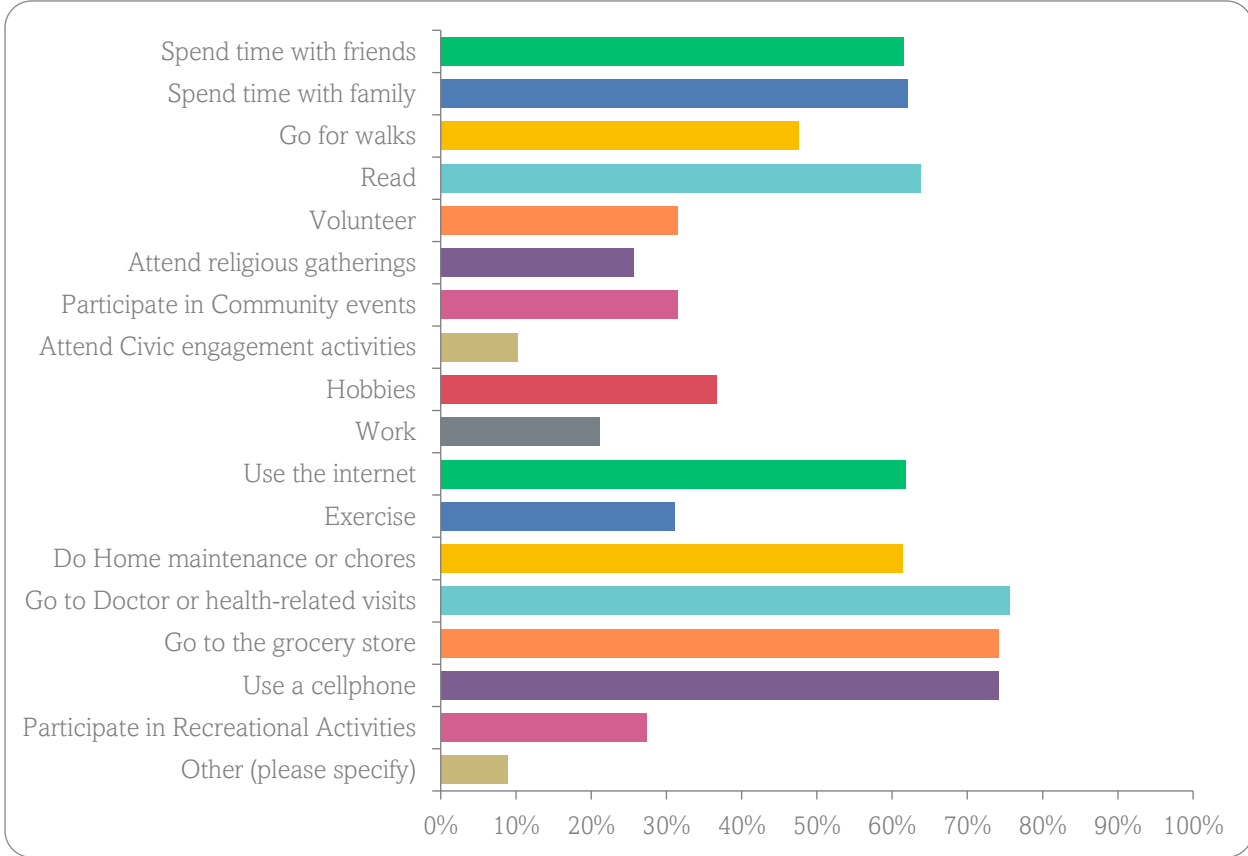


Other:

ability to write, arthritis/motor skill issues	in pain 24 hrs a day
amputee	Keeping up with home maintenance and repairs
anxious	knee replacement, surgery & hand, burned
cleaning	Long drives
COPD, acute Asthma, bad heart	Meeting people and making friends in Liberty
decent housing options	No Driver License
dental services	no family or friends consistently have to go to Orange County for medical care
depression and anxiety	No local pharmacy, or doctors within 15-20 miles
disabled	Occasional isolation and related mild melancholy
due to co-pays	our "community" has been negatively impacted by AirBnB's
feeling useless	Personal health issues and high drug costs.
Frustrated	RA caused my back problems
Have punched nerves	scared of homelessness
Hearing is just a little difficult. Not bad.	Taking care of household cleaning chores.
Hearing loss	walk with a cane, gave up driving at 90
help with drivers to medical appointments where a driver is required	Worry the bldg I live in is not safe
I am basically content	I have medical providers, but it's frustrating sometimes to not get answers. Sometimes they don't return phone calls. And other times they want to send you to more and more doctors. It's tiring and frustrating.
I don't have a driver's license so I depend on my husband	

Q14: Select the activities you do now. (please select all that apply)

Answered: 599 Skipped: 11



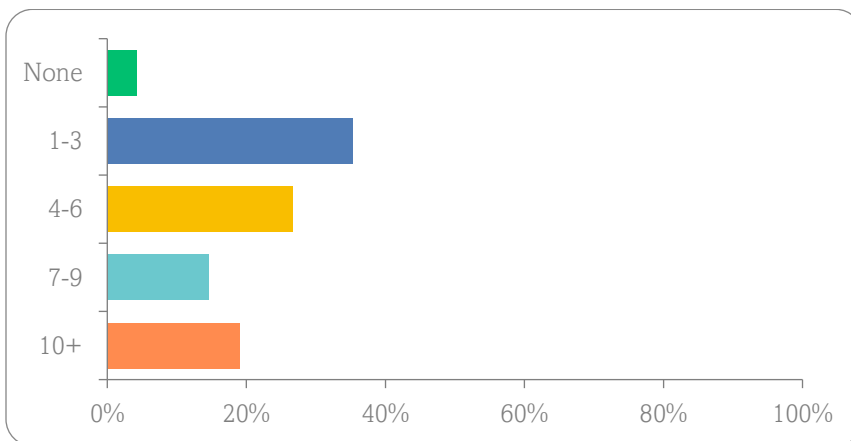
Other:

attend local entertainment venues	hunting & fishing
build bird houses & feeders	I don't want to live with family my apart. is my sanctuary
Camping	News junkie, puzzle addict
church	Part-time realtor
cook	pickelball
crochet	Play pickle ball and Mahjong
Dinner on Weekends	play with my dog
do crosswords	Pray
dog walker	Some travel
bridge	spending time (on phone) religious gatherings on zoom
Eat	studying the bible
Fully active	theater-acting

garden	travel
Gardening and property maintenance.	travel & stock market
gardening, split firewood	travel/rock concerts
go once a month to Livingston Manor Seniors meeting	trips
go out once a week to Grandson- 23 yrs old.	Tusten Social, Library
go to grandchildren's sporting events	Used to volunteer but gave it up at age 71.
Go to the movies. United way trips to Broadway.	Volunteer EMT
Health maintenance activity [eg. Insulin)	Walk my little dog Mia
hiking, fishing	watch grandchildren
watch tv, go to grocery store by scooter	watch TV
Work a seasonal job	

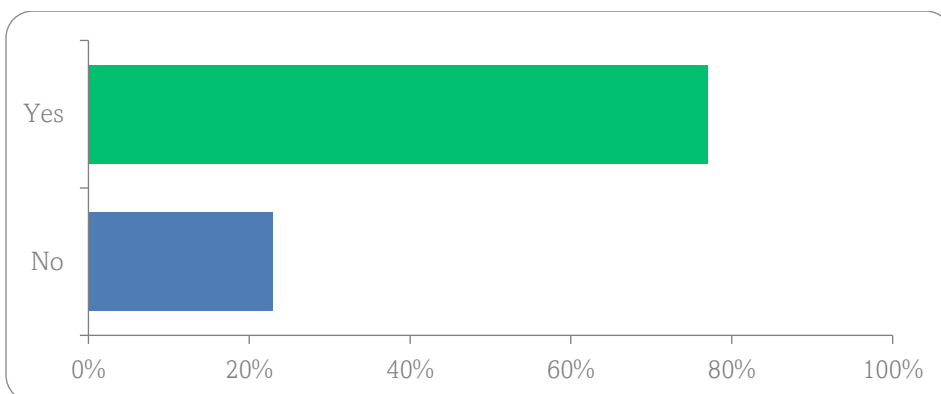
Q15: How many times do you leave your home each week?

Answered: 588 Skipped: 22



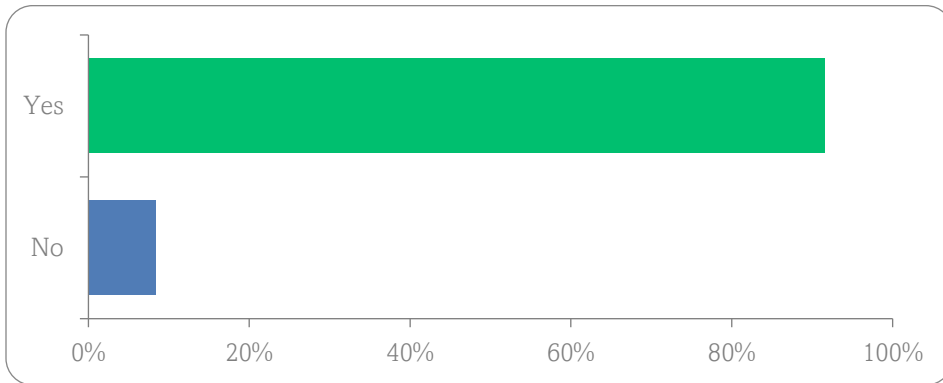
Q16: Do you feel prepared if there were an emergency?

Answered: 576 Skipped: 34



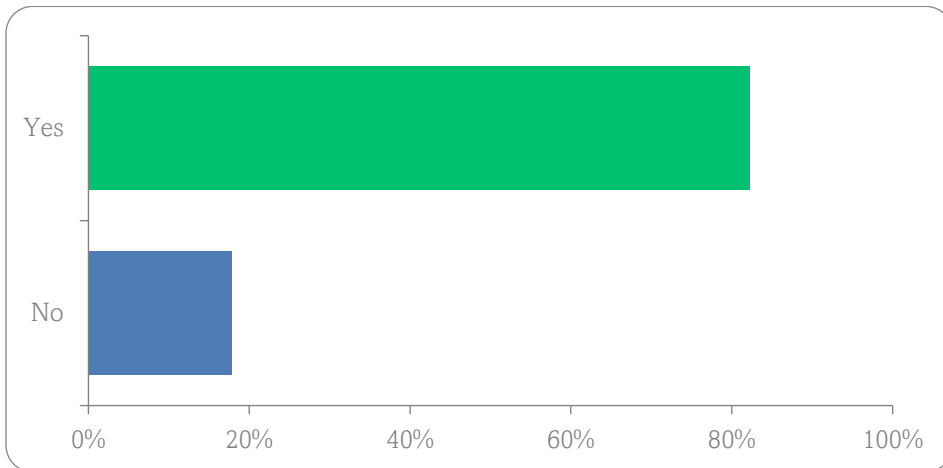
Q17: In an emergency, is your home easily accessible?

Answered: 593 Skipped: 17



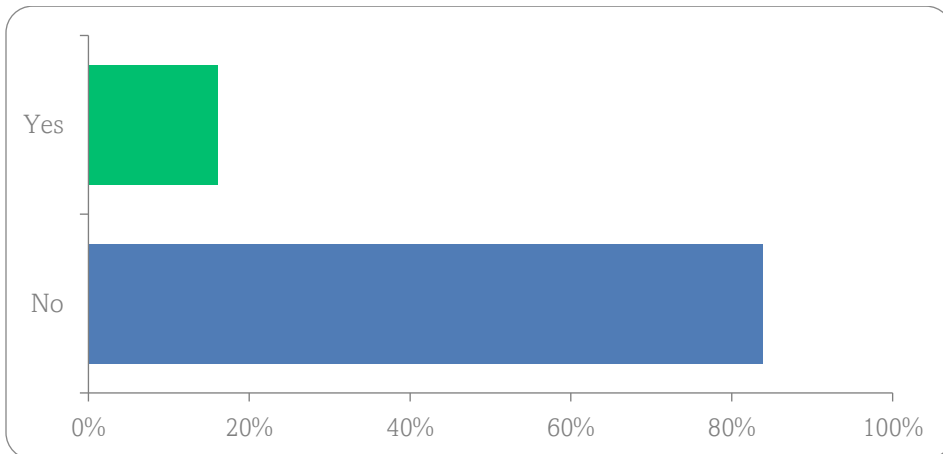
Q18: Do you have friends or family you see regularly that live nearby?

Answered: 596 Skipped: 14



Q19: Are you a caregiver to anyone or do you have dependents?

Answered: 596 Skipped: 14

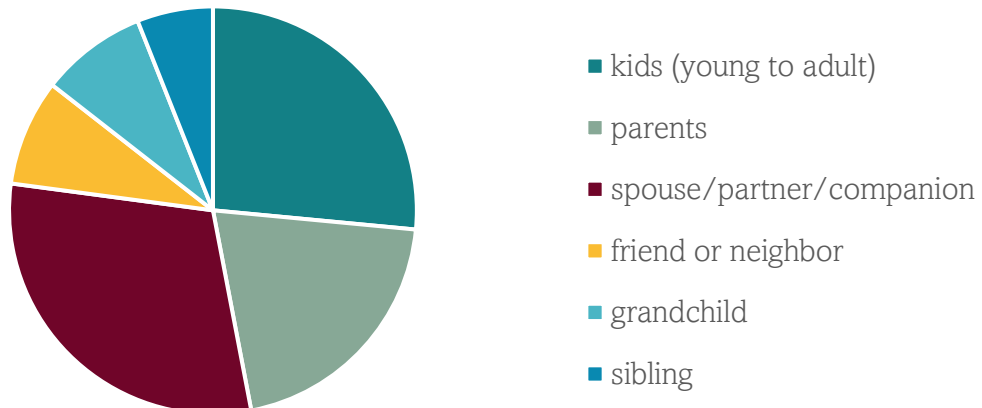


Q20: If yes to question 19, to whom?

In the columns to the right of the comments there is a number which indicates the number of survey respondents who wrote this comment.

my dependents	1	father-in-law	1	friends with dementia 5 hours every Sunday.	1
disabled spouse, seizure/stroke	1	friends in our senior group	1	Mom & Grandkids	1
2004-2011 took care of Dad	1	grandchildren	3	Mom- Betty Horton	1
family friend who is 101 years of age	1	Grandma	1	Mother	6
adopted daughter	1	handicapped granddaughter	1	Mother-in-law	1
adult daughter & grandson	1	have one son 19 and mother law 89	1	my 13 year old daughter	1
Adult daughter is dependent, grandson (15 months old)	1	High functioning autistic son	1	My adult, mentally ill daughter	1
Son, daughter	1	husband	15	my companion who has emphysema	1
Wife and two children.	1	I had done it for my husband for the past 10 years	1	My daughter and granddaughter live with me	1
Parent	1	I have a mentally challenged brother, I'm his guardian	1	my dog	1
Brother lives alone neighbor	1	sometimes caregiver to grandchild	1	my kids	1
College age daughter	1	Son	1	my Mom in NJ, I go back and forth 1/week 95 miles	1
common law partner	1	son & daughter	1	My parents live with me and one of my children still lives with me.	1
daughter age 9	1	son with disabilities	1	my son & parents	1
daughter	3	send money to family in Gambia	1	myself with friends	1
dependents	1	SIL with ALZ	1	Neighbors	1
son, friends	1	sister-in-law	2	Neighbors and family	1
Niece	1	spouse	3	wife	4

Dependents Relation to Caretakers



Q21: Where do you hear about events and news going on in your community? (limit 70 words)

MEDIA	
Newspapers	119
Sullivan County Democrat	33
River Reporter	10
Mid-Hudson News	2
Times Herald	2
Spectrum News	3
Manor Ink	4
TV	44
Upper Delaware Network	3
Channel 6 or 7	9
internet/online/computer	80
Facebook	52
Instagram	3
email	19
social media	28
cell phone	17
radio	40
cable	1
flyer	16
Monthly Hoot	2
newsletter	6

PLACES/PEOPLE	
post office	6
Office for the Aging	6
firehouse/fire department	2
meetings	16
library	15
by mouth/word of mouth	38
friends/neighbor/family/children	138
bulletin board	16
church	17
Sage session	1
club	9
senior center	5
do not hear	9

Q22: What community resources, services, activities, or clubs do you use on a regular basis? (limit 70 words)

Alchemy Writer' Group
BANK & TRASH PICKUP
Bank, grocery store, library, church, Order of Eastern Star, Sullivan County Community Chorus, Livingston Manor Renaissance
bus trips, plays, entertainment, library
Chamber
church (4 responses)
church, Liberty Library
concerts in town, farmers market
Cornell Coop, ATI
do not know where they are
fire dept. & Masonic lodge
Food bank
Food pantry
food pantry, nutrition site, Presbyterian church, office of the aging, Main Senior Club
Food, service
Grover Hermann Hospital Auxiliary
Growing Older Together, Sullivan County Office for the Aging Shopping Bus
heap
HEAP \$23 Snap
I use We Care transportation for rides when my relative not able to take me. But paying customer, not Medicaid. Pricey
I volunteer at church, other agency
Jw.org
library (2 responses)
library services
library, senior meetings
Library, farmers markets, films, some cultural events
local entertainment
local senior groups, garden club, fund raisers, Audubon, Bashakill shopping
Monticello Seniors
music by lake, fire department, meals
None (27 responses)
None. Unaware of what's available.
office for the Aging Shopping bus, growing older together, western Sullivan public library
once a week senior green
only farmers market

pantry, church
parks
Pine Bush Library book club
Public library, Literacy Volunteers, church, local gym
Senior center; pool club (summer); civic center; media/internet (TV, computer, etc.)
Senior club
senior groups, library, friends
senior outfit, stamp club
senior trips
seniors Monticello So. Fallsburg, Bethel
snap Medicaid
Sullivan 180, SALTCARES, Congregation Agudas AZKim
The Liberty Library. I am VERY involved with the Hispanic Immigrant Community at St. Peter's Church and have been for 7 yrs, altho' I don't understand the language.
Town of Rockland Senior Citizens
town web site
Tusten social, local government, Yarnslingers, DVAA
United way trips
Variety
various but not on regular basis, such as library, senior meeting and or outings, & fundraisers
Walk Hurleyville & Parksville trails, and LCS high school track
What community resources???
Whatever I can- i.e. libraries, hiking, museums, theater, Church events, local events, anything to give spouse and myself social
Yoga, tennis, line dancing (winter), Delaware Community Center, the river to walk, swim, float, movie theatre

Q23: Are there any community resources, services, activities, or clubs that you would like to use but are not aware of or have been unable to find?

Covid booster
Food, help with energy costs
Free or low-cost exercise classes, more transportation options, community chorus, beach, or pool access
have access to resources through colleagues if needed
Help with bills
help with computer to get on internet, to complete applications for services, for work, etc.
how would I know if I am not aware of them
I can't think of any.
I do have concerns about ageing in place but I am in contact with office of ageing
I do not know of any community resources
I don't know

I'd love adult daycare but can't afford it
indoor walking in winter
medical without traveling 50 miles
meditation classes, dinners, trips to NYC, museum show
men's club, exercise group for seniors
more senior events
My parents are getting too old to drive so we're going to need to look into transportation options for medical care and shopping for them.
Need cheaper, more accessible transportation for older (75 and above) seniors. Not to limit them to an hour of shopping. Takes us longer than that.
No (22 responses)
No idea. I have not looked.
no long drive after dark
no, I'm very busy
None at this time
Not sure
not to my knowledge
one on one meet to discuss problems
Pickleball, senior meeting club
rides tom Dr appointments some outside county with specialist
Senior centers, transportation to senior center
Senior citizens clubs and trips
senior lunches or meals
Transportation to health care, groceries in the river area, cell service is sketchy too.
trips
Weeeelll... if I wasn't aware of them, I wouldn't look for them or find them. I did like that Senior Conference a yr ago in Hurleyville.
would like more information on performing arts center in Hurleyville
yes (5 responses)
yes, exercise, shopping, bingo
Yes, have a custodian help.
Yes. See above question
yoga for elderly & dance classes for seniors with health issues (pain, arthritis)

Q24: Do you have any needs that we did not ask about? If so, please describe. (limit 70 words)

no (20 responses)
As I age major concerns about access to health care & emergency services
Counseling for growth and crises
Easier access to Adult Protective Services. I am helping an individual who is deaf and had to call John Liddle for assistance. Eventually I may need assistance. I have a good income and can pay for services so I'm OK at the moment.
fixing things around the house-house repairs
Home health services such as an aide, housekeeping,
how can seniors receive affordable farm food, health food for fixed income
How to readily access available senior resource
I am curious about lunches at the Senior Center. I found them helpful and enjoyable. Are they gone for good?
I do not think so
I have an apartment on the first floor that is for the sick there are many. please help me
I have difficulty managing my home. I do have an aide but could use more help.
I live alone M-Th, husband comes F-Sun so in event of emergency, power outage, etc., who would know I'm there, any window decals of such?
I want my neighbor to not play her music so LOUD
I'm okay now, but if I lose my mobility or my vision (and can no longer drive) I don't know what I would do.
Indoor walking area.
Legal
medical/rx services seem to be moving out
more food stamps then recommended only last 2 weeks, other 2 weeks is on me.
My house needs to be fixed and I can't get help financially or honest people
my husband was a veteran, are there any benefit for wife/survivors?
need help with accessing Medicare
need more areas/towns where we can access classes, socialize etc.
Only that we live in a bldg with no management and have to wait til someone comes to pay the rent, we were without hot water for over a week at one point. No one cares if we all rot here!
picking up prescriptions
room where we can get together and play games
suitable, affordable senior housing
The services for transportation are not located in the River area. We are always left to fend for ourselves. No ride, don't go. But if you live in Monticello or Liberty area, you get it all even though you can take a cab to your health care visits. We are not that fortunate. We are the lost taxpayers of the County.
transportation to medical apts much nearby
where can I find a list of services offered?
why are there no health facilities in Sullivan County that offer radiation treatments

Survey Subgroup Analysis

Survey results were also analyzed by the following subgroups:

- People from areas outside of population centers as indicated by zip code.
- People from within more densely populated areas as indicated by zip code.
- People in the oldest age group of 85 years or older.
- People who identified as African American or Black.
- People who identified as Hispanic or Latino.

These subgroups were analyzed so that survey results could be understood for different groups that may have specific vulnerabilities. For example, people in rural areas may have less access to services, or people who are 85 years or older are more likely to be frail, have health challenges, and be less likely to drive.

		White	English as Primary Language	Currently Working (PT + FT)	Renters	Live Alone	Caretaker	Having a Difficult Time With			
								Driving	Accessing Transportation	Having Enough Food	Accessing Healthcare
TOTAL	610	82%	94%	19%	27%	51%	16%	14%	13%	10%	12%
Rural	365	89%	94%	21%	17%	41%	19%	14%	11%	6%	11%
Urban	245	70%	92%	15%	40%	64%	11%	11%	12%	14%	10%
85+	54	94%	94%	4%	9%	69%	9%	28%	15%	2%	11%
Black or African American	47	NA	94%	9%	64%	64%	9%	15%	19%	15%	11%
Hispanic/Latino	32	NA	53%	9%	59%	63%	19%	9%	9%	25%	16%

245 survey respondents (40% of all respondents) indicated that they lived in a zip code for one of the villages. Sullivan County villages represent the most densely populated areas of the county. Of people in this group:

- 46% (113 people) have a household income of \$20,000 or less.
- 64% (156 people) live alone.
- 6% (16 people) said they do not feel prepared if there were an emergency.
- 52% (129 people) said they use the internet.
- 36% (88 people) said they only leave their homes 1-3 times per week.

- Some of the services or programs that people in this group would like to see include:
 - a gym and exercise programs,
 - cultural programs,
 - more transportation options,
 - volunteer opportunities,
 - multigenerational programs and space, and
 - games like bingo, chess, and bridge.

- A large number of people commented that they did not know about existing services or programs or what they might like to have.

- Some of the needs mentioned by people in this group were:
 - more transportation options,
 - affordable housing for seniors,
 - home care aides,
 - hot meals,
 - closer and more medical services,
 - legal assistance.

The needs of seniors in rural areas are often different than the needs of seniors in more densely populated areas such as the villages of Sullivan County. For this reason, we examined the responses of survey participants outside of village zip codes versus those of respondents in one of the county's villages. There were 363 respondents that indicated they lived in one of the zip codes outside of a village. Of these people in the more rural areas:

- 21% (76 people) have a household income of \$20,000 or less.
- 3 people indicated that they do not currently have a home.
- 9% (34 people) said they do not feel prepared if there were an emergency.
- 33% (119 people) said they leave their home only 1-3 times a week.
- 15% (56 people) said they did not have friends or family that they see regularly that live nearby.

- Some of the services or programs that people in this group would like to see include:
 - more transportation services,
 - better access and transport to medical services,
 - help with insurance,
 - social programs,
 - senior lunches,
 - exercise programs,
 - group tours,
 - help with technology, and
 - a senior center.

- Some of the needs expressed by this group include:
 - help with maintenance and cleaning around the house,
 - help finding an affordable vehicle,
 - better and more affordable internet,
 - help accessing senior housing,
 - a caregiver,
 - assistance with the cost of food,
 - more festivals and music events, help picking up prescriptions,
 - mobile health services, and
 - help accessing existing services.

There were 54 people who completed the survey who reported their age to be the oldest age group of 85 years or older. Of this group:

- The following reported having a difficult time:
 - 70% (38 people) Walking
 - 29% (16 people) Remembering Things
 - 46% (25 people) Hearing
 - 29% (16 people) Seeing
 - 22% (12 people) Using Technology
- 27% (15 people) reported feeling bored and/or isolated.
- 68% (29 people) said they spend time with friends or family.
- 4 individuals from this age group reported that they did not do any of the activities listed in the survey.
- 5 individuals reported that they do not leave the house at all and 46% (25 people) reported that they only leave the house 1-3 times a week.
- 13% (7 people) said they did not feel prepared if there were to be an emergency.
- 13% (7 people) said that they do not have family that live nearby that they see regularly.
- Only 9% (5 people) in this age group reported that they hear about events and news going on in the community from the internet or social media. This is much lower than in the younger senior age groups.
- There were limited responses of people in this age group about wanted services or needs. Some of the things mentioned to these prompts were:
 - a want for swimming opportunities,
 - trips to shopping areas,
 - chess and bridge,
 - free legal advice,
 - eye care medical specialist,
 - help cleaning the house, and
 - a walker to ambulate.

There were 47 people (7%) who completed the survey who reported their race or ethnicity as Black or African American. Of this group:

- 53% (25 people) reported that their income was \$20,000 or less.

- 42% (20 people) reported having a difficult time walking,
- 45% (21 people) of respondents from this group indicated that they only leave their home 1-3 times a week.
- 25% (12 people) said they do not feel prepared if there were an emergency.
- 12% (6 people) said they hear about news and events from church,
- 10% (5 people) mentioned the internet as a source for information, 21% said TV, and many mentioned neighbors or bulletin boards.

- There were several comments from this group about using the services of the Office for the Aging but also a high number of comments about not knowing what services and programs exist.

- Some of the desired services or needs mentioned by this group include:
 - medium income housing for seniors,
 - help with food access,
 - help accessing Medicare and other services,
 - transportation assistance, more recreational activities including games,
 - help accessing existing services for seniors including,
 - and end of life and financial planning.

% of survey respondents (32 people) indicated their race or ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino. Of this group:

- 33% (11 people) said they speak at home is Spanish.
- 60% (20 people) said their household income is \$20,000 or less.
- 30% (10 people) said they feel isolated or bored.
- 60% (20 people) said they spend time with friends and/or family.
- 39% of respondents from this group (13 people) mentioned that they hear about news and events from friends, neighbors, or other people in their community.

Several people from this group wrote that they would like to see music and dance activities.

- Some of the needs mentioned were:
 - transportation,
 - counseling and support groups,
 - assistance for people with disabilities,
 - information about services including those for family members of veterans.