

*TallahasseeVoices*  
**Survey on Affordable Housing Ordinance<sup>1</sup>**

By a 2 to 1 margin, Leon County residents do not want local government to require affordable housing in all neighborhoods. The City Commission has been dealing with the issue of affordable housing recently, but has yet to take action on the issue. Based on community opinion, the City Commission should not attempt to force all developers, and hence all neighborhoods, to include affordable housing.

Three in ten residents (31%) maintain that all developments should contain affordable housing, yet 61% of Leon County residents believe that affordable housing should be available somewhere in the community, not necessarily in their neighborhoods. Majorities of African Americans (55%), low-income residents (51%), and young residents (56%), that is, the types of residents who are under represented in the *Tallahassee Voices* Internet Panel, agree that affordable housing should be available somewhere, just not in all developments.

Likewise, 63% of local residents claim that government has no business enforcing where people live, while only 29% of local residents want government to pass laws that ensure that there is affordable housing in all developments. Majorities of African Americans (61%), low-income residents (58%), and young residents (60%) agree that government should not regulate where affordable housing is located.

While part of a draft of the City of Tallahassee Inclusionary (affordable) Housing Ordinance laments housing price differentials across different parts of the community,<sup>2</sup> 75% of local residents want housing prices to be set by the market place, not by government intervention. Only 21% of residents believe that it is detrimental to the community to have much greater housing prices in some parts of the community than in others. Majorities of African Americans (70%), young residents (71%), and low-income residents (64%) think that housing prices should be set based on what people are willing and able to pay regardless of how great differences in average home prices are across the community.

By a 2 to 1 margin, local residents support the concept of the City Commission encouraging developers to build housing for families making less than the median household income. Yet the results change 180 degrees when the concept is changed slightly to include affordable housing in **all** neighborhoods, as 60% do not want the City Commission to pass an ordinance providing for affordable housing in **all** neighborhoods and developments. The ethnic/racial composition of the

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<sup>1</sup> Results are from a February 2005 *Tallahassee Voices* Internet Survey Panel, a pro bono project jointly sponsored by Kerr & Downs Research and the *Tallahassee Democrat*. The panel contains 2007 local residents; 774 responded to the Affordable Housing Survey. The panel under represents minorities (10%), younger residents (28%) and low-income households (21%).

**To become a panel member, go to [www.tallahasseevoices.com](http://www.tallahasseevoices.com).**

<sup>2</sup> Language from the December 15, 2004 Draft Proposed Ordinance states, “WHEREAS, according to the *Tallahassee Democrat*, “Boomtown for Builders,” March 7, 2004, and the Tallahassee Board of Realtors, this geographic trend of high-priced housing on the “northeast” and the lowest-priced housing on the “southside” continues to date, with the average closing price of a single family house in the northeast part of the community in 2003 being well over \$200,000 while the average in the southwest being under \$100,000”

*Tallahassee Voices* Internet Panel had an impact on responses to this question as 43% of African Americans support the affordable housing ordinance compared with 25% of whites. Likewise, 40% of low-income residents support the ordinance, while 16% of high-income residents support it.

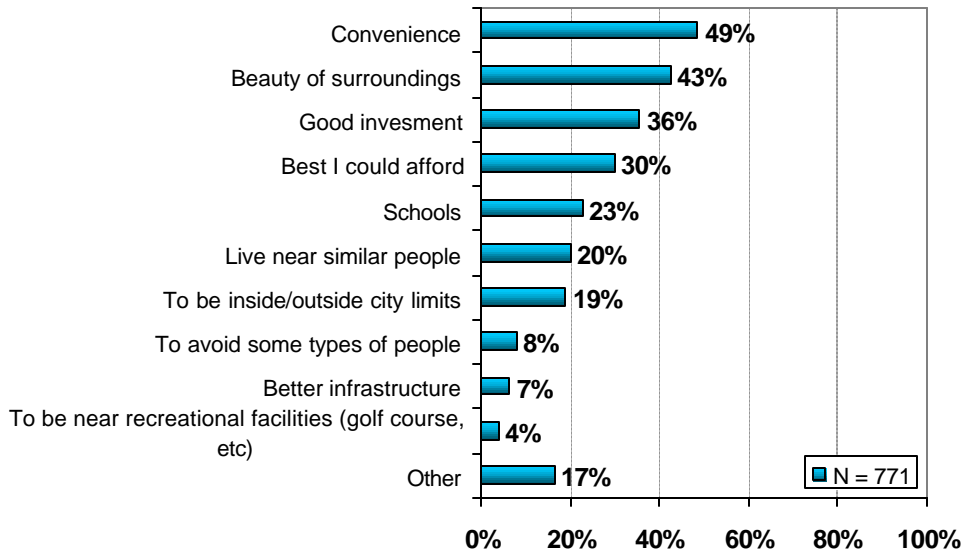
In the draft ordinance, developers have an opportunity to buy their way out of providing affordable housing by paying a fee of approximately \$2,500 per housing unit built. Nearly half of local residents (47%) think the affordable housing ordinance should not be passed because it will increase the price of housing in developments that do not contain affordable housing. Just over one in three local residents (36%) think an affordable housing ordinance is necessary to ensure diversity. African Americans and whites have diametrically opposed views on this question as 56% of African Americans support an affordable housing ordinance because it will help ensure neighborhood diversity despite an increase in house prices. Only 34% of whites support the ordinance on the grounds of neighborhood diversity if there is a concomitant increase in house prices.

The City draft ordinance contains several provisions to encourage developers to build at least 10% affordable housing units in each development including the following:

- ?? 25% increase in density permitted by zoning, thus enabling developers to earn more return on their investments
- ?? More lenient restrictions on setbacks and lot size requirements
- ?? More lenient restrictions on visual buffers
- ?? Expedited development review process
- ?? More lenient transportation concurrency provisions

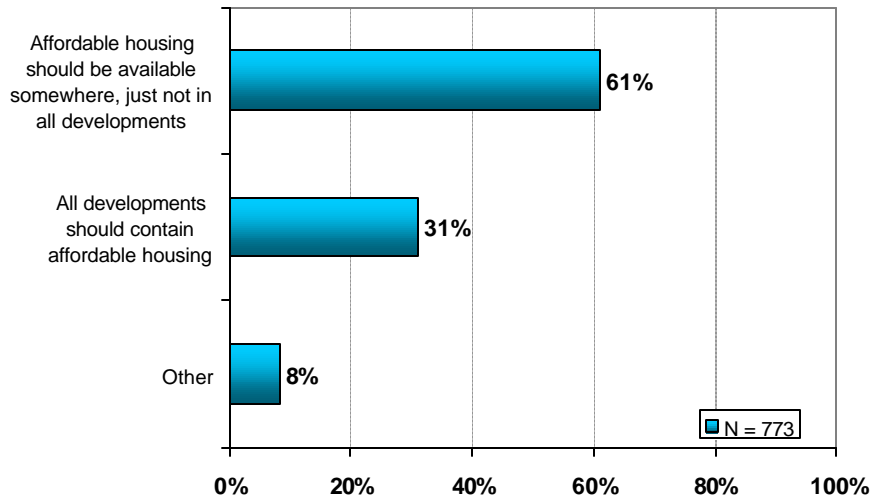
Only 20% of local residents agree that these incentives are a small price to pay to provide affordable housing in all developments. Seven out of ten residents (69%) counter by saying development restrictions should apply equally to all developments rather than offering more lenient development restrictions to developers who agree to build affordable housing. Responses to this question do not differ by race/ethnic background, age, or household income.

### Reasons for selecting neighborhoods



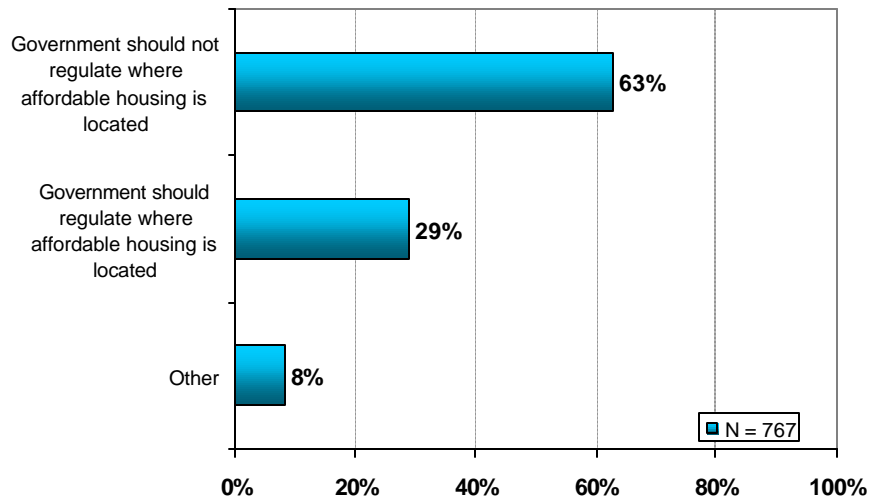
What are the main reasons you chose to live in your current neighborhood?

### Affordable housing in my neighborhood



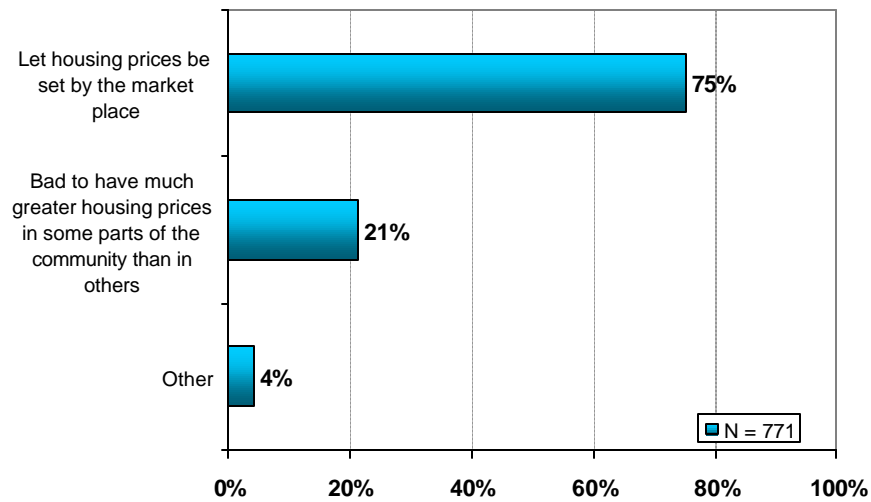
Some people say it is better if all developments contain affordable housing so developments are more diverse. Other people say it is better if there is affordable housing somewhere in the community, even if it is not available in all neighborhoods. With which group do you agree?

### Affordable housing & the government



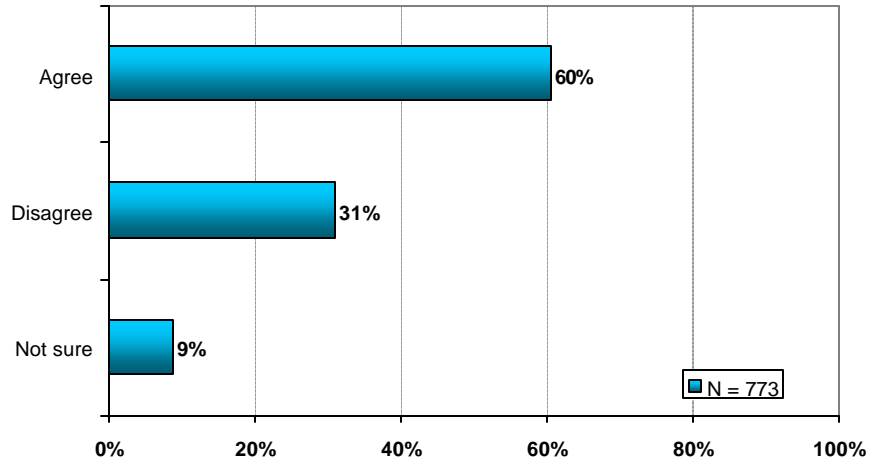
Some people say that government should pass laws to ensure that there is affordable housing in all developments. Other people say government has no business enforcing where people live. With which group do you agree?

### Housing prices



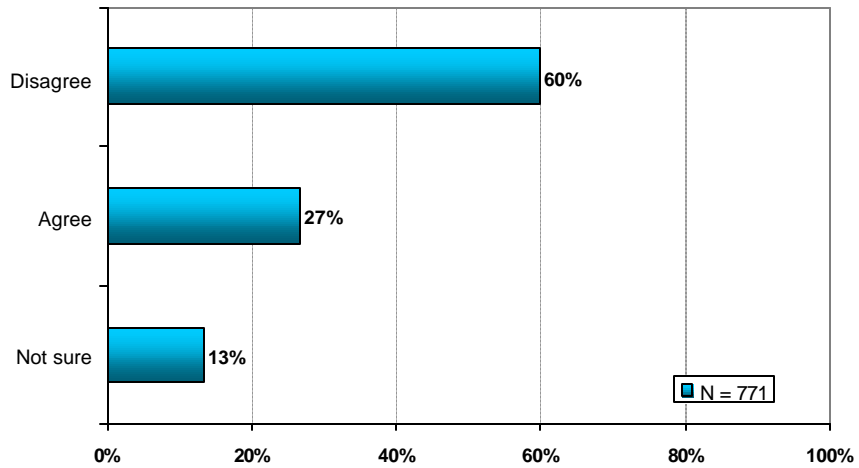
Some people say it is bad for our community for home sales in north and northeast neighborhoods to average over \$200,000 and home sales in the south and southwest neighborhoods to average less than \$100,000. Other people say housing prices should be set based on what people are willing and able to pay regardless of how great the differences in average home prices across the community. With which group do you agree?

**The City Commission should pass an ordinance encouraging developers to build housing for families making below the median household income**



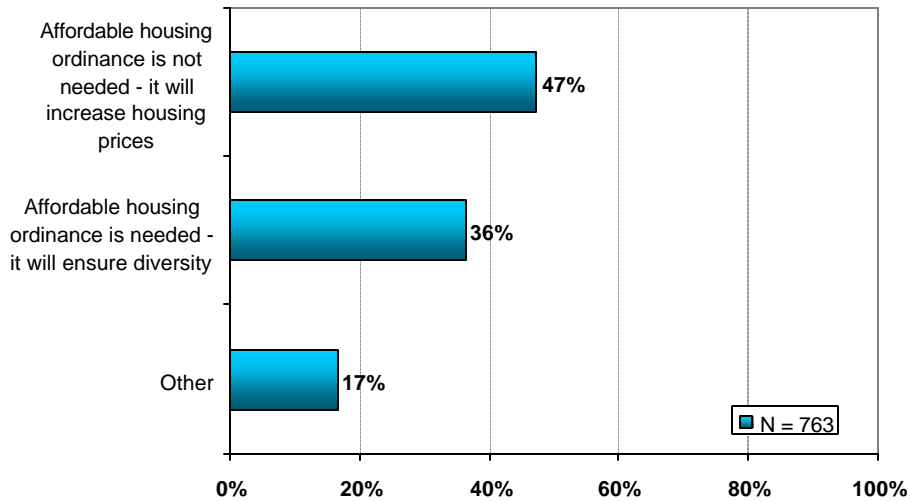
Do you agree or disagree that the City Commission should pass an ordinance that encourages developers to build housing for families with household incomes below the median household income?

**The City Commission should pass an ordinance providing for affordable housing in all neighborhoods and developments**



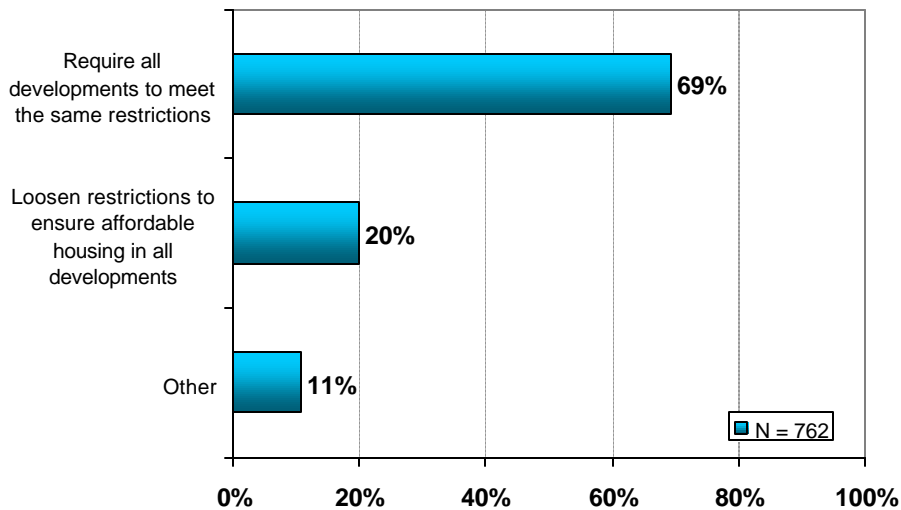
Do you agree or disagree that the City Commission should pass an ordinance that provides for affordable housing opportunities in all neighborhoods and developments throughout the community?

**The ordinance the City Commission is considering will give developers a choice to build at least 10% affordable housing units in each development or pay a fee of ~\$2,500 per housing unit built**



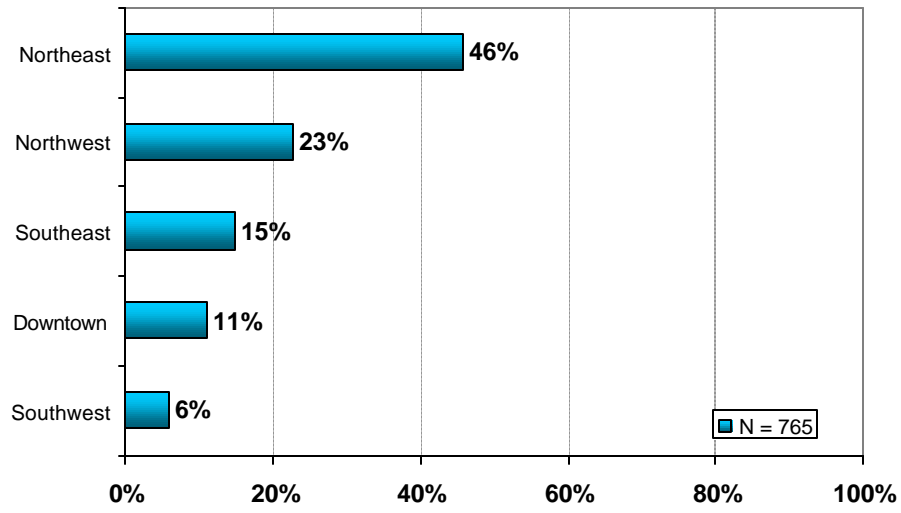
The affordable housing ordinance the City Commission is considering will give developers a choice to build at least 10% affordable housing units in each development or pay a fee of approximately \$2,500 per housing unit built. Some people say the affordable housing ordinance should be passed so each development will be diverse with regard to types of housing and types of people living there. Other people say the affordable housing ordinance should not be passed because it will increase the price of housing by at least \$2,500 in developments that do not contain affordable housing. With which group do you agree?

**Restrictions on developments**

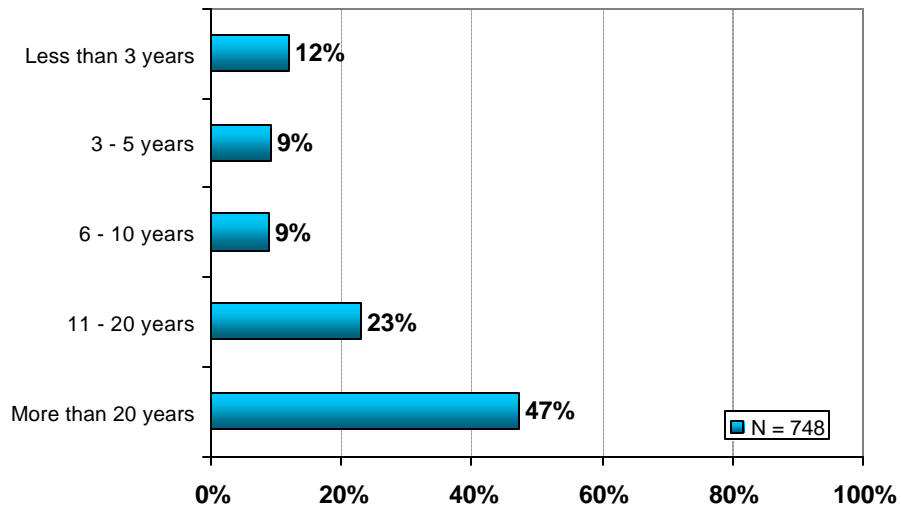


To encourage developers to include at least 10% affordable housing units within each development, the proposed affordable housing ordinance loosens normal restrictions on developments. For example, lots can be smaller, visual buffers between lots can be eliminated, more houses can be built per acre, and traffic concurrency requirements are loosened which means more traffic. Some people say development restrictions on lot sizes, number of housing units per acre, lack of visual buffers, and more traffic are small prices to pay to provide affordable housing in all developments. Other people say development restrictions should apply equally to all developments regardless of whether or not they contain affordable housing. With which group do you agree?

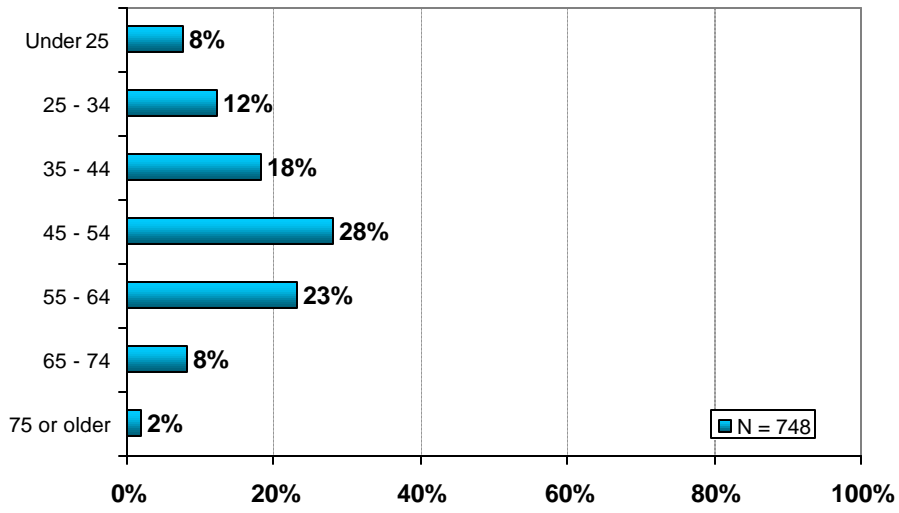
### In which part of the community do you live?



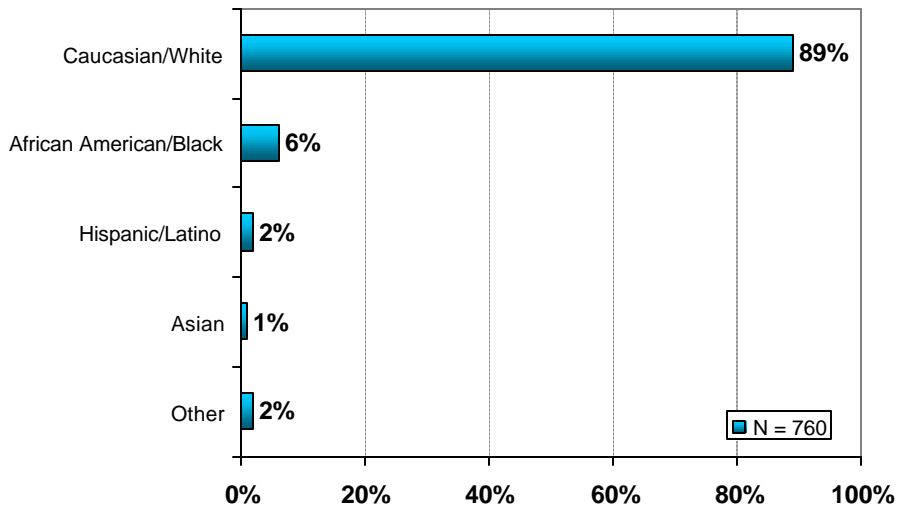
### Years in Leon County



### Age

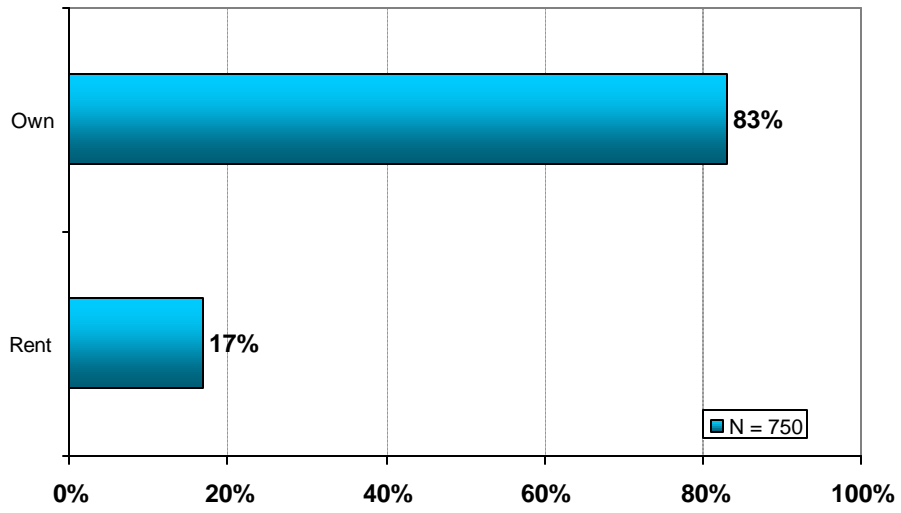


### Race/Ethnicity

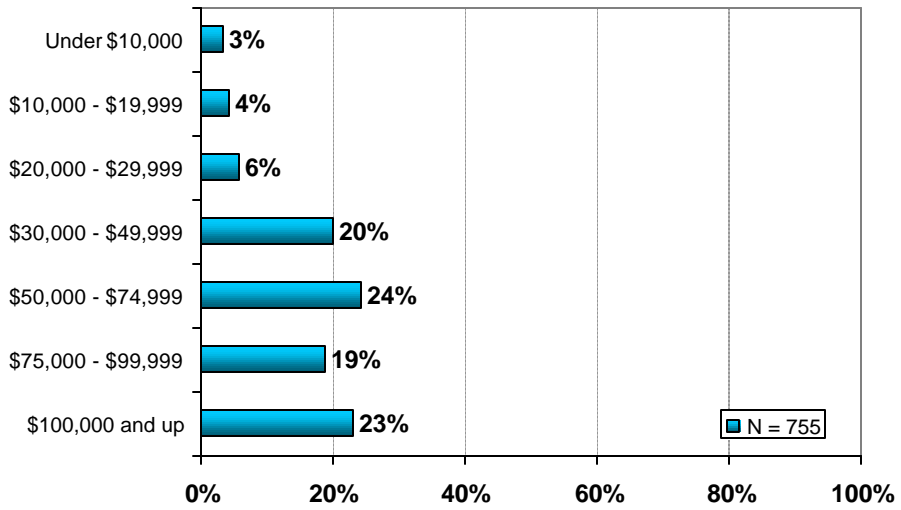




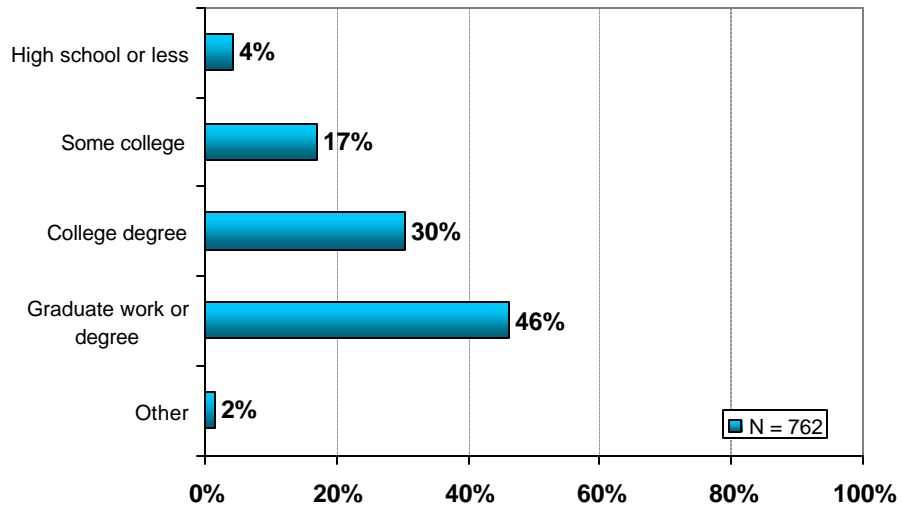
### Rent or Own?



### Household income



### Education level



### Gender

