



UNITED
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LEHIGH VALLEY QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY

June 2025



A Focus on Social Connectedness and Age-Friendliness

A telephone-based survey of Lehigh and Northampton Counties conducted in May 2025 by the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion (MCIPO) in partnership with United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley (UWGLV) and WFMZ Channel 69.

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Valley Quality of Life Survey 2025: A Focus on Social Connectedness and Age-Friendliness

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Project Overview

The Lehigh Valley Quality of Life Study was conducted in May 2025 by the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion (MCIPO) in partnership with United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley (UWGLV) and WFMZ Channel 69. The telephone-based survey was administered to a random sample of 544 residents living in Lehigh and Northampton counties and was weighted according to known Census population demographic parameters to make the sample more representative.¹ A diverse sample of residents shared their perceptions about quality of life in the region, including views about change, key economic and social features of their communities and their own personal well-being.

Among the goals of the 2025 Quality of Life Survey was special interest in understanding more about social connectedness in the Lehigh Valley. In 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General identified loneliness as an urgent public health concern, linked to both individual and societal health. For example, loneliness is linked to greater risk for dementia, disease, depression and anxiety. It may also be an indirect measure and potential consequence of social connections in schools, workplaces and civic organizations in our communities.² Identifying the degree to which Lehigh Valley residents experience loneliness, or conversely convey strong social connections, is a step in meeting the Surgeon General's challenge to strengthen individual and community health through meaningful relationships that make us healthier and happier. It is also a step in advancing the work of United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley (UWGLV), which for more than a decade, has supported research to better understand the needs of seniors in our region and to inform actions that support age-friendly communities.

This report summarizes the findings of the Quality-of-Life Survey with a special focus on how seniors perceive quality of life in the region and key aspects of their own lives. The attitudes and experiences of seniors are a critical dimension of quality of life for all residents. The way our community is built determines how easily seniors can access services, feel safe, stay healthy and stay connected. According to the AARP, healthy aging and age-friendly communities are supported by eight "domains of livability": outdoor space, transportation, housing, social participation, social inclusion, civic participation, communication and information and community and health services. These domains also inform the Pennsylvania Department of Aging's strategic planning and development of a ten-year Master Plan for Older Adults. The survey findings reported here are helpful in thinking about translating these national and statewide initiatives to our own community and in identifying the key challenges, opportunities and priorities for seniors in the Lehigh Valley.

¹ The respondent sample was generated using voter registration files. With 544 respondents, the margin of error for findings reported here is +/- 4%. Due to sample size, the margin of error for subgroups within the sample is higher. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding. Unless otherwise noted, all data are weighted by sex, race, age, and education according to the 2020 U.S. Census profile for Lehigh and Northampton counties.

More information about the sample can be found in Appendix II, which includes frequencies for every question asked on the survey, including demographic questions.

² *Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation*, The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection, 2023.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), in 2023, approximately 19% of the 691,335 people living in the Lehigh Valley were seniors, ages 65 and older. This equals about 65,126 seniors in Lehigh County and 62,869 seniors in Northampton County.³ The population of seniors in the region is diverse. Previous research shows seniors' experiences vary across the Lehigh Valley in several key ways:

- **County differences.** Conditions can look very different in Lehigh versus Northampton.
- **Socioeconomic factors.** Income, education and employment all affect access to resources.
- **Geography.** Life in rural areas can differ markedly from life in urban centers.
- **Cultural and family context.** Traditions, family structures and support networks shape daily life.
- **Individual circumstances.** Personal health status and other unique factors influence each senior's experience.⁴

These earlier research studies provide an important backdrop to the current survey, reminding us that even in contexts in which large majorities provide positive evaluations of life in the Valley, there are key subgroups of our population who have quite different experiences, in some cases due to marginalization and significant unmet need.

In contrast to previous UWGLV studies focusing on seniors only, the 2025 Quality of Life Survey is focused on how age is related to community satisfaction and experiences of social connection among people of all ages in the Lehigh Valley. This represents a shift in focus away from individual-level characteristics of seniors toward community-level variables related to age-friendliness. The extent to which the Lehigh Valley is age-friendly can be expected to shape the evaluations of all residents in the region across different stages of life. Age-friendly communities are inclusive and supportive and foster the health and well-being of individuals of all ages. The 2025 Quality of Life Survey offers a fresh look at the strengths and challenges of our region, providing a broader understanding about the ways residents of different ages experience life in the region.

Key Findings

- There is much to be proud about in the Lehigh Valley. Significant majorities of survey respondents across all age groups rate the quality of life in our region as either “excellent” or “good.”⁵
- Seniors, ages 65 and older, report very positive perceptions, both when it comes to evaluating key features of the region—such as parks/outdoor spaces, the economy, and social connections in neighborhoods—and when it comes to reflecting on their own individual well-being through measures of social isolation and loneliness. Positive evaluations are even stronger among older residents, ages 75 and older. For example, 75% of respondents ages 75 and older rate the economy in the Lehigh Valley as excellent; 97% of them say they are satisfied with their relationships with neighbors; 74% say they never, or hardly ever, feel lonely or isolated from others. The perceptions of older adults in our region are in many ways an optimistic correction to societal expectations about aging.

³ A snapshot of key demographic information about the senior population in each county is summarized in Appendix IV. Although the population of seniors in the Lehigh Valley as a region is growing, there are notable differences by county: in Lehigh, seniors make up about 17% of the total population; this figure is 20% in Northampton. U.S. Census Bureau, 2023: ACS 5-Year Estimates Comparison Profiles, CP05.

⁴ The most recent of these studies is, *Lehigh Valley Seniors: Healthy Aging 2021 Update*.

⁵ Appendix I puts these findings in historical context.

- Although seniors are optimistic about quality of life in the region, they are less positive about the direction of change in the Lehigh Valley. This is especially the case among seniors who have lived in the region their entire lives, close to one-half of whom believe that life in the region is “getting worse.” By comparison, only 8% of seniors who moved to the region in the past ten years say life is “getting worse.” Put differently, relative newcomers are more positive about their future in the Lehigh Valley—a good sign that the region is a welcoming place filled with potential opportunity—while life-long residents are more positive about their past and somewhat less positive about the future—a reflection, perhaps, of the strength of attachment to community and the mixed-bag consequences of rapid change and growth in the region.
- When seniors are asked to explain why they perceive life in the region to be getting better, they mention features such as location; nature and outdoor spaces; arts, and community. When asked why they perceive life in the region to be getting worse, they mention issues such as housing, transportation, overdevelopment, traffic and crime. Survey respondents across all age categories note similar levels of concern with key issues, with majorities saying they are somewhat or very concerned by the loss of open spaces, the affordability of housing and the affordability of health care.
- In many categories of quality of life studied in the survey, older adults report more positive perceptions than younger and middle-age groups, confirming previous research which finds mental health and well-being tend to decline in middle-age. The perceptions, challenges and opportunities of middle adulthood in the Lehigh Valley remain relatively unexplored; therefore, these findings point to questions ripe for future research.
- Survey findings suggest that the Lehigh Valley has a high degree of social connectedness experienced by individuals of all ages, and that these connections are important to individuals’ emotional wellbeing. Respondents communicate strong feelings of satisfaction with their relationships with neighbors, recreation and entertainment options, neighborhood safety, intergenerational interactions and travel in and around the Lehigh Valley.
- Of special interest, the youngest adults in the survey, ages 18 to 24, communicate the most negative perceptions of social connections and, perhaps as a partial consequence, they also communicate more negative assessments about their own experiences of social isolation and loneliness. These findings confirm developing national studies which suggest young people report troubling high rates of loneliness likely driven by a variety of factors and, in the absence of intervention, with potential long-term negative consequences for healthy aging.
- Taken as a whole, the 2025 Quality of Life survey findings suggest that age-friendliness in the Lehigh Valley is a multi-faceted process through which individuals interact with the environment. Our experiences of aging reflect the intersection of key features of the region— the economy, housing, transportation, crime, loss of open space—with social networks in our neighborhoods, and with individual level attitudes, experiences and personal sense of well-being.

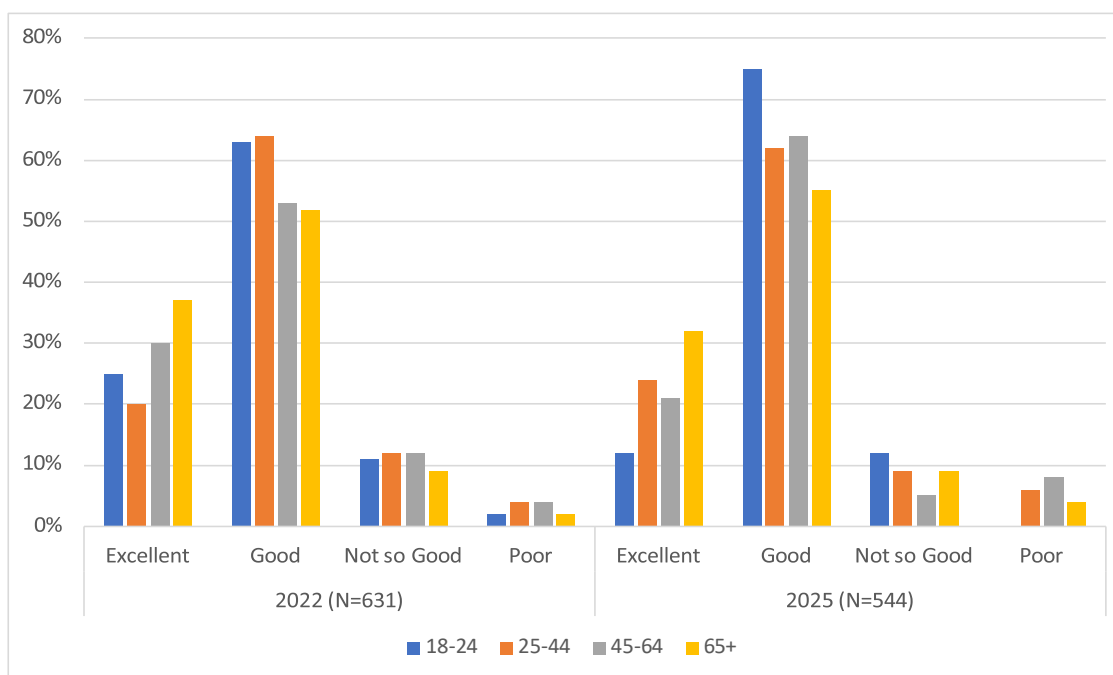
Analysis and Discussion

Overall Satisfaction with Quality of Life in the Lehigh Valley

Lehigh Valley surveys consistently show that majorities of residents rate the Valley as either an excellent or good place to live. This is the case across all age categories, and it has remained generally consistent overtime (Figure 1). Evaluations of the region do vary, however, in important ways by education, income and race/ethnicity (Appendix III).

Of special interest, age generally has a U-shaped relationship with quality-of-life ratings, such that both younger and older respondents report the most positive evaluations. Approximately 94% of respondents ages 75 and older rate the Valley as an “excellent” or “good” place to live (Figure 2). In comparison, although respondents ages 55 to 64 are still overwhelmingly positive—with 80% saying the region is an “excellent” or “good” place to live—this age group is more negative than the others, perhaps reflecting what is sometimes called a “mid-life dip” or “mid-life curve” in overall happiness and satisfaction.⁶

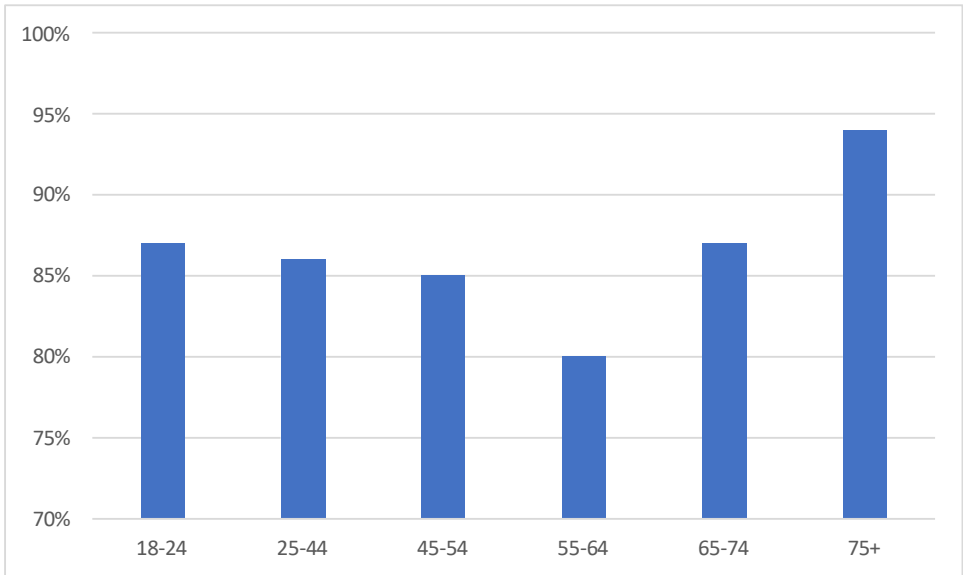
Figure 1. Overall, how would you rate the Lehigh Valley as a place to live? 2022 and 2025 by Age



Note: 2022 findings are from the MCIPO Quality of Life Survey from 2022. See MCIPO for more information.

⁶ For a discussion of the U-shape in happiness across the lifespan, see David Blanchflower and Carol Graham, “The Mid-Life Dip in Well-Being: A Critique,” *Social Indicators Research* 161, no. 1 (2022): 287-344.

Figure 2. Respondents Rating the Valley as an “Excellent” or “Good” Place to Live by Age, 2025



Although the vast majority of residents in the Lehigh Valley share positive views on quality of life, things get more complicated when respondents are asked if life in the region is moving a positive or negative direction. Thirty-eight percent of all survey respondents say that life in the region is “getting better,” compared to 32% who say that it is “getting worse” and 21% who say it is “staying the same” (Figure 3). Age matters to these evaluations in significant ways as shown in Figure 4. Among the younger age groups, ranging from 18 to 54, more than 40% of respondents say that life is getting better; this figure drops to between 26% and 29% among older age categories. In fact, 41% of respondents ages 65 to 74 say life in the region is getting worse.

Figure 3. In general, would you say that life in the Lehigh Valley is getting better or getting worse?

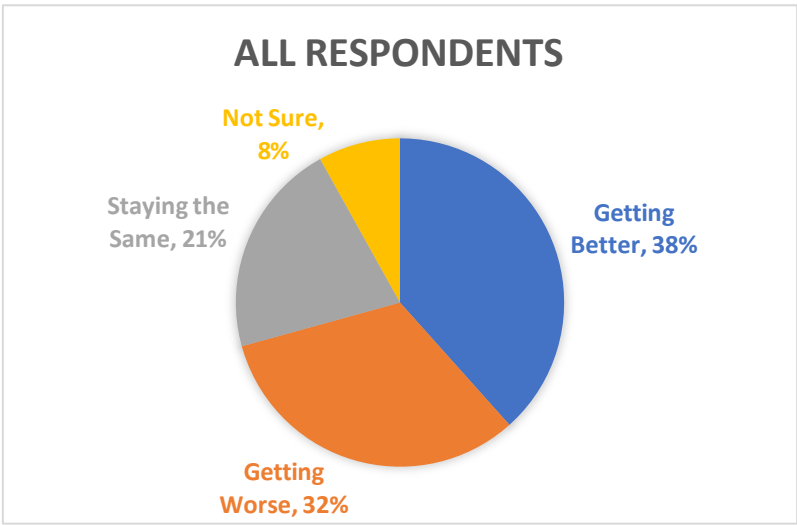
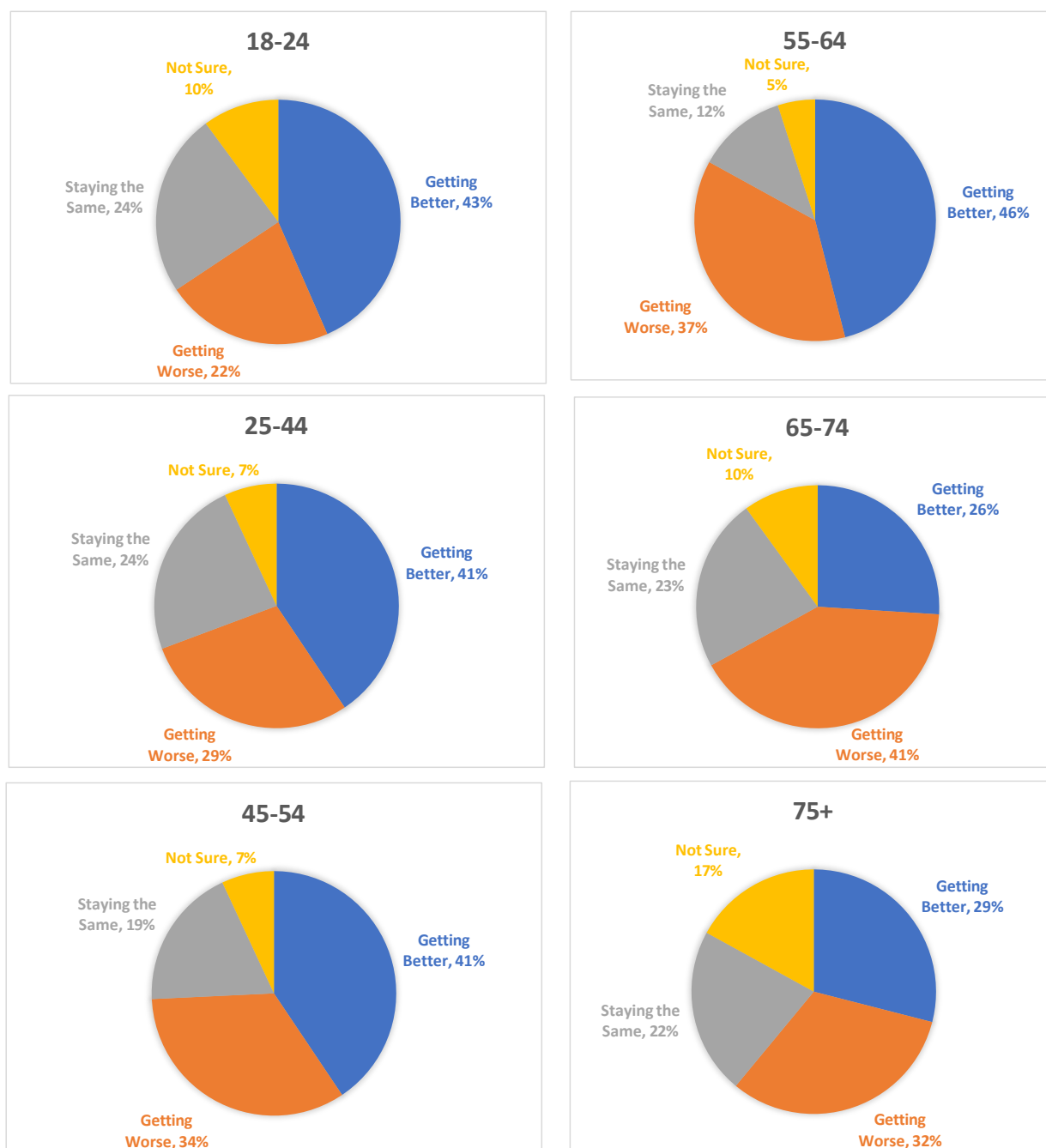


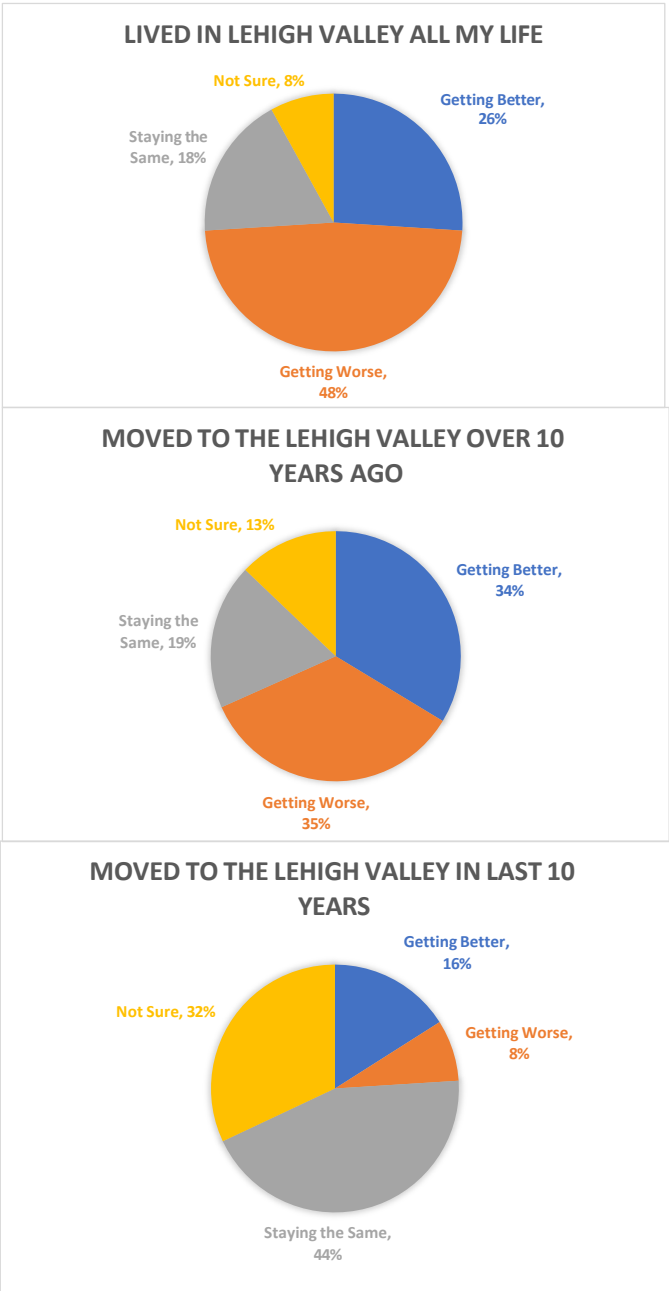
Figure 4. Respondents' Views on Life in Valley Getting Better or Getting Worse, by Age



Seniors' perceptions of positive or negative change are clearly linked to the length of time they have lived in the region. As seen in Figure 5, close to one-half of seniors who have lived in the Lehigh Valley their entire lives say that things are getting worse. Among seniors who moved to the Valley in the past 10 years, however, only 8% say things are getting worse. First-hand experiences are clearly driving evaluations of the direction of change. These findings invite additional consideration about the differences between forward-looking and backward-looking quality of life perspectives.⁷

⁷ The Pew Research Center, for example, finds that older adults are significantly less optimistic about the future than in evaluations of the past, even though significant majorities remain positive when it comes to evaluating their lives today. See: "Aging and Quality of Life," Chapter 6 in "View on End-of-Life Medical Treatments," November 21, 2013, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2013/11/21/chapter-6-aging-and-quality-of-life/>.

Figure 5. Respondents 65 and Older on Life in Valley Getting Better or Getting Worse, by Length of Residency



The survey invited respondents to explain, in their own words, why they believe life in the Lehigh Valley is getting better or getting worse. Figure 6 illustrates the most common responses to this question among seniors, ages 65 and older, providing a visual illustration of the issues most on seniors' minds. What some respondents see as a reason things are getting better—increased population, for example—another respondent may see as a reason things are getting worse. What is most useful about Figure 6 is that it highlights the types of change Lehigh Valley seniors are experiencing. Across the survey as a whole (as seen in Appendix II), housing, a variety of social opportunities (arts, restaurants, shopping, etc.) and job opportunities were most frequently mentioned as the reasons that life is “getting better.” Population (size and change), traffic, crime and economic issues were the most frequently mentioned reasons by those who believe life in the Lehigh Valley is “getting worse.”

Figure 6. Respondents 65 and Older, Key Reasons Life in Valley is Getting Better or Getting Worse



Community Aspects Supporting Quality of Life

The survey sought to understand how respondents evaluate key features of the Lehigh Valley. In the context of age-friendly communities these variables help draw attention to the ways that aging is process in which individuals interact with the social, cultural and economic environment in dynamic ways. These variables also prompt consideration about the ways that attitudes toward aging and generational attitudinal differences influence perceptions of community.

As shown in Table 1, Lehigh Valley seniors' evaluations of key aspects of the region—the economy, housing, race relations, transportation, public schools, parks and outdoor spaces and retail stores— follow the same pattern as respondents from all age groups. In general, majorities of Lehigh Valley residents rate each of these aspects as either “excellent” or “good,” although in the case of housing, transportation and public schools the majorities are small or essentially split.

There are a few differences across age categories that are worth noting in Table 1. Most respondents who say that the economy and housing in the Lehigh Valley are excellent or good is found among respondents ages 75 and older. These differences are not necessarily statistically significant, but they may be substantively significant—perhaps reflecting older residents’ relative economic stability and/or housing compared to younger age groups. For example, younger adults, who are far less positive about the economy and housing, may be seeking to buy a home, or to find employment; middle-age adults may be seeking to move within the region (as shown in Appendix III, no respondents ages 55 to 64 rated housing in the Valley as “excellent,” with a majority settling instead on “good” in their evaluation). A smaller percentage of seniors ages 65 to 74 evaluate the economy and housing in positive terms, perhaps reflecting economic uncertainty and concern linked to retirement. Older residents are less positive when it comes to evaluating retail stores and, among those 75 and older, they are also less positive about race relations.⁸

It is also interesting to consider the proportions of seniors who said they are “unsure” when it comes to evaluating race relations, transportation, public schools and parks and outdoor spaces. In the case of public schools, it is perhaps not surprising that more older adults are unsure, given the ways that one’s interactions with schools is most often a function of sharing families with and/or parenting young children, which may become less likely with age. In other areas, however, that older adults are more likely to say “unsure” could signal potential obstacles to the region’s age-friendliness. For example, are older respondents “unsure” about parks and outdoor spaces because they spend less time in these spaces and is this a reflection of access? Or, is access to parks and outdoor spaces less important to quality-of-life measures among seniors than among younger age groups? Are older adults less sure and more negative about race relations because they are more likely to live in segregated places within the Valley?⁹

These findings point to possible areas worthy of future research. The key takeaway from Table 1 is that survey respondents are relatively positive, although perhaps not overwhelmingly so, when it comes to evaluating aspects of the region. Age shapes respondents’ evaluations in interesting ways, with middle-aged adults in general less positive than younger or older groups. It is also important to keep in mind, as seen in Appendix III, that perceptions of these community features vary in significant ways by income, race/ethnicity, and education.

Individuals help create their own well-being by using the resources that are available to them in their communities and neighborhoods. Features of neighborhoods, therefore, can have both positive or negative consequences for how individuals perceive quality of life at both the community and personal level. The features of neighborhoods that matter the most to individual quality of life may vary with age. Table 2 summarizes respondents’ level of concern for key features of neighborhoods across different age categories. As shown, residents of all ages generally share the same concerns, with majorities saying they are “very concerned” or “somewhat concerned” with the loss of open spaces, the affordability of housing, and the affordability of health care at the top of the list. Looking closer at these key aspects of communities by age, higher percentages of middle-age adults communicate concern about loss of open space, becoming a victim of a crime, housing costs and health care costs when compared to the youngest and oldest age categories.

⁸ To provide a bit of context here, a 2019 report from the Pew Research Center suggests that majorities of Americans say race relations in the U.S. are “bad” and “getting worse.” See Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Anna Brown, and Kiana Cox, “Race in America: How Americans See the State of Race Relations” April 9, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/04/09/how-americans-see-the-state-of-race-relations/>.

⁹ The senior population in the Lehigh Valley, as seen in the Census ACS estimates in Appendix III, is predominantly white, although it is slowly diversifying overtime. Due to small sample size, it is not possible to draw meaningful conclusions about how white and non-white seniors may have answered the question about race relations differently. Across all survey respondents, however, white respondents were more positive about race relations compared to Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino.

Table 1. Ratings of Key Community Aspects, by Age

		18-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Economy	Excellent or Good	63%	68%	71%	71%	64%	75%
	Not so Good or Poor	37%	29%	27%	29%	36%	23%
	Unsure	0%	2%	2%	0%	0%	3%
Housing	Excellent or Good	50%	48%	47%	51%	48%	57%
	Not so Good or Poor	49%	49%	47%	39%	46%	38%
	Unsure	2%	3%	6%	10%	5%	6%
Race Relations	Excellent or Good	72%	76%	66%	65%	73%	56%
	Not so Good or Poor	23%	17%	29%	29%	17%	28%
	Unsure	5%	7%	2%	5%	10%	17%
Transportation	Excellent or Good	58%	52%	36%	56%	53%	51%
	Not so Good or Poor	37%	41%	49%	33%	38%	32%
	Unsure	5%	7%	15%	11%	9%	17%
Public Schools	Excellent or Good	53%	61%	55%	59%	62%	68%
	Not so Good or Poor	33%	34%	36%	33%	17%	14%
	Unsure	14%	6%	9%	8%	22%	18%
Parks and Outdoor Spaces	Excellent or Good	80%	88%	83%	88%	87%	82%
	Not so Good or Poor	20%	10%	16%	11%	12%	7%
	Unsure	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%	11%
Retail Stores	Excellent or Good	89%	84%	79%	75%	79%	70%
	Not so Good or Poor	11%	14%	13%	23%	21%	28%
	Unsure	0%	2%	8%	3%	0%	3%

Majority response in each category is in bold. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 2. Respondents' Concerns with Neighborhood Features and Issues, by Age

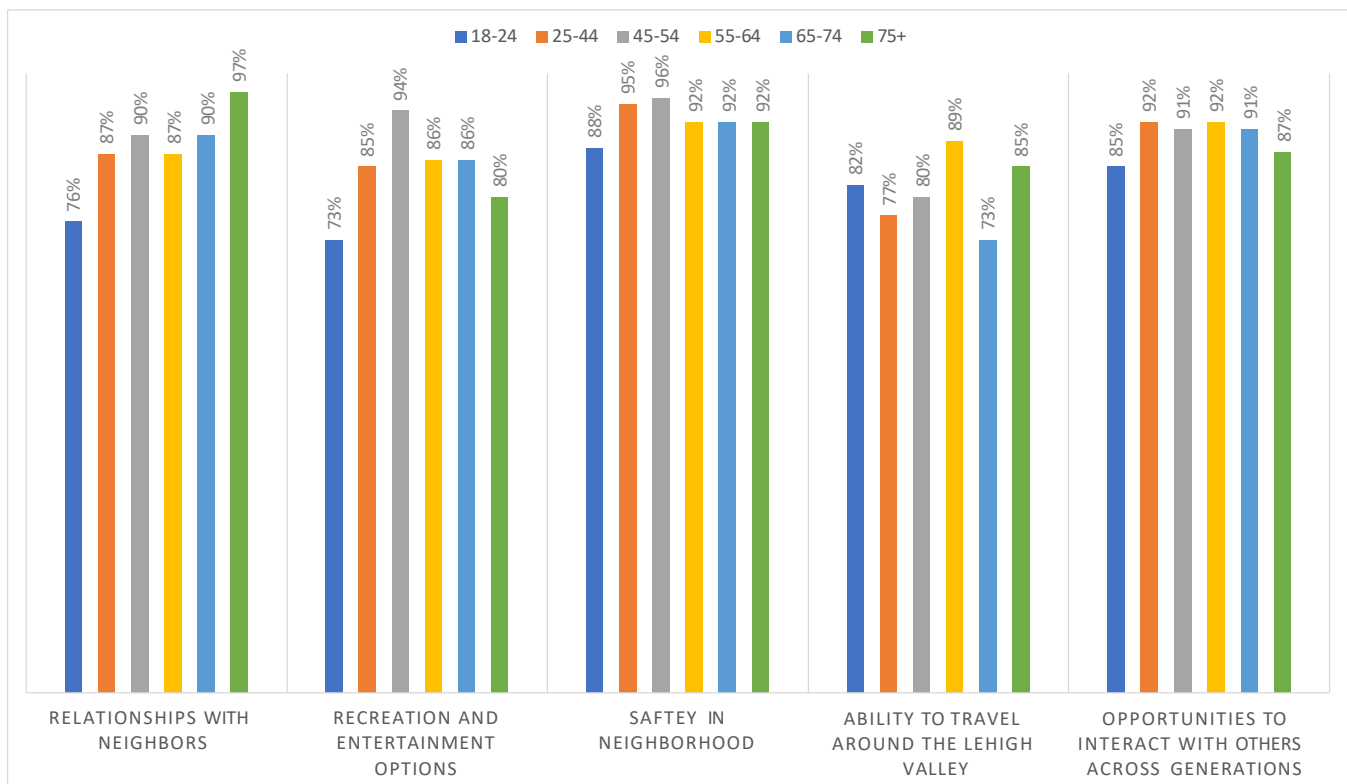
		18-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 +
Loss of Open Spaces (Forests/Farms)	Very Concerned	32%	44%	49%	41%	49%	43%
	Somewhat concerned	35%	22%	36%	44%	35%	28%
	Not too concerned	27%	23%	9%	11%	10%	17%
	Not at all concerned	6%	11%	5%	5%	5%	8%
	Not Sure	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	4%
Becoming a Victim of a Crime	Very Concerned	29%	9%	12%	15%	15%	29%
	Somewhat concerned	18%	37%	35%	36%	30%	26%
	Not too concerned	38%	34%	24%	32%	35%	29%
	Not at all concerned	15%	19%	29%	17%	18%	14%
	Not Sure	0%	2%	0%	1%	3%	1%
Safety of Drinking Water	Very Concerned	9%	23%	31%	19%	19%	24%
	Somewhat concerned	21%	28%	26%	31%	33%	15%
	Not too concerned	32%	16%	21%	23%	18%	28%
	Not at all concerned	38%	28%	22%	27%	30%	32%
	Not Sure	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Air Quality	Very Concerned	20%	22%	25%	23%	22%	22%
	Somewhat concerned	29%	24%	22%	32%	33%	29%
	Not too concerned	32%	16%	20%	23%	27%	23%
	Not at all concerned	26%	28%	23%	20%	18%	23%
	Not Sure	0%	2%	0%	3%	0%	3%
Affordability of Housing	Very Concerned	48%	59%	58%	40%	55%	44%
	Somewhat concerned	37%	23%	29%	39%	27%	26%
	Not too concerned	8%	8%	8%	11%	8%	10%
	Not at all concerned	6%	8%	5%	4%	9%	13%
	Not Sure	2%	3%	0%	7%	1%	7%
Affordability of Healthcare	Very Concerned	48%	48%	59%	45%	52%	42%
	Somewhat concerned	27%	24%	29%	40%	23%	27%
	Not too concerned	12%	15%	6%	4%	12%	13%
	Not at all concerned	12%	10%	5%	5%	12%	18%
	Not Sure	2%	4%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Ability to Choose Where you Live as You Age	Very Concerned	26%	29%	35%	22%	29%	19%
	Somewhat concerned	8%	20%	30%	35%	29%	25%
	Not too concerned	33%	20%	12%	20%	14%	17%
	Not at all concerned	22%	26%	19%	22%	29%	35%
	Not Sure	0%	6%	5%	1%	0%	4%

Majority response in each category is in bold. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Social Connections, Relationships and Emotional Well-Being

A key theme of the 2025 Quality of Life Survey is social connectedness. The survey included questions designed to measure residents' levels of satisfaction with a variety of social interactions. As shown in Figure 7, respondents across all age categories report high levels of satisfaction across each variable. Of particular interest, in each category, the oldest respondents (ages 75+) have more positive evaluations than the youngest respondents (ages 18-24). It is the youngest respondents, ages 18 to 24, who are least positive about community social connections; smaller proportions of young adults are satisfied with their relationships with neighbors, recreation and entertainment options, neighborhood safety and opportunities to interact with others across generations. Respondents are slightly less positive in their evaluation of their ability to travel around the Valley compared to other measures, but even here close to three-quarters say they are "very" or "somewhat satisfied."

Figure 7. Respondents Who are "Very Satisfied" or "Somewhat Satisfied" with Community Social Connections, by Age



Most respondents share positive perceptions about community social connections— these are important variables that may be linked to individuals' experiences of social isolation and loneliness. Findings from earlier UWGLV research, in 2019 and again in 2021, suggest that seniors who live alone, who are low-income and who have disabilities (such as those related to activities of daily living and instrumental activities of daily living) are more likely to report feelings of loneliness and social isolation. The questions on the 2025 Quality of Life Survey provide an opportunity to think about the ways that features of the community interact with age and other individual level characteristics to shape experiences of social isolation and loneliness.

The survey asked respondents several questions about social isolation and emotional well-being (Figures 8-9). Similar to findings above which suggest that younger respondents are less positive about social connections than older respondents, feelings of loneliness and isolation are more prevalent among

younger respondents and generally improve with age. The same is true of respondents' descriptions of their mental health and emotional well-being, with higher proportions of younger adults describing their mental health as fair or poor compared to older age groups. Between 6% and 8% of respondents between the ages of 25 and 64 say that they feel lonely or isolated "all of the time." The pattern is generally the same in Figure 9, with age contributing to more positive assessments of mental health and emotional wellbeing. Whereas 23% of respondents ages 18-24 describe their mental health and emotional well-being as "fair" or "poor" only 9% of those ages 65 to 74 and 4% of those 75 and older say the same.

Figure 8. How often, if ever, do you feel lonely or isolated from those around you? By Age

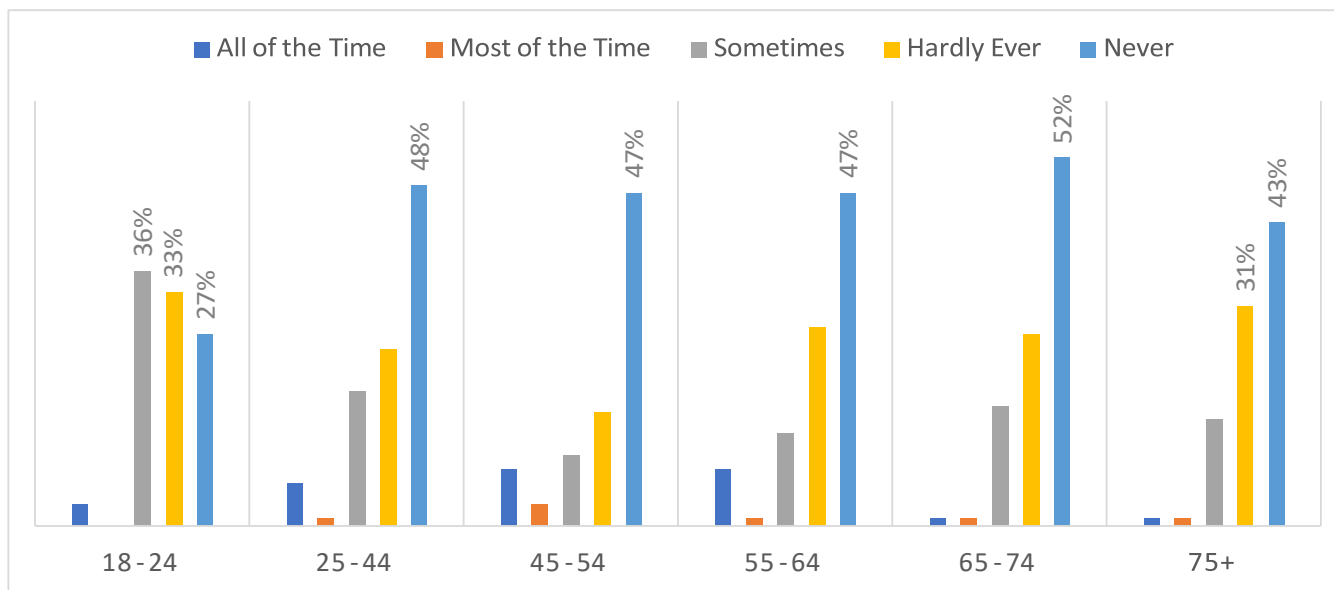
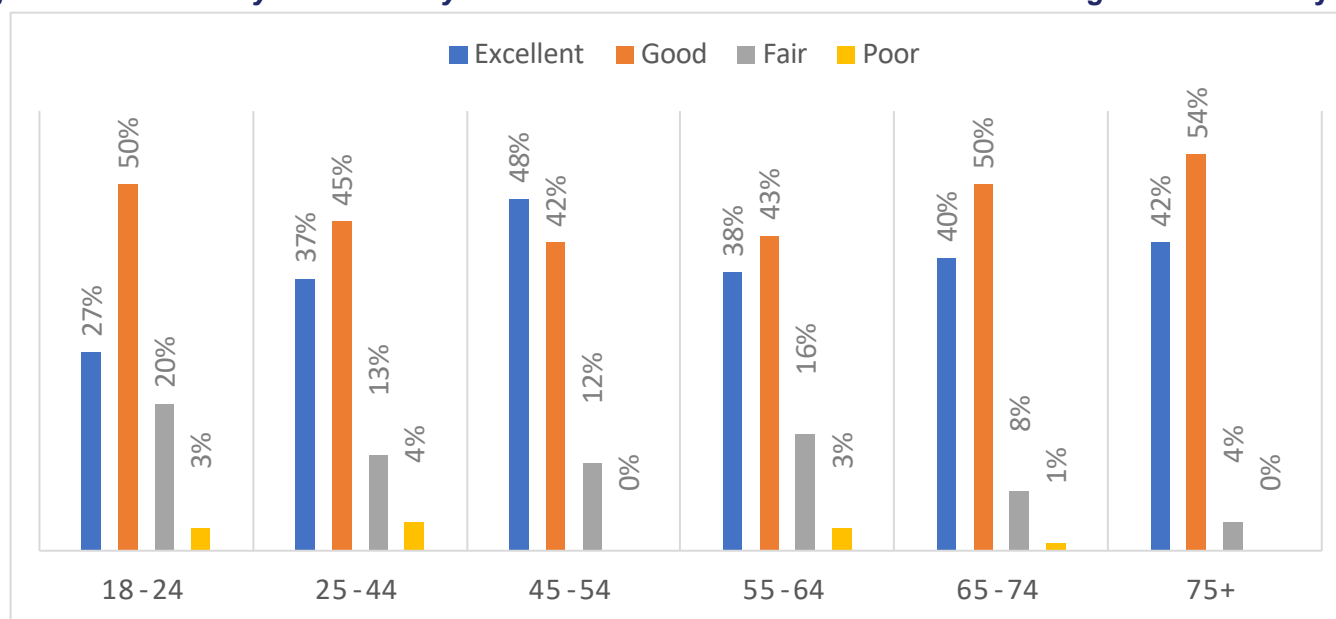


Figure 9. How would you describe your own mental health or emotional well-being at this time? By Age



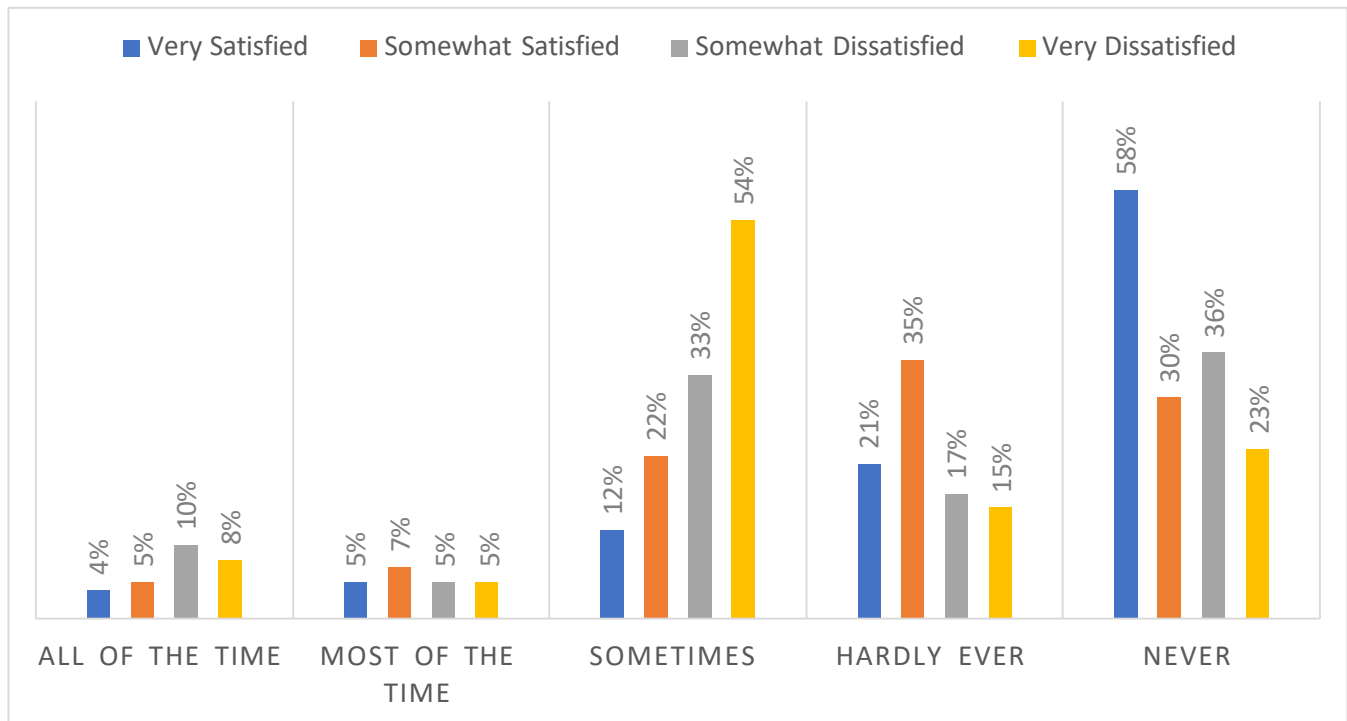
Recognizing that older adults are at risk of social isolation and loneliness, especially due to potential erosion of social networks and the increased prevalence of chronic health conditions with age, these findings are reassuring: most seniors in the Lehigh Valley say that they are rarely lonely and provide positive evaluations of social connections. These findings also confirm previous research which shows that individual optimism and positive evaluations of life often increase with age, despite the challenges of aging (such as, for example, death of a spouse or loss of independence).¹⁰

At the same time, these findings point to many factors that may contribute to social isolation and loneliness among younger age groups. In addition to the environmental variables included in the Quality of Life Survey, worthy topics of future research include additional determinants of mental health and well-being, such as work stress, job instability, parenting and child care, elder care, social supports, economic security, access to services and social justice.

Age-friendly communities are attentive to the features of our environment which benefit all ages. For example, both younger and older adults in our region certainly benefit from relationships with neighbors and are more likely to experience isolation and loneliness in the absence of those relationships. This is clearly shown in Figure 10, which shows that for all survey respondents, those who are most satisfied with their relationships with neighbors are also more likely to say that they “never” or “hardly ever” feel lonely or isolated.

¹⁰ For example, see “Perceptions of Aging During Each Decade of Life After 30,” NORC at the University of Chicago, Issue Brief, March 2017, [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfindmkaj/https://www.norc.org/content/dam/norc-org/pdfs/Brief_WestHealth_A_2017-03_DTPv2.pdf](https://www.norc.uchicago.edu/content/dam/norc-org/pdfs/Brief_WestHealth_A_2017-03_DTPv2.pdf).

Figure 10. How often, if ever, do you feel lonely or isolated from those around you? All Respondents, by Level of Satisfaction with Relationships with Neighbors



Appendix I: Selected Time-Series, MCIPO Quality of Life Surveys, 2011-2015

Ratings of Quality of Life in the Lehigh Valley: 2011-2025

	2025	2022	2018	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Excellent	25%	28%	32%	26%	31%	29%	29%	30%
Good	61%	58%	61%	66%	62%	63%	58%	61%
Not So Good	8%	11%	6%	7%	2%	5%	9%	9%
Poor	4%	4%	1%	1%	5%	3%	2%	<1%
Not Sure	1%	<1%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%

Views on the Direction of Life in the Lehigh Valley: 2011-2025

	2025	2022	2018	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Getting Better	38%	30%	59%	51%	47%	34%	30%	26%
Getting Worse	32%	40%	18%	26%	28%	37%	45%	51%
Staying the Same	21%	30%	13%	17%	21%	22%	22%	15%
Not Sure	9%	1%	11%	6%	4%	8%	4%	8%

Appendix II. 2025 Quality of Life Survey Frequency Tables

Q1: *What County do you currently reside in?*

Lehigh County	51%
Northampton County	49%

Q2: *Overall, how would you rate Lehigh Valley as a place to live? Would you say it's an excellent, good, not so good, or poor place to live?*

Excellent	25%
Good	61%
Not so good	8%
Poor	4%
Not sure (vol)	1%

Q3: *In general, would you say that life in the Lehigh Valley is getting better or getting worse?*

Getting better	38%
Getting worse	32%
Staying the same (vol)	21%
Not sure (vol)	9%

Q4: *What is the primary reason you think life in the Lehigh Valley is getting better/getting worse. (OPEN ENDED QUESTION ASKED TO THOSE WHO SELECTED EITHER BETTER/WORSE)*

Of those who responded “getting better” to Q3, X% indicated a primary reason of:

1. New businesses/Housing	17%
2. Amount/Variety of things to do (arts, restaurants, shopping, etc.)	14%
3. Job opportunities	11%
4. Access to healthcare/schools/necessary services	8%
5. Affordability/Economy	6%
6. Sense of community	6%
7. Population size/Diversity	5%
8. Amount of crime	4%
9. Cleanliness/Air quality	3%
10. Politics	3%
11. Infrastructure/Public transportation	3%
12. Location	1%
13. Nature/Outdoor spaces	1%
14. Other	11%
15. Don't know/No response	6%

Of those who responded “getting worse” to Q3, X% indicated a primary reason of:

1. Population size/Diversity	17%
2. Traffic/Dangerous driving	14%
3. Amount of crime	13%
4. Affordability/Economy	10%
5. Overdevelopment/Warehouses	9%
6. Job opportunities	8%
7. Politics	6%
8. Infrastructure/Public transportation	3%
9. Access to healthcare/schools/necessary services	2%
10. Cleanliness/Air quality	2%
11. Sense of community	1%
12. Location	1%
13. Nature/Outdoor spaces	1%
14. Other	9%
15. Don't know/No response	2%

Q5: *In general, would you say that the quality of life in the Lehigh Valley is much better, somewhat better, somewhat worse, or much worse than regions of similar size in United States?*

Much better	21%
Somewhat better	37%
Somewhat worse	6%
Much worse	4%
About the same (vol)	13%
Not sure (vol)	19%

Next, I would like you to rate the quality of various categories of life in the Lehigh Valley. For each category that I mention, please rate it as either excellent, good, not so good, or poor as it pertains to life in the Lehigh Valley. (QUESTIONS 6 to 12 ROTATED)

	Excellent	Good	Not so good	Poor	Not sure (vol)
Q6: The economy	4%	65%	23%	7%	2%
Q7: Housing	4%	46%	28%	17%	5%
Q8: Race relations	7%	63%	20%	3%	8%
Q9: Transportation	5%	46%	29%	10%	10%
Q10: Public schools	11%	49%	18%	11%	12%
Q11: Parks and outdoor spaces	29%	57%	9%	3%	3%
Q12: Retail stores	16%	63%	13%	5%	3%

Now I would like to ask you some questions regarding your satisfaction with various aspects of life in the Lehigh Valley. For each aspect that I mention please indicate if you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with that aspect of life in the Lehigh Valley? (QUESTIONS 13 to 18 ROTATED)

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not sure (vol)
Q13: Your current job	47%	24%	3%	4%	22%
Q14: Your relationship with neighbors	52%	36%	8%	2%	2%
Q15: Your recreation and entertainment options	44%	40%	9%	3%	4%
Q16: Safety in your neighborhood	64%	27%	4%	5%	1%
Q17: Your ability to travel around the Lehigh Valley	45%	36%	11%	7%	2%
Q18: Your opportunities to interact with others across generations	49%	41%	4%	2%	4%

Next, I have a few questions regarding your level of concern for a variety of issues. For each issue that I mention please tell me if you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned? (QUESTIONS 19 to 25 ROTATED)

	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Not Too Concerned	Not At All Concerned	Not sure (vol)
Q19: The loss of open spaces such as forests and farms in the Lehigh Valley	44%	31%	17%	8%	1%
Q20: Becoming a victim of a crime	16%	32%	32%	19%	1%
Q21: The safety of drinking water in your community	23%	26%	21%	29%	1%
Q22: The air quality in your community	26%	27%	22%	24%	1%

Q23: The affordability of housing in the Lehigh Valley	52%	29%	9%	7%	3%
Q24: The affordability of healthcare	49%	28%	11%	11%	2%
Q25: The ability to choose where you live as you age	29%	24%	19%	25%	3%

Q26: Now I have a few questions regarding mental health matters. First, how often, if ever, do you feel lonely or isolated from those around you?

All of the time	5%
Most of the time	6%
Sometimes	18%
Hardly ever	26%
Never	45%
Not sure (vol)	< 1%

Q27: How would you describe your own mental health or emotional well-being at this time? Would you say it is -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Excellent	38%
Good	47%
Only fair	12%
Poor	2%
Not sure (vol)	1%

Q28: Compared to 12 months ago, would you say your mental health or emotional well-being is much better, somewhat better, somewhat worse, much worse or about the same as a year ago?

Much better	19%
Somewhat better	16%
Somewhat worse	14%
Much worse	3%
About the same as a year ago	48%
Not sure (vol)	1%

Q29: Which of the following best describes your residency in the Lehigh Valley?

I lived all of my life in the Lehigh Valley	40%
I moved to the Lehigh Valley in the last 10 years	18%
I moved to the Lehigh Valley over 10 years ago	42%

Q30. Finally, I have a few questions about yourself. First, what is your current marital status?

Single	29%
Married	50%
Separated	1%
Divorced	6%
Widowed	9%
Partnered	5%

Q31. What is your highest level of education?

Less than High School	4%
High School graduate	33%
Some college or technical school	25%
College graduate (4 yr. only)	22%
Graduate or professional degree	15%

Q32. Which of the following categories best describes your racial identity?

White/Caucasian	65%
African American	5%
Hispanic/Latino	21%
Asian	3%
Native American	< 1%
Mixed Race	3%
Other	2%

Q33. What is your zip code? _____

Q34. Which of the following categories best describes your family income?

Under \$20,000	10%
\$20,000 - \$40,000	15%
\$40,000 - \$60,000	16%
\$60,000 - \$80,000	13%
\$80,000 - \$100,000	10%
Over \$100,000	37%

Q35. How many people, including yourself, are currently living in your household? _____

1	19%
2	37%
3	17%
4	13%
5	7%
6	2%
7	0%
8	< 1%
9	< 1%

Q36: In which of the following age categories does your current age fall?

18 – 24	12%
25 – 44	30%
45 – 54	16%
55 – 64	14%
65 – 74	14%
75 and older	13%

Q37: Finally, to which gender identity do you most identify?

Male	49%
Female	51%
Another category besides male or female	< 1%

Appendix III. 2025 Quality of Life Survey Key Crosstabulations

Q2: Overall, how would you rate Lehigh Valley as a place to live? Would you say it's an excellent, good, not so good, or poor place to live?

	Excellent	Good	Not so good	Poor	Not sure
Lehigh County	24%	58%	10%	7%	1%
Northampton County	27%	64%	7%	2%	< 1%
Female	30%	60%	8%	2%	1%
Male	20%	63%	9%	7%	1%
No College Degree	22%	62%	9%	6%	1%
College Degree	31%	59%	8%	2%	1%
White	31%	55%	9%	4%	1%
Person of Color	14%	72%	9%	5%	0%
Under 60K Income	26%	55%	11%	8%	1%
Over 60K Income	26%	64%	7%	2%	1%
18 – 24	12%	75%	12%	0%	2%
25 – 44	24%	62%	9%	6%	0%
45 – 54	21%	64%	5%	8%	2%
55 – 64	29%	51%	12%	7%	1%
65 – 74	24%	63%	9%	4%	0%
75 or older	42%	52%	6%	0%	0%

Q3: In general, would you say that life in the Lehigh Valley is getting better or getting worse?

	Getting Better	Getting Worse	Staying the same	Not sure
Lehigh County	36%	32%	24%	8%
Northampton County	40%	33%	18%	9%
Female	36%	33%	21%	10%
Male	40%	32%	21%	7%
No College Degree	37%	36%	20%	8%
College Degree	41%	27%	24%	9%
White	34%	38%	20%	9%
Person of Color	46%	22%	23%	9%
Under 60K Income	39%	39%	15%	7%
Over 60K Income	42%	29%	22%	8%
18 – 24	43%	22%	24%	10%
25 – 44	41%	29%	24%	7%
45 – 54	41%	34%	19%	7%
55 – 64	46%	37%	12%	5%
65 – 74	26%	41%	23%	10%
75 or older	29%	32%	22%	17%

Next, I would like you to rate the quality of various categories of life in the Lehigh Valley. For each category that I mention, please rate it as either excellent, good, not so good, or poor as it pertains to life in the Lehigh Valley. First, Q6: **The economy**

	Excellent	Good	Not so good	Poor	Not sure (vol)
Lehigh County	5%	63%	23%	8%	1%
Northampton County	3%	66%	24%	6%	2%
Female	4%	66%	22%	5%	2%
Male	4%	63%	24%	9%	1%
No College Degree	4%	63%	23%	9%	2%
College Degree	3%	67%	24%	4%	1%
White	5%	66%	21%	7%	1%
Person of Color	1%	62%	28%	8%	2%
Under 60K Income	4%	61%	23%	11%	2%
Over 60K Income	4%	68%	23%	5%	1%
18 – 24	5%	59%	29%	8%	0%
25 – 44	7%	62%	23%	6%	2%
45 – 54	1%	70%	17%	9%	2%
55 – 64	0%	71%	25%	4%	0%
65 – 74	4%	60%	24%	12%	0%
75 or older	4%	70%	20%	3%	3%

Q7: Housing

	Excellent	Good	Not so good	Poor	Not sure (vol)
Lehigh County	5%	40%	32%	17%	6%
Northampton County	3%	52%	24%	17%	5%
Female	3%	49%	28%	16%	4%
Male	5%	43%	29%	18%	6%
No College Degree	5%	45%	25%	19%	6%
College Degree	1%	48%	34%	13%	4%
White	5%	44%	28%	17%	5%
Person of Color	2%	49%	29%	16%	5%
Under 60K Income	2%	41%	32%	20%	6%
Over 60K Income	5%	54%	23%	16%	2%
18 – 24	5%	46%	32%	17%	2%
25 – 44	4%	45%	35%	13%	3%
45 – 54	0%	47%	29%	18%	6%
55 – 64	1%	50%	22%	18%	10%
65 – 74	1%	47%	27%	20%	5%
75 or older	11%	46%	17%	21%	6%

Now I would like to ask you some questions regarding your satisfaction with various aspects of life in the Lehigh Valley. For each aspect that I mention please indicate if you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with that aspect of life in the Lehigh Valley? First, Q14: **Your relationship with your neighbors**

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not sure (vol)
Lehigh County	50%	35%	9%	4%	2%
Northampton County	54%	37%	6%	1%	3%
Female	52%	38%	8%	1%	1%
Male	53%	33%	7%	3%	4%
No College Degree	51%	36%	9%	2%	3%
College Degree	55%	35%	6%	2%	2%
White	56%	33%	9%	2%	1%
Person of Color	44%	42%	6%	3%	5%
Under 60K Income	50%	34%	11%	3%	3%
Over 60K Income	53%	37%	5%	3%	3%
18 – 24	41%	35%	18%	2%	5%
25 – 44	45%	41%	7%	6%	1%
45 – 54	52%	37%	2%	1%	7%
55 – 64	55%	33%	9%	1%	3%
65 – 74	62%	28%	10%	0%	0%
75 or older	65%	34%	1%	0%	0%

Q16: Safety in your neighborhood

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not sure (vol)
Lehigh County	59%	31%	4%	7%	<1%
Northampton County	70%	23%	3%	3%	1%
Female	67%	26%	4%	3%	1%
Male	61%	28%	3%	7%	1%
No College Degree	60%	31%	4%	4%	1%
College Degree	71%	20%	2%	6%	1%
White	64%	28%	5%	3%	1%
Person of Color	63%	26%	2%	9%	0%
Under 60K Income	59%	31%	4%	6%	1%
Over 60K Income	65%	26%	4%	4%	1%
18 – 24	59%	29%	2%	11%	0%
25 – 44	62%	27%	7%	5%	0%
45 – 54	64%	33%	4%	0%	0%
55 – 64	65%	27%	1%	5%	1%
65 – 74	72%	21%	4%	3%	1%
75 or older	68%	26%	0%	4%	1%

Q17: Your ability to travel around Lehigh Valley

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not sure (vol)
Lehigh County	41%	39%	11%	7%	3%
Northampton County	49%	33%	10%	8%	0%
Female	45%	36%	11%	7%	2%
Male	44%	35%	10%	8%	2%
No College Degree	41%	39%	11%	7%	3%
College Degree	50%	31%	11%	8%	0%
White	41%	35%	14%	8%	2%
Person of Color	52%	36%	4%	7%	1%
Under 60K Income	40%	41%	10%	5%	3%
Over 60K Income	46%	34%	12%	8%	<1%
18 – 24	43%	39%	13%	5%	0%
25 – 44	42%	35%	13%	7%	2%
45 – 54	51%	29%	7%	11%	2%
55 – 64	52%	37%	8%	3%	0%
65 – 74	42%	31%	14%	12%	1%
75 or older	38%	47%	4%	8%	3%

*Next, I have a few questions regarding your level of concern for a variety of issues. For each issue that I mention please tell me if you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned? First, Q19: **The loss of open spaces such as forests and farms in the Lehigh Valley***

	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Not too Concerned	Not at all Concerned	Not sure (vol)
Lehigh County	44%	29%	18%	8%	1%
Northampton County	43%	34%	16%	7%	<1%
Female	46%	32%	14%	7%	1%
Male	41%	31%	19%	8%	<1%
No College Degree	40%	33%	20%	6%	1%
College Degree	49%	29%	11%	10%	1%
White	48%	32%	13%	6%	<1%
Person of Color	35%	31%	24%	9%	2%
Under 60K Income	47%	31%	14%	7%	1%
Over 60K Income	41%	32%	20%	8%	0%
18 – 24	32%	35%	27%	6%	0%
25 – 44	44%	22%	23%	11%	0%
45 – 54	49%	36%	9%	5%	1%
55 – 64	40%	44%	11%	5%	0%
65 – 74	49%	35%	10%	5%	0%
75 or older	43%	28%	17%	8%	4%

Q21: The safety of drinking water in your community

	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Not too Concerned	Not at all Concerned	Not sure (vol)
Lehigh County	26%	28%	19%	27%	1%
Northampton County	20%	25%	24%	31%	1%
Female	23%	26%	19%	31%	1%
Male	22%	27%	24%	26%	1%
No College Degree	26%	28%	20%	26%	0%
College Degree	17%	24%	23%	34%	3%
White	20%	25%	26%	29%	1%
Person of Color	29%	31%	13%	27%	1%
Under 60K Income	26%	30%	18%	26%	0%
Over 60K Income	18%	24%	25%	32%	1%
18 – 24	9%	21%	32%	38%	0%
25 – 44	27%	28%	16%	28%	1%
45 – 54	31%	26%	21%	22%	0%
55 – 64	19%	31%	23%	27%	1%
65 – 74	19%	33%	18%	30%	0%
75 or older	24%	15%	28%	32%	1%

Q22: The air quality in your community

	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Not too Concerned	Not at all Concerned	Not sure (vol)
Lehigh County	27%	30%	19%	23%	1%
Northampton County	24%	25%	26%	24%	1%
Female	27%	22%	25%	25%	2%
Male	24%	33%	20%	23%	1%
No College Degree	27%	25%	22%	24%	2%
College Degree	24%	31%	22%	23%	1%
White	21%	29%	25%	24%	1%
Person of Color	35%	24%	17%	23%	1%
Under 60K Income	31%	24%	19%	24%	3%
Over 60K Income	21%	30%	25%	24%	<1%
18 – 24	14%	29%	32%	26%	0%
25 – 44	30%	24%	16%	28%	2%
45 – 54	35%	22%	20%	23%	0%
55 – 64	23%	32%	23%	20%	3%
65 – 74	22%	33%	27%	18%	0%
75 or older	22%	29%	23%	23%	3%

Q23: The affordability of housing in the Lehigh Valley

	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Not too Concerned	Not at all Concerned	Not sure (vol)
Lehigh County	55%	27%	7%	7%	4%
Northampton County	50%	31%	10%	8%	2%
Female	52%	28%	8%	8%	4%
Male	53%	29%	9%	7%	2%
No College Degree	52%	28%	9%	7%	4%
College Degree	53%	29%	8%	8%	2%
White	50%	30%	10%	7%	3%
Person of Color	58%	26%	7%	6%	4%
Under 60K Income	58%	24%	10%	6%	2%
Over 60K Income	51%	31%	7%	9%	3%
18 – 24	48%	37%	8%	6%	2%
25 – 44	59%	23%	8%	8%	3%
45 – 54	58%	29%	8%	5%	0%
55 – 64	40%	39%	11%	4%	7%
65 – 74	55%	27%	8%	9%	1%
75 or older	44%	26%	10%	13%	7%

Q27: How would you describe your own mental health or emotional well-being at this time? Would you say it is – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	Not sure (vol)
Lehigh County	41%	44%	12%	3%	0%
Northampton County	35%	49%	13%	2%	1%
Female	30%	56%	12%	1%	1%
Male	47%	37%	12%	4%	0%
No College Degree	38%	47%	12%	3%	<1%
College Degree	39%	46%	14%	1%	1%
White	40%	48%	10%	1%	1%
Person of Color	35%	44%	17%	4%	0%
Under 60K Income	27%	51%	18%	4%	1%
Over 60K Income	42%	46%	9%	2%	<1%
18 – 24	27%	50%	20%	3%	0%
25 – 44	37%	45%	13%	4%	1%
45 – 54	45%	42%	12%	0%	1%
55 – 64	38%	43%	16%	3%	0%
65 – 74	40%	49%	8%	1%	1%
75 or older	42%	54%	4%	0%	0%

Appendix IV. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023, Snapshot of Lehigh Valley Senior Population

	Lehigh Seniors = 65,126	Northampton Seniors = 62,869
Race/Ethnicity*		
White	87%	90.2%
Black or African American	3.1%	2.6%
Asian	2.4%	1.7%
Some other race	4.3%	2.4%
Two or more races	3.4%	3.0%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	9.2%	5.4%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	84.5%	88.9%
Living Alone	43.0%	41.2%
Disability Status for civilian noninstitutionalized population	62,459	60,814
With any disability	29.5%	28.8%
Nativity and Citizenship		
Native	58,505	58,358
Foreign born	6,621	4,511
Naturalized U.S. citizen	79.7%	75.8%
Not a U.S. citizen	20.3%	24.2%
Language at Home		
English only	86.2%	89.8%
Language other than English	13.8%	10.2%
Speak English less than "very well"	8.6%	5.5%
Employment		
In labor force	18.2%	17.8%
Employed	17.5%	17.0%
Unemployed	0.8%	0.8%
Poverty Status Past 12 mos.		
Population for whom poverty status is determined	62,459	60,814
Below 100 percent of the poverty level	8.0%	6.2%
100 to 149 percent of the poverty level	8.3%	6.4%
At or above 150 percent of the poverty level	83.7%	87.4%

*Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander and American Indian and Alaskan Native less than 1%.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "Population 65 Years and Over in United States." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0103, 2023, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S0103?q=United+States&t=Older+Population&g=010XX00US_050XX00US42077,42095. Accessed on May 19, 2025.