



2019

# Hendricks County Community Needs Assessment

*Summary of Results*

*Where Local Good Grows*

**Hendricks County  
Community Foundation**



#DefiningNeedsLeadingChange



*“More pedestrian connections between neighborhoods and schools”*

SUGGESTED SOLUTION

# Quick Summary of Key Findings

- More than 3,000 individuals responded, ensuring an accurate projection of the entire county's population.
- Respondents believe the most important community assets are safety, a strong education system, trusted leadership, healthy and strong families, and access to healthcare and wellness options.
- In contrast, there were significant concerns about traffic congestion, addictions, lack of coordinated planning efforts and cooperation, the motivations and knowledge levels of local leaders, and the influence of negative social media.
- Survey results identified priorities for addressing community needs, including strengthening community leadership, improving the health of our community, making getting around easier, coordinating unified planning for Hendricks County towns and organizations, and engaging our entire community to increase communication, trust and unity.
- Respondents believe key issues aren't being addressed because of a lack of resources, self-motivated or apathetic local leaders, and resistance to change.
- Only 40 percent feel very or extremely connected to their towns and Hendricks County, with newcomers feeling the most disconnected.
- Three out of five people are very or extremely willing to help make their community a better place.



HENDRICKS COUNTY

*“Communicated  
inclusion of all  
religions, races,  
genders”*

SUGGESTED SOLUTION



# Assessment Methodology

The data presented in this report are the culmination of a three-step process that began when Hendricks County Community Foundation staff interviewed 58 key community leaders to learn their perceptions of the county's most immediate and important needs. Next, we conducted seven focus groups that brought a total of 98 individuals together to share their concerns about their communities, resources available to address those concerns, barriers to accessing those services, and possible solutions. We then created and distributed a community-wide needs assessment survey with a goal of attaining demographic percentages reflecting the county's population.

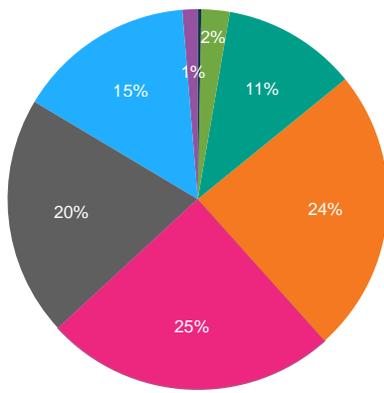
Hendricks County has a population of 167,009 (US Census 2018), and we received more than 3,000 completed surveys. Based upon standard statistical measures, we achieved a 99 percent confidence level (with a 2 percent margin of error) for accuracy in reflecting the views of Hendricks County residents as a whole. In four key demographic segments (age, gender, income, and education level), our confidence level was 95 percent (with a 3 percent margin of error).

In simple terms, the participants in this survey accurately represent the population of Hendricks County and its key demographic groups, so its findings can be projected across the actual population with a great deal of confidence. The methodology is consistent with the standards used by demographers, social scientists, and grantmaking organizations.

Our only concern was the low response rate from people of color. Census data states 16 percent of Hendricks County residents are nonwhite, but only 4.5 percent of our responses came from individuals describing themselves as nonwhite. While this gap does not weaken the statistical validity of the survey's findings, it does indicate a need to further engage people of color in our community.

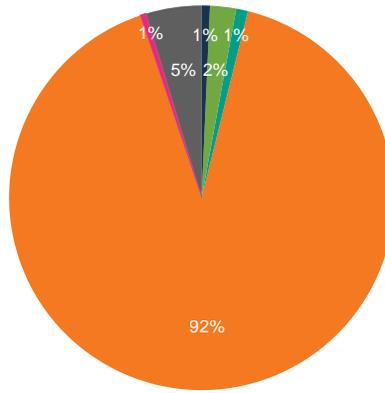
# Who Responded?

The 2019 Hendricks County Needs Assessment was highly promoted and well-distributed throughout Hendricks County, using methods such as emails, media, flyers, and distribution at events. The county has a population of 167,009 (2018) and we received more than 3,000 completed surveys. As detailed in the methodology on the previous page, the response accurately represents the county's overall population and its key demographic groups.



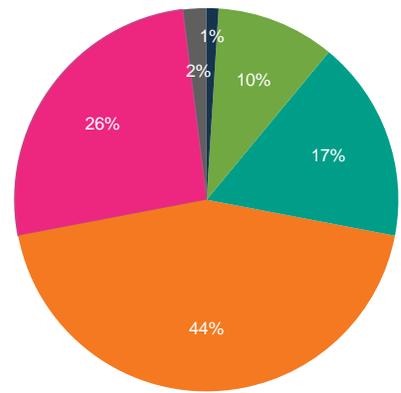
**By Age**

- Under 18 ●
- 18-24 ●
- 25-34 ●
- 35-44 ●
- 45-54 ●
- 55-64 ●
- 65 and older ●
- Prefer not to Answer ●



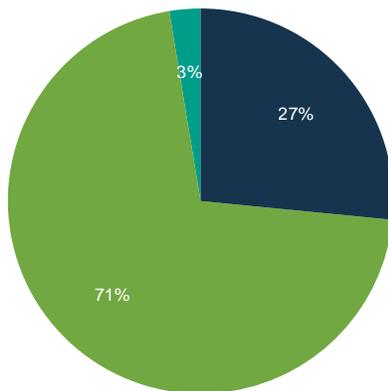
**By Race/Ethnicity**

- Asian ●
- Black/African American ●
- Hispanic/Latinx ●
- White/Caucasian ●
- Other ●
- Prefer not to Answer ●



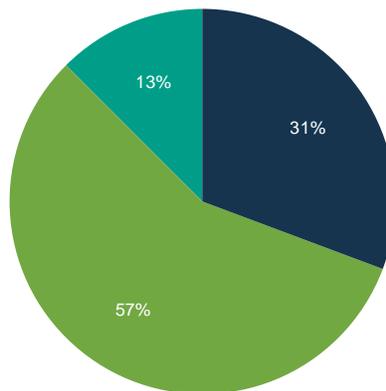
**By Educational Attainment**

- Less than high school ●
- High School Diploma or Equivalent ●
- Some college ●
- Certification, Assoc. or Bachelors ●
- Advanced Degree ●
- Prefer not to Answer ●



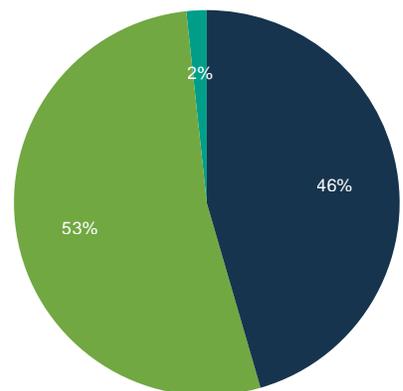
**By Gender**

- Man ●
- Woman ●
- Other/Prefer not to Answer ●



**By Household Income**

- (county median is \$74,245)
- Below Median ●
  - At or Above Median ●
  - Prefer not to Answer ●

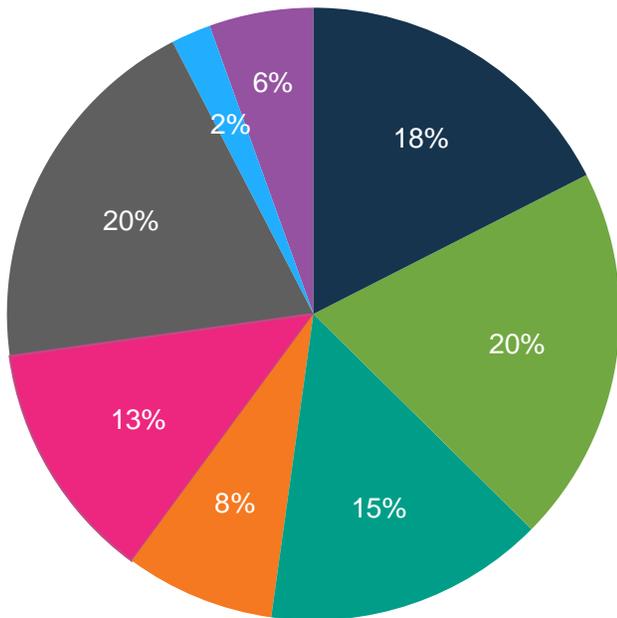
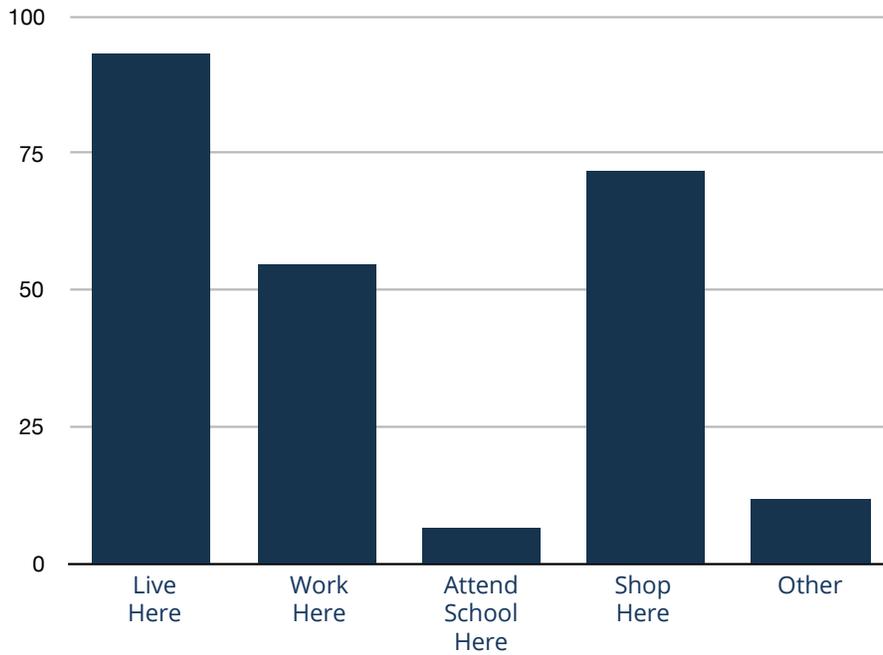


**Have Children Under Age 18**

- Yes ●
- No ●
- Prefer not to Answer ●

\*Percentages add up to more than 100% due to rounding or allowing for multiple responses.

## Relationship to Hendricks County



### Where They Live

- Avon ●
- Brownsburg ●
- Danville ●
- Mill Creek ●  
*(Amo, Belleville, Cartersburg, Clayton, Coatesville, Hadley, Stilesville)*
- North West Hendricks ●  
*(Jamestown, Lizton, North Salem, Pittsboro)*
- Plainfield ●
- Other ●
- Outside County ●

## How Long They Have Lived in Hendricks County

Part of a Multi-Generation Family	9.5%
Born and Raised	11.7%
More than 20 Years	24.7%
11 to 20 Years	22.7%
4 to 10 Years	15.6%
Less than 4 Years	9.5%
Do Not Live Here	6.3%

\*Percentages add up to more than 100% due to rounding or allowing for multiple responses.

# What Assets are Important for Hendricks County?

Before we can examine ways to improve life in Hendricks County, it's critical to determine what people view as most important. The survey presented a list of 20 community assets and asked respondents to rate how important each was to them. The community assets were chosen based upon best practices and comments from our focus groups. They represent elements of life that may or may not be present in a given community.

More than 90 percent of respondents ranked these five assets as important or very important to them:

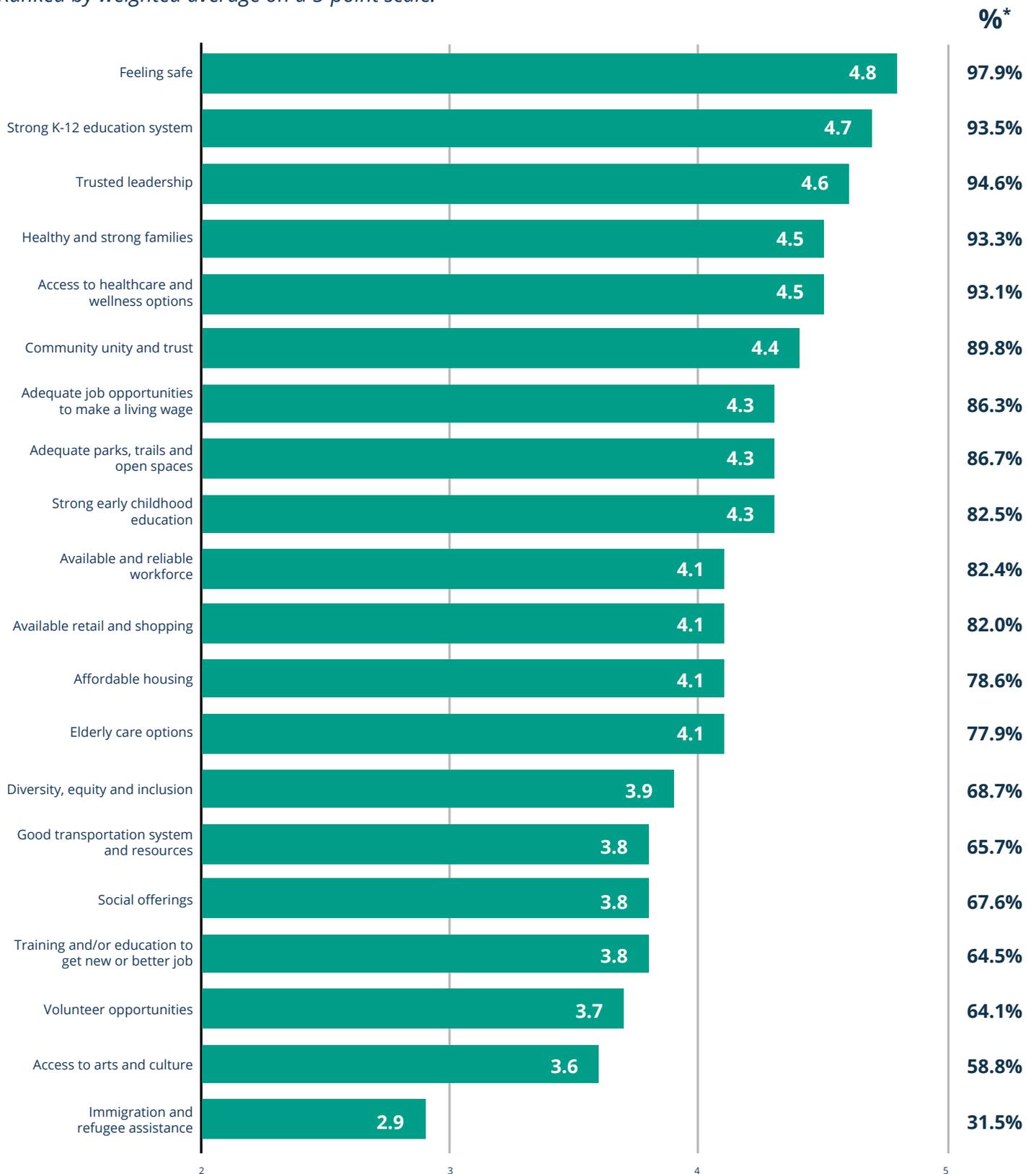
- Feeling safe
- Strong K-12 education system
- Trusted leadership
- Healthy and strong families
- Access to healthcare and wellness options

The assets were ranked consistently across the demographic groups, except that affordable housing was given slightly less importance by respondents whose income exceeded the county's median.

The full list of assets follows, ranked from most important to least important based upon a weighted average of responses. For each item, the bar indicates the weighted average of responses, and the adjacent number is the percentage who ranked the asset as important or very important.

# Community Assets

Ranked by weighted average on a 5-point scale.



\*Percentage of respondents who ranked the asset as important or very important.

# What Concerns People about Hendricks County?

Hendricks County faces a variety of challenges, but which of them create the greatest sense of concern among residents? We presented a list of 20 potential issues that were identified by participants in the focus groups and interviews and asked respondents to choose up to five as the top issues facing their communities.

Overall, the top five issues rated by respondents were:

- Inadequate public transportation and traffic congestion
- Unhealthy addictions (e.g., alcohol, drugs)
- County and towns don't coordinate planning efforts or work together
- Community leaders have self-interest rather than social responsibility and lack overall community knowledge
- Negative and false social media influencing issues

We also asked in an open-ended question what bothers respondents the most, and the top five cited were:

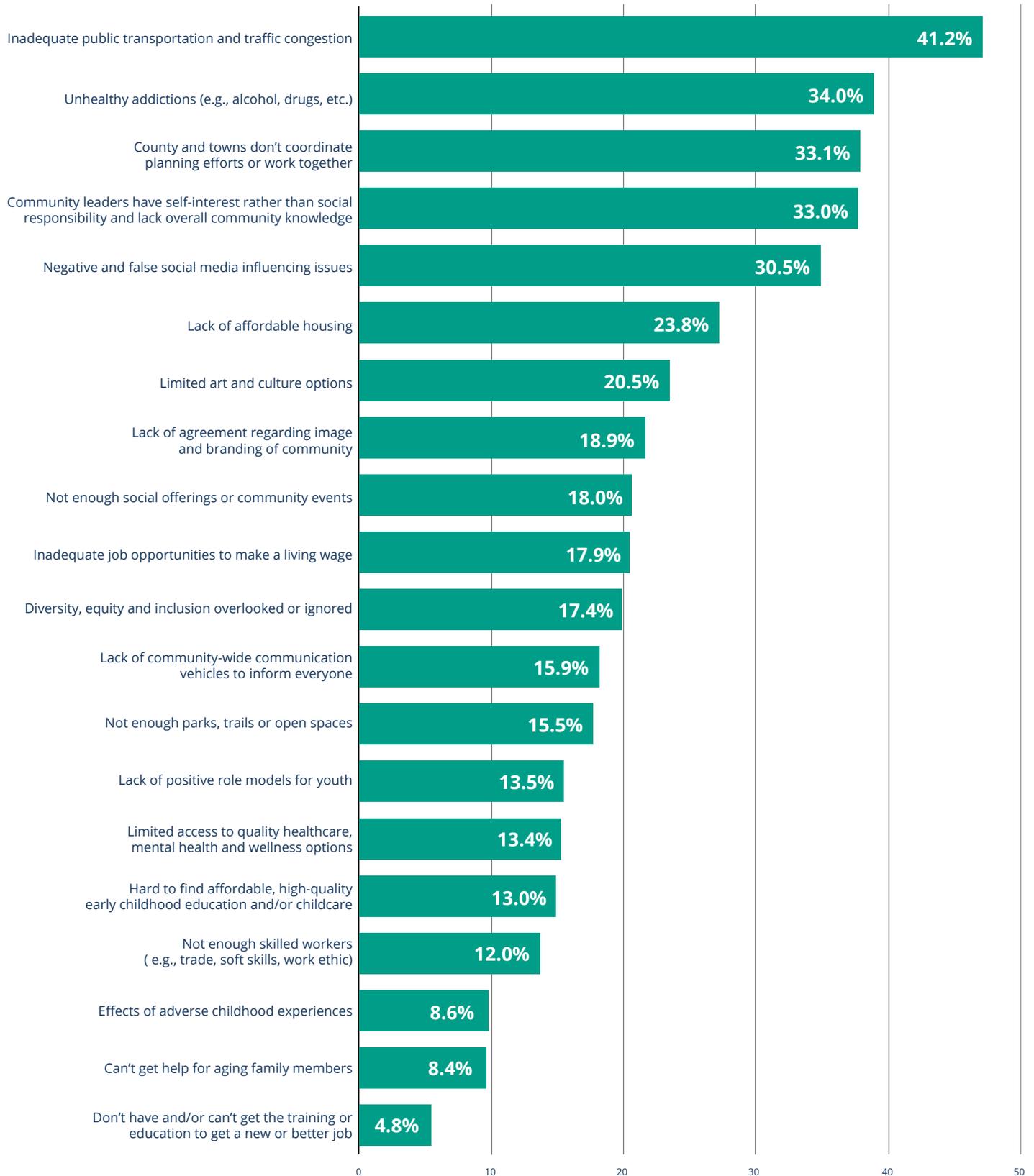
- Traffic congestion
- Limited retail, shopping and/or restaurants
- Poor roads and/or sidewalks
- Too much and/or fast growth
- Communities not planning for growth

While the needs rated were consistent across the board, women gave slightly higher importance to lack of affordable housing and not enough social offerings or community events – while men assigned slightly more importance to County and towns don't coordinate planning efforts or work together, lack of community-wide communication vehicles to inform everyone, and not enough parks, trails or open spaces. In addition, those whose income was above the county median saw less of a need for affordable housing and job opportunities to make a living wage than those whose income was below the median.

Even though some issues may have a low ranking, the size of Hendricks County means they are still significant. For example, just 8.4 percent cited difficulties getting help for aging family members, but projected across the county's population, that represents more than 14,000 individuals.

The full list of issues follows, ranked based on the percentage of respondents who chose the issue as one of their community's top five.

# Community Issues and Needs



# Hendricks County Needs

Correlating the lists of assets and issues cited by respondents provides valuable insight into community needs. For example, although feeling safe and a strong K-12 education system were the most important assets, neither was high on the issues list. This suggests respondents hold high opinions of local first responders and K-12 school districts.

## **COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP**

While trusted leadership was the third-highest-ranked asset and community unity and trust was the sixth, three of the top five issues that were cited were County and towns don't coordinate planning efforts or work together, community leaders have self-interest rather than social responsibility and lack overall community knowledge, and negative and false social media influencing issues. A lack of agreement regarding image and branding of the community also ranked highly.

## **HEALTHY COMMUNITY**

Healthy and strong families and access to healthcare and wellness options were in the top five assets, yet the highest-ranked needs that negatively affect families were unhealthy addictions, negative and false social media influencing issues, and a lack of affordable housing.

## **GETTING AROUND MORE EASILY**

Respondents didn't rank a good transportation system and resources among the most important community assets, but they did cite inadequate public transportation and traffic congestion as the top issue.

## **MORE CULTURE AND THINGS TO DO**

In ranking assets, respondents placed access to arts and culture as one of the least important, with just 58.8 percent identifying it as important or very important. However, limited arts and culture options was the seventh highest-ranked issue. Open-ended responses associated culture with the broader "things to do" suggesting a desire for more unique places to eat and shop.

## ENGAGE OUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY

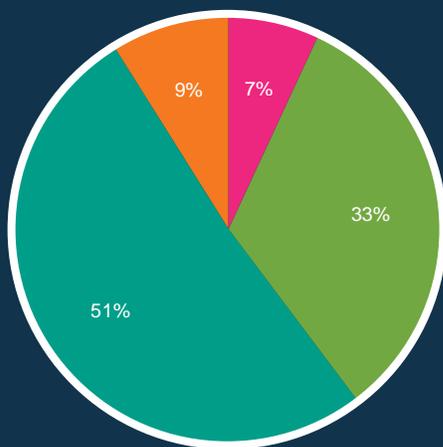
Community unity and trust was ranked sixth and diversity, equity and inclusion was ranked fourteenth for community assets. However, diversity, equity and inclusion is overlooked or ignored was ranked eleventh in our list of needs. Despite that comparatively low ranking, conversations during the information-gathering process as well as our response rate from people of color made it clear that community leaders want to engage the entire community but struggle to find avenues to do so.

## BETTER COMMUNICATION

While the lack of county-wide communication vehicles to inform everyone was not ranked as a high need in the survey, it proved to be a major topic in interviews and focus groups, centering on the lack of awareness among residents and leaders about resources available in the county.

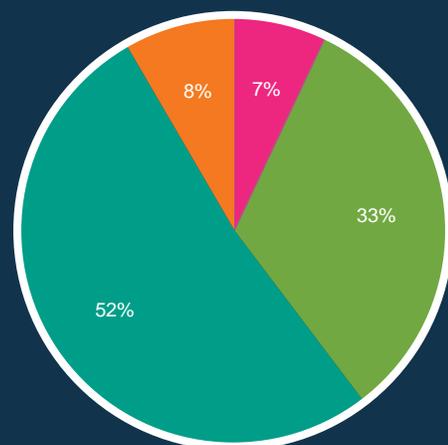
# Are People Connected to the Community?

We asked how connected respondents felt to their town and Hendricks County as a whole. Only 39.7 percent overall indicated they felt very or extremely connected to both. The percentage of residents who didn't feel connected was significantly higher among people who have been here four years or less.



**Connected to Town**

Extremely ● Very ●  
Slightly ● Not at all ●



**Connected to County**

Extremely ● Very ●  
Slightly ● Not at all ●

# How Do We Improve Hendricks County?

## WHAT COULD MAKE THINGS BETTER?

Respondents were asked to list one thing that could be done to make their community a better place. The top seven responses can be summarized as:

- Improve community leadership transparency, trust, and communication
- Fix road infrastructure and traffic
- Create better plans for growth
- Bring in more (and more diverse) restaurants, shopping, and retail
- Limit growth and/or stop building houses and apartments
- Build more diverse and/or affordable housing
- Connect resources, work together and/or break down silos

## WHY AREN'T ISSUES BEING ADDRESSED?

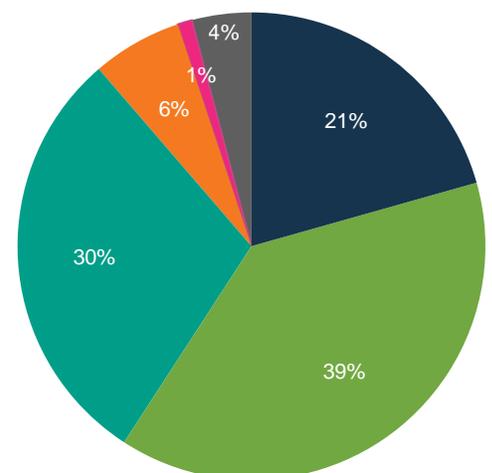
Respondents were asked why the issue that bothers them the most isn't being fixed. The top seven responses can be summarized as:

- Lack of money and/or resources to address the issue
- Local leadership is self-interested, apathetic and/or ineffective
- Resistance to change or inertia
- Too much growth
- Inadequate infrastructure and/or roads
- Lack of and/or poor overall planning
- Apathy and/or lack of empathy for the problem

## ARE YOU WILLING TO HELP?

When asked how willing they were to engage in making their community a better place, three out of five people said they're very or extremely willing to help.

Extremely willing ● Very Willing ●  
Moderately willing ● Slightly Willing ● Not Willing ●  
Prefer not to answer ●



\*Percentages add up to more than 100% due to rounding or allowing for multiple responses.

# About the 2019 Hendricks County Needs Assessment

Hendricks County is one of Indiana's fastest-growing counties, but as our county grows, are the needs of residents being met? Are local resources sufficient to address those needs? What could be done to make the county an even better place to live and work?

Hendricks County Community Foundation received a Community Leadership Planning Grant from Lilly Endowment "to evaluate the local landscapes and identify and prioritize community needs and assets, develop a deeper understanding of what their roles should be within the community, strengthen relationships with local stakeholders and potential collaborators, build internal capacities to act as an effective leader, and prioritize and develop strategies to address high priority challenges and opportunities with implementation grant funding."

The 2019 Hendricks County Needs Assessment is a broad-based community-wide survey to learn what people who live and work here think about key issues. We will use the results of this assessment to identify and prioritize the county's needs, bring together local institutions and resources, and create solutions to address those needs in significant and lasting ways.

We come to this process from an unbiased perspective, with no vested interest in specific results. Our goal is to facilitate discussions and solutions that will keep Hendricks County a vibrant and growing community for the foreseeable future, making it an even better place to live and work. We encourage individuals and community organizations to play an active role in the process.





# What people had to say...

*“Getting to know neighbors and looking out for each other”*

SUGGESTED SOLUTION

*“Lack of diverse restaurants and things to do both inside and outside”*

REPORTED BOTHER

*“Lack of unity among the town and County leaders”*

REPORTED BOTHER

*“Lack of a core mission and vision for our town”*

REPORTED BOTHER

*“Apartments are developed faster than roads”*

ROAD BLOCKS

*“Infrastructure can’t keep pace with population growth”*

ROAD BLOCKS

*“Not sure the full impact of growth is being reviewed. Seems very dollar driven”*

ROAD BLOCKS

*“Lack of leadership that transcends politics”*

ROAD BLOCKS

*“Those in positions of leadership aren’t working with local community members”*

ROAD BLOCKS

*“There is no long-term plan for sustainable growth”*

ROAD BLOCKS

*“Convert Rockville Road to limited access like Keystone Avenue”*

SUGGESTED SOLUTION

*“County, towns and townships need to work together for the common good”*

SUGGESTED SOLUTION

*“Better access to drug treatment and addiction counseling”*

SUGGESTED SOLUTION

*“Accurate unbiased communication on issues affecting the community”*

SUGGESTED SOLUTION