



# Ottawa County Housing Commission

## 2022-2027 Strategic Plan



Ottawa County  
*Where You Belong.*

# Acknowledgments

## Ottawa County Housing Commission (2022)

Chair Holly Cole, *Grand Haven Area Community Foundation: Vice President of Grants & Program*

Doug Zylstra, *City of Holland: Commissioner District 3*

Patrick Waterman, *City of Hudsonville: City Manager*

Virginia Beard, *Hope College: Associate Professor of Political Science*

Thomas Reinsma, *Scholten Fant: Senior Attorney*

## Key Stakeholders

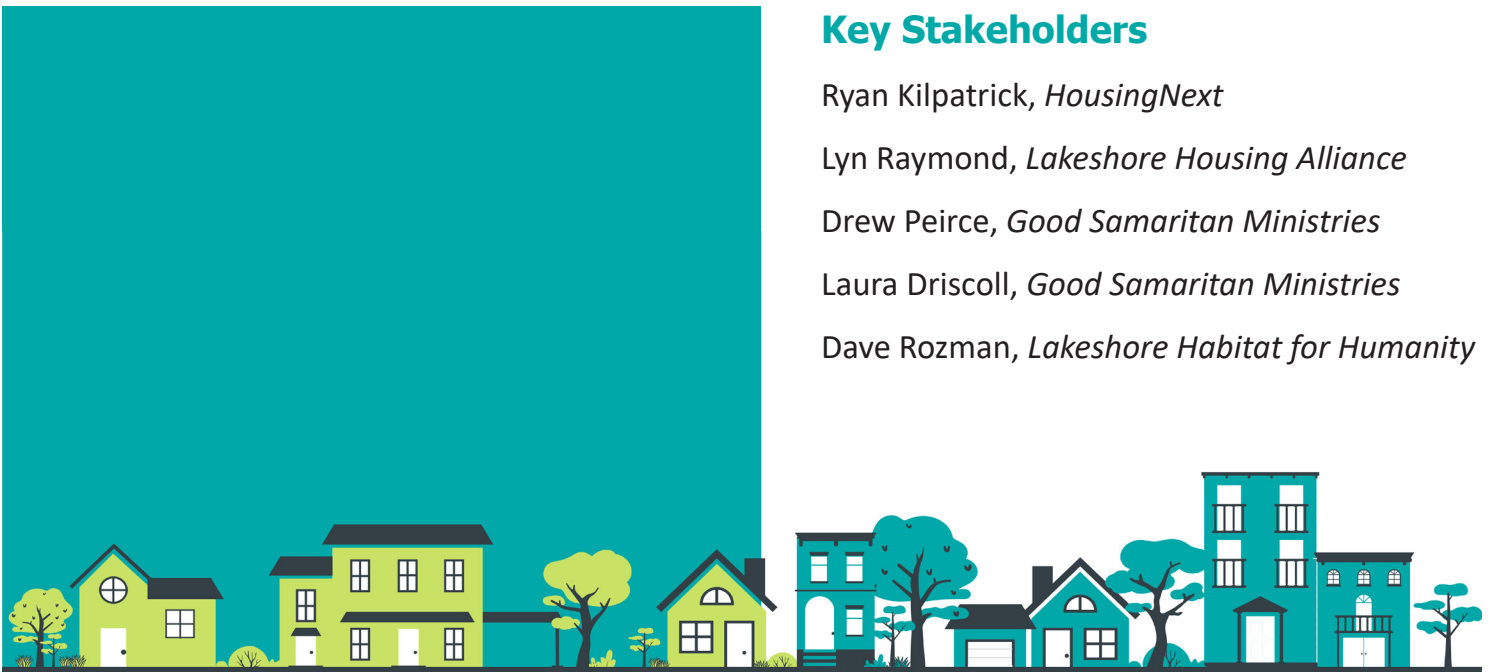
Ryan Kilpatrick, *HousingNext*

Lyn Raymond, *Lakeshore Housing Alliance*

Drew Peirce, *Good Samaritan Ministries*

Laura Driscoll, *Good Samaritan Ministries*

Dave Rozman, *Lakeshore Habitat for Humanity*



## Ottawa County Staff

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Kylie Vosburg, *DSI: Land Use Specialist*

# Executive Summary

The Ottawa County Housing Commission (OCHC) works cooperatively with federal, state, and local governments to address housing needs within Ottawa County. Created in March 2006, the OCHC was formed to ensure eligibility for certain housing-related funds and programs that may only be accessible to HUD-recognized housing commissions, namely the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Around this time HUD and MSHDA stopped issuing new housing choice vouchers, resulting in the OCHC becoming inactive.

With the codification of county ordinances in April 2019, along with interest in enhancing regional collaboration to address Ottawa County's housing challenges, the OCHC reconvened in November 2019 for the first time in seven years. A strategic planning session was held on August 21, 2020 to ensure the commission moved forward in a clearly-defined direction to address housing needs. Commission members, key stakeholders, and staff assessed Ottawa County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as they pertain to housing within the county. This process—known as a SWOT analysis—helped determine factors that influence housing affordability within the county. A “story board”, involving commission members ranking the importance of objectives and deliverables, was also used to establish the direction of the OCHC and to develop this strategic plan.



Moving forward, this plan should act as a guide and reference for the OCHC as it continues working with partners—both new and existing. However, this plan is intended to be a living document. In the future, the Housing Commission may develop new goals, work towards new objectives, and establish new baselines for its continued success, and the strategic plan will be updated to meet those new challenges and successes.

Since the original creation of this document in 2020, the Ottawa County Housing Commission has been successful in attaining Public Housing Authority status as of July 2020. Some other noteworthy aspects of this initiative include the ongoing development of an Eviction Prevention Program with the inclusion of proactive eviction modeling, as well as the development of a Citizen Survey which was deployed in 2021 which assessed the support of a hypothetical housing millage throughout the county. More information regarding those initiatives can be observed in Appendix A, page 6.

# Vision

The vision of an organization reflects its ideals and ultimate goals. In the case of the Ottawa County Housing Commission, the vision is one of simplicity:

**“Encouraging public and private partnerships to ensure housing in Ottawa County is affordable for people of all ages and incomes.”**

# Mission

**“To serve residents of Ottawa County by increasing housing opportunity throughout Ottawa County in conjunction with our multi-sector partners including housing and service providers to contribute to the success of our local community and economy.”**

A guiding principle, a mission statement communicates the purpose of an organization and what it hopes to accomplish. The Ottawa County Housing Commission has a clear mission for its future:

# Goals

Goals identify what an organization seeks to achieve by its existence and operation. The Ottawa County Housing Commission has three primary goals for its future:

- 1.) Leverage financial resources to help construct more affordable housing units in the County.**
- 2.) Organize the County’s Housing Commission for long-term, sustaining impact.**
- 3.) Build a network of community partners committed to supporting affordable housing.**
- 4.) Advocate for affordable housing on all fronts.**

# Goals and Objectives

2022-2027

## Goal #1

Leverage financial resources to help construct more affordable housing units in the County

### Objectives:

- Maintain Public Housing Authority (PHA) status
- Secure project-based vouchers via HUD
- Create a reliable funding stream dedicated to supporting affordable housing

## Goal #2

Organize the County's Housing Commission for long-term, sustaining impact

### Objectives:

- Develop Long-Range Countywide Housing Plan (tied to Future Land Use Vision)
- Assess resources required to administer a robust, impactful Housing Commission into the future
- Maintain a "dashboard" of pertinent metrics to help guide the Housing Commission over time
- Continuously enhance the Commission's website with valuable information and resources
- Update Housing Needs Assessment (for 2023)

## Goal #3

Build a network of community partners committed to supporting affordable housing

### Objectives:

- Maintain partnerships with County Land Bank Authority (LBA) and Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA)
- Establish/maintain meaningful relationships with community stakeholders (e.g. housing, non-profits, real estate developers, ALICE residents, etc.)
- Enhance/coordinate affordable housing-related data collection with local units of government
- Support courts and local agencies with eviction prevention programming
- Examine mortgage/foreclosure assistance needs

## Goal #4

Advocate for affordable housing on all fronts

### Objectives:

- Develop strategy/approach for the Housing Commission to support, on a case-by-case basis, viable affordable housing proposals in the County
- Collaborate with HousingNext on hosting affordable housing (educational) discussions within the County's urbanized/urbanizing areas
- Continuous outreach/education to local units to help reinforce their role in affordable housing
- Propose and/or advocate for necessary legislation
- Continue to assess the viability of a millage to increase affordable housing in the county

# Goal Achievements

2020-2021

## Goal #1

Leverage financial resources to help construct more affordable housing units in the County

### Achievements:

- **July 2020**- Gained qualified Public Housing Authority Status
- **September 2021**- Partnered with Muskegon County to facilitate the transfer of housing vouchers for the Samaritas Spring Lake Senior Complex

## Goal #3

Build a network of community partners committed to supporting affordable housing

### Achievements:

- **July 2020**- Established support of courts and local agencies with eviction prevention programming using CERA dollars
- **November 2020**- Created educational piece to demonstrate the dynamic between the OC Land Bank Authority and the OC Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
- **January 2022**- Established partnership with GVSU to implement predictive modeling for eviction prevention purposes
- **February 2022**- Established an advocacy committee for eviction diversion

## Goal #2

Organize the County's Housing Commission for long-term, sustaining impact

### Achievements:

- **July 2021**- A "dashboard" of pertinent metrics was established to help guide the Housing Commission over time

## Goal #4

Advocate for affordable housing on all fronts

### Achievements:

- **July 2020**- Published a white paper describing the benefits of utilizing PILOT agreements to encourage affordable housing development
- **February 2021**- Published a white paper describing the impacts of mandated requirements for parking on the availability of affordable housing.
- **May 2021**- Partnered with the Michigan Housing Coalition to support legislative packages for affordable housing
- **December 2021**- A Citizen Survey was distributed to county residents to analyze support of a hypothetical housing millage to increase the availability of affordable housing in the county
- **August 2022**- Supported two affordable housing project applications, Dwelling Place in Holland and Samaritas in Spring Lake, submitted for ARPA funding. Both received funding.
- **August 2022**- Supported ARPA application for Eviction Prevention to extend the program until sustainable funds can be secured.

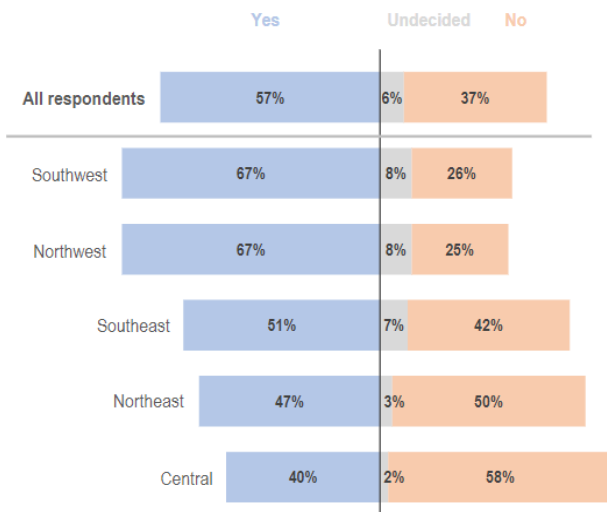
# Appendix A- Citizen Survey

December 2021

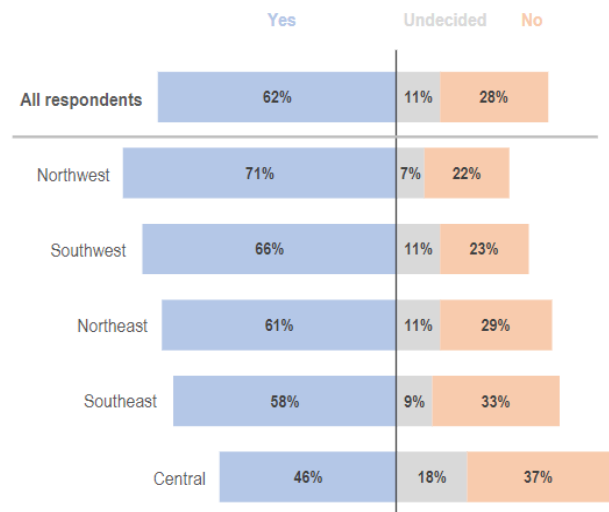
## Overview

In 2021, an Ottawa County Citizen Survey was deployed to measure “customer satisfaction” with the County’s performance in meeting public needs. Results from this survey showed that residents (21% of respondents) ranked the “availability of affordable housing” as their top issue of concern. Another aspect of the survey asked respondents if they would vote for a hypothetical 0.1 mill housing millage to increase the availability of affordable housing in Ottawa County. Respondents were then asked if they would be more likely to support such a proposal if funding was a partnership of private businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government. The following graphs depict the results of those questions:

Housing millage vote grouped by Ottawa County region



More likely to support a housing millage proposal if funding was a partnership of private businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government grouped by Ottawa County region



Prepared by: Ottawa County Department of Strategic Impact (December 2021)



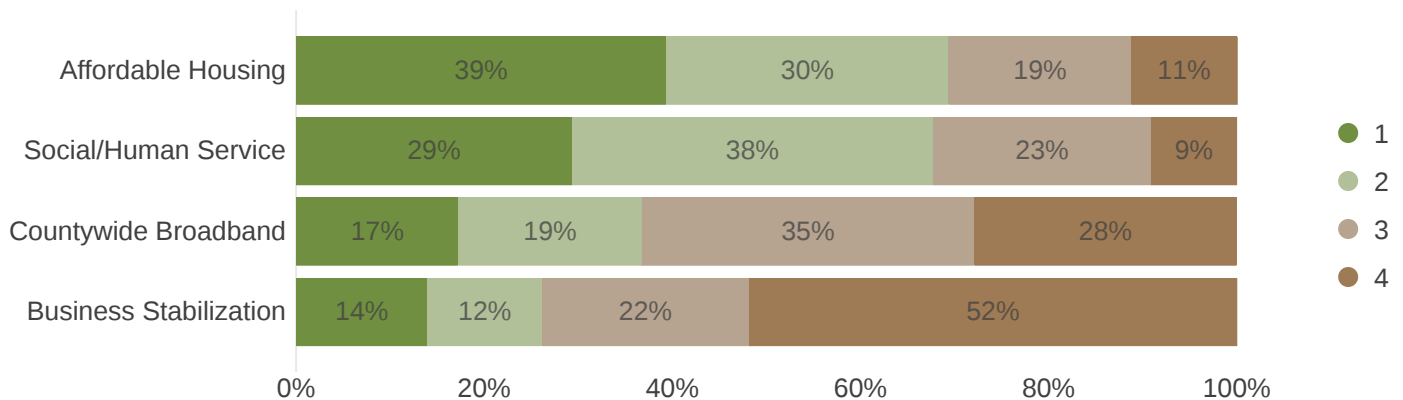
## ARPA Public Input - Survey Results

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), a COVID-19 relief package, was signed into law in March 2021. This Act includes billions in federal funding for state and local governments. This federal aid is intended to address economic impacts of the pandemic and ensure a strong recovery. Determined to utilize these one time federal resources wisely, Ottawa County formed the American Rescue Plan Act Committee. Appointed by the Board of Commissioners, the Committee is comprised of community members representing a cross-section of local public and private organizations. The Committee's sole purpose is to guide the Board of Commissioners on how to spend the \$57 million that the County has received from ARPA.

ARPA Committee members have identified needs within their area of expertise and are assisting County officials with drafting funding options and priorities. To ensure projects funded by ARPA dollars benefit all who live and work in Ottawa County, the Committee identified five categories, or "buckets", of high level priorities. To further inform the funding process for subsequent rounds of ARPA funding, Ottawa County opened a survey on July 1, 2022 to obtain feedback from residents and business owners. This report includes the results of that survey which was completed by **2233 respondents**.

**Please rank the following funding buckets from 1 to 4, with 1 being the highest and 4 being the lowest.**

1943 Responses



**Please rank the following funding buckets from 1 to 4, with 1 being the highest and 4 being the lowest.**

1943 Responses

Field	Mean
Affordable Housing	2.02
Social/Human Service	2.12
Countywide Broadband	2.74
Business Stabilization	3.12

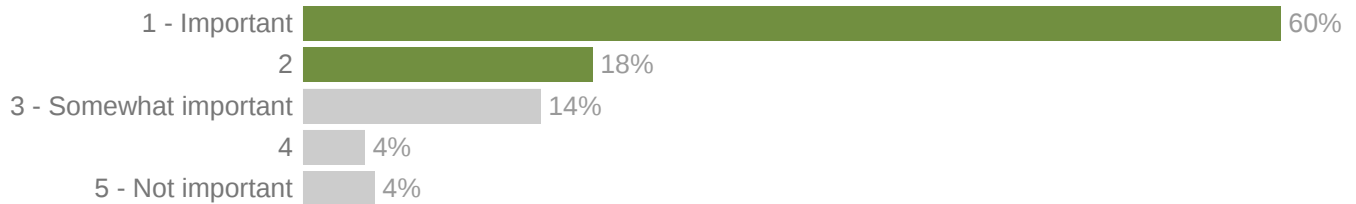


### Affordable Housing bucket project subcategories

On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is it to fund projects within each subcategory?

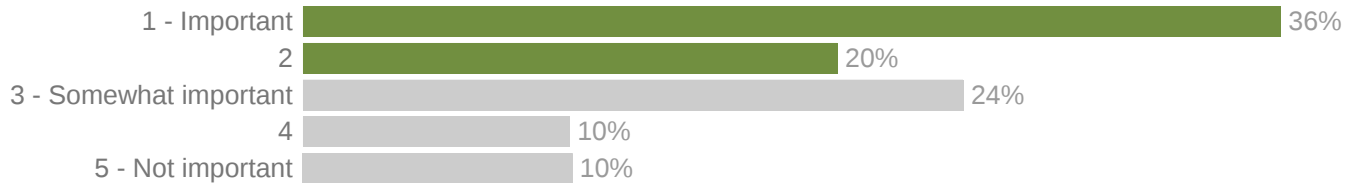
#### Increasing housing stock that meets the financial needs of the local workforce.

2173 Responses



#### Increasing housing stability by reducing residential evictions for the local workforce through private-public partnerships.

2174 Responses



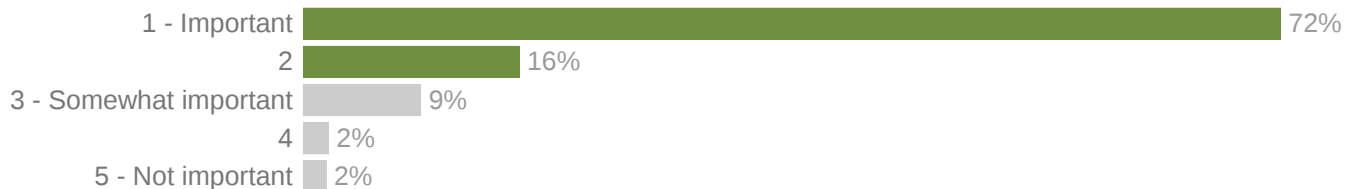

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### Social/Human Service bucket project subcategories

On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is it to fund projects within each subcategory?

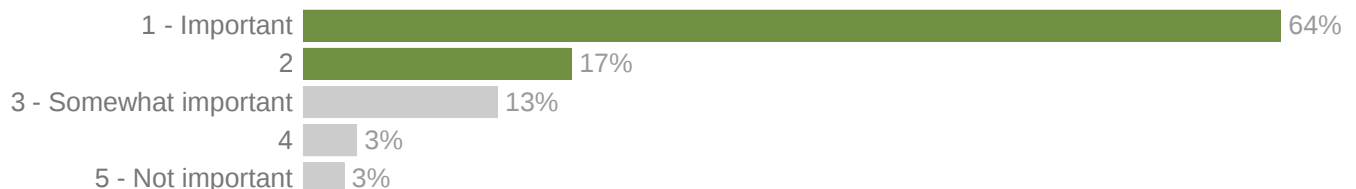
#### Creating pathways for all residents in need to receive mental health support.

2172 Responses



#### Increasing access to affordable child care.

2173 Responses

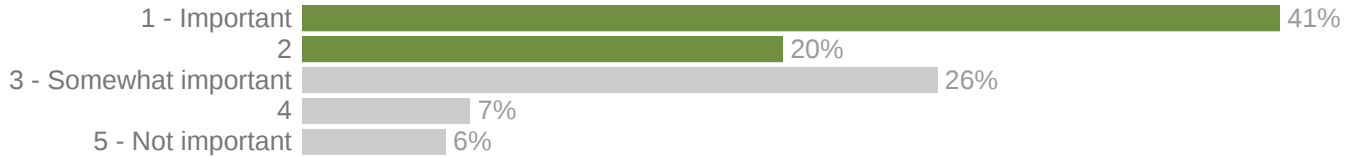


### Countywide Broadband bucket project subcategories

On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is it to fund projects within each subcategory?

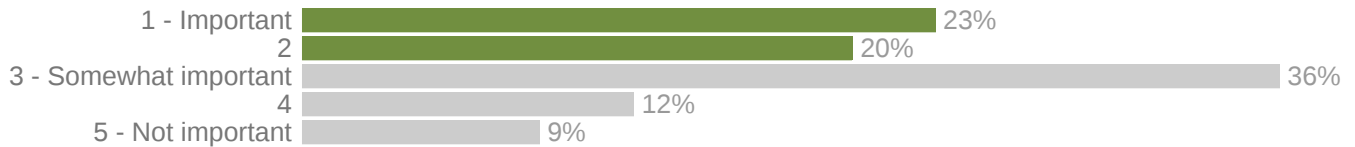
#### Building broadband infrastructure, in collaboration with the private-sector, to connect areas of the County lacking reliable, affordable high-speed internet.

2147 Responses



#### Creating digital literacy programs to help residents develop the competencies needed to participate in an expanding digital world.

2173 Responses

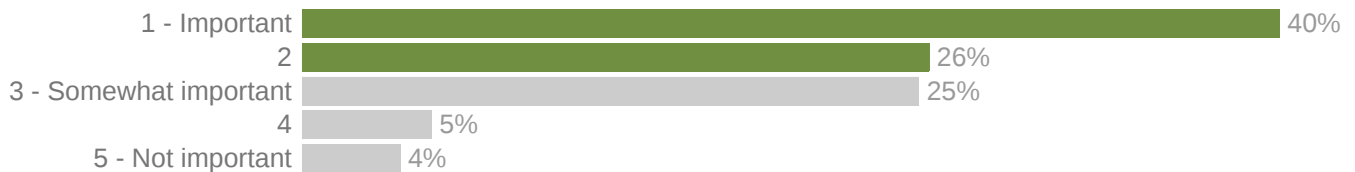


### Business Stabilization bucket project subcategories

On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is it to fund projects within each subcategory?

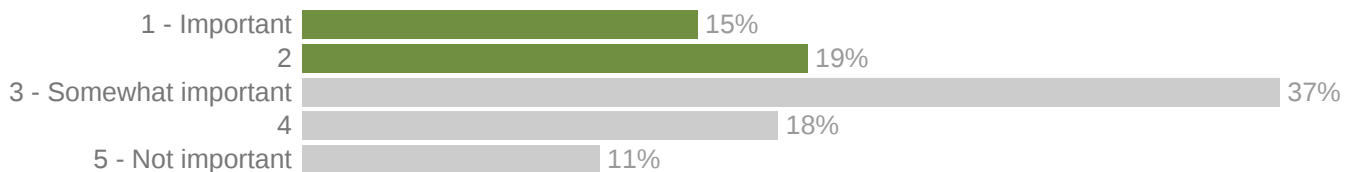
#### Improving access and decreasing cost to community college and workforce education opportunities for residents.

2172 Responses



#### Implementing automation technologies among area manufacturers challenged by workforce shortages.

2167 Responses

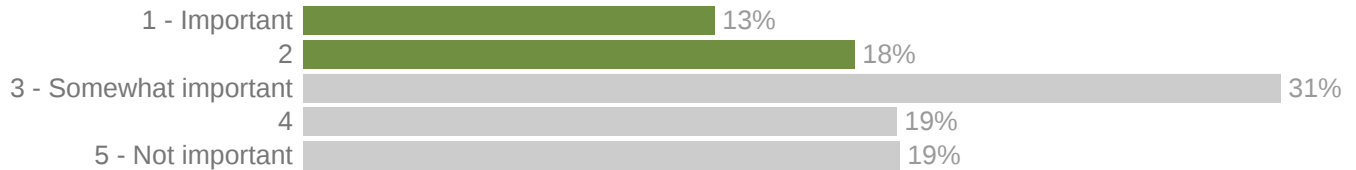


### Business Stabilization bucket project subcategories (cont.)

On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is it to fund projects within each subcategory?

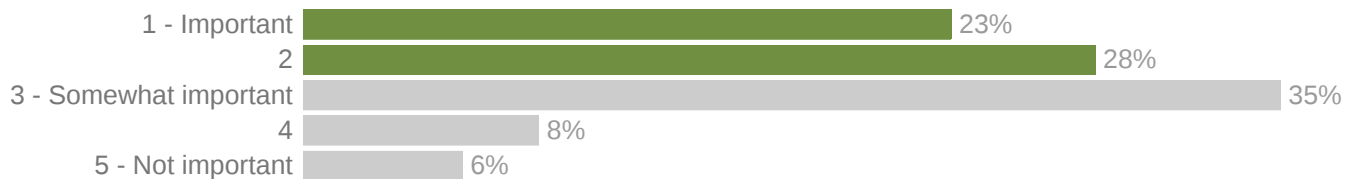
**Marketing nationally our region's distinct culture, lifestyle, and economy to help increase our population and meet the growing demands of area employers.**

2168 Responses



### Increasing resources and technical support for economically disadvantaged small businesses.

2170 Responses



## Respondent Demographics

### Did you answer this survey as an Ottawa County resident or business owner?

2172 Responses



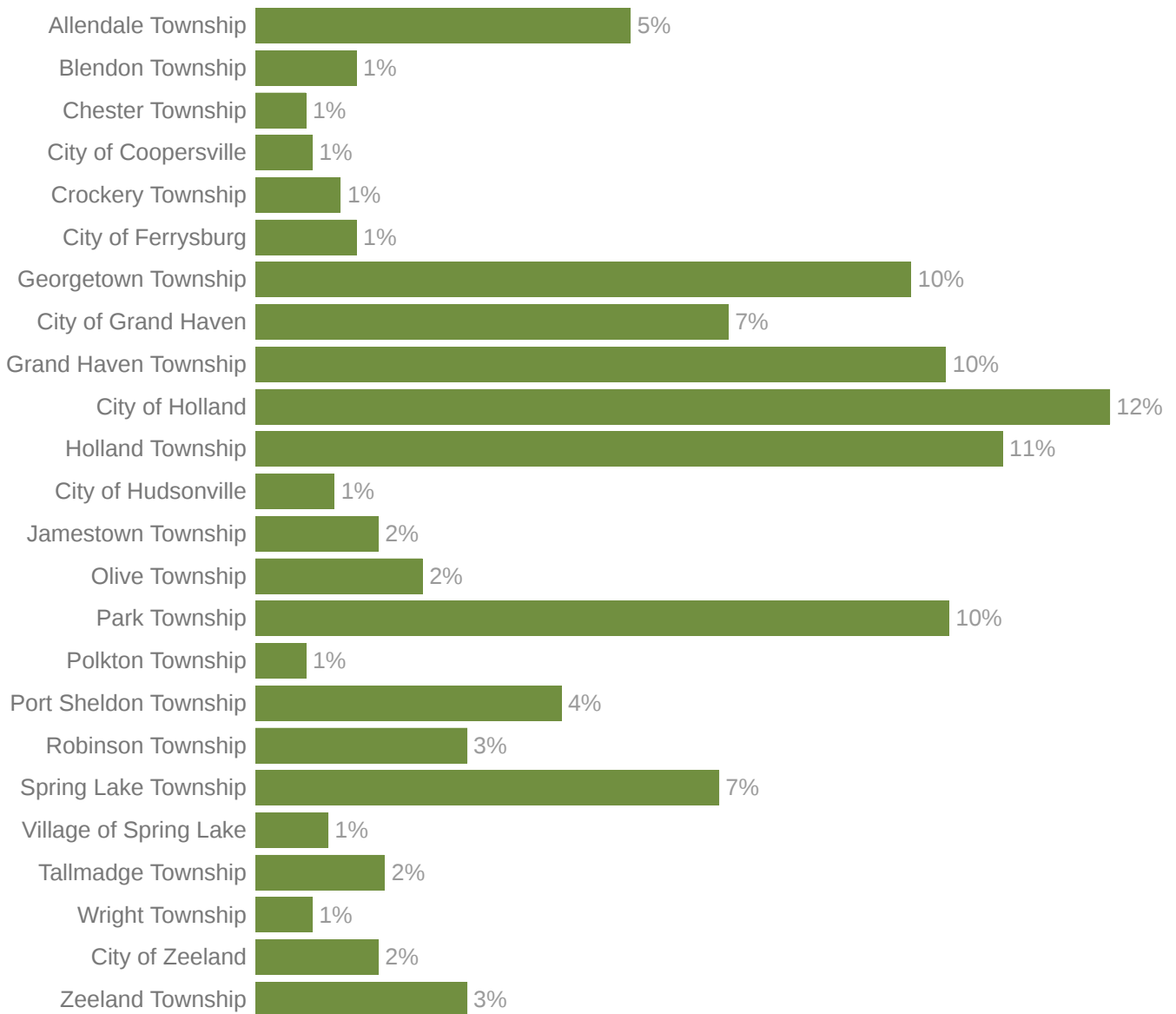
### Do you own or rent your home?

2119 Responses



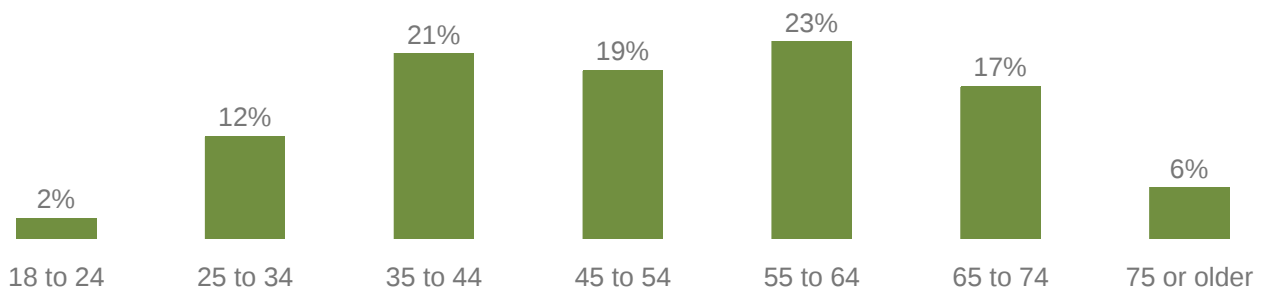
**In which township or city do you live or own a business? If you answered the survey as a resident and business owner, please select one township or city.**

2181 Responses



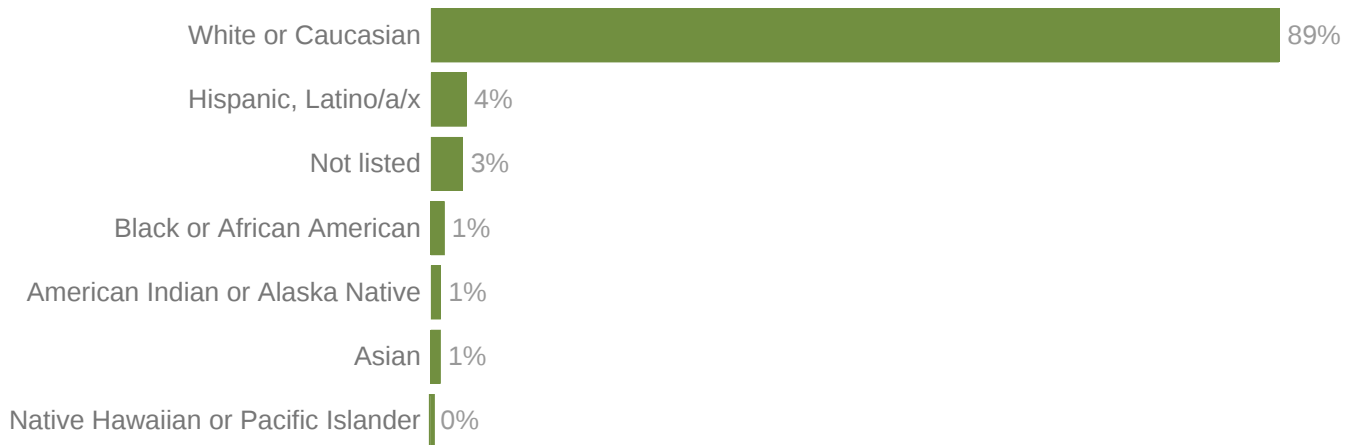
**Please select your age group:**

2162 Responses



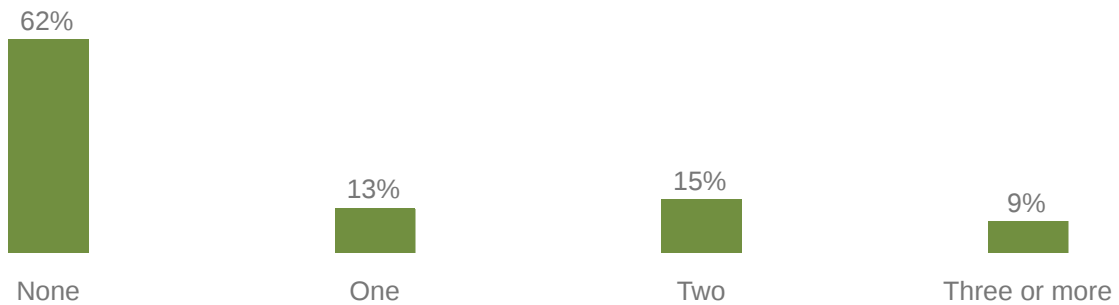
### How do you describe your race/ethnicity? You may select multiple options.

2114 Responses



### How many children under the age of 18 currently live in your home?

2166 Responses



### Which category best represents your household's total income over the past year before taxes?

1994 Responses

