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COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

# 2024 Reno County Benchmark Report

Hutchinson   
**community**  
FOUNDATION



Innovation Economy Partners  
OUR FOCUS: IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

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Photo Credit: Sandra Milburn







# Executive Summary:

A total of 1,022 individuals took the survey, representing a significant response across the county. The data here can be seen as indicative of what the community members care are paying attention to the most. While the response rates vary from town to town, this data can help local leaders refine the manner in which they prioritize their policies and investments. The most critical priority highlighted by residents relates to economic development, especially attracting more businesses to the community.

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## Economic Confidence

Residents express generally a positive view of the county economics. The only area where the perception is negative is in the area of 'current business conditions'; all other factors are positive. The community would also like to see more metrics tied to quantifying economic development progress.

pg **6, 7, 8**

## Community Engagement Confidence

Residents show strong personal commitment to the community but would like to see more details related to the development plans of the community. The residents do rank very highly the ability for local leaders to execute on programs and projects.

pgs **9a-9b**

## Critical Community Priorities

The top three community priorities are as follows: (1) Attract new businesses, (2) Address blight, and (3) Help address child care issues.

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## Survey Respondent Profile

Survey respondents are predominantly long-term residents, homeowners, and well-educated individuals, with most employed in the service sector. Age and gender representation is balanced.

The Community Benchmarking report has been commissioned by Hutchinson Community Foundation to help local residents gain a better understanding of the most pressing opportunities Reno County towns face. The annual reports that are generated will help leaders determine the extent to which community efforts are having an impact on local residents. The reports are also a way for towns in the area to pursue grants to help further their local efforts.

**Local leaders can use this framework to help inspire change.  
This report provides the clues on what fellow residents are craving.**



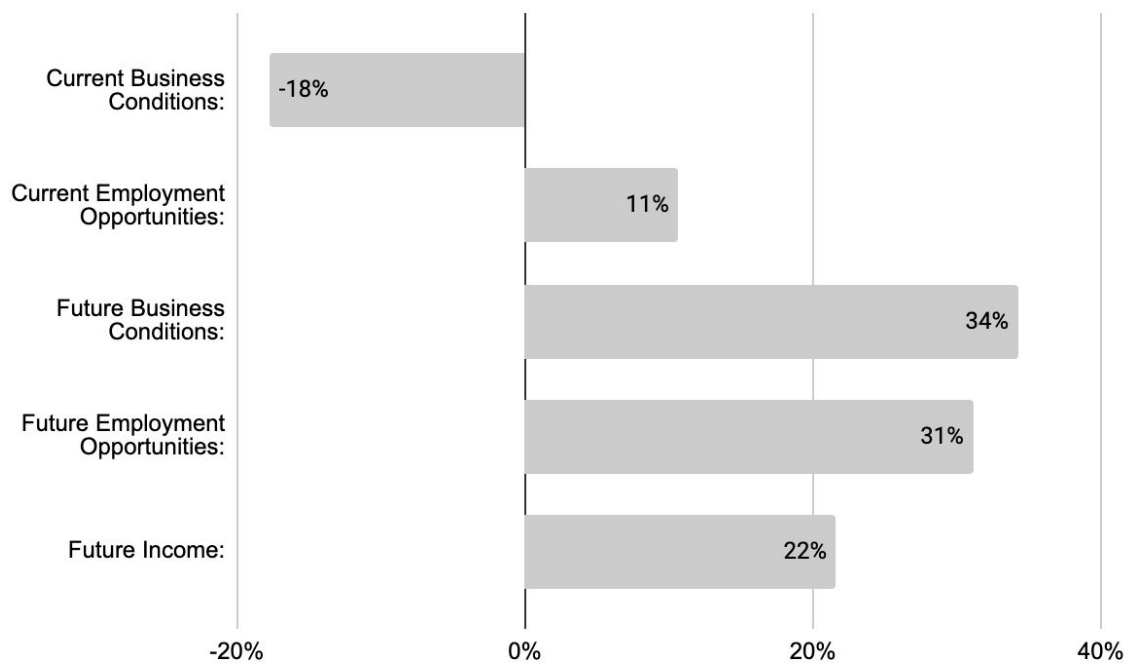
# Confidence In Our Local Economy

## Economic Summary:

The residents of Reno County generally have a positive view of the local economy, and the future perceptions look quite promising, in addition to the unemployment rate trending down and the median household income trending up. This should indicate more prosperity for more people in the county. The lowest perception is around current business conditions, which is supported by respondents choosing attracting new businesses as the top priority. In addition, when asked what key metrics the county should be measuring, respondents selected economic development metrics for the top five. This all indicates an acute need for local focus on economic development.

## Survey Responses

### Our Economic Perceptions

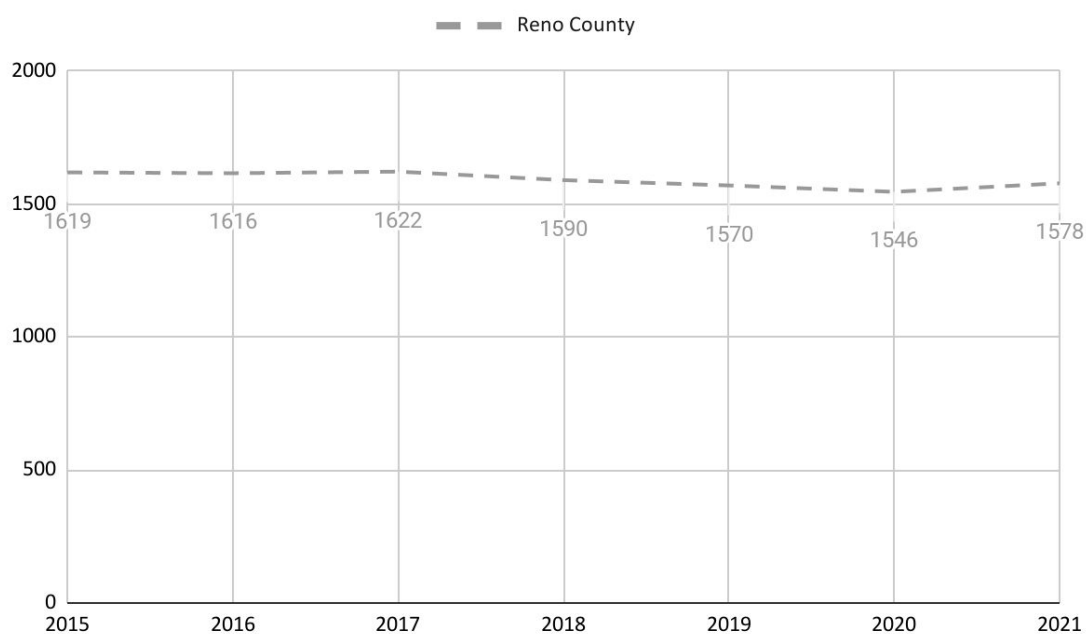


### Popular Ideas for the County:

- **Retail** - Residents are looking for more shopping options, including stores, markets, and retail centers. There's a desire for a broader variety of shops, from local boutiques to larger retail chains.
- **Health & Wellness** - Many respondents mentioned the need for more gyms, wellness centers, spas, and clinics. There is a clear call for increased access to healthcare services and fitness options.
- **Food & Beverage** - Suggestions focused on new restaurants, cafes, and bakeries. People expressed interest in more dining options, including specialty cuisine and family-friendly spots.
- **Technology & Services** - Respondents highlighted the need for more tech-based businesses and services, such as IT support, coworking spaces, and innovative technology solutions for local needs.

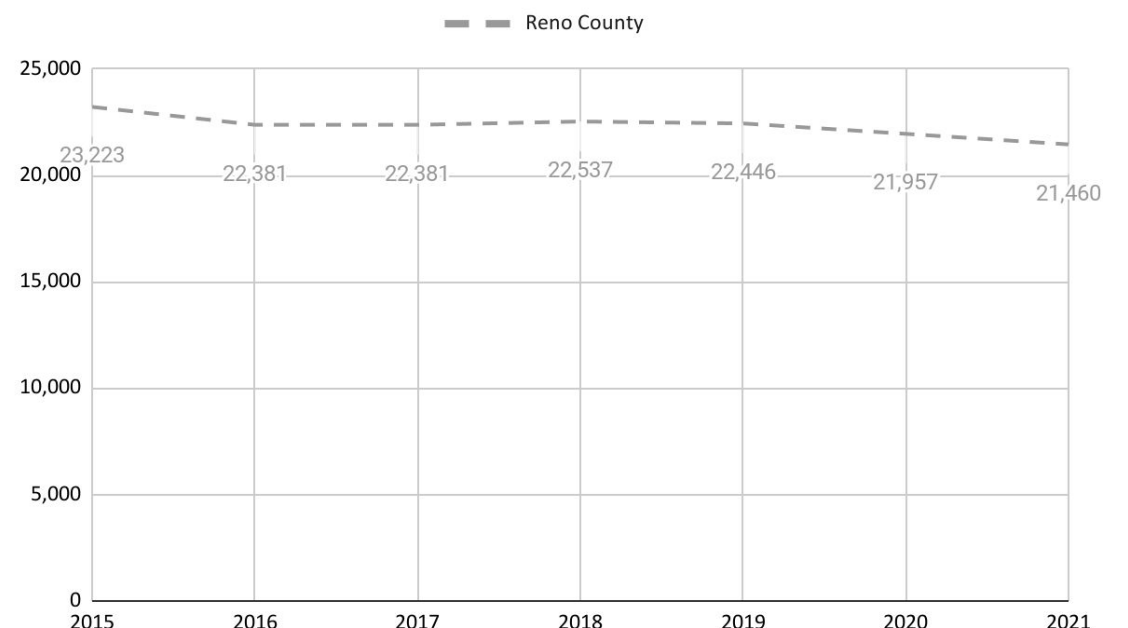
## Local Economic Indicators

### Total Businesses



Data source:USCB, County Business Patterns

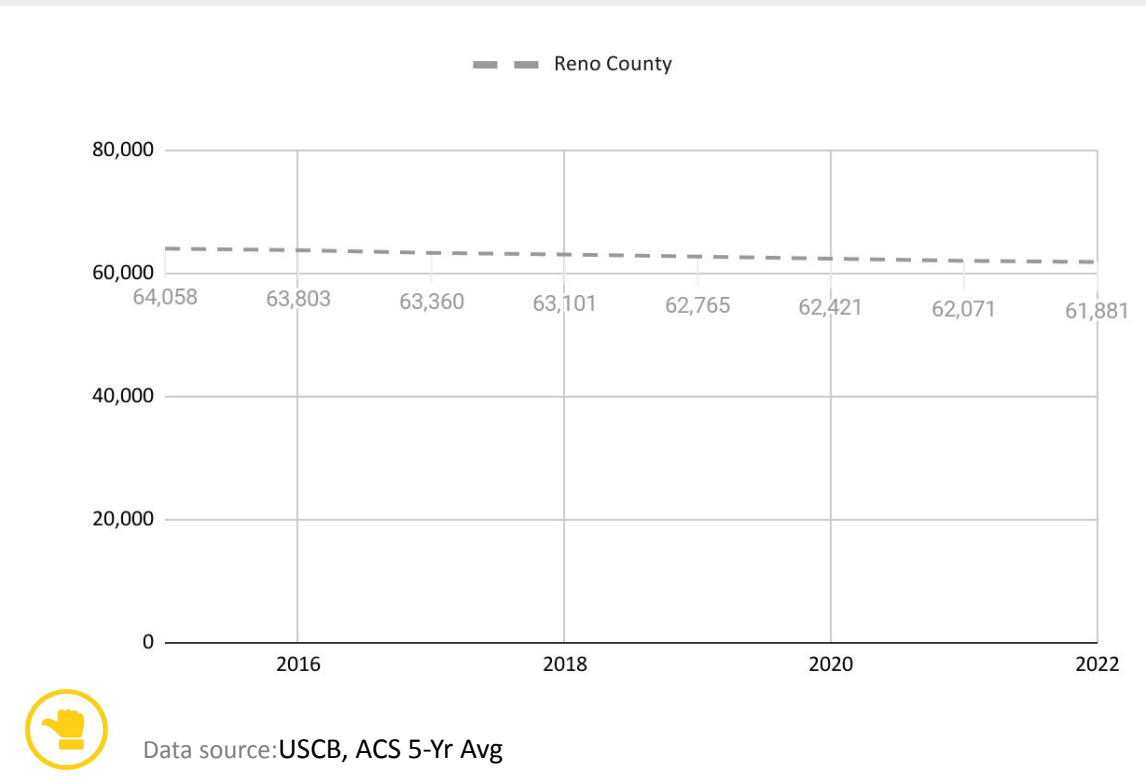
### Employment



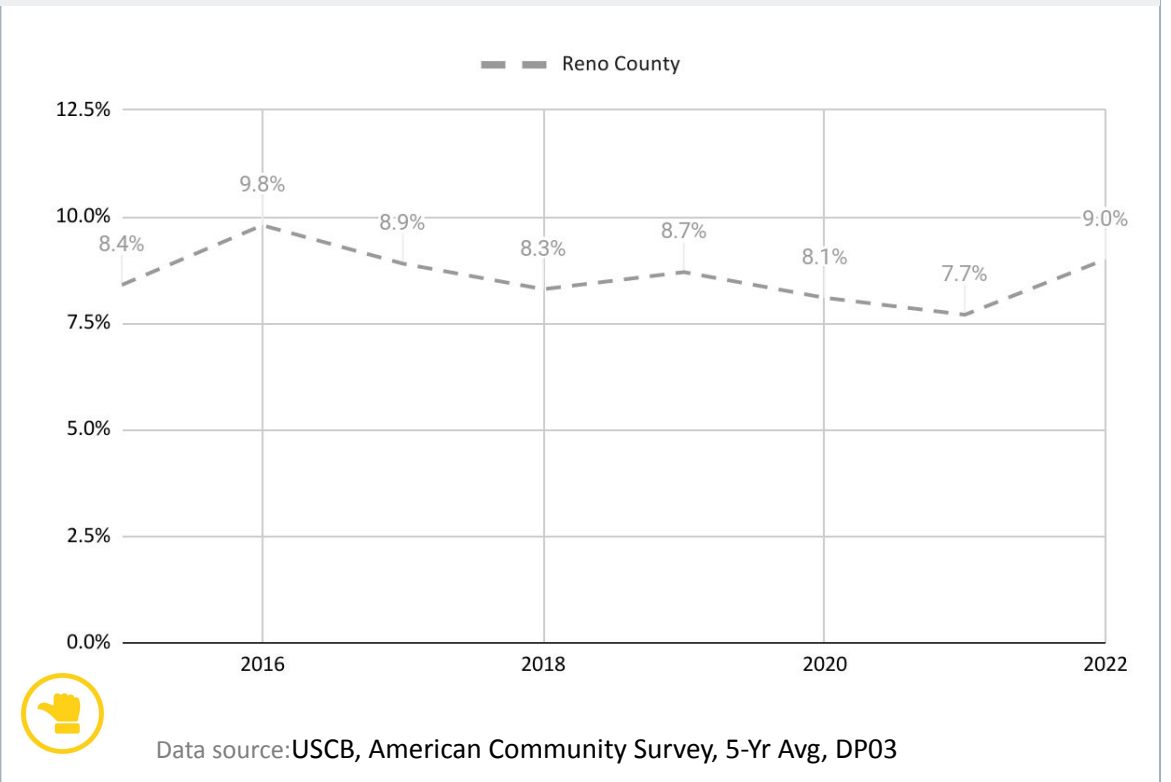
Data source:USCB, County Business Patterns

# Local Economic Indicators (Cont'd)

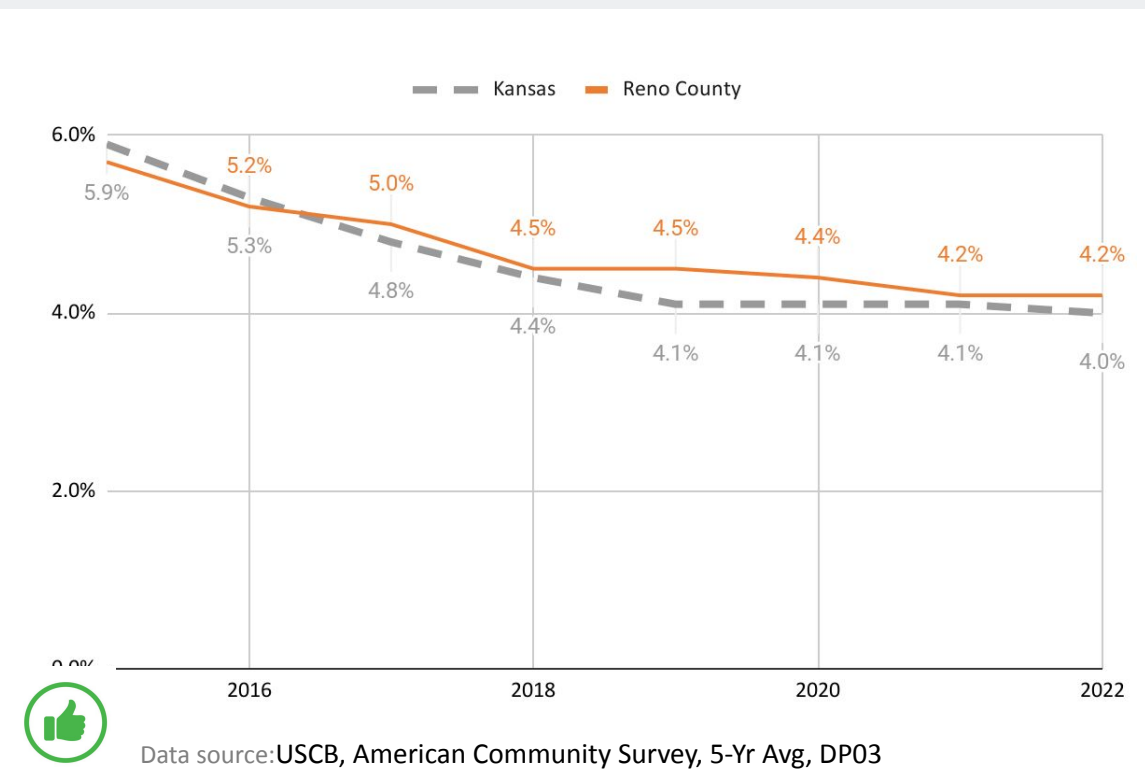
## Overall Population Trend



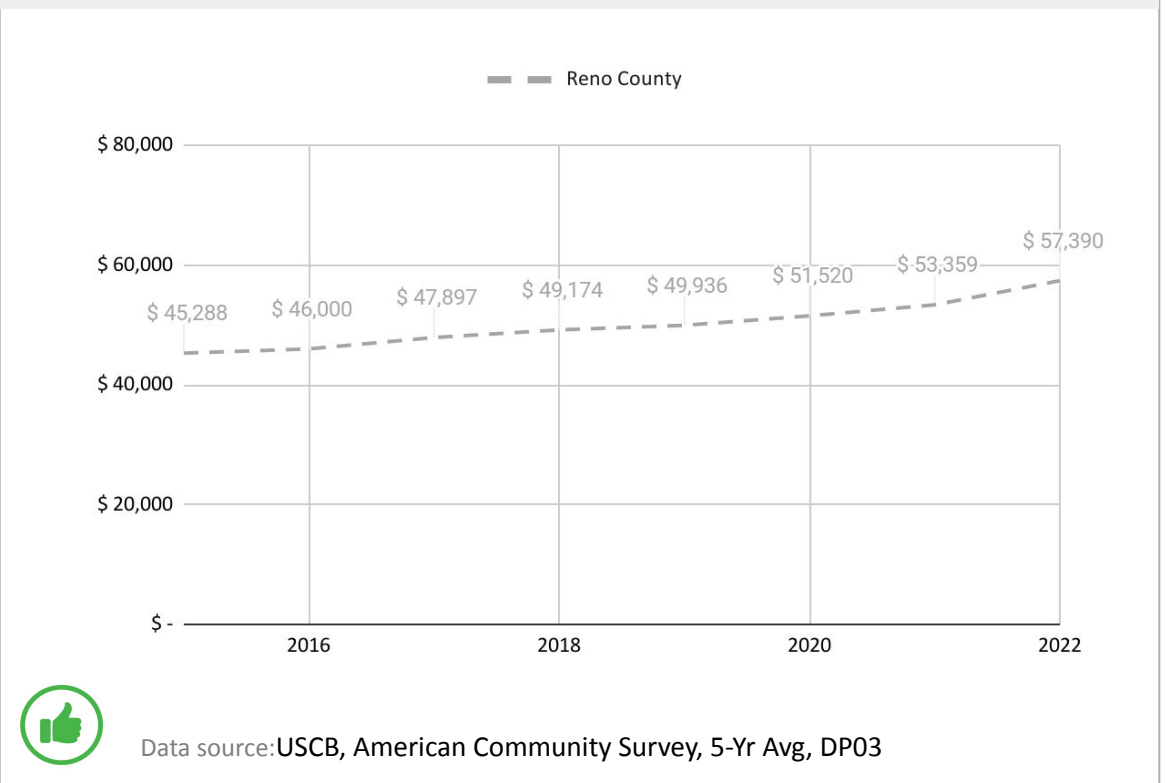
## Local Poverty Rate



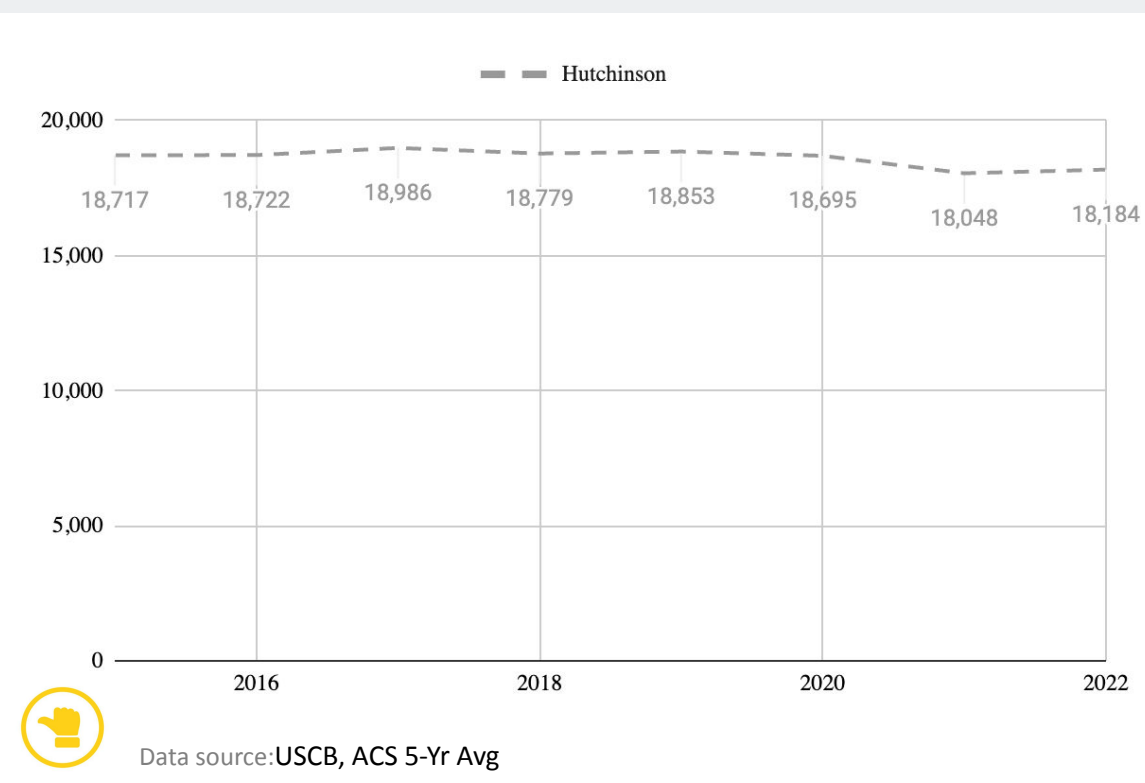
## Local Unemployment Rate



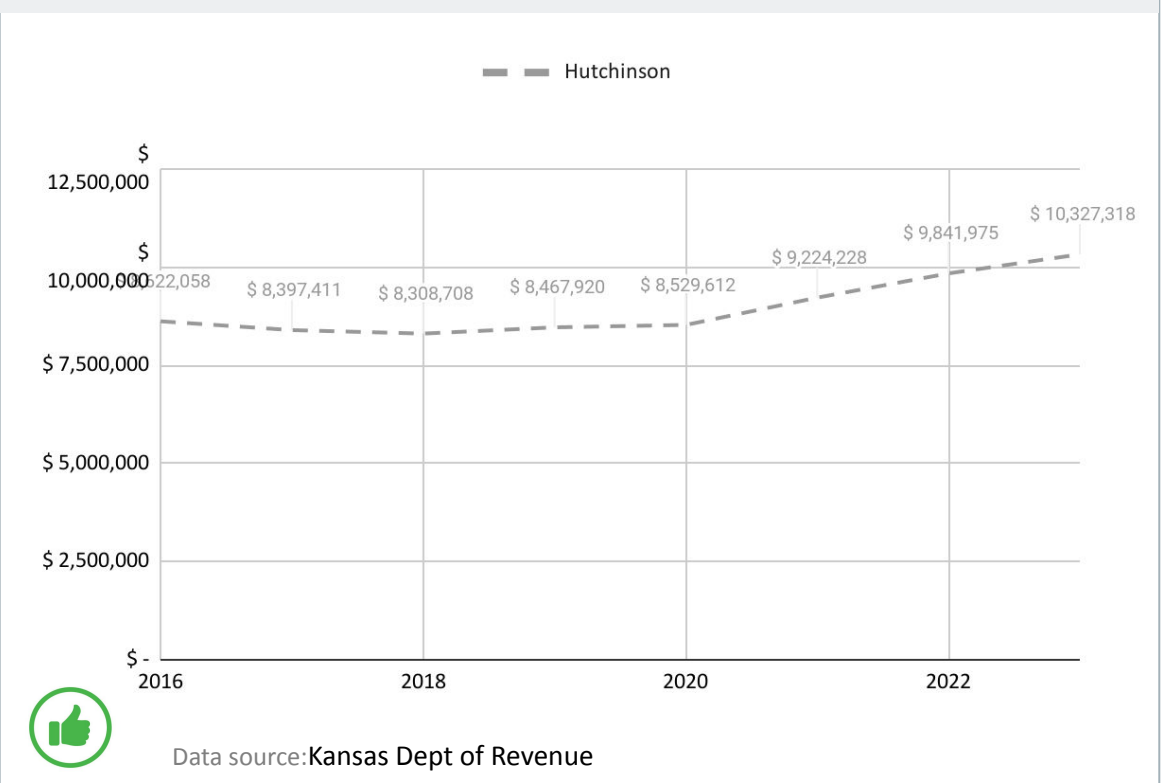
## Median Household Income



## Total Housing Units



## Annual Sales Tax Collection





# Confidence In Our Local Community

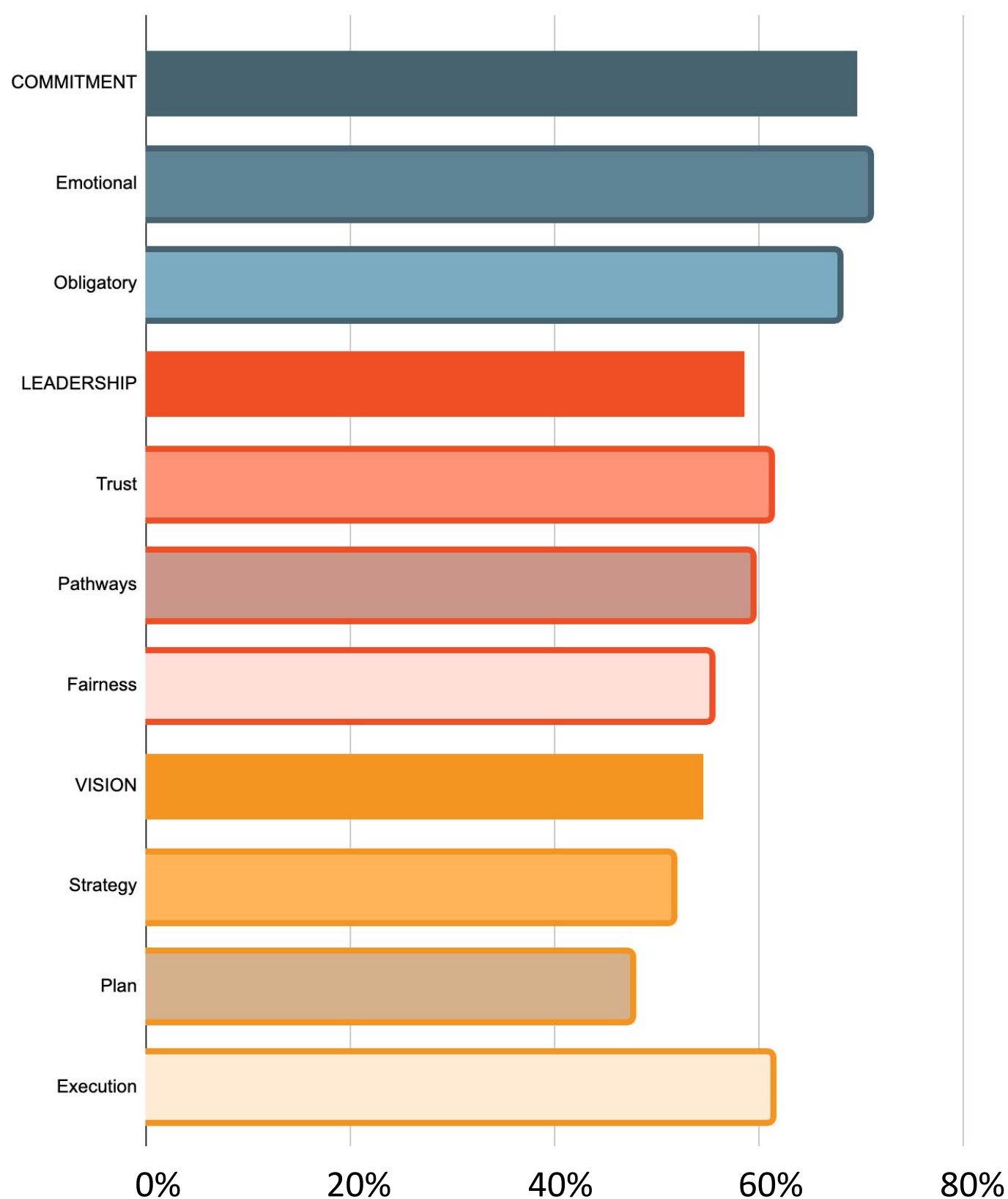
## Engagement Summary:

The community's personal commitment remains strong, with many residents feeling a deep sense of belonging and responsibility toward the community's well-being. However, local leadership faces some challenges in effectively communicating and engaging with the broader population, which could be improved by ensuring that community decisions reflect the residents' needs. There is a clear execution, but more work is needed in planning as well as aligning residents with long-term goals.



Photo Credit: Nick Hemphill

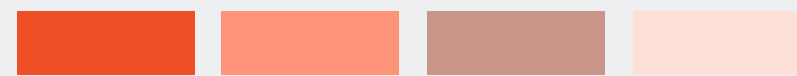
## How do our residents view our community?



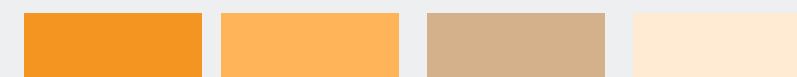
### Commitment



### Leadership



### Vision



As we look at the responses across the county, the category where the residents ranked the community the highest was in **Commitment**. The area where the community ranked itself the lowest was around the areas of **strategizing and planning**. The team's ability to execute is seen as quite strong.

**What opportunities does this data represent for local leaders?**

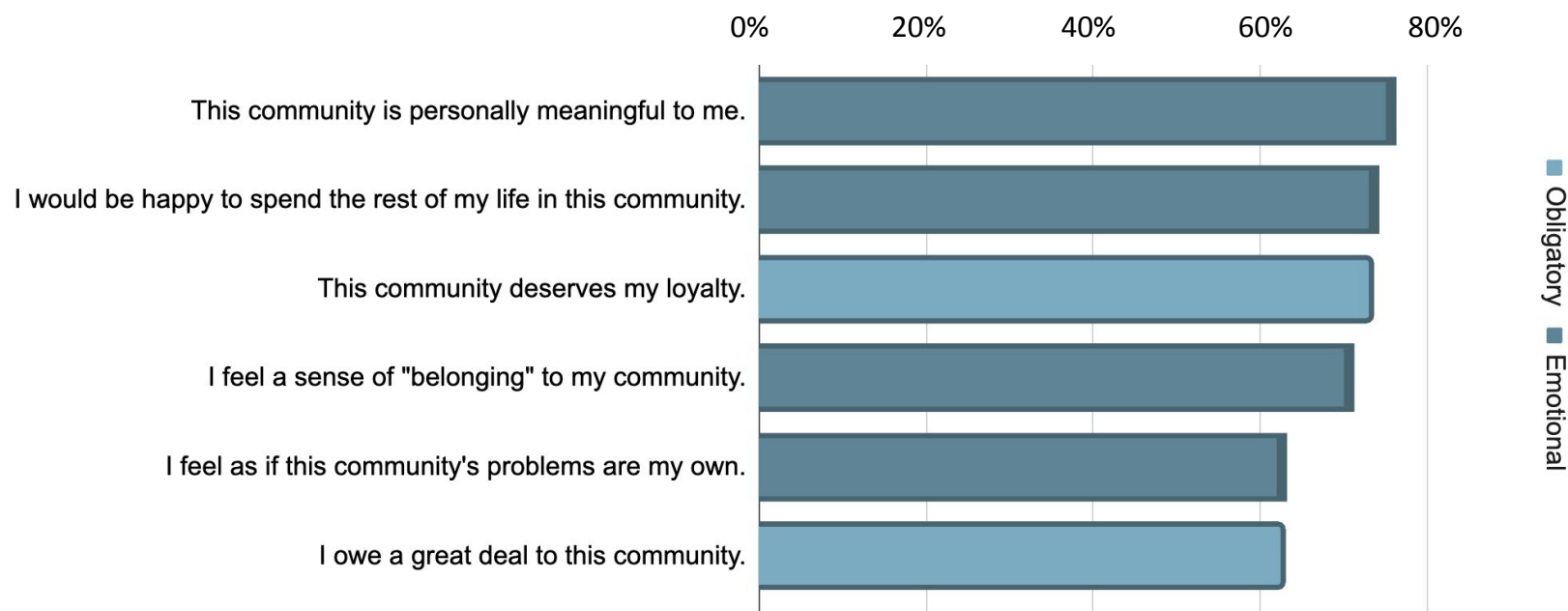
**What efforts would you initiate to capitalize on this opportunity? What would you stop doing? If there was one additional step that the community could take, what would it be?**

**What would be the value of embarking on this effort?**

# Confidence In Our Local Community

Portion of the community that is highly confident on the listed community dimensions (Rating range: 0-7)

## Community Confidence: Personal Commitment



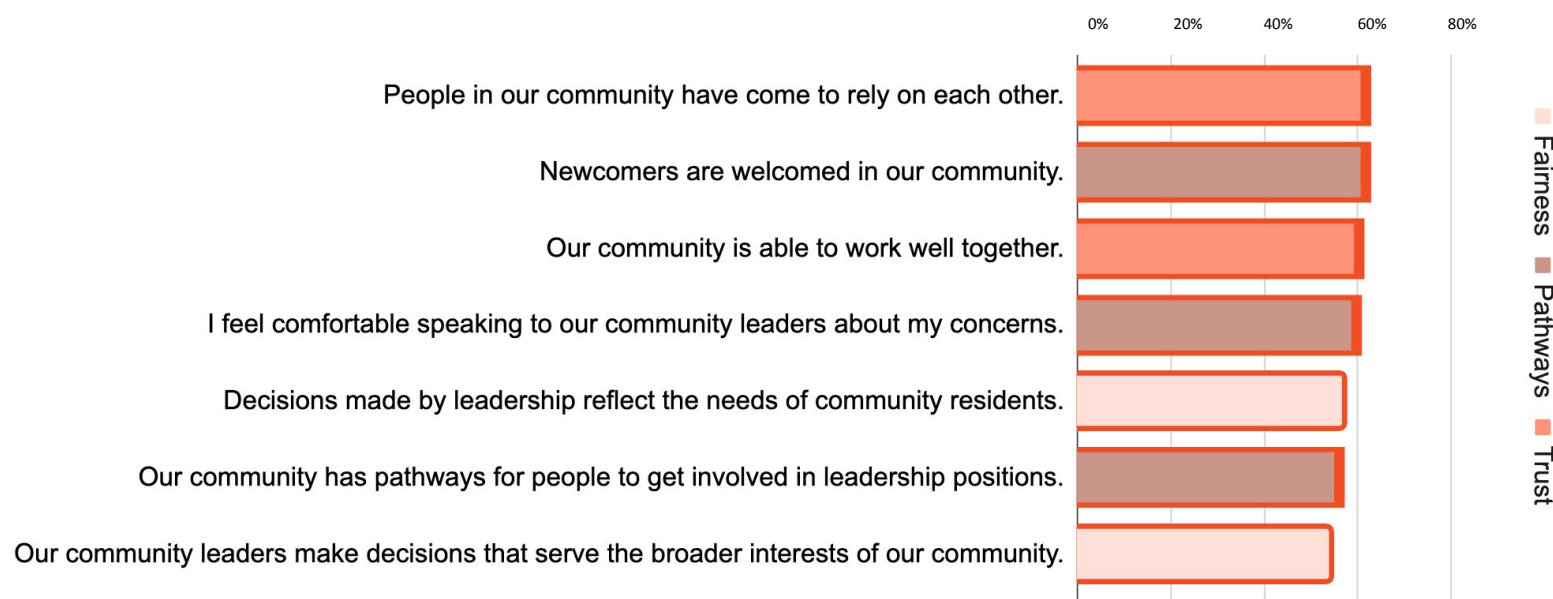
Personal commitment is the factor that is ranked the highest across the county. This demonstrates that the residents have a high degree of emotional and obligatory commitment to the community. Knowing this:

**How can residents be more involved in shaping community outcomes?**

**What local initiatives can foster stronger ties?**

**How can the community make it easier for people to become more involved?**

## Community Confidence: Local Leadership

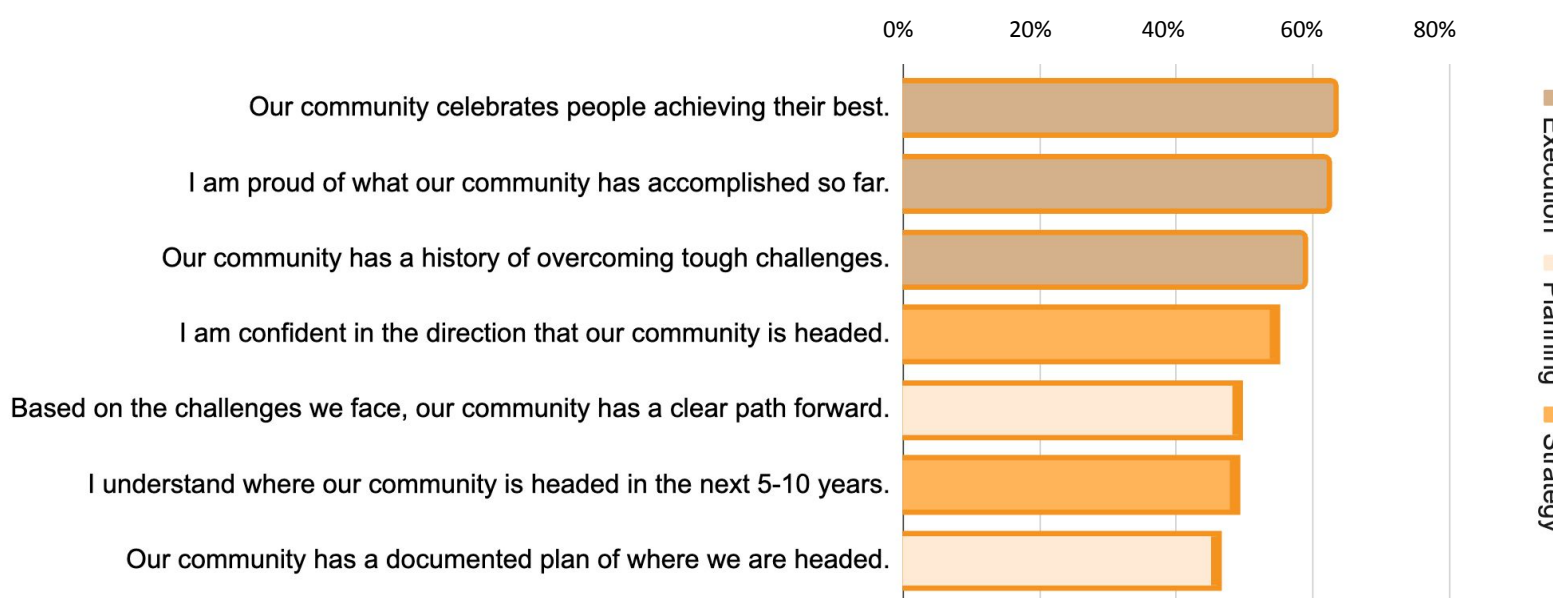


Local leadership perceptions are ranked in between the other two variables. While generally positive, this represents an opportunity for community leaders to help create pathways for individuals to serve in the community easier.

**How can leadership be more transparent in sharing their priorities? How can the leaders better communicate with the local residents?**

**Most importantly, what would be the value of this effort?**

## Community Confidence: Vision



Across the sub-categories, we see a clear pattern: the residents see the community's ability to execute efforts and projects better than other categories. Lowest ranking relates to the ability for the community to proactively plan their efforts.

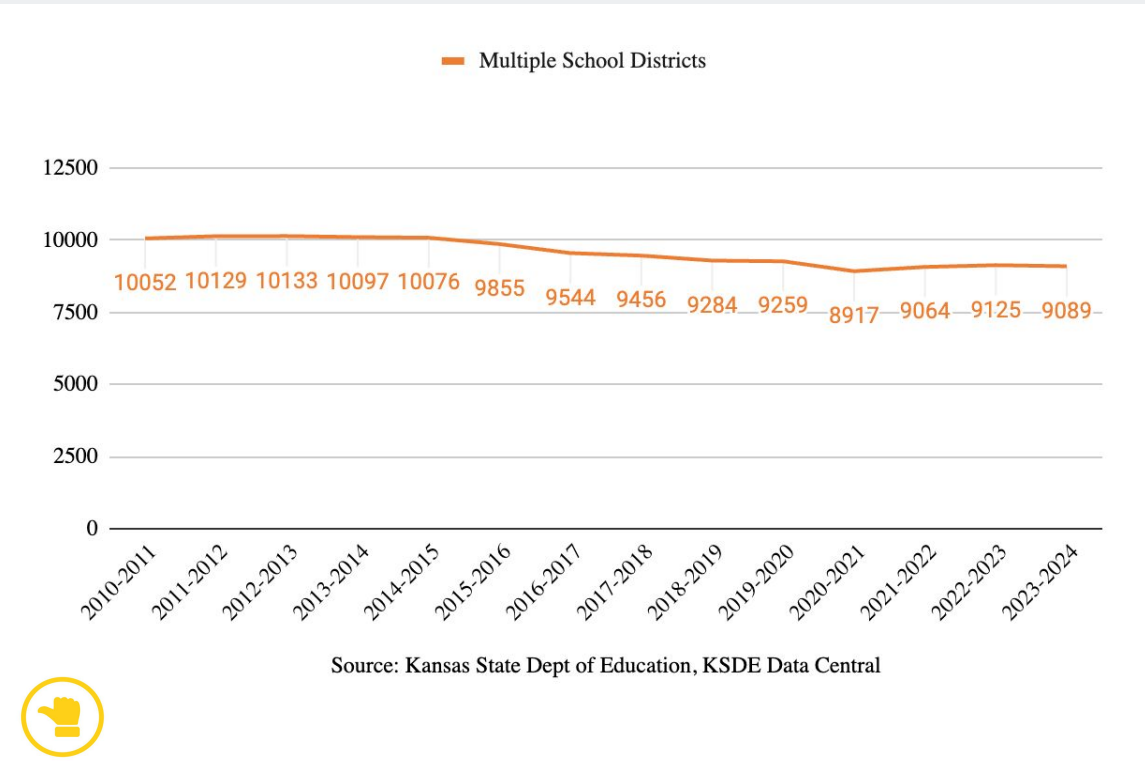
**How can the community better communicate its long-term goals and plans?**

**Interestingly, the lowest rating in this and the above category, both speak to a similar theme. What patterns do you see?**

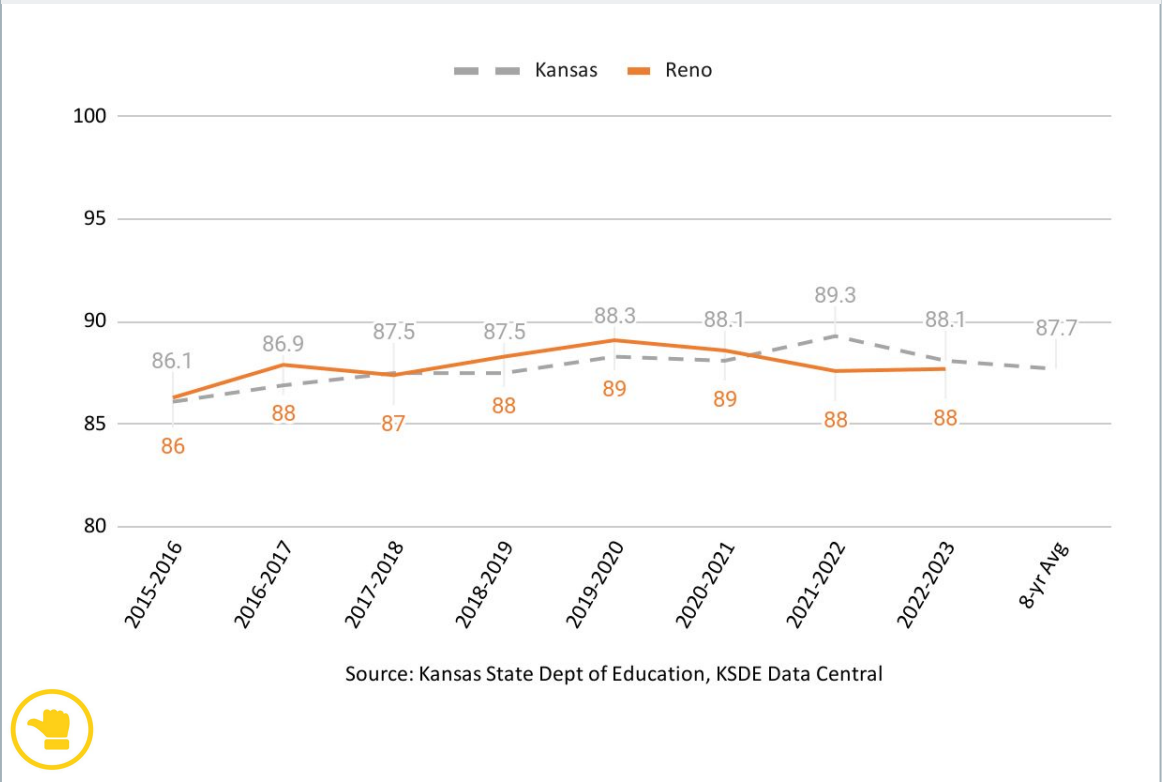


# Local Community Indicators

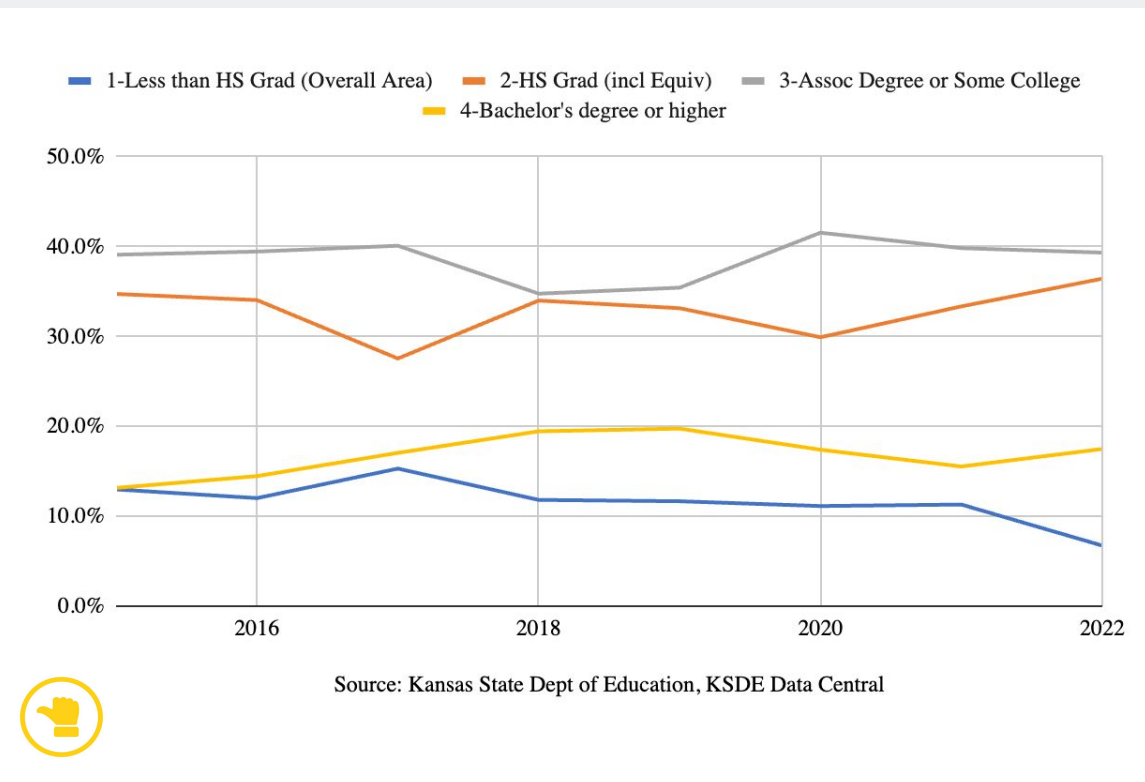
## Local School Enrollment



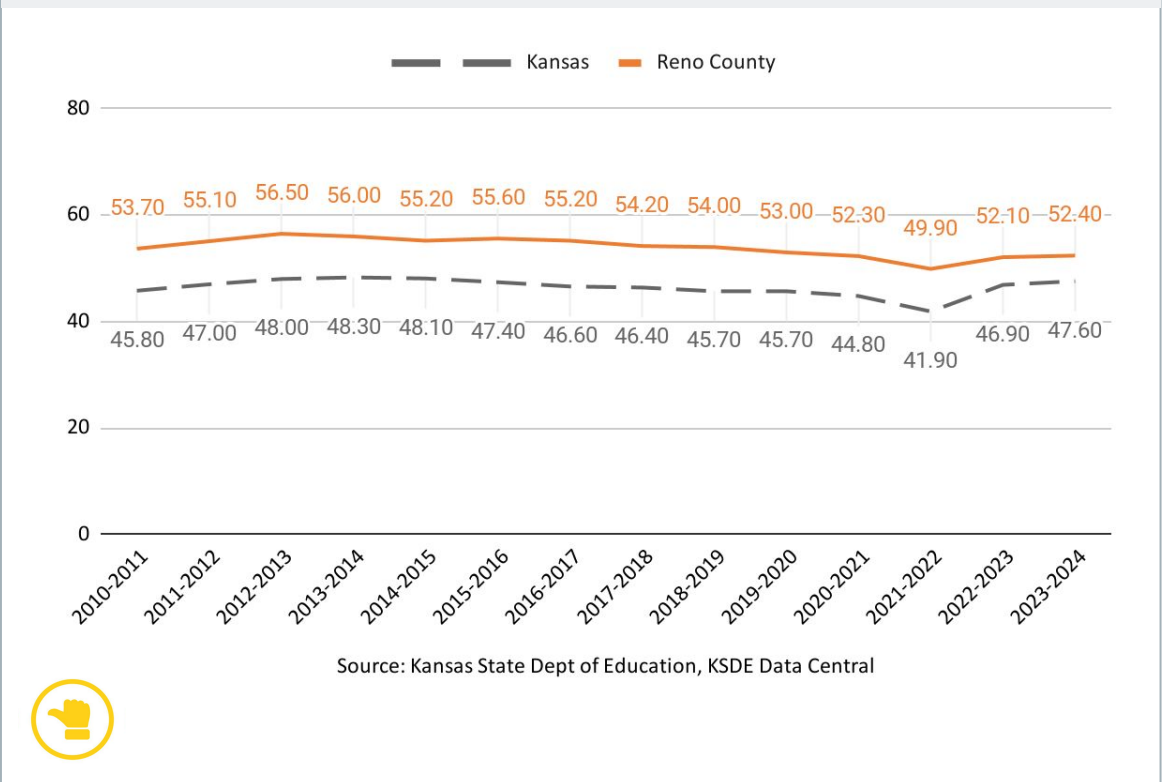
## High School 4 Year Graduation Rate



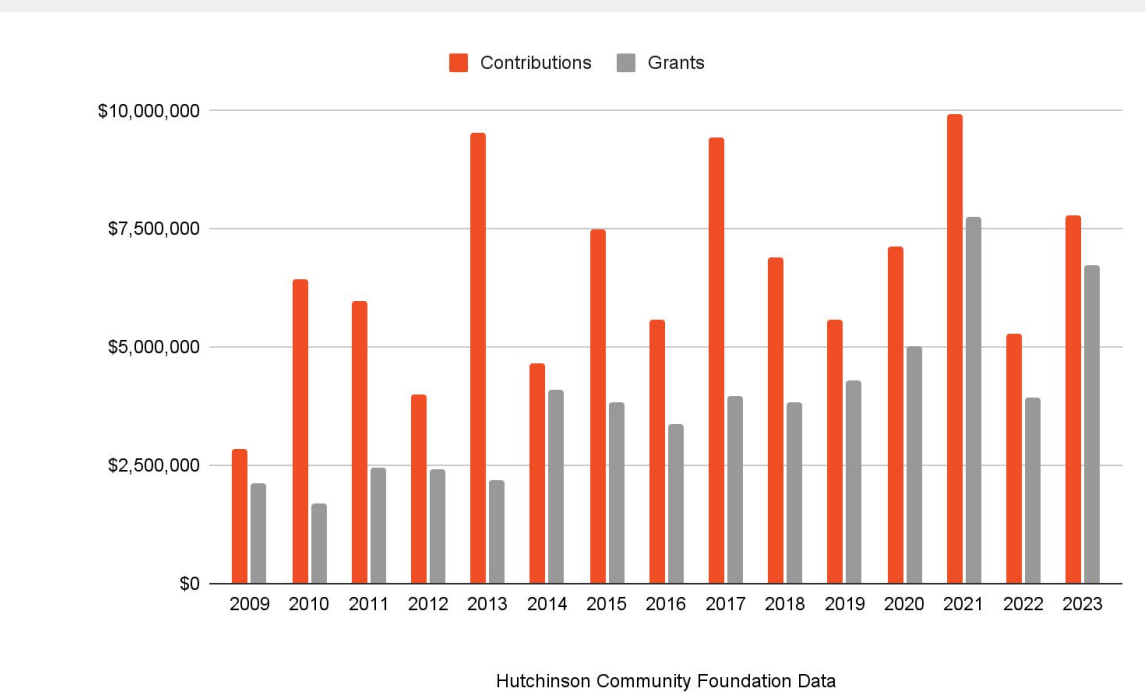
## Local Educational Level



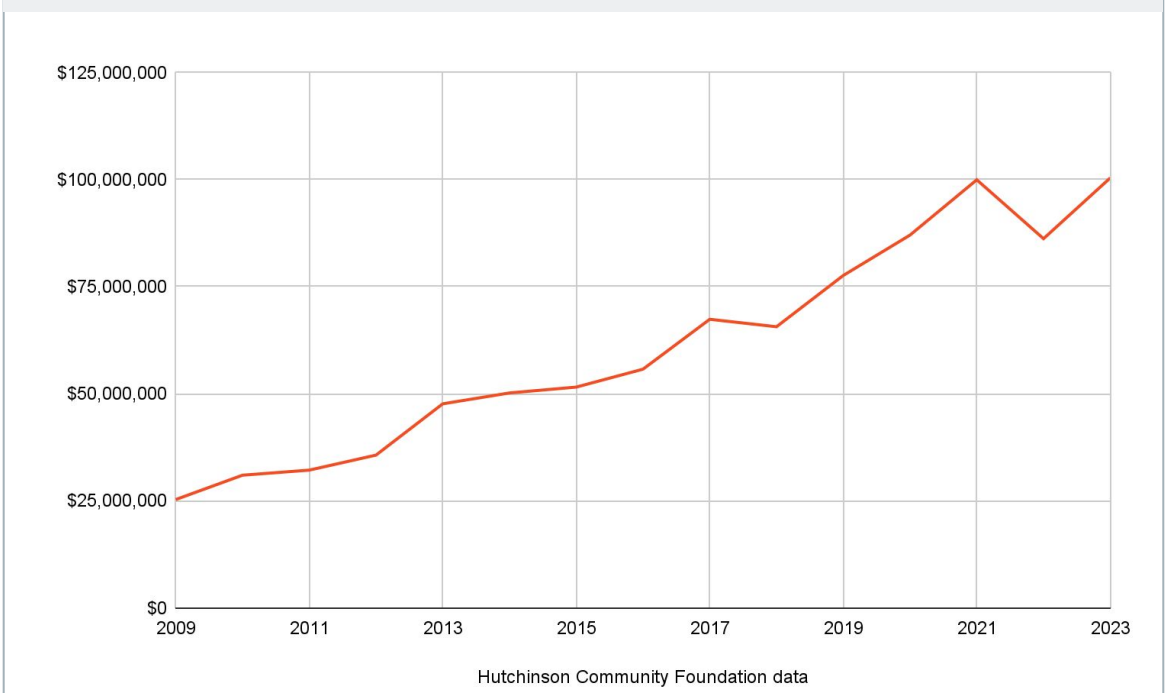
## School District % Free-Reduced Price Lunch



## Hutchinson Community Foundation: Contributions & Grants



## Hutchinson Community Foundation: Total Assets





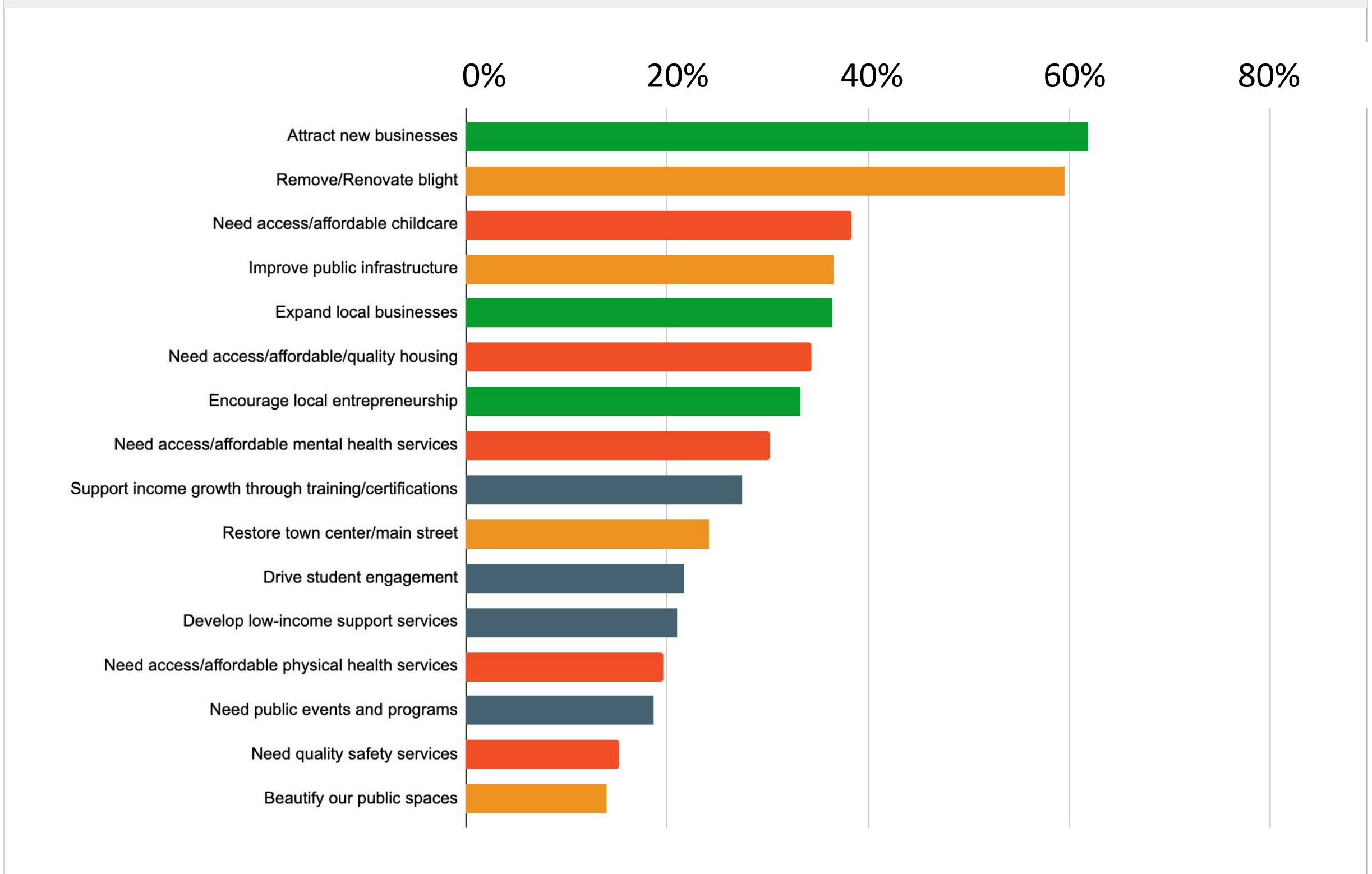
# Community Program Priorities

## Priorities Summary:

The top three community priorities are as follows: (1) Attract new businesses, (2) Address blight, and (3) Help address child care issues. These issues span across economic, community and health issues. At an aggregate level, the data suggests that the categories of projects that the residents want addressed span across all the categories evenly. The one exception to this is the issues related to the 'people'. These items are lower in the list than other categories. What does this mean for local leaders? How would you refine your investment and program decisions based on the below data?

■ Health    
 ■ Placemaking    
 ■ Economy    
 ■ People

## 2024 Economic and Community Development Priorities



### Vibrant Place:

The top priority for this section is the removal and renovation of run-down properties, reflecting a strong desire to improve the county's aesthetics and infrastructure.

### Resilient Economy:

The highest priority is attracting new businesses, signaling a need for economic expansion. Encouraging local entrepreneurship and expanding existing businesses are also key to creating a thriving economy, providing growth and stability for the community.

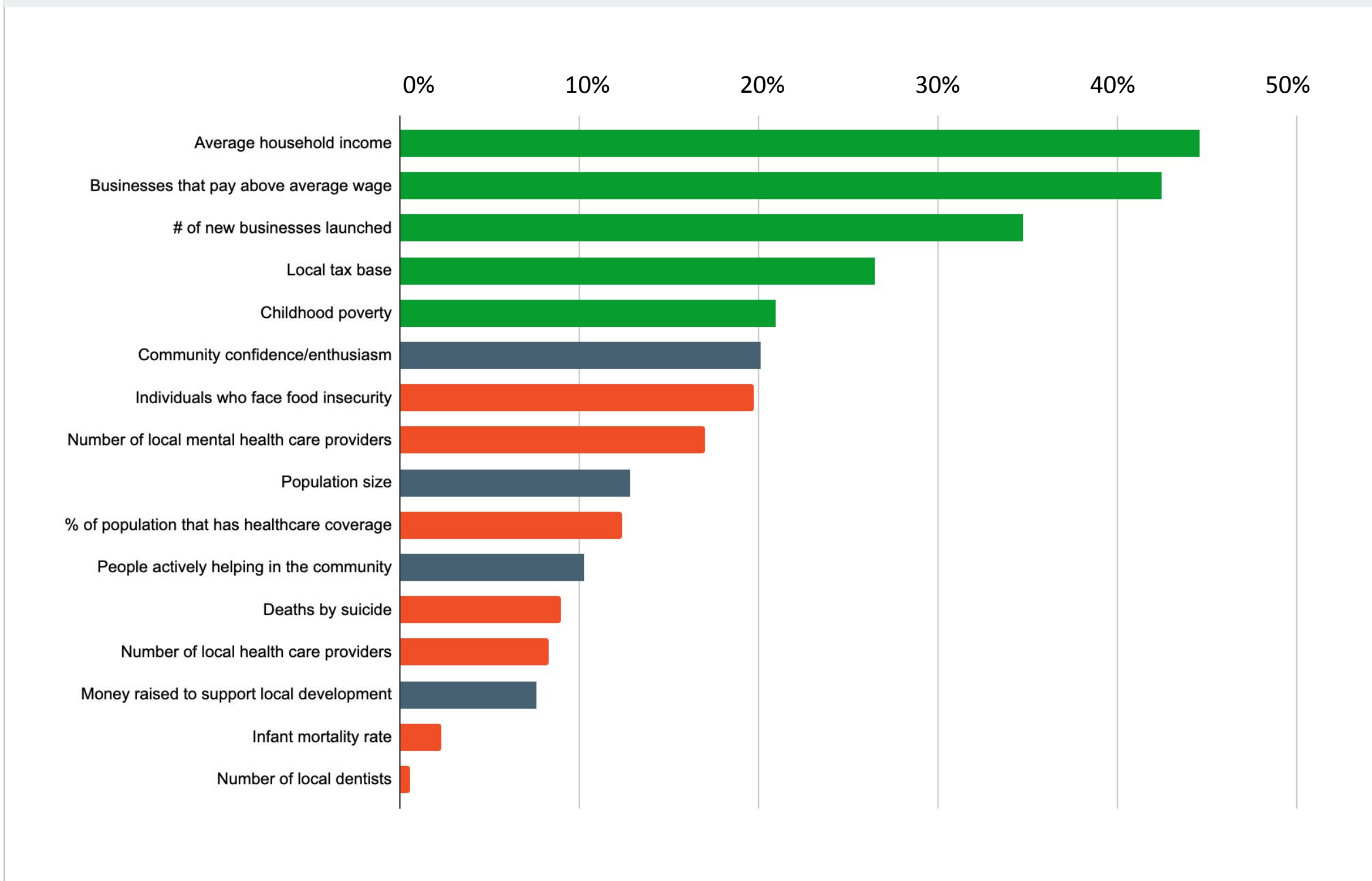
### Healthy Citizens:

Access to affordable housing, childcare, and mental health care are vital concerns for residents, along with addressing mental and physical health services.

# Community Progress Indicators

Health Economy People

## 2024 Community Progress Indicators



### Economy:

Economic priorities topped the list! Respondents prioritize improving household income, launching new businesses, and raising wages. A focus on reducing childhood poverty and growing the local tax base also emerge as key economic goals.

### Community Engagement:

From a community goals perspective, the community would like to see an increase in confidence and enthusiasm.

### Health:

Health priorities include reducing food insecurity, improving mental health services, and expanding access to healthcare.

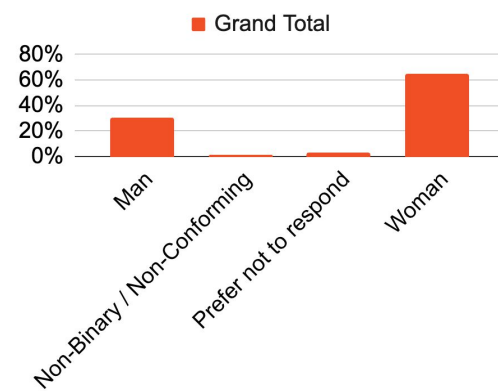


# Survey Respondents

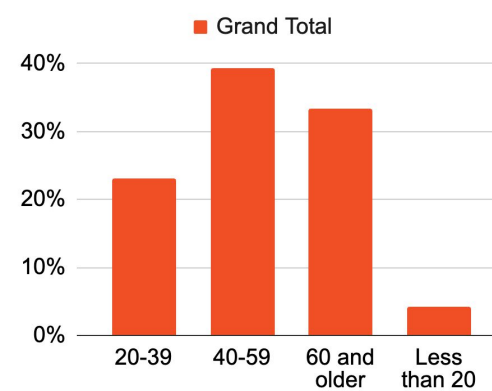
## Number of Participants



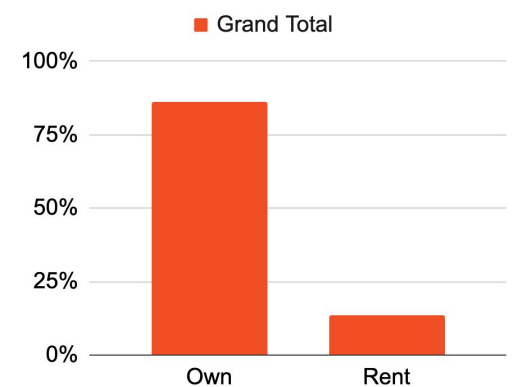
## Gender



## Age Profile



## Residential Status



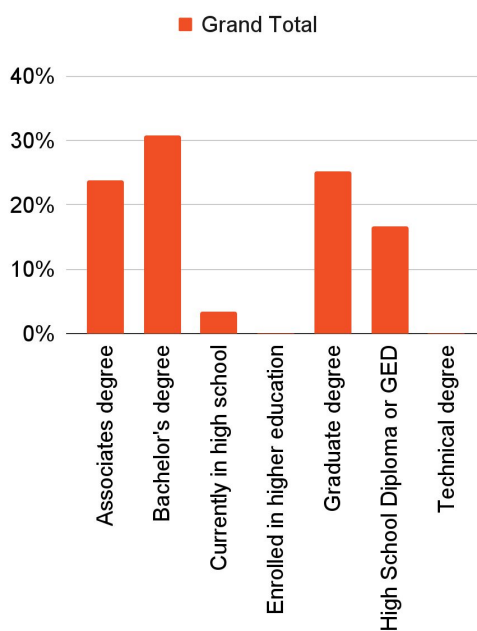
The biggest demographic captured in the survey is those who have lived in the community for the most extended period.

The biggest takeaway is that female respondents made up the largest group, with male respondents forming a smaller, yet still significant, group

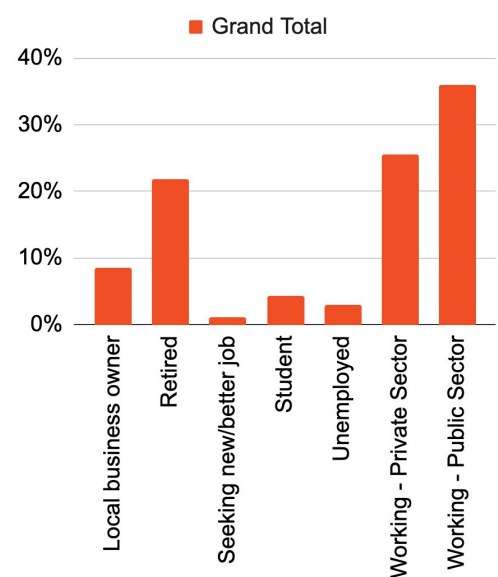
The most respondents were in the middle-age group of 40-59 year-olds, indicating that this demographic is the most engaged in the survey.

Homeowners made up the majority, while renters represented a smaller portion of the survey responses, reflecting a strong ownership trend.

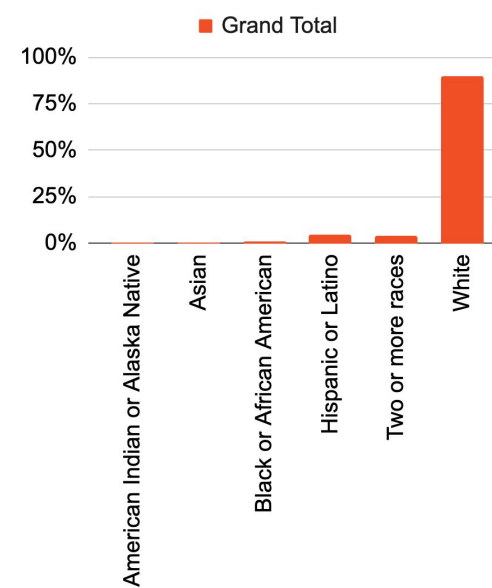
## Education Level



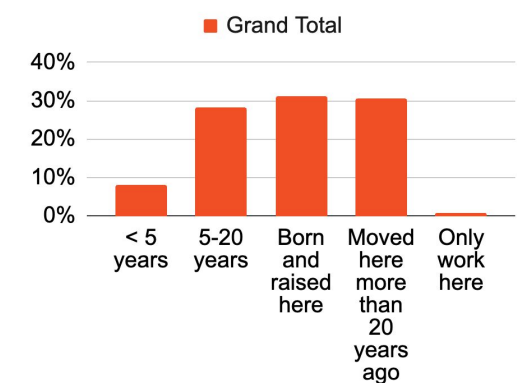
## Employment Status



## Ethnicity



## Years lived in location



Most respondents had a college education, indicating a well-educated population, with fewer respondents having lower education levels.

The largest group of respondents work in the public service sector, with other professions also well-represented, including those retired.

The respondents are predominantly white, but survey results may not fully reflect the ethnic percentage profile of the community. Some important voices may still need to be engaged.

The majority of respondents have lived in the community for at least 5 years, showcasing sustained community engagement.

**270**

Number of people who expressed an interest in volunteering to better the community  
270 of 1,022 (26%)