

# **Supplement: Benzie County Materials Management County Engagement**

March 1, 2023

PREPARED BY:



COMMISSIONED BY:



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Working together with Networks Northwest and member communities, RRS completed a comprehensive set of tasks that fulfills the objectives of Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Materials Management Community Engagement (MMCE) grant and lays the groundwork for regional collaboration in materials management planning among member communities.

The MMCE grant process is intended to help counties in the transition to materials management and begin to identify partnership within regions and counties, understand current materials management deficiencies and opportunities, highlight future changes to the planning process, and outline steps that can occur now at the county and regional levels to assist with the development of future materials management programs and infrastructure.

Key improvements and recommendations for counties within Networks Northwest are found in the respective sections in the report. RRS identified forty (40) recommendations that are categorized into seven areas which form the basis for a robust materials management system:

- Community Access
- Facilities and Infrastructure
- Robust Markets, including Materials of Focus
- Public/Private Partnerships
- Supportive Policy
- Education and Outreach
- Regional Planning

Specific to Benzie County and as required by the EGLE grant, RRS identified the top five needs and the top three materials management projects that Benzie County should consider.

## **TOP FIVE NEEDS:**

1. Curbside recycling
2. Consistent education and outreach
3. At least one Center for Hard to Recycle Materials (CHaRM)
4. Hub-and-spoke collections for key materials, particularly yard and food waste
5. More frequent household hazardous waste collection opportunities

## **TOP THREE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT PROJECTS:**

Based on the top five needs above, RRS recommends Benzie County focus on three projects that could have significant impact on accessibility, awareness, and sustainable funding for programs and services.

1. Engage County and municipal leaders in conversations about materials management solutions in light of changes in state law.
2. Evaluate the funding and infrastructure needed to regularly or periodically collect additional materials, including more frequent household hazardous waste events, mattresses, food waste, and other difficult to recycling items.
3. Develop consistent recycling outreach materials in partnership with the hauler, the processor, the mills, and, as appropriate, the region.

# STAKEHOLDERS

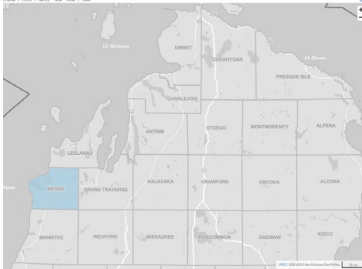
A stakeholder list was developed in collaboration with each county recycling contact to determine priority county, municipal, and other invested stakeholders. Perspectives were sought from either direct interview (in person or via phone) or through a set of questions distributed via email. Emails were sent at least twice seeking feedback.

| First    | Last          | Organization                          | Contact Type |
|----------|---------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Jesse    | Zylstra       | Benzie County Solid Waste & Recycling |              |
| Tad      | Peacock       | Benzie Conservation District          | email        |
| Mark     | Bevelhymer    | GFL/American Waste                    | in-person    |
| Cory     | Brown         | Northern Disposal                     | call, email  |
| Jill     | Reynolds      | Waste Management                      | email        |
| Todd     | Harland       | Republic Services                     | email        |
| Josh     | Stoltz        | Grow Benzie                           | email        |
| Katelyn  | Zeits         | Benzie County                         | email        |
| Bob      | Roelofs       | Benzie County                         | email        |
| Art      | Jeannot       | Benzie County                         | email        |
| Andy     | Miller        | Benzie County                         | email        |
| Rhonda   | Nye           | Benzie County                         | email        |
| Tim      | Markey        | Benzie County                         | email        |
| Evan     | Warsecke      | Benzie County                         | email        |
| Gary     | Sauer         | Benzie County                         | email        |
| Mark     | Roper         | Almira Township                       | email        |
| David    | Daris         | Inland Township                       | email        |
| Ron      | Sequin        | Colfax Township                       | email        |
| Paul     | Solern        | Platte Township                       | email        |
| Tia      | Kurina-Cooley | Homestead Township                    | email        |
| Ron      | Hitesman      | Weldon Township                       | email        |
| Jason    | Barnard       | Benzonia Township                     | email        |
| Matt     | Emery         | Joyfield Township                     | email        |
| Anna     | Grobe         | Lake Township                         | email        |
| Amy      | Ferris        | Crystal Lake Township                 | email        |
| Carl     | Noffsinger    | Gilmore Township                      | email        |
| Paul     | Crandall      | Blaine Township                       | email        |
| Joshua   | Mills         | City of Frankfort                     | email        |
| Jennifer | Wilkins       | Village of Elberta                    | email        |
| Jeffery  | Sandman       | Village of Honor                      | email        |
| Craig    | Timm          | Village of Lake Ann                   | email        |
| Eugene   | Allen         | Village of Thompsonville              | email        |
| Dawn     | Olney         | Village of Beulah                     | email        |



|                    |          |  |           |
|--------------------|----------|--|-----------|
| <b>Tim</b>         | Flynn    | Village of Benzonia                            | email     |
| <b>Todd</b>        | Warren   |  | email     |
| <b>Marlene</b>     | Wood     |  | email     |
| <b>David</b>       | Schaffer |  | email     |
| <b>Samantha</b>    | Wolfe    |  | email     |
| <b>Christopher</b> | Cote     |  | email     |
| <b>Annie</b>       | Browing  |  | email     |
| <b>Sarna</b>       | Salzman  | SEEDS  | in-person |
| <b>Ann</b>         | Rogers   | Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council | email     |

# BENZIE COUNTY - GAPS



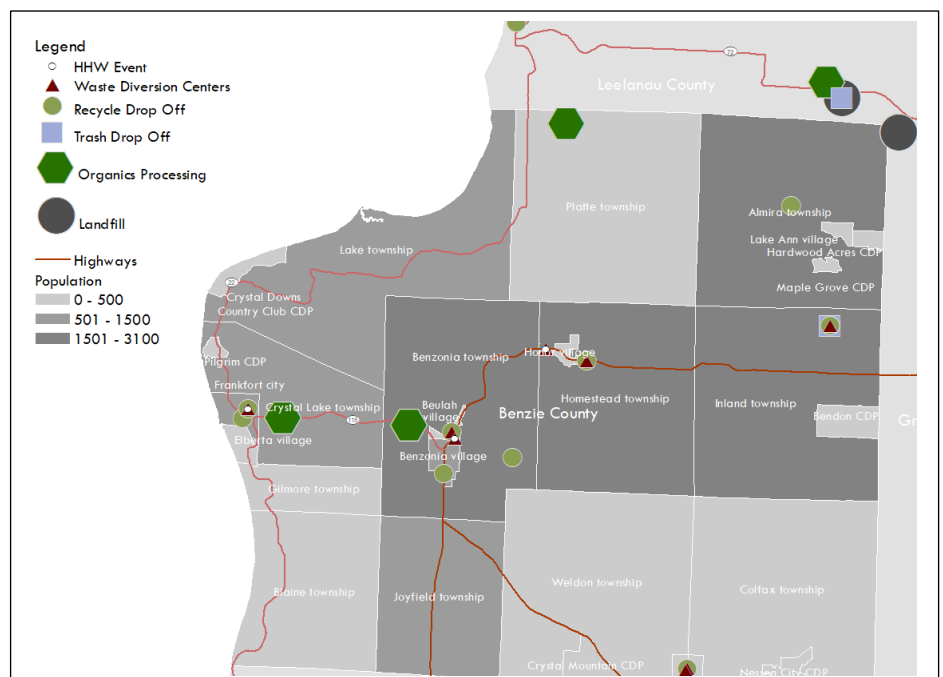
|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Population:                    | 17,970 |
| Square Miles of Land Area:     | 319.7  |
| Households:                    | 6,940  |
| Employer Establishments:       | 455    |
| Countywide Curbside Trash:     | NO     |
| Countywide Curbside Recycling: | NO     |
| Countywide Curbside Organics:  | NO     |
| Countywide Drop-off Trash:     | NO     |
| Countywide Drop-off Recycling: | YES    |
| Countywide Drop-off Organics:  | YES    |
| Countywide Drop-off HHW:       | YES    |


**Community Access:** Every household and business in a community needs convenient access to effective programs. This access can be through curbside collection, drop-off site locations, or a combination of the two. Material diversion and recovery needs to be as convenient as waste disposal as a first step sustainable materials management.

- Benzie County residents have access to seven (7) comprehensive recycling drop-off stations at a rate of 1 for every 45 square miles. (1:45). Cardboard-only collections are provided at four (4) additional locations that are privately operated.
- Benzie County residents are not offered curbside recycling.
- HHW days are offered two (2) times per year at two (2) different locations around the county.
- There is one food waste collection program available for drop-off.

**Processing Facilities:** The material collected at the home and business needs to be processed before reaching the end market. It is crucial for the County to own or have access to processing facilities conveniently located, technologically advanced, and with enough capacity to handle the population's current and future material streams. These facilities act as the "middleman" between the local government and the end market.

- Benzie County does not own or operate any processing facilities but does contract or partner with processing facilities.





**Robust Markets:** The success of end markets that receive the recyclables that are collected leads to success in growing a sustainable circular economy that ultimately allows material to be diverted from landfills over the long term. By increasing demand, Networks Northwest creates a ‘pull’ for additional materials that in turn, drives supply.

- Within Benzie County there are no identified markets for recovered materials.

**Public/Private Partnerships:** The business community and Networks Northwest will need to work closely together to find success. These partnerships can be found through funding opportunities with private companies, shared owner/operator agreements for MRFs and composting facilities, marketing and educational campaigns, and everything in between. Many retailers and packaging companies are realizing that local governments are responsible for the end of life for their products, thus leading to the sustainability of their product. Therefore, the benefits of public/private partnerships are becoming more apparent and accessible.

- Benzie County partners with the local Ace Hardware and building supply company to collect latex paint.
- The Sheriff’s Department hosts a prescription and over-the-counter drop-box.
- Grow Benzie has partnered with Benzie County to create a community composting guild. This allows participants to drop off organic waste and receive compost in return.

**Supportive Policy:** To reach high landfill diversion goals, policy will need to be crafted to ensure responsible recovery of material is the standard practice throughout the community, not just the best practice. A variety of policy approaches can be explored for Networks Northwest that have found success in other parts of the country and the globe.

- Benzie County utilizes PA 69 to fund current programs.

**Education and Outreach:** Once a strong infrastructure is in place, all citizens and businesses will need to know how to handle material in their home and at work. Recycling systems continue to evolve as material composition changes and technologies change. Thus, information needs to be put in front of the citizens of your community on a regular basis in many different ways to feed MRFs and end markets with good quality material, while continuing to decrease the material buried in landfills.

- There does not appear to be a consistent message about recycling locations and materials across the county.

# SURVEY

Over 1,650 individuals across the Networks Northwest region took the survey that included questions about current participation in recycling-related activities as well as future needs and demographic information to inform trends. 98 people from Benzie County participated in the survey.

This survey was not intended to meet statistical minimums. Rather, it was intended to be a snapshot to inform the current usage and future needs of the region. The set of questions that were asked was purposefully restricted to reduce the chance of survey fatigue, wherein participants close the survey prior to completing it.

The survey was intended to take no more than 10 minutes to complete, with participants being told in the introduction that it should take no more than 5-8 minutes. The survey was distributed by community recycling coordinators and Networks Northwest via social media and press release. Survey logic was built into the flow of questions to ensure that the appropriate type of question was asked based on previous responses. As such, participation rates in each question varied. The majority of survey respondents are current recyclers and is the result of the way the survey was distributed. Further studies to understand reasons for non-participation may be needed.

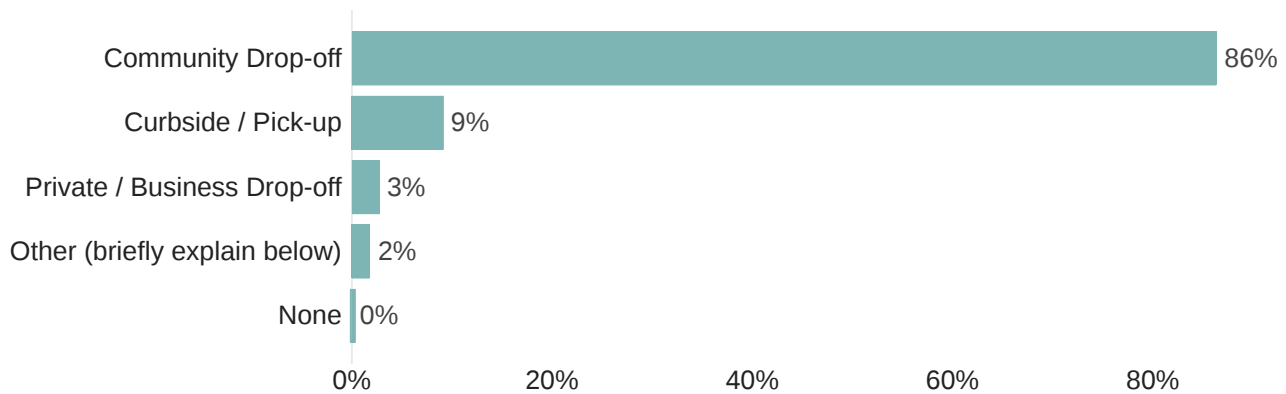
The full survey results for Benzie County are on the following pages.

# MMCE Networks Northwest Survey Results Summary (Benzie County)\*

Q1 - What recycling services are available in your area? (select all that apply)

**SUMMARY** - Benzie residents have access to at least one form of recycling service. Community Drop-off is the predominate recycling service type offered in Benzie County.

98 Responses



Q1 - "Other" text responses

1 Responses

takeback  
deposit  
container  
dropwaste  
stores

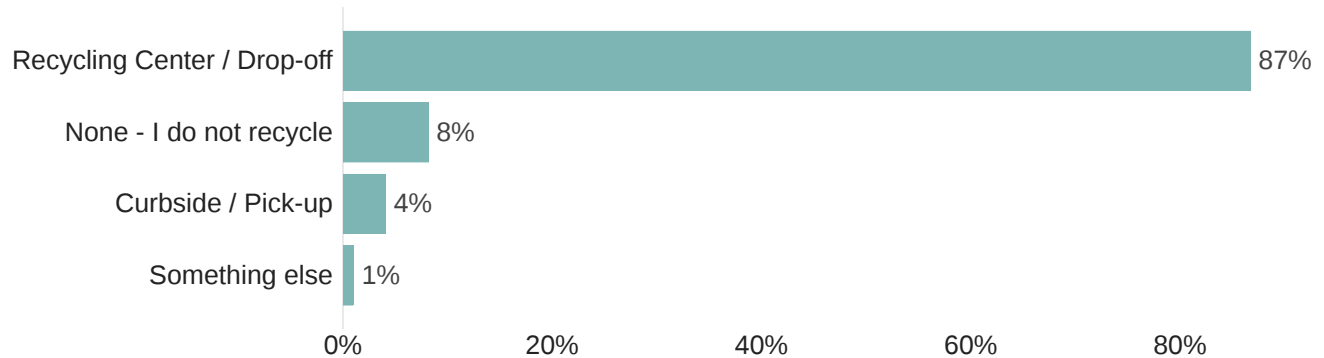
\*Grey boxes stating, "No data found - your filters may be too exclusive," indicate questions with without responses from respondents as a result of low base size and/or non-required survey questions.



## Q2 - What type of recycling services do you most often use, not including bottle returns?

**SUMMARY** - Given the stated availability of recycling services, it is unsurprising that Drop-off services are most often used. And, despite recycling accessibility, 8% do not recycle at all.

98 Responses



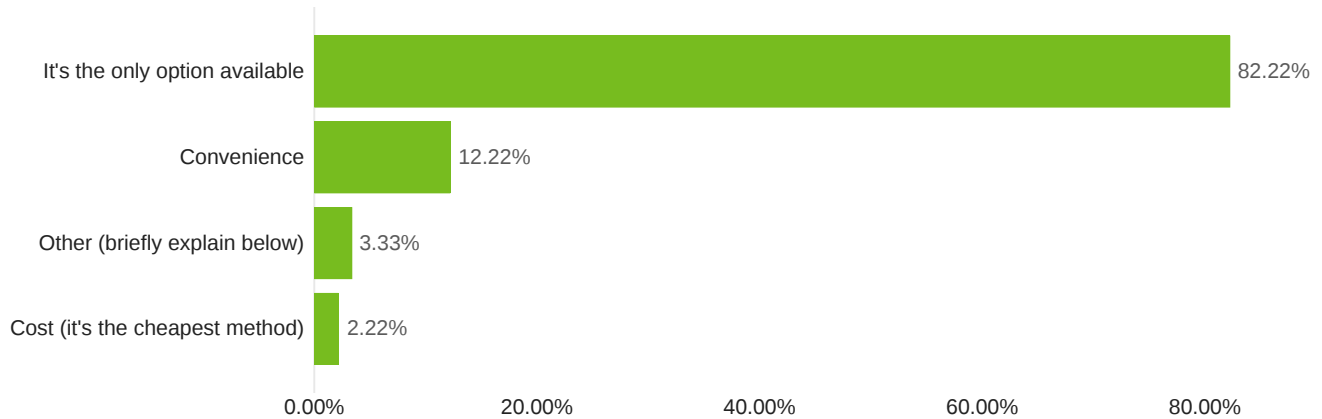
## Q2 - What type of recycling services do you most often use, not including bottle returns? Text responses

No data found - your filters may be too exclusive!

### Q3 - What is the most important reason you choose to recycle this way?

**SUMMARY** - 82% of residents chose their method of recycling because it is the only option offered.

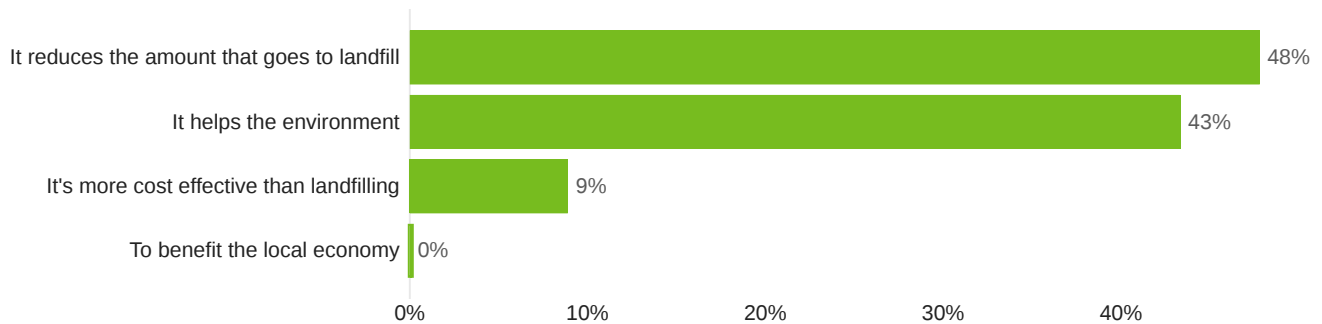
90 Responses



### Q4 - Why do you recycle?

**SUMMARY** - 48% recycle as a means to reduce the amount of waste headed to landfills. 43% do so for environmental reasons.

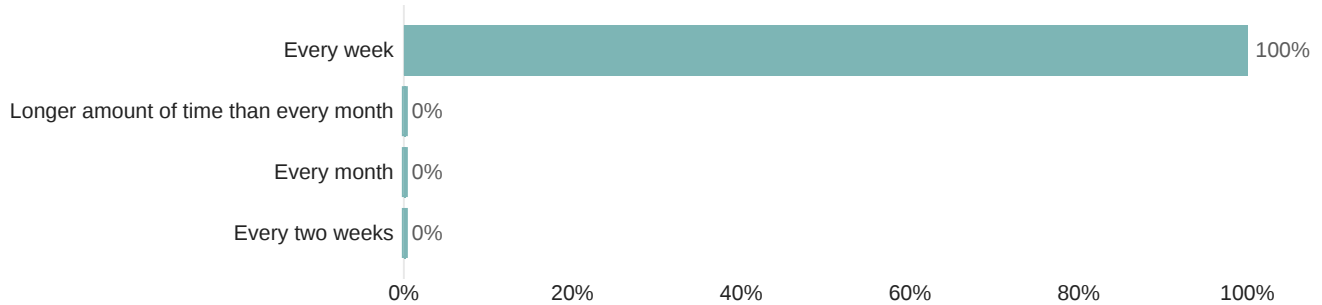
90 Responses



## Q5 - How often do you recycle using curbside / pick-up?

**SUMMARY** - Of those who are offered Curbside Pick-up services, all use the service weekly.

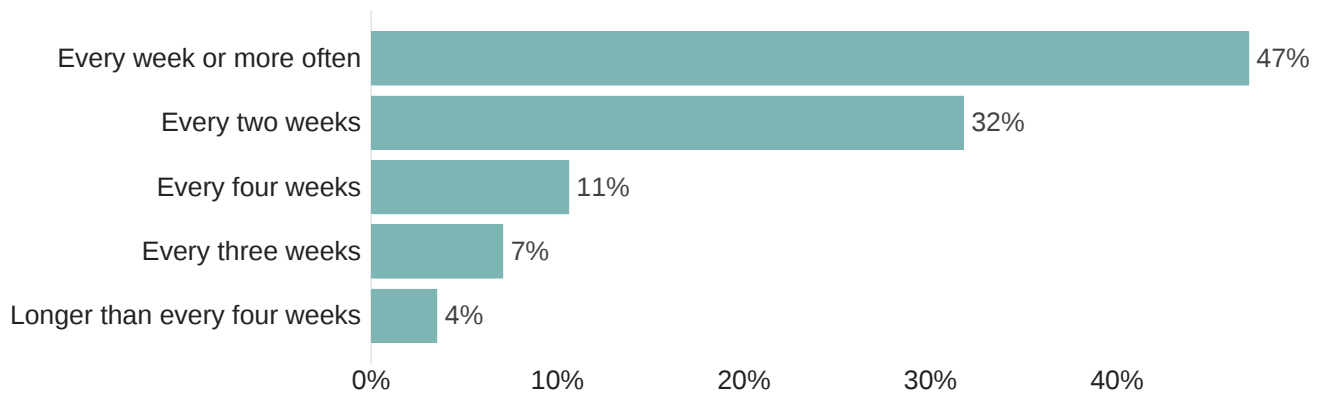
4 Responses



## Q6 - How often do you recycle using a Recycling Center or drop-off?

**SUMMARY** - Those with access to Drop-off recycling services to are likely to use the service either every week or every other week.

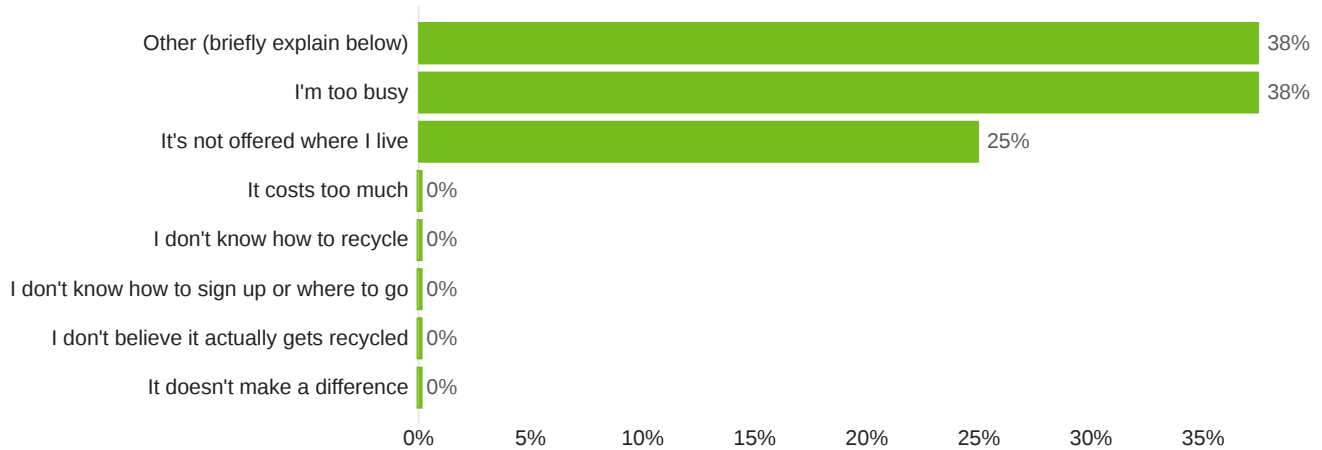
85 Responses



## Q7 - What is the most significant reason you do not recycle?

**SUMMARY** - Of those who do not recycle, all express sentiments of inconvenience: recycling is not offered close to where they live and takes much time to get to Drop-off sites. A couple emphasized that they would recycle if Curbside Pick-up recycling services were offered.

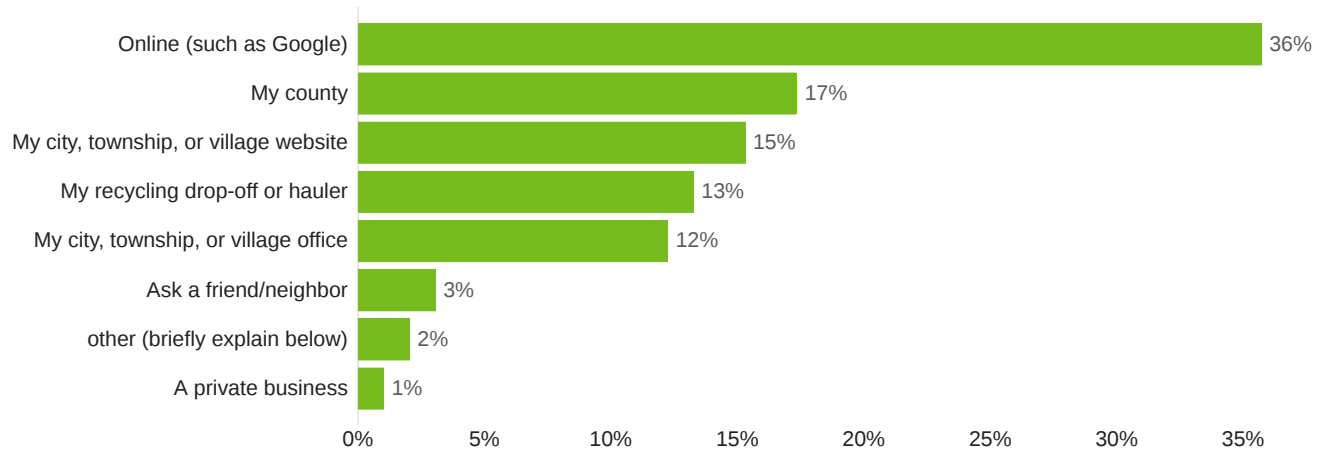
8 Responses



## Q8 - If you had questions about recycling, where would you first seek out information?

**SUMMARY** - 57% first look towards their municipality and recycling providers to answer questions about recycling. 40% seek information from Google, friends, and private businesses.

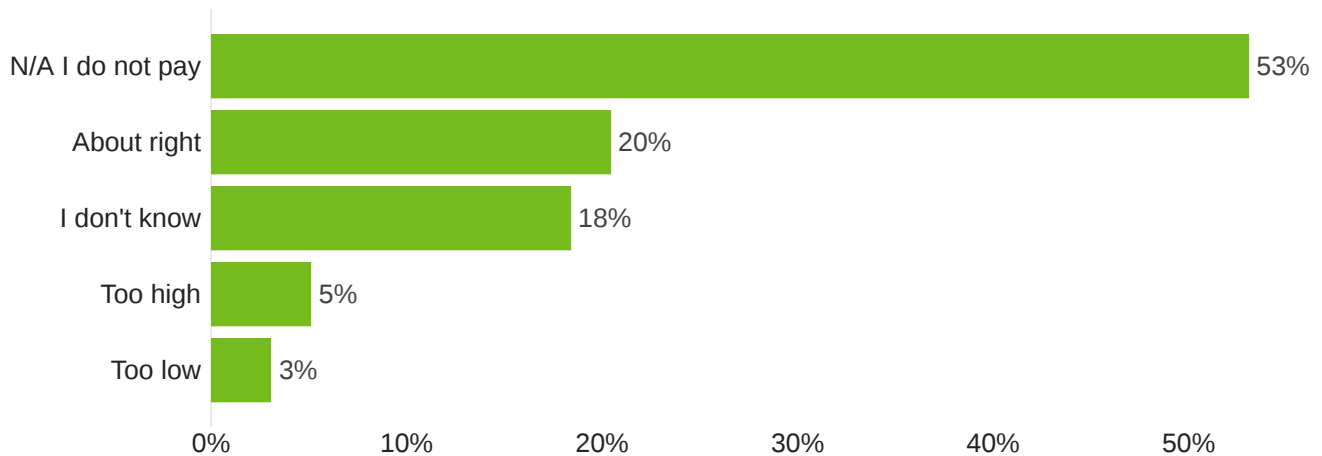
98 Responses



**Q9 - Do you think the cost of recycling is too high, about right or too low?**  
Please respond even if you do not recycle.

**SUMMARY** - 53% do not pay for recycling. While 20% feel that the price of recycling is about right. NOTE: One potential problem with this question, is that the survey did not capture whether the respondent knows if the cost of recycling is bundled into the cost of their trash pickup.

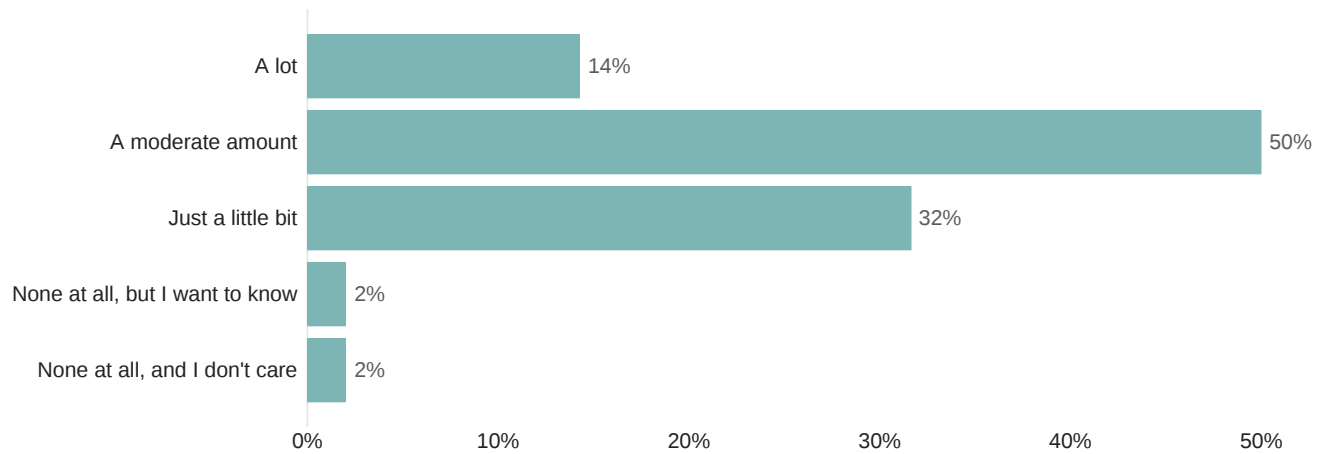
98 Responses



## Q10 - How much do you know about recycling, generally speaking?

**SUMMARY** - A majority feels they know a moderate amount about recycling. Whereas only 14% feels that they know a lot.

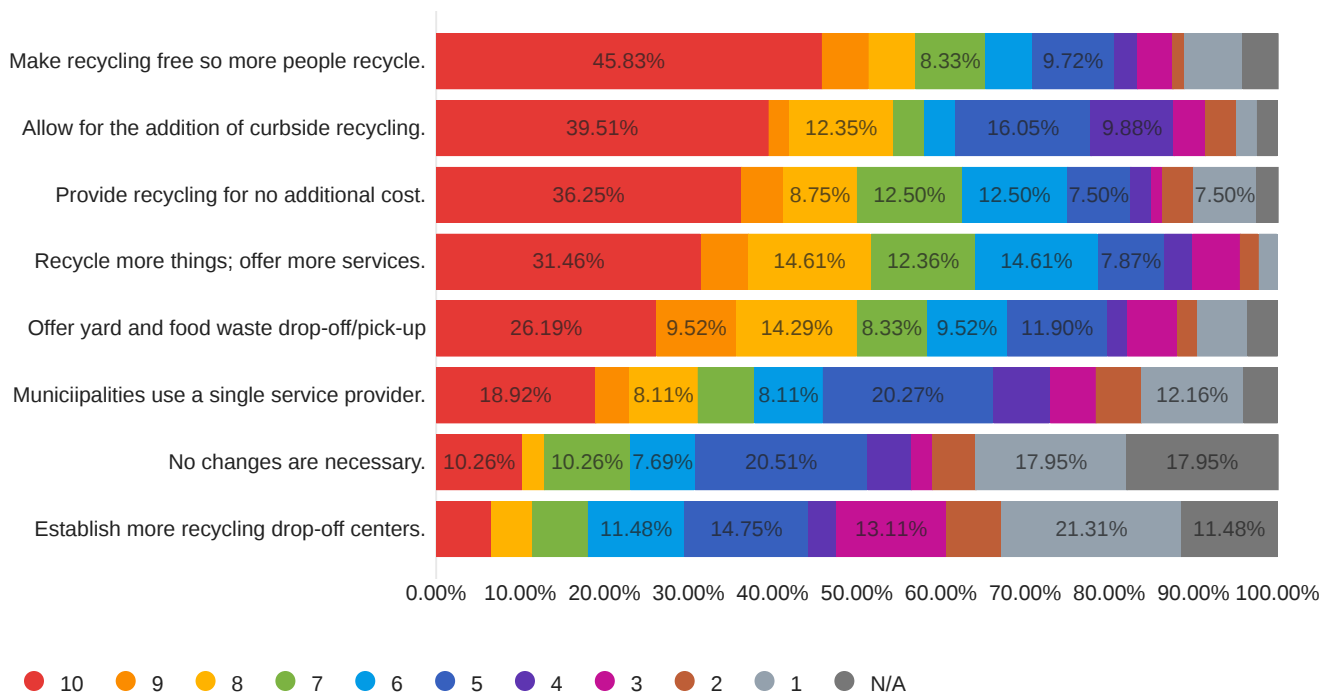
98 Responses



**Q11 - Leaders in Northwest Michigan are exploring ways to improve recycling and other waste management services offered to residents and businesses. On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being VERY IMPORTANT and 0 being NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT, how important are each of the following potential improvements to you? If you already have access to an option, select 'not applicable'**

**SUMMARY -** Although residents who currently recycle feel that recycling costs either the right amount or little to nothing for them, they express an importance for recycling to be completely free to allow for greater accessibility and participation from more people. As well, residents would like curbside recycling services.

95 Responses



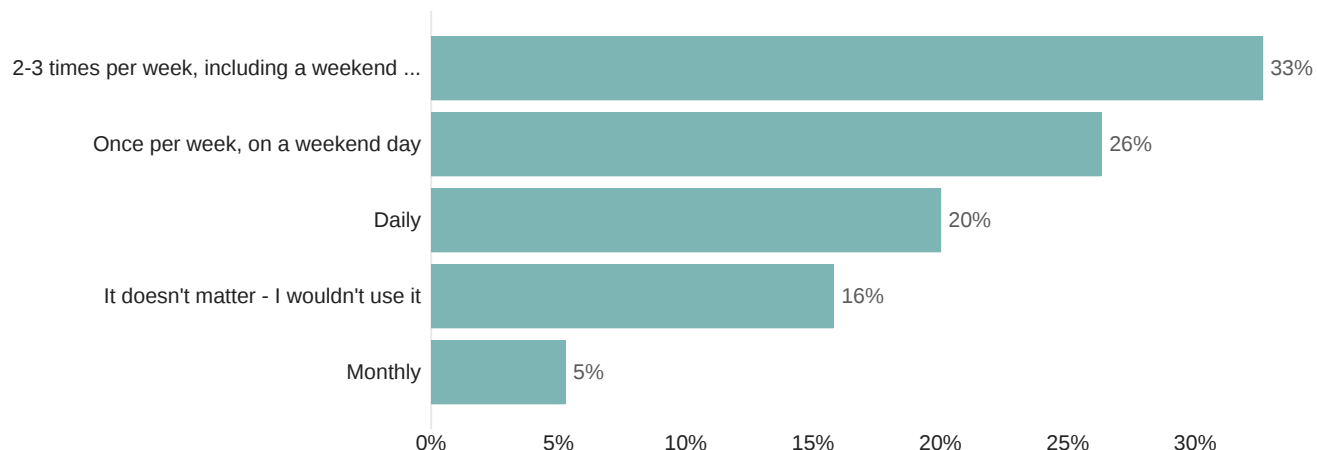
Select a field



## Q12 - If a convenient recycling or food waste drop-off site were available close to where you live, how often would you want it open?

**SUMMARY** - 59% of people would like a Drop-off site open at least once per week on the weekend day. Less than a quarter would like Drop-off sites open daily.

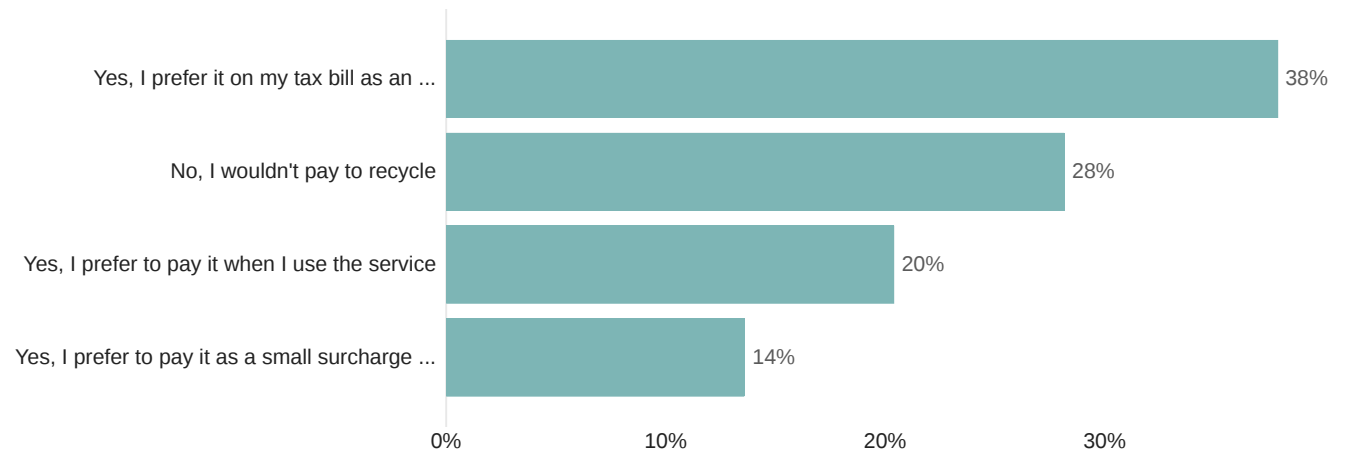
95 Responses



# Q13 - Would you be willing to pay a small fee to have convenient access to recycling or food waste collection?

**SUMMARY** - Residents primarily prefer to pay for recycling or food waste collection through an assessment or fee on their tax bill. 28% do not want to pay anything for recycling or food waste collection services.

98 Responses

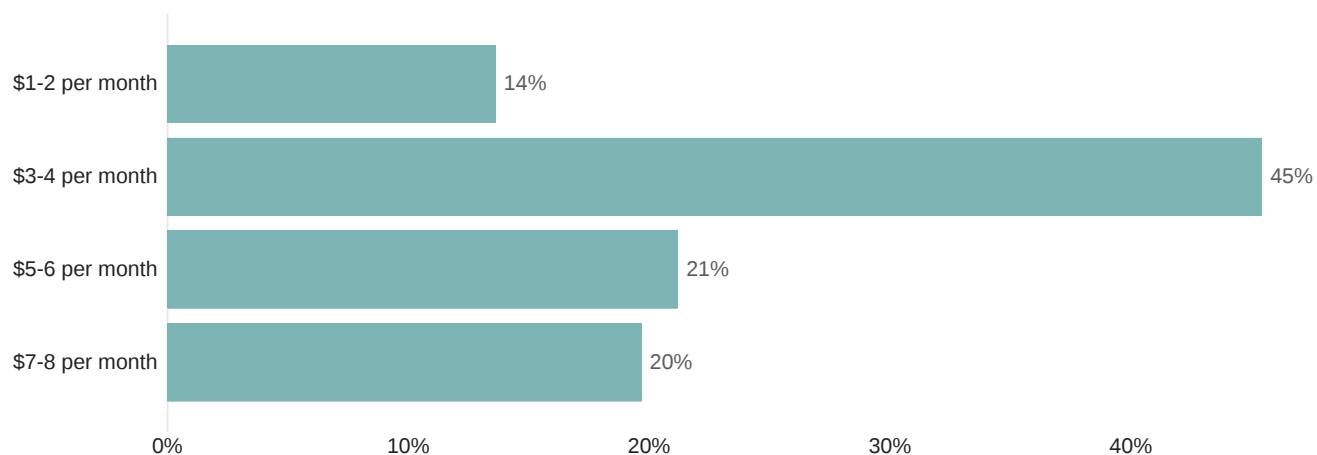


## Q14 - What would you be willing to spend to get convenient access to recycling or food waste collection?

**SUMMARY** - A sizeable fraction of respondents (28%) would not pay anything for convenient access to recycling or food waste collection. Of those willing to pay for recycling or food waste collection, 80% want to pay \$6 or less a month for recycling or food waste collection; \$3-4 per month is most preferred.

Note: 28% of respondents would not pay anything.

66 Responses



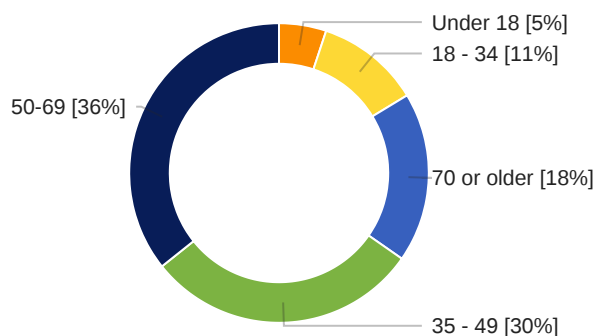
## Demographics and Background of Respondents

### SUMMARY:

- Respondents are primarily between the ages 35-69.
- Respondents are predominately female.
- 88% have some college education or higher.
- 87% of respondents own the home that they live in.
- 90% live in Benzie County year around.
- About two-thirds do not have children living in their home who are school age or younger while the other third does.
- 95% of respondents are white with little representation of other racial or ethnic groups.
- Median yearly household income falls around \$75,000 - \$100,000 per year.
- Of those who rent or lease their home, none have access to recycling on the property, but all would like the service.

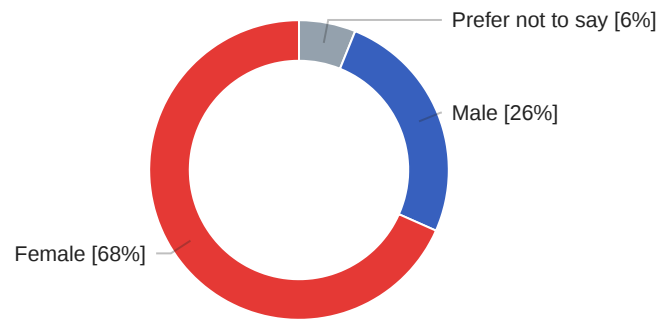
### Q16 - Which of these best fits your age?

98 Responses



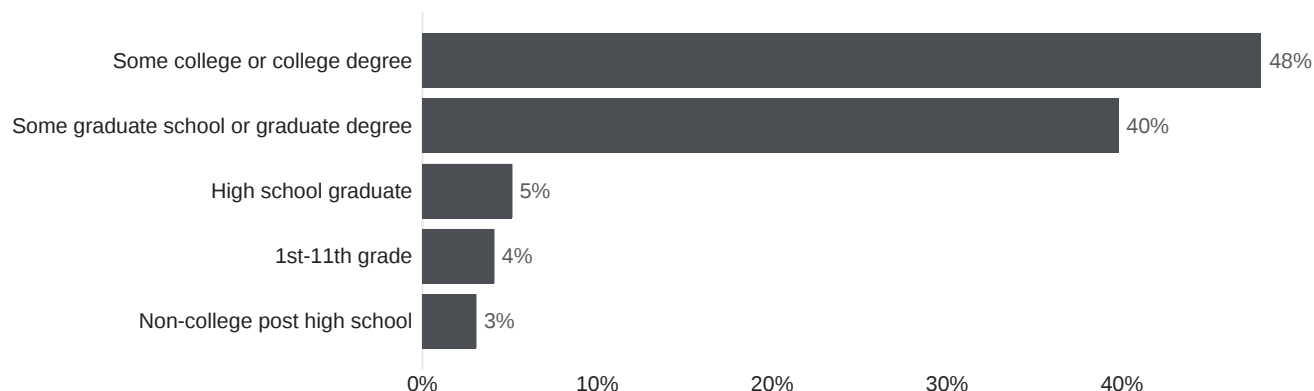
## Q17 - What is your gender?

98 Responses



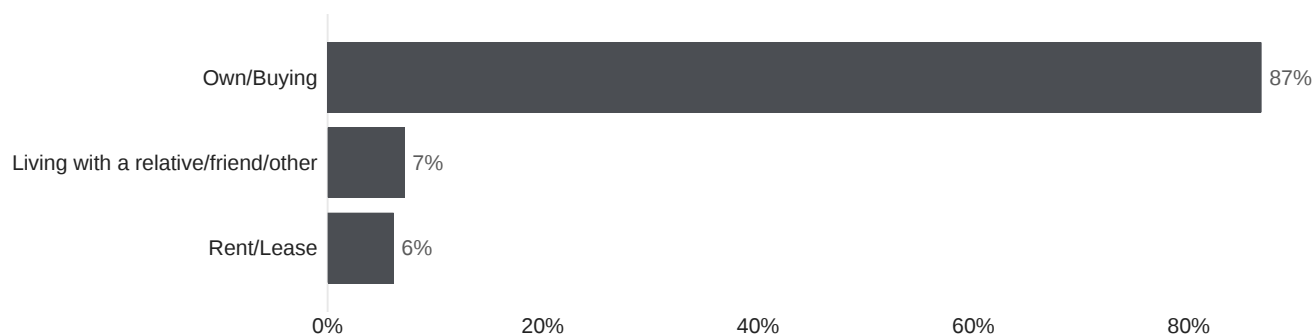
## Q18 - What is the last grade or level of schooling you completed?

98 Responses



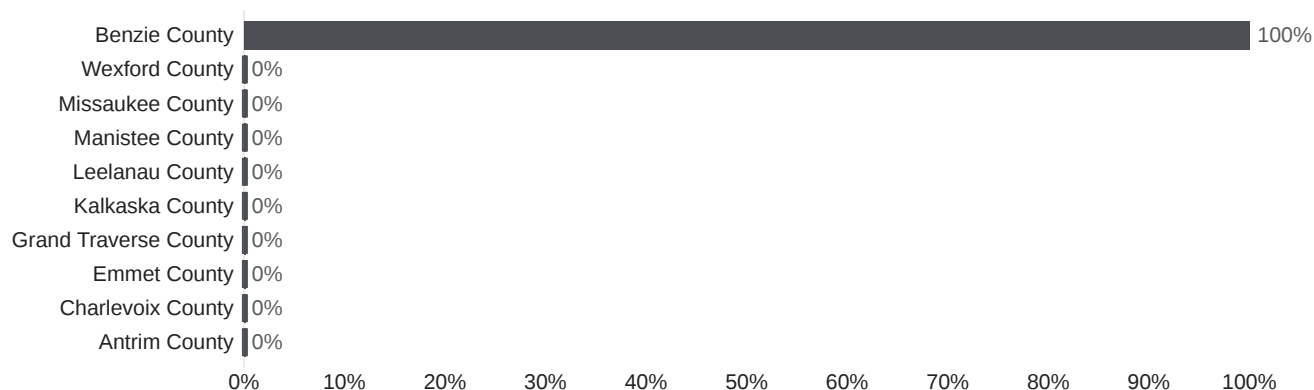
## Q19 - Do you own your own home, are you buying a home, or do you lease or rent where you live?

98 Responses



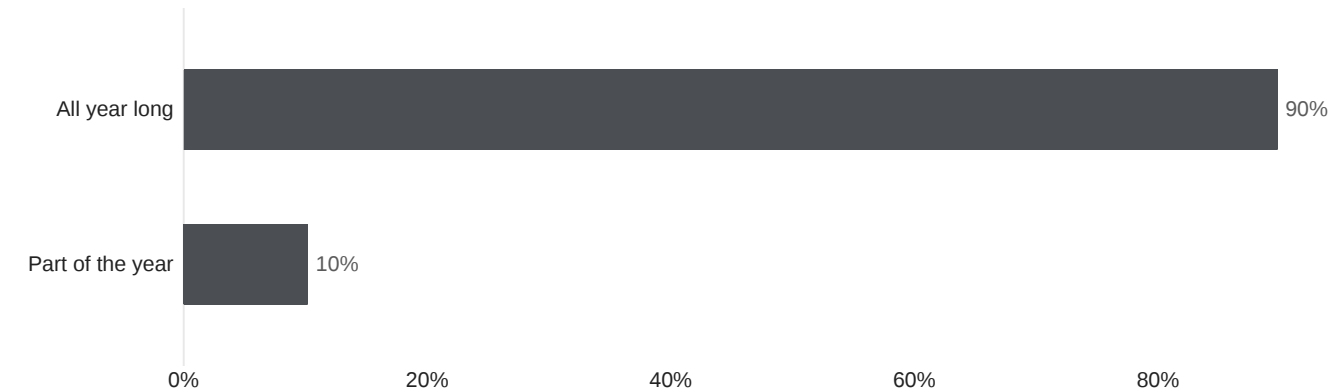
## Q20 - County

98 Responses



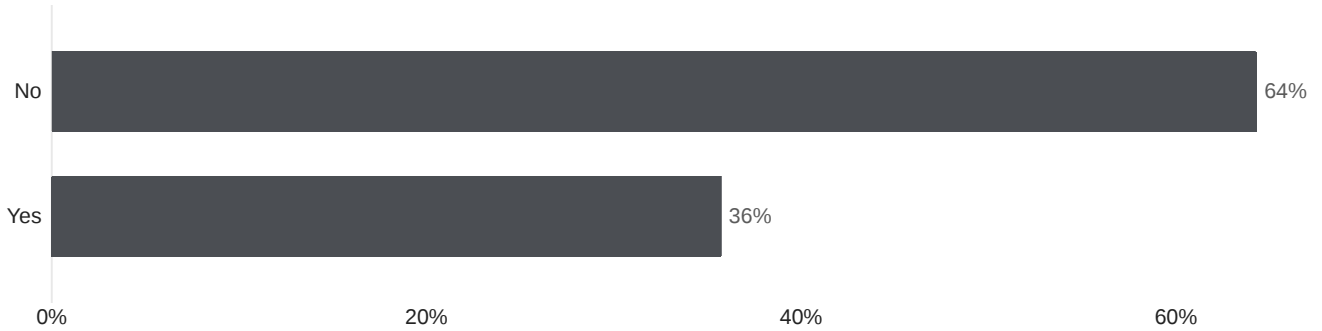
# Q21 - How much of the year do you live in this county?

98 Responses



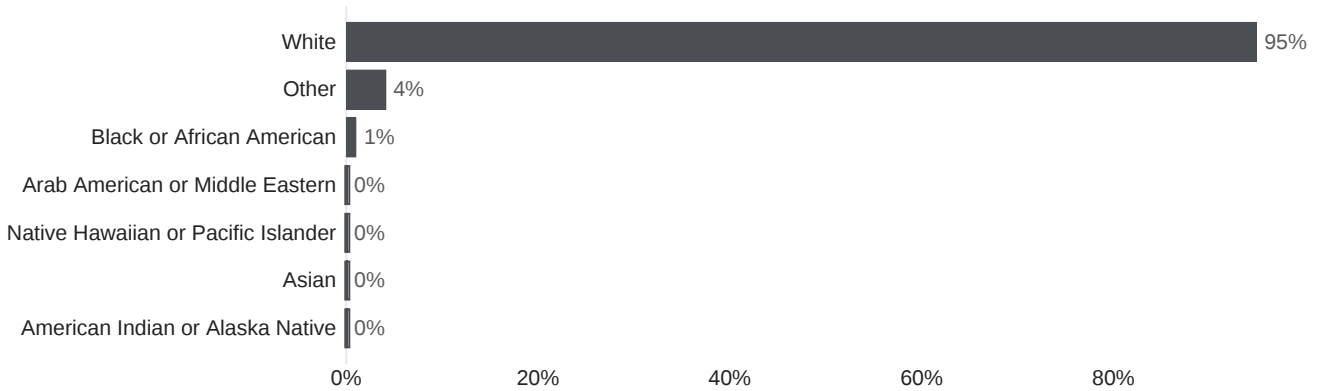
## Q22 - Do you have children living in your home who are school age or younger?

98 Responses



## Q23 - Which racial or ethnic group best describes you?

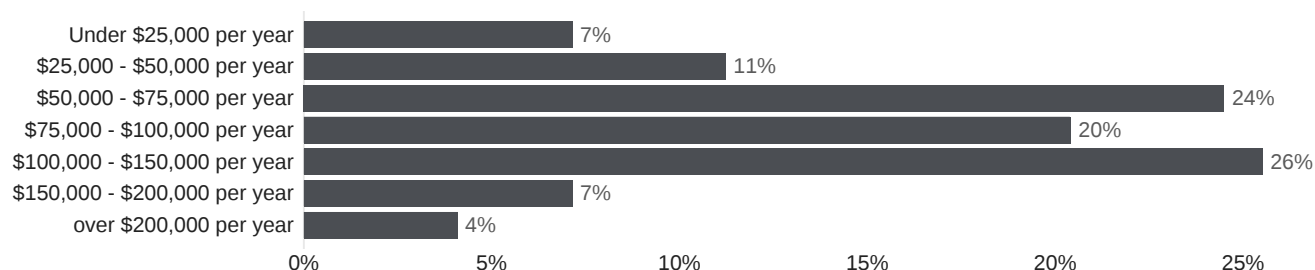
98 Responses





Q24 - In which of the following categories does your total yearly household income fall, including everyone in the household? If retired, please select an income category based on retirement income.

98 Responses



Q27 - As a renter/lessee, do you have recycling available on the property where you live?

6 Responses

