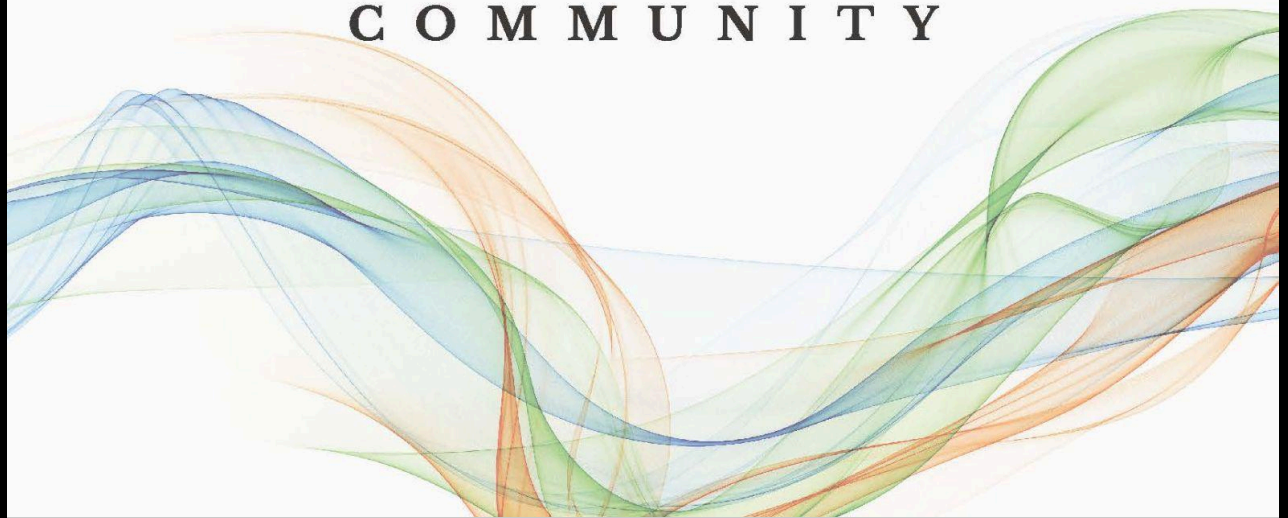# GFI

Global Flint Initiative

CREATING A
WELCOMING
COMMUNITY

The Global Flint Initiative

Research Report Advancing Welcoming Community Initiatives in Flint

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The data and findings presented in this report are created for the International Center of Greater Flint (ICGF) by the UM-Flint research team.

Executive Summary

This report summarizes data collected from the "Advancing Welcoming Communities Initiatives" survey administered to immigrants and international students from August 2024 to February 2025 as part of ICGF's Global Flint Initiative. The survey design and process for gathering responses is described in detail below. The data reported here are from 201 completed surveys gathered from 25 different community locations. The survey and the survey data report are organized across 12 sections, summarized as follows:

Respondent Background	The majority of survey respondents (59%) are females of middle class background. The average age is 37. They come from more than 30 different countries. Cuba, Mexico, Nigeria, India, and Venezuela comprise the top 5 countries of origin.
Timing & Reasons for Migrating	The majority of survey respondents came to the US in the last 3 years. Reasons for leaving the home country and coming to the US include work and educational opportunities, and reasons for coming to Flint include already having family or friends here.
Marriage, Family, & Household	About half of the survey respondents are married, and a majority have children. The majority live in a house or condo together with others.
Language	First language spoken varies greatly and literacy figures highly among survey respondents. Nearly half of those who took the survey indicate that English is among the languages they speak. Several people wish to improve their English language ability or are currently taking English language instruction. Many survey respondents indicate they have access to native or heritage language instruction, but there are people who do not have access who want it.
Education	About half of survey participants have attended school in the US and about half have not. Many come to the US with degrees or certifications, and some find these do not transfer here. About a third of respondents are currently enrolled in school, and many indicate they are interested in pursuing education in the US.
Employment & Economics	This section has 4 subsections. Employment: Survey respondents are full-time students, employed and unemployed individuals, and people who identify as homemakers. Income: Many survey respondents indicate they are the main provider for their household and about a quarter are responsible for people outside their household. Income levels span all brackets, but most fall in the lower income brackets. Workforce Development: The majority of respondents report they have the training they need, but across categories such as resume writing,

interview skills, equipment and computer skills, 20-25% lack the training they need, and the greatest need lies in on-the-job training.

Entrepreneurship: Like elsewhere in Michigan, about 10% of respondents own a business and many indicate interest in owning a business across a wide range of different business types.

Services	Survey participants consistently identify a lack of familiarity with services and report never using them. Food assistance and healthcare are reported as the easiest services to access, while housing assistance is the most difficult to access.
Transportation	A majority of respondents have a driver's license and travel by a car they own. Ability to get transportation to daily necessities is split: it is either very easy or very difficult. A majority travel 15 minutes or less for most travel needs with the exception of social or leisure activities, for which people tend to travel longer distances.
Health	A large majority of respondents have health insurance, most report having had a health check up in the last year, and many state they have not been diagnosed with common diseases or conditions found in the US like diabetes, hypertension, or cancer. Nevertheless, many respondents say that they have not been able to get the health care they need or experience delays in getting health care, with the main cause for this listed as a lack of health insurance. Finally, the data suggest a complex picture of participant well-being, with survey participants indicating they experience both positive and negative indicators for well-being.
Religion	Many respondents have a house of worship they can attend, and many services are offered in their first language. But there is disagreement about the local availability of religious and culturally specific food and other items.
Social Integration, Violence, & Rights	Indicators of social integration like physical and leisure activity or safety are positive and point to Flint experiences often overlooked in dominant representations of the city. But survey participant responses show that there is room for improving sense of belonging.
Future Plans for Living in Flint	Nearly half of the survey participants indicate they plan to continue living in the Flint/Flint area, but more respondents indicate they plan to continue living in the US than those who plan to stay in the area, suggesting opportunities to make Flint a more permanent destination.

Project Context and Partners

The Global Flint Initiative (GFI) is an economic and community revitalization strategy spearheaded by the International Center of Greater Flint (ICGF). This initiative is inspired by [Global Detroit](#) and [Welcoming Community](#) initiatives. In this work, ICGF engages a network of stakeholders and aims to develop detailed plans for a set of strategies, programs, and initiatives that are uniquely right and needed for the Flint region.

The GFI officially launched on March 5, 2024. Partnerships with area researchers are an important component of GFI's first year and ICGF efforts to facilitate evidence-informed planning and decision making. ICGF research partners include:

- Kettering University faculty Dr. Kenneth Williams and graduate students who completed [a literature review](#) on the challenges faced by immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and international students in the US.
- A multidisciplinary University of Michigan-Flint (UMF) faculty team that designed, implemented, and analyzed survey research to learn more about immigrants in the community and their experiences and needs. The UMF team worked with student researchers during the survey implementation phase.

ICGF research partners helped organize and host the GFI kick-off event held at the Gloria Coles Flint Public Library. The event was an opportunity to introduce the project and gather information about the local experiences of migrants from the organizations that serve them. The event included a [presentation](#) and breakout sessions with attendees to understand the issues local migrants are facing from the perspective of those serving the population. More than 32 people attended, representing educational organizations, public services and government representatives, faith-based organizations, and local non-profits. See articles about the event in:

- [East Village Magazine](#)
- [Flintside](#)

The UM-Flint team held follow-up discussions with organizations that expressed interest in contributing to the creation of the survey. This included meetings with multiple staff from organizations such as Arab American Heritage Council, Latinx Center, Uloma Immigrant House, and the international students from Kettering who wrote the literature review. Along with ICGF leadership, these staff and students reviewed and tested the survey questions, added to them, and suggested changes.

Survey Design

The survey topics and themes are drawn from the March 5 kickoff meeting. The UMF team reviewed several published surveys about US migrant populations to identify appropriate questions and phrasing. The survey is written in English and edited for simple, plain language so that it is understandable despite different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The survey is translated into Spanish and Arabic.

The survey contains 98 questions. Although most of the questions are multiple choice, some open ended questions are included. The survey instrument uses skip-logic so that no one has to read and answer questions that do not pertain to them; instead, based on previous responses, survey participants only see questions relevant to them (e.g. if the subject indicates do not have children, they skip and thus do not see questions about their children's education).

Survey questions are organized thematically in 12 sections as follows:
- Respondent Background
- Reasons for migrating
- Marriage, Family & Household
- Language
- Education
- Employment & Economic Conditions
- Services
- Transportation
- Health
- Religion
- Social Integration
- Future Plans for Living in Flint

The survey is approved by UM-Flint's Institutional Review Board as exempt research with no more than minimal risk (HUM#00256816). No sensitive or identifiable information was or is collected from participants.

This report summarizes the findings from the Global Flint Initiative survey. The survey helps document who is here, providing demographic characteristics of the growing immigrant population in the greater Flint area. It helps us know more about what these diverse communities and individuals are experiencing in the area, identifying kinds of services or supports they need. This information can inform ICGF strategic planning and efforts to enhance capacity for creating welcoming community infrastructure.

Survey Administration

Between August 2024 and January 2025, 259 surveys were collected. Of these, 201 have usable data, meaning that the respondent answered most to all the survey questions, as follows: 102 in English, 80 in Spanish, and 19 in Arabic.

Surveys were conducted in-person at approximately 25 different locations around Genesee county:
- Colleges and Universities (MCC college enrollment, MCC ELAP course, UM-Flint picnic, Kettering international students organization) and schools (Richfield Public School Academy open house, GISD adult ESL)
- Immigrant-focused organizations and events:
    - AAHC events (annual picnic, business group, health literacy with Uloma Immigrant House)
    - Latinx Center events (end of bimestre, Dia de los Muertos)
- Community events and locations (Flint Public Library, Genesee County Free Medical Clinic, Muslim food pantry, Qamaria, Michigan Works)
- Religious groups: Various Churches and Mosques

Survey respondents receive $10 for their participation and are provided with culturally appropriate food or snacks. The surveys are preloaded on tablets and QR codes are available for participants who prefer to use their phone. The survey is comprehensive and requires anywhere from 20 to 60 minutes to complete. At least one faculty member from the UMF team is present at all events where surveys are administered, often accompanied by student research assistants and/or ICGF rep, to explain the study and uses of the data collected, answer questions, and troubleshoot technical issues.

Survey participants reflect much of the breadth and diversity of the immigrant population in the area. But our sample likely does not capture all of the diversity. The survey sample is constrained by:
- Participant self-selection
- Researcher access to immigrant groups and individuals within groups
- Language (surveys are available only in English, Arabic, and Spanish)
- Time commitment to complete the survey

Our survey data collection method relies heavily on gatekeepers for access to different immigrant groups and trust building. Examples of what may be underrepresented populations in this report include:
- People unable to take the time for the survey at the survey event
- Individuals with literacy challenges and/or those who do not read English, Spanish, or Arabic
- Groups or individuals not already connected to local schools or organizations in the ICGF network that supported the study process. This likely includes the most vulnerable or those with the least resources, such as undocumented or unhoused people.

Survey Results

The results below reflect findings from 201 survey respondents. Please note:
- There are embedded skip logics within the survey
- Ethical research protocols require that respondents be allowed to skip any question they are not comfortable answering.

As a result, the total response size for each question **will vary** and will be noted in parentheses in text or on graphs as N. Where possible results are presented in percentages. However, scaled responses are presented in count form indicating frequency, reflected in parentheses on graphs as *f*.

Respondent Background

The survey begins by determining eligibility, asking if the participant is 18 or older (if no, the survey ends), and whether they are immigrants or children of immigrants (if neither, the survey ends). The majority are **first generation immigrants** (84.1%, N=169) and the remainder second generation/children of immigrants (15.9%, N=32).
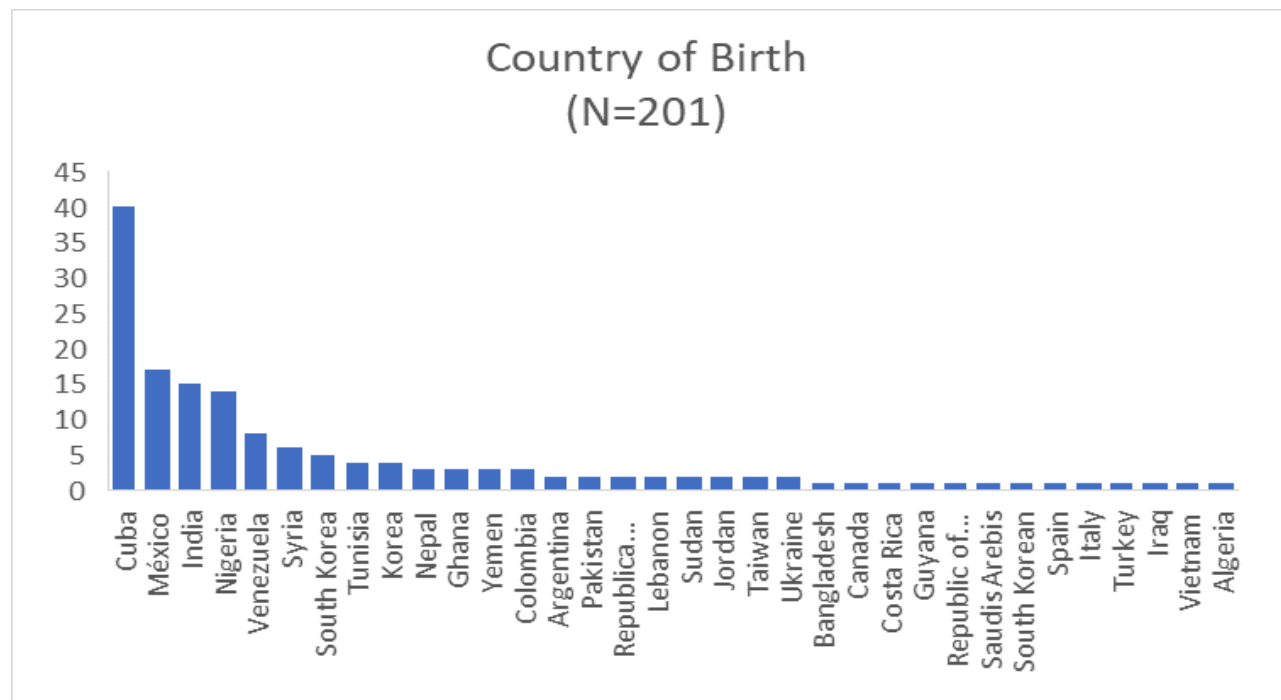
We asked how individuals self-describe, and the majority self-describe as immigrants (61.3%, N=100) or international students (23.3%, N=38).
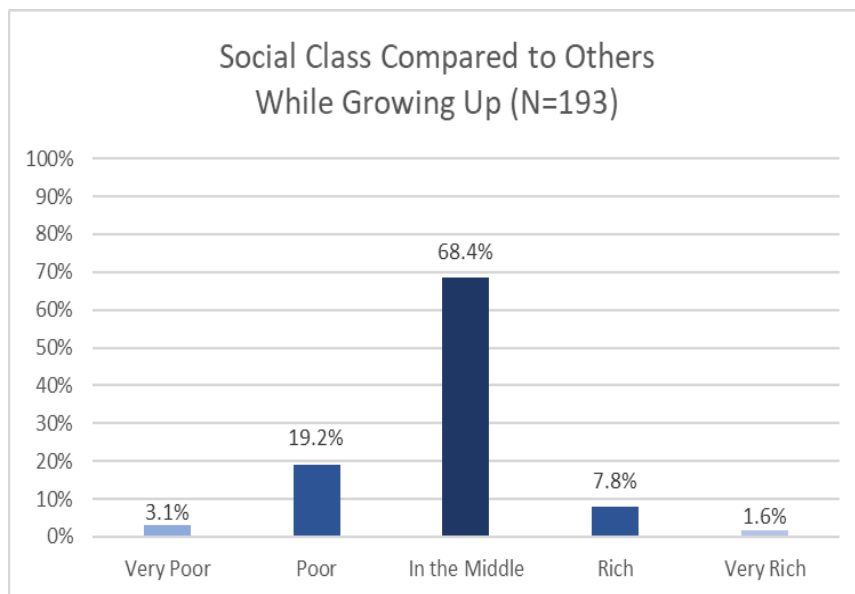
Sex
(N=192)

41.1%

58.9%
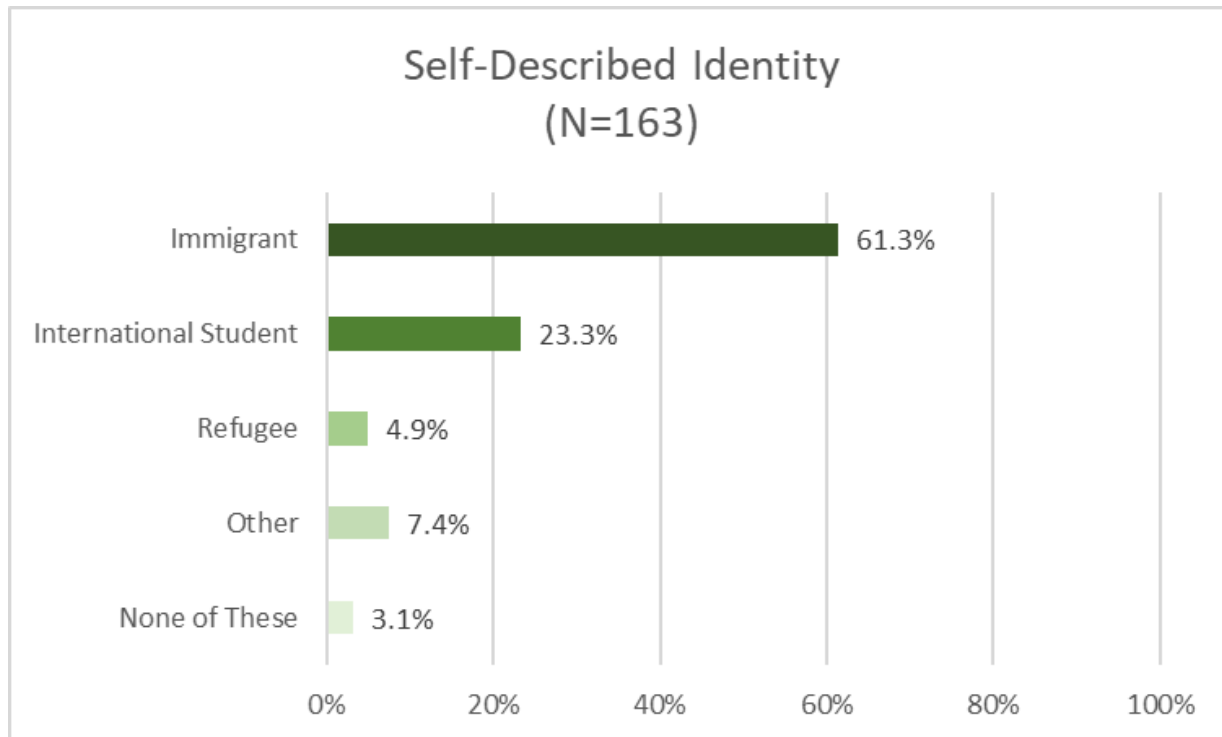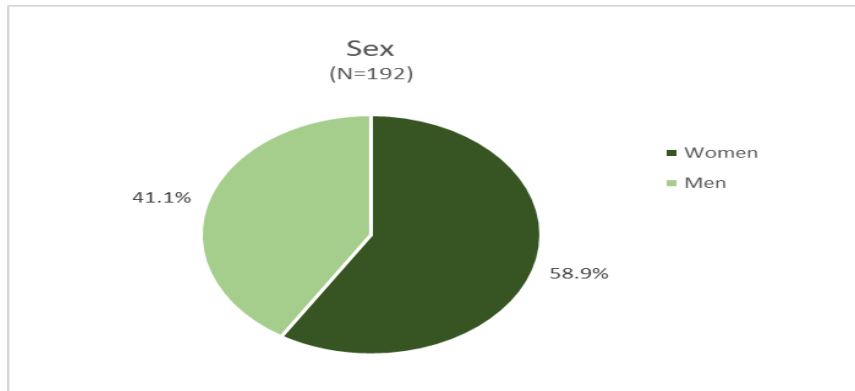
■ Women
■ Men

Women comprise more than half of those who completed the survey (58.9%, N=113). Survey respondents range in **age** from 18 to 86 years old. But a majority of respondents range in age from 22 to 52, with an average age of 37.

The highest number of survey participants report being born in Cuba (N=40), followed by Mexico (N=19), India (N=15), Nigeria (N=13), and Venezuela (N=7).

Country of Birth
(N=201)

Cuba, México, India, Nigeria, Venezuela, Syria, South Korea, Tunisia, Korea, Nepal, Ghana, Yemen, Colombia, Argentina, Pakistan, Republica…, Lebanon, Sudan, Jordan, Taiwan, Ukraine, Bangladesh, Canada, Costa Rica, Guyana, Republic of…, Saudis Arebis, South Korean, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Iraq, Vietnam, Algeria

Social Class Compared to Others While Growing Up (N=193)

More than two thirds of respondents indicate they grew up with **middle class** backgrounds in their country of origin (68.4%, N=132). Just shy of 10% of respondents claim they grew up in locally well off rich or very rich families (9.4%, N=181). At the same time, nearly 20% of respondents claim they grew up with locally poor (19.2%, N=37) or very poor class backgrounds (3.1%, N=6)

Timing and Reasons for Migrating

The greatest number of survey participants immigrated to the US in 2024 (N=36), 2022 (N=30), and 2023 (N=20).

Year of Arrival in US (N=153)
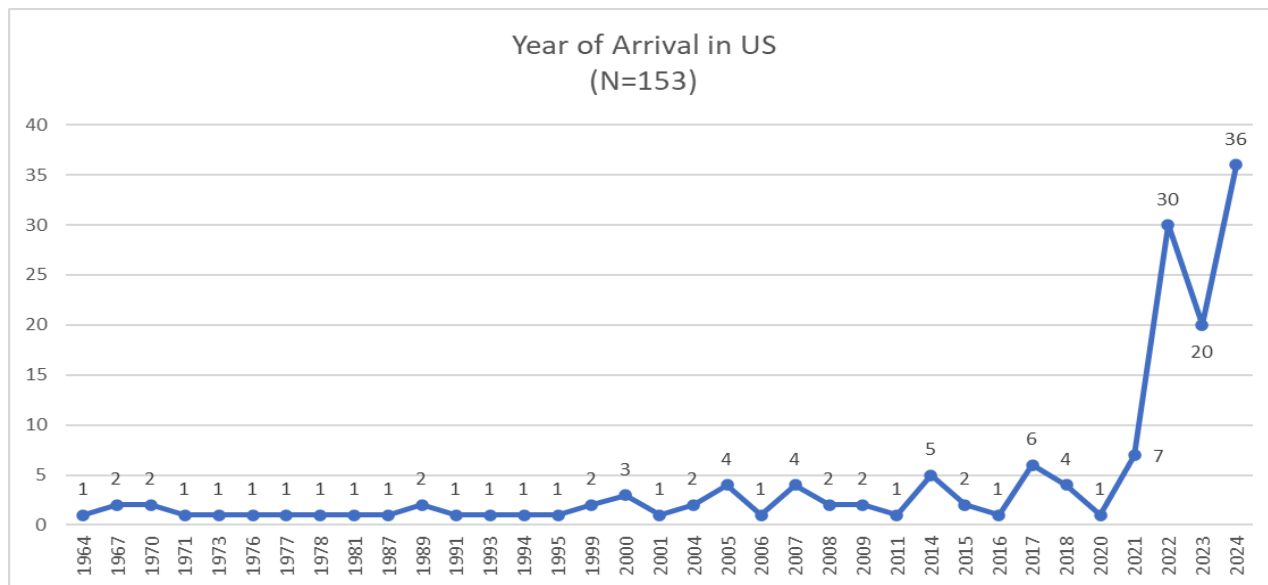
Reasons for leaving the home country include the lack of work opportunities in the home country, the lack of educational opportunities at home and the promise of an education abroad, conflict, insecurity or social unrest in the home country, and family reunification. "Other" includes adoption, better job prospects, business and schooling, financial hardship, married an American citizen, improve English, missionary work, and new experience. **Reasons for coming to the US** mirror this information, with "other" including a better future and opportunities, adoption, better job prospects and money/quality of life, better life opportunity, safety, and religious reasons.

Reasons for Leaving Home Country (N=338)

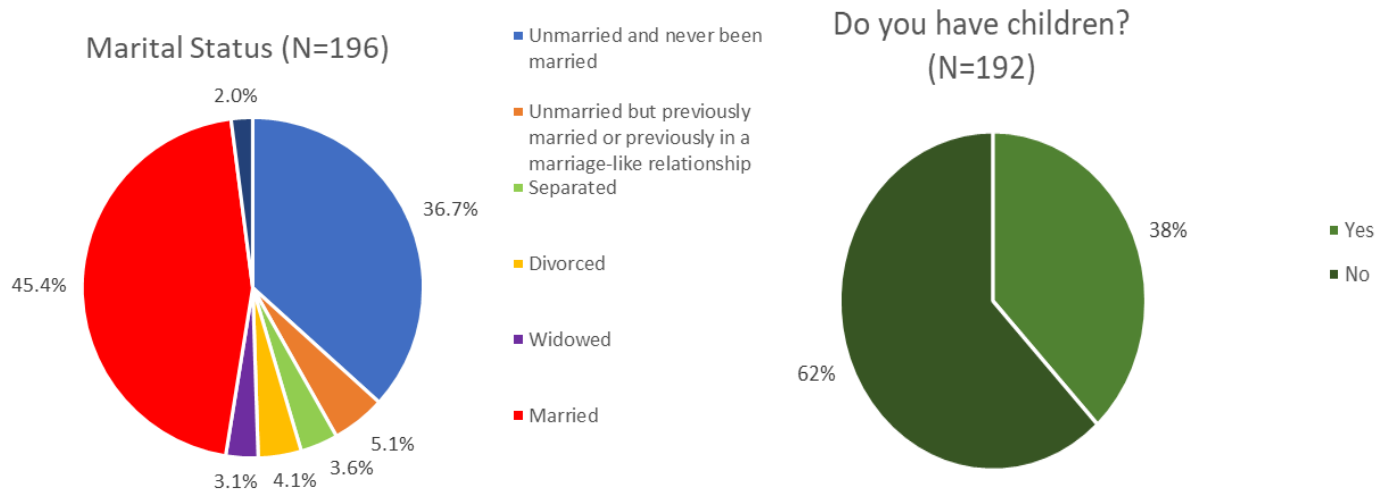Reasons for Coming to the US (N=338)
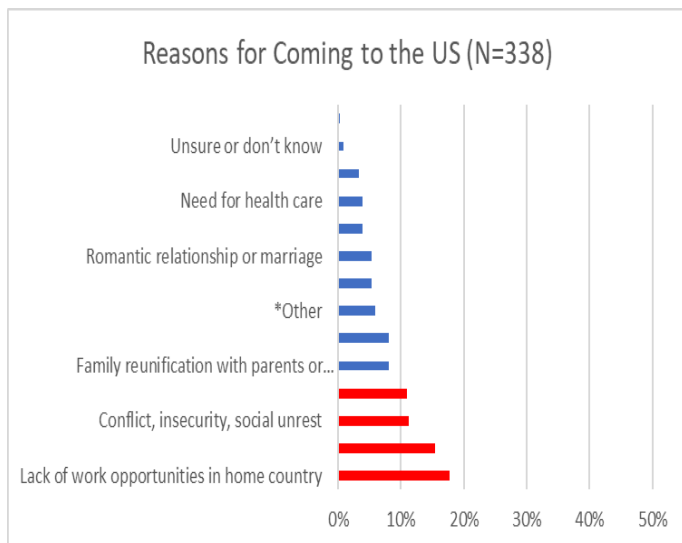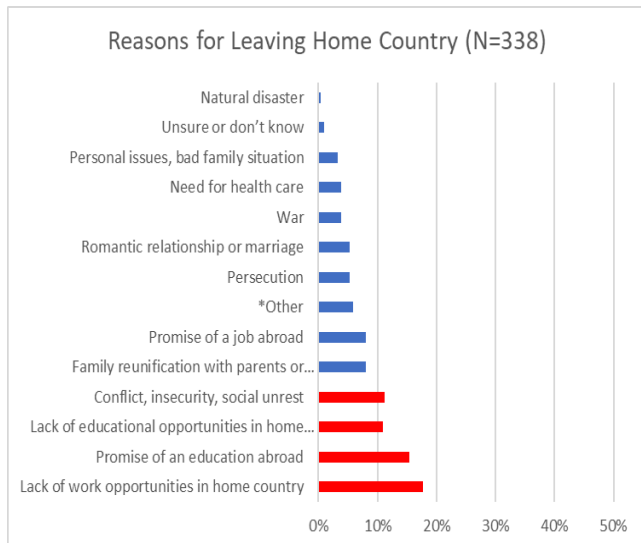
The lack of work opportunities is the most common push/pull factor listed for leaving the home country and coming to the US, but interestingly, respondents choose Flint over other locations in many cases because they already had friends or family here. Other **reasons for coming to Flint** include: adoption, better job prospects, bought a house or condo, father's job, Flint agreement with my university, near work, new environment, and spouse's family lives in the area.

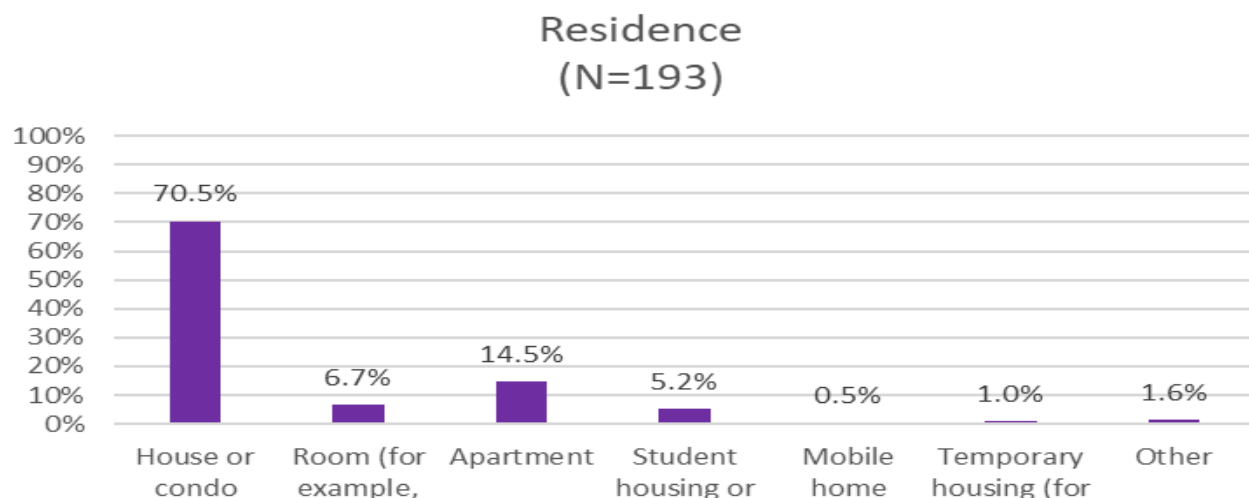

Reasons for Coming to Flint (N=305)
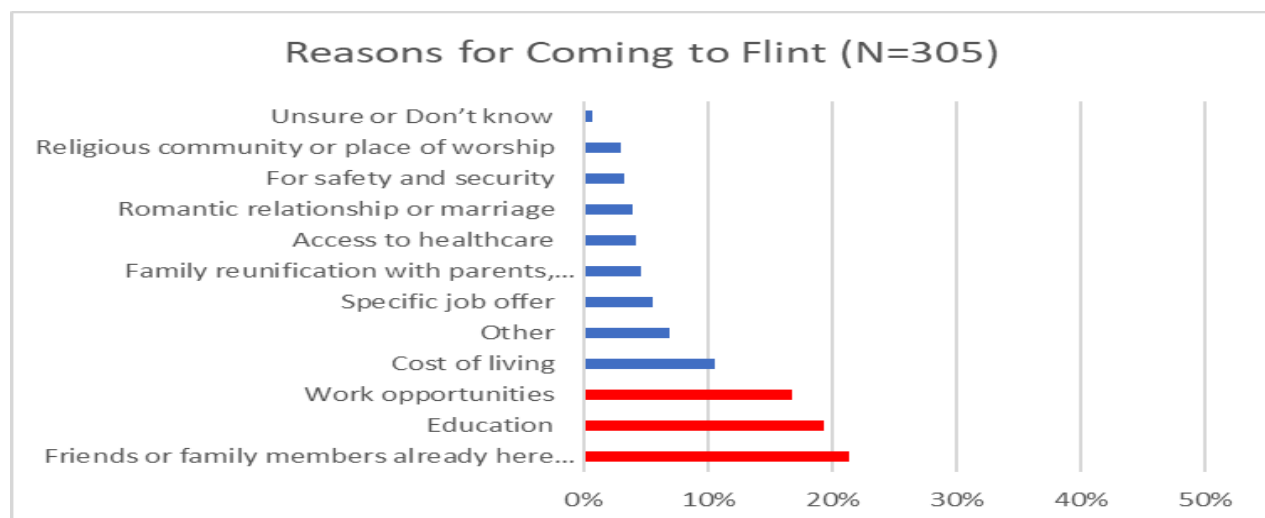
Marriage, Family & Household

Close to half of participants are **married** (45.4%, N=89) followed by 36.7% (N=72) who are unmarried and have never married. A majority of respondents indicate they have **children** (62%, N=119). The vast majority of their children (95%, N=113) live in the US, but 11% (N=13)[1] indicate their children live outside the US. Ten respondents report that they intend for their children to move here and 4 respondents report not being able to bring their children here to live with them.

Marital Status (N=196)
- Unmarried and never been married
- Unmarried but previously married or previously in a marriage-like relationship
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Married

2.0%
36.7%
45.4%
3.1% 4.1% 3.6%
5.1%

Do you have children? (N=192)

- Yes
- No

38%
62%

A majority of respondents (71.3%, N=127) live with others, and 16.3% (N=29) live alone. Those living with others report living with parents (N=26), spouse or partner (N=61), children (N=52), other family members (N=16), housemates or roommates (N=28), landlord (N=2), strangers (N=7), and other (N=3).

The most common reported **residence types** are house or condo (70.5%, N=136), followed by apartment (14.5%, N=28), room (6.7%, N=13), and student housing (5.2%, N=10). Additionally, 50% (N=65) of participants living in a house or condo own it, while 36.2% (N=47) rent, and 13.1% (N=17) live rent free.

Residence (N=193)

House or condo	Room (for example,	Apartment	Student housing or	Mobile home	Temporary housing (for	Other
70.5%	6.7%	14.5%	5.2%	0.5%	1.0%	1.6%

Language

The first language spoken by respondents varies. The number of languages respondents speak also varies, but many report speaking 2-3 languages. Thirty-five people indicate their native language is **English**, and 94 indicate English is among the languages they speak.

Half of the survey respondents did not respond to questions regarding English language proficiency, but a noticeable number of respondents are seeking to improve their English language ability. For example, 30.2% (N=48) are currently taking a class to learn or improve English.

From 45 of the 48 respondents currently taking English language instruction of some sort, 88.9% (N=40) confirm that it is at a location that they feel comfortable attending. Additionally, 38 people describe where they are currently taking English instructions pointing to in-person and online learning settings including apps as follows:
- 55.3% (N=21) are taking it in-person (for example, GISD, Latinx Center, Michigan Works, and Mott Community College)
- 44.7% (N=17) are taking it online (for example, via Duolingo or Busuu, YouTube videos, Google Meet, and Instagram)

In addition to asking about English language educational opportunities, we asked about **native or heritage language** education: 52.3% (N=78) report having access to native language education. Of those who do not currently have access, 53.2% (N=25) want native language education for themselves. Reasons preventing them from getting native or heritage language education include:

- Classes I want are not available (N=9)
- I can't afford the classes at this time (N=7)
- Lack of transportation (N=4)
- Classes I want are not available at a convenient location (N=3)
- The classes I want are not available in the format I need (for example, in person format or online format) (N=3)
- I don't have time to take classes (N=3)
- Classes are not available at a time that works for me (N=2)
- Lack of childcare (N=2)
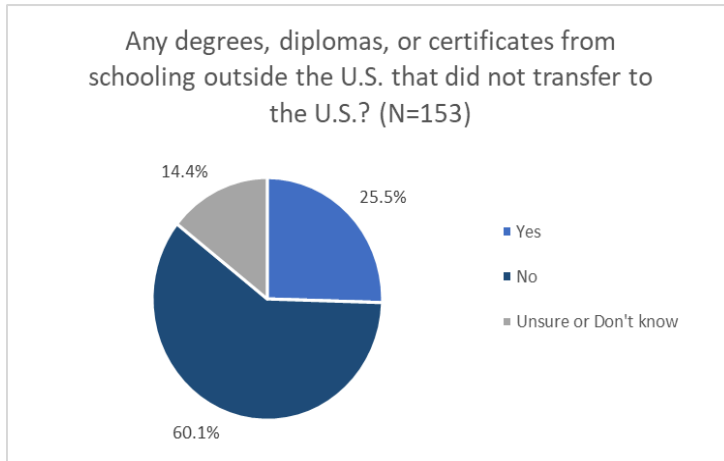- Other (N=2)
- Unsure or Don't know (N=1)

Finally, **literacy** features prominently among respondents. Over half of respondents report reading everyday in their native language (62.3%, N=91) and 70.9% (N=122) read in English everyday. But there were 10 respondents who said they were not able to read in their native/heritage language and 8 who were not able to read in English.

Education

Excluding classes taken to learn or improve English, more respondents indicate they have never attended school in the US (53.5%, N=99), followed by those who have (45.4%, N=84).
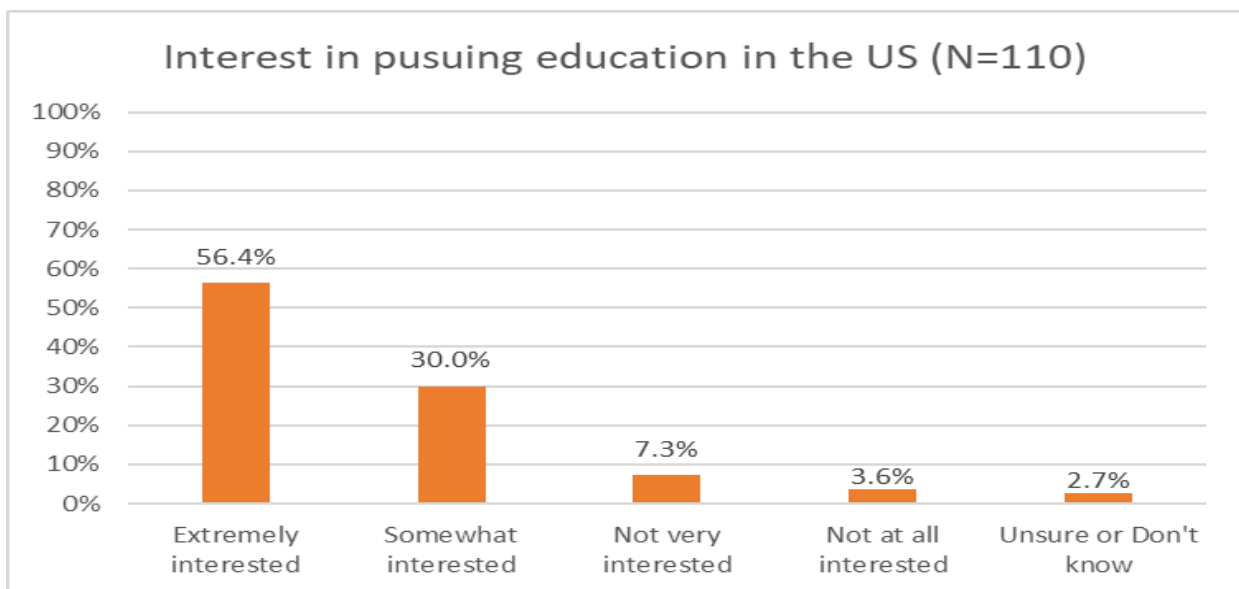
A majority of survey respondents are not currently enrolled in school (66.5%, N=121), but nearly one third are (32.4%, N=59). This number reflects the international students who participated in our survey and others who state they are currently enrolled in programs locally at Mott, Kettering, UM-Flint, or in the state such as at MSU, and even a few out of state universities.

For those who indicate they have completed some education in the US, 14.8% (N=12) earned an associate degree,12.4% (N=10) a bachelor's degree, and 12.3% (N=10) a master's degree.

Any degrees, diplomas, or certificates from schooling outside the U.S. that did not transfer to the U.S.? (N=153)

14.4%
25.5%
60.1%

- Yes
- No
- Unsure or Don't know

Education is a push/pull factor to come to the US. But, a number of respondents come here with certifications and degrees, and 25% (N=39) reported that their degrees, diplomas, or certificates from outside the US did not transfer to the US. This means that certification expectations here may prevent immigrants from locally using the formal education, knowledge, and skills they bring with them.
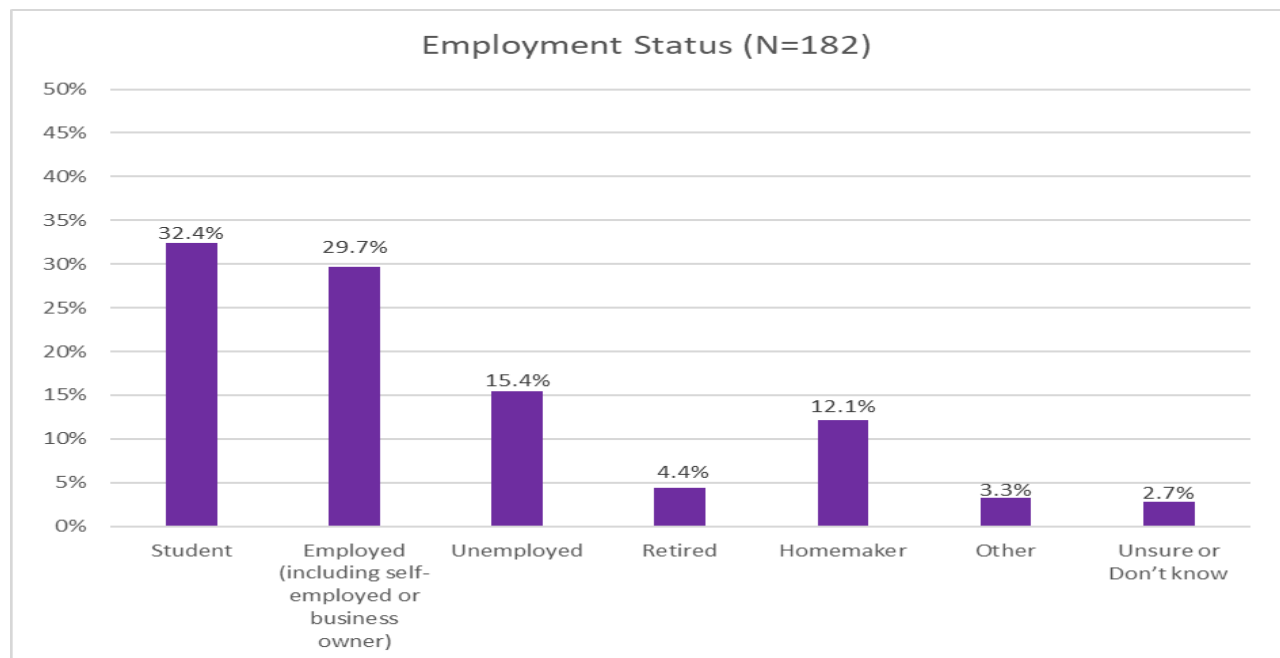
Over half of respondents (56.4%, N=62) expressed interest in pursuing education in the US. However, nineteen people (9.5%) state they are not getting the education they want, and examples of reported barriers to pursuing education are cost and language.
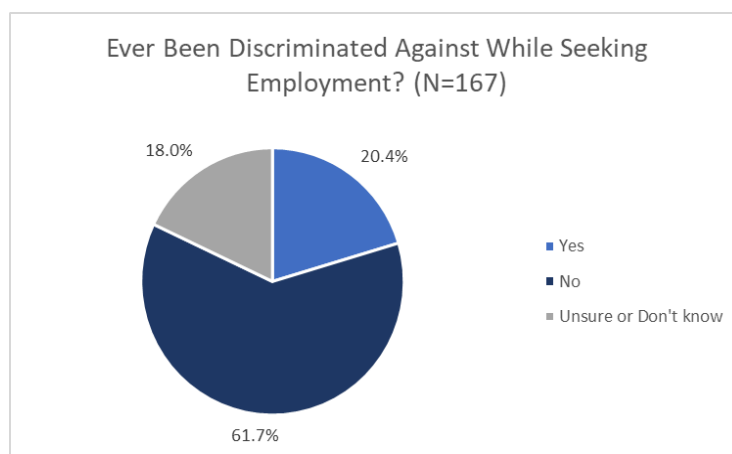

Interest in pusuing education in the US (N=110)

Extremely interested	56.4%
Somewhat interested	30.0%
Not very interested	7.3%
Not at all interested	3.6%
Unsure or Don't know	2.7%

Employment and Economic Conditions

Employment

We asked survey takers what best describes their employment status, and about 30% (N=55) indicate they are employed, 32.4% (N=59) selected student[2] as their primary occupation, 15% (N=27) unemployed, and 12% homemakers (N=22).

Employment Status (N=182)

Category	Percentage
Student	32.4%
Employed (including self-employed or business owner)	29.7%
Unemployed	15.4%
Retired	4.4%
Homemaker	12.1%
Other	3.3%
Unsure or Don't know	2.7%

For the employed category, 77.6% (N=38) work full-time and 20.4% (N=10) part-time. Thirty-five report they are employees at a company and 16 are self-employed or business owners.

Ever Been Discriminated Against While Seeking Employment? (N=167)

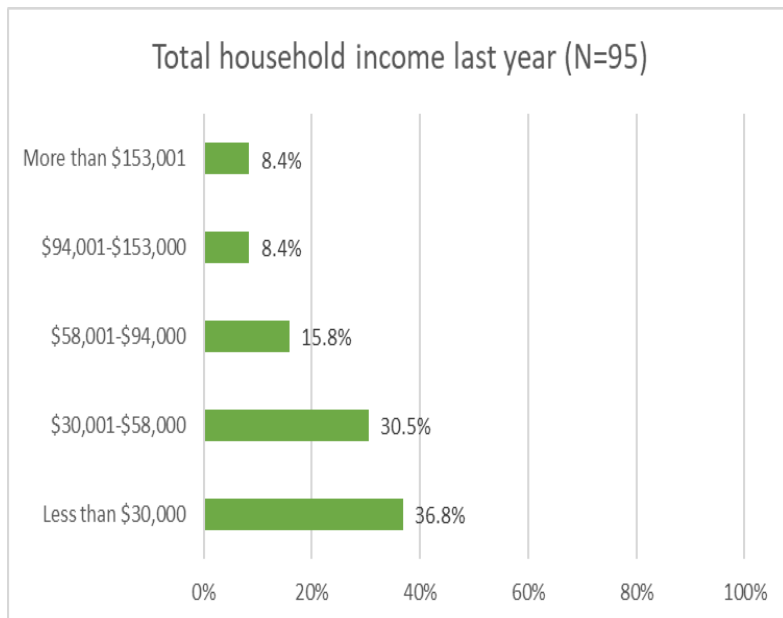| Response	Percentage
Yes	20.4%
No	61.7%
Unsure or Don't know	18.0%

While nearly two-thirds of respondents say they did not experience discrimination while seeking employment, 20% (N=33) indicate they did and another 18% (N=30) indicate they are unsure. Of those who experienced discrimination, a common theme regarding that discrimination was language related: a lack of fluency in English or an accented variety of English are commonly cited by those who report discrimination.

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[2] Note that a total of 38 respondents identify as international students, while 59 respondents say their primary occupation is being a student. This means that in addition to international students, several first or second generation immigrants are also enrolled in school as their primary occupation.

Income

We asked participants if they were the **main provider** for their households. Over one third (38.2%, N=68) state they are the main provider and 56.7% (N=101) are not. In terms of financial responsibility for people outside of their household, 70.1% (N=117) of respondents indicate they are not financially responsible for people outside their household, while 23.4% (N=39) said yes they are.

Total household income last year (N=95)

| Income Range	Percentage
More than $153,001	8.4%
$94,001-$153,000	8.4%
$58,001-$94,000	15.8%
$30,001-$58,000	30.5%
Less than $30,000	36.8%

Excluding international students, respondents report a wide range of **total household income** levels. More than two-thirds of respondents indicate their household income to be in the bottom two categories, at $58,000 or less. When asked if their household income is sufficient to provide food, clean water, and shelter, half of the respondents (50.3%, N=88) report that it is sufficient. However, 29.7% (N=52) report that their income is insufficient to meet their basic needs.

During the first year of arrival respondents had difficulty obtaining credit for housing, car, credit cards and businesses, with the greatest difficulty related to housing and credit cards.

Ability to get credit in the first year of arrival

Legend: House (N=31), Car (N=38), Credit Card (N=52), Business (N=18)
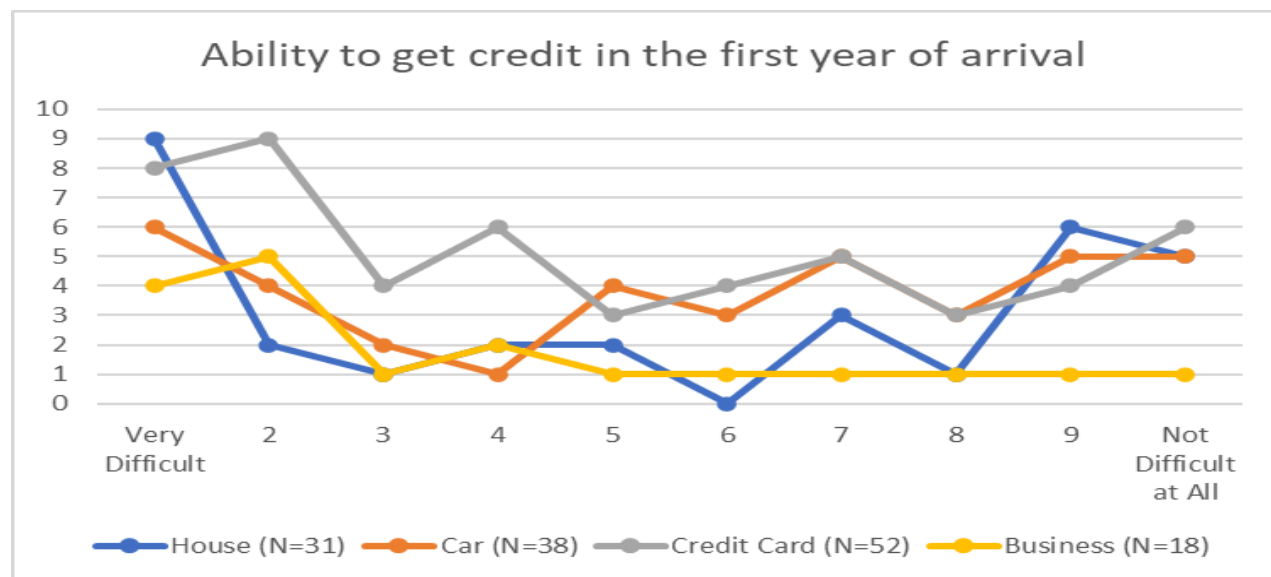
Workforce Development

We asked participants if they have access to eight forms of training and support that can increase employability or advancement on the job including resume writing, interview skills, equipment knowledge and skills, computer knowledge and skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, leadership or management training and on the job training. The majority are able to access all of these skills and training but the greatest need lies in on-the-job training (32.8%, N=39).


Access to job skill or workforce training
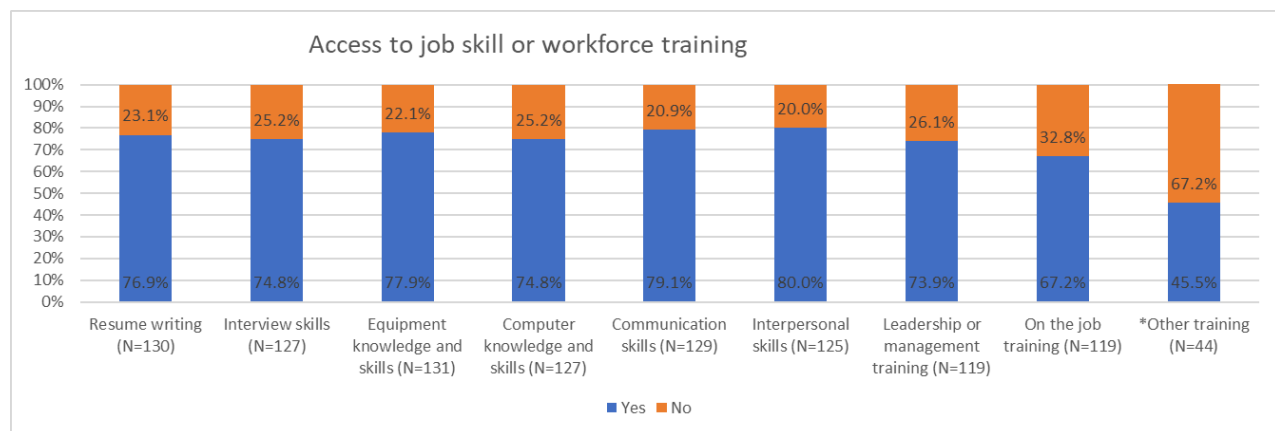
Entrepreneurship

The Office of Global Michigan and the American Immigration Council (AIC) report that immigrants **start businesses** at "far higher rates than the US population overall" (AIC, 2025). According to the AIC report, 10.6% of Michigan businesses are immigrant-owned. Our survey results reflect this trend with 9.7% (N=17) of respondents indicating that they are business owners. Although a large majority of our survey respondents are not currently business owners (90.3%, N=158), and a large majority of them have never been business owners (87.7%, N=136), it is noteworthy that 62.3% (N=82) indicate they are interested in owning a business.

Of those interested in building a business, a few people are actively working on one (6.3%, N=5), more than half (52.5%, N=42) have an idea for a business but have not started working on a business plan, and over one third are not currently working on an idea or a plan (37.5%, N=30). Regardless of where they are in the process, there is a wide range of business types respondents state they would like to build, from restaurants and shops to medical and law offices.
Of those interested in starting a business, though, 88% (N=37) indicate they do not have the resources needed to get started.

Services

When asked if they **know about community organizations** that provide a range of different kinds of services, survey participants consistently identify a lack of familiarity with each of the listed services. The following two graphs represent a total of 14 different types of services people might seek. Respondents indicate they know very little about adoption (70.9%, N=90), housing (65%, N=93), and childcare (61.8%, N=76) services. They indicate knowing much more about organizations providing services like cultural events and celebrations (43.7%, N=66), educational support (40%, N=54), food bank/pantry (42.6%, N=60), and translation and interpreting (42.1%, N=59) services.

Knowledge of community organizations that provide these services

Knowledge of community organizations that provide these services
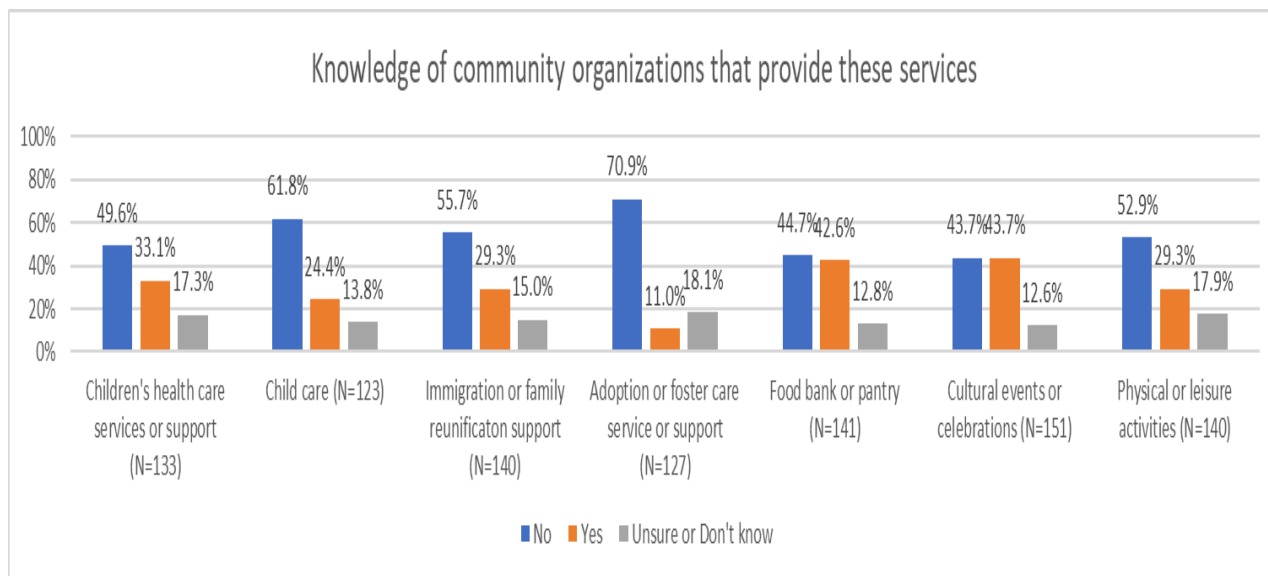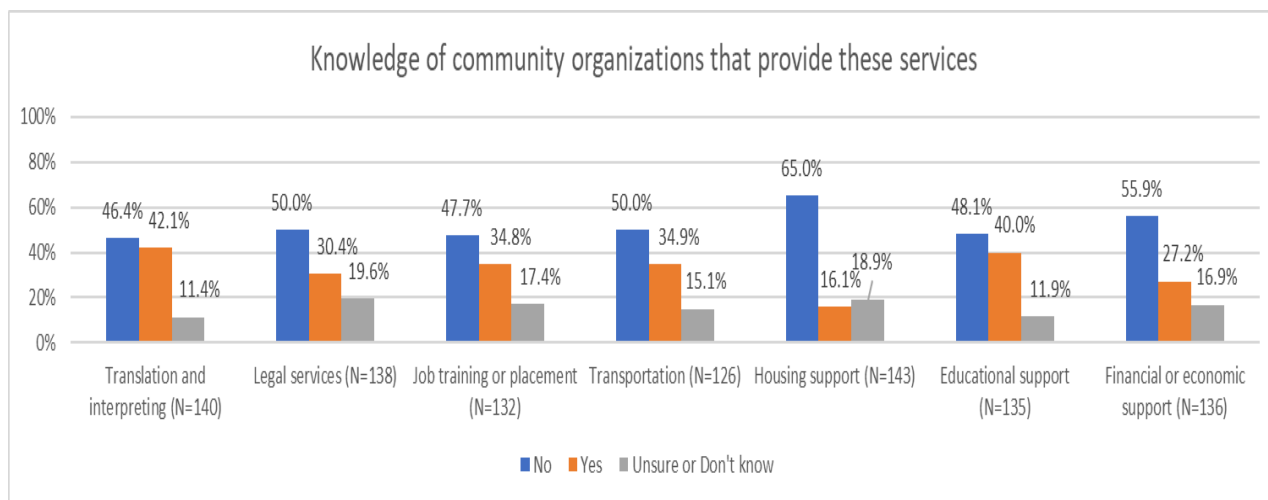
When asked **how frequently they use services**, participants overwhelmingly report never using any of the different services listed. However, translation and interpreting (25.3%, N=35) services are the highest among those most often[3] used, followed by SNAP (23.5%, N=31), and children's health care services or support (19%, N=22).

Frequency of service use

Frequency of service use
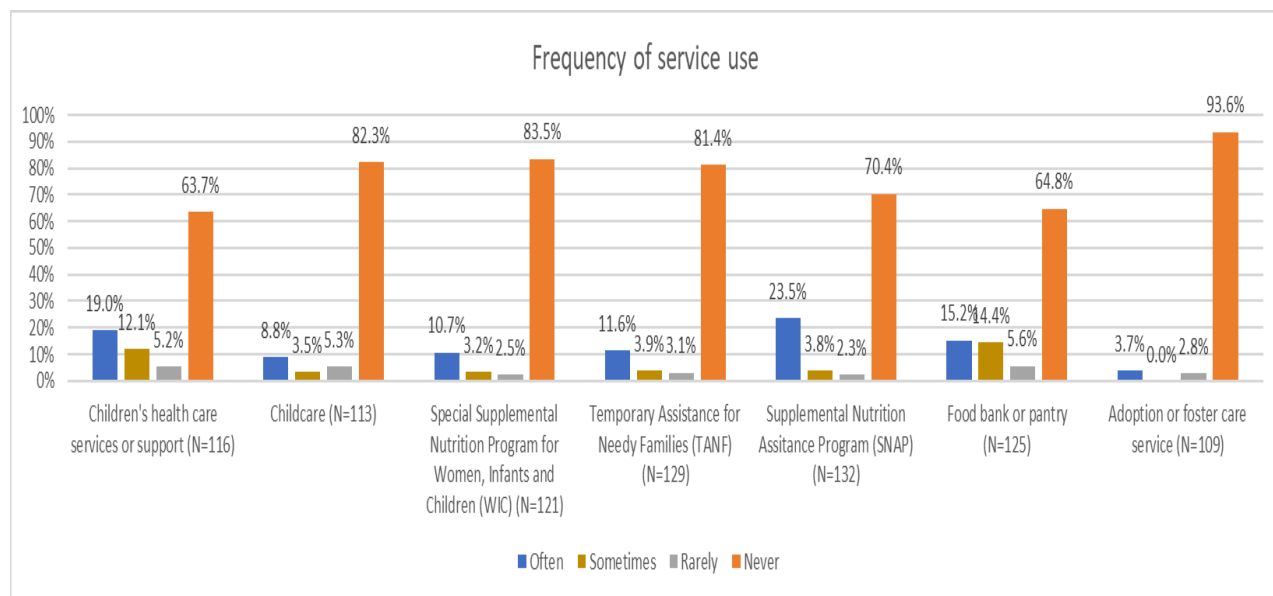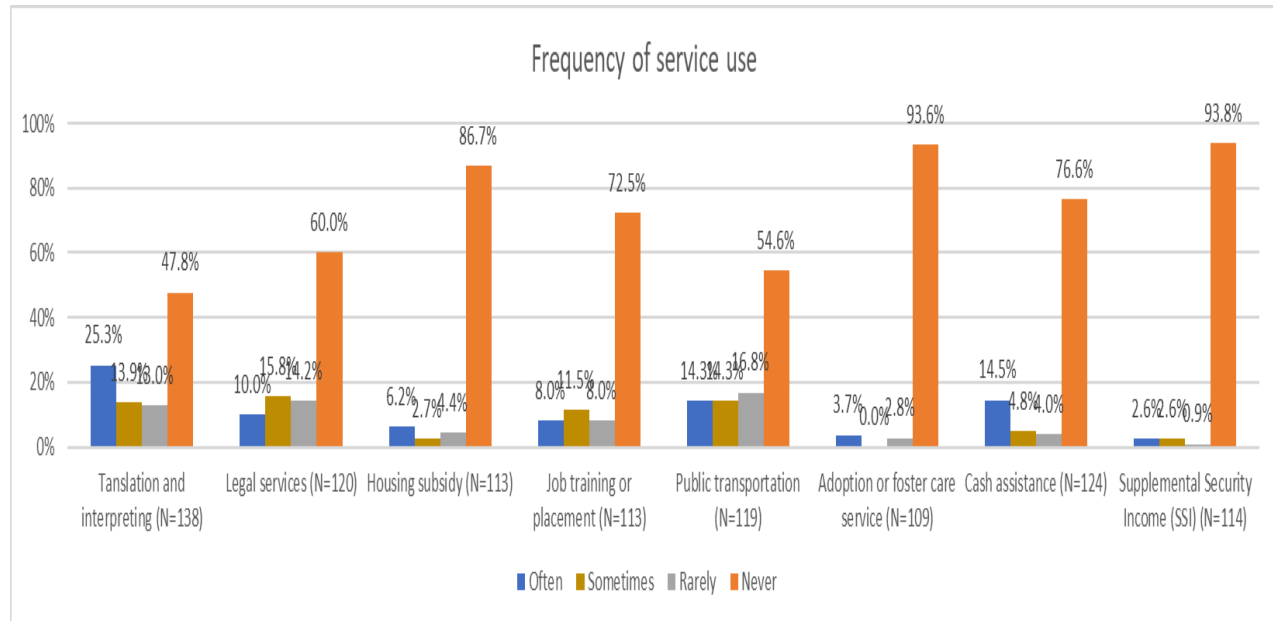
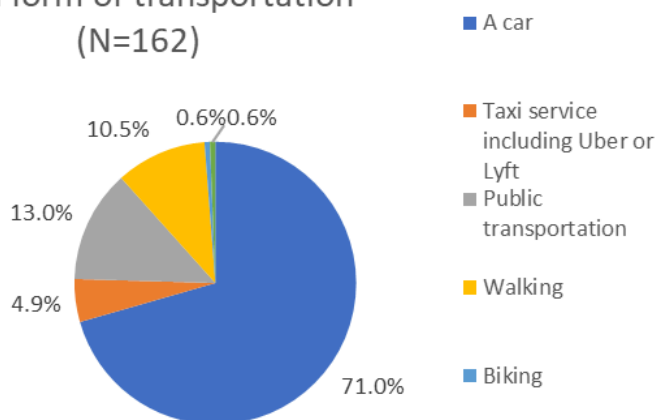[3] "Often" is a combined category of "very often" and "often".

Finally, when asked about **their ability to access services,** many survey participants feel neutral about their ability to get public services yet approximately half view their ability to get food assistance (52%, N=52) and health care (47.6%, N=50) as easy[4]. The greatest difficulty is expressed for housing assistance (36.2%, N=25).
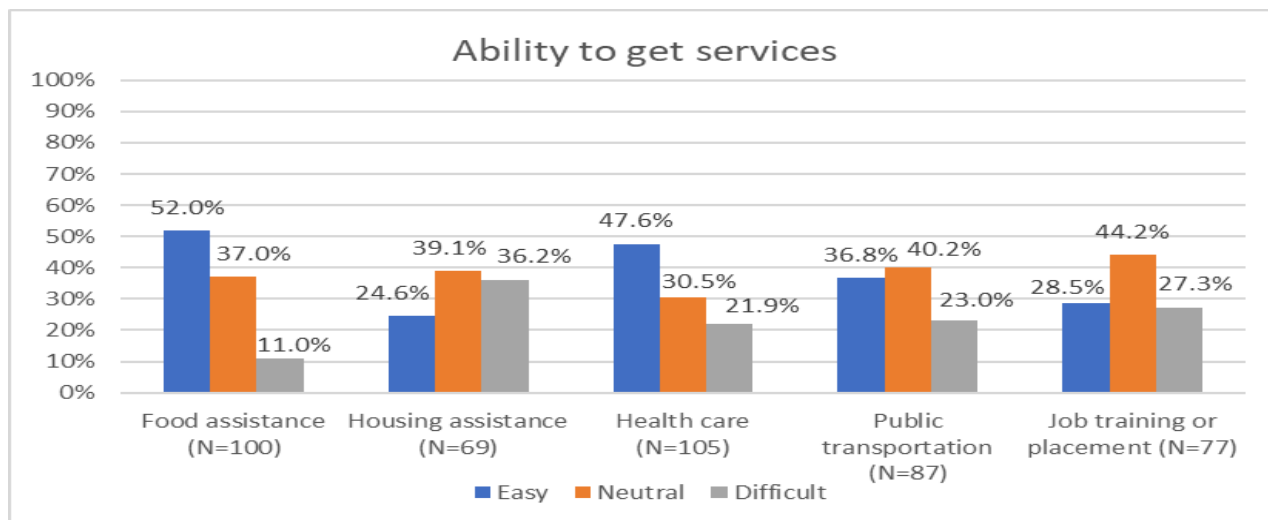
Transportation

Most respondents report that they have a **driver's license** (64.2%, N=106). Of the fifty-one respondents who do not have a license, 74.5% (N=38) want to have a license


More than two thirds of respondents indicate that their main **form of transportation** is a car (70.6%, N=115) and the majority of car users own their car (73.6%, N=81). After car transportation, respondents indicate that their primary means of transportation is public transportation (12.9%, N=21), followed by walking (10.4%, N=17), taxi service including Uber or Lyft (4.9%, N=8), biking (.6%, N=1), or not sure (.6%, N=1).

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[4] "Easy" is a combined category of "very easy" and "fairly easy" and "difficulty" is a combined category of "very difficult" and "fairly difficult".

As shown in the graph below, respondents rate their ability to get to various places, where 1 is very easy to get to and 10 is very difficult. The responses show extremes: to get to daily necessities, transportation is either very easy or very difficult. Transportation to work and school are the locations for which transportation is the easiest, but almost as many people indicate that it is very difficult to get to work and school as the number of people that find it easy. Food, other shopping, and religious/social events are very difficult to get to.
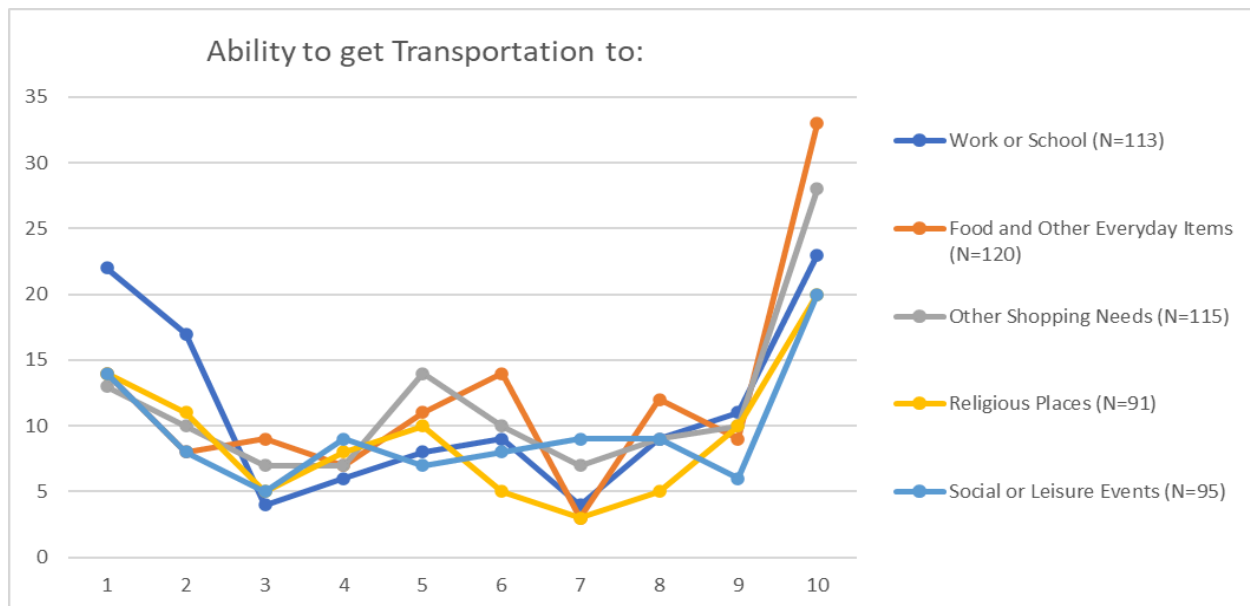
Finally, as you can see in the graph below, respondents vary greatly in their typical travel time to needed items or services. Respondents travel **15 or fewer minutes** to food (70.7%, N=106) and shopping items (66.4%, N=89), but also to work or school (58.9%, N=73) and healthcare services (56.5%, N=65). They typically travel further, **30 or more minutes**, to social or leisure activities (36.8%, N=43), work or school (25.8%, N=32), religious places (25.4%, N=30), and other shopping needs (24.6%, N=33).
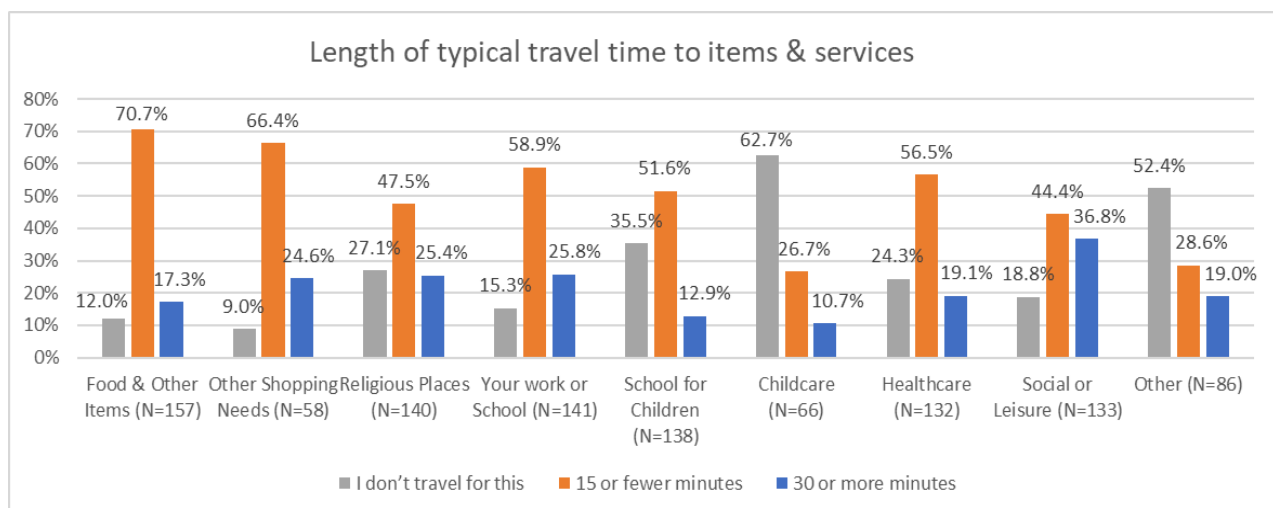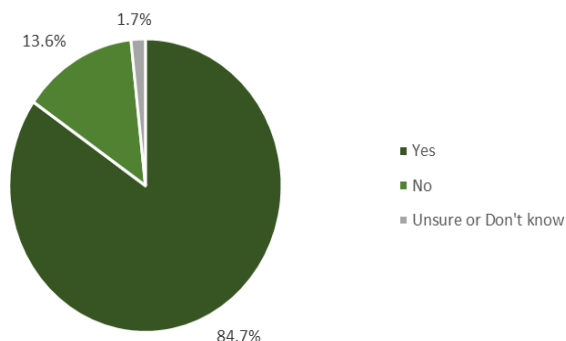
Health

A large percentage of respondents have **health insurance** (84.7%, N=149). For those who indicate that they do not have health insurance, costs and immigration paperwork are listed as the primary barriers to access. Those who have health insurance indicate they get it through their employer (N=30), school (N=32), medicare and medicaid (N=74), or self-funded (e.g., ACA, N=9).

Nearly 60% of respondents (59.4%, N=98) report they have had a **physical exam or health check-up** with a doctor in the last 12 months. Respondents report the reasons preventing physical or health check ups as follows:

- no insurance (N=11)
- no money for copay or association cost (N=10)
- no transportation (N=8)
- no time off from work (N=7)
- language barrier (N=5)
- discrimination (N=1)
- other (e.g., recent arrival to US, didn't need one, N=12)
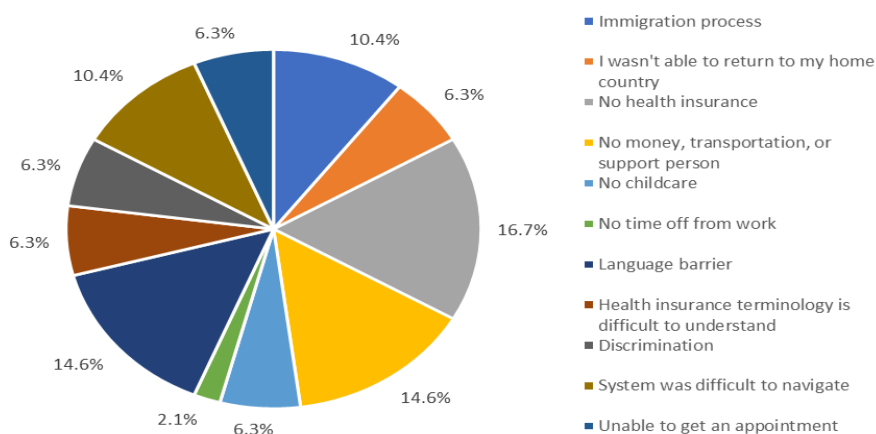
Currently have health insurance? (N=176)

- Yes
- No
- Unsure or Don't know

84.7% — 13.6% — 1.7%

Had a physical exam or health check-up with a doctor in the U.S. in the last year (N=165)

- No
- Yes
- Unsure or Don't know

59.4% — 38.2% — 2.4%
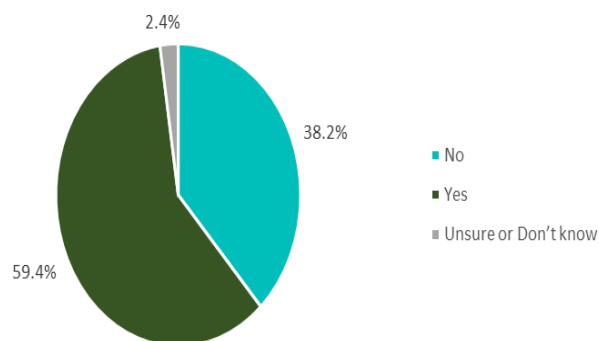
Nearly two-thirds of respondents go to a doctor in the US when they are in need of medical (61.6%, N=101), eye (57.2%, N=91), or dental (61.7%, N=100) care with very few returning to home country for care (3.0%, 5.7%, and 6.2% respectively).

Reasons for NOT being able to get needed health care

- Immigration process
- I wasn't able to return to my home country
- No health insurance
- No money, transportation, or support person
- No childcare
- No time off from work
- Language barrier
- Health insurance terminology is difficult to understand
- Discrimination
- System was difficult to navigate
- Unable to get an appointment

10.4%, 6.3%, 16.7%, 14.6%, 6.3%, 2.1%, 14.6%, 6.3%, 6.3%, 10.4%, 6.3%

More than two-thirds of respondents (69.3%, N=97) indicate that since coming to the US, they have NOT been able to get the health care needed. Respondents' reasons for their inability to get health care are listed in this chart.

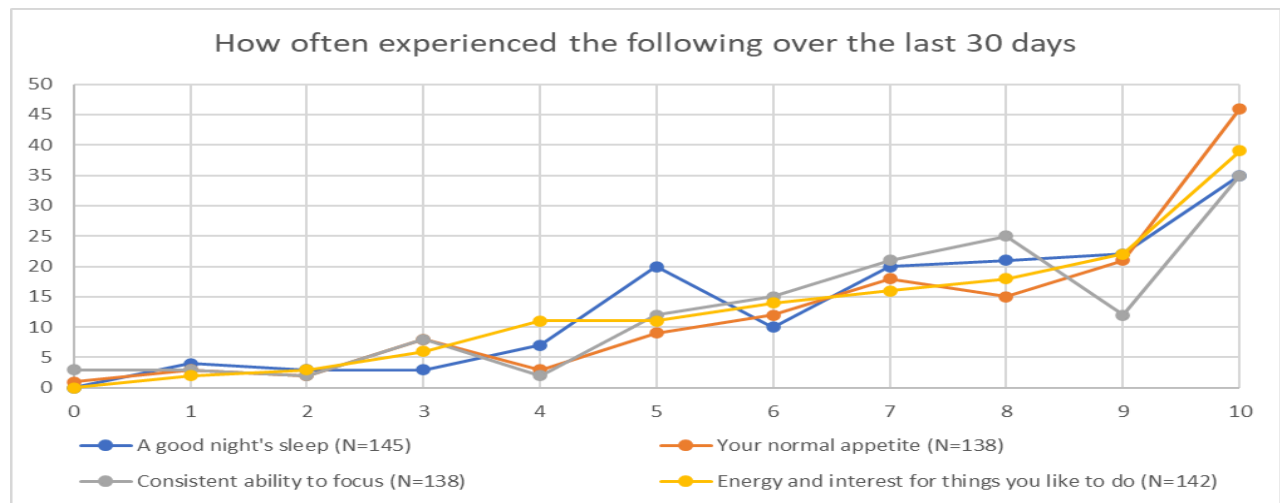Over two-thirds (70.0%, N=105) of respondents have experienced a delay in getting health care. Respondents list the reasons for delays in receiving health care in the chart here.

Reasons for experiencing delays in health care

- Waiting on immigration — 10.8%
- Waiting to return to my home country — 2.7%
- No health insurance — 20.3%
- Waiting for money, transportation, or supp — 9.5%
- No childcare — 2.7%
- No time off from wor — 5.4%
- Language barrier — 9.5%
- Health insurance terminology is difficult to understand — 5.4%
- Discrimination — 2.7%
- System was difficult to navigate — 8.1%
- Appointment was canceled — 6.8%
- Unable to get an appointment — 10.8%
- *Other — 5.4%

In our sample, most respondents report that they have not been diagnosed with common chronic diseases or conditions found in the US such as hypertension, diabetes, heart diseases, seizure disorders, strokes, or cancer.

Although most respondents indicate not using mental health services since coming to the US (84.1%, N=132), 13.4% of respondents indicate they have used mental health services (N=21).

When it comes to general well-being, we asked questions regarding sleep, appetite, ability to focus, and energy levels. The graph below shows the responses on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being never and 10 being everyday. The trends in responses show that the majority are experiencing general wellbeing based on these indicators.

How often experienced the following over the last 30 days

- A good night's sleep (N=145)
- Your normal appetite (N=138)
- Consistent ability to focus (N=138)
- Energy and interest for things you like to do (N=142)

We also asked about feelings of irritability, loneliness, feelings of worthlessness, nervousness, and unintentional weight gain or loss. Note that while the previous graph focused on positive indicators that support wellbeing, the one below is focused on indicators that interfere with wellbeing. Once again, the graph below shows the responses on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being never and 10 being everyday.
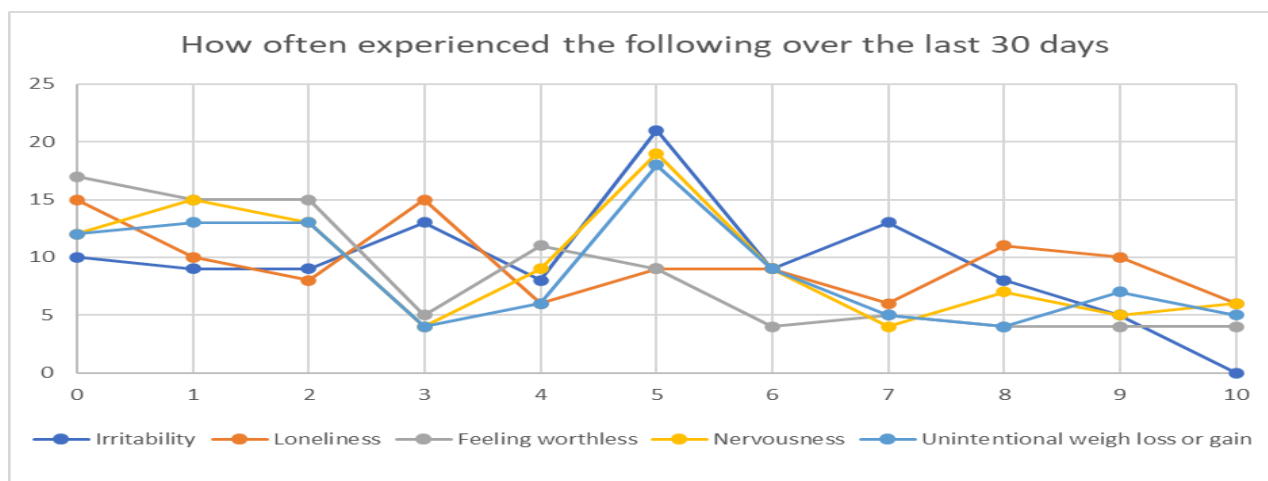

Responses show a more complex story of wellbeing in this graph than the previous one, where more respondents report that they experience negative feelings such as irritability and nervousness as well as unintentional weight loss/gain in about half of the last 30 days. Additionally, a cluster of responses report daily feelings of loneliness, nervousness and worthlessness, indicating potential need for more social connection and access to other mental wellbeing support.

Religion

Almost three quarters of respondents report that there is a house of worship or religious place they can attend (74.4%, N=96) and nearly two-thirds say these places have services or events in their first language (64.9%, N=74). Additionally, 77.4% of respondents report not feeling discriminated against because of religion.
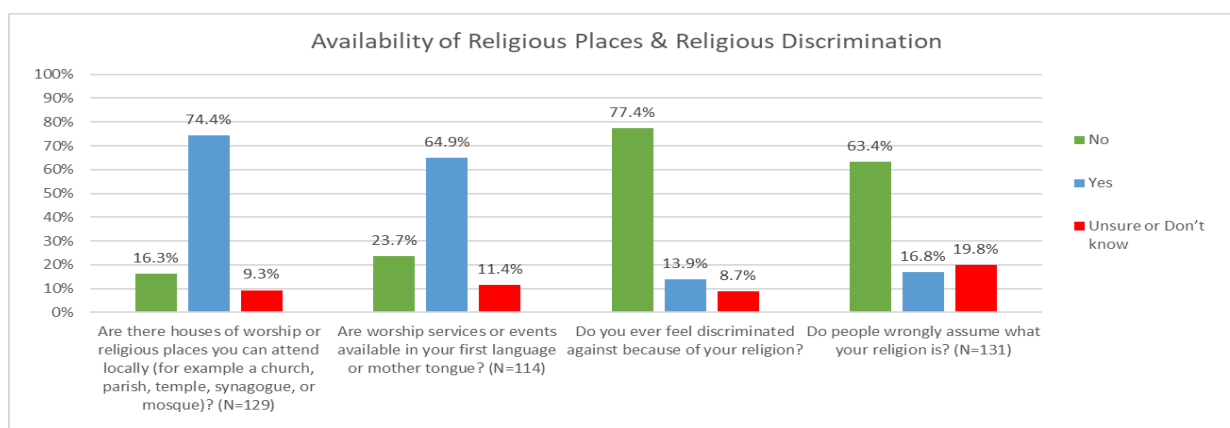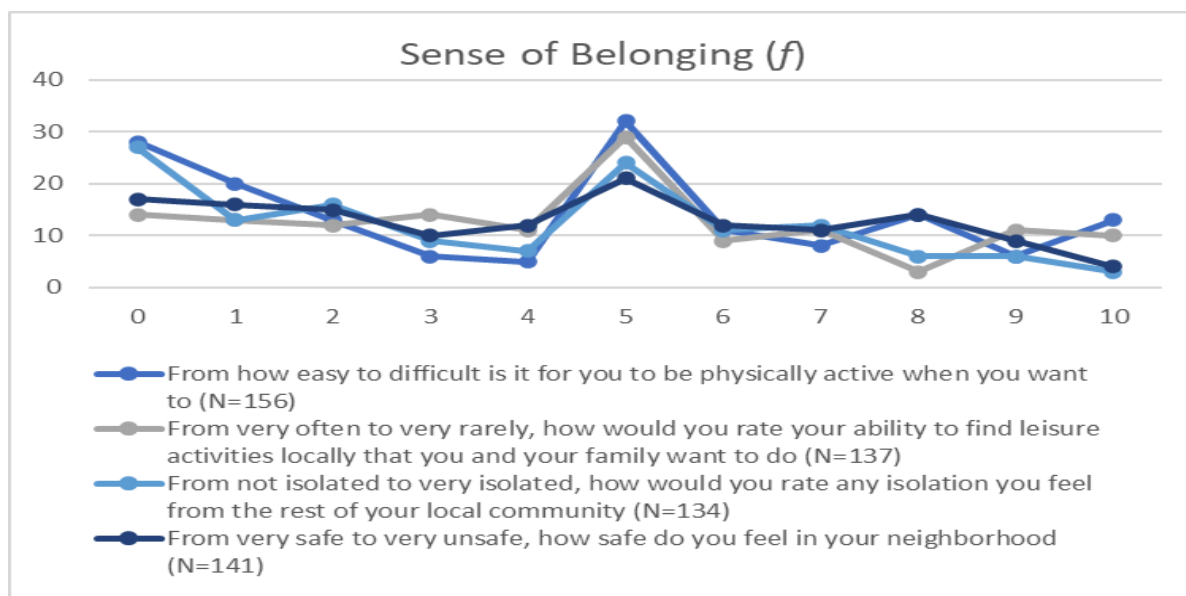
Respondents are divided in their opinions about the local availability of religious and cultural food, clothing, and other items with some reporting that they are able to find all that they want and others are only able to find some of what they want (or in the case of food, none). More specifically, with slight majorities, respondents report that only **some** of their religious or cultural *foods* (30.2%, N=19) and *clothing* (29.2%, N=14) are the ones they want, while **all** the *other* cultural and religious items are the ones they want (N=28.6%, N=8). Religious and cultural food items (including brand, quality, size, and flavor) is the only category where respondents (12.7%, N=8) indicate none are available locally.
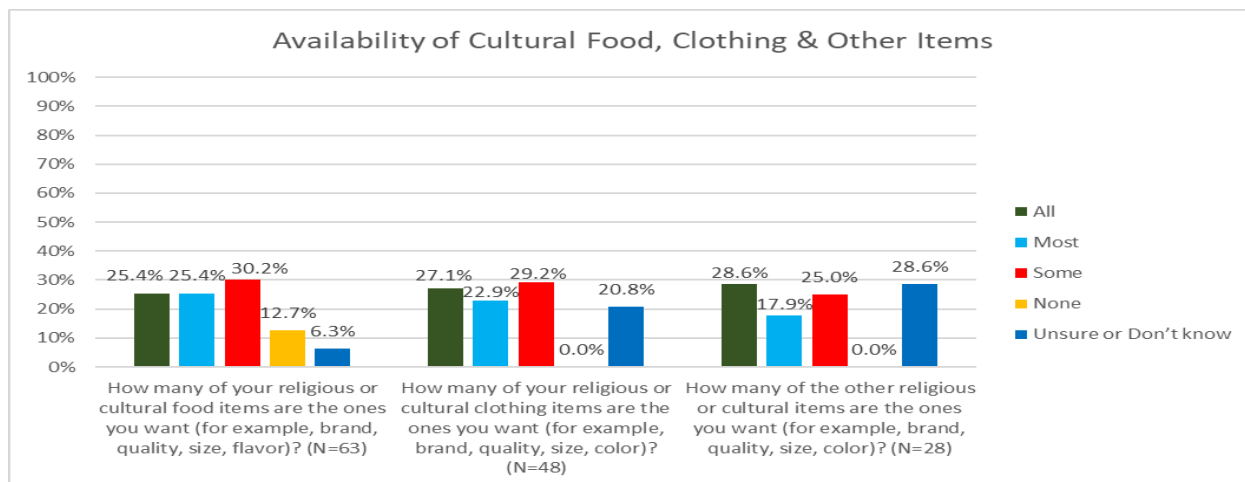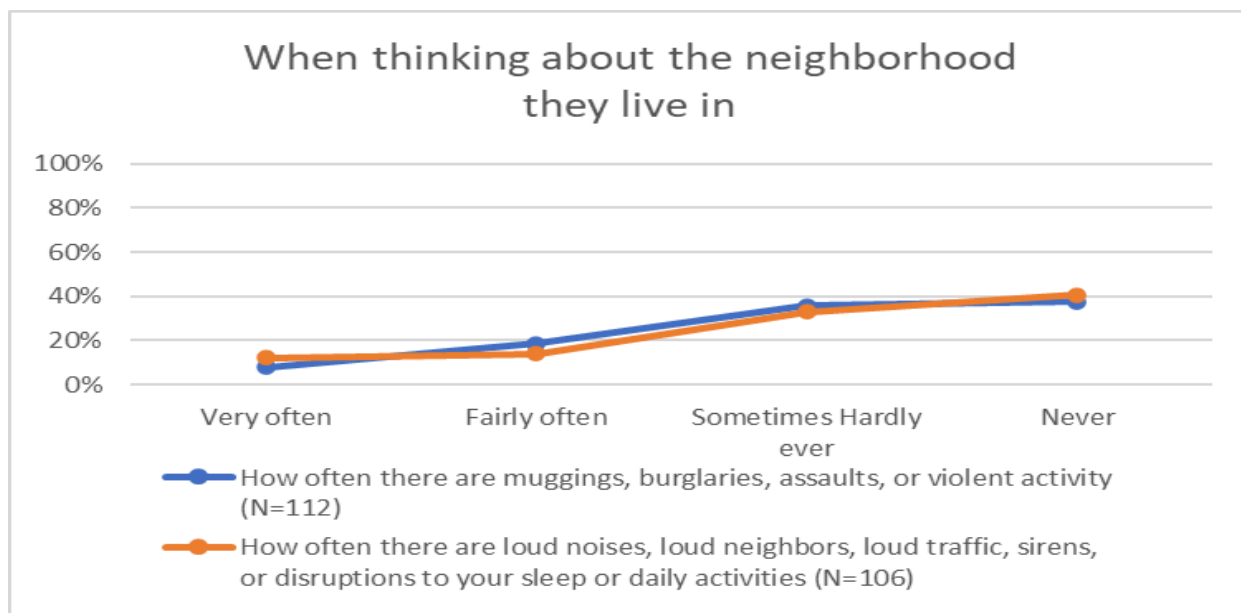

Social Integration, Violence, and Rights

A sense of belonging and ways to connect with others socially are key markers of welcoming communities that support community and individual development and well being.

The graph below tracks **4 markers of social integration and sense of belonging:** physical activity, leisure activity, feelings of isolation, and safety. The graph displays positive responses (easy, very often, not isolated, and very safe) listed to the left as 0, and negative responses (difficult, very rarely, very isolated, and very unsafe) on the right as 10. It shows that many respondents find it easy to be physically active when they want (N=28), can very often find local leisure activities (N=14), do not feel socially isolated from their local community (N=27), and feel very safe in their neighborhoods (N=17). However overall, more respondents are neutral [rating of 5 on scale of 1 to 10] and some have negative feelings about their sense of belonging, suggesting need for improvement in services for these areas.

Sense of Belonging (*f*)

Legend:
- From how easy to difficult is it for you to be physically active when you want to (N=156)
- From very often to very rarely, how would you rate your ability to find leisure activities locally that you and your family want to do (N=137)
- From not isolated to very isolated, how would you rate any isolation you feel from the rest of your local community (N=134)
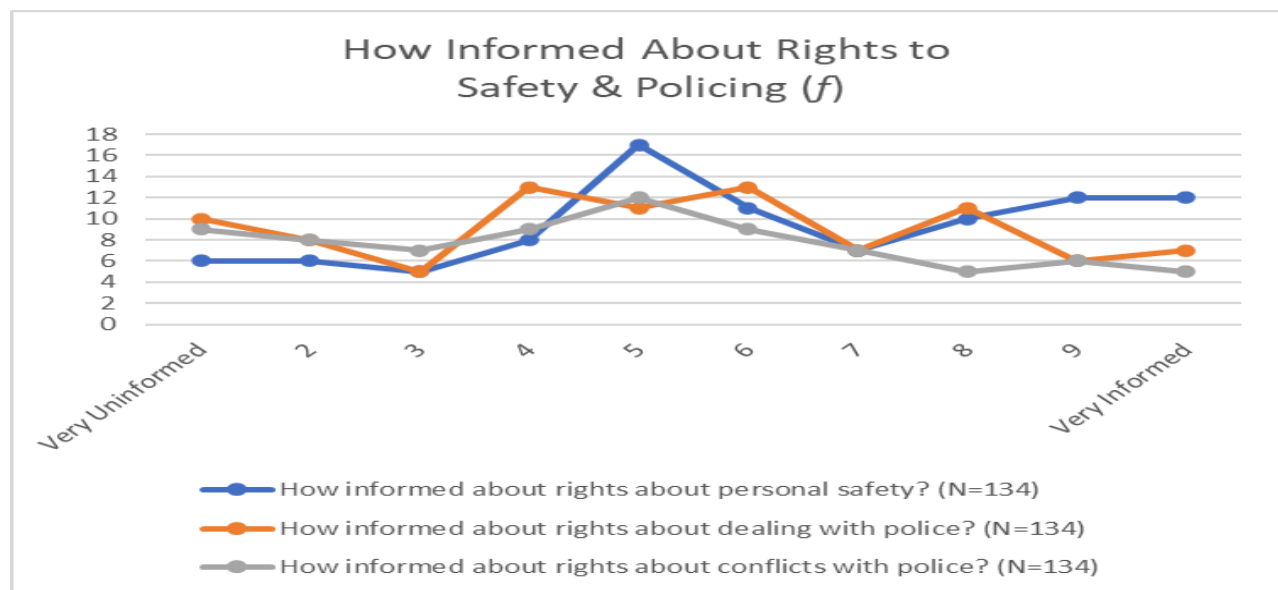- From very safe to very unsafe, how safe do you feel in your neighborhood (N=141)

When asked about muggings, assaults, and violent activities or loud noises, neighbors, traffic, sirens or disruptions in their neighborhood, the most common responses are **never** or **hardly ever**, suggesting that the common representations of the greater Flint area may be misrepresentations or skewed representations.

When thinking about the neighborhood they live in

Legend:
- How often there are muggings, burglaries, assaults, or violent activity (N=112)
- How often there are loud noises, loud neighbors, loud traffic, sirens, or disruptions to your sleep or daily activities (N=106)
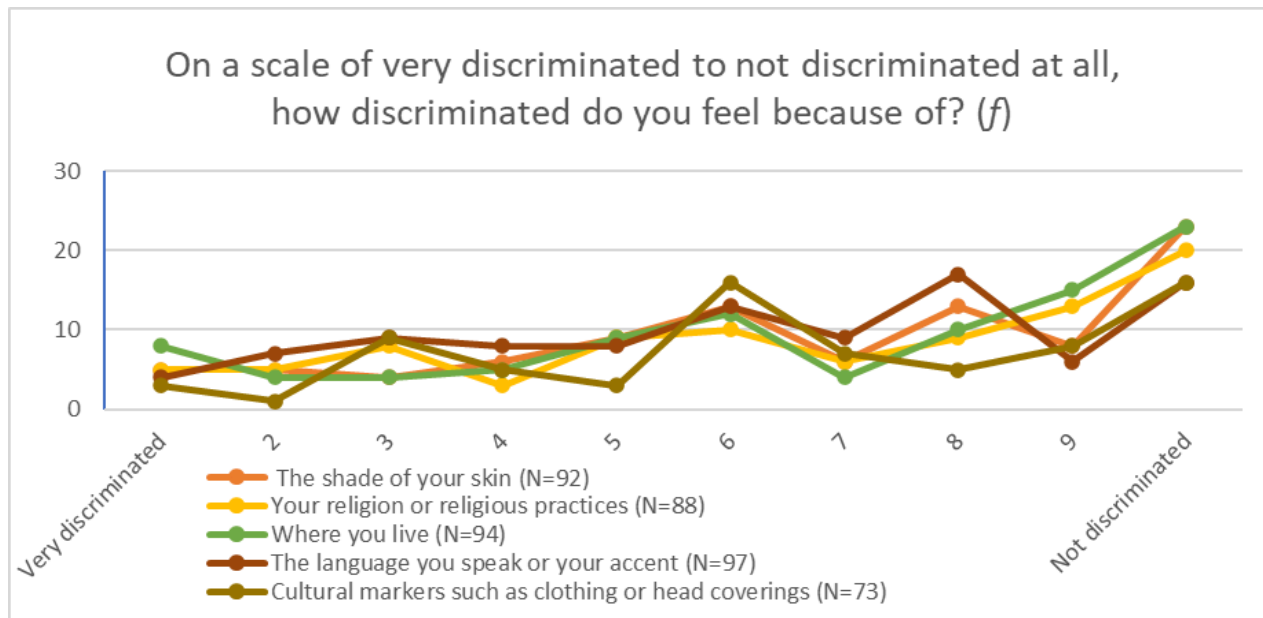
Responses to questions related to awareness of rights regarding language, housing, and immigration are fairly evenly spread across the scale. For housing (N=12) and immigration rights (N=17), the highest number of respondents report being very informed about these rights, while the highest number of respondents are neutral [answered 5 on a scale of 1 to 10] regarding being informed of rights to language services (N=20).

How Informed About Rights to Services (*f*)

— How informed about rights about language services? (N=134)
— How informed about rights about housing? (N=134)
— How informed about rights about immigration status? (N=134)
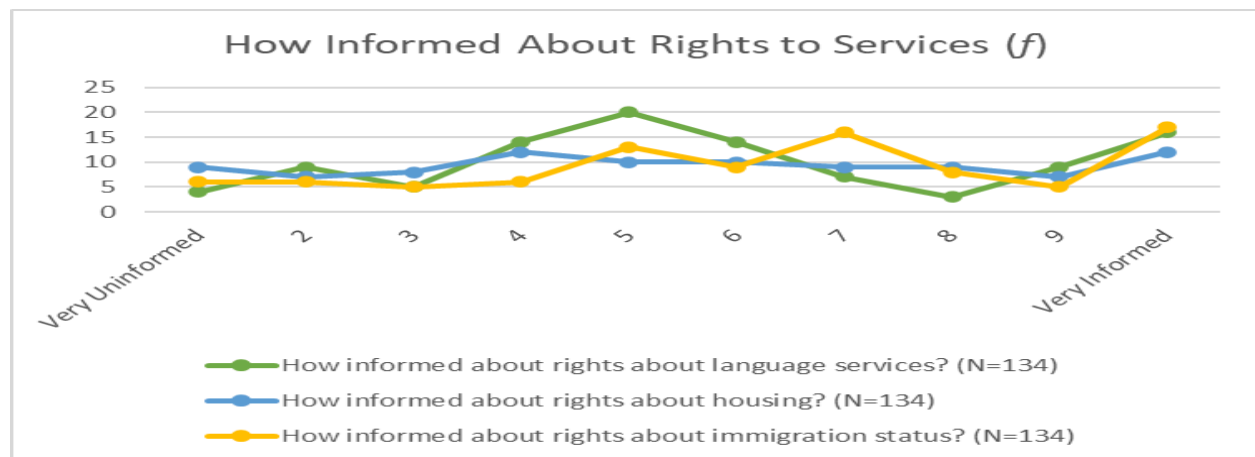
With a pretty even spread in awareness, most respondents are neutral [answered 5 on a scale of 1 to 10] about how informed they feel about their rights to personal safety (N=17), dealing with police (N=11), and conflicts with police (N=12).

How Informed About Rights to Safety & Policing (*f*)

— How informed about rights about personal safety? (N=134)
— How informed about rights about dealing with police? (N=134)
— How informed about rights about conflicts with police? (N=134)

Respondents generally do not feel discriminated against [answered 10 on a scale of 1 to 10] because of their skin color (N=23), religion (N=20), where they live (N=23), spoken language/accent (N=16), or cultural markers (N=16). However, for those that feel discriminated against [answered 1 on a scale of 1 to 10], ratings are highest for being discriminated against for where they live (N=8).

On a scale of very discriminated to not discriminated at all, how discriminated do you feel because of? (*f*)

Legend:
- The shade of your skin (N=92)
- Your religion or religious practices (N=88)
- Where you live (N=94)
- The language you speak or your accent (N=97)
- Cultural markers such as clothing or head coverings (N=73)

Future Plans for Living in Flint & US

While the majority (63.8%, N=95) of respondents plan to continue living in Flint, 25.5% (N=38) report that they are unsure if they will stay here. Compared to those who plan to continue to live in the US (81.6%, N=129), this suggests opportunities to make Flint a more permanent destination.

Discussion

The following are some of the take-aways from this study. This is not a comprehensive or exhaustive list, but a starting point for ongoing data analysis and discussion.

Who is here and in this sample?

The data collected does not represent the full range of immigrant backgrounds and experiences in the Flint area. We must continue to find ways to learn more about the breadth of immigrant experiences in the Flint area including the experiences of those who may be more vulnerable or less connected to social services, secular or religious organizations, or support networks. At the same time, we should not ignore the needs and important contributions of the population this survey sample does represent.

In this sample, the majority of respondents are recent immigrants from many different countries with a recent uptick in Cuban and Venezuelan migration to the area. Most come with middle class backgrounds and education, yet it is important to remember that more than two-thirds of our sample have household incomes with $58,000 or less. The individuals and families are multilingual, and literacy rates appear to be high.

What are they doing?

The results indicate that survey participants are people who are working or going to school and getting degrees, many have children, and some have businesses. They are people who are already investing in the community through purchase of houses and cars, and participating in the economy and region (e.g., shopping, sending kids to school, using the health system, attending religious services). Most have health insurance, get regular health check ups, and do not seem to have common chronic conditions found here in the US.

What do they need or what support might be helpful?

Accessing Information and Services:
- Nearly half of those who took the survey indicate that English is among the languages they speak, but we should remember that nearly half the surveys analyzed for this report were completed in languages other than English (80 in Spanish and 19 in Arabic). This means that English is not necessarily a language with which all 201 respondents have proficiency. While some respondents are able to find resources (e.g. education, religious centers) in their native language, others use translation services, and there appears to be a need for more information available in languages other than English.
- Survey participants consistently identify a lack of familiarity with public and community services, especially those related to housing. They don't use many of the services available, and especially find access to services related to housing and job training difficult.

- Transportation is also fraught. Despite the fact that most respondents report they own a car and travel 15 minutes or less to meet their basic needs, almost as many people indicate that it is very difficult to get to work and school as the number of people that find it easy.

Economic and Educational Support:
- Many have kids, some identify as homemakers, others indicate they work part time or are unemployed, and while salary ranges vary, the majority are in bottom salary ranges. Taken together, this suggest needs for
  - Childcare support
  - Help with transfer of credentials and/or ongoing educational pursuits for employment advancement
  - Workforce development
  - Support connecting with service providers and support for understanding rights regarding language, housing, immigration, and discrimination
  - Credit support, especially for housing and credit cards
- Additionally, gaining access to education as well as developing business plans and acquiring start-up capital can provide opportunities for advancement, thus increasing the economic vitality for these families and the region.
- Even though car ownership is high among our survey respondents, there are clearly barriers to transportation, and those without a car are constrained in their ability to participate in the local region and economy.
- Furthermore, several people indicated they wish to improve their English language ability or are currently taking English language instruction.

Wellbeing, Social Integration, and Belonging:
- Health insurance rates are high, but for those experiencing delays or a lack of needed healthcare, the lack of health insurance is one of the biggest barriers. Although many indicators of wellbeing are reported positively by respondents, reports of experiencing loneliness, worthlessness, and nervousness are present. The data suggest that supporting health insurance access and access to mental health and wellbeing are important.
- Religious organizations and houses of worship, which are widely reported to be accessible and in the native language, are a valuable resource for increasing feelings of belonging.
- Social and leisure opportunities require people to travel further, indicating that local social events or activities that bring people together are desired.
- Although perceived discrimination rates are low, they are nevertheless present for some, particularly while looking for a job and in terms of experiencing language-based discrimination.

The Story of Flint:
- Although we do not know where exactly within Genesee County the respondents live, the immigrants who responded to the survey seem to be experiencing a different story of Flint than what popular media presents.

- Respondents are drawn by family and friends as well as opportunities for home and car ownership, and report rare experiences of violence or disruptive noise in their neighborhoods. There is space for celebrating and sharing this vision and telling a new story.

Taken together, these findings point to issues of accessibility and the need to ensure that information is provided in multiple languages, especially health, civic, and legal information. Language support might help with economic improvement and health care barriers noted above. Rights and workplace trainings (including those that involve hiring processes) that identify and overcome discrimination are needed. There are many ways to improve and the items listed above are meant only as a starting point for discussion. Finally, this research and the take-aways are focused on immigrant-background residents of Genesee County, but services and support that are provided for the most vulnerable in our community will raise up everyone by increasing resources and accessibility.

Future Directions For Research

The research is ongoing and the UM-Flint team is currently conducting qualitative research using focus groups to better understand the trends that the survey data points to. Additionally, this survey instrument is comprehensive and can be used again in 3-5 year cycles in order to generate longitudinal data and understanding of how the immigrant population is changing over time.

This data report is being actively used by ICGF and their Board to identify and structure programs and service resources for the community using evidence-based decision making. Additionally, other community partners who work with ICGF will engage with the reports to improve our analysis and contribute ideas for planning, and to improve their service or work.

Acknowledgments