

**THE FUTURE OF GRASSROOTS AMERICA:  
LOCAL PERSPECTIVES ON CURRENT AND EMERGING ISSUES  
FACING URBAN, SUBURBAN AND RURAL COMMUNITIES**

A Report Commissioned by the





## **THE FUTURE OF GRASSROOTS AMERICA: LOCAL PERSPECTIVES ON CURRENT AND EMERGING ISSUES FACING URBAN, SUBURBAN AND RURAL COMMUNITIES**

Despite the tradition of America being a nation of organizations, a nation of joiners, and a nation of community activists, local organizations are rarely asked for their views on their neighborhoods—what’s working, what’s broken, and what they need in order to do their work more effectively. In a political polling culture that spends more time obsessing on percentage point shifts in presidential popularity ratings than it does on capturing a full picture of the needs of all American communities—from rich to poor—it is not surprising that community-level attitudes and priorities are glossed over. While major city newspapers may from time to time run front-page headlines shouting that the president’s, the governor’s, or the mayor’s approval rating has just dropped and he or she is in trouble in the next election, it is a rare front-page headline saying that “90 percent of low-income families say health-care for their children is inadequate.” The motivation for most polling is to gauge local citizens’ views with an eye to future elections and how to frame the political agenda in order to maximize candidate appeal. In contrast, the purpose of this research project was to ask community leaders what issues they are dealing with today, what issues are on the horizon, and what challenges they face as they try to address current and emerging issues.

Because such a wide variety of organizations fall within the label “community organizations” and there are no comprehensive listings of this population, deciding which types of organizations to include in a survey is a challenge. Typically there are higher densities of such organizations in central cities, particularly large central cities. Suburban communities are more likely to have governmental or quasi-governmental organizations working on issues like housing, the environment, transportation, and other policy issues. Rural organizations are more likely to be regional in nature, simply because of the need to define a wider geographic catchment area in order to create a more cost effective organization.

There are other factors as well. Community level organizations are typically not large. As our survey shows, the major of such organizations have fewer than ten full-time paid staff. Polling these organizations is like polling small businesses—from the one-person entrepreneur to the storefront that just opened. Finally, even where there are lists of local organizations held by national organizations, there can be some protectiveness of such lists. Because they are often used for fund-raising and membership drives, lists of local-level organizations are a protected resource among regional, statewide, and national organizations, making a comprehensive collection of such organizational names across different issues difficult.

Despite these obstacles to polling community-level organizations, the views of their leaders need to be assessed. As social scientists as far back as Alexis de Tocqueville have noted, local organizations and local initiatives are critical in shaping our society. As we begin a new century, community organizations continue to represent a critical comp

community institutions over the past 25 years; as this happens, the local organizations become less effective. As Putnam puts it: “The ebbing of community over the last several decades has been silent and deceptive. We notice its effects in the strained interstices of our private lives and in the degradation of our public life” (402-403). If one follows the logic of his argument, then the answer to the question of measuring community-level priorities is that it is increasingly difficult to measure these because local organizations have been disappearing from the American landscape.

While a minor intellectual industry has developed to counter Putnam’s “Bowling Alone” thesis, former Roper Center for Public Opinion Research Executive Director Everett Carl Ladd challenged the Harvard professor’s claims most directly in his 1999 book, *The Ladd Report*

neighborhood churches working, in partnership with researchers, developed a policy that resulted in reductions in youth violence in a Boston neighborhood (Berrien and Winship 1999). The ASA panel concludes that, “Neighborhood-based prevention strategies may thus yield payoffs that complement the traditional individual-specific approach of most interventions” (Sampson et al., p. 40).

Much of the policy research on low-income communities doesn’t typically include any comprehensive collection of data from community leaders themselves. In an earlier CURL research project on what resources Chicago community leaders thought were needed to promote the community’s voice in policy research, Arvis Avarette, Executive Director of Dearborn Homes Resident Management Corporation, which served residents in one of the Chicago Housing Authority’s housing developments, said that there should be a survey research organization that regularly solicited information from low-income community members about their attitudes and needs (Avarette 1993). This is not to fault such research, but rather to point out that the typical policy research book generally includes little input from the communities that would be affected by such policy. Similarly other researchers and authors advocating for more resources for low-income communities, for communities of color, or for local communities in general do not have available to them data from an annual poll on “what do communities think?” (Etzioni 1993; Slessarev 1997; Hochschild 1995). This current project is a small step toward collecting such information directly from community organization leaders.

### **WHO DID WE STUDY?**

In identifying participants for both segments of for this study, CURL worked closely with the NNC staff. The groups and organizations whose leaders provided answers to our questions should not be seen as representative of all community-level organizations nationally.<sup>1</sup> Rather, they reflect a cross-section of NNC member organizations. For this reason, the perspectives of housing and community development organizations are more strongly represented than those of environmental, educational or labor organizations. At the same time, participants in the focus groups and respondents of the survey were drawn from many different types of organizations, of varying size, working in different types of community areas and having multiple roles that combine service work, organizing, and advocacy.

The 55 individuals who participated in the five regional focus groups tended to be veteran organizational leaders with in-depth knowledge of issues, close contacts with community members and local officials, and an understanding of the decision-making process.<sup>2</sup> They came from a variety of organizational settings, with slightly more than one-fourth (27%) drawn from housing organizations and another 21 percent coming from community development corporations. The remainder represented community-based organizations (16%), social service agencies (11%), miscellaneous groups (9%), community action and community advocacy groups (7%), faith-based and government agencies (4% each). Their organizations operated in different community settings, from central city neighborhoods, to metropolitan and regional areas, to rural districts.

Among the 216 individuals who completed the longer, mailed survey, nearly one-half (45%) were located in community-based organizations, while slightly less than one-third (31%) were working in community development corporations. Local, state, and federal government agencies, including a number of public housing authorities, represented about three in ten (31%). Smaller percentages came from social service agencies (17%), advocacy groups, including community action agencies (15%), regional organizations (9%), faith-based groups (2%), and some Indian tribal government agencies (1%). Finally,

there was a random assortment of respondents who co







*commercial revitalization, commercial development, addressing concentrations of poverty, and land use and zoning.*

Keeping in mind that there are a higher proportion of housing and community development organizations among NNC's members' constituent organizations, particularly significant is the high portion of respondents (2 out of 3) who listed *job creation* and *education* as current issues. For so many respondents who are particularly focused on housing and community development issues to raise these as current issues along side affordable housing suggests just how central both of these issues are to the quality of life in their communities. It also speaks to the interconnections between issues—particularly issue areas directly related to skill development and sustainable income.

Other issues that were identified as current issues by a majority of leaders include *health care*, *child care*, and *welfare reform*. All of these issues relate to the day-to-day functioning of a community and the quality of life of its residents and families. While some of these issues may be seen as being controlled from outside of the community, survey respondents provided a clear message that they are relevant to their organization's goals and successes.

### **Emerging Issues in Local Communities**

instance, the list of current issues identified by the majority of leaders in city and metropolitan organizations is significantly longer than those for suburban and rural areas. Leaders of metro organizations identified 23 issues and city leaders identified 19 issues as current. On the other hand, only five issues in the suburbs and six issues in the rural areas were identified by more than one-half of the organizational leaders as current issues.<sup>6</sup> This may reflect a greater spread of issue areas in the suburbs and rural area as well as a greater range of perspectives among organizations located in suburban and rural communities. In no case did the proportion of suburban or rural leaders responding that an issue was “current” exceed the proportion of either city or metro organizations that made that response.

In many instances, issues currently facing leaders of city and metropolitan-area organizations were viewed as emerging by leaders of suburban organizations.<sup>7</sup> For instance, one-third of the leaders of city organizations identified *gentrification* as a current issue, while only 11 percent of suburban leaders did. However, one-third of these suburban leaders

revitalization, jobs and the economy, and housing.<sup>8</sup> In most cases, the percentage of leaders who consider these current issues far outweighs those who consider them emerging issues. At the same time, four of the issues that were assessed by more than 50 percent of the leaders as current issues were also considered by more than 25 percent to be emerging issues, suggesting that they are continuing to expand. These include *affordable housing, homelessness, youth civic engagement, and leadership development.*

The cluster of civil rights issues identified as by the leaders of city organizations as emerging—immigrant rights, race and ethnic group issues, and age-specific issues speaks to a heightened awareness of and concern about population changes in city nei

These were job creation, condition of housing stock, homelessness, affordable housing, and child care. In

list them as “not an issue” (26 and 33 percent respectively).<sup>10</sup> On race, gender and age issues, both metropolitan area organizations and city organizations are more likely than rural and suburban organizations to indicate that these are current issues (see the appendix for specific tables on race, gender, and age tables by organizational geographic areas). The most striking difference is on responses to the race as an issue question; 50 percent of metropolit

number three emerging issue in communities today. Slightly more than one-half (54%) indicate that they are planning on working on the number one emerging issue they mentioned and less than one-half (45%) say they are planning on tackling the number two emerging issue.

### **FACTORS AFFECTING THE EMERGENCE OF ISSUES**

The community leaders who participated in this stud

foster greater understanding and awareness among national policy makers about the complexities associated with the day-to-day realities of life in their communities.

### **Building Organizational and Community Capacity**

Many of the focus group participants could point to successes in their local communities or cities. These activities ranged from addressing the poverty of colonias in New Mexico to supporting a statewide initiative to provide equitable school funding in all of Maryland's communities—whether moderate- or



sort of permeates down to the kids. It's a real problem. And the anxiety now with cuts and war, and general pervasive distancing people from the government is something that is really going to

their communities that they can solve if provided adequate resources. Reacting to a foundation’s rejection of an idea to provide limited language training for Asian immigrant workers—but enough to get them a job that would pay the rent and put food on the table—the director recounted that the foundation did not find the program “innovative enough.” As he put it, funders want community organizations to be on this “sexy [idea] treadmill. You’ve got to change everything; you’ve got to call it something different every year even if its not....”

In another case, a board member of a social service organization providing comprehensive services to low-income residents in a mixed-income neighborhood on Chicago’s northern lake front, spoke of the double-edged sword when a foundation does decide to provide longer-term support for a particular local community. She comments that “adopt-a-community approaches are OK, but then you get tagged as a X foundation community and no one else is going to give you money.” She added that, “there is no accountability on the part of foundations.” This was met with immediate nods of agreement of all focus group participants around the table.

There was also a keen awareness that they operate in an environment where there are many organizations competing for funding. This is true not only when it comes to foundations, but more importantly when it comes to funding from government agencies. A number of survey respondents mentioned the challenge of trying to find money for their programs in an environment of heightened competition for declining resources.

### **Limited Resources**

Many of the local leaders who responded to the survey noted the challenges of trying to address issues in the face of stretched organizational resources more generally. In addition to direct funding, local leaders also brought up the issue of time as a resource—time that was needed in order to get the work of their organization done. This is particularly pressing given all the activities for which local organizations are responsible in the community. Another limited resource was staffing. Echoing the concerns of many small organizations, one local leader wrote that with “only one employee, [we] do not have to time to dedicate to lobby policy makers.” Others cited their small organizational size as a challenge in connection with organizing and sustaining advocacy efforts.

### **Fostering Understanding of Local Issues at the National Level**

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## **More Effective Community-Anchored Policy Research**

In an environment of austerity, there was heightened sensitivity to using government, foundation, and university research and policy development resources more effectively. This was stated a number of ways. First, a San Francisco Bay Area community leader complained that there is a “disconnect” between “think tank staff” engaged in “policy initiatives” and the population that they “are supposedly developing solutions for.” He added that, “it would be nice

housing set-asides to legislatively mandate that a certain proportion of new housing stock be affordable housing. The Human Needs Coordinating Council in New Mexico is a coalition of non-profits throughout the state. According to one community leader in Albuquerque, the Council has been effective in prioritizing issues and lobbying for state legislation. In Maryland a coalition of community organizations was key in the creation of the Thornton Commission, a state body exploring ways of reducing quality and resource inequities among Maryland's public schools. Also in Maryland, Rally for the Region was able to organize over 2,500 people from over 100 organizations to focus on legislative issues ranging from improved public transit to more affordable drug treatment centers.

Although we can point to the many successful past and present coalitions, there is skepticism about some coalitions. One participant in the Chicago focus group bluntly stated that his organization will only get involved in coalitions if there is likely to be a direct payoff for his organization: "It is a matter of self-interest." Smaller community organization resources are too limited to spend staff time on coalitions when there are local community issues to be addressed and needs to be met. Community organizations often feel that the larger organizations controlling many coalitions end up getting more of the resources coming out of the collective work.

Despite the reservations and cautiousness about coalitions, most community leaders did see benefits to coalition work. They saw three kinds of resources potentially coming out of coalitions: policy ideas (policy research, data documenting community needs, and data that can be used in justifying existing programs and activities), legislative initiatives, and additional financing to local communities to address pressing issues. Success in getting new resources into the local communities, typically as the result of new legislation and state expenditures was clearly valued. There were more reservations about policy research alone. As one San Francisco community leader put it "academic ideas" are of less value to communities that the documentation of successful programs and innovations that can increase community capacity to address pressing problems. This further reinforces the potential of collaborative university-community policy research partnerships where community members are involved in defining the research agenda—an agenda that often has been defined by university-based disciplines.

While statewide coalitions typically include rural partners, leaders of rural organizations spoke of the difficulty of creating and maintaining coalitions that help protect their interests. The lack of organizational density in non-metropolitan areas is a significant factor. Rural areas find it difficult to create the kinds of specialized support organizations and coalitions found in metropolitan areas, such as those providing technical assistance for media relations, alternative technology, or computer technical support. Even more basic coalitions—those advocating for affordable housing, better public transportation, or improved investment in public education—are also difficult to sustain in rural areas. One community leader at the Atlanta focus group recognizes the importance of coalitions but laments the lack of such networks in rural areas in her state:

I am from rural South GA and there is nothing there; no advocates. There [isn't] even any [organizational] diversity in rural problems with coalition leadership in each respective area. There is a gap outside the walls of the [Atlanta] Metro area as far as coalitions are concerned, as far as anything is concerned. There definitely needs to be some more activity there. For the sake of getting bills passed, a coalition is critical to effect change. Everyone is understaffed and overworked as far as getting that together, there needs to be from a national level more money for building coalitions.

## CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Examining information from both focus group discussions and survey respondents, community-level organizations identified a number of the challenges facing them in the months and years ahead. Some of these issues are persistent issues that have been present for years; others are new or emerging challenges.

### **Develop a “popular movement”**

A strong theme running through the focus group discussions was the need for more effective grassroots organizing and political organizing that would produce a stronger voice for low-income families and organizations advocating for economic justice issues. It was actually a staff member from a government agency at one of the focus groups who articulated this issue well:

We can complain about that and that is the way it is going to be. We complain about the [corporate] PAC [Political Action Committees], but we don't think about how we can support the politicians who we think can speak for us. We don't put candidates out there, and we don't work on promoting them for public office. We occasionally give politicians the opportunity to come to a groundbreaking. I don't think we are as savvy in the non-profit community about how to gain political support and influence. We hide under the guise that non-profits cannot support politicians, but we are each voters.

This is not to suggest that a popular advocacy movement would supplant work done by grassroots organizations or national organizations, rather it is suggesting the need for a full array of advocacy, organizing, political educational, and research efforts if social change is to be successful. A Chicago government official with a deep personal history of involvement in the civil rights movement recently underscored the frustration that he, as a policy maker, faces when national organizations produce research underscoring growing inequities, but then there is no popular movement to follow up on this and pressure elected officials. Commenting on a Children's Defense Fund report released in May 2003 documenting an increase of 746,000 to 932,000 African-American children living in extreme poverty in only one year between 2000 and 2001 (a 20 percent jump), this local government leader asked “where's the outrage? It is stunning that there is no popular movement” that can capitalize on this research and put pressure on national and local elected officials (Wood 2003).

While there were no specific questions in either the focus groups or the survey on forms of communication among grassroots organizations or between grassroots organizations and regional/statewide/national organizations, the potential of developing more effective communication systems among organizations exist. Recent discussion of organizing tactics within the anti-war movement has highlighted the effectiveness of using computers and even cell phones. Dubbed “smart mobs” by Howard Rheingold, these technologies may be not be accessible to low-income families, but they certainly are accessible to many organizations that could use these to increase grassroots voice. (Rheingold 2002; Pariser 2003) Networks of neighborhood organizations could use such technologies more effectively and national organizations could create better developed two-way communication links to local groups in communicating national initiatives as well as listening to ongoing local needs. One participant in the Baltimore focus group did point to a recent example where a citywide organization had effectively used web-based communications strategies to communicate to a constituency that was largely accessing the information through library-based computers. This is an underdeveloped area, but something that clearly has potential.

## **Addressing Disengagement**

As already implied by some of the focus group participant comments listed above, community resident disengagement from neighborhood life, community institutions, and the political process was a theme running through a significant portion of the discussion. This issue raised by community leaders is

for the entire nation, where local and national organizations are more effectively brought together to address local needs. Increasing the capacity of combined local and national networks and coalitions would represent a social and political resource in this era of scarce resources. An enhanced understanding on the part of both local and national organizations of day-to-day needs and how they link to national trends would bring the holistic perspective that both local and national organizations talk about into better focus.

The hope is that the material contained in this report and the data collected through this research project will be a stimulus for work informed by local community needs and perspectives. The hope is also that there will be continued efforts to collect ongoing information on community perspectives on current and emerging issues. If there is a front line in addressing the real challenges facing low-income families and communities today, it is along the residential blocks of our inner cities, along the struggling retail districts in aging suburban communities, and around quiet town squares in rural America. The success in meeting the needs and challenges identified by leaders and residents living and working on and around these blocks, districts, and town squares is ultimately the true measure of success in providing opportunity for all citizens.





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## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The information for this study was gathered using two complementary research methods. Over a six-week period from mid-March to late April, focus groups were conducted in five different locations: Baltimore, MD; Chicago, IL; San Francisco, CA; Albuquerque, NM; and Atlanta, GA. NNC selected the participants for each group. Overall, 55 individuals were involved, with an average size of 11 participants per session; groups ranged in size from six in Chicago to 17 in Atlanta. Participants were drawn from a variety of local organizations, including community development corporations, local housing groups, faith-based advocacy groups, social service agencies, and economic development organizations. The facilitators for each group were members of the CURL staff and they explored a fixed set of questions with participants.

The second method was a national survey of local organizations. The goal was to obtain approximately 200 completed surveys. Using a list of approximately 8400 names supplied by a selected

number of surveys initially mailed out; based on 1,158 delivered surveys, the overall response rate was slightly less 20 percent. Traditionally in survey research, the expectation is that response rate for surveys should be as close to 100 percent as possible. It has been argued that as the response rate falls, the sample becomes less representative of the larger population under study. A biased sample produces less reliable data. However, recent research suggests that the response rate is unrelated to the accuracy of findings and in fact, low response rates may provide *more* accurate results than higher response rates. (Visser et al 1996). The explanation focused on the characteristics of respondents; as researchers worked harder to contact potential respondents, in order to boost the response rate, they ended by recruiting individuals who were less informed about the topic under study and ended up providing less accurate responses. In the case of this research, while the response rate is low, we are nevertheless confident that the 216 cases reflect a cross-section of NNC membership.

### **Source Organizations for the NNC Master List of Survey Participants**

**AFL-CIO:** List of central labor councils. Because the list was not electronic, NNC selected two councils from each state that had a list of members for inclusion in their master list.

**Council of State Community Development Agencies:** Separate lists of local organizations that are members or recipients of TA/aid provided by the following state chapters: Alaska, Iowa, Massachusetts, Maryland, Nevada, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin.

**Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development:** List of members.

**Catholic Campaign for Human Development:**

**Coalition for Community Schools:** List of members, including educators, youth groups, community service agencies, etc.

**Chicago office of Local Initiatives Support Corporation:** List of local partner organizations.

**Development Training Institute:** List of TA and training recipients, local partners.

**Enterprise Foundation:** List of local offices and TA and training recipients.

**Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta:** List of local aid recipients/local partners?

**Housing Assistance Council:** List of local rural community development and housing organizations.

**Metropolitan Housing Coalition:** Mailing list for the Louisville area.

**National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials:** List of local/regional housing authorities.

**National Housing Conference:** Mailing list with a mix of local and national housing groups.

**National Neighborhood Coalition:** Membership list

**Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation:** List of local community development groups and recipients of TA and training.

**National Trust for Historic Preservation:** Mailing list of local preservation/community development groups and Main Street program officers as well as some national organizations.

**Sustainable Racine:** Regional group working on planning/sustainability in Racine, WI.

**U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:** List of Catholic dioceses in the United States plus local Catholic social justice/community service organizations.

## APPENDIX 2

### ISSUES IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Percentage of respondents indicating that an issue is one that they are currently facing, one that is emerging, or one that is not an issue (N=216)<sup>12</sup>

Issue	Currently an issue	Emerging as an issue	Not an Issue	Don't Know or Missing
<b>Community Development Issues</b>				
Banking and lending	38%	18%	33%	11%
Displacement of low income families	41	24	26	9
Gentrification	21	25	39	15
Community safety	48	21	22	9
Access to transportation	43	20	28	9
Transportation as a development tool	27	26	28	19
Land use and zoning	50	18	16	17
<b>Revitalization Issues</b>				
Residential neighborhood revitalization	55	18	19	8
Commercial revitalization	54	20	16	9
Addressing concentrations of poverty	51	19	18	12
<b>Jobs and the Economy</b>				
Commercial development or redevelopment	61	18	12	9
Job creation	66	12	14	8
Labor issues	37	17	33	13
<b>Housing issues</b>				
Fair housing	41	15	33	10
Condition of housing stock	64	12	14	10
Homelessness	60	19	12	8
Affordable housing	78	11	4	7
<b>Environment/Energy/Transportation</b>				
Transportation	45	21	23	11
Energy	24	24	36	16
Environment	35	23	30	12
<b>Government Issues</b>				
Responsiveness to local communities	42	19	26	13
Regional equity	41	22	22	14
Tax equity	35	23	26	16
Homeland security	16	26	42	17

<sup>12</sup> For “current issues,” cells that are shaded represent those issues identified as current issues by 50 percent or more of the respondents. For “emerging issues,” cells that are shaded represent those issues identified as emerging issues by 25 percent or more of the respondents.

**APPENDIX 2**

**ISSUES IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, continued**

Issue	Currently an issue	Emerging as an issue	Not an Issue	Don't know or Missing
<b>Civil Rights Interests</b>				
Disability issues	24%	22%	35%	18%
Immigrant rights	23	18	42	16
Race and ethnic group issues	39	24	28	8
Gender issues	19	13	51	17
Age-specific issues	20	21	41	18

**APPENDIX 3**  
**ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY 50 PERCENT OF MORE OF LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERS, BY**  
**GEOGRAPHICAL AREA**

Central city community issues	Suburban community issues	Metropolitan area issues	Rural community issues
Condition of housing stock (81%)	Affordable housing (72%)	Affordable housing (92%)	
Education (80%)	Health care (65%)	Homelessness (81%)	
Commercial development (79%)	Job creation (50%)	Education (79%)	
Affordable Housing (78%)	Prescription drug reform (50%)	Job Creation (73%)	
Community safety (76%)	Education (50%)	Land use/zoning (72%)	
Residential revitalization (76%)		Condition of housing stock (71%)	
Job creation (76%)		Health care (69%)	
Commercial revitalization (71%)		Commercial development (64%)	
Addressing poverty (67%)		Addressing poverty (64%)	
Homelessness (63%)		Residential revitalization (63%)	
Government Responsiveness to local communities (63%)		Child care (63%)	
Welfare reform (63%)		Community Safety (62%)	
Childcare (63%)		Commercial revitalization (60%)	
Youth engagement (59%)		Displacement of low-income families (57%)	
Race (53%)		Transportation (57%)	
Health care (57%)		Welfare reform (55%)	
Land use (52%)		Access to transportation (54%)	
Leadership development (52%)			
Labor issues (51%)			





<b>Transportation as a Development Tool</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*
Currently an issue	25%	17%	38	36	24%
Emerging as an issue	30	39	18	21	37
Not an issue	37	39	27	29	21
Don't Know	9	6	17	14	18
(N)	(57)	(18)	(60)	(28)	(38)

<b>Land Use and Zoning</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*
Currently an issue	52%	35%	72%	44	50
Emerging as an issue	16	47	12	22	24
Not an issue	21	12	8	26	21
Don't Know	11	6	7	7	5
(N)	(56)	(17)	(57)	(27)	(38)

### **REVITALIZATION ISSUES**

<b>Residential neighborhood revitalization</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*
Currently an issue	76%	22%	63%	38%	56%
Emerging as an issue	8	28	16	31	28
Not an issue	15	50	16	28	14
Don't Know	0	0	5	3	3
(N)	(59)	(18)	(62)	(29)	(36)



<b>Homelessness</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*
Currently an issue	63%	44%	81%	33%	72%
Emerging as an issue	25	22	11	48	8
Not an issue	10	28	7	19	19

## GOVERNMENT ISSUES

<b>Responsiveness to Local Communities</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*
Currently an issue	63%	39%	52%	21%	28%
Emerging as an issue	16	22	15	31	28
Not an issue	19	39	25	45	31
Don't Know	2	0	8	3	14
(N)	(57)	(18)	(61)	(29)	(36)

<b>Regional Equity</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*
Currently an issue	48%	33%	53%	29%	38%
Emerging as an issue	24	28	23	25	22
Not an issue	19	39	14	39	27

<b>Immigrant Rights</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*
Currently an issue	22%	11%	36%	14%	24%
Emerging as an issue	26	6	20	25	13
Not an issue	40	78	33	57	47
Don't Know	12	6	12	4	16
(N)	(58)	(18)	(61)	(28)	(38)

<b>Race and Ethnic Group Issues</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*
Currently an issue	52%	22%	50%	21%	34%
Emerging as an issue	27	17	19	38	29
Not an issue	20	56	27	41	26
Don't Know	0	6	3	0	10
(N)	(59)	(18)	(62)	(29)	(38)

<b>Gender Issues</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*
Currently an issue	30%	6%	22%	11%	16%
Emerging as an issue	10	6	18	15	19
Not an issue	54	76	45	74	49
Don't Know	5	12	14	0	16
(N)	(57)	(17)	(62)	(27)	(37)

<b>Age-specific Issues</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*
Currently an issue	25%	18%	24%	18%	19%
Emerging as an issue	26	18	23	29	14
Not an issue	42	65	31	54	54
Don't Know	7	0	23	0	14
(N)	(57)	(17)	(62)	(28)	(37)

## **OTHER IMPORTANT COMMUNITY ISSUES**

<b>Access to Technology</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*
Currently an issue	42%	0%	30%	31%	29%
Emerging as an issue	28	38	33	21	43
Not an issue	30	63	27	41	19
Don't Know	0	0	10	7	10
(N)	(43)	(8)	(30)	(29)	(21)

<b>Criminal Justice and Legal Issues</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*
Currently an issue	49%	17%	47%	17%	40%
Emerging as an issue	19	31	27	31	15
Not an issue	23	41	23	41	25
Don't Know	9	10	3	10	20
(N)	(43)	(8)	(30)	(29)	(20)

<b>Prison Reform</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*
Currently an issue	38%	17%	30%	7%	17%
Emerging as an issue	10	17	25	17	22
Not an issue	40	67	38	66	44
Don't Know	12	0	8	10	17
(N)	(58)	(18)	(61)	(29)	(36)

<b>Youth Civic Engagement</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*
Currently an issue	59%	11%	41%	34%	27%
Emerging as an issue	28	44	26	28	32
Not an issue	12	39	20	31	22
Don't Know	2	6	13	7	19
(N)	(58)	(18)	(61)	(29)	(37)

<b>Leadership Development</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*

<b>Welfare Reform</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*
Currently an issue	63%	17%	55%	45%	63%
Emerging as an issue	7	33	14	31	5
Not an issue	23	44	23	21	18
Don't Know	7	6	8	3	13
(N)	(57)	(18)	(62)	(29)	(38)

<b>Food and Nutrition</b>					
	City	Suburbs	Metro	Rural	Unspecified*
Currently an issue	47%	11%	45%	30%	40%
Emerging as an issue	19	28	23	20	16
Not an issue	26	56	20	43	22



**APPENDIX 5**

**THE PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS INDICATING AN ISSUES WAS ONE OF THE TOP THREE CURRENT AND EMERGING ISSUES IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

<b>CURRENT ISSUES</b>	<b>Number 1 current issue</b>	<b>Number 2 current issue</b>	<b>Number 3 current issue</b>	<b>Total responses for issue</b>
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