



ALBION FORWARD SURVEY REPORT 2017

*A summary and analysis of the data collected by the Build Albion
AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative through the Albion Forward Survey.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

Executive Summary _____	1
Key Findings: _____	1
Recommendations for action include but are not limited to: _____	2
Introduction _____	3
Background _____	3
What is the Build Albion Americorps VISTA Initiative? _____	3
What is the Albion Forward Survey? _____	3
How the Albion Forward Survey was Developed _____	4
Implementation of the Albion Forward Survey _____	4
Limitations and How to Use this Report _____	5
Thank you to our Partners and Participants _____	6
Demographic Information _____	7
Community Planning _____	9
Summary _____	9
Making Albion a Thriving City _____	9
Neighborhood Stabilization _____	10
Neighborhood Planning Councils _____	10
Meeting Financial Needs of Albion Households _____	10
Environmental Factors _____	12
Connections _____	13
Communication _____	13
Transportation _____	14
Who Needs Transportation Assistance? _____	15
What People need Transportation Assistance For _____	17
What Services are Currently being Utilized? _____	19
Education in Albion _____	23
Summary _____	23
Youth Programming inside and outside of Albion _____	24

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Conclusion	28
Food Security	29
Summary	29
Albion Forward Survey Key Food Security Statistics:	29
Actions	31
Food Access: Logistics & Market	31
Gaps & Awareness	32
Food Security of Aging Adults	34
Health Care	38
Summary	38
Environmental Issues	38
Access to Medical Care	41
Health Programming	46
Medical Expenses	50
Citations:	52
Job Connection and Access	53
Conclusion	55
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:	55
Appendix 1: Previous Needs Assessments	57
Appendix 2: Citations and Resources	58
Appendix 3: The Albion Forward Survey	59

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

Albion College, the City of Albion, and community organizations began the Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative in 2016 as a part of a larger community effort to revitalize the City of Albion. AmeriCorps VISTA is a national service program focused on alleviating poverty. An expectation of all first year AmeriCorps VISTA programs is to conduct an assessment of the community's needs and assets. Therefore, the Albion Forward Survey was implemented by the first year members of the Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative in early 2017. The goal of the survey was to gather community input in regards to economic development, education, health, and food access, identify ways residents of Albion connect to happenings in Albion, and identify transportation needs of Albion residents.

The Build Albion VISTA Initiative made a significant effort to receive as many citizen responses to the Albion Forward Survey as possible, especially citizens of low income. The VISTA team distributed flyers door-to-door at every subsidized housing facility and were stationed at local businesses, churches, food pantries, and other local organizations and community spaces throughout business days, evenings, and weekends. The survey was advertised in the local newspapers, community meetings, community coalitions, newsletters, and sponsored social media posts. 430 City of Albion residents completed the survey.

This report does not claim that the results of this survey are statistically significant relative to the entire city. It is intended to be used to influence the future work of the Build Albion VISTA Initiative, its partners, and any other citizen or organization. Community members and organizations using this report should understand that this report can serve as a starting point for future research, discussion, and action.

Below are some key findings followed by recommendations for action based on survey results, other needs assessments of the region, and conversations with community members.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Most important aspects for Albion to be a thriving city: good infrastructure, having an active and lively downtown, safe neighborhoods, a variety of retail stores, a variety of affordable recreation options, and a wide variety of quality housing options.
2. Respondents mostly get information about services and events in Albion through social media and word of mouth.
3. News services like Albion Recorder and E-News may be more effective for seniors than other age groups and for whites more than people of color.
4. 16.1% of respondents need transportation assistance.
5. Many respondents said that they would like for Neighborhood Planning Councils to oversee a Neighborhood Watch program and to plan for developments in their neighborhoods.
6. Top three areas in which respondents are struggling to meet the financial needs of their households: home repairs, utilities, and food.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

7. Top three physical environmental health concerns: broken down homes and buildings, abandoned industrial sites, and toxic substances.
8. Average satisfaction (1 being very unsatisfied, 5 being very satisfied) with current out of school educational programs among respondents was 2.44.
9. Over 55% of respondents selected that they would like youth programming to be offered in downtown Albion and the District Library which is also located in downtown Albion.
10. 30% of respondents indicated that they worry about not having enough food, cost being the main reason.
11. 24% of those that worry about not having enough food worry every day.
12. 40% of respondents indicated some level of use or interest in using a food pantry.
13. Oaklawn Medical Group and an Emergency Room were the top two choices for where respondents go when they are sick or need medical attention.
14. Exercise classes were the most desired free health class, followed by stress reduction, and then food-related courses (nutrition, food tasting demonstrations, cooking on a health budget, and gardening).
15. 32% of respondents could not afford some kind of medical expense in the past 12 months.
16. Top job training interest: Entrepreneurship/Business.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Utilize sponsored social media posts to reach Albion residents about services and happenings in the community (Key Finding 2).
- Start Neighborhood Planning Councils to implement programs like Neighborhood Watch, to plan for infill housing developments, and foster a sense of engagement with and ownership of the Albion community among residents (Key Finding 5).
- Continue efforts to demolish and rehabilitate blighted homes and industrial properties (Key Finding 7).
- Offer afterschool programming in downtown Albion locations (Key Finding 9)
- Offer free health classes for exercise, stress reduction, food tastings, healthy cooking, and gardening. Some should be geared towards older adults for accessibility (Key Finding 14).
- Entities like the Albion Economic Development Corporation, Albion College, and Greater Albion Chamber of Commerce should continue to offer learning opportunities for entrepreneurship and business to the community (Key Finding 16).

For a full list of recommendations for action, see pages 55 and 56.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

BACKGROUND

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) was founded in 1965 under the Johnson administration as a national service program to fight poverty in America. In 1993, under the Clinton administration, VISTA was incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs.

Each VISTA member makes a year-long, full-time commitment to serve a nonprofit organization or public agency. VISTA members do not provide direct services, such as tutoring children or building homes. Instead, they focus their efforts on building the organizational, administrative, and financial capacity of organizations that improve literacy, improve health services, foster economic development, and otherwise assist communities of low income.

WHAT IS THE BUILD ALBION AMERICORPS VISTA INITIATIVE?

Albion College, the City of Albion, and community organizations began the Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative in 2016 as a part of a larger community effort to revitalize the City of Albion. Through capacity building, focused on alleviating poverty and creating partnerships with stakeholders, these efforts could serve as a model to other post-industrial towns.

In the winter of 2015, Albion College applied for a grant to be a site for an AmeriCorps VISTA team to serve the City of Albion. The proposal was to have ten VISTA members and one VISTA leader serving in the areas of Economic Opportunities, Education, and Healthy Futures and was granted in February of 2016. The grant period is for three years with a possibility of renewal for an additional two years. The VISTA members commit to one year of service. Each year, eleven new VISTA members will arrive and serve the Albion community.

WHAT IS THE ALBION FORWARD SURVEY?

The goal of the first year of the program was to conduct an assessment of the community's needs and assets. This is an expectation of all first-year AmeriCorps VISTA programs. Numerous community members and partnering organizations also expressed that they lacked data that was specific to Albion and the people that they intend to serve. A community survey was a way to collect useful data for and from community members, guide the Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Program, serve as a starting point for further research, be a source of community engagement, and be a call to action.

The specific goals of the Albion Forward Survey were to:

- Gather community input in regards to economic development, education, health and food access
- Identify ways residents of Albion connect to happenings in Albion
- Identify transportation needs of Albion residents

INTRODUCTION

How the Albion Forward Survey was Developed

To begin, the VISTA team met with various community members and organizations to discuss the needs of the Albion community and the gaps in services/data. One concern that was heard from community members, was that this would be “just another survey” that would repeat findings and not be used for anything. To prevent this from being “just another survey,” the VISTA team compiled existing data and survey results from research done on the community in the past. These needs assessments can be found in Appendix 1.

The VISTA members then spent time with the program partners including: the City of Albion, the Albion Economic Development Corporation, the Albion Food Hub and Farmers Market, the Albion Health Care Alliance, Marshall Public Schools, the Calhoun County Land Bank Authority, and Michigan Works! to identify information that would inform future decisions and plans. They focused on what had not been asked in the previous surveys done over the past decade.

With this information, the VISTA team created a survey centered on the three focus areas of Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative: Education, Healthy Futures, and Economic Opportunities. Using the Battle Creek Vision survey as a model, the VISTA members spent time narrowing down the questions to make a survey that was complete, yet manageable, for citizens to complete in a reasonable amount of time. The Albion Forward Survey was reviewed by Albion College’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) and was implemented from January through mid-April. As an incentive to complete the survey, participants had the option to be entered into a raffle to win one of 25 ten-dollar gift cards to Family Fare.

Implementation of the Albion Forward Survey

The Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative made a significant effort to receive as many citizen responses to the Albion Forward Survey as possible, especially citizens of low income. Respondents could either fill out a paper or online version of the survey. Both versions also included a consent form along with a form to express interest in volunteering in Albion and entrance into the raffle.

Collectively, the VISTA team put in over 400 hours of service to go to where residents are in the community to survey in person. Online advertising was utilized as well. The VISTA team distributed flyers door-to-door at every subsidized housing complex and were stationed at local businesses, churches, food pantries, local nonprofits, the Albion District Library, and other community spaces throughout business days, evenings, and weekends. The survey was also advertised in the local newspapers, community meetings, community coalitions, newsletters, and sponsored social media posts.

The Albion Forward Survey was reserved for City of Albion residents only. The Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative’s grant proposal stressed that efforts would be focused on the City of Albion. Having a specific and focused geographic boundary also provided a stronger study design.

From January 3rd to April 14th, 2017, the VISTA team collected 470 surveys - 225 by paper and 245 online. Of those, 40 were not analyzed because they were either were not City of Albion residents or they did not check the box agreeing to the terms of the survey. Therefore, their responses were not included in the

INTRODUCTION

analyses done for this report. The data from these surveys have been archived and will be used in secondary analyses of the data set, if desired.

LIMITATIONS AND HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

The demographics of the Albion Forward Survey respondents do not fully match Census estimates for race, age, gender, employment status, and income. This was partially by design, because the VISTA team specifically wanted to have a high number of respondents of low income. The survey responses may also be susceptible to sampling errors and response biases due to survey implementation. For example, many survey responses came from a sponsored Facebook post linking to the online survey, which may show bias towards those without internet access and could influence how respondents answered the question regarding where they get information. Where VISTA members went in person to survey may have also influenced responses, such as surveying at food pantry distributions, which would influence how people responded to food pantry usage in the survey. Lastly, there were some discrepancies between the paper and online version of the survey.

Therefore, this report does not claim that the results of this survey are statistically significant relative to the entire city. It is not intended to be interpreted as a scientific study. Rather, it is an analysis of 430 respondents from the community. The report is intended to be used to influence the future work of the Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative, its partners and any other citizen or organization. Community members and organizations using this report should understand that this report can serve as a starting point for future research, discussion, and action.

Finally, some survey responses did not follow the exact instructions to certain questions. All responses were tallied and included in this analysis.

INTRODUCTION

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND PARTICIPANTS

On behalf of the Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative, we acknowledge the many partners we had in the process of creating, administering, and analyzing the Albion Forward Survey. Your insight and experience guided and bolstered our efforts to serve the Albion community. We also appreciate every resident that took the time to participate in the survey and help spread the word about not only the survey, but also the Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative. Your collaboration is what makes the program a success.

Advisory Committee and Organizational Partners:

City of Albion	Albion College
Starr Commonwealth	Albion District Library
Marshall Public Schools	Kids at Hope
Calhoun County Land Bank Authority	Albion Health Care Alliance
Forks Senior Center	Albion Food Hub
Albion Economic Development Corporation	Senior Services of Southwest Michigan
Michigan Works!	Reverend Donald Phillips

Hosting Sites:

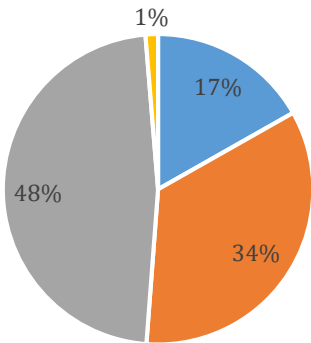
Albion Family Fare	City of Albion Recreation Department
Freeway Church	Albion Interfaith Ministries
Albion Housing Commission	Oak Meadows Homes
Lincolnshire Townhomes	Maple Grove Apartment
Kids 'N' Stuff	City of Albion
Biggby Coffee	Parks Drugstore
Forks Senior Center	First United Methodist Church
St. James Episcopal Church	New Hope Food Pantry
St. Paul Lutheran Church & Kid to Kid Shop	Albion's Farmers Market/Food Hub
Albion District Library	First United Methodist Church

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Demographic Information

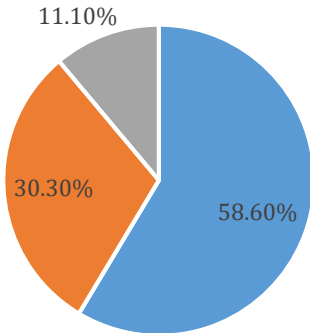
Below is a series of graphs that show the basic demographic information of the survey respondents.

Age of Respondents



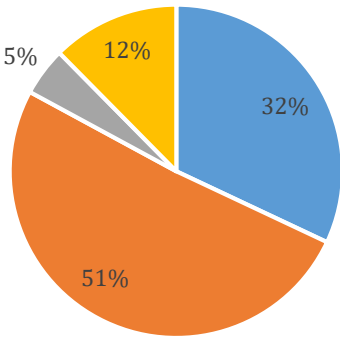
- 18-34 Years Old
- 35-54 Years Old
- 55+ Years Old
- Prefer Not to Answer

Gender Identities of Respondents



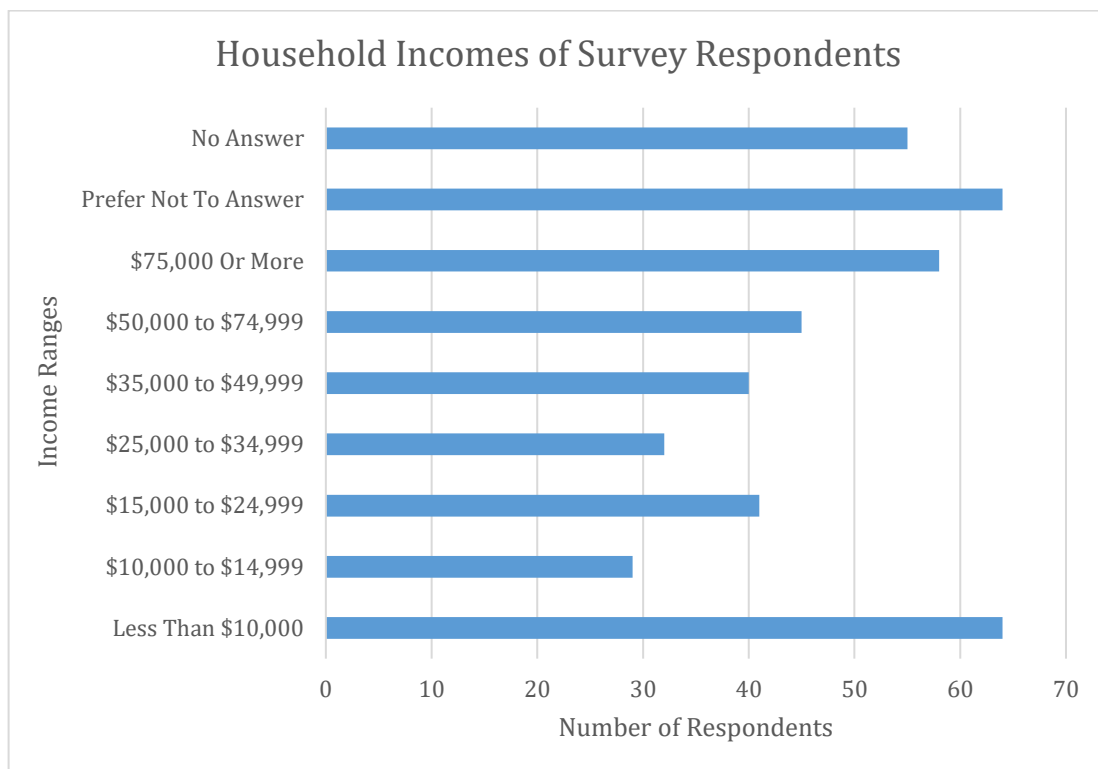
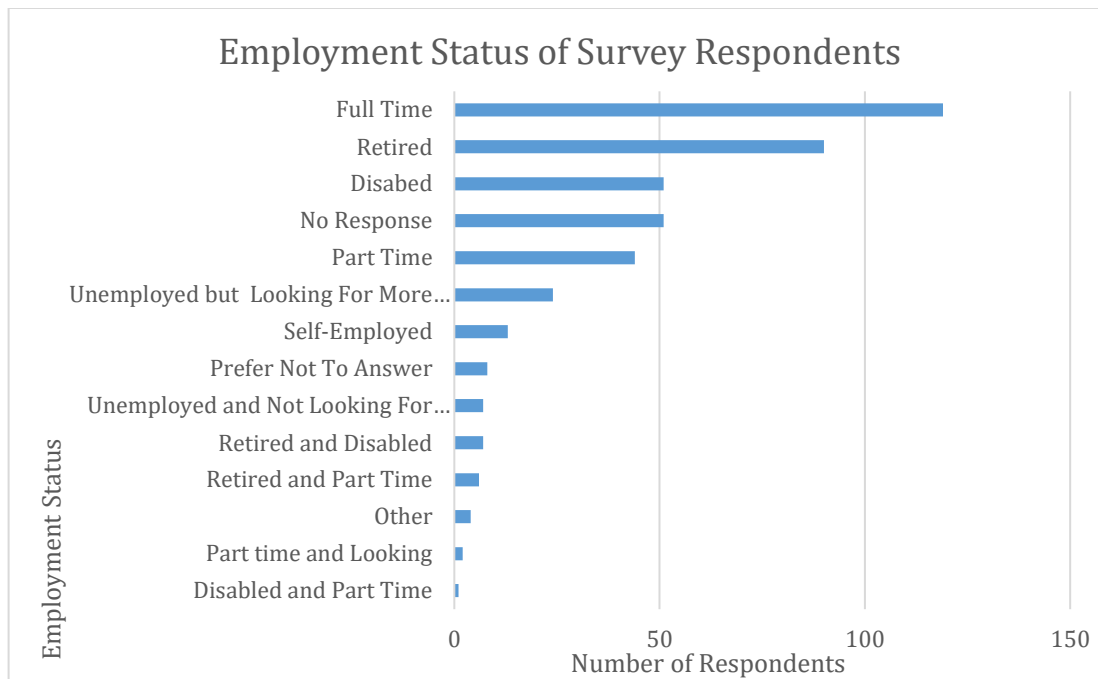
- Female
- Male
- No Answer/Prefer Not to Answer

Racial Identities of Respondents



- Person of Color
- White
- Prefer Not to Answer
- No Answer

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION



COMMUNITY PLANNING

Community Planning

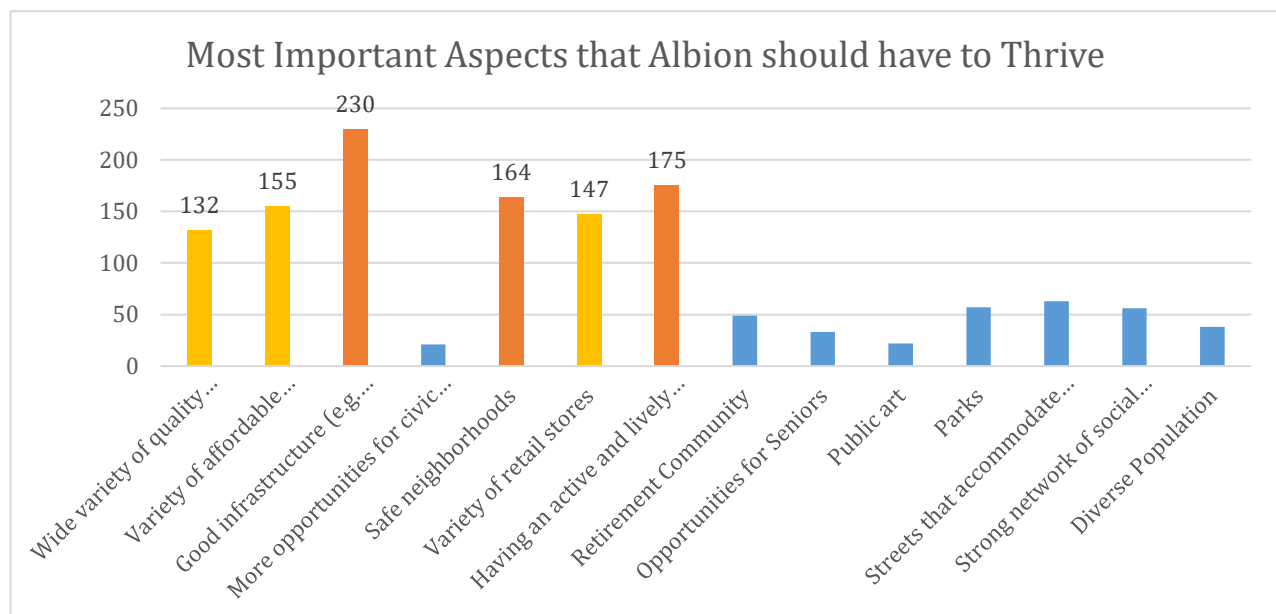
SUMMARY

One area of focus for the Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative is community planning to spur economic growth, neighborhood stability, a robust and equitable housing market, public safety, and community health. The information gathered from the Albion Forward Survey will be useful in determining the areas that community organizations and the city government can focus on to create a more attractive community for current and future residents, visitors, and employers.

MAKING ALBION A THRIVING CITY

With many different approaches can be taken for revitalizing the Albion community, the Albion Forward Survey attempted to gather information on which direction residents feel the city should take. Consulting community members is optimal for the planning process to avoid conflicts and pursue what residents want. To gather more information on what direction residents would like to take, the Albion Forward Survey asked residents to choose their top three choices to the question, “What are the most important aspects for Albion to become a thriving city where people want to live, work, and play?” The answers are depicted in Figure P-1. The data in Figure P-1 also includes responses that had more than or less than three choices made. Many respondents said that Albion should have good infrastructure, followed by an active and lively downtown, and safe neighborhoods. The next three highest responses were having a wide variety of quality housing options, a variety of affordable recreation activities, and a variety of retail stores.

Figure P-1: Most Important Aspects that Albion should have to Thrive



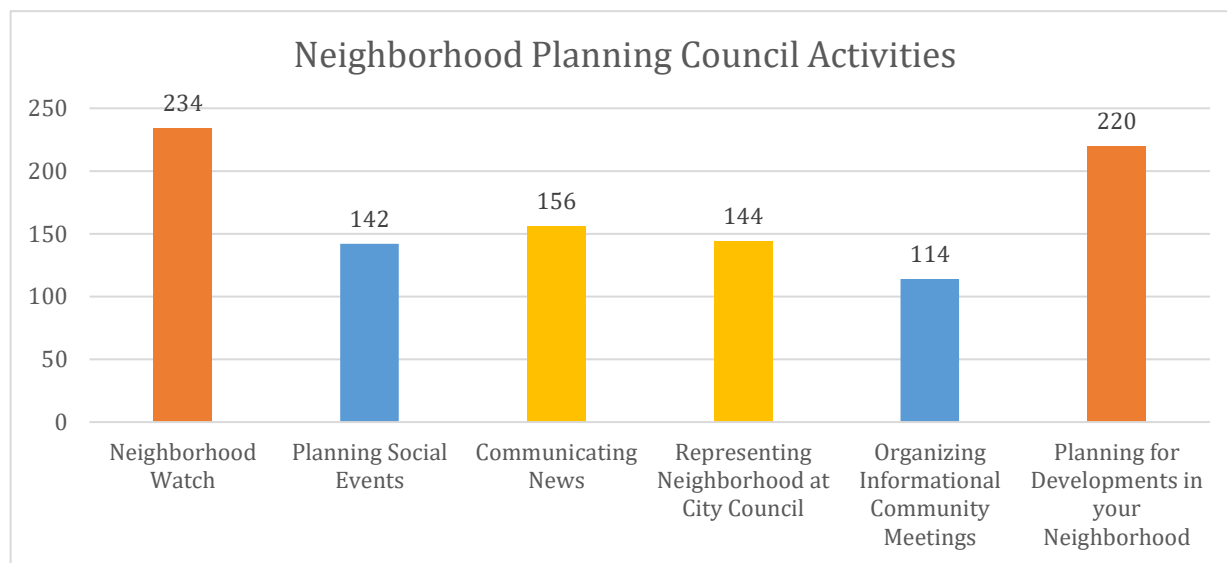
COMMUNITY PLANNING

NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION

Neighborhood Planning Councils

Citizens have expressed an interest to AmeriCorps VISTA members in having more control over developments in the community as well as seeing more developments within their own neighborhoods. Residents were asked in the Albion Forward Survey about what types of activities they would like to see a “Neighborhood Planning Council” (NPC) involved in, if they were to have one. They were asked to select their top three responses. Some chose more than three and some chose less than three. All responses were included in the following graph. As seen in Figure P-2, many respondents said that they would like for NPCs to oversee a neighborhood watch program and to plan for developments in their neighborhoods. The next responses in order of popularity were: communicating news, representing neighborhoods at City Council, planning social events, and organizing informational community meetings.

Figure P-2: Neighborhood Planning Council Activities



Meeting Financial Needs of Albion Households

One objective of this community survey was to gather information that could help steer efforts to improve the quality of life for Albion residents. Respondents were asked to identify all areas in which they were struggling to meet the financial needs of their households. Residents were asked to select all of the responses that applied to them. Figure P-3 shows the answers respondents gave regarding financial struggle(s) for their household.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

Figure P-3: Areas in Which Respondents Noted that they are struggling to meet their Financial Needs

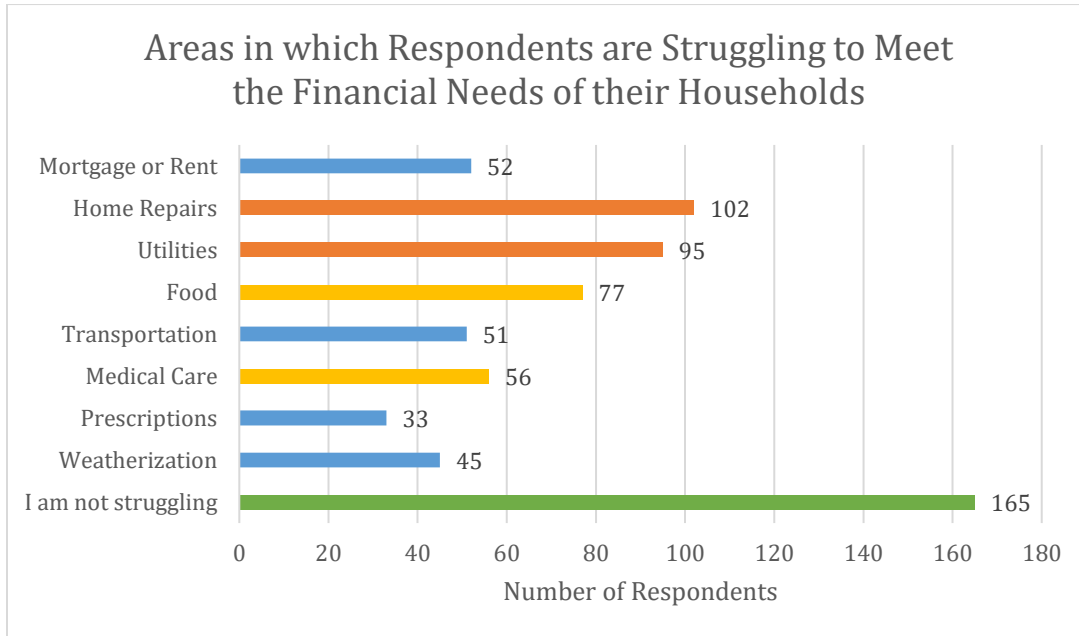
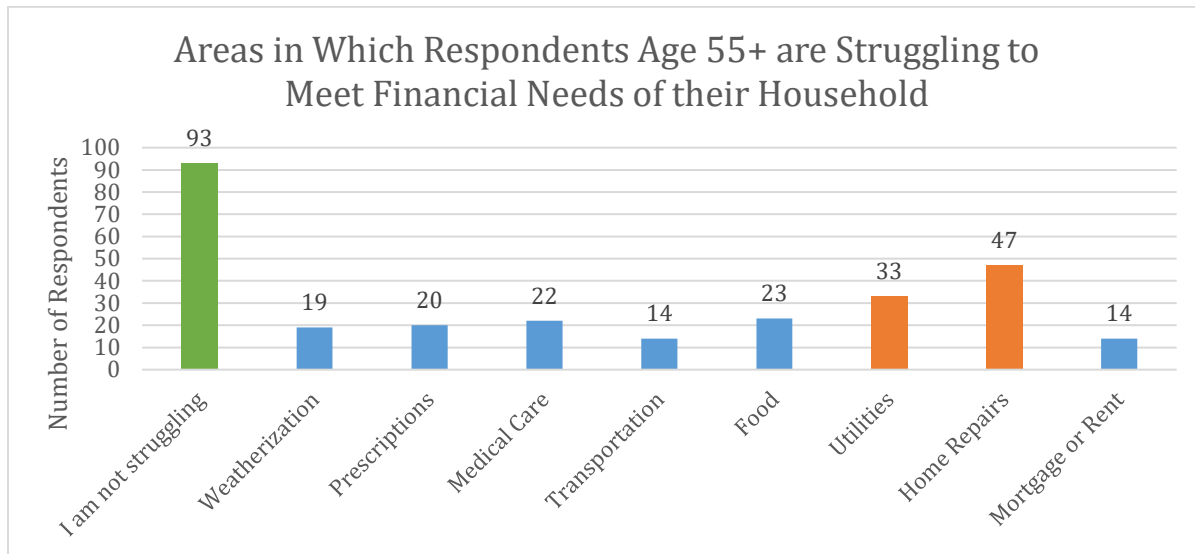


Figure P-4: Areas in which Respondents Age 55+ are Struggling to meet their Financial Needs



In the 2016 Senior Needs Assessment of Calhoun and Barry Counties, 16.8% of seniors said they did not have enough income and 50.9% said they were okay right now but worry about the future.

Many Albion Forward Survey respondents age 55 and up noted that they were struggling to meet the financial needs of their household in some way. Home repairs topped the list. On top of cost, another factor contributing to this is that older adults may not be physically able to do some home repairs and instead

COMMUNITY PLANNING

would have to pay a professional which increases the cost. There could also be the added emotional cost of letting a stranger into their home. Members of the Albion focus groups in the 2016 Senior Needs Assessment of Calhoun and Barry Counties noted that finding a trusted handyman was a significant challenge.

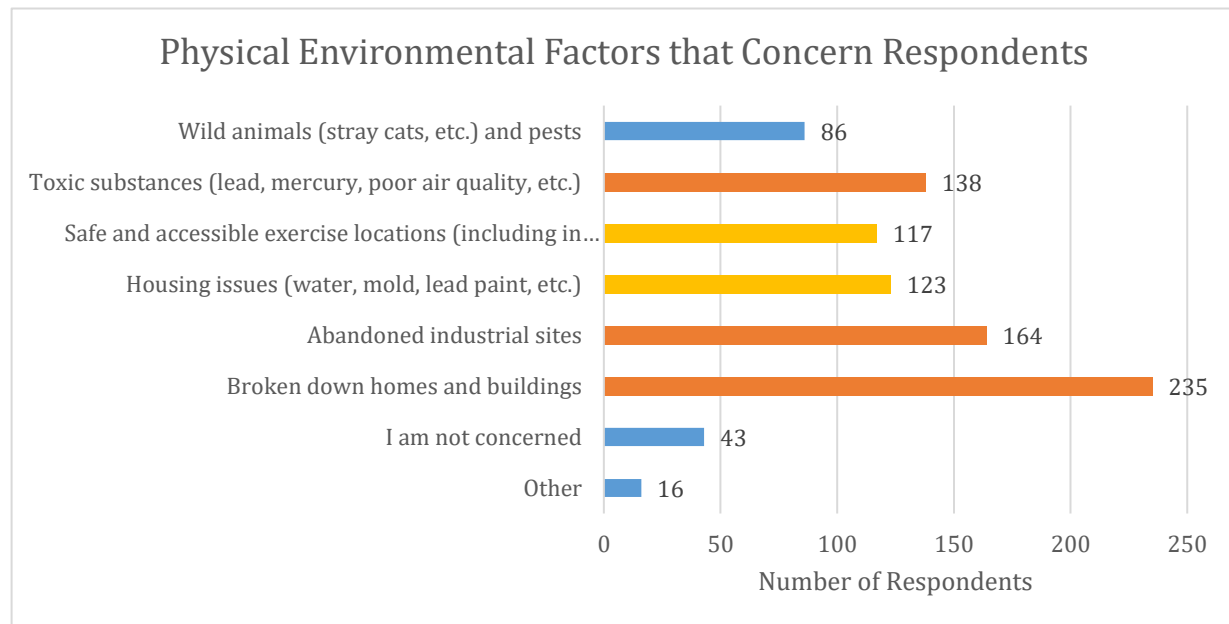
Among age groups, older respondents mentioned prescriptions more than other age groups. Members of the Albion focus groups in the Senior Needs Assessment noted many ways medical costs cause significant challenges to their financial stability.

Environmental Factors

Residents were asked which physical environmental factors were a concern with respect to household health (Figure P-5). Pertaining to neighborhood stabilization and the quality of the housing stock, it was helpful to see respondents' concerns in and around their home.

Efforts have been made over the past few years by the Calhoun County Land Bank Authority and the City of Albion to demolish blighted homes and properties to improve the health and safety of the Albion community.

P-5: Physical Environmental Factors that Concern Respondents



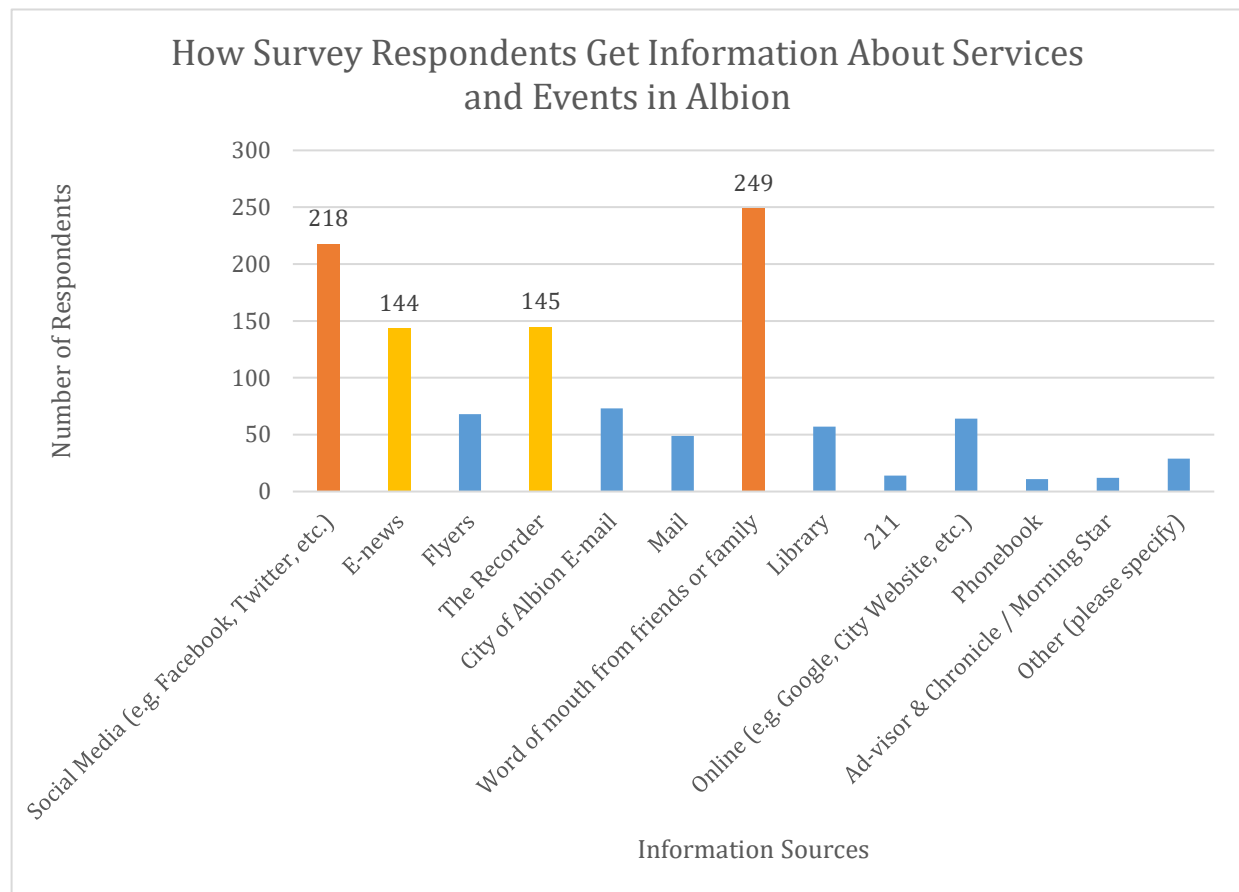
CONNECTIONS

Connections

COMMUNICATION

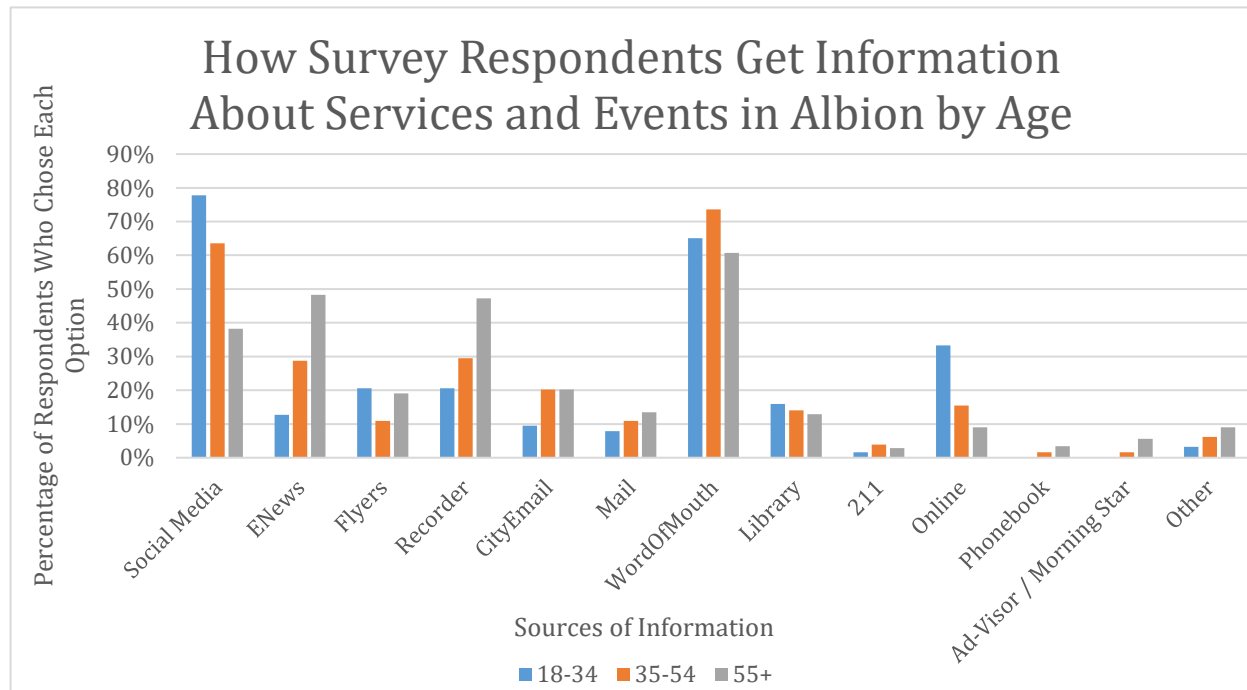
Communication has been a challenge for many organizations and individuals within Albion. Attempting to distribute information throughout the entire community has not been easy. To determine the best way to reach residents as a whole, and how to reach certain demographics, the Albion Forward survey asked respondents how they get their information. When asked how they get information on news and events in Albion, most respondents said that they get their information from word of mouth or from social media (Figure C-1). The next two top responses were the E-News and the local newspaper, the Albion Recorder.

Figure C-1: How Albion Residents get Their Information



CONNECTIONS

Figure C-2: Where Albion Residents get Their Information by Age



In comparing preferred information sources among different age groups, Figure C-2 suggests that older adults in Albion rely on news sources like the Albion Recorder and Albion E-News more than other age groups. Of those ages 18-34, the top two responses were social media and word of mouth from family and friends. Of those ages 35-54, social media and word of mouth were the most common communication forms. Organizations may want to utilize sponsored social media posts that appear on a certain number of people's social media feeds within a designated geographic area.

Of those ages 55 and up, the sources of information chosen in descending order were: word of mouth from friends or family, the Albion E-News, the Albion Recorder, and social media. Word of mouth clearly dominates among respondents age 55 and up. Social media could be considered a different kind of "word of mouth" and many area seniors may be mainly relying on their social networks for information.

While "Flyers" was not a top choice among respondents, the survey did not address passive flyer delivery verses active flyer delivery. Flyers may be more effective when combined with actively engaging people in conversation while passing out flyers, rather than flyers that are left at a space for advertisement. This difference further emphasizes the importance of word of mouth in spreading information in Albion.

TRANSPORTATION

Many are aware that transportation is a major challenge in the Albion community. Workgroups, organizations, and governments have been working to address this challenge over the years but a long-term

CONNECTIONS

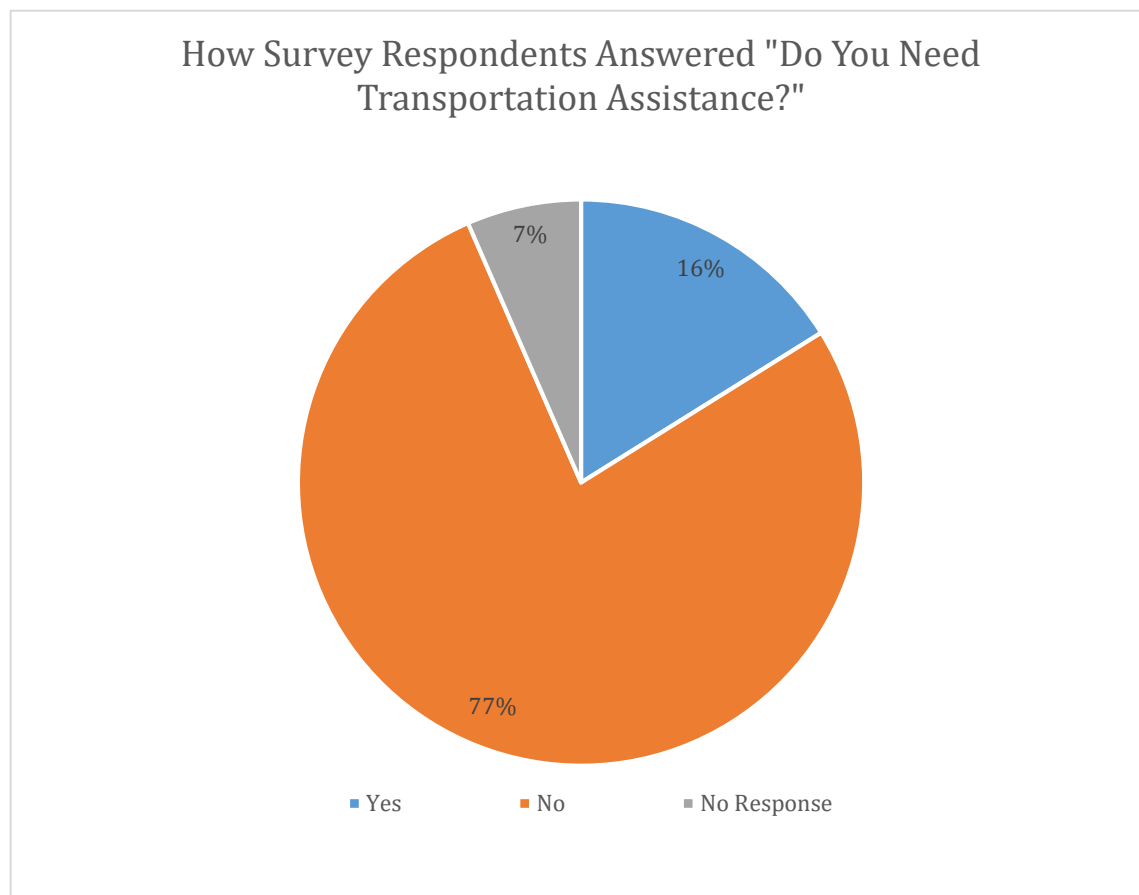
sustainable solution has not been found. The Albion Forward Survey sought to gather more information on the transportation needs of Albion residents.

Who Needs Transportation Assistance?

Survey respondents were asked if they need transportation assistance. Figure C-3 shows that 16% of survey respondents indicated that they need transportation assistance. The age group that indicated that they need transportation assistance the most was the age 35-54 respondents (Figure C-4).

Respondents that need transportation assistance for employment are mostly those that identified themselves as “disabled.” Figure C-5 shows the distribution of transportation need based on income level. The respondents that have an income of less than \$10,000 a year are those with the highest need for transportation assistance.

Figure C-3: Percentage of Respondents Who Need Transportation Assistance



CONNECTIONS

Figure C-4: Percentage of Respondents that Need Transportation Assistance by Age

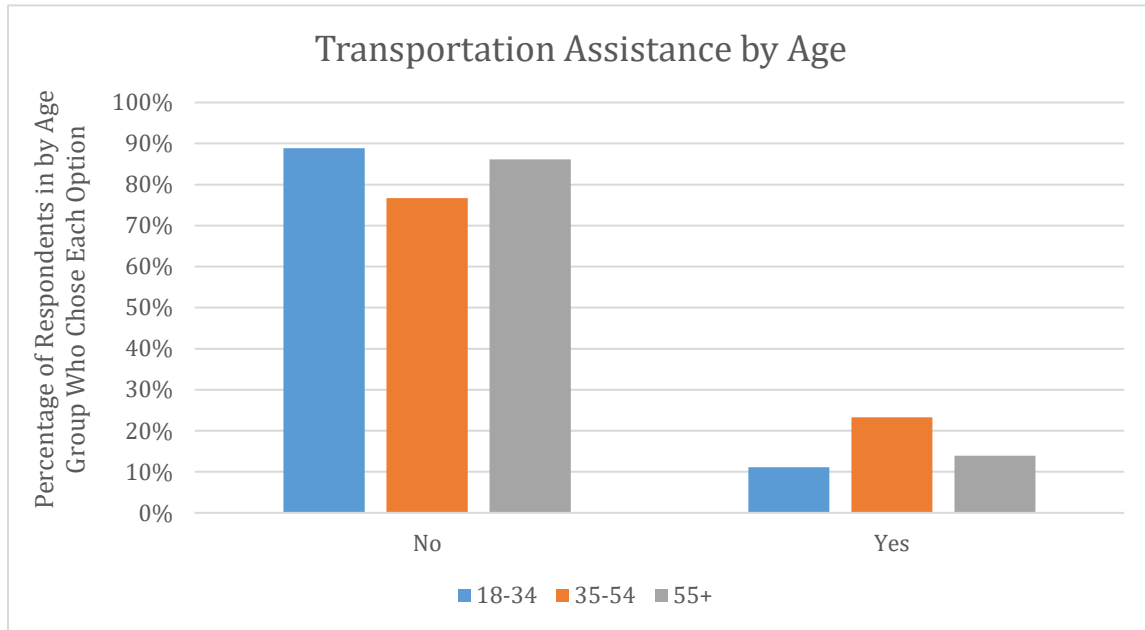
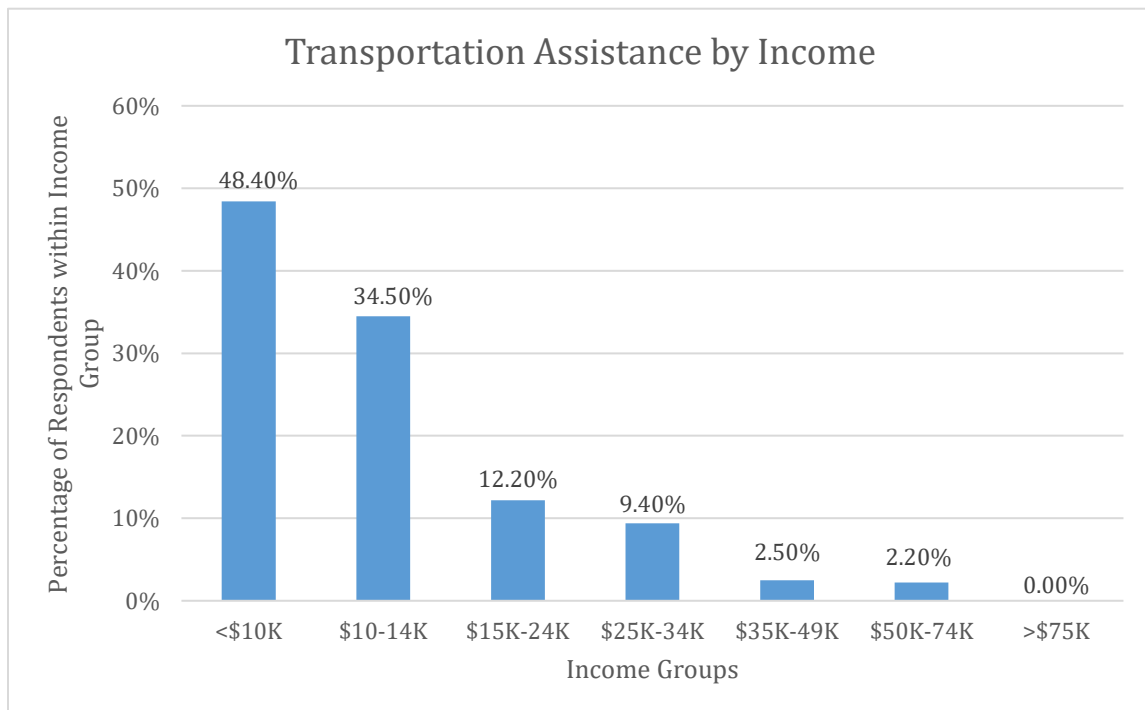


Figure C-5: Percentage of Respondents that Need Transportation Assistance by Income

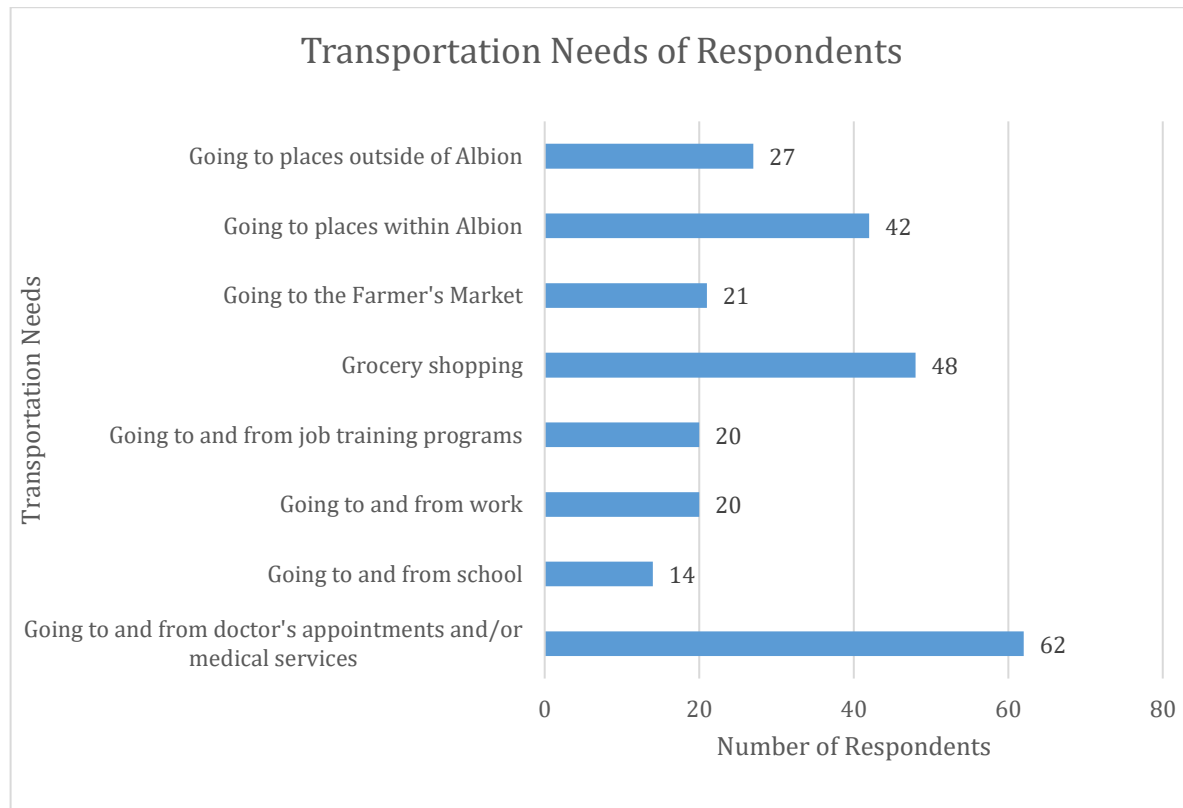


CONNECTIONS

What People need Transportation Assistance For

Respondents who said they need transportation assistance were then asked to specify where they need transportation assistance. Figure C-6 shows that the top three needs for transportation among respondents were going to doctor appointments, going grocery shopping, and going to places within Albion. Respondents of all ages found themselves struggling most to get to doctor appointments without transportation assistance. Figure C-7 shows the different transportation needs based on age group. Among respondents ages 18-34, the lowest need for transportation assistance was going to school. Those respondents were more concerned with transportation to their work and the other needs stated above. Respondents age 35-54 show the largest transportation need for going grocery shopping and going to places both inside and outside of Albion.

Figure C-6: Transportation Needs of Respondents



CONNECTIONS

Figure C-7: Reasons for Transportation Assistance by Percentage within Each Age Group

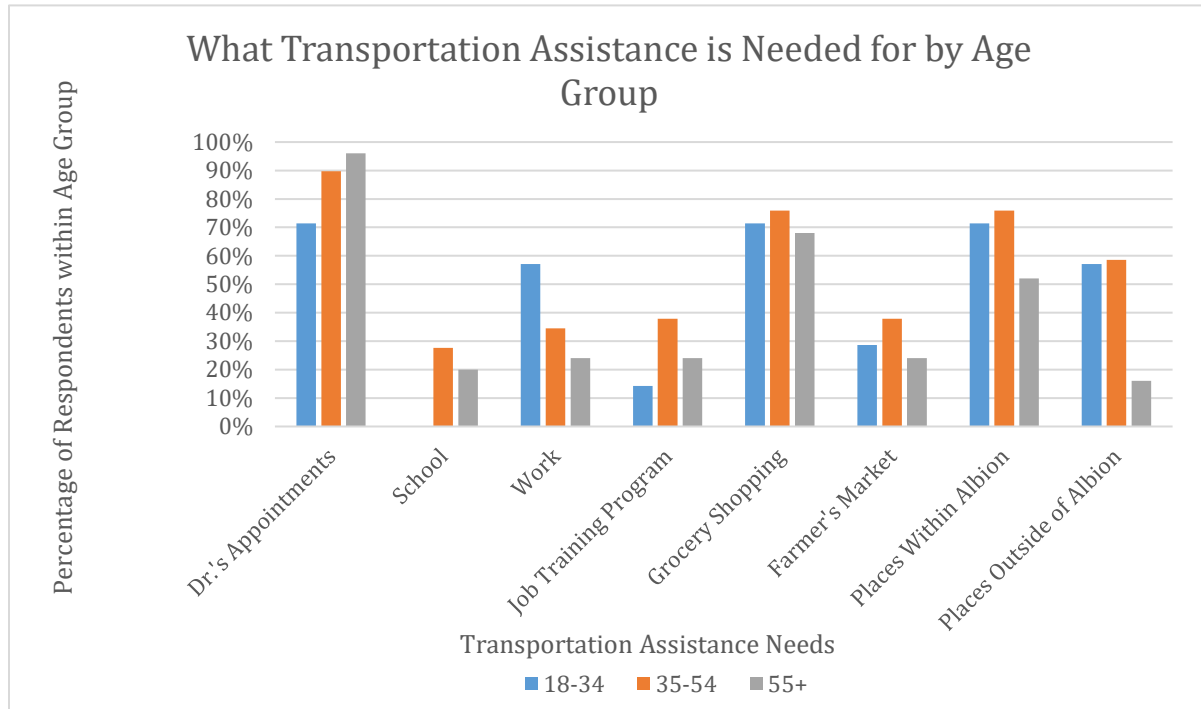
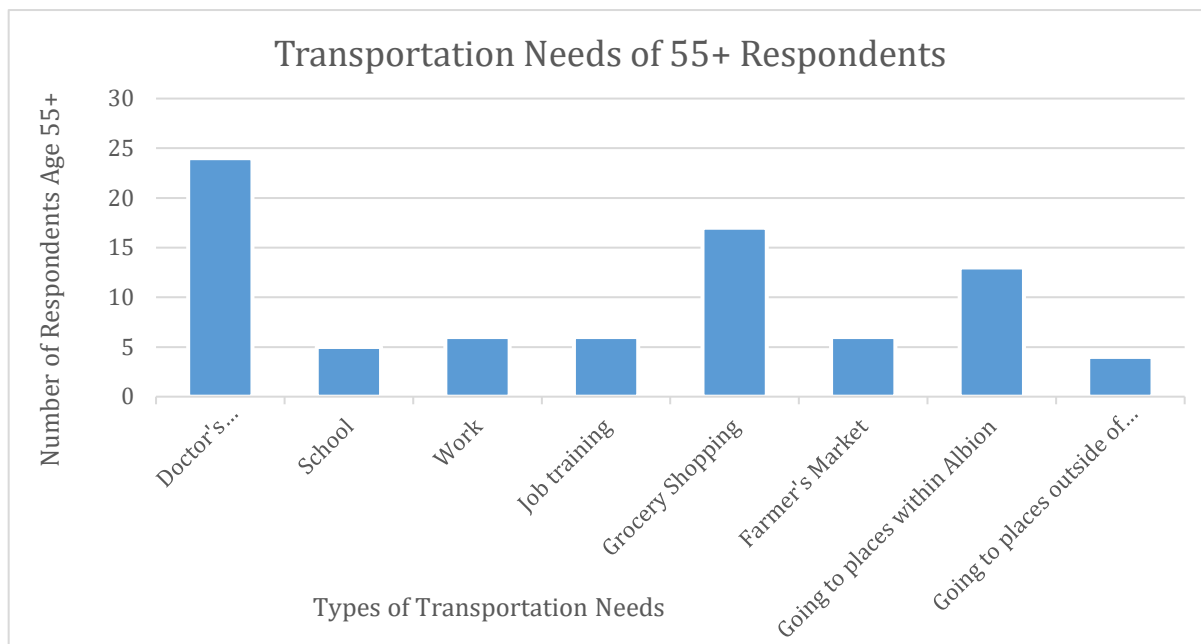


Figure C-8: Transportation Needs of Respondents Age 55+



CONNECTIONS

Of the respondents age 55 and up, 13.9% said that they need transportation assistance. Transportation options are limited in Albion and older adults who are not able to drive or do not have a car may find it difficult to get to important places. The biggest transportation need among respondents age 55 and up is going to and from doctor appointments or medical services (30%), followed by grocery shopping (21%), and going to places within Albion (16%). Older respondents who said yes to this question tended to choose doctor's appointments as a transportation need slightly more than the other age groups (Figure C-7).

The 2016 Senior Needs Assessment for Calhoun and Barry Counties noted that older adults in Calhoun County underutilize ride sharing services. Focus groups in Albion, one at Maple Grove Apartments and the other at Forks Senior Center, both stressed transportation as a major challenge. Both also noted the need for after-hours transportation for things such as medical needs, getting to congregate meal sites, and getting to church.

What Services are Currently being Utilized?

Survey respondents were asked what transportation services they use to get to important places. Respondents had the option of choosing the Albion-Marshall Connector, Community Action Transport, Taxi/Uber, None, or fill in the blank for "Other." There was unfortunately a miscommunication in how the question should be answered. Many respondents wrote in their car, bicycle, friend, etc. into the "Other" option. Since these are not transportation services and the question was often not answered as intended, that graph is not included. However, those who responded with the Albion-Marshall Connector, Community Action Transport, and Taxi/Uber were analyzed by employment status and income range. These demographic breakdowns are of interest to some community organizations.

Among respondents that use the Albion-Marshall Connector to get to important places, 27.50% identified their employment status as "disabled" and this was the largest percentage (Figure C-9). In terms of income, respondents making less than \$10,000 a year and between \$10,000 and \$15,000 dollars a year reported using the Albion-Marshall Connector the most (Figure C-10).

Community Action Transport is a service offered to senior citizens and persons with disabilities. Therefore, those who reported their employment status as "retired and disabled" made up the largest percentage of usage by far (Figure C-11). Those making less than \$10,000 a year or between \$10,000 and \$15,000 a year reported using this service more than other income groups (Figure C-12).

Figure C-14 shows a diverse spread of Taxi/Uber usage by employment status with "disabled" being the most reported. The respondents that reported using Taxi/Uber are those that belong to the \$10,000 - \$15,000 income group, with the less than \$10,000 as the second largest (Figure C-15).

CONNECTIONS

Figure C-9: Percentage of Citizens using the Albion Marshall Connector by Employment Status

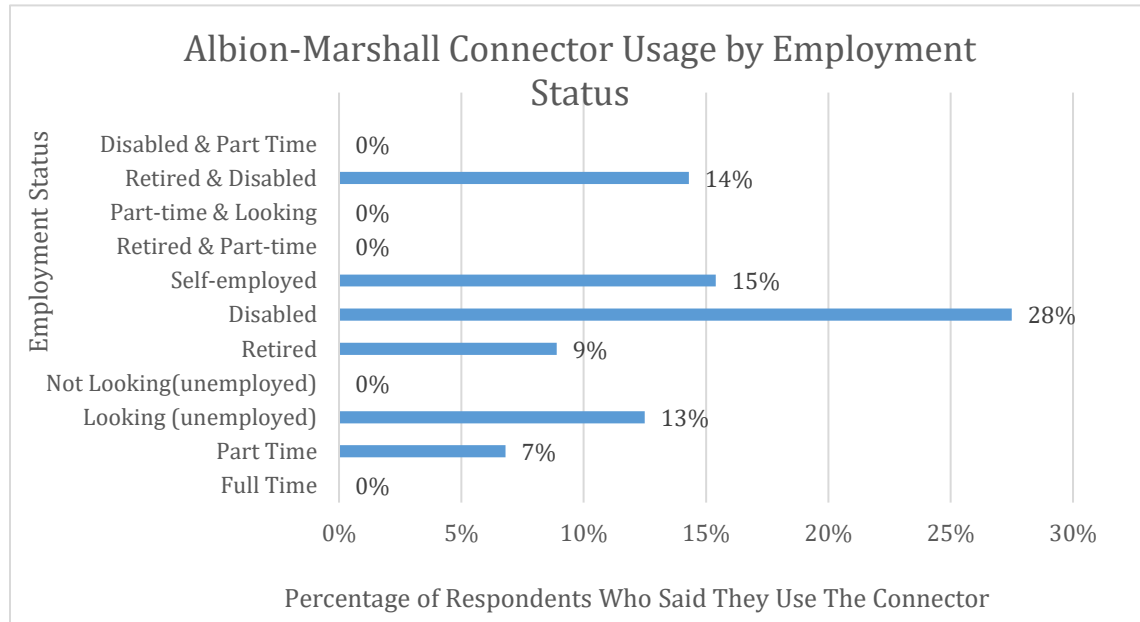
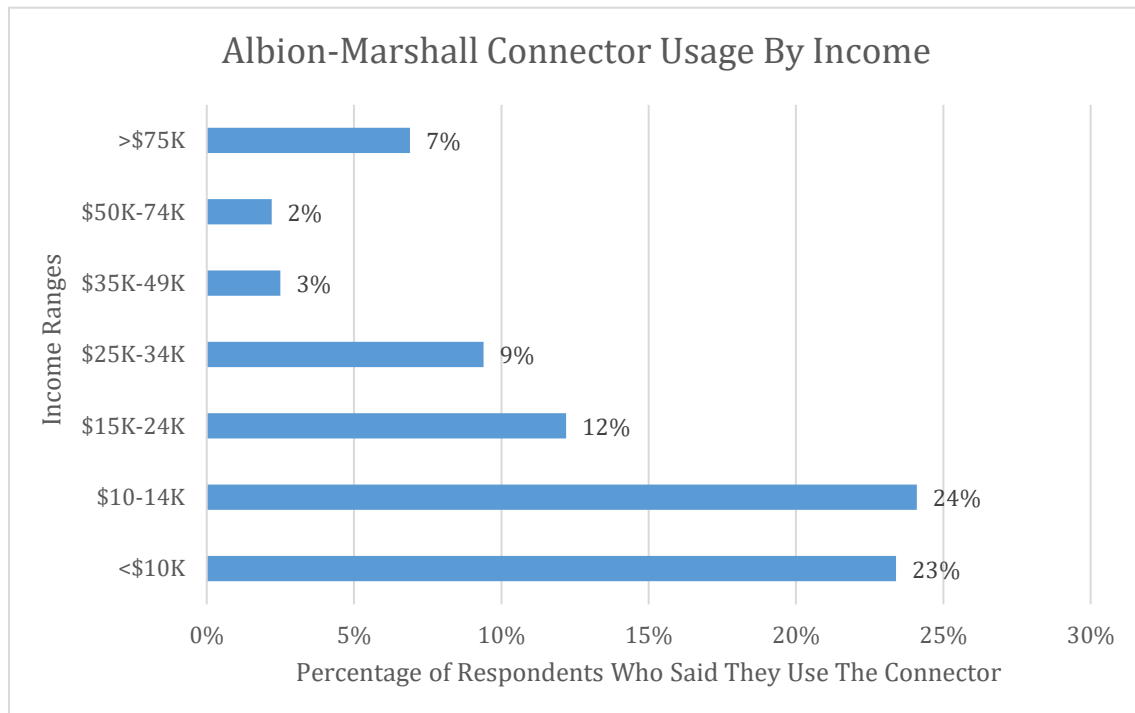


Figure C-10: Percentage of Respondents using the Albion-Marshall Connector by Income



CONNECTIONS

Figure C-11: Community Action Transport Use by Employment Status

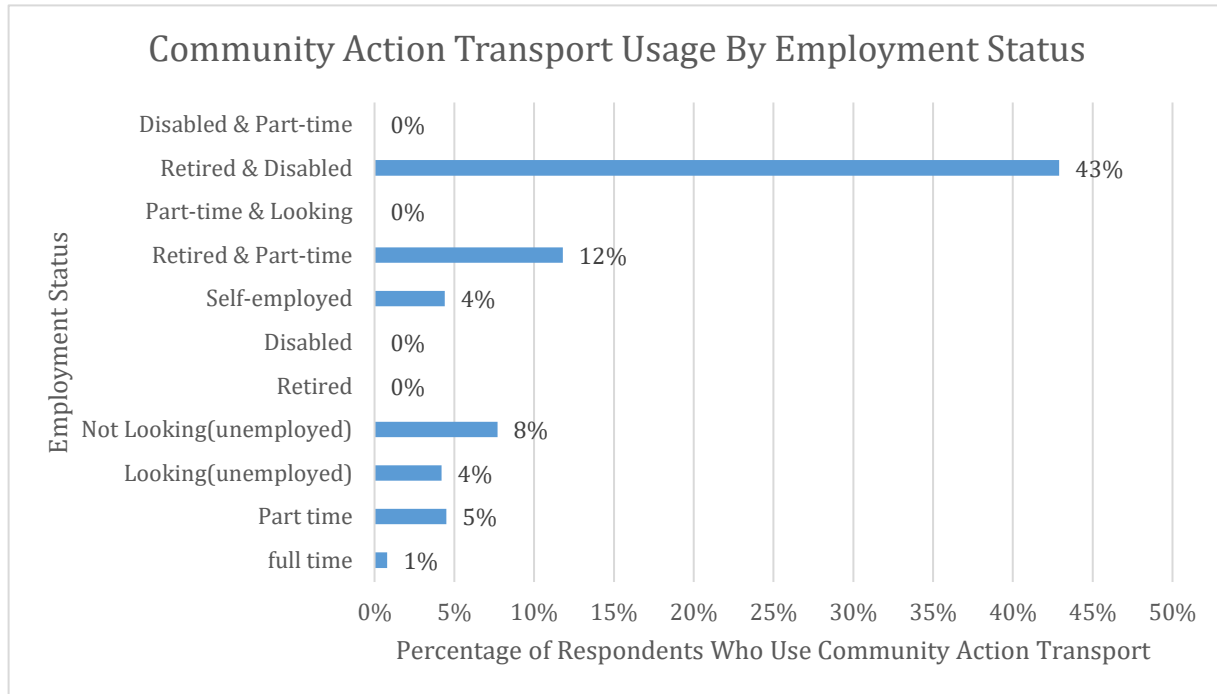
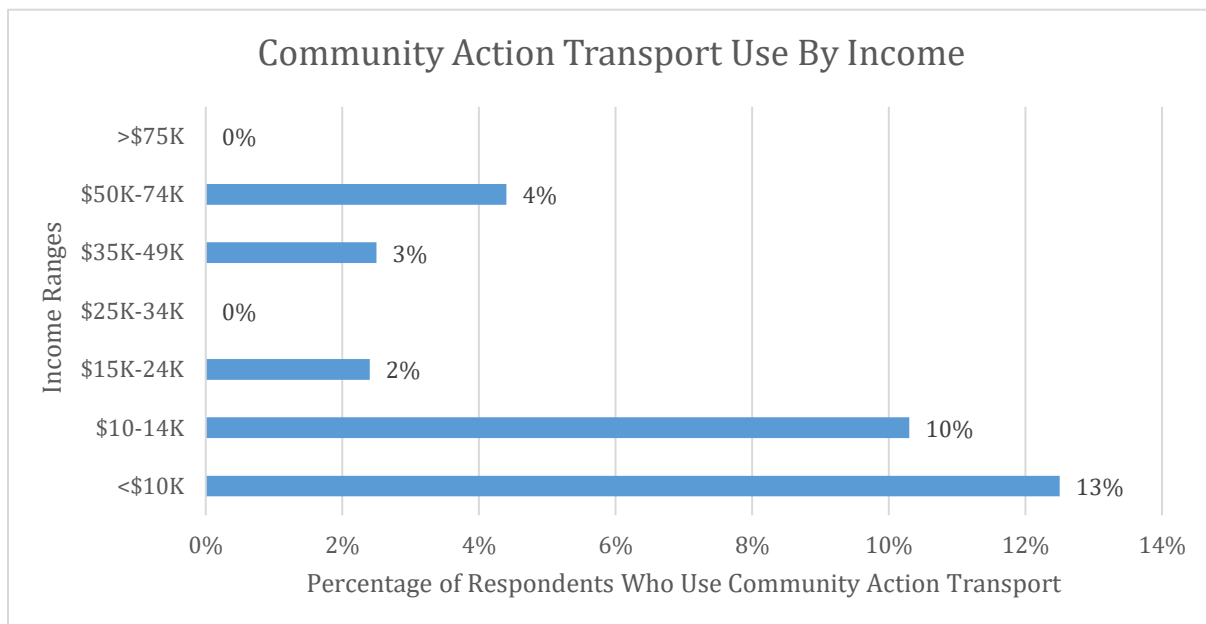


Figure C-12: Community Action Transport use by Income



CONNECTIONS

Figure C-13: Taxi/Uber use by Employment Status

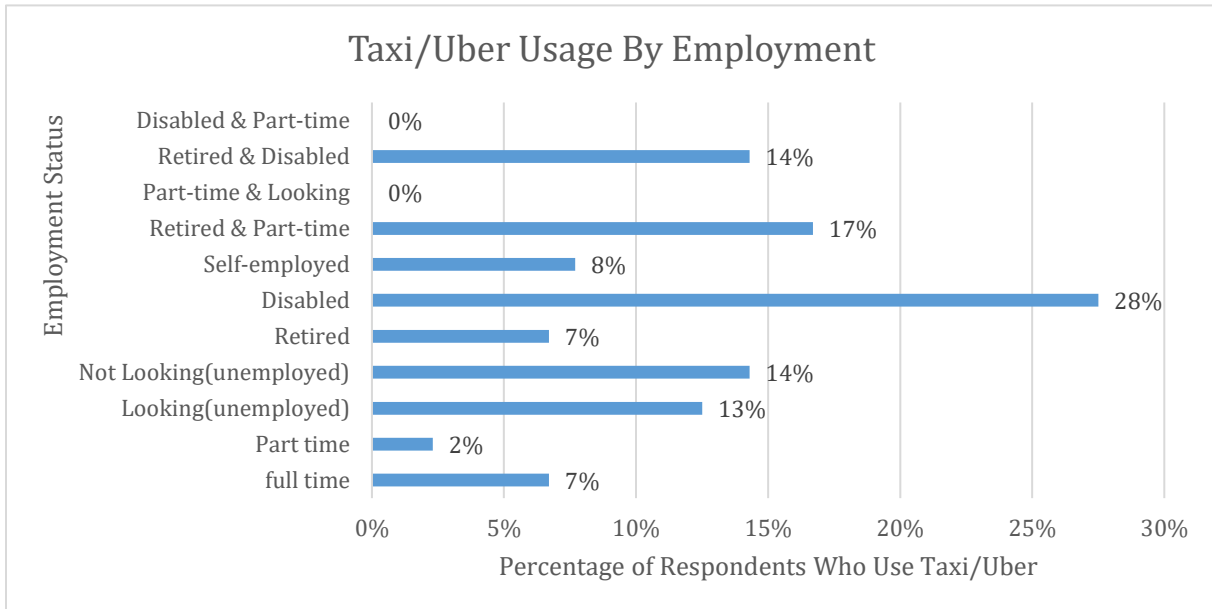
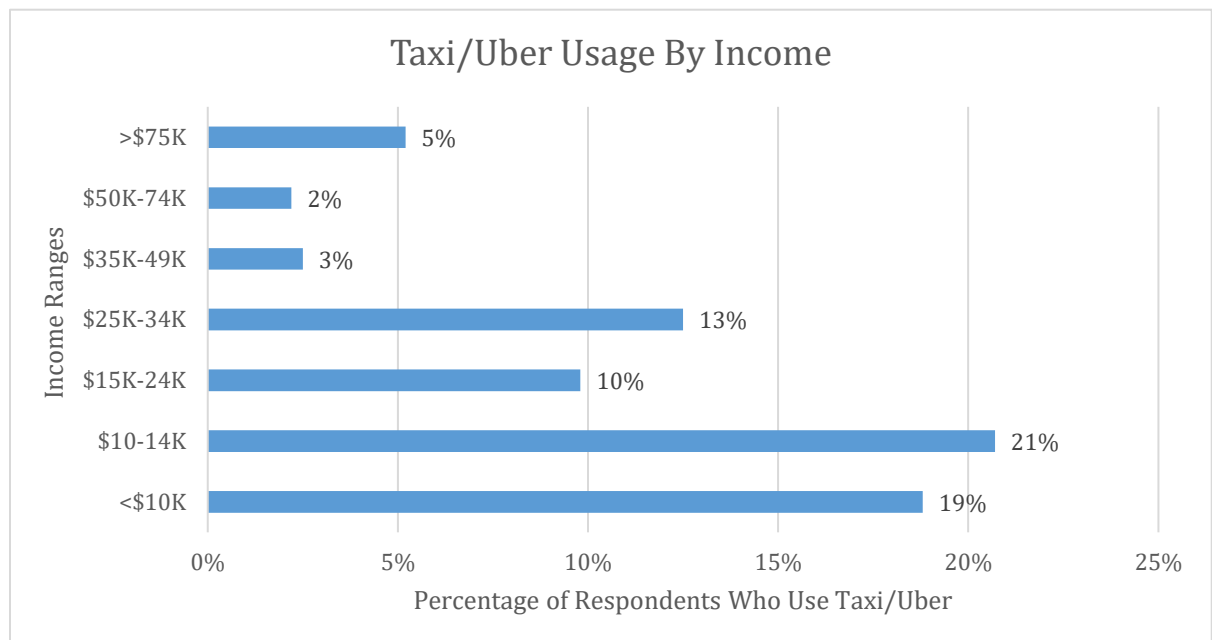


Figure C-14: Taxi/Uber use by Income



EDUCATION IN ALBION

Education in Albion

SUMMARY

In early fall 2015, the Albion School Board formed a consultant and citizen committee, which reviewed the financial situation of the Albion Public Schools and sought solutions to the growing debt and loss of students. It was determined that no viable options were available to pay the debt. The State of Michigan offered to make a payment to Marshall Public Schools to cover Albion School District's debt, cover transitional costs, and make capital improvements to Harrington Elementary School if APS were to be annexed by Marshall Public Schools. The Albion School Board decided to take the matter to a vote by Albion residents. The voting residents of Albion made the decision on May 3rd, 2016 to allow Marshall Public Schools to annex Albion Public Schools and dissolve the Albion Public School District. On July 1, 2016, Albion Public Schools (APS) was closed by annexation with Marshall Public Schools (MPS).

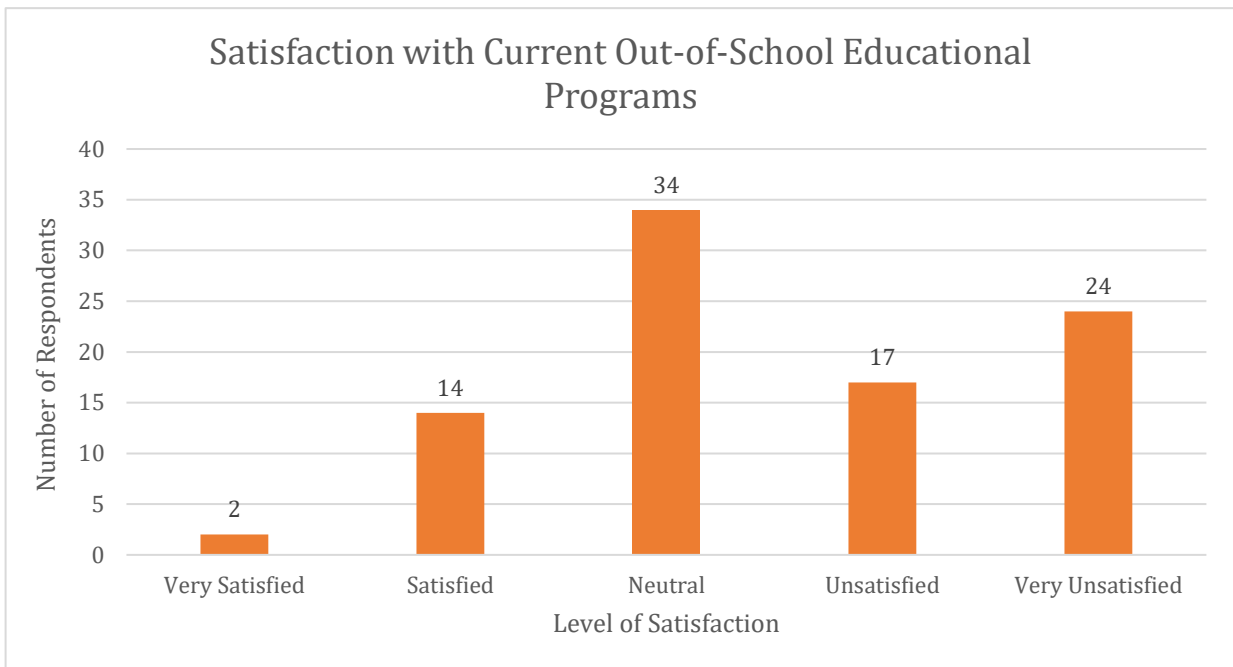
The vote was controversial among the people of Albion and the closing of Albion Public Schools has left deep wounds and reopened old wounds in the Albion community. With the launching of the Albion-Marshall Resilient Communities Project, a variety of opportunities for community healing and building stronger connections with Marshall officially began being offered in March of 2017. Members of the Education Team in the Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative have built the capacity of this initiative through community outreach, maintaining an online presence, and helping coordinate events.

Because of the recent annexation, the AmeriCorps VISTA Education Team decided to focus their questions on afterschool opportunities for youth ranging from kindergarten through 12th grade. The survey asked the respondents who have one or more K-12 student in their home about their preferences regarding programming available to their child. Out of the surveys administered and analyzed, 107 respondents identified that they did have a student in their home. Below are figures displaying answers that the respondents chose to submit, and because they were given the option to skip questions, not all findings correspond accurately with the total.

EDUCATION IN ALBION

Youth Programming inside and outside of Albion

Figure E-1: Satisfaction with Current Out-of-School Educational Programs

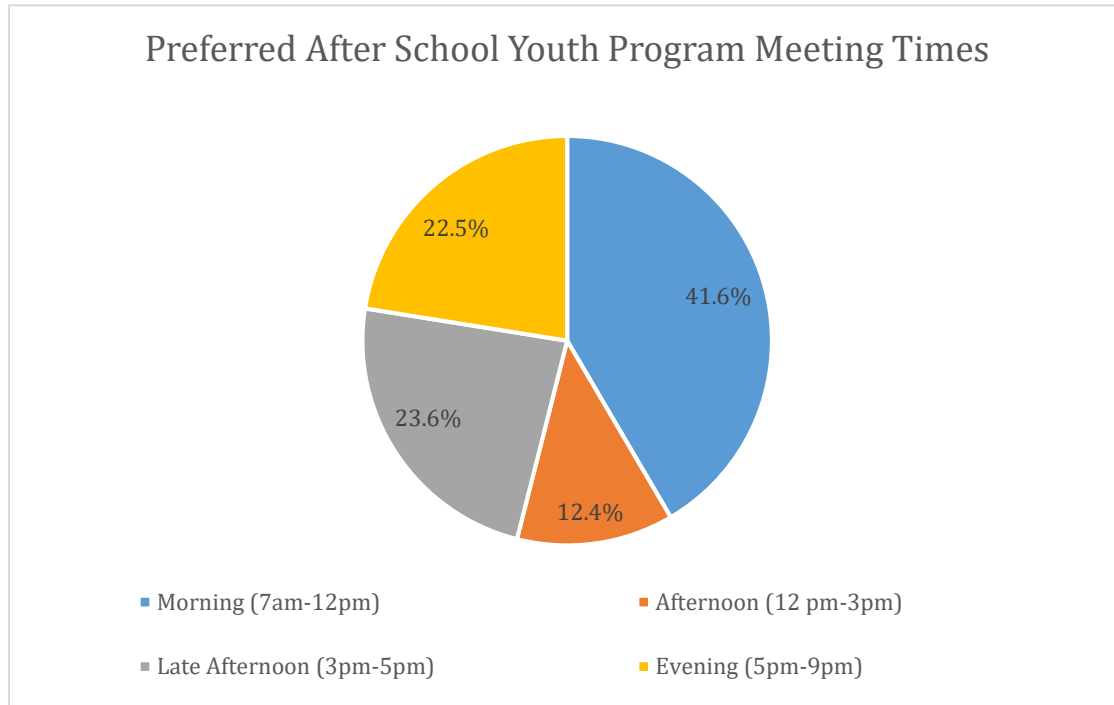


For this question, 91 respondents were willing to share their opinions about the current out-of-school program opportunities. Figure E-1 shows a less than satisfied lean in attitudes toward existing after school programming. Survey respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with current out-of-school educational programs on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being very unsatisfied and 5 being very satisfied. The average satisfaction rating was 2.44, which is between unsatisfied and neutral.

In contrast, though not shown in the figure, only 46 respondents for the Education section indicated that the student(s) in their household participate in out-of-school programs. This means that 50% of the respondents for this question about satisfaction of out-of-school programs did not share that their child participates in the currently offered programs.

EDUCATION IN ALBION

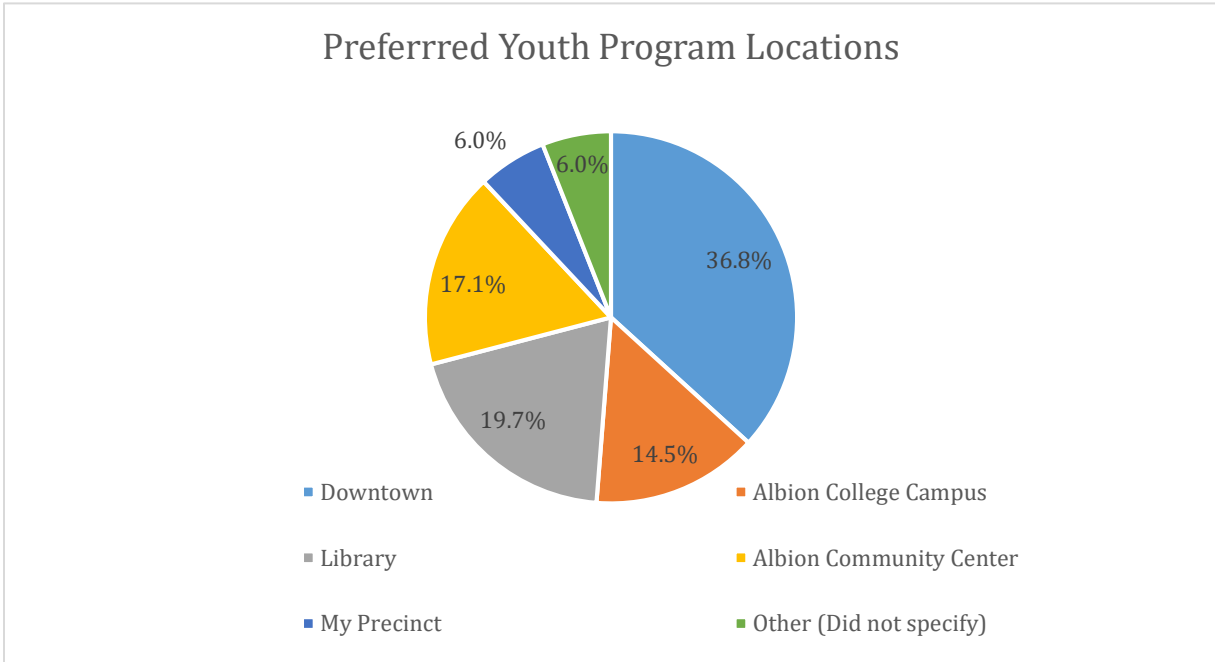
Figure E-2: Preferred Youth Program Times



In Figure E-2, the two most preferred time frames for youth programming are in the morning and in the late afternoon. Evening hours are nearly as desired as late afternoon, leaving the afternoon time frame as the least preferred time for youth programming to take place. The survey did not address what time of the school year or summer that these times are preferred.

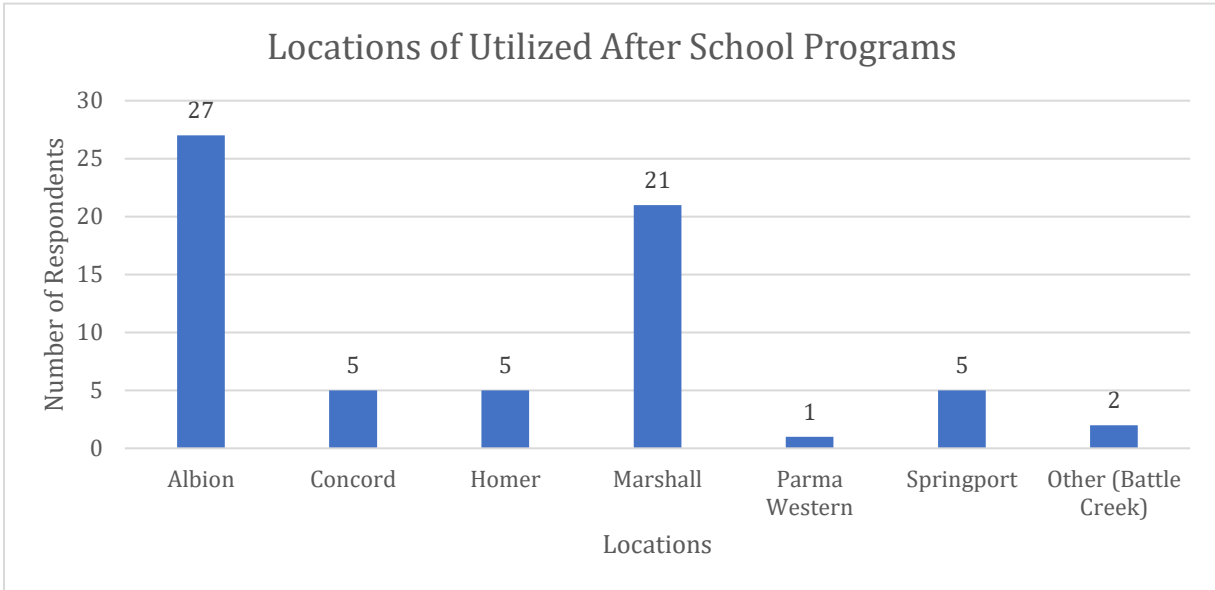
EDUCATION IN ALBION

Figure E-3: Preferred Youth Program Locations



Over 55% of respondents selected that they would like youth programming to be offered in downtown Albion and the District Library which is also located in downtown Albion. These locations are followed by the Marshall Opportunity School/Albion Community Center and Albion College Campus.

Figure E-4: Locations of Utilized After School Programs



EDUCATION IN ALBION

Figure E-4 shows where parents indicated their children participate in out-of-school programs. The VISTA team received feedback from one of its community partners that students who are now going to school in other cities were also participating in extracurricular activities in those cities. Since athletics data is available through the school systems and recreation departments, this question excluded athletics in order to not collect redundant data. This figure suggests that the majority of respondents still utilized after school programs offered in Albion. The second highest response by far is Marshall, which corresponds with the growing partnership between Albion and Marshall.

Figure E-5: Desired Youth Programs

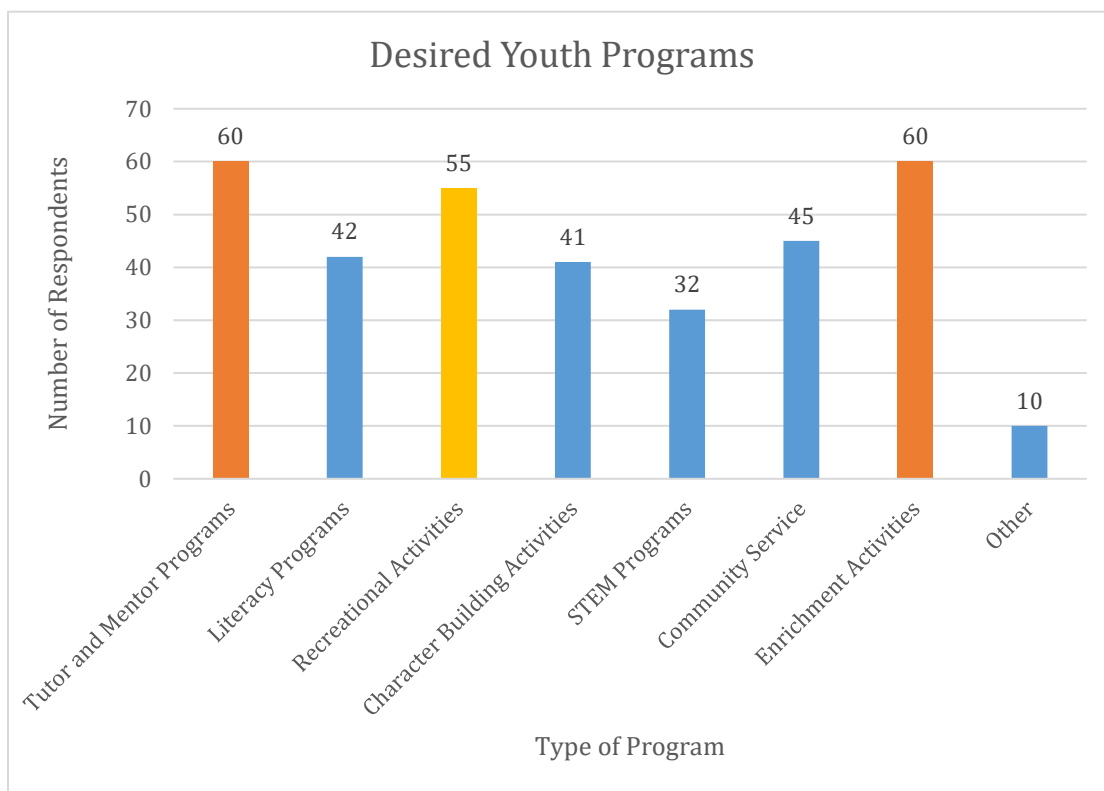


Figure E-5 shows the program type that parents/guardians would like to see. For the “other” option, some respondents entered that they would like to see programs that focused on cultural enrichment, career exploration, preschoolers, and the outdoors/nature. As shown above, Tutor and Mentor Programs tied for the most responses with Enrichment Activities. On the survey, Enrichment Activities included dance, music, theatre, and art. Also on the survey, Literacy Programs included Family Reading Nights and kids programming. The high response rate on this question indicates that adults are eager to see more programs for their youth and provides a baseline for which programs may be most utilized.

EDUCATION IN ALBION

CONCLUSION

Although the education system in Albion is in a critical state, after the vote to annex the schools to Marshall Public Schools, the city has seen a turning point in community engagement and support for the youth. It is the goal of the Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Education Team that the information collected in the Albion Forward Survey provide a stronger basis for meeting the needs of youth and their families. During the past year, the Education Team VISTA members have participated in planning meetings to bridge gaps in current after school programming. The desired program areas given by respondents in this section, specifically a call for tutoring/mentoring and enrichment activities, provide direction for planning programming going forward.

Food Security

SUMMARY

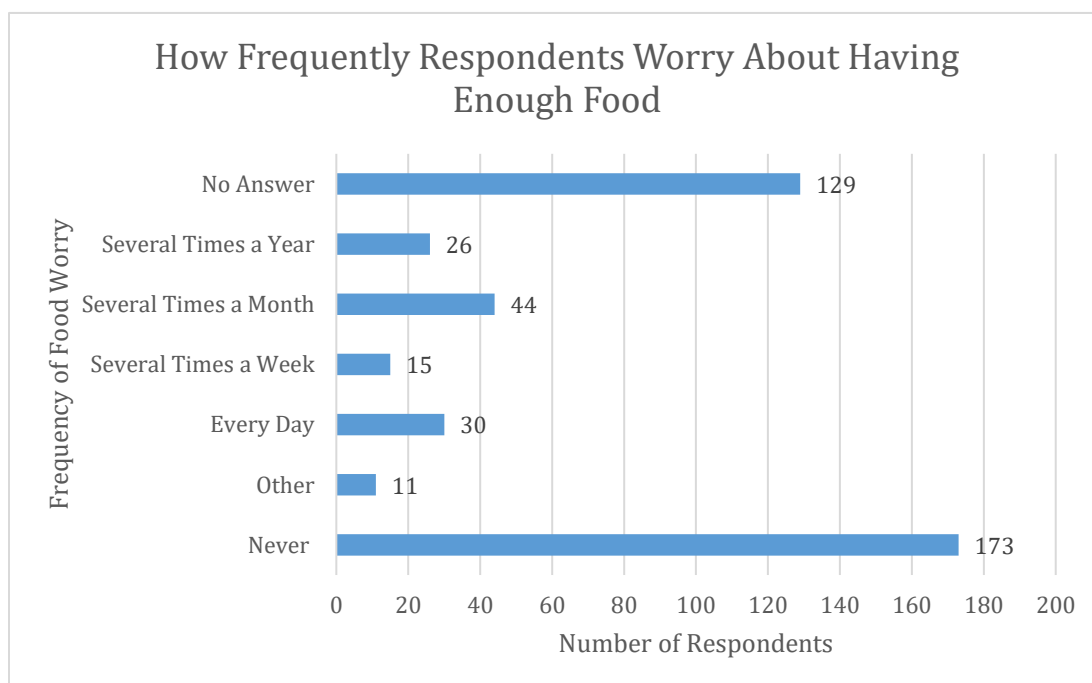
According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Albion, Michigan is a “food desert,” meaning that people living here have low access to food because of location, vehicle access, and cost. To view the USDA Food Access Research Atlas, an interactive “food desert” map visit:

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/>.

Albion Forward Survey Key Food Security Statistics:

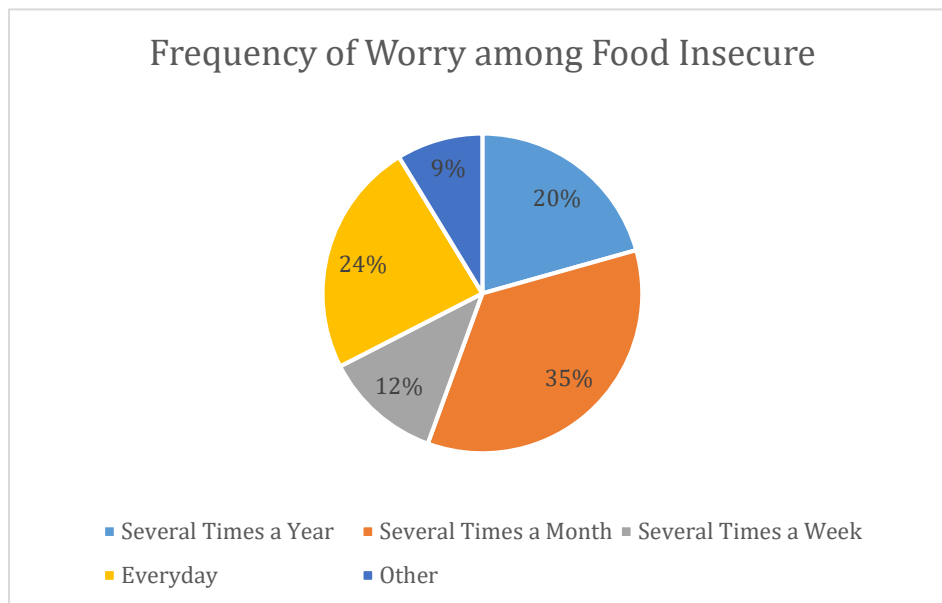
- 18% of respondents indicated that they struggle financially to meet the food needs of their household.
- 11% of respondents reported needing transportation assistance for grocery shopping and 5% indicated a need for transportation assistance to the Albion Farmers Market.
- 30% of respondents indicated that they worry about not having enough food (Figure F-1).
- 24% of those that worry about not having enough food worry every day (Figure F-2).
- Cost is reported as the main reason (Figure F-3) people worry about not having enough food.

Figure F-1: Frequency with which Survey Respondents worry about Food



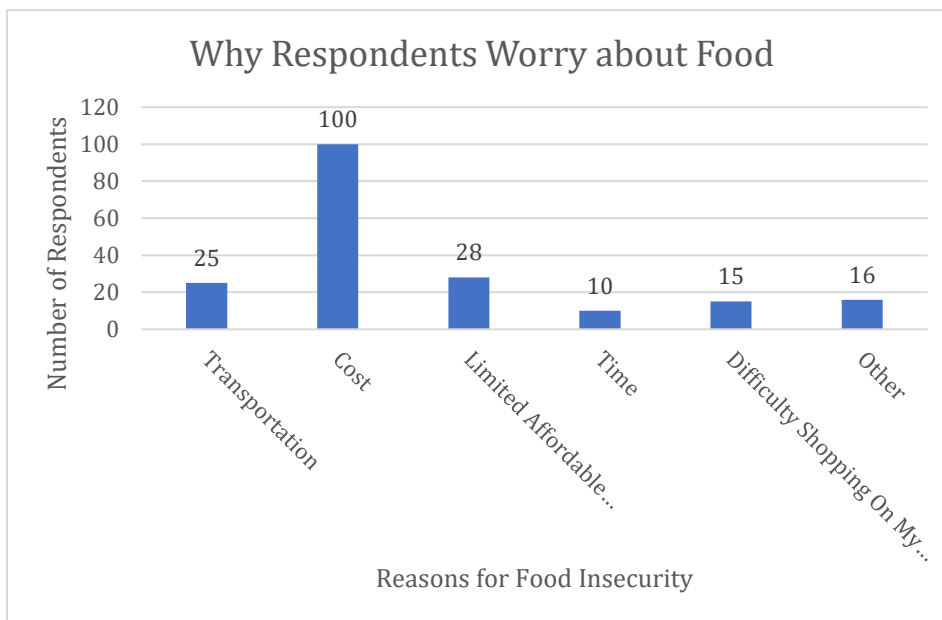
FOOD SECURITY

Figure F-2: Frequency of Worry among Food Insecure



For those that said that they do worry about having enough food, Figure F-2 shows the frequency with which they worry.

Figure F-3: Why Respondents are Food Insecure



FOOD SECURITY

ACTIONS

Several community organizations have been addressing food insecurity in Albion by running food pantries, conducting outreach in the religious community on SNAP education, economic development surrounding food with the Albion Food Hub, meal delivery for seniors, and community gardening by Albion Community Gardens. For more information on Albion's food system see the Albion Community Food Profile here: <http://www.albionfoundation.org/food/index.php>.

FOOD ACCESS: LOGISTICS & MARKET

In the Key Statistics section, 11% of respondents reported needing transportation assistance to the grocery store, reflecting the impact that transportation has on food access in Albion. Albion has one major grocery store, Family Fare, and a local food and plant store, Jolly Green Junction. Both stores are located on the far north side of town. There is a seasonal Farmers market downtown and several farms in the areas surrounding Albion. 58% of respondents indicated that they shop at the Albion Family Fare, 25% at Jolly Green Junction, and 39% at Albion's Farmers Market for produce (Figure F- 4). Many of the respondents go to locations outside of Albion, including Jackson, Marshall, Battle Creek, and others (Figure F-4), suggesting that produce needs are not currently being met within Albion. This potential space in the market for an additional fresh produce warrants further study.

The location and business model of a new fresh produce venture should be considered carefully to help meet the needs of residents of the Albion community with low or no access to transportation. Considering that 5% of respondents reported a need for transportation assistance to the Albion Farmers Market, a venture that involves fresh produce delivery may be an appropriate solution to the overall transportation to produce issue. Some respondents might be more interested, however, in the experience of going to grocery store or farmers market, rather than just having access to fresh produce.

The community may also consider the transportation-related data of this survey, as their clients may have difficulty reaching food pantries. The most used food pantry reported in the Albion Forward Survey was New Hope's food pantry (Figure F-5) which is on the northern side of Albion, even farther than Family Fare and Jolly Green Junction. Albion Interfaith Ministries' food pantry, which was reported as the second most-used pantry by the survey respondents (Figure F-5), and Albion Innovation's food pantry are both located down town. The pantry locations relatively mirror store locations in placement, meaning that some sections of Albion's population with limited or no access to transportation may have difficulty receiving services. Panty use data may be susceptible to sampling bias because the Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative surveyed specifically at Albion Interfaith Ministries and New Hope Worship Center.

FOOD SECURITY

Figure F-4: Where Respondents buy Produce

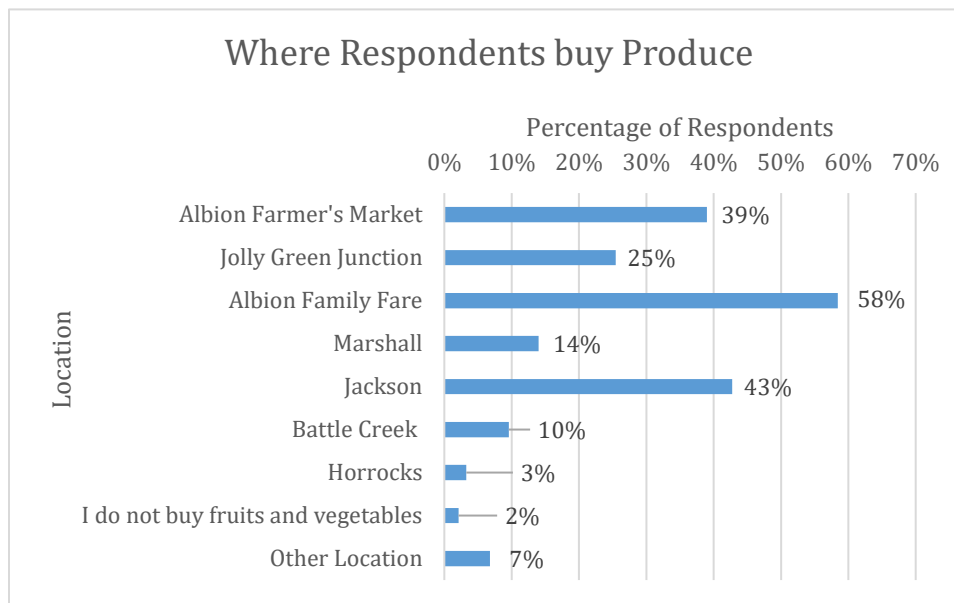
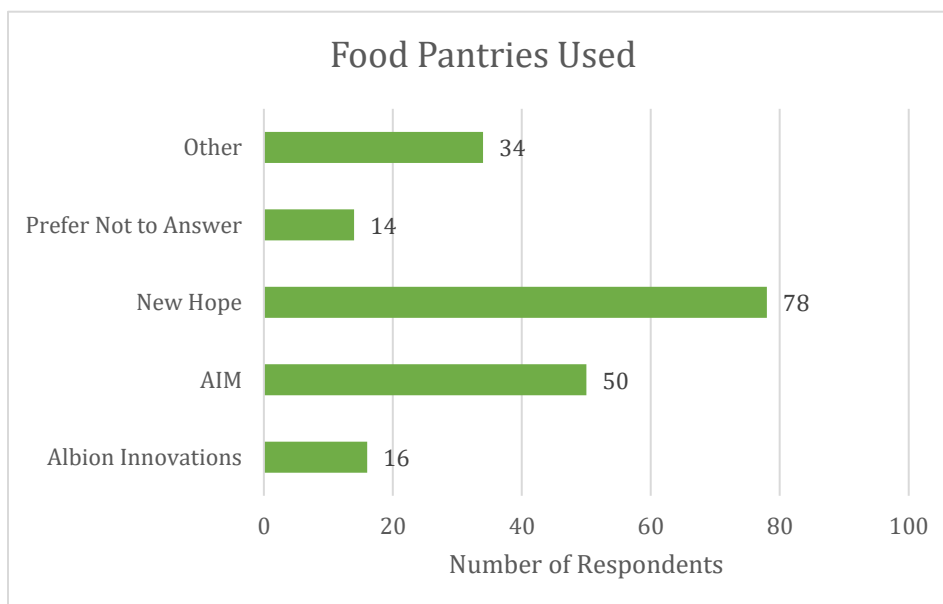


Figure F-5: Food Pantries Respondents are Using



GAPS & AWARENESS

When asked about food pantry use, 40% of respondents indicated some level of use or interest in using a food pantry (Figure F-6). Many indicated that they did not use a pantry but would like to (Figure F-6)

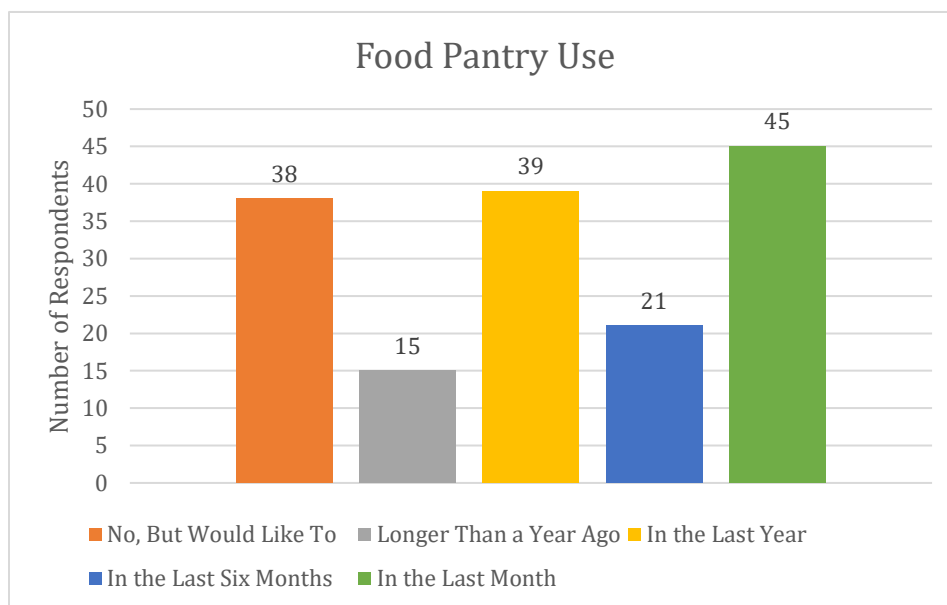
FOOD SECURITY

indicating a potential gap in service. A closer look at what barriers to food pantry use people have experienced may improve service to the community.

Looking at questions that people remained silent on, 30% of respondents did not provide an answer when asked how often they worry about food and another 15% did not provide an answer when asked if they used a food pantry. Silence around these topics may be linked to shame around being unable to meet basic needs and speaks to a need for community awareness of hunger. This is a potential space for further study on outreach programming within the Albion community.

Many respondents indicated interest in free food-related programming (Figure F-7). Offering programming and classes within Albion can be a strong platform for engaging in community food security and awareness. This may also help increase the pace of economic development surrounding local food, specifically the efforts of the Albion Food Hub. While classes should remain open to all ages, targeting these class offerings by age group may also increase engagement and participation. As shown in Figure H-14, individuals ages 18-54 show interest in classes surrounding healthy cooking on a budget, gardening, and food related education. Respondents age 55 and up showed interest in these same classes to a lesser intensity, but nutrition and food tastings with demonstrations were in their top four health and wellness classes (Figure H-13).

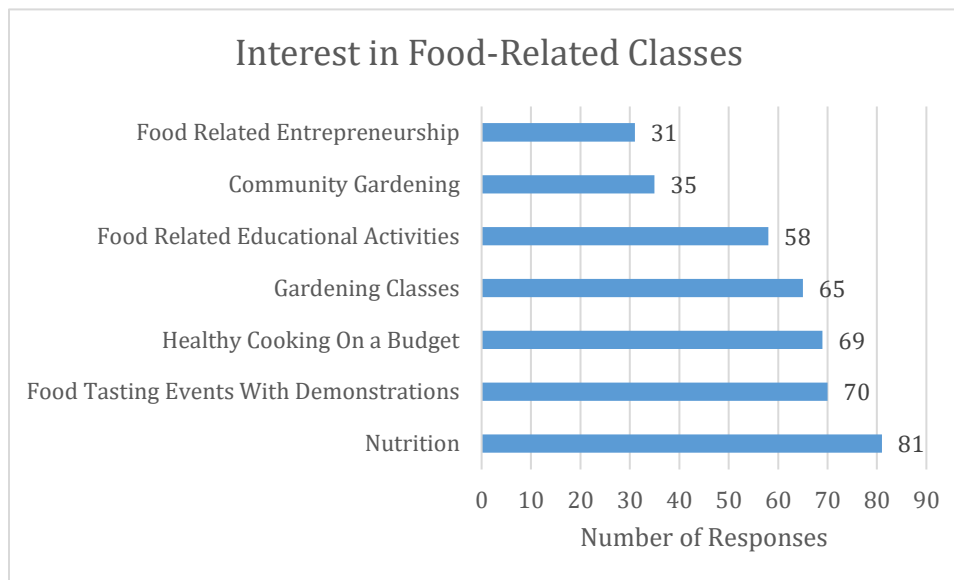
Figure F-6: Frequency of food pantry use.



Note: 194 respondents: No, Not Interested. 65 respondents: Prefer Not to Answer or No Answer

FOOD SECURITY

Figure F-7: Interest in free food related classes.



FOOD SECURITY OF AGING ADULTS

Food insecurity is a concern among older adults and Albion’s classification as a food desert impacts their well-being and livelihood. Access to fresh fruits and vegetables is vital to the health of aging adults and seniors who may already have limited access to nutrient-rich foods due to barriers such as transportation, cost, and time. Some services in Albion are available to alleviate these barriers, but more are needed.

Senior Services Southwest in Kalamazoo provides the local and crucial “meals on wheels” program, but the waiting list to be a recipient of this service is long. The Community Action Agency is based in Battle Creek and has an office in Albion in the same building as the Forks Senior Center. The Community Action Agency provides transportation for seniors and the differently-abled with 24 hours’ notice and some meal delivery programs. Food pantries exist in Albion and neighboring communities that older adults can use, but they rarely offer transportation assistance and have limited operating hours.

The following section will analyze how respondents to the Albion Forward Survey who indicated they were age 55 or older answered questions related to food security and how different age groups answered different questions.

FOOD SECURITY

Figure F-8: Frequency with which Respondents Age 55+ Worry about Having Enough Food

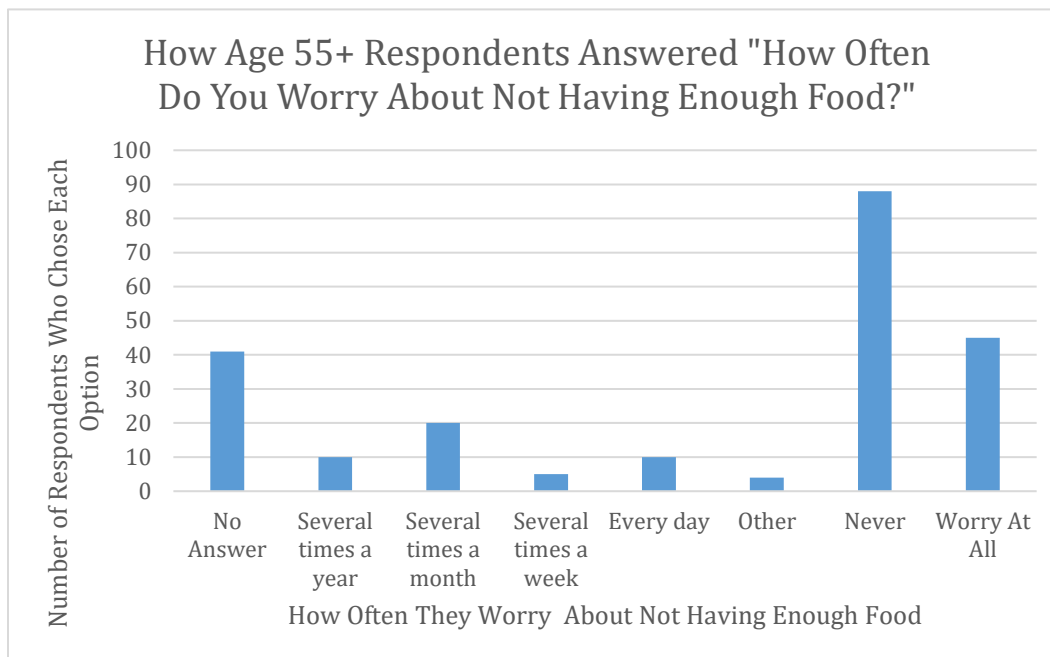
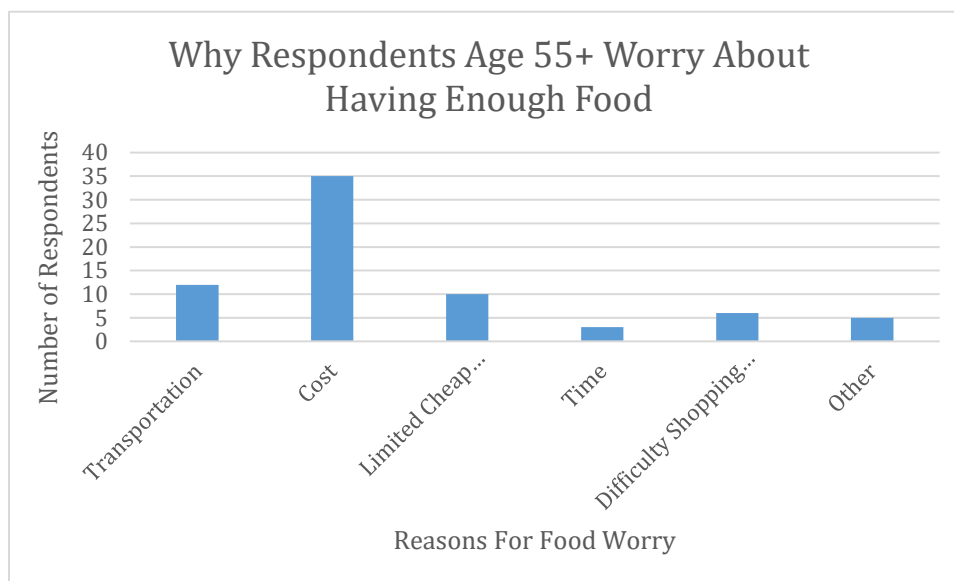


Figure F-9: Why Respondents Age 55+ Worry about Having Enough Food



FOOD SECURITY

Figure F-10: Reasons for Food Worry by Percentage of Respondents within Each Age Range

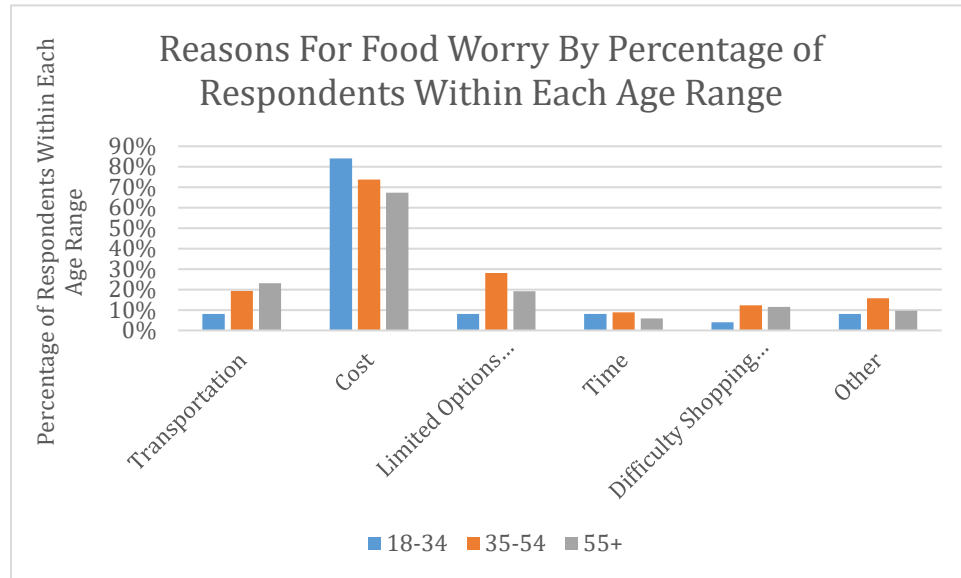
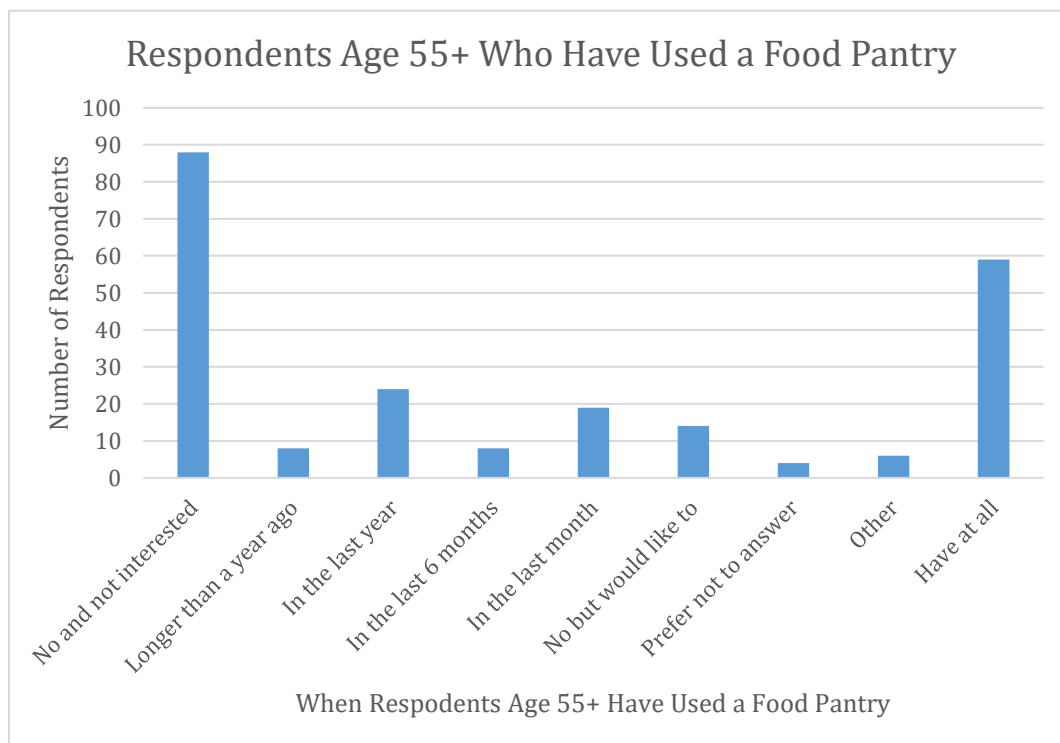
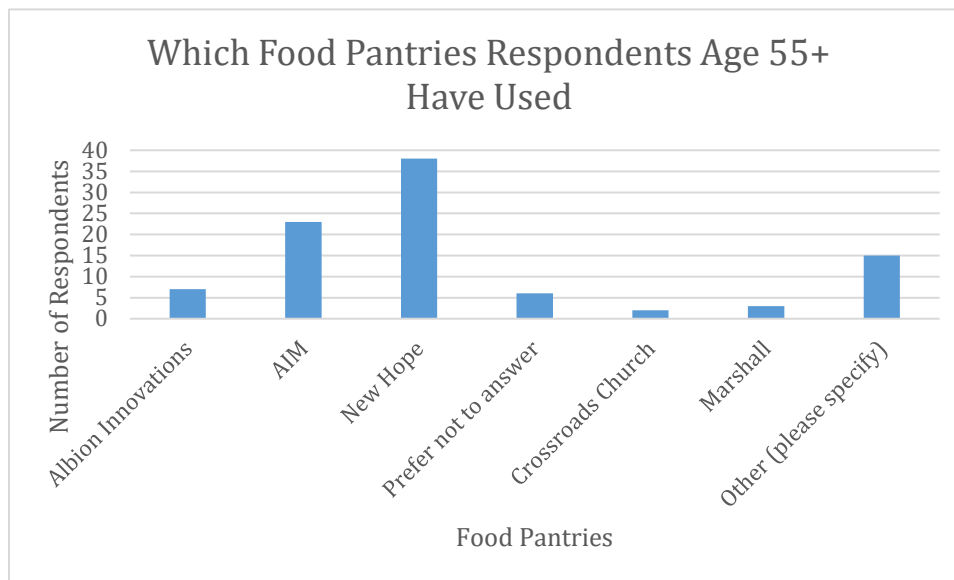


Figure F-11: Respondents Age 55+ who have Used a Food Pantry



FOOD SECURITY

Figure F-12: Food Pantries that Respondents Age 55+



Many respondents ages 55 and up have worried about having enough food at some point in the last year (Figure F-8). The most prevalent reason was cost (Figure F-9). Further, many of these respondents also indicated that they have used food pantries in the past (Figure F-11), New Hope Worship Center and Albion Interfaith Ministries being the most popular (Figure F-12). Pantry use data may be susceptible to sampling bias because the Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative surveyed at Albion Interfaith Ministries and New Hope Worship Center.

This may warrant more advertising of programs like Senior Project FRESH (Food Retail Expansion to Support Health) otherwise known as Farmers Market Nutrition Program, community classes about low-budget and healthy grocery shopping, advertising SNAP Double Up Food Bucks, and bolstering community food pantries. Further, meal delivery programs may need to be expanded as well as the population continues to age.

The 2016 Senior Needs Assessment reported that approximately 30% of their community survey respondents often do not have enough money to buy food. A similar percentage noted using food banks or food pantries. Bolstering food assistance programs in Albion and bringing in more food source options may not only help aging adults in Albion, but also those who live in the rest of eastern Calhoun County and rely on Albion for goods and services.

Health Care

SUMMARY

Many Albion residents face challenges to living an optimally healthy life in Albion. Due to the relatively small number of health care providers, Albion is considered by the Health Resources and Services Administration to be a Health Professional Shortage area for Primary Care Services. In the Albion Health Care Alliance's 2016 Health Needs Assessment, 61.7% of respondents said that services not being available prevented them from getting needed medical care in the past year. With the loss of Albion's only hospital in 2002 and no urgent care clinic in town, the physical distance one must travel for health care puts a strain on many families, especially families of low income, who may lack transportation, childcare, or the ability to take time off of work. Finding access to health care is even more difficult for Albion residents who are uninsured or underinsured.

With a lack of variety of food retailers in the area, families of lower income or who are transportation-limited may also experience difficulty in buying healthy food. All of these factors, known as social determinants of health, largely impact the health of a community. The Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA members asked community stakeholders who were interested in improving the health of the Albion area what information would be helpful for them. While reading through previous community health needs assessments that have been completed in this area (see Appendix 1), it was noted that Albion-specific data on certain topics was missing. Those missing pieces, combined with insight from community leaders, helped the VISTA members to develop the survey questions included in this section.

Results are broken down by race and income, and sometimes age, categories for each question, producing some potentially meaningful findings, although as stated in the introduction, this report cannot claim statistical significance. In general, the differences between how people of color and white people answered each question mirrored the differences between how income groups answered each question, which may be reflective of the demographics of the city.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Respondents were asked about the physical environmental factors that were most concerning to their health or the health of their household and were asked to pick their top three responses. The City of Albion is aware of several environmental concerns among Albion residents, including blighted homes, air, and water quality. These factors have an impact on health. Answers from this question can help the City prioritize its cleanup and revitalization efforts. The Calhoun County Land Bank Authority also wanted to know if residents of Albion considered broken down buildings and industrial sites to be a health hazard.

HEALTH CARE

Figure H-1: Percentage of Respondents Worried about Environmental Issues

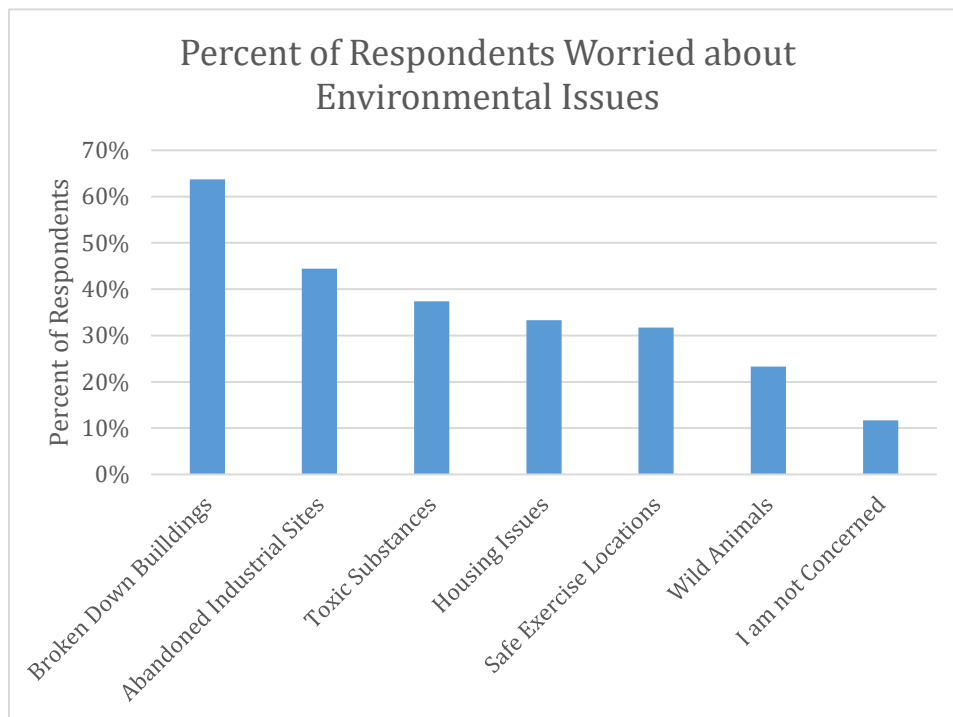


Figure H-1 shows the percentage of all respondents that indicated they were concerned about the environmental factors included as options for this question. Some people chose more or less than three options. All responses have been included in the data set. For example, 64% of all survey respondents checked the broken down homes and buildings options as one of their top three household health concerns.

The most commonly selected environmental factor is broken down homes and buildings (64% of all residents), followed by abandoned industrial sites (44.4%), and by toxic substances (lead, mercury, poor air quality, etc.) (37%). Only 12% of respondents said they are not concerned about any environmental health hazards.

HEALTH CARE

Figure H-2: Percentage of White Persons and Persons of Color Concerned about Environmental Issues

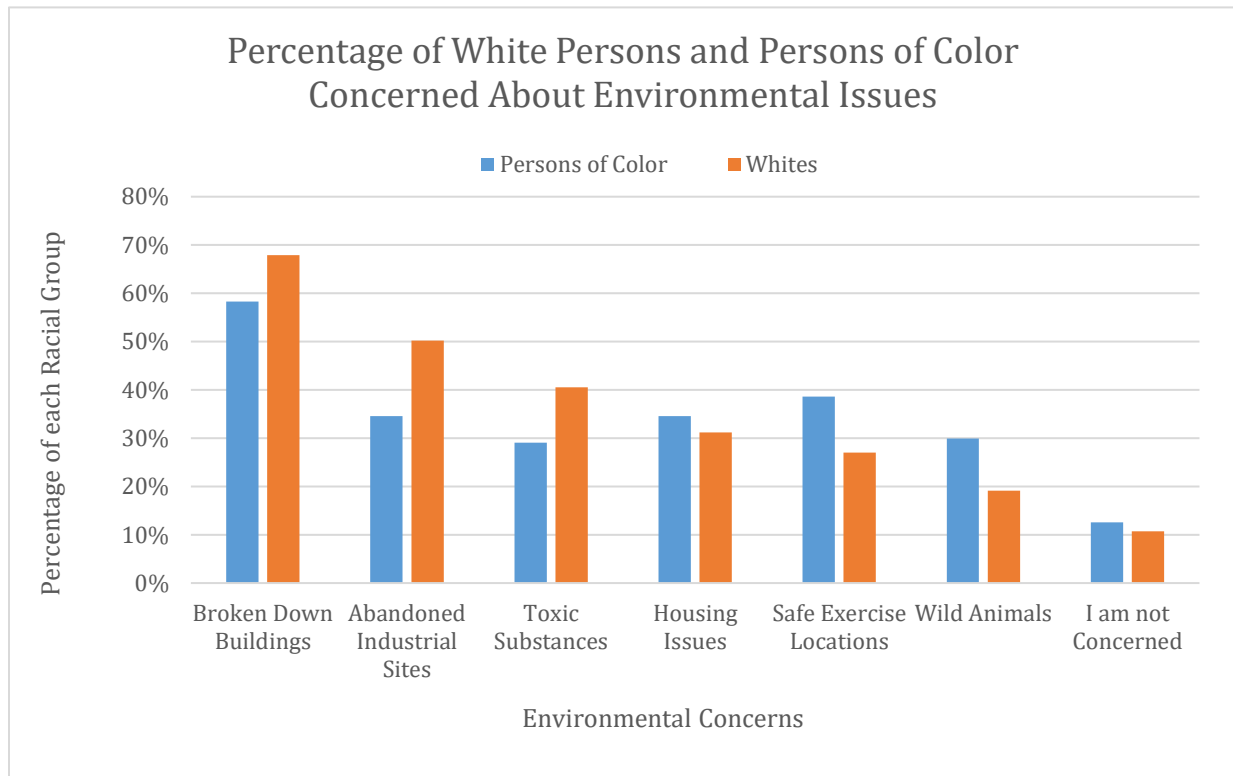


Figure H-2 breaks down the top environmental concerns by race of the survey taker (white and/or persons of color).

HEALTH CARE

Figure H-3: Percentage of People who are Concerned about Environmental Issues by Income

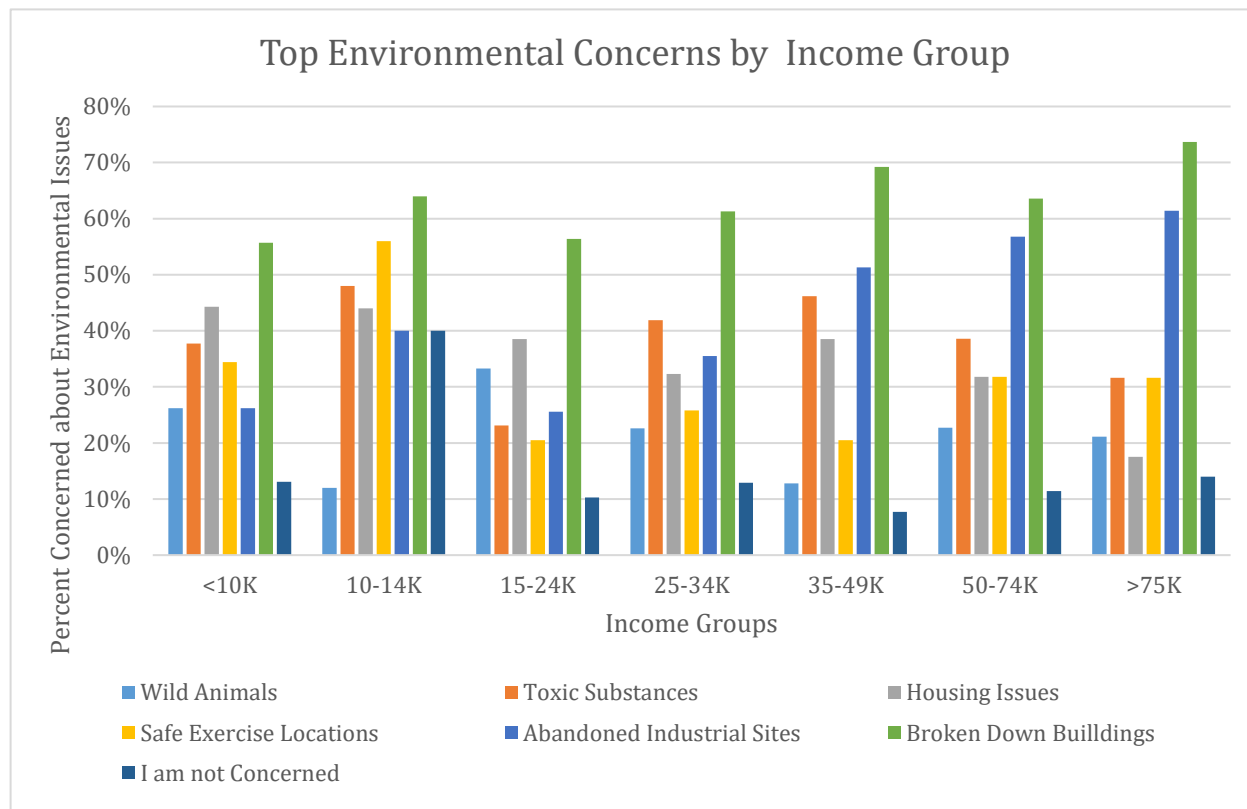


Figure H-3 shows the top environmental concerns by income of the survey taker (<\$10,000, \$10,000-\$15,000, \$15,000-\$24,000...). The differences in responses were not tested for statistical significance. Survey respondents of higher income were more concerned about abandoned industrial sites and broken down buildings. Respondents of lower income were more concerned about housing issues. The \$10K-14K income group stood out in its high concern about safe exercise locations (56%). Individuals of lower income already experience a number of barriers to optimal health status, so this result may be of interest to many community stakeholders.

ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE

Residents were asked where they go to receive medical attention when needed. They were asked to select all of the options that applied to them. This question was asked to look for demographic differences between chosen health care locations.

HEALTH CARE

Figure H-4: Health Care Providers used by Survey Respondents

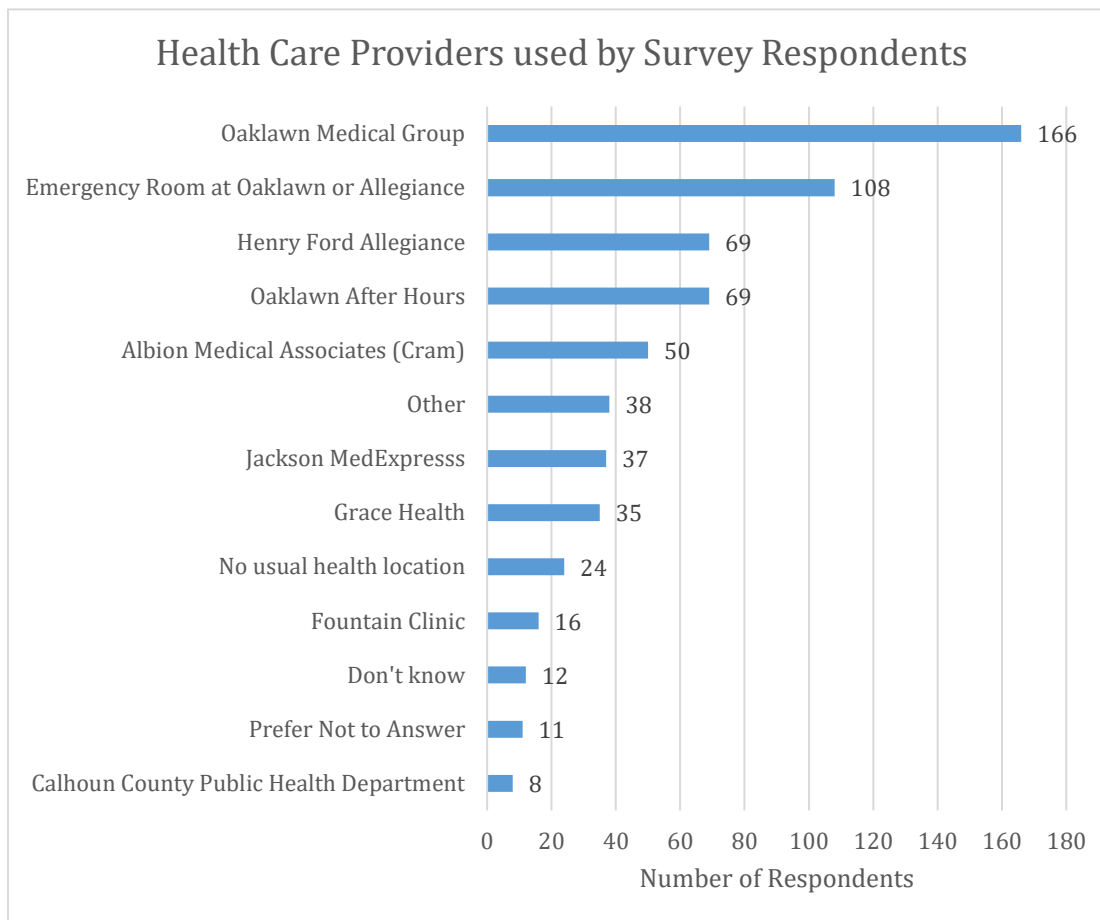


Figure H-4 shows how many survey respondents indicated that they often use the health care providers listed in the graph. Of the 380 respondents, 166 respondents regularly go to Oaklawn Medical group for medical care. Oaklawn Medical Group is the most commonly used health care provider. Some respondents chose multiple health care locations whereas some chose only one. It is unclear from the way the question was asked whether the 108 survey respondents use the Emergency Room at Oaklawn or Allegiance as their regular medical care, or only in emergencies. The Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative recommends increasing advertisement of the Calhoun County Public Health Department's services to increase usage of that underused resource.

HEALTH CARE

Figure H-5: Health Care Provider use by Race

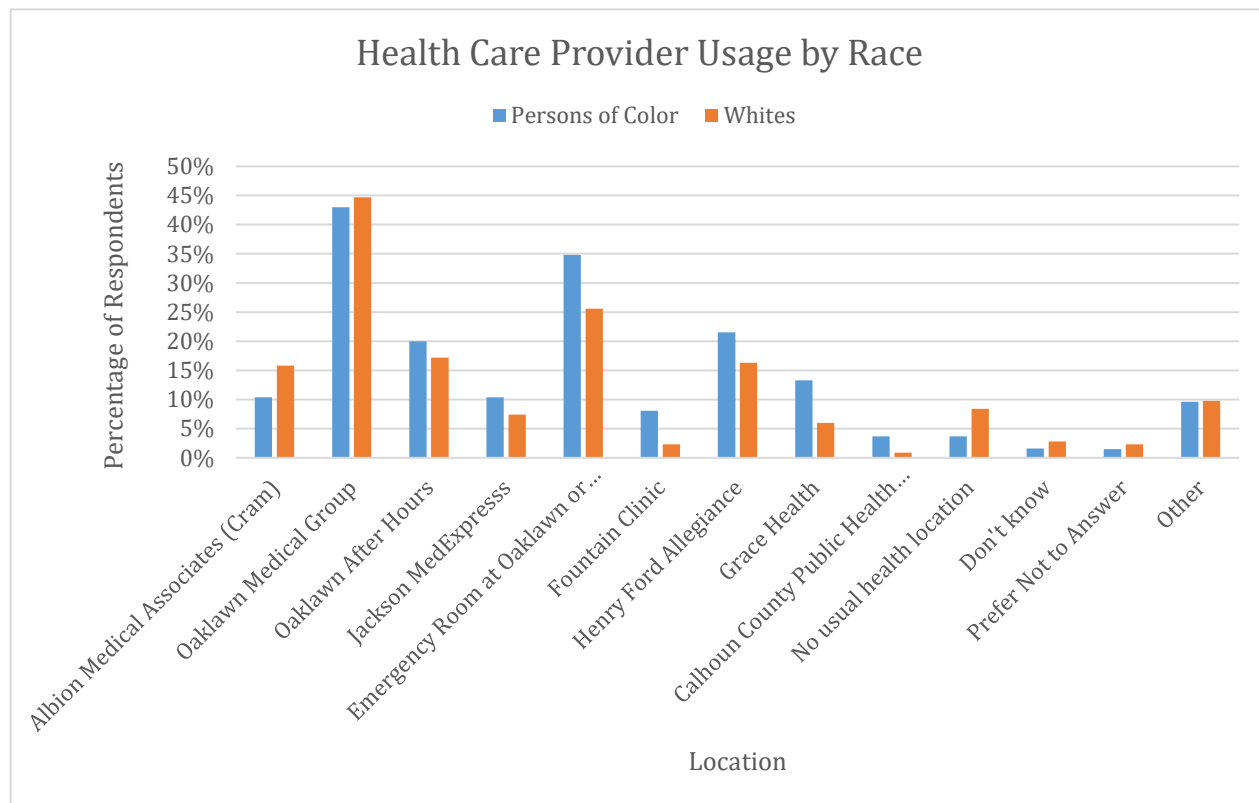


Figure H-5 breaks down the most commonly used health care providers by race of the survey takers (white and persons of color). For example, 43% of all persons of color who answered this question selected Oaklawn Medical Group as a health care provider they most often go to. The differences in responses were not tested for statistical significance. The results do not appear to differ much by race of the respondent, except 10% more persons of color indicated the use the Emergency Room for medical care most often. However, as previously stated, it is unclear if the respondents use the Emergency Room as their regular medical care, or only in case of emergencies.

HEALTH CARE

Figure H-6: Health Care Provider use by Income Group

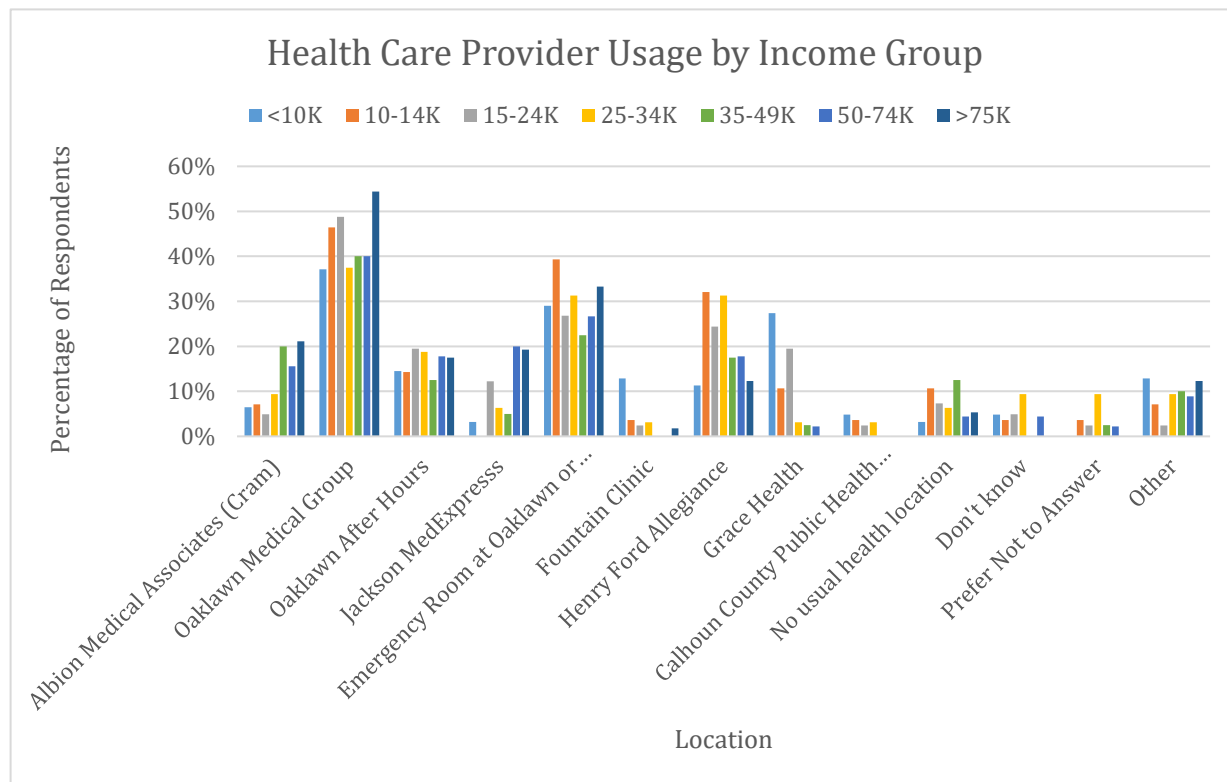


Figure H-6 shows the health care providers used by respondents by income of the survey respondents. The majority of all income groups go to Oaklawn Medical Group for medical attention. A larger percentage of respondents of lower income frequent Henry Ford Allegiance, Fountain Clinic, and Grace Health than higher-income respondents. A larger percentage of respondents of higher-income frequent Albion Medical Associates than those of lower income.

HEALTH CARE

Figure H-7: Where Persons Age 55+ go for Medical Attention

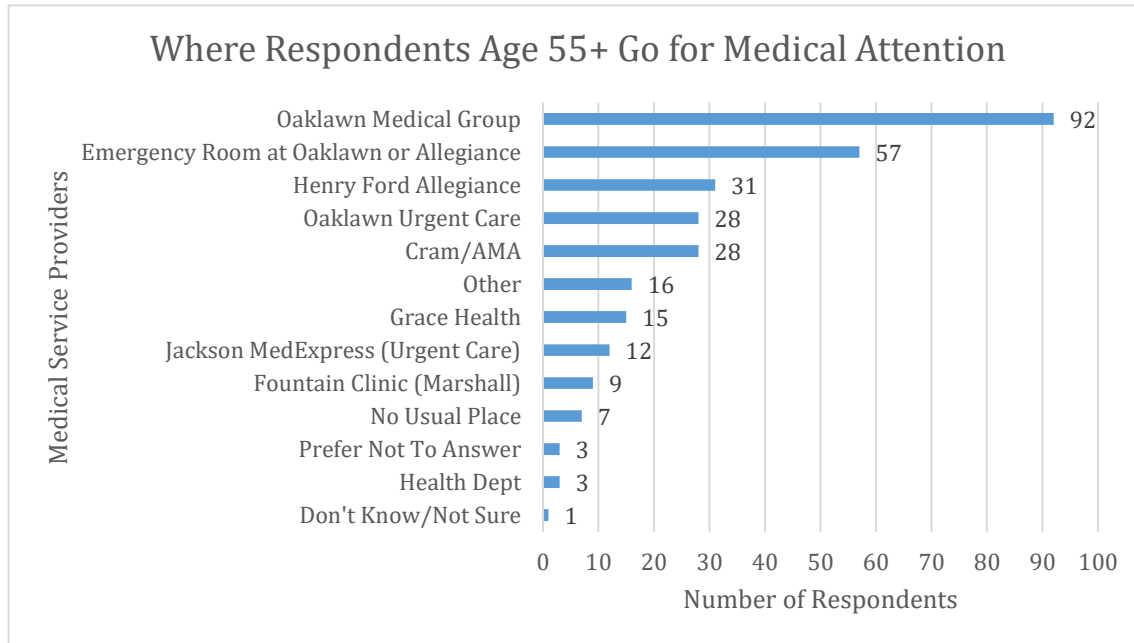
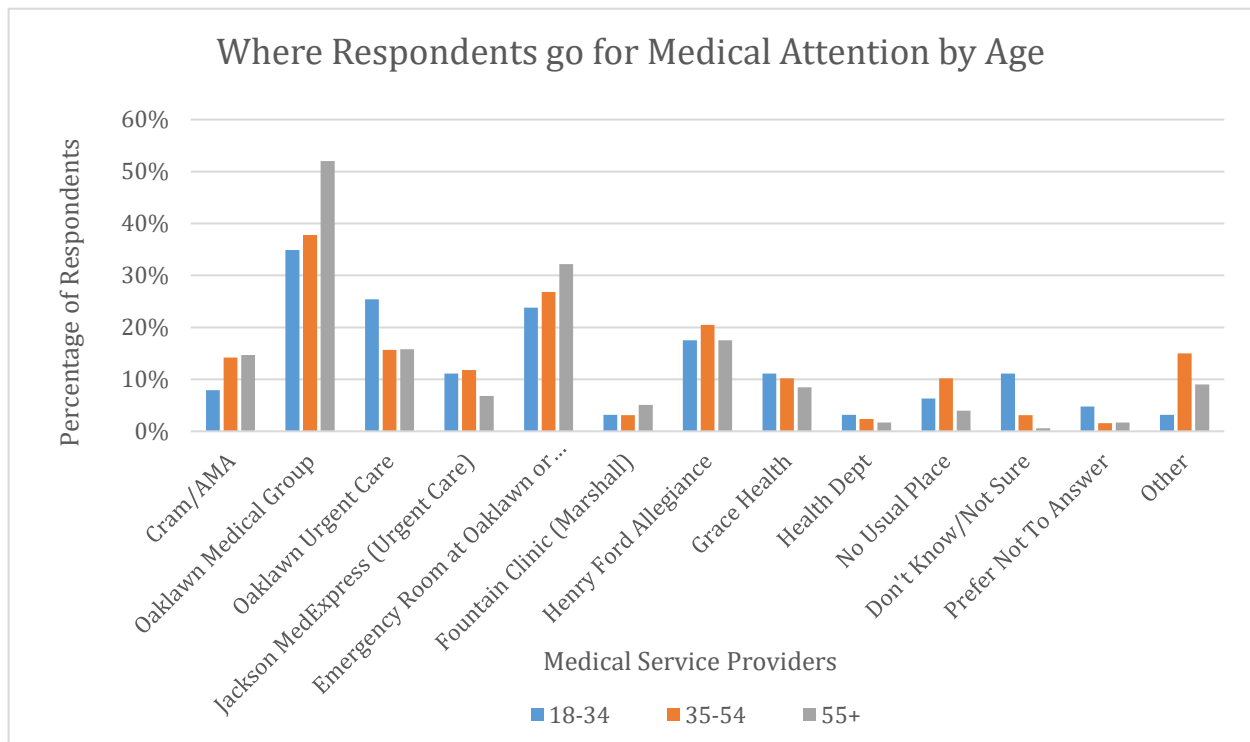


Figure H-8: Where Survey Respondents go for Medical Attention by Age



HEALTH CARE

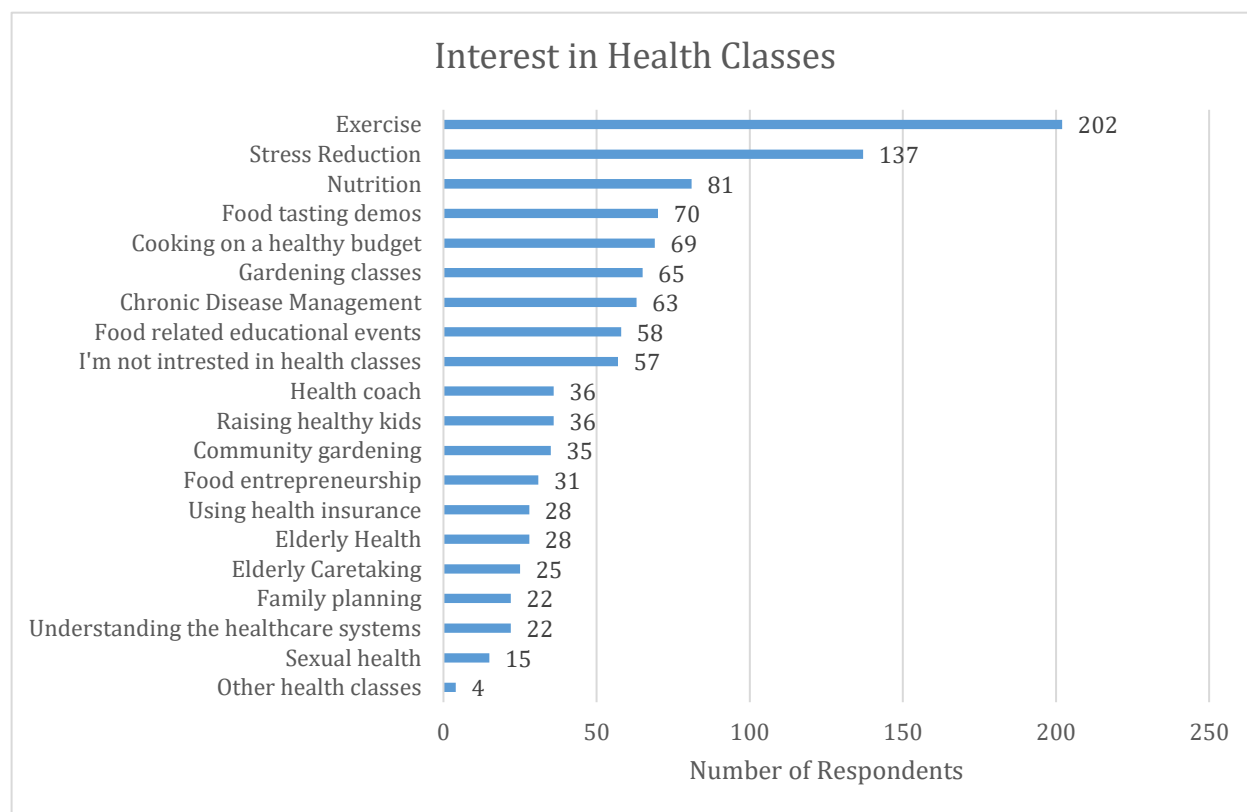
Most respondents age 55 and up chose Oaklawn Medical Group as their main provider when they are sick or need medical attention (Figure H-7). Oaklawn has a primary care office in Albion and is headquartered in neighboring Marshall. The next largest option was the emergency room, either at Oaklawn or Henry Ford Allegiance. Oaklawn's emergency room is over 10 miles away and Allegiance's is over 20 miles. If many older adults in Albion rely on these places for medical care, transportation and time could be a significant barriers to proper care.

In this study, it appears that older adults tend to choose Oaklawn more than the other age groups. They also tended to choose the emergency room more, which may be due to more serious medical needs related to aging.

HEALTH PROGRAMMING

The Albion Forward Survey asked residents about the types of health classes that people would be interested in. There are resources available for putting on programming and community partners were seeking input on the types of programming that people would be interested in attending. The question was asked to ensure that health programming is meeting the interests and needs of Albion residents and to see if certain groups of people have different interests or needs as it relates to health information or education.

Figure H-9: Interest in Health Classes



HEALTH CARE

Figure H-9 shows how many of the respondents selected each class as one of the top three they are interested in. It should be noted that some people chose more or less than three options. These responses were included in the data. For example, 202 respondents said a free exercise class was one of their top three most desired health classes. Exercise classes were by a large majority the most desired health class, followed by stress reduction, then food-related courses (nutrition, food tasting demonstrations, cooking on a health budget, gardening).

Figure H-10: Interest in Health Classes by Race

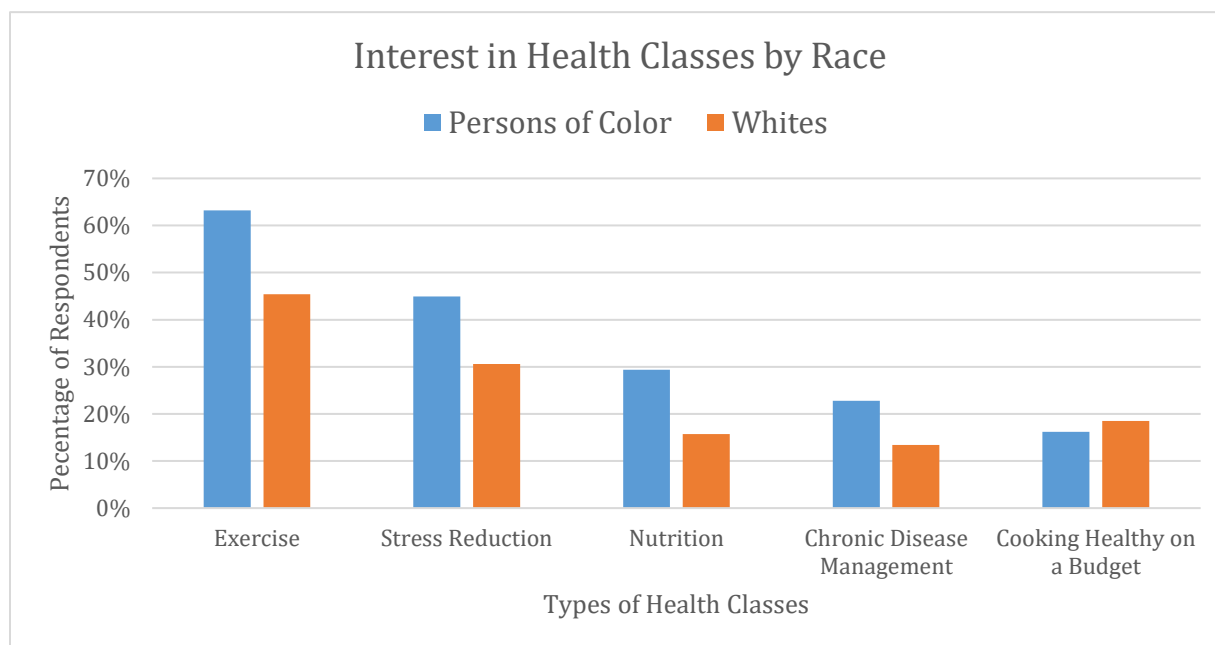
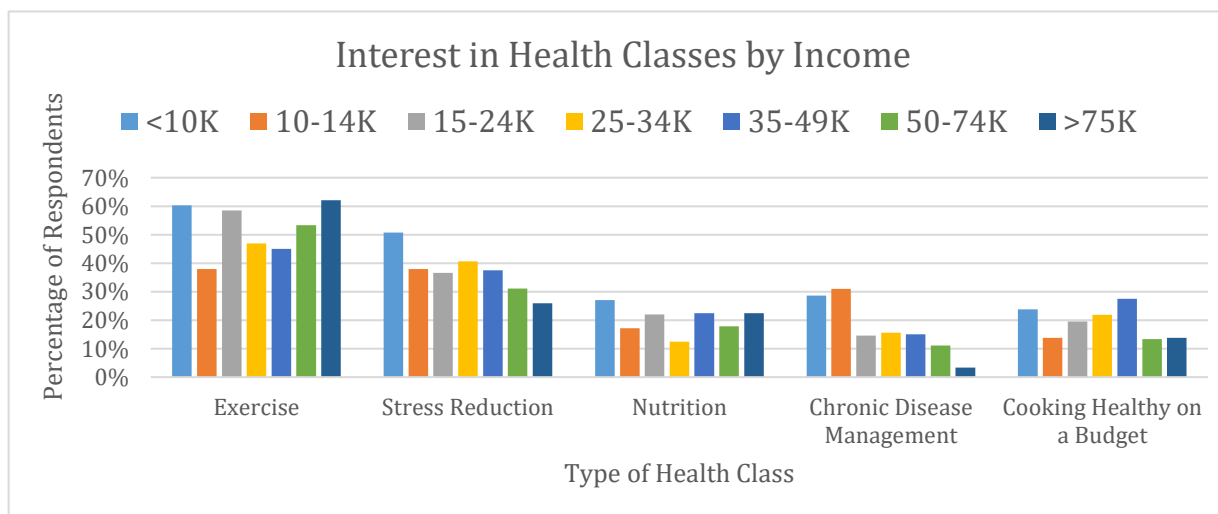


Figure H-11: Interest in Health Classes by Income Group

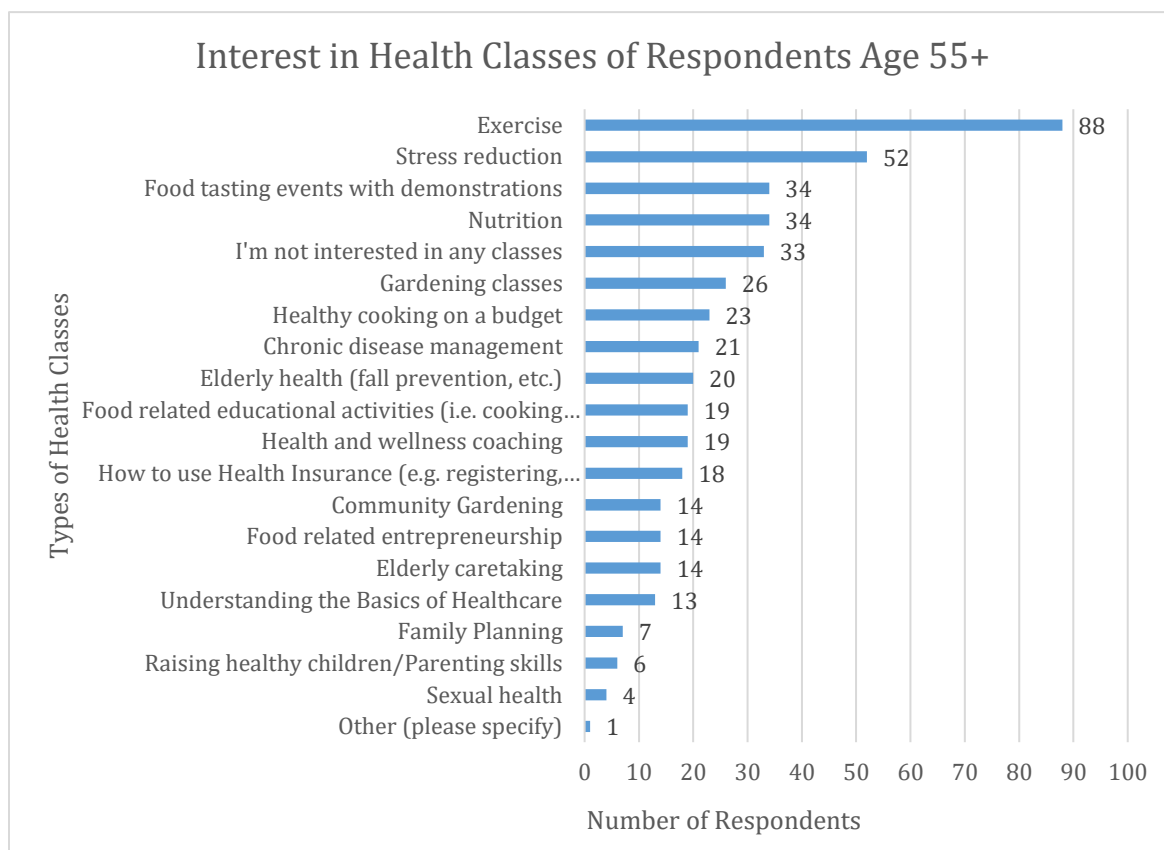


HEALTH CARE

Figures H-10 and H-11 demonstrate how race and income impacted the response to this question. Only five classes were selected to show on the graph in order to save space. The VISTA members believe these five classes may reveal major differences in interest among race and/or income. Persons of color reported a higher relative interest in exercise, stress reduction, and nutritional programming than white people did. Whites were more interested in gardening classes and food tasting demos (not shown). People of lower income groups reported relatively more interest in stress reduction. People of higher income reported relatively more interest in food tasting demos and gardening classes.

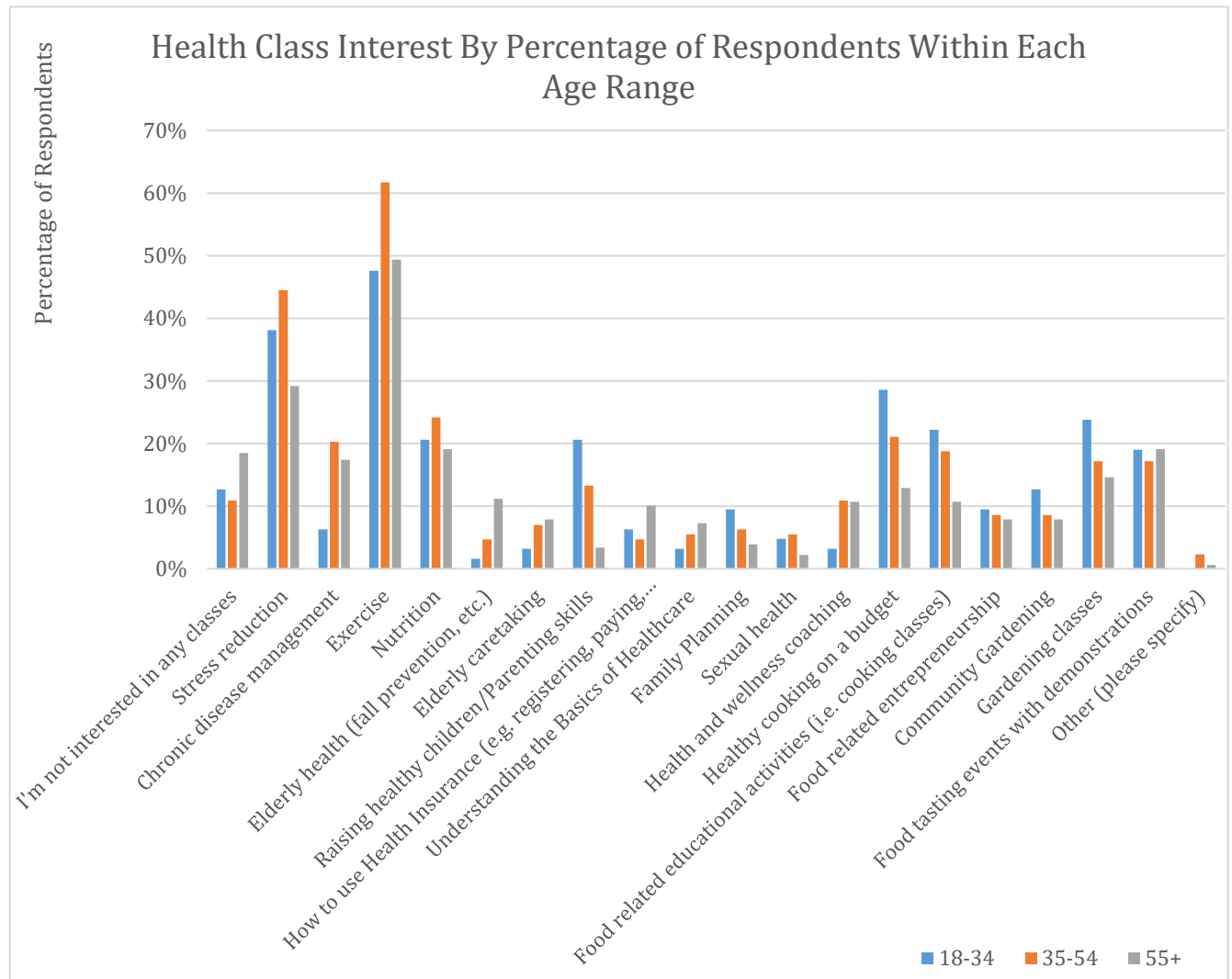
Physical activity, diet, and nutrition are all major factors affecting an individual's longevity and development of chronic health issues. People of color and people from lower income groups already experience a number of barriers to having an optimal health status, including access to health insurance, causing chronic disease rates to be higher (Wilkinson et. al). Community groups who care about improving the health of their community should take note of the large interest, especially by people of color and people of low income groups, for educational classes on these main determinants of health status. Focus groups investigating strategies to reach these populations with culturally competent health and wellness information may be relevant to many community stakeholders.

Figure H-13: Interest in Health Classes of Respondents Age 55+



HEALTH CARE

Figure H-14: Interest in Health Classes by Age



Of the options for free health and wellness classes, respondents age 55 and over overwhelmingly chose exercise (Fig. H-13). Other top choices include stress reduction, nutrition, and food tastings with demonstrations.

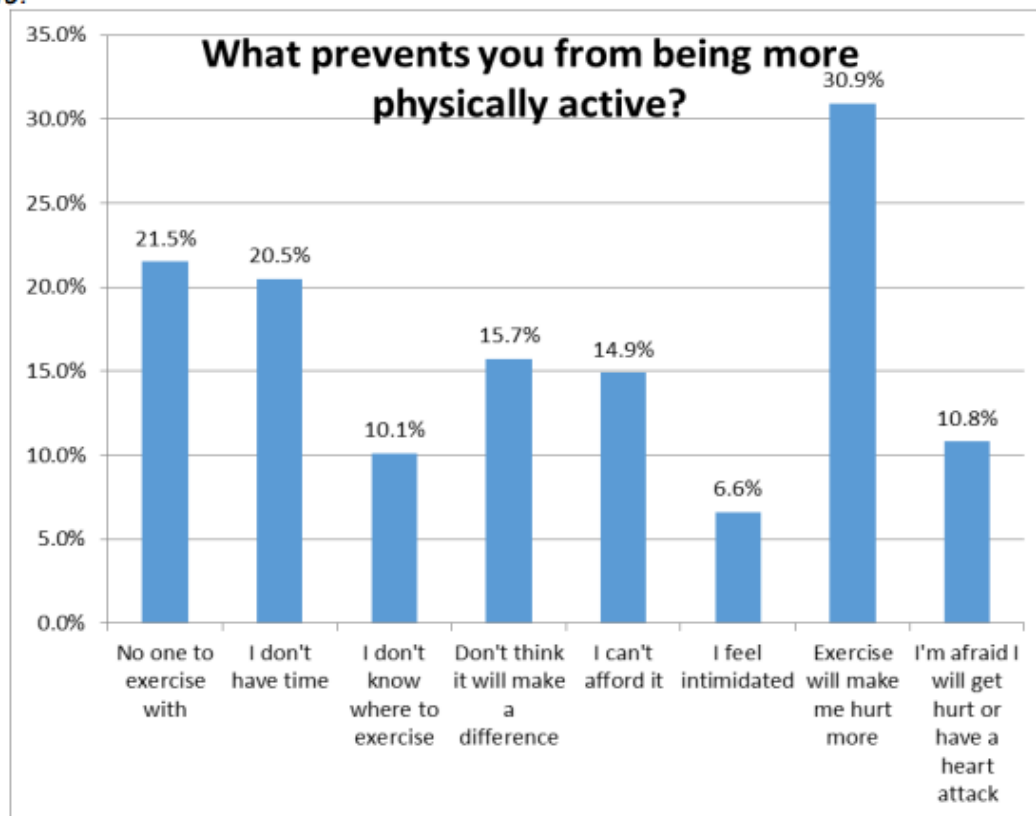
The 2016 Senior Needs Assessment notes that heart disease and diabetes are major ailments affecting mortality among older adults in Calhoun County. Focus group members at Maple Grove Apartments in Albion also expressed strong feelings of isolation, which can lead to poor mental health. Community health and wellness classes geared towards older adults could encourage healthy behavior and provide social interaction that can improve mental health.

HEALTH CARE

As Figure H-15 notes, older adults have a variety of challenges in being more physically active. Free exercise classes geared towards older adults that are age friendly and provide a welcoming social setting could alleviate many of these challenges.

Figure H-15: 2016 Senior Needs Assessment

Figure 48:



Source: Senior Needs Assessment 2016 for Calhoun and Barry Counties

MEDICAL EXPENSES

As discussed previously in this report, there are a significant number of Albion residents of low income. This can have an effect on people's access to necessary health care, prescriptions, transportation, and other health care related costs. Residents were asked if they or anyone in their household were unable to see a doctor, receive medical treatment, or obtain a prescription due to cost. This question was asked in order to update the data on lack of access to health care to guide and demonstrate the needs for funding and programming initiatives.

HEALTH CARE

Figure H-16: Percentage of Respondents Who Struggled to Afford Medical Expenses in the Past 12 Months

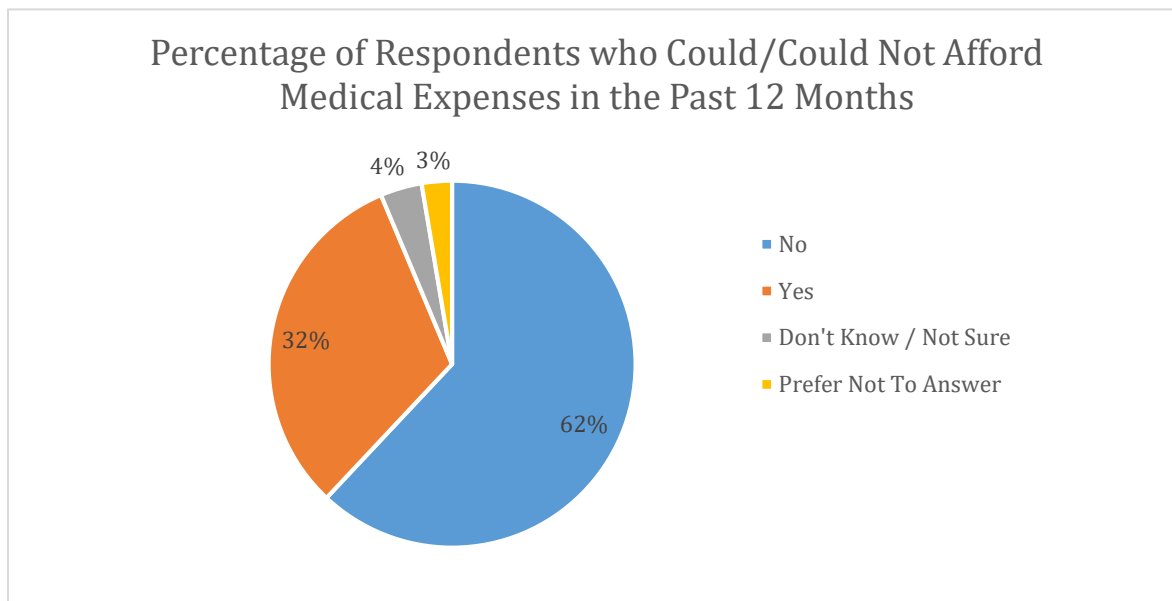
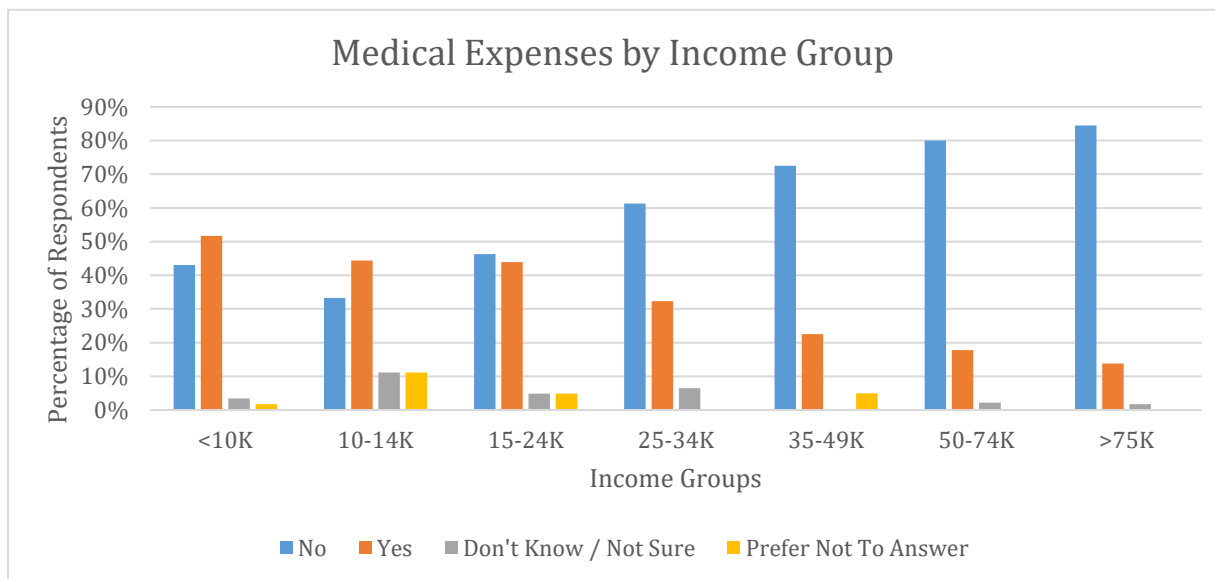


Figure H-17: Percentage of Respondents who Struggled to Afford Medical Expenses in the Past 12 Months by Income Group

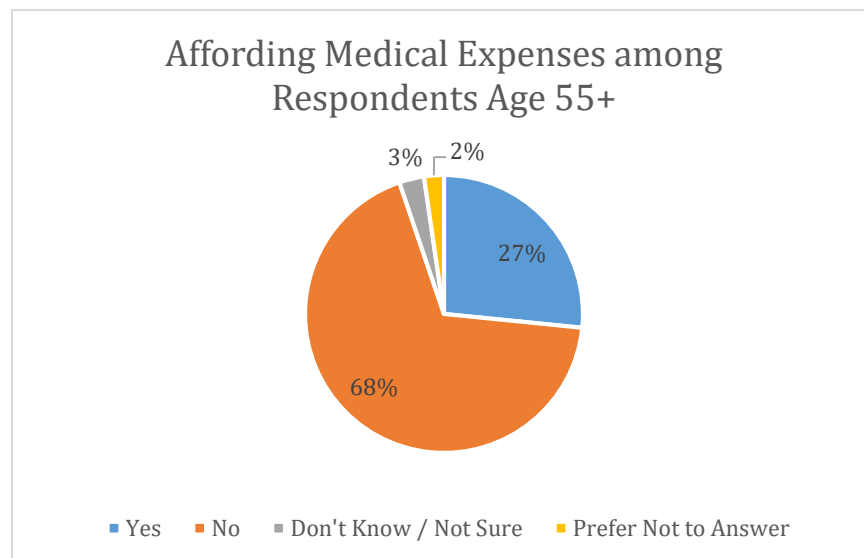


In general, people of color and people from lower income groups have a harder time paying for medical costs.¹ Of the 300 respondents, around 32% could not cover medical expenses in the past 12 months due to cost. This number jumps to around 50% for the less than \$10,000 a year income group. Around 15% of

HEALTH CARE

people from the more than \$75,000 a year income group also had difficulty covering medical costs in the past 12 months.

Figure H-18: Percentage of Respondents Age 55+ Struggling to Afford Medical Expenses in the Past 12 Months



Many older adults also noted struggling with medical costs. Survey respondents age 55 and up also noted that their biggest transportation need was for medical appointments (see Figure C-8 in *Connections*).

The 2016 Senior Needs Assessment noted more specific cost issues for older adults in terms of vision, hearing, and dental care. That survey asked if there was a time in the last 12 months when one should have had their vision checked, had their hearing checked, or had a dental visit but did not go. Of those respondents who said yes, the “the most prevalent responses related to affordability and lack of insurance coverage.” Medicare covers some of these costs, but doesn't cover things like most dental care, dental procedures, or supplies, routine eye exams for eyeglasses or contact lenses, hearing exams, hearing aids, or exams for fitting hearing aids (source: Medicare.gov). Seniors often have to get supplemental insurance or pay out of pocket for these costs, which is not possible for many.

Citations:

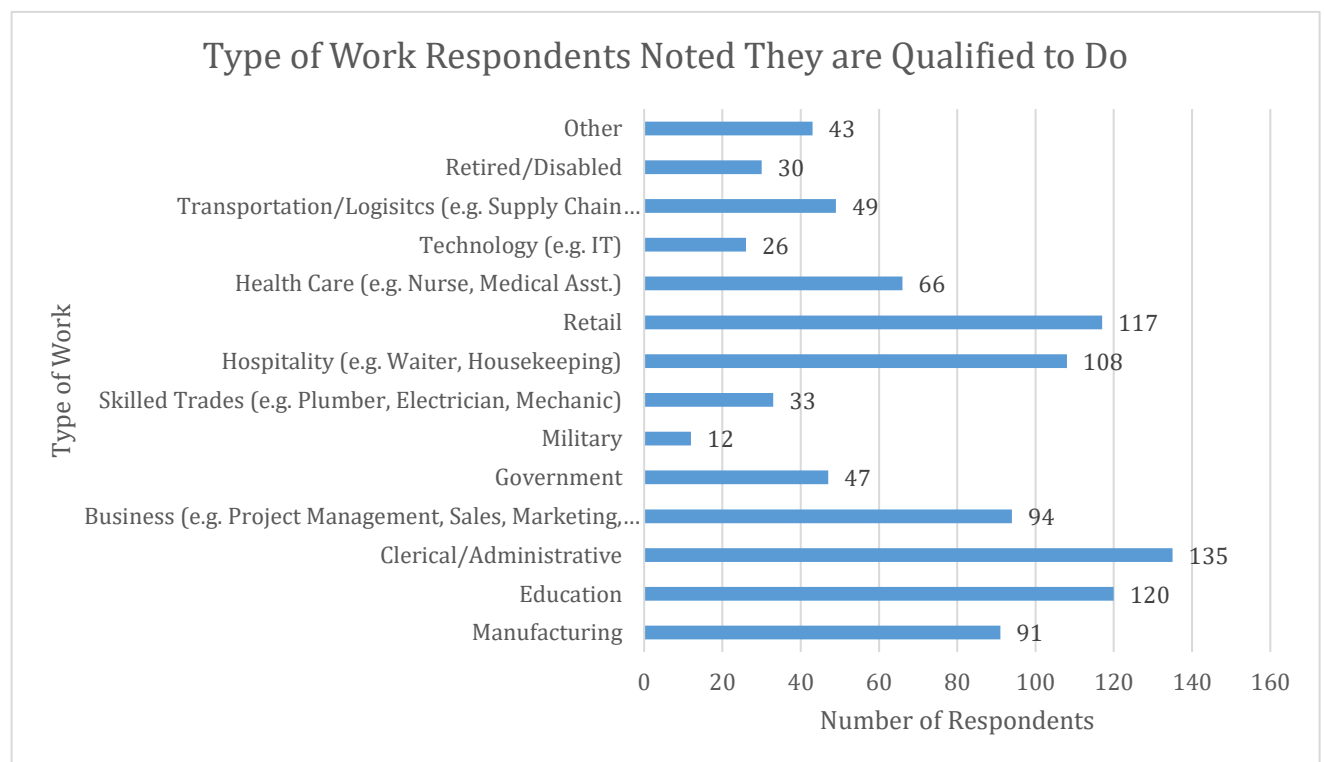
1. Wilkinson R, Marmot M, editors. Social determinants of health: The solid facts [Internet]. 2nd ed. Copenhagen: World Health Organization; 2003 [cited 2010 May 26]. Available from: http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/98438/e81384.pdf [PDF – 470 KB].

JOB CONNECTION AND ACCESS

Job Connection and Access

An important area of focus for the Albion Forward Survey was to assess the workforce and job market in the city of Albion. As a part of the workforce assessment the VISTA team and its community partners wanted to know what type of work the respondents feel they are prepared or qualified to do based on their experience and work history. Figure J-1 shows various categories of job types and the responses received related to residents' preparedness and qualification for those jobs.

Figure J-1: Types of Work Respondents Noted They are Qualified to Do



Another objective of the Albion Forward Survey was to gather information on what types of job skills training respondents were interested in pursuing. Figure J-2 shows the number of responses received for interest in different job or career training. Figure J-3 shows the respondents preferred method for receiving training. Albion and the greater Albion region have seen several new businesses and factories move in bringing hundreds of jobs with them. The challenge that many have expressed is that they are unable to find the skilled labor to fill these positions. Organizations such as Michigan Works! and the Albion Economic Development Corporation can fill in the gaps by offering job trainings, job fairs, and assisting employers in attracting talent from within the Albion community. With the massive economic downturn in 2008 and the severe recession that followed, many Albion residents have been discouraged from looking for work. The

JOB CONNECTION AND ACCESS

following graphs show the interest that people have in job trainings and the ways in which they prefer to learn.

Figure J-2: Interest in Job Trainings

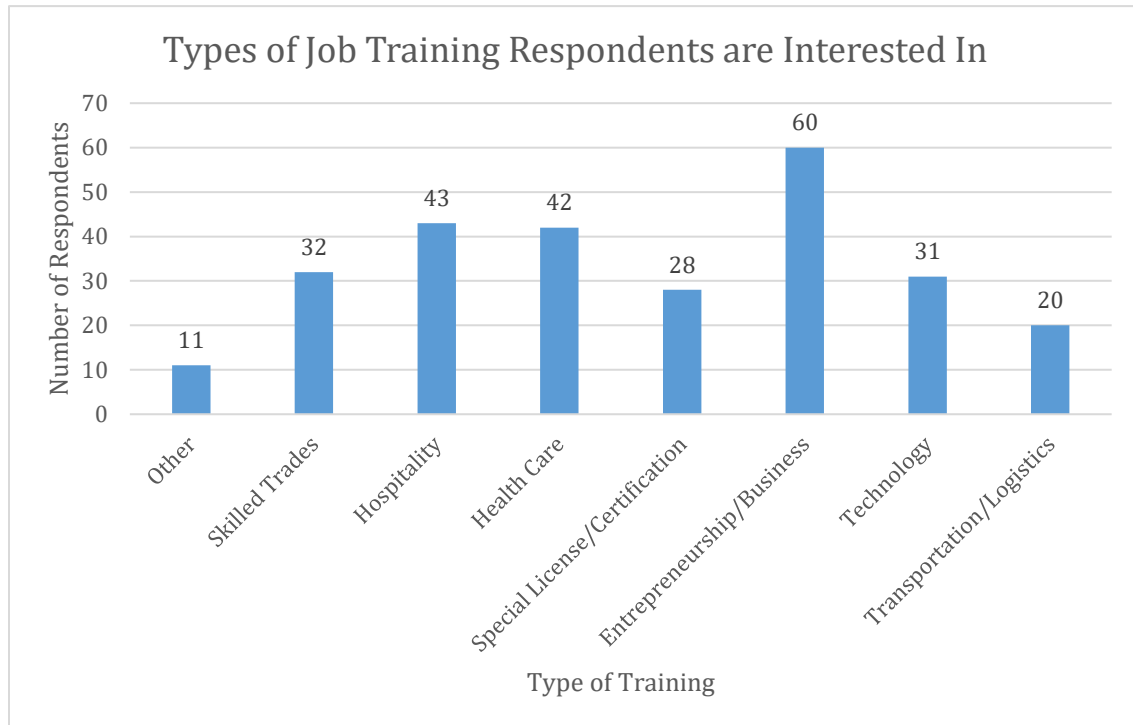
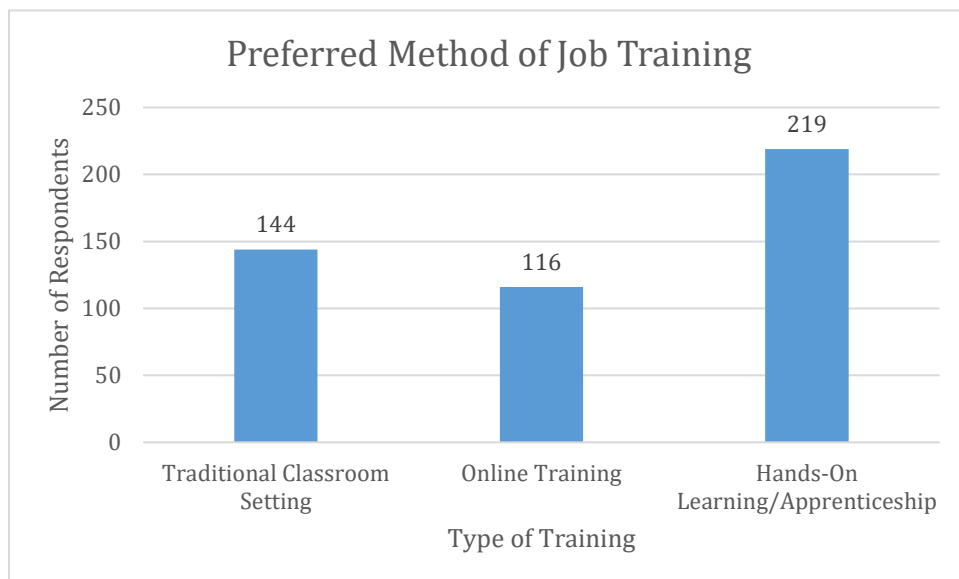


Figure J-3: Preferred Method of Job Training



CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative was able to engage over 400 citizens of the City of Albion through the Albion Forward Survey. The VISTA team views this as a success because hundreds of community members made their voices heard about their needs and their vision for the Albion community. Many community members and partners were skeptical that a number over two or three hundred could be reached, especially with a survey that had over twenty questions. Further, over 150 survey respondents said “yes” to being interested in volunteering in Albion and provided contact information for when opportunities arise. This volunteer network may provide support to numerous events and programming in the City of Albion.

While this data is not from a scientific study, it can serve as a starting point for more research and provides interesting information from questions that may have never been asked of the community before. The VISTA team believes that some recommendations can be suggested based on the data and what has been heard from community partners and citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

- Utilize sponsored social media posts to reach Albion residents about services and happenings in the community.
- Utilize news services like Albion Recorder and E-News with word of mouth and social media to reach seniors.
- Focus groups for certain health care needs (for example: diabetes or cancer patients, disabled residents, etc.) may be necessary to truly understand health care needs and barriers to health care in Albion.
- Start Neighborhood Planning Councils to implement programs like Neighborhood Watch, to plan for infill housing developments, and foster a sense of engagement with and ownership of the Albion community among residents.
- Support creation of a “Senior Visiting Program” to reach shut-in seniors for social interaction and help with light home repairs and upkeep.
- Create a new local produce venture/produce delivery service to help those that have difficulty leaving their homes without assistance or have limited access to transportation.
- Increase advertisement of essential but underutilized health resources such as services offered by the Calhoun County Public Health Department.
- Offer free health classes for exercise, stress reduction, food tastings, healthy cooking, and gardening.
 - Some should be geared towards older adults for accessibility because they could encourage healthy behavior but also provide social interaction that could improve mental health
- Increase advertising of programs like Senior Project FRESH and SNAP Double Up Food Bucks Program to improve access to healthy food for those that have difficulty affording it.
 - Advertise that these programs are accepted at the Albion Farmers Market

CONCLUSION

- Offer community classes about affordable and healthy grocery shopping.
- Meal delivery programs will need to be expanded for shut-in seniors as the population continues to age.
 - Meal delivery programs should consider partnering with the Albion Food Hub to increase distribution in Albion.
- Provide wider access to safe and accessible exercise locations with a focus on welcoming people of color and people of low income.
- Increase advertisements for the health navigator of the Albion Health Care Alliance and MMAP Counselor at Forks Senior Center to people of low income and people of color. Sponsored social media postings may be a good outlet for this.
- Continue efforts to demolish and rehabilitate blighted homes and industrial properties.
- Pursue funding for neighborhood beautification efforts.
- Word of mouth and social media tend to be the best ways to spread the word about news and should be used when advertising jobs or job training opportunities.
- Increase out-of-school programming in downtown Albion.
- Entities like the Albion Economic Development Corporation, Albion College, and The Greater Albion Chamber of Commerce should continue to offer learning opportunities for entrepreneurship and business to the community.

For community members or organizations who are interested in further analysis using this data, one may request to have a copy of the survey spreadsheet to analyze or ask the VISTA team to try and answer a question using Albion Forward Survey data. This will be provided in compliance with confidentiality requirements to not share survey respondents' personal information. Further, one may request to see the survey itself, any flyers that were made, procedures, etc. The VISTA team is happy to provide advice on surveying in Albion including what worked and what did not.

Other needs assessments and additional reading resources are provided in Appendix 1. Many of these were used to help craft the Albion Forward Survey and provide valuable information that community members and organizations can use to inform programming, understand needs, and provide foundations for further research. One hope of the Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative is that the Albion Forward Survey results will provide a piece of the picture of Albion and be a springboard for further reading, research, and action.

APPENDIX 1: PREVIOUS NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Appendix 1: Previous Needs Assessments

Albion Community Food Profile

<http://www.albionfoundation.org/food/index.php>

Albion Health Care Alliance 2016 Albion Health Needs Assessment

http://www.albionhca.org/uploads/7/8/9/6/78969324/ahca_presentation_may26.pdf

Calhoun County 2013 Community Health Needs Assessment

https://www.calhouncountymi.gov/assets/1/7/Calhoun_County_Community_Health_Needs_Assessment.pdf

Calhoun and Barry Counties Senior Needs Assessment 2016

For more information, contact Carewell Services (Area Agency on Aging Region 3B) or Calhoun County Senior Services.

Calhoun County Report Card from The Coordinating Council

http://dev.tcccalthoun.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/RC_Edit_02_15_2017.pdf

Oaklawn Hospital 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)

<http://oaklawnhospital.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Calhoun-County-CHNA-2016-Oaklawn-rt2.pdf>

United Way of Michigan Study of Financial Hardship

<http://www.changethestory.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2017-ALICE-Report-Michigan.pdf>

APPENDIX 2: CITATIONS AND RESOURCES

Appendix 2: Citations and Resources

BC Vision Survey

<https://www.wkkf.org/what-we-do/michigan/bc-vision>

USDA Food Access Research Atlas

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/>.

Wilkinson R, Marmot M, editors. Social determinants of health: The Solid Facts [Internet]. 2nd ed. Copenhagen: World Health Organization; 2003.

http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/98438/e81384.pdf

APPENDIX 3: THE ALBION FORWARD SURVEY

Appendix 3: The Albion Forward Survey

Albion Forward

A Community Needs Survey by
The Build Albion AmeriCorps VISTA Initiative

The goal of this community survey is to:

1. gather community input in regards to economic development, education, health and food access,
2. identify ways residents of Albion connect to the happenings in Albion, and
3. identify transportation needs of Albion residents.

1. Where do you get your information about services, events, and what is going on in the Albion community? Pick your top THREE.

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E-news | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-1-1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flyers | <input type="checkbox"/> Online (e.g. Google, City Website, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Recorder | <input type="checkbox"/> Phonebook |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Albion E-mail | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mail | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth from friends or family | |

2. If your neighborhood had a Neighborhood Planning Council, which activities would you like to see it involved in? Pick your top THREE.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood watch | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing informational community meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planning social events | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning for developments in your neighborhood, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communicating news | e.g., green spaces, housing developments, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Representing your neighborhood at City Council | community gardens, etc. |

3. What are the most important aspects for Albion to be a thriving city where people want to live, work, and play? Pick the top THREE.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wide variety of quality housing options | <input type="checkbox"/> Having an active and lively downtown |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of affordable recreational activities (e.g. Sports, Art, Children's enrichment activities, Library, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Having a Retirement Community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good infrastructure (e.g. Roads, Sidewalks, Water System, Lighting, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities for Seniors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More opportunities for civic engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Public art |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safe neighborhoods | <input type="checkbox"/> Parks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of retail stores | <input type="checkbox"/> Streets that accommodate all forms of transportation (e.g. Walking, Biking, Driving, Handicap Accessible) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of outdoor activities (River, trails, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong network of social services |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Diverse population |

4. Do you need transportation assistance? Check all that apply.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No (Skip 4a) |
| a. If yes, for what? | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Going to and from doctor's appointments and/or medical services | <input type="checkbox"/> Grocery shopping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Going to and from school | <input type="checkbox"/> Going to the Farmer's Market |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Going to and from work | <input type="checkbox"/> Going to places within Albion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Going to and from job training programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Going to places outside of Albion |

Options continued on next page

APPENDIX 3: THE ALBION FORWARD SURVEY

Survey #: _____
Date: _____

5. Which of the following transportation services have you used to get to important places such as your job, a doctor's appointment, educational opportunities, the grocery store etc.?

☐ Albion Marshall Connector ☐ Other (please specify): _____
☐ Community Action Transport ☐ None (Skip Question 6)
☐ Taxi/Uber

6. What difficulties have you experienced with the current transportation options in Albion? Check all that apply.

☐ None at all ☐ Days of operation
☐ Not enough transportation options ☐ Cost too much money
☐ Not showing up on time ☐ Pick up takes too long
☐ Not showing up at all ☐ I don't know where to go for transportation help.
☐ Hours of operation

7. Do you have Kindergarten through 12th grade students in your home?

☐ Yes ☐ No (If no, skip to question 11)

8. On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with the Kindergarten through 12th grade out of school educational programs?

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

a. What could be improved? Check up to two that apply for each category.

Preferred Start Time:

☐ Morning (7am-12pm) ☐ Downtown
☐ Afternoon (12pm-3pm) ☐ Albion College Campus
☐ Late Afternoon (3pm-5pm) ☐ Library
☐ Evening (5pm-9pm) ☐ Albion Community Center
☐ Precinct: _____
☐ Other (please specify): _____

Preferred Location:

9. Does your student participate in after school program(s) (excluding athletics) ? If so, where?

☐ Yes ☐ No

b. Program name: _____

Duration: **Location:**

☐ Summer ☐ Albion
☐ Year-round ☐ Concord
☐ Academic School year ☐ Homer
☐ I Don't know ☐ Marshall
☐ Parma Western
☐ Springport
☐ Other (please specify): _____

10. What types of programs would you as the parent/guardian like your student(s) to join? Check all that apply.

☐ Tutor & Mentor Programs

APPENDIX 3: THE ALBION FORWARD SURVEY

Survey #: _____
 Date: _____

☐ Literacy Programs (e.g., Family reading nights, Kids programming)
☐ Recreational Activities
☐ Character Building Activities
☐ STEM Programs

☐ Service in the Community
☐ Enrichment Activities (e.g., Dance, Music, Theatre, Art)
☐ Other (please specify): _____

11. What type of work would you say you are prepared or qualified to do? Check all that apply.

☐ Manufacturing
☐ Education
☐ Clerical/Administrative
☐ Business (e.g. Project Management, Sales, Marketing, Accounting, etc.)
☐ Government
☐ Military
☐ Skilled Trades (e.g. Plumber, Electrician, Mechanic)

☐ Hospitality (e.g. Waiter, Housekeeping)
☐ Retail
☐ Health Care (e.g. Nurse, Medical Asst.)
☐ Technology (e.g. IT)
☐ Transportation/Logistics (e.g. Supply Chain Management, Warehouse, Inventory Management)
☐ Other (please specify): _____

12. Are you interested in any of the following job trainings?

☐ Not interested
☐ Skilled Trades (e.g. Plumber, Electrician, Mechanic)
☐ Hospitality (e.g. Cook, Customer Service)
☐ Health Care (e.g. Nurse, Medical Asst.)
☐ Special License/Certification (e.g. CDL, Forklift Operator)

☐ Entrepreneurship/Business
☐ Technology (IT, programming)
☐ Transportation/Logistics
☐ Other (please specify): _____

13. How do you prefer to learn or receive training? Pick ALL that apply.

☐ Traditional classroom setting
☐ Online

☐ Hands-on learning/apprenticeship

14. Which of the following physical environmental factors are most concerning to you or your household's health? Pick the top THREE.

☐ Wild animals (stray cats, etc.) and pests
☐ Toxic substances (lead, mercury, poor air quality, etc)
☐ Safe and accessible exercise locations (including in the winter)

☐ Housing issues (water, mold, lead paint, etc.)
☐ Abandoned industrial sites
☐ Broken down homes and buildings
☐ I am not concerned
☐ Other (please specify): _____

15. If there were free community classes related to health and wellness, which of the following would you be interested in? Pick your top THREE.

☐ I'm not interested in any classes
☐ Stress reduction
☐ Chronic disease management
☐ Exercise *(options continued on the next page)*
☐ Nutrition
☐ Elderly health (fall prevention, etc.)
☐ Elderly caretaking
☐ Raising healthy children / Parenting skills

☐ How to use health insurance (e.g. registering, paying, coverage, etc.)
☐ Understanding the basics of healthcare
☐ Family planning
☐ Sexual health
☐ Health and wellness coaching
☐ Healthy cooking on a budget

APPENDIX 3: THE ALBION FORWARD SURVEY

Survey #: _____
Date: _____

☐ Food related educational activities (i.e. cooking classes)
☐ Food related entrepreneurship

☐ Gardening classes
☐ Food tasting events with demonstrations

16. When you are sick or need medical attention, to which of the following place do you go to most often? Check all that apply.

☐ Ralph & Mary Cram Medical Center (Albion Medical Associates)
☐ Oaklawn Medical Group (Family doctor)
☐ Oaklawn After Hours (Urgent Care)
☐ Jackson MedExpress (Urgent Care)
☐ Emergency Room: ☐ Oaklawn or ☐ Allegiance
☐ Fountain Clinic (Marshall Free Clinic)

☐ Henry Ford Allegiance Family Medicine (in Albion)
☐ Grace Health
☐ Calhoun County Public Health Department
☐ Other (please specify): _____
☐ No usual place
☐ Don't know/not sure
☐ Prefer not to answer

17. In the past 12 months was there a time when you or someone in your household needed to see a doctor, receive medical treatment, or needed a prescription but could not because of cost?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know/not sure
☐ Prefer not to answer

18. Where do you buy fresh fruits and vegetables and how often?

☐ Albion Farmer's Market ____ Times per month
☐ Jolly Green Junction ____ Times per month
☐ Family Fare ____ Times per month
☐ Marshall ____ Times per month
☐ Battle Creek ____ Times per month

☐ Jackson ____ Times per month
☐ Other (please specify): _____
____ Times per month
☐ I do not buy fruits and vegetables.

19. How often do you worry about not having enough food?

☐ Every day
☐ Several days out of a week
☐ Several times a month

☐ Several times a year
☐ Never (**skip to question 20**)
☐ Other (please specify): _____

a. Why? Check all that apply

☐ Transportation
☐ Cost
☐ Limited affordable options for my dietary needs

☐ Time
☐ Difficulty shopping on my own
☐ Other (please specify): _____

20. In the past 12 months, have you used a food pantry?

☐ Yes, in the last year
☐ Yes, in the last 6 months
☐ Yes, in the last month

☐ Yes, but longer than a year ago
☐ No, but would like to
☐ No and not interested

a. If yes, which food pantries?

☐ Albion Innovations
☐ AIM
☐ New Hope

☐ Other (please specify): _____
☐ Prefer not to answer

21. In which areas do you find yourself struggling to meet the financial needs of your household? Check all that apply.

APPENDIX 3: THE ALBION FORWARD SURVEY

Survey #: _____
Date: _____

☐ Mortgage or Rent
☐ Home Repairs
☐ Utilities
☐ Food
☐ Transportation

☐ Doctor's Appointments and/or Medical Care
☐ Prescriptions
☐ Weatherization
☐ I am not struggling to meet the financial needs of my household

Demographics

22. What is your gender?
☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Other (please specify): _____

☐ Prefer not to answer

23. What is your age?
☐ Under 18 years old
☐ 18-24 years old
☐ 25-34 years old
☐ 35-44 years old

☐ 45-54 years old
☐ 55 and over
☐ Prefer not to answer

24. What is your current employment status?
☐ Full-time
☐ Part-time
☐ Part-time and looking for work
☐ Not employed, looking for work
☐ Not employed, not looking for work
☐ Retired

☐ Disabled, not able to work
☐ Self employed
☐ Odd Jobs (cash only or side jobs)
☐ Other (please specify): _____
☐ Prefer not to answer

25. To which racial or ethnic group(s) do you identify? Check all that apply.
☐ African-American (non-Hispanic)
☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
☐ Asian/Pacific Islanders
☐ Burmese
☐ Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
☐ Hispanic or Latino

☐ Japanese
☐ Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
☐ Other (please specify): _____
☐ Prefer not to answer

26. What is your household income?
☐ Less than \$10,000
☐ \$10,000 to \$14,999
☐ \$15,000 to \$24,999
☐ \$25,000 to \$34,999
☐ \$35,000 to \$49,999

☐ \$50,000 to \$74,999
☐ \$75,000 to \$99,999
☐ \$100,000 to \$149,999
☐ \$150,000 to \$199,999
☐ \$200,000 or more
☐ Prefer not to answer

27. What are the nearest cross streets that you reside at?

28. How did you take this survey? (Circle one)

APPENDIX 3: THE ALBION FORWARD SURVEY