

Anchorage Housing Survey – Summary

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Introduction

The Anchorage Housing Survey was intended for Anchorage residents to share their experiences with housing issues and how they engage in their neighborhoods. This survey sought feedback from the public on housing policies in Anchorage and on the potential opportunities to meet our housing needs.

The effort is in partnership with the Municipality of Anchorage’s Planning Department, as well as additional stakeholders including NeighborWorks Alaska (NWAK). Lindsey Hajduk is an Anchorage resident who works for NWAK and is currently undergoing a remote graduate program at the University of New Hampshire. This information was provided in the introduction to the survey.



The Anchorage Housing Survey launched on November 29, 2021, and closed on January 3, 2022. This survey was provided online only through Qualtrics and distributed through the Federation of Community Councils and NWAK’s listserv, as well as promoted on Facebook through NWAK.

Overall, 510 surveys were completed. An incentive of four \$25 gift cards was also promoted to encourage participation. The survey responses were removed from any self-identifying information for the incentive, keeping the survey response data confidential.

Demographics

Age

Respondents were asked to share the year they were born in, which was converted into decade groupings. Of the 511 responses, most respondents were in the 31-80 year old range. Most respondents were in their sixties (19.4%),



Demographics

SUMMARY

followed by their thirties (17.8%), forties (17.6%), fifties (15.7%), seventies (13.7%), twenties (6.5%), and finally eighties (1.8%).

Gender

Most respondents identified as women (65.3%), with 29.9% as male and 0.4% as gender non-conforming.

Race and ethnicity

Most respondents identified as white (83.6%), followed by Alaska Native (6.5%), mixed race (5.3%), some other race (2.5%), Asian (1.2%), and Black (0.8%). Most respondents did not identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Latina (95.7%), while 4.3% did.

Household type

Most respondents describe their household types as married couples without children under 18 (35.8%) and with children under 18 (17.6%), or a one-person household (22.4%).

Other responses include multi-generational living situations, married couples with children over 18 years old, disabled residents or relatives, or married couples with additional adults, either children or roommates.

Own or rent

The majority of respondents own their current residences (78.0%), while 18.7% rent. Other responses include living with a partner or extended family member who owns the home, living at their workplace, staying with a friend, or currently houseless.

Household income

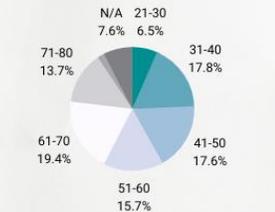
Respondents shared the ranges of their annual household incomes. Most respondents had incomes between \$50,000-99,999 (46.3%), followed by \$100,000-149,999 (23.8%), then below \$50,000 (21.3%), then \$150,000-199,999 (14.0%), then over \$250,000 (5.4%), and finally \$200,000-249,999 (5.2%).

Income toward housing

Most respondents pay 20% or less of their monthly household income toward housing (42.9%), followed

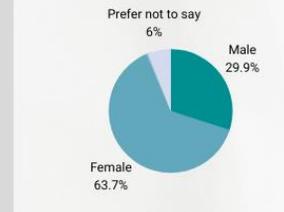
HOUSING STATUS

The majority of respondents own their current residences (78.0%), while 18.7% rent. Other responses (3.4%) include living with a partner or extended family member, living at their workplace, staying with a friend, or currently houseless.



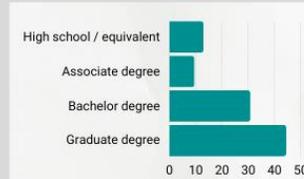
Ages

Most respondents were in their sixties (19.4%), thirties (17.8%), forties (17.6%), fifties (15.7%), seventies (13.7%), twenties (6.5%), and finally eighties (1.8%).



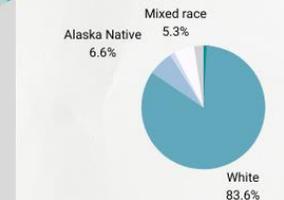
Gender

Most respondents identified as women (65.3%), 29.9% as male, and 0.4% as gender non-conforming.



Education Level

Most respondents reside in households where a bachelor or graduate degree were the highest education level achieved (77.1%).



Race

Most respondents identified as white (83.6%), followed by Alaska Native (6.5%), mixed race (5.3%), some other race (2.5%), Asian (1.2%), and Black (0.8%).

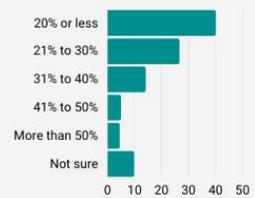
Household Income

Most respondents had incomes between \$50,000-99,999 (46.3%)



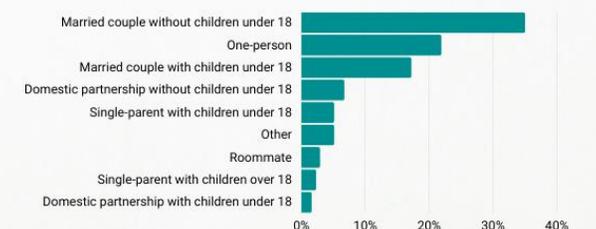
Income on Housing

Most respondents pay 20% or less of their monthly household income toward housing (42.9%).



Household Type

Most respondents were married couples without children under 18 (35.8%) and with children under 18 (17.6%), or a one-person household (22.4%).



by 28.5% who pay between 21-30%. Some respondents (20.6%) pay between 31%-50%, and 4.8% pay over 50% of their monthly income on housing.

Households who pay more than 30% of their income on housing may have difficulty affording other necessities, like food, clothing, transportation, and health care. Severe rent burden is for households paying more than 50% of their income on rent. One senior respondent indicated they spend more than 50% of their household income on housing.

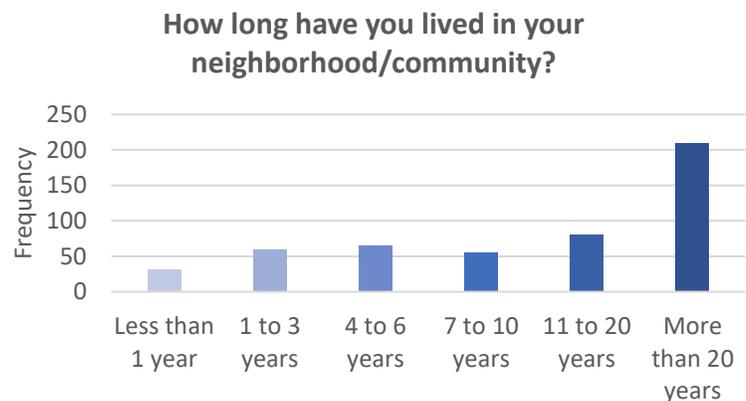
Education level in household

Most respondents reside in households where a bachelor or graduate degree were the highest education level achieved (77.1%), while 13.3% of households had a high school degree or equivalent, followed by an associate degree (9.6%).

Engagement in Neighborhood

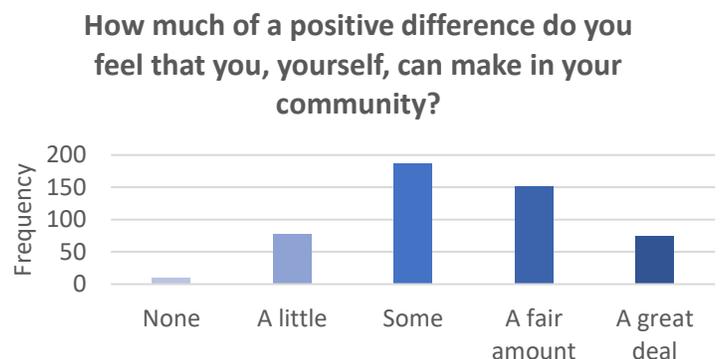
Length of time in neighborhood

Overall, most respondents have lived in their neighborhood for over 20 years (41.6%), followed by 16.1% for 11-20 years, 12.9% for 4-6 years, 12.0% for 1-3 years, 11.2% for 7-10 years, and 6.2% for less than 1 year.



Belief to make a positive difference in community

Respondents were asked how optimistic they are in being able to make a positive difference that they, themselves, could make in their community. Most respondents believe they can make a fair amount or a great deal of difference in their community (45.0%), followed by 37.4% believing they could make some difference, and 17.6% believing they could make little to no difference.



Length of time in neighborhood & belief to make a positive difference

Regardless of how long a resident has lived in their neighborhood, most respondents believe they can make “some” difference in their communities or more. The longer a respondent has lived in their neighborhood, the more optimistic they are to make a positive difference, with those living over 20 years in their neighborhood (52.2%) followed by the 11-20 year residents (45.7%). The most pessimistic respondents were in the 4-6 year, then 1-3 years, then 7-10 year time frames.

Age & belief to make a positive difference

Regardless of age, all respondents were more optimistic they can make positive, except for the three 81-90 year old respondents. Generally, the older a respondent's age the more optimistic they are to make a positive difference. Respondents between the ages of 51-79 are the most optimistic age group, with about 50% positive responses.

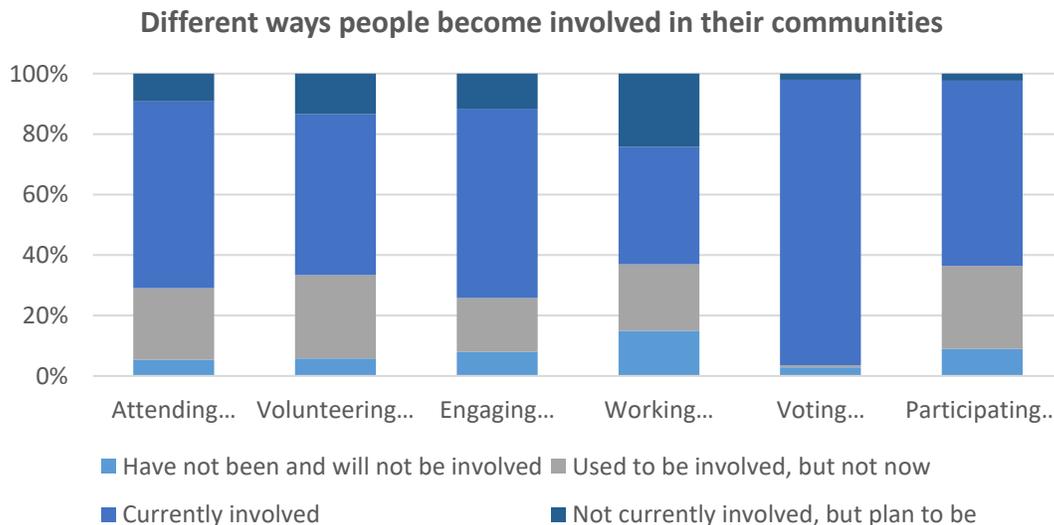
Housing status and belief to make a difference

Regardless of if a respondent owns or rents their current residence, all respondents are more optimistic. Those that own their housing are more optimistic than those that rent. Respondents who own their housing are 31.9% positive, compared to those that rent which are 16.2% more optimistic.

Involvement in community

Respondents were asked about their level of involvement in various community activities. They could indicate when they have been involved in the past if ever, are currently involved, or have not been but plan to be in the future. For each activity, the majority response for each activity is that most respondents are currently involved in the efforts. This is most clearly seen regarding voting, where 94.4% of respondents currently vote. Six different activities were asked about, and the following list is in the order with the most *current* involvement:

1. **Voting** in a local or national election
2. **Engaging** in community affairs, civic activities, or political issues
3. **Attending** a public meeting, writing to a public official, or talking with a public official
4. **Volunteering** my time to support a nonprofit or community organization
5. **Participating** in a neighborhood association, a community civic organization, or a community event or activity
6. **Working** to improve the public spaces in my neighborhood



Overall, most respondents have been or are currently involved in these activities. The activities most respondents have not and will not be involved in include working to improve public spaces (14.9%) and engaging in civic affairs (8.0%). The activities most respondents are not currently involved in but plan to

be in the future include working to improve public spaces (24.2%) and volunteering time to support a nonprofit or community organization (13.4%).

The impact of COVID-19 and reductions in in-person activities was not measured in this survey. However, after nearly two years of the pandemic many virtual or physically-distanced accommodations have been available, though they still may not be accessible for older residents or those without internet or technology access.

Length of time in neighborhood & current involvement in activities

The longer a resident has resided in a community, the more likely they are currently involved in these activities. Residents who have lived in their communities for more than 20 years are most currently involved in these activities, followed by residents of 7-10 years, residents of 11-20, residents of 1-3 years, residents of 4 to 6 years, and finally residents of less than 1 year in their neighborhood.

Age & current involvement in activities

The older a respondent was, the more likely they are to be currently involved in these activities. However, respondents over 81 were understandably least likely to be involved.

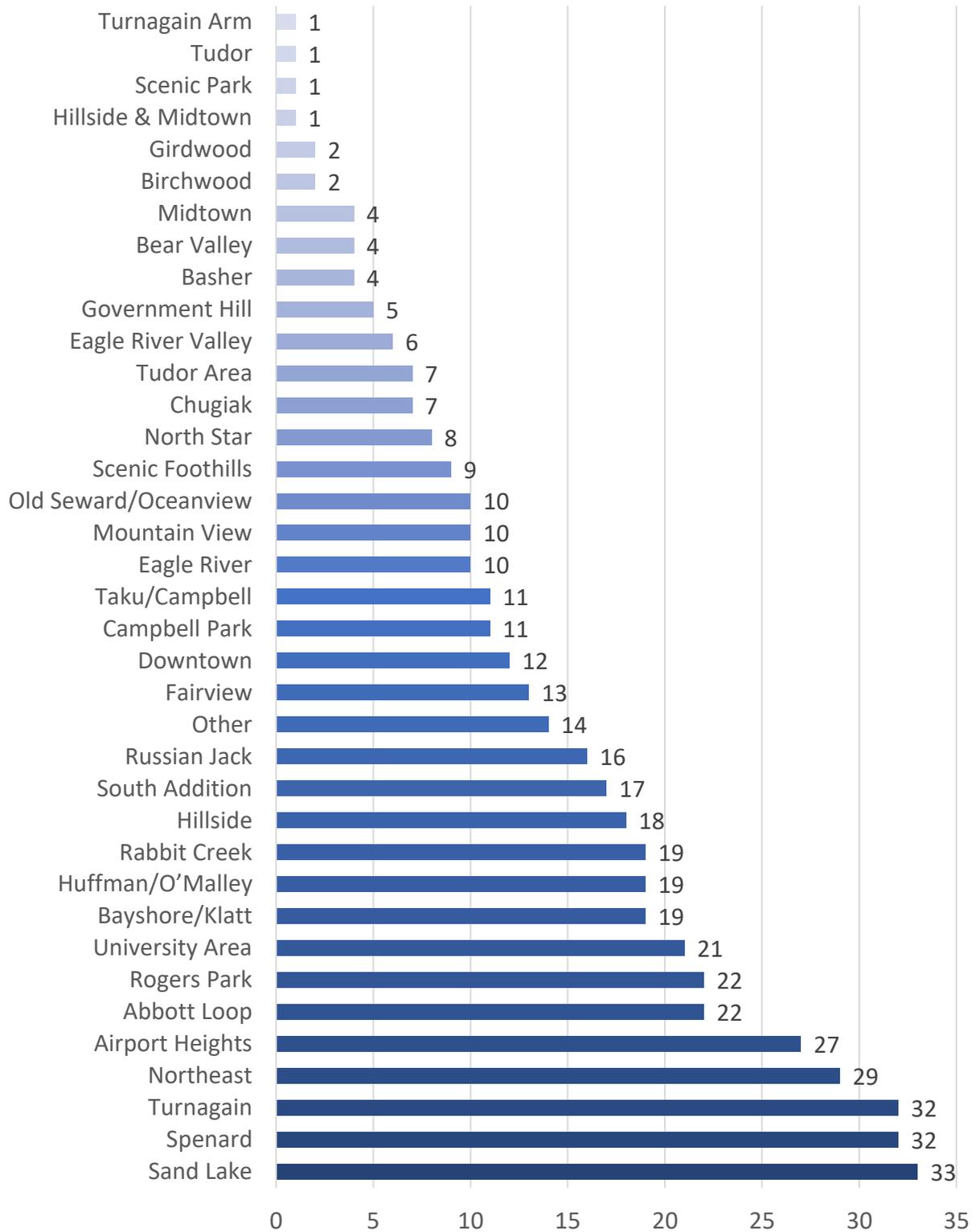
Housing status & current involvement in activities

Respondents who own their residence are currently more involved in the community activities. However, both groups that own or rent their current residences follow similar patterns of involvement, though owners attend more public meetings or write to or talk to a public official more than renters. Renters are more likely to volunteer than participate in neighborhood associations compared to owners.

Community Council

Of the 511 respondents, residents offered responses from 35 of the 38 community councils, with an average of 13.6 per council area. Residents were provided a link to the community council map to determine their council area, however there were 14 respondents that wrote in another response, mostly including Anchorage or more than one community council. Councils with the most responses include Sand Lake (6.5%), Spenard (6.4%), Turnagain (6.3%), Northeast (5.7%), and Airport Heights (5.3%).

What Community Council area do you live in?



Housing

Satisfaction with available housing

When asked how satisfied they were with the type of housing available to them on their budgets, respondents were split between dissatisfaction (41.1%) and satisfaction (43.3%), with 15.6% neutral.

Length of time in neighborhood & satisfaction with housing

The longer a respondent has lived in their neighborhood, the more satisfied they are with housing that is available to them on their budget. The shorter a respondent has lived in their neighborhood, the more dissatisfied they are.

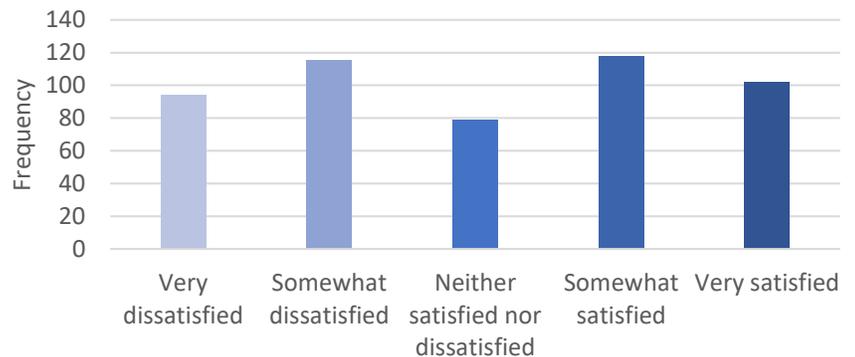
Residents who have lived in their neighborhood less than a year are 71.0% dissatisfied, while residents who have lived over 20 years in their neighborhood are only 24.7% dissatisfied. Conversely, 20+ year residents are 56.5% satisfied, while -1 year residents are only 19.3% satisfied.

Age & satisfaction with housing

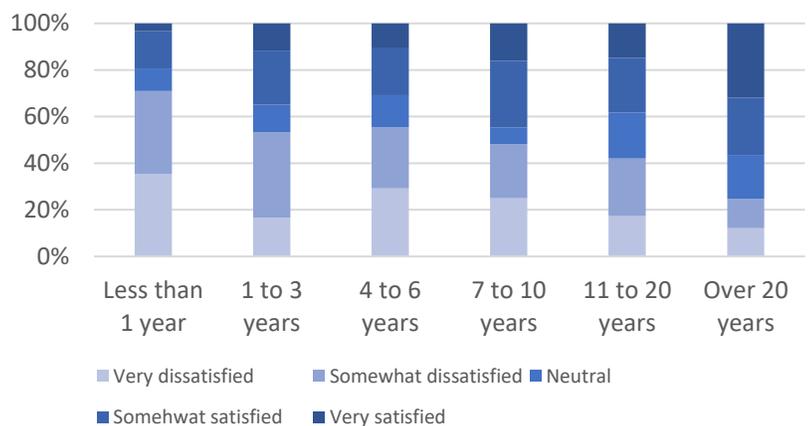
Older respondents are more satisfied with housing that is available to them on their budget. The younger a respondent is, the more they are dissatisfied with housing.

Respondents in the age ranges of 61-90 are more satisfied than dissatisfied, with respondents in the 81-90 range with the most satisfaction. Respondents from 21-50 are more dissatisfied than satisfied, with respondents in the 21-30 age range with the most dissatisfaction.

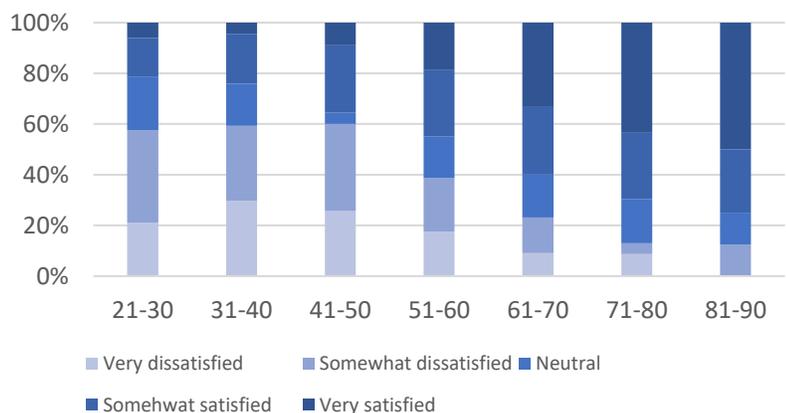
In general, how satisfied are you with the type of housing that is available to you on your budget?



Length of time & housing satisfaction



Age & housing satisfaction



Housing status & satisfaction with housing

Respondents who own their residences are much more satisfied with housing available on their budgets (52.1% satisfied), while only 15.9% of renters are satisfied. However, 75.6% of renters and 94.1% of respondents with other living arrangements are most dissatisfied.

Income & satisfaction with housing

The higher the income of the respondent, the more satisfied with the type of housing that is available to them on their budget.

Respondents with an annual household income of less than \$25,000 are most dissatisfied (72.4%), with only 17.2% positive responses. On the other end, respondents with annual household incomes over \$250,000 are most satisfied (20.0%), with 72.0% negative responses—almost mirrored results. The \$100,000-124,999 income range was most neutral with just a 3.2% positive advantage.

Income toward rent & satisfaction with housing

The more a respondent pays in monthly income toward housing, the more dissatisfied they become with the housing available to them on their budget. Only respondents who pay less than 20% of their monthly income on housing were also positive about the housing available to them, with 56.4% satisfied responses compared to 28.0% dissatisfied. All other levels were more dissatisfied than satisfied on the housing available to them.

Education level & satisfaction with housing

Respondents with higher education levels obtained within the home were more satisfied with housing available to them on their budget, but a bachelor and graduate degree levels were approximately equal in their dissatisfaction (about 37.0%) and satisfaction (about 47.7%). Respondents with a high school degree or equivalent were most dissatisfied (56.9%).

Race & satisfaction with housing

Respondent satisfaction of housing available to them on their budget varied based on the racial identities of the respondents; however, most racial categories have few respondents to be representative. With 407 (out of 510) respondents identifying as white, it is notable that satisfaction was split almost evenly with 40.5% respondents dissatisfied and 44.7% satisfied.

Scenarios to find housing

Respondents were asked how challenging or easy different scenarios to find housing were in Anchorage. Overall, respondents overwhelmingly agreed that all scenarios were somewhat to very challenging, with over 70.1% of respondents for each scenario. The scenarios and summaries are as follows:

- **To find attainable quality rental housing:** Most respondents believe it is challenging to attain quality rental housing (79.2%), while 13.9% are not sure, and 6.9% believe it is easy.
- **To find attainable quality housing to buy:** Most respondents believe it is challenging to attain quality housing to buy (81.4%), while 11.0% are not sure, and 7.6% believe it is easy
- **For a family of four with an annual income of about \$30,000 to find attainable quality housing:** Most respondents believe this is challenging (90.7%), while 6.9% are not sure, 2.6% believe it is easy.

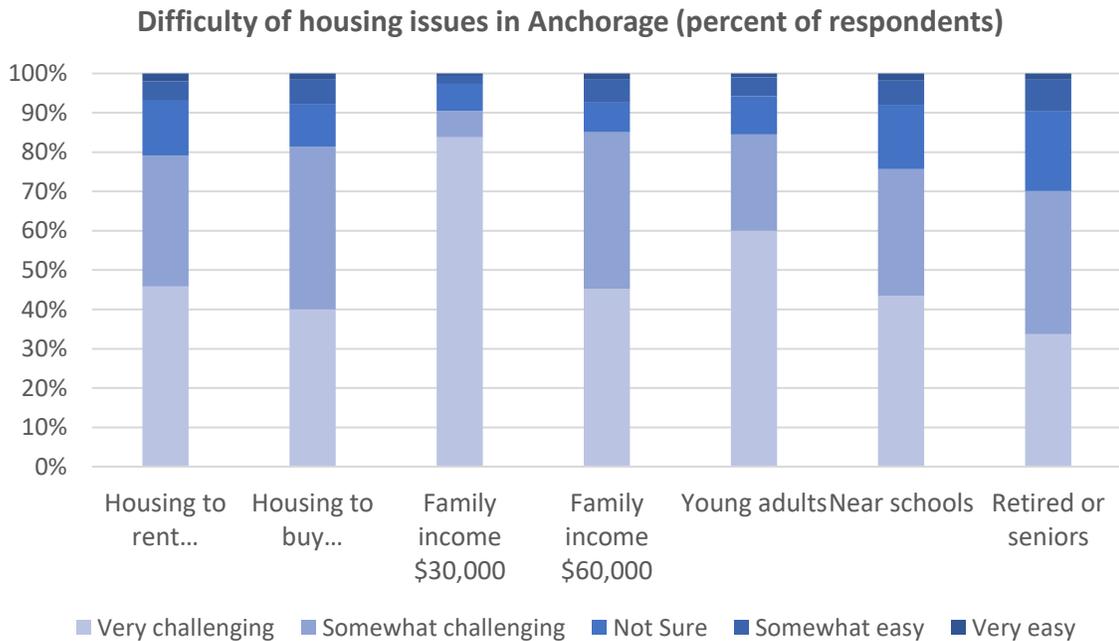
HOUSING SATISFACTION

Satisfaction with available housing goes up for:

- Longer-term residents
- Older residents
- Higher income earned
- Pay less income toward rent
- Higher education level in home
- Homeowners

- **For a family of four with an annual income of about \$60,000 to find attainable quality housing:** Most respondents believe this is challenging (85.1%), while 7.5% are not sure, 7.4% believe it is easy.
- **For young adults who are just entering the labor force to find attainable quality housing:** Most respondents believe this is challenging (84.5%), while 9.7% are not sure, 5.8% believe it is easy.
- **For a family with children to find attainable quality housing near quality public schools:** Most respondents believe this is challenging (75.7%), while 16.3% are not sure, 7.8% believe it is easy.
- **For retired people or senior citizens to find attainable quality housing:** Most respondents believe this is challenging (70.1%), while 20.2% are not sure, 9.7% believe it is easy.

The easiest scenario was for retired people or seniors to find housing (9.7%) but it is also the most uncertain (20.2%). The most challenging scenario was for a family of four with an annual income of \$30,000 to find attainable quality housing (90.7%). Contrasting the \$30,000 income \$60,000, respondents found it to be easier with the \$60,000 income (7.4% compared to 2.6% of respondents); however, it is still significantly challenging to do so (85.1% of respondents).



Affordable and desirable housing

Respondents were asked to share their level of agreement or disagreement with two statements regarding housing. Based on their assumptions of what most people can afford, they were asked if they believe housing is available and desirable. The majority of respondents believe most people cannot find available housing they can afford (70.2%), while just 12.6% of respondents believe it is available. Respondents are split believing housing most people can afford is either desirable (45.4%) or not desirable (40.0%), with 15.0% unsure. Overall, this suggests that if housing is desirable in Anchorage, it is likely not available at levels most people can afford.

Length of time & availability of housing

Overall, over 60.9% of respondents believe affordable housing is not available. Shorter-term residents are more pessimistic, with 83.8% of residents of less than one year in their neighborhoods disagreeing. Longer-term residents are more optimistic, with 60.9% of twenty+ year respondents agreeing affordable housing is available most people can afford.



Overall, over 39.3% of respondents believe desirable housing is not available. Respondents were closer in agreement that housing is desirable across residential periods. Respondents of less than 1 year were split 39.3% disagreeing and also agreeing. Longer-term twenty+ year respondents generally agreed more about housing desirability with 53.9% agreeing it is available.

Age and availability of housing

Respondents of all ages believe housing is not available that most people can afford. The younger the respondent, the more they believe affordable housing is not available.

Respondent below the age of 50 also believe that desirable housing is not available that most people can afford. However, the older a respondent is above 51, the more they believe desirable housing is available.

Housing status and availability of housing

All respondents believe housing that most people can afford is not available in Anchorage. Those in other living situations and renters disagree the most with over 86.2% of respondents, while owners are slightly more optimistic with only 65.7% respondents disagreeing.

Respondents who own their current residences and those with other living situations both lean toward believing desirable housing is available, with over 46.9% of respondents agreeing. Only 35.2% of renters agreed, while over half disagreed that desirable housing was available.

Local Housing Solutions

Solving housing affordability

Respondents were overall optimistic that there are solutions for housing affordability, with 57.3% of respondents agreeing a fair amount or a great deal can be done. A quarter of respondents were not sure (24.4%), and 18.3% believed just some or nothing could be done about it.

Housing status & solving affordability

Respondents who currently rent their residences are more optimistic that more can be done to solve housing affordability, with 72.4% positive responses, compared to 54.2% of owners or 47.0% of those in other housing situations. Owners were most pessimistic, with 20.7% negative responses, compared to 8.5% renters and 5.9% in other.

Local government action

Respondents overwhelmingly believe government should be doing more (69.0%), followed by respondents who were not sure (15.3%), those who believe government is doing too much (7.5%), and those who believe government is doing enough (8.2%).

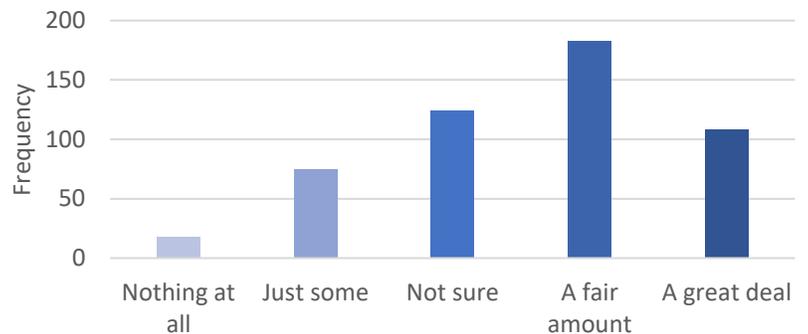
Housing status & government action

Regardless of renting or owning, respondents overwhelmingly believe government should do more for affordable housing. Owners tend to believe government is doing too much, but with only 5.9% of respondents believing this.

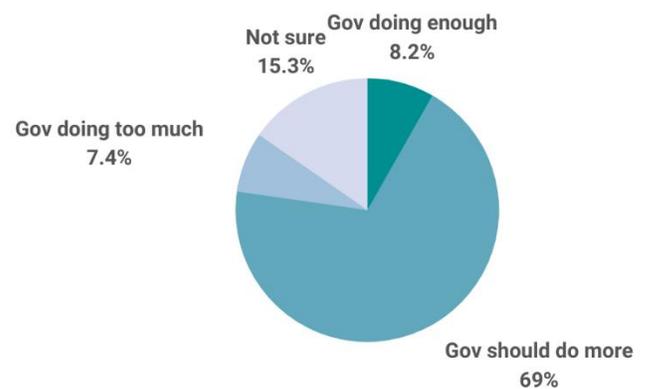
Income level & government action

Across all income levels, respondents overwhelmingly believe government should be doing more to solve housing problems.

Realistically, how much do you think can be done to solve the problem of housing affordability?



Do you think the local government (meaning the Anchorage Assembly and Mayor) is doing enough to ensure that there is sufficient affordable quality housing in Anchorage?



Education level & government action

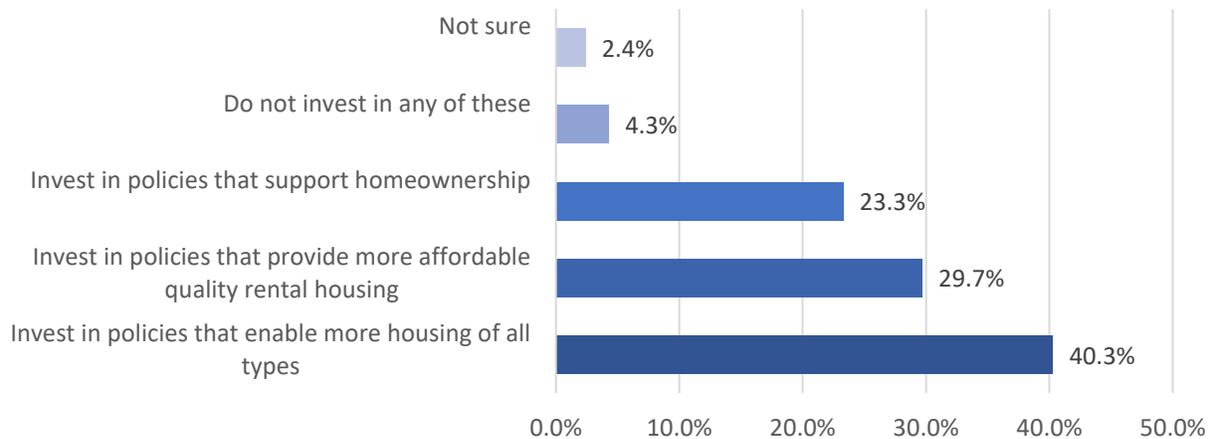
Regardless of education levels obtained, respondents overwhelmingly believe government should be doing more for affordable, quality housing in Anchorage. Respondents with a high school or associate degree in the home next believed government was doing enough (10.4-12.1%). Respondents with an associate degree in the home also most believed government was doing too much (12.5%), whereas households with graduate degrees least believed this (5.7%).

Housing policy solutions

Respondents overwhelmingly agree government should be investing in housing policies overall, with just 4.3% of respondents not wanting government to invest in policies and 2.4% of respondents not sure. Most respondents wanted investment in policies that enable housing of all types (40.3%), with 29.7% specific for affordable quality rental housing and 23.3% for homeownership.

Respondents overwhelmingly agree that government should do more for affordable quality housing. Of respondents who believe this, they believe government should invest in policies that provide more affordable quality rental housing first, followed by policies for housing of all types, and finally policies that support homeownership.

When it comes to housing policy, what do you think is more important for the local government to do right now?



Housing status and housing policies

Respondents most support policies that promote housing of all types, regardless of their housing status. Renters and owners next wanted policies that provide more affordable quality rental housing, and then policies for homeownership. Those with other housing situations slightly prioritized homeownership over rental housing.

Education level and housing policies

Regardless of the highest education level obtained at home, respondents overwhelmingly support the three policies suggested. Support for policies for affordable quality rental housing and for more housing

of all types are somewhat equally supported across all education levels. Support for policies that support homeownership varied the most, with most support at the high-school or equivalent level (27.4%).

More housing options

Respondents overall support seeing more varieties of housing in Anchorage especially for smaller, denser housing options. Single family homes, whether higher-density or large, received the least support.

The most support was 46.8% for Accessory Dwelling Units and 46.6% for cottage-style housing, followed by 43.2% for tiny homes, 40.9% for rowhouses/townhomes, 37.5% for duplexes, 35.0% for high-density condos or apartments, 32.2% for high-density single family housing, and 22.8% for large single-family housing.

