

Poll #2: Diversity, Inclusiveness, and Institutions



486 responses



247 open-ended
comments



**Open March 15 –
May 8**

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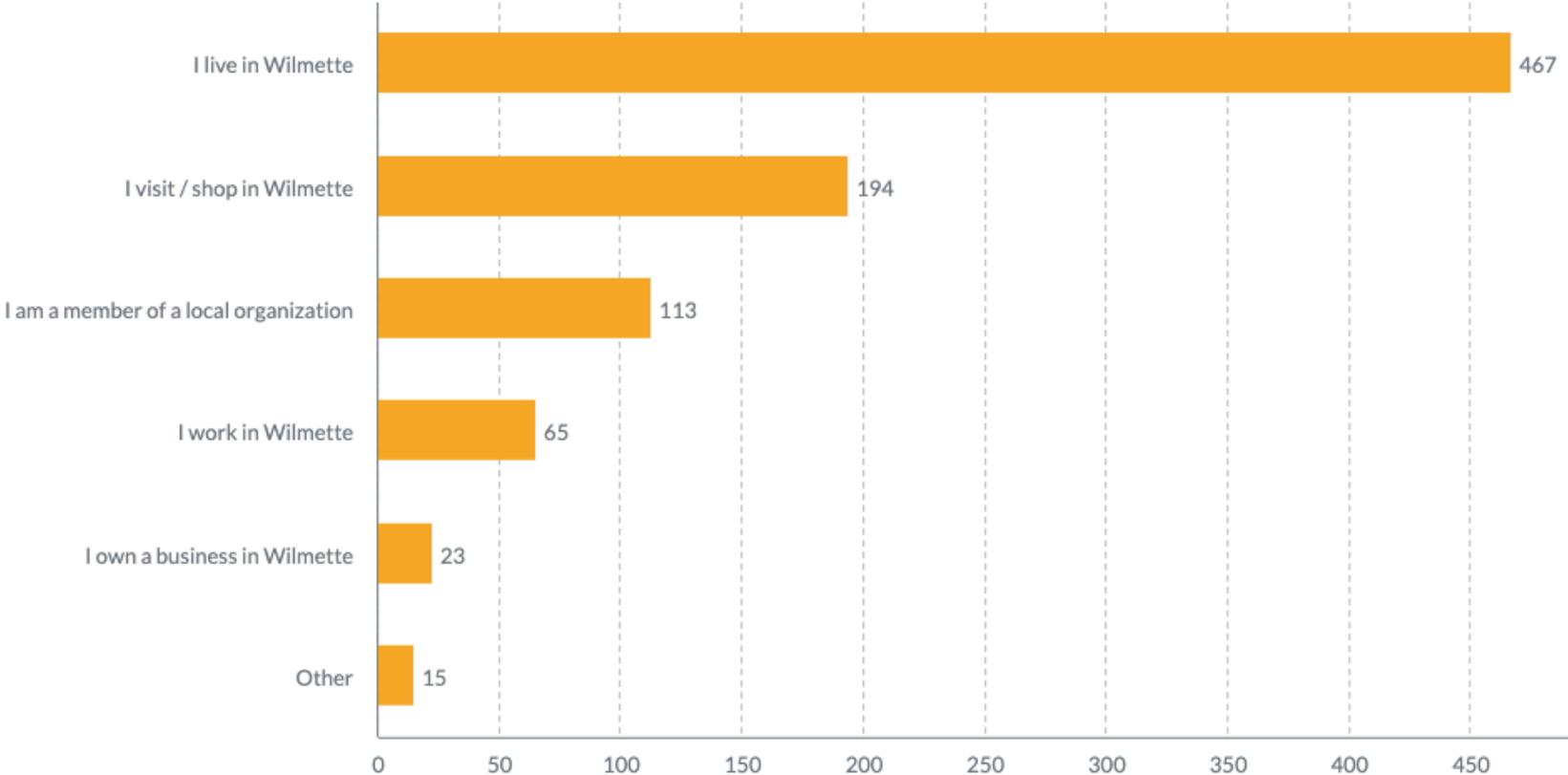
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Introduction & Overview

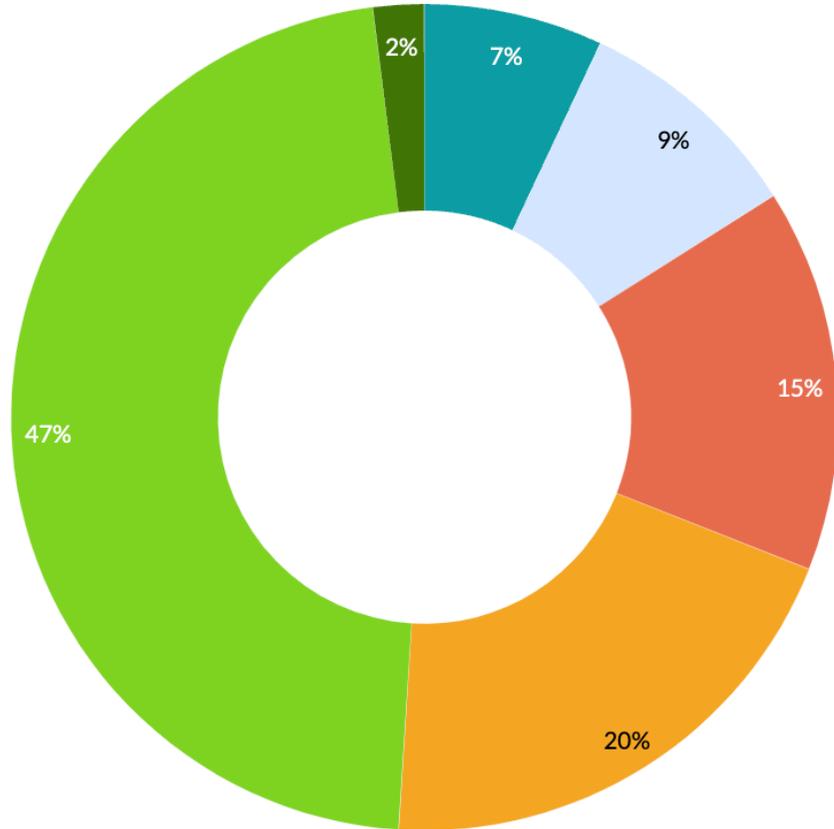
- This online poll and the results summarized here are **not intended to be statistically significant**, nor are they the conclusive “answers” to important questions of diversity, inclusion, and institutions in Wilmette.
- The findings highlighted in this document help paint a picture of **a sample of perspectives** represented in the Village. These takeaways will be incorporated into the comprehensive plan, along with other engagement findings and analysis conducted as part of this planning process.
- Results should also be considered in context of the demographic makeup of respondents. **Just 12% of respondents identified as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC)**. As of the 2020 Census, 22% of Wilmette residents identify as BIPOC.

Demographics of Survey Respondents

How are you connected to Wilmette? (Check all that apply)

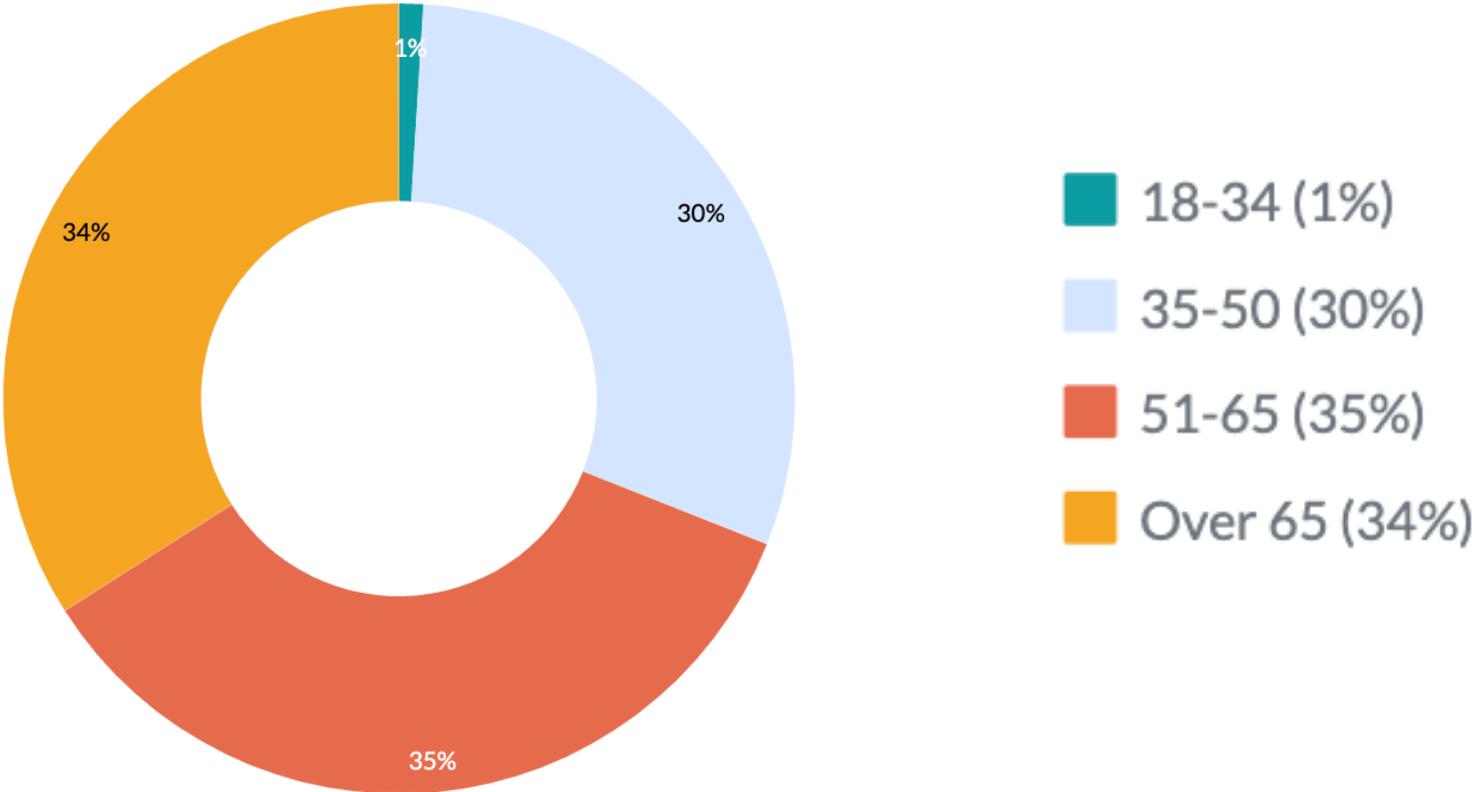


If a resident, how long have you lived in Wilmette?

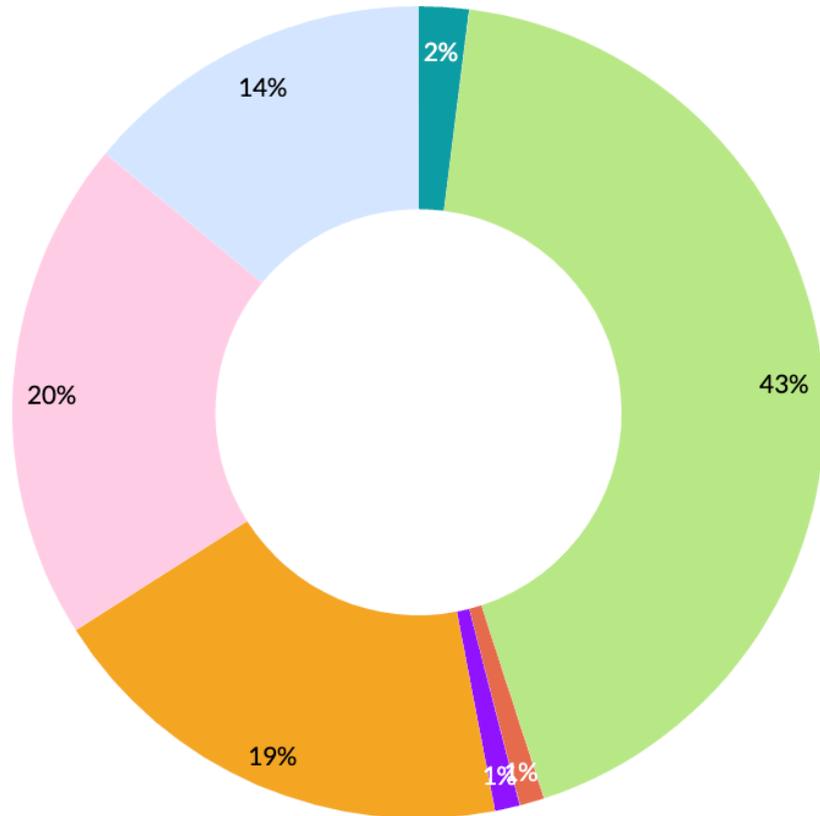


- Less than 2 Years (7%)
- 3 to 5 Years (9%)
- 6 to 10 Years (15%)
- 11 to 20 Years (20%)
- Over 20 Years (47%)
- N/A (2%)

What age group do you belong to?

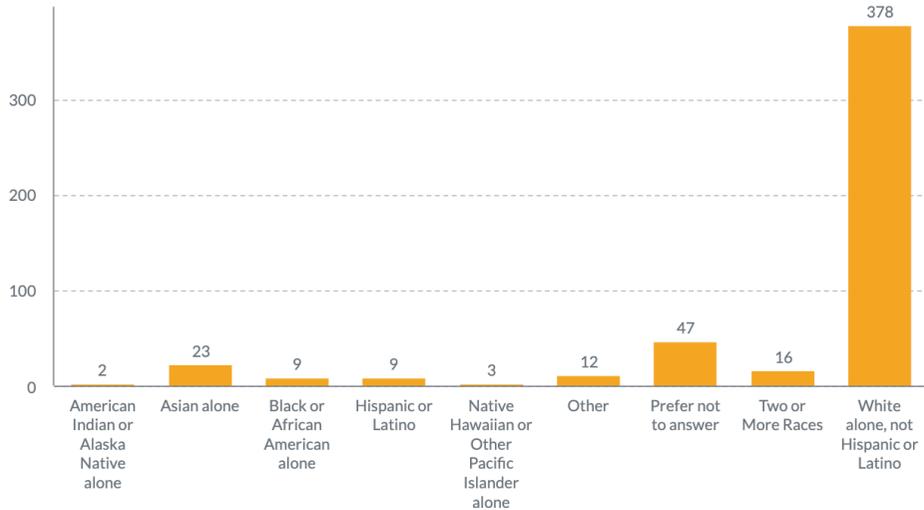


What faith do you practice?

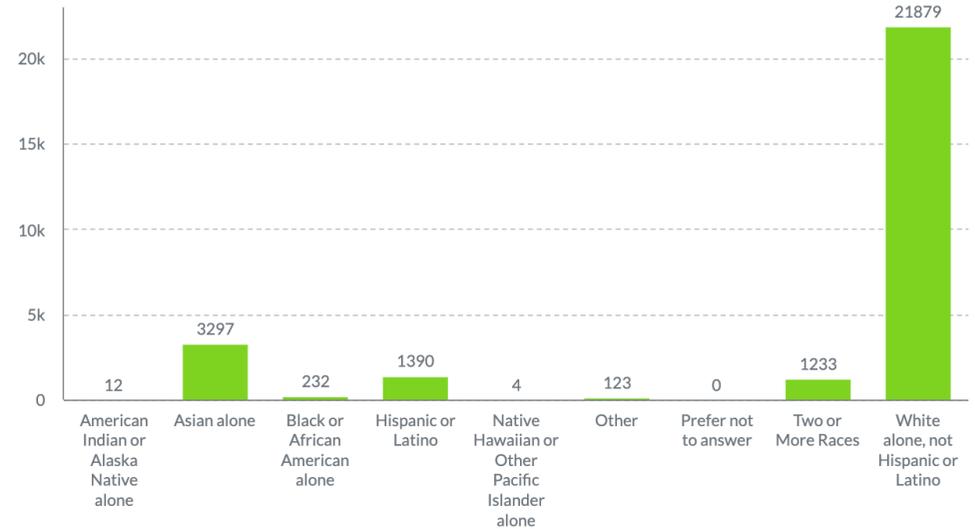


- Baha'i (2%)
- Christianity (43%)
- Hinduism (1%)
- Islam (1%)
- Judaism (19%)
- Prefer Not to Answer (20%)
- Other (Agnostic, Interfaith, None) (14%)

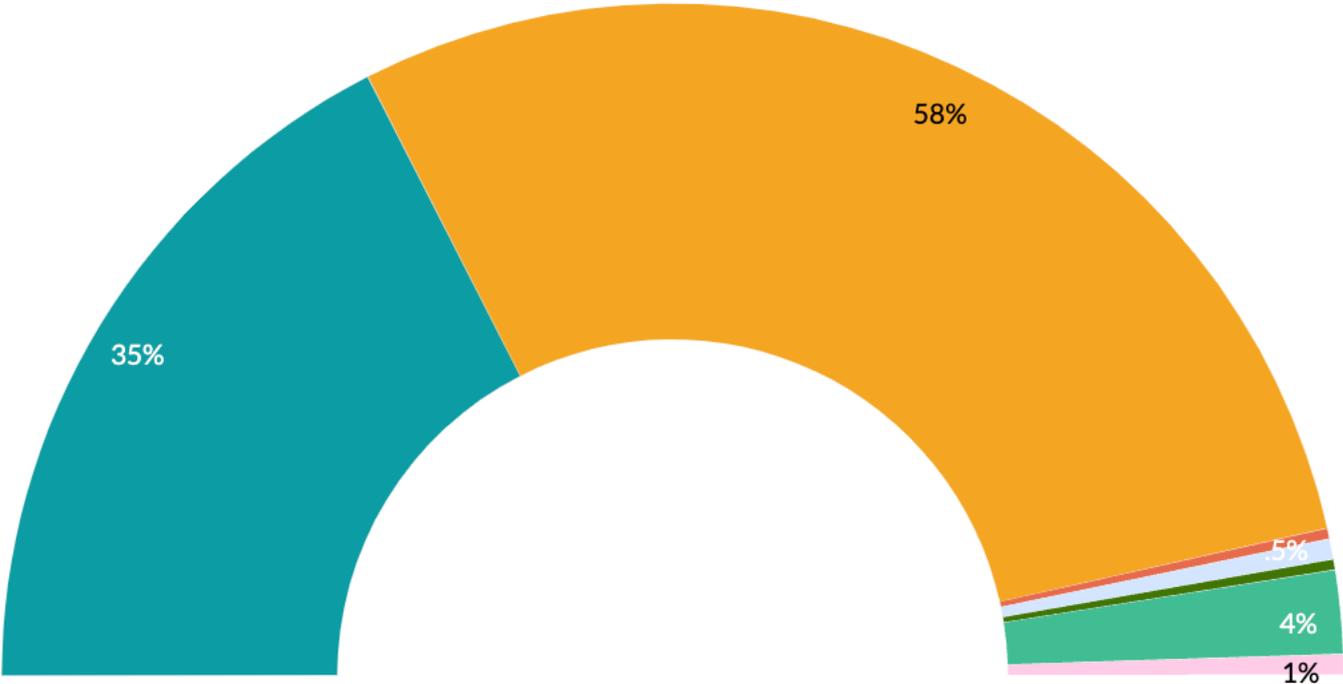
Race/Ethnicity (Check all that apply)



2020 Census Data: Race/Ethnicity in Wilmette



Gender Identity

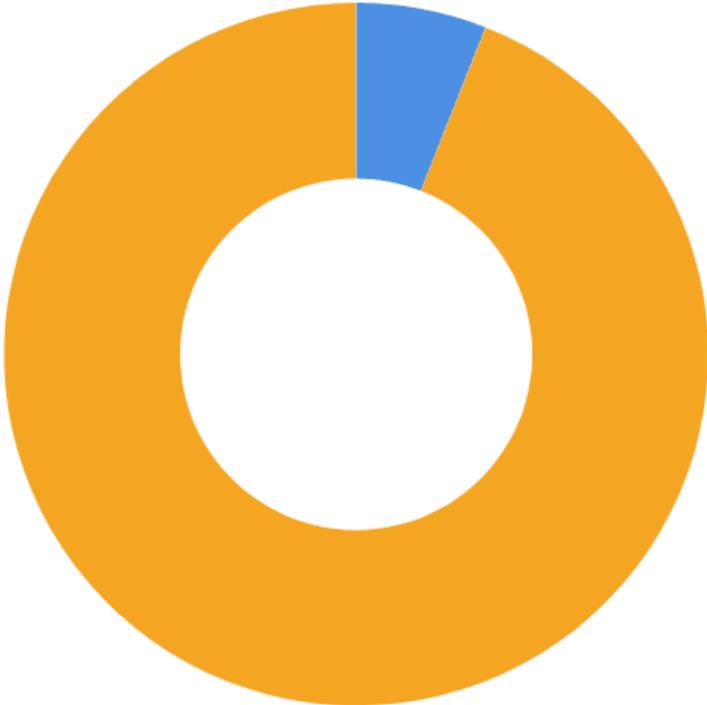


Male (35%) Female (58%) Non-binary (0.5%) Cisgender (1%) Transgender (0.5%) Prefer not to answer (4%) Other (1%)

Sexual Orientation



I live with a disability.



■ Yes (6%) ■ No (94%)

Rating Question Responses

POLL #2 SUMMARY

WILMETTE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

	1 - STRONGLY DISAGREE	2 - DISAGREE	3 - NOT SURE	4 - AGREE	5 - STRONGLY AGREE
The Village of Wilmette is a welcoming community.	11	48	92	218	111
Wilmette residents respect others whose backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences are different from their own.	12	44	123	207	96
Wilmette offers a variety of opportunities to learn about people from a wide range of backgrounds (i.e., race, gender, religion or sexual orientation).	34	156	153	89	52
Getting to know people with backgrounds different from my own has been easy in Wilmette.	43	181	88	107	64
I feel a sense of belonging in Wilmette.	12	35	67	194	174
I have experienced a micro-aggression (such as a joke or slur) due to my race, ethnicity, sexuality, or gender.	219	150	19	66	30
My neighbors would readily welcome someone from a different background into our community.	13	37	124	197	113
I know where to find resources to learn more about topics of diversity and inclusion in Wilmette.	43	129	121	124	65
There are opportunities for people to express concerns about feeling welcome and their sense of belonging in Wilmette.	32	95	218	76	57
Our community should be doing more to enhance diversity and inclusion in Wilmette.	54	52	59	159	158
Perspectives from all people are included in decision making in Wilmette.	44	95	194	94	57

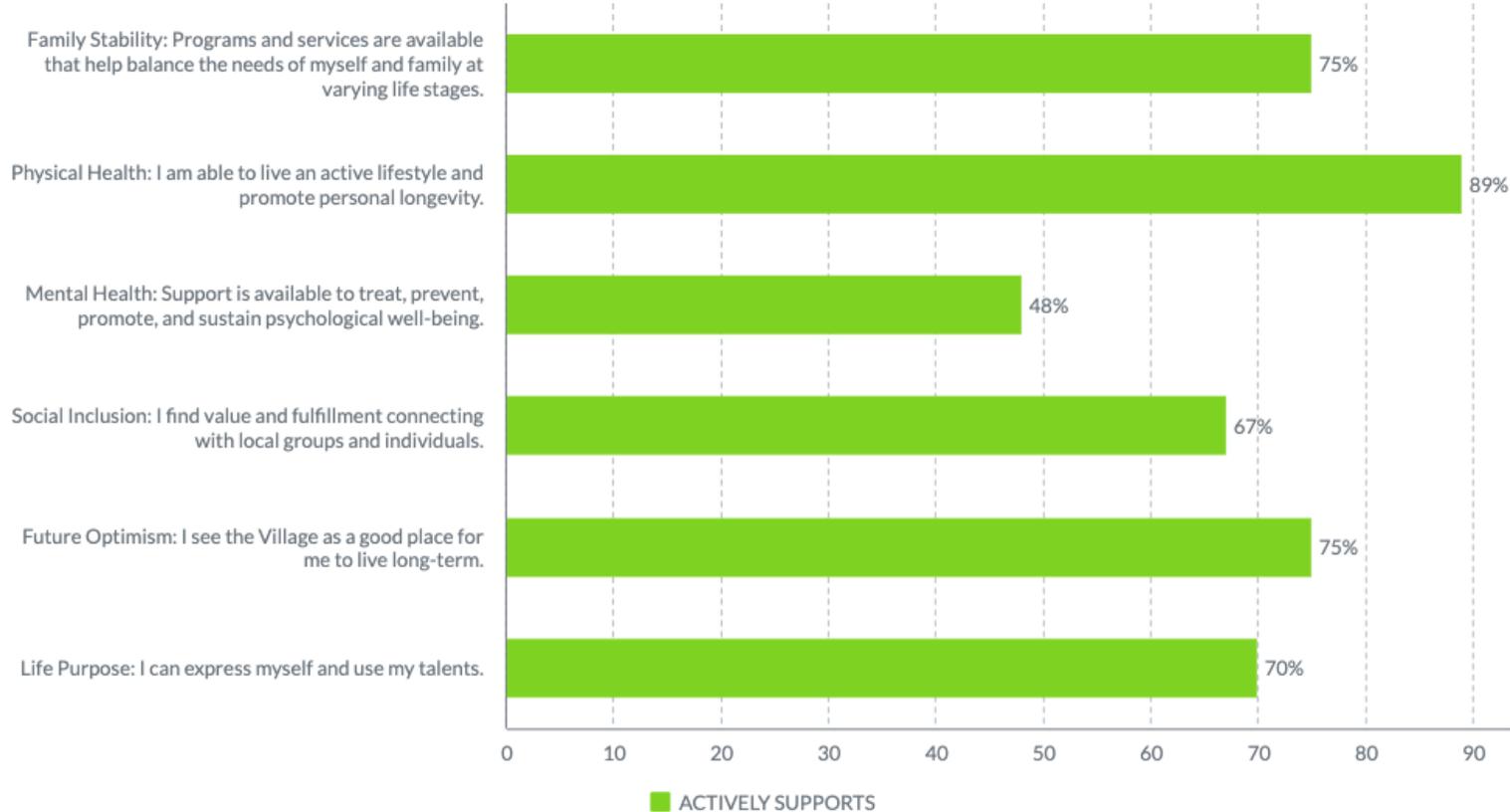
Statements most strongly agreed with, in order:

RANK	
1	I feel a sense of belonging in Wilmette.
2	The Village of Wilmette is a welcoming community.
3	My neighbors would readily welcome someone from a different background into our community.
4	Wilmette residents respect others whose backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences are different from their own.
5	Our community should be doing more to enhance diversity and inclusion in Wilmette.
6	I know where to find resources to learn more about topics of diversity and inclusion in Wilmette.
7	There are opportunities for people to express concerns about feeling welcome and their sense of belonging in Wilmette.
8	Perspectives from all people are included in decision making in Wilmette.
9	Wilmette offers a variety of opportunities to learn about people from a wide range of backgrounds (i.e., race, gender, religion or sexual orientation).
10	Getting to know people with backgrounds different from my own has been easy in Wilmette.
11	I have experienced a micro-aggression (such as a joke or slur) due to my race, ethnicity, sexuality, or gender.

Other ways to understand these results...

- **68% of all respondents and 60% of BIPOC respondents** Agreed or Strongly Agreed that Wilmette is a welcoming community.
- **Microaggressions due to race, ethnicity, sexuality or gender are more likely to be experienced by BIPOC respondents** (45% of all BIPOC vs. 16% of all White respondents).
- Of all respondents, **2 in 3** were either Not Sure, Disagreed, or Strongly Disagreed that perspectives from all people are included in Wilmette's decision making.
- **68%** of all respondents think that Wilmette should be doing more to enhance diversity and inclusion.
- **Nearly half (47%)** of all respondents were Not Sure if there are opportunities for people to express concerns about feeling welcome in Wilmette.
- **63% of all respondents** were either Not Sure, Disagreed, or Strongly Disagreed that they know where to find resources to learn more about diversity and inclusion in Wilmette.

Respondents who said that Wilmette’s community institutions, activities, and/or amenities “Actively Support” the following:



Sampling of Open-Ended Responses

- The following slides feature direct quotes from some of the poll's open-ended responses.
- Nearly 250 responses were submitted. Those highlighted here represent a range of perspectives that were shared in a constructive manner.
- These are provided to shed light on the personal and subjective nature of this topic and to learn from the experiences—both positive and negative—of others.
- Topics include: racial profiling, raising a family, LGBTQ+ experience, east/west divide, affordability, people with disabilities, economic differences, neighbor relationships, community programs, and more.

Please share additional feedback pertaining to community institutions and/or your reasoning for rating aspects as high (actively supports) or low (is harmful to):

- I have a **multi racial family and feel very comfortable living in Wilmette** with my kids.
- I grew up in the village and moved back here in my 40s. The library, community band, beach and sailing, park district, art and other programs, my church provide **many chances to connect with the community and meet others of diverse backgrounds and interests.**
- **Park district does a great job of bringing people together.** Adult clubs, facilities, and leagues (platform tennis, etc.) provide great opportunity for health and friendship.
- **Wilmette Park District and Public Library are the two community institutions that offer programs that have been consistently delivering opportunities** for families at varying life stages.
- Wilmette is a great village and we **as an older gay couple have almost always felt welcomed.** We are also encouraged to see the outreach Wilmette is doing.

Please share additional feedback pertaining to community institutions and/or your reasoning for rating aspects as high (actively supports) or low (is harmful to):

- As a family of color, **we confront micro aggressions on a regular basis**. Why is my biracial son the only child who is asked for proof of residency when he goes to Centennial pool with a group of white friends and they aren't asked for similar proof, for instance? I don't mind the policy but everyone should be treated equally. Why do neighbors call the police when they see my African American husband walk to the gym in the early morning? Why do people who knock on our door and see a brown face question if we live in our home? I provide these examples to illustrate that even in nice communities like Wilmette there is a lot of work to be done to embrace diversity.
- I often go to Evanston or Chicago to church, arts organizations and social organizations because **I have no desire to be the only African American at an event**.
- The **anti-Asian incidents specifically directed to me** that occurred in Wilmette in just the last couple of years have ranged from teenagers yelling racial comments out of their car at me as I walked down Lake Street to being mistaken downtown for a Thai food delivery person, and more...it shouldn't be happening in Wilmette.
- As a resident of **west Wilmette I often feel like my voice is not heard** as loudly as those who live in east Wilmette.

Please share additional feedback pertaining to community institutions and/or your reasoning for rating aspects as high (actively supports) or low (is harmful to):

- I'd **like to see a much more visible support for the LGBTQ+ community**, from gender neutral language to bathrooms, pride flags and education about the transgender community.
- It is hard for me to be optimistic about a long-term future in a place where the **cost of living is too high to allow much diversity** and those who can afford it seem largely content with the status quo.
- **Jobs for those with intellectual disabilities.** Small business owners could be a huge part of helping them join the Wilmette community and they are willing to work!
- **I don't think the schools do a good job about teaching diversity.** There is a loud group of people who seem angry at the idea of teaching or talking about diversity or LGBTQ topics. Also, I went to a board meeting on affordable housing and I was dismayed about the negative words and scare tactics that were brought up at the meeting.

Please share additional feedback pertaining to community institutions and/or your reasoning for rating aspects as high (actively supports) or low (is harmful to):

- **I always felt very welcome to participate** in PTOs when the kids were in school, in scouts, youth sports, etc. We were always able to find friends and support from the parent groups. There are tons of volunteer opportunities to stay connected.
- **Actively supports a place for community & mental health well being.** It is an amazing community/area that provides so much to address our mental health through the park district, golf, trails, Gilson, library and social services.
- I think **Wilmette is a wonderful place to raise children.** We have great supports and activities for families with young children and older adults. I don't see as many opportunities/services/supports for young adults.
- Wilmette is a **wonderful community of people who are sensitive and inclusive.** There is no need to change anything.

Please share additional feedback pertaining to community institutions and/or your reasoning for rating aspects as high (actively supports) or low (is harmful to):

- The Wilmette Public Library, the school system, and the Wilmette Park District are **outstanding and engage my family through all stages of life** -- from pre-school programs to programs for seniors. The Lake, Gillson Park and our beautiful beaches are tremendous assets that bring people together to enjoy nature and outdoor activities. We have **wonderful organizations that help connect people and support our greater community.** That said, I believe we **could do better to engage more community members in Village policies, committees, and volunteer activities.** Under our new Village President, we seem to be heading in the right direction: taking more time to review the applications of people applying to serve on committees and reconvening the Human Relations and Housing commissions. Let's encourage these commissions to make real, tangible changes. Also, we **can do better to help all members of the community with social services, particularly affordable housing, and mental health needs, particularly mental health services for teenagers.**

Anything else you'd like to share on the topics of Diversity, Inclusiveness and Community Institutions?

- Our institutions such as school board, village board, park board, library board etc. **having more diverse leadership would be a strong marker for being the welcoming, inclusive community** we aspire to be.
- One of the biggest **impediments to progress** in this village is exemplified in the debate over minimum wage requirements for local businesses, and in the **arguments over affordable housing units in recent construction projects**.
- My child lives with **high functioning autism. He was excluded all through Wilmette schools** despite the district's reputation as great for special needs.
- This is **one of the most open and welcoming communities I have ever been apart of**. Very progressive perspectives. Baha'i a temple being part of the fabric of the community is a great manifestation of this.

Anything else you'd like to share on the topics of Diversity, Inclusiveness and Community Institutions?

- **Block parties are a good idea** and seem to support getting to know people better. We have found that joining a church/faith based community or joining a community group or getting involved on Village Committees is a good way to get to know new people.
- There are numerous local groups, such as RAIN (Racial Awareness in the Northshore) or HEROS (Healing Everyday Racism in Our Schools) and it is **CRITICAL** for the long-term Diversity and Inclusiveness of Wilmette to **work with RAIN/HEROS groups to increase the diversity in Wilmette thoughtfully.**
- I think **affordable housing is an important aspect of creating more diversity** within our community and is something the village should actively work to increase.
- Perhaps invite the various local faith-based institutions to host designated "shared" services to allow "outsiders" to see how they practice their faith and **begin to erase religious tribalism.**

Anything else you'd like to share on the topics of Diversity, Inclusiveness and Community Institutions?

- I think the human race (people of all backgrounds) will always struggle with prejudice. **Wilmette is the best place I've lived yet for tolerance and respect.** We have over 20 languages spoken at Avoca West. We have intercultural night at Marie Murphy and it is always sold out. There are at least 5 different races on my block and we all like and help each other.
- The **community is open, kind, and welcoming already.** No need to spend additional resources on this.
- Please don't interfere where you should not be. There's a place for the village to do its job. There are **other institutions to address these issues that should not involve the village.**
- The Village should **neither encourage nor discourage anyone to live here** based on race, gender, sexuality, etc.
- While I applaud Wilmette's goal of being a welcoming community, there are other areas that matter to the village aside from DEI. **I hope Wilmette doesn't focus on DEI to the exclusion of other important topics.**