

CONTENT Engagement

Analysis Report

Key Metrics

ONE OMAHA

DATE RANGE:

6 August 2024
1 November 2024

Total Engagements:

118



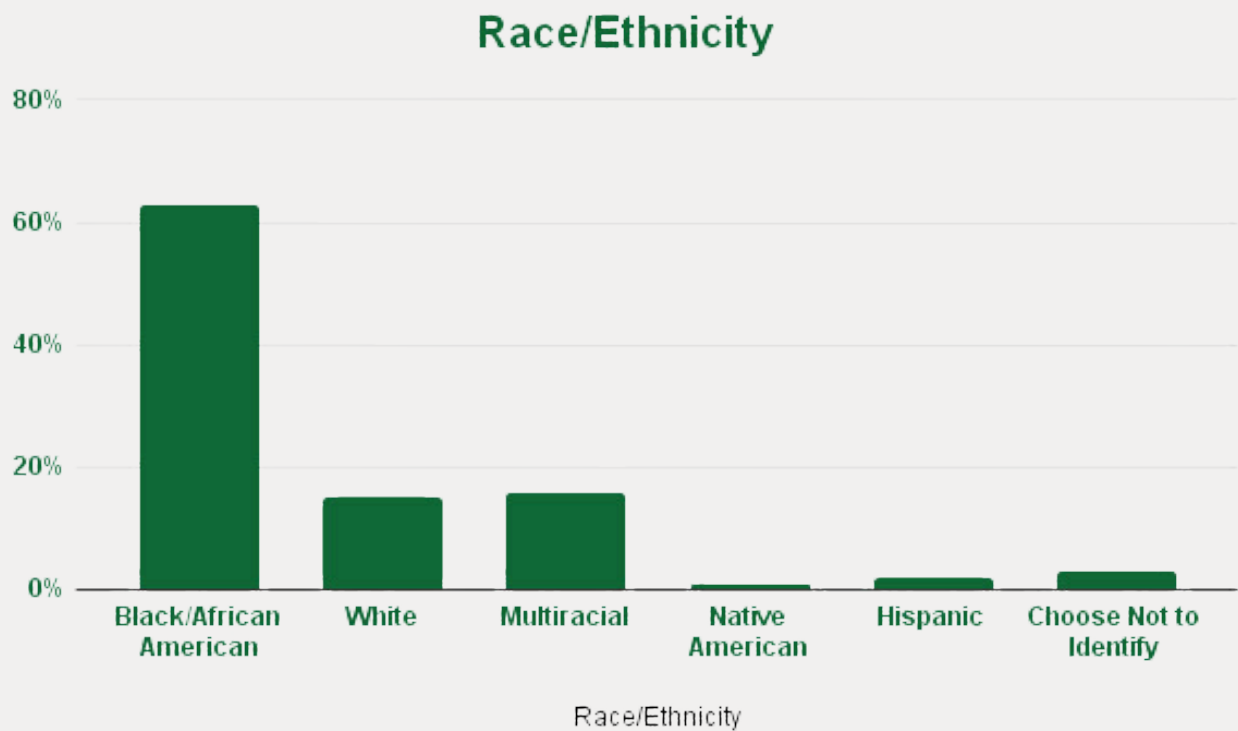
ONE OMAHA

Here's a summary of the race and ethnicity data from the survey participants:

- Black or African American: 65 participants
- White: 15 participants
- Multiracial: 9 participants
- Native American or Alaska Native: 7 participants
- Hispanic or Latino: 2 participants
- Decline to identify: 3 participants

Additional Notes:

- Some participants identified with more than one race or ethnicity.
- Most respondents are Black or African American, making up the largest demographic group.



Zip Code Analysis and Narrative for the Thriving Communities Grant

Breakdown of Respondents by Region:

- North Omaha:
 - Zip codes included 68110, 68111, 68112, 68131, and 68104.
 - This area had the highest representation in the survey, reflecting a solid connection to the highway's immediate impacts. Due to their proximity to Highway 75, many residents here may experience displacement or environmental effects.
- South Omaha:
 - Zip codes included 68105, 68108, 68124, 68128, and 68133.
 - There were fewer responses from this region, possibly due to the less direct highway impact. However, to increase engagement, outreach in this area should focus on language accessibility and cultural relevance.
- West Omaha:
 - Zip codes included 68122, 68134, 68137, 68142, and 68164.
 - This area contributed to a smaller portion of respondents. Since it is further removed from the highway, efforts should emphasize how infrastructure decisions affect broader community equity.
- Other/Neighboring Areas:
 - Zip codes included 51501, 51510, 68102, and 68132.
 - These areas represent nearby or cross-border interests, highlighting the need to understand regional partnerships and shared concerns about transportation.

Recommendations:

- **Focus on North Omaha:** This area most significantly overlaps with the concerns raised in the survey and should remain a priority for the grant's engagement strategies.
- **Tailored Outreach:** Develop culturally responsive materials for South Omaha to address language and cultural barriers.
- **Education for West Omaha:** Provide information on how Highway 75's redevelopment supports citywide public safety and economic goals.
- **Regional Collaboration:** Engage neighboring zip codes for broader regional insights and resource-sharing opportunities.

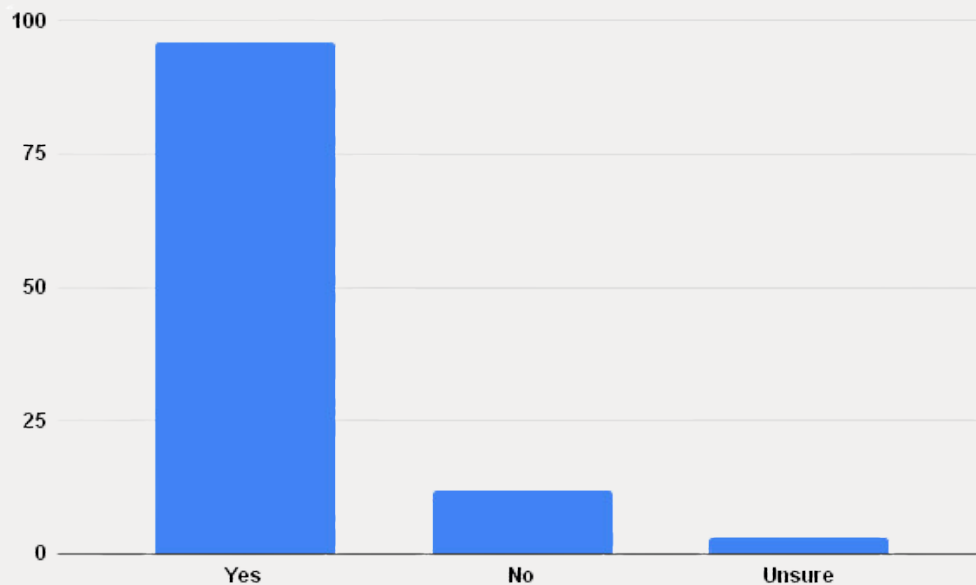
Registered Voter Information

The question posed was, "Are you a registered voter?" The responses are broken down as follows:

- "Yes": 96 responses
- "No": 12 responses
- "Unsure": 3 responses

Visualization of Responses

- A significant majority of the respondents, 86.5%, are registered voters.
- A smaller proportion, 10.8%, indicated they are not registered voters.
- A minimal percentage, 2.7%, are unsure about their voter registration status.



The survey results indicate a strong inclination toward voter registration among respondents, with 86.5% affirming their status as registered voters. This high proportion suggests considerable civic engagement or awareness among the group surveyed. However, the 10.8% of respondents who are not registered and the 2.7% who are unsure represent potential voter outreach and education opportunities.

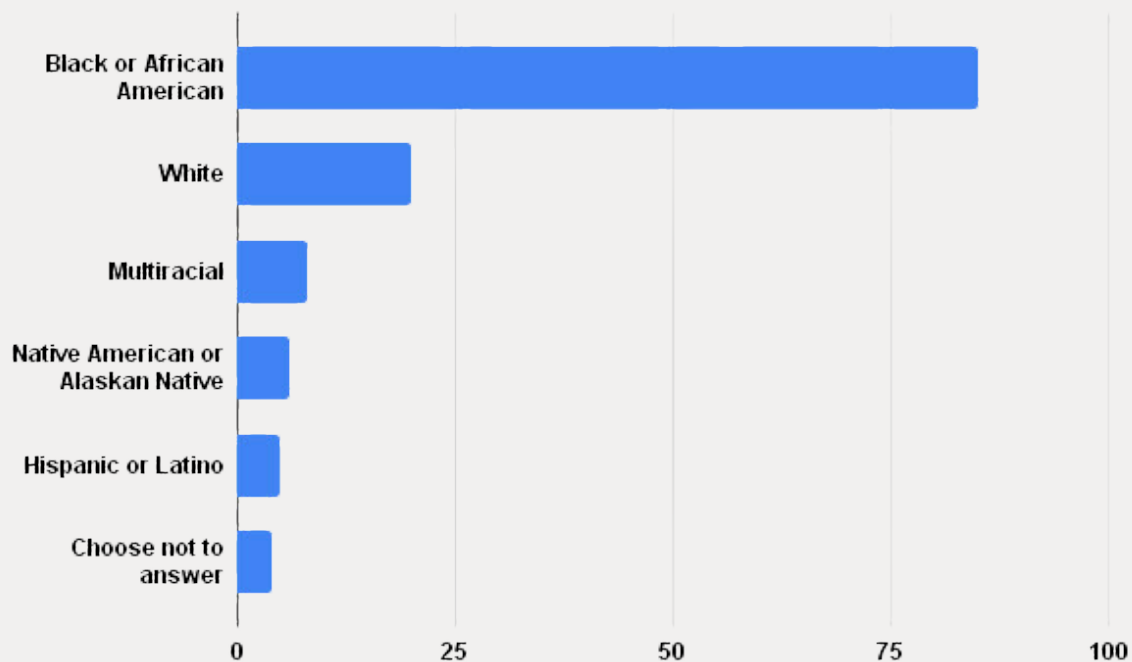
Given that approximately 13.5% of respondents are either unregistered or uncertain about their registration, targeted campaigns addressing voter registration processes and the importance of participation in democratic systems could effectively convert a portion of this group into active voters.

These findings underscore the importance of ongoing efforts to engage communities in voter registration initiatives, especially as election periods approach. Identifying the barriers preventing the unregistered population from signing up, such as lack of information, access issues, or apathy, could be crucial in closing the registration gap.

Race & Ethnicity

Key Observations

- **Black or African American** is the most frequently selected race/ethnicity in 85 out of 111 responses (76.6%).
- **White** was the second most common, with **20 responses** (18.0%).
- Smaller groups included **Multiracial** (7.2%), **Native American or Alaska Native** (5.4%), and **Hispanic or Latino** (4.5%).
- **3 respondents** (2.7%) chose not to identify or declined to answer.



The results show that Black or African American is the predominant racial/ethnic identity among respondents, representing 76.6% of the sample. This indicates a strong representation of the Black community, showing that the survey's focus or outreach efforts effectively engaged this demographic.

Other racial/ethnic groups, including White (18%), Multiracial (7.2%), Native American or Alaska Native (5.4%), and Hispanic or Latino (4.5%), contribute to the diversity of the sample but in smaller proportions. The 2.7% of respondents who declined to identify highlight the importance of allowing participants the option of non-disclosure.

Overall, the data reflect a highly Black-identified respondent group with notable intersections of multiracial, Indigenous, and Hispanic identities. This emphasizes the importance of considering intersectionality in future analyses or outreach efforts to ensure inclusivity and representation across diverse racial and ethnic groups.

Recommendations

1. Address Disproportionate Impacts on Black and African American Communities

- a. **Why:** The majority of respondents (76.6%) identify as Black or African American, indicating that this community has likely been most affected by the historical and current impacts of Highway 75, including displacement, reduced property values, and loss of community identity.
- b. **Recommendation:** Prioritize initiatives that address the specific needs of Black communities, such as affordable housing projects, minority business support, and cultural preservation programs. Partner with Black-led organizations to ensure community members are central to decision-making and benefit equitably from improvements.

2. Foster Inclusive Community Engagement Across All Racial Groups

- a. **Why:** While Black or African American respondents dominate the data, there is notable representation from White (18%), Multiracial (7.2%), Native American or Alaska Native (5.4%), and Hispanic or Latino (4.5%) communities.
- b. **Recommendation:** Create multilingual, culturally sensitive community engagement programs to ensure all racial and ethnic groups have a voice in shaping Highway 75 initiatives. Outreach efforts should focus on gathering input from underrepresented groups, including Native American, Hispanic, and Multiracial populations, to ensure their needs are also addressed.

3. Develop Equity-Focused Infrastructure and Environmental Improvements

- a. **Why:** The data highlights a diverse population, with many likely experiencing environmental injustices such as air and noise pollution, limited pedestrian access, and economic disadvantages caused by Highway 75.
- b. **Recommendation:** Use the grant to fund infrastructure projects that restore neighborhood connectivity and reduce environmental impacts in historically marginalized communities. These projects should include pedestrian bridges, green spaces, and noise barriers in predominantly Black and low-income areas, ensuring equitable access to improved infrastructure and environmental quality for all racial groups.

The question asked was, "**Do you feel that your racial or ethnic background influences your experience in this community?**" The responses are categorized as follows:

- Yes: 91 responses (81.9%)
- No: 20 responses (18.1%)

Key Insights

- **Overwhelming Agreement:** A significant majority of respondents, 81.9%, believe their racial or ethnic background influences their experience in the community.
- **Minority Disagreement:** A smaller group, 18.1%, do not feel that their racial or ethnic background influences their community experience.

The results indicate that race or ethnicity significantly impacts how individuals perceive their experiences within the community, with over 81% of respondents affirming this influence. This suggests that systemic or interpersonal dynamics tied to racial or ethnic identity shape interactions, opportunities, and perhaps even barriers within the community.

This data underscores the necessity of addressing racial and ethnic disparities for initiatives like the ReConnecting Communities Grant, which aims to foster equity and inclusion. Programs should focus on mitigating challenges tied to identity-based experiences while amplifying opportunities for underrepresented groups. The 18.1% who reported no influence provide a contrasting perspective, potentially highlighting areas where inclusivity has been achieved or racial dynamics may be less pronounced.

In conclusion, the grant's objectives should prioritize creating spaces where all community members, irrespective of their racial or ethnic background, can thrive equally. Further exploration into the specific challenges faced by those who feel influenced is critical to designing effective, targeted interventions.

Recommendations

1. Address Historical and Ongoing Racial Disparities Caused by Highway 75

- a. **Why:** The majority of respondents feel that race or ethnicity significantly impacts their community experience, likely tied to historical injustices such as the displacement of minority communities during the construction of Highway 75.
- b. **Recommendation:** Allocate funding to initiatives that repair historical harm, such as affordable housing projects, community-driven land use planning, and financial reparations for displaced families. Include racial equity assessments in all infrastructure and community development projects to ensure that marginalized populations directly benefit.

2. Foster Equity in Community Engagement and Decision-Making

- a. **Why:** The perception of racial influence highlights a need for inclusive and equitable community engagement to ensure that all voices are heard, especially those from historically marginalized groups.
- b. **Recommendation:** Develop and fund programs that prioritize Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) representation in planning processes related to Highway 75. Host multilingual and culturally sensitive forums to gather feedback and provide decision-making power to community members most affected by the highway's impact.

3. Invest in Programs that Promote Economic and Social Equity

- a. **Why:** Racial disparities often correlate with economic and social inequities. The impacts of Highway 75, including displacement and loss of businesses, have likely exacerbated these inequities for racial minorities.
- b. **Recommendation:** Use grant funding to create job training programs, support minority-owned businesses, and improve public transportation to connect underserved neighborhoods. Focus on projects that restore economic vitality to historically marginalized communities while ensuring equitable access to the benefits of redevelopment.

The question was, **"How long have you lived in your current neighborhood?"**

Based on the responses, the data is grouped and analyzed by years, months, or life duration where applicable. Responses that included non-numeric terms (e.g., "entire life") were categorized as "Lifetime."

Key Insights

- **Short-term Residents:** A significant portion of respondents (46.4%) reported living in their neighborhood for 5 years or less.
- **Moderate Tenure:** 37.8% of residents have lived in their neighborhood between 6 and 20 years, indicating a stable middle-tier group.
- **Long-term Residents:** Approximately 20.7% of respondents have lived in their neighborhood for over 20 years, showcasing deep-rooted community ties.
- **Lifetime Residents:** A small but notable group of 3 respondents indicated they have lived in their neighborhood their entire lives.

Category	Range (Years)	Count
Less than 1 year	0-0.9	7
1-5 years	1-5	39
6-10 years	6-10	24
11-20 years	11-20	18
21-30 years	21-30	10
31-40 years	31-40	9
41-50 years	41-50	10
51+ years	51+	4
Lifetime	Entire Life	3

The responses show a mix of newer and long-term residents, with 46.4% living in their neighborhood for 5 years or less, highlighting the need for community integration efforts. Long-term residents (20.7%) and lifetime residents underscore the importance of preserving community ties and engaging them in leadership roles. The Thriving Communities Grant could address these groups by fostering connections for new residents and leveraging long-term residents' experience to promote intergenerational collaboration. Programs should also consider the needs of moderate-term residents (6-20 years) who bridge newer and rooted populations.

Age Range

The responses to the question about age range were distributed as follows:

Key Insights

- **Largest Groups:**
 - The majority of respondents fall within the **35-44** (25.2%) and **45-54** (27.4%) age ranges, comprising more than half of the respondents (52.6% combined). This suggests a focus on middle-aged adults.
- **Youth Representation:**
 - Only **2.2%** of respondents were under 18, and **2.2%** were aged 18-24, indicating a small presence of younger demographics.
- **Older Adults:**
 - **8.9%** of respondents are **65 and older**, highlighting a more minor but significant presence of seniors.

Age Range	Count	Percentage
Under 18	3	2.2%
18 - 24	3	2.2%
25 - 34	21	15.6%
35 - 44	34	25.2%
45 - 54	37	27.4%
55 - 64	25	18.5%
65 and older	12	8.9%

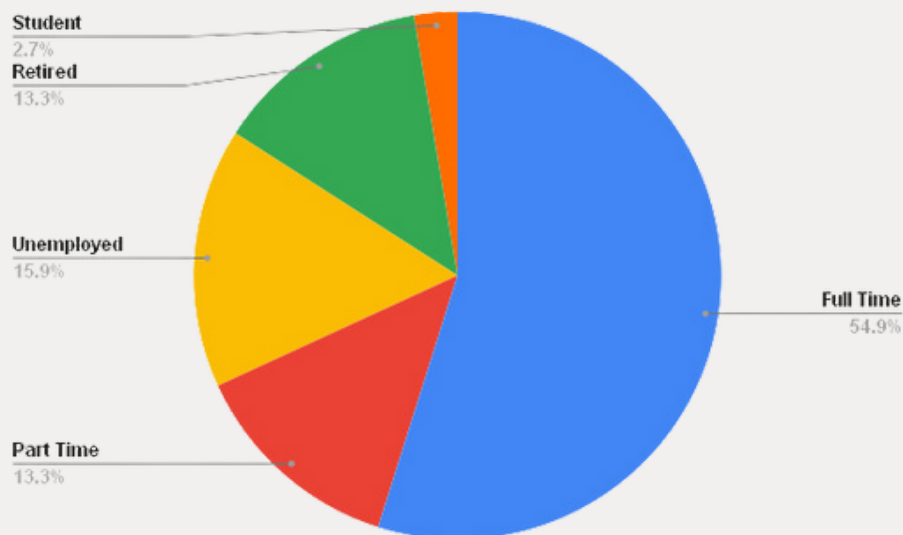
The data highlights a predominantly middle-aged population, with **52.6%** of respondents aged 35-54, suggesting they are critical stakeholders in the community. Programs funded by the **Thriving Communities Grant** should focus on supporting this group with workforce development, family support, and civic engagement initiatives. The **25-34** and **55-64** groups (34.1%) represent transition phases, benefiting from resources like career growth and financial planning. Youth (4.4%) are underrepresented, indicating a need for outreach through mentorship and education programs. Older adults (8.9%) could benefit from health services and social inclusion efforts, ensuring the grant addresses all age groups effectively.

Employment Status

The responses to the question about employment status were categorized and analyzed as follows:

Key Insights

- **Majority Employment:**
 - Most respondents (**52.5%**) are employed full-time, indicating a solid working population.
- **Part-Time and Retired:**
 - Both **part-time employment** and **retirement** represent smaller but equal proportions at **12.7%** each.
- **Unemployment:**
 - **15.3%** of respondents are unemployed, signaling a notable group needing economic support and job opportunities.
- **Students:**
 - Only **2.5%** of respondents identified as students, indicating minimal representation from this group.



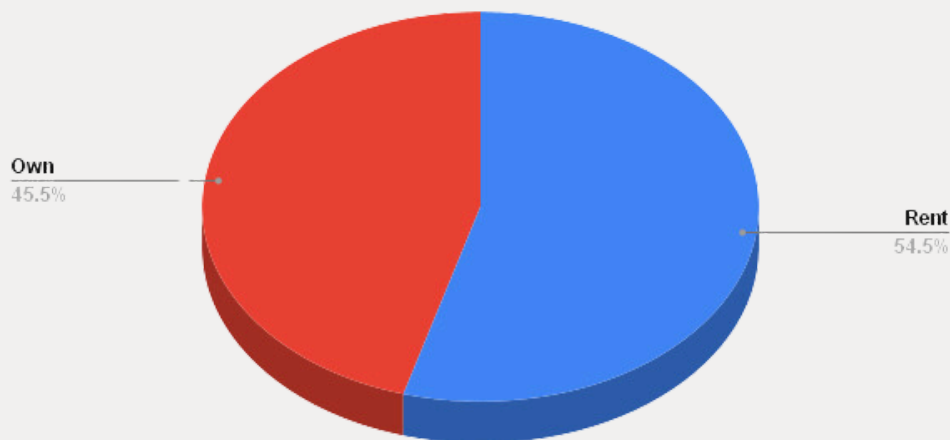
The data shows a primarily employed population, with **65.2%** working full-time or part-time. The **Thriving Communities Grant** should focus on workforce development initiatives to enhance job stability and career advancement. The **15.3% unemployment rate** highlights the need for job training, employment counseling, and economic opportunities. For the **12.7% retired population**, programs promoting social inclusion, volunteerism, and health resources can keep them engaged. Although students make up only **2.5%**, youth employment and skill-building initiatives could support their transition into the workforce, ensuring economic equity across all groups.

Home Ownership

The responses to the question of housing status were categorized as follows:

Key Insights

- **Majority Renters:**
 - The majority of respondents, **54.5%**, rent their homes, indicating a significant portion of the population may face challenges such as housing stability and affordability.
- **Homeowners:**
 - **45.5%** of respondents own their homes, reflecting a nearly balanced mix but slightly lower homeownership rates, which may impact long-term community investment and stability.



The data shows a community with a majority renting population (**54.5%**), highlighting the need for programs that address rental stability, affordability, and tenant rights. Initiatives such as rental assistance, housing education, and access to affordable housing opportunities could greatly benefit this group.

For homeowners (**45.5%**), programs focusing on property maintenance support, neighborhood improvement, and long-term investment in the community could enhance stability and engagement. The **Thriving Communities Grant** should balance these efforts to ensure renters and owners have access to resources that promote housing security and a thriving, inclusive community.

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Recommendations

1. **Prioritize Affordable Housing and Rent Stabilization Near Highway 75**

- a. **Why:** The majority of respondents are renters, indicating a potential vulnerability to rising housing costs and displacement due to Highway 75's impacts.
- b. **Recommendation:** Use grant funding to create affordable housing units, provide rental assistance, and implement rent stabilization policies in neighborhoods impacted by Highway 75. Support programs that protect renters from displacement and offer pathways to homeownership, fostering housing stability and economic equity.

2. **Support Homeownership Programs to Strengthen Community Investment**

- a. **Why:** The 45.5% of respondents who are homeowners reflect a need to promote long-term investment and stability in communities divided by Highway 75.
- b. **Recommendation:** Fund programs that assist renters in transitioning to homeownership, such as down payment assistance, credit repair services, and homebuyer education programs. These initiatives can help bridge the gap between renters and homeowners, encouraging generational wealth and stronger neighborhood ties.

3. **Develop Housing Policies that Mitigate the Impacts of Highway 75**

- a. **Why:** The highway's impacts, such as displacement, reduced property values, and limited access to resources, affect both renters and homeowners.
- b. **Recommendation:** Design housing policies to offset the harmful effects of Highway 75, such as tax incentives for homeowners, rehabilitation grants to improve aging properties, and mixed-income housing developments to ensure inclusive growth. These efforts should also include protections for long-term residents to maintain affected neighborhoods' cultural and social fabric.

The question asked **how the construction of Highway 75 has impacted the community**. The responses were categorized into key issues and frequencies:

Impact	Count	Percentage
Displacement of residents	64	53.8%
Increased traffic	58	48.7%
Noise pollution	46	38.7%
Air pollution	40	33.6%
Reduced property values	39	32.8%
Increased commute times	34	28.6%
Loss of local businesses	57	47.9%
Loss of community/neighborhood identity	8	6.7%
Positive impacts	4	3.4%
No impact/unknown	6	5.0%

Key Insights

- **Negative Impacts Dominate:**
 - The majority of respondents highlighted negative effects such as displacement of residents (53.8%), increased traffic (48.7%), noise pollution (38.7%), and loss of local businesses (47.9%).
 - Additional concerns include air pollution (33.6%), reduced property values (32.8%), and increased commute times (28.6%).
- **Community Cohesion:**
 - A significant theme emerged regarding the loss of community and neighborhood identity, with some respondents emphasizing cultural loss, reduced walkability, and environmental racism.
- **Positive Impacts:**
 - A small percentage of respondents (3.4%) noted benefits, such as improved business opportunities or better traffic flow in certain areas.
- **Neutral/No Impact:**
 - A few respondents (5.0%) reported minimal or no perceived impact on their neighborhood.

The construction of Highway 75 has had profound and predominantly negative impacts on the community, as reported by respondents. The **Thriving Communities Grant** should prioritize addressing the widespread displacement of residents and the resulting loss of local businesses and community identity. Programs focused on affordable housing, neighborhood revitalization, and support for displaced families can help restore cohesion.

Environmental concerns like **air and noise pollution** and **reduced property values** require targeted interventions, including green infrastructure, noise barriers, and property value stabilization initiatives. Traffic-related issues like **increased commute times and congestion** highlight the need for transportation planning that prioritizes community connectivity and accessibility.

Efforts should also recognize and amplify the few positive impacts, leveraging them as models for future development. The grant must center on community-driven solutions to mitigate harm and promote a thriving, equitable environment for all affected residents.

Recommendations

1. Address Displacement and Housing Stability

- a. **Why:** Over half of respondents (53.8%) identified displacement as a major impact of Highway 75, reflecting significant disruptions to residents and families.
- b. **Recommendation:** Use the grant to fund initiatives that mitigate displacement and support housing stability. This includes affordable housing development, homeownership programs for displaced families, and financial assistance for renters at risk of being displaced. Additionally, prioritize policies that preserve neighborhood diversity and cultural identity.

2. Mitigate Environmental and Infrastructure Impact

- a. **Why:** High percentages of respondents cited increased traffic (48.7%), noise pollution (38.7%), air pollution (33.6%), and reduced property values (32.8%) as significant challenges stemming from Highway 75.
- b. **Recommendation:** Implement green infrastructure solutions, such as noise barriers, air filtration systems, and tree planting, to reduce environmental impacts. Improve road designs to alleviate traffic congestion and invest in sustainable transportation infrastructure, such as pedestrian walkways and bike paths, to enhance connectivity and reduce reliance on cars.

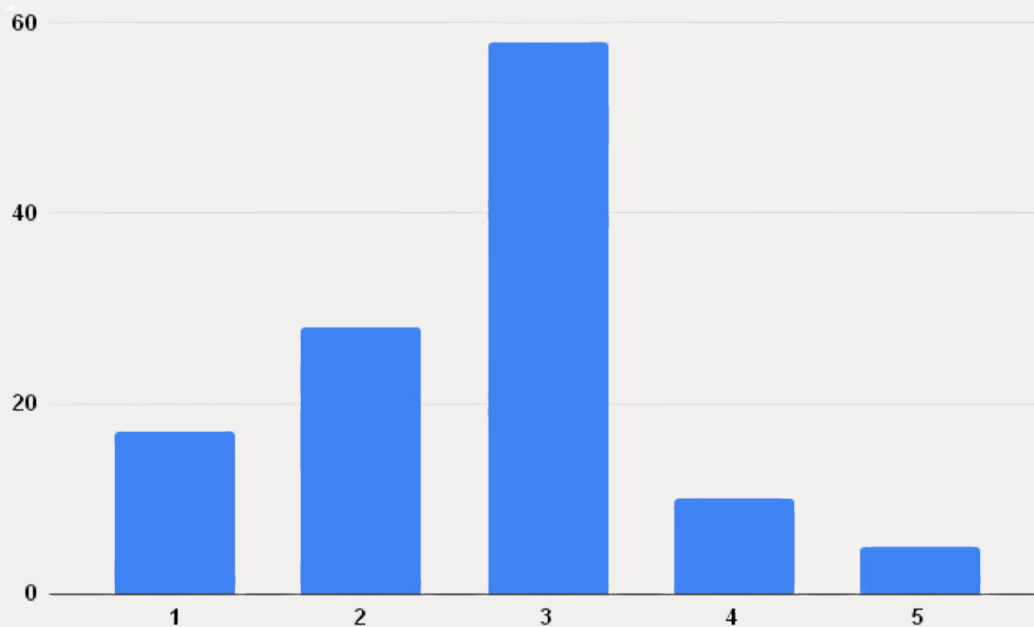
3. Revitalize Local Businesses and Restore Community Identity

- a. **Why:** Nearly half of respondents (47.9%) noted the loss of local businesses, and others emphasized the decline in community cohesion and cultural identity due to Highway 75.
- b. **Recommendation:** Allocate funding to support small businesses and incentivize new businesses to return to or establish themselves in affected neighborhoods. Focus on preserving and celebrating local culture through community-focused events, public art projects, and the restoration of shared spaces, fostering a renewed sense of belonging and pride.

The question asked respondents to rate the **overall impact of Highway 75 on their community on a scale of 1–5**, where 1 represents the most negative impact and 5 represents the most positive. The responses were distributed as follows:

Key Observations

- Neutral Ratings Dominate:
 - Nearly half of respondents (49.2%) gave a neutral score of 3, indicating mixed or moderate feelings about the highway's impact
- Negative Sentiment:
 - 38.1% of respondents rated the impact negatively, with scores of 1 (14.4%) or 2 (23.7%), highlighting significant dissatisfaction.
- Positive Ratings Are Minimal:
 - Only 12.7% of respondents rated the impact positively, with scores of 4 (8.5%) or 5 (4.2%), showing limited favorable perception of Highway 75.



The ratings indicate a largely neutral to negative perception of Highway 75's impact, with **38.1%** of respondents expressing dissatisfaction and **49.2%** giving a neutral score. This suggests that the highway has created significant challenges, including displacement, environmental impacts, and a loss of community cohesion, affecting many residents.

The **Thriving Communities Grant** should address these concerns by supporting programs that mitigate displacement, improve neighborhood cohesion, and tackle environmental issues like noise and air pollution. The high percentage of neutral responses presents an opportunity to shift perceptions through targeted infrastructure improvements and community engagement. With only 12.7% viewing the impact positively, the grant can emphasize inclusive, community-driven solutions to ensure the highway benefits all residents equitably.

Recommendations

1. Prioritize Projects to Address Negative Community Impacts

- a. **Why:** With 38.1% of respondents rating the impact of Highway 75 as unfavorable (1 or 2), it's clear that dissatisfaction stems from specific issues like displacement, loss of businesses, environmental concerns, and reduced connectivity.
- b. **Recommendation:** Allocate funding to projects that address these negative impacts, such as developing affordable housing for displaced residents, restoring small businesses, and improving accessibility across neighborhoods divided by Highway 75. These initiatives should focus on repairing harm and improving the quality of life for those most affected.

2. Engage the Community to Understand Mixed Sentiments Better

- a. **Why:** Nearly half of respondents (49.2%) rated the highway's impact as neutral (3), suggesting uncertainty or moderate feelings about its influence.
- b. **Recommendation:** Conduct further community engagement, such as focus groups or surveys, to better understand the specific concerns or benefits perceived by neutral respondents. Use this feedback to design targeted programs, such as transportation improvements or community revitalization efforts, that address their needs and enhance their experience.

3. Highlight and Expand Positive Impact

- a. **Why:** Only 12.7% of respondents rated the highway's impact as positive (4 or 5), indicating limited recognition of any benefits.
- b. **Recommendation:** Identify and expand on the elements of Highway 75 that are viewed positively, such as improved connectivity or economic opportunities in select areas. Invest in infrastructure upgrades, like pedestrian-friendly crossings, public transit enhancements, and beautification projects, to amplify these benefits and foster a greater sense of community pride and ownership.

The responses to the question about **challenges introduced by Highway 75 to daily life** were grouped into recurring themes and categorized as follows:

Challenge	Count	Percentage
Traffic and congestion	50	42.0%
Commute delays (longer travel times, detours)	42	35.3%
Displacement of families and businesses	25	21.0%
Construction and road closures	22	18.5%
Loss of community cohesion	15	12.6%
Environmental concerns (air/noise pollution)	12	10.1%
Reduced walkability and accessibility	10	8.4%
Positive impacts (e.g., quicker connections)	6	5.0%
No significant challenges	18	15.1%

The data highlights that **traffic and congestion (42%)** and **commute delays (35.3%)** are the most frequently mentioned challenges introduced by Highway 75, significantly impacting residents' ability to navigate the area efficiently. **Construction and road closures (18.5%)** compound these issues, creating additional frustrations. Programs funded by the **Thriving Communities Grant** should improve traffic flow, reduce construction disruptions, and enhance transportation infrastructure to mitigate these daily inconveniences.

The **displacement of families and businesses (21%)** and the **loss of community cohesion (12.6%)** reflect more profound social challenges tied to Highway 75. Addressing these concerns requires investments in affordable housing, business revitalization, and community-building initiatives to restore neighborhood identity. **Environmental concerns (10.1%)** and **reduced walkability (8.4%)** call for green infrastructure solutions, such as noise barriers and improved pedestrian access, to foster a healthier and more connected community.

While a small percentage (5%) acknowledged benefits like quicker connections, the majority expressed dissatisfaction, highlighting the need for inclusive solutions that prioritize the well-being of displaced and affected residents. With **15.1%** reporting no significant challenges, these positive experiences can serve as a foundation for planning equitable interventions that address both practical and systemic issues.

Recommendations

1. Alleviate Traffic Congestion and Commute Delay

- a. **Why:** 42% of respondents cited traffic and congestion as a significant challenge, with 35.3% also highlighting longer travel times and detours as major issues
- b. **Recommendation:** Invest in infrastructure improvements that streamline traffic flow, such as optimized traffic signals, expanded lanes, and better signage for detours during construction. Support alternative transit options like expanded bus routes, bike paths, and pedestrian-friendly crossings to reduce reliance on vehicular traffic.

2. Mitigate Displacement and Restore Community Cohesion

- a. **Why:** 21% of respondents reported displacement of families and businesses, and 12.6% mentioned a loss of community cohesion, emphasizing the social disruptions caused by Highway 75.
- b. **Recommendation:** Fund programs that provide affordable housing, relocation assistance, and incentives for displaced businesses to return. Introduce community-building initiatives, such as neighborhood events, shared spaces, and cultural preservation efforts, to restore a sense of unity and belonging.

3. Address Environmental and Accessibility Concerns

- a. **Why:** Environmental challenges, including air and noise pollution (10.1%), and reduced walkability and accessibility (8.4%), were notable issues. These reflect the highway's negative impact on the surrounding quality of life.
- b. **Recommendation:** Implement green infrastructure solutions, such as noise barriers, tree planting, and air quality monitoring systems, to address environmental concerns. Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, such as safe crossings and accessible pathways, to enhance walkability and reconnect divided neighborhoods.

The responses to the question of **community improvement priorities** were grouped into key themes and ranked based on frequency of mention:

Priority	Count	Percentage
Affordable housing	58	41.4%
Employment opportunities	55	39.3%
Education and youth programs	38	27.1%
Safety and crime reduction	34	24.3%
Community resources (health, food, transit)	32	22.9%
Economic development (business, property)	30	21.4%
Infrastructure and transportation	25	17.9%
Community engagement and leadership	22	15.7%
Environmental improvements	10	7.1%

The responses reflect a strong need for investment in **affordable housing (41.4%)**, **employment opportunities (39.3%)**, and **education and youth programs (27.1%)**. These priorities highlight the community's focus on creating a stable foundation for residents to thrive. Programs funded by the **Thriving Communities Grant** should address housing affordability, job creation, and educational support to empower families and build generational wealth.

Safety and crime reduction (24.3%) emerged as another critical area, emphasizing the need for community policing and neighborhood safety initiatives. Additionally, **community resources (22.9%)**, such as access to health services, nutritious food, and reliable public transit, are essential for improving residents' quality of life. Investments in **economic development (21.4%)**, including small businesses and property revitalization, and **infrastructure improvements (17.9%)**, like road repairs and accessible transportation, are also necessary to foster sustainable growth.

Lastly, **community engagement (15.7%)** and environmental improvements (7.1%) reflect a desire for more robust connections and cleaner, greener spaces. The grant can drive meaningful and inclusive change in the community by addressing these diverse priorities.

Recommendations

1. Develop Affordable Housing and Mitigate Displacement

- a. **Why:** 41.4% of respondents identified affordable housing as the top priority. Displacement due to Highway 75 has significantly impacted housing stability and affordability in the surrounding communities.
- b. **Recommendation:** Use the grant to fund affordable housing projects near Highway 75, focusing on mixed-income developments and protecting long-term residents from displacement. Include programs like rent-to-own opportunities, housing repair grants, and protections for low-income renters to maintain community stability.

2. Improve Employment Opportunities Through Infrastructure Investments

- a. **Why:** 39.3% of respondents highlighted employment opportunities as a priority, reflecting the need for stable jobs and economic revitalization in areas affected by Highway 75.
- b. **Recommendation:** Invest in job training programs, small business support, and workforce development initiatives. Focus on creating jobs related to infrastructure improvements, such as construction, environmental restoration, and public transportation enhancements, ensuring residents directly benefit from the grant's projects.

3. Enhance Community Resources and Safety

- a. **Why:** 22.9% of respondents emphasized the importance of community resources, including access to health, food, and transit, while 24.3% identified safety and crime reduction as critical concerns.
- b. **Recommendation:** Fund programs that enhance public transit connectivity across Highway 75, improve access to healthy food through local grocery stores or markets, and establish community safety initiatives like lighting improvements and neighborhood watch programs. Prioritize resource hubs integrating health services, recreational spaces, and educational opportunities.

The responses to the question about **specific programs or initiatives that could improve the quality of life in the community** were grouped into common themes and ranked by frequency:

Program/Initiative	Count	Percentage
Youth programs (education, recreation, jobs)	45	32.1%
Affordable housing	35	25.0%
Employment and job training	30	21.4%
Community engagement and leadership	20	14.3%
Mental health and healthcare services	18	12.9%
Education and financial literacy	15	10.7%
Transportation improvements	12	8.6%
Violence prevention and public safety	10	7.1%
Environmental improvements (parks, clean-up)	8	5.7%
Food security and grocery access	8	5.7%
No specific suggestion/unsure	15	10.7%

The responses highlight the need for targeted investments in **youth programs (32.1%)**, including recreation, education, and job training, as a top priority for improving quality of life. These initiatives can engage young residents and create long-term opportunities for growth and crime prevention. **Affordable housing (25.0%)** and **employment programs (21.4%)** also emerged as critical needs, emphasizing the importance of stable housing and job opportunities for economic mobility and security.

Other key areas of focus include **community engagement (14.3%)**, **mental health and healthcare services (12.9%)**, and **education/financial literacy programs (10.7%)**. These reflect a demand for resources that empower residents with the skills and support needed to improve their lives. **Transportation improvements (8.6%)**, **violence prevention (7.1%)**, and **environmental upgrades (5.7%)**, such as cleaner parks and better pedestrian safety, were also mentioned as essential for enhancing daily living conditions.

The **Thriving Communities Grant** should prioritize these areas by funding youth initiatives, housing, employment, and health services while fostering collaboration and leadership within the community. Programs that address transportation, food security, and public safety can further create a well-rounded approach to community development. By aligning with these priorities, the grant can meaningfully impact residents' quality of life and create a more equitable and thriving environment.

Recommendations

1. Invest in Youth Programs to Support Long-Term Community Development

- a. **Why:** Youth programs (32.1%) were the most frequently mentioned priority, highlighting the community's desire for initiatives that provide education, recreation, and job training for young residents.
- b. **Recommendation:** Use grant funding to establish youth-focused community centers near Highway 75, offering after-school programs, sports leagues, and job training opportunities. Partner with local organizations to create mentorship programs to reduce crime and empower young residents to become community leaders.

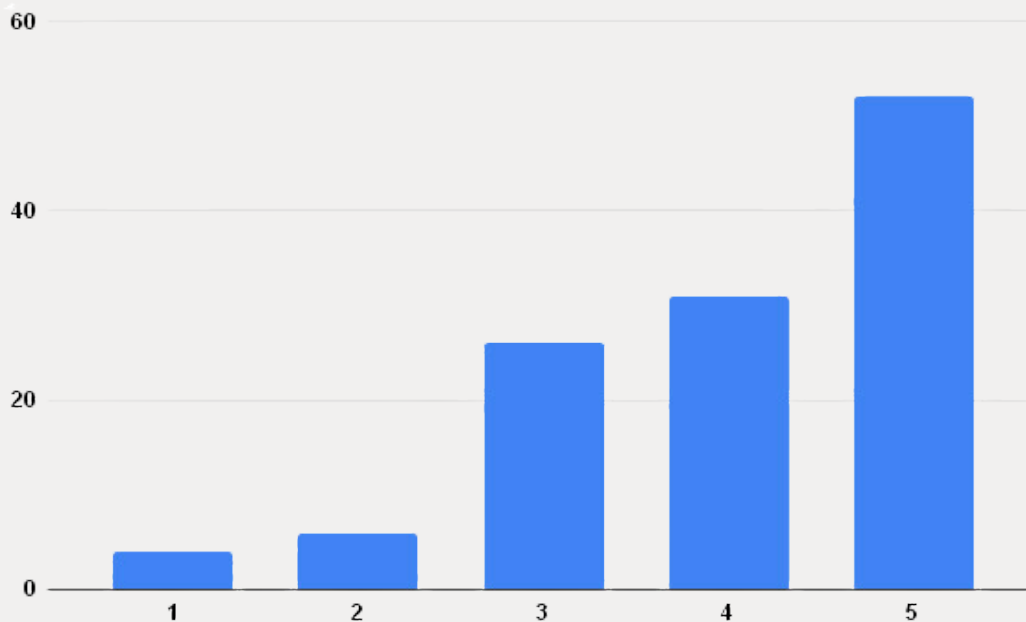
2. Expand Affordable Housing and Employment Opportunities

- a. **Why:** Affordable housing (25.0%) and employment/job training (21.4%) were critical areas of concern, reflecting the need for stable housing and economic mobility in neighborhoods impacted by Highway 75.
- b. **Recommendation:** Develop mixed-income housing projects to address displacement caused by Highway 75 and job creation programs such as vocational training or apprenticeships in infrastructure and construction fields. Include provisions to prioritize hiring residents for highway redevelopment projects.

3. Enhance Community Health and Accessibility

- a. **Why:** Community engagement (14.3%), mental health services (12.9%), and transportation improvements (8.6%) highlight the need for accessible services and cohesive neighborhoods.
- b. **Recommendation:** Fund programs to improve mental health access and build safe pedestrian and bike pathways across Highway 75 to reconnect divided neighborhoods. Support initiatives promoting community engagement, such as neighborhood events, town halls, and collaboration with local leaders to foster stronger resident relationships.

The question asked respondents to rate, on a scale of 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely), **how likely they are to participate in community meetings or initiatives**. The results were distributed as follows:



Key Insights

- **High Willingness to Participate:**
 - The majority of respondents (**69.8%**) rated their likelihood as either **4 (26.1%)** or **5 (43.7%)**, indicating a strong willingness to engage in community meetings or initiatives.
- **Neutral or Mixed Sentiment:**
 - **21.8%** of respondents gave a neutral score of **3**, suggesting they might need more encouragement or clarity on the benefits of participation.
- **Low Likelihood to Participate:**
 - Only **8.3%** of respondents rated their likelihood as **1 or 2**, signaling a relatively small group that may face barriers to engagement or lack of interest.

The results demonstrate a high level of interest in community participation, with **nearly 70%** of respondents expressing a willingness to engage in meetings or initiatives to improve their neighborhood. This presents a firm foundation upon which the **Thriving Communities Grant** can be built. Programs and initiatives should capitalize on this enthusiasm by creating accessible, inclusive, and well-communicated opportunities for involvement.

For the **21.8%** who are neutral and the **8.3%** who are less likely to participate, the grant can implement targeted outreach to address potential barriers, such as scheduling conflicts, lack of information, or perceived ineffectiveness of past efforts. Providing tangible outcomes from community initiatives and fostering trust can help convert neutral or hesitant respondents into active participants.

By leveraging the strong interest in engagement and addressing gaps in participation, the grant can create a thriving and collaborative environment that empowers residents to take an active role in shaping their community's future.