



South Valley Mainstreet Community Survey Report

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Pivot Evaluation

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This survey report is a result of past research and current collaborative community engagement efforts.

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Introduction

The South Valley neighborhood, rich in culture and strong connection to the land, experiences a combination of factors that direct its community's well-being. Some factors include high poverty rates and low Census counts. Previous studies finding high home ownership rate of 81% and an aging population led Bernalillo County Housing Rehabilitation Program staff to identify the need for home improvement for older homes in disrepair or in need of rehabilitation, as many housing units were built before 1979 (Community Strategies Institute, 22). Geographically, the South Valley is in the area of Bernalillo county in immediate vicinity of the city limits and is home to a unique mix of Hispanics, Chicanos, Mexicans, Latinos, and New Mexicans among others. A set of contrasting factors are the low access to local healthy foods and close proximity to agricultural land. Current temporal factors include the increased interest of outsiders in the South Valley real estate, upcoming construction on Bridge Blvd, and continued efforts for increased access to healthy local produce and economic development efforts local entities, and potential opportunities for home maintenance support.

South Valley Mainstreet collaborates with organizations to provide a more holistic approach to community and economic development. Potential partners include Habitat for Humanity and Agri-Cultura Network, who collaborated in the creation of a survey to ensure that the research opportunity informs partners of community needs related to their missions for effective and relevant future project development. Potential partners also include the South Valley Economic Development Center, and Bernalillo County. Based on preliminary discussions with potential partners came the development of a community survey that identifies needs in the South Valley community related to healthy food access, transportation, and support needs related to aging in place. Additionally, the South Valley MainStreet plans to connect findings from community members to the available city and county resources. While the survey covered many topics, this report focuses on housing and aging-in-place needs alone.





Research Questions

While the complete survey included a broad range of questions, this report focuses on housing. Various community partners, such as the Bernalillo County, Habitat for Humanity and utility companies have an interest in proactively addressing concerns before a crisis or before challenges compound. How do these organizations proactively discover community needs? They rely upon multiple sources of information. The questions that follow attempt to bolster existing information.

1) What are the Housing rehabilitation needs in the community?

Neighborhoods with outstanding repair issues often risk deteriorating conditions leading to crime or become targets for conflict between developers and neighbors. There may be future opportunities to help citizens with minor home repairs and maintenance to improve beauty and over-all home status in the community. Habitat for Humanity wishes to know the types of home beautification and safety support needs as they choose neighborhoods to support.

2) What is the extent and type of aging-in-place needs in the community?

Senior citizens often face challenges keeping up on home maintenance and upgrades leading to safety concerns. Seniors desiring to continue living independently in their homes raises additional concerns for their safety. This particular area has a higher than usual proportion of seniors paying mortgages. On fixed or low income and perhaps with limited mobility, they can become at risk from the elements. During one recent winter, damage and danger ensued when the natural gas system failed. With extreme weather events on the increase, is this aging population at risk?

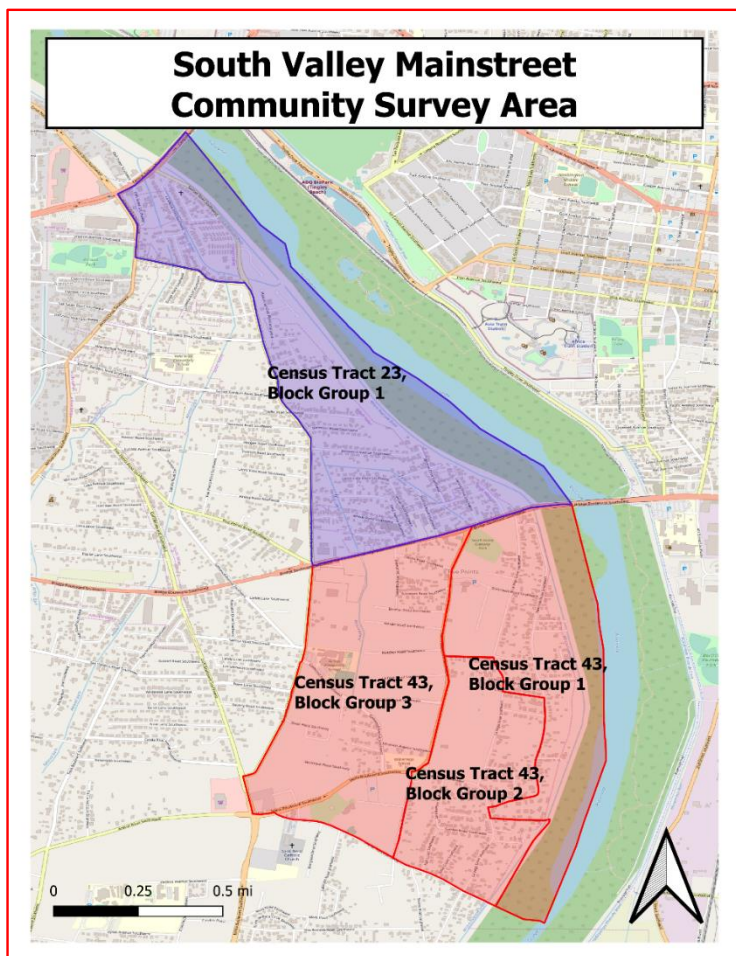




Methods

Survey Area

The collaborating organizations listed the survey topics of interest. The survey's geographic extent includes three Census tracts that encompass both the South Valley Mainstreet area and the area along Bridge Blvd that will soon be going through transportation construction. The four Census Block Groups hold additional importance because they experienced low Census return rates in the 2010 Census, making these areas important due to the decreased federal funding and to low representative Census numbers. Officials may overlook the needs of these neighborhoods because they are often grouped with larger areas that have different demographic and historical patterns.



Survey Implementation

The SVMS focused its survey efforts on the residential area with close proximity to Dolores Huerta Gateway Park, location of the La Familia Growers Market. The Census tracts delimited the area because the tracts are smaller areas than zip codes. Additionally, the survey efforts preceded the 2020 Census count, creating an opportunity to support those Census count efforts.





Using the postal service list of addresses, the evaluators created a random sample of 78% to invite to participate survey. Evaluators sent an invitation and follow-up post cards to participate on the online survey to all the randomly selected addresses. The evaluators followed-up by visiting all those who had not filled in their address upon online completion (adding unattached contact information was voluntary) between 10 am and 7 pm Monday through Sunday. The two methods, offered in both English and Spanish, combined to increase the representation variation of community members who completed the survey.

The South Valley MainStreet planned follow-up activities (e.g. meetings) to share the results with the community members and interested organizations to create recommendations that include the community's input. Those were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic that arrived in March, 2020.

Methods: South Valley Households Description

The community survey asked about the people's ages within the households, although it did not quantify the number of members whose ages fell within each category.

Figure 1 shows that:

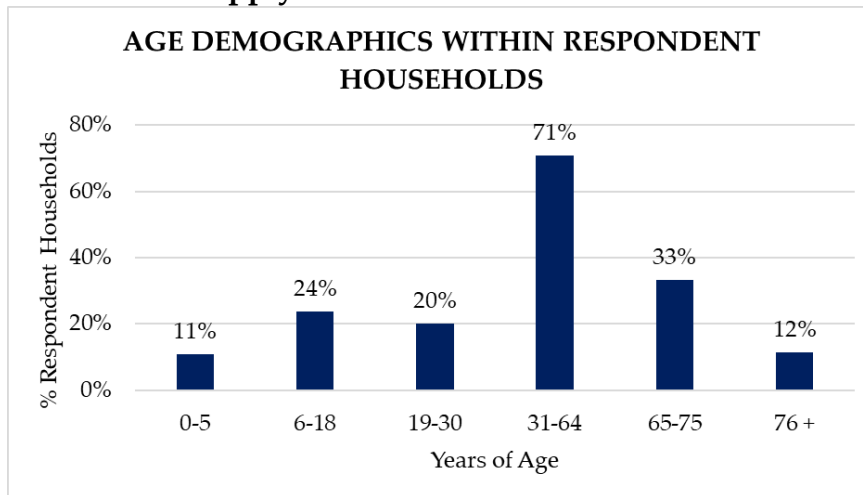
- almost two thirds of respondent households are home to adults within the ages of 31-64.
- 35% of homes have children under 18 years old.
- 43% of homes have senior citizens over the age of 64 years old.

The percent of households with children in our survey sample was higher than the household percent with children in the Census 2018 household estimates. There could be two potential reasons for this difference in percent. The first is that children are the most undercounted population in the Census; Census 2010 had a child undercount of 5% (Jensen et. al, 2018). This could indicate that our survey sample was biased towards households with children (Table 1), potentially due to the times that survey technicians visited the homes or perhaps that this area actually has more households with children. This is a small bias and the results are likely still within the 7% margin of error (Table 2).





Figure 1. Please tell us about the ages of the people who live in your household. Select all that apply.



N=165

*Note: Respondents offered multiple answers; therefore, percents add to more than 100%

Table 1. Proportion of Households with Children Comparison

Households with Children	Survey Sample	Census Tract 23	Census Tract 43
Total Households	165	3,088	1,935
Household with Children	57	832	540
% Households with Children	34.55%	26.94%	27.91%

Table 2. Statistical Comparison of Household with children proportions (Test for Difference between Proportions)

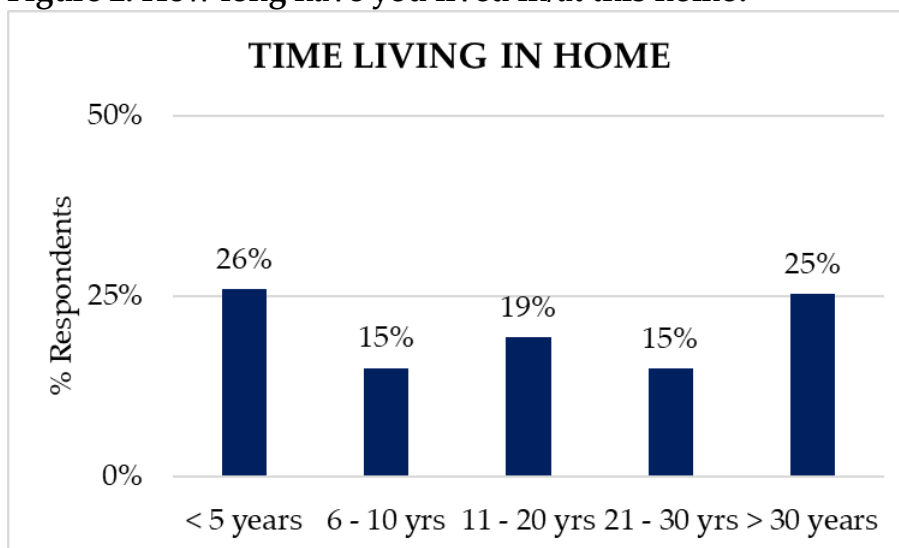
Proportion Comparison Groups	P=value
Survey Sample to Census Tract 23	P<0.05
Survey Sample to Census Tract 43	P>0.05
Census Tract 23 to Census Track 43	P>0.05





The South Valley residents include a combination of people whose families have resided here for generations and families who moved in more recently. This survey reached people living in the area for varied periods of time. Respondents are almost evenly spread in terms of time lived in their current home, from less than 5 years to more than 30 (Figure 2).

Figure 2. How long have you lived in/at this home?

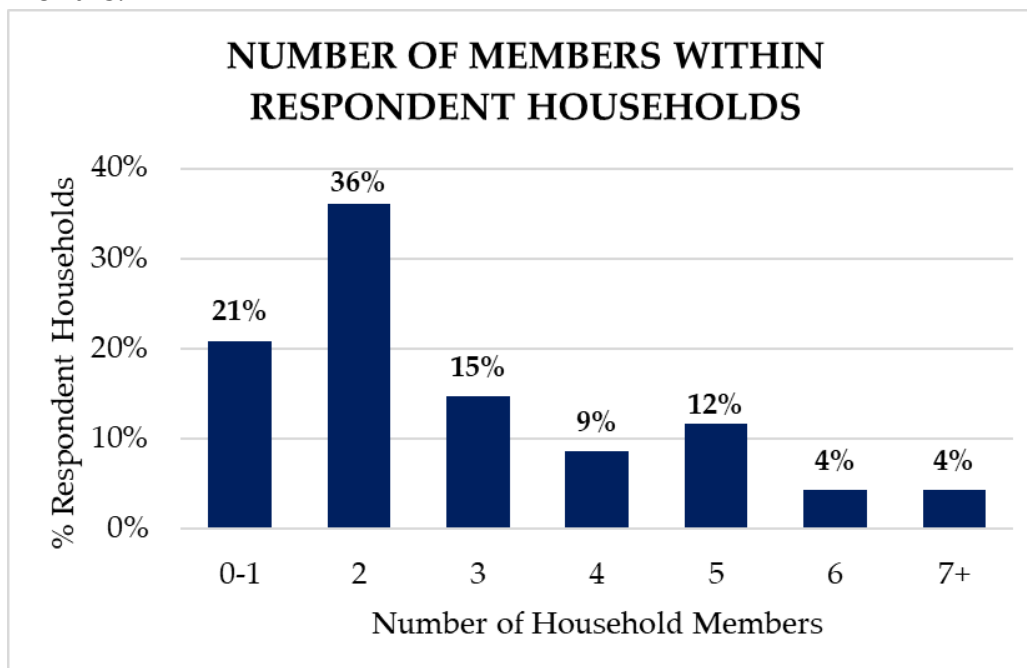


N=166





Figure 3. Please tell us how many people live in your household, including family members, friends, and any renters you may have who have lived here in the past 6 months.



N=163

*Note: some participants wrote zero. Since they live in that address, evaluators interpreted these answers as zero additional people living in that address, which equals 1 person.

Methods: Challenges

South Valley households are physically difficult to reach, with homes protected by high fences, locks, and guard dogs; survey technicians missed 32.2% of homes for these reasons. Additionally, mailing addresses are not 100% representative of actual homes, with some addresses being businesses or empty lots. Further, 17% of homes report having multiple households within their mailing address (

Figure 4). For those who reported more than one household within their address, 70% had two or more separate living quarters (Figure 5).

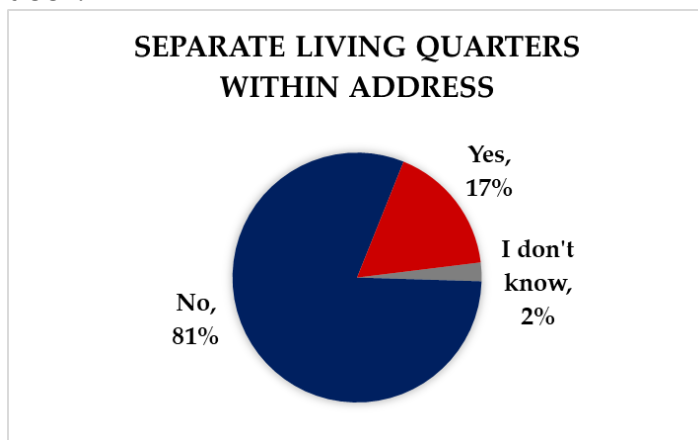




Implications

Multiple households within an address may have implications for the sampling procedures. The assumption during the sampling was that a mailing address is the most complete homes list within the census tract blocks, especially compared with voter address lists. These multiple household results translate to an inability to connect with about 17% of actual households in this project, including for any additional Census outreach within the four census tract blocks.

Figure 4. Does your residence or address have any separate living quarters, where people live and eat separately and enter those quarters directly through a different door?

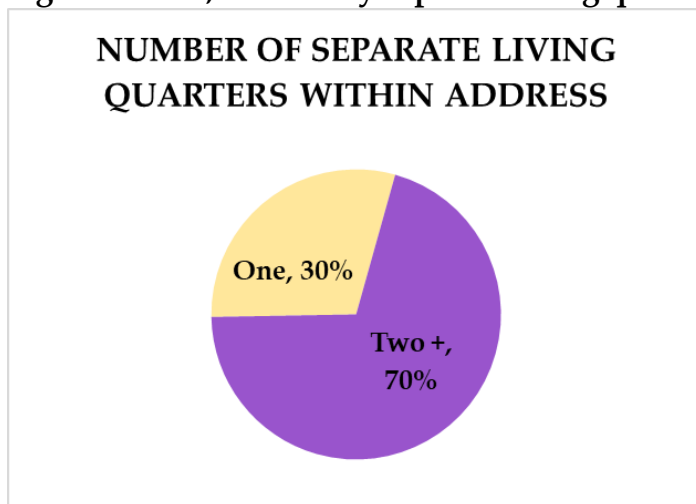


N= 165





Figure 5. If so, how many separate living quarters does this address contain?



N=27

Method: Results

The online and door-knocking combination resulted in a local population representative sample at the 95% confidence level. The difference between people choosing to do the survey online based on a post-card invitation and doing it in person is minimal; both methods work well to get a response. However, the online survey completions rose only after at least one door knock to remind and encourage residents to complete the survey. Without an in-person contact, the online numbers would have remained lower than in-person surveys with survey technician contacts.

The survey's margin of error for population representation was calculated at 7%. One indicator that error may be larger is that households with children may be slightly over represented, although this discrepancy may be due to Census children undercount. Also, the survey's ethnic group percent was deviated from the Census 2018 estimates. A contributing factor may be that certain age or ethnic groups and homes with groups of certain ages may have different preferences for interaction with door-knockers.





Findings

The high percentage of households with children and seniors has important implications for focused investment in resources within the local community. Community resilience relies on more than households' economic sustainability; it relies on healthy food availability, educational resources, and senior citizen social support. Senior citizens, particularly, need increased transportation and home maintenance support, as well as healthcare and services to reduce isolation.

Findings: Millennials' Hopes and Plans for Home Ownership

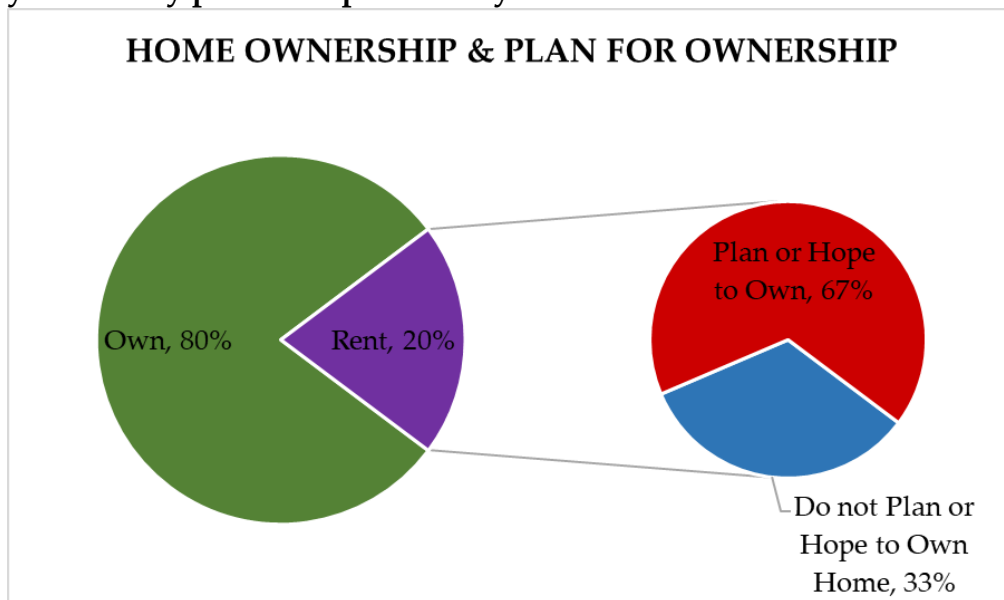
Given residents' historical roots and their cultural attachment, it is important to understand the most common plans and hopes for their continued presence in the South Valley. The plans and hope of Millennials, particularly, holds implications for development in the South Valley. According to the National Real Estate Investor, currently minorities, specifically Hispanics make up almost half of all Millennials in the United States. This is also reflected in Bernalillo County, where, according to UNM BBER, most Millennials live in the southwest area of Bernalillo County and Hispanics make up the largest percentage of the Millennial population in Bernalillo County.

Home ownership rates are higher in the South Valley, with families who have generations-long roots in connection to the South Valley. Many families have passed their land, homes, and agricultural practice down from generation to generation following a historical concept of land tenure unique to New Mexico. 80% of respondents own their home (Figure 6). The survey does not distinguish between having a home title or having a mortgage. Of the 20% who do not own their home, two thirds actively plan or hope to own their own home. A closer look at age ranges reveals that 89% of households with people in the age range from 19-30, which falls within the Millennial category, plan or hope to own their own home.





Figure 6. Do you (or anyone who lives here) own or rent this home? & If you rent, do you actively plan or hope to own your own home?



N=166

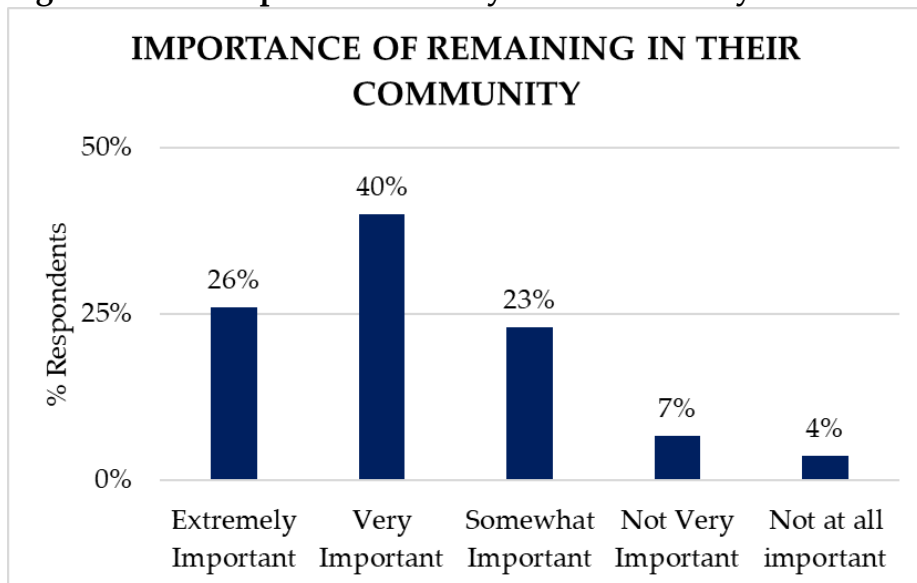
Findings: Aging in Place

The cultural and historical, generational ties to the land, combined with the high percent of home ownership may indicate that residents opt for aging in place in this community. The fact that 66% of respondents give great importance to remaining in the South Valley as they age (Figure 7) and that an even higher percent of respondents, 90%, report that it is 'very' to 'extremely' important to live independently as they age (Figure 8) implies that respondents opt to live independently in their homes in this community as they age.



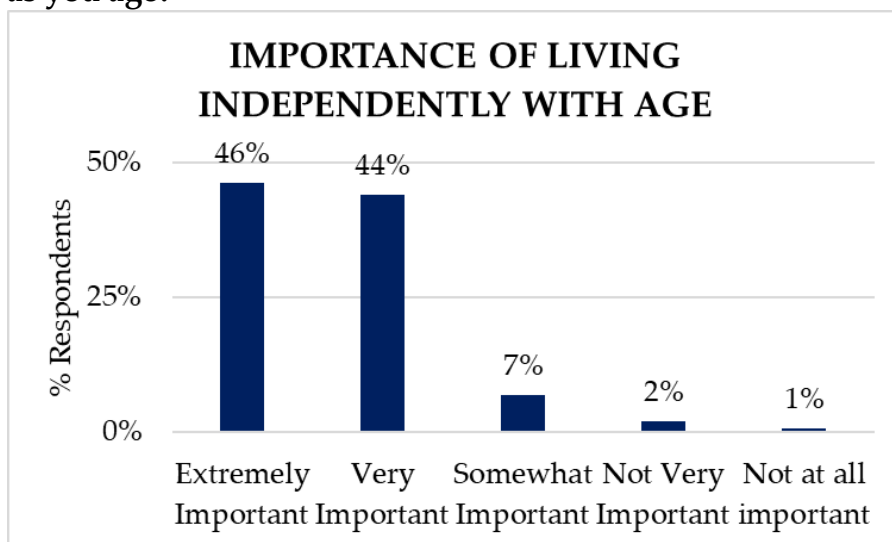


Figure 7. How important is it for you to remain in your community as you age?



N=165

Figure 8. How important is it for you to be able to live independently in your home as you age?



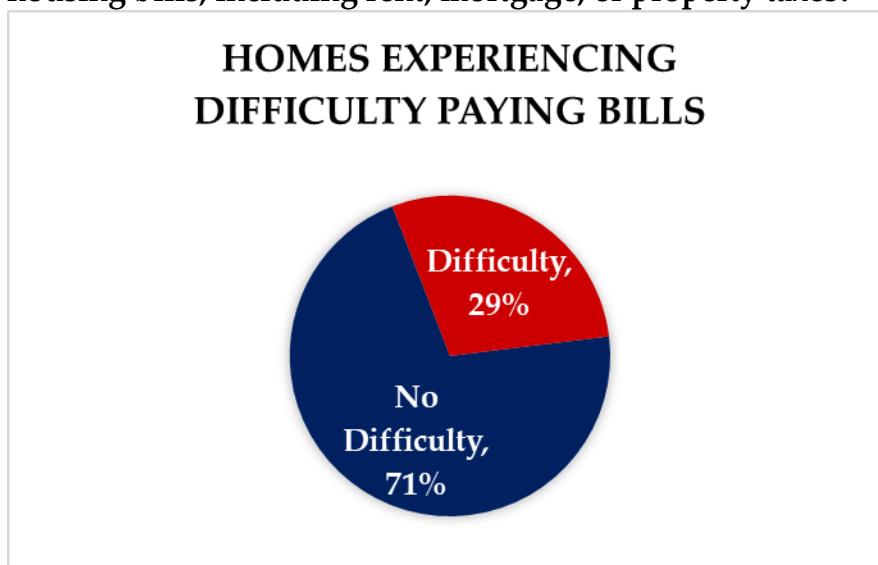
N=164





Various factors, including economic and physical vulnerability influence household needs and their ability to cover those needs. 29% of respondents report experiencing economic difficulties, such as having difficulties paying their bills (Figure 9). One quarter of homeowners experienced difficulties paying their mortgage (Table 3), property taxes, or housing bills in the past year. Respondents reporting they owned homes predicted hardship for paying their mortgage ($\Phi=0.170$, $P<0.05$); however, this very small effect means that both renters and home owners experienced difficulty paying bills.

Figure 9. In the past 12 months, has your household had a hard time paying your housing bills, including rent, mortgage, or property taxes?



N=166

Table 3. Home ownership by experience of difficulties in paying housing bill, including rent, mortgage, or property taxes.

	Own home	Rent home
Experience difficulties paying bills	25%	44%
No difficulties paying bills	75%	56%
Total	100%	100%

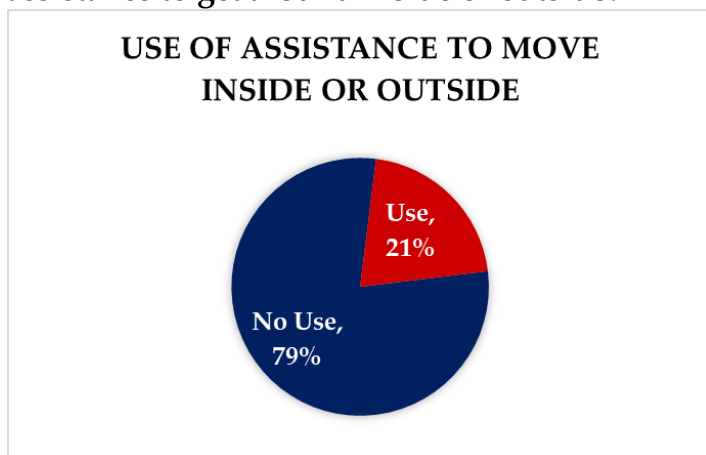
N=166





As people age, falling becomes a major concern for physical vulnerability. Moving around a home requiring repair or maintenance may increase the risk of injury. 21% of respondent households have a member that uses assistance to move (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Does anyone in your family household use a walker, wheelchair, other assistance to get around inside or outside?



N=166

Home Maintenance: Seniors at Risk of Falling

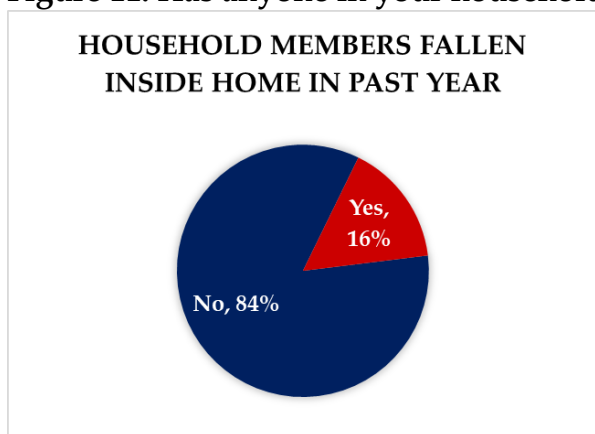
Aging in place safely requires doing home maintenance and upkeep. The survey asked people who owned or were in the process of owning their home questions about home maintenance needs. Survey respondents mostly reported needing exterior improvement, both for beautification and safety. 70% of respondents reported needing help with exterior painting, patching, beautification, or minor repairs and energy efficiency upgrades and 68% need support with energy efficiency upgrades (Figure 13). Close to 50% of participants reported needing to create easier access into their home, including yard-clean or fixing walkways or ramps.





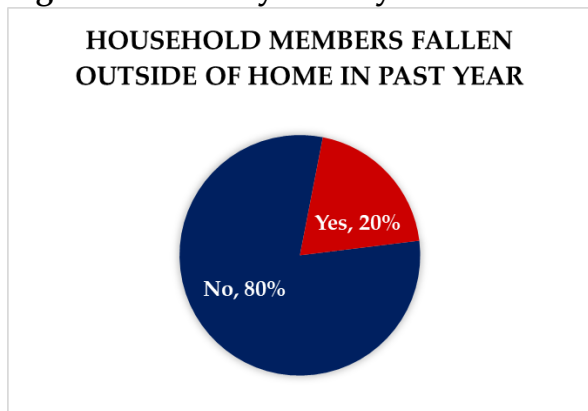
Indoor home maintenance needs include improving floor and grounds for all people to walk safely. 16% (Figure 11) of members reported having a household member fall inside their home in the past year, and 20% reported having a household member fall outside their home (Figure 12). These may be an indication of a need for floor maintenance inside a home and walkways outside.

Figure 11. Has anyone in your household fallen inside the home in the past year?



N=163

Figure 12. Has anyone in your household fallen in the yard in the past year?

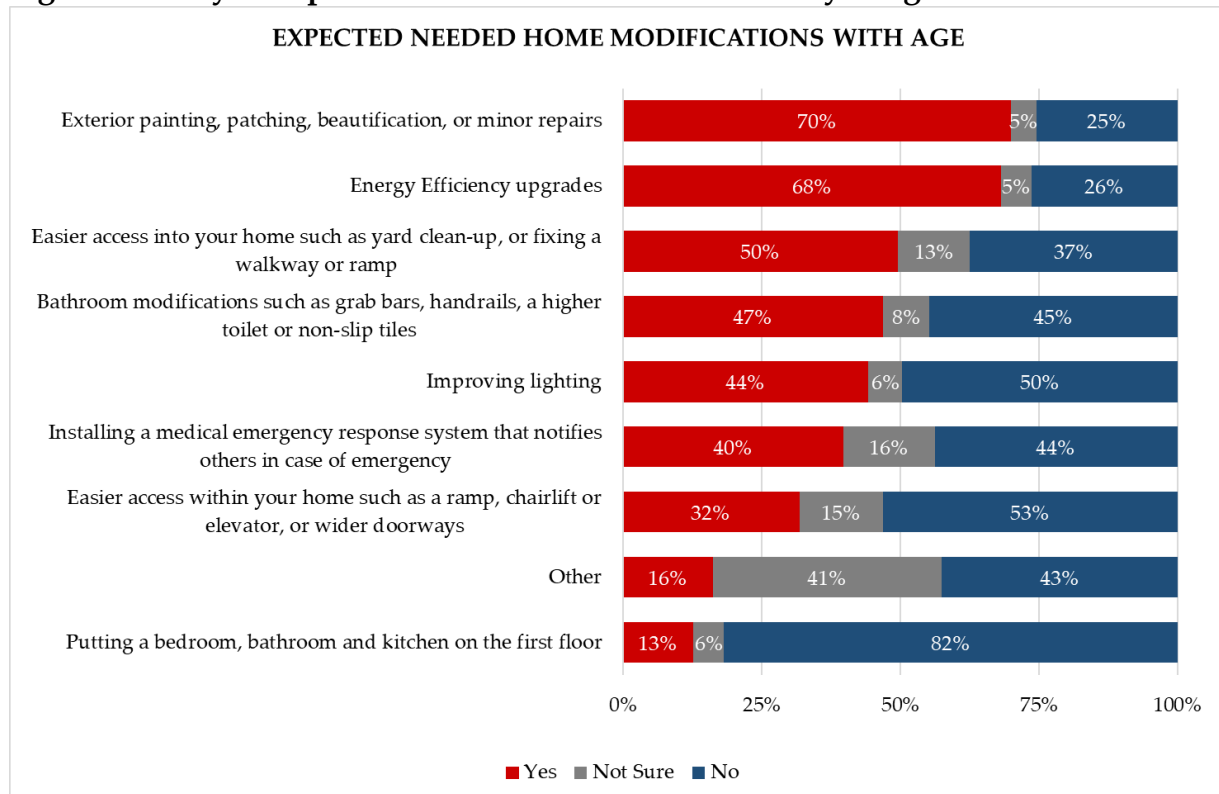


N=164





Figure 13. Do you expect to need these modifications as you age?



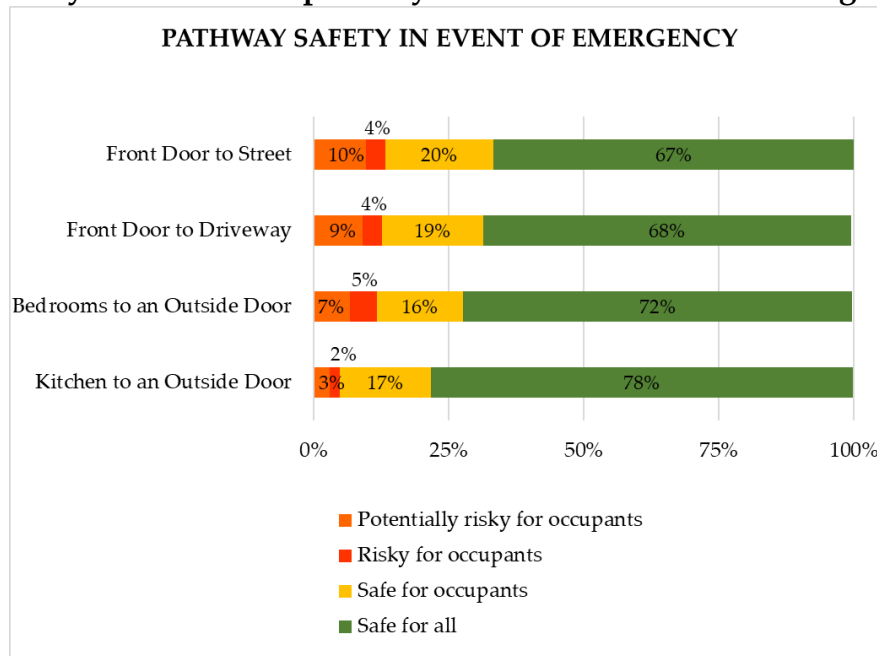
N=166





Home safety includes safe walkways in case of emergency. Figure 14 shows that the outside walkways are the most problematic, with 14% of respondents reporting that that front door to the street is 'risky' to 'potentially risky'.

Figure 14. Consider the following areas in and around your home. Please tell me how safe you think these pathways are in the event of an emergency.



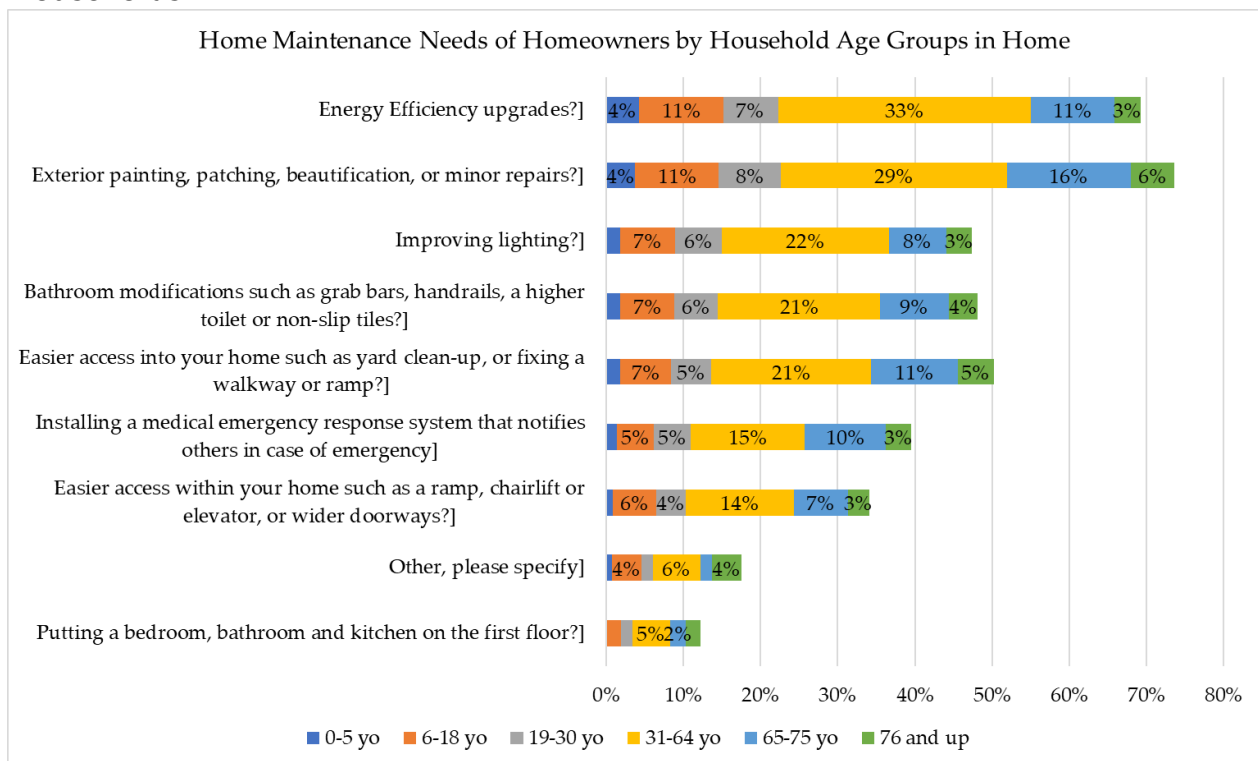
N=164 Bedrooms to outside door; N=165 Kitchen to outside door; N=162 Front door to driveway; N=152 Front door to street





Homes with children and grandparents may need more attention to safe environments. Children and grandparents may benefit more from certain home improvements than homes with adults without mobility issues. Looking at the age group composition in a household helps understand who would benefit from certain home repair types. For example, Figure 15 shows that 22% of households needing exterior painting and beautification are home to senior citizens, who may not be able to perform the needed repairs on their own.

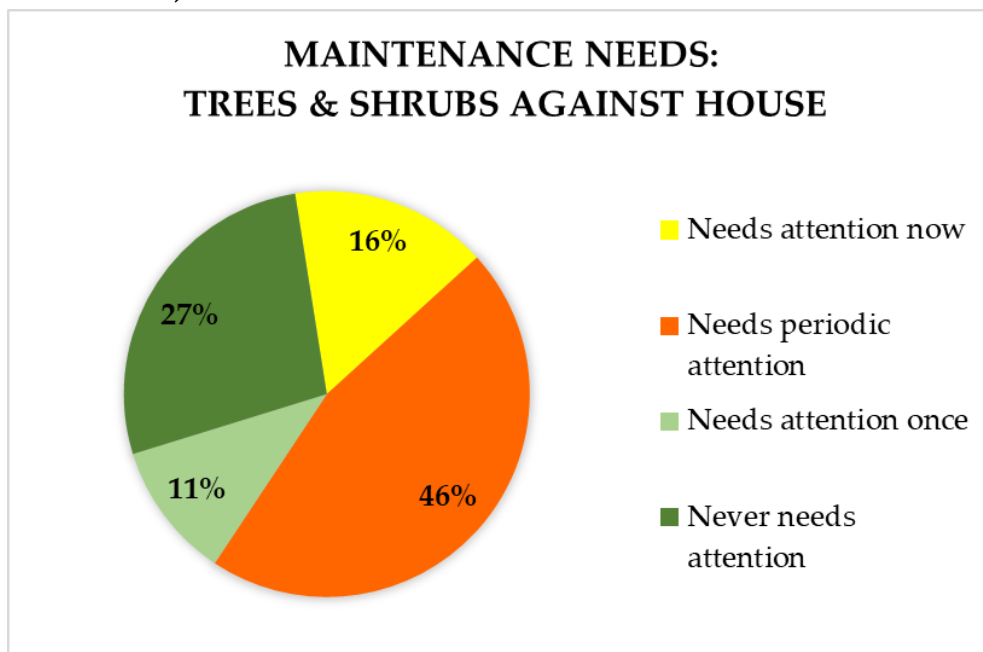
Figure 15. Home Maintenance Needs of Homeowners by Household Age Groups in Households





Trees and shrubs may often create a hazardous environment for the home's residents and for the building itself; they may rub or lean against the house causing a fire hazard, block pathways, lift cement slabs (causing tripping hazards), touch power lines (causing fire hazard and or service disruption), or tree branches at risk of falling over a home. 73% of respondents (Figure 16) have some need for vegetative maintenance. 16% need immediate assistance.

Figure 16. Consider the following areas around your home. How much attention do you need to give to trees or shrubs against house (for example: fire hazard, obstruction).



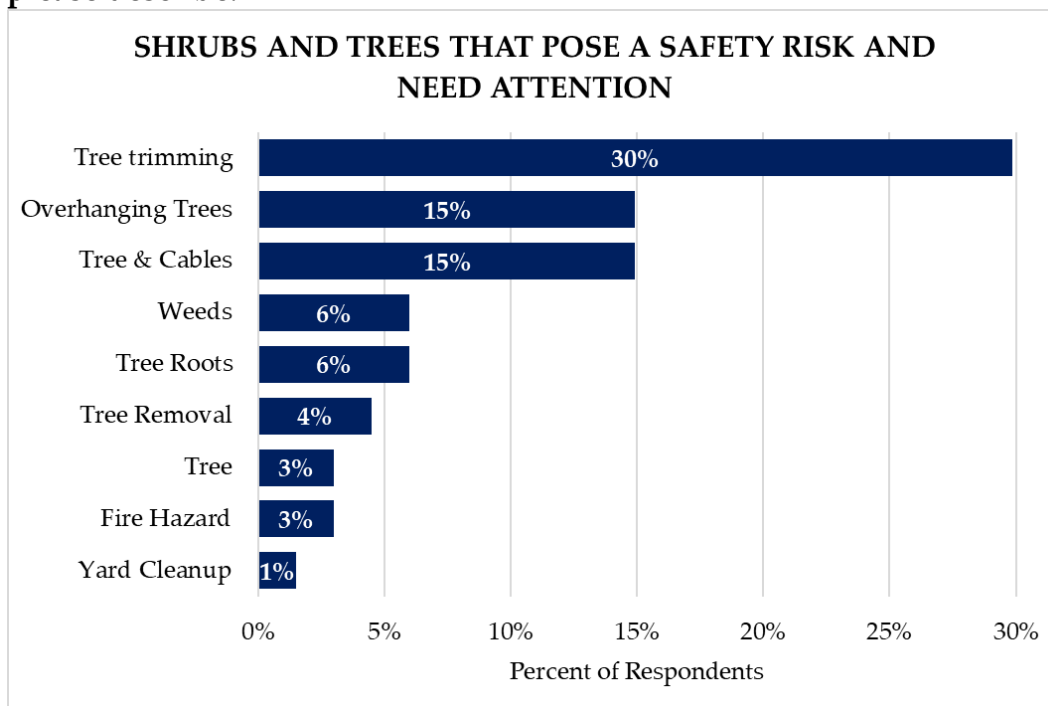
N=165





Detailed needs include: tree trimming (30% of those who wrote out a description), specific issues with trees reaching power lines (15%), and tree branches hanging over their homes (15%).

Figure 17. If you responded that any areas were a safety risk or needed attention, please describe.



N=67

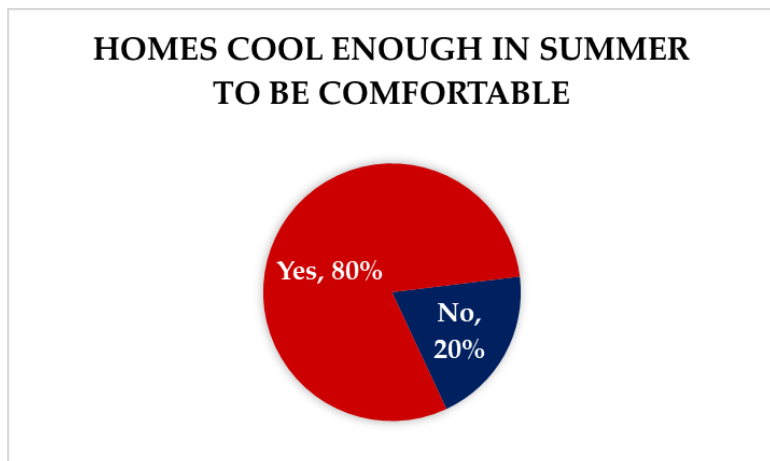
Findings: Seniors at Risk During Heat Waves

Households in the Middle Rio Grande Basin must be equipped with heating and cooling for its residents to be minimally comfortable. 80% of respondent homes are cool enough in the summer to be comfortable for the household members (Figure 18). This may indicate that 1 in 5 people may need assistance for safety in harsh heat conditions.





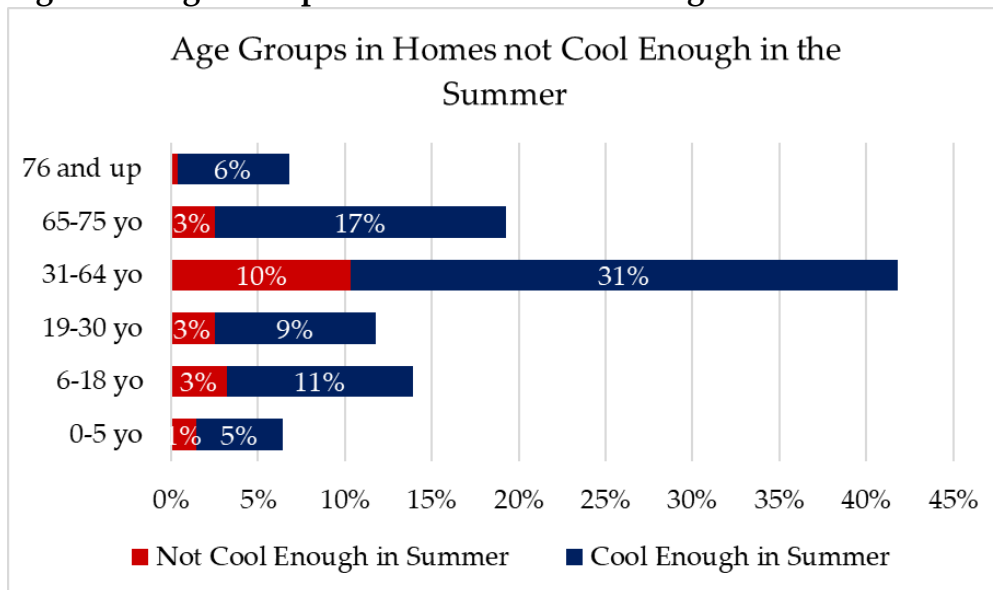
Figure 18. Is your home cool enough in the hottest summer months for everyone to be comfortable?



N=166

3% of all respondent homes who have at least one senior citizen do not have homes cool enough to be comfortable in the summers. That percent translates to at least 59 senior citizens in this neighborhood whose health could be at risk during an extreme weather event. Younger residents with existing health conditions could also be at higher risk, potentially raising the number of those at risk even further.

Figure 19. Age Groups in Home not Cool Enough to be Comfortable in the Summer



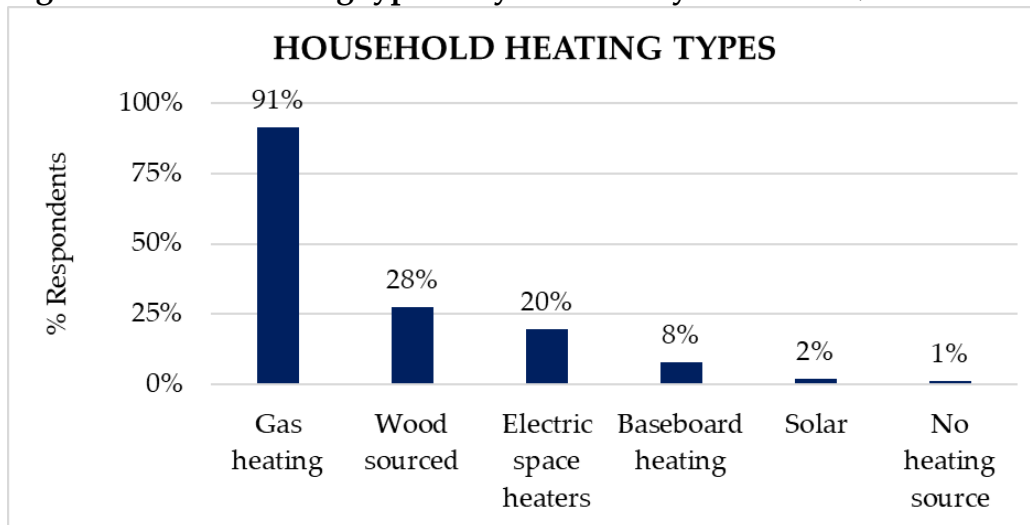
N=166





The survey asked respondents about heating and cooling as an indicator of updates residences may require. Without essential heating, winter climatic conditions of the Rio Grande Basin result in frozen pipes, among other living condition issues. Respondents indicated they heat their homes mostly with gas heating (91%) or wood source (28%). 44% reported multiple heating sources and 1% did report not having a heating source. While the 1% may seem like an insignificant percent, providing resources to ensure that no area residents go without running water could prevent unnecessary tragedy.

Figure 20. What heating types do you have in your home? (Select all that apply)



N=163





Conclusion

Investment in housing update and maintenance support would have noticeable impact on its residents, many of whom are senior citizens. This survey's results concur with the home maintenance needs mentioned in the Bernalillo County New Mexico Affordable Housing Plan. Bernalillo County, with the support of nonprofit organizations, citizens, and other entities may effectively offer targeted support to homeowners and renters to update their homes to make them safer outside by improving pathways and trimming hazardous trees and inside by improving the safety of walkways. Some homes may need support in improving the inadequate cooling and heating systems that put their residents in peril of tragedy during any unusually harsh weather conditions.

References

Community Strategies Institute, 2015. Bernalillo County New Mexico Affordable Housing Plan.

Jensen, E., Schwede L., Griffin D., & Konicki S. (2018). Investigating the 2010 Undercount of Young Children – Analysis of Complex Households. *U.S Census Bureau*. May 27, 2020. <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/program-management/final-analysis-reports/2020-report-2010-undercount-children-complex-households.pdf>





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