

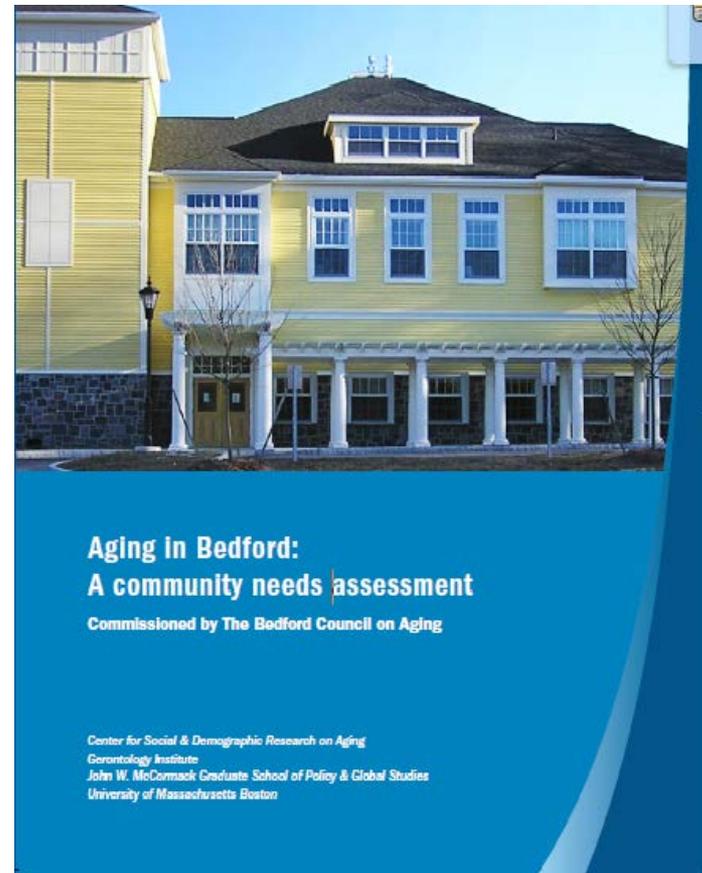
# Aging in Bedford: A community needs assessment

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Caitlin Coyle, PhD  
Research Fellow, Assistant Professor  
Gerontology Institute  
University of Massachusetts Boston

# Outline:

- ❑ Scope of the Bedford community needs assessment study
- ❑ Methods of investigation
- ❑ Key Findings
- ❑ Key Recommendations



# Scope of the Bedford Community needs assessment study

- ❑ To investigate and document current and future needs and preferences of Bedford's older residents. Content of the assessment included:
  - ❑ Bedford COA
  - ❑ features of the community more broadly

# METHODS

- ❑ Demographic Profile
  - ❑ U.S Census Bureau
  - ❑ The American Community Survey (ACS)
- ❑ Resident mail survey
  - ❑ All residents age 55+
  - ❑ 1,560 residents responded. Response rate of 34%
    - ❑ We heard from 15% age 55-59, 34% 60-69, 29% for those ages 70-79 and 22% who are age 80+)
    - ❑ Among survey respondents age 80 and older, 20% live at the VA (n=5) or Carleton Willard (n=66).
- ❑ 4 Focus groups
  - ❑ 2 community stakeholders
  - ❑ 1 resident
  - ❑ 1 Town Departments

# METHODS (cont'd)

## □ 4 key-informant interviews

- ▶ Town Administrator
- ▶ 2 Board of Selectmen
- ▶ Chief of Police
- ▶ Chief of Fire

## ▶ Peer community comparison

- ▶ Acton
- ▶ Lincoln
- ▶ Burlington
- ▶ Lexington
- ▶ Concord
- ▶ Carlisle

## ▶ Review of existing reports

# KEY FINDINGS

# Currently 1 in 5 Bedford residents are age 60+

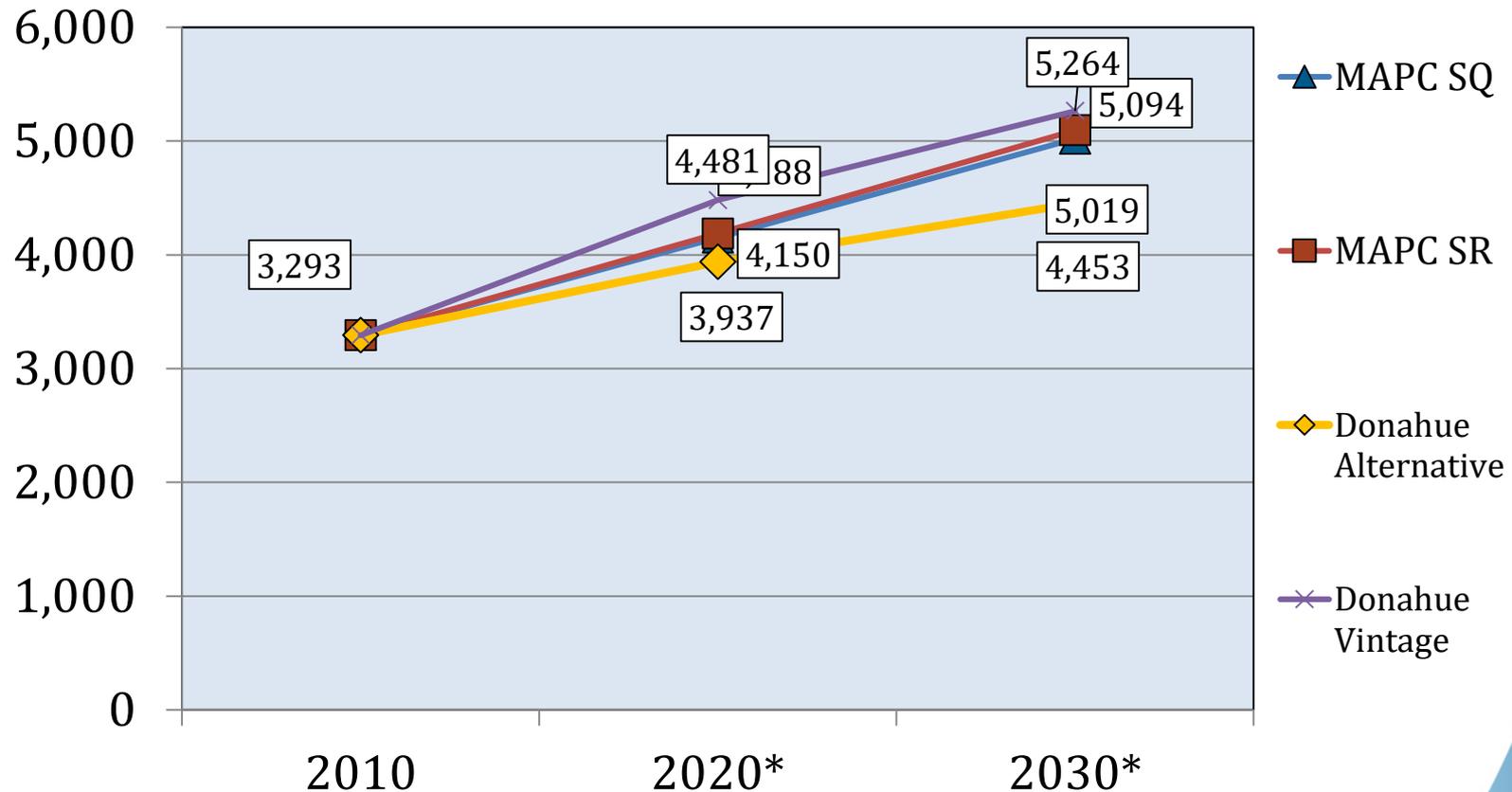
**Table 1.** Number and percentage distribution of Bedford's population by age category, 2016

Age Category	Number	Percentage
<b>Under age 18</b>	3,499	25%
<b>Age 18 to 49</b>	5,066	36%
<b>Age 50 to 59</b>	2,465	18%
<b>Age 60 to 79</b>	2,144	15%
<b>Age 80 and older</b>	914	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,088</b>	<b>100%</b>

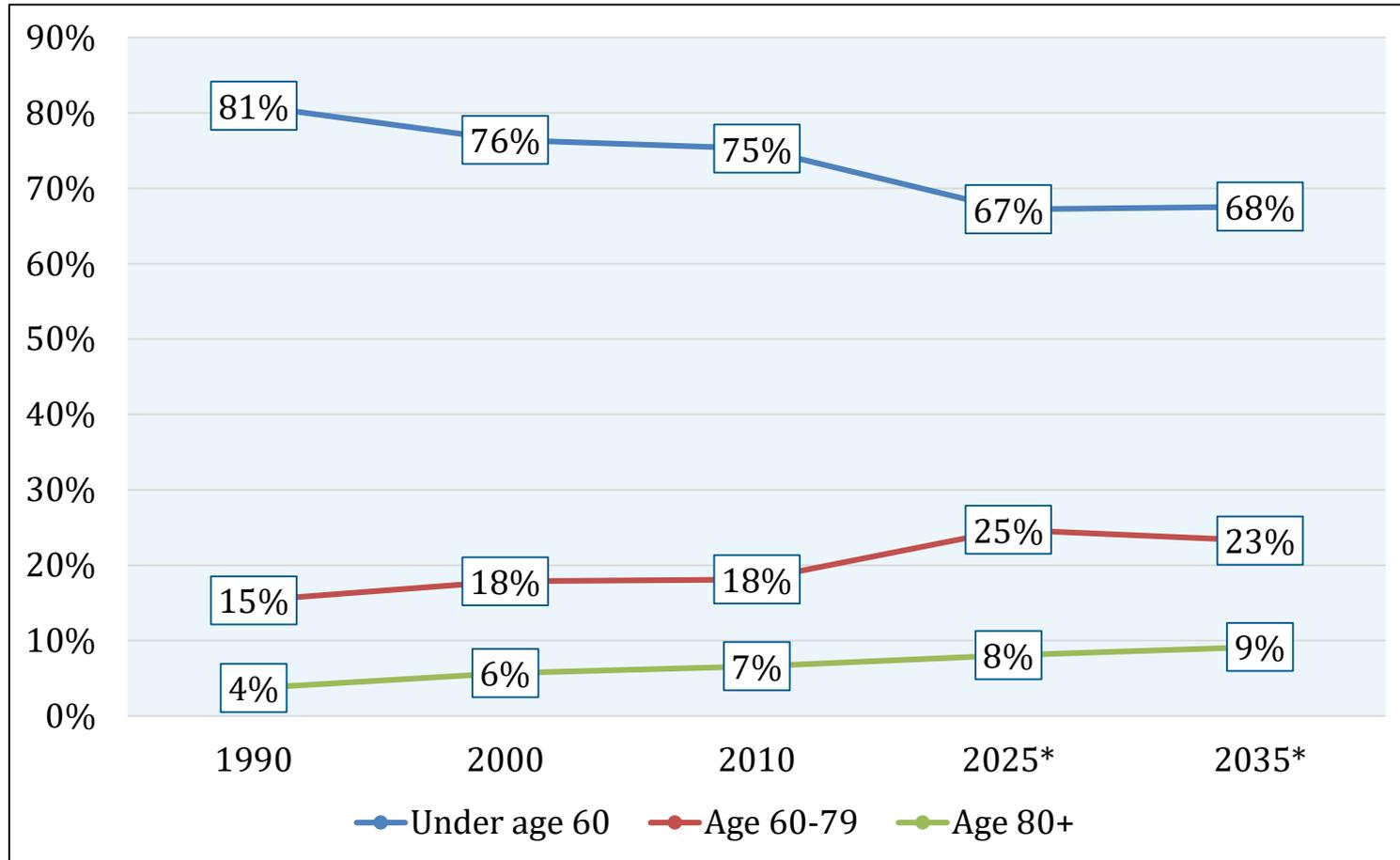
Source: American Community Survey, 2012-2016, Table B01001. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

# Bedford's Senior Population is Expected to Continue Growing

Number of residents age 60 and older 2010 with projections to 2020\* and 2030\*



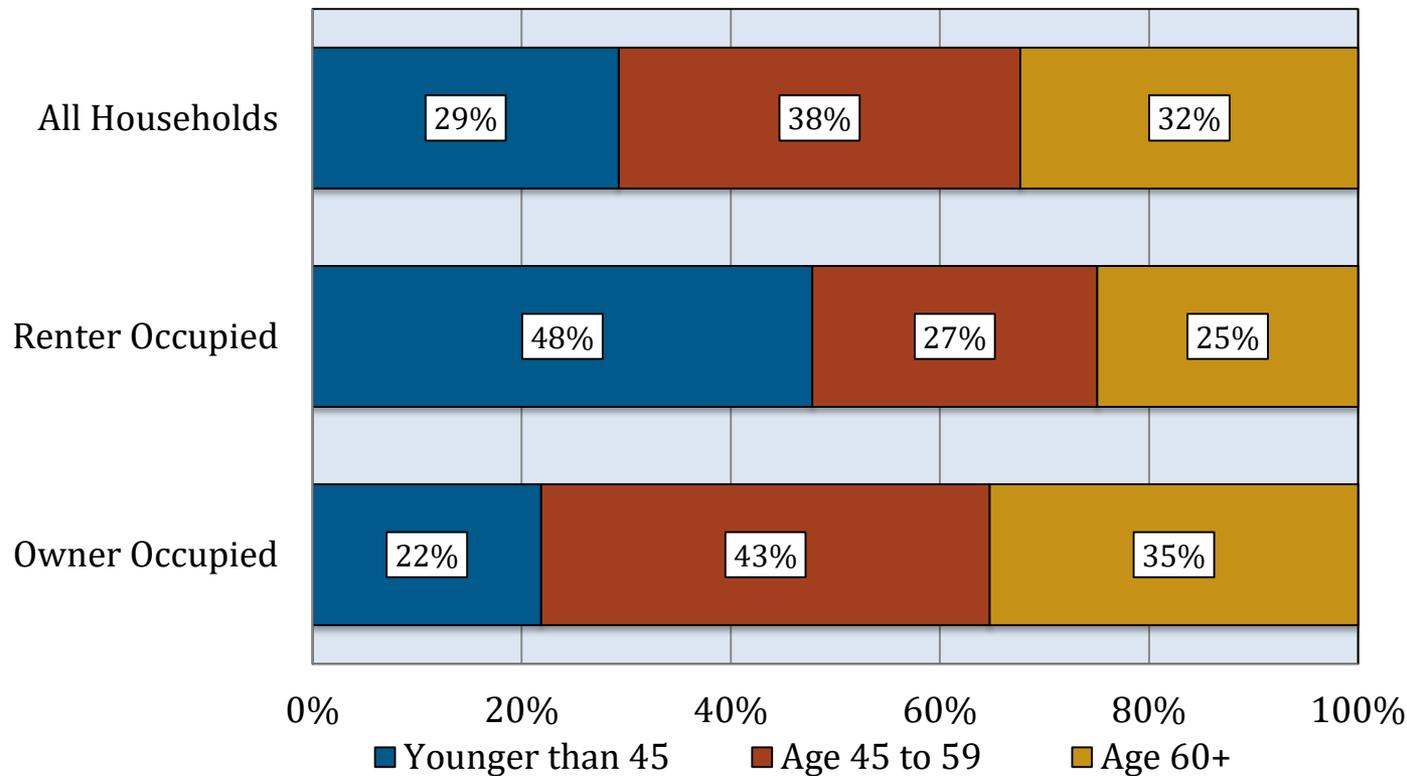
# By 2030, 1 in 3 Bedford residents will be age 60+



Source: Population figures for 1990-2010 are from the U.S. Census, 1990 thru 2010.

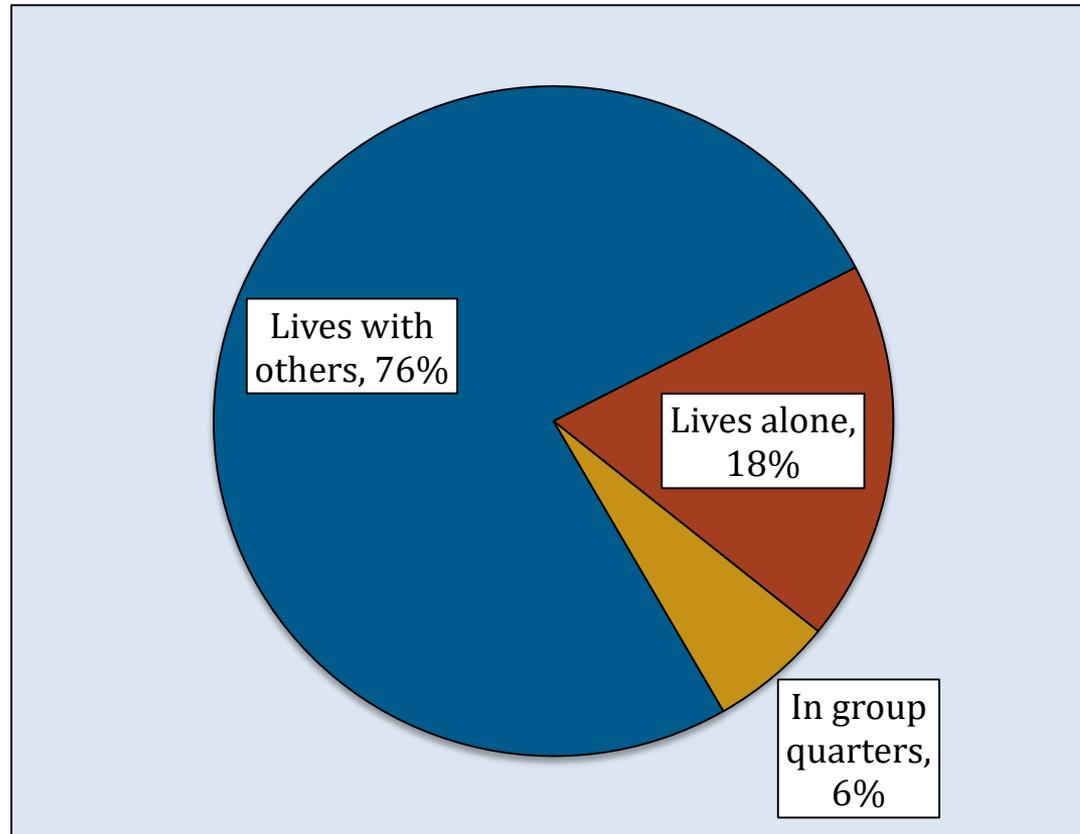
\* Figures for 2025 and 2035 are the Vintage Population Projections generated by the Donahue Institute, University of Massachusetts: <http://pep.donahue-institute.org/>

# A large portion of homes in Bedford are owned by residents aged 60+



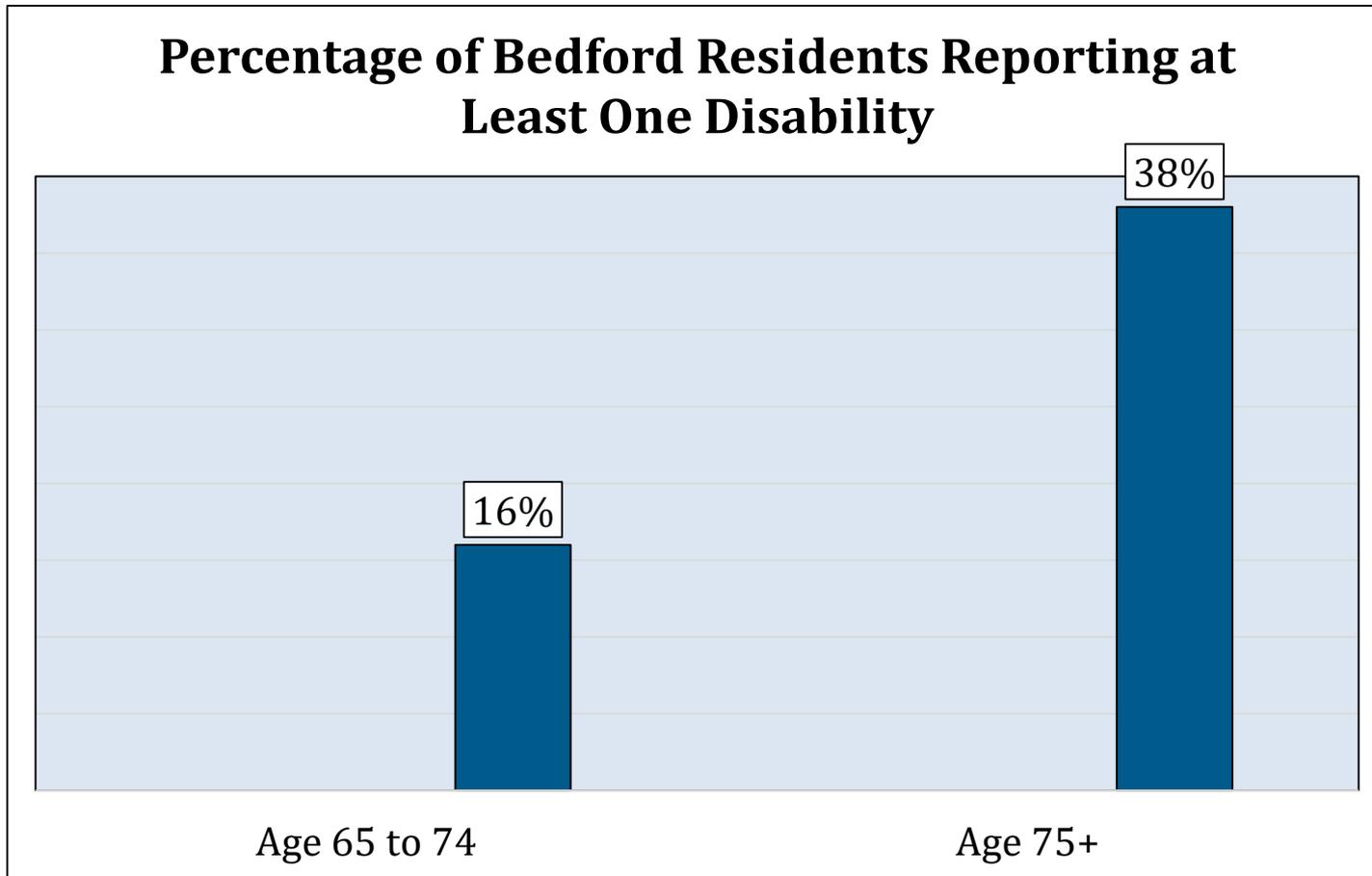
Source: American Community Survey, 2012-2016, Tables B25007.

# Nearly 1 out of 5 Bedford residents aged 65+ live alone



Source: American Community Survey, 2012-2016, Table B09020.

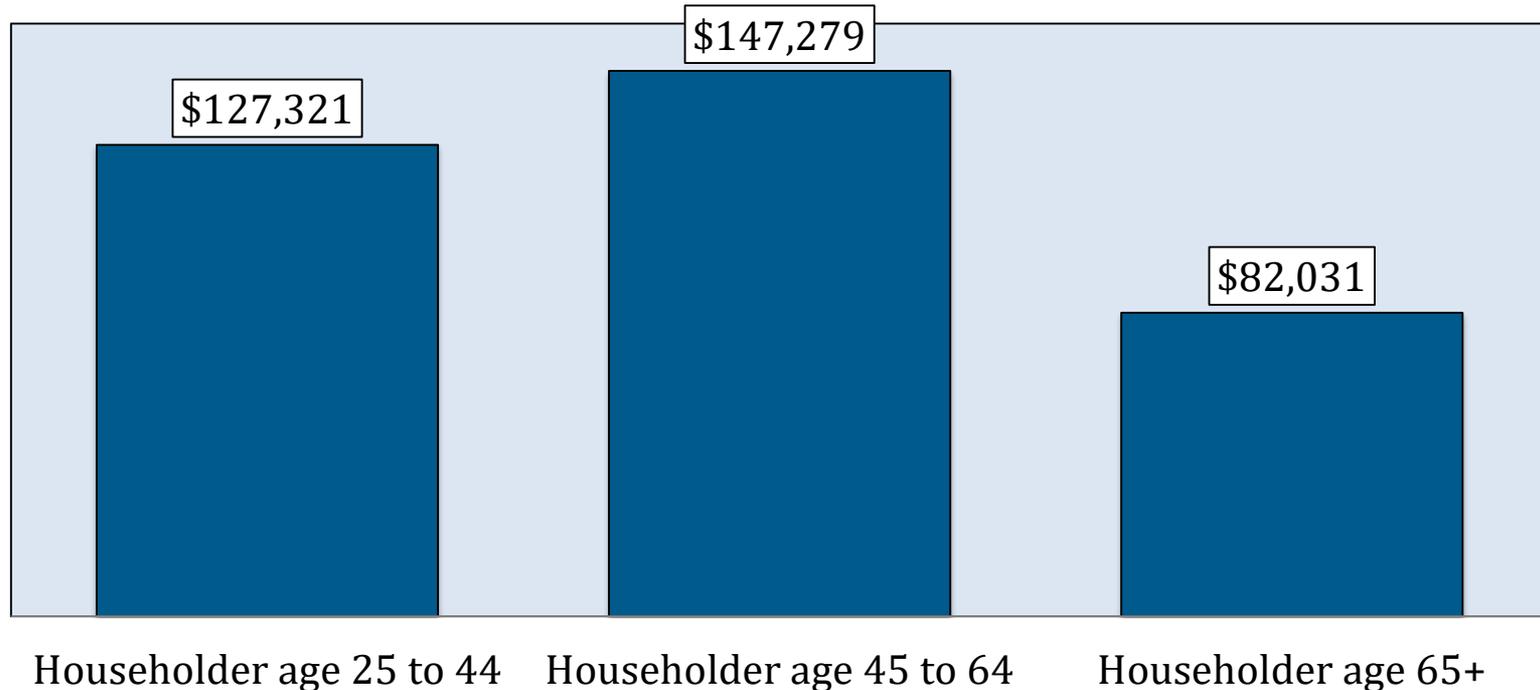
# Risk of acquiring disability more than doubles after age 75



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2012-2016, Table B18101.

# Bedford Seniors, particularly women, are economically disadvantaged compared to younger residents

Median household income in Bedford by age and living situation of householder (in 2016 inflation-adjusted dollars)



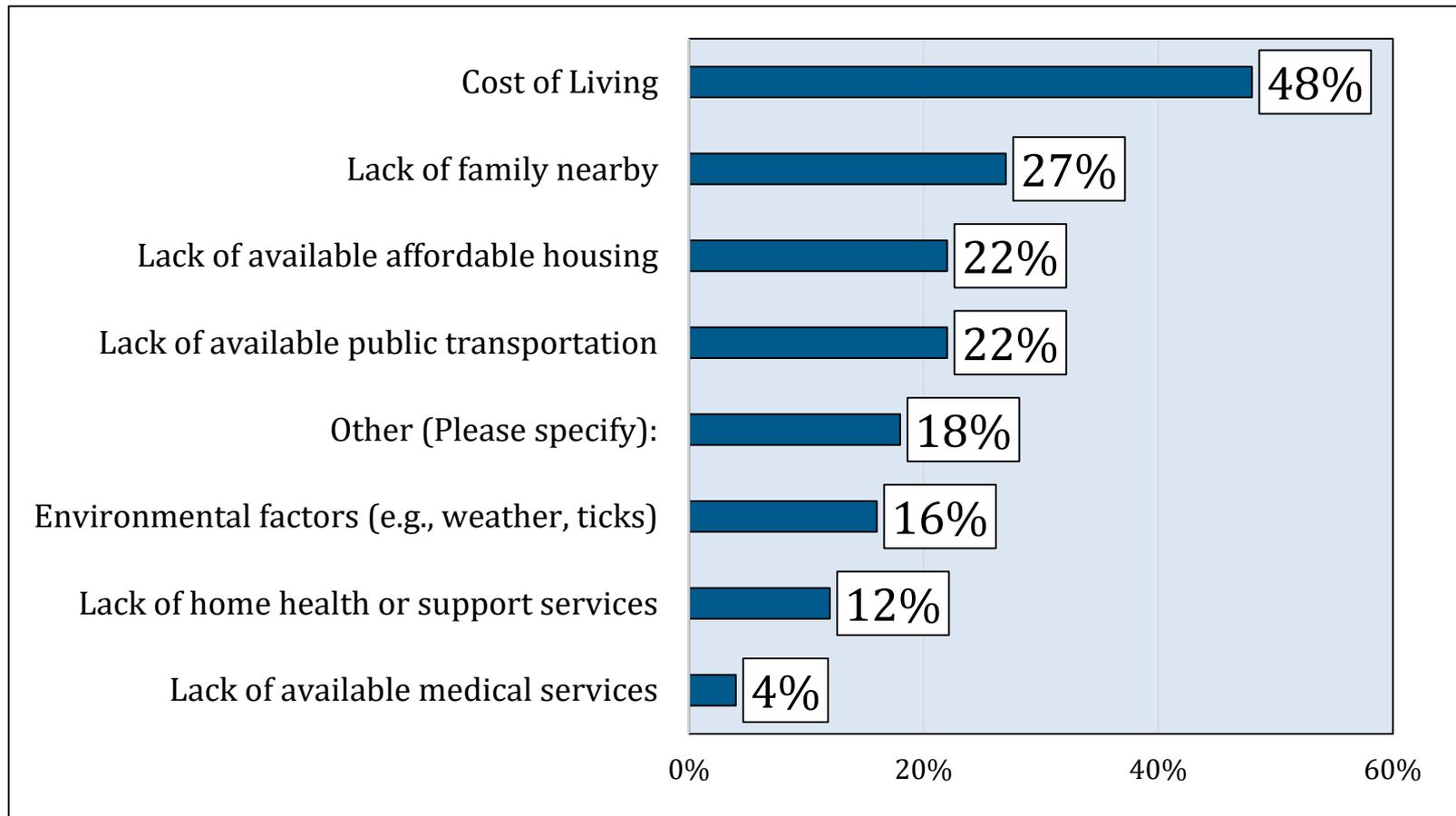
Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2012-2016, Tables B19049 and B19215.

# SURVEY RESULTS

# Bedford's seniors are committed to aging in Bedford

- ▶ Two-thirds (61%) of survey respondents reported having lived in Bedford for more than 25 years;
- ▶ 53% report that it is very important to them to remain in Bedford as they get older.
- Most survey respondents (68%) report that they *always* feel safe in Bedford.

# Cost of Living, lack of family nearby, affordable available housing and access to public transportation are concerns for the future

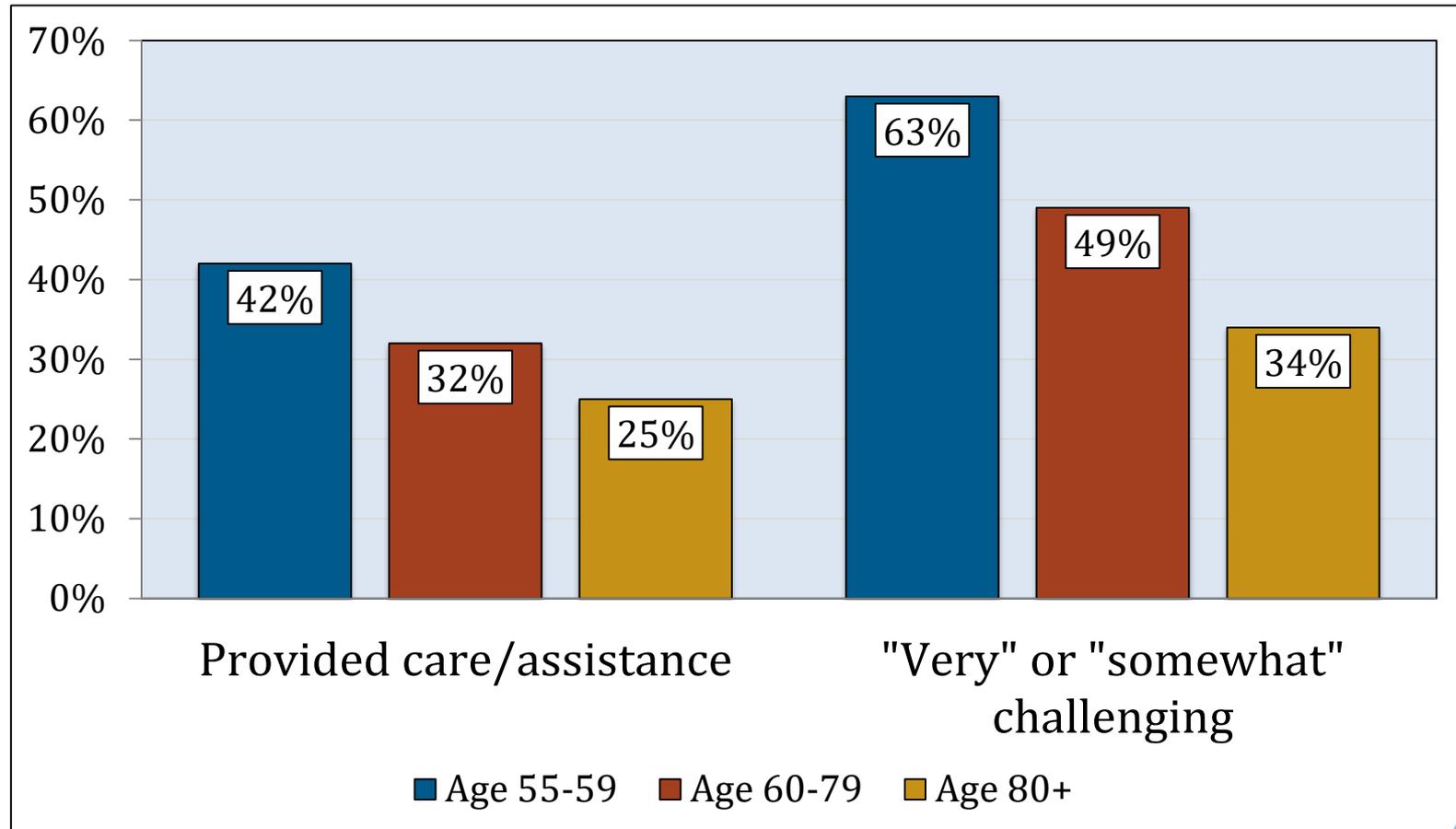


Note: Participants could choose all options that applied, therefore totals by age category do not equal 100%.

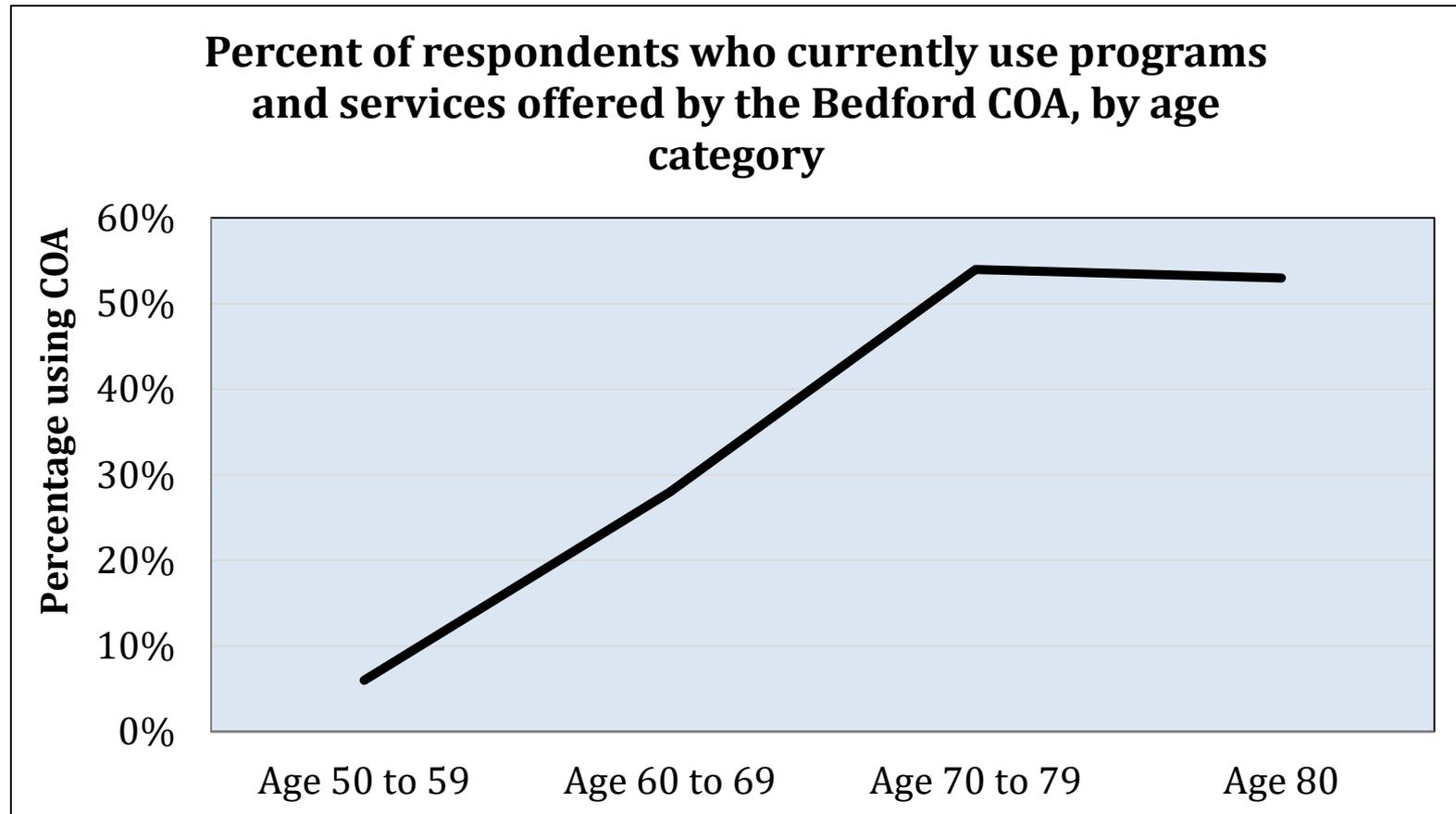
# Availability and adaptability of housing stock are important housing needs in Bedford

- 52% of homeowners responding to the survey indicate that their homes need modifications. A portion (9%) of these residents are unable to afford these necessary changes
- 29% of homeowners report that their homes need repairs and of them, some (7%) are unable to afford these repairs
- 32% of seniors responding to the survey say that if a change in health or physical ability required a move, they would seek out **smaller single-family homes in Bedford.**
  - About another third (29%) of respondents would prefer **housing with supports** (e.g., senior independent living or assisted living communities).

# One-third of survey respondents report providing care to a person who is frail or disabled



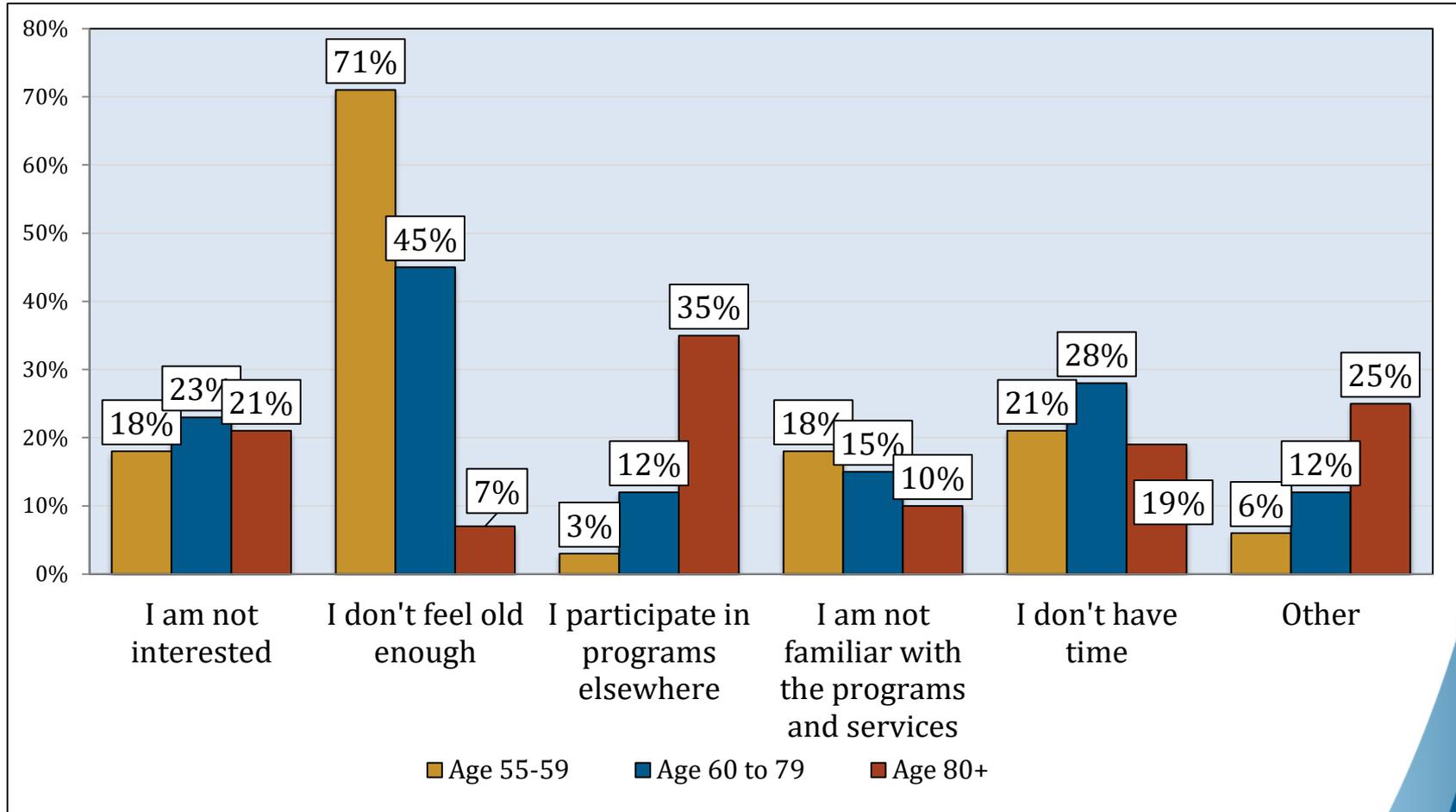
# A wide range of ages participate at the Bedford COA



Source: Community survey

Note: 71 respondents live at Carleton-Willard or the VA (n=71). Among them, only 30 report participating at the COA.

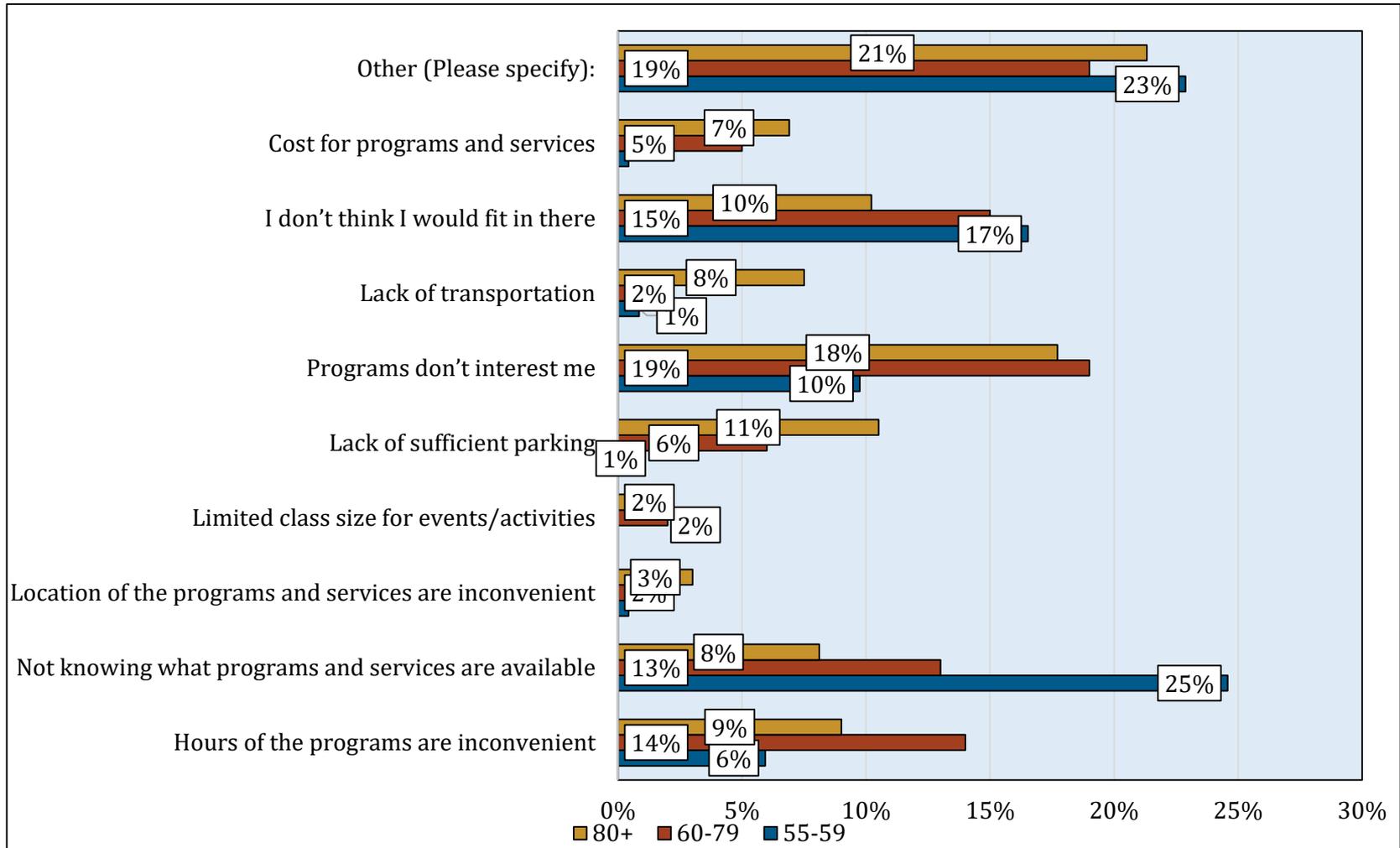
# Lack of time and interest are primary deterrents to participating at the Bedford COA



\*Respondents could choose all that apply; therefore, columns do not add to 100%

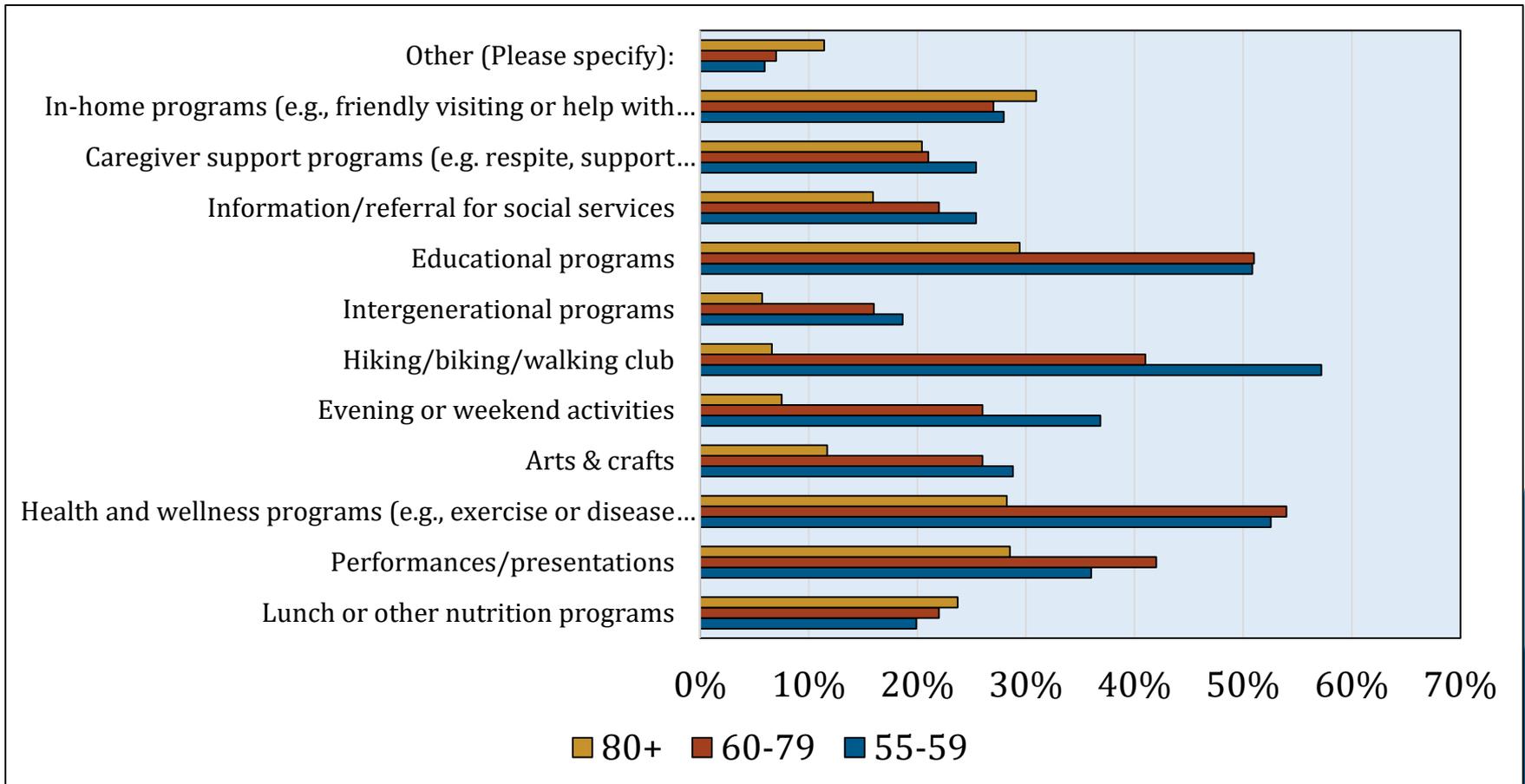
\*Only includes respondents who answered "Never" on question 33

# Not knowing what programs and services are available at the Bedford COA is perceived as a barrier to participation



\*Respondents could choose all that apply; therefore, columns do not add to 100%

# More than half of respondents age 55-79 reported interest in future programming that includes physical activity, health and wellness, or educational opportunities.



\*Respondents could choose all that apply; therefore, columns do not add to 100%

# Despite having adequate space, the Bedford COA operates the smallest tax work-off program and has one of the smallest staffs compared to peers

Town	Senior Center Space Square Feet	Adequate space? *	Staff FT/PT	# of Tax Work Off Program Positions *	% programs run by volunteer*
Bedford	14,000	Yes	3/3	Less than 10	50-74%
Acton	22,000 (about a ¼ used for other offices)	No	1/6	Less than 10	50-74%
Lincoln	7,300 (only use about 4,800)	No	1/3	21-30	50-74%
Burlington	NP (human services center)	No	3/6	Unlimited slots	25-49%
Lexington	34,600 (community center, no dedicated space)	Yes	2/6	31-40	25-49%
Concord	12,000	No	8/9	10-20	25-49%
Carlisle	NA	No	2/12	21-30	1-24%

\*Retrieved from MCOA database; NA=Not applicable; NP=Not provided

# Recommendations

- ▶ Plan for growth of the older population in Bedford. The Bedford COA as well as Town Departments and organizations operating in Bedford will be impacted by a growing older population. Adequate planning will require each to evaluate what the shifting demographic means for their operations, and how best to respond.
  - ▶ **For example, consider a strategic planning process that would include plans for staffing, space, parking, and programming as it relates to the future seniors of Bedford.**
- ▶ Strengthen information dissemination about transportation options available in Bedford.
  - ▶ **For example, pursue grant funding to expand marketing and outreach for the existing transportation options in Bedford (e.g., the DASH) or to host training sessions on the use of concierge transportation options like Uber, Lyft or GoGoGrandparent.**

*“the only thing I really lack is transportation of my convenience and a means of getting to areas beyond Bedford”*

# Recommendations (cont'd)

- ▶ Promote alternative housing options for aging in place in Bedford like home-sharing or co-housing. Connect residents with information about these options and support advocacy efforts to adjust zoning regulations that would allow for these alternative housing options to be taken-up by seniors in Bedford.
  - ▶ **For example, convene an “Aging in Place Workshop” to educate the public about creative ways to use their home equity to age in place as well as about alternative housing models like home-sharing.**

# Recommendations (cont'd)

- ▶ Develop information to share with community members about home modifications that can make their homes safer to live in as they age.
  - ▶ **For example, work with community partners to develop a resource of local handyman services and information about financial support for such modifications.**

*“[I’m concerned about...] being able to find capable and trustworthy people to help with household and personal care”*

*“Physically our house will be difficult. It requires stairs to get to the main floor. ”*

# Recommendations (cont'd)

- ▶ Enhance existing cross-departmental and public-private relationships, and encourage the creation of more collaborations, especially relating to supporting vulnerable residents of the community.
  - ▶ **For example, facilitate a quarterly networking event for local organizations. These events would include community education about the programs and services available through the Bedford COA but also provide a mechanism by which community stakeholders can stay connected around issues facing seniors in Bedford.**

*“[as a real estate agent] If I come across a senior who is living in less than ideal conditions, who can I call?”*

# Recommendations (cont'd)

- ▶ Strengthen community knowledge about the senior services available to residents in Bedford.
  - ▶ **For example, consider creating an incentive for “first-time” COA participants or a similar “welcome committee” at the Bedford COA to ensure that new participants have a pleasant first experience.**
- ▶ Expand senior activities in Bedford, focus program expansion to include health and wellness programs, exercise classes, educational opportunities, and social programs for residents who may be homebound or frail.
  - ▶ **For example, explore the use of technology (e.g., phone or other mobile devices) to include homebound residents in existing programs through video technology, or making “friendly visits” by telephone.**

“Because of my lack of familiarity with the COA, I think of the COA as blue haired ladies sitting around the card table playing bridge.”

# Recommendations (cont'd)

- ▶ Consider hosting additional educational programs related to employment and/or retirement planning.
  - ▶ For example, to engage older residents of Bedford who are still working consider hosting local financial planners and banks to educate the community about saving for retirement.
- ▶ Expand caregiver support opportunities in Bedford.
  - ▶ For example, consider hosting a “Caregiver’s Night Out” to provide residents of Bedford who might be caring for a spouse, parent, or grandparent to enjoy a night of entertainment. Explore partnerships with area adult day programs to provide respite care during the event.

*“[I would like to see programs for working seniors: financial management, retirement transitioning, excursions on weekends, social events that would be likely to include working folks.”*

# Recommendations (cont'd)

- ▶ Strengthen opportunities to connect older residents with existing resources to improve economic security in Bedford. Advocate for the creation of new resources and programs to support economic security of seniors in Bedford.
  - ▶ **For example, consider ways to make the tax work-off program more widely available to residents of Bedford (e.g., adjust eligibility criteria to include residents age 55 and older or raise the income requirements).**

*“Property taxes and water and sewage fees: These are increasing at rates well above inflation rates. Relief should be provided to seniors living on fixed and limited incomes!”*

**Thank you!**

<b>Rating of “importance to you or your family”, % responding “Very Important” or “Important”</b>	<b><u>COA Participants</u></b>	<b><u>Non-participants</u></b>
<b>Exercise classes (e.g., yoga, Tai Chi)</b>	30%	24%
<b>Physical health and wellness clinics (e.g., Blood pressure, hearing, or foot care clinics)</b>	31%	26%
<b>Professional services (e.g., health insurance counseling, tax, legal, or financial)</b>	31%	22%
<b>Educational opportunities (e.g., book club, computer classes or lectures)</b>	32%	21%
<b>Transportation</b>	24%	25%
<b>Trips/Outings</b>	29%	20%
<b>Fix It Shop</b>	30%	19%
<b>Social or recreational activities (e.g., pool, parties, crafts, gardening, painting)</b>	25%	19%
<b>Volunteer opportunities</b>	19%	19%
<b>Social and emotional support (e.g., phone calls, office visits, emails, home visits)</b>	14%	18%
<b>Nutrition programs (e.g., lunches or home-delivered meals)</b>	16%	18%
<b>Support groups (e.g., caregiver, diabetic, or falls prevention group)</b>	17%	17%
<b>Evening programs</b>	18%	14%
<b>Senior Employment Program</b>	12%	15%
<b>Assistance with local or state applications (e.g., fuel assistance, SNAP)</b>	13%	17%