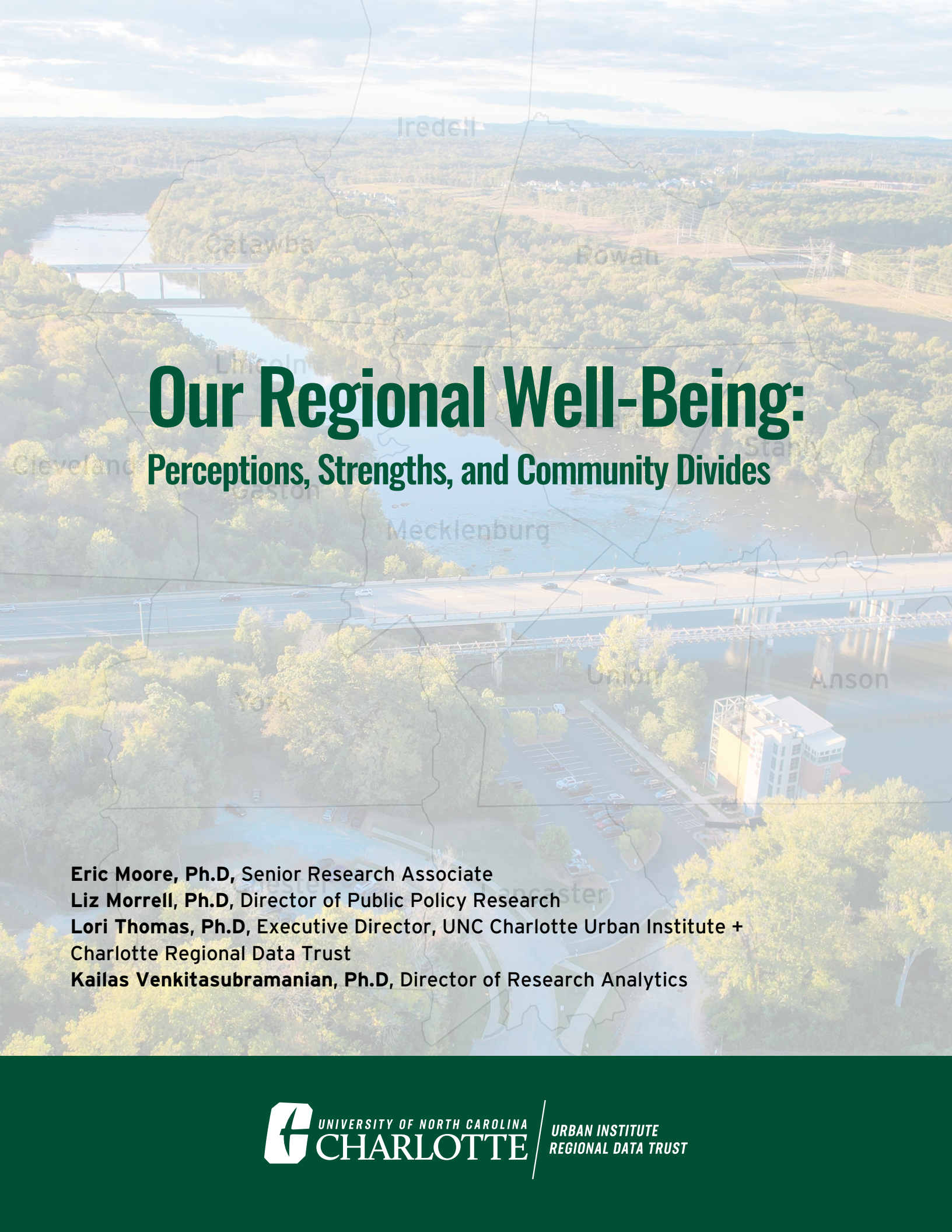




Our Regional Well-Being:

Perceptions, Strengths, and Community Divides

Eric Moore, Ph.D, Senior Research Associate

Liz Morrell, Ph.D, Director of Public Policy Research

Lori Thomas, Ph.D, Executive Director, UNC Charlotte Urban Institute +
Charlotte Regional Data Trust

Kailas Venkitasubramanian, Ph.D, Director of Research Analytics



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE

URBAN INSTITUTE
REGIONAL DATA TRUST



Our Regional Well-Being: Perceptions, Strengths, and Community Divides

Introduction

Well-being represents a cornerstone within social science and public policy research. A society's well-being can predict "the extent to which it [the country] is resilient, builds capacity for action, and is prepared to transcend challenges", and researchers, organizations, and governments are increasingly interested in better understanding it.¹

This concept has been studied in the United States, but it has often relied on static measures such as job counts, income, and/or Gross Domestic Product (GDP). While these measures provide critical information for researchers and policymakers alike, an increasing body of evidence demonstrates the shortcomings of using these measures to capture quality of life and subjective well-being effectively.² As the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi commission concluded when examining societal measures of well-being and their limitations, well-being should be "...captured by asking people [about] themselves".³ This, however, raises two additional questions. First, what does well-being entail, and how can we measure it effectively? Second, how does understanding the well-being of citizens and residents inform or shape policy outcomes?

Moving to a Subjective Approach

This first question is not as straightforward as it may seem. Beyond a broad consensus that well-being is a multidimensional concept informed by an individual's physical, social, economic, and environmental circumstances,

there is significant variation in the dimensions that researchers include in their frameworks and how questions are worded to respondents.⁴ That said, there is agreement that well-being often involves three domains: evaluative (how satisfied people are with life overall and whether life feels worthwhile), affective (the balance of positive and negative emotions in everyday experience), and eudaimonic (a sense of meaning and purpose).⁵

Using these domains and leveraging work from organizations such as the Happiness Research Institute and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), we also include thirteen measures related to:

- The level of connection we share with our network and community (social capital)⁶
- Financial resiliency and the ability to absorb an unexpected shock (economic security)⁷
- The safety and satisfaction one has from residing in their community (place)⁸
- Optimism about the future of the region (outlook)⁹

Why Studying Well-being Matters

This brings us to the second question from earlier: how does the well-being of citizens and residents matter, or shape, policy outcomes? Put another way, why should policymakers, researchers, practitioners, or residents in our region care about understanding well-being in the multidimensional way we are striving to create?

¹ "Promoting Well-Being," accessed August 3, 2026, <https://www.who.int/activities/promoting-well-being>.

² Andre Perry and Jonathan Rothwell, "We Need to Talk about Well-Being: Why the Study of Well-Being Is Crucial for Race Relations and Advancing Prosperity," *Brookings*, April 28, 2023, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/we-need-to-talk-about-well-being-why-the-study-of-well-being-is-crucial-for-race-relations-and-advancing-prosperity/>; European Union, "Quality of Life Indicators," Eurostat, accessed July 3, 2026, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Quality_of_life_indicators.

³ Joseph E. Stiglitz et al., "Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress," 2009.

⁴ Aaron Jarden and Annalise Roache, "What Is Wellbeing?," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 20, no. 6 (2023): 5006, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20065006>; Antonella Delle Fave et al., "The Eudaimonic and Hedonic Components of Happiness: Qualitative and Quantitative Findings," *Social Indicators Research* 100, no. 2 (2011): 185-207, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-010-9632-5>.

⁵ Carol D. Ryff, "Psychological Well-Being Revisited: Advances in the Science and Practice of Eudaimonia," *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* 83, no. 1 (2014): 10-28, <https://doi.org/10.1159/000353263>; OECD, "OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being," OECD, OECD Publishing, March 20, 2013, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264191655-en>; Ed Diener et al., "Subjective Well-Being: Three Decades of Progress," *Psychological Bulletin* 125, no. 2 (1999): 276-302, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.125.2.276>.

⁶ Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Revised and updated (Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2020); Sheldon Cohen, "Social Relationships and Health," *American Psychologist* 59, no. 8 (2004): 676-84, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.59.8.676>.

⁷ Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir, *Scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means so Much* (Times Books Henry Holt and Company, 2013).

⁸ Martha Craven Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*, First Harvard University Press paperback edition (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013).

⁹ Charles S. Carver et al., "Optimism," *Clinical Psychology Review* 30, no. 7 (2010): 879-89, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2010.01.006>.

To start with, individual-level well-being can directly influence other outcomes. Researchers have found a causal link between well-being and health outcomes, as well as overall mortality rates. Individuals with higher levels of subjective well-being and strong social relationships are found to live longer, on average, while communities with higher levels of optimism display lower rates of substance abuse.¹⁰ Other researchers have focused on the relationship between well-being and crime, with scholars finding evidence that generalized trust and community cohesion (the latter being a component of social capital) resulted in lower levels of violent crime at the neighborhood level.¹¹

Another branch in the literature demonstrates how well-being can serve as a predictive (leading) indicator of future structural transformations. This contrasts with traditional metrics like GDP, which inherently reflect past performance (lagging). Higher levels of social connectedness and community cohesion have been associated with allowing communities to recover more quickly from natural disasters (Hurricane Katrina) or other exogenous shocks (the 2008 financial crisis).¹² On the other hand, satisfaction with the local community and its perceived trajectory plays a critical role in residential mobility choices, with researchers noting the possibility of an eventual “brain drain” of residents (particularly younger ones) increases as belief in the community’s future outlook becomes more pessimistic.¹³

Survey Design

The UNC Charlotte Urban Institute (hereafter the Institute) partnered with the Happiness Research Institute and The Gambrell Foundation to ask a representative sample of residents to complete validated measures of subjective well-being, social capital, and financial resilience.

To effectively execute a representative survey over a 14-county region with a diverse demographic profile distributed across two states (North Carolina and South Carolina) and spanning a wide range of population sizes, from over 1 million in Mecklenburg to under 50,000

in Chester (SC) and Anson (NC) counties, the Institute employed American Directions Research Group (ADRG) to administer a multi-modal survey of:

- 1,700 interviews from non-probability online panelists;
- 2,300 live telephone interviews from listed samples. The live telephone sampling frame consists of a list of telephone numbers obtained from a commercial source and uses a systematic selection technique that selects every *n*th number from the list to generate a representative sample.

Weighting the Survey

In addition to using regional quotas, the Institute weighted the final sample by county of residence, race, ethnicity, gender, age, reported household income, and homeowner status. Economic stability (as measured by income) is an important driver of sentiment, particularly regarding quality of life and well-being. In addition, renters are traditionally underrepresented in survey research yet remain an ever-growing segment of the region’s population.

After testing multiple iterations of different weighting methodologies, our chosen method reduced the sample by just under 600 respondents (final sample size ~3300). Still, it kept our margin of error below 3% for the overall region. Interested readers can refer to **Appendix A for more detailed information on how the survey weights were calculated.**

Analysis and Methodology

To provide a clear and practical summary of our findings, we present weighted frequency distributions of the outcomes of interest, based on the survey weights. This ensures each overall metric reflects the true composition and demographic diversity of our target population, not just the raw respondent pool, providing a reliable, representative baseline for top-line decision-making.

After establishing these overall results, we disaggregate responses using weighted cross-tabulations to reveal how opinions, priorities, and behaviors vary across key socio-demographic and political groups. To keep these

¹⁰ Julianne Holt-Lunstad et al., “Social Relationships and Mortality Risk: A Meta-Analytic Review,” *PLoS Medicine* 7, no. 7 (2010): e1000316, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000316>; Bruno S. Frey, “Happy People Live Longer,” *Science* 331, no. 6017 (2011): 542-43, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1201060>; Carol Graham and Redzo Mujcic, “Hope and the Life Course: Results From a Longitudinal Study of 25,000 Adults,” *Health Economics* 35, no. 1 (2026): 90-101, <https://doi.org/10.1002/hec.70041>.

¹¹ Susybel Roxana Kallsen et al., “Collective Efficacy and Crime: Time-Variant Analyses of Los Angeles Neighborhoods, 2000 to 2008,” *Justice Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (2026): 420-42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2025.2529354>; Robert J. Sampson et al., “Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy,” *Science* 277, no. 5328 (1997): 918-24, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.277.5328.918>.

¹² Stefan Partelow, “Social Capital and Community Disaster Resilience: Post-Earthquake Tourism Recovery on Gili Trawangan, Indonesia,” *Sustainability Science* 16, no. 1 (2021): 203-20, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-020-00854-2>; Daniel P. Aldrich, *Building Resilience: Social Capital in Post-Disaster Recovery* (The University of Chicago press, 2012).

¹³ Carol Graham and Sergio Pinto, “Unequal Hopes and Lives in the USA: Optimism, Race, Place, and Premature Mortality,” *Journal of Population Economics* 32, no. 2 (2019): 665-733, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-018-0687-y>; Charlotta Mellander et al., “Here to Stay—The Effects of Community Satisfaction on the Decision to Stay,” *Spatial Economic Analysis* 6, no. 1 (2011): 5-24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17421772.2010.540031>.

subgroup analyses substantively meaningful and statistically robust, we recoded select demographic variables before disaggregation. This consolidation serves two primary analytical objectives: aligning granular categories with theoretical frameworks (such as grouping income into distinct economic tiers) and addressing small sample sizes in underrepresented sub-populations to prevent sparse cell counts from inflating standard errors. Ultimately, this methodology safeguards statistical power while preserving clear, actionable categories for analysis.

When disaggregating to the county level, relying on raw county estimates can be problematic because sample sizes vary widely across counties, leading to large and uneven margins of error. In some counties, small sample sizes mean that reported percentages can fluctuate significantly due to chance, making it difficult to distinguish real differences from random noise. This can result in misleading conclusions and unreliable comparisons between counties.

Small-area estimation offers a solution by using statistical modeling to combine information from all counties and relevant demographic data. This approach stabilizes estimates for counties with small samples, reducing the impact of random variation and providing more accurate, reliable figures. By drawing on the broader dataset, small-area estimation ensures that county-level results more accurately reflect the true population, supporting more confident decision-making and targeted action. Interested readers can find a more detailed explanation of **how we used Bayesian methods to estimate county-level estimates in Appendix B.**

The Psychological Components of Well-Being

Life satisfaction, also referred to as subjective well-being (SWB), is a fundamental concept in the study of happiness and well-being.¹⁴ Asking about life satisfaction allows respondents to provide a relative self-assessment of their well-being within the context of other contributing factors and circumstances, and provides researchers with an invaluable baseline of how an individual appraises their current life situation.¹⁵

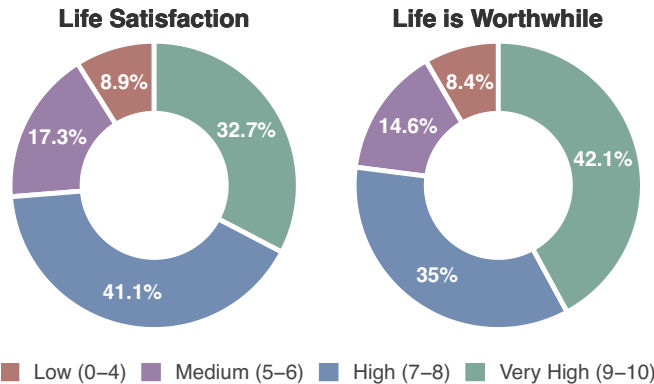
Purposeful well-being (PWB), or the sense that life is worthwhile, represents another facet of well-being. Research shows that *eudaimonic* tendencies, the belief that one's activities are worthwhile and that life has direction, are distinctly important to seeing higher levels of life satisfaction and more stable well-being over time, sometimes with a greater impact compared to the subjective orientations mentioned above.¹⁶

Given the importance of these dimensions to understanding the region's well-being, we asked respondents two questions:

- On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely", how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
- On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely", overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?

Residents in our region report an average life satisfaction of 7.4 and an average score of 7.7 when determining if their life is worthwhile, demonstrating that our region appears to have a higher life satisfaction than the national average of 6.82.¹⁷ As there is only so much that can be gleaned from the weighted average, we recategorize the two respective variables into Low (0-4), Medium (5-6), High (7-8), and Very High (9-10) levels and look at the distribution of the data in Figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1 Residents report high levels of subjective and purposeful well-being



¹⁴ Ed Diener, "Guidelines for National Indicators of Subjective Well-Being and Ill-Being," *Applied Research in Quality of Life* 1, no. 2 (2007): 151-57, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-006-9007-x>; Ulrich Schimmack, *Subjective Indicators of Well-Being: Life Satisfaction, Positive Affect, Negative Affect - Replicability-Index*, April 17, 2025, <https://replicationindex.com/2025/04/17/whatisswb/>.

¹⁵ Rosemarie Kobau et al., "Well-Being Assessment: An Evaluation of Well-Being Scales for Public Health and Population Estimates of Well-Being among US Adults," *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being* 2, no. 3 (2010): 272-97, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-0854.2010.01035.x>.

¹⁶ Alan S. Waterman et al., "The Questionnaire for Eudaimonic Well-Being: Psychometric Properties, Demographic Comparisons, and Evidence of Validity," *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 5, no. 1 (2010): 41-61, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760903435208>; Carol D. Ryff, "Psychological Well-Being Revisited: Advances in the Science and Practice of Eudaimonia," *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* 83, no. 1 (2014): 10-28, <https://doi.org/10.1159/000353263>.

¹⁷ Esteban Ortiz-Ospina et al., "Happiness and Life Satisfaction," *Our World in Data*, May 1, 2017, <https://ourworldindata.org/happiness-and-life-satisfaction>.

Figure 1 further emphasizes that respondents in the region, overall, report high levels of well-being, with around 33% reporting a very high level of life satisfaction and 42% strongly agreeing that their lives are worthwhile. Taken together, 67% of residents in the region have at least a high level of life satisfaction and a sense that their lives are worthwhile (scoring at least 7 on both questions).¹⁸

Granted, research has shown that well-being and happiness are not often evenly distributed amongst the population, often demonstrating disparities in well-being across individuals and social/structural determinants.¹⁹ Therefore, we examined the distribution of this level of well-being across the 14-county region shown in Figure 2 and across various demographic groups shown in Figure 3.

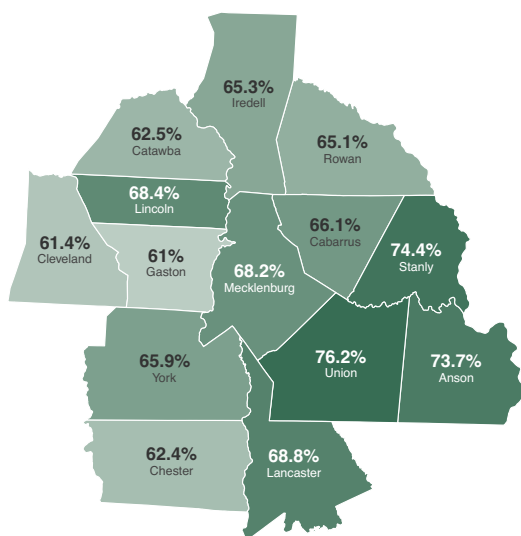


FIGURE 2 Residents in Anson, Stanly, and Union counties report highest levels of well-being

While most counties have around 65%-69% of residents with high levels of both personal life satisfaction and worth, a few notable exceptions stand out across the region. Cleveland, Chester, Gaston, and Catawba counties all have rates on this combined measure that are lower than the regional average. Conversely, Anson, Stanly, and Union counties show the strongest relative levels, placing them in the region's top group for high life satisfaction and purposefulness.

Turning to Figure 3, homeowners are about 23 percentage points more likely than renters to report a high level of well-being. Age and income are positively related to this metric, with both groups experiencing increased well-being as they grow older (age) or earn more (household income). This finding on income remains consistent with findings in the literature, while the relationship between age and well-being varies significantly between countries.²⁰ A similar trend appears in employment status, with those employed full-time reporting higher levels of well-being than those employed (but not full-time) and those currently out of work.

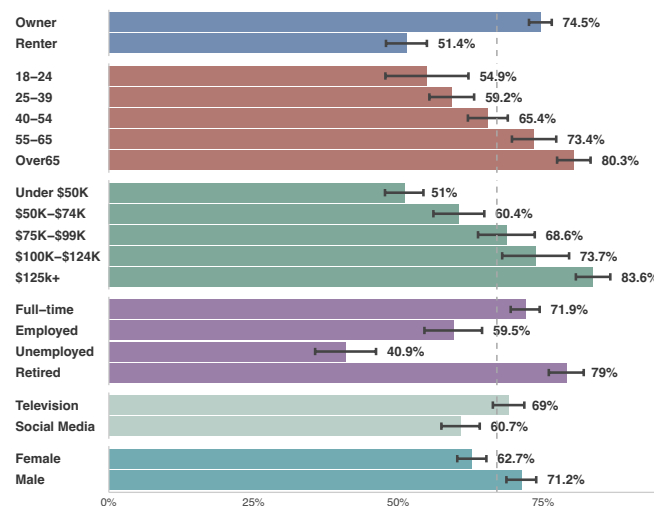


FIGURE 3 Homeowners, older residents, and households with higher income enjoy significantly higher levels of well-being

Another interesting divide is where residents get their information about local issues. Just under 70% of residents who obtain their information from more traditional sources, i.e., television, report a high sense of well-being. In comparison, just under 61% of residents who get their information from social media sources report the same level. Although not statistically significant, a slightly higher proportion of Hispanic residents (70%) report high levels of well-being than White (67%) and Black/African American (63%) residents.

¹⁸ Gallup Inc, "Indicator: Life Evaluation Index," Gallup.com, Accessed July 27, 2026, <https://www.gallup.com/394505/indicator-life-evaluation-index.aspx>.

¹⁹ Andrew Steptoe et al., "Subjective Wellbeing, Health, and Ageing," *The Lancet* 385, no. 9968 (2015): 640-48, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(13\)61489-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(13)61489-0); Ellen J. Thompson et al., "Psychological Distress, Depression, Anxiety, and Life Satisfaction Following COVID-19 Infection: Evidence from 11 UK Longitudinal Population Studies," *The Lancet Psychiatry* 9, no. 11 (2022): 894-906, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(22\)00307-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(22)00307-8).

²⁰ Michael Gurven et al., "Subjective Well-Being across the Life Course among Non-Industrialized Populations," *Science Advances* 10, no. 43 (2024): eado0952, <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.ado0952>; Matthew A. Killingsworth, "Experienced Well-Being Rises with Income, Even above \$75,000 per Year," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118, no. 4 (2021): e2016976118, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2016976118>.

Understanding Social Connectedness

Well-being is not confined to just the personal. Research has found that the level of social connectedness, e.g., community trust, social networks, and perceived support, remains an important determinant of an individual's and population's quality of life.²¹ The importance of the connection, reciprocity, and trust between individuals and their social networks on an individual's well-being has remained a consistent source of interest since Putnam's seminal work nearly 30 years ago, as individuals in communities with higher levels of social capital report higher levels of subjective and purposeful well-being.²²

To assess the importance of social networks and relationships within the region, we began by asking residents how often they came into contact with friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues. For each group, respondents indicated how often they came into contact with it and could select from the following options: Never, Less than once a month, 1-3 times a month, Weekly, Daily, or Not relevant.

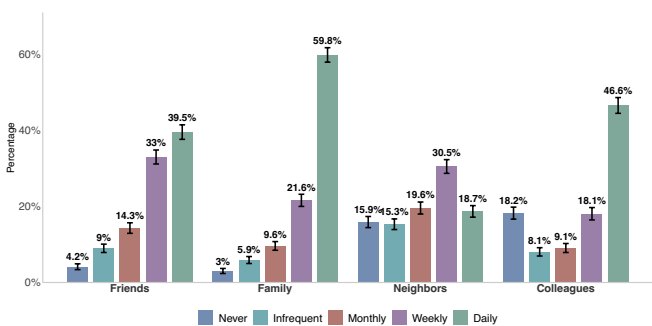


FIGURE 4 Residents have more frequent contact with their immediate networks

Figure 4 shows that over 70% of residents interact with or come into contact with their friends and family at least once a week. This number drops when we examine relationships beyond one's immediate circle, with fewer than 50% of residents reporting similar contact with their neighbors.

This discrepancy also appears in two related questions we asked about social connectedness. The first question asks “How would you describe your sense of belonging to your

local community?”, while the second question asks “On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you completely disagree and 10 means you completely agree: How much do you agree or disagree that if you were in trouble, you have relatives or friends you could count on?”

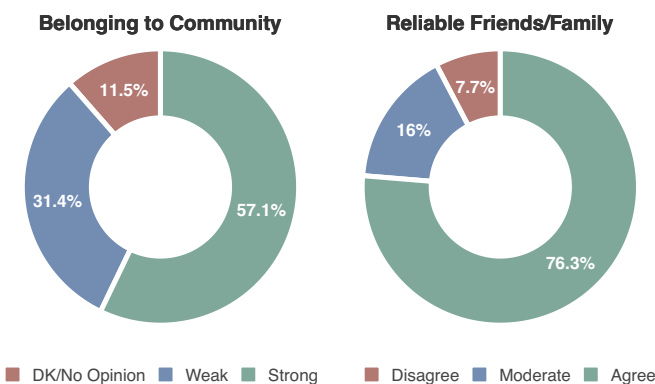


FIGURE 5 Residents express greater confidence in their support from immediate networks than connection to wider community

While 76% of residents strongly agree that they have relatives or friends they could count on if they were in trouble (score of at least 8 out of 10), just 57% of residents felt a strong sense of belonging to their local community.

While trying to understand these items separately may be difficult, research has shown that questions around the frequency of social contact, perceived availability of support, and sense of belonging to the community all map onto a multidimensional construct of social connection.²³ We therefore calculated a composite social connectedness score using the previous questions (seven in total, as the social contact question is split into the four categories) to provide a more robust overview of the level of social connectedness, or lack thereof, across the region. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) demonstrates the unidimensionality of these items and, consequently, supports treating them as indicators of a common underlying construct.

The composite variable ranges from -1.92 to 1.12. A higher score implies a higher level of social connectedness, with an individual having more regular contact with friends/family/neighbors/colleagues, a stronger sense of belonging to their local community, and a belief that they have friends/family they can count on in a crisis. Conversely, a lower score implies an individual is less likely to have regular contact

²¹ John F. Helliwell and Robert D. Putnam, “The Social Context of Well-Being,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B: Biological Sciences* 359, no. 1449 (2004): 1435–46, <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2004.1522>; Julianne Holt-Lunstad, “Social Connection as a Critical Factor for Mental and Physical Health: Evidence, Trends, Challenges, and Future Implications,” *World Psychiatry* 23, no. 3 (2024): 312–32, <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.21224>.

²² John F. Helliwell et al., “Social Capital and Well-Being in Times of Crisis,” *Journal of Happiness Studies* 15, no. 1 (2014): 145–62, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-013-9441-z>.

²³ “World Happiness, Trust and Social Connections in Times of Crisis,” accessed July 2, 2026, <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2023/world-happiness-trust-and-social-connections-in-times-of-crisis/>.

with these four groups, a weaker sense of belonging, and does not believe they have people they can count on.

We now turn our attention to this latter group. We begin by calculating the county-level estimates of residents with low levels of social connectedness (**social disconnection**) using our small-area estimation framework. These estimates are provided in Figure 6 below:

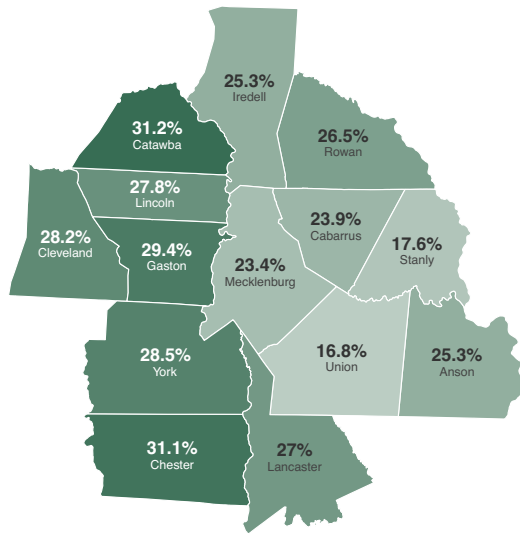


FIGURE 6 Residents in Gaston, Chester, and Catawba experience higher levels of social disconnection

Union, Stanly, and Mecklenburg counties have the smallest percentage of residents experiencing social disconnection. This suggests residents in these counties lead more socially active lives, with more regular social interactions and a stronger sense of community. Gaston, Chester, and Catawba counties cluster at the opposite end of this spectrum, implying that residents in these counties have much lower levels of interaction with their social networks and engage with their communities less frequently than the regional average.

Figure 7 plots the weighted percentage of residents experiencing social disconnection across select groups. Similar to other researchers, we find that renters are significantly more likely than homeowners to have weak social connections and support: approximately 38% of renters experience social disconnection compared to just 19% of homeowners, a difference of 18 percentage points.²⁴ Household income shows a linear trend: households earning under \$75,000 a year are significantly more likely to experience social marginalization than those earning at least \$125,000.

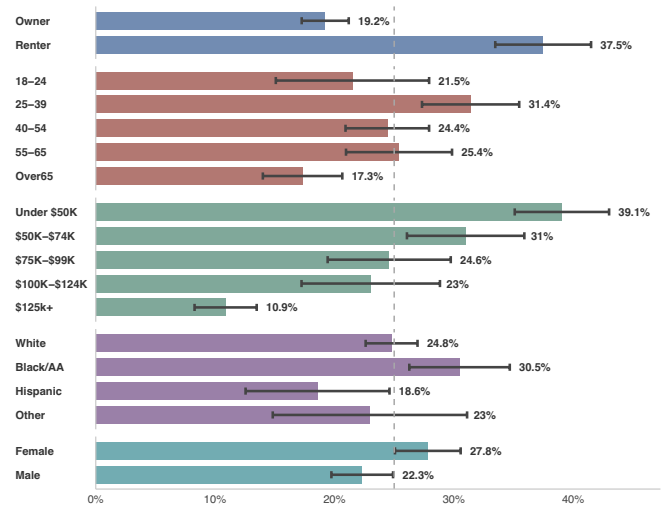


FIGURE 7 Renters, households with lower income, and residents between 25-39 years old are more likely to experience social disconnection

While slightly weaker than income, age also has a significant impact, but in a different way. Here we see a U-shaped relationship, with social disconnection peaking among residents aged 25-39, then dropping back to around the regional average. While middle-aged residents don't quite drop to the level of those under 25, it is interesting given the expected linear trend highlighted in the literature, and one that could warrant further exploration.²⁵ Hispanic residents experience the lowest rates of social disconnection, while Black/African American residents are more likely to experience this issue compared to White residents.

Moving from Connection to Trust

Generalized trust in others represented another facet of the social context of well-being, i.e., social capital. While the previous section discussed the importance of social connections to an individual's overall life satisfaction, research also points to a similar importance of generalized trust (the ability to trust others outside one's immediate network) for stable life evaluation and satisfaction.

Figure 8 shows that around 48% of residents in the region have a high level of trust in the general public, indicating strong agreement with the statement that "most people can be trusted". This is particularly interesting given recent national trends showing that around 25% of Americans

²⁴ Denise DiPasquale and Edward L. Glaeser, "Incentives and Social Capital: Are Homeowners Better Citizens?," *Journal of Urban Economics* 45, no. 2 (1999): 354-84, <https://doi.org/10.1006/juec.1998.2098>.

²⁵ Shannon Ang, "Life Course Social Connectedness: Age-Cohort Trends in Social Participation," *Advances in Life Course Research* 39 (March 2019): 13-22, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alcr.2019.02.002>.

believe that most people can be trusted.²⁶ While that GSS question is closed-ended rather than on a 0-10 scale, it suggests our region appears more trusting than the national average.

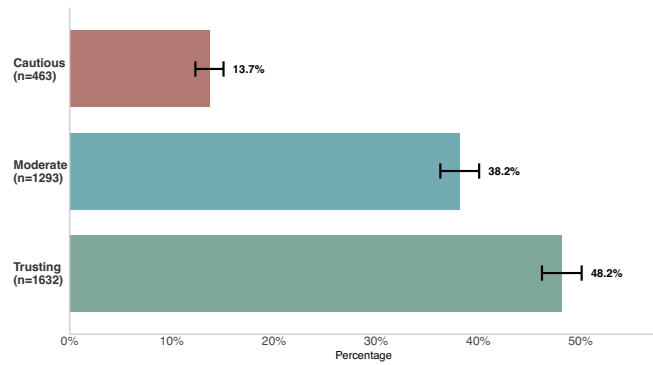


FIGURE 8 Less than half of residents believe people can be trusted, in general

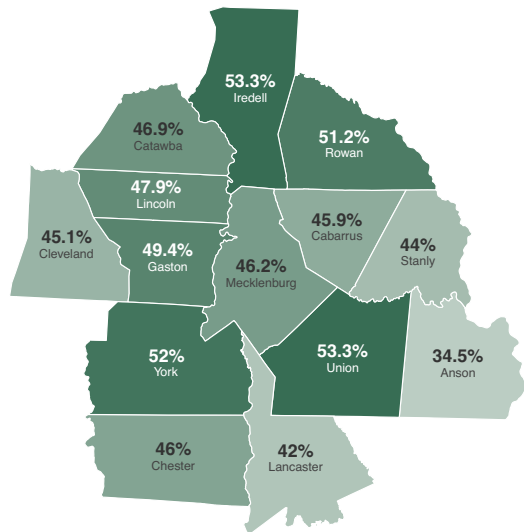


FIGURE 9 Residents in Iredell and Union counties express the highest levels of generalized trust

Figure 9 shows that a majority of counties cluster around the expected average level of generalized trust (48%), a finding that is consistent with research in the US.²⁷ The only outliers of interest are Anson and Lancaster, where residents express lower levels of social trust compared to the regional average, while Iredell and Union counties have residents

expressing higher levels of social trust compared to the regional average.

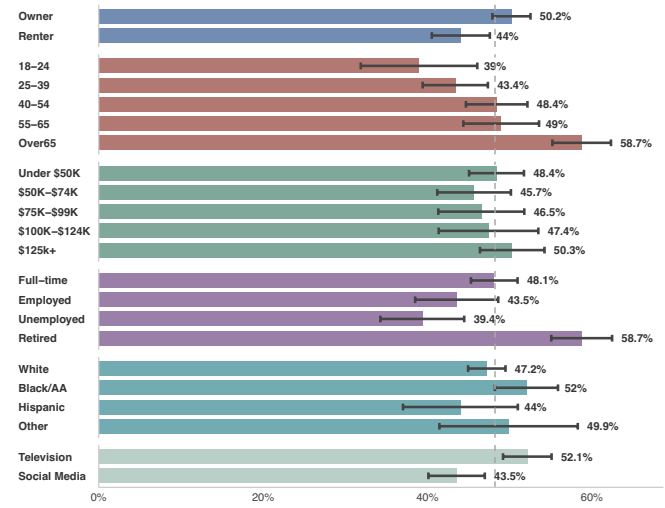


FIGURE 10 Homeowners, older residents and those getting information on local issues from television have higher levels of generalized trust

Homeowners express higher levels of social trust than renters, while residents across the region appear to report greater social trust as they get older. Residents who get local news on television report higher levels of social trust than those who get their news from social media (about a 9-percentage-point difference). No significant differences emerge across household income levels or race/ethnicity. While this finding is contrary to expectations, there may be other factors influencing this (null) relationship and could be of interest to explore further.²⁸

Economic and Financial Situation

It is impossible to discuss well-being and quality of life without discussing an individual's financial status/situation. Specifically, research shows that perceived financial trajectory (how have your finances changed over the past year) and financial resilience (the capacity to absorb an unanticipated expense without borrowing) remain core indicators of economic well-being and, by extension, overall quality of life.

²⁶ NORC at the University of Chicago, "General Social Survey, 1972-2024 Cumulative File," GSS Data Explorer, 2025.

²⁷ Laura Silver et al., "Americans' Trust in One Another," Pew Research Center, May 8, 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/2025/05/08/americans-trust-in-one-another/#h-geography>.

²⁸ Andrea Albertazzi et al., "Income Inequality and Social Trust," *Economics Letters* 257 (December 2025): 112675, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econlet.2025.112675>.

The first item, which asks about perceived changes over the past year, is drawn from behavioral economics, where research shows that an individual's self-evaluation of their financial situation can significantly affect their understanding of well-being.²⁹ The economics literature also informs the importance of using the "unexpected expense" or "financial fragility" item. Often defined as the inability to cope with a modest, unanticipated financial shock using readily available resources, this measure remains an integral part not only of the literature but also of the work of both the Federal Reserve and the United States Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.³⁰

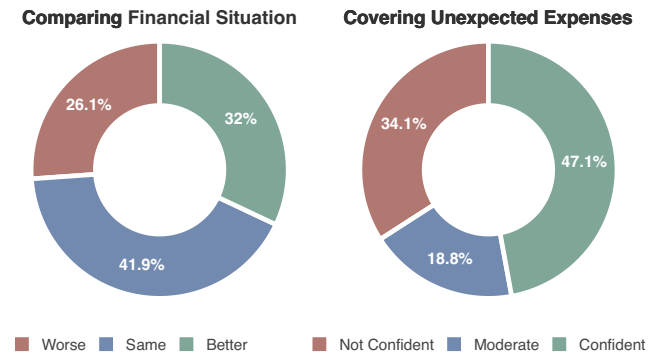


FIGURE 11 While a majority of residents state their financial situation is either the same or improved from a year ago, more than one-third are not confident in dealing with an unexpected expense

Figure 11 examines these two questions at the regional level. For the first question (perceived changes to one's financial situation), a plurality of residents say their finances are about the same as they were a year ago (as of April 2026). This is similar to findings from the same month from the Federal Reserve of New York, which reported that around 40% of respondents estimated their financial situation to be about the same as it was one year ago.³¹

This same study found that 42% of national respondents stated their financial situation has worsened in the last year. Interestingly, only a quarter of residents in our region say their finances are worse today than they were at this time last year. This could indicate relative economic resilience in our region compared to the country as a whole,

though it is difficult to state definitively without more advanced analyses.

The picture of our region's financial well-being does not improve when residents report their financial fragility. 34% of residents across the region say they are not confident they can handle an unexpected expense without asking for assistance. This is in line with recent data from the Federal Reserve, which found that a similar proportion of national respondents would have to borrow or rely on others to help pay for an unexpected expense.³² Given how many residents are concerned about this type of expense, we examine potential differences across groups and within our region.

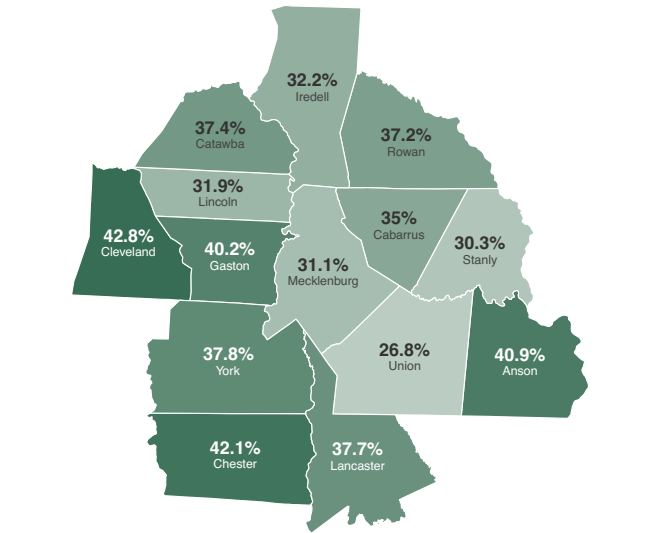


FIGURE 12 Residents in Gaston, Anson, Cleveland, and Chester counties report the highest levels of financial uncertainty

Union County stands out with the lowest relative rate of financial fragility across the region. A central group of counties, including Stanly, Mecklenburg, Iredell, and Lincoln, tracks close to the regional baseline. On the other end of the scale, Gaston, Anson, Cleveland, and Chester counties form a distinct cluster with elevated relative levels of financial vulnerability, illustrating that residents face greater difficulty handling an unexpected bill.

²⁹ Nishant Garg et al., "Financial Well-being: An Integrated Framework, Operationalization, and Future Research Agenda," *Journal of Consumer Behaviour* 23, no. 6 (2024): 3194-212, <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.2372>.
³⁰ Annamaria Lusardi et al., *Financially Fragile Households: Evidence and Implications*, no. w17072 (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2011), w17072, <https://doi.org/10.3386/w17072>; Jacob S. Hacker et al., "The Economic Security Index: A New Measure for Research and Policy Analysis," *Review of Income and Wealth* 60, no. S1 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.1111/roiw.12053>.
³¹ Federal Reserve Bank of New York., "June Survey: Inflation Expectations Up at Short- and Medium-Term Horizons; Gas Price Growth Expectations Fall," 2026, <https://www.newyorkfed.org/microeconomics/sce>.
³² Federal Reserve Board, "Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households in 2025 - May 2026," 2026, <https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/2026-economic-well-being-of-us-households-in-2025-executive-summary.htm>.

Given the variation across counties, it is unsurprising that groups within the region also differ significantly.

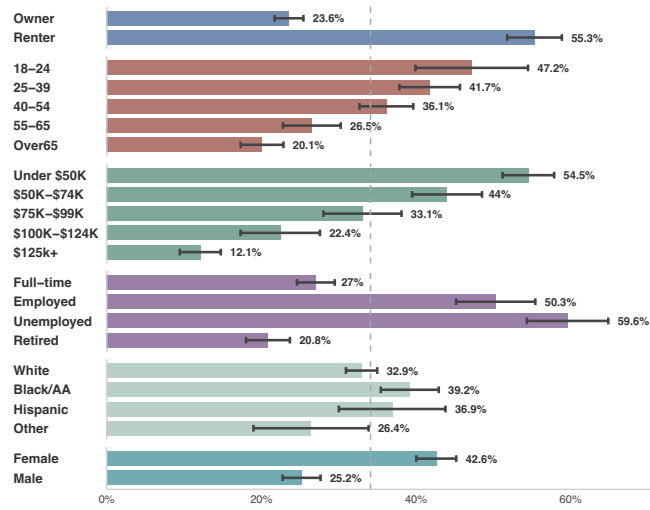


FIGURE 13 Renters, younger residents, households with lower income, females, Black and Hispanic residents are significantly more likely to be uncertain about their ability to deal with an unexpected expense

Renters report financial fragility at a rate just under 32 percentage points higher than homeowners, with age and income showing the expected linear decrease (older and higher-income residents have significantly lower levels of financial uncertainty). Gender also shows a significant difference: just under 43% of females have no confidence in dealing with an unexpected expense, compared to just over 25% of males (a difference of 18 percentage points). Race/Ethnicity also sees significant differences, with Black/African American (39%) and Hispanic (37%) residents experiencing greater uncertainty than White (33%) or other (26%) residents.

Regional Outlook

While previous sections of this report evaluate residents' immediate, daily realities—such as personal finances and social networks—this final section shifts to the broader regional picture. An individual's quality of life is heavily shaped by the community conditions around them, which can also have the impact of attracting and/or retaining residents; therefore, understanding how residents across our 14-county region feel about the region itself remains an important component not only to understanding well-

being but also for economic development considerations.³³ In this portion of the survey, respondents answered questions about regional strengths, challenges, and potential future outcomes.

Strengths of the Region

We begin by examining what residents consider the region's top assets (strengths). Among the many strengths residents listed, **food/restaurants** was cited most often (40.9% of residents), followed by **climate/weather** (35.8%), **job opportunities** (33.6%), **diversity** (31.2%), and **community/culture** (28.4%).

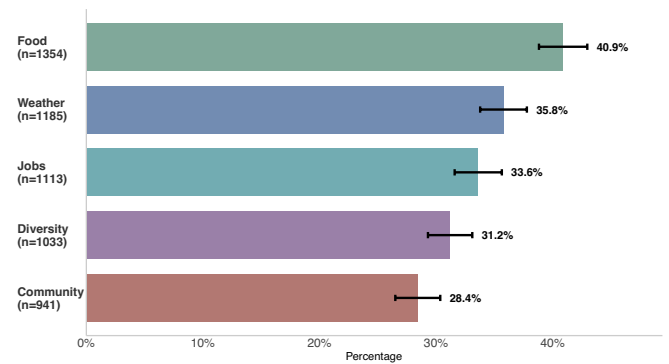


FIGURE 14 The Food and Restaurant scene was the most commonly selected strength of the region

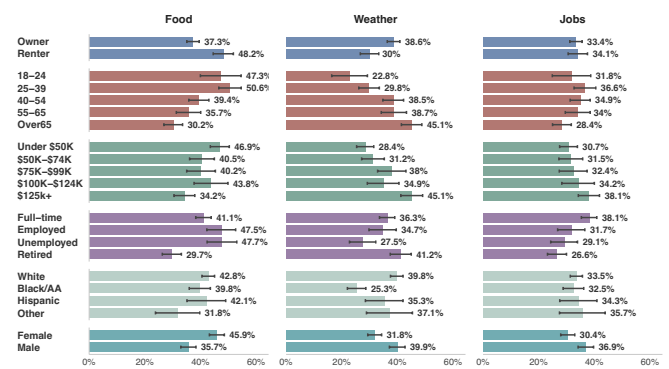


FIGURE 15 Gender, Household Income, and Employment Status show the largest differences in the expressed strengths of the region

Younger residents, renters, and females all ranked food and restaurants among the region's top strengths. More than half of adults aged 25-39 cited this as the region's top strength (50.6%, compared with 30.2% of seniors), while nearly half (48.2%) of renters cited it as the region's top strength, compared with 37.3% of homeowners.

³³ Edward L. Glaeser et al., "Consumer City," *Journal of Economic Geography* 1, no. 1 (2001): 27-50, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26160399>; Carol Graham et al., "Monitoring Wellbeing as a Warning Indicator: The U.S. Crisis of Deaths of Despair," *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, November 15, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-025-10517-y>; Johannes Emmerling et al., "Subjective Well-Being at the Macro Level—Empirics and Future Scenarios," *Social Indicators Research* 157, no. 3 (2021): 899-928, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-021-02670-2>.

Climate/weather, on the other hand, was more likely to be cited as a strength by older respondents (45.1% of seniors compared with only 22.8% of adults aged 18-24), homeowners (38.6% of homeowners compared with 30% of renters), and males (39.9% compared to 31.8% for females).

Interestingly, job opportunities as a regional strength showed little variation across most socio-demographic groups, but were more likely to be identified as a strength among full-time workers (38.1%) and men (36.9% compared with 30.4% of women).

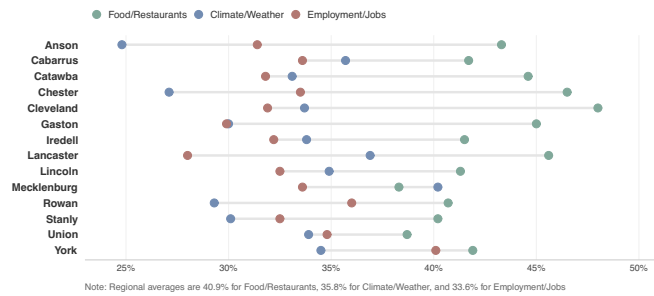


FIGURE 16 Agreement on the strengths of the region appears divided across a rural-urban divide

Geographically, strengths are sorted along a rural-urban divide, with appreciation for the region's food scene highest in peripheral counties such as Cleveland, Chester, and Lancaster. In comparison, only 38.3% of Mecklenburg County residents selected this as a strength. The idea that job opportunities are a regional strength is strongest in York and Rowan counties, while Lancaster residents were least likely to share this view.

Issues of the Region

Housing affordability was identified as a top-three concern for the region by nearly 60% of respondents, 13 percentage points higher than the second-highest concern (**crime and public safety**, with 46.3% of residents citing concern) and nearly double the other concerns (**transportation/traffic** at 29.4%, **taxes** at 27.4%, and **public education** at 27.2%).

The survey data on housing represents a curious paradox: many residents rate their own housing situation highly (mean of 7.7 on a 10-point scale), yet roughly 75% name housing affordability as a significant challenge in their community. At first glance, these two findings may seem in conflict, but they answer different questions. Satisfaction measures how residents feel about the housing they already hold, while the affordability question concerns the broader market as it stands today. The second question better informs policy because it reflects current rather than legacy conditions, and it is compelling because, in every county, at

every income level, and for both major political parties, residents describe the market as difficult.

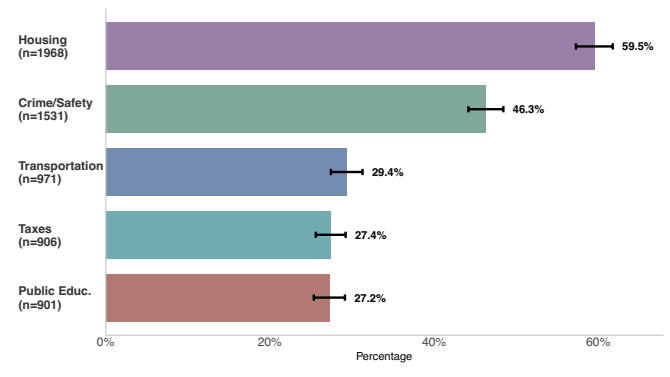


FIGURE 17 Housing affordability is the biggest concern for residents in our region by a significant margin

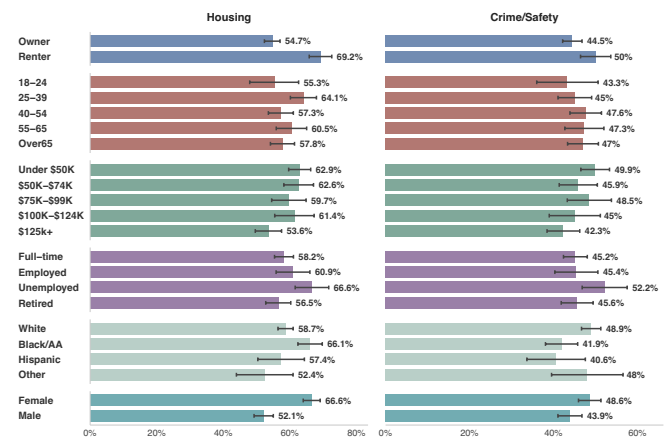


FIGURE 18 Renters, females, and household income see the greatest differences in their selection of housing affordability and crime/safety as issues of regional concern

Beyond this broad consensus around housing affordability are notable stratifications by social group. Concerns about housing affordability are highest among renters (69.2% compared with 54.7% of homeowners), women (66.6% compared with 52.1% of men), and Black/African American residents (66.1% compared to 58.7% of White and 57.4% of Hispanic/Latino residents).

Concerns about crime and safety show similar trends. Low-income households (49.9% compared to 42.3% for those earning at least \$125k), females (48.6% as opposed to 43.9% of males), and renters (50% compared to 44.5% of homeowners) are all more likely to be concerned about crime and safety across the region, none of which are necessarily surprising given the groups of individuals who are statistically the most likely to be victims of violent

crime.³⁴ What is interesting is that the trend for race/ethnicity flips from what we see with housing affordability. Here, White residents (48.9%) are statistically more likely to select crime/safety as a top regional concern compared to Black/African American (41.9%) or Hispanic/Latino (40.6%) residents.

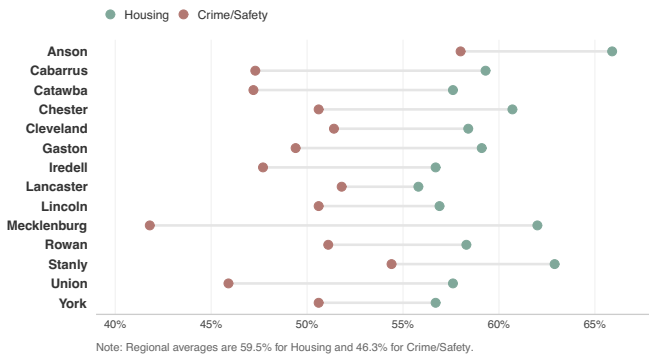


FIGURE 19 While concern about affordability is (largely) universal, concern about crime is concentrated in the peripheral counties

Geography tells a two-part story in the survey’s findings. On the one hand, housing affordability is a majority concern in all 14 counties. Concern about crime, by contrast, is concentrated in peripheral counties such as Anson and Stanly, compared with a regional low in Mecklenburg. This loose coupling of perceived vulnerability and actual recorded crime is a well-documented pattern.³⁵ Researchers have uncovered potential causal mechanisms behind this, including the effect of media coverage in rural areas.³⁶

It is also worth considering that respondents were asked about problems facing the entire region and thus may have answered with the entire 14-county region in mind, not just their home county.

Our Region in the next 3-4 years

Survey respondents were asked whether living conditions in their communities will be better, worse, or about the same in three to four years. Excluding those who were unable to say, 25% expected improvement, 43% expected stability, and 31% expected decline.

Group-based differences in outlook are apparent by age, housing tenure, and where respondents obtain their news about their local communities. Residents aged 25-55 expressed the highest rates of pessimism about the region’s

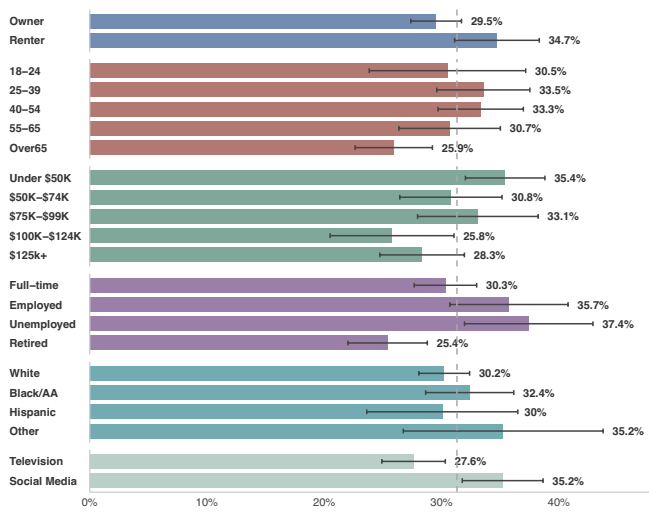


FIGURE 20 Renters and those getting their news from social media are significantly more likely to be pessimistic about their community’s future

future (~33%), renters (34.7%) were more likely to be pessimistic compared to homeowners (29.5%), and those who rely on social media as their primary news source (35.2%) are significantly more likely to be pessimistic compared to those relying on more traditional sources (27.6%).

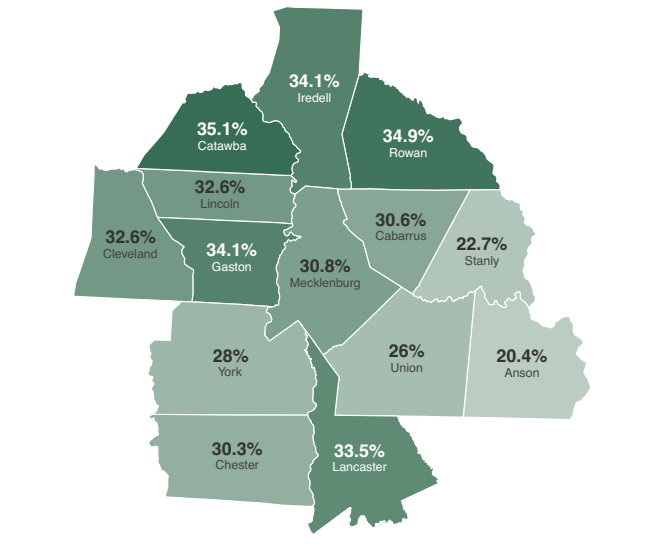


FIGURE 21 Pessimism regarding change in living conditions is highest in the northern part of the region

³⁴Erika Harrell et al., *Household Poverty and Nonfatal Violent Victimization, 2008-2012*, NCJ 248469 (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014), <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/hpnnv0812.pdf>.

³⁵C. Hale, “Fear of Crime: A Review of the Literature,” *International Review of Victimology* 4, no. 2 (1996): 79-150, <https://doi.org/10.1177/026975809600400201>.

³⁶Ted Chiricos et al., “Crime, News and Fear of Crime: Toward an Identification of Audience Effects,” *Social Problems* 44, no. 3 (1997): 342-57, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3097181>.

Community pessimism shows a clear geographic pattern, clustering primarily across the northern part of the region. Catawba, Rowan, and Iredell counties exhibit elevated relative rates of residents expecting local conditions to decline in the next 3-4 years, while pessimism sits at the lower end of the regional scale in Union, Stanly, and Anson counties. However, this may reflect smaller sample sizes (which increases uncertainty around the estimates) or some of these counties already being in lower socio-economic areas and therefore more likely to feel that things will stay the same.

For most measures of well-being, suburban Union and Lincoln Counties rank near the top among the 14 counties, while a set of smaller, more rural counties (Anson, Cleveland, Chester) rank near the bottom. Urban Mecklenburg County is close to the regional average on most measures, except for concern for the environment (higher than average) and concern about crime (lower than average). However, responses to the question about future outlooks complicate this pattern, with both Cleveland and Anson counties showing above-average levels of hope for the future despite low current well-being scores. In contrast, some comparatively prosperous counties, such as Lincoln and Iredell, expect a decline.

Conclusions and Discussion

Findings from the 14-county survey indicate a robust overall baseline well-being. Regional averages for life satisfaction (7.4) and purposeful well-being (7.7) exceed a comparable national benchmark for life satisfaction (6.82), and 67% of residents score high (at least 7) in both dimensions.

These regional averages and totals, however, mask disparities across geographic and socioeconomic boundaries:

- Anson, Stanly, and Union counties show the highest well-being levels, reaching 73% or higher, whereas Cleveland, Chester, Gaston, and Catawba counties trail the regional average.
- Homeowners are 23 percentage points more likely than renters to report high well-being. Similarly, higher income, full-time employment, older age, and primary reliance on traditional news outlets strongly align with higher reported well-being.

A significant disparity exists between private networks and broader social trust. While three-quarters (76%) of residents cite dependable immediate networks, only 57% feel a strong sense of belonging to their local community, pointing to a marked split between broad civic integration and personal support systems. As with the combined

measure of well-being, a factor analysis of our composite index shows distinct demographic and geographic gaps.

Rates of social disconnection reach 30% or more in Catawba, Chester, and Gaston counties, whereas Union, Stanly, and Mecklenburg exhibit much lower levels. From a demographic perspective, disconnection affects Black residents, adults between 25 and 39 years old, households with annual incomes below \$75,000, and renters (38% versus 19% for homeowners) at disproportionately higher rates.

On a related note, regional metrics show that 48% of residents agree that “most people can be trusted”. While this figure exceeds national benchmarks (~25%), it remains well below the trust and support residents feel for their primary circles.

However, generalized trust varies by geography: Iredell and Union see at least 53% of residents agreeing that most people can be trusted, while this sentiment falls below 43% in Anson and Lancaster counties. Demographically, older residents, homeowners, and people who rely on traditional television news rather than social media show higher levels of generalized trust (a 9-percentage-point difference).

A large share of residents report financial fragility.

Turning to economic well-being highlights a pronounced dichotomy between positive short-term trends and widespread systemic vulnerability: although just 25% of respondents say their personal financial position deteriorated over the preceding year, over a third (34%) express little or no confidence in handling a sudden emergency cost independently. This vulnerability exhibits sharp geographic and demographic concentration:

- Geographically, financial fragility rises to 40% or more across Gaston, Anson, Cleveland, and Chester counties, whereas Union County stands at a regional low of 27%.
- High levels of fragility disproportionately burden renters (exceeding homeowners by nearly 32 percentage points), female respondents (43% compared to 25% for males), lower-income and younger demographics, as well as Black (39%) and Hispanic (37%) community members.

Residents express some concern about the future. Just under one-third (31%) of community members expect local living conditions to deteriorate over the next three to four years; this pessimism is most pronounced among renters, middle-aged adults, social media news consumers, and residents in northern counties, even as certain economically challenged rural communities remain remarkably optimistic.

Taken together, these findings reveal a region with aggregate prosperity masking disparities and challenges in housing, financial security, and social cohesion. While regional baselines for life satisfaction, generalized trust, and short-

term economic trajectory consistently outperform similar national averages, they obscure vulnerabilities concentrated along clear socioeconomic, geographic, and racial lines.

- Homeownership emerges as the single most critical anchor of overall well-being, with renters experiencing starkly elevated rates of financial fragility, social disconnection, and pessimism about the region's future.
- Peripheral counties—most notably Gaston, Chester, Cleveland, and Catawba—repeatedly exhibit compounded disadvantages across multiple metrics.
- Universal alarm over housing affordability underscores a regional housing market that increasingly threatens long-term stability.

These findings paint a picture of a region where overall well-being is unevenly shared across groups and areas. That said, the findings are not meant to offer all the answers. They provide a solid foundation for further work, raising important questions about why these disparities exist and what underlying factors might be at play. The next step is for researchers and local leaders to dig deeper, using more advanced statistical modeling and integrated spatial tools such as the Carolinas Regional Explorer to better understand the root causes of these inequalities.

Your Voices Carolina Regional Well-being Survey Questions

Q1. When you think about your "community" in the context of this survey, which of the following best describes the area you are primarily referring to?

1. My immediate neighborhood
2. My town or city
3. My county
4. My state
5. A community of interest (e.g., faith group, social circle)
6. Other (specify): [SPECIFY]
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q2. Thinking about the positive aspects of our area, what do you see as the greatest strengths of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg region today? Please select up to three options:

1. Job Opportunities
2. Cost of Living
3. Climate & Weather
4. Community/Culture
5. Diversity
6. Education
7. Food & Restaurants
8. Public Safety
9. Travel/Location
10. Other (specify): [SPECIFY]
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q3. How do you prefer to get local news and information?

1. Television
2. Newspapers (online or print)
3. Radio/podcasts
4. Social media
5. I'm not interested in local issues
6. Other (specify): [SPECIFY]
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q3b. Which social media platform do you primarily use? [ACCEPT ONE RESPONSE]
[ASK ONLY IF Q3 = 4 'Social media']

1. Reddit
2. Facebook
3. Instagram
4. TikTok
5. YouTube
6. X (formerly Twitter)
7. Other (specify): [SPECIFY]
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q4. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely", overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?

Q5. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely", overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?

Q6. [MATRIX] Thinking about the past week, please indicate how much of the time you felt the following ways.

Response Scale:

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Moderately
4. Quite a bit
5. Very much
99. Don't Know/Refused

Items to rate:

- a. Happy
- b. Sad
- c. Anxious
- d. Peaceful
- e. Angry
- f. Bored

Q7. [SOCIAL CONTACT] How often do you come into contact with the following groups of people? By contact, we mean talking or doing something together. It can be in-person, over the phone, over a video call, over social media / text messaging, etc.

Response Scale:

1. Never
2. Less than once a month
3. 1-3 times a month
4. Weekly
5. Daily
6. Not relevant
99. Don't Know/Refused

Groups to rate:

- a. Friends
- b. Family
- c. Neighbors
- d. Colleagues

Q8. How would you describe your sense of belonging to your local community?

1. Very Weak
2. Somewhat Weak
3. Somewhat Strong
4. Very Strong
5. No Opinion
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q9. Using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you completely disagree and 10 means you completely agree: How much do you agree or disagree that if you were in trouble, you have relatives or friends you could count on?

Q10. Generally speaking, on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you 'can't be too careful' and 10 means 'most people can be trusted,' where would you place yourself?

Q11. Compared to a year ago, would you say your financial situation is better, worse, or about the same?

1. I am better off now than I was a year ago
2. I am worse off now than I was a year ago
3. My financial situation is about the same
4. Don't Know
99. Refused

Q12. How confident are you that you could handle an unexpected expense (such as a car repair or urgent bill) without borrowing or asking for help?

1. Not at all confident
2. Slightly confident
3. Moderately confident
4. Very confident
5. Completely confident
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q13. In the past 7 days, not including today, on how many days did you eat each of the following meals?

- a. Breakfast [ENTER 0-7, 99= Don't Know/Refused]
- b. Lunch [ENTER 0-7, 99= Don't Know/Refused]
- c. Dinner [ENTER 0-7, 99= Don't Know/Refused]

Q14. In the past 7 days, not including today, on how many days did you eat each of the following meals with a friend, family member, or someone else you know?

- a. Breakfast [ENTER 0-7, 99= Don't Know/Refused]
- b. Lunch [ENTER 0-7, 99= Don't Know/Refused]
- c. Dinner [ENTER 0-7, 99= Don't Know/Refused]

Q15. In the past 12 months, how many different groups, organizations, or associations have you been actively involved in? This includes volunteering your time, attending regular meetings, or helping with organized events, either in-person or online.

1. 0 groups
2. 1 group
3. 2 - 3 groups
4. 4 - 5 groups
5. 6 or more groups
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q15b. [ASK ONLY IF Q15 = 2, 3, 4, OR 5] You mentioned being involved with [NUMBER FROM Q16] in the past 12 months. Which of the following types of organizations or associations were they? Please mention all that apply:

1. Community or Neighborhood
2. Religious or Spiritual
3. Civic or Service
4. Recreational, Sport, or Hobby
5. Educational or Youth-focused
6. Professional or Trade
7. Political or Advocacy
8. Cultural or Artistic
9. Health or Support
10. Other (specify): [SPECIFY]
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q15c. [ASK ONLY IF Q15 = 1 '0 groups'] People have many different reasons for not being involved in community groups or organizations. Which of the following, if any, have made it difficult for you to participate in the past 12 months? You may select up to three choices.

1. I have other commitments (incl. work and family) or a busy schedule.
2. I have difficulty with transportation or the cost of participating.
3. I am not aware of opportunities or don't know how to get involved.
4. I don't feel welcome or like I would fit in.
5. I don't feel that my involvement would actually make a difference.
6. Illness or physical/mental health challenges make it difficult.
7. I am simply not interested in being part of a group at this time.
8. Other (specify): [SPECIFY]
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q16. In the area where you live, how much of a problem are environmental issues such as air pollution, noise, or lack of green space?

1. None at all
2. A little
3. A moderate amount
4. A lot
5. A great deal
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q17. How safe do you feel when you walk alone in your local area?

a. During the day

1. Very unsafe
2. Unsafe
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat safe
5. Very safe
99. Don't Know/Refused

b. At night

1. Very unsafe
2. Unsafe

3. Neutral
4. Somewhat safe
5. Very safe
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q18. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you are 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means you are 'completely satisfied', how satisfied are you with your current housing situation (including the condition of your home, location, and space)?

Q19. In your opinion, how easy or difficult is it for people in your community to find housing they can afford?

1. Extremely difficult
2. Somewhat difficult
3. Somewhat easy
4. Extremely easy
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q19b. [ASK IF Q19 = 1 OR 2] What do you think are the main reasons that housing is difficult to afford? You may select up to three choices.

1. Corporations/national investors buying properties
2. Landlords can raise rent without limit
3. Opposition to affordable housing in neighborhoods
4. People moving in from out of state
5. Developers only building expensive homes
6. Local government is not doing enough
7. Not enough housing being built
8. Other (specify): [SPECIFY]
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q20. What do you think are the biggest problems facing the Charlotte-Mecklenburg region today? Please select up to three options:

1. Housing affordability
2. Crime/safety
3. Economic opportunity
4. Public education
5. Transportation
6. Racial Equity
7. Public health
8. Climate/environment
9. Taxes
10. Other (specify): [SPECIFY]
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q21. Looking ahead 3–4 years, do you think living conditions in your community will be better, worse, or about the same as today?

1. Better in 3-4 years
2. Worse in 3-4 years
3. About the same as today

4. Don't know
99. Refused

Q22. What is your zip code?

Q23. Please select your age range.

1. 18 to 24
2. 25 to 39
3. 40 to 54
4. 55 to 65
5. Over 65
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q24. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? Are you...

1. Working full time
2. Working part time
3. Not employed, but looking for work
4. Not employed and not looking for work
5. Not employed, unable to work due to a disability or illness
6. Student
7. Retired
8. Other (specify): [SPECIFY]
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q24b. [ASK ONLY IF Q24 = 1 'Working full time' OR 2 'Working part time'] What best describes your current work schedule?

1. I work completely remotely
2. I work remotely some of the time, and from a place of business at other times (hybrid)
3. I work at an office location or place of business
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q25. Which of the following income categories best describes your household's annual gross income?

1. Less than \$15,000
2. \$15,000 - \$24,999
3. \$25,000 - \$34,999
4. \$35,000 - \$49,999
5. \$50,000 - \$74,999
6. \$75,000 - \$99,999
7. \$100,000 - \$149,999
8. \$150,000 or more
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q26. Do you describe yourself as a man, a woman, or in some other way?

1. Man
2. Woman
3. Some other way ('non-binary' 'transgender' 'genderfluid' etc.)
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q27. Generally speaking, when it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as a...

1. Democrat
2. Republican
3. Independent
4. Other party (specify): [SPECIFY]
5. No preference
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q27b. [ASK ONLY IF Q27 = 1 'Democrat' OR 2 'Republican'] Would you call yourself a strong [PARTY FROM Q28] or a not very strong [PARTY FROM Q28]?

1. Strong
2. Not very strong
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q27c. [ASK ONLY IF Q27 = 3 'Independent' OR 4 'Other party' OR 5 'No preference'] Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?

1. Closer to Republican
2. Neither
3. Closer to Democratic
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q28. Is your current house, apartment, or mobile home...

1. Owned by you or someone in this household with a mortgage or loan
2. Owned by you or someone in this household free and clear (without a mortgage or loan)
3. Rented (includes living with someone else who pays rent)
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q29. Do you speak a language other than English at home?

1. Yes
2. No
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q29b. [ASK ONLY IF Q29 = 1 'Yes'] What is this language?

1. Arabic
2. Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese)
3. French, Haitian, or Cajun
4. German or Other West Germanic Languages
5. Indian (incl. Hindi, Bengali)
6. Korean
7. Russian, Polish, or Other Slavic Languages
8. Spanish
9. Vietnamese
10. Other (specify): [SPECIFY]
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q30. How would you describe your race? You may select up to three choices.

1. White
2. Black or African American
3. Asian
4. American Indian or Alaskan Native
5. Middle Eastern or North African
6. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
7. Other (specify): [SPECIFY]
99. Don't Know/Refused

Q31. Are you of Hispanic, Latino(a), or Spanish origin?

1. **No**, not of Hispanic, Latino(a), or Spanish origin
2. **Yes**, Hispanic, Latino(a), or Spanish origin
99. Don't Know/Refused



ui.charlotte.edu