



# Supplement: Grand Traverse 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 Grand Traverse County and as required by the EGLE grant, RRS identified the top five needs and the top three materials management projects that Grand Traverse County should consider.

## **TOP FIVE NEEDS:**

1. Promote the availability of and participation in curbside recycling.
2. Distribute consistent education and outreach in partnership with recycling and waste haulers.
3. Develop at least one Center for Hard to Recycle Materials (CHaRM) that includes a hub-and-spoke model for collection of key materials, particularly yard and food waste, mattresses, and other targeted items.
4. Food waste collection points conveniently located and more frequent household hazardous waste collection opportunities.
5. Availability of on-site multifamily and business recycling.

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

Based on the top five needs above, RRS recommends Grand Traverse 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 collect additional materials, including more frequent household hazardous waste events, mattresses, food waste, and other difficult to recycling items regularly or periodically.
3. Develop consistent recycling outreach materials in partnership with the hauler, the processor, the mills, and, as appropriate, the region and promote participation in recycling.

# 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	Primary Stakeholder Type	Contact Type
David	Schaffer	Grand Traverse County		Call, emails
Becky	Oien	Grand Traverse Band (Leelanau, Grand Traverse)	tribal	email
Todd	Harland	Republic Services	hauler	email
Jim	Palmer	Waste Management	hauler	email
Andy	Gale	Bay Area Recycling for Charities	hauler	email
Kris	Wood	Bay Area Disposal	hauler	email
Doug	White	Acme Township	township	email
Nicole	Blonshine	Blair Township	township	email
Beth	Friend	East Bay Charter Township	township	email
Gerianne	Street	Fife Lake Village	township	email
Chuck	Korn	Garfield Charter Township	township	email
Douglas	Moyer	Grant Township	township	email
Marvin	Radtke, Jr.	Green Lake Township	township	email
Dan	Hawkins	Kingsley Village	village	email
Ron	Lemcool	Long Lake Township	township	email
John	Ockert	Mayfield Township	township	email
Rob	Lajko	Paradise Township	township	email
Isaiah	Wunsch	Peninsula Township	township	email
Marty	Colburn	City of Traverse City	city	email
Doug	Mansfield	Union Township	township	email
Ron	Popp	Whitewater Township	township	email
<b>ALL County Commissioners</b>		Grand Traverse County	county	email
Betsy	Coffia	Grand Traverse County	county	email
Brad	Jewett	Grand Traverse County	county	email
Rob	Clous	Grand Traverse County	county	email
Rob	Hentschel	Grand Traverse County	county	email
Bryce	Hundley	Grand Traverse County	county	email
Penny	Morris	Grand Traverse County	county	email
Darryl	Nelson	Grand Traverse County	county	email
Richard	Lewis	City of Traverse City	city	email
Amy	Shamroe	City of Traverse City	city	email
Mi	Stanley	City of Traverse City	city	email

<b>Mitchell</b>	Treadwell	City of Traverse City	city	email
<b>Ashlea</b>	Walter	City of Traverse City	city	email
<b>Tim</b>	Werner	City of Traverse City	city	email
<b>Mark</b>	Wilson	City of Traverse City	city	email
<b>Ann</b>	Rogers	Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council	community organization	email
<b>Mark</b>	Bevelhymer	GFL/American Waste	transfer station operator, hauler	in-person
<b>Sarna</b>	Salzman	SEEDS	community organization	in-person

# GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY - GAPS



Population:	95,238
Square Miles of Land Area:	464.3
Households:	45,776
Employer Establishments:	3,395
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.

- Grand Traverse County offers seven (7) access points for drop-off of recyclables, averaging one for every 66 square miles (1:66).
- A county ordinance ensures that the majority of residents in single-family homes have access to curbside recycling.
- Onsite access to recycling in multifamily units is not managed by the county but is offered through the waste hauler if contracted by the property manager.
- A pilot-scale organics collection program for food waste operates in City of Traverse City.

**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.

- There are two organics processing facilities, one of which is owned and operated by Grand Traverse County.
- There is one regional single stream materials recovery facility (MRF) that the county contracts with for collection services.

**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.

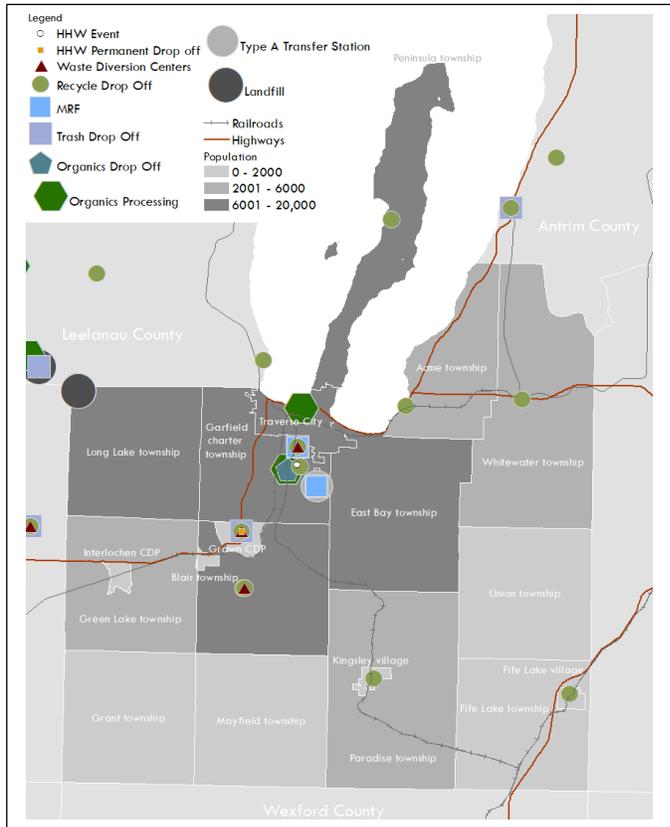
- No end markets were identified in Grand Traverse County.

**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.

- No public/private partnerships were identified in Grand Traverse County.

**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.

- Grand Traverse County has a county-wide ordinance that requires waste haulers to offer curbside recycling service to single family residential structures and multi-family residential structures with 4 or less units per building in a 'designated curbside recycling district'.
- Two townships, Peninsula and Acme, utilize franchise agreements to streamline collection and reduce costs to residents in their respective jurisdictions.



**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.

- The RecycleSmart brand is used to help awareness of Grand Traverse County resource recovery programs, including brush drop-off, educational programming, household hazardous waste events, recycling, solid waste management, and the county's Take It Back Recycling Directory.



# 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. 286 people from Grand Traverse 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.

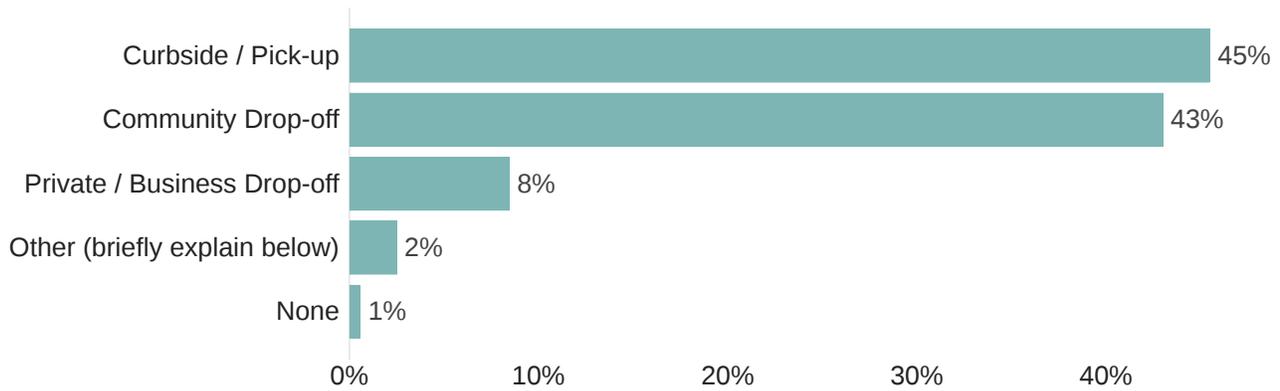
The full survey results for Grand Traverse County are on the following pages.

# MMCE Networks Northwest Survey Results Summary (Grand Traverse)

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

**SUMMARY** - 63% expressed having access to both Curbside Pick-up and Community Drop-off recycling services as well as a few additional services such as hazardous waste drop-off and BARC (Bay Area recycling), a non-profit.

286 Responses



Q1 - "Other" text responses

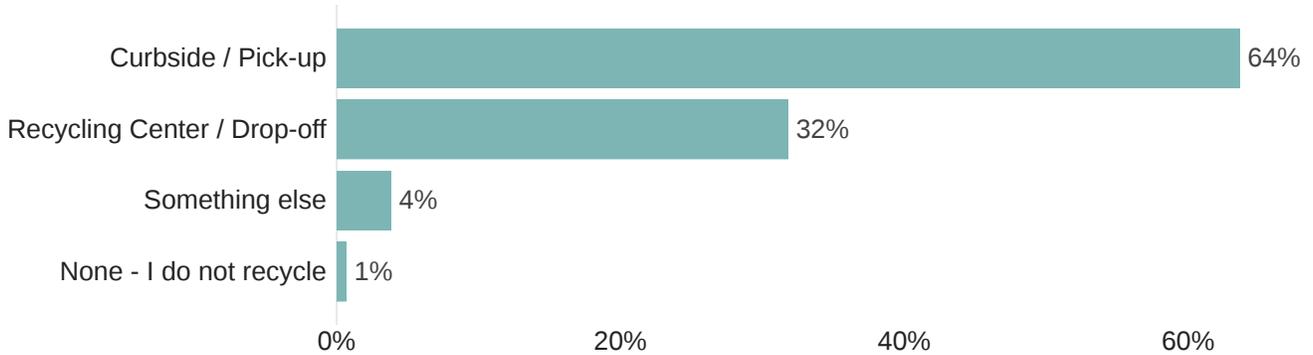
11 Responses



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

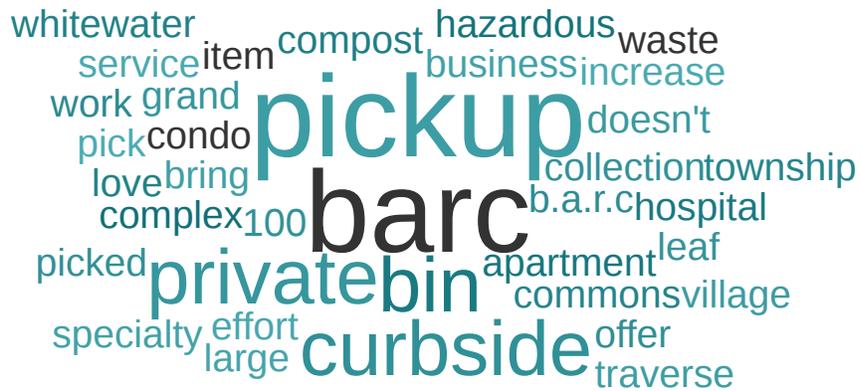
**SUMMARY** - Two-thirds of residents take advantage of Curbside Pick-up recycling services while the other third uses Drop-off centers.

286 Responses



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

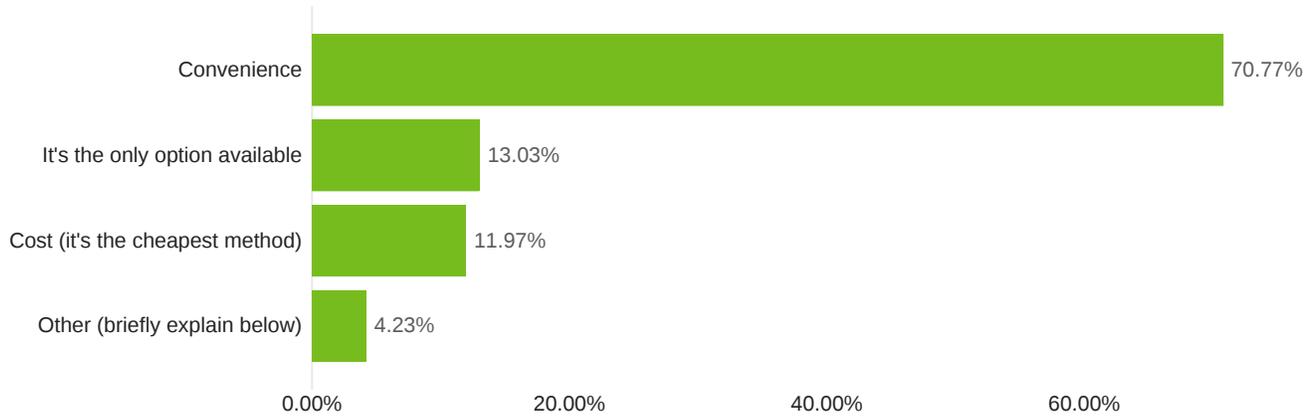
10 Responses



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

**SUMMARY** - A majority of residents use curbside because of its convenience. They also see it as a cheaper method to recycle. Those who chose "It's the only option available" are predominately individuals who have access to only Drop-off recycling services.

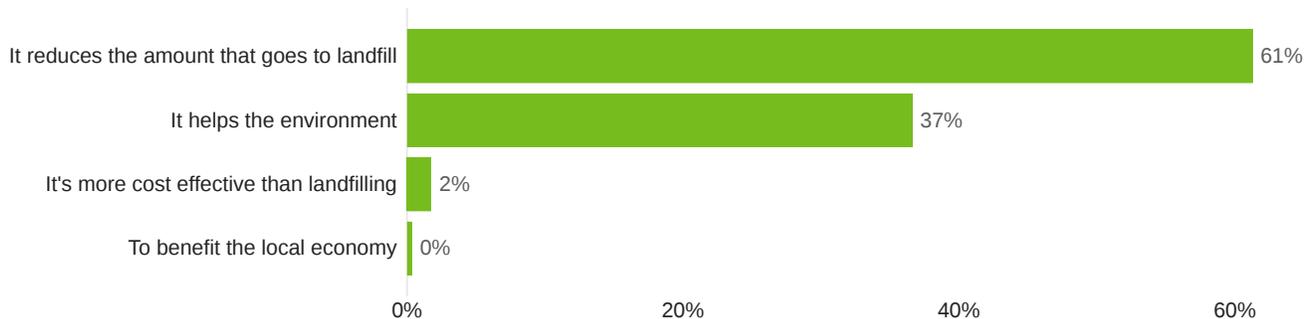
284 Responses



### Q4 - Why do you recycle?

**SUMMARY** - Yet, very few (none) recycle for economic reasons. Instead, they associate recycling as reducing the amount of waste headed to landfills or as an environmentally sound decision.

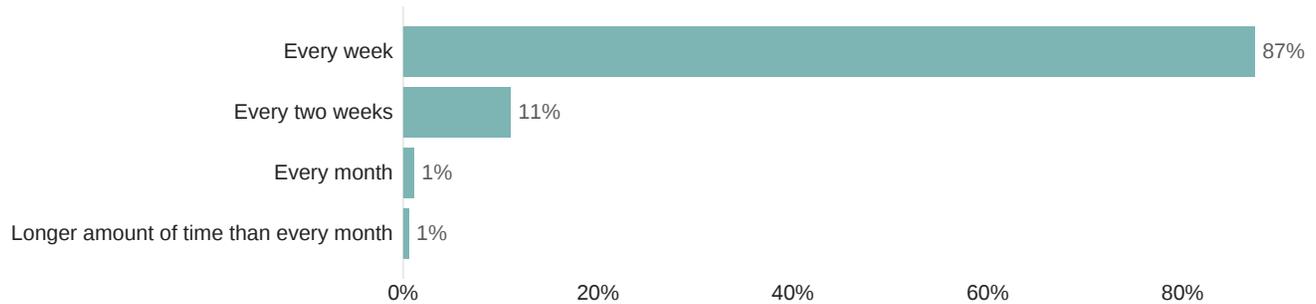
284 Responses



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

**SUMMARY** - Of those who are offered Curbside Pick-up services, 87% use the service every week.

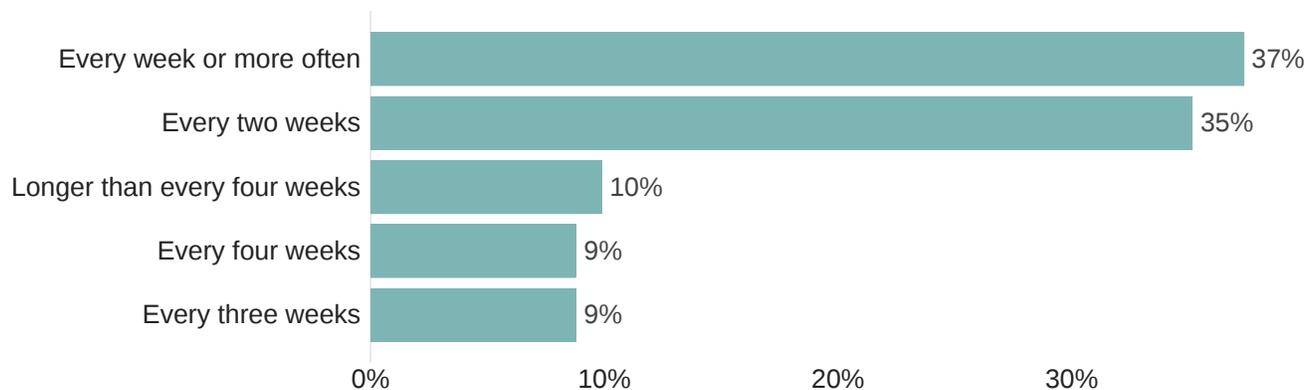
182 Responses



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

**SUMMARY** - Those with access only to Drop-off recycling services to are most likely to use the service weekly. Otherwise, residents with other recycling services available use Drop-off recycling services less frequently, though every two weeks is not uncommon.

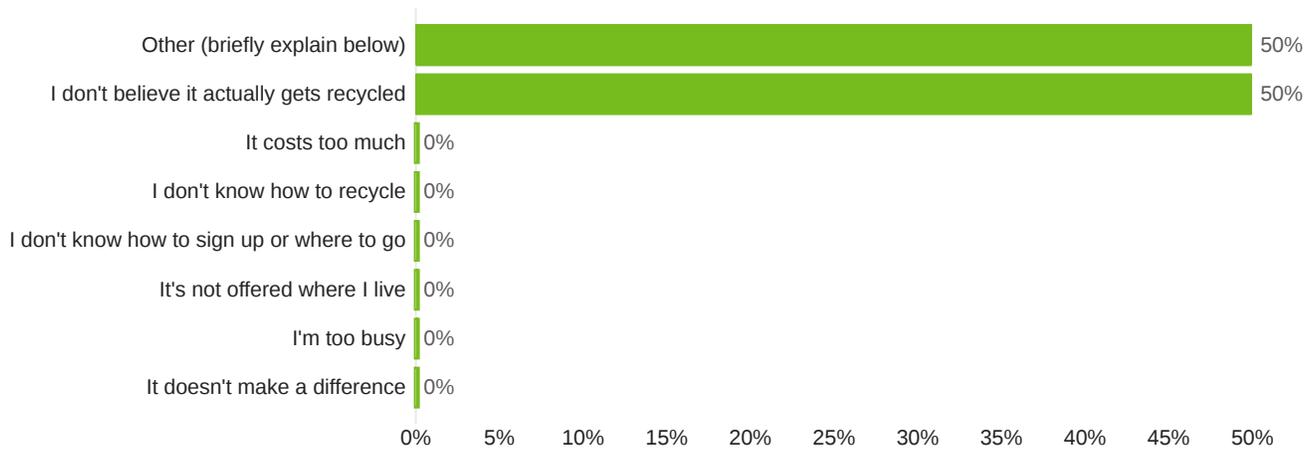
91 Responses



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

**SUMMARY** - Of the two individuals who do not recycle, one feels that the materials do not get recycled while the other does not have access to a Pick-up recycling service at their apartment.

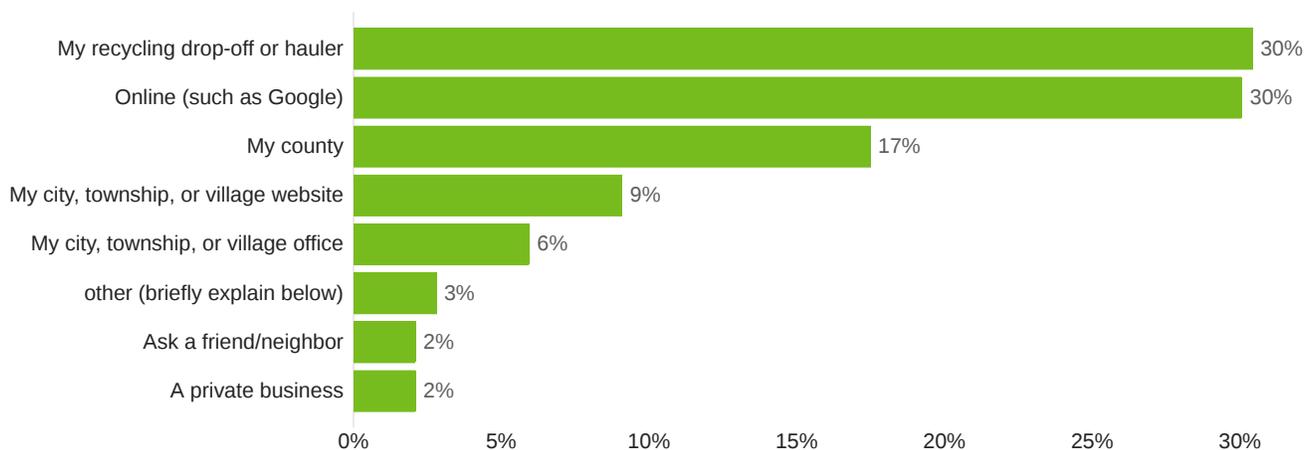
2 Responses



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

**SUMMARY** - 62% first look towards their municipality and recycling providers to answer questions about recycling. While the other third seeks information from Google, friends, and private businesses.

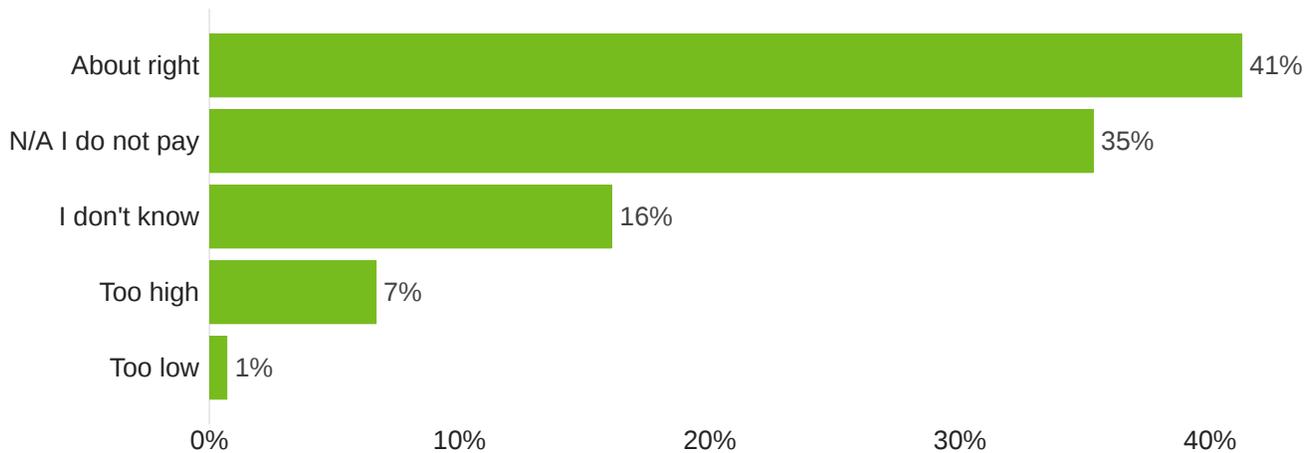
286 Responses



### 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** - 35% do not pay for recycling. While 41% 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.

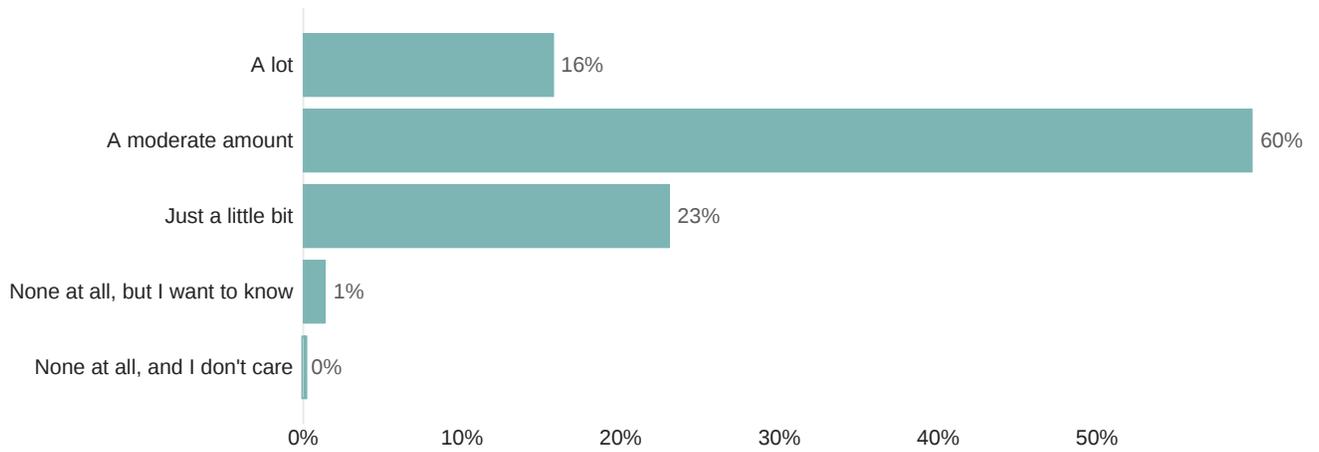
286 Responses



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

**SUMMARY** - A majority feels they know a moderate amount about recycling. Whereas only 16% feels that they know a lot.

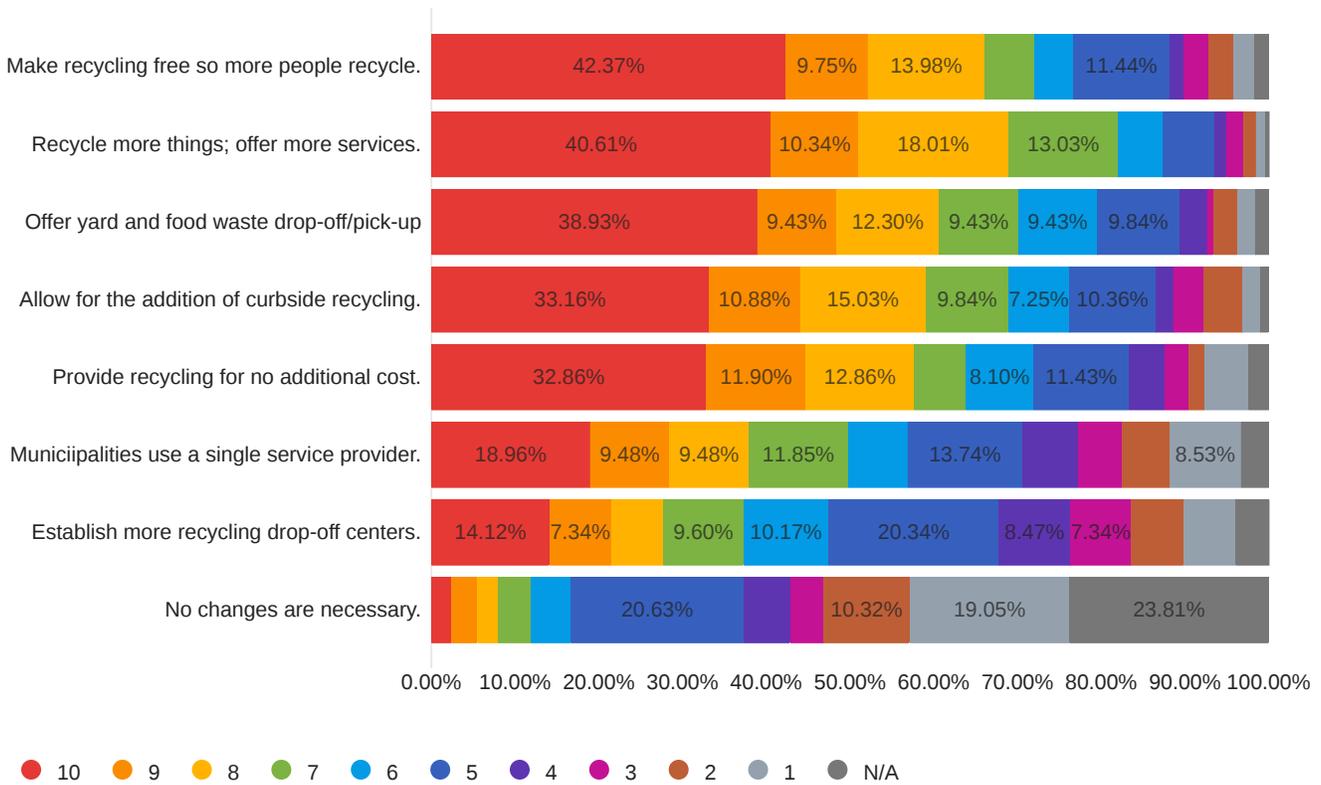
286 Responses



**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 little to nothing, they express the need for recycling to be completely free to allow for greater accessibility and participation from more people. As well, residents would like to see more recycling services to support the recycling of items not currently recycled in their areas.

275 Responses

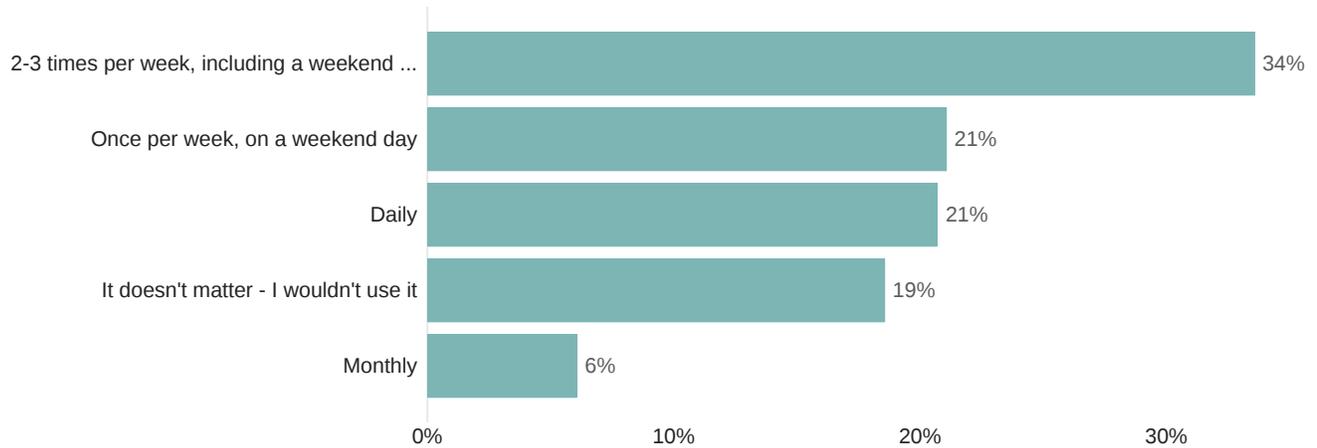


Select a field

## 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** - 55% 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.

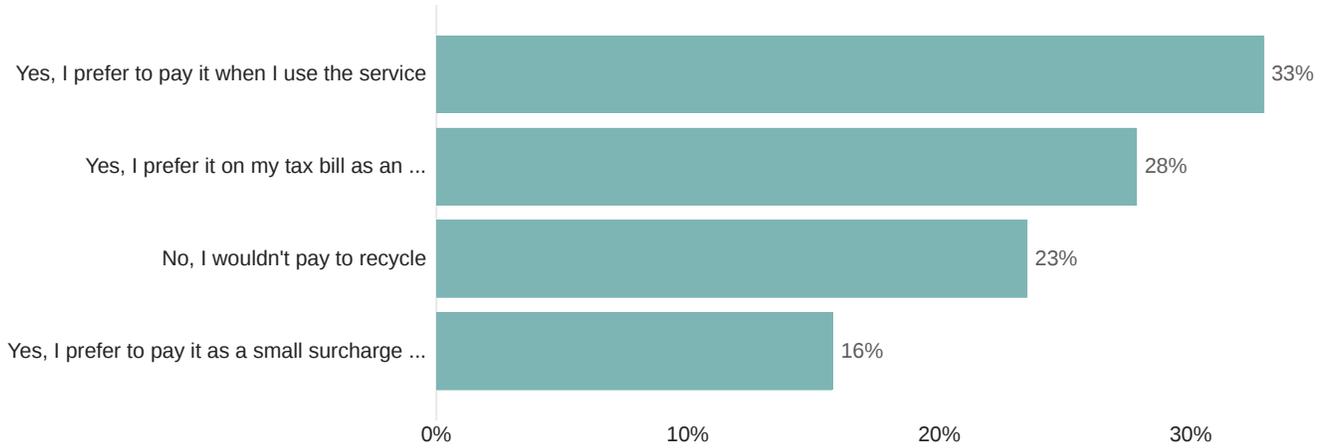
280 Responses



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

**SUMMARY** - Only a quarter of residents express a disinterest in paying for recycling. Instead, most prefer to pay when they use the service or have an assessment or fee on their tax bill.

286 Responses

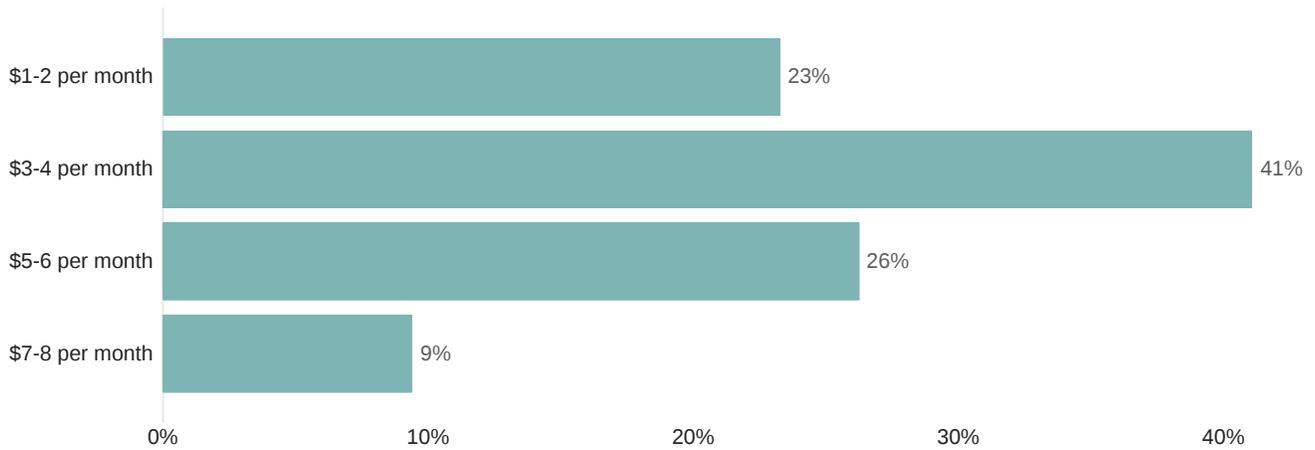


## Q14 - What would you be willing to spend to get convenient access to recycling or food waste collection?

**SUMMARY** - A sizeable fraction of respondents (23%) would not pay anything for convenient access to recycling or food waste collection. Of those willing to pay for recycling or food waste collection, 90% want to pay \$6 or less a month for recycling or food waste collection; \$3-4 per month is most preferred.

Note: 23% of respondents would not pay anything.

202 Responses



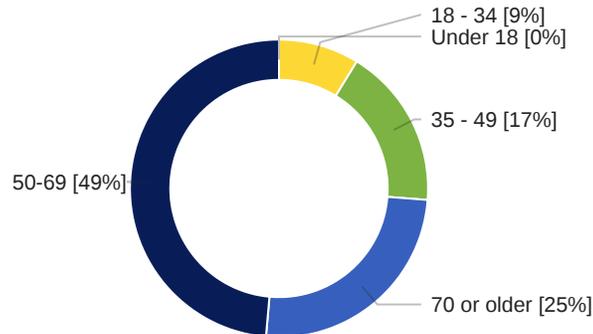
# Demographics and Background of Respondents

## SUMMARY:

- Respondents are primarily 50 years of age or older.
- Respondents are predominately female.
- 93% have some college education or higher.
- 89% of respondents own the home that they live in.
- 97% live in Grand Traverse County year around.
- Unsurprisingly, because of the higher age range of our respondents, 84% do not have children living at home who are school age or younger.
- 94% of respondents are white with little representation of other racial or ethnic groups.
- Median yearly household income falls around \$50,000 - \$75,000 per year.
- Of those who rent or lease their home, a majority does not have on-site recycling available to them, but would like to have the option. Two-fifths have access to and use on-site recycling services.

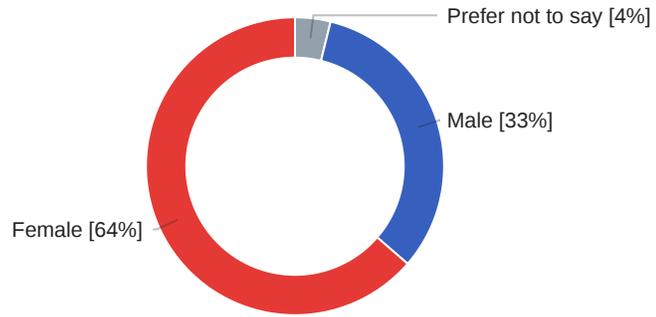
## Q16 - Which of these best fits your age?

286 Responses



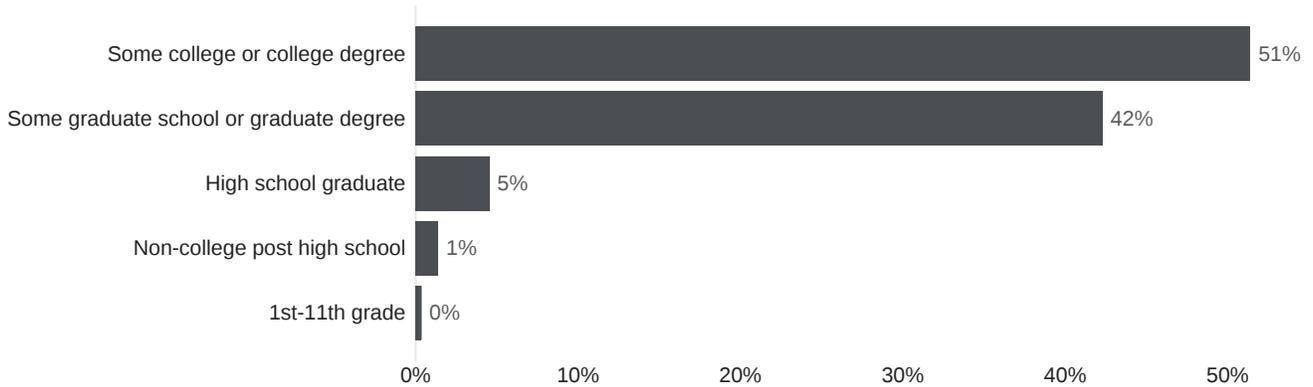
# Q17 - What is your gender?

286 Responses



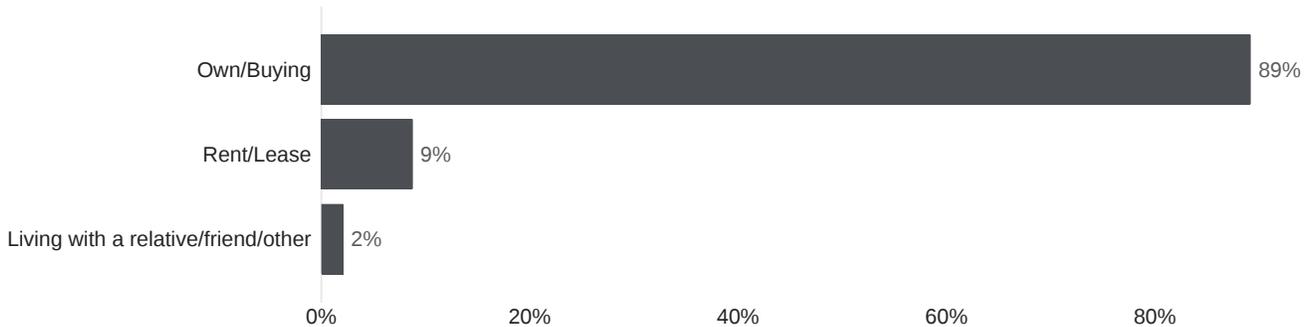
### Q18 - What is the last grade or level of schooling you completed?

286 Responses



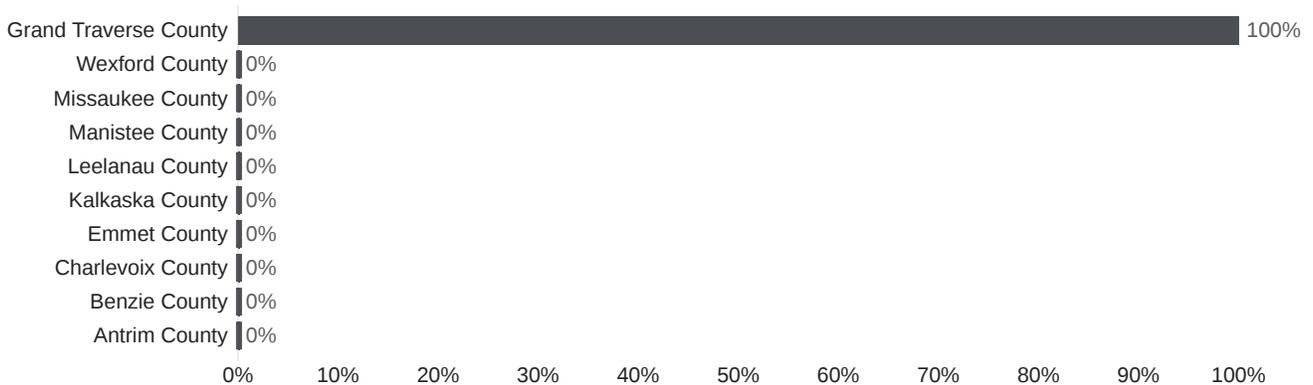
### Q19 - Do you own your own home, are you buying a home, or do you lease or rent where you live?

286 Responses



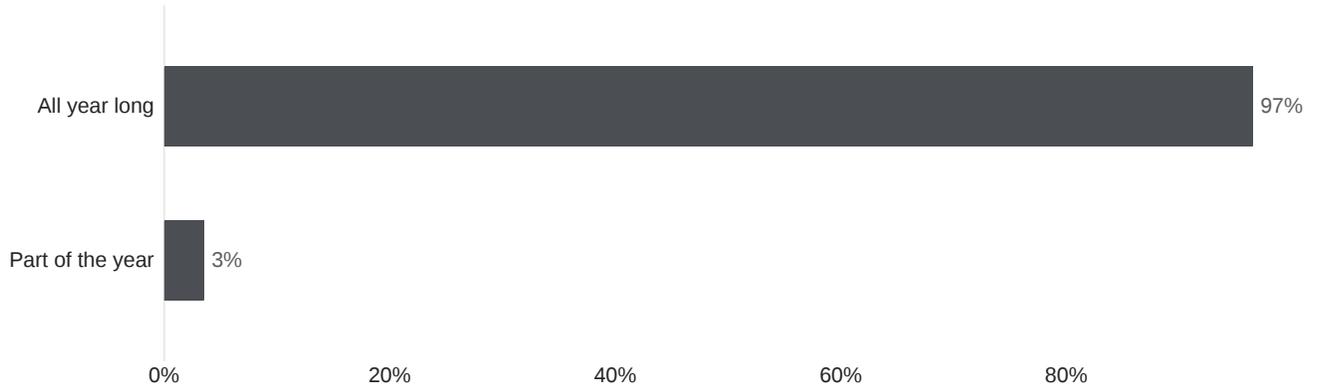
### Q20 - County

286 Responses



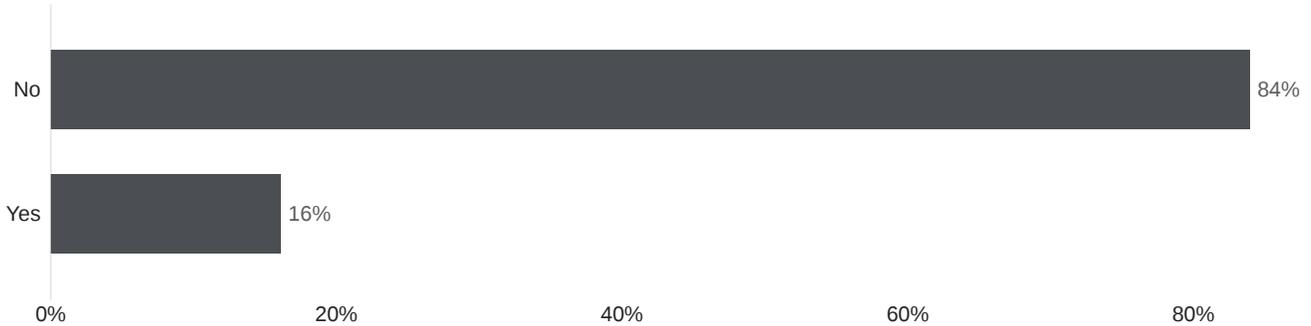
# Q21 - How much of the year do you live in this county?

286 Responses



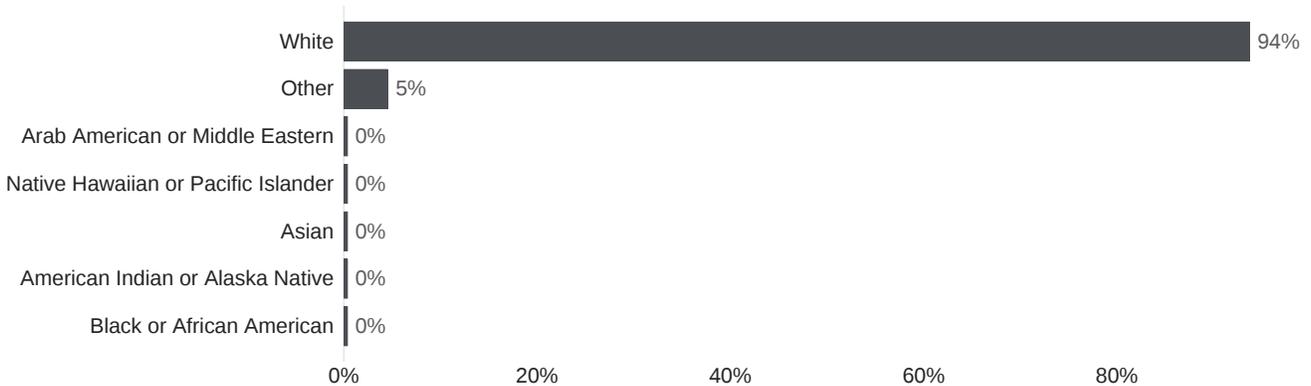
### Q22 - Do you have children living in your home who are school age or younger?

286 Responses



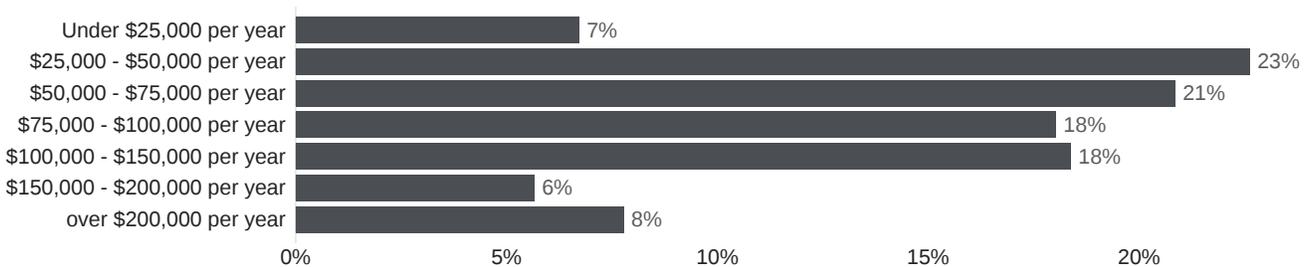
### Q23 - Which racial or ethnic group best describes you?

286 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.

283 Responses



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

25 Responses

