

1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panel Survey Final Report

**Addressing Arts and Cultural Activities,
Public Library Services, Housing, and
Economic and Workforce Development**

**Sponsored by
Illinois Arts Council
Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Western Illinois University
Applied Social Research Unit, Illinois State University**

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Summary

The Applied Social Research Unit (ASRU) of Illinois State University, the Illinois Arts Council, and the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs of Western Illinois University sponsored the 1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panel Survey. The survey sought the experience and opinions of rural Illinois residents—persons living in non-metropolitan counties whose communities do not exceed 50,000 residents—about arts and cultural activities, public library services, community housing conditions, and economic and workforce development.

In 1998-1999, 1,659 Illinois Rural Life Panelists responded to the survey; the response rate was 32 percent. The geographic distribution of Panelists generally represents the distribution of Illinois non-metropolitan residents. Panelists tend to be older, have higher annual incomes, and have more education than non-metropolitan residents as a whole.

Arts and cultural activities

Availability. Nearly all Panelists indicated the presence of at least one or more arts-related organizations or services in their rural communities. Fortunately, with a few exceptions, the majority of Panelists without arts-related organizations and services have to drive less than 25 miles to access such organizations and services.

Rural youth arts education and activities. Nearly all Panelists (97%) think it is at least “somewhat important” to educate children in the arts in school. The majority of Panelists report that children in their communities are offered arts and cultural activities through all school levels (except pre-school) and can take part in such opportunities through organized youth groups and religious organizations if they choose to do so. Despite the perceived high availability of arts opportunities for children, more Panelists “don’t know” about opportunities for children than about other community organizations and arts-related services.

Participation in the arts. Overall, 84 percent of Panelists report participation in at least one arts activity. More Panelists participate in the categories of movies, film, or video, music (all types), dance, museums, photography, and literature than in any other types of arts activities. About 12 percent of Panelists support arts and cultural organizations, events, and activities as volunteers (e.g., they participate as sponsors, organizers, artists, performers, directors, instructors, chaperones, users, technicians, board and committee members, salespersons, and grant writers).

Strengthening rural arts and cultural life. The majority of Panelists see at least a moderate need to strengthen arts and cultural activities in their communities. In their written comments, the largest numbers of Panelists say they want to see more 1) activities for youth; 2) arts and crafts (e.g., painting, pottery, sculpture, photography, woodworking, sewing); 3) music-related activities (e.g., vocal, popular, instrumental); and 4) theater (e.g., plays, musicals, movies).

In light of Panelists' responses to the 1998-1999 Survey, arts and cultural organizations serving rural communities may consider:

- increasing communication about arts and cultural activities in rural communities and regions;
- encouraging schools and other organizations with a youth focus to educate and raise awareness of the arts in their communities by highlighting youth art projects;
- adopting collaborative strategies with groups and organizations in and among rural communities to share resources and make arts and cultural activities available;
- fostering volunteer development; and
- sharing information about successful arts-related programs, projects, events, and organizations in rural areas to serve as models or resources.

Public library services

Library assets and access. Public libraries help to strengthen rural communities by serving current residents and appealing to new businesses and residents. Library location may influence Panelists' ability—especially Panelists who live in the country—to travel to the library or afford a library card. In their written comments, several Panelists expressed they can't get a library card because they live out of the district or city limits. In some cases, residents said that fees to use the library are too high or not affordable. Although most Panelists (88%) report having a library in their community, Panelists from the smallest rural communities are most likely to have to travel for library services.

Library uses and changes. Panelists use public libraries for the varied services, programs, and resources they offer. They primarily use the library for recreational reading and reference information. However other uses of the library (e.g., to attend training programs, use library resources such as a FAX machine, or to attend business or social group meetings), suggest that libraries can and do offer more than reading and reference materials. Because some community residents may not be aware of all their public library provides, libraries should inform residents of the available programs and resources.

Although most Panelists are satisfied with their local library's services, they suggested the most important ways in which their library could change. More Panelists called for longer open hours, changes related to technology (e.g., more access to computers and access to library's card catalog from home computer), and more programs for young people than for more current or increased reading and reference materials.

Housing issues

Housing affordability, conditions, and availability. Adequate, appropriate, and affordable housing is essential to the well being of families and the viability and development of communities. Generally, Panelists are less certain about the housing situation for special populations and housing affordability than they are about housing availability and conditions. Over 60 percent of Panelists believe community housing stock is in good repair and in better repair than ten years ago. About 50 percent think there is more available housing now than ten years ago and enough housing to meet the demand in their communities.

Community response to housing issues. Nearly a third of Panelists (30%) are unsure about what their communities are doing in response to housing issues. This situation indicates an opportunity for communities to involve residents in development activities or in the least to inform residents about these activities.

Other Panelists are more aware of housing-related activities in their communities such as planned private subdivisions and community planned housing development. Some Panelists indicate the community recognizes a housing issue but has made no response. Over one-quarter of Panelists (28%) do not expect population growth in their communities, so they think housing should be adequate.

Government support for homebuyers, renters, and homeowners. A majority of Panelists (60%) are in favor of the government supporting first-time homebuyers in purchasing a home. Panelists are more evenly split when it comes to favoring or opposing both financial help to homeowners for home repair and assistance for low-income persons in making rent payments.

Review housing issues and share information. Recognizing that rural communities face greater challenges than urban communities in mustering resources to support housing construction, rehabilitation, and finance, Panelists' responses to housing questions on the 1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panels Survey suggest that:

- Local governmental units should recognize housing as an economic development issue that affects the community's ability to attract and retain business and residents.
- Communities should assess and discuss their housing situations, keep residents informed of activities related to housing, and explore options for housing finance, development, and rehabilitation.
- Community organizations should obtain information about programs to support homeowners, homebuyers, renters, individuals needing home repair, and organizations involved with housing credit, development, and rehabilitation.
- Innovative community-based strategies are necessary to develop existing or new housing that is appropriate and affordable.

Economic and workforce development

General economic well being and job availability. While jobs are available in their communities, most Panelists (84%) say these are low paying jobs without benefits. Many Panelists have experienced the loss of jobs in their communities due to business closure and cutbacks. Panelists' communities also have lost residents because these residents could not find a job in their chosen field or professions.

Panelists suggest that lack of higher paying jobs has serious implications for rural community sustainability and growth. Job unavailability has a negative effect on resident retention and local leadership development (as young people leave their communities for job prospects in urban areas). It also causes some rural residents to commute long distances for jobs with suitable pay. This takes time away from family life and child supervision and reduces the time rural residents have for volunteering in their own communities.

Despite Panelists' indications of poor local job quality, business closures, and business cutbacks, over one-third of Panelists (37%) indicate that local economic conditions have improved compared with five years ago. Another 39 percent of Panelists report that local economic conditions have remained the same.

Workforce and business support and opportunities. An area's workforce is of primary importance in business retention and attraction. Educational opportunities, accessible and affordable services such as early childhood education, childcare, transportation, health care, elder care, and support for new businesses are essential for creating jobs and developing a workforce that remains employed and economically independent.

Through their opinions of service availability and need, the 1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panelists echo what other reports and policy and planning documents advocate:

- cooperatively planned and delivered training and education. This includes leadership development in rural communities, programs to teach people about starting businesses, and job-related training to create a skilled and adaptable workforce;
- imaginative use of technology to support training, communications, and job creation (e.g., telecommuting);
- development of innovative approaches for childcare, adult daycare, and transportation allowing more rural residents to attain and retain employment; and
- encouragement of rural residents in developing, using, and marketing community resources and amenities to support community and economic development.

Introduction

Since 1989, the Illinois Rural Life Panel Survey (IRLPS) has served as a tool for gaining and sharing information about non-metropolitan county residents' opinions and experiences about quality of life issues. Non-metropolitan counties have communities with populations of 50,000 or less and are defined as "rural" by the IRLPS project. Broadly, the project's goals are to:

- identify trends regarding rural quality of life in Illinois; and
- meet information needs of researchers, advocacy and professional organizations, and community groups.

In 1998-1999, the Illinois Rural Life Panel Survey project received generous support and interest from two sponsors in addition to the Applied Social Research Unit of Illinois State University: the Illinois Arts Council, a State agency, and the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA), Western Illinois University. The 1998-1999 IRLPS sought the experience and opinions of rural Illinois residents about arts and cultural activities, public library services, community housing conditions, and economic and workforce development.

The Illinois Arts Council strives, as part of its mission and values, to serve the diverse needs and interests of Illinois residents in the arts and to support artistic programming in under-served rural areas. To inform the Council's mission, the 1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panel Survey included questions about:

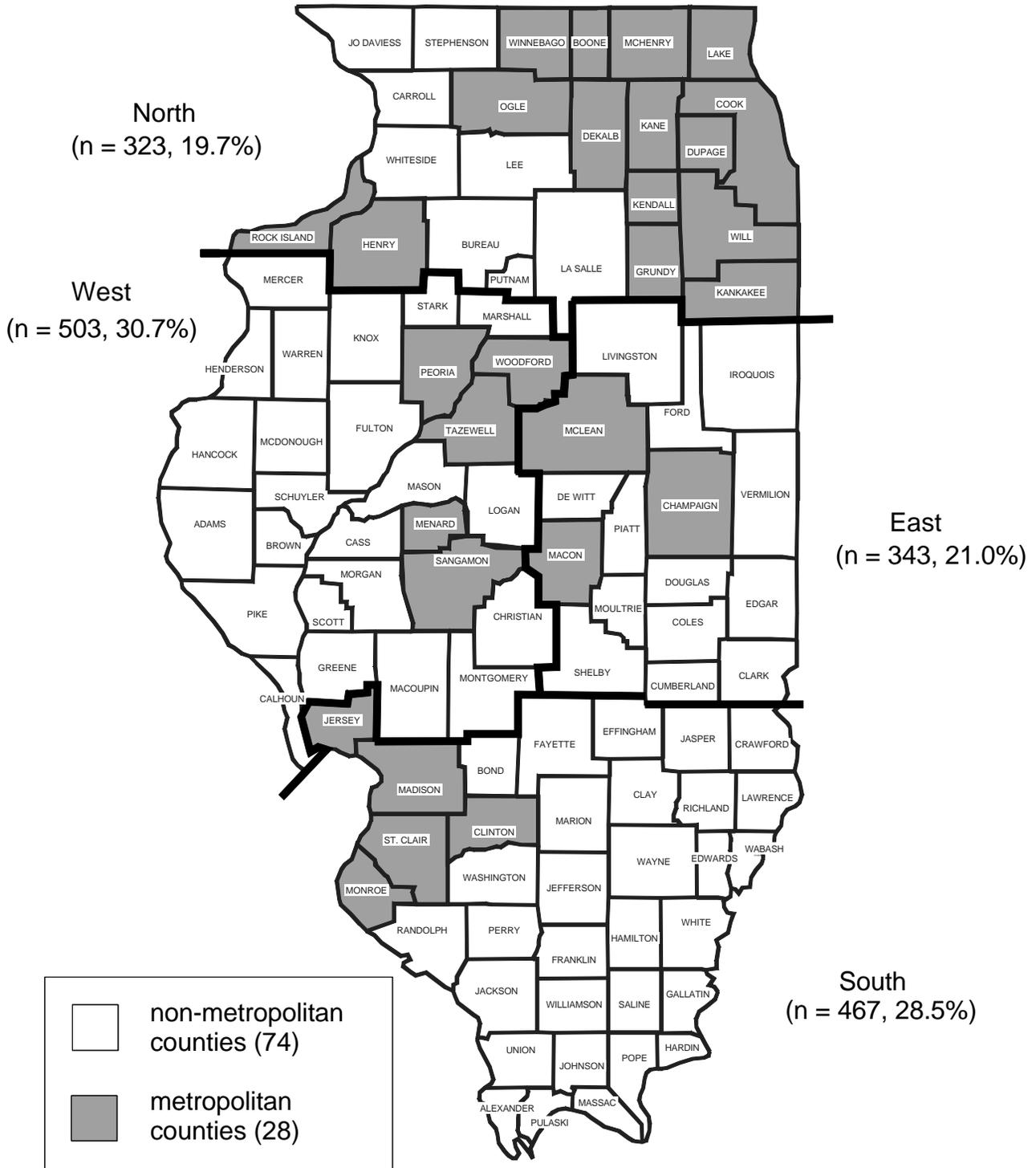
- arts and cultural activities and organizations in Panelists' communities;
- Panelists' participation in the arts and their opinions about educating children in the arts; and
- needs and opportunities for strengthening arts and cultural activities in Panelists' communities.

The IIRA, State agencies, and public interest associations use Illinois Rural Life Panel Survey data to inform policy, programs, objectives, and goals affecting rural Illinoisans. The 1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panel Survey considered the following additional issues:

- public library services (availability, usage, satisfaction, suggestions for change, and willingness of Panelists to pay for improved library services);
- housing conditions, availability, and affordability in Panelists' communities and their communities' responses to housing issues; and
- economic and workforce development (general economic conditions, Panelists' employment and opinions about job availability, and employment support services such as training, business support, childcare, programs for youth, and transportation).

The following report summarizes Panelists' opinions about these topics and provides Panelists' comments about quality of life in their communities and regions.

Figure 1: Illinois Map Showing Regions and Metropolitan and Non-metropolitan Counties



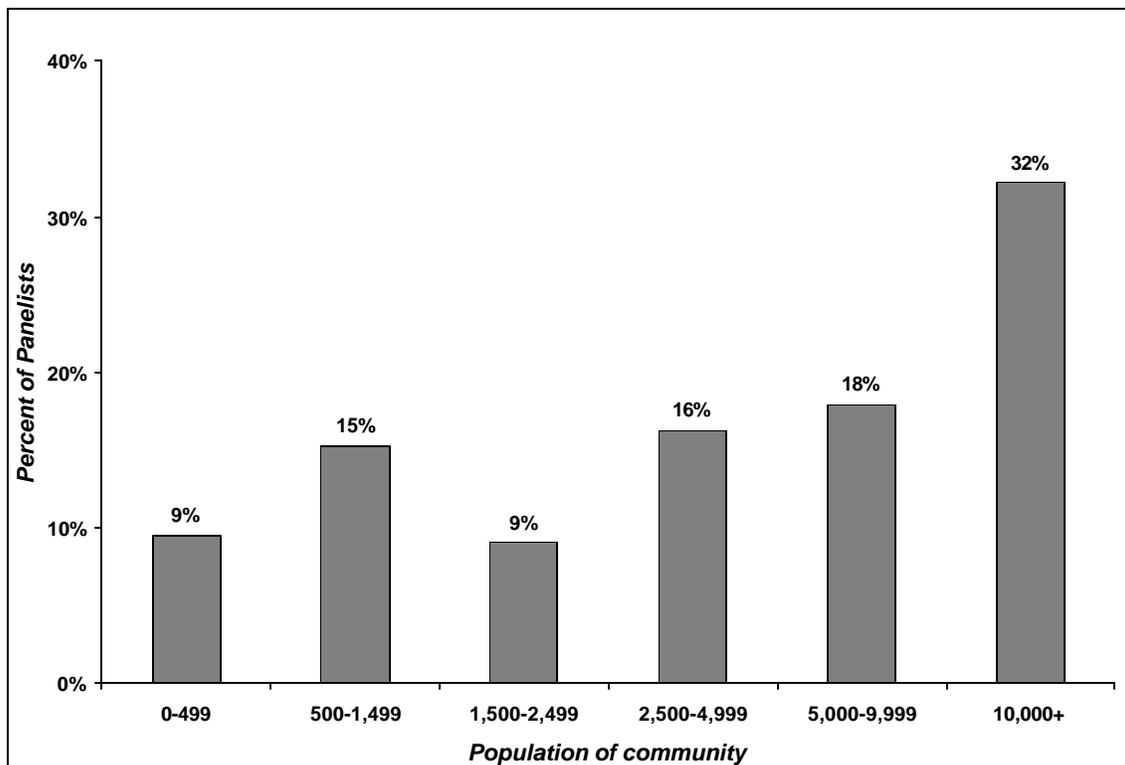
Who Are the Illinois Rural Life Panelists?

Survey questionnaires were sent in November 1998 to adult residents (age 18 or older) living in Illinois' 74 non-metropolitan counties. Of the 5,467 Panelists sent a survey, 349 proved to be ineligible for the Panel because they had moved out of a non-metropolitan Illinois county or died; thus, the eligible sample was 5,118. Panelists returned 1,659 completed surveys for a response rate of 32 percent (1,659/5,118). See Appendix A for a demographic profile of 1998-1999 Panelists.¹

The geographic distribution of the 1998-1999 IRLPS respondents mirrors that of the State's adult (age 18 or older) non-metropolitan population as a whole. The difference between the percent of respondents living in each of the four geographical regions and the percent of all adults living in non-metropolitan counties in each of the regions is less than two percent except for the South region. Survey respondents from the South region under-represent the adult population in that region by 5.2 percent. See Figure 1 for a map outlining these regions and the percentage of Panelists responding from each region.²

Slightly more survey respondents live in small communities than Illinois' non-metropolitan residents as a whole. Thirty-three percent of Panelists, compared to 31 percent of non-metropolitan residents, live in communities with 2,499 or less population; 32 percent of Panelists, compared to 35 percent of non-metropolitan residents, live in communities with populations of over 10,000.³

Figure 2: Population of Panelists' Communities (n=1,621)



Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Question 43
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

About three-quarters of Panelists have lived in their communities for 21 years or more; about 14 percent of Panelists have lived in their communities for fewer than 10 years. The majority of Panelists (66%) describe themselves as living “in town/city”; however, one-quarter say they live “in the country, not on a farm” (13%) or “on a farm” (12%). Perceptions of what “rural” means varies: in the past, some Panelists living “in town” have commented they do not consider themselves “rural”; some Panelists living in the larger non-metropolitan county communities also do not consider themselves “rural.”

The majority of Panelists are white (91%) and male (55%). Males are slightly over-represented compared to the total non-metropolitan adult male population (49%).⁴ Panelists tend to be older than Illinois’ non-metropolitan residents; 51 percent of Panelists are between ages 50 and 79 compared to the 36 percent of non-metropolitan residents in this age range in 1997.⁵ About three-quarters of Panelists are married (74%); 11 percent are widowed; and the remaining 15 percent are single, separated, divorced, or living with a domestic partner. One-third of Panelists (34%) have children under age 18 in their households.

Panelists tend to have more formal education than non-metropolitan residents as a whole. Only six percent of Panelists have less than a high school education compared to 26 percent of all non-metropolitan residents. The majority of Panelists (64%) have some college education or a degree, compared to 36 percent of all non-metropolitan county residents.⁶

Survey respondents also tend to have higher incomes than Illinois’ non-metropolitan residents have in general. Only one-quarter of Panelists compared to 52 percent of non-metropolitan residents have annual incomes of less than \$25,000. About 32 percent of Panelists compared to 13 percent of non-metropolitan residents have annual incomes of \$50,000 or greater.⁷ Most Panelists (80%) derive no income from farming. Farm income accounts for 25 percent or more of household income for 9 percent of Panelists; the remaining 11 percent of Panelists earn less than one-quarter of their income from farming. About three-quarters of Panelists are employed either full- (62%) or part-time (12%).

¹ The demographic table includes the percentage of respondents who did not answer specific questions. The percentages described in “Who Are the Illinois Rural Life Panelists?” include only those specifying demographic information; hence, there are slight differences between the percentages in the report narrative and the demographic table. For the 1998-1999 IRLPS, less than three percent of the 1,659 respondents chose not to answer each demographic question with the exception of the near eight percent who did not indicate their household income within a range.

² U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Estimates of the Population of Counties by Age and Gender: 1990-1997*, [Internet], (Released September 1998).

³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population and Housing, STF3A*, (1990).

⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Estimates of the Population of Counties by Age and Gender: 1990-1997*, [Internet], (Released September 1998).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population and Housing, STF3A*, (1990).

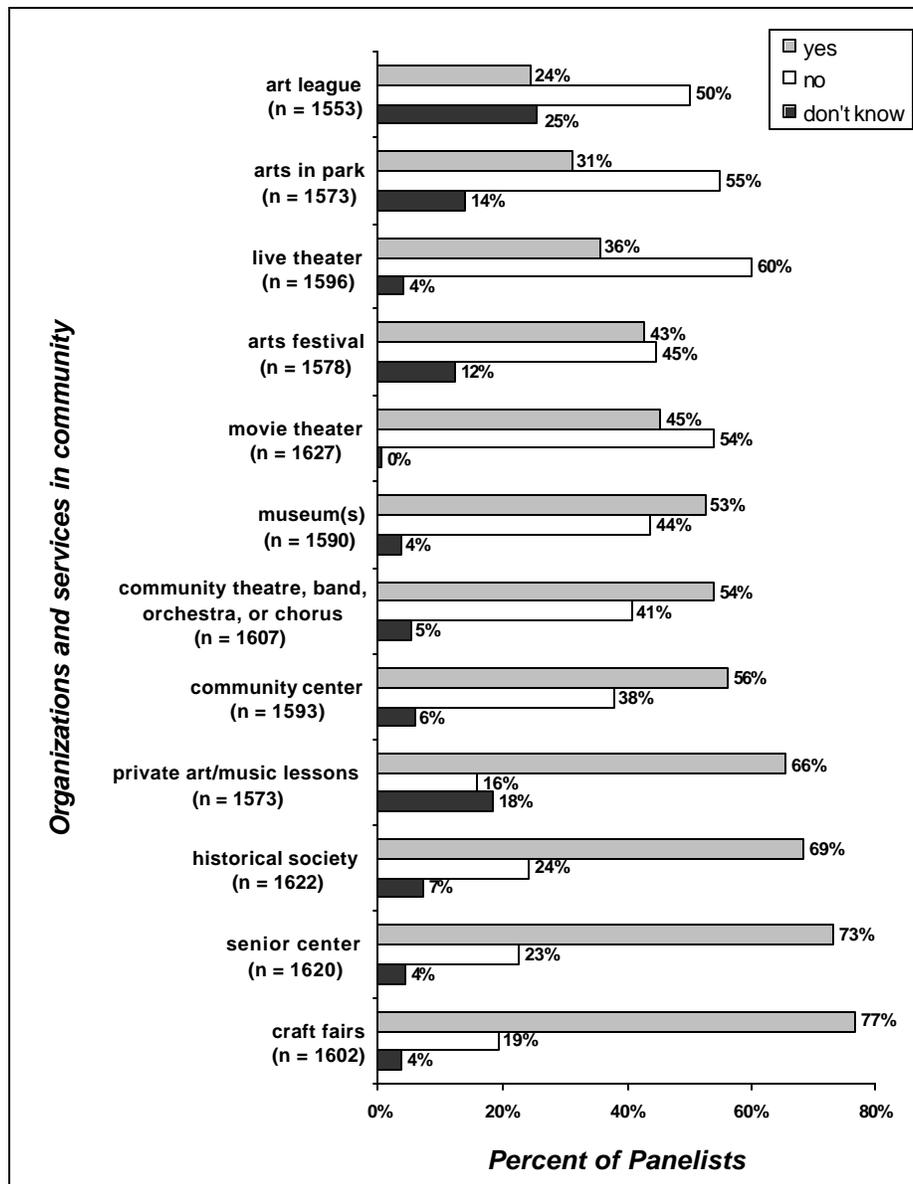
⁷ Ibid.

Arts and Cultural Activities in Rural Illinois

Availability of organizations and services

Do Illinois' rural residents have access to arts and cultural activities in or near their home communities? Figure 3 presents the percentage of "yes," "no," and "don't know" responses to the question, "Please indicate whether or not your community has the following organizations or services." Nearly all Panelists indicated the presence of at least one or more listed organizations or services in their communities. Less than one percent of Panelists reported either not knowing the availability of or not having all the listed organizations and services.

Figure 3: Panelists Indicating Availability of Organizations and Services in Their Communities



Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Question 1
 Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Less than one-third of Panelists say there is an arts in the park program (31%) or an art league (24%) in their community. It should be noted that these types of activities also received high responses of “don’t know” in relation to other organizations and services. The use of the specific terms “arts in the park” and “art league” may be unfamiliar to Panelists; even if such opportunities exist in their communities, they may be called by different names or may not be strongly promoted. This could partially account for the high “don’t know” response and emphasizes the need for effective marketing of arts opportunities. Annual community arts festival (12%) and private art/music lessons (18%) also received many “don’t know” responses.

Compared to the other organizations and services, craft fairs (77%), senior centers (73%), historical societies (69%), and private art/music lessons (66%) are most often present in Panelists’ communities. It is noteworthy that presence of a senior center or a community center (56%) does not guarantee that residents have exposure to arts and cultural activities through these organizations or know about these activities when they take place. Such centers, though, may be natural outlets for arts and cultural programming.

In addition to community or civic centers, Panelists suggest other outlets for arts and cultural programming when commenting on the types of private art and music lessons available in their communities. Some say art and music lessons are available through local schools, local or regional community colleges and universities, music stores, art/frame shops, and private individuals. About 40 percent of the 1,659 responding Panelists commented that private arts/music lessons are available in their communities.

There is a strong relationship between community size and presence of arts and cultural programming and services (see Figure 4). As one might expect, generally, the smaller the community, the less available are many types of organizations and services. One exception to this generalization is the availability of community centers in many small communities.

Fortunately, the majority—at least 50 percent—of Panelists who indicate the absence of arts and cultural opportunities in their communities also have to travel less than 25 miles to access such opportunities. There are three exceptions: slightly more than 50 percent of Panelists must travel more than 25 miles for arts in the park, an art league, or live theater. Figure 5 shows the number of miles specific percentages of Panelists would have to travel to access opportunities not available in their communities.

Figure 4: Panelists Indicating Availability of Organizations and Services in Their Communities by Community Population

	% of respondents by community size (*dark shading = largest %s; light shading = smallest %s)						% of all respondents
	0 -499	500 -1,499	1,500 -2,499	2,500 -4,999	5,000 -9,999	10000+	
Arts in the park	3%	9%	16%	21%	27%	62%	31%
Community center	45%	47%	44%	51%	58%	70%	56%
Senior center	28%	51%	62%	79%	90%	89%	73%
Arts festival	12%	22%	33%	36%	47%	66%	43%
Craft fairs	35%	50%	75%	81%	87%	94%	77%
Theater, band, chorus	8%	19%	39%	45%	62%	88%	54%
Movie theater	10%	8%	15%	21%	50%	92%	46%
Live theater	4%	9%	14%	26%	30%	72%	36%
Art league	4%	4%	5%	18%	24%	48%	24%
Historical society	18%	42%	61%	73%	84%	87%	69%
Museum	12%	28%	36%	50%	68%	74%	53%
Private art/music lessons	28%	46%	58%	64%	74%	84%	66%

Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Question 1

Figure 5: Miles Panelists Must Travel to Organizations and Services Not Available in Their Communities

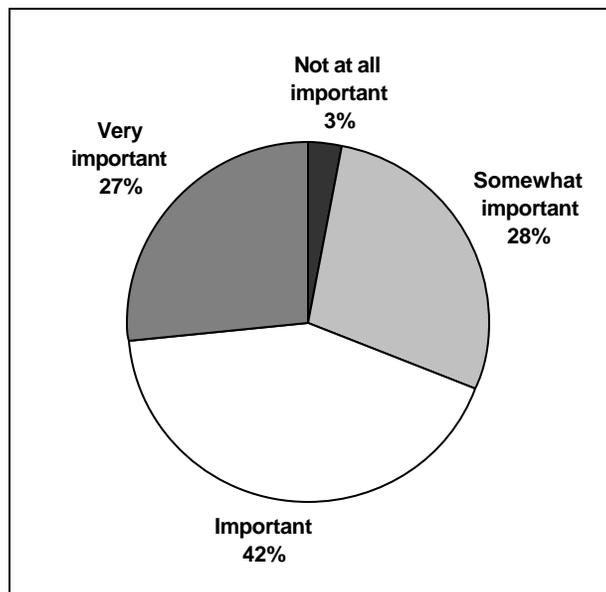
Organization/Service	0-24 miles	25-49 miles	50+ miles
Arts in the park	48%	37%	15%
Community center	72%	25%	4%
Senior center	84%	15%	0%
Arts festival	56%	33%	11%
Craft fairs	71%	25%	5%
Theater, band, chorus	62%	30%	8%
Movie theater	74%	24%	2%
Live theater	47%	34%	19%
Art league	48%	38%	14%
Historical society	80%	17%	2%
Museum	52%	26%	22%
Private art/music lessons	74%	22%	4%

Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Question 1

Rural youth arts education and activities

The organizations and arts-related opportunities mentioned in the previous section may be available to both adults and young people living in Panelists' communities. In addition to these opportunities, Panelists specifically indicated availability of arts and cultural activities for youth through the schools, youth groups, and religious organizations in their communities. They also gave their opinions about the importance of educating children in the arts in school. Nearly all Panelists (97%) think educating children in the arts in school is at least "somewhat important." (See Figure 6.)

Figure 6: Panelists' Opinions About the Importance of Educating Children in the Arts in School (n=1,629)



Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Question 2

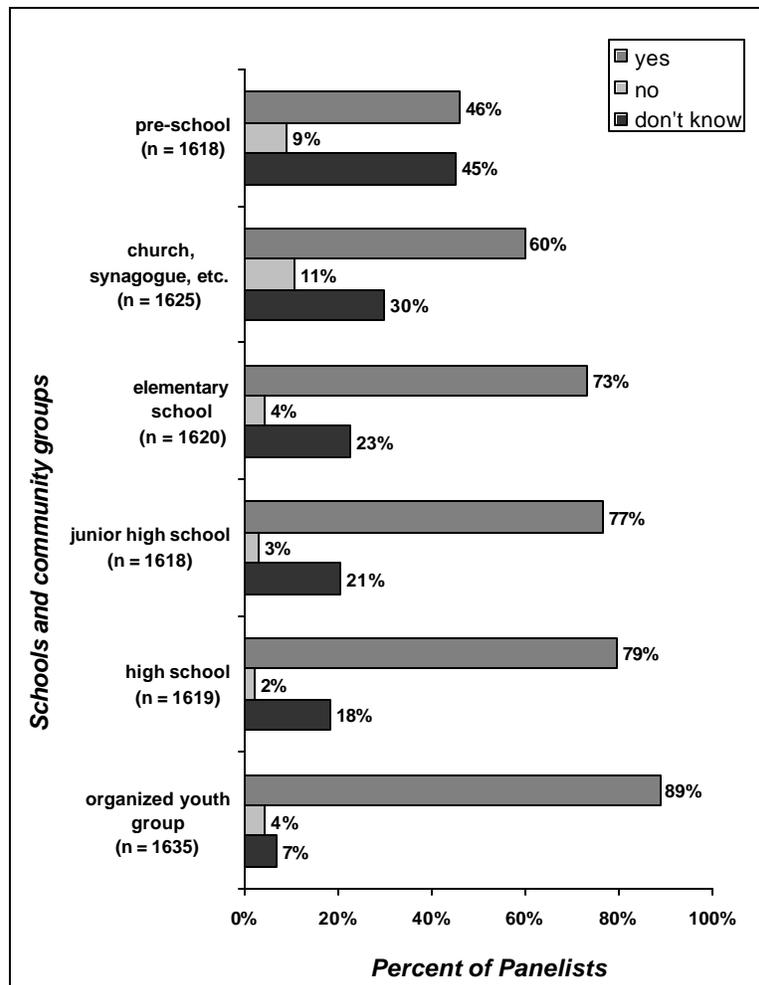
Panelists' opinions about the importance of arts education do not seem to be related to the presence of a person(s) under age 18 in the household (about one-third of Panelists have children in the household) or to household income.

In their general comments at the end of the survey, some Panelists expressed concern about educating children in the arts in school at the expense of educational focus in other areas. One Panelist commented, ". . . I do not think art and culture is as important as the three 'Rs.' It is very depressing when you hear that skills in the three 'Rs' are decreasing every year. Shouldn't school resources be concentrated on the basics until they are mastered, then art and culture?" See Appendix B for this and other comments.

Rural young people appear to have moderately good access to arts and cultural activities; at least 60 percent of Panelists indicate availability of opportunities through each school level (except preschool),

youth groups, or religious organizations. Figure 7 presents the percentage of Panelists stating “yes,” “no,” or “don’t know” to the presence of arts and cultural opportunities for youth.

Figure 7: Panelists Indicating Provision of Arts and Cultural Activities for Children in Schools and Community Groups



Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Questions 3 through 5
 Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

The high percentages of “don’t know” in Figure 7 may indicate a need for increased communication about arts opportunities in Panelists’ communities; it is noteworthy that approximately 20 percent or more of Panelists indicate they do not know about most opportunities for youth arts activities. Unlike Panelists’ attitudes about the importance of arts education, Panelists’ knowledge of arts opportunities appears to be related to having children in the home. A larger percentage of Panelists with household members under age 18 indicate presence of arts and cultural activities through schools, youth groups, and religious organizations compared to the percentage of Panelists without children in the household.

Rural Illinois schools and other organizations could play an important role in raising awareness about the arts in their communities. Potentially, schools and other organizations could display youth art projects in public buildings, invite community members to student performances, and communicate with community groups and the media about arts and cultural activities taking place in schools and other settings.

Rural residents' participation in the arts

Illinois rural adult residents participate in arts and cultural activities in numerous ways: as performers and artists, as audience members, for leisure activity, and as volunteers. Figure 8 indicates types of activities in which Panelists participated in the last 12 months and their manner of participation. Definitions of “performer/artist,” “leisure activity,” and “audience member” were not provided for Panelists; therefore, Panelists participating in the arts in similar ways may have indicated their participation differently. For example, one church choir member may have identified him- or herself as a performer while another may have considered this participation leisure activity. Museum visitors and movie watchers may have indicated this participation as “audience member” or “leisure activity.”

Overall, 84 percent of Panelists report participation in at least one arts activity in the last 12 months. The greatest participation of Panelists (as performers or artists, leisure activities, or audience members) is in the categories of movies, film, or video, music (all types), dance, museums, photography, and literature. Examples of literature participation provided for Panelists in the survey instrument included writing and story or poetry reading. Panelists may or may not have included their interest in reading in this category. Movies, musical events, theater, dance performance, and museums involve the greatest numbers of Panelists as audience members.

Figure 8: Activities and Manner in Which Panelists Participate in the Arts (n=1,659)

Activity	% Total Participation	% Artist/ Performer	% Leisure Activity	% Audience Member
Sculpture	10%	1%	2%	7%
Other arts and crafts	15%	4%	8%	5%
Woodworking/carving	22%	4%	12%	8%
Visual arts	25%	3%	9%	14%
Needlework, knitting, etc.	25%	5%	13%	7%
Literature	26%	4%	16%	8%
Dance	30%	2%	11%	19%
Photography	30%	4%	19%	8%
Popular music event	31%	2%	8%	23%
Museums	32%	1%	13%	19%
Instrumental music	40%	3%	4%	36%
Theater/ Drama	40%	2%	3%	37%
Vocal music	44%	6%	4%	37%
Movies, film, video	64%	2%	23%	44%

Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Question 6

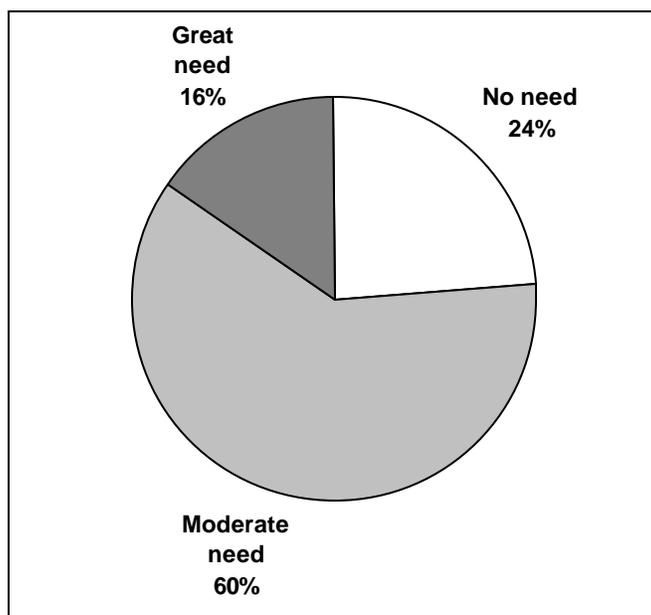
About one out of ten Panelists supports arts activities as a volunteer (12%). Panelists’ written comments indicate they volunteer in various organizations and ways. They support arts and culture in schools, libraries, hospitals and nursing homes, foundations, associations, councils, and clubs, parks, churches, historic preservation sites and societies, museums, community centers, social service organizations, and youth organizations. Panelists volunteer as:

- ? developers, planners, fundraisers, organizers, and financial contributors;
- ? artists and performers;
- ? directors, producers, sponsors, and leaders;
- ? instructors, demonstrators, and tour guides;
- ? chaperones, janitors, decorators, ushers, safety personnel, and technicians (e.g., props, set construction, lights, sound);
- ? board members, chairpersons, committee members; and
- ? salespersons and grant writers.

Strengthening rural arts and cultural life

Most Panelists perceive at least a moderate need to strengthen arts and cultural activities in their communities. Figure 9 presents the percentage of Panelists reporting “no need,” a “moderate need,” or a “great need” to increase their communities’ arts focus.

Figure 9: Panelists’ Opinions About the Need to Strengthen Arts and Cultural Activities in Their Communities (n=1,549)



Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Question 9

When asked to make comments about any survey topic or other issues, a few Panelists said other community issues should be addressed before focussing on the arts. After stating several county problems, one Panelist said, “. . . Do not worry about arts/library. Take care of the important immediate needs. It is a joke when we do a survey for the arts. . . .” Another stated, “. . . Prop up the arts after these more important items are corrected.” See Appendix B for general comments.

What kinds of arts or cultural activities would Panelists like to see more of in their communities? One-third of all Panelists replied to this question. The largest numbers of them—more than 50 in each of the following categories—said they want to see more 1) activities for youth; 2) arts and crafts (e.g., painting, pottery, sculpture, photography, woodworking, sewing); 3) music-related activities (e.g., vocal, popular, instrumental); and 4) theater (e.g., plays, musicals, movies). Panelists’ comments suggest they want increased opportunities for participation as performers or artists, leisure activity, and audience members.

In their general comments, some Panelists expressed a desire for increased arts and cultural programming but mentioned barriers to arts opportunities in their areas. Several Panelists cited limited availability and

expense of arts classes for adults and/or children; others said that funding and staffing issues limit arts provision. One Panelist commented:

. . . Since Lincoln Land has an extension building here right near our Industrial park, (about 2 years) they did have art workshops available but not widely enough, or reaching enough local children. Of course, costs limited access for some parent's children to participate as well as faculty and time constraints for Lincoln Land College personnel as well.

Another Panelist wrote:

Small towns are struggling to survive. We recently were turned down for a grant to remodel and add on to our Carnegie library. Seems like all the grants go to larger communities. We are on the National Trail Highway and we are trying to promote tourism. We have a wealth of heritage but little help in preserving it. Our Historical Society is doing its best but due to an elderly membership we are progressing very slowly. . . .

In light of Panelists' responses to the 1998-1999 Survey, arts and cultural organizations serving rural communities may consider:

- ? increasing communication about arts and cultural activities in rural communities and regions;
- ? encouraging schools and other organizations with a youth focus to educate and raise awareness of the arts in their communities by highlighting youth art projects;
- ? adopting collaborative strategies with groups and organizations in and among rural communities to share resources and make arts and cultural activities available;
- ? fostering volunteer development; and
- ? sharing information about successful arts-related programs, projects, events, and organizations in rural areas to serve as models or resources.

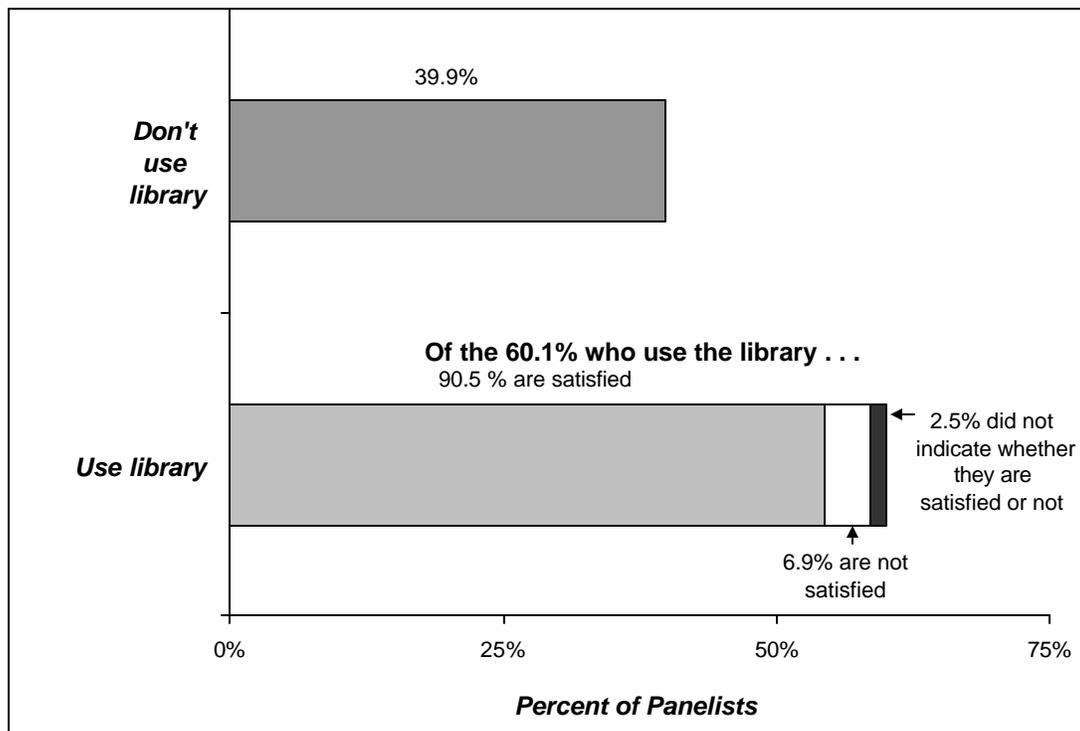


Public Library Services

Illinois' public libraries are community assets

Public libraries help to strengthen rural communities by serving current residents and appealing to new businesses and residents. The 1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panel Survey asked Panelists about the existence of libraries in their communities, their use of the library, and their satisfaction with library services. Panelists also gave their opinions about the influence having a library makes on quality of life, economic development, and resident attraction. Most residents who use a public library expressed satisfaction with the services the library provides. (See Figure 10.)

Figure 10: Panelists' Library Usage and Satisfaction with Library Services (n=1,638)



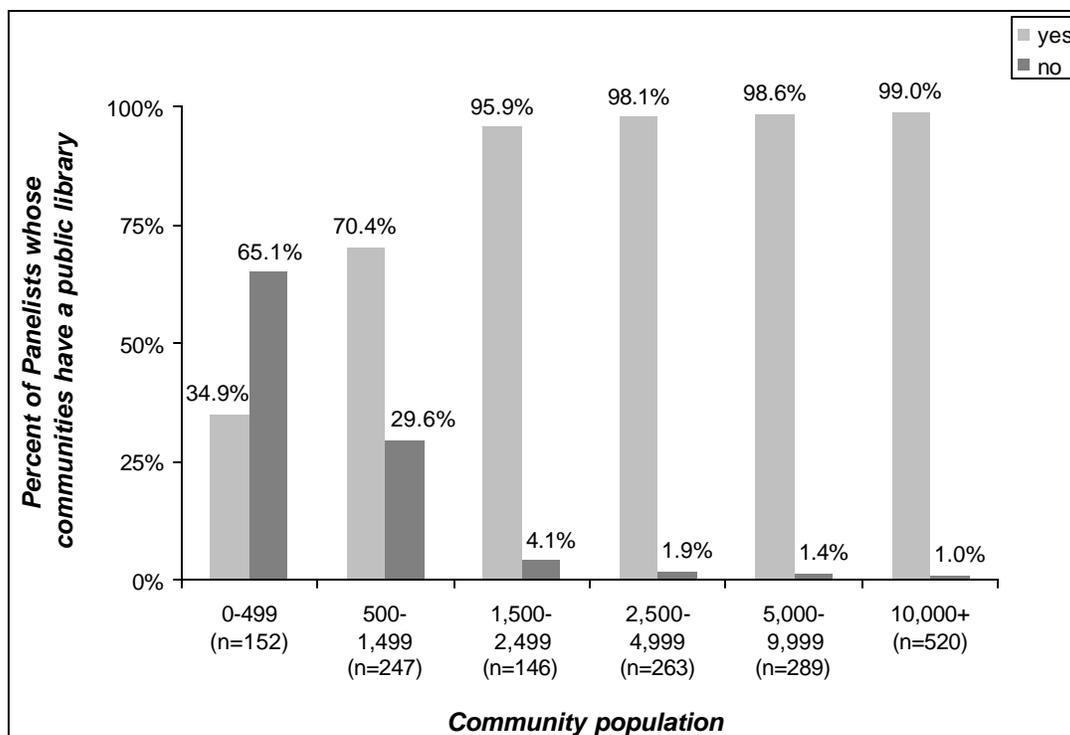
Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Questions 14 and 16
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

In addition to being satisfied, most Panelists (92%) think having a public library makes a community a better place to live. One Panelist commented, "I understand the value of a library to any town. I am 81 and don't read much anymore. I do encourage my family and friends to take advantage of all they offer today." Although a majority of Panelists think having a library helps attract business and residents to the community (53% and 68% respectively), some are unsure that having a library produces these effects. Respectively, 29 percent and 21 percent said they "don't know" if having a library helps attract businesses or residents. Panelists with libraries in their communities were more likely than Panelists without libraries to say "yes" when asked if libraries contribute positively to economic development, resident attraction, and quality of life.

Who is using the public library?

Rural residents use or don't use the public library for many reasons. For example, distance to the library, personal health and mobility, eligibility for a library card, physical features of the library, hours of operation, and availability of resources may influence the degree to which the library is used. Most Illinois Rural Life Panelists reported having a library in their community (88% or 1459 Panelists). Of those Panelists without a public library in their community, most (97% or 185 Panelists) said the nearest library is within 24 miles. Panelists from the smallest rural communities are most likely to have to travel for library services. Nearly two out of three Panelists (65%) from the smallest rural communities (population less than 500 people) and one out of three Panelists (30%) from communities with 500 to 1,499 population reported that their communities do not have a public library. (See Figure 11.)

Figure 11: Percent of Panelists Indicating the Availability of a Public Library in Their Community by Community Population



Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Questions 11 and 43

Notes: Respondents were asked "Approximately how many people live in your community?" Their estimates were used to define community populations in this figure. The "n" is the number of respondents who answered both question 11 about whether their community has a public library and question 43 about community population. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Over half of Panelists (52%) reported having a current library card; a larger percentage reported using the library (60%). Panelists living in a town or city are more likely to have a library card and use the library than Panelists living in the country or in a rural subdivision. About one-quarter of all Panelists without a current library card indicated they are either ineligible (14%, n=100) for a card or

don't know if they are eligible (11%, n=81). More Panelists living in the country than in a city or town said they don't know if they are eligible for a card. (See Figure 12.)

Figure 12: Percent of Panelists Living in a Town, in the Country, or in a Rural Subdivision Who Have Library Cards, Are Eligible for Cards, and Use the Library

Questions	Answers	Where Panelists live				
		In town/city	On a farm	In country, not on farm	Rural subdivision	Other
Do you have a current library card?	yes	60%	23%	37%	48%	42%
	no	39%	77%	63%	52%	58%
	don't know	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%
	TOTALS	100% n=1091	100% n=189	100% n=209	100% n=104	100% n=38
If you don't have a card, are you eligible for a library card?	yes	82%	66%	63%	79%	68%
	no	10%	18%	21%	17%	23%
	don't know	8%	17%	17%	4%	9%
	TOTALS	100% n=398	100% n=125	100% n=126	100% n=53	100% n=22
Do you use the public library?	yes	66%	41%	48%	59%	51%
	no	34%	59%	52%	41%	49%
	TOTALS	100% n=1087	100% n=185	100% n=208	100% n=104	100% n=39

Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Questions 13, 14, and 45

Notes: The "n" is the number of respondents who answered question 45 about where they live and either question 13 about library card eligibility or question 14 about whether they use the public library. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Library location may influence Panelists' ability—especially Panelists who live in the country—to travel to the library or afford a library card. In their written comments, several Panelists indicated that they can't get a library card because they live out of the district or city limits. In some cases, residents said that fees to use the library are too high or not affordable. One Panelist commented, "We can't get a library card because we don't live in the town of Charleston, although all the schools are there. . . ." Another said, "The nearest library is nice but its \$85 for a family to get a card for 1 year; \$65 for a senior citizen. I cannot afford this, neither can people on limited incomes." A third Panelist recognized that, "Library cards are available for rural residents for a fee but we have never purchased one."

In addition to Panelists' residence, their education and age also relate to whether they have library cards and use the library. More younger Panelists than older Panelists have a card; more Panelists with some college experience or advanced degrees have a card than Panelists with high school or less education. A greater percentage of Panelists with some college or with an advanced degree use the library than Panelists with high school or less education.

How are Panelists using libraries?

Panelists use public libraries for various services, programs, and resources they offer. (See Figure 13.) They primarily use the library for recreational reading, to locate reference information, and to access newspapers, magazines, or other periodicals.

Figure 13: Panelists' Reasons for Using Public Libraries (n=984)

Reasons for using library	Percent
Recreational reading	68.4%
Locate reference information	49.9%
Access to newspapers and magazines	36.2%
Gather information for a hobby	25.1%
Use the copy machine	24.1%
Information for my business	18.0%
Children's summer reading program	17.2%
Other	9.2%
Use the Internet	8.2%
Attend meeting of a social group	7.4%
Use a fax machine	5.1%
Attend business meetings	4.8%
Attend training programs	2.2%

Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Question 15

Some of the less frequently indicated reasons for using the library (e.g., to attend training programs, use library resources such as a FAX machine, or to attend business or social group meetings) suggest that libraries can and do offer more than reading and reference materials. Some community residents may not be aware of all their public library provides.

Suggestions for change

Although most Panelists are satisfied with their local library's services, they suggest the most important ways in which their library could change. More Panelists called for longer open hours, changes related to technology (e.g., more access to computers and access to library's card catalog from home computer), and more programs for young people than for more current or increased reading and reference materials. Figure 14 shows the ten most important things public libraries in Panelists' communities could change.

Panelists' suggestions for change varied most notably with their ages. Younger Panelists were more likely than older Panelists to call for changes such as increased access to material in other libraries, more information on jobs and careers, more programs for youth, longer open hours, Internet help, more access to computers, and capability to search library's catalog from a home computer.

Figure 14: Panelists' Suggestions for Changing Public Libraries in Their Communities (n=984)

Rank	Ten most important things libraries could change	Percent
1	Open more hours	25.6%
2	More access to computers	18.3%
3	More programs for youth	17.6%
4	Ability to search library's catalog with home computer	16.6%
5	More current recreational reading	16.0%
6	Information on jobs and careers	15.9%
7	More programs for adults	14.3%
8	More access to materials in other libraries	12.7%
9	Access to more videos	12.0%
10	More help with the Internet	10.8%

Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Question 17

One test of Panelists' support for their local library is their willingness to invest in library improvements. Over half of Panelists responded "no" (36%) or "don't know" (21%) when asked if they would pay higher property taxes to improve the library. Most of the Panelists in favor of paying higher taxes for library improvements said they would pay \$1 more per month (33%) or \$2 to \$5 more per month (52%). Libraries have other options for generating funding for improvement, expansion, additional materials, etc. As one Panelist suggested, seeking grant money is an alternative to increasing taxes.



Conditions, availability, and affordability

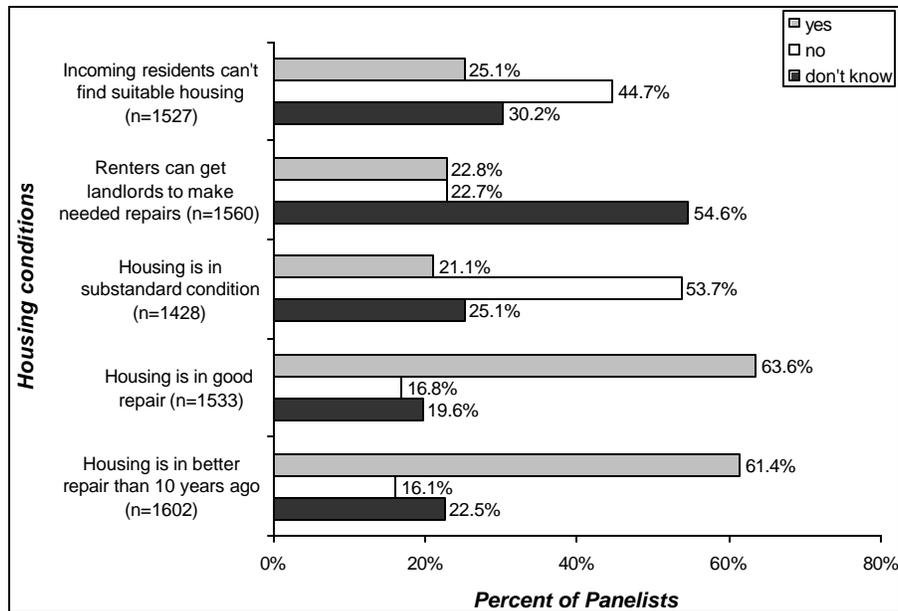
Adequate, appropriate, and affordable housing is essential to the well being of families and the viability and development of communities. The 1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panelists provided information about their own housing and gave opinions about housing in their communities. Most Panelists reported living in a house (92%) with about equal numbers of the remaining Panelists living in a mobile home (4%) or an apartment/condominium (4%).

Governmental and nonprofit organizations supporting rural community development recognize several trends related to rural community housing: decreased availability and affordability of rural housing; rising construction costs; aging housing stock with little or unstable rates of new development; increasing numbers of elderly residents who may have needs for specific types of housing and services; and homelessness which is hard to detect in rural areas.¹ Although the actual number of housing permits issued increased between 1990 and 1997 for both non-metropolitan and metropolitan Illinois counties, the number of permits issued per 1,000 residents is lower in non-metropolitan counties (2.29 permits per 1,000) than in metropolitan areas (4.15 permits per 1,000).² A collaboration of organizations has developed a vision for Illinois rural development that includes among its goals availability of “Affordable housing for all rural residents, including individuals with special needs”³

Illinois Rural Life Panelists described housing affordability, conditions, and availability in their communities. Generally, Panelists are less certain about the housing situation for special populations and housing affordability than they are about housing availability and conditions (certainty is indicated by the percentage of Panelists answering “don’t know” to a question). Over 60 percent of Panelists believe community housing stock is in good repair and in better repair than ten years ago. About 50 percent think there is more housing available now than ten years ago and enough housing to meet the demand in their communities. Comparatively, few Panelists (14%) believe communities in their area have a housing surplus. Figures 15 through 18 present Panelists’ general descriptions of housing in their communities: conditions, availability, affordability, and housing for special populations.

Rural advocacy and community development organizations view housing development and rehabilitation as an economic development activity. Available, affordable, decent, and appropriate housing is necessary to support population increases in a community. While some Panelists (8%) believe that businesses do not locate in their community because of inadequate housing for employees, a large percentage (42%) are unsure whether this is the case.

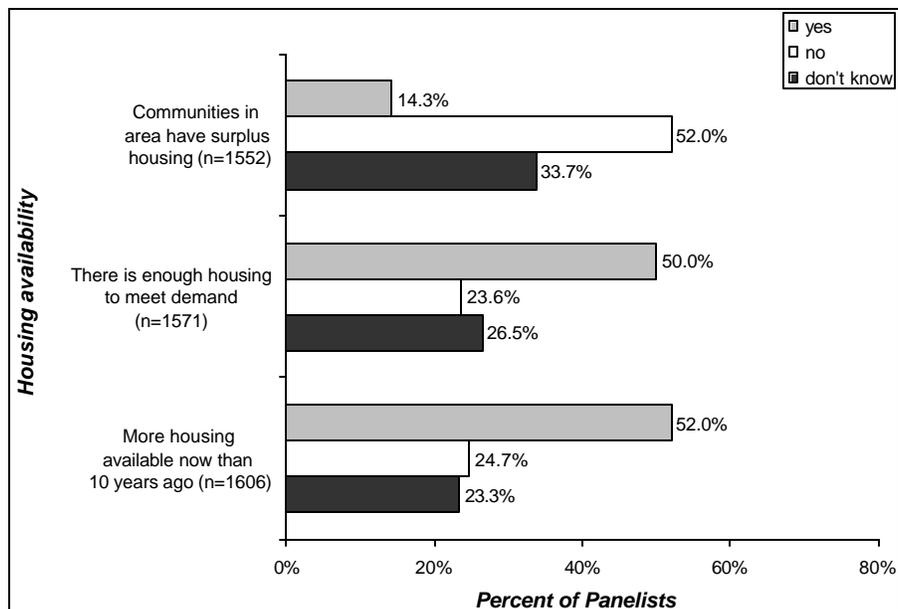
Figure 15: Panelists' Opinions About Housing Conditions in Their Communities



Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Question 28 (a through d, and l)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

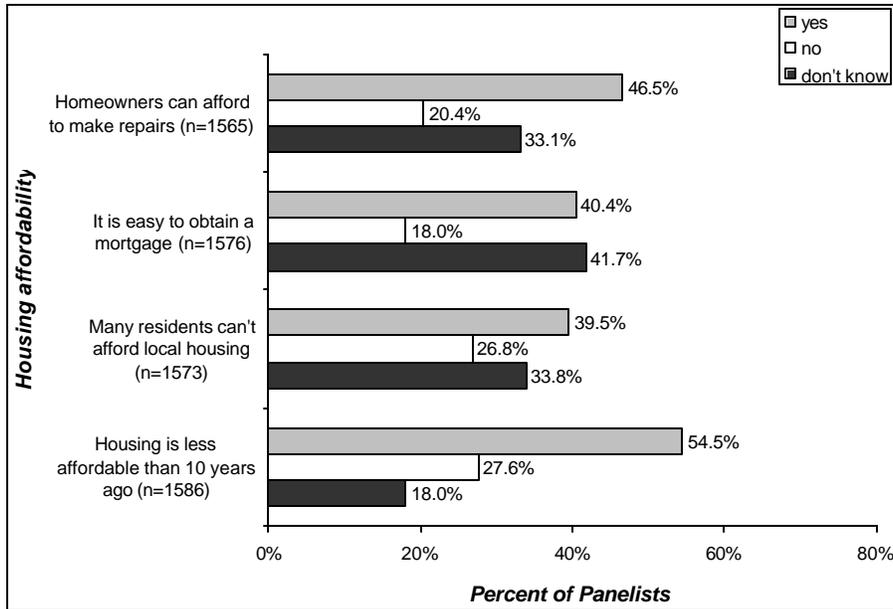
Figure 16: Panelists' Opinions About Housing Availability in Their Communities



Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Question 28 (e through g)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

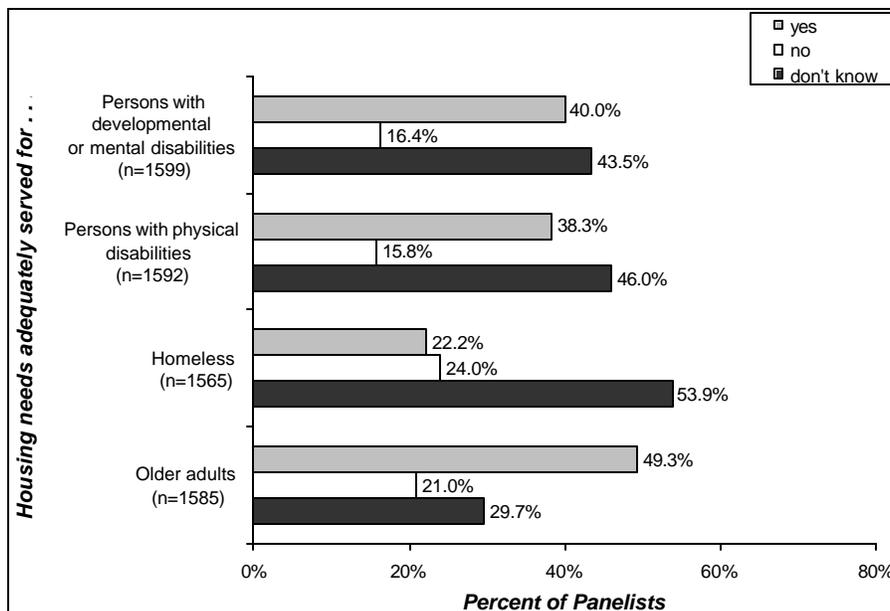
Figure 17: Panelists' Opinions About Housing Affordability in Their Communities



Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Question 28 (h through k)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 18: Panelists' Opinions About Housing Needs of Special Populations in Their Communities



Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Question 28 (m through p)

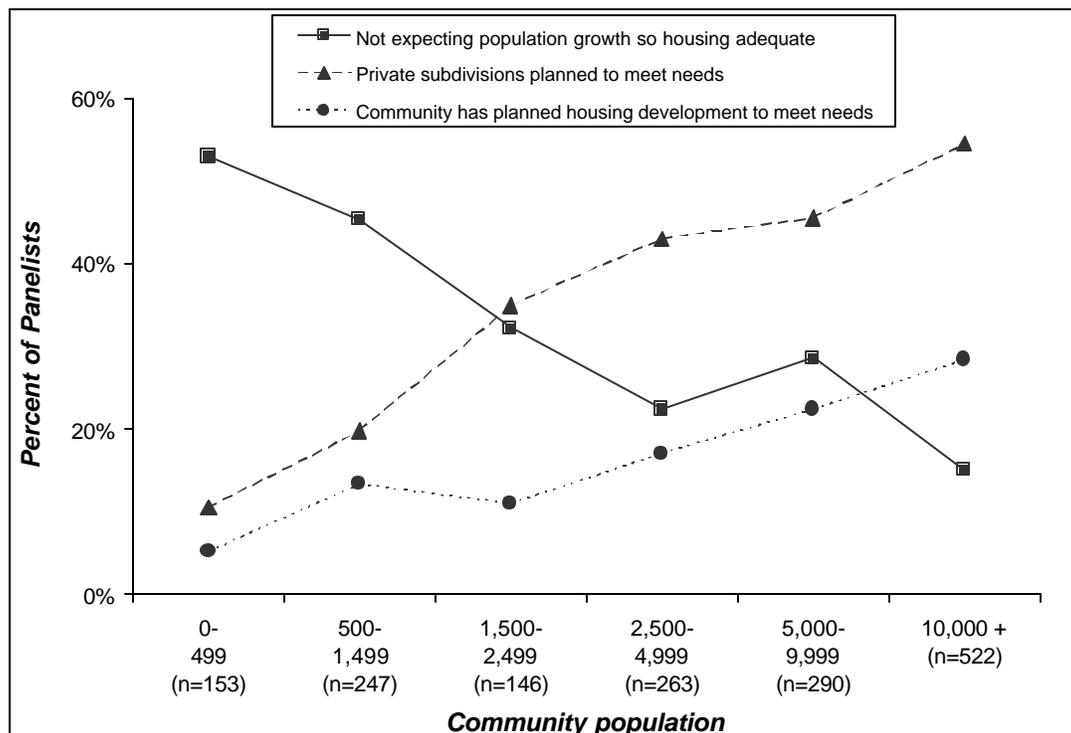
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

How are communities responding to housing issues?

Nearly a third of Panelists (30%) are unsure about what their communities are doing in response to housing issues. This situation indicates an opportunity for communities to involve residents in development activities or at least to inform residents about these activities.

Other Panelists are more aware of housing-related activities in their communities. About 40 percent say there are new private subdivisions planned to meet housing demand. Twenty percent of Panelists indicate their communities are planning housing developments; 10 percent indicate the community recognizes a housing issue but has made no response. A large percentage of Panelists (28%) do not expect population growth in their communities, so they think housing should be adequate. Community response to housing issues is related to community population. Greater percentages of Panelists from small communities than from large communities do not expect population growth and indicate no new housing developments. (See Figure 19.)

Figure 19: Panelists' Opinions About Their Community's Response to Housing Issues by Community Population



Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Questions 27 (a through c) and 43

Notes: Respondents were asked "Approximately how many people live in your community?" Their estimates were used to define community populations in this figure. The "n" is the number of respondents who answered both question 27 about their community's response to housing issues and question 43 about community population. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Rural community housing issues vary. Panelists' expressed several perspectives about the following **community and housing issues**.⁴

Growth in communities and the connection between housing and economic development:

- ? "We have too many people—do not want to expand."
- ? "This town does not like much of anything to come in so it will not grow. Wal-Mart, Prison, etc."
- ? "Too small of town, no room to grow."
- ? "There is very little population growth because there is not employment to allow people to afford housing, therefore, not growth."
- ? "This is a small town in the middle of a farming area that is being hit hard by the loss of farmers income due to decreasing hog prices and crop prices. Next year will be even worse as some will be forced to sell out. Some 8-10 homes have recently been improved because of a grant received from the State of IL. But there were many more applicants. The community needs more businesses."

Housing affordability (including taxes), supply, and demand:

- ? "Tourism and second homes/home weekend rentals abound in our area. There are lots of homes, but because of increases in valuation/taxes there are many long term residents who can no longer live in our community. We do have some low income housing but that doesn't meet the needs of many of our young people, young families, older couple."
- ? "Regarding housing—rent cost is escalating faster than salaries. Taxes on homes of retired persons or those on fixed incomes is becoming an excessive burden."
- ? "Private homes are built or moved in to meet the need."
- ? "Need more low income housing. Adequate employment is not plentiful."
- ? "Our community is in depression & people are leaving area, plenty of homes are available."
- ? "Chapter 8 housing and public housing available."
- ? "Not much new housing—most inadequate."
- ? "Seems they are planning too many subdivisions—not really needed."
- "New private subdivisions leaving houses within the city open & left on the market."
- ? "Affordable decent housing is in short supply."
- ? "Needs more affordable housing for Senior Citizens."
- ? ". . . We need more affordable housing for low income families. People making minimum wage or slightly higher cannot afford housing in our area. New homes and subdivisions are built for the executive incomes not low wage earner."
- ? "Rental housing is limited & expensive, Federal housing units are limited, ALWAYS a waiting list. Young married couples need a program to help them obtain homes; possibly through a home builder. It is impossible for a young couple to save a down payment for a home, something they can have an equity in. This would help our economy & nation greatly. FHA is not the answer. I was a home builder many years. I helped many young people myself."

Conversion of farmland to residential development:

- ? “Community [has] housing needs but property owners with lots land reluctant to sell.”
- ? “I don’t necessarily agree with community planning by building more private subdivisions replacing valuable farmland—more old homes in town should be rehabbed—especially historic homes, instead of torn down.”
- ? “I feel expansion of subdivisions is adversely encroaching upon prime farmland.”

City/town planning and action:

- ? “City allows house to become eyesore, wait too long to take action.”
- ? “City government seems totally lacking in any plan for housing needs.”
- ? “I am VERY DISAPPOINTED that our village board has not been active enough in improving or planning housing. Our village is going downhill in appearance and quality of housing and the residents we attract, yet I don’t know how to help.”
- ? “High rent/cost developments new but because of material \$ labor—deteriorating rapidly. Original core of town being allowed to crumble into slums.”

Housing repair and rehabilitation:

- ? “Much repair work is being done on existing housing: siding, windows, roofing, etc.”
- ? “Community more concerned about new development than maintaining current housing.”
- ? “If our community is to grow, we would need to make major improvements to our infrastructure. Our city does not have the means/funds to do this. Most people here travel 50+ miles to work. Note: As a realtor, I have the info on Governments’ involvement with mortgages. Problem: Low income/lower priced homes do not qualify for loans. Can’t expect a seller (\$30,000 home) to update the home to meet requirements for loan. We have ample homes that are so old with poor foundations. (Price range of \$50,000.) Who wants a \$50,000 home with poor foundation and in need of major repairs—i.e. windows—roof—siding etc.?”

Specific community programs to support housing development or redevelopment:

- ? “Possible population growth as a result of a TIF district.”
- ? “We have a local Habitat for Humanity that builds homes for low income families.”
- ? “Mortgage credit certificates . . . mortgage revenue bonds.”
- ? “Community is in process of formulating response via the Main Street Program.”

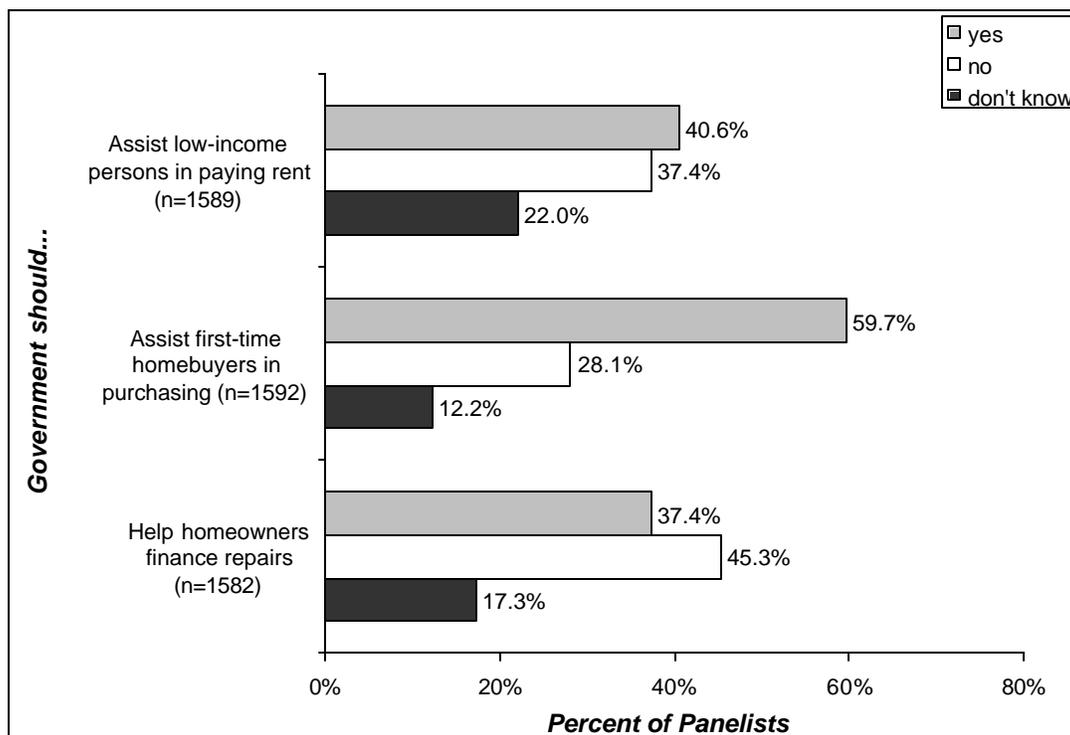
Housing support

In the last decade, some government programs that support rural housing development have decreased **available funding or reconfigured into large “block grant” programs that favor urban areas.**⁵ Nonprofit organizations at the national, state, and local levels are growing to assist housing development, home purchase, and rent payment. For example, YouthBuild provides construction trade training to teenagers as they build affordable homes; Habitat for Humanity uses volunteers and sweat equity to build homes for

persons with low incomes; local government units and social organizations may provide financial information and assistance to homebuyers. Partnerships among social organizations, lenders, developers, businesses, and government agencies are becoming more important for housing development.

Panelists gave their opinions about whether the government should or should not support housing rehabilitation, home purchase, and rent payment assistant. A majority of Panelists are in favor of the government supporting first-time homebuyers in purchasing a home (60%). Panelists are more evenly split when it comes to favoring or opposing both financial help to homeowners for home repair and assistance for low-income persons in making rent payments. (See Figure 20.)

Figure 20: Panelists' Opinions About Government Financial Help for Homeowners, Homebuyers, and Renters



Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Question 26
 Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Recognizing that rural communities face greater challenges than urban communities in mustering resources to support housing construction, rehabilitation, and finance, Panelists' responses to housing questions on the 1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panels Survey suggest that:

- ? Local governmental units should recognize housing as an economic development issue that affects the community's ability to attract and retain business and residents.
- ? Communities should assess and discuss their housing situations, keep residents informed of activities related to housing, and explore options for housing finance, development, and rehabilitation.

-
- ? Community organizations should obtain information about programs to support homeowners, homebuyers, renters, individuals needing home repair, and organizations involved with housing credit, development, and rehabilitation.
 - ? Innovative community-based strategies are necessary to develop existing or new housing that is appropriate and affordable.⁶

¹ Ziebarth, A., K. Brown, and P. Elgatian, *Building Better Communities: A Guidebook for Community Leaders on Developing Rural Housing Opportunities*, (Champaign-Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Extension Service, 1999) and Housing Assistance Council, *Information Sheets* on rural housing availability, quality, and affordability and housing for special populations, [Internet], <http://www.ruralhome.org>, (April 2000).

² Housing permits per 1,000 residents was calculated using 1997 housing data from U.S. Census Bureau, USA Counties, [CD-ROM], (1998) and using 1997 population data from U.S. Census Bureau, [Internet], <http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/countypop.html>, (April 2000).

³ Rural Partners, *Building a Brighter Future for Rural Illinois: Goals for Stronger Communities*, (Rural Partners: Springfield, IL, 1998).

⁴ Panelists provided comments about housing next to specific housing questions and in their general comments at the end of the survey. All general comments are provided in Appendix B. Comments made on the survey next to specific questions are not included in this Appendix.

⁵ Housing Assistance Council, *Information About . . . Federal Spending for Rural Housing: Trends and Implications*, [Internet], <http://www.ruralhome.org/pubs/infoshts/14.htm>, (April 2000) and Keyser, Sheldon, USDA Rural Development-Illinois, *Affordable Housing in Illinois (or, the Lack Thereof)*, (March 2000).

⁶ For information about community case studies for housing development and financing, sources of funding for technical assistance, and potential sources for project financing, please see Ziebarth, A., K. Brown, and P. Elgatian, *Building Better Communities: A Guidebook for Community Leaders on Developing Rural Housing Opportunities*, (Champaign-Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Extension Service, 1999). For copies of this publication, please write to the University of Illinois, 917 S. Wright St. Champaign, IL 61820; email acespubs@uiuc.edu; TEL 1-800-345-6087. Please refer to circular 1367. For information about three Illinois programs that support strengthening of communities, please see Hanna, Robin, "Helping Illinois Communities Help Themselves: Illinois Main Street, Competitive Communities Initiative, and MAPPING the Future of Your Community," *Rural Research Report*, Vol. 8, Issue 10, (Macomb, IL: Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Western Illinois University, 1997). To obtain a copy of this publication, write to Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Stipes Hall 518, Western Illinois University, 1 University Circle, Macomb, IL 61455-1390; TEL 309-298-2237, [Internet], <http://www.iira.org>.

Economic and Workforce Development

It is estimated that between 1990 and 1998, Illinois' population increased by 5.4 percent. Most of this growth occurred in metropolitan areas or in non-metropolitan counties near metropolitan centers.¹ For some rural communities, population and related economic growth in the early 90's increased business attraction and expansion, employment opportunities and workforce, and the market for housing and other goods and services.²

Other rural communities have not realized these benefits. One report recognizes that "While population stabilization is encouraging, the estimated population gains in many cases are small and may not always indicate economic revitalization and growth. Many nonmetro counties adjacent to larger metro areas find that new residents are fleeing suburbs with high housing prices, high property taxes, and growing social problems. These residents may still work in the suburbs, shop in the suburbs, and use the rural location primarily as a bedroom community. . . ."³

A few 1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panelists expressed concerns about growth and its influence on community quality of life. One said, "...Outsiders coming to our community to live or visit (many from Chicago) bring many wonderful things to share, but the downside has been the terrific increase in real estate and property tax. It is a sad and difficult situation. The only help I can see is if there are changes made by the state in regards to property tax and funding."

The 1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panelists responded to questions about local economic conditions, the availability of jobs, effects of business decisions on population trends, and services supporting employment (e.g., training, entrepreneurial support, childcare, placement services, and transportation).

General economic well being and job availability

While jobs are available in their communities, most Panelists (84%) say these are low paying jobs without benefits. Smaller percentages of Panelists report availability of high paying jobs (21% of Panelists) or low paying jobs with benefits (52% of Panelists). The lack of higher paying jobs has serious implications for rural community sustainability and growth. Low wages and the disparity between rural and urban wages, ". . . make it more difficult to retain rural residents and do not stimulate human capital investments by those who plan to remain."⁴

Several Panelists discussed these and other effects of low wages on their communities and families. One Panelist said:

We're struggling to survive as a community—our young people must leave to get good jobs—education—we don't offer them any reason to stay. The school system suffers from teachers moving in and out due to low pay scales. . . . The hog prices are forcing our best farmers out of business. Family farms continue to decline in numbers. They are the basis of our community. We're quickly becoming a poor rural area that lacks the educated young people to become the leaders. These people are leaving. . . . Soon only the old and the poor will be left here.

Another Panelist said:

There are some jobs out there, but they're not always good paying jobs. We've had a decrease in unemployment, but warehouse jobs don't pay a lot of money. Companies are downsizing & working the employees longer hours & more days, which takes you away from your family a lot, then there goes your family values, because "who's watching the kids?"

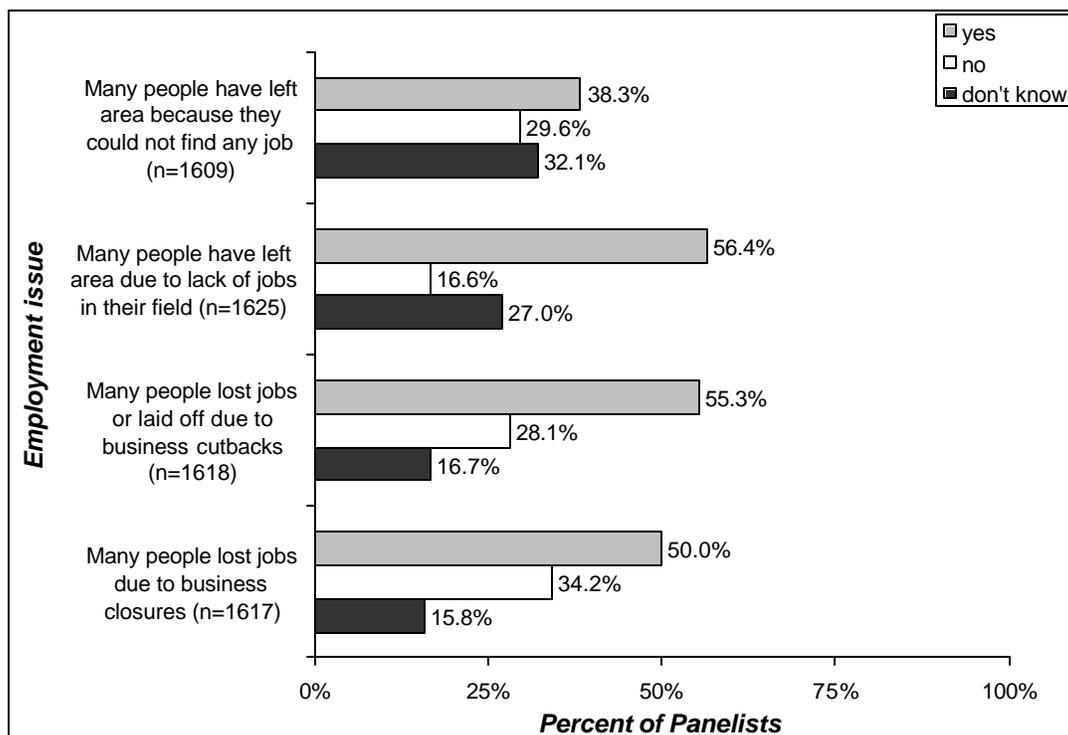
A third Panelist talked about the relationship between economic conditions and a community's young people:

More needs to be done for the youth of small towns and villages. Scout troops don't have enough adult leaders for the troops. Kids are left alone while parents work causing trouble in the town. People are too busy to volunteer—working and commuting to jobs out of town.

...

Many Panelists have experienced the loss of jobs in their communities due to business closure and cutbacks. Panelists' communities also have lost residents because these residents could not find a job in their chosen field or professions. (See Figure 21.)

Figure 21: Panelists' Opinions About Employment and Loss of Jobs in Their Communities and Surrounding Areas



Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Question 30 (g through j)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Several Panelists, in their written comments, discussed business closures, long commutes to work, and the need for economic development activities. One Panelist called for, “Retail and industrial business opportunities for our community. Recent closings have left our community without retail (women, infant and children) stores.” Another said, “It was the end of ’97 when my husband lost his job. So our income of ’97, \$43,480 to \$16,500 in 1998. It’s a big jump. The plant where my husband had worked moved to the South states for cheaper labor. He was a machinist. No jobs available unless its 45 min. to 1 hr. away.”

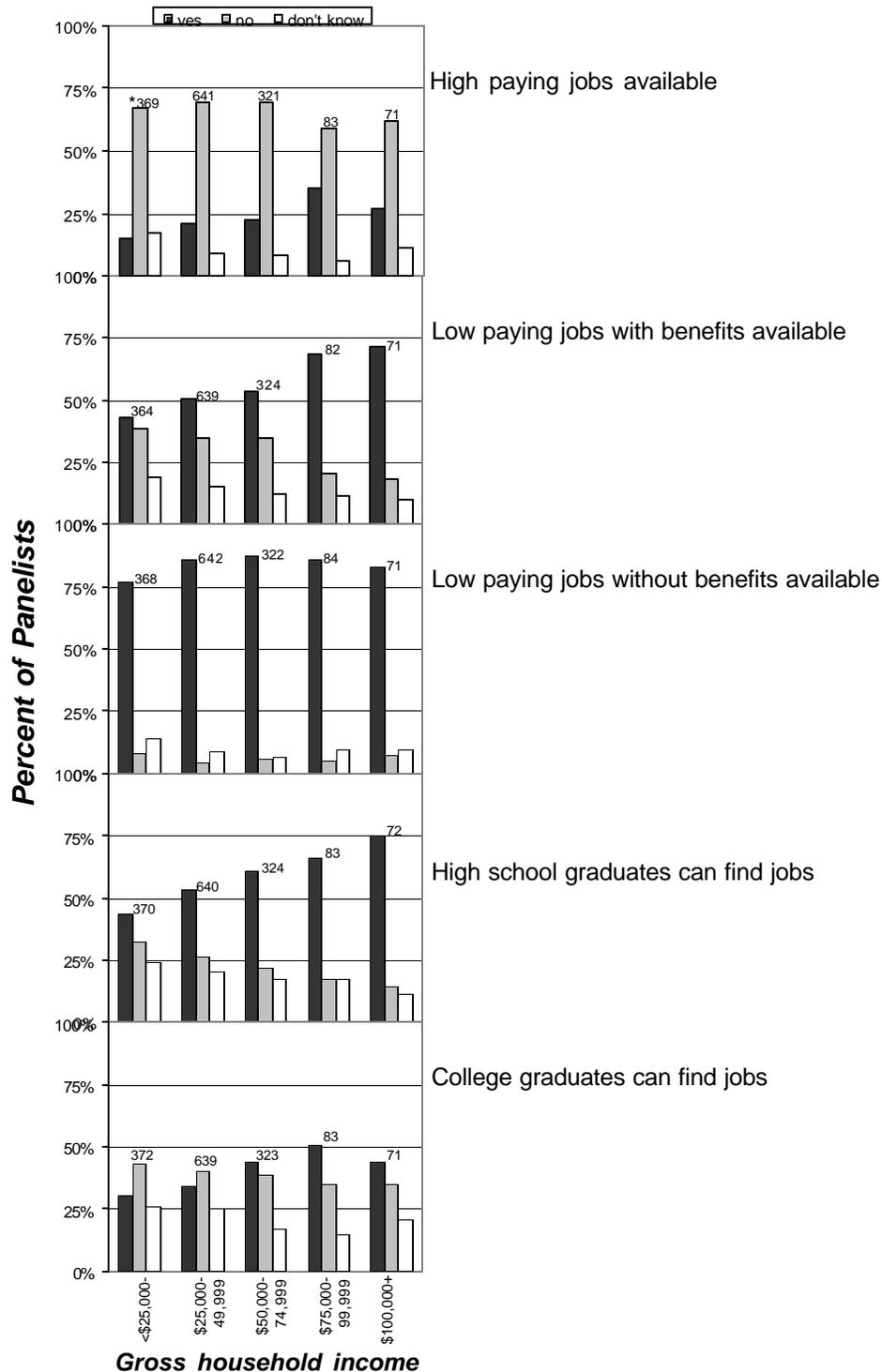
Another Panelist discussed the flight of companies from rural to urban areas:

Rural communities in our area need more business and industries for jobs, most of the jobs left are low paying service industry jobs. Companies merging and downsizing have cost the local area a lot of jobs. With the local tech & prof. jobs, the area is becoming a bedroom community for the jobs in the urban areas. We need the high pay jobs in the rural area, too many companies are moving them to the urban areas. If the better pay jobs come, (more than minimum wages) \$10/hr then the house demand will take care of itself. . . .

As one Panelist noted, young people also are leaving the community for job and educational opportunities. College graduates are unlikely to return to a rural community that lacks jobs commensurate with their educations and aspirations. According to Panelists, job prospects in rural areas differ for adults at various life and educational stages. While just over half of Panelists (54%) believe high school graduates can find jobs, fewer Panelists believe there are job prospects for college graduates or adults over 40 (36 and 39% of Panelists respectively) in non-metropolitan areas.

The outlook regarding job availability and community experience with business closure and layoffs varies with Panelists’ incomes. Panelists with higher incomes appear to be more optimistic than Panelists with lower incomes about job opportunities. Also, Panelists with higher incomes report business closures or cutbacks and outmigration from their communities less often than Panelists with lower incomes. Figure 22 shows Panelists descriptions of employment and business conditions in their communities and surrounding areas by income.

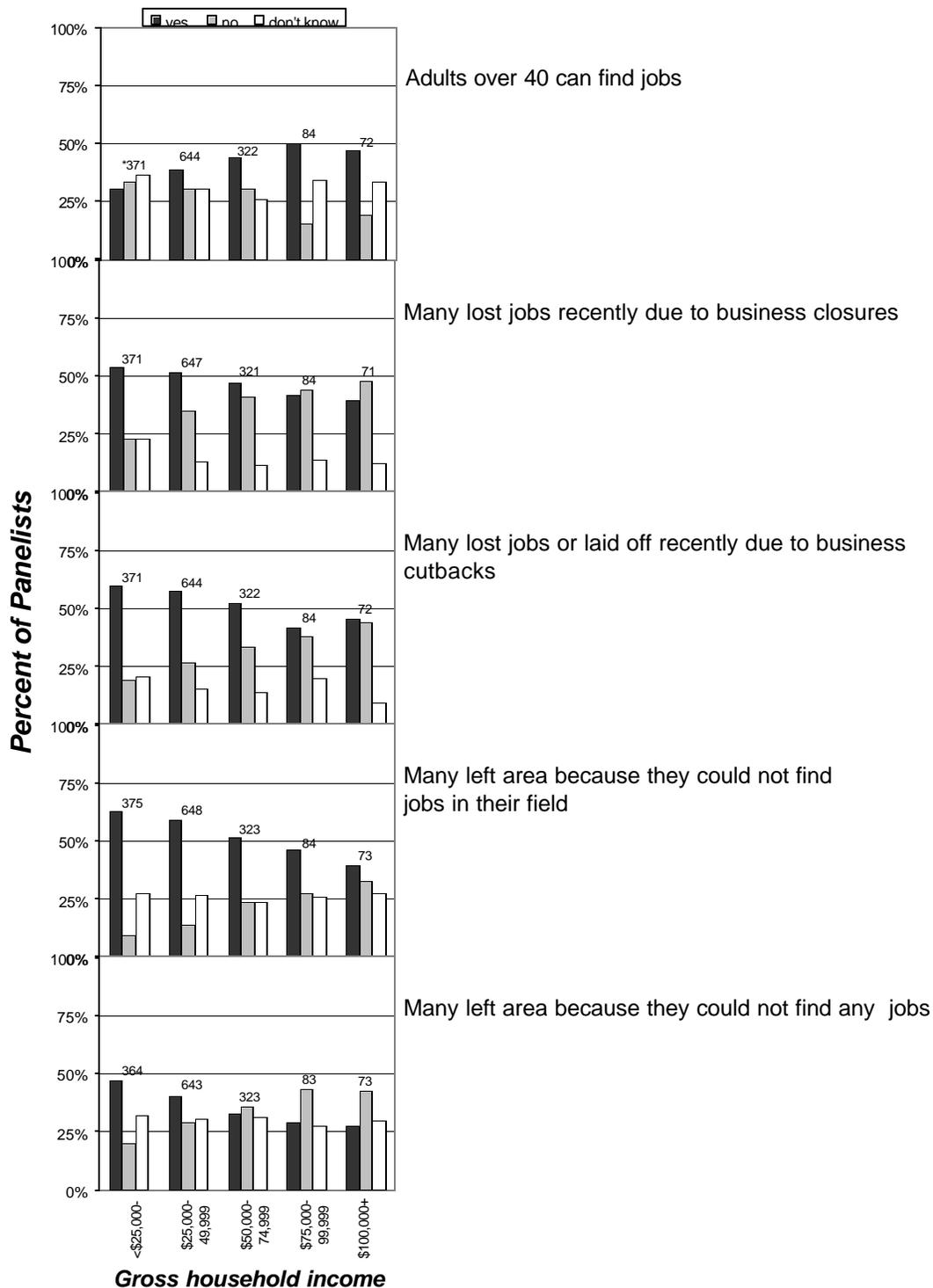
Figure 22a: Panelists' Descriptions of Employment and Business Conditions in Their Communities and Surrounding Areas by Panelists' Incomes



Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Questions 30 (a through j) and 47

*The number above each group of three bars is the number of respondents who answered the part of question 30 noted to the right of the graph and whose gross household income was in the income range noted at the bottom of the graphs.

Figure 22b: Panelists' Descriptions of Employment and Business Conditions in Their Communities and Surrounding Areas by Panelists' Incomes



Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Questions 30 (a through j) and 47

*The number above each group of three bars is the number of respondents who answered the part of question 30 noted to the right of the graph and whose gross household income was in the income range noted at the bottom of the graphs.

Despite Panelists' indications of poor local job quality, business closures, and business cutbacks, over one-third of Panelists (37%) indicate that local economic conditions have improved compared with five years ago. Another 39 percent of Panelists report that local economic conditions have remained the same.

Workforce and business support and opportunities

An area's workforce is of primary importance in business retention and attraction. The 1999 annual report on the state of rural Illinois described a shortage of skilled workers in some rural areas and outlined the importance of this workforce. "A skilled workforce is necessary to retain young residents, to take advantage of technology, to attract businesses and entrepreneurial activity, and to advance economic development."⁵

Educational opportunities, accessible and affordable services such as early childhood education, childcare, transportation, health care, elder care, and support for new businesses are essential for creating jobs and developing a workforce that remains employed and economically independent. These opportunities and services are especially important for women and their families.⁶ Panelists were asked about the availability of and need for specified training and employment support services in or near their communities.

Computer and other job-related training. Most Panelists (78%) report that computer training is available for adults in or near their communities. Compared to other services asked about on the survey, Panelists are most aware of availability of computer training. Only 8 percent of Panelists do not know about availability of this training. Although it appears computer training is widely available, half of Panelists indicate that more computer training is needed in their communities. The second largest percentage, 31 percent of Panelists, believe that computer training opportunities should remain the same.

Panelists also reported on the availability of and need for other job-related training (non-specific). About an equal percentage of Panelists indicated that other job-related training is available in or near their communities (58%) and that there is a need for more job-related training opportunities (57%). Some Panelists don't know about availability or need for job-related training (22 and 14% respectively).

The presence of a nearby college or university is a benefit for some Panelists. One Panelist said "Local Jr. College w/in 20 miles provides many of job training courses mentioned on & off campus—even here in town." Another said, "We have Western Illinois University in town; also Spoon River College has a campus [in] town. This I feel greatly helps attract people to this town. . . ."

Availability of training from local schools and earning a degree, however, do not guarantee availability of jobs in a rural area as one Panelist pointed out.

We are fortunate in my community to have Southern Illinois University, and a very good junior college—John A. Logan—nearby. These two schools provide many arts, cultural, and training opportunities for the people of Southern Illinois. However, with the reduction in coal mining jobs, and no influx of manufacturing or high-tech jobs, it is difficult for educated, native, Southern Illinoisans to find adequate job opportunities.

Although Panelists from each of the four regions of the State (see map on page 12) did not differ significantly in their estimates of training need in their communities, Panelists from the eastern region of the State reported the least availability of computer and other types of training. About 70 percent of Panelists from the eastern region reported availability of computer training compared to 79 to 82 percent of Panelists from other regions. About 48 percent of Panelists from the eastern region reported availability of other training compared to 60 to 65 percent of Panelists from the other regions. Also, Panelists from smaller rural communities were less likely to report availability of training services than Panelists from larger communities. (See Figure 23.)

Figure 23: Panelists Indicating Availability of Computer and Other Training by Community Population

Service	In or near your community?	Community population					
		0-499	500-1,499	1,500-2,499	2,500-4,999	5,000-9,999	10,000 or more
Computer training for adults	yes	56%	59%	71%	77%	81%	93%
	no	33%	30%	22%	15%	10%	2%
	don't know	11%	11%	7%	8%	8%	5%
	TOTALS	100% n=147	100% n=239	100% n=142	100% n=255	100% n=289	100% n=515
Other job-related training	yes	38%	43%	46%	48%	54%	82%
	no	40%	35%	31%	26%	19%	4%
	don't know	22%	23%	23%	26%	27%	14%
	TOTALS	100% n=144	100% n=238	100% n=135	100% n=250	100% n=281	100% n=507

Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Questions 33 (a and b) and 43

Notes: Respondents were asked "Approximately how many people live in your community?" Their estimates were used to define community populations in this figure. The "n" is the number of respondents who answered both question 33 about availability of computer and other job-related training and question 43 about community population. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Cooperatively planned and delivered education and training are key.⁷ The National Workforce Investment Act of 1998 legislates access to basic employment and information services that are accessible by and available to all citizens in one location. Local workforce investment boards—comprised of representatives of business, education, labor, community-based organizations—will assess, plan for, and be accountable for meeting workforce needs of the region. Rural areas must ensure their fair representation on these boards. Service providers must consider rural areas when planning and delivering programs.

Public and private educational institutions can capitalize on new technology to provide distance education. Educational institutions can recognize new markets for their training and education programs. These markets may be skills driven and based on employment trends. Markets may also be driven by individuals who find they must train or retrain because their employment and economic situations have changed—for

example, farmers who must hold positions off the farm during recession in commodity prices or women in middle age who are divorced or widowed.

Businesses must work cooperatively with educational institutions and other training providers to develop and provide appropriate training. Businesses must invest in developing the workforce through flexible policies that allow workers to pursue training and education objectives without jeopardizing current employment.

Childcare and adult daycare. With increases in two-earner households and women in the workplace, childcare and adult daycare options are becoming more important for job retention.⁸ Although most Panelists (85%) believe daytime childcare is available in or near their communities, they are less certain about other types of care such as night childcare (54% don't know), childcare for children with special needs (50% don't know), or adult daycare services (31% don't know). With the exception of daytime childcare, Panelists are also less certain about local need for each of these services compared to other services included on the survey (33 to 40 percent don't know about need for child and adult care options). Again, community size is related to the availability of services with Panelists from smaller communities reporting less availability of services than Panelists from larger communities. (See Figure 24.)

Figure 24: Panelists Indicating Availability of Childcare and Adult Daycare Services by Community Population

Service	In or near your community?	Community population					
		0-499	500-1,499	1,500-2,499	2,500-4,999	5,000-9,999	10,000 or more
Daytime childcare services	yes	62%	75%	82%	88%	93%	93%
	no	22%	11%	9%	6%	2%	1%
	don't know	16%	14%	10%	6%	5%	5%
	TOTALS	100% n=147	100% n=238	100% n=141	100% n=253	100% n=286	100% n=514
Nighttime childcare services	yes	11%	15%	16%	20%	16%	27%
	no	42%	35%	33%	30%	28%	15%
	don't know	47%	50%	50%	50%	55%	58%
	TOTALS	100% n=142	100% n=239	100% n=141	100% n=251	100% n=285	100% n=510
Childcare services for children with special needs	yes	17%	20%	24%	22%	31%	41%
	no	35%	31%	26%	27%	18%	9%
	don't know	48%	49%	51%	51%	51%	51%
	TOTALS	100% n=148	100% n=239	100% n=140	100% n=247	100% n=282	100% n=505
Adult daycare services	yes	31%	34%	39%	39%	45%	62%
	no	41%	34%	33%	24%	26%	8%
	don't know	28%	32%	28%	37%	29%	30%
	TOTALS	100% n=146	100% n=236	100% n=139	100% n=254	100% n=284	100% n=511

Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Questions 33 (c through f) and 43

Notes: Respondents were asked "Approximately how many people live in your community?" Their estimates were used to define community populations in this figure. The "n" is the number of respondents who answered both question 33 about availability of childcare and adult daycare services and question 43 about community population. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Entrepreneurial and job placement support. One approach to economic development is provision of support for new business start-ups. In addition, career counseling and assistance for job placement may provide residents with employment options they have not considered. Fewer than one-third of Panelists are aware of either programs to help people start new businesses (31%) or programs to teach youth how to start and manage a business (28%) in or near their communities; many more Panelists "don't know" about availability of such programs (43% don't know about entrepreneurial support and 42% don't know about programs for youth). Over half of Panelists (55%) indicate that businesses or agencies that help people find work are available in or near their communities. Panelists' regard their communities' needs for such programs or agencies similarly. About half of Panelists say there is a need for more programs to

encourage business start-up (50%), programs teaching youth about entrepreneurship (54%), and businesses or agencies that support job placement (47%).

Technology applications. Access to technology and its applications can give rural areas the ability to obtain training at a distance, conduct business worldwide, work from home, or access information via the Internet thus helping to overcome barriers to participation in the economy.

One Panelist suggested an employment opportunity for rural residents as well as a necessary direction for rural development.

Info on local telecommunications, internet access, telephone, high-speed data, fiberoptic might be interesting and pertinent. I have “telecommunicated [telecommuted]” for 5 years which has enabled me to stay in my home community. Improved communications capability seems critical to small town survival. Even when decent-paying jobs w/ benefits are scarce locally, a telecommuter can live where he or she wants and make a living at or above the small community average. Unfortunately, too few employers have recognized the benefits of letting people work this way. An employer can pay less because the cost of living in rural Illinois is lower. Some employees are happy to work for less because of the above, and because of the safe and casual lifestyle (great environment to raise kids—few problems with drugs, crime, etc.).

Another Panelist also recognized potential rural advances with technology applications and discussed the importance of youth programs.

This community cannot become competitive until its communications systems are equal to larger communities. Would like more positive and progressive programs for youth to help them make an impact to this area when they grow up, (or now) and to give them more hope of a successful career. (More access to national industry leaders, etc.).

Transportation. To obtain employment, training and education, health care, and goods and services, rural residents must have reliable transportation. Nearly all Panelists (97%) report that their cars are their primary means of transportation. Other Panelists rely on friends or relatives for rides or other means. Despite their access to vehicles, Panelists see a need for more public transportation in their communities (39%) and between their communities and surrounding areas (48%). Fewer Panelists “don’t know” about needs for intra-community (21%) or inter-community public transportation (24%). Over two-thirds of Panelists report that public transportation is not available either in their communities (69%) or between their communities and surrounding areas (70%). Few Panelists—less than 7 percent—indicate they “don’t know” about public transportation options.

Building a brighter future

The 1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panelists echo what previously mentioned reports and policy and planning documents advocate. One document, *Building a Brighter Future for Rural Illinois: Goals for Stronger Communities*, outlines goals and objectives for rural Illinois stressing leadership development, envisioning economic vitality, and defining quality of life standards for rural areas.⁹ Some of the goals and objectives for rural Illinois include increased: local leadership and skilled workforce development; access to health care, education and other services, transportation, technology, information, and housing; support for entrepreneurship; and rural citizen awareness, respect for, and use of community resources.

All facets of community life are intertwined. Affordable and adequate access to transportation, health care, housing, adult and child education, and child and adult care help determine one's quality of life and ability to successfully gain employment and remain employed. Affordable and adequate access to these amenities and availability of a skilled workforce also affect business location decisions.

¹ Governor's Rural Affairs Council and Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Western Illinois University, *Rural Illinois: Entering a New Era*, (1999), 2.

² Walzer, N. and L. Beier, "Quality of Life in Rural Illinois," *Rural Research Report*, 9:1, (Western Illinois University, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Fall 1997), 1.

³ Walzer, N. and J. Crump, "Economic Trends in Rural Illinois," *Rural Research Report*, 8:3, (Western Illinois University, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Winter 1996-1997), 1.

⁴ Governor's Rural Affairs Council and Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Western Illinois University, *Rural Illinois: Entering a New Era*, (1999), 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vii.

⁶ State of Illinois, *Final Report of the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women in Illinois*, (Springfield, IL, December 1998).

⁷ Governor's Rural Affairs Council and Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Western Illinois University, *Rural Illinois: Entering a New Era*, (1999).

⁸ In 1980, 42.5 percent of the non-metropolitan workforce were females (2,328,260 females). In 1990, this percentage increased to 45.5 percent (2,653,338). The percentage change between 1980 and 1990 of families with two or more workers was 8.9 percent for non-metropolitan Illinois counties. Labor market data comes from Illinois Department of Employment Security, 1980 and 1990 employment information, [Internet], <http://lmi.ides.state.il.us/>, (April 2000).

⁹ Rural Partners, *Building a Brighter Future for Rural Illinois: Goals for Stronger Communities*, (Rural Partners: Springfield, IL, 1998). Rural Partners can be reached at 3085 Stevenson Drive, Suite 302, Springfield, IL 62703, TEL 217-585-9242, FAX 217-585-8233.



Appendix A: Respondent Demographics

Figure 25: 1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panel Respondent Demographics (n=1,659)

Variables/Values	Number	*Percent
Age (What year were you born?)		
18 - 34	276	16.6%
35 - 49	430	25.9%
50 - 64	444	26.8%
65 - 79	397	23.9%
80+	97	5.8%
No response	15	0.9%
Gender		
Female	736	44.4%
Male	914	55.1%
No response	9	0.5%
Marital status		
Single	111	6.7%
Married	1221	73.6%
Domestic partner	14	0.8%
Separated/divorced	114	6.9%
Widowed	185	11.2%
No response	14	0.8%
Race		
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	0.3%
Black/African American (Non-Hispanic)	7	0.4%
Hispanic (Latino/a)	10	0.6%
Native American	110	6.6%
White (Non-Hispanic)	1482	89.3%
Other	11	0.7%
Checked more than one	10	0.6%
No response	24	1.4%

Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Questions 38 through 41

*Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. The demographic table includes the percentage of respondents who did not answer specific questions (“No response”). The percentages described in “Who Are the Illinois Rural Life Panelists?” in the report narrative include only those specifying demographic information; hence, there are slight differences between the percentages in the report and this table.

Figure 25: 1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panel Respondent Demographics (n=1,659)

Variables/Values	Number	*Percent
Community size (Approximately how many people live in your community?)		
0 - 499	153	9.2%
500 - 1,499	247	14.9%
1,500 - 2,499	146	8.8%
2,500 - 4,999	263	15.9%
5,000 - 9,999	290	17.5%
10,000+	522	31.5%
No response	38	2.3%
Years in community (How many years have you lived in your community?)		
Less than one	8	0.5%
1 - 5	111	6.7%
6 - 10	109	6.6%
11 - 20	226	13.6%
21+	1193	71.9%
No response	12	0.7%
Where respondent lives (Which of the following best describes where you live?)		
In town/city	1099	66.2%
On a farm	191	11.5%
In the country, but not on a farm	211	12.7%
In a rural subdivision	104	6.3%
Other	39	2.4%
No response	15	0.9%
Anyone under 18 at home (Is there anyone living in your household who is under age 18?)		
Yes	550	33.2%
No	1090	65.7%
No response	19	1.1%
Employment		
Full-time	889	53.6%
Part-time	169	10.2%
Unemployed and looking for work	36	2.2%
Unemployed and not looking for work	352	21.2%
No response	213	12.8%

Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Questions 19, 31, and 43 through 45

*Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. The demographic table includes the percentage of respondents who did not answer specific questions ("No response"). The percentages described in "Who Are the Illinois Rural Life Panelists?" in the report narrative include only those specifying demographic information; hence, there are slight differences between the percentages in the report and this table.

Figure 25: 1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panel Respondent Demographics (n=1,659)

Variables/Values	Number	*Percent
Education (How far did you go in school?)		
Less than a high school degree	94	5.7%
High school degree/GED	455	27.4%
Some college, but no degree	421	25.4%
Associates degree	138	8.3%
Bachelors degree	171	10.3%
Some graduate work	92	5.5%
Graduate degree	159	9.6%
Other (e.g., vocational training)	31	1.9%
Checked more than one	82	4.9%
No response	16	1.0%
1997 gross household income		
Less than \$15,000	178	10.7%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	211	12.7%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	306	18.4%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	352	21.2%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	324	19.5%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	84	5.1%
\$100,000+	73	4.4%
No response	131	7.9%
How much of your 1997 gross household income was derived from farming?		
None	1299	78.3%
Less than 25%	175	10.5%
25 to 49%	53	3.2%
50 to 74%	36	2.2%
75%+	58	3.5%
No response	38	2.3%

Source: 1998-1999 IRLPS Questions 46 through 48

*Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. The demographic table includes the percentage of respondents who did not answer specific questions ("No response"). The percentages described in "Who Are the Illinois Rural Life Panelists?" in the report narrative include only those specifying demographic information; hence, there are slight differences between the percentages in the report and this table.



Appendix B: Panelists' Comments

At the end of the 1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panel Survey instrument, respondents had an opportunity to provide written comments about any survey topic, other issue, or suggestions for future surveys. Panelists (n=367) made comments about the following broad topics: arts and culture; government; healthcare; housing; workforce and economic development; and the survey instrument. Their comments are provided in full below. Each bullet identifies one Panelist's comment. In some cases, comments have been altered to protect the identity of the respondent.

- We live in a farming area. It is great. It also used to have several factories in the area. We had a great life but it started to dwindle years ago and now it is just about gone. The factories are just about all gone in this area. Is this free trade or what? Everyone here cannot have a farm or be farmers. My husband was employed by four different factories in the area over his working lifetime that were closed and taken to Mexico or one of the other out of the USA factories. He was always in Management so it was not just an hourly factory job (at one of the companies he was supervising between 8 and 9 hundred employees). These companies just moved out for cheaper labor etc. What about us?? Our little town of 1600 had 3 factories. [Company name] was a big one. It employed between 7 and 8 hundred at their peak. The canning company had been here since the early 1900s employing many people especially during the summer canning season (corn, beans and asparagus). This was a good means for our youth to earn extra money for school etc. One small electronic factory is still here but it does not employ many people. The town to the South of us and also the town to the North of us is in about the same circumstances. Factories keep closing in this area and several of the ones that are left are in trouble. All their plans seem to be to leave the USA and go to Mexico or some place like that. We need some industry in this area. Please, don't the politicians see what is happening to rural areas like ours. We need the work in the USA.
- Take my name off the list!
- Would like to see a high speed train from Chicago to St. Louis w/ shuttle trains from Freeport/Rockford/Galena/Dubuque, etc. to Chicago.
- It would appear I don't know much about the community I live in--that is probably true. Most of my children no longer live at home. I have no idea re: childcare services. I also work full-time at a job 30 miles from my home and work in an occupation where I have never been unemployed. I truly have no great understanding about the job market in my community.
- Community access to the internet is far more important than libraries. The internet will provide far more resources than a local library.
- Lower school taxes & accountability for tax money spent. Help for seniors in dealing with local hospital billing which is confusing and sometimes grossly in error. Hospital billing dept. is either incompetent or unwilling to explain charges. Area has only one hospital.
- Please do not send me the survey from now on. I am in poor health and do not wish to participate anymore. Thank you [id number].
- School taxes.

-
- Question issues of increasing cost to HOMEOWNERS (senior citizens) for electricity--water--sewer--garbage & trash removal--also is brush & leaf burning a controversial issue in small to medium town populations? It seems to be in Whiteside County. In other communities to burn or not to burn?
 - There is housing available in this town but the cost of housing is far above what most people can afford. The people who work in the bigger cities can afford housing here, but most the local workers making minimum wage have to live in substandard locations. The city needs younger leaders to promote some heavy industry so that people can afford to live comfortably.
 - Need more higher paying jobs, industry, and better child care for working parents.
 - There is going to be a big change in this community in the next 3 years. A prison will be coming in and there will be many things that will have to change. Many of my answers will be not valid. Hope some of this is helpful.
 - The job situation is pitiful for single women who want to live in a rural area. VERY low pay (minimum wage) and no benefits make it impossible. I even own my home (it was very cheap) so do not have housing payments and still cannot support myself. NO jobs offer benefits. The jobs available to women, that is! The world assumes everyone is married so “women's jobs” are low pay, no benefits. I was driving to Bloomington to work--better pay but the extra pay is eaten up by automobile costs and gasoline. Can't win! My mother is moving in with me in the near future to cut costs for both of us.
 - I feel more funds should be made to assist persons with Paranoid Schizophrenia.
 - The public school system, throughout the USA needs a complete overhaul. Must start at the very top.
 - Local Jr. College w/in 20 miles provides many of job training courses mentioned on & off campus--even here in town.
 - I enjoy participating but am always uneasy about the confidentiality.
 - Retail and industrial business opportunities for our community. Recent closing have left our community without retail (women, infant and children) stores.
 - I would like to see a survey on district assessments. The purpose being to adjust districts that are in need due to losses of revenue or rapid expansions. This would include all districts such as library, fire, school and so on.
 - I would like to see more cultural activities for children and less importance put on sports and sport activities in our community.
 - I am retired, and that leaves me quite uninformed concerning questions 28 & 34.
 - Sorry did the best I could having acute arthritis of hands--also I did not see if I was to fill in blank or check box. I could not find at beginning if wanted it checked. If you cannot use this due to I filled in boxes or what, need new glasses [sic]. Thank you, be happy to do it over, if you would like. Thanks.

-
- When you ask if more of something is needed I feel the question is rather stupid. You sure don't need less of anything to be up to date in today's world, get real. PLEASE DO NOT SEND me any more of these surveys.
 - Survey the need for VOCATIONAL EDUCATION--especially in rural communities. How does the general public rate the importance of it? Do they support it? What should be taught? Etc. Thanks.
 - I have a problem with government subsidized or school art programs. Throughout history the arts have challenged conformity and have ridiculed complacency. Good art challenges the intellect. Government subsidized art will of course have to adhere to the taste and social agenda of the ruling body and school art, having to take care not to offend anyone or tread on anyone's toes, is of necessity going to be vapid and dishwatery. Thus we breed a generation of beanie baby/precious moments art. Maybe my views are a bit cynical, but let's face it, Thoreau was right when he said "the government is best that governs least." Give students the ability to read and write or appreciate the visual or symphonic arts, but don't choose their agenda of what to appreciate. Let them discover art on their own.
 - It was the end of '97 when my husband lost his job. So our income of '97, \$43,480 to \$16,500 in 1998. It's a big jump. The plant where my husband had worked moved to the South states for cheaper labor. He was a machinist. No jobs available unless its 45 min to 1 hr. away. Thank you. [Name]
 - I am a retired farmer living on my farm. Lot of the questions don't pertain to me.
 - We do have some things in our very rural area but we have to do a lot of travel to get a lot of other service and then you find out you don't qualify and that really bites. It would be nice to have some kind of out-post or something like that so as people can use it and also make it known to the public so as they know that it is here for them. We need local job training and new jobs for everyone not just the young or the old. And some kind of computer training besides what is taught in grade & high school for the baby boomers. A lot needs to be done for the elds [sic].
 - In response to question 23, property taxes are already too high. Property owners should not bear such a heavy load.
 - Re: Arts in town--we gave a very active theater & light opera group, a very active art league & museum societies, a good city rec. dept., and very active private sports leagues & teams. "DO IT IN DANVILLE" was a city motto for a long time, but I say "DO IT IN THE MIDWEST." Central Illinois/Indiana has a high quality of life.
 - I am disabled. I am raising a granddaughter (12). We can't get a library card because we don't live in the town of Charleston, although all the schools are there. Many people depend on me for a ride to doctors, grocery shopping, drug store, etc. because of no public transportation.
 - When you live in a small community you get accustomed to driving to wherever you need. It would be nice to have more things available in our community, but until our community grows and can provide those things for ourselves, I think it would be unrealistic to try to provide them with tax dollars.

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- I think [east central Illinois community] is a kind of stay-the-same situation. It is a kind of established thing. The doctors, lawyers, businessmen have been here for years. Ministers, school teachers come & go. Rent is very high & taxes are high yet there is low income housing, and very few factories. High school graduates seem to disappear to live & work elsewhere. The same established farmers are on the school board (some) year after year. Service jobs are available & big turn over there as they find better jobs. [East central Illinois community] may not be a true sample as Mattoon, Champaign, Decatur, Springfield, Effingham are all so close to find all the amenities. Many go out of town to do their trading. To use the expression the streets fold & close down about sundown here. Drug traffic is a problem everywhere but somewhat better now. One couple had a retirement property bought near Nashville, TN--sold out here to retire there but came back & re-established here. Things had changed so much for the worse near the big cities they found the standard of living was better here. Some in Mattoon sell out go to Arizona etc. to live then come back here & re-buy back here after all those years living here. I don't know if there could be a come back for the barber shop quartet--band in the park--no Barnes & Noble store here.
 - Living in our rural farm community, arts are of little importance to MOST people. Also with the current market prices for all commodities it is becoming increasingly more important to retrain farmers in other business & technical fields. Many of our friends who are farming are also looking for a job elsewhere to help support their families and in some cases in order to hang onto farms that have been in their families for generations. I personally hate to see farm ground being sold in order to put up another sub-division.
 - This community has a college & jobs are generally given to the college students & grads. I am now 51 years old & due to this fact may lose all I have worked for my whole life. My car needs repairs so I am not able to travel far to work. Life is becoming unbearable without a job. I am very willing to work but cannot obtain a job!
 - There is a real need to help people who are single and on a very low income and disability, housing, etc.
 - I think the school needs to help the children that are not "A" students, but are not failures either. Sometimes they just need a little more time.
 - Short term vocational training for adults is available but limited in scope. Potential employee & business seem interested in further development. Re: Item #28 responses are accurate in light of your wording "general," but those w/limited income would have a different perspective. This group may be about 25% of total population, but their needs are great. Your survey is not likely to reveal the severity of their needs re: housing.
 - More questions on the use of the internet, also more questions concerning services such as water rates or electricity and other services provided in the rural areas.
 - Temporary job programs are taking away the working man's life for bettering his family with, insurance (health), pension, seniority, and pay. TAKES AWAY.
 - Please remove me from your list.

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- Thanks for the opportunity to finish this survey. Sorry you had to send me another. Olney is a unique town for the arts. A lot of people deserve credit but perhaps [local couple] deserve the most.
 - I'm retired and stay at home, a lot of things I have no interest in so don't have opinions. I'm sure we need a lot of things mentioned and maybe we have them and I don't follow their teachings so gave no opinions.
 - #47 My income is derived from
 - 1) Retired Navy pension
 - 2) Retired coal miner's pension
 - 3) Social security retirement benefits for myself and spouse based on eligible benefits at age 62 for each of us, & I work to an annual minimum of \$12,000 which is limitation imposed by union & employer contractual agreement for retirees of UMWAIf I earn more than \$1000 per month my benefits & my wife's benefits of medical care and hospitalization under the Coal Act would be in jeopardy. And under Social Security rules, I am penalized \$1.00 for every \$2.00 I earn beyond \$9,120.
 - Info on local telecommunications, internet access, telephone, high-speed data, fiberoptic might be interesting and pertinent. I have “telecommunicated” for 5 years which has enabled me to stay in my home community. Improved communications capability seems critical to small town survival. Even when decent-paying jobs w/ benefits are scarce locally, a telecommuter can live where he or she wants and make a living at or above the small community average. Unfortunately, too few employers have recognized the benefits of letting people work this way. An employer can pay less because the cost of living in rural Illinois is lower. Some employees are happy to work for less because of the above, and because of the safe and casual lifestyle (great environment to raise kids--few problems with drugs, crime, etc.).
 - More needs to be done for the lower income people, especially the aged. The aged never have a chance for income, more than what Social Security to just be protected health wise; also sum for burial coming from Social Security is way below the poverty line. It hasn't risen in over 40 years. Have they forgotten the people who came through the great depression, survived and helped support this great county in the past. Sorry just had to get it out in the open. The world and leaders need to wake up. There may be another “Great Depression” headed our way. It wouldn't surprise me in the least. The Bible says “Charity begins at home.” Does it really?
 - We need jobs that pay a realistic wage with benefits. Social Security is not working, I can draw SS at age 65 as an early retirement! I hope I live that long. If it is not going to be there for us, tell us, give our MONEY BACK! And let us take care of ourselves.
 - Library cards are available for rural residents for a fee but we have never purchased one.
 - Include in your survey about benefits offered to employees in small business or farm operations. Ask if there are any people known who live on farms, retired, but live in poverty rather than sell out in order to live better on said assets. Thank you for this opportunity to air my thoughts.
 - Need better paying job and better schools.

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- We need a means of getting more jobs in our town. Such as a factory, restaurants, stores. We hear of some coming. They stay a short time and leave or never come. We live across the Wabash River from Princeton, IN where more business seems to flourish. Sorry this is late.
 - 5600 in county--1 school. Our needs--good support for medical needs. A doctor--MEC. Our county has no hospital--consolidate county wide--1 large excellent hospital. Mental health needs attention. Teen/babies/drugs/unemployed are the problems. Do not worry about arts/library. Take care of the important immediate needs. It is a joke when we do a survey for the arts. Train parents to be parents--which would help out the teachers to improve the education system.
 1. Train parents to be parents.
 2. Medical needs
 3. Improve the needs for seniors, worry about the arts when we have everything.
 The State needs to look at funding. This is a waste of money for our state.
 - Plenty of low pay jobs without benefits, very few with enough income to support families. Age old problems: CEOs want to cut staff & salaries & benefits so workers produce less & CEOs complain can't get good workers so cut staff more & workers work less no one wins. Give it 20 years & everyone will see can't produce value on paper only & wages & production will start back up.
 - Retired into rural farm area—many town, college, business areas available via short drive—thus enclosed questionnaire can vary as to possible areas chosen.
 - The deer, fox and coyote population should be reduced. The deer especially are causing accidents, deaths, damage and are destroying crops.
 - Please take us off this panel. I have asked before and you keep sending letters. We are older, live on a farm several miles from town (a small town). We do not take part in all these things you have listed and will not at this time of our life. Thank you.
 - This community cannot become competitive until its communications systems are equal to larger communities. Would like more positive and progressive programs for youth to help them make an impact to this area when they grow up, (or now) and to give them more hope of a successful career. (More access to national industry leaders, etc.).
 - I am surprised you don't ask about connections with outside world through TV. We listen or watch regularly a FEW public television programs and listen to public radio in the car.
 - There are no jobs—no good housing. No businesses—people have to leave to find jobs.
 - I filled out survey because my husband chose not to take time to fill it out. I hope you can still use the results from this questionnaire.
 - I understand the value of a library to any town. I am 81 and don't read much anymore. I do encourage my family and friends to take advantage of all they offer today. Our housing seems adequate. County seat is 10 miles away and its necessary to go there for most all of our needs. Doctor, dentist, groceries, medicine and work.

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- We have a very nice community. A lot of elderly people, who are very helpful to one another. Many new young residents who seem to fit in nicely.
 - Rural communities in our area need more business and industries for jobs, most of the jobs left are low paying service industry jobs. Companies merging and downsizing have cost the local area a lot of jobs. With the local tech & prof. Jobs, the area is becoming a bedroom community for the jobs in the urban areas. We need the high pay jobs in the rural area, too many companies are moving them to the urban areas. If the better pay jobs come, (more than minimum wages) \$10/hr then the house demand will take care of themselves [sic]. Builder[s] are will[ing] to build new house[s], but with the poor job outlook are being [word unclear] in building [word unclear] houses. Without the flow of new high pay job[s], the rural community is in high need of assist in financing first time buyer, low income buyer and assisting very low income home owner in repair[ing] their property.
 - Federal government spends billions of dollars on space programs, when there are people (locally) that can't make a decent living on their present jobs. The amount the elderly spend in prescription medicine is too much. Also supplement insurance is a problem. Our income is \$1250 per month and med. & suppl. Inc. comes to \$400 (which is about 1/3).
 - 1. Each home own well water.
 2. Each home own sewer system.
 3. Huge need for repair help--clean roof gutters etc. without having to pay huge bill from city repair men who drive to our town--limited income, it hurts.
 - Please exclude my name from any future surveys. Thanks.
 - It's hard to live in a small town. Everyone knows everyone and their business. Everyone complains but no one steps forward during elections so the same tiny mind gets in over and over. There is nothing for the kids but trouble. Very few would consider work but they work very hard at getting into trouble. The government won't let you make them mind then smack their hand when they go astray. They don't like and have no respect for anyone. Some of the teachers act the same way and parents are absent so the kids haven't got a chance. At least the ones that need guidance. There are a few exceptional kids that do well despite absent parents--only 1 parent and teachers that only worry about the paycheck and staying out of the way because they aren't allowed to make them mind either. I really believe this is a much bigger problem than the lack of arts. They need discipline and respect. If they get these 2 things and see the results of getting and giving, the arts will find their way.
 - There is training if you can pay for it! H.S. grads need more training or school for better jobs.
 - Our town is small, and we don't expect much, taxes are too high.
 - We need no more taxes. Older people are having a hard time paying them now.
 - This is a very small town so we do not have many of these things. A lot of retired people live here.
 - We need to provide more housing in the community in order to attract business. Need more cultural activities in the community.

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- Our area is extremely depressed. Our school will be in financial woes by next fall. Our major employer closed down 3 years ago. Not much hope for any new companies moving into the area. The forest service (Fed. Gov't) owns a large part of our area. They don't pay taxes--they make "payment in kind" which amounts to a minimal amount so our tax base is extremely low. Our population for the whole county is 5,000 and many are elderly and retired. I would imagine about 75% of our county's population live below the poverty level. One good thing is we have a medical clinic and small hospital. The bad thing is our hospital is on the brink of disaster so one wonders how long it will be before it is forced to close.
 - There definitely should be more Christian activities for our youth.
 - I think we are doing well in all four areas. However improvements each year or so is good. I just heard that our civic art center will be closed early next year for some improvements to the lower level. Hope I have been a help.
 - Housing in this area is way too expensive for two income families which is the category most people I know fall into. There are low paying jobs and lots of P/T low pay jobs but with no benefits. With the cost of housing and bills and insurance rates its almost IMPOSSIBLE to make ends meet let alone get ahead. We need higher paying jobs, full-time with medical benefits and lower housing payments.
 - Property taxes, taxes, politicians' salaries.
 - There is a greater need for higher paying jobs closer to home for non-college graduates, more skills. Training for same should be correlated with schools for same training and businesses that need such skilled people--some of this is now available at Gillespie, IL through Vatterot College extension and Lincoln Land Extension new bldg. here. However, some from our area (Hillsboro nearby 6-7 miles) are traveling to night school in St. Louis or Springfield to secure special training--re-training often after working all day or part-time locally to help pay bills, because of shutdown of Hillsboro Glass Factory. Some of the wives have secured or had jobs and some husbands have stayed home during day (or night) while wives work to care for children during summer and then they go to night classes here or in St. Louis or Springfield. Note: Since Lincoln Land has an extension building here right near our Industrial park, (about 2 years) they did have art workshops available but not widely enough, or reaching enough local children. Of course, costs limited access for some parent's children to participate as well as faculty and time constraints for Lincoln Land College personnel as well.
 - If our community is to grow, we would need to make major improvements to our infrastructure. Our city does not have the means/funds to do this. Most people here travel 50+ miles to work. Note: As a realtor, I have the info on Governments' involvement with mortgages. Problem: Low income/lower priced homes do not qualify for loans. Can't expect a seller (\$30,000 home) to update the home to meet requirements for loan. We have ample homes that are so old with poor foundations. (Price range of \$50,000) Who wants a \$50,000 home with poor foundation and in need of major repairs--i.e. windows-- roof--siding etc.?
 - I have lived in Effingham the past 62 years. In this time the town has truly progressed. We have it all; if not, we can reach it in traveling 100 miles to 200. This is a special town. One day, it could be a city.

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- Our county has lost almost all of its mining jobs. The employment opportunities are largely minimum wage but many do have benefits. However, it's difficult even with both spouses working to maintain a comfortable life style. To save for children's education or for retirement is almost impossible. Our property taxes are very high for a rural area and continue to go up every year. My husband and I feel we will die working.
 - Activities for the youth.
 - Am interested in completing my B.S. Need classes at Shawnee College. It is too difficult and costly to work all day and try to drive to Carbondale, Murray, or Cape Girardeau to finish. It seems the government addresses everyone but the older (war babies)--divorced females when it comes to help. We send people on public aid to college pay their way and give them money to live on while they finish school. My child is grown so I got nothing--can't get the colleges to realize there is a big market in divorced older women--no children who want to get better jobs by finishing their degree.
 - Travel for senior citizens is available here in Pike county. The senior bus runs on schedules to different cities and different senior programs. I-72 is a large and important highway for this part of the state. It is an economic improvement plus a good convenience for the population. I think our government needs to insure our seniors for benefits into the future. Plus the continued social security payments.
 - Topic for future surveys, telephone service in rural areas. The Problem: IL. residents in rural areas are subjected to incredibly small local telephone districts, often with well under 1,000 local, non-toll numbers available. Our counter parts in Springfield, Bloomington, and Chicago can call hundreds and thousands, and even millions of local numbers. This causes excessive long distance charges, especially when using the internet. The Fix: Nebraska, Iowa, and many other states require the phone companies to bundle many local districts into larger calling areas. It is a simple and cost effective fix to a real problem.
 - Lines are too drawn resulting in lack of flexibility on question 33 and 34. Peoples' ability varies. Some 70 year olds can work as well as 40-50 years olds and do not require benefit packages. There could be some workers available to help those who need help and are able to pay part of the bills for labor on home repair--perhaps students in Manual training, high school and college who would be cleared as non-security risks.
 - There are only 300 people living in this community. Several of these questions were N/A.
 - White County needs assistance in starting new business. Drugs are very plentiful in our community. We need law enforcement people made to arrest drug dealers.
 - I'm retired, a widow, and go to Dubuque, IA Dubuque Co. as there is no drug store. No grocery store. No shopping in East Dubuque and its 15 miles to nearest other town in Illinois. Too much gambling, bars, and taverns.
 - Why can some communities attract booming business and be successful and our community can not? More activities for all age groups.

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- Has anyone considered how enormously helpful it could be if local schools became more of a community center for parents. New and prospective moms really should enroll in parent-training classes, preferably with dad. Preventive medicine (prenatal visits, vaccinations) could be handled from these community centers--nurse on duty full-time. Full-time childcare should be available, especially for the poor. One or more social workers should be employed full-time to know every new mom in the neighborhood and provide early identification for troubled kids. Kids with noticeable problems or handicaps sure need a lot of special help—"main-lining" kids with problems means kids sometimes (almost and always) get teased so much it can really exacerbate their already formidable difficulties. Police are having to deal with resulting domestic problems that should be handled by social workers and families working together in their neighborhood community centers.
 - 1. Farm commodity prices--(adjusted in inflation) are at or below the depression era.
 2. Health insurance rates are too high especially for self-employed farmers.
 3. I feel more people need to recycle to help our environment.
 - As I am now 70 years of age, I probably do not know as much about community affairs as younger persons, but I read local papers and keep fairly well up on happenings. Environmental subjects are always of interest to me.
 - Mega-hog farms=trouble? Colleges & Universities seem to espouse many theories about how to farm. Just when minimum till and such practices as better regulation of chemical usage seem to be helping for future land use, here come the "hogs." How did this all happen? Aren't colleges developing these practices? More responsive state and federal regulations should be in place as it seems to be the only way to go. Colleges are not policing themselves. As tax dollars for education are being questioned, it is time to wise up. Most people think of local public schools and state colleges being fairly threatened where I am a great supporter of state colleges and public education. I feel it is time to take into account what is being taught, how and at what cost.
 - Property tax issues. Own my home 40 years. My 98 assessment probably in 99 just went up 34.7%. Interestingly enough, no changes have been made to this property since 1991. Illinois must find a more equitable method to finance its educational system. I didn't complete section 28. My gut feeling is that housing is adequate, but in short supply.
 - We need more things for the young & older people to do. Everyone is bored & kids are out running the streets because of it. They are in little cliques on street corners puffing cigarettes when they know they shouldn't because they don't have anything of interest to do. Have you any suggestions for (small towns) to keep these kids from getting in trouble?? Everyone needs help now days.
 - Survey was addressed to my husband [name], I am the one who replies.
 - The Hoopston Art Association holds monthly meetings and sponsors an Art Show held during Hoopston Sweet Corn Festival. They also give a lesson on some form of art at monthly meetings. We take field trips to art museums at least once a year.
 - Please stop sending surveys.

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- So many industries are being taken over by others. They then move or downsize etc. There is no security in jobs anymore and tension grows! Sad!
 - I would like to see the insurance for people on social security be kept from raising.
 - We are 2 hr in any given direction to a large mall for shopping--1-2 hr to a surgeon (I would want to operate on me) or specialist. 2 hr to live entertainment--theater or music event. Like most communities we have federal housing--have lived here 44 years--If I was to drive all around town I would say most older homes are in worse shape today than 10 years ago. Like all towns some areas are better than others--very little new housing. A new apartment complex (many units) small area. Will be interesting to see what it looks like when all units are filled with families, cars, pets, etc. College grads move on, all but a few teachers who get hired locally. We set up house keeping in the mid early 50's--when times were much different. A dollar went farther--of course we paid our rent and bills first. Having renters that is not how it is done today. They play first, then try to pay their bills. There's no education on how to manage a household, to budget or how to shop for food or stretch a food dollar. Young couples today are very ignorant when it comes to managing money.
 - Regarding question #45 and #48, we live in the country and have farm land that is farmed by another farmer so we do receive an income from the crops he plants on our land.
 - In regard to housing and economic development, my community has been changing in a very negative way. In some respects it seems like a history lesson unfolding before us. A local business employs great numbers of Hispanics. These people have come here to live and work. Their culture is in many respects different from ours. They do not speak English, they live in very substandard places, they drive without insurance, use and bring even more drugs into the area. As they live where they can afford, these areas of town become true eyesores. City ordinances are not enforced and trash, garbage, junk vehicles, etc. are quite common in yards. Many of the people are here illegally, and many are just trying to live a better life. Without a positive plan or good communication with the employer, the town seems unable to deal with the needs of these workers, their families and the local residents. It is in many ways, like a lesson and I think in the instance the grade is an F for failure. A plan should have been discussed with the local employer so that some effort could have been made to provide decent housing, space in the schools, etc. for this influx of people. If this was not possible, then it seems logical to hire people from the local area.
 - There have been numerous people move down from the Joliet and Chicago area lured by area realtors who advertise in Chicago and Joliet newspapers. The prices of property is somewhat less. Many have not adjusted to small town living.
 - Need more part-time jobs for people over 60. Many people want to feel needed and work is good for the mind and body.
 - Public transportation is lacking! Shawnee Community College is 25 miles. Shawnee offers some excellent programs--truck driving, barge training, auto mechanics, computers, etc.--however, what good can be realized when they don't have a car. As a part-time volunteer at the local soup kitchen, I have heard of their problems. If transportation is available, maybe they would take advantage of Shawnee.

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- We're struggling to survive as a community--our young people must leave to get good jobs--education --we don't offer them any reason to stay. The school system suffers from teachers moving in and out due to low pay scales. We need to offer young families good quality day care services. We can't--our church supports the only pre-school in 20 miles radius--it's not enough--no at-risk program is offered through school system. We are losing kids before they even get started! The hog prices are forcing our best farmers out of business. Family farms continue to decline in numbers. They are the basis of our community. We're quickly becoming a poor rural area that lacks the educated young people to become the leaders. These people are leaving. I have 4 sons. In [year] we lost our farm--our sons got through school--[description of sons' work]. None are ever going to live in [home county in western Illinois]. We see the same in family after family. Soon only the old and the poor will be left here.
 - Would like to see more questions about how communities can help encourage industry and businesses to locate in small communities.
 - Education basics are needed! Transportation is a big issue! Local jobs are given to local work force which is available!
 - We need more police protection in this area. Fairly certain our small town has drug problem and youth out running streets/rural roads after midnight. As with most schools we could use more money to help with school expenses. We have good system but could be more helpful to students in prep. for college or vocational schools. Would love to see a business come to our community to offer jobs to students not able to go to college.
 - Under housing conditions we need more affordable housing for low income families. People making minimum wage or slightly higher cannot afford housing in our area. New homes and subdivisions are built for the executive incomes not low wage earner.
 - The elected officials in our town vote down chances for expansion or improvements. People don't want changes! We have needed healthcare (especially for the elderly) that is available in larger metropolitan areas.
 - The nearest library is nice but its \$85 for a family to get a card for 1 year; \$65 for a senior citizen. I cannot afford this, neither can people on limited incomes. The town I live near does not and will not have public transportation.
 - General work study-type of work, hours worked, salary range, etc.
 - Paris is a small town w/lots of potential. However, it's easier to travel (25-100 miles) & get what you need w/o the hassle of special ordering. We have a wonderful young people's theatre group, excellent parks (& numerous), a great historical society & a very competitive art league. It is a great town to raise families, but it does not have the higher paying jobs, but we are near (25-60 miles) to larger work areas.
 - We have a small hospital and 2 nursing homes. These are the top employers. Many residents are elderly, retired farmers.

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- Misplaced this form. Sorry I've been so long in returning it. I will be gone in February, March and part of April. Because of this you may want to find someone to take my place. I would certainly understand.
 - I do not like to see the Federal Government taking on more and more social programs. It costs the taxpayers. There is more government control, or “strings attached” to funds “given” by government (to buy political favor). The state and local governments can best decide how the money is to be used. Kennedy was right when he said, “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.” Everyone seems to want more and more given to them, and once they are on the government dole or have a new agency started they never want to give it up, or try to get off of it. To save Social Security for OUR CHILDREN, I think we may need to start it at 66 and gradually go to 70 years, and also not receive a COLA for awhile! After all, it was not meant to cover ALL our living, and many have received more than they paid into it. I think too that the Fed. Govt. must STOP taking the TRUST funds and using the money for other things (the IOU's they have written need to be paid back ASAP).
 - Danville has been a good place to raise a family but very few come back after college to work. Many prime industries have moved out & as the nation goes, too many people are out of a job!! (and Clinton has upped the economy--rubbish!!) I'm sick of the big conglomerates & wealthy businesses buying out the smaller companies and without fail--eventually disband the company!! They forget THEY started at the bottom--SAD!! It's the middle American who keeps this country going!! What will happen next? If this county continues to ABORT its future citizens--we are doomed!! And they wonder why there will be no workforce in time to come to support Social Security! DUMB! It's right before their eyes! GREED and SELF-PRESERVATION!! God Help Us!!
 - We truly need more for teen age group. They are not motivated--can hardly find anyone for odd jobs--yard work, clean car, clean garage, clean eaves and so forth.
 - Please change last name on my survey from [names listed]. This is my 3RD request!!!
 - We need more English speaking doctors. How to help the older people survive.
 - Childcare locally is offered by individuals in home, and rarely offered except in daytime hours.
 - As all surveys and polls, the real point is often missed due to the choice of answer. You would pick up more information with an “other” check box & more to write on each question. Has any research ever been done to compare how a child reared & taught @ home until age 6 compares to a child taken to nursery school, daycare, pre-school etc. Could the problem with the kids not learning @ school be NO foundations of security & learning has occurred at home.
 - We've lost our school, our community seems to be dying, businesses have closed up and people have moved away. Its hard not having a grocery store or a gas station to service your car. Its hard for our elderly to get around with no public transportation at least if we had a grocery store, they could get food or little things they need. Delavan is the nearest ambulance, grocery and or doctor office. We do a lot of business there or for big purchases go into Pekin. Young people can't buy a house, they make it too hard for them on a minimum wage job.

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- I am not sure of several of these questions as I am still working part-time in home care for the elderly plus taking care of my five bedroom home, garden, flowers and my 91 year old mother who lives with me.
 - The major industry has scheduled a 25% labor reduction for 1-1-1999. This may bring some changes.
 - I'm 72 years old--not a good choice of a person to be surveyed.
 - Why do we encourage people not to work by giving them everything through tax supported programs? Why do we encourage single women to have children by supporting this by ADC programs? Many figure this is better than working. Why do laws that apply to the average person not apply to lawyers and politicians? Why is our country being infiltrated by illegal immigrants who are then supported by government programs rather than deporting them?
 - Surveys are not all that helpful for retiree. I hope I have been of some value to you.
 - Nursing homes--population, level of expertise, level of confidence users have of nursing homes, prices--estimate price in 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, 20 years. Business opportunities that would be good to start in next few years. Importance and price of water in next 30 years.
 - I believe our biggest problem today throughout the US is the fact that we are over regulated. This prevents most people from creating new businesses, factories etc. I also believe that the fear of lawsuits also prevents most people who could start up a new business or factory from doing so. We have less than 10% of the world's population, yet we have 90% of the world's attorneys. Attorneys fail to distribute wealth, they instead keep it to themselves. Japan trains 10 engineers to one attorney, we train 10 attorneys to each engineer. Engineers create jobs which spreads wealth, attorneys instead prevent companies from taking risk involving new products or expansion of their factories, which creates job growth. We need real meaningful legal reform such as the English rule of law, loser pays both parties' legal fees in all lawsuits. This would stop about 70% of the lawsuits in America. We also need term limits for all elected officials serving in both state government and federal.
 - Our village board has looked into funding to improve existing housing to help people repair their homes, yet they claim there isn't enough interest to pursue the problem further. We have the new highway (I 172-336) yet they continue to deny, the town could grow positively--instead, we get more trailers in poor condition and the few businesses we have do not work well together. Rather, they monopolize certain services and ridicule others trying to improve the town and school. Unfortunately, one of these businessmen was elected to the village board and hasn't at all helped the situation. In fact, he has contributed to it. I will be working against him for re-election, but in our small town, no one will probably run against him so he will be elected anyway. It's a very sad situation when we could be moving forward instead of stagnating.
 - Regarding housing--rent cost is escalating faster than salaries. Taxes on homes of retired persons or those on fixed incomes is becoming an excessive burden. You might want to have a survey addressing that and related problems.
 - I don't have children in the schools and work out of town so I'm not a good authority on our town.

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- My answers were based on the community I just moved from--although I only moved about 5 miles. Our library is new and I was amazed at all that was available. Our community loses its young people because there aren't enough decent paying or "career" opportunities. I am looking for a new job because I travel 1 hour each way to work and it is very difficult to find something and I know I will take a large pay cut. I think most people in my community have to be 2 income households to make it. Housing is ridiculous. You could build a new home for the asking price of a 50 year old 1500 sq. ft ranch.
 - I [name], sub for my wife, [name] in filling out this report. We live in a rural area in Stephenson Co. about 9 miles from Freeport with a population of 26,000.
 - Public transportation is available in the county and nearby towns. The county board is voting on extending the service to our town early in 1999. It would be beneficial to elderly and persons unable to drive themselves to shopping and appointments. Our local county board member and church pastor are working toward this goal being a reality.
 - Our community is blessed with a percentage of the following retail sales by category as of 1997--Eat/drink 12%--Apparel 2%--Furniture/HH 3%--Lumber 12%--Auto 27%--Specialized 8%--Mfg. 6%--Food 22%. We are in need for more money to help the fixed income people to be able to receive a housing rehabilitation grant program. It would be nice to be able to give a higher percentage of people the opportunity than what we have been granted (money-wise by govt.) previously. Would like to see the 336 road come near our town to help our manufacturing and other businesses be able to have a more direct route to Chicago or St. Louis.
 - We need something for young kids to do in our community. We have no movie theater, skating rink, YMCA. Nothing.
 - You are doing a wonderful job. I've appreciated "taking part." But now it is time this questionnaire should go to a younger more active person. I take little participation in community affairs now. Thanks, [Name]
 - Everyone I talk to who lives on SSI in other states are higher paid. I've been disabled at least 20 years or more. I have to wait as high as 6 weeks to 2 or 3 mo. for things medical I need such as back brace, blood sugar test, wanted to give me blood pressure cuff that couldn't be used left handed when right, I can not take codeine & have chronic allergies to lots of medications I have to wait or practically beg for medicine I can take. Illinois has no feeling for anyone who can't do for themselves. I would blow this state if I were not handicapped and need to be near son seeing D.C.F.S. totally destroyed my family with lies. [Part of comment removed to protect Panelist identity.]
 - I believe probably all nearby communities could use additional family activities for all ages. Being in the real estate industry, however, I believe the government is going to someday have mud in their face for offering no money down for financing new homes. My experience shows if you have nothing invested it is easy to walk. As far as helping fix property, I, years ago, had help--but like every other program--it would need such monitoring--I think it would result in more problems & abuse than we need anymore of. To quote the best selling book ever, "If a man does not work--he does not eat." Let's help people by teaching them to be givers & not receivers. The FREE RIDE, WORK, REPAIRS, ETC. does NOT WORK.

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- I know I'm not qualified, but when I was in a sociology class, I did some estimating and I figured if all the working class would cut back to 4 day a week jobs that would give all the non-working people jobs, which in turn would help stop a lot of welfare, which in turn we wouldn't have to make as much money because government wouldn't need it if everyone worked and if they didn't work, then they get NO help. It's not fair that people like myself work day and night and can't afford insurance have to support people who sit on their behinds waiting for government check and a medical card. People are reinforced NOT to work. I know some people who quit jobs for less paying jobs just to get a medical card. People wake up, this is not right. People who work and contribute to society don't have anything and people who don't get it all. Just like the majority of people on welfare are the ones having children. Working people know they can't afford very many children, some are opting not to have any. So inevitably the majority of our society will be welfare children; which statistically has been proven will be welfare people also. Then who is going to work to pay for all the welfare? Just look at all the arts you could afford if you could take all the welfare only and use it for that purpose. Long-term, the system is going to be a DISASTER, WAKE UP AMERICA.
 - Dear [IRLPS representative]: As I have been ill the last few months I think I will have to drop out of this survey. I have enjoyed it but find my future very uncertain. Thank you for opportunity to be a panelist in the past few years.
 - I would like to be removed from future panels. I work full-time and have a 92 (almost 93) year old mother that requires much time and care. I am unable to attend functions like I used to.
 - The only opportunity adults have to indulge in hands-on-art is to pay for classes through the college or local craft shop. These classes are limited and expensive. There are opportunities for adults to try-out for seasonal concerts or quarterly live-theater performances but again the opportunities are limited; teens can try-out for these performances as well, however, there are not nurturing programs to promote talent or the arts in youth, and these opportunities are limited and low-profile.
 - Taxes are a huge issue in our household. While I believe that our community could benefit from more programs etc. I personally can't afford to keep paying the higher taxes that go along with these. As my community improves my own standard of living keeps decreasing. I have worked hard to own my home, paid off my mortgage, work 40+ hours a week and seem to keep falling further behind due to being taxed to death. I find myself bitter that I have to work so hard to keep supporting all those who CHOOSE not to work. These same people benefit from all the same things I do, the difference being that I pay for it and they don't. It just doesn't seem like a very fair system!
 - I believe that it is imperative for our surrounding communities to aggressively search for businesses to locate in our area. The loss of International Harvester and the mines has never been recovered from in this immediate area. It would be a shame to see our small town way of life dissolve to the larger metropolitan areas. There is something to the real sense of "community" where that word really means something.
 - I think there should be more transportation for the elderly that can't drive. They could pay a fee if they could afford it but not be as expensive as a taxi. They probably have this service in larger cities but not out in smaller towns and in the country.

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- Public transportation: (1) In town: smaller buses, more frequent runs, more routes, 24/7 service, better advertised, subsidized by MFT funds, and (2) 50-mile-radius--from & to smaller communities to hub community and bus/rail transportation between hub communities, e.g. interurban “trolley” making frequent runs on existing track between Galesburg, Macomb, Quad cities, Peoria, for commuters, shoppers, and to attend cultural events; well-publicized to attract riders.
 - The housing in rural areas is not adequate. Galesburg which is approximately 5 miles away has seen an increase in housing prices, though it has not been beneficial for first time home buyers or the average working person. Most people in the area do not have high paying jobs. Many work 2 or 3 jobs so they can support their family. Jobs connected with the service industry are low paying and usually have no benefits. It is not too difficult to find a lower paying job.
 - Downtown revitalization. Preservation. Adequate schools. These issues should also be addressed. They are important to retaining residents.
 - We need more help for stay at home mothers whose husbands work to be able to purchase their own home. We need to be able to make it possible to buy a home with no down payment.
 - The Dollar General and Family Dollar have a lot of stock in stores and appear to do a thriving business. There are some things they do not carry in stock. I hear people remark they can buy things here that they can only get in larger towns. The ONE grocery store does a good business. There are items needed, such as--Vicks Vaporub, darning needles with big eyes, paper clips, mentholatum, computer paper, ink also the kind of ink you put on pads to stamp things, cards of buttons, zippers, galvanized buckets and small tubs with a bail, cloth table cloths, spices and flavoring (a variety) not so expensive, more arts, crafts and ceramics. I am a retired senior and crippled. My activities are limited, was formerly active in many things. I am sorry that I haven't been of much help this time. They do teach art in schools and colleges. There does [need] to be more employment for people just out of high school. There is employment, but not enough for everyone. Prices seem on the rise. Our Coast to Coast store closed suddenly and it was doing a thriving business. Need a shop that repairs lawn and riding mowers fast. The store that sold and repaired [word unclear] has closed. I meant to get out and ask questions about all your questions so I could send you an answer. I have had serious problems from a spider bite for several months. Also a death of a relative. Sorry about the delay. Sincerely, [Name]
 - Too much help goes to people who won't work and cheat the government. No follow-up. Too many “give-mes.” Too high pay for government employees and pensions. No pay for farm food supplies, in my 63 years farming, corn prices have ranged from 5 cents a bushel to \$2.00 a bushel, farm land ground from \$150 to \$3500. Machinery tractor \$750-\$6000 same size. Lawnmower cost more than my first tractor. Things can't work this way forever. These were prices in 1936 and now 63 years ago.
 - High speed train corridor Chicago to St. Louis, HMOs.
 - Church expansion. Ministry to rural areas. Religious training to young people.
 - Taxes.

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- Illinois Arts Council: I do not think art and culture are as important as the three “Rs.” It is very depressing when you hear that skills in the three “Rs” are decreasing every year. Shouldn't school resources be concentrated on the basics until they are mastered, then art and culture? [Name]
 - Our secondary schools need to be reorganized to do a better job for students and communities. They depend far too much on property taxes. We need federal income tax sharing again. Our area is now starting to have a few more families move in from areas to the East (Fox River Valley). It makes housing prices higher than before. Some of these people are really good community supporters. Others merely want lower taxes and more space.
 - See comment under library. If one doesn't have private transportation it is extremely difficult to get to employment or access any services.
 - Recreational opportunities in community & surrounding areas. Expansion of public transportation to access cultural opportunities in areas beyond the local area.
 - Difficult questions to answer, like 27, 28 & 30. Seems too broad, and I cannot determine exactly what you were looking for. For example, 28A & 28B could be answered very differently by people in different neighborhoods, but still within the same community.
 - We need more good paying jobs with good benefits. More industry. A skilled trades school is needed in our town. Have to go to Rockford or elsewhere to get training.
 - Small towns are struggling to survive. We recently were turned down for a grant to remodel and add on to our Carnegie library. Seems like all the grants go to larger communities. We are on the National Trail Highway and we are trying to promote tourism. We have a wealth of heritage but little help in preserving it. Our Historical Society is doing its best but due to an elderly membership we are progressing very slowly. With all these research programs etc. one would think we in small towns would receive more help than we do. [Name]
 - A community calendar for scheduled events. A church directory other than the local bank. If a person is retired, what is the source of their income?
 - Need to take survey on roads and their conditions. Roads in Illinois are in very bad shape.
 - When you're not in the work force, it's hard to answer questions regarding training, etc.
 - At age 85, I am not as active as I once was. My activity involves church and senior citizens organization headquartered in Springfield, 35 miles away serving 12 counties, the latter of which I am presently president. Fortunately I still drive, though my wife does not. Sorry to be returning late!
 - The State of Illinois needs to remove schools from property taxes. This tax is very unfair because everyone is not paying their fair share to educate their children. I would like for state sales tax to replace the property tax for school support. This will work as proven in other states. This way everyone would help support the schools.

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- Thanks for surveying the arts.
 - Would like to see more opportunities for retired people needing additional income. Infrastructure in Wabash County is not conducive to attracting industries. Bridge over the Wabash is far out of date and too narrow for commercial traffic.
 - We live at the edge of [southern Illinois town] and have 40 acres of farm ground and raise some sheep.
 - Problems: In a university community Carbondale
 1. Slum landlords (Student housing)
 2. Student renters in older neighborhoods
 3. Drugs
 4. Student alcoholism
 5. Political correctness
 6. Decline in manners, dress, courtesy
 7. Rising cost of medical care and drugs
 8. Too much “Strip growth”
 9. Loss of small, locally owned business to international franchises (Wal-Mart, etc.)
 10. Mergers & loss of jobs
 11. Noise pollution & environmental concerns
 12. Decline of rural populations and changes in value systems
 13. Declining participation in traditional organizations: Elks, VFW, MOOSE, Legion, etc.
 14. Declines in church membership & attendance.
 - I hope the data gathered will tell the true story of rural Illinois. Thanks for performing this needed info gathering job or task.
 - Rental housing is limited & expensive, Federal housing units are limited, ALWAYS a waiting list. Young married couples need a program to help them obtain homes; possibly through a home builder. It is impossible for a young couple to save a down payment for a home, something they can have an equity in. This would help our economy & nation greatly. FHA is not the answer. I was a home builder many years. I helped many young people myself.
 - I feel there should be more help from state grants for more improvements in small town areas, rather than the big cities, especially to be able to keep some of our youth to keep building our small communities. Future surveys: Politics & people; Education.
 - I have moved from: [address] to: [address]. Much further from any town no gas station etc. here. Also no CRIME! Drive 100 miles one way to work. It's worth it! [Name]
 - Send me no more.
 - Farming has become a real worry. We are hog farmers and it looks like that market is gone to the big producers. The grain prices are down. Cattle prices are down. None of the products we produce are making us a profit anymore. The future looks very bad.

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- This is a small town in the middle of a farming area that is being hit hard by the loss of farmers income due to decreasing hog prices and crop prices. Next year will be even worse as some will be forced to sell out. Some 8-10 homes have recently been improved because of a grant received from the State of Ill. But there were many more applicants. The community needs more businesses.
 - Some additional services would be nice but added cost could not be justified unless its sponsored by Federal or State government. I would like to see how nearby communities interact with each other. Such as schools, education, projects, etc. I ask this because my town (Marseilles) has a hard time with a surrounding town (Seneca). Problem goes back over 50 years. Also, equal education is not equal. One town can be very rich and can't spend enough money and the one next to it can't find money for basic needs. I apologize for not returning the survey in time. These are important and should be continued. Have a great 1999.
 - Medical care for the poor, old, and middle class, who should pay state, federal or both? How should medical care be administrated by insurance company or by private companies? If our state & federal administrators & employees receive medical after retirement, why shouldn't the lower class receive the same, at the same price?
 - Community has experienced several coal mine closings recently as well as my own employment: a printing plant employer of 863 people.
 - We need good affordable housing. We need jobs to replace railroad closing/re-locating & the closing of the Army depot. We need fewer "Chicago" families on welfare moving into our area. Is it too easy to get welfare in rural areas? Welfare should be limited! More childcare is desperately needed. We need industry to provide jobs.
 - Freeport is very arts/culture conscious. We have Art Museum/Dance Company/Historical Museums/Library/Community Concert Series/Community Theater Group/Community Choir/Orchestra/Community Band (summer)/Theater, band orchestra & dance in high school and community college. Many churches sponsor concerts from time to time.
 - Shrink Government!
 - We live in a small town pop. 450; 80% retired people, 40 widows and single women age 50 or older, 3 men single over 50. Have one convenience store. Federal housing project with 30 rooms; most everyone owns their own small but modest home. Several small towns within 20 mile radius. Children are bused to consolidated school located about 10 miles from town. These towns were former coal mining towns, 20 to 40 years ago mines all closed. But towns now exist. The closest towns with any industry is 20 miles away. The only younger people living in town drive 20 to 50 miles to work. Everyone gets their mail at the post office. The post office serves as the new center. We have no rich people in town and very few new cars and trucks. If anyone gets a new vehicle, everyone in town knows about it the next day. When anyone dies or gets sick everyone knows about it. It's a good place to live where everyone knows all about your business before you do. [Name]
 - Greatly needed public transportation. Great need for more youth activities especially in the summer months.

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- There are a lot of housing questions & others I'm not sure about, but there is always need of improvement.
 - Need more--
 1. Low income housing
 2. Night-time child care
 3. Public transportation after 4 p.m.
 4. Assistance to help people with disabilities and health problems
 5. Assistance to disabled and elderly people in the home
 6. Jobs for retired people
 - Property taxes. In this community are ridiculous. Way out of wack. They make up market value & do not go by sales price.
 - This town has been in top 3 of states unemployment for several years. Just early this year it went down to 8 (or wavering). A huge underground stream flows through east side of this county. It could (should) be developed. Politics (locally) may hinder it--much bottled water is sold here.
 - We need public transportation to other towns and a bus in town would be nice.
 - The worst thing the community did was get rid of High School. We need more industry. Without a High School it is hard to attract industry. People do not want to live and work one place and send the children another. People are going to go where there are schools. The city is very lax on trying to attract industry. That's something that is very much needed. If I had the funding I would put up a warehouse for a factory in the next town. Which they need. The community really needs factories. Industry that can employ 100 or more people. It would put the community back where it needs to be. I just had my fourth cervical surgery, I don't know if I will be able to go back to my job. I would rather have Government funding to start a warehouse, than live off the government the rest of my life. I think a person should have a chance to work, and make a living. We have a high rate of unemployment around here, and something needs to be done to rectify that. Get people back to work and off welfare: I know I don't want to sit back on my laurels and do nothing. There are a lot more people out there who feel the same. Someone needs to get the city to attract more industry not build parks we don't need, since we got rid of the high school, every year my taxes have gone up but there is nothing being improved. There is nothing to show for the increase. If you have any other questions you may phone me or write. [Name & address]
 - I'm 75 years old please send the information to some community who has all these things available in the community. Can't write I had a stroke.
 - Do more with job training for all ages! Hourly work pay scales: minimum wage to < than \$10.00 hr. is not a living wage in America!
 - There was no question--but my wife & I are both retired--with Social Security & SVRS as income.
 - There is a tremendous need for assistance to low or no income households due to physically disabling situations not for people who aren't interested in work.

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- Our town is very small--less than 500 people--most of these issues cannot be addressed as my local community because there is not a need in a town this size. Everything is available within 30 miles or less.
 - County law & legal systems; Consumer fraud (business); County government.
 - Recreation facilities and needs in rural Illinois.
 - Why don't you send these papers to younger people?
 - I have recently been unemployed by the clean air act--we need higher paying jobs--manufacturing etc. With a high school education only, there is nothing in this area. I now drive 1 hour each way to work.
 - Access to higher education is difficult. I currently drive 80 miles each way to work towards a graduate degree. Technology innovations & services are very slow to work towards rural areas and tend to be very expensive when available.
 - If you want people to fill these out don't ask about income & etc. Just do the survey!!!
 - Take our names and address off your mailing lists. Do not waste my money sending these out. This will be the last survey I will fill out. From this point out I will throw them all away. Thank you. All names to [address].
 - Our town is made up of a bunch of restaurants and fast food places. Our community needs to be bringing in more factories and such. Nobody wants to work for minimum wage.
 - Community public works department is terrible. Money should be diverted there to help improve city/county roads.
 - RE: question 23--if we would fund schools based on income tax then I would be willing to pay more tax for libraries.
 - I would like to mention that while [west central Illinois community] is a fairly self-contained community, the taxes keep going up (11% last year) and have for the last 6 years we have owned a home. Ford County needs to attract more industry to have a base (whatever it is manufacturing or information). Also, affordable housing is a problem. There is not enough rental and affordable housing in the mid-range.
 - Things for children to do, meets our needs or not.
 - Our community needs more volunteers for schools, churches etc. The schools & community need more school spirit. Schools need to teach more on how to get along with others & also more team work. I feel that if they continue to look out for themselves, eventually the community will disintegrate to nothing. What ever happened to help thy neighbor, or better yet the golden rule!
 - I think any town/city could always use more programs for education for children & adults.

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- [Removed personal identifying information.] I was born in this town and have seen first hand how this community has been very prosperous at its highest and then fell rock bottom when we lost over “Caterpillar” as it were. When International Harvester closed I was in [school] & the town folded in on itself. Growing up, I lived at the [name] Apts. when they first started in [year]. We saw how beautiful it was and how friendly & clean it was. Even to '75 it wasn't bad, but soon after the work left (IH & small business because of the \$ lost from IH workers) the housing development began to go down. Funding for the housing development either was cut back or something, because it began to become the “ghetto” of Canton. Roaches, poor repair, garbage overflowing, play equip in disrepair, no more flower or tree planting. Holes in walls or paint need repair, appliances in need of replacement. As I can see it now, '99, there is still a long way to go. They are in need of transportation though, about town. As for child care & the homeless, the child care givers need more screening before hiring them & also it is just too expensive for this low income area & we need nighttime care for 2nd shift or just a chance to get out with your spouse. Myself, I have not used daycare because of the “surprise” visits I made to the centers and head start programs. The homeless are becoming more of a problem since the prison came to Canton. The outreach on Main St. was forced out of town so there isn't anywhere left but the kindness of others. The low income jobs in this area are everywhere but no kind of benefits & if on aid the \$ to take from the parent trying to get ahead. The Youth leave Canton because there is not good work available, even if going to the Jr. College (SRC) is a good idea unless they can live with their parents. Training--pretty much--mechanic, welder? Nurses aid or truck driver, every thing else takes a year or more & a bundle of cash. I'm [age] and my only choice is to go on the road with my husband & my kids (home schooling) to pay off our bills and make ends meet. At least we will all be together as a family. At [age], a mother of 2 has to go to vocational school to become a truck driver to help her husband make ends meet. It's a shame to be gone from home to make \$ to pay for the home, you can't enjoy living in because the local economy is so poor on job hours. ALSO we have a big problem with “slum landlords” in town. The tenants have no choice but stay because they once lived in the “ghetto” or can't afford the rent of the nicer homes or apts. This is not good for the children “3 SISTERS” is a classic example. Now where do they go?
 - We have Western Illinois University in town; also Spoon River College has a campus in town. This I feel greatly helps attract people to this town. You might ask questions regarding higher education in future surveys. Also I and my family feel that our community needs to do more to attract restaurant chains to town. Currently we have a proliferation of burger & pizza places and a couple (3) nice restaurants (1 somewhat expensive, and 2 mid-priced range) but nothing in the line of Perkins, Applebee's, TGI Fridays, etc.
 - Too lengthy!!
 - With the Pinckneyville Correctional Center opening up in Perry County within last couple months, I have a feeling that this area and the surrounding areas will change in all aspects of life.
 - I would love to see our area have something for our youth--a YMCA, bowling, anything to get involved in. Being such a small town our youth tend to get bored, there is nothing for them to do.
 - Continue to survey and ask question about children & pre-adults on direction for a brighter future, schooling, more things for kids--teens to do in a community--activity center, etc. To try and give them good direction for the future.

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- My wife [Name] and I live in rural Makanda, [description of land and siting]. The village [Makanda] consists of the post office, a few houses, church, cemetery, used furniture store, village hall and just completed village community center building--the entire population of Makanda is about 400 people. Approximately 4 years ago, [village had first appeals board meeting] . . . and have not met since--any adult training would probably be given at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale or John A Logan College at Carterville, IL. I hope this information helps in your research. Sincerely, [Name]
 - I don't think just because a person or family lives out in the county or out of city limits, they should have to pay for library card. Some family might not be able to pay for it and the kids suffer in their homework when they need a book from the library and can't check it out because they don't have a library card. I think if you have an address in that town you should be able to get a card. Thank you very much.
 - Some questions leave room for interpretation e.g., Do “you” use, does “you” mean you or family members or strictly you?
 - The whole region of deep southern Illinois has a very high unemployment & poverty rate. Some communities have over half the population on welfare. The schools & towns and families and services all reflect a very disadvantaged situation. Over 75% of high school graduates have to move away to find decent employment. Prison system in the whole of southern Illinois.
 - Our area suffers economic downturn due to low prices in oil & agricultural commodities and EPA restrictions on Illinois coal. Rec. import fees in order to save small farms and the associated communities around rural America. Domestic oil producers are going out of business due to cheap oil. Place \$5 import fee on imported oil and send this to military in order to fund Persian Gulf military efforts. ALSO: if any money is available subsidize small town grocery stores. Elderly in these communities must have a place to buy food, etc. Prop up the arts after these more important items are corrected. Please call anytime.
 - Everything was fine on here except question #41. I am a white male but simply object to the ongoing fragmentation of our great society. We have ceased to live as one country made of different parts and have become a bunch of parts trying to live as one county. I also do not see the need of the arts being introduced through public education, it should be up to the parents to introduce such things as they deem necessary. I also object to the category of “domestic partner” in question #40. This too is a further fragmentation of the morality that made this country strong. Please don't get me wrong, there is certainly a place for the arts in the world, but with all due respect, it should not be a societal absolute such as reading, writing and arithmetic.
 - My wife and I have 3 boys [teen ages]. We both work full-time & I work a second job after work. We saved for 15 years bought a nice lot 9 years ago. We built a new home 2 years ago which we did 90% of the work ourselves. Now we are stuck paying \$6,050 a year in property taxes. We are [mid-thirties], don't touch drugs and I'm extremely pissed off the government punishes us in taxes for working hard & being honest!! Want more here is who I am. [Name, address, phone, email]
 - I live in open country (6 acres) and drive 21 miles to my job in a town of six thousand in an adjoining county. Very little contact is maintained in the local village.

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- [Town] needs council members that really know the needs of the people in [town]. Like try to get some kind of industry instead of things like Hopalong Casidy Trail, which nobody uses, and to have the police set up a trap and catch people driving without using belts, taillights out especially older women that don't even know the taillight is out. They ticket them instead of giving them a warning that's why people go out of town to shop, to avoid a police ticket. [Town] used to be a great town to live in. It surely has changed drastically with the government of today.
 - Transportation, the train to and from Chicago!!
 - They closed the rehabilitation workshop here. That is the only job I could handle. It made me feel good about myself. Now what do I have?
 - Youth programs: Very few programs/activities that teenagers can get involved in. Police in the community deal with the problem by running off kids who just gather in parking lots to talk. The kids then are forced to go elsewhere, like county roads where drinking is the primary activity. But from the "community" standpoint, the problem is fixed because they don't "see" the kids. Any logical person sees that the problem is worse. But local city police think it's better because if they are not in town, it's not their problem.
 - I hope this information is of help.
 - Concerning arts in my community, there are many opportunities for older children and adults, however, being the parent of a pre-schooler, I don't think there are as many activities for children not yet in school. I would be interested in ways to get my 4 year old involved in cultural activities. Or is there a place to get information on activities I might not know about? My wife would be interested in a survey dedicated to the needs of working mothers and their children. Ex. day care business, support groups, work leaves, etc.
 - Arts in my community is particularly active and supported. Issues such as access to healthcare, transportation concerns (lack of adequate highway access), and "quality of life" are some issues I'd like to see addressed. Living in a rural area is primarily an issue when there is grave difficulty finding the basics of life.
 - RE: #48, I did answer that none of my income was derived from farming, however, that is not entirely true, in the sense that we serve many farm families through our local business, and their success or failure can have an impact on our business and my income.
 - We pay way too much in taxes in the state of IL. Businesses are leaving IL due to this fact. Our town has lost a large number of jobs due to business leaving town.
 - DUI Legislation!!! Need Reform!!! Less of it.
 - There are many temp service agencies in our community but no real job search agencies. Employers are needed in the community who will provide living wages and benefits not the substandard ones currently provided.

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- **ONE OF MY MAJOR CONCERNS:** Getting some financial assistance when you first buy your home for major repairs on your home. Such as a new roof, foundation repairs, drafty windows etc. It is very hard to raise a family and come up with \$7000 for a new roof. It really hurts the pocketbook. I had to refinance my house and borrow the additional money to pay for flu's [flues]. Why can't younger kids in school who are learning trades help out with things like this? I would help them, and also help residents of different towns.
 - Governmental issues, especially high taxes for the middle class working stiff. Possibly a survey studying the low budget volunteer fire departments have to work with.
 - People have left the area because of high property taxes. I believe there is enough money in the system, yet I do not believe that it gets spent wisely. Several sources indicate that people in prisons and correctional institutions have more access to education, information and government funding, than do kids in schools. For instance many schools have no air conditioning and parents have to pay large sums for certain education.
 - I believe that Charleston, IL would be better served with a community center, such as a YMCA, there are several groups looking into this matter at this time.
 - Our small community has a very large contingent of artists of all stripes, studio & performance. Most either are working professionally (full or part time), or have worked professionally & have chosen not (mostly to have more secure income). Anyone of any age who does not participate in or patronize art of any kind simply are not interested. Even the lobby of our city hall, as well as MANY businesses have art displays that are changed at least monthly. Performance: Active, private theater, dance, orchestra, academic: all, H.S. & University.
 - **NO MORE TAXES!!** Every year the taxes I pay from property to utility continue to rise at a greater % than my income. I have less spendable income every year!! The federal & state governments need to "sharpen the pencil" & live within a budget that the citizens of the county & state can afford!! If I want to spend more money on my family I have to have the **MONEY TO DO IT. THE AMERICAN DREAM IS DROWNING IN THE POOL OF HIGH TAXES.** How can I live the American dream when due to this governments high tax policies, every step I take forward is rewarded by more taxes that put me 2 steps back!! **TAX RELIEF NOW!!**
 - I personally would like to see more children doing this survey and then be able to see some of their answers to some of these questions just to see actually how many of these children in today's society are actually interested in learning something whether it be a trade, school, etc. Thanks. [Name]
 - Some of your questions were hard to place a yes or no answer. (example) College students & people in general finding jobs. There are some jobs out there, but they're not always good paying jobs. We've had a decrease in unemployment, but warehouse jobs don't pay a lot of money. Companies are downsizing & working the employees longer hours & more days, which takes you away from your family a lot, then there goes your family values, because "who's watching the kids?"
 - I have a problem having a public library that I pay taxes for but cannot get a library card because I live outside of the city limits.

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- Our community is not very big but it is not dying; people that do move here, do like it, and stay but most of the higher paid jobs are out of town. Certain parts of town have gone down but it has really depended on the scum that moved in a nice place and actually destroyed them. Then the people that have lived here all their lives have had to live with it but other parts of town are really nice. The community sticks together.
 - My thoughts are that arts should be a part of the community. They have the ability to show the beauty from another's eyes. I also think the state & fed taxes should be lower. Far too long has the working men & women supported the others that do not work, or the wealthy that find legal loop holes that beat or cheat the tax laws.
 - Danville has lost too many factories and gained way too many restaurants. There is a need for higher paying jobs in Vermillion County for residents 20-45 years of age.
 - The town of [name] & the State of IL have disappointed us so terribly, that we have decided to move to another state! [Removed identifying information about issue with school system.] My wife recently opened and closed a daycare center here in town. Closed because of ever changing codes and more stupidity and miscommunication between the Springfield DCFS and the [city name] DCFS. Closed because of ignorance on both parts. Closed because we were threatened with a LAWSUIT for operating without a temporary permit, a permit that the [city name] office said we had. Closed because these communities and the State of Illinois doesn't care about people & small business trying to make it. They only care about those who ALREADY have! [Name]
 - No foreign country should ever be allowed to own more than 50% of any American company, factory. They buy them then close the doors send the work back to their non-union plants. This has happened a lot and that leaves American people working for minimum wage & some have to hold down multiple jobs to make ends meet. [Name & address]
 - Topics for future surveys--gang and drug & smoking issues!
 - Community Center--for all ages. A place where games or cards could be played, where art lessons, any kind of club meeting could be held. I feel that people should not, necessarily, be segregated by AGE. We have an excellent library. It serves all ages.
 - Before and after school child care is a real problem.
 - On the arts part, my kids have it in school. Also, there are a lot of business closings in our area, last June my wife's job went to Mexico and then there was another area business that closed a few months later. Another of the big factories closed. We live in a small town and few good paying jobs. The health ins. benefits are awful and to get insurance on your own costs an arm and a leg.
 - I referenced a town 30 miles as my community. As this is where my husband and I work, shop, etc. We live in a small rural town and children belong to a different school district than that referenced as my community. I believe the arts are an important part in any community, but many times feel they are reserved more for higher income families.

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- Section 28: Many questions worded to be no distinction between yes and no.
 - There needs to be a government based healthcare plan for older ones in our community. We have older relatives that can't afford medical care or blood pressure medicine.
 - Public aid employees and college employees need a course in human resource management.
 - I don't know how people even pay their bills in this low income area. There are no high paying jobs, the average rate of pay is \$6 per hour. How do single parents even pay their rent or basic needs on that income. Kids fresh out of school hardly have a chance to move out of the house w/ mom and dad on McDonalds type wages. My brother is 25 and still living at home & probably will until he gets married and has two income to pay basic bills, rent, utilities, car payment, groceries, etc. THIS IS PATHETIC."
 - I think there should be some kind of 2nd chance program to help people buy homes or cars. We recently had to file bankruptcy due to medical bills because of poor or no insurance on the job and due to my husband's previous marriage where his lawyer was no help to him. We would like to own a home of our own to someday give to our children but everyone denies us help. I'm sure there are others out there like us who just need someone to give us a chance without a co-signer.
 - Need more jobs with benefits in Southern Illinois!
 - Jobs in our area are nil. A big job--the coal mines are closing or downsizing. Many of our young people are having to leave to be able to find a job.
 - Our community is blessed to have an active arts council that provides programs for the schools & community alike. But like many organizations they struggle to maintain programs because of financial reasons. It would benefit all if more city & county developmental dollars would go to arts programs. It's ironic that small communities can receive support for sports from businesses & government & individuals with little trouble and arts programs (community concert, theater, music & visual) seem to suffer. Threaten to eliminate Little League & and you have an uproar but threaten to have art & music once a week in the schools and people say, "Oh too bad!" Aren't they both equally important to our children? Truthfully those kinds of attitudes frighten me.
 - Only true arts exposure is provided by SIU college and community (35 miles) in this area or 2 1/2 hour trip to St. Louis (100 miles).
 - A lot of business and people won't locate in Franklin County because of the property taxes here.
 - There is only one movie theater in the area and it is out of state, overcrowded, needs to be updated and is expensive. Housing could be better. A lot of the homes are old and in need of repair but cost the same as a brand new home for no apparent reason. As a student, the fact that I have to drive more than 50 miles to get to an "in-state" university is really frustrating.
 - I do not consider Carbondale as a rural community. Although Jackson County does contain rural areas. Also Carbondale is a university town and there are always things to do.

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- Our town is affected by presence of a university. My answers would be very different most places in Southern Illinois. We are very involved w/ the arts. My husband is a painter, my older son has a jazz band, my daughter is a music teacher.
 - I live in Carbondale, which is a very diverse community, culturally speaking. It's also got a wide array of age groups living here, as the home of SIUC, college students and the school are the main source of revenue for the town. Two areas I'd like to see improve are 1) The quality of housing, particularly rental property, (much of it is substandard compared to other college towns) and 2) A push to bring more businesses to the town/surrounding area. I might emphasize the need for better restaurants (both chain and local) and the need for employers to consider the wealth of college grads available to work in decent paying jobs with benefits. Thanks, Carbondale, IL Resident
 - Study on college towns--1/2 population is local/1/2 student. *Difference in the way city govt. treats students as opposed to locals. *Discrimination in housing and laws upheld in community. Zoning laws, etc.
 - I am a self-employed restaurant owner for the past 21 years in the same county and area. My wife and I are both very interested in our community and in the arts and education. We have 2 grown sons and are very satisfied our area did offer them many if not all education & activities they were interested in and they are both proud of their community and are wanting to stay in the area in the future. If we were not so busy in our business we would be using the activities in our area very often.
 - The two major businesses in Franklin County have been coal mining and farming. There are no mines operating in Franklin County now. The mine I work at is in Jefferson County. As of 11-23-98 hogs are selling for 15 cents a pound, grain prices are lower than they were 37 years ago when people were farming with mules and horses. So, the family farms that haven't gone bankrupt, are going to go bankrupt which leaves Franklin County with no major businesses. The people I'm selling ins. to don't live in Franklin County. Franklin County is a microcosm of a welfare state, the majority of our population is either on state aid or is retired. With much of the County undermined who would set up a business on property that may subsidize and leave the buildings condemned. Franklin County has only two hopes, that fossil fuel users install scrubbers and start using Southern IL coal again, and that the corporate farms that are trying to monopolize agriculture are prevented from doing so.
 - Franklin County needs to do more to attract and keep new business in the area. Taxes in Franklin County are very high. I believe that many people rent vs. own a nice home due to high taxes.
 - My wife is a BSW major. She has tried to do research in the community on a social services needs assessment. A lack of finances and information hindered her attempts. Any grant funding or other information you can send would be appreciated. [Name and address]
 - I believe we are already taxed enough. If this is a survey to find out where to spend extra or more tax dollars let the people have the money back. I think we already support many things a lot of people would not agree with if the truth were told. If any new programs are needed it would be teaching people moral values and truth as the Bible, God's Holy Word represents. After all our great country's leaders can't even do that any more.

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- People should be taught to do things for themselves and not rely on government so much. Government should not try to control everyone's lives and try to be mother to them. Elected people should respect the people who voted for them instead of trying to do the thinking for all of them and doing as they please.
 - Future surveys of schools & taxes for schools; teachers and their pay. Laws (example) seat belts required. Insurance on families. The price of food and/or gas for a minimum wage job. Public aid recipients. No smoking in most restaurants (predigiousness) [sic]. A child on Ritalin.
 - I think we could use more affordable daycare, transportation, housing & medical in this area. These items are available but most of the time it is unaffordable when it is available to the low income.
 - Question #28 was very difficult to answer considering some parts of our community have not been empowered while others have. You can not answer yes or no for the whole village.
 - We are fortunate in my community to have Southern Illinois University, and a very good junior college--John A Logan--nearby. These two schools provide many arts, cultural, and training opportunities for the people of Southern Illinois. However, with the reduction in coal mining jobs, and no influx of manufacturing or high-tech jobs, it is difficult for educated, native, Southern Illinoisans to find adequate job opportunities.
 - My income last year was \$7,980. That's why I live in public housing. The rent on all the old houses are too high for me as well as a lot of other people to pay, I think the government should send people to see for themselves what kind of houses & trailers people are living in and the amount of rent they are paying. Then they will know themselves what is going on in rural and small towns. [Name]
 - A big issue is we pay taxes in Southern IL. But most the time there is development its north of Springfield. We feel we are the forgotten people when it comes to development in IL.
 - Future surveys--food styles (i.e., Vegetarianism). Health care vs. holistic care. Anything to raise cultural awareness would be an improvement. I would like to see programs to support fine art & textiles for adults as well as children. The adults have nothing to do--other than eat fried chicken & go to the bars. It's very sad. Something to expand horizons. Personally, I need work space, somewhere to go to paint, draw, sculpt, create, the kind of environment you usually only get if you take a college level art class. Somewhere creative types could get together & work. Of course, with gallery space to show! Thanks for the opportunity to tell SOMEONE this. [Name]
 - Although the survey is complete, it was a bit lengthy. Shorter format could be considered for the future.
 - Future Topic: Very Strict Rules on sex violence from media, TV.
 - Low paying jobs like McDonald's are available however, other jobs are hard to find.
 - We currently have our home for sale and plan on moving to where there are more opportunities for our children and family, but no one wants to locate here; therefore having trouble selling our home.

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- We need to help single moms who get no child support. I think if no one is willing to help me get child support, then I should get a tax break or something to help me support my kids. I think there should be access to adult education to further my career, for a minimal price.
 - Two local companies have laid off workers this year. My wife and I drive 45 miles each way to work. There are NO jobs available where we live. Please help our community.
 - We most definitely need additional entertainment for children & adults in our community. Such as miniature golf, skating ring, ice skating rinks, teen clubs, adult (non alcoholic) clubs, affordable buffet & steak house, etc. We also need a discount food chain, such as Aldi's or something similar. I also think that along w/these other suggestions we need a YMCA or another gym of some sort.
 - What about the laws are only good for some people but are not good for others. Some wheelchair people think they can break the law everyday and not be charged w/anything. Other wheelchair people get in trouble, are arrested, found guilty and pay for their mistakes and the other wheelchair people don't get into trouble for breaking the law. Why is that? Are there double standards for wheelchair people? Should people in wheelchairs be allowed to drive down the middle of the road causing accidents or use the sidewalk? Should w/chair be excused from their actions in society? Or should they be accountable for their actions? If you cause an accident, do you stay around until the police show up or just take off? Why can w/chair people cause an accident and then leave before the police show up? How about change the laws to make w/chair people accountable for their actions? It's about time somebody does something.
 - How do people that live in rural areas feel about the Animal Rights Movement today, compared to 10 years ago; specifically the Animal Rights activists/fanatics not the animal welfare proponents. I'm an avid hunter & trapper (lived on a farm, or in the country all of my life). I would think that the rural folks have grown leery or tired of the animal activists. Do people who live in rural areas overwhelmingly support hunting & trapping?
 - We moved to this area from the St. Louis area, so we are used to a lot of art & music activities. This area is very different & lacks the availability for choices. We are used to a much higher quality (museums, library, movie, theater, etc.).
 - Our city needs a welcome wagon. When we moved here we didn't know where anything was. We had to ask people or just find out things on our own. We could use public transportation also for people who can't drive.
 - Please do not send me anymore surveys.
 - Gangs--stabbing--drugs--why children. Police not doing job--are so violent. Children depressed on drugs. Robberies--why people don't press charges. Why are 32 houses for sale? Drinking. Battered mothers & fathers. Incest. Condition of homes and yards. High taxes. Chicken [explicative] cops. Mayors that are chicken [explicative]. Why should people move because of gangs? Why are cops out screwing waitresses at coffee shops? Why kids are uptown biting off other kids fingers? Why no one ever does anything to reach the young people of this town for the good not the bad. 32 houses for sale. High taxes. Low incomes.

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- Danville, IL is a good town. We need more culture however. Nicer restaurants, gallery, etc. The class of people are somewhat lower, due to the fact that high paying jobs are scarce. I feel taxes are very high in the area I live. Over all taxes are terrible in Danville (real estate). We don't have nice toy shops, dining, coffee, cooking, shopping. That must go to Champaign, Indy or Chicago.
 - I would be willing to pay more taxes to support additional prisons.
 - We need more job opportunities.
 - I work with young high school people when they are not in front of a keyboard of some kind they are helpless. When told to figure things especially figures with a pencil and paper they are completely dumbfounded. I think all of the schools better get back to the basics of reading, writing and math. It's no wonder a lot of these young people are taken advantage of. We don't need more education we need more to educate these young people the way in which they can understand the way real life really is.
 - WASTE OF MY TIME.
 - There is a desperate need for assisted living (food preparation and housekeeping) quarters for aged and handicapped persons in the area.
 - Regarding arts--we have a wonderful county theatre. Because we have chosen to live in a small community we cannot expect to have museums, concerts, etc. We drive to those kind of events. In my opinion, I don't think our taxes should raise to help fund any other organizations. I would not welcome any tax increase for anything. Our family lives within our means--the government should have to do that too.
 - I am over 88 years old. I don't go to several places so I answered best that I could. I never go to the library, which is in Gilman. Please send this to someone else to answer. Remember getting your last paper but I could not answer it & it finally got lost. I go a lot & visit my granddaughter in the summer. I live 2 1/2 miles from Crescent City. I go up town to get my mail. Go to bank.
 - Our schools do need more arts in lower grades. Teachers are limited on time and there is no art teacher for lower grades. High school has an art teacher.
 - Available police/sheriff protection/patrols for rural areas.
 - I am 88 years old and not able to get out much. I have a problem hearing also--I really can't answer your questions like I would like because of my age.
 - We are looking forward to our enlargement and renovation of our Metropolis public library in the near future.
 - Any plans to update a survey on community services, i.e. fire protection, streets. How many people can name a city alderman or have attended a government meeting?

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- NEEDED in this small town area--transportation for Sr. events, Dr., health care trips etc. (Needs government sponsored plans DUE to liability by individual.)
 - Road conditions
 - Access to expressway vs. 2 lane highways
 - Why the state still collects tolls on interstate highways
 - Traffic congestion vs. MVA
 - Direct questions for topics that directly affect all people in a community based on the city management. Such as:
 1. Road conditions in and around communities
 2. Sewer and garbage control/pickup
 3. Recycling of the non-common item such as tires, air conditioners etc.
 - I have multiple sclerosis, so my physical activities are limited.
 - This city I live in has a lot of low-paying (\$6 -\$7) [word unclear] jobs, no growth in this city. If you want a higher paying job you have to travel 30 miles or more. My son in law lost his job in this city 1 1/2 years ago, because the company he used to work for moved to Kentucky because the company said they were paying a higher wage than they wanted to. He had 24 years with this co. He is 42 years old and has to start over. He has worked a lot of low-paying jobs, but nothing steady!
 - I think city could do more to help senior citizen when you're alone. They think they can hire work done and some don't even get enough social security to even have a decent meal. I've seen some poor old people buying dog food to eat because they can't afford other food. This is the truth because my son worked in a grocery store and asked the people why since they didn't have a dog. In winter time they try to clear off the snow in drive way and some have to pay to have it done. That isn't cheap. Then the city trucks come along and push the snow back in front of their drive. The city help is riding around in a truck doing nothing. Getting paid for that when they could take the snow out in front of drive that they parked in. The same way with the leaves. They have laws not to burn and when you don't drive or have a car. The mayor says hire it done. But like I say some don't have the money. Use to be you could hire a kid cheap. But now they don't want to do it cause they get all the money they need from their folks. So the city should have a program to help the old people. Instead of worrying what they can put in their pocket. Bring back the old days.
 - Success adding something on sky-rocketing property taxes. Year after year increases eating up fixed retirement income and discouraging people from both building and buying homes.
 - The loss of jobs/closing of factories in our area is one of my greatest concerns.
 - No. Cover very good (survey). None.
 - This is a bedroom community. The city doesn't seem interested in doing anything to attract new business. They have approved a new subdivision but individuals who want to build apartments and duplexes, they are giving a rough time. Nothing will ever change around here, if the city keeps opposing progress.

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- I feel that it is ok to help people with housing cost but the person must pay back and stand behind a commitment to better themselves so this does not repeat. As a rule most landlords are good but we do have some that are not repairing. We do not have many of any homeless, but we do have church group that help in need. The job market in my area is good but people can not be picky for just the right job, they must be willing to work their way up.
 - Jobs of a desirable pay now go in Sullivan. We have one grocery store with outrageous prices & no stores for shopping. Our town is dying and the city officials are letting it.
 - Live near a village of less than 300. Would like to know what percent is on public aid.
 - Do you believe filter strips stop rivers from being polluted by humans? It's your money they are wasting. Please contact me if you are concerned about the FSA spending your money in the wrong place. [Name and address]
 - Question #2 art in school: I think it is more important to spend as much time as possible teaching children good basic math, reading, and spelling. I'm afraid our children are dependent too much on computers to do their daily living and will not know if the computer is right or wrong.
 - Question 28--Unless one is in the process of looking for housing, one is generally not enlightened as to the state of housing as addressed in this question. Question 30--Same idea as above. I would like to see another survey that deals with health care issues especially pertaining to home care services available in rural areas. I am involved in home health care as a respiratory therapist and 50-60% of the patients I see are elderly, with little or no family assistance. Living in rural Edgar, Vermillion & Iroquois counties.
 - Please take my name off of this survey panel because my eyes are bad and it is very difficult for me to read the survey questions. [Name]
 - I believe our government is intruding on our personal lives by regulating too many things. I.e.: No-body put a gun to anyone's head to smoke. It was their own choice. So the Clinton admin. sues and taxes the companies to raise revenue. Next in line are the gun manufacturers. Who's next?? Clinton has to be the lowest form of life in this world. He is supposed to be looked up to. Not be the laughing stock of the world. All he proved was if you have enough money, you can get away with anything. (Look at O.J. Simpson.) Kelly McGinnis was court-martialed for adultery, but her commander-in-chief can get by with anything. What do the American people own in Wash. D.C., a White House or a Whore House? If that piece of [explicative] had any respect for his people and country he would have resigned a long time ago and stopped embarrassing this great county. Thank you.
 - There is public transportation for seniors at times. We are losing so many mining and factory jobs, good paying, plus farming is in trouble, younger people moving out, older ones retiring.
 - Please do not send me any more of the questionnaires.
 - More public transportation. We have Sr. van during the week--nothing for weekends, shopping or church.

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- Having been away from the workplace and child-centered activities and programs for so many years, I doubt that my replies are complete enough to warrant much attention; or contributory to your statistical programs.
 - Some of my “Don't Know” answers are due to the decisiveness of yes or no. I.e.: Should the government (we) help people repair their homes? Yes! for those who need & deserve help and no! for those not in need. Question 28n: If the answer is yes then the question is most--there are no homeless since their need is a “home.” Question 30 is tough--all of these can be answered yes or no--depending on your individual experience or viewpoint. 30J is No because of “any job.” If this read “any suitable job” I would answer “Yes.” Our community has had a robust economy therefore many people have moved in and many have moved out--for every reason in the book. I know you may receive some replies which will make you wonder if they--the replies--are from the same community--there are those who don't see “my town” the way I do. Best Regards, [Name]
 - Max wages for this community's factory workers is around \$12.00 machinist and tool & die. Many min. workers at fast food joints. Farmers are in trouble because of low grain, cattle & hog prices. There needs to be an equalization of wages from North to South and East to West in this country. Our education system needs to be over hauled. When children can go all the way through college and not know how to read there's something drastically wrong. Sports have taken over and the basics are being neglected. Drug dealers should be executed immediately on conviction.
 - Several factories are either cutting back on workforce or moving from area completely. This area (Clay County) has no General Motors dealership, no shoe stores, very few respectable eating establishments. Need more specialized medical people.
 - Art is not important to people in areas like this.
 - Please keep me informed of results and future surveys. Thank you.
 - My husband and I are retired and both have developed serious health problems in the past year. The questions regarding arts and culture were difficult to answer due to our circumstances. Living in a very small community, we are not as knowledgeable as you need to ascertain a more complete survey regarding this subject, especially in the area aforementioned, the topics probably need attended by the younger generation. I am concerned greatly about the issue that deals with social and spiritual aspects. I am gravely concerned at the way our country is headed. I do not particularly like government intruding in our private personal lives. The youth need to be taught the work ethic. Taught to take responsibility for own actions. Of course, the same needs to be applied to the adults as well. There are many issues that need attention but arts and culture is not a top priority in this home.
 - We need more programs like Christmas in April which we do have & Habitat for Humanity with local groups doing it as volunteers instead of government. We also need railroads to put back local passenger service--they had a place of business in every town & threw it away. We can't drive forever nor keep building roads. Please someone take an interest in small communities. Thank you for your help in getting information to our elected officials and others.

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- We live in a wonderful community with varied individuals whose talents bring art & culture to us. But they struggle on volunteered time. Many enjoy the efforts of a few. Because of our rural setting, we draw a lot of low income people here. The community is very charitable compared to others and with six churches in our town alone, there are many supporting missions. "Our community" really encompasses those in our consolidated school district. Bottom line, we support our children--arts, programs, athletics. These draw the community together. Topics: Why people don't attend church. Are they faithful?
 - The rich get richer the poor poorer. The law is also for the man with the money, life gets harder not any easier. Topics for future.
 1. Crime--let the punishments fit the crimes--each case should be treated equally.
 2. Fathers who are not Dead Beat Dads do pay child support but mothers never allow visitation and never held accountable for their actions.
 3. Price for cars too high--we don't live in them!
 4. Concern for our jobs--are you in fear of losing it? Does your job pay fair, equal to years of service.
 5. Benefits--will they and are they going to be there when you need them. And cost is too high for the senior.
 - There were a number of questions that I am not enough informed about to answer in a credible way. A town our size can stand in need of many services, but can't afford with schools and service needed to pay for has put a damper on improvements because the tax burden is so great.
 - More needs to be done for the youth of small towns and villages. Scout troop don't have enough adult leaders for the troops. Kids are left alone while parents work causing trouble in the town. People are too busy to volunteer--working and commuting to jobs out of town. There needs to be more organized exercise programs for the baby boomers.
 - I feel the only way to address community needs is to BEGIN to instill values through the educational system. We did not get in this condition overnight & it will take several generations to climb out of this hole we are digging for ourselves.
 - I do not believe that I am the one to answer the questions in this survey, however I did the best I could. Many of these questions didn't seem to fit this part of the state. Please forgive me as I did the best I could. We need jobs and people to work together as this seems to be our main problem.
 - How will Y2K affect me? Will the electric utility deregulation be as screwed up as the phone companies? I can hear the phone ringing now; companies wanting my electric business. Also, I would like to see telemarketing outlawed!
 - It seems to me a lot of questions are redundant.
 - Sorry this is late--it was set aside while trying to do cards, etc.
 - We live on a farm, but haven't farmed since 1988. My brother-in-law does the farming around here.
 - I wish to discontinue filling out these questions. Please do not send anymore.

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- Please do not send me anymore of this material we do not live in country anymore and my husband [name] passed away [date] and I can not see to fill this in anymore. Thank you
 - We do not need ANY government agency getting involved [in] housing issues. If you can't afford to buy a house & keep it up, then a person will just have to rent or look into a mobile/modular home. Just look at what OUR government has accomplished by its efforts so far with subsidized housing & the DEPENDANCY they have created. Less intrusion and letting us keep more of our own paychecks would help solve many of these social problems.
 - Tourism and second homes/home weekend rentals abound in our area. There are lots of homes, but because of increases in valuation/taxes there are many long term residents who can no longer live in our community. We do have some low income housing but that doesn't meet the needs of many of our young people, young families, older couple. Outsiders coming to our community to live or visit (many from Chicago) bring many wonderful things to share, but the downside has been the terrific increase in real estate and property tax. It is a sad and difficult situation. The only help I can see is if there are changes made by the state in regards to property tax and funding.
 - Topics: Single parents, Working mothers, Health issues, Transportation infrastructure
 - 1. Need public transportation.
 2. Need home for Retirees to buy & service for home work & yard.
 3. Need place that does not cost an arm & leg.
 4. I am 80 years old doing own work & my wife does her own.Checked in[to] places where a person can take care of themselves and the cost is so high we can't afford to go there. We need a place for people who have an income (average) and [don't] want to have to spend every dime to get along. We take care of other countries & people overseas why not take care of our own older people who want to live independently but need some assistance to live. We talk to help the young. How about the older people. I hope I make myself clear. Thanks for your help. To sum it up average income people would like to have some help to live and not spend all the social security & pension money to live and pay rent. Also take what money they have to live and buy a retirement home. Old people are as important as young people also some children come from families who just don't care about supporting their children.
 - We need less government not more projects to spend tax money on.



Appendix C: Methodology

Survey Development

The Applied Social Research Unit, Illinois State University, worked with staff members of sponsor organizations to generate topics and questions for the 1998-1999 Illinois Rural Life Panel Survey. Sponsors for this survey include: the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs of Western Illinois University, the Illinois Arts Council, a State agency, and the Applied Social Research Unit. A copy of the survey follows the project methodology.

Sample

In fall 1998, the existing sample of 3,467 Panelists was augmented with 2,000 new contacts, ages 18 to 34, obtained from Survey Sampling, Inc. Because older adults have historically been over-represented on the Illinois Rural Life Panel due to their higher response rate, the 2,000 18 to 34 year olds were added to the 1998-1999 survey sample in an attempt to increase representation of the experience and opinions of this age group. All Illinois Rural Life Panelist samples have been selected randomly and include adult residents (over age 18) of Illinois' non-metropolitan counties. Samples are representative of non-metropolitan residents with listed telephone numbers.

Survey administration

In November 1998, survey questionnaires were mailed to both continuing and new Panelists with an attached cover letter inviting participation. The survey was mailed a second time in February 1999 to Panelists who had not returned a survey.

The sample size for the first mailing was 5,467 Panelists. Of these, 349 contacts proved to be ineligible for the Panel because persons had moved to a metropolitan county of Illinois, moved out of State, had a change of address that could not be traced, were temporarily away, or died. Thus, the final number of eligible Panelists was 5,118.

Survey response

Panelists returned 1,659 questionnaires yielding a response rate of 32 percent (1,659/5,118). Figure 25 in Appendix A provides demographic information (e.g., age, gender, income, education) for these respondents.

Data analysis

Quantitative survey data were entered and analyzed in SPSS 8.0 for Windows. Frequencies were generated for each question on the survey. In addition, crosstabulations were computed for selected items.

Respondents' written comments were entered in Microsoft Access 97 for Windows. Comments were categorized by content to enable their summary and reporting.

ILLINOIS RURAL LIFE PANEL

1998-1999 SURVEY



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Introduction

This questionnaire asks about your experience as a rural resident with arts and cultural activities, public libraries, housing, and economic and workforce development. You are considered a rural resident for this survey because you live in a nonmetropolitan county—a county that has no community with more than 50,000 people. Many questions refer to "your community." If you live in a town, that town is "your community" for this survey. If you live outside of town, please consider the town closest to you as "your community" (or consider the place to which your mail is addressed if you feel that is more appropriate). *Please be assured your individual responses will remain confidential.*

Arts and cultural activities

The Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, is trying to increase access to and funding for the arts throughout Illinois. The Council wants to know about your interest in and access to arts in your community.

- Please indicate whether or not your community has the following organizations or services. If **no**, please indicate the distance in miles to the nearest such organization or service.

	yes	no	don't know	if no, miles to nearest organization or service
Arts in the park.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Community center.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Senior center.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Annual community arts festival.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Craft fairs.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Community theatre, band, orchestra, or chorus..	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Movie theater.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Live theater.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Art league.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Historical society.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Museum(s).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Private art/music lessons.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Please specify available lessons _____

- On a scale from "not at all important" to "very important," how important do you think it is to educate children in the arts in school?

**not at all
important**

**somewhat
important**

important

**very
important**

3. Please indicate whether or not local schools provide children with arts and cultural activities.

	yes	no	don't know
Pre-school.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elementary school.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Junior high school.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High school.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Does your community have an organized youth group (e.g., Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, other) that gives children access to arts and cultural activities? yes no don't know

5. Does your community have a church, synagogue, or other religious organization that gives children access to arts and cultural activities? yes no don't know

6. During the last 12 months, which of the following events/activities have you participated in as . . .
 A) performer or artist?
 B) leisure activity?
 C) audience member? Please check all that apply in columns A, B, and C.

	A) performer/ artist	B) leisure activity	C) audience member
Dance.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Theatre/drama.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocal music (choral, solo).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instrumental music (orchestra, band, solo).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Popular music event (e.g., Rock-N-Roll, Pop, Golden Oldies).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photography.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Movies, film, video.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sculpture.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visual arts (e.g., painting, drawing, other visual arts).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Museums.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Needlework, knitting, quilting, crocheting.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Woodworking/carving.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Literature (e.g., writing, story or poetry reading).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other arts and crafts.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(please explain other arts and crafts) _____			

7. Do you support any arts activity(ies) as a volunteer? yes no

8. If you answered **yes** to question 7, for what activity(ies) do you volunteer?

9. Is there a need to strengthen arts and cultural activities in your community?

no need moderate need great need

10. What kinds of arts or cultural activities would you like to see more of in your community?

Public library services

11. Is there a public library in your community? yes no don't know
12. If **no** to question 11, approximately how many miles away is the nearest public library?
 0-4 miles 5-9 miles 10-24 miles 25-49 miles 50+ miles don't know
13. Do you have a current library card?
 yes
 no  13a. If **no**, are you eligible for a library card? yes no don't know
 don't know
14. Do you use the public library?
 yes  14a. How often? once/week twice/month once/month less than once/month
 no  14b. If **no**, skip to question 19.
15. How do you make use of the library? Check all that apply.
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> information for my business | <input type="checkbox"/> use the copy machine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> recreational reading | <input type="checkbox"/> use the Internet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> access to newspapers, magazines, or other periodicals | <input type="checkbox"/> use a FAX machine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> locate reference information | <input type="checkbox"/> gather information for my hobby |
| <input type="checkbox"/> attend training programs | <input type="checkbox"/> attend meetings of social groups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> children participate in summer reading program | <input type="checkbox"/> attend business meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other (please specify) _____ | |
16. Are you satisfied with the services the library provides? yes no
17. What are the most important things you would like to see the library change? Check all that apply.
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> more current recreational reading or hobby materials | <input type="checkbox"/> more current newspapers and magazines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> information on job opportunities and careers | <input type="checkbox"/> more information about my community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> more access to materials in other libraries | <input type="checkbox"/> more help with using the Internet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> more assistance in finding library materials | <input type="checkbox"/> more access to computers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> better seating, lighting, or work space | <input type="checkbox"/> access to more videos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> more space for programs or meeting rooms | <input type="checkbox"/> distance learning classes available |
| <input type="checkbox"/> more programs for youth | <input type="checkbox"/> more programs for adults |
| <input type="checkbox"/> open more hours | <input type="checkbox"/> ability to search library's card catalog with home computer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other (please specify) _____ | |
18. How do you access library materials? Check all that apply.
- access library card catalog from home computer
 - go to the actual library building
 - order items from other locations in the state to be picked up at local library
 - use a community information network created by library
 - use library's Internet home page
 - other (please specify) _____
19. Is there anyone living in your household who is under age 18?
 yes  Go to question 20.
 no  Go to question 22.

20. How often do these individuals (under age 18) use the local public library?

- once/week twice/month once/month
 less than once/month only when school assignments require never

21. If these individuals do not use the library, why not? Check all that apply.

- school assignments do not require it use computer/Internet at home
 usually purchase reading materials do not read books very much
 library does not have needed/enough materials library not open at convenient times
 no programs offered for child's age group programs offered at inconvenient times
 materials ordered by my library from other libraries do not arrive in timely manner
 other (specify) _____

22. Do you think having a public library . . .

- | | yes | no | don't know |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. makes a community a better place to live?..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. helps attract businesses to a community?..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. helps attract residents to a community?..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

23. Would you pay higher property taxes to improve the library?

- yes  23a. **If yes, how much more per month?** \$1 \$2 to \$5
 no \$6 to \$10 more than \$10
 don't know

Housing conditions, availability, and affordability

The following questions concern housing (houses, apartments, mobile homes, condominiums, etc.) in your community.

24. Do you live in a: house mobile home apartment/condominium
 other (specify) _____

25. Do you: pay a mortgage own house/mobile home/condominium outright
 rent other (specify) _____

26. Please indicate whether or not the government should . . .

- | | yes | no | don't know |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. help homeowners finance repairing their homes..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. assist first-time homebuyers in purchasing a home..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. assist low-income persons in making rent payments..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

27. Please indicate which of the following statements accurately describes your community's response to housing issues? Check all that apply.

- do not expect population growth in community so housing should be adequate
 new private subdivisions are planned which should meet expected housing demands
 community has planned housing developments to meet housing needs
 community recognizes a housing issue but has not yet formulated a response
 don't know about a community response
 other (specify) _____

28. Please indicate whether or not each of the following statements generally describes housing in your community.

	yes	no	don't know
a. The housing is in better repair now than it was ten years ago.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Housing is in good repair.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Housing is in substandard condition.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Incoming residents cannot find suitable housing in town.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. There is more available housing now than ten years ago.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. There is enough housing to meet the demand.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Communities in this area have a surplus of housing.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Housing is less affordable now than ten years ago.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Many residents cannot afford local housing.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. It is easy to obtain a mortgage.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Homeowners can afford to make repairs.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Renters can get landlords to make needed repairs.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. The housing needs of older adults are adequately served.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. The needs of the homeless are adequately served.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. The housing needs of persons with physical disabilities are adequately served.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. The housing needs of persons with developmental or mental disabilities are adequately served (e.g., retarded, chronically mentally ill).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. Businesses do not locate in town because of inadequate housing for employees.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Economic and workforce development

29. Compared with five years ago, have local economic conditions:

- improved remained the same worsened

30. Please indicate whether or not each of the following statements generally describes **your community and surrounding areas**.

	yes	no	don't know
a. High paying jobs are available.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Low paying jobs with benefits are available.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Low paying jobs without benefits are available.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. High school graduates can find jobs.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. College graduates can find jobs.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Adults over age 40 can find jobs.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Many people have lost their jobs in the last few years due to business closures.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Many people have lost their jobs or been laid off in the last few years due to business cutbacks.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Many people have left the area in the past few years because they could not find a job in their chosen field/profession.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Many people have left the area in the past few years because they could not find any job.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Training is available for people who want to improve their job skills.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Information about Panelists

The following questions are for research purposes only. All responses are strictly confidential and are never associated with individual respondents. Data regarding age, gender, income, etc. are used to combine respondents with similar characteristics and analyze their responses to various items. By comparing these smaller sub-groups of respondents, a more accurate and representative picture of the opinions and feelings of rural residents can be obtained.

38. What year were you born? 19_____

39. Are you: Female Male

40. Are you: Single Married Domestic partner
 Separated/divorced Widowed

41. Are you:

Asian/Pacific Islander Native American
 Black/African American (Non-Hispanic) White (Non-Hispanic)
 Hispanic (Latino/a) Other (please specify)_____

42. In what Illinois county do you live? _____

43. Approximately how many people live in your community?

0-499 500-1,499 1,500-2,499
 2,500-4,999 5,000-9,999 10,000 or more

44. How many years have you lived in your community?

less than one 1-5 6-10
 11-20 21 or more

45. Which of the following best describes where you live? Chose one.

in town/city on a farm in the country, not on farm in a rural subdivision
 other (please explain)_____

46. How far did you go in school?

Less than a high school degree Bachelors degree
 High school degree/GED Some graduate work
 Some college, but no degree Graduate degree
 Associates degree Other (e.g. vocational training)_____

47. What was your 1997 gross household income?

Less than \$15,000 \$50,000 to \$74,999
 \$15,000 to \$24,999 \$75,000 to \$99,999
 \$25,000 to \$34,999 \$100,000 or more
 \$35,000 to \$49,999

48. How much of your 1997 gross household income was derived from farming?

none less than 25% 25 to 49% 50 to 74% 75% or more

