



V E R N O N
RESEARCH GROUP

Grand Forks, East Grand Forks Community Needs Assessment

Community Residents' Report

*Prepared for
United Way of Grand Forks,
East Grand Forks and Area
[Hwww.unitedwaygfegf.org](http://www.unitedwaygfegf.org)*

April 2010

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Purpose and Methodology

In the second phase of this Community Needs Assessment, the target audience was community residents. From the in-depth interviews with community leaders and decision-makers, the following areas were identified for exploration in the quantitative study:

- ▼ A shortage of affordable housing
- ▼ Alcohol abuse, binge drinking
- ▼ Concerns about care for senior residents
- ▼ Crime in our community
- ▼ Domestic violence
- ▼ Drug abuse
- ▼ Finding a job that pays a living wage
- ▼ Finding affordable child care
- ▼ Getting a quality education in the public schools
- ▼ Homelessness, or those about to be homeless
- ▼ Integrating people of different races or ethnicities
- ▼ Lack of affordable medical care
- ▼ Lack of economic growth
- ▼ Lack of a free health clinic
- ▼ Mental illness or emotional issues
- ▼ Not being able to retain or attract young people
- ▼ Unemployment or underemployment

The goal of the study was to understand the following questions:

- ▼ How much of a problem are each of these issues among the population of the Greater Grand Forks area?
- ▼ How do residents feel these problems have changed over time?
- ▼ How aware are residents of the social service options available in the Greater Grand Forks area – where would they turn?
- ▼ What are the priorities community members want leaders to focus their attention on?
- ▼ How do community members perceive government and non-profit leaders overall?

In conjunction with the United Way of Grand Forks, East Grand Forks (UWGFEGF) and their partners, Vernon Research Group designed a survey instrument to reflect the specific goals of the study identified above.

Three hundred thirty-six telephone and 75 web surveys with Greater Grand Forks area residents aged 18 and older were conducted between November 30, 2009 and January 4, 2010, and averaged slightly less than 20 minutes per interview. The survey attempted to match 2006 U.S. Census statistics.

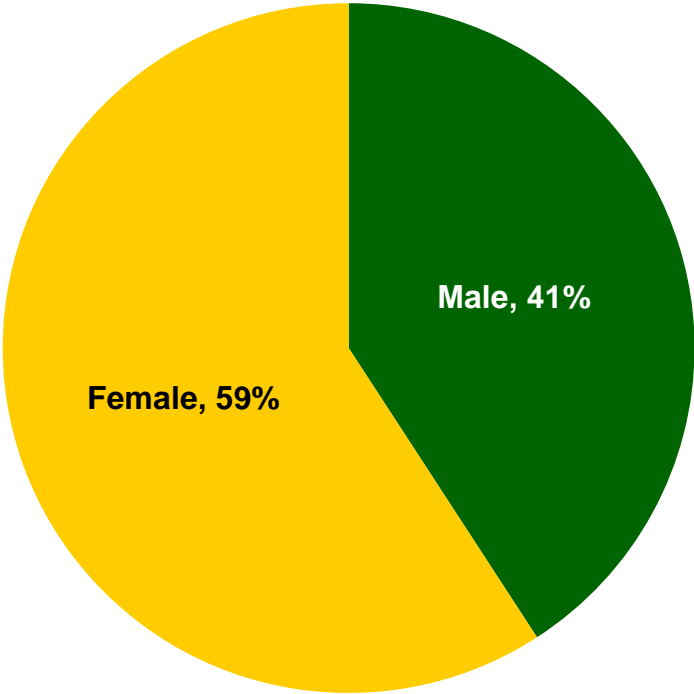
About the Sample

Gender

The sample was 59% female and 41% male.

N=411

S18. Are you...

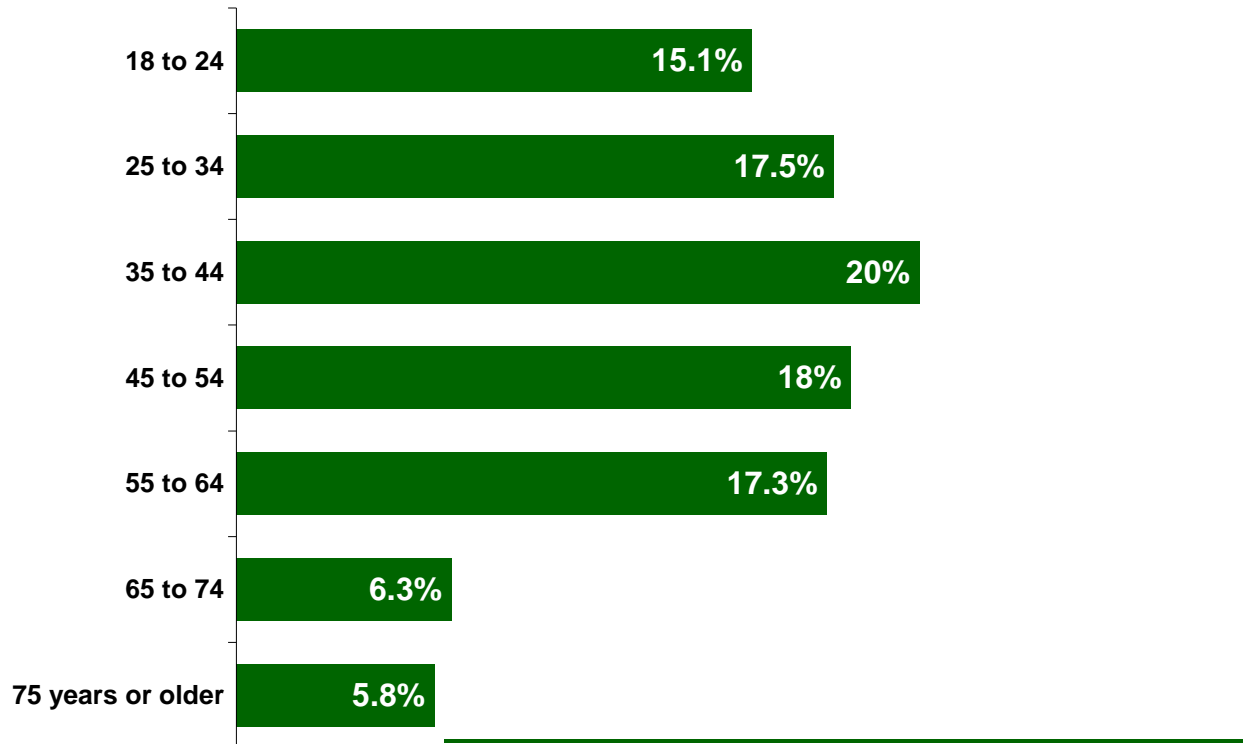


Age

According to the U.S. Census the Grand Forks area tends to be younger. The sample had fewer 18-to-24 year olds but more 25-to-64 year older.

N=411

S1. What is your age?



U.S. Census	Percentage
Under 18	22%
18 to 24	22%
25 to 34	13%
35 to 44	11%
45 to 54	13%
55 to 64	9%
65 to 74	5%
75 years and older	5%

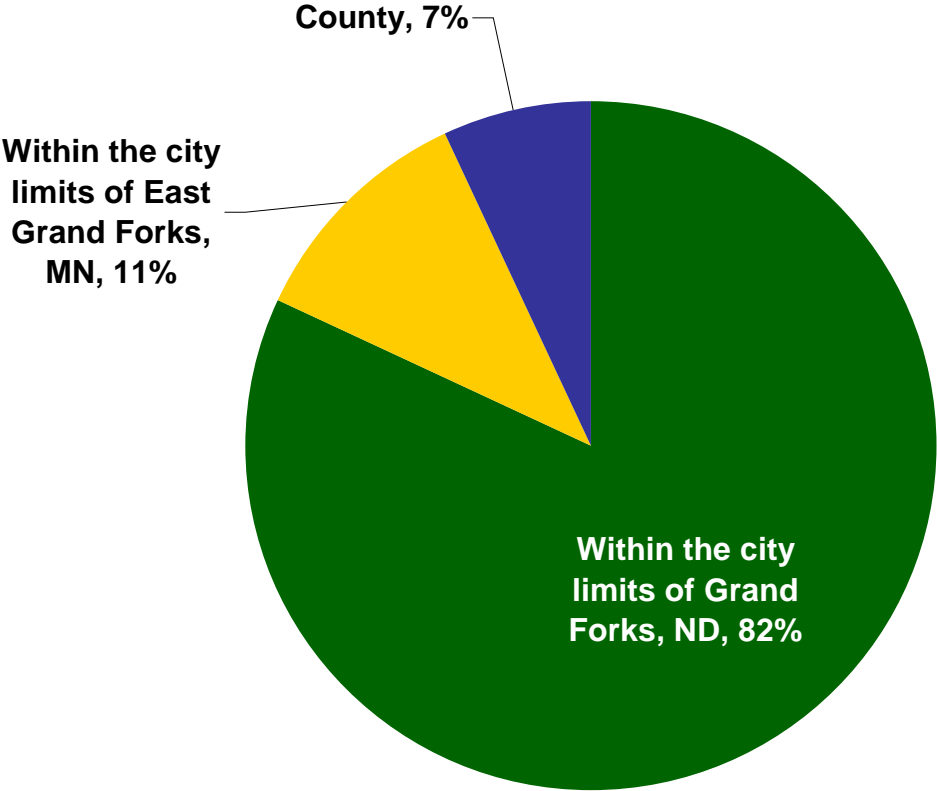
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey

Community by Location

The cities sampled in the county included Reynolds, Thompson, Gilby, Northwood, Manvel and Larimore.

N=411

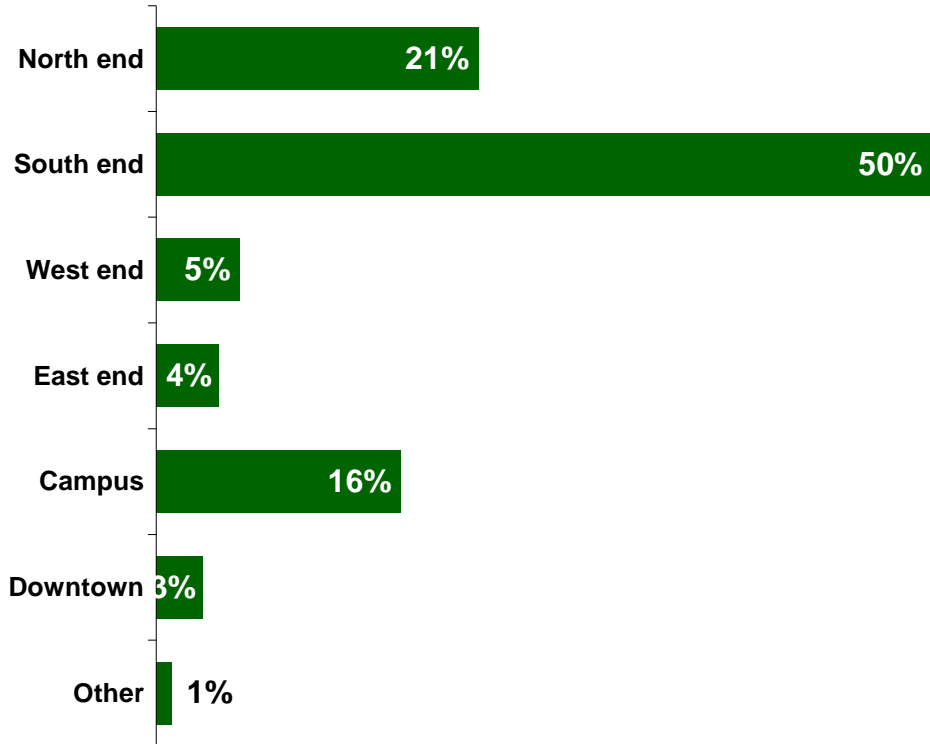
S2. Do you currently reside...



Location within Grand Forks

The South end of Grand Forks had the highest representation.

N=336 S4. Which of the following best describes where you live?

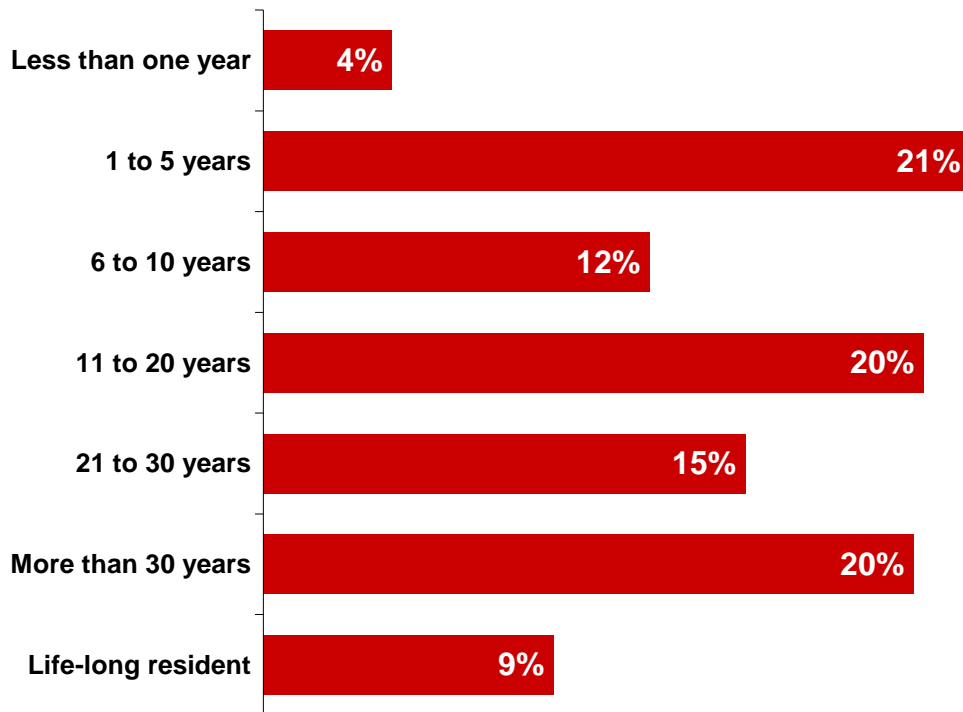


Length of Residence

A quarter of residents have lived in the area for less than six years, while another 30% have lived there for more than 30 years.

N=411

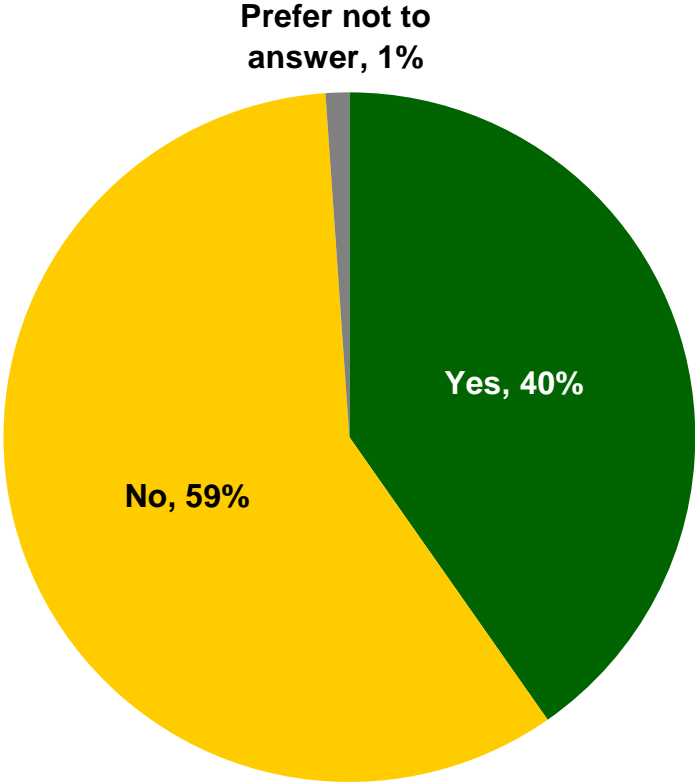
S5. How many years have you lived in the Greater Grand Forks area?



Children Living at Home

About 60% of respondents do not have children living at home.

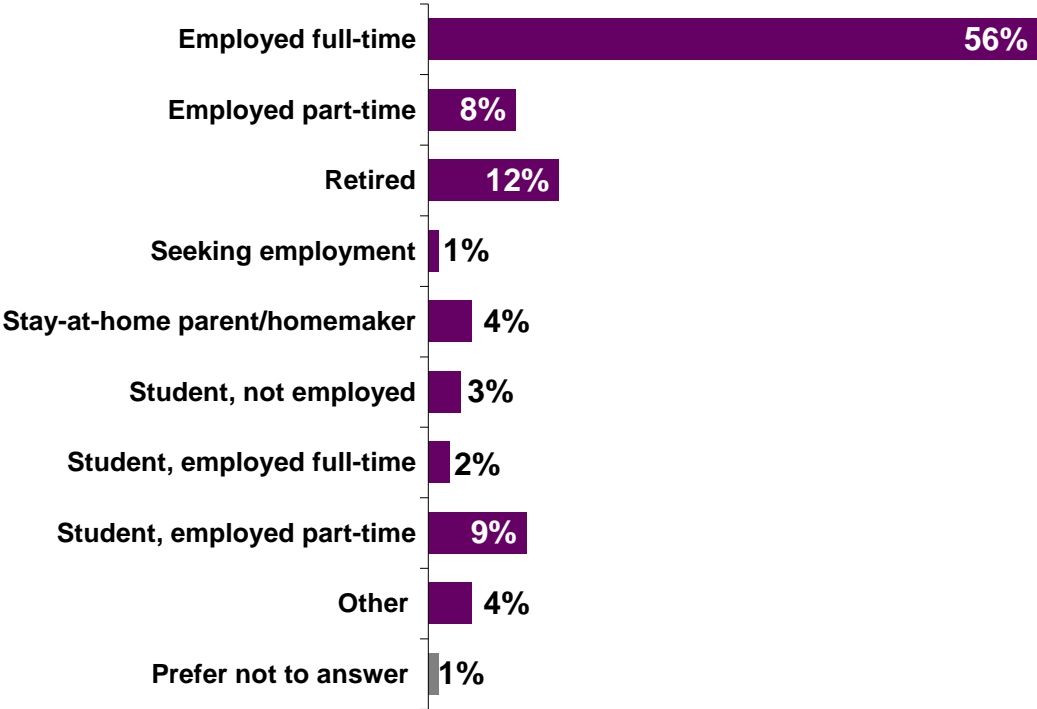
N=411 S6. Do you have children who live at home with you?



Employment

76% of residents are employed full- or part-time. Respondents seeking employment are significantly more likely to live in East Grand Forks.

N=411 S9. Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?

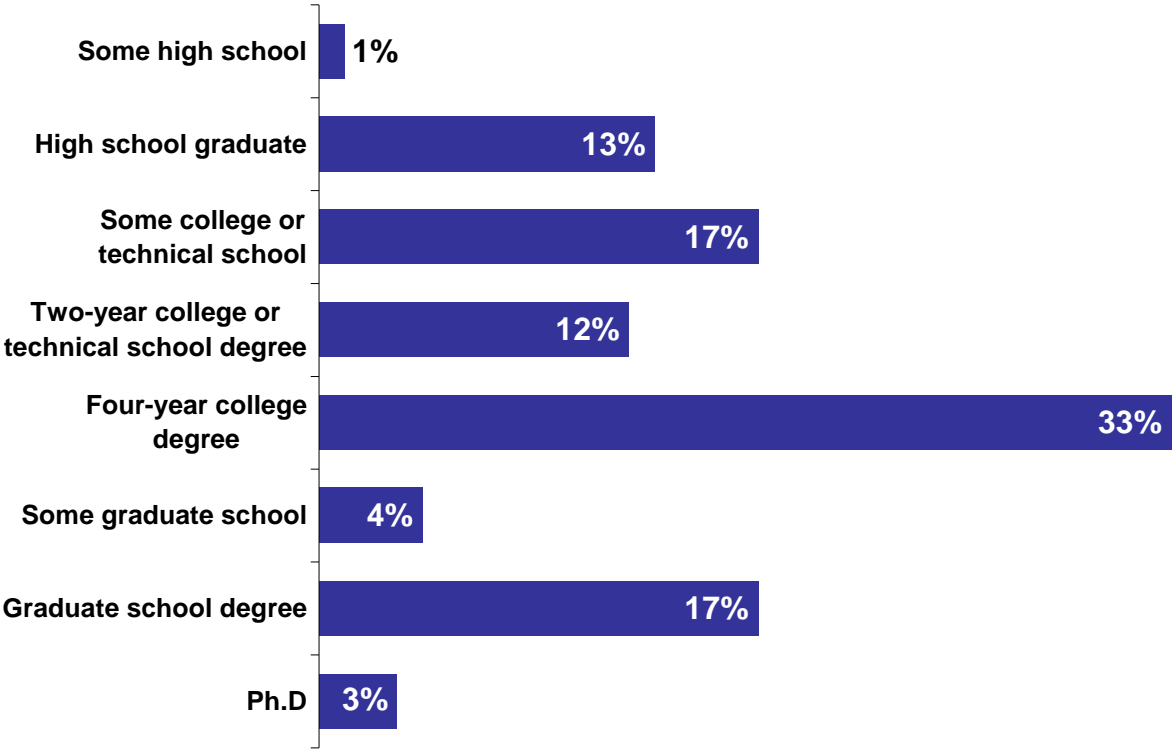


Education

Over half of respondents have at least a four-year degree. Male respondents tend to be more highly educated than their female counterparts. In addition, respondents living in Grand Forks also have higher levels of education than those respondents living in East Grand Forks or Grand Forks County.

N=411

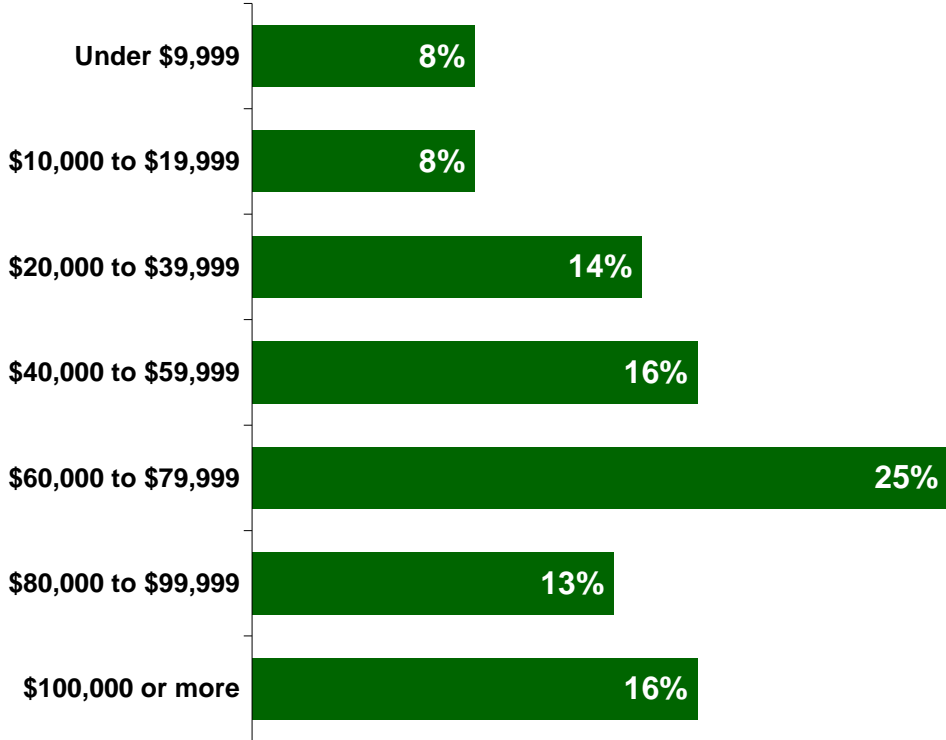
S14. What was the last level of education that you completed?



Annual Household Income

Those earning less than \$20,000 are more likely to be under 35 years old and have lower educational achievement.

N=411 S17. Which of the following categories best describes your annual household income before taxes?

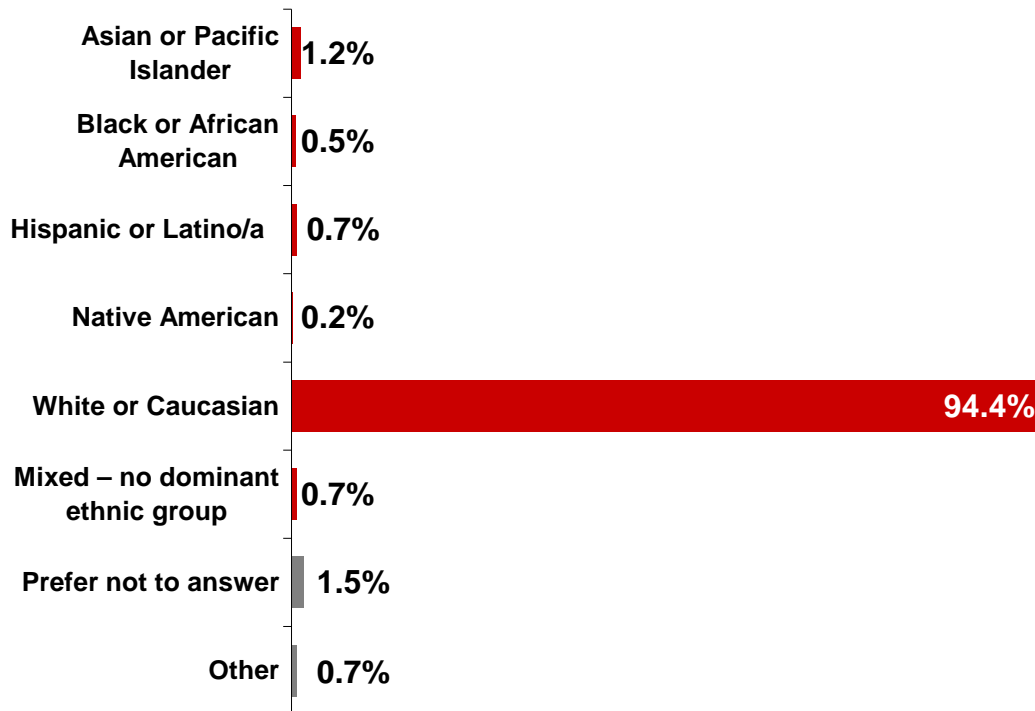


Race or Ethnic Background

The predominant race in the Greater Grand Forks area is white.

N=411

S15. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnic background?



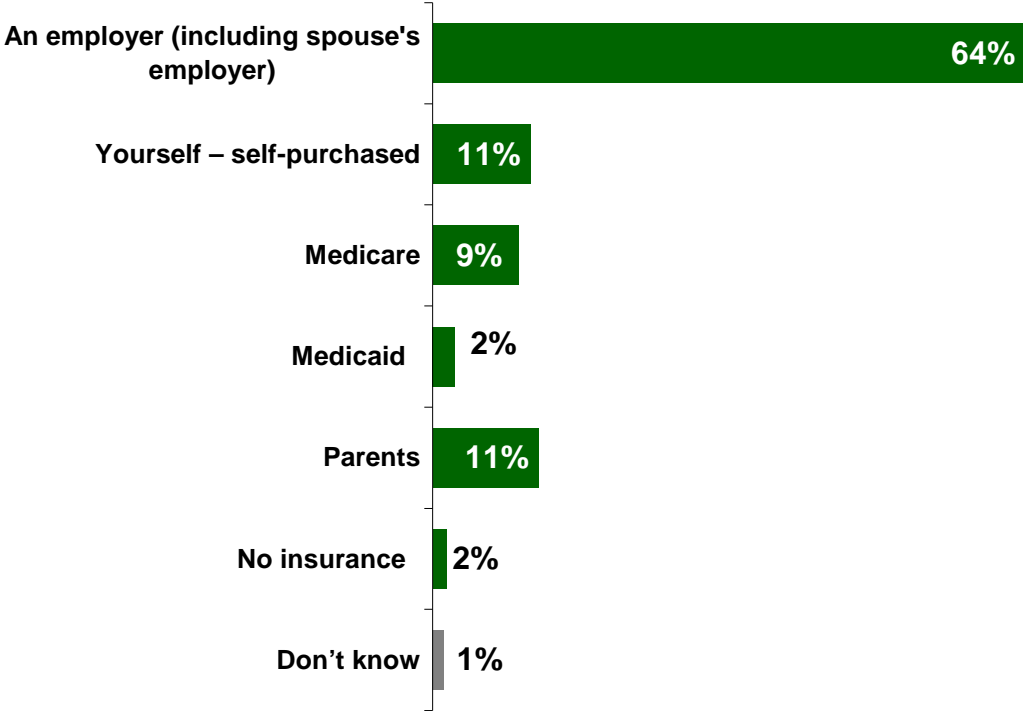
U.S. Census	Percentage
White	92%
Native American	3%
Other race	2%
Black or African American	2%
Mixed - no dominate ethic group	1%
Asian or Pacific Islander	1%
Hispanic or Latino/a	0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey

Health Insurance

About two-thirds of respondents are covered by insurance through their employers.

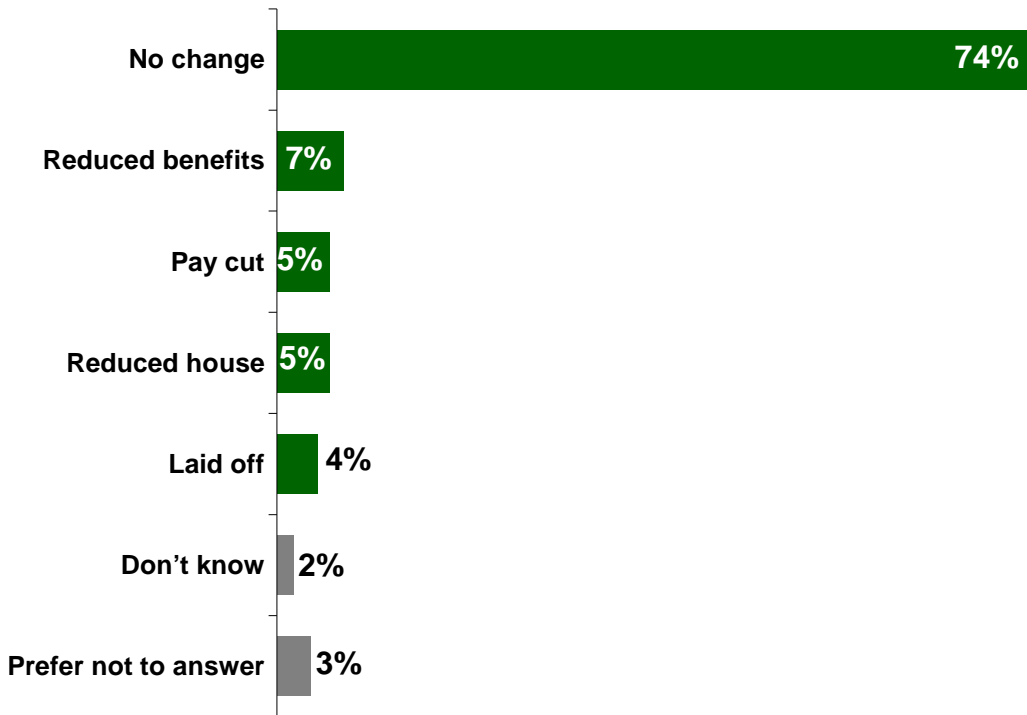
N=411 S8. Are you covered by health insurance through___?



Effects of Current Economic Situation

Most workers have seen no change in their current employment situation, given the current economic situation. Those who have seen a change, specifically reduced benefits, are significantly more likely to be females.

N=411 S11. Thinking about your current employment situation, have you been affected in any of the following ways, given the current economic crisis? Please select all that apply.

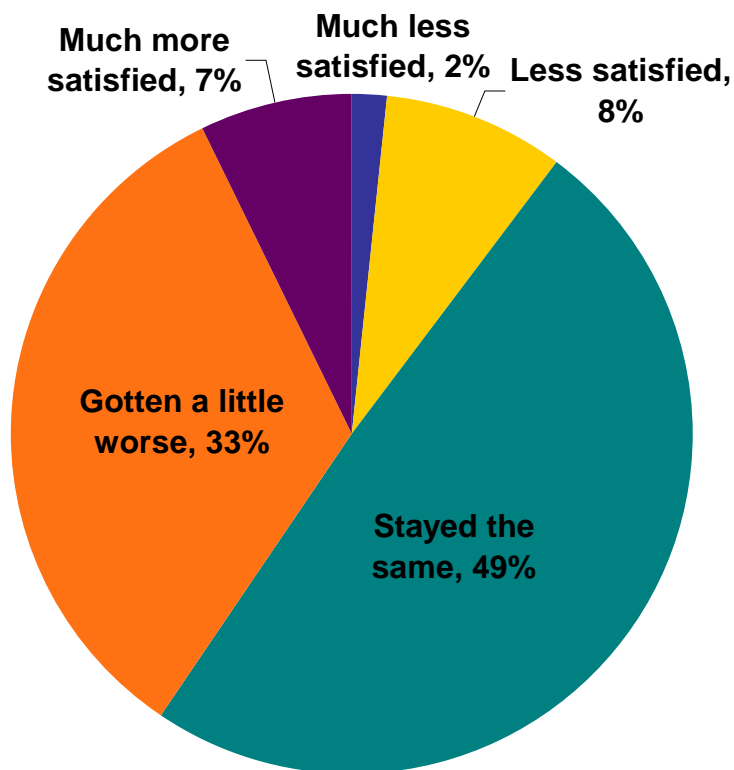


Findings

Change in Quality of Life

40% of residents feel their quality of life has improved, while another half of the respondents feel their quality of life has stayed the same. However, 10% of residents feel less satisfied.

N=411 Q11. How has your quality of life, your personal satisfaction with the cultural and intellectual environment, in the Greater Grand Forks area changed in the past 5 years? Are you...



Change in Quality of Life by Age

Residents aged 18 to 34 are significantly more likely to feel more satisfied with their overall quality of life than other age groups.

*How has your quality of life, your personal satisfaction with the cultural and intellectual environment, in the Greater Grand Forks area changed in the past five years? *What is your age?*

	18 to 34 (n=123)	35 to 54 (n=155)	55+ (n=118)	Total (n=411)
Much less satisfied	2%	1%	2%	2%
Less satisfied	7%	9%	9%	9%
Stayed the same	40%	53%	53%	49%
More satisfied	44%	29%	28%	33%
Much more satisfied	7%	8%	8%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Change in Quality of Life by Gender

In addition, we see that women are more likely to feel less satisfied than their male counterparts. We also see residents with less education, those who are unemployed and those who rent as significantly more likely to feel less satisfied with their overall quality of life.

How has your quality of life, your personal satisfaction with the cultural and intellectual environment, in the Greater Grand Forks area changed in the past five years? *Gender

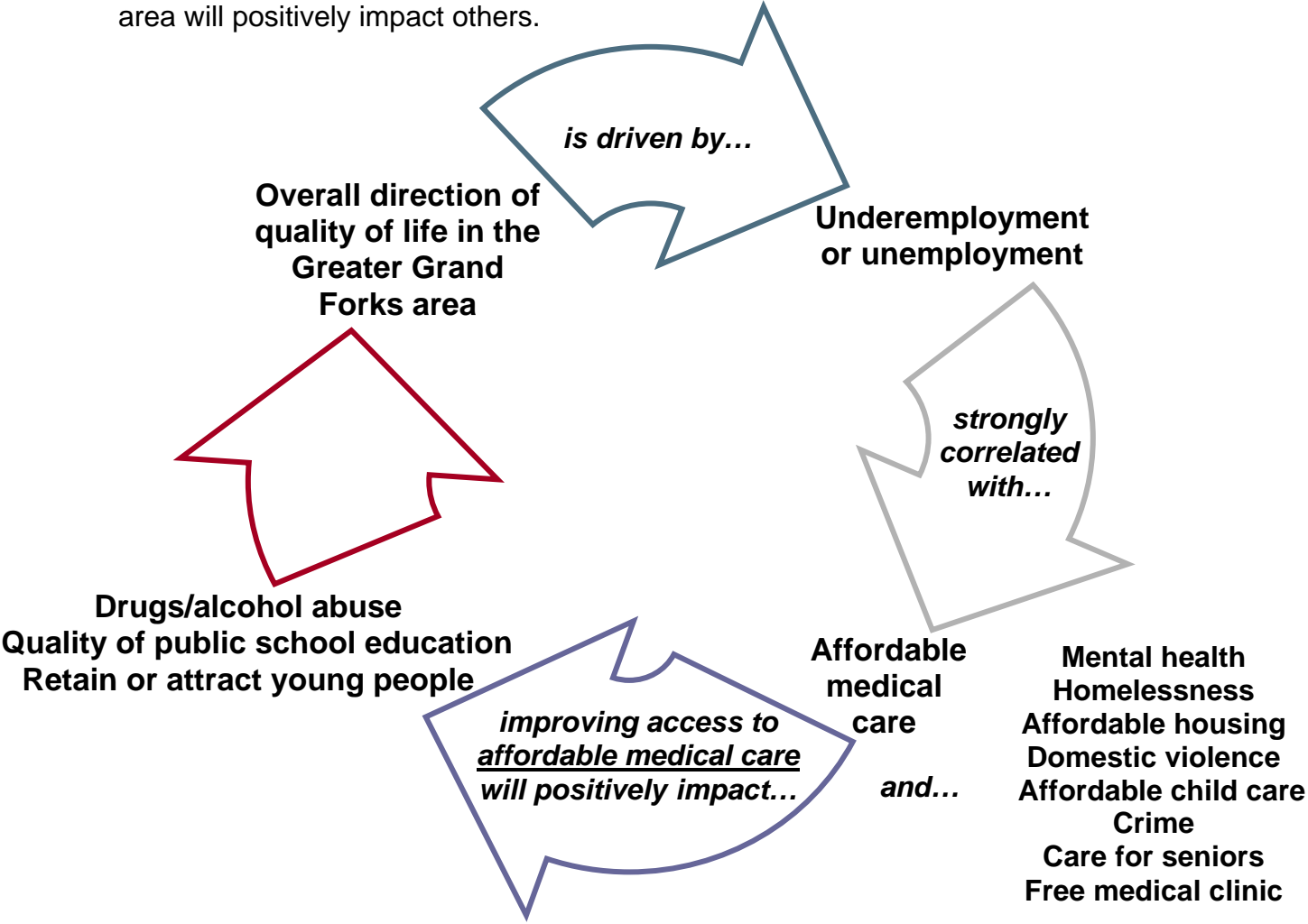
	Male (n=168)	Female (n=243)	Total (n=411)
Much less satisfied	1%	2%	2%
Less satisfied	5%	11%	9%
Stayed the same	48%	50%	49%
More satisfied	37%	31%	33%
Much more satisfied	9%	6%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Drivers of Quality of Life

Social science research is not an exact science, as is the case with any science dealing with people, their opinions, perceptions, behaviors, etc. Statistically, correlations and regression analysis of data can help us to establish relationships between variables. While we cannot make judgments with certainty as to causality, we can tell if there is a specific relationship that exists beyond chance. Such is the case with drivers of quality of life.

Here, you see that there is strong correlative value between the perceptions of respondents as to whether quality of life is getting better or worse and the seriousness they attribute to each of the tested issues or challenges. Based upon analysis of the data, we can make certain assumptions of the sociological implications of the relationships established between variables.

The following chart demonstrates how the analysis of the data in this study can provide direction for the UWGFEGF, both in terms of allocation of resources and doing the greatest good for the most people. In other words, sometimes improvements in one area will positively impact others.

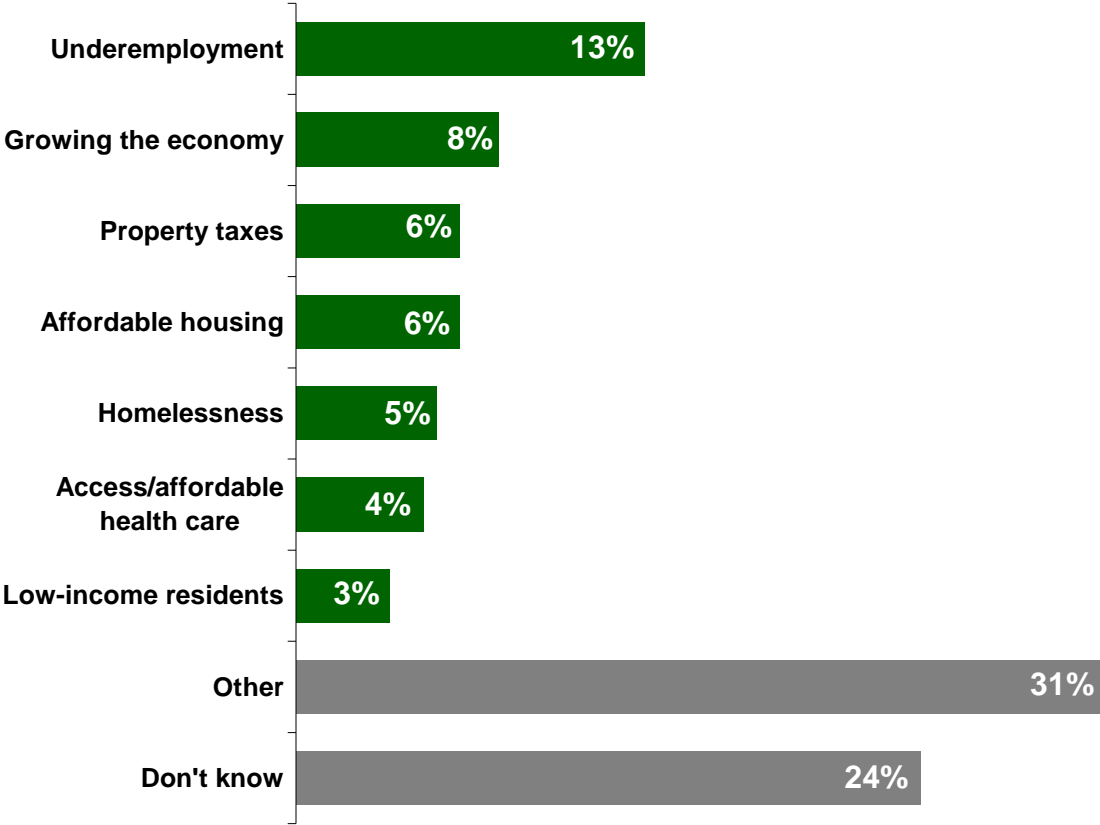


Most Critical Issues Facing Residents

Although we do not see a lot of consensus, underemployment and growing the economy were both mentioned by residents.

N=411

Q1. In your opinion, what is the most critical issue facing residents of the Greater Grand Forks area right now?



Key Issues – Level of Severity (I)

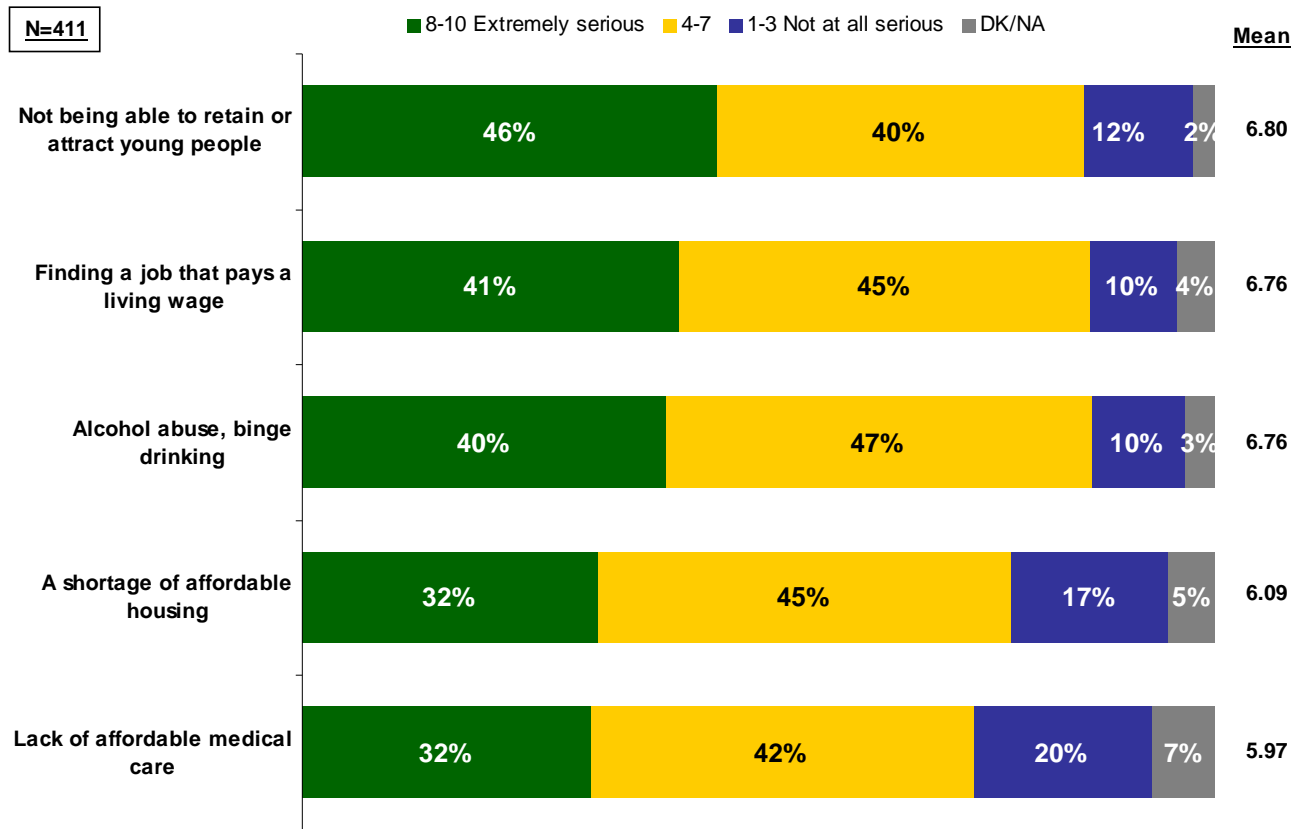
When asked to rank the severity of the following issues on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all serious and 10 is extremely serious, 46% of residents felt that not being able to retain or attract young people was the most serious community issue.

Residents in East Grand Forks are more likely to feel that getting a quality education in the public schools is a serious community issue.

Women ranked every issue more serious than their male counterparts, as did older residents.

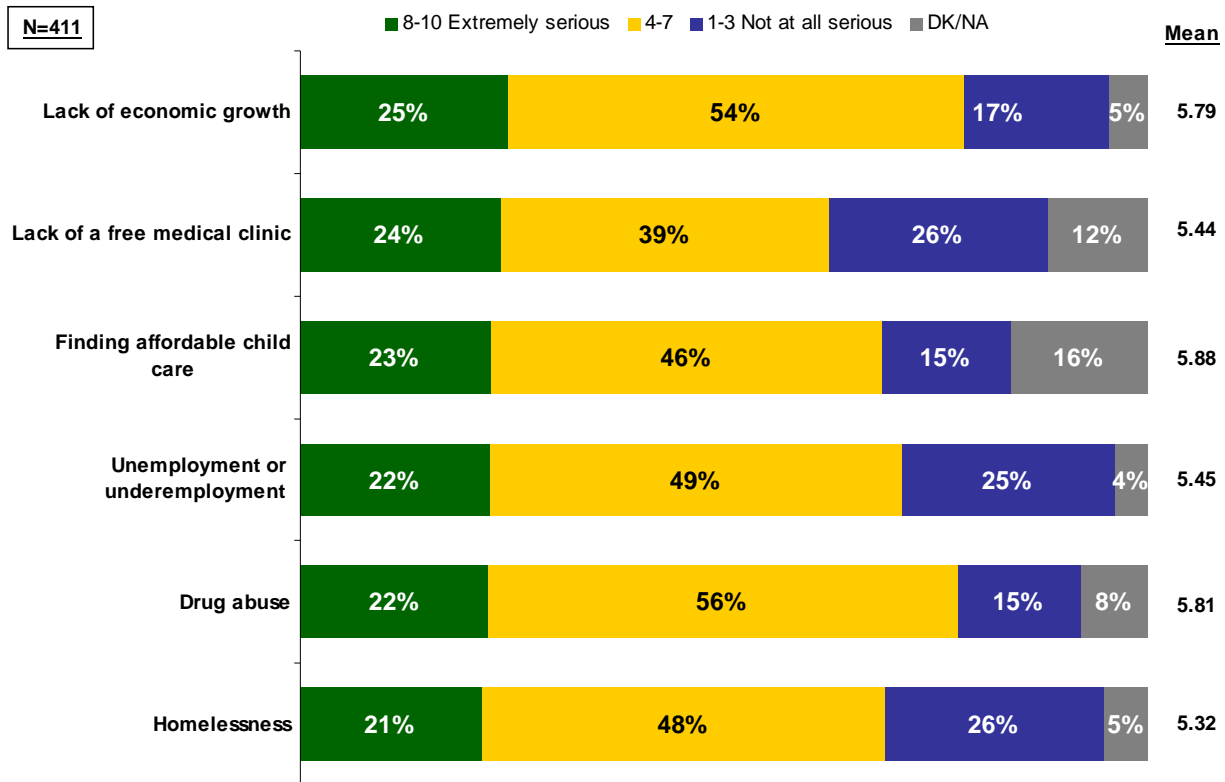
Rank	Most Serious Community Issues	Extremely Serious
1	Not being able to retain or attract young people	46%
2	Finding a job that pays a living wage	41%
3	Alcohol abuse, binge drinking	40%
4	A shortage of affordable housing	32%
5	Lack of affordable medical care	32%
6	Lack of economic growth	25%
7	Lack of a free medical clinic	24%
8	Lack of affordable child care	23%
9	Unemployment or underemployment	22%
10	Drug abuse	22%
11	Homelessness, or those about to be homeless	21%
12	Domestic violence	18%
13	Concerns about care for senior residents	18%
14	Getting a quality education in the public schools	17%
15	Integrating people of different races or ethnicities	16%
16	Mental illness or emotional issues	15%
17	Crime in our community	13%

Key Issues – Level of Severity (II)



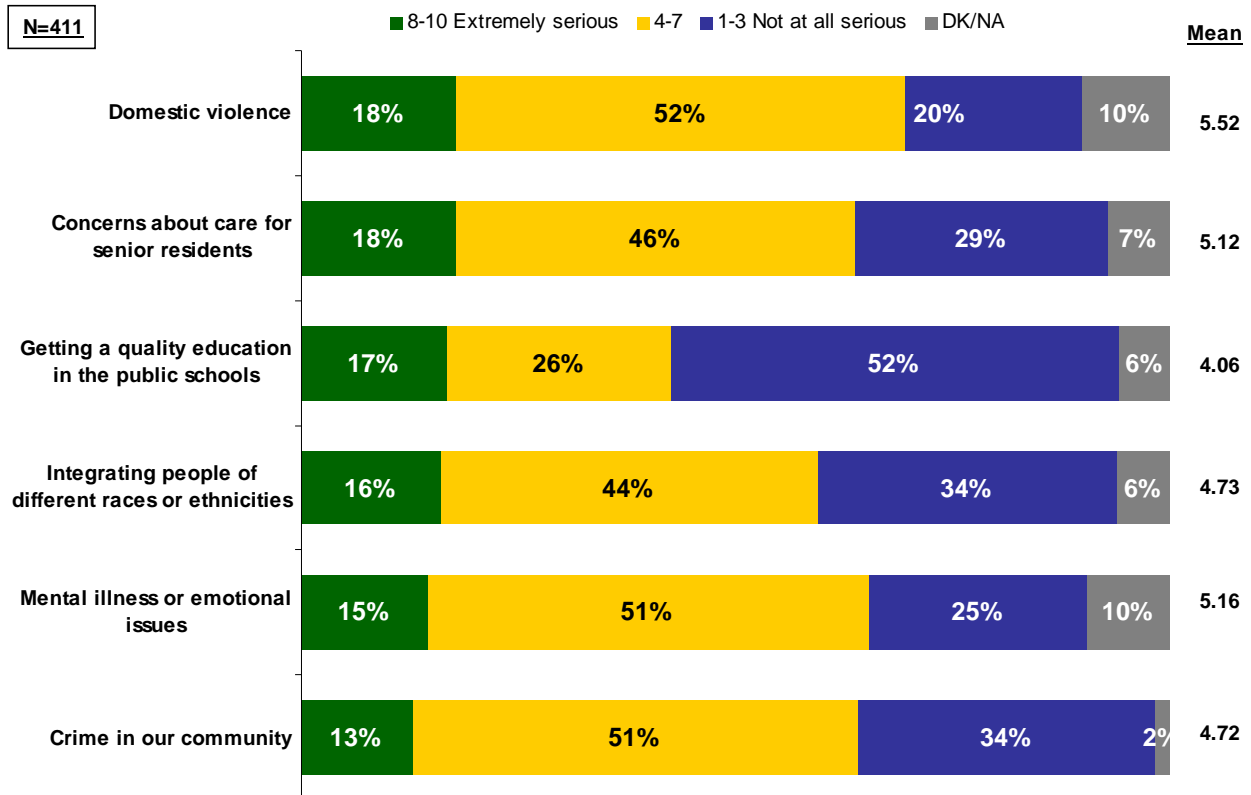
Q.4 I am going to read you a list of concerns that may affect families in the Greater Grand Forks area. For each one, tell me how serious YOU believe the problem is in the area.

Key Issues – Level of Severity (III)



Q4. I am going to read you a list of concerns that may affect families in the Greater Grand Forks area. For each one, tell me how serious YOU believe the problem is in the area.

Key Issues – Level of Severity (IV)



Q4. I am going to read you a list of concerns that may affect families in the Greater Grand Forks area. For each one, tell me how serious YOU believe the problem is in the area.

Change Over Time

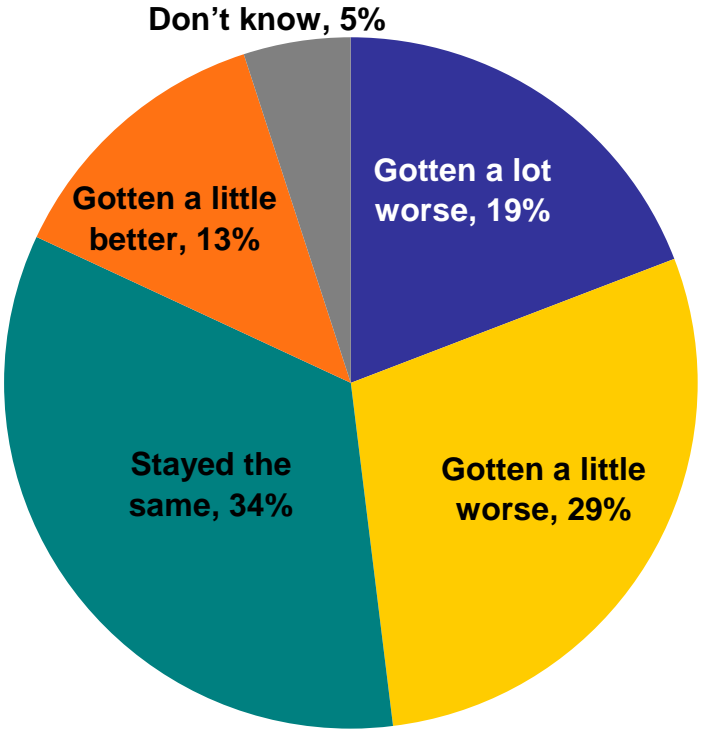
For those residents who said the issues listed below were an extremely serious problem, we asked, “How have those issues changed over time?”

About half of people who said that not being able to retain or attract young people was an extremely serious issue feel that it has gotten worse over the past few years.

Rank	Most Serious Community Issues Change Over Time	Gotten Worse
1	Not being able to retain or attract young people	48%
2	Finding a job that pays a living wage	60%
3	Alcohol abuse, binge drinking	58%
4	A shortage of affordable housing	61%
5	Lack of affordable medical care	61%
6	Lack of economic growth	44%
7	Lack of a free medical clinic	46%
8	Lack of affordable child care	55%
9	Unemployment or underemployment	73%
10	Drug abuse	35%
11	Homelessness, or those about to be homeless	73%
12	Domestic violence	40%
13	Concerns about care for senior residents	30%
14	Getting a quality education in the public schools	15%
15	Integrating people of different races or ethnicities	31%
16	Mental illness or emotional issues	55%
17	Crime in our community	73%

Change Over Time: Not being able to retain or attract young people

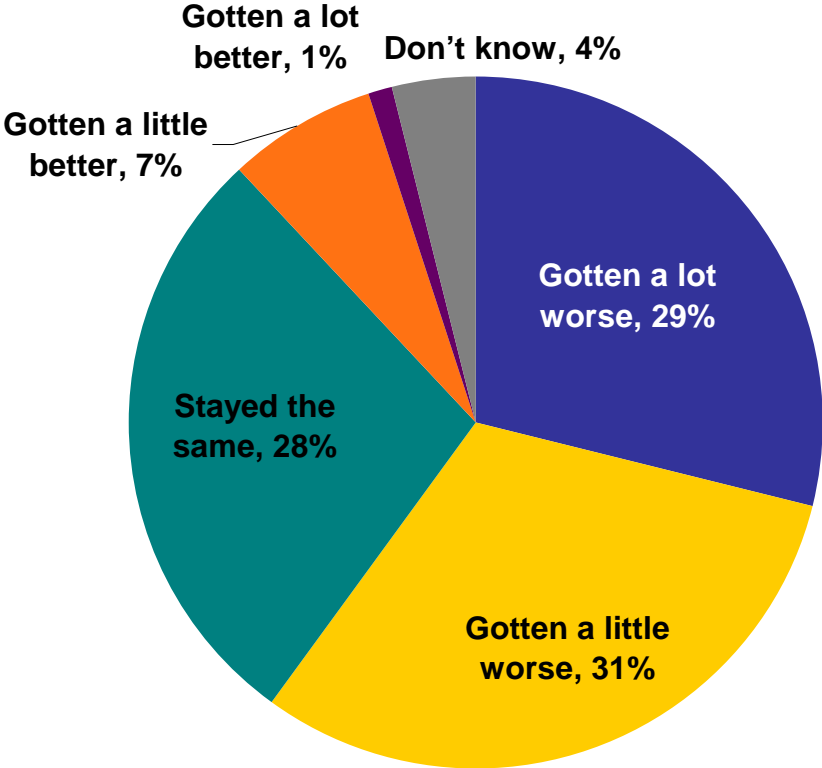
N=187



Q5P. How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - not being able to retain or attract young people?

Change Over Time: Finding a job that pays a living wage

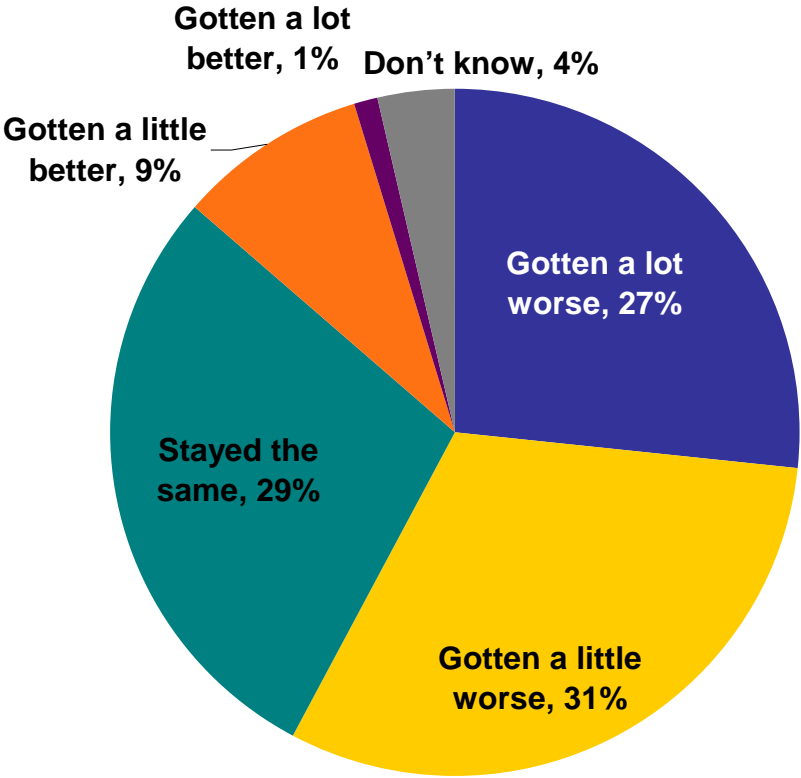
N=170



Q5G. How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - finding a job that pays a living wage?

Change Over Time: Alcohol abuse, binge drinking

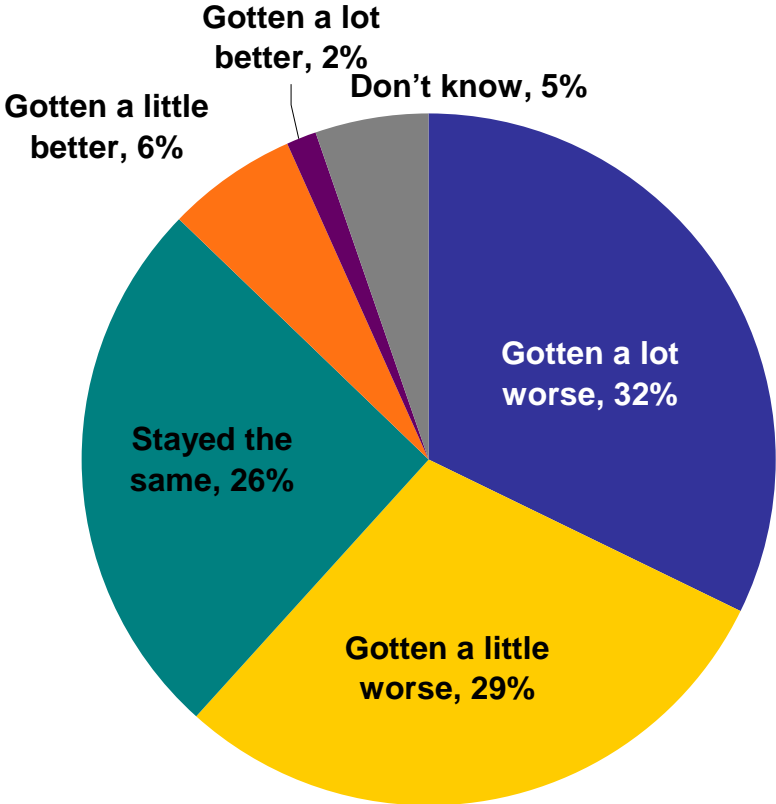
N=164



Q5B. How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - alcohol abuse, binge drinking?

Change Over Time: A shortage of available housing

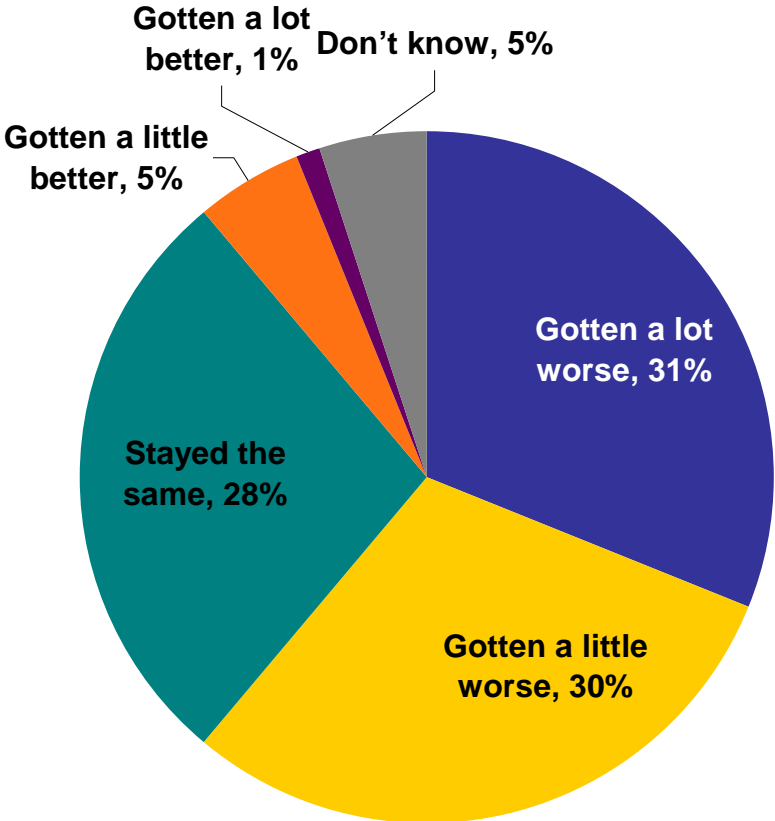
N=133



Q5A. How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - a shortage of affordable housing?

Change Over Time: Lack of affordable medical care

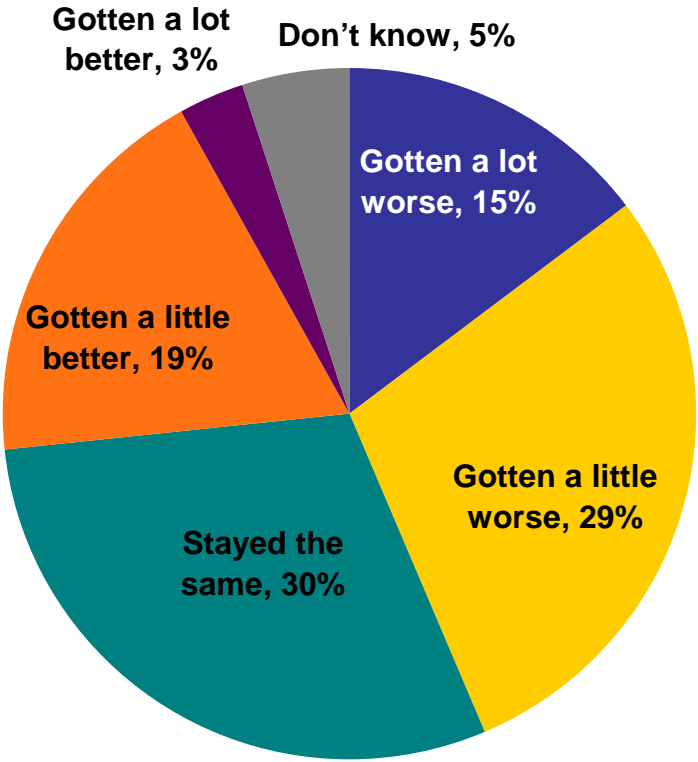
N=130



Q5L. How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - lack of affordable medical care?

Change Over Time: Lack of economic growth

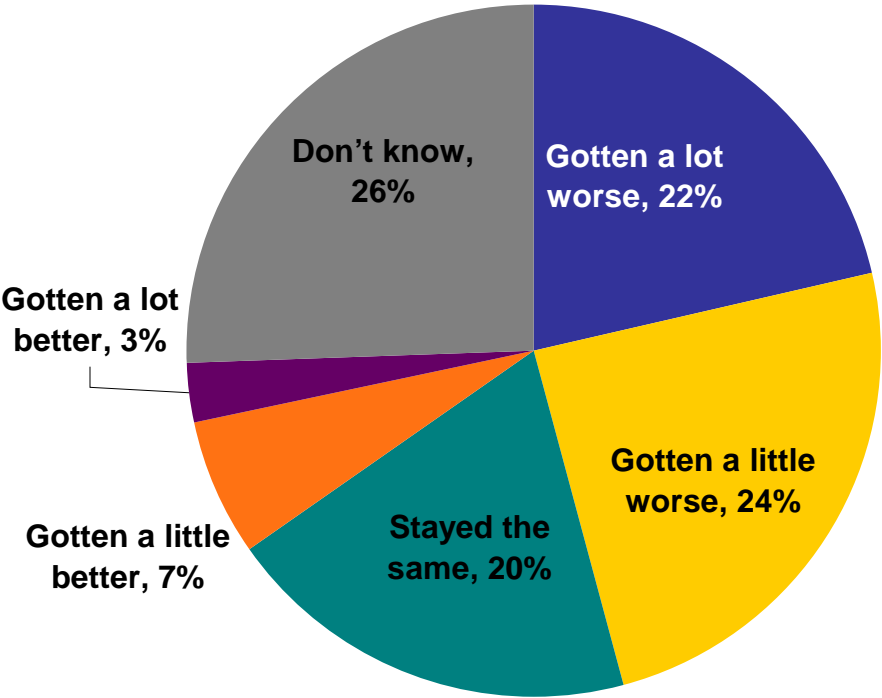
N=101



Q5M. How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - lack of economic growth?

Change Over Time: Lack of a free medical clinic

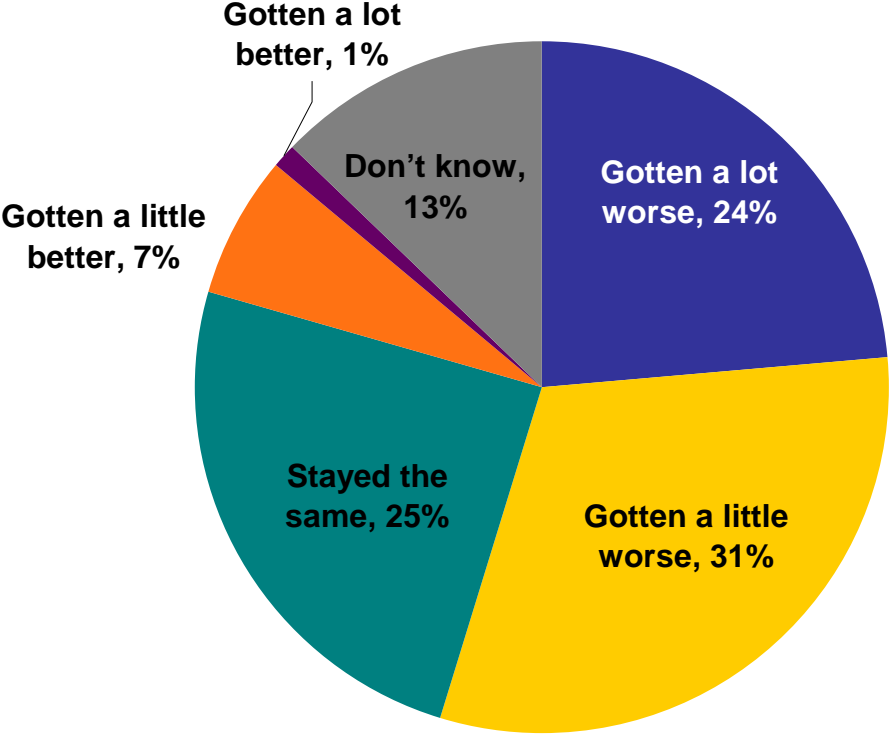
N=107



Q5N. How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - lack of free medical clinic?

Change Over Time: Lack of affordable child care

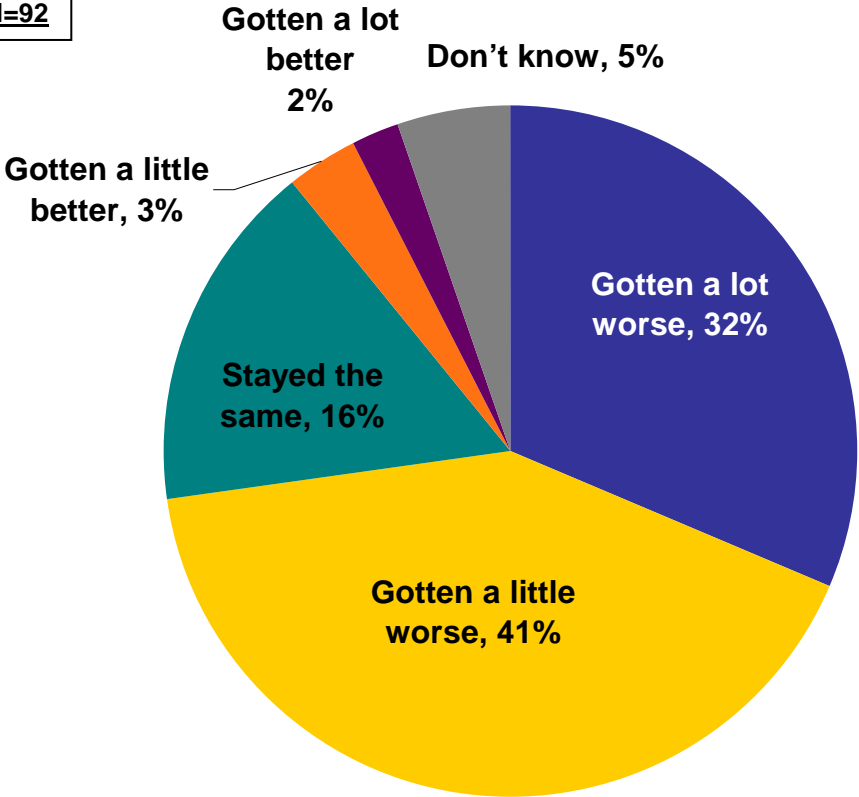
N=96



Q5H. How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - affordable child care?

Change Over Time: Unemployment or underemployment

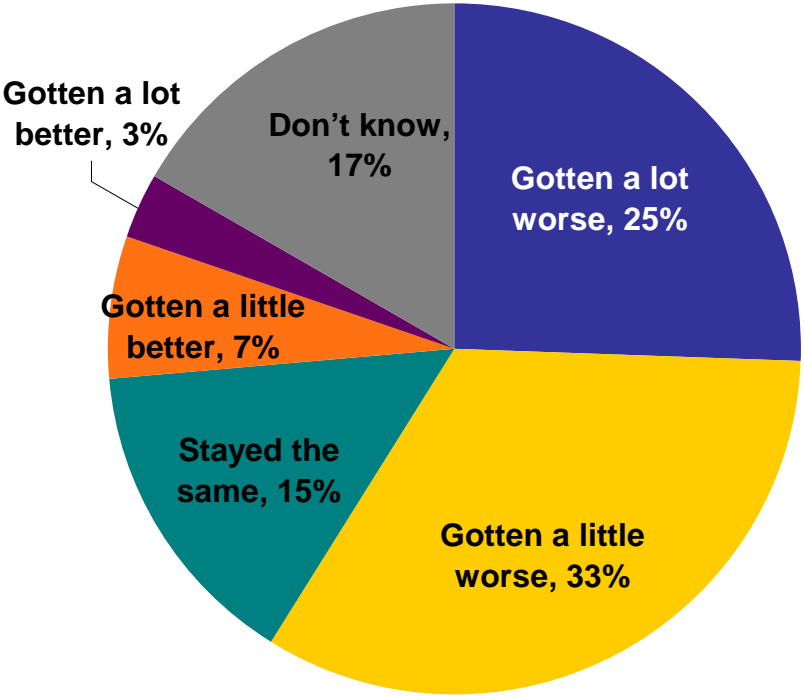
N=92



Q5Q. How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - unemployment or underemployment?

Change Over Time: Drug abuse

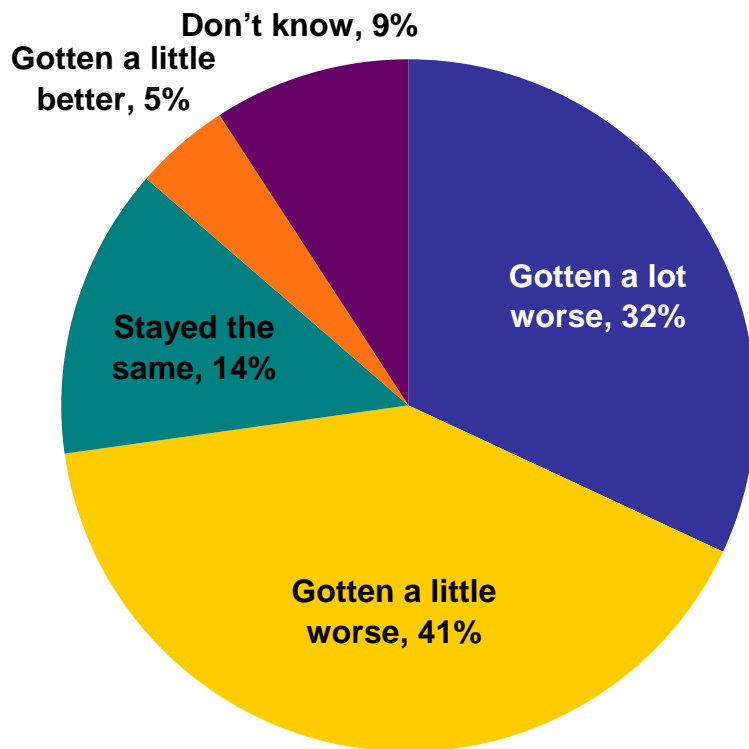
N=102



Q5F. How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - drug abuse?

Change Over Time: Homelessness, or those about to be homeless

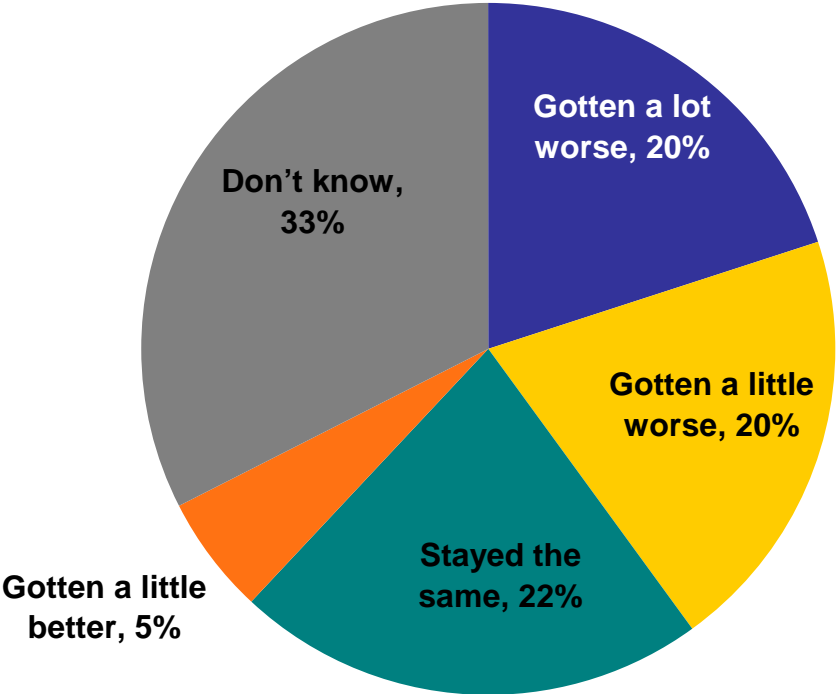
N=88



Q5J. How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - homelessness?

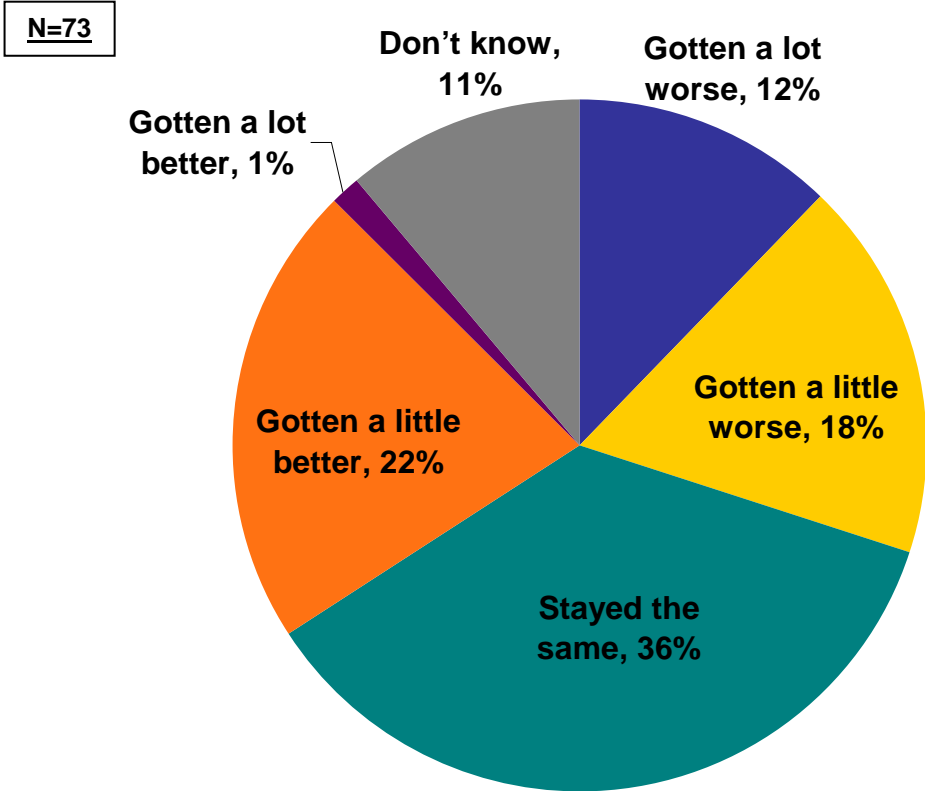
Change Over Time: Domestic violence

N=95



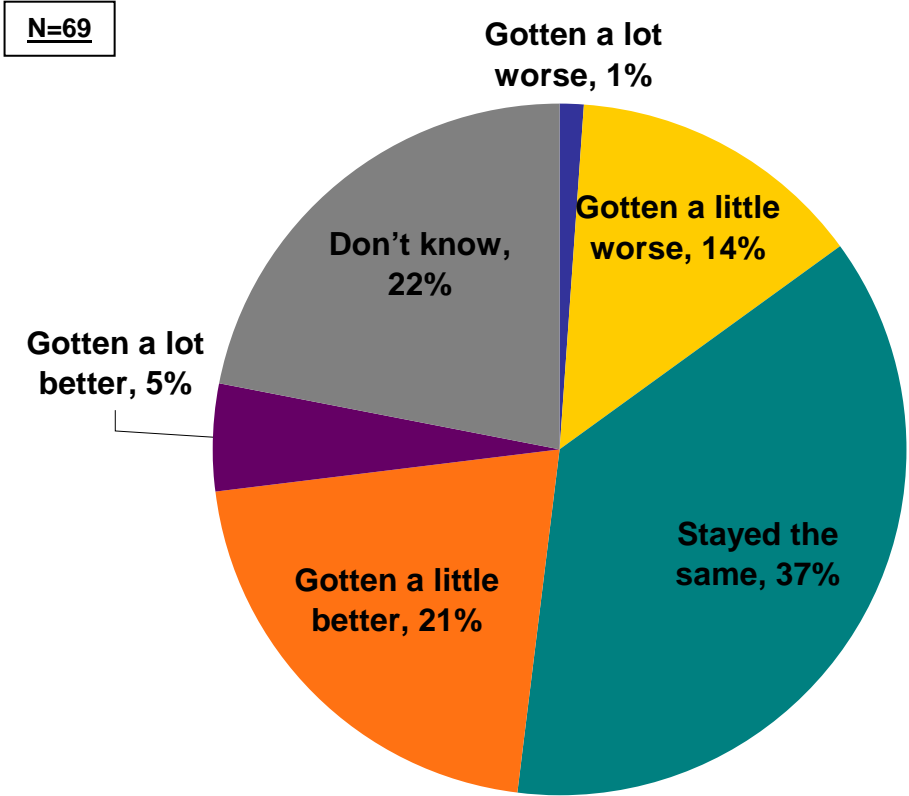
Q5E. How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - domestic violence?

Change Over Time: Concerns about care for senior residents



Q5C. How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - concerns about care for senior residents?

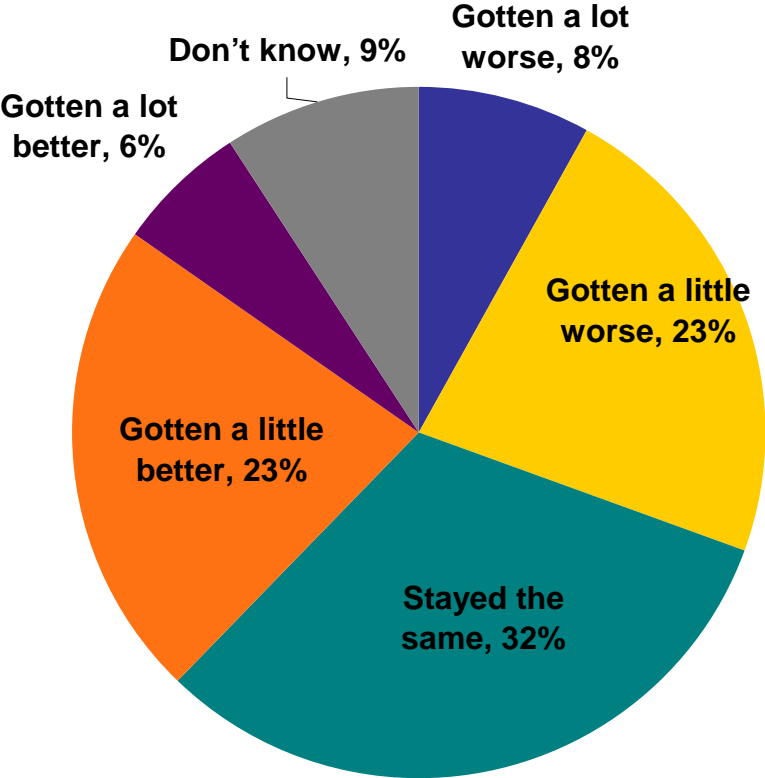
Change Over Time: Getting a quality education in the public schools



Q5I. How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - getting a quality education in the public schools?

Change Over Time: Integrating people of different races and ethnicities

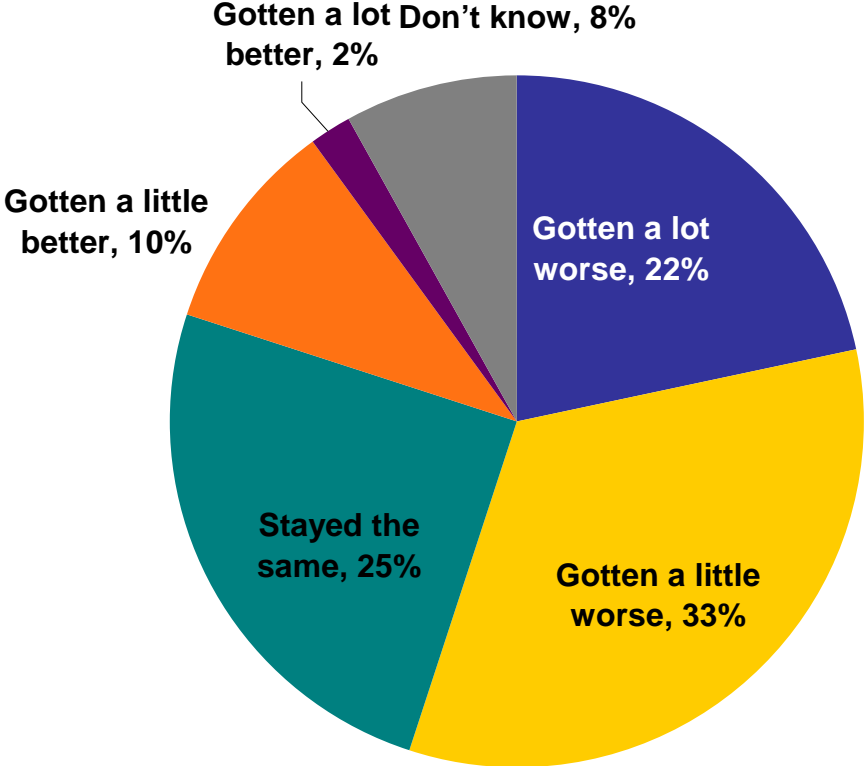
N=66



Q5K . How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - integrating people of different races and ethnicities?

Change Over Time: Mental illness or emotional issues

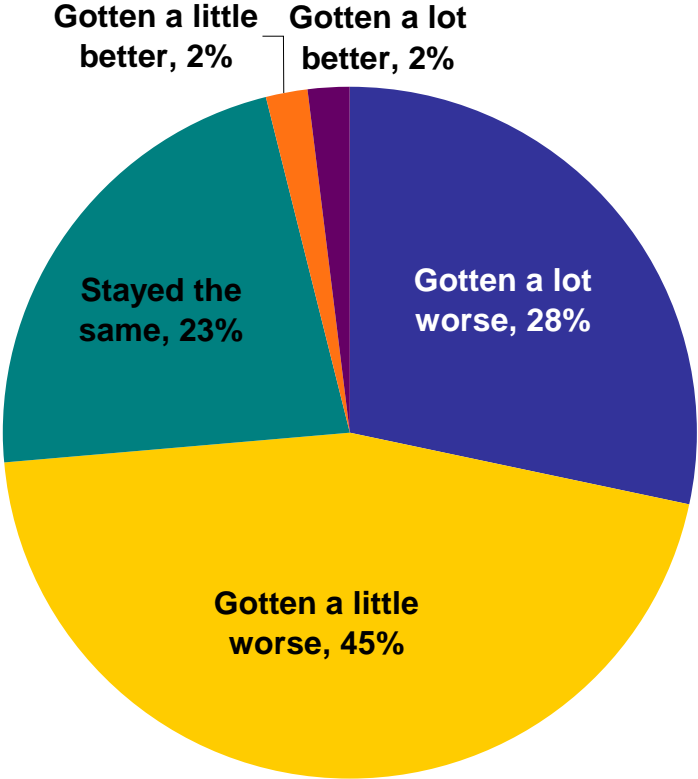
N=60



Q50. How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - mental illness or emotional issues?

Change Over Time: Crime in our community

N=53



Q5D. How has this problem changed over the past few years in the Greater Grand Forks Area - crime in our community?

Awareness

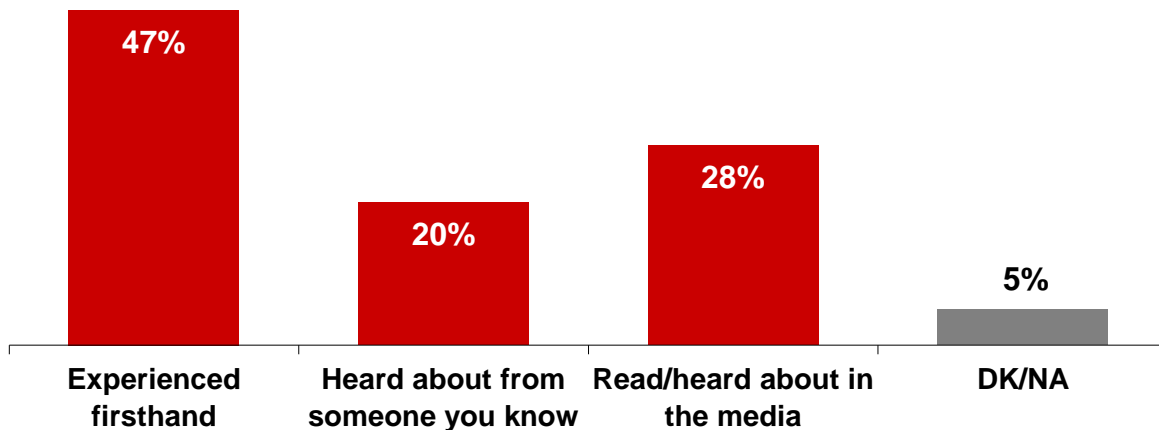
For those residents who said the issues listed below were an extremely serious problem, we asked, “Is this something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?”

Of those who said that finding a job that pays a living wage is an extremely serious issue, 44% have experienced it firsthand.

Rank	Most Serious Community Issues Change Over Time	Experienced Firsthand
1	Not being able to retain or attract young people	47%
2	Finding a job that pays a living wage	44%
3	Alcohol abuse, binge drinking	31%
4	A shortage of affordable housing	40%
5	Lack of affordable medical care	40%
6	Lack of economic growth	36%
7	Lack of a free medical clinic	27%
8	Lack of affordable child care	33%
9	Unemployment or underemployment	32%
10	Drug abuse	20%
11	Homelessness, or those about to be homeless	15%
12	Domestic violence	7%
13	Concerns about care for senior residents	38%
14	Getting a quality education in the public schools	48%
15	Integrating people of different races or ethnicities	49%
16	Mental illness or emotional issues	38%
17	Crime in our community	25%

Awareness: Not being able to retain or attract young people

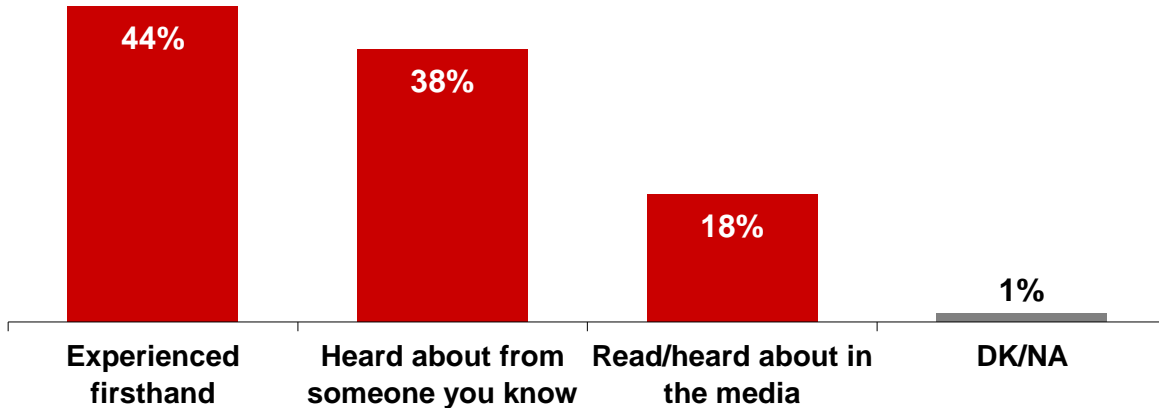
N=187



Q6P. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?

Awareness: Finding a job that pays a living wage

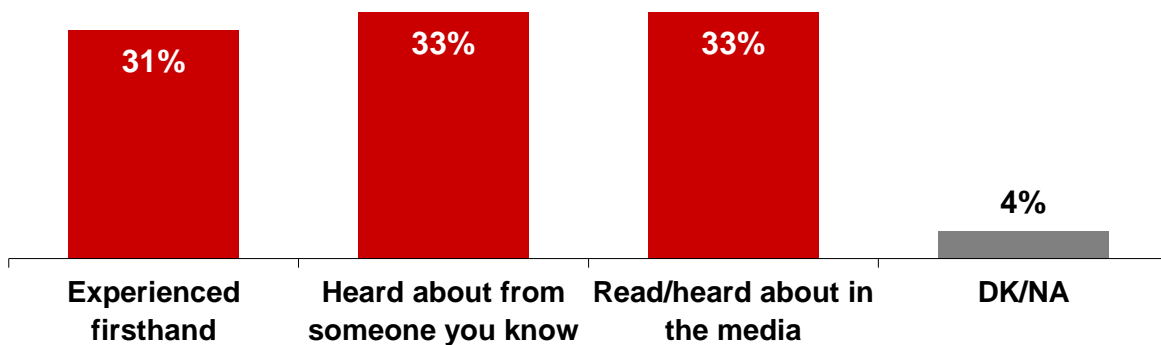
N=170



Q6G. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?

Awareness: Alcohol abuse, binge drinking

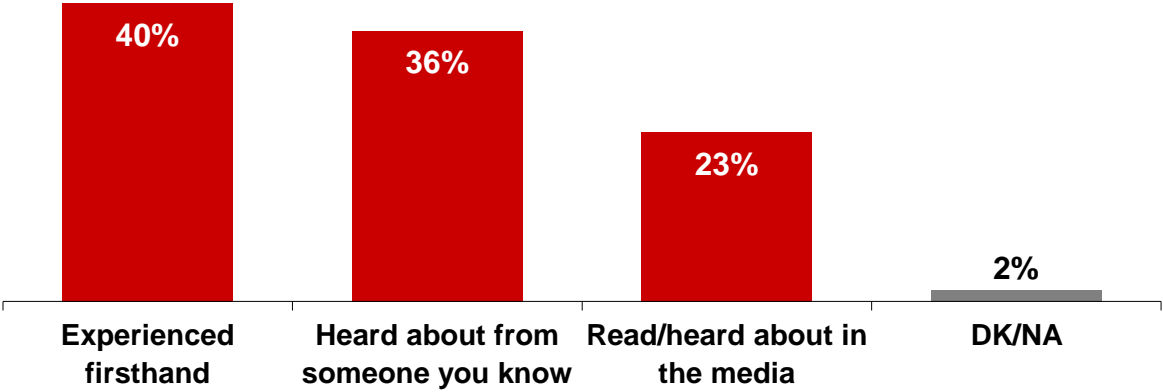
N=164



Q6B. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?

Awareness: A shortage of affordable housing

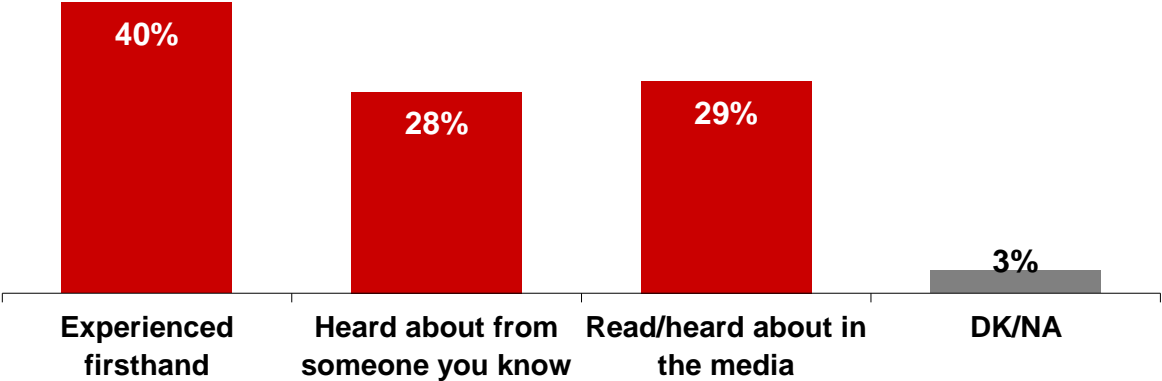
N=133



Q6A. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?

Awareness: Lack of affordable medical care

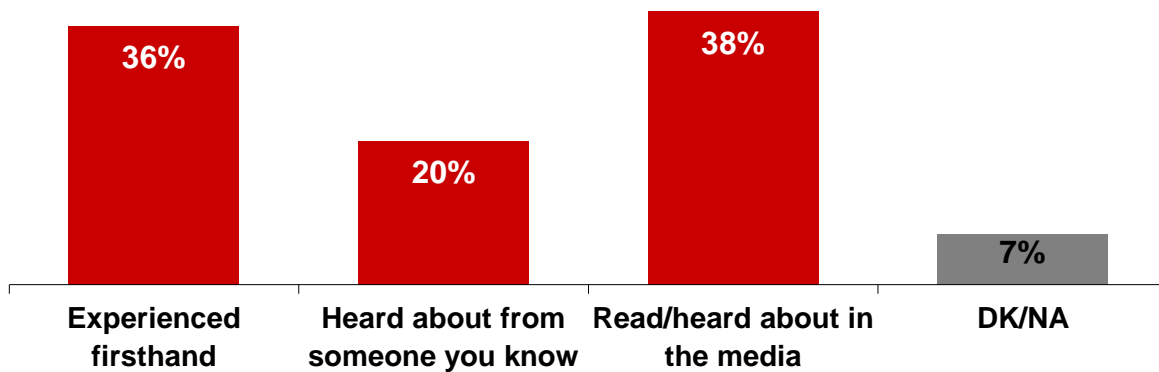
N=130



Q6L. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?

Awareness: Lack of economic growth

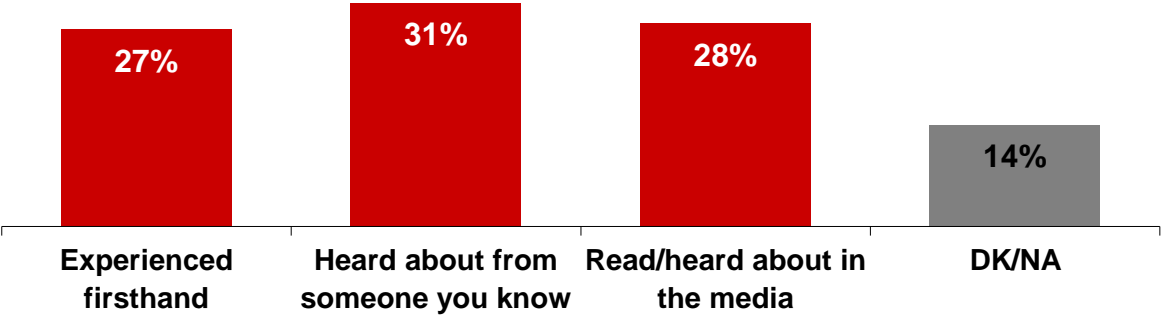
N=101



Q6M. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?

Awareness: Lack of a free medical clinic

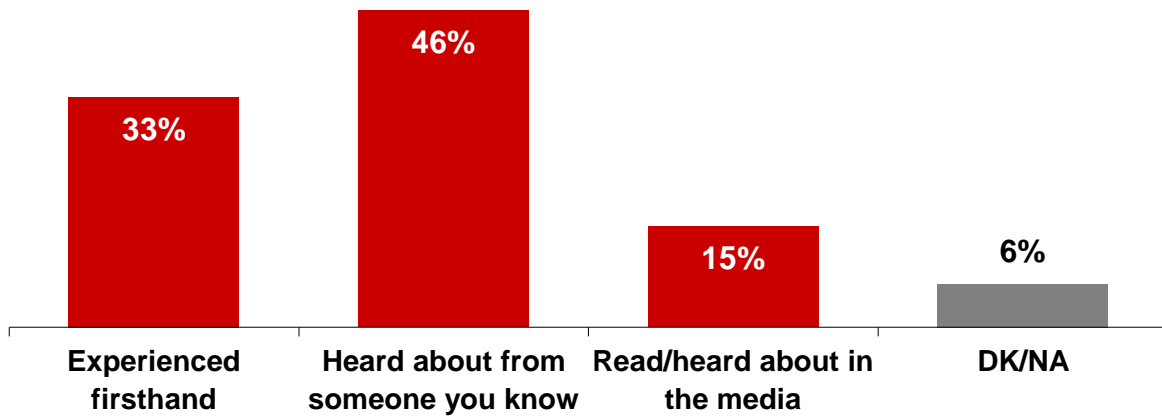
N=107



Q6N. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?

Awareness: Lack of affordable child care

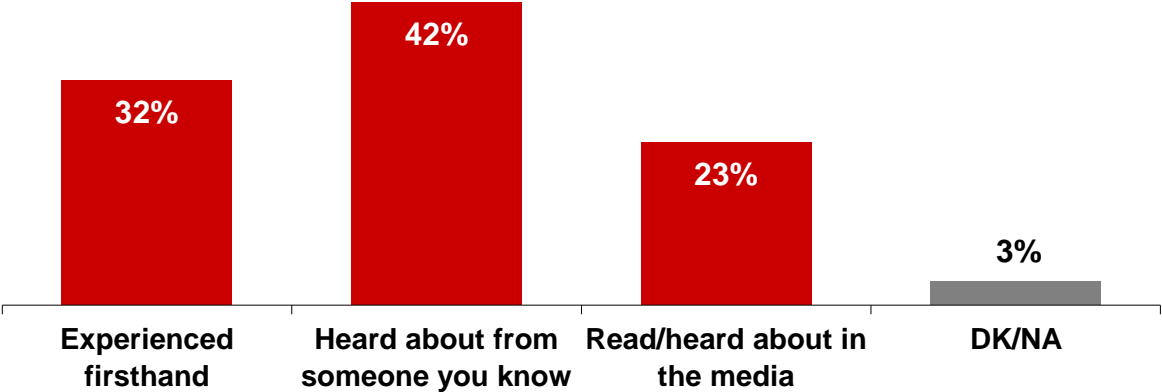
N=96



Q6H. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know, or read or heard about in the media?

Awareness: Unemployment or underemployment

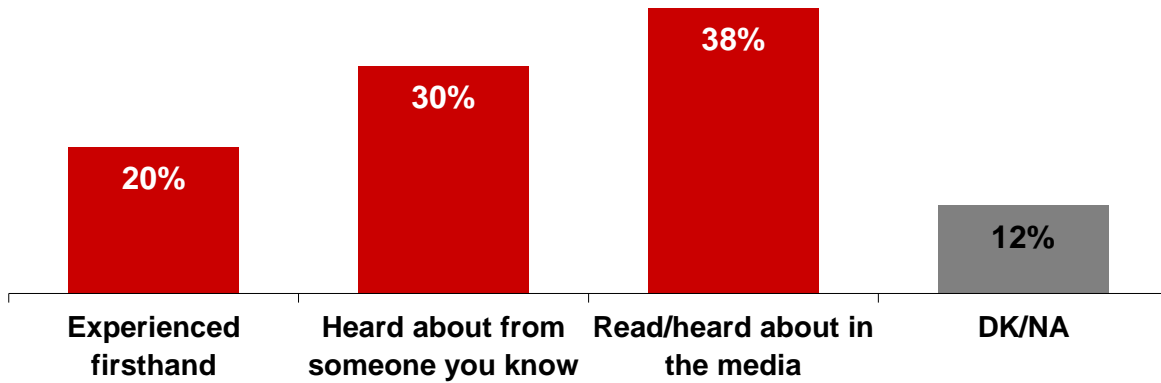
N=92



Q6Q. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?

Awareness: Drug abuse

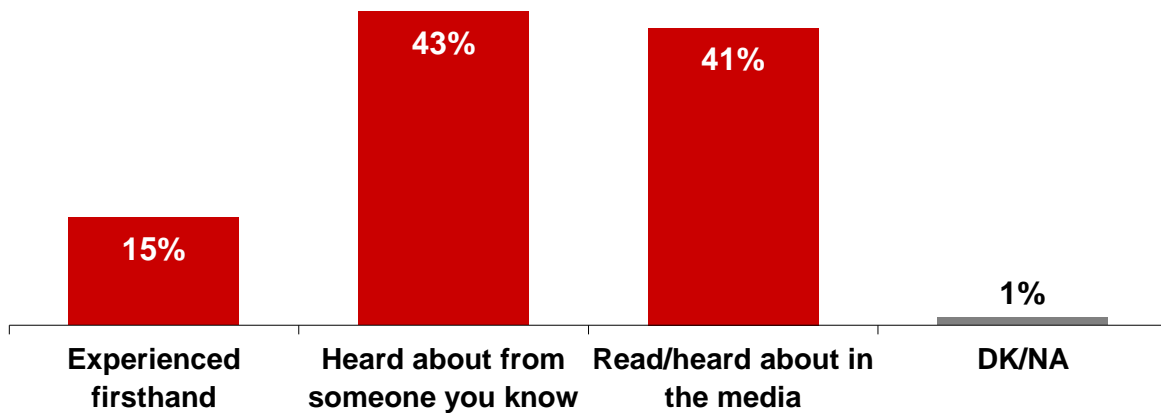
N=102



Q6F. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?

Awareness: Homelessness, or those about to be homeless

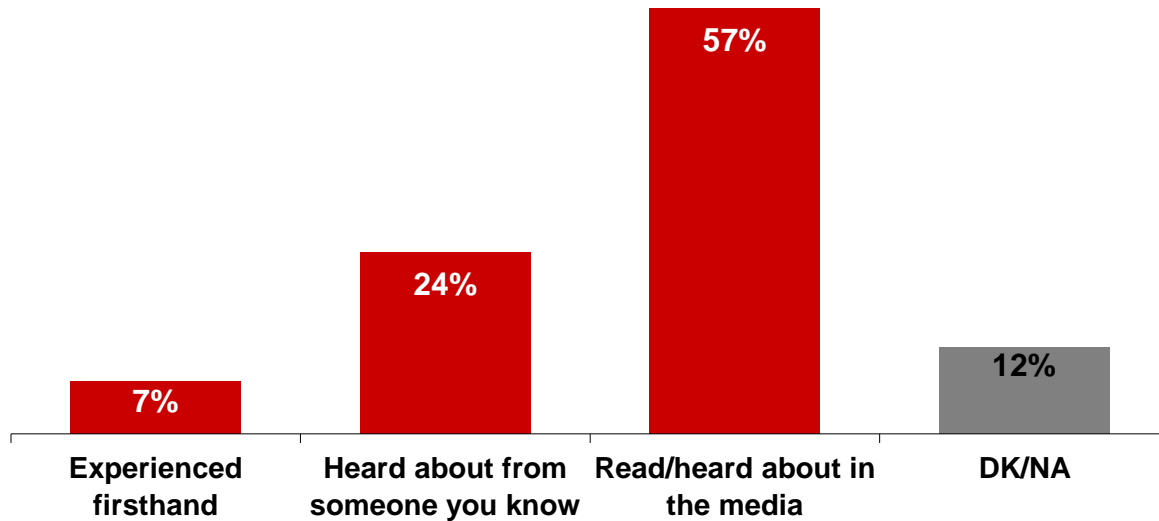
N=88



Q6J. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?

Awareness: Domestic violence

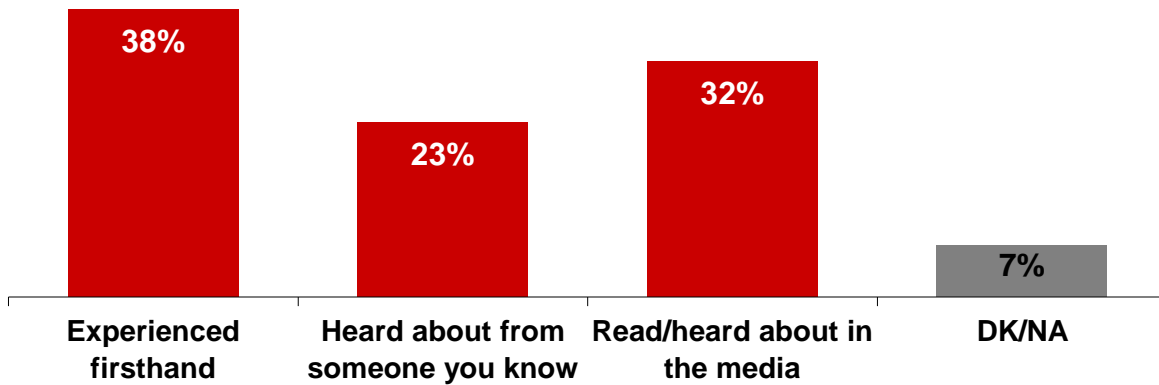
N=95



Q.6E. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?

Awareness: Concerns about care for seniors

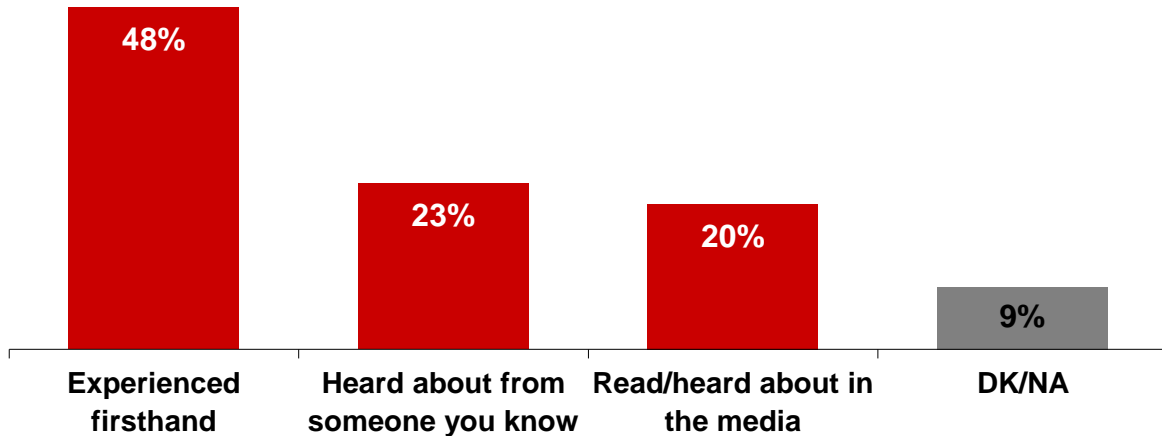
N=73



Q6C. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?

Awareness: Getting a quality education in the public schools

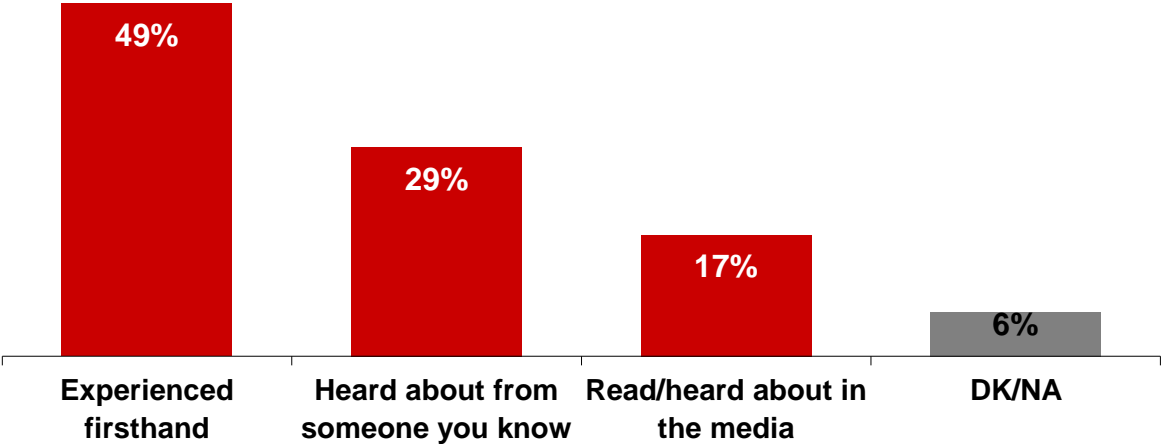
N=69



Q6I. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?

Awareness: Integrating people of different races or ethnicities

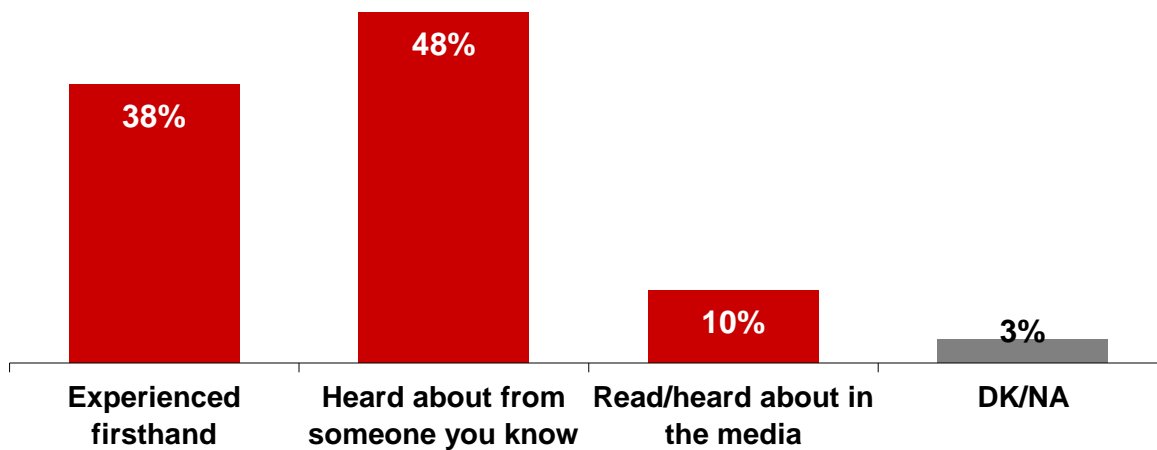
N=66



Q6K. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?

Awareness: Mental illness or emotional issues

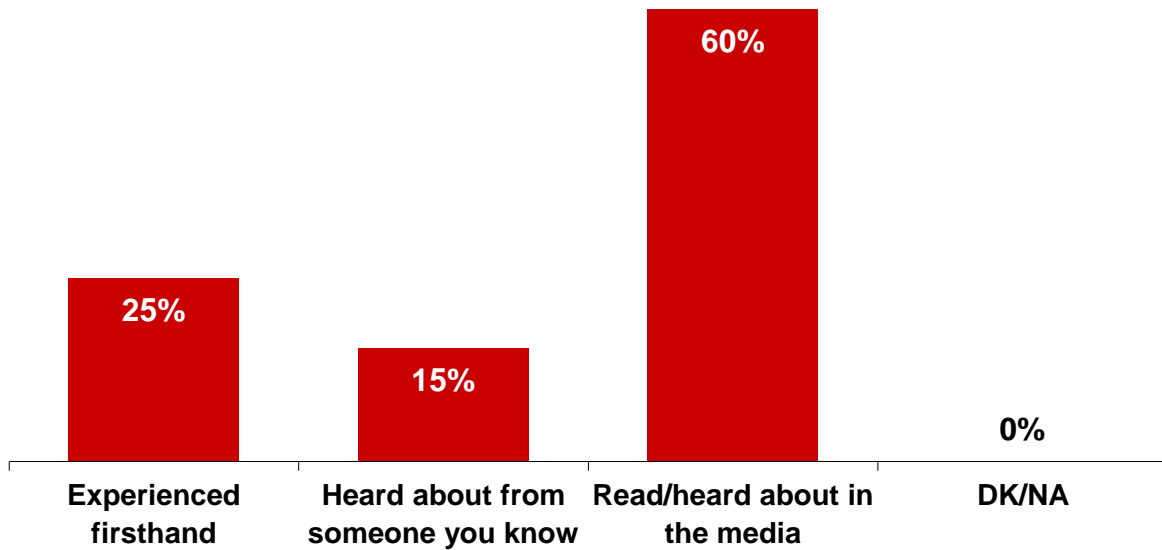
N=60



Q60. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?

Awareness: Crime in our community

N=53



Q6D. Is _____ something you have experienced in your family, heard about from someone you know experiencing it, or read or heard about in the media?

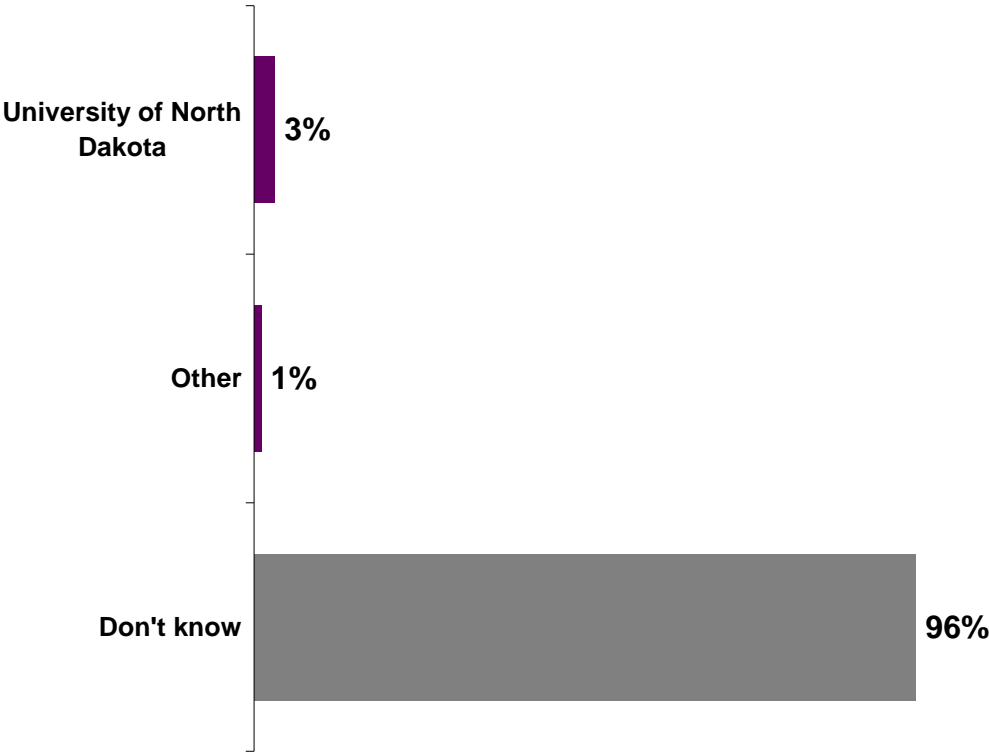
Sources of Assistance

When asked, “If you were approached by someone new to the community, and that person’s family needed assistance with any of the items listed below, what local agency or organization would you refer them to FIRST?,” most residents were unsure for things like a cultural center or reporting discrimination. Residents were more sure when the question was about things like relief from domestic violence or finding employment.

Sources of Assistance	Don't Know
Cultural Center	96%
Reporting discrimination	78%
Finding child care	51%
Finding affordable housing	45%
Family planning	44%
An unplanned pregnancy	42%
Alcohol or drug abuse treatment	34%
Finding public transportation	28%
Mental health treatment	28%
Relief from domestic violence	28%
Finding employment	18%

Sources of Assistance: Cultural Center

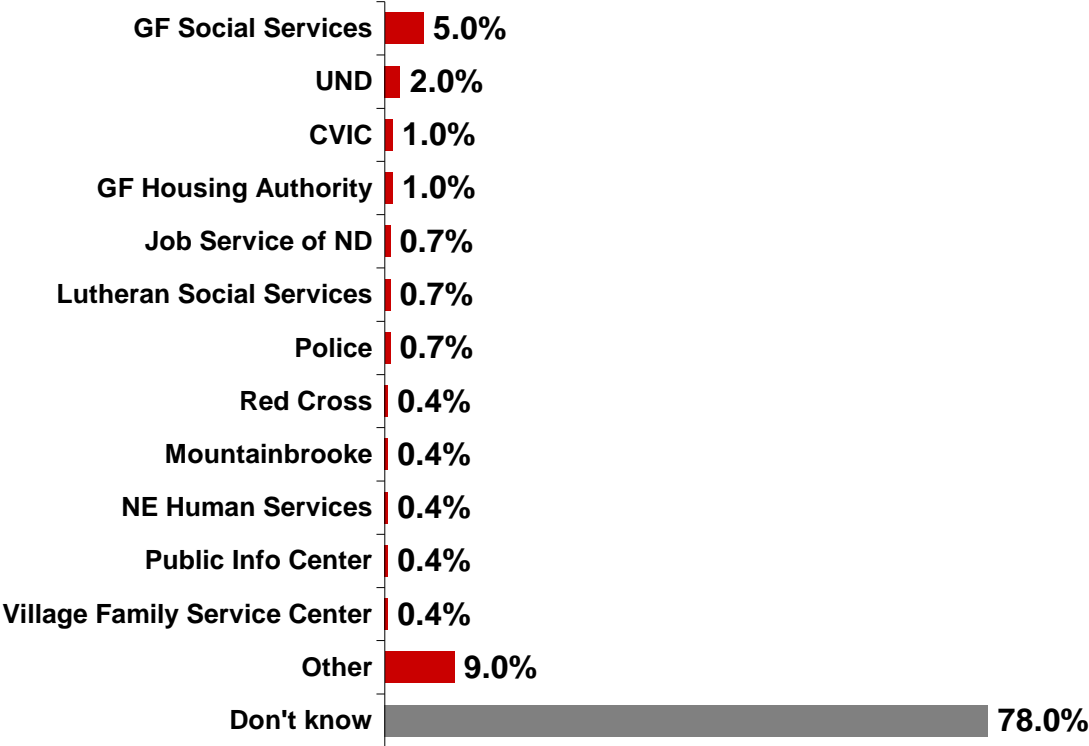
N=411



Q7D. Cultural Center

Sources of Assistance: Reporting discrimination

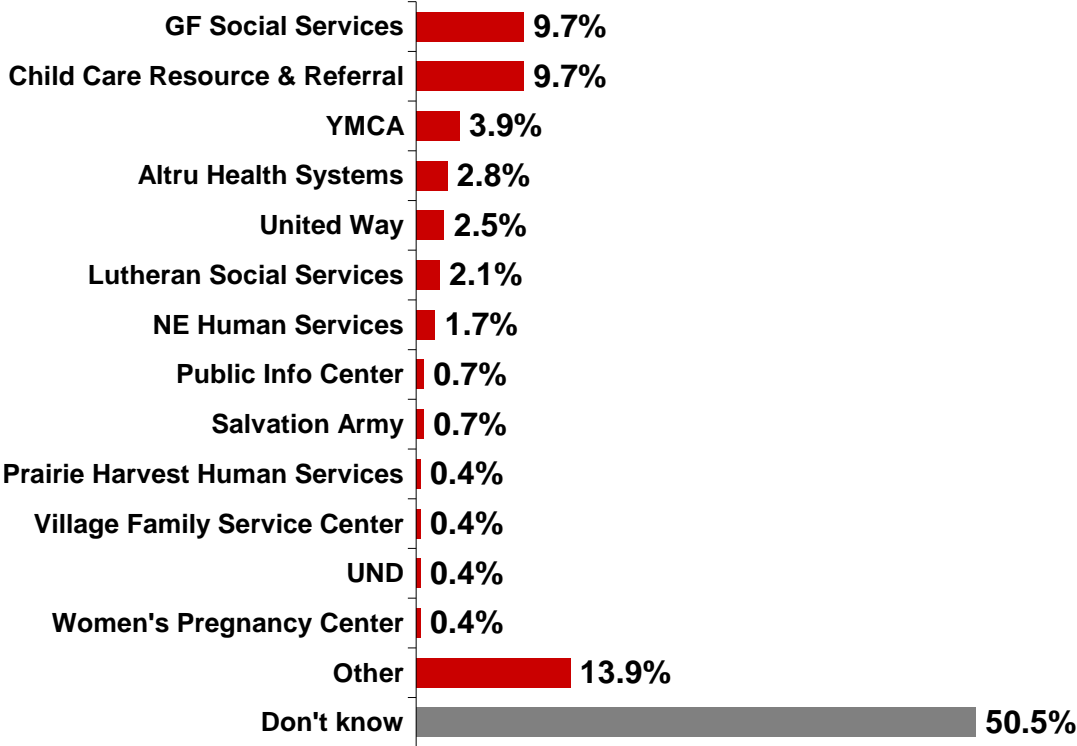
N=411



Q7Q. Discrimination

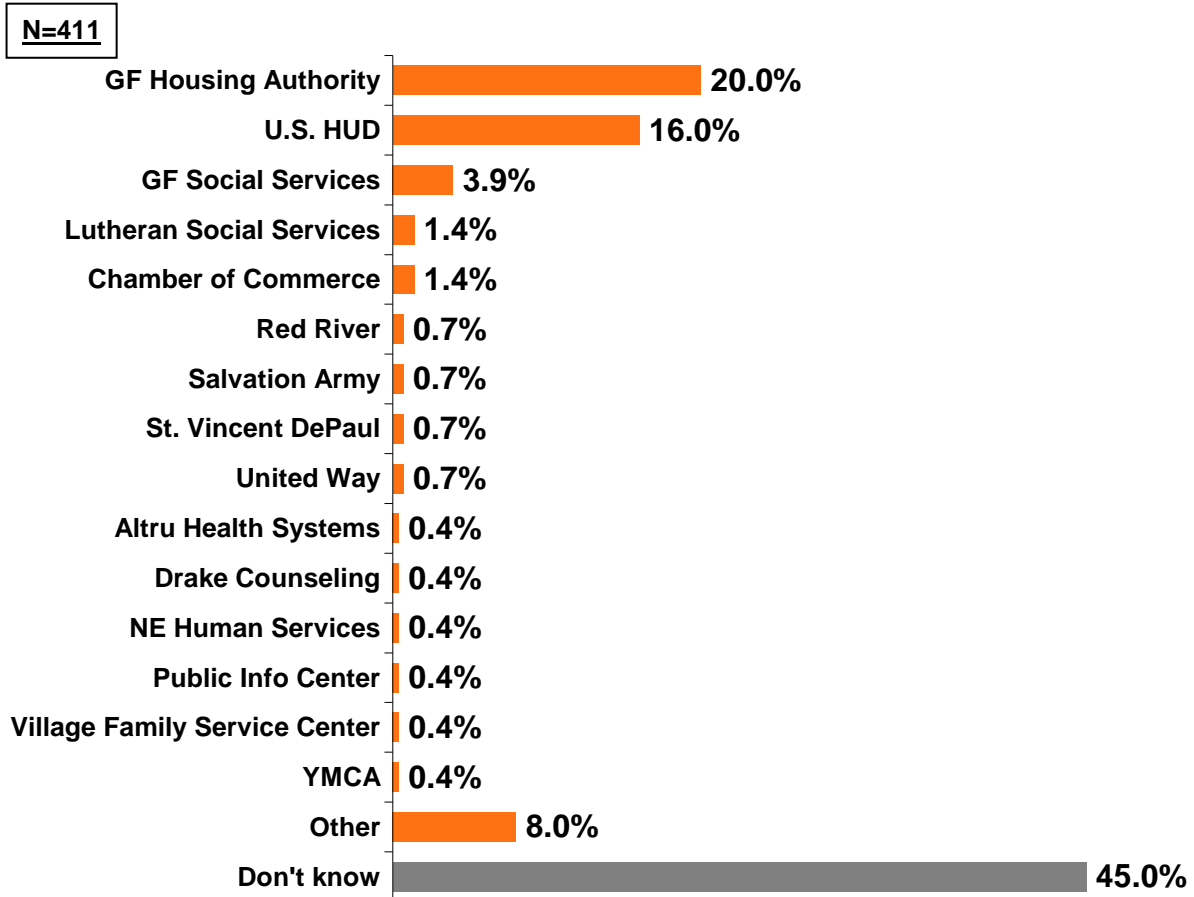
Sources of Assistance: Finding child care

N=411



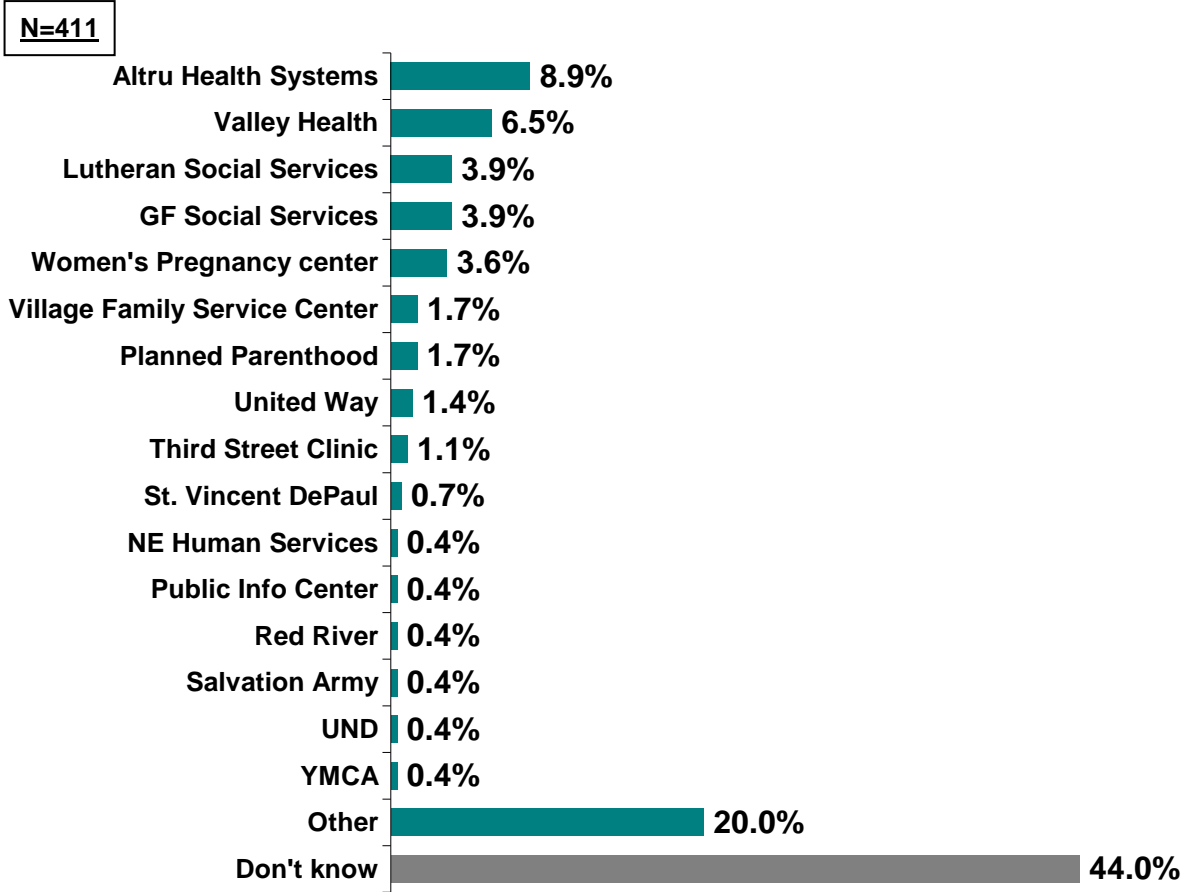
Q7C. Child care

Sources of Assistance: Finding affordable housing



Q7F. Finding affordable housing

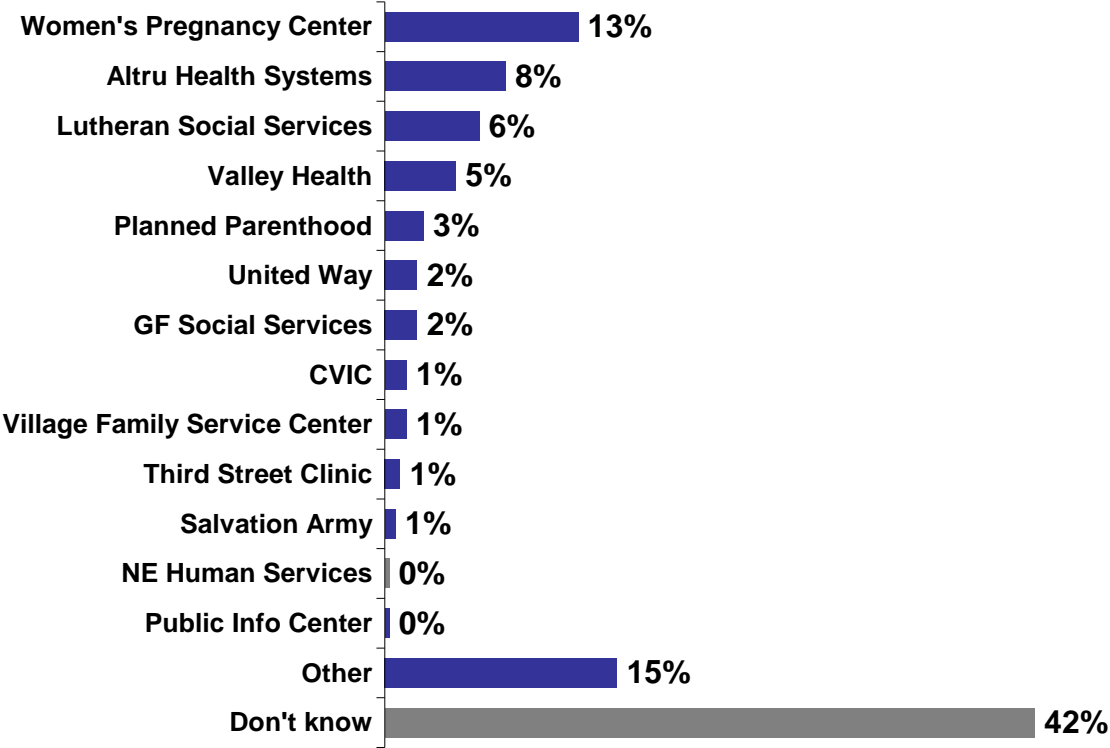
Sources of Assistance: Family planning



Q7E. Family planning

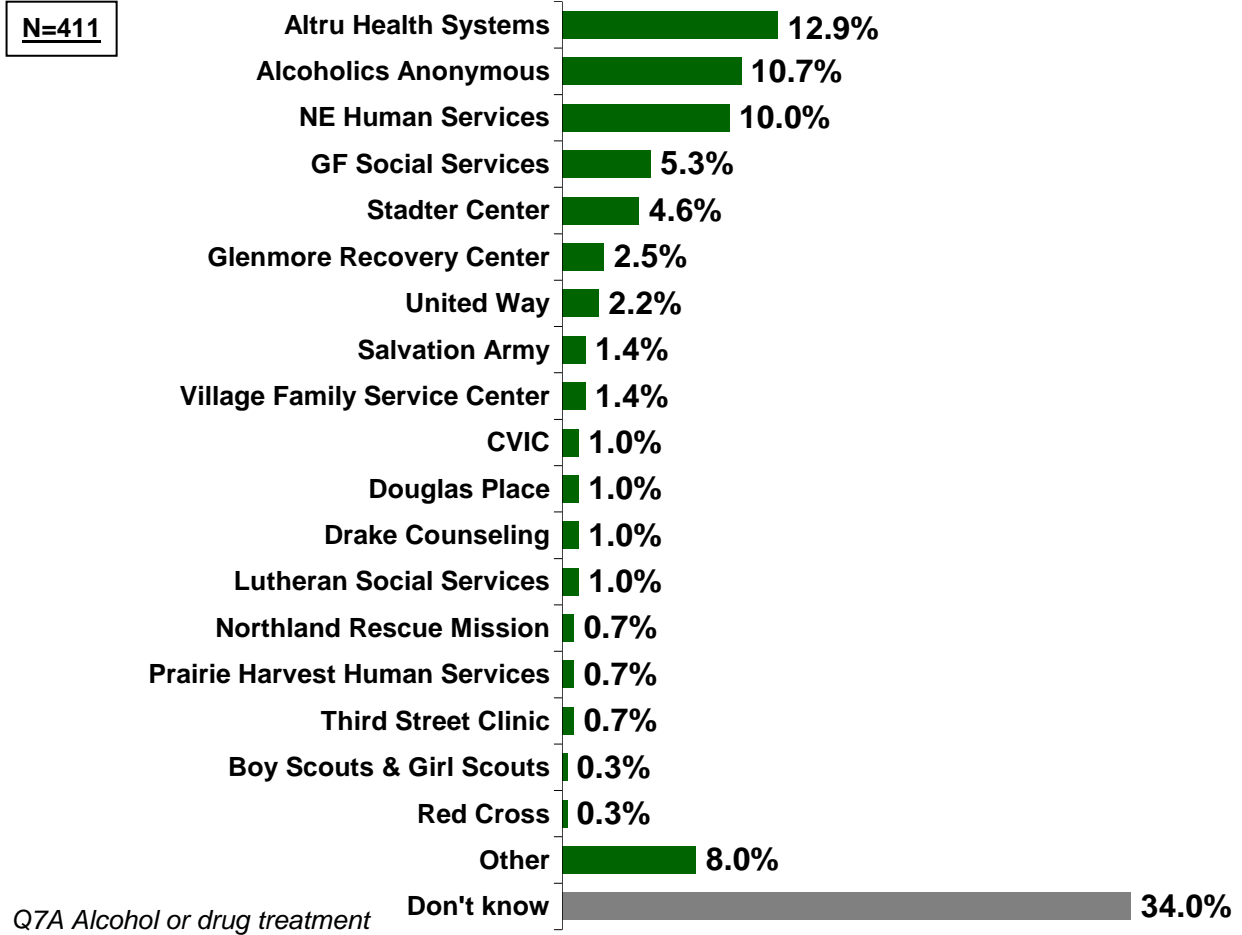
Sources of Assistance: An unplanned pregnancy

N=411



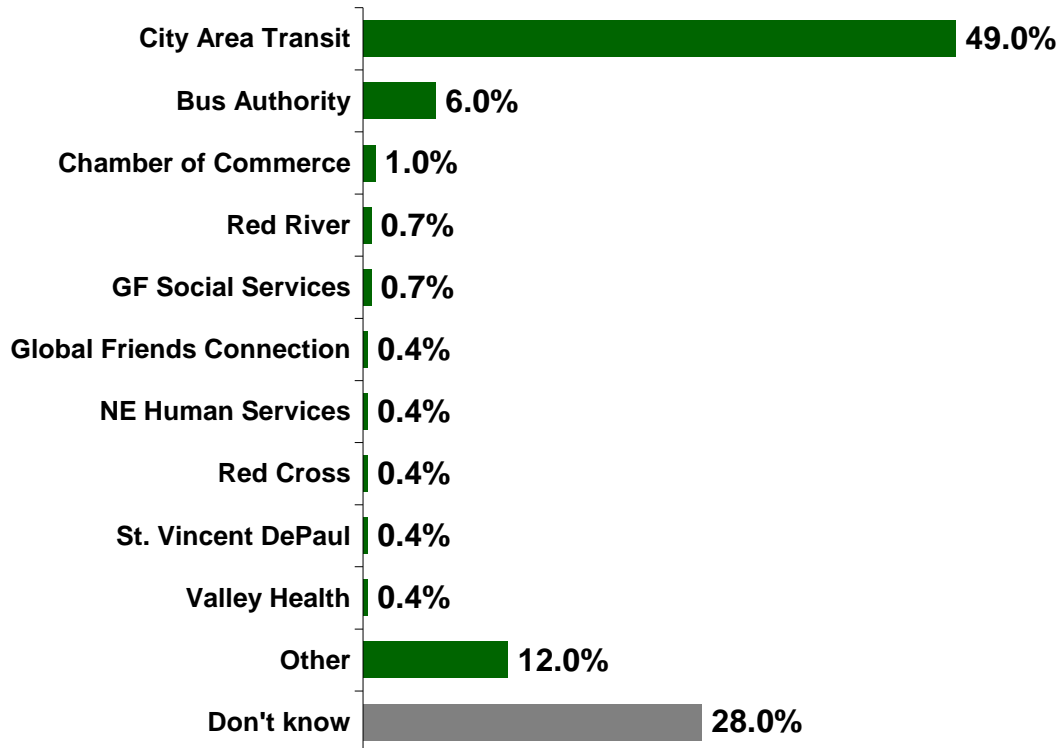
Q7B. An unplanned pregnancy

Sources of Assistance: Alcohol or drug abuse treatment



Sources of Assistance: Finding public transportation

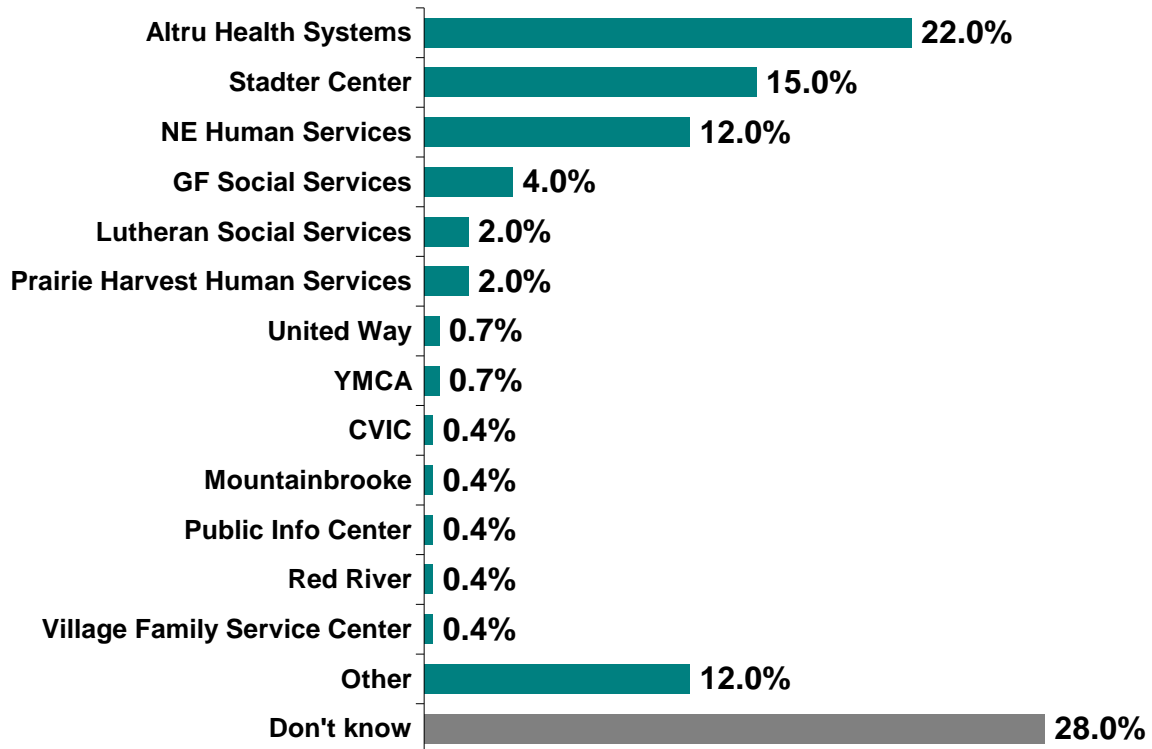
N=411



Q7H. Public transportation

Sources of Assistance: Mental health treatment

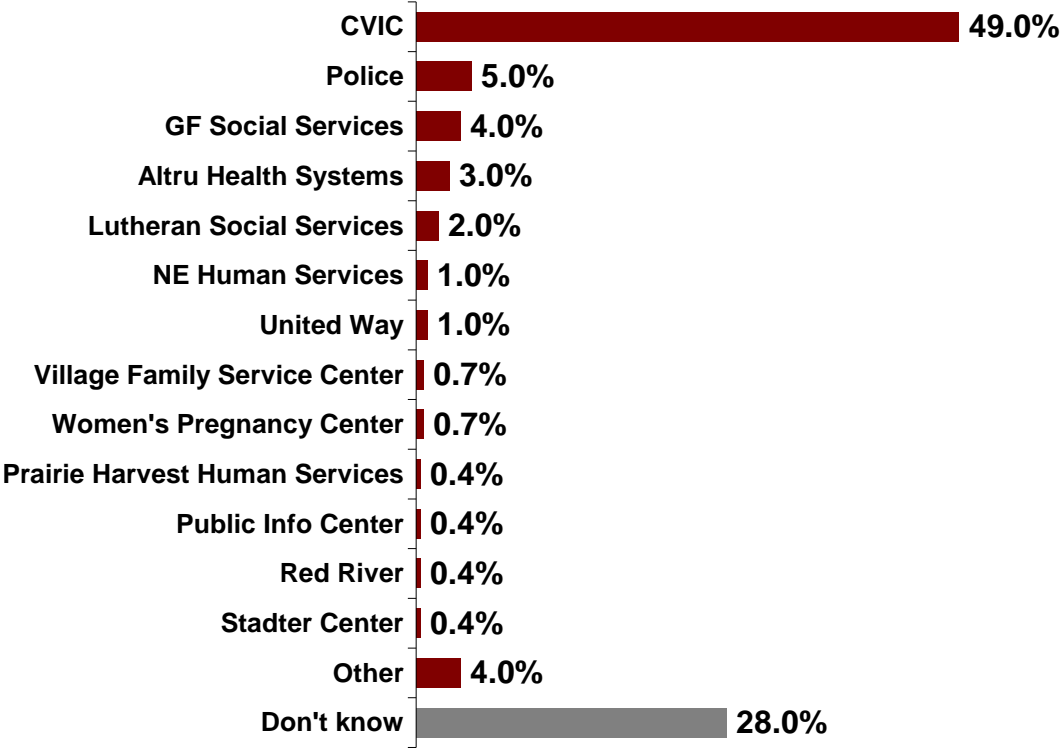
N=411



Q7L. Mental health

Sources of Assistance: Relief from domestic violence

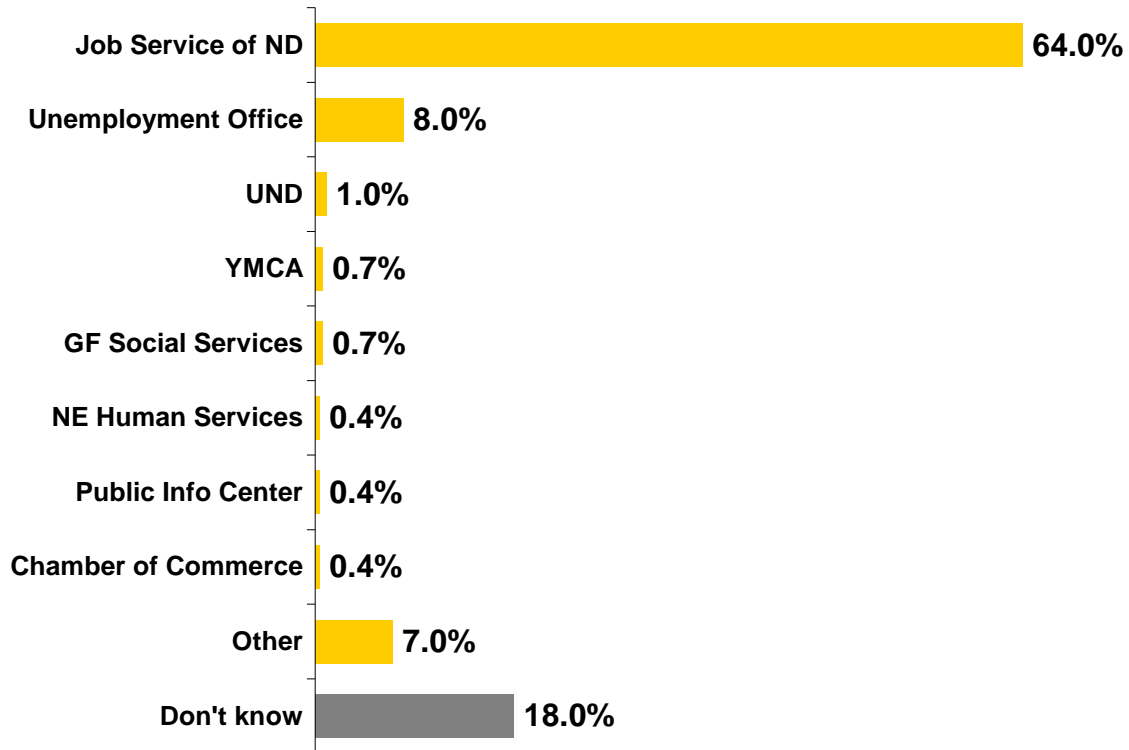
N=411



Q7P. Domestic violence

Sources of Assistance: Finding employment

N=411



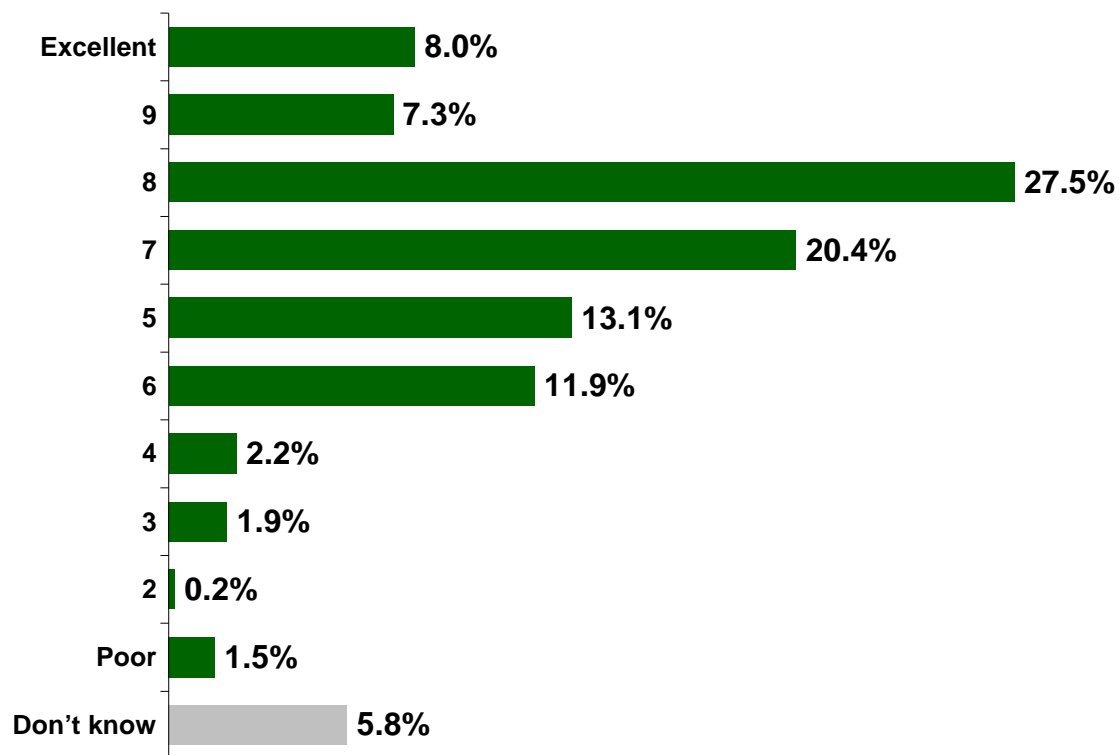
Q7G. Finding employment

Perceptions of Local Agencies and Organizations

Most respondents have a positive perception of the local organization and agencies working in the community.

N=411

Q8. *What is your overall perception of the local agencies and organizations working in the community?*

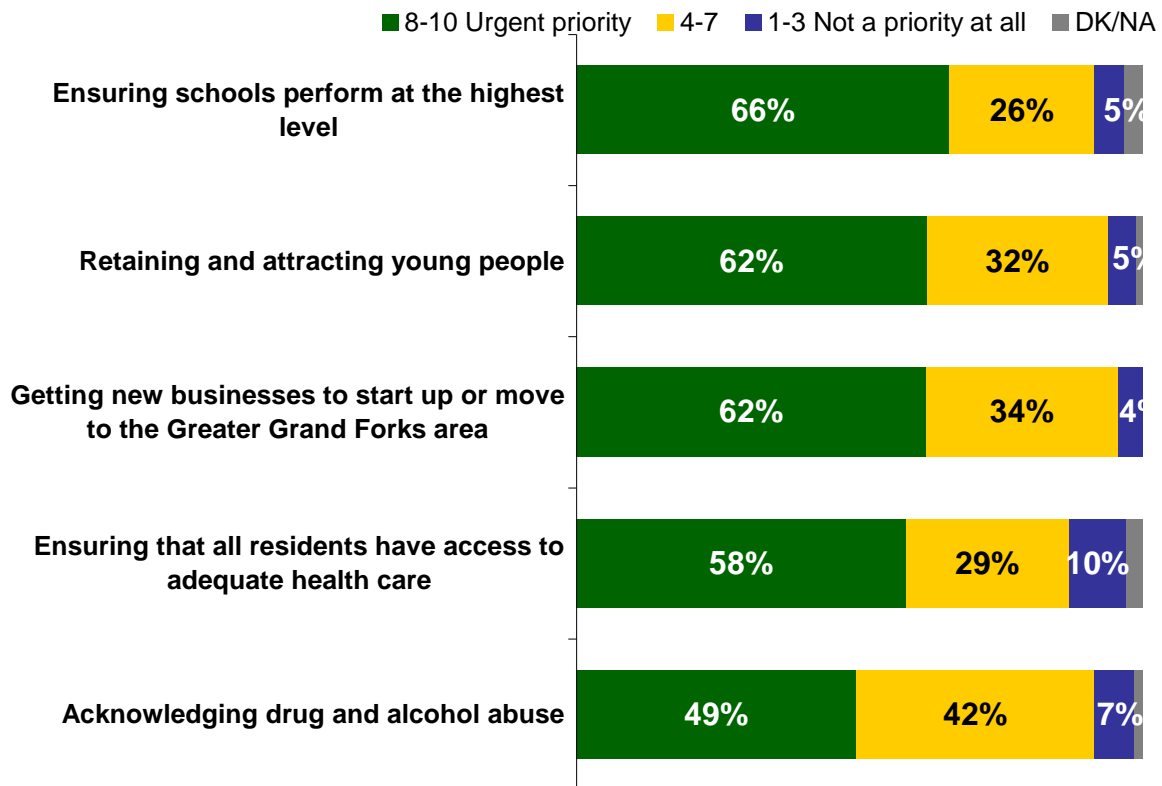


Priorities for Improving County (I)

High-performing schools, attracting and retaining young people and bringing new businesses to the Greater Grand Forks area should be the priorities for leaders.

N=411

Q10. What level of priority should Greater Grand Forks area leaders put on each of the following tasks?

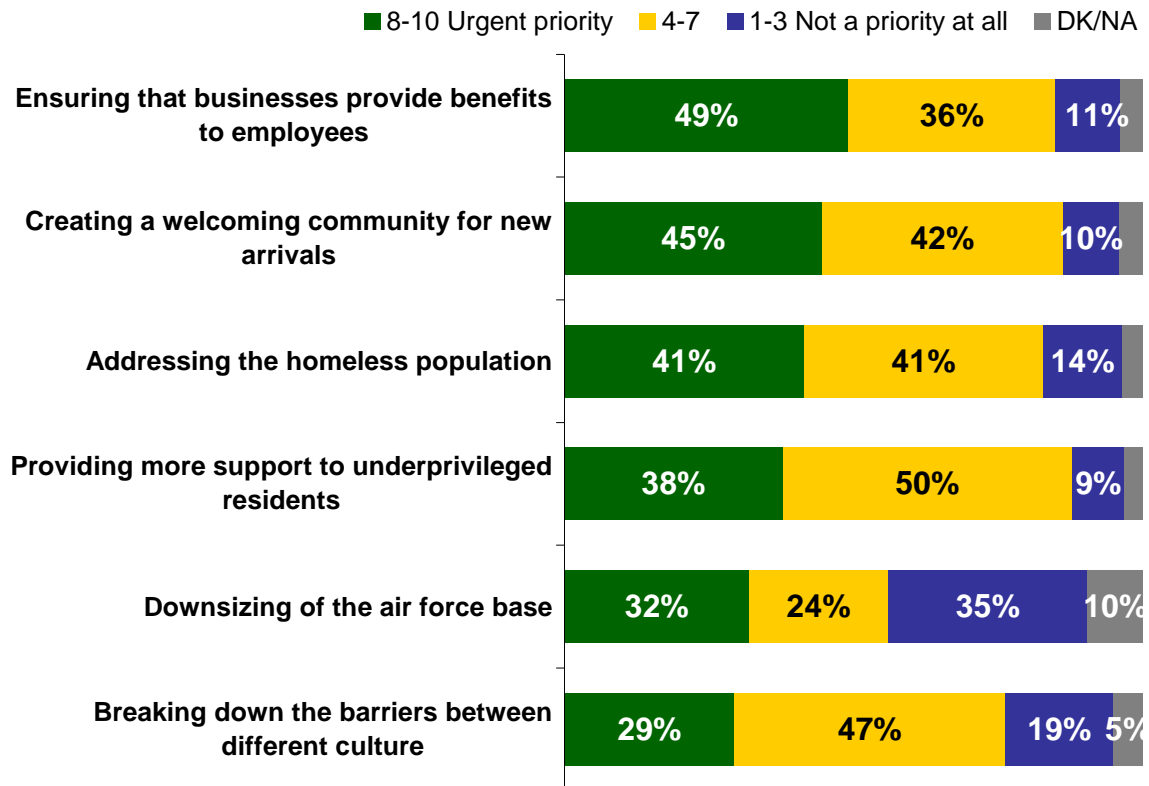


Priorities for Improving County (II)

Residents feel that leaders should focus less on the downsizing of the air force base and breaking down barriers between different cultures.

N=411

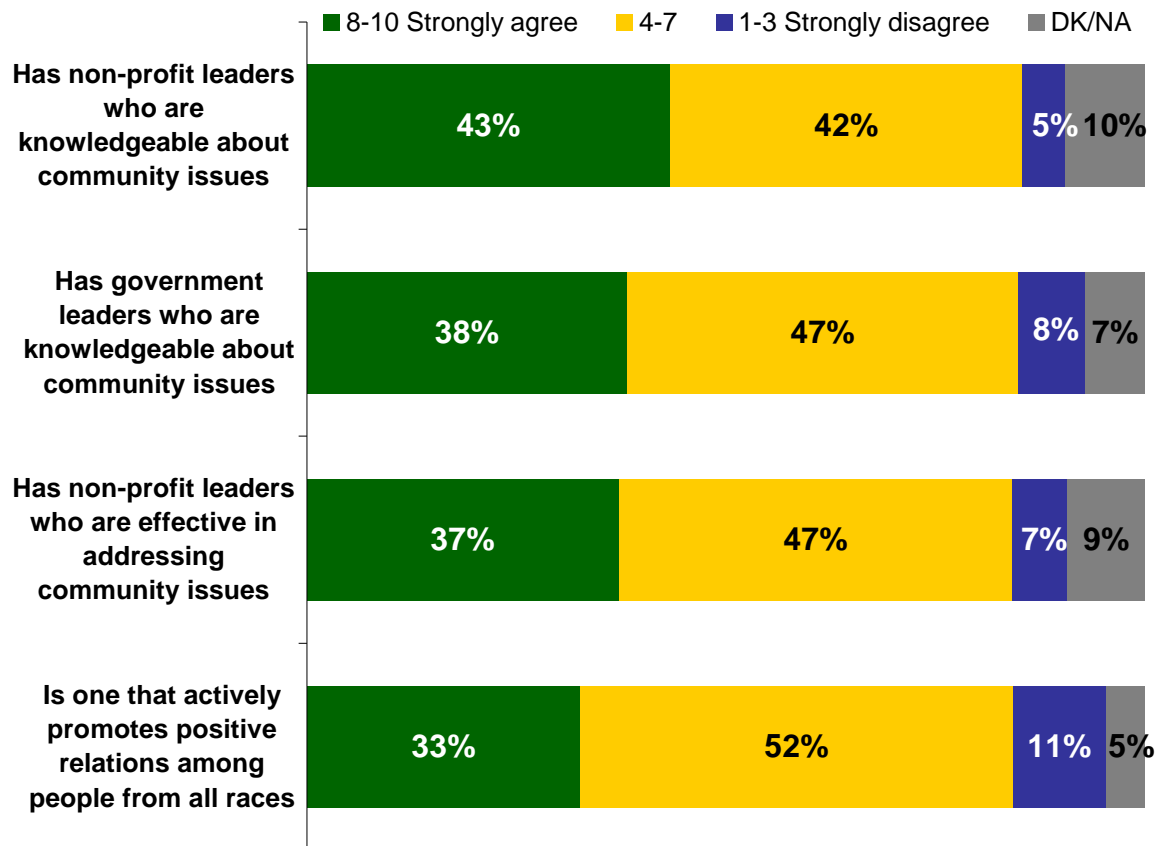
Q10. What level of priority should Greater Grand Forks area leaders put on each of the following tasks?



Perception of Community and Leadership (I)

Residents most strongly agree that the Greater Grand Forks area has non-profit leaders who are knowledgeable about community issues.

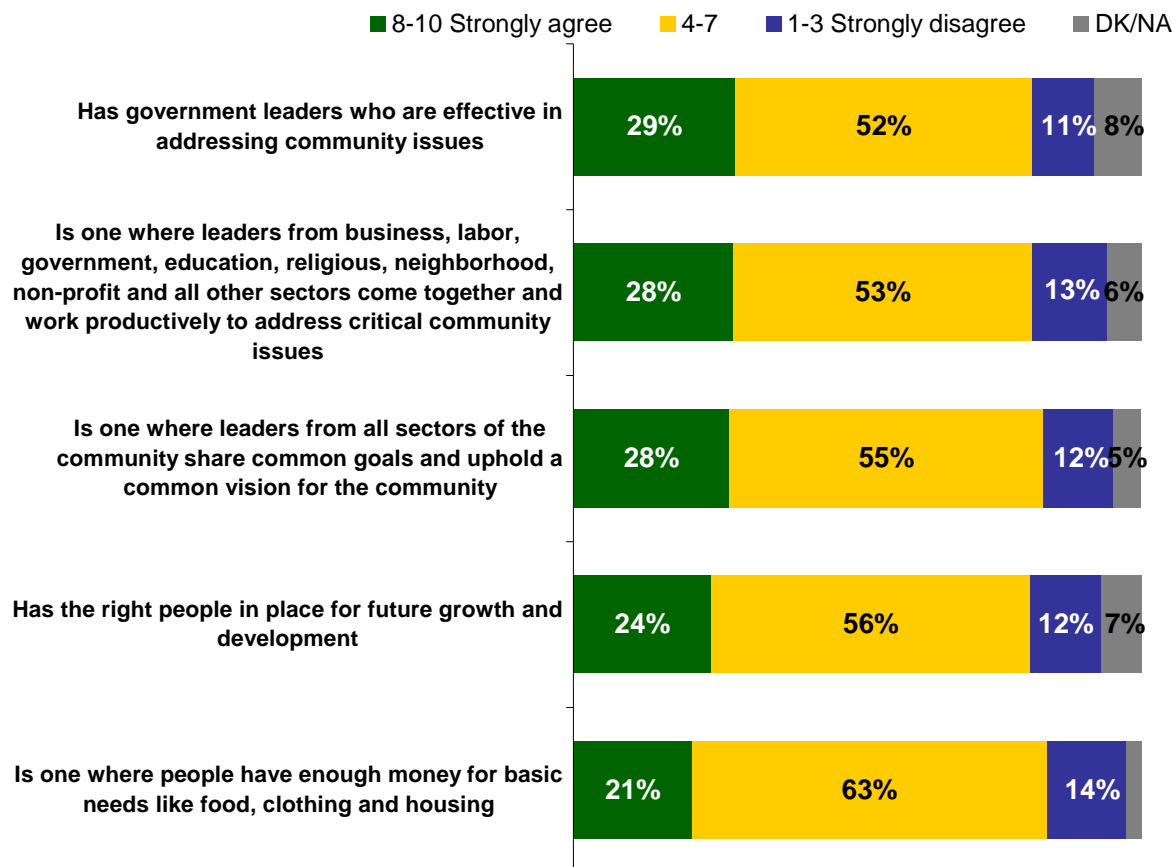
N=411 Q13. Please rate your agreement with the following statements:



Perception of Community and Leadership (II)

Residents are less likely to agree that the area is one where people have enough money for basic needs, like food, clothing and housing.

N=411 Q13. Please rate your agreement with the following statements:



Conclusions

- ▼ 90% of residents feel their quality of life has gotten better or stayed the same; however, 10% feel it has gotten worse.
- ▼ Younger residents and males are more likely to feel satisfied with their overall quality of life.
- ▼ Underemployment and unemployment are the drivers of quality of life. Affordable medical care is also important, and improving these attributes will greatly affect other areas, like being able to retain and attract young people.
- ▼ Most respondents feel that underemployment, or people not being able to find a job that pays a living wage, is the most critical issue facing the Greater Grand Forks area.
- ▼ The most serious problem facing the community is not being able to attract or retain young people.
- ▼ Residents perceive crime as the issue of least concern.
- ▼ Recognition of local agencies or organizations varied depending on the issues. Recognition was high, for example, with where to obtain alcohol or drug treatment, but low for where to report discrimination.
- ▼ Over 40% of residents have a positive perception of local agencies and organizations working in the community.
- ▼ Residents feel that ensuring schools perform at the highest level is the greatest priority for area leaders. Retaining and attracting young people and getting new businesses to the area are close behind.
- ▼ Residents feel that leaders should spend less time on addressing the downsizing of the air force base and breaking down barriers between different cultures.
- ▼ About 40% of residents believe that non-profit and government leaders are knowledgeable about community issues. However, they are less likely to agree that these groups are effective in addressing community issues, especially government leaders.

- ▼ Residents are less likely to feel that the community has the right people in place for future growth and development.
- ▼ Also, agreement was low that the community is one where people have enough money for basic needs, like food, clothing and housing.