

2017 IMPACT REPORT



on the table®
greater akron



On the Table Greater Akron 2017 Impact Report

Prepared by
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The University of Illinois at Chicago
for
Akron Community Foundation and
The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation



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On October 3, 2017, residents across Greater Akron came together in conversation to talk about issues that impact the region and its quality of life. This conversation-oriented initiative known as *On the Table Greater Akron* was an opportunity for friends, families, neighbors, colleagues, and even people who were meeting for the first time to gather around a shared meal and have a real dialogue about what is important to them with the intention of fueling meaningful change.

On the Table Greater Akron called for thousands of diverse residents from all walks of life and all socio-economic backgrounds to come together in order to discuss meaningful ideas for strengthening the community. It was an opportunity for residents to think about how to help shape their region into a strong, vibrant, safe, and dynamic place for all of those who live and work there. This one-of-a-kind initiative was oriented around the notion that small conversations can generate big ideas, and these ideas ultimately can help shape the future of the region. While organizers of *On the Table Greater Akron* recognize there is no “quick fix” to the region’s problems, they believe residents, organizations, businesses, foundations, and government agencies can together spur progress by sharing new ideas and bold solutions and working together to invest in the ideas they help create. Akron Community Foundation itself plans to use the data gathered from the initiative to inform some of the Foundation’s proactive grantmaking in the near future. By providing the opportunity for residents to engage and listen to their neighbors and for the community foundation to hear back from the people it serves, Greater Akron will come to know the priorities and aspirations of those who participated in this initiative as they think about the future success and growth of the region moving forward.

Akron Community Foundation organized *On the Table Greater Akron* with support from The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Knight Foundation brought *On the Table* to 10 cities across the country in 2017: Lexington, KY (March 15); Philadelphia, PA (May 23); Long Beach, CA (September 23); Gary, IN (September 26); Akron, OH (October 3); Detroit, MI (October 4); Miami, FL (October 17); Charlotte, NC (October 25); Columbus, GA (November 7); and San Jose, CA (November 15). This *On the Table* replication project draws from an initiative that originated in Chicago in 2014 as part of The Chicago Community Trust’s Centennial celebration. Since its inception and expansion into other cities, *On the Table* has been an occasion for residents of a city or region to convene and discuss local opportunities and challenges while focusing on strategies to make their communities safer, stronger, and more dynamic.

All 10 cities designated their own specific day in 2017 to convene residents in mealtime conversations for discussions on how to make their city a better place to live, work, and play. Following the conversations, participants had the opportunity to take a survey about their *On the Table* experience. This survey featured 27 questions that were standard across all 10 cities, plus up to five additional questions that were unique to each city. Following the collection of survey data, all cities receive a report summarizing and analyzing the survey data and a link to a data exploration tool. Community foundations can use insights from the data to inform strategic planning, and local decision-makers, organizations, and residents can use the data to collaborate around improving the quality of life in their cities. A national report incorporating data from all 10 cities and exploring correlations and comparisons in the full data set will be produced in early 2018.



Research Methodology

Knight Foundation invited the University of Illinois at Chicago's (UIC) Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement (IPCE) to serve as the research partner for this *On the Table Greater Akron* initiative. We set out to gain a deeper understanding of the conversations through results gathered from a survey of *On the Table Greater Akron* participants.¹ This report presents the results of the survey and incorporates analyses to provide insight into the summary data. The data itself can be accessed and explored through ipce.shinyapps.io/OTTAKRON17.

The central questions guiding this research include: Who responded to the survey? How did the conversations go? How did the conversations impact respondents? Additionally, Akron Community Foundation was interested in learning more specifically about issues, knowledge, and actions related to Greater Akron, such as the biggest problem facing Greater Akron; what respondents wish they knew more about with regard to their local community; and one way respondents are willing to help improve Greater Akron in the future. The foundation also wanted to learn how respondents heard about *On the Table Greater Akron*.

We collected survey data using three methods: a public web link to the Qualtrics survey, an e-mailed unique link to the Qualtrics survey, and distributed print surveys. To accommodate non-English speakers, the survey was translated into Spanish, Karen, and Nepali. The collection of survey data began the morning of the *On the Table Greater Akron* conversations (October 3) when the public web link opened. On the same day and immediately following conversations, print surveys were made available to participants. Following the conversations, participants for whom we had e-mail addresses received an e-mail invitation to take the survey.² Surveys were collected through October 31, 2017.

The respondent population discussed in this report is a self-selected sample of participants who partially or fully completed the survey.³ All three survey sources yielded a total of 3,598 responses (1,153 through the e-mailed link, 252 through the web link, and 2,193 through the print survey).⁴ Because this group constitutes a non-random sample of total participants, conclusions cannot be scientifically generalized beyond the respondent group. However, the data and analysis provide useful insight into the opinions, habits, and backgrounds of a number of engaged Greater Akron residents.

¹ See Appendix A for the full survey.

² We had e-mail addresses only for those who provided it through the registration process or during sign-in on the day of the conversation. Registration and signing in were not required for participation, and those who did not register or sign in were able to access the survey through the public web link shared by Akron Community Foundation or through print surveys.

³ See Appendix B for a summary report featuring visualizations of responses for all survey questions.

⁴ The estimated survey participation rate is 60%. This is calculated by dividing the total number of survey respondents (3,598) by the estimated number of *On the Table Greater Akron* participants (6,000). Akron Community Foundation provided the estimated number of *On the Table Greater Akron* participants.



THE CONVERSATIONS

Who Responded?

Given that the perspectives, ideas, and experiences of over 3,500 respondents inform this report, it is worth exploring what we know about who responded to the survey. This section summarizes data about respondent demographics such as gender, age, educational attainment, race and/or ethnicity, geography, length of residence, and homeownership status; it also presents information about respondents' civic attitudes and engagement behaviors. Additionally, it incorporates Summit County comparison data and national comparison data, where available. When comparing *On the Table Greater Akron* data to Summit County resident data, only those respondents who live in Summit County (and not the full data set) are compared to the regional data.

Without having survey data for everyone who participated in the *On the Table Greater Akron* initiative, we are unable to explain differences, if any, between our respondent group and regional and national comparison groups.⁵ While we have survey data for respondents, this data does not fully reflect participation in *On the Table Greater Akron*. This study represents a subset of *On the Table Greater Akron* participants—itsself a subset of the Greater Akron population—who self-selected to respond to the survey.

Demographics

Gender and Age

Over two-thirds (68%) of respondents identified as female, and 31% identified as male (see Figure B.1). With regard to age, 13% of respondents were 18 to 29 years old, and this percentage gradually increased as respondents got older: 17% were in their 30s, 20% were in their 40s, 22% were in their 50s, and 27% were 60 years old and up (see Figure B.2). Summit County respondents' ages tracked closely with Summit County residents' ages, with slight underrepresentation of those respondents who were 18 to 29 years old. The percentage of respondents who reported living in Summit County and who were 60 years old and up was equal to the county percentage of those in this age group (29%). The three age groups in the middle (30s, 40s, and 50s) made up of Summit County respondents were nearly on par (within one to three percentage points) with the county percentages for these groups. Finally, while 13% of Summit County respondents were 18 to 29 years old, 20% of all Summit County residents are in this age range (see Figure B.3).⁶

Educational Attainment

In reporting on educational attainment, both respondent data and Summit County data reflect highest degree obtained. One-third (33%) of respondents reported having earned a graduate degree, and 31%

⁵ For example, the respondent group is 68% female and 31% male. While it is possible that this accurately reflects participant make-up, it is also possible that the participant breakdown was closer to 50/50, but females responded to the survey at disproportionately higher rates. Without having data for all participants, we cannot know if the rate at which certain groups participated was proportional or disproportional.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S0101; generated using American FactFinder; <<http://factfinder2.census.gov>>; (17 May 2017).



indicated they have earned a bachelor's degree. Additionally, 9% said they have an associate or vocational degree, 15% reported obtaining some college, and 10% indicated they have a high school diploma or GED. Only 2% of respondents reported having less than a high school education (see Figure B.4). When compared to Summit County as a whole, there was overrepresentation of respondents with a college degree or higher and underrepresentation of respondents with some college or less.⁷ Whereas 11% of all Summit County residents have a graduate degree, three times as many, or 33%, of Summit County respondents reported having earned the same. Similarly, whereas 19% of all Summit County residents have a bachelor's degree, 31% of Summit County respondents said they have the same level of education. With regard to a high school diploma or GED, 9% of Summit County respondents reported attaining this level of education, which was 3.5 times less than the 32% of Summit County residents who have a high school diploma or GED. Furthermore, 2% of respondents reported completing less than high school, which was over three times less than the 9% of Summit County residents with less than a high school education (see Figure B.5).⁸

Race

In terms of race and/or ethnicity, 72% identified as White, and 20% identified as Black or African American. Much smaller percentages identified as Multiracial (3%), Other (2%), Asian (1%), American Indian/Alaska native (0.7%), and Hispanic or Latino/a (0.4%) (see Figure B.6).⁹ White respondents and Hispanic and/or Latino/a respondents were underrepresented groups, and Black or African American respondents were an overrepresented group. While 69% of Summit County respondents identified as White, 81% of all Summit County residents identify as White. Furthermore, while 0.5% of Summit County respondents identified as Hispanic or Latino/a, four times as many, or 2%, of all Summit County residents are Hispanic or Latino/a. With regard to Black or African Americans, 24% of Summit County respondents identified as Black or African American, while 13% of all Summit County residents identify as Black or African American (see Figure B.7)¹⁰

Geography

A majority (79%) of respondents said they currently live in Summit County, with much smaller percentages also having reported Stark County (9%), Medina County (4%), Cuyahoga County (3%), and Portage County (3%) (see Figure B.8). Nearly one-half (49%) of respondents said they currently live in Akron, while other respondents reported being from Cuyahoga Falls (5%), Hudson (3%), Stow (3%), Copley (3%), Green (2%), Medina (2%), Canton (2%), Uniontown (2%), and Fairlawn (2%) (see Figure B.9).

⁷ For the education variable, in addition to including only those respondents who live in Summit County when comparing to representative data, only those 25 years of age or older are included as well (as opposed to the full data set).

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S0101; generated using American FactFinder; <<http://factfinder2.census.gov>>; (17 May 2017).

⁹ Unlike census data, the *On the Table Greater Akron* race variable features an "Other" response option. Because of this, the *On the Table Greater Akron* race percentages are very modestly lower than they would be if the "Other" was not a featured category.

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau; 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Voting Age Population by Citizenship and Race (CVAP), published 02/01/2017.



The top respondent ZIP codes include 44313 (10%), 44320 (6%), 44333 (5%), 44303 (4%), 44310 (4%), 44305 (4%), 44224 (4%), 44236 (3%), 44321 (3%), and 44319 (3%) (see Figure B.10).

Length of Residence

Nearly one-half (45%) of respondents reported that they were long-term residents who have lived in their local community for 20 or more years. Twenty-two percent of respondents said they have lived in their community for 10 to 19 years, and another 22% of respondents indicated they were newcomers, or those who have lived in their local community for zero to four years. Eleven percent of respondents said they have lived in their community for five to nine years. Compared to national rates, long-term resident respondents were an overrepresented group, as 32% of people nationally have lived in their community for 20 or more years (see Figure B.11).¹¹

Homeownership

Regarding homeownership, 70% of respondents indicated they own their primary residence, and 25% said they rent (see Figure B.12).¹² The percentage of Summit County respondents who said they own their primary residence was higher than the percentage representing all of Summit County. Seventy-one percent of Summit County respondents said they own their primary residence, while 66% of all Summit County residents report the same (see Figure B.13).¹³

Relationship to Akron Community Foundation

When asked about their relationship to Akron Community Foundation, 38% of respondents said they had not heard of the Foundation, and 34% said they have attended one of the Foundation's events. Just under one-fifth (19%) reported being a grantee, 6% indicated they have volunteered with the Foundation, 6% reported being a funder, and 3% said they work there. Additionally, 12% reported some other relationship to Akron Community Foundation than that which was listed (see Figure B.14).

Civic Attitudes and Activities

Biggest Problem Facing Greater Akron

According to 32% of respondents, economic issues and poverty was the biggest problem facing Greater Akron. Following this issue area, 28% of respondents mentioned drugs and addiction as the biggest problem. Fifteen percent thought both equity and social inclusion and education and youth development were the biggest problems, and 14% said public safety and the judicial system (see Figure B.40).¹⁴

¹¹ Pew Research Center, December, 2008, "American Mobility. Who Moves? Who Stays Put? Where's Home?"

¹² Just like the race variable, the *On the Table Greater Akron* homeownership variable also features an "Other" response option (unlike in the Census data), which has slight implications for the *On the Table Greater Akron* homeownership percentages showing lower than they otherwise would.

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04; generated using American FactFinder; <<http://factfinder2.census.gov>>; (17 May 2017).

¹⁴ More detail on these themes and the other themes that emerged within this variable can be found in our Issues and Problems Codebook in Appendix C.



“Thinking about my community, I wish I knew more about . . . ”

Respondents were asked to identify what they wish they knew more about in their community. Eighteen percent of respondents said resources, followed by 15% who expressed interest in how to get involved and 13% who indicated government, policy, and politics (see Figure B.42).¹⁵

Resources

Respondents who said they wish they knew more about resources in their community largely referred to “available resources” and “community resources,” as well as community programs, organizations, and services. Some respondents expressed interest in learning “how to spread the word about all the resources available,” “how to connect local resources to those who need it,” and “how to spread the resources out throughout the city.” Others brought up grants and funding (such as how to obtain grants and acquire funding) for local projects.

Respondents were particularly interested in “resources to help those in need,” as seen in the range of types of resources mentioned, from education and school resources to resources for the elderly; from resources to support families to resources in place for the homeless; from job training resources to resources that aid in getting out of the system. Responses regarding resources related to health, however—especially the opioid crisis—were prevalent. Respondents wanted to know more about “opiate recovery resources,” “resources for addiction” and “for substance use,” and available “resources for those having difficulty.” One respondent mentioned “all the resources available to improve overall health.”

How to Get Involved

For those respondents who showed interest in knowing more about how to get involved, they primarily focused on “volunteering” and “volunteer opportunities.” They expressed interest in learning about “volunteer events,” “volunteer activities,” “volunteer options,” and “where to volunteer,” and they wanted to know “how to volunteer and get connected.” Some respondents brought up “volunteer opportunities available for people who work full time,” “a volunteer matching program,” “volunteer groups,” “young professional volunteer opportunities,” and “flexible ways to volunteer.” One respondent noted that he/she was interested in knowing “all the ways I can impact my community. I wish there was a central website with all the opportunities available.”

Other respondents focused more generally on getting involved, such as “ways to get involved,” “how to get involved to best assist using the talents I have,” “where to get involved,” “diverse ways to get involved,” and knowing “everything going on in the community and how I can get involved.” Some respondents were concerned with outcome. For example, one respondent mentioned “how to get involved in events that help build the community,” and another respondent asked about “how to personally become active and involved in leading positive changes for the greater community.” According to other respondents, they wanted to know “how a citizen who doesn’t have special

¹⁵ More detail on these three themes and the other themes that emerged within this variable can be found in Appendix D.

connections can get involved,” “a way for me to get involved in a very niche way,” and “how to get better involved at the local level, while having limited free time to be involved.”

Government, Policy, and Politics

Where respondents were interested in knowing more about government, policy, and politics, they mainly brought up “local government,” such as “how city government functions and makes decisions,” “government planning,” “government issues,” “government operations,” and the “inner workings of government.” One respondent indicated wanting to know more about “when there are public community meetings with government officials where we can feel comfortable to discuss our concerns,” and another respondent expressed curiosity for knowing, “outside of city government, who’s making the decisions about the communities we live in?” Other respondents wanted to know more about “local politics” and “local officials,” as well as how to “[influence] local politicians and school boards.”

Relatedly, some respondents focused on “city planning,” “city initiatives,” and “city improvement projects.” They want to know about the “city budget” and its “allocation,” and they want to be informed on “city spending.” Respondents also expressed interest in “the inner workings of the city operations,” “decisions by city council,” and “the short and long-term plans that Mayor Horrigan has for the City of Akron.”

How to Help Improve Greater Akron

Respondents were also asked to indicate one way they are willing to help improve Greater Akron in the future. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents said build relationships and collaborate. Additionally, 54% of respondents said raise awareness and educate others, 52% said get more involved in community, and 51% said volunteer (see Figure B.43).¹⁶

Personal Impact and Community Attachment

Respondents reported largely positive attitudes toward their own potential for influencing change. Nearly one-half (46%) of respondents indicated they believe they can have a big impact in making their community a better place to live, and 37% said they can have a moderate impact. The 46% of respondents who think they can have a big impact was greater than the 32% of people nationally who believe they have this level of efficacy, and the 37% of respondents who think they can have a moderate impact was equivalent to the percentage of people nationally (37%) who said the same (see Figure B.15).¹⁷

Respondents also reported high levels of attachment to their local community. Almost one-half (45%) of respondents indicated they are very attached to their local community, and 43% said somewhat attached. In comparison, 19% of people nationally are very attached, and 48% of people nationally are somewhat attached (see Figure B.16).¹⁸

¹⁶ Further details on these four themes and the other ranked themes can be found in Appendix E.

¹⁷ Pew Research Center, November 2016, “Civic Engagement Strongly Tied to Local News Habits.”

¹⁸ Ibid.

Social Issues

When respondents were asked to identify the social issues that are most important to them 49% said education and youth development, 38% said economic issues and poverty, and 30% said family. Furthermore, 25% of respondents said equity and social inclusion, and 24% said health (see Figure B.17). Following this, using the same set of issue areas, respondents were asked to identify the social issues to which they primarily contribute their time, talent, and/or financial resources. Thirty-nine percent of respondents said education and youth development, and 36% said family. Additionally, 25% said religion and morals, 23% said health, 21% said arts and culture, and 20% said economic issues and poverty (see Figure B.18).¹⁹

Engagement Habits

Respondents reported high levels of engagement across all measures considered. Nearly one-quarter (23%) of respondents said they are very involved in community and neighborhood activities where they live; in comparison, only 11% of people nationally indicate this level of involvement. An even larger percentage (47%) of respondents reported they are somewhat involved, which is higher than the 39% of people nationally who said the same (see Figure B.19).²⁰

With regard to how they engaged with their community over the past year, respondents were most likely to have donated, volunteered, and attended a public meeting. Nearly three-fourths (73%) of respondents said they donated more than \$25 to a charitable organization within the past year; 71% said they did volunteer activities through or for an organization within the past year; and 56% said they attended public meetings in which there was discussion of community affairs within the past year. Additionally, 35% said they worked with people in their neighborhood to fix or improve something in the past year. With regard to how respondents compared to national percentages, respondent involvement exceeded national involvement for all activities. Nationally, 50% of people donated this past year (compared to 73% of respondents), and 24% volunteered this past year (compared to 71% of respondents). Only 8% of people in the U.S. attended a public meeting about community affairs within the last year (compared to 56% of respondents), and 8% worked with people in their neighborhood to fix or improve something (compared to 35% of respondents) (see Figure B.20).²¹ When it comes to voting in local elections, 71% reported that they always vote (see Figure B.21).

Places to Connect

Respondents reported connecting with others in a variety of places. Nearly one-half (47%) of respondents said they like to connect with others at a religious institution, 41% cited parks, and 38% identified schools. Additionally, 30% selected community rec center, 30% chose library, and 23%

¹⁹ We used our issues codebook (see Appendix C) to populate the response options for these two questions highlighting important social issues and contributions to social issues.

²⁰ Pew Research Center, December, 2008, "American Mobility. Who Moves? Who Stays Put? Where's Home?"

²¹ United States Department of Commerce. Bureau of Census, United States Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Corporation for National and Community Service. Current Population Survey, September 2015: Volunteer Supplement. ICPSR36411-v1. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2016-04-29. <https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR36411.v1>.



specified a place other than those provided in the response options, with the top three “other” responses being community events and meetings (5%), restaurants (5%), and community service activities (3%). Finally, 21% of respondents said they like to connect at public squares, 16% identified shopping centers, and 11% said community garden (see Figure B.22).

Engagement with News Sources

Respondents also reported the frequency with which they get information about their local community from common online and offline sources. Two-thirds (66%) of respondents said they receive information about their local community from word of mouth several times a week to every day, which was over double the percentage of people who rely on word of mouth this frequently nationally (31%) (see Figure B.29). The 53% of respondents who reported tuning in to local radio for information about their community several times a week to every day was higher than the 35% of people nationally who listen to the radio for news this frequently (see Figure B.25). In terms of local television news, 52% of respondents said they watch the news several times a week to every day, which was nearly equivalent to the 51% of people nationally who watch the news this frequently (see Figure B.24). With regard to local newspapers, 50% of respondents said they consult a newspaper for information about their community several times a week to everyday, while 28% of people nationally do the same (see Figure B.23). Nearly one-half (47%) of respondents indicated they rely on social networking sites several times a week to every day to consume information about their local community, which was over four times the percentage at which people nationally use social media sites to get local information this frequently (11%) (see Figure B.27). Over one-quarter (27%) of respondents reported gathering information from newsletters or e-mail listservs several times a week to every day, which was three times greater than the 8% of people nationally who rely on a newsletter or e-mail listserv this frequently (see Figure B.28). Finally, 13% of respondents indicated they read blogs for information about their local community several times a week to every day, which was greater than the national percentage of 5% for this level of frequency (see Figure B.26).²²

How Did the Conversations Go?

An essential aspect of this research is exploring the conversations themselves. This section groups data on how and why respondents were drawn to the conversations, the relative familiarity or unfamiliarity with other participants in the conversation, and where the conversations took place. It also uncovers the range of issues respondents reported raising in conversation, and it describes solutions or next steps that respondents reported were generated from their conversations. Furthermore, it incorporates youth voices from youth conversations, and finally, it discusses content shared about *On the Table Greater Akron* on social media.

Conversation Dynamics

Respondents reported hearing about *On the Table Greater Akron* in a variety of ways. Fifty-nine percent received an invitation, and 31% heard about it from a community or non-profit organization, with the top three non-profit organization responses including Akron Community Foundation (3%), Church (1%),

²² Pew Research Center, November, 2016, “Civic Engagement Strongly Tied to Local News Habits.”

and Rotary Club of Akron (1%). Additionally, 20% of respondents heard about it through word of mouth, 13% saw or heard an advertisement, and 10% learned about it through social media. Nine percent of respondents indicated a response other than that which was provided, with the top three other responses being heard about it at work or from an employer (5%), from a teacher or professor (1%), and at school or university (1%) (see Figure B.44).

Respondents reported participating in *On the Table Greater Akron* for a number of reasons. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents said they participated to discuss and address important issues in their community, and 58% said they wanted to learn from and listen to others. Additionally, 32% said they were interested in getting involved in their community, 32% said they wanted to support the organizer of the conversation, and 30% said they hoped to build relationships with new people (see Figure B.30).

In terms of how familiar respondents were with the other people at the conversation, 39% of respondents said that the other participants were mostly people they knew before the conversation. Furthermore, 32% of respondents said that the other participants were mostly people they did not know before the conversation, and 29% of respondents said there was an equal mix of both people they knew and did not know before the conversation (see Figure B.31).

The great majority (96%) of respondents said their conversation took place in Summit County (see Figure B.32). Over three-fourths (76%) of respondents indicated their conversation took place in Akron. Smaller percentages of respondents said their conversation took place in Cuyahoga Falls (3%), Fairlawn (3%), Judson (3%), and Green (2%) (see Figure B.33). With regard to ZIP codes, at 18%, 44311 featured the greatest percentage of respondents, followed by 44320 (9%), 44304 (6%), 44313 (6%), 44310 (5%), 44305 (5%), 44301 (5%), 44685 (4%), 44303 (4%), and 44333 (4%) (see Figure B.34).

Issues Raised

On the Table Greater Akron provided an opportunity for participants to raise and discuss issues that impact the quality of life in and around Greater Akron. A majority of respondents (77%) reported raising an issue of concern in their conversation. The issues that emerged help identify respondents' priorities and concerns and where they would like to see their communities headed. As seen through survey responses, respondents touched on a range of issues. Thirty percent of respondents raised an issue related to equity and social inclusion, and 28% raised an issue related to education and youth development. Economic issues and poverty was top of mind for 21% of respondents, as was drugs and addiction for 18% of respondents and public safety and the judicial system for 15% of respondents (see Figure B.35).²³

Solutions Generated

On the Table Greater Akron is rooted in the idea that dialogue can spur new ideas for action. In addition to the discussion and dissection of issues in conversations, 59% of respondents said their conversation

²³ More detail on these themes and the other themes that emerged within this variable can be found in our Issues and Problems Codebook in Appendix C.



generated a specific solution. A total of 1,617 respondents provided a solution. With the help of Akron Community Foundation, we selected a number of ideas to highlight that provide solutions to many of the top issues identified.²⁴ These demonstrate the range respondents put forward—from high-level and complex ideas to simple actions that impact everyday life. Solutions submitted via the *On the Table Greater Akron* survey are available for viewing in the data exploration tool (ipce.shinyapps.io/OTTAKRON17).²⁵

A number of respondents had equity and social inclusion in mind as they proposed solutions in their conversations. For example, one respondent suggested breaking down barriers specifically between people of different cultures and people who struggle with addiction. Another respondent proposed increasing access to transportation for various populations, such as seniors, people with disabilities, and underserved populations. A third respondent focused on encouraging others to say something when they encounter racism and not to remain silent, and a fourth respondent said he/she wanted to see employer education on implicit gender bias. Finally, another respondent put forward an idea for a regularly-occurring forum for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities so they can share their ideas and concerns more frequently.

Some respondents provided solutions for issues related to education and youth development. One respondent idea was to get more involved in youth-development programs, such as tutoring and after-school programs where mentoring is made available to students. Another respondent brought up helping families show enthusiasm for their child's education. One more respondent suggested corporate involvement and support in the school system. Because businesses want a locally trained workforce, this respondent believes that efforts can begin in early education through interaction with and mentorship of students. Financial support from corporations will also ensure that the tools for learning are present in schools.

Several solutions were provided by respondents with regard to drugs and addiction. As one respondent proposed, Akron can become a leader in the fight against the opioid epidemic, especially given its position as the home of AA and 12-step recovery programs. A second respondent suggested that people speak more openly about mental illness, and a third respondent put forward the idea of offering more treatment programs and transitional living for those affected by addiction and mental illness.

Finally, a few respondents turned their attention to economic issues and poverty with their solutions. According to one respondent, Akron should follow the model of revitalization in Highland Square. Another respondent brought up focusing the community's attention on improving downtown and creating livable neighborhoods. Lastly, one respondent indicated increasing workforce development through implementation of a pilot program.

²⁴ The mention of a specific solution does not indicate an endorsement from IPCE or Akron Community Foundation. Furthermore, Akron Community Foundation should not be assumed to take responsibility for a solution mentioned in this report. We selected the ideas referenced above in order to show the types of solutions that respondents proposed.

²⁵ The responses in the data exploration tool have been scrubbed of all identifying information.

Youth Voices

Akron Community Foundation developed a youth component to *On the Table Greater Akron* in order to support engagement in schools and community youth programs. After their *On the Table Greater Akron* conversations, youth were encouraged to reflect on their experience in a post-event group activity. They were asked to use the outline of a person to reflect on the idea discussed in conversations that has the most potential to bring about change in their community (head), the most important issue facing their community that they care about (heart), and examples of an action they are most likely to take inspired by their conversation (feet). Given the activity's focus on issues and ideas for action, we categorized the data according to these two classifications.

While this data is not representative of the entire Greater Akron area, it does highlight what a collection of students who participated in the Head, Heart, and Feet reflection activity think and care about with regard to their communities.

Issues

Youth respondents mentioned a variety of issues affecting their communities. The top issue brought up by youth respondents was with regard to violence, gangs, and safety, and the second most prominent topic was related to drugs. Other issue areas raised by youth respondents include health, schools and education, and economic issues.

A large proportion of youth respondents mentioned the issue of violence, gangs, and safety. Some youth respondents talked about the issue of "safety" and "be[ing] safe" in their communities and schools. Other youth respondents brought up "gun violence" and "stopping gun violence," as well as "gangs" and the need to "stop gangs" and "keep kids out of gangs." A few respondents brought up an issue with police.

Youth respondents also raised the issue of drugs in their communities. They mentioned that "drugs [are] a serious problem in Akron" and there is currently a "drug epidemic." One youth respondent said "it's so easy to access [drugs]"; however, another respondent said when there is "more to do . . . [there is] less incentive for drugs." As other respondents pointed out, "drugs [affect] everyone[,] including family members" and "this is important because it has caused loved ones to pass or have a bad life."

Ideas for Action

In addition to discussing issues, youth respondents brainstormed a variety of ideas for their communities and actions they could take inspired by their conversation. The top three ideas for action generated by youth respondents were build up and improve community, create more activities and events, and self-improvement. Other ideas for action less frequently mentioned but still important include come together and organize, help one another, strengthen education and schools, speak up and take a stand, volunteer, donate, share information, increase diversity, and support local government and leadership.



With regard to build up and improve community, youth respondents mentioned ways to fix up their communities. They want to see a “change in community,” which can be accomplished by “livening up our parks,” “clean[ing] up the park,” “pick[ing] up trash,” “fix[ing] up basketball courts,” “add[ing] more streetlights,” and “fix[ing] roads” so they are “better.” Youth respondents also suggested “put[ting] . . . new places into buildings that aren’t being used” and “find[ing] more spaces to build [attractions],” such as “more clothing stores” and “more restaurants.” Additionally, one youth respondent expressed wanting to “make sure everyone has housing, food, and proper clothing,” and another youth respondent offered the general advice to “respect everything.”

Youth respondents also mentioned create more activities and events as an idea for action. Within this theme, youth respondents talked about “need[ing] more places to be,” “more public spaces for teens,” and “things for teenagers to do.” They suggested that the community “bring attractions to us,” as “we need more things to do.” For example, there can be “more programs to help teens for college,” “programs for boys [such as] boxing, yoga,” and “game nights at [the] library.” Some youth respondents expressed interest in doing things together as a community: “have many gatherings and events we could do as a community (together)” and “I am willing to make events happen like cookouts, festivals[,] etc. just so our community can come together.” Ultimately, as one youth respondent noted, they can “raise money to do a new activity that will stop this drug epidemic.”

Finally, youth respondents brought up ideas and actions around self-improvement. According to one youth respondent, the conversation made them “think about [their] life choices.” “I can try to fight less,” said one youth respondent, and another youth respondent made a goal of “staying away from drugs.” Some youth respondents talked about self-respect and respecting others: “respect yourself as you respect others,” “be nice to people,” “treat people the same,” “try to see [and] understand the other side,” “love each other,” show “kindness,” “care more about people,” and “lead by example.” A few youth respondents wanted to focus on their family: “build a better relationship with my mom” and “do better for my family and myself” were two examples provided.

As a method for modeling civic responsibility and encouraging students to learn about other perspectives and explore ways to become more engaged in their communities, the *On the Table Greater Akron* conversations and the follow-up ‘Head, Heart, and Feet’ exercises were unique learning opportunities for students. Students had the potential to expand their familiarity with and understanding of local issues, brainstorm ways to take action and make a difference in their communities, and build and grow their connection and commitment to their schools, communities, and region.

Social Media

Social media provided an opportunity to deepen engagement efforts with *On the Table Greater Akron* and expand participation in the initiative. Akron Community Foundation launched its social media campaign in August 2017 as a method of promoting *On the Table Greater Akron* and creating a virtual space where conversations could begin or continue. The campaign served as a useful tool in capturing



live content from conversations as they occurred and providing opportunities for online engagement by those who were not able to participate in physical conversations.

We used the social media monitoring platform Meltwater Buzz to analyze social media activity and understand the influence of this initiative in the digital realm.²⁶ We tracked the designated hashtag #OnTheTableAkron. In total, #OnTheTableAkron saw more than 1,200 public mentions; these mentions were amplified, generating 2.8 million total impressions. The month of October saw the highest number of mentions, which not surprisingly, peaked on the day of the *On the Table Greater Akron* initiative.

Social media captured the enthusiasm surrounding the initiative through an array of posts and picture-sharing on various platforms, including Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook; of these, Twitter was the most popular medium used throughout the social media campaign. Additionally, Twitter saw 335 unique influencers. When it comes to breaking down the levels of engagement on Twitter, 42% of tweets were original tweets, 56% were retweets, and 2% were @message tweets. Furthermore, 30% of tweets featured links, and 28% contained media. In terms of tweeters' platforms, 71% used a mobile device, 21% used a desktop, and 5% are unknown.

Social connections went beyond advertising the initiative and spreading the word. Many offered commentary on what social media users were thinking about in the context of *On the Table Greater Akron* or what they had discussed in conversations. Some comments from social media users include: "Hopes for the community: Neighborhood collaborations, educational support and more volunteering"; "Learned so much from our students today! #OnTheTable conversation abt being positive role models & helping our community #OnTheTableAkron"; "When we ENGAGE in our community, we INVEST in the result"; "One of our jewels in the city is the #blackmalesummit. The city should send all our black high school males next year! #OnTheTableAkron"; and "To talk about things that will make us better in the city rather than divide us. #OnTheTableAkron."

How Did Conversations Impact Respondents

The short-term impact *On the Table Greater Akron* conversations had on respondents demonstrates the significance and value of these types of civic conversations. This section brings together data regarding the outcomes of these conversations, including new connections forged and an understanding of how to address community issues. Additionally, it reports the likelihood of a respondent taking action following their conversation and the actions that respondents indicated they are most likely to take.

Conversation Outcomes and Future Actions

Over one-half (58%) of respondents reported connecting with others at their conversation by speaking with one more attendees they did not already know before and/or after the conversation. Additionally, 21% exchanged contact information with one or more attendees they did not already know, and 16% made specific plans to work with one or more attendees to address a new idea, issue, or project in the

²⁶ See Appendix F for a visual summary of key findings from the social media analysis.

future. Over one-quarter (27%) of respondents indicated not connecting with other conversation attendees in any of the ways listed in the response options (see Figure B.36).

The largest proportion (41%) of respondents said that, after participating in their conversation, they have a somewhat better understanding of how they, personally, can help address the issues facing their community. Over one-quarter (28%) of respondents said they had a little better understanding, and 20% said that had a much better understanding. Twelve percent indicated no change (see Figure B.37). In terms of how likely they are to take specific actions or next steps regarding an issue or solution discussed, 86% of respondents indicated they are somewhat-to-very likely to take action (see Figure B.38). Of the actions or next steps respondents are likely to take, 64% said they are interested in building relationships and collaborating, 59% said they want to raise awareness and educate others, 49% said they hope to get more involved in community, and 42% indicated they intend to volunteer (see Figure B.39).

ANALYSIS

We conducted a set of analyses that go beyond the original guiding questions of this study. These analyses help deepen understanding of the survey response summary data and are useful in identifying areas of opportunity for further investigation or action. These additional analyses include a description of the top five themes within the Expressing Concern variable; an exploration of subgroup comparisons for groups such as gender, age, level of education, race, and geography across responses to a variety of questions; and disparities between the social issues respondents reported are most important to them and the social issues to which they said they contribute their time, talent, and/or financial resources.

Expressing Concern

“Issues” and “problems” represent two distinct measures used to determine, respectively, what issues respondents discussed during their conversations, and what is the biggest problem facing Greater Akron. However, given the overlap in responses to each of these survey questions, we combined “issues” and “problems” to create a new variable referred to as “expressing concern.” Within this variable, a respondent must have provided a response to at least one of the two “issues” and “problems” questions. Therefore, to have expressed concern means to have raised an issue in conversation, identified the biggest problem facing Greater Akron, or both.

At 38%, the largest proportion of respondents expressed concern with economic issues and poverty. Additionally, 31% of respondents expressed concern with equity and social inclusion, 31% with drugs and addiction, and 30% with education and youth development. Finally, public safety and the judicial system was of concern to 21% of respondents (see Figure B.41). The top five words across all themes that emerged from the expressing concern variable include “community,” “lack,” “drugs,” “education,” and “poverty” (see Figure G.1).²⁷

²⁷ See Appendix G for a word cloud of the top 200 words and a chart featuring the frequencies of the top 20 words.



The following sub-sections more deeply explore the top five themes within the Expressing Concern variable. They provide a descriptive analysis of what respondents said when they mentioned topics related to these five themes, and they incorporate quoted responses where appropriate to highlight sentiment, to provide examples of personal opinion, and to preserve the nuances and specificity of language used by respondents.

Economic Issues and Poverty

When respondents expressed concern for economic issues and poverty, they largely mentioned poverty in their responses. Respondents cited the “cycle of poverty” and “generational poverty,” and they brought up “need[ing] to break [the] cycle of poverty” and finding a “bridge out of poverty.”

Respondents also talked about the conditions that contribute to and impact poverty, such as “living in our silos,” “institutional racism,” “economic instability,” and “lack of job opportunities,” and they mentioned how “economic revitalization” and “improve[d] economic conditions” can “reduce poverty.”

Respondents also focused their attention on that which is absent or is perceived to be absent from their communities, such as a “lack of resources.” Some respondents were concerned about there not being enough resources in the community, especially for underserved groups, while other respondents talked about how there is a “lack of knowledge” of “valuable” “community resources” and “where to find [them],” rather than an actual lack of resources. Furthermore, with regard to resources in the community, some respondents said there is also a “lack of coordination of resources,” and others said there is a “lack of awareness of what groups [and] individuals are doing to better coordinate resources.” One respondent expressed wanting to see community centers better utilized “to allow people to have better knowledge of the community resources,” and another respondent said they wanted to see “more sharing of resources in different areas.”

Economic development and economic growth were other areas of concern for respondents, particularly the perceived absence of both. For example, respondents pointed out the “lack of growth” and how “more people are leaving the city than moving into [it],” which affects economic development. According to some respondents, there is “stagnant population growth and . . . resulting slow economic growth,” and they said they want to see “industry and development growth that matches the community’s growth.” Many respondents brought up the “development of industry and culture that attracts millennial growth.” They expressed wanting to see “economic growth that will support a growth in jobs so young people want to live here.” Some respondents indicated a “lack of meaningful opportunities for . . . young people” and a “lack of jobs that will keep young people here to raise their families.” Relatedly, others brought up how there needs to be “opportunities for young people, especially college graduates” and “job opportunities for young people to stay in or move to Akron.” Some respondents considered all workers in Akron, especially when mentioning “higher paying job opportunities,” a “need for job training,” and a “need for more living wage job opportunities.”

Related to the discussion of economic development and economic growth is what respondents had to say about revitalizing Downtown Akron. Respondents mentioned the “closure of retail businesses and unemployment in [the] Akron area,” the “lack of businesses to attract people downtown,” and



“underutilized space and buildings downtown.” There is a “desire,” one respondent said, “for a rebuilding of Downtown Akron [and] finding a way to entice stores and businesses back to the city.” “Building Akron up” and “Akron Downtown re-development” were focus points for many respondents, especially with regard to attracting people to the downtown area and making it a place where people want to spend time. As one respondent said, “We need to get more people [and] families to come to Downtown Akron and stay down there.” Several respondents also brought up this need for drawing people Downtown and keeping them there for an extended period of time: “People tend to come for events [and] dining and then leave,” one respondent said, and another respondent said there is a “need for something to keep people downtown in the area after an activity.” Respondents expressed wanting to see a “more vital downtown,” which, for some respondents, includes “cool restaurants and bars within walking distance” and “more options like coffee shops, cafes or bars (not college bars) to keep people engaged downtown,” and for others includes “more than bars and restaurants for Main Street businesses.” For one respondent, revitalizing downtown means “being able to get the right businesses into downtown for the renovation[:] local shops, local restaurants, local markets, local breweries, local coffee, local bakery. How do we make that happen without relying on chain retailers[?]” Revitalizing Downtown Akron ultimately means focusing on “having people work, live[,] and play in one place and not have to leave to do any of the[se] activities.”

Equity and Social Inclusion

Within equity and social inclusion, many respondents expressed concern for youth and the availability and accessibility of activities and programs within the community. Respondents cited a “lack of activities for young people in my community,” a “lack of places for young people to hang out,” and a “lack of community support for our youth.” “There is nothing for youth to do. We need other activities outside of school hours,” one respondent explained. Some respondents described a need for “more activities for young people in the community” and “more activities (organized programs) for young people to keep them off the streets and help direct them in a positive way.” For example, this might include “employment for young people [and] summer and after[-]school activities for young people.” Overall, respondents said there needs to be “positive youth activities” and “outlets for youth.” There also needs to be “services for young people” and “more prevention programs.” As one respondent said, it is important to keep “young people happy, healthy[,] and employed.”

Race and racism were also prominent topics for respondents. Respondents described the presence of “race issues” in their community, such as “racism,” “division by race,” “poor race relations,” “racial inequality,” “racial conflict,” “racial distrust,” “racial tensions,” “institutional racism,” “subtle racism,” and “hidden racism.” “The biggest problems,” according to one respondent, “are the divisions across racial . . . lines.” Another respondent brought up “racism and the fear of the unfamiliar.” Respondents also mentioned the “lack of public will to discuss issues of racial inequality” and that “people are afraid to discuss race.” However, there is “the need to address racism” and ensure “equity for people of color.” The community suffers from “racial injustice,” as one respondent noted, and another expressed that “the community has a problem with racial reconciliation.” In addition to talking about “race relations” and the “lack of opportunities for minorities,” respondents also discussed “segregation of refugees in our community [who are] not integrated into culture but remain separate pockets of people.”



Many respondents who reported discussing an issue related to this theme did so with regard to diversity and inclusion. Some respondents brought up a “lack of inclusion” and a “lack of diversity,” especially a “lack of . . . acceptance of diversity” and a “lack of communication and understanding between diverse communities.” They also mentioned “equity,” such as “equity for minority communities” and “equity across race and gender lines.” A number of respondents expressed interest in making themselves “more proactive with showing support for diversity” and stated a common desire “to bridge the barriers of race, politics, and religion to find common goals and build a stronger community.” They have noticed a “community divide” and have suggested a range of efforts to bridge this barrier, including “supporting the integration of newcomers in our community,” starting a “‘Unity in Community’ Fest to join all factors of community,” creating “cross-cultural relationships to engender the healthy growth of our community,” and “respecting cultures.” One respondent brought up misunderstandings, such as “misinformation about individual’s cultures, religions, ethnicities and genders[, as] these issues make it difficult for international students, scholars, business people, guests, immigrants and refugees to feel welcome and included in our community.”

Several respondents also mentioned access and inclusion for the seniors and elderly. They brought up a “lack of senior centers” and “community centers for elderly people,” as well as “issues with transportation for elderly people.” According to one respondent, “My concerns were in regards to taking better care of and respecting our senior community (above 65 years of age).” A few respondents discussed the “disconnect between youth and adults,” and one respondent asked, “How do we bridge the gap between older adults and youth?” Another respondent suggested “multi-generational activities to bridge [the] gap[, including] much needed mentors and positive role models for youth.”

Drugs and Addiction

Respondents additionally expressed concern for issues and problems around drugs and addiction. A large number of respondents referenced drug “use,” “abuse,” and “overdose,” as well as drug “problems” and “activity” in their communities. Many respondents referred to the current situation as an “epidemic” and a “crisis.” “The drugs are the number one issue,” said one respondent, and another respondent said “the biggest problem not being addressed is drugs and alcohol abuse.” According to some respondents, “drugs [are] affecting [the] entire community” and there are “too many drugs.” One respondent cited “the crisis regarding deaths from drugs,” and another mentioned “developing solutions to gain control of the drug problem that is killing so many young people and people in general.” For many respondents, “the largest concern of all” was regarding “opiates.” Many cited an “opioid” and “heroin epidemic,” and reinforced that there is currently a “terrible” “crisis” with regard to this issue.

Several respondents asked for greater “drug control” and wondered “how to [get] rid of drug problems.” Respondents were interested in exploring “how to combat” the epidemic and the “availability of mental health resources” for addressing the “crisis.” One respondent brought up “long-term treatment, sober living in safe places, after care, [and] long[-]term treatment” for those affected. Another respondent said there needs to be more “awareness of this being a mental illness. . . . [and]



having a continual connecting thread from detox to recovery and society.” One respondent expressed frustration with the “drain of resources with regard to Opioid crises (Police, EMS, Hospitals, Children Services, Jails, Courts, Schools, etc.).” Other respondents noted the “lack of resources to treat . . . [the] crisis.” As one respondent said, there is “no community plan outlined for [the] opioid epidemic.”

According to respondents, the drug crisis affects teenagers and adults alike, with teenagers reportedly using drugs “in schools,” given the “accessibility of drugs in our schools,” or “not going to school and [experiencing] drug issues” and adults showing a “high rate of illegal drug use.” As one respondent noted, “drug production, use, distribution [and] deaths” is problematic. This same respondent said there is “the need for services to assist the young adults to get them [on] their feet, lead productive lives, [and] help lift them up instead of beating them down so that they [don’t] turn to the drugs in the first place.” According to another respondent, “This isn’t just a young person problem. All economic incomes, all ages, all races are affected with this crisis. We need to listen to each other. We need to build community and help one another. Suffering and the ‘shame’ of being an addict needs to be overcome to build community and help one another.” Some respondents were focused on “the effect of the drug epidemic on families[,] resulting in future generations of hopelessness,” and “keeping our families safe in light of opioid concerns.” Similarly, respondents discussed “the silent victims—kids of opiate addiction” and “the impact of the opioid epidemic on child[-]serving agencies and the community at large.”

Many respondents talked about “drug addiction” and the “addiction crisis,” as well as “untreated addiction.” One respondent made note of “drug addiction and [the] lack of immediate availability in treatment facilities[, as well as a] lack of facilities,” and another respondent identified the “ripple effect” caused by “mental health and drug addiction.” Several respondents reported discussing alternatives to prison for drug offenders. There needs to be more “drug facilities. . . not jail” for those who are currently using, said one respondent. Other respondents talked about “drug treatment,” “recovery [and] drug[-]free environments,” “places for drug offenders,” and “housing for offenders.” One respondent indicated that “drug money confiscated should go towards drug treatments and helping sober addicts get back on their feet.”

Many respondents expressed a need for “rehab,” “treatment,” and “support” for those affected by the “drug epidemic.” “Drug deaths” and “drug overdoses” were areas of concern for some respondents, as was a “‘missing generation’ of drug addicted parents leaving children with grandparents.” Several respondents expressed wanting to “[help] people with drug addiction,” “help people [who] want to get clean,” “[help] people in new recovery from drugs to remain sober by helping them navigate systems for basic needs,” provide “more sober activities,” and provide “resources in [the] community to support drug abusers in ending drug dependence.” One respondent noted a “lack of easy access to resources for parents and students. Related to this, the stigma associated with any discussions of drugs [and] alcohol makes it hard for people to ask for information.”

Other respondents talked more generally about addiction, especially the “stigma regarding addiction” given “the lack of education.” As one respondent said, “addiction needs to be more known [and] talked



about more as a disease.” Another respondent indicated, “families in our community [are] covering up serious situations of addiction rather than accessing and addressing them.” There should be “improved access to addiction treatment [such as an] inpatient hospital . . . [and] detox center,” one respondent said, and another suggested a “recovery high school.”

Education and Youth Development

Respondents who brought up issues and problems related to education and youth development largely mentioned education and schools. They described both education and schools as “poor” and education as “subpar,” mentioned the “lack of education” in their communities,” and brought up the “quality of public education” and “public schools.” According to respondents, there is a “need to improve education for youth,” especially considering a “lack of proper education [for] young people (elementary [through] high school)” and “how unprepared young adults are.” Currently, according to one respondent, the “education system [is] focused on bureaucratic goals instead of values and building strong citizens of the future.” What can we do to make our schools stronger,” and “what are we doing about education” were just a few questions put forward by respondents.

Respondents considered “schools” themselves to be problematic, especially “Akron Public Schools,” and they mentioned “underperforming public schools” and “low student enrollment in public schools” as further evidence of issues. “Schools are an issue,” said one respondent, “and most people move out of the city to avoid Akron Public Schools.” Some respondents mentioned “public schools [versus] charter and[/]or home schooling,” and they expressed wanting “better education for our kids” and a “stronger education system,” especially given “Akron Public Schools['] state report card.” One respondent described schools as “failing,” and another respondent was “concerned about Akron public schools ranking so low.” According to one respondent, “school choice is taking children away from our public schools,” as is, according to another respondent, “the reputation of Akron City Schools.” According to a different respondent, “improving the reputation and attractiveness of Akron Public Schools” is a necessary step forward for the community, and another respondent expressed wanting to see “school system stability and reputation.” One respondent asked, “Is the [Akron Public Schools'] model effective in our community?”

Other respondents mentioned what they see as lacking or problematic in schools and what they would like to see changed or improved in the school system. For example, one respondent brought up the “need for schools to go back to music [and] art, [and the] need for kids to learn to think, not just learn to test[-]take.” Another respondent made note of the reduction of “the music and art classes in many schools,” and a third respondent brought up the issue of “cutting back on the arts in our schools[,] which down the road will have catastrophic effects on the arts in this community.” Other respondents brought up the “lack of life skills [and] social skills training in schools” and the “lack of preparedness for young people to begin life as adults.”

Several respondents stressed the “importance of quality early childhood education” and described how a “lack of support at the younger [grades]” causes the “achievement gap [to get] bigger at the [high school level].” Some mentioned wanting to see “education . . . match the job needs in the community”



and “vocational training for high schools,” while others referenced the “lack of importance placed on higher education. Are we telling our inner city youth they are not worthy of an advanced education?” “Unsustainable student debt and the cost of higher education” were other higher education problems noted by respondents. One respondent expressed wanting to see “improve[d] GED opportunities for kids that didn’t stay in school [and] support [for] Akron public schools with career development programs,” and other respondents said they wanted to see more “mentoring [of] youth” in their community.

Some respondents also identified other youth issues as being problematic in their communities. According to respondents, “getting youth involved in positive activities educationally and recreationally,” “strengthening youth,” and “supporting the youth” are all important aspects of youth development. Respondents identified that there needs to be more “funding for youth,” as well as “activities and development for the youth.” According to some respondents, there are “undereducated youth,” a “lack of youth programs,” a “lack of . . . extra activities that are free for youth,” in addition to “misguided youth.” “We need to reach our youth, get them off the streets,” said one respondent, and another respondent mentioned “youth and how to address their needs.”

Public Safety and the Judicial System

When respondents mentioned public safety and the judicial system as a concern, they primarily brought up crime, violence, and safety. Respondents named crime and violence as areas of concern in their communities, citing “increasing crime rates” and the “reputation of high crime and that the community is not safe.” “Gun violence” and “domestic violence” were two common types of violence named. There is “too much violence,” as one respondent noted, and “it seems to be everywhere and can happen anytime,” causing a “desensitization” to it, other respondents said. There needs to be more effort around “stopping the violence,” especially considering the “amount of violence and crime and the impact that has on the community and a person’s everyday life. If trauma is not address[ed], their everyday life will remain unraveled.” “Juvenile crime after school” is also of concern to some communities, as one respondent indicated. Additionally, some respondents talked about “the need to focus more on the prevention of domestic violence, rape[,] and sexual assault.” Finally, one respondent mentioned “drugs and crime,” which he/she believes “go hand[-]in[-]hand.”

Safety and a “sense of safety” was also of high concern to respondents, especially with regard to violence and crime. Respondents expressed wanting to see more “neighborhood safety” and “making everyone from all neighborhoods feel safe.” According to one respondent, Akron faces the “shifting of crime . . . from place to place,” though a number of respondents cited “downtown Akron,” especially in the evening, as particularly unsafe. Some respondents focused their attention in particular on “youth safety” and “safety for children.” As one respondent said, “I raised the issue of deteriorating safety in my neighborhood. . . . [that] exists to a much higher level [than] my tolerance.”

Some respondents turned their attention to police officers, whether it was a call for greater “police presence” or criticizing the police for “brutality.” There were a number of respondents who indicated that there are “insufficient numbers of police officers,” especially a “limited police presence in



downtown Akron,” and there needs to be “more police patrol.” There needs to be increased “police response” to “street violence” and increased “police presence” in “crime watch,” especially “in after school hours.” While some respondents called for greater “respect for police,” other respondents talked about the need for “police training on cultural sensitivity.” According to one respondent, “Akron needs to have a conversation about the attitudes of police in lower-income areas,” and another respondent brought up “racial tensions with police (regarding recent shootings [in] downtown Akron).” Some respondents discussed “police and community relationships,” especially “bridging” that relationship and increasing “interaction” and “dialogue” between both camps.

Subgroup Comparisons

Each question analyzed in this section contains comparisons between various subgroups based on gender, age, level of education, race, and geographic regions.

Gender

Regarding gender, we conducted analyses between male- and female-identifying respondents. While the original survey provided an “Other” gender option, too few respondents selected this option for inclusion in subgroup analyses.

Age

Based on the original survey question, which asked for year of birth, we created five age groups categorized by decade: the youngest group (made up of respondents who were 18 to 29 years old), the 30s group, the 40s group, the 50s group, and the oldest group (made up of respondents who were 60 years old and older).

Education Level

Though more specific information regarding respondents’ educational background was obtained, we dichotomized responses for the purpose of analysis. We divided responses into two categories: respondents with a college degree (made up of respondents with a college degree or higher) and respondents without a college degree (made up of respondents with some college or less).

Race

For an analysis by race, we created three racial subgroups: Black (consisting of respondents indicating Black or African American), White (consisting of respondents indicating White), and other racial and ethnic groups (which includes respondents who indicated Latino/a, Asian, Multiracial, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, or Other).

Geography

For the geography variable, we categorized respondents in Greater Akron into four areas based on their self-reported place of residence: Akron, City of Hudson, Medina County, and Summit County (other than Akron or Hudson).



Biggest Problem Facing Greater Akron

Survey respondents were asked to answer the open-response question, “What is the one biggest problem facing Greater Akron?” We used the Issues and Problems codebook to categorize these responses.”²⁸

When analyzed by educational attainment, respondents without a college degree were more likely to mention drugs and addiction, more than twice as likely to cite an issue related to public safety and the judicial system, and less likely to mention economic issues and poverty than were respondents with a college degree. Nearly one-quarter (23%) of respondents without a college degree mentioned public safety and the judicial system and 36% mentioned drugs and addiction, whereas only 10% of respondents with a college degree mentioned public safety and the judicial system and 25% mentioned drugs and addiction. At 37%, respondents with a college degree were more likely to mention economic issues and poverty than the 23% of respondents without a college degree who did the same.

In the analysis of racial and ethnic groups, Black respondents were least likely to mention drugs and addiction as the biggest problem facing Greater Akron and White respondents were least likely to mention public safety and the judicial system. As compared to 18% of Black respondents, 32% of White respondents and 28% of respondents of other races and ethnicities mentioned an issue related to drugs and addiction. While 22% of Black respondents and 21% of respondents of other racial and ethnic groups mentioned an issue related to public safety and the judicial system, only 11% of White respondents also did so.

In terms of homeownership, renters were more likely to mention an issue related to public safety and the judicial system, and homeowners were more likely to mention economic issues and poverty. At 22%, renters mentioned an issue related to public safety and the judicial system twice as often as the 11% of homeowners who also did so. Conversely, 35% of homeowners mentioned economic issues and poverty, yet only 26% of renters said the same.

In terms of geographic analysis, respondents from Hudson were much more likely to list drugs and addiction as the biggest problem facing Greater Akron than were respondents from Akron, Medina County, and Summit County (not Akron/Hudson).²⁹ Over half (52%) of Hudson respondents mentioned drugs and addiction, which was much more than the 24% of Akron respondents and the average of 33% of respondents from Medina County and Summit County (not Akron/Hudson) who said the same.

²⁸ See Appendix C for the Issues and Problems codebook and definitions.

²⁹ It is important to note that the Hudson conversation topic was pre-determined, as organizers had residents of this area focus on opiates during their *On the Table Greater Akron* conversation.



“Thinking about my local community, I wish I knew more about . . .”

Survey respondents were also asked to answer the open-response question, “Thinking about my community, I wish I knew more about . . .” We created a ‘Know More’ codebook to categorize these responses.”³⁰

There was little divergence in responses to this question among subgroups related to homeownership, gender, educational attainment, and racial groups.

In an analysis by age, the largest differences were related to respondents wanting to know how to get involved and about activities and events that are happening in their communities. At 21%, the youngest two age groups, 18 to 29 year olds and respondents in their 30s, were more than twice as likely to want to know more about how to get involved than the 8% of respondents 60 years old and up who said the same. Likewise, respondents in the youngest two groups were more than twice as likely (16%) to want more information about activities and events happening in communities in comparison to the average of 7% of respondents in the 40s, 50s, and 60 years old and up groups who said the same.

In an analysis based on geography, Hudson resident respondents were much more likely to mention drugs and addiction than respondents from other geographic areas.³¹ Thirty percent (30%) of Hudson respondents mentioned wanting to know more about drugs and addiction, while only an average of 5% of respondents from other areas mentioned a desire to know more about this topic.

How to Help Improve Greater Akron

Respondents were also asked to answer the closed-response question, “What is one way you are willing to help improve Greater Akron in the future?”³²

Younger respondents were most likely to say they are willing to get more involved with the community, help support their family, and pursue personal development, and the oldest respondent group was least likely to pursue building relationships or take job-related actions. Seventy percent of 18 to 29 year old respondents indicated they are willing to get more involved in the community, as compared to an average of 55% of respondents in their 30s through 50s and 36% of the oldest respondents (60 years old and up). At 57%, respondents aged 18 to 29 years old were also more likely to pursue personal development and learning, compared to the 36% of respondents 60 years old and older who said the same. Respondents 60 years old and older were also least likely to pursue job-related actions and building relationships and collaboration. Nineteen percent of respondents 60 years old and up selected job-related actions, as compared to an average of 46% of all other respondents; furthermore, 58% selected build relationships and collaborate, as compared to an average of 69% of other respondents.

³⁰ See Appendix D for the ‘Know More’ codebook and definitions.

³¹ It is important to note that the Hudson conversation topic was pre-determined, as organizers had residents of this area focus on opiates during their *On the Table Greater Akron* conversation.

³² See Appendix E for the ‘Ways to Help’ codebook and definitions.

Respondents with a college degree were an average of 11% more likely to be willing to build relationships and collaborate, to donate, and to take action at their jobs than were respondents without a college degree.

In terms of analysis by race and ethnicity, White respondents were more likely to select job-related actions at 42%, as compared to 27% of Black respondents and 37% of respondents of other races and ethnicities.

Homeowners were more likely to be willing to donate, while renters were more likely to want to get more involved in their community. Nearly one-third (31%) of homeowners stated they are willing to donate to improve Greater Akron, as compared to 21% of renters who indicated the same. Conversely, 58% of renters were willing to get more involved in the community, as compared to 49% of homeowners who said the same.

Important Social Issue

In this section, subgroups were analyzed by their responses to a close-ended, multiple-choice question asking, “Which of the following social issues are most important to you?”³³

At 10%, male respondents were more than twice as likely as female respondents (4%) to select government as an issue that is important to them.

Respondents without a college degree more frequently selected family and religion and morals, but were less likely to select equity and social inclusion. Whereas 39% of respondents without a college degree selected family and 21% selected religion and morals, only 26% of respondents with a college degree selected family and 11% selected religion and morals. At 30%, respondents with a college degree were more than twice as likely to choose equity and social inclusion than the 15% of respondents without a college degree who did the same.

With regard to racial and ethnic groups, Black respondents were most likely to select religion and morals, White respondents were most likely to select the environment and parks, and respondents of other racial and ethnic groups were significantly more likely to select immigration. At 22%, Black respondents were much more likely to select religion and morals as an important issue than the 13% of White respondents and 10% of respondents of other racial and ethnic groups who did the same. Though only 5% of White respondents and 0% of Black respondents selected immigration, 9% of respondents of other racial and ethnic identities did so. White respondents were more likely to select the environment and parks than other racial and ethnic groups, with 19% of White respondents selecting it, as compared to 6% of Black respondents and 9% of respondents of another race or ethnicity.

³³ See Appendix C for the Issues and Problems codebook and definitions.

Primary Social Issue Contribution

The following subgroup analyses were based of the closed response question, “To which social issues do you PRIMARILY contribute your time, talent, and/or financial resources?” Response options were identical to the question above regarding important social issues.³⁴

The older the respondent, the more likely they were to indicate that they contribute to causes related to religion and morals. Whereas the two youngest groups averaged only 16%, respondents 60 years old and older selected religion and morals twice as often (32%). At 48%, respondents in their 40s were most likely to say that they contribute to education and youth development, with the youngest two age groups averaging 42% and the oldest age group contributing least to this category at 31%.

At 47%, respondents without a college degree were much more likely to select family than the 30% of respondents with a college degree who said the same. However, respondents with a college degree were more likely to select education, with 44% of respondents with a college degree selecting this answer as compared to 30% of respondents without a college degree.

In terms of race and ethnicity, 18% of White respondents selected environment and parks, which was more often than the 2% of Black respondents and 9% of respondents of other races and ethnicities who indicated the same.

Issue Raised During Conversation

Survey respondents were asked to respond to the question, “Did you raise an issue of concern regarding your community? If yes, please specify.” We categorized responses using our issues and problems codebook.³⁵

In terms of race and ethnicity, Black respondents most frequently raised an issue related to education and youth development, but were less likely to mention drugs and addiction. Over 40% of Black respondents mentioned education and youth development, as compared to 25% of White respondents and 35% of respondents of other races or ethnicities. Conversely, only 9% of Black respondents raised an issue related to drugs and addiction, compared to 21% of White respondents and 17% of respondents of other races and ethnicities who did the same.

At 15%, renters were less likely to raise an issue related to economic issues and poverty than the 24% of homeowners who did so.

When comparing geographic areas, respondents from the City of Hudson were much more likely to mention drugs and addiction than respondents from other areas.³⁶ At 46%, the proportion of

³⁴ See Appendix C for the Issues and Problems codebook and definitions.

³⁵ See Appendix C for the Issues and Problems codebook and definitions.

³⁶ It is important to note that the Hudson conversation topic was pre-determined, as organizers had residents of this area focus on opiates during their *On the Table Greater Akron* conversation.

respondents from the City of Hudson who raised drugs and addiction was over two times greater than that of respondents from all other areas, including 13% of respondents from the City of Akron, 20% of respondents from Medina County, and 21% of respondents from Summit County (not Akron/Hudson).

Disparity between Important Issues and Contributions

When considering the social issues that were most important to respondents (important issues) and the social issues to which they contribute their time, talent, and/or financial resources (contributions), the data reveal disparities between these two variables (see Figure H.1). These disparities can be useful indicators of social issues where greater contribution of time, talent, and financial resources are needed.

Transportation resulted in the greatest issues-to-contributions disparity. Among the respondents who mentioned transportation as a social issue, only 17% also reported that they contribute their time, talent, and/or financial resources to this cause. The media featured the next greatest disparity, with 24% of those concerned with this social issue also contributing toward it. Public safety and the judicial system featured the third greatest disparity, as 28% of those concerned with this social issue also reported contributing toward it. Notably, education and youth development had the highest number of respondents considering it the most important social issue (n=1,344), and 61% of respondents reported contributing their time, talent, and financial resources to it. Arts and culture and religion and morals were the two issues with the least amount of disparity. Seventy-eight percent of respondents who were concerned with religion and morals also expressed contributing to it, and 70% of respondents who expressed concern with arts and culture also reported contributing to it.

CONCLUSION

On October 3, 2017, residents across Greater Akron came together to talk about issues that impact the region and its quality of life. This conversation-oriented initiative known as *On the Table Greater Akron* was an opportunity for friends, families, neighbors, colleagues, and people who were meeting for the first time to gather around a shared meal for a real dialogue about what is important to them with the intention of fueling meaningful change.

Organized by Akron Community Foundation with support from The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, *On the Table Greater Akron* brought together an estimated 6,000 participants. Out of the estimated 6,000 participants who attended a conversation, about 60% (3,598) responded to a survey regarding their experience. Survey respondents primarily completed print surveys (61%), with another group of respondents utilizing an e-mailed link to the online survey (32%), and a smaller proportion using a direct web link to the survey (7%).

Social media captured the enthusiasm surrounding the initiative through an array of posts and picture-sharing on various platforms, including Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. In total, #OnTheTableAkron saw more than 1,200 public mentions; these mentions were amplified, generating 2.8 million total



impressions (posts that were displayed in user feeds). Twitter was the most popular medium used throughout the social media campaign. Additionally, Twitter saw 335 unique influencers—accounts with large numbers of followers who helped amplify the message.

A broad range of Akron-area residents participated in the survey. Over two-thirds (68%) of respondents identified as female, and 31% identified as male. With regard to age, 13% of respondents were 18 to 29 years old, a percentage that gradually increased as respondents got older, with 17% in their 30s, 20% in their 40s, 22% in their 50s, and 27% being 60 and up. The distribution of age groups for Summit County respondents tracked closely with the distribution for Summit County residents, with the exception of the 18 to 29 year old group.

In terms of race and/ or ethnicity, 72% of respondents identified as White (72%), and 20% of respondents identified as Black or African American. Much smaller percentages identified as Multiracial (3%), Other (2%), Asian (1%), American Indian/Alaska native (0.7%), and Hispanic or Latino/a (0.4%). The racial makeup of survey respondents from Summit County was slightly more diverse than that of Summit County overall. While 69% of respondents from Summit County identified as White, 81% of all Summit County residents identify as White, according to current county census data. Further, 24% of Summit County survey respondents identified as Black or African American, compared to the 13% of all Summit County residents who identify similarly.

Respondents tended to be highly educated. Just under two-thirds (64%) of respondents reported having a bachelor's degree or higher. Comparatively, only 11% of all Summit County residents have a graduate degree, and 19% hold a bachelor's degree. While only 2% of survey respondents reported completing less than high school, 9% of Summit County residents report the same level of education.

Respondents were a highly engaged group across all measures considered, especially when comparing Greater Akron respondents to national data. For example, 70% of respondents described themselves as already somewhat or very involved in community and neighborhood activities where they live. Consistent with these responses, in the past year 73% of respondents had made a charitable donation, 71% had volunteered, 56% had attended a public meeting, and 36% had worked to fix or improve something in their community.

Given their current high levels of engagement, it is not surprising that respondents are eager to find ways to collectively address the issues in their communities. When asked about the motivation behind participation in *On the Table Greater Akron*, 65% of respondents stated wanting to discuss and address issues in the community. Respondents also stated wanting to learn from and listen to others (58%), which demonstrates the value respondents place on exchanging ideas and on critical, collective “brainpower.” The desire to connect with others and exchange ideas can be seen in the percentage of respondents who were interested in building relationships and collaborating as an action or next step following their conversations (64%).



Furthermore, respondents reported multiple levels of engagement that resulted from their conversations. Over one-half of respondents (58%) said they connected with others by speaking with one or more attendees they did not previously know, and 21% of respondents also exchanged contact information. Additionally, 16% of respondents reported that they made specific plans to work with one more attendees to address a new idea, issues, or project in the future.

Of the seven sources of information for local news that we asked about—including television, radio, and newspapers—respondents most frequently get their information by word of mouth from friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors. Two-thirds (66%) of respondents reported receiving information about their local community from word of mouth several times a week to every day, which further demonstrates respondents' ongoing connections within their communities and their desire to connect in person with others.

Although *On the Table Greater Akron* respondents are an engaged group, they still expressed a desire to increase engagement and learn about ways to get more involved. In response to the prompt, "Thinking about my community, I wish I knew more about . . .", 15% of respondents expressed wanting to know more about how to get involved, which was the second highest ranked response.

Respondents are eager to take action and address issues together. The majority (86%) of respondents are somewhat-to-very likely to take specific action or next steps regarding an issue discussed during *On the Table Greater Akron*. Of this group of respondents who are likely to take action, 64% plan to do this by building relationships and collaborating, 59% plan to raise awareness and educate others, and 49% plan to get more involved in their community.

On what issues might respondents focus their collective efforts? Respondents made clear their concerns with regard to Greater Akron. Overall, the top issue about which respondents raised concern through either an issue they brought up in conversation or their response to the greatest problem facing Greater Akron involved economic issues and poverty, with 1,222 respondents (38%) showing concern for this issue. The next top three concerns all receiving attention from slightly less than one-third of respondents were equity and social inclusion (31%), drugs and addiction (31%), and education and youth development (30%). The fifth highest issue that 21% of respondents raised concern about was public safety and the judicial system.

Of these top concerns, the concern surrounding public safety and judicial system stands out as an area with a heightened need for increasing engagement and raising awareness around opportunities. Only 28% of respondents who selected public safety and the judicial system as among the top three most important social issues also selected this as a social issue to which they contribute their time, talent and/or financial resources. Conversely, religion and morals was the issue with the least amount of disparity between respondents' concerns and contributions, meaning those who said religion and morals was important to them also frequently reported contributing to it. Of the top five concerns,



education and youth development was the issue with the least amount of disparity, with many respondents who reported it as an important issue also reporting that they contribute to it.

In attempting to build connections and confront these top issues, it may be strategic to meet the residents of Greater Akron where they already are. When asked where respondents like to connect with others, two of the top three responses were religious institutions and schools. Since the issues of religion and morals and education and youth development show high levels of participation and engagement among respondents who care about them, religious institutions and schools seem to be prime locations to build relationships, focus recruitment efforts, and work on joint initiatives to address the top challenges that confront Greater Akron residents.

On the Table Greater Akron was an opportunity for residents of Greater Akron to get together with old friends and new acquaintances to have conversations about the issues that they care about the most. In doing so, many people came together to share their experiences about life in Greater Akron and how they would like to see it become an even better region that serves all of its residents. Conversations served as a catalyst for generating ideas and potential actions and created a space for participants to make personal connections so that they might find ways to ignite change with fellow residents.



APPENDICES

Appendix A: *On the Table* Greater Akron 2017 Survey



Welcome, and thank you for taking part in this survey!

The purpose of this research is to understand who participated in *On the Table* and the nature and quality of the conversation event in which you participated on October 3, 2017, coordinated by Akron Community Foundation. The University of Illinois at Chicago's Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement (IPCE) is administering the survey.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Completion of this survey is voluntary, you may skip any question, and there are no right or wrong answers. Your responses will be kept confidential. Collected data will be stored in locked offices in a locked suite, and data with direct identifiers will be password protected. Data will be kept throughout the research study period and will be deleted after five years. No personally identifiable data will be reported, and confidentiality will be protected to the fullest extent possible. IPCE and Akron Community Foundation will have access to your e-mail address, but Akron Community Foundation will not have access to your individual responses. Results of this study will be publicly available at www.ipce.uic.edu and www.onthetableakron.com.

The principal investigator of this research is IPCE Director Joseph Hoereth. If you have any questions about the survey, you may contact IPCE by phone at 312-355-0088 or by e-mail at jhoereth@uic.edu. You may also contact the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects (OPRS) by phone at 312-996-1711 or by e-mail at uicirb@uic.edu.

By responding to the survey, you acknowledge the following:

- You have read the above information
- You voluntarily agree to participate in this study
- You are at least 18 years of age

Please mark your answers like this: not like this:

Begin here

1. Please provide the e-mail address used to register you for *On the Table*. If you DID NOT register online, please provide your e-mail address below.

E-mail Address: _____

2. Which best describes your MOST IMPORTANT reason(s) for participating in *On the Table*? (Select all that apply)

- To discuss and address important issues in my community
- To learn from and listen to others
- To meet and build relationships with new people
- To get more involved in my community
- To support the organizer of the conversation
- Other (please specify): _____

If you participated in MORE THAN ONE *On the Table* conversation, please refer to only one of your conversations for the next two questions.

3. Where did your conversation take place?

County: _____

City or Town: _____

Neighborhood: _____

4. The other people at my conversation were:

- Mostly people I did NOT know before the conversation
- Mostly people I knew before the conversation
- An equal mix of both

5. Did you raise an issue of concern regarding your community?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide examples:



6. Did your conversation(s) generate any specific solutions?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide examples:

7. How did you connect with others at your conversation(s)? (Select all that apply)

- I spoke with one or more attendees I did not already know before and/or after the conversation(s)
- I exchanged contact information with one or more attendees I did not already know
- I made specific plans to work with one or more attendees to address a new idea, issue, or project in the future
- None of the above

8. After participating in your conversation(s), to what extent do you better understand how you, personally, can help address the issues facing your community?

- Much better
- Somewhat better
- A little better
- No change

9. How likely are you to take specific actions or next steps regarding an issue or solution discussed?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not too likely
- Not at all likely

If you answered NOT TOO LIKELY or NOT AT ALL LIKELY, please skip to Question 11.

10. Please select the actions or next steps you are likely to take regarding an issue or solution discussed. (Select all that apply)

- Build relationships and collaborate
- Get more involved in community
- Improve myself through personal development and learning
- Raise awareness and educate others
- Become more politically involved
- Donate
- Volunteer
- Provide support for my family
- Take action through my job
- Mentor or motivate others
- Other (please specify): _____

11. How much impact do you think people like you can have in making your community a better place to live?

- A big impact
- A moderate impact
- A small impact
- No impact at all

12. In general, how attached do you feel to your local community?

- Very attached
- Somewhat attached
- Not very attached
- Not at all attached

13. Which of the following social issues are most important to you? (CHOOSE UP TO THREE)

- Arts and Culture
- Economic Issues and Poverty
- Education and Youth Development
- Environment and Parks
- Religion and Morals
- Equity and Social Inclusion
- Family
- Food Access
- Government
- Health
- Housing and Homelessness
- Immigration and Migration
- Public Safety and Judicial System
- The Media
- Technology
- Transportation
- Other (please specify): _____
- Other (please specify): _____
- Other (please specify): _____

14. To which of the following social issues do you PRIMARILY contribute your time, talent (knowledge or skills), and/or financial resources?
(CHOOSE UP TO THREE)

- Arts and Culture
- Economic Issues and Poverty
- Education and Youth Development
- Environment and Parks
- Religion and Morals
- Equity and Social Inclusion
- Family
- Food Access
- Government
- Health
- Housing and Homelessness
- Immigration and Migration
- Public Safety and Judicial System
- The Media
- Technology
- Transportation
- Other (please specify): _____
- Other (please specify): _____
- Other (please specify): _____

15. How involved are you in community and neighborhood activities where you live?

- Very involved
- Somewhat involved
- Not too involved
- Not at all involved

16. Since October 2016, have you:
(Select all that apply)

- Worked with people in your neighborhood to fix or improve something?
- Donated money, assets, or property with a combined value of more than \$25 to charitable or religious organizations?
- Done any volunteer activities through or for an organization?
- Attended any public meetings in which there was discussion of community affairs?
- None of the above

17. How often do you vote in local elections, such as for mayor or a school board? Across the nation, these elections have about 20% voter turnout.

- Always vote
- Sometimes vote
- Rarely vote
- Never vote
- Prefer not to answer / Not eligible to vote

18. Where do you like to connect with others?
(Select all that apply)

- Parks
- Library
- Community rec center
- Schools
- Public squares
- Religious institution, such as a church
- Community garden
- Shopping centers
- Other (please specify): _____

19. How often, if ever, do you get information about YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY from each of the following sources, whether online or offline?

	Every day	Several times a week	Several times a month	Less often	Never
Local newspaper	<input type="radio"/>				
Local television news	<input type="radio"/>				
Local radio	<input type="radio"/>				
A blog about your local community	<input type="radio"/>				
A person or organization you follow on a social networking site	<input type="radio"/>				
A newsletter or e-mail listserv about your local community	<input type="radio"/>				
Word of mouth from friends, family, co-workers and neighbors	<input type="radio"/>				

To help us better understand who participated in *On the Table*, please respond to the following demographic questions. Your responses are confidential.

20. Where do you currently live?

County: _____

City or Town: _____

Neighborhood: _____

Zip Code: _____

21. About how many years have you lived in your local community?

Number of Years: _____

22. Do you own or rent your primary residence?

- Own
- Rent
- Other (please specify): _____

23. What is your current gender identity?

(Select all that apply)

- Male
- Female
- A gender identity not listed here (please specify): _____

24. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than high school
- High school diploma or GED
- Some college
- Associate/Vocational degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate degree

25. In what year were you born? Year: _____

26. How would you identify your race and/or ethnicity? (Select all that apply)

- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino/a
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other (please specify): _____

27. What is your relationship to Akron Community Foundation? (Select all that apply)

- Funder
- Grantee (my organization has received funds from them)
- I have volunteered with them
- I work there
- I've attended one of their events
- I had not heard of Akron Community Foundation before *On the Table*
- Other (please specify): _____

28. What is the biggest problem facing Greater Akron?

29. Thinking about my local community, I wish I knew more about:

30. What is one way you are willing to help improve Greater Akron in the future? (Select all that apply)

- Build relationships and collaborate
- Get more involved in community
- Improve myself through personal development and learning
- Raise awareness and educate others
- Become more politically involved
- Donate
- Volunteer
- Provide support for my family
- Take action through my job
- Mentor or motivate others
- Other (please specify): _____

31. How did you hear about *On the Table Greater Akron*? (Select all that apply)

- I received an invitation
- I saw or heard advertisement/s
- I learned about it through social media
- I heard about it through word of mouth
- I heard about it from a community or nonprofit organization (please specify): _____
- Other (please specify): _____

32. Are you interested in receiving e-mail communications about how you can stay involved?

- Yes, you may contact me via e-mail
- No, thank you

On the Table 2017

Summary of Results for All Respondents

Following On the Table, 1,153 participants responded to the survey by clicking on an e-mail link, 252 responded by clicking on the web link, and 2,193 responded by submitting a print survey.

In total, 3,598 On the Table participants fully or partially responded to the survey. This document provides a summary of responses by question. The 'n' provided in each question is the number of respondents for that question.

Section 1: Who Participated?

Respondent Demographics

Figure B.1: What is your current gender identity?

% of respondents (n = 3,429)

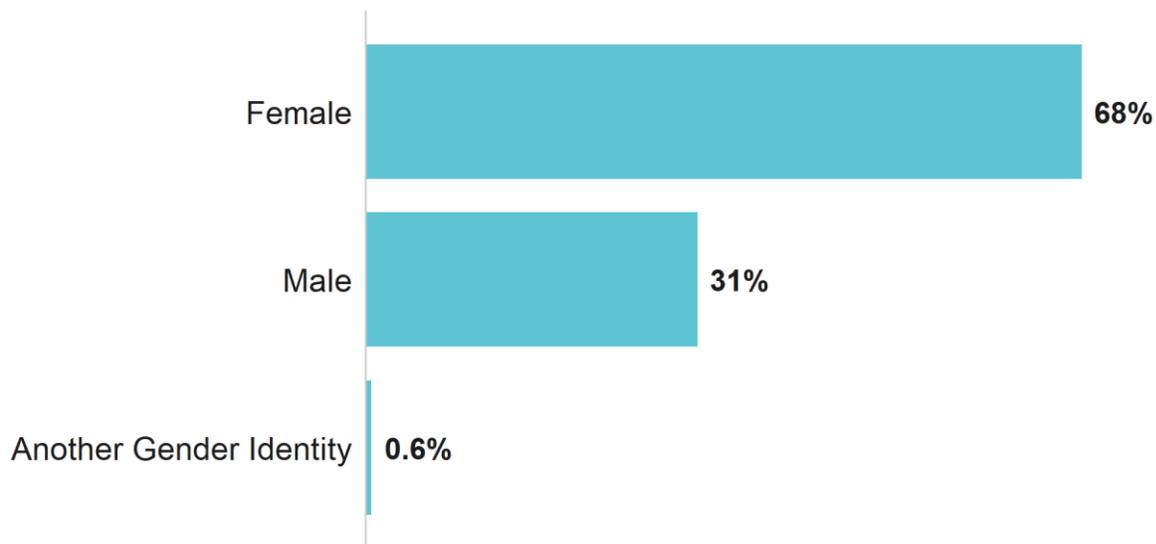


Figure B.2: Age of Respondents by Decade

% of respondents (n = 3,239)

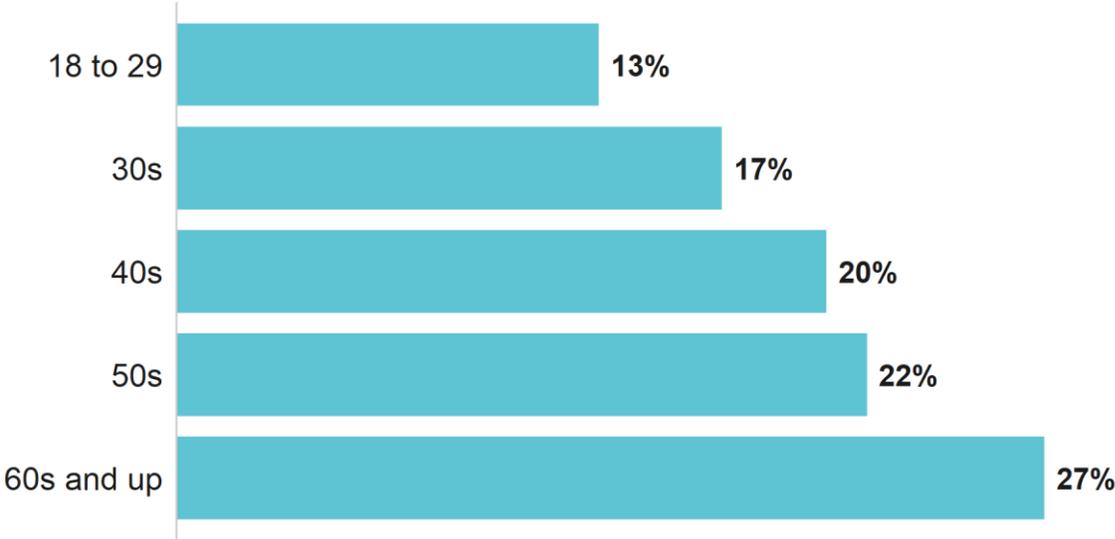


Figure B.3: Age of Respondents by Decade, Comparison

% of Summit County RESPONDENTS (n = 2,496) compared to Summit County RESIDENTS
SOURCE: U.S. Census, ACS 2011 - 2015

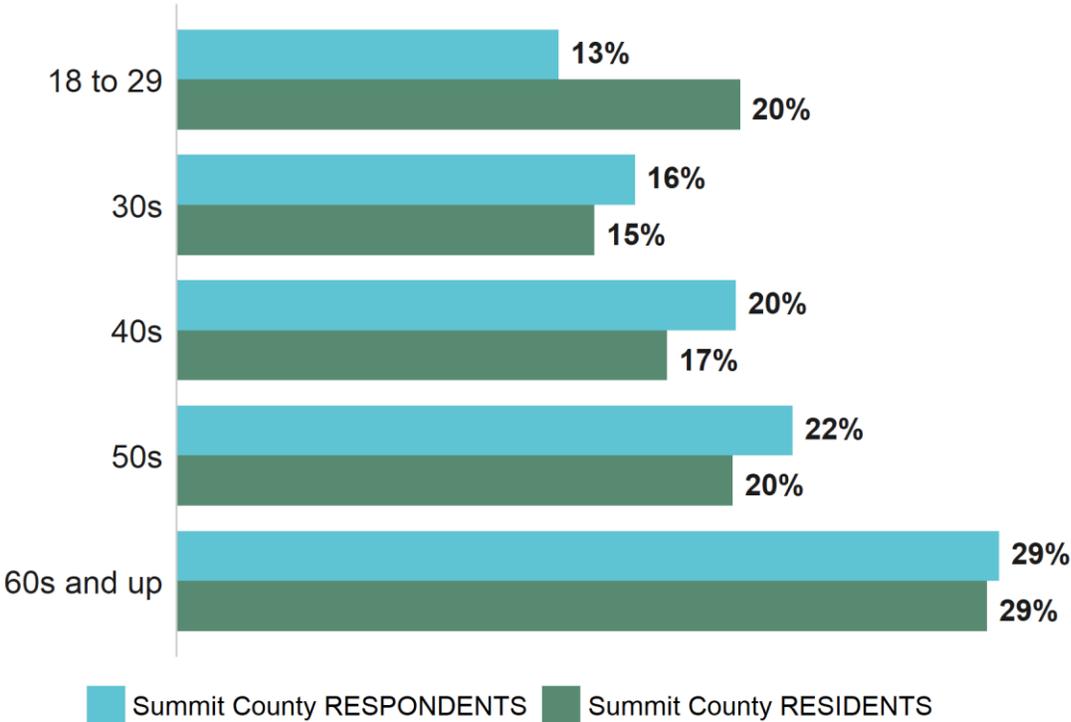


Figure B.4: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

% of respondents (n = 3,451)

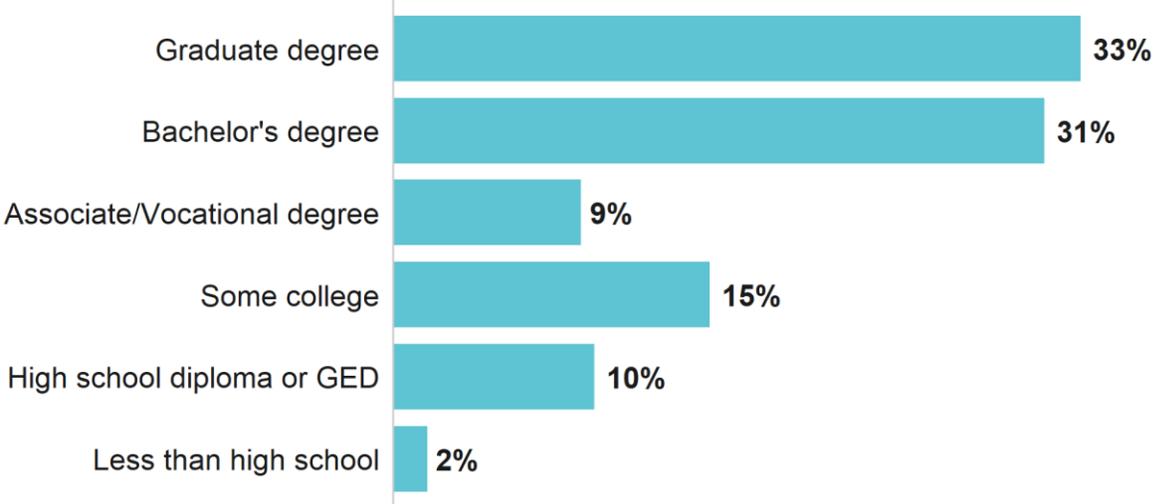


Figure B.5: Highest Level of Education, Comparison

% of Summit County RESPONDENTS ages 25+ (n = 2,336) compared to Summit County RESIDENTS ages 25+

SOURCE: U.S. Census, ACS 2011 - 2015

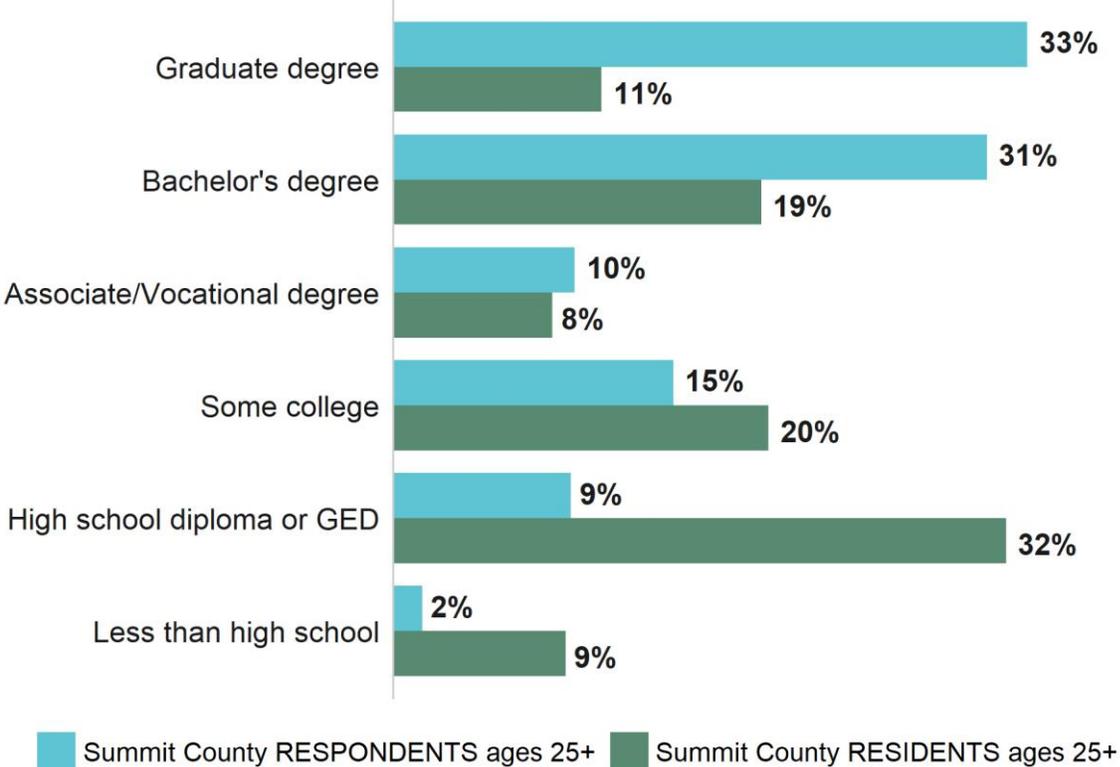


Figure B.6: How would you identify your race and/or ethnicity?

% of respondents (n = 3,412)

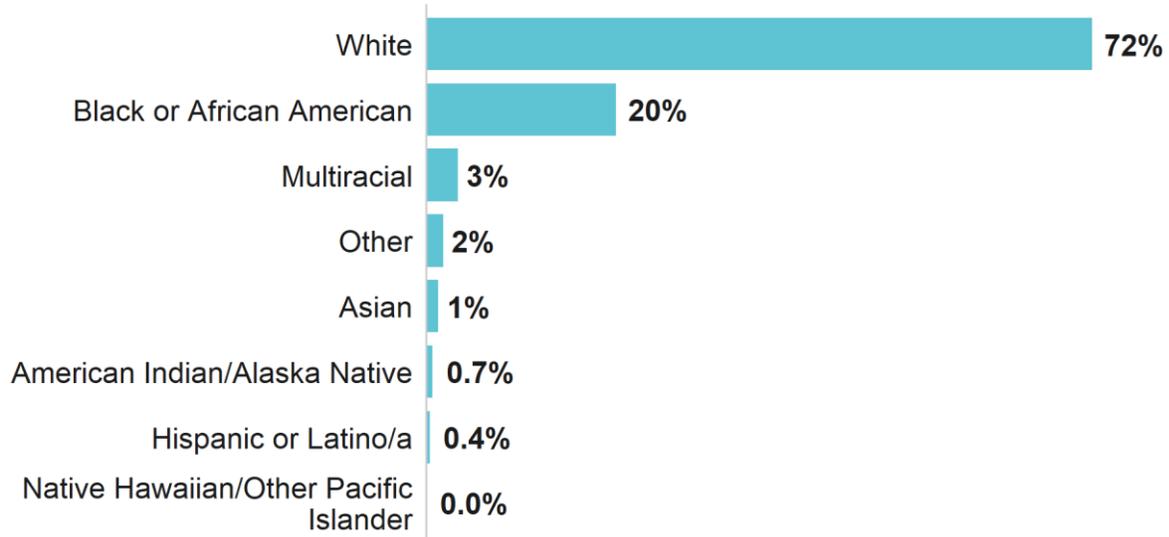


Figure B.7: Racial and/or Ethnic Identity, Comparison

% of Summit County RESPONDENTS (n = 2,572) compared to Summit County RESIDENTS

SOURCE: U.S. Census, ACS 2011 - 2015, Voting Age Population by Citizenship and Race (CVAP)

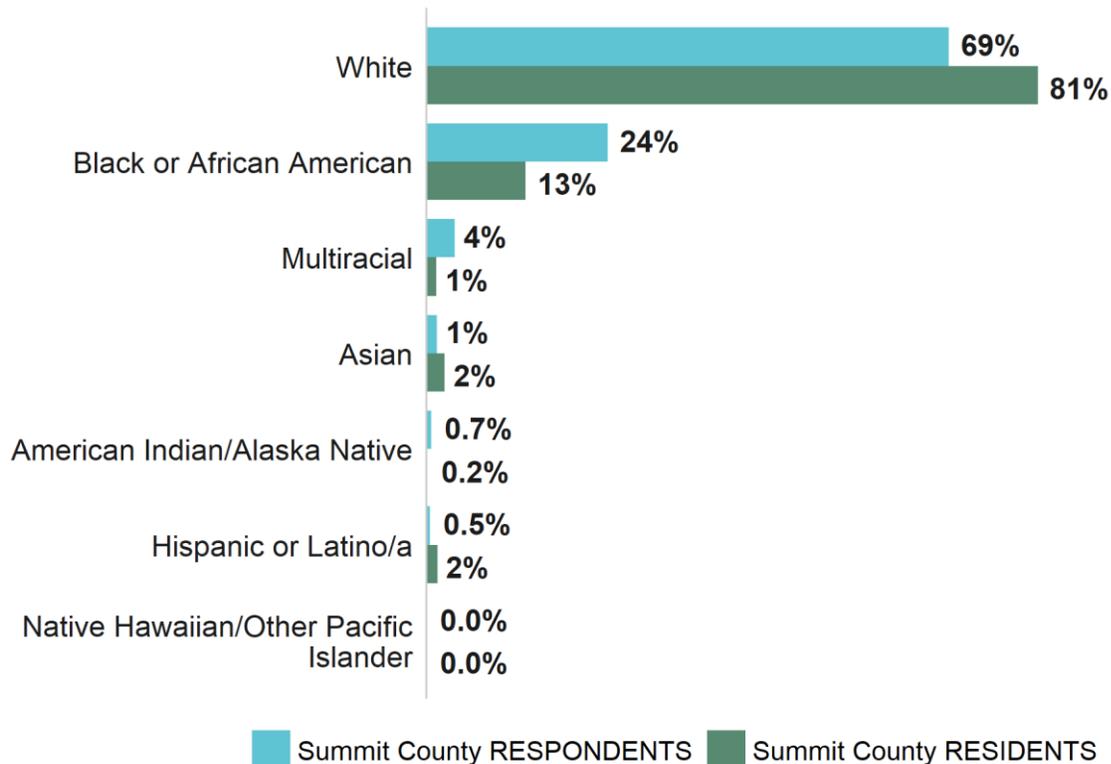


Figure B.8: Where do you currently live? Top counties:

% of respondents (n = 3,452)

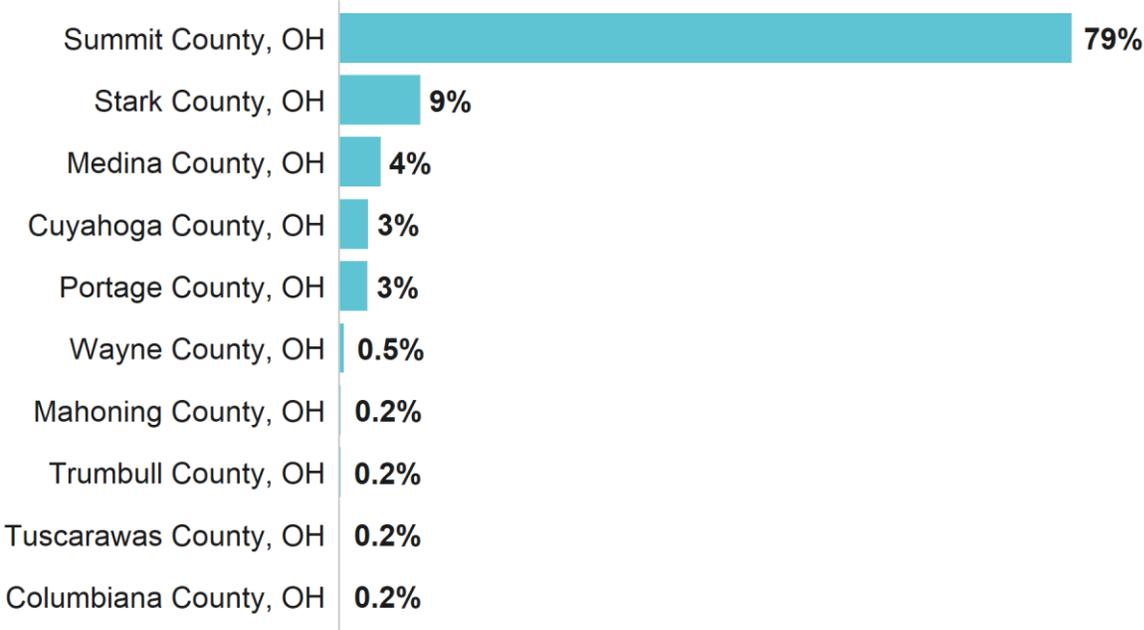


Figure B.9: Where do you currently live? Top cities:

% of respondents (n = 3,434)

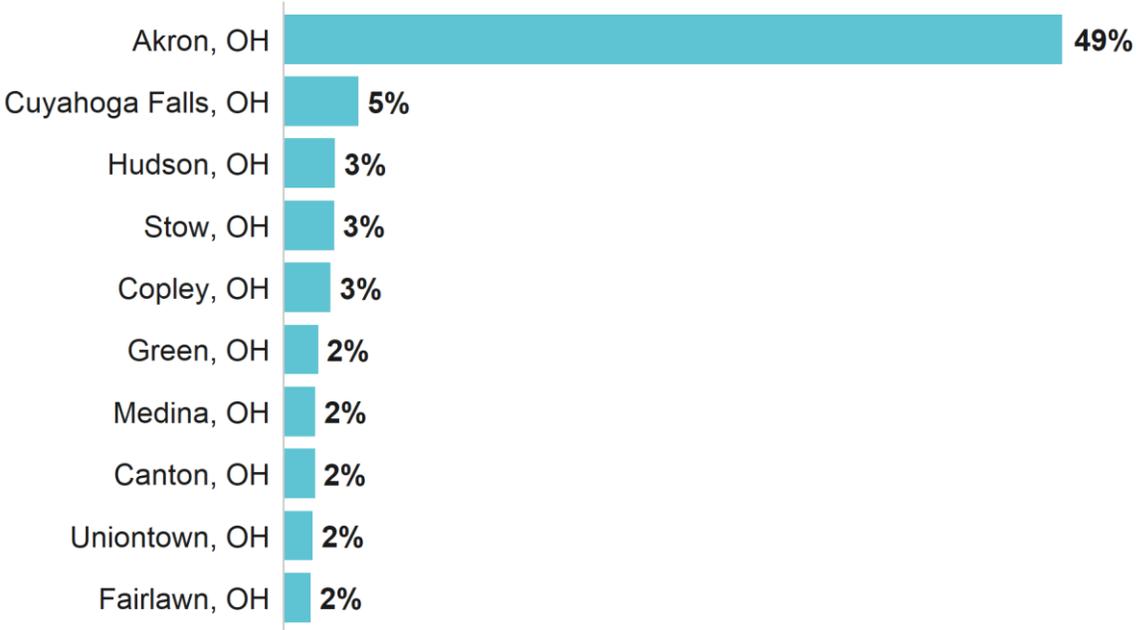
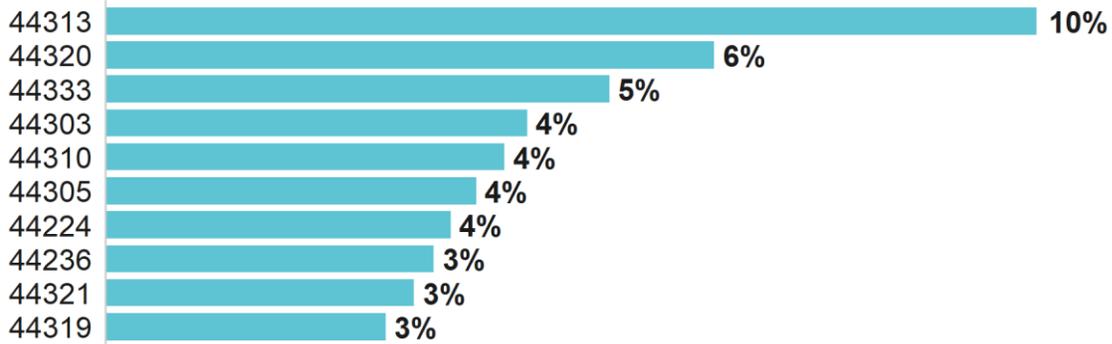


Figure B.10: Where do you currently live? Top Zip Codes:

% of respondents (n = 3,400)



Where Respondents LIVE

of Respondents by Zip Code

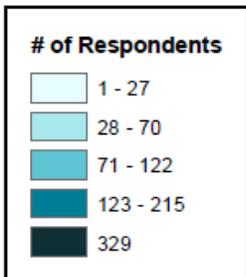
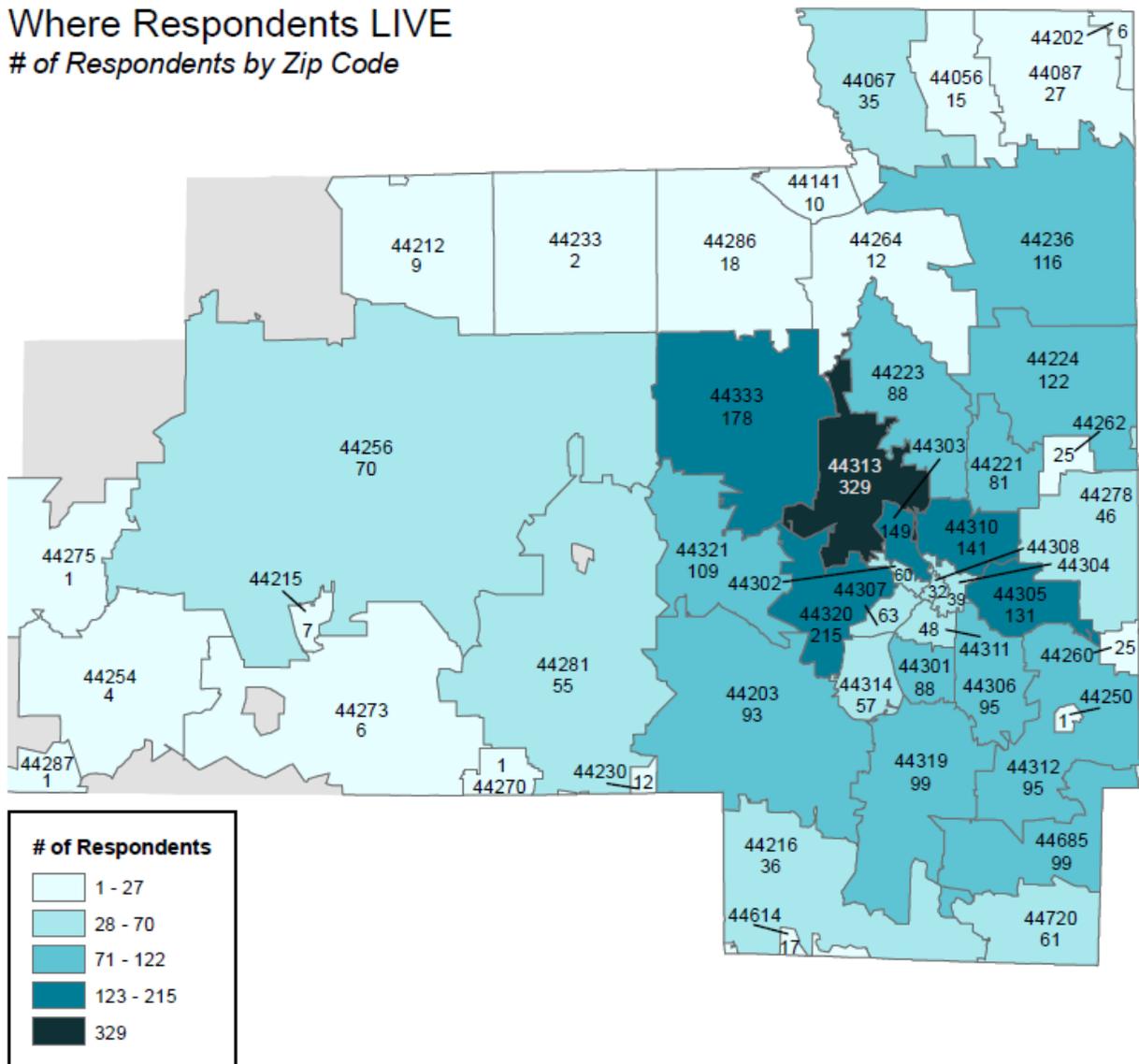


Figure B.11: About how many years have you lived in your local community?

% of respondents (n = 3,406) compared to National Rate

SOURCE: Pew Research Center, December, 2008, 'American Mobility. Who Moves? Who Stays Put? Where's Home?'

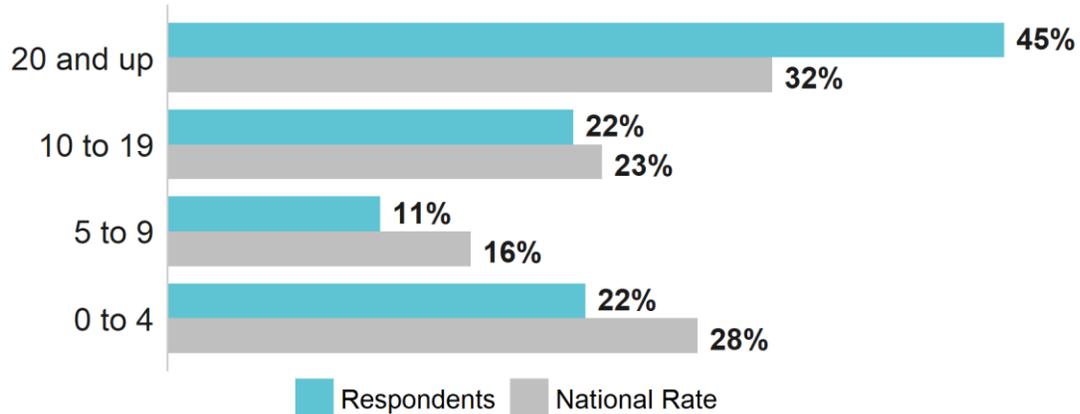


Figure B.12: Do you own or rent your primary residence?

% of respondents (n = 3,399)

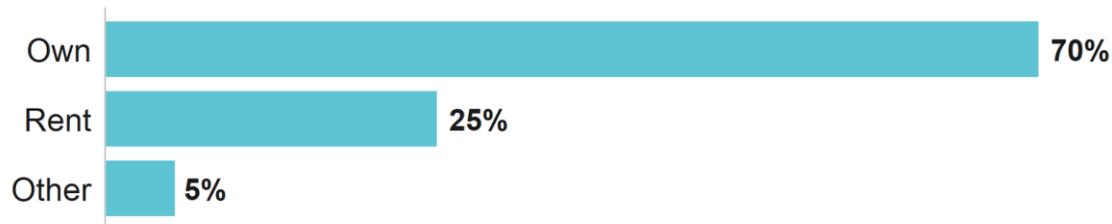


Figure B.13: Homeownership Comparison

% of Summit County RESPONDENTS (n = 2,491) compared to Summit County RESIDENTS

SOURCE: U.S. Census, ACS 2011 - 2015

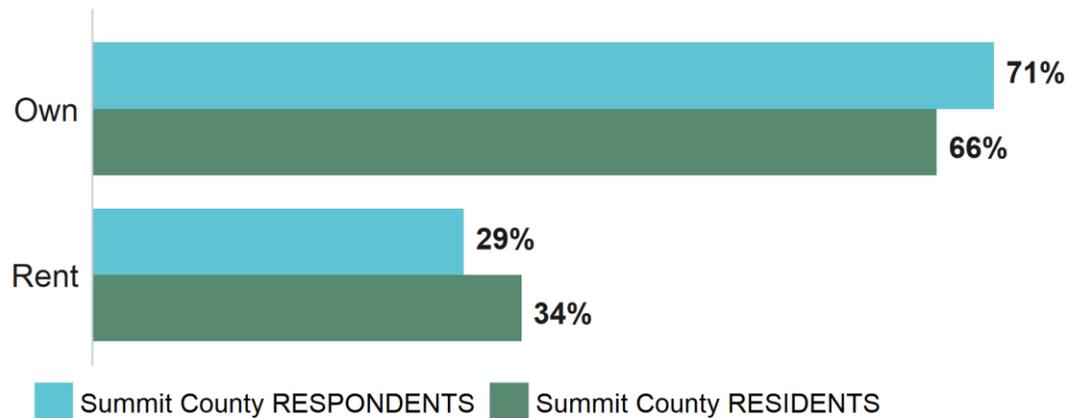
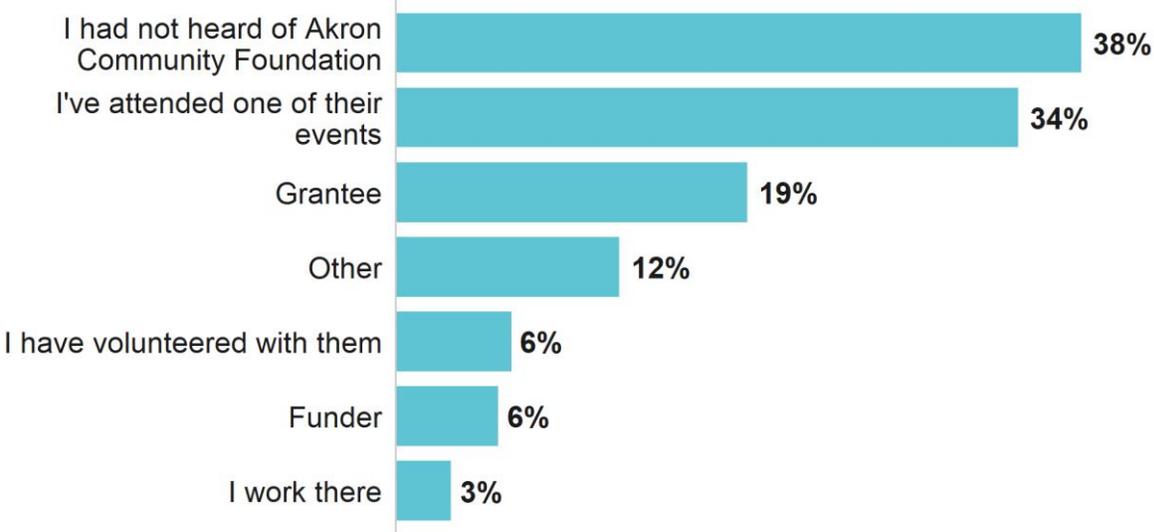


Figure B.14: What is your relationship to the Akron Community Foundation?

% of respondents (n = 3,206 // select all that apply)



*Other' response: Heard of them (1%).

Civic Attitudes and Activities

Figure B.15: How much impact do you think people like you can have in making your community a better place to live?

% of respondents (n = 3,506) compared to National Rate

SOURCE: Pew Research Center, November, 2016, 'Civic Engagement Strongly Tied to Local News Habits'

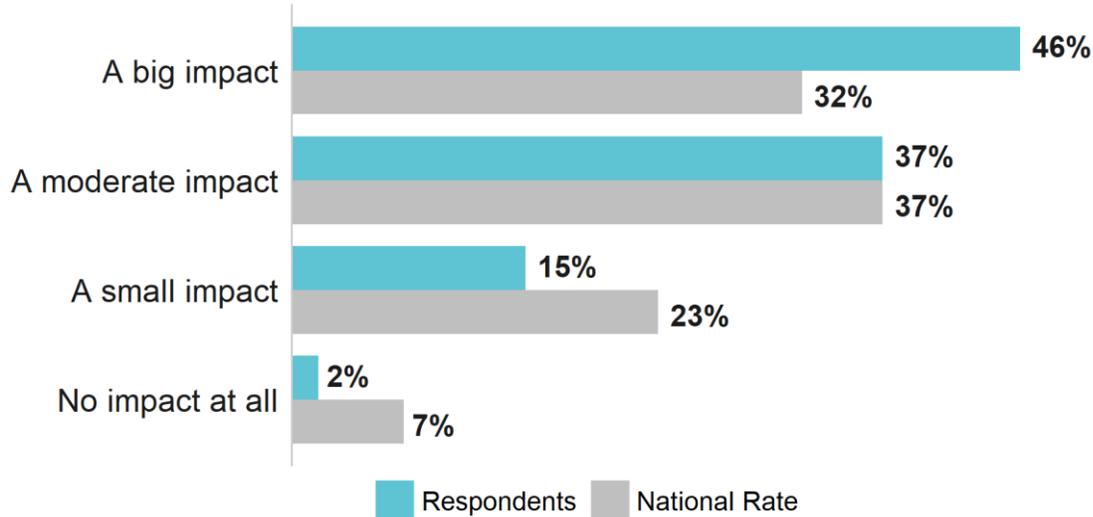


Figure B.16: In general, how attached do you feel to your local community?

% of respondents (n = 3,513) compared to National Rate

SOURCE: Pew Research Center, November, 2016, 'Civic Engagement Strongly Tied to Local News Habits'

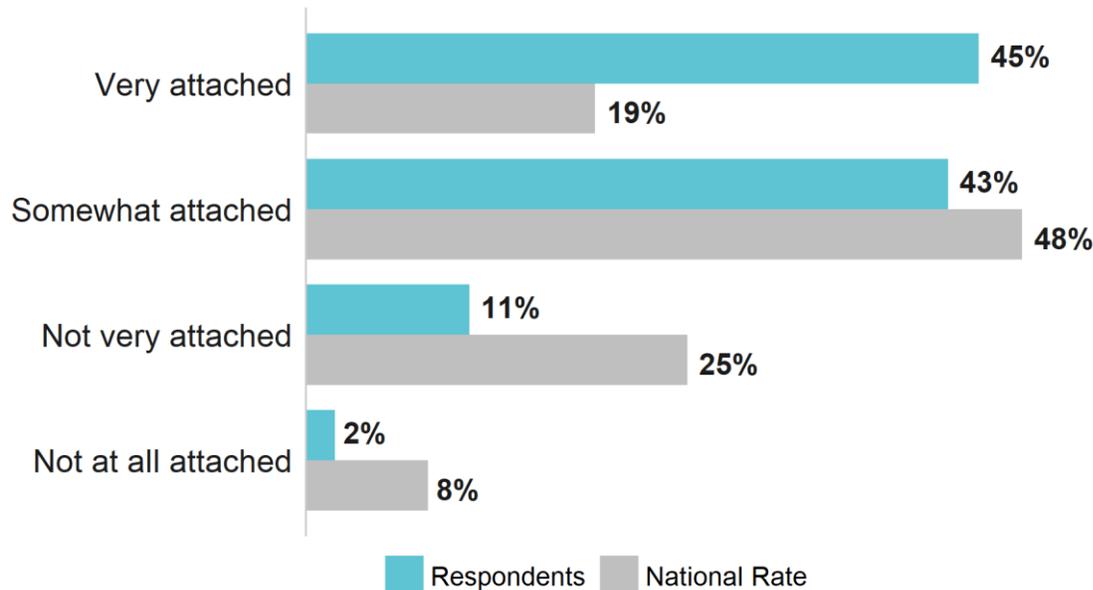
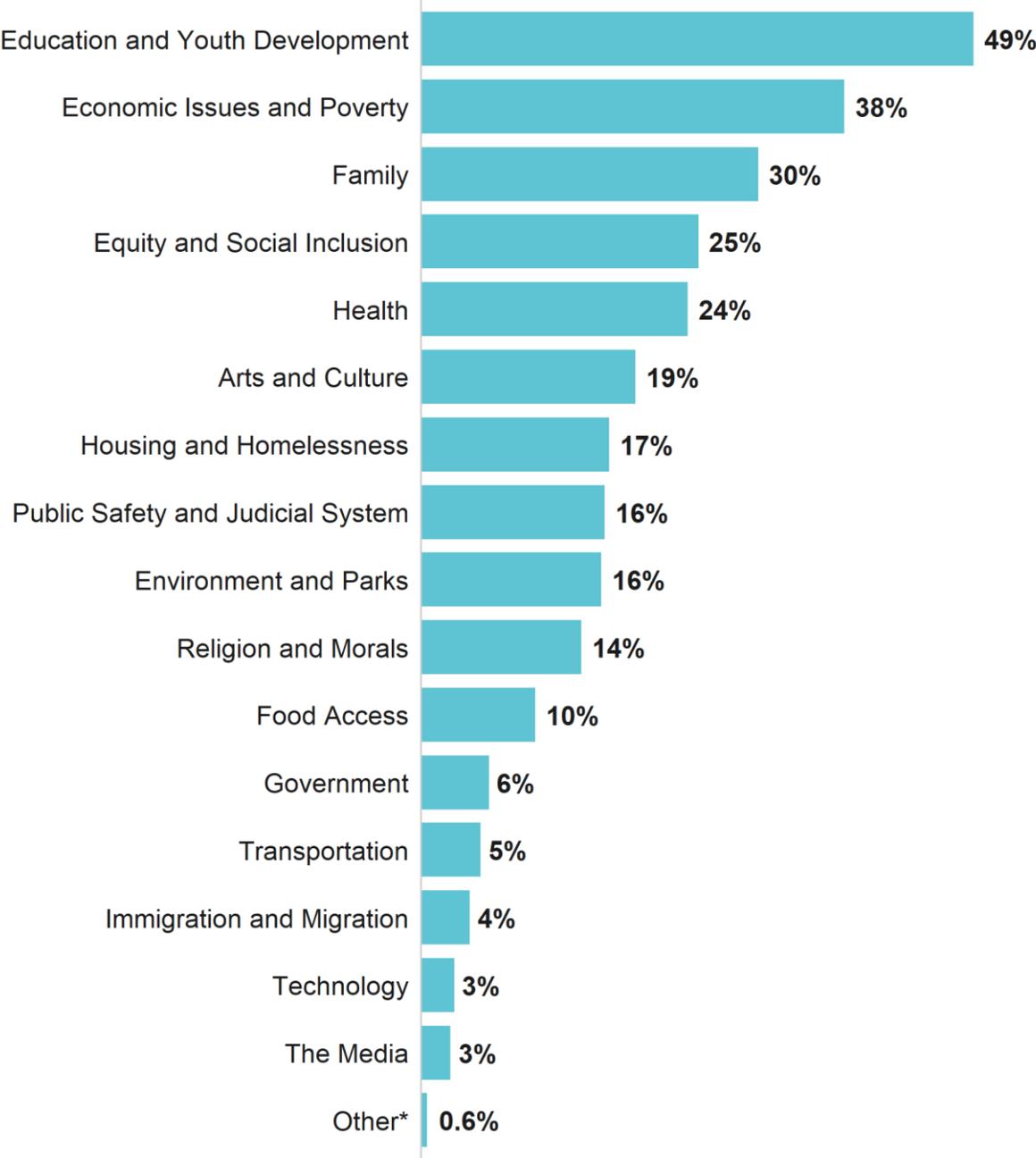


Figure B.17: Which of the following social issues are most important to you?

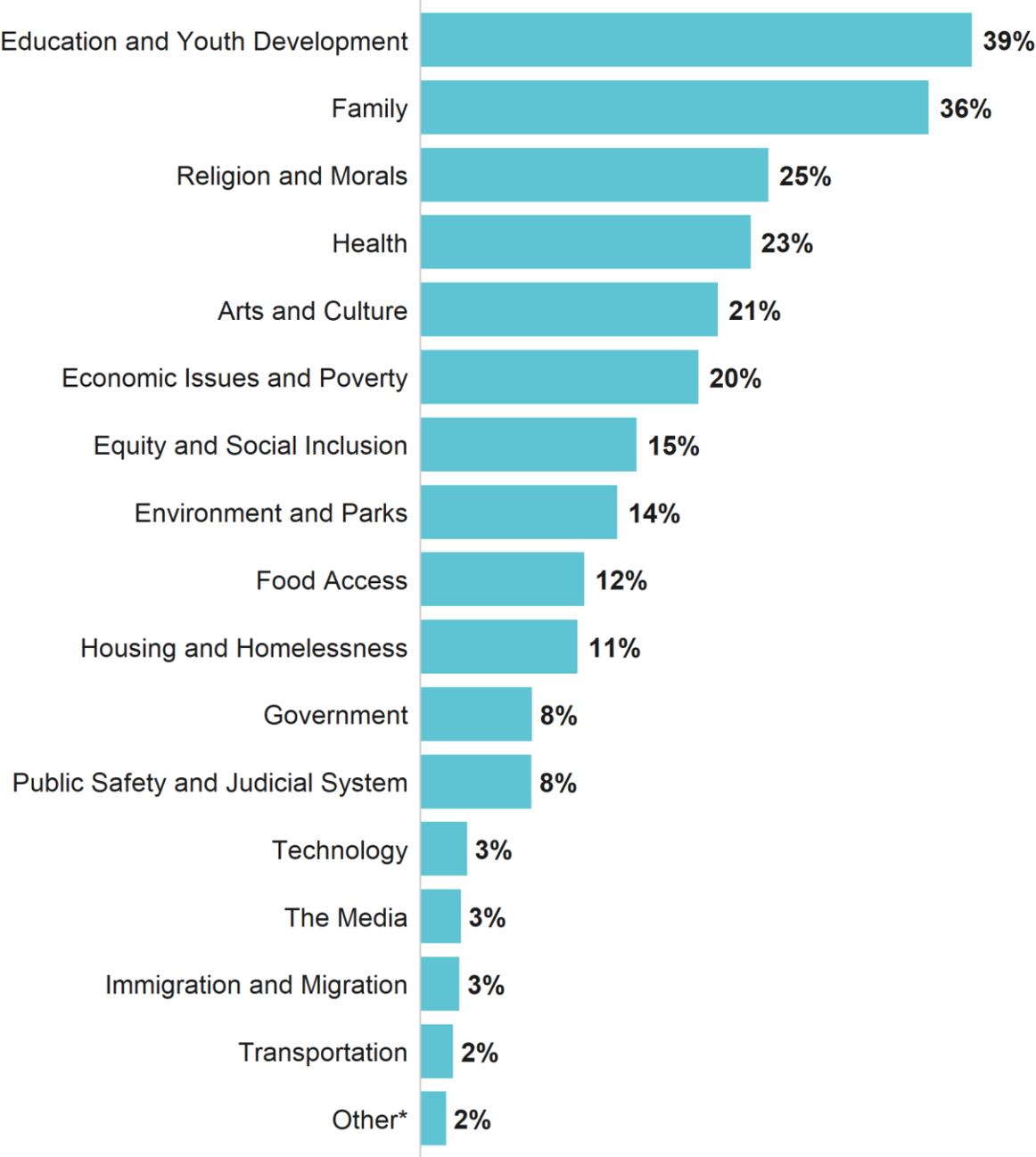
% of respondents (n = 2,873 // choose up to three)



*The top 3 'other' responses are: Collaboration (0.3%), Community Engagement (0.1%), and Community Development (0.1%).

Figure B.18: To which social issues do you PRIMARILY contribute your time, talent, and/or financial resources?

% of respondents (n = 3,159 // choose up to three)



*The top 3 'other' responses are: Philanthropy (0.6%), Community Engagement (0.4%), and Community Development (0.2%).

Figure B.19: How involved are you in community and neighborhood activities where you live?

% of respondents (n = 3,495) compared to National Rate

SOURCE: Pew Research Center, December, 2008, 'American Mobility. Who Moves? Who Stays Put? Where's Home?'

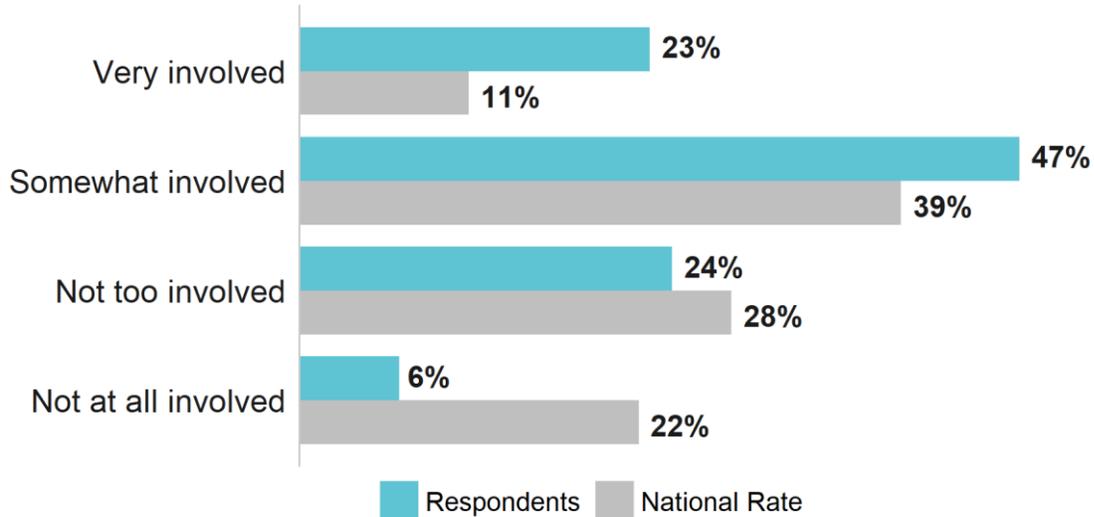


Figure B.20: Engagement Activities in the Past Year, Comparison

% of respondents (n = 3,483) compared to National Rate

SOURCE: U.S. Census, Current Population Survey, September 2015: Volunteer Supplement

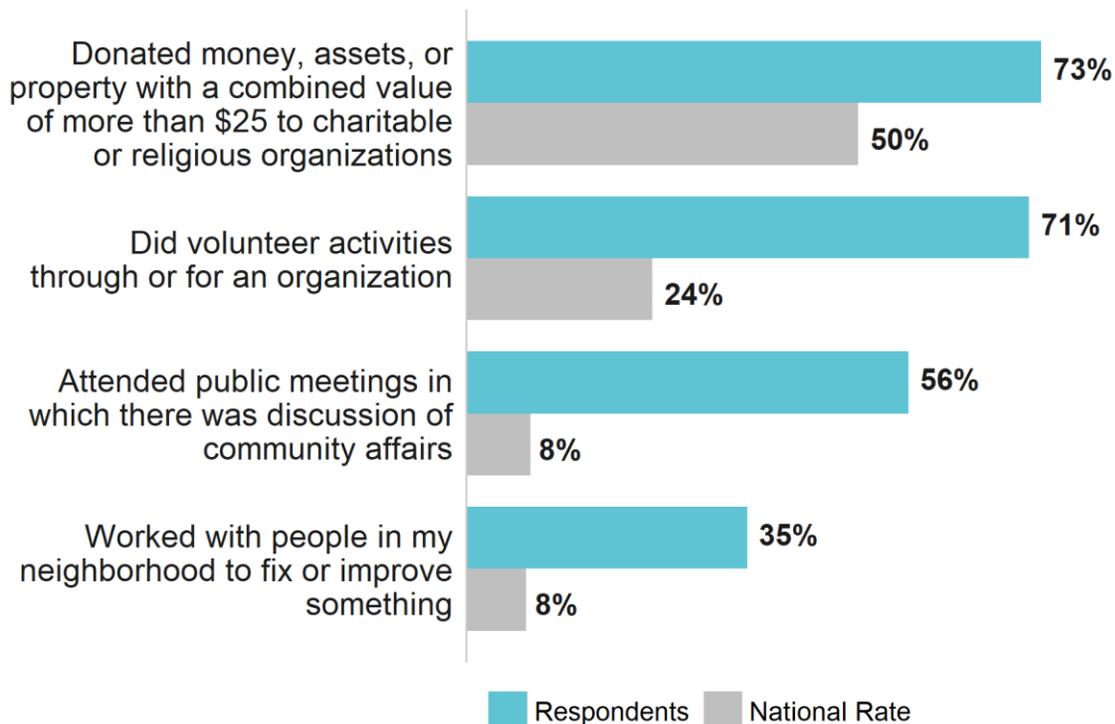


Figure B.21: How often do you vote in local elections, such as for mayor or a school board?

% of respondents (n = 3,480)

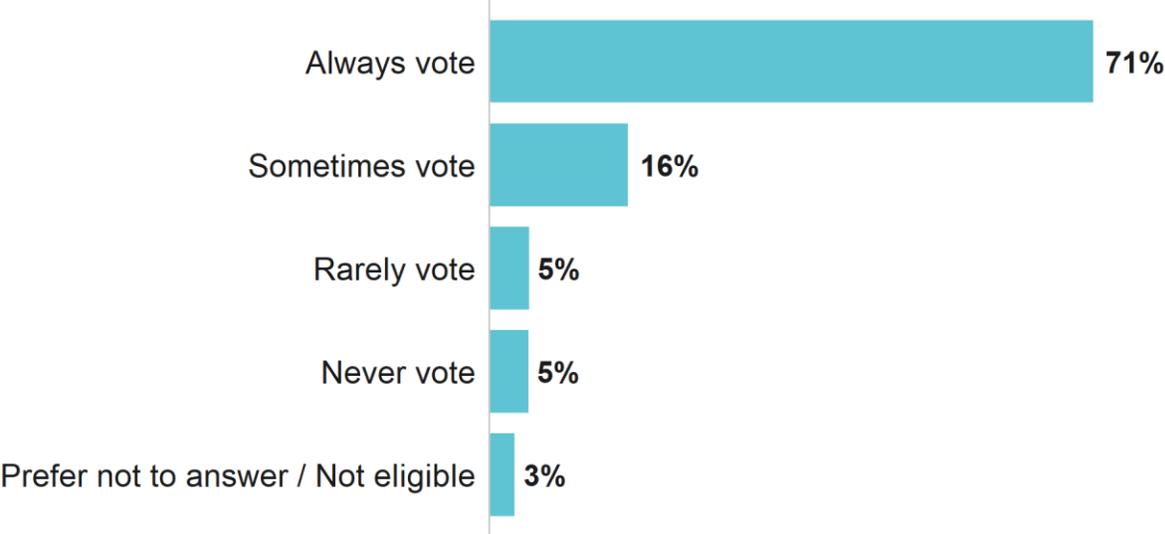
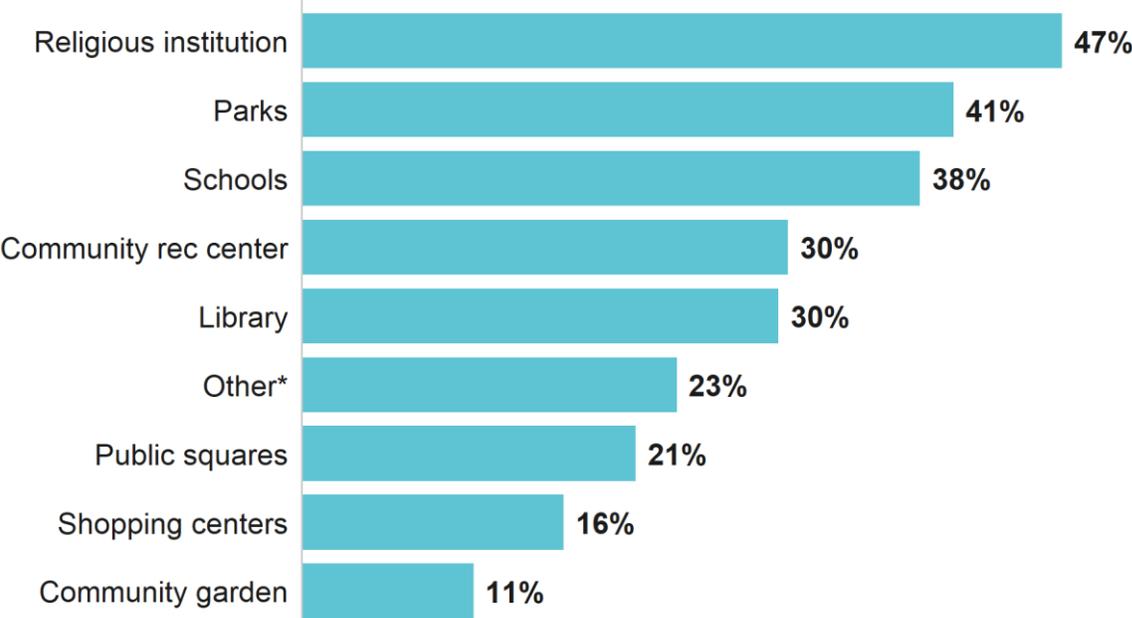


Figure B.22: Where do you like to connect with others?

% of respondents (n = 3,365 // select all that apply)



*The top 3 'other' responses are: Community Events and Meetings (5.4%), Restaurants (4.8%), and Community Service Activities (3.2%).

Figures B.23 through B.29 present results on how often respondents get information about their local community from each of the following sources, whether online or offline.

SOURCE of comparison data: Pew Research Center, November, 2016, 'Civic Engagement Strongly Tied to Local News Habits'

Figure B.23: Local Newspaper

% of respondents (n = 3,248) compared to National Rate

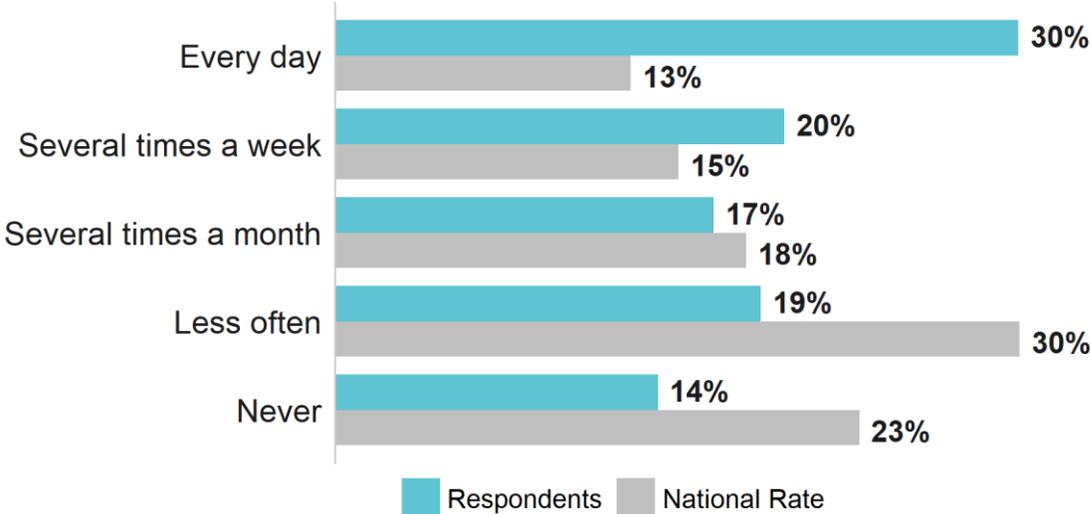


Figure B.24: Local television news

% of respondents (n = 3,162) compared to National Rate

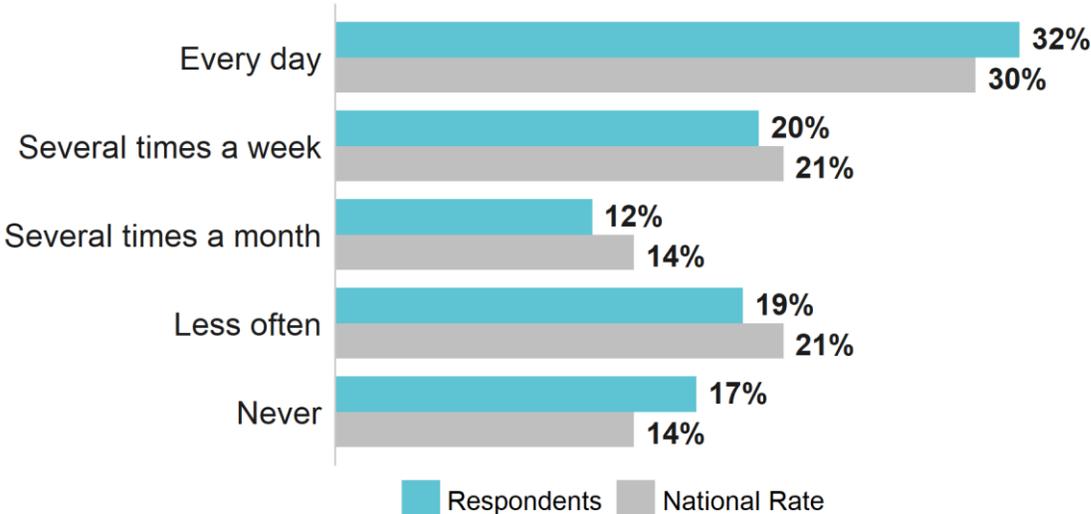


Figure B.25: Local radio

% of respondents (n = 3,075) compared to National Rate

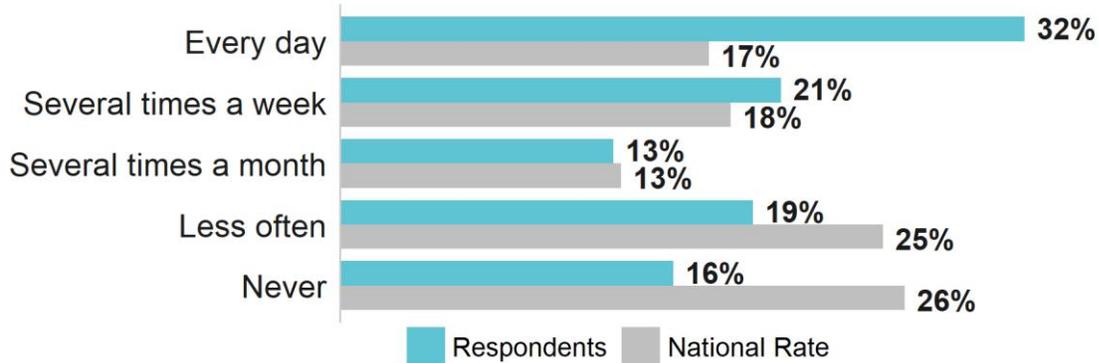


Figure B.26: A blog about your local community

% of respondents (n = 2,829) compared to National Rate

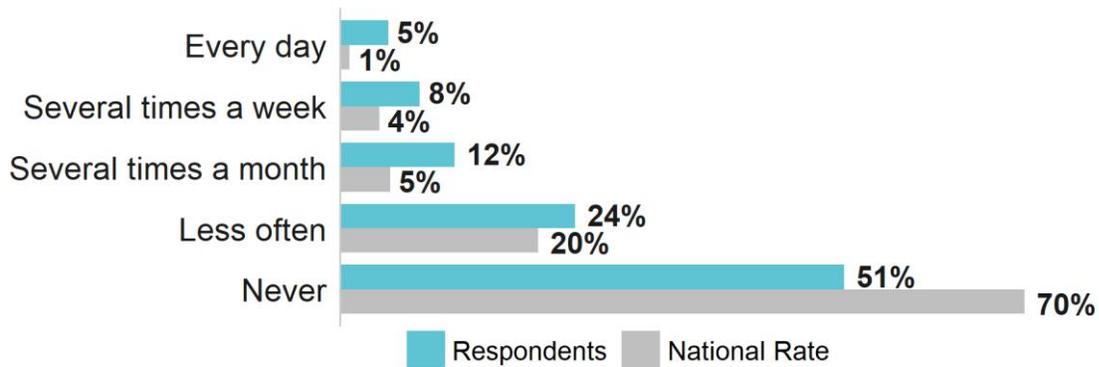


Figure B.27: A person or organization you follow on a social networking site

% of respondents (n = 3,017) compared to National Rate

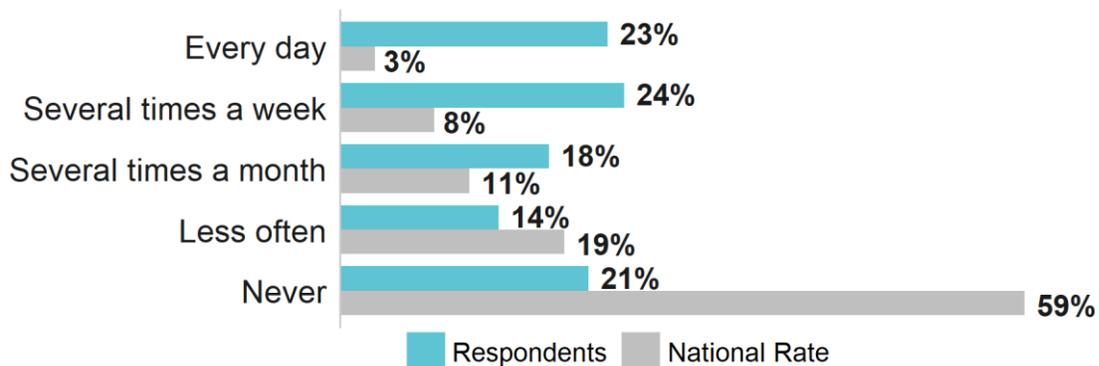


Figure B.28: A newsletter or e-mail listserv about your local community

% of respondents (n = 3,005) compared to National Rate

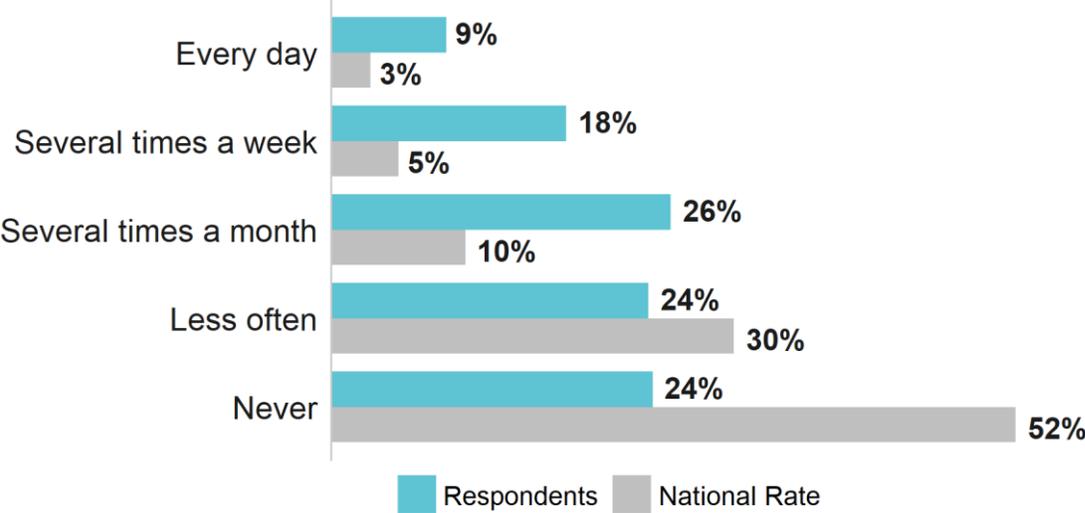
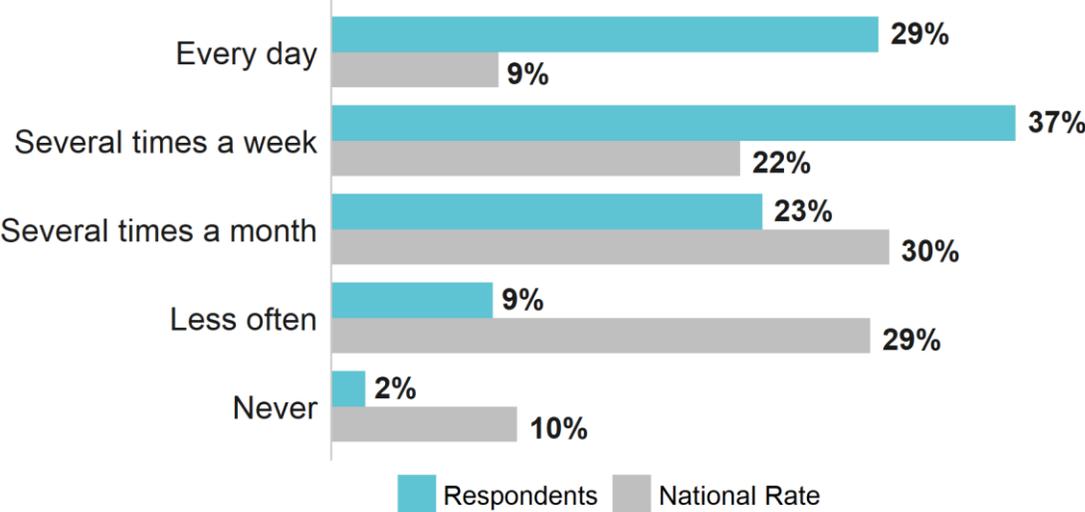


Figure B.29: Word of mouth from friends, family, co-workers and neighbors

% of respondents (n = 3,227) compared to National Rate



Section 2: Conversation Dynamics, Topics, and Impact

Conversation Dynamics and Topics

Figure B.30: Which best describes your MOST IMPORTANT reason(s) for participating in On the Table?

% of respondents (n = 3,539 // select all that apply)

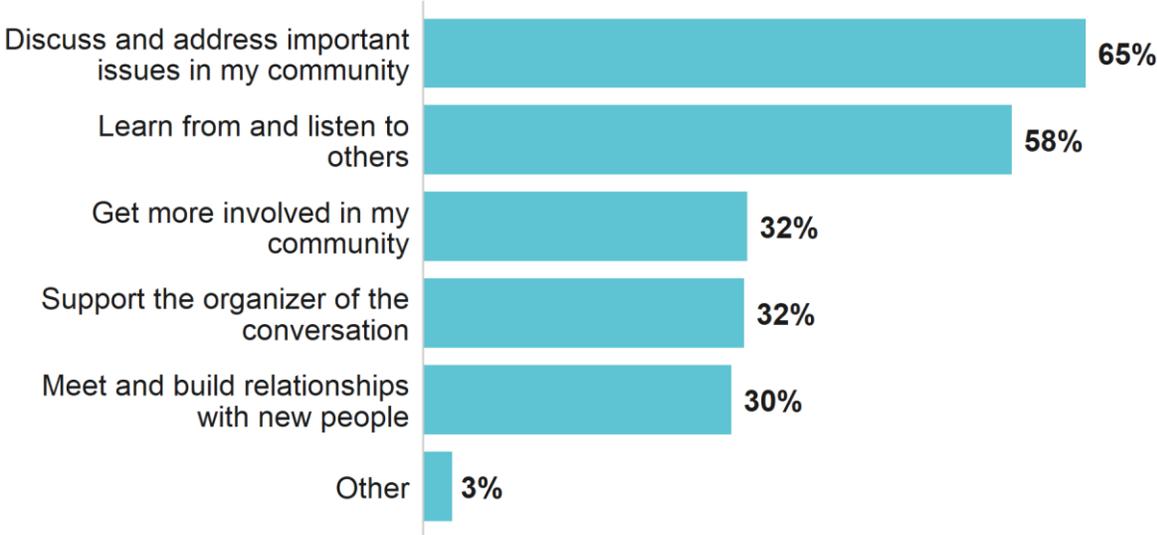


Figure B.31: 'The other people at my conversation were ...'

% of respondents (n = 3,511)

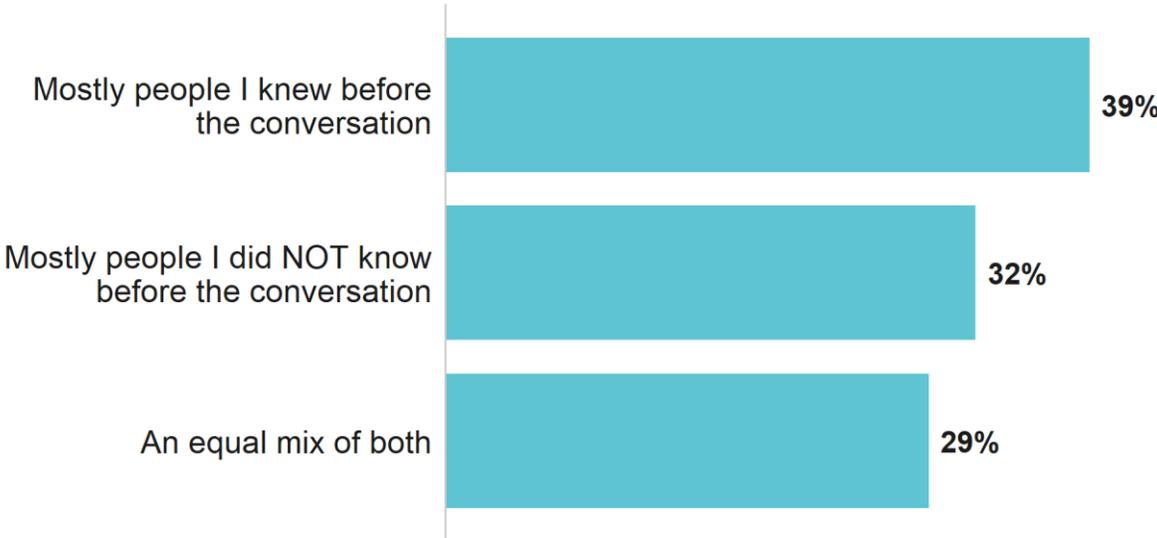


Figure B.32: Where did your conversation take place? Top counties:

% of respondents (n = 3,525)

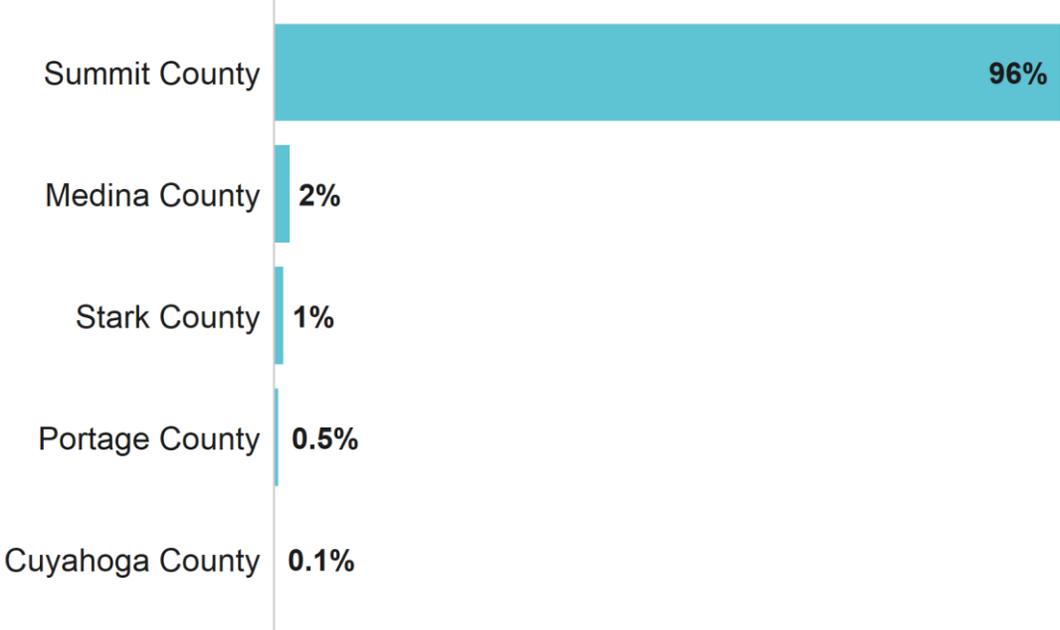


Figure B.33: Where did your conversation take place? Top cities:

% of respondents (n = 3,495)

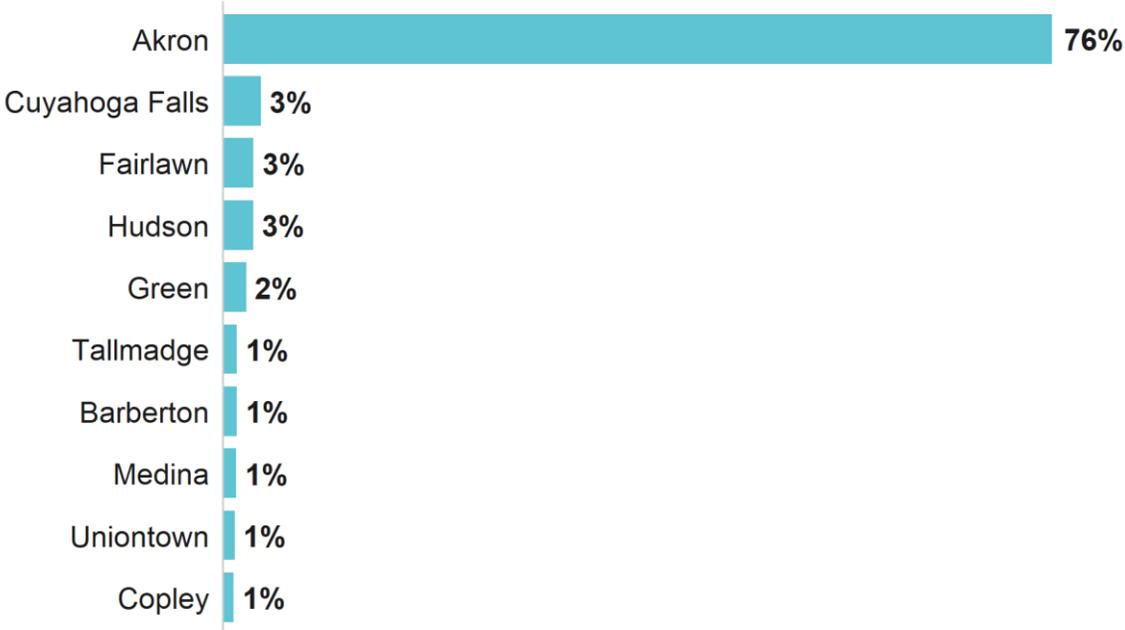
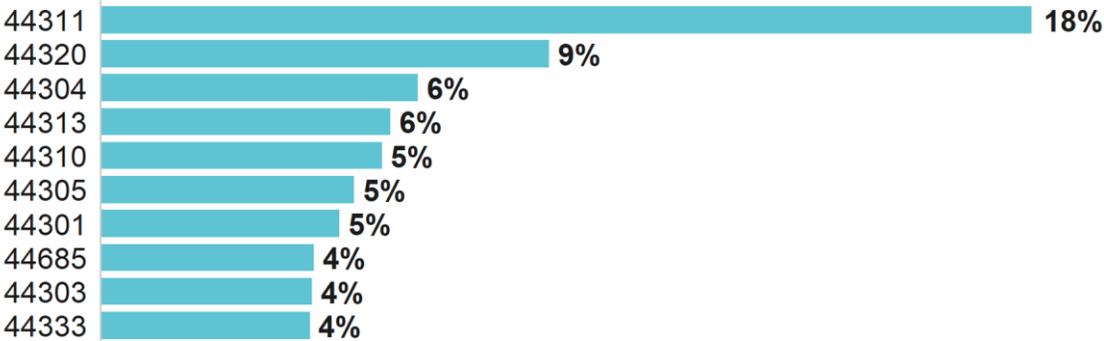


Figure B.34: Where did your conversation take place? Top ZIP codes:

% of respondents (n = 2,466)



Where Respondents Attended On The Table Conversations
of Respondents by Zip Code

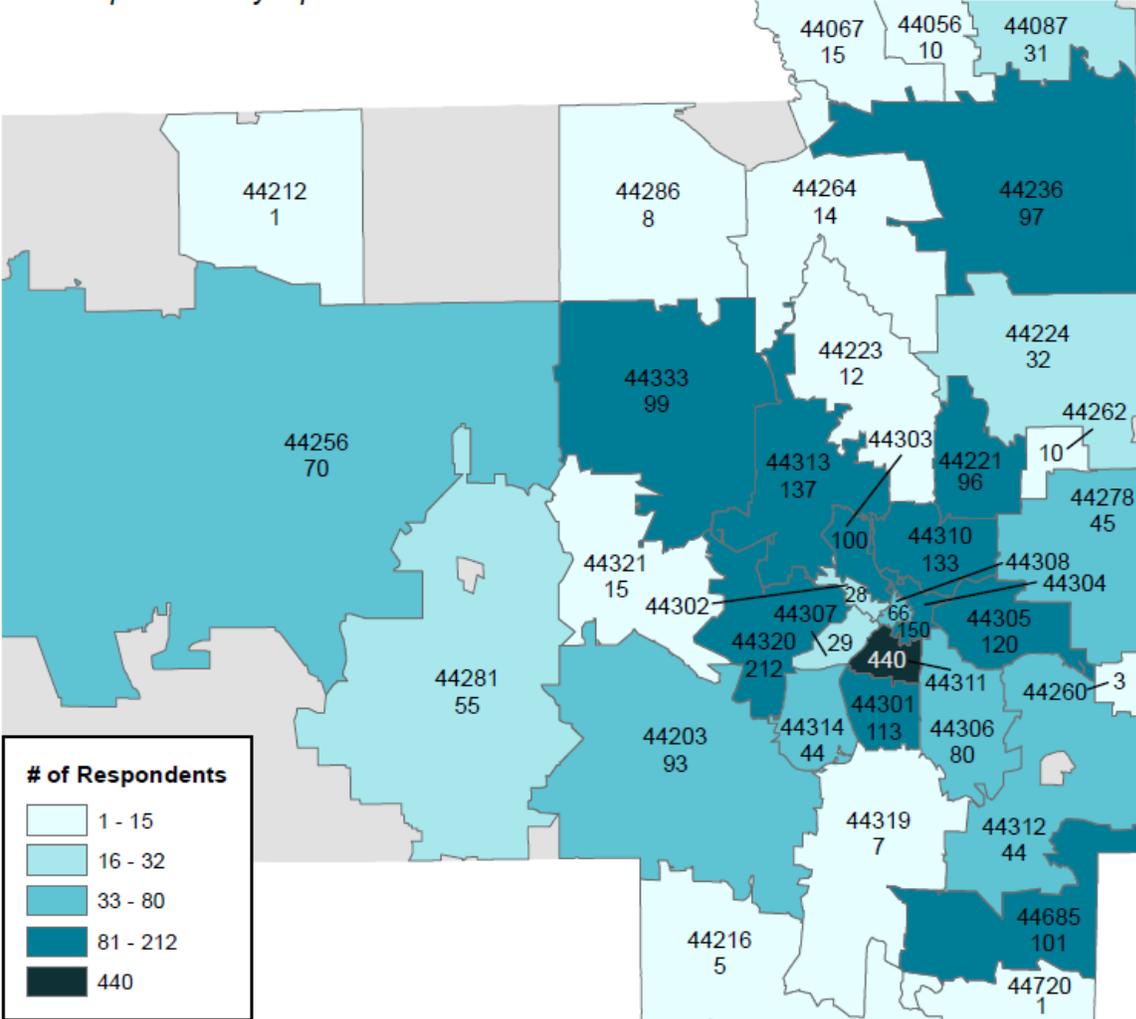
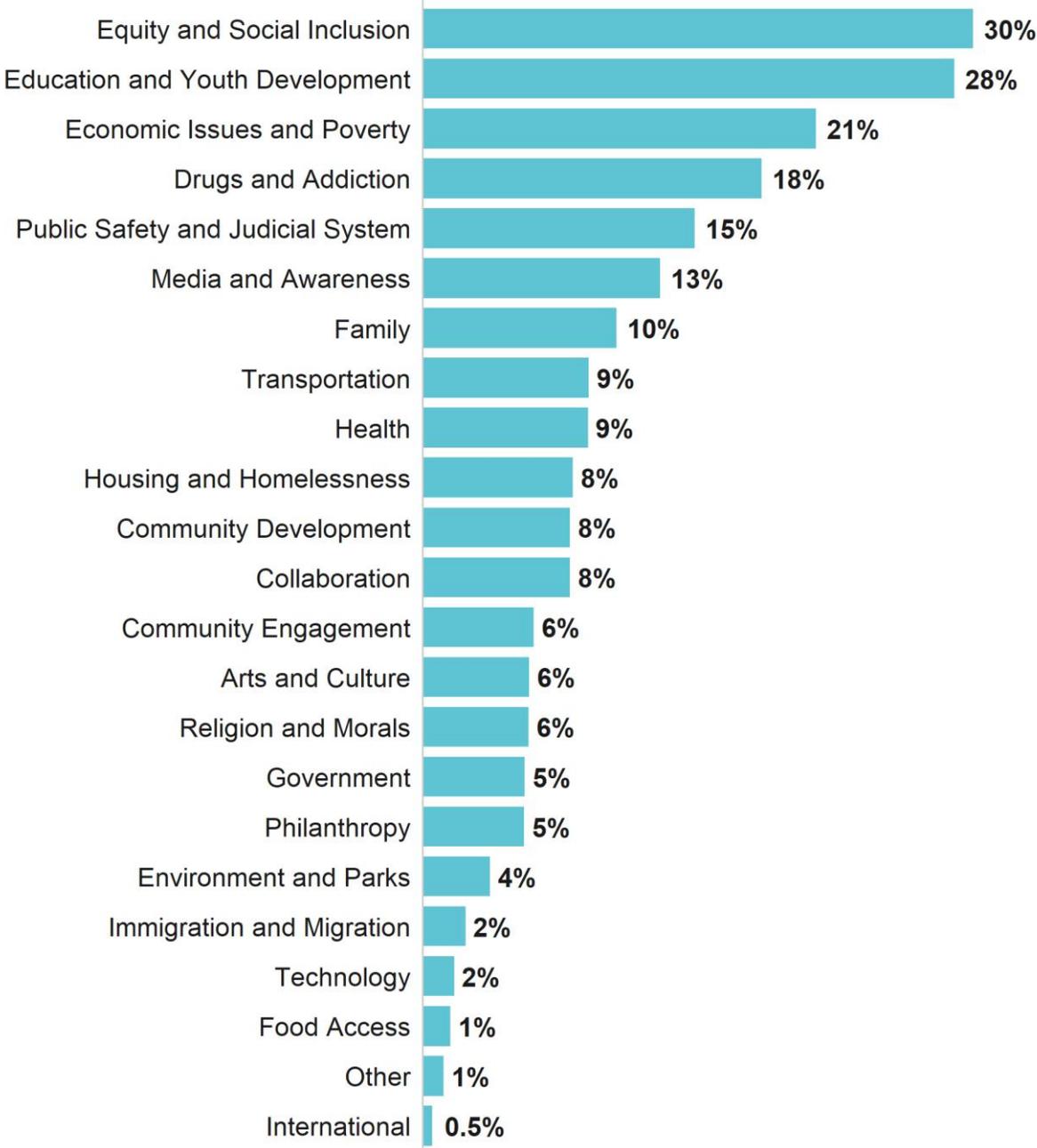


Figure B.35: Issues Raised During the Conversation

% of respondents (n = 2,481)



Impact of the Conversation

Figure B.36: How did you connect with others at your conversation(s)?

% of respondents (n = 3,465 // select all that apply)

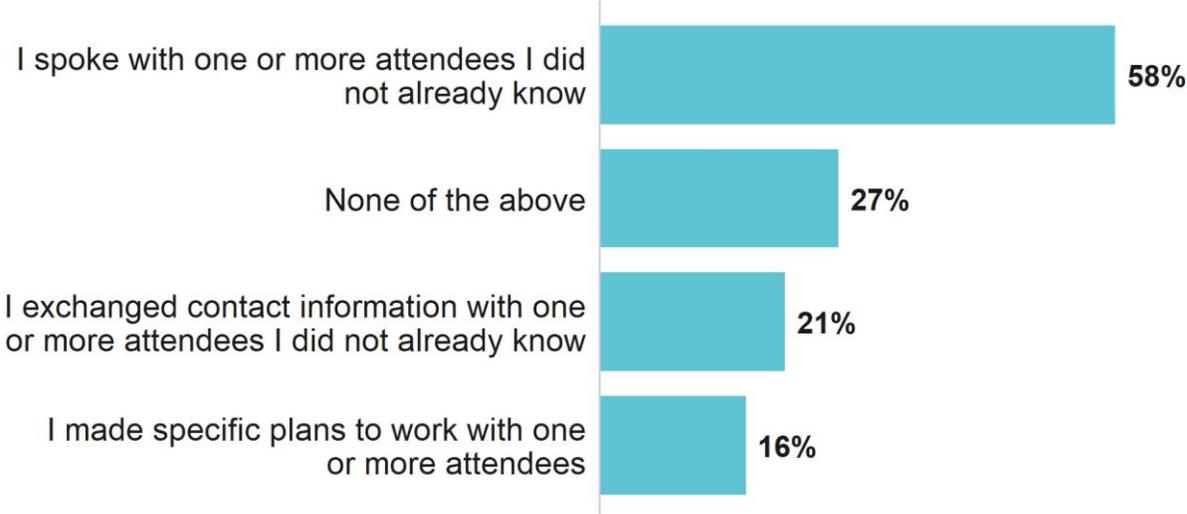


Figure B.37: After participating in your conversation(s), to what extent do you better understand how you, personally, can help address the issues facing your community?

% of respondents (n = 3,505)

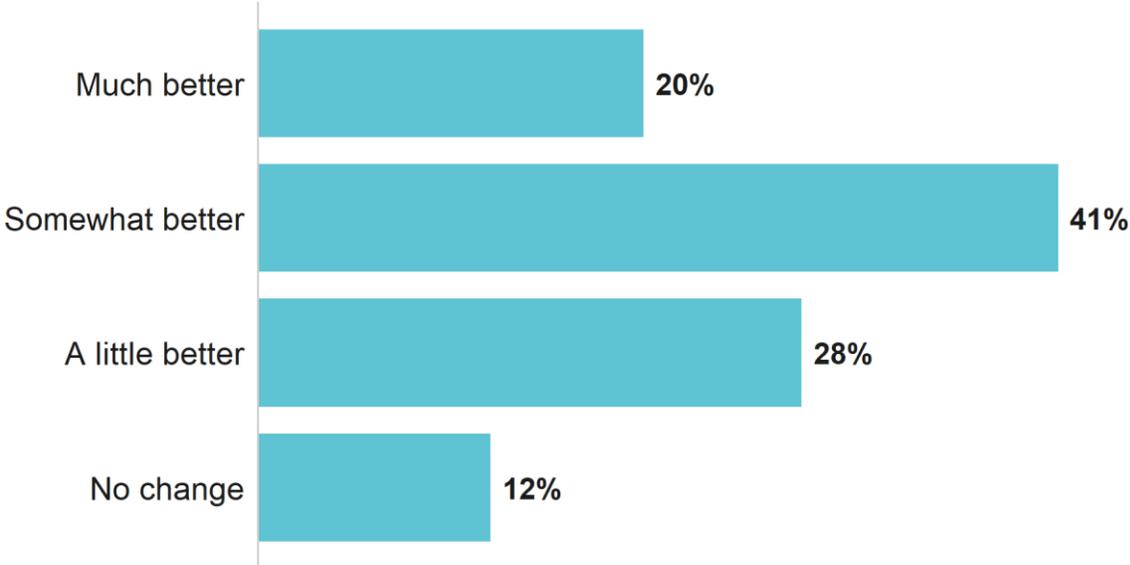


Figure B.38: How likely are you to take specific actions or next steps regarding an issue or solution discussed?

% of respondents (n = 3,500)

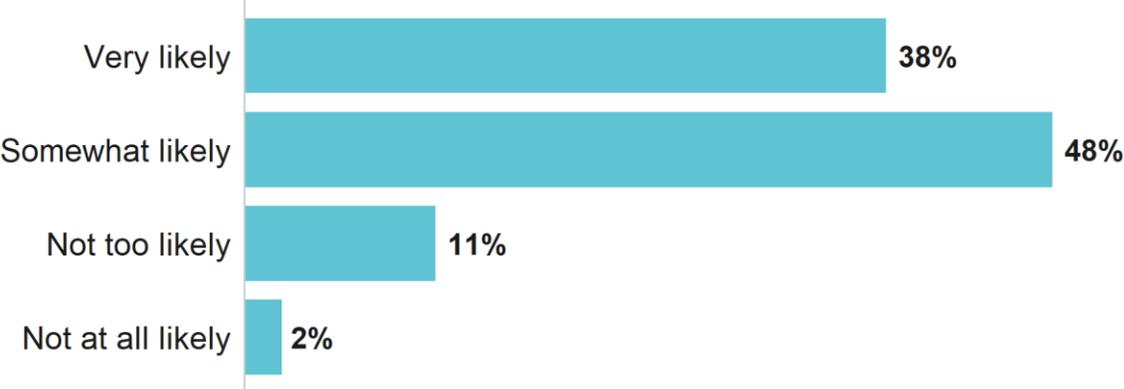
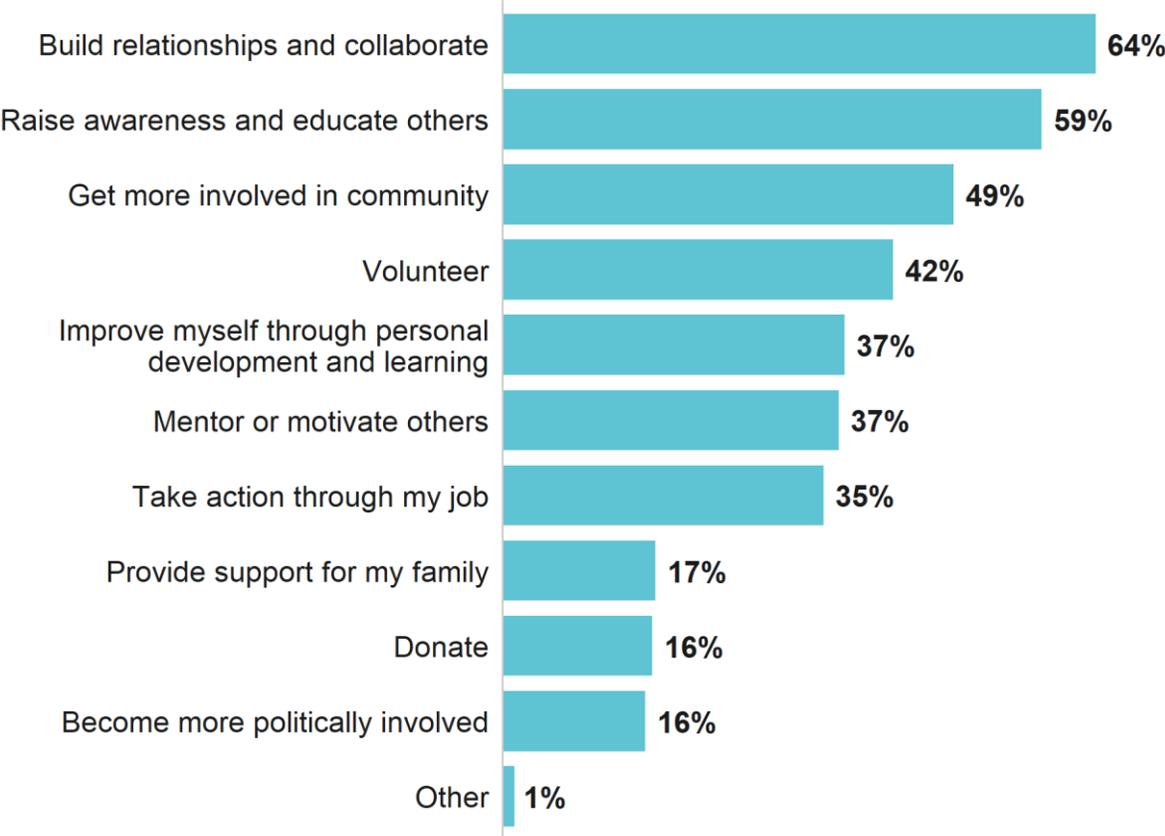


Figure B.39: Actions or next steps respondents are likely to take regarding an issue or solution discussed

% of respondents (n = 3,008 // select all that apply)



Section 3: Custom Questions

Figure B.40: What is the biggest problem facing Greater Akron?

% of respondents (n = 2,856)

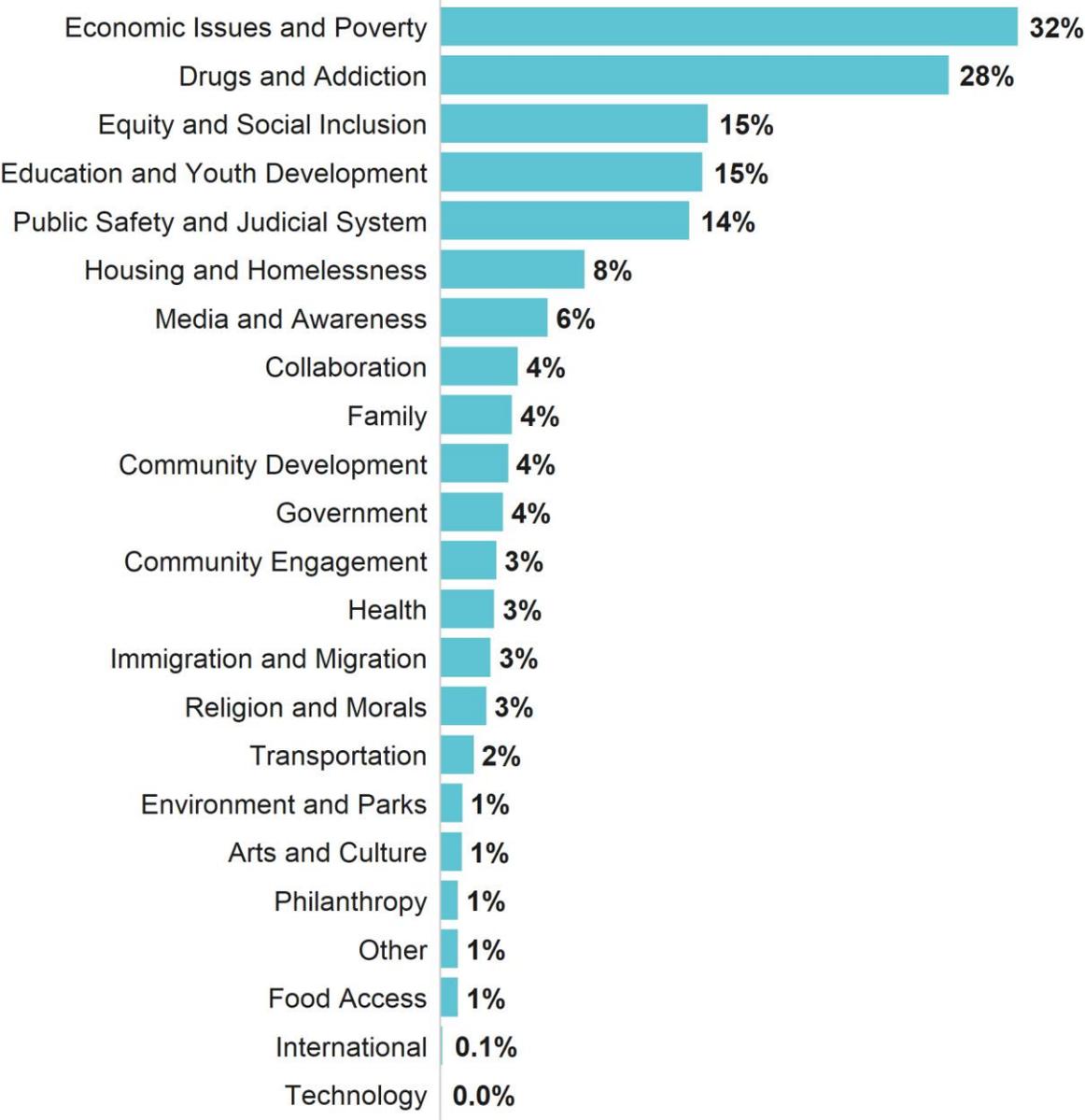


Figure B.41: Expressing Concern

% of respondents (n = 3,228). For example, 38% of respondents mentioned Economic Issues and Poverty at least once as either an issue they discussed during conversation or as the biggest problem Greater Akron.

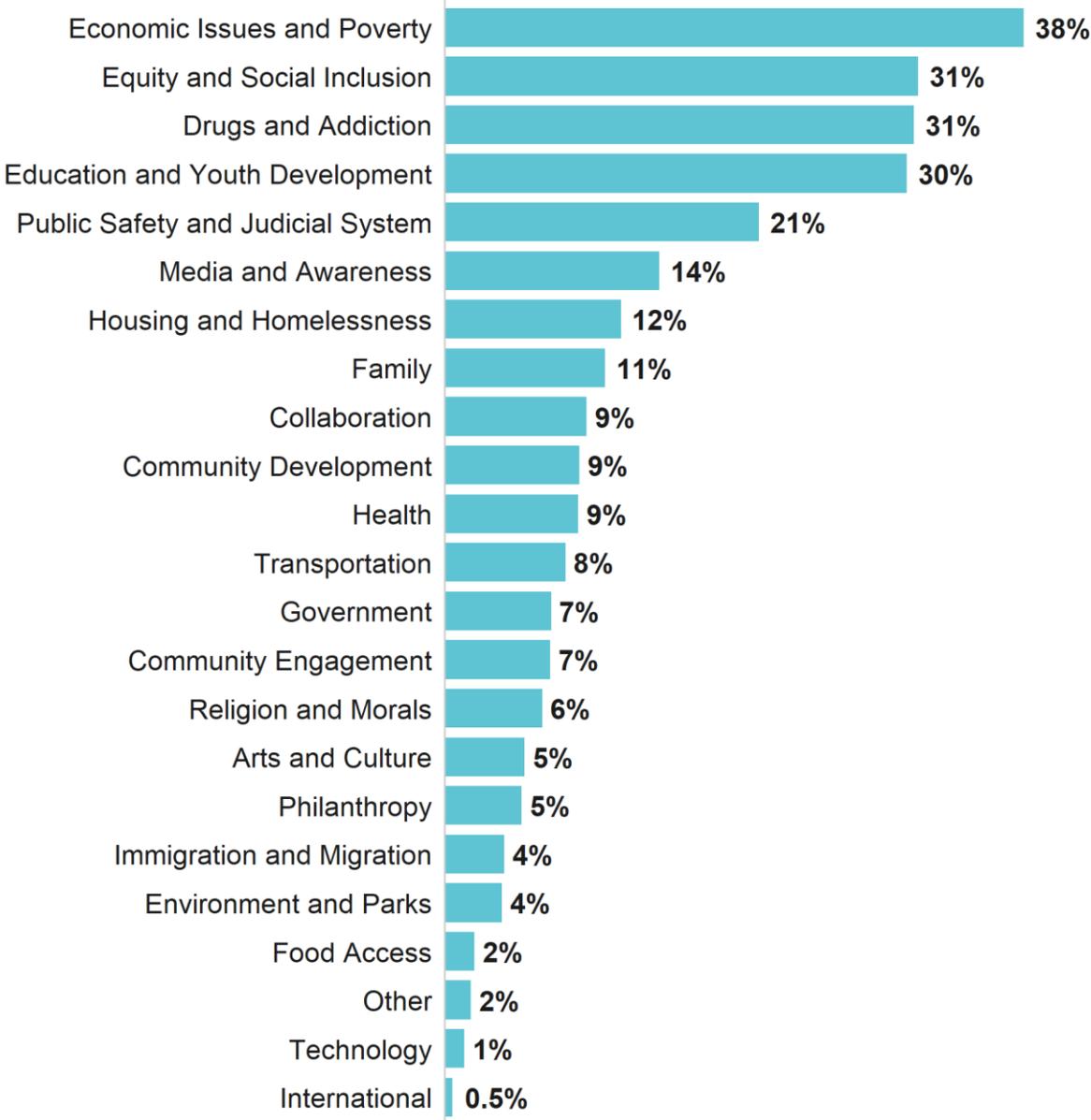


Figure B.42: Thinking about my local community, I wish I knew more about:

% of respondents (n = 1,869)

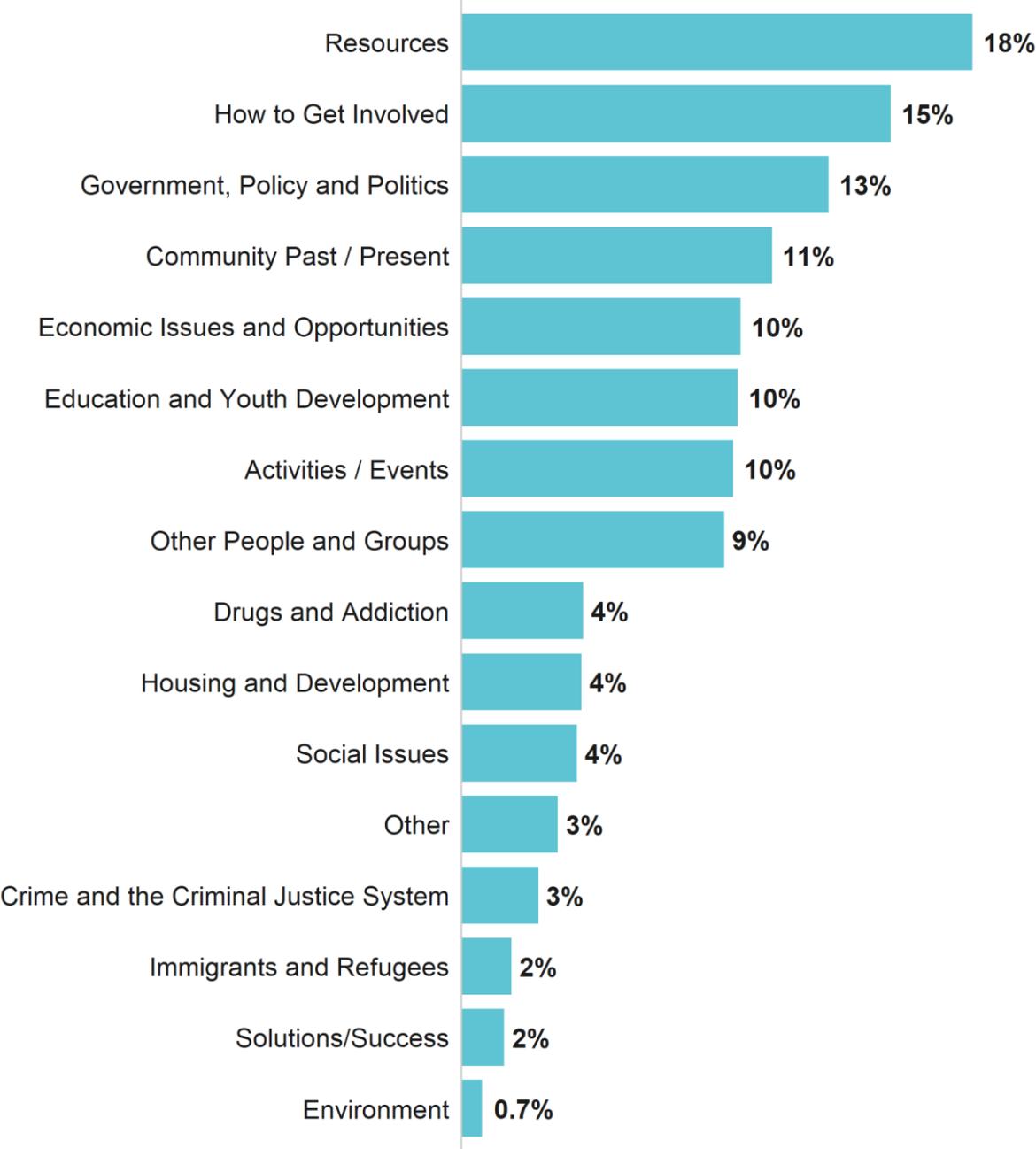


Figure B.43: What is one way you are willing to help improve Greater Akron in the future?

% of respondents (n = 3,292 // select all that apply)

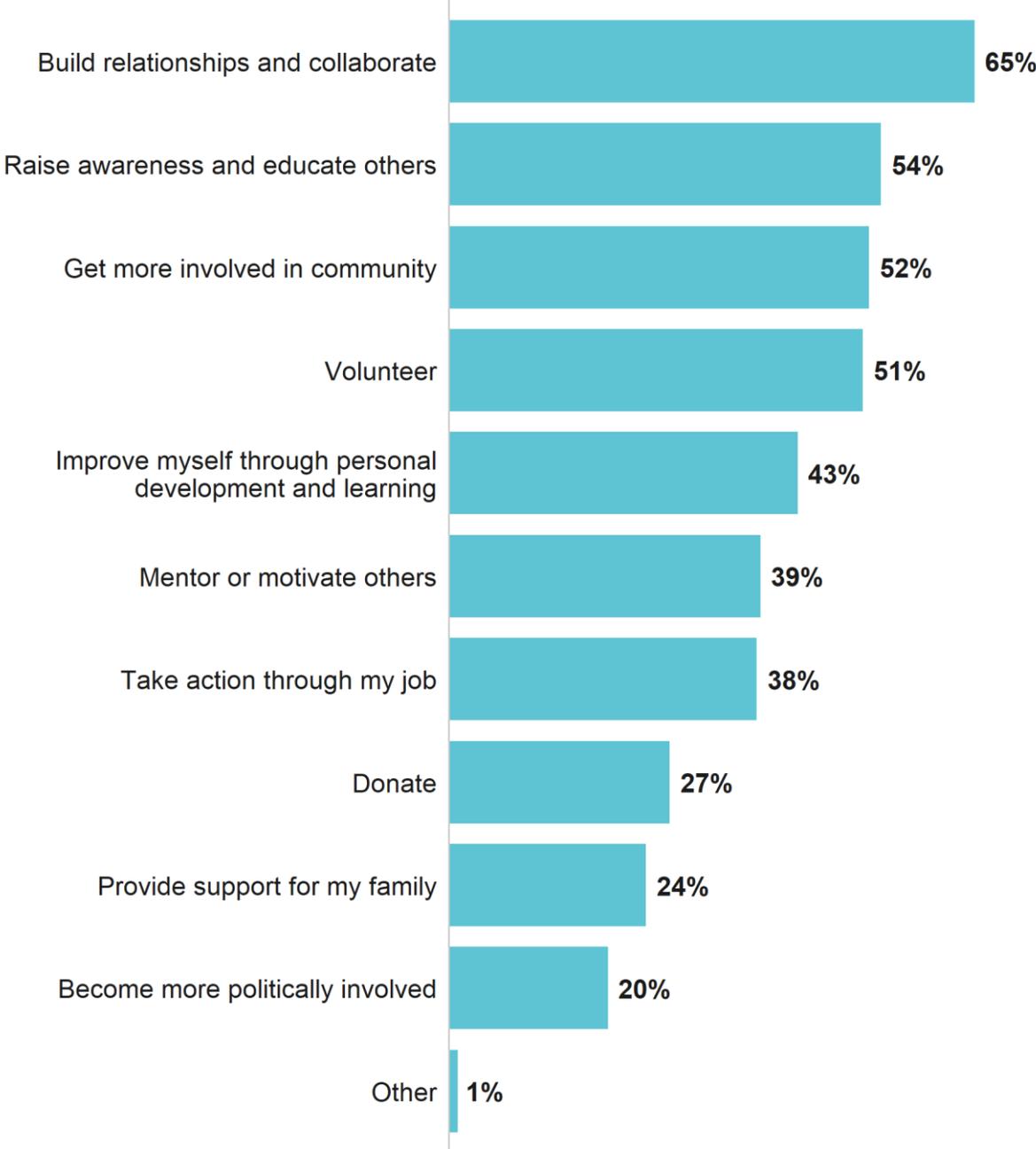
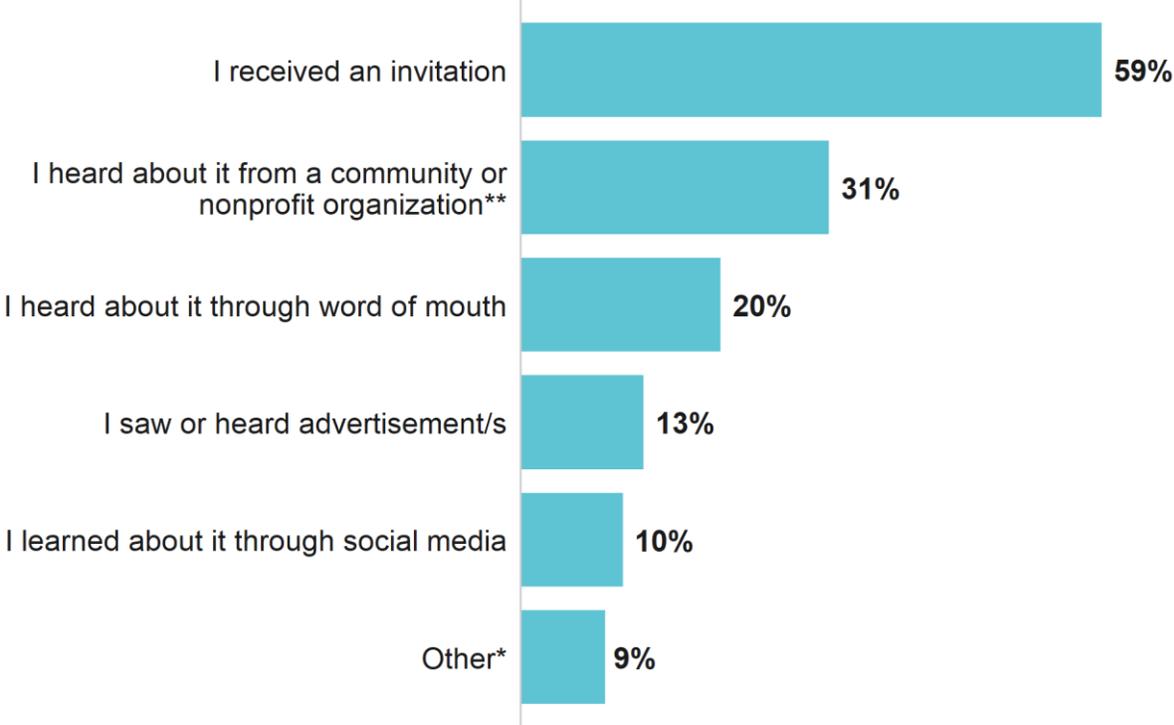


Figure B.44: How did you hear about On the Table Greater Akron?

% of respondents (n = 3,386 // select all that apply)



*The top 3 'other' responses are: I heard about it at work or from an employer (4.7%), I heard about it from a teacher or professor (0.7%), and I heard about it at school or university (0.6%).

**The top 3 'nonprofit org' responses are: Akron Community Foundation (3.2%), Church (1%), and Rotary Club of Akron (0.8%).

Appendix C: Issues and Problems Codebook– Defined

Arts and Culture

An arts and culture code may refer to art initiatives such as art for social change as well as public art and art infrastructure, or it may acknowledge culture through cultural institutions (such as libraries) and city events (such as festivals) as well as through opportunities for ethnic cultural awareness.

Collaboration

A collaboration code refers to working together and building relationships to create partnerships and expand networks. It may function at the community or individual level and often involves crossing divides and building bridges while working toward collective impact. Sharing resources and holding dialogues/conversations are other indicators of collaboration.

Community Development

A community development code refers to identifying community assets and building up the community, particularly through local economic development, in order to improve quality of life. It also refers to building a sense of community and creating community for those who live there.

Community Engagement

A community engagement code refers to overall involvement and participation in one's neighborhood or community in order to make a difference. Often there is an organizing element at the grassroots level as well as intentions for improved neighbor relations and opportunities for neighborhood gatherings.

Drugs and Addiction

A drugs and addiction code refers to drugs, drug addiction, drug awareness and education, drug treatment options, drug-related violence and deaths, and many aspects of the opioid crisis.

Economic Issues and Poverty

An economic issues and poverty code refers to economic development on one end and economic insecurity, or poverty, on the other, covering in the intermediate unemployment and jobs as well as income inequality and wage issues.

Education and Youth Development

An education and youth development code refers primarily to schools (such as school system or curriculum) and students (often at the high school level) with additional focal points on mentoring and general youth development. It is also inclusive of other related topics such as community relationships, parent involvement, and research.

Environment and Parks

An environment and parks code refers to overall environmental sustainability efforts and clean up as well as recreational opportunities for all.

Equity and Social Inclusion

An equity and social inclusion code uses a social justice lens to account for forms of exclusion and issues of access and equality for underserved groups. Reference is largely made to youth access and engagement concerns as well as to issues of disparity as noted across income levels, racial groups, and neighborhoods.



Ethics and Religion

An ethics and religion code refers largely to personal attributes and attitudes, such as apathy or hope. It is also inclusive of faith-based community work

Family

A family code refers to the overall functioning and behavior of the family unit, particularly through parent involvement and support (or lack thereof) and child concerns such as childcare.

Food Access

A food access code refers primarily to food insecurity, focusing on problems of hunger and food deserts and solutions regarding food assistance and urban agriculture.

Government

A government code refers to the governing habits of the state and regional municipalities, especially regarding fiscal issues and taxes, including pensions and cuts to social services, as well as transparency, accountability, and corruption. It also involves the function of government, particularly through elections, public engagement, and public policy.

Health

A health code refers to the wellbeing of both people and communities, considering in particular mental health issues and also taking into account public health, quality of life issues, nutrition and wellness, and health care.

Housing and Homelessness

A housing and homelessness code primarily refers to homelessness and issues around home ownership and renting responsibilities.

Immigration and Migration

An immigration and migration code refers to the displacement, movement, and integration of immigrant communities, including those who are undocumented.

International

An international code refers to world affairs and Chicago as positioned as a global city.

Judicial System and Public Safety

A judicial system and public safety code may refer to the criminal justice system as well as public safety and crime, including instances of gang violence, gun violence, drugs, and trafficking, and how officials such as police can better provide community security.

Media and Awareness

A media and awareness code refers to raising awareness around issues of importance and addressing ignorance, particularly through the media and social media. It includes improving communication and building new narratives, especially around persistent stigmas.

Philanthropy

A philanthropy code refers to increased funding and support for programs and nonprofit organizations and often incorporates a need for organizational capacity building, institutional community outreach,



and corporate social responsibility. On the individual level, it refers to civic responsibility and volunteering, with individuals taking action for the greater good.

Technology

A technology code refers to technology in a general sense and includes references to access, training, and improvement.

Transportation

A transportation code refers to transportation access and transportation infrastructure.



Appendix D: Know More Codebook– Defined

Activities / Events

An activities/events code refers to any recreation (such as the arts or sports), any program organized by an individual, organization, or community, or non-specific cultural event.

Community Past / Present

A community past/present code refers to both the history and current status of a community. Often there is a focus on happenings that build a sense of community, organized by groups and organizations at the grassroots level. It also includes relevant community members, such as local leaders and advocates.

Crime and the Criminal Justice System

A crime and the criminal justice system code refers to the antecedents and consequences of criminal activity (primarily violence and drugs), police systems and structures that ensure public safety, and topics related to incarceration.

Drugs and Addiction

A drugs and addiction code refers to drugs, drug addiction, drug awareness and education, drug treatment options, drug-related violence and deaths, and many aspects of the opioid crisis.

Economic Issues and Opportunities

An economic issues and opportunities code refers to both economic growth through local businesses and employment opportunities and economic insecurity (i.e. poverty, low income). Also included are resources that can enhance economic prosperity, such as financial literacy instruction, affordability of necessities, and job training.

Education

An education code uses an ecological lens to account for both formal (i.e. school) and informal (i.e. parenting/family) educational sources that guide and shape young people. Also included are any opportunities for youth to learn, engage or develop.

Environment

An environment code refers to environmental sustainability efforts, included but not limited to, green technology and use of public transit, as well as cleanliness and health-related environmental concerns, such as litter and waste and air and water quality.

Government, Policy, and Politics

A government, policy, and politics code may include references to policy, primarily regarding taxes, funding, and zoning, as well as political agendas and citizen rights.

Housing and Development

A housing and development code refers to housing-related issues (primarily homelessness and ownership/renting responsibilities), in addition to issues concerning community growth (displacement, gentrification, overcrowding) and structural development (facilities, infrastructure, transportation).



How to Get Involved

A how to get involved code captures a sentiment of desire to help, volunteer, make a difference, contribute, participate or engage others. This code also may refer to those leading these efforts, such as change makers and people interested in running for office.

Immigrants and Refugees

An immigrants and refugees code refers to respondents' desire to learn more about immigrants and refugees in their community, especially those immigrants who have recently arrived in Akron. Respondents often mentioned reaching out to these communities in order to learn about their experiences in Akron and how to build bridges between recent immigrants and the larger Akron community.

Other People and Groups

An other people and groups code refers to networking building connections with both local residents/neighbors and people from other geographic locations. It also includes people of different unspecified cultures, heritages, or backgrounds.

Resources

A resources code refers to any initiative that works to better lives and communities, including both the services, supports, and information themselves, as well as the responsible organization or agency.

Solutions and Successes

A solutions and successes code refers to positive, impactful initiatives or examples of success and accomplishment, embodying an interest in being refreshed with good news. It may also refer to how to solve a problem or fix something.



Appendix E: Ways to Help Codebook– Defined

Building Relationships and Collaboration

A building relationships and collaboration code refers to creating and strengthening partnerships between entities such as individuals, organizations, or neighborhoods, as well as expanding networks, working together toward a common purpose, sharing resources, and ultimately breaking down barriers and finding commonalities with others. It can also indicate follow-up *On the Table*-style conversations and meetings.

Create New Program or Organization

A create new program or organization code refers to starting a new initiative as a means of addressing a need, absence, or issue in a community.

Community Participation

A community participation code refers to community organizing and outreach efforts; community forums, meetings, and events; and general community involvement (such as volunteering in the community) done for the purpose of bettering the community. It is also inclusive of community conversations and dialogues unrelated to *On the Table*.

Family Relationships and Involvement

A family relationships and involvement code refers to supporting other families in the community as well as providing better care for one's own. It also includes more parent engagement within schools as a way to support children.

Mentor/Motivate/Train

A mentor/motivate/train code refers to creating educational and supportive relationships that promote the development of individuals. It may involve serving as a role model and encouraging others in one's community to get involved as well as mentoring those who are disadvantaged or underprivileged, including youth (especially youth of color) and women.

Philanthropic Giving and Fundraising

A philanthropic giving and fundraising code refers to foundations and organizations providing more funding to projects and programs within communities. On an individual level, it refers to increasing personal giving in order to provide support to initiatives of interest.

Political and Electoral Engagement

A political and electoral engagement code refers to communicating the public's values and opinions to the elected officials and bureaucrats through actions like attending meetings, advocacy, and contacting representatives. It also refers to influencing the selection of people who make public policy through actions like voting or running for office.

Promote Inclusion and Equity

A promote inclusion and equity code refers to taking action to provide equal opportunity for all and to advocate for inclusivity and diversity. It can involve dismissing stereotypes and empowering those who are marginalized and disadvantaged.



Raise Awareness

A raise awareness code refers to sharing information and new ideas in order to educate others on important topics. It involves getting out the word, especially through word of mouth and social media, and changing the conversation to promote new narratives.

Research/Assessment/Planning

A research/assessment/planning code refers to learning more about one's community and identifying issues, needs, assets, and resources. It can often incorporate an action plan to implement necessary research-based changes.

Self-Improvement

A self-improvement code refers to bettering oneself for the benefit of the entire community. It involves staying informed of what's happening in the community, becoming more open-minded, improving personal communication (i.e., more listening), and taking responsibility to complete acts for the common good.

Volunteering

A volunteering code refers to general involvement in organizations, at church, in schools, and at shelters as well as serving on a council, committee, or board. It is also inclusive of service work.

Workforce and Business Development

A workforce and business development code refers to encouraging and supporting business and job creation to increase economic development in one's community.

Work-Related Social Responsibility

A work-related social responsibility code refers to individual service through one's work in order to provide better opportunities and improved quality of life for others. It can also refer to businesses better serving the community.



Prepared by Meltwater Buzz



Social Media Analysis Report Akron, OH

Hashtag Usage

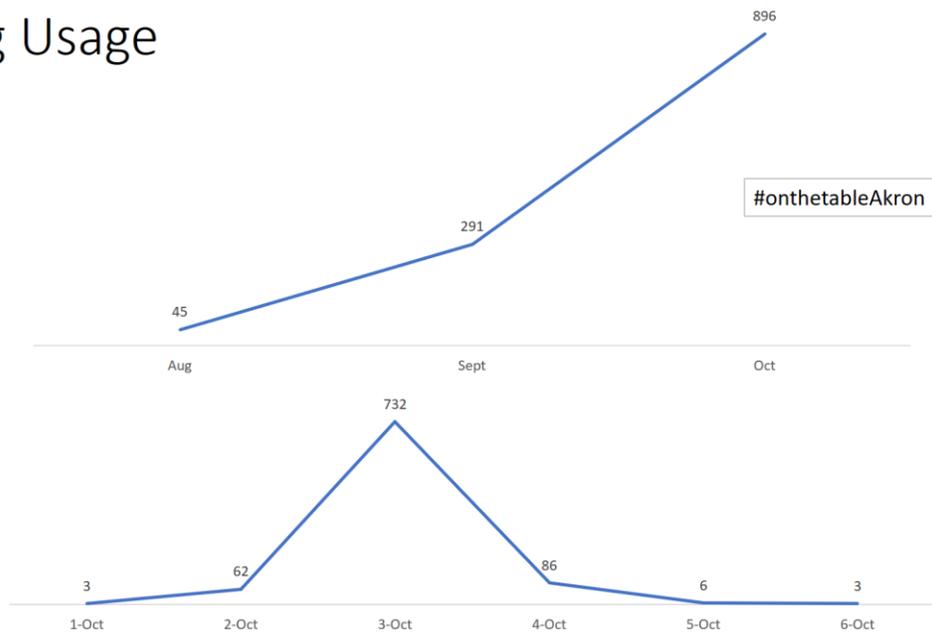
1,232

Total mentions

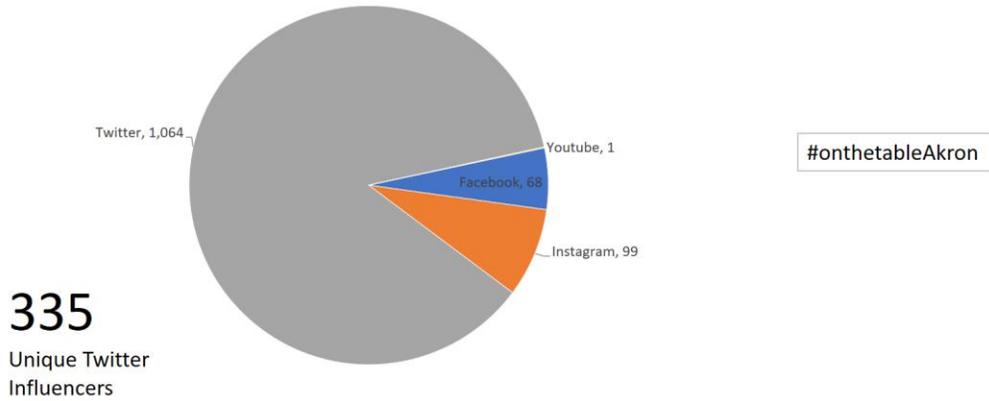
2.8M

Total impressions

The event occurred on
Oct 3.



Platform Breakdown



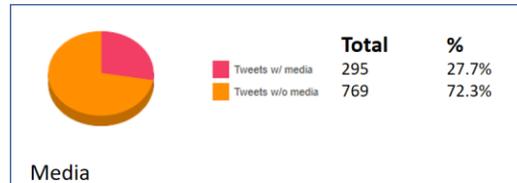
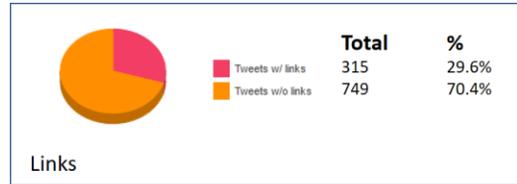
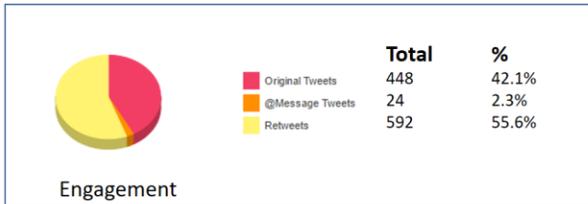
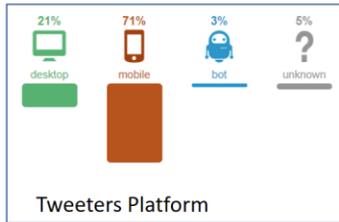
Hashtag Usage

Top Influencers

Twitter User	Posts
@Igarofalo240	177
@relinkdotorg	40
@ConxusNEO	32
@kimberlyGayle	25
@AkronCF	22
@CommLegalAid	17
@AkronOhioMayor	16
@sos_jr	16
@tlegrair	15
@SummitEdInit	14



Twitter Insight



Top Sources	
Twitter for iPhone	43.8%
Twitter Web Client	16.9%
Twitter for iPad	16.2%
Twitter for Android	9.2%
Sprout Social	2.8%
Other	11.1%



Appendix H: Visualization of Disparity between Important Issues and Contributions

Figure H.1

