

2021

Life in Hampton Roads Report: The 12th Annual Life in Hampton Roads Survey

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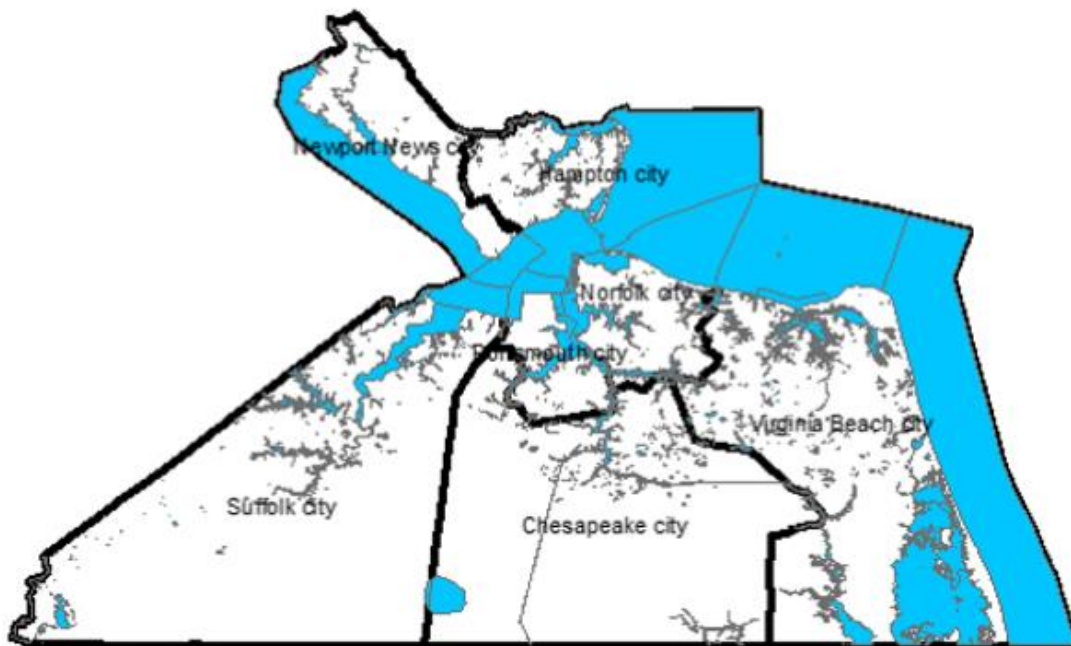
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LIFE IN HAMPTON ROADS

2021

The 12th Annual Life in Hampton Roads Survey Report



Report compiled by Dr. Tancy Vandecar-Burdin, Dr. Randy Gainey, Dr. Jesse Richman, Steve Parker, Wendi Wilson-John, & James Valliere

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OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

For any questions concerning the data or report for the 2021 Life in Hampton Roads Survey, please contact Dr. Tancy Vandecar-Burdin (SSRC Director) at tvandeca@odu.edu.

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Executive Summary

The Social Science Research Center (SSRC) at Old Dominion University is pleased to present the results from the 12th annual Life in Hampton Roads (LIHR) survey. The purpose of the survey was to gain insight into residents' perceptions of the quality of life in Hampton Roads. It is important to note that the methodology for this year's survey differs from previous Life in Hampton Roads surveys. The first ten years of the survey were conducted using a random sample of Hampton Roads residents via telephone. Last year state and university COVID-19 restrictions did not allow for staffing of the SSRC call center during the survey period. Therefore, on-line survey panels were used to solicit respondents to complete a web-based survey. This year, a mixed methods approach of telephone calls and web surveys were used to administer the survey. Given the continued and evolving pandemic conditions in Hampton Roads and the rest of the world, many of this year's questions focused on residents' experiences with and responses to continuing COVID-19 conditions.

Despite the pandemic and stay-at-home restrictions, more than two-thirds of respondents rated the quality of life in the region as excellent or good (65.4%). About one in four rated Hampton Roads' quality of life as fair (28.5%) and 3.9% rated it as poor. Consistent with previous years, respondents rated the quality of life in their city and their neighborhood more highly than they did for the region as a whole. Sixty-eight percent rated the quality of life in their city as good or excellent and 26.1% rated their city as fair. Only 4.3% rated their city's quality of life as poor. Neighborhood ratings of quality of life were the highest, with 79% rating their neighborhood as excellent or good. Only 16.3% rated their neighborhood quality of life as fair and a mere 4.2% rated it as poor.

- The impacts of the pandemic are seen in responses to questions about employment and the economy. Less than half of those responding to this year's survey (47.8%) were employed full-time while another 13.3% were employed part-time. All respondents regardless of employment status were asked if they had been laid off, furloughed or had hours reduced because of COVID-19 conditions. Almost one-quarter (23.7%) indicated yes. The transition to working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic was reflected in that about one-quarter (24.2%) of respondents indicated that they are only working from home (14.3%) or are working mostly from home (9.9%).
- Hampton Roads residents had mixed perceptions of the economy but showed some optimism about their own financial situation. Less than half (47.5%) of those surveyed rated the economic conditions in Hampton Roads as excellent (6.5%) or good (41.0%). Respondents showed some optimism for the future, with 35.8% indicating that they think they and their family will be better off financially a year from now. Just under half (48.3%) think they will be the same and only 9.2% believe they will be worse off. Residents are perhaps hopeful that the personal financial impacts of COVID-19 will be short-lived, and the economy at large will soon get back to a sense of normalcy.
- Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, about three-quarters (72.3%) of Hampton Roads residents felt that their health in general was good (54.4%) or excellent (17.9%). Only 3.8% rated their health as poor while one in five rated their health as fair (23.3%). Over half (51.6%) of respondents indicated that they personally knew someone who was ill as a result of COVID-19 (but not seriously ill) and one in five (20.3%) knew someone who had died as a result of COVID-19.

- The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were seen in the reported ways that children were being schooled in the spring of 2021. Over a quarter of respondents reported having school-aged children (26.1%). More than forty percent (44.4%) of respondents with school-aged children reported that their children were attending public school with only virtual classes and another 10.6% were home-schooled. Another 44 percent were attending public school with at least some in-person classes.
- Nearly three-quarters of respondents reported being very satisfied (31.9%) or somewhat satisfied (42.9%) with the local police. However, respondents reported negative experiences with police varied significantly between races. Only 9.5% of white respondents reported that they or someone close to them had a negative experience with police compared to 29.1% of black respondents and 16.9% of respondents of other races.

This year's report also includes breakdowns for many questions by race and/or city of residence. In some cases, there are significant differences among these groups.

Introduction & Methodology

The Social Science Research Center (SSRC) at Old Dominion University recently completed data collection for the 12th annual Life in Hampton Roads (LIHR) survey. The purpose of the survey is to gain insight into residents' perceptions of the quality of life in Hampton Roads and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other topics of local interest such as perceptions of police, employment, and other issues. Questions were generated via email invitations to faculty throughout the University community. Questions of interest were submitted, and the overall pool of questions was narrowed down by SSRC staff and former SSRC faculty directors. Several new questions, particularly those focused on residents' experiences and perceptions of COVID-19, were included along with several questions from previous Life in Hampton Roads surveys. Funding for the 2021 survey was provided by the Social Science Research Center. The SSRC would like to thank the College of Arts and Letters and the ODU Office of Research for their continued support of the survey. A total of 796 surveys were completed between July 12th and October 3rd, 2021.

It is important to note that the methodology this year differs from previous Life in Hampton Roads surveys. In all years prior to 2020, we used a telephone survey methodology. In 2020, due to COVID-19 social distancing restrictions and telework directives, we employed only a web-based survey using two panels of respondents. This year, due to continued concerns about social distancing as well as labor shortages, we used a mixed mode approach to include telephone surveys and web-based surveys using two panels of respondents. Telephone surveys (n=160, landline and cell phones) were completed between July 12th and September 23rd. The web-based surveys (n=636) overlapped telephone survey attempts slightly and were completed between September 10th and October 3rd. The first panel was obtained from Qualtrics which partners with over 20 online sample providers to supply a network of diverse respondents (for more information, please see <https://www.qualtrics.com/research-services/onlinesample/>). Qualtrics panel participants are recruited from various sources, including website intercept recruitment, member referrals, targeted email lists, gaming sites, customer loyalty web portals, permission-based networks, and social media. The second panel was a proprietary SSRC panel consisting of Hampton Roads residents who had previously participated in a Life in Hampton Roads telephone survey between 2014 and 2019, provided

their email address at the end of the interview, and agreed to be contacted for future web-based surveys.

These changes limit to some degree the ability to compare the 2020 and 2021 results with those from previous years or to confidently generalize results to the Hampton Roads population as a whole. Because the online panels used for this survey (with the partial exception of the SSRC panel) are opt-in rather than randomly sampled, we have not calculated random sampling-based confidence intervals for this year's survey. Nonetheless, we note that an increasing number of surveys have moved online in recent years, and that in many instances useful data has been developed despite the challenges and limitations of both telephone and online survey research. As in previous years, responses were weighted to match city level race, age and gender demographics. Responses were also weighted based upon technology availability including landline versus cell phone and high-speed internet availability. This weighting should improve the degree to which survey data is comparable across years.

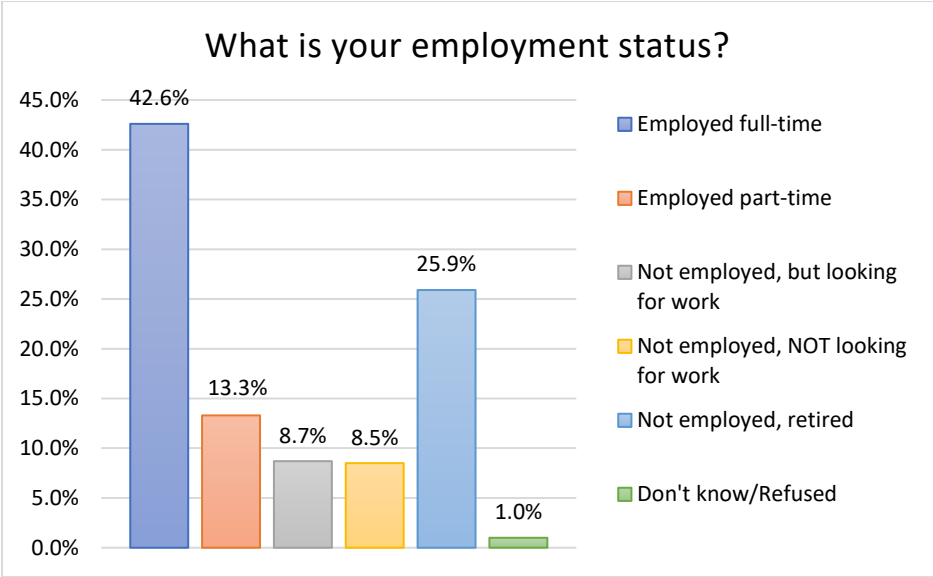
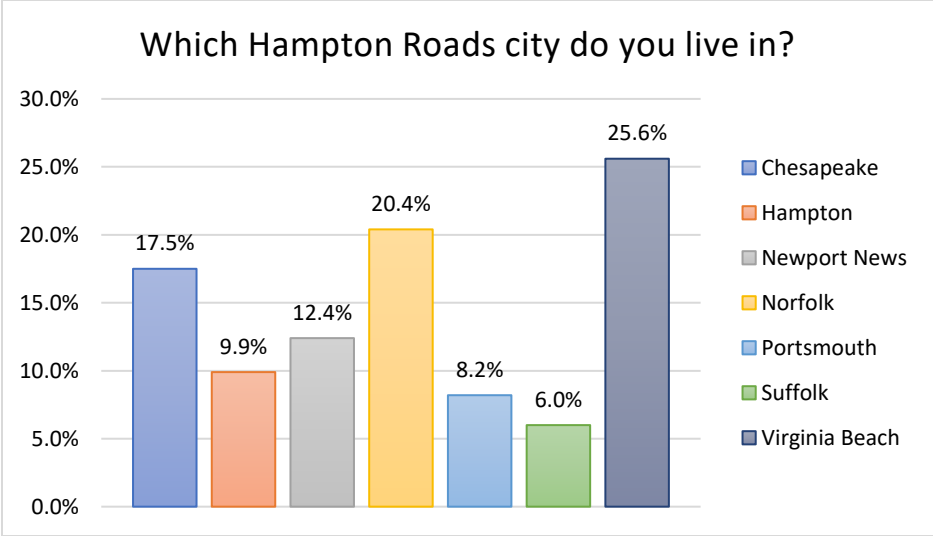
Sample Demographic Coverage

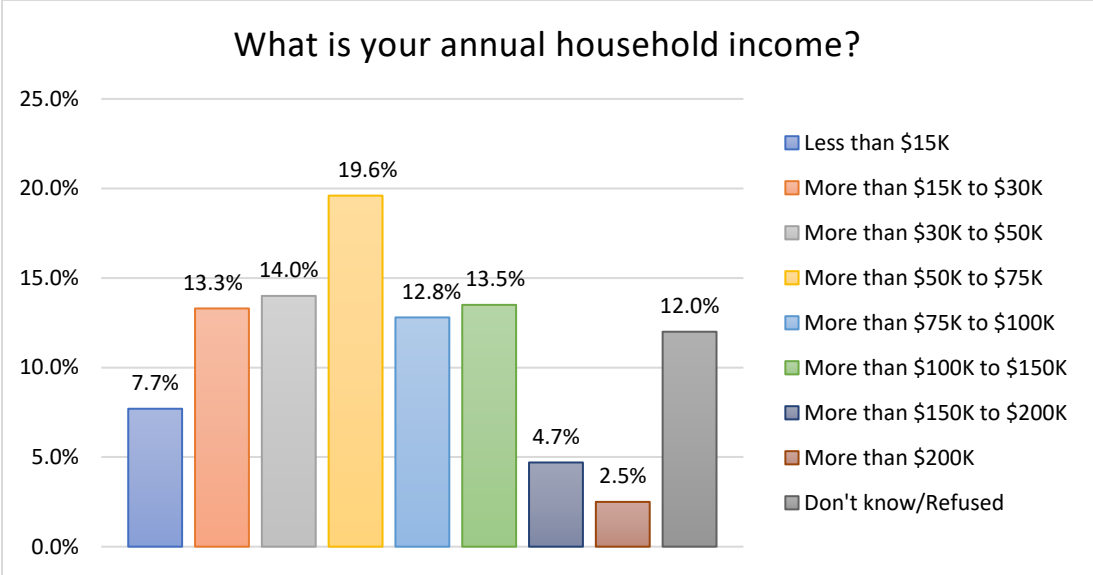
Unlike nearly all other data presented in the 2021 Life in Hampton Roads survey report, demographic data described here is presented unweighted in order to give curious readers a sense of the demographic coverage achieved by the survey. Of the 796 citizens interviewed, 59.6% were white, 28.6% were Black or African-American, and 9.9% considered themselves to be another race/ethnicity; including 1.4% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 0.3% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 2.5% Asian, and 2.8% indicated they were multiracial. In a separate question, 8.7% of respondents indicated that they were of Hispanic/Latino origin. Just over one-third of respondents were male (34.8%) and 63.6% were female. Almost half (47.0%) of the respondents received a high school diploma or GED, completed trade or professional school, or attended some college. An additional 38.3% of respondents completed an undergraduate or graduate degree. More than forty percent of respondents were married (44.3%) and 19.8% were divorced, separated, or widowed. One-quarter of those surveyed were single and not living with a partner (24.9%) while a small portion of single people reported living with a partner (10.7%).

Race or Ethnicity	Percentage
White	59.6%
Black or African-American	28.6%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.4%
Asian	2.5%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.3%
Multiracial	2.8%
Other	2.9%
Don't Know/Refused	1.9%
Gender	Percentage
Male	34.8%
Female	63.6%
Highest level of school completed	Percentage
Some grade school	0.0%
Some high school	3.5%

High school diploma/GED	18.5%
Completed trade/professional school	5.3%
Some college	23.2%
Associate's degree	10.2%
Bachelor's degree	24.1%
Graduate degree	14.2%
Other	0.5%
Don't Know/Refused	0.5%
Age	Age in years
Average age (years)	45.3
Marital Status	Percentage
Single, not living with partne	24.9%
Single, living with partner	10.7%
Married	44.3%
Divorced/separated	12.6%
Widowed	7.2%
Don't Know/Refused	0.4%

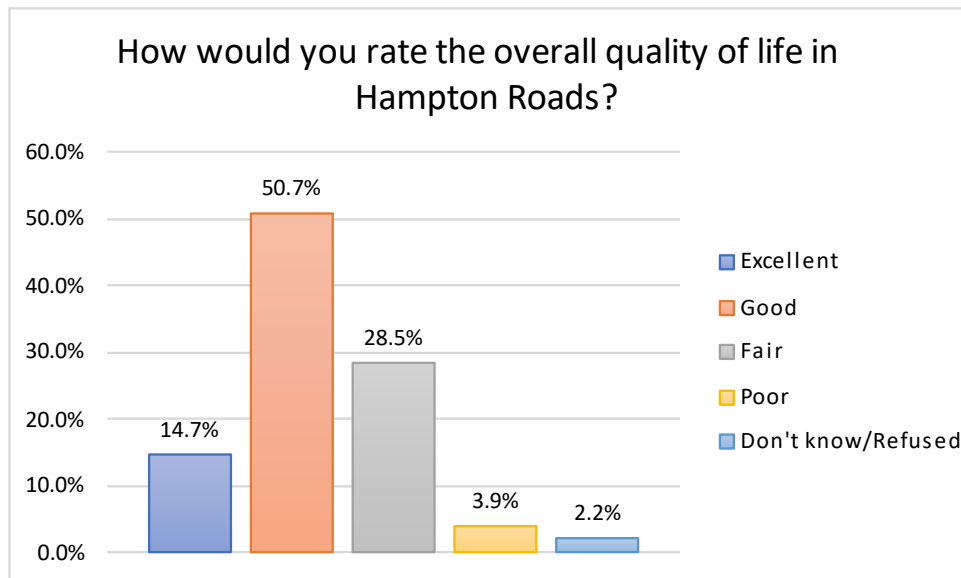
Consistent with population estimates from the census, the majority of respondents lived in three of the seven major cities, Virginia Beach (25.6%), Norfolk (20.4%) and Chesapeake (17.5%). The majority of survey participants were employed (55.9%), 13.3% worked part-time while 42.6% reported that they worked full-time. Of the remaining respondents, 25.9% were retired, 8.7% were unemployed but looking for work, and 8.5% were not employed and not looking for work. The majority of respondents reported that neither themselves, nor anyone in their household were active-duty military (87.1%). Only 8.9% of respondents were active-duty military and/or had a spouse/partner that was in the military. About one-fifth (21.0%) of participants reported their family household income for last year as \$30,000 or less, 33.6% reported earning more than \$30,000 to \$75,000, while 33.5% earned more than \$75,000. Respondents were also asked to identify their type of household phone usage. The vast majority of respondents indicated that their household was cellphone only or cellphone mostly (57.9% and 29.3%, respectively). Comparatively, only 11.8% of respondents said their household was landline mostly and only 1.0% said their household was landline only.



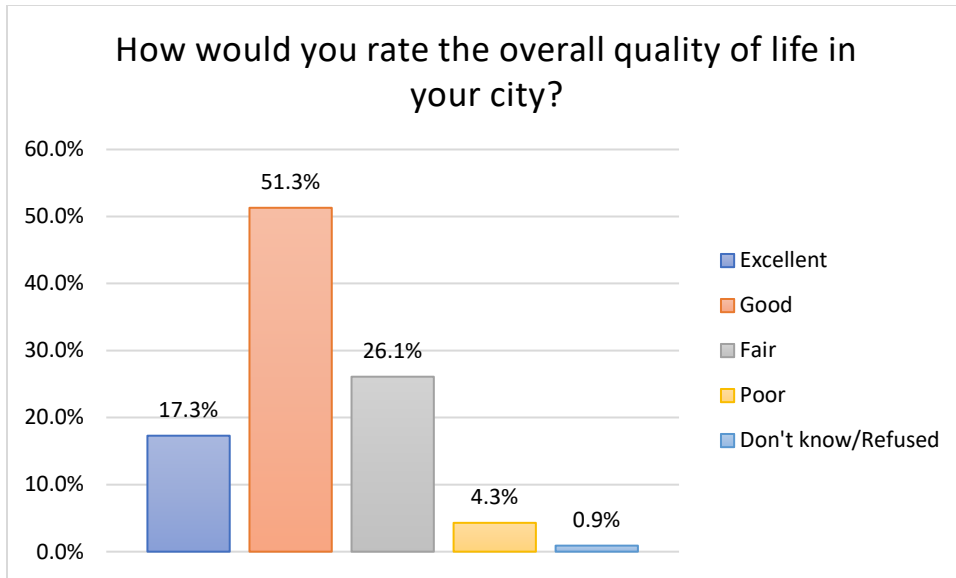


Quality of Life

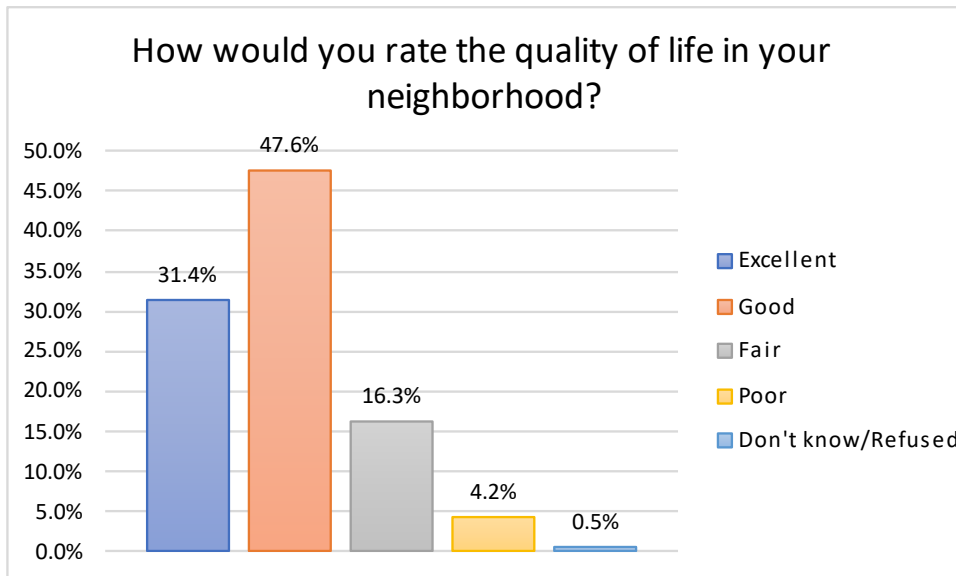
Almost two-thirds of respondents rated the quality of life in the region as excellent or good (65.4%). This is slightly lower than in previous, non-COVID years (ranging from 68% to 71% between 2017-2019). About 28% rated Hampton Roads' quality of life as fair (28.5%) and 3.9% rated it as poor.



Consistent with previous years, respondents rated the quality of life in their city and their neighborhood more highly than they did for the region as a whole. Just over 68% rated the quality of life in their city as good or excellent (68.6%) and 26.1% rated their city as fair. Only 4.3% rated their city's quality of life as poor.



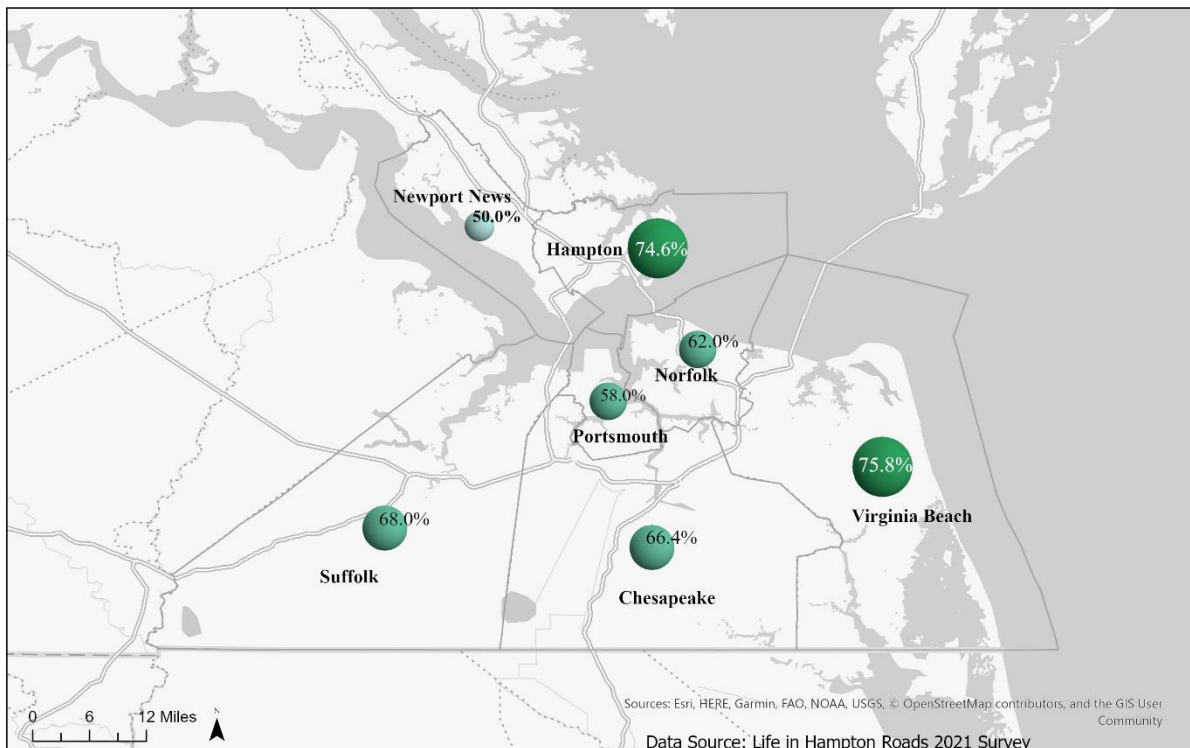
Neighborhood ratings of quality of life were the highest, with 79% rating their neighborhood as excellent or good. Only 16.3% rated their neighborhood quality of life as fair and 4.2% rated it as poor.



Quality of Life by City

The ratings clearly and statistically varied based on where respondents live. Across all cities, only a small percentage rated the quality of life in Hampton Roads as poor with the highest percentage in Newport News with 11% followed by the city of Hampton with 6%. Less than 5% of residents in the other cities rated the quality of life in the area poorly. A larger proportion of residents rated the area as excellent with about 20% of those living in Norfolk, Virginia Beach and Suffolk reporting that the quality of life is excellent. Combining positive responses (good and excellent), Hampton and Virginia Beach residents were the most likely to rate the regional quality of life as excellent or good (75 and 76%, respectively). More than 60% of residents in Norfolk (62%), Chesapeake (66%), and Suffolk (68%) rated the area favorably while 58% of Portsmouth residents and just half of Newport News residents did so (49.5%).

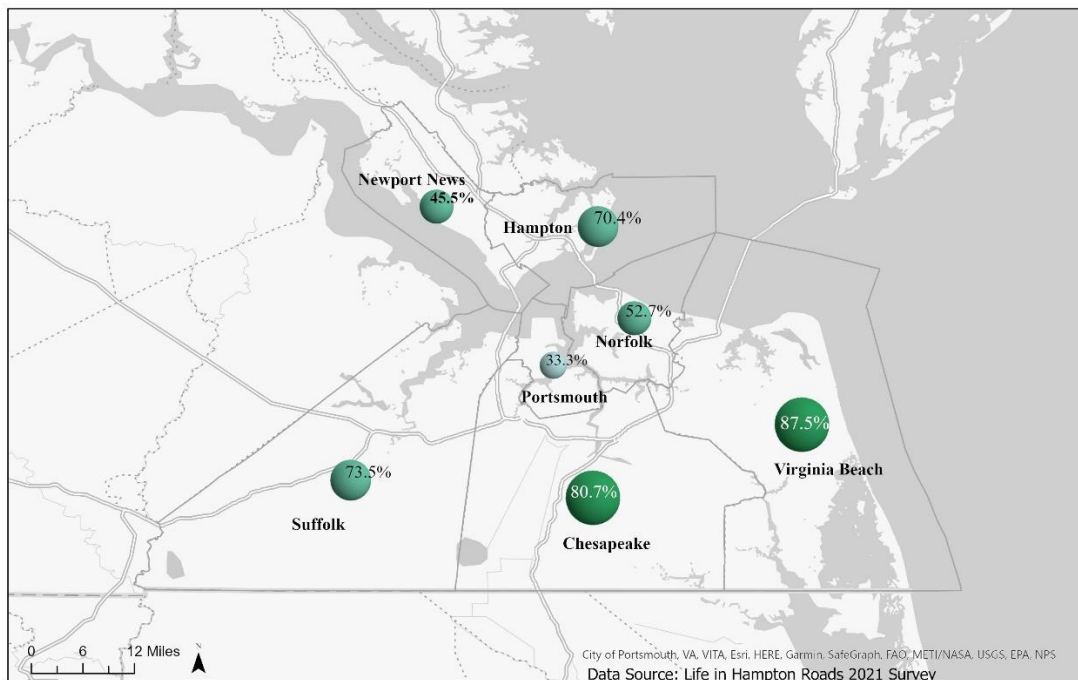
% of City Residents Rating Quality of Life in the Hampton Roads Area as Good or Excellent



The differences are even more pronounced, however, when looking at residents' rating of the city where they live. In most cities, very few people rated the quality of life as poor--less than

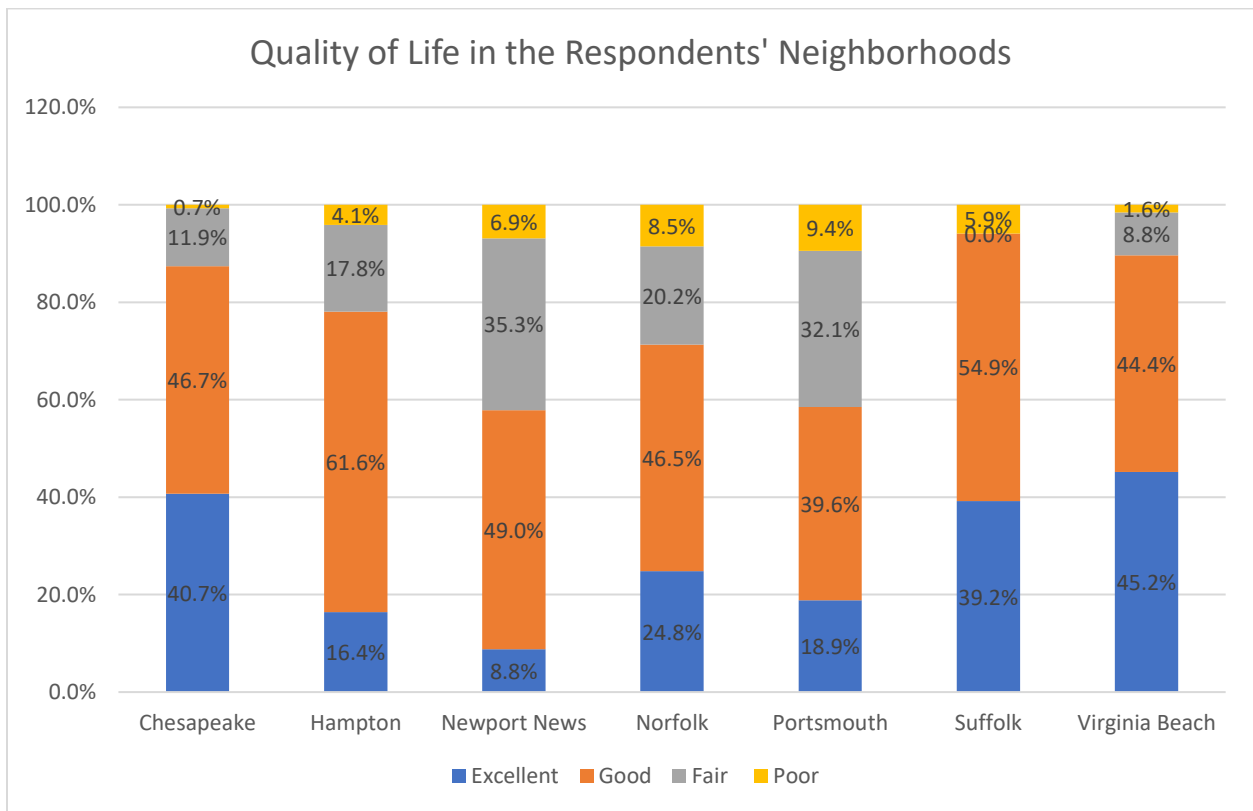
1% in Virginia Beach and Chesapeake and less than 5% in Suffolk. Less than 9% rated the quality of life of as poor in Norfolk, Newport News and Hampton with only Portsmouth reaching double digits (16%). On the other end of the spectrum, over one-quarter of residents rated the quality of life as excellent in Virginia Beach and Suffolk while less than 10% rated the quality of life as excellent in Portsmouth and Newport News. After combining excellent and good responses, over 80% of residents in Virginia Beach and Chesapeake rate the quality of life favorable as more than 70% of Suffolk and Hampton residents. Over half of Norfolk residents rate their quality of life favorably while less than half of Newport News and Portsmouth residents report that their city quality of life is excellent or good.

% of Residents Rating Quality of Life in their City as Good or Excellent



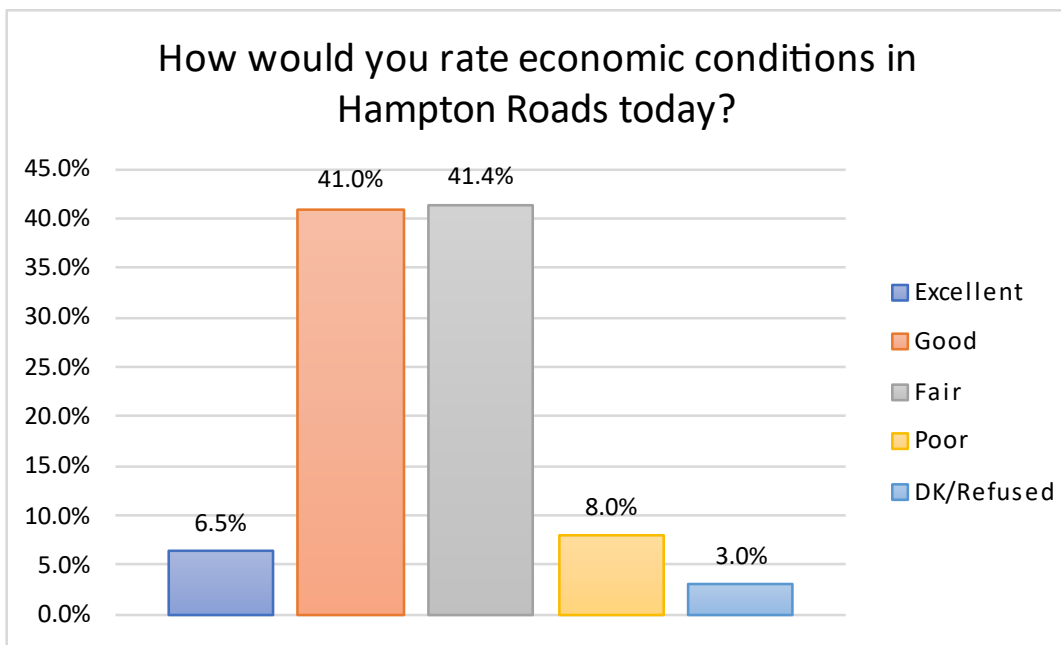
There is considerable variation in the sociodemographic and socioeconomic conditions of the neighborhoods within each of the cities of Hampton Roads and likely in the perceived quality of life across residents within each of the cities. When asked about quality of life in the neighborhoods they reside, responses also varied greatly across cities. Clearly though and in contrast to perception of their city or the region as a whole, respondents viewed their

neighborhoods favorably. In none of the cities did truly negative quality of life ratings (poor) in the neighborhood reach double digits. Furthermore, respondents across cities were more likely to rate the quality of life in their neighborhood as excellent with only Newport News having less than 15%. Over one-third of residents rated the quality of life in their neighborhoods as excellent in Suffolk, Chesapeake, and Virginia Beach. When positive responses are combined (good and excellent), well over half of residents across all cities rated the quality of life in their neighborhood positively.

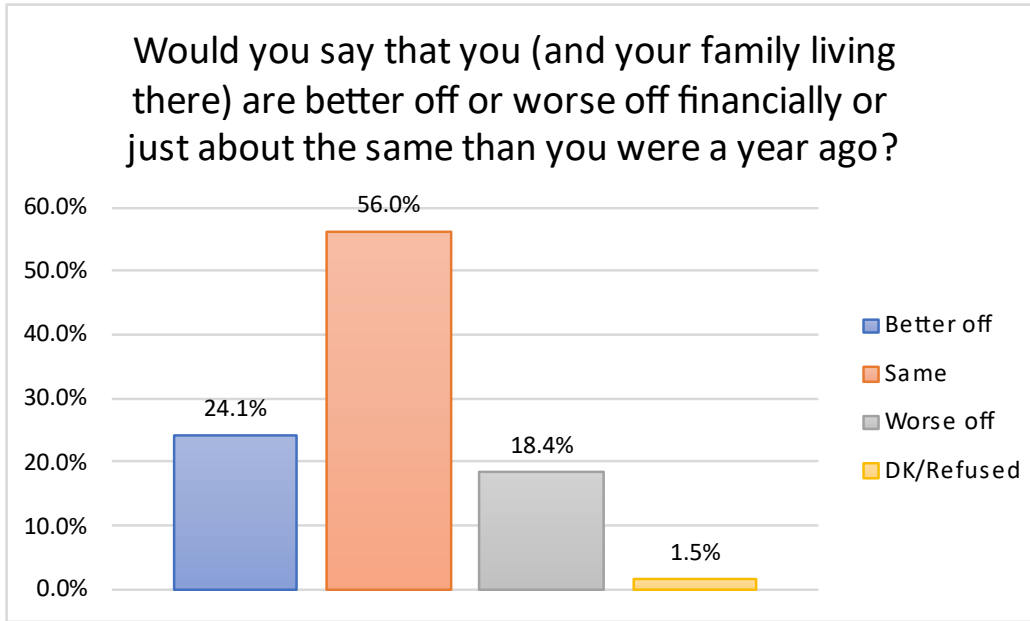


Perceptions of the Economy

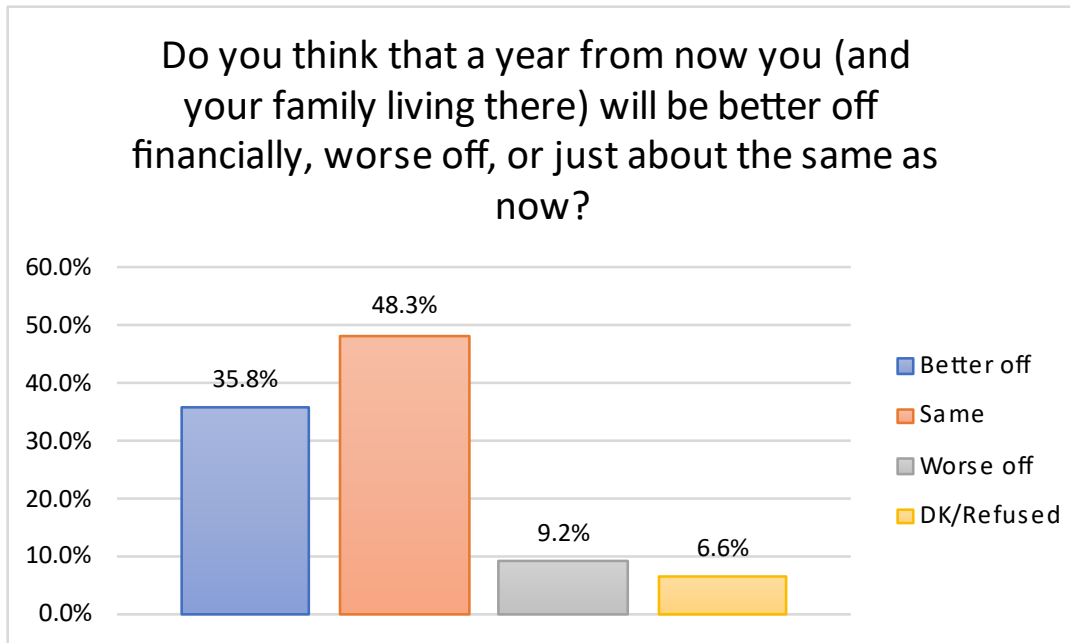
Hampton Roads residents had mixed perceptions of the economy but showed some optimism about their own financial situation. Less than half (47.5%) of those surveyed rated the economic conditions in Hampton Roads as excellent (6.5%) or good (41%). More than 40% (41.4%) rated economic conditions as fair and 8% rated them as poor. Interestingly, despite the impacts of COVID-19, these ratings are not that much different than in past years of the survey. In 2019, 49.9% of respondents rated economic conditions as good or excellent. This year's ratings are actually higher than in 2018 (45.3% rating excellent or good).



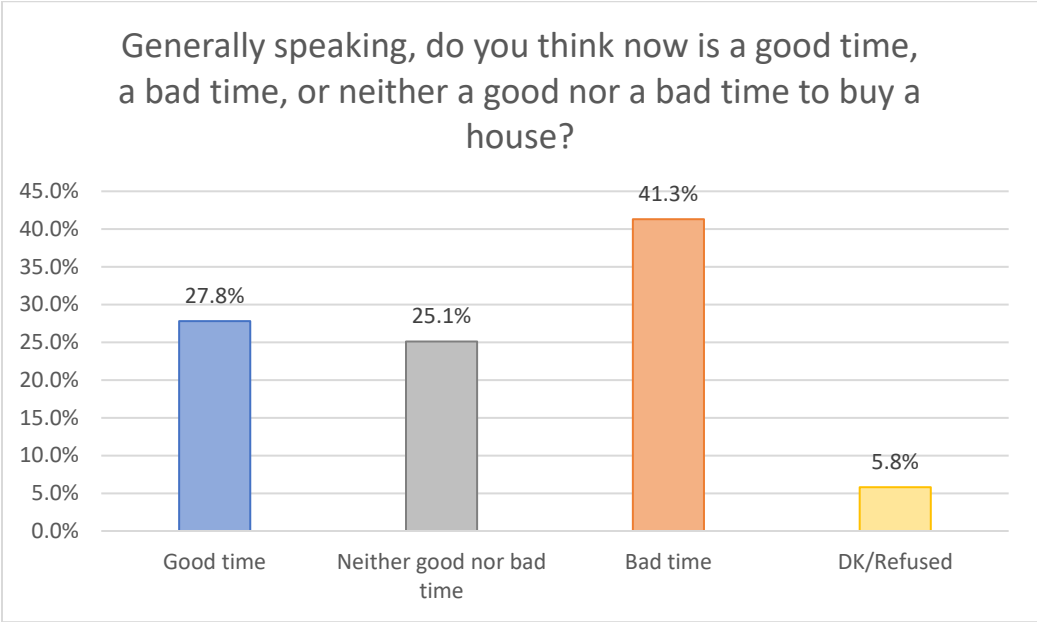
When asked if they and their family were better or worse off financially compared to a year ago, 24.1% reported that they were better off and 56.0% reported that they were about the same. About 18% indicated that they and their family were worse off financially. These numbers show a slightly more positive view of residents' financial standing compared to 2020 (22.8% thought they were better off and 52.9% thought they were about the same).



Respondents showed some optimism for the future, with 35.8% indicating that they think they and their family will be better off financially a year from now. Just under half (48.3%) think they will be the same and less than 10% (9.2%) think they will be worse off. Residents are perhaps hopeful that the worst of the financial impacts of COVID-19 will not be long-lasting.



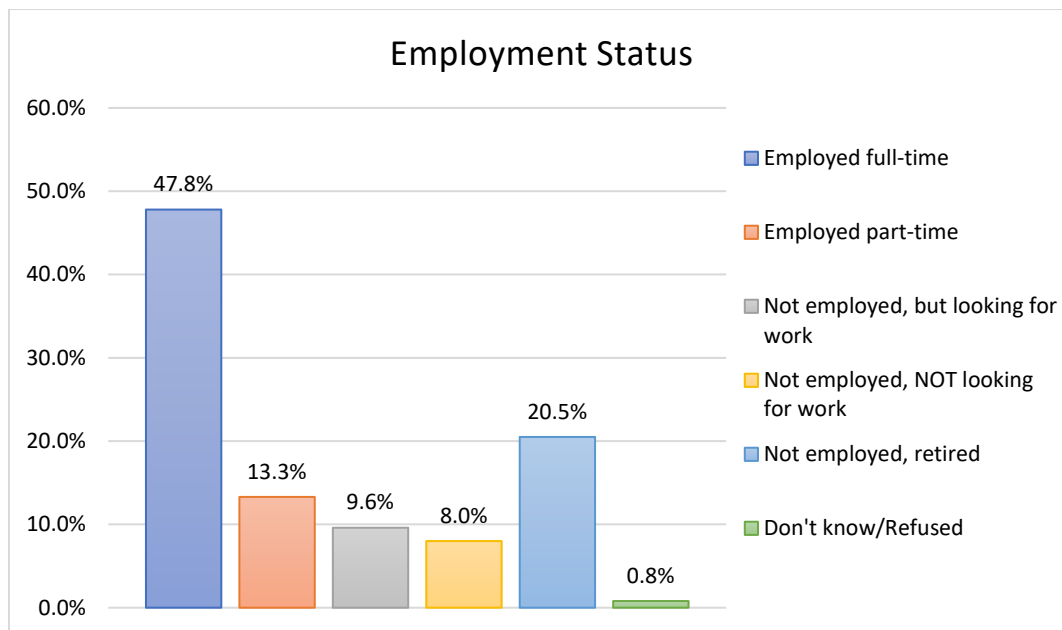
The outlook for home purchasing, however, may be less optimistic. Over 40 percent (41.3%) of respondents think that now is a bad time to buy a house and only 27.8% think that it is a good time to buy a house. One in four (25.1%) think that it is neither a good nor bad time. This is a major shift from 2019 when over 40 percent (45.4%) thought it was a good time to buy a house. These shifting sentiments perhaps reflect data showing a decrease in home listings (supply) and an increase in prices.¹



¹For example, see: <https://www.virginiabusiness.com/article/hampton-roads-reports-continued-sellers-market-for-homes/>

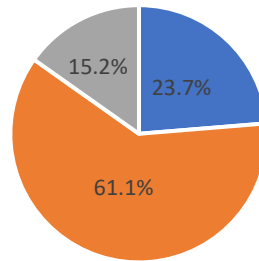
Employment & COVID-19

As can be seen from the graph below, less than half of those responding to this year's survey were employed full-time (47.8%) while another 13.3% were employed part-time. Just over 20% were retired. About 9.6% were not employed but looking for work while 8.0% were not employed and not looking for work.



Regardless of employment status, all respondents were asked if they were laid off, furloughed, or had hours reduced at work at any time during the past year because of COVID-19 conditions. More than one in five respondents (23.7%) indicated that their employment had been impacted because of the pandemic.

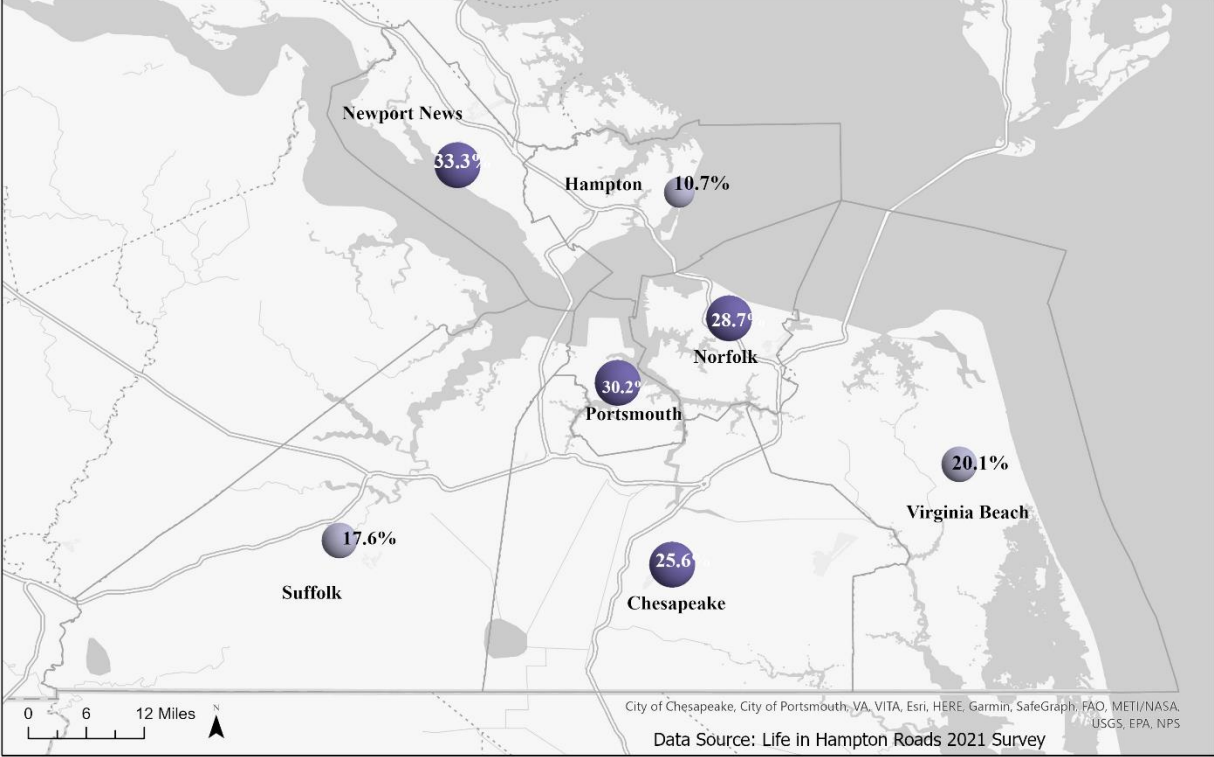
Regardless of your current employment status,
were you laid off, furloughed, or had hours
reduced at work at any time during the past year
because of COVID-19 conditions?



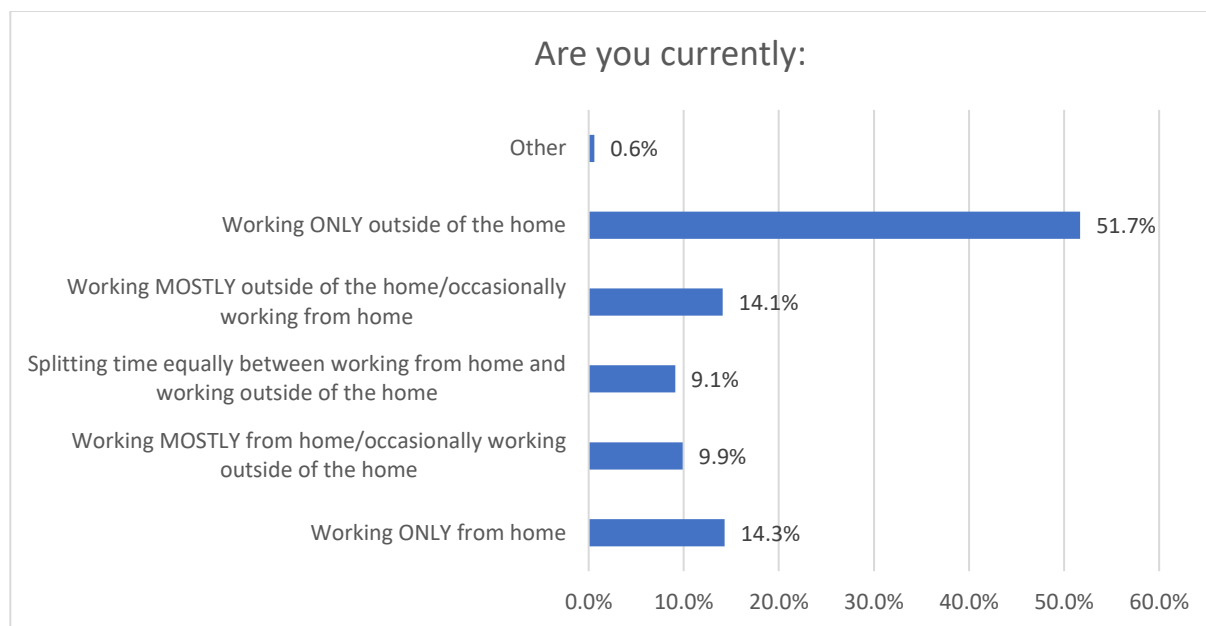
■ Yes ■ No ■ No, retired

A third (33.3%) of Newport News respondents reported that they had been laid off, furloughed or had hours reduced at work during the past year. More than one-quarter of respondents from Portsmouth (30.2%), Norfolk (28.7%) and Chesapeake (25.6%) also reported they had either been laid off, furloughed or had their hours reduced. The city of Hampton had the lowest percentage of respondents (10.7%) who reported being laid off, furloughed or had their hours reduced.

% of City Residents Responding they were laid off, furloughed, etc. because of the COVID-19 Pandemic



Respondents who indicated working full- or part-time were asked about their current working arrangement. More than half (51.7%) indicated that they were working only outside of the home. About 14% were working either mostly outside of the home/working occasionally from home. About 9-10% reported splitting time equally between working from home and working outside of the home or were working mostly from home/occasionally working outside of the home. Another 14 percent (14.3%) reported working ONLY from home. These numbers reflect a partial shift back towards working away from home as pandemic restrictions have eased. In the 2020 survey nearly 3 in 10 respondents (29.8%) reported working only from home, and an only slightly greater portion (33.2%) reported working only away from home.

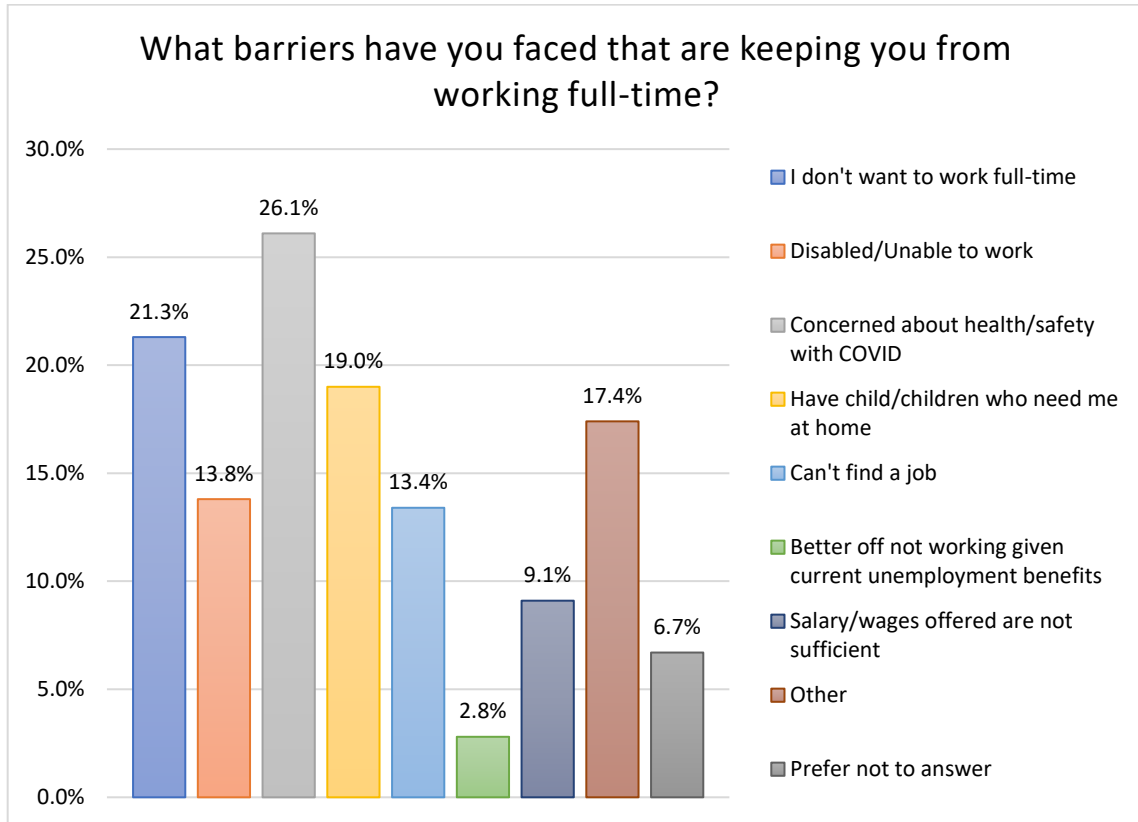


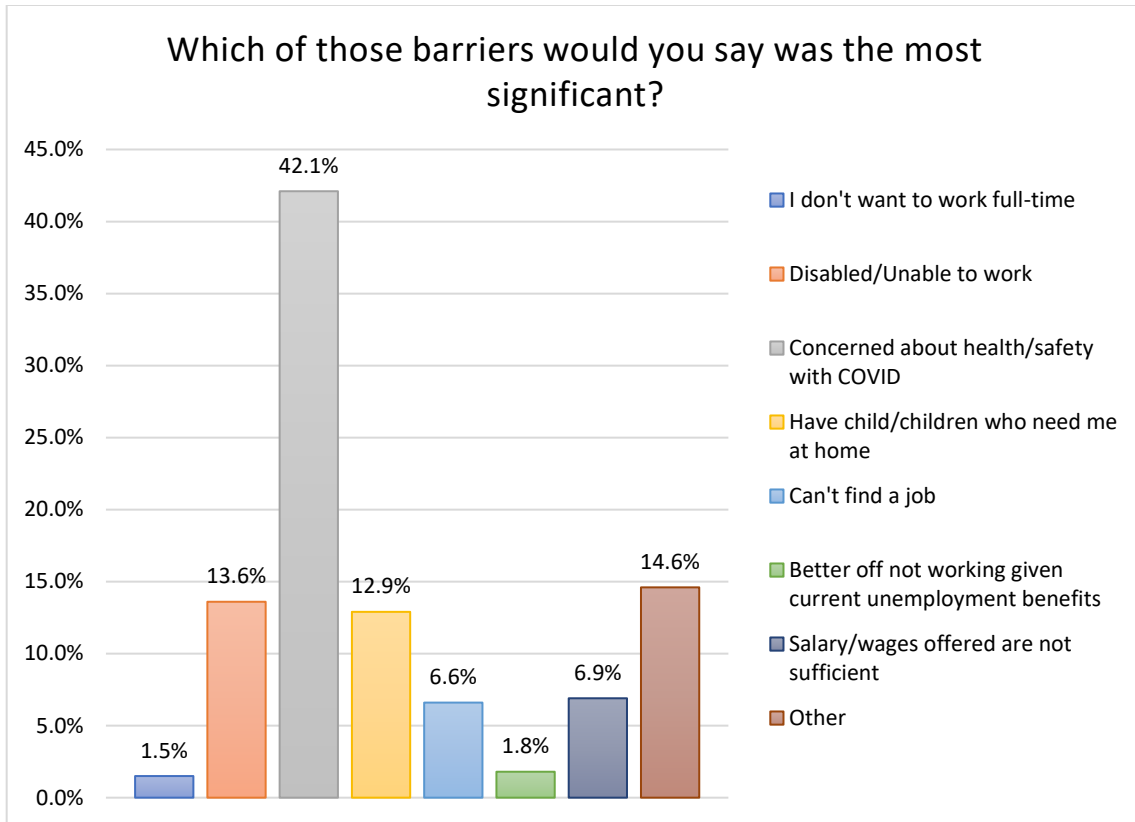
Respondents who were working at least part-time were asked to rate their level of work burnout in their current, main job on a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 meaning “not feeling burned out at all” and 10 meaning “feeling completely burned out”. The average score was 5.1 which was down slightly from 2020 (average = 5.3). However, these burnout scores are both higher than respondents in 2019 who only averaged 4.2. Further, the percentage of those rating their burnout score as 10 (completely burned out) almost doubled from 2019 (5.8%) to 2021 (10%). It is likely that the higher burnout levels in 2020 and 2021 reflect the increased stresses and challenges some respondents have experienced as a result of the pandemic.²

All respondents who were not working full-time and not retired were asked about barriers that may be keeping them from working or working full-time. More than one in four cited concerns about health/safety due to COVID (26.1%) and 21.3% cited not wanting to work full-time. About one in five (19%) indicated that they had a child or children who need them at home and 13.8% were disabled or unable to work. Just over 13% indicated that they could not find a job and 9.1% indicated that the salary/wages offered were not sufficient.

² For example, see <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/09/23/the-future-of-work-is-here-employee-burnout-needs-to-go.html>

Those respondents who indicated more than one barrier to full-time employment were asked which barrier was the most significant. About 42 percent (42.1%) indicated that concerns about health and safety due to COVID-19 was the most significant barrier.



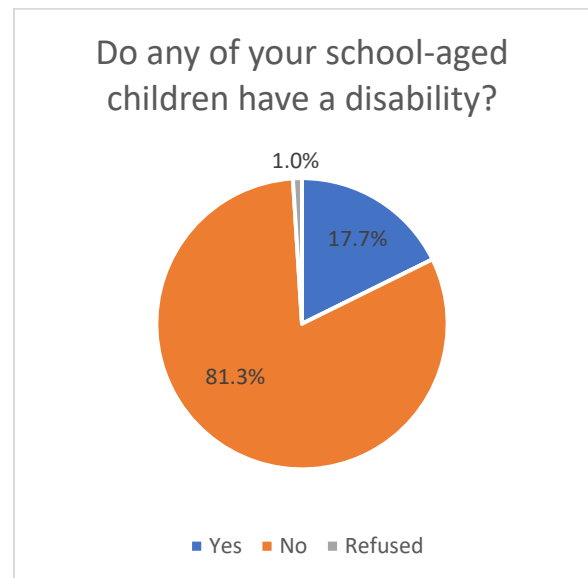
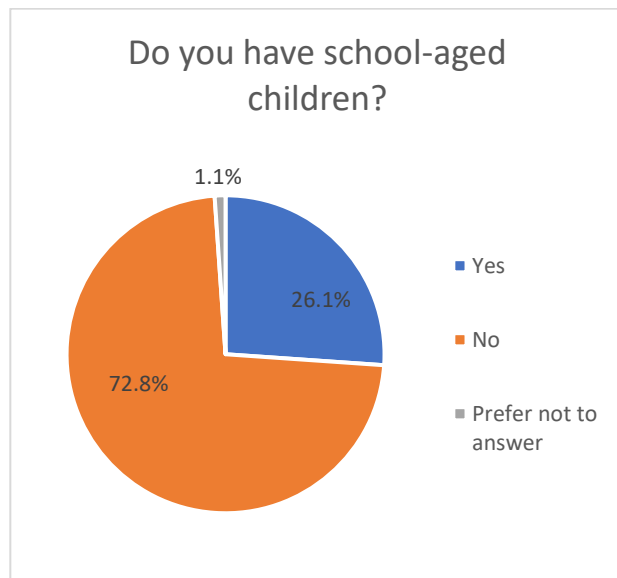


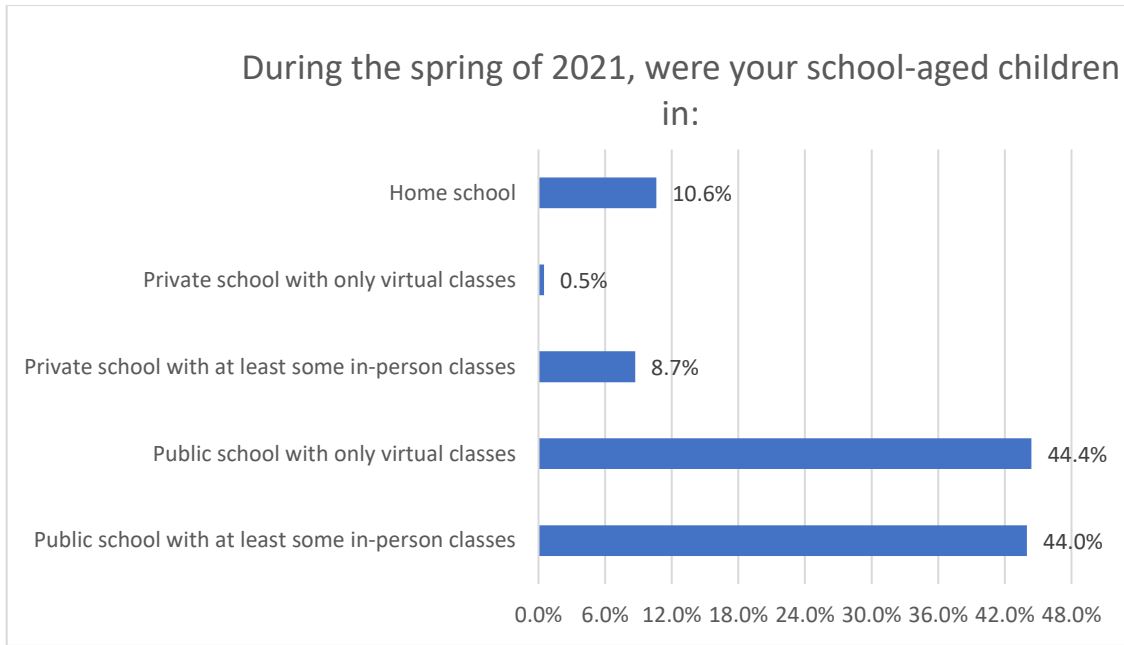
This data has important implications for labor market supply in Hampton Roads. The unemployment rate in Virginia was only 3.6% in Virginia in October 2021, and the labor force participation rate of 63% was well below pre-pandemic levels.³ As a result, employers in the state – as with employers nationwide – reported difficulties finding workers, and policymakers have struggled to find a solution. These survey results suggest that reduced concern about the COVID-19 pandemic would increase labor supply, followed by improvements to childcare availability.

³ For example, see <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/LBSSA51>

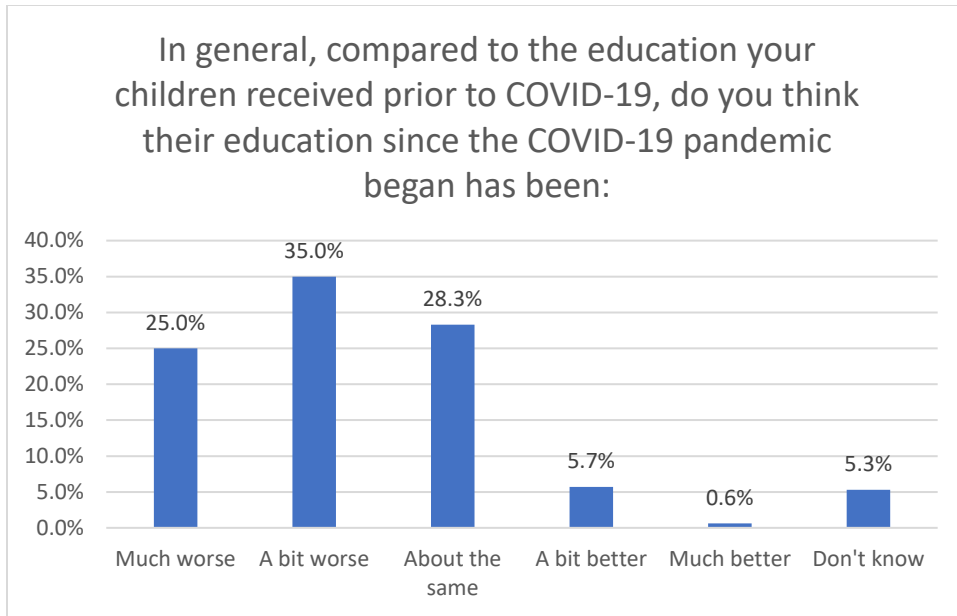
Education & Public Schools

About one in four (26.1%) of respondents reported having a school-aged child/children and 17.7% of those parents indicated they had a school-aged child with a disability. Those with school-aged children were asked where/how their children were attending school in the spring of 2021 given COVID-19 conditions. Similar percentages of parents reported that their child attended public school with only virtual classes (44.4%) or attended public school with at least some in-person classes (44%). About 10 percent (10.6%) indicated that their child was home schooled and 8.7% indicated that their child/children attended private school with at least some in-person classes.



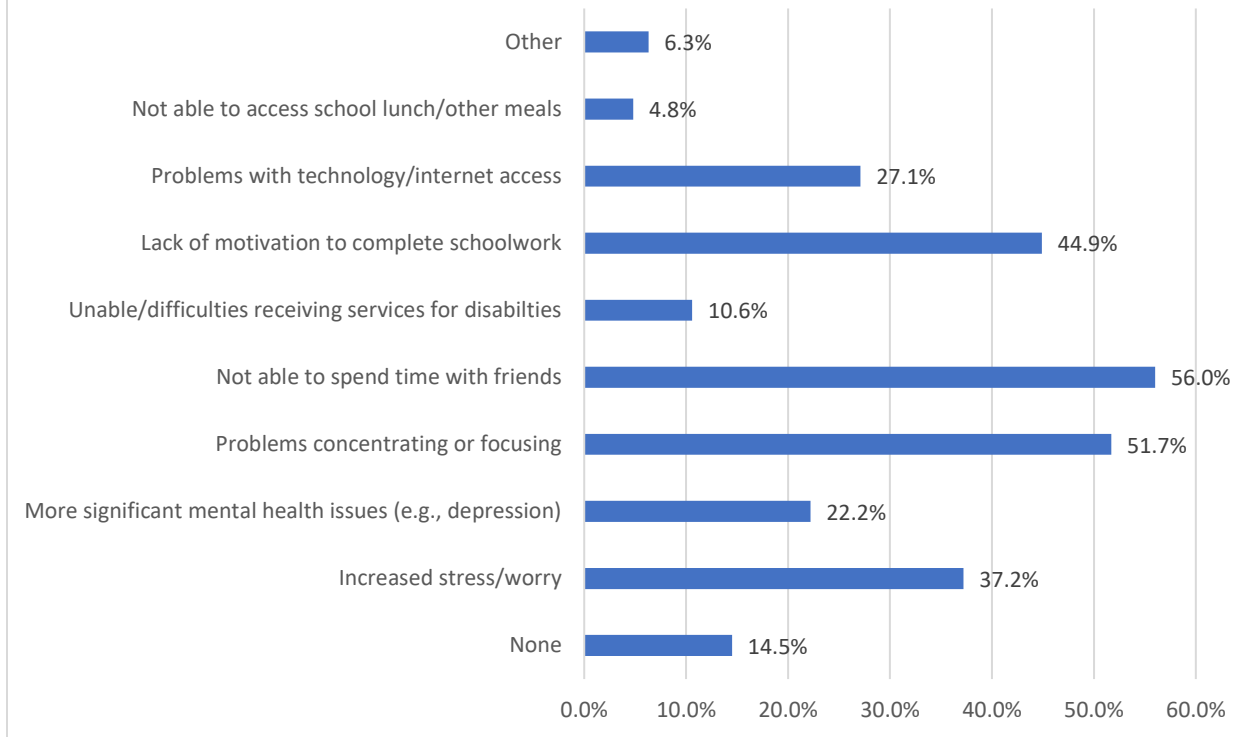


Those respondents with school-aged children were asked to compare the quality of education their children received since the pandemic began to prior to COVID-19. The majority (60%) indicated that the education their child received since the pandemic began was either much worse (25%) or a bit worse (35%) than the education received prior to the pandemic. Only 6.3% of parents felt that the education their child received since the pandemic was a bit or much better and 28.3% felt that the education was about the same. This continues the pattern seen in 2020 when 55.9% of respondents thought that their child’s education was a bit worse or much worse. In 2021, 60.0% held this view. The increase occurred mostly among those responding that their child’s education was much worse (19% to 25%).



Parents of school-aged children were asked about difficulties their child/children had experienced due to changes in their daily routines because of COVID-19 conditions. About 14.5% of parents reported no difficulties. More than half of parents indicated that their child was not able to spend time with friends (56%) or had problems concentrating or focusing (51.7%). Other common reported difficulties included lack of motivation to complete schoolwork (44.9%), increased stress/worry (37.2%), and problems with technology/internet access (27.1%). Fewer parents reported that their child was unable to receive services for disabilities (10.6%) or not being able to access school lunches or other meals (4.8%). However, these lower numbers may reflect the smaller populations potentially impacted by these issues. For instance, nearly 41 percent (40.9%) of respondents who had children with disabilities reported problems with receiving services for disabilities.

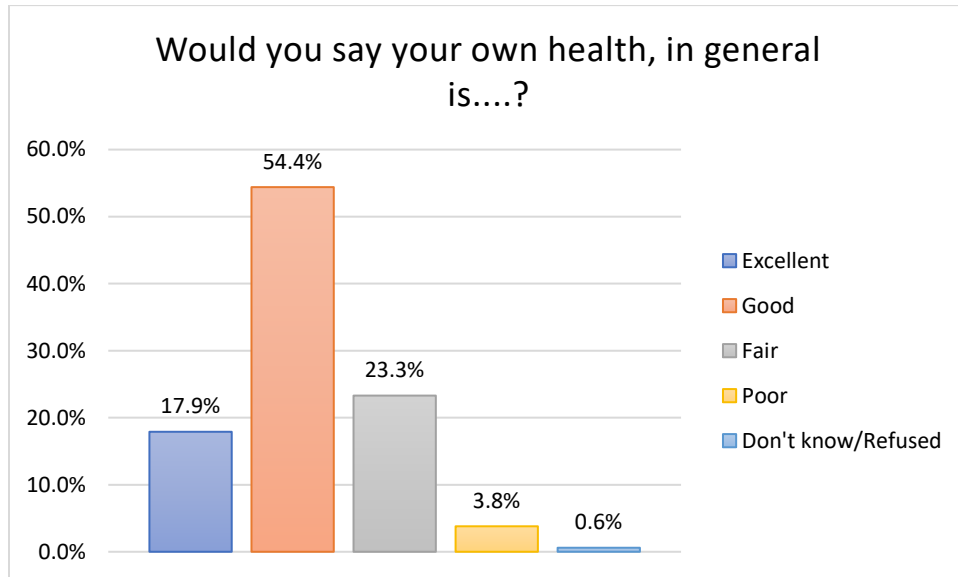
What difficulties, if any, did your school-aged children encounter with changes to their daily routine given COVID-19 conditions?



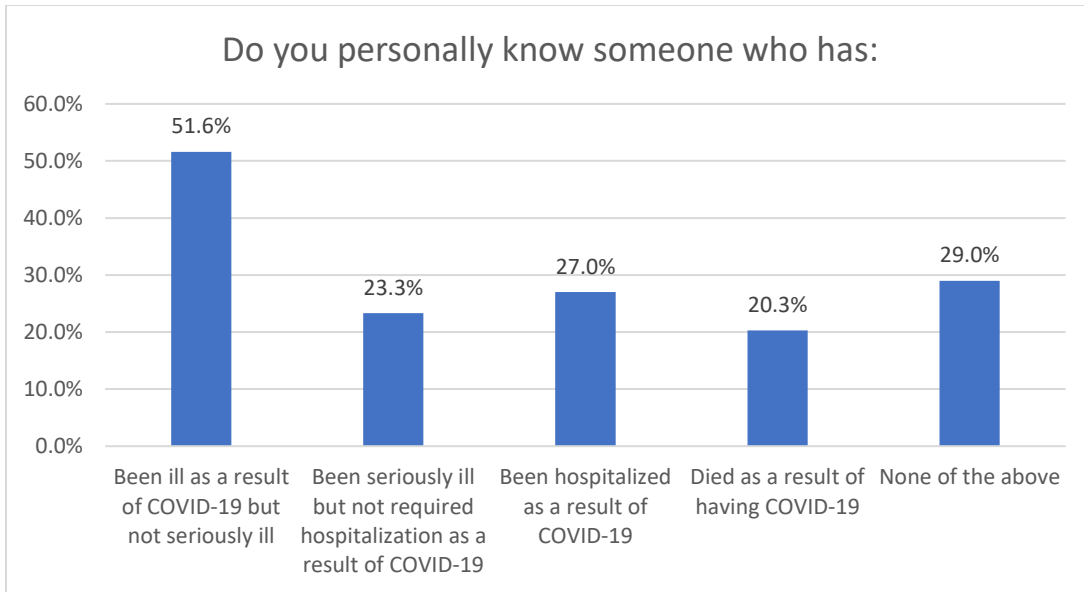
Overall, the results in this section highlight the significant burdens the disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have placed on children and their educational progress.

Health, Experiences with COVID & Vaccines

More than 72% of respondents rated the quality of their own health as excellent (17.9%) or good (54.4%). This is lower than previous years which is not surprising given on-going pandemic conditions. Further, the percentage of respondents rating their health as excellent or good has been declining over recent years (e.g., from 82% in 2017).

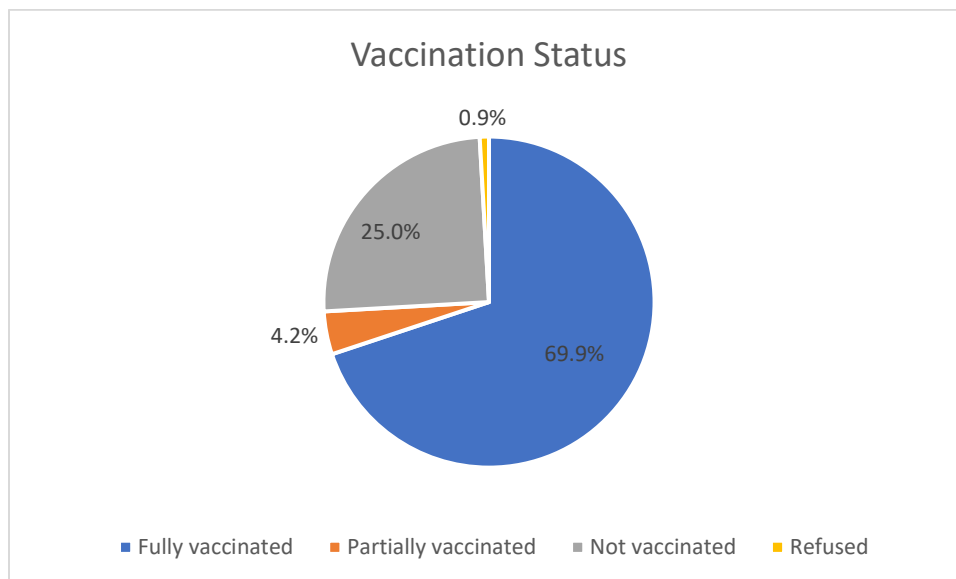


Respondents were asked if they personally knew someone who was affected in various ways by COVID-19. One in five respondents (20.3%) knew of someone who had died as a result of COVID-19. More than half (51.6%) knew of someone who has been ill as a result of COVID-19 but not seriously ill. Almost one in four respondents (23.3%) knew of someone who had been seriously ill but not required hospitalization and 27% knew of someone who has been hospitalized as a result of the virus. Just under one-third (29%) responded “none of the above” to knowing someone who was personally ill with COVID-19. This reflects the increasing levels of personal experience with the pandemic from last year. In 2020, nearly two thirds (61%) responded “none of the above” and only 8% know someone who had died as a result of having COVID-19.



COVID-19 Vaccination Status

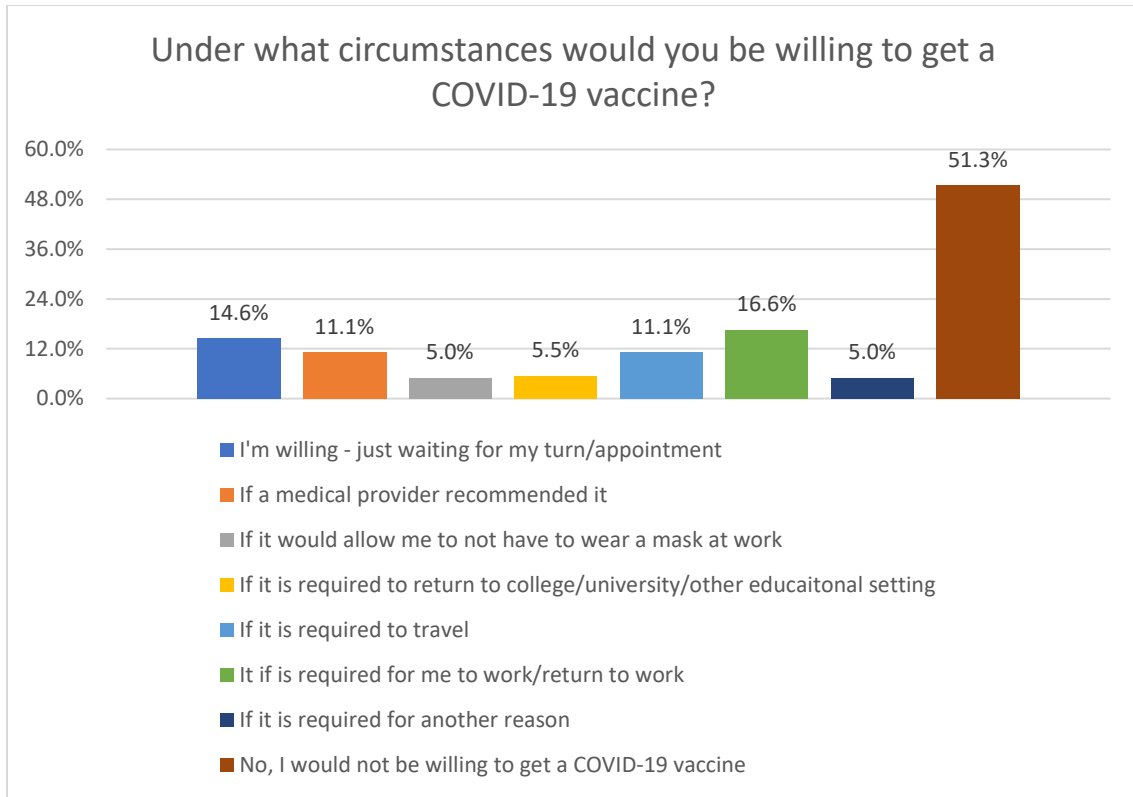
The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the use of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines for emergency use in December, 2020. By the time the Life in Hampton Roads survey began, about 5 million adults in Virginia had at least one dose of the vaccine⁴. Hampton Roads residents were asked if they had been vaccinated with at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and 74.3% indicated yes. Overall, 69.9% of respondents indicated that they were fully vaccinated and 25% indicated that they were not vaccinated (even partially).



⁴ For example, see: <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations?country=USA>

The 25% who indicated that they had not received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine were asked under what circumstances they would be willing to get a vaccine. More than half (51.3%) indicated that they would not be willing to get a vaccine in any of the circumstances asked about. More than 16% indicated that they would be willing if it was required for them to work or to return to work (16.6%). About 15% indicated that they were willing and just waiting for their turn or their appointment. Eleven percent indicated they would be willing if a medical provider recommended it or if it is required to travel. About 5% indicated they would be willing if it would allow them to not have to wear a mask at work, if it would be required to return to college/university or some other educational setting, or if it is required for other reasons.

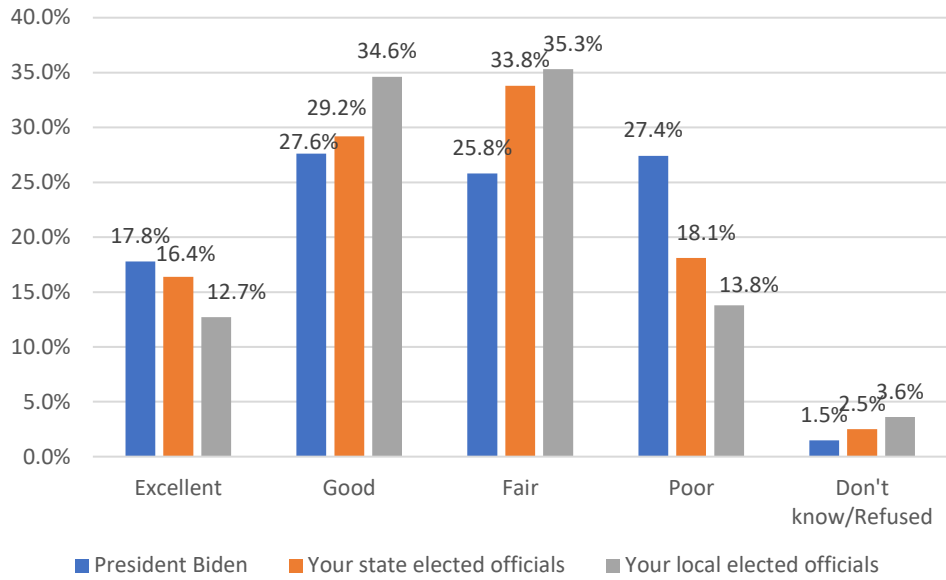
Those who indicated that they would be unwilling to get a COVID-19 vaccine were asked an open-ended/free response question about why they choose to not get vaccinated. The most frequent responses included a general distrust of the government or the pharmaceutical companies, concern about the safety of the vaccines or the possible side effects, and the speed at which they were developed.



COVID-19 Response

Respondents were asked to rate the job of President Joe Biden, their state elected officials, and local elected officials in terms of responding to the coronavirus outbreak. President Biden received the highest percentage of “excellent” ratings (17.8%) but also the highest percentage of “poor” ratings (27.4%). Local elected officials received the highest percentage of “good” (34.6%) and “fair” ratings (35.3%). When combining “excellent” and “good” responses, local elected officials were rated slightly higher than state elected officials and the president (47.3% compared to 45.6% and 45.4% respectively). Respondent ratings of state and local officials’ response to the pandemic were fairly similar to the ratings from 2020, though both were down slightly. In 2020 just over half of respondents (51%) rated state and local officials’ pandemic response as good or excellent.

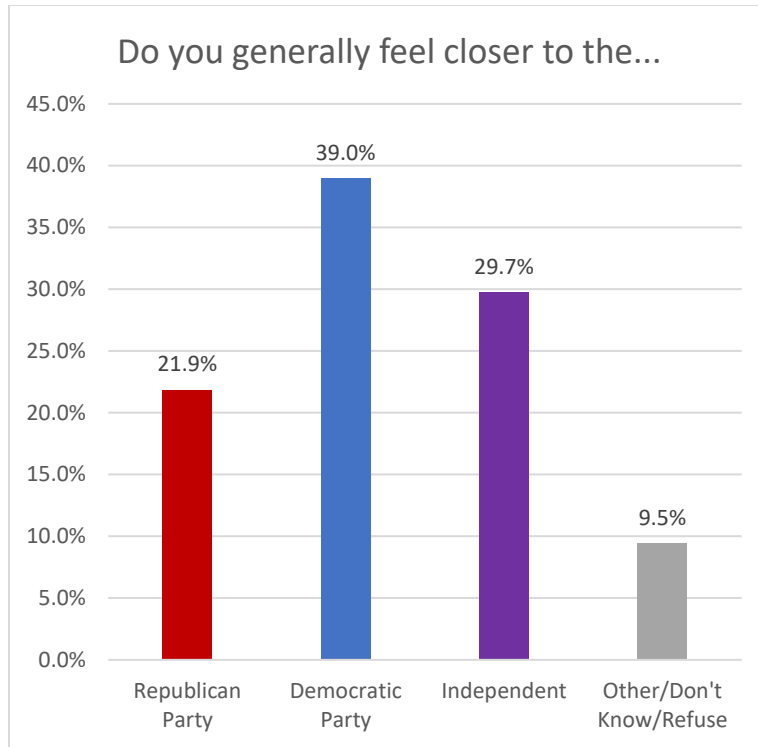
How would you rate the job each of the following is doing responding to the coronavirus outbreak?



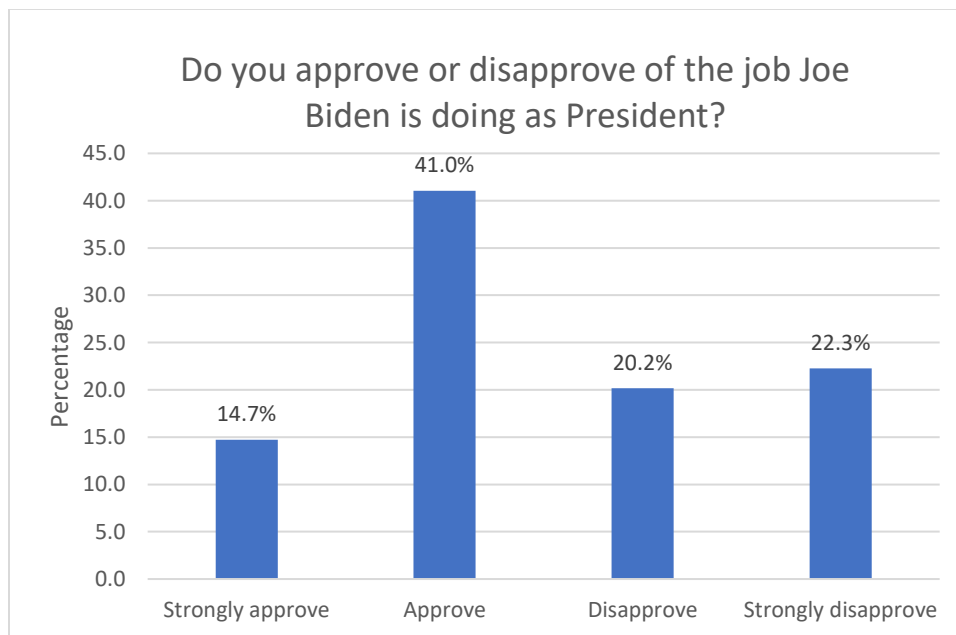
Politics & Ethics in Government

The Life in Hampton Roads survey typically includes a few questions about political attitudes. In 2021 the questions asked included party affiliation, job approval of President Biden, and preferences for the 2021 Gubernatorial election. The survey also included a set of questions about ethics in local government that have been asked in previous Life in Hampton Roads surveys.

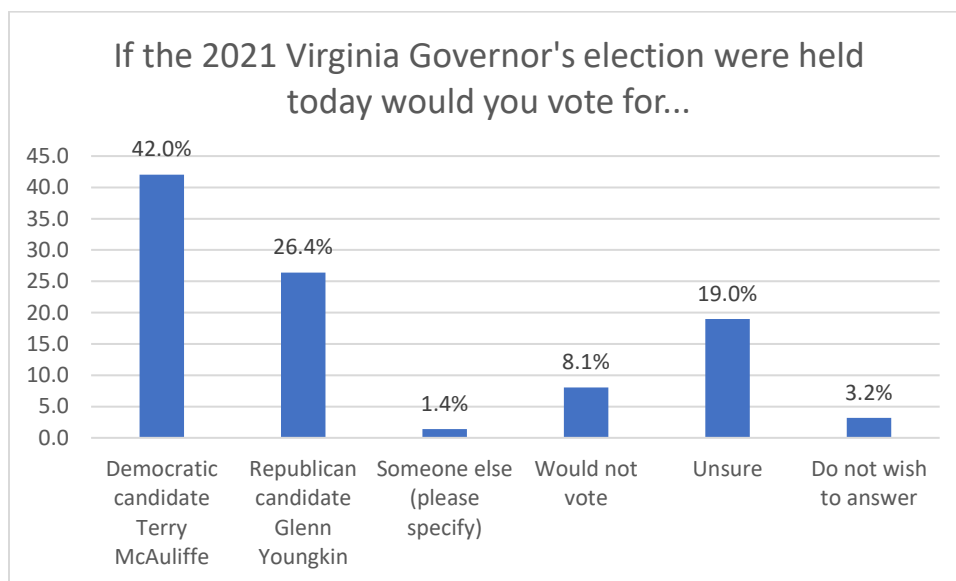
Political party affiliation among respondents to the survey leaned substantially towards the Democratic Party, in line with past surveys in Hampton Roads. Thirty nine percent (39.0%) of respondents said they felt closest to the Democratic party when asked the question “Do you generally feel closer to the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, or do you consider yourself to be an independent or something else.” Approximately 22 percent (21.9%) responded Republican Party. This represents a modest gain for the Republican Party from some previous years. For instance, in 2017 and 2015 less than 20% indicated that they felt closest to the Republican Party. This year’s survey puts the Republican party roughly where it was in surveys a decade ago. But it also represents a gain for the Democratic Party relative to nearly all previous years. In 2015 and 2017 only 35% indicated that they felt closest to the Democratic Party. Overall, this seems to indicate a trend towards more individuals responding with a major party they felt closest to, especially on the Democratic side.



Overall, respondents also tended to have a positive view of President Joe Biden’s job performance, with 14.7% saying that they strongly approve, and another 41% indicating that they approve. Just over 20% selected the disapprove or strongly disapprove option (20.2% and 22.3%).

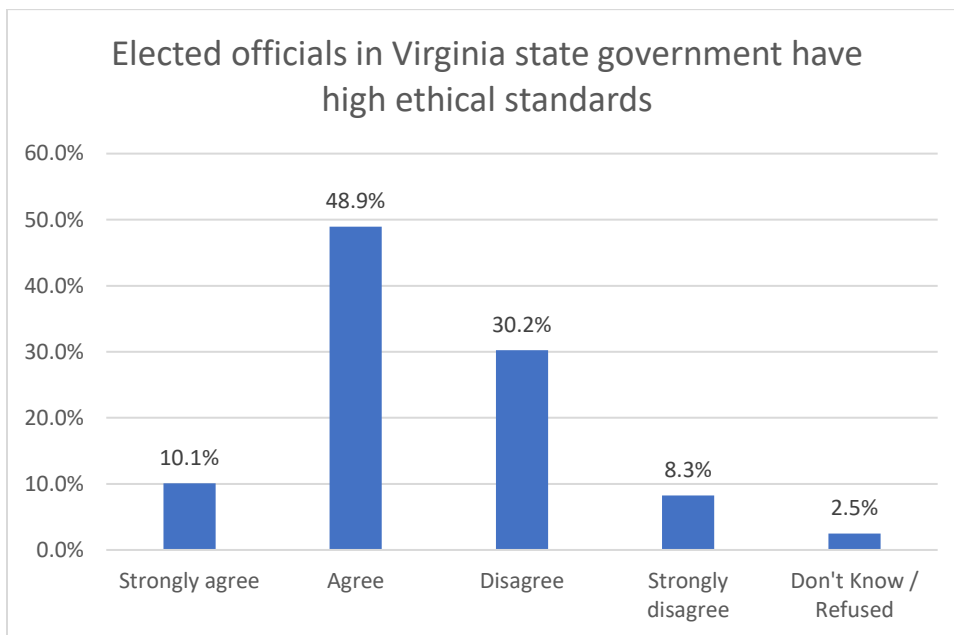
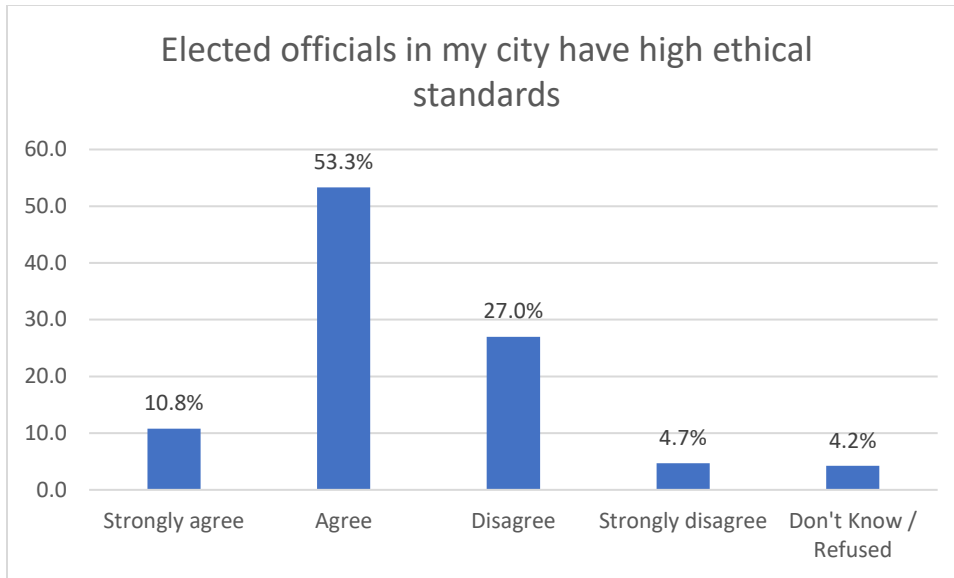


As the numbers above might lead one to expect, when respondents were asked which candidate they supported for governor, Terry McAuliffe, the Democratic candidate, received the most support, with 42% of respondents indicating that they would support McAuliffe. It is worth noting that the survey was conducted over the summer and early fall – months prior to the election. Of respondents who indicated they would vote for one of the two major-party candidates, 61.4% indicated that they would vote for McAuliffe. One important caveat to note is that this survey did not include a likely voter screen and is not restricted to registered voters. Thus, higher turnout by supporters of one candidate or the other could lead to substantially different outcomes. In the November general election, McAuliffe received only 54.3% of the two-party vote in the 7 cities included in the survey. The decline in McAuliffe support from early October when the survey concluded to November 2nd is consistent with the change in support seen in state-wide polling: McAuliffe’s support dropped by roughly six percentage points in the Real Clear Politics average from October 3rd though November 2nd.⁵



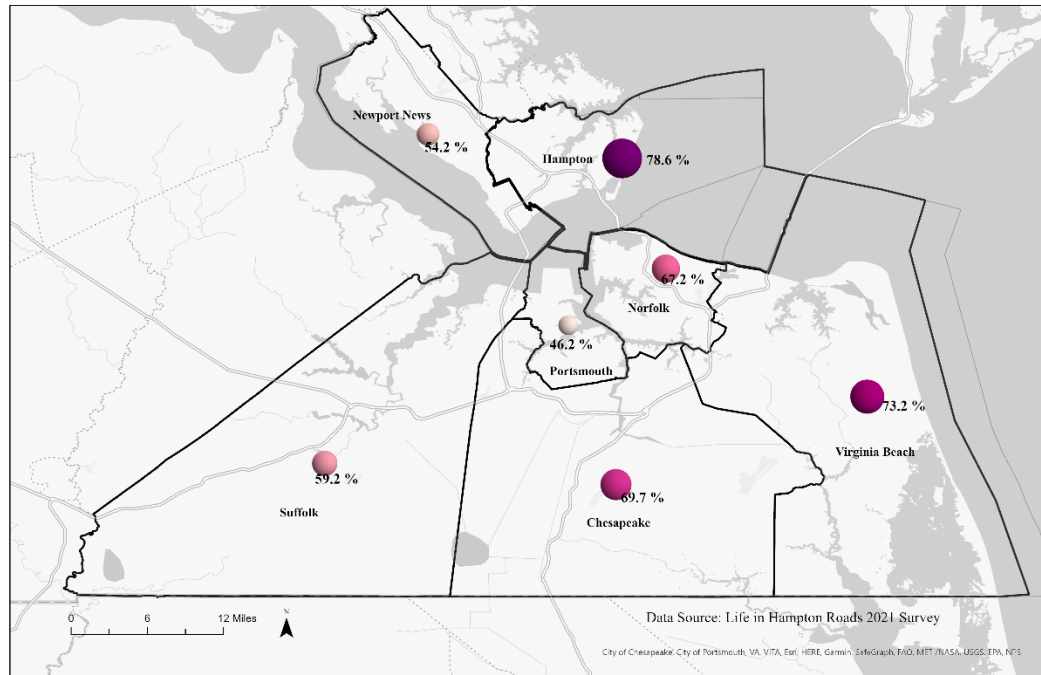
Two questions were asked about perceptions of ethics in state and local government. Overall, both questions indicated that substantial majorities believe that “elected officials in my city have high ethical standards” with similar proportions at the state level.

⁵ For example, see https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2021/governor/va/virginia_governor_youngkin_vs_mcauliffe-7373.html



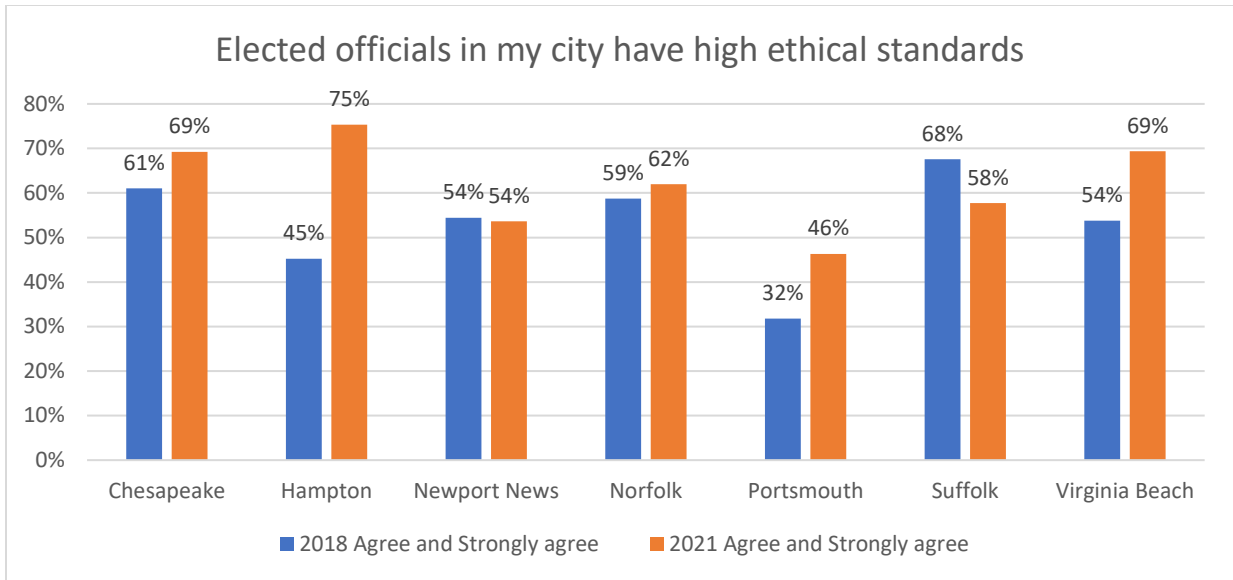
The percent of respondents who agreed/strongly agreed that their city elected officials have high ethical standards varied significantly depending on which city the respondent lived in. At the highest end were respondents from Hampton (78.6%), Virginia Beach (73.2%), Chesapeake (67.7%) and Norfolk (67.2%). Considerably lower rates of believing that city elected officials have high ethical standards were reported by residents in Suffolk (59.2%), Newport News (54.2%), and Portsmouth (46.2%).

% of Respondents Who Agree/Strongly Agree that City Elected Officials Have High Ethical Standards



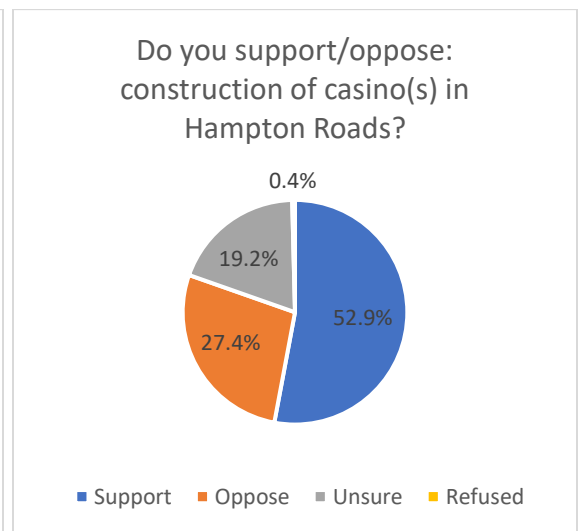
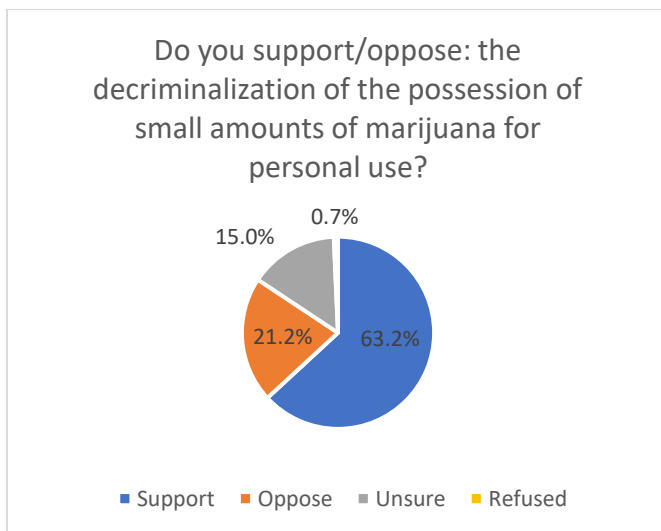
The city level and state level results both reflect a substantial improvement in respondent perceptions relative to the last time the survey examined these questions in 2018. In 2018, only 49.8% of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed Virginia elected officials had high ethical standards, and in 2018 only 48.7% agreed or strongly agreed that local elected officials had high ethical standards. However, it is possible that this reflects consequences of the changes in survey mode. A larger portion of respondents in the telephone survey in 2018 gave a “don’t know” response.

Some cities in particular have seen major improvements in respondent perceptions in the three years since the question was last asked. Portsmouth remains the lowest among the cities but has seen major gains (32% to 46%). Hampton jumped from second lowest to highest. Suffolk and Newport News saw declines.



Support for Marijuana Decriminalization & Casinos

Respondents were asked about their support for two current issues: the decriminalization of marijuana and construction of casinos in Hampton Roads. Just under two-thirds of respondents (63.2%) support the decriminalization of the possession of small amounts of marijuana for personal use and 15% are unsure. A smaller percentage but still more than half (52.9%) support the construction of casinos in Hampton Roads while 19.2% are unsure.



Perceptions of the Police

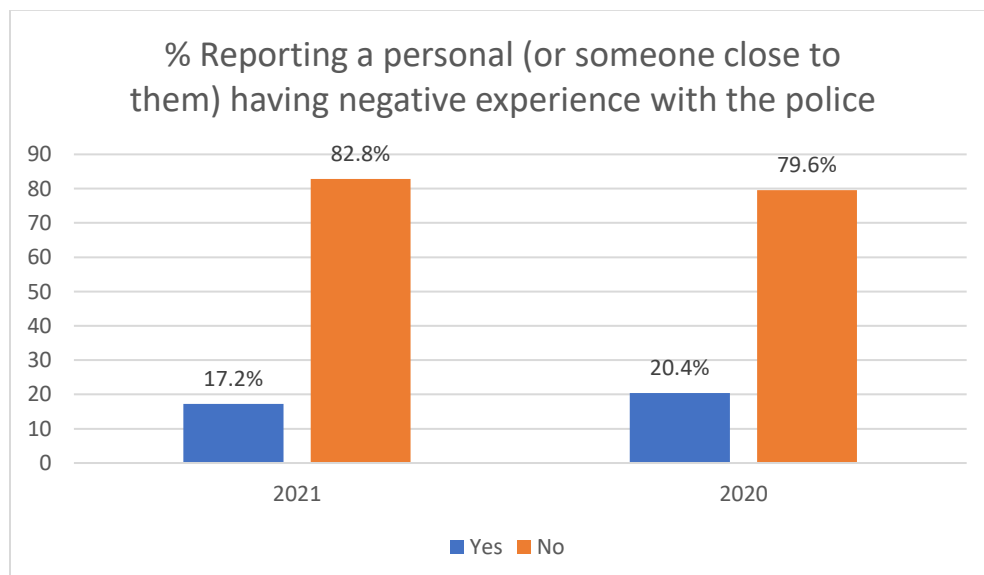
The 2021 Life in Hampton Roads survey included two items which measured negative experiences with the police:

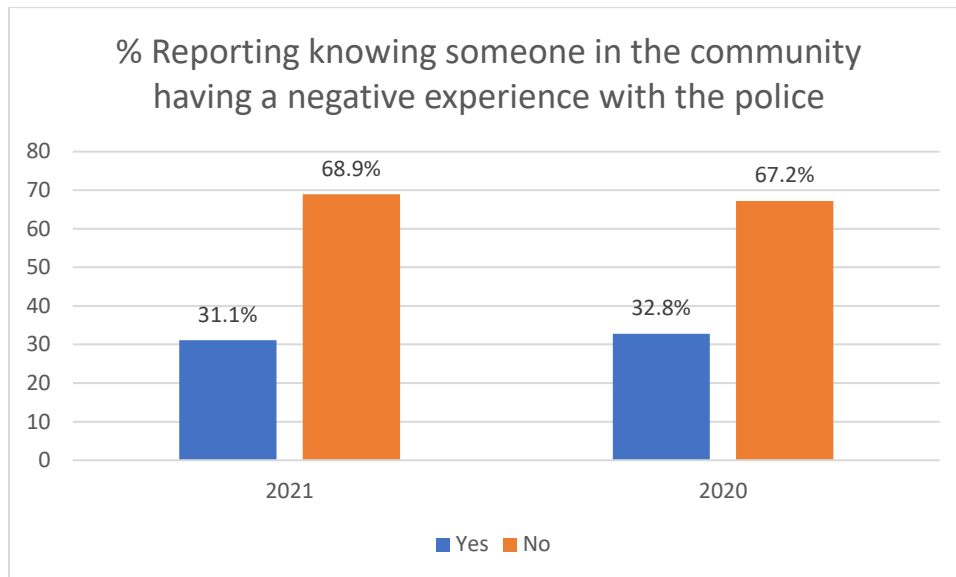
1. In the past year, have you or someone close to you had a negative experience with police (e.g., the officer shouted at you, cursed at you, pushed, or grabbed you)?
2. In the past year, have you heard of someone in your local community who had a negative experience with police (e.g., the officer shouted at them, cursed at them, pushed, or grabbed them)?

We note that both items refer to relatively serious negative encounters and are not issues related to standard daily encounters with the police. Response categories were simply “yes” and “no”. These questions were also asked of residents in the 2020 survey.

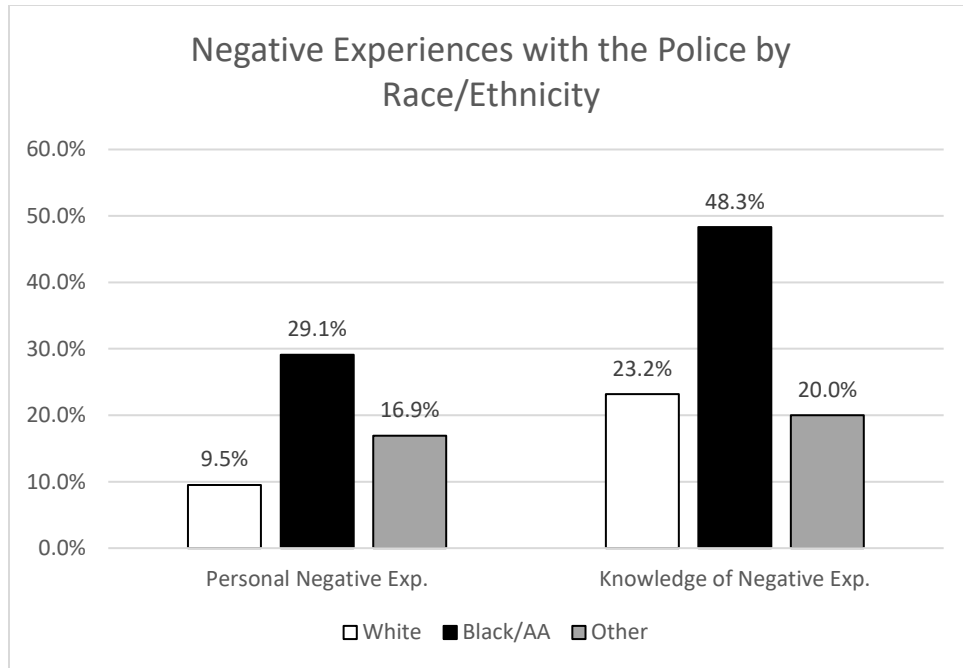
Experiences with Police

This year about 17% of the respondents reported that they (or someone close to them) had had a negative experience with the police, down 3% from the 20% reported last year. The percentage of residents having heard of someone in their local community who had had a negative encounter with the police was much larger. Indeed, nearly a third of respondents reported such knowledge in 2021 (31.1%) and 2020 (32.8%). This number is probably much higher because there are so many ways of hearing about unpleasant incidences—e.g., from family, friends, or various media sources.

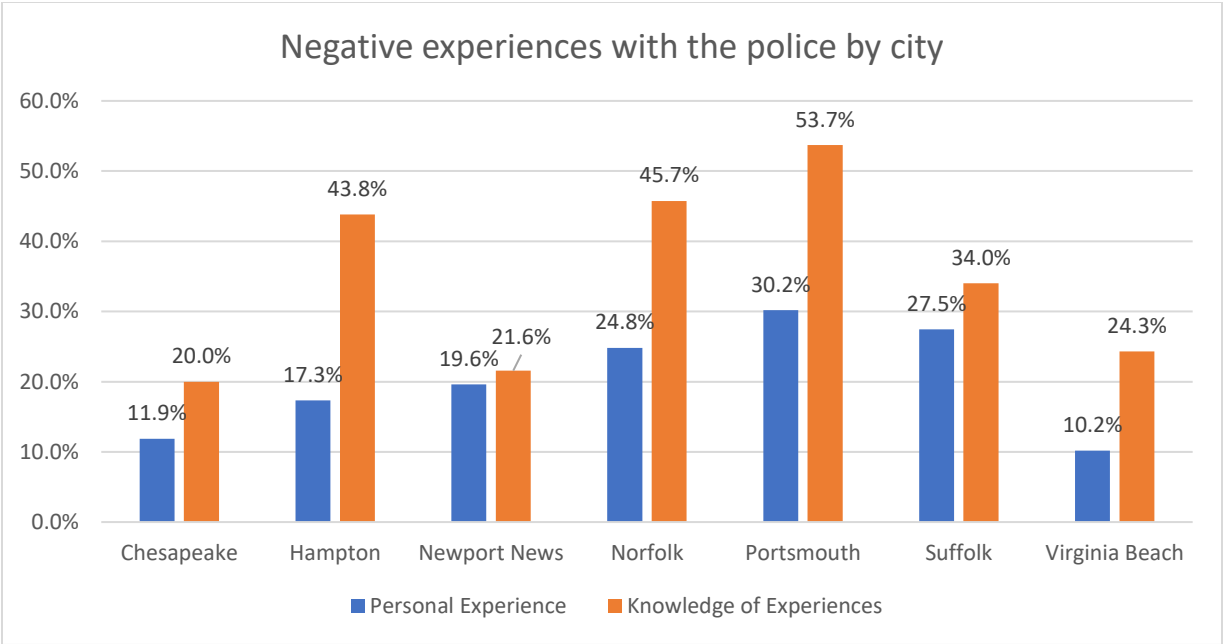




Consistent with last year’s results we also found significant differences in negative encounters with the police by race and ethnicity. African Americans (29%) were nearly three time more likely than whites (9.5%) to report that they themselves or someone close to them had a negative experience with the police. Persons identifying as some other race or ethnicity were more likely to report this type of experience than whites, but much less likely than African Americans. Nearly half of African American respondents (48%) reported they had knowledge of a negative experience in the community. This percentage is more than twice that of white respondents (23%) or other identifying races (20%).

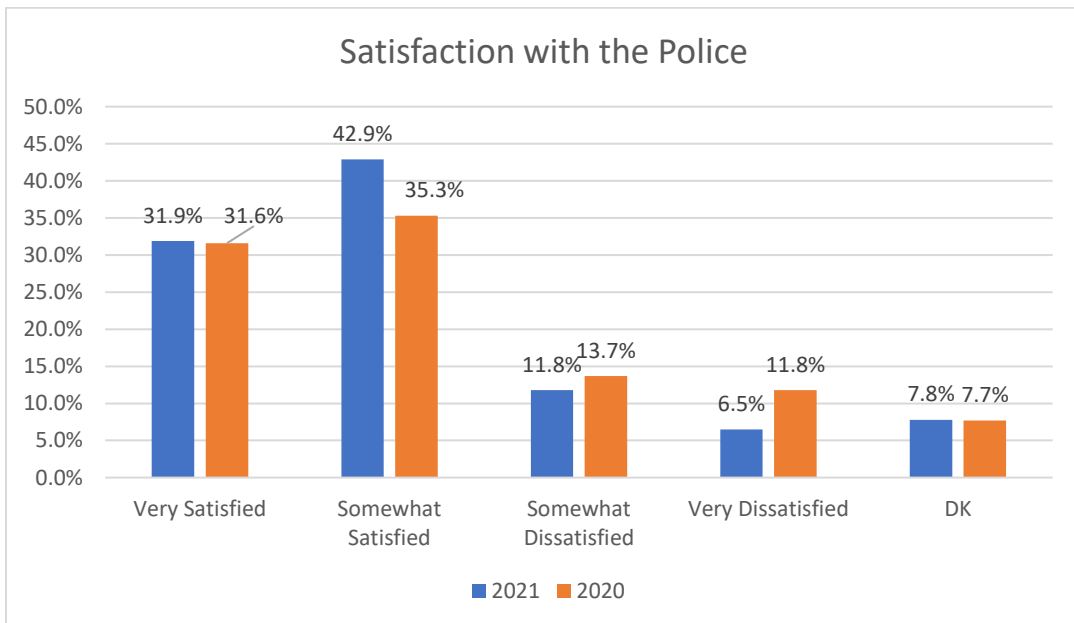


Negative experiences with the police also varied substantially by city. Focusing first on direct experiences or knowledge of someone close to them, Virginia Beach and Chesapeake reported the lowest rates at 10.2% and 11.9%, respectively. Hampton and Newport News were at 17.3% and 19.6%, respectively, and then the percentages jump to 24.8% for Norfolk, 27.5% for Suffolk, and 30.2% for Portsmouth. The pattern is similar for the second question focusing on knowledge of someone in the city having a serious negative encounter. Chesapeake and Virginia Beach were relatively low (20% and 24.3%), and Newport News was in that range as well (21.6%). The percentages increase for other cities with Suffolk being 10% higher than any of those at 34% and Hampton another 10% higher (43.8%), followed by Norfolk (45.7%) and Portsmouth (53.7%).

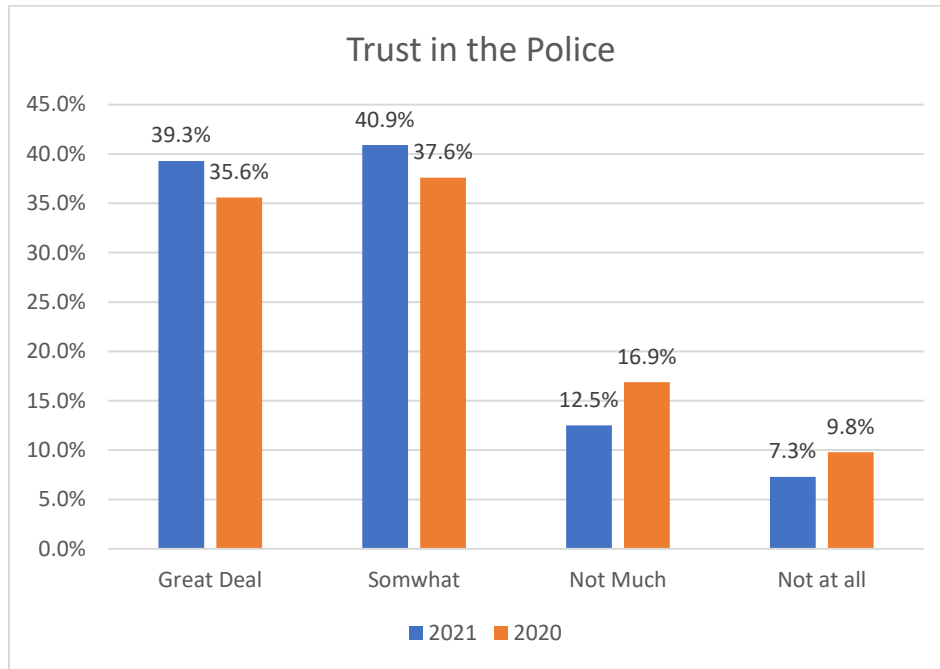


Perceptions of Police

Hampton Roads residents were asked a variety of questions about their perceptions of the local police. Two of those questions were also asked in 2020; one focused on general satisfaction and the other with trust in the local police. In terms of general satisfaction, the vast majority of respondents (74.8%) were either very satisfied (31.9%) or somewhat satisfied (42.9%) in 2021. This is about a 7.9% increase from the 66.9% reporting being satisfied a year ago.



Similar to last year, the majority of residents (80.2%) either trusted the police a great deal (39.3%) or somewhat (40.9%). Combined, this total was up about 7% from 73% of respondents last year.

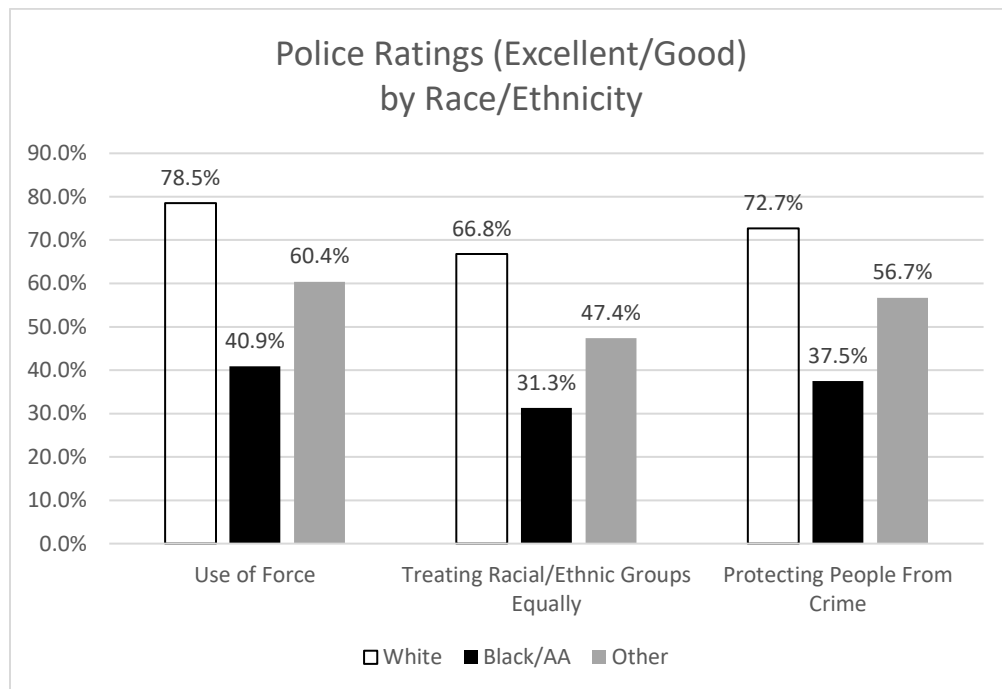


The 2021 survey also asked three new items about the police. Specifically, we asked “How would you rate the job police (in your city) are doing when it comes to each of the following: 1) Using the right amount of force for each situation? 2) Treating racial and ethnic groups equally? 3) Protecting people from crime?”. Response categories were excellent, good, fair, and poor.

Again, the overall perceptions were positive with the highest rating on the item focusing on the use of force with about 61% rating the local police as good (36.9%) or excellent (23.9%). Not far behind, about 57% of residents rated their local police as good (36.3%) or excellent (21.1%) in terms of protecting people from crime. Just half (50%) of residents, however, rated the local police as good (29%) or excellent (21%) in terms of treatment racial and ethnic minorities. Just over 19% of respondents rated the local police as poor in this area compared to 9.8% with the use of force and 11.6% in terms of protecting people from crime.

Consistent with national trends and results from prior years of the Life in Hampton Roads survey, there are clear and statistical differences across race/ethnicity in perceptions of local police. For these comparisons, the perception, satisfaction, and trust questions were recoded to combine the percentages of the two positive items (e.g., excellent/good, very satisfied/satisfied, a great deal/somewhat). These comparisons showed that the largest differences are between whites and African Americans with those respondents identifying as something other than white or African American generally falling in the middle of the other two groups.

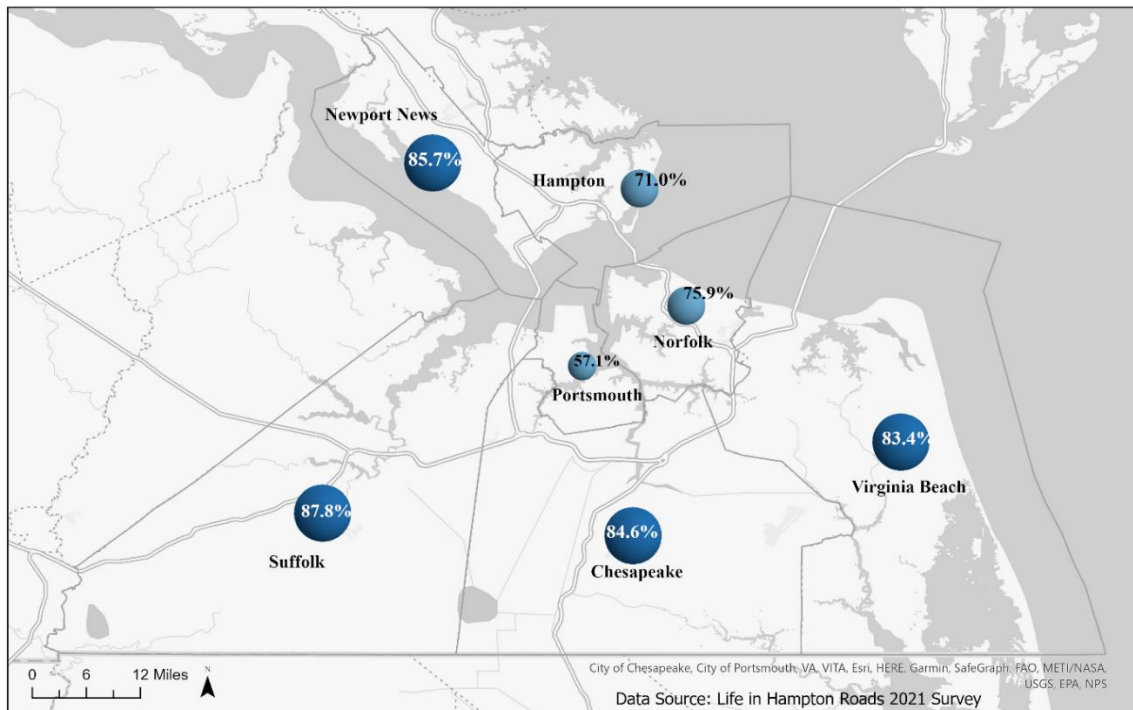
The largest African American/white differences are found in the items asking respondents to rate the job the police in their city are doing in regards to using the right amount of force for each situation, treating racial and ethnic groups equally, and protecting people from crime. The differences between whites and African-Americans exceeded 33%. There is a 37.6% difference in the ratings of police use of force, and a 35.5% and 35.2% difference for treatment of racial/ethnic minorities and protecting people from crime, respectively.



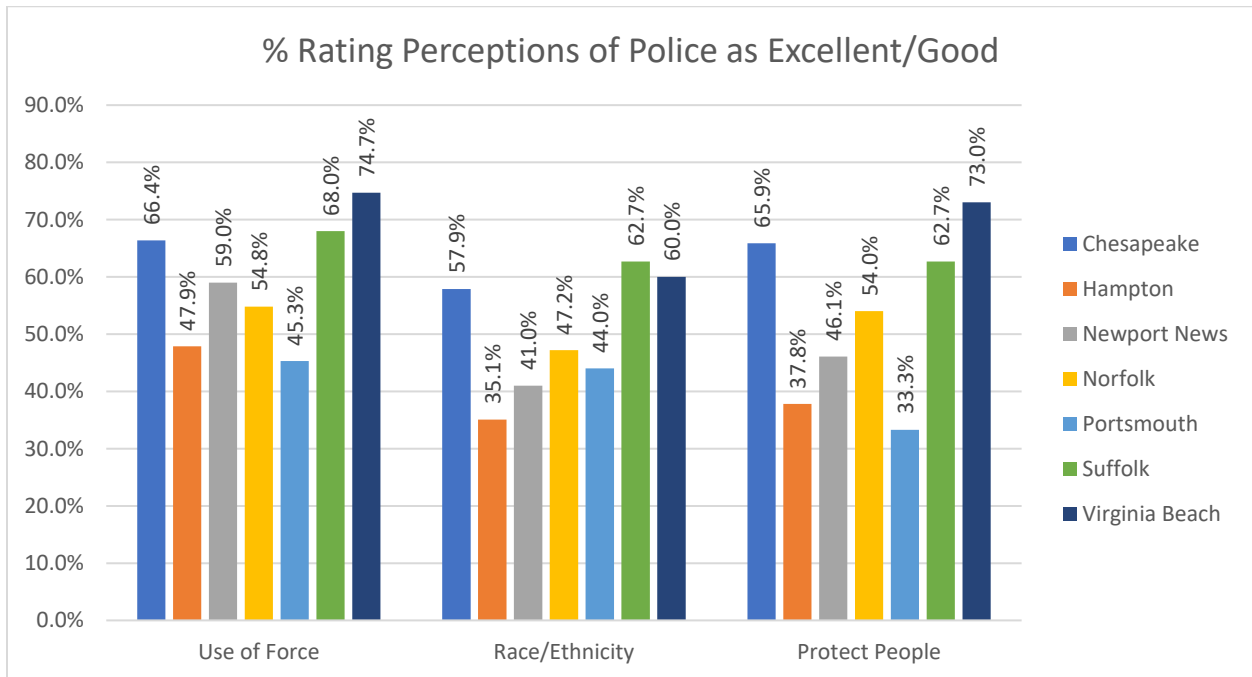
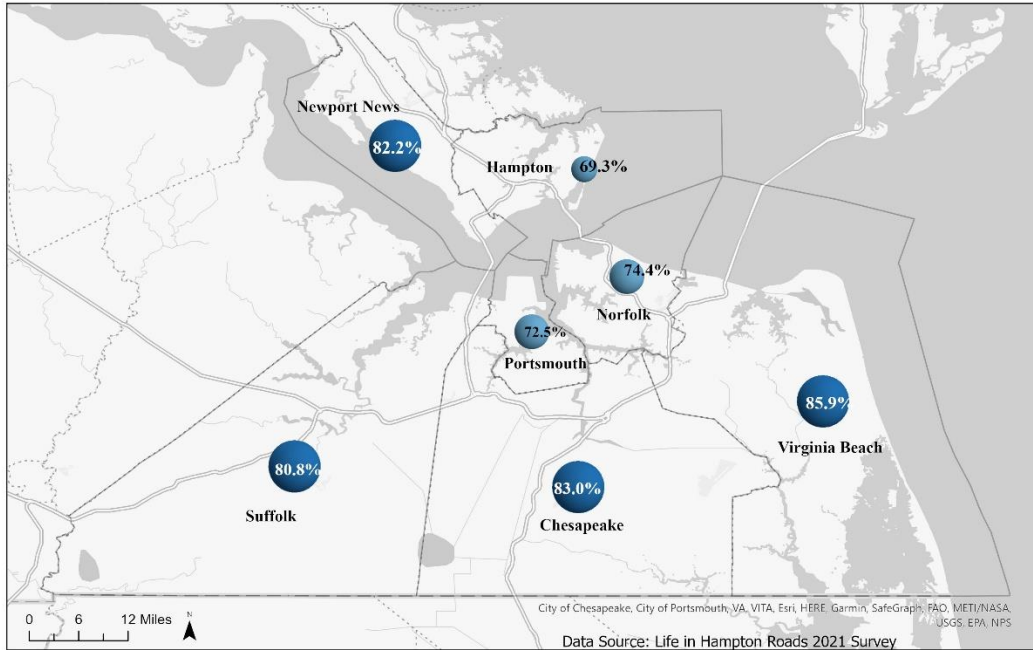
Perceptions of the Police by City

All five attitudinal/perceptual measures of the police varied significantly across the seven cities of Hampton Roads. Several things are clear from the data. First, some consistently rank the police quite highly and certainly more highly than other cities. Specifically, across the board respondents from Virginia Beach, Suffolk, and Chesapeake are more trusting and satisfied with the police and rank their police forces higher in terms of use of force, treatment of racial and ethnic minorities, and protecting people from crime. We note that residents of Newport News also rate their police force relatively highly with over 80% reporting being satisfied with and trusting the police, but their ratings on the three specific items are at least 10% lower than Virginia Beach (as one point of reference) and this holds true for Hampton, Norfolk and Portsmouth as well. These results suggest that the three more affluent cities with smaller concentrations of racial and ethnic minorities have higher regard for their police forces than the other four.

% of City Residents Responding they are Somewhat or Very Satisfied with the Local Police

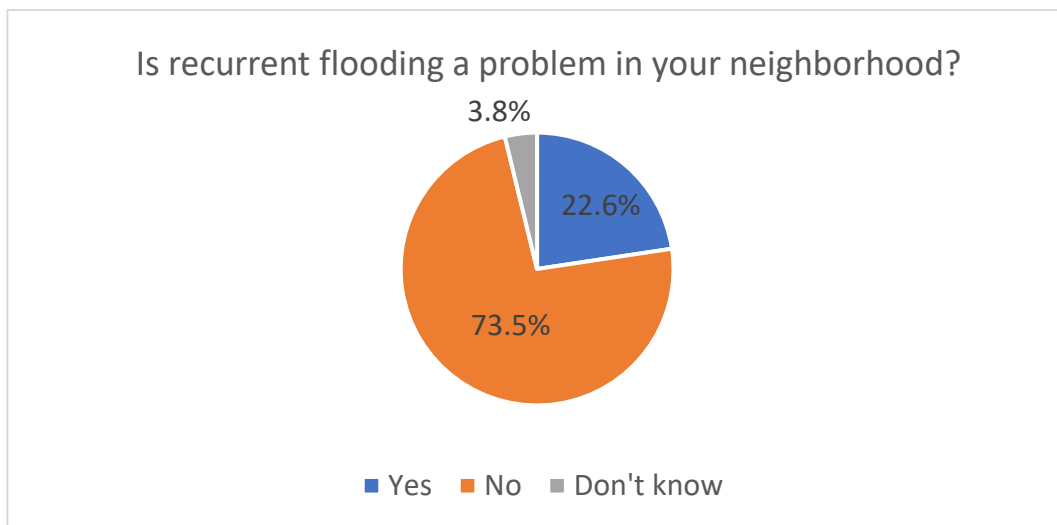


% of City Residents Responding that they Trust the Local Police Somewhat or a Great Deal



Flooding, Hurricane Evacuation, & Sheltering During COVID-19

The changing climate and rising sea levels touch nearly every aspect of life in Hampton Roads, with some neighborhoods and communities experiencing it more acutely relative to others. But, overall, how persistent is recurrent flooding as perceived by Hampton Roads residents? This year's survey finds that nearly 23% of respondents state that recurrent flooding is a problem in their neighborhood, a number broadly consistent with the responses seen since this question was first asked in 2013 when 23% of respondents also indicated that recurrent flooding was a problem in their neighborhood.

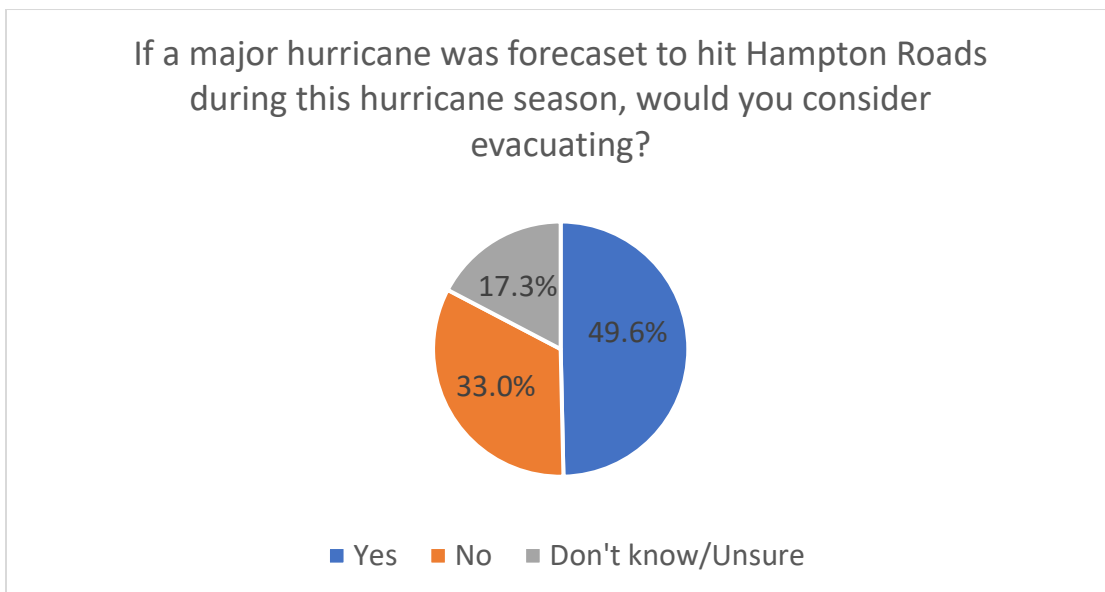


In addition, the survey included several questions concerning how residents plan to prepare for and respond to hurricanes during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a special look at the role COVID may play in conditioning sheltering behavior. The 2021 hurricane season at the time of the survey had been relatively quiet for the Hampton Roads region. However, state and local officials have been cognizant of the potential for COVID-related fears to depress evacuation and sheltering behavior and have taken these considerations into planning assumptions about who may evacuate, seek public shelter, and shelter in place.

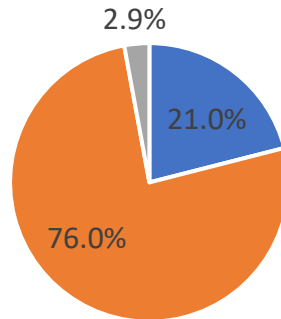
A decrease in the propensity to either evacuate or seek public shelter is a concern because choosing to weather the storm by remaining in the primary residence within the region may actually increase exposure to risk, such as wind and tidal surge. The hazards of remaining in

coastal areas subject to intense winds and flooding are well-known - yet concerns about exposure to COVID may actually lead residents to remain in high-risk areas.

The Life in Hampton Roads survey provides insight into the risk perceptions of the population and how these risk perceptions may shape sheltering behavior. For example, when asked if a major hurricane were approaching Hampton Roads, a third of the population would not consider evacuating while about half (49.6%) would consider evacuation. The percentage who would consider evacuation is similar to last year (45%). Further, among those who would not evacuate, 21% state that concerns about having enough cash or credit on hand to support the cost of evacuation weighed in the decision not to evacuate.



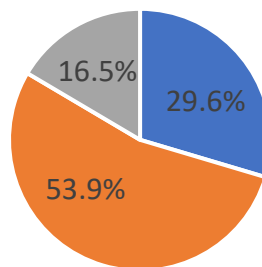
Did you answer "no" at least partly because of concern that you would not have enough cash or credit on hand to pay for the costs of evacuation?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know/Refused

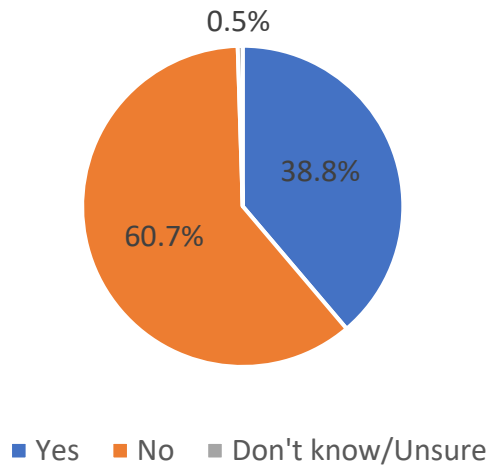
Residents were also asked, if evacuation were required, would they consider sheltering in a public shelter. Nearly 54% said they would not seek a public shelter and, among these, over 38% stated fears about increasing exposure to COVID informed their decision not to seek a public shelter. It appears that fears relative to sheltering amid the pandemic may have eased from last year – in 2020, 63% of respondents reported that they would not consider a public shelter with 70% of those citing concerns about COVID-19 exposure.

If a hurricane was forecast to hit Hampton Roads that required an evacuation of the area, would you consider sheltering in a public shelter?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know/Unsure

Did you answer "no" at least partly because you are concerned you or your family members may be exposed to the COVID-19 virus while sheltering?



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