NEW BRUNSWICK
2016 COMMUNITY SURVEY

FINAL REPORT
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OVERVIEW

This report is the nineteenth in a series of surveys of New Brunswick residents conducted on behalf of New Brunswick Tomorrow (NBT) by the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP) at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. It is believed to be the longest running community survey in the nation. It serves to capture perceptions of the quality of life in New Brunswick, as well as reactions to the changes and developments that have occurred as a result of revitalization over the past four decades. First done in 1976, the survey was previously conducted biennially. This 2016 installment continues a break in the pattern that began in 2012 by being conducted four years after the last assessment in 2012.

The 2016 study marks a significant transition in the questions and format that have been traditionally used for this ongoing project. The 2016 survey implements substantial revisions and additions to what has been normally asked in the past in order to better adapt to the needs, changes, and future of New Brunswick and to set a higher level of standards in a new decade for all subsequent assessments. The survey still adheres to many of the key questions residents have been asked for decades in order to continue the collection of data on important historical trends, but it also introduces the opportunity for more advanced and in-depth analysis of New Brunswick residents and their attitudes, behaviors, and everyday life — particularly when it comes to health and food security. The 2012 survey specifically addresses the following topics: perceptions of quality of life, neighborhood development, and safety;
opinions on schools, youth programs, and childcare services; health and food security; and attitudes on prominent New Brunswick institutions.

The 2016 survey also marks a potential first for the history of the study by being fielded in multiple modalities. Respondents were selected from a scientifically designed, randomly drawn address-based sample (ABS) of New Brunswick residents; the address-based sample provided better coverage of the city that was far superior to anything in past iterations. Residents were contacted by a mixture of postal mail, email, text message, cellular telephone, and landline telephone.

Results in 2016 were a bit of a departure from 2012 and some of the historical patterns seen in recent iterations of the study. This time around, residents were slightly less satisfied with their city and neighborhoods, more willing to move out, and more concerned about crime and safety. While residents generally reported being in a reasonable state of health, issues persisted with various health conditions, access to care, and nutrition habits. On a positive note, however, the public school systems in New Brunswick received their highest scores yet, and residents continue to remain mostly positive about the influences of Rutgers University and Johnson & Johnson.

Key to understanding the results that follow is observing the disparities between certain demographic groups throughout the entire survey. Hispanic residents, those who are less educated, those in lower income brackets, foreign-born residents, and those living in Census
tracts 55 through 56.01 are often at a disadvantage when it comes to various aspects of life in New Brunswick compared to their counterparts.

Results, moreover, were no doubt impacted by an increasingly intense political climate, both locally and nationally. The 2016 presidential election brought issues like immigration, race, and sanctuary cities to the forefront of politics; these kinds of issues most likely played a role in the day-to-day politics of the city, as well. Local and national current events furthermore potentially compounded challenges already faced by the survey research industry in terms of an increasing unwillingness to respond to surveys, in general. Yet, in spite of political context and declining response rates, the data gathered in this 2016 iteration provides a valuable, representative look at the lives of New Brunswick residents and their views on the community.

Major highlights from the full report immediately follow. Readers are encouraged to review the full report for detailed information and demographic comparisons.
REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Community, Neighborhood, and Family

Just over half of New Brunswick residents believe the City of New Brunswick is an “excellent” (7 percent) or “good” (45 percent) place to live, while 47 percent rate the city as “fair” (37 percent) or “poor” (10 percent). Views in 2016 are slightly less positive than they were four and eight years ago.

Views of one’s own neighborhood continue to be more positive than those of the city as a whole: 13 percent say their neighborhood is an “excellent” place to live, 47 percent say good, 29 percent say only fair, and 11 percent say poor. Much like with the city as a whole, however, views are slightly less positive than they have been in the recent past.

Negativity pervades residents’ feelings on whether or not they would move out of their neighborhood if they had the opportunity: while 36 percent would stay where they are, 17 percent would want to move elsewhere in New Brunswick, and 47 percent would want to move out of New Brunswick entirely.

When asked what should be done to make New Brunswick a better place to live, reducing crime and making the city safer top the list: 22 percent of residents mention something about crime and safety.
Twenty-two percent say they feel “very” safe in their neighborhood at night, down from 36 percent four years ago; this is the lowest on record in the five decades this question has been asked of New Brunswick residents. Most instead feel somewhere in the middle when it comes to safety, a category that has seen a significant increase since 2012: 61 percent now say they feel “somewhat” safe in their neighborhood at night, up from 51 percent four years ago. Just 17 percent say they do not feel safe “at all,” up from 10 percent four years ago and the highest ever recorded in the history of the survey.

Half believe crime in New Brunswick has remained the same, compared to 40 percent who felt this way in 2012. The rest are split evenly between whether crime has gotten better or worse – 25 percent versus 25 percent. The latter has improved since 2012; four years ago, 33 percent of residents said crime had gotten worse.

**Education and Youth**

Just over half of all residents give positive ratings to the New Brunswick public school system: 13 percent say the city’s public schools are doing an “excellent” job, and another 40 percent say they are doing a “good” job. Thirty-seven percent rate them as “only fair” and 10 percent as “poor.” This is a large improvement from recent years and the first time in the history of the survey where a majority felt positively about public education in the city.
Almost half of residents (49 percent) believe the quality of public schools in the city have remained the same since four years ago, and another 37 percent say they have gotten better. Just 14 percent feel they have gotten worse, virtually the same number as in 2012.

Under half of residents (46 percent) with children in their household report that any of their children attend some type of after-school or summer youth program; 54 percent claim no child in their household participates in these types of programs. The biggest factors in non-participation are not knowing enough about these programs (32 percent) and children in their household being too young to enroll (28 percent selected).

Over half of those with children in the household in need of care (56 percent) say that children most often stay with a family member, and another 23 percent say children in their household go to a licensed daycare; 13 percent of residents send children to stay with someone who is not a family member. When a child is home sick and adults in the household have to go to work, almost all residents with children in the household (81 percent) report that an adult typically misses work to stay home and care for the child. There is widespread disinterest in access to a child daycare center with health workers trained to take care of their children when sick.

**Community Health**

Members of the New Brunswick community are confronted with an array of serious health concerns. Among the health issues we asked about, obesity (29 percent) and depression (28 percent) are most prevalent. Of the seven health conditions asked about in the survey, 39
percent of residents report that no one in their household has any of these asked about health issues. Twenty-nine percent claim only one of these health concerns applies to a member of their household, 16 percent deal with two issues, and 11 percent deal with three. Just 4 percent say their household struggles with any four of these health issues, and virtually no one says their households deal with five or six of them; no one reports all seven conditions.

Eighty-seven percent of residents report having some type of health insurance coverage. When asked where they or a household member are most likely to go for medical care, 51 percent of respondents say they visit a family doctor. Another 23 percent go to a local clinic, and 18 percent visit a hospital emergency room. Six percent take care of themselves.

Fifty-nine percent of residents claim that every member of their household, including him or herself, have had a regular check-up with a doctor in the last 12 months. When it comes to the dentist, 38 percent of residents report that all members of their household have had a dental visit in the last 12 months.

Nine in 10 say that members of their household are able to get care when needed when it comes to medical care or prescription care. Access to dental care is slightly more challenging. While 78 percent say members of their household are able to get care when needed, 7 percent say they can only get care after a delay, and 15 percent claim they are unable to get care at all.
Overall, 78 percent of residents report obtaining health care in New Brunswick with at least some ease: 47 percent say it is very easy, and 31 percent say it is somewhat easy. Sixteen percent, on the other hand, say it is somewhat hard, and 6 percent say it is very hard. This has changed little since 2012.

More than eight in 10 residents claim to actively exercise for at least 30 minutes at least once a week.

**Food Security**

Forty-four percent of all residents report eating fruits and vegetables every day each week, with the average response at about five out of seven days. Much like with fruits and vegetables, half of all residents (51 percent) claim to eat breakfast every day, with the average response around five days a week. While fast food is not a daily occurrence, residents do admit to eating it with some regularity – on average, about one to two times a week. Almost all residents (95 percent) claim they shop at a supermarket for most foods.

Almost four in 10 residents (39 percent) say there have been times in the past 12 months when they did not have enough money to buy food that their family needed.

Almost half (48 percent) of residents claim that their household can “always” afford to eat good healthy meals. Forty-seven percent say they can “sometimes” afford it, and 5 percent say they “never” can.
Half of all residents (50 percent) report that their household can “sometimes” afford enough to eat but not always the kind of food they should; 29 percent “always” feel like they can afford enough but not the right kind, but another 21 percent “never” feel this way.

Over half of residents (56 percent) say they never worry that food will run out in their household before there is money to buy more. Eight percent, on the other hand, always feel this way, and 36 percent “sometimes” feel this way.

Similarly, 65 percent say they “never” worry that the food they buy won’t last and that they won’t have money for more. Twenty-eight percent “sometimes” feel this way, and 8 percent “always” do.

In terms of the kinds of food residents can afford to buy, 56 percent say they “never” feel as if they cannot afford to buy fruits and vegetables, but 35 percent say they “sometimes” feel this way, and 9 percent “always” do.

Most residents (61 percent) say they “never” rely on low-cost instead of higher quality food to feed children in the household. The remainder of residents, however, “sometimes” (34 percent) or “always” (5 percent) does this. These numbers differ little from 2012.

Evaluations of New Brunswick Institutions
Thirty percent of residents claim they have heard of **New Brunswick Tomorrow**; 70 percent have not. This is a marked difference from the last eight years, when half of residents said they knew of the organization.

**Rutgers University** retains its high ratings among residents: 82 percent say Rutgers is good for New Brunswick, 1 percent say it is bad, 10 percent say it is a little of both, and 6 percent do not think the university makes any difference. These numbers are similar to four and eight years ago, with approval down only a few percentage points.

**Johnson & Johnson**’s impact remains mostly positive, as well: 70 percent say the company is “good” for New Brunswick. Yet this is down from 78 percent in 2012 and the first time on record that ratings have fallen that low – or, for that matter, below 74 percent. Just 3 percent believe J&J is bad for New Brunswick, and 9 percent say it is “both good and bad.” Residents are now more likely than ever to believe the company makes no difference in the community – 18 percent, the highest in the four decades the survey has been conducted.
# Weighted Sample Demographics

**709 New Brunswick Residents (18+)**  
Margin of Error = +/- 7.6 percentage points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>Born in the US</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>37%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Where Born Outside US</td>
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<tr>
<td>White (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Asian</td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td>Parents born in US</td>
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<td>18-34</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>Peru</td>
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</tr>
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<td>35-49</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>43%</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>Housing Situation</td>
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<td>8th grade or less</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>Neither</td>
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<td>Some high school</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Own house</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<td>Graduated high school</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>Rent house</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<td>Vocational/technical school</td>
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<td>Rent apartment</td>
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<td>Some college</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>Rent rooms in house or apt</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduated college or above</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chief wage earner</td>
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<td>Live w/ relative/friend free</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>No permanent place to live</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<td>Employment Status</td>
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<td>Interview Language</td>
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<td>Employed full time</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>78%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employed part time</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employed in temporary work</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Relationship Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stay at home parent</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Living as couple</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Civil union</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On disability</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under $10K</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>$10K - $19,999</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>Children in the Household</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>$20K - $29,999</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30K - $49,999</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50K - $74,999</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75K or more</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
A Demographic Profile of New Brunswick

Community Survey Sample Breakdown

The 2016 New Brunswick Community Survey weighted sample of 709 residents approximates the actual demographic makeup of the New Brunswick population as defined by U.S. Census parameters. Much like the population itself, the sample is divided evenly by gender. In terms of respondent age range, the sample resembles the actual breakdown within the city, which skews somewhat younger than the State of New Jersey as a whole: 55 percent of all respondents are between ages 18 and 34, 21 percent are between 35 and 49, 17 percent are between 50 and 64, and 8 percent are age 65 or older.

The weighted sample is also representative by race and ethnicity. Twenty-two percent of respondents classify themselves as non-Hispanic white, 16 percent as non-Hispanic Black or African American, 49 percent as Hispanic, 6 percent as Asian, and 8 percent as something else or mixed.

Education levels of respondents are also in line with the varying degrees of education obtained by New Brunswick residents in the population: 48 percent of respondents have a high school diploma or less, 5 percent went to vocational or technical school, 29 percent have attended some college, and 18 percent have graduated college or done some type of graduate work.
Respondents were also asked a series of questions about themselves and their households that went beyond traditional demographics. Respondents vary greatly in how long they have lived in New Brunswick. Seven percent have lived in the city for less than a year, 15 percent state they have lived there 1 to less than five years, 14 percent have lived there between 5 and 10 years, and 26 percent between 10 and 20 years. A plurality of respondents says they have lived in New Brunswick for decades: 37 percent say they have lived in the city for 20 years or more.

In terms of relationships, almost half of respondents in the sample say they are single; 30 percent are married. Forty percent have children in their household. Respondents vary widely in the number of people the claim live in their household. On average, respondents report between three to four people living in their household, with the modal number per household being two people. The average number of children per household among residents in the sample is one, though the modal number of children is zero. The average number of household members over 60 years old is between zero and one, with the modal number being zero.

Almost half of respondents (45 percent) say they are employed full time, and another 11 percent are part time; 2 percent say they are employed in temporary work. The remainder are not necessarily unemployed, however; just 7 percent claim to currently be out of work. The remainder of respondents say they are stay-at-home parents (4 percent), students (17 percent), retirees (10 percent), or on disability (4 percent). Fifty-six percent state that they are the chief wage earner in the household. Respondents’ annual income spans a wide range. Twenty-nine percent report an annual household income at or below the federal poverty line: 11 percent
make under $10,000 and another 18 percent somewhere between $10,000 and $19,999.¹

Seventeen percent report a household income of $20,000 to $29,999, 20 percent report a household income of $30,000 to $49,999, 12 percent report a household income of $50,000 to $74,999, and 22 percent report a household income of $75,000 or more.

As for living situation, 27 percent of respondents in the weighted sample claim they own a house; 69 percent rent a house, apartment, or room, while 3 percent live with someone for free, and 1 percent say they do not have a permanent place to live.

Only a portion of the sample identifies as foreign-born. Sixty-three percent claim they were born in the United States, while 37 percent say they were not. More than half of respondents are first-generation, however; 55 percent state that both of their parents were born outside the United States, while 43 percent say their parents were born here.

The Geography of New Brunswick

Subsequent analysis of New Brunswick featured in this report is divided geographically by Census tracts. Tracts 51 through 53 cover the northwest corner of the city, bordering East Franklin and including College Avenue, Easton Avenue, much of the downtown, Rutgers University, St. Peter’s Hospital, and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. Tracts 55

¹ Poverty level is determined by number of persons in the household. For example, the 2017 federal poverty level for a household of four is $24,600: https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines.
Tracts 51-53

Within the weighted sample, the area covered by tracts 51 through 53 is evenly divided by gender: 51 percent of residents in this area of the city are men, and 49 percent are women. The area is also more mixed racially and ethnically: 42 percent of residents are non-Hispanic white, 4 percent are non-Hispanic Black, 34 percent are Hispanic, and 12 percent are either multi-racial or something else. Just over half of the group is made up of millennials\(^2\): 46 percent are 18 to 29 years old, 30 percent are 30 to 49 years old, 13 percent are 50 to 64 years old, and 11 percent are 65 years or older. A plurality of residents located in these tracts have had some college: 15 percent have had some high school or less, 16 percent graduated high school, 9 percent graduated vocational or technical school, 41 percent have had some college, and 20 percent have graduated college or pursued graduate work.

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\(^2\) Henceforth, the 18 to 34 year old age category will be referred to as “millennials.”
This area also tends to be somewhat wealthier than other areas in the city: 13 percent are in households making under $10,000 annually, 18 percent fall somewhere between $10,000 and $19,999, 14 percent fall between $20,000 and $29,999, 25 percent fall between $30,000 and $49,999, 3 percent fall between $50,000 and $74,999, and 28 percent are in households making $75,000 or more. Respondents from this area are also most likely to be students: 35 percent say they are currently students, while another 34 percent are employed full time, 16 percent are retired, 7 percent are unemployed, and 5 percent are stay at home parents.

Fifty-eight percent living in this area are single, 26 percent are married, and 16 percent have children in the household. Eight in 10 residents located in these tracts rent a room, apartment, or house instead of own. Two-thirds were born in the United States, and 47 percent say both of their parents were also born here.

**Tracts 55-56.02**

The area covered by tracts 55 through 56.02 is more heavily female: 39 percent of residents in this area of the city are men, compared to 61 percent who are women. The area is also mostly Hispanic: 8 percent of residents are non-Hispanic white, 25 percent are non-Hispanic Black, 62 percent are Hispanic, and 4 percent are either multi-racial or something else. Millennials are once again the largest group here: 34 percent are 18 to 29 years old, 32 percent are 30 to 49 years old, 23 percent are 50 to 64 years old, and 10 percent are 65 years or older. Residents in this area are most likely to have a high school diploma or less: 18 percent have completed 8th
grade or less, 12 percent have had some high school, 45 percent graduated high school, 4 percent graduated vocational or technical school, 11 percent have some college, and 10 percent have graduated college or pursued to graduate work.

Compared to the other census tracts, this area is the poorest in the city: 24 percent are in households making under $10,000 annually, 14 percent fall somewhere between $10,000 and $19,999, 27 percent fall between $20,000 and $29,999, 15 percent fall between $30,000 and $49,999, 7 percent fall between $50,000 and $74,999, and 13 percent are in households making $75,000 or more. Respondents in this area also have a higher unemployment rate than almost all others: while 32 percent are employed full time, 24 percent part-time, and 3 percent temporarily, 10 percent are unemployed. Another 11 percent are retired, 10 percent are on disability, 8 percent are stay at home parents, and 1 percent are current students.

Forty-five percent living in this area are single, and 28 percent are married; 53 percent have children in the household. Sixty-one percent of residents located in these tracts rent a room, apartment, or house instead of own. Sixty percent were born in the United States; of the 40 percent not born here, 33 percent were born in Mexico, 22 percent in the Dominican Republican, and the rest were born somewhere else. Forty percent say both of their parents were born in the United States; 60 percent say at least one of their parents was born in the country.

**Tracts 57-58**
The area covered by tracts 57 and 58 is somewhat evenly split by gender: 53 percent of residents in this area of the city are men, and 47 percent are women. The area is also mostly Hispanic: 4 percent of residents are non-Hispanic white, 19 percent are non-Hispanic Black, 74 percent are Hispanic, and 2 percent are either multi-racial or something else. This segment of the city is also younger: 45 percent are 18 to 29 years old, 34 percent are 30 to 49 years old, 16 percent are 50 to 64 years old, and 5 percent are 65 years or older. Residents in this area are most likely to either have a high school diploma or some college: 7 percent have completed 8th grade or less, 6 percent have had some high school, 39 percent graduated high school, 6 percent graduated vocational or technical school, 37 percent have some college, and 5 percent have graduated college or pursued to graduate work.

Eight percent are in households making under $10,000 annually, 30 percent fall somewhere between $10,000 and $19,999, 10 percent fall between $20,000 and $29,999, 27 percent fall between $30,000 and $49,999, 7 percent fall between $50,000 and $74,999, and 18 percent are in households making $75,000 or more. This area has one of the highest employment rates: 57 percent are employed full time, 7 percent part-time, and 2 percent temporarily. Four percent say they are unemployed. Another 9 percent are retired, 5 percent are on disability, and 16 percent are current students.

Forty-six percent living in this area are single, and 37 percent are married; 62 percent have children in the household. Renting versus owning is somewhat evenly split in this area: 46 percent own, while 47 percent rent. Forty-eight percent were born in the United States; of the
52 percent not born here, a plurality (43 percent) say they are from the Dominican Republic, another 29 percent from Mexico, 15 percent from El Salvador, and the rest from somewhere else. Thirty-six percent say both of their parents were born in the United States; 64 percent say at least one of their parents was born in another country.

Tracts 60.01-60.02

The area covered by tracts 60.01 and 60.02 is somewhat evenly split by gender: 54 percent of residents in this area of the city are men, and 46 percent are women. The area is more racially and ethnically mixed than others: 26 percent of residents are non-Hispanic white, 27 percent are non-Hispanic Black, 35 percent are Hispanic, and 13 percent are either multi-racial or something else. This segment of the city is more mixed in terms of age: 31 percent are 18 to 29 years old, 39 percent are 30 to 49 years old, 22 percent are 50 to 64 years old, and 9 percent are 65 years or older. Residents in these census tracts are most likely – and more likely than any other area – to have completed college or graduate work: 2 percent have completed 8th grade or less, 2 percent have had some high school, 38 percent graduated high school, 1 percent graduated vocational or technical school, 18 percent have some college, and 40 percent have graduated college or pursued to graduate work.

This area is also the most affluent in the city: 7 percent live in households making under $10,000 annually, 1 percent fall somewhere between $10,000 and $19,999, 15 percent fall between $20,000 and $29,999, 26 percent fall between $30,000 and $49,999, 22 percent fall between $50,000 and $74,999, and 28 percent are in households making $75,000 or more. This
The area covered by tract 93 is more heavily female: 43 percent of residents in this area of the city are men, while 57 percent are women. The area is somewhat more racially and ethnically mixed than others: 19 percent of residents are non-Hispanic white, 12 percent are non-Hispanic Black, 39 percent are Hispanic, and 30 percent are either multi-racial or something else. Most residents are middle-aged or younger: 38 percent are 18 to 29 years old, 45 percent are 30 to 49 years old, 14 percent are 50 to 64 years old, and 3 percent are 65 years or older. About half of residents in this census tract have completed up to high school: 6 percent have completed 8th grade or less, 23 percent have had some high school, 25 percent graduated high school, 27 percent have some college, and 19 percent have graduated college or pursued graduate work.
Eight percent of residents live in households making under $10,000 annually, 30 percent fall somewhere between $10,000 and $19,999, 7 percent fall between $20,000 and $29,999, 22 percent fall between $30,000 and $49,999, 13 percent fall between $50,000 and $74,999, and 20 percent are in households making $75,000 or more. Forty-nine percent are employed full time, 3 percent part-time, and 2 percent temporarily. Three percent are unemployed. Another 30 percent are current students, 6 percent are on disability, 4 percent are retired, and 3 percent are stay at home parents.

Fifty percent are single, and 19 percent are married; 28 percent have children in the household. Eleven percent own an apartment or house, while 89 percent rent. Forty-nine percent were born in the United States; of the 51 percent not born here, a plurality (39 percent) say they are from the Dominican Republic, another 21 percent are from Mexico, and the rest are from somewhere else. Thirty-five percent say both of their parents were born in the United States, and 64 percent say at least one of their parents was born in another country.
Community, Neighborhood, and Family

Life in the City of New Brunswick

Just over half of New Brunswick residents believe the City of New Brunswick is an “excellent” (7 percent) or “good” (45 percent) place to live, while 47 percent rate the city as “fair” (37 percent) or “poor” (10 percent). Views in 2016 are slightly less positive than they were four and eight years ago, however, when almost six in 10 held positive views about living in the city. Nevertheless, residents continue to remain much more positive than they were back in 1978 when the survey first began asking the question and the city’s revitalization process was in its earliest stages; back then, only 34 percent of residents felt positively about New Brunswick.

Racial and ethnic differences emerge on ratings of the city as a whole. Non-Hispanic Black residents are much more positive (63 percent say “excellent” or “good”) than non-Hispanic white residents (45 percent) or Hispanic residents (48 percent). For Hispanics, in particular, this continues a downward trend that began four years ago.

Other demographic factors influence ratings. Positive city ratings increase with income and are higher among those with the most education than those with only some college or a high school degree or less. Length of residency also matters. Those who have lived in the city for five years or more are much more likely to give positive ratings than those who are newcomers to the city.
Where residents are located in New Brunswick also has an impact on how they feel about the city as a place to live. Those living in census tracts 60.01 and 60.02 are most likely to give positive ratings (10 percent excellent, 61 percent good). Those in census tracts 55 to 56.02, as well as those living in tract 93, are also more positive than negative about the city – at 59 percent (3 percent excellent, 56 percent good) and 56 percent (20 percent excellent, 36 percent good), respectively. Those living in tracts 57 and 58, and especially tracts 51 through 53, are mostly negative, on the other hand. Forty-five percent living in the first set of census tracts rate the city as an “excellent” (11 percent) or “good” (34 percent) place to live; 40 percent say the city is “only fair,” and 15 percent of this group believe it is a “poor” place to live. Among residents in tracts 51 through 53, 4 percent say “excellent,” 34 percent say “good,” 48 percent say “only fair,” and 14 percent say “poor.” See Figure 2.1 for a full demographic breakdown.

**Life in New Brunswick Neighborhoods**

Views of one’s own neighborhood continue to be more positive than those of the city as a whole: 13 percent say their neighborhood is an “excellent” place to live, 47 percent say good, 29 percent say only fair, and 11 percent say poor. Much like with the city as a whole, however, views are slightly less positive than they have been in the recent past. Positive ratings are down five percentage points since 2012 when neighborhood life was last measured, mainly among those who say their neighborhood is “excellent.” This is the lowest rating of one’s own neighborhood since 1992, when 58 percent gave a positive evaluation (see Figure 2.2).
Figure 2.1: New Brunswick Ratings by Demographic
Figure 2.2: Neighborhood “Excellent”/“Good” Ratings (1978-2016)
Once again, ratings differ by key factors. Hispanic residents are almost as positive about their neighborhoods as non-Hispanic residents: 55 percent of the former give “excellent” or “good” ratings, compared to 59 percent of the latter. Hispanics rate their neighborhoods slightly higher than they do the city as a whole, which is a change from four years ago. White and Black residents also rate their neighborhoods a bit more positively than they do the city as a whole, though the gap between the two ratings is much smaller than it was in 2012. Those in the highest income bracket and those with the highest levels of education are much more positive about their neighborhoods than their counterparts.

Much like with ratings of New Brunswick overall, some areas of the city rate their neighborhoods better than others. Eight in 10 residents living in census tracts 60.01 and 60.02 rate their neighborhood as an “excellent” (28 percent) or “good” (52 percent) place to live, as do about six in 10 residents living in tract 93 (19 percent “excellent,” 41 percent “good”) and tracts 55 through 56.02 (8 percent “excellent,” 55 percent “good”). Half of residents in tracts 51 through 53 give positive ratings (7 percent “excellent,” 43 percent “good”). Those living in tracts 57 and 58 are the only residents who are more negative than positive about their neighborhood: 9 percent say their neighborhood is an “excellent” place to live and 35 percent say “good,” while 39 percent say their neighborhood is “only fair” and 17 percent rate it “poor.” See Figure 2.3 for a complete breakout by demographics.
Figure 2.3: Neighborhood Ratings by Demographic
Commitment to New Brunswick

Negativity pervades residents’ feelings on whether or not they would move out of their neighborhood if they had the opportunity: while 36 percent would stay where they are, 17 percent would want to move elsewhere in New Brunswick, and 47 percent would want to move out of New Brunswick entirely. See Figure 2.4 for trend data.

Some residents have a stronger desire to stay (or move) than others. Male residents are much more willing to stay in New Brunswick than female residents: just over half of women (53 percent) say they would like to move out of the city entirely, compared to 38 percent of men. A desire to move out decreases with age, and conversely, wanting to stay exactly where one is in their current neighborhood increases with age.

Wishes to stay or leave are similar among different racial and ethnic groups. White residents are only slightly more likely to want to leave the city entirely, and Hispanic residents are slightly more likely than non-Hispanic residents to want to move out of their neighborhood but stay within New Brunswick.

Those who rate the city as a “fair” or “poor” place to live are more likely to want to move out of the city entirely than those who give positive ratings. Likewise, residents who rate their neighborhoods negatively are more likely than those who give more positive ratings to want to move out of their neighborhood and the city. Perceptions of safety also impact the desire to
Figure 2.4: Commitment to New Brunswick (1978-2016)$^3$

$^3$ 2016 “move out” results are reported as “move out of neighborhood” (17 percent) and “move out of city” (47 percent) combined, similar to 2012 reporting.
move: residents who feel less safe in their neighborhood at night are more likely to want to move out of their neighborhood and out of New Brunswick.

Residents living in census tract 93 are most likely to want to stay where they are, though this number still misses the halfway mark: 45 percent want to stay, while 12 percent want to move elsewhere in the city and 42 percent want to move out entirely. Just over half of those living in tracts 60.01 and 60.02 want to move out of the city entirely; another 9 percent want to move to another part of New Brunswick, and 39 percent would stay where they are. Residents in tracts 51 through 53 feel similarly. Those living in the areas covered by tracts 57 and 58, as well as 55 through 56.02, are least likely to say they want to stay where they currently live – 31 percent and 34 percent, respectively – though among those who want to move, about a third want to simply move elsewhere within New Brunswick.

Making New Brunswick Better

When asked what should be done to make New Brunswick a better place to live, reducing crime and making the city safer top the list: 22 percent of residents mention something about crime and safety in this open-ended question (see Figure 2.5). This is not a new sentiment. Residents mentioned crime and safety at the top of their list for improvements back in 2012, as well. The next most popular response is clean streets: 10 percent of residents mention

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4 Responses were recorded verbatim in each mode; word-for-word responses can be found in the Appendix. Open-ended responses were then categorized into various topics that have been used through the history of the New Brunswick Tomorrow Community Survey, as reflected by the percentages highlighted above.
something about this as an important thing that needs to be done. Residents mention a variety of other issues, including more job opportunities (7 percent), roads and traffic (6 percent), and improving education and schools (6 percent); the importance of this last item has dropped markedly since 2012 where it stood as the second most important issue at 23 percent.\(^5\)

Some of the various topics mentioned by residents are closely aligned and can be collapsed further into even broader categories. Improving societal conditions is the top overarching concern, with 29 percent of residents mentioning something about issues like crime, drug problems, race relations, immigration, local government, and more. Another 18 percent want something done about economic conditions, 15 percent say something about improving the community, and 12 percent want improvements to transportation. Seven percent each mention education and housing.

Some demographic differences emerge in what residents believe is the most important thing to do in order to improve New Brunswick life. While non-Hispanic white residents and Hispanic residents are mainly concerned most about societal conditions (at 50 percent and 31 percent, respectively), non-Hispanic Black residents are most likely (at 29 percent) to mention something improving economic conditions. Those in the lowest income bracket are most likely to cite community improvement as the most important thing that needs to be done (at 27 percent), compared to those in higher income brackets, for whom societal conditions top the list.

\(^5\) This is perhaps due to improved perceptions of the public school system in 2016, as will be elaborated on in Chapter 3.
Societal conditions are also the top concern for those living in census tracts 51 through 53 and 55 through 56.02 (34 percent and 35 percent, respectively). Those in tracts 57 through 58, on the other hand, believe the foremost issue should be improving the community (39 percent). The most important issue for those in tracts 60.01 through 60.02 is economic conditions (25 percent), while those in tract 93 mention a myriad of things that need improvement.

Safety and Crime

Negativity toward life in New Brunswick may stem from residents’ declining perceptions of safety in the city and their beliefs that crime has not improved. Twenty-two percent say they feel “very” safe in their neighborhood at night, down from 36 percent four years ago; this is the lowest on record in the five decades this question has been asked of New Brunswick residents. Most instead feel somewhere in the middle when it comes to safety, a category that has seen a significant increase since 2012: 61 percent now say they feel “somewhat” safe in their neighborhood at night, up from 51 percent four years ago. Just 17 percent say they do not feel safe “at all,” up from 10 percent four years ago and the highest ever recorded in the history of the New Brunswick Community Survey. See Figure 2.6 for trend data.

Some groups furthermore feel less safe in their neighborhoods at night than others. Hispanic residents feel less safe than non-Hispanic residents: 15 percent of Hispanics feel very safe, compared to 29 percent of non-Hispanics. Nevertheless, a majority of Hispanics feels “somewhat” safe (64 percent); one in five of this group does not feel safe at all.
Figure 2.5: Most Important Thing to Make New Brunswick a Better Place to Live

- Make safer/reduce crime: 22%
- Clean streets: 10%
- More jobs: 7%
- Roads and traffic: 6%
- Improve education: 6%
- Lower taxes: 4%
- Encourage new business: 4%
- More/better parking: 3%
- Deal with drug problems: 3%
- Improve government/politics: 3%
- Lower rents/rent control: 2%
- More activities for children/teens: 2%
- More/better parks/recreation: 2%
- More police/foot patrols: 2%
- Improvements in community: 2%
- Improve downtown area: 2%
- Build more housing: 2%
- Better transportation: 2%
- Make landlords keep up property: 1%
- Improve police protection: 1%
- Renovate buildings: 1%
- Over development: 1%
- Other: 10%
Figure 2.6: Safe in Neighborhood at Night (1978-2016)
Again, socioeconomic factors and age play a role. Those with the most education and those in the highest income bracket feel safest. Safety concerns are also slightly lower among older residents compared to their younger counterparts. Those who give the city or their neighborhood negative ratings and those who want to move also feel less safe.

Feelings of safety also vary depending on which area residents reside. Those living in census tracts 51 through 53 are least likely to feel safe compared to everyone else: 8 percent very safe, compared to 61 percent who say somewhat safe, and 31 percent who do not feel safe at all. Conversely, those in census tracts 60.01 and 60.02 feel the safer than anyone else, with almost all residents in this area evenly split between feeling “very” and “somewhat safe” in their neighborhood at 49 percent each. In a distant second, 28 percent of residents living in census tract 93 feel “very safe,” and another 63 percent say “somewhat”; residents located in tracts 55 through 56.02 and 57 through 58 are about ten points less likely to feel “very safe” (at 17 percent and 19 percent, respectively), but are about as likely to say “somewhat” (69 percent and 60 percent, respectively). See Figure 2.7 for a full demographic breakdown.

Half believe crime in New Brunswick has remained the same, compared to 40 percent who felt this way in 2012. The rest are split evenly between whether crime has gotten better or worse – 25 percent versus 25 percent. The latter has improved since 2012; four years ago, 33 percent of residents said crime had gotten worse. See Figure 2.8 for trend data.
Figure 2.7: Perceptions of Neighborhood Safety at Night by Demographic

- Gender: Male, Female
- Race/Ethnicity: White, Black, Hispanic
- Age: 18-34, 35-49, 50-64, 65+
- Education: HS or Less, Some College, College Grad
- Income: Under $20K, $20K - $49.9K, $50K+
- Length of Residency: <10 yrs, 10-20 yrs, 20+ yrs
- Census Tract: 51-53, 55-56.02, 57-58, 60.01-60.02
- Child in HH: Yes, No
- Born in US: Yes, No

The chart shows the percentage of people perceiving their neighborhood safety at night as very safe, somewhat safe, or not at all safe, categorized by the above demographics.
Figure 2.8: Crime in New Brunswick Better or Worse (1980-2016)
Perceptions of how crime in the city has evolved in the past four years noticeably differ by gender. While 32 percent of men believe crime has gotten better since 2012, just 18 percent of women feel the same. A majority of women – 58 percent – instead feel that crime has remained the same, compared to 42 percent of men.

White residents are less likely than Hispanic or Black residents to feel crime has improved and instead are more likely to say crime has stayed the same. Hispanic and Black residents, on the other hand, are more likely to believe that crime has gotten worse; 27 percent of Blacks and 22 percent of Hispanics say this, compared to 15 percent of whites.

Views on crime are also influenced by age and how long one has been a resident of New Brunswick. New Brunswick’s youngest residents are less likely than their older counterparts to believe crime has gotten better and more likely to feel that crime has stayed the same; residents 35 years or older are more likely to say crime has improved, but they are also more likely than millennials to say crime has gotten worse. Likewise, residents who have lived in the city for less then 10 years are more likely to believe crime has remained the same and slightly less likely to believe it has gotten better than those who have lived in the city for longer. Residents who have lived in the area longer are a bit more likely to believe crime has gotten better but are also more likely than their counterparts to believe crime has gotten worse.

Those living in census tract 93 are most likely to feel crime has gotten better in the past four years: 44 percent feel this way, compared to 12 percent who say it has gotten worse, and 44
percent who feel it has remained the same. Those in tracts 60.01 and 60.02 are also slightly more optimistic than others (29 percent say crime has gotten better), though a slight majority (52 percent) believes it has stayed the same. Those living in tracts 55 through 56.02, on the other hand, are least likely to feel crime has improved (at 18 percent) and most likely to feel it has stayed the same (at 58 percent). While those located in tracts 57 and 58 are slightly more likely to feel crime has gotten better (22 percent), they are actually also the most likely to believe it has gotten worse (32 percent). Residents in tracts 51 through 53 are split between whether it has gotten better or worse at 25 percent each. See Figure 2.9 for a full demographic breakdown.
Figure 2.9: Change in Crime Perceptions by Demographic
3 Education and Youth

Public Schools

Forty-one percent of New Brunswick residents report having at least one person in their household attending school: 13 percent have at least one child in pre-kindergarten, 9 percent have at least one child in kindergarten, 20 percent have at least one child in first through fifth grade, 16 percent have at least one child in sixth through eighth grade, and 19 percent have at least one child in high school. Just 2 percent of residents report that someone in their household is attending the New Brunswick Adult Learning Center.

Just over half of all residents give positive ratings to the New Brunswick public school system, though most of these responses are concentrated within the “good” category: 13 percent say the city’s public schools are doing an “excellent” job, and another 40 percent say they are doing a “good” job. Thirty-seven percent rate them as “only fair” and 10 percent as “poor.” This is a large improvement from recent years and the first time in the history of the New Brunswick Community Survey where a majority felt positively about public education in the city (see Figure 3.1).
Figure 3.1: “Excellent”/“Good” Ratings Of New Brunswick Schools (1978-2016)
Views on New Brunswick public schools are virtually identical whether or not residents have children in their household, but differences emerge between those who have someone actually in the school system versus those who do not: 64 percent of residents with someone in their household attending school give the school system positive ratings, compared to 43 percent of individuals in households where no one attends. Likewise, those in a household whose child is anywhere from pre-kindergarten to elementary school age are more positive than those without a child in these grades, as are those who have children in middle or high school compared to those who do not.

Women give lower school ratings than men, though this greater negativity stems from female residents without someone in the school system. Female residents with someone in school are actually much more positive than women, in general – 59 percent give an “excellent” or “good” rating. Their male counterparts still continue to be more positive, however: almost three-quarters of males with someone in school rate the school system positively.

Hispanic residents give higher ratings than non-Hispanic residents: 59 percent of Hispanics say the schools are “excellent” or good,” versus 47 percent of non-Hispanics. Non-Hispanic white residents are less approving of the school system than non-Hispanic Black residents – 35 percent compared to 51 percent.

Views on the school system are most negative among those with a college degree or higher, as well as those in the highest income bracket, yet are most positive among those with some
college and those in middle-income households. Residents 50 years or older are also less likely to give the schools positive ratings. Negativity among these groups can once again be attributed to lack of personal experience with the system: ratings are more positive among older residents, the more highlight educated, and the more affluent if someone in their household actually attends a New Brunswick public school.

Residents living in census tracts 57 through 58 are most likely to give positive school ratings compared to those living in other areas of the city (at 67 percent), while those in census tracts 55 through 56.02 give the least positive ratings (at 41 percent). See Figure 3.2 for a full demographic breakdown. See Figure 3.2 for a full demographic breakdown.

Almost half of residents (49 percent) believe the quality of public schools in the city have remained the same since four years ago, and another 37 percent say they have gotten better. Just 14 percent feel they have gotten worse, virtually the same number as in 2012.

There is little difference in opinion between those with children and those without; instead, disparities once again emerge between those who actually have children attending a New Brunswick school and those who do not. Forty-seven percent of those with children in school believe the quality of public schools in the city is getting better, compared to 27 percent of those who do not have anyone attending. This positive outlook holds true for residents with young children attending school, as well as those with children in middle and high school.
Figure 3.2: School Ratings by Demographic
Residents who have lived in New Brunswick longer are more likely than newcomers to believe the quality of schools in the area have gotten both better and worse; almost two-thirds of residents who have lived in New Brunswick for less than 10 years say that the schools have mainly stayed the same.

Forty-eight percent of Hispanic residents believe schools in the city are improving, while 13 percent feel they have gotten worse, and 40 percent say they have stayed the same. Non-Hispanic residents are much less positive: about a quarter believe the schools have gotten better, while six in 10 say there has been no change. More than eight in 10 non-Hispanic white residents feel the schools have remained the same; just 7 percent say they have gotten better, and 11 percent say worse. Non-Hispanic black residents are more likely than whites to say the schools have gotten both better (32 percent) and worse (23 percent); 44 percent see no change.

Much like with overall ratings, views on whether the school system has improved in the past four years declines with age, education, and income. See Figure 3.3 for a full demographic breakdown.

Residents cite a variety of reasons as to why they feel the school system has gotten better, worse, or remained the same (see Figure 3.4). Those who believe the quality of public schools has stayed the same are most likely to say that they simply have not seen any improvements in the last four years (32 percent).
Figure 3.3: Change in Public School Perceptions by Demographic
Figure 3.4: Reasons for Perceptions of Public School System by Initial Response
Among those who feel schools in the city have gotten better, 20 percent say this is due to recent construction and renovation, and another 14 percent say this is due to the programs being offered; 13 percent mention something about the curriculum. Those residents who believe the schools have gotten worse are most likely to say it is due to the teachers (21 percent); a number of residents in this group also negatively mention something about the programs being offered (16 percent) or reputation (13 percent).

**Youth Programs**

Under half of residents (46 percent) with children in their household report that any of their children *attend some type of after-school or summer youth program*; 54 percent claim no child in their household participates in these types of programs. These numbers mostly parallel those from 2012 (see Figure 3.5).

The biggest factors in non-participation are not knowing enough about these programs (32 percent) and children in their household being too young to enroll (28 percent selected). Another 14 percent say children in their household are simply not interested. This lack of interest used to be the number one reason for non-participation back in 2012 but is now a distant fourth.
Figure 3.5: Non-Participation Reasons (2012 vs. 2016)
Childcare

Just over half of residents with children in the household (53 percent) say they have children in need of childcare. Among this group, 56 percent say that children in the household in need of care most often stay with a family member, and another 23 percent say children in their household go to a licensed daycare; 13 percent of residents send children to stay with someone who is not a family member. These numbers have also changed little since 2012 (see Figure 3.6).

When a child is home sick and adults in the household have to go to work, almost all residents with children in the household (81 percent) report that an adult typically misses work to stay home and care for the child, a trend that has increased slightly from four years ago (see Figure 3.7). Eleven percent make some other type of arrangement, and another 7 percent say the child typically stays home alone in this situation. Only 1 percent of residents report using a sick child daycare center.

Residents with children are mostly uninterested in access to this last option: 75 percent say they would not be likely to use a local child daycare center with health workers trained to take care of their children when sick, while 25 percent would.

When asked to estimate a reasonable cost per day to send their child to such a facility, respondents’ answers ranged from free to paying $160 daily. Averaging across all responses,
respondents said they would be willing to pay about $35, though the single most frequent answer was $15 a day.
Figure 3.6: Child Care Options (2012 vs. 2016)
Figure 3.7: Sick Child Care Options (2012 vs. 2016)

- An adult stays home and misses work: 75% (2012), 81% (2016)
- The child goes to a sick child daycare center: 6% (2012), 1% (2016)
- The child stays home alone: 5% (2012), 7% (2016)
- Something else: 13% (2012), 11% (2016)