



AP-NORC SURVEY FINDS SHARP DIFFERENCES IN AVAILABLE SERVICES TO HELP AMERICANS AGE AT HOME

Non-white and lower-income Americans report less access to local services that would help them age at home

Chicago, IL, July 28, 2021 — Overall, Americans think that their communities offer the quality services needed to allow older adults age at home, according to a new study from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and funded by The SCAN Foundation.

Yet non-white adults and those earning less than \$50,000 a year are less likely to report that their area does a good job providing many of these services, including health care, nutritious food, social activities, transportation, and in-home supports, among others.

Looking at health care in particular exposes a crucial divide. Overall, 46% of Americans think that their community does a good job of meeting older adults' needs for health care, but white adults are more likely to say so than non-white adults (52% vs. 37%). These differences persist for specific health care services like pharmacies, urgent care, vision care, primary care doctors, physical therapy, short-term physical rehab centers, and mental health care.

“Americans want to age at home, but not all populations have the ability to do so—particularly communities of color and those of lower socioeconomic status,” said Dr. Sarita A. Mohanty, president and CEO of The SCAN Foundation. “Through the thoughtful use of the American Rescue Plan funds, states and localities can make a huge difference by creating more equitable access to key community services that make living well and safely at home a reality.”

In addition, significant shares of the population are simply unsure about how well their local area is doing providing these services. For example, 34% of Americans are unsure about access to home health aides for older adults in their community, with those ages 18-59 especially uncertain (38%). While this group might not yet need assistance related to aging, many of these adults will find themselves providing care to an aging loved one in the coming years.

The study also explores the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities and evaluates differences in which communities have recovered more than others. Overall, 53% of people feel that their local area has mostly or completely recovered from the pandemic, but this share falls to 44% among non-white adults and just 38% among non-white adults with incomes below \$50,000 a year.

“While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact communities across the country, some areas are already seeing high levels of recovery while others are struggling – particularly non-white and lower-income Americans.” said Jennifer Benz, Deputy Director of The AP-NORC Center. “That slower recovery is likely to have downstream impacts for quite some time, including on the community resources and services that older adults rely on to be able to age at home.”

Other key findings include:

- Eighty-two percent of adults have at least a few trustworthy people outside their home that they can rely on for help, but 10% have just one person they can turn to and 8% have none.
- Those living in urban areas are less likely to count on neighbors (11%) than those living in suburban (19%) or rural (20%) areas as people they can trust for help.
- Those living in urban areas are more likely than those in rural areas to think their area does a good job meeting older adults' needs for transportation (46% vs 29%).
- More think their local area is doing a poor job rather than a good job providing older adults with access to affordable housing (32% vs. 26%).
- Adults in households earning \$100,000 or more are more likely to think their area does a good job with healthy food and nutrition than those in households that make less than \$50,000 (53% vs 39%).
- Compared to white adults, non-white adults are less likely to think their area does a good job providing access to high-quality grocery stores (55% vs. 72%), places of worship (56% vs. 73%), and Wi-Fi (39% vs. 55%) to people like them.
- White adults are more likely than non-white adults to describe places of worship (54% vs. 41%) and businesses (47% vs. 34%) in their local area as mostly or completely recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Those living in rural areas are more likely than those living in urban areas to describe businesses (49% vs. 35%) and civic organizations (40% vs. 26%) in their area as mostly or completely recovered from the pandemic.

About the Study

This survey, funded by The SCAN Foundation, was conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Staff from NORC at the University of Chicago, The Associated Press, and The SCAN Foundation collaborated on all aspects of the study.

Survey Methodology

The nationwide poll was conducted in English between June 10 and June 14, 2021, using the AmeriSpeak Omnibus®, a monthly multi-client survey using NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. Online and telephone interviews using landline and cell phones were conducted with adults age 18 and older representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia; 1,071 completed the survey—1,036 via the web and 35 via telephone. The panel excluded recipients of long-term care who live in some institutional types of settings, such as skilled nursing facilities or nursing homes, depending on how address are listed for the facility. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 4.2 percentage points.

For more information, please visit www.longtermcarepoll.org.

About The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the

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The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals.

About The SCAN Foundation

Supported by a grant from The SCAN Foundation - advancing a coordinated and easily navigated system of high-quality services for older adults that preserve dignity and independence.

www.TheSCANFoundation.org

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