



**agefriendly**  
EDMONTON

# OLDER ADULTS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Highlight Report | 2016

Edmonton



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SENIORS  
COORDINATING  
COUNCIL

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Research & Consulting Inc.



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# PROJECT BACKGROUND

Edmonton is a community that values, respects and actively supports the safety, diversity and well-being of older adults. In October 2008, the City of Edmonton conducted the 2008 Seniors Needs Assessment. The intent of the survey was to gather a clear and accurate representation of the services that are most helpful to older adults, the services that need improvements, and to help identify service priorities and opportunities in the provision of services to older adults in Edmonton. This survey, along with extensive community

consultation, contributed to the development of an action plan based on the World Health Organization's Guide to Age-Friendly Cities.

In 2010, City Council adopted the Edmonton Seniors Declaration and in 2012 endorsed the "Vision for an Age Friendly Edmonton Action Plan". Since 2013, Age Friendly Edmonton (AFE) partners have been actively implementing projects and initiatives that will help achieve the goals outlined in the Vision for an Age Friendly Edmonton Action Plan.

**The 'Social and Recreational Participation' Working Group of the AFE Initiative has been tasked with accomplishing the following goals:**

- Ensuring seniors have access to a wide array of affordable and personally relevant activities.
- Providing opportunities for social engagement and recreation that are inclusive and welcome diversity.

The Working Group identified the need for increased knowledge on the experience of older adults at social and recreational programs/facilities. Ultimately, the Working Group was seeking a better understanding of the motivations and/or barriers to social and recreational participation in order to improve facilities, policies, programs, and services.

'In 2015, Bannister Research was contracted to conduct a survey for the City of Edmonton regarding older adult (55+ years) citizens' social and recreational participation in order to inform facilities, policies, programs and services within the City. The following research methods were utilized:



## Telephone survey

with the target demographic (adult citizens aged 55 or older).

*Results provide a margin of error no greater +3.5% at the 95% confidence level or 19 times out of 20.*



## In-Depth interviews

with identified stakeholders, as determined by the Client.

*Stakeholders included City staff and partners of Age Friendly Edmonton (AFE).*

This report highlights some key findings\* of the 2015 City of Edmonton Older Adults Needs Assessment study.

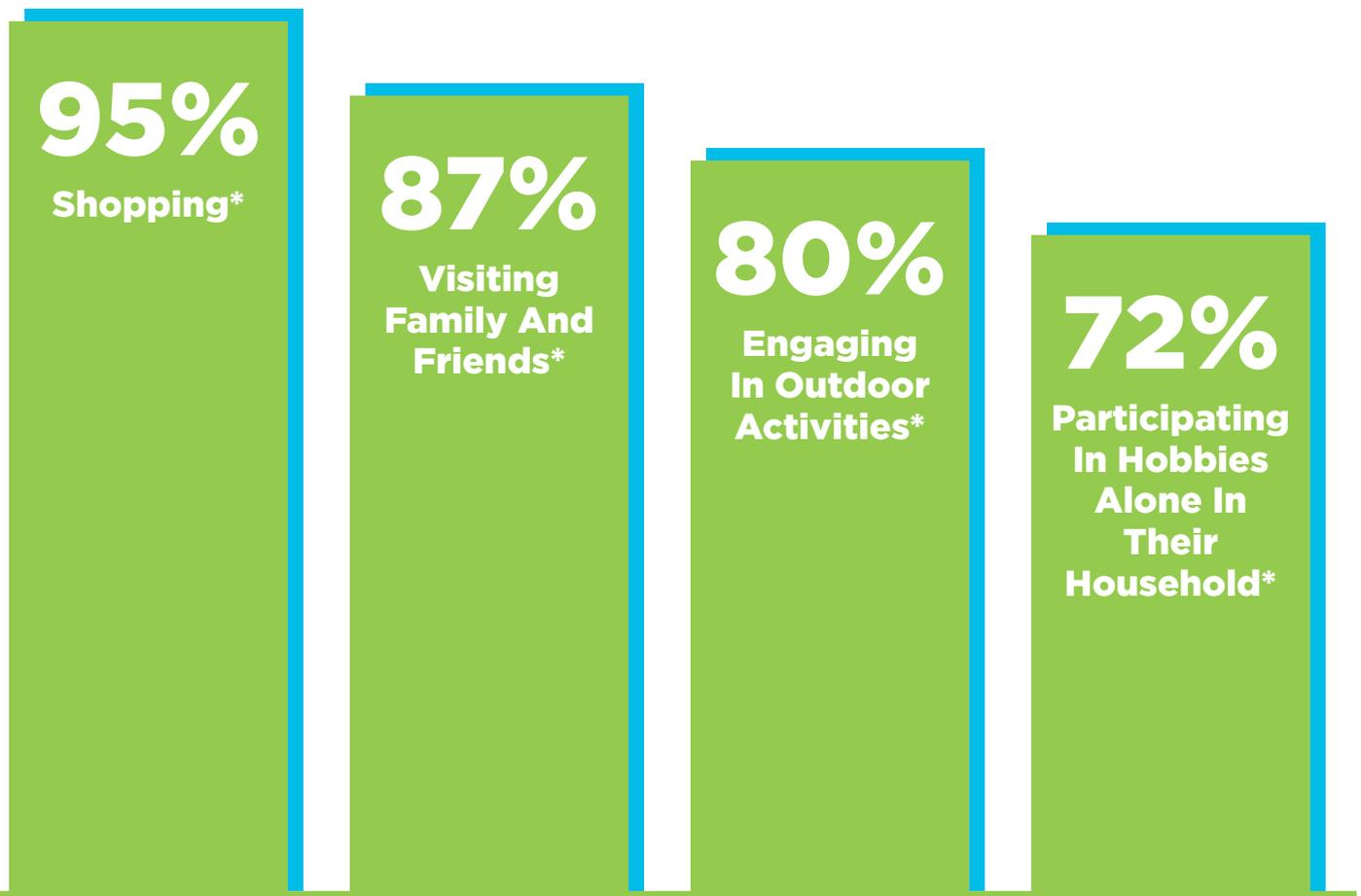
*\*Complete findings are available in the final report.*

# KEY FINDINGS

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Overall, Edmonton older adults' needs relative to social and recreational programs and facilities are being met.

Most older adults are active, reflected by the large portion of older adults surveyed having participated in the following activities on, at minimum, a monthly basis, including:



*\*Percentage of respondents who participated in this activity once a month or more.*



**56%** of respondents did not want to participate in more activities. When further probed about why they chose to visit the facilities they do, the most common response was its location was convenient (26%).

**54%** of respondents reported they had volunteered in the last 12 months, a significant increase from 40% in 2008.

**14%** of respondents said lack of free time was the most common reason preventing them from visiting a different facility.

**85%** of older adults (55+ years), indicated they felt safe in their community, a significant increase from 2008 where 75% of respondents reported feeling safe.

# CURRENT ACTIVITY LEVEL

Respondents were asked how often they participate in a number of social, wellness, recreational, educational, creative and/or cultural activities.

Most commonly, the majority of respondents participated in the following activities once a month or more:

- 95%** Shop
- 87%** Visit family and friends
- 80%** Outdoor activities
- 72%** Hobbies alone in their household

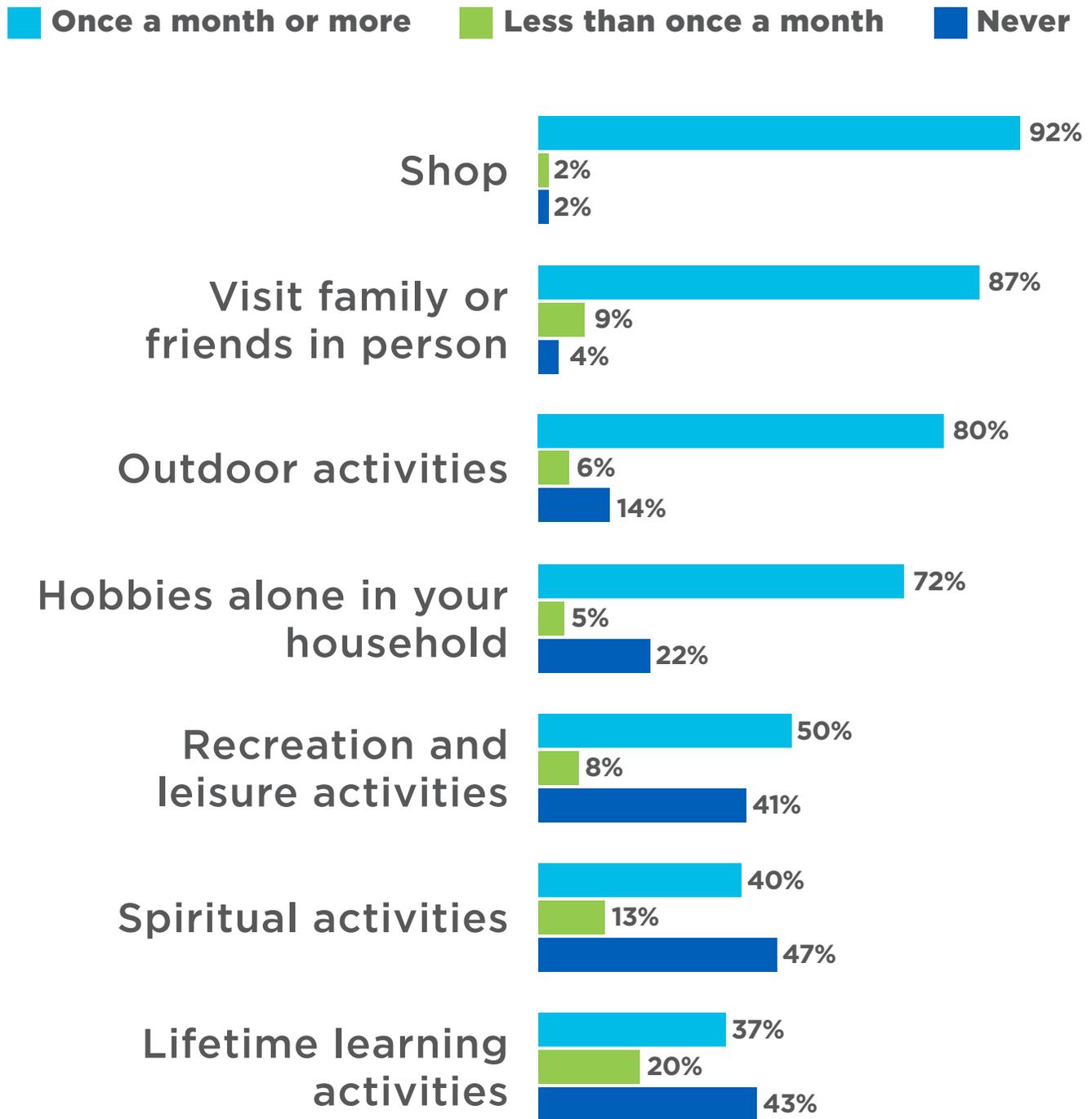
In contrast, approximately one third of respondents participated in the following activities once a month or more:

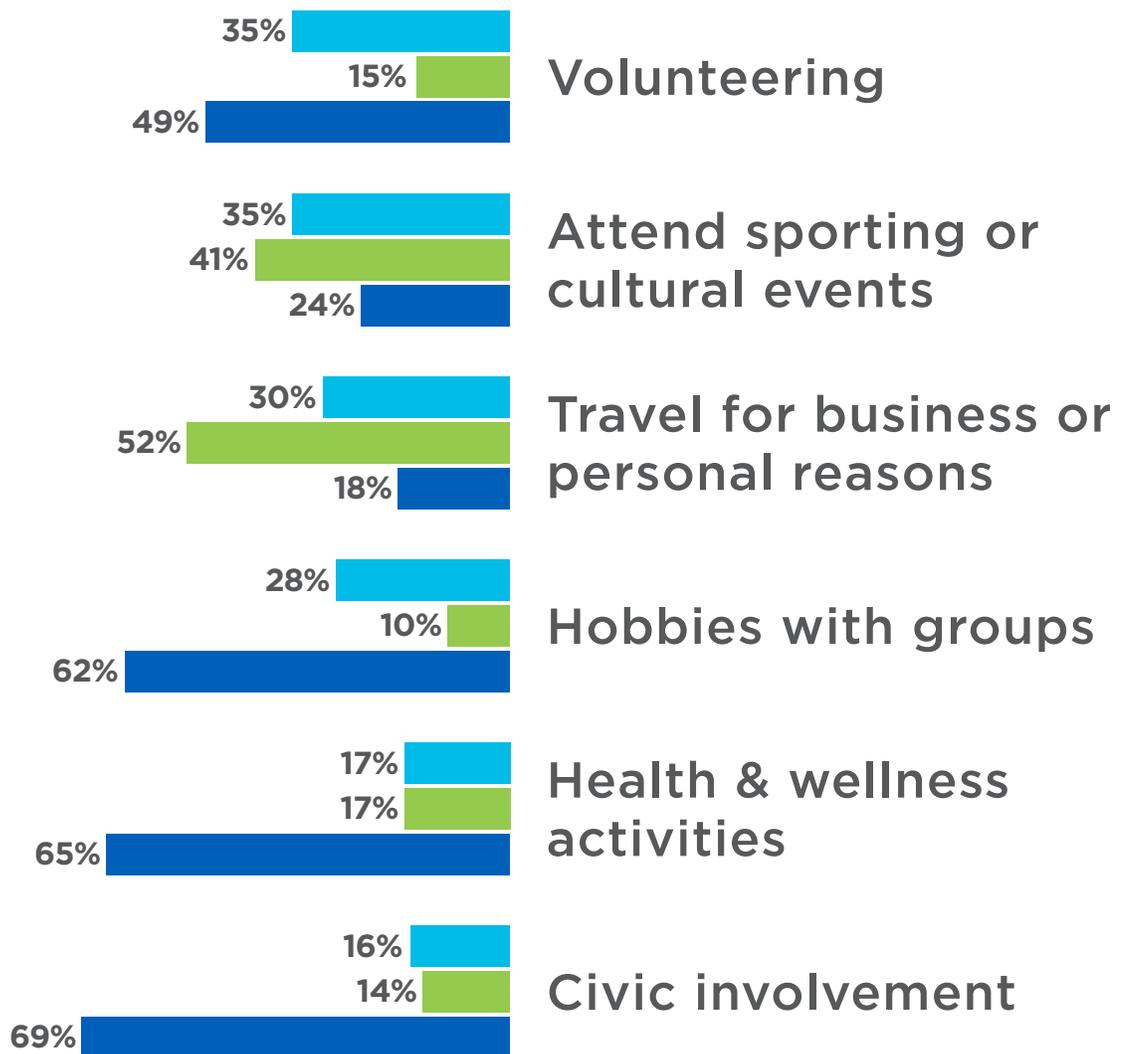
- 30%** Travel for business or personal reasons
- 28%** Hobbies with groups
- 17%** Health and wellness activities
- 16%** Civic involvement

See Figure 1 on the following page.



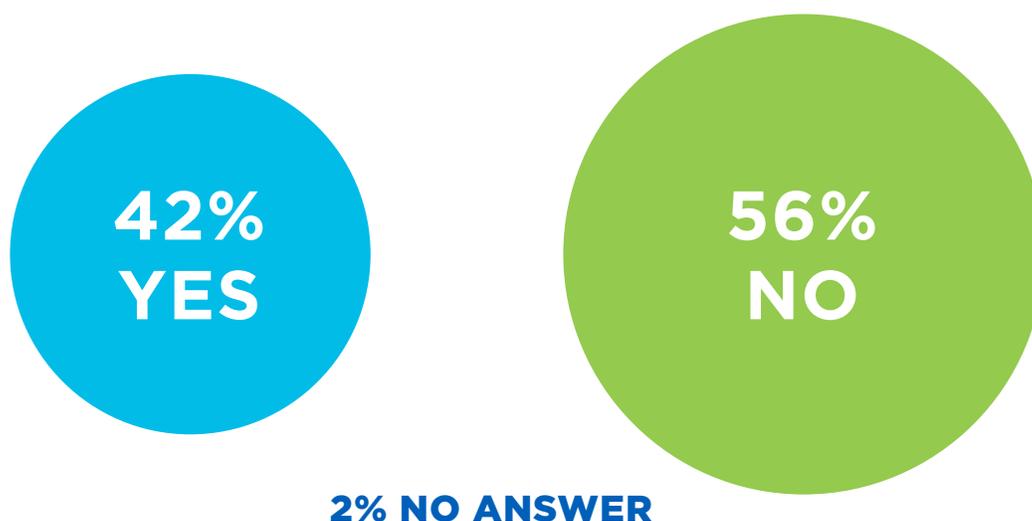
# How often do you participate in these activities? *Figure 1*







When asked if they wished they could participate in more social, wellness, recreational, educational, creative, and/or cultural activities,



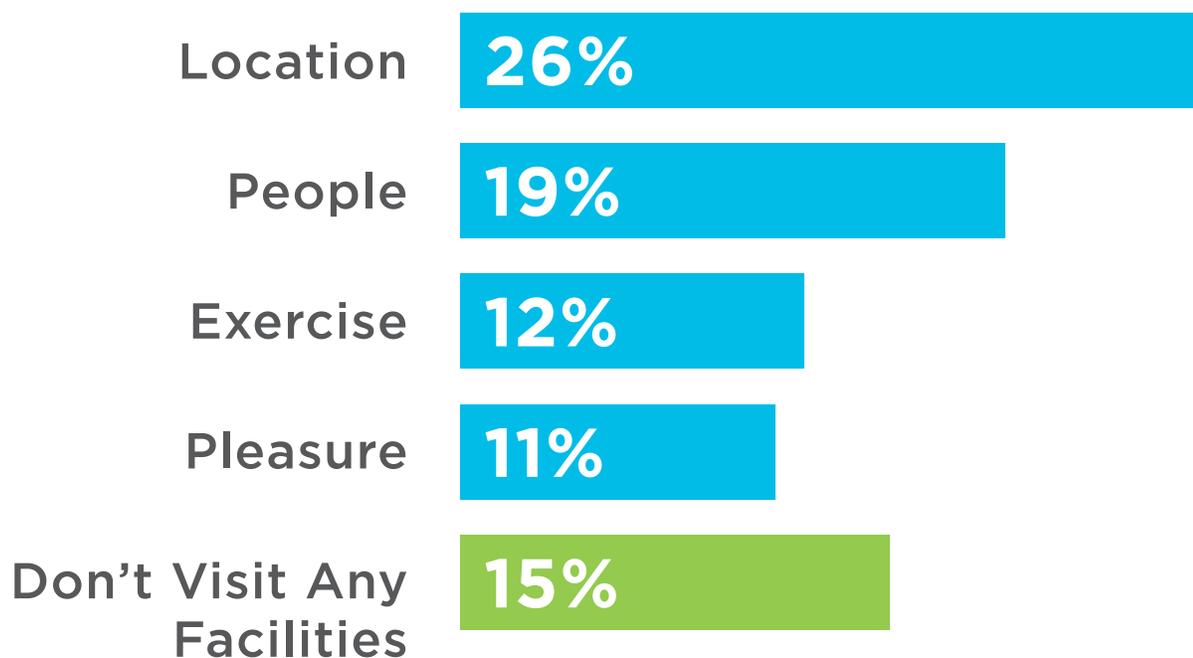
Respondents who wished they could participate in more activities were asked what prevents them from being more active. 44% of respondents indicated a lack of time, followed by 35% who indicated a health condition prevented them from doing more.

**Respondent subgroups significantly more likely to want to take part in more social, wellness recreational, educational, creative and/or cultural activities included:**

- Females (48%) versus males (36%);
- Those who live in the North-East (47%) or the South-East (49%) part of the City versus those who live in the North-West/Central part (37%);
- Those aged 55 to 64 (50%) versus those aged 65 to 79 (38%) or 80 years and older (28%);
- Those who have volunteered in the past 12 months (46%) versus those who have not (39%);
- Those who would like more acquaintances (71%) versus those who would not (31%);

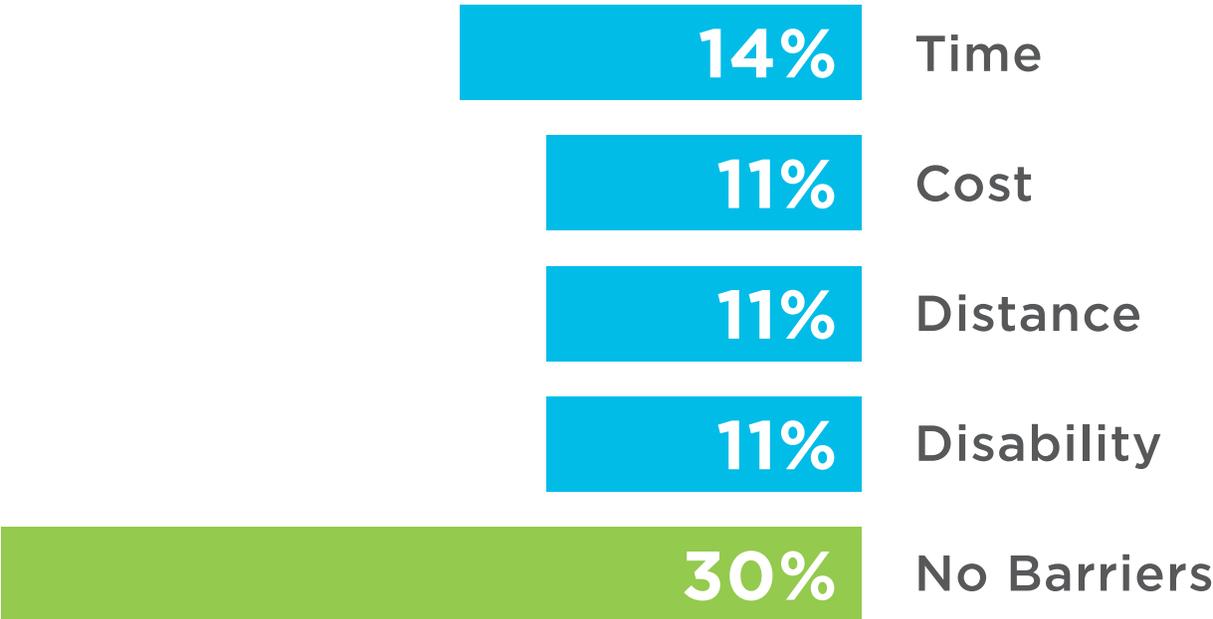
All respondents were asked to indicate the top three reasons they choose to visit the particular facilities that they do:

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Convenient location was the most common response (26%), followed by interaction with other people (19%), for exercise (12%), and for pleasure or enjoyment (11%). Fifteen percent (15%) of respondents indicated that they do not visit any facilities.

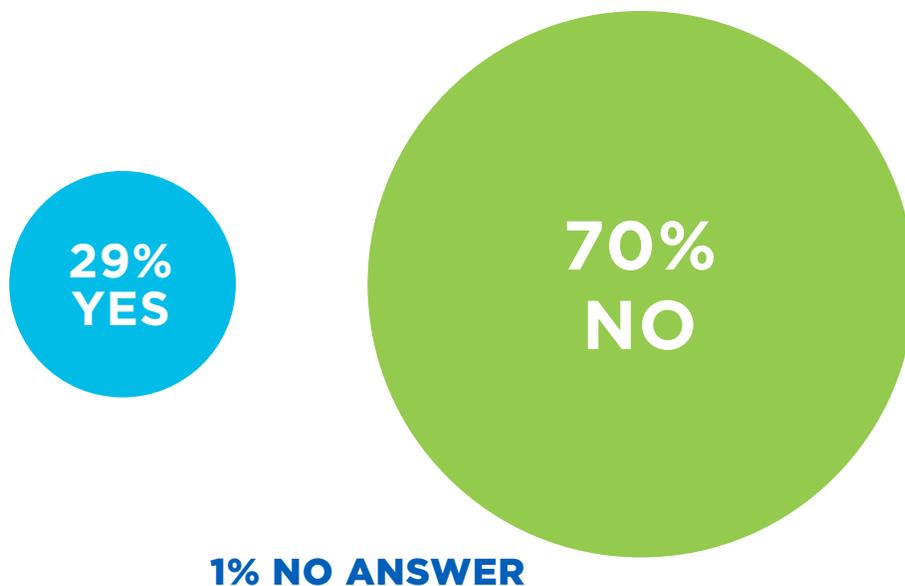
Respondents were asked to identify any barriers or difficulties that exist that would discourage or prevent them from visiting different facilities than the ones that they currently visit.



The most common barriers included a lack of free time (14%), cost (11%), distance (11%), or a physical disability (11%). Nearly one-third of respondents indicated that there were no barriers or difficulties (30%).



Next, respondents were asked if they would like to have more acquaintances.



**Respondent subgroups significantly more likely to agree with the statement “there are things that make it more challenging to pursue social interactions” included:**

- Ages 55 to 64 (37%) versus 65 to 79 (26%);
- Those who have not volunteered in the past 12 months (36%) versus those who have (28%);
- Those who socialize with 0 to 5 people on average a week (40%) versus those who socialize with 6 to 10 people (29%) or more than 10 (27%);
- Those who talk to friends 0 to 2 times a week (40%) versus those who talk to friends 3 to 10 times a week (29%);

**Respondent subgroups significantly more likely to want more acquaintances included:**

- Ages 55 to 64 (39%) versus 65 to 79 (21%) or 80 years and older (17%);
- Those who socialize with 0 to 5 people in an average week (34%) or 6 to 10 people (32%) versus those who socialize with more than 10 (22%)

**Those who indicated there are things that make it challenging to pursue social interactions most frequently indicated these obstacles that make it challenging to pursue social interactions:**

- A lack of free time (33%)
- Poor health (18%)
- A physical disability (17%)

# SOCIAL ISOLATION

While the overarching results of the study reinforced that the needs of many in the older adult population are being met in the City of Edmonton, a few areas emerged where additional exploration or effort could be focused.

The results of the needs assessment highlight the current as well as the potential risk of social isolation amongst older adults, with stakeholders

indicating that a greater number of older adults are being affected than anticipated. Indicators of social isolation are reflected in the survey results.

## Survey Results

**32%** indicated that there were things that make it difficult to pursue social interactions; when asked to specify these barriers, 18% mentioned poor health or general health reasons, 17% mentioned a physical disability/handicap or limited mobility and 11% cited financial reasons or a lack of finances.

**16%** of respondents cited feelings of isolation as the reason they felt unsafe in their community.

**3%** of respondents indicated they do not socialize with anyone over the course of an average week and 9% reported socializing with only 1 to 2 people in the course of one week.

**29%** of respondents indicated that they would like more acquaintances, given the opportunity.



**These results point to a segment of the older adult population that are inhibited or intimidated in some way from participating in various social and/or recreational settings.**

## The respondent sub-groups significantly more likely to demonstrate feelings of social isolation included:

- Those who have not volunteered in the last 12 months
- Those who disagree they are financially secure
- Those whose marital status is other than married or widowed
- Those who rent their home
- Those who use a computer 4 times a week or less

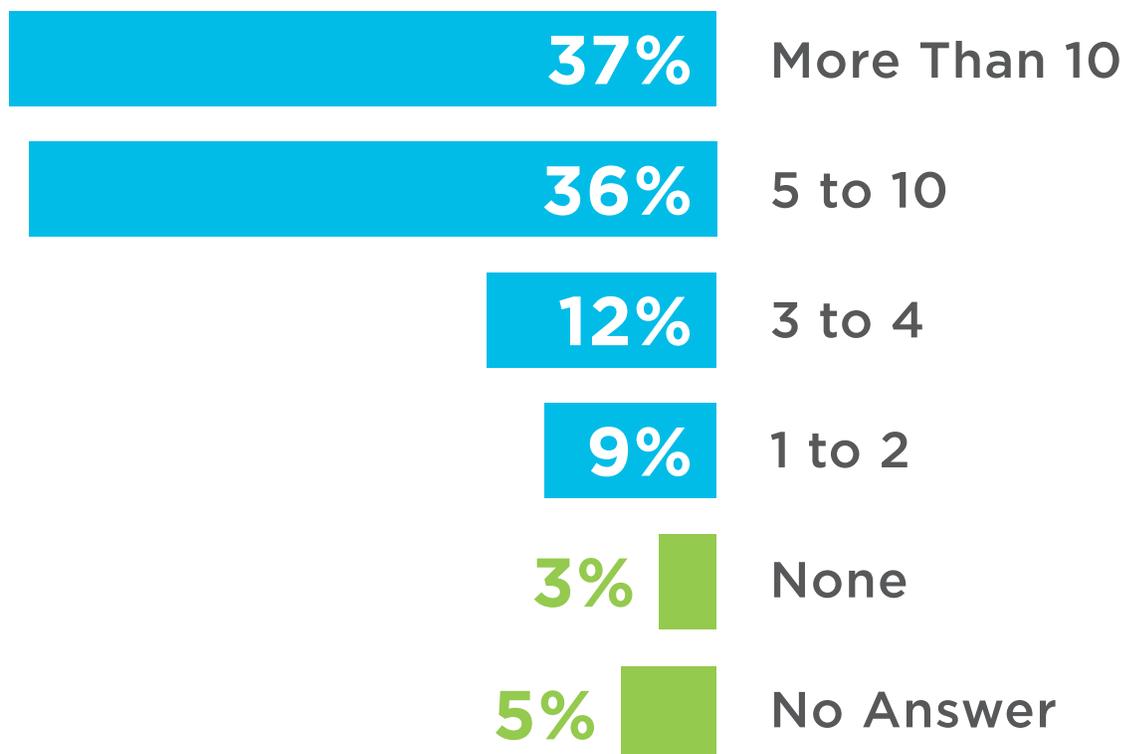
While the results suggest that only this segment is most at risk, social isolation has the potential to affect a greater number of older adults. Interview respondents noted that a single incident such as fall or an injury can limit one's ability to maintain their current lifestyle, which in turn can quickly lead to

social isolation. Efforts to circumvent or address social isolation should be two-fold; identification and intervention for those currently experiencing social isolation; and efforts regarding education and prevention for those currently active but potentially at risk in the future.

# INDICATORS OF ISOLATION: URGENCY BEHIND NEED

In this section of the survey, respondents were asked a series of questions related to their social interactions on a weekly basis.

In the course of an average week, how many different people do you socialize with?



**Respondent subgroups significantly more likely to have socialized with no one on average during a week included:**

- Those who have not volunteered in the past 12 months (6%) versus those who have (1%);
- Those who talk to friends 0 to 2 times a week (11%) versus those who talk to friends 3 to 10 times (1%);
- Those who feel safe in their community (9%) versus those who do not (3%);
- Those whose marital status is other than married or widowed (5%) or who are widowed (7%) versus those who are married (2%);

**Respondent subgroups significantly more likely to have socialized with 5 to 10 people on average during a week included:**

- Those who would like more acquaintances (41%) versus those who would not (33%);
- Those who talk to friends 0 to 2 times a week (36%) or 3 to 10 times (40%) versus those who talk to friends 11 or more times (23%);
- Those who are married (37%) or whose marital status is other than married or widowed (39%) versus those who are widowed (26%);

**Respondent subgroups significantly more likely to have socialized with 10 or more people on average during a week included:**

- Those who have volunteered in the past 12 months (46%) versus those who have not (26%);
- Those who would not like more acquaintances (40%) versus those who would (27%);
- Those who talk to friends over 10 times a week (62%) versus those who talk to friends 3 to 10 times (36%) or 0 to 2 times (20%);
- Those who are married (40%) or widowed (37%) versus those whose marital status is other than married or widowed (25%);

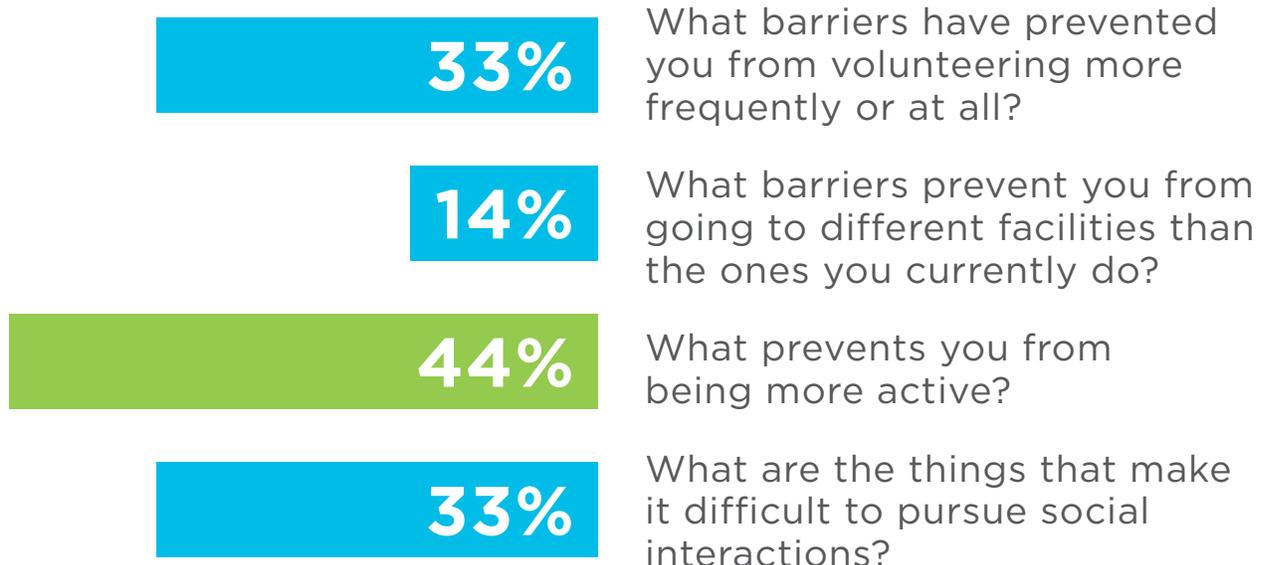
# VOLUNTEERISM AND GENERATION SQUEEZE

## Expectations of retirement and volunteer involvement with the older adult population are changing.

The younger generation of older adults have higher expectations of retirement life and many plan to remain in their homes as they age. Expectations regarding volunteer opportunities are also changing, with older adults seeking more meaningful and significant

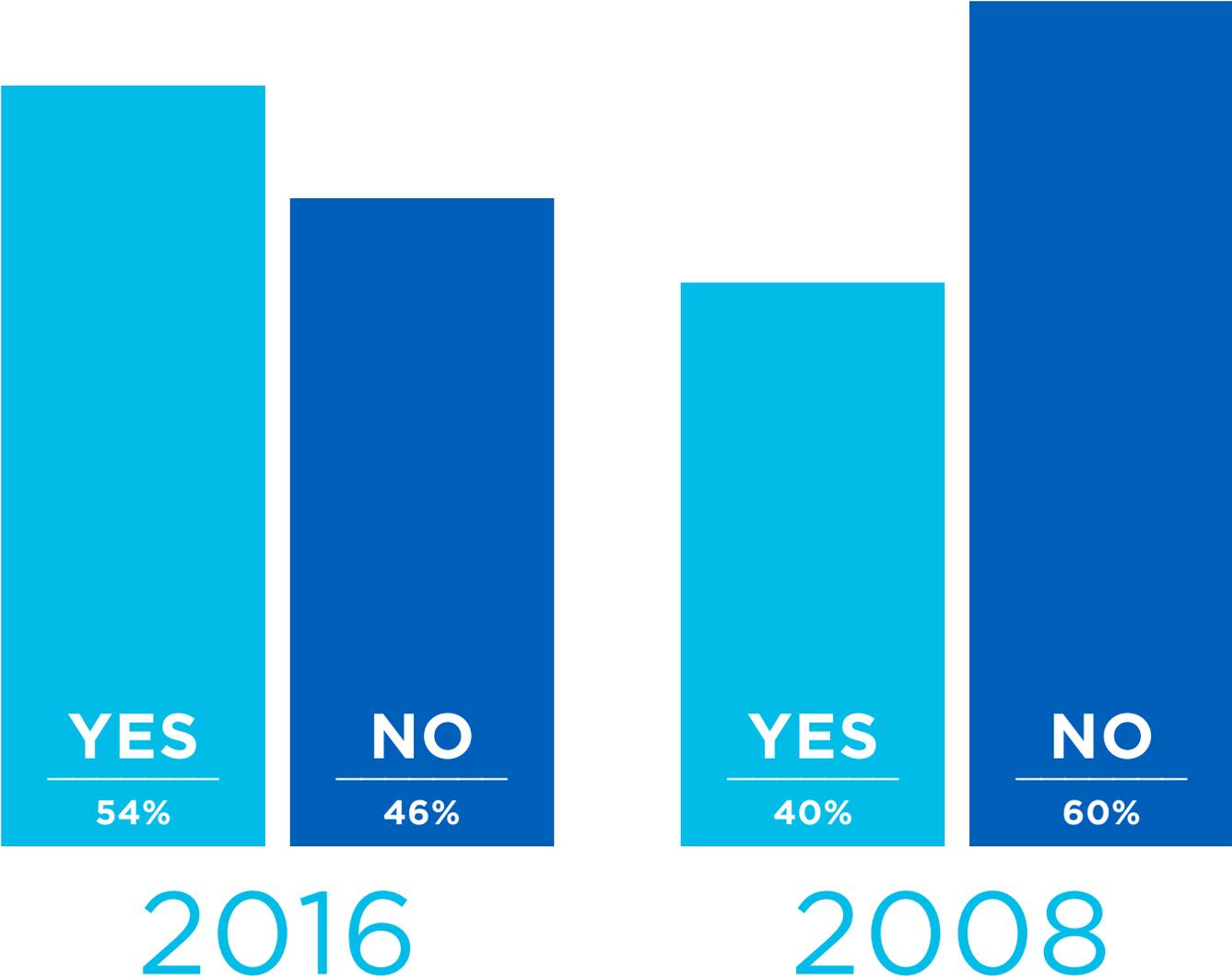
volunteer roles. Some older adults are delaying retirement, with some choosing to semi-retire. Many older adults are balancing the demands placed on them by elderly parents and adult children, resulting in potential time and financial constraints.

## “Not having enough time” was the most frequent response to the following survey questions, including:



Respondents were asked if they had volunteered in the past 12 months.

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# HOUSING NEEDS AND AGING IN PLACE

**As identified in the survey results, aging in place is important to a majority of older adults.**

**82%** of older adults ranked staying in their home as important. Given the importance that older adults assign to aging in place, the level of awareness of assistance and service for those staying in their homes should be prioritized. Interview respondents reported varying awareness levels with services to assist aging in place, which is further reinforced by the survey results.

Those who indicated that they had never received assistance for a range of activities from someone other than a loved one were asked if they were aware that they could receive assistance with various activities.

Respondents reported a range of levels of awareness with these services ranging from 36% to 69%.

While some older adults are aware of the services they can access to help them age in place, there are a large number who are not aware, which could lead to issues if and when they are in need of these services.

Having comprehensive information about aging in place supports at locations that older adults frequent may help to increase awareness of these services.



# SAFETY AND SECURITY

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their safety and security.



● 10% NEUTRAL

● 4% UNSAFE

**Respondent subgroups significantly more likely to feel safe and secure in their community included:**

- Males (89%) versus females (83%);
- Those who live in the North-West/Central (86%), South-West (91%) or South-East (91%) part of the City versus those who live in the North-East part (75%);

**Respondents who felt unsafe in their community were asked why they provided this response. Most commonly, respondents cited these as reasons they felt unsafe in their community:**

- Criminal activity (63%)
- Feelings of isolation (16%)
- Homelessness or transient people (13%)



Respondents were asked to rate how strongly they agreed that they were financially secure. The majority of respondents (70%) were in agreement that they were financially secure, while 18% were in moderate agreement and 11% disagreed that they were financially secure.

Significantly, Those who live in the South-West part of the City (76%) were more likely to agree they are financially secure versus those who live in the South-East part (63%);



# AGING IN PLACE

Respondents were read a list of activities and asked how often over the past 12 months they received assistance with each activity from someone other than a loved one (e.g. friends or family).

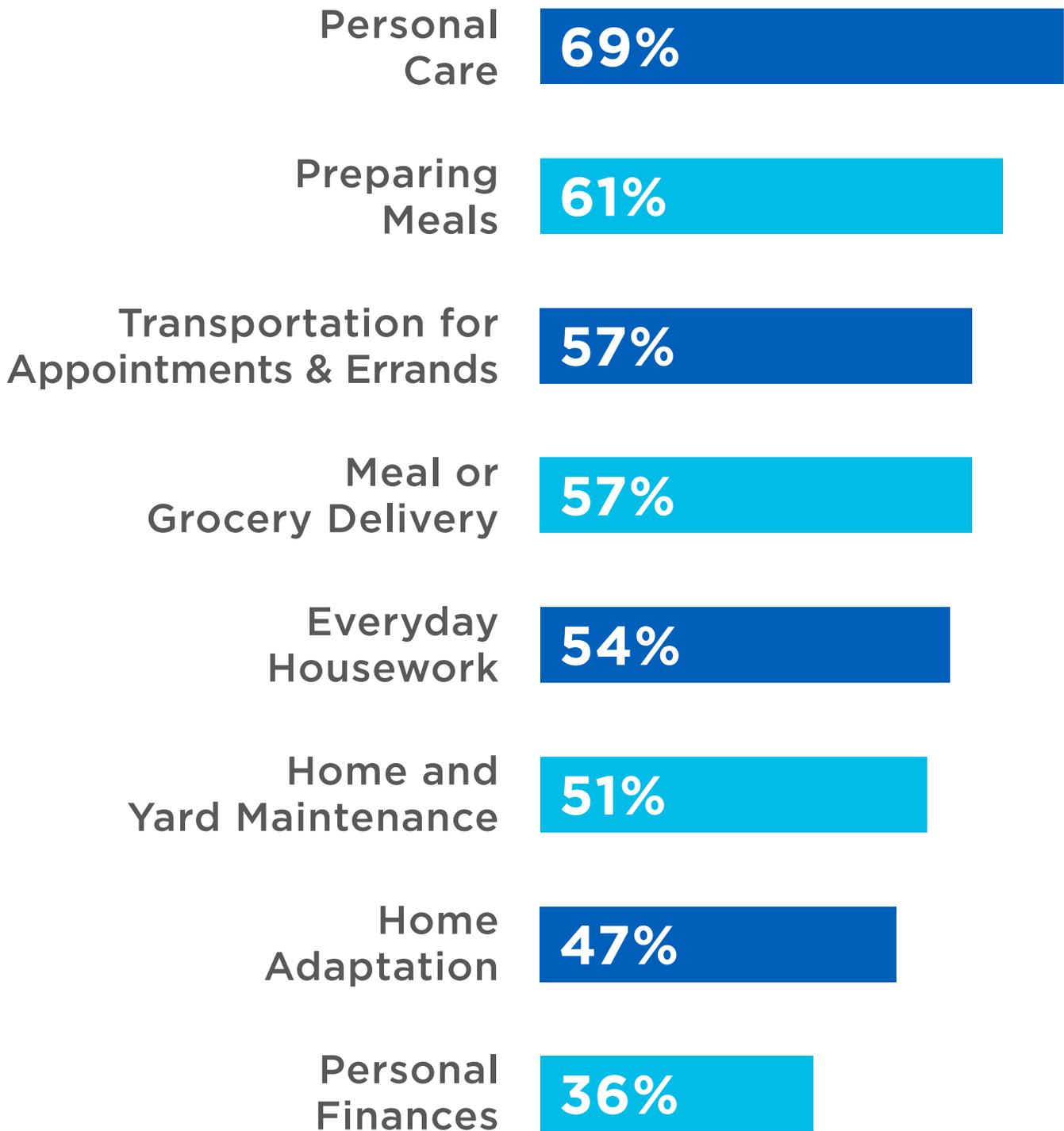
Most commonly, respondents indicated that they received assistance (from someone other than a loved one) with the following activities once a month or more:

- **14%** Home and yard maintenance such as mowing the lawn, snow removal, or window washing.
- **13%** Everyday housework such as dusting, tidying up and laundry.
- Those aged 55 to 79 (71% to 81%) were more likely to never need assistance with home or yard maintenance versus those aged 80 years and older (58%);
- Those aged 55 to 64 (95%) were significantly more likely to never need assistance with home adaptation versus those aged 80 years and older (89%).



# Were you aware you could receive assistance with...?

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**Respondent subgroups significantly more likely to be aware they could receive assistance with getting to appointments or running errands included:**

- Female (61%) versus male (53%);
- Those who live in the South-East part of the City (67%) versus those who live in the North-West/Central (54%) or South-West part (54%);

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Respondents were asked if they had experienced any difficulty in regards to obtaining or receiving assistance.

- 16%** Knowing where to look for help
- 13%** Finding qualified help
- 12%** Difficulty asking for assistance
- 11%** Family or friends being unavailable
- 11%** The cost of help
- 10%** The overall challenge of finding assistance
- 8%** Not knowing where to look for financial assistance



**Respondent subgroups significantly more likely to have had difficulty in the past 12 months knowing where to look for help included:**

- Female (18%) versus male (13%);
- Those who socialize with 0 to 10 people on average a week (17% to 21%) versus those who socialize with more than 10 (10%);
- Those who would like more acquaintances (22%) versus those who would not (13%);

**Respondent subgroups significantly more likely to have had difficulty in the past 12 months finding qualified help included:**

- Ages 80 years and older (17%) versus 65 to 79 (10%);
- Those who socialize with 0 to 5 people on average a week (17%) versus those who socialize with 6 to 10 (11%);

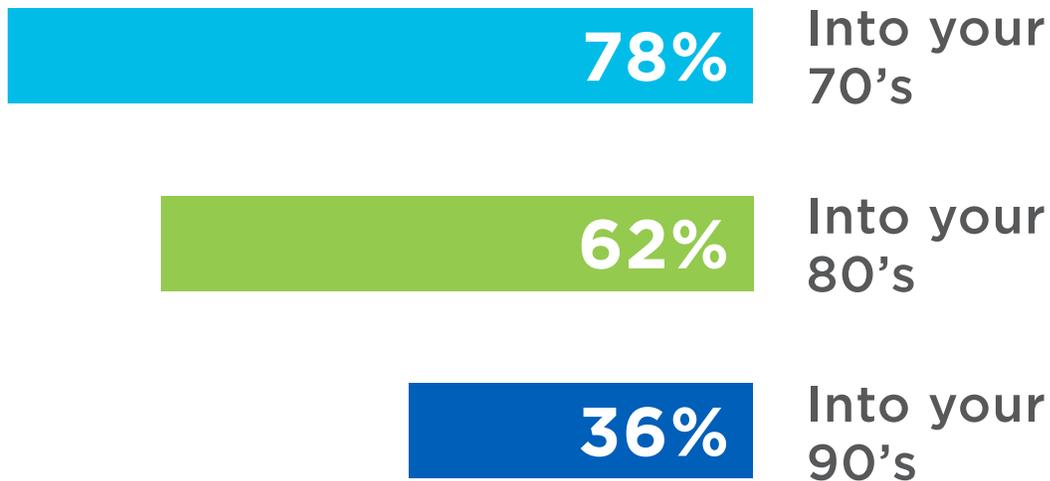
**Respondent subgroups significantly more likely to have had difficulty in the past 12 months asking for assistance included:**

- Ages 55 to 64 (14%) versus those aged 65 to 79 (9%);
- Those who socialize with 0 to 5 people on average a week (17%) versus those who socialize with 6 or more (7% to 10%);

**Respondent subgroups significantly more likely to have had difficulty in the past 12 months with family or friends being unavailable included:**

- Ages 55 to 79 (11% to 14%) versus those aged 80+ (4%);
- Those who would like more acquaintances (21%) versus those who would not (7%);

# How likely is it that you will try to stay in your current home?



Next, respondents were asked how likely they were to try to stay in their current home into their 70's, 80's and 90's using a 1 to 5 scale where 1 meant "not at all likely" and 5 meant "very likely". The results were as follows:

<i>*Base: Respondents aged 55 to 64</i>	5 Very likely	4	3	2	1 Not at all likely	No answer	Mean (out of 5)
<i>**Base: Respondents aged 55 to 79</i>							
<i>*** Base: All respondents</i>							
Into Your 70's*	<b>67%</b>	11%	9%	3%	<b>8%</b>	1%	<b>4.27</b>
Into Your 80's**	<b>51%</b>	11%	13%	6%	<b>15%</b>	4%	<b>3.81</b>
Into Your 90's***	<b>30%</b>	6%	14%	9%	<b>33%</b>	8%	<b>2.89</b>

Respondents were provided with a list of nine aspects to consider when choosing where to live in the future and asked to rate the importance of each aspect using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 meant “not at all important” and 5 meant “very important.” At least 70% of respondents rated the following as important (providing ratings of 4 or 5 out of 5):

- Staying in their home (82% of respondents provided a rating of 4 or 5 out of 5);
- Being near or close to family and friends (76%);
- Familiarity of neighbourhood or community (71%).
- Being near or close to amenities like shopping, restaurants, etc. (75%);
- Affordability of housing or the amount of upkeep needed for their property (74%); and

## Have you discussed or considered any of the following to assist in staying in your home as you age?

Renovations to your current home

27%

Live in help

9%

Meal programs

8%

*\*Percent of respondents who indicated that they have discussed or considered each option*

Please indicate the importance of the following on a scale of 1 to 5\*

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- 82%** Staying in your home
- 76%** Being near or close to family and friends
- 75%** Being near or close to amenities like shopping, restaurants, etc.
- 74%** Affordability of housing or the amount of upkeep needed for your property
- 71%** Familiarity of neighbourhood or community
- 69%** Being near or close to a physician
- 66%** Being near or close to public transportation
- 51%** Food or meal services
- 51%** Programs and/or activities offered within a seniors housing facility

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*\*Percent of respondents who felt the statement was important (ratings of 4 or 5 out of 5)*

# STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT VARIATIONS OF RESPONSES CORRELATED TO AGE

In the following pages, the responses that were significantly more likely to be given by one age group versus another are reported. This builds a profile of how each age group was most likely to respond.



## Respondents aged 55 to 64 years were significantly more likely to:

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- Never need assistance with personal care.
- Never need assistance with preparing meals.
- Never need assistance with home adaptation.
- Never need assistance with getting to appointments or running errands.
- Never need assistance with everyday housework.
- Never need assistance with home or yard maintenance.
- Rate affordability of housing or the amount of upkeep needed for your property as important.
- Rate being near to amenities like shopping and restaurants as important.
- Rate being close to public transport as important.
- Have volunteered in the last 12 months.
- Take part in outdoor activities more than once a week.
- Rate that programming or activities in seniors housing as important.
- Be aware they could receive assistance with home adaptation.
- Want to take part in more social, wellness recreational, educational, creative and/or cultural activities.
- Want more acquaintances.
- Agree with the statement “there are things that make it more challenging to pursue social interactions”.
- Have had difficulty in the past 12 months asking for assistance.
- Have had difficulty in the past 12 months with family or friends being unavailable.
- Have had difficulty in the past 12 months knowing where to look for financial assistance.

## Respondents aged 65 to 79 years were significantly more likely to:

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- Rate staying in their home as important.
- Stay in their current home into their 80's.
- Visit family or friends in person more than once a week.
- Take part in civic involvement more than once a week.

## Respondents aged 80 years and older were significantly more likely to:

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- Never do hobbies with groups.
- Never do health & wellness activities.
- Stay in their current home into their 90's.
- Never volunteer.
- Never take part in lifetime learning activities.
- Never do recreation or leisure activities.
- Never attend sporting or cultural events.
- Never do hobbies alone in their household.
- Never take part in outdoor activities.
- Never travel for business or personal reasons.
- Take part in spiritual activities more than once a week.
- Have had difficulty in the past 12 months finding qualified help.
- Have considered meal programs.
- Never shop.
- Need assistance with preparing meals more than once a week.
- Need assistance with personal care more than once a week.



# RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics	2015	2008
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	47%	50%
Female	53%	50%
<b>Age</b>		
55 to 64	49%	44%
65 to 79	37%	42%
80 and older	14%	15%
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married or living together as a couple	65%	56%
Widowed	14%	21%
Divorced	11%	11%
Single, Never married	9%	9%
Separated	2%	2%
<b>Own or Rent</b>		
Own	88%	83%
Rent	11%	17%
<b>Do you live alone or with others</b>		
Alone	28%	37%
With others	71%	63%

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>Type of dwelling</b>		
House	75%	69%
Condominium	16%	17%
Apartment	6%	11%
Seniors housing	3%	2%
<b>Number of months a year spent outside of Edmonton</b>		
None	68%	-
1 to 2 months	22%	-
3 to 6 months	7%	-
7 to 9 months	<1%	-
10 to 11 months	<1%	-
All year	1%	-
Mean	0.79%	-
<b>Gross Household Income for 2014</b>		
Less than \$30,000	13%	22%
\$30,000 to \$50,000	20%	20%
\$50,000 to \$70,000	15%	13%
\$70,000 to \$100,000	14%	8%
\$100,000 to \$150,000	9%	9%
\$150,000 or greater	10%	9%
Refused/Not Stated	21%	28%

Demographics	2015	2008
<b>In a course of an average week, how often do you use a computer?</b>		
Not at all	15%	-
One or two times	3%	-
Three or four times	5%	-
Five or more times	77%	-
<b>Cultural origin</b>		
Canadian	21%	55%
German	15%	8%
English	13%	-
Scottish	13%	7%
Ukrainian	11%	8%
Irish	10%	7%
British	8%	14%
Canadian	5%	-
French	7%	4%
Dutch	3%	3%
Polish	3%	3%
Norwegian	3%	-
Other	19%	11%

Demographics	2015	2008
<b>How many years have you lived in Edmonton?</b>		
1 to 5 years	1%	N/A
6 to 10 years	2%	N/A
11 to 20 years	7%	8%
More than 20 years	89%	85%
<b>Mean</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	<b>42.2%</b>
<b>Ward</b>		
Ward 1	8%	-
Ward 2	8%	-
Ward 3	8%	-
Ward 4	8%	-
Ward 5	8%	-
Ward 6	8%	-
Ward 7	8%	-
Ward 8	8%	-
Ward 9	8%	-
Ward 10	8%	-
Ward 11	9%	-
Ward 12	9%	-

