

Calgary



# Seniors Age-Friendly Strategy Research

## Final Report

**ENVIRONICS**  
RESEARCH

Prepared for The City of Calgary by:

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## Objectives and approach

The senior population in Calgary is increasing and may reach 20% of Calgarians by 2036. The City of Calgary's Senior Services team within the Calgary Neighbourhoods (CN) business unit has developed a Seniors Age-Friendly Strategy for Calgary in collaboration with other City of Calgary business units and community stakeholders.

The City of Calgary sought to gather information to support the Seniors Age Friendly Strategy.

To meet these objectives, a telephone survey was conducted with 500 residents aged 65 years and older in Calgary in January 2017. The survey took an average of 15 minutes to complete. A sample of this size is expected to be accurate to +/-4.4%, at the 95% confidence level.

Data were weighted to reflect the seniors population in Calgary. The strata used were age (65-74 and 75+), gender, and quadrant – using postal code to identify each quadrant.

Only differences that are statistically significant are presented in this report.

# Executive summary



# Executive summary

- By and large, a majority of seniors in Calgary surveyed feel that the quality of life for them in the city is good or better. They generally feel informed about issues facing them in Calgary and informed about access to services.
- Drilling down to specific issues, the seniors surveyed express the most concern about seniors in Calgary having sufficient income to meet their needs and the availability of community health supports.
- The seniors surveyed are also concerned about transportation-related issues, availability of community supports, and the possibility of living with Alzheimer's or other dementias.
- For a majority of seniors surveyed, getting in and around the home, and maintaining the inside appears to be a fairly easy task. However, one in five have difficulty with these tasks. These challenges are more often cited by those who have made modifications to their home, suggesting that either more modifications may be required, or those that were made were to address other issues.
- The research suggests concern and uncertainty among seniors about the adequacy of home services available to them, as well with housing options. Moreover, over half of seniors think it is difficult to find specific housing types for seniors.

# General Attitudes





# Key Findings: General Attitudes

- A majority of seniors characterize the quality of life for seniors in Calgary as good or better.
  - 41% say it is good, 29% consider it very good while 8% believe it is excellent.
  - There are no statistically significant differences in perception of the quality of life by age or gender.
- There are some differences in perceptions of quality of life across quadrants. Notably, those in the southwest quadrant are more apt than others to consider the quality of life as very good or excellent (47%).
- Three in four seniors consider themselves informed about seniors issues in Calgary. Slightly fewer (63%) consider themselves informed about how to access specific programs and services for seniors.

# Key Findings: General Attitudes

- The results show some differences in perceptions which are informed by age and quadrant. Residents at least 85 years of age consider themselves more informed about general issues affecting seniors and specific programs in comparison to younger seniors. As well, residents in the Northwest and Southwest quadrants believe that they are more informed compared to those in other quadrants of the city.
- There is also a relationship between perceived quality of life for seniors and being informed. Those who think the quality of life is excellent are more apt to believe they are informed.
- Meanwhile, one in three (36%) say they have been involved in accessing seniors programs or services in the past year. Those who have accessed programs and services are more likely to consider themselves informed on broader seniors issues as well as specific programs.
- The findings indicate some differences in who has accessed programs and services in the past year. Seniors at least 85 years of age and women are more likely to say they have been involved in accessing seniors programs and services in comparison to others.



# Key Findings: General Attitudes

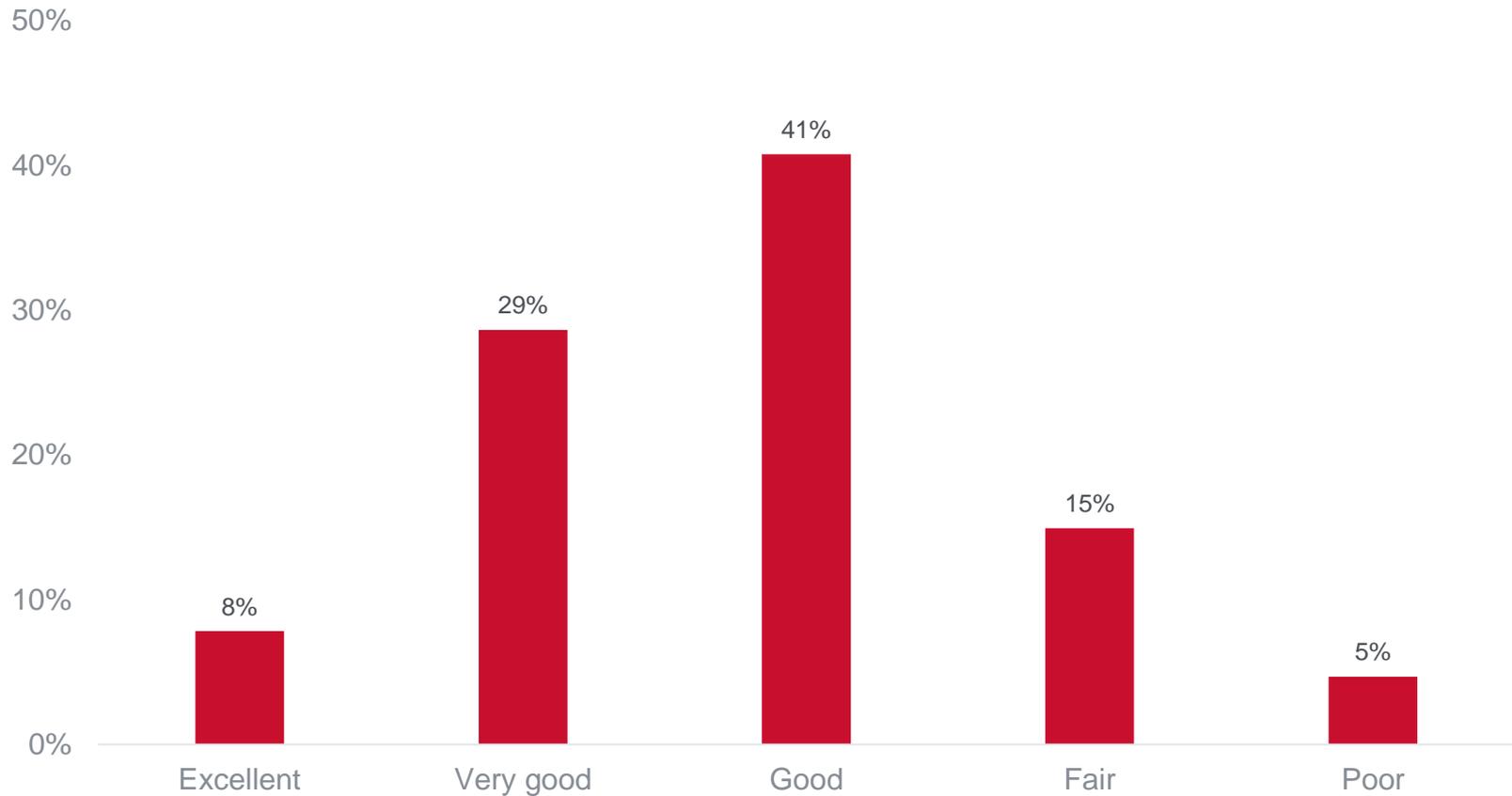
- Calgary seniors **surveyed** believe that there are a number of issues seniors face today in the city, chief among them is having a sufficient income to meet their needs; close to two in three consider this an issue.
- Just over half of seniors consider the following issues for seniors as well:
  - Community support and health services to allow seniors to stay in their own homes
  - Finding and maintaining suitable housing
  - Living with Alzheimer's or other related dementias
  - Transportation and mobility outside of the home
- Just under one half of seniors believe that access to information and services is an issue. Lastly, four in ten identify inclusion and elder abuse as issues seniors face in the city.
- Demographically, there are some differences in perceptions of issues across groups.
  - Those between 65 and 74 years of age are more likely to identify transportation/mobility issues and access to information and services as issues facing seniors. Meanwhile, women are more likely than men to consider elder abuse, having a sufficient income to live, finding and maintaining housing, and living with dementia as issues.

# Key Findings: General Attitudes

- When asked to select the most important issue facing seniors in Calgary from a list, no single issue is most important for a majority of residents. However, having a sufficient income to meet one's needs is the most important for just under three in ten seniors.
- Community support and health services to remain in one's home is the most important issue for one in five seniors. Just over one in ten identify living with Alzheimer's or other related dementia or finding and maintaining suitable housing as the most important issue.
- Similar proportions believe that transportation and mobility outside of the home (6%), access to information and services (5%), and elder abuse (3%) are the most important issues.
- There are some differences across subgroups on perceptions of most important issue. Those living in the two western quadrants of the city are more likely than those in the Northeast quadrant to consider community support and health services to remain in their own home as the most important issue.
- Those who feel that the quality of life for seniors is fair or poor are more likely to identify having sufficient income to meet one's needs as the most important issue for seniors as compared to those who have more positive opinions about quality of life for seniors.



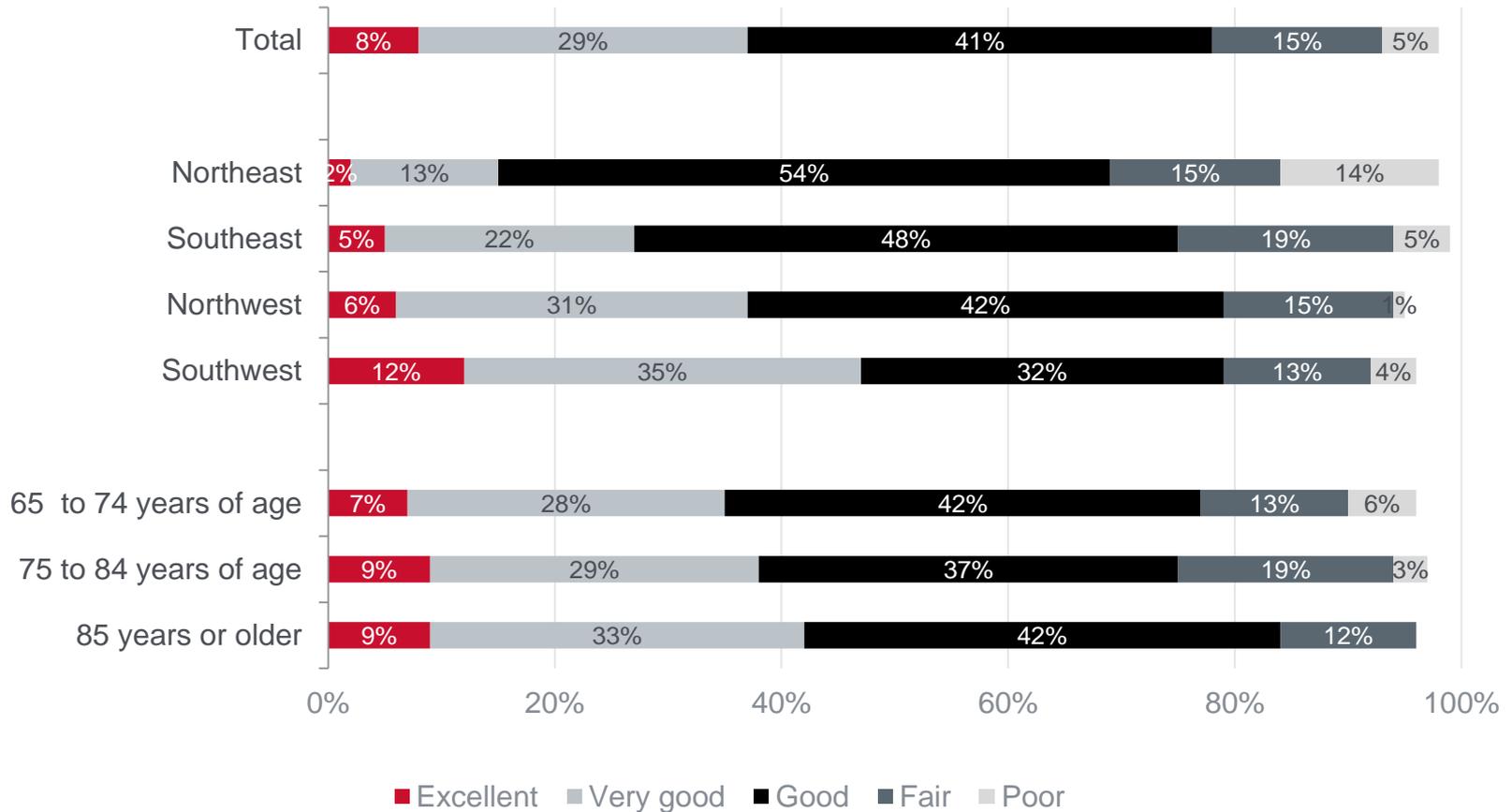
# Overall quality of life for seniors in Calgary



Q1. Overall, how would you rate the quality of life for seniors living in Calgary?  
 Base: All respondents (n=500)



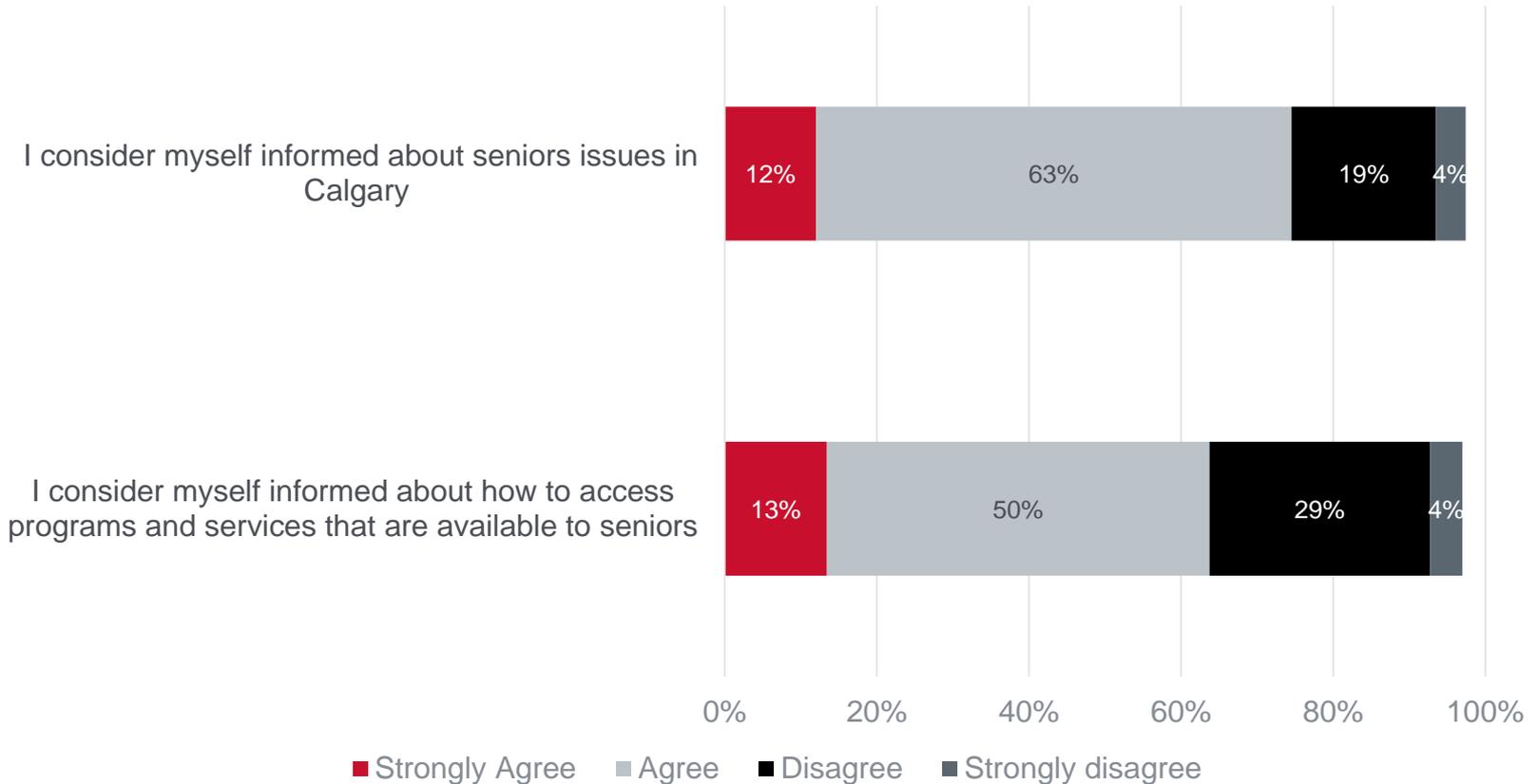
# Quality of life for seniors



Q1. Overall, how would you rate the quality of life for seniors living in Calgary?  
 Base: All respondents (n=500)



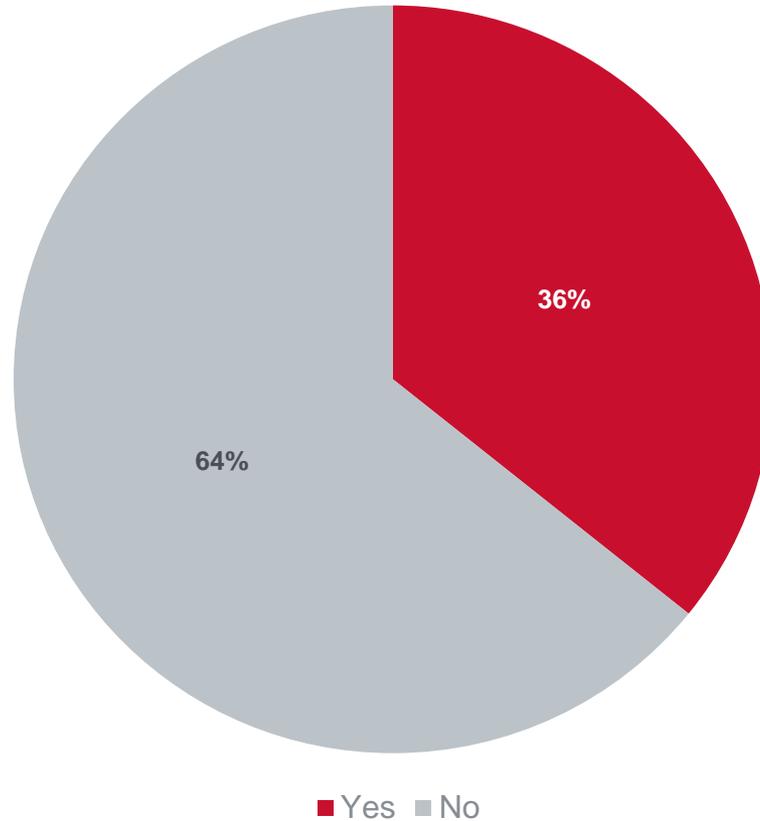
# Informed about seniors issues and programs and services



Q2. To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following?  
 Base: All respondents (n=500)



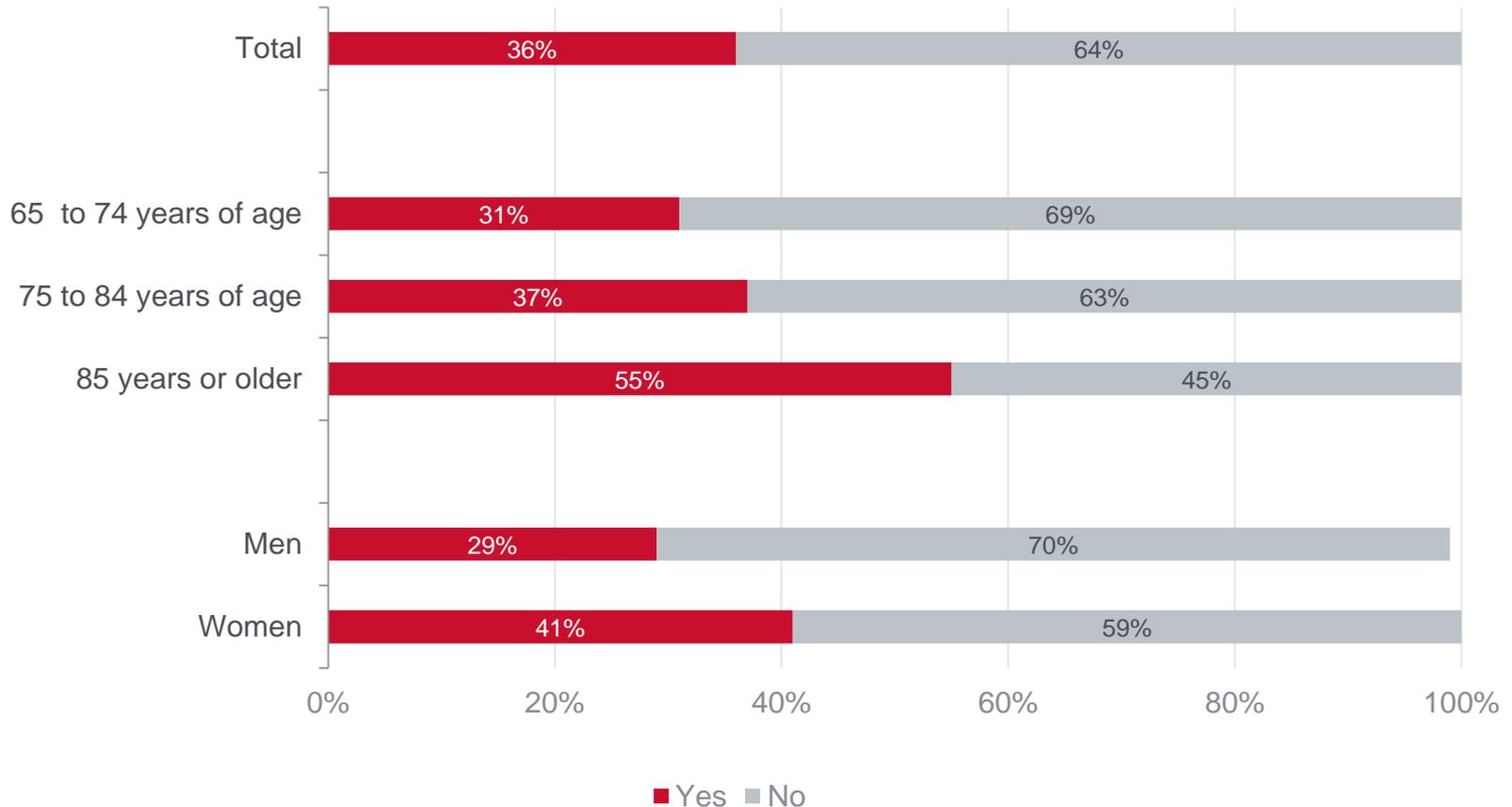
# Involvement in accessing seniors programs in past 12 months



Q3. In the past 12 months, have you been involved in accessing seniors programs and services, either for myself or on behalf of someone else?  
 Base: All respondents (n=500)



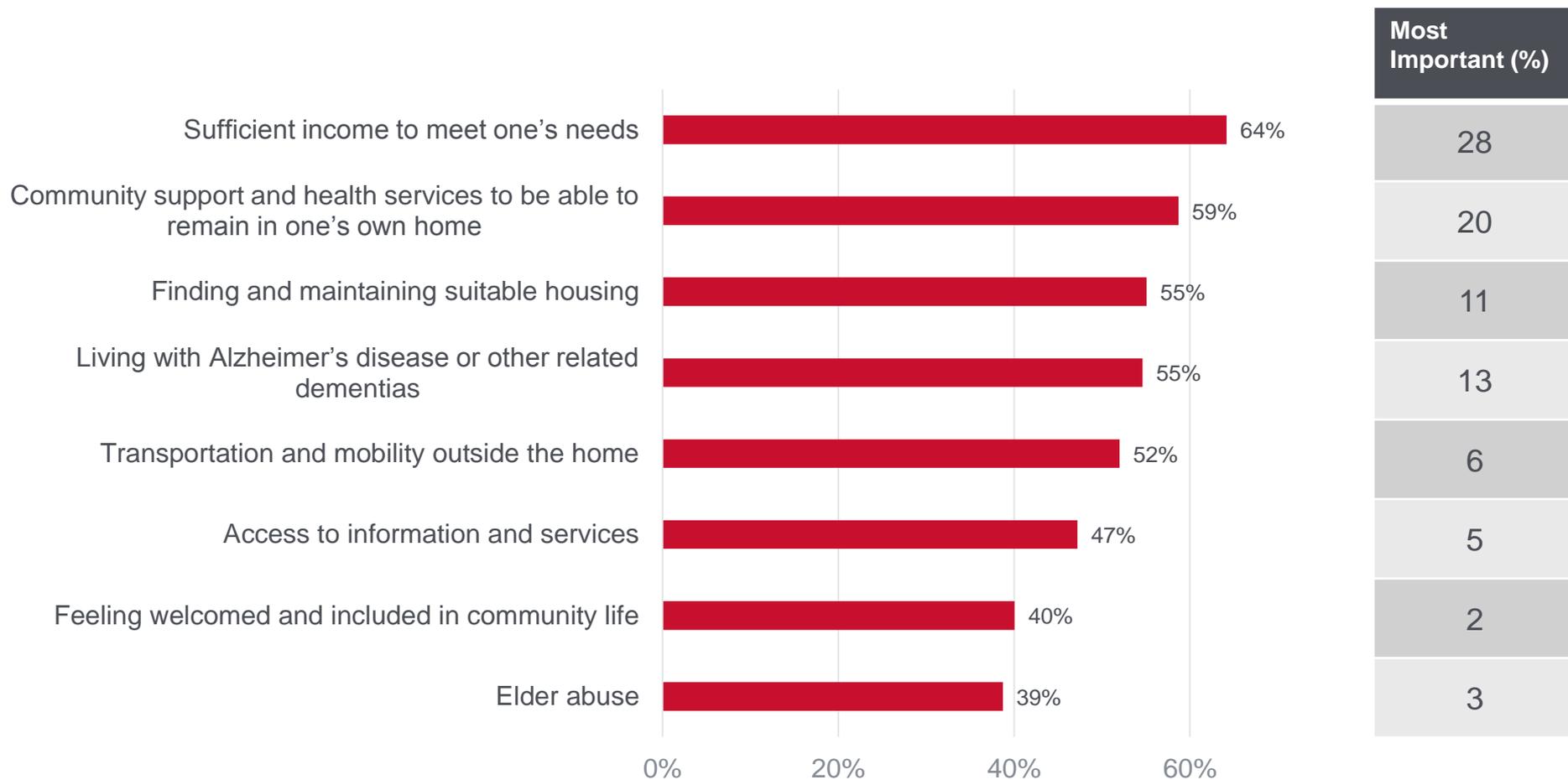
# Involvement in accessing seniors programs in past 12 months



Q3. In the past 12 months, have you been involved in accessing seniors programs and services, either for myself or on behalf of someone else?  
 Base: All respondents (n=500)



# Issues facing seniors today



Q4. Here are some issues that may or may not be a concern for seniors 65 or older. . Which of the following would you say are issues for seniors today in Calgary?

Base: All respondents (n=500)



# Issues facing seniors today

	TOTAL	65 to 74 years	75 to 84 years	85 or older	Men	Women
Sufficient income to meet one's needs	64%	66%	66%	52%	59%	69%
Community support and health services to be able to remain in one's own home	59%	61%	58%	52%	57%	60%
Finding and maintaining suitable housing	55%	56%	55%	54%	48%	61%
Living with Alzheimer's disease or other related dementias	55%	55%	55%	50%	48%	60%
Transportation and mobility outside the home	52%	56%	50%	40%	48%	55%
Access to information and services	47%	51%	45%	36%	46%	48%
Feeling welcomed and included in community life	40%	42%	36%	44%	43%	38%
Elder abuse	39%	42%	34%	33%	33%	43%

Q4. Here are some issues that may or may not be a concern for seniors 65 or older. . **Which of the following would you say are issues for seniors today in Calgary?**

Base: All respondents (n=500)



# Most important issue by quadrant

	TOTAL	North East	South East	North West	South West
Sufficient income to meet one's needs	28%	29%	30%	28%	26%
Community support and health services to be able to remain in one's own home	20%	6%	15%	24%	24%
Living with Alzheimer's disease or other related dementias	13%	11%	10%	14%	15%
Finding and maintaining suitable housing	11%	21%	8%	10%	11%
Transportation and mobility outside the home	6%	2%	8%	7%	6%
Access to information and services	5%	9%	10%	2%	4%
Elder abuse	3%	7%	3%	2%	2%
Feeling welcomed and included in community life	2%	2%	4%	1%	2%

Q5. Of these issues, which is the most important one facing seniors today?  
 Base: All respondents (n=500)

# Employment

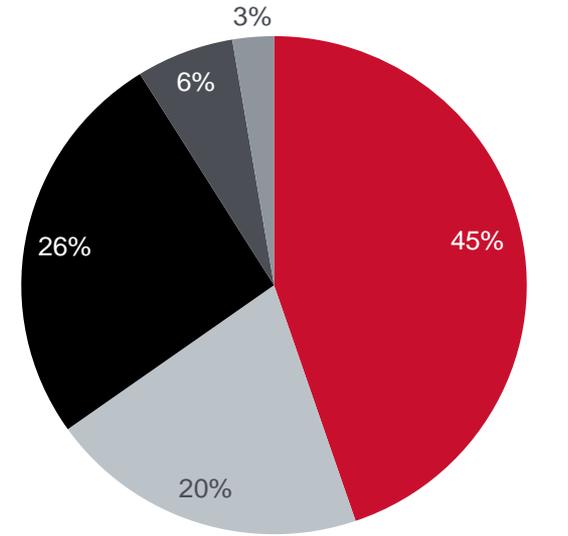
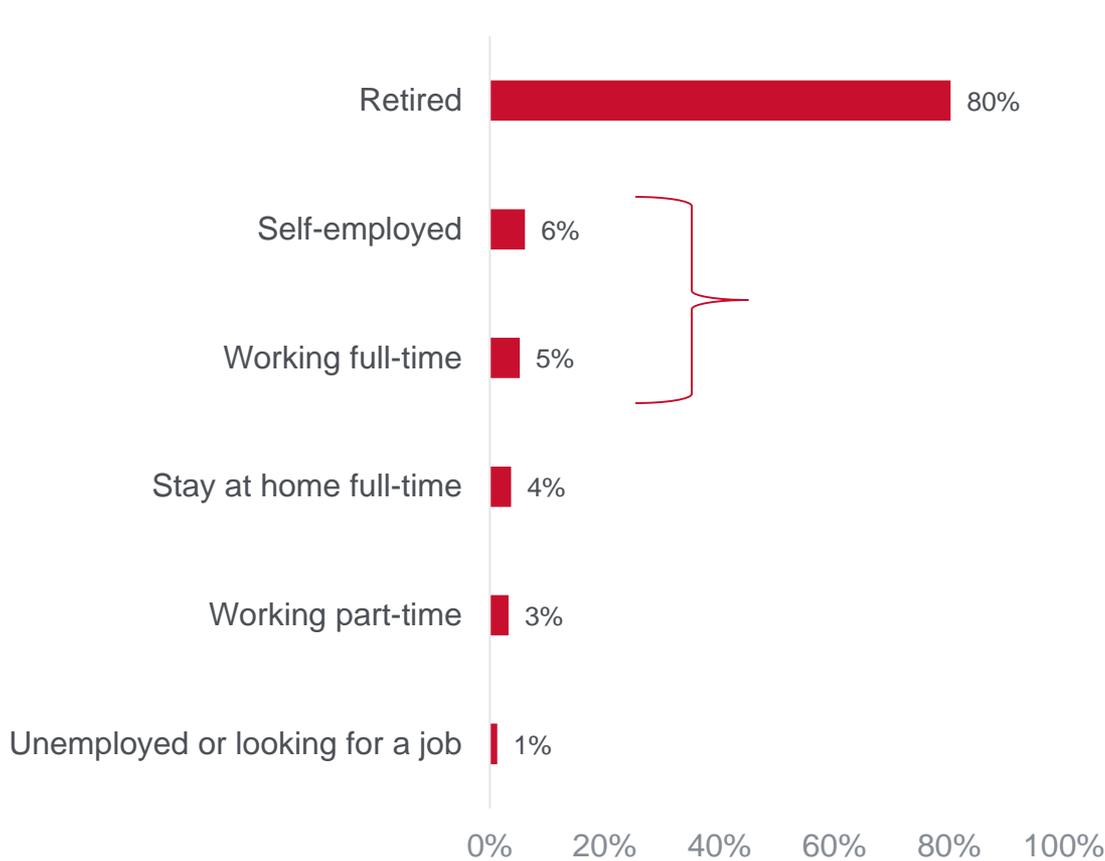


# Key Findings: Employment

- The majority of seniors surveyed are retired (80%). The proportion of seniors who are retired also increases with age; 71% (n=195) between 65 and 74 are retired compared to 89% (n=52) of those 85 or older are retired.
- Meanwhile, 15% of seniors are employed in some capacity, be it full time (5%), part time (3%), or self-employed (6%).
  - Those working full time are more likely to reside in the Northeast quadrant of the city.
- Among those still working (n=66), close to half say they have plans to retire. The remainder are split between never retiring due to enjoyment of working (26%) or never retiring due to financial reasons (20%).
- Among those who are employed (n=66), 73% feel that their employer offers them flexibility in their work. and it is usually in the form of scheduling and workload.



# Employment status



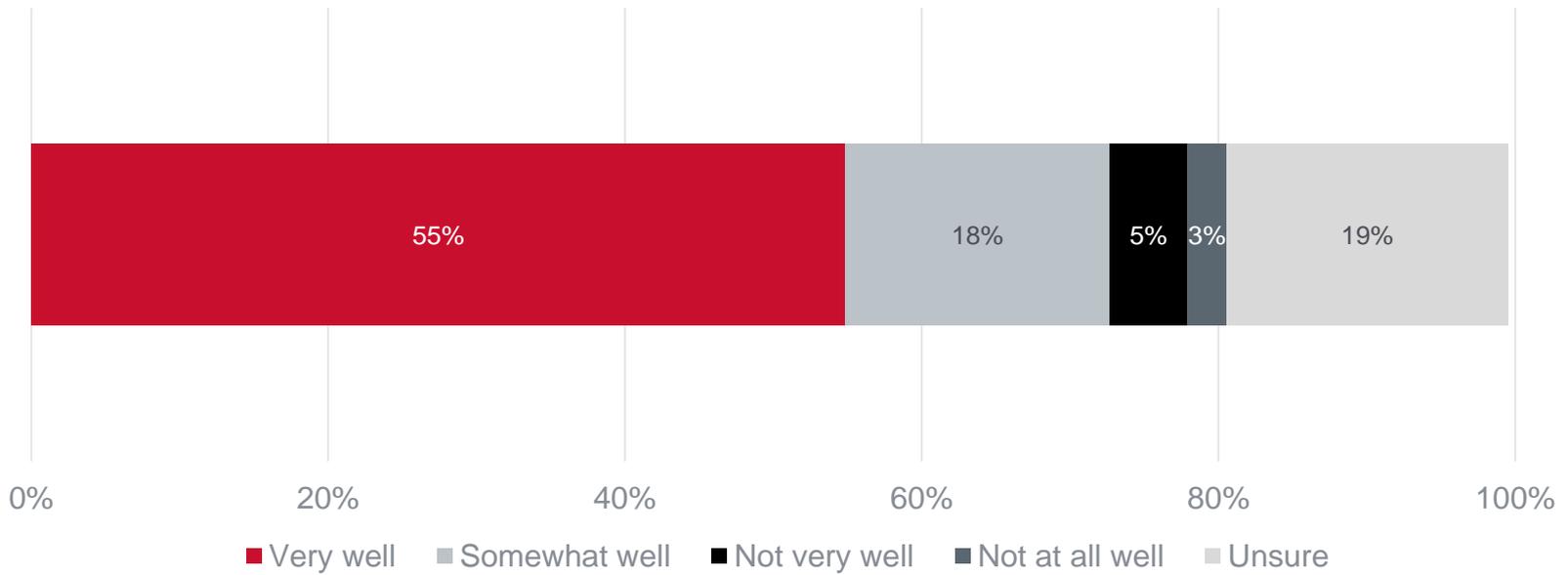
- Plan to retire
- Plan on never retiring due to financial reasons
- Plan on never retiring because I enjoy working
- Depends/not sure
- DK/NA

Q6. Which of the following best describes your own present employment status?  
Base: All respondents (n=500)

Q7. Do you plan to retire at some point in the future, or do you plan on never retiring?  
Base: Those who are employed (n=66)



# Employer flexibility



Q8. How well do you feel that your current employer offers flexibility to you for work?  
 Base: Those who are working (n=66)



# Reasons why employer is flexible

Theme (code)	Frequency (n)	Example comments
Flexible schedule / time off when needed	24	I chose to go a consulting route so I could have flexibility. I'm usually here but if I want a day off or have to go to the doctor, it's not an issue.
Manageable workload	15	Because its contract and the way I do the contract it leaves it open, just as long as it gets done they are happy.
Helpful / understanding / empathetic	6	Because he's an understanding boss, if you need time off he gives it to you
I am my own employer	13	Because I am the employer
Other	3	Corruption. sometimes he tells us to work when its sorted with our mobility.
Don't know / refused	3	No reasons

Q9. Why do you say your employer offers flexibility?

Base: Those who are employed and say employer offers flexibility (n=48)

# Housing



# Key Findings: Housing

- The majority surveyed are living independently, most commonly in a single-family detached home (60%). Others are living in a townhouse (18%), apartment (12%) or condo (1%). A very small number surveyed reside in a lodge (1%) or nursing home (1%).
  - Seniors between 65 and 74 years of age are more likely to live in a single detached home in comparison to older adults.
  - Regionally, those living in the Southwest and Northwest quadrants of the city are more likely to live in an apartment building in comparison to those in the Southeast quadrant.
- A large majority of seniors surveyed own their residence (88%) and virtually all those living in a single-family home own it (98%).
  - Owning their home is more common among those under the age of 85.
- A small majority of those surveyed live with a spouse or partner (55%) and about one in ten (13%) have an adult child in the home. One in three seniors live alone (32%). There are some differences in living arrangements by age and gender.
  - Women and those at least 85 years of age are more likely to live alone (43% and 54% respectively).

# Key Findings: Housing

- About one five have made some changes to help them get in or around their home. Those between the ages of 75 and 84 are more likely to say they have made some changes in comparison to those under the age of 75.
- One in four of those surveyed have a difficult time maintaining the inside or outside of their home and finding resources to modify their home. By contrast, getting in and around their home appears to be the easiest task for seniors from the list of tasks tested.
- There is a relatively high degree of uncertainty about how easy or difficult it is to access home care services or resources to help them modify their home, with over three in ten each saying they don't know the level of ease (or difficulty) to perform this task.
  - Those who have made modifications to their home are more apt to say it is difficult for them to get in and around their home as well as maintain both the inside and outside of their residence.

# Key Findings: Housing

- Those who feel that the quality of life for seniors in Calgary is poor are more likely to believe that these tasks are difficult for them to do.
- The ease of maintaining the outside of their home varies by age and gender. Younger seniors and men are more likely to say it is easy to maintain the outside of their home.
- A majority are concerned about the affordability of some household expenses, primarily utilities, larger maintenance expenses, and property taxes. There is somewhat less concern with regular maintenance costs.
- Calgary seniors are the least concerned about their mortgage or rent. Perhaps not surprising, seniors in lower income brackets express more concern about this expense.



# Key Findings: Housing

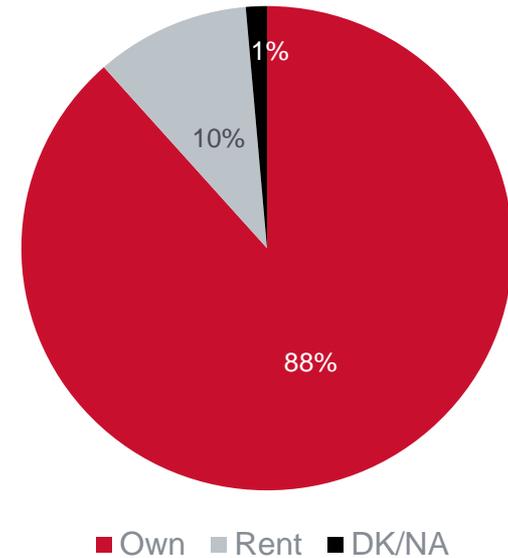
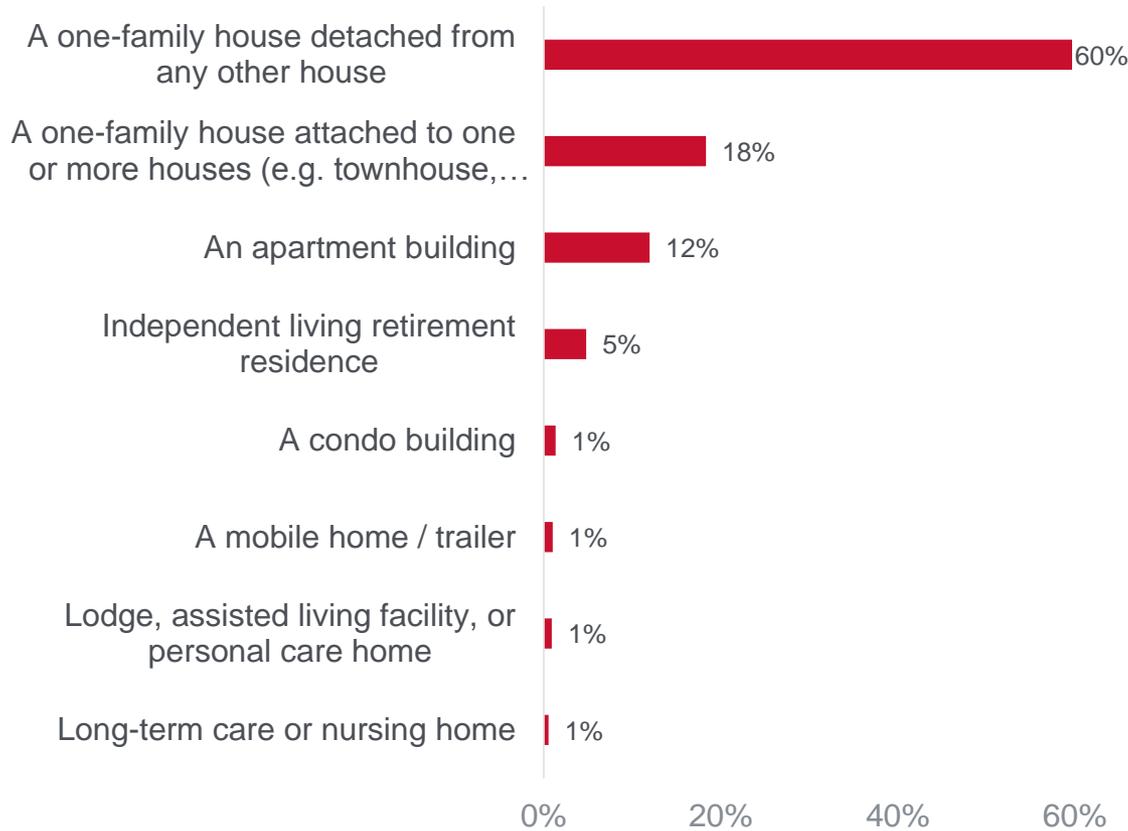
- A majority of seniors surveyed express concern about the availability of services should they suffer a long-term disability, chronic illness, or dementia, with 50% being very concerned.
  - Those who feel that the quality of life is either good, fair or poor express greater concern about the availability of services.
- Seven percent of seniors believe there are very adequate services available and an additional 43% believe they are somewhat adequate. Fully one in four do not know if there are adequate services available.

# Key Findings: Housing

- Moreover, residents are split on the availability of housing options to meet their future needs. Just under half believe there are adequate housing options whereas four in ten (38%) do not believe there are adequate choices. The remainder are unsure.
  - Geographically speaking, residents of the Southwest quadrant are more likely than those in Eastern quadrants to believe there are adequate housing options.
- A majority of residents believe it will be difficult to find specific housing types should they need it in the future. Moreover, about one in five residents are unsure how easy or difficult it is to find specific housing options. Housing that will allow seniors to downsize and independent living units are considered the easiest to find.
- There is more perceived difficulty or uncertainty in finding assisted living units or units where unrelated people live together and support each other.



# Housing situation

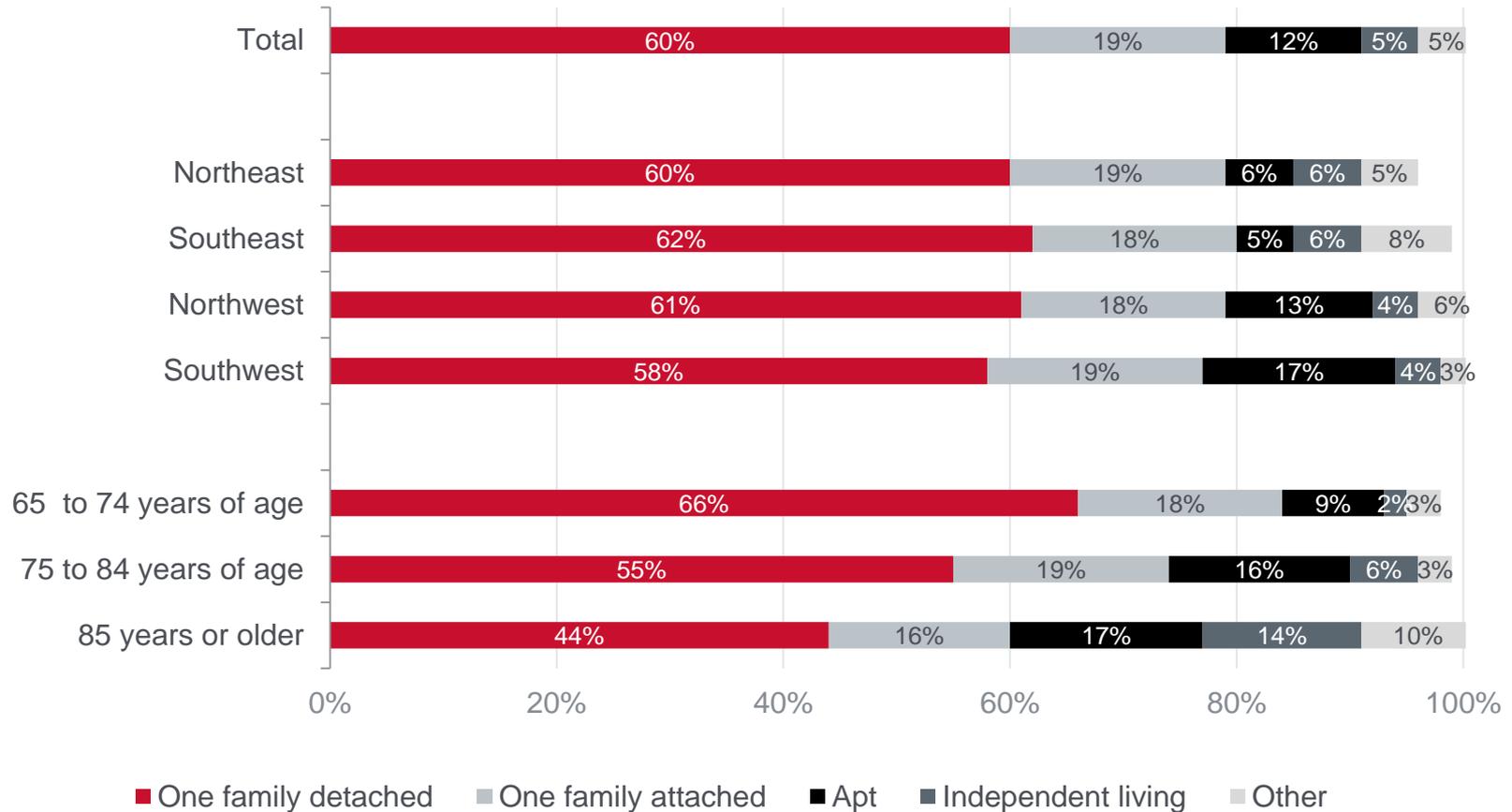


Q10. Which one of the following categories best describes your home?  
Base: All respondents (n=500)

Q11. Do you currently own or rent your home?  
Base: Those in an independent home (n=492)



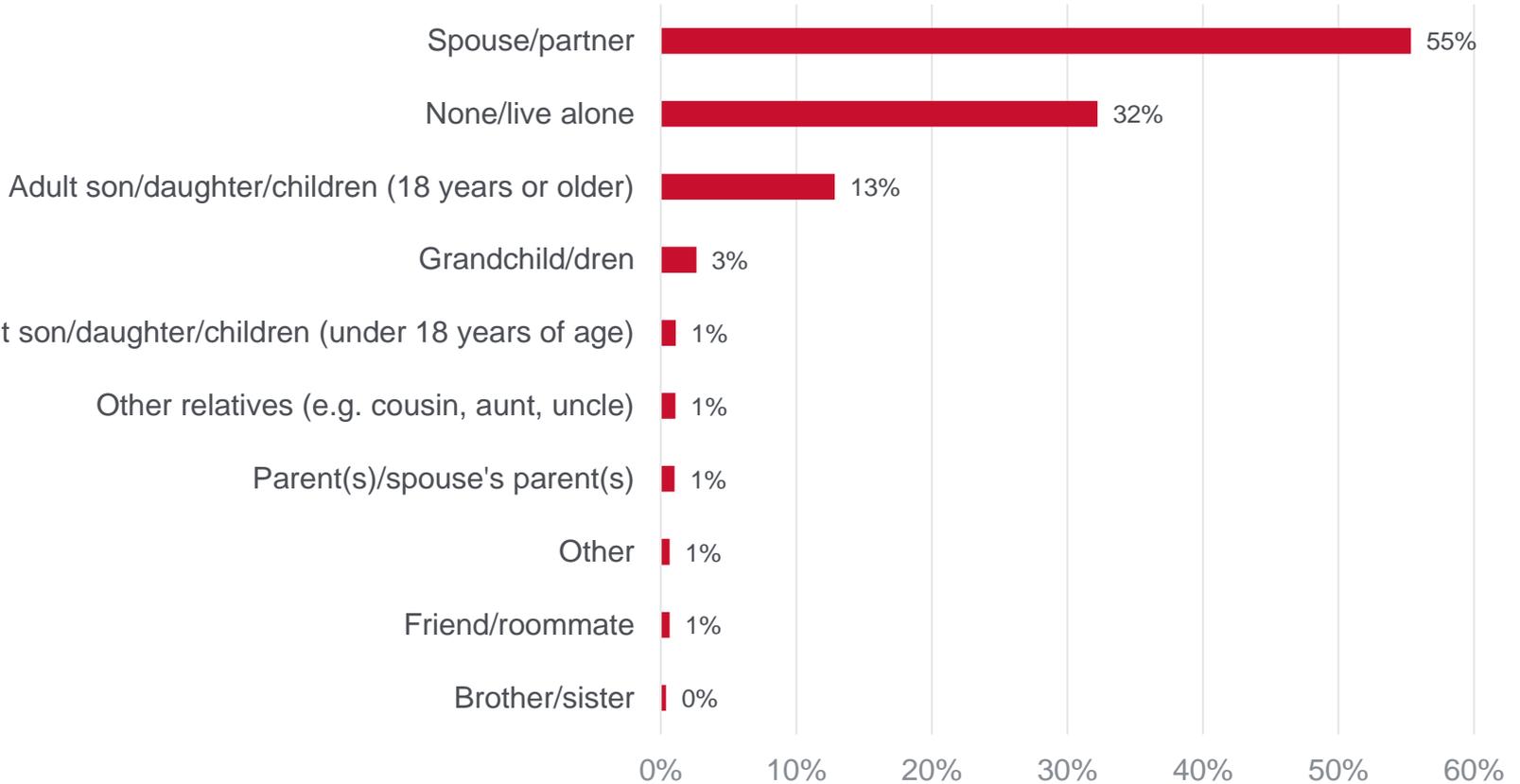
# Housing situation



Q10. Which one of the following categories best describes your home?  
 Base: All respondents (n=500)



# Household composition

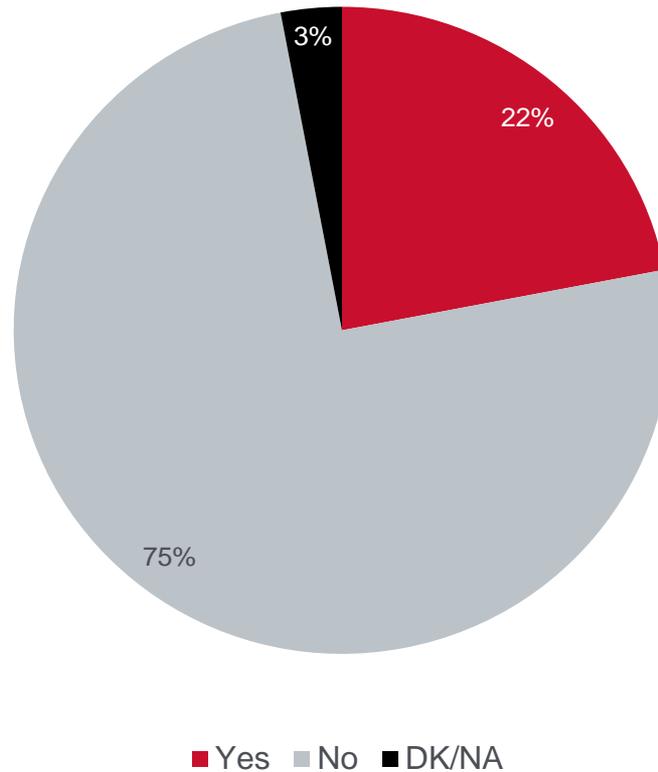


Q12. Who else, if anyone, lives with you?

Base: All respondents (n=492)



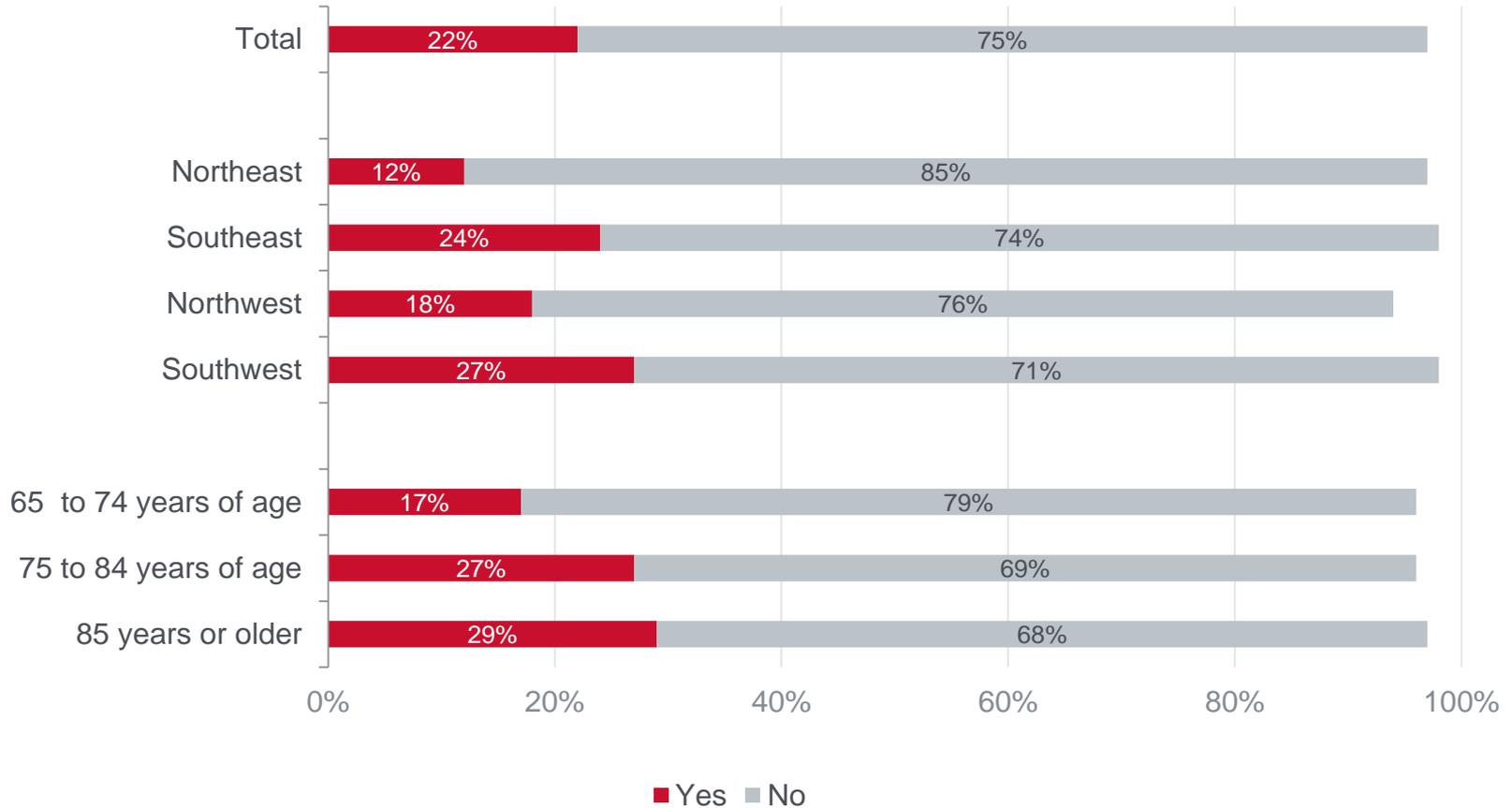
# Made modifications around home



Q13. Have you made any changes to help you get in or around your home?  
 Base: All respondents living in a home (n=492)



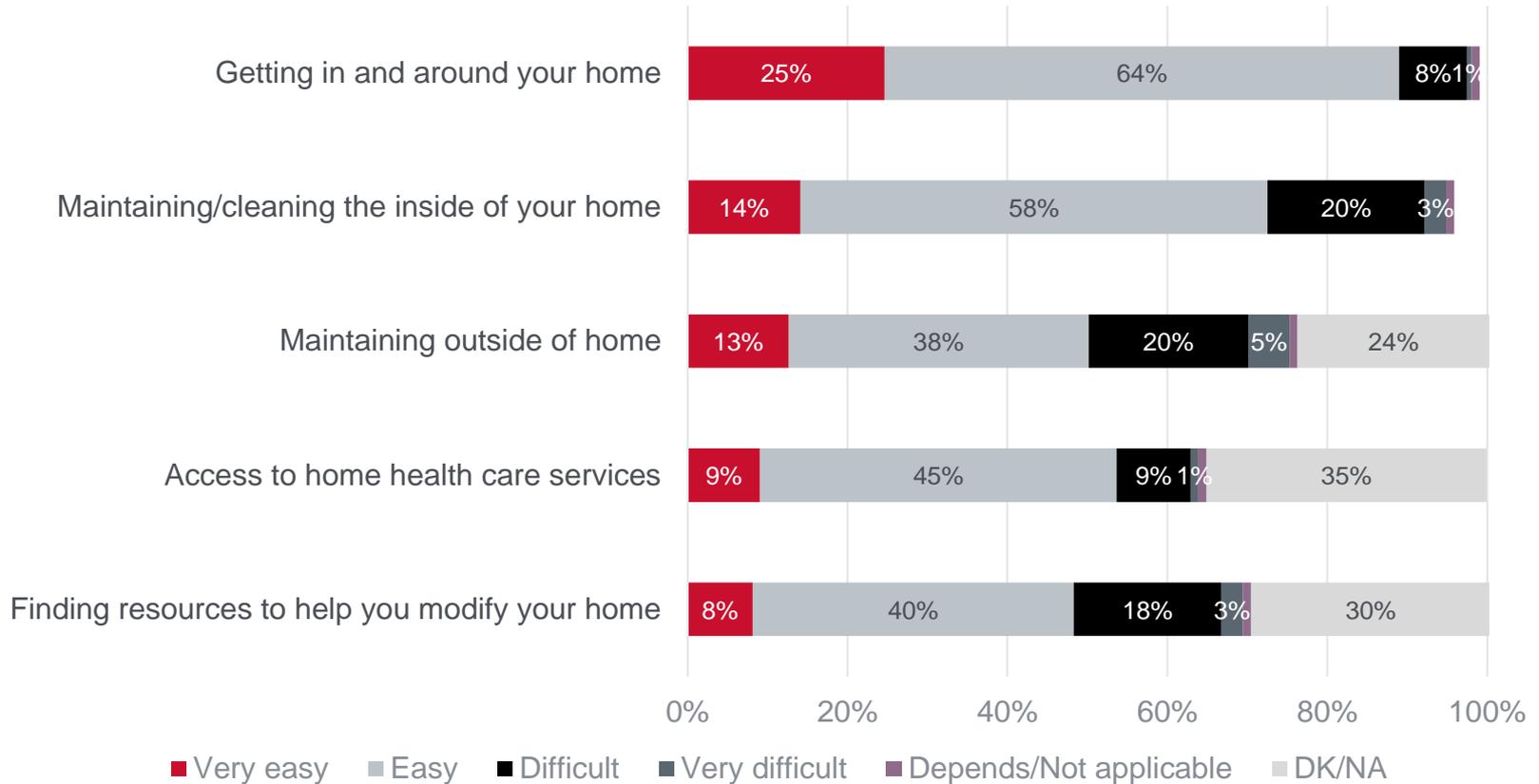
# Made modifications



Q13. Have you made any changes to help you get in or around your home?  
 Base: All respondents living in a home (n=492)



# Ease of doing tasks around the home



Q14. To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following?  
 Base: All respondents (n=492)



# Ease of doing tasks around the home

% Very easy or easy

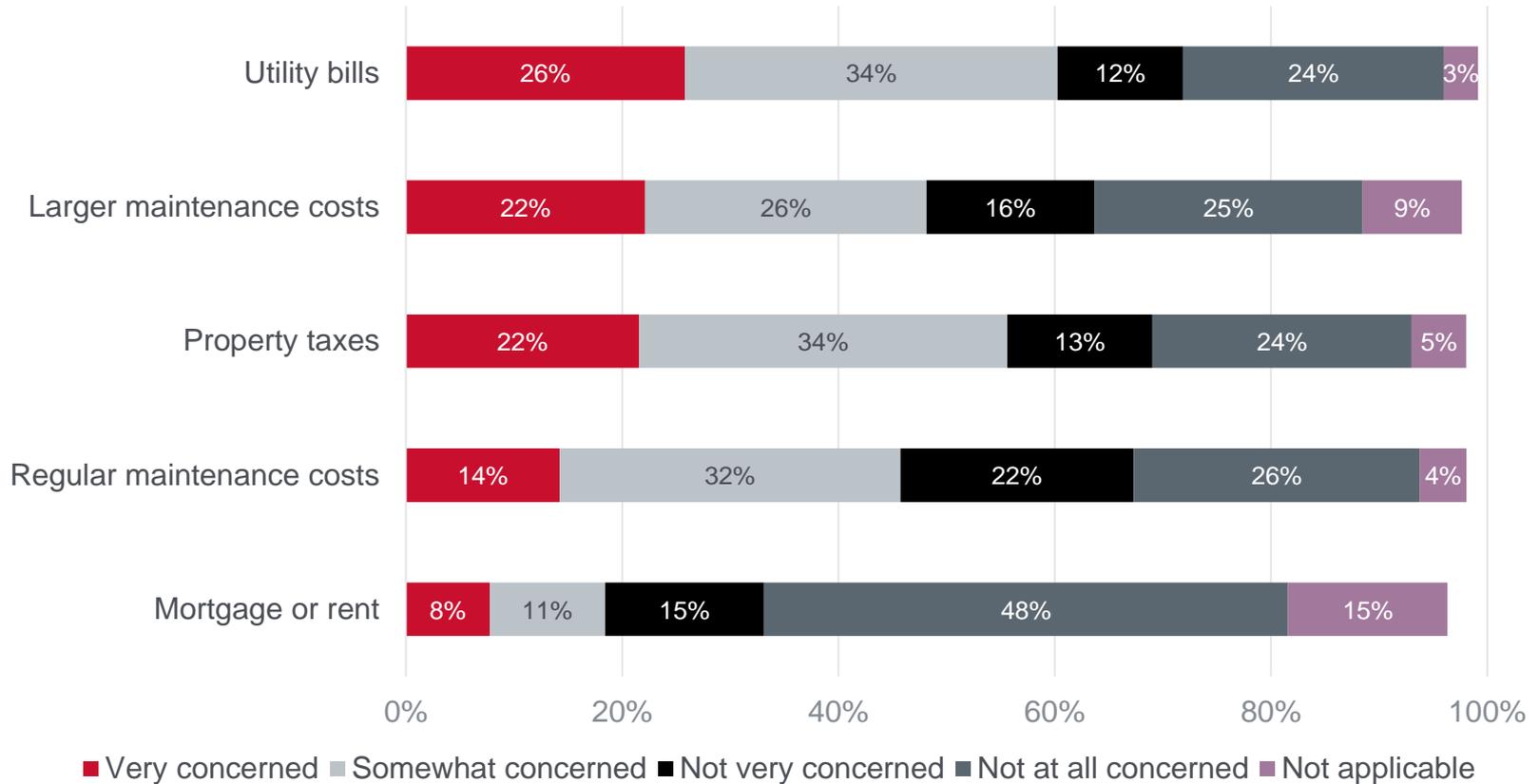
	TOTAL	65 to 74 years	75 to 84 years	85 or older	Men	Women
Getting in/around home	89	90	86	91	89	89
Maintaining/ cleaning inside	73	79	66	60	78	68
Access to home health care	54	53	51	67	56	52
Maintaining/ cleaning outside	50	58	41	38	60	42
Finding resources to help modify home	48	47	48	53	52	45

Q14. To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following?

Base: All respondents (n=492)



# Concern about expenses around home



Q15. To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following?  
 Base: All respondents (n=492)



# Concern about the affordability of expenses

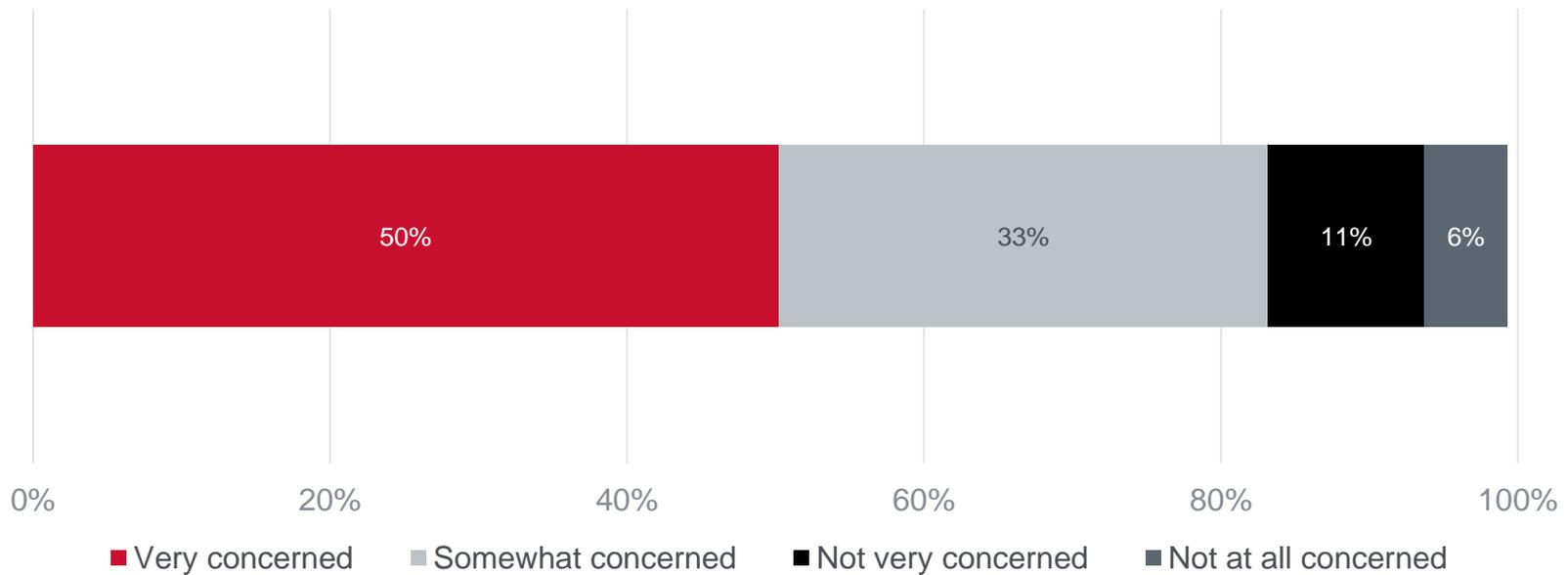
% Very or somewhat concerned

	TOTAL	65 to 74 years	75 to 84 years	85 or older	Men	Women
Utility bills	60	65	56	49	62	59
Property taxes	56	58	57	38	58	54
Larger maintenance expenses	48	51	51	26	43	52
Regular maintenance costs	46	48	48	31	38	52
Mortgage or rent	18	22	15	12	17	20

Q14. When thinking about various expenses related to your home, how concerned are you about being able to afford the following:  
 Base: All respondents (n=492)



# Concern about availability of services

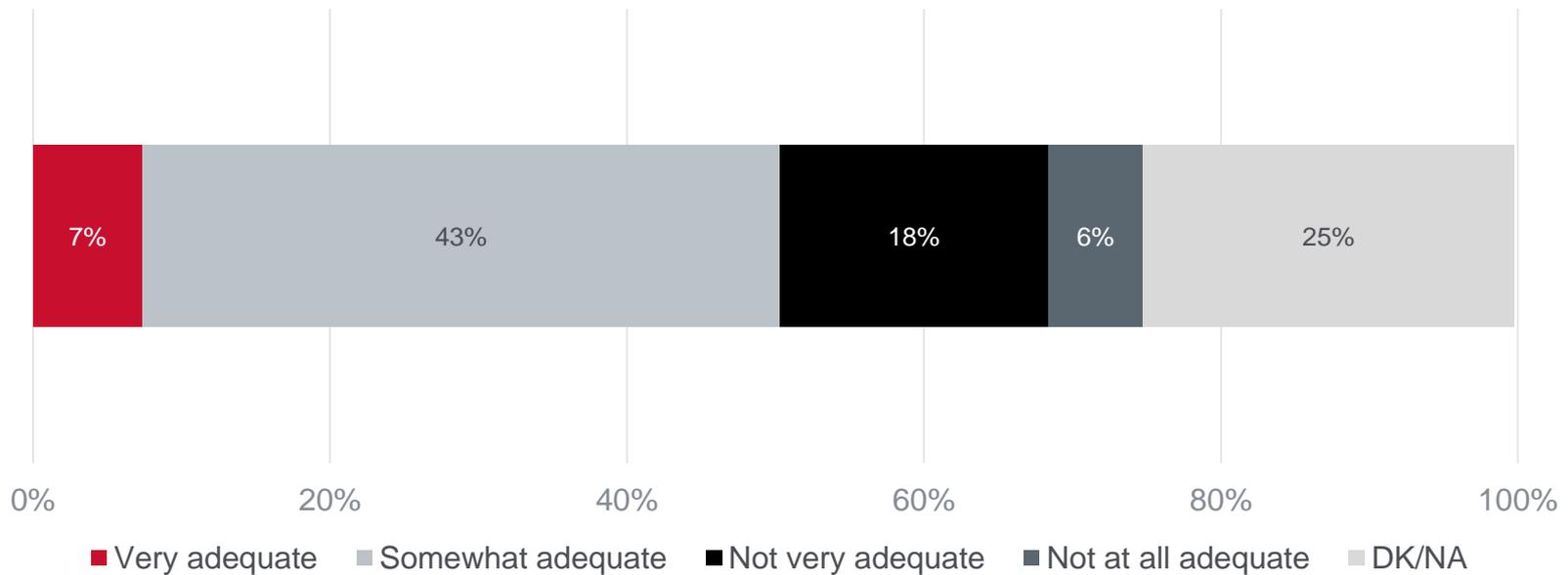


Q16. How concerned are you that services would be available to you if you personally suffered a long-term disability, a chronic illness, dementia, or could no longer care for yourself?

Base: All respondents (n=492)



# Adequacy of available in-home services

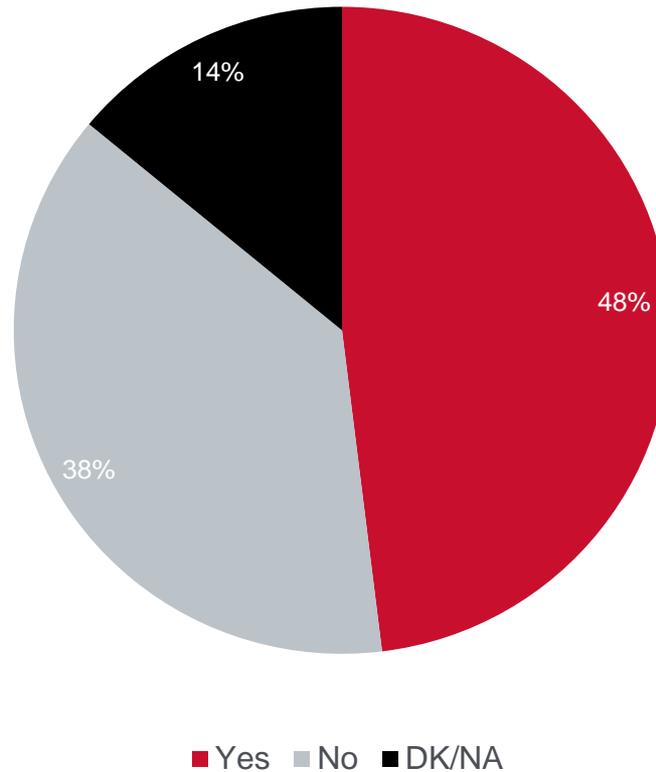


Q17. In your opinion, how adequate are the in-home services and care options in your community to help people who become unable to live independently because of their health, mobility, or disability? Are they...?

Base: All respondents (n=492)



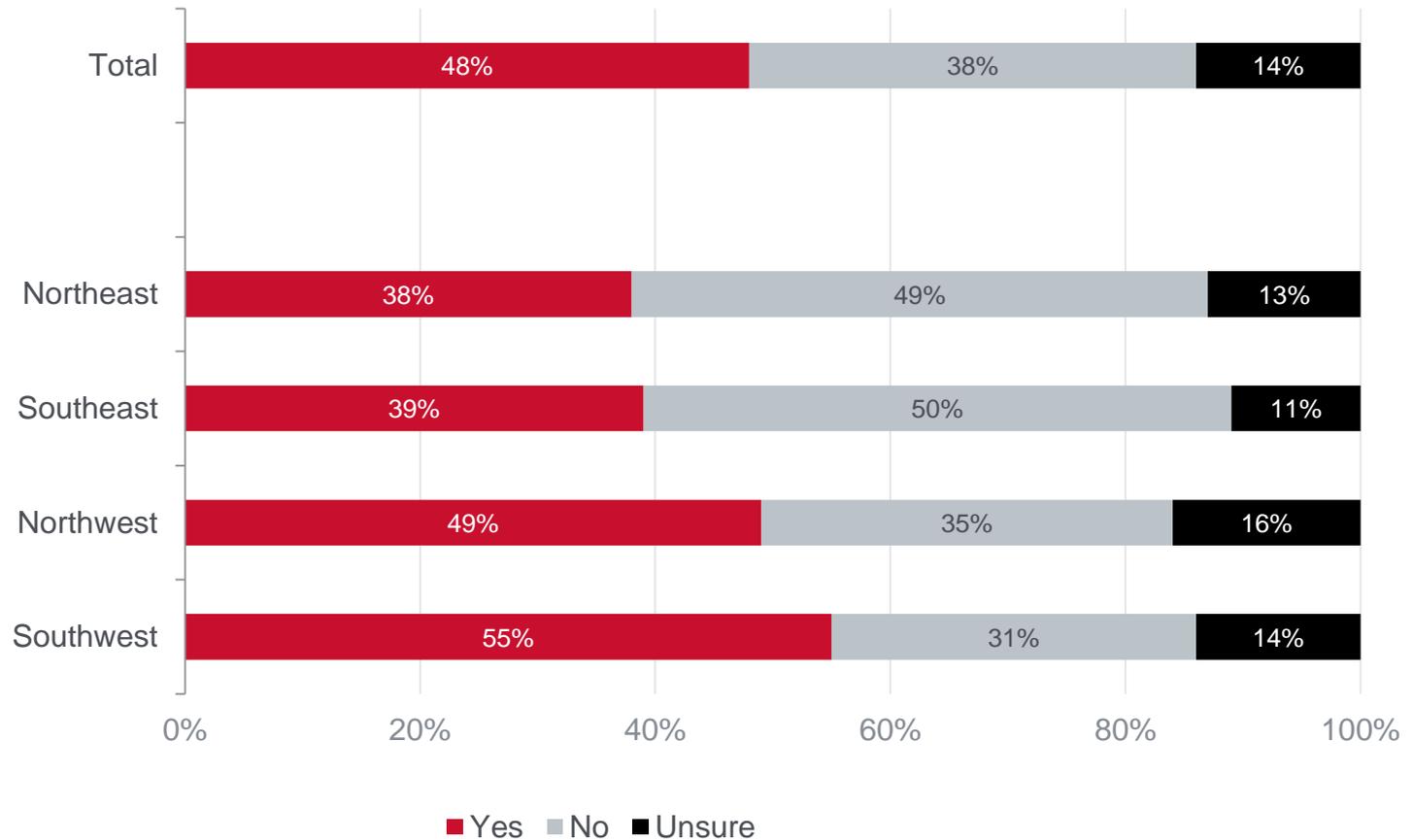
# Range of housing options available



Q18. Is there a range of housing options close to where you live to meet your future needs, or those of your friends or family?  
 Base: All respondents (n=492)



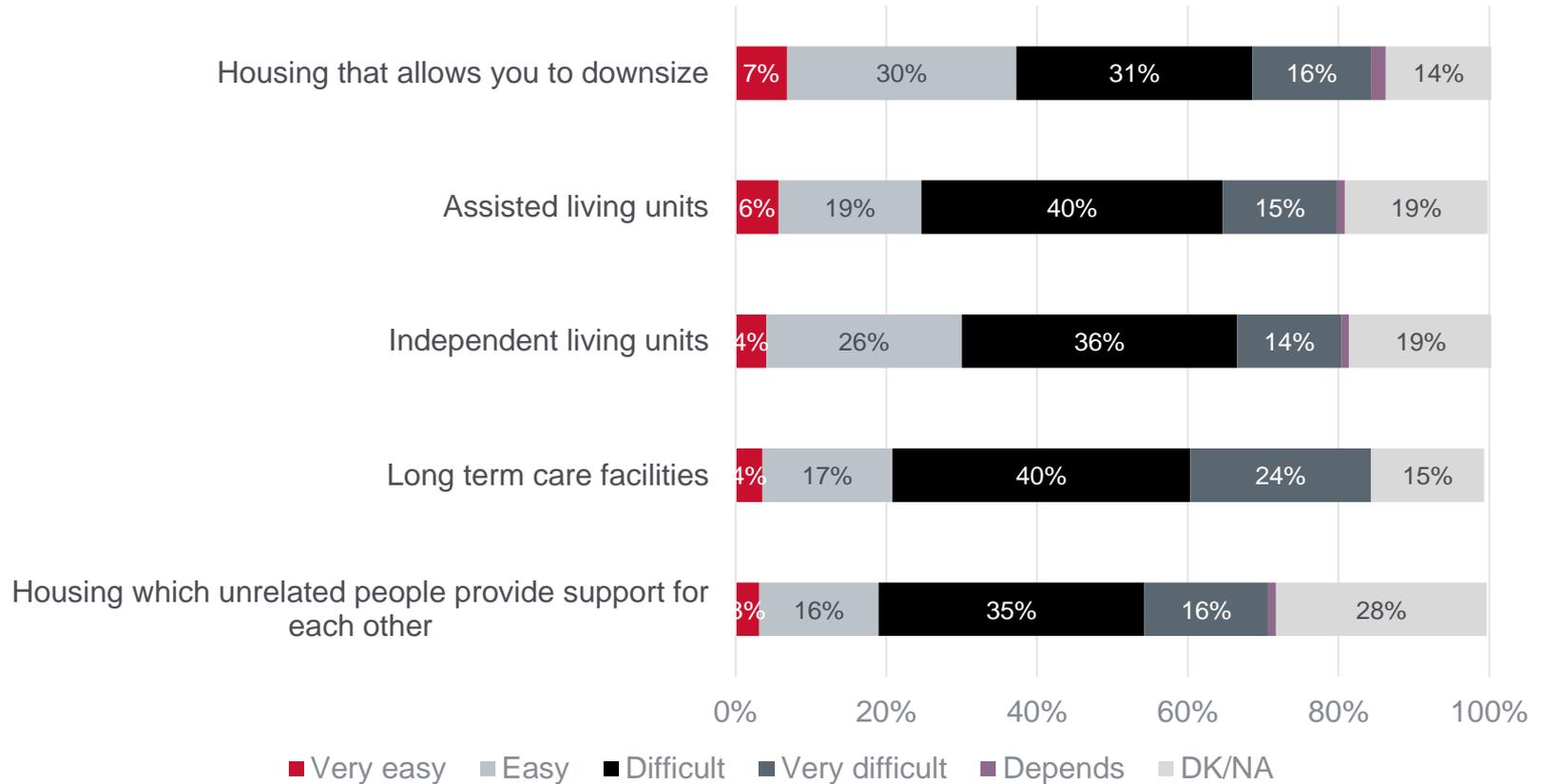
# Range of housing options available



Q18. Is there a range of housing options close to where you live to meet your future needs, or those of your friends or family?  
 Base: All respondents (n=492)



# Ease of finding specific housing for seniors



Q19. How easy or difficult do you think it is to find the following kinds of housing for seniors? How about....  
 Base: All respondents (n=500)

# Transportation



# Key Findings: Transportation

- A large majority of residents drive to get around the city and this is the primary mode of transportation for three in four seniors. Others use public transit, walk, or have someone drive them where they need it.
  - The likelihood of driving decreases with age. As well, men are more likely than women to drive (90% vs. 76%).
  - Over four in ten (44%) of those at least 85 years of age (n=25) rely on others to take them where they need to go. They are also twice as likely to use taxis to get around (17% vs. 9%).
- When considering their primary mode of transportation, three in four say driving is their primary mode and one in ten have someone drive them when required. Less than one in ten seniors use public transit as their primary way of getting around the city.
- About three in four seniors find it easy to get around the City, with 23% saying it is very easy.
  - Perceptions of ease of moving around the city vary by age and gender. The perceived ease decreases with age. In addition, men are more likely than women to believe it is easy to get around the city.
  - Those in fair or poor health are more likely to say they have difficulty getting around the city
- The perceived ease of getting around the city is similar among those who drive and those who use public transit.

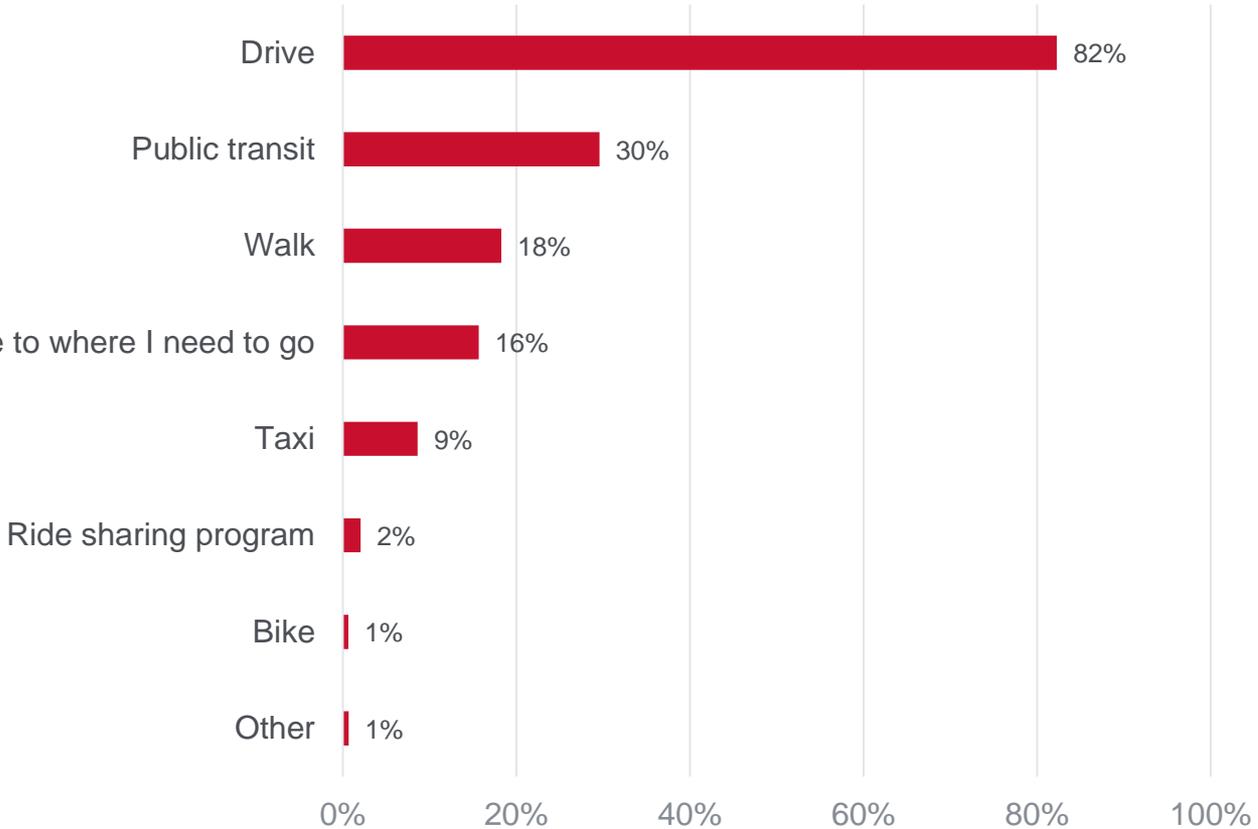


# Key Findings: Transportation

- Those who have difficulty getting around the city (n=110) were asked what would make it easier for them. Those experiencing difficulty most commonly suggest better access to public transit (29%). Fewer focus on roads and infrastructure maintenance or less traffic (16% and 12%). Others say that it is their own mobility or health that makes it difficult for them to get around Calgary.
- Others believe having someone else drive them around would make it easier for them to get around.
- Those who use public transit (n=147) as a mode of transportation were asked their agreement on a series of statements. Transit users are most likely to agree that transit passes are affordable, with 59% agreeing with that statement. Similar proportions also agree that public transit stations are easily accessible for seniors (58%) and that it is easy for seniors to get around the city on public transit (55%).
- Those who don't use public transit primarily say it is because it is too difficult to access because of both the transit system itself or their own mobility, or that they have their own car.



# Modes of transportation



Primary

75

8

3

10

0

1

0

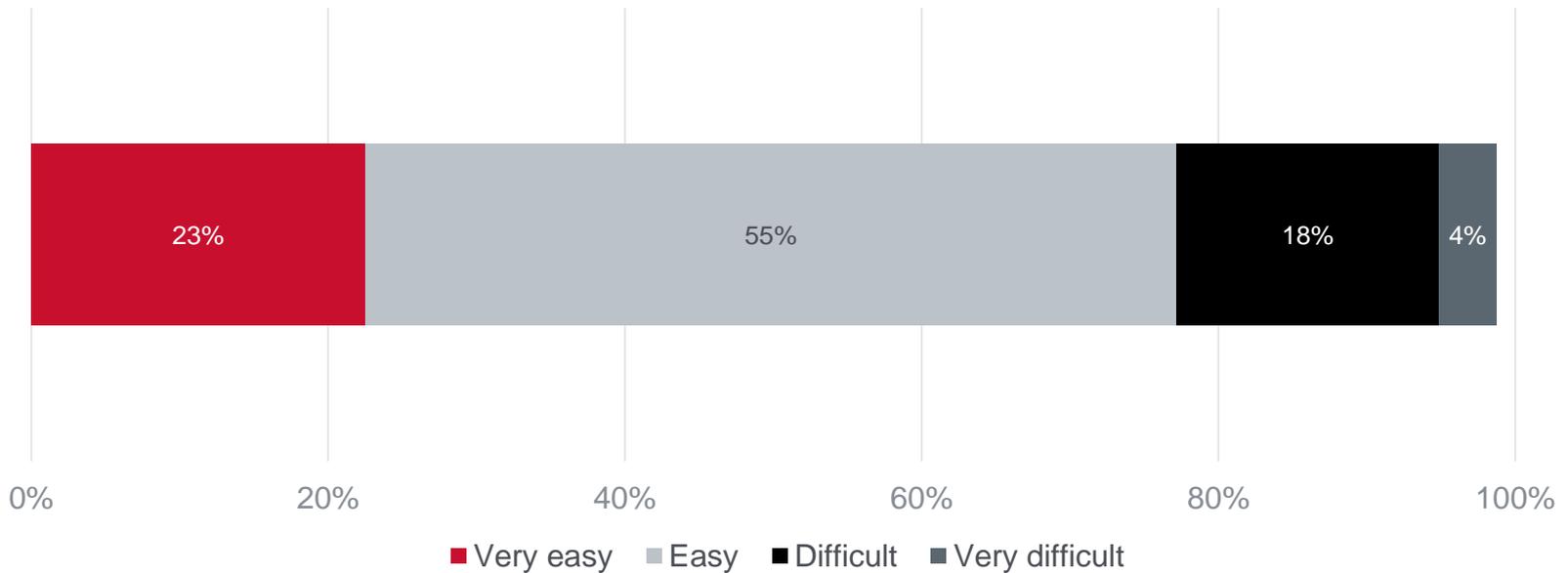
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Q20. In general, what mode(s) of transportation do you use to get around the city? Base: All respondents (n=500)

Q21. IF MORE THAN ONE MODE: And which of these is your primary mode of transportation? Base: All respondents (n=194)



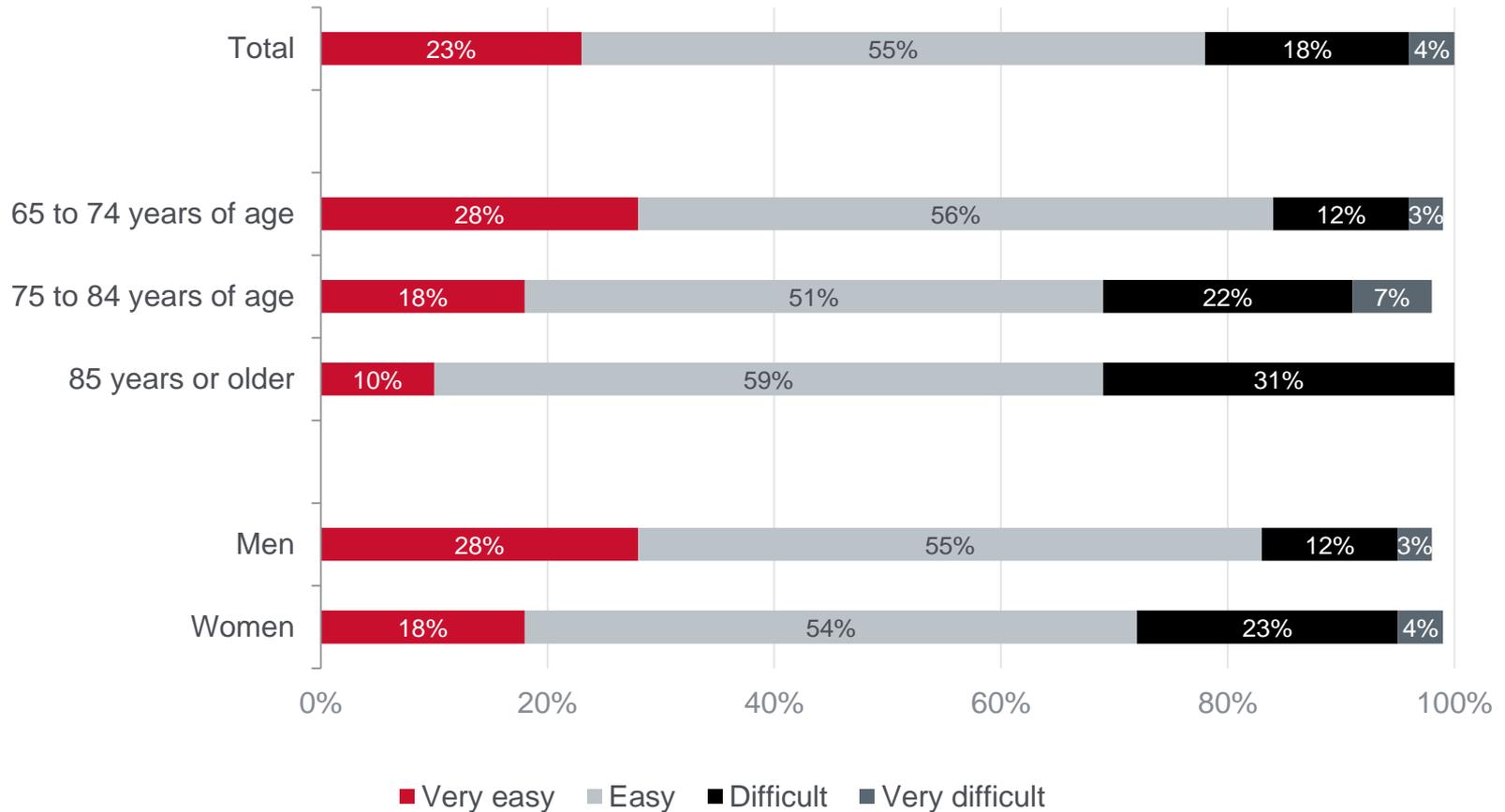
# Ease of getting around the city



Q22. How easy or difficult is it for you to get around the city. Is it, very easy, easy, difficult or very difficult?  
 Base: Those who are working (n=500)



# Ease of getting around the city



Q22. How easy or difficult is it for you to get around the city. Is it, very easy, easy, difficult or very difficult?  
 Base: Those who are working (n=500)



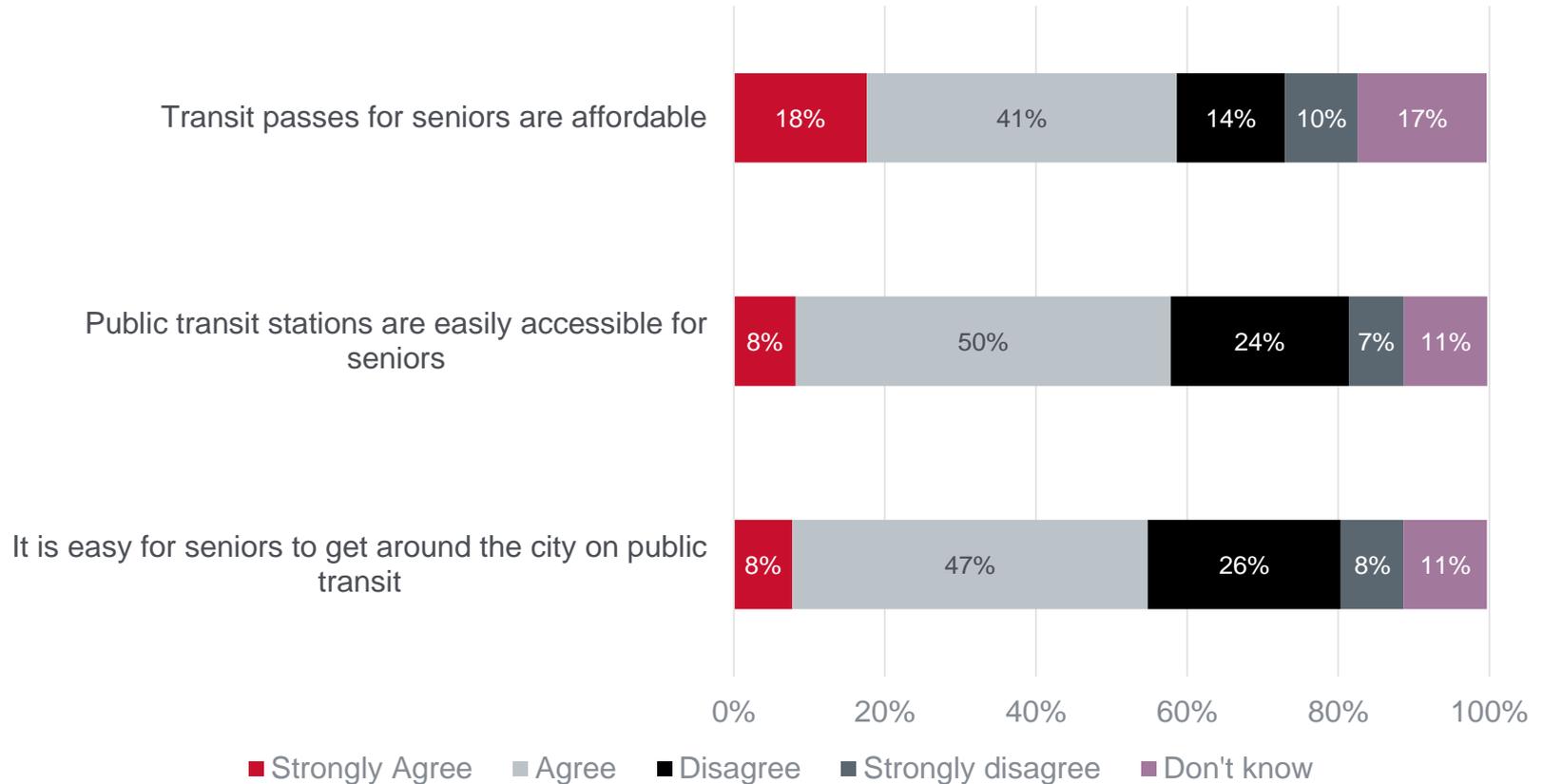
# Improvements to getting around

Theme (code)	Frequency (n)	Example comments
Better access to public transit in general	31	More access to transportation; handibus hard to get a hold of Its called access. If approved you can get a handy bus, only one bus ticket each way Access to more bus routes. To have main routes run more often on public transit.
Better roads / infrastructure	17	If roads were clear in winter time Get the road built that we were promised ten years ago, the south ring road. Clearer roads, ice is an issue.
Better health / mobility	14	Well, to get around I have to have help. If I was more mobile, the fault is in me.
Less traffic	13	Our traffic is horrendous. Improve bottlenecks.
Having someone else drive me	13	Personal driver
More policing / better drivers	6	More defensive drivers Monitoring the speed. People move much too quickly. Not enough tickets handed out
Other	20	The weather is one big handicap with ice on the road and the price of gas Smaller city More handicap stalls and more automatically opening doors.
Refused	11	

Q23. What would make it easier for you?  
Base: Difficult to get around (n=110)



# Agreement about public transit



Q24. When thinking of using public transit, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements:  
 Base: Public transit users (n=147)



# Reasons for not using transit

Theme (code)	Frequency (n)	Example comments
Accessing transit is too difficult	93	Because I cant walk very well Because I can't see to get off and on the bus without falling.
I have my own vehicle / like to drive	91	because I have my own vehicle.
Transit is not convenient / easier to drive	76	it is not particularly easy to get to, inconvenient. the bus service is not convenient
Transit is not reliable / faster to drive / don't like waiting	59	Because my car is faster and easier Because its not accessible you never know when they are coming.
Don't need to	30	We have our own car, what's the purpose of car if you're not going to drive it
Routes don't go where I need to / too many transfers	25	Work at the airport, no transit available during hours. Because the transit is not convenient for where I want to go
Received poor service / had a bad experience	22	Transit is very poor service where we are at It's lousy
Transit is too expensive	20	We often go downtown but the cost of transit is higher than paying for parking and much more inconvenient
Not familiar enough with system	16	Not a lot of experience with transit.
Don't go downtown	15	Don't go downtown
Family members drive me around	11	Why would I? if I have my daughter to drive me around.
Other	14	Don't like it Because I am too old
Don't know	10	

Q24. Why don't you use transit?  
Base: non-public transit users (n=353)

# Social inclusion

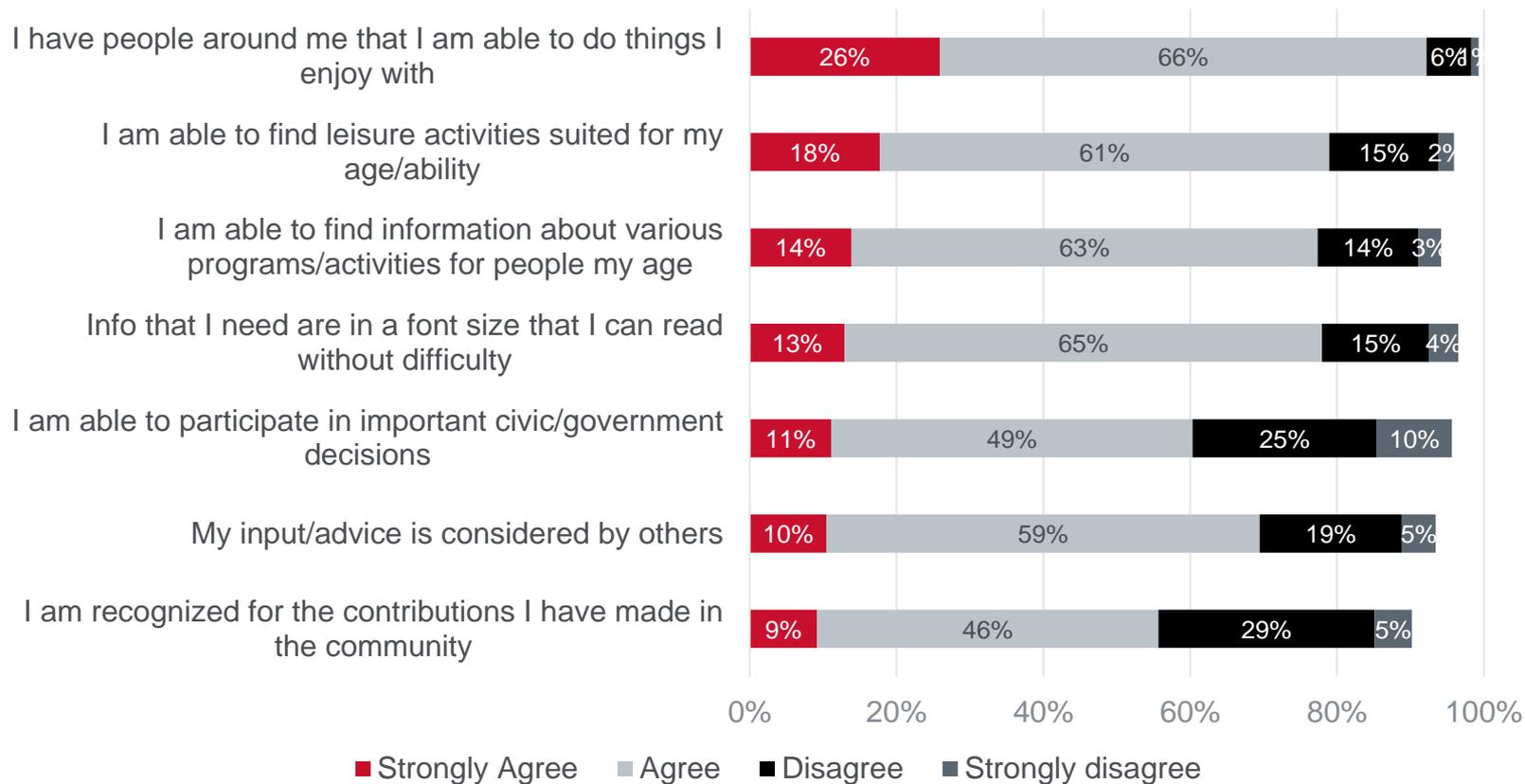


# Key Findings: Social inclusion

- A majority of seniors agree that they can participate in the community. Almost nine in ten believe that they have people around them that they are able to enjoy activities with, while slightly fewer agree that they are able to find suitable leisure activities for their age or ability.
- Three in four believe that they are able to find programs for their age, information about programs and activities and that this information is in a suitable font size.
  - Those who consider their overall health as either excellent or very good are more likely than others to agree that they are able to find activities suitable for their age and ability.
- There is somewhat less agreement that their input is considered by others, they are able to participate in important civic/government events, and that they are recognized for their contributions in the community.
- Generally, those who feel that the quality of life for seniors in Calgary is fair or poor are less likely to agree to agree with all aspects of social inclusion statements that were tested.



# Statements about participation and inclusion



Q24. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with:  
 Base: All respondents (n=500)



# What would make it easier to find information

Theme (code)	Frequency (n)	Example comments
Mail / printed material	23	Newspaper ads Publications If it was in newspaper or just send it out to district to put in local papers or letters
Internet	20	The City website On the internet The internet
Telephone / in person	6	Talk to people If I could pick up the phone and speak with someone directly
TV / Radio	3	Put it out more so we can read and hear it on the news, tv programs etc
Other	14	Things other than the internet More input from seniors Too much information online
Refused	24	

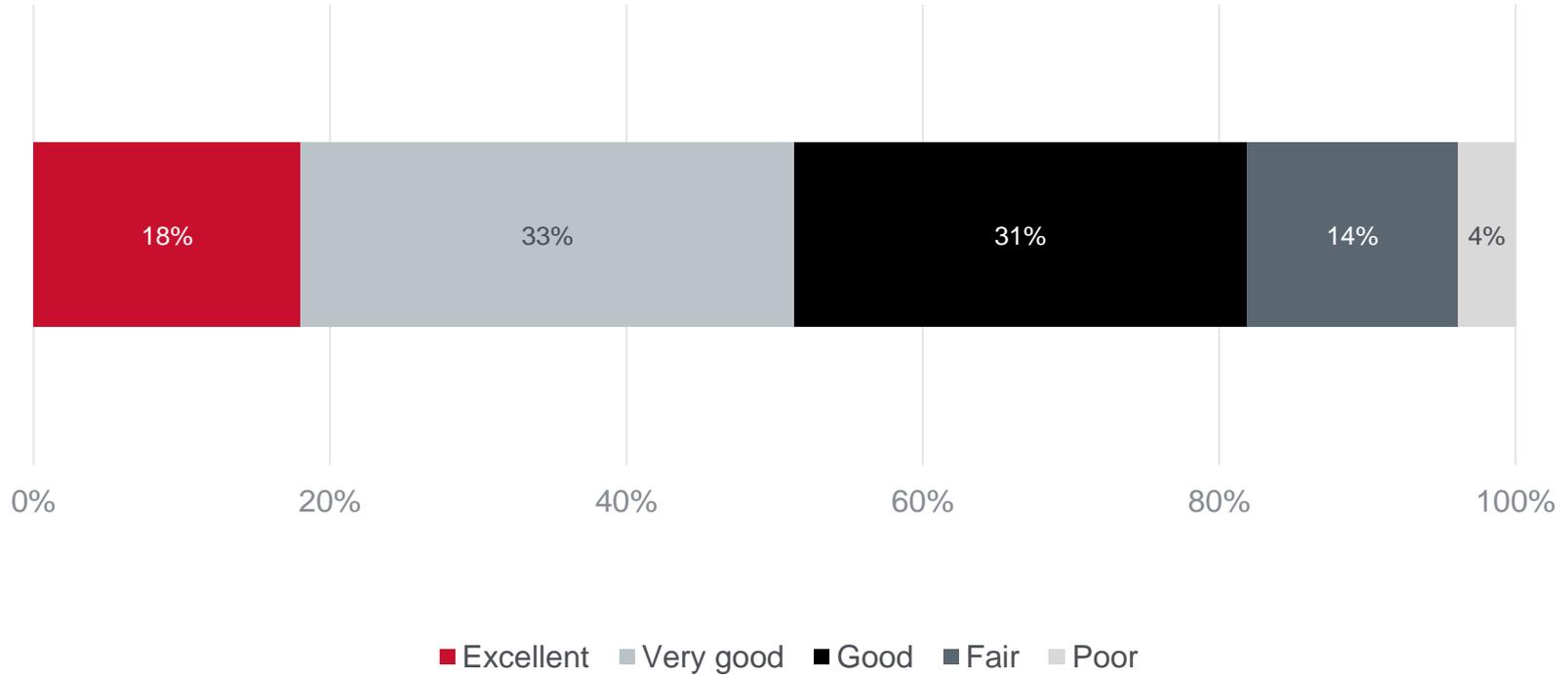
Base: Those with difficulty accessing information about programs (n=82)

# Participant snapshot





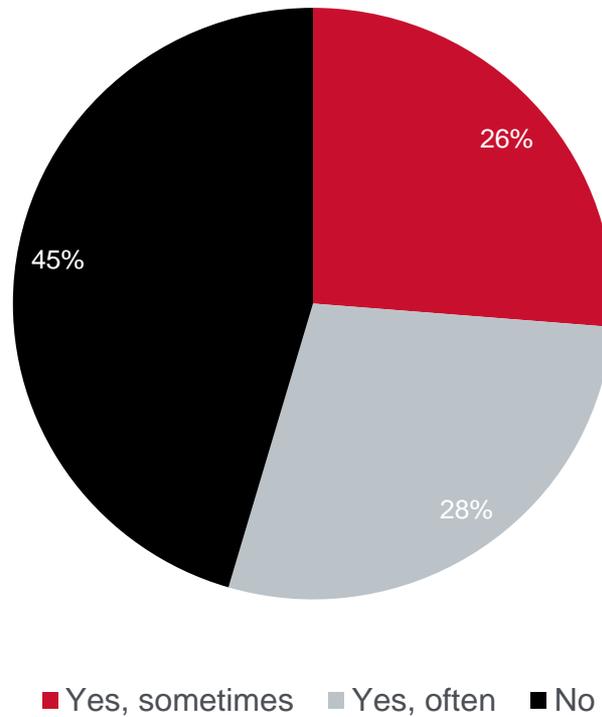
# Overall health



Q27. In general, would you say your health is? Base: All respondents (n=500)



# Difficulty with daily tasks

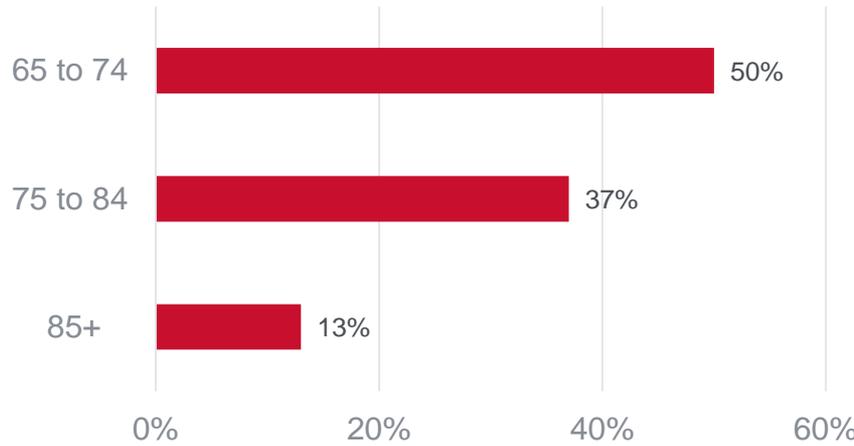


Q28. Do you have any difficulty hearing, seeing, communicating, walking, climbing stairs, bending, learning or doing any similar activities?  
 Base: All respondents (n=500)

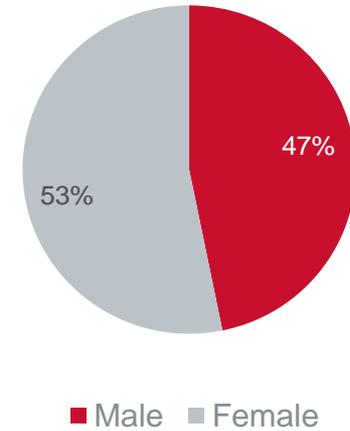


# Respondent characteristics (unweighted)

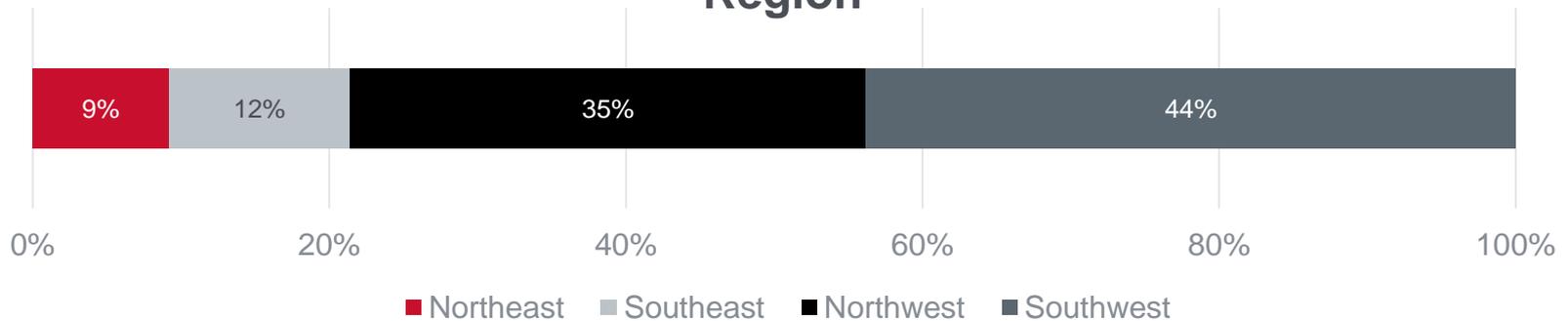
### Age



### Gender



### Region

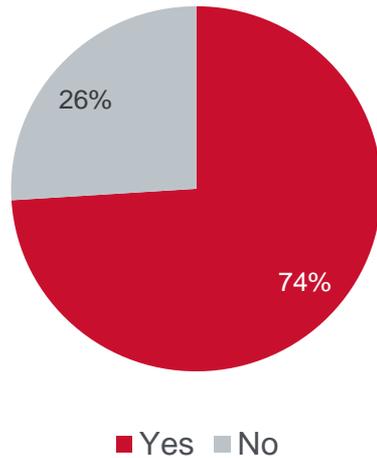


S1. Which of the following age categories do you belong to?  
 Q33A. May I please have the first 3 digits of your postal code?  
 Q37. Gender  
 Base: All respondents (n=500)

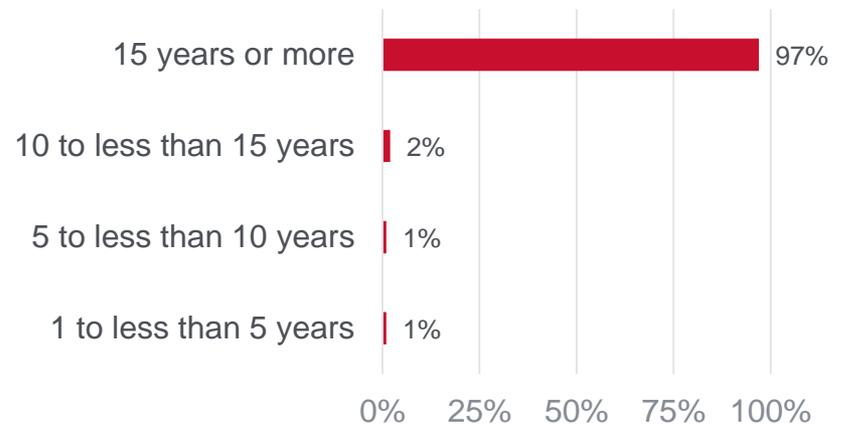


# Respondent characteristics (unweighted)

## Born in Canada



## Lived in Canada



Q29. Which of the following categories best corresponds to the total annual income, before taxes, of all members of your household, for 2016?

Q30. How long have you been a resident of Calgary?

Q31. Were you born in Canada?

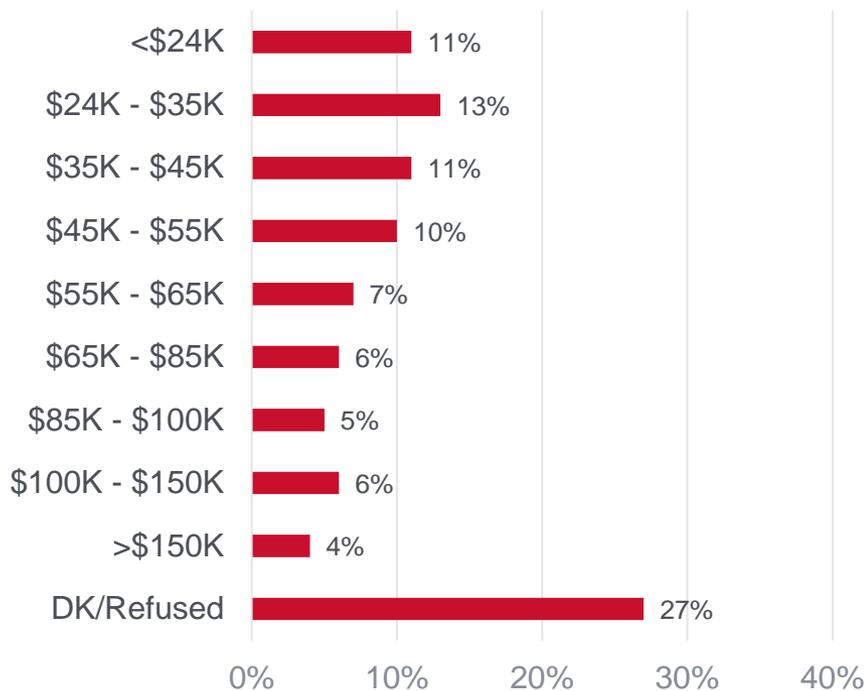
Base: All respondents (n=500)

Q32. How long have you lived in Canada? Base: Born outside of Canada (n=129)

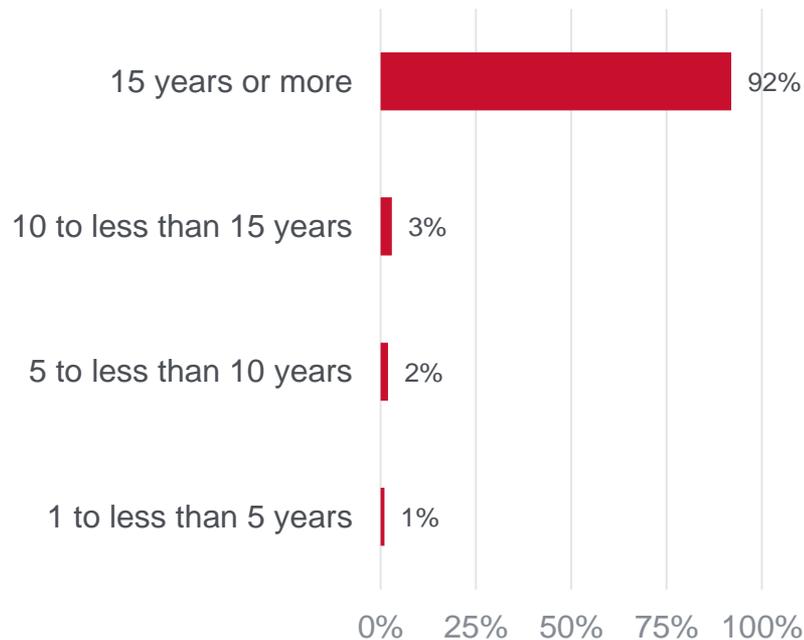


# Respondent characteristics (unweighted)

## Income



## Resident of Calgary



Q28. For statistical purposes only, we need information about your income. All individual responses will be kept confidential. Which of the following categories best corresponds to the total annual income, before taxes, of all members of your household, for 2016?

Q29. How long have you been a resident of Calgary?

Base: All respondents (n=500)

Thank you

