

Love WHERE YOU *Live*

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

2025 Nickerson Benchmark Report

Hutchinson 
community
FOUNDATION



Innovation Economy Partners
OUR FOCUS: IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

info@HutchCF.org | hutchcf.org

What Makes Our Community Special?

"I finally feel like we have an administration that has the future generations best in mind and are forward thinking."

Aryn

"What makes Nickerson special is the people, I've always loved the way we all look out for each other and our kids."

Joe

"The way the community comes together to help each other."

Christopher

"When needed, our community comes together. Our small town plays a role in a movie, it's also one of the first towns established in KS."

Sherri

"We have events like Klear Nearly that bring the whole town together. We have strong leaders that make the decisions for our town and the community as a whole."

Shiann

"It's home. It's hometown feel and neighborly residents."

"Terrific school system, a City Mayor who truly cares about our little city and residents, our City Park and Splash Pad gives the children so much fun!"

Anonymous

"I love our small town vibe but still having a local grocery store. It's pretty quiet here majority of the time and I feel comfortable raising my children here."

Anonymous

"Our unity makes our community special, we all come together after something difficult happens."

Lakyn

"Love how easy going the community is and how much we help each other out."

Selby

In June 2024, Hutchinson Community Foundation launched Love Where You Live, a three-year community empowerment initiative that centers resident perceptions, dialogue, and collaborative action. Alongside community partners, our goal is to provide Reno County communities (and the county as a whole) with data and a process that will empower residents to make positive change and boost community pride. Learn more at hutchcf.org.

Leaders That Make Our Community Special



Executive Summary:

In 2025, Nickerson is a town in transition, deeply rooted in tradition, yet looking toward renewal. Residents report high emotional ties to the community, driven by shared experiences and long-standing relationships. While confidence in long-term vision and planning remains moderate, residents express increasing optimism about execution and leadership inclusivity. Economic concerns, particularly regarding job opportunities and income, persist—but younger residents show encouraging signs of future investment. Major priorities center on restoring pride through infrastructure renewal, blight reduction, and community beautification. Residents envision cleaner streets, safer walkways, and active storefronts as catalysts for broader transformation. While barriers to volunteerism still exist, more people, especially retirees and younger adults, are stepping up in new, flexible ways.

pgs **4-5**

Economic Confidence

Relative negativism defines Nickerson's economy, with residents prioritizing blight removal, infrastructure, and small business revival amid generational investment gaps and hoping to still invest, but planning on business conditions possibly getting worse.

pgs **6-8**

Community Engagement Confidence

Emotional ties remain strong in Nickerson, but planning confidence lags, leadership trust improves, and newcomers seek clearer paths into the community.

pgs **10-12**

Critical Community Priorities

Nickerson aims to renew neighborhoods through practical, visible improvements—residents favor beautification, youth programs, and public infrastructure.

pg **13**

Survey Respondent Profile

Long-term residents show higher confidence and investment concern; younger adults are more hopeful. Public sector workers emphasize infrastructure needs.

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

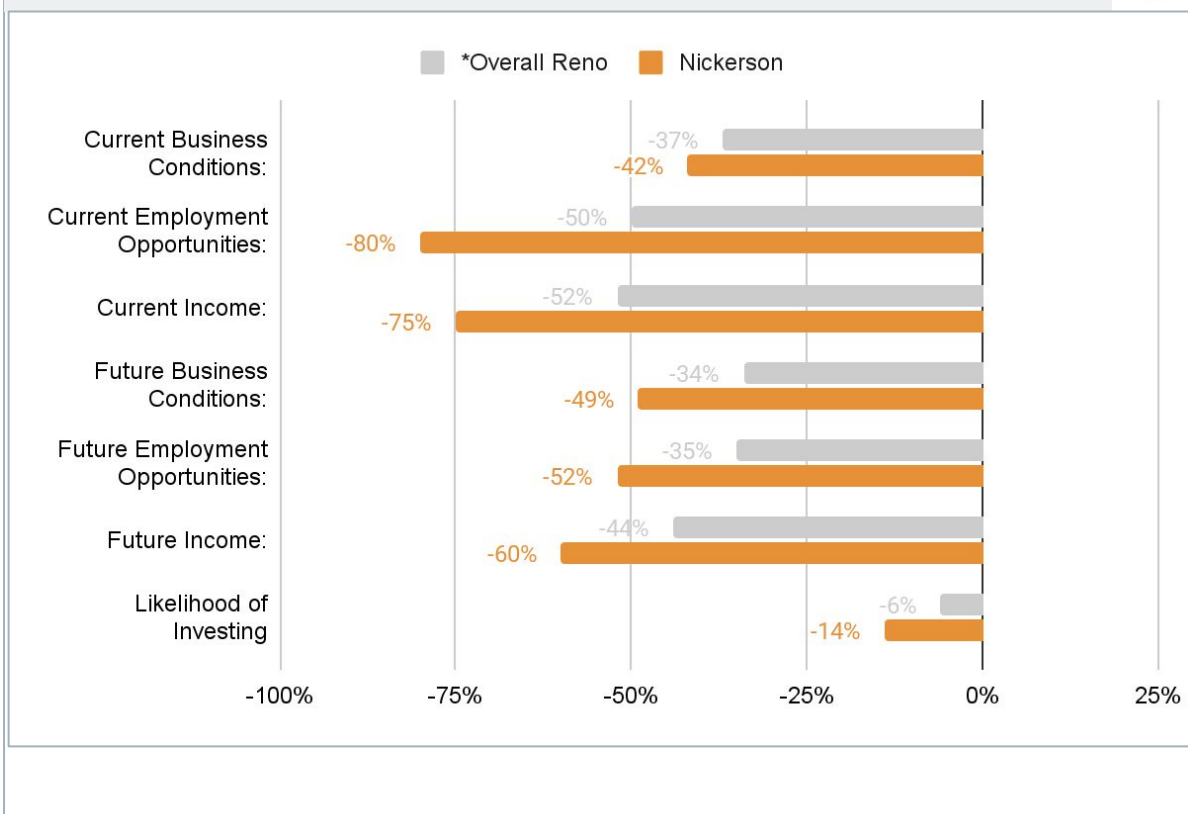
Economic Summary:

Nickerson's economic confidence in 2025 reflects a landscape of cautiousness and disheartened individuals. Residents here were in the minority when they expressed that the future business conditions were expected to be worse than the current ones. Younger adults show optimism and a willingness to invest in the near term. Compared with the Reno county average, Nickerson trails in economic outlook but public sentiment maintains a strong focus on current assets and hopeful growth through revitalization. Blight removal, infrastructure renewal, and local entrepreneurship remain top program priorities. Despite fiscal limitations, residents believe small, targeted efforts are key.

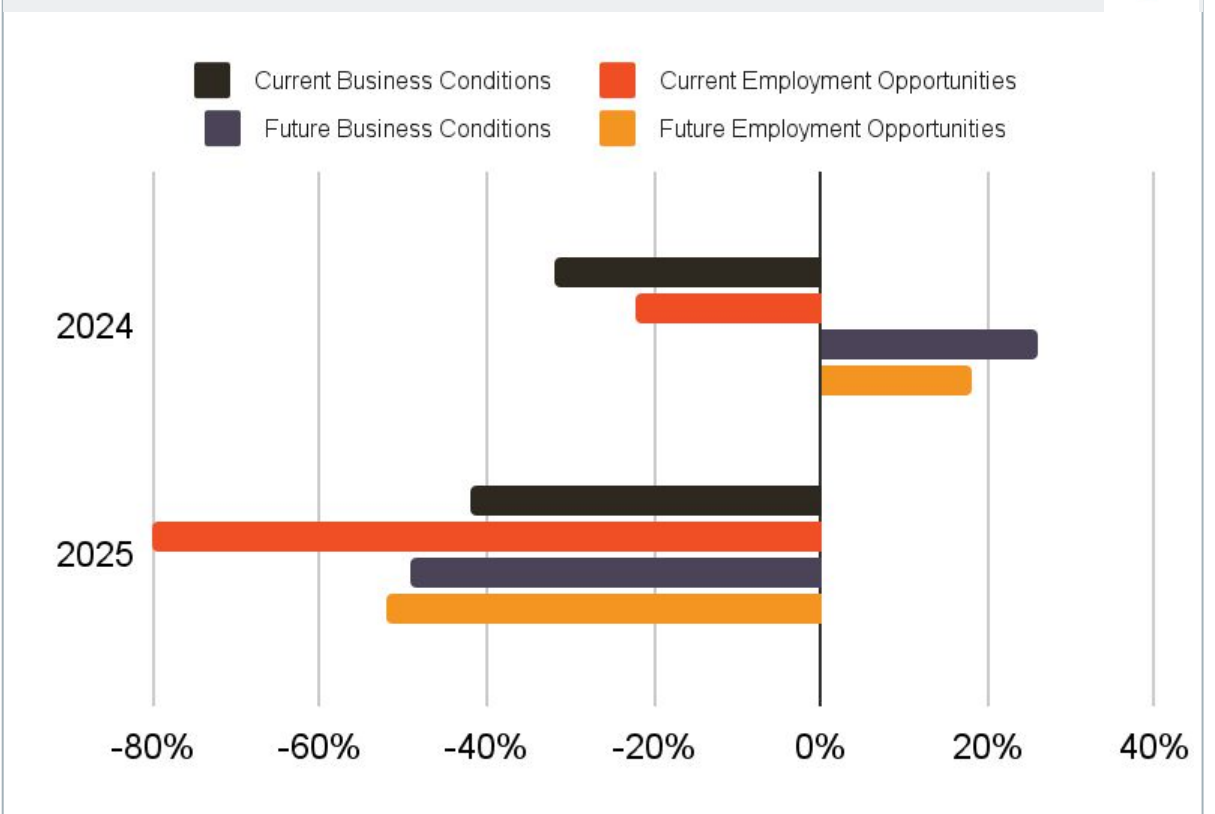
Businesses Needed In Our Town:

- **Restaurants – Only one current option, closed Sundays and Mondays**
- **Hardware/Lumber Store – Needed for home and auto repair essentials**
- **Coffee Shop/Café – Social space and breakfast/lunch option**
- **Youth Activity Center – No places for teens or kids to socialize**
- **Law Enforcement – Concerns over safety, lack of local police presence**
- **Entertainment Venue – No theaters, bowling, or pool halls**

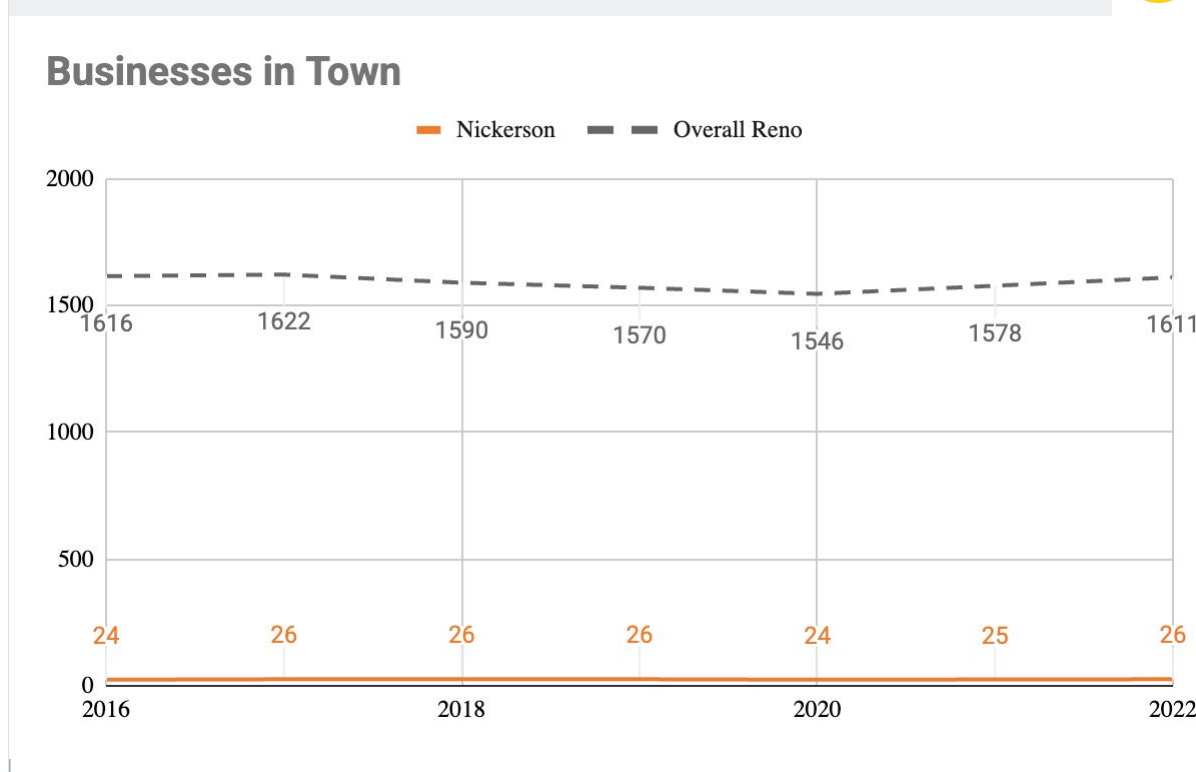
Our Economic Perceptions



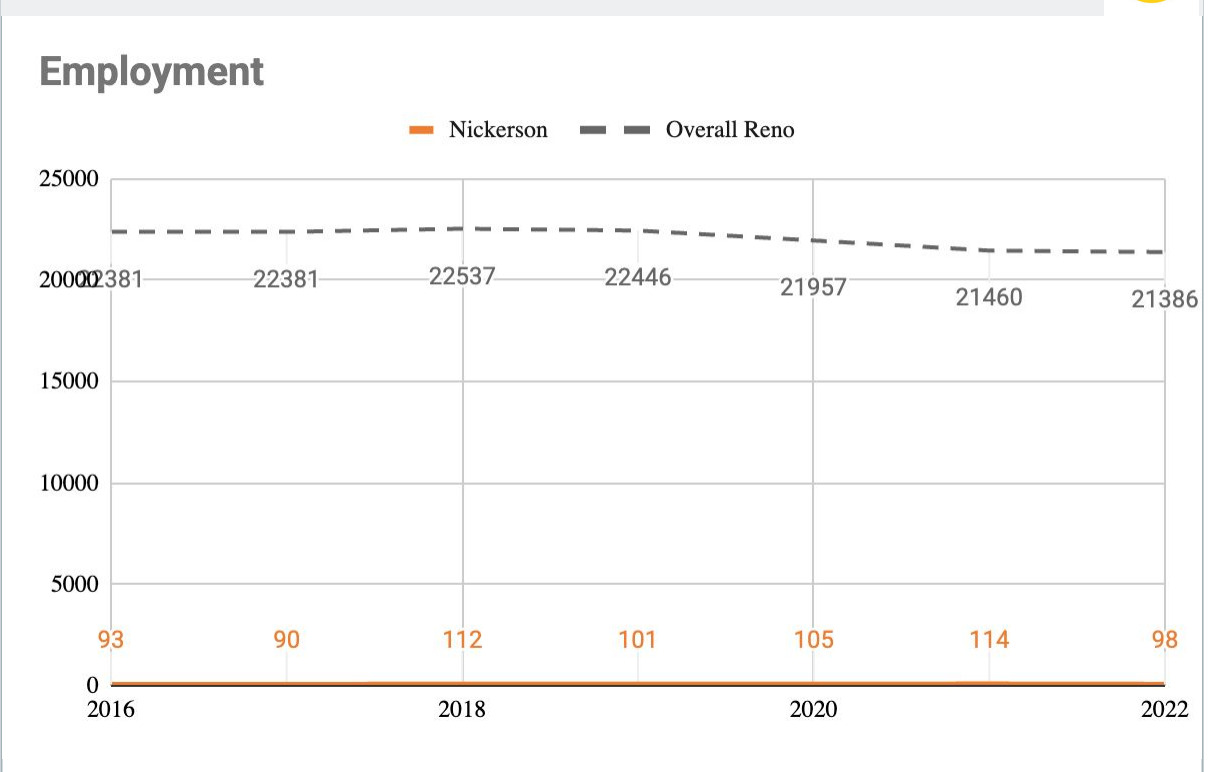
Year Over Year Change (2024 vs 2025)



Businesses in Our Town



10 Year Shift in Local Jobs

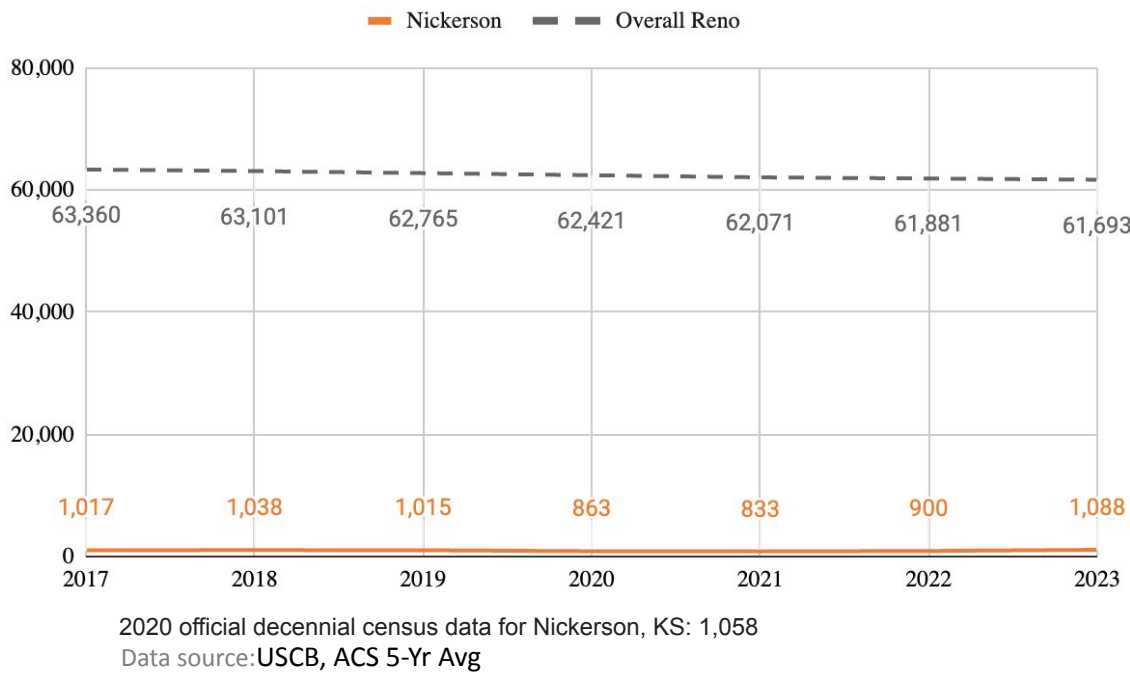


Local Economic Indicators (Cont'd)

Overall Population Trend



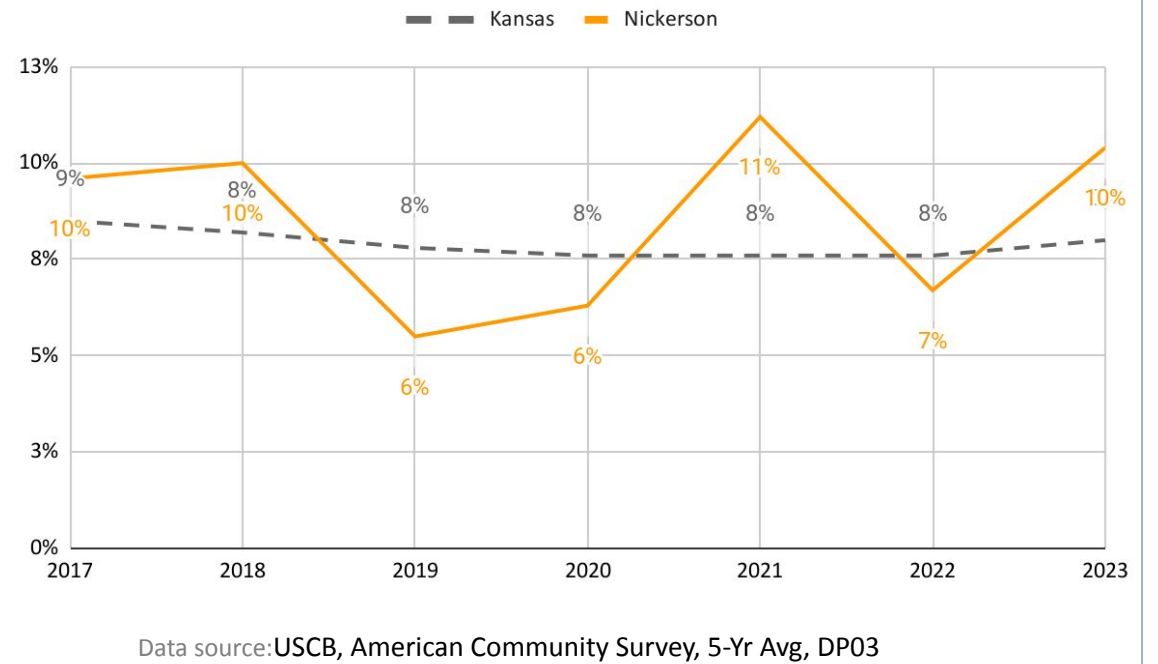
Population



Local Poverty Rate



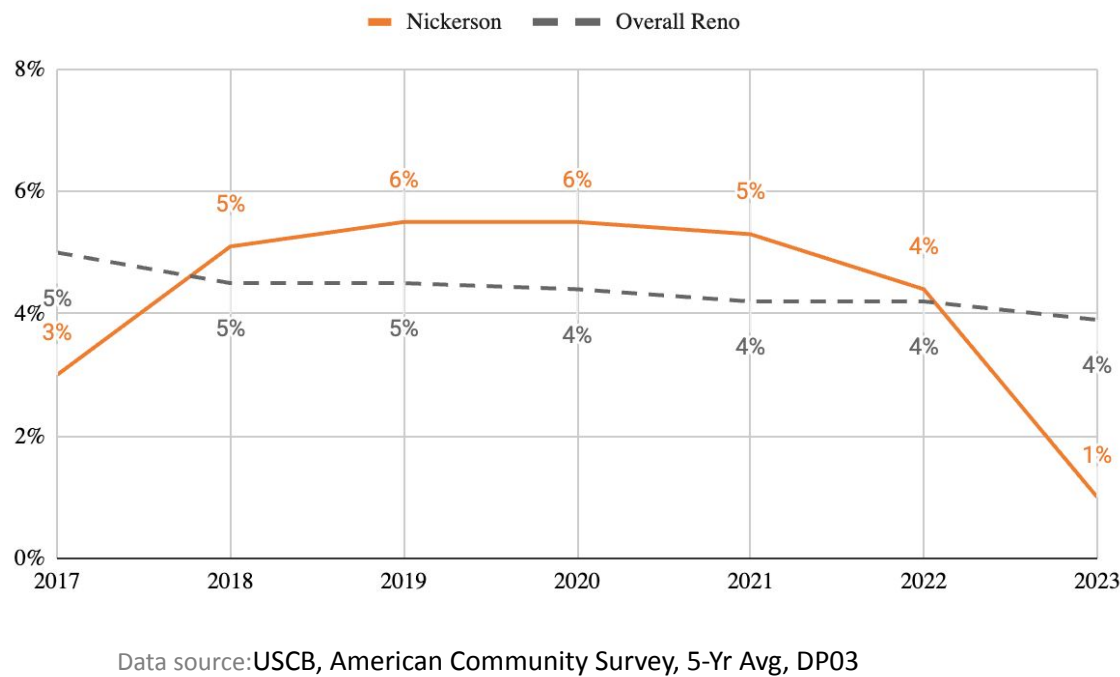
Poverty Rate



Local Unemployment Rate



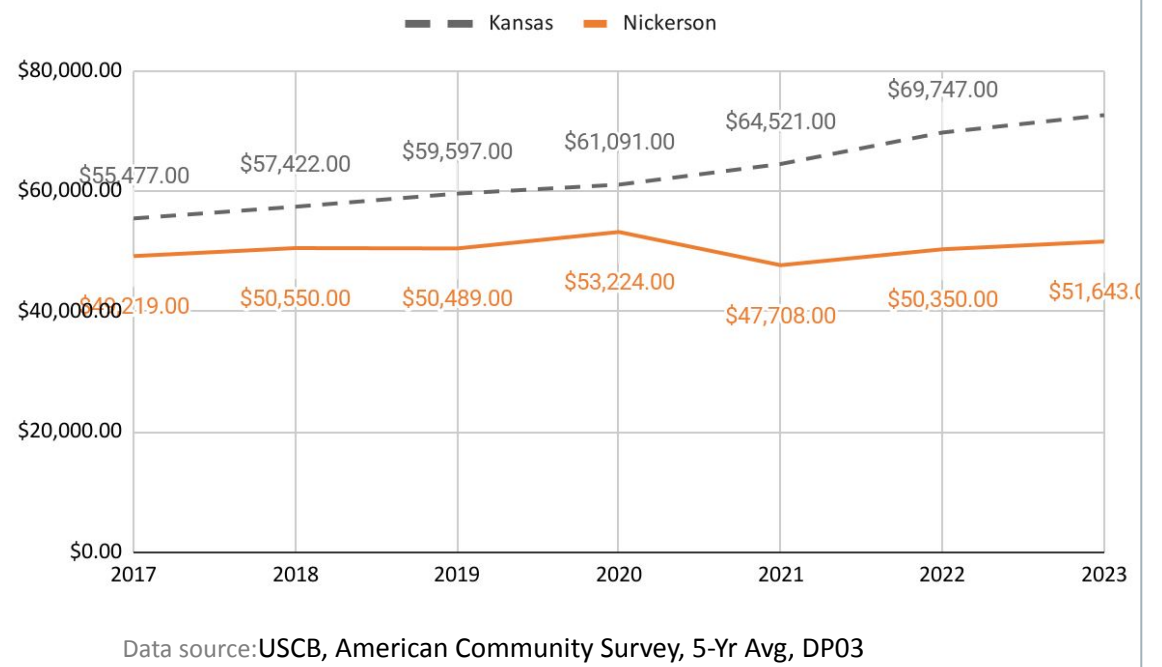
Unemployment Rate



Median Household Income



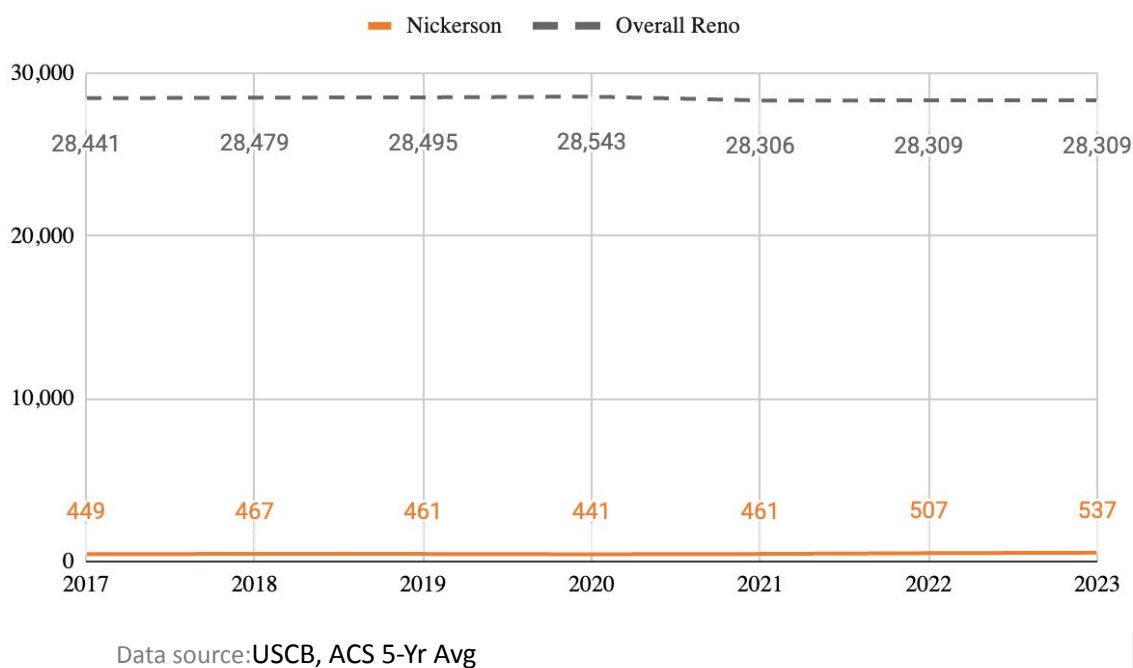
Median Household Income



Total Housing Units



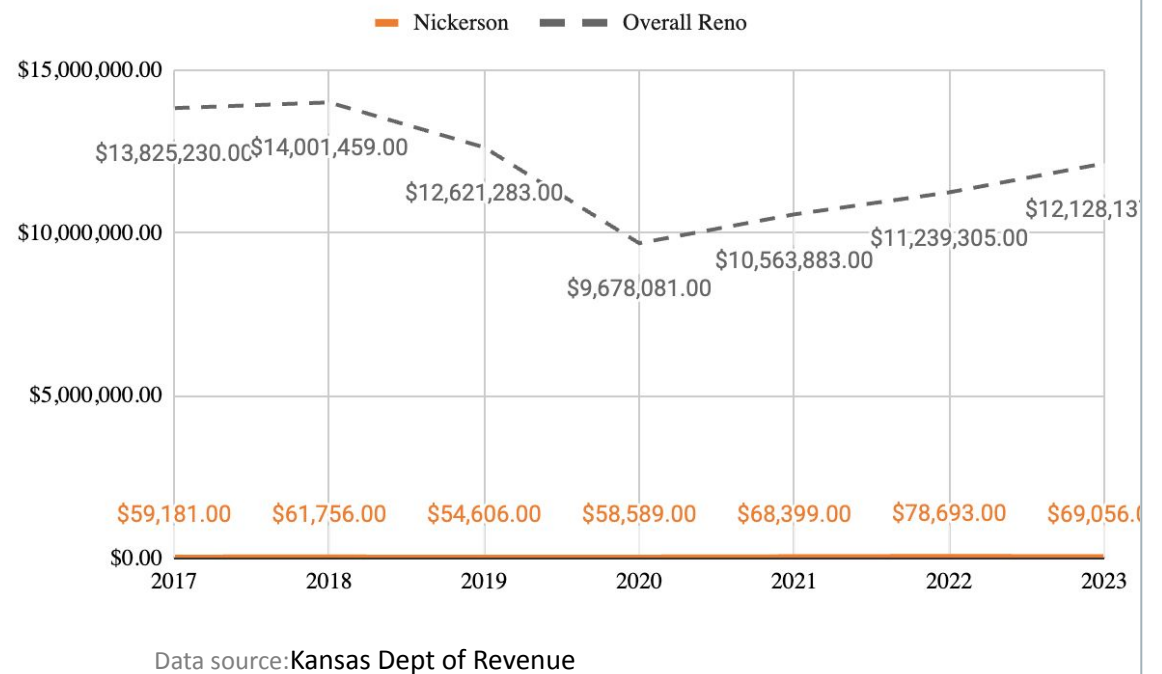
Housing Units



Annual Sales Tax Collection



Annual Sales Tax Collection



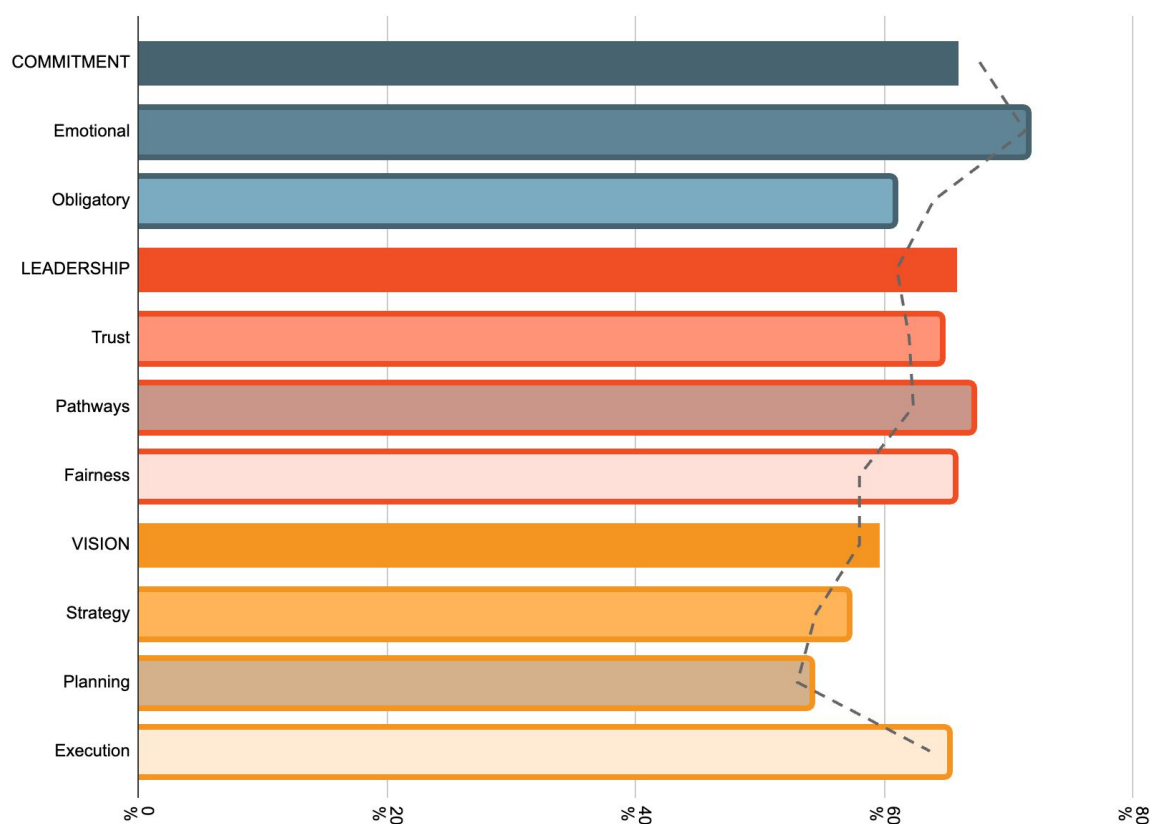
Confidence In Our Local Community

Engagement Summary:

Nickerson residents continue to express a strong emotional commitment to their town, with high scores in belonging, meaning, and long-term attachment. Long-tenure residents report especially high levels of pride and connection. However, planning and strategic clarity remain weak points. Residents feel more confident in the community's execution than its documentation or long-term vision. Trust in leadership is moderate, with slight improvements in fairness and inclusivity year-over-year. Newcomers and younger residents remain less connected, highlighting the need for better onramps to leadership and clearer communication.



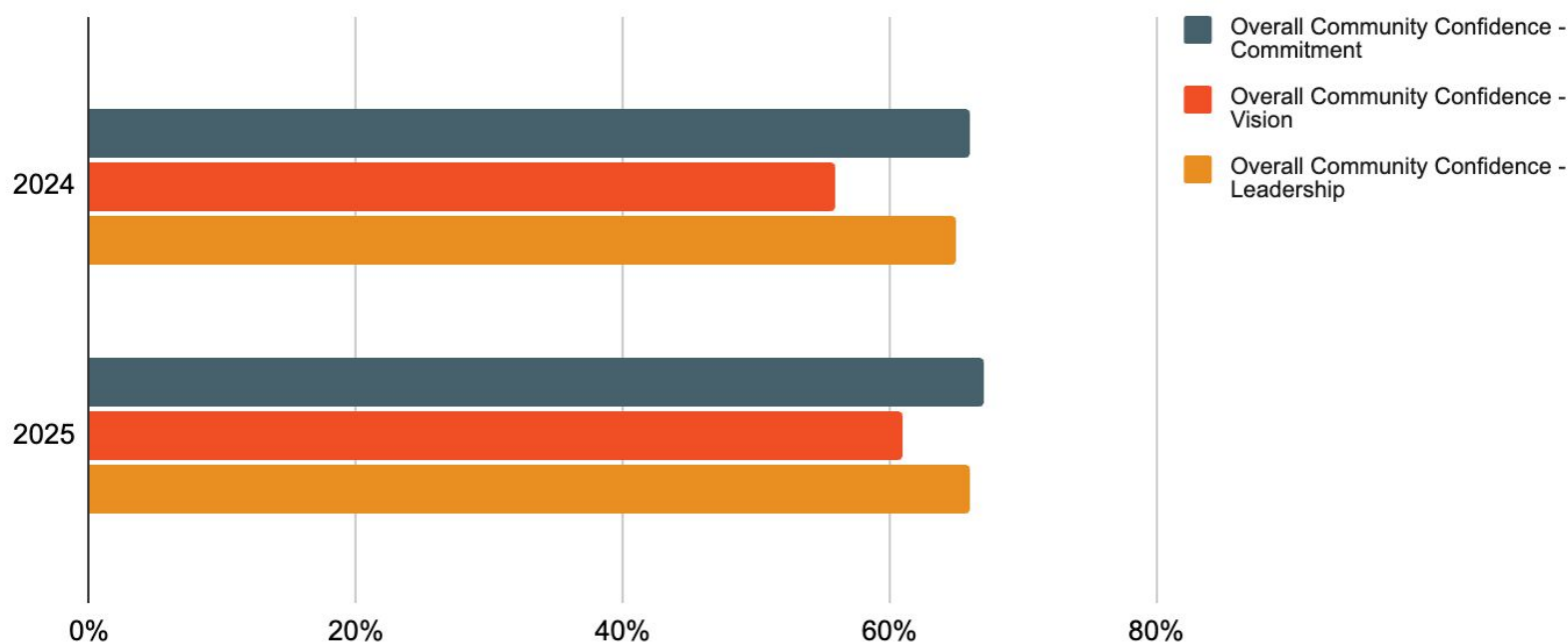
How do our residents view our community?



Questions:

- Why is Emotional Commitment higher than Obligatory Commitment, and how can we bridge the gap?
- What can be done to improve Planning confidence in Nickerson, especially around documented paths forward?
- Why is Trust in leadership lower than other Leadership indicators, and what drives this skepticism?
- How do long-term residents influence higher Emotional Commitment, and how can this be extended to newcomers?
- In what ways can Strategy communication be improved to increase confidence in the community's direction?
- What explains the gap between Execution confidence and Planning confidence?

Year Over Year Change

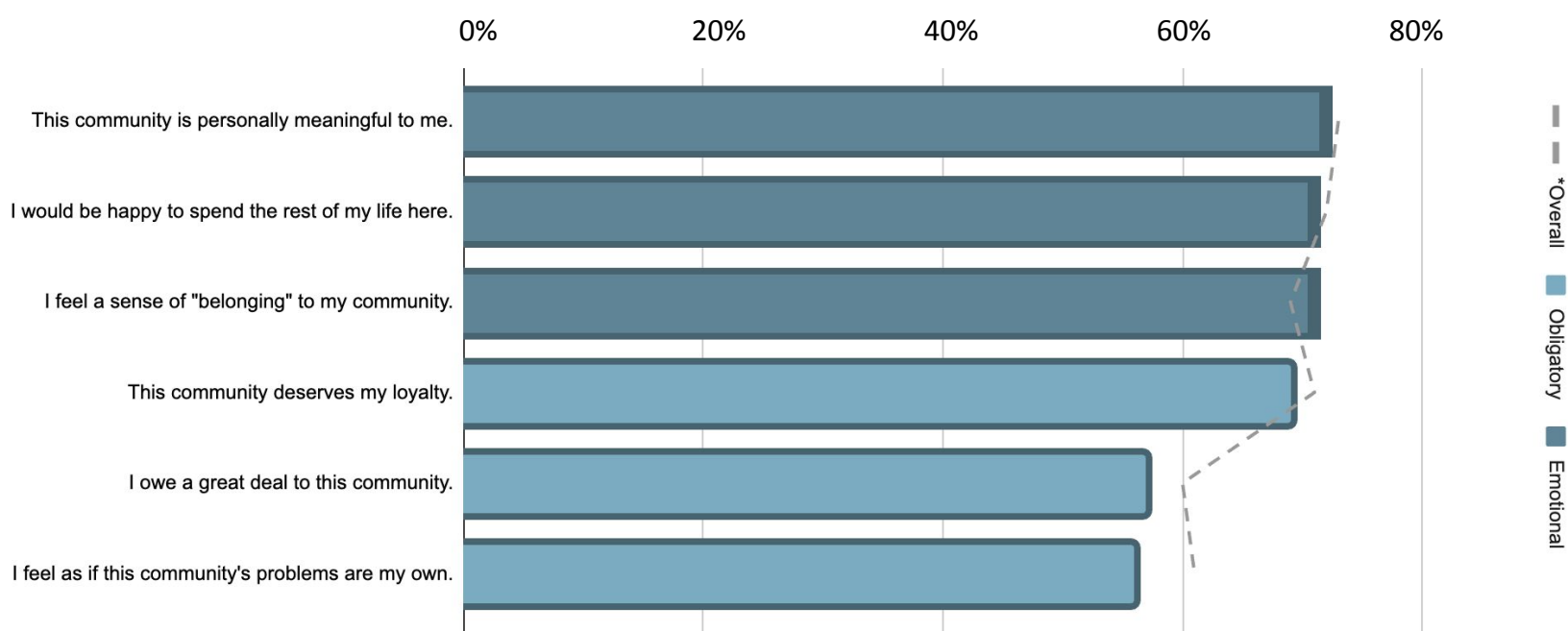


Confidence In Our Local Community

Average Reno County Score

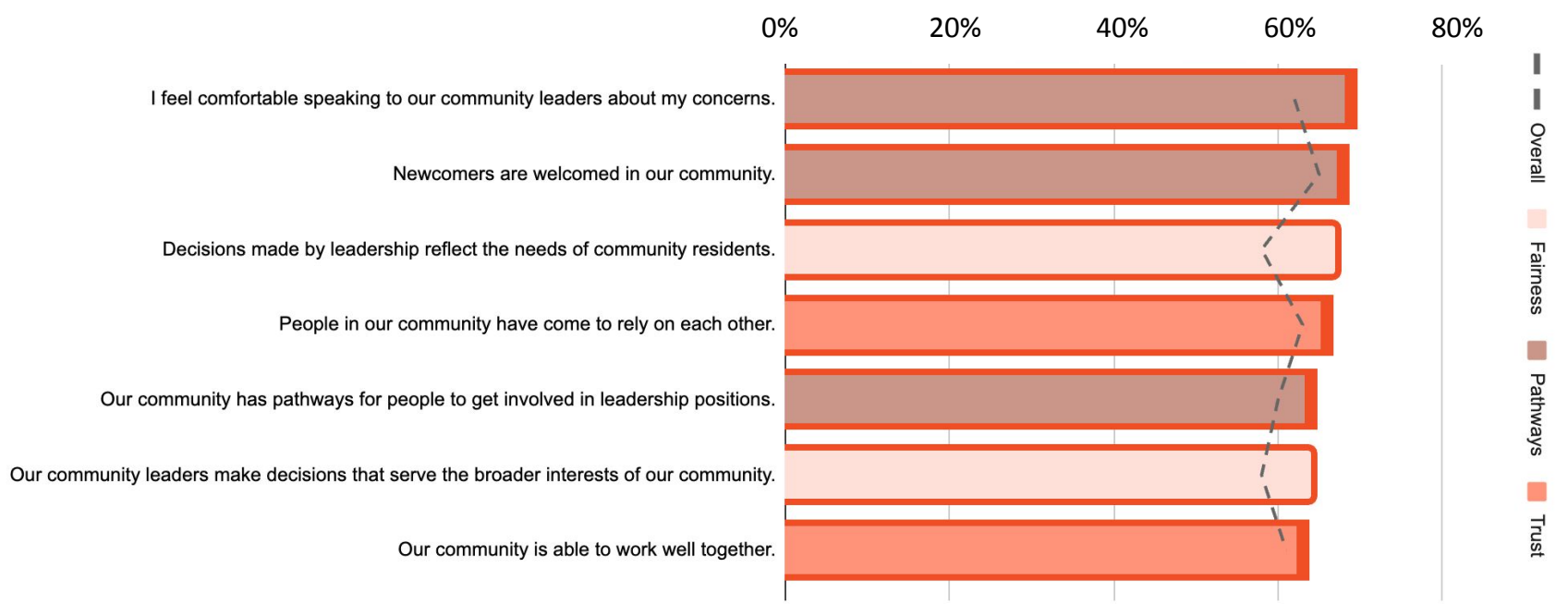
Portion of the community that is highly confident on the listed community dimensions (Rating range: 0-7)

Community Confidence: Personal Commitment



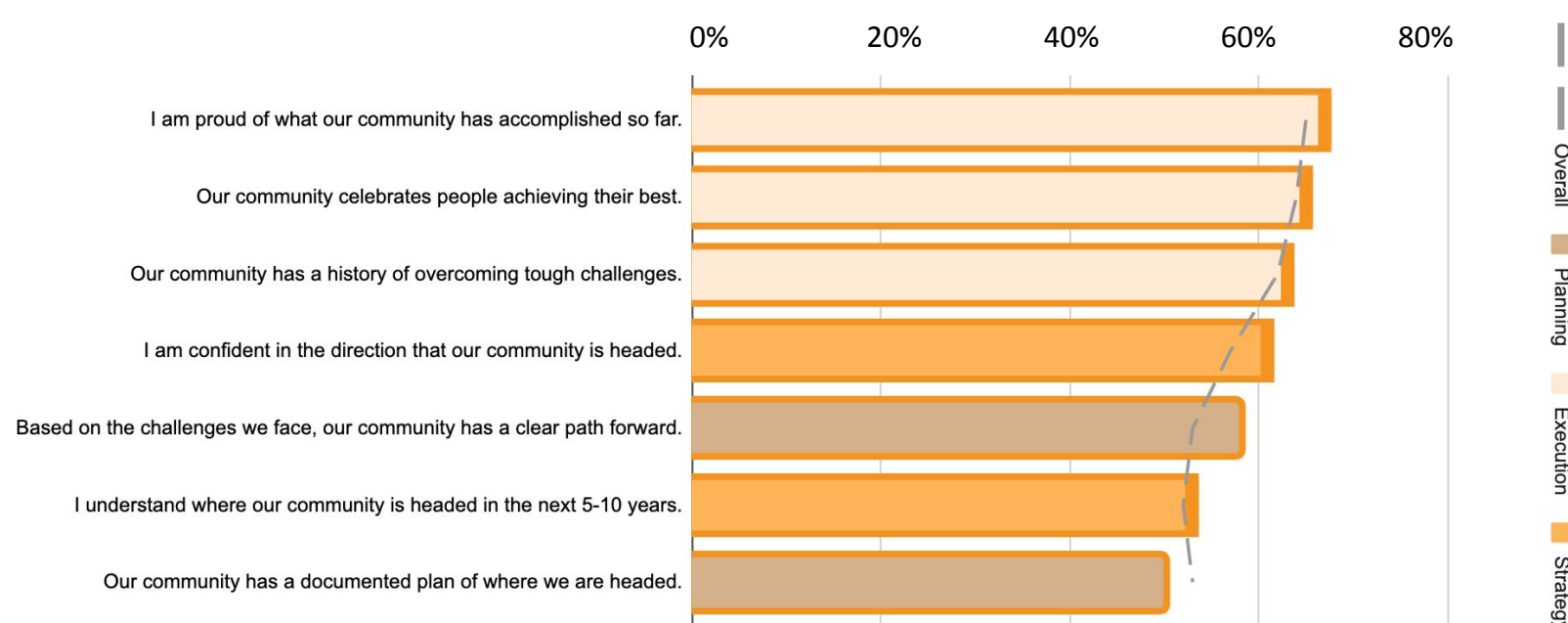
- What drives the high Emotional Commitment in Nickerson and how can it be preserved?
- How can we better connect newcomers to the emotional values long-term residents express?
- What role does community history play in shaping loyalty and belonging in Nickerson?
- How can we engage families with children to deepen their already strong commitment to the area?

Community Confidence: Local Leadership



- What factors have contributed to slight improvements in fairness and inclusivity in leadership?
- Why does "working well together" still trail behind other Leadership indicators?
- How can leadership improve decision transparency, especially for younger adults?
- What contributes to residents feeling comfortable speaking to leaders?

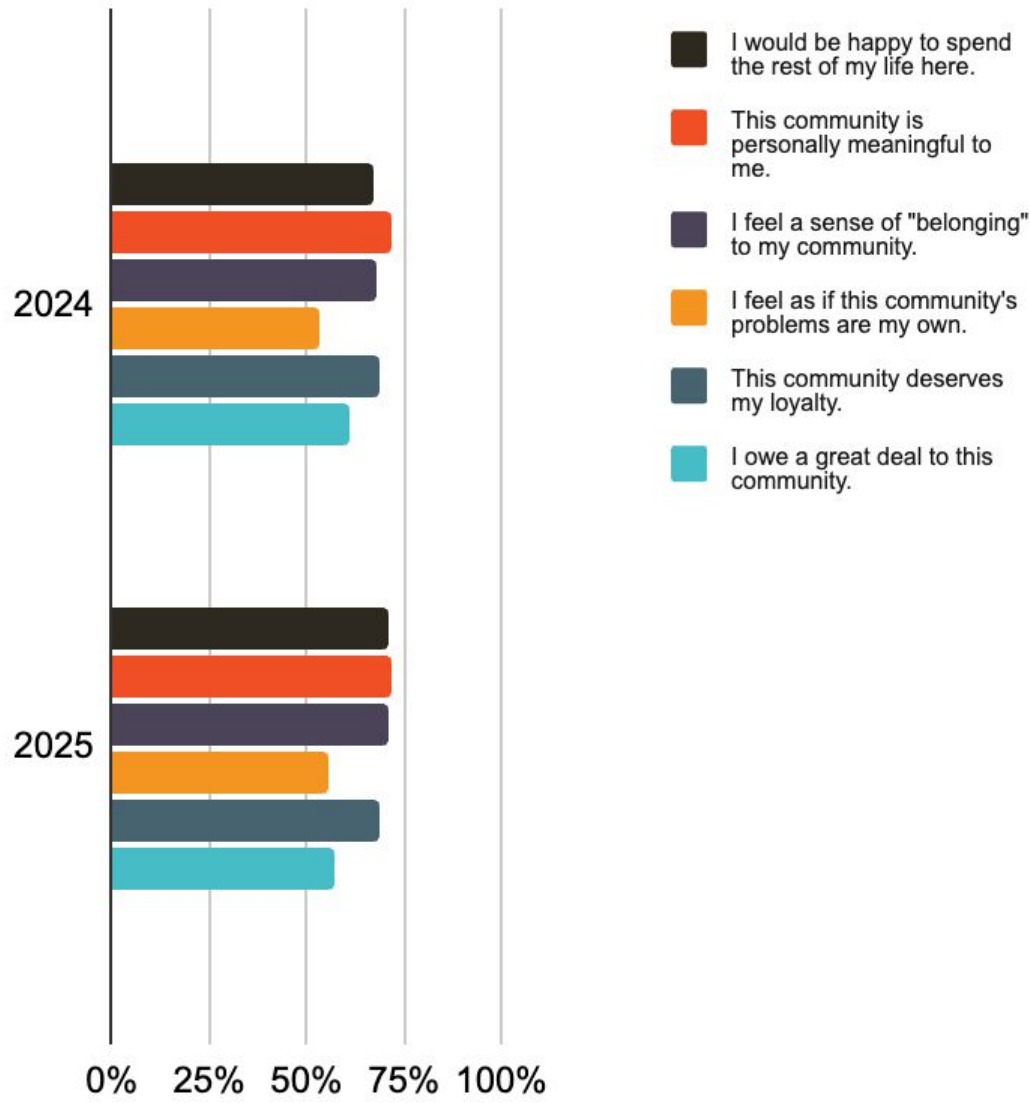
Community Confidence: Vision



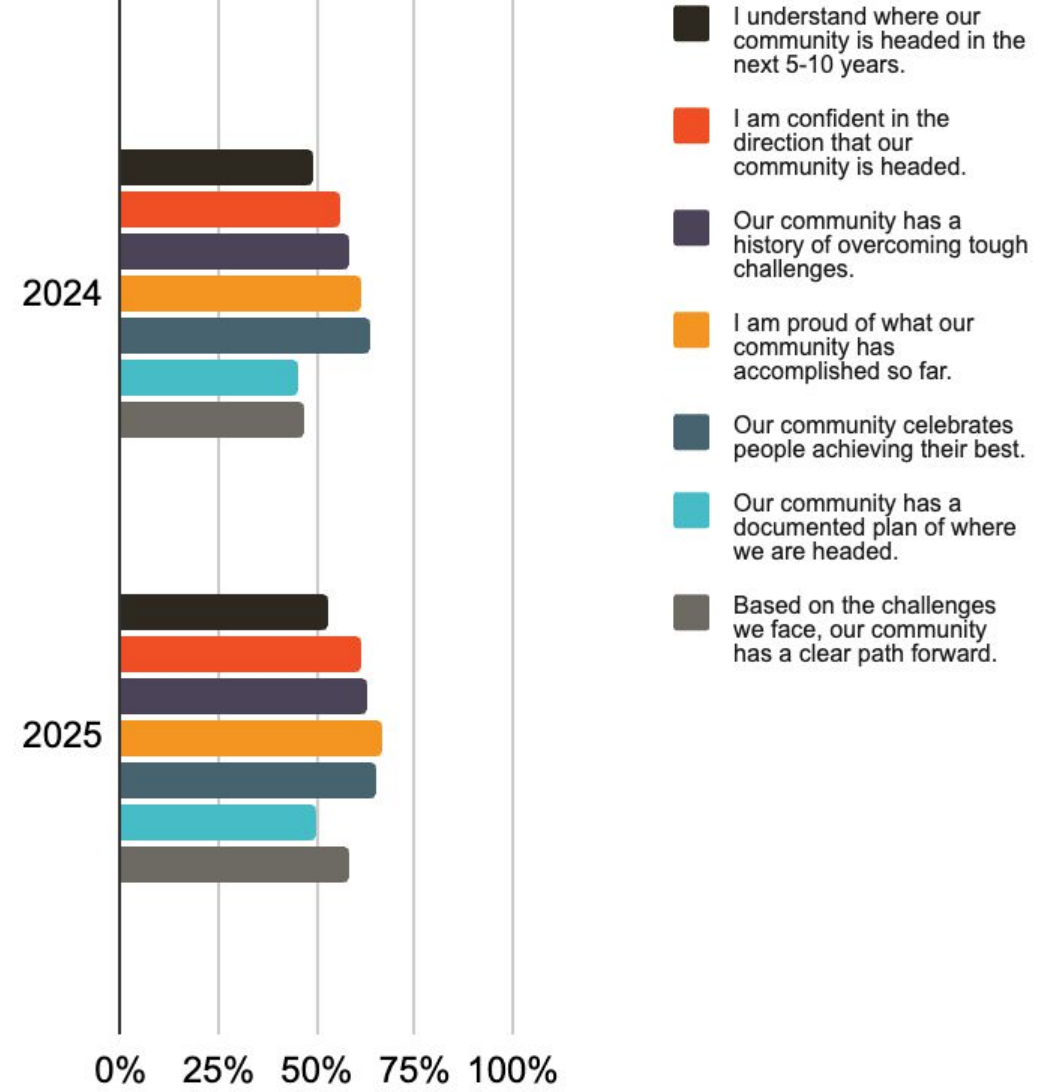
- Why do residents feel more confident in community direction than in long-term planning?
- What improvements have driven modest YOY growth in Execution confidence?
- How can documentation of community plans be made clearer or more accessible?
- What efforts have strengthened community pride in overcoming challenges?

Confidence In Our Local Community

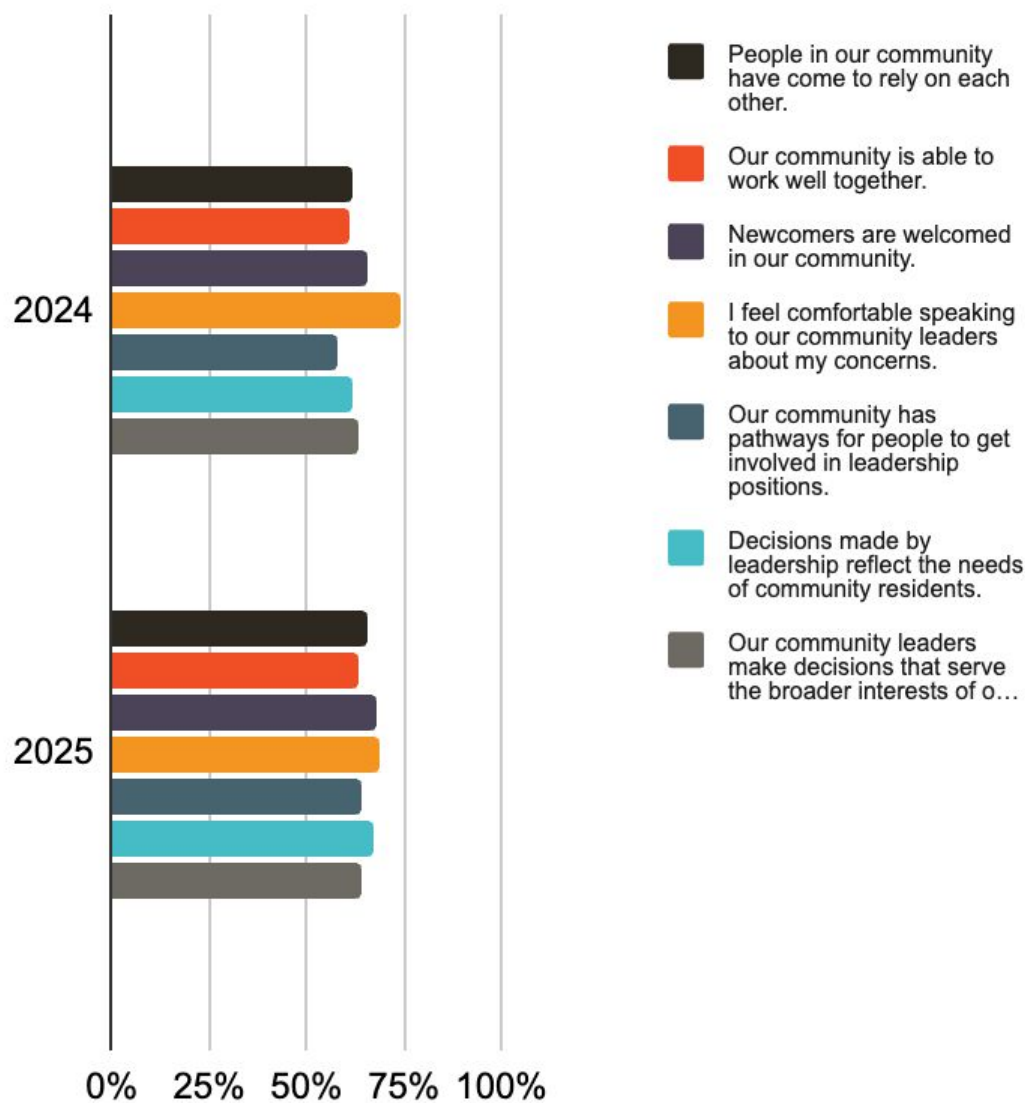
Commitment



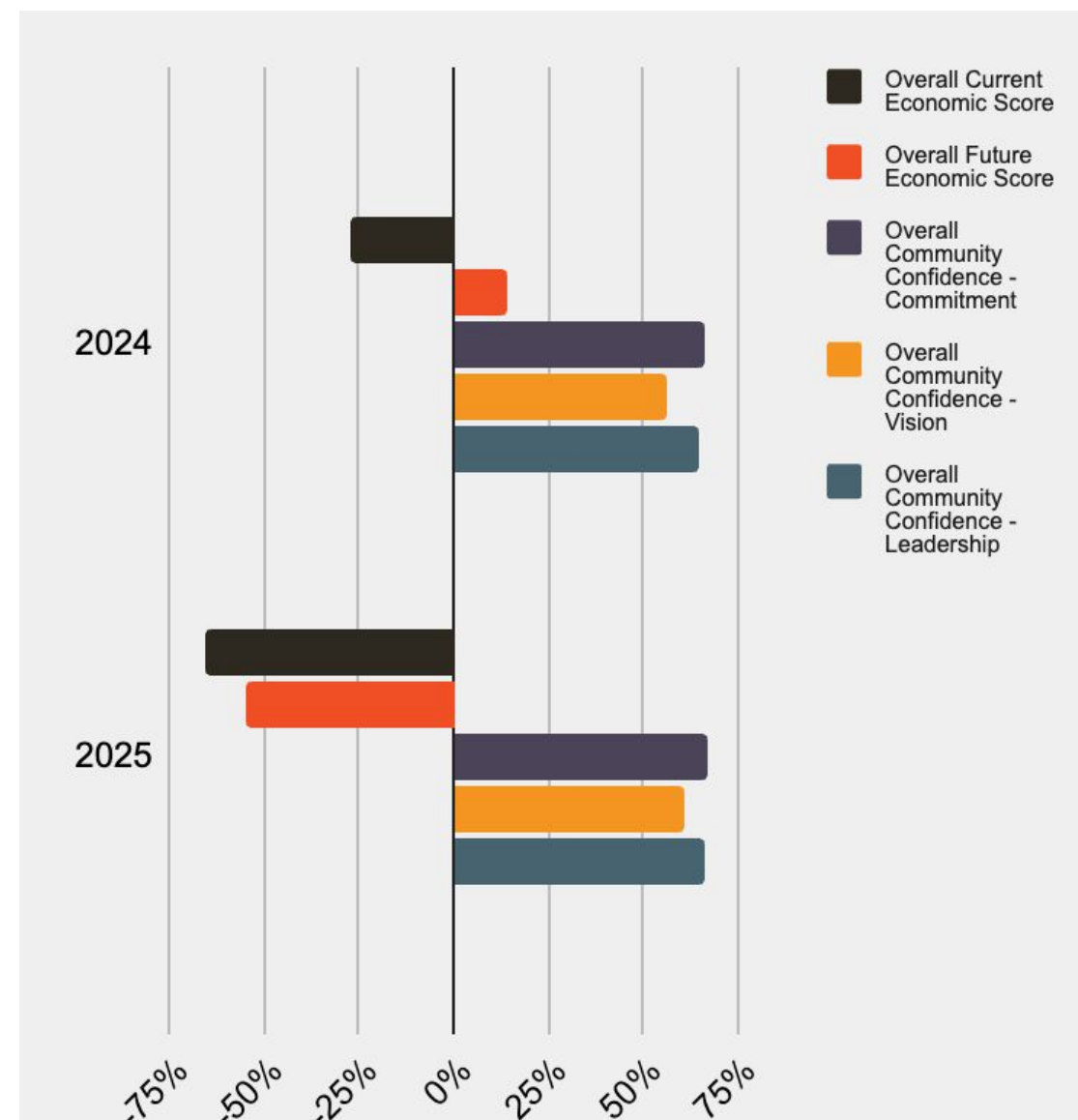
Vision



Leadership



Economic vs. Community Confidence

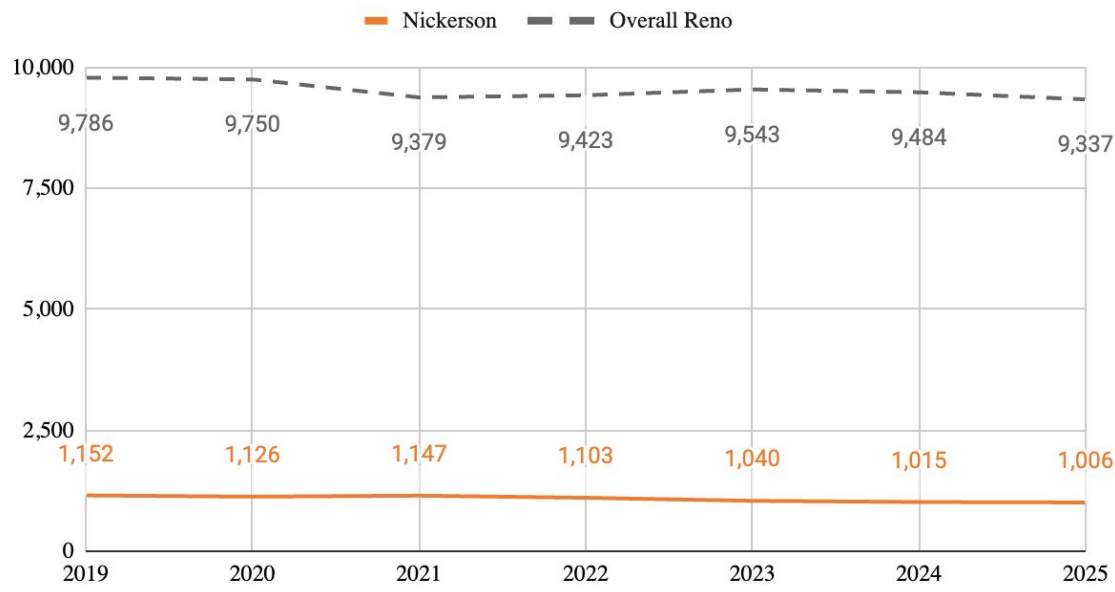


Local Community Indicators

Local School Enrollment



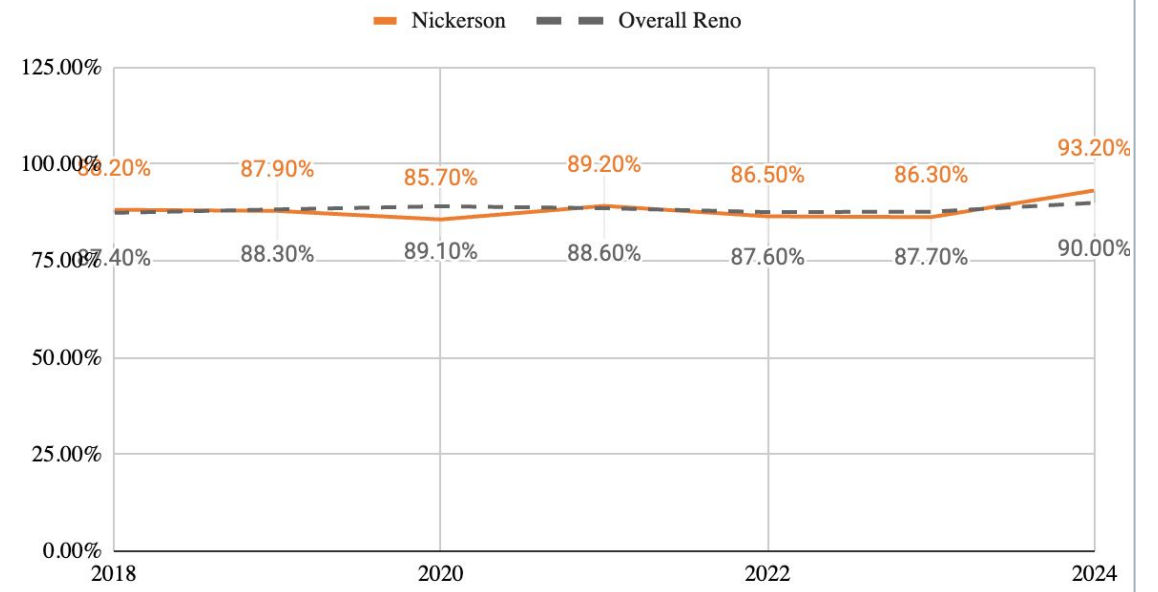
Enrollment



High School 4 Year Graduation Rate



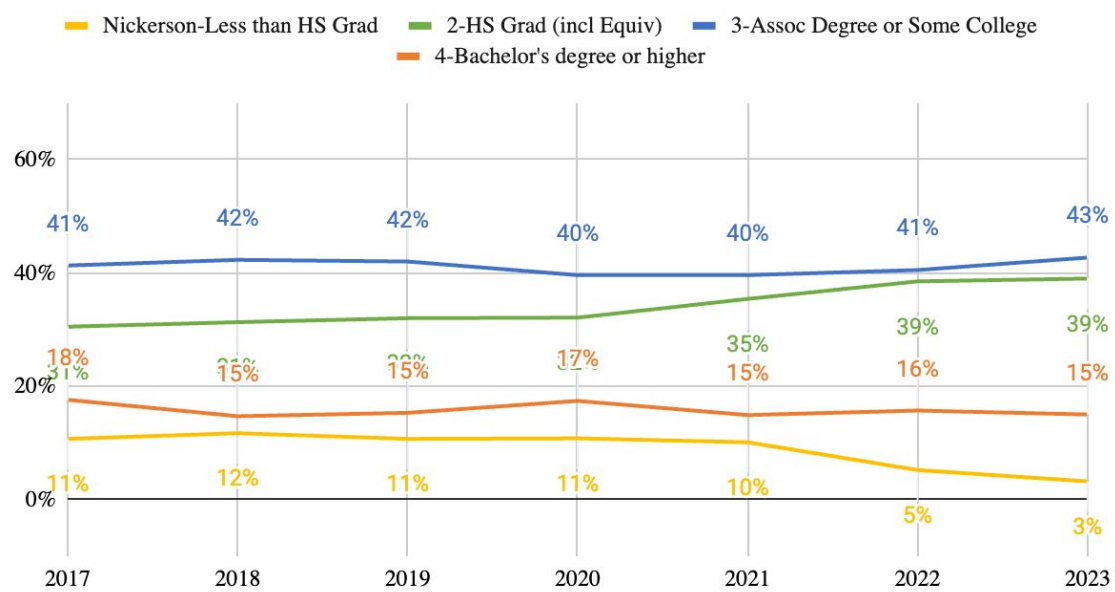
Graduation Rate



Local Educational Level



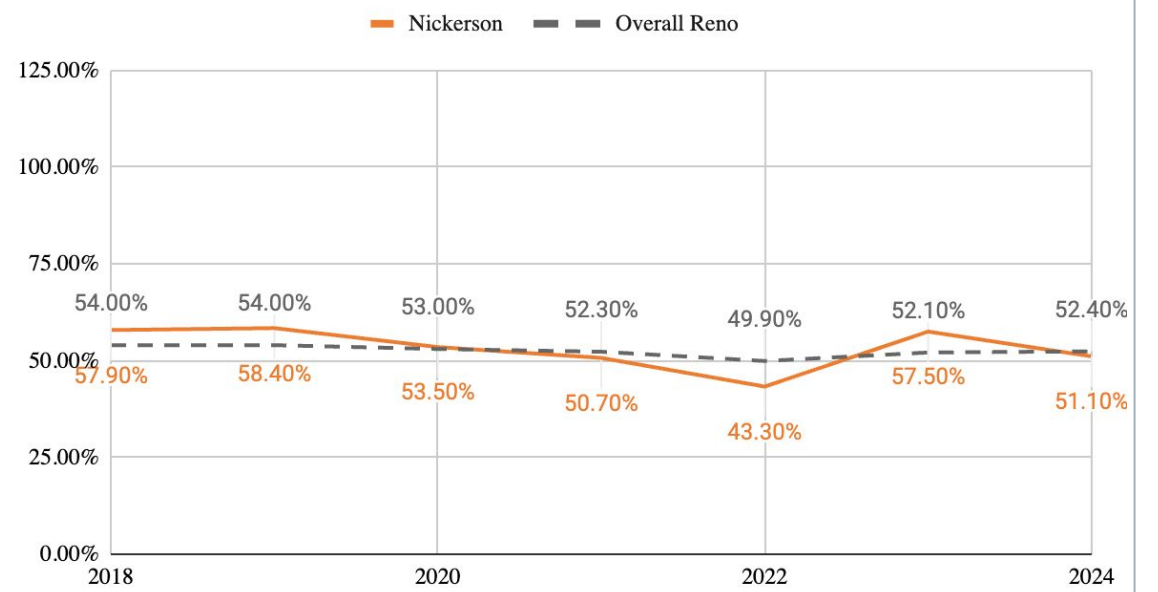
Education Level



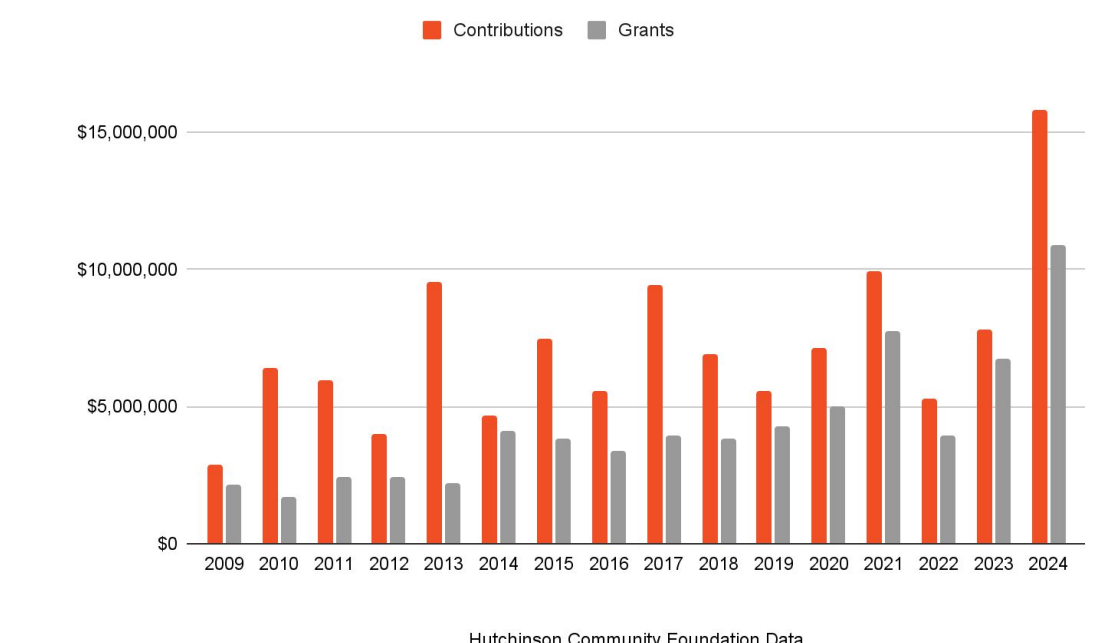
School % Free-Reduced Price Lunch



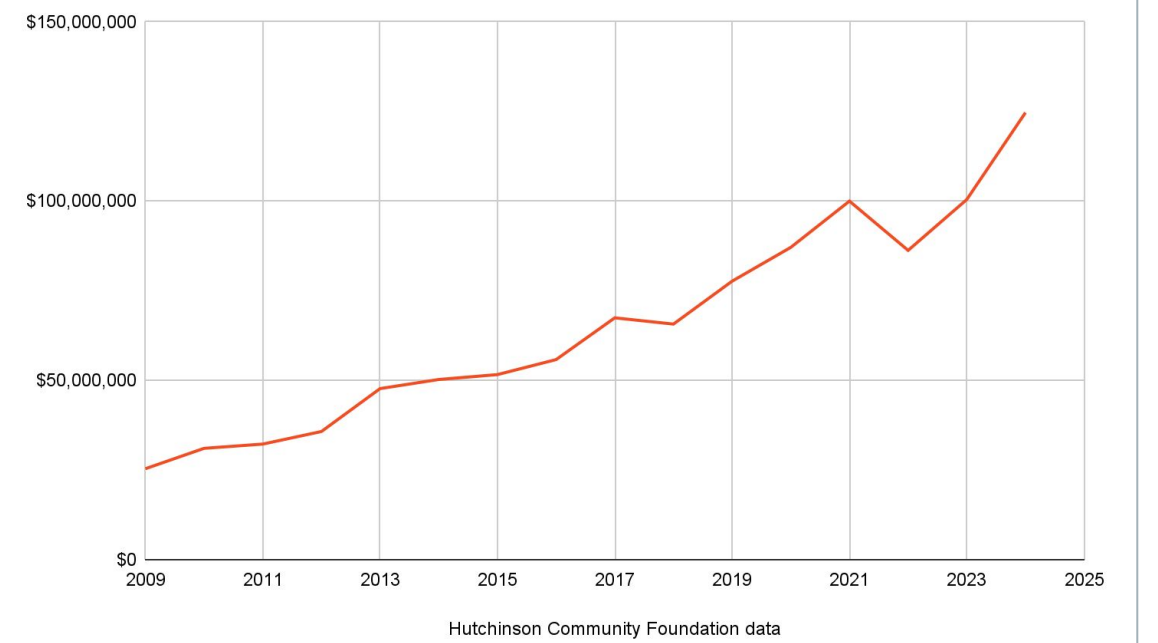
Free/Reduced Lunch



Hutchinson Community Foundation: Contributions & Grants



Hutchinson Community Foundation: Total Assets

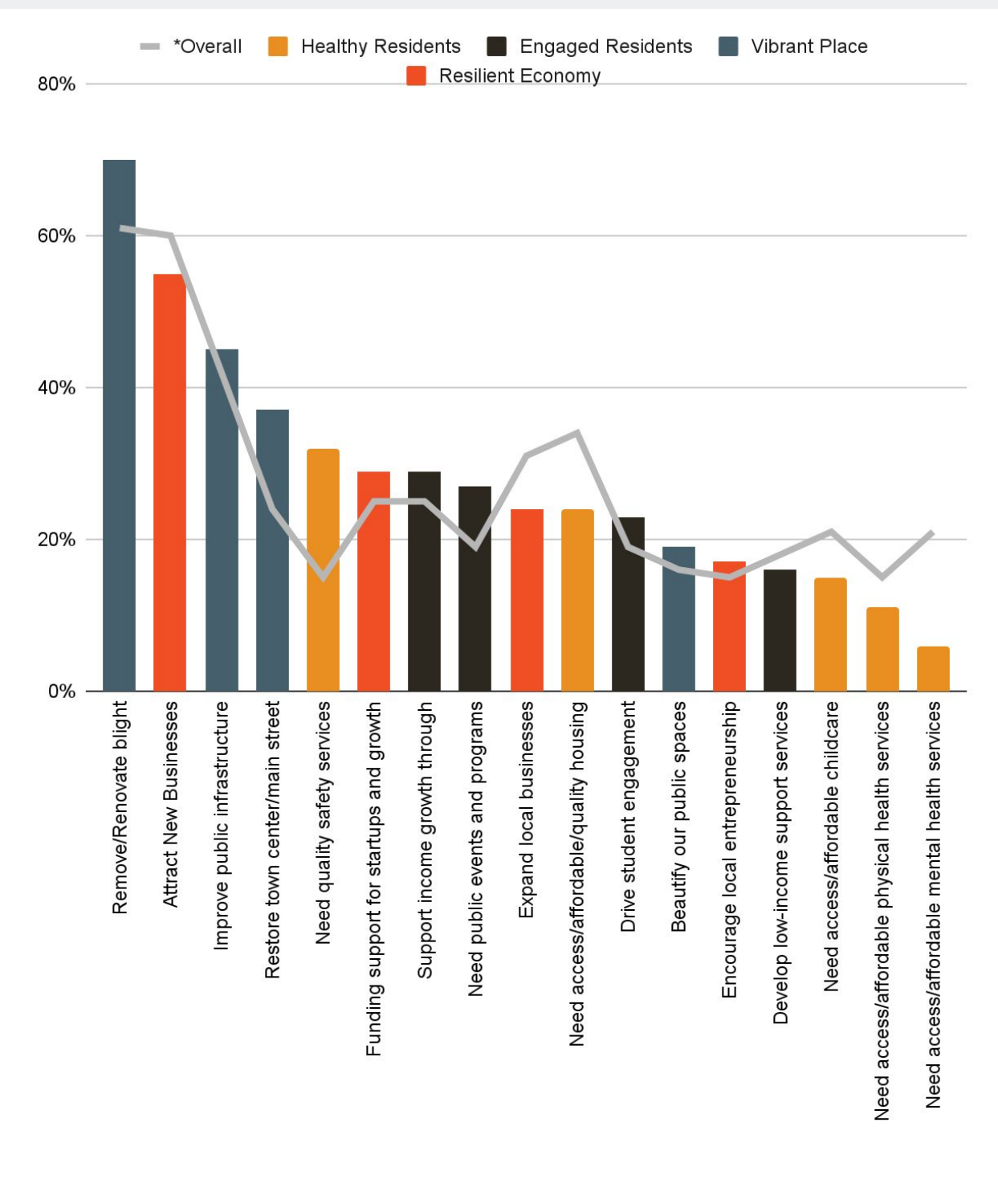


Community Program Priorities

Priorities Summary:

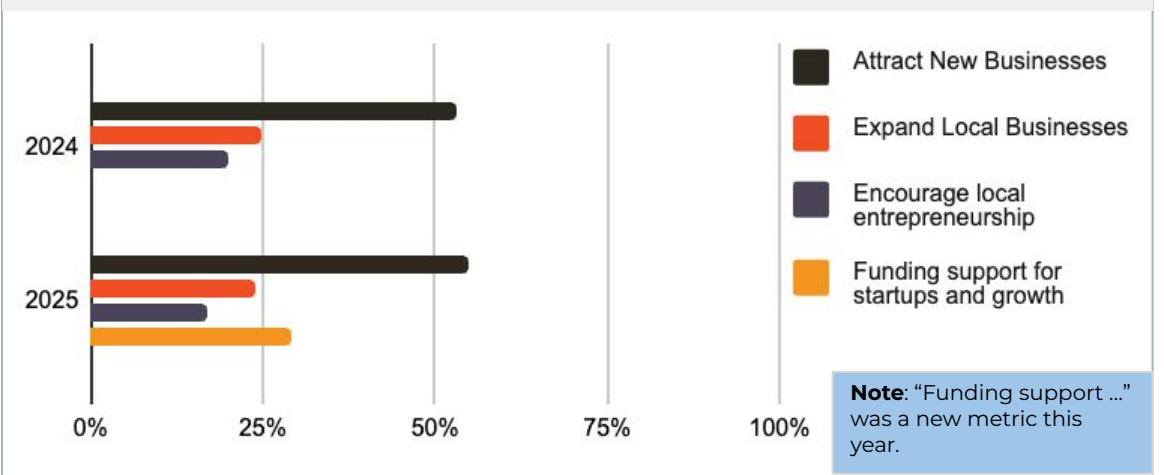
Nickerson's priorities in 2025 reveal a community striving to stabilize and renew. With unlimited resources, residents envision major infrastructure projects like fixing sidewalks, roads, drainage, and housing to reinvigorate neighborhoods and attract new residents. When constrained to \$15k/year, their focus shifts to practical beautification efforts and targeted supports, such as signage and property cleanup. Across both funding scenarios, themes of pride, safety, and renewal emerge. Youth-oriented opportunities are gaining momentum, especially among younger adults and parents who voice growing concern about food insecurity.

Program Priorities

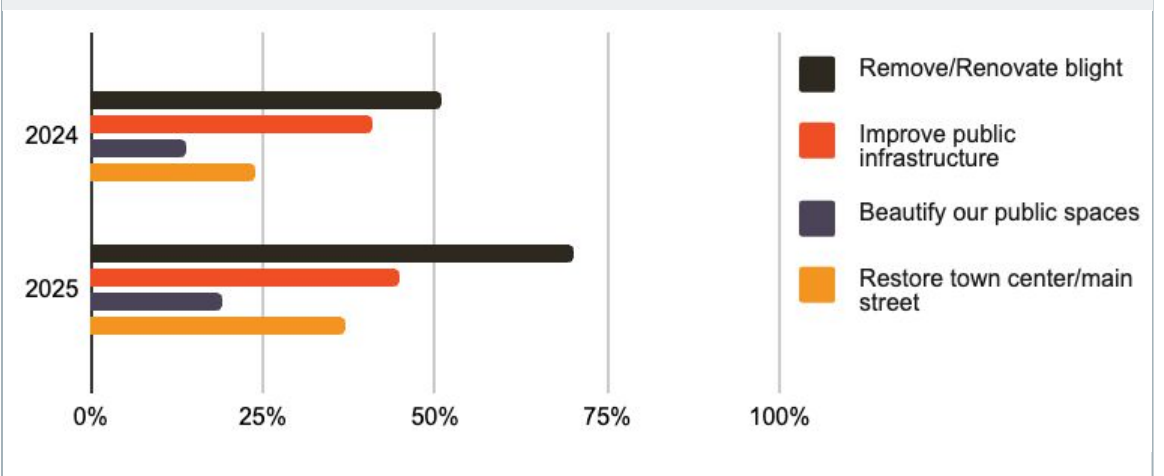


- What strategies can Nickerson use to accelerate removal and renovation of blighted properties?
- How can public infrastructure improvements be phased to maximize visibility and community benefit?
- What partnerships could help restore the town center and attract more local investment?
- Why is attracting new businesses a higher priority than expanding or supporting existing ones?

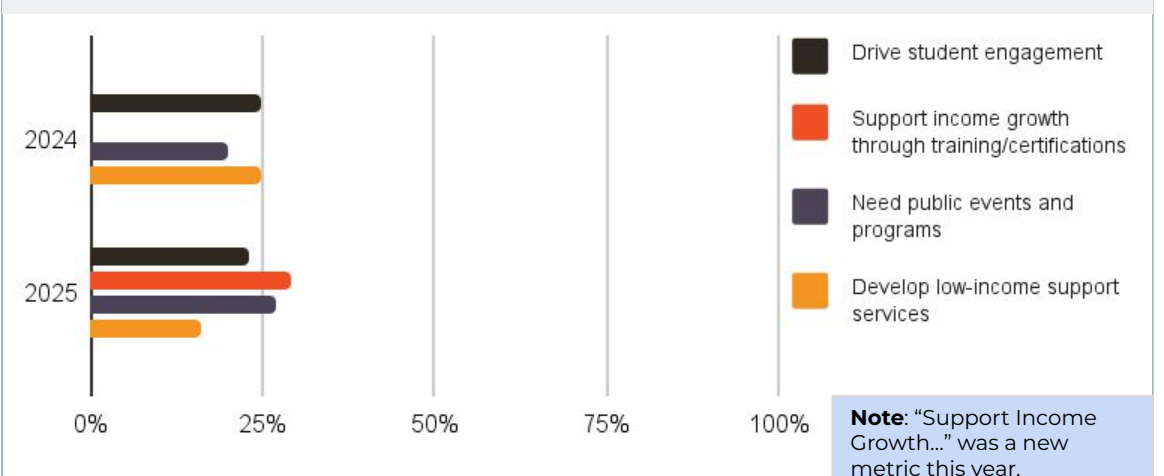
Resilient Economy



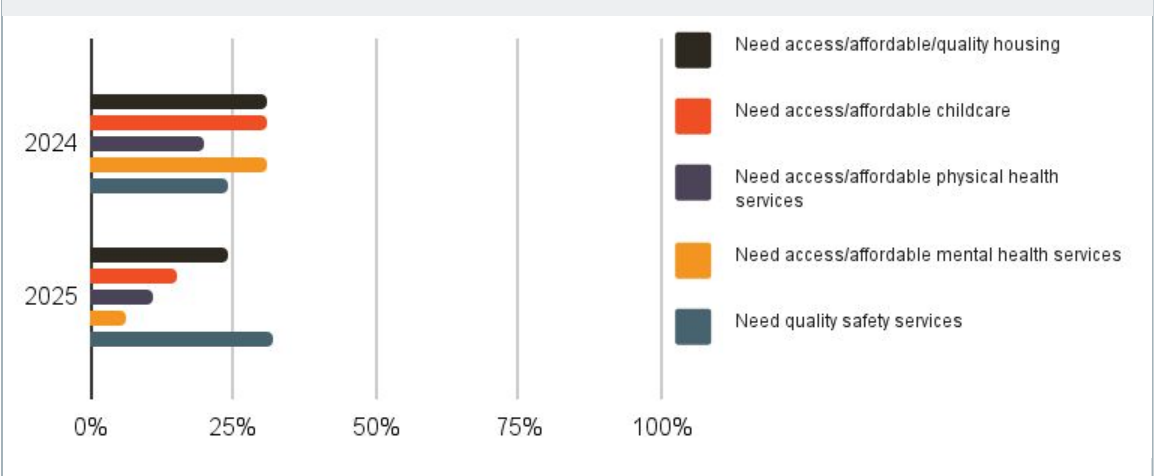
Vibrant Place



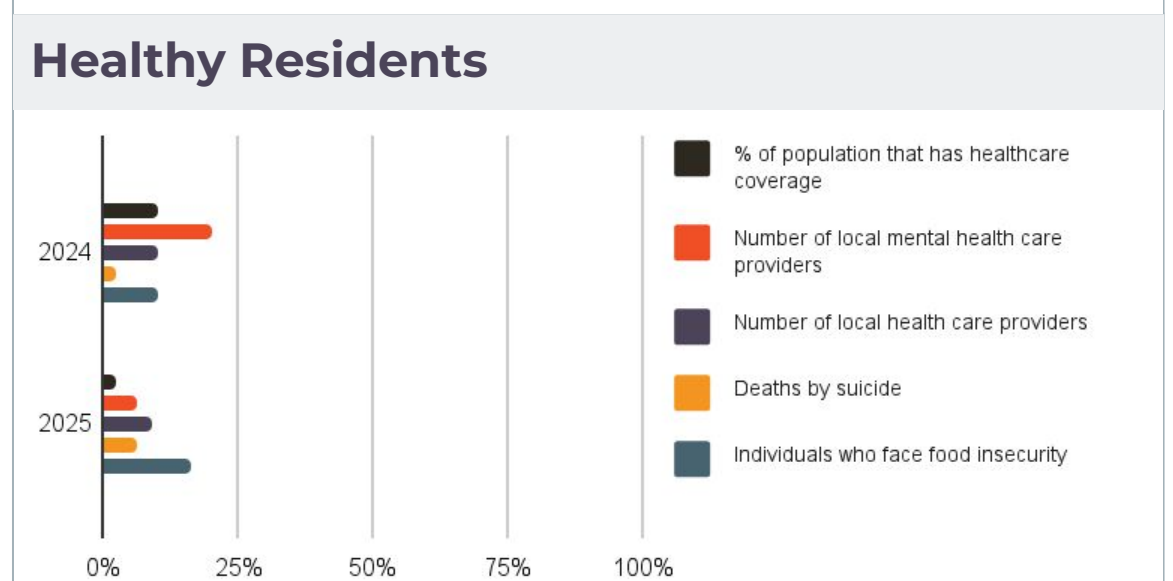
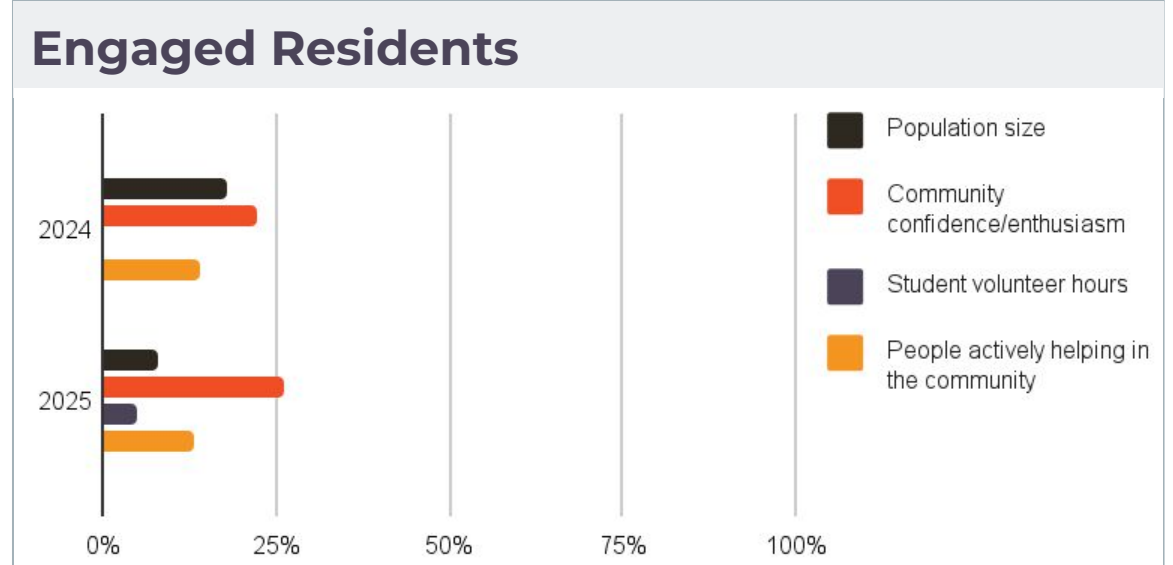
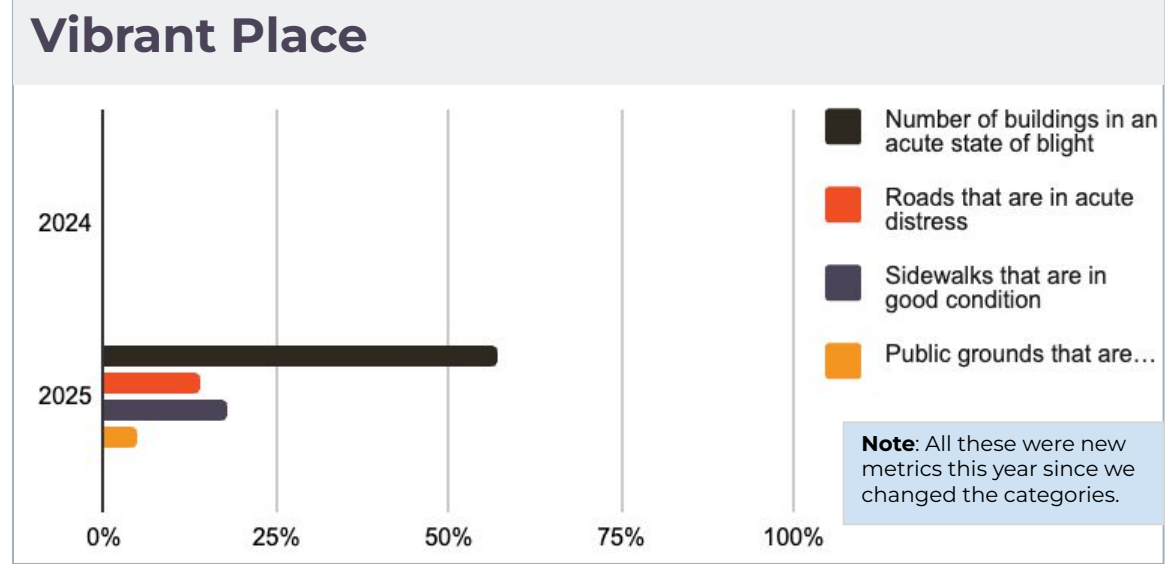
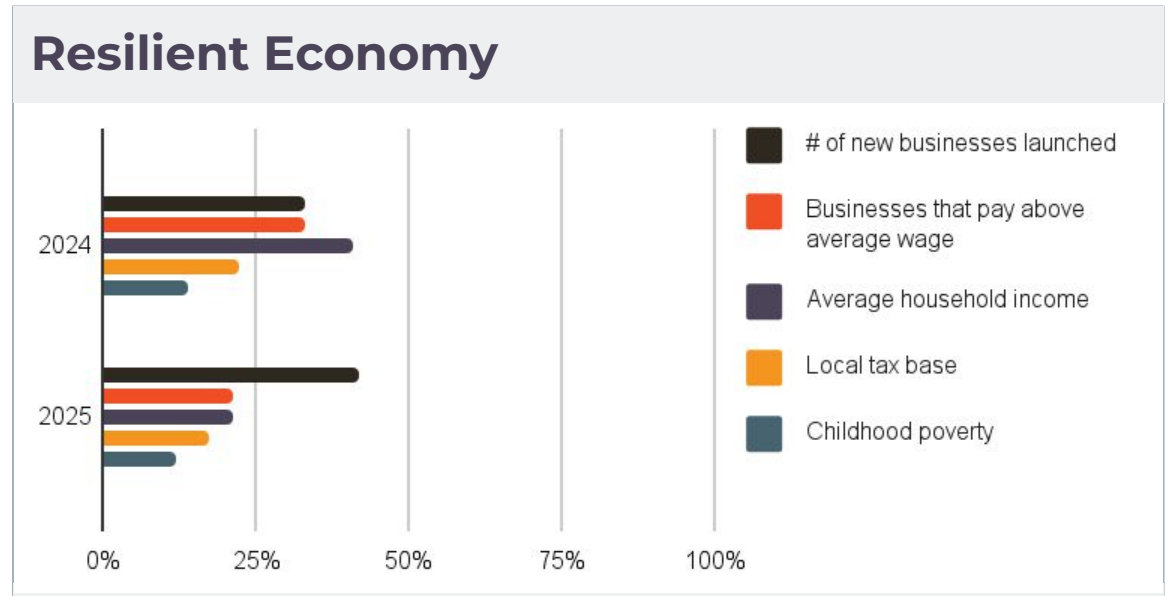
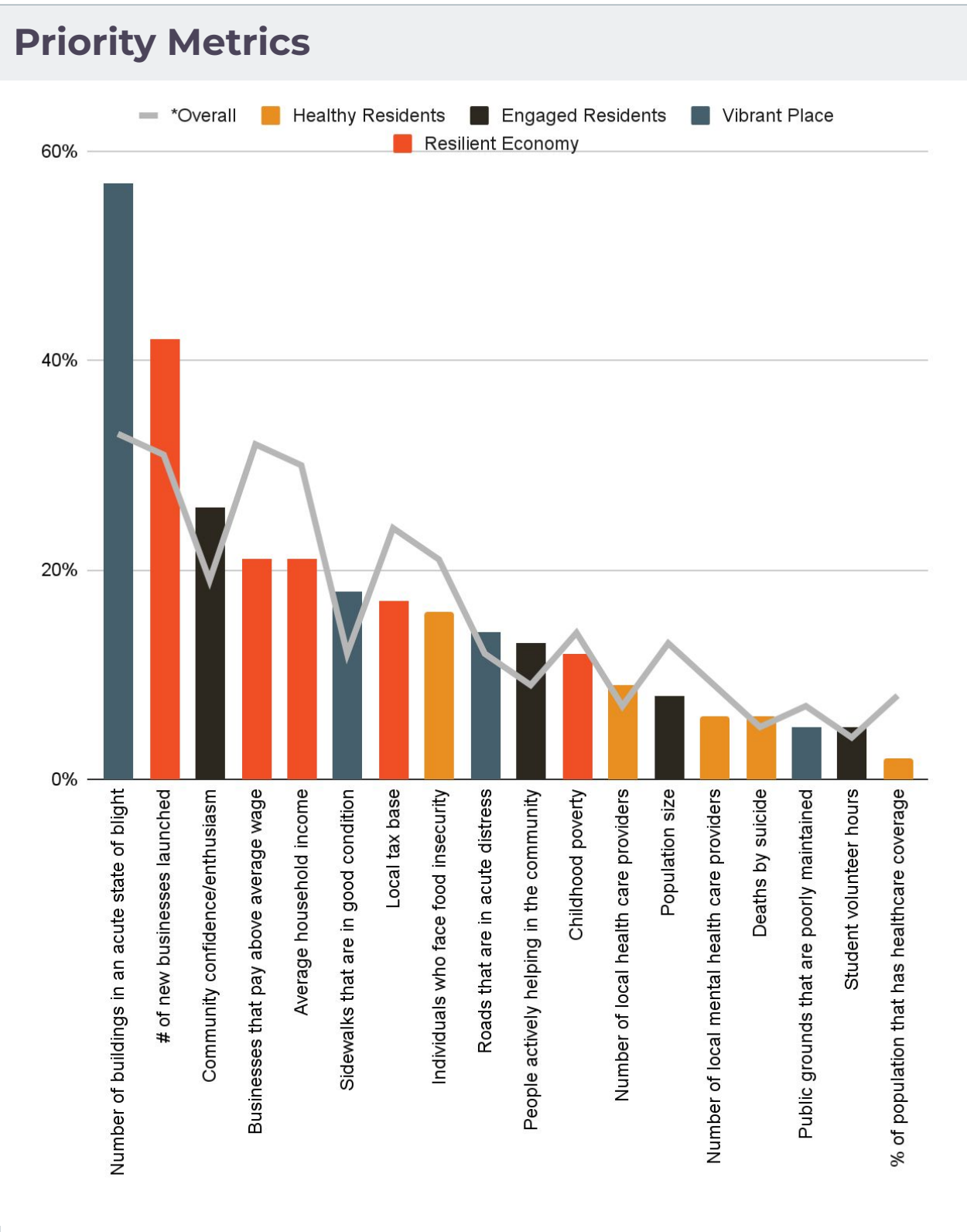
Engaged Residents



Healthy Residents



Community Priority Metrics



- What steps can reduce the high number of buildings in an acute state of blight?
- How can the community support new business launches in ways that sustain long-term growth?
- What approaches can improve community confidence and enthusiasm, especially among younger families?
- How can Nickerson address rising concern about food insecurity in a sustainable way?
- What efforts are needed to increase the number of businesses paying above-average wages?



Investing In Local Priorities

What project should be undertaken locally if money, time, or skills were not a constraint? What outcome would this create in the next 2-3 years?

- Sidewalk and Road Improvements – Fixing sidewalks, paving roads, and improving storm drainage to increase safety, accessibility, and town appeal
- Housing Revitalization – Renovating or removing abandoned homes to attract new residents, support low-income families, and beautify the community
- Downtown/Main Street Revamp – Restoring storefronts and creating incentives for small business growth to revitalize the town center
- Youth and Family Services – Building community centers or health hubs for counseling, WIC, youth life skills, and recreational activities

If we could only invest \$15k in a program each year for the next 3 years, what project should we work on? What outcome would this create in the next 2-3 years?

- Neighborhood Beautification – Cleaning up properties, demolishing abandoned structures, and promoting pride to increase investment and morale
- Sidewalk and Road Repairs – Improving walkability and safety near schools and neighborhoods, with long-term visual and functional benefits
- Small Business Support – Grants or incentives for new business startups to generate local jobs and revitalize vacant storefronts
- Housing Assistance – Rehab programs or clean-up efforts for homes to attract new families and improve living standards

Serving your community!

How do you serve your community today?

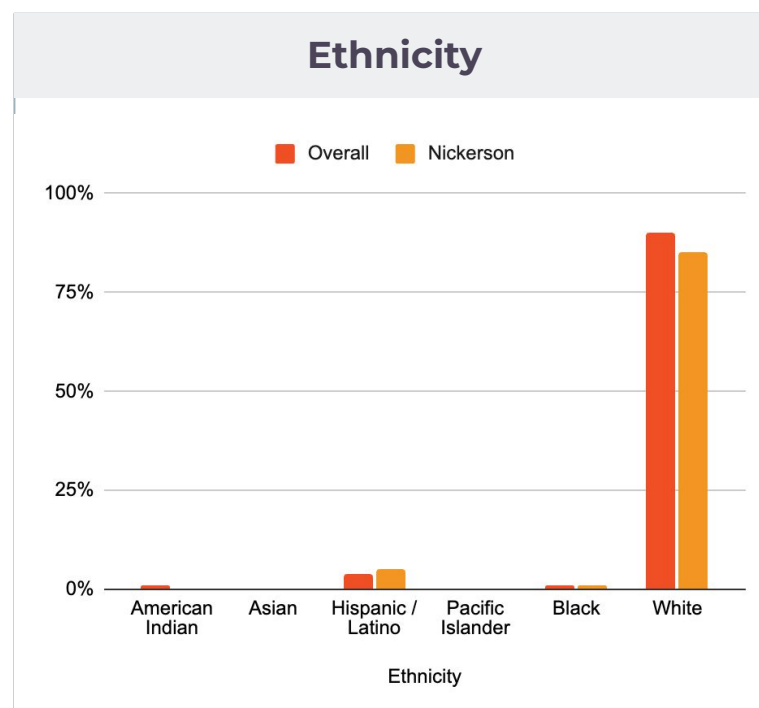
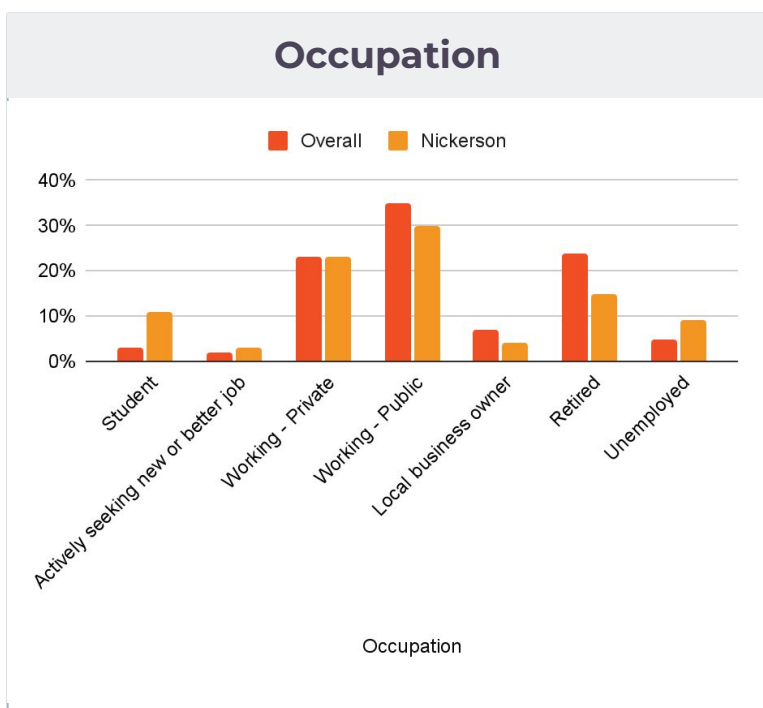
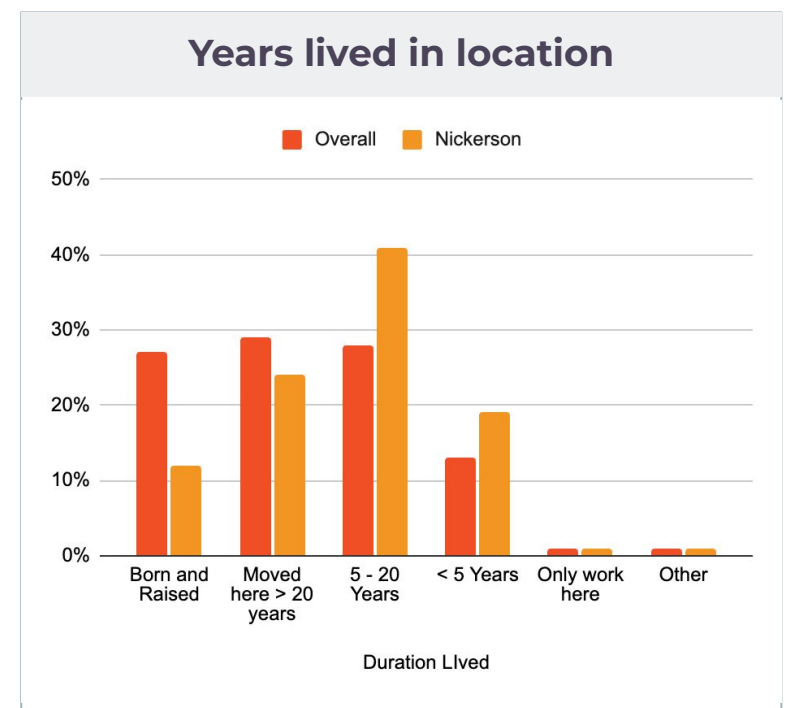
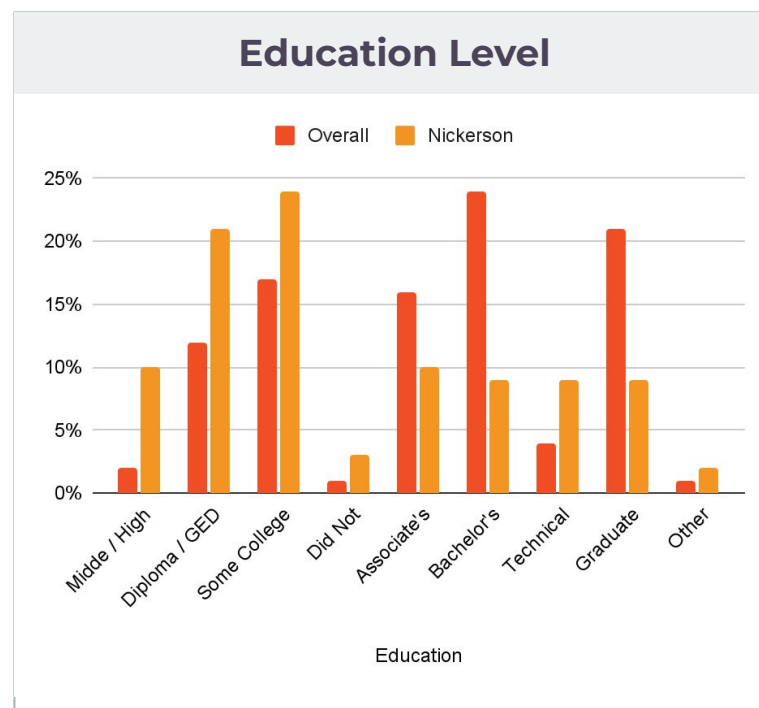
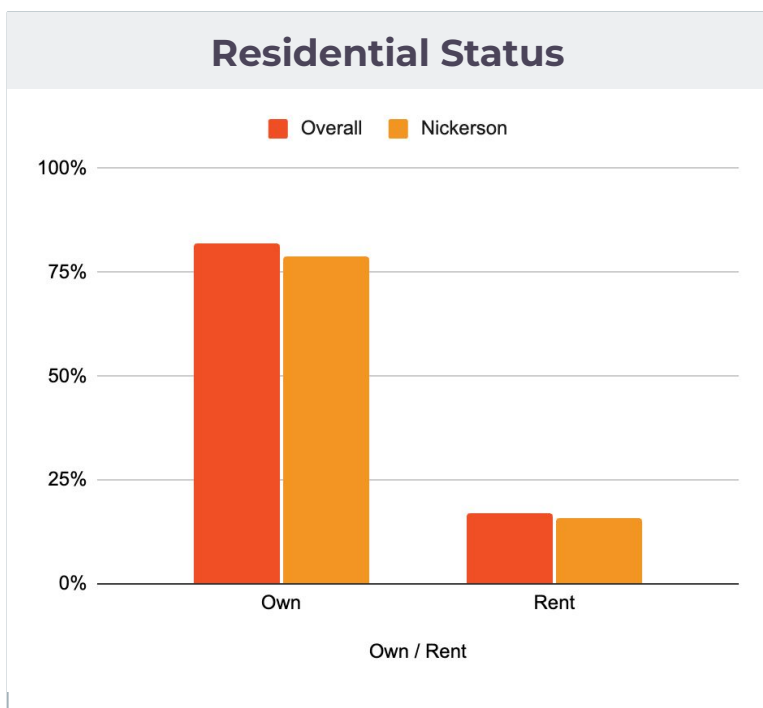
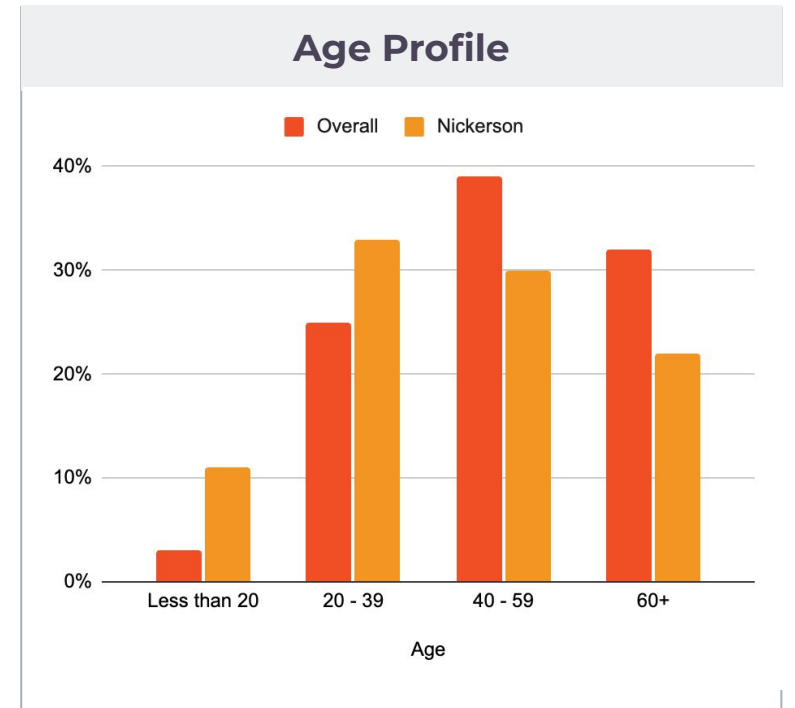
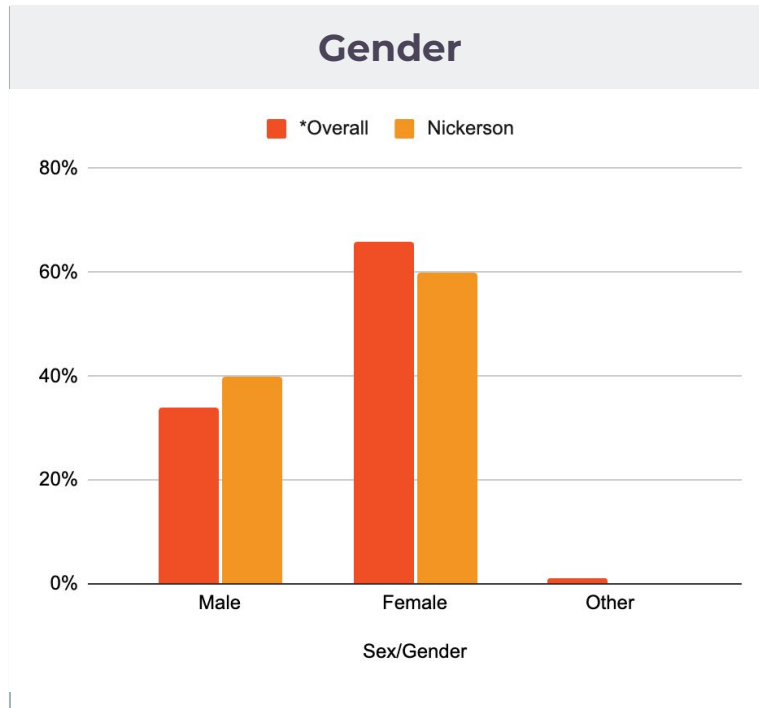
- Volunteer Fire Department – Many residents serve or have served as volunteer firefighters, providing essential emergency response
- City Governance – Roles like city council, planning and zoning, and city treasurer are actively held by community members to guide local decisions
- Local Business Support – Residents serve by shopping locally, banking locally, and supporting small or home-based businesses
- Community Volunteering – Participation in events like Klear Nearly, PTA, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and local committees helps sustain civic life

How would you like to serve your community in the future?

- Youth Programs and Mentorship – Starting initiatives to support kids, such as youth centers, tutoring, or real-world life prep
- Community Clean-Up and Beautification – Organizing clean-up days and contributing to the improvement of town aesthetics and pride
- Business Development – Opening local businesses or supporting economic growth through entrepreneurship and job creation
- Civic Engagement – Joining city committees, planning boards, or decision-making bodies to help shape the town's future

Survey Respondents

100
Total Responses



- Older adults (40–59) are significantly less likely to invest locally (-43%) than younger adults (20–39), who show a positive investment outlook (31%).
- Residents living in Nickerson for over 20 years report much higher confidence (5.1) in the community's direction than those living there 5–20 years (3.21).
- Public sector workers (69%) are nearly three times more likely than private sector workers (23%) to prioritize improving public infrastructure.

Average Community Score
Town Score

38 Number of people who expressed an interest in volunteering to better the community (38%)