



CENTER FOR
ADVANCING
OPPORTUNITY

THE STATE OF OPPORTUNITY IN AMERICA

Understanding Barriers & Identifying Solutions



GALLUP®

Thurgood Marshall
College Fund

The Charles
Koch Foundation

Koch
Industries, Inc.

COPYRIGHT STANDARDS

This document contains proprietary research, copyrighted and trademarked materials of Gallup, Inc. Accordingly, international and domestic laws and penalties guaranteeing patent, copyright, trademark and trade secret protection safeguard the ideas, concepts and recommendations related within this document.

The materials contained in this document and/or the document itself may be downloaded and/or copied provided that all copies retain the copyright, trademark and any other proprietary notices contained on the materials and/or document. No changes may be made to this document without the express written permission of Gallup, Inc.

Any reference whatsoever to this document, in whole or in part, on any web page must provide a link back to the original document in its entirety. Except as expressly provided herein, the transmission of this material shall not be construed to grant a license of any type under any patents, copyright or trademarks owned or controlled by Gallup, Inc.

Gallup® is a trademark of Gallup, Inc. All other trademarks and copyrights are property of their respective owners.

Table of Contents

2

About This Report

3

Key Findings

5

Introduction

10

CHAPTER 01:

Snapshot of Americans Living
in Fragile Communities

20

CHAPTER 02:

Education

30

CHAPTER 03:

Employment and
Entrepreneurship

36

CHAPTER 04:

Crime and Criminal
Justice Reform

44

CHAPTER 05:

Optimism and Self-Confidence

52

CHAPTER 06:

Residents' Recommendations
for Improvement

58

Conclusion

61

References





About This Report

This report is based on the initial phases of a new initiative by the Center for Advancing Opportunity, the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf), the Charles Koch Foundation and Koch Industries, in collaboration with Gallup. The project will give voice to members of fragile communities across the United States. This research defines fragile communities as areas with high proportions of residents who struggle financially in their daily lives and have limited opportunities for social mobility.

The motivation to take on this research is simple: to understand the perceived barriers to opportunity and empower organizations that serve fragile communities to create evidence-based solutions. The current analysis incorporates qualitative and quantitative research methods – including a representative survey of 6,230 fragile-community residents nationwide – to produce a rich set of baseline insights on their lives and experiences.

The motivation to take on this research is simple: to understand the perceived barriers to opportunity and empower organizations that serve fragile communities to create evidence-based solutions.

The project's ultimate objective is to use these insights to identify the most important variables for understanding community-based barriers to opportunity and combine them in an index that will allow scholars and policymakers to compare different communities and track changes over time. Rather than providing a snapshot of static conditions, the goal is to create a meaningful tool for understanding the progress made by the communities at the core of this project.

Key Findings

Fragile-community residents are almost three times as likely as Americans overall to say there were times in the past year when they did not have enough money to pay for food for themselves or their families – 44% vs. 16%, respectively. The difference reflects the extent to which hardship is concentrated in such areas. The relationship between race and poverty in the U.S. is reflected in the racial and ethnic makeup of fragile communities, which is markedly different from most other areas of the country; in total, about two-thirds of residents in such communities identify as black (37%) or Hispanic (29%), versus less than one-third of the total U.S. population.

The fragile communities selected for inclusion in this study were identified based largely on the low average socioeconomic status of their residents – including the proportion living below the poverty level and the proportion without a college degree. Additional criteria included employment rates and composite well-being indicators from previous Gallup surveys of Americans.

Fragile-community residents in the U.S. give their lives an average rating of 6.07 on a zero-to-10 “ladder” scale where zero represents the worst possible life for them and 10 represents the best possible life. By comparison, Gallup found that the average life rating among Americans overall in the first half of 2017 was about one scale point higher, at 7.05.

Three interrelated factors are among the most formidable barriers to social mobility in fragile communities: low education levels, lack of employment opportunities and high crime rates. The combined effect of these circumstances forces many residents of fragile communities to stay focused on short-term concerns associated with day-to-day survival rather than planning for the long term.

1. Fragile-community residents recognize the importance of a good education – particularly a college education. However, just 19% agree that everyone in the U.S. has access to an affordable college education.

- Overall, 12% of fragile-community residents aged 25 and older have a four-year bachelor's degree or more, versus 34% among the total U.S. population.
- Within fragile communities, residents' financial and well-being indicators improve dramatically with each level of educational attainment beyond high school, including vocational training and two-year associate degrees. For example, 20% of residents with no more than a high school education say their standard of living is improving, versus 29% of those with a vocational or technical education and 37% of those with a four-year bachelor's degree or more.

2. Ten percent of fragile-community residents are not employed and say they have been actively looking for employment in the past four weeks, despite national unemployment figures of 4.3% to 4.4% during the survey's field period. Further, while 9% of fragile-community residents say they have plans to start a business in the next year, many more, 33%, say they have thought about starting a business in the past but decided not to do so.

- Among fragile-community residents who are actively looking for work, health problems are the most common challenge preventing them from taking jobs. This finding highlights the two-way relationship between low socioeconomic status and poor health in such communities, and the need for more targeted research to determine which health interventions have the most potential to break this negative cycle.
- Among those who have thought about starting businesses but decided not to, 70% cite a lack of personal savings as a reason. No more than 34% mention any other single reason.

3. A majority of fragile-community residents – 59% – say they would like to relocate permanently given the opportunity. Among this group, three-fourths cite crime as a major reason (51%) or minor reason (25%) for wanting to do so.

- Despite a general reduction in violent and property crime nationwide over the past 20 years, a slight majority of fragile-community residents (51%) say crime in their area has increased in the past few years, while 9% say it has decreased. By comparison, 40% of Americans overall said in an October 2017 Gallup poll that they thought there was more crime in their area than there had been a year ago.
- A majority of fragile-community residents (54%) say they would like the police to spend more time in their community, while just 5% say they would like the police to spend less time there. Nonetheless, by a wide margin, residents say they would prefer to spend more money and resources on attacking the root causes of crime through education and training (84%) than on improving law enforcement with more police, prisons and judges (16%).
- Residents are twice as likely to say they have a lot of respect for their local police (48%) as they are to say they have a lot of confidence in them (24%), suggesting many of those who respect the police in their area nonetheless doubt their ability to prevent crime.

Satisfaction with local housing is the community-perception variable most strongly related to fragile-community residents' confidence in their ability to achieve their career and financial goals.

- Overall, 38% of fragile-community residents are confident or very confident in their ability to achieve both their career and financial goals – but this figure rises to 47% among those who are satisfied with their access to good, affordable housing in the area where they live, while falling to 28% among those who are dissatisfied. This finding highlights housing policy as a key consideration in efforts to improve the opportunity structure for fragile-community residents.
- Other factors significantly related to residents' optimism about their career and financial goals include perceptions of local economic conditions, access to healthcare and confidence in local police.

Higher wages and more funding for public schools are among the changes that residents are most likely to say would positively impact their communities.

Asked which two of 12 possible policy interventions would have the most positive impact on people in their area, fragile-community residents are most likely to choose raising the minimum wage (40%), increasing funding for public schools (30%), better transportation infrastructure (27%) and more government aid for low-income people (27%).

- Preferred policy options differ substantially by residents' reported political orientation. Republican residents of fragile communities are more likely to favor greater restrictions on immigration and reduced taxes and regulations on businesses, while Democrats are more likely to favor increasing the minimum wage and increasing funding for public schools. Policies with relatively high levels of support from members of both parties include more job training, improved transportation infrastructure and a stronger police presence.
- Overall, 51% of fragile-community residents identify as Democrats or lean toward the Democratic Party, while 24% are Republicans or lean Republican. Fifteen percent are political independents. As among the population at large, black and Hispanic residents of fragile communities in the U.S. lean heavily Democratic, as do residents with lower household income levels.

Introduction

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson set forth his vision to build a Great Society that included “an unconditional war on poverty.”¹ The goal was to eliminate extreme poverty in the United States. The federal government provided unprecedented levels of federal assistance to the most vulnerable Americans and passed legislation to encourage the formation of “strong, sustainable and inclusive communities.” In 2016, more than 40 million Americans — 12.7% of the total population — lived below the official poverty line. While poverty has declined 6.3 percentage points since 1964, we have miles to go to address the barriers to opportunity. And when we involve the government, the private sector, faith-based organizations *and* residents of fragile communities in the problem-solving business, things will begin to change.

Higher wages and more funding for public schools are among the changes that residents are most likely to say would positively impact their communities.

¹ Lyndon Baines Johnson, State of the Union Address, Jan. 8, 1964.

Over the past 50 years, researchers have primarily focused on understanding the following issues:

- why concentrated poverty persists
- to what degree living in disadvantaged communities affects individuals' ability to achieve higher living standards and positive health outcomes
- what attributes enable at-risk individuals to overcome daunting barriers

In turn, community leaders, policy entrepreneurs and politicians have proposed and implemented programs aimed at addressing the root causes of poverty and providing individuals the opportunity for upward mobility.² However, no study has surveyed individuals from these fragile communities in an effort to produce a nationally representative sample that covers their perspective about the barriers to opportunity.³

The Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf) has launched a new initiative in collaboration with Gallup that will give voice to members of fragile communities across the country. The motivation to take on this research is simple: to understand the perceived barriers to opportunity and empower organizations that serve fragile communities to create evidence-based solutions.

The current report is based on the initial phases of this research, which uses both qualitative and quantitative research methods to arrive at a more comprehensive portrait of life in America's fragile communities. The next phase will use the resulting insights to create an index that consolidates the most important indicators of access to opportunity, allowing researchers and policymakers to compare conditions in communities across the country and to track progress at the local and national levels over time. The index will fill an important gap in the national dialogue on fragile communities by considering both external barriers to opportunities, such as a lack of options for high-quality education or support for entrepreneurship, and more subjective barriers, such as a prevailing lack of hope and optimism that may discourage residents from striving to achieve a better future for themselves and their families. The goal is to create a meaningful tool for better understanding conditions associated with progress in the communities at the core of this project.

² The Urban Institute's U.S. Partnership on Mobility From Poverty and the Pew Charitable Trust's Economic Mobility Project are two sources for information on the state of economic mobility.

³ Several research programs have investigated neighborhood variation within specific cities or across a number of urban centers. Examples include the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods and the Casey Foundation's Making Connections Study.

METHODOLOGY

The initial qualitative phase of the project consisted of in-depth interviews conducted via phone with participants in four metropolitan areas: Birmingham, Alabama; Cleveland, Ohio; Fresno, California; and Chicago, Illinois. The goal of these interviews was to learn how residents of fragile communities view their own circumstances and the options available to them. The resulting insights helped inform the development of a quantitative questionnaire.

The questionnaire was mailed to 28,000 people across the U.S., including both urban and rural areas, to get 6,000 completed surveys. For the purposes of this study, the following four criteria were used to select census tracts eligible for inclusion in the sample domain:

1. Employment
 - Unemployment rate
 - Percentage of working-age adults not in the labor force
2. Poverty rate
 - Percentage of residents with household income below the poverty level
 - Percentage of residents with household income below twice the poverty level
3. Education: Percentage of adults with a college degree
4. Composite score on the Gallup-Sharecare Well-Being Index⁴

U.S. census tracts were divided into quartiles with regard to recent data in each of the four domains. To be included in the sample, a census tract had to be in the worst-performing quartile in at least three of the four. Approximately one out of seven census tracts in the U.S. was selected for the study. At least one tract in every state except Vermont was selected. Three of the cities in which the qualitative research was conducted – Birmingham, Chicago and Fresno – were oversampled to provide enough cases for analysis of subgroups in those communities. These three communities were selected in part because they represent distinct geographic regions in the U.S., each with its own economic and historical influences, as well as different racial and ethnic compositions.⁵

The goal of these interviews was to learn how residents of fragile communities view their own circumstances and the options available to them.

⁴ The Gallup-Sharecare Well-Being Index measures Americans' perceptions of their lives and their daily experiences through five interrelated aspects of well-being: sense of purpose, social relationships, financial security, relationship to community and physical health. Results are based on Gallup tracking interviews with a national sample of at least 500 U.S. adults daily. To learn more about the index, visit www.well-beingindex.com.

⁵ The national sample of fragile-community residents is weighted so that the oversampled communities are not overrepresented in the overall results.

WHAT ARE FRAGILE COMMUNITIES?

Fragile communities in the U.S. are characterized by high proportions of residents struggling in their daily lives and possessing limited opportunities for social mobility. This conception is closely tied to the literature on concentrated poverty and disadvantage that became prominent by the mid-1980s.

Fragile communities can be found across the country, and in both urban and rural areas – anywhere that a confluence of poverty and isolation helps perpetuate a cycle of disadvantage from which residents find it difficult to break free. A recent analysis of census and survey data by researchers at Penn State University determined that, after a reduction in the number of poor communities during the late 1990s, poverty in the U.S. began to re-concentrate in the 2000s, a process that has continued in the wake of the Great Recession. The ethnic makeup of Americans living in high-poverty areas has also changed during that time, with rising percentages of Hispanics and whites. Specifically, the authors found that the proportion of whites living in such areas rose from 5.8% in 2000 to 8.2% in the 2010-2014 period.

Concentrated poverty has also shifted geographically in the last 20 years, particularly as the renovation of many inner cities has forced low-income residents to move to the suburbs. Researchers have begun to study the implications of that shift, which may exacerbate the challenges facing residents, given that social safety nets tend to be less developed in suburban areas than in urban centers.

Fragile communities in the U.S. are characterized by high proportions of residents struggling in their daily lives and possessing limited opportunities for social mobility.

01

Snapshot of Americans Living in Fragile Communities

The fragile communities included in the study were selected largely for the differences between the socioeconomic conditions of their residents and those of the average American. While about one-third of Americans overall (34%) say they have a four-year bachelor's degree or more, about one in eight residents of fragile communities (12%) say the same. Income comparisons are even starker; half of Americans overall (50%) have annual household incomes of \$60,000 or more, versus 15% of fragile-community residents. In some fragile communities, the situation is worse yet. Among Birmingham residents, just 5% report having household incomes of at least \$60,000, while most (59%) have incomes of \$23,999 or less.

The relationship between race and socioeconomic status in America is clearly reflected in the country's fragile communities. Whereas less than one-third of Americans overall (29%) identify as black or Hispanic, this number rises to about two-thirds (66%) in the areas surveyed. Among communities in the three oversampled cities, black and Hispanic residency is far higher. In Birmingham, the vast majority of fragile-community residents (89%) are black; in Chicago, most are black (59%) or Hispanic (33%); and in Fresno, a majority (55%) are Hispanic.

Overall, 51% of fragile-community residents identify as Democrats or say they lean toward the Democratic Party, while 24% are Republicans or lean Republican and 15% are political independents (the remaining 10% do not respond). By comparison, in response to general-public surveys in the first half of 2017, 45% of Americans say they are Democrats or lean toward the Democratic Party, while 39% are Republicans or lean Republican and 11% are independents. The heavier Democratic orientation in fragile communities largely reflects the high proportion of black or Hispanic residents and lower-income Americans, groups that consistently favor the Democratic Party.

Overall, 51% of fragile-community residents identify as Democrats or say they lean toward the Democratic Party, while 24% are Republicans or lean Republican and 15% are political independents.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FRAGILE-COMMUNITY RESIDENTS IN THE U.S.

		FRAGILE COMMUNITIES NATIONWIDE (N=6,230)	FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN BIRMINGHAM (N=584)	FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN CHICAGO (N=598)	FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN FRESNO (N=746)	TOTAL U.S. POPULATION* (N=87,139)
Education	Less than high school diploma	13%	10%	16%	12%	11%
	High school graduate	35%	34%	30%	36%	27%
	Vocational school/Some college	31%	37%	27%	25%	17%
	Associate degree	9%	9%	7%	9%	11%
	Bachelor's degree or more	12%	10%	20%	18%	34%
Household income	\$23,999 or less	43%	59%	36%	42%	19%
	\$24,000 to \$34,999	15%	13%	16%	12%	13%
	\$35,000 to \$59,999	19%	14%	20%	21%	18%
	\$60,000 to \$89,999	9%	4%	10%	10%	18%
	\$90,000 or more	6%	1%	7%	6%	32%
Race/Ethnicity	Non-Hispanic white	31%	11%	7%	23%	68%
	Black	37%	89%	59%	10%	13%
	Hispanic	29%	1%	33%	55%	16%
	Asian	2%	0%	1%	11%	2%

* Based on aggregated Gallup Daily tracking results from January-June 2017; results are weighted according to the most recent demographic data from the U.S. Census

LIFE EVALUATIONS

To provide a basic indicator of their subjective well-being, the survey asked fragile-community residents to think of a zero-to-10 “ladder” scale,¹ where zero represents the worst possible life for them and 10 the best possible life. Respondents were asked to first rate their current lives on that scale and then to predict where they think their lives will be five years in the future.

Overall, residents of fragile communities rate their current lives at just over 6, on average, and their future lives at about 7.4. Results are generally consistent in each of the three cities oversampled for the study. Residents’ current-life ratings are a full scale point below those of the U.S. population overall (at just over 7, on average). Future-life ratings among fragile-community residents average about 1.4 points higher than current-life ratings – the corresponding gap among Americans overall is just under one scale point (0.84). The comparison suggests that fragile-community residents are somewhat more hopeful than Americans overall that their lives will improve in the coming years, though the difference also likely reflects the fact that their ratings have more room for improvement.

LIFE EVALUATION AVERAGES AMONG RESIDENTS OF FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN THE U.S.

Estimates followed by confidence intervals in parentheses, p<.05

	FRAGILE COMMUNITIES NATIONWIDE (N=6,230)	FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN BIRMINGHAM (N=584)	FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN CHICAGO (N=598)	FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN FRESNO (N=746)	TOTAL U.S. POPULATION* (N=87,139)
Current life	6.07 (6.01 to 6.13)	6.02 (5.83 to 6.21)	6.01 (5.83 to 6.19)	6.05 (5.90 to 6.20)	7.05 (7.04 to 7.06)
Life in five years	7.43 (7.37 to 7.49)	7.64 (7.45 to 7.83)	7.50 (7.32 to 7.68)	7.45 (7.28 to 7.62)	7.89 (7.88 to 7.90)

* Based on aggregated Gallup Daily tracking results from January–June 2017

Not surprisingly, life evaluations trend upward with education and income levels among fragile-community residents. For those with annual household incomes of \$15,000 or less, the current-life average is 5.42, after which it rises steadily with each income bracket, reaching 7.31 among residents with incomes of \$90,000 or more. Among Americans overall with household incomes of \$90,000 or more, the average life evaluation is somewhat higher, at 7.61, suggesting living in a fragile community has some effect on residents’ life evaluations independent of their individual income levels.

¹ Based on the Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale (Cantril, 1965)

There are a few notable differences by other demographic categories among fragile-community residents. Male and female residents give similar current-life ratings, on average, though women rate their future lives somewhat more highly than men do, a pattern that is also seen among Americans overall. Black and Hispanic residents of fragile communities are somewhat more optimistic than white residents that their future lives will be better than their lives in the present (see Chapter 5).

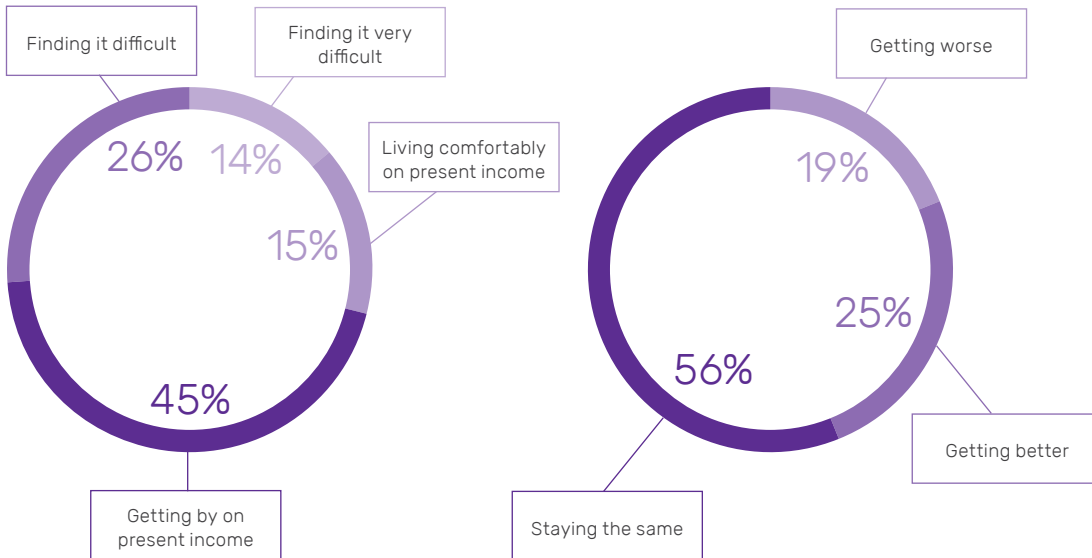
FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY

Asked to characterize their feelings about their current household income, 15% of fragile-community residents say they are “living comfortably” on that income, while almost half (45%) say they are “getting by” and four in 10 say they are finding it “difficult” (26%) or “very difficult” (14%). Despite the general optimism reflected in their future-life ratings, only about one-fourth of residents (25%) say their standard of living is currently improving, while the majority (56%) say it is staying the same and 19% say it is getting worse. By comparison, Americans overall are far more likely to say their standard of living is improving, at 65%, while 16% say it is staying the same and 19% say it is getting worse.

Male and female residents give similar current-life ratings, on average, though women rate their future lives somewhat more highly than men do, a pattern that is also seen among Americans overall.

Which one of these phrases comes closest to your own feelings about your household’s income these days?

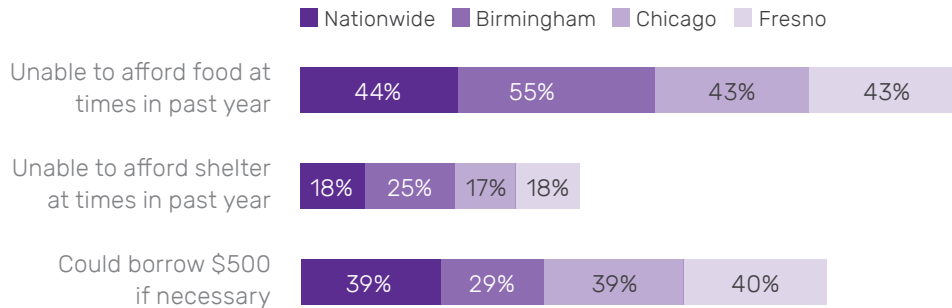
Right now, do you feel your standard of living is getting better, staying the same or getting worse?



Residents of fragile communities are commonly unable to afford basic necessities. While 16% of Americans overall say there were times in the past 12 months when they did not have enough money to buy food for themselves or their families, this figure rises to 44% among fragile-community residents. For comparative purposes, the Gallup World Poll finds that similar percentages say yes to the same question among the general public in Panama (44%) and El Salvador (43%).² Among fragile-community residents who say they have had trouble paying for food in the past year, 56% say they have been on food assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) during that time.

Eighteen percent of fragile-community residents say there were times in the past 12 months when they had trouble affording adequate shelter for themselves or their families. Among this group, 23% say they have been on housing vouchers or housing assistance during that time. Overall, almost half of adults in fragile communities (47%) are dissatisfied with the availability of good, affordable housing in their area. Residents' financial vulnerability is also reflected in the finding that just 39% say there is a person or place they could borrow \$500 from if they needed to but could not pay it back for three months. Each indicator of financial vulnerability is somewhat more common in Birmingham than in Chicago or Fresno.

FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY AMONG RESIDENTS OF FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN THE U.S.



About four in 10 residents of America's fragile communities (41%) say they or someone in their household receives Medicaid benefits, while almost as many (37%) receive some form of food assistance, such as the Food Stamp program or SNAP. For most of the services listed, rates of use are somewhat higher among fragile communities in Birmingham than among those in Chicago or Fresno. However, Fresno residents are more likely to receive unemployment benefits than those in Birmingham or Chicago.³

2 Gallup World Poll, 2017. The margins of error at the 95% confidence level are ±3.8 percentage points for results from Panama and ±3.9 percentage points for results from El Salvador.

3 As in much of California, unemployment remained high in Fresno, at over 8% in mid-2017; see https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.ca_fresno_msa.htm

Have you or anyone in your household received any of the following government services and benefits in the past 12 months?

	FRAGILE COMMUNITIES NATIONWIDE	FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN BIRMINGHAM	FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN CHICAGO	FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN FRESNO
Medicaid	41%	49%	44%	36%
Food assistance	37%	46%	39%	39%
Supplemental Security Income	21%	29%	23%	22%
Disability benefits	20%	33%	19%	17%
Housing assistance	12%	15%	15%	11%
Unemployment benefits	8%	5%	6%	13%

TENURE IN COMMUNITY

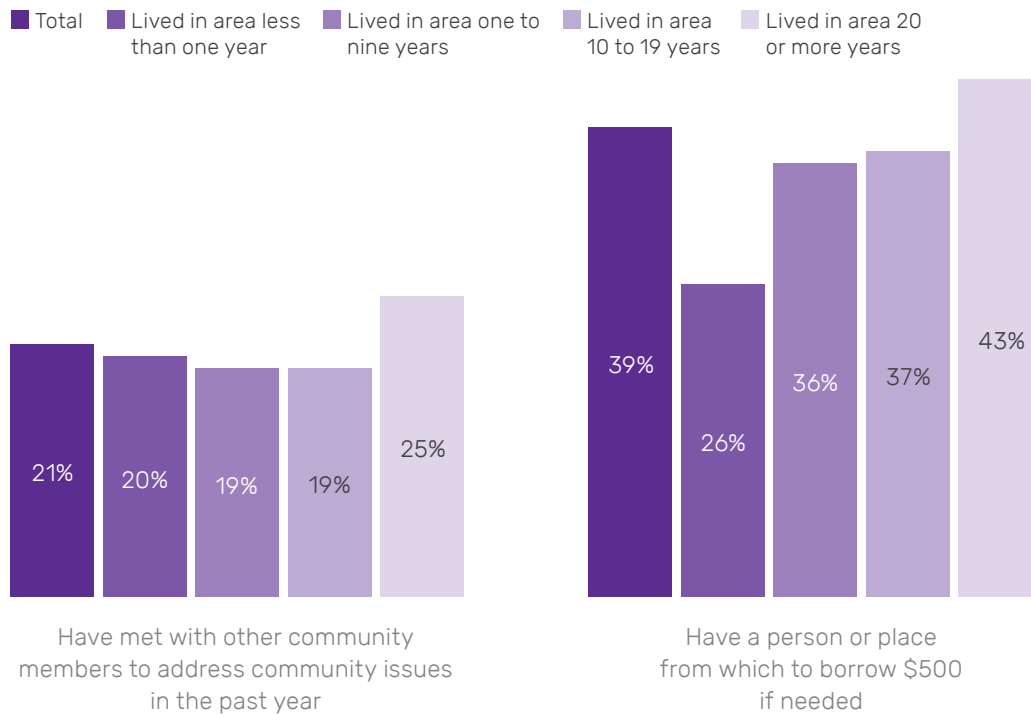
One concern about fragile communities is the potentially transitory nature of residence there; in neighborhoods with high levels of turnover, it has been argued, it is harder for economic opportunities to take root and for residents to establish social networks that they can draw on in times of need. However, the current study finds that most people living in America’s fragile communities are long-term residents; 41% say they have lived in their local area for at least 20 years, while an additional 22% have been there between 10 and 19 years. Just 23% are relative newcomers, having lived in their local area for four years or less. White residents are particularly likely to have lived in their current area for 20 years or more, at 52%, versus 39% for black residents and 33% for Hispanics.

Length of tenure in a neighborhood has possible implications for residents’ levels of social integration, which prior research has found to be related to economic and health outcomes. These implications may be particularly relevant in the context of fragile communities, where residents are more likely to require help from others in their social network on occasion. One recent study found that the relationships between length of tenure and some measures of social integration are stronger in low-income communities than in more affluent ones.

41% of residents say they have lived in their local area for at least 20 years, while an additional 22% have been there between 10 and 19 years. Just 23% are relative newcomers, having lived in their local area for four years or less.

Among fragile-community residents in the current study, however, length of residence only appears to be modestly associated with greater civic ties and social capital benefits, and only among the longest-term residents. Overall, 21% of fragile-community residents say they have worked with others in the community during the past year to resolve a community issue or problem, with this figure somewhat higher, at 25%, among those who have lived in their area for 20 years or more. Similarly, those who have lived in their community for at least 20 years are somewhat more likely than shorter-term residents to say there is a person or place they could borrow \$500 from if needed.

COMMUNAL TIES DO NOT IMPROVE MUCH WITH LENGTH OF TENURE IN FRAGILE COMMUNITIES





TYPE OF RESIDENCE

Overall, fragile-community residents are somewhat more likely to say they rent (53%) rather than own (47%) the home they live in. Residents' likelihood of owning their home increases with length of tenure; 66% of those who have lived in their current area for 20 years or more own their home, versus 20% of those who have lived in their current area for four years or less. A majority of residents overall (54%) live in detached single-family homes, while 27% live in apartment buildings. Among the oversampled cities, apartment living is more common in the densely populated Chicago area than in Birmingham or Fresno.

Which of the following best describes the place where you currently live?

	FRAGILE COMMUNITIES NATIONWIDE	FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN BIRMINGHAM	FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN CHICAGO	FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN FRESNO
A one-family house detached from any other house	54%	67%	40%	57%
A building with two or more apartments	27%	18%	51%	25%
A one-family house attached to one or more houses	8%	5%	5%	6%
A mobile home	5%	1%	1%	3%

02

Education

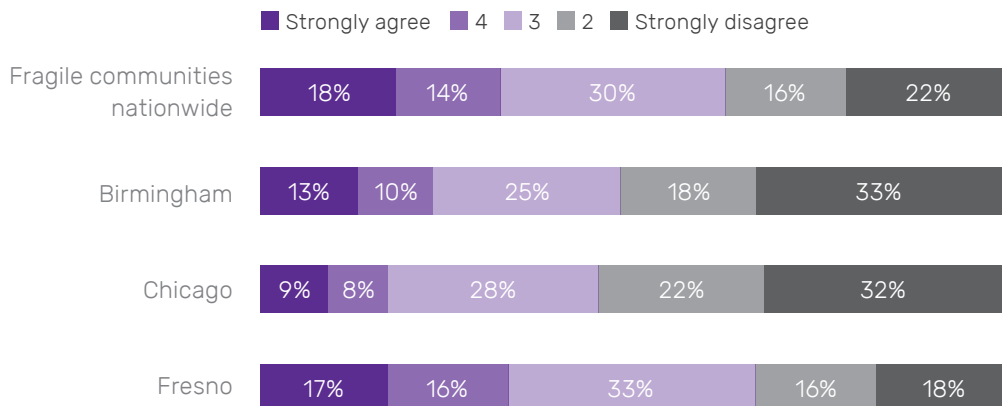
Though the majority of residents in America’s fragile communities struggle to get by, their levels of hardship and perceptions of future prospects differ dramatically by educational attainment. Access to education beyond high school in particular heightens residents’ confidence and expands the opportunities available to them. Notably, these benefits are not only associated with four-year degrees; adults with vocational training or two-year associate degrees also have a substantially brighter outlook in terms of their employment status and living standards, as well as their health and self-confidence.

ONLY A THIRD OF FRAGILE-COMMUNITY RESIDENTS AGREE THAT ALL LOCAL CHILDREN HAVE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

About one in three residents of fragile communities nationwide feel all children in the area where they live have access to high-quality public schools. Asked to rate their level of agreement with this statement on a five-point scale where “5” means they strongly agree and “1” means they strongly disagree, 32% of residents choose a 5 or 4, while 38% indicate disagreement by choosing a 1 or 2. These perceptions correspond with recent studies of the relationship between poverty and school quality – including a January 2018 report from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights – that find schools in low-income areas have fewer resources, in terms of both financial and social capital.

In two of the three oversampled cities – Birmingham and Chicago – residents are even less likely than those in fragile communities nationwide to agree with the statement about access to high-quality public schools, at 23% and 17%, respectively. During the survey’s field period, Illinois schools were facing a funding crisis that threatened to delay the start of the school year for Chicago Public Schools.

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement: All children in the area where you live have access to high-quality public schools.



Discrepancies in educational outcomes have fueled a long-standing debate over the quality of schools available to residents of America's poor communities. The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) education law passed in 2001 explicitly targeted the achievement gap between the country's disadvantaged students and the rest. The Every Student Succeeds Act, which replaced NCLB in December 2015, is also intended to help provide educational equity for disadvantaged and high-need students. A 2017 study painted a mixed picture with regard to national graduation rates: Though black and Hispanic students still lagged the national average (74.6% and 77.8% vs. 83.2%, respectively), graduation rates among those minority groups had also risen more quickly than among white students since 2011.

Asked to choose which two from a set of 12 policy interventions would make the most positive impact in their area, 29% of residents in fragile communities select increasing funding for public schools, a percentage that is second only to raising the minimum wage (see Chapter 6). Among fragile-community residents in the three oversampled cities, the proportion who choose this policy option spikes to 46% in Chicago. Future studies might further explore residents' opinions on how increased funds for public schools should be spent — particularly in light of studies that demonstrate simply allocating more money to public education often fails to result in commensurate achievement gains.

I think, as far as the young people are concerned, I think it's pretty much jacked up because the parents don't have nothing for their children to do — so, guess what? They're going to go out there and get into all types of trouble. If they're not slinging dope, they're going to kill somebody for some money or something. I think they cut most of the programs out, because back in the 80s when I was going to high school, I mean we had all types of programs.

**Male, Unemployed,
Age 46: Chicago**

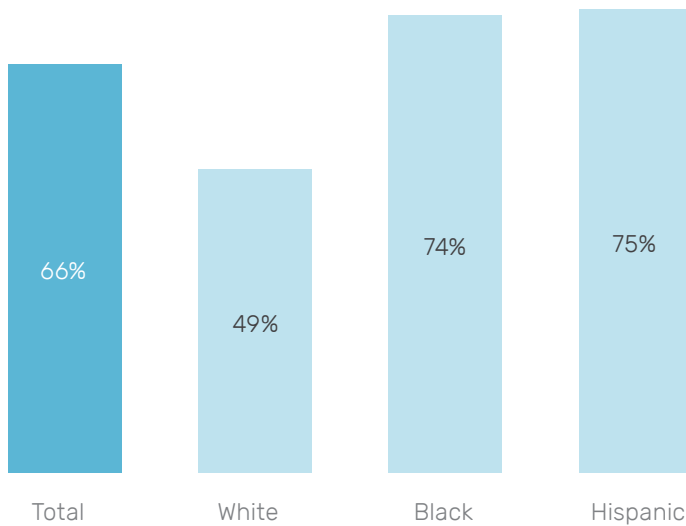


Discrepancies in educational outcomes have fueled a long-standing debate over the quality of schools available to residents of America's poor communities.

RESIDENTS OF FRAGILE COMMUNITIES RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION, THOUGH MOST SAY NOT EVERYONE HAS ACCESS TO ONE

How important is a college education today?

PERCENTAGE WHO SAY “VERY IMPORTANT,” BY RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP



There is high consensus among fragile-community residents that a college education is “very important” (66%) or “important” (22%). Notably, about three-fourths of black (74%) and Hispanic (75%) residents say a college education is very important, versus about half (49%) of white residents.

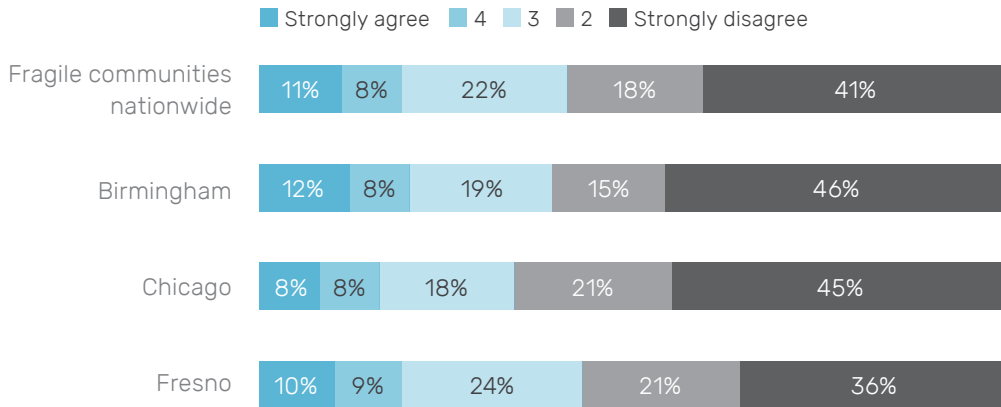
However, just 19% of fragile-community residents agree that everyone in the U.S. has access to an affordable college education and give this statement a 4 or 5 on a five-point agreement scale; most (59%) disagree, including four in 10 (41%) who strongly disagree. Among Chicago-area residents, the proportion who disagree overall reaches two-thirds (66%).

For young children, I think that the education system, it gets an F. Oh my goodness, it’s terrible. Absolutely terrible. I had one child go through middle school and high school here and I’m telling you, it took everything for me to get my child graduated. And when I say that, I had to stay on those teachers to get my child the best education that she possibly could get out of it, and, to me, it really wasn’t that good. It was just very difficult, you know.

Female, Unemployed Hairstylist and Preschool Volunteer, Age 54: Fresno

Just 19% of fragile-community residents agree that everyone in the U.S. has access to an affordable college education.

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement: All people in the U.S. have access to an affordable college education if they want it.



These findings support previous qualitative research indicating that though young people of color in disadvantaged urban areas often view higher education as the path to success, many are unable to identify the resources that would make access to such education possible. As noted in the introductory section, just 12% of fragile-community residents overall have a four-year bachelor’s degree or more, versus 34% among the total U.S. population. Residents of fragile communities are somewhat more likely than the general public to have some form of vocational training – 11% to 4%, respectively. However, they are no more likely than Americans overall to have a two-year associate degree, at about 9%.

Geographic proximity is likely an important factor for many fragile-community residents considering their options for higher education. Among residents who say they would like to move permanently to another area, most cite better education or training opportunities as a “major reason” (34%) or a “minor reason” (25%) they would like to do so.

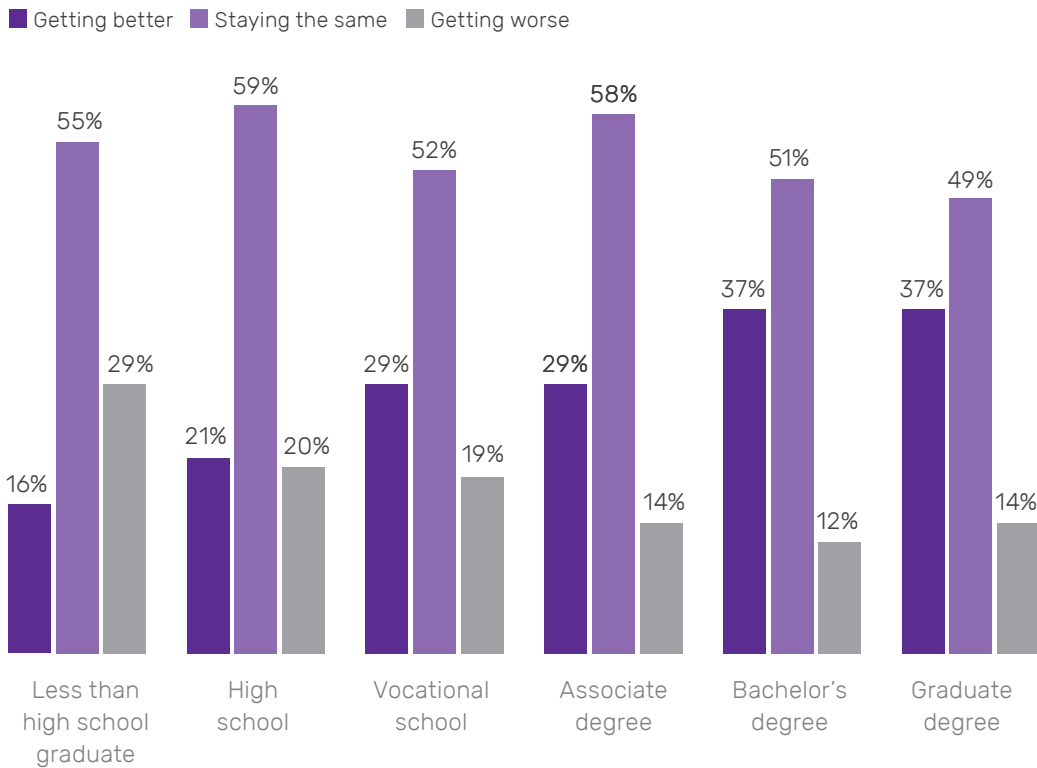
Just 12% of fragile-community residents overall have a four-year bachelor’s degree or more, versus 34% of the total U.S. population.

INCREASED EDUCATION ASSOCIATED WITH GREATER ECONOMIC OPTIMISM AMONG FRAGILE-COMMUNITY RESIDENTS

Residents' economic optimism varies considerably by education level; for example, those with any form of educational attainment beyond high school are significantly more likely than those with no more than a high school education to say their standard of living is improving.

Right now, do you feel your standard of living is getting better, staying the same or getting worse?

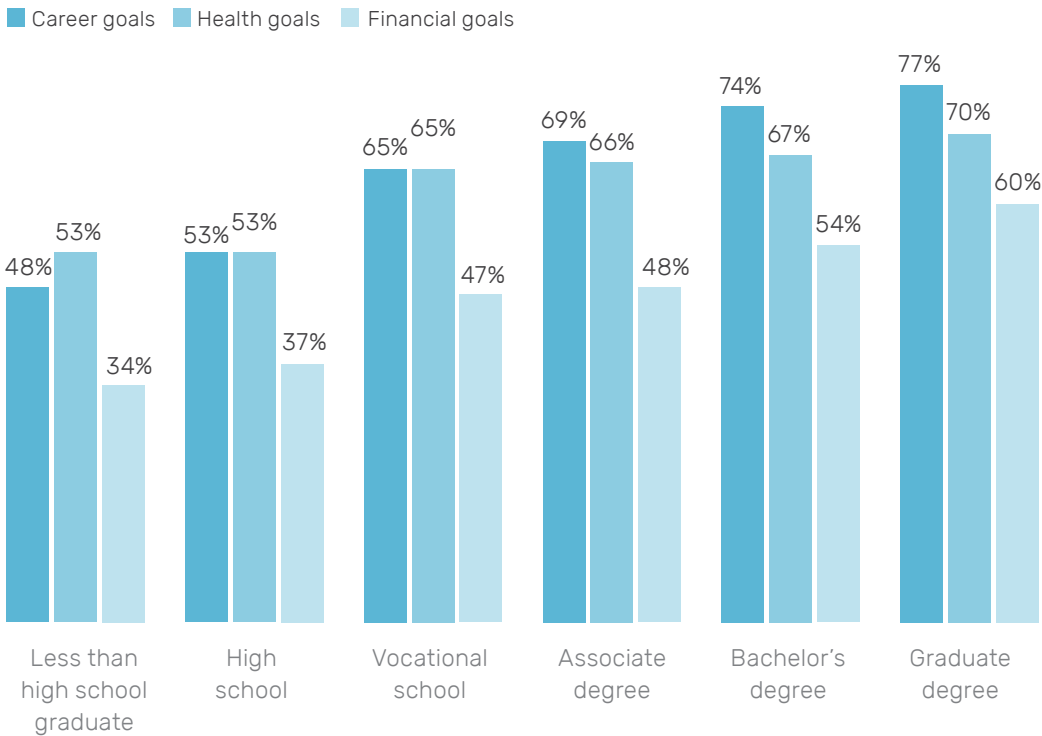
RESULTS AMONG FRAGILE-COMMUNITY RESIDENTS, BY EDUCATION LEVEL



The data point to a strong positive relationship between education and self-efficacy. Residents' confidence in their ability to achieve their career goals, health goals and financial goals all trend sharply upward with their education level. The largest gaps tend to be between those with a high school education or less and those with any form of higher education, including vocational school or a two-year degree. However, any increase in education level is associated with a corresponding increase in confidence (see Chapter 5 for further discussion of the determinants of self-efficacy in fragile communities).

How confident are you in your ability to achieve goals you set for yourself in each of the following areas?

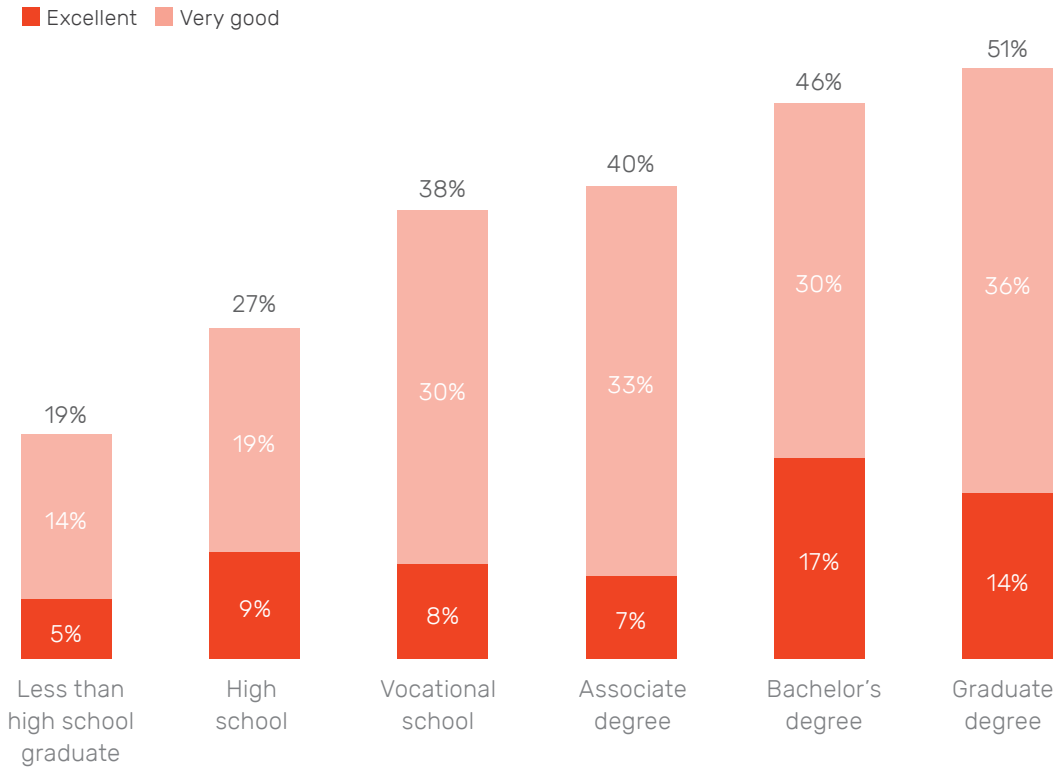
RESULTS AMONG FRAGILE-COMMUNITY RESIDENTS, BY EDUCATION LEVEL



Prior research has established that certain social behaviors and norms prevalent in extremely fragile communities – such as smoking, drinking and illicit drug use – contribute to poor health outcomes. For example, Gallup polls consistently find rates of smoking are substantially higher among low-income Americans than among their more affluent counterparts. Within fragile communities, however, education appears to represent a powerful bulwark against harmful health outcomes. Residents’ assessments of their own health status rise very consistently with their education level.

Within fragile communities, education appears to represent a powerful bulwark against harmful health outcomes.

Would you say your own health, in general, is excellent, very good, good, fair or poor?



Total percentages may not reflect the exact sum of “excellent” and “very good” percentages due to rounding.

There are several ways that education can influence improved health outcomes, including providing a greater ability to navigate the healthcare system and greater awareness of the harmful effects of unhealthy behaviors. For the most part, however, the benefits of education on individuals’ health operate indirectly through their improved employment and income potential. For example, because better-educated people typically have fewer financial problems, they are less likely to live with chronic stress, which can have a debilitating impact on physical and mental health.

The data also reveal the extent to which reliance on social assistance programs skews heavily toward less-educated residents of fragile communities. For example, 61% of residents with less than a high school diploma have received Medicaid benefits in the past 12 months, versus 39% of those with vocational school training and 35% of those with an associate degree.

The benefits of education on individuals’ health operate indirectly through their improved employment and income potential.



PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AMONG FRAGILE-COMMUNITY RESIDENTS, BY EDUCATION LEVEL

	LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	HIGH SCHOOL	VOCATIONAL SCHOOL	ASSOCIATE DEGREE	BACHELOR'S DEGREE	GRADUATE DEGREE
Food assistance	59%	43%	31%	29%	18%	13%
Medicaid	61%	45%	39%	35%	28%	19%
SSI	38%	25%	14%	19%	9%	11%
Disability benefits	29%	21%	15%	20%	10%	8%
Housing assistance	28%	11%	12%	6%	4%	3%
Unemployment benefits	5%	9%	8%	10%	9%	4%

People often identify their lack of employment as a serious barrier to opportunity. One compelling data point from this project is that, for those living in fragile communities, those who have a two-year associate degree are about as likely to have a job as are those with a bachelor's degree or more. Finding ways for more people to obtain two-year degrees, perhaps at community colleges, could be a way to help residents expand the range of job opportunities available to them.

Two-year associate-degree holders in fragile communities are about as likely to have a job as those with a bachelor's degree or more.

Geographic proximity is likely an important factor for many fragile-community residents considering their options for higher education.

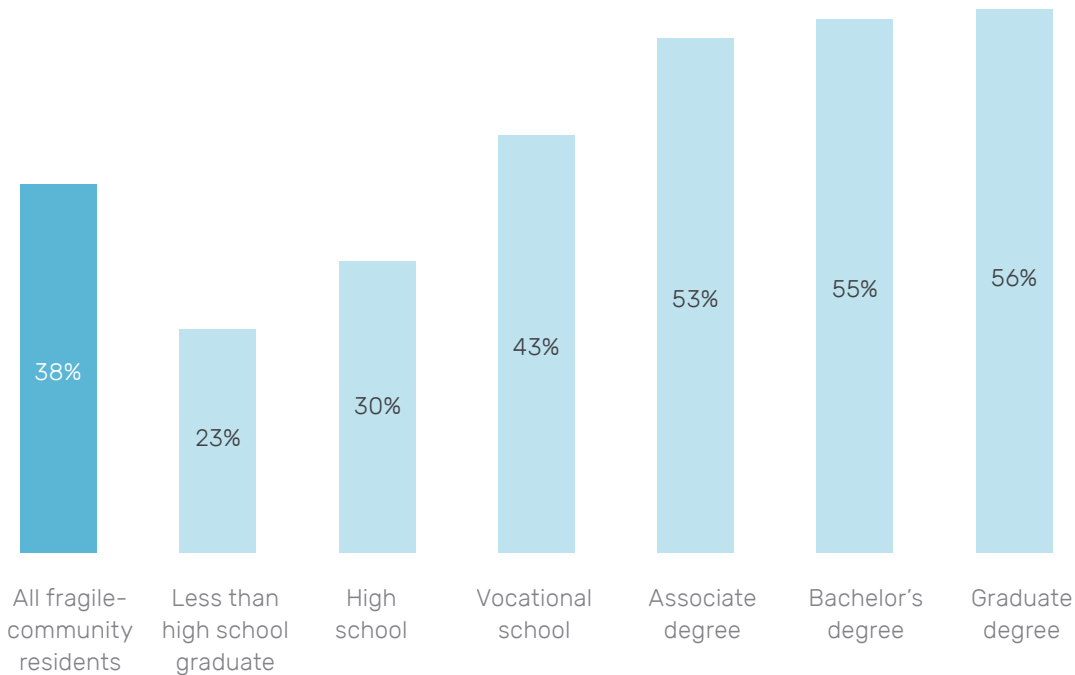


03

**Employment and
Entrepreneurship**

As much as any other factor, joblessness helps perpetuate the cycle of disadvantage that characterizes many fragile communities. Overall, 38% of residents in the fragile communities surveyed say that they work at least 30 hours a week for an employer – somewhat below the 44% of Americans overall who say the same. As noted in the previous section, education level is a huge differentiator among fragile-community residents, and that is also the case with employment. Among those residents with some type of college education – including a two-year associate degree – more than half work full time for an employer, compared with only 30% of high school graduates and 23% of adults without a high school degree.

PERCENTAGE OF FRAGILE-COMMUNITY RESIDENTS WHO WORK FULL TIME FOR AN EMPLOYER, BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



Ten percent of fragile-community residents are not employed and say they have been actively looking for employment in the past four weeks, despite national unemployment figures of 4.3% to 4.4% during the survey's field period. Among black residents, the proportion looking for employment rises to 14%.

Ten percent of fragile-community residents are not employed and say they have been actively looking for employment in the past four weeks.

JOB SEEKING AMONG FRAGILE-COMMUNITY RESIDENTS, BY RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP

	TOTAL	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC	ASIAN
Percentage not employed and actively looking for a job	10%	5%	14%	10%	.

* Insufficient sample to report results

Residents of fragile communities who are actively looking for employment were also asked to select from a list of nine possible issues the one that represents the biggest challenge for them in finding a job. The most common response, selected by 30%, is that health problems prevent them from taking jobs. Thus, for many residents of fragile communities, both low education levels and poor health hinder their ability to find and maintain stable employment. Lack of sufficient local job openings is the second most commonly cited challenge, at 19%.

Women who are looking for jobs in fragile communities are more likely than men to cite the need to care for children or family members as a challenge. Responses to this question are generally similar among white and black job seekers in fragile communities. However, Hispanic job seekers are less likely than those who are black or white to view health problems as their biggest challenge and are more likely to cite lack of qualifications and the need to care for children or other family members.

That’s the other unfortunate thing about the area. The job market within the area is not that viable. So a lot of the positions that I’m looking for, or applying for, are in the suburban areas or back in downtown Chicago.

**Female, Temporary Office Worker, Writer and Life Coach
Age 47: Chicago**



Women who are looking for jobs in fragile communities are more likely than men to cite the need to care for children or family members as a challenge.

In your opinion, which of the following is the biggest challenge for you in finding a job?

RESULTS AMONG FRAGILE-COMMUNITY RESIDENTS WHO SAY THEY ARE ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR A JOB

	TOTAL	MEN	WOMEN	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC
Health problems prevent you from taking jobs	30%	31%	30%	36%	36%	20%
Not enough job openings	19%	20%	18%	18%	18%	18%
Available jobs don't pay enough	12%	12%	12%	9%	12%	15%
Need to care for children or family members	11%	5%	16%	10%	7%	17%
Not qualified for available jobs	10%	9%	11%	8%	7%	16%
Do not have reliable transportation	7%	7%	6%	4%	9%	7%
Available jobs not desirable	5%	6%	4%	9%	3%	3%
Discrimination against people like you	4%	6%	3%	4%	6%	2%
Available jobs do not offer benefits you need	3%	4%	1%	2%	2%	3%

Note: The sample of Asian residents looking for jobs is too small to report the results.

The relationship between poor health and local economic conditions likely runs two ways in many fragile communities. Health problems can hamper residents' productivity, while poor economic conditions can increase the incidence of stress-related health conditions. A recent analysis of mortality and morbidity in the U.S. found that mortality rates have been rising since the turn of the century among middle-aged whites with lower education levels, due in part to drug overdoses, suicides and alcohol-related liver disease. The authors offer a preliminary explanation in which "cumulative disadvantage over life, in the labor market, in marriage and child outcomes, and in health, is triggered by progressively worsening labor market opportunities at the time of entry for whites with low levels of education."

MANY RESIDENTS OF FRAGILE COMMUNITIES ASPIRE TO START BUSINESSES BUT LACK THE FUNDS TO DO SO

Local entrepreneurship is often seen both as an important factor in fostering job creation and economic growth in depressed areas and as a path to self-sufficiency for low-income residents. However, Americans in fragile communities face considerable barriers to becoming viable business owners, both at the individual and community levels. Individual-level constraints include a lack of access to financial capital and a lack of requisite skills to be a successful entrepreneur. At the community level, poor local economic conditions may

compound the risk facing prospective business owners. Researchers have studied a range of additional obstacles that often discourage residents in poor communities from starting entrepreneurial endeavors, such as a lack of self-belief and fear of crime.

About 2% of residents in fragile communities say they are self-employed full time (at least 30 hours a week), versus 6% of Americans overall. Nine percent of fragile-community residents nationwide say they plan to start a business in the next 12 months. Black, Hispanic and Asian residents are somewhat more likely than white residents to have entrepreneurial plans. However, a much higher proportion of fragile-community residents say they have considered becoming business owners in the past but decided not to; 33% overall respond this way, including 38% of blacks and Asians, 32% of Hispanics, and 28% of whites.

ENTREPRENEURIAL ASPIRATIONS AMONG FRAGILE-COMMUNITY RESIDENTS, BY RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP

	TOTAL	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC	ASIAN
Planning to start a business in the next 12 months	9%	6%	11%	9%	9%
Have considered starting a business in the past but decided not to	33%	28%	38%	32%	38%

Among fragile-community residents who have considered starting businesses but decided not to, by far the most common reason – cited by 70% – is that they don’t have enough personal savings to do so. Two other reasons represent a distant second tier, each cited by 34%: reluctance to give up the security of their current job and simply not knowing how to get started.

These results are consistent across regions and in the three oversampled cities, but they do vary somewhat by racial and ethnic group. White residents are somewhat more likely than black or Hispanic residents to say that they do not want to give up the security of a steady income and that they worry about their odds of success. For their part, blacks and Hispanics are more likely than whites to say they have an idea but don’t know where to start. Younger residents who say they have thought about starting a business are also particularly likely to say they didn’t know where to start, or that they didn’t have enough knowledge about running a business. Among each group, however, lack of savings is by far the most frequent response.

I’ve seen a lot of neighborhood businesses come and go. A lot of people moved out of the neighborhood, you know, with the housing bust – it hurt. Like we have Randall Park Mall, it’s been deserted now over 10 years. It was a major hub, where it brought a lot of people into this area. ... With it being closed, it kind of depressed the area.

Male, Unemployed and on Disability, Age 50: Cleveland

Which of the following have played a role in your decision not to start a business?

RESULTS AMONG FRAGILE-COMMUNITY RESIDENTS WHO HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT STARTING A BUSINESS BUT DECIDED NOT TO

	TOTAL	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC
You do not have enough personal savings to start a business	70%	66%	74%	71%
You like the security of a steady income	34%	42%	31%	32%
You have an idea, but don't know where to start	34%	27%	37%	39%
You worry that the odds of success are very low	29%	43%	25%	22%
You have no knowledge about running a business	26%	27%	25%	26%
You worry that running a business will impact your work-life balance	12%	21%	7%	11%
You worry about the competition	8%	13%	6%	7%

Note: The sample of Asian residents who responded to these questions is too small to report the results.

Lack of access to funding makes the prospect of entrepreneurship a non-starter for many fragile-community residents. Funds are needed not only as startup capital for any new endeavor, but also to provide a financial cushion during the transition from wage or salary employment. As noted in Chapter 1, however, just 39% of fragile-community residents say there is a person or place from which they could borrow even \$500 if they needed to.

However, these results also demonstrate that access to financial capital is not the only challenge facing prospective entrepreneurs in fragile communities. The relatively high proportion who say they have an idea but don't know where to start – including almost four in 10 among black and Hispanic residents who have thought about starting businesses – implies many may benefit from community-based training or mentoring programs that help residents think about how to turn their ideas and energy into entrepreneurial endeavors. As a 2013 report on low-income entrepreneurs in the New York City area noted, “If cultivated, the ‘side-hustles’ common in many low-income neighborhoods could blossom into mainstream businesses.”

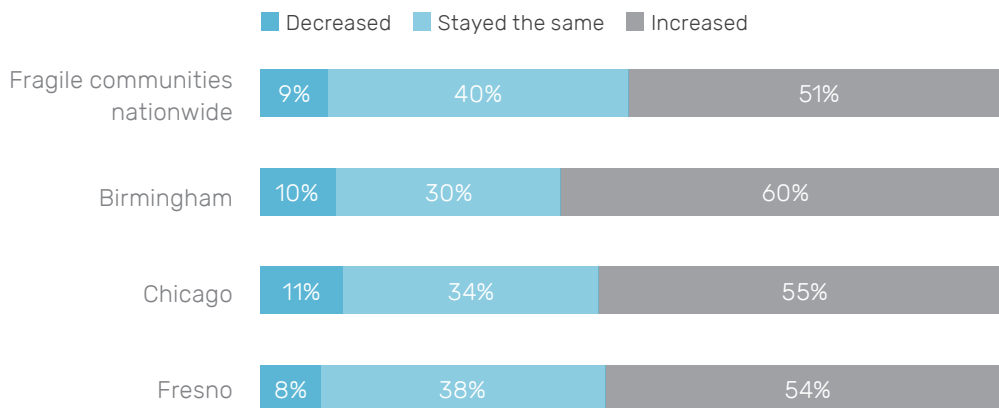


04

**Crime and Criminal
Justice Reform**

Crime remains a serious problem in many of America’s fragile communities. Though rates of crime overall and violent crime have declined since the 1990s in the U.S., the violent crime rate rose for the second consecutive year in 2016. A slight majority of fragile-community residents overall – 51% – say they believe crime in their area has increased in the last few years, while 40% say it has stayed the same and just 9% say it has decreased. Those living in fragile communities in the Birmingham area are particularly likely to say crime has increased during that time, at 60%. By comparison, 40% of Americans overall told Gallup in an October 2017 poll there is more crime in their area than there was a year ago.

In the last few years, do you believe crime in your area has increased, stayed the same or decreased?



MOST RESIDENTS WISH FOR A GREATER POLICE PRESENCE IN THEIR AREA

A majority of residents in fragile communities nationwide (54%) say they would like to see the police spend more time in their neighborhood, while 5% say the police should spend less time there. These results correspond closely to residents’ perceptions that the crime rate in their area has increased rather than decreased in the past few years. Majorities of black (61%) and Hispanic (56%) residents say they would like the police to spend more time in their area, versus 47% of white residents.

This finding suggests that community policing efforts – according to which law enforcement officers have a visible day-to-day presence working with citizens to solve community problems – are either not being implemented or are under-resourced, particularly in fragile communities with a high proportion of minority residents. In qualitative interviews, some fragile-community residents said they wished the police would do more to maintain order in their neighborhood on a day-to-day basis rather than appearing only when a violent crime is committed.

I feel safe, very safe. The police are visible, which can be a deterrent if anybody tried to commit a crime. ... If you go to Wal-Mart, you’re going to see them. If I go to Walgreens, which is right down the street from me, I’m seeing them. You know, just sitting in parking lots like tonight when I came home, I can honestly say I saw about three.

Female, School Librarian, Age 56: Birmingham

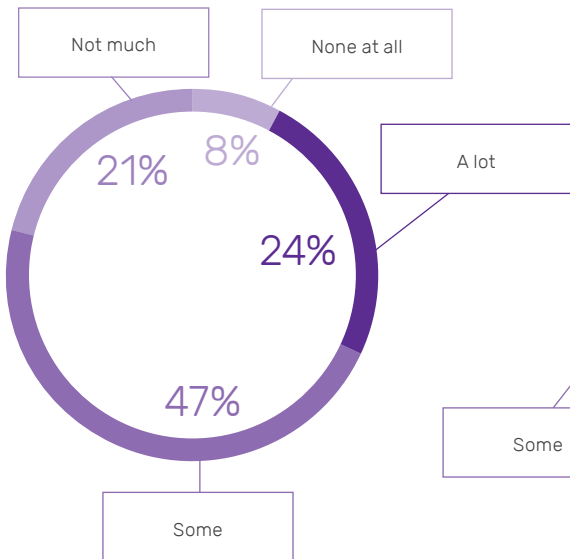
Residents' responses regarding the police presence in their area are related not just to their perception of crime as a problem, but also their confidence that they will not be treated unfairly when they interact with law enforcement officers. As noted in the next section, almost one in four fragile-community residents overall – and more than one-third of black residents – believe people like them are treated “unfairly” or “very unfairly” by their local police. Among residents who feel police treat people like them very unfairly, one in four (25%) would prefer the police spend less time in their area, substantially higher than the 5% who respond this way among residents overall.

About one-fourth of fragile-community residents (24%) say they have “a lot” of confidence in their local police, though almost half (47%) have “some” confidence in them. Residents are more likely to say they have a lot of respect for the police in their area, at 48%, than they are to say they have a lot of confidence in them. The discrepancy may imply that many of those who view the police as competent or well-meaning nonetheless doubt their ability to deter crime, whether through insufficient resources or other reasons beyond their control.

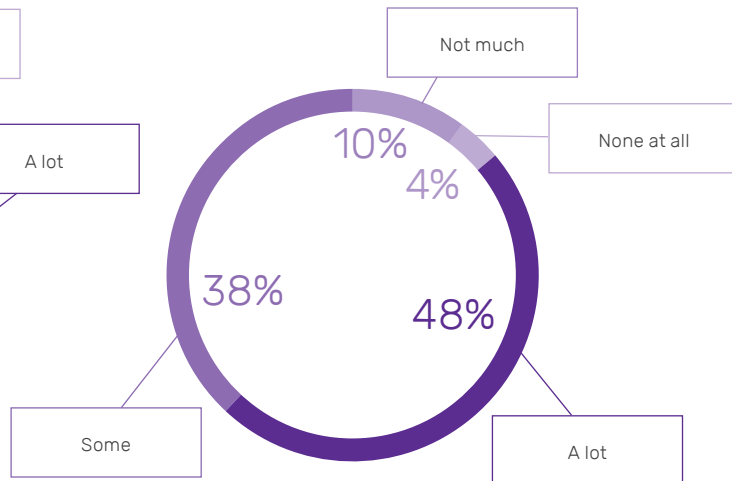
*How much confidence do you have in the police in your area?
How much respect do you have for the police in your area?*

RESULTS AMONG FRAGILE-COMMUNITY RESIDENTS NATIONWIDE

CONFIDENCE IN POLICE



RESPECT FOR POLICE



About four in 10 black residents of fragile communities (39%) say they have little or no confidence in their local police. This is significantly higher than the corresponding figures among white residents (21%) and Hispanic residents (26%). Results regarding respect for local police also vary by race, though the differences are smaller: 19% of black residents say they have not much respect or none at all, versus 11% of white residents and 9% of Hispanic residents.

Despite the finding that a majority of fragile-community residents wish for a greater police presence in their area, most would prioritize addressing the root causes of crime over deterring it by improving law enforcement. Given the choice, 84% say that more money and effort should go to attacking the social and economic problems that lead to crime through better education and job training, while 16% favor putting more money and effort toward improving law enforcement with more prisons, police and judges. There is a significant partisan difference in these responses, with residents who identify with the Democratic Party particularly likely to favor attacking the causes of crime. Even among Republicans, however, almost two-thirds (65%) respond this way.

But if I could change one thing, it would be getting rid of the gang activity down there. If it was something realistic, probably just placing more police officers, making more patrols. They were pretty rare to come by and, when you did make a call, they would take hours before actually arriving.

**Male, Retail Worker,
Age 21: Fresno**

Which of the following approaches to lowering the crime rate in the U.S. comes closer to your own view?

	TOTAL RESIDENTS	REPUBLICANS/ LEAN REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRATS/ LEAN DEMOCRATIC	INDEPENDENTS/ NO AFFILIATION
More money and effort should go to attacking the social and economic problems that lead to crime through better education and job training.	84%	65%	90%	85%
More money and effort should go to deterring crime by improving law enforcement with more prisons, police and judges.	16%	35%	10%	15%

RESIDENTS OF COLOR ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WHITES TO PERCEIVE UNFAIR TREATMENT BY POLICE OR COURTS

Residents' likelihood to say they have confidence in and respect for their local police is related to their perceptions of how people like them are treated by local law enforcement. Overall, 23% of residents in fragile communities feel people like them are treated unfairly or very unfairly by police. However, black residents are three times as likely as white residents to feel this way – 35% vs. 11%, respectively. Hispanic residents match the overall average, at 23%.

An even higher proportion of black residents – 47% – feel people like them are treated unfairly or very unfairly by the legal system and courts. White and Hispanic residents are considerably less likely to respond this way, at 20% and 28%, respectively. Entrenched racial

discrimination in the U.S. criminal justice system has received considerable attention from scholars in recent years in high-profile works such as Michelle Alexander’s 2010 book, *The New Jim Crow*.

How fairly or unfairly do you think each of the following treat people like you?

PERCENTAGE OF EACH GROUP WHO SAY “UNFAIRLY” OR “VERY UNFAIRLY”

	TOTAL	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC	ASIAN
Local police	23%	11%	35%	23%	15%
The courts/legal system	32%	20%	47%	28%	19%

FEAR OF CRIME FUELS MANY RESIDENTS’ DESIRE TO MOVE AWAY

Crime is the most commonly cited reason residents of fragile communities give for wanting to move to a different area. This is one way high crime rates can curb economic growth; the resulting emigration diminishes a community’s tax and consumer base, leaving those who are unwilling or unable to move with fewer resources to maintain a healthy local economy. The exodus of residents from Chicago’s South and West Sides is a well-documented example; Chicago’s Cook County had the largest population loss of any county nationwide in 2016.

Overall, about six in 10 residents of fragile communities (59%) say they would like to move permanently to another area if they had the opportunity, and two in 10 overall (21%) say they actually have plans to move in the next 12 months. Residents’ desire to relocate declines with their length of tenure in their current location. However, even among those who have lived in their current area for 20 years or more, about half (49%) say they would like to move away if they could. Similarly, those who have been in their current area for four years or less are three times as likely as those who have lived there for 20 years or more to have plans to relocate in the coming year – 36% vs. 12%, respectively.

Well, when I first moved up here, this neighborhood was very quiet, very friendly; we knew a lot of people that lived in the neighborhood. But as the years went through, the people started changing, the neighborhood started changing. ... It’s very different now throughout the years due to crime. ... So it’s not like you can sit outside too much longer, people robbing, people are stealing, people are breaking in cars, breaking in houses; they don’t even care no more. And me and my husband is like, this is not what we’re used to.

Female, Homemaker, Age 41: Cleveland

DESIRE/INTENT TO RELOCATE AMONG FRAGILE-COMMUNITY RESIDENTS, BY LENGTH OF RESIDENCY

	TOTAL RESIDENTS	NUMBER OF YEARS LIVING IN LOCAL AREA			
		1-4	5-9	10-19	20+
Would like to move permanently to another area given the opportunity	59%	69%	62%	63%	49%
Planning to move permanently to another area in the next 12 months	21%	36%	25%	18%	12%

Fifty-one percent of residents who would like to relocate say crime is a “major reason” they would like to do so, while 25% say it is a “minor reason.” About three-fourths of would-be movers in the Chicago area (74%) say crime is a major reason they would like to relocate.

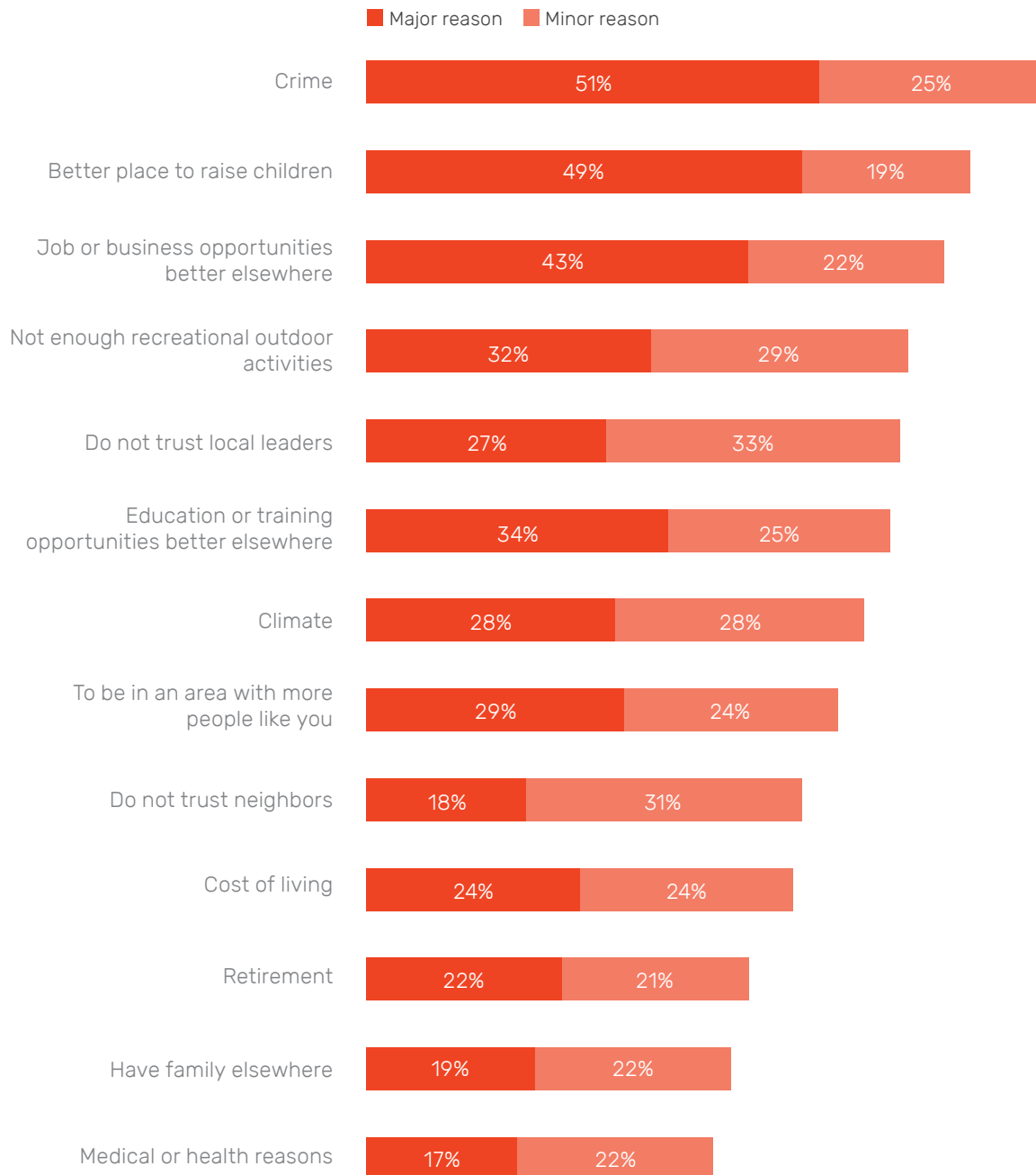
Fear of crime may also be a factor in residents’ desire to find a better place to raise children, cited as a major reason for relocating by 49% of would-be movers. Residents with children under 18 in the household are somewhat more likely than those without children to say they would like to move away permanently – 64% vs. 55%, respectively. Among those with children in the household who say they would like to move, two-thirds (67%) say having a better place to raise children is a major reason.



Residents with children under 18 in the household are somewhat more likely than those without children to say they would like to move away permanently.

Is each of the following a major reason, minor reason or not a reason you would like to move?

RESULTS AMONG RESIDENTS WHO WOULD LIKE TO MOVE PERMANENTLY TO ANOTHER AREA



Crime is the most commonly cited reason residents of fragile communities give for wanting to move to a different area.

05

Optimism and Self-Confidence

The idea that concentrated poverty in disadvantaged areas may suppress residents' motivation and self-confidence has been debated since the 1960s but has seen some resurgence as a research topic in recent years. Social cognitive theory holds that individuals' level of self-confidence – their belief in their own ability to accomplish their goals – has consequences for their success beyond those attributable to the social and economic challenges they face. Specifically, people with little confidence in themselves may be more likely to avoid or give up on new challenges for fear they are too difficult. The current study uses a variety of measures to gauge fragile-community residents' levels of optimism and self-confidence.

THOUGH ECONOMIC OPTIMISM IS LOW, MOST RESIDENTS DO NOT HAVE A DEFEATIST ATTITUDE

Residents of fragile communities are not optimistic that economic conditions where they live will improve anytime soon. Less than one-third say their communities have a good economy (31%) or are good places to find a job (30%). Further, they are more than three times as likely to say economic conditions in their areas are getting worse (42%) as they are to say they are getting better (13%).

About two-thirds of fragile-community residents (68%) say that in general, people in the U.S. can get ahead by working hard – though this figure is lower than the 79% of Americans overall who responded this way in a 2016 poll of the general public. Notably, this perception is about as common among fragile-community residents with a high school education or less as it is among those with higher educational attainment.

Sometimes it's a bit of a struggle if my husband don't get to work all week. But most of the time, I mean we get by. We don't never go without anything to eat or go without lights or, you know, anything like that. ... If they put their mind to it, anybody can be successful. It don't matter where you from or where you at, you can do it. You just gotta put your mind to it and want to do it and do it. ... As long as I got my kids and my grandkids and my husband and good health, that's all that matters to me.

Female, Sells Furniture Part Time, Age 59: Birmingham



Residents of fragile communities are not optimistic that economic conditions where they live will improve anytime soon.

Can people in this country get ahead by working hard, or not?

RESULTS AMONG FRAGILE-COMMUNITY RESIDENTS, BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

	TOTAL U.S. POPULATION	TOTAL RESIDENTS	HIGH SCHOOL OR LESS	VOCATIONAL SCHOOL	ASSOCIATE DEGREE	BACHELOR'S DEGREE	GRADUATE DEGREE
Yes, can get ahead	79%	68%	67%	70%	71%	71%	66%
No, cannot get ahead	21%	32%	33%	30%	29%	29%	34%

BLACK RESIDENTS OF FRAGILE COMMUNITIES ARE SOMEWHAT MORE HOPEFUL THAN WHITE RESIDENTS ABOUT THE FUTURE

Though black residents on average rate their current lives similarly to white residents of fragile communities, their average rating when asked to predict where their lives will be in five years is significantly higher than that of white residents, implying a greater sense of hope for the future. Black residents' higher optimism is particularly noteworthy given that they are more likely than white residents of fragile communities to currently be suffering financial hardship (for example, 57% of black residents say they have had trouble affording food in the past year, versus 31% of white residents).

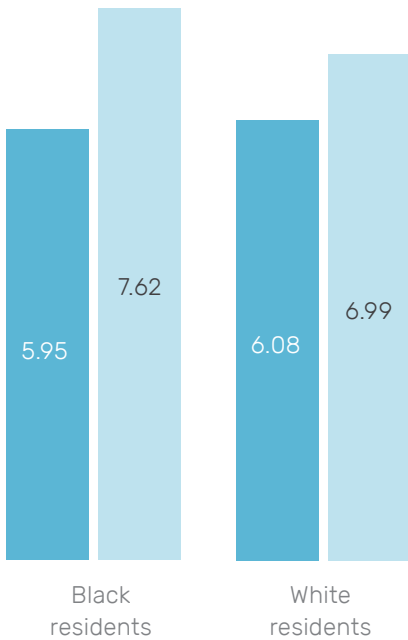


“Secure” means to me having a roof over my head that I don’t have to worry about not having in the near future. I’d like to be able to eat out once or twice a week, being able to have time to go see friends, or perhaps host friends over at my place. And then, having enough money put back to where if something were to occur I’d be able to care of that — like paying off my student debt. I don’t want anything extravagant, you know.

Female, Part-Time Jobs at a Pet Store and as a Photographer, Age 27: Birmingham

Please imagine a ladder with steps numbered from zero at the bottom to 10 at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you, while the bottom represents the worst possible life for you. On which step of the ladder do you personally feel you stand at this time? On which step do you think you will stand about five years from now?

■ Average rating, life today ■ Average rating, life in five years



Additional results suggest one reason black residents are somewhat more optimistic about the future is that they appear more open to making changes, including some that may have a positive impact on their future prospects. For example, both black and Hispanic residents of fragile communities appear more likely than white residents to place a high value on attending college. Asked how important a college education is today, about three-fourths of black (74%) and Hispanic (75%) residents say it is “very important,” versus about half of white residents (49%).

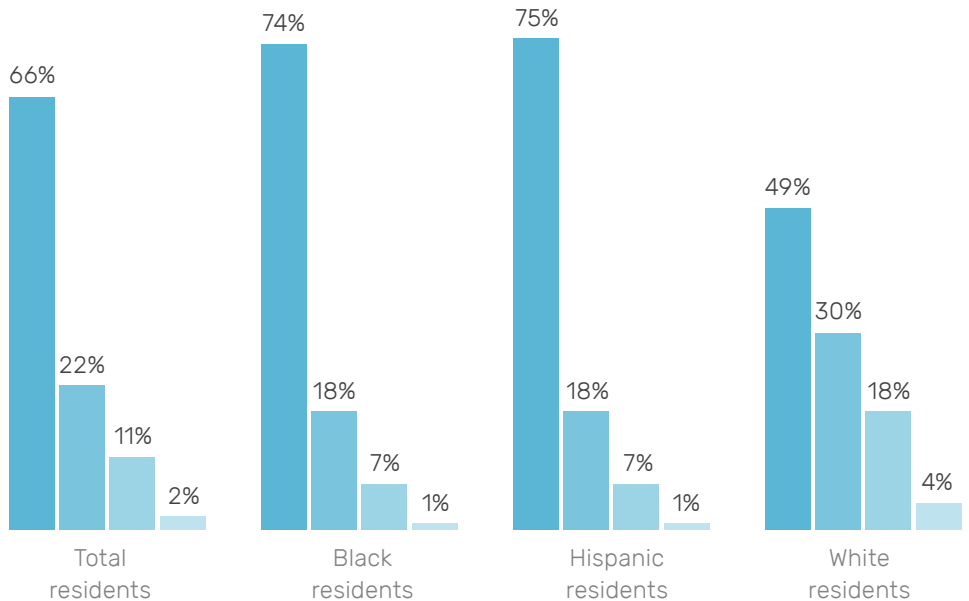
I’m actually at a point where I’m saving money now. I’m able to save, you know? So even though I don’t have a thousand dollars saved up just yet, I’m working towards it, so I know, and I’m being more responsible with my money, so I know that, you know, it’ll get better.

Female, Catering Company Worker, Age 27: Birmingham

Black residents’ higher optimism is particularly noteworthy given that they are more likely than white residents of fragile communities to currently be suffering financial hardship.

How important is a college education today?

■ Very important ■ Important ■ Somewhat important ■ Not at all important

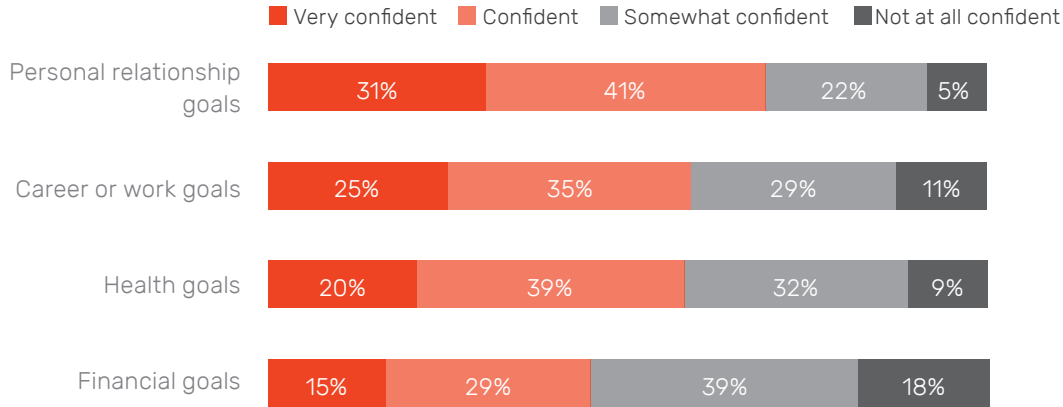


Black residents of fragile communities are also more open than white residents to the idea of relocating in search of better opportunities. Asked whether they would like to move permanently to another area given the chance, two-thirds of black residents (66%) say yes, compared with about half (51%) of white residents. Further, among residents who would like to relocate, blacks are significantly more likely than whites to cite job and education opportunities as major reasons for doing so. Black residents are also twice as likely as white residents to say they are actually planning to move permanently to another area in the next 12 months – 28% vs. 14%, respectively.

RESIDENTS’ CONFIDENCE IN THEIR ABILITY TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS VARIES WITH PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR COMMUNITY

One goal of the current study is to gauge the extent to which residents of fragile communities are able to handle challenging conditions with resilience and determination. The survey includes a set of items asking residents to rate their confidence in their ability to accomplish goals in four areas: career or work, personal relationships, finances and health. Less than one-third of residents say they are “very confident” in their ability to achieve each of the four types of goals included in the survey, though most are at least “confident” in their ability to achieve relationship goals, career goals and health goals. They are least likely to be confident or very confident in their ability to achieve their financial goals, at just 44%.

How confident are you in your ability to achieve goals that you set for yourself in each of the following areas – very confident, confident, somewhat confident or not at all confident?



Not surprisingly, residents’ confidence in their abilities to reach their financial, career, relationship and health goals trends sharply upward with education level (see Chapter 2). Given that education and income are strongly related, it makes sense that residents’ confidence also rises with their income level. Younger residents of fragile communities also tend to be more confident than older residents in their ability to achieve their goals; for example, 36% of those aged 18 to 24 are “very confident” in their ability to achieve their career or work goals, versus 19% of those aged 50 and older.

HOUSING SATISFACTION STRONGLY RELATED TO RESIDENTS’ CONFIDENCE REGARDING CAREER, FINANCIAL GOALS

In addition to the influence individuals’ personal socioeconomic status (SES) may have on their optimism and resilience, some researchers have documented collective “neighborhood effects” on residents’ self-efficacy – i.e., their perceptions of their own ability to accomplish their goals. Boardman and Robert (2000), for example, find that an individual’s level of self-efficacy varies according to the unemployment rate of the neighborhood they live in, even after controlling for various indicators of individual-level SES. Such findings have important implications for social mobility, as they imply that geographically concentrated hardship limits the abilities and aspirations of residents in fragile communities beyond the individual-level effects of poverty.

Logistic regression models were used with the current data to examine the relationships between several community-perception variables and residents’ likelihood to say they are “confident” or “very confident” in their ability to achieve their financial and career goals, while controlling for residents’ demographic characteristics, including income, education

level and employment status.¹ As would be expected, a number of residents’ perceptions – including local economic conditions, access to healthcare and confidence in local police – are significant predictors of their overall confidence in their ability to achieve their career and financial goals.

However, the factor that is most strongly related to this outcome is residents’ satisfaction with housing availability in their neighborhood. Overall, 38% of fragile-community residents say they are confident or very confident in their ability to achieve both their career and financial goals – but this figure rises to 47% among those who are satisfied with access to good, affordable housing in their area, while falling to 28% among those who are dissatisfied. This relationship is consistent even after controlling for residents’ demographic variables and other community perceptions such as optimism about local economic conditions.

CONFIDENCE IN ABILITY TO ACHIEVE CAREER AND FINANCIAL GOALS STRONGLY RELATED TO PERCEIVED ACCESS TO GOOD, AFFORDABLE HOUSING AMONG FRAGILE-COMMUNITY RESIDENTS

	FRAGILE-COMMUNITY RESIDENTS OVERALL	RESIDENTS SATISFIED WITH ACCESS TO GOOD, AFFORDABLE HOUSING	RESIDENTS NOT SATISFIED WITH ACCESS TO GOOD, AFFORDABLE HOUSING
Percentage confident or very confident in their ability to achieve both career and financial goals	38%	47%	28%

This finding points to housing policy as an area for more detailed research on how to improve the opportunity structure for fragile-community residents. Many live with the threat of eviction or homelessness, forcing them to stay focused on short-term concerns associated with day-to-day subsistence and undermining their ability to work toward long-term goals that can help them achieve a better future.

A 2017 report from the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard noted that the number of U.S. households spending more than half their income on rent had risen to 11.1 million by 2015, and that the vast majority of these were extremely low-income households. Harvard researcher Matthew Desmond’s 2016 book, *Evicted*, describes the ways in which eviction undercuts stability in families and communities. Future fragile-community studies might include items that assess the impact of experiences with or concerns about eviction on residents’ mindsets and access to opportunity. They might also seek residents’ input on various interventions intended to lower eviction rates, such as counseling and support services for at-risk families.

¹ A binary dependent variable was created for this analysis, with fragile-community residents who say they are “confident” or “very confident” in their ability to achieve both career and financial goals (38% of the total sample) placed in one category and all others placed in the second category.

Overall, 38% of fragile-community residents say they are confident or very confident in their ability to achieve both their career and financial goals.

06

Residents' Recommendations for Improvement

Policymakers have long debated the best strategies on how to improve access to opportunity and disrupt the cycle of disadvantage in fragile communities. The current study sought the perspective of residents themselves on some of the most commonly raised policy options. Presented with a list of 12 potential interventions, respondents were asked to select up to two they felt would bring the most positive impact.

The most common choice, selected by 40% of residents overall, is to raise the minimum wage. This is among the most controversial options for combating poverty; while it may improve conditions for low-skill workers, some economists note that it comes at the risk of higher unemployment and consumer prices as employers face higher labor costs. The current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour is unchanged since 2009, though many states have minimum wages above that level, including most of those in regions where the cost of living is highest, such as the Northeast and West Coast.

The second most commonly chosen option, selected by 30%, is to increase funding for public schools. Another education-related strategy included in the survey, establishing more charter schools, was chosen by 4% of residents overall among the changes they felt would have the most impact.¹

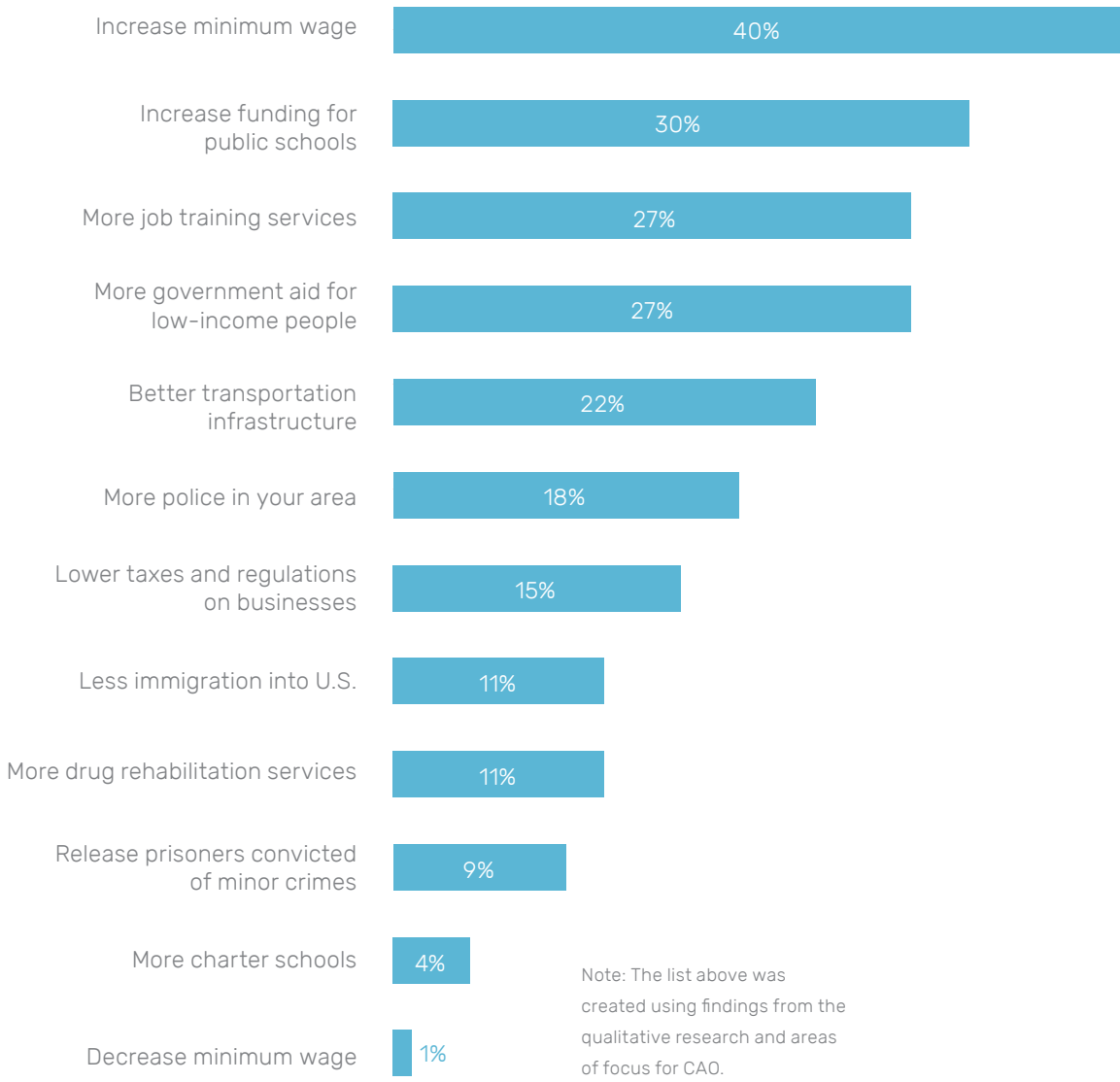


The current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour is unchanged since 2009, though many states have minimum wages above that level, including most of those in regions where the cost of living is highest, such as the Northeast and West Coast.

¹ Notably, the survey did not offer a definition of charter schools as part of the question; thus, many respondents in areas where such schools are not found may not have considered this option because they were unfamiliar with the term. In Alabama, for example, a charter school was just passed in 2015 and the state's first charter school had not opened by the time of the survey. In addition, because increased funding for public schools was higher than charter schools on the list of response options, it is possible that a primacy effect contributed to respondents' more commonly choosing the former option.

In your opinion, which of the following changes would bring the most positive impact for people in your area?

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESIDENTS WHO INCLUDE EACH CHANGE AMONG THEIR RESPONSES

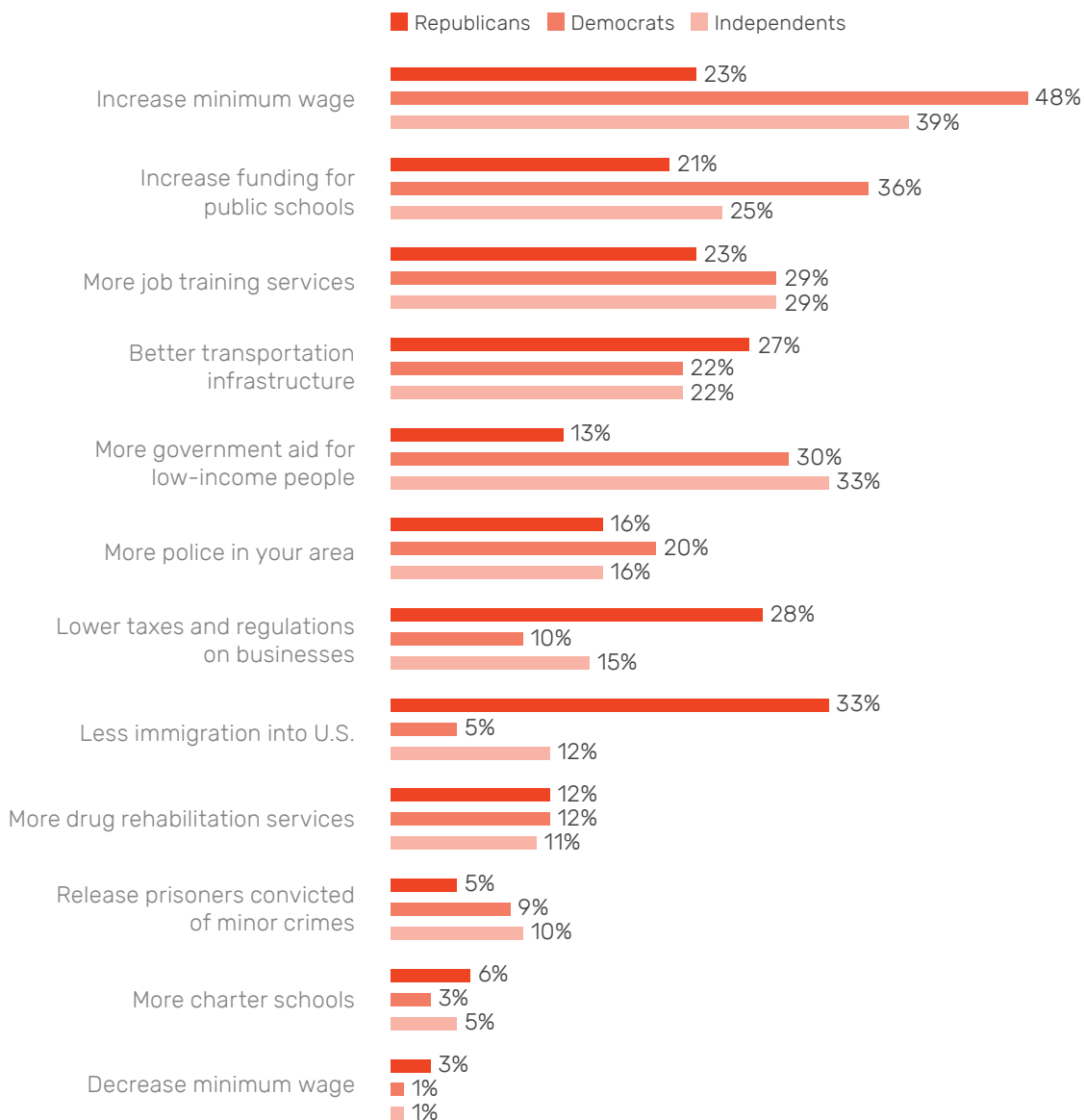


As might be expected, residents' preferred policy options vary significantly by their political affiliation. Those who identify as Republicans or identify as independent but lean toward the Republican Party, representing 24% of the total fragile-community sample, are more likely to favor greater restrictions on immigration and less taxes and regulations on businesses. Those who identify with the Democratic Party or lean Democratic, representing 51% of the

sample, are more likely to favor solutions that require government action, including raising the minimum wage, increasing funding for public schools and providing more public aid for low-income people. Political independents, representing 15% of the sample, fall in between the two partisan groups on these issues.

In your opinion, which of the following changes would bring the most positive impact for people in your area?

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESIDENTS WHO INCLUDE EACH CHANGE AMONG THEIR RESPONSES



Given the high level of political polarization among both policymakers and the U.S. public, it may be useful from a practical standpoint to highlight policy options that are most likely to elicit broad-based support. Those most commonly selected by similar proportions of Republican, Democratic and independent fragile-community residents include more job training, improved transportation infrastructure and a stronger police presence.

In particular, more research on the effective implementation of local job-training programs seems warranted by the financial and employment gains associated with vocational training among fragile-community residents (see Chapter 2). Recent Department of Labor statistics indicate there is still a sizable skills gap in the U.S. economy; 6.1 million jobs have been left unfilled because employers are having trouble finding applicants with the requisite skills. Increased focus on strategies for bridging the gap between training efforts and workplace needs – including targeted job training and apprenticeships – may provide a welcome alternative to longer-term degree programs for many fragile-community residents.

I feel like the opportunity is there, but it's kind of, I don't know, slipping away almost? Like it's becoming harder to improve your circumstances, you know? Like if you're really poor, I think it's really much harder now to get into like the middle class than it was like when I was a kid. Yeah, it just feels like there's a general feeling of the deck being stacked against you. Like the corporations colluding sort of thing, you know, to keep minimum wage low, or keep wages low and people kind of in their [current] class. And it's not even like a concerted effort, it just feels like an overall kind of pressure.

Male, Camera and Copier Technician, Age 31: Chicago

More research on the effective implementation of local job-training programs seems warranted by the financial and employment gains associated with vocational training among fragile-community residents.

Conclusion

Through its partnership with Gallup, the Center for Advancing Opportunity (CAO) is gathering critical data that will serve as the basis of Gallup's annual Opportunity Index. This index will capture the pulse of the most vulnerable Americans' views on opportunity in America.

Findings from the initial phases of this research offer a useful perspective on the overlapping challenges facing fragile-community members, the combination of which represents a formidable barrier to economic opportunity for many. Low levels of educational attainment and high joblessness rates speak to the untapped human potential inherent in these communities – as do the frustrations and unrealized ambitions of their residents.

To understand how such environments help perpetuate cycles of disadvantage, researchers and policymakers need to understand the perspective of those who live in them. The long-term goal of this research project is to improve that understanding and provide a consistent, reliable means by which to track changes in the outlook of fragile-community residents in the U.S. We believe such information can be an invaluable tool for designing public and private-sector initiatives that help Americans in such areas improve not just their own lives, but the stability and prosperity of their families and broader communities. This report lays the foundation for a long-term exploration of barriers to opportunity and the creation of evidence-based solutions to these challenges.

Each year, CAO will invite Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to submit research and programmatic proposals to broaden the field of research on fragile communities and engage students in preparation for academic, research and professional careers as leaders in the identification and implementation of evidence-based solutions. For information about future opportunities to apply for grants, please visit www.advancingopportunity.org.

A successful life, to me, would be to help out people, whether it's the less fortunate or whatever that may be. But obviously to take care of my eventual family. I'd like to have kids. I want to be able to take care of my wife. It's not about just being successful. I want to be able to do something that I'm more passionate about, that I'm utilizing the skillset that I believe God has given me. I don't want to just make money; I want to try and make somewhat of a difference. And even if it is one person at a time throughout my entire life as it goes on, so be it, but that's what a successful life looks like.

**Male, Aerospace Welder,
Age 33: Cleveland**

ABOUT GALLUP

Gallup delivers analytics and advice to help leaders and organizations solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 80 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviors of employees, customers, students and citizens than any other organization in the world.

ABOUT THURGOOD MARSHALL COLLEGE FUND

Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) is the nation's largest organization exclusively representing the Black College Community. TMCF member-schools include the publicly supported Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly Black Institutions, enrolling nearly 80% of all students attending black colleges and universities. Through scholarships, capacity-building and research initiatives, innovative programs, and strategic partnerships, TMCF is a vital resource in the PK-12 and higher education space. The organization is also the source of top employers seeking top talent for competitive internships and good jobs. To date, the organization has awarded more than \$250 million in such assistance to its students and member-schools.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR ADVANCING OPPORTUNITY

In 2016, TMCF received a \$26 million gift from the Charles Koch Foundation and Koch Industries to launch the Center for Advancing Opportunity (CAO) to expand educational, social and economic opportunities in our nation's most fragile communities through original research, educational programs and direct engagement with residents. By listening to different community voices and supporting scholars and students committed to making a positive difference, we work to empower people eager to put ideas into action and discover mutually beneficial solutions to bolster fragile communities across the country.

CAO is building the capacity of HBCUs to engage talented faculty in researching these issues and building a pipeline of talent that can contribute to developing solutions to these challenging problems. In 2017, CAO established its first campus-based research center at an HBCU – The Center for the Study of Economic Mobility at Winston-Salem State University (WSSU). In 2018, CAO established two more centers – The Center for Justice Research at Texas Southern University and The Center for Educational Opportunity at Albany State University. These are the first of several HBCU research centers CAO will fund to focus on the most pressing issues in education reform, economic opportunity and justice.

ABOUT THE CHARLES KOCH FOUNDATION

Everyone has the ability to learn, contribute and succeed if they have the freedom and opportunity to do so. That's why, more than 50 years ago, Charles G. Koch began supporting education. The Charles Koch Foundation, founded in 1980, continues this work by funding research and education that help people expand their horizons, develop their skills and help others.

ABOUT KOCH INDUSTRIES, INC.

Koch Industries owns a diverse group of companies integral to creating life's basic necessities: food, shelter, clothing and transportation. With 100,000 employees in more than 60 countries worldwide, including 60,000 in the U.S., Koch Industries strives to make life better through innovative solutions that set industry best practices for quality and responsibility. Koch Industries is also an unapologetic advocate for the principles of a free and open society, which are applied across Koch companies every single day and contribute to its overall success. For more news and stories, visit www.KOCHind.com.

References

Alexander, M. (2010). *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press.

Allard, S. (2017). *Places in Need: The Changing Geography of Poverty*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

DePaoli, J., Balfanz, R., Bridgeland, J., Atwell, M. & Ingram, E. (2017). *Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenge in Raising High School Graduation Rates*. Civic Enterprises and Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University.

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84(2), 191-215.

Boschma, J. & Brownstein, R. (2016, February 29). The concentration of poverty in America's schools. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/02/concentration-poverty-american-schools/471414/>.

Boardman, J. & Robert, S. (2000). Neighborhood socioeconomic status and perceptions of self-efficacy. *Sociological Perspectives*, 43(1), 117-136.

Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2017). Community Policing. Retrieved from: <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=81>.

Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2017, November 7). Job openings and labor turnover – September 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.nr0.htm>.

Cantril, H. (1965). *The Pattern of Human Concerns*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Case, A. & Deaton, A. (2017, March 23-24). Mortality and morbidity in the 21st century. Brookings Papers on Economic Activity. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/6_casedeaton.pdf.

Center for an Urban Future. (2013, April). Launching low-income entrepreneurs. Retrieved from <https://nycfuture.org/pdf/Launching-Low-Income-Entrepreneurs.pdf>.

Cohen, P. (2010, October 17). 'Culture of poverty' makes a comeback. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/18/us/18poverty.html>.

Desmond, M. (2016). *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York: Crown Books.

Dewan, S. (2013, October 28). Microcredit for Americans. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/29/business/microcredit-for-americans.html>.

Edgcomb, E. & Thetford, T. (2012). Microenterprise development as job creation. Aspen Institute. Retrieved from <http://fieldus.org/Publications/JobCreation.pdf>.

Edmiston, K. (2008). Entrepreneurship in low and moderate income countries. In Glenn Yago, James Barth, and Betsy Zeidman (Eds.), *Entrepreneurship in Emerging Domestic Markets*. New York: Springer, pp. 1-8.

Eltagouri, M. & Wong, G. (2017, March 23). Chicago area leads U.S. in population loss, sees drop for 2nd year in a row. *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-chicago-census-population-loss-met-20170322-story.html>.

Ford, M. (2016, April 15). What caused the great crime decline in the U.S.? *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/04/what-caused-the-crime-decline/477408/>.

Grimm, S., Lemay-Hebert, N. & Nay, O. (2014). 'Fragile States': Introducing a political concept. *Third World Quarterly*, 35(2), March 2014, 197-209.

Guthrie, L., Butler, S. & Ward, M. (2009). Time perspective and socioeconomic status: A link to socioeconomic disparities in health? *Social Science & Medicine*, 68(12), June 2009, 2145-2151.

Humphreys, K. (2015, January 14). Why the wealthy stopped smoking, but the poor didn't. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/01/14/why-the-wealthy-stopped-smoking-but-the-poor-didnt/?utm_term=.11c75a29886d.

Iceland, J. & Hernandez, E. (2017). Understanding trends in concentrated poverty: 1980-2014. *Social Science Research*, 62, 2017, 75-95.

Jackson, C.K., Johnson, R. & Persico, C. (2016). The effects of school spending on educational and economic outcomes. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 131(1), 157-218.

Johnson, L.B. (1964, January 8). State of the Union address. Retrieved from <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=26787>.

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. (2017). *The State of the Nation's Housing*.

Kearney, M. (2014). The economic challenges of crime and incarceration in the United States. Brookings. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/the-economic-challenges-of-crime-incarceration-in-the-united-states/>.

Keene, D., Bader, M. & Ailshire, J. (2013). Length of residence and social integration: The contingent effects of neighborhood poverty. *Health Place*, May 2013.

Kim, P., Aldrich, H. & Keister, L. (2004). "Household Income and Net Wealth," in William B. Gartner, Kelly G. Shaver, Nancy M. Carter, and Paul D. Reynolds, Eds., *Handbook of Entrepreneurial Dynamics: The Process of Business Creation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 49-61.

Kneebone, E. & Holmes, N. (2016). U.S. concentrated poverty in the wake of the Great Recession. Brookings, March 31, 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/u-s-concentrated-poverty-in-the-wake-of-the-great-recession/>.

Lardier, D., Herr, K., Barrios, V., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R. (2017). Merit in meritocracy: Uncovering the myth of exceptionality and self-reliance through the voices of urban youth of color. *Education and Urban Society*, 2017, 1-27.

Meer, J. & West, J. (2016). Effects of the minimum wage on employment dynamics. *Journal of Human Resources*, University of Wisconsin Press, 51(2), 500-522.

Reardon, S., Robinson, J. & Weathers, E. Patterns and trends in racial/ethnic and socioeconomic academic achievement gaps. In H.A. Ladd and E.B. Fiske (Eds.), *Handbook of Research in Education Finance and Policy (Second edition)*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Russell, K. (2017, January 5). A higher minimum wage in 2017. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/01/05/business/economy/state-minimum-wages.html>.

Schulte, S. & Podesta, L. (2017, August 10). School funding dispute continues as teachers, students protest delay. ABC7 News. Retrieved from: <http://abc7chicago.com/education/school-funding-dispute-continues/2292625/>.

U.S. Department of Education. (2017). Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Retrieved from: <https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rn>.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2017). Mission. Retrieved from <https://www.hud.gov/about/mission>.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2017). Income and Poverty in the United States: 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2017/demo/p60-259.html>.

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. (2018). Public Education Funding Inequity in an Era of Increasing Concentration of Poverty and Resegregation. Retrieved from <http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2018-01-10-Education-Inequity.pdf>.

Veenstra, G. (2000). Social capital, SES and health: An individual-level analysis. *Social Science and Medicine*, 50(5), 619-629.

Weissman, J., Pratt, L., Miller, E. & Parker, J. (2015, May). Serious psychological distress among adults: United States, 2009-2013. NCHS Data Brief No. 203. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db203.pdf>.

Williams, N. & Williams, C. (2011). Tackling barriers to entrepreneurship in a deprived urban neighborhood. *Local Economy*, 26(1), 30-42.

Zimmerman, E., Woolf, S. & Haley, A. (2015). Understanding the relationship between education and health. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Retrieved from <https://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/education/curriculum-tools/population-health/zimmerman.html>.



CENTER FOR
ADVANCING
OPPORTUNITY

**The Center for
Advancing Opportunity**

901 F St. NW #300
Washington, DC 20004

t +1 202.507.4851
f +1 202.652.2934

www.advancingopportunity.org



**Thurgood Marshall
College Fund**

901 F St. NW #300
Washington, DC 20004

t +1 202.507.4851
f +1 202.652.2934

www.tmcf.org

GALLUP®

World Headquarters

The Gallup Building
901 F Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

t +1.877.242.5587
f +1.202.715.3045

www.gallup.com

K KOCH™

**Koch
Industries, Inc.**

4111 E. 37th St. So.
Wichita, KS 67201

t +1 316.828.5500

www.kochind.com

Charles Koch
CHARLES KOCH FOUNDATION

**The Charles Koch
Foundation**

1320 N Courthouse Road #500
Arlington, VA 22201

t +1 703.875.1600
f +1 703.875.1766

www.charleskochfoundation.org