



2021 Member Survey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INITIATIVE LED BY:



EVALUATION LED BY:



Funding for this project was provided in part through a grant from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments through the Federal Transit Administration's Enhanced Mobility program.

Context

In March 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic descended upon Washington, DC, Villages across the city jumped into action to support their members. The city's 13 neighborhood-based Villages had been serving older adults for many years before the onset of the pandemic and were able to maximize their existing connections, services, and volunteer base to respond quickly to member needs. Throughout the pandemic, Villages have remained nimble, providing a wide range of programs and services to members, even as the landscape continually changed. These services include up-to-date COVID information, including assistance with vaccine appointments; transportation to medical appointments and/or assistance with telemedicine; social and wellness programs – often offered through online platforms; and friendly phone calls and wellness checks.

A year after the first closures happened in Washington, DC, vaccines started to be more widely available and the prospect of businesses reopening was on the horizon. At this transitional moment, DC Villages wanted to learn about their members' experiences during the pandemic and their plans to engage with Village activities as COVID restrictions were being lifted. To achieve this goal, and with funding from the [Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments](#) (MWCOG), eleven Villages conducted a survey of their members in the summer of 2021. This survey was designed to provide information about the needs and opinions of Village members, as outlined in the objectives below.

2021 DC Village Member Survey Objectives

Through this DC Village-wide survey, Villages in DC will have a deeper understanding of:

1. **Characteristics** of members completing the survey
2. Members' **transportation** needs, challenges, and assistance from the Village
3. Members' current feelings of **isolation** or social connection
4. The **value** of the Village to members, both during the pandemic and in the upcoming year
5. Members' current and desired **engagement** in Village activities, including barriers that impede engagement at the desired level

DC Villages wanted to learn about their members' experiences during the pandemic and their plans to engage with Village activities as COVID restrictions were being lifted.

Survey Design and Implementation

Building on lessons learned and information gained in a 2018 all-Village survey effort, this initiative was inspired and supported by Villages across Washington, DC. The network of [DC Villages](#) turned to [Sharp Insight, LLC](#), [Capitol Hill Village's](#) independent evaluation partner, for assistance with the design, implementation, analysis, and reporting of the 2021 DC Village Member Survey. Survey development was guided by Executive Directors from DC Villages and informed by concurrent research efforts at Villages in Ohio and prior research efforts from the University of California at Berkeley, [Center for the Advanced Study of Aging Services](#).

Village Executive Directors established the survey objectives (above), refined the survey items, and agreed upon implementation methods and the survey timeline. The final survey tool was designed to be used by all participating DC Villages and to contain items that would align with those being used by Villages in Ohio for comparison of aggregate data outside of the region. In addition, DC Villages were offered the option to add their own custom items to the survey. Six of the eleven Villages opted to customize their survey.¹

To maximize accessibility of the survey, Villages had the option to offer the survey in two formats: online (through SurveyMonkey) or interview-administered (read aloud by a trained volunteer and entered into SurveyMonkey by the volunteer). Training videos and materials were created by Sharp Insight and distributed to any Village implementing an interview-administered survey. Not all Villages offered an interview option and the use of the interview option ranged from 0-18 surveys.

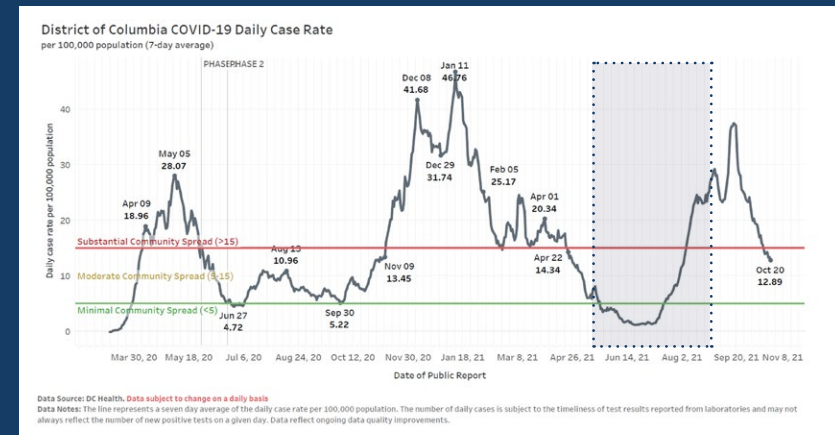
Villages were provided with sample promotion email messages and were responsible for publicizing and distributing the survey within their Village. The first survey launched on Monday, June 7, 2021 and closed on Wednesday, July 7, 2021. The last survey launched on Monday, August 16, 2021 and closed on Tuesday, August 31, 2021. Villages had the option to launch the survey on any date between June and August that was convenient for them. All surveys closed by August 31st. Most surveys were open for 3-4 weeks, with the range being from 2 to 5 weeks.

¹ Findings from custom items were shared with the relevant Villages and are not included in this summary.

A Note About COVID-19 and Survey Implementation

When the first survey launched on June 7th, DC was on the cusp of relaxing some COVID restrictions and re-opening. DC Health reported a seven-day average daily case rate of 2.5 cases per 100,000 population, considered “minimal” community spread.²

By the time the last survey launched on August 16th, the Delta variant was widespread in DC and some restrictions were re-implemented. DC Health reported a seven-day average daily case rate of 29.3 cases per 100,000 population, considered “substantial” community spread.



While all surveys took place in the summer of 2021, the changing COVID landscape may have impacted some responses, particularly to items pertaining to “during the pandemic” or “as COVID restrictions are lifted.” In an open-ended survey response, one member commented, “This survey is optimistic about restrictions being lifted.”

Results

In the summer of 2021, a total of **642** members from 11 DC Villages responded to the Multi-Village Member Survey, either online or through an interview-administered survey. With participating Villages reporting a total of 1,862 members at the time of the survey, this sample of 642 members represents 34% of their membership. Response rates at individual Villages varied, ranging from 25% to 60% of members at 10 Villages, with one Village reporting participation from 6% of their members.

The three visual executive summaries that follow highlight both quantitative and qualitative findings from each of the five survey objectives. More specifically, the first summary provides an overview of **Village member characteristics**, including member transportation and loneliness (Objectives 1, 2, 3). The second summary focuses on the **value of Villages** to members (Objective 4). Finally, the third summary highlights **Village engagement** among members (Objective 5).

Through this survey effort, DC Villages learned that the majority of **member survey respondents tend to be independent and self-sufficient**. Most reported that they used an independent mode of transportation and/or were generally able to get where they needed or wanted to go; however, that is not to say that they were without needs.

In exploring the data in greater depth, statistical analyses revealed that five key member characteristics were important differentiators of experience among Village members.

Our Village has started a strategic planning process to guide our efforts over the next three years and input from the survey is instrumental in determining priorities and directions for our future.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FROM ONE OF THE DC VILLAGES

Members who reported any of the following five characteristics were statistically more likely to report greater need surrounding transportation and/or assistance from the Village:

- Use of at least one mobility support
- Relying on others for transportation
- Feeling lonely
- Living alone
- Not being confident in ability to get the help needed to remain in home as long as desired

With the knowledge gained from the 2021 DC Village Member Survey, the Village leaders have a stronger understanding of their members, how they can further engage among current members, and how they can be more strategic in their efforts to reach and support members who may be in need.

The results of the survey both provided affirmation that our services and programs were hitting their mark and gave us new information to work with, like the connection between use of a mobility device and isolation.

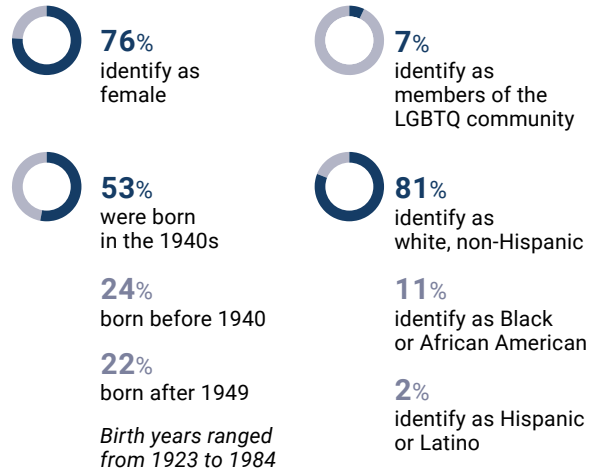
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FROM ONE OF THE DC VILLAGES



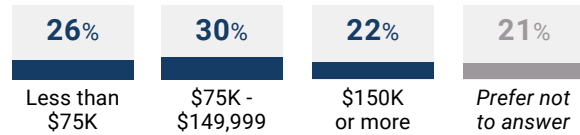
Overview of Member Characteristics, including Transportation and Loneliness • Objectives 1, 2, and 3

Among the 642 members* who completed the 2021 Village Member Survey...

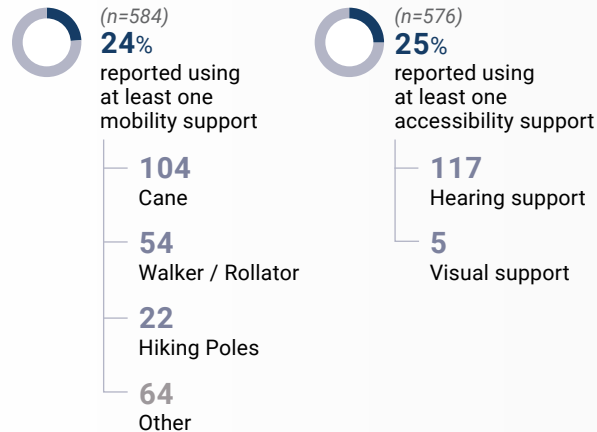
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS (n=567-601)



ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME (n=599)

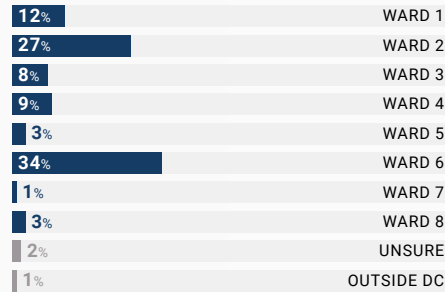


MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY



WARD, VILLAGE AND RESIDENCE

RESPONDENTS REPRESENTED ALL EIGHT WARDS IN DC (n=603)



11 DC Villages, ranging in size from 30 to 356 members (average 169), participated in the survey. (n=642)

25% of responses came from one Village: CAPITOL HILL

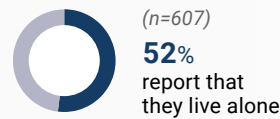
44% of responses came from four Villages: DUPONT CIRCLE, FOGGY BOTTOM / WEST END, MOUNT PLEASANT, WATERFRONT

Each was 10-13% of the sample

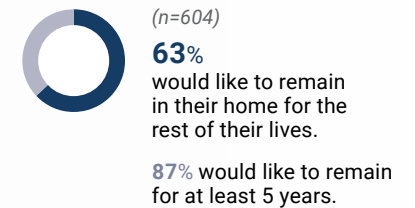


31% of responses came from six Villages: BROOKLAND, EAST ROCK CREEK, GEORGETOWN, KINGDOM CARE, NORTHWEST NEIGHBORS, PALISADES

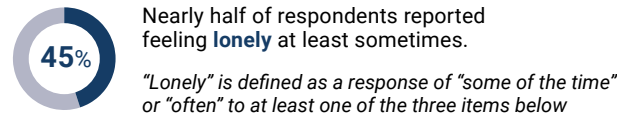
Each was 2-8% of the sample



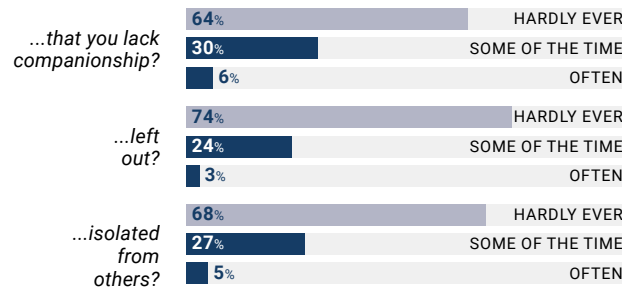
85% were confident they could get the help they needed to stay in their home as long as they desired (n=608)



LONELINESS (n=595)



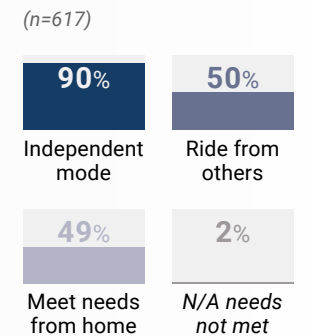
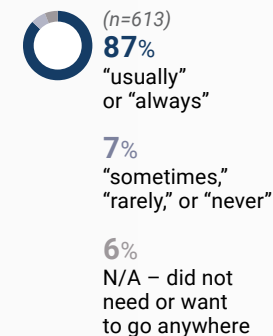
HOW OFTEN DO YOU FEEL...



TRANSPORTATION

Most members reported being able to get to where they wanted or needed to go in the prior month.

Most members use at least one **independent** mode of transportation. Half **rely on rides from others** and/or **meet their needs from home**, via delivery / online participation.



*The 2021 Village Member Survey was completed by a convenience sample of 642 individuals: 601 reported being current members, 18 reported that they were unsure, and 23 did not respond. An additional 47 respondents indicated that they are not current members. Findings for these non-members were reported separately. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

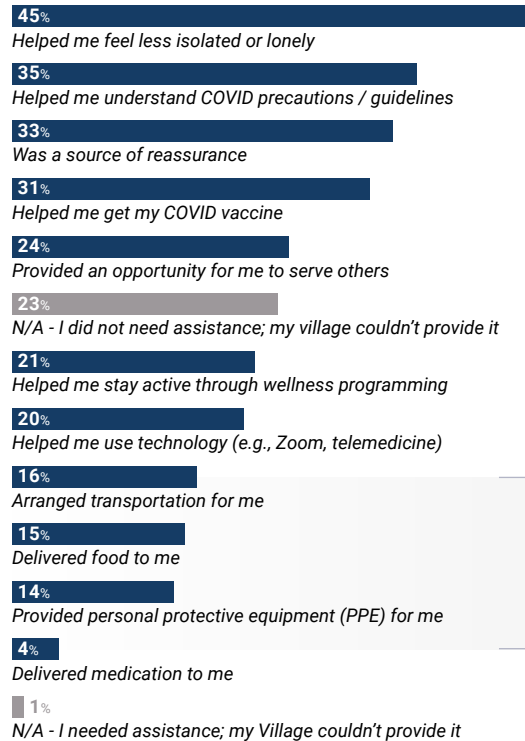


Value of the Village to Members • Objective 4

ASSISTANCE FROM THE VILLAGE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

(n=630)

Nearly half of respondents (45%) reported that their Village helped them feel less isolated or lonely during the pandemic.



Members who received assistance with these "basic needs" (excluding PPE) were more likely to: use mobility support, live alone, be lonely, and/or rely on transportation from others.

(n=541)

During the pandemic, members highly valued Village activities and events (33%), COVID-related support (30%), and contact / connection (25%).

33% Village Activities and Events

"Use of Zoom for activities previously held in person. I enjoyed these activities and was happy I was able to continue to participate in them."

"Social ... activities to feel wanted and ... not to be alone. The book club and online activities were wonderful."

"Lectures & yoga via Zoom because I had no other contact with friends nor was I able to exercise outside."

"I felt a comforting continuity in the few village activities I've been involved in before and during the pandemic."

"... innovative use of Zoom to host travel and art programs."

30% COVID-Related Support

"Information about covid vaccine sites and times. This was most appreciated as the village contacted me, not vice versa, with ... a phone number to call for a vaccine appointment."

"Village was a beacon of usable, practical, calming info."

"Transportation to medical appointments and to VACCINE [were] the most valuable."

"Pandemic information and assistance getting vaccine."

"Information & reassurance..."

25% Contact and Connection

"Participation ... via Zoom provided social connection, conversation, and intellectual enjoyment. Also, the periodic calls from a Village member provided social connection with a friend, reassurance that help was available with a phone call..."

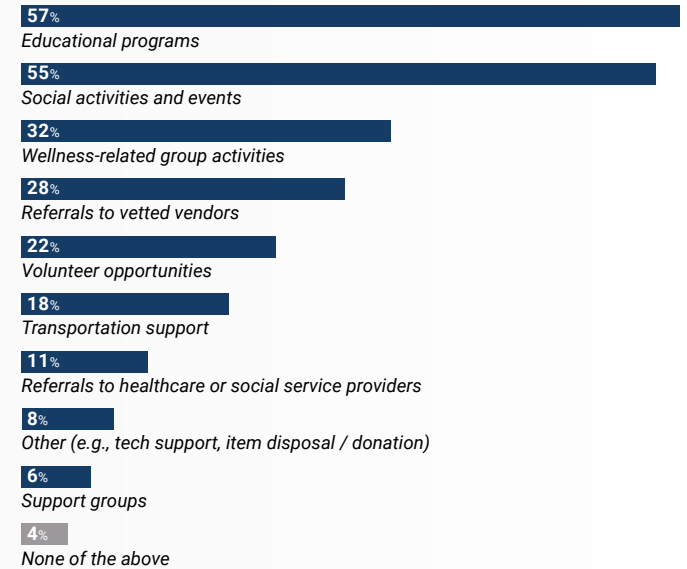
"As a person living alone, I appreciated the weekly contact by email."

"The ZOOM meetings. It made me feel less isolated and more connected. Also spurred me to FaceTime with relatives."

"The Village staff did a terrific job of organizing virtual activities and keeping in touch via email. It helped me feel connected to others throughout the pandemic."

ANTICIPATED MOST VALUABLE VILLAGE SERVICES AND PROGRAMS AFTER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

(n=640)



(n=537)

In general, members value their Village for social connection and community building (55%), as "insurance" or a resource (37%), and for Village activities and events (21%).

"I've lived in [neighborhood] for decades, but never felt a sense of community living here until I joined the Village. I have met many wonderful neighbors through the Village that I would never have met if I hadn't joined."

"I value the opportunity to meet interesting, generous, thoughtful, fun people and develop long-term friendships."

"The opportunity to meet others in my age cohort who live in the same ... part of the city, and the sense of communal belonging this brings."

"Knowing that it is there when you need it. It is like an insurance policy and very comforting."

"I see the Village as 'Help Insurance,' a term coined by one of our members: I most especially appreciate knowing that the Village is there to help me navigate what I can't do on my own."

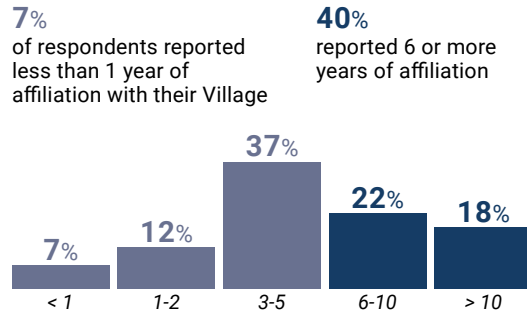
"The hub that connects members with various activities, provides volunteer opportunities and is there in time of need."



Village Engagement among Village Members • Objective 5

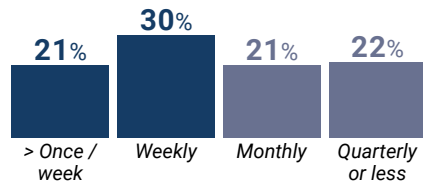
AFFILIATION AND PARTICIPATION

(n=636)



(n=625)

51% of members were involved with their Village on a weekly basis or more frequently.



ANTICIPATED PARTICIPATION IN FUTURE: IN-PERSON VS. ONLINE

(n=599)



Two in five respondents (41%) anticipated wanting to participate in **more Village events in-person** than online as COVID restrictions are lifted. A similar amount (44%) anticipated wanting to participate in Village events **equally** online and in-person. Those who use a mobility support and/or report being lonely were significantly* more likely to anticipate participating online than those who do not.

Most frequent reasons members would choose online over in-person: Weather, distance from home, time of day, and local COVID conditions. Those who anticipate participating online were significantly* more likely to select "type of venue" and "concern about uneven compliance with COVID requirements" as reasons they would attend online rather than in-person.

While many respondents crave a return to in-person events, there is also widespread appreciation for the benefits of online events.

41% In-Person

"Although zoom has been wonderful, I do like being with people in person. I will continue to enjoy meetings on zoom because I don't have to go anywhere. Eating, walking, and biking with friends are activities that I prefer to do in person."

"I would like a hybrid of Zoom and in-person"

"I find that using Zoom for presentations is fine but not for group discussions as small groups of participants often tend to take over and leave out those that are more reticent to speak up"

"I am hearing impaired and virtual meetings are difficult for me..."

44% Equally In-Person and Online

"I imagine a hybrid mix of participation. Certainly the ease of attending through ZOOM is a plus. At the same time, I truly missed being with people in person."

"It depends. Meetings and lectures are fine either way, and online has the advantage of no time spent on travel. But gatherings are more personal, more connected, simply offer a better experience in person."

"Limited mobility makes Zoom more valuable. If I knew someone was available to help me at an event I might increase my in-person attendance."

"It's good for your well-being to see and interact with other people in person, but online events are great for evenings, bad weather, and for those not able or not feeling up to going out."

"It's going to take time for me to be comfortable with meeting in person."

"During winter months I foresee participating in more online events."

15% Online

"I have limited mobility, can drive but useless if no nearby parking. Having activities on-line enables me to participate much more widely."

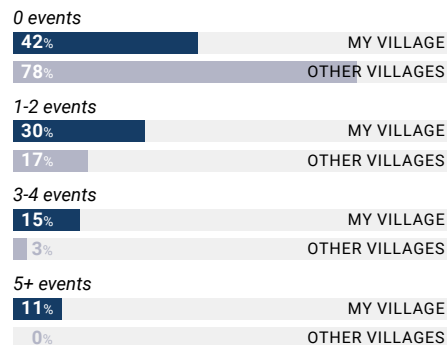
"I hope there will always be an opportunity to do some activities via zoom as I prefer not to go out at night, or when it's icy or too hot especially if I need to walk or use public transportation."

"My mobility has declined markedly in the past 18 months, so the move to Zoom was a godsend."

EVENT ATTENDANCE – AT MEMBERS' OWN VILLAGE AND OTHER VILLAGES

(n=619-630)

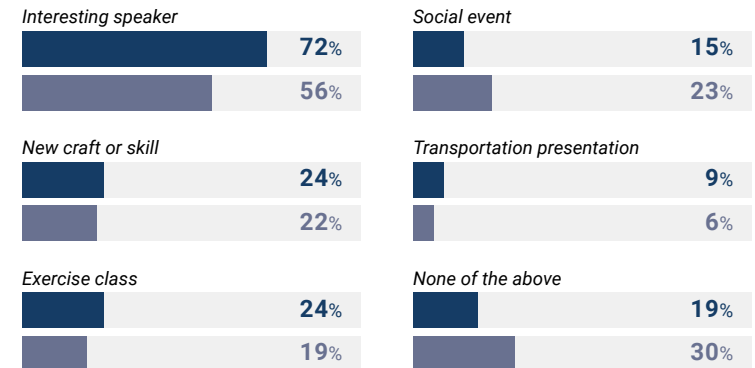
Half of respondents (55%) attended at least one activity or event sponsored by their Village in the prior month, either online or in person. Three quarters (78%) did not attend any events at other Villages.



(n=614)

An opportunity to hear an interesting speaker is the most common reason respondents would likely attend an event at another Village, either online or in-person.

■ ONLINE
■ IN-PERSON



*The 2021 Village Member Survey was completed by a convenience sample of 642 individuals. For detailed findings, including statistical analyses, please refer to the full report and accompanying Excel summary. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. The Delta variant of COVID-19 became more prevalent in DC during the survey period, resulting in different experiences for those surveyed in June compared to those surveyed in August.