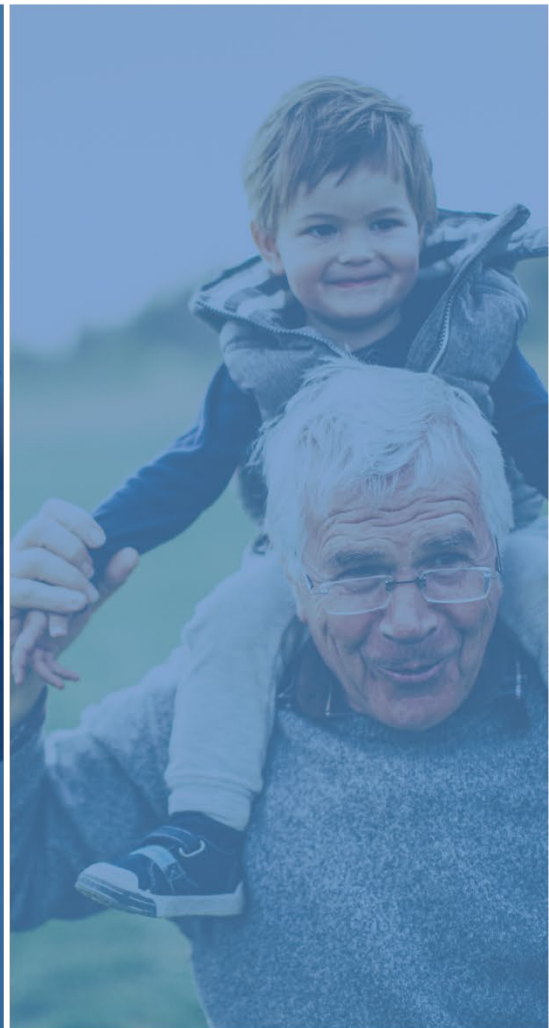
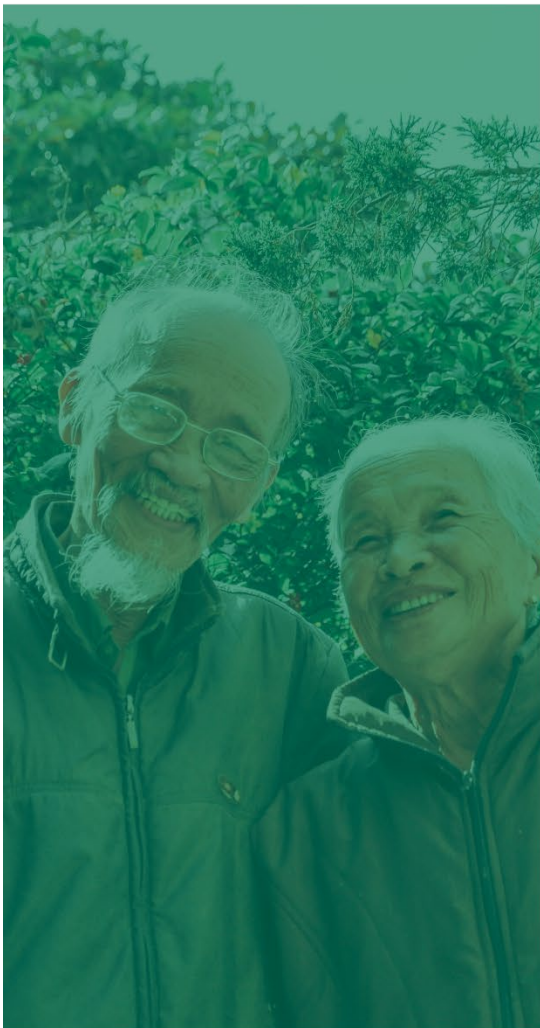


Lake County

Statistical Profile of Older Adults



Introduction

Lake County's residents have supported older adults in the community through the Senior Levy since 1992. This funding allows the county to maintain facilities and services for older adults living in Lake County. The Commissioners are committed to equitable and beneficial allocation and distribution of the funds and do so with guidance from the Senior Citizens Advisory Panel. In 2015, an assessment of older adults was conducted in Lake County which resulted in a wide variety of services designed to respond to the desire of older adults to remain independent in home and community-based settings; all of which are still being provided today. The 2015 assessment identified the levy as a critical component of supporting older adults in Lake County. It is an asset of the county that allows Lake County to provide a high level of support for its residents.

To continue to be good stewards of the public dollars allocated to senior programming, the Commissioners have partnered with The Center for Community Solutions to conduct a needs assessment of older adults in Lake County. With an investment of one-time funding to respond to the COVID pandemic and post-pandemic needs of older adults as well as the continued funding provided through the levy, the Commissioners value the input of older adults and those serving older adults on how to best leverage the funding. The assessment provides information on the current needs and desires of older adults in the community. The first section of the report is a statistical profile of older adults using secondary data including the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census. The second part of the report includes contributions from the community and explores opportunities for additional or enhanced services through examples from other communities.

Over six hundred individuals responded to a survey and forty individuals with knowledge of the older adult community participated in roundtable discussions. From the survey results and conversations, four themes of interest emerged: Positive Aging, Housing, Social & Emotional Well-being, and Modernization of Senior Services. Exemplary programs and services from around the country were identified and invited to share their experiences in implementing and supporting older adults. Based on surveys, roundtables, and interviews with exemplary program staff, opportunities have been identified that would have support in Lake County and be feasible with the resources available.

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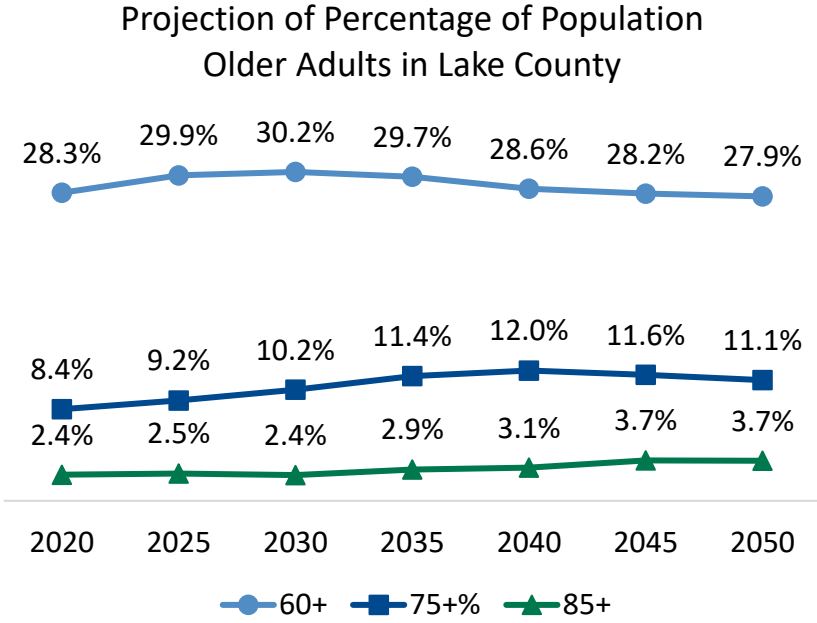
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Demographic Profile of Lake County

Secondary data analysis for this assessment was compiled by The Center for Community Solutions. We relied on the latest available data for the civilian, non-institutionalized population. Unless otherwise noted, the data source is the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 2022 5-Year estimates. Wherever possible, data is reported for ages 60 and older. However, due to data availability, some indicators are for the population ages 65 and older. All the data carry margins of error. For smaller geographies and subpopulations, margins of error can be substantial, and differences should be interpreted with caution.

Lake County encompasses 23 cities, villages, and townships. The area is home to 66,841 adults over 60, accounting for 28.8 percent of the county’s total population. Following state and national trends, the number and share of older adults has been growing in the county and is expected to continue to increase for the next several decades. This increase is the result of generational demographics and the fact that people are living longer lives and remaining in their homes and communities as they age. The growth is particularly pronounced among the population ages 85 and above. Increasing numbers of the oldest residents is expected to increase demand for supportive services including home-delivered meals, housekeeping, home modification, in-home care, and social connectedness. The entire community will need to adapt to these changes.

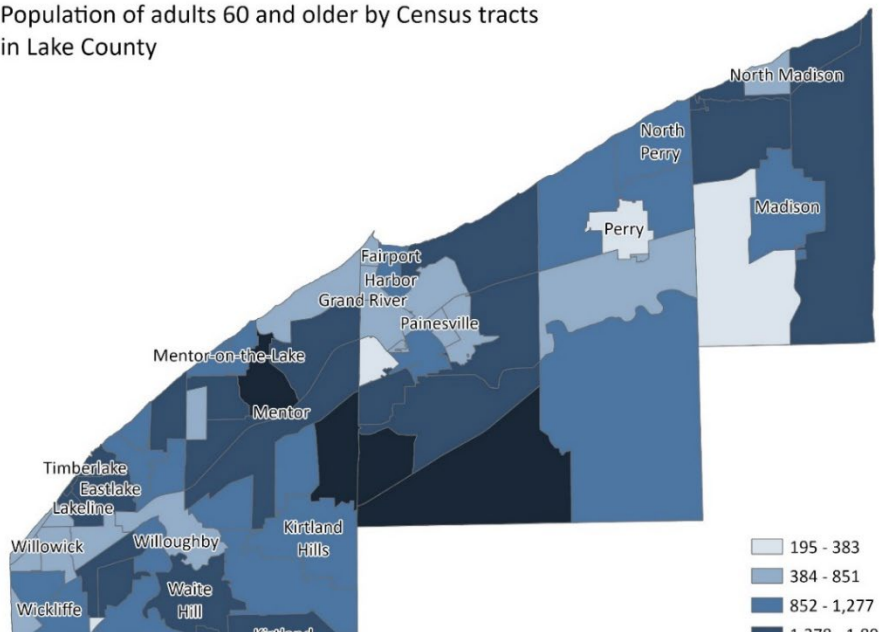


The indicators selected for examination provide an overview of the social, economic, health and demographic characteristics of the older adult population in the county with special emphasis on older individuals with greatest economic need, greatest social need, low-income minority older individuals, and those with limited English proficiency.

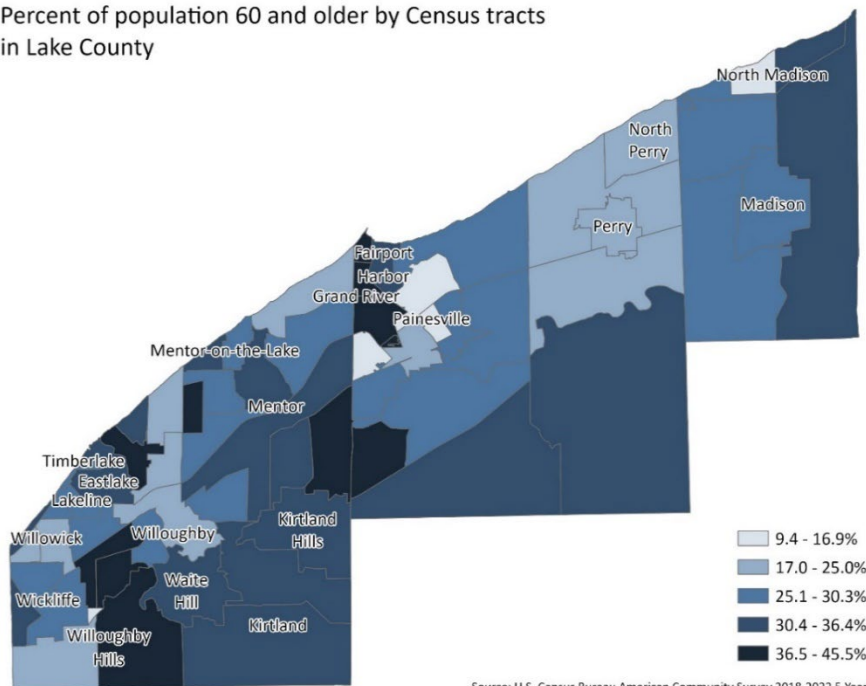
Social

Census tracts are not the same size area but have similar population sizes. In Lake County, the Census tracts with the highest numbers of older adults are near Concord and Mentor. Census tracts in the western half of the county have higher concentrations of older adults, with adults 60 and older making up a third or more of the population in some tracts.

Population of adults 60 and older by Census tracts in Lake County



Percent of population 60 and older by Census tracts in Lake County

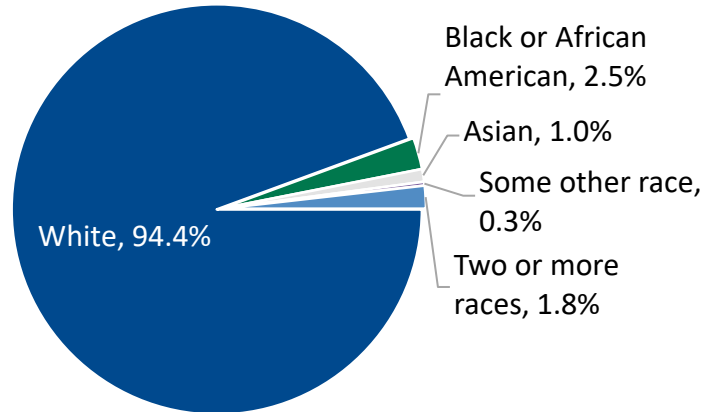


Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates

Race and Ethnicity

Lake County residents identify predominantly as white, with 95 percent of adults 60 and older identifying as white and five percent identifying as another race. Of the five percent not identifying as white, about half identify as Black or African American, about a quarter identify as two or more races, and about a fifth identify as Asian. Similarly, only one percent of adults 65 and older in Lake County are Hispanic or Latino.

Race of adults 60 and older in Lake County

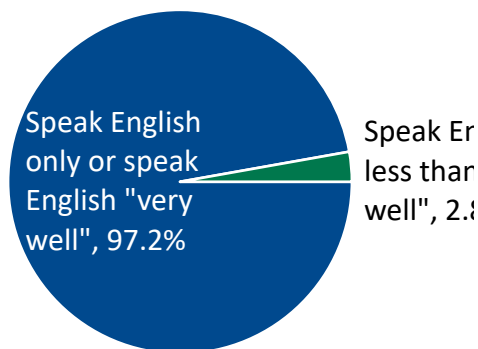


1.2% Hispanic or Latino

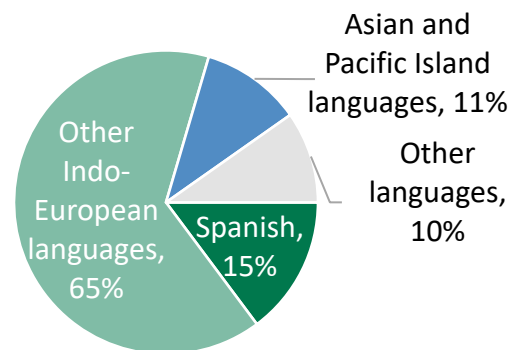
Language Spoken at Home

Most older adults in Lake County speak English. However, close to three percent of adults 60 and older in Lake County speak English less than well. Of the adults 65 and older who speak English less than well, there is a diversity in the languages they do speak. Only about a sixth speak Spanish. Most of these older adults speak an Indo-European language, and eleven percent speak an Asian and Pacific Island language. An additional ten percent speak another language.

Adults 60 and older who speak English in Lake County



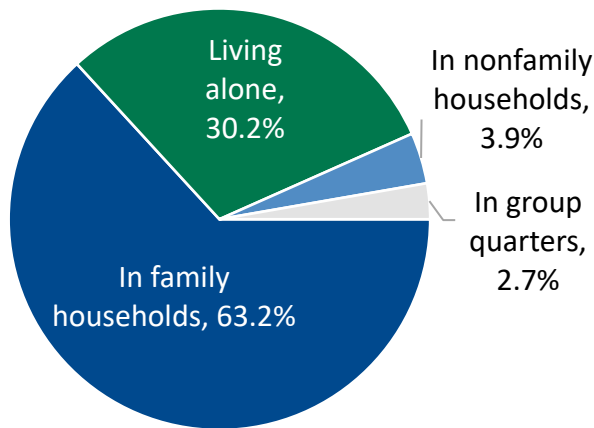
Languages spoken by adults 65 and older in Lake County who speak English less than "very well"



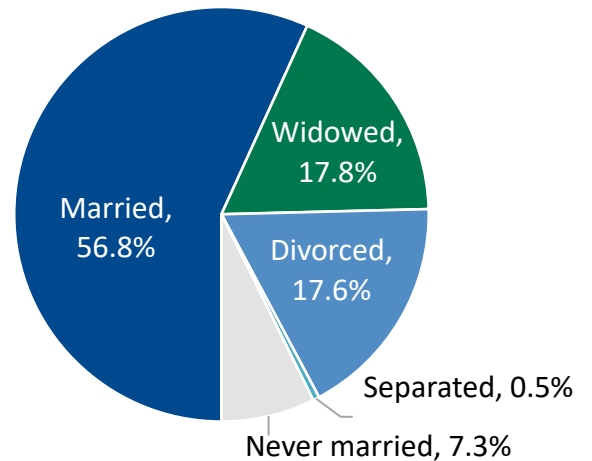
Family Status

While most older adults in Lake County live in family households, almost a third of adults 65 and older are living alone. This is more pronounced for women 65 and older. Thirty-seven percent of women 65 and older are living alone, whereas twenty-two percent of men 65 and older are living alone. Living alone can contribute to social isolation and vulnerability. Close to three percent of adults 65 and older are living in group quarters.

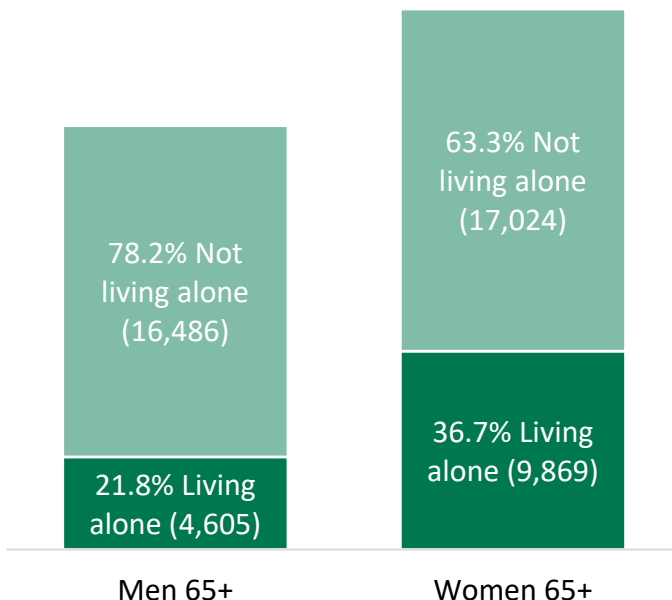
Household types for adults 65 and older in Lake County



Marital status of adults 60 and older in Lake County



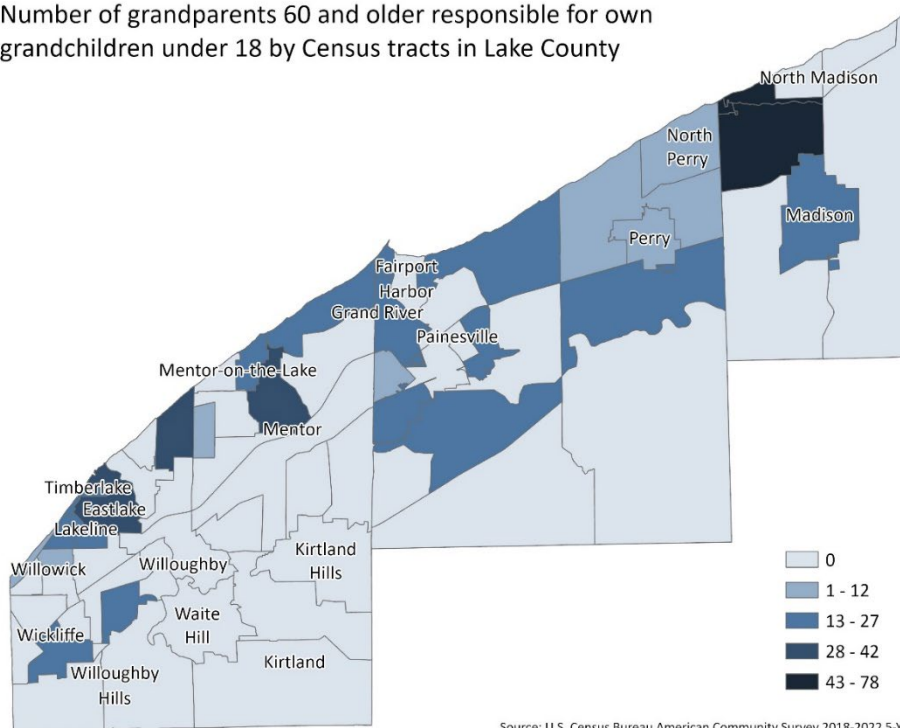
Adults 65 and older living alone in Lake County



Of adults 60 and older, over half are married. Almost two-fifths of adults 60 and older are widowed, and an equal number are divorced, which relates to the number of adults over 65 living alone. An additional seven percent have never married and less than one percent are separated.

Some adults 60 and older in Lake County are responsible for caring for their grandchildren. The highest number of grandparents caring for their grandchildren is around North Madison, Mentor, and Eastlake.

Number of grandparents 60 and older responsible for own grandchildren under 18 by Census tracts in Lake County



Veteran Status

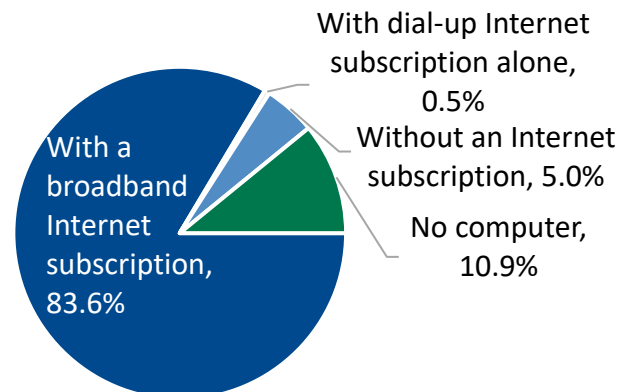
More than 1 in 8 people over the age of 60 are veterans in Lake County, accounting for 13.1% of the total population. Men are much more likely to report having served in the military than women.

13.1%
Veteran

Internet Access

Although over eighty percent of adults 65 and older in Lake County have a computer and broadband Internet, there remain large numbers of older adults without a computer or Internet access. Eleven percent of older adults in Lake County do not have a computer and an additional five percent have a computer but do not have an Internet subscription. Over 200 older adults, about half a percent, have a computer with dial-up Internet.

Computer and Internet access for adults 65 and older in Lake County



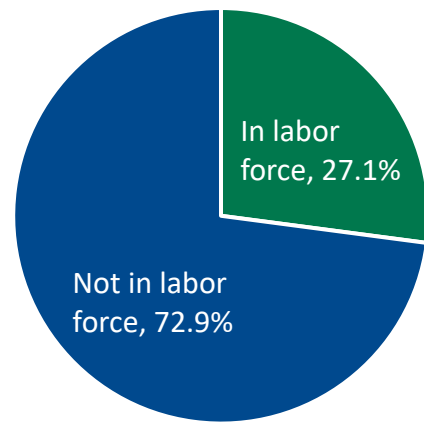
Economic

Employment

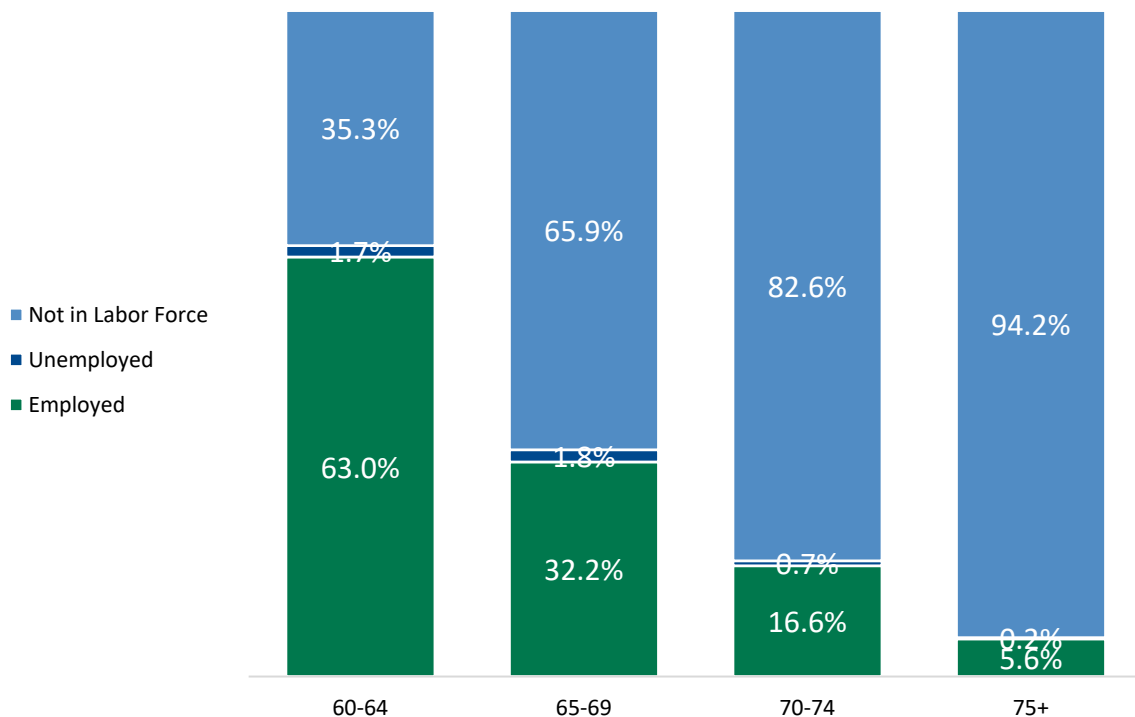
More than a quarter of adults 60 and older and Lake County are in the labor force.

Nationwide trends show that people are delaying retirement and remaining in the workforce longer than in previous generations. Over 8,500 people over the age of 60 are in the labor force in Lake County, including 8,171 who are employed and 412 who are unemployed but actively looking for work. According to this data, the unemployment rate for older adults in the county overall was 4.8 percent. As shown in the chart below, labor force participation drops substantially after age 65, as people retire either by choice or by necessity.

Employment status of adults 60 and older in Lake County



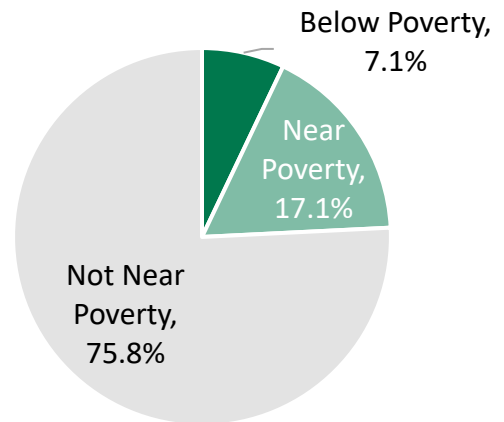
Labor Force Participation by Age in Lake County



Income and Poverty

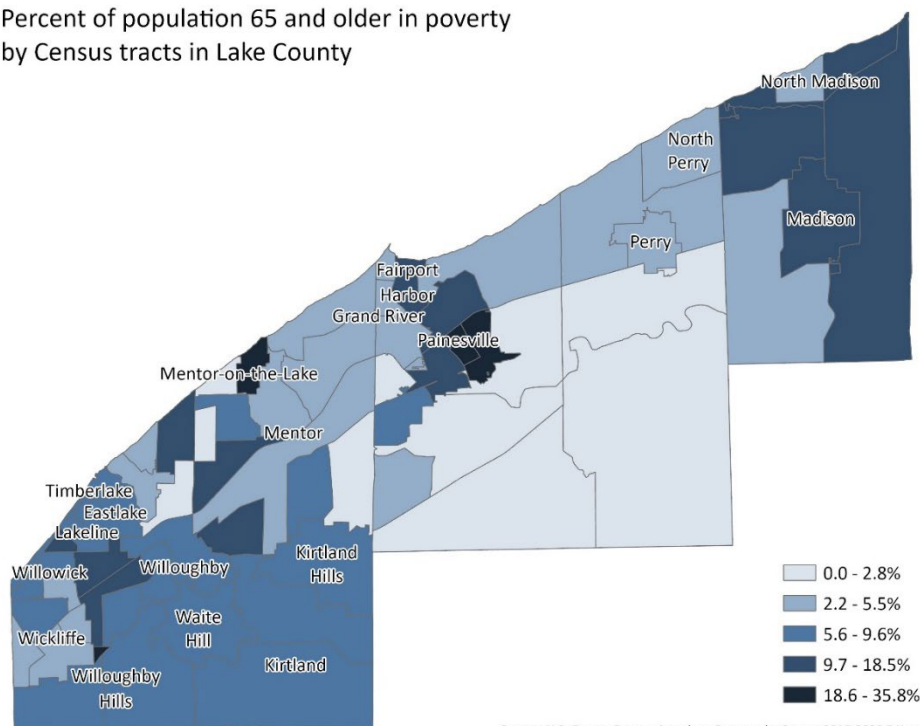
Overall, older adults in Lake County are not experiencing high rates of poverty. At 7.1 percent, the poverty rate for adults over the age of 65 in the county is lower than the state average of 9.1 percent. However, over 3,300 people over age 65 are living in poverty, including 1,173 people who are in deep poverty, defined as having total household income that is less than 50 percent of the poverty threshold. An even greater number of older adults are considered “near poor” with incomes between 100 and 199 percent of poverty. The median household income for householders 65 years and over in Lake County is \$52,286.

Adults 65 and Older at Specified Levels of Poverty in Lake County



The poverty rates vary greatly throughout the county. The areas south of Painesville and Perry have very low rates of poverty for adults 65 and older; less than three percent. Older adults in the eastern part of the county around Madison are experiencing higher rates of poverty, 10 to 19 percent, than older adults in the western part of the county around Willoughby, six to ten percent. Adults 65 and older are experiencing the highest rates of poverty near Mentor-on-the-Lake, Painesville, and an area in Willoughby Hills north of I-271.

Percent of population 65 and older in poverty by Census tracts in Lake County



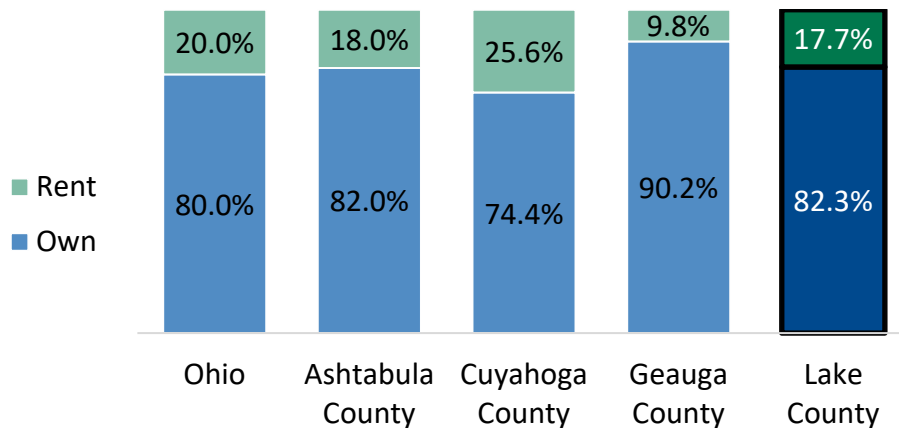
Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates

Housing

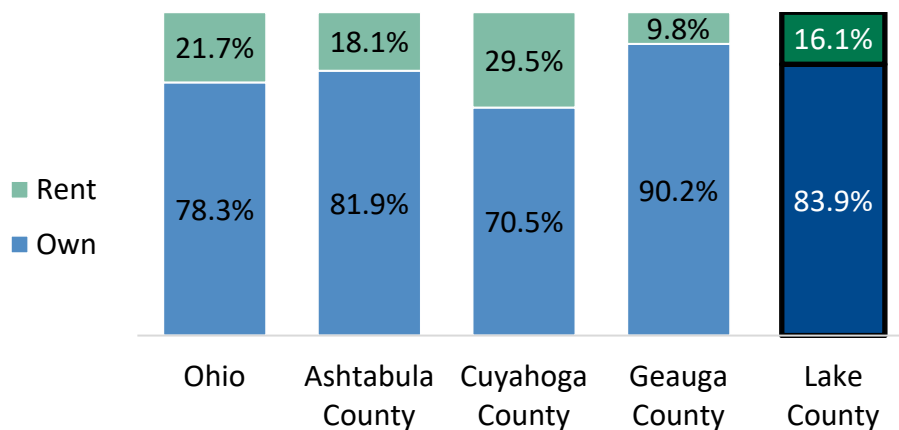
Rent vs. Own

Less than 20 percent of adults 60 and older in Lake County rent housing. This proportion has remained consistent over the last decade. In 2012, 17 percent of adults 60 and over in Lake County lived in a home they were renting. In 2022, 16 percent of adults 60 and over in Lake County lived in a home they were renting. Older adults in Lake County are a little more likely to own instead of rent housing than older adults overall in Ohio. Rate of homeownership for older adults in Lake County are comparable to those for older adults in Ashtabula County, higher than Cuyahoga County, and lower than Geauga County.

Share of households 60 years and older who own vs. rent in 2012



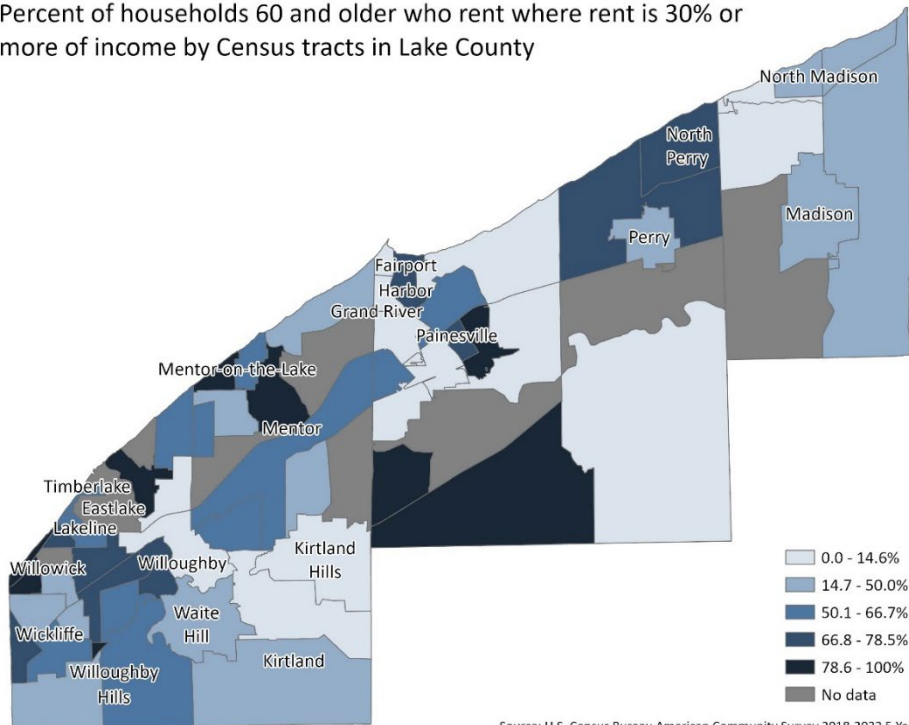
Share of households 60 years and older who own vs. rent in 2022



Affordability

For the sixteen percent of older adults who rent housing, the rent is often unaffordable. Fifty-six percent of renters over age 65 pay 30 percent or more of their total income for housing costs, compared to 21.6 percent of owners. There are Census tracts in Lake County where almost all the older adults who rent are paying more than 30 percent of their income towards rent. In total, 11,694 older adult households in Lake County are in unaffordable housing situations. When housing costs account for a large portion of a household's total income, it is more difficult to afford other necessities.

Percent of households 60 and older who rent where rent is 30% or more of income by Census tracts in Lake County



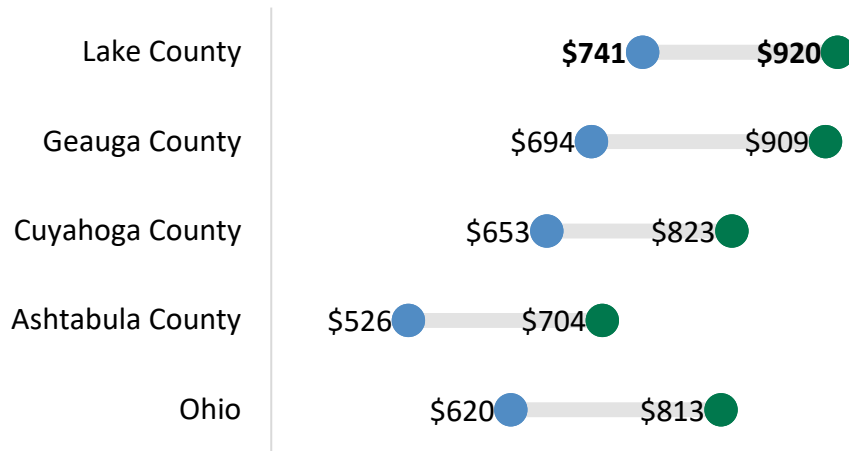
Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates

Over the last decade, there has been an almost three percent increase in adults over 60 who are paying more than 30% of their income towards rent in Lake County. This increase is in the middle of surrounding communities. The percentage of older adults paying more than 30% of income towards rent stayed the same over the last ten years in Ohio, increased almost six percent in Ashtabula County, and decreased two percent in Cuyahoga County. Between 2012 and 2022, median rent has increased almost \$200 per month in Lake

Percent of adults 60 and older paying more than 30% of income towards rent			
	2012	2022	Change
Ohio	50.3%	50.3%	↔0.0%
Ashtabula County	47.6%	53.4%	↑5.8%
Cuyahoga County	55.4%	53.4%	↓-2.0%
Geauga County	48.8%	49.3%	↑0.5%
Lake County	53.3%	56.1%	↑2.8%

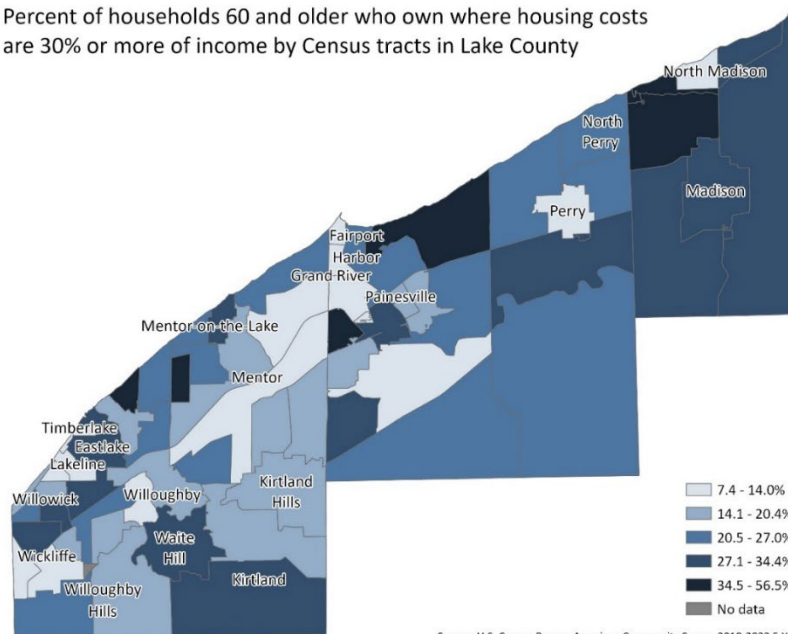
County. This increase is seen throughout the state and surrounding communities.

Change in median rent between 2012 and 2022



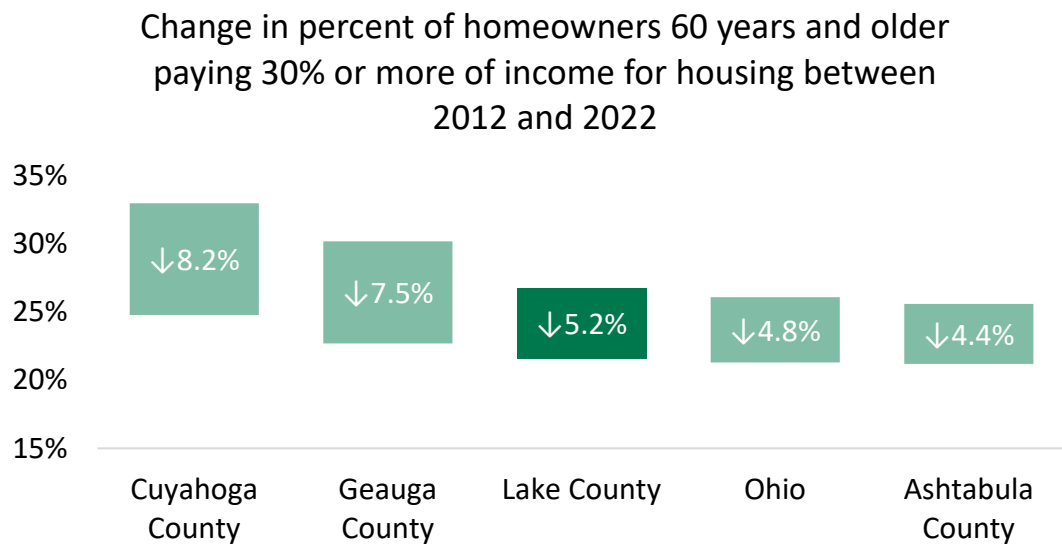
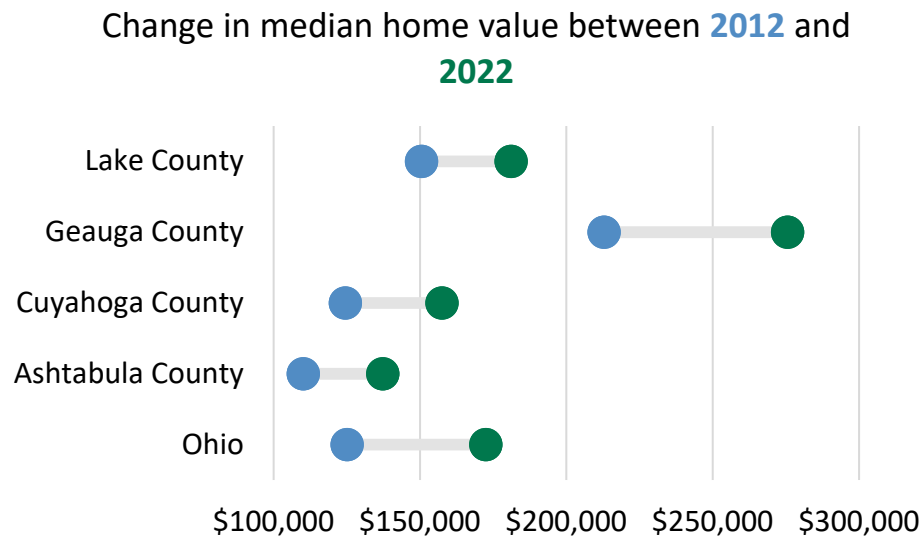
Although the percentage of households 60 and older who are not renting and who are paying more than 30 percent of income towards housing costs are much lower than the households that rent, these households are unequally distributed across Lake County. More homeowners are paying more than 30 percent of their income towards housing in Census tracts between Timberlake and Mentor-on-the-Lake, east of Fairport, and west of North Madison.

Percent of households 60 and older who own where housing costs are 30% or more of income by Census tracts in Lake County



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates

Median home values increased between 2012 and 2022 in Lake County. This increase mirrors similar median home value increases in the state and surrounding counties. Although median home values have gone up in Lake County, that does not mean that homeowners overall are finding housing costs less affordable. In fact, the percentage of homeowners 60 years and older who pay more than 30 percent of income for housing costs has decreased in Lake County, the state, and each surrounding county in the last decade. These housing costs include self-reported mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, and a second mortgage or home equity loan, if applicable. This decrease could be a reflection of older adults still working who have higher incomes, as well as older adults who have paid off a mortgage and own their home free and clear. Nevertheless, more than 1 in 5 older adults in Lake County and surrounding counties are burdened with unaffordable housing costs.



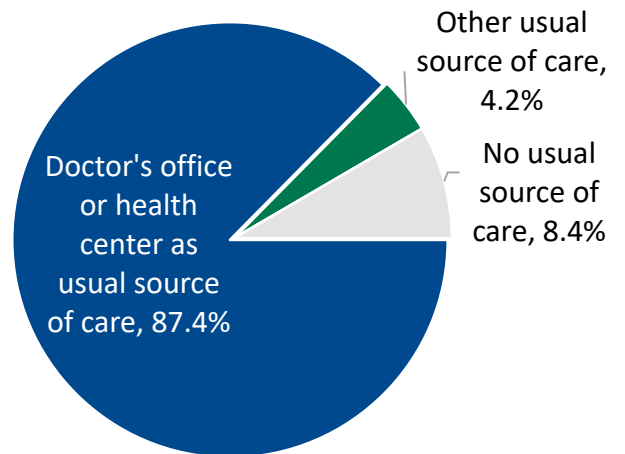
Health

Data is from the 2021 Ohio Medicaid Assessment Survey unless otherwise noted. The survey examines access to the health system, health status, and health determinant characteristics of both Ohio's Medicaid, Medicaid-eligible, and non-Medicaid populations.

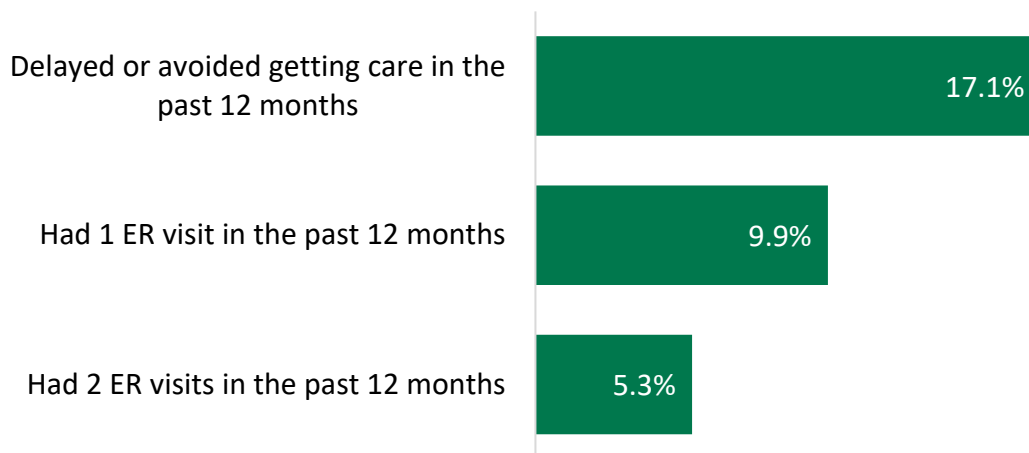
Access to Care

Most adults 60 and older in Lake County have a usual source of medical care. A usual source of care is a place where a person receives care when they are sick or need advice about health. A usual source of care could be a doctor's office, health center, hospital emergency room, urgent care center, or a clinic in a pharmacy or grocery store. Eighty-seven percent of adults 60 and older in Lake County have a doctor's office or health center as their usual source of care, which means that four percent have another location as their usual source of care. Eight percent of older adults in Lake County do not have a usual source of care. Even if a person has a usual source of care, it does not mean they are visiting their medical provider regularly. In fact, seventeen percent of adults 60 and older in Lake County delayed or avoided getting care. One in ten older adults visited the ER in the last year as well.

Usual source of care for adults 60 and older in Lake County



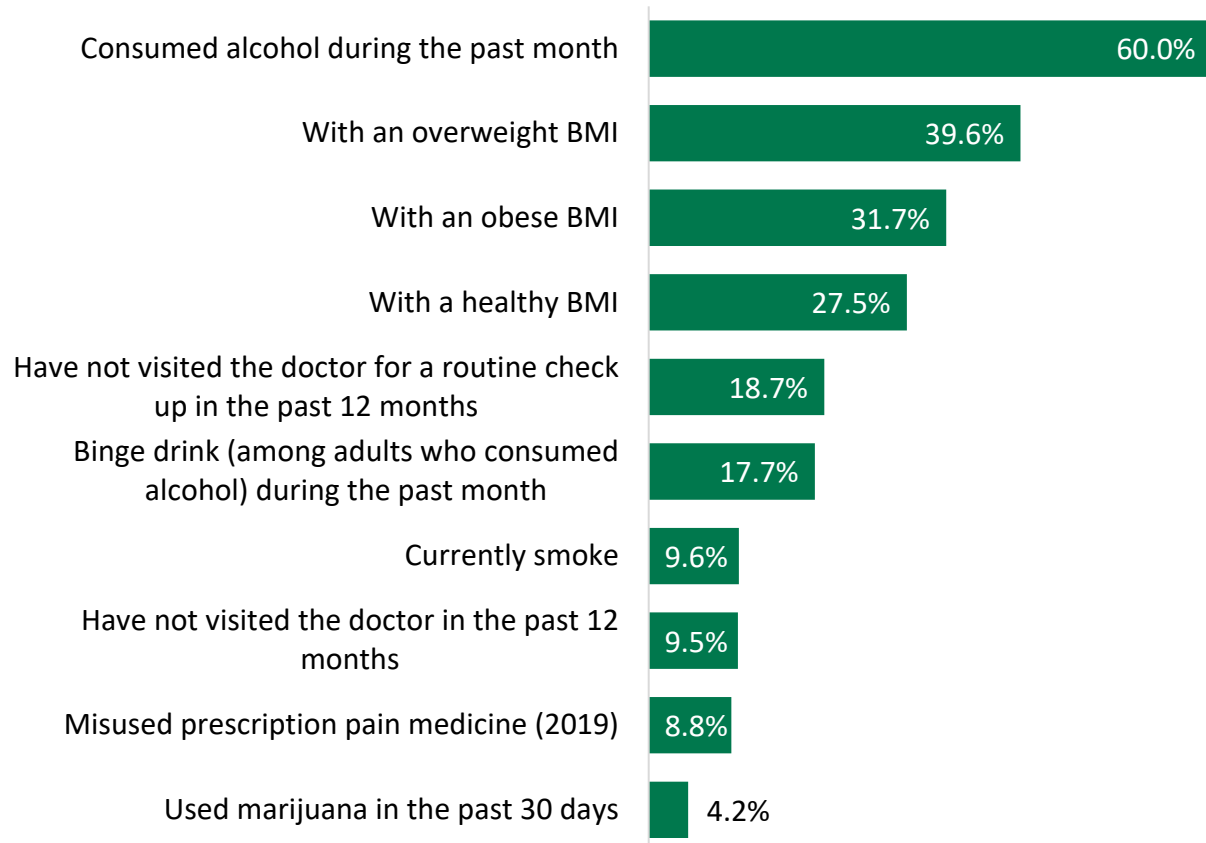
Adults 60 and older in Lake County who...



Health Behavior

Weight is a challenge for adults 60 and older in Lake County. About three-quarters of older adults are obese or overweight. One in ten older adults currently smoke and one in ten older adults have not visited a doctor in the last year.

Adults 60 and older in Lake County who...



Unmet Dental Needs

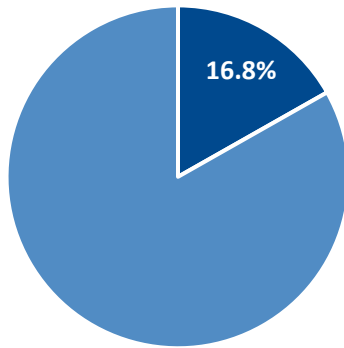
Five percent of adults 60 and older in Lake County had unmet dental needs in the past year. Lack of routine dental care often leads to complications and additional health issues.

Health Status

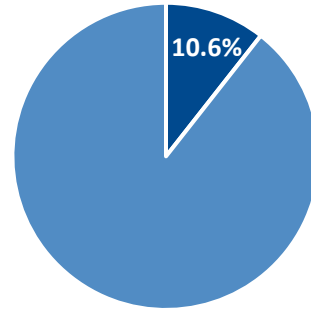
Seventeen percent of adults 60 and older in Lake County report having poor or fair health. One in ten older adults have been injured due to a fall. Seven in ten older adults are dealing with a chronic condition, the most common being hypertension and high cholesterol.

5.5%
Unmet dental needs

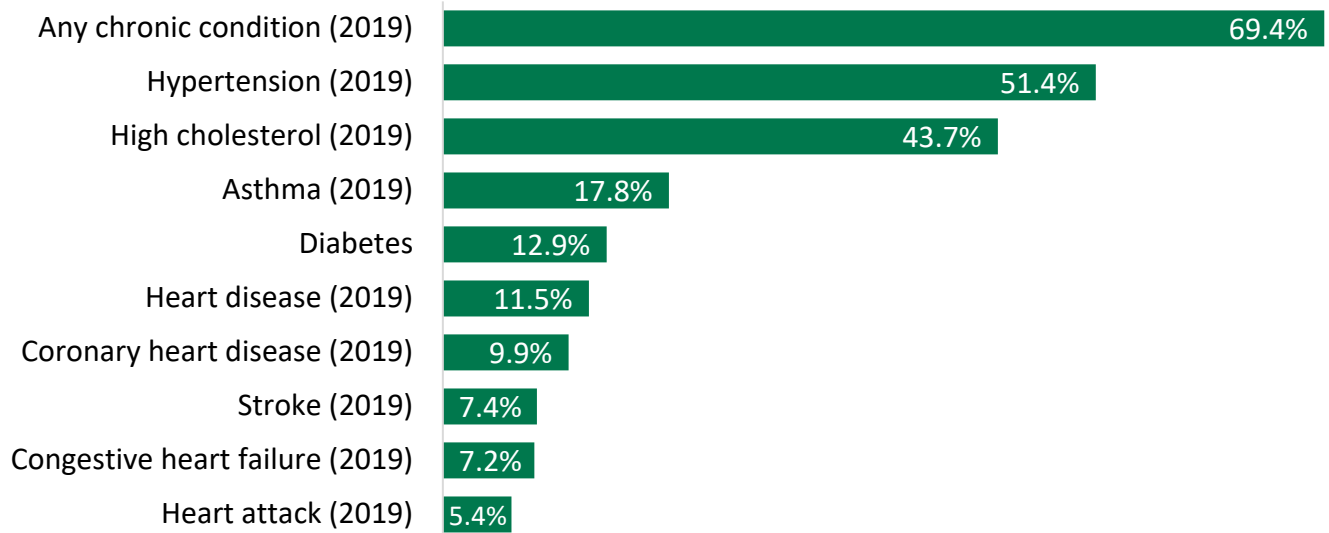
Adults 60 and older in Lake County with poor/fair health



Adults 60 and older in Lake County who were injured due to a fall (2019)



Adults 60 and older in Lake County who have ever been diagnosed with...

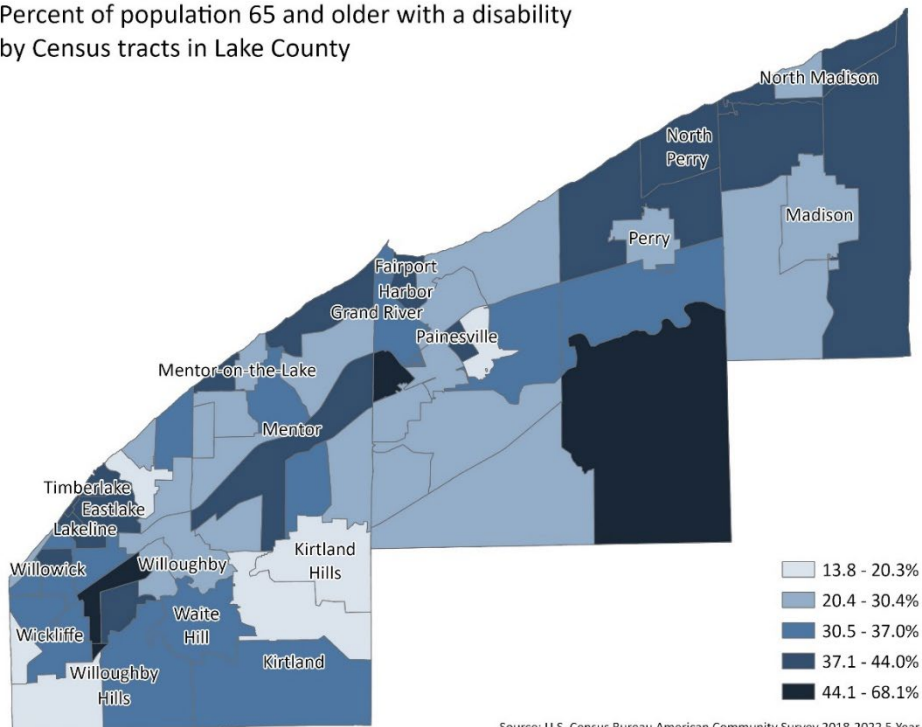


Disabilities

Many adults 65 and older are living with a disability in Lake County. A third (32.9%) of all non-institutionalized older adults over age 65, or 15,405 people, had one or more disabilities. This includes 23.7 percent of those aged 65-74 and 46 percent who are 75 and older. As shown below, ambulatory difficulties, defined as having serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs, were most common, followed by hearing difficulty, and then independent living difficulties, where a person has difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem. The highest concentration of older adults living with a disability are in parts of Willoughby and Willoughby Hills, Painesville, and Leroy Township.

Adults 65+ With One or More Disabilities	15,405
With a Hearing Difficulty <i>Having serious difficulty hearing</i>	6,332
With a Vision Difficulty <i>Blind or having serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses</i>	2,550
With a Cognitive Difficulty <i>Because of a physical mental, or emotional problem, having difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions</i>	2,923
With an Ambulatory Difficulty <i>Having serious difficult walking or climbing stairs</i>	9,391
With a Self-Care difficulty <i>Having difficulty bathing or dressing</i>	2,949
With an Independent Living Difficulty <i>Because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, having difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping</i>	5,722

Percent of population 65 and older with a disability
by Census tracts in Lake County



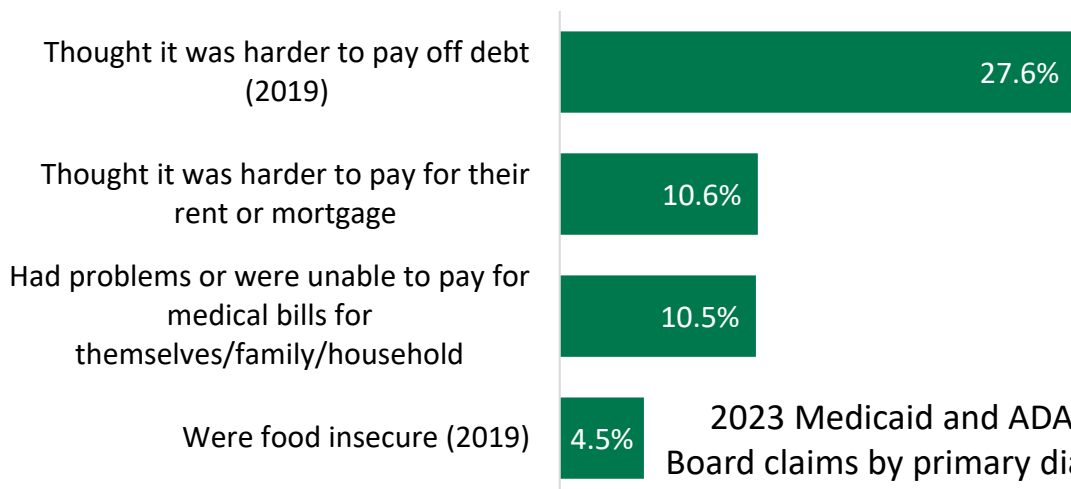
Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates

Census data shows that 2,923 older adults in the county have cognitive difficulty or face challenges remembering, concentrating, or making decisions because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem. Dementia is one type of cognitive difficulty. Research by the Alzheimer’s Association shows that the share of people with Alzheimer’s dementia increases with age, from 5 percent among people ages 65 to 74, to 13.1 percent of people ages 75 to 84, rising to around one third (33.2 percent) among people aged 85 and older. Utilizing these statistics, Community Solutions estimates that as many as 5,225 people ages 65 and older in the county may be living with Alzheimer’s dementia. As the population ages, these numbers are growing rapidly. Across Ohio, the number of people over age 65 who have Alzheimer’s is projected to increase 13.6 percent between 2020 and 2025.

Economic Distress

Financial stress affects health and wellbeing. Some older adults in Lake County are experiencing financial stress. Over a quarter of adults 60 and older in Lake County think it has gotten harder to pay off debts. One in ten older adults report it is harder to pay for housing and that they had problems paying for medical bills in the last year. In 2019, close to five percent of older adults were food insecure, meaning at times they did not know where their next meal would come from. That number has increased due to inflation increasing the costs of food and other items in the past few years.

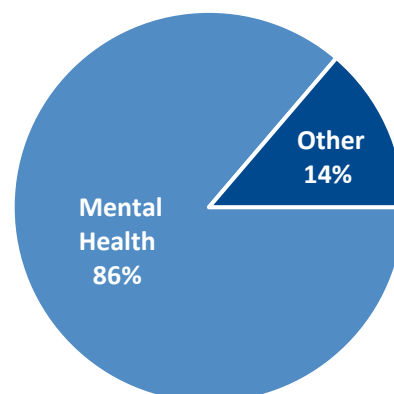
In the past 12 months, adults 60 and older in Lake County who...



2023 Medicaid and ADAMHS Board claims by primary diagnoses for adults 65 and older in Lake County

Mental Health

Local data on mental health of older adults is hard to find. A study by the Kaiser Family Foundation in 2020 found that one in four adults aged 65 and older reported being anxious or depressed.¹ In 2021, twenty-six percent of Medicare beneficiaries had depression. Twenty-nine percent of Medicare beneficiaries had a mental condition.² In Lake County in 2023, adults aged 65 and older made 4,022 claims funded by Medicaid or Lake County



¹ <https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/one-in-four-older-adults-report-anxiety-or-depression-amid-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

² <https://www.chartbook.mcbs.org/#beneficiary-health>

Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board. Eighty-six percent of these claims were for mental health services.

Loneliness and social isolation are key risk factors for mental health conditions in later life. The stress of taking on a caregiver role as an older adult, often for a spouse, can effect mental health. Abuse is another contributing factor. Pre-pandemic sources estimated that one in ten older adults experienced elder abuse.³ A study during the pandemic found that one in five older adults reported elder abuse.⁴

Twelve percent of adults 60 and older in Lake County have high loneliness scores. These scores are based on how often adults reported lacking companionship, feeling left out, and feeling isolated from others. People who reported lacking companionship, feeling left out, and feeling isolated from others often have high loneliness scores. Loneliness and social isolation are related to poor health and decreased quality of life. Isolated adults are also more vulnerable to scams.

12.1%
High loneliness scores

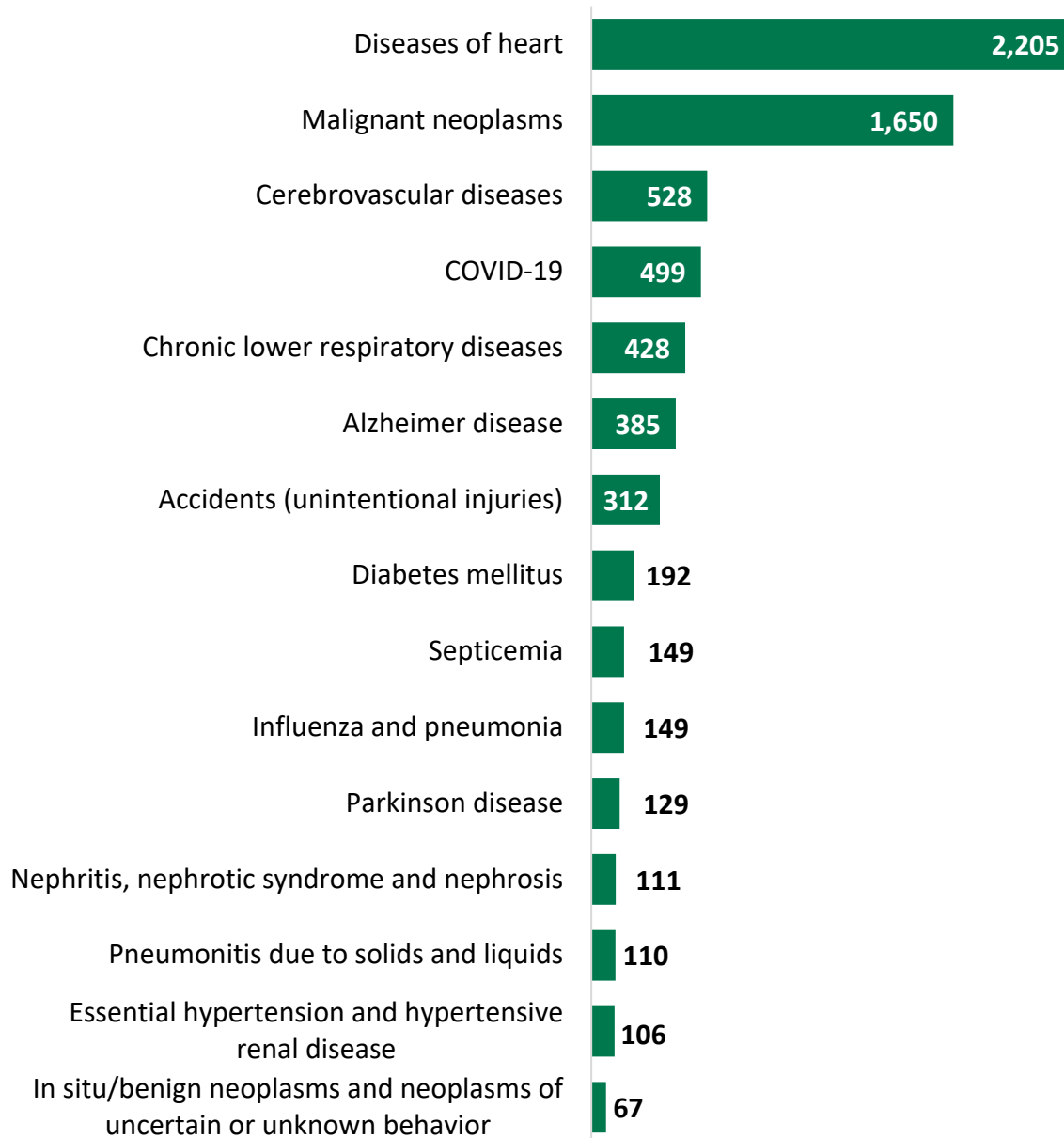
³ <https://nij.ojp.gov/library/publications/prevalence-estimates-and-correlates-elder-abuse-united-states-national-0>

⁴ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33518464/>

Leading Causes of Death

Between 2018 and 2021, the leading causes of death for adults 65 and older in Lake County were diseases of the heart and malignant neoplasms, the medical term for cancerous tumors. These two causes account for over half the deaths. Almost 500 deaths were attributed to COVID, close to 400 deaths were attributed to Alzheimer’s, and over 300 deaths were caused by accidents. These accidents include falls, for which older adults are at an increased risk.

Leading causes of death for adults 65 and older in Lake County
2018-2021



Community Contributions

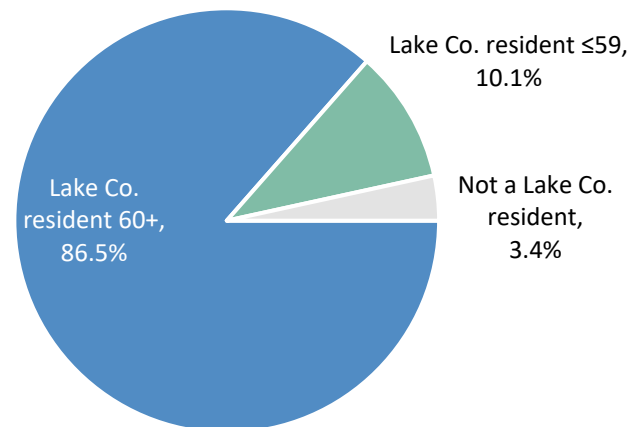
The Board of Lake County Commissioners surveyed older adults in Lake County to determine which services, programs, and supports are most important to them. The survey was conducted between March 25 and May 6, 2024. The survey was promoted through social media and e-newsletters, as well as in-person visits to senior centers to help seniors complete the online survey. The survey gathered information on the importance of housing, nutrition, transportation, behavioral health, health and wellness, communication and general aging related supports for residents of Lake County.

Survey Respondents

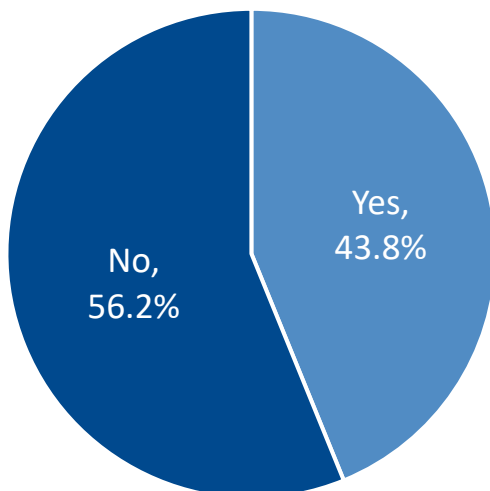
The survey was completed by 613 people. More than 96 percent of respondents are Lake County residents, and 86 percent of respondents are aged 60 or older.

Two-fifths of respondents work or volunteer for an organization or business that provides programs or services for older adults in Lake County. Of these respondents, almost three-fourths are volunteers. The remaining fourth are leaders or staff within an organization.

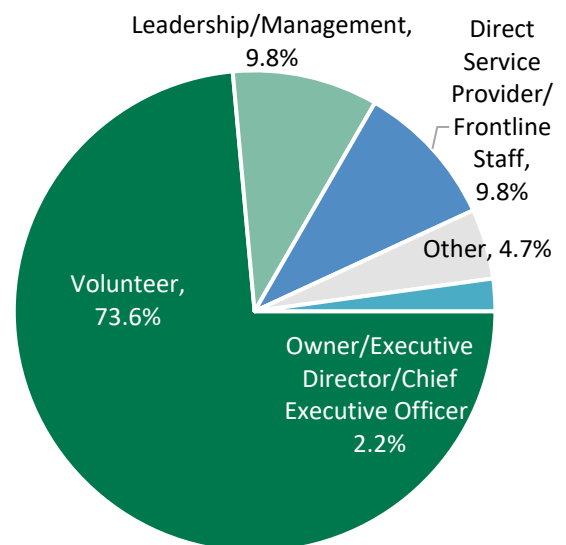
Respondents Residency and Age



Do you work or volunteer for an organization/business that provides programs or services for older adults in Lake County?



Which option best describes your role in the organization?



Aging Network Roundtables

In addition to the survey, the Board of Lake County Commissioners brought together professionals working with older adults to discuss challenges and opportunities for older adults in Lake County. These roundtable discussions with professionals were held over four sessions in May 2024 and engaged individuals representing thirty-six organizations. These organizations address the spectrum of needs of older adults. Participants included:

Adult Protective Services	Lake County YMCA
Alzheimer's Association	Lake Geauga Habitat for Humanity
Board of Lake County Commissioners	Laketran
Catholic Charities Lake County	Legal Aid Society
Congressman David Joyce's Office	Lifeline, Inc.
Crossroads Health	Mentor Public Library
Fair Housing Resource Center, Inc.	Mentor Senior Center
Family Pride of NEO	Morley Library
Home Instead	Perry Senior Center
Job & Family Services	Project Hope
Kirtland Senior Center	Senior Citizens Advisory Panel
Lake County ADAMHS	Signature Health
Lake County Council on Aging	St. Gabriel Church - Food Pantry
Lake County Free Clinic	TruBlue of the Western Reserve
Lake County General Health District	United Way Lake County
Lake County Planning & Development	Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging
Lake County Probate Court	Willowick Senior Center
Lake County Veterans Service Office	WRAAA Board of Trustees

Four separate groups were held and conversations covered similar topics with variations based on the expertise in the room. Question included:

- What is working well for older adults in Lake County?
- What would you like to see changed?
- Are there generational differences between what people want and need as they age?
- What should we be thinking about now to plan or the future of older adults in Lake County
- What should/could senior centers look like in 5, 10, 15, 20 years....
- Think about someone you know in their sixties – what are you worried about for them?
Same question but for someone in their 40s, 50s, 70s, 80s, 90s etc.
- If you had a magic wind, blank check and pot of gold, what would you change to make Lake County a perfect place for older adults?

The following sections provide analysis centered on the themes that emerged from the demographic data, survey result and roundtable discussions. The themes are Positive Aging, Housing, Social & Emotional Well-being and Modernization of Senior Services. The themes are reflective of the communities values and desires for the future of Lake County aging services.

Positive Aging

A theme that recurred throughout the roundtables was around the stigma associated with aging and needing to change individuals' and the community's perception of aging. Providers shared that older adults do not think of themselves as "seniors" and therefore do not engage in services for seniors. Some providers use the word "maturing" instead of "senior." Often age is conflated with health and ability, and there is a variety across seniors.

There are consequences to not acknowledging the reality of aging. Adults in their 40s and 50s, approaching senior status, need to think about how to manage their finances, especially as people live longer. Seniors who do not visit senior centers miss social connections and engaging programs, and the supportive services senior center staff can recommend. Senior center staff often become another trusted person in an older adult's life. This is particularly crucial as roundtable participants noted that all older adults including those that live in Lake County often need community support to age in place. It was noted that often seniors will not reach out for help when they need it, or before a minor problem becomes a big problem.

Participants discussed the benefit of an "Aging Doula" – someone who could support and guide individuals and families with the transitions that accompany aging.

Positive Aging Opportunities

Aging Mastery Program®

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) offers the Aging Mastery Program® - a comprehensive, fun, and engaging education and behavior change approach that celebrates the gift of longevity. The program believes that modest lifestyle changes can produce impactful results and that people can be empowered to cultivate health and longevity. Nationwide, the Aging Master Program® is offered at more than 830 sites and more than 33,000 participants have completed the program. The program covers ten core topics:

- Navigating Longer Lives: The Basics of Aging Mastery
- Exercise and You
- Sleep
- Healthy Eating and Hydration
- Financial Fitness
- Advance Planning
- Healthy Relationships
- Medication Management
- Community Engagement
- Falls Prevention

There are additional elective classes which cover Communicating with Your Doctor, Preventative Health Services and You, Memory Matters, Nutritional Vital Signs, Sexual Health, You Home as a Strategic Asset, Rightsizing Your Life, Sage Home/Healthy Home, Intergenerational Connections, and Aspirations/Bucket Lists.

Ohio's Area Agency on Aging, PS2, which covers the nine counties in the Dayton area, has been offering the Aging Mastery Program® since 2019. They contract with facilitators to offer the program in local communities. Choosing a local facilitator has been critical to their success, as they bring in guest speakers for each of the classes and know the resources in the community. A challenge has been getting participants to commit to ten weeks. They try to get around this by scheduling the classes in conjunction with something like an existing senior lunch or providing incentives.

In Dayton, East End Community Services has been offering the Aging Mastery Program® since 2020. It is the major component of their Reducing Isolation Supporting Engagement (RISE) program for seniors, which they put together in response to the increased isolation during the COVID pandemic. To effectively reach people, they make some adjustments to the program. Nationally, the program is offered to people 60 and older. In Dayton, they reach people 55 and older. They also take the program wherever anyone is willing to host the program and adjust the format as needed. The program has been offered in churches, libraries, and senior centers. It could be multiple classes a week for fewer weeks. They rely on the videos that NCOA produced to go with each class instead of bringing in guest speakers. Thanks to a grant, East End Community Services offers a refurbished Chromebook to each participant who completes the classes, along with dedicated time with their tech lab staff. Once participants complete the program, they are part of the alumni group invited to ongoing social events and outings. There is a dedicated staff person for the Aging Mastery Program® who can coordinate all these additional offerings.

Both providers report that the Aging Mastery Program® workbook, required for the program, is great. They also note the support available for the program. There are virtual meetings every other month with Aging Mastery Program® providers to discuss the program. Recruitment can be challenging but has been successful through word of mouth once there are people who have completed the program, as well as working with agency partners who host the program. Having food and refreshments for participants is necessary for the program's success, but often is not covered by funding.

An evaluation of the Aging Mastery Program® found that participants showed statistically significant levels of improvement in physical activity and advanced care planning. A separate quasi-experimental study found that attending the Aging Mastery Program® was associated with improvements in mental health. Other providers have reported that program participants increased their social connectedness, physical activity levels, healthy eating habits, use of advanced planning, communication with doctors, use of Medicare preventive benefits, medication adherence, participation in evidence-based program, and adoption of other healthy behaviors. Both Dayton area providers report that participants overwhelmingly appreciate the program and learn new things to improve their lives.

Reframing Aging

The National Center to Reframe Aging is dedicated to ending ageism by advancing an equitable and complete story about aging in America. The center is the trusted source for proven communication

strategies and tools to effectively frame aging issues. It is the nation's leading organization, cultivating an active community of individuals and organizations to spread awareness of implicit bias toward older people and influence policies and programs that benefit all of us as we age.

The coordinated effort to reframe aging was born out of national groups who wanted to affect policy around older adults. They conducted research on messaging to develop communication strategies to combat ageism. An example of their findings is to stop referring to the growing number of seniors as a "tidal wave," "tsunami," or "crisis," because this makes people feel that there is nothing they can do about it. There are three people in Ohio trained by the National Center to Reframe Aging: one at Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging (o4a), one at Western Reserve Area Office on Aging, and one at United Church Homes.

A Communications Best Practices guide from Reframing Aging lays out eight best practices:

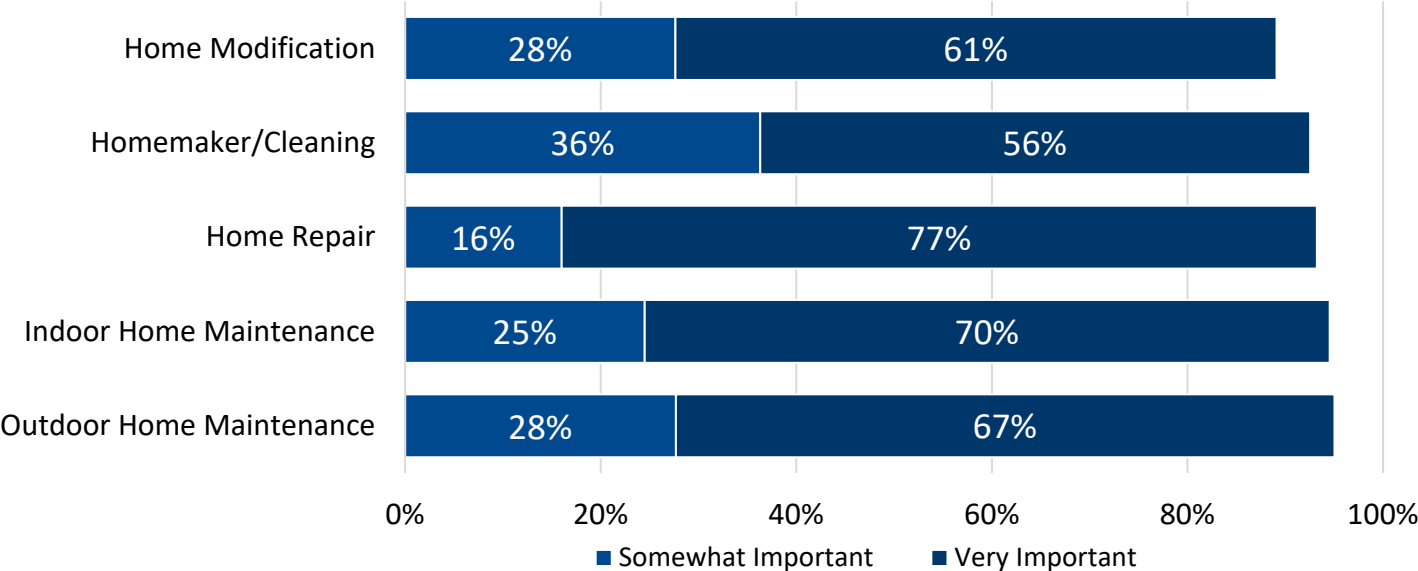
1. Use Language That Is Inclusive and Free of Age Bias
2. Highlight the Diversity That Exists in the Older Population
3. Talk Affirmatively About Changing Demographics
4. Emphasize Collective Responsibility and Social Context
5. Talk About Aging as a Dynamic Process That Can Benefit Society
6. Always Define Ageism When You Use the Term
7. Include Concrete, Systems-Level Solutions
8. Incorporate the Concepts of Justice and Ingenuity

The reframing aging training is geared towards people in the aging field, and not the public. The idea is that if leaders change the way they talk about older adults, others will follow. Strategies include strength-based messaging and anchoring messages in the value of justice. An example of a subtle change is to not only speak of taking care of older adults, but asking how we can keep them engaged because they have value. O4a has put the training into practice with all its communications and feels that the updating messaging contributed to success in getting funding in the last two state budgets.

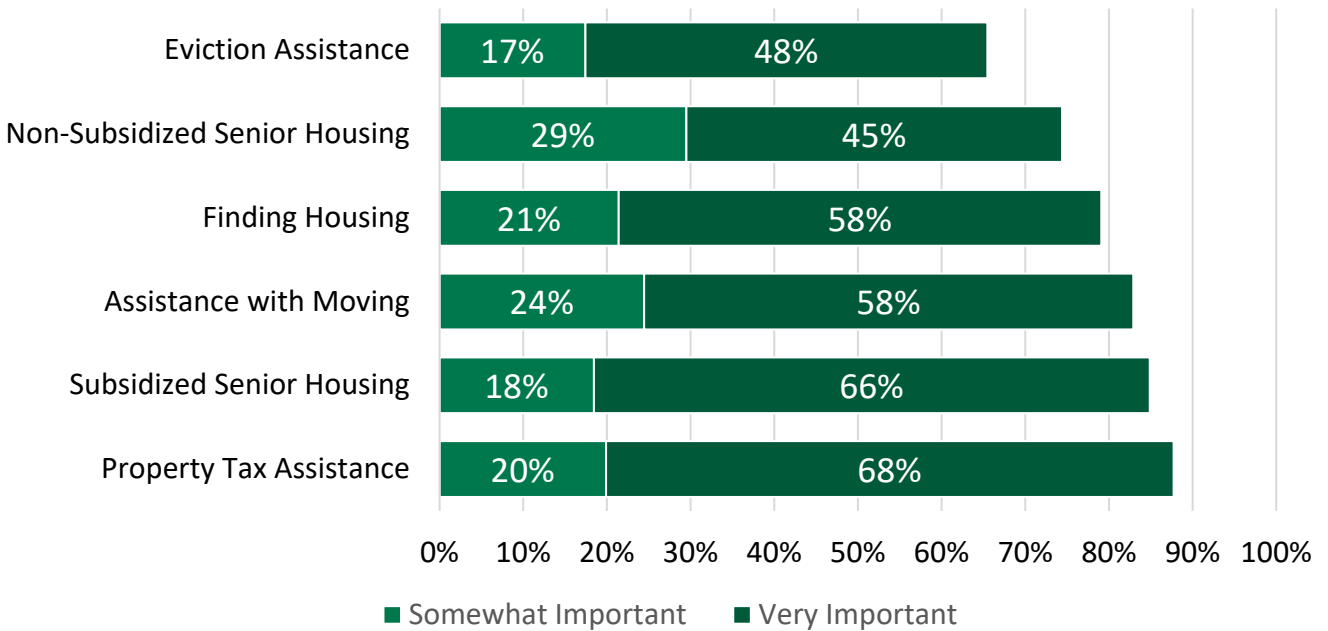
Housing

Survey takers placed a high value on housing support for older adults in Lake County. The top five types of support valued as somewhat or very important were related to the maintenance of the physical space including indoor and outdoor maintenance, home repairs, cleaning, and modifications. Having a safe and well-maintained physical environment allows residents to stay independent within their homes. As physical abilities change, residents may need assistance in some of the more labor-intensive tasks related to maintaining the physical structure. Help with property taxes, subsidized senior housing, assistance with moving and finding housing were valued by over seventy five percent of survey takers. Though still valued by more than half of the respondents, non-subsidized senior housing and eviction assistance were lower priorities for the community compared to other types of housing support.

Housing supports are valued for older adults in Lake County



Housing services that support the ability to afford a home or move are slightly less valued than supports for a physical space



The open-ended questions on the survey received many comments related to housing, particularly in the areas of home maintenance, financial relief, and affordable housing. Older adults in Lake County have a need for assistance with repairs, making safety modifications to their homes, and identifying providers of affordable handyman services, cleaning services, yard work, and snow plowing. Many survey respondents also requested financial relief in the form of property tax freezes or reductions, homestead exemptions, and discounted utilities. Older adults in Lake County want affordable housing options that include ranch-style condominiums, apartments, and senior living communities.

Aging Network Roundtables

Housing came up frequently in roundtable discussions. The prevailing feeling is that there is not enough affordable housing for older adults in Lake County. The new houses being built are large, apartments are expensive, and there are no ranches or smaller options. The few smaller homes that are available are not senior-friendly. Rental prices are not affordable for individuals relying on SSI, and even for seniors who own their homes taxes are becoming too expensive.

Senior living communities are a solution to the housing needs of seniors and issues with isolation. Seniors do well in senior living settings because they watch out for each other. However, there are wait lists for senior housing in Lake County. Some participants noted that Lake County is seeing a record number of homeless seniors – the highest in twenty years – as well as those at risk of homelessness. There is a desire from those at the roundtables to see more affordable housing or subsidies for

independent living facilities. There is also an acknowledgement that “not-in-my-backyard” or NIMBY mentality is present in the community when it comes to high-density housing.

Participants were unanimous in wanting to spend the rest of their lives in Lake County. They cited many positive attributes in Lake County: that it is smaller and more personal than big cities yet also has a broad network of services, the Metroparks, feeling of safety, recreation options, medical centers, quiet but also accessible to resources, and of course connections over a lifetime to the community and family. However, participants did not know if they could stay in Lake County due to rising property taxes and the need to drive anywhere.

When asked if you had a magic wand, a blank check, and a pot of gold what would you do to make Lake County the perfect place for older adults? The number one response was to address housing. Some wished for more neighborhood communities, others wanted supportive living complexes with services provided, and others envisioned diversified and affordable housing everywhere.

Housing Opportunities

Home-Sharing

Nesterly is an award-winning social enterprise dedicated to building intergenerational connections and increasing access to affordable housing through homesharing. It leverages technology to make it safe and convenient for households to rent a spare room to a student, social worker, volunteer, and other renters interested in lower cost, longer term living options. The homesharing platform helps housemates connect over common interests and facilitates the ability to exchange a portion of rental payments for help with grocery shopping, dog walking, yard work, tech support, and more. Nesterly works with local municipalities and organizations to realize its vision of creating a more affordable and interconnected world, one home at a time.

Founded in Boston in 2017, Nesterly expanded to Columbus, Ohio in 2019. In Columbus, Nesterly is sponsored by the Central Ohio Area Office on Aging who has a staff member acting as point person for the program. The Central Ohio Area Office on Aging contracts with Nesterly, who in turn provides the Nesterly platform, Nesterly name, customizable homeshare agreements, conducts background checks on guests, manages rent payments, and covers liability insurance. Nesterly also acts as an unbiased third party if needed and assesses host and guest experiences.

Columbus had a lot of initial momentum around homesharing when Nesterly was launched in the fall of 2019. The pandemic slowed the momentum, but it is building again. The Central Ohio Area Office on Aging found that they needed to change the narrative around homesharing and put together a helpful Homesharing 101: Things to Consider presentation. People needed to realize that homesharing is not new – living alone is new. Homesharing is established and beneficial. It addresses issues with housing and isolation. Older adults are more likely to be on fixed incomes which causes them to be more acutely affected by rapid costs of living. Homesharing offers a means to increase income. Nesterly has a particular focus on promoting intergenerational homesharing. In Columbus, over a third of the homeshare agreements have made use of the task exchange feature, where the guest agrees to

complete certain needed tasks in place of a portion of rent. As of January 2024, Columbus has had 100 hosts create Nesterly accounts and nearly 500 guest accounts.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are small houses or apartments that exist on the same property as a single-family residence. This traditional home type is re-emerging as an affordable and flexible housing option that meets a national housing need. An AARP survey in 2021 found that adults who would consider creating an ADU would do so to:

- provide a home for a loved one (86%)
- provide housing for relatives or friends (86%)
- have a space for guests (82%)
- create a place for a caregiver to stay (74%)
- increase the value of their home (69%)
- feel safer by having someone live nearby (67%)
- earn extra income from renting to a tenant (63%)

ADUs could be detached or attached, convert all or part of a garage, or be a separate living space either above or below the main living level in a house.

A barrier to ADUs is often existing zoning restrictions. Communities, counties, and even entire states across the country have updated zoning laws to permit ADUs in response to a need in the community. Cleveland Heights is in the process of producing a set of designs for “granny flats” which residents can choose from if they want to build an ADU on their property. These designs will already have approval from the city’s architectural review board, zoning committee, and planning committee, and therefore streamline the process for residents.

Lexington-Fayette Urban County government in Kentucky updated its ordinances in 2020 to permit ADUs. In 2014 the Senior Services Commission conducted a survey in which housing scored poorly. Their community has many single-family homes and apartments, but no housing for middle incomes. The Division of Planning meets with each department every 5 years as it puts together the Comprehensive Plan. During the meeting between Planning and the Senior Services Commission in 2017, the Senior Services Commission requested the ability to develop ADUs. Planning included it in the Comprehensive Plan, as it supported the community’s emphasis on maintaining greenspace around the urban service boundary and emphasis on infill instead.

It took from 2017 to 2020 to get the ordinance updated. During the process, the Senior Services Commission hosted several community sessions to get people engaged and understand the benefits of ADUs. In particular, the Senior Services Commission saw ADUs as a means for older adults to age-in-place, maintain autonomy, and even obtain additional income. The Senior Services Commission worked with the University of Kentucky’s School of Design to do renderings of ADUs to show how they would conform to neighborhood aesthetics. Additionally, there was a sewer study that showed ADUs would have a negligible impact.

The initial ordinance passed in 2020 included restrictions such as no detached units, an owner-occupancy requirement, and a deed restriction. These restrictions limited the financing available for ADUs. In the first 18 months, only six permits were issued for ADUs, when at least 30 people had an initial interest. In 2023, Planning went back to council and pointed out how the restrictions were limiting permits and that it was more difficult to set up an ADU than a short-term rental. The ordinance was updated in December 2023 removing the restrictions, and there have already been more permits in the six months since the update than the 18 months before. Planning meets with every resident interested in an ADU before they progress to the permit stage.

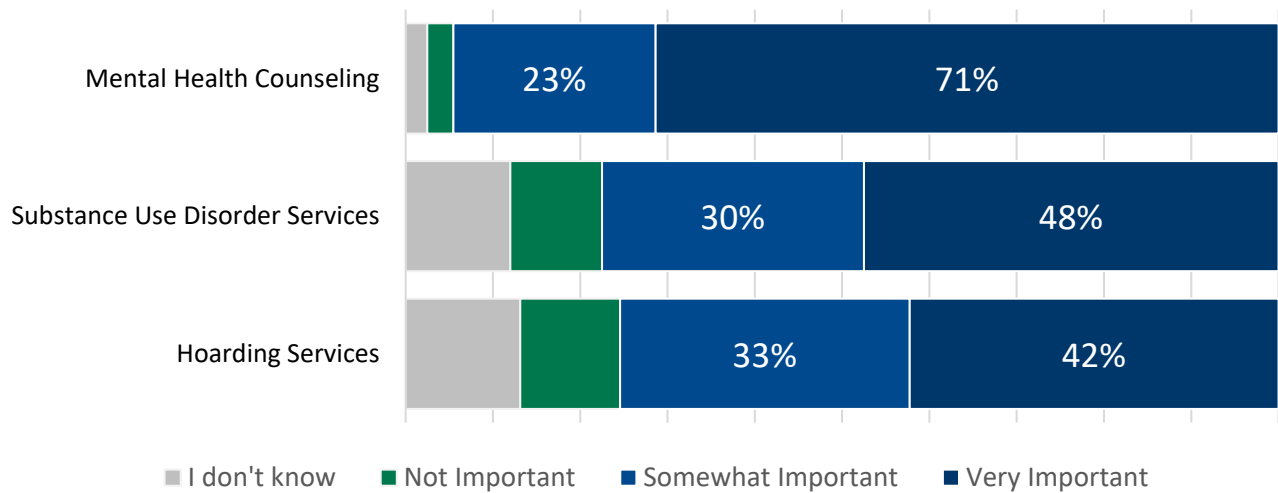
Now that regulatory barriers have been removed, financing will be the biggest challenge. Interest rates and building costs remain high.

One of the benefits of legalizing ADUs is that illegal ADUs exist everywhere. By legalizing these dwellings, ADUs are held to higher standards. Although some residents were opposed, at council meetings those who were opposed with hypothetical scenarios were outnumbered by residents with concrete examples as to how ADUs would help them. One family assisted by the ADU ordinance was a mom with a disabled adult son. Her son now has an upstairs apartment with a caregiver. Most permits for ADUs in Lexington Fayette County have been for caregivers or a place for elderly parents.

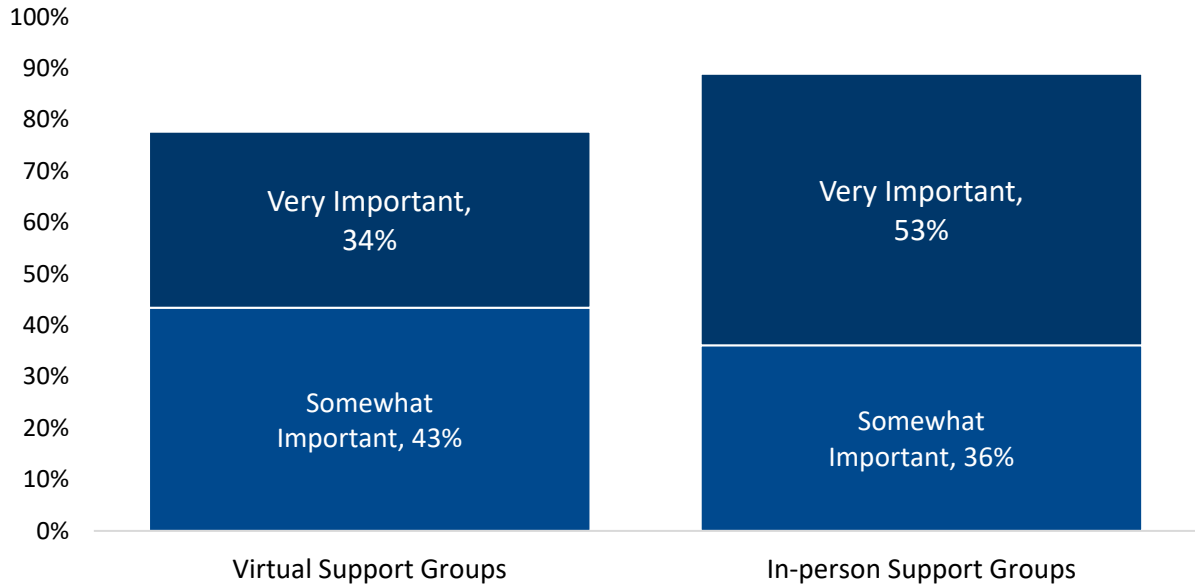
Social & Emotional Well-Being

The Lake County community is supportive of behavioral health services for older adults. Over 90% of those who responded to the survey felt that providing adult protective services was important. These types of services protect members of the community from abuse, neglect, and self-neglect by investigating reports and connecting older adults to needed services. Community members who attended roundtables expressed concern that Lake County older adults were experiencing behavioral health issues and could benefit from connection to various behavioral health services. The survey found wide support for many of these services. Ninety-four percent of residents believe it is important to offer mental health screenings for older adults. Screenings can identify symptoms of depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions, and are the first step in obtaining helpful services for those in need. When a behavioral health issue is identified, services including counseling, substance use treatment, hoarding services and support groups can be helpful in managing symptoms and improving quality of life.

There is wide support for mental health counseling for Lake County older adults

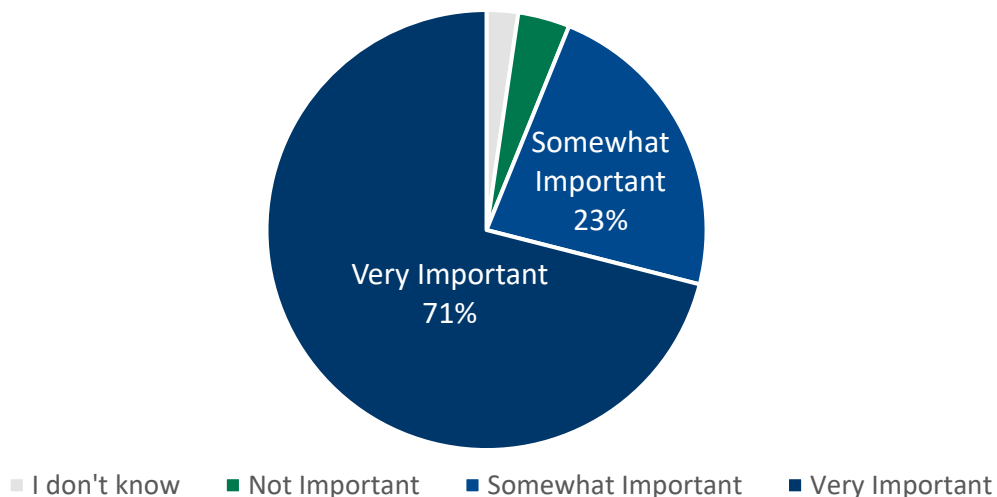


There is a slight preference for in-person support groups over virtual support groups



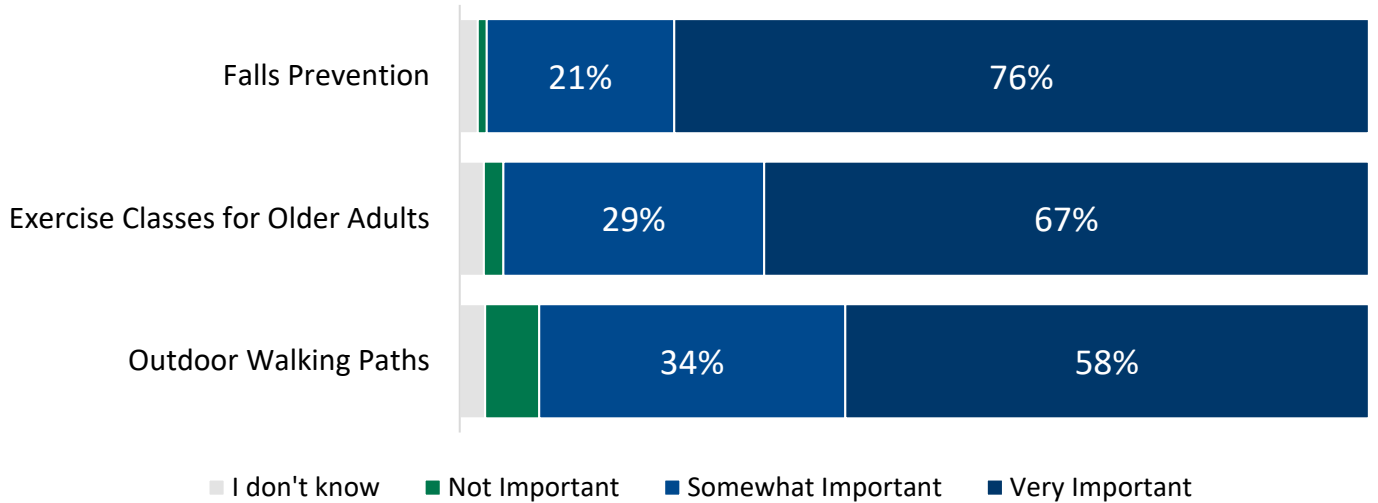
Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic required social distancing to protect from transmission of the virus, many older adults were at an elevated risk of social isolation and loneliness which can lead to poor health outcomes. There is no single solution for social isolation and loneliness but instead multiple avenues to increase connectedness to one’s community and ways to strengthen relationships among family, friends, and community members. Nearly all survey takers indicated these programs were important for older adults in Lake County.

Programs aimed at addressing loneliness and isolation (i.e. Phone Pal, Friendly Visitor) are highly valued by Lake County residents



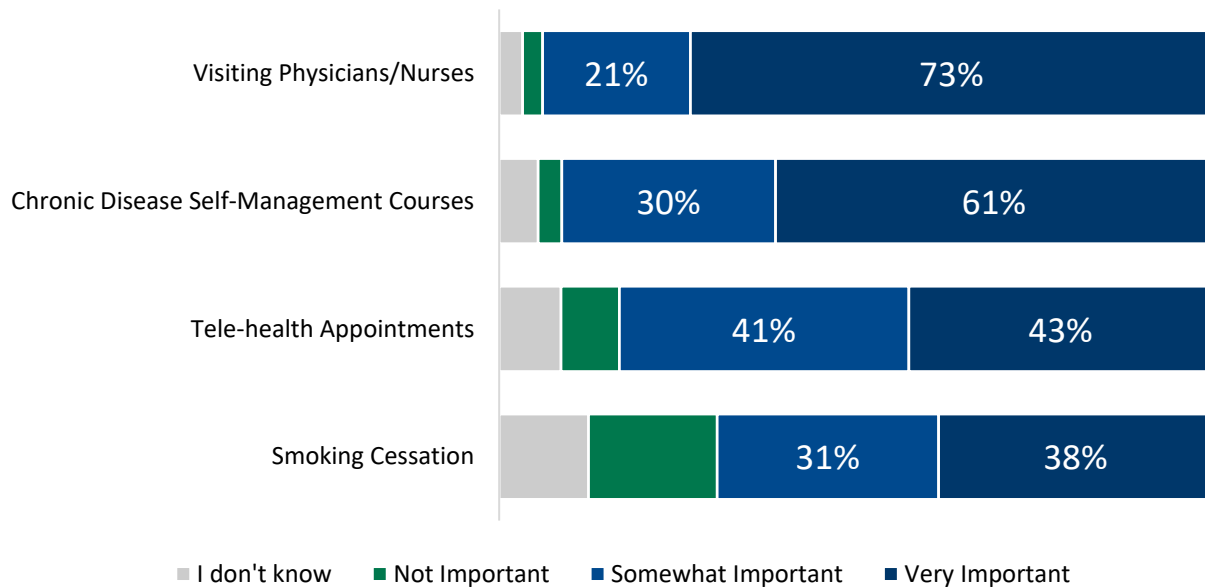
Opportunities for physical activity can boost both social connectedness and improve health and well-being. Being active through classes, participating in walking groups and engaging in fall prevention courses are known ways to reduce falls that can lead to injury and immobilization. These types of programs are desired by residents of Lake County.

Increasing physical activity can improve health, stability & social connection



In addition to increased physical activity, interventions from medical professionals can also improve the health and well-being of older adults. Residents are most supportive of visiting physicians and nurses and chronic disease self-management courses.

How important are the following types of **health and wellness** support services for older adults living in Lake County?



Survey respondents requested more social activities, support groups, volunteer opportunities, and home visits. There were requests for health-related services, including exercise classes, mental health support, and counseling. Several respondents suggested the expansion of social programs and recreational activities for older adults, including exercise classes, cultural events, and intergenerational programs. Respondents also emphasized the importance of healthcare services, including dental and mental health care. There were also requests for assistance with end-of-life planning and grief counseling.

Aging Network Roundtables

Over several conversations, participants mentioned many areas in which older adults would benefit from additional support. When it comes to health, older adults need advocates to speak on their behalf at doctor appointments and make sure they understand what a doctor says. Seniors may need assistance applying for Medicaid, either because they do not realize they need to apply, because the application can be complicated, or perhaps because the associated cost is prohibitive. Being on Medicaid is often a prerequisite for other services. Concerns around dual diagnoses, particularly with mental health and substance abuse problems, were raised, as there is so much shame around seeking help for these issues. Senior centers should have places to speak about these issues to social workers.

There are many older adults providing caregiving roles in their families – either for grandchildren or another older adult – resulting in stress for the caregiver. Grandparents parenting grandchildren need assistance navigating getting support from the state, whereas older adults need assistance getting appropriate guardians when they can no longer make decisions. Older adults in these caregiving roles, which can also include grown children with disabilities, are often too busy caring for others to reach out. The situations can involve caring for those with dementia, managing falls, or having to put a loved one in a facility. Many participants commented on the need to meet people where they are instead of waiting and hoping they will seek assistance.

There are concerns about Lake County’s capacity to provide care for older adults in the county. Staffing is low in long-term care facilities, leading to problems with safe staffing and wait lists. A deficit of care professionals could be addressed by increased pay, better employee benefits, and honoring care professionals. This could be done by something like the Great Minds program which is being put in place to encourage careers in the behavioral health workforce.

Roundtable participants repeatedly raised the alarm about scams targeting older adults. There is a tension between legitimately needing to provide personal information to apply for services and then not providing personal information to scams, which makes it difficult to distinguish scams from legitimate requests. Those who have been scammed do not say anything because they feel ashamed or think there is no recourse. Participants called for more education and investigative resources to go after scammers. One participant noted that it has been helpful to build trust with the police department because then it is easy to ask questions when they know the officers.

Social and Emotional Well-Being Opportunities

Scam Squad and Elder Abuse Task Force

Cuyahoga County’s Department of Consumer Affairs was the first in the nation to put together the Scam Squad model, which has now been implemented nationwide. There are almost 60 police departments in Cuyahoga County – not all of which take scam reports. The Scam Squad brings together nonprofit and government agencies who work with seniors as well as law enforcement agencies, as well as offers a staffed hotline. Early on, they met with every police department to let them know to send people to the Scam Squad if they will not take scam reports. Their goals include sharing scam reports with people who can investigate as well as ending blind referrals where victims never receive any support. They stay on top of scams, through the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) annual report, the FTC advisory committee on scam prevention report, and the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) on scams. They mine reports to identify trends and alert the public. The FTC has reliable resources and can be a great starting place to understand and educate about scams, but the FTC is never going to return a call or provide a victim with wraparound support.

Butler County coordinates efforts to combat scams through the Prosecutor’s office. The Community Outreach Director for the Prosecutor is tasked with promoting available help and assisting the assistant prosecutor with investigations. She also personally takes the calls that come in on the scam hotline. In addition to the Community Outreach Director, the Prosecutor has also appointed an assistant prosecutor and an investigator to address scams (in addition to their other cases). Butler County developed visor

cards to distribute to police officers with enforcement agency contact information, as well as a summary of applicable laws and penalties. Cuyahoga County uses this, along with providing police with tear-off pads for referrals and “hang up” cards to remind people when to hang up on someone.

In both counties, they emphasized the importance of having law enforcement involved and bringing together a network of providers working with older adults. Both counties shared the importance of in-person meetings to build trust and expand networks agencies can lean on and refer to. Both counties also freely offered to share their resources, or even to let others simply take and use their resources, if they made sure to change the phone number. Once the reporting number was established and promoted in each county there has been an increase in scam reports over the years. Both are also trying to figure out how to address the emotional aspect that is involved in scams, as many people go into panic mode when threatened.

Most importantly, both counties shared how important prevention is. Once an individual is involved in a scam, they are in too deep. One person referred to needing to “deprogram” individuals after they get out of a scam. Loneliness is a risk factor for being scammed. Those who experience loneliness or are socially isolated are more likely to engage in conversations that can create space for bad actors to access funds of older adults. Those who do not have regular communication with others do not have the opportunity to check in on suspicious financial requests from new connections. Programming that promotes deepening social connections addresses loneliness and social isolation and can serve as an effective preventative factor by reducing susceptibility to scams. Though it is harder to measure scams that have been thwarted through good social connection, it is undeniably better for all involved to prevent scams.

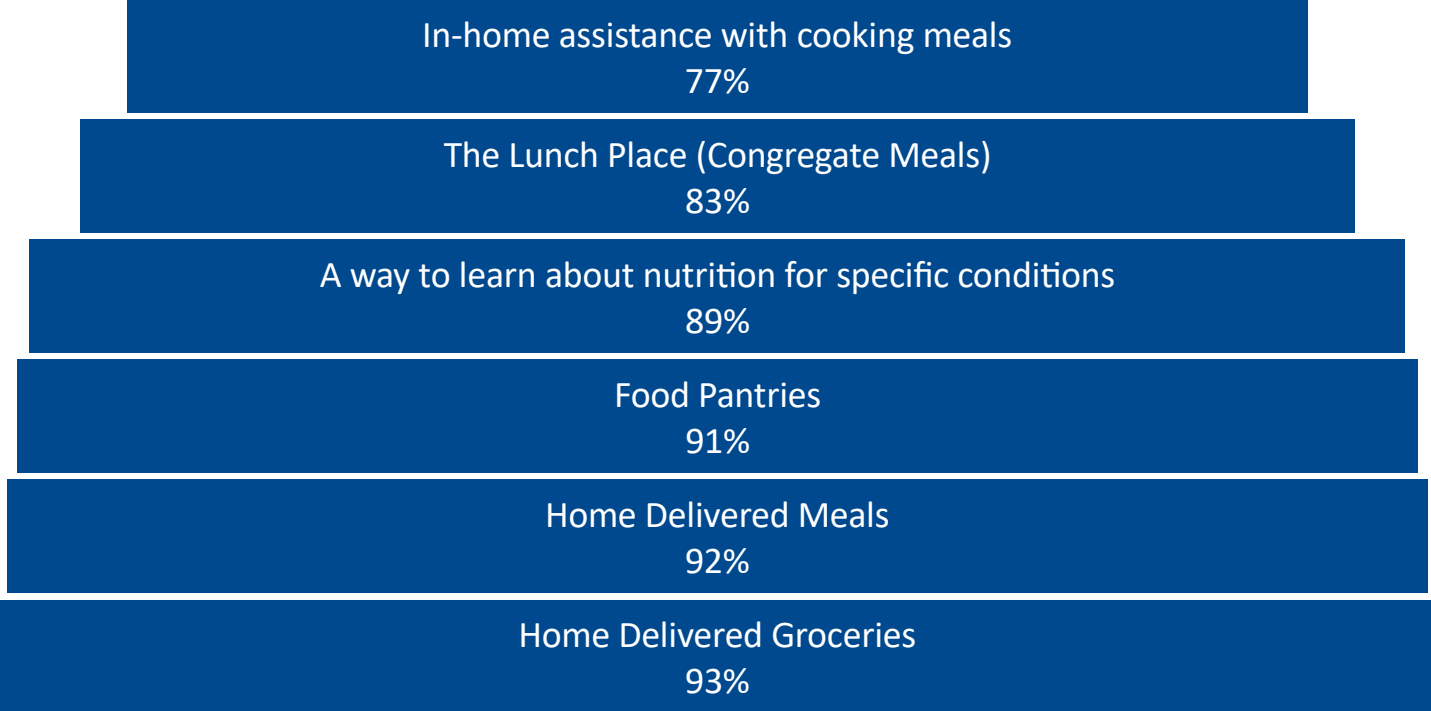
Continued Support for Behavioral Health

Many older adults throughout the country experienced a disruption to their daily activities and ability to make and maintain social connections during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the health risks related to COVID-19 for older adults and those with chronic health conditions, many previously active seniors physically isolated themselves. During this time of necessary isolation, many older adults experienced an increase in loneliness, depressive symptoms and other behavioral health issues. Older adults in Lake County will benefit from the continuation and strengthening of programs and services that provide both protective factors for mental health and address current symptoms. Protective factors include developing strong social networks, participating in community events, learning new skills or hobbies, physical activity and access to health care. Current symptoms can be addressed through support groups, individual counseling, medication management and improved family dynamics. The Lake County ADAMHS Board’s continued care of older adults through their crisis line, assessments, provider referrals and outreach and education is a critical component of the older adult support network.

Modernization of Senior Services

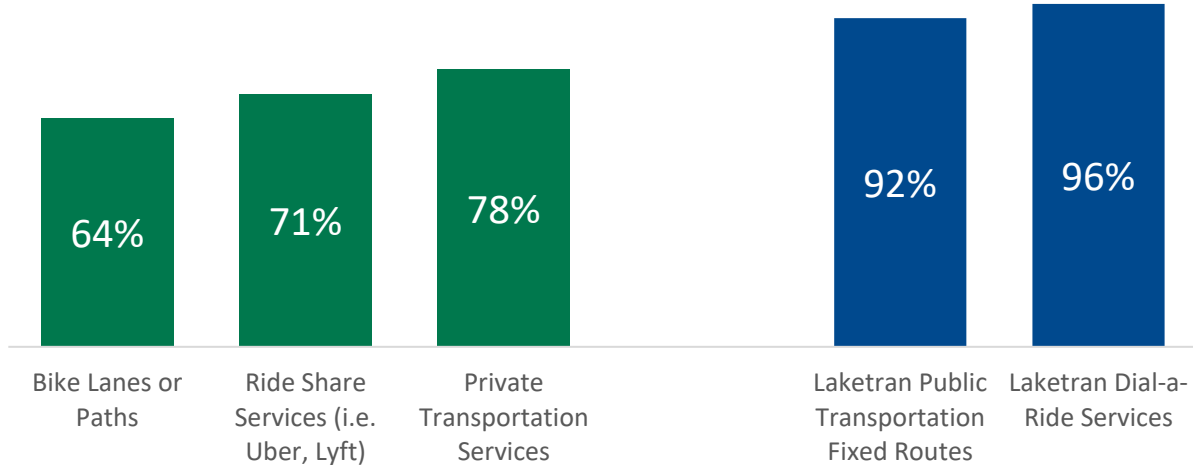
Senior Centers have historically played a vital role in connecting older adults to each other, to their communities and to needed services. Over time, they have necessarily shifted and adapted services to meet the needs of the current population. As Lake County experiences a growing number of older adults and older adults who are living active and longer lives, there is opportunity for senior centers and other service providers to consider how best to meet the needs of the current generation. One of the most notable features of many senior centers are nutrition programs, with many offering congregate meals and food pantries. Lake County residents placed a high value on both home-delivered meals and groceries.

Percent of survey takers who identified nutrition services as important



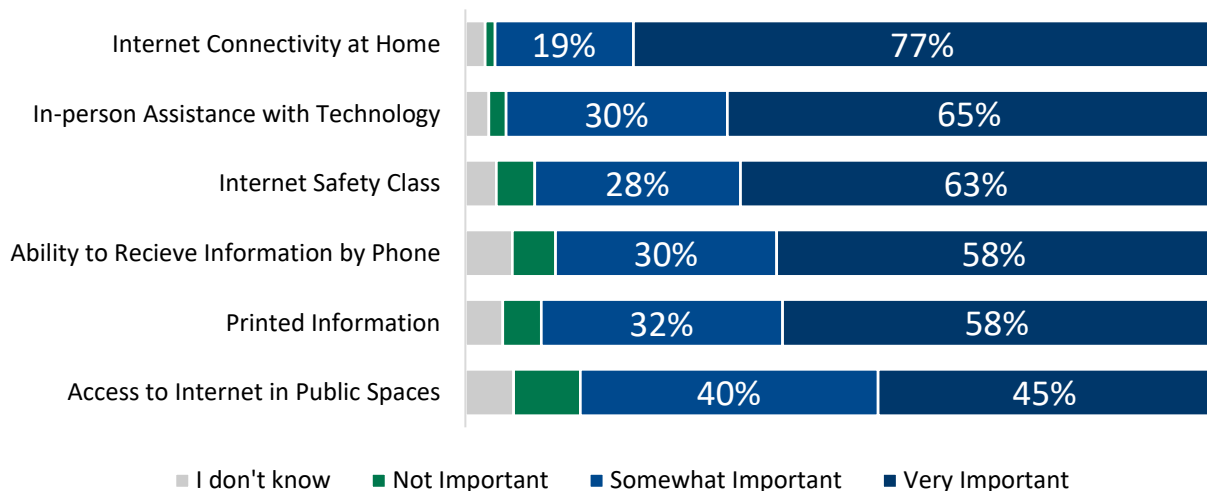
Senior Centers can be helpful in guiding older adults in understanding what their options are as they transition from driving to relying on other modes of transportation. Public transportation, both fixed route and dial-a-ride services are seen as important by most of the community. Private transportation and ride share services are seen as less important than public transit but more important than bike paths and lanes.

Public transportation services are viewed as important in Lake County



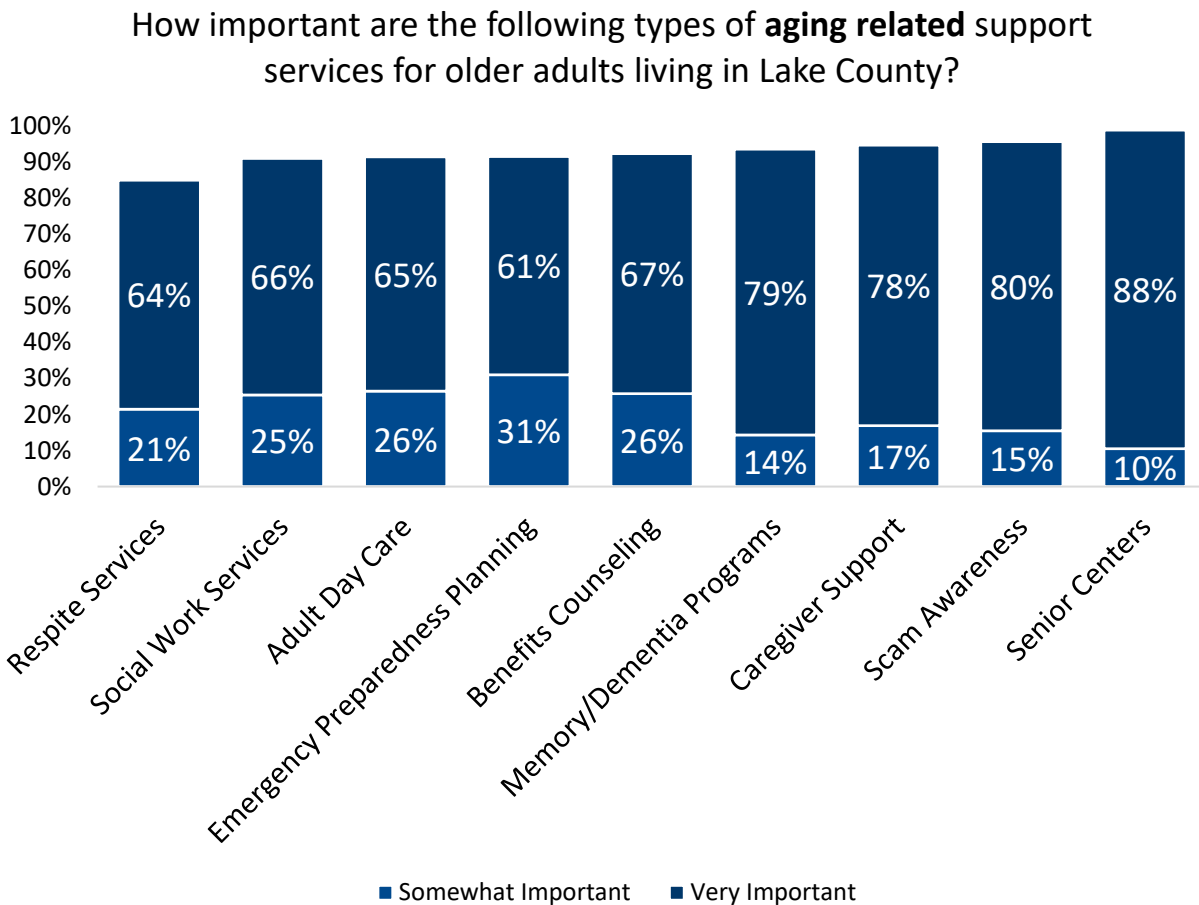
Senior Centers often serve as a hub of information for older adults in a community. They can both be physical and virtual places to receive information and learn how to use the ever-changing modern communication tools. Older adults who prefer to remain home or are unable to leave their homes can still stay connected through virtual services. Nearly all the survey takers rated having internet connectivity at home as important or very important. Along with the connective, 95 percent believe it is important to have in-person assistance with technology. This assistance, along with internet safety classes, could be provided within the home or in a community setting such as a library or senior center. Although older adults are becoming increasingly internet savvy, most continue to value receiving information by phone and in print.

How important are the following types of **communication** support services for older adults living in Lake County?



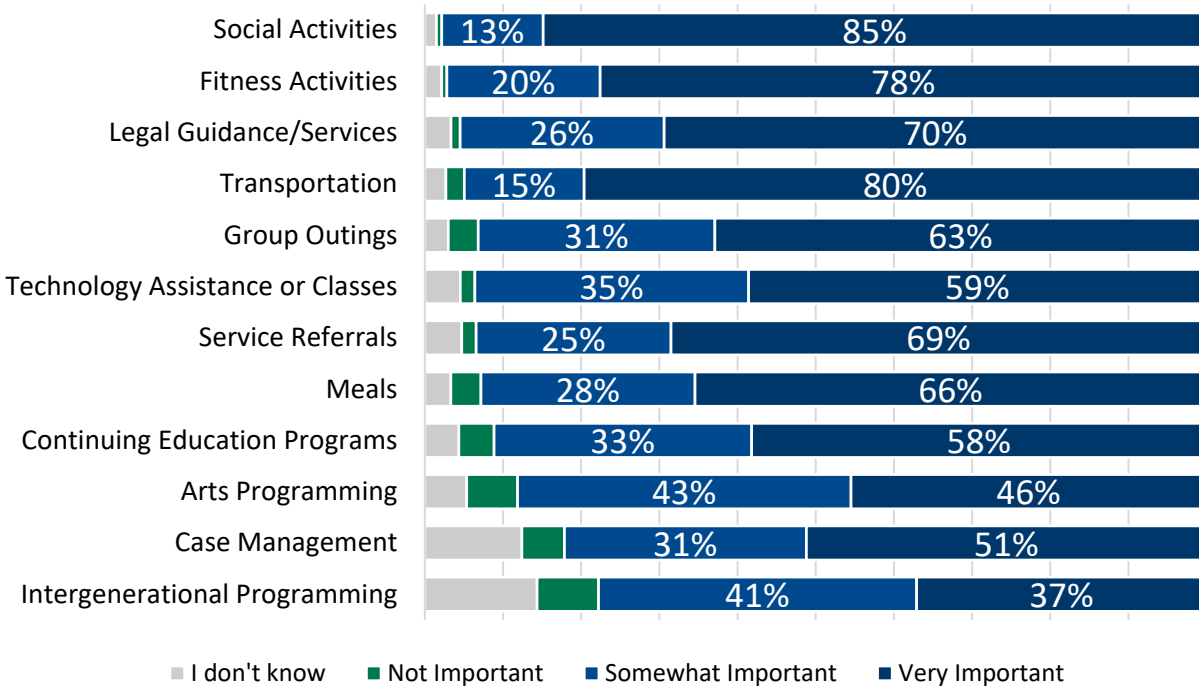
Aging Related

As a person ages, they often benefit from services tailored to the needs of being older. These are often services that had not been needed earlier in life. There is often a need to make a person aware of the service's existence and educate them on why it can be beneficial and how to access it. Within Lake County, most residents believe it is important to have active senior centers and scam awareness programs. Caregiver support and memory care programs are also highly valued.



There is a limitless number of programs and services a senior center can offer to the community. In Lake County, the top two activities indicated as important were fitness and social activities. Activity-based movement and social programs reduce social isolation and loneliness and can significantly impact health and well-being of older adults. Legal guidance and services also ranked high in importance; this may reflect a desire for residents to have assistance preparing legal documents including power of attorney and wills.

How important is it that **Senior Centers** in Lake County provide the following:



Survey respondents appreciated the senior centers in Lake County, particularly for their socialization opportunities, and wanted to see them expand programs. There were multiple requests for exercise programs and warm pool exercises. Survey respondents emphasized the importance of Meals on Wheels, expanded food pantry programs, home-delivered meal services, and assistance with grocery shopping. This continues to be a need in Lake County. Transportation came up frequently. Overall, Laketrans had a lot of support from the survey takers. Some suggested more convenient and accessible options through expanding Dial-a-Ride, as well as the need for better coordination with medical facilities. There were requests for help with internet costs, computer use, and technology instruction. Some mentioned a lack of awareness about existing services.

Aging Network Roundtables

Currently, some of the most popular offerings at senior centers are meals, as well as outings such as day trips to wineries or casinos. Pickleball courts, new crafts, and socializing are all things that appeal to people about senior centers. Participants agreed that senior centers should keep offering these wanted services, but there was also a desire to see senior centers adapt and do more.

Participants perceive senior centers as being like rec centers. On one hand this is good, as senior centers should focus on health and wellness. However, senior centers that act as rec centers may not be equipped for older seniors. Many participants felt senior centers need to do more to connect older adults to other services. There is often shame around asking for help, and seniors need people they feel

comfortable with helping them access services. There was also strong support for senior centers helping adults be life-long learners to help prevent cognitive decline.

Participants discussed how to engage more seniors at the senior centers. As there is a perception that senior centers “are for old people” there could be a financial incentive to bring younger older adults in the door initially. If senior centers were part of an intergenerational space, the transition could happen more naturally and benefit from intergenerational connections. It is challenging to bridge empty nesters from focusing on their family to joining a senior center. Pairing new members up with a mentor or buddy could be a successful strategy for retaining engagement. Additionally, senior centers should be sending mailings to all residents or older adults, not just members, to make the community aware of what is available.

In the future, senior centers may need to have a regional approach to be successful. Planning on a larger level would lead to economies of scale. Accountability for results could be built into funding. There was support for funding programs to keep barriers low for seniors. A collaborative approach to centers across the county would allow shared membership of residents and increase access to the offerings of each center. Centers could be reorganized as branches of Lake County Senior Centers and draw on each other’s programming strengths. Shared costs could free up additional funding for new or expanded programming.

Modernization Opportunities

Standards of Excellence

Within the National Council on Aging (NCOA), there is the Modernizing Senior Centers Resource Center. The objectives of the Modernizing Senior Centers Resource Center are to:

- Provide leadership to senior center and aging network professionals to support the modernization of senior centers
- Provide training, consultation, and technical assistance to senior centers around effective strategies for increasing and maintaining successful programming that meets the diverse needs of older adult participants
- Serve as a clearinghouse for innovative programs and strategies that can be successfully replicated at the local level

In 2022, NCOA conducted qualitative research with senior center professionals nationwide. These conversations revealed many of the same challenges as in Lake County: meeting the needs of a growing population, building capacity, and managing misperceptions and negative images about aging and senior centers. The conversations also supported the establishment or refinement of standards or core expectations for senior centers related to facilities and programs, integration of technology, and a focus on health and wellness.

Historically, NCOA offered the only accreditation program for senior centers through the National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC). NCOA sunset the NISC accreditation program in 2023 due to low rates of engagement and financial barriers for senior centers. However, NCOA maintains the NISC standards of

excellence as a self-assessment for senior centers, and offers best practices in innovation and programming, as well as networking and training opportunities. Membership is free.

San Diego Seniors Community Foundation put together a Master Plan for modern senior centers in its community, going beyond the baseline of nutrition services and social events into a dynamic community entity that engages the physical, mental, intellectual, and creative power of older adults to realize a higher quality of life of health, wellness, and independence. The designs are specific to locations throughout the community, but incorporate acting as a social hub, welcoming a large community, being multi-generational, and sustainable. San Diego's modern senior center envision programs and services that support:

Physical/Health Care

- Fitness center with adaptive equipment, group exercise, yoga, dancing, walking groups, sporting events
- Nursing and care coordination services, workshops on chronic disease management, nutrition education, health fairs, telemedicine

Behavioral

- Support groups, counseling services, connection to community mental health resources

Intellectual

- Classes tailored to the practical and educational, connections to university programs, lecture series, book clubs

Creative

- Journaling, creative writing, painting, expanded arts and crafts, theater, talent shows, music classes

Technology

- Computer labs, classes, support for hand-held and in-home technical devices

Financial

- Access to professionals for consultation, budget development, job training/employment assistance

Altruistic/Existential

- Volunteerism, civic engagement, peer advocacy, grassroots organizing, and building a community network that brings greater opportunities to build sense of belonging and purpose

To modernize, senior centers across the country are looking to strengthen community network practices, provide modern facilities and amenities, offer responsive and adaptive programming, raise operational standards, and cultivate diverse sources of funding. NISC studies of senior centers recommended placing a high priority on excellence in design, health and wellness, innovative programming, social ventures providing job opportunities for low-income seniors and revenue to the senior center, community civic engagement, and the evolving needs and preferences of contemporary seniors. Adapting current programming and offering new programming will be essential to continue to attract residents in their early years of older adulthood.

Coordinated Support

As crucial to adapting programs to appeal to multiple sub-populations of older adults is maintaining the role of senior centers as providing services for older adults that allow them to maintain their independence for as long as possible, particularly for those with higher levels of care need and/or modest incomes. The Options for Independent Living (Options) program of the Cuyahoga County Department of Senior is an example of a county-based, levy-funded program that fills the gaps of older adults who need support to remain in their home but do not meet the qualifications for means-tested programs such as PASSPORT. Options provides a sliding scale fee schedule and offers a menu of services that an older adult may receive. A similar program in Lake County could provide the supports needed keep seniors in their homes, maintain a high quality of life and be active members of the community.

Assessment Themes	Goals	Opportunities	Potential Actions
Positive Aging	<i>Reduce Stigma associated with aging that prevents people from engaging in programs and services</i>	Positive Aging Communications	Utilize Reframing Aging Communications Best Practice Guide for messaging about and for older adults.
			Provide training open to all county residents and service providers on Reframing Aging.
		Aging Mastery Program	Provide support to local organizations that implement the Aging Mastery or other similar evidenced based programming designed to center the positive aspects of aging.
		Community Engagement	Foster interdependence and intergenerational relationships through programs like the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (R.S.V.P.).
Housing	<i>Address housing costs and create new housing options for older adults</i>	Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)	Establish partnerships with non-profit and/or private development corporations to pursue development of ADUs.
			Identify steps to allow local jurisdictions to allow ADUs, including model legislation (zoning code templates in accordance with Township and Municipal law) and financing options.
		Home sharing models	Engage a third-party platform to coordinate home sharing among Lake County residents.
		Home Maintenance	Increase support to and development of local programs that provide home maintenance and home modification for older Lake County residents. Increase awareness of home maintenance programs available. Consider expansion of available services (i.e. snow plowing).
		New Construction	Consider a one-time capital catalytic investment to support development of new construction projects for older adults. Consider a partnership with private or non-profit development teams.
Social Emotional Well Being	<i>Recognize and respond to the unique social and emotional needs of older adults</i>	Collaborative Mental Health Efforts	Support & promote Lake County ADAMHS Board current efforts in providing services to older adults, and explore new opportunities to collaborate.
			Provide educational opportunities for aging network professionals to learn more about behavioral health and for behavioral health professionals to learn more about aging adults.
		Scam Prevention	Develop a cross-sector taskforce to address scams in older adults. Taskforce members should include aging network professionals, law enforcement, legal community, banking industry, someone with lived experience and others committed to reducing scams.
			Use current communication methods including newsletters and social media to provide education on scam trends and tips to avoid being scammed.

Modernization of Senior Services	<i>Revamp programs and services to meet the needs of all older adults</i>	Build Capacity	Build capacity at the county level to expand/manage services and introduce innovative service delivery models to address identified gaps in an operationally and fiscally sustainable manner.
		Coordinated Support	Develop a service that provides coordinated care management and in-home services for older adults living in their homes that do not qualify for means-tested programs.
		Standards of Excellence	In collaboration with current senior center leadership, develop and adopt standards of excellence across senior centers to provide a high level of service at all centers.
		Increasing Collaborative Efforts with WRAAA	Collaborate with the Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging to identify innovative programming and funding models for senior services to adapt current programing and offer new options that appeal to older adults.