



*Community
Compass*

Building a Stronger New Haven Region
Through Civic Engagement, Investment and Leadership

Community COMPASS
Greater New Haven Region
**United Way of Greater New Haven
Needs Assessment**

Spring 2003



United Way

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CSRA
Center for
Survey
Research &
Analysis
at the University of
Connecticut

UNITED WAY OF GREATER NEW HAVEN NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Executive Summary

At the request of the United Way of Greater New Haven, the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut conducted a telephone survey from March 10 through March 27, 2003 of 902 adults residing in the Greater New Haven area as defined by UWGNH to better understand the needs and concerns of residents. The sample was stratified into three areas:

- New Haven;
- Hamden, East Haven, West Haven (referred to as the Inner Ring); and,
- Bethany, Branford, Guilford, Madison, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, and Woodbridge (referred to as the Outer Ring).

Stratifying allows the data to be examined regionally and locally amongst the three areas. The sample was randomly selected using Random Digit Dialing. This statistically valid sample can be generalized to the entire adult population of the greater New Haven area.¹

Primary Findings

The following points summarize the main findings of this study:²

- The GNH area gets solid marks as a place to live and work; 52 percent say the region is a “good” place to live and work, and 12 percent rate it as “excellent.”
- Economic issues consistently surface as major concerns.³
- Substance abuse and health care, including costs, fitness, and nutrition, rank as major concerns.
- Although economic issues are at the top of the list of concerns, issues regarding children such as having enough positive role models and recreation programs/facilities also emerge as important concerns.
- The New Haven area consistently rates issues as bigger problems or concerns than the other two GNH regions.⁴
- Tobacco use ranks as the greatest concern regarding children and youth; this issue receives a mean of 6.02 on a 10-point scale, with 0 meaning not at all a problem and 10 meaning a major problem, followed by alcohol (5.8) and drugs (5.66).
- Adults report being involved with their children by frequently reading to them and eating dinner with them. For example, 85 percent of families with children under age 5 say they read to their children often.

¹For more information on this topic, see the “Methodology” section of this report.

²See the Frequency Questionnaire in Appendix A for exact question wording.

³Economic issues encompass a wide variety of topics such as employment, taxes, affordable housing, education funding, and health care costs.

⁴This issue is mentioned throughout the report and is summarized in Appendix A.

- Schools receive good to moderate ratings suggesting some improvements may be needed; however, more information may be warranted to better understand specifically what those concerns are.
- The vast majority of children and adults have some type of health insurance or plan.
- This survey provides guidance to the UWGNH on the types of programs GNH area residents want and/or need based on their self-reported concerns. In addition to economic issues in a broad sense, concerns include but are not limited to:
 - Substance abuse, including smoking, among youth;
 - Traffic;
 - Obtaining care for a disability;
 - Physical fitness including nutrition; and,
 - Adequate recreation programs.
- The survey also indicates issues about which residents are not particularly concerned such as suicide among youth. If any of these issues are indeed problems, as identified by other data, the need for programs to educate the public should be considered.

Summary

Overall, citizens in the GNH area consider the economy, substance abuse (including tobacco), and health care the most problematic issues. However, respondents also consider themselves involved with their families. In the majority of households with school-age children, adults attend school events and read to young children; families often sit down at a table and eat dinner together. Most residents also feel connected to their towns, and rate the New Haven area as either an excellent or good place to live and work.

Answers to open-ended questions⁵ about the biggest problem in the respondent's town as well as the biggest problem in his/her household indicate that economic issues—in a broad sense from taxes to funding education—are taking center stage. Issues dealing with finances or the economy are among the top four responses in each question, and accounted for half (50 percent) of the answers to questions about the biggest problem in the respondents' towns and 52 percent of responses to the question about the biggest problem in the household. The second most common answer to the question about the towns' biggest problems is education including education funding as well as education in general and education reform. Among household problems in the open-ended question, after the economy, health care is mentioned most frequently, including health care costs.

Financial issues surface as a concern throughout the survey. When respondents are asked to rate whether specific issues are problems in their *towns* on a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 meaning not at all a problem and 10 meaning a major problem, affordable housing and employment issues receive the highest overall ratings (5.87 and 5.48, respectively). Ratings of these issues vary by region with New Haven ranking these specific problems higher than the other two areas. Additionally, in another question, almost a third (30 percent) say their households are economically worse off than they were last year.

⁵An open-ended question indicates that the respondent was NOT given any response choices. Answers were recorded verbatim.

Finances are again in the forefront in a battery of questions that asks respondents to rate concerns within their *households* on the same 0 to 10 scale. Saving for retirement is the highest rated concern overall (5.32) as well as within each area.

Other topics of concern include substance abuse and health care. When asked about problems among children and youth using the same 10-point scale, tobacco use receives the highest overall ranking (6.02) followed by alcohol (5.80) and drugs (5.66). And when the question focuses on the biggest problems in the respondents' households, obtaining care for a disability rates highest overall (2.72) in all three GNH areas followed by obtaining adequate health care (1.77) and dental care (1.67).

Other concerns about children and youth also emerge. Although tobacco use is rated the biggest problem, nutrition, eating disorders, and physical fitness also rank highly (5.08, 5.03, and 4.97) followed by bullying, (4.95), mental health (4.83), and teen pregnancy (4.71). Suicide was ranked the least problematic among issues surrounding children and youth about which respondents were asked (2.83). And, in another question, almost four in ten (39 percent) disagree with the statement that children and youth have the positive role models they need.

At the same time, respondents say they are involved with their children and that child care is not a major issue. In a vast majority of households (87 percent), an adult always or sometimes attends school activities and reads often to children under age 5 (85 percent). Almost a third (32 percent) say they sat down at a table and ate dinner as a family every night of the previous week. Only 10 percent did not eat dinner at all together. Moreover, 94 percent of respondents who use child care are either very or somewhat satisfied with it; 88 percent say the same about after school care. Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) consider the cost of after school programs either about right or a bargain.

Outside of specific problems and concerns, residents of the GNH area are generally satisfied with the region. For example, when asked to rate the New Haven area as a place to live and work, 64 percent rate it as either excellent or good. And, 72 percent consider themselves to be either very connected or somewhat connected to their towns. Almost half (47 percent) feel very safe in their neighborhoods and six in ten (62 percent) say they are not bothered by noise in their neighborhoods at all. Additionally, nearly seven in ten (68 percent) either hardly ever or never feel lonely or isolated.

Nevertheless, schools receive moderate ratings and respondents say the recreation programs in their towns could improve. When asked to grade the schools, 73 percent give them a B or C. Almost half (48 percent) of respondents consider recreation programs and facilities for adults either fair or poor; 42 percent say recreation programs and facilities for children are fair or poor.

New Haven residents generally consider their town's problems worse than the rest of the GNH area. On the 10-point scale, the mean scores for various problems are consistently higher in New Haven than in the Inner Ring or the Outer Ring. For example, both New Haven and the Inner Ring rate unemployment or jobs as their towns' top problem, but the mean for New Haven is 6.96 compared to 5.39 for the Inner Ring. Additionally, New Haven gives substance abuse a mean of 6.7 while the Inner Rings says 5.13 and the Outer Ring rates it as 4.33. This pattern suggests that New Haven residents consider their town's problems more severe than the other parts of the surveyed region. Several other examples are provided in the detailed discussion of the data as well as in Appendix B.

Next, when respondents are asked to rank problems within their households, the mean for each item is minimal suggesting that people consider some problems to be occurring in their towns but not in

their families. For example, substance abuse receives an overall mean rating of 5.41 as a problem in the respondents' towns whereas drug abuse rates a mere 0.38 as a problem within households.

The vast majorities of children and adults have health insurance but nonetheless are somewhat concerned about health care costs. Almost all children (96 percent) have some type of health insurance as do 87 percent of adults. However, a third (35 percent) are either very or somewhat worried about being able to pay medical or health care costs. Fifteen percent say they or a household member put off medical treatment in the past year because of the cost and a quarter (23 percent) put off dental care because of the expense.

In evaluating these survey findings, it is important to consider the data as relative. In batteries of questions in which respondents are asked to rank issues of concern, the mean (or average) score is not as important as how one issue stacks up against another. For example, among issues regarding children and youth, tobacco use rates as a major concern (a mean of 6.02) yet "alcohol" is also a big worry (5.8). Most important is the fact that tobacco, alcohol, and drugs are the top three issues rather than the actual means these topics receive. Additionally, the fact that issues regarding children and youth rank highly at a time when economic issues dominate indicates the importance of those issues to GNH area residents.

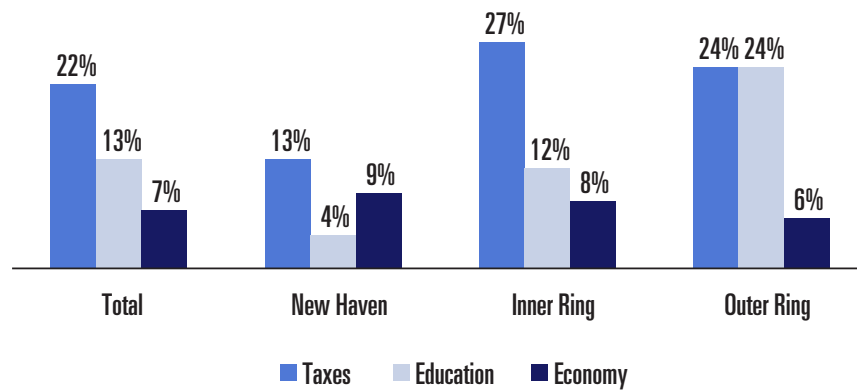
Although residents of the GNH area seem generally content—they like their towns and say their households face few social issues such as domestic violence or gambling—they also have several economic concerns that range from affordable housing to paying for dental care as well as concerns about substance abuse among young people. These and other survey findings are discussed in more detail in the following pages.

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The Top Issue: It's the Economy...

The economy is very much on the minds of GNH residents with economic issues repeatedly named as the biggest problem in towns as well as in households. When asked to identify the biggest problem in their towns in an open-ended question without providing any response options at the beginning of the survey, 22 percent name taxes, the most common answer. About a quarter of Inner Ring (27 percent) and Outer Ring (24 percent) residents mention taxes, compared to 13 percent in New Haven. Although the percentage naming “taxes” is lower in New Haven, it nonetheless is the most frequent answer to the open-ended question in that particular area. Other top answers for the GNH area as a whole are education including funding for education (13 percent), governmental finances (7 percent), and the cost of living (8 percent). Overall, more than half of the answers to this open-ended question deal with finances in a broad sense.

Figure 1. Biggest Problems in GNH Area (Q2)



Similarly, in an open-ended question about the biggest problem in the respondent's household, a third (33 percent) say finances. Next, issues related to health including costs are mentioned by 8 percent, the second most frequent answer. Jobs and employment follow with 7 percent providing that answer.

The economy surfaces again when respondents rate how much of a problem, if at all, several issues are in the respondent's town on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning “not at all a problem” and 10 meaning “a major problem.” With an overall mean of 5.87, affordable housing tops the list followed by unemployment or jobs (5.48). New Haven rates both of these issues as bigger problems than the other two areas.

Figure 2. Highest Ranking Problems in New Haven (Q9)

Means

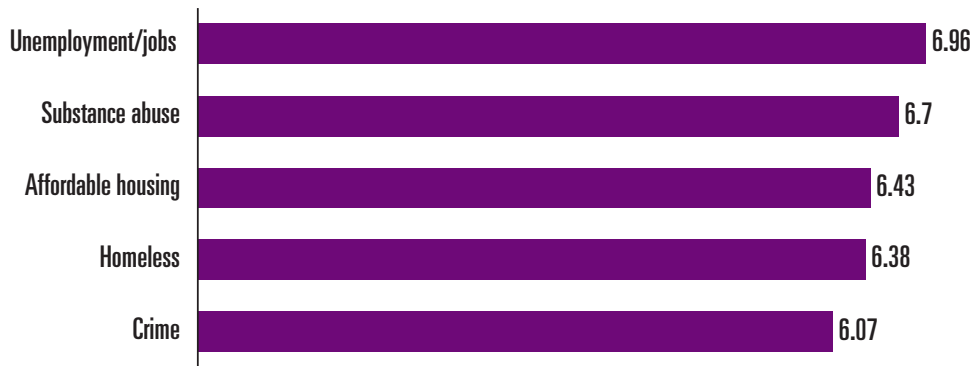
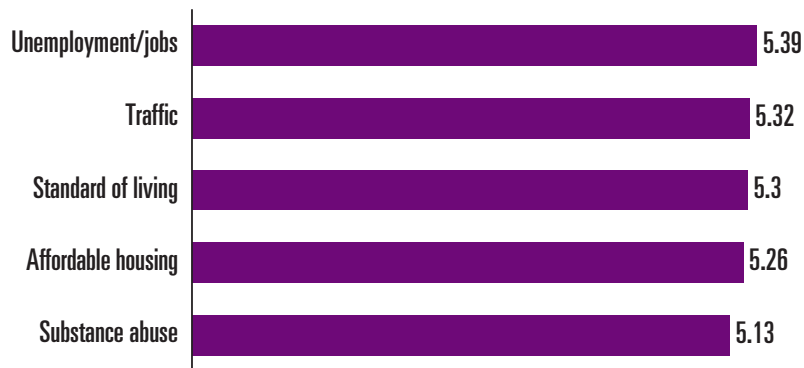


Figure 3. Highest Ranking Problems in Inner Ring (Q9)

Means

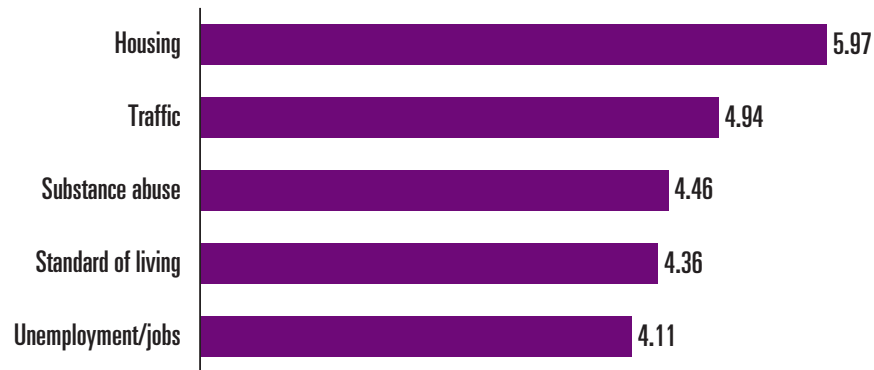


Traffic congestion (5.41) is also rated among the top five problems overall along with substance abuse (also 5.41), and is then closely followed by “maintain standard of living” (5.17). The Outer Ring, however, rates standard of living 4.36 compared to 5.9 in New Haven and 5.3 in the Inner Ring.

A similar pattern emerges with many issues such as employment and jobs. The overall rating for this issue is 5.48, the second highest rating. But New Haven scores it 6.96 and the Inner Ring gives it 5.39. The Outer Ring rates employment and jobs as 4.11, which is substantially lower than the other GNH areas.

Figure 4. Highest Ranking Problems in Outer Ring (Q9)

Means



Homelessness is rated lowest overall at 3.83 although a substantial disparity exists between the regional areas. Homelessness is considered a relatively minor issue in the Outer Ring (1.98), a moderate problem in the Inner Ring (3.24), and the fourth highest rated problem in New Haven (6.38). Similarly, race and ethnic relations rate only a 2.53 in the Outer Ring compared to 4.96 in New Haven and 4.41 in the Inner Ring.

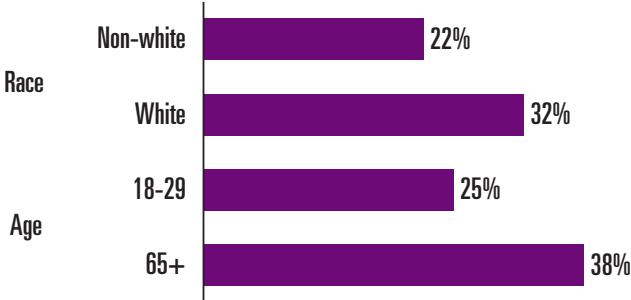
In other questions, economic problems continue to surface. Three in ten (30 percent) say their households are worse off economically this year than last year. Half (52 percent) are about the same. Only 18 percent are better off. These percents are similar in all three GNH areas although whites and senior citizens are more likely to say they are worse off economically.

Additionally, saving for retirement is considered the issue of greatest concern within households. Using the same 0-10 scale, respondents are asked to rate how concerned they are, if at all, with several issues. Saving for retirement⁶ receives an overall mean score of 5.32 with all three areas giving similar mean scores. Next, getting exercise is rated as the second issue of concern with a mean of 4.53.

Interestingly, the issue of *least* concern among households also deals with the economy. Paying for or obtaining basic necessities such as food, housing, and utilities gets a 2.75 on the 10-point scale and the overall mean for losing a job or having work hours reduced is 3.28, the second lowest mean. The juxtaposition of these issues—saving for retirement as opposed to obtaining basic necessities and job loss—suggests that residents are concerned about their long-term economic welfare as opposed to putting food on the table today. However, obtaining basic necessities receives a higher rating in New Haven (3.39) compared to the Inner Ring (2.86) and the Outer Ring (2.03).

⁶This question was asked only of those who are not now currently retired.

Figure 5. Worse Off Economically Compared to Last Year (Q6)



Children and Youth: Tobacco Tops the List of Concerns

Concerns about children and youth focus on substance abuse and the lack of positive role models. When asked to determine how much of a problem, if at all, 14 specific issues are for children and youth in their towns on the 10-point scale, tobacco use receives the highest mean score (6.02) followed by alcohol or drinking (5.8), and drugs (5.66).

Figure 6. Problems for Children and Youth (Q13)

Means

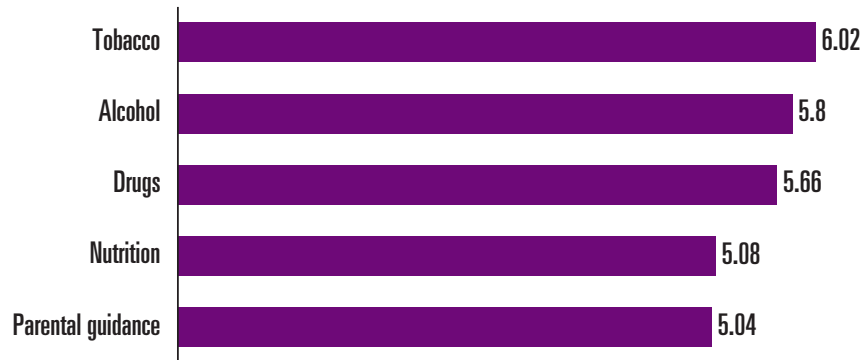
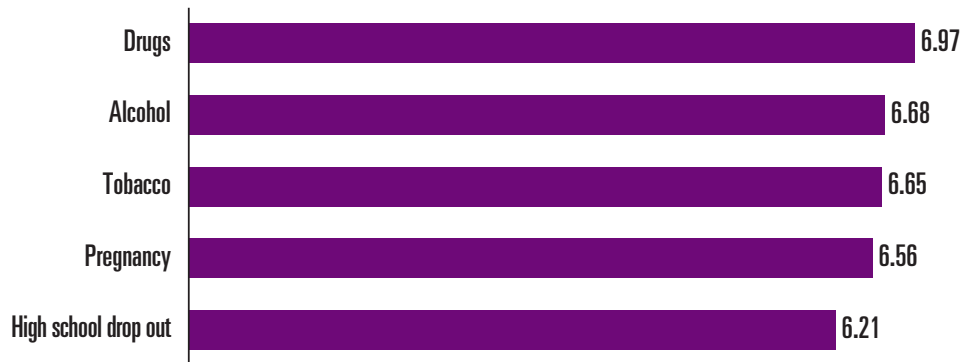


Figure 7. Top Five Problems of Children and Youth in New Haven (Q13)

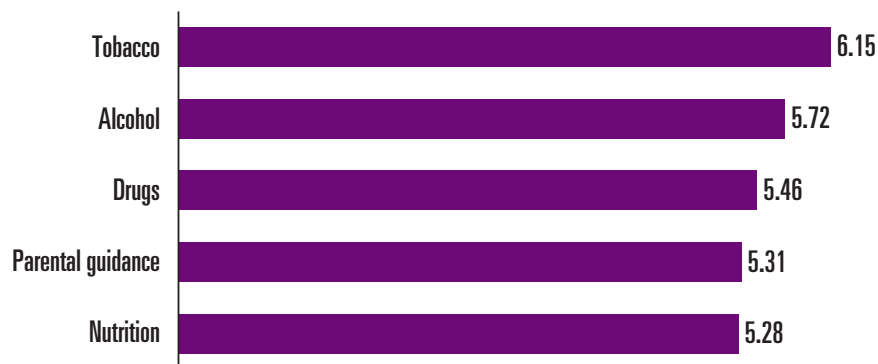
Means



Ratings on issues regarding children and youth vary somewhat among areas of the GNH region. Again, the mean scores for New Haven are higher on every issue, and pregnancy and dropping out of high school rate among the top five problems whereas those issues receive lower means in the other areas. However, all three areas rank suicide lowest of the 14 issues, yet New Haven's mean score is 3.28 compared to 3.02 for the Inner Ring and 2.23 for the Outer Ring.

Figure 8. Top Five Problems of Children and Youth in Inner Ring (Q13)

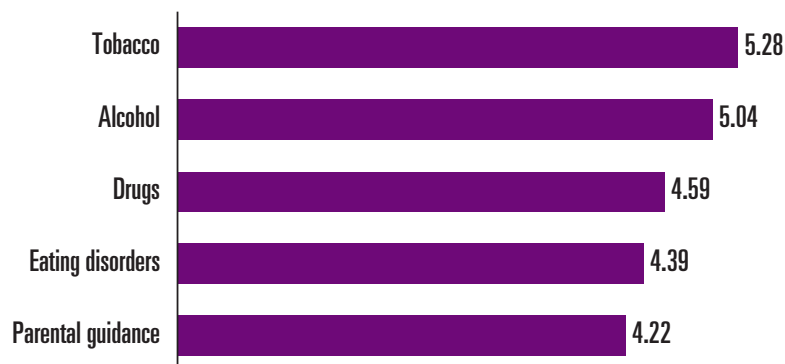
Means



GNH area residents are somewhat divided on the issue of whether children and youth have the positive role models they need. Four in ten (39 percent) disagree with the statement: “Children and youth in my town generally have the positive role models they need,” while 59 percent agree with it.

Figure 9. Top Five Problems of Children and Youth in Outer Ring (Q13)

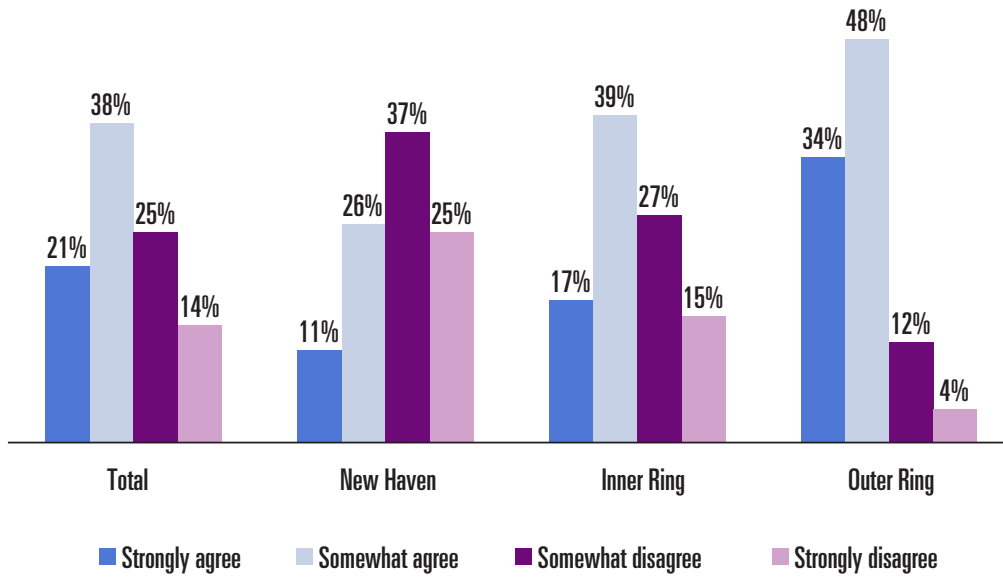
Means



Opinions on this issue, however, vary among the New Haven and Inner Ring areas and the Outer Ring. In New Haven, 62 percent disagree with the statement and 37 percent agree with it. In the Outer Ring, however, 72 percent agree and only 16 percent disagree. In the Inner Ring, 56 percent agree and 42 percent disagree.

Answers also vary according to race and age. A quarter (26 percent) of non-whites *strongly* disagree with the above statement whereas only 10 percent of whites *strongly* disagree with it. Additionally, 20 percent of adults ages 65 and older strongly agree with the statement compared to 12 percent of those between ages 18 and 25.

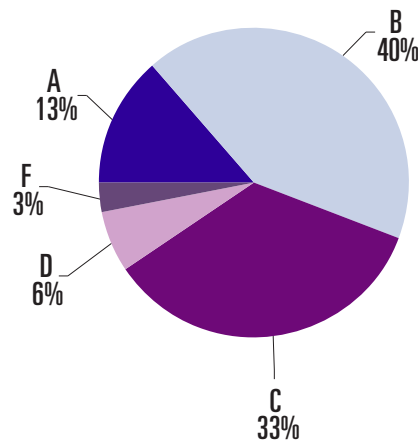
Figure 10. Children Have Positive Role Models They Need (Q14)



Education: Schools Receive About Average Marks

Concerns about education also surface as concerns among GNH residents. Fully 13 percent consider education, including education reform and funding, their town's biggest problem in an open-ended question, which is the second most frequent answer. When asked to grade their town's schools using the A, B, C, D, and F scale, only 13 percent give the schools an A, three-quarters (73 percent) say B or C, and 9 percent give them a D or F

Figure 11. Grading Schools (Q15)



Once more, a large disparity exists between New Haven and the Outer Ring. Only 7 percent of New Haven residents give their town's schools an A compared to a quarter (23 percent) of the Outer Ring. Similarly, about half (49 percent) of New Haven adults give their schools a C; only 14 percent in the Outer Ring give their schools a C.

Figure 12. School Grades by Area (Q15)

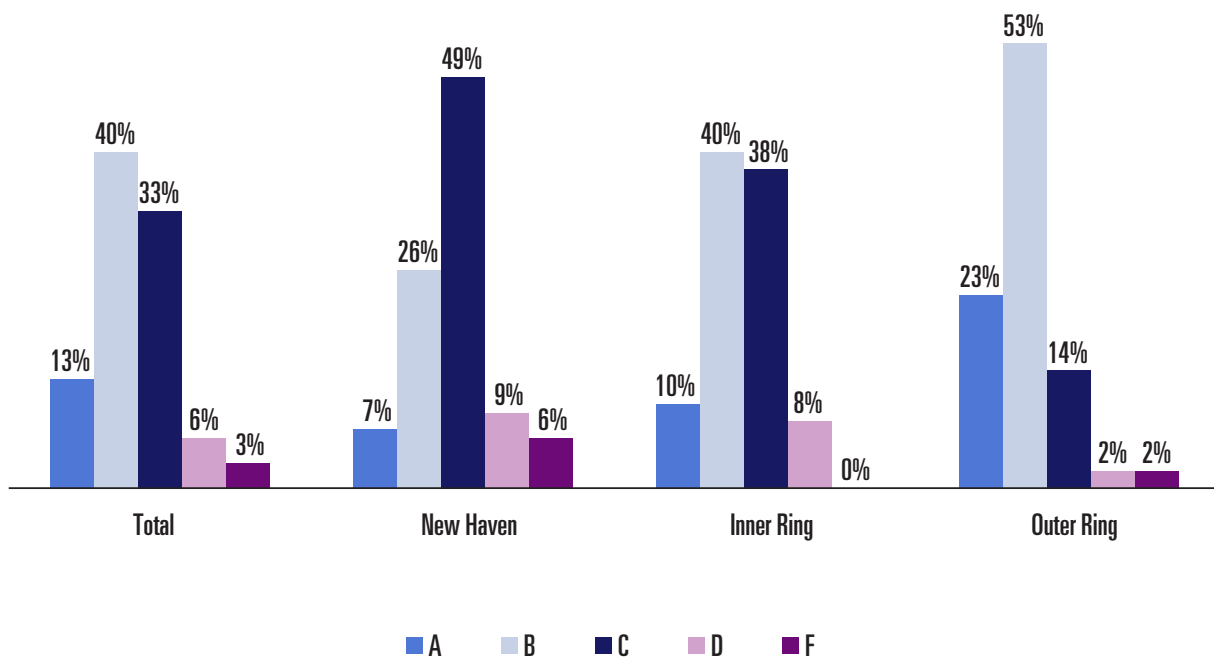
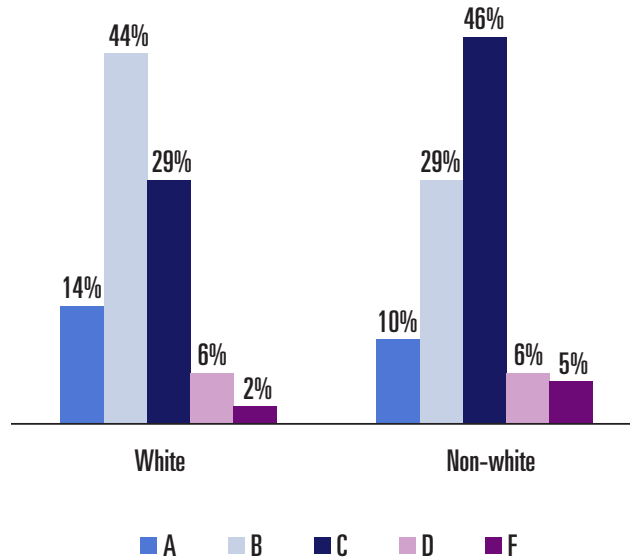


Figure 13. Grades by Race (Q15)

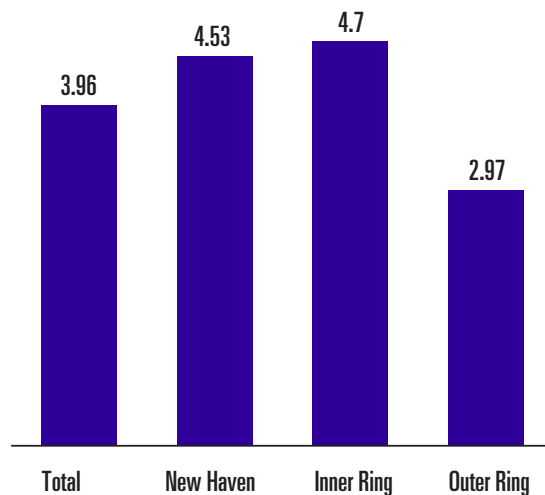


Whites also tend to rate their schools higher than non-whites. Among whites, 29 percent give their schools a C whereas 46 percent of non-whites give their schools a C

Safety at school is also a concern. When asked how concerned members of the respondent’s household are about “your child’s physical safety at school,” the Inner Ring gives a mean score of 4.7 and New Haven gives this issue a 4.53. At 2.97, Outer Ring residents rate the issue substantially lower.

Figure 14. Concerns About School Safety (Q26g)

Means



Dropping out of high school is a significant concern in New Haven. In the set of questions in which respondents rate how much a problem 14 issues are regarding children and youth, dropping out of high school ranks twelfth (4.46) overall. Again, however, in New Haven this issue receives a mean of 6.21, the fifth highest rating within that area. The Inner Ring’s mean is 4.47, and the Outer Ring gives the issue 2.66.

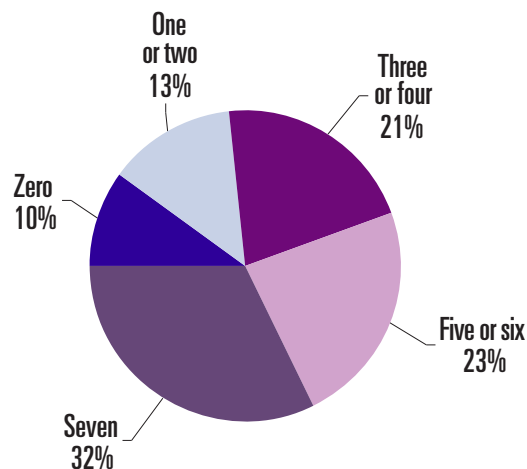
Family Life: Active and Involved

The survey findings indicate that GNH residents consider themselves involved with their families. Respondents say they often eat dinner as a family, read to their children, and attend school activities. Additionally, few find problems with either child care or after school care. Other than financial concerns, few report problems in their households with issues such as domestic violence or substance abuse.

A third (32 percent) of GNH residents in households with at least two persons say they ate dinner together as a family every night in the previous week. The percents are fairly consistent among regions. For example, 36 percent in New Haven say they ate dinner as a family every night in the previous week compared to 31 percent in the Inner Ring, and 30 percent in the Outer Ring. In contrast, 14 percent of New Haven respondents did not eat dinner at all as a family whereas 11 percent gave that answer in the Inner Ring and only 5 percent gave it in the Outer Ring.

Additionally, households of younger respondents ate dinner less frequently in the previous week than older respondents. A quarter (26 percent) of respondents ages 18-29 did not eat dinner together as a household at all the previous week; only 2 percent of those respondents age 65 and older gave that answer.

Figure 15. Number of Times Ate Dinner Together (Q29)



Adults in the vast majority of households with children under age 5 often read to them. Fully 85 percent say they often read to their children; only 2 percent never read to them.

Additionally, two-thirds (67 percent) of GNH adults with school-aged children always attend school activities such as open houses, conferences, plays, and programs. Only 7 percent rarely or never attend school activities. These percentages vary somewhat among regions with 74 percent always attending school activities in the Outer Ring compared to 56 percent in New Haven. However, 31 percent of New Haven adults “sometimes” attend activities; 15 percent in the Outer Ring gave that answer.

However, more whites than non-whites attend activities as do homeowners as opposed to renters. Almost three-quarters (72 percent) of whites always attend school activities compared to about half (56 percent) of non-whites. Similarly, about half (57 percent) of renters always attend the activities whereas three-quarters (72 percent) of homeowners do the same.

Some worries about balancing family and work activities exist but the issue does not stand out. Concerns about “balancing work and family responsibilities with children or disabled or elderly relatives” receive a mean score of 3.34 on the 0-10 scale, which ranks sixth out of the eight issues in this battery of questions. The concern rates about the same in all regions.

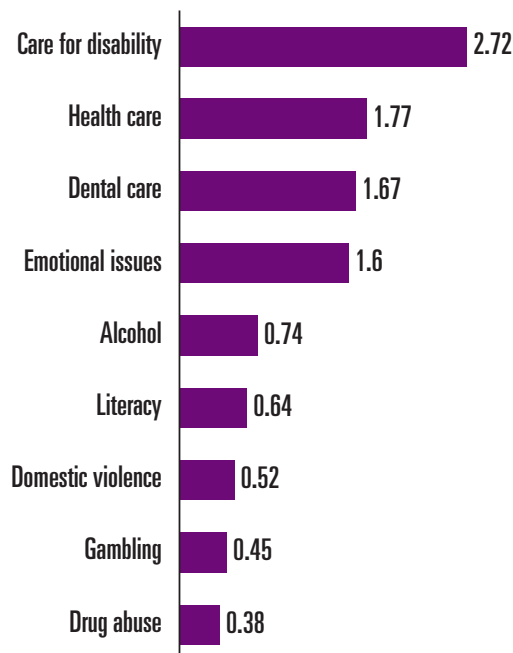
Figure 16. How Often Read to Children (Q31)



Social issues such as domestic violence, substance abuse, and literacy are not viewed as major concerns within respondents’ households although the same issues may rate higher in the towns. Interestingly, the mean rating for substance abuse as a problem in the respondents’ towns is 5.41 on the 10-point scale, but within the households, alcohol or drinking too much receives a mean of 0.74 and drug abuse receives 0.38.

Figure 17. Problems in Household (Q24)

Means



There is also satisfaction with child care and after school care. Less than half (42 percent) of households with children under age 5 use a child care provider and 94 percent say they are either very or somewhat satisfied with the overall quality of the care. Seven in ten (70 percent) are very satisfied. Moreover, 79 percent report that problems with child care have either hardly ever or never prevented the respondent from getting to work.

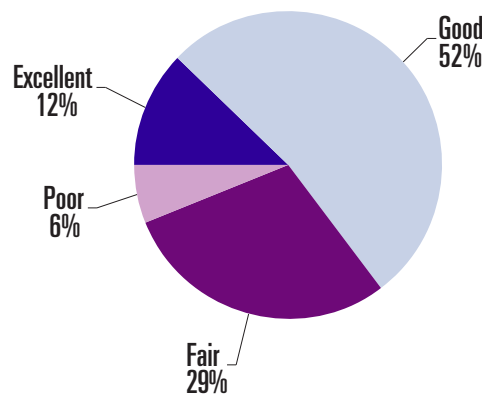
About a quarter (26 percent) of households with school-aged children use after school care three or more afternoons per week. Almost nine in ten (86 percent) have had hardly any or no problems obtaining after school care; three-quarters (76 percent) have *never* had any problems. Similar to those who use a child care provider, 88 percent are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied. However, in contrast to child care, less than half (46 percent) are *very* satisfied. A third (34 percent) of those who use after-school care consider it a bargain while 29 percent describe the price as “about right.” A quarter (24 percent) consider the programs too expensive.

Quality of Life: A Sense of Satisfaction

The GNH region is considered a “good” place to live and work and most residents feel “connected” to their communities. Racism and homelessness are not big concerns and the majority of people would feel at least somewhat safe to take a walk at night by themselves in their neighborhood. Almost half did some type of volunteer work in the previous month and about a third gave at least \$1,000 to charities in the past year. A few concerns, however, do surface regarding recreation activities and facilities for children and adults as well as traffic.

Two-thirds (65 percent) rate the GNH area as an excellent or good place to live and work. These percentages vary only slightly among regions. For example, about a third of both New Haven (34 percent) and the Inner Ring (33 percent) residents say the area is a “fair” place to live and work whereas only 19 percent in the Outer Ring give that answer.

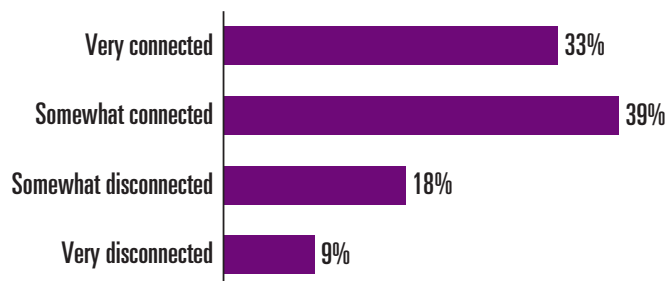
Figure 18. Rate GNH Area (Q3)



On the other hand, whites rate the area higher than non-whites. Fully 70 percent of whites say the GNH area is a good or fair place to live and work compared to 50 percent of non-whites.

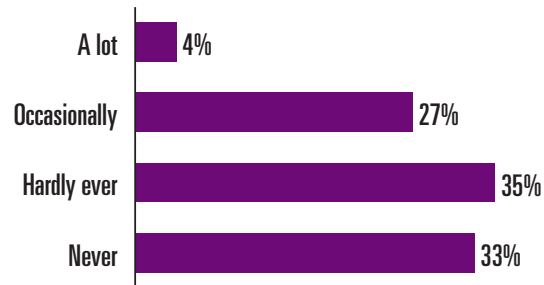
A strong majority also feels “connected” to their towns. Almost three-quarters (72 percent) feel very or somewhat connected to their towns while only a quarter (27 percent) feels somewhat or very disconnected. The Inner Ring area residents tend to feel the least connected. Whereas 65 percent in that area feel very or somewhat connected, 76 percent note those feelings in the Outer Ring and 71 percent in New Haven.

Figure 19. Connection with Town (Q4)



Further, seven in ten (68 percent) GNH residents report that they hardly ever or never feel lonely or isolated. Answers to this question vary little among demographics except for marital status and income. Fully 41 percent of married respondents never feel lonely or isolated compared to only a quarter (25 percent) of unmarried adults. Similarly, 10 percent of respondents in households with annual incomes of less than \$20,000 feel lonely or isolated “a lot;” only 1 percent of those with incomes of \$100,000 or more give that answer.

Figure 20. Feel Lonely or Isolated? (Q28)



When asked to rate race and ethnic relations as a problem in their towns on a 10-point scale, the issue receives a mean of 3.94, the eighth lowest ranking out of nine issues. Only homelessness has a lower mean score (3.83.) Although New Haven rates racial issues as a bigger problem than the Inner Ring or the Outer Ring (4.96, 4.41, 2.53, respectively), the issue nonetheless ranks the lowest in New Haven.

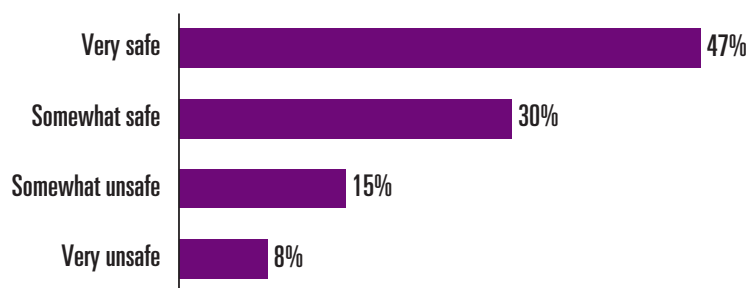
Similarly, the overall mean for homelessness is 3.83, the lowest ranking issue in that set of questions. New Haven rates this issue much higher (6.38) than the other areas (3.24 in the Inner Ring and 1.98 in the Outer Ring) but it still only ranks fourth among New Haven’s problems.

Few Worry About Crime

Crime is also not a big concern. The overall mean score is 4.35. New Haven gives crime a mean rating of 6.07 (the fifth highest rating among the issues), the Inner Ring gives crime a 4.37, and Outer Ring residents say 2.75. In rating how much of a problem 14 issues are for children and youth “in your town,” violence or crime committed by youth ranks eleventh (4.51) overall. The mean score in New Haven for this item is 6.07, the sixth highest issue for that area; in the Inner Ring, violence or crime committed by youth receives a mean of 4.59, ninth out of 14 issues. The Outer Ring scores this issue 2.97, the eighth highest ranking.

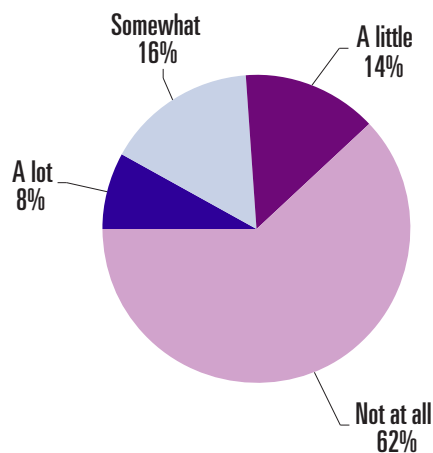
Not surprising, then, the majority (77 percent) of residents feel at least somewhat safe to take a walk alone in their neighborhoods. However, the percentage feeling at least somewhat safe drops to 65 percent in New Haven. Fully 78 percent of the Inner Ring residents feel at least somewhat safe and as do 87 percent of those in the Outer Ring.

Figure 21. Feel Safe Walking Alone at Night? (Q10)



Noise is also not an issue. Three-quarters (76 percent) say the noise level in their neighborhoods bothers them either not at all or a little. New Haven residents tend, however, to be more bothered by noise. Three in ten (34 percent) say they are either bothered a lot or somewhat by the noise level; only 14 percent in the Outer Ring give that answer.

Figure 22. Bothered by Noise? (Q11)



Affluent Are More Likely to Own a Gun

Few households report owning a gun. Only 12 percent say that someone in their household owns a gun. This percentage varies little by demographic group except income. Households with higher incomes are more likely to own a gun than lower income households. A quarter (24 percent) of those with incomes in the \$80,000-99,999 range own a gun whereas 2 percent own a gun in households with incomes of \$20,000 or less.

The three main reasons for owning a gun are:

- Target practice/sport (31 percent);
- Protection (25 percent); and,
- Hunting (23 percent).

Only 1 percent say the main reason for having a gun is to exercise their Second Amendment rights.

Many Volunteer, Contribute to Charities

Almost half (45 percent) of the respondents spent at least an hour in the previous month volunteering for groups in their towns such as civic groups, political groups, sports groups, and the PTA. Conversely, 55 percent spent no time volunteering. These percentages varied little among regions.

Figure 23. Hours Volunteered Last Month (Q8)

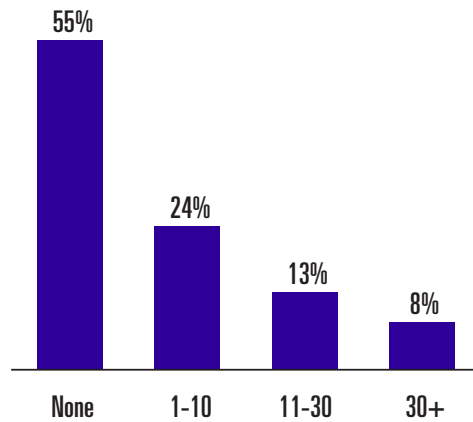
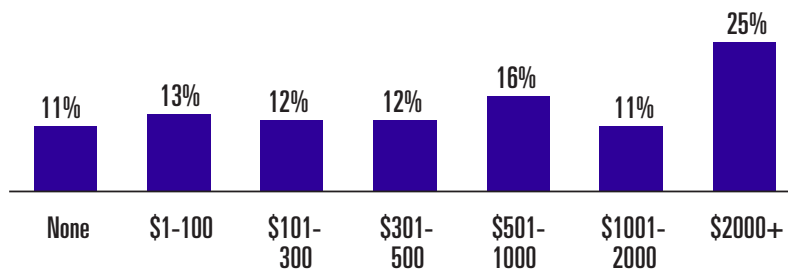


Figure 24. Charitable Donations Last Year (Q7)



Additionally, a solid majority (89 percent) donated some money to charities in the past year. A quarter (25 percent) donated more than \$2,000. Interestingly, these figures varied only slightly among regions. For example, 20 percent of New Haven residents gave at least \$2,000 compared to 24 percent of Inner Ring area residents, and 29 percent of those the Outer Ring.

A Few Concerns About Recreation Programs

Residents do, however, see some need for more adult recreation programs and facilities. Half (50 percent) say there are either an excellent or good number of recreations programs and facilities in their towns and 48 percent say the number is either fair or poor. Only 11 percent of New Haven residents say the programs are excellent compared to 28 percent in the Outer Ring. Conversely, 30 percent of those in New Haven say the programs are poor while only 7 percent in the Outer Ring give that answer.

Most people in the area are also satisfied with the number of recreation programs and facilities for children in their towns. More than half (57 percent) say the number of programs and facilities are either excellent or good. As with the adults, New Haven residents are less pleased with this matter than those in the Outer Ring. Fully 42 percent of New Haven respondents answer either excellent or good, compared to 52 percent in the Inner Ring, and 78 percent in the Outer Ring.

Figure 25. Rate Recreation for Adults (Q12)

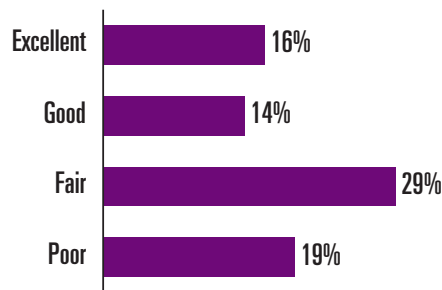
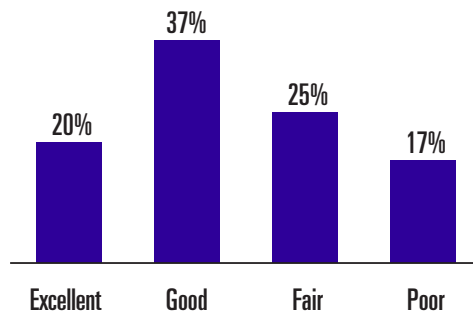


Figure 26. Rate Recreation for Children and Youth (Q16)

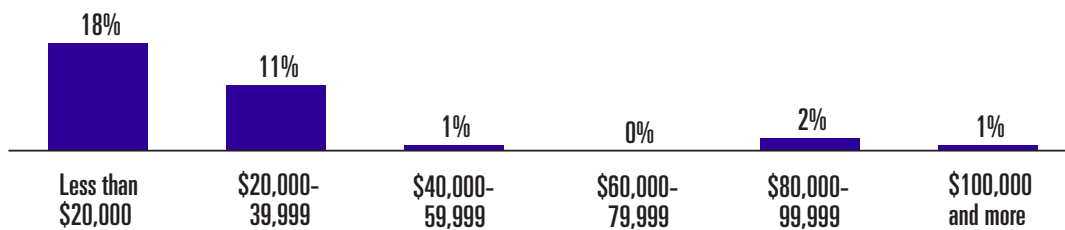


Traffic

All three areas rate traffic as a problem. New Haven scores traffic a 6.01 on the 10-point scale. The Inner Ring follows with 5.32 and the Outer Ring report 4.94. Traffic is the second highest rated problem in the battery of nine issues in both the Inner Ring and the Outer Ring. And, although the mean in New Haven is the highest of the three regions, it is sixth on that city's list.

Although traffic is an issue of concern, the vast majority of GNH residents manage to get around the region without any problems. Asked to choose between two statements to describe their situations, 94 percent chose "I get around the area without any problems using a car or other transportation," and only 6 percent chose "I find it difficult to get around the area because I don't have a car, cannot drive, or do not have access to other transportation."

Figure 27. Difficult to Get Around by Income (Q46)



These percentages remain stable throughout the regions and other demographic characteristics but do vary somewhat according to income. Among those with household incomes of \$20,000 or less, 82 percent are able to get around and 18% are experiencing problems. However, 100 percent respondents in households with incomes between \$60,000-79,999 chose the statement about getting around without problems.

Seniors Say Their Programs Are Largely Adequate

Additionally, GNH residents consider programs for senior citizens to be either very adequate (35 percent) or somewhat adequate (39 percent.) Only 4 percent say the programs are very inadequate. These percentages, however, vary by area. Fully 43 percent in the Outer Ring and 40 percent in the Inner Ring area say the programs for senior citizens are *very* adequate compared to only 21 percent in New Haven. Another 19 percent in New Haven consider the programs very or somewhat inadequate.

However, most seniors rate the programs highly. More than half (56 percent) of those age 65 and over say the programs for seniors are very adequate compared to only 18 percent of those ages 18-29.

Figure 28. Adequacy of Programs for Seniors (Q47)

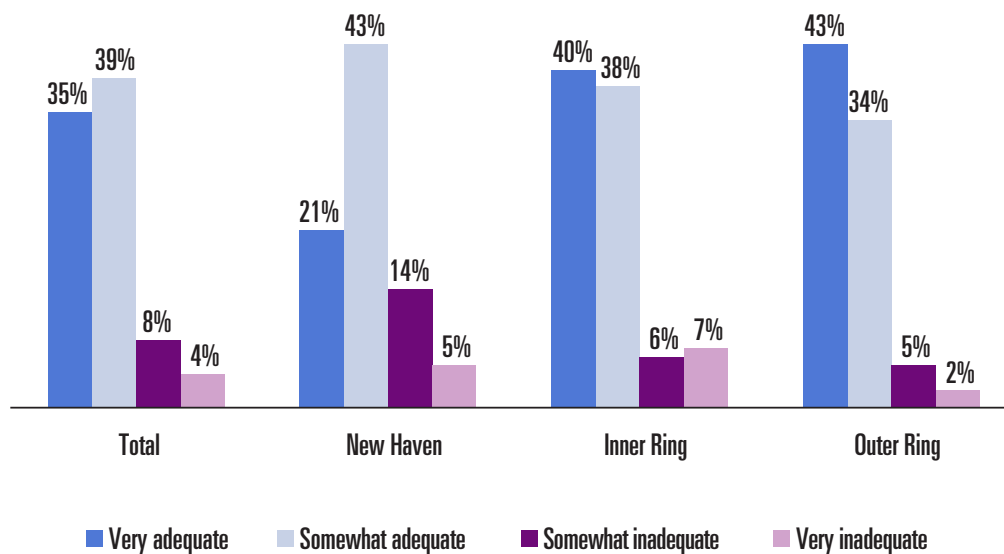
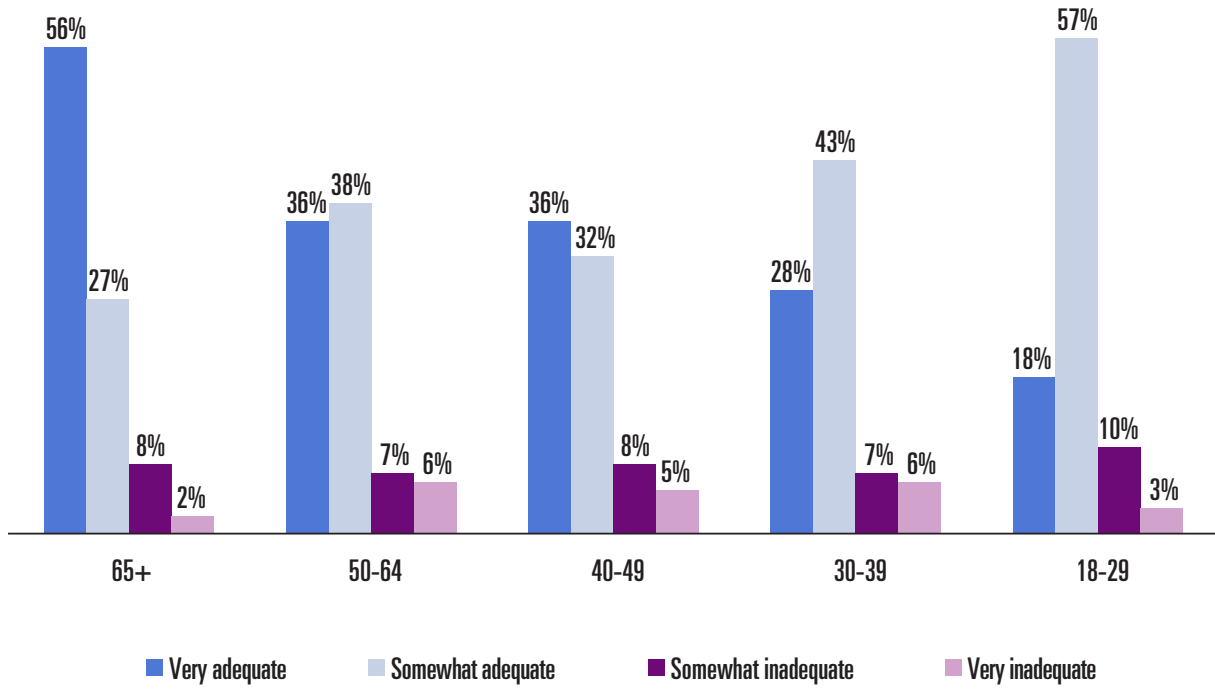


Figure 29. Adequacy of Programs for Seniors by Age (Q47)

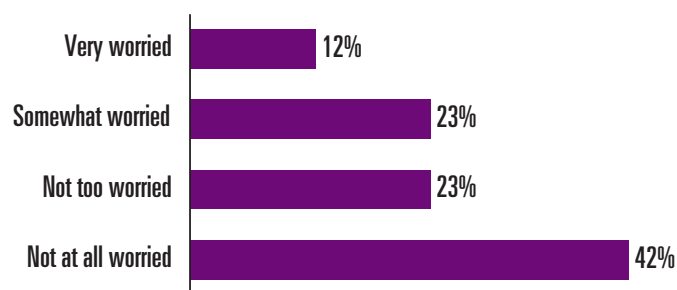


Health: Concerns About Costs and Getting Enough Exercise

A solid majority (94 percent) of respondents say they are either in excellent or good health and most adults (87 percent) and children (96 percent) report having some type of health insurance or health plan. Nevertheless, health care costs are a concern as are exercise and diet.

Worries over health care costs are evident although not widespread. More than a third (35 percent) of residents say they are very or somewhat worried about being able to pay medical or health care costs. Senior citizens and those with low incomes tend to worry more than others. A third (33 percent) of those ages 65 and over are either very or somewhat worried about costs compared to 24 percent of young adults under age 30. At the same time, however, 42 percent of seniors say they are not at all worried; 46 percent of young adults give that answer.

Figure 30. Worried About Medical Costs? (Q41)



For some, the cost of medical or dental care has meant delaying treatment. Fifteen percent say they or a member of their household put off medical treatment in the past year because of the cost and 23 percent put off dental care because of the cost.

Figure 31. Delayed Medical Care? (Q42)

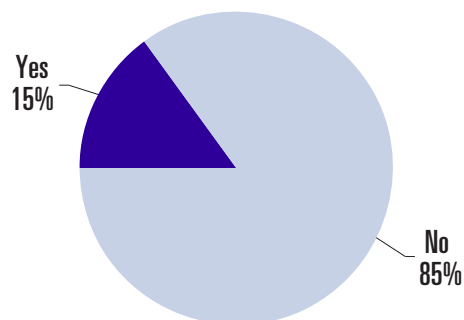
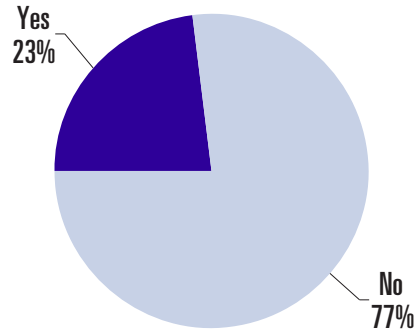
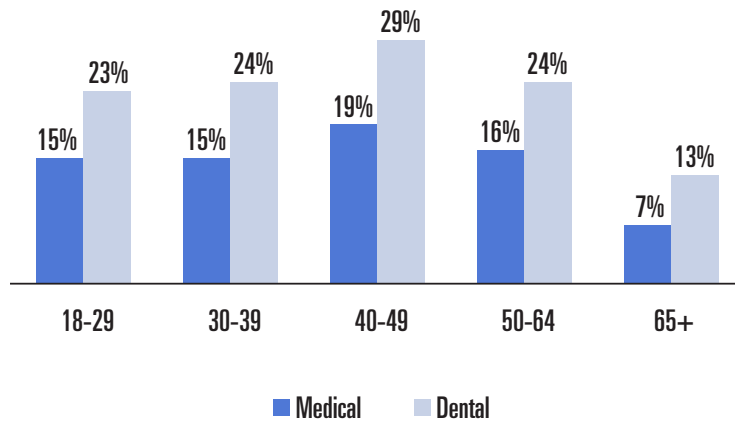


Figure 32. Delayed Dental Care? (Q43)



Interestingly, young people are more likely to delay treatment than senior citizens. Only 7 percent of adults age 65 and older put off medical treatment in the past year and 13 percent of this age group delayed dental treatment. In comparison, 15 percent of those under age 30 put off medical treatment and a quarter (23 percent) put off dental treatment.

Figure 33. Delays in Care by Age (Q42 & Q43 by age)



Physical Fitness Registers as a Concern

When asked to rate concerns in the household on the 10-point scale, saving for retirement received the largest mean (5.32), as mentioned earlier. The second highest rating is for “getting enough exercise” (4.53) and the fourth highest rating is for “being overweight” (3.42). These two issues are considered a greater concern within the household than losing a job (3.28), being in debt (3.32), or balancing family and work responsibilities (3.34).

Among children and youth, nutrition or eating healthy foods (5.08) rates higher on the scale than parents providing guidance (5.04), bullying (4.95), mental health (4.83), teen pregnancy (4.71), and suicide (2.83). The mean rating for eating disorders is 5.03, the sixth highest rating out of 14 issues, and physical fitness (4.97) ranks seventh.

More than a quarter (28 percent) of GNH households include at least one resident who smokes or chews tobacco. Tobacco use, however, decreases with age but is higher among those with less education. Only 18 percent of seniors smoke or chew tobacco compared to a third (34 percent) of adults ages 18 to 29. Similarly, 36 percent of those with only a high school degree use tobacco while only 12 percent of post-graduates partake.

Conclusion

The finding that the economy is of central concern to GNH residents is not surprising considering the economic slowdown the nation is currently facing. The economy is a major concern in national surveys as well. And the findings suggest that the majority of people are satisfied with various aspects of their families and communities. There is *not* widespread discontent in the area although there are critical issues that concern citizens.

Nevertheless, several issues loom as important, particularly in the New Haven area. Substance abuse, specifically tobacco use among children and youth, is a concern as is exercise, nutrition, and health care costs. And residents register concern over children and youth having the positive role models they need.

In some cases, the findings may indicate a lack of awareness of the importance of an issue. For example, suicide ranks as the least important problem among children and youth. Child abuse, dropping out of high school, and teen pregnancy also do not rate high on the 10-point scale. If indeed these issues are problems in the area, the survey findings indicate a need for an education program.

The United Way of Greater New Haven, like all organizations, has finite resources. This survey offers guidance on how to use those resources. For example, it is quite evident that needs in New Haven are, across the board, greater than in the other areas of the region. And, as mentioned above, several issues stand out as concerns among residents.

Methodology

To better understand the perceived needs, concerns, and problems of residents in the Greater New Haven area, the Greater New Haven United Way commissioned the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut to conduct a quantitative survey among adults ages 18 and older. The telephone survey was conducted using Random Digit Dialing from March 10 through March 27, 2003. A total of 902 interviews were conducted and the sample was stratified into three areas:

- New Haven (n=301)
- The Inner Ring, East Haven, and West Haven (n=300)
- The Outer Ring of towns including Bethany, Branford, Guilford, Madison, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, and Woodbridge (n=301)

The margin of error is ± 3.26 for the total population, and ± 5.64 in each of the three areas. The margin of error may be greater for smaller subgroups.

Telephone numbers were generated through a random-digit-dial telephone methodology to ensure that each possible residential telephone number in the Greater New Haven area had an opportunity to be selected for this survey. Once selected, each telephone number was contacted a minimum of four times to attempt to reach an eligible respondent. Households where a viable contact was made were called additional times. Within each household, one adult was randomly selected to complete the interview.

To ensure the survey data was generalizable to all adults in the Greater New Haven area, data was weighted to adjust for probabilities of selection, sample design, and to ensure that characteristics of survey respondents match known population estimates for the area.

APPENDIX A

CLOSER COMPARISON OF THE THREE AREAS IN GREATER NEW HAVEN

As mentioned at the beginning of the report, the sample was stratified into three areas:

- New Haven;
- Hamden, East Haven, West Haven (referred to as the Inner Ring); and,
- Bethany, Branford, Guilford, Madison, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, and Woodbridge (referred to as the Outer Ring).

Stratifying allows the data to be examined regionally and locally amongst the three areas. The data on each of the three areas reveals an interesting mixture of similarities and contrasts. In general, however, New Haven rates issues as greater concerns or problems than do the other two areas. Of the three areas, the Outer Ring consistently indicates that the issues about which respondents were questioned are less of a problem or concern.

The three areas have very different demographics. The Outer Ring is more affluent, better educated, older, and more likely to be white than New Haven. Only 8 percent have annual household incomes less than \$20,000 compared to 27 percent with that income level in New Haven and 11 percent in the Inner Ring. Furthermore, a quarter (27 percent) of respondents in New Haven are ages 18-29 while that age group makes up 18 percent in the Inner Ring and 8 percent in the Outer Ring. Education levels, however, do not vary as much. In the Outer Ring, a high school degree is the highest level of education for 22 percent compared to 26 percent in New Haven and 28 percent in the Inner Ring. Thirty percent of the Outer Ring has at least a four-year college degree while 22 percent in New Haven have the same level. In the Outer Ring, 23 percent have a graduate degree; in New Haven, 19 percent have an advanced degree.

Similarities

Two types of similarities exist. First, each area may rate the same problem as a concern but at different magnitudes, and, second, each area may provide similar percentages or means to some questions. To illustrate the first type of similarity, all three areas rate substance abuse among the top five problems in their towns but New Haven residents give the issue a mean score of 6.7, the mean in the Inner Ring is 5.13, and it is 4.46 in the Outer Ring.

An example of the second type of similarity mentioned above is that finances are considered the biggest problem in respondents' households at about the same percentages. A third (32 percent) of New Haven respondents answer finances as does the Inner Ring (35 percent) and the Outer Ring (32 percent).

Issues that fit the first model in which the magnitude of the problem varies include the following:

- In both New Haven and the Inner Ring, unemployment or jobs ranks as the town's biggest problem in a closed-ended question using a 0 to 10 scale with 0 meaning not at all a problem and 10 meaning a major problem; however, the mean in New Haven is 6.96 while the mean in the Inner Ring is 5.39.
- Alcohol ranks as the second most important problem among children and youth in all three areas although the means vary (New Haven, 6.68; Inner Ring, 5.72; Outer Ring, 5.04).

- Suicide receives the lowest rating as a problem for children and youth in all three areas (New Haven, 3.28; Inner Ring, 3.02; Outer Ring, 2.23).
- When asked to rate nine issues as problems in the household, the issues that ranked first, second, third and so on are quite similar among the areas but the means vary. For example, obtaining adequate health care receives 2.42 in New Haven, 1.92 in the Inner Ring, and 1.0 in the Outer Ring yet it is the second highest ranking problem in each of the three areas.
- Taxes are most frequently mentioned as the biggest problem facing towns in an open-ended question in each of the three areas but at different rates (13 percent in New Haven, 27 percent in the Inner Ring, and 24 percent in the Outer Ring).

Issues in which the three areas gave similar answers or percentages include:

- Three-quarters (74 percent) in New Haven and 76 percent in the Outer Ring say they feel very or somewhat connected to their towns.
- Answers to the question about whether the respondent's household is economically better off, worse off, or about the same as last year are quite similar in the three areas. (31 percent say worse off in New Haven as do 27 percent in the Inner Ring and 31 percent in the Outer Ring.)
- Similar amounts of time were spent volunteering in the three areas (24 percent say 1-10 hours in New Haven; 22 percent in the Inner Ring; and 27 percent in the Outer Ring).
- About a quarter (27 percent) say they occasionally feel lonely or isolated compared to 29 percent in the Inner Ring and 26 percent in the Outer Ring.
- There are minor differences among the three areas as far as how many times a week the households sits down together and eats dinner. In New Haven, 36 percent said they ate dinner together every night in the previous week, 31 percent gave that answer in the Inner Ring and 30 percent in the Outer Ring.
- Adults read to their children at similar rates in the three areas. In New Haven, 89 percent say an adult often reads to children as do 86 percent in the Outer Ring.
- Similar percentages worry about health care costs. Fourteen percent are very worried in New Haven as are 13 percent in the Inner Ring and 11 percent in the Outer Ring.
- Outer Ring residents are just as likely to put off medical care because of the cost. In New Haven 18 percent give that answer compared to 13 percent in the Inner Ring and 13 percent in the Outer Ring.

Contrasts

Along with similarities come many contrasts between the three areas including the following:

- Asked to score 14 issues regarding children and youth on the 0 to 10 scale, New Haven gave every issue a higher mean than the Inner Ring or the Outer Ring.
- Among the top five problems facing children and youth in the respondent's town, tobacco ranks first in the Inner and Outer Rings and third in New Haven yet the mean score in New Haven for that issue is higher than in either of the two areas (New Haven, 6.65; Inner Ring, 6.15; Outer Ring, 5.28).
- Also among problems facing children and youth, teen pregnancy receives the fourth highest mean in New Haven (6.65) but ranks ninth among the 14 issues about which respondents were questioned in the Inner Ring (4.66) and tenth in the Outer Ring (2.87).
- Only 11 percent in New Haven strongly agree that children have the positive role models they need compared to 17 percent in the Inner Ring and 34 percent in the Outer Ring.
- Schools receive lower grades in New Haven. Only 7 percent of New Haven residents give the schools an "A" while 10 percent in the Inner Ring say "A," and 23 percent in the Outer Ring.
- Outer Ring residents feel much safer walking alone at night in their towns than New Haven or Inner Ring respondents: 65 percent in the Outer Ring say they would feel very safe compared to 29 percent in New Haven and 46 percent in the Inner Ring.
- Noise is more likely to bother New Haven residents than in the other two areas. Fully 71 percent of the Outer Ring says that noise does not bother them at all; 51 percent give that answer in New Haven.
- The Outer Ring is much happier with recreation programs and facilities for adults. More than a quarter (28 percent) say the programs are excellent while 9 percent say excellent in the Inner Ring and 11 percent give that answer in New Haven. The situation is similar for recreation programs for children and youth; 31 percent in the Outer Ring call the programs excellent while only 15 percent say excellent in New Haven as do 16 percent in the Inner Ring.
- New Haven residents are more likely to rate their health as excellent than in either of the other two areas. (New Haven, 44 percent; Inner Ring, 31 percent; Outer Ring 39 percent.)
- Inner and Outer Ring residents are more likely to own a gun. Only 6 percent of New Haven residents say that someone in the household has a gun while 16 percent give that answer in the Inner Ring and 14 percent in the Outer Ring.