

2017 Age Friendly Sacopee Valley Initiative survey results summary

This survey represents a partial snapshot of the current state of aging in the Sacopee Valley towns of Baldwin, Cornish, Hiram, Parsonsfield and Porter, based on surveys conducted in the spring and summer of 2017. This effort was a collaboration between the Grateful Undead and the Sacopee Valley Health Center, with help from the AARP; the Grateful Undead is a group of wider Sacopee Valley residents working to make their communities more “age-friendly”. We received 163 completed surveys. Our hope is that insights from this survey can direct us towards work that needs to be done to support aging residents of our towns. Below is a summary of survey results.

Portrait of respondents

The typical respondent in this survey was between 50-79 years old, living with a spouse or partner in a house they owned, active in the community, and relying on driving to get to where they want to go.

Relatively “young” elders. The majority of respondents (69%) were between the ages of 50-79, with relatively few in their 80’s or 90’s (12%). This may have been, in part, because surveys were often gathered at public events such as town meetings and other events that the oldest and homebound would have trouble attending. Because of this, results are skewed in the direction of folks who are still active and relatively healthy.

Home-based. A large majority of respondents lived with a spouse or partner (71%) in homes that they owned (92%). Smaller numbers lived alone (18%) or in households of 3 or more (10%). US Census statistics show that our area has a larger than average percentage of older adults living in aging homes, on lower incomes than any other age group*; that would explain the significant percentage of respondents who needed help with home chores and heating their homes (10%) - shoveling, roofraking were specifically mentioned by respondents. The same percentage reported that their homes were not warm enough in the winter; reasons varied from paying for fuel, poor insulation, and difficulty bringing in wood/pellets. It would seem safe to assume that the percentage needing help would be much higher if the oldest residents, especially those living alone, were more represented in the survey. **Active in community.** Many respondents reported being active in their communities - errands/ shopping, medical appointments, visits with family/friends and restaurants at the top of the list. Many also volunteered with a range of organizations that included schools, town government, historical societies and political groups. Most (76%) reported being “as social as you want to be”, but 20% said they were not; isolation and loneliness can be a real problem for elders in our rural areas. Reasons given were varied, included “can’t afford”, “health”, “don’t like to go out after dark” and “can’t leave spouse.” One said “(I) don’t make friends easily.” **Dependent on cars/driving.** It should come as no surprise that most folks in the area rely on cars for getting around (95%). When asked if they could walk to town, most (67%) said no, one respondent quipped that it was possible, “but it would take at least an hour.” Most reported feeling safe in their home (87%) and their community (93%), but there was a repeated concern about the lack of police presence and the presence of drug users and traffickers.

Expectations for the future

The vast majority of respondents want to stay in their current home as they age; however they express many uncertainties about how increased needs could be managed.

Looking forward, a large majority of this group want to be able to stay in their own home as they age (76%). This will likely prove challenging with advancing age, the likelihood of one partner being left alone at some point, and the maintenance required of older homes. Other options chosen: 9% would like to move to a senior community, and 7% would have someone move in with them, with 16% not knowing or not responding to the question. Similarly, when asked how about finding transportation in later years, 32% say their family will drive them, and 28% say “someone will help” or “I don’t know”. In terms of socialization, 87% expect to spend time with family, while 6% worry about being alone. Given the increased mobility of families and the tendency of younger relatives to move away for work, this reliance on family for help in advanced age could prove problematic for many.

Areas of particular concern raised by survey:

- **Oldest residents** - How can we get more input from the 80+ group?
- **Transportation** - How can elders get around easily, when no longer able to drive?
- **Isolation in rural homes** - How can we reduce social isolation? How do we help seniors living alone maintain older homes, or help provide access/information about other options?
- **Medical services and information** - How can we increase accessibility to those in need?
- **Money issues** - What measures and support can help low income seniors?

* US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B25126, cited in AARP document, p 6

We are hoping to learn more about the strengths and needs of older people in our area so that we can work with our local communities to become "age-friendly". If you are 50 years old or more, we invite you or someone in your household who can help you complete this survey - your answers will be helpful for planning and decision-making. Please email sacopeegratefulundead@gmail.com if you have questions about this survey.

If you would like to have a copy of the results from this survey or would like to know more about the Age-Friendly Sacopee Valley Initiative, please share your name: _____
and your contact information (email or phone): _____

Please drop off your finished survey at your town office by June 1. Thank you for taking time to tell us about what it is like for you to age in our area!

163 total responses

About you

1. What town do you live in? Baldwin 58, Cornish 11, Hiram 31, Parsonsfield 11, Porter 49, No Answer (NA) 3
I can walk to the center of town ☐ Yes 34 ☐ No 110
2. How many years have you lived in your town? ☐ 0-5 12 ☐ 6-20 38 ☐ 21-50 86 ☐ all my life 23 NA 3
3. How do you identify yourself? ☐ female 104 ☐ male 58 ☐ other NA 3
4. What is your age? ☐ 50-59 30 ☐ 60-69 61 ☐ 70-79 52 ☐ 80-89 17 ☐ 90+ 2 NA 1

About your housing situation

5. Check all that apply:
☐ I own my own home 150 ☐ I rent 7 ☐ I live in a group facility 0 ☐ I am homeless 3 ☐ other NA 2
6. How many people live in your household, including yourself? ☐ 1 30 ☐ 2 117 ☐ 3 or more 17
7. If you do not live alone, with whom do you live? Please check all that apply:
☐ spouse/partner 116 ☐ younger relative(s) 15 ☐ older relative(s) 3 ☐ friend(s) 4 ☐ other _____
8. Is your home warm enough in the winter? ☐ yes 145 ☐ no 17 NA 3
If no, please check all issues that apply: ☐ paying for fuel ☐ poor insulation/drafts ☐ bringing firewood/pellets into my home 3 ☐ other _____ 17 / 12 / 9

How to get from here to there

9. How do you get around? Please check all that apply: ☐ my car 155 ☐ bike 8 ☐ family/friends take me 16
☐ spouse/partner takes me 21 ☐ I walk 23 ☐ I'm homebound 1 ☐ other NA 3
10. If transportation is a problem for you, why? Please check all that apply:
☐ money is an issue 8 ☐ no vehicle 1 ☐ no public transportation 10 ☐ I get rides, but I don't like to ask 7 NA 117
11. What keeps you from going places you need to go? Please check all that apply: ☐ lack of transportation 5
☐ I use a wheelchair/walker ☐ I have difficulty seeing ☐ I have trouble hearing ☐ other health conditions 2/3/5/7
☐ I don't like going out ☐ I don't like going alone ☐ weather conditions ☐ I cannot walk well ☐ other 6/7/30/4 NA 99

At home in your community

12. How do you find out what's happening? Please check all that apply: ☐ newspaper 86 ☐ internet 81 ☐ church 30
☐ talk to my friends 109 ☐ Channel 2 14 ☐ the Shopping Guide 147 ☐ posters 32 ☐ other 3
13. Is it easy to find out about community events and local activities? ☐ yes 81 ☐ somewhat 14 ☐ no
14. When you go out, what kinds of things do you do? Please check all that apply: ☐ walk ☐ go to church 93/45
☐ exercise class or sports ☐ visit family/friends ☐ cards or bingo ☐ restaurant ☐ hobby group 32/117/13/106/20
☐ volunteer ☐ classes ☐ errands/shopping ☐ medical appointments ☐ work ☐ other 48/15/124/120/55
15. Do you volunteer? Please check all that apply: ☐ service group or at church 53 ☐ I help others on my own 59
☐ I would like to do more 23 ☐ I'm not able to volunteer 11 NA 29

16. Are you as social as you want to be? ¹²⁴ ☐ yes ³² ☐ no NA 6

If no, please check all issues that apply: ☐ I don't like going out ☐ no one to go with ☐ no ride 1/9/2
☐ I can't afford to go out ☐ nothing to do ☐ too far to drive ☐ I don't know what is going on 12/8/10/11
☐ I don't like to go out after dark ☐ event times are not convenient ☐ other 11/8 NA 66 (see comments)

17. Please check all the services you need now: ☐ none ☐ home health care ☐ money management 97/1/4
☐ daily phone check-in ☐ help filling out forms ☐ finding medical equipment ☐ help with cooking 3/2/0/17
☐ help with home chores (e.g. bringing in wood, yard work, housecleaning, food shopping) 17
☐ modifications to help me stay in my home (e.g. ramp, grab bar, wider doors, extra lighting) 3
☐ other 2 NA 42 (see comments)

• The public places you use

18. If you don't visit some public places like the post office or libraries, why not? Please check all that apply:
☐ no seating ☐ no parking nearby ☐ doors are difficult to open ☐ no accessible public restrooms 3/8/5/8
☐ poor sidewalks ☐ poor lighting ☐ no wheelchair/walker access ☐ other 7/2/0/2 NA 119

19. Where do you get your food? Please check all that apply: ☐ stores or markets ☐ Meals on Wheels 157/0
☐ USDA farmshares ☐ local farms ☐ food pantry/soup kitchen ☐ my own garden ☐ family/friends 3/51/11/68
☐ church suppers ☐ I don't always have enough food ☐ other 14/0 "raise own meal", "internet"
20. What food issues do you have, if any? Please check all that apply: ☐ not enough food ☐ not enough meat 1/3
☐ too few vegetables/fruit ☐ poor quality food ☐ I'm unable to cook 11/6/1 NA 116

• Health and wellness

21. Do you have a problem with falls or a fear of falling? ²⁶ ☐ yes ¹²¹ ☐ no "yes, when icy"
If yes, what if anything, have you done to prevent falls? Please check all that apply:

☐ looking for information ☐ talking with my doctor ☐ participating in a fall-prevention program 4/10/2
☐ walking for strength ☐ making changes in my home to reduce the risk of falling ☐ improving lighting 14/13/5/10
☐ removing hazards like small rugs ☐ taking classes to improve balance and strength ☐ nothing 10/5/6

23. Do you have the health care services you need: ¹²⁵ ☐ yes ²⁸ ☐ no NA 6
If no, what do you need? dental (x3), cheap eye care, blood draws/ER/hospital, accessibility, no copays, evening hours,
house calls

24. Do you feel safe with the people you live with? ¹⁴² ☐ yes ² ☐ no NA 17
If no, what do you need to feel safe? _____

25. Do you feel safe in the community where you live? ¹⁵² ☐ yes ⁶ ☐ no NA 6
If no, what do you need to feel safer? (see comments)

• Future plans

26. As you age, where do you want to live? Please check all that apply: ☐ in my current home ☐ sell my 124/7
home and rent ☐ go on renting ☐ move in with family ☐ have someone move in with me ☐ move to 1/8/11/4
assisted living ☐ move to a senior community ☐ move closer to the center of town ☐ I don't know 15/9/16
NA 10

27. As you age, how will you get to the places you want to go? Please check all that apply:
☐ public transportation ☐ rides for seniors ☐ drive as long as I can ☐ my family will drive me 6/12/136/52
☐ someone will help ☐ I don't know 24/21 NA 9

28. As you age, who will you spend time with? Please check all that apply:
☐ members of my community ☐ people my age ☐ family ☐ friends ☐ I worry about being alone 69/60/141/111/10

If you have other things to tell us about these topics, please use the space below.

(see comments, following page)

Additional comments from survey respondents:

12. How do you find out what's happening in your community? (in addition to list offered)

- town newsletter (2)
- family
- radio (2)
- library (2)
- Channel 6 (2)
- go to town meetings
- clueless, usually
- TV (8)
- clubs and social groups
- I go to a lot of meetings
- periodicals
- neighbors
- @ PO, Whistle Stop
- being involved
- Hiram Historical Society
- American Legion Auxiliary

14. When you go out, what kinds of things do you do? (additional from list offered)

- local meetings
- Board games + puzzles
- Gibson Sr. Ctr
- drive
- lunch
- liquor store
- kayak, hike
- chorus in Portland
- musical events (2)
- library, historical society

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15. Do you volunteer?

- town government/committees
- conservation groups
- Libraries, Historical Societies
- food pantry
- fire departments
- political action - writing reps, demonstrations
- "No, but I do help with stray cats"
- "no money to do anything"

16. Are you as social as you want to be? If not, check all that apply (under "other"):

- "don't make friends easily"
- "too much work!"
- "just need to take time"
- "work, other responsibilities"
- "commuting to work limits time"
- "caring for mom at home"
- "medical"
- "can't leave spouse"
- "health"

17. Please check all the services you need now (listed under "other"):

- "roofraking"
- "shoveling"
- "Financial advice on IRAs, etc."
- "transportation"
- "help with hearing aides and dental"
- "help with money for hearing aides and dental"

23. Do you have all the health services you need?

If no, what do you need?

- "cheap eye + dental"
- "dental" (x2)
- "blood draws/ER/hospital
- "accessibility, no copays, evening hours, house calls"

25. Do you feel safe in the community where you live? If no, what do you need to feel safe?

- "would like more visible sheriffs/more visible police presence"
- "concerned about lack of law enforcement to control traffic, drug use"
- "speed limits, fewer drug traffickers"
- "loud/fast cars, strangers lurking"
- "too many drug users + home invasions"
- "yes, but maybe illusory - so much anger!"

Final question: If you have other things to tell us, use the space below:

- “pre-Medicare considerations/info”
- “I would like to see medical outreach - visiting nurses and doctors”
- “Hope we can have adult ed classes in our community center especially computer-like facebook, excell- and a computer consult person who is patient, and variety classes -woodworking, art, photography, stained glass.” (survey from Baldwin)
- “I find family, neighbors, friends, church members, businesses, helpful, pleasant, firendly. Am doing OK so far.”
- “Don’t want to be a burden. Have a long term care directive.”
- “I am able to live rurally now but have looked at what the future will bring and how to age in place. Working w/seniors I know the issues that face them. I take calls every day w/fewer resources to connect them with transportation, isolation and having to make choices like whether to heat or or eat.”
- “Lower taxes.”
- “ideas: friendly visitor program, daily hone call to “aloners”, list of available home services and providers”
- “Property taxes too high. Lights, heat cost.”
- “property taxes too high; cost of living increasing; social security not keeping up with cost of living expenses.”
- “Exercise place for seniors”
- “It is not an issue for us, but I wonder if getting to the dump/trash & recycling is an issue for some people.”
- “Currently independent but I see transportation as an issue, current activities for older people in a flyer would be helpful and useful talks on aging.”
- “Maybe some sort of community center where seniors can meet and interact is a worthwhile idea. I feel isolation, particularly for those living alone, can seriously impact mental and physical health. A dedicated space, open whenever, to meet for coffee, a potluck supper, games, or arts and crafts would be nice. And maybe there may be an opportunity to get discounted group rates on an occasional harbor cruise, bus tour, concert, or art showing. There should also be a daily call up service for those infirmed seniors who have no family or friends to check on them. These people can injure themselves and suffer needlessly and horrifically until they are discovered. Finally, let’s not forget The Right To Die. When we decide we have no quality of life left and no one cares about us, give us the option and means to humanely end it.”
- “I would like to have a nice walking, multi use trail like the Mountain Division Trail in Fryburg and Standish, Windham. We have RR tracks going right through Baldwin and Hiram. How can this idea become a reality?”

The Demographics of Aging in Sacopee Valley and Ossipee Region

Sacopee Valley and the Ossipee Region, covers 9 towns—Baldwin, Cornish, Hiram, Limerick, Limington, Newfield, Parsonfield, Porter, and Waterboro—and is home to 24,010 people. The median age ranges from 32 in Limerick to 48 in Parsonfield. Nearly one in five (19%) have attained the milestone of their 60th birthday¹. One of three (38%) of the 3,223 households in the region include at least one person age 60 or older².

Living Arrangements: While the majority of older people live with a spouse, relative, or friend, many live alone. With the exception of Parsonfield, Porter, and Waterboro, women are more likely to live alone than men³.

One in three (31%) older residents moved to their home in the area less than 15 years ago⁴. Recent movers have fewer social ties and are at greater risk for social isolation than their peers who have lived in the same home for a longer time.

Housing: Home ownership is common, with 88% of older families living in a home they own or are purchasing⁵. Older residents may need help with repairs and modifications to remain safe and comfortable in their homes and to protect their investment.

Older people are more likely to live in older houses than are younger people⁶. Older homes need more maintenance and modifications for people to age in place. The need to find help with home chores is greatest for those aging with a disability that prevents them from doing simple, routine chores safely.

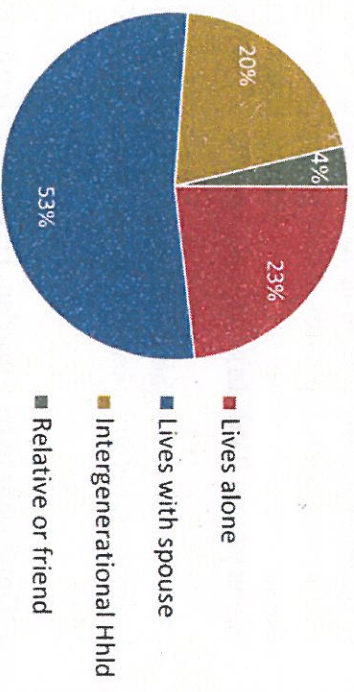
Income Security: Households headed by an older person have a lower median income than the overall population in the Sacopee Valley and Ossipee Region towns. Food security may be a challenge for some older residents. In the past year, 15% of older households received Food Stamps, compared with 20% of younger households⁸.

There is significant income disparity among older households: 20% of families live on less than \$15,000/year while 10% have a yearly income of \$75,000+⁹. About 37% of families age 65 + have mortgages on their homes.¹⁰ Based on the Elder Economic Index, an older couple with a mortgage living in the area need \$42,396/year to meet basic needs for food and shelter¹¹.

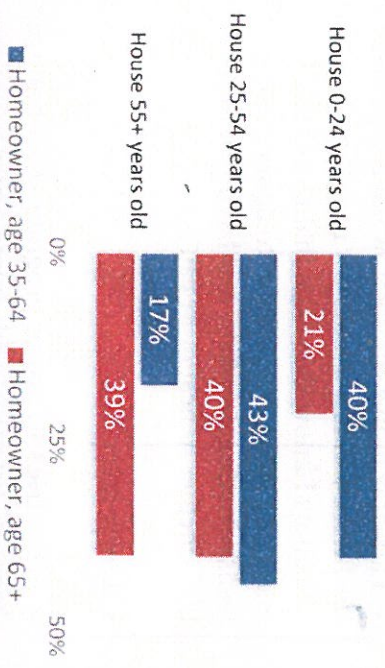
Veterans: Overall, 12% Sacopee Valley and Ossipee region residents are veterans. The percentage jumps to 57% of men age 65+¹². Veterans were less likely to be poor or live with a disability than non-veterans; 4% of veterans age 65+ had income less than the poverty rate, compared with 11% of non-veterans. Disability is present for 17% of veterans, compared with 39% of non-veterans¹³.

Disability: Residents of Sacopee Valley and the Ossipee region have a disability rate comparable with their peers throughout Maine; 40% of area residents age 65+ have at least one disability, compared to 36% of Mainers¹⁴. The disability rate increases to 58% for people age 75 and older who live in the area¹⁵. Half (52%) of older residents with a disabling condition live with more than one disability¹⁶. People who live with multiple physical limitations face an increased risk of social isolation and may require some assistance with transportation, finding resources to maximize wellness and independence, and completing needed home modifications.

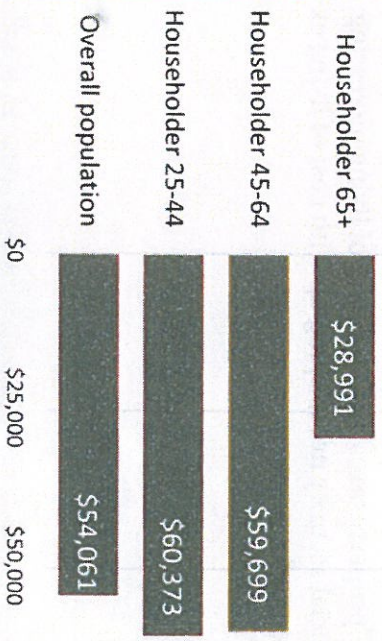
Living Arrangements of people age 65+³



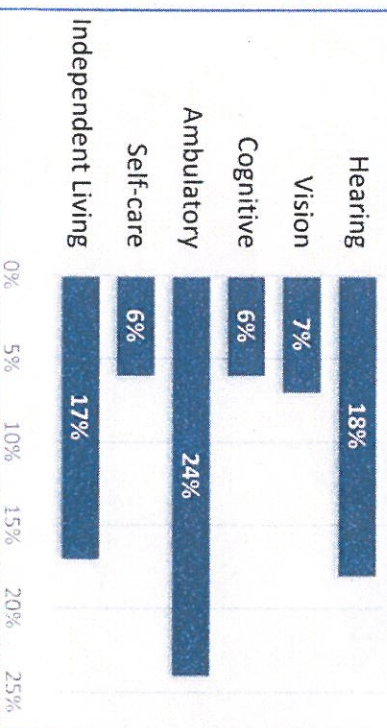
Age of owner-occupied housing by age of homeowner⁶



Median Income of Households, by Age⁷



Percentage of residents age 65+ with a disability¹²



¹ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B0905

² US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table S1101

³ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B09020 and Table B11006

⁴ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B25126

⁵ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B25007

⁶ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B25126

⁷ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

⁸ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

⁹ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

¹⁰ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

¹¹ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

¹² US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

¹³ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

¹⁴ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

¹⁵ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

¹⁶ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

¹⁷ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

¹⁸ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

¹⁹ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

²⁰ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

²¹ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

²² US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

²³ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

²⁴ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

²⁵ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

²⁶ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049

²⁷ US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates for 2010-2014, Table B19049