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2025 DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey Highlights Trust, Resilience, and Economic Challenges Across Connecticut

Hartford, Conn. — At a packed statewide event hosted yesterday by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, DataHaven unveiled the results of its latest **DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey (DCWS)**, believed to be the largest and most comprehensive neighborhood-level wellbeing survey in the United States. The event, attended by civic leaders, health professionals, and nonprofit partners, featured presentations from DataHaven as well as remarks by Hartford Mayor Arunan Arulampalam and Jay Williams of the Hartford Foundation. Data placemats and graphics, along with detailed crosstabs for each 2025 DCWS question, are available at <https://ctdatahaven.org/wellbeingsurvey>.

The DataHaven survey captures a portrait of residents' health, economic stability, and community life through interviews with thousands of randomly-selected adults in every Connecticut ZIP Code. The New Haven-based nonprofit organization collaborates with Siena Research Institute to ensure the reliability and consistency of its research methods, which include live interviews in English and Spanish and statistical weighting to accurately represent Connecticut's entire adult population. Since 2015, more than 53,000 representative adults have participated in these in-depth interviews. For the 2025 survey, 1,371 adults were interviewed from August 4 to October 16, 2025, and the statewide results carried a maximum margin of error of 3.5 percent.

"Connecticut continues to show great resilience and a high quality of life, with more than 83 percent of adults saying they are satisfied with the place they live," said Mark Abraham, Executive Director of DataHaven. "But the data also reveal areas of concern that communities are working hard to address, including cuts to food assistance, health care, and housing that over a million people in our state have been relying on. The results also show rising anxiety, worries about immigration enforcement, differences in access to economic and health opportunity, and financial stress, especially for renters and families with children."

Trust in Local Institutions Remains High

The presentation began with a focus on institutional trust, a theme that resonated among the representatives from local and statewide agencies, philanthropies, and healthcare organizations gathered at the event. "Our data show that trust in local and state government remains high, even as trust in federal government has declined," said Abraham. "This implicit legitimacy of local partners is one of Connecticut's greatest assets, as it allows communities to respond with credibility as challenges arise."

Abraham noted that the survey continues to demonstrate a strong link between responsive government and higher self-reported well-being, underscoring the importance of access to trusted local information at a time when the availability of reliable data has been threatened nationally.

A Collaborative Effort

The survey is made possible through a broad coalition of partners. This year, major supporters include the University of Hartford, American University, and Yale University, Connecticut Children's, Yale New Haven Health, the Connecticut Department of Public Health, local health departments in Hartford, New Haven, and Stamford, and regional philanthropic organizations including The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, Connecticut Community Foundation, The Connecticut Project, Fairfield County's Community Foundation, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, United Way Coastal Fairfield County, United Way of Greater New Haven, and the United Way of Connecticut, with many other organizations contributing as well.

"This diversity of organizations supporting the survey reflects the fact that the survey measures what matters most to quality of life, whether that is community trust, transportation, affordability, health, housing, or support from friends and family," Abraham said at the event.

Major Changes Since Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The presentation highlighted the largest statewide changes measured by the DataHaven survey between 2018 and 2025.

- **Cannabis use doubled**, with about 350,000 more adults now using cannabis or marijuana (24 percent of adults using it at least once during the last 30 days, up from 12 percent in 2018).
- **Optimism about local jobs** increased and underemployment rates improved somewhat, with 250,000 more adults in Connecticut rating employment opportunities for residents in their area as "excellent" or "good."
- **Mental health** challenges rose, with about 200,000 more adults reporting anxiety or depression.
- Chronic disease diagnoses rose, with about 150,000 more adults reporting **diabetes or hypertension**, potentially reflecting both an aging population and improved screening.
- The number of adults who **ran out of money for housing**, and the number who had to stay home in the past year because they lacked reliable transportation, both increased by roughly 150,000 adults. In 2025, 11 percent of adults statewide (about 320,000 people) said they ran out of money for housing, which is about double the rate that was measured by the DataHaven survey 10 years ago. Statewide, 7 percent of adults said they **had to miss doctor's appointments** because they had no way to get there.

- **Food insecurity is rising**, increasing by 100,000 adults from pre-pandemic levels. The increase is particularly large for adults living with children (with 26 percent reporting that they ran out of money for food in the past year, compared to 11 percent of adults without children). Abraham noted that this increase is even more striking if compared to 2021's record low in the food insecurity rate, when the expanded Child Tax Credit helped families and slashed child poverty nationally. In some of Connecticut's largest city centers, up to half of adults with children report that they ran out of money for food this past year.
- Access to care remains an issue, with 100,000 more adults **unable to get needed medical treatment in the last year**. The rate of missed care spiked during the peak year of the COVID-19 pandemic and has since improved for higher-income adults but continued to worsen among moderate- and lower-income residents.
- About 100,000 fewer adults in the state **smoke cigarettes**, though this is partly because vaping has become more popular, especially among younger adults.
- About 150,000 additional residents say they have **safe places to ride bicycles**, likely reflecting the construction of new protected bike paths in many towns.
- **Social support declined**, especially for adults with below-median incomes, with 100,000 fewer adults saying they usually receive the social or emotional support they need.

Despite these shifts, Abraham emphasized that “most measures have remained stable over time, meaning that Connecticut continues to outperform national averages on many dimensions of health and well-being.”

Key Topics Shared at the Event

The presentation covered several additional findings from this year's data:

- **SNAP and the Social Safety Net:** In 2025, new questions were added on public benefits. The survey found that 26 percent of Connecticut adults or their household members have received SNAP at some point, 36 percent have received Medicaid/HUSKY, 9 percent received rental housing assistance, and more than 1 in 10 used a food pantry in the past year. The survey also found that of the adults who received SNAP within the past 30 days, the majority had not used a food pantry or emergency food service at all within the past year. “These numbers help communities understand who depends on safety net programs, and how policy changes like the pause in SNAP benefits are likely to drive a huge increase in demand at food banks,” Abraham said. The survey also examined residents' attitudes about public programs, finding that **most say that there is not enough assistance for low income people**, and that most residents are concerned that current national policy changes will lead to more people going hungry or unable to access health care or housing.

- **Immigration Concerns:** The survey included questions about the personal and community effects of immigration enforcement. In Connecticut, 31 percent of all adults worry “somewhat” or “a lot” that they or someone they know could be detained, deported, or have their legal immigration status revoked. Many residents, particularly Latino adults, reported heightened stress, lost sleep, and delayed medical care related to these concerns. “Even before new policies take effect that will dramatically increase the federal budget for immigration enforcement and deportations, many residents are already feeling an impact on their health and well-being,” Abraham noted.
- **Eviction and Criminal Justice:** A new survey item showed clear disparities in evictions by incarceration experience, suggesting a need for policy interventions that reduce the barriers to stable housing for people with past justice involvement.
- **Mental Health:** About 13 percent of all adults, including 22 percent of young adults, reported needing mental health treatment within the past year but being unable to get it, often due to cost or lack of available services.
- **Social Support:** Abraham noted that this single measure of how much support people feel from family and friends predicts happiness and well-being more than any other item in the survey. “The increase in loneliness is something we should take seriously, and we should consider what we can collectively do to support each other in our state,” he said.

Data Access and Next Steps

The **2025 DCWS Connecticut Crosstabs** were distributed to attendees and are publicly available at ctdatahaven.org/wellbeingsurvey. Survey data are also accessible in DataHaven’s town reports and its Connecticut Town Data Viewer, which combines results since 2015 to provide neighborhood-level insights for each of the 169 towns in the state. DataHaven encourages partners and advocates to reach out for analyses or presentations that can bring the findings to life at the local level.

Media Contact

Mark Abraham, MPH, Executive Director, DataHaven, Email: [info \[at\] ctdatahaven.org](mailto:info@ctdatahaven.org), Phone: (203) 500-7059.