



AGE-FRIENDLY

Delaware County

2023 ASSESSMENT REPORT



Published August 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Age-Friendly Project Overview	2
Survey Methodology	3
Key Findings	4-5
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	6
Transportation	7
Housing	8
Community Engagement and Participation	9-10
Communication and Information	11
Community and Health Services	12-13
Respondent Demographics (About You)	14-15
Geographic Representation	16
Contact Information	17
Appendices	DelawareHealth.org/data
Appendix A Survey Tool	
Appendix B Raw Survey Response Tables	

INTRODUCTION

Delaware County, Ohio, has experienced rapid population growth in recent years, particularly among older adults. This demographic shift is notable as the county becomes an increasingly popular destination for retirees and older adults seeking a high quality of life. The influx of older adults is driven by Delaware County's appealing combination of excellent health care services, vibrant community life, strong school systems, and abundant recreational opportunities. As this population segment grows, it underscores the importance of enhancing age-friendly initiatives, ensuring that infrastructure, services, and programs are tailored to meet the unique needs of older residents. This proactive approach will help maintain Delaware County as an attractive and supportive environment for its aging population.

A critical component of designing a successful age-friendly community initiative is understanding the experiences of older adults in Delaware County. This involves identifying the community assets available to support their needs and recognizing the challenges the "built environment" may present. The purpose of an age-friendly needs assessment is to gather insights into what older residents require to age safely and securely in their chosen living environments. Every community has unique strengths that contribute to its livability, as well as areas needing improvement. This assessment provides essential information to enhance your age-friendly initiative by leveraging existing community strengths and addressing service gaps.

SourcePoint is at the forefront of this vital age-friendly initiative in Delaware County, committed to creating a community where older adults can thrive. By leading this effort, SourcePoint aims to ensure that the voices and needs of older residents are heard and addressed. We invite all community members to participate in this important endeavor. Your input and involvement are crucial in shaping a supportive and inclusive environment for our aging population. Join us in making Delaware County a model of age-friendly living by contributing to the needs assessment and supporting our ongoing efforts. Together, we can build a stronger, more resilient community for everyone.

Learn more at MySourcePoint.org/age-friendly.



Fara Waugh, LISW-S
Chief Executive Officer
SourcePoint



Garrett Guillozet, MPA, REHS/RS, AEMT
Health Commissioner
Delaware Public Health District

This report funded by:



AGE-FRIENDLY PROJECT OVERVIEW

AGE-FRIENDLY
Delaware County

ACTION PLAN

Small Steps. Big Impact.



Housing

Goal: Ensure older adults have access to affordable, accessible, and safe housing options.



Transportation

Goal: Assure older adults have access to affordable, safe transportation that gets them where they need to go.



Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Goal: Provide safe, accessible places for people to gather and engage.



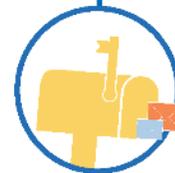
Support, Health & Safety Services

Goal: Ensure older adults are able to access and afford community support, health, and safety services.



Community Engagement

Goal: Ensure older adults can continue to work, volunteer, and be actively engaged in community life.



Communication & Information

Goal: Recognize older adults communicate in various ways and ensure they are connected within the community.

Mission

Age-Friendly Delaware County will collaborate to innovate and improve key elements of livability that support healthy aging in our community.

Vision

Delaware County is an active, safe, healthy, and connected community for all ages and abilities.

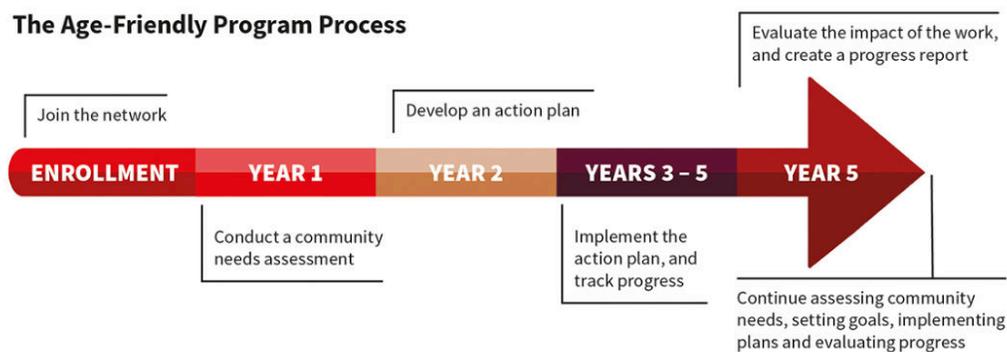
SourcePoint
Thrive after 55

MySourcePoint.org/age-friendly



SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The initial Age-Friendly Delaware County Assessment began in 2018 with research of tailored survey designs, focus groups, data gap identification and an advisory group to determine the focus and design of the assessment process. Following these steps, the “My Life in Delaware County” survey tool was created. In the five years since that initial survey, SourcePoint and the Delaware Public Health District have taken the information gathered in the survey to improve the lives of older adults in the county. Being a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, Delaware County has committed to participating in an assessment process and cycle of continuous improvement as described in the graph below.



In 2023, it was time to resurvey older adults in Delaware County. The 2023 survey tool included 59 questions divided into 7 sections. For a copy of the survey tool, please refer to Appendix A. Cover letters, thank you/reminder letters and a reminder postcard were included in the mailings sent to residents during winter 2023 and spring 2024.

All documents were sent to the Ohio Department of Health Institutional Review Board (IRB). Final documents underwent full review, and the project was approved by the IRB.

A single sample frame was used to select which residents would receive the survey. Individuals were selected via random sampling from the Delaware County Board of Election Voter Registration Database and 1,500 registered voters aged 55 and older were selected to participate. This group was then sent a cover letter, survey and a pre-stamped envelope in which to return the survey. All sampled residents were then sent a letter as a reminder to return the survey or thank them for their participation. Lastly, a reminder postcard was sent to any remaining residents who had not returned the survey.

Returned survey responses were entered into a secure database. Data was cleaned and then analyzed using Stata software. A total of 427 valid surveys were included in the dataset for a response rate of 21%.

The data presented in this report is represented with a mix of graphs, percentages, and qualitative comments that are from survey respondents. It is just a snapshot, and full results can be found in the back of this report in Appendix B. All the data represented is from responses of Delaware County residents aged 55 and older. Respondents of the survey were informed that they did not have to complete the whole survey and were free to skip questions they did not want to answer and stop at any time. This is important to note because any percentages shown in this report are therefore the percentages of individuals who chose to answer the question, not the percentage of individuals who answered the survey.

KEY FINDINGS

In looking to the future, it's crucial to reflect on past survey results and examine how the data has evolved over the past five years. Delaware County is experiencing rapid growth, which means the priorities of its residents are shifting. Below is a comparison between the 2018 survey results and those from the 2023 survey. Additionally, there are a few notable 2023 survey findings categorized by geographic region.

Older adults prefer to receive information by the following methods:



Social media: **↑ 22% (+4%)**

Newspaper: **↓ 21% (-19%)**

Radio: **↓ 21% (-10%)**

Mail: **↓ 72% (-8%)**

TV: **↓ 33% (-6%)**

Faith-based organizations & community boards: **↓ 23% (-5%)**

Older adults indicated they would consider the following housing types if they were to move in the future:

Condo: **↓ 49% (-7%)**

Family member's home: **↑ 19% (+6%)**

Older adults reported using the following types of technology:

Smartphone: **↑ 86% (+7%)**

Facebook: **↑ 55% (+6%)**

Instagram: **↑ 24% (+9%)**



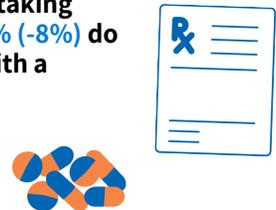
Number of prescription medications taken by older adults:

Zero: **↓ 13% (-4%)**

3: **↓ 10% (-6%)** 

5+: **↑ 26% (+6%)** 

Of those older adults currently taking prescription medications, **↓ 42% (-8%)** do not review their medications with a pharmacist every year.



After turning 55, **↓ 10% (-20%)** said they were abused, neglected, or a victim of a scam.



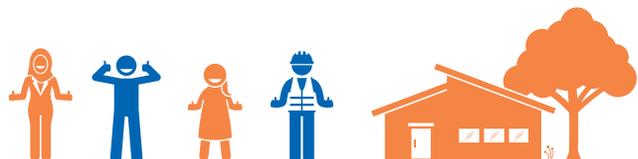
↓ 84% (-6%) of older adults have children 

↓ 62% (-9%) of older adults have grandchildren 

↓ 36% (-5%) of older adults are not aware of mental health services in their community.



↓ 63% (-17%) of older adults would rate their community as a very good or excellent place to live as they age.



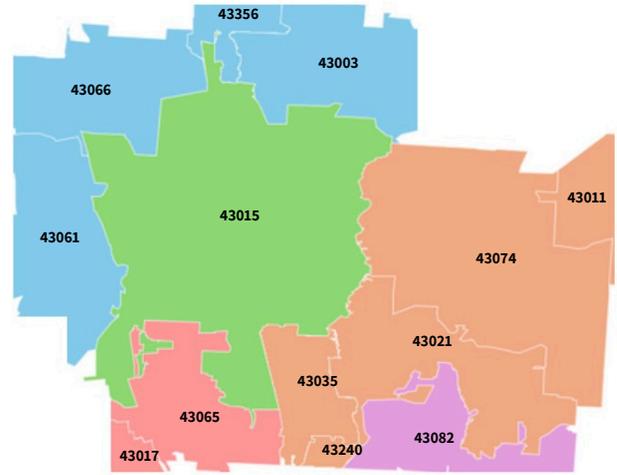
KEY FINDINGS

Results by Geographic Region

Transportation

In your neighborhood do you have access to convenient public transportation?

- Orange Region** 48% do not
- Green Region** 45% are not sure
- Red Region** 66% do not
- Purple Region** 35% are not sure



For a more detailed description of the map, see page 17.

Community Engagement and Participation

How often do you feel the following:

- Orange Region** 71% hardly ever feel lack of companionship
- Green Region** 78% hardly ever feel left out
- Red Region** 80% hardly ever feel left out
- Purple Region** 83% hardly ever feel isolated from others

Do you agree that there are activities that interest you in your community?

- Orange Region** 77% agree
- Green Region** 83% agree
- Red Region** 79% agree
- Purple Region** 84% agree

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Do you experience any of the following barriers in your neighborhood when spending time outdoors or in public spaces?

No public restrooms

- Orange Region** 30%
- Green Region** 26%
- Red Region** 23%
- Purple Region** 16%

No place to get free drinking water

- Orange Region** 30%
- Green Region** 26%
- Red Region** 23%
- Purple Region** 16%

OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS



People need public places to gather – indoors and out. Green spaces, seating and accessible buildings (elevators, zero-step entrances, staircases with railings) can be used and enjoyed by people of all ages (AARP, The 8 Domains of Livability: An Introduction, 2023).

This section covered Q1-Q5 on the survey tool and addressed topics relating to safe and accessible places for people to gather, public buildings and outdoor spaces.

In your neighborhood do you have access to the following?



Neighborhood Access

Well-maintained and safe parks	79%	Sidewalks	59%
Well-maintained public buildings	76%	Accessible multi-use trails	59%
Public parking	67%	Well-lit streets & walkways	52%
Crosswalks	62%		



Neighborhood Barriers

Do you experience any of the following barriers in your neighborhood when spending time outdoors or in public places?

No place to get free drinking water.	32%
Limited sidewalks where I want to walk.	27%
No public restrooms.	25%
Nowhere to sit / rest.	21%
Sidewalks are uneven or unsafe.	19%
Limited / unavailable public parking.	17%
No crosswalks / no crosswalks with signals.	14%
Multi-use trails are unavailable or inaccessible to me.	10%
Restrooms that are not accessible.	8%

94% of Delaware County older adults consider their community to be somewhat or very safe.



Are **outdoor spaces** (parks, playgrounds, trails, etc.) in your community easily accessible to those that have different physical abilities (wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, canes, etc.)?

70% Yes 10% No

Are **public buildings** in your community easily accessible to those that have different physical abilities (wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, canes, etc.)?

67% Yes 3% No



“Public parking exists, but is a bit of a walk during peak hours.”

“Oxford Township Hall has well-maintained and safe parks.”



TRANSPORTATION



Driving shouldn't be the only way to get around. Pedestrians need sidewalks and safe, crossable streets. Dedicated bicycle lanes benefit nondrivers and drivers alike. Public transit options can range from large-scale (trains, buses, light rail) to the small (taxis, shuttles or ride share services) (AARP, The 8 Domains of Livability: An Introduction, 2023).

This section covered Q6-Q8 on the survey tool and addressed topics relating to how older adults currently navigate their community and what methods of transportation they have access to in their neighborhood.

Methods of transportation used by older adults in Delaware County

Car (driven by yourself)	81%
Car (driven by someone else)	6%
Public transportation	<1%
Walk	<1%
Transportation service <small>coordinated by community entity (churches, retirement communities, service providers, etc.)</small>	<1%



In your neighborhood do you have access to the following:

- Affordable public transportation**
18% Yes 38% No 38% Not Sure
- Convenient public transportation**
16% Yes 42% No 36% Not Sure
- Accessible transportation**
28% Yes 27% No 37% Not Sure
- Well-maintained streets**
84% Yes 8% No 4% Not Sure
- Bike lanes / trails**
55% Yes 27% No 12% Not Sure

Do you experience any of the following barriers getting to where you need to go?

- 23% I am not aware of public transportation in my community
- 10% Parking issues / difficulty with parking
- 6% I do not feel safe when walking
- 5% Other
- 4% I do not drive
- 3% I do not have other to take me
- <1% I cannot afford public transportation



“Some sidewalks are uneven or unsafe.”

“Need pamphlets sent with phone numbers and names of transportation.”

“Some of the amenities are close by but require driving.”



HOUSING

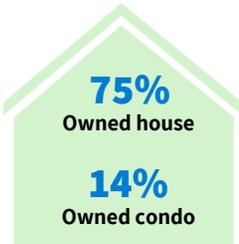


Most older adults want to reside in their current home or community for as long as possible. This is possible if a home is designed or modified for aging in place, or if a community has housing options that are suitable for differing incomes, ages and life stages (AARP, The 8 Domains of Livability: An Introduction, 2023).

This section covered Q9-Q17 on the survey tool and addressed topics relating to aging in place, as well as current and preferred housing types.

45% of Delaware County older adults need assistance maintaining the **exterior** of their home.

42% of Delaware County older adults need assistance maintaining the **interior** of their home.

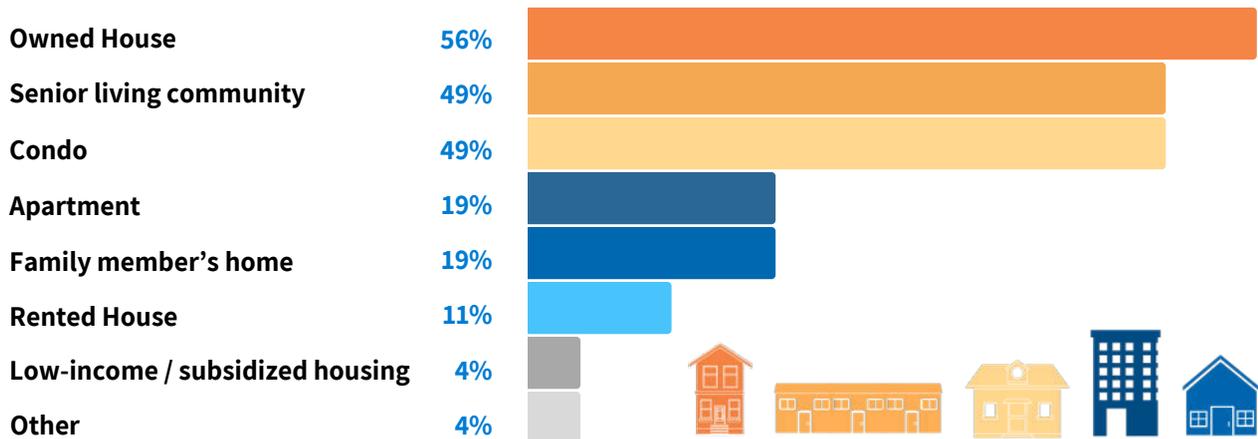


The majority of older adults find it important to stay in both their community and current home as they age:

91% find it important or very important to stay in **their community**.

89% find it important or very important to stay in **their current home**.

Older adults indicated they would consider the following housing types if they were to move in the future:



81% indicated that they would be prepared for an emergency, including a 3-day supply of food, water medicine, etc.

Percentage of Delaware County older adults who have the following working items in their home:

- 96%** Smoke detectors
- 96%** Air conditioner / heater
- 93%** Fan
- 78%** Carbon monoxide detectors
- 31%** Alternative source of electric power



20% said they would move out of Delaware County for the main reason of **cannot afford property taxes**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION



This section covered Q18-Q22 on the survey tool and combines the social participation, respect and social inclusion, and work and civic engagement domains.

Regardless of a person's age, loneliness is often as debilitating a health condition as having a chronic illness or disease. Sadness and isolation can be combated by having opportunities to socialize and the availability of accessible, affordable and fun social activities.

Everyone wants to feel valued. Intergenerational gatherings and activities are a great way for young and older people to learn from one another, honor what each has to offer and, at the same time, feel good about themselves.

An age-friendly community encourages older people to be actively engaged in community life and has opportunities for residents to work for pay or volunteer their skills. (AARP, The 8 Domains of Livability: An Introduction, 2023).

There are **negative stereotypes** about people my age.



There are **volunteer opportunities** that interest me in my community.



There are **opportunities for community members from different generations to engage together.**



There are **education opportunities** that interest me in my community.



My **ideas and opinions are valued** by local decision makers.



There are **physical activity opportunities** that interest me in my community.



There are **activities** that interest me in my community.



Local schools involve older adults in events and activities.



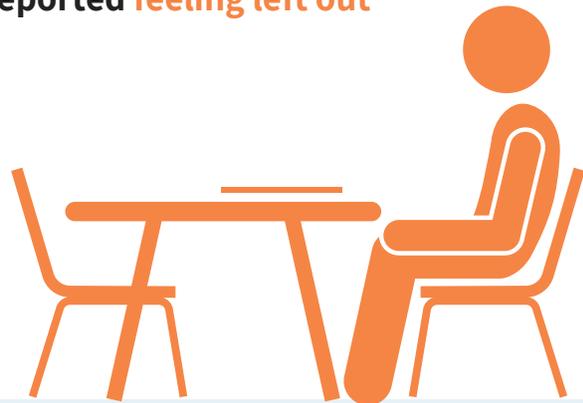
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION



25% of older adults reported feeling a **lack of companionship**

23% of older adults reported **feeling isolated** from others

22% of older adults reported **feeling left out**



60%
Retired

27%
Employed

4%
Disabled,
Unable to work

3%
Seeking work

Older adults reported the following concerns upon transitioning into retirement:

18% Not able to maintain current lifestyle.

14% Losing social connections.

14% Lack of access to health benefits.

13% Filling time with meaningful activities.

11% Losing sense of worth.

3% Experienced a struggle with technology when seeking employment.



“The Rec Center and park trails give me physical activity opportunities that interest me in my community.”

“I don't know if my ideas are valued by local decision makers.”



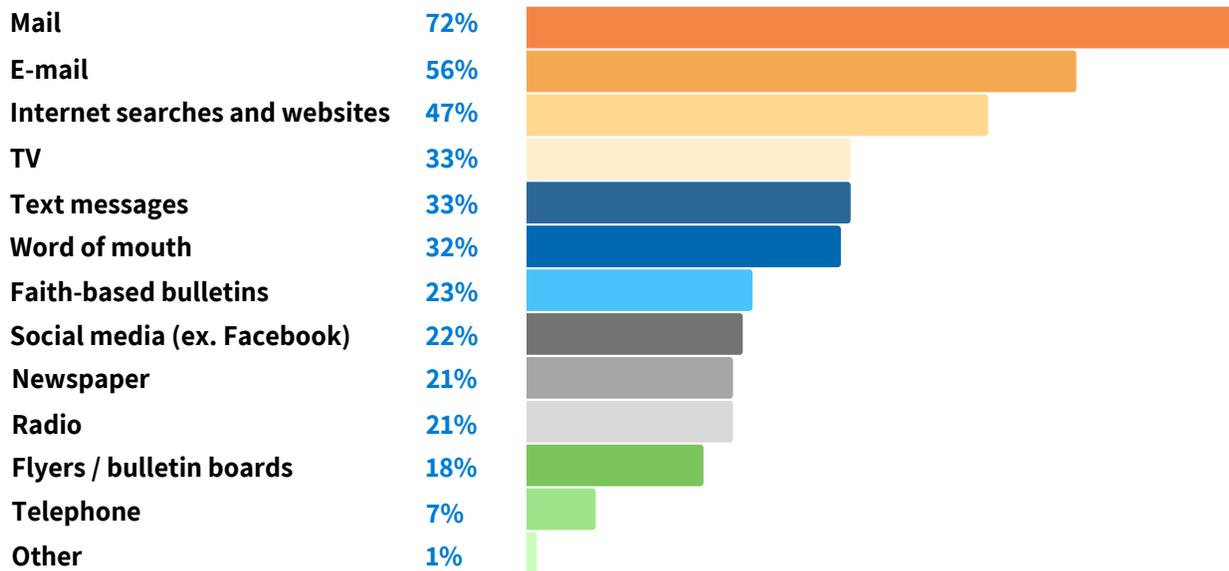
COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION



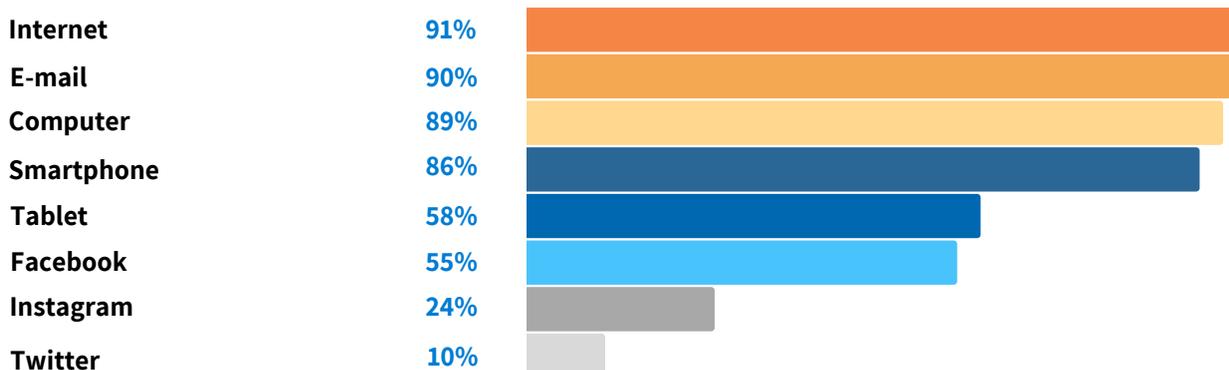
Communication now occurs in ways few could have imagined a decade ago. Age-friendly communities recognize that information needs to be shared through a variety of methods since not everyone is tech-savvy, and not everyone has a smartphone or home-based access to the internet (AARP, *The 8 Domains of Livability: An Introduction*, 2023).

This section covered Q23-Q26 on the survey tool and addressed topics relating to technology and preferred methods of communication.

Older adults would prefer to receive information by the following methods:



Older adults reported using the following types of technology:



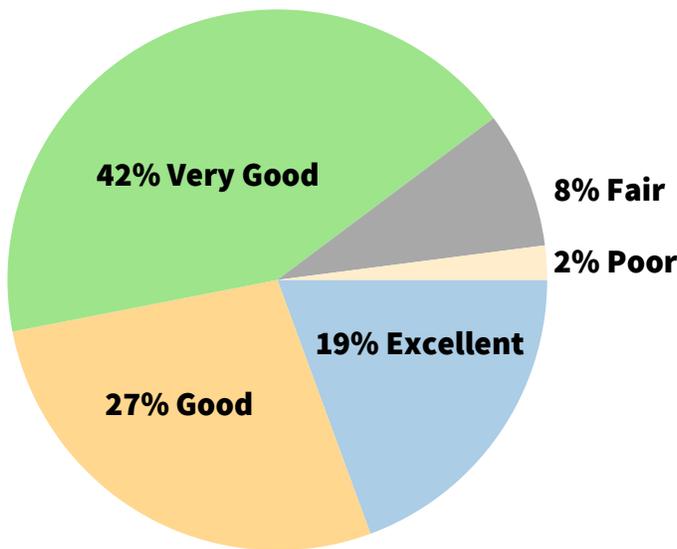
COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SERVICES



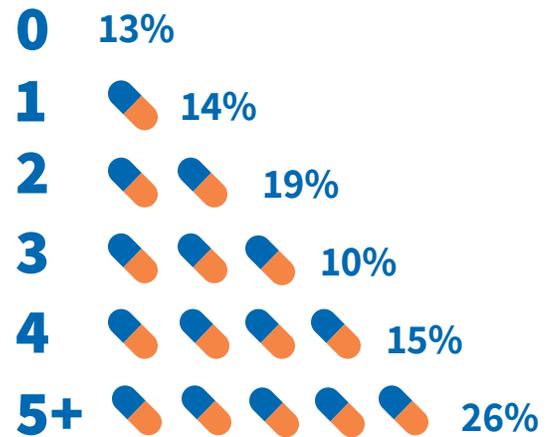
At some point, every person of every age gets hurt, becomes ill or simply needs some help. While it's important that assistance and care be available nearby, it's essential that residents can access and afford the services required (AARP, The 8 Domains of Livability: An Introduction, 2023).

This section covered Q27-Q43 on the survey tool and addressed topics relating to health issues commonly affecting older adults.

In general, older adults reported their health status as:



Number of prescription medications taken by older adults:



Of those older adults currently taking prescription medications, **42%** do not review their medications with a pharmacist every year.

19% of older adults have fallen in the past 6 months.

22% are anxious about falling.

68% of older adults exercise every day to several times a week.



Older adults reported receiving food the most from the following resources:

44% Dining out at a restaurant

4% Family / friend provided food or meals

3% Farmer's market

2% Group meals at community center, senior center, church, etc.

0% Food pantry



Before turning 55, **8%** said they were abused, neglected, or a victim of a scam.

After turning 55, **10%** said they were abused, neglected, or a victim of a scam, including:

5% Deceived into giving money/property

4% Had money/property taken without permission

COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SERVICES

36%

of Delaware County older adults are not aware of mental health services in their community.



Older adults reported currently experiencing the following:



- 18% Difficulty walking or climbing stairs.
- 12% Deaf or serious difficulty hearing.
- 6% Difficulty running errands alone due to a physical, mental or emotional condition.
- 5% Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions due to a physical, mental, or emotional condition.
- 4% Difficulty dressing or bathing.
- 2% Blind or serious difficulty seeing even without glasses.

20%

reported being a caregiver, which is someone who is not paid to provide care for someone else, such as a family member or friend.



- 8% care for a Spouse
- 4% care for a Parent
- 2% care for a Friend
- 2% care for an Adult Child
- 1% care for Grandchildren

<1%

reported feeling extremely stressed in caring for a family member of friend.

6%

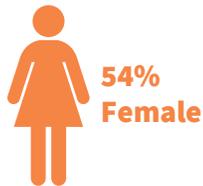
reported that the person they are caring for has Dementia or Alzheimer's disease.



ABOUT YOU



This section covered Q44-59 on the survey tool and includes demographics and socioeconomic characteristics of those who responded to the survey. Demographic data can be used to divide the larger older adult population into relevant sub-groups and describe Delaware County's older adult population.

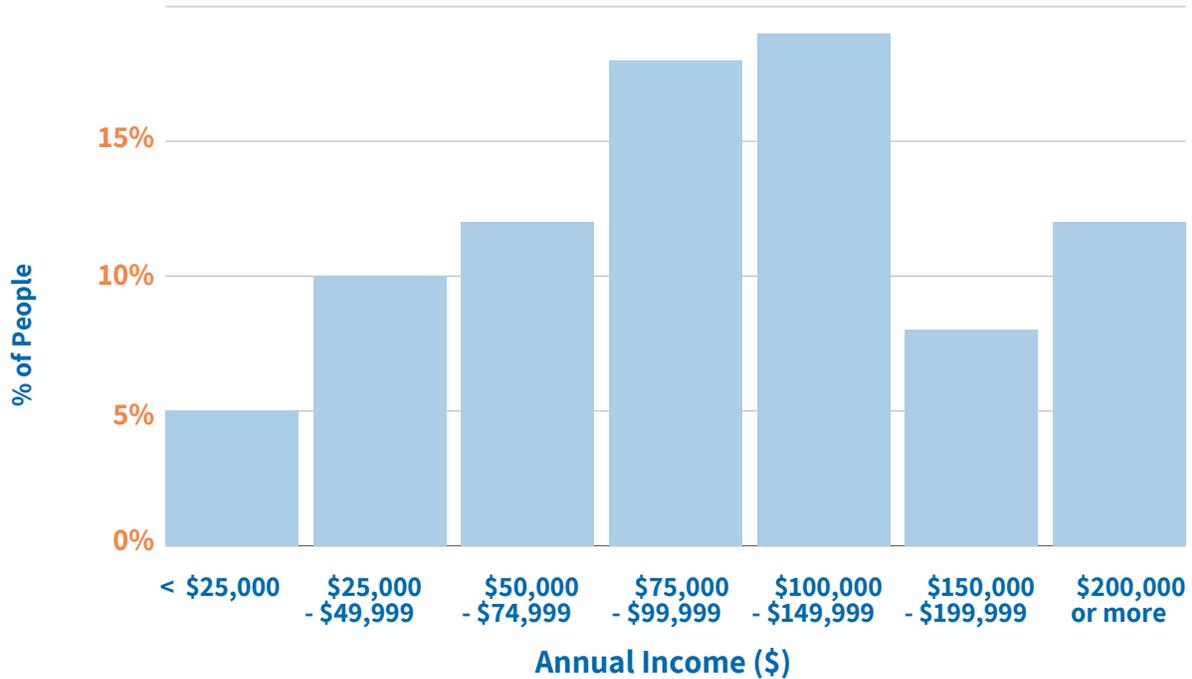


Average Age: 72 years old

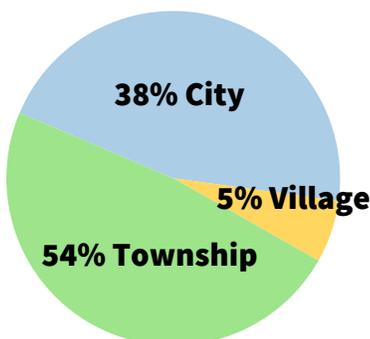
Race:

- White 90%**
- Black or African American 2%**
- Prefer not to answer 2%**
- Asian 1%**
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race) <1%**

Household income breakdown for Delaware County older adults



Municipality:



Education:

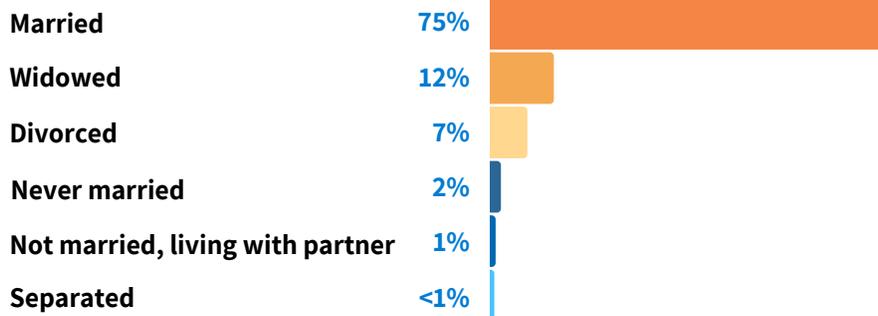
- K-12th grade (no diploma): **2%**
- High school graduate, GED or equivalent: **13%**
- Post-high school education/training (no degree): **14%**
- 2-year college degree: **8%**
- 4-year college degree: **27%**
- Post-graduate study (no degree): **6%**
- Graduate or professional degree(s): **25%**

Served in military: 14%

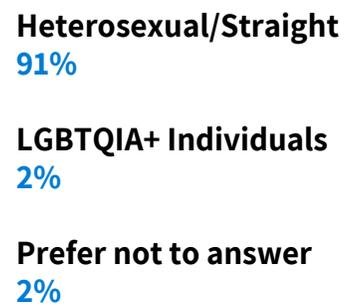


ABOUT YOU

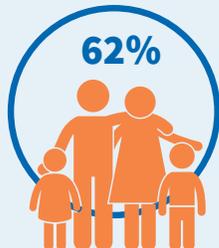
Current marital status of older adults



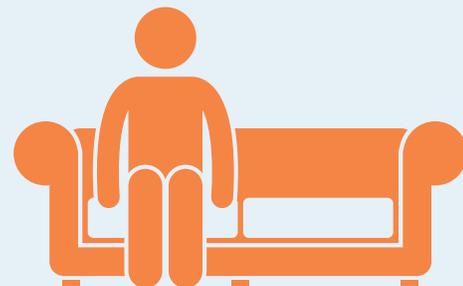
Sexual orientation



of Delaware County older adults have children



of Delaware County older adults have grandchildren



18% of Delaware County older adults live alone

63%

of older adults would rate their community as a very good or excellent place to live as they age



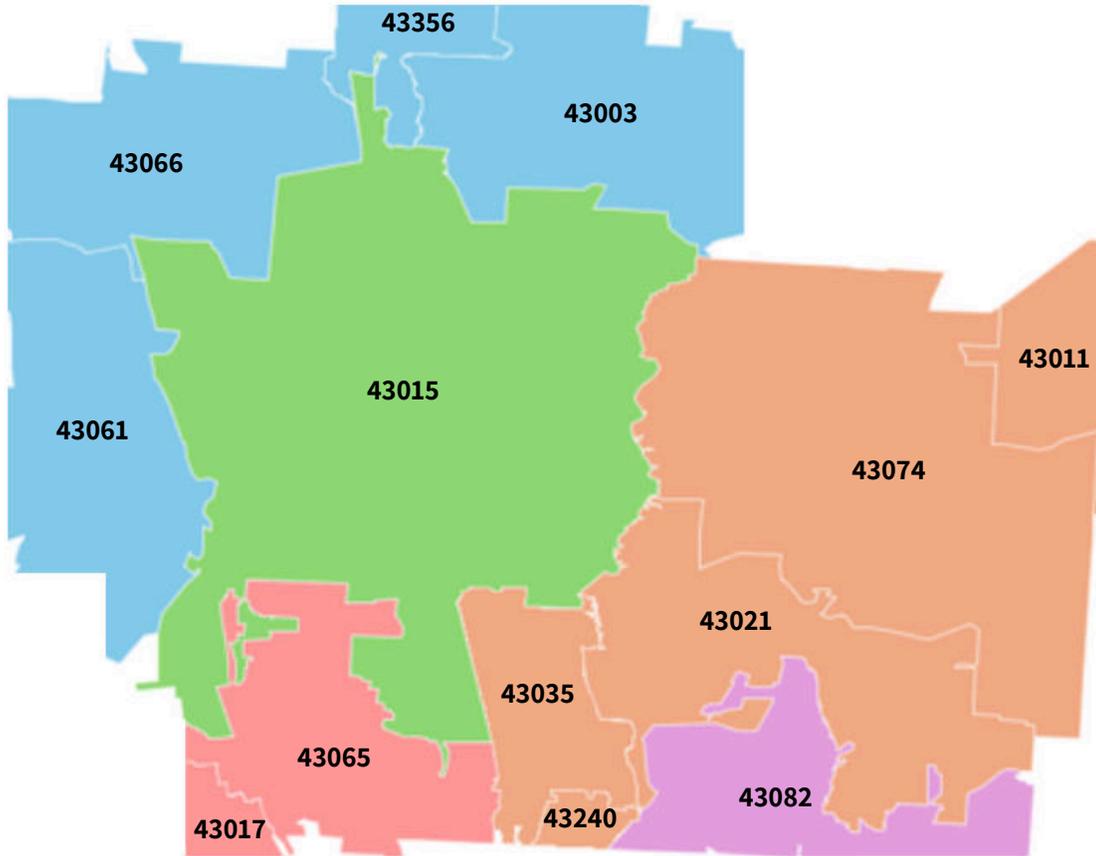
Average years lived in Delaware County:

25



GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

Data is available by the below geographic regions. While this data is not statistically significant, it can be useful in examining regional trends. Data can be requested from the Delaware Public Health District.



Blue Region*

Ostrander, Radnor, Waldo,
Ashley, Prospect

Total number of respondents: 17

Orange Region

Sunbury, Galena, Johnstown,
Centerburg, Lewis Center, Columbus

Total number of respondents: 91

Green Region

Delaware

Total number of respondents: 119

Red Region

Dublin, Powell

Total number of respondents: 90

Purple Region

Westerville

Total number of respondents: 93

*Not enough responses to report aggregate results

CONTACT INFORMATION



For more information regarding:

Assessment results, further data analysis, survey methodology, or this report, please contact the Delaware Public Health District.

Emily Lipp, Epidemiologist
740-203-2030, ELipp@DelawareHealth.org

Strategic planning, workgroups, current initiatives, and ways to get involved please contact SourcePoint.

Amelia Tucciarone, Chief Programs Officer
740-363-6677, amelia@MySourcePoint.org

Alison Yeager, Chief Advancement Officer
740-203-2396, alison@MySourcePoint.org