

Aging in Brewster: A Community Needs Assessment

January 2024

Commissioned by the Town of Brewster

Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging
Gerontology Institute
University of Massachusetts Boston



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Contributors and Acknowledgements

This report was produced by the Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging (CSDRA), a research unit within the Gerontology Institute at UMass Boston. The CSDRA provides resources and research expertise to communities, nongovernmental organizations, and other agencies throughout the Commonwealth.

Caitlin Coyle, Beth Rouleau, and Ceara Somerville are primarily responsible for the contents of this report. Other contributors include Brittany McFeeley, and undergraduate students Taylor Carmody, Roisin O’Keefe, Himani Pachchigar, and Sabrin Zahid.

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For more information, contact:

The Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging
Gerontology Institute
University of Massachusetts Boston
CSDRA@umb.edu | 617.287.7413

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Executive Summary

This report describes research undertaken by the Center for Social & Demographic Research on Aging (CSDRA) within the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston, on behalf of the Town of Brewster. The goals of this project were to investigate the interests, preferences, and opinions of Brewster’s residents aged 50 or older by engaging the community regarding their experiences and needs relevant to the Council on Aging’s (COA’s) objective to identify and serve the needs of all Brewster citizens 50 and older. The contents of this report are meant to inform the Town of Brewster, the Brewster COA, Senior Center, and organizations that work with and on behalf of older residents of Brewster for the purposes of COA mission fulfillment alongside planning and coordination of services for current and future needs of residents. The report will also help to build awareness about issues facing Brewster among community members at large.

A broad range of findings are reported in this document, highlighting the many positive features of Brewster as well as concerns expressed by older residents. While many of our findings, and the recommendations that follow, intersect with the scope of responsibility of the Brewster Council on Aging, it is understood that responding to many needs and concerns expressed in the community will require the involvement of other municipal offices or community stakeholders, and some will require substantial collaborative effort.

We summarize key findings and make the following recommendations to the Town of Brewster:

Building engagement among residents and partnerships for programming are essential tools while the Town explores solutions to address the COA’s inadequate and outdated space.

- Build awareness of the Brewster Senior Center, a community asset – one that is operating in restrictive space amidst growing community needs and demands.
 - Investigate opportunities to increase Senior Center programs and services at satellite locations in the community, such as public housing, the library, the schools, and local businesses.
 - Build participation levels among younger seniors and new retirees, through programs that reflect prioritized interests, to foster support for the development of a new center that will address existing limitations through innovative design features, programs, and services.
 - Consider developing an “ambassador program” and coach residents to actively encourage new participants. This could function as a property-tax work-off position or offer an incentive for the number of new participants they can recruit.

- Consider ways to welcome first-time participants who are reluctant to participate on their own (e.g., a “new member day” or a “bring a buddy” program).
- Use technology and existing social connections to encourage new participants.
 - Explore the use of technology (e.g., phone or other mobile devices) to include residents who are unable to leave their home in existing programs through video technology or making “friendly visits” by telephone.
 - Partner with the schools to recruit a Technology Advisor and establish a Teens Teaching Technology Club to offer training workshops in the community.
- Create additional opportunities for lifelong learning, performances, and physical fitness opportunities.
 - Continue to participate in conversations about the development of the former Sea Camps property to ensure that older resident’s preferences are at the forefront.
 - Enroll residents in free online courses through various institutions¹², and host in-person sessions for them to work through material together.
 - Provide transportation, and discounted tickets, to older residents to attend local youth performances at area schools.

Obtaining supplementary and accessible transportation is a concern for some residents as they age.

- Conduct targeted, proactive, outreach to raise awareness of existing programs that provide transportation to medical appointments and other destinations.
- Consider developing a local “travel training” program where residents can learn about options and navigation while providing suggestions for future services to meet evolving needs.
- Target information to communities within Brewster who may have particular need for transportation services including those living alone and those with disabilities. Consider additional outreach for transportation when inclement weather is anticipated.

¹ <https://www.umb.edu/olli/>

² https://www.edx.org/school/uc-berkeleyx?irclid=3jj00OR%3A3xyPUkoUX2XqiWMLUkH29GVBRsvcz40&utm_source=affiliate&utm_medium=Business%20Insider.&utm_campaign=Online%20Tracking%20Link &utm_content=ONLINE_TRACKING_LINK&irgwc=1

- Explore developing supplemental transportation options like “Visit-a-Friend” program in Wellfleet³ or the Silver Express car service offered through the Barnstable Adult Community Center⁴.
- Support the expansion of volunteer transportation programs, including Nauset Neighbors. Consider a partnership with the schools to encourage students and parents to become volunteer drivers. Also, explore grant funding or fundraising opportunities to provide access to adaptive vehicles.

Financial insecurity—driven largely by housing costs is a concern and barrier for many residents.

- Promote awareness of existing property tax relief programs and inform residents of proposals being considered by the Select Board and Finance Team for a future Town Meeting.
 - Document the number of residents who are “turned away” from existing programs to establish recommendations for expanding access.
 - Explore other incentive programs for volunteers.
 - Establish a property tax credit for first responders, educators, and eligible healthcare workers to address staffing shortages and foster opportunities for employees to work and live in the community.
- Engage with local businesses and organizations to create “senior discount” programs to offset costs and improve quality of life for older residents.
- Explore partnerships that will build community engagement around food insecurity and help to destigmatize access to food resources.
 - Facilitate the development of volunteer-based Community Gardens to support increasing demands on the food pantry and the need for affordable fresh produce on Cape Cod.
 - Explore the replication of the Stretch Your Food Budget program as an alternative way for residents to engage with supplemental grocery programs⁵

There is a pressing need for housing solutions that address affordability and downsizing needs.

- Explore innovative housing solutions that diversify housing stock and offer features that facilitate aging in place. Consider:
 - Greenhouse Senior Living, a model offering intergenerational housing and workforce housing that is currently being developed on Martha’s Vineyard.

³ <https://www.wellfleetcoa.org/support-services>

⁴ <https://www.barnstablepatriot.com/story/lifestyle/boomers/2018/07/20/taking-pride-in-their-ride/11443117007/>

⁵ <https://www.syfb.space/>

- Multigenerational housing models like the Treehouse in Easthampton⁶
- Cottage style communities that offer a small footprint, universal design features, supportive services, and events for social engagement.
- Host informational workshops with regional organizations that offer technical and financial assistance to Cape Cod residents who are exploring the opportunity to build an Accessory Dwelling Unit. See Community Development Partnership.⁷
- Host informational workshops with representatives of organizations that facilitate the creation of a home share agreement. See LifePath⁸ Nesterly⁹ and Cape Abilities¹⁰.
- Continue to host AARP Home Fit programming at the library or Town Hall to support residents in identifying needs and solutions for their home environments.
- Connect residents with local handyperson services or home repair services. See the Boston HOME center as one possible model or engage in a partnership with Cape Cod Regional Technical High School.
- Consider developing a Snow Angels program¹¹ or Yard Angels¹² program other mechanisms for residents to assist with yardwork or small repair projects

Many Brewster residents need support due to physical or cognitive conditions, and many caregivers need help.

- Enhance access to Town funded healthcare screening services through publicity and accessible transportation services. Explore funding opportunities to revitalize the former dental mobile unit and introduce a mobile healthcare unit.
- Support efforts to incorporate Dementia Friendly features and resources at the Brewster Ladies’ Library, including the creation of a memory café.
- Consider hosting a “Caregiver’s Night Out” to provide residents who might be caring for a spouse, parent, or grandparent an opportunity to enjoy a night of entertainment.
- Host a community resource fair in partnership with Town Departments and community organizations; offer workshops to address challenges identified during the Spring 2023 community services discussion.

⁶ <https://www.masshousing.com/en/programs-outreach/planning-programs/treehouse-easthampton>

⁷ [Lower Cape Housing & ADU Resource Center](#)

⁸ <https://lifepathma.org/what-we-offer/financial/home-share-program/>

⁹ [Nesterly A better way to share](#)

¹⁰ [Shared Living - Cape Abilities](#)

¹¹ <https://www.townofblackstone.org/senior-center-council-aging/pages/snow-angels-program>

¹² <https://www.voacolorado.org/volunteer-opportunities/yardangels>

Risk for social isolation in Brewster is high.

- Engage local faith communities, restaurants, and nonprofits like the Family Table Collaborative to host a monthly community dinner to provide a regular opportunity for residents to come together in a social setting¹³.
- Partner with a local performance venue to host storytelling events that build connections through shared stories. See Hull Firefly Storytelling for ideas.¹⁴
- Implement a Senior Civic Academy¹⁵ that is accessible to older residents by offering daytime sessions, considering adult learner styles, and ensuring that topics relevant to healthy aging in Brewster are included (e.g., transportation, how to access resources, and social engagement opportunities.)
- Work together with the Public Works Department to install new, or dedicate existing, “Chat Benches”¹⁶ to create public spaces where socializing is encouraged.
- Consider celebrating National Good Neighbor Day (9/28) or Older Americans Month (May) with a series of “Let’s Talk, Brewster” programs¹⁷ in which residents come together to be in conversation with one another that are exhilarating, inspiring, and meaningful.

¹³ <https://www.generationsoverdinner.com/>

¹⁴ [The Trustees of Reservations](#)

¹⁵ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/296/Civic-Academy>

¹⁶ <https://www.salemma.gov/home/news/salem-unveils-%E2%80%99Chappy-chat%E2%80%9D-bench-program>

¹⁷ <https://conversationsnewyork.com/>

Introduction

Like many of the communities on Cape Cod, Brewster's population is comprised of a significant share of older adults (e.g., residents age 60 and older). In fact, in 2020 nearly half of the community identified as an older adult (47%)---a total of 4,872 residents. It is expected that growth rates of older adults will far outpace those of younger segments of the population. In part, this can be attributed to the attraction of Brewster as a retirement destination. Its beautiful beaches and other outdoor amenities plus the close-knit community of residents make it an idyllic place to age.

Currently, many older adults benefit from programs and services designed to address aging-related needs and prolong independence, offered through the Brewster Council on Aging (COA) and physical space at the Senior Center. As a municipal entity, Brewster's COA is an important and valued resource, operating as the Town's central point of contact for older residents who seek services to promote healthful and fulfilling lives. Growth of the older adult population therefore has special significance for the COA and increasing demand for its services and programs can be expected moving forward.

This report presents the results of a comprehensive examination of issues relating to aging in Brewster. A needs assessment was undertaken in order to support planning on the part of the Town of Brewster, the Council on Aging (COA), and the community as a whole. Results presented here focus on the characteristics and needs of Brewster residents who are age 50 and older. While the primary goal of this report is to support strategic planning of the COA, a secondary goal is to present information that will be useful to other Brewster offices and organizations interacting with older residents and considering plans for the future of Brewster.

The Brewster Council on Aging and Senior Center

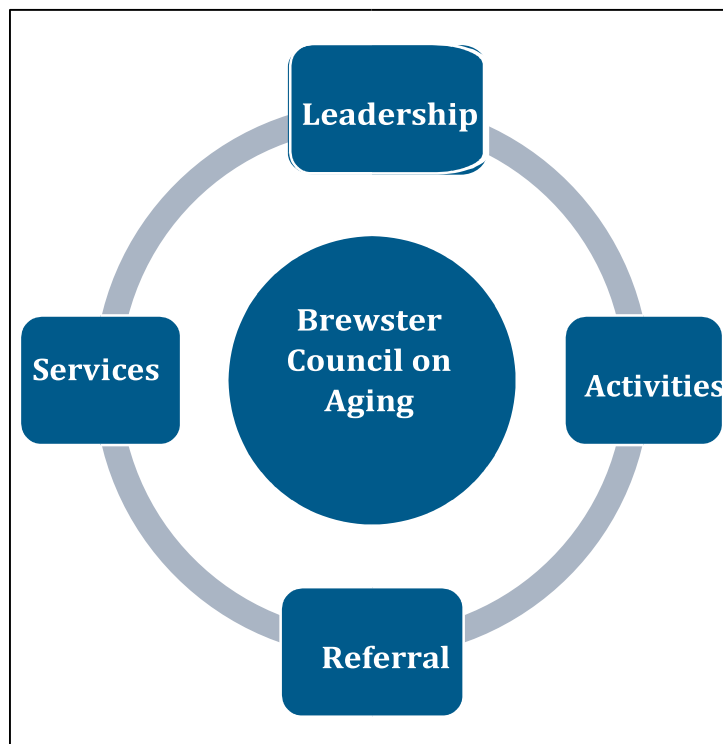
In Massachusetts, Councils on Aging (COAs) are municipally appointed agencies meant to link older residents to needed resources. Virtually every city and town in Massachusetts has a COA, and in most communities, they serve as the only public social service agency. Each COA is expected to establish its own priorities based on local needs and resources. Many COAs are responsible for operating a senior center, a community facility housing senior services and programs, along with the staff and volunteers offering them.

The Brewster Council on Aging (COA), a municipal department, and the municipally appointed COA Board, are meant to link older residents to needed resources and desired activities. The mission of the Brewster Council on Aging is "To support and advocate for older adults and their families by providing programs, services and resources that promote independent living and quality of life." Working toward that end, COA staff and volunteers

assist in delivering programs and initiatives that shape and enrich the experiences of three generations of older adults. This work is done in concert with other local town departments and various area private and public providers and organizations, including Elder Services of Cape Cod & the Islands—the regional Area Agency on Aging serving Brewster—the Massachusetts Council on Aging (MCOA), and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA). The goal is to provide a welcoming environment that services the diversity of the Town’s older adult residents.

In general, when considering the mission of COAs, observers commonly think of two sets of responsibilities. First, COAs promote well-being among older residents by offering activities that appeal specifically to older adults and that promote personal growth and social engagement.

Exercise classes, late-life learning programs, and informational programs are good examples. Second, COAs provide services to older residents and their families that promote physical and emotional wellness. Blood pressure clinics and transportation services are common examples of such services.



Many observers are not aware of two additional important responsibilities of COAs. COA staff members link older residents in the community to existing programs for which they may be eligible by providing needed information and referring residents to appropriate programs and services. For example, staff may help residents apply for income support programs or health insurance made available through the state or federal government. Finally, COAs provide leadership within the community around issues faced by older adults, by serving on municipal boards, interacting with other municipal offices, and serving as resources to residents and organizations.

The Brewster COA consists of a nine-member advisory board appointed by the Select Board and each appointment is for a three-year term. The COA Board holds public televised meetings at the Brewster Town Hall monthly and provides advocacy for seniors as well as support for COA programs and services that promote health and quality of life among residents. COA board members help the COA to set goals and objectives, and offer their support and advocacy to implement and promote the COA’s mission. The responsibilities of the COA Board members

include: setting policy for the COA; advocating for the older population and representing Brewster on other committees per request; serving as an escort on trips; assisting in set-up for events or other volunteer activities; and identifying the needs of Brewster's older adults to assist in the development of programs and services to meet those needs. Additionally, the COA Board promotes and helps educate the community on issues of importance to older adults and advocates on their behalf.

The Senior Center is an integral part of the community, providing a dedicated space to serve the interests and needs of Brewster's older residents. Its presence serves as a reminder that no matter your age, you are a valued member of the community. The goal is to provide programs and services that: encourage connection, provide access to information/services and resources, assist with a variety of needs, nourish body/mind and spirit, while educating, supporting, and celebrating older adults. Family members also utilize the Senior Center to gather information or explore services when caring for a loved one. Additionally, the center serves as a resource and gathering space for a number of other town organizations, welcoming the opportunity to broaden intergenerational offerings. Complete information about programs and services, including a monthly schedule, can be found on the Town of Brewster website¹⁸

COA Operations Overview

For the following section, data reported about the Brewster COA was gathered from Town of Brewster Fiscal Year 2022, the 2022 Town Annual Report, as well as from the COA Executive Director. As the numbers of older residents increase, the need for resources dedicated to this segment of the population will also continue to grow and to change. Thus, it is crucial that the Brewster COA plan in earnest to assure that resources are used efficiently and effectively to meet the current and future needs of older people in the town.

The Brewster Senior Center operates Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and is closed on weekends. The staff consists of nine staff people (6 full-time; and 3 part-time). The Director of the COA is full-time as well as a Senior Department Assistant and Department Assistant. The program coordinator, a SHINE-certified outreach coordinator, and the transportation coordinator are also full-time employees. Part-time staff positions include van drivers (2) and a SHINE-certified outreach coordinator (1).

For fiscal year 2024, the total budget for the COA was approved at \$396,209. COA services and programs are funded by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, municipal appropriation, grant support from several sources, gifts and donations, and nominal fees charged for some activities.

Programs and Services

¹⁸ <https://www.brewster-ma.gov/council-aging-and-council-aging-board>

The Staff and Board of the COA continue to develop a wide range of enriching programs to meet the interests and needs of Brewster's diverse population of older residents. Since the start of the pandemic, many programs have been offered via zoom and Brewster Channels 8 and 99. In addition to programs that provide opportunities for social engagement, fitness, learning, and pleasure, the COA provides critical services to foster access to health and community support resources among Brewster's older adults. Services include nutrition and home-delivered meals, outreach services, and wellness checks on homebound seniors.

Recreation, Fitness & Social Events

Seniors participate in a variety of programs such as: chair and gentle yoga, meditation, music workshops, book club, mah jong, bingo, knit and crochet, quilting, Tai Chi, Qi Gong, strength & balance, line dancing, painting/arts & crafts, computer support, forest bathing, walking club, birthday parties, cookouts, holiday parties, trivia and more.

Nutrition

- Senior Dining is available every Tuesday and Thursday at the Brewster COA with a reservation two business days in advance. The requested meal donation is \$4.00. Rides to/from lunch are free. The Senior Dining program is sponsored by Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands.
- Meals on Wheels, also sponsored by Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands, provides meals for people age 60 and over who are unable to prepare their own meals.
- During FY 22, through Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands, 8,731 home-delivered meals were provided to 86 individuals.
- Healthy Meals in Motion serves all eligible Brewster seniors by providing groceries, fresh produce, and paper products each month. Pick up is at the COA on the second Wednesday of each month.

Support Services

A variety of services are offered directly through the Brewster COA, including but not limited to fuel assistance, legal and tax assistance, durable medical equipment loans, health services (blood pressure, glucose testing, hearing screenings), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Assistance, Emergency Buttons, educational workshops, and caregiver support groups (including an Alzheimer's Caregiver Support & Activity Group). Outreach Coordinators connect older residents and their families to resources through local, Cape-wide, state, and federal services and programs, including home care, long-term services, and those of an urgent or emergency nature. During FY 22, outreach counseling was provided by telephone and in-person to 756 individuals. This included health insurance reviews for S.H.I.N.E. (Serving Health Insurance Needs of the Elderly). Counseling support led to substantial cost savings for 255 older residents.

A summary of programs and services is provided below:

<p>Outreach and advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General information and referral services • Case management • Health Benefits Counseling (SHINE) • Other Benefits Counseling <p>Professional Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Assistance • Tax Assistance • Financial Management • Mental Health Support <p>Support Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social/Supportive Day Care • Friendly Visiting • Employment Services • Transportation 	<p>Wellness and Nutrition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Education • Health Screening • Wellness Checks • Medical Equipment Loans • Fitness Programs <p>Community Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifelong Learning • Recreation and Socialization • Arts and Hobbies • Intergenerational Programming • Cultural events • Day Trips
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Transportation Services

- The COA van provides transportation to grocery shopping in Orleans on Mondays and/or Wednesdays, from 11:00am to 1:00pm with two-day notice for reservation and a suggested donation of \$2.
- A wheelchair accessible medical van is provided by COA staff for transport to medical appointments Monday through Friday. A minimum of 7 business days advanced reservation is required. Donations are accepted for this service.
- Volunteer drivers, using their own vehicles, are available for routine medical and dental appointments with a travel limit to Hyannis. In Fiscal Year 2022, 33 volunteer drivers, who provide rides to medical appointments using their own vehicles, provided 378 rides to seniors.
- Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority (CCRTA) offers medical transportation to Boston by Cape Cod Direct on an accessible bus Monday through Thursday with and reservation in advance. The Cost is \$30.00 Round Trip/\$15.00 One-way.
- CCRTA SmartDART provides on demand, door to door, wheelchair accessible transportation to all Cape Cod residents and is available Monday through Saturday in all towns, with limited Sunday service. Rides must be scheduled by no later than noon on the day prior to a ride.
- During Fiscal Year 2022, 2,664 rides were provided by the COA for senior and disabled residents.

Volunteer Engagement

During 2022, over 70 volunteers provided 2,658 hours of service to complement the efforts of COA staff. Volunteers assisted with computer classes, legal help, food distribution, medical appointment transportation, and assembly of the bimonthly COA newsletter. The significant and continuing contributions of volunteers who share their time and talent to keep programs running are appreciated by COA staff and participants at the Senior Center. The Senior Tax Work-Off Program provides municipal volunteer opportunities to nineteen eligible senior citizens and/or veterans in exchange for a reduction in their real estate tax bills; applications for the program are available at the COA and Town Hall during the fall. Program participants can receive a \$1,000 reduction in their tax bill in exchange for 67 hours of service or a \$500 reduction in exchange for 33.5 hours.

Communication

The bimonthly *Bayside Chatter* newsletter is mailed (or emailed) on request and is also available on the Town website under “News and Announcements” at: [Newsletters | Town of Brewster \(brewster-ma.gov\)](#) and on the COA page of the Town website. The newsletter provides information about COA programs and services as well as related communication from other Town departments including the Library, Recreation, Police, and Fire Departments. In addition to the newsletter, programs and events are also announced via flyers posted throughout town.

Community Collaboration:

The COA Board recognizes the importance of collaborating with Town departments and local, regional, and state agencies to provide a range of programs and services. During Older Americans Month in May of 2022 and 2023, the COA took the lead in partnering with stakeholders to host Brewster’s first Health and Wellness Fair for residents of all ages. Information and interactive displays were offered on fire safety and prevention, exercise programs, dental health, family caregiving, mental health services, nutrition, and dementia/Alzheimer’s Disease. To inform and coordinate planning efforts, COA Board members also serve as members of the Board of Health, the Vision Planning Committee, and the Drummer Boy Park Advisory Committee, as well as liaisons to the Recreation Commission, the Housing Partnership, and the Bay Property Planning Committee. The COA Director is a non-voting member of the COA Board as well as a member of the Wells Court Committee, All Citizen’s Access Committee and COVID-19 Relief Fund Committee, and a liaison to the Bay Property Planning Committee and the Drummer Boy Park Advisory Committee.

The COA is grateful for the continued financial support of the Friends of Brewster Seniors, a 501 (c) (3) corporation with the mission of providing programs, entertainment, and financial help to support the senior community of Brewster. The Friends group also manages the Sea Captains’ Thrift Shop at 66 Harwich Road. Proceeds provides financial assistance to support programs which otherwise could not be funded through the Town budget.

Methods

This assessment utilized both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods alongside rigorous analyses of existing and primary data in order to capture a broad and deep understanding of the Town of Brewster and its older residents. Demographic material used in this report was drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau (the decennial censuses and the American Community Survey) and from projections generated by the Donahue Institute at the University of Massachusetts. Primary data was collected through qualitative methods, including key informant interviews, focus groups, and through a community survey. Additional information about the Brewster COA was retrieved from material drawn from the COA's 2022 Annual Report as well as original data collected for this study.

Demographic Profile

As an initial step toward understanding characteristics of the Town of Brewster's older population through quantitative data, we generated a demographic profile of the Town using data from the decennial U.S. Census and the American Community Survey (ACS)—a large, annual survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. For purposes of this assessment, we primarily used information drawn from the most current 5-year ACS files (2017-2021), along with U.S. Census data for the Town of Brewster to summarize demographic characteristics including growth of the older population, shifts in the age distribution, gender, race and education distributions, householder status, living arrangements, household income, and disability status.

Key Informant Interviews

In the Spring of 2023, we conducted interviews with 11 individuals who currently hold leadership positions in Brewster. The interviews were held individually or in groups of two as listed here: 1) Recreation Director and Chair of the Bay Property Planning Committee; 2) Library Director; 3) Chiefs of Police and Fire; 4) Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager; 5) Town Planner and Housing Coordinator; 6) Select Board Member; 7) Health Director. The interviews focused on the interviewees' perceptions relating to unmet, as well as foreseeable community needs; and potential solutions that promote aging in place and wellness among residents. All interviews were conducted remotely via telephone or video conference. Interviews ranged from 45-90 minutes. Input from Key Informants was synthesized and is summarized below by theme.

Focus Groups

During the Fall of 2023, research staff from the Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging conducted three focus groups in Brewster. Participants included residents and community stakeholders. Each focus group discussion was in person and lasted close to ninety minutes. The resident groups were held at Town Hall and Frederick Court. The third

focus group was held at Town Hall with community stakeholders who provide services and interact with residents of Brewster. A total of approximately 55 residents participated and shared insights related to their interests, needs, and experiences as residents and stakeholders in the community.

Community Survey

In collaboration with the COA Board members, a community survey was developed for this study. A mailing list was obtained from the Brewster Town Clerk, based on the most current municipal census. Postcards were mailed to all residents age 50 and older (n=6,149) alerting them to complete the survey online, by telephone, or by picking up a paper copy at various locations throughout town. Subsequently, printed surveys were mailed to Brewster residents age 75 and older, along with a postage-paid return envelope. As well, the survey was made available via the Town's website. A total of 1,390 responses to the survey were obtained, representing a strong return rate of 23% (see **Table 3**). 60% were returned online, and the rest of the responses were returned by mail.

Data Analysis

Data collected for the resident survey were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics, including frequencies and cross-tabulations, and are reported in full in tables contained in **Appendix A** and throughout the results section of this report. Some responses elicited through open-ended questions were extracted and cited verbatim within this report (e.g., "What are your greatest concerns about your ability to continue living in Brewster?"). Notes taken during the study's qualitative components (e.g., focus groups, key informant interviews) were reviewed by project staff and used to characterize and categorize salient ways in which aging issues are impacting older adults and individuals who work with older adults in Brewster. We used information from all sources of data to develop recommendations reported in the final section of this report.

Results

Demographic Profile of Brewster

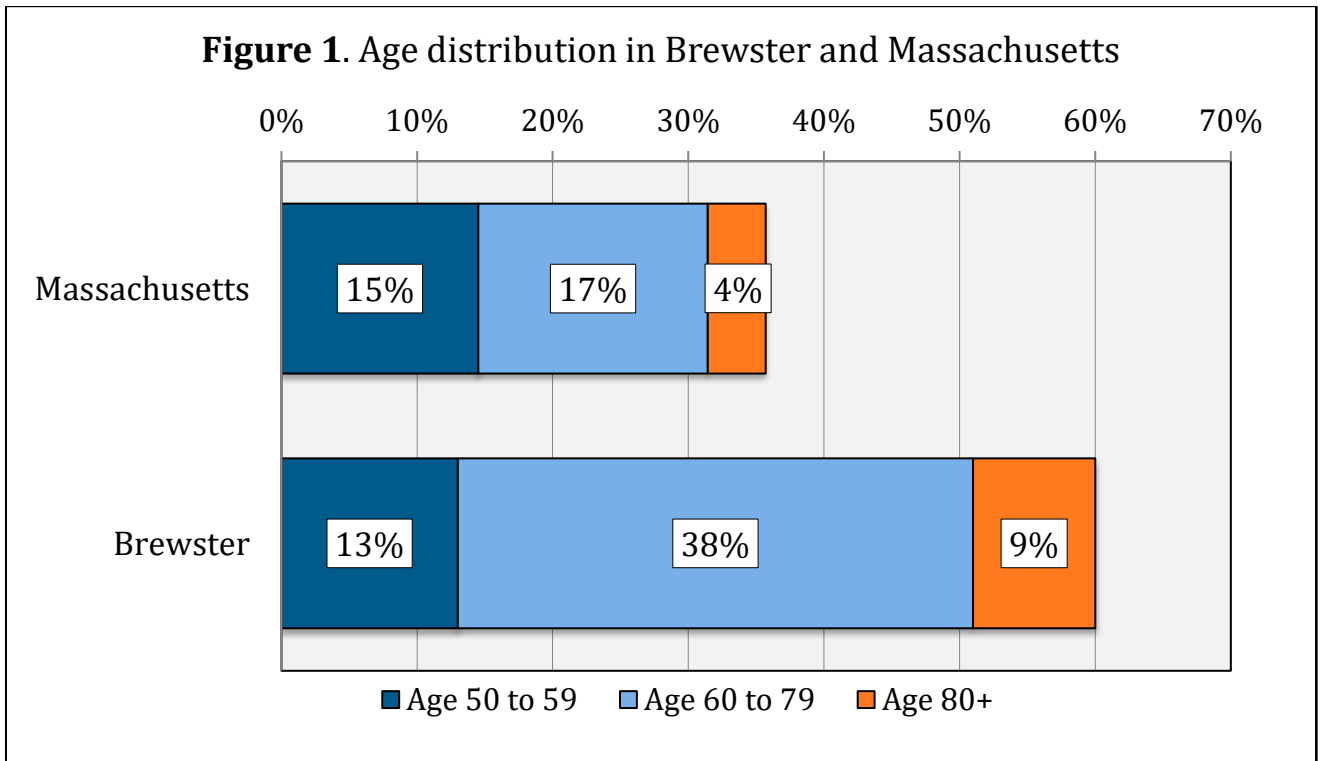
According to American Community Survey (ACS), there were about 10,282 residents living in the Town of Brewster in 2021. About 60% of the population (6,147 individuals) were age 50 and older (See **Table 1**). Residents who were age 50 to 59 (1,301 individuals) made up 13% of the population; residents age 60 to 79 (3,870 individuals) comprised around 38%, and another 976 residents (9%) were age 80 and older.

Table 1. Number and percentage distribution of Brewster's population by age category, 2021

Age Category	Number	Percentage
Under age 18	1,414	14%
Age 18 to 49	2,721	26%
Age 50 to 59	1,301	13%
Age 60 to 79	3,870	38%
Age 80 and older	976	9%
Total	10,282	100%

Source: American Community Survey, 2017-2021, Table B01001. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

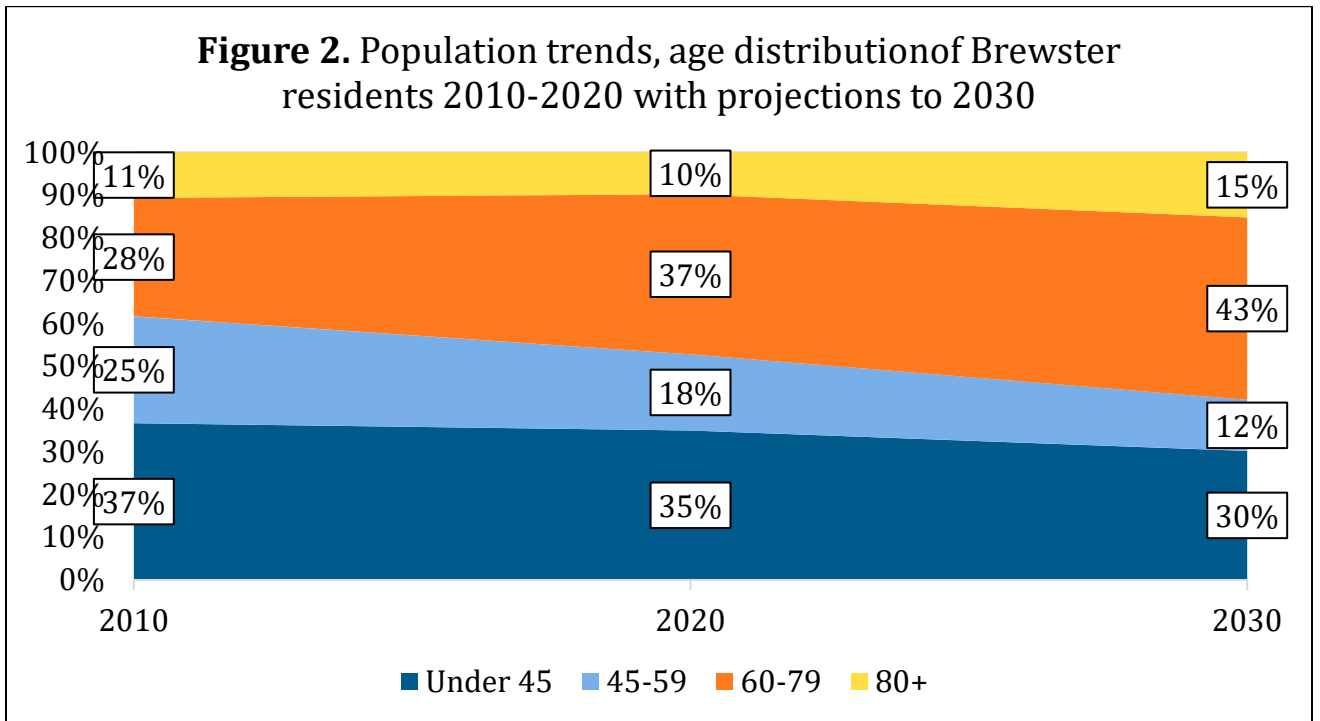
The share of Brewster’s population age 50 and older is larger than the overall state of Massachusetts (**Figure 1**). About 36% of the Massachusetts population was in the 50+ age group in 2021, compared to 60% of the Brewster population. Compared to the Commonwealth, Brewster also had a much higher portion of residents age 60 and older. The share of Brewster residents age 60 and over and the share of residents age 80 and older are more than double the respective shares for the state of Massachusetts. In 2021, Massachusetts residents age 60 and over comprised about 21% of the population, including 4% age 80 and over. In Brewster, about 47% of the population was 60 or older, including 9% who were 80 years or older.



Source: American Community Survey, 2017–2021, Table B01001. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

Figure 2 shows the age distribution of Brewster’s population from 2010 to 2020, and population projections for 2030¹⁹. In 2010, about 38% of the Town’s population was age 60 and older; this percentage steadily increased by 2020 (47%). According to projections created by the Donahue Institute at the University of Massachusetts, a trend toward an older population is expected in future decades. Donahue Institute vintage projections suggest that by 2030, more than half of Brewster’s residents will be age 60 or older—43% of the town’s population will be between the ages of 60 and 79, with an additional 15% age 80 and older.

¹⁹ Population projections are shaped by assumptions about birth rates and death rates, as well as domestic and international immigration and out-migration. The Donahue Institute projections used here also account for population change associated with aging of the population, which is a strong predictor of future growth and decline of population levels. For more information on the methods used to create Donahue Institute projections, see Renski, Koshgarian, & Strate (March 2015).



Source: Population figures for 2010 thru 2020 are from the U.S. Census.

* Figures for 2030 are the Vintage Population Projections generated by the Donahue Institute, University of Massachusetts: <http://pep.donahue-institute.org/>

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Brewster's Older Population

Brewster is less diverse than the state with respect to race. For all ages combined, about 95% of Brewster residents report their race as White non-Hispanic, compared to 73% in Massachusetts (ACS, 2017–2021, Table B01001). Among Brewster residents age 65 and older, 98% reported white race and ethnicity. The remaining percentage of the population age 65 and older reported Asian (1%), and Hispanic (1%) ethnicity.

Table 2. Race distribution of residents who are age 65 and older in Brewster.

Race	Number	Percent
White	3,574	98%
Asian	33	1%
Hispanic	22	1%
Total	3,629	100%

Source: American Community Survey, 2017-2021, Tables B01001A-I. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

Additionally, only 2% of older Brewster residents speak a language other than English at home (ACS, 2017–2021, Table B16004). Those who speak another language other than English at home most commonly speak an Indo-European language (2%). American

Community Survey estimates on education suggest that Brewster residents are well educated on average. 54% of persons 65 and older have either a bachelor’s degree or a graduate/professional degree (*ACS, 2017–2021, Table B15001*). Among this cohort, 38% have a bachelor’s degree and 62% have a graduate degree. This educational profile contributes to the vitality and character of the community, which depends on older adults who value opportunities to be involved through volunteer and civic engagement activities, as well as late-life learning opportunities— activities that are often present in highly educated communities (Fitzgerald & Caro, 2014).

Similar to many older adults living in communities throughout the U.S., a large proportion of Brewster residents aged 65 and over remain in the workforce. Almost 32% of adults age 64 to 74 are participating in the labor force. Of those age 75 and older, 4% remain in the workforce (*ACS, 2017–2021, Table S2301*).

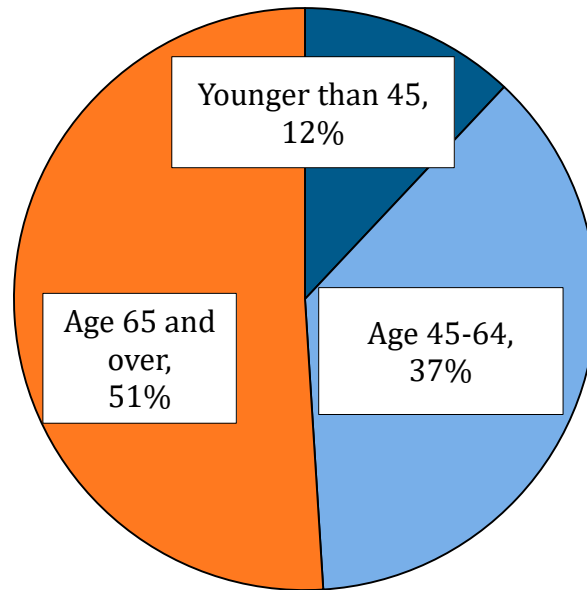
Nearly 28% of men age 65 and older report veteran status (*ACS, 2017–2021, Table B21001*). As a result, many of the town’s older residents may be eligible to receive some benefits and program services based on their military service or that of their spouses.

Living arrangements and housing costs of Brewster’s Older Population

A majority of Brewster’s 4,605 households have householders who are middle-aged or older. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a “householder” is the person reported as the head of household, typically the person in whose name the home is owned or rented. Residents age 45 and older represent 88% of all households in Brewster²⁰ including 51% of those who are age 65 and over (**Figure 3**).

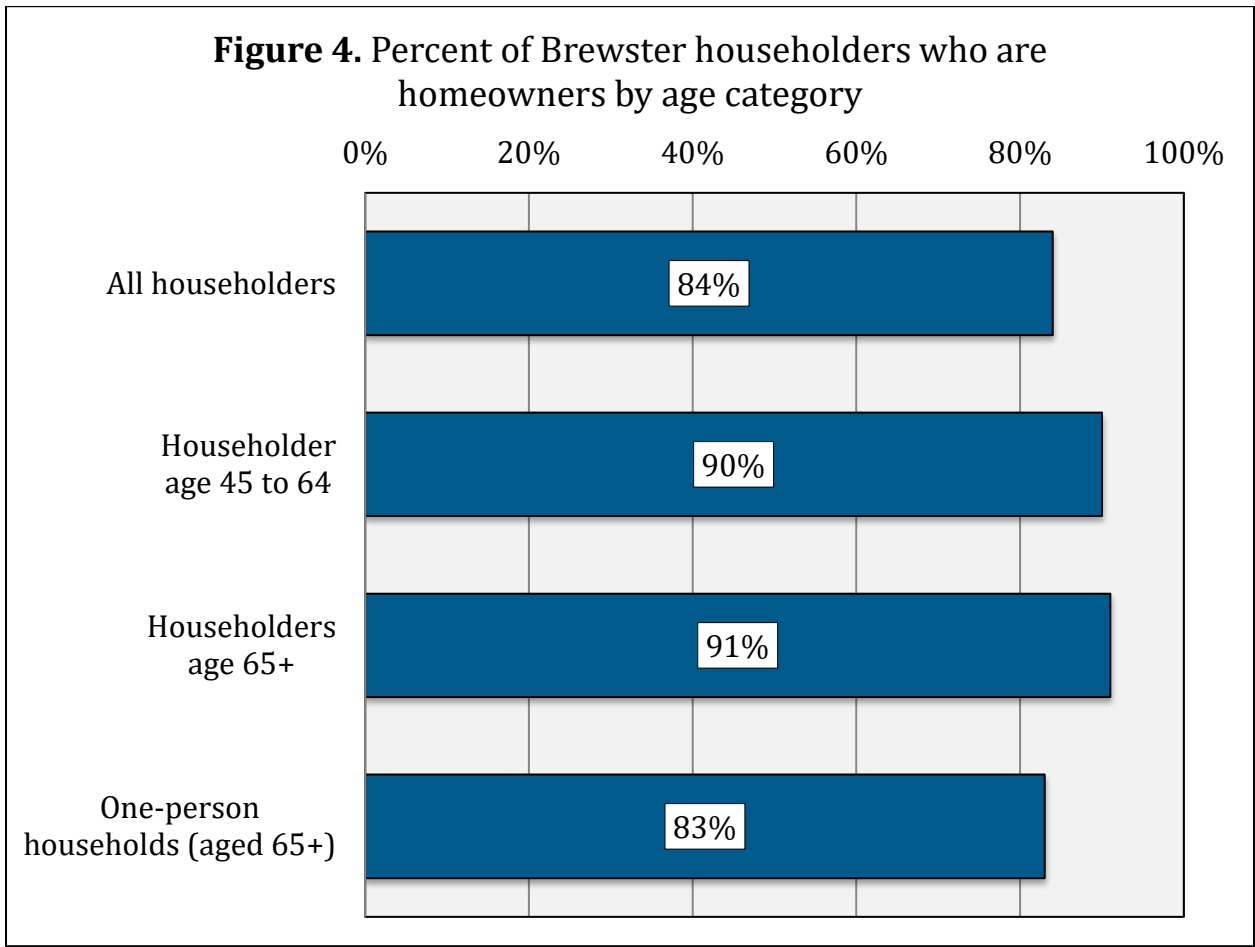
²⁰ Many available Census data on the older population of Brewster are based on ages 45 and 65 as reference points rather than ages 50 and 60, as are used elsewhere in this report.

Figure 3. Age structure of Brewster householders



Source: American Community Survey, 2017–2021, Table B25007. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

Most Brewster residents live in homes that they own or are purchasing (84%); **Figure 4**). Nearly 90% of residents age 45 to 64 own their homes, and 91% of householders 65 and older own their homes. A sizeable share of Brewster residents who are 65 and older and live alone, also own their home (83%). The much higher number of older homeowners has implications for what amenities and services are likely to be needed and valued by members of the community. Home maintenance and supports are often necessary for older homeowners—especially those who live alone—in order to maintain comfort and safety in their homes.

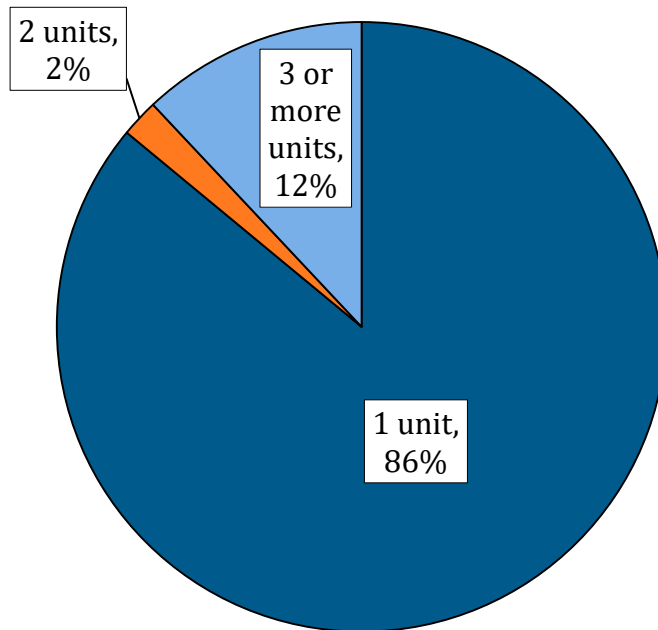


Source: American Community Survey, 2017-2021, Tables B25007 and B25011. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

Additionally, 66% of Brewster’s 4,605 households have at least one individual who is age 60 or older (ACS 2017–2021, Table B11006). This high proportion— which is likely to increase in the future— generally reflects the widespread demand for programs, services, and other considerations that address aging-related concerns, including health and caregiving needs, transportation options, and safe home environments.

Among the total 8,338 housing structures in Brewster (**Figure 5**), 86% are single unit structures and the remaining 14% are housing structures that contain two or more housing units, including apartment complexes.

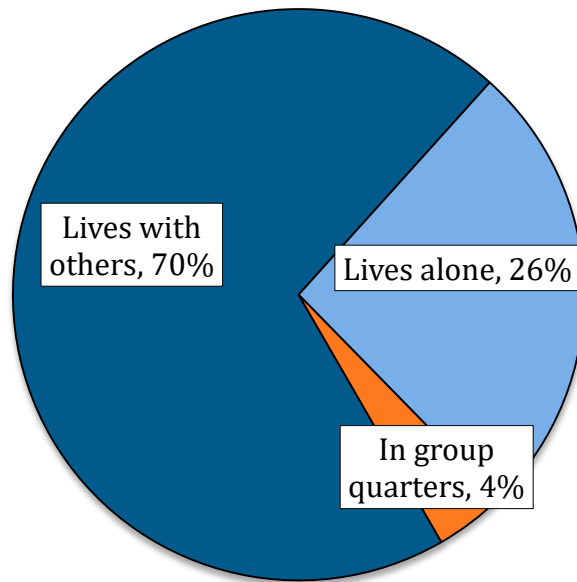
Figure 5. Number of units in Brewster housing structures



Source: American Community Survey, 2017–2021, Table B25024. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

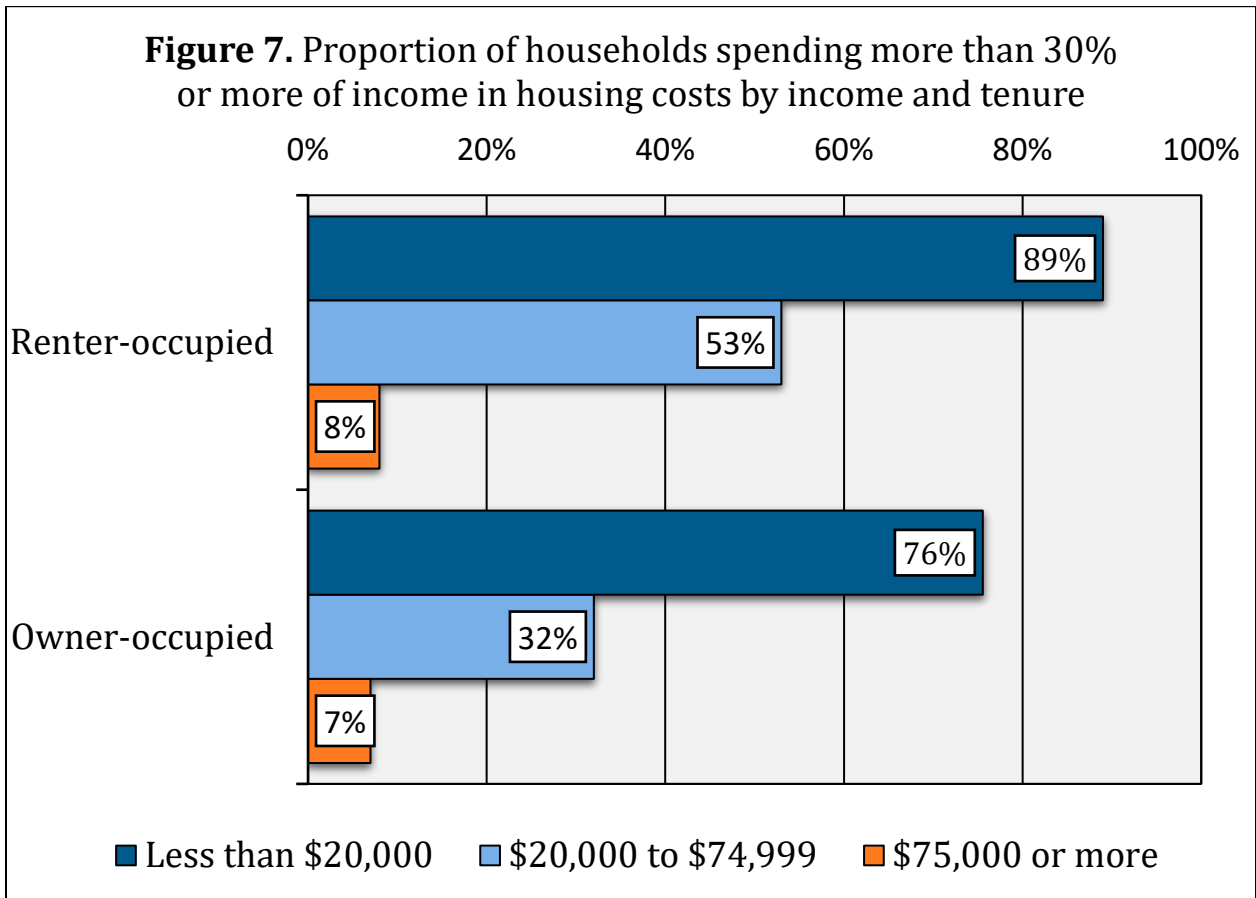
A moderate proportion of Brewster residents who are age 65 and older (26%) live alone in their household whereas 70% live in households that include other people, such as a spouse, parents, children, or grandchildren (**Figure 6**). Additionally, around 4% of older Brewster residents live within group quarters.

Figure 6. Living arrangements of Brewster residents, age 65 and older



Source: American Community Survey, 2017–2021, Table B09020. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

Regarding housing cost, **Figure 7** shows the proportion of households spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs. For both owners and renters, the high share of housing costs decreases as the household income increases. However, there is a higher share of renters spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs compared to owners, regardless of the level of income. About 89% of renter-occupied households with incomes below \$20,000 spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs compared to 76% of owner-occupied households in the same income threshold. In households with incomes between \$20,000 and \$74,999, the difference is even bigger; 53% of renter-occupied households in that income bracket spend more than 30% of household incomes on housing costs compared to 32% of owner-occupied households. For households with incomes of \$75,000 or more, the proportion of households spending more than 30% on housing costs is similar, 8% for renter-occupied and 7% for owner-occupied households.



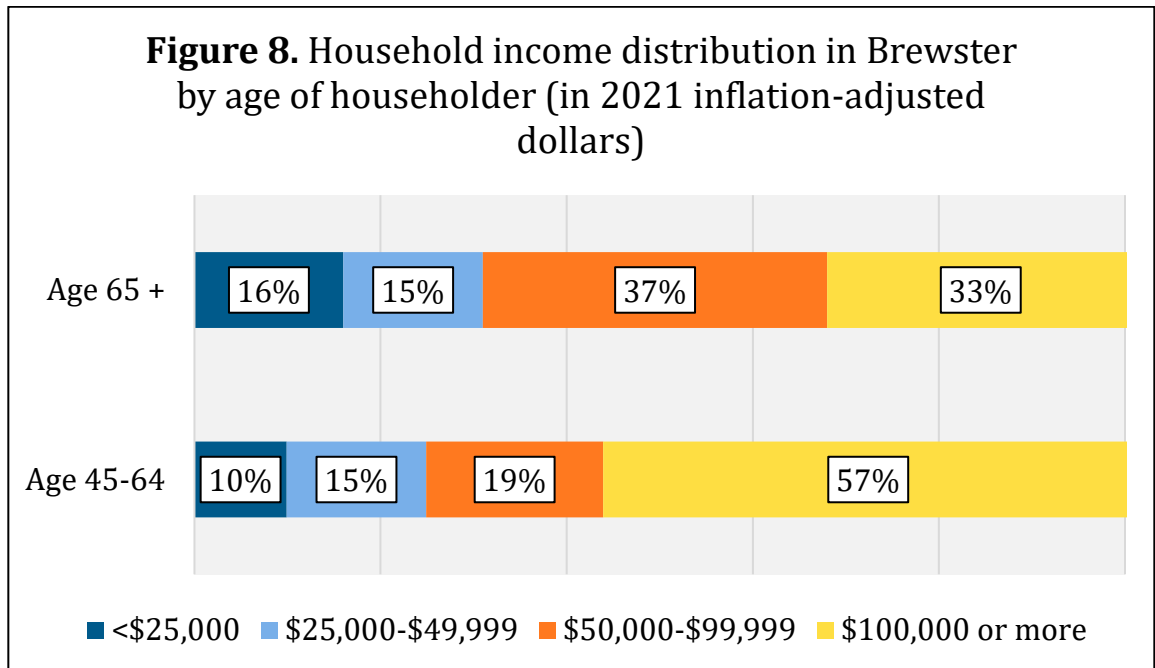
Source: American Community Survey, 2017–2021, Table B25106. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

Note: Includes only community households, not group quarters such as nursing homes.

With respect to household income, there is some comparative disadvantage of older residents in Brewster. As a whole, Brewster residents’ median household income is somewhat higher than the one estimated for Massachusetts, \$88,110 compared to \$74,167. Among Brewster’s householders, those aged 45 to 64 have the highest median income at \$127,929—which is also greater than the statewide median for this age group (\$92,096). Among householders 65 and older, the median income is \$78,421, also higher than the statewide median for this age group (\$45,193), and similar to the median income of younger Brewster householders (\$76,452). Older residents living alone are at greater disadvantage in terms of household income. Older men living alone have considerably higher median income (\$41,471) than women living alone (\$29,559). Given that about 26% of older residents age 65 and older live alone in Brewster, these figures suggest that a sizeable number of residents are at risk of economic insecurity.

The economic profile of older Brewster residents relative to younger residents is further illustrated in **Figure 8**, which shows that the older adult population lives on a more modest income. 33% of Brewster residents age 65 and older report incomes of \$100,000 or more. By comparison, 57% of households headed by residents aged 45-64 report this level of

income. 16% of households headed by someone age 65 and older report annual incomes under \$25,000, compared with 10% of households headed by individuals age 45 to 64. Thus, there is a sizeable segment of Brewster’s older population that is at risk of financial insecurity or economic disadvantage.

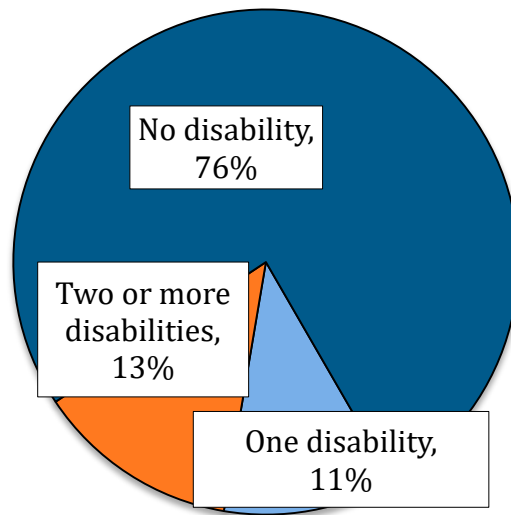


Source: Source: American Community Survey, 2017–2021, Table B19037. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

Note: Includes only community households, not group quarters such as nursing homes.

The increased likelihood of acquiring disability with age is evident in data from the ACS. Many Brewster’s residents age 65 and older experience some level of disability that could impact their ability to function independently in the community. About 11% of Brewster’s residents age 65 and older have one disability, and approximately 13% report two or more disabilities (**Figure 9**).

Figure 9. Percentage of Brewster residents age 65+ reporting at least one disability



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2017–2021, Table C18108.

Among the different types of disability that are assessed in ACS, the most commonly cited by Brewster residents 65 and older were hearing problems (11%); ambulatory difficulties -difficulty walking or climbing stairs (11%); independent living limitations-difficulty doing errands alone, such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping (10%); and cognitive (9%). Other disabilities experienced by older Brewster residents include self-care difficulties (5%), and vision difficulties (2%).

Insights from Key Informant Interviews

Brewster’s serene, rural landscape is admired for its features while also recognized for its challenges related to housing and economic development, and access to resources.

Key informants described Brewster as a rural community where open space is intentionally preserved and valued by Brewster residents. Close to 35% of the town’s land is restricted for development, in part due to water resource management. An active Conservation Trust and ce use of CPA funds contribute to the purchases of open space; when land is considered for purchase or donated, there is consideration of perpetual conservation vs. housing use. Existing homes are spread out; there is no town center; and few retail establishments. While the idyllic landscape is treasured, the community is primarily car dependent and there are limitations related to walkability and sidewalks; access to amenities; and opportunities for housing development. Brewster’s lack of infrastructure and access to resources are further challenged by seasonal population fluctuations, prompting the need to plan for future

growth. Town leaders are collaboratively working to develop initiatives that offset these limitations while preserving the town's character and creating features and resources that support residents as they live and age in Brewster. Planning efforts are reflected in recent studies including the Local Comprehensive Plan (2023), Housing Production Plan (2022), Open Space and Recreation Plan (2022), Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion report (2022), Multi-hazard Mitigation Plan (2022), and Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (2022). The Local Comprehensive Plan (LCP), adopted by Town Meeting, builds upon the 2017 Vision Planning Process. The LCP includes goals and a comprehensive action plan associated with eight key community issues, or Building Blocks: Community Character, Water Resources, Open Space, Housing, Coastal Management, Local Economy, Governance, Community Infrastructure, Solid Waste Management, and Climate Mitigation and Adaptation. Momentum includes expansion of transportation resources through a partnership with the CCRTA and a vibrant volunteer network that includes Nauset Neighbors; adoption of Complete Streets policy to enhance roadways and sidewalks; exploration of mixed use residential development in commercial corridors; revisions to the Accessory Dwelling (ADU) zoning bylaw to address lot size restrictions; the a creation of a Housing Coordinator and Affordable Housing Trust; CDBG funding for housing related needs; and use of CPC funding to incorporate ADA accessibility improvements in outdoor and recreational spaces.

There are growing concerns related to the cost of living and the need for suitable and affordable housing.

Housing costs are high, and recent debt exclusions have contributed to a significant tax burden for residents. Property values increased close to 40% in the last 3 years, and market demand is high. There is less housing stock – the number of available units is 20% of what it was 3 years ago. One individual shared that taxes are high and increasing due to multiple projects that represent the tip of the iceberg – these include the \$133 million renovation of the regional high school, school repairs, and staffing needs for Police and Fire. Many older adults are at the lower poverty level and struggling. *People living on fixed income are being squeezed hard, especially among older adults who are no longer working.* As a newly designated economic justice community, the schools have also seen an increase in poverty levels. Food insecurity is an issue, especially among the older demographic. The local food pantry has seen increasing demand prompting the need to build opportunities that connect residents with additional resources and to destigmatize access to the food pantry and other social services. Key informants shared that many older residents are working part time, a potential indicator of financial need. The latest wave of retirees reflects higher socioeconomic status and growing disparity between higher and lower income brackets among residents. In response to feedback related to tax burden, Town leaders are considering the impact of new projects on the tax base and exploring tax relief programs to be brought to a future Town Meeting.

Key informants recognized the need to develop additional affordable housing and options that include supportive services. Demand, often among older residents, exceeds inventory. Currently, there is a waitlist of more than 5 years for public housing in Brewster. Brewster's Housing Trust has a rental assistance program, and the section 8 waitlist is close to 3 years. The lack of affordable housing and downsizing options has led to a Lifecycle housing problem in Brewster. Residents often become over housed and remain in large older homes that are expensive or difficult to maintain due to repair needs and a shortage of contractors. Some residents defer maintenance and live in unsafe conditions where others reluctantly make the difficult decision to leave the Cape to secure more affordable housing. The Housing Authority now maintains a list of former residents who moved away and are hoping to return to Brewster if affordable housing becomes available. The Town is also supporting residents who are struggling to remain in Brewster by connecting individuals to home loan programs, COA resources, and CDBG funds that enable eligible residents to age in place. There is also a need to focus on workforce housing – especially for those who support healthcare and other needs related to the aging population but cannot afford to live on the Cape.

The Council on Aging, a relied upon and valuable community-based support, is limited as a resource due to inadequate Senior Center space and staffing.

Key informants shared that the COA is a vibrant resource; COA staff are dedicated to outreach efforts and providing services that meet the needs of older adults in Brewster. Simultaneously, there is frustration related to what cannot be accomplished at the Senior Center. The potential impact of the COA as a community resource is restricted by the Senior Center's features. Interviewees recognized that the space, built in 1880, is antiquated and needs attention. Interviewees stressed that there are budget constraints and limitations related to capacity, safety, accessibility, design, and staffing that must be addressed to maximize wellness promoting opportunities in the community.

Since the last COA strategic plan was adopted, the COA has attempted to address shortcomings through coordination of satellite programming in the community. Social services staff meet monthly with Town leaders to foster organization across departments and strategically coordinate programming initiatives. While the library is also experiencing space and accessibility issues, there is strong participation among older adults on site. Library staff includes an adult services librarian who identifies needs and means to expand programming. Current offerings include aging related informational resources; a memory loss collection of books; Lifelong Learning; technology support; and an intergenerational book club. The library is working to develop dementia-friendly features and create functional, inclusive, accessible space; the development of a memory café is being considered. The Recreation Department is working to create more intergenerational programs, walking clubs, and movie nights while managing high levels of participation among older adults in outdoor recreation including pickleball and tennis. Volunteer

initiatives are being built among older adults to support Recreation operations and provide instructional aid to younger residents.

Conversations related to the need for COA space have been underway for many years and have evolved to recognize the diverse interests and needs of Brewster's residents. There is a desire to create more social engagement and programming activities while building inclusion across generations. Brewster residents, some of whom visit senior centers in other towns, are looking to create a model in Brewster that houses the COA, Recreation, and other social services under one roof. Key informants described overwhelming interest in a multigenerational community center model that would be a resource for the entire community.

The Cape Cod Sea Camps (CCSC), which was purchased in 2021 and includes the Bay and Pond properties, is at the forefront of discussions and exploration related to the development of a new facility. Brewster's Vision Planning process informed the purchase of the CCSC and formation of the Bay Property Planning Committee to evaluate potential uses for the properties (which include 90 buildings sited on 55 acres on the bay). During 2023, The Town of Brewster partnered with a consultant to actively engage residents through a survey and three well attended community forums on site. Discussions centered around desired uses and potential to re-purpose existing buildings and build new structures to create facilities, amenities, and programs for the community. Feedback and data from this process are being assembled to inform planning and the creation of conceptual designs. A campus style community center and housing are among potential uses under consideration for the site. Concerns related to use of the space include costs related to remediation, renovation, and new construction. The Eddy School had also been considered for future use as a Senior Center or Community Center, amidst shrinking school enrollment levels, but is not currently an option for a community center. Plans are evolving and related warrant articles are being developed for 2024 Town Meeting.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to access health and community-based supports.

Key informants shared that there are barriers, including financial insecurity and lack of transportation, for a segment of the older population that struggles to connect with health and supportive services. Interviewees acknowledged that there are isolated homebound residents whose needs are unknown and growing fear that future health related needs will be unmet. Many older adults are struggling to find available healthcare providers. An interviewee shared: *Getting a primary care physician (PCP) is becoming increasingly difficult in this area. I see people looking and posting on social media regularly for a PCP. Many providers are not accepting new patients and others have waiting lists for one year or longer. Some providers have changed to a concierge model that requires a monthly fee beyond medical insurance coverage. For those experiencing financial insecurity, this model is out of reach. Interviewees also highlighted growing support needs related to mental and behavioral health. The Town currently leverages a network of nonprofit providers and*

provides close to twenty organizations with funding from Brewster's' Human Services Committee. The fragile nature of the healthcare network and barriers to care are prompting the need to build upon collaborative efforts that will enable successful access to community-based resources.

Amidst increasing public safety demand, first responders are furthering their understanding of challenges to inform planning and build resources that respond to community needs.

First responders shared that scarcity of primary care physicians and transport needs are salient stressors that have led to increasing demand for their services. A high percentage of emergency calls originate among older residents. For FY23 there were 1,523 individuals transported to the hospital and over 2,000 EMS calls – 84% of those individuals were 50 and older and 72% were 65 and older. Many calls are generated from skilled nursing, assisted living, and 55+ facilities in Brewster. In addition to medical needs and assists, there are growing challenges related to scams targeting older residents, solicited by phone or email. Education programs have been put in place, but the complexity of online fraudulent activity challenges preventative efforts. Brewster residents are eligible for a free lockbox and can register for the Reassurance Program which supports older residents who live alone through daily phone check-ins. These essential public service offerings provide a valuable mechanism for interaction with the older community living in Brewster. As the population ages, growing demand for resources and programs is anticipated. EMS is engaged in a staffing study and succession planning to address existing staffing shortages, partly due to lack of younger adults in the community. Staffing shortages combined with demand for response (e.g., three of four staff go out on a single ambulance call) led to removal of the requirement that safety personnel live within 6 miles of Brewster. As first responders travel longer distances to and from Brewster response times can be impacted. High call volume also increases the need for regional support to offset staffing shortages.

The Town of Brewster is dedicated to strengthening its communication network to address information gaps and enhance strong levels of civic engagement.

Key informants shared that the Town of Brewster is outreach oriented and aims to foster community engagement and two-way communication between the Town and residents, many of whom are involved in community planning processes and contribute to strong levels of civic engagement. Existing communication channels include the Town website, which has over 1,000 subscribers; social media; local cable television; newsletters and other forms of paper distribution; community forums; and surveys. Amidst this network, the Town recognizes that there are communication gaps and opportunities to broaden outreach and interaction among residents who are not connected to information and resources. Interviewees shared that information can be lost in the ether and navigation can be challenging. There are concerns that Town websites and social media are not inclusive means to distribute information about available programs and services. Engaging adults in an accessible way is critical as future iterations of technology evolve. Interviewees also

expressed the vital nature of in-person engagement, not just to strengthen communication, but also to build trust in Town departments and local organizations. Community Navigators were suggested to fill this need and connect residents with available information and resources.

Insights from Focus Group Participants

Community Assets

During the focus groups, residents of Brewster recognized several community assets including natural resources amidst a scenic and quaint landscape; opportunities for recreation and social engagement; vibrant community spirit; and Town of Brewster services. For many participants, these features have continued to foster appreciation, comfort, and familiarity among residents for many years.

Brewster enjoys beachfront access to Cape Cod Bay and the largest network of ponds on Cape Cod. Participants acknowledged that Town of Brewster leaders have supported initiatives that respect the town's natural resources, history, and the charming environment that has remained unchanged over the years. Along with outdoor opportunities for engagement, Brewster offers theater and musical venues. Participants also recognized the people of Brewster and high levels of dedication among both residents and Town leaders. The community was described as having incredible opportunities for volunteering and giving back to the community, matched with many caring and supportive resident volunteers. Nauset Neighbors, a non-profit volunteer driven organization was recognized for its tremendous support for residents who have needs related to transportation, technology support, and home related tasks. Participants expressed their appreciation for the Council on Aging (COA) as well as the Friends of Brewster Seniors. A resident shared *that the building has challenges, but the people there make a difference*. Despite inadequate COA physical space, residents are grateful for the talented staff and creative efforts underway to grow programs through partnerships in the community.

Challenges

Senior Center space is outdated, inadequate, and lacks accessibility features.

While many praised the efforts of COA staff, conversations around the Senior Center focused on the lack of space and accessibility. Specifically, there is no easy egress from the 2nd floor; the elevator does not work consistently; and the bathroom is not accessible. When asked why participants do not visit the Senior Center, individuals also cited cost and not feeling welcome. While staff were recognized as very friendly and helpful, activity groups were described as cliquy. There has been longstanding, and growing, interest in creating new space and expanding programming opportunities. Participants expressed interest in fitness features while stressing that programming enhancements are not feasible in the existing building. Residents highlighted other communities with desirable space and questioned why this initiative is taking so long in Brewster. Participants, who have waited years for promising progress, stressed that older adults deserve better space – space that fosters

engagement and provides a foundation from which more residents will leverage available resources. Because participation levels are low, need is not being demonstrated. It is challenging to convey the potential impact of a new and improved facility on levels of participation and ensuing impact on wellness. Participants also stressed that the diverse needs and interests of older adults must be aligned with the design and implementation of new programming and services. One resident expressed interest in gathering feedback from the oldest cohort of older adults to ensure that their needs and interests are addressed; a stakeholder noted that older and younger populations are looking out for each other in terms of needs and the future design of community space. During each focus group, participants acknowledged that there is support for the creation of a multigenerational community center. Continued input from stakeholders, including older adults and COA staff, is critical to ongoing design and planning efforts. Additionally, financial literacy related to the provision of elder services would be useful in promoting momentum toward the creation of new space.

Cost of living and access to affordable housing are major concerns, especially for older adults.

Tax increases have been significant – and are expected to increase due to increasing market valuations and the renovation of the regional high school. Water and sewer bills on Cape Cod have also increased. Participants described cost as a barrier to accessing transportation and amenities including the Town pool and beach. Residents are frustrated with the lack of affordable housing stock and downsizing options. Many older residents are in older homes where they feel over housed and overwhelmed by maintenance needs. Among a limited number of existing options, wait lists are long – often 5 years. Participants shared that many wish to but can't leave their homes; the alternative to remaining in their existing homes is to leave the community and potentially reside a long distance from their longtime valued connection to the community of Brewster. One resident questioned, *why do we need to consider leaving a town that we have loved and supported for years*. Similar to frustration around the Senior Center, residents shared that housing solutions are overdue and imperative for future generations. Participants referred to examples of desirable layouts and shared floorplans of cottage style homes that would contribute to the development of diverse housing stock. Stakeholders also highlighted housing challenges– adding that *Seniors are the largest population looking for resources and housing assistance*. Affordable housing needs to be built at scale to support those in need and those working in the community. Modifications to restrictive zoning policies were highlighted as a means to foster the creation of diverse housing options; and the mandate of the former Sea Camp initiative includes exploration of new housing solutions on site.

Brewster is a car dependent community and walkability is limited by the sidewalk infrastructure.

Many residents rely on the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority (CCRTA), COA, friends, and neighbors for rides. The Town recently advocated for the addition of CCRTA bus stops at

each of the public housing properties. Residents shared that increased accessibility to the CCRTA network has been helpful in meeting their transportation needs, specifically for access to grocery stores and pharmacies (which do not exist in Brewster). Residents shared their love for walking in Brewster but acknowledged that there are challenges including limited sidewalks and lack of traffic lights with pedestrian crossings. Both residents and stakeholders stressed the need to balance the desire to retain Brewster's quaint character with the need for visible safety enhancements. During the stakeholder meeting, there was discussion around the desire to have a vibrant community that is resilient and serves changing needs amidst resistance to changes and costs. Aesthetics vs. functionality is the crux of many conversations related to evolving community needs.

There are unmet, unknown needs related to isolated residents and opportunities to build inclusion throughout the lifespan.

Brewster can be perceived as a wealthy community; however, there are vulnerable residents with diverse needs. The COA was recognized as a caring and dedicated resource for vulnerable individuals; however, there are growing needs among residents that prompt consideration of future staffing needs. There are also isolated residents who do not access resources; their level of needs is unknown. While a reassurance program exists, there is an opportunity to strengthen mechanisms to identify and reach isolated residents, including those with unmet healthcare needs and those who are no longer driving. Participants suggested a multi-dimensional approach that includes door to door outreach; educating residents to be aware of neighbors' needs; and building outreach to inform residents of Town of Brewster resources, including the COA, reassurance program, and lockbox placement. Residents highlighted ageism and inclusion as issues. One participant shared that older adult residents have consistently shown their support to address Town of Brewster needs, but not enough is being done to support the evolving needs of the growing demographic of older adults.

The shortage of health and homecare workers – which is tied to housing costs- is limiting access to care.

Both stakeholders and residents shared that the shortage of health and homecare workers – which is tied to housing costs- is limiting access to care, both in the home and medical setting. Residents shared that it is difficult to find a provider who is accepting new patients; and accepts Medicaid/Medicare. The wait list for in-home services through Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands has been ranging from 500 to 700 across the region. A stakeholder shared the suggestion to partner with a community health center and provide a small mobile healthcare unit at the Senior Center. Participants shared that responding to mental health needs is a significant challenge, one that can be exacerbated by isolation. A mental health provider shared that Medicare only covers certain levels of licensing and it is challenging to maintain adequate staffing to meet growing needs. The continuum of mental health care is critical, and there is value in engaging supportive collaterals. Unfortunately, informal support from family and friends is often unreachable for the growing number of adults who

do not have a family member, emergency contact, or healthcare advocate. A healthcare worker shared that community-based programs are growing to offset limitations of the healthcare network. While preventative screening is increasingly being offered in the community to bring peace of mind to residents, it has been difficult in recent years to get older adults out of their homes to participate in these Town funded programs. Residents also shared their struggles related to technology and communication with healthcare providers.

Communication gaps and lack of awareness inhibit access to information and resources.

Among focus group participants, multiple communication channels were mentioned including the COA newsletter, Friends of Brewster Seniors newsletter, Town website, community access channel, Cape Cod Times, Cape Cod Chronicle, social media, and word of mouth. Echoing the frustration voiced related to communication with healthcare providers, participants shared that it is difficult to connect with a person when making a call to Town Hall or a local business. With the knowledge that many residents do not use, or are not comfortable with technology, participants shared their concern that people who don't leverage technology are missing information. Participants also highlighted the communication gap for residents who are not engaged during in-person informational events and Town Meetings. Barriers to in-person participation include lack of transportation and inconvenient schedules. Stakeholders shared that participation at Legislative office hours is low, and there is frustration among older adults, and families with young children, around late-night timing, and consecutive nights for Town Meeting. These barriers must be addressed to ensure residents can conveniently participate in person and to foster stronger turnout at Town Meeting. Familiar with these communications related concerns, the Town of Brewster has continued to prioritize community outreach and education in recent years. To inform planning efforts, the Town conducted an online survey in September 2023 to gather feedback from residents about their satisfaction with the Town's communication, how they currently receive news, and their preferences for the future. With continued focus, progress can be made to ensure that a robust multi-dimensional communication model is in place and residents can conveniently connect to available information and resources.

Results from Community Survey

In this section, we report key findings from each section of the survey. Tables illustrating results in detail are included in Appendix A.

Respondents to the community survey included 1,390 Brewster residents, representing a 23% response rate (Table 3). This is a strong return rate and reflects interest among community residents. Compared to the age distribution of Brewster as a whole, we heard

from a smaller share of residents age 50-59; survey response rates were higher among those age 70 and older. Given the small number of respondents reporting age 90 or older, results will be reported for age groups 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, and 80+ throughout the remainder of this report. Response distributions by age group are shown for all survey questions in **Appendix A**.

Table 3. Community Survey Respondents

	Number of responses	Age distribution (%), survey responses	Age Distribution of Brewster's 50+ population**
Age 50-59*	80	6%	21%
Age 60-69	275	22%	39%
Age 70-79	547	44%	24%
Age 80+	347	25%	16%
TOTAL	1,390	100%	100%

*141 respondents did not report their age.

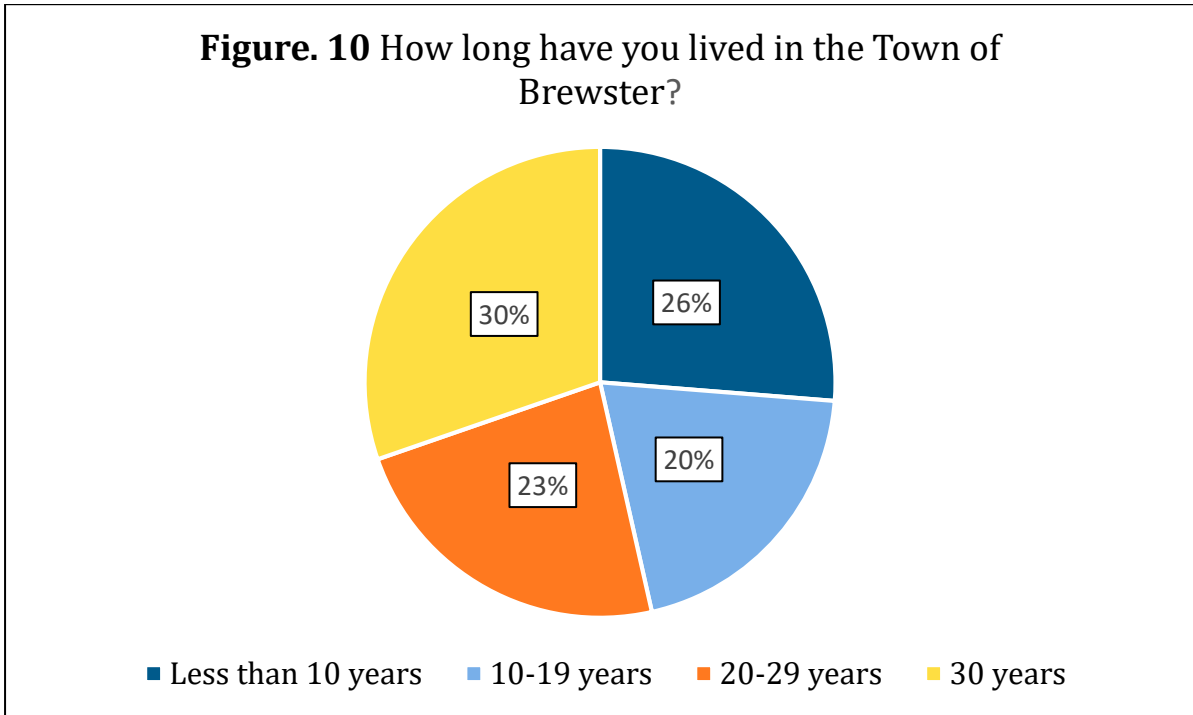
** (Source: American Community Survey, 2017-2021, Table B01001. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates)

Community and Neighborhood

A commonly expressed goal of older adults is to remain living in their own homes for as long as possible. Aging in place implies remaining in familiar home and community settings, with supports as needed, as opposed to moving to institutional settings, such as nursing homes. By aging in place, older adults can retain their independence, as well as maintain valued social relationships and engagement with the community.

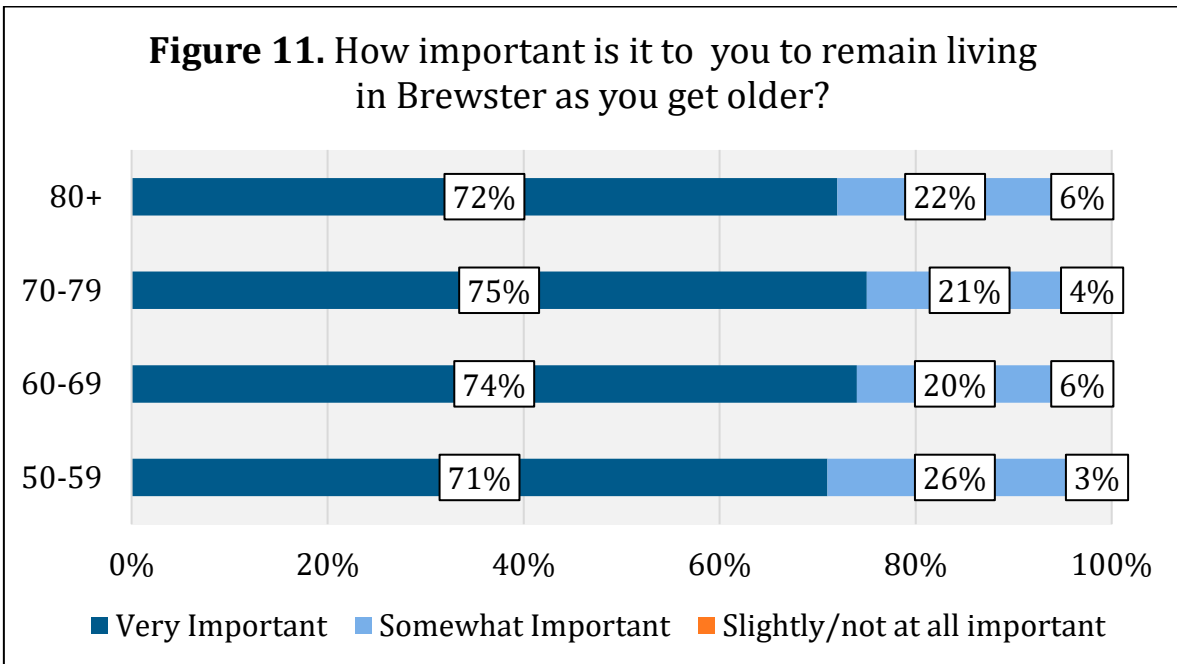
Survey respondents included residents who have lived in Brewster for many years, as well as relative newcomers. Duration of residing in Brewster varies from 26% of respondents who have been in town less than 10 years compared to 30% who have lived in Brewster for more than 30 years (see **Figure 10**). These individuals offer insight based on their years of experience of living in Brewster. It is also helpful, however, to hear from those who are new to Brewster. Thirteen percent (14%) of residents have resided in Brewster for less than 5 years (see **Appendix A**). As well, most survey respondents report being full-time residents of Brewster (89%) and the remaining 11% report spending parts of the year elsewhere (see **Appendix A**).

Figure. 10 How long have you lived in the Town of Brewster?



As seen in **Figure 11**, survey respondents were asked “How important is it to you to remain living in Brewster as you get older.” Across age groups, more than 70% of respondents reported that it is very important to them to remain in Brewster as they get older.

Figure 11. How important is it to you to remain living in Brewster as you get older?



Most (86%) of respondents wrote about their greatest concerns about aging in Brewster. Commonly cited concerns with sample quotes are included in **Table 4**. More than half of responses focused on financial security: residents are concerned about being able to afford to continue living in Brewster as they age, citing increasing taxes and cost of living as burdensome, especially with

respect to limited income in retirement. The second most common concern was about accessing essential services and amenities. This includes access to medical care, pharmacies, and things like grocery stores and home care services. Concerns about transportation most often referred to being able to get to where respondents need to go—healthcare services, shopping, social engagements, and others. Respondents were not only concerned about getting to these places, but making sure they exist in or around Brewster. Another primary concern for those who provided a response was that they can remain healthy and active in later life. Worries about physical health changes that could limit mobility and independence as well as concerns about having ample opportunity to stay active and engaged in the community were described.

Table 4. Sample responses to question, “What are your greatest concerns about your ability to continue living in Brewster?”

Affordability, cost of living, and taxes
<i>The real estate taxes are killing me. Now they are almost 1/4 of my income, with house insurance that's almost 1/2 of my monthly income!! And with the upcoming increases for the schools and possibly library, I am being taxed out of existence!!!</i>
<i>The fact that taxes continue to increase but the services provided for seniors never seem to be any better.</i>
<i>Running out of money without further income</i>
<i>It scares me that the town keeps raising taxes. I don't know if I'll be able to afford living here much longer. The town needs to stop spending money on things that the elderly won't or can't use and in things that cause our taxes to increase.</i>
<i>Increasing costs to keep our home may force us to move. Real estate taxes and home insurance along with unpredictable utility costs are definitely a concern</i>
Access to amenities and services
<i>The fact that there are no pharmacies, and no large grocery stores in town for myself or someone to get medications, etc. without traveling out of Brewster</i>
<i>Lack of shopping, good dining and entertainment.</i>
<i>Will there be help if I should ever need a home health aide or nurse's aide in the future.</i>
<i>Very poor medical care available travel off Cape needed constantly to have quality care.</i>
Staying healthy, active, and independent
<i>Mobility. Mine may lessen as I get older, and it would become more challenging for me to get where I need to go.</i>
<i>Inability to maintain my home and property. Do not have family around for support.</i>
<i>Loss of independent functioning, leading to inability to drive to events where I would actually be with people as well as loss of ability to do my own basic human needs. Who will take care of me? Where will I go?</i>

If I become immobile how do I access grocery stores, department stores etc.? If I require nursing home care, are there enough beds to accommodate me in Brewster?

Transportation Concerns

I am a single 71 year old woman with no family within 2 hours. As I age, my biggest concerns are: (1) how to get around when can't drive (2) how to get to medical appointments

It will be very difficult to live here if we lose our ability to drive.

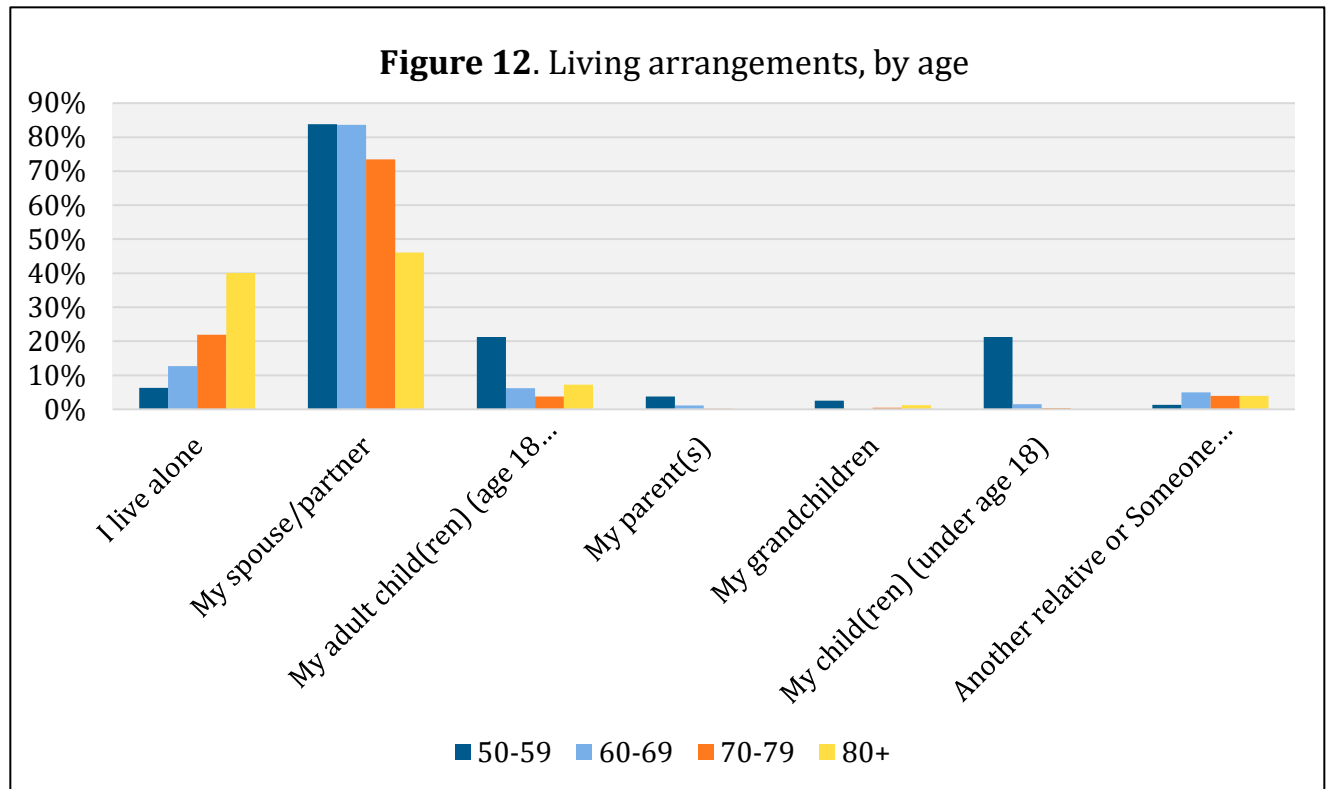
Poor transportation options for non-drivers

Housing and Living Situation

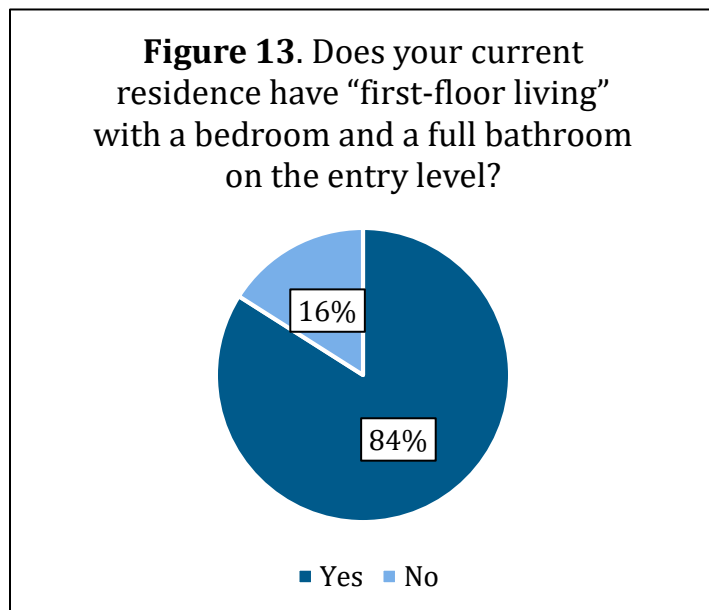
The availability and affordability of housing that is suitable to meet the changing capacity of older people are key factors that influence the ability of residents to age in place, and to lead fulfilling and healthy lives into old age. Many people are attached to their current home, even if the “fit” between individual capacity and the home environment decreases. Homes may become too large for current needs, or may become too expensive to maintain on a fixed income. Design features of homes, such as the number of stories and manageability of stairs, may challenge older residents’ ability to remain living safely in their home. Home modifications, including installation of bathroom grab bars, railings on stairs, adequate lighting throughout the home, ramps, and/or first floor bathrooms, may support residents’ safety and facilitate aging in place. Programs that connect older homeowners with affordable assistance for maintaining and modifying their homes and their yards can help protect the value of investments, improve the neighborhoods in which older people live, and support safe living. The availability of affordable housing options, especially those with accommodating features, including assisted living, may allow residents who are no longer able to stay in their existing homes to remain in their community.

Shown in **Figure 12**, 40% of those 80 and older in Brewster report living alone compared to only 6% of those age 50-59. Living alone has the potential to lead to social isolation and has implications for services that may be needed by the older segment of the population. Living alone does not, on its own, indicate social isolation. However, considering the type and quantity of support services required with age, living alone is an important factor to

consider.



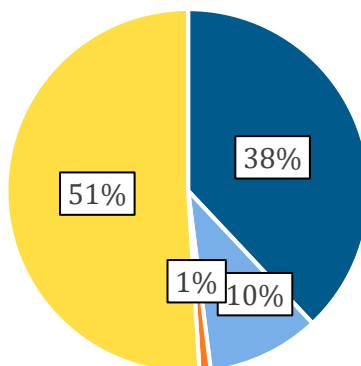
Most survey respondents live in homes that they own (94%) (see **Appendix A**). In order to assess the “age-friendliness” of the housing stock in Brewster, respondents were asked if they currently had a bedroom and bathroom on the entry-level of their home—an important feature as occupants age and mobility (up and down stairs) becomes more challenging. **Figure 13** shows that a majority of respondents do have this feature in their home (84%). Having living space that can be accessible as residents age is crucial for maintaining independence.



Maintaining a home requires resources, including people who can make repairs and the finances to pay for these repairs. In response to the question, “Does your current residence need home modifications (e.g., grab bars in showers or railings on stairs) to improve your ability to live in it safely for the next five years?” 49% of respondents stated “yes”. Among them, 38% report being able to afford these changes while 10% cannot and 1%

report not being responsible for such changes (**Figure 14**).

Figure 14. Does your current residence need home modifications (e.g., grab bars in showers or railings on stairs) or home repairs to improve your ability to live in it safely for the next 5 years?



- Yes, and I can afford to make these modifications or repairs.
- Yes, but I cannot afford to make these modifications or repairs.
- Yes, but I am not responsible for making these modifications or repairs (e.g., I rent my current residence).
- No, my current residence does not need modifications or repairs.

Survey participants were asked the type of housing they would prefer if a change in health or physical ability required moving from their current residence in the next five years. Responses varied greatly by age group. More than half (51%) of respondents age 50-59 would choose a smaller single-family home to other options, as would 39% of those age 60-69 (see **Figure 15**). Among those respondents in their 70s and 80s, a condominium is most preferred. Although modest, a share of respondents across age groups are interested in developing an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) or participating in a home-share program. These preferences for alternative senior living options by those age 50 and older has implications for future housing policy decisions in Brewster.

Figure 15. In the next 5 years, if financial needs or a change in your/your partner’s health or physical ability requires that you move from your current residence or create an alternative solution, what kind of housing would you prefer?

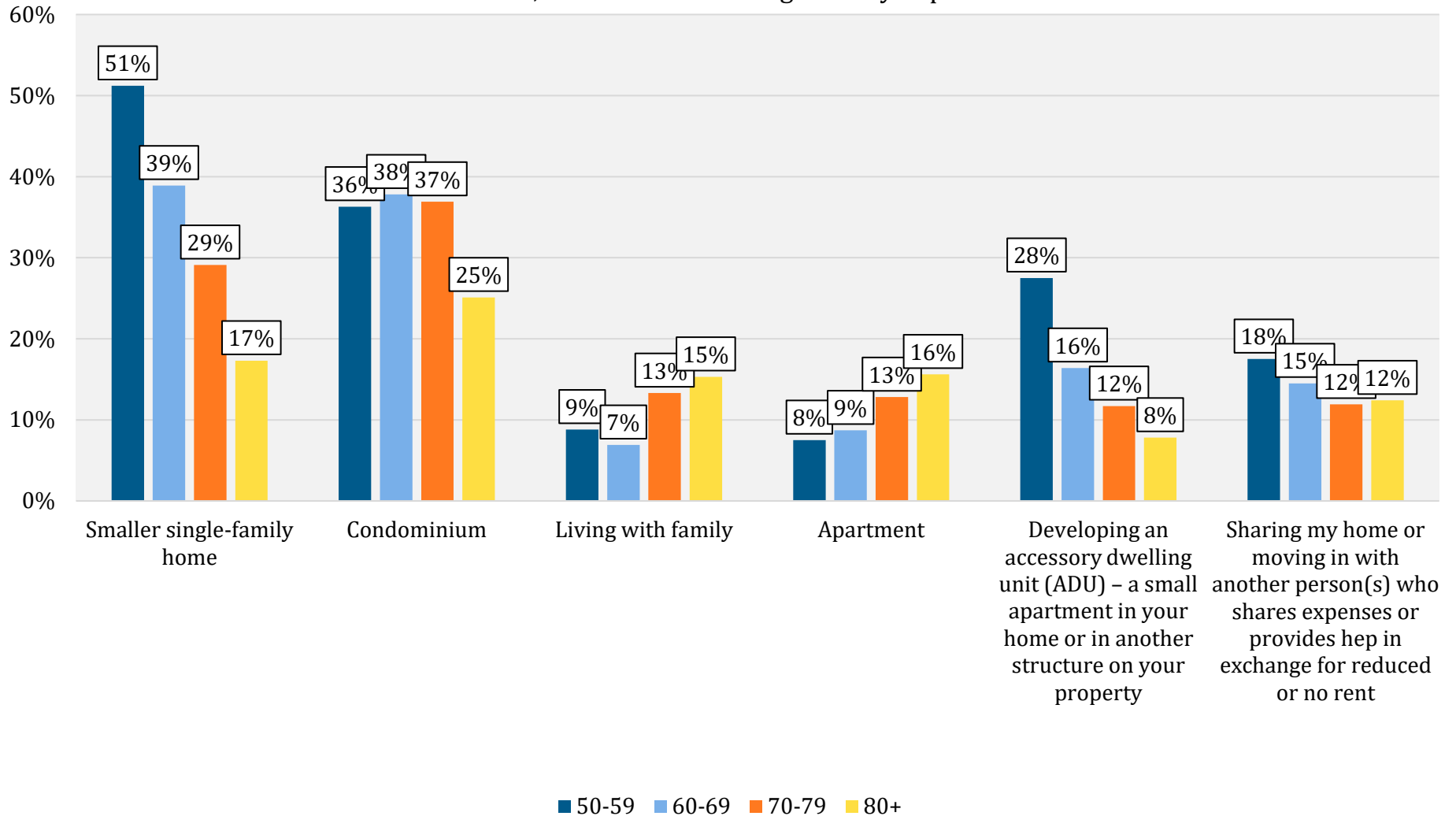


Figure 16. If you would consider developing an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) in your home or on your property, would you need help with any of the following?

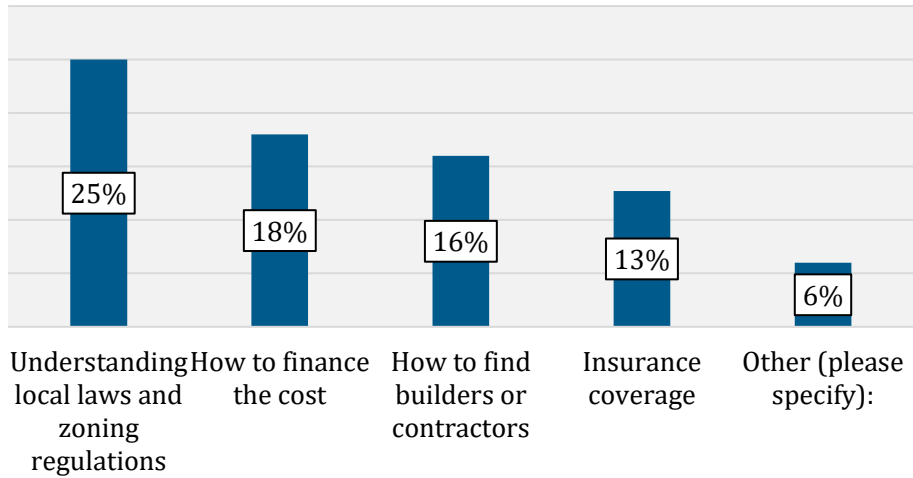
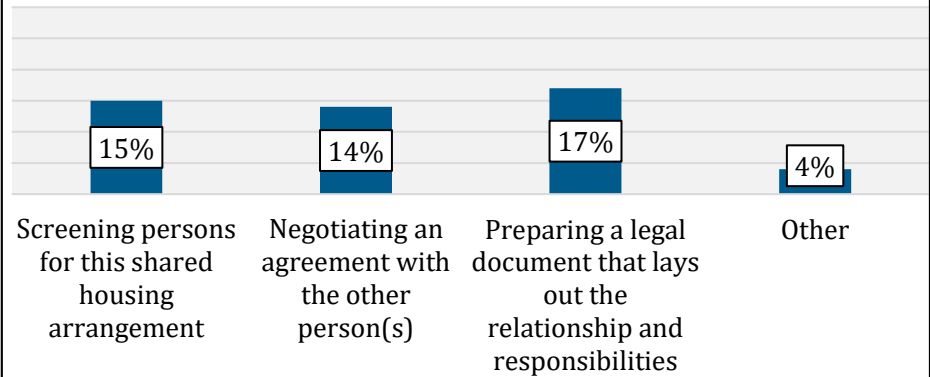


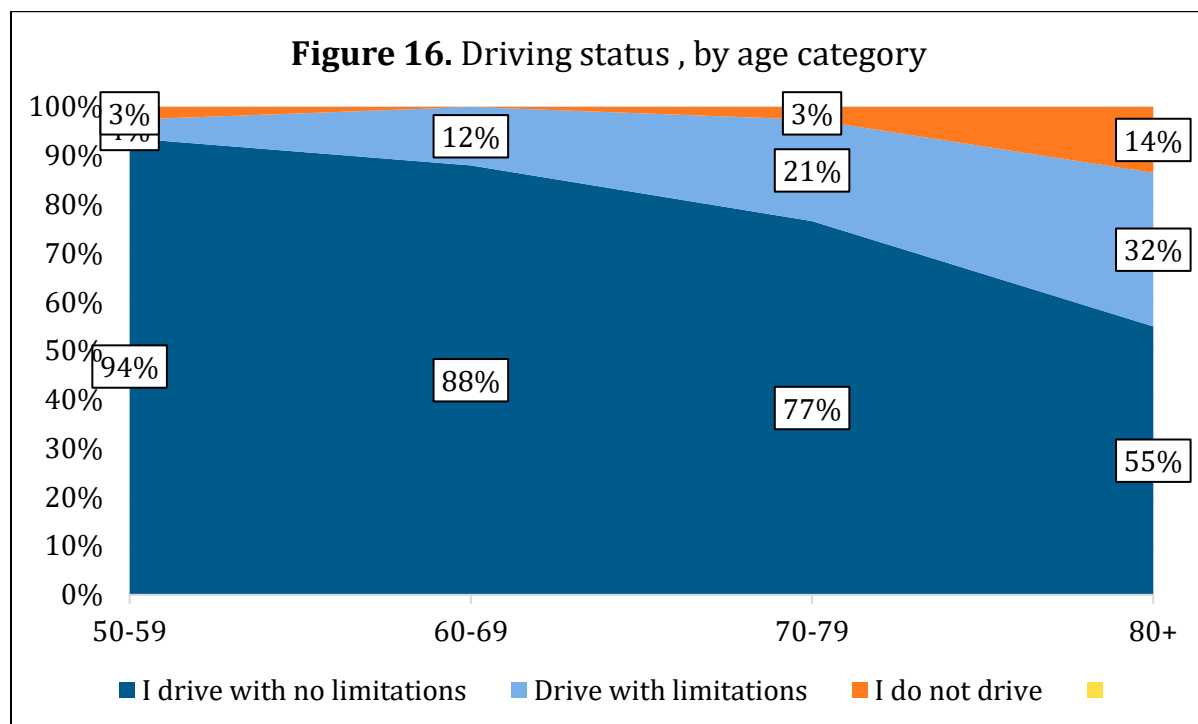
Figure 17. If you would consider sharing your home or moving to another person's home, would you need help with any of the following?



Transportation

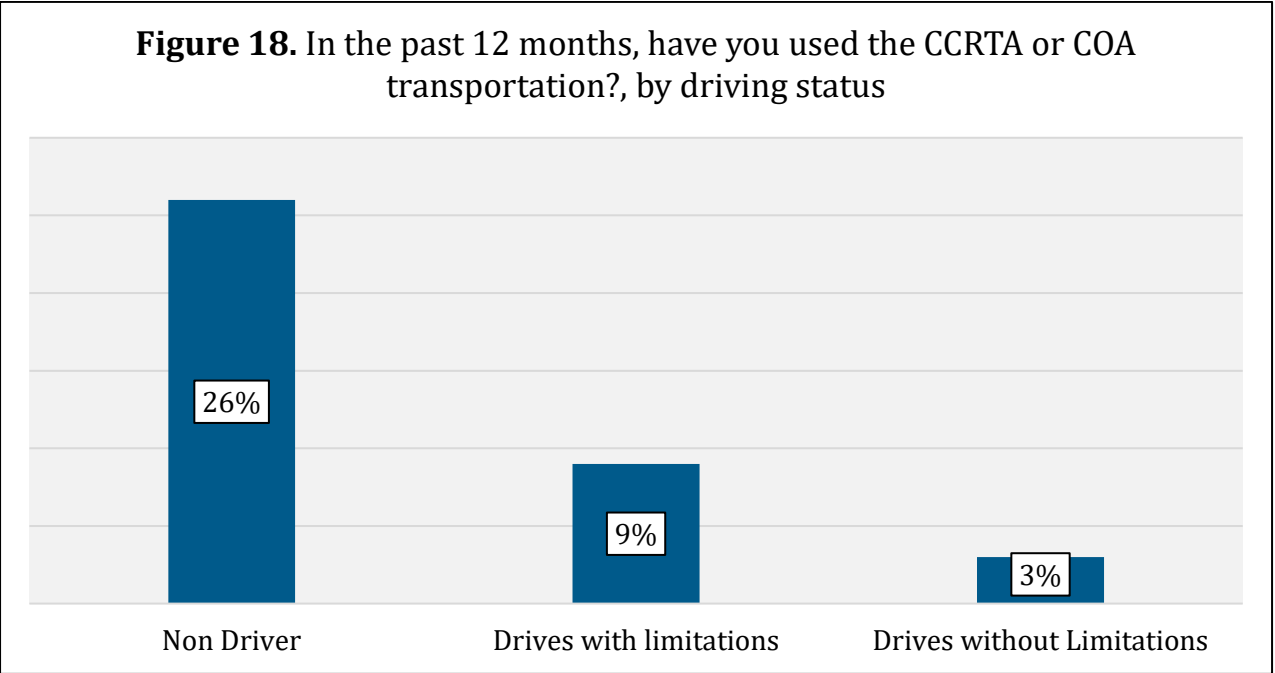
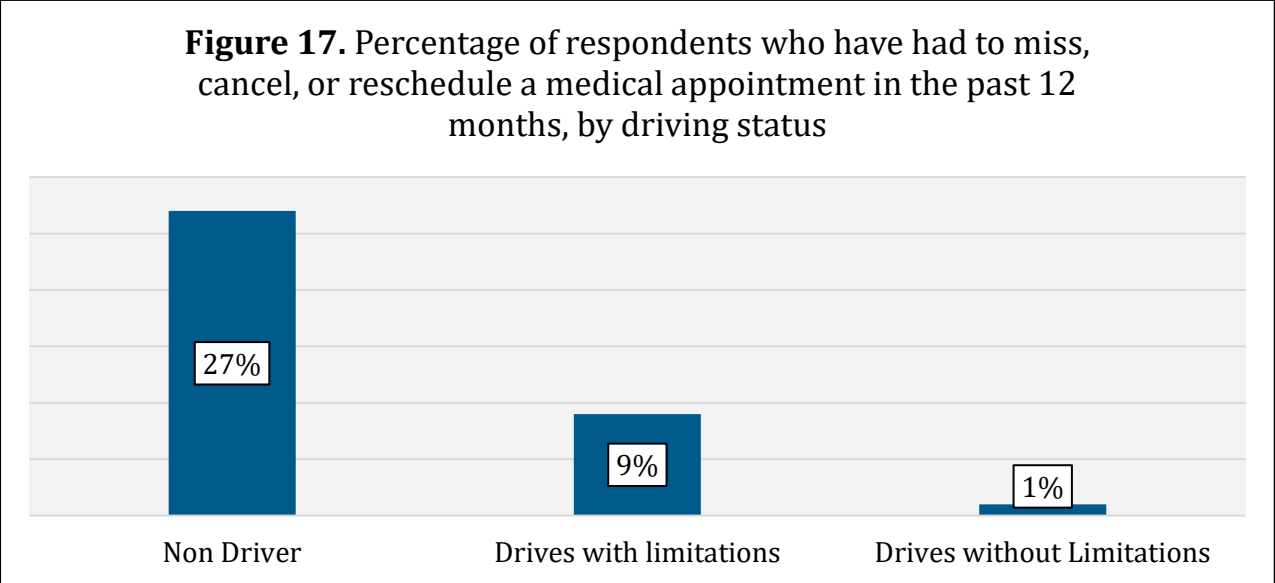
Transportation is a basic need for people of all ages who desire to lead independent, meaningful, and socially engaged lives. For older adults specifically, limited transportation options can lead to challenges in socializing, attending appointments, and fully participating in their community. The vast majority of Americans rely primarily on private transportation to meet these needs, and most individuals drive their own automobiles well into old age. Due to difficulties with transportation, individuals with health conditions and disabilities that adversely affect their ability to drive safely may be unable to participate in activities they previously enjoyed and valued. Indeed, a national survey of people aged 50 and older conducted by the AARP (2005) found that compared to older drivers, non-drivers reported lower quality of life, less involvement with other people, and more isolation.

Most survey respondents reported active driving status, with 74% driving with no limitations, and 5% not driving at all. **Figure 16** demonstrates that driving status diminishes with age: 94% of those age 50-59 drive without limitations, compared to 77% of those in their 70s and 55% of those age 80 and older.



A small share of respondents (4%) reported “yes” when asked if they have had to miss, cancel, or reschedule a medical appointment due to lack of transportation (**Appendix A**). When considering driving status, however, 9% of those who drive with limitations and 27%

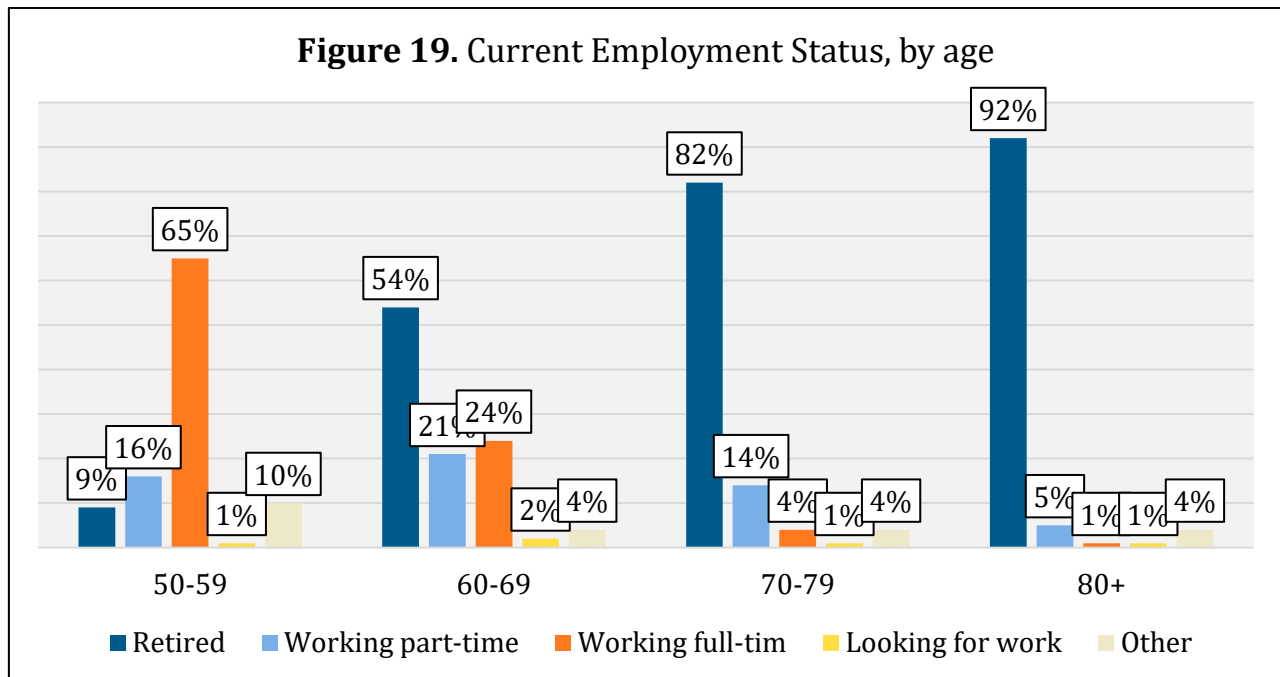
of those who do not drive reported “yes” to this question (**Figure 17**). These findings suggest that transportation limitations appear to negatively impact accessing medical care for the most vulnerable segments of Brewster’s older resident community. A similar pattern across driving status was observed when asking about the use of public transportation. Among those who drive themselves, only 3% report using CCRTA or COA transportation in the last year (see **Figure 18**). This proportion jumps to 26% among those who do not drive at all and 9% of those who limit their driving in some way.



Employment and Retirement

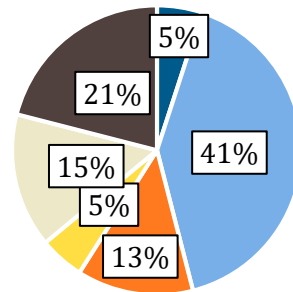
Remaining in the workforce due to financial necessity or personal preference is a decision that shapes later life for most older people. For those still working, their experiences can mean less hours, different schedules, and an interest in maintaining professional relationships. For those who have chosen retirement, maintaining active lifestyles and contributing to the world around them can be important factors when considering how to spend their time. Regardless of employment status, the ability to pay for necessary expenses and maintain quality of life can be challenging due to age related shifts in health, ability, costs, and streams of income.

Many people across the country continue to work beyond the traditional retirement age of 65, and this is evident in the Brewster survey results. One reason for continuing to work is to maintain financial security in later life. Among Brewster survey respondents, 9% (n=115) report that they do not believe they have adequate resources to meet their financial needs, including food, home maintenance, personal healthcare, and other expenses” (see **Appendix A**). Among all survey respondents, more than one-quarter (26%) are still working. **Figure 19** shows that a majority of respondents in their 50s are still working full or part-time (91%), and 46% of those in their 60s are also working. These results are similar to results from the American Community Survey, which reports that almost 32% of adults age 65 to 74 are participating in the labor force. Of those age 75 and older, more than 4% remain in the workforce (ACS, 2017–2021, Table S2301). These results indicate that a share of Brewster residents over age 60 remain in the workforce.



For those who responded that they are still working full or part-time, 41% expect to retire within the next 5 years (see **Figure 20**). Interestingly, many older adults who are still working do not know when they expect to retire (15%), or do not anticipate ever retiring (21%). Developing new programs that would particularly attract older workers may be useful. For example, convening a job fair for part-time or volunteer positions or hosting seminars on retirement planning—both financial and social.

Figure 20. Anticipated retirement plans among those still working



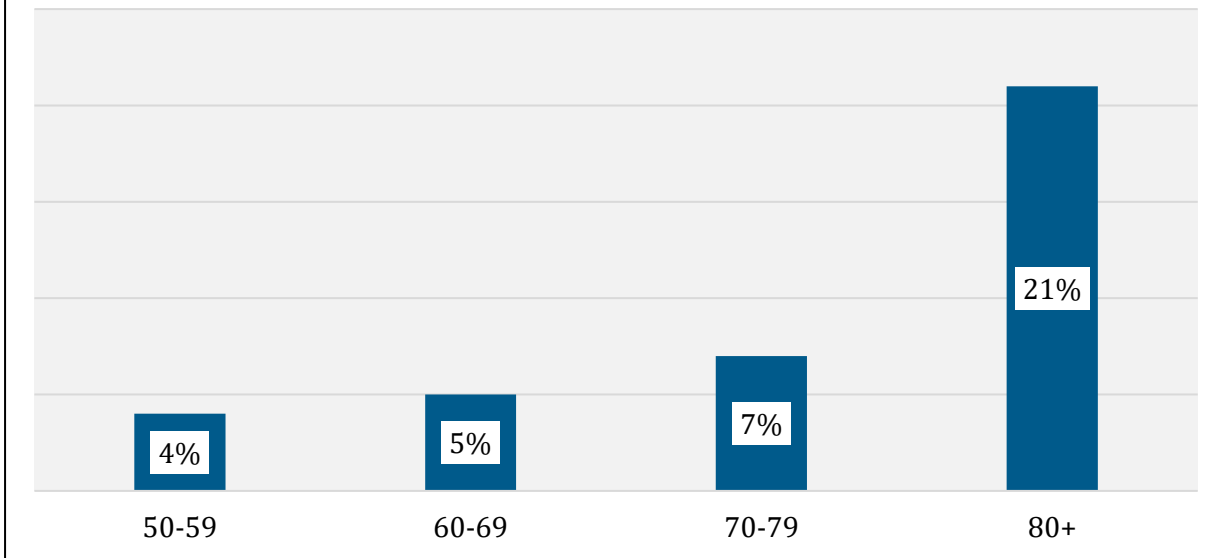
- N/A, I'm already fully retired
- Within the next 5 years
- In 6 to 10 years
- In more than 10 years
- Not sure
- I do not anticipate ever fully retiring

Health and Caregiving

Nationally, most of the care and support received by older adults due to health difficulties or disability is provided informally by family members or friends. Informal caregivers throughout the country contribute millions of hours of care without financial compensation (see statistics through the [Family Caregiver Alliance](#)).

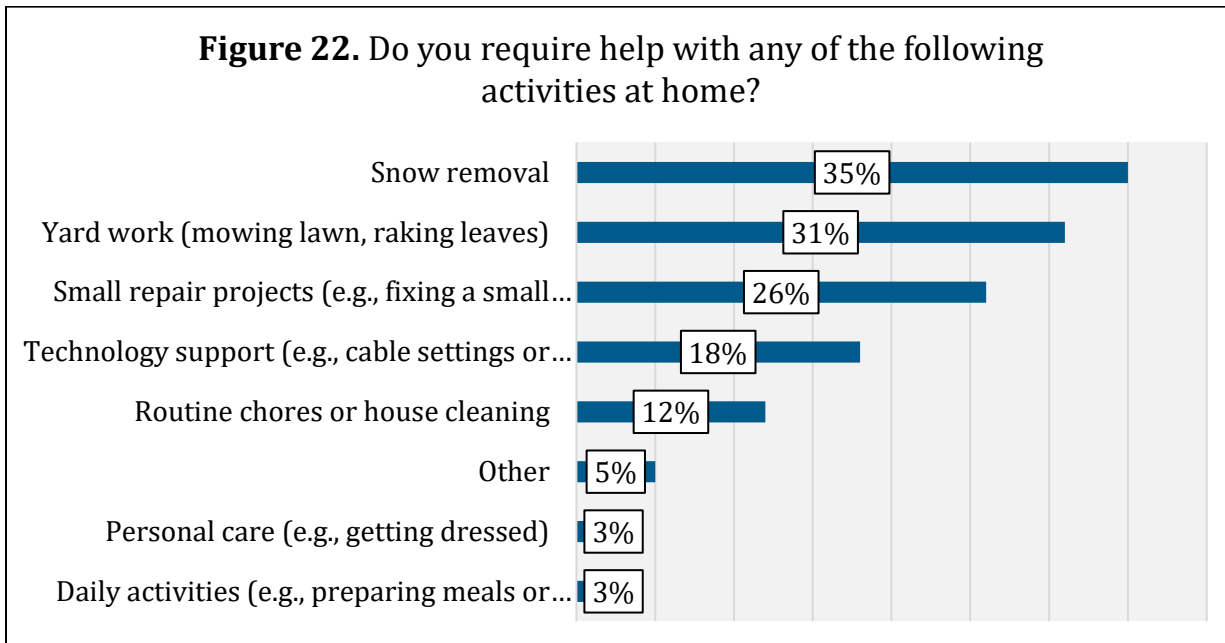
Survey participants were asked to report whether they had an impairment that limits their ability to participate in community activities. Although 10% of all respondents reported having a limiting impairment, it is apparent that the likelihood of impairment increases with age. About 5% of those in their 60s reported having an impairment that limits their ability to participate in the community. This share rises to 7% for respondents in their 70s, and increases to 21% of respondents age 80 or older (see **Figure 21**).

Figure 21. Do you have an impairment that limits your ability to participate in the community?(% yes)



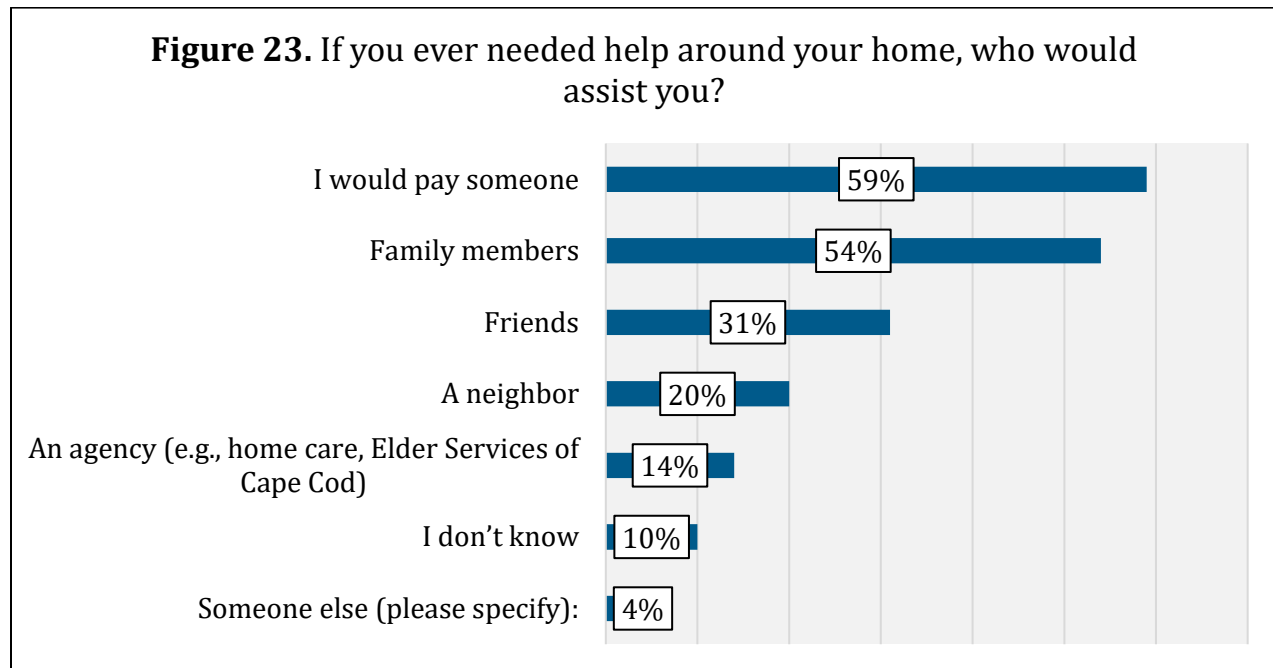
One way that changes in health and ability can make aging in the community more challenging is by impeding one’s ability to do things independently. Survey respondents were asked if they needed help with various tasks in and around their home. **Figure 22** shows that help with outdoor tasks like snow removal and yard work is required by about one-third (~400) respondents. As well, more than 1 out of 4 survey respondents report needing help with small repair projects around the house. Interestingly, 31% of respondents in their 80s need help with technology support. Help with these tasks can ease worry and facilitate continued independence.

Figure 22. Do you require help with any of the following activities at home?



When asked who might be available to help with these tasks, a majority reported that they would pay someone to help (59%) or have family members help (54%) (see **Figure 23**). This

requires that there are people known to the resident and available to work and/or that family members are available to do this work when needed. Interestingly, 31% would rely on friends to help with these tasks, and 20% would rely on neighbors. This presents an opportunity to consider how peers and neighbors can be activated to provide this kind of support.

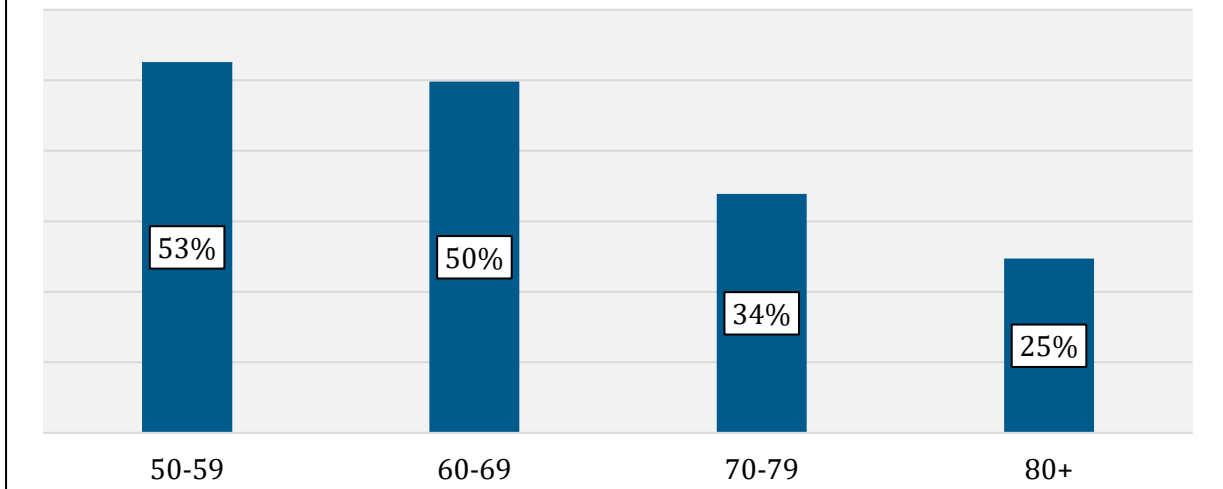


According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the number of caregivers increased from 43.5 million in 2015 to 53 million in 2020. By 2030, an estimated 73 million people will be 65 or older and many will require daily assistance from at least one caregiver. Studies show that caregiving can lead to physical, emotional, and financial strain for many individuals.²¹

More than one-third (36%) of survey respondents stated that they are currently providing care or have provided care or assistance to a person who was disabled or frail in the past 2 years. That percentage is highest among those age 50-59 (53%) and age 60-69 (50%) (see **Figure 24**).

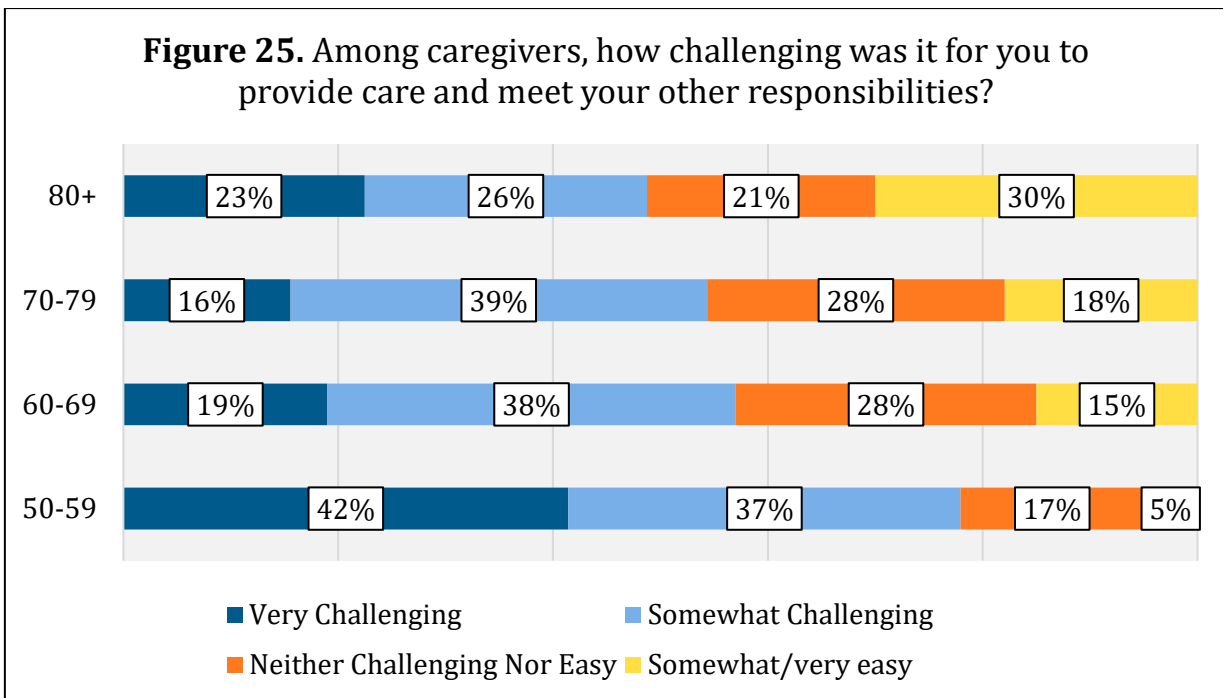
²¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/supporting-caregivers.htm>

Figure 24. Do you now or have you in the past 2 years provided care or assistance to a person who is disabled or frail?

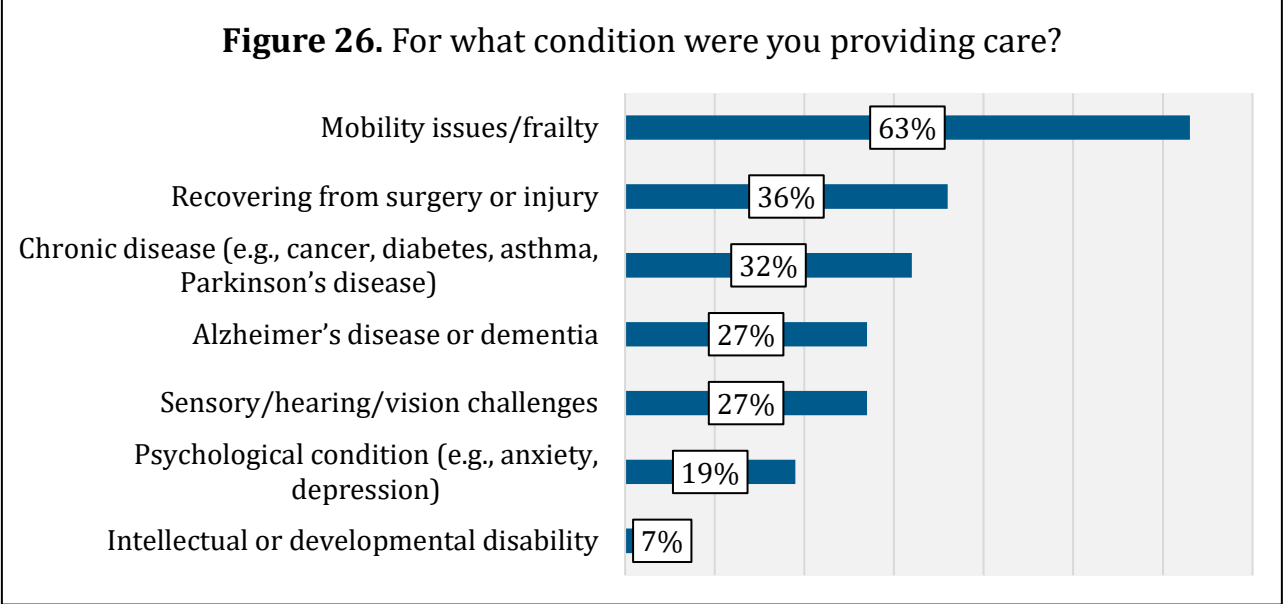


Many caregivers who responded to the Brewster survey, when asked how challenging it was to provide care and meet other family/work responsibilities, stated that it was very or somewhat challenging. This was especially true for those age 50-59 and 60-69, where more than 50% of those providing care reported this was very or somewhat challenging (see **Figure 25**). Many in this age group are likely still working and therefore may be struggling to meet the demands of both caregiving and work (e.g., transportation to adult day programs). Connections to local or state caregiving supports, and programming (e.g., support groups) might be needed to support caregivers.

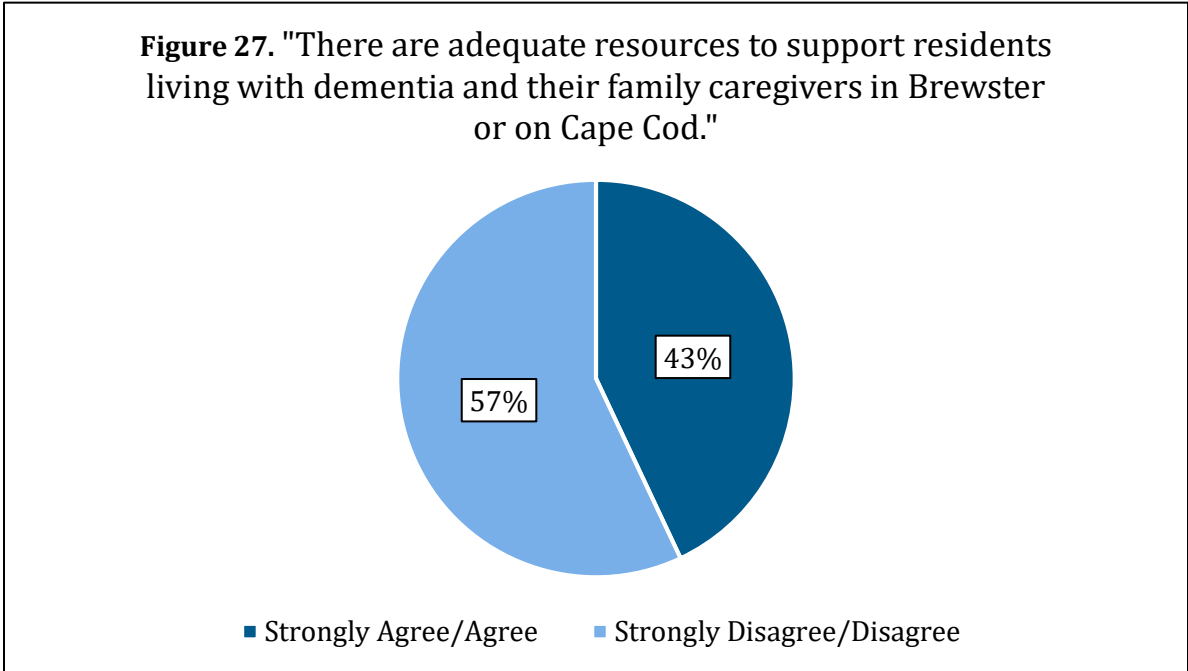
Figure 25. Among caregivers, how challenging was it for you to provide care and meet your other responsibilities?



Caregivers were asked to indicate which conditions were experienced by their care recipient. The most frequently reported condition was mobility impairment (such as difficulty walking or climbing stairs) at 63%, followed by recovering from surgery or injury (36%) or chronic diseases like diabetes, arthritis, or heart disease (32%) (see **Figure 26**). For more than 1 out of 4 (27%) care givers, their care recipient was living with Alzheimer’s disease or dementia or a sensory impairment (e.g., vision or hearing).



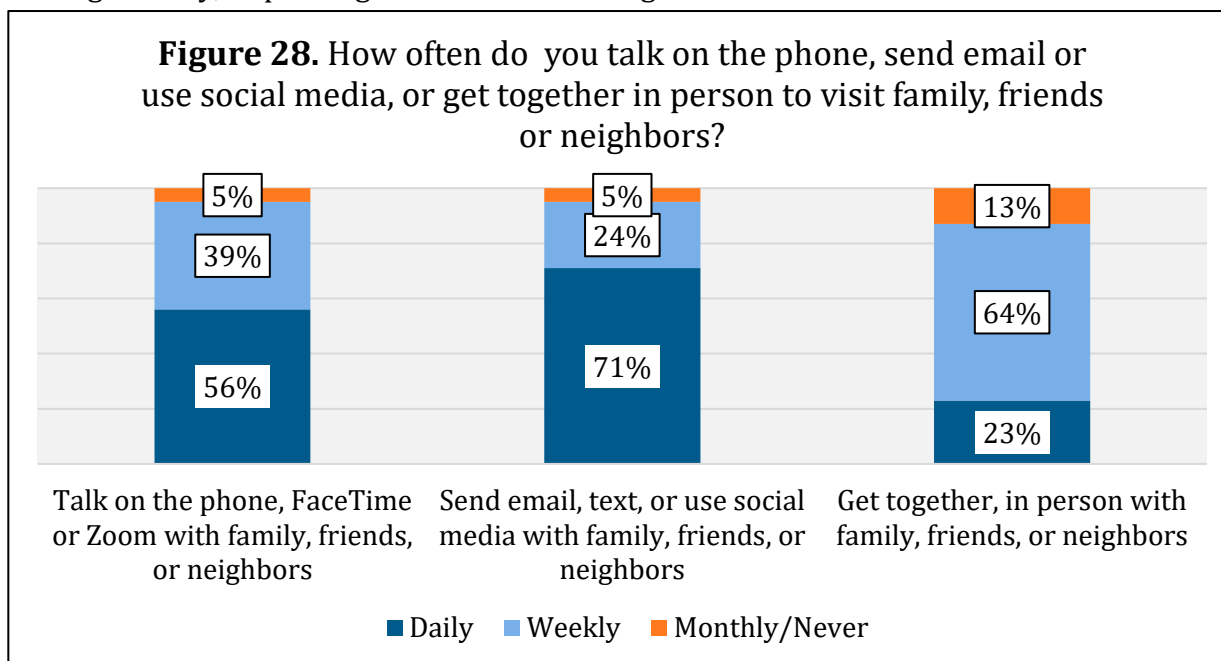
Among those who reported caring for someone with Alzheimer’s disease or dementia, 57% reported that there are NOT adequate resources to support residents living with dementia and their families in the area (see **Figure 27**).



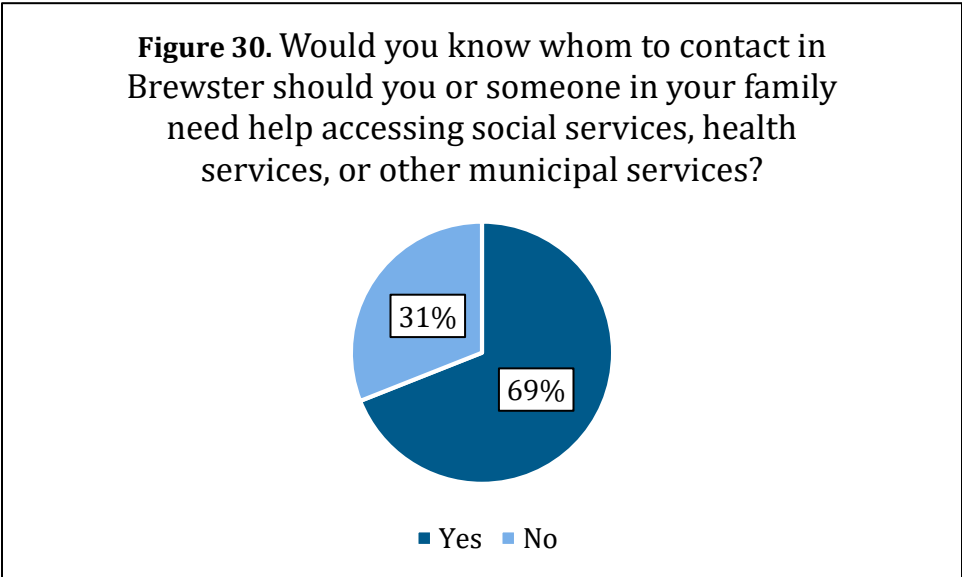
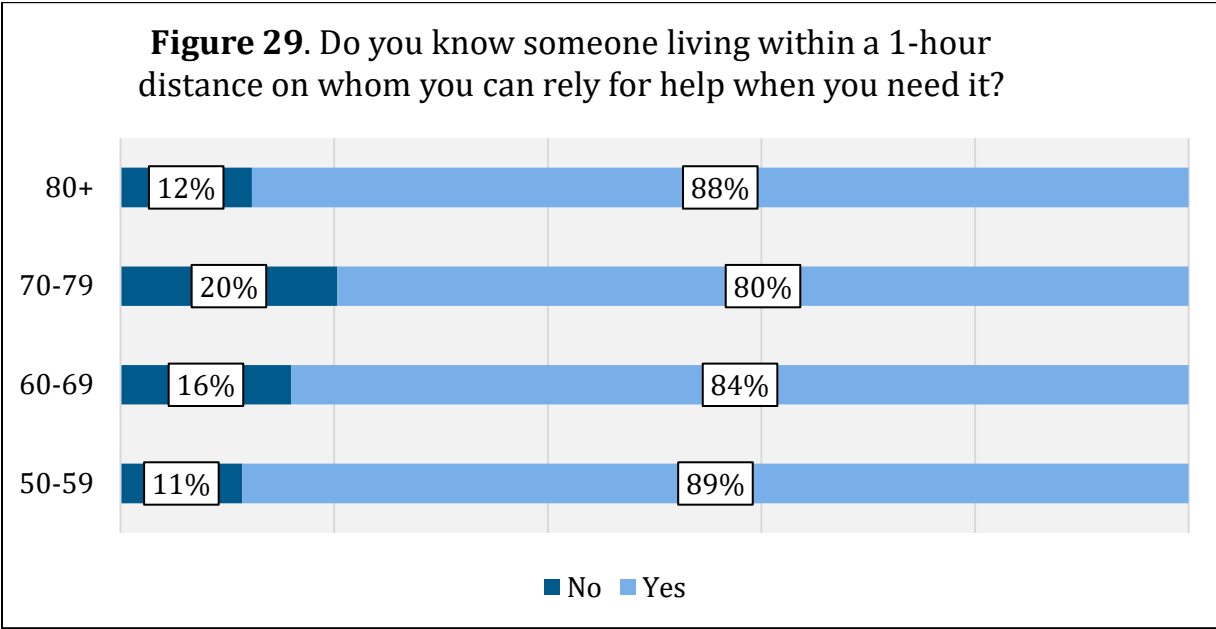
Social Activities and Relationships

Social activities and relationships shape well-being for individuals of all ages. Indeed, the absence of social relationships may have as substantial a negative impact on health as behaviors such as smoking or overeating. Many older adults are at high risk for social isolation, especially if their health and social networks break down. These risks are exacerbated if accessible services and transportation are not readily available to them as a means for maintaining contact with the world outside their homes. Providing opportunities for social engagement and participation in community events—through volunteer programs, learning opportunities and exercise programs, as well as social activities—can help community members maintain social support, remain active, prolong independence, and improve quality of life.

The majority of survey respondents speak with someone or use email or social media on at least a weekly basis to connect with family, friends, or neighbors (see **Figure 28**). Although 62% of the respondents get together in person with someone at least weekly, more than one third only get together monthly or less frequently. Of note, 25% of respondents age 80 or older reported getting together with loved ones daily, compared to less than 20% for all other age groups (Appendix A). Individuals who have infrequent contact with friends or relatives represent important groups to target efforts aimed at reducing isolation and, more generally, improving emotional wellbeing.



Openness to helping others, watching out for neighbors, and being embedded in a strong system of mutual support are hallmarks of a strong community. Yet, when survey respondents were asked if they know someone living nearby on whom they can rely for help when needed, 17% of all respondents said they did not; including 1 out of 5 respondents age 70-79 (**Figure 29**).

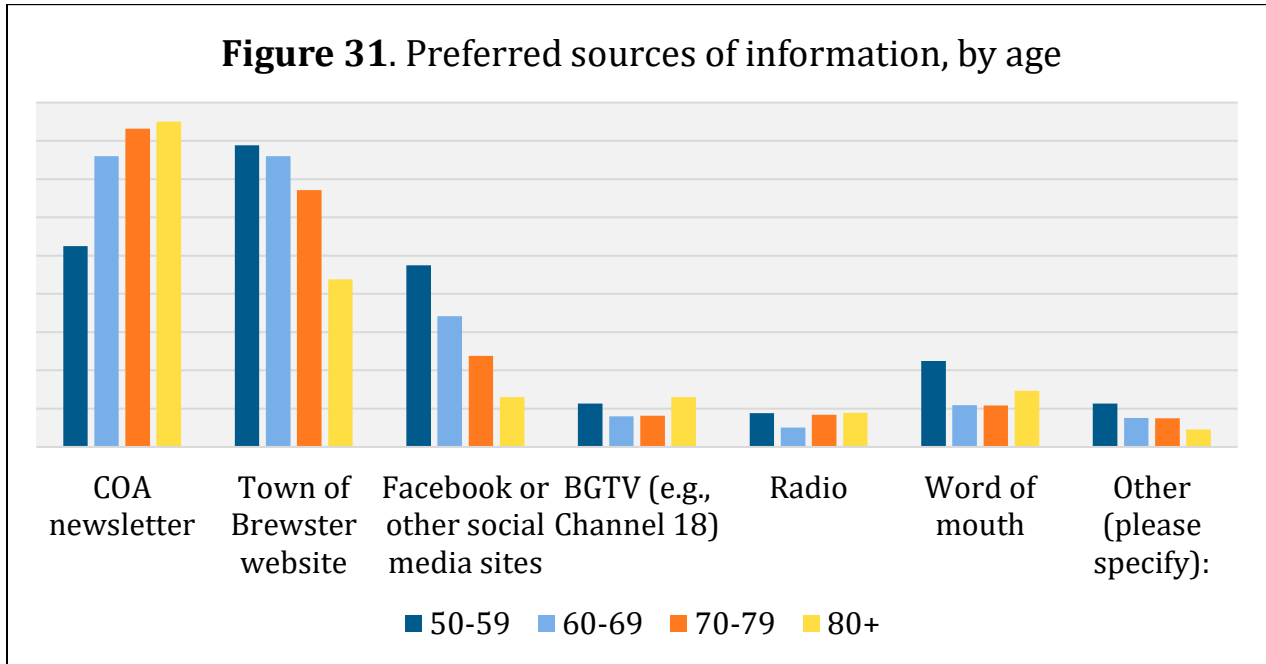


When asked, 31% of survey respondents reported that they do NOT know whom to contact in Brewster should they, or someone in their family, need help accessing local services (see **Figure 30**). This is a signal of the

importance of ongoing outreach and instruction to residents as to how and where to turn for assistance.

Figure 31 shows that for those in their 70s and 80s, that *Bayside Chatter* newsletter is the most preferred way of obtaining information about what is available through the Council on Aging. For those in their 50s and 60s, the Town’s website is a preferred source of information about what is happening at the Brewster Council on Aging. Considering the importance of these two sources of information to the community, it will be important to continue to invest in ongoing efforts to improve and widen the reach of this information.

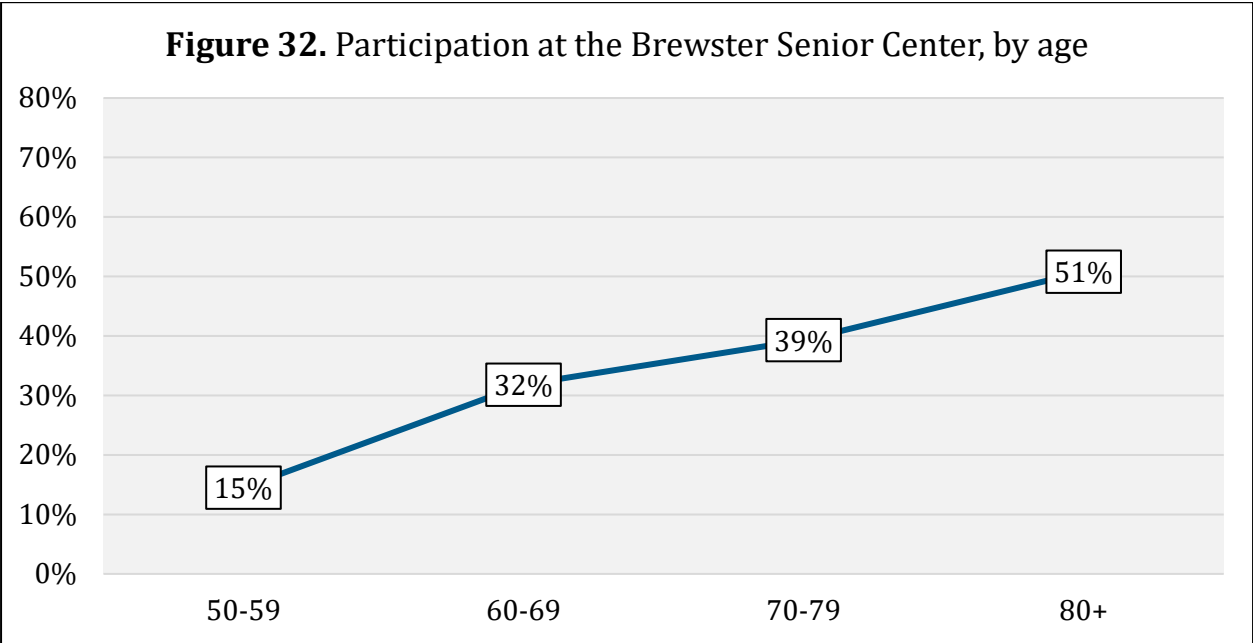
Figure 31. Preferred sources of information, by age



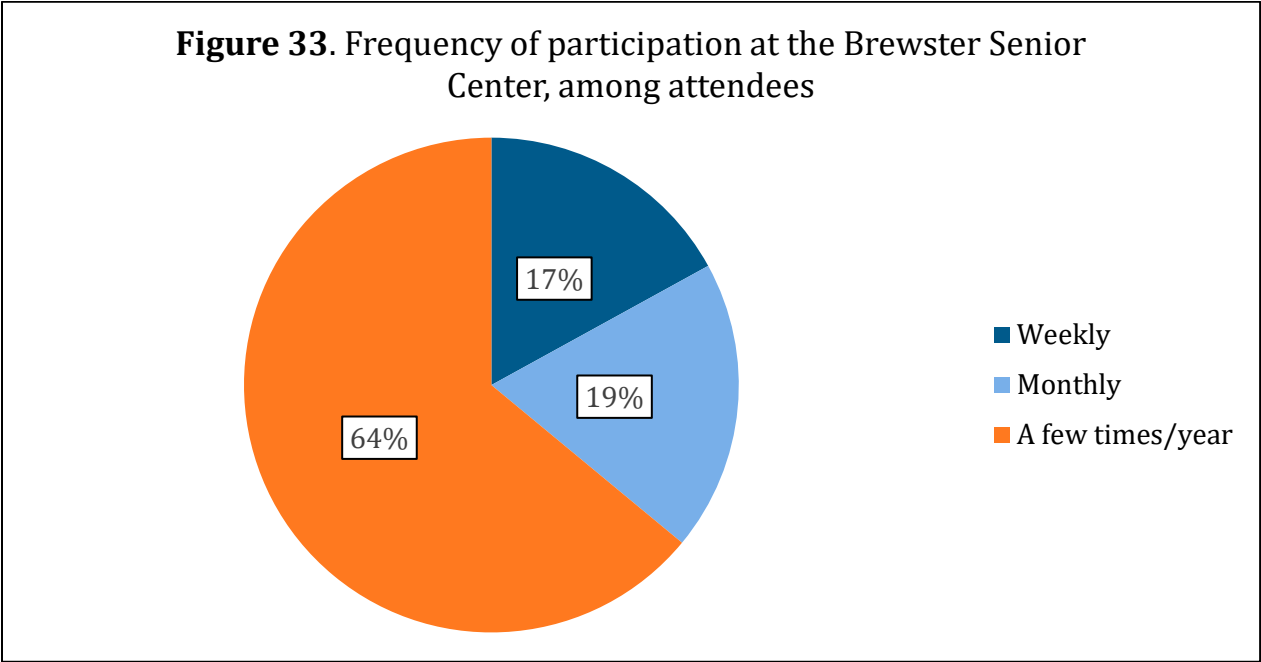
Current & Future Programs & Services at the Brewster Senior Center

Local senior centers play a part in helping older adults age in place and in community. Residents may obtain transportation, health screening, or social services through their local COA. Older adults may seek opportunities for engagement and socialization through volunteer programs, learning opportunities and exercise programs, as well as social activities. These involvements can help community members maintain social support, remain active, prolong independence and improve quality of life. Some research suggests that participating in a Senior Center may reduce one’s sense of isolation, a highly significant outcome given the negative consequences of being disconnected socially.

More than 80% of respondents see the Brewster Senior Center as playing a role in their or their loved one’s lives—making it clear that the Brewster Senior Center is a revered community asset for many (**Appendix A**). Survey results suggest that participation in the Brewster Senior Center is considerably more common among older residents. As shown in **Figure 32**, just 15% of those age 50-59 and 32% of respondents in their 60s report ever using programs or services offered by the Brewster Senior Center. Then, about 39% of those in their 70s and 51% of respondents age 80 and older indicated they have participated in programs at the Brewster Senior Center. This age-graded pattern of participation is not unusual in senior centers and may reflect the increasing value of the Brewster Senior Center to older residents.

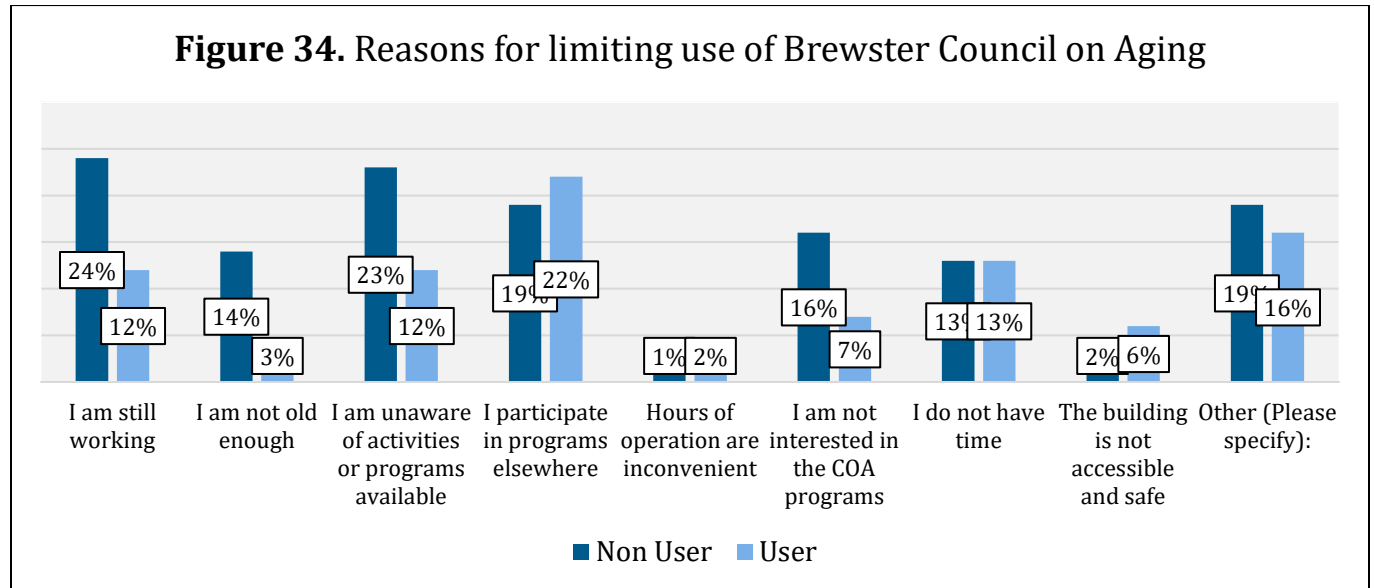


Among respondents who participate at the Brewster Senior Center, 64% only visit a few times a year, while 17% visit weekly. (Figure 33). This range of participation levels highlights the broad continuum of affiliation with the Brewster COA, with many residents participating just periodically, while others include visits to the Brewster COA as part of their regular weekly schedule (Appendix A).



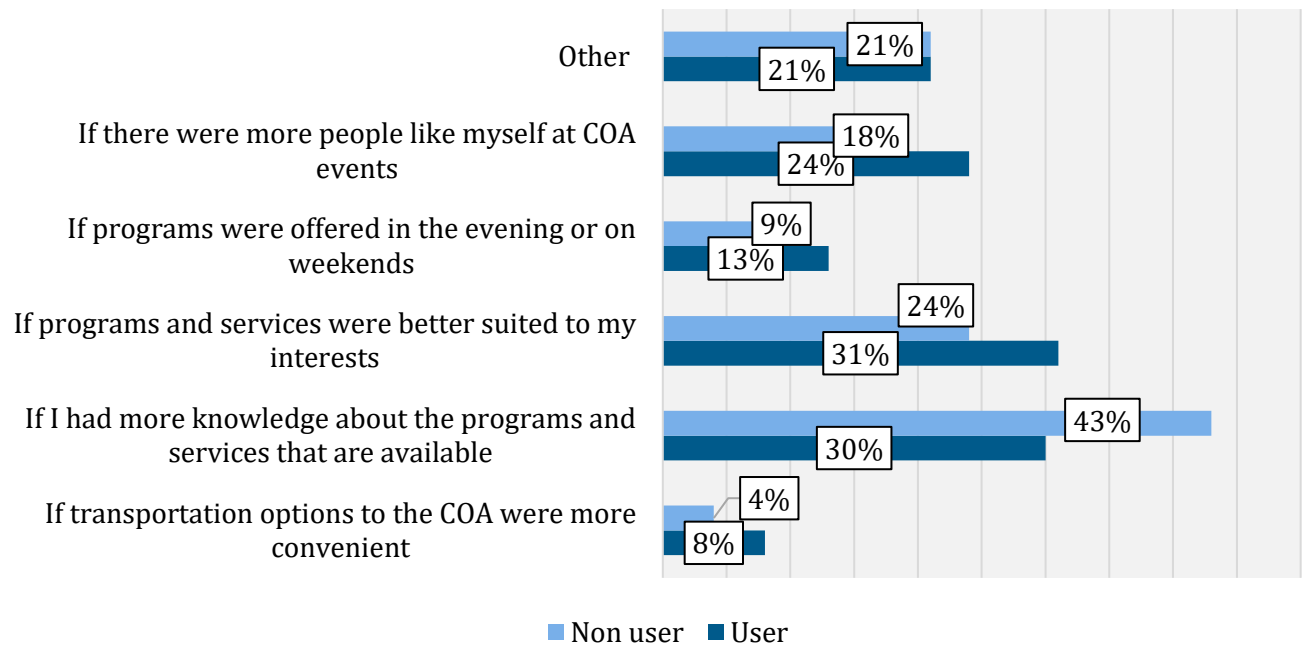
Among those who have never used the Brewster Council on Aging, major limiting factors in include still working (24%) and not knowing what is available (23%) (see Figure 34). For

those who do use the Brewster Council on Aging, participating in programs elsewhere (22%) and “other” (16%) were most commonly reported barriers. For those who wrote in, most can be described as “not having a need” to participate more often. For example, one resident wrote, “I am very active on my own and don’t need programs yet but recognize their importance.”



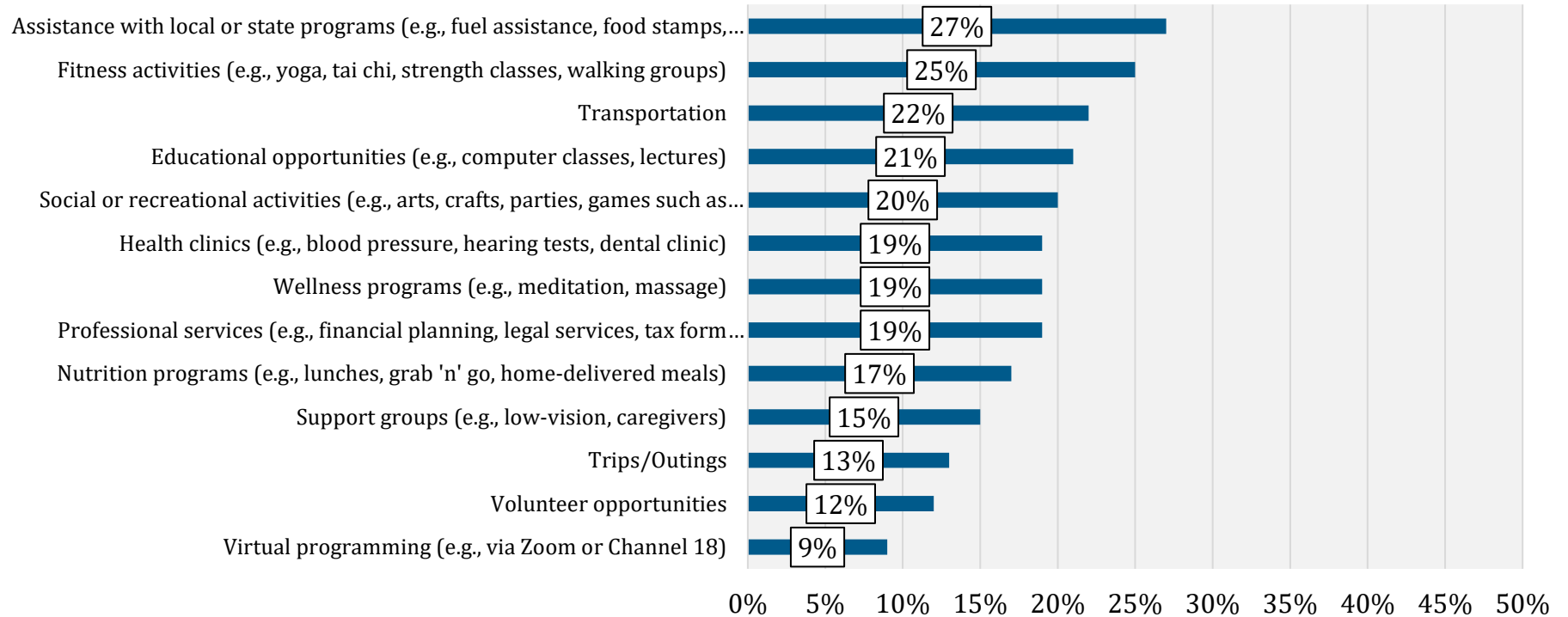
Among those that never use the Brewster Council on Aging, having more information about programs and services offered would increase the likelihood of participating (reported by 43% of non users) (see **Figure 35**) and for those who do use the Brewster COA, more programs that suit their interests would increase participation (31%).

Figure 35. Which factors would increase the likelihood of your using the Brewster Council on Aging?, by user status

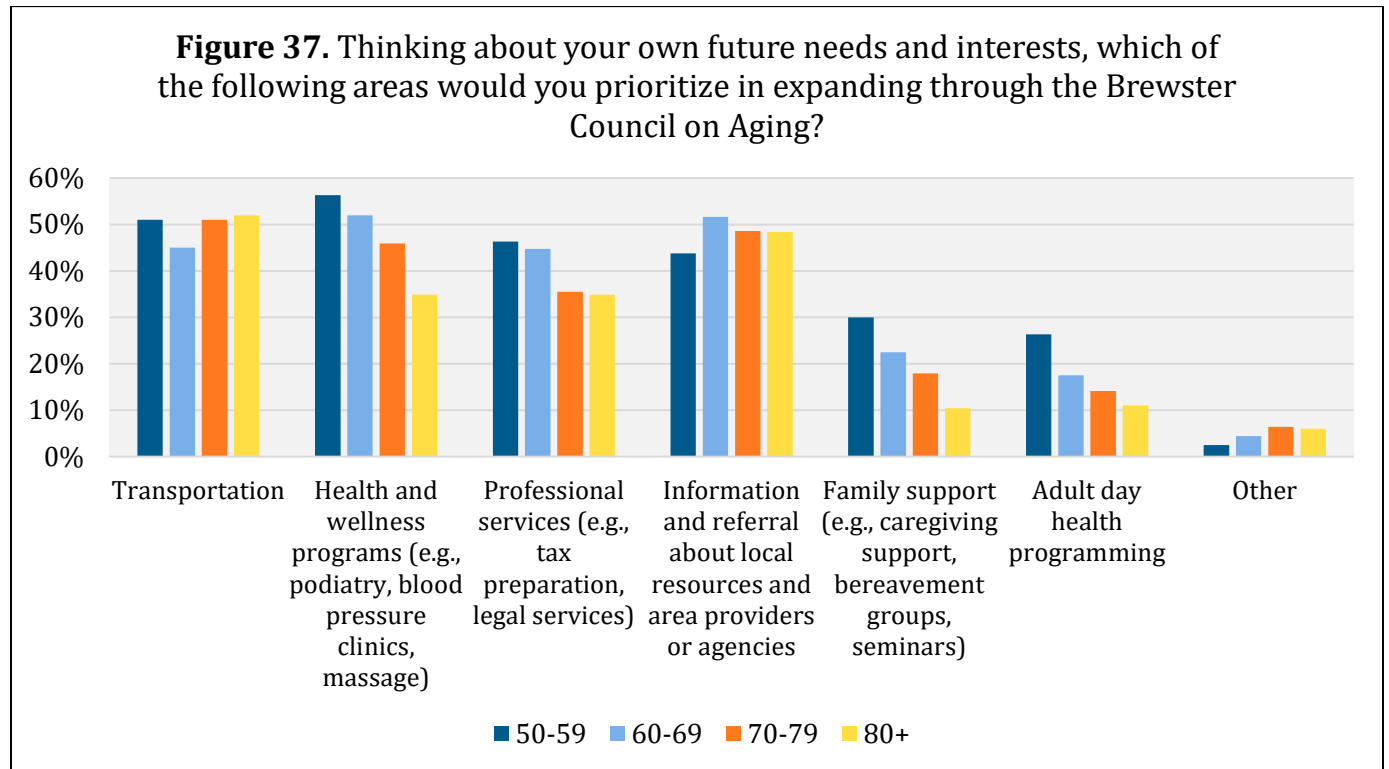


When asked about the importance of current functions of the Brewster COA, similar patterns across age groups were observed. The most valuable functions of the COA are assistance with local or state programs, transportation, and fitness activities (see **Figure 36**). Opportunities for education and social interaction were rated very important by at least one out of five survey respondents.

Figure 36. Please rate the importance of each program/service to you or your family



The next two figures present findings related to the kinds of programs and services that survey respondents would like to see more of through the COA. **Figure 37** presents the kinds of services that respondents would like to expand. Transportation, health and wellness programs, and information and referral are the top three services prioritized by respondents, regardless of age.

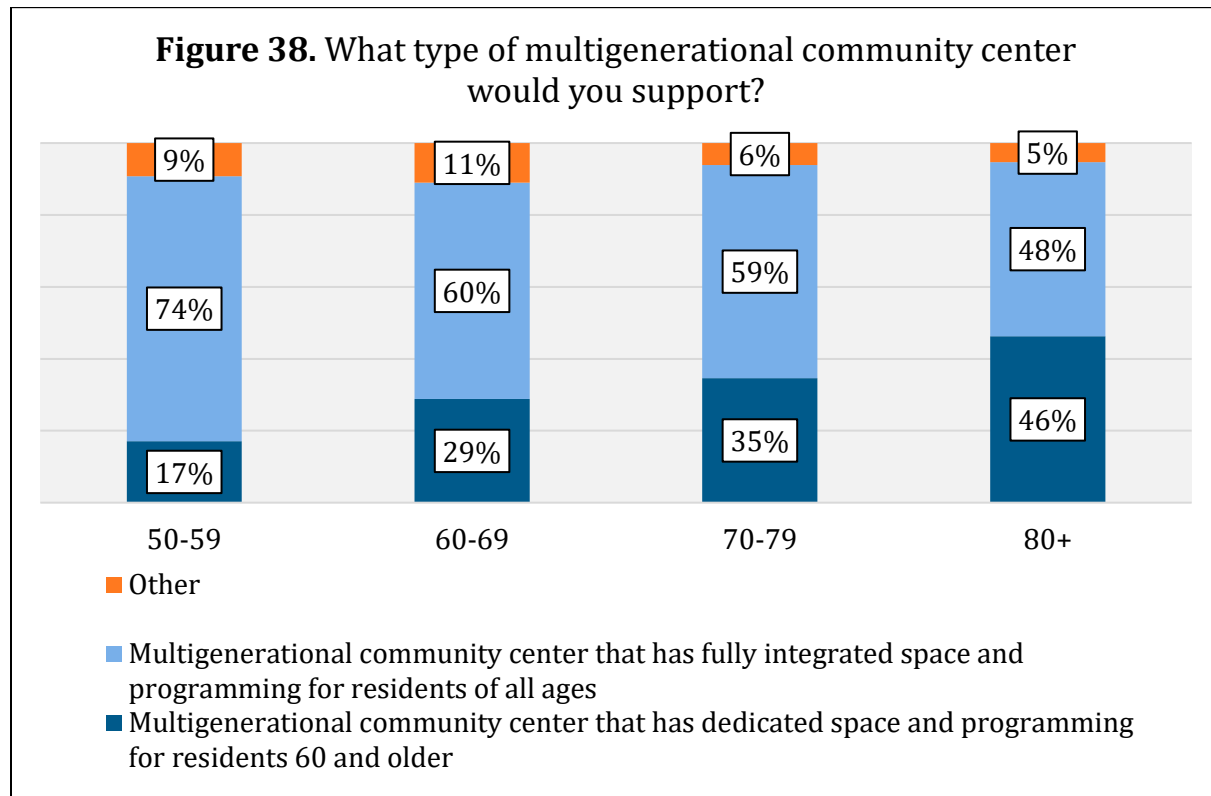


As far as the kinds of programs that respondents would like to see expanded through the Brewster Council on Aging, a similar pattern emerged across age groups (see **Appendix A**). Exercise, both indoor and outdoor, lifelong learning and performances and visual arts opportunities are the most commonly preferred. **Table 5** shows these results, by age.

Table 5. Preference for program expansion, by age

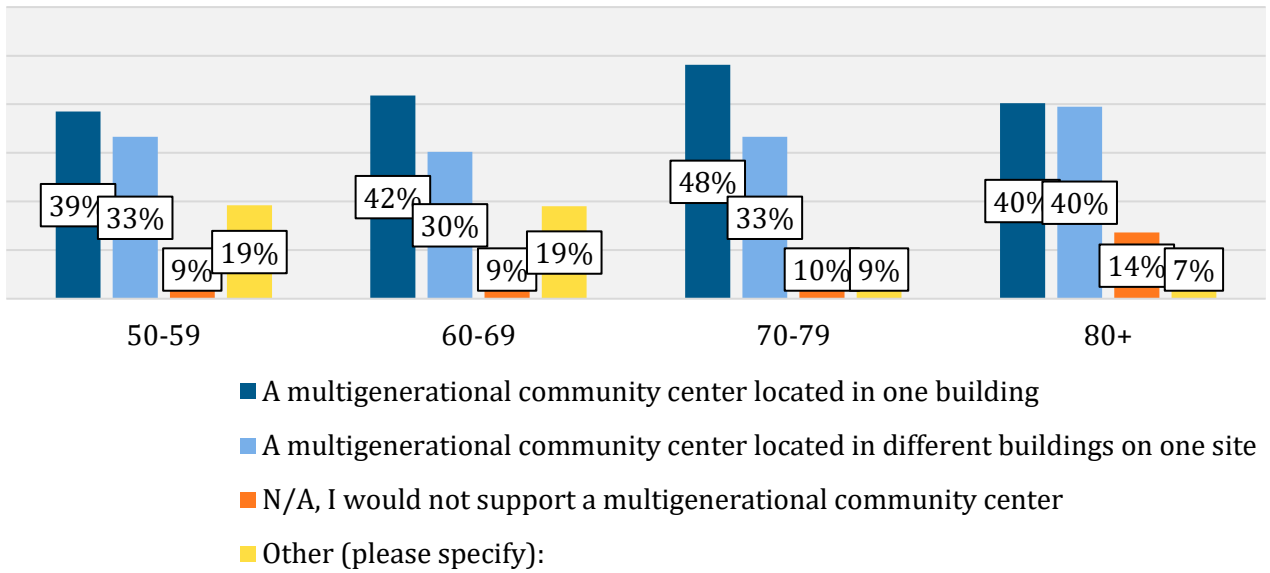
50-59	60-69	70-79	80+
Outdoor exercise (e.g., hiking/walking, kayaking) (64%)	Outdoor exercise (e.g., hiking/walking, kayaking) (60%)	Performances and visual arts (e.g., concerts, lectures) (51%)	Performances and visual arts (e.g., concerts, lectures) (39%)
Wellness programs (e.g. stress management, meditation) (53%)	Performances and visual arts (e.g., concerts, lectures) (53%)	Lifelong learning programs (e.g., history, writing, languages, cultural courses) (43%)	Day trips (38%)
Indoor exercise (e.g., yoga, aerobics) (53%)	Indoor exercise (e.g., yoga, aerobics) (53%)	Outdoor exercise (e.g., hiking/walking, kayaking) (42%)	Lifelong learning programs (e.g., history, writing, languages, cultural courses) (38%)
Social activities (e.g., games or parties) (51%)	Lifelong learning programs (e.g., history, writing, languages, cultural courses) (48%)	Indoor exercise (e.g., yoga, aerobics) (42%)	Technology skills classes (e.g., smartphone applications) (37%)
Arts classes (e.g., art, photography, acting, music) (45%)	Wellness programs (e.g. stress management, meditation) (42%)	Day trips (37%)	Indoor exercise (e.g., yoga, aerobics) (27%)

The Town of Brewster is considering building a new combined Senior/Community Center. Specifically, the Brewster Select Board and Town Administration analyzed the possible acquisition of the former Cape Cod Sea Camps properties and received Town support in 2021 to purchase the property. Survey participants were asked to rate their preference for a senior center vs. a community center available to residents of all ages (see **Figure 38**). Over half (58%) of survey respondents expressed preference for an all-ages community center with fully integrated space for all ages.



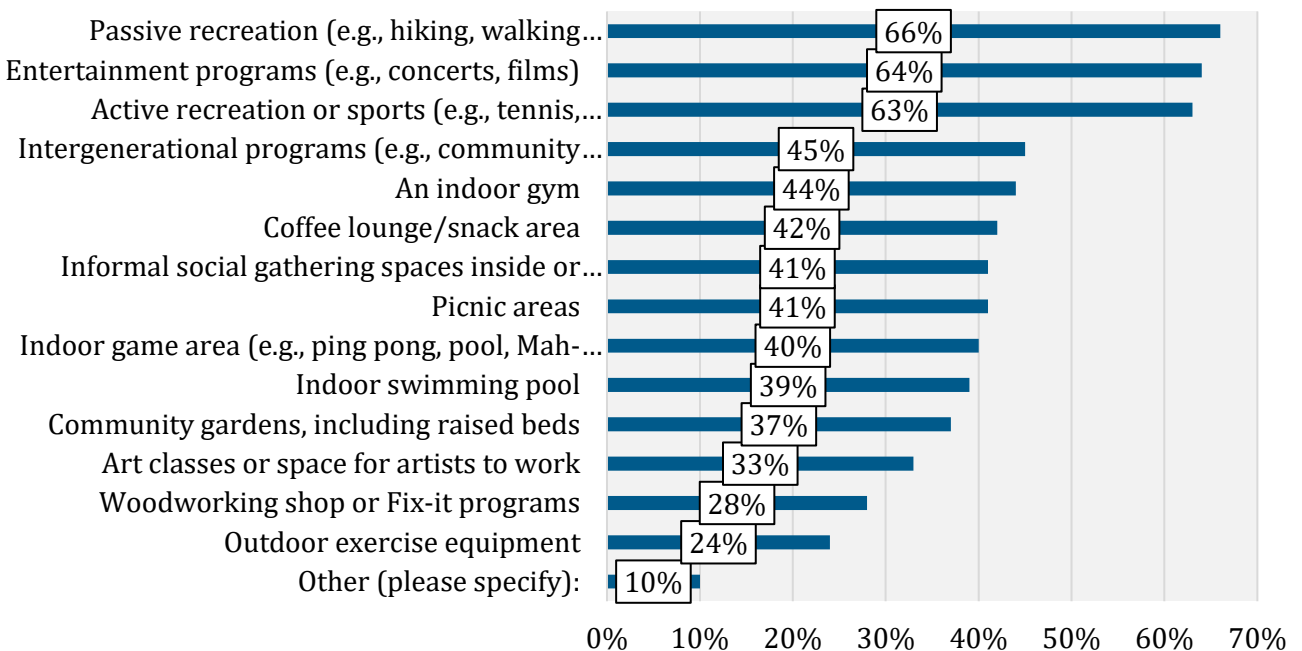
As for how the space is organized, most respondents (44%) prefer having a multigenerational community center in one building, as opposed to having programs available across multiple buildings (34%), and 14% would not support a community center at all (see **Figure 39**).

Figure 39. What is your preference for how space and programing are organized?

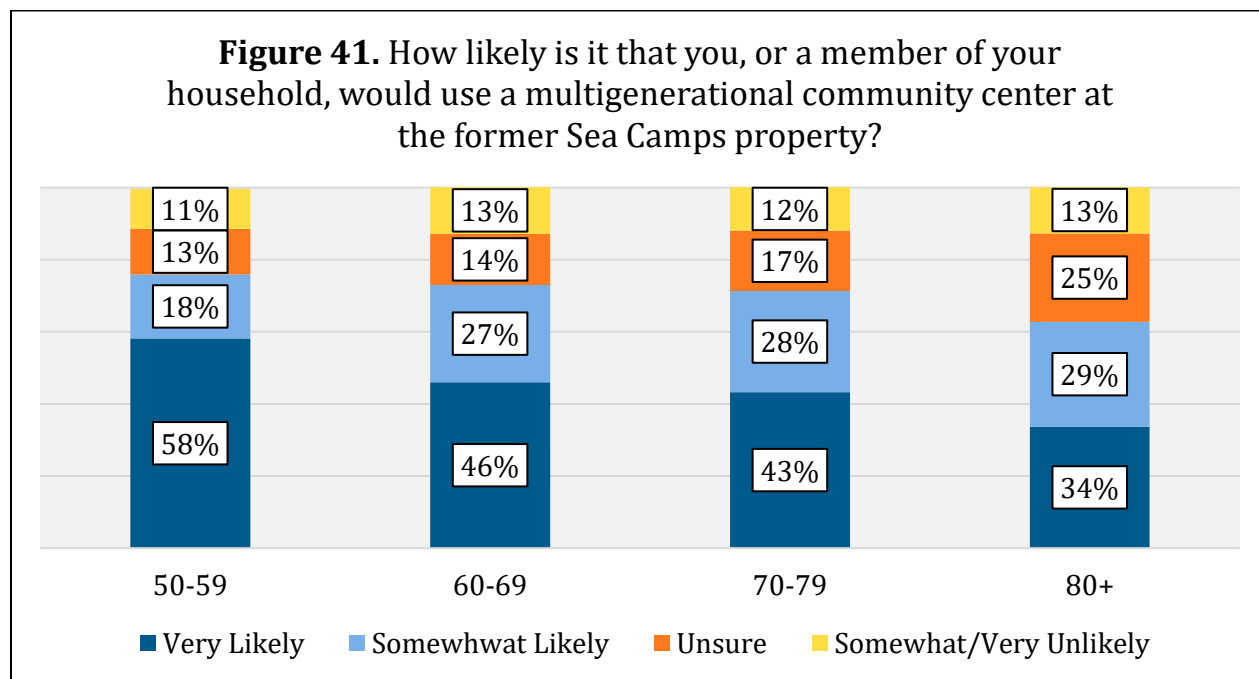


Passive recreation (66%), entertainment venue for concerts and films (64%), and active recreation (64%) are the most frequently cited types of programs desirable at the former Sea Camps property (see **Figure 40**). The types of spaces that more than 40% of respondents would like to see included are an indoor gym (45%), intergenerational programming (44%), a coffee lounge/snack area (42%) and picnic areas (41%).

Figure 40. Which of the following would you like to see happen at the former Sea Camps property?



About 42% of all respondents would be “very likely” to use a multigenerational community center at the former Sea Camps property (see Appendix A). **Figure 41** shows some slight differences across ages. For example, only 34% of those respondents age 80 or older would use such a place. As well, more than one-quarter of respondents age 60 and older report being “unsure” about their participation. Suggesting that continued engagement and understanding of the community’s need for such a space is needed.



At the conclusion of the survey, respondents were invited to write in any additional thoughts or comments about the Town of Brewster and more than 600 participants took the time to provide additional feedback. Some comments mirrored support for topics learned during this needs assessment while many comments provided fresh insights. The most prominent themes that emerged are presented in **Table 6**, with sample quotes. The majority of the comments were positive, about the Town of Brewster more broadly, and about the Brewster COA, specifically. It is evident from the comments that while some of those who complimented the COA take advantage of the programs and services, others do not at this time, but are comforted to know that Brewster’s COA is available for their future needs.

In addition, there were many suggestions and strong sentiment regarding the structure of the senior center, in addition to its programs and services. Several respondents identified physical features of the building as deterrents to participation, while recommending updates to the furniture, interior design, and physical structure as actions that would make the senior center feel more inviting and contemporary. Moreover, many respondents wrote-in suggestions for programs and services, focusing on adding variety to the existing catalog of offerings. Respondents recognized the need for continued and expanded services, such as transportation, financial assistance, and home

maintenance referrals, echoing concerns about continuing to live independently in Brewster, as reported in Table 4. Other comments regarding programs emphasized participating in energetic and engaging activities, creating social connections, and wellness that contribute to quality of life, as well as having opportunities to participate late in the afternoon and evening or on weekends. Modernized surroundings and expanded offerings are things that respondents identified as needs—but in the opinion of many residents, would require additional investment in an appropriate space, staffing, and other resources conducive to a vibrant center.

Another common sentiment expressed by survey respondents included the perception that older residents in Brewster need more attention and support from the Town. Many cited feeling that their own needs and interests were in competition with those of younger residents, specifically when it comes to municipal spending and development priorities.

Many statements shared as write-ins by survey participants focused on community-wide issues such as reaching residents through improved communication strategies. Some respondents provided specific ideas for the COA to amplify outreach, such as welcoming programs to facilitate participation by Brewster’s newer residents, and “open house” greeting events to encourage COA engagement with Brewster’s younger older-adults, in addition to other suggestions. Recognizing the heterogeneity among the older population, multiple streams of communication and information (e.g., print materials, emails, social media, phone calls) can be synthesized to maximize reach.

Table 6. Additional thoughts or comments about the Town of Brewster

The Town of Brewster has broader issues to be addressed outside of the potential community center.
<i>Aging in place, promoting well-being among seniors and coping with increasing infirmities are all very important programming issues for Brewster. Their scope is too broad to be addressed only by the COA. How are programs and services for seniors actively linked up across the departments of health, planning, recreation, COA etc.?</i>
<i>As time goes on the real estate abatement considerations need to increase this allowance as housing cost are rising credits to firemen/police to acquire homes to serve the town</i>
<i>with regard to the previous question about income, I currently have resources, but am not sure if / how long this will continue</i>
<i>My father and mother-in-law are aging, and the two biggest needs seem to be local transportation to medical and social activities, and an ability to reach out to a trusted list of those able to provide help with small jobs around the house at an hourly rate (moving furniture or packages, help with the internet, etc).</i>
Ideas for programming and services to be offered by the Brewster Council on Aging
<i>More programming suitable for men, especially those w/o wives. More for frail adults who are cognitively in tack but can't get around. More intellectually stimulating programming; More programming for children of elders in preparation for the trials and tribulations of parents and their own old age (maybe in summer when they are all here).</i>

Would like to see more outside activities for active older adults--group hikes, trips to games in Boston, group bicycle rides, kayaking, paddle boarding, fishing,

Maybe a buddy system amongst several volunteers who periodically check in each other couple times weekly

Would love retirement financial planning resources.

Positive feedback for the Brewster Council on Aging

I have only praise for our Senior center, they make life a joy

I have used COA phone counseling in the past year to find out how to sign up for Medicare. That was very helpful- thank you!

Thank you for all that you currently do for seniors in our community. It is reassuring to know that you are there and available for us if and when we need any assistance.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This report describes research undertaken by the Center for Social & Demographic Research on Aging (CSDRA) within the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston, on behalf of the Town of Brewster. The goals of this project were to investigate the needs, interests, preferences, and opinions of Brewster's residents age 50 or older by engaging the community regarding their experiences and needs relevant to the Council on Aging's (COA's) objective to identify and serve the needs of all Brewster citizens age 50 and older. The contents of this report are meant to inform the Town of Brewster, the Brewster COA, Senior Center, and organizations that work with and on behalf of older residents of Brewster for the purposes of COA mission fulfillment alongside planning and coordination of services for current and future needs of residents. The report will also help to build awareness about issues facing Brewster among community members at large.

A broad range of findings are reported in this document, highlighting the many positive features of Brewster as well as concerns expressed by older residents. While many of our findings, and the recommendations that follow, intersect with the scope of responsibility of the Brewster Council on Aging, it is understood that responding to many needs and concerns expressed in the community will require the involvement of other municipal offices or community stakeholders, and some will require substantial collaborative effort.

We summarize key findings and make the following recommendations to the Town of Brewster:

We summarize key findings and make the following recommendations to the Town of Brewster:

Building engagement among residents and partnerships for programming are essential tools while the Town explores solutions to address the COA's inadequate and outdated space.

- Build awareness of the Brewster Senior Center, a community asset – one that is operating in restrictive space amidst growing community needs and demands.
 - Investigate opportunities to increase Senior Center programs and services at satellite locations in the community, such as public housing, the library, the schools, and local businesses.
 - Build participation levels among younger seniors and new retirees, through programs that reflect prioritized interests, to foster support for the development of a new center that will address existing limitations through innovative design features, programs, and services.
 - Consider developing an “ambassador program” and coach residents to actively encourage new participants. This could function as a property-tax work-off position or offer an incentive for the number of new participants they can recruit.
 - Consider ways to welcome first-time participants who are reluctant to participate on their own (e.g., a “new member day” or a “bring a buddy” program).
- Use technology and existing social connections to encourage new participants.
 - Explore the use of technology (e.g., phone or other mobile devices) to include residents who are unable to leave their home in existing programs through video technology or making “friendly visits” by telephone.
 - Partner with the schools to recruit a Technology Advisor and establish a Teens Teaching Technology Club to offer training workshops in the community.
- Create additional opportunities for lifelong learning, performances, and physical fitness opportunities.
 - Continue to participate in conversations about the development of the former Sea Camps property to ensure that older residents’ preferences are at the forefront.
 - Enroll residents in free online courses through various institutions^{22,23}, and host in-person sessions for them to work through material together.
 - Provide transportation, and discounted tickets, to older residents to attend local youth performances at area schools.

²² <https://www.umb.edu/olli/>

²³ https://www.edx.org/school/uc-berkeleyx?irclid=3jj00OR%3A3xyPUkoUX2XqiWMLUkH29GVBRsvcz40&utm_source=affiliate&utm_medium=Business%20Insider.&utm_campaign=Online%20Tracking%20Link &utm_content=ONLINE_TRACKING_LI NK&irgwc=1

Obtaining supplementary and accessible transportation is a concern for some residents as they age.

- Conduct targeted, proactive, outreach to raise awareness of existing programs that provide transportation to medical appointments and other destinations.
- Consider developing a local “travel training” program where residents can learn about options and navigation while providing suggestions for future services to meet evolving needs.
- Target information to communities within Brewster who may have particular need for transportation services including those living alone and those with disabilities. Consider additional outreach for transportation when inclement weather is anticipated.
- Explore developing supplemental transportation options like “Visit-a-Friend” program in Wellfleet²⁴ or the Silver Express car service offered through the Barnstable Adult Community Center²⁵.
- Support the expansion of volunteer transportation programs, including Nauset Neighbors. Consider a partnership with the schools to encourage students and parents to become volunteer drivers. Also, explore grant funding or fundraising opportunities to provide access to adaptive vehicles.

Financial insecurity—driven largely by housing costs is a concern and barrier for many residents.

- Promote awareness of existing property tax relief programs and inform residents of proposals being considered by the Select Board and Finance Team for a future Town Meeting.
 - Document the number of residents who are “turned away” from existing programs to establish recommendations for expanding access.
 - Explore other incentive programs for volunteers.
 - Establish a property tax credit for first responders, educators, and eligible healthcare workers to address staffing shortages and foster opportunities for employees to work and live in the community.
- Engage with local businesses and organizations to create “senior discount” programs to offset costs and improve quality of life for older residents.
- Explore partnerships that will build community engagement around food insecurity and help to destigmatize access to food resources.
 - Facilitate the development of volunteer-based Community Gardens to support increasing demands on the food pantry and the need for affordable fresh produce on Cape Cod.

²⁴ <https://www.wellfleetcoa.org/support-services>

²⁵ <https://www.barnstablepatriot.com/story/lifestyle boomers/2018/07/20/taking-pride-in-their-ride/11443117007/>

- Explore the replication of the Stretch Your Food Budget program as an alternative way for residents to engage with supplemental grocery programs²⁶

There is a pressing need for housing solutions that address affordability and downsizing needs.

- Explore innovative housing solutions that diversify housing stock and offer features that facilitate aging in place. Consider:
 - Greenhouse Senior Living, a model offering intergenerational housing and workforce housing that is currently being developed on Martha’s Vineyard.
 - Multigenerational housing models like the Treehouse in Easthampton²⁷
 - Cottage style communities that offer a small footprint, universal design features, supportive services, and events for social engagement.
- Host informational workshops with regional organizations that offer technical and financial assistance to Cape Cod residents who are exploring the opportunity to build an Accessory Dwelling Unit. See Community Development Partnership.²⁸
- Host informational workshops with representatives of organizations that facilitate the creation of a home share agreement. See LifePath²⁹ Nesterly³⁰ and Cape Abilities³¹.
- Continue to host AARP Home Fit programming at the library or Town Hall to support residents in identifying needs and solutions for their home environments.
- Connect residents with local handyperson services or home repair services. See the Boston HOME center as one possible model or engage in a partnership with Cape Cod Regional Technical High School.
- Consider developing a Snow Angels program³² or Yard Angels³³ program other mechanisms for residents to assist with yardwork or small repair projects

Many Brewster residents need support due to physical or cognitive conditions, and many caregivers need help.

- Enhance access to Town funded healthcare screening services through publicity and accessible transportation services. Explore funding opportunities to revitalize the former dental mobile unit and introduce a mobile healthcare unit.

²⁶ <https://www.syfb.space/>

²⁷ <https://www.masshousing.com/en/programs-outreach/planning-programs/treehouse-easthampton>

²⁸ Lower Cape Housing & ADU Resource Center

²⁹ <https://lifepathma.org/what-we-offer/financial/home-share-program/>

³⁰ [Nesterly A better way to share](#)

³¹ [Shared Living - Cape Abilities](#)

³² <https://www.townofblackstone.org/senior-center-council-aging/pages/snow-angels-program>

³³ <https://www.voacolorado.org/volunteer-opportunities/yardangels>

- Support efforts to incorporate Dementia-Friendly features and resources at the Brewster Ladies' Library, including the creation of a memory café.
- Consider hosting a "Caregiver's Night Out" to provide residents who might be caring for a spouse, parent, or grandparent an opportunity to enjoy a night of entertainment.
- Host a community resource fair in partnership with Town Departments and community organizations; offer workshops to address challenges identified during the Spring 2023 community services discussion.

Risk for social isolation in Brewster is high.

- Engage local faith communities, restaurants, and nonprofits like the Family Table Collaborative to host a monthly community dinner to provide a regular opportunity for residents to come together in a social setting³⁴.
- Partner with a local performance venue to host storytelling events that build connections through shared stories. See Hull Firefly Storytelling for ideas.³⁵
- Implement a Senior Civic Academy³⁶ that is accessible to older residents by offering daytime sessions, considering adult learner styles, and ensuring that topics relevant to healthy aging in Brewster are included (e.g., transportation, how to access resources, and social engagement opportunities.)
- Work together with the Public Works Department to install new, or dedicate existing, "Chat Benches"³⁷ to create public spaces where socializing is encouraged.
- Consider celebrating National Good Neighbor Day (9/28) or Older Americans Month (May) with a series of "Let's Talk, Brewster" programs³⁸ in which residents come together to be in conversation with one another that are exhilarating, inspiring, and meaningful.

³⁴ <https://www.generationsoverdinner.com/>

³⁵ [The Trustees of Reservations](#)

³⁶ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/296/Civic-Academy>

³⁷ <https://www.salemma.gov/home/news/salem-unveils-%E2%80%99Chappy-chat%E2%80%9D-bench-program>

³⁸ <https://conversationsnewyork.com/>

Appendix A: Community Survey Results

Note: Appendix tables are based on 1,390 responses to the Town of Brewster Survey of residents age 50 and over, conducted in Summer 2023. 59.8% of respondents completed the survey online and the rest were returned my mail. See text for additional details.

Q1. Which of the following best describes your status as a resident of Brewster?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
I live in Brewster year-round	90%	90%	88%	90%	93%
I primarily live in Brewster, but spend winters living elsewhere	6%	1%	5%	8%	6%
I primarily live elsewhere, but spend parts of the year living in Brewster	4%	9%	7%	2%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q2. Do you plan to become a full-time resident of Brewster in the next 5 years?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	7%	10%	6%	6%	7%
No	5%	5%	7%	4%	2%
Not applicable, I am already a full-time resident.	88%	85%	87%	90%	91%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q3. How long have you lived in Town of Brewster?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Fewer than 5 years	14%	20%	24%	10%	8%
5-9 years	13%	10%	15%	16%	8%
10-19 years	20%	25%	21%	23%	15%
20-29 years	23%	24%	12%	22%	34%
30 years or longer	30%	21%	28%	29%	35%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q4. How important is it to you to remain living in Brewster as you get older?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very important	73%	71%	74%	75%	72%
Somewhat important	22%	26%	20%	21%	22%
Slightly important	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%
Not at all important	2%	--	2%	2%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q6. Would you know whom to contact in Brewster should you or someone in your family need help accessing social services, health services, or other municipal services?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	69%	68%	65%	68%	76%
No	31%	32%	35%	32%	24%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Section II: Housing and Living Situation

Q7. Who do you live with? (Check all that apply)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
I live alone	23%	6%	13%	22%	40%
I live with a spouse or partner	68%	84%	84%	74%	46%
I live with my adult children (age 18 or older)	7%	21%	6%	4%	7%
My parents	<1%	4%	1%	<1%	--
My grandchildren	<1%	3%	--	<1%	1%
My children (under age 18)	2%	21%	2%	<1%	--
Another relative	2%	1%	4%	2%	2%
Someone else	2%	--	<1%	2%	2%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q8. Do you own or rent your current residence?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
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The home is owned by me or someone with whom I live.	94%	95%	98%	95%	88%
The home is rented by me or someone with whom I live.	3%	4%	1%	3%	4%
Other	3%	1%	1%	2%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q9. Does your current residence have a “first-floor living” with a bedroom and full bathroom on the entry level?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	84%	84%	83%	85%	84%
No	16%	16%	17%	15%	16%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q10. Does your current residence need home modifications (e.g., grab bars in showers or railings on stairs) or home repairs to improve your ability to live in it safely for the next 5 years?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes, and I can afford to make these modifications or repairs	37%	34%	34%	39%	40%
Yes, but I cannot afford to make these modifications or repairs	10%	12%	10%	10%	7%
Yes, but I am not responsible for making these modifications or repairs (e.g., I rent my current residence)	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%
No, my current residence does not need modifications or repairs	52%	53%	55%	50%	50%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q11. In the next 5 years, if financial needs or a change in your/your partner’s health or physical ability requires that you move from your current residence or create an alternative solution, what kind of housing would you prefer? (Check all that apply)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Smaller single-family home	29%	51%	39%	29%	17%
Apartment	12%	8%	9%	13%	16%
Condominium	32%	36%	38%	37%	25%
Living with family	12%	9%	7%	13%	15%
Assisted living community	28%	13%	18%	32%	38%
Developing an accessory dwelling unit (ADU)- a small apartment in your home or in another structure on your property	13%	28%	16%	12%	8%
Sharing my home or moving in with another person(s) who shares expenses or provides help in exchange for reduced or no rent	12%	18%	15%	12%	12%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q12. If you would consider sharing your home or moving to another person's home, would you need help with any of the following? (Check all that apply)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Screening persons for this shared housing arrangement	14%	19%	21%	14%	11%
Negotiating an agreement with the other person(s)	13%	18%	19%	14%	11%
Preparing a legal document that lays out the relationship and responsibilities	16%	21%	20%	17%	12%
N/A, not interested in doing this	71%	74%	70%	76%	73%
Other	4%	--	4%	4%	4%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q13. If you would consider developing an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) in your home or on your property, would you need any help with any of the following? (Check all that apply)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Understanding local laws and zoning regulations	24%	51%	34%	21%	18%
How to finance the cost	17%	38%	23%	17%	10%
How to find builders or contractors	15%	34%	20%	15%	10%
Insurance coverage	12%	30%	18%	12%	6%
N/A, not interested in ADU	60%	31%	56%	69%	68%
Other	6%	10%	7%	7%	4%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Section III: Health

Q.14. Do you require help with any of the following activities at home? (Check all that apply)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Routine chores or house cleaning	11%	4%	6%	9%	23%
Daily activities (e.g., preparing meals or keeping track of bills)	3%	3%	1%	1%	6%
Yard work (e.g., mowing lawn, raking leaves)	29%	11%	18%	31%	46%
Snow removal	32%	16%	23%	35%	48%
Personal Care (e.g., getting dressed)	1%	1%	<1%	<1%	3%
Small repair projects (e.g., fixing a small appliance, replacing locks)	24%	10%	13%	28%	37%
Technology support (e.g., cable settings or connecting to Wi-Fi)	17%	3%	9%	18%	31%
No, I do not require any help	46%	75%	67%	47%	30%
Other	4%	3%	3%	5%	6%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q15. If you ever needed help around your home, who would assist you? (Check all that apply)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Family members	51%	49%	54%	51%	60%
Friends	29%	28%	37%	30%	28%
A neighbor	19%	14%	21%	20%	22%
An agency	13%	13%	14%	12%	17%
I don't know	10%	16%	11%	11%	7%
I would pay someone	55%	61%	62%	61%	52%
Someone else	4%	3%	2%	4%	5%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q16. Do you have an impairment that limits your ability to participate in the community?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	10%	4%	5%	7%	21%
No	90%	96%	95%	93%	79%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Section IV: Social Activities and Relationships

Q17. How often do you talk on the phone; send email or use social media; or get together to visit with family, friends, or neighbors? (check only one per item)

Q17_1. Talk on the phone, FaceTime, or Zoom or FaceTime with family, friends, or neighbors

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Every day	57%	70%	59%	53%	54%
One or more times a week	31%	24%	31%	33%	31%
A few times a month	7%	4%	6%	8%	8%
About once a month	2%	1%	<2%	3%	3%
A few times a year (e.g., holidays)	2%	1%	<2%	2%	2%
Never	1%	--	<2%	1%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q17_2. Send email, text, or use social media with family, friends, or neighbors

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
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Everyday	72%	87%	81%	72%	56%
One or more times a week	19%	11%	15%	20%	26%
A few times a month	4%	1%	3%	5%	6%
About once a month	1%	1%	<1%	2%	1%
A few times a year (e.g., holidays)	1%	--	--	<1%	1%
Never	3%	--	<1%	<1%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q17_3. Get together in person with family, friends, or neighbors

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Every day	24%	33%	24%	23%	21%
One or more times a week	43%	35%	43%	41%	47%
A few times a month	21%	18%	21%	22%	21%
About once a month	6%	8%	6%	7%	7%
A few times a year (e.g., holidays)	5%	6%	5%	7%	4%
Never	1%	--	1%	<1%	--
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q18. Do you know someone living within a 1-hour distance on whom you can rely for help when you need it?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	84%	89%	84%	80%	88%
No	16%	11%	16%	20%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q19. What kind of volunteering would you be most interested in? (Check all that apply)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
N/A I am not interested or able to volunteer at this time	36%	44%	36%	33%	45%
Physical activity (e.g., landscaping or setting up tables)	10%	16%	19%	11%	5%
Administrative assistance (e.g., answering phones or greeting people)	21%	19%	21%	25%	21%
Special events or one-time needs	32%	36%	40%	37%	25%
Program assistance (e.g., planning or helping host programs)	12%	15%	13%	14%	11%
Skills-based volunteering (e.g., providing marketing or technology consultation)	10%	18%	14%	12%	5%
Other	15%	9%	14%	18%	16%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Section V: Caregiving

Q20. Do you now or have you in the past 2 years provided care or assistance to a person who is disabled or frail (e.g., a child, a spouse, parent, relative, or friend)?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	36%	53%	50%	34%	25%
No	64%	47%	50%	66%	75%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q21. If yes on question 20: How challenging is/was it for you to care for this person(s) and meet your responsibilities with family and/or work? (Check only one)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very challenging	21%	42%	19%	17%	23%
Somewhat challenging	35%	37%	38%	38%	24%
Neither challenging or easy	26%	17%	29%	27%	24%
Somewhat easy	10%	2%	7%	9%	17%
Very easy	8%	2%	7%	9%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q22. If yes: Did this person have any of the following conditions? (Check all that apply)

	All Ages
Alzheimer's disease or dementia	22%
Psychological condition (e.g., anxiety, depression)	16%
Intellectual or developmental disability	5%
Mobility issues/frailty	51%
Sensory/hearing/vision issues	23%
Chronic Disease (e.g., cancer, diabetes, asthma, Parkinson's disease)	27%
Recovering from surgery or injury	29%
Other	8%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q23. If you are taking care of someone with dementia, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: *There are adequate resources to support residents living with dementia and their family caregivers in Brewster or on Cape Cod.*

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Strongly agree	4%	2%	3%	2%	10%
Agree	11%	18%	8%	10%	14%
Disagree	14%	20%	12%	13%	14%
Strongly Disagree	5%	7%	3%	6%	6%
Not applicable (N/A)	66%	53%	74%	69%	56%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Section VI: Transportation

Q24. Which of the following describes your driving status? (check only one)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Not applicable - I do not drive	5%	3%	--	3%	13%
I limit my driving (e.g., I avoid driving at night, during bad weather, in unfamiliar areas)	20%	4%	12%	21%	32%
I drive with no limitations	75%	93%	88%	76%	55%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q25. In the past 12, months have you used the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority (CCRTA) transportation or the Council on Aging transportation?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	5%	10%	4%	3%	9%
No	95%	90%	96%	97%	91%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q26. Within the past 12 months, did you have to miss, cancel, or reschedule a medical appointment because to lack of transportation?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	4%	1%	2%	2%	8%
No	96%	99%	98%	98%	92%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Section VII: Programs & Services at the Brewster Council on Aging

Q27. Do you see the Brewster COA as playing a role in the lives of yourself, loved ones, or neighbors?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	82%	72%	82%	80%	86%
No	18%	28%	18%	20%	14%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q28. The following items refer to programs and services that are currently offered through the Brewster COA. Please rate the importance of each program/service to you or your family. (Check only one box per item to rate importance)

Q28_1. Assistance with local or state programs (e.g., fuel assistance, food stamps, health insurance counseling)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very important (1)	27%	38%	35%	23%	24%
(2)	5%	6%	8%	5%	2%
Moderately important (3)	14%	13%	13%	15%	13%
(4)	7%	13%	7%	8%	4%
Not at all important (5)	40%	20%	31%	42%	49%
I don't know	7%	10%	6%	7%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q28_2. Transportation

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very important (1)	22%	42%	26%	18%	21%
(2)	7%	6%	11%	7%	2%
Moderately important (3)	16%	8%	13%	16%	20%
(4)	7%	11%	5%	9%	6%
Not at all important (5)	42%	24%	38%	45%	45%
I don't know	6%	9%	7%	5%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q28_3. Support groups (e.g., low-vision, caregivers)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very important (1)	15%	22%	17%	12%	16%
(2)	7%	10%	12%	7%	2%
Moderately important (3)	19%	23%	20%	18%	17%
(4)	9%	15%	10%	9%	8%
Not at all important (5)	41%	15%	32%	47%	45%
I don't know	9%	15%	9%	7%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q28_4. Health clinics (e.g., blood pressure, hearing tests, dental clinic)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very important (1)	19%	30%	22%	15%	20%
(2)	9%	13%	14%	9%	3%
Moderately important (3)	22%	21%	17%	25%	21%
(4)	10%	8%	12%	10%	8%
Not at all important (5)	34%	19%	28%	36%	41%
I don't know	6%	9%	7%	5%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q28_5. Nutrition programs (e.g., lunches, grab-n-go, home delivered meals)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very important (1)	17%	33%	22%	13%	15%
(2)	7%	7%	12%	5%	4%
Moderately important (3)	15%	22%	10%	16%	19%
(4)	8%	10%	7%	9%	6%
Not at all important (5)	47%	19%	43%	51%	50%
I don't know	6%	9%	6%	6%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q28_6. Professional services (e.g., financial planning, legal services, tax form preparation)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very important (1)	19%	27%	24%	16%	17%
(2)	10%	17%	16%	9%	5%
Moderately important (3)	21%	23%	20%	21%	20%
(4)	8%	14%	9%	8%	7%
Not at all important (5)	36%	12%	26%	40%	44%
I don't know	6%	7%	5%	6%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q28_7. Social or recreational activities (e.g., arts, crafts, parties, games such as mah-jong or cards)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very important (1)	20%	33%	21%	18%	20%
(2)	9%	12%	12%	10%	4%
Moderately important (3)	27%	26%	30%	26%	25%
(4)	9%	6%	9%	10%	9%
Not at all important (5)	30%	17%	23%	31%	37%
I don't know	5%	6%	5%	5%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q28_8. Wellness programs (e.g., meditation, massage)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very important (1)	19%	30%	22%	17%	17%
(2)	12%	18%	18%	13%	5%
Moderately important (3)	27%	20%	26%	29%	26%
(4)	8%	10%	11%	8%	6%
Not at all important (5)	28%	14%	18%	28%	39%
I don't know	6%	8%	5%	5%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q28_9. Fitness activities (e.g., yoga, tai chi, strength classes, walking groups)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very important (1)	26%	40%	28%	25%	20%
(2)	13%	15%	19%	15%	6%
Moderately important (3)	26%	24%	24%	28%	25%
(4)	9%	4%	9%	9%	8%
Not at all important (5)	22%	10%	16%	19%	35%
I don't know	4%	7%	4%	4%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q28_10. Educational opportunities (e.g., computer classes, lectures)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very important (1)	21%	34%	23%	19%	19%
(2)	13%	16%	18%	14%	8%
Moderately important (3)	28%	21%	31%	28%	26%
(4)	9%	7%	9%	10%	9%
Not at all important (5)	24%	15%	15%	24%	33%
I don't know	5%	7%	4%	5%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q28_11. Trips/outings

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very important (1)	14%	20%	10%	13%	16%
(2)	12%	18%	20%	11%	5%
Moderately important (3)	27%	27%	26%	27%	27%
(4)	12%	9%	14%	13%	9%
Not at all important (5)	29%	17%	24%	30%	37%
I don't know	6%	9%	6%	6%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q28_12. Volunteer opportunities

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very important (1)	12%	19%	14%	12%	10%
(2)	12%	16%	18%	12%	5%
Moderately important (3)	27%	26%	33%	26%	23%
(4)	11%	16%	10%	12%	8%
Not at all important (5)	29%	13%	18%	29%	42%
I don't know	9%	10%	7%	9%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q28_13. Virtual programming (e.g., via Zoom, or Channel 18)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very important (1)	9%	18%	10%	8%	9%
(2)	8%	9%	12%	8%	4%
Moderately important (3)	25%	23%	27%	25%	21%
(4)	12%	15%	12%	14%	9%
Not at all important (5)	35%	20%	30%	35%	42%
I don't know	11%	15%	9%	10%	14%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q29. Over the last 12 months, how frequently have you used services or attended programs offered by the Brewster COA, either in-person or remote? (check only one)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Two or more times a week	3%	1%	2%	2%	6%
About once a week	4%	--	4%	4%	5%
A few times a month	3%	--	2%	3%	5%
About once a month	4%	1%	<1%	4%	8%
A few times a year (e.g., special events only)	25%	12%	24%	26%	27%
Never	61%	86%	68%	61%	49%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q30. What is the reason that you do not currently use programs or services offered by the Brewster COA? (check all that apply)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
N/A, I currently use programs or services offered by the Brewster COA	11%	1%	8%	11%	18%
I am still working	18%	65%	38%	11%	6%
I am not old enough	9%	53%	16%	6%	1%
I am unaware of activities or programs available	17%	18%	20%	19%	18%
I participate in programs elsewhere	18%	5%	13%	24%	23%
Hours of operation are inconvenient	2%	1%	<1%	2%	2%
I am not interested in the COA programs	11%	6%	11%	14%	14%
I do not have time	12%	20%	16%	12%	10%
The building is not accessible and safe	3%	--	2%	4%	5%
Other	16%	10%	15%	18%	21%

**Figures do not sum to 100%.*

Q31. Below, please check all factors that would increase the likelihood of your using the Brewster COA programs and services (check all that apply)

I would be more likely to use Brewster COA programs and services...

	All ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
If transportation options to the COA were more convenient	5%	1%	2%	4%	11%
If I had more knowledge about programs and services that are available	35%	29%	39%	39%	37%
If programs and services were better suited to my interests	25%	20%	32%	26%	26%
If programs were offered in the evening or on weekends	10%	24%	15%	10%	4%
If programs were offered in another setting rather than at the COA	10%	9%	11%	12%	9%
If there were more people like myself at COA events	19%	20%	30%	20%	13%
Other	19%	19%	19%	21%	23%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q32. Thinking about your own future needs and interests, which of the following areas would you prioritize in expanding the programs available through Brewster COA? (Check all that apply)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Lunch or other nutrition options	14%	28%	14%	15%	14%
Grab 'n' Go meals	16%	29%	19%	16%	15%
Technology skills classes (e.g., smartphone applications)	28%	16%	26%	33%	37%
Wellness programs (e.g., stress management, meditation)	32%	53%	42%	36%	23%
Performances and visual arts (e.g., concerts, lectures)	43%	45%	53%	51%	39%
Social activities (e.g., games or parties)	24%	51%	31%	25%	18%
Space for informal socializing	13%	25%	17%	14%	12%
Day trips	34%	39%	37%	37%	38%
Indoor exercise (e.g., yoga, aerobics)	37%	53%	53%	42%	27%
Intergenerational activities	14%	31%	24%	14%	9%
Art classes (e.g., art, photography, acting, music)	24%	45%	38%	26%	16%
Special interested programs (e.g., LGBTQ+, singles, or grandparents raising grandchildren)	6%	13%	9%	7%	4%
Lifelong learning programs (e.g., history, writing, languages, cultural courses)	39%	41%	48%	43%	38%
Outdoor exercise (e.g., hiking/walking, kayaking)	39%	64%	60%	42%	25%
Evening or weekend activities	14%	39%	24%	14%	7%
Caregiver programs (e.g., education, support groups)	12%	25%	16%	12%	8%
Other	7%	6%	5%	8%	11%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q33. Thinking about your own future needs, which of the following areas would you prioritize in expanding the services offered through the Brewster COA? (check all that apply)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Transportation services to medical appointments, grocery shopping, errands	45%	51%	46%	51%	52%
Health and wellness programs (e.g., podiatry, blood pressure clinics, massage)	41%	56%	52%	46%	35%
Professional services (e.g., tax preparation, legal services)	34%	46%	45%	36%	35%
Information and referral about local resources and area providers or agencies	44%	44%	52%	49%	48%
Family support (e.g., caregiving support, bereavement groups, seminars)	16%	30%	23%	18%	10%
Adult day health programming	14%	26%	18%	14%	11%
Other	5%	3%	4%	6%	6%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q34. The Town of Brewster is asking residents to consider siting a new multigenerational community center at the former Sea Camps property. What type of multigenerational community center would you support? (Check only one)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
A multigenerational community center located in one building	44%	39%	42%	48%	40%
A multigenerational community center located in different buildings on one site	34%	33%	30%	33%	39%
N/A, I would not support a multigenerational community center	11%	9%	9%	10%	14%
Other	11%	19%	19%	9%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q35. Considering a potential multigenerational community center, what is your preference for how space and programming are organized?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Multigenerational community center that has a dedicated space and programming for residents 60 and older	35%	17%	29%	35%	46%
Multigenerational community center that has fully integrated space and programming for residents of all ages	58%	74%	60%	59%	49%
Other	7%	9%	11%	6%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q36. The former Sea Camps presents a range of opportunities for use. In general, which of the following would you like to see happen there? (check all that apply)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Active recreation or sports (e.g., tennis, pickleball, swimming, baseball, softball, basketball, bocce)	57%	76%	76%	63%	50%
Passive recreation (e.g., hiking, walking circuits, bird watching)	59%	79%	75%	66%	55%
An indoor gym	41%	58%	49%	46%	36%
Coffee lounge/snack area	38%	41%	41%	43%	40%
Community gardens, including raised beds	33%	58%	48%	32%	29%
Entertainment programs (e.g., concerts, films)	58%	71%	65%	66%	60%
Woodworking shop or Fix-it programs	26%	38%	45%	25%	19%
Outdoor exercise equipment	22%	36%	30%	24%	18%
Intergenerational programs (e.g., community events, shared meals, movie nights)	41%	59%	52%	45%	37%
Indoor game area (e.g., ping pong, pool, Mah-Jongg, card and other game tables)	36%	53%	46%	39%	35%
Educational programs or classes (e.g., lectures, research projects, nature education)	53%	60%	63%	60%	53%
Picnic areas	37%	56%	50%	40%	33%
Indoor swimming pool	35%	36%	39%	41%	38%
Informal social gathering spaces inside or outside	37%	56%	45%	42%	35%
Art classes or space for artists to work	30%	45%	43%	30%	26%
Other	9%	13%	15%	8%	8%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q37. How likely is it that you, or members of your household, would use a multigenerational community center at the former Sea Camps?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very likely	42%	58%	46%	43%	34%
Somewhat likely	27%	18%	27%	28%	29%
Unsure	18%	13%	14%	17%	24%
Somewhat unlikely	5%	2%	4%	5%	4%
Very unlikely	8%	9%	9%	7%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q38. Where would you prefer to find information about the activities and services offered by the Brewster COA? (check all that apply)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
COA newsletter	72%	53%	76%	83%	85%
BGTV (e.g., Channel 18)	9%	11%	8%	8%	13%
Town of Brewster website	57%	79%	76%	67%	44%
Radio	7%	9%	5%	8%	9%
Facebook or other social media sites	22%	48%	34%	24%	13%
Word of mouth	11%	23%	11%	11%	15%
Other	6%	11%	8%	8%	5%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Section VIII: Demographic Information

Q39. Please select your gender identity.

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Female	62%	69%	67%	60%	62%
Male	38%	30%	33%	40%	38%
Other	--	1%	--	--	--
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q40. What is your age range? (check only one)

Age	Percentage Responded
Under 50*	<1%

50-59	5%
60-69	20%
70-79	39%
80-89	21%
90+	4%
No response	10%
Total	100%

*Only 7 participants under 50, they were added to the 50-59 age group

Q41. Are you able to access the internet from your home?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	96%	100%	99%	98%	89%
No, I cannot afford internet access at home	1%	--	--	<1%	2%
No, I choose not to have internet access at home	3%	--	<1%	2%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q42. What is your employment status? (Check all that apply)

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Working full-time	11%	65%	24%	4%	1%
Working part-time	12%	16%	21%	14%	5%
Looking for work	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Retired	67%	9%	54%	82%	92%
Other	4%	10%	4%	4%	4%

*Figures do not sum to 100%

Q43. When do you plan to fully retire?

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
N/A, I am already fully retired	71%	12%	51%	78%	91%
Within the next 3 years	5%	4%	12%	5%	1%
In 3 to 5 years	6%	22%	15%	3%	1%

In 6 to 10 years	4%	22%	7%	1%	<1%
In more than 10 years	2%	19%	1%	--	--
Not sure	5%	6%	7%	6%	1%
I do not anticipate ever fully retiring	7%	15%	7%	7%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q44. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: “I have adequate resources to meet my financial needs, including food, home maintenance, personal healthcare, and other expenses.”

	All Ages	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Strongly Agree	45%	48%	50%	46%	38%
Agree	46%	40%	41%	45%	52%
Disagree	7%	9%	7%	7%	8%
Strongly Disagree	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%