

STEP IT UP!



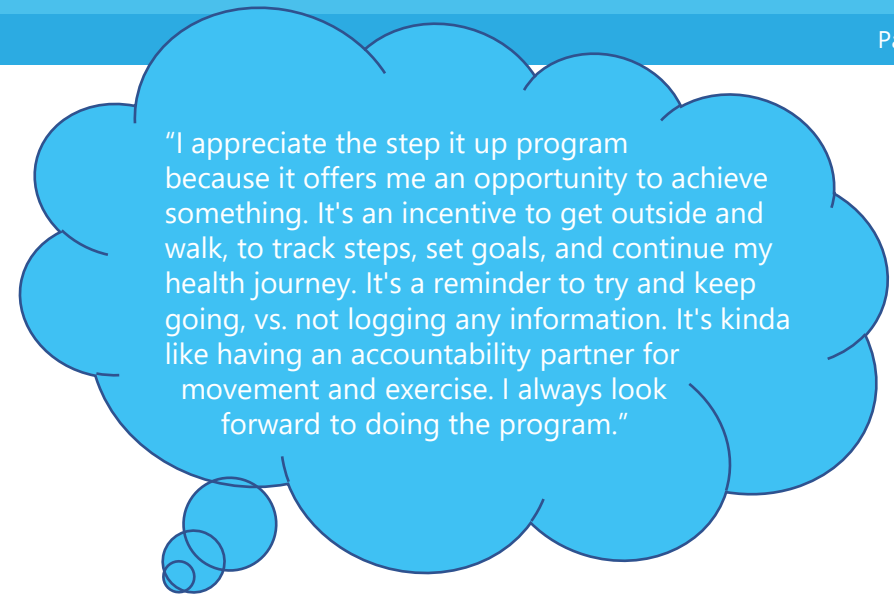
Ottawa County
Where You Belong

Introduction

The 2021 Spring Step It Up! Fitness Challenge & Adventure Series kicked off on May 10. The free, 8-week program offers group walks, an adventure series, weekly strength training, healthy eating and mental health tips, and provides accountability with physical activity goal setting and reporting. Through these program offerings, the goal is to get community members active, visiting new parks, exercising outdoors more frequently, and improving their overall health.

This document is organized into four sections:

- Participant outcomes
- Program participation
- Program components
- Participant demographics



Program Highlights

- Both program goals for the year were achieved:

	Goal	Actual
Number of program enrollees	1,000	1,062
% of participants reporting that their health improved as a result of participating in the program	60%	65%

- 60% of participants whose physical health and 74% whose mental health worsened during COVID-19 reported an improvement after completing the program.
- 56% of participants reported exercising outdoors more frequently and 55% reported being more comfortable exercising outdoors as a result of the program.

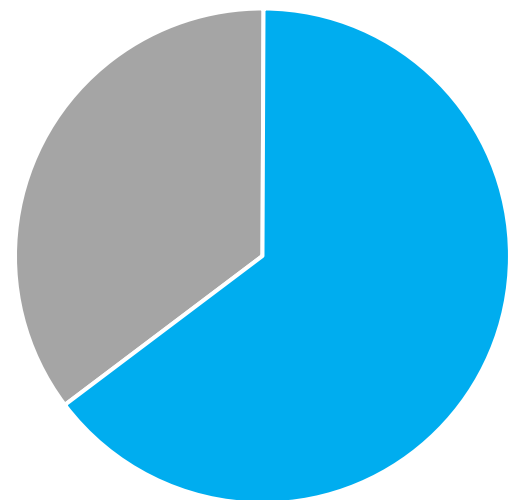


Potential Areas for Improvement

- The percent of participants meeting the recommended national health guideline of doing muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days a week increased by 7-percentage points in 2021 from pre- to post-program. While this improvement is good, it is lower than the 15-percentage point increase that was seen during the 2020 Step It Up! program.
- The percent of participants who reported visiting a new Ottawa County Park during the program has been trending downward from a high of 62% in 2018. During the 2021 program year, 48% of participants reported visiting a new Ottawa County Park during the program.
- The percent of participants who reported minutes of physical activity in week 8 of the program—10% of participants—is the lowest percent since this data was first tracked in 2018.

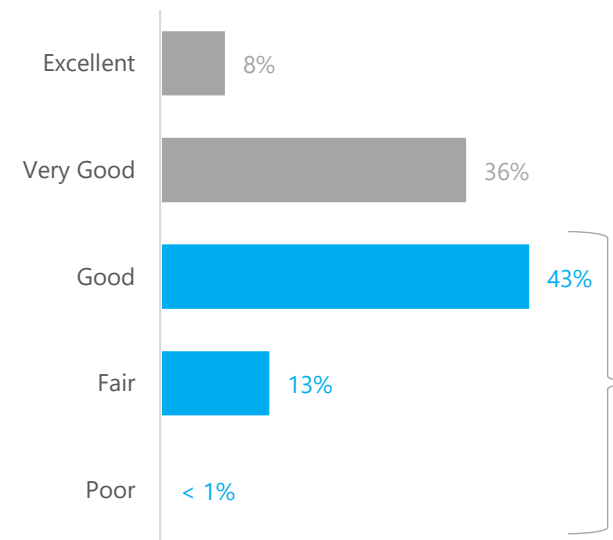
"Great program and incentives to continue a healthy lifestyle!"

Participant Outcomes – Health



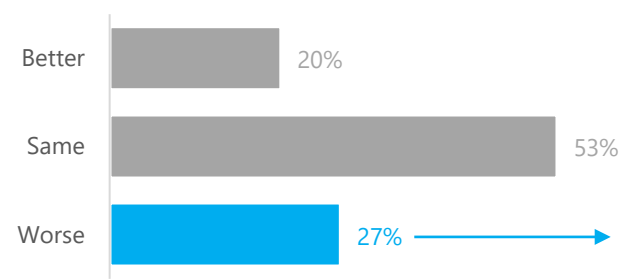
65% of participants reported that their **Health Improved** as a result of participating in Step It Up! This is higher than the goal of 60% that was set for the year.

56% of participants reported **Good, Fair, or Poor Health** before participating in Step It Up!



40% of these participants reported an improvement in their health after completing Step It Up!

At the start of the program, 27% of participants reported their physical health was **Worse** than before the COVID-19 pandemic.



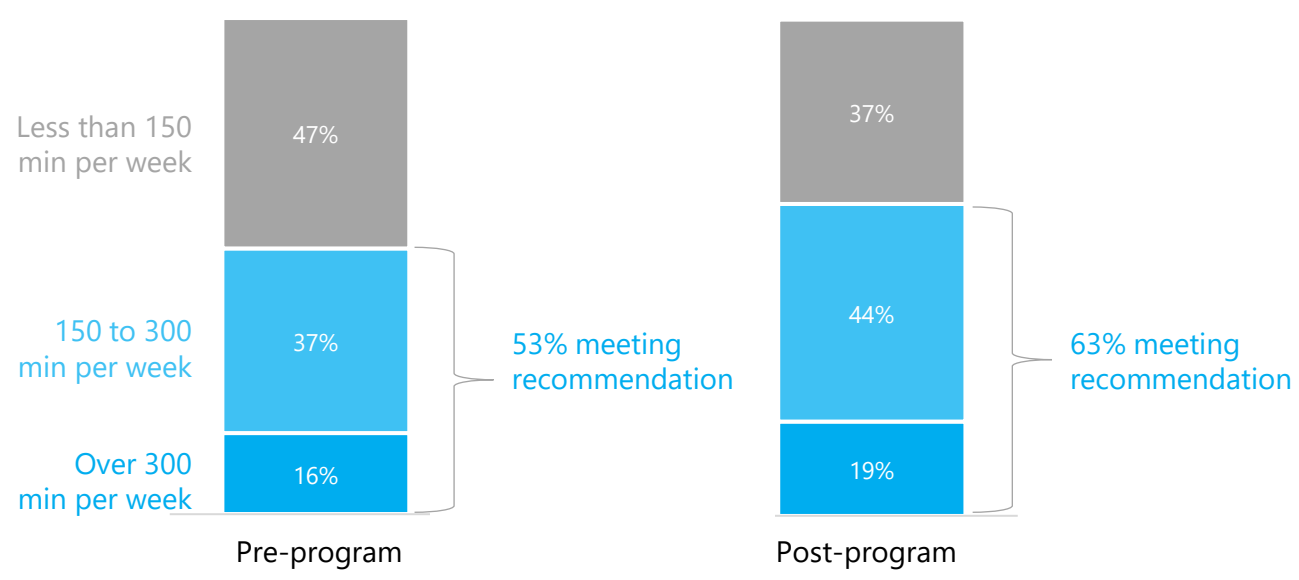
60% of these participants reported an improvement in their physical health after completing Step It Up!

Notes: Total responses by question: 232 – health improvement & health rating; 228 – COVID-19 physical health.

Participant Outcomes – Physical Activity & Strength Training

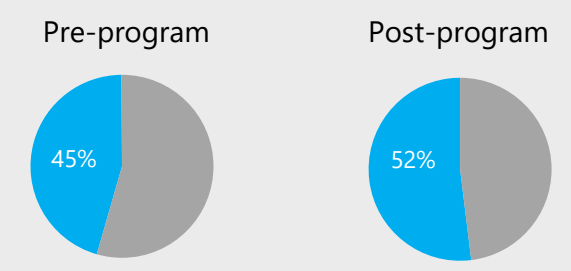


National health guidelines recommend that adults get at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) to 300 minutes (5 hours) of physical activity per week. Before starting the Step It Up! program, 53% of participants reported meeting this recommendation. At the end of the program, 63% of participants reported meeting this recommendation.



National health guidelines recommend that adults do muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days a week. Before starting the Step It Up! program, 45% of participants reported meeting this recommendation. At the end of the program, 52% of participants reported meeting this recommendation.

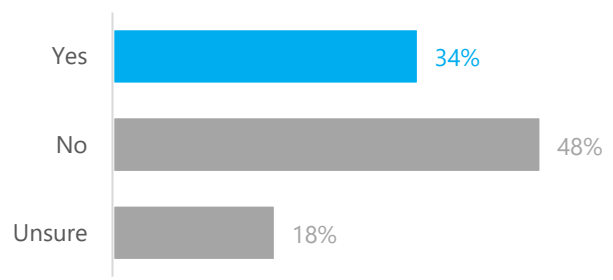
This 7-percentage point increase is lower than the 15-percentage point increase that was seen during the 2020 Step It Up! program.



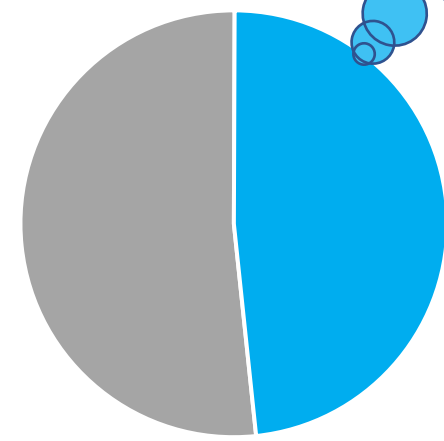
Notes:
Total responses by question: 226 – physical activity; 231 – strength training.

Participant Outcomes – Park Program Participation & Visits

34% of previous Step It Up! participants reported that they **have participated in an Ottawa County Parks program** since participating in Step It Up!



"This was fun & helped me learn much more about what the parks have to offer! I hope it continues! Thank you so much for the summer spark!!"

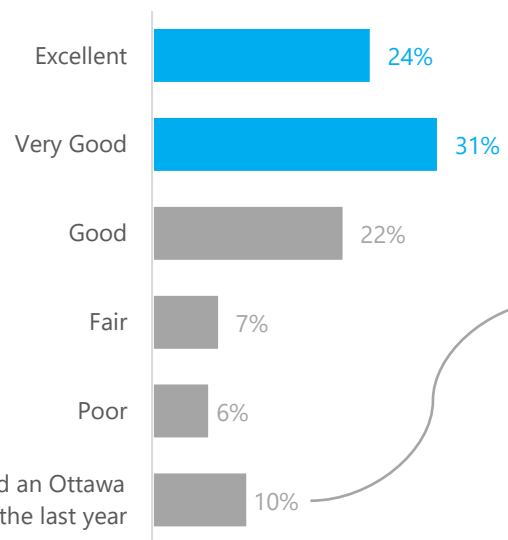


48% of participants reported that they **visited a new Ottawa County Park** during Step It Up!

The percent of participants who reported visiting a new Ottawa County Park during the program has been trending downward from a high of 62% in 2018.

"Ottawa County has one of the best park systems I have ever seen, and I have lived in a lot of places. We are very fortunate to have such a great resource!"

55% of participants rated Ottawa County parks as **Excellent or Very Good** before participating in Step It Up!

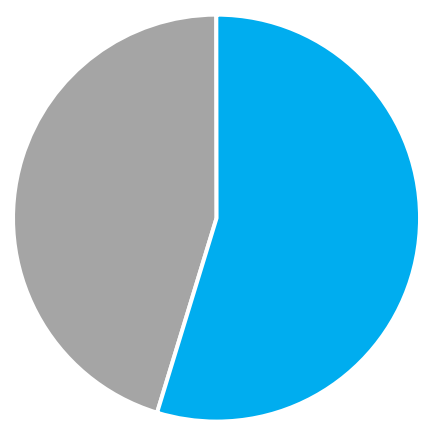
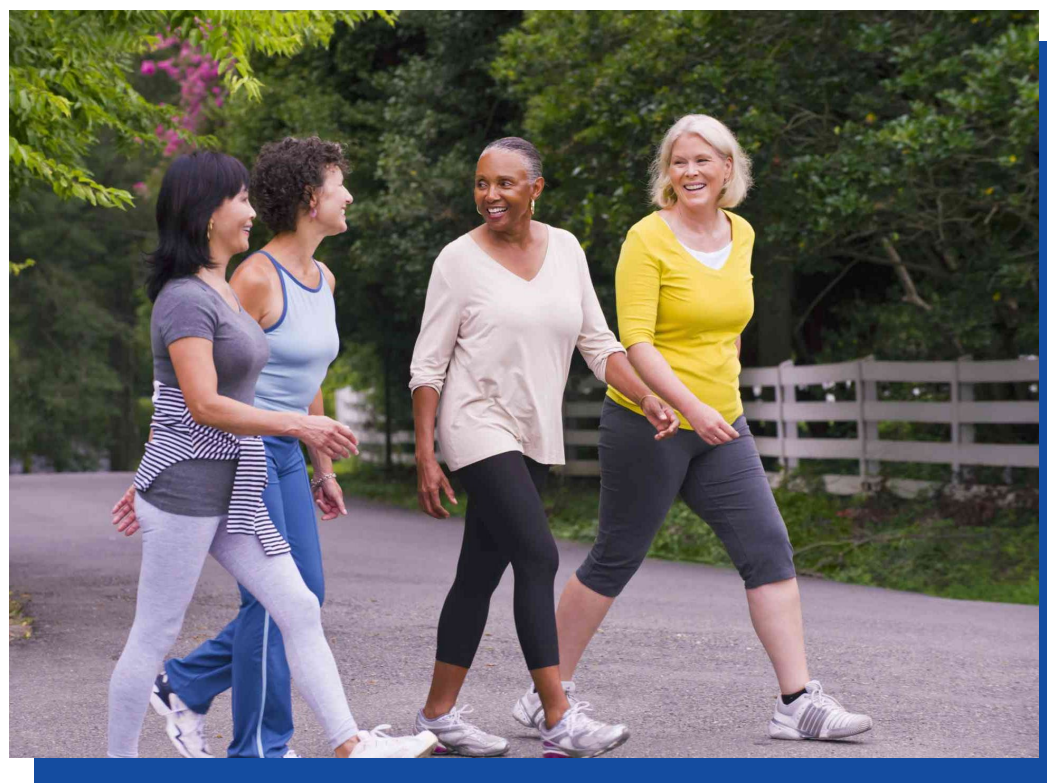
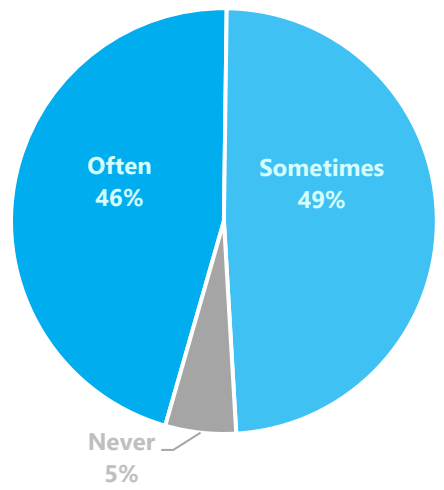


- Reasons include:
- COVID-19 restrictions/safety (32 participants)
 - New to the area (22 participants)
 - Parks not located near me (12 participants)
 - No reason provided (12 participants)
 - Other reason (6 participants)
 - Don't think to do it (5 participants)
 - Too busy (4 participants)
 - Lack of motivation (4 participants)
 - Unaware of parks (2 participants)

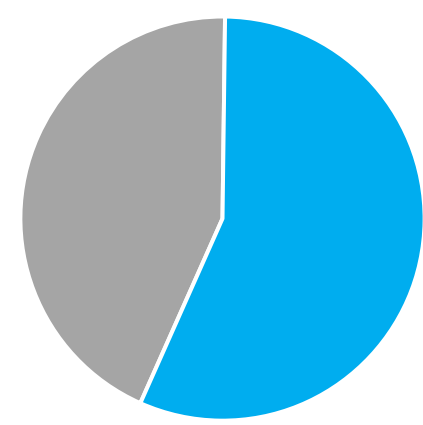
Notes:
Total responses by question: 308 – parks program participation; 232 – park visitation during program; 1,044 – parks rating.

Participant Outcomes – Exercising Outdoors

46% of participants exercised outdoors often before participating in Step It Up!



55% of participants reported that they are more comfortable exercising outdoors as a result of Step It Up!



56% of participants reported that they are exercising outdoors more frequently as a result of Step It Up!

Notes: Total responses by question: 1,062 – pre-program frequency of exercise; 232 – post-program frequency & comfort of exercise.

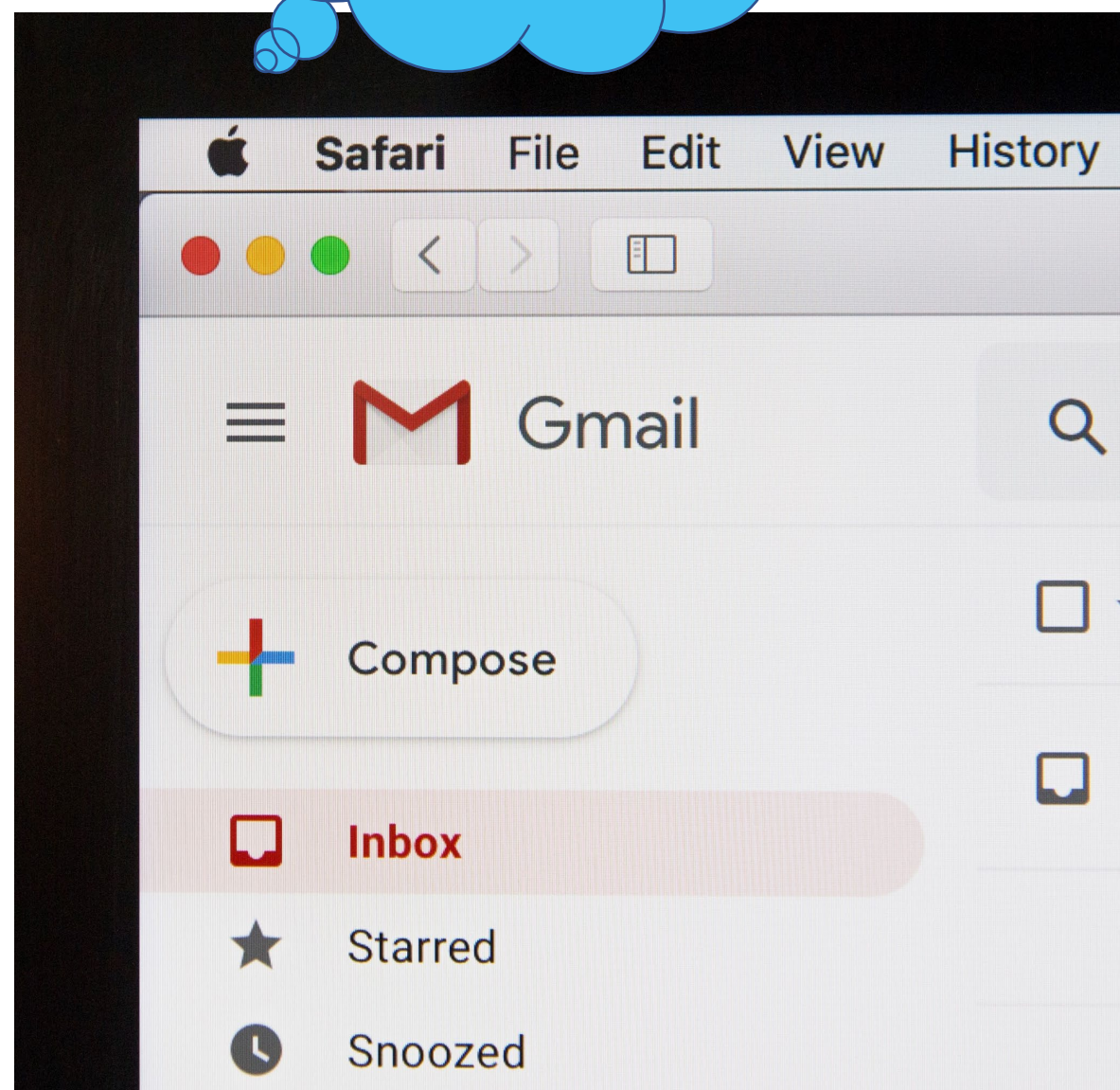
Program Components – Weekly Communications

During the challenge, participants receive weekly emails containing a variety of information about upcoming group walks and activities, strength training activities, healthy eating tips, and mental wellness tips. The emails also serve as a reminder for participants to track minutes of physical activity and enter the information into a database. Participants can also choose to receive additional communications via text message.

“Thank you! I really needed the weekly reminders and accountability this year - more so than ever. The pandemic was really bad for my waistline!!!”



59% of participants opted to receive text message communications.



Program Components – Group Walks & Adventures

The Step It Up! group walks and adventure series resumed this year, but with limited capacity due to COVID-19. This year's program featured 36 group walks at parks throughout Ottawa and Allegan counties. Participants also had the opportunity to participate in an Adventure Series that includes activities such as kayaking and nature navigation. New this year was an opportunity for participants to go on a StoryWalk as part of a new partnership with county libraries.

"I was so happy with various things about Step It Up this year! I appreciated the fast/slow groups, the alternating days each week the group would meet in the evening, and park locations. I could fit it into my work/home life schedule. I enjoyed learning from the naturalists about the parks history and natural habitats. 8 weeks is a perfect time frame to get to participate."

June 14-June 20 - StoryWalk with Herrick District Library at Paw Paw West

I Know a River Loves Me / Yo sé que el río me ama



Group Activity this Week ✂

Kayaking - June 19, 10 am at Hawthorn Pond Natural Area

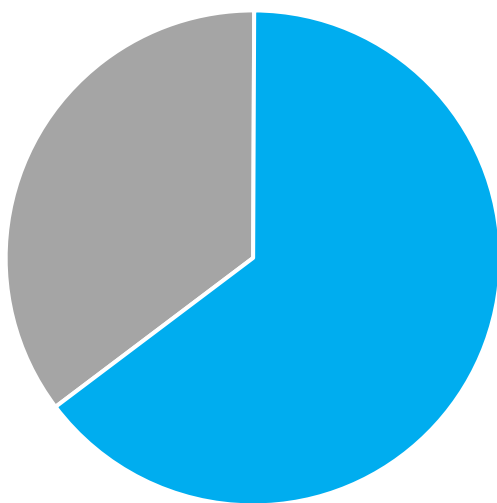
Want to try your hand at paddling before you hit the river? Come test drive one of Ottawa County Park's kayaks-- each slot is for 25 minutes of paddle time.



Program Components – Healthy Eating Tips

The partnership with Ottawa Food continued in 2021 to provide weekly healthy eating tips to participants. Provided to the right is one of the weekly tips shared this year.

Post-program feedback indicates that **65%** of participants reported **using the healthy eating tips** shared in the weekly emails.



HEALTHY EATING

Tips from Ottawa Food, a Step it Up! program partner

real food can.

MAKE IT YOURSELF!
Simply Broccoli

INGREDIENTS

- 1 head broccoli
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Recipe courtesy of foodnetwork.com

Makes 4 Servings

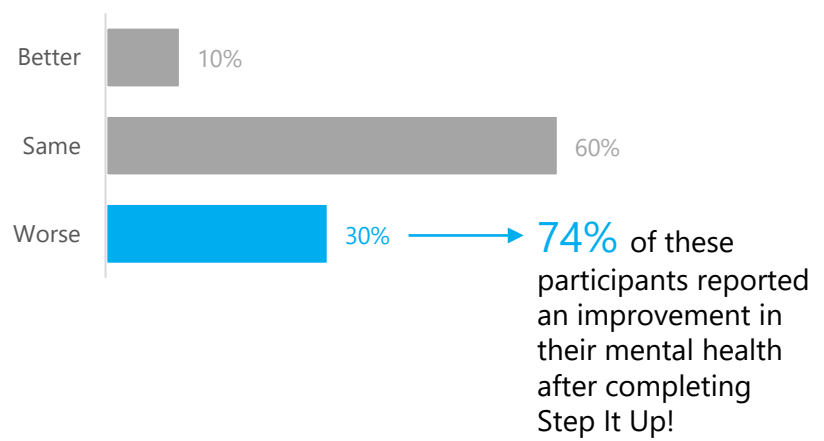
1. Trim the woody skin off the broccoli stem and slice the broccoli into nice long "trees".
2. In a large saucepan, mix the water, olive oil, garlic, red pepper flakes, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil over high heat.
3. Add the broccoli and cover to steam. After 3 minutes, turn off the heat, and allow the broccoli to sit for another couple of minutes. Toss to coat and serve.

Notes:
Total responses by question: 232 – healthy eating tips.

Program Components – Mental Wellness Tips

The weekly emails continued to promote mental wellness and motivational tips, a program component that was added in 2020 as a result of COVID-19.

At the start of the program, **30%** of participants reported their mental health was Worse than before the COVID-19 pandemic.



"Can't wait to give this a try. My mom and I love to walk, but are running out of new options. Before COVID, I went to the YMCA 2-3 times a week. Lately I have no motivation to exercise. Hoping this program will encourage me, make new friends and increase my mental health."

MENTAL WELLNESS

Yoga with Adrienne 🧘

It has been a stressful year! Living through a pandemic and trying to take care of our families and ourselves is a challenge. Yoga is one way to connect with your breath and relieve stress. [Yoga with Adrienne](#) is a free resource with videos for everyone - beginner to expert - with sequences from 5 minutes to over an hour.

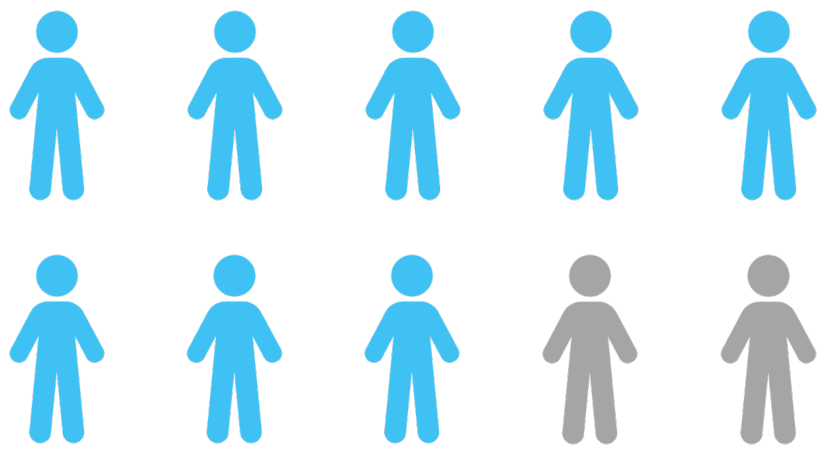
YOGA TIPS
QUICK STRESS FIX

0:36 / 6:18

Notes:
Total responses by question: 229 – COVID-19 mental health.

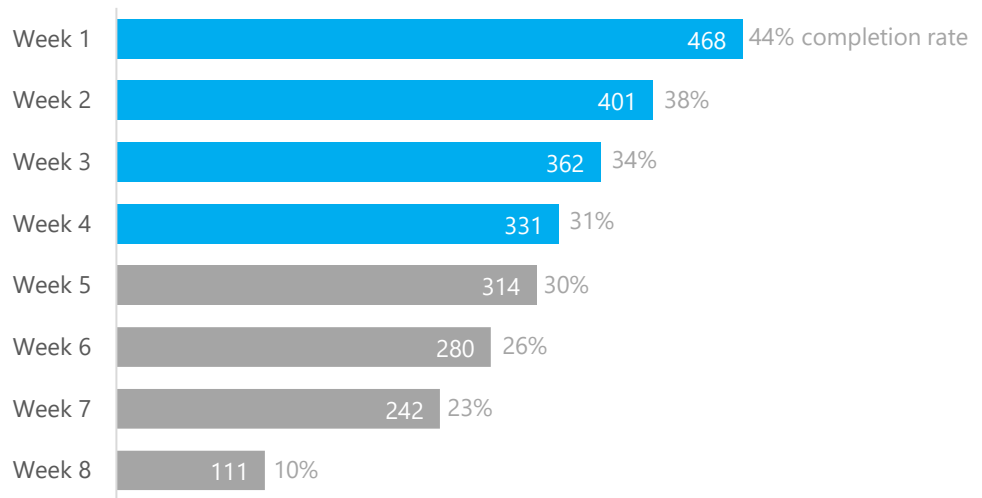
Program Components – Goal Setting & Reporting

73% of participants chose to set a weekly physical activity goal.



Participants are encouraged to report minutes of physical activity at least once a week. As in previous years, all participants who report activity are entered into a weekly prize drawing.

Weekly reporting of physical activity ranged from a high of 468 participants (44% completion rate) to a low of 111 participants (10% completion rate). 94 participants (9%) reported physical activity for all 8 weeks. The percent of participants reporting in week 8 of the program—10% of participants—is the lowest percent since this data was first tracked in 2018.



Notes:
Total responses by question: 1,062 – goal setting & reporting.

Program Participation – Enrollment Rates

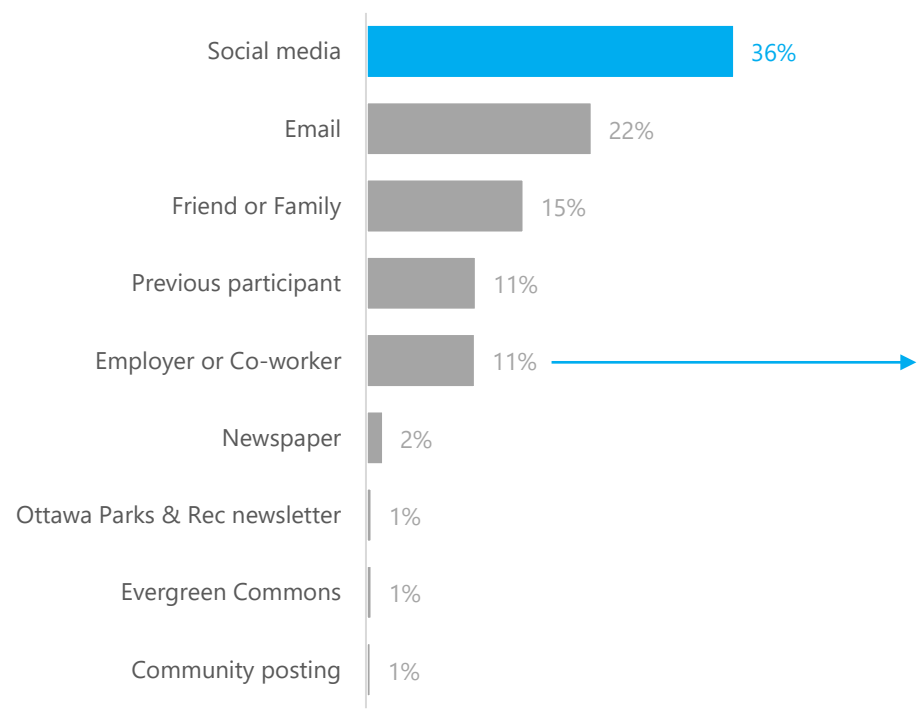


1,062 people enrolled in Step It Up! in Spring 2021. This is higher than the goal of 1,000 that was set for the year.

The Workplace Wellness challenge also continued this year to help employers get their employees active.



36% of participants heard about the program through social media.



Join your fellow employees in Step it Up!

This free program is designed to help you get active, visit new parks and have fun. All levels of fitness are welcome & encouraged to participate.

Commit to fit and sign up online!
miOttawa.org/StepItUp

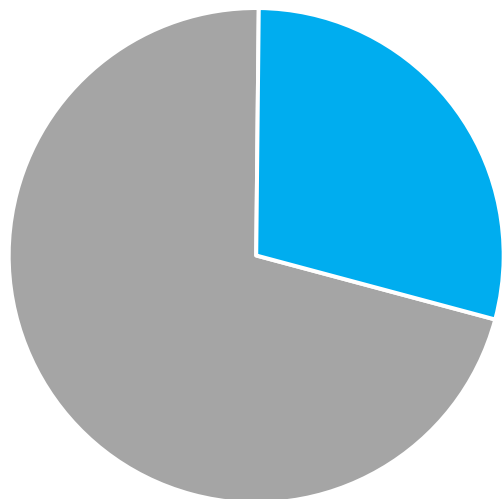
BEGINNERS ENCOURAGED!

Notes:
Total responses by question: 1,059 – learned about the program.

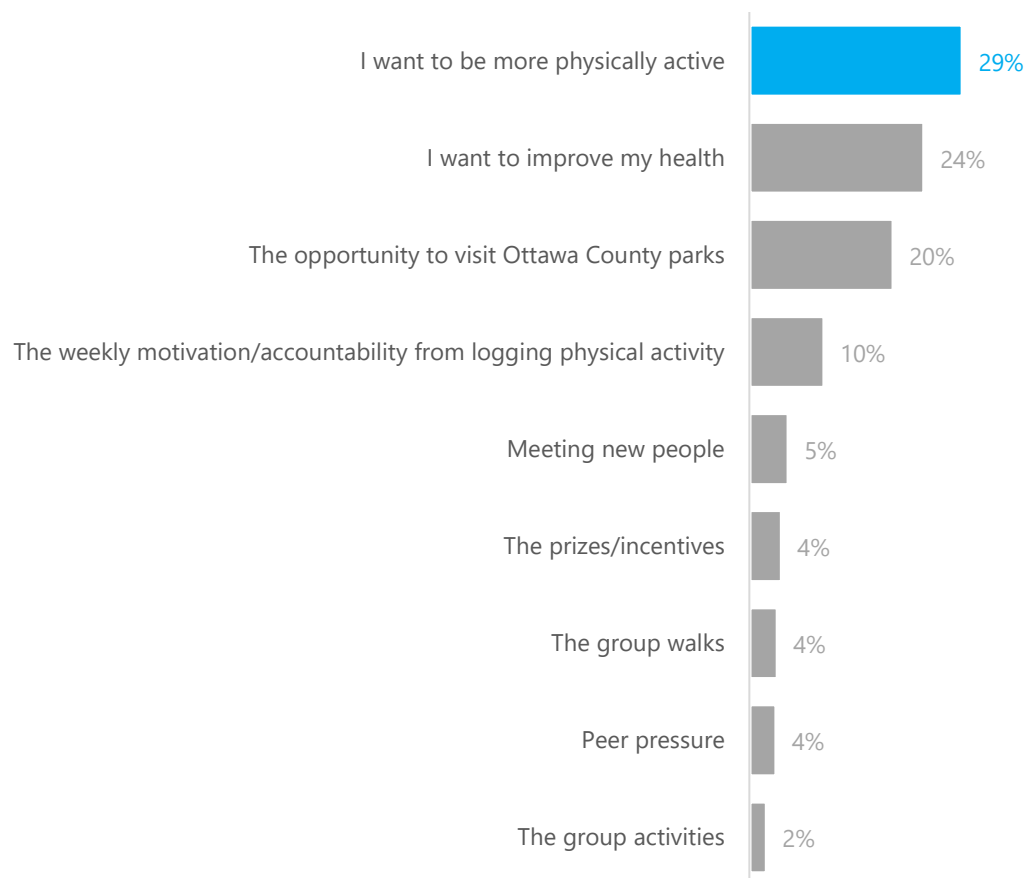


Program Participation – Motivation to Participate in Step It Up!

29% of people enrolled had previously participated in Step It Up!



29% of participants identified 'I want to be more physically active' as the main reason for participating in Step It Up!

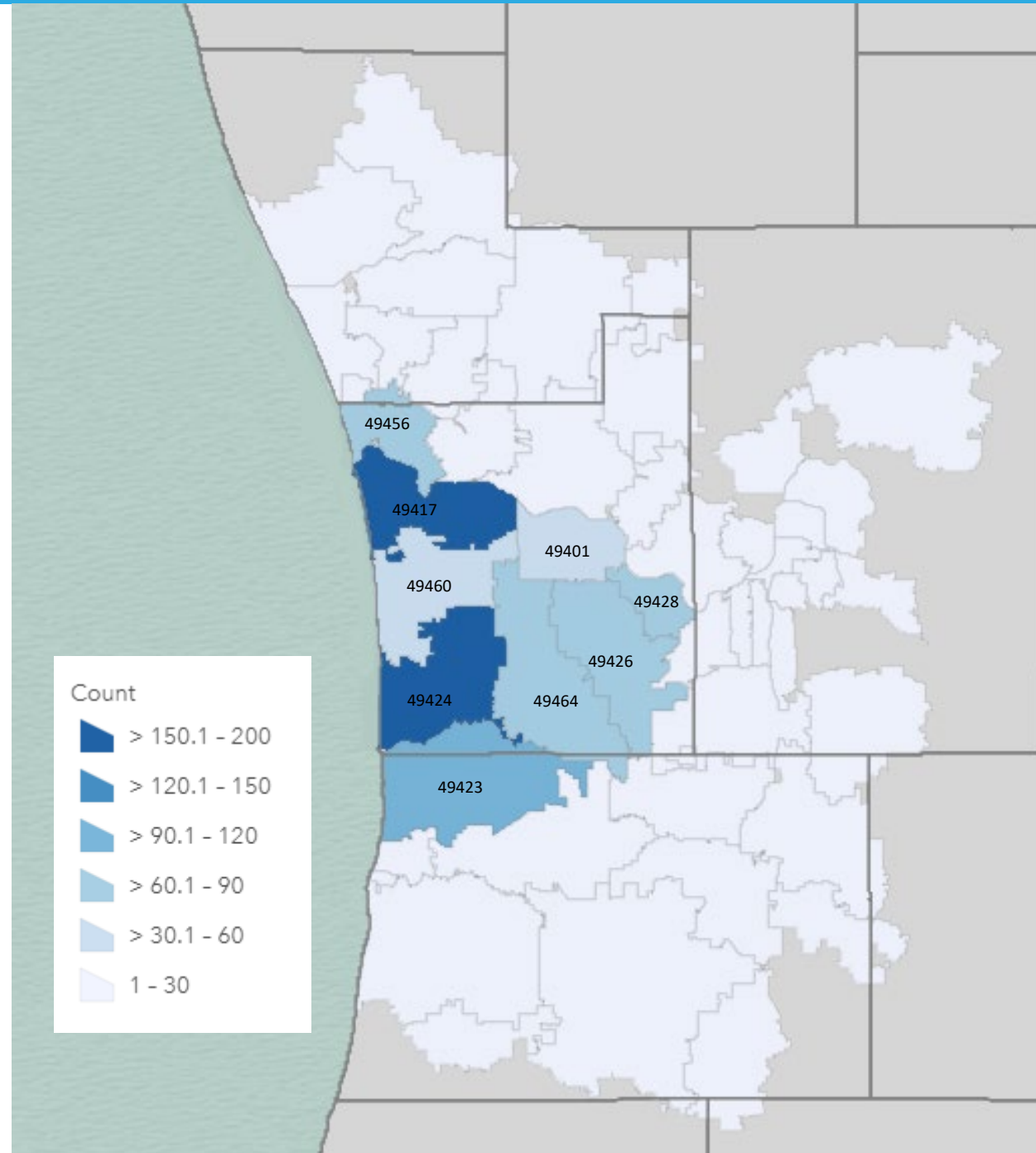
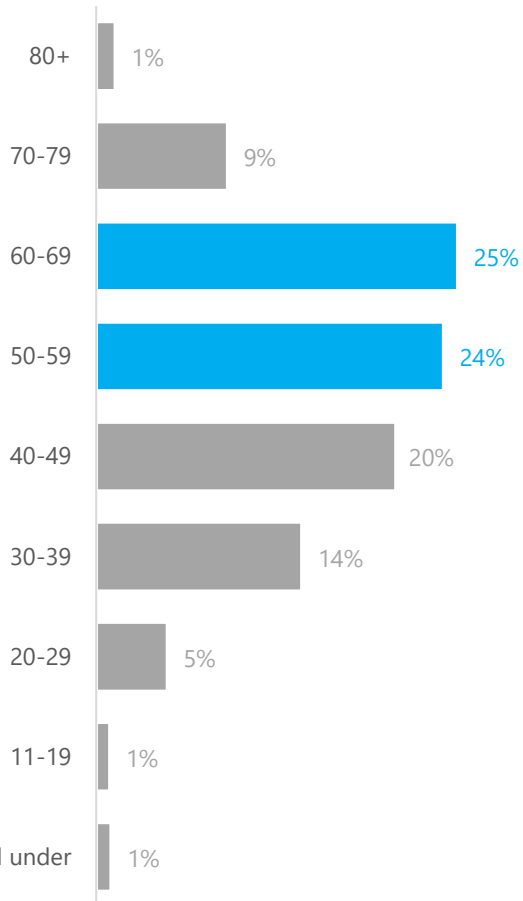


Notes:
Total responses by question: 1,062 – previous participant status & reason for participating.
Participants could select multiple reasons for participating.

Participant Demographics

As shown in the map to the right, **56%** of participants live in the zip codes along the **Lake Michigan shoreline in Ottawa County and into northern Allegan County.**

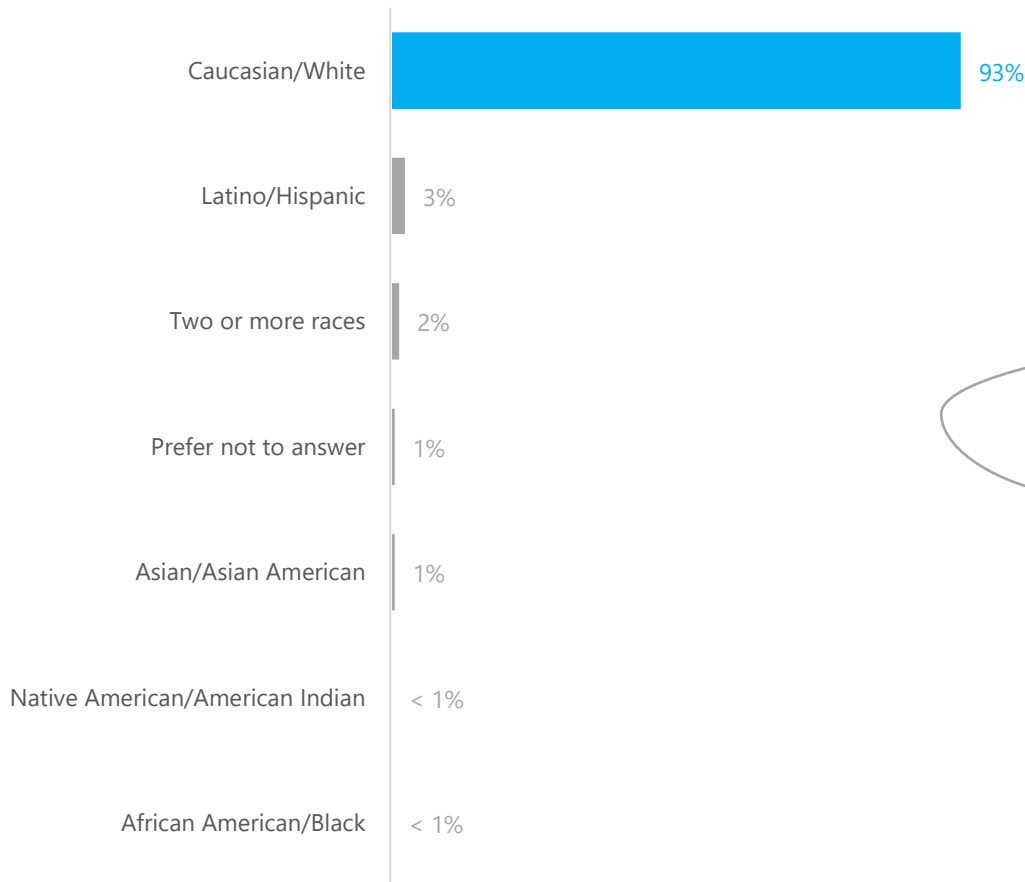
Nearly half of participants are in the **50- to 69-year-old** age group.



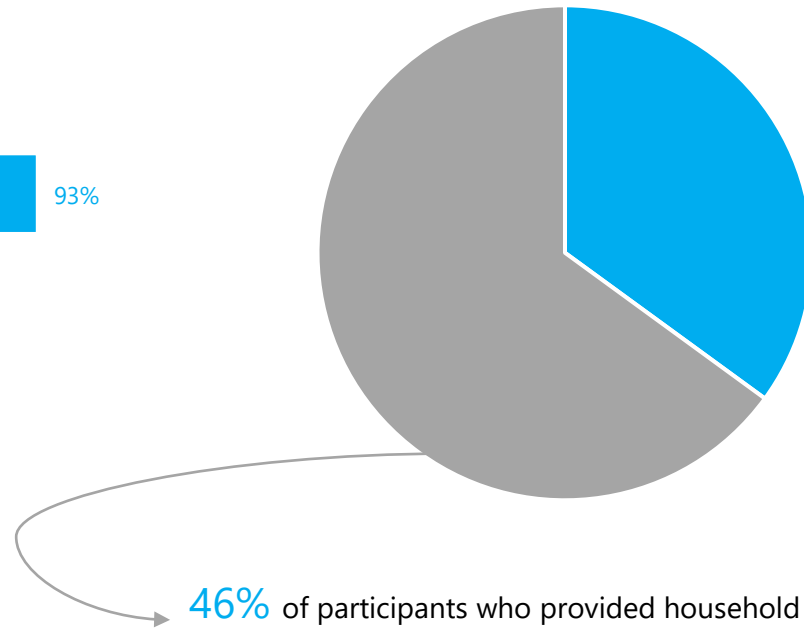
Notes:
Total responses by question: 1,047 – age group; 1,061 – zip code.

Participant Demographics

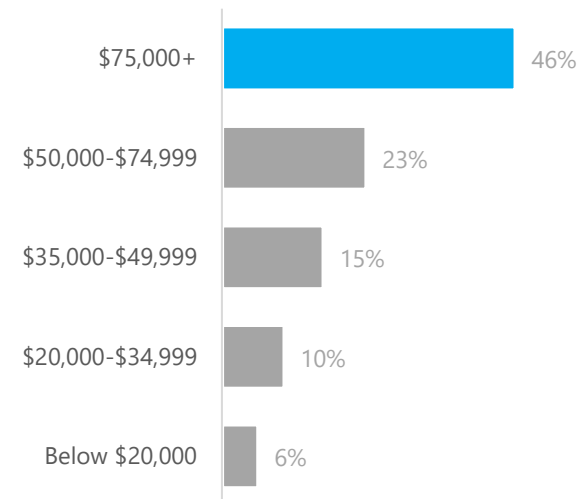
93% of participants are Caucasian/White.



35% of participants indicated that they preferred not to answer the question requesting annual household income.



46% of participants who provided household income information have an annual household income of \$75,000 or more.



Notes:
Total responses by question: 1,058 – race/ethnicity; 1,062 – household income.