



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

TOP FIVE NEEDS:

1. Drop-off recycling stations + assurance of curbside recycling, where populations justify the service
2. Consistent education and outreach
3. At least one Center for Hard to Recycle Materials (CHaRM)
4. Hub-and-spoke collections for key materials
5. More frequent household hazardous waste collection opportunities

TOP THREE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT PROJECTS:

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

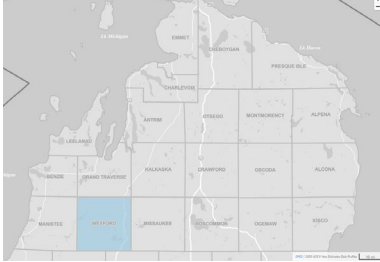
1. Engage County and municipal leaders in conversations about materials management solutions in light of changes in state law.
2. Evaluate the funding and infrastructure needed to regularly or periodically collect additional materials, including more frequent household hazardous waste events, mattresses, 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	Primary Stakeholder Type	Contact Type
Joe	Porterfield	Wexford County	County Administrator	primary
Mark	Bevelhymmer	GFL/American Waste	hauler	In-Person
Todd	Harland	Republic Services	hauler	Email
Jill	Reynolds	Waste Management	hauler	Email
Sarna	Salzman	SEEDS	community organization	In-person
Ann	Rogers	Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council	community organization	Email
Joseph	Hurlburt	Wexford County	county official	Email via County Administrative Staff
Michael	Musta	Wexford County	county official	Email via County Administrative Staff
Ben	Townsend	Wexford County	county official	Email via County Administrative Staff
Kathleen	Adams	Wexford County	county official	Email via County Administrative Staff
Michael	Bush	Wexford County	county official	Email via County Administrative Staff
Julie	Theobald	Wexford County	county official	Email via County Administrative Staff
Gary	Taylor	Wexford County	county official	Email via County Administrative Staff
Jason	Baughan	Wexford County	county official	Email via County Administrative Staff
Brian	Potter	Wexford County	county official	Email via County Administrative Staff

WEXFORD COUNTY - GAPS



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.


- Curbside recycling is available in the City of Cadillac through a private hauler. It is not offered in the remainder of Wexford County.
- Drop-off recycling is available at one location in the county.
- HHW services are provided through a single day event.
- There are no organics collection locations for food or yard waste.

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.

- Wexford County has a small, privately owned materials recovery facility with baling capacity.

Population:	33,673
Square Miles of Land Area:	565.0
Households:	13,212
Employer Establishments:	882
Countywide Curbside Trash:	NO
Countywide Curbside Recycling:	NO
Countywide Curbside Organics:	NO
Countywide Drop-off Trash:	NO
Countywide Drop-off Recycling:	NO
Countywide Drop-off Organics:	NO
Countywide Drop-off HHW:	YES





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.

- There were no markets identified in Wexford County 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.

- There are no public/private partnerships in Wexford 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.

- Wexford County does not use policy to fund or ensure convenient access to 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. 77 people from Wexford 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.

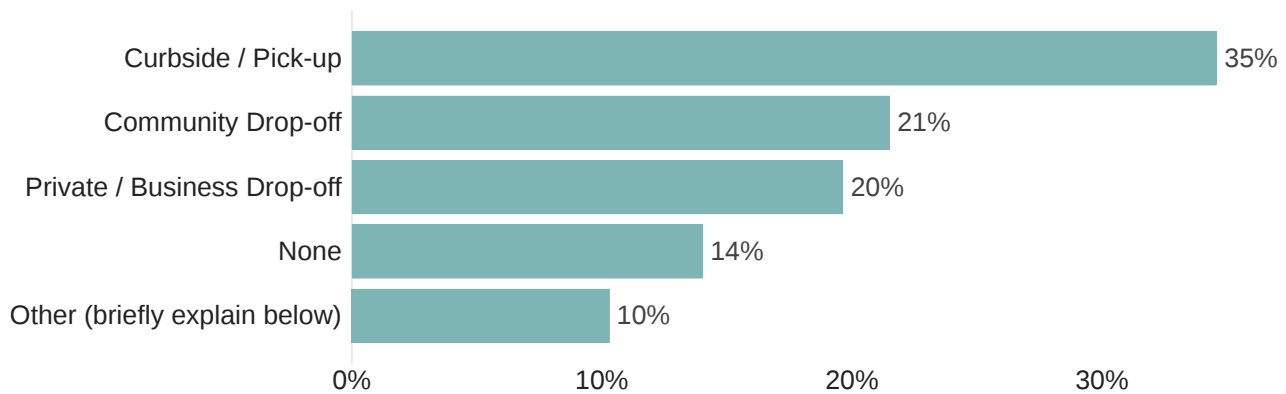
The full survey results for Wexford County are on the following pages.

MMCE Networks Northwest Survey Results Summary (Wexford County)

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

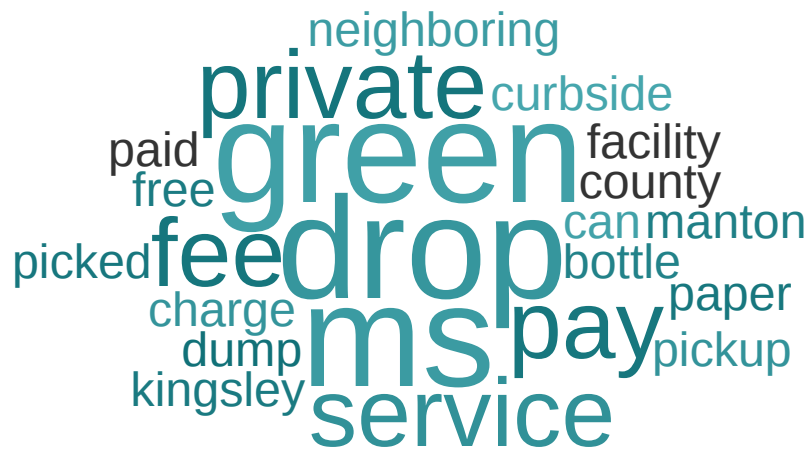
SUMMARY - 17% express having access to both Curbside Pick-up and Community Drop-off recycling services. Many noted that these services are offered through private businesses, such as Ms Green, for a fee.

77 Responses



Q1 - "Other" text responses

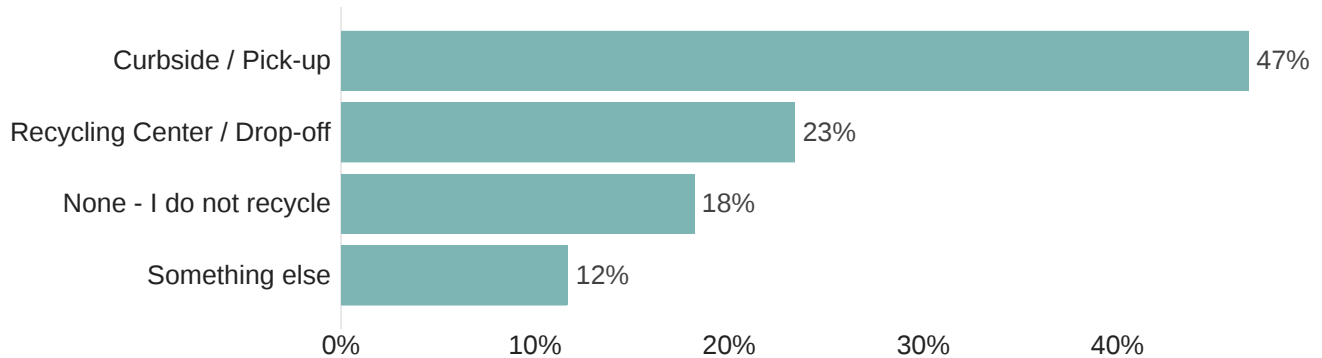
11 Responses



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

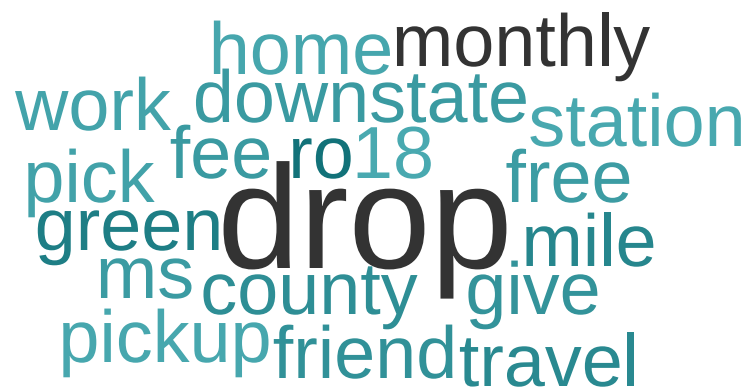
SUMMARY - Although most use Curbside Pick-up recycling services many express traveling elsewhere, to a different county, to recycle. 18% do not recycle at all.

77 Responses



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

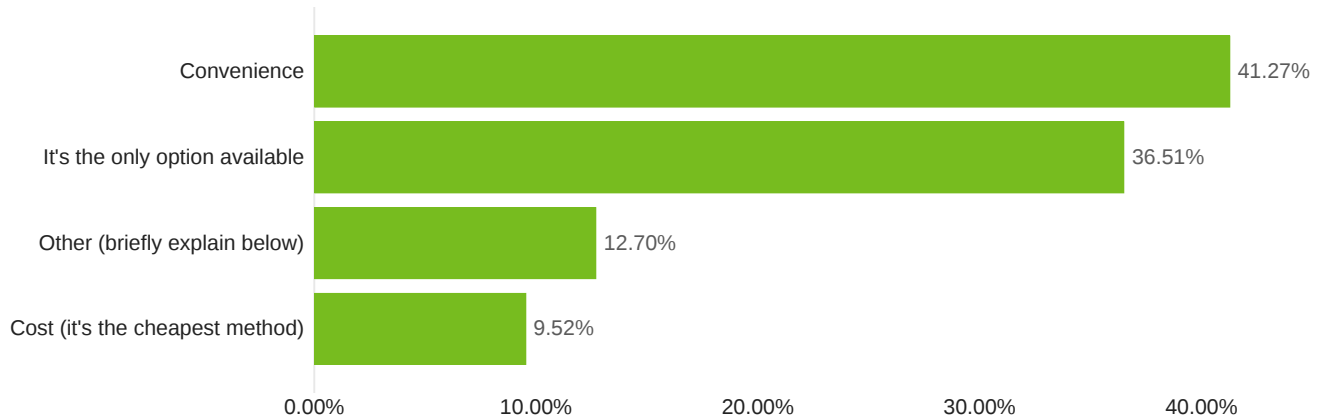
7 Responses



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

SUMMARY - For Wexford residents, convenience is the leading reason for choosing the method of recycling.

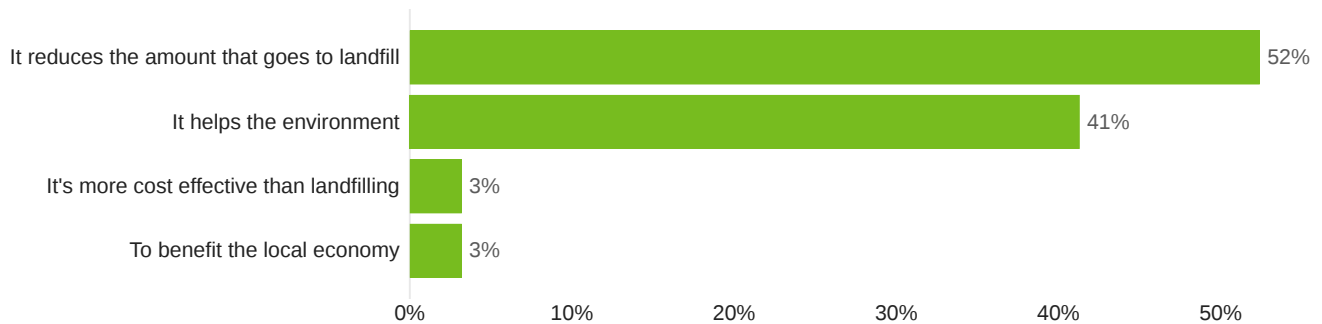
63 Responses



Q4 - Why do you recycle?

SUMMARY - 52% recycle as a means to reduce the amount of waste headed to landfills. 41% do so for environmental reasons.

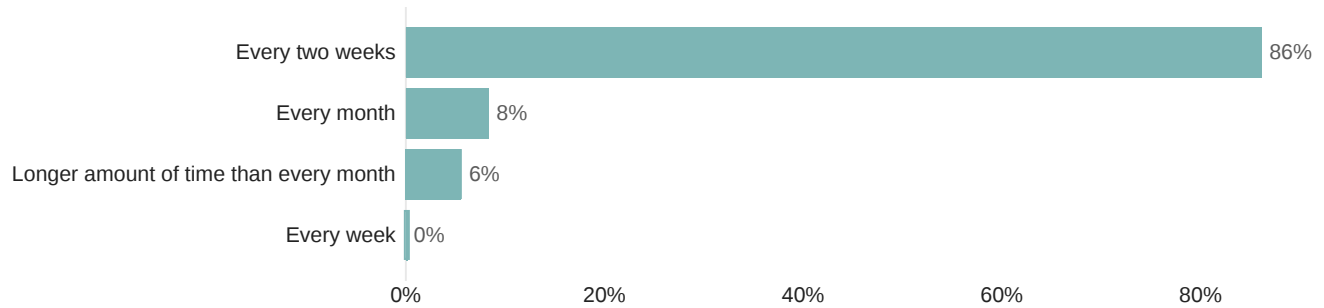
63 Responses



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

SUMMARY - Of those who are offered Curbside Pick-up services, 86% use the service every two weeks and no one uses it weekly.

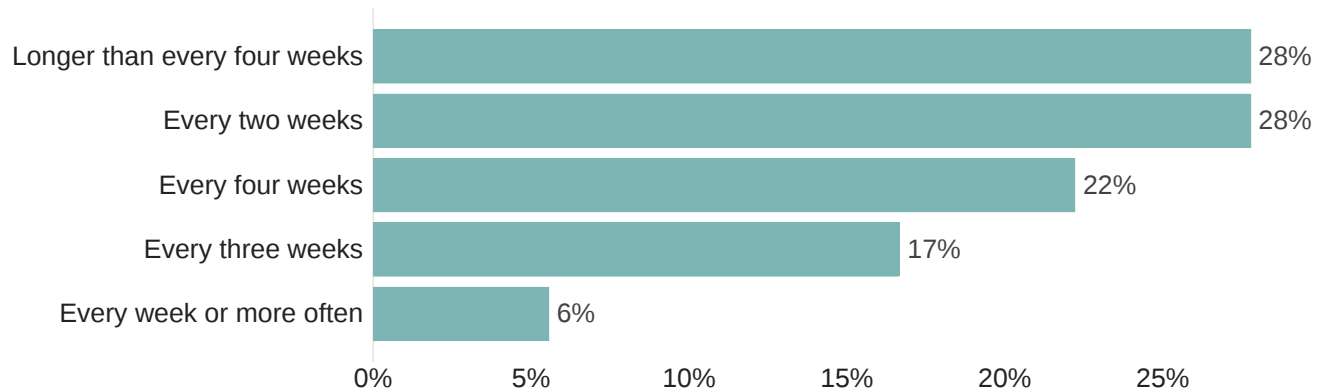
36 Responses



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

SUMMARY - Those with access to Drop-off recycling services are likely to use the service either every other week, monthly, or longer than monthly. This is likely due to distances required to travel to the Drop-off sites.

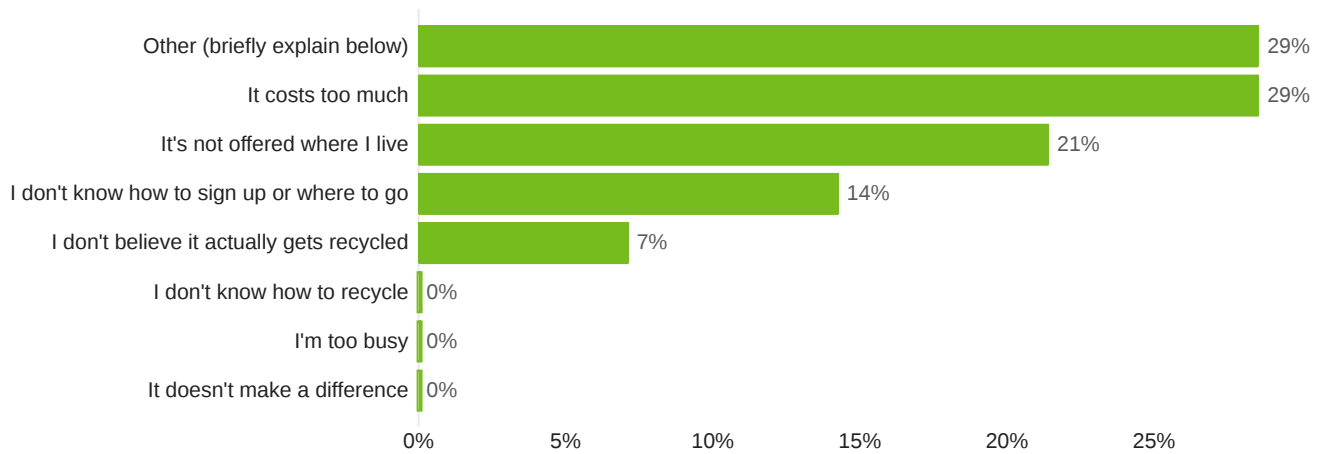
18 Responses



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

SUMMARY - Of those who do not recycle, all express sentiments of inconvenience, high costs, and no curbside recycling offered.

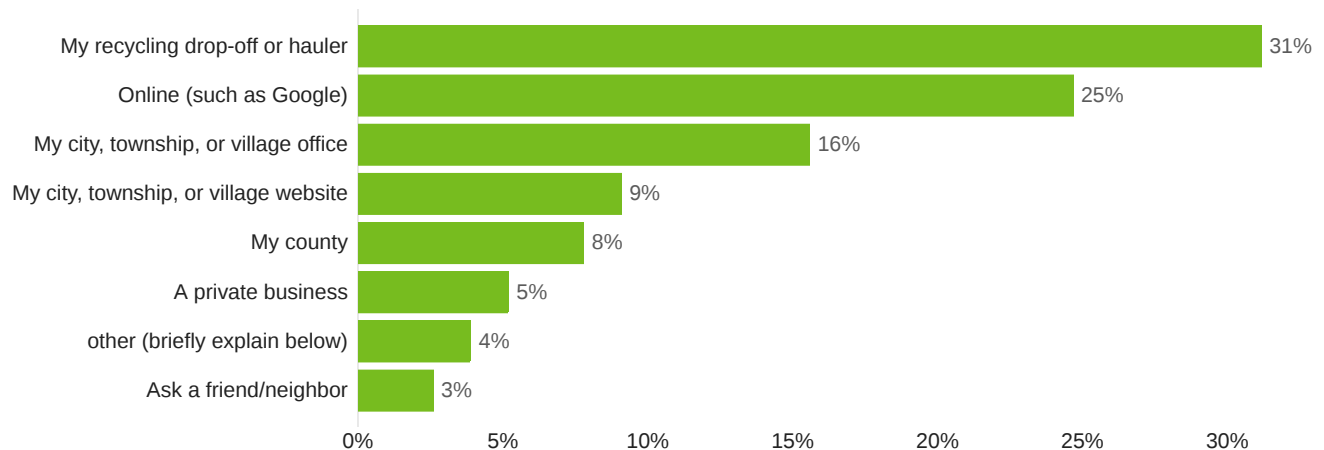
14 Responses



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

SUMMARY - 64% first look towards their municipality and recycling providers to answers questions about recycling. 33% seek information from Google, friends, and private businesses. One individual expressed, "There is no help in Wexford County about recycling."

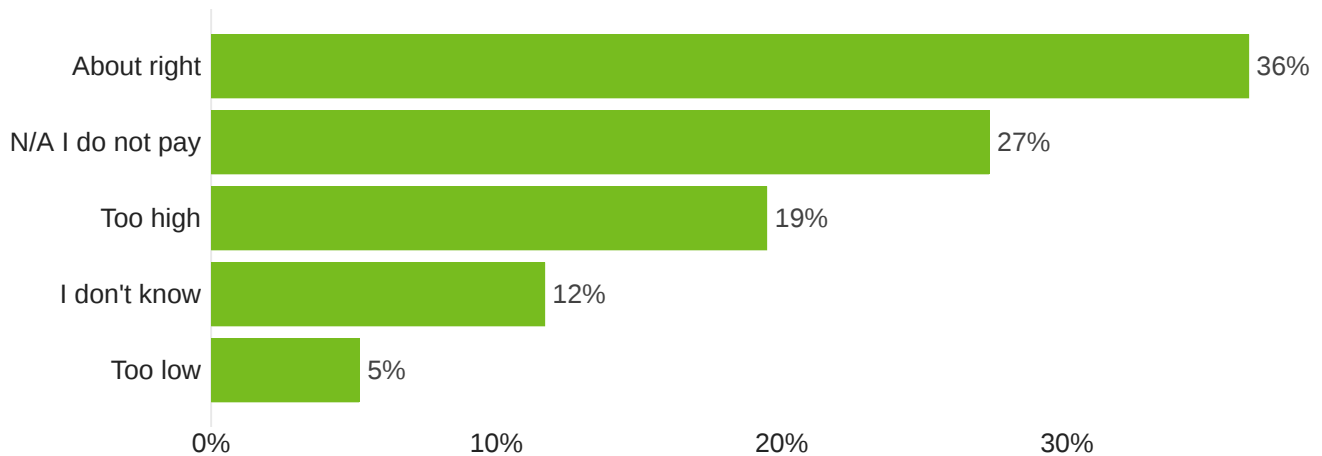
77 Responses



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 - 27% do not pay for recycling. While 36% 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.

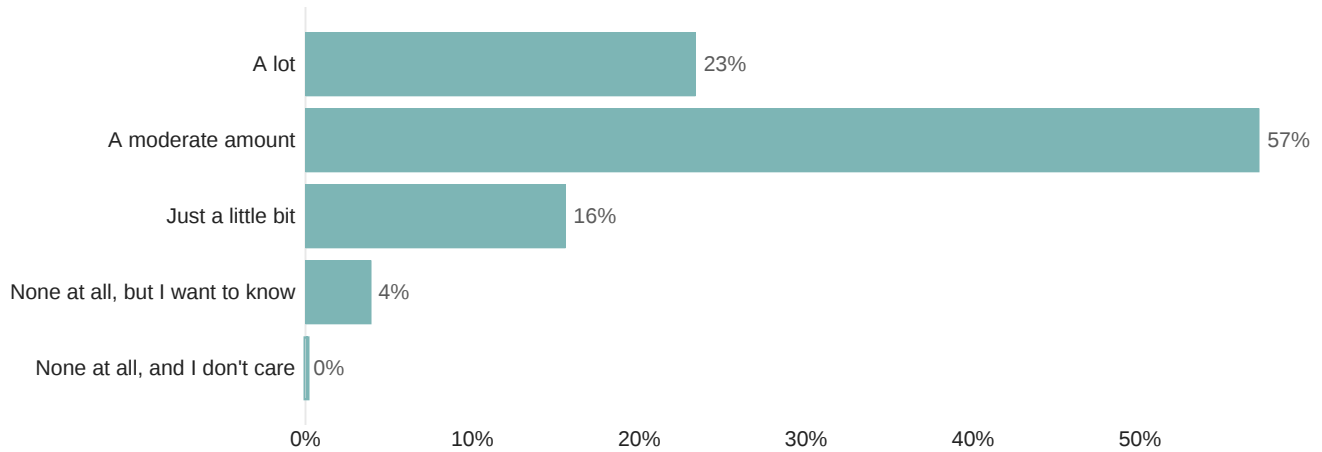
77 Responses



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

SUMMARY - A majority feels they know a moderate amount about recycling. Whereas only 23% feels that they know a lot.

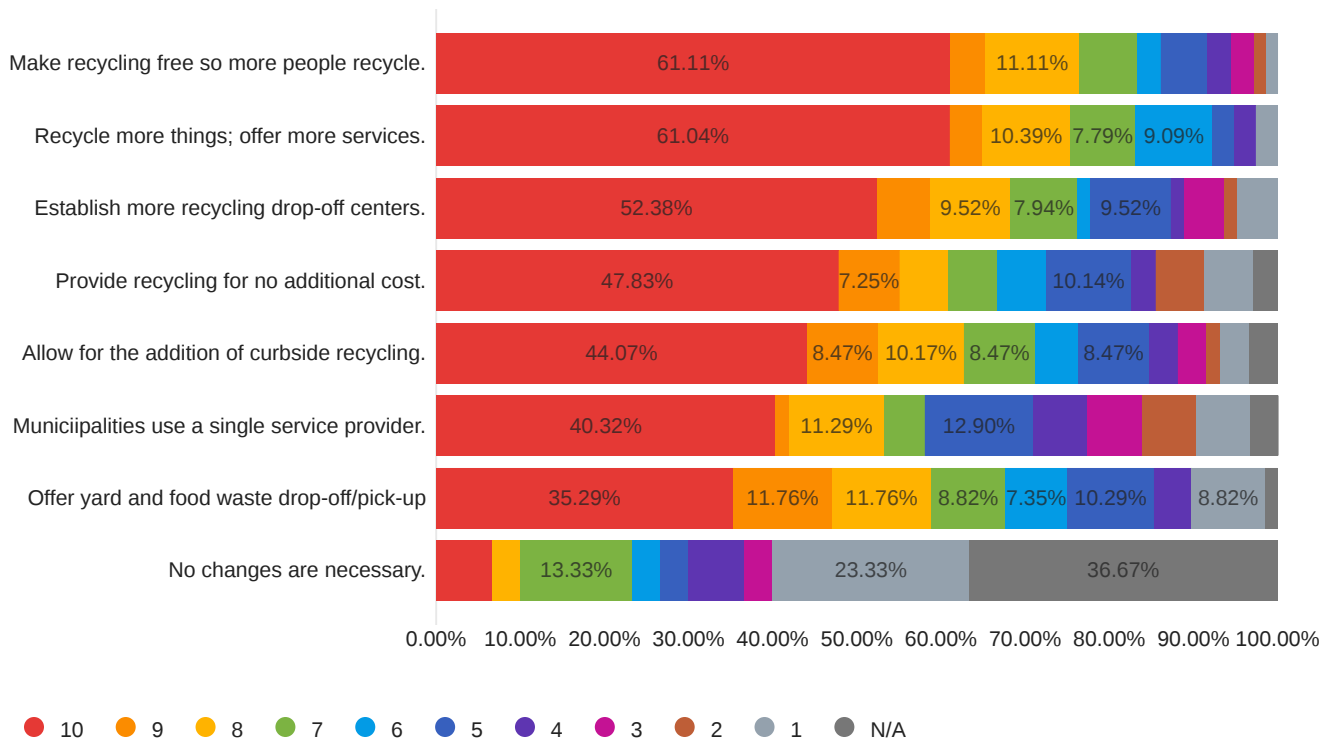
77 Responses



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 to see more recycling services to support the recovery of items not currently recycled in their area.

77 Responses

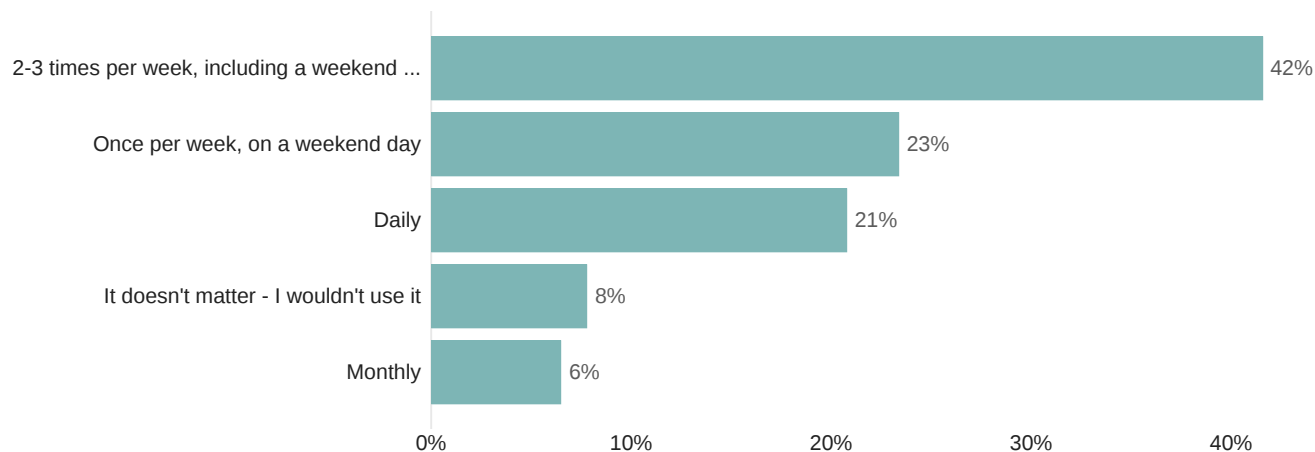


Select a field

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 - 65% 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.

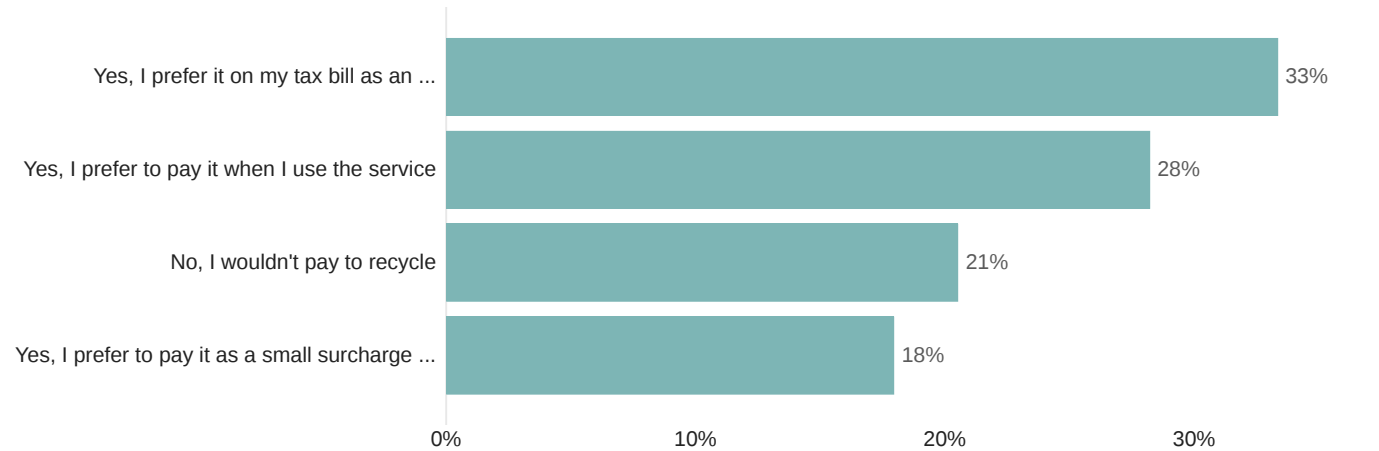
77 Responses



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

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

77 Responses

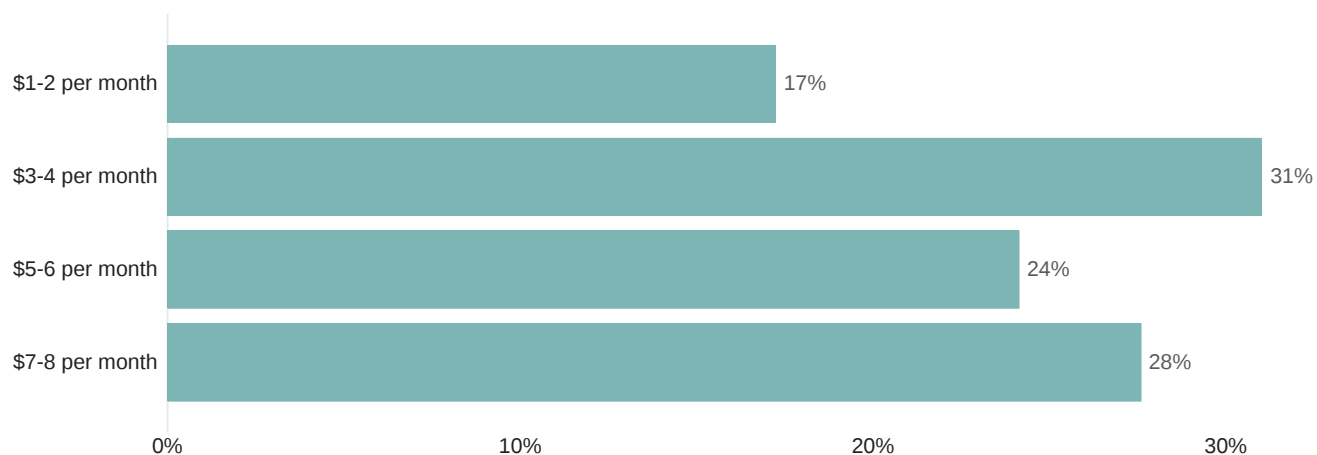


Q14 - What would you be willing to spend to get convenient access to recycling or food waste collection?

SUMMARY - A sizeable fraction of respondents (21%) would not pay anything for convenient access to recycling or food waste collection. Of those willing to pay for recycling or food waste collection, 72% want to pay \$6 or less a month for recycling or food waste collection; \$3-4 per month is most preferred.

Note: 21% of respondents would not pay anything.

58 Responses



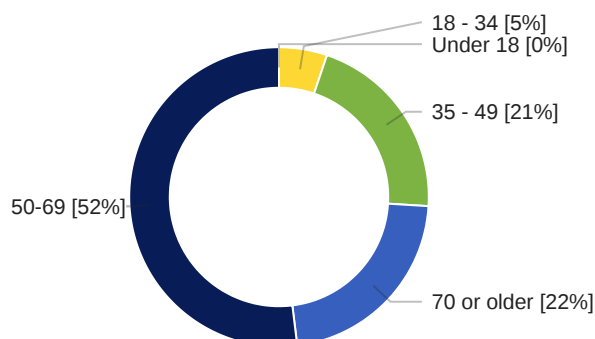
Demographics and Background of Respondents

SUMMARY:

- Respondents are primarily 50 years of age or older.
- Respondents are predominately female.
- 92% have some college education or higher.
- 96% of respondents own the home that they live in.
- 95% live in Wexford County year around.
- Unsurprisingly, because of the higher age range of our respondents, 81% do not have children living at home who are school age or younger.
- 96% 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, one does not have recycling services available on the property, but would like the service and the other does have and uses recycling services available on the property.

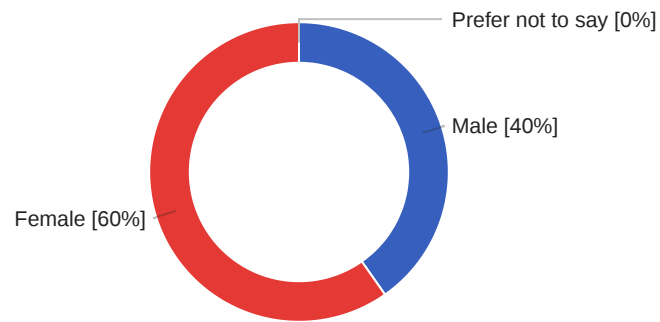
Q16 - Which of these best fits your age?

77 Responses



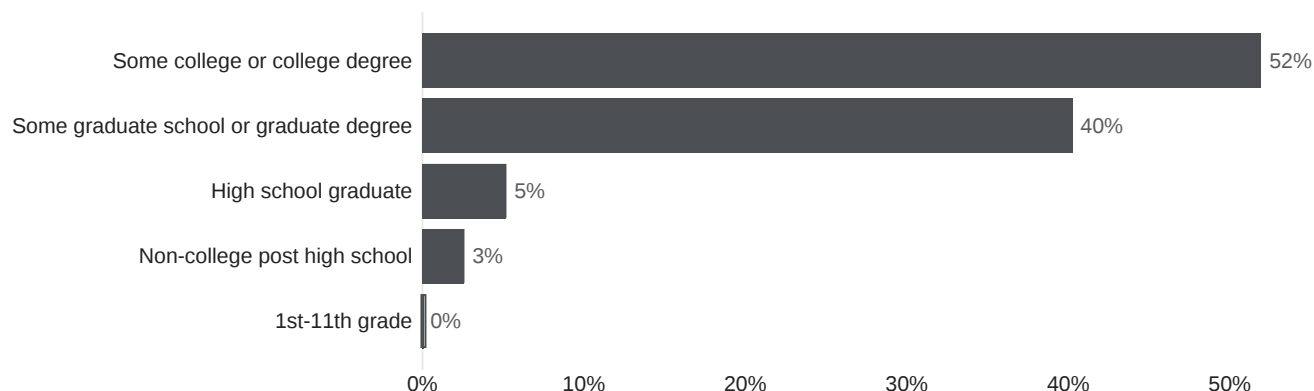
Q17 - What is your gender?

77 Responses



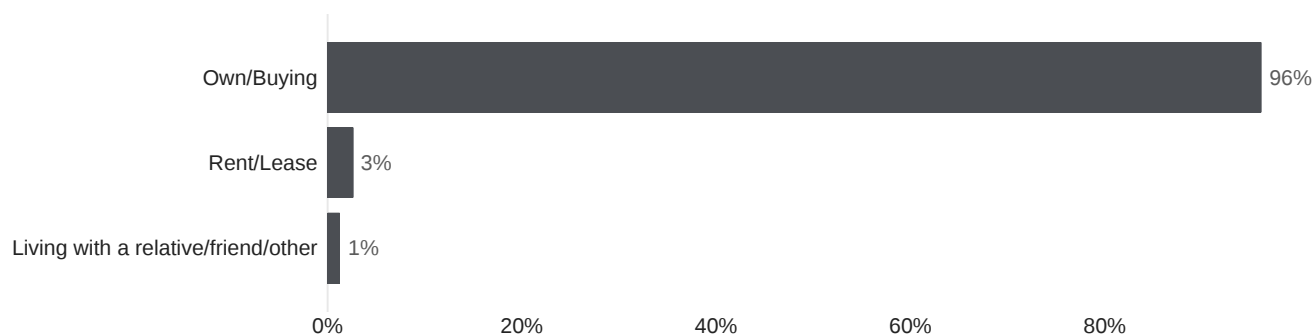
Q18 - What is the last grade or level of schooling you completed?

77 Responses



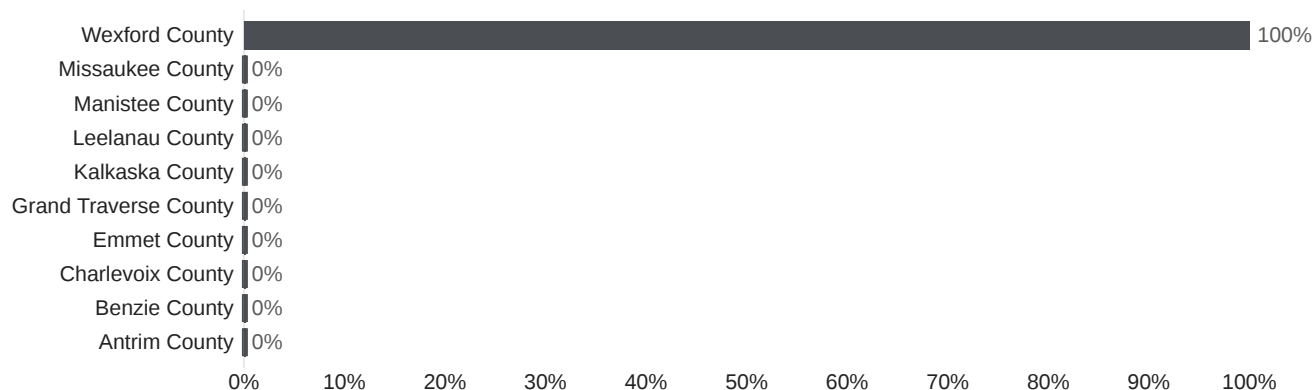
Q19 - Do you own your own home, are you buying a home, or do you lease or rent where you live?

77 Responses



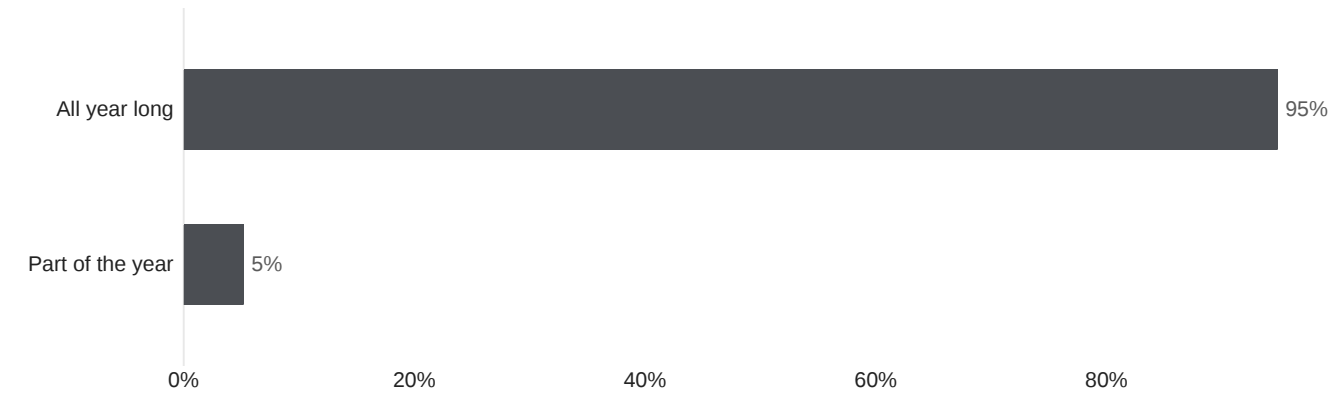
Q20 - County

77 Responses



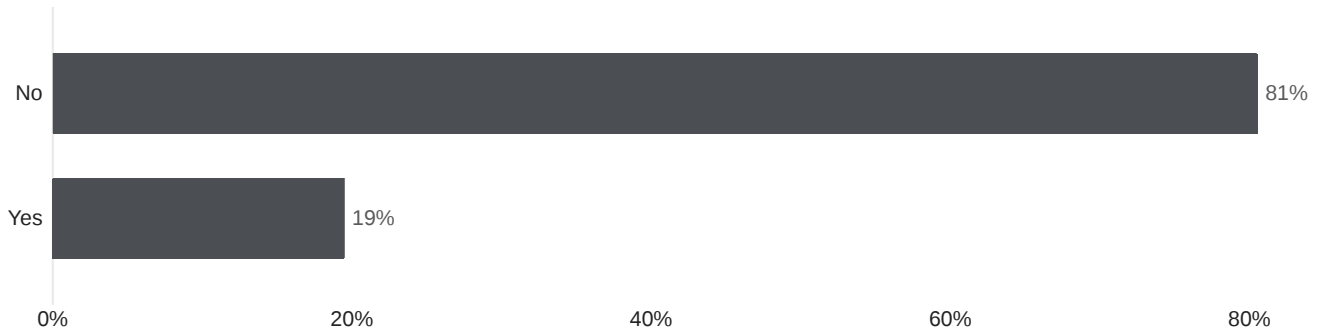
Q21 - How much of the year do you live in this county?

77 Responses



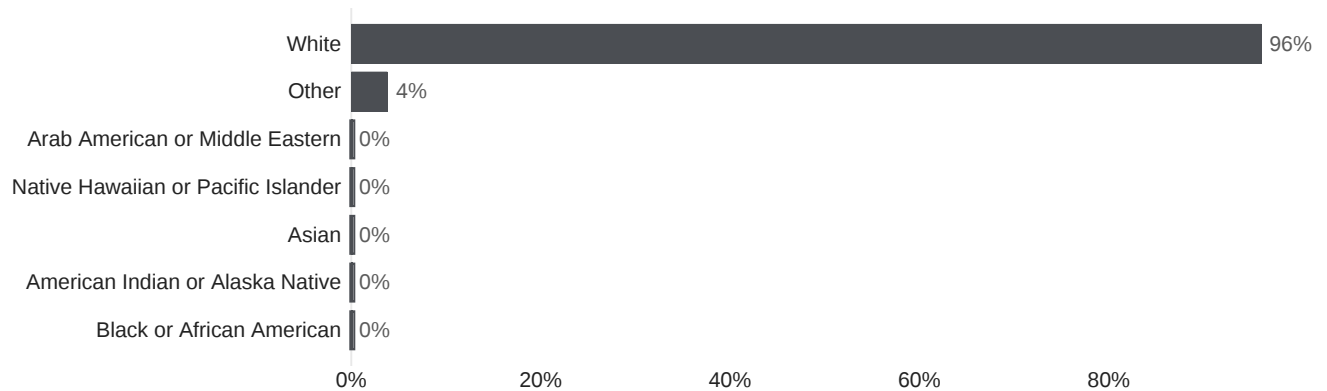
Q22 - Do you have children living in your home who are school age or younger?

77 Responses



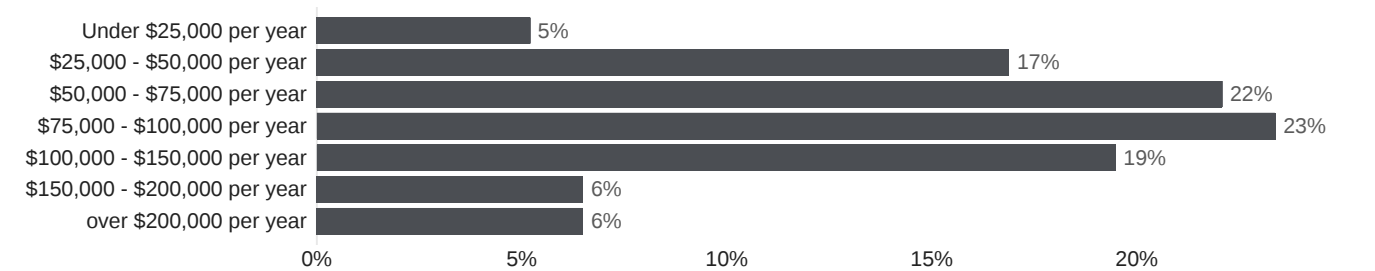
Q23 - Which racial or ethnic group best describes you?

77 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.

77 Responses



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

2 Responses

