



A Portrait of Baltimore

Results of the 2023 Baltimore Area Survey

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1. Introducing the Baltimore Area Survey

The Baltimore Area Survey is an effort to measure aspects of life among Baltimore-Area residents. We seek to provide data to residents, community groups, nonprofits, local governments, and businesses through this and subsequent Baltimore Area Surveys to help them better understand the lives and conditions of Baltimore-area residents. The survey is designed to be representative of adult residents of Baltimore City and Baltimore County. By drawing a representative sample of respondents, we can help Baltimore-area residents understand conditions in the present and we aspire to measure change in conditions over time.

Working with our Community Collaboration Committee, we identified four themes of life among Baltimore-area residents for which we thought data would be useful: neighborhood conditions, health, resident finances and entrepreneurship, and the connections residents have to people, places, and organizations in the Baltimore area. Our report follows these broad themes and reports on major findings within each of these themes. The results come from 1,352 respondents representative of residents in Baltimore City and Baltimore County during the summer of 2023. This report provides initial findings across the breadth of the themes we identified.

One of our commitments at 21st Century Cities is making the data that we collect available to the entire Baltimore-area community. We believe that high-quality, representative data on the residents of the Baltimore area can improve the policies of local governments, the programs of nonprofits, and services offered by businesses. Therefore, we have released the underlying data for community use that removes any identifiable information. Information on obtaining the data for analysis can be found on our website: <https://21cc.jhu.edu/baltimore-area-survey/>

Methods

A brief summary of the methods we used may provide helpful context to understand the results. The survey was sent to a statistically representative sample of 6,000 households in Baltimore City and 4,000 households in Baltimore county. Sampled households were spread across almost the entirety of both jurisdictions. The respondents were invited to join the sample via a letter sent to them through the mail that included a two-dollar bill as an incentive. They were provided instructions to complete the survey online with a unique weblink and QR code and were paid a further five-dollar incentive for filling out the survey.

The overall survey has a margin of error of ± 4.2 percent. Different subgroups will have larger margins of error since they will be based on smaller samples. When we divide the sample into Baltimore City and Baltimore County residents, for example, the margins of

error are ± 5.1 percent among Baltimore City residents and ± 6.3 percent among Baltimore County residents. Tables containing margins of errors for subgroups can be found at the end of this report.

Given the history of the Baltimore region and current high levels of racial segregation and racial inequality, we investigate racial differences in many of the outcomes in this report. We largely followed the method that the US government uses when reporting data from the Census and other federal reports. We measure race based on a combination of two questions. The first asked if the respondent reported that they were Latinx and the second asked the respondents to report racial categories that applied to them. We counted everyone who reported that they were Latinx as Latinx. For those who did not report being Latinx, we categorized all respondents who reported that they were Black if they responded that they were Black in combination with any other race. We categorized as White anyone who reported being White alone with no other racial group. And we categorized those who reported another racial group (e.g., Asian or American Indian) or if they were Latinx into an “Other” category. Despite being less than ideal, we classified other groups into a single category because no single group had a large enough sample to be able to draw statistically meaningful conclusions. It is our hope that, as we collect data in future years, that analyzing other racial and ethnic groups will become possible by combining samples across years.

In addition to releasing the data, we also plan to release reports that provide more depth to the topics of this report over the coming year leading up to the 2024 survey.

Themes

The 2023 Baltimore Area Survey focused on four themes identified by the Community Collaboration Committee as topics relevant to residents, organizations, and government in Baltimore. The four themes had the common thread that data on the topic should help the Baltimore area understand itself better and that the data should complement existing sources of data available through other sources. We briefly describe each of the themes below and present findings from that theme in the subsequent sections of the report.

Neighborhoods

We want to know how Baltimore-area residents evaluated their neighborhoods, including how satisfied they are with their neighborhoods and how they perceive them to have changed. We focus on these perceptions, along with other subjective aspects of neighborhoods, to supplement existing sources of data from both Baltimore City and County governments, the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, and the Census Bureau. Future reports will connect the responses of Baltimore-area residents to these data sources.

Connectivity

This section describes how Baltimore-area residents connect to the people, places, and organizations in the area. Two major topics on which we focus here are transportation issues that arise for Baltimore-area residents and the relationships that residents have to businesses, nonprofit, and local governments—including the police—in and near their neighborhoods. The results in this section provide context for possible entrepreneurial opportunities, some of which we discuss in another section of this report, and may let public leaders know about the concerns that arise among residents when navigating local government. We anticipate that future surveys will be able to track changes over time.

Health

Tracking the health of Baltimore-area residents is another priority of the Baltimore

Area Survey. We asked respondents to report on their own physical and mental health. These measures have been used extensively by researchers, including the World Health Organization, to study the general health of groups of people. Like with the neighborhood data above, these measures can supplement data collected by health departments in the city and the county. In addition, we were particularly concerned with the collateral effects of health conditions. One of those major public health concerns is drug abuse and overdose deaths. We report on the way in which Baltimore-area residents' lives have been touched by drug abuse.

Finance and Entrepreneurship

Measures of experiences related to financial conditions may provide better context for understanding the lives of Baltimore-area residents than income alone. We report on food security among Baltimore-area residents as one such additional measure. Beyond documenting financial problems, we also wanted to explore possible opportunities. We examined residents' thoughts about entrepreneurship and the possibilities that entrepreneurship offered.

Findings

The sections that follow contain the results of questions from each of the four themes above. Because of the methods used to conduct the survey, the results represent the sentiments, perceptions, and experiences of Baltimore-area residents. We hope that the findings help Baltimore-area residents understand themselves in the context of their neighbors throughout the area and may support decisions of residents, nonprofits, businesses, and governments.

About seven out of every eight residents reported being either “extremely” or “somewhat” satisfied with their neighborhoods.

2. Neighborhoods and Schools

Neighborhood Satisfaction and Improvement

We asked respondents how many blocks encompassed the area that they considered their neighborhood. Figure 2.1 reports the percentage of residents that reported the number of blocks they considered to be part of their neighborhood. Slightly more than half of respondents reported that their neighborhoods were smaller than 10 blocks in size. Residents of the county were slightly more likely to consider their neighborhoods to consist of fewer blocks, but the differences could have been due to statistical noise. Baltimore-area residents report being satisfied with their neighborhoods. About seven out of every eight residents reported being either “extremely” or “somewhat” satisfied with their neighborhoods. The residents who were satisfied were equally split between those who said that they were “extremely” satisfied with their neighborhoods and those

Size of neighborhood

Number of blocks Baltimore-area residents reported being in their neighborhood:

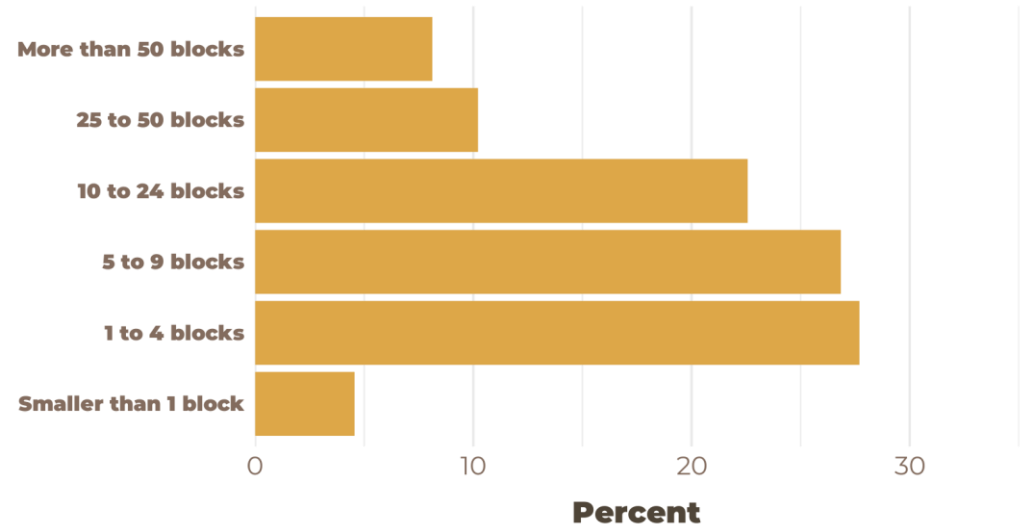


Figure 2.1: Reported size of neighborhood

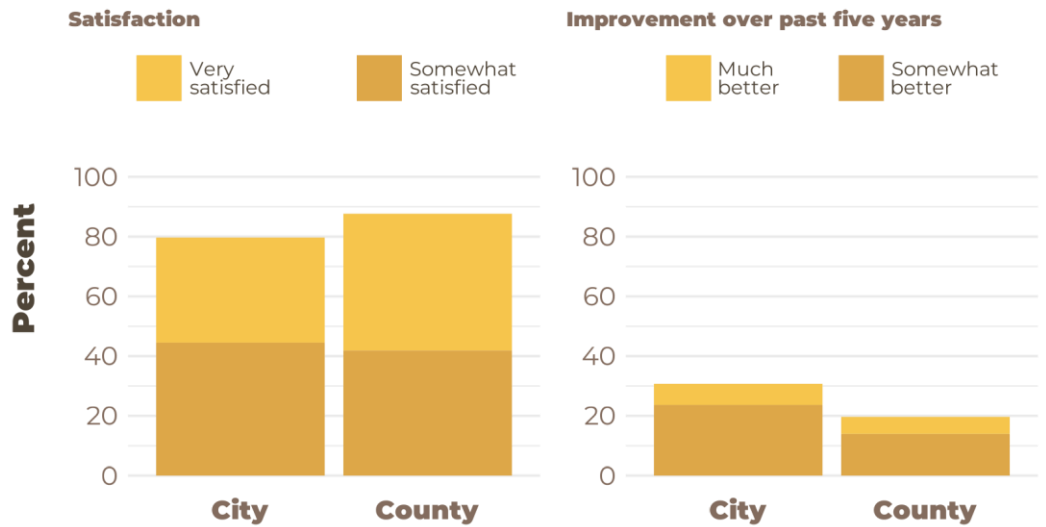
who said that they were “somewhat” satisfied with their neighborhood. Only 6.9 percent reported being “very dissatisfied” with their neighborhoods.

The left plot in Figure 2.2 shows that a small difference in neighborhood satisfaction existed between city and county residents. County residents were 7.97 percent more likely to report being either “extremely” or “somewhat” satisfied. City residents were, however, more likely to report that their neighborhoods had become better places to live over the past five years. The right side of Figure 2.2 shows the difference. Among city residents, 30.7 percent reported that their neighborhood had become either a much or a somewhat better place to live, compared to 19.7 percent among county residents (though this may be because they had more room to improve in the eyes of the residents).

Neighborhood perceptions

Share of residents satisfied with neighborhood and who see improvement

Figure 2.2: Neighborhood satisfaction and perceived improvement over the past five years by jurisdiction



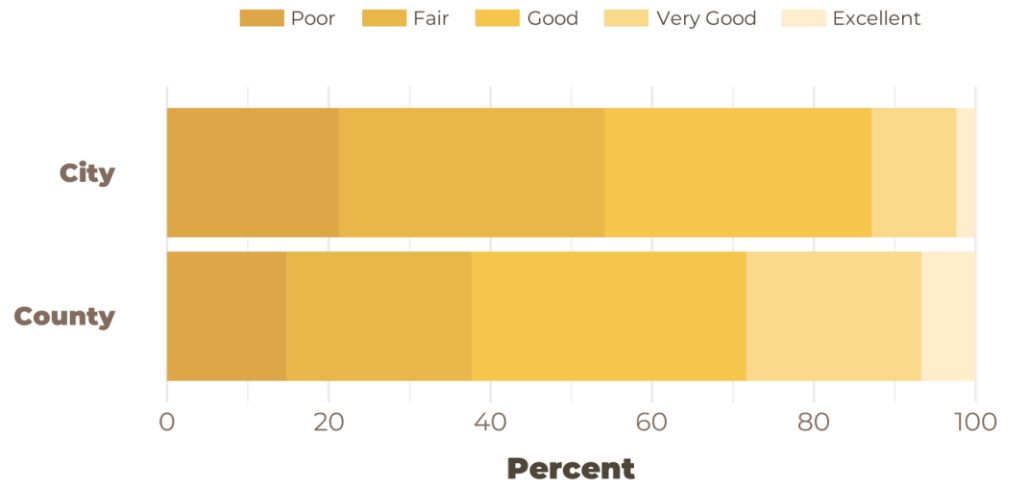
Schools

Just over one in five Baltimore-area residents considers the quality of the public schools in their neighborhood to be either “very good” or “excellent.” A third of residents rate the schools as “good” while 27 percent rate them as “fair” and 17.4 rate them as “poor”. Pronounced differences between city and county residents were clear. Only 12.8 percent of City residents reported that the public schools in their neighborhood were either “excellent” or “very good”. Over two times that share of county residents, 28.4 percent, reported their neighborhood schools being “excellent” or “very good”.

Figure 2.3: Evaluation of public schools in neighborhood

Quality of Schools

Perceptions of neighborhood public schools among Baltimore-area residents by jurisdiction

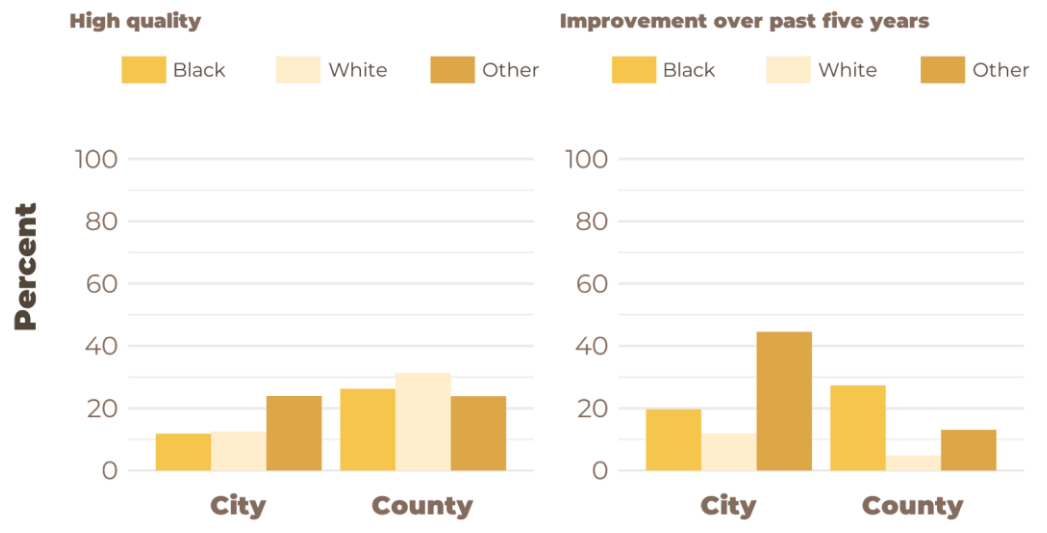


Although Black and White Baltimore-area residents viewed schools differently, the racial segregation between the city and county accounted for almost all of the difference. The shares of Black and White county residents who rated their schools as “excellent” or “very good” were similar to one another. The left panel of Figure 2.4 shows that 26.2 percent of Black residents and 31.4 percent of White residents reported that their school was either “very good” or “excellent,” a difference small enough that we cannot statistically distinguish between the two. Meanwhile, in the city, just over 10 percent of both Black and White city residents rated their local schools as “very good” or “excellent.” Other-race Baltimore city residents, however, were much more likely than either Black or White city residents to rate schools in their neighborhoods as “excellent” or “very good.”

Figure 2.4 Perceptions of public school quality and improvement over previous five years by jurisdiction

School quality and improvement

Shares of groups who report high school quality and improvement by jurisdiction



Black residents in both the city and the county were, however, more likely to report that their neighborhood schools had improved over the past five years. Among city residents, nearly one in five Black residents thought that their neighborhood school had improved, almost double the share of White residents. The difference was even more pronounced in the county: 27.3 percent of Black residents thought that their schools had improved compared to only 4.8 percent of White residents. Whether these differences come about because White residents already lived in neighborhoods with better schools with less room to improve, or the differences reflect an improved sense among Black Baltimore-area residents warrants further investigation.

Summary

The overwhelming majority of Baltimore-area residents are satisfied with their neighborhoods. This was true in both the city and the county. City residents, however, were more likely to have reported improvement over the past five years. Perceptions of school quality of neighborhood schools remained low, especially in the city. This was true among both Black and White Baltimore-area residents. Black residents living in both the city and the county were, however, much more likely than White residents to have reported improvements in neighborhood quality over the past five years.

3. Connectivity

Trust in Local Organizations

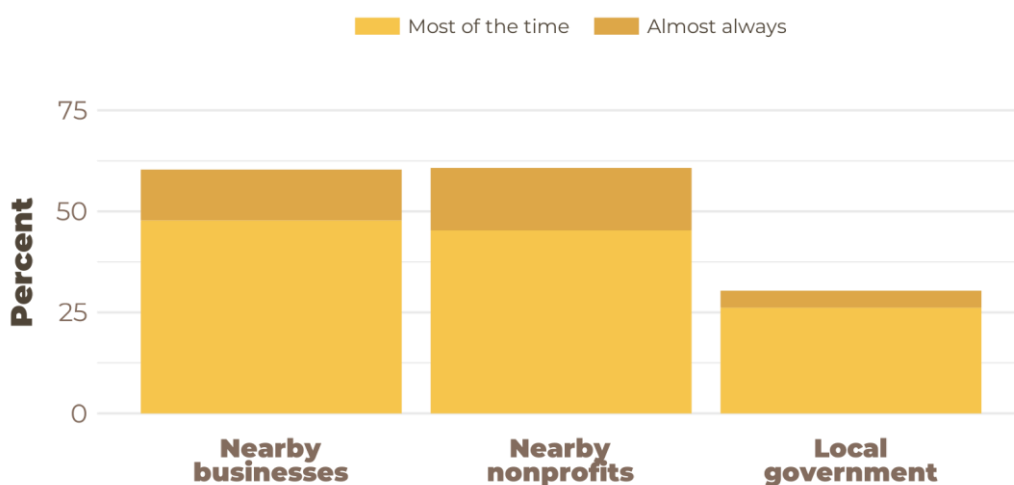
The daily lives of Baltimore-area residents touch many organizations. Businesses provide goods and services, nonprofits provide assistance and support the quality of life, and the local government provides public services. We asked Baltimore-area residents about each of those types of organizations and focused on those that they use regularly. Specifically, we asked residents to think about organizations “in or near your neighborhood,” those that they could “get to easily using a mode of transit (for example, walking, driving or taking public transit) that you usually use.”

Three in five Baltimore-area residents reported that they trusted businesses near them to do what is right “almost always” or “most of the time.” An equal share reported that they trusted nonprofits near them to do the same. This excluded the relatively large share of residents—19 percent—who reported that no nonprofits were present in or near their neighborhoods (2.2 percent reported that no businesses were present). Both of these figures were comparable to the share of residents who reported that people in general can be trusted. Among Baltimore-area respondents, 64.3 percent reported that people could usually or always be trusted to do what is right.

Figure 3.1: Trust in organizations to do what is right

Trust in organizations

Percentages of Baltimore-area residents reporting how often they trust organizations to do what is right



In contrast, only half as many Baltimore-area respondents reported that they trusted their local government to do what was right almost always or most of the time. Table 3.1 shows that shares of residents who trust each type of organization was higher in the county than in the city for all three types of organizations.

Table 3.1: Percent of residents who trust organizations to do what is right at least most of the time

	Businesses	Nonprofits	Local government
City	58	55	20
County	62	65	38

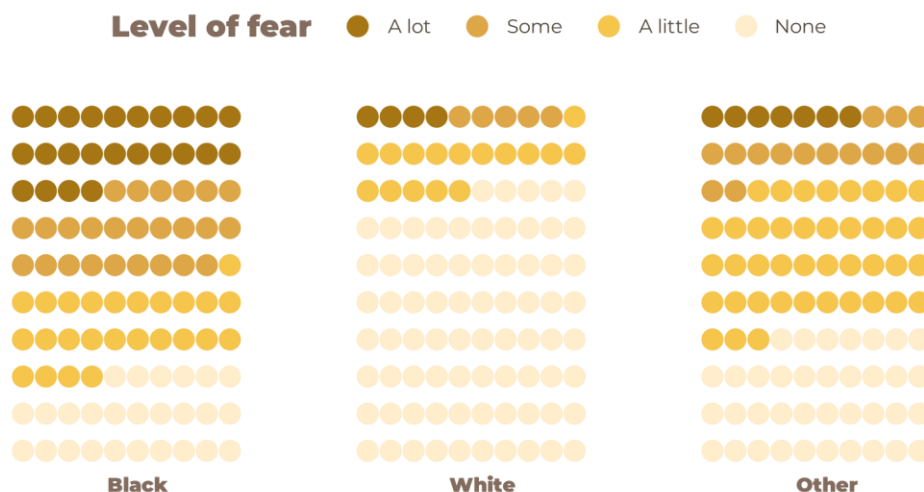
Policing

A profound racial divide existed when we asked Baltimore-area residents about police. We asked respondents about how much fear they had of questioning or arrest by the police and how much it affected their daily lives. Figure 3.2 represents the proportion of Baltimore-area residents who report feeling this fear. Each dot represents one percent of each racial group. The difference in fear for White residents compared to all other racial groups in the Baltimore area is striking.

Figure 3.2: Fear of arrest or questioning by police by race

Fear of police

Baltimore-area residents who fear arrest or questioning by police by race



A quarter of Black residents said that they had “a lot” of fear that they or their loved ones would be targeted by police for questioning or arrest

Three quarters of White Baltimore-area residents reported that they had no fear of police. Most White residents who did report being fearful of police arrest or questioning reported that they had only “a little” fear.

The inverse was true among Black residents: three-quarters of Black Baltimore-area residents *had at least some fear*. Fully a quarter of Black residents said that they had “a lot” of fear that they or their loved ones would be targeted by police for questioning or arrest and another quarter said that they had “some” fear. Among the Black residents who reported that they had at least a little fear of police questioning or arrest, more than half, 52.7 percent, reported that the fear affected their daily lives “some” or “a lot”. The results were similar between Black city and county residents and the racial differences were similar between city and county residents.

Shares of other-race Baltimore-area residents who reported fear of police behaviors were similar to the shares of Black residents. The intensity of the fear, however, was lower: 6.5 percent of other-race residents reported “a lot” of fear of being questioned or arrested by police compared to the quarter of Black residents.

Transportation

Transportation presented problems for a substantial share of Baltimore-area residents. Residents need to be able to get places to get things done, but they also need to get places to enjoy their lives. We asked respondents a set of six questions about problems they might have with transportation. Our goal was to understand how issues with transportation may affect both getting places and how it may affect the way that they feel. The questions we asked are listed in Table 3.2. The first three connect to the opportunities that may have been lost by respondents because of a lack of transportation while the last three get at the emotional dimension of transportation access.

Table 3.2: Transportation questions asked of 2023 Baltimore Area Survey respondents

In the past 30 days...

...how often did you have to reschedule an appointment because of a problem with transportation?

...how often did you skip going somewhere because of a problem with transportation?

...how often were you not able to leave the house when you wanted to because of a problem with transportation?

...how often did you feel down because you did not have the transportation you needed?

...how often did you worry about inconveniencing your friends, family, or neighbors because you needed help with transportation?

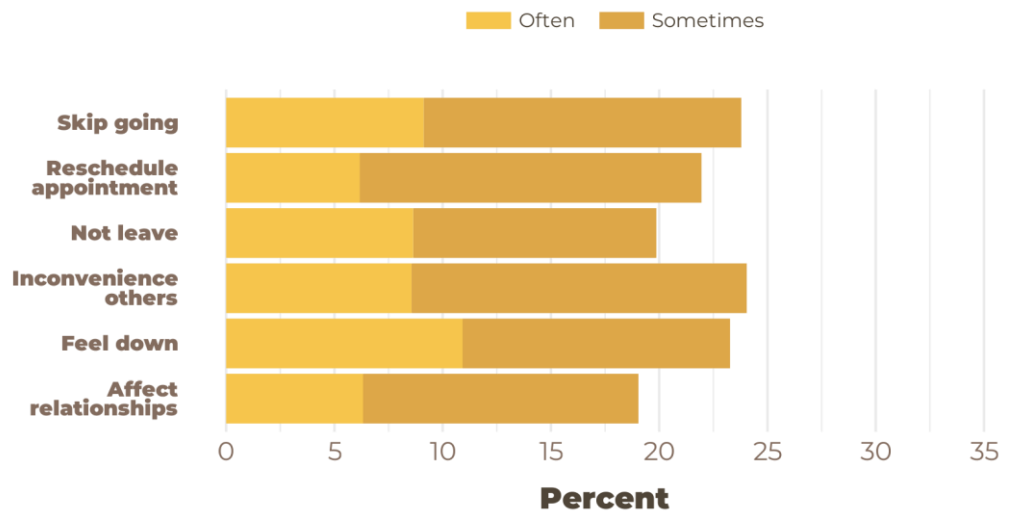
...how often did problems with transportation affect your relationships with others?

Figure 3.3 reports the share of Baltimore-area residents who reported each aspect being a problem “often” or “sometimes” over the past 30 days. More than one in five Baltimore-area respondents reported having needed, at least sometimes, to reschedule an appointment, skipped going somewhere, felt down, or inconvenienced others because of issues with transportation. One in ten Baltimore-area residents reported that they “often” feel down because they had issues with transportation. Overall, one third of Baltimore-area residents reported at least one transportation-related issue, including 43.5 percent of city residents and 26.2 percent of county residents.

Figure 3.3: Problems related to transportation

Transportation issues

Shares of Baltimore-area residents reporting issues due to transportation



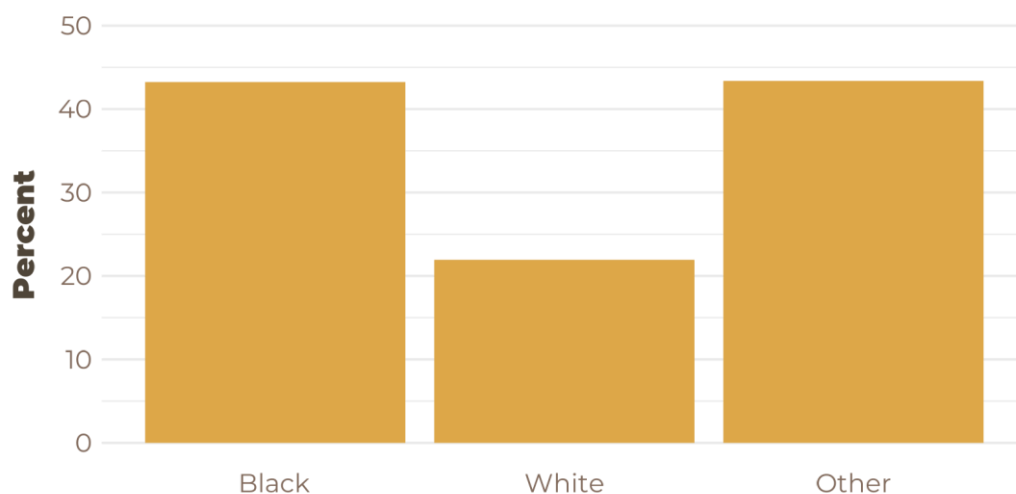
Baltimore-area residents of color were much more likely to face transportation issues than White Baltimore-area residents. Figure 3.4 shows the share of residents who reported “sometimes” or “often” having trouble with at least one aspect of life in Table 3.2 because of transportation. Only 21.9 percent of White residents reported having any trouble with transportation. In contrast, 43.2 percent of Black residents reported having an issue due to transportation. Shares of other-race residents who had transportation issues were similar to Black residents, with 43.4 percent reporting issues. While more people in the city than the county reported having issues with transportation, the racial disparities were consistent across both jurisdictions.

Figure 3.4: Reported transportation Issues by race

Baltimore-area residents of color were much more likely to face transportation issues than White Baltimore-area residents.

Transportation Insecurity

Share of Baltimore-area residents reporting at least one transportation issue by race



Summary

Most Baltimore-area residents trust the businesses and non-profits in and near their neighborhoods to usually do what is right. They have less trust that local governments will do what is right.

Profound racial differences separate the daily experiences of White Baltimore-area residents from residents of color in both policing and transportation. About three in every four Baltimore-area residents of color experiences fear of police questioning or arrest while three in every four White resident says that they have no fear of police. The differences in fear, which varied little across the city/county line, affect the everyday lives of Baltimore-area residents and likely shape interactions with police forces in both the city and the county.

Transportation issues are another issue marked by racial inequality in the Baltimore area. One in three Baltimore-area residents deal with issues related to transportation, including things like missing appointments. The burden, however, falls far more on Baltimore-area residents of color than it does on White residents. About twice as many Baltimore-area residents of color report having at least one transportation-related issue compared to White Baltimore-area residents.

4. Health and Well-Being

Self-Rated Health

We asked respondents to rate both their physical and mental health. Self-rated measures like these are commonly used to measure the overall health of groups of people. Table 4.1 shows that 12.4 percent of Baltimore-area residents reported being in “excellent” physical health and 30.5 percent reported being in “very good” physical health. The share of residents reporting “excellent” mental health were slightly higher, at 20.5 percent, and 32.1 percent reported being in “very good” mental health.

Table 4.1 Self-rated health

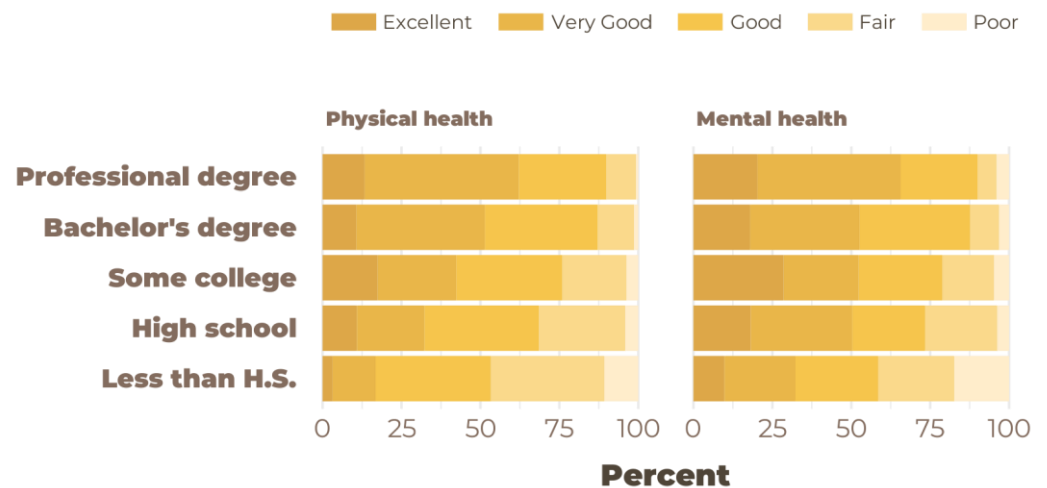
Level	Physical	Mental
Excellent	12	20
Very Good	30	32
Good	34	27
Fair	20	16
Poor	3	5

Education strongly predicted how Baltimore-area residents rated their own health, both physical and mental. Figure 4.1 shows this correlation. Each step of education attained included larger shares of people who report being in either “excellent” or “very good” physical health, ranging from 16.8 percent among those with less than a high school degree to 62.2 percent among those with a professional degree. The contrast is nearly as sharp for mental health: 65.6 percent of those with professional degrees reported “excellent” or “very good” mental health compared to only 32.3 percent among those with less than a high school degree.

Figure 4.1: Self-rated physical and mental health by education

Self-Rated Health

Level of physical and mental health among Baltimore-area residents by education



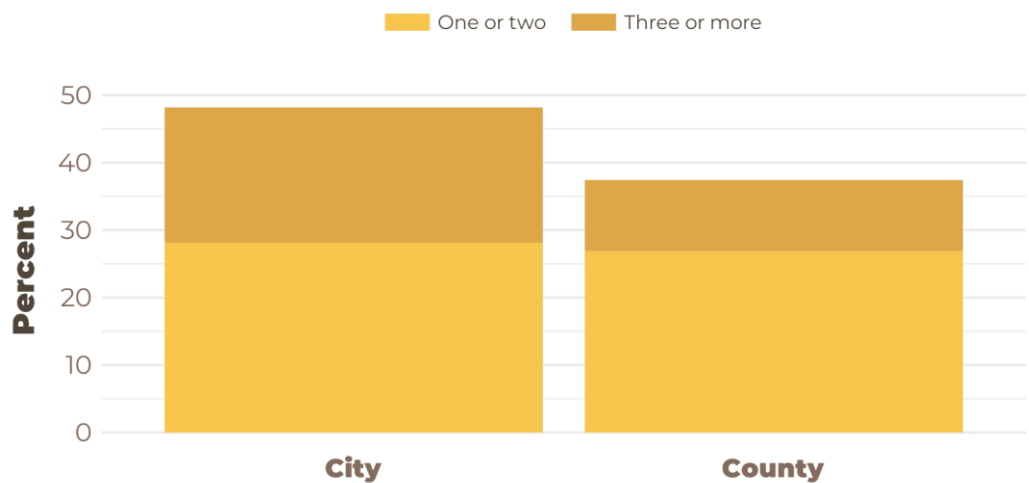
Drug Addiction

One of our priorities for studying health was understanding the ways that health conditions impact larger communities. We investigated some of these larger consequences by asking questions about those who know people who are addicted to illegal drugs. Over forty percent of Baltimore-area residents know at least one person who is addicted to illegal drugs and, among those, 14.5 percent know three or more people who are addicted to drugs. There was a difference between city and county residents. City residents were twice as likely as county residents to know three or more people who are addicted to drugs (shown in the dark area in Figure 4.2): 20.1 percent of city residents know three or more people compared to only 10.5 percent of county residents. Just over a quarter of residents in both the city and the county know one or two people who are addicted to illegal drugs.

Figure 4.2: Shares of residents reporting knowing someone addicted to illegal drugs by jurisdiction

Connection to Drug Addiction

Numbers of people Baltimore-area residents know who are addicted to illegal drugs by jurisdiction



Among area residents, more than a quarter—28.5 percent—have ever experienced the death of a loved one as the result of a drug overdose.

Tragically, a large share of Baltimore-area residents have also been touched by overdose deaths. Among area residents, more than a quarter—28.5 percent—have ever experienced the death of a loved one as the result of a drug overdose. The percentage of Baltimore-area residents bereaved of a loved one are similar to percentages found in a [recent national survey](#). The probability of knowing someone who died was approximately equal between city and county residents: 31.3 percent of city residents and 26.5 percent of county residents reported losing someone to drug overdose.

Covid Losses

The Covid pandemic also exacted losses on Baltimore-area residents. Just over a quarter of Baltimore-area residents experienced the loss of a loved one due to the pandemic. The burden was not shared equally, however. The pandemic led a larger share of Black Baltimore-area residents losing loved ones than White residents or those who identified as another race. More than a third of Black Baltimore-area residents—37.1 percent—reported losing loved ones. In comparison, only 20.7 percent of White Baltimore-area residents and 21.3 percent of other-race residents lost loved ones to the pandemic. These estimates are slightly lower, though in line with, estimates from a [national survey](#) of the share of Americans who know someone who died of Covid.

Summary

Educational opportunity and race shape health-related experiences among Baltimore-area residents. While many residents report being in very good or excellent physical and mental health, those residents are far more likely to have attained high levels of education compared to those with less education. We also show how illegal drugs and the Covid pandemic touched those around us as well. Substantial shares of Baltimore-area residents lost loved ones to illegal drug overdoses and to the Covid pandemic. While seeking to improve the health of Baltimore-area residents, it will be important to consider the manner in which these experiences shape those who have dealt with those losses.

5. Financial Well-Being & Entrepreneurship

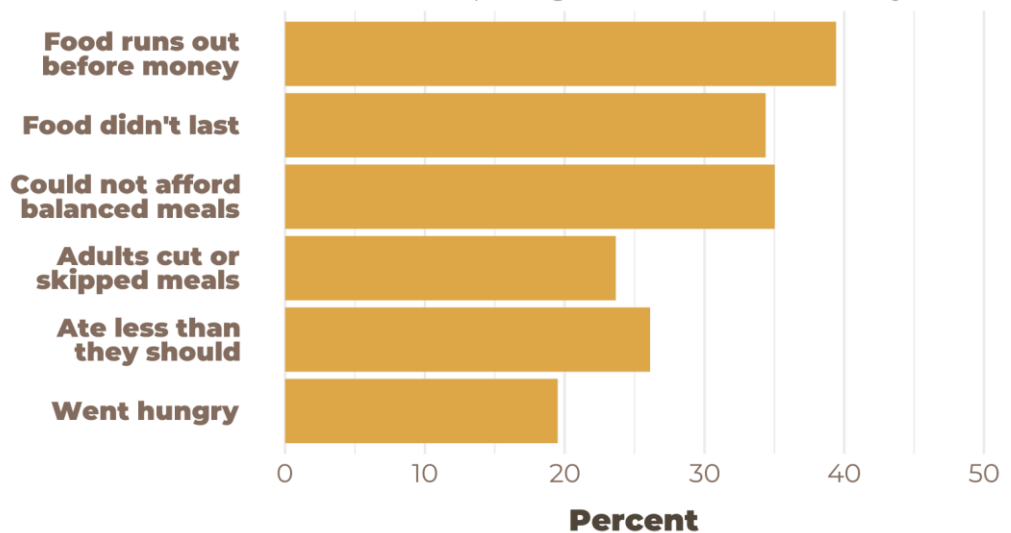
Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is a major problem for Baltimore-area residents. We asked respondents a series of questions used by the US Department of Agriculture to measure food insecurity. Figure 5.1 plots the responses to these questions. Almost 40 percent of Baltimore-area residents reported that, in the past year, they worried that their food would run out before they got money to buy more. In addition, 34.4 percent and 35 percent respectively reported that their food didn't last and that they could not afford balanced meals. More alarmingly, about one in five Baltimore-area residents went hungry in the past year because there wasn't enough money for food. Around a quarter of respondents reported that they ate less than they thought that they should or adults in their household skipped meals because they couldn't afford food. Among those that reported skipping meals, about a third (35.5 percent) reported doing so *almost every month*.

Figure 5.1: Measures of food insecurity

Experiences of Food Insecurity

Shares of Baltimore-area residents reporting issues with food insecurity



Black Baltimore-area residents suffer from food insecurity much more than White Baltimore-area residents.

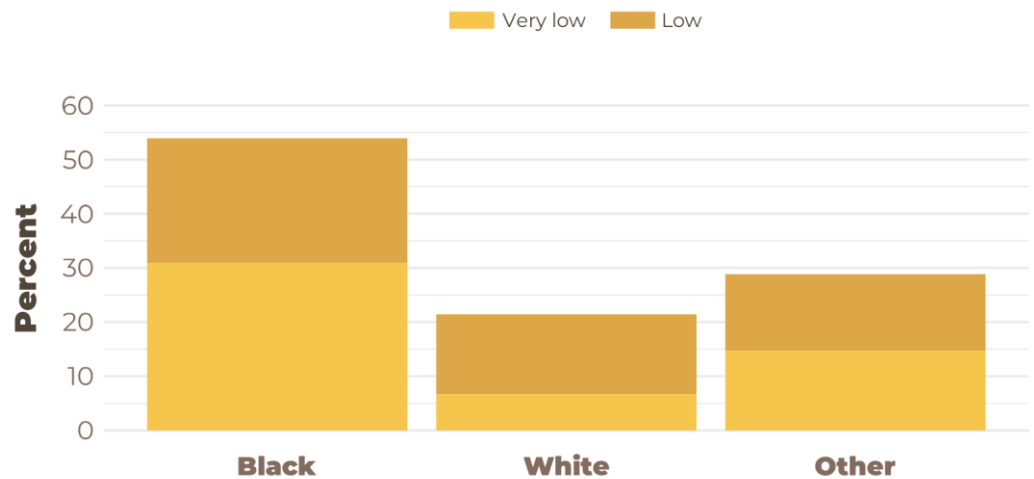
Black Baltimore-area residents suffer from food insecurity much more than White Baltimore-area residents. We combined the measures above into a scale based on procedures recommended by the US Department of Agriculture. The measure defines three levels of food *security*: high, low, and very low. Therefore, residents in the “low” and “very low” categories are those who experience food insecurity.

Figure 5.2 shows the share of Baltimore-area residents in the low and very low categories. Almost a third of Black Baltimore-area residents experienced “very low” food security. Another 23 percent experienced “low” food security. That means that about half of Black Baltimore-area residents experienced food *insecurity*. In contrast, only 21.4 percent of White Baltimore-area residents reported any level of food insecurity and, among those who do, twice as many were in the “low” security category compared to the “very low” security category. Income differences between Black and White residents accounts for some, but not all, of the racial difference in food insecurity.

Figure 5.2: Food insecurity by race

Level of Food Security

Shares of Baltimore-area residents who experience low or very low food security by race



Gig Economy

The “gig” economy played a relatively small role in the finances of Baltimore-area residents. About seven percent of Baltimore-area residents participated in the “gig” economy—things like driving for Uber or Lyft or performing services on TaskRabbit—in the 30 days prior to the survey. Another 14.6 percent had performed gig jobs, but hadn’t done so in the 30 days prior to the survey. Among the small group of respondents who reported having participated in the prior 30 days, 76.1 percent reported that it made up about half or more of their income. Caution should be taken interpreting the exact percentages of these numbers, however, given the small proportion of respondents who reported participating in the gig economy over the past month.

Entrepreneurship

Baltimore-area residents—especially Black Baltimore-area residents—exhibit a strong entrepreneurial spirit. Overall, 23.3 percent of Baltimore-area residents considered being an entrepreneur a better path to financial success than working for an established business. Black Baltimore-area residents, however, were twice as likely to endorse this opinion than White Baltimore-area residents: 33 percent of Black residents compared to only 15.2 percent of White residents. Given these results, it’s perhaps unsurprising that Black residents in the Baltimore area were more likely to consider themselves entrepreneurs, 35.4 percent did, compared to White residents, among whom only 20.1 percent did.

Figure 5.3: Best path to financial success

Best Path to Financial Success

Shares of Baltimore-area residents reporting their ideas of the best path to financial success by race

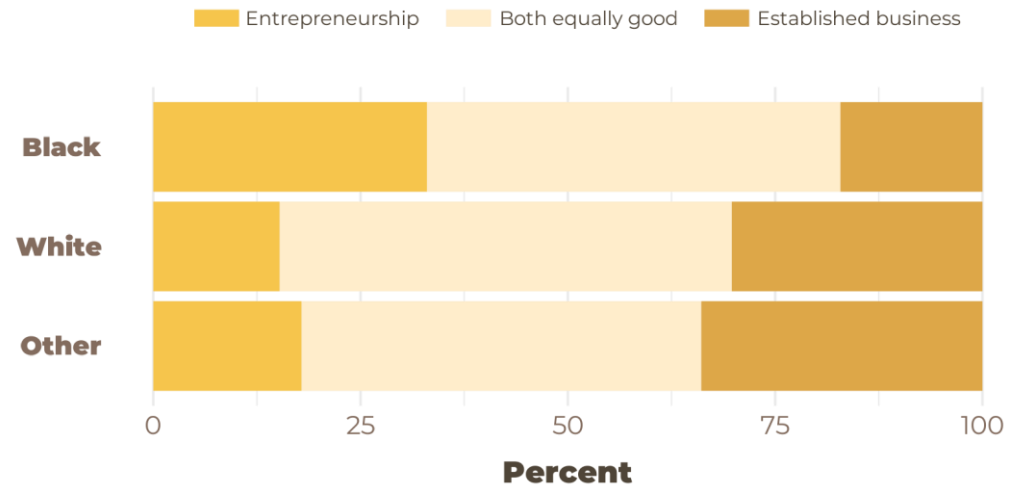


Figure 5.3 shows that the inverse was true when considering working for an established business. White Baltimore-area residents were almost twice as likely as Black Baltimore-area residents to report that working for an established business was a better path to financial success. About half of both Black and White Baltimore-area residents considered both to be equally good paths to financial success. There may be opportunities for growth in Baltimore by investigating the sources of inspiration among Black Baltimore-area residents who seek entrepreneurial opportunities and by connecting those residents to opportunities to develop their visions.

Summary

Racial divides shape the financial conditions and outlooks of Baltimore-area residents. About half of Baltimore-area's Black residents experienced food insecurity in the past year. Policies and programs may seek to address the unique challenges Black Baltimore-area residents face when affording food. In addition, race shapes the entrepreneurial outlook among Baltimore-area residents. Black residents were more likely to identify entrepreneurship as the best path for financial success. Community and business organizations in the Baltimore area may want to explore ways to foster entrepreneurial opportunities in Black communities throughout the area.

6. Conclusions

The results from the 2023 Baltimore Area Survey provide a sense of several areas that shape the lives of Baltimore-area residents.

Strong neighborhood satisfaction. Baltimore is often described as a city of neighborhoods. Our results show that most people in the city are satisfied living in their neighborhoods. The satisfaction also extends to Baltimore County where similar shares of residents reported being satisfied in their neighborhoods. Residents also tended to trust the businesses and nonprofits in or nearby residents' neighborhoods. A sizable share of Baltimore-area residents, especially those in the city, also feel that their neighborhoods have improved in the past five years.

Public organizations are perceived less well among Baltimore-area residents. Overall, Baltimore-area residents are unlikely to report that the public schools near them are very good or excellent and few residents trusted their local government. Perceptions of public organizations were divided between city and county residents: both the quality of public schools and trust in local government tended to be lower in the city than in the county.

More than one in four Baltimore-area residents has lost a loved one to a drug overdose

Daily experiences and outlooks differ substantially by race. The legacy of racism and segregation remain a defining feature of the Baltimore area. The survey shows how disparities by race still affect the daily lives and outlook of Baltimore-area residents. Race profoundly shapes at least two features of daily life that we measured: food and transportation. In both cases, larger shares of Black residents than White residents reported experiencing negative issues. The disparity was especially stark for being able to afford food regularly. Around half of Baltimore-area Black residents experience some level of food insecurity. And over 40 percent of Black Baltimore-area residents experience issues with transportation, compared to about 20 percent of White residents.

We also find a profound racial difference in the fear that police invoke for Baltimore-area residents. About three in every four Black Baltimore-area residents have fear of police arresting or questioning them or their families. A quarter of Black residents report having a lot of fear. And the fear affects the lives of Black residents: over half of those who feel fear say that it affects their daily lives. In contrast, only a quarter of White Baltimore-area residents report any fear and the vast majority of those report having only a little fear. Although racial disparities in fear of police are not unique to Baltimore, that fear imposes costs disproportionately borne by Black Baltimore-area residents.

At the same time, racial differences emerged in the outlooks of Baltimore-area residents on several dimensions. Black residents are more likely to perceive that the quality of their local schools had improved. On a more personal level, Black residents were more likely to report that entrepreneurship may offer a better path to financial success than were White residents.

Collateral consequences of drug addiction. We find that a large share of Baltimore-area residents have been touched by drug overdoses. Over a third of county residents and nearly half of city residents know at least one person who is addicted to illegal drugs. A sizeable share know three or more. And more than one in four Baltimore-area residents has lost a loved one to a drug overdose, which is on par with the share of residents who lost loved ones due to Covid. The collateral consequences of drug addiction reach far and wide.

The 2023 Baltimore Area Survey provide data by, about, and for residents of the Baltimore-area. The results reported here offer Baltimore-area residents the opportunity to understand the lives of area residents better. And the results provide a baseline from which residents, nonprofits, businesses, and local governments can understand changes in the future. As groups make decisions, the results here and the underlying data provide the means to inform those decisions with data about the Baltimore-area community.

7. Appendix

The 2023 Baltimore Area Survey was funded by Johns Hopkins University. It was coordinated by the university's 21st Century Cities Initiative (21CC) and the sampling and data collection was conducted by Westat.

Detailed Methods

The 2023 Baltimore Area Study used several methods to make the survey responses representative of Baltimore-area residents. The data were based on an address-based sample of 10,000 addresses in postal route files. The data were stratified by jurisdiction: 6,000 addresses were sampled in Baltimore City and 4,000 addresses were sampled in Baltimore County. Addresses were then implicitly stratified by Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) defined by the US Census Bureau and census tract to ensure that the sample represented geographic areas across the entire geographic area. Census tracts with where the combined shares of Black and Latinx residents were oversampled. Sample design weights were calculated to account for the unequal probability of sampling residents due to these decisions.

After data collection, the survey design weights were combined with post-response weights were applied to the sample to weight sample responses so that the data represent the adult, English-speaking population of the Baltimore area. Post response weights used benchmarks from the Census American Community Survey to match the composition of age, race, gender, homeownership status, educational attainment, jurisdiction, and PUMA of residence. Weights were applied to all results reported in this report.

We received 1,352 complete responses to the survey, which are those used in this report. This represented a response rate of 13.52 percent based on standards created by the American Association of Public Opinion Researchers.

Subgroup Sample Sizes and Margins of Error

Jurisdiction

Respondents were coded as being in Baltimore City or Baltimore County based on the address where the survey was sent.

Jurisdiction	N	Margin of Error
City	818	5.1
County	534	6.26

Race

We classified respondents into three racial groups: Black, White, and Other. Those who did not report a race were not included in race-specific analyses.

Race	N	Margin of Error
Black	485	6.4
White	653	6.55
Other	162	12.5
Not reported	52	

Education

Education	N	Margin of Error
Less than H.S.	43	18.9
High school	215	9.13
Some college	348	8.42
Bachelor's degree	342	7.78
Professional degree	398	7.03
Not reported	6	



What is Baltimore Area Survey?

The Baltimore Area Survey (BAS) is a new, annual, representative survey of Baltimore City and County residents being run by Johns Hopkins 21st Century Cities Initiative (21CC). The BAS will help scholars, community members, and policymakers learn more about the Baltimore area's strengths and challenges from residents. 21CC affiliated researchers will partner with Baltimore community leaders and policy makers to identify pertinent topics to study and then field a survey with questions on those topics to a representative address-based sample of Baltimore City and Baltimore County residents every year. Having the survey in the field on an annual basis means that policy makers and community leaders are never more than a year away from asking important questions and having timely data. The survey will also allow for measuring change over time and looking at perceptions and opinions before and after significant events.

Find out more:

Website: 21cc.jhu.edu/research/baltimore-area-survey

Email: 21CC@jhu.edu