



# **Dan River Region Social Capital Survey**

**2019**

**NC STATE**

**Municipal Research Lab  
Department of Public Administration**



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## ***Acknowledgements***

This report presents the results of the 2019 Social Capital Survey which was conducted in the Danville Region, including the City of Danville, VA, Pittsylvania County, VA, and Caswell County, NC. This study was conducted for the Danville Regional Foundation under contract with the Municipal Research Lab in the Department of Public Administration at North Carolina State University. All of the fellows of the Municipal Research Lab are grateful to the more than one thousand residents of the Danville Region who have given their time to answer the survey in order to help the Danville Regional Foundation improve the lives of those in the region.

Dr. Bruce D. McDonald, III, Director of the Municipal Research Lab and Associate Professor of Public Budgeting and Finance, was the Principal Investigator for this study. He was involved in all phases of the project, including logistical planning, survey response collection, data coding, data analysis, and writing this report.

Mr. Brad A.M. Johnson, Ph.D. student in Public Administration and Doctoral Fellow of the Municipal Research Lab, provided assistance in the design of the questionnaire and survey response collection. He also took an active role in the data analysis. Brad Johnson and Dr. Bruce McDonald co-authored the report.

Mr. Clark Casteel, M.A., Vice President of the Danville Regional Foundation, served as the primary point of contact between the Municipal Research Lab and the Danville Regional Foundation on all aspect of the project. He actively participating in the design of the questionnaire and in suggesting revisions to the survey report.

*To maximize comparability of the 2019 Social Capital Survey to surveys conducted in 2009 and 2011 by the Center for Survey Research at the University of Virginia, we have replicated the format of their reports here.*

*The Municipal Research Lab is responsible for any error or omissions in this report. Questions may be director to the Municipal Research Lab, P.O. Box 10684, Raleigh, NC 27605. The Lab may also be reached by telephone at (919) 515-5178 or by e-mail at [municipallab@ncsu.edu](mailto:municipallab@ncsu.edu).*





## ***Executive Summary***

The 2019 Danville Regional Social Capital Survey was conducted by the Municipal Research Lab (Lab) in the Department of Public Administration at North Carolina State University. The Lab undertook the project at the request of the Danville Regional Foundation. The survey of 1,286 people living in the City of Danville, VA, Pittsylvania County, VA, and Caswell County, NC was conducted from January 8, 2019, to March 8, 2019.

Overall, the purpose of the survey was to:

- Measure how people feel about the region and their future in it;
- Measure people's attachment to their community;
- Measure the region's social capital, which includes civic engagement, political involvement, and connectedness to the community;
- Measure the community's trust of its government and leadership; and,
- Compare current results with previous surveys conducted in 2009 and 2011.

Social capital refers to the network of relationships amongst people that live within a community. Included in this network is the shared sense of identity, understanding, values, and trust that the community holds. Research has shown that communities with more capital are better able to meet the needs of the community, as well as to protect the quality of life of resident, defend their political interests, and fend off external threats. As a result of this relationship, the strengthening of a community's social capital can also enhance the capacity of the community to provide for its residents. It is therefore important for the long-term planning of the Danville Regional Foundation, and the communities that it services, that the state of social capital in the Dan River Community be understood.

Two previous social capital surveys of the Danville Region were conducted in 2009 and 2011. The 2009 survey established a base understanding of social capital the region, with the 2011 survey showing how the was beginning to address the challenges it faced. This updated survey measures how the community has progressed over the long-term. The results of the previous surveys will be used in this report for comparison over time.

## ***Survey Results***

### **Overall Quality of Life**

Survey respondents were asked to rate the overall quality of life in Danville Region. On a scale from 1 to 10, where a 1 represents the worst possible community in which to live and a 10 represents the best possible community, respondents gave a mean rating of 6.63. The rating is statistically significant from the 2009 and 2011 ratings. This rating suggests that residents have a positive, but not strong regard for the quality of life in the Dan River Region. About 37.9% of respondents have an "8" or better for their rating of the region as a place to live, another 32.6% rated it as a "6" or "7", and 29.5% rated the region as a "5" or less.

Residents of Caswell County, rated the quality of life in their community the highest, with a mean rating of 7.26. Pittsylvania County and City of Danville residents rated their communities as 6.93 and 6.35, respectively. For all three communities, the perception of the overall quality of life had diminished compared to the previous surveys.

## Community Attachment

Overall, the residents of the Dan River Region have a strong sense of community. They feel a strong sense of belonging and feel it is important for them to live in this particular area. Most respondents also reported having close relatives nearby to support them. They also feel they have an impact in making their community a better place to live. While the overall results of the 2019 survey are positive, the strength of the results has diminished somewhat over time.

Research suggests that how well a resident is attached to their community has a significant impact on their perceptions of the quality of life within the community. In the 2009 iteration of the Danville Social Capital Survey, a community attachment index was created. This index helps to measure how attached residents of the Dan River Region are to their community and to assess the impact that their community attachment has on the ratings of quality of life given by residents of the Dan River Region.

Eight variables in the survey were combined to form the community attachment index. For each of these eight questions where respondents answered very important, strongly agree, or agree, one point was scored on the index for a total of up to eight points. The community attachment index declined significantly from a mean of 3.79 in 2011 to a mean of 2.78 in 2019.

Utilizing the index, it was found that higher levels of community attachment were positively related to a respondent's perception of the quality of life in the Dan River Region.

## Civic Participation

To capture the civic participation of residents of the Danville Region, we looked at several factors. The results show that residents are very

religiously-oriented. Approximately 40.3% of respondents reported that they attend religious services every week or almost every week, and only 16.8% reported that they never attend services.

We also considered membership in community organizations and engagement with community organizations either by volunteering. A total of 1007 respondents (78.3%) reported being a member of a community organization. Continuing with the pattern of church attendance, the most prominent type of organizational membership was with religious organizations. Approximately 22.2% of respondents reported being a member of a religious organization. The second most prominent organization type in which people have memberships are health clubs, sports clubs, etc. (9.3%), followed by professional societies and business associations (7.8%), hobby, garden, or recreation groups (6.5%) and PTA or school support groups (4.8%).

More than half of respondents (63.5%) reported that they have volunteered their time to organizations such as charities, schools, hospitals, religious organizations, neighborhood associations, and civic or other groups. Of the respondents who do volunteer, less than one-third (31.4%) reported that they volunteer 2 hours or less per month. This was closely followed by those who volunteer between 3 and 5 hours per month (29.2%). About 20.9% reported volunteering between 6 and 10 hours and 11.5% reported volunteering between 11 and 20 hours per month. Only 6.7% of respondents reported that they volunteer 20 or more hours per month.

A total of 931 respondents answered the survey's question regarding charitable contributions, 685 of the respondents reported that they have financially supported a charitable cause. The average total annual giving of those that support charitable causes was \$2,487.96. Another 246

respondents reported that they did not financially support a charitable organization.

## Political Participation

Nearly all respondents (93.7%) reported that they were registered to vote and most respondents (84.8%) reported that they voted in the 2018 election. Compared to respondents from the 2011 survey, who were asked if they voted in the 2010 election, these numbers show a statistically significant increase. While midterm elections have historically seen declines in voting, the politically charged climate of the United States may have encouraged voter turnout in 2018. Other forms of political participation have also increased since 2011. Over, the trust that residents of the Dan River Region have in the local government has declined.

## People in the Economy

The employment status of residents in the Dan River Region has improved since the previous surveys, with more than half of respondents reporting that they maintain full-time employment. In line with the 2011 survey, one in five respondents said they work more than one paid job.

When respondents were asked about their perceptions of their work, the answers provided showed a picture of a declining workforce that is underemployed. From 2009 to 2011, a decline in most of the perception measures was found. Further declines in all measures were found from 2011 to 2019. Despite the declines, respondents continue to generally feel engaged with their work.

The impact of the Great Recession on the Dan River Region has begun to diminish. Significantly lower numbers of people in 2019

said that they had been negatively impacted by the economy during the previous two years than had in 2011. Those who had been negatively affected continue to mention the higher cost of living and difficulty paying bills as key impacts.

## Children and Schools

Less than one-third (29.8%) of respondents continued to say that the Dan River Region is a good place raise children. Two-fifths (42.5%) had a favorable opinion of local schools. Compared to previous years, an increased share of respondents felt that the education provided in local schools has gotten worse. An increased share of respondents also felt that the community was doing a worse job of helping to prepare children for preschool. Respondents did report fewer challenges to children and youth than they had in previous surveys.

As in 2009 and 2011, approximately two-thirds of respondents (62.1%) continued to say that when a child is ready to leave home, it is better for them to move to some other area. When asked, only one-third (34.9%) said that they hope their children will return to the Dan River Region in the future.

According to survey respondents, the great challenge affecting children and youth in the region is the prevalence of drugs in the community, though this is less of a concern than it had been in 2009. Respondents showed strong support for quality education and youth education programs to provide a better quality of life for their children and youth.

## Health Indicators

The 2019 Social Capital Survey found little change since 2011 in the overall quality of health for residents of the Dan River Region. The

current survey, however, did find an increase in the difficulty of residents at managing their healthcare. Particular concern emerges around the decline of physical activity throughout the region, as well as growth in the rate of respondents who reported that it was difficult to eat healthy and that obesity was a serious problem in the household. Additionally, more than half of respondents reported that they do not have the resources to address their obesity problem.

- Perceptions regarding the quality of education being provided in the region have diminished over time (see Chapter VII); and,
- The obesity rate has increased while residents struggle to find the resources to address the problem (see Chapter VIII).

## Conclusion

Any assessment of social capital must recognize that the indicators of capital stock are closely correlated with an individual's socio-economic status. In a region suffering from economic setbacks, lack of education and income among residents will have an effect on how involved they are in civic life. Taking these factors into account, the overall level of social capital is fairly strong in terms of civic involvement, social connectedness, and religious involvement, but in need of development in areas of community attachment. There are some encouraging signs of change in the way that residents engage with their communities and grow their civic skills. This survey thus points to areas, subgroups, and arenas of activity where the Dan River Region may be able to improve the level of civic engagement, the strength of social capital, and the quality of life for residents.

For the 2019 survey, points of particular interest include the following:

- Concerns regarding the safety of the community both during the day and night rose significantly, including the safety of schools for students (see Chapter III);
- The trust that residents in the Dan River Region have in their community is strong (see Chapter III);

# I. Introduction and Summary of Methods

## Purpose

The 2019 Danville Regional Social Capital Survey was conducted by the Municipal Research Lab (Lab) in the Department of Public Administration at North Carolina State University. The Lab undertook the project at the request of the Danville Regional Foundation. The survey of 1,286 people living in the City of Danville, VA, Pittsylvania County, VA, and Caswell County, NC was conducted from January 8, 2019 to March 8, 2019.

Overall, the purpose of the survey was to:

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defend their political interests, and fend off external threats. As a result of this relationship, the strengthening of a community's social capital can also enhance the capacity of the community to provide for its residents. It is therefore important for the long-term planning of the Danville Regional Foundation, and the communities that it services, that the state of social capital in the Dan River Community be understood.

Two previous social capital surveys of the Danville Region were conducted in 2009 and 2011. The 2009 survey established a base understanding of social capital the region, with the 2011 survey showing how the community was beginning to address the challenges it faced. This updated survey measures how the community has progressed over the long-term. The results of the previous surveys will be used in this report for comparison over time.

Previous research on social capital has demonstrated that individuals and their communities have different levels of social capital.<sup>1</sup> This research has shown that social capital is tied to the quality of an individual's life. Individuals with high levels of social capital are more likely to be active and engaged, as well as satisfied with their lives. Although the social ties that an individual forms are ultimately the responsibility of the individual, many of the factors behind social capital are associated with economic status. Research, for example, has shown that the level of an individual's charitable giving is closely tied to their income and educational attainment.<sup>2</sup> Further, economic status and political participation have also been shown to be highly correlated.<sup>3</sup> While socioeconomic factors might influence the stock

<sup>1</sup> Lin, N., Cook, K. S., & Burt, R. S. (2008). *Social capital: Theory and research*. New Brunswick, NJ: AldineTransaction.

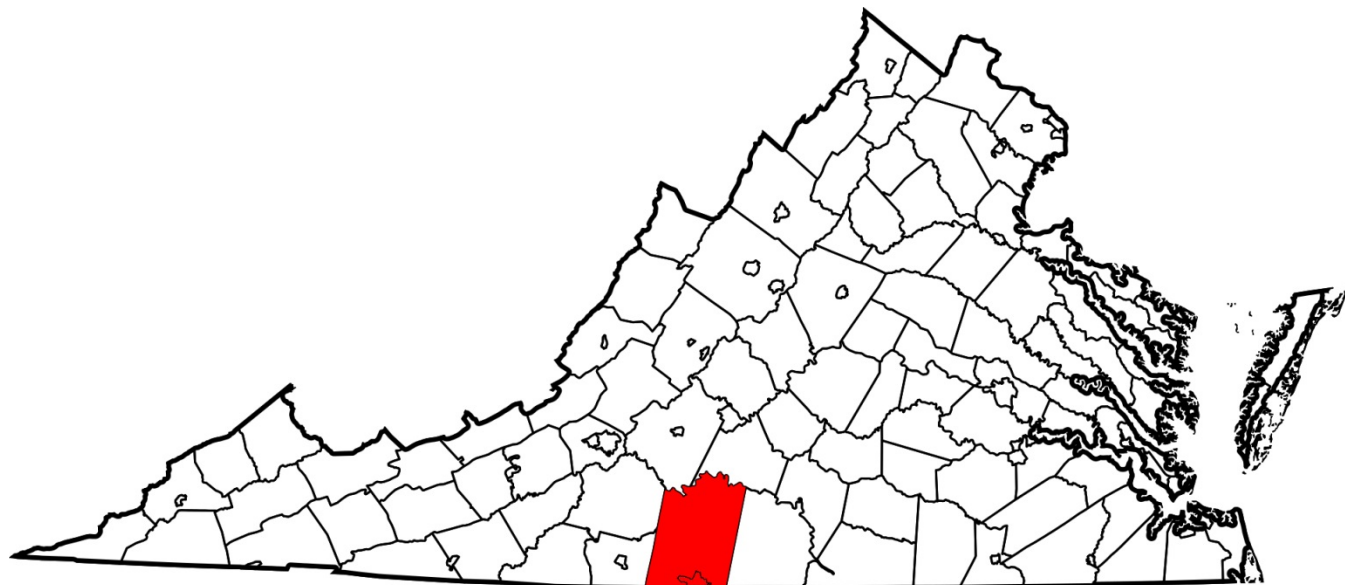
<sup>2</sup> Eger, R. J., McDonald, B. D., & Wilsker, A. L. (2015). Religious attitudes and charitable donations. *Journal of Applied Business and Economics*, 17(2), 52-65.

Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., & Brady, H. E. (1995). *Voice and equality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard College.

<sup>3</sup> La Due Lake, R., & Huckfeldt, R. (1998). Social capital, social networks, and political participation. *Political Psychology*, 19(3), 567-584.

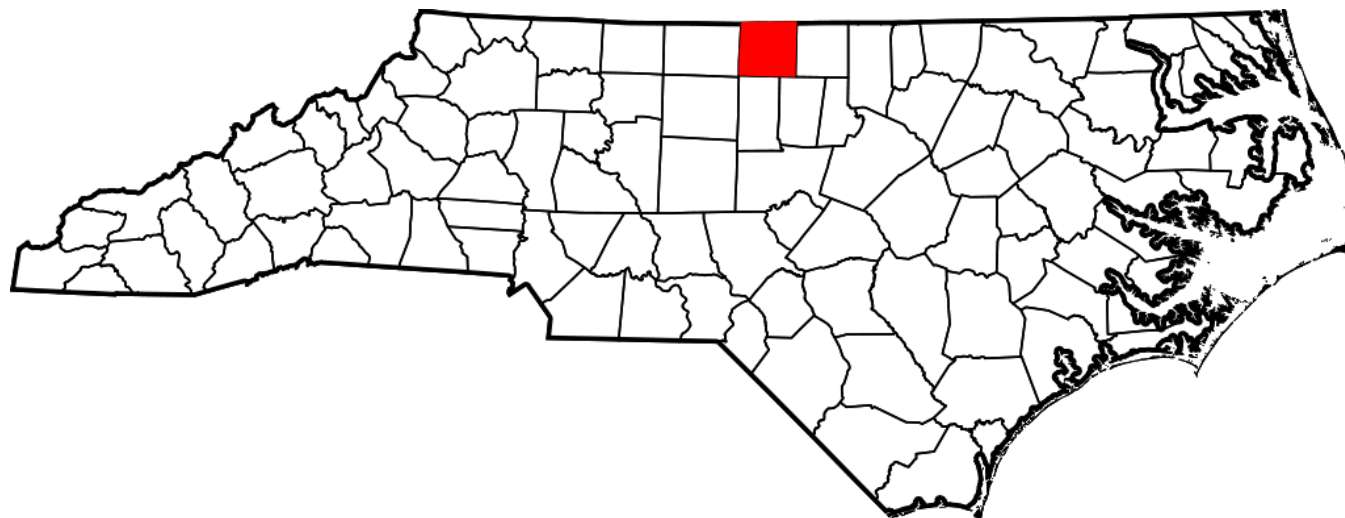
**Figure 1.** Pittsylvania County, VA and the City of Danville, VA

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**Figure 2.** Caswell County, NC

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of social capital that an individual possesses, all of the members of a community have the opportunity to build their stock of social capital by creating new ties and expanding their networks with those in who live in the area.

An example of a form of social capital that expands beyond an individual's socioeconomic condition is their community attachment. Research has shown that individual with high levels of community attachment are more likely to be a member in a community organization. They are also more likely to volunteer for organizations or in support of causes within the community, exhibit higher levels of trust in their government, and be more politically active.<sup>4</sup> All of these factors are important to consider when looking at the pattern of social capital in the Dan River Region, where average income and educational attainment is lower than other parts of Virginia.

## Survey Design

The Danville 2019 Social Capital Survey questionnaire investigates a large number of topics related to the status, position, resources, and perceptions of residents in the community. Survey respondents were asked about:

### *Overall Quality of Life in the Dan River Region*

- Quality of life five years ago
- Expected quality of life five years from now
- Quality of life compared to other communities

### *Community Attachment*

- Respondent's sense of community attachment
- Resident's perceived impact in making the community a better place to live
- Safety at home, in their neighborhood, shopping areas, and schools

### *Civic Participation*

- Attendance at religious service
- Organization membership
- Volunteering and giving
- Acquisition of civic skills

### *Political Participation*

- Attendance at public meetings
- Voter registration and voter frequency
- Trust in government

### *People in the Economy*

- Effect of the economy on the labor force
- Willingness to learn new skills and obtain training
- Current job situation, work rewards, and commitment

### *Children and Schools*

- Rating the Dan River Region as a place to raise children
- Evaluation of schools in the Dan River Region
- Biggest challenges facing children and youth in Danville

### *Health Issues*

- Respondents' overall health
- Access to healthcare and health-related resources

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<sup>4</sup> Guterbock, T. M., & Fries, J. (1997). *Maintaining American's social fabric: The AARP survey of civic involvement*. Washington, DC: AARP.

La Due Lake, R., & Huckfeldt, R. (1998). Social capital, social networks, and political participation. *Political Psychology*, 19(3), 567-584.

- Perceptions of children's physical activities

The following sections of this report provide a descriptive summary of the results along with their interpretation. Statistically significant differences among subgroups in the populations are reported. The margin of error for the survey is  $\pm 2.7\%$ .

The complete 2019 survey is found in Appendix A of this report, and Appendix B provides the survey methodology implemented for this study. The cross tabulations and satisfaction mean ratings by demographic variables are provided in Appendix C, Appendix D provides the frequency distributions for all substantive questions. Finally, Appendix E provides the open-ended responses from survey respondents.

## Subgroup Analysis

Survey responses were broken out and analyzed by demographic characteristics. In discussing the results, we report when there are instances in which the differences among demographic subgroups such as men or women, are statistically significant. Statistical significance refers to when the differences between the subgroups is not likely to have been the result of random occurrence or sampling variability, but rather is a reflection of a real difference within the population.<sup>5</sup>

The demographic characteristics listed below were those primarily used in our analysis of the subgroups. In some instances, characteristics were combined to facilitate a comparison.<sup>6</sup>

- Age: The age of respondents was determined by subtracting the year of

birth from 2019. The results were then divided into five age brackets for analysis: 18-25, 26-37, 38-49, 50-64, and 65 and over.

- Educational Attainment: Comparisons were made based on the highest level of education obtained by respondents. Educational levels were established based on the highest education as an individual having some high school education, a high school diploma, some college, a four-year degree, some graduate education, masters or professional degree, and doctoral degree.
- Marital Status: Respondents that were married at the time they completed the survey were compared to other relationship categories. These were: separated, divorced, widowed, and never married.
- Household Income: Four brackets for household income were used in comparison. The brackets compared were: less than \$30,000, \$30,000-\$49,999, \$50,000-\$69,999, and more than \$70,000.
- Homeowner Status: Comparisons were also made between homeowners and renters.
- Gender: Women were compared with men.
- Race and Ethnicity: A comparison of race and ethnicity was also made based on respondents being white, black, or other racial identification. Hispanic respondents were also compared to non-Hispanic respondents.

Following the definitions of race and ethnicity used by the U.S. Census Bureau, the classification of race and ethnicity is based on two questions in the survey. In

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<sup>5</sup> Only differences that reached statistical significance at a 95% level of confidence ( $p < 0.05$ ) are discussed.

<sup>6</sup> For many of the demographic characteristics used for comparison, additional categories were collected in the

2019 survey. To ensure comparability over time, the data for these additional categories were recoded here to fit the categories utilized in the 2011 and 2009 surveys.



the first question, respondents were asked about their ethnicity and whether they identify as Hispanic. In the second question, respondents were asked about their race. In the graphs that jointly display race and ethnicity, the Hispanic data is based on the ethnicity question and is displayed alongside several categories from the race question.

## Summary of Methods

The Municipal Research Lab employed an internet-based response recruitment approach. Previous iterations of the Danville Social Capital Survey had utilized a telephone-based approach to recruiting responses. While the telephone-based approach was successful at recruiting a significant number of responses, an internet-based approach has a unique advantage. Specifically, it allows for the recruitment of responses from a more representative sample of the population, thus improving the accuracy of the survey results.

Responses to the survey were collected over two months, from January 8, 2019 to March 8, 2019. To collect responses, community partners of the Danville Regional Foundation were asked to distribute the survey through their networks. A link to the survey was also distributed to community networks in the Dan River Region through Facebook and Twitter, and targeted ads on Facebook were utilized to maximize the opportunity of those in the region to complete the survey.

Based on this approach, 1,286 responses to the survey were collected. The margin of error for a sample of this size is plus or minus 2.7 percent. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size drawn from the region, the results will fall in

a range of  $\pm 2.7$  percentage points of what would have been obtained had every individual in the region been surveyed.

T-tests, which measure the statistical difference between the means of two groups, were used to test for differences across the demographic groups. To determine whether differences were statistically significant, a cut-off p-value of 0.05 was utilized. Unless otherwise noted, the differences between 2019 and previous surveys are statistically significant. Additional details regarding the survey and sampling methodology is provided in Appendix B.

## Demographic Profile

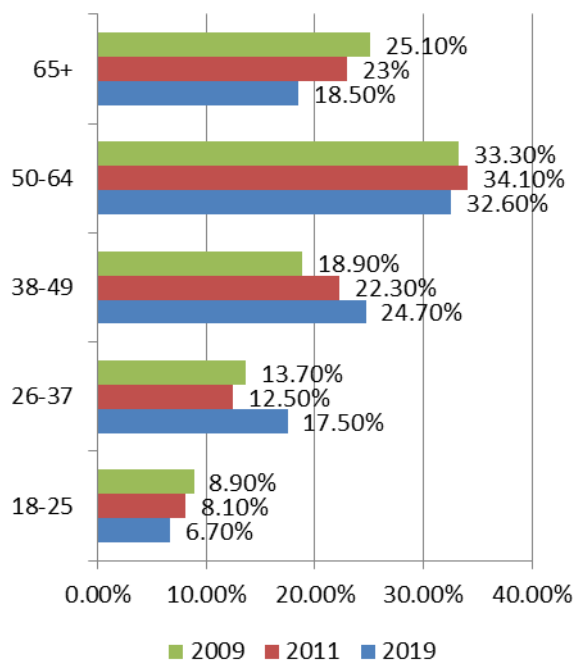
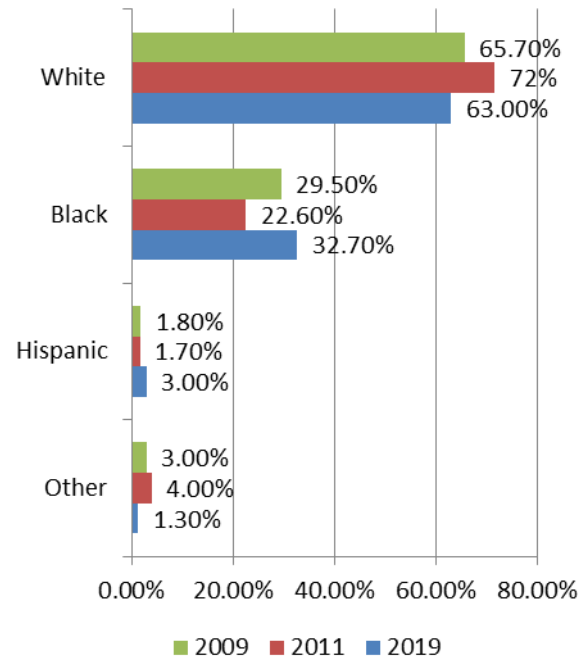
Survey respondents were asked several demographic questions to allow for analysis of the data by personal and social characteristics. In the Danville Micropolitan Statistical Area, women outnumber men (54.4% to 45.6%).<sup>7</sup> In the study sample, women accounted for 65.9% of responses.

Figure 3 provides the age of responses of the 2019, 2011, and 2009 surveys. With regards to age, just under one-fifth (18.5%) of respondents were aged 65 and over and one-third (32.6%) were aged between 50 and 64. About a quarter (24.7%) were aged between 38 and 49, 17.5% were between 26 and 37, and 6.7% were between 18 and 25 years of age.

A little more than half of respondents to the 2019 survey were married (55.2%), 16.3% were divorced, 2.5% were separated, 6.4% were widowed, and 19.7% were never married.

Approximately one-third of respondents reported that they had children under the age of 18 in their household (33.2%). Of those, 36.8% had children

<sup>7</sup> The Danville Metropolitan Statistical Area was reclassified as a Micropolitan Statistical Area in 2013.

**Figure 3. Age of Respondents****Figure 4. Race and Ethnicity of Respondents**

aged five or under, 50.3% had children between the ages of six and 12, and 53.6% had children in the household between the ages of 13 and 18. The majority of households with children under the age of 18 send their children to public school (77.5%). Only 15.8% send their children to private schools, and 6.7% reported that they home-school their children.

Two of the survey questions asked respondents about their race and ethnicity. In the first question, respondents were asked whether they identify their ethnicity as Hispanic. In the second question, respondents were asked how they identified their race. Just under two-thirds of the survey respondents self-identified as white (63.0%), nearly a third self-identified as African-American or black (32.7%), 4.3% self-identified with another race (i.e., Asian, Native American, etc.) or identified their ethnicity as Hispanic. The breakdown of the race and ethnicity of respondents is provided in Figure 4.

In 2019, approximately 63.3% of respondents reported they were employed at the time. However, only 54.8% of respondents reported that they were working full-time. Another 8.5%

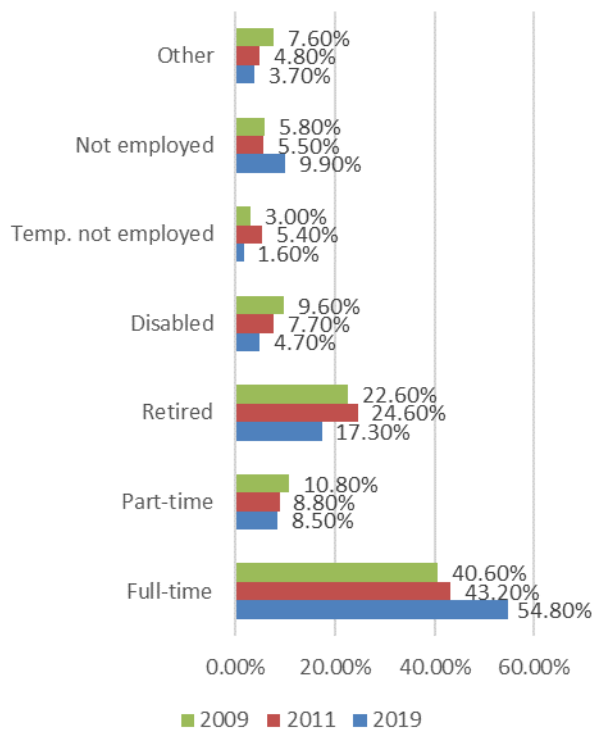
reported that they were working part-time. Of the remaining 36.7% of respondents, 3.4% reported that they were unemployed, 17.3% were retired, and 16.1% reported being out of work for other reasons, such as a disability or being a student or homemaker.<sup>8</sup> An overview of employment status is provided in Figure 5.

The median household income in the 2019 survey was between \$30,000 and \$49,999. Nearly a quarter of respondents (24.2%) reported that their annual household income was under \$30,000 and 25.3% reported that their income

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<sup>8</sup> Consistent with previous iterations of the survey, respondents may be hesitant to disclose that they are unemployed. As such, the unemployment rate of 3.4% may

include systematic error in addition to the random error present in the survey.

**Figure 5. Employment**

fell into the \$30,000 and \$49,999 bracket. About one-fifth (17.8%) reported an income in the \$50,000 and \$69,999 bracket, 16.8% fell into the \$70,000 and \$99,999 bracket, and 16% reported an income of \$100,000 or more.

In the area of education, respondents were asked to report their highest level of educational attainment. As shown in Figure 7, 1.1% of survey respondents did not complete high school and 14.3% were high school graduates. More than two-fifths (41%) of respondents took some college coursework or earned a 2-year associated degree, and 21.6% reported a 4-year degree as their highest level of education. More than one-fifth had experience in graduate school coursework, with 17.6% having taken some graduate courses or completed a master's degree and 4% having earned a Ph.D. or other doctorate-level degree.

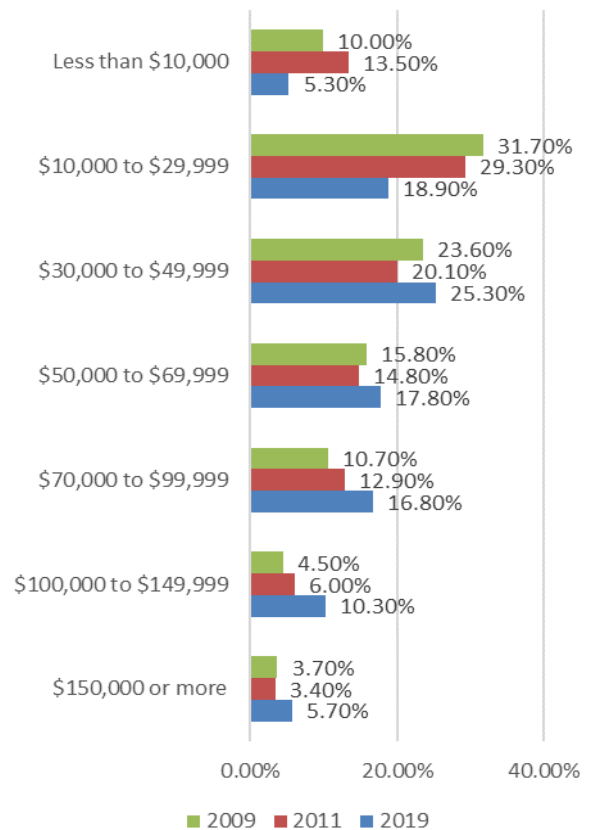
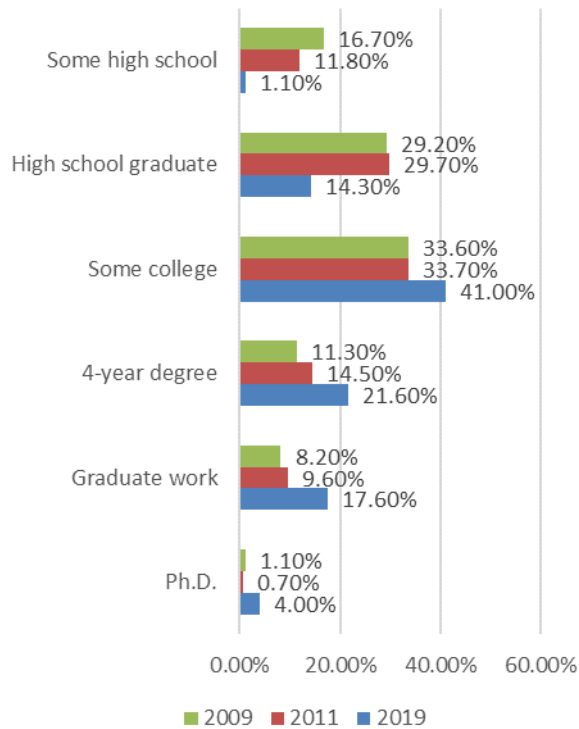
**Figure 6. Household Income**

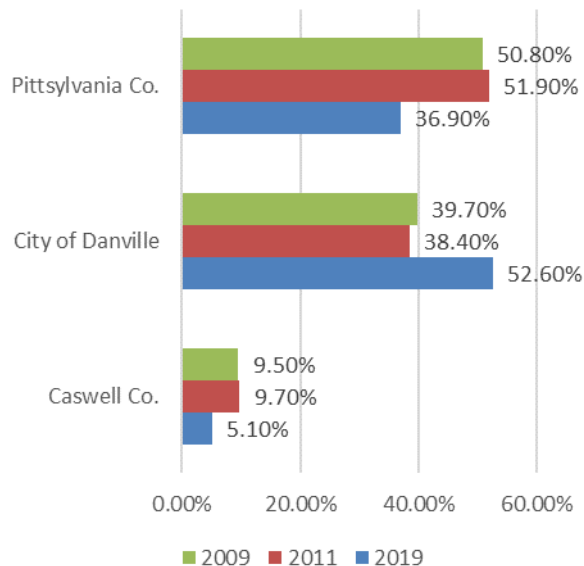
Figure 8 provides the location of residence for survey respondents. The majority of respondents (52.6%) were residents of Danville, VA. Another 36.9% reported their residency as Pittsylvania County, VA, and 5.1% reported their residency as Caswell County, NC.

Looking at the length of residency in the Dan River Region, 3.5% reported being new residents, with 2.2% having resided in the region for less than six months and 1.3% having resided in the region between six months and a year. Almost one-tenth (9.8%) reported that they have lived in the area between one and five years and one-fifth (20.3%) reported living in the region between five and 20 years. The majority of respondents (66.4%) reported that they have resided in the region for 20 years or more.

**Figure 7. Educational Level**

Over one-third (34.6%) of the 2019 respondents described the area in which they live as an urban area or small city. An additional 17.6% described the area as suburban, 19.5% described it as a small town, and 5.6% as a rural village. About one-fifth (22.6%) described the area as being “out in the country.”

Most of respondents to the survey reported that they live in a home that they own (69.6%) and just over a quarter of respondents reported that they rent their home. The remaining 4.2% of respondents reported other arrangements, such as living with parents or partners. The majority of respondents (79.1%) reported their home as a single-family dwelling. About 3.7% live in a duplex or townhouse, 8.8% live in an apartment or condominium, and 0.4% live in a dormitory. The remaining 7.9% reported that they live in some other study of structure, such as a mobile home or trailer.

**Figure 8. Geographic Distribution**

## II. Quality of Life in the Dan River Region

### Overall Impression

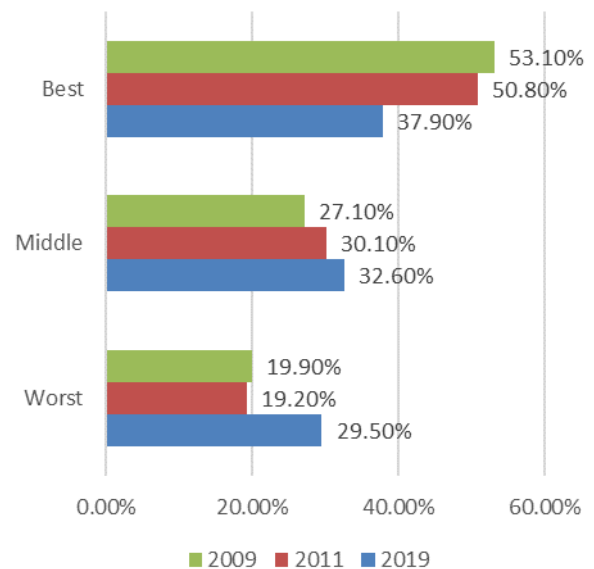
In the 2019 survey, as with the 2009 and 2011 surveys, respondents were asked about their overall impression of the quality of life in the Dan River Region. This was captured in the question:

*“On a scale of 1 to 10, where a 1 represents the worst possible community in which to live and a 10 represents the best possible community, how would you rate your community as a place to live?”*

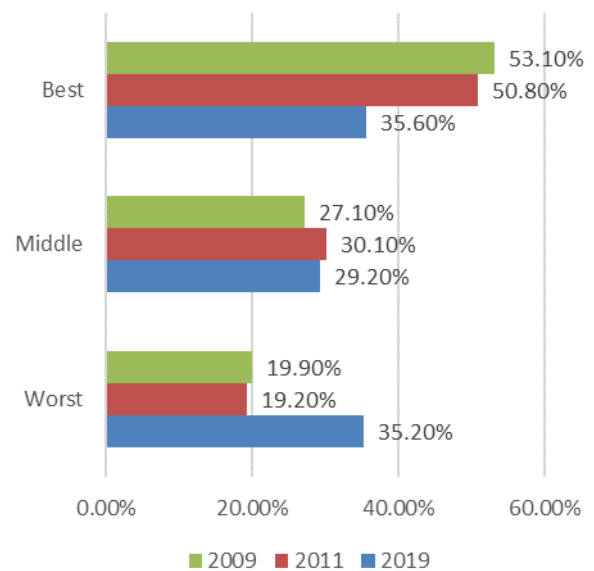
In 2019, respondents to the survey gave the Dan River Region a mean rating of 6.63. This rate is statistically significant from both the 2009 rate of 7.30 and the 2011 rating of 7.31. This finding suggests that residents of the region continue to have a positive perspective of the community, but that their overall impression on the quality of life that the region provides has diminished overtime.

Figure 9 provides an overview of the distribution of ratings provided by respondents across the current and previous social capital surveys. To ensure consistency with previous reports, the ratings were coded into three categories: best, middle, worst. Responses that had ratings between 8 and 10 were coded as best, responded that had ratings between 6 and 7 were coded as middle, and responds that had ratings of 5 or less were coded as worst. A little over one-third (37.9%) gave the Dan River Region the best ratings for overall quality of life. About 32.6% rated the overall quality of life as being in the middle and 29.5% rated the region as having the worst quality of life.

**Figure 9. Overall Quality of Life Ratings**



**Figure 10. Overall Quality of Life 5 Years Ago**



## Quality of Life over Time

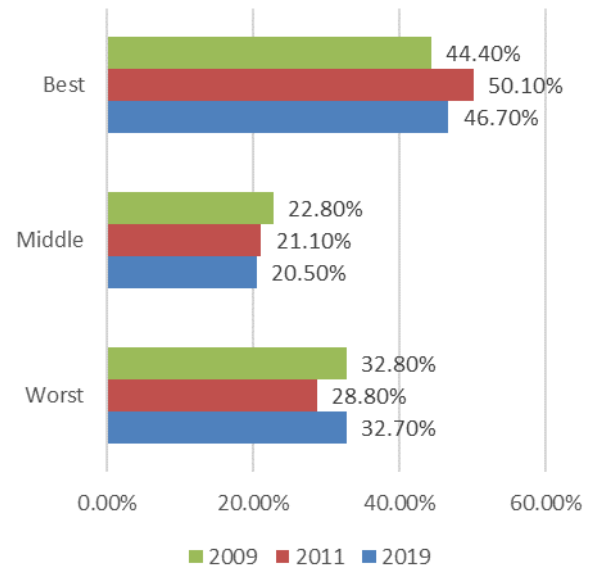
Respondents to the survey were also asked to rate the quality of life of the region five years ago using the same 1 to 10 scale, where a 1 represents the worst possible community and a 10 represents the best possible community.

In 2019, the mean retrospective rating for the quality of life in the Dan River Region was 6.49. This mean rating is lower than the ratings that the region received in the 2009 and 2011 surveys. In 2009, the region received a mean retrospective rating of 7.55, and, in 2011, the region received a mean retrospective rating of 7.29. These findings are consistent with the ratings received for the overall quality of life. Between 2009 and 2011, the impression of the overall quality of life in the region declined among survey respondents. Another decline was seen when coming the 2011 and 2019 responses. It may be that respondents have fewer positive feelings about 2014 than they did about either 2004 or 2006, but it may also be representative of an overall decline feelings of nostalgia.

When considered in combination with the overall quality of life ratings, one possible explanation is that the Dan River Region experienced a decline between the 2011 and 2019 surveys, resulting in the dip between the surveys. In 2011, the overall quality of life was 7.31, whereas the 2014 rating, reported in the 2019 survey, was 6.49. From this perspective, the current rating of 6.63 would likely be a trend that is returning toward an upward pattern.

An overview of the measurement for the question on the overall quality of life five years ago are provided in Figure 10. The data reported in this figure follow the same coding scheme established for Figure 9, where responses with a rate between 8 and 10 were coded as best, responses with a rate between 6 and 7 were coded as middle, and responses with a rate between 1 and 5 were coded as worst.

**Figure 11. Overall Quality of Life in 5 Years**

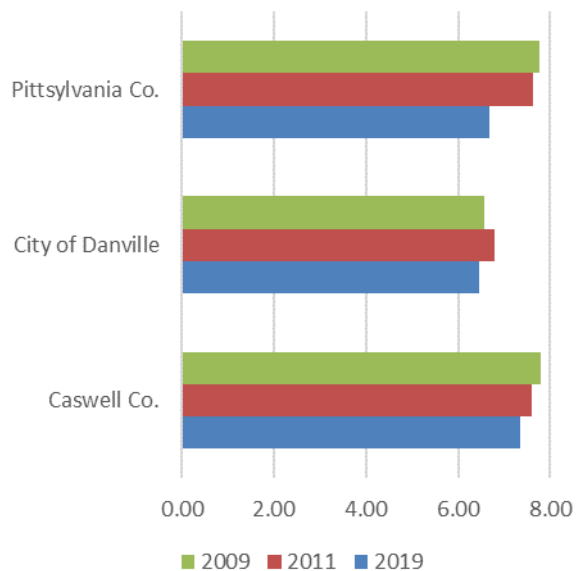


Next, respondents were asked about their perception of where the region will be in five years. Responses were again measured on a 1 to 10 scale, where a 1 represents the worst possible community to live in and a 10 represents the best possible community. The mean rating for this question in 2019 was 6.58. This rating was lower than both the 2009 and 2011 ratings, which were 6.69 and 6.96, respectfully. While ratings for overall quality of life and the quality of life from five years ago were statistically significant across survey iterations, the perception of the quality of life five years from now were statistically insignificant from the previous surveys. This means that the overall impression of the future quality of life has remained statistically consistent over time.

Using the coding scheme established for Figure 9, Figure 11 provides an overview of how the Dan River Region expects their quality of life to be in five years.

While the results from the 2019 survey are higher than the current quality of life, the increase in quality is margin, increasing by only 0.09 points from 6.49 to 6.58, but it is also

**Figure 12.** Mean Overall Quality of Life Ratings by Area



statistically insignificant. This implies that residents of the region do not expect an overall improvement in their quality of life within the near future.

To help provide insight into the quality of life ratings, Figure 12 provides the mean rating for the quality of life in the Dan River Region by the respondents' area of residence. The overall rating for the region is 6.49. With a mean rating of 7.36, residents of Caswell County, NC have a more positive viewpoint regarding their quality of life than others in the region. With a mean rating of 6.69, residents of Pittsylvania County, VA also had a better than average view. Residents from Danville, however, exhibited a lower than average rating at 6.45. For all three areas, the 2019 ratings were lower than those received in both 2009 and 2011.

## Demographic Summary

In 2019, female respondents to the survey were more likely males to give positive ratings on present and past the quality of life in the Dan River Region. When considering the future, males had a more positive outlook on their quality of life than females.

Respondents with lower levels of educational attainment were more likely to assess the overall quality of life in the Dan River Region more favorably those with higher levels of education. This may be the result of accurate feelings about the quality of life, but it also may be the result of survey bias. Previous research has shown that respondents with less education are, in general, more likely to give positive responses to survey questions than more educated respondents.<sup>9</sup>

The age of respondents was also positively related to a respondent's feelings on the quality of life. Younger respondents were more likely to have a negative view in their quality of life ratings than older respondents. In particular, younger respondents tended to have a negative view on the past and present quality of life, but a more positive perspective on their future. Conversely, respondents aged 65 and older had a more positive view on past and present quality of life but were more pessimistic about their future. Differences in ratings based on age, however, were not statistically significant.

Marital status was positively associated to a respondents rating on the quality of their life in the region. Consistent with previous iterations of the survey, married and widowed respondents gave higher ratings than those who were never married.

Finally, respondents who reported that they live in the country or a rural village gave the highest ratings on the quality of live, as compared to

<sup>9</sup> Meisenberg, G., & Williams, A. (2008). Are acquiescent and extreme response styles related to low intelligence and

education? *Personality and Individual Differences*, 44(7), 1539-1550.



those who live in the city, suburban area, or small town.

### III. Community Attachment

#### Community Attachment

A key objective of the 2019 Social Capital Survey is the measurement of respondents' attachment to the Dan River Region community. Research into social capital has established community attachment as a predictor of an individual's stock of capital.<sup>10</sup> Several questions were asked in the survey to capture how respondents feel about their place in the community where they live. This chapter reports on the level of community attachment present in the Dan River Region, as reported by survey respondents.

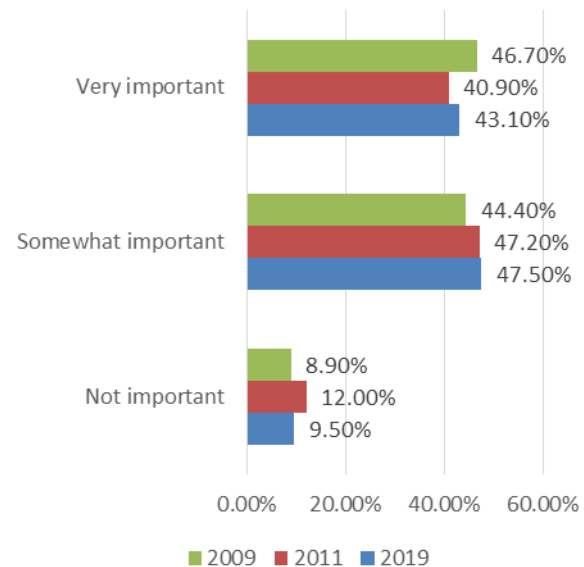
The first question regarding community attachment in the 2019 survey was:

*"How important is it to you to feel a part of the community?"*

An overview of the response to this question is provided in Figure 13. In 2019, over two-fifths of respondents (43.1%) reported that it was very important to feel a part of the community. Another 47.5% reported that it was somewhat important for them, and only 9.5% reported that it is not important for them to feel a part of the community.

Looking at the importance of belonging across iterations of the survey, a smaller share of respondents said that it was not important in 2019 than in 2011. A nearly identical share of respondents in 2019 and 2011 reported that it was somewhat important, and a slightly larger share in 2019 said that it was very important. When comparing the 2019 and 2011 results to those from 2009, the importance of belonging has declined over time.

**Figure 13.** Important to Feel a Part of the Community



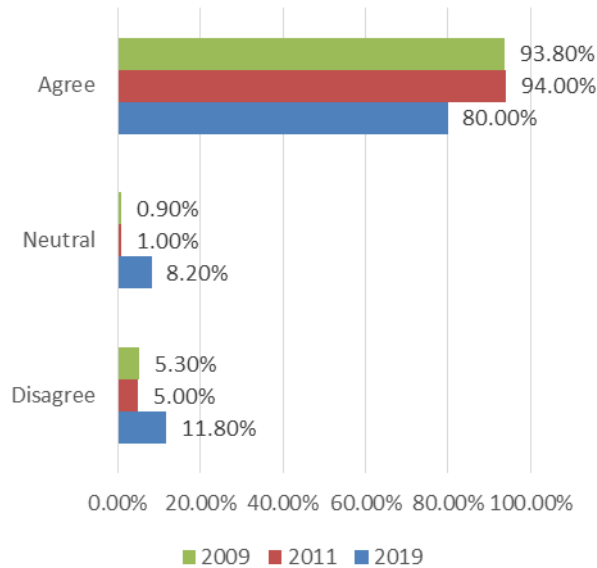
Respondents were also asked about the frequency at which they feel a sense of belonging or membership in the community. Only a little over one-third (36.4%) of respondents said that they always or most of the time feel a sense of belonging to the community where they live. Another third of respondents (33.3%) reported that they sometimes feel a sense of belonging, and the remaining third reported that they rarely or never feel a sense of belonging (21.9% and 8.4%, respectively). While there was not statistical significant difference between the 2009 and 2011 results, the responses to the 2019 were statistically significant.

Next, respondents were asked to respond about the extent that they agree to a series of statements about the community where they live. These statements were:

- I feel at home in the area where I live;

<sup>10</sup> Perkins, D. D., & Long, D. A. (2002). Neighborhood sense of community and social capital. In A. T. Fisher, C. C. Sonn, & B. J. Bishop (Eds.), *Psychological sense of*

*community* (pp. 291-318). Boston, MA: Springer.

**Figure 14. Feel at Home Where I Live**

- I feel I have a lot in common with the people who live in this community; and,
- It is very important to me to live in this particular area

An overview of the responses to these statements is provided in Figures 14, 15, and 16, respectfully. For each of the three statements, respondents reported a decline in their sense of belonging with the Dan River Community since the 2011 survey. As indicated in Figure 14, four-fifths of respondents (80.0%) reported that they somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree with the statement that they feel at home in the area where they live. Approximately 8.9% neither agree nor disagree with the statement, and 11.8% reported that they somewhat disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

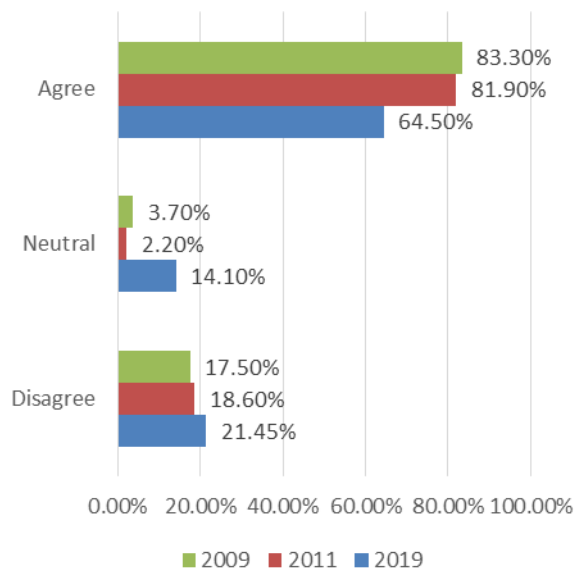
**Figure 15. Have a Lot in Common with People Who Live in this Community**

Figure 15 provides the responses to the statement on that respondents feel they have a lot in common with people who live in the community. About three-fifths of respondents (64.5%) reported that they somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree with the statement. Conversely, 14.1% reported that they neither agree nor disagree and 21.5% reported that they somewhat disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

A summary of responses to the third statement are provided in Figure 16. When asked about the importance of living in the area, only 55.5% reported that they somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree. Another 22.8% reported that they neither agree nor disagree, and 21.7% reported that they somewhat disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

A stronger sense of belonging to the community is associated with having relationships with others who live in their community. Figure 17 provides an overview of survey responses to the question of how many neighbors do respondents know on a first-name basis. About two-fifths (41.0%) of respondents reported that they know six or more neighbors on a first-name basis. Just over half (52.4%) reported knowing between one

and five neighbors. Only 5.5% said that they do not know any of their neighbors on a first-name basis. The findings show mixed significance. The finding of knowing no neighbors on a first name basis is not statistically significant from either the 2009 or 2011 results; however, all other differences are statistically significant.

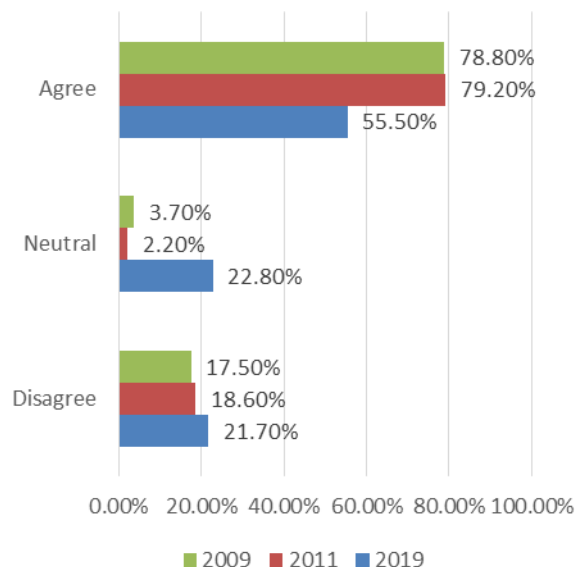
Having relatives who lives close by also promotes a sense of belonging to a community. In 2019, a little more than half (56.5%) of respondents reported that they have close relatives who live within a 15-minute drive from their home, and 28.5% reported that they have close relatives within walking distance of their home.

In a direct measure of community attachment, the survey asked respondents whether they would like to be living in the same community in five years. Almost three-fifths (59.8%) reported that they would like to be living in the Dan River Region in five years. This rate is down from 72.1% in 2011 and 76.6% in 2009. In response to a separate question, 71.2% of respondents reported that they expect to be still living in the Dan River Region in five years. This is down from a rate of 75.2% in 2011 and 78.7% in 2009.

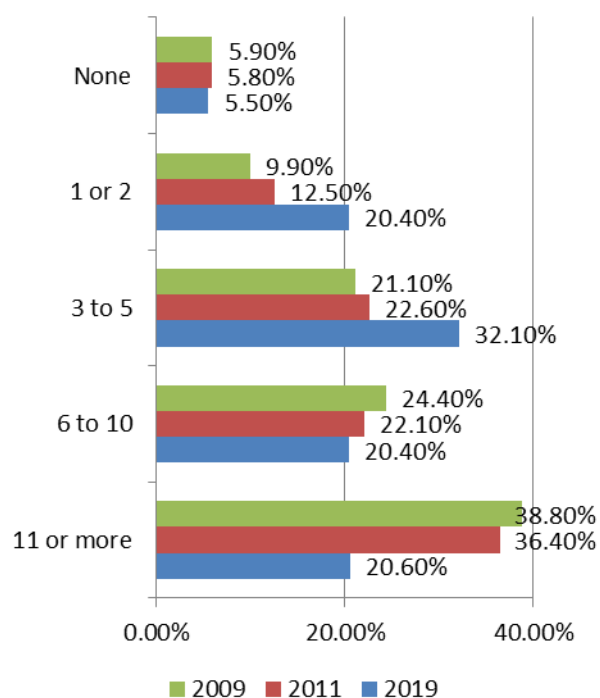
## Efficacy and Perceptions of Community

Survey respondents were asked to rate their perceptions on the appearance of the community and what impact they believe they have in making the region a better place to live. In 2019, 36.2% reported that they always or most of the time feel that people like themselves have an impact on making their community a better place to live. Another 37.7% said that they sometimes feel like they could have an impact, whereas 18.5% reported that they rarely feel this way and 7.6% reported that they never feel this way. A

**Figure 16.** Feel it is Important to Live in this Particular Area



**Figure 17.** Neighbors You Know



summary of responses to this question is provided in Figure 18.

When comparing the 2019 results to those from 2009 and 2011, there is a growing trend of pessimism. The percent of respondents believing that they can have no impact on improving the community has more than doubled from 3.1% in 2009 to 7.6% in 2019. The rate of responses believing that they can only sometimes have an impact has also increased. Conversely, the rates of respondents reporting that they always, most of the time, or sometimes can have an impact have diminished over time.

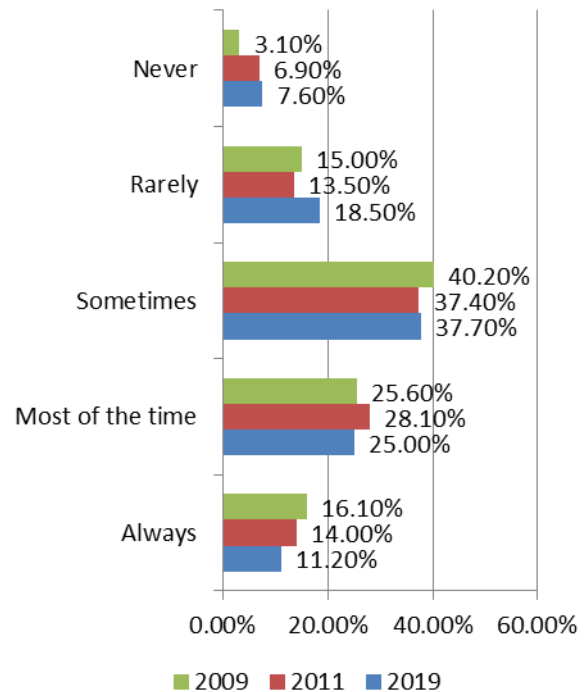
Survey respondents were also asked about the extent to which they agree with the statements “I care about what others in my community think of my actions” and “My neighborhood is being well kept up.” As of 2019, 62.3% of respondents in the Dan River Region reported that they somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree that they care what others think of their actions. This compares to 2009 and 2011, when 88.4% and 82.9%, respectfully, of respondents answers in the affirmative. Similarly, in 2019, 69.0% of respondents said that they somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree that their neighborhood is being well kept up. This compares to 2009, when 88.4% reported the same feeling, and 2011 when 89.1% reported the perception of their community.

## Crime and Personal Safety in the Community

The sense of feeling safe in one’s community is another characteristic that is tied to the sense of belonging in the community. To capture the sense of feeling safe, respondents were asked to rate how safe they feel in the community under several conditions. These conditions are:

- How safe they feel in their neighborhood during the day;

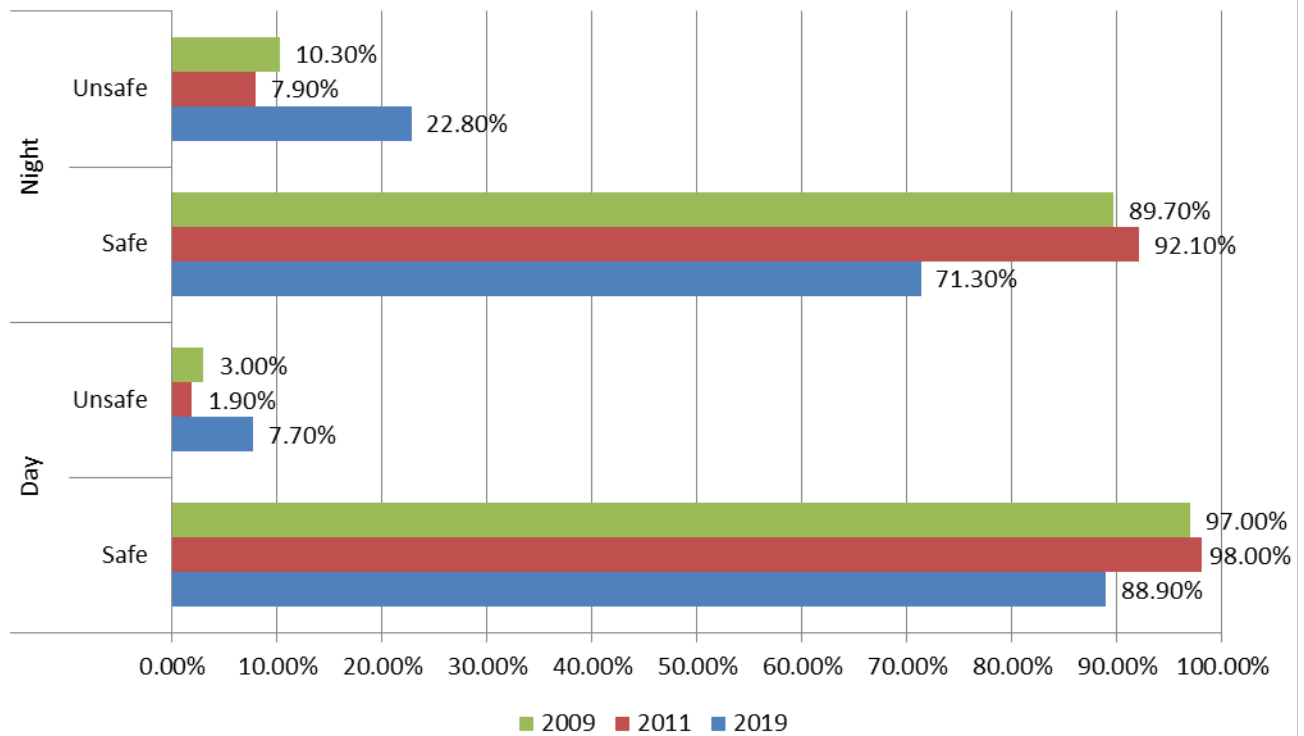
**Figure 18.** Impact in Making the Community a Better Place to Live



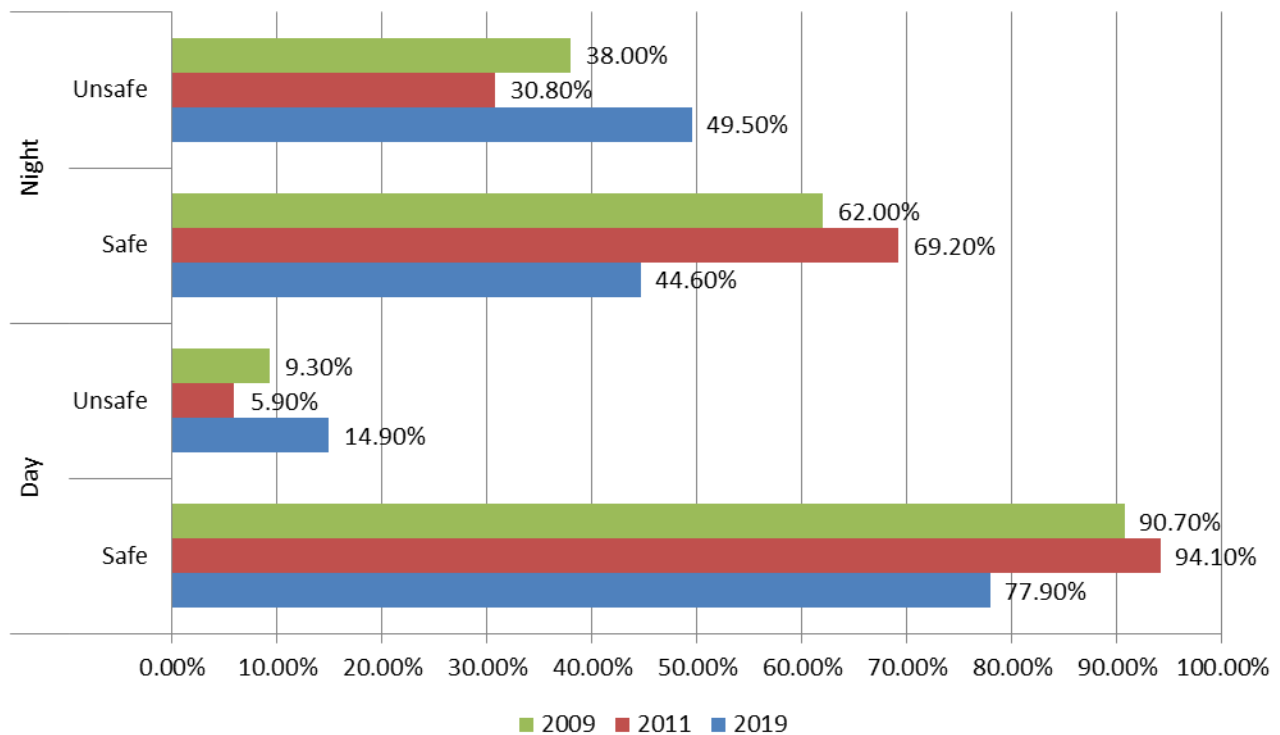
- How safe they feel in their neighborhood during the night;
- How safe they feel in shopping areas in the community during the day;
- How safe they feel in shopping areas in the community during the night;
- How safe they feel the schools in the community are for students; and,
- How safe they feel in their home.

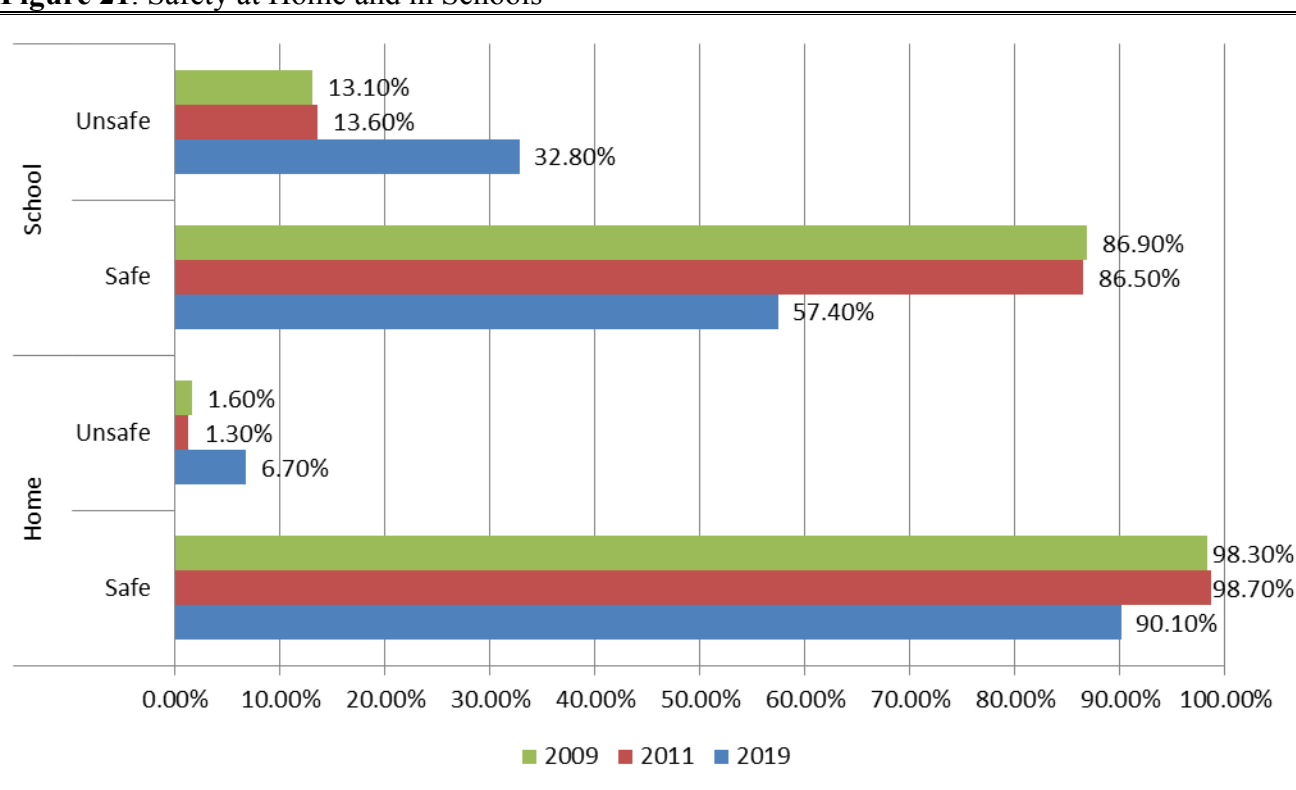
Figure 19 provides an overview of how safe respondents feel in their neighborhood during the day and at night. Based on the survey, 88.9% of respondents reported that they feel somewhat safe, safe, or very safe in their neighborhoods during the day, whereas 7.7% reported feeling somewhat unsafe, unsafe, or very unsafe in their neighborhoods during the same. At night, the feeling of safety was found to drop. Only 71.3% of respondents reported that they feel safe in their neighborhoods at night and 22.8% of respondents reported that they feel unsafe. It is important to

**Figure 19. Safety in the Neighborhood**



**Figure 20. Safety in Shopping Areas**



**Figure 21.** Safety at Home and in Schools

note that the difference in the feeling of safety between day and night in the neighborhoods is statistically significant.

The perception of feeling safe in the neighborhood has declined since the 2009 and 2011 surveys, with the rate of respondents feeling unsafe either in the day or night having doubled since the earlier studies.

When asked about the feeling of safety in shopping areas, 14.9% reported feeling unsafe in shopping areas during the day, and nearly half (49.5%) of respondents reported feeling unsafe in shopping areas at night. Again, it is important to note that the increase in the feeling of being unsafe in the community has increased for 2019. An overview of the feeling of safety in shopping areas is provided in Figure 20.

Next, when asked about the feeling of safety in their own home, respondents reported that they generally feel safe in their homes. Approximately

90.1% of respondent reported that they feel safe in their homes and 6.7% reported that they feel unsafe. Overall, there was an 8.7% decline in the feeling of safety in a respondent's home when compared to responses from 2011. The rate of feeling unsafe, however, grew by 415.5% from 2011 to 2019.

When survey respondents were asked how safe they felt the schools were for students, only 57.4% of respondents reported feeling that the schools were safe. Nearly one-third (32.8%) reported that they felt the schools were unsafe for students. The perception that the schools were unsafe for students grew by 141.2% between 2011 and 2019, and the percent of the schools as safe declined by 33.6% during the same period.

The perception that schools in the community are unsafe for students was greatest among racial minorities. Of survey respondents who self-identified as black or African American, nearly half (49.9%) reported that they believe that the

schools in the community are unsafe. Comparatively, 24.4% of respondents who self-identified as white had the same belief.

An overview of the responses to the sense of feeling safe in homes and schools is provided in Figure 21.

## **The Community Attachment Index**

As noted earlier, research has shown that the attachment individuals feel about their community has a significant impact on their perceptions of the quality of life within that community. While social capital is understood to be the networks of relationships amongst people that live within a community, community attachment is viewed to the perception of those networks and the social relationships that define them. To look at the relationship between community attachment and quality of life, the Center for Survey Research at the University of Virginia designed an index that measures the attachment of an individual to their community. The results of this index were then used to assess the overall impact of community attachment on the ratings of quality of life in the Dan River Region that was provided by survey respondents.

Initially developed by the Center for Survey Research for use in the 2009 iteration of the Danville Social Capital Survey, the index has also been used to measure community attachment in the 2011 survey.

According to the 2009 and 2011 reports on the Danville Social Capital Survey, the community attachment index is built around the responses to eight questions. These questions are:

- Do you have any close relatives who live within a 15-minute drive to your home;
- Do you have any close relatives within walking distance of your home;

- How important is it for you to feel a part of the community;
- How often do you feel a sense of belonging or membership in your community;
- How much do you agree with the statement, “I feel at home in the area where I live;”
- How much do you agree with the statement, “I feel I have a lot in common with the people who live in this community;”
- How much do you agree with the statement, “I care about what others in my community think of my actions;” and,
- How much do you agree with the statement, “It is important to me to live in this particular area.”

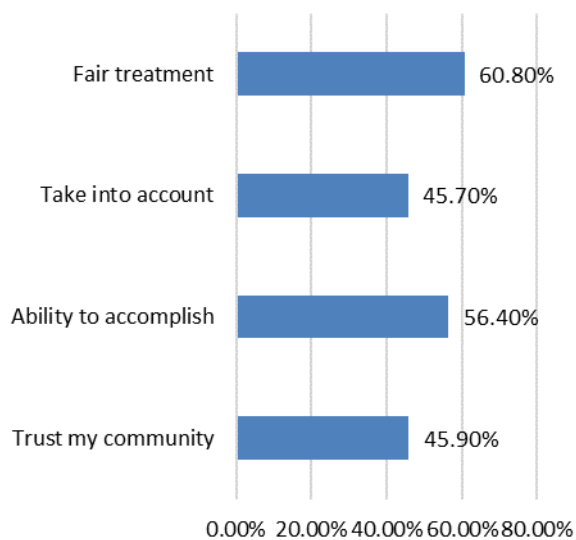
To create the index, a simple count system is utilized. Respondent were given one point if they have a relative who lives within a 15 minute driving distance to their home; one point if they have relatives within walking distance; one point if it is very important that they feel a part of the community; one point if they always feel a sense of belonging; one point if they strongly agree that they feel at home in the area where they live; one point if they strongly agree that they have a lot in common with people in the community; one point if they strongly agree that they care what others think of their actions; and, one point if it is very important for them to live in the Dan River Region. The result is a scale that varies from a minimum of zero to a maximum of eight points.

Between 2009 and 2011, the community attachment index declined, declining from a mean score of 4.16 in 2009 to a mean score of 3.79 in 2011. In 2019, the index has continued to decline with a mean score of 1.67. Although the index scores on zero to eight point scale, the max score received by any respondent was a seven. The median score was a one.



One possible explanation for the decline in the index overtime is an improvement in the measurement scales used in the survey questionnaire. In previous iterations of the survey, when respondents were asked about the extent to which they agree with a statement, they were given a Likert scale of only five points (strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree). This limited scale can hinder the ability of respondents to answer survey questions accurately. To allow for a more accurate response, the current iteration frequently expanded such questions to a seven-point scale (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree). Given the reduced range of options under the scale used in the previous iteration of the survey, it is likely that the difference is the result of censoring. In previous surveys, for example, respondents might have only agreed with a statement but were forced to choose between somewhat agree and strongly agree. In such an instance, it is reasonable to assume that respondents might have censored their response by inflating their agreement to strongly agree.

**Figure 22.** Trust in the Community



If the index is expanded to incorporate agree with strongly agree in the appropriate questions, the mean community attachment index score is 2.78. The revised score is more directly comparable to the scores calculated for the 2009 and 2011 surveys.

As with the previous surveys, the index was used to explore the relationship between community attachment and the four quality of life indicators. As with previous years, the 2019 survey showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between community attachment and the quality of life indicators.

## Trust in Community

An ongoing concern in any community, and a key factor in community attachment, is much residents feel they can trust their community. In the 2019 Social Capital Survey, four questions were added to capture respondents perception of community trust. For these questions, respondents were asked to rate how strongly they agree with the statements:

- My community treats people like me fairly and justly;
- I believe my community takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions;
- My community has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do; and,
- I trust my community.

The first three statements captured the respondents perceptions of the three dimensions of trust: integrity, dependability, and competence. The final statement captures the respondents overall perception of their trust in the community. The extent to which respondents somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree is provided in Figure 22.

Overall, residents of the Dan River Region have a strong sense of trust in their community. More than three-fifths (60.8%) of respondents reported that they felt the community treats people like them fairly and justly. Roughly 45.7% of respondents said that they believe the community takes the opinions of people like them into account, and over half (56.4%) of respondents said that they felt the community has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.

In looking at the overall measure of community trust, 45.9% of respondents reported that they trust their community. The differences between the direct measure of community trust and the dimensions of trust may be indicative of question bias. As a result, the responses on the dimensions are believed to be a more accurate reflection of community trust.

## Demographic Differences

To better understand how the perception of community attachment differs across the Dan River Region, the differences between the demographic groups established in Chapter I were tested.

In 2019, women were significantly more likely than men to report that it is very important to feel a part of the community, 64.6% compared to 35.4%, respectfully. Women were only slightly more likely than men to feel at home where they live, 80.6% compared to 79.3%. Men, however, were more likely to care what others in the community thought of their actions. Approximately 72.8% of men reported that they somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree that they care what others think of their actions as compared to only 62.9% of women.

Danville and Pittsylvania County residents were more likely than Caswell County residents to report that they would like to be living in the same community in five years. This may, in part,

be due to the economic differences between the three locations, as willingness to live in an area has been tied to income. In 2019, residents of Caswell County reported significantly lower incomes than residents of Danville or Pittsylvania County, supporting the suggestion that Caswell County residents are more likely to be interested in moving communities in order to seek out better opportunities.

Residents of Pittsylvania County and Caswell County were also more likely to feel safe in their communities, both during the day and at night. Caswell County residents, however, were significantly more likely to feel that schools in their community were unsafe for students.

An individual's race also impacts their attachment to the community. Respondents who self-identified as white reported that they are more likely to know their neighbors and expect to be living in the Dan River Region in five years. Self-identified black or African American respondents were more likely to have close relatives within walking or short-driving distance. They were also more likely to feel that the schools in their community were unsafe for students. Respondents who self-identified as American Indian, Native American, or Alaskan Native were more likely to have been negatively affected by the economy over the previous two years, all other races being equally in the likelihood of a negative effect.

As expected, respondents with higher income and higher levels of educational attainment were more likely to feel an overall sense of community attachment. This includes their sense of belonging in the community and their feeling of safety. Contrary to the previous surveys, income and education were inversely tied to whether the respondent had been negatively affected in the economy. Lower income and less educated respondents reported higher rates of being negatively affected over the previous two years due to changes in the economy.

Age and marital status were also positively associated to community attachment. Older respondents and married respondents were more likely to know their neighbors and report a desire to live in the Dan River Region in the next five years. Inversely, younger respondents and divorced respondents were less likely to have strong community attachments.

Those without children under the age of 18 were less likely to want or expect to live in the Dan River Region in the next five years. They were also less likely to be affected by the economy, whether positively or negatively, over the previous two years.

Homeownership was shown to be tied with community attachment. Respondents who reported owning their own home knew more of their neighbors than renters. They were also more likely to want and expect to live in the region in five years. Homeowners also reported a stronger perception of belonging in the community, a stronger perception that they have a lot in common with neighbors, and that it was important for them to live in the area. They also have a stronger feeling of being at home and an increased perception that their community is safe.

Length of residence in the Dan River Region was also tied to community attachment. Respondents who reported that they have residents in the community for 20 years or more were more likely to know their neighbors. They were also more likely to have close relatives nearby. Additionally, length of residence was tied to the desire and expectation of living in the same community in five years. Long-term residents are also more likely to feel at home in the community, maintain a perception of commonality with others in the community, and have a sense of belonging in the region.

Respondents that live in single-family dwellings were more likely than others to want and expect to live in the Dan River Region in five years.

Those who lived in apartments or condominiums were most likely to want and expect to leave the area. Respondents who live in a duplex or townhouse reported that they felt less safe in their community, but the comparison to other housing types was statistically insignificant.

Lastly, respondents who reported that they live out in the country or rural communities were more likely to feel safe overall in their communities. They were also more likely to have close relatives within walking distance; however, respondents from small towns and suburban areas were more likely to have close relatives within a 15-minute drive of their home. Survey respondents that live in an urban area or small city or a rural village reported a higher sense of belonging. They also reported that it is more important to feel a part of their community. Retirees were also exhibited a strong sense of community attachment. According to survey results, they reported more interest in living in the community in the future and a stronger sense of belonging.

## IV. Civic Participation

### Introduction

As the network of relationships amongst people that live within a community, the stock of an individual's social capital not only influences their perceptions of the community, but their willingness to become involved in it. One potential means of involvement is their civic participation. That is, their participation in volunteering or participation in community organizations.

Volunteering or participating in community organizations is a way for individuals to develop connections with other people, particularly those of like minds, form social networks throughout the community, and engage in social activities. At the same time, volunteering in community and other civic organizations provides individuals the opportunity to engage in activities that benefits the Dan River Region. By examining the extent of civic engagement by residents of the region, we are able to better understand the stock of social capital within the community and the potential for individual and collective benefits from those engagements.

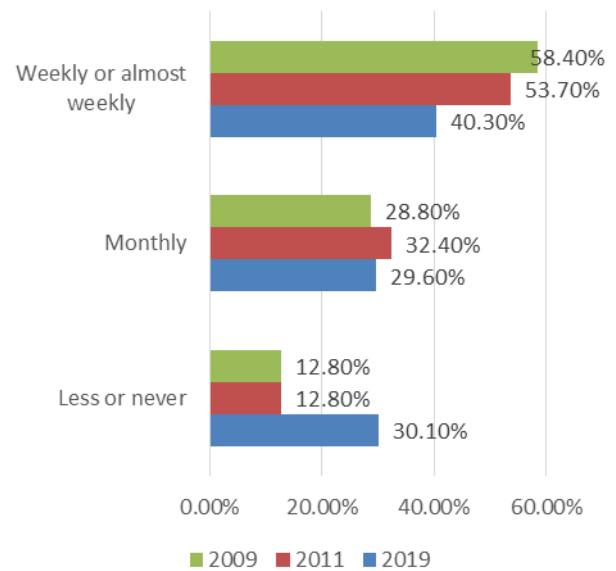
### Religious Activities

Respondents were asked:

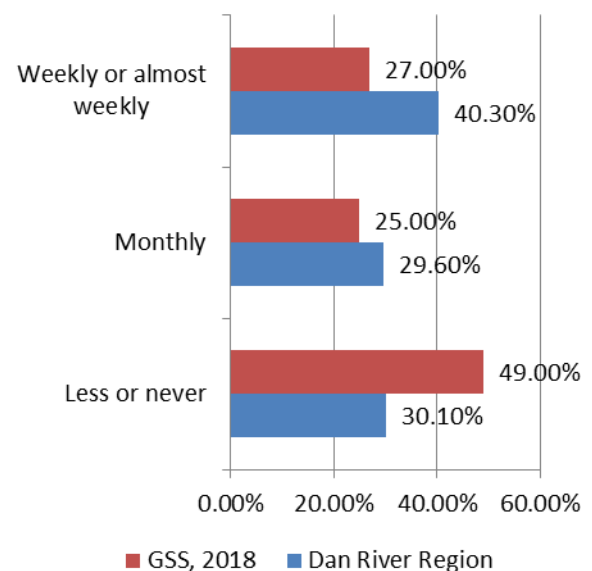
*“Not including weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?”*

Only two-fifths (40.3%) of respondents reported that they attend religious services either every week or almost every week. Another 29.6% of respondents said that they attend either once or twice a month or a few times per year. Almost one-third (30.1%) reported that they only attend religious services once a year or less.

**Figure 23. Religious Service Attendance**



**Figure 24. Religious Service Attendance, Comparison to National Data**



An overview of religious service attendance is provided in Figure 23. As shown in the figure, religious attendance has diminished over time. The 2011 Social Capital Survey found no statistically significant difference in the rate of attendance between 2009 and 2011. In 2019, however, the difference in those who attend weekly or almost weekly is statistically significant, as is the difference in those who attend once a year or less to never. These findings are in line with the national trend of declining religiosity.

Despite the decline in religiosity throughout the Dan River Region, when compared to national trends, residents of the region are significantly more religious. This is shown in Figure 24, which provides a comparison of religious service attendance for survey respondents to the 2019 Social Capital Survey with the 2018 General Social Survey (GSS), a national survey that monitors social trends.

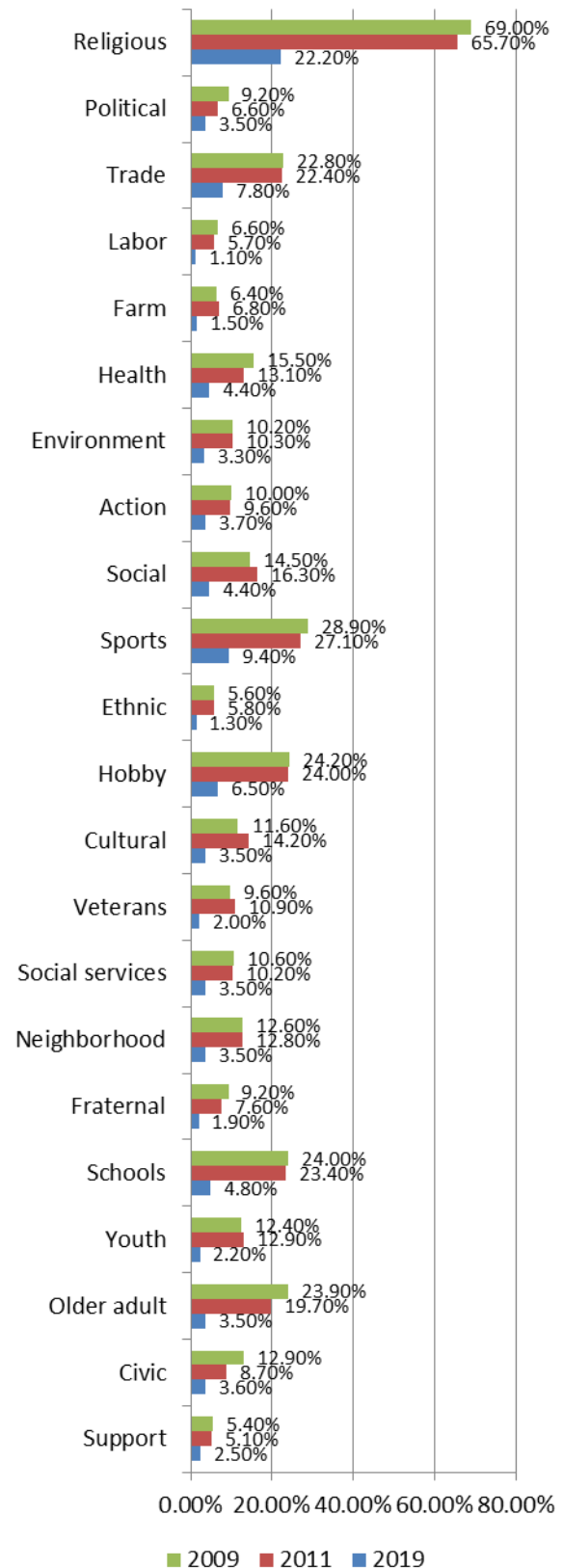
Respondents were also asked: “[i]n the last 12 months, have you been involved in any activities related to religious, spiritual, or church-sponsored groups?” Almost three-fifths (58.4%) reported yes and 41.7% reported no. These results do not represent a statistically significant change from the 2011 survey.

## Organization Membership

Respondents were provided a list of the types of organizations that they may have been involved with. They were then asked to select the types of organizations that they had been a member of in the last twelve months.

Of respondents who reported membership in an organization, the most common type of organizational membership was religious organizations. Just over one-fifth (22.2%) of respondents reported membership in a religious organization. The second most prominent

**Figure 25. Group Membership**



organization type in which people have memberships were health clubs, sports clubs, etc. (9.3%), followed by professional societies and business associations (7.8%), hobby, garden, or recreation groups (6.5%), and PTA or school support groups (4.8%). Figure 25 provides a comparative look at group membership by organizational type for all three Social Capital Surveys.

Following the practice of the previous surveys, an analysis was conducted to look at the impact of the community attachment index on organizational membership. The results of this analysis showed that community attachment was a positive and significant predictor of membership in organizations, particularly religiously affiliated ones.

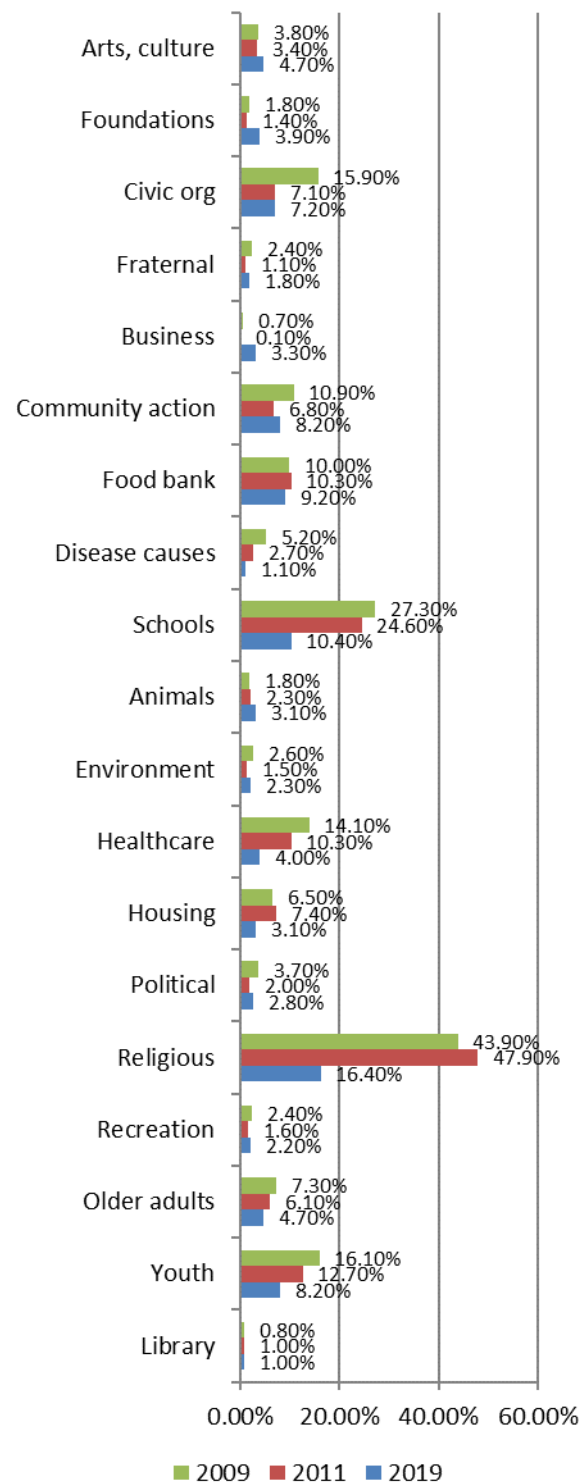
## Volunteering

More than half of respondents (63.5%) reported that they have volunteered their time to organizations such as charities, schools, hospitals, religious organizations, neighborhood associations, and civic or other groups.

Respondents who do volunteer are most likely to have volunteered for a religious organization or church (16.4%). The second most likely area for volunteerism is in schools, education, and tutoring (10.4%), followed closely by foodbanks (9.2%), and community action organizations and youth activities (8.2% each). An overview of the type of volunteerism reported in the survey is provided in Figure 26.

A comparative look at the type of volunteerism observed in the Dan River Region over time supports the earlier evidence of a decline in religiosity throughout the region. Volunteering with a religious organization or church has significantly declined over time. The declines observed since 2011 in volunteering in schools, education, and tutoring and volunteering with

**Figure 26. Types of Volunteering**



youth organizations are statistically significant. Other changes between the 2011 and 2019 rates in the types of volunteerism, however, are not statistically significant.

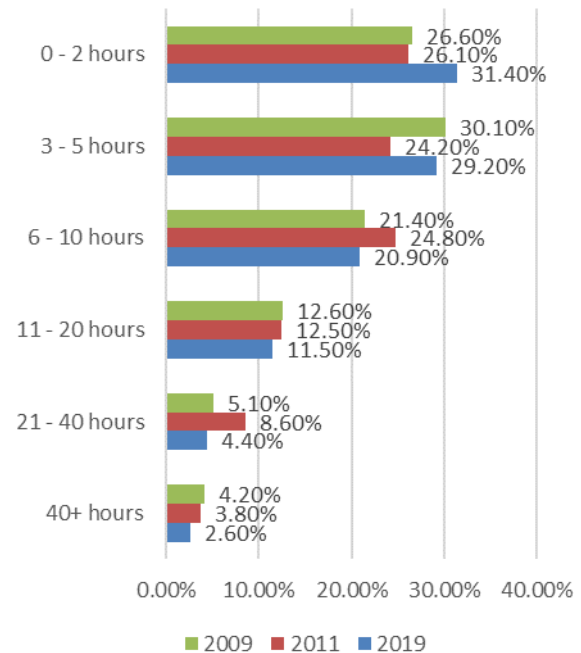
Of the respondents who do volunteer, less than one-third (31.4%) reported that they volunteer 2 hours or less per month. This was closely followed by those who volunteer between 3 and 5 hours per month (29.2%). About two-fifths (20.9%) reported volunteering between 6 and 10 hours, and about one-tenth (11.5%) reported volunteering between 11 and 20 hours per month. Only 6.7% of respondents reported that they volunteer 20 or more hours per month. The median number of hours that survey respondents reported they volunteer per month is between 3 and 5 hours. Data on the hours of volunteerism is shown in Figure 27.

Comparatively, the results show a decline in the duration of volunteering within the Dan River Region over time. This decline is most prominently seen with those volunteering 21 hours or more of their time per month. On the other hand, the percentage of respondents who volunteer between 0 and 5 hours per month has increased. Overall, the change in the share of survey respondents that reported volunteering, as well as the shifts in the number of hours reported here, after statistically significant.

## Civic Skills

In addition to membership in an organization and volunteering in the community, individuals may acquire skills and experience through participation in civic organizations. Research has shown that civic skills, as well as communication and organizational abilities, are valuable for the

**Figure 27. Hours Volunteered per Month**



community and its overall health. If an individual is able to effectively communicate through speech or writing, or if they are capable of organizing meetings, they are more likely to be effective in their community engagement.<sup>11</sup>

To capture the civic skills of residents in the Dan River Region, survey respondents were asked about their involvement in organizations. About a quarter (25.8%) of respondents said that they had served as an officer of an organization or committee during the last 12 months. Nearly a third (31.8%) reported that they had written a letter or e-mail for a group, and 26.2% reported that they had made a public presentation. A third of respondents (33.4%) also reported that they had helped plan or lead a meeting.

Figure 28 shows the share of respondents who participated in these types of civic activities. Survey respondents in 2019 were more likely to have participated in each of the four categories.

<sup>11</sup> Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., & Brady, H. E. (1995). *Voice and equality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard College.



Additionally, the changes to all four categories since 2011 was statistically significant. These increases are positive indicators for the Dan River Region as civic skills are key predictors of engagement in community affairs and political issues.

A total of 931 respondents answered the survey's question regarding charitable contributions, 685 of the respondents reported that they have financially supported a charitable cause. The average total annual giving of those that support charitable causes was \$2,487.96. Another 246 respondents reported that they did not financially support a charitable organization.

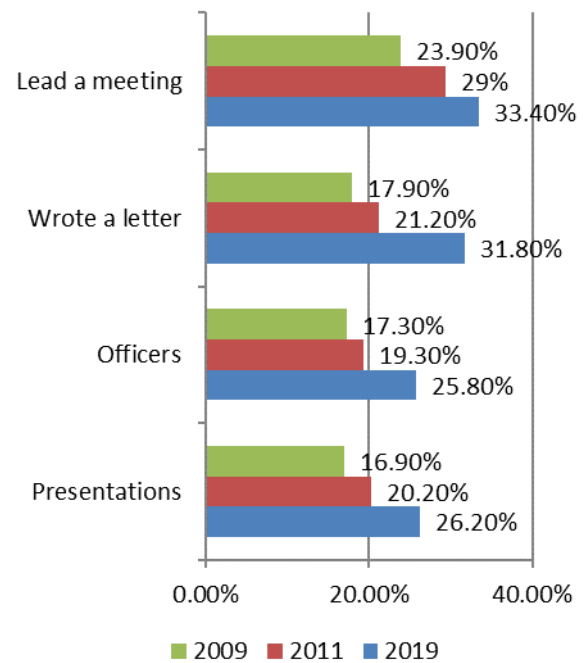
Over a quarter of respondents (27.3%) reported that they have given \$1,000 or more to religious and non-religious organizations in their community. Only 6.7% reported that they have given between \$500 and \$1000. Another 14.1% reported that they have given between \$100 and \$500, whereas 4.6% of respondents said that they gave less than \$100 in charitable giving.

## Demographic Differences

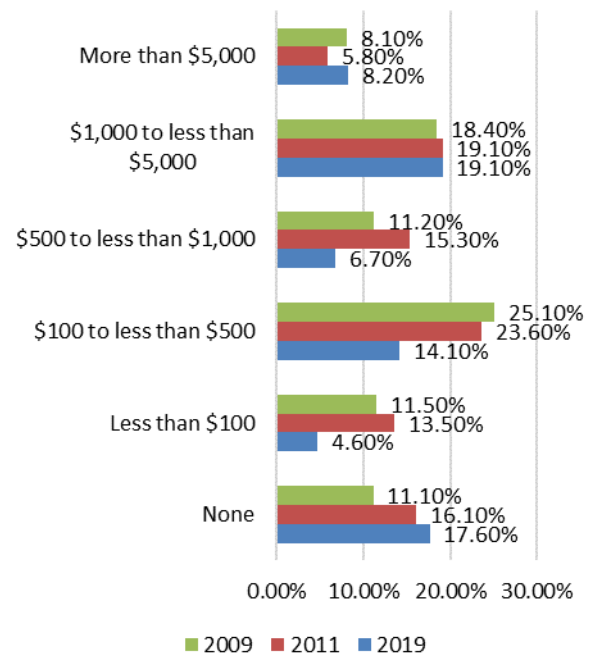
As with the 2009 and 2011 surveys, testing was conducted to determine the demographic differences for specific indicators of civic participation. Consistent with the previous surveys, women were more likely than men (66.7% and 33.3%, respectfully) to be involved in any type of church-sponsored activities. In regards to the type of organizations where respondents help membership, women were more likely to hold membership in all types of organizations, except for veterans' groups, labor unions, and fraternal groups.

Considering the impact of race on civic participation, respondents who self-identified as African American or black have a higher rate of involvement in church-sponsored activities.

**Figure 28. Civic Skills**



**Figure 29. Charitable Giving**





About 64.9% of African American or black respondents reported that they have been involved in religious or church-sponsored groups, compared to 60.0% of self-identified Asian or Pacific Islanders and 56.0% of self-identified white respondents. The racial divide of involvement in other types of organizations was statistically insignificant, with respondents from each race equally participating in each type of organization.

Regardless of income, religious organizations were the primary source of membership for respondents. For respondents with an income of \$30,000 or more, the second most prominent type of organizational membership was for health clubs. Respondents with an income of \$29,999 or less reported hobby organizations as their second most prominent type. Considering the impact of education, for all measurement of education except for those who started but did not finish high school, religious organizations were the primary organization type for membership. Respondents with some graduate work reported professional or trade associations as their respondent most prominent type of organizational membership. All other respondents with a degree reported a health club as their secondary type of membership. (There were not enough responses for those with less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education or those with some high school education but no diploma to sufficiently establish membership order beyond the most frequented membership.

Consistent with previous iterations of the survey, age was found to be a significant factor in civic participation. Respondents aged 65 and older were more likely to be members of religious organizations. They were also more likely to be involved in religious or church-sponsored activities. Younger respondents were more likely to be involved in social organizations or active in organizations related to social causes, such as animal rights or environmentalism. Respondents between the ages of 26 and 49 were more likely to be members of professional or trade

associations, as well as school-related groups. Similarly, respondents with children were more likely to be members of school-related groups and youth organizations.

Consistent with the 2011 study, homeownership was found to be tied with civic participation. Over three-fifths of homeowners (61.6%) reported that they were actively involved in religious or church-sponsored groups, compared to just 49.3% of renters. They were also more likely to be members of health clubs, professional and trade associations, and hobby groups. Homeowners were only slightly more likely to volunteer. About 65.7% of homeowners responded that they volunteer compared to 57.8% of renters.

Marital status is also linked to the measures of civic participation. Widowed and married respondents were most likely to attend a church service each week (31.4% and 30.0%, respectfully). Married and separated respondents, however, were more likely to be involved in religious or church-sponsored groups (63.2% and 63.0%, respectfully). As with other demographic groups, membership in a religious organization was the primary type of membership observed across all marital status. Respondents who were married or had been married reported that they were more likely to belong to health clubs as their secondary membership. Separated or divorced respondents reported professional or trade associations as their secondary type of membership, and widowers were more likely to be members of neighborhood or homeowners' associations as their secondary membership.

After membership in a religious organization, residents of Danville and Pittsylvania County were more likely to be involved in health clubs. Alternatively, residents of Caswell County were more likely to be involved in professional or trade associations.

Finally, the duration of residents in the Dan River Region was found to have no significant impact on civic participation. This may be the result of newer residents participating in community organizations as a means of building social networks in the region.



## ***V. Political Participation***

### **Introduction**

Political participation is any activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action, regardless of whether the influence was direct or indirect. Political participation provides residents of a community the opportunity to communicate with governmental officials about their ideas, preferences, and desires. Residents of the Dan River Region have several options for this communication. That is, they can express their views directly to public officials or indirectly by voting and influencing electoral outcomes. They may also volunteer time or offer financial support for political causes as a means of communicating their views.

### **General Interest and Attendance at Meetings and Rallies**

Respondents to the 2019 survey were asked the question:

*“How interested are you in politics or national affairs?”*

More than three-quarters of respondents (76.3%) reported that they were very interested or somewhat interested in politics or national affairs. Only 16.8% reported that they were only slightly interested, and 7.0% said that they had no interest at all. These findings do show growth in political interest since the 2011 iteration of the survey. This growth is also in line with national trends.

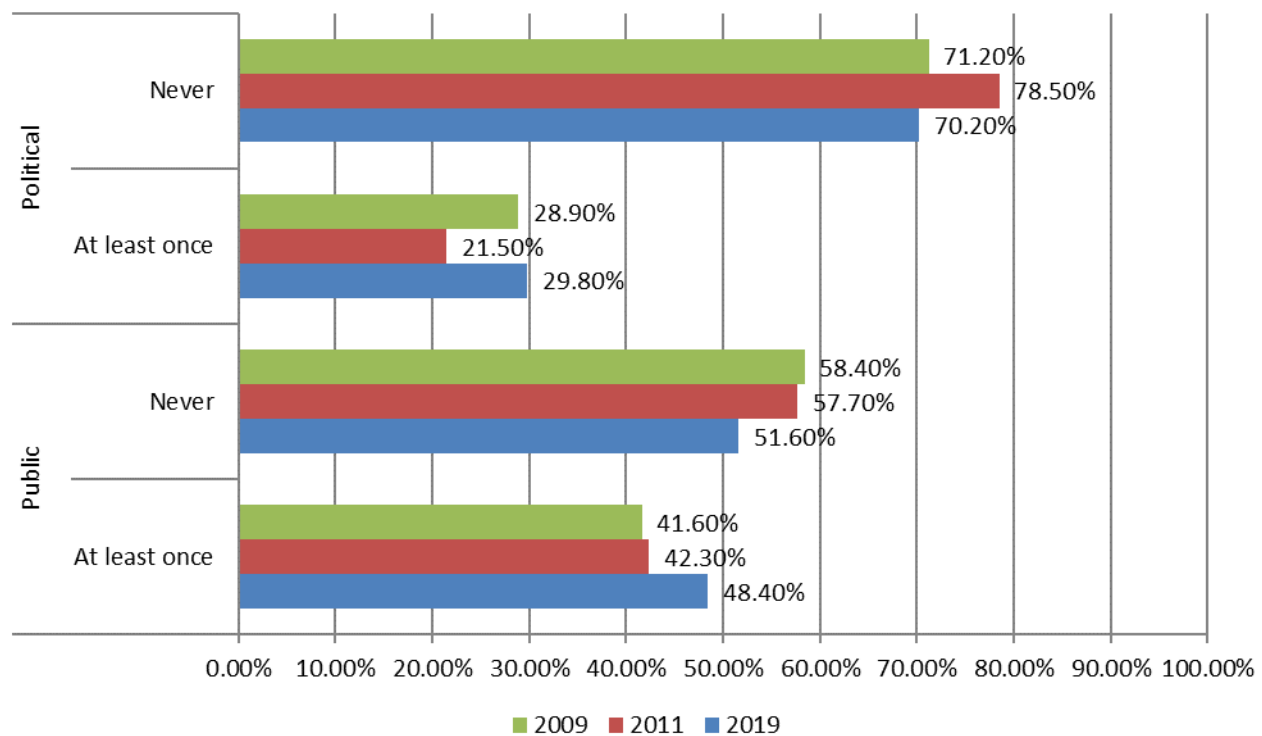
Interest in political can also be measured by looking at the level of participation in public meetings. On asking survey respondents about participation in public meetings where there was a discussion of community or school affairs, 30.3% of respondents reported that they had

attended such meetings a few times during the past 12 months. Almost one-fifth (18.1%) reported that they had attended such a meeting once, and more than half (51.6%) reported that they had never attended such a meeting. Almost three-quarters of respondents also reported that they had never attended a political meeting or rally. About 16.1% reported that they had attended a political meeting or rally a few times, and 13.7% said that had only done so once.

Figure 30 provides an overview of participation in public or political meetings for respondents in 2009, 2011, and 2019. In the 2011 survey report, a statistically significant decline in attendance was found for respondents in 2011 as compared to 2009. When comparing 2011 to 2019, a statistically significant increase in participation was found. Across attendance at both public and political meetings. The rate of attendance at political meetings, however, was not statistically significant from the response rates of 2009. Given the politically charged environments of 2008 and 2018, a similar rate of political participation is not surprising. One important change from previous surveys is the increase of participation in public meetings, which reflects a growth in local politics and community action rather than the state and national politics typically reflected in political meetings.

### **Voting Participation**

Elections are an opportunity for residents of a community to formally register their preferences and directly influence the political climate of an area. In 2019, nearly all (93.7%) of respondents said that they were registered to vote, and 84.8% reported that they voted in the November 2018 election. Data on voter participation should be interpreted with caution. Previous research on voting behavior has shown that survey respondents are likely to over-report their voting

**Figure 30.** Attend Political or Public Meetings

behavior.<sup>12</sup> In comparison to responses to the 2011 survey, the increase in the overall share of respondents who reported that they are registered to vote is statistically significant; however, the share of voters who reported having voted in the last election was not shown to be a statistically significant difference. The number of registered voters may be related to historical presidential campaigns, but the lesser number of respondents reporting that they voted may be tied to the mid-term elections of 2010 and 2018.

When asked about how often they vote in city or local elections, more than four-fifths (80.2%) of 2019 respondents reported that they voted most of the time, most always, or always. More than half (56.2%) reported that they always vote in city or local elections. Nearly equal shares

reported that they only vote sometimes (6.2%), rarely (4.9%), or never (5.6%). Increased participation in voting at the local level further supports the growth of interest in local affairs that was observed in meeting attendance. An overview of local voting behavior is reported in Figure 31.

## Other Political Activities

In addition to voting, there are a number of other ways in which residents can be active in their communities and have an influence on government decision-making. These activities can include signing petitions, participation in a political campaign, or participation in a demonstration, protest, or boycott. Residents

<sup>12</sup> Abramson, P., & Clagett, W. (1986). Race related differences in self-reported and validated turnout in 1984. *Journal of Politics*, 48(2), 412-422.

may also be effective in solving neighborhood and community problems by working together. They may also work together to solve problem at the state or national level.

Overall, the results of the 2019 survey continue to suggest that residents of the Dan River Region are not likely to participate in these types of political activities. About three-fifths (60.3%) of respondents reported that they had signed a petition in the last two-years; however, in the remaining cases less than thirty percent said that they had participated in the activities. In all categories, participation in political activities have increased since 2011. The difference in 2011 and 2019 rates were statistically significant in every case except for working to solve community problems. Figure 32 provides the participation rates by type of participation and by survey year.

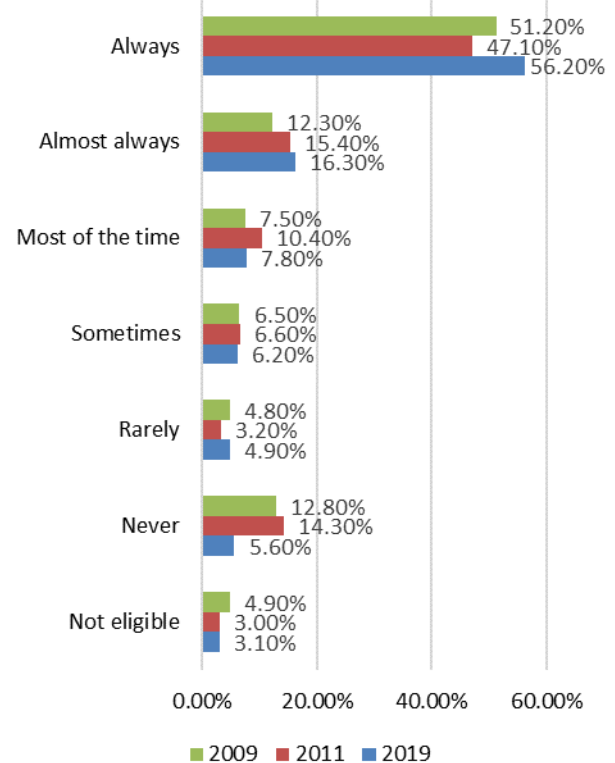
## Resources to Solve Problems

Respondents to the 2019 survey were asked the question:

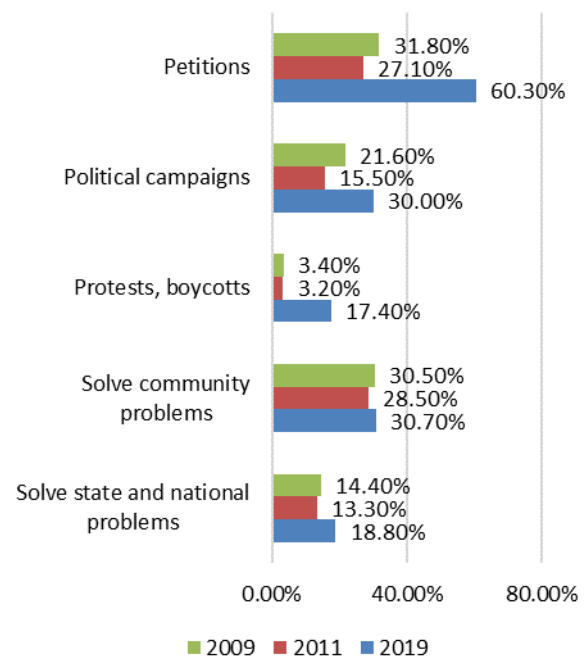
*“Do you have any connections or resources outside the community that you can draw on for help in solving community problems or issues?”*

Just over one-fifth (21.6%) of respondents reported that they have the connections or resources outside the community that they can draw on for help in solving community problems or issues. When asked to elaborate on what resources they have to draw on, some of the thing’s respondents mentioned include churches, community or religious leaders, elected officials, state agencies, national organizations, friends, and family. Appendix E provides a table of the individual responses.

**Figure 31. Voted in City or Local Elections**



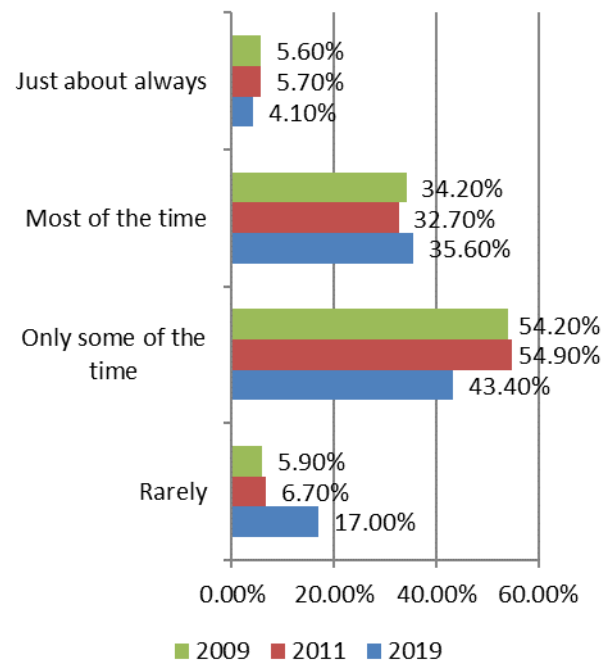
**Figure 32. Participation in Political Activities**



## Trust in Government

Survey respondents were also asked about their level of trust in local government. In 2019, only 4.1% of respondents reported that they can just about always trust their local government to do what is right. A little over one-third (35.6%) said that they can trust their local government most of the time. Just over two-fifths (43.4%) said that they trust their local government to do what is right only some of the time, and 17.0% said that they rarely trust their local government to do what is right. The rate of trust just about always, only some of the time, and rarely were statistically different from the rates observed in 2011. The difference in the rate of trust most of the time was not statistically significant. Figure 33 provides an overview of how respondents reported their trust in local government.

**Figure 33.** Trust in Government



## Demographic Differences

In 2019, survey respondents from Danville, Pittsylvania County, and Caswell County reported near equal responses on whether they were registered to vote, with no statistical difference between the groups. Residents of Danville, however, were slightly more likely to have voted in the 2018 election (87.0%) than residents of Pittsylvania County (83.5%) or Caswell County (79.0%).

Due to the high rate of voter registration reported in the survey, there is no gender, ethnic, or racial distinction between groups in terms of whether they are registered to vote. Women, however, were slightly more likely to have voted in November 2018 than men (86.6% compared to 81.0%, respectfully). Respondents who self-identified as white were also slightly more likely to have voted in November (87.1%) compared to self-identified African American or black respondents (81.6%).

Educational attainment and income were also found to be a strong predictor of political participation, with both being tied to a respondent's participation in elections by voting in 2018. Respondents with higher levels of education are more likely to have worked with their neighbors to solve a neighborhood or community problem. Compared to previous iterations of the Social Capital Survey, in 2019 education was not shown to be a significant factor in an individual's trust in local government.

Age was also a contributing factor to political participation. Older residents are more likely to be interested in politics or national affairs. They are also more likely to be registered to vote. As a respondent ages, they are also more likely to report that they almost always or always vote in local elections; however, this effect begins to taper off for respondents aged 65 and over. Inversely, younger respondents are more likely to have worked to solve a problem at the state or national level, and they are more likely to have

the connections or resources outside the Dan River Region that they can draw on to solve community problems.

In 2019, marital status was found to have only a minimal influence on political participation. The rates of being very interested or somewhat interested in politics or national affairs for respondents who were married, divorced, windowed, or never married were not statistically significant. Respondents who were separated, however, had a significantly lower interest. Married and divorced respondents were more likely to have voted in the November 2018 election than others. There were no significant differences in the level of trust in local government to do what is right across marital status.

Homeownership was a strong predictor of interest in politics or national affairs. Approximately 88.2% of homeowners voted in the November 2018 election. Nearly as many (78.0%) reported that they most always or always vote in local elections. They are also more likely than renters to have signed a petition, participated or contributed to a campaign, or participated in a protest during the previous two years. On the other hand, only 75.2% of renters voted in the 2018 election and only 58.4% of them reported that they most always or always vote in local elections.

Respondents in the Dan River Region who described their community as an urban area or small city or as a small town are more likely to have an interest in politics and national affairs. This interest continues through most of the political participation measured used in the study. The differences, however, are generally not significant, implying that type of community is not a good indicator of participation.

Length of residence in the Dan River Region was inversely associated with an interest in politics or national affairs, with those having lived in the region for less than six months having

significantly higher rates of interest. Approximately 58.3% of these residents reported that they were very interested in politics and national affairs, and another 20.8% reported that they were somewhat interested. However, long-term residents were more likely to have voted in the 2018 election. This may be, in part, due to the capacity of residents to locate to the region and registered to vote in time for the election.

Employment status was also inversely associated with political participation, such that respondents who were outside the job market (i.e., retirees, disabled respondents, homeworkers, and students) had greater interest in politics and national affairs. Respondents who were employed full-time, retirees, homeworkers, and those who were permanently disabled were more likely to have voted in the November 2018 election than those working part-time, the temporary laid off, the unemployed, and students. The differences between the groups in the other categories of political participation were insignificant.





## VI. People in the Economy

Economic research has shown that the economic conditions a region impact the quality of life that residents within the region will have.<sup>13</sup> Included among the economic conditions are employment conditions. Meaningful employment and the feeling of satisfaction that individuals receive from their job can impact other aspects of community life. Relationships established within the work community and the level of connectedness that people have with others at the workplace provide much needed social resources beyond just income.

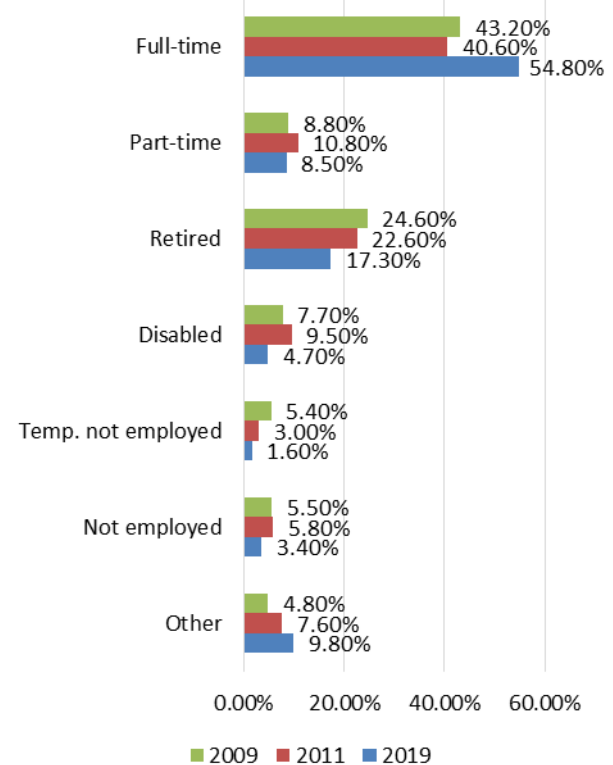
### Employment

In 2019, a little over three-fifths (63.3%) of respondents reported that they were employed full-time or part time; 54.8% were employed full-time and an additional 8.5% were employed part-time. Nearly one-fifth (17.3%) of the respondents were retired. Those not employed included 4.7% who were permanently disabled, 1.6% who were temporarily laid off or disabled, and 3.4% who were unemployed. Another 3.3% reported that they were a homemaker, 3.3% were students, and 3.3% reported some other form of employment arrangement.

Figure 34 provides an overview of the 2019 results on employment, as well as the 2009 and 2011 results. Based on a comparison to previous years, respondents were significantly more likely to be employed full-time. The differences in all categories across all years except for part-time employment were statistically significant.

More than two-thirds (67.0%) of employed respondents worked in the City of Danville.

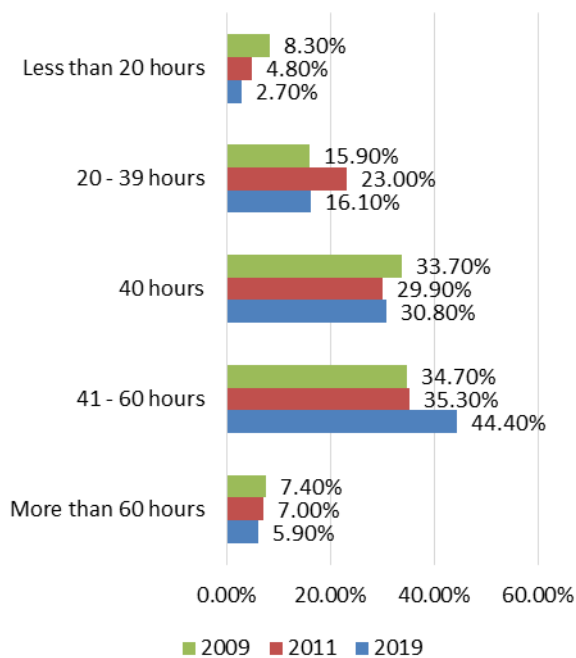
**Figure 34. Employment**



Another 13.2% reported that their job was located in Pittsylvania County. Only 4.7% said that they worked in Caswell County, and 15.1% reported their job as being located outside of the Dan River Region. More than one-fifth (22.1%) of employed respondents also reported having more than one paid job.

The number of hours worked by employed respondents is provided in Figure 35. In 2019, 5.9% of respondents reported working an average of 60 hours or more each week. More than two-fifths (44.4%) reported working between 41 and 60 hours, and almost one-third (30.8%) reported working an average of 40 hours a week. Just under one-fifth (18.8%) of employed respondents said that they work less than 40

<sup>13</sup> Diener, E., & Suh, E. (1997). Measuring quality of life: Economic, social, and subjective indicators. *Social Indicators Research*, 40(1-2), 189-216.

**Figure 35. Hours Worked**

hours each week. In comparison to the 2011 data, only the rate of those working 40 hours per week and those working more than 60 hours per week were statistically insignificant.

When asked about their commute time to work, the overwhelming majority of respondents (81.7%) reported a daily commute time of 30 minutes or less.

## Perceptions of Work

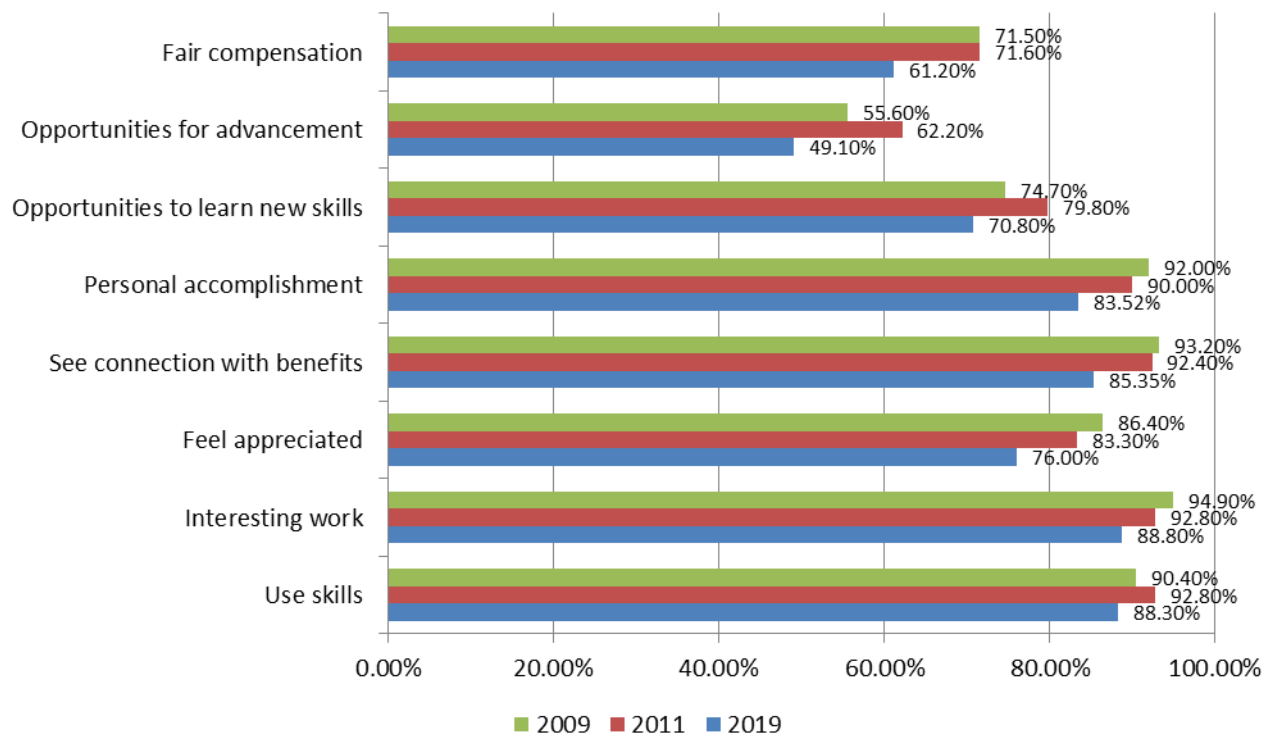
To understand how residents of the Dan River Region feel about their employment, survey respondents were asked to read a list of statements and rate how much they agree with the perception of work displayed in the statement. The responses to the statements were aimed at clarifying respondents' engagement with their employment and the sense of meaning that they derive from their work. Overall, the response to these statements were positive.

Most respondents (88.8%) reported that they find their work to be interesting and that they see the connection between their work and the benefits that others receive (85.4%). However, respondents were not as positive about their opportunities to learn new skills (70.8%) and fair compensation (59.2%). Less than half (49.1%) felt that they had an opportunity for advance in their current job.

Figure 36 provides an overview of the perceptions regarding employment. The percentages shown are the percentages of respondents that somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree with the statements regarding their perceptions of work. In comparison to the 2009 and 2011 surveys, residents of the Dan River Region have a declining perception of their employment and the work opportunities that are available to them. In most cases, the perception still high, but any downward trend is troubling as residents start feeling unrewarded by their work.

Respondents who were employed were asked if they were required to obtain a specific degree or certification other than a high school diploma for their current position. More than half (56.0%) said that a specific degree or certification was required. This compares to only 39.6% of respondents giving the same answer in 2011.

When asked if they would be likely to take a special course or receive any special job training if given the opportunity, 45.9% said that they were extremely likely to take the opportunity. Another 31.6% reported that they were somewhat likely to take a course or receive job training. When asked for what reason they might get special job training, nearly half (47.7%) reported that they would get the training to improve their job. Just over a quarter (26.2%) said they would take the training to change jobs, and 17.0% said they would take the training only if required by the jobs. The rates for training that is required for a job was not statistically significant. The reasons provided for special training are provided in Figure 37.

**Figure 36. Perceptions of Work**

## Economic Situation

In 2009 and 2011, survey respondents were asked whether they had been affected by the events of the Great Recession. Specifically, respondents were asked the question:

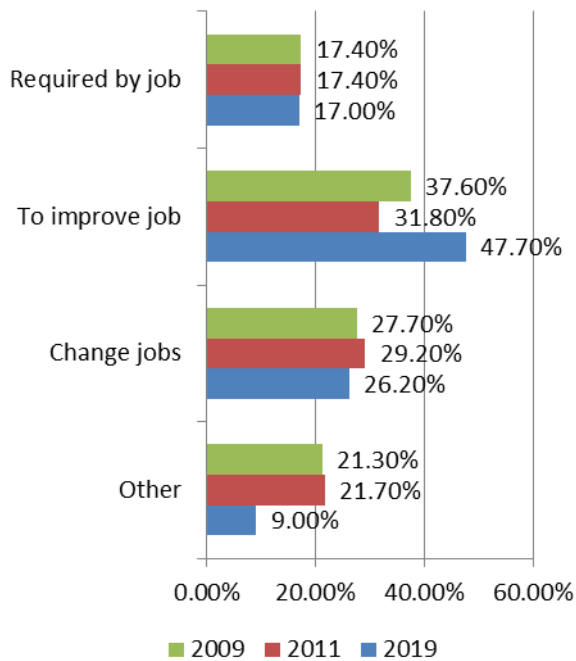
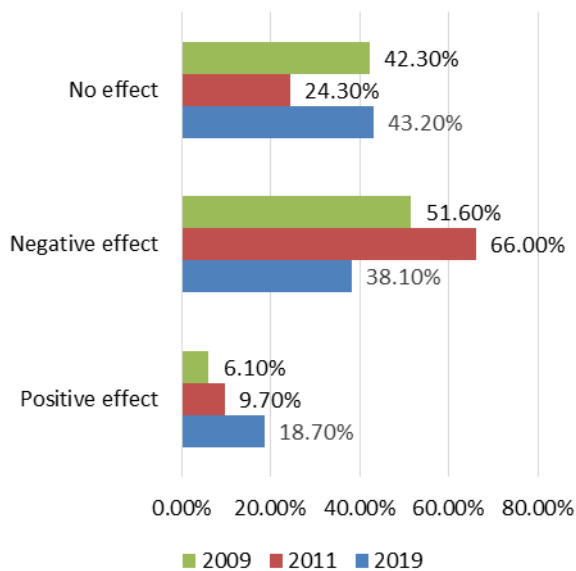
*“Have changes in the economy over the past two years affected your household, either positively or negatively?”*

Approximately two-fifths (43.2%) reported that they had not been affected by the economy during the previous two years. The remaining 56.8% reported having received some form of effect. Just over a third (38.1%) reported that the effect had been negative, and almost one-fifth (18.7%) reported that the effect has been positive. The results of the responses regarding the impact of the economic situation are provided in Figure 38. Significant and positive changes are seen when comparing the 2011 and 2019 survey

results, with significantly more respondents having been positively impacted and significantly fewer respondents having been negatively impacted.

Respondents who reported that they had been negatively affected were asked a follow-up question to determine how they were impacted. The most common affect was a higher cost of living, with 16.1% of negatively impacted respondents having reported the affect. About 14.5% reported that they had found it hard to pay bills and make ends meet, and 13.4% reported increased crime or gang activities. About one-tenth reported a loss of income (10.9%) or medical and health-related issues (9.3%).

The decline in those who have been negatively impacted by the economy since 2009 and 2011 is a reflection of the economic turnaround experienced in the United States, but it also a reflection of a growing economy in the Dan River

**Figure 37. Reasons for Special Training****Figure 38. Affected by the Economic Situation**

Region. The reduction in the number of areas where respondents were affected also supports the notion of a growing economy in the region.

## Demographic Differences

How different demographic groups within the Dan River Region perceived the economy was also considered. Men were more likely than women (63.9% compared to 50.1%, respectfully) to be employed full-time. Women were more likely to be working part-time and unemployed. The distinction between the perceptions of male and female respondents on their employment and the satisfaction they receive were statistically insignificant across all of the statement categories.

Self-identified African American or blacks exhibited slightly higher rates of full- and part-time employment when compared to self-identified white respondents. They were also more likely to have more than one paid job. Overall, racial divides based on the effect of the economy and the perceptions on employment were statistically insignificant.

As expected, the level of educational attainment was tied to a respondent's employment status, with those who have received more education being more likely to be working full-time. Educational attainment was also positively associated with the interest of respondents to take a special course or receive special job training. When looking at the connection between education and the meaning that a respondent received from their employment, higher levels of educational attainment were only connected to the perception of opportunities for advancement in a job.

Generally, income was positively tied to perceptions of work, with higher income respondents having more favorable views. There

was no significant relationship between income and interest in additional training.

Age was also found to be an important factor, with younger respondents reporting higher ratings on the assessment of their work perceptions. They would also be more likely to take a special course or training. Respondents with children were more likely to be employed full-time (69.8% compared to 47.1%), and they are also more likely to take a special course or job training.

Considering marital status, separated respondents reported lower ratings on the assessments of work perception. They are, however, more likely than others to be employed full-time, whereas divorced respondents are more likely to have more than one job.

Lastly, homeowners were slightly more likely than renters to be employed full-time. They were also twice as likely to be retired. More homeowners reported that a specific degree or certification was required for their current position than did renters. Renters, on the other hand, were more likely to have more than one paid job, and they were more likely to take a special course or receive additional job training.



## VII. Children and Schools

An ongoing concern is the perception of residents in the Dan River Region about children. Specifically, how they view the quality of education that children are receiving, and whether people feel that children have to leave the region in order to make a living and achieve a good quality of life.

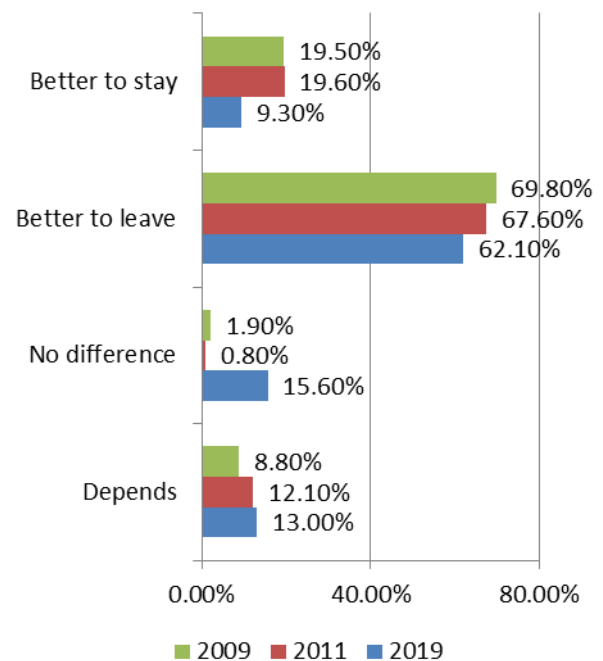
### Raising Children

In the 2019 Social Capital Survey, only 5.4% of respondents said that the Dan River Region was an excellent place to raise children. Another 24.4% said it was a good place. Nearly two-fifths (39.0%), however, reported that it was a bad place, and 31.2% said it was a poor or terrible place to raise children (24.5% and 6.7%, respectfully).

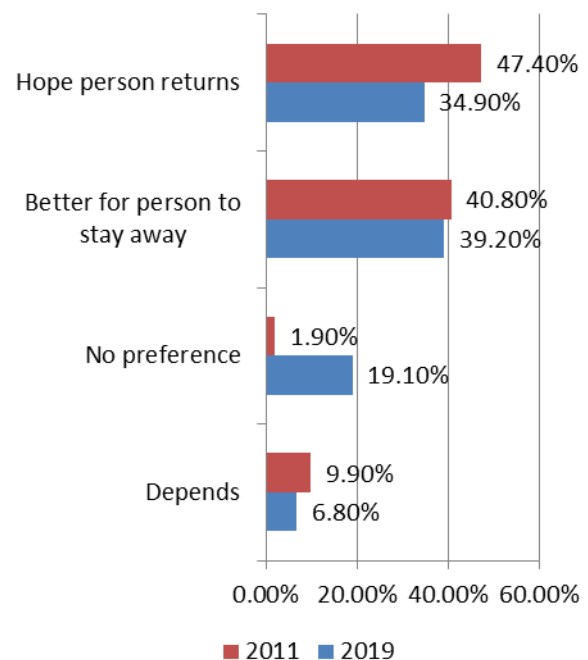
Nearly two-thirds (62.1%) of respondents reported that when a child from the Dan River Region is ready to leave home, it is better for them to move to some other area. The responses to this question are provided in Figure 39. Just under one-tenth (9.3%) reported that it is better for them to stay in the area. Another 15.6% said that it makes no difference whether they stay or go, and 13.0% said that it depends. Respondents who indicated that it depends were invited to expand upon the answer. The expanded responses are provided in Appendix E.

Figure 40 provides the answers to a follow-up question that was asked in both the 2011 and 2019 surveys. In the follow-up question, respondents were asked about whether they hoped that a young person who moved away for other opportunities would return to the region. About one-third (34.9%) said that they hoped that person would return. Nearly two-fifths (39.2%) said that it would be better for them to stay away, and nearly one-fifth (19.1%)

**Figure 39. What is Best for Children**



**Figure 40. Hope Young Person Returns to Work and Raise Family**





indicated no preference. Another 6.8% of respondents said that it depends. These respondents were invited to expand upon the answer. The expanded responses are provided in Appendix E.

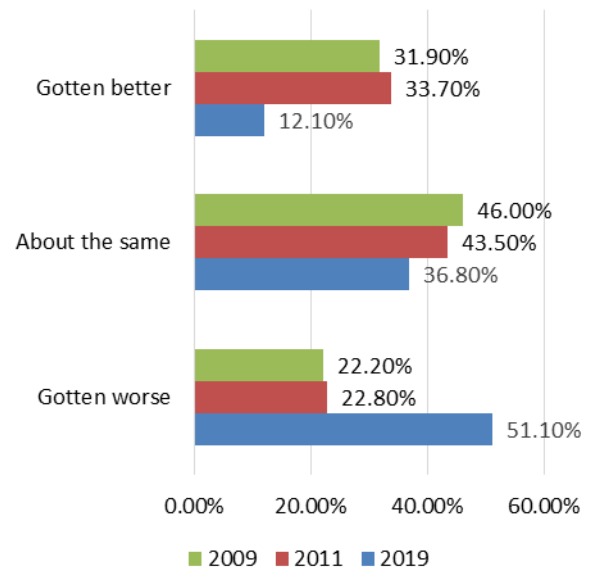
## Schools

When asked to rate the education provided by schools in the Dan River Region, more than two-fifths (42.5%) reported that they were somewhat satisfied, satisfied, or very satisfied with the quality of education students in the community were receiving. When respondents were asked about the improvement of education over the past five years, only about one-tenth (12.1%) said that they felt that the public schools have gotten better. A little more than one-third (36.8%) felt that the quality had stayed the same, and more than half (51.1%) felt that the quality of the schools has gotten worse. An overview of how the community has perceived the quality of education to have changed over the past five years is provided in Figure 41.

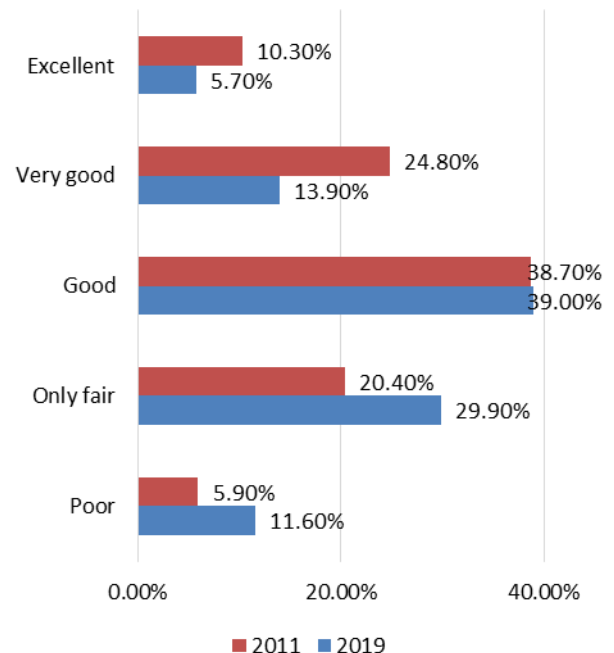
Respondents were also asked to assess how well the community was doing to prepare children for preschool. Less than one-fifth said that the community was doing either an excellent job (5.7%) or a very good job (13.9%). Over one-third thought the community was doing a good job (39.0%). Another 29.9% rated the community's preparation as only fair, and about one-tenth (11.6%) reported that the community's preparation was poor.

Comparing the 2019 survey to the previous surveys, the results show a statistically significant decline in the perception of educational quality in the region, with the exception of the community doing a good job preparing children for preschool. Most importantly is the 124.1% growth in the perception that the quality of education being provided in schools has gotten worse.

**Figure 41.** Change in Education Provided by Schools



**Figure 42.** Job Community is Doing Helping Children Prepare for Preschool



## Challenges

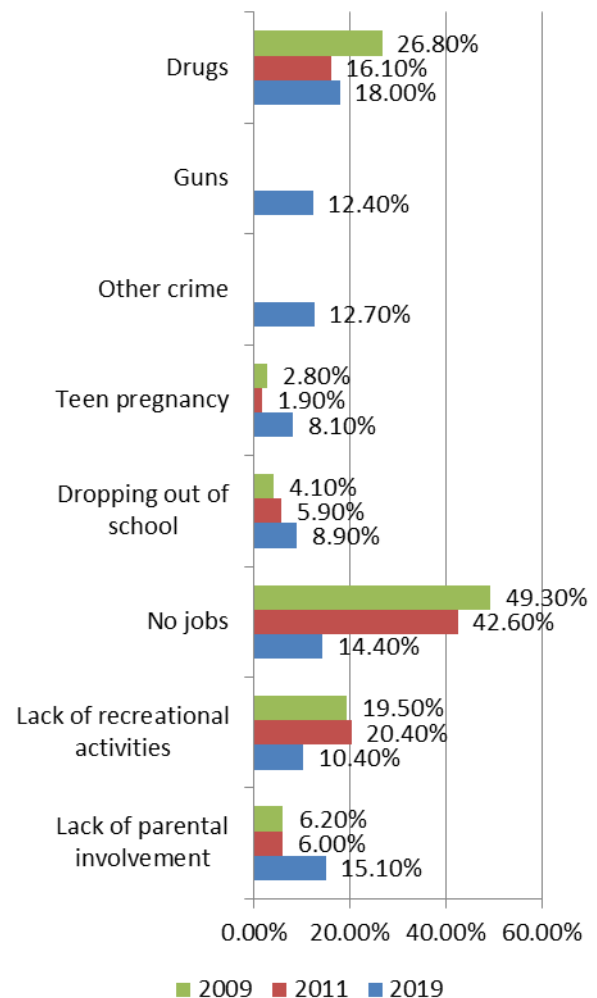
In 2019, respondents were asked to name the biggest challenges that children and youth in the Dan River Region face. Of those responses, the largest category was drugs (18.0%). Nearly as many (15.1%) reported that the greatest challenge was lack of parental involvement, followed by no jobs (14.4%). Guns (12.4%) and other crime (12.7%) were also leading concerns. When comparing how responses have changed over time, the rates of response for each category was statistically significant.<sup>14</sup> Figure 43 provides an overview of responses to the challenges question.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to list other challenges that they felt children and youth in the region were faced with. In their answers, respondents frequently cited gangs and bullying as key challenges. These responses are provided in Appendix E.

## Demographic Differences

Respondents of Caswell County were more likely to have children (45.0%) than residents of Pittsylvania County (37.3%) or Danville (30.2%). Caswell respondents were also more likely to homeschool their children, rate the region as a good or excellent place to raise children. Respondents in Pittsylvania County were more likely to be satisfied with the quality of education that children in the community were getting; however, respondents in Danville were least satisfied with the quality of education. Those in Danville and Caswell County were equally as likely to send their private schools, they were more significantly more likely to have done so that respondents from Pittsylvania.

**Figure 43. Challenges for Children and Youth**



Residents in suburban areas, small towns, and out in the country were equally likely to have children under the age of 18 living in the household. Respondents living in a rural region were only slightly less likely to have children, and those in an urban area or small city were the least likely to have children in the household. Respondents who live in rural villages were most likely to send their children to private schools, followed by residents of small towns. Rural village residents, however, were least likely to

<sup>14</sup> Guns and other crime were two categories that had not accounted for in the previous surveys.

homeschool their children. When considering the region as a place to raise children, rural village respondents were more likely to list the Dan River Region as a good or excellent place, followed by respondents from an urban area or small city.

Males and female were equally as likely (34.3% and 32.5%, respectfully) to have children, though women were more likely to send their children to public schools. Male respondents were more likely to rate the region as a good or excellent place to raise children. They were also more likely to report that they were somewhat satisfied, satisfied, or very satisfied with the quality of education in the community, and report that it is better for children to stay in the area rather than leave.

In regards to race, self-identified Asian or Pacific Islanders were most likely to have children in the household, followed by self-identified African American or black respondents. Self-identified Asian or Pacific Islanders were least likely to send their children to public school, opting instead to send their children to private school, whereas self-identified African American or black respondents were most likely to send their children to public school. Asian or Pacific Islander respondents were most likely to rate the region as a good or excellent place to raise children, followed by African American or black respondents and white respondents. A similar pattern was found for the perceptions of the quality of education children in the community were getting. All races were equally as likely to report that public schools in the community have gotten better or worse over the past five years.

Educational attainment was only partially linked to a respondent's opinions on children and schools. Respondents who had a doctorate or doctoral level degree were least likely to send their children to public school; however, they were more likely to choose public school over other schooling options. Respondents without a high school degree were most likely to be

somewhat satisfied, satisfied, or very satisfied with the quality of education in the region. The differences among other levels of educational attainment were statistically insignificant. Respondents with less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education were more likely to report that the public schools had gotten better over the past five years, and those with some high school education but no diploma were most likely to view the public schools as having stayed the same. All other levels of educational attainment reported that the schools had gotten worse.

Homeowners were more likely to rate the Dan River Region as a good or excellent place to raise children. While homeowners were more likely to report that they were somewhat satisfied, satisfied, or very satisfied with the quality of education that children in the community were getting, they were also more likely to report that the quality of the public schools had gotten worse.

Widowers were most likely to rate the region as a good or excellent place to raise children, followed by separated respondents. Married respondents and widowers were also more likely to report that they were somewhat satisfied, satisfied, or very satisfied with the quality of education in the region. Respondents who reported that they were separated, however, were most likely to report that the public schools had gotten worse, followed closely by married respondents.

Lastly, the duration of residency in the Dan River Region was also tied to educational perceptions, with long-term residents being more likely to report that public schools had gotten worse, though they were more likely to report being somewhat satisfied, satisfied, or very satisfied with the quality of education children in the community received.

## VIII. Health Issues

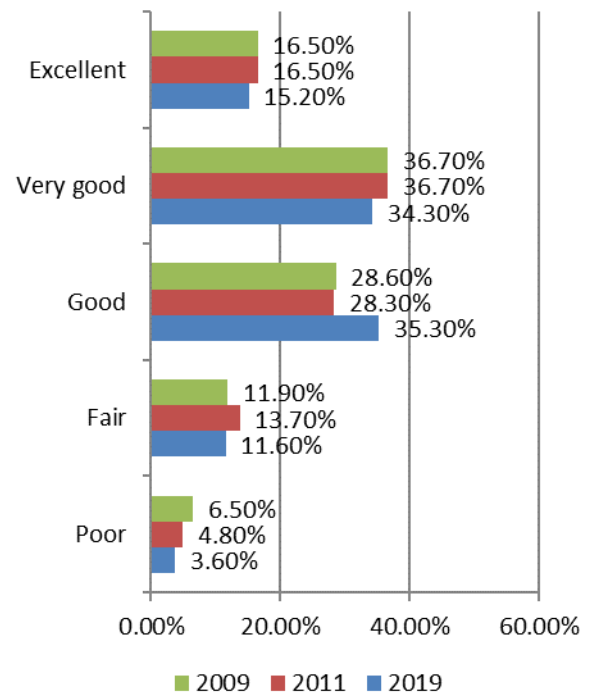
As supplemental purpose of the 2019 Social Capital Survey was to get an overall picture of the health of people in the Dan River Region.

### Overall Health

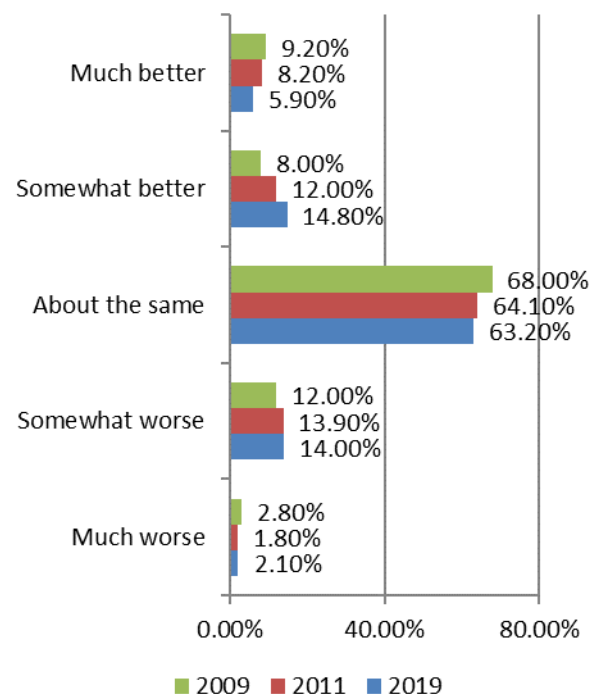
Generally, respondents in the Dan River Region continue to report that they are in good health. Nearly half (49.5%) of respondents reported that they were in very good or excellent health. Just over one-third (35.3%) reported that they were in good health. Another 15.2% said that their health as either fair or poor. While there had been little change in responses between 2009 and 2011, there has been some change in the years since. Specifically, the difference in the rate of respondents who reported good health is statistically significant, as is the rate of respondents who reported poor health. Figure 44 provides an overview of respondents' health status.

Survey respondents were also asked to compare their current health to their health status one year ago. Almost two-thirds (63.2%) said that their health was about the same as one year ago, and 20.7% said their health was somewhat better or much better than one year ago. Just 16.1% reported that their health had gotten somewhat worse or much worse. When compared to previous iterations of the survey, there has been little substantive change over time, with the only statistically significant difference being the decline in respondents who reported that their health was much better or somewhat better. An overview of the health comparison to the year before is given in Figure 45.

**Figure 44. Overall Health Status**



**Figure 45. Health Comparison to One Year Ago**



## Physical Activity and Problems with Obesity

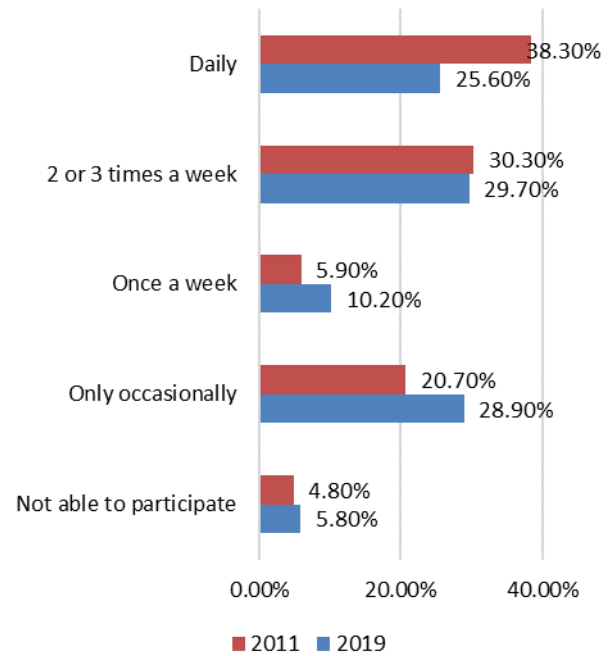
In the 2019 survey, respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their own physical activity levels, as well as their perceptions of obesity as a problem, both for within their communities and their households.

Respondents in the Dan River Region reported being relatively active. About a quarter (25.6%) reported that they engage in physical activity on a daily basis, and 29.7% reported being active at least two or three times a week. One-tenth (10.2%) report that they participate in physical activity only once a week; however, 28.9% of respondents said that they are physically active only on occasion. The remaining 5.8% said that they are not able to participate in physical activities. These rates, and a comparison to the rates from 2011, are provided in Figure 46.

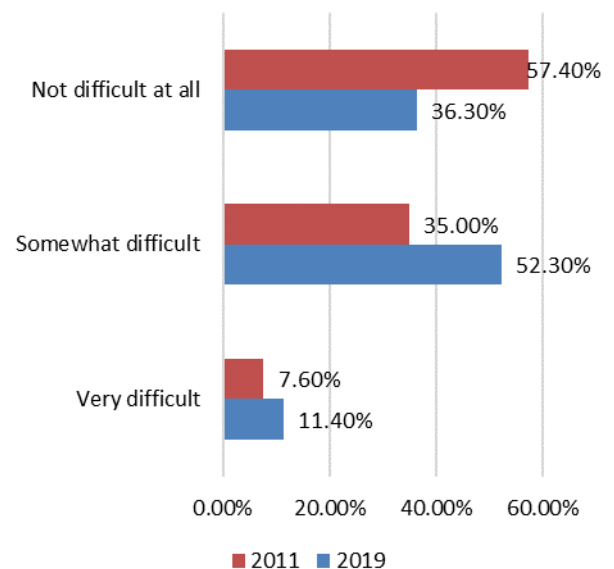
Good nutrition is also important for health living. When asked how difficult it was to eat healthy, over one-third (36.3%) responded that it was not difficult at all. More than half (52.3%) reported that it was somewhat difficult to eat health, and 11.4% reported that it was very difficult. Results to this question are provided in Figure 47.

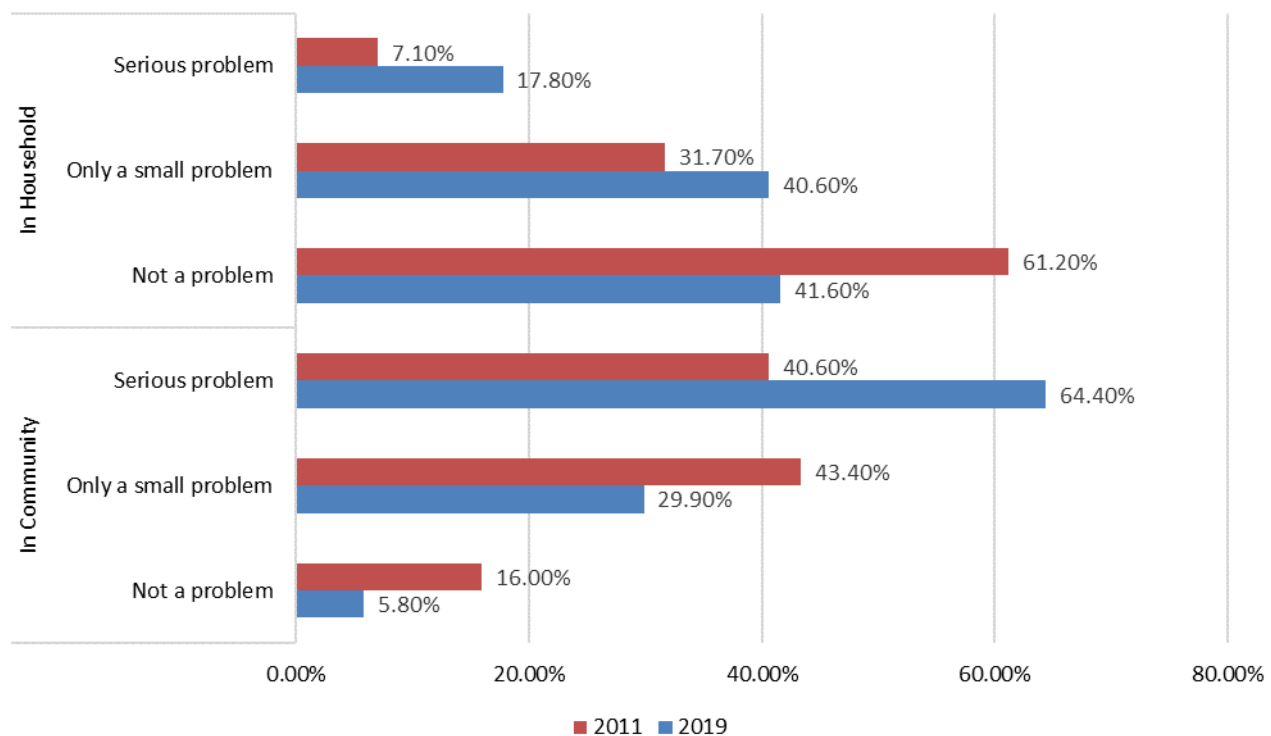
When asked whether obesity was a problem in the community where they lived, 64.4% responded that it was a serious problem. Another 29.9% said that it was only a small problem, and 5.8% reported that it was not a problem. However, fewer respondents saw obesity as a problem in their household. Under one-fifth (17.8%) reported that obesity was a serious problem in their household. More than two-fifths (40.6%) said that it was only a small problem, and another two-fifths (41.6%) said that obesity was not a problem. These data are shown in Figure 48.

**Figure 46. Participation in Physical Activity**



**Figure 47. Difficulty in Eating Healthy**



**Figure 48. Obesity as a Problem**

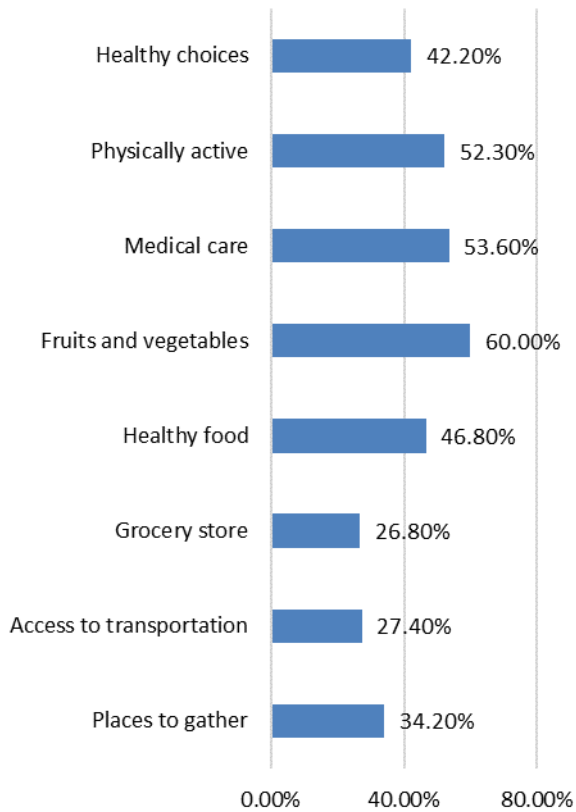
Of respondents who said that obesity was a problem, 45.1% reported that they have the resources to deal with the problem. Of the resources reported, the most frequent responses included the knowledge of what to do and their doctors (see Appendix F for an overview of the open-ended responses to this question). More than half (54.9%) of respondents reported that they are not equipped to handle their obesity problem.

## Access to Healthy Resources

In the 2019 Social Capital Survey, several questions were asked to better understand the accessibility of healthy resources by residents. Eight questions were added to the survey. For these questions, respondents were asked to rate how strongly they agree with the statements:

- The community I live in makes it easier for me to make healthy choices;
- In my community, it is easy to be physically active;
- In my community, it is easy to access medical care;
- In my community, it is easy to buy fresh fruits and vegetables;
- In my community, it is easy to buy healthy food;
- There is a grocery store within walking distance of my house;
- There is good access to public transportation in my community; and,
- In my community, there are free places for community members to gather and spend time.

The extent to which respondents somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree is provided in Figure 49.

**Figure 49. Access to Healthy Resources**

Overall, the results of the additional questions provide positive results. Three-fifths of respondents reported that it is easy for them to buy fresh fruits and vegetables. Just over half of respondents said that it is easy to be physically active in the community and that there is easy access to medical care (52.3% and 53.6%, respectfully). Only a little more than a quarter of respondents said that they have either good access to public transportation or a grocery store within walking distance of their house. This access follows racial lines. Self-reported minorities are more likely than self-identified white respondents to report that they do not have good access to public transportation or a grocery store within walking distance.

## Demographic Differences

When considering the geographic areas of the Dan River Region, respondents in Danville and Caswell County reported a slightly higher overall health status. Just over half (55%) of Caswell County respondents said that their health was either very good or excellent, as did 51.7% of Danville respondents. Only 45.8% of Pittsylvania County respondents gave the same report. A similar trend is found in regards to respondents who either participate in physical activity daily or two to three times a week. Caswell County respondents were more likely to find it extremely difficult to eat healthy.

Men were more likely than women to find it difficult to eat healthy, though women were more than twice as likely to see obesity as a problem in the household.

Racial differences among the perception of overall were statistically insignificant, though self-identified white respondents were able to get a doctor's appointment easier when it is needed. White respondents were also found to be more physically active than racial minorities, though self-identified African American or black respondents reported higher rates of obesity as a serious problem in the household.

Physical activity was also tied to age. Younger respondents were most likely to be engaged in regular physical exercise.

While education was associated to healthcare, it provided a decline in benefits as respondents received more education. Those with a 2-year degree, 4-year degree or some graduate work reported their overall health as very good or excellent at higher rates than respondents with other levels of educational attainment. A similar pattern was also found with income. However, higher levels of educational attainment were positively associated with easier access to medical care and the frequency at which they engage in physical activity.

Separated respondents were more likely to participate in physical activity on a daily basis. They were also more likely to find it extremely difficult to eat health and view obesity as a serious problem in the household. Divorced respondents and widowers were least likely to report their overall health as either good, very good or excellent.

Lastly, homeowners were more likely than renters to report their overall health as either very good or excellent. They are also more likely to participate in regular physical activity. Renters, however, were more likely to find it more difficult to eat healthy. While renters were more likely to report that obesity was a serious problem in the household, they were less likely to have the resources necessary to address the problem. Alternatively, homeowners were more likely to view obesity as a problem in the community.





## ***IX. Summary and Conclusion***

The preceding chapters of his report described the various factors that have been identified as contributing to the level of social capital in the residents of the Dan River Region, and the capacities of the community as a whole.

The 6.63 mean satisfaction rating for quality of life in the Dan River Region (as measured on a scale ranging from 1 to 10) is an indication of the regard that residents have for the quality of in the region. This rating was statistically lower than the rating in 2011; however, it is higher than the perceived quality of life in the region from five years ago.

Residents of Caswell County and Pittsylvania County continue to rate the quality of life higher than those who live in Danville; however, all communities have rated the quality of life lower than they did in both the 2009 and 2011 surveys.

Respondents to the Social Capital Survey do continue to have a positive outlook on life in the region, with a statistically significant share of respondents reporting that they expect the quality of live to be high.

### **Community Attachment**

Overall, residents of the Dan River Region continue to have a strong sense of community. The results of the 2019 survey show similar trends for the measures of community attachment to what were found in the 2009 and 2011 surveys. Respondents continue to feel a strong sense of belonging with their community and that it is important for them to live in the region. They also feel that they have a lot in common with people in their community and that they have an impact in making their community a better place to live. The score of the community attachment index, however, continued to decline from a high of

4.16 in 2009 to a 3.79 in 2011, and now a 2.78 in 2019. The magnitude of this change is in part an artifact of the way in which the index was constructed.

One area of concern is a significant change in how safe respondents perceived their community. In all areas, respondents reported their community as increasingly unsafe. The most significant of these changes was a 97.6% increase in the perceptions that schools in the community were unsafe for children.

### **Civic Participation**

The Dan River Region continued to remain a civically engaged community. While rates of participation in religiously affiliated or other community organizations have declined since previous surveys, a comparison of the region to national trends shows that the Dan River Region is still a highly engaged community. Declines in volunteering and charitable giving, however, are concerning as they can affect the capacity of organizations in the community to operate effectively.

### **Political Participation**

Compared to 2011, respondents of the 2019 survey were more likely to be registered to vote and more likely to have voted in a recent election. Both the 2010 and 2018 elections were “mid-term” elections and an increase in voter turnout is a strong indicator of increased politicization in the region. This is supported by an increase of respondents who reported that they almost always or always vote in city or local elections. While other forms of political participation also increased since 2011, the overall trust that residents of the Dan River Region have in the local government has declined.

## People in the Economy

The employment status of residents in the Dan River Region has improved since the previous surveys, with more than half of respondents reporting that they maintain full-time employment. In line with the 2011 survey, one in five respondents said they work more than one paid job.

When respondents were asked about their perceptions of their work, the answers provided showed a picture of a declining workforce that is underemployed. From 2009 to 2011, a decline in most of the perception measures was found. Further declines in all measures were found from 2011 to 2019. Despite the declines, respondents continue to generally feel engaged with their work.

The impact of the Great Recession on the Dan River Region has begun to diminish. Significantly lower numbers of people in 2019 said that they had been negatively impacted by the economy during the previous two years than had in 2011. Those who had been negatively affected continue to mention the higher cost of living and difficulty paying bills as key impacts.

## Children and Schools

Less than one-third (29.8%) of respondents continued to say that the Dan River Region is a good place raise children. Two-fifths (42.5%) had a favorable opinion of local schools. Compared to previous years, an increased share of respondents felt that the education provided in local schools has gotten worse. An increased share of respondents also felt that the community was doing a worse job of helping to prepare children for preschool. Respondents did report fewer challenges to children and youth than they had in previous surveys.

As in 2009 and 2011, approximately two-thirds of respondents (62.1%) continued to say that when a child is ready to leave home, it is better for them to move to some other area. When asked, only one-third (34.9%) said that they hope their children will return to the Dan River Region in the future.

According to survey respondents, the great challenge affecting children and youth in the region is the prevalence of drugs in the community, though this is less of a concern than it had been in 2009. Respondents showed strong support for quality education and youth education programs to provide a better quality of life for their children and youth.

## Health Indicators

The 2019 Social Capital Survey found little change since 2011 in the overall quality of health for residents of the Dan River Region. The current survey, however, did find an increase in the difficulty of residents at managing their healthcare. Particular concern emerges around the decline of physical activity throughout the region, as well as growth in the rate of respondents who reported that it was difficult to eat healthy and that obesity was a serious problem in the household. Additionally, more than half of respondents reported that they do not have the resources to address their obesity problem.

## Conclusion

Any assessment of social capital must recognize that the indicators of capital stock are closely correlated with an individual's socio-economic status. In a region suffering from economic setbacks, lack of education and income among residents will have an effect on how involved they are in civic life. Taking these factors into

account, the overall level of social capital is fairly strong in terms of civic involvement, social connectedness, and religious involvement, but in need of development in areas of community attachment. There are some encouraging signs of change in the way that residents engage with their communities and grow their civic skills. This survey thus points to areas, subgroups, and arenas of activity where the Dan River Region may be able to improve the level of civic engagement, the strength of social capital, and the quality of life for residents.



## **Appendix A: Survey**

## ***Danville 2019 Social Capital Survey***

### **Introduction Section**

{Q: PARTICIPANT AGREE}

You are invited to participate in a survey being conducted by the Municipal Research Lab at North Carolina State University. We are conducting an important survey on behalf of the Danville Regional Foundation to learn more about life in your community and how people spend their time. It will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

In exchange for completing the survey, you can be entered into a drawing for one of five \$100 Visa gift cards. At the end of the survey, you will be asked if you would like to be entered into the drawing. Only completed surveys are eligible for the drawing.

It is very important for us to learn your opinions; however, your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project. If you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you can withdraw from the survey at any time.

Your survey responses will be strictly confidential, and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. Your information will be coded and will remain confidential. If you have any questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, you may contact the lab by email at [municipallab@ncsu.edu](mailto:municipallab@ncsu.edu).

Do you agree to participate in this survey?

1. Yes
2. No

**If PARTICIPANT AGREE =2, skip to END OF SURVEY**

## Location Perception

{Q: CONFIRM}

Please confirm that you are a resident of one of the following areas. In what county or independent city do you live?

1. Danville, VA
2. Pittsylvania County, VA
3. Caswell County, NC
4. Other County/Independent City

{Q: DANVILLE}

How long have you lived in the Danville region?

1. 0 - 6 months
2. 6 months - 1 year
3. 1 - 2 years
4. 2 - 5 years
5. 5 - 10 years
6. 10 - 20 years
7. 20 years or more

{Q: HOWLONG}

How long have you lived at your current address?

1. 0 - 6 months
2. 6 months - 1 year
3. 1 - 2 years
4. 2 - 5 years
5. 5 - 10 years
6. 10 - 20 years
7. 20 years or more



{Q: AREA}

How would you describe the area in which you live?

1. Urban area or small city
2. A suburban area
3. Small town
4. A rural village
5. Out in the country

{Q: OWNHOME}

Do you own your home or are you renting your place of residence?

1. Owns (dwelling is owner-occupied)
2. Rents
3. Other (please specify)

{Q: TYPEOFHOME}

Which of the following best describes the place where you live?

1. Single family dwelling
2. Duplex or townhouse
3. Apartment or condominium
4. Mobile home or trailer
5. Dormitory
6. Some other type of structure (please specify)

{Q: QUALITY}

On a scale from 1 to 10, where a 1 represents the worst possible community in which to live and a 10 represents the best possible community, how would you rate your community as a place to live?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Worst Best

{Q: YRSAGO}

On a scale from 1 to 10, where a 1 represents the worst possible community in which to live and a 10 represents the best possible community, where would you say that your community stood five years ago?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Worst Best

{Q: FUTUREB}

How, thinking about the future, where on the same 1 to 10 scale would you rate that your community will stand five years from now?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Worst Best

{Q: COMPARE}

How would you rate your community as a place to live compared to other counties or cities where you have lived?

1. Excellent
2. Very good
3. Good
4. Only fair
5. Poor
6. Always lived in my community

{Q: NEIGHBOR}

How many neighbors do you know on a first name basis?

1. None
2. 1 or 2
3. 3 to 5
4. 6 to 10
5. 11 or more
6. No neighbors - Isolated dwelling

{Q: CLOSEREL}

Do you have any close relatives who live within walking distance of your home?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: DRIVEREL}

Do you have any close relatives who live within a 15-minute drive of your home?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: FIVEYEAR}

Would you like to be living in this same community five years from now?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: EXPECT}

Do you expect to be living in this same community five years from now?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: AFFECTED}

Have changes in the economy over the past two years affected your household, either positively or negatively?

1. Yes, Positively affected
2. Yes, Negatively affected
3. No effect

**If AFFECTED=1 or 3, skip to FUTUREB**

{Q: NEGATIVE}

How were you negatively affected? (Check all that apply)

1. Loss of job
2. Decrease in employment
3. Cannot find new job
4. Loss or reduction of income
5. Hard to pay bills and make ends meet
6. Reduced value of home or property
7. Loss of employee benefits
8. Medical and health-related issues
9. Foreclosure
10. Decreased value of investment or retirement fund
11. Higher cost of living (energy, health costs, taxes, etc.)
12. Higher crime/gang activities
13. Other (please specify)
14. Nothing specific

{Q: BETTROFF}

Looking ahead to the next five years, do you think your household will be better off financially, worse off, or just about the same?

1. Better off financially
2. Worse off
3. About the same

## Political Participation

Our next set of questions is about public affairs.

{Q: INTEREST}

How interested are you in politics and national affairs? Are you...

1. Very interested
2. Somewhat interested
3. Only slightly interested
4. Not at all interested

{Q: PUBMEET}

How often in the past twelve months have you attended any public meetings in which there was a discussion of community or school affairs?

1. A few times
2. Once
3. Never did this

{Q: POLMEET}

How often in the past twelve months have you attended a political meeting or rally?

1. A few times
2. Once
3. Never did this

{Q: VOTE}

Are you currently registered to vote?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not eligible to vote

{Q: ELECTION}

Did you vote in the November 2018 election?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not eligible to vote

{Q: CITYVOTE}

How often do you vote in city or local elections?

[Only asked only if lived in the Dan River Region longer than 6 months]

1. Always
2. Most always
3. Most of the time
4. Sometime
5. Rarely
6. Never
7. Not eligible to vote

{Q: TRUST}

How much of the time do you think you can trust the local government to do what is right?

1. Just about always
2. Most of the time
3. Only some of the time
4. Rarely
5. Never

{Q: PETITION}

In the last two years, have you signed a petition? This would include petitions circulated on the internet.

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: CAMPAIGN}

In the last two years, have you participated in or contributed to a political campaign?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: PROTEST}

In the last two years, have you participated in a demonstration, protest, or boycott?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: PROBLEM}

In the last two years, have you worked with your neighbors to solve a neighborhood or community problem?

1. Yes
2. No

**If PROBLEM=2, skip to ADVOCATE**

{Q: PROBACTN}

What specifically did you do when you worked with your neighbors to solve a neighborhood or community problem?

{Q: ADVOCATE}

In the last two years, have you worked with others to try and solve a problem at the state or national level?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: CONNECT}

Do you have any connections or resources outside the community that you can draw on for help in solving community problems or issues?

1. Yes
2. No

**If CONNECT=2, skip to END OF SECTION**

{Q: RESOURCE}

What are some of the resources you have to draw on for help in solving community problems?

## Civic Participation

{Q: RELIGION}

Not including weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?

1. Every week (or more often)
2. Almost every week
3. Once or twice a month
4. A few times per year
5. Once a year or less
6. Never

{Q: CHURCH}

In the last 12 months, have you been involved in any activities related to religious, spiritual, or church-sponsored groups?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: GROUPS}

Select the types of organizations that you have been a member of in the last twelve months? (Check all that apply)

1. Religious organizations, including a church or temple
2. Political clubs or political party committees
3. Professional societies, trade or business associations
4. Labor unions
5. Farm organizations
6. Organizations that work on health issues
7. Environmental or animal protection groups
8. Other public interest or political action groups
9. Social clubs, Greek fraternities and sororities, college clubs
10. Health clubs, sports clubs, athletic leagues, country clubs, swimming pool
11. Ethnic, nationality, or civil rights organizations
12. Hobby, garden, or recreation groups
13. Literary, art, cultural organizations, historical societies
14. Veterans' groups
15. Social service organizations
16. Neighborhood or homeowners' associations
17. Fraternal groups like Rotary, Elks, Eastern Star, Shriners



18. PTA, PTO, or school support groups
19. Scouts or other youth organizations
20. Clubs or organizations for older people such as AARP
21. Any other civic or community organizations including fire department
22. Support groups, self-help groups, or 12-step programs

{Q: RESOURCE}

In the past 12 months, have you volunteered any of your time to organizations such as charities, schools, hospitals, religious organizations, neighborhood associations, and civic or other groups?

1. Yes
2. No

**IF RESOURCE=2, skip to OFFICER**

{Q: TYPEVOL}

What types of organizations have you volunteered for? (Check all that apply)

1. Arts, culture, and humanities
2. Foundations
3. Civic organizations
4. Fraternal associations
5. Business or for-profit corporation
6. Community or neighborhood action
7. Food bank or other food programs
8. Disease related causes
9. School, education or tutoring
10. Protection of animals
11. Environment or conservation
12. Healthcare
13. Housing or homeless
14. International
15. Political, legislative or advocacy
16. Religious or church
17. Adult recreation
18. Service to older people
19. Youth activities
20. Library
21. Other (please specify)

{Q: HOURS VOL}

About how many hours per month, on average, do you spend volunteering for organizations?

1. 0 - 2 hours
2. 3 - 5 hours
3. 6 - 10 hours
4. 11 - 20 hours
5. 21 - 40 hours
6. 40 hours or more

And now thinking more generally about the things you do.

{Q: OFFICER}

In the past 12 months, have you served as an officer or served on a committee of any local club or organization?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: LEADER}

In the last 12 months, have you helped plan or lead a meeting?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: LETTER}

In the past 12 months, have you written a letter or an e-mail for a group?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: PRESENT}

In the past 12 months, have you made a public presentation?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: GIVING}

During the past 12 months, approximately how much money did you and the other family members in your household contribute to all non-profit organizations - religious and non-religious, including your local religious congregation?

## People in the Economy

Next, we would like to ask you a few questions about work.

{Q: EMPLOY}

Are you currently:

1. Working full time
2. Working part time
3. Temporarily laid off or disabled
4. Unemployed
5. Retired
6. Permanently disabled
7. Homeworker
8. Student
9. Other (please specify)

**If EMPLOY=3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9, skip to END OF SECTION**

{Q: NUMJOBS}

Do you have more than one paid job? (NUMJOBS)

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: HOURWORK}

About how many hours do you work in the average week? Count everything, including extra jobs or paid work you do at home.

{Q: JOBLOCATE}

Where is your job located? (if more than one, where is your primary job located)

1. City of Danville
2. Pittsylvania County
3. Caswell County
4. Other (please specify)

{Q: COMMUTE}

On a typical day, about how long does it take you to get to work one way?

1. 30 minutes
2. 45 minutes
3. 60 minutes
4. 75 minutes
5. 90 minutes
6. 105 minutes
7. 120 minutes
8. 135 minutes
9. 150 minutes
10. Work at home

{Q: MEANING}

For the following statements, please indicate the answer category that best reflects your opinion.

- a. My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.
- b. I find my work interesting.
- c. I feel appreciated, respected, and valued at work.
- d. I see the connection between the work I do and the benefits received by others.
- e. My job gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment.
- f. I have plenty of opportunities to learn new skills.
- g. I have the opportunity for advancement in my job.
- h. I feel that I am compensated fairly.
- i. My pay is about the same or better than I would receive elsewhere.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Somewhat Agree
4. Neither Agree nor Disagree
5. Somewhat Disagree
6. Disagree
7. Strongly Disagree

{Q: JOBCRED}

Other than a high school diploma, was a specific degree or certification required for your current position?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: TRAINING}

If you had the opportunity, how likely is it that you would take a special course or receive any special job training?

1. Extremely likely
2. Somewhat likely
3. Neither likely nor unlikely
4. Somewhat unlikely
5. Extremely unlikely

{Q: WHYTRAIN}

What is the one main reason that you might like to get special job training?

1. Your current job requires it
2. You want to improve your current job
3. You want a new career or occupation
4. There is some other reason (please specify)

## Perceptions of Children

{Q: CHILDRENYESNO}

Are there children under the age of 18 in the household?

1. Yes
2. No

**If CHILDRENYESNO=2, skip to CHILDRN**

{Q: CHILDREN}

How many children under the age of 18 are in the household?

{Q: UNDER6}

How many are age 5 or under?

{Q: SIXUP}

How many are age 6 to 12?

{Q: TEENS}

How many are age 13 to 17?

{Q: SCHPUB}

Do any of the children in your household attend public schools?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: SCHPRIV}

Do any of the children in your household attend private schools?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: SCHHOM}

Are any of the children home-schooled?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: CHILDRN}

How would you rate the Danville region as a place to raise children?

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Average
4. Poor
5. Terrible

{Q: SCHOOLS}

How satisfied are you with the quality of the education the children in your community are getting?

1. Very satisfied
2. Satisfied
3. Somewhat satisfied
4. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
5. Somewhat dissatisfied
6. Dissatisfied
7. Very dissatisfied

{Q: SCHSAT}

Over the past 5 years, do you think the public schools in your community have gotten better?

1. Gotten better
2. Stayed the same
3. Gotten worse



{Q: PSSAT}

Over the past 5 years, do you think the public schools in your community have gotten better at providing skills that will be useful in obtaining a job?

1. Gotten better
2. Stayed the same
3. Gotten worse

{Q: PSCOL}

Over the past 5 years, do you think the public schools in your community have gotten better at providing skills needed for pursuing a four-year college degree?

1. Gotten better
2. Stayed the same
3. Gotten worse

{Q: PREPARED}

How would you rate the job the community is doing helping children of pre-school age get ready for school?

1. Excellent
2. Very Good
3. Good
4. Only Fair
5. Poor

{Q: MOVEAWAY}

When a child from the Danville region is ready to leave home, do you think it would be better for them to stay in the Danville region or move to some other area to live?

1. Better to stay
2. Better in some other area
3. No difference
4. Depends (please specify)

{Q: RECOMMND}

If your child or the child of a close friend asked you for advice would you recommend that they stay in the Danville region or move away for opportunities somewhere else?

1. Better to stay
2. Better in some other area
3. No difference
4. Depends (please specify)

{Q: RETURNS}

If a young person does move away for opportunities elsewhere, would you hope that the person returns to the Danville region or do you think it would be better for them to stay in some other area to live?

1. Hope the person returns
2. Better for the person to stay away
3. No Preference
4. Depends (please specify)

{Q: CHALL}

What do you think are the biggest challenges that children and youth face in the Danville region?  
(Check all that apply)

1. Drugs
2. Guns
3. Other Crime
4. Teen pregnancy
5. Dropping out of school
6. No jobs
7. Lack of recreational activities/after school programs
8. Lack of parental involvement/control
9. Other (please specify)

## Efficacy and Perceptions of Community

{Q: FEELPART}

How important is it to you to feel a part of the community?

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

{Q: BELONG}

How often do you feel a sense of belonging or membership in the community?

1. Always
2. Most of the time
3. Sometimes
4. Rarely
5. Never

{Q: IMPACT}

Overall, how often do you think people like you have an impact in making your community a better place to live?

1. Always
2. Most of the time
3. Sometimes
4. Rarely
5. Never

{Q: COMMUNITYTRUST}

For the statements below, please indicate the answer category that best reflects your opinion about your community.

- a. My community treats people like me fairly and justly.
- b. I believe my community takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions.
- c. My community has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.
- d. I trust my community.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Somewhat Agree

4. Neither Agree nor Disagree
5. Somewhat Disagree
6. Disagree
7. Strongly Disagree

{Q: COMMUNITY STATEMENTS}

For the statements below, please indicate the answer category that best reflects your opinion about your community.

- a. I feel at home in the area where I live.
- b. I feel I have a lot in common with the people who live in this community.
- c. I care about what others in my community think of my actions.
- d. My neighborhood is being well kept up.
- e. It is very important to me to live in this particular area.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Somewhat Agree
4. Neither Agree nor Disagree
5. Somewhat Disagree
6. Disagree
7. Strongly Disagree

{Q: SAFETY}

For the questions below, please indicate the answer category that best reflects your opinion about the safety of your community.

- a. How safe do you feel in your neighborhood during the day?
- b. How safe do you feel in your neighborhood during the night?
- c. How safe do you feel in shopping areas in the community during the day?
- d. How safe do you feel in shopping areas in the community at night?
- e. How safe do you feel the schools in your community are for the students?
- f. How safe do you feel in your home?

1. Very Safe
2. Safe
3. Somewhat Safe
4. Neither Safe Nor Unsafe
5. Somewhat Unsafe
6. Unsafe
7. Very Unsafe

## Overall Health

{Q: HEALTH}

In general, would you say your health is:

1. Excellent
2. Very good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Poor

{Q: HLTHCOMP}

Compared to one year ago, how would you rate your general health now? Is it:

1. Much better
2. Somewhat better
3. About the same
4. Somewhat worse
5. Much worse

{Q: APPTCALL}

In the last 12 months, did you call a doctor's office in the Danville region for an appointment?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: GETAPPT}

How easy is it to get an appointment when you need it?

1. Very
2. Easy
3. Somewhat easy
4. Neither easy nor difficult
5. Somewhat difficult
6. Difficult
7. Very difficult

{Q: WAITTIME}

Not counting an appointment that was scheduled at your last visit, for your most recent doctor's visit, how long did you have to wait from the time you called and made the appointment until you saw the doctor?

1. Same day
2. Next day
3. Two to three days
4. Four to six days
5. One week to ten days
6. More than ten days, but less than one month
7. One month or more
8. N/A-Appointment was made at last visit

{Q: POORHLTH}

Is there anyone in your immediate family who is not in good health or who currently has a serious health condition?

1. Yes
2. No

**If CHILDRENYESNO=1**

{Q: CHILDACT}

How many times a week does the child in your household with the most recent birthday engage in vigorous physical activity long enough to make him/her breathe hard?

1. Daily
2. Three or more times a week
3. Once or twice a week
4. Occasionally
5. Never

**If CHILDRENYESNO=1**

{Q: WATCHTV}

During a normal week, how many hours a day does the child in your household with the most recent birthday watch television?

1. 0 - 1 hour
2. 1 - 3 hours
3. 3 - 5 hours
4. 5 or more hours

{Q: ACTIVITY}

How often do you participate in physical activity such as walking and exercising?

1. Daily
2. 2-3 times a week
3. Once a week
4. Only occasionally
5. Not able to participate in physical activity

{Q: NUTRITN}

How difficult is it for you to eat healthily?

1. Extremely difficult
2. Somewhat difficult
3. Not difficult at all

{Q: OBESITY1}

How much of a problem is obesity in the community where you live?

1. Serious problem
2. Only a small problem
3. Not a problem

{Q: OBESITY2}

How much of a problem is obesity in your household?

1. Serious problem
2. Only a small problem [skip to end of section]
3. Not a problem [skip to end of section]

**If OBESIY2=2 or 3, skip to END OF SECTION**

{Q: OBESERES}

Do you have the resources to handle the obesity problem in your household?

1. Yes
2. No

**If OBESERES=2, skip to HEALTHACCESS**

{Q: OBESERES2}

What resources do you have to handle obesity in your family?

{Q: HEALTHACCESS}

For the statements below, please indicate the answer category that best reflects your opinion about your community.

- a. The community I live in makes it easier for me to make healthy choices.  
In my community, it is easy to be physically active.
  - b. In my community, it is easy to access medical care.
  - c. In my community, it is easy to buy fresh fruits and vegetables.
  - d. In my community, it is easy to buy healthy food.
  - e. There is a grocery store within walking distance of my house.
  - f. There is good access to public transportation in my community.
  - g. In my community, there are free places for community members to gather and spend time together.
- 
1. Strongly Agree
  2. Agree
  3. Somewhat Agree
  4. Neither Agree nor Disagree
  5. Somewhat Disagree
  6. Disagree
  7. Strongly Disagree



## Demographics

We have just a few final questions to ask. We ask these questions just for statistical purposes, and all your answers are strictly confidential. You can skip any questions you don't wish to answer.

In what year were you born? {Q: YRBORN}

What is your gender? {Q: GENDER}

1. Male
2. Female

What is your zip code? {Q: ZIPCODE}

What is your current marital status? {Q: MARITAL}

1. Married
2. Separated
3. Divorced
4. Widowed
5. Never married

What is the highest level of education you completed? {Q: EDUC}

1. Less than 9th grade
2. 9th - 12th, but did not finish high school
3. High school graduate or G.E.D.
4. Some college but no degree
5. 2-year college degree/A.A./A.S.
6. 4-year college degree/B.A./B.S.
7. Some graduate work
8. Completed masters or professional degree
9. Advanced graduate work or Ph.D.

{Q: INCOME}

What range best describes your annual household income from all sources in 2018?

1. \$0 - \$9,999
2. \$10,000 - \$29,999
3. \$30,000 - \$49,999
4. \$50,000 - \$69,999
5. \$70,000 - \$99,999
6. \$100,000 - \$149,999
7. \$150,000 or more

{Q: HISPANIC}

Do you consider yourself to be of Hispanic or Latino origin?

1. Yes
2. No

{Q: RACE}

What category best describes your race?

1. African American/Black
2. Asian or Pacific Islander
3. White
4. American Indian/Native American/Alaskan Native
5. Multi-racial
6. Other (please specify)

## Conclusion

{Q: DRAWING}

As a token of our thanks for taking this survey, you can be entered into a drawing for a \$100 Visa gift card. Five winners will be chosen at random from those who have completed the survey and provided their information below. The drawing will be conducted on April 1, 2019. Winners will be contacted at that time.

Would you like to be entered into the drawing? The information you provide for the drawing will not be associated with any of the other responses you have given.

1. Yes
2. No

**If DRAWING=2, skip to END OF SECTION**

{Q: DRAWING-NAME}

What is your name?

{Q: DRAWING-EMAIL}

What is your email address?

{Q: THANKYOU}

Thank you very much for participating. We appreciate the time you have taken to complete this interview. The survey's results will be reported to the Danville Regional Foundation at a future date.

If you have any questions on the purpose of this study, you can contact the Municipal Research Lab. The lab can be contacted via email at [municipallab@ncsu.edu](mailto:municipallab@ncsu.edu).

Thank you again for your time.

## **Appendix B: Survey and Sampling Methodology**

## ***Survey and Sampling Methodology***

The 2019 Danville Social Capital Survey was conducted by the Municipal Research Lab at North Carolina State University using Qualtrics, an internet-based survey platform. Responses to the survey were recruited online and through Danville Regional Foundation community partners. A discussion of the methodology utilized for the survey was provided in Chapter I of this report. Additional details on the development of the survey questionnaire, the recruitment of survey responses, and the statistical testing utilized are provided in this appendix.

### **Questionnaire**

The majority of the questions in the survey are identical to those asked in the 2011 and 2009 surveys. Questions from the previous surveys were developed by the Center for Survey Research at the University of Virginia on consultation with the Danville Regional Foundation. The intent of the survey is to measure the social capital of people who live in the Dan River Region. Included in the measurement of social capital is how members of the region feel about their community, their interest in civic engagement, political involvement, and connectedness to the community. An intent of the survey design to keep to the questionnaire as consistent as possible in order to maximize the comparison of data over time. In each iteration of the survey, however, small adjustments have been made as to what questions are being asked based on the circumstances of the region. In the 2019 survey, modifications were made to include questions about community trust and access to health-related community resources. Modifications were also made to existing questions in order to expand the options available to respondents in order to better capture their perceptions. Several questions regarding telephone access were dropped from the survey as they were no longer necessary due to the change in the response collection process. All changes that were made to the survey were developed by the Municipal Research Lab in close consultation with the Danville Regional Foundation.

### **Response Collection**

The Municipal Research Lab employed an internet-based response recruitment approach. Previous iterations of the Danville Social Capital Survey had utilized a telephone-based approach to recruiting responses. While the telephone-based approach was successful at recruiting a significant number of responses, an internet-based approach has a unique advantage. Specifically, it allows for the recruitment of responses from a more representative sample of the population, thus improving the accuracy of the survey results.

Responses to the survey were collected over a two-month period, from January 8, 2019 to March 8, 2019. To solicit responses, a dual-approach was taken. First, community partners of the Danville Regional Foundation were contacted and asked to distribute the survey link to their networks. Second, an online recruitment approach was adopted through social media. Social media networks in the Dan River Region were contacted through Facebook and Twitter and asked to distribute the survey to their social network. The networks were followed up with on two occasions, roughly halfway through the survey window and

in the last of the survey, to encourage the recruitment of additional responses. To further encourage responses, two ads were placed on Facebook, each running for one week. Ads encouraged viewers to complete the survey and were targeted to those who live in the region and were aged 18 and over. The first ad ran during the third week of the survey window and the second ad ran during the final week of the survey window.

In total more than 1,750 individuals in the Dan River Region looked at the survey. Of those who looked at the survey, only those who completed six percent or more were included in the final study. This allowed only those who completed at least the first full page of survey questions to be included. This cut off was based on the utility of the responses to the study as the first several questions established willingness to participate in the study and verified that the respondent was a resident of the region. This approach produced a dataset of 1,286 responses from residents of the Dan River Region.

## **Sampling Error and Statistical Testing**

The final sample of this study includes 1,286 responses. Based on the size of the dataset and the population size of the Dan River Region, the results have a margin of error of plus or minus 2.7 percent. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size drawn from the region, the results will fall in a range of  $\pm 2.7$  percentage points of what would have been obtained had every individual in the region been surveyed.

Statistical significance tests were used to verify the differences among sub-groups and across years. Specifically, the Student's t-test was utilized. The t-test looks at whether there is a statistical difference in the means of two groups, allowing for the determination of whether there is difference in how demographic groups have responded in the 2019 survey, as well as how responses to the 2019 survey compare to the results of the 2009 and 2011 surveys. Throughout this report, differences that yield a "p-value" of 0.05 or less were reported. A value of 0.05 indicates that there is only a five percent chance that the difference is due to sampling error, rather than reflecting a real relationship within the study population.



## **Appendix C: Cross Tabulations/Mean Ratings by the Demographic Variables**