



Montana Movers Study 2021 Report

Tara Mastel

Community Development Associate Specialist, Montana State University Extension

Sabre Moore

Student Researcher, Montana State University
Executive Director, Carter County Museum

Dr. Sarah Schmitt-Wilson

Department of Education, Montana State University

Dr. Eric Austin

Department of Political Science, Montana State University

Funded By:



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Executive Summary

Montana has experienced rapid growth in the past decade.¹ In-migration accelerated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic which has caught the attention of leaders and everyday citizens alike. Understanding more about who is moving in and why can help local leaders make decisions on how to allocate resources in response to the changes they see. This survey will give a more complete picture of who is moving to Montana communities, which we hope advances the discussion surrounding newcomers going forward.

We learned that people moved to enjoy the quality of life offered by Montana communities and movers seem to be quite satisfied with their new community. The top reasons given for moving include: to have better access to the outdoors, to live in a less congested place, to take advantage of a slower pace of life, and to live in a smaller community. A smaller number of people indicated that financial oriented reasons, such as a job, lower cost of living or lower priced housing, were important to their decision to move. Only about a third of people said they moved primarily for a job, which was similar to what was found in the original iteration of this study conducted in Minnesota in March and April of 2019.

Newcomers indicate that they frequently take advantage of the amenities of their new community such as rivers, trails, community events and the like. They report high levels of engagement in their new community, including volunteerism, attendance at public meetings and establishing social connections in their new community.

Housing availability is often a challenge in rural places as well as metro/micro communities. The availability of housing was one of the lowest ranked factors across all aspects of the survey. Only 32 percent said they moved to find lower cost housing which leads to the question, is lower cost housing not available in Montana?

¹ <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/dec/popchange-data-text.html>

Most people moving to Montana communities are new to that town, meaning they have never lived in the new community before. Contrary to common belief, people moving to rural communities are significantly *less* likely to have ever lived there before. People moving to metro/micro communities are significantly more likely to have lived there before.

The sense of welcoming a community provides has a significant impact on whether people think they will stay in a community. Those that rate a community low for welcoming say they are unlikely to stay in the community long-term, which has significant implications for recruiting workforce or remote workers for Montana employers. Being welcoming to newcomers is free and can have a significant impact on retaining workforce or new residents.

Not all movers to Montana communities are coming from out-of-state. In our study, about half of respondents moved from within the state and about half moved from outside of the state. Very few respondents (about 4 percent) said their move was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Respondents to this survey have higher incomes and higher levels of education than the median income and education level of Montana residents as measured by the U.S. Census Bureau. This is likely a result, in part, because our mailing list was drawn from property ownership records.

In summary, the data from this survey indicates that the people moving into Montana communities are moving for the same reasons long-time residents enjoy living here. Newcomers are seeking the quality of life that Montana communities offer, and they are actively taking advantage of the amenities that set life in Montana apart from other places.

Introduction

The story told about Montana's rural small towns tends to be one of economic decline, population loss and despair. Despite the negative narrative, our rural communities remain intact, thanks to the many volunteers that run local government and civic organizations. Desire to escape cities has increased in recent years and anecdotal evidence of in-migration due to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic has drawn even more attention to who is moving to Montana's communities.²

Ben Winchester, Rural Sociologist at University of Minnesota Extension Center for Rural Vitality, presented the keynote at the first Reimagining Rural conference in the Fall 2019 hosted by Montana State University Extension, Montana Community Foundation, and the Governor's Office. Winchester's talk, "Rewriting the Rural Narrative", highlighted positive stories about rural life including the data from his "Brain Gain" research that shows people are moving into rural communities to enjoy the quality of life these places offer. Hearing these positive stories of rural life had a significant impact on the audience in 2019 and audiences in the next two iterations of the Reimagining Rural program held virtually in 2020 and 2021.

Despite how welcome it was to hear this positive story of rural life, Montana audiences were skeptical that Winchester's data from a study of rural Minnesota would hold true in Montana. After encountering resistance from some local leaders in rural communities about implementing changes based on Winchester's data, it became clear that replicating this research in Montana would be a worthy goal to show who is moving to rural communities, why they are moving there and how satisfied they are once they get there. It is clear from recent news reports

² Americans Are Less Likely Than Before COVID-19 To Want To Live in Cities, More Likely To Prefer Suburbs. Pew Research Center.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2021/12/16/americans-are-less-likely-than-before-covid-19-to-want-to-live-in-cities-more-likely-to-prefer-suburbs/>

of housing shortages and business relocations and expansions that people have been moving to Montana's larger communities. It is less known that people are also moving to Montana's rural communities, due in part to the dominant media stories of decline and despair surrounding Montana's rural towns.

The Montana survey, which is a close replication of Winchester's "Brain Gain" study, was sent to people moving to small and large communities across the state to find out if there are any differences between people moving to these communities. Winchester conducted his original "Brain Gain" study in 2010.³ A second study was conducted by Winchester and colleagues in the fall of 2019 which is the source of the Minnesota data included in this paper.⁴

We hope this research helps inform discussions about the role and value of newcomers, particularly in light of the increased in-migration observed since the pandemic. It should be noted that this survey was sent out in the spring of 2021 (late April and early May) at the end of the time when people were quarantining at home. The timing may have helped boost our response rate; however only about a quarter of respondents moved during the pandemic and most of them likely had their plans set prior to the full effect of the pandemic. We believe that the impact of the pandemic on the answers given to the survey is minimal.

A sincere thanks to Montana Community Foundation, our lead sponsor of this research for sharing the desire to execute our own "Brain Gain" study; and to the Montana Farm Bureau Foundation for supporting the study to help local leaders understand more about maintaining the vitality of our rural communities. We are thankful for the vision of these two organizations for making this study possible.

³ New Residents Survey Summary of Results West Central Minnesota. Ben Winchester, 2011.

■ 1.2011.EDA Center.Ben Winchester Survey Report.pdf

⁴ The *Rural Workforce and Entrepreneur Recruitment and Retention Project* work is supported by the Innovation for Rural Entrepreneurs and Communities Priority Area grant 2017-68006-26231 from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Not yet published as of April 2022.

Research Design, Methods and Analysis

Study Design and Data Collection

The initial approach used for this study was the replication and extension of research done by the University of Minnesota Extension's Center for Community Vitality. That research, which surveyed newcomers to rural communities throughout the state, sought information about the attributes of the movers and their households, the factors that contributed to their move into those rural communities, and their perceptions of the communities they moved into. Building on the research conducted in Minnesota, the primary component of the current research in Montana was a similar survey of newcomers to communities throughout Montana.

In late April and early May 2021, 9,000 paper surveys were sent to a mailing list that consisted of parcels with a home in Montana that had a change of ownership in the previous five years provided by the Montana Department of Revenue. Approximately two weeks after the survey was sent, a reminder postcard with an online link to complete the survey was sent to the same mailing list. Surveys were sent from the Human Ecology Learning & Problem Solving (HELPS) Lab at Montana State University-Bozeman with a return address from Montana State University Extension. Surveys were sent to all 56 counties in the state; however, no surveys were returned from Powder River and Petroleum counties. Of the surveys sent, 152 were unable to be delivered due to bad addresses.

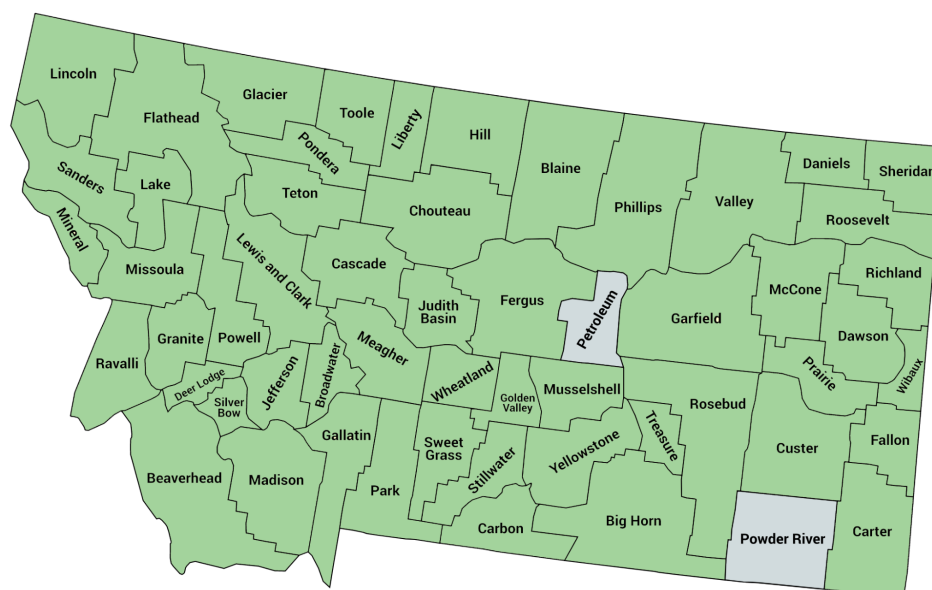


Table 1: Summary of Survey Responses	
Total surveys mailed out	9,000
Total undeliverable as addressed	152
Total number of survey responses	1,765
Response rate for all returned surveys	19.9%
Error for all returned responses	+/-2.29%

Description of Mailing List Sample

Montana's relatively unique centralized system for property tax collection means that the Montana Department of Revenue has a centralized database of property owners. The Montana Department of Revenue created a mailing list for this research project in January 2021, which included parcels across the state with a residence and that had a change of ownership in the previous five years.

A total of 83,046 addresses were included in the original file from Revenue. Using the zip codes of the property address, the research team coded the addresses into rural or metropolitan/micropolitan areas using U.S. Census designations⁵. Of all addresses in the original list from Montana Department of Revenue, 60,536 were in the state's 10 counties that are included in the U. S. Census Bureau's definition of Metropolitan and Micropolitan statistical areas. Only about one third or 22,610 residential properties were in the remaining 46 counties that make up Non-Metropolitan areas in Montana. When addresses were selected for mailing, an equal proportion of metropolitan/micropolitan and non-metropolitan were chosen. Overall, there were 907 responses from the rural addresses and 856 from the metropolitan/micropolitan addresses.

⁵ U.S. Census Montana: 2020 Core Based Statistical Areas and Counties
https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/metro-micro/reference-maps/2020/state-maps/30_Montana_2020.pdf

Population, Sample and Survey Administration

For this study, we've defined "newcomers" as anyone who moved into any community in Montana within the past five years. Although the focus of the study is on newcomers to rural communities, communities of all sizes were included in the study. Popular perceptions of what constitutes "rural" vary significantly within the public and can deviate substantially from technical definitions of the term, including that used by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). OMB defines rural as areas which are outside existing metro- or micropolitan communities and/or have populations of fewer than 10,000 residents. Because there are relatively few metro- and micropolitan communities in Montana and because even those communities are often viewed as being "rural" by newcomers from much larger and densely populated areas, we have defined "newcomers" as anyone moving into a community in Montana within the last five years.

The population we drew our sample from was a comprehensive list of title transfers from the Montana Department of Revenue that had taken place within our designated time period. We did exclude "quick claim" title transfers on the assumption that those property transfers were likely to be between family members, rather than purchase by new owners. Our sampling strategy used households as the unit of analysis and focused on those households that have moved into a new or different zip code in Montana sometime in the last 5 years. We then weighted the sample to ensure sufficient presence of households from rural communities (based on Census designation codes) in the data, knowing that there would be more title transfers in larger communities simply based on the number of properties in those larger communities.

Our final sample was 9,000 households. The survey (described below) was distributed by mail and included a prepaid return envelope. Reminder postcards were sent to all recipients

two weeks after the survey was sent. Based on the results of prior research conducted in Montana, we anticipated a likely response rate of roughly 12%, which would in turn result in a +/- 3% error rate. Once the survey was distributed, 152 of 9,000 surveys were returned as undeliverable. The actual response 1,765 partially or fully completed responses of 8,848 delivered surveys. This yielded a 19.9% response rate and a +/- 2.29% error rate for all responses received which included 561 responses from people that moved from within the same zip code. The primary group that was examined from this survey was the 1,204 responses that were from people that moved to a new zip code. Of this group, we received a 13.62 % response rate and a +/- 3.09% error rate.

Limitations

The sampling strategy utilized had two primary limitations. First, because it was based on title transfers, it did not have any systematic inclusion of renters. Further, reservation and tribal communities were not captured in this dataset because these addresses are not subject to Montana property tax and are not in the Department of Revenue's centralized database. Moreover, as previously discussed the full impact of Covid-19 on decisions cannot be determined due to the timing of the survey.

Survey Structure and Content

The structure and content of the survey was designed to parallel and augment the prior research that had been conducted in Minnesota, but also to reflect Montana context and research team questions. The survey was structured around six categories of questions:

- *Characteristics and attributes of the move* - timing, prior residence based on zip code, personal or family history with the destination community, length of prior residence, Covid factors influencing the move;
- *Factors considered before the move* - economic, physical or environmental, social;
- *Important features of the destination community* - social, governance (local government or schools), infrastructure (housing, broadband, health care), natural environment, economic climate and conditions;
- *Activities and features experienced since arrival* - social, civic, recreational;
- *Demographics* - household characteristics, age, race, ethnicity, education, income;
- *Workforce attributes* - working/retired, physical or telecommuting, job type/industry.

A complete copy of the survey can be found in the Appendix.

Analytical Approach

The analytical approach used was primarily descriptive and focused on identifying trends and patterns within the overall sample of newcomers, but particularly within the workforce subgroup, those who moved to rural destination communities, and movers who came from outside Montana. The analysis also looked for patterns where subgroups intersected, for example within movers who are in the workforce and moved to rural communities.

Two Groups of Interest

The high response rate for this survey enabled a deeper analysis of specific groups of interest by the research team and other stakeholders. This report examines responses from individuals who indicated that they moved to a new zip code. An examination of these newcomers plus the additional 561 respondents that indicated they moved within the same zip code is planned for a later date. This report examines respondents in two categories of interest:

- Those that moved to rural places and those that moved to larger cities,
- Those in the workforce, defined as ages 18-64 years old,

In summary, this report focuses on those that moved to a new zip code as a whole group and segmented by size of community and workforce age.

Moved to New Zip Code

Respondents were asked to write in the zip code of their current residence. Of the 1,765 total responses, 561 indicated that their previous residence was in the same zip code. Since our objective was to study people moving into a new community, we have excluded those that moved within the same zip code from this analysis. The group that returned the survey but had moved within their same zip code may provide interesting insights about movers and will be analyzed at a later date. A total of 1,204 responses were received from respondents indicating they moved to a new zip code. Of the 1,204 respondents that moved to a new zip code, 534 (47 percent) moved from within Montana and 590 (52 percent) moved from 47 other states.⁶ A total of 10 (0.8 percent) respondents moved from six other countries, with the highest representation coming from Germany. There were 15 illegible and 55 blank responses to the question.

Table 2: The Top Ten States for Newcomers

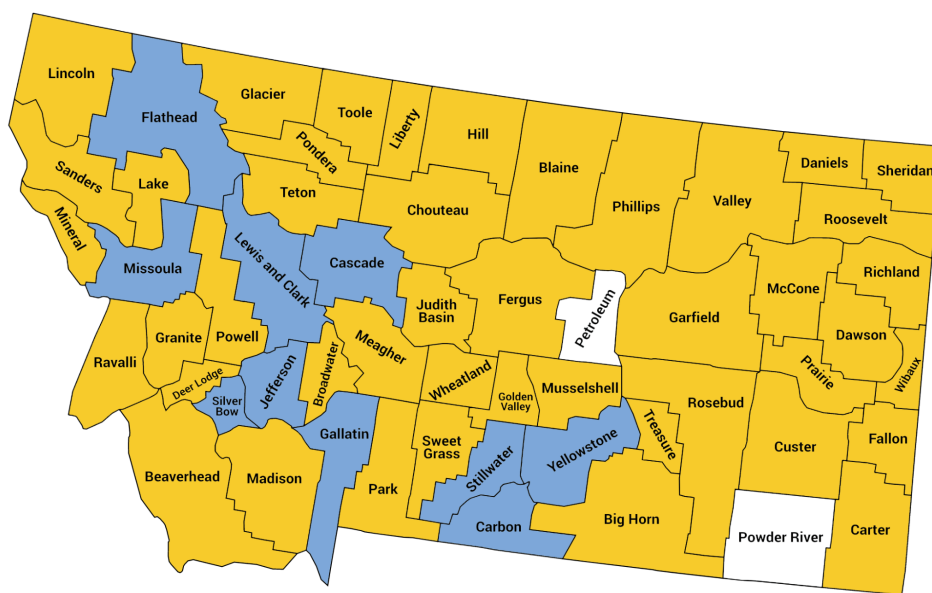
Top Ten States (Newcomers)	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Montana	534	47%
California	94	8%
Washington	94	8%
Colorado	57	5%
Oregon	33	3%
Idaho	32	3%
Texas	24	2%
Wyoming	24	2%
Nevada	18	1%
Utah	18	1%

This group is included in the analysis as a baseline of all movers into Montana communities to help us understand the experience of people who chose to move into a new community.

⁶ Percentages calculated using 1134 as a total which is the total sample of 1204 minus the 70 responses that were either blank or illegible.

Rural and Metro/Micro

To understand differences in those who chose to move to large and small communities in Montana, survey results from the 1,204 newcomers were separated into two categories (Rural and Metro/Micro). The map below illustrates the two categories of counties and how they are distributed in Montana. Predominantly rural counties are designated in yellow and metro/micro in blue. The U.S. Census designation for Metropolitan and Micropolitan counties were used to define the “Metro/Micro” areas of Montana⁷. All other areas in the state are defined as Non-metropolitan, which are also predominantly rural areas. An equal number of surveys were sent to metro/micro and rural areas of Montana to receive enough responses from each area to examine any potential differences between these groups. Given that our mailing list had nearly three times more addresses in metro/micro areas than rural areas, oversampling of rural addresses was required. The oversampling of rural areas was effective as there were nearly equal response rates from rural and metro/micro areas, including 631 (52%) responses from rural areas and 573 (48%) from metro/micro areas.



⁷ https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/metro-micro/reference-maps/2020/state-maps/30_Montana_2020.pdf

Workforce

Analyzing motivations of the workforce was the primary research question for the University of Minnesota Extension study on which this study was based.⁸ To be able to compare our findings with the Minnesota study, we examined the workforce age group. Respondents were included in the Workforce group if the primary respondent was between the ages of 18 and 64 which included a total of 811 respondents. Of the respondents in this group, 392 moved from within Montana and 400 moved into the state from 39 other states. A total of 19 respondents moved to Montana from other countries, with the highest representation coming from Germany.

Table 3: Workforce Newcomers by State

Top Ten States (Workforce)	Respondents	Percentage
Montana	392	48%
California	57	7%
Washington	57	7%
Colorado	39	5%
Oregon	21	3%
Idaho	21	3%
Texas	20	2%
Georgia	18	2%
Wyoming	16	2%
Utah	15	2%

⁸ The University of Minnesota Rural Newcomer study was completed in 2019, however, the results are not yet published as of April 2022 due to personnel challenges brought on by the COVID 19 pandemic. Results from earlier studies on this topic can be found at:
<https://extension.umn.edu/economic-development/rural-brain-gain-migration>

Results

Respondent Characteristics

The following section includes data from page one of the surveys which asks about the respondent's current residence, their previous residence, timing of their move, length of time at previous residence and if their move was for a job or impacted by the COVID pandemic.

When did you move?

Roughly equal numbers of respondents said they moved in 2019 and 2020 compared to those that moved in 2018. Those that said they moved before 2016 fell outside the parameters of the study and so were omitted from the data tabulations.

Table 4: Newcomers Year Moved by Relocation Place (Rural, Metro/Micro), Workforce Group, and Zip Code Change

Year moved to current community	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
2021	2%	1%	2%	1%
2020	24%	26%	26%	25%
2019	24%	26%	23%	25%
2018	24%	17%	22%	21%
2017	16%	17%	16%	17%
2016	5%	7%	6%	6%
Before 2016	5%	5%	5%	5%
Blank	0.16%	0.17%	0.25%	—

What month did you move?

June, July, August and October were the months with the highest percentage reporting a move in each of the four groups.

Table 5: Newcomers Month Moved by Relocation Place (Rural/Metro), Workforce Group, and Zip Code Change

Month moved to current residence	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
January	3%	7%	5%	5%
February	4%	2%	3%	3%
March	5%	6%	5%	5%
April	7%	8%	7%	7%
May	9%	10%	9%	9%
June	10%	10%	10%	10%
July	14%	12%	14%	13%
August	13%	14%	13%	13%
September	9%	8%	7%	9%
October	12%	10%	11%	11%
November	8%	8%	8%	8%
December	5%	6%	6%	6%

Have you ever lived in this community before?

Most people moving to Montana communities had never lived in that community before. Of those that moved to a new zip code, 73 percent said they had never lived there before. Only 27 percent of respondents had ever lived in the community before. Of those in the Workforce group, only 28 percent said they had lived there before and 21 percent said that their spouse had lived there before. The percentage who had never lived there before was higher for those that moved to a rural area than for those that moved to a metro/micro area. For those moving to rural areas, 76 percent said they had never lived there before compared to 66 percent who moved to metro/micro areas. A similar pattern was reported for spouses with respect to rural and metro/micro areas.

Survey questions five and six asked if the respondent or their spouse/partner had ever lived in the area before. Combining the answers to these two questions, it was determined that 34 percent of households in the Workforce group had never lived in the community before.

Table 6: Newcomers Returnees by Relocation Place (Rural/Metro), Workforce Group, and Zip Code Change

Returnees (Self)	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
No	76%	66%	70%	73%
Yes	22%	32%	28%	27%
Blank	3%	2%	2%	

Returnees (spouse/partner)	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
No	64%	54%	60%	61%
Yes	14%	24%	21%	19%
I do not have a spouse/partner	19%	20%	16%	20%

Returnee (anyone in household)	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
No	—	—	64%	—
Yes	—	—	34%	—

How long did you live in your previous community?

People moving to Montana communities had lived in their previous communities for a long time. There were slight differences between people moving to rural and metro/micro areas. People moving to rural places were more likely to have lived in their previous community for more than 10 years compared to those moving to a Metro/Micro area. People in the Workforce age group were more likely to have lived in their previous community for 2-10 years compared to those not in the Workforce Group.

Table 7: Newcomers Previous Community by Relocation Place (Rural/Metro), Workforce Group, and Zip Code Change

Years in Previous Community	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
1 year or less	7%	6%	8%	7%
2-10 years	39%	46%	50%	43%
More than 10 years	52%	46%	39%	50%
Blank	2%	2%	2%	—

Did you move for a job?

Most survey respondents did not move to their new community primarily for a job. The largest percentage of respondents who did move for a job were those in the Workforce age group of 18-64 years of age. Those moving to rural areas (75%) were the highest percentage of group respondents moving to their new community primarily for a job.

Table 8: Newcomers Job Move by Relocation Place (Rural/Metro), Workforce Group, and Zip Code Change

Moved primarily for a Job	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
No	75%	69%	63%	74%
Yes	22%	30%	35%	26%
Blank	3%	2%	2%	—

Was your move COVID related?

Only four percent of people said their move was motivated by the pandemic. This is likely because approximately 25% of respondents who completed the survey moved during the pandemic (between 2020 and 2021).

Table 9: Newcomers Covid-related by Relocation Place (Rural/Metro), Workforce Group, and Zip Code Change

Was your move motivated by the COVID Pandemic?	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
No	94%	94%	93%	96%
Yes	3%	4%	4%	4%
Blank	3%	2%	2%	—

Reasons for Moving

The next table indicates the relative importance of various factors to movers when considering a move, which was a question included on page two of the survey instrument. The option for answering this question was a five-point scale which included Very Important, Important, Moderately Important, Slightly Important and Not Important.

Table 10 shows the combined responses of those who answered “Very Important” and “Important” to the following question: *“When you chose to move to this community, how important were the following factors for your household?”*

Table 10: Newcomers Factor for Moving by Relocation Place (Rural/Metro), Workforce Group, and Zip Code Change

Move Factors	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
To live closer to relatives	41%	42%	38%	43%
To live closer to friends	15%	17%	16%	16%
To find lower priced housing	32%	29%	33%	32%
To buy available land	29%	22%	28%	27%
to find higher quality schools	10%	19%	20%	15%
To find a lower cost of living	32%	27%	31%	31%
To find a safer place to live	44%	37%	44%	42%
To find a good environment for raising children	27%	39%	43%	34%
Take advantage of a slower pace of life	58%	43%	53%	53%
To live in a smaller community	58%	41%	51%	52%
To live in a larger community	3%	7%	5%	5%
To live among people with similar values	42%	38%	41%	42%
To find a less congested place to live	62%	48%	57%	58%
To find a higher paying job	10%	19%	19%	15%
To find a job that matches my skills	16%	28%	30%	23%
To find a better job for my spouse/partner	9%	15%	17%	13%
To find a job that allowed for a better work-life balance	20%	29%	35%	25%
To take on a new job	19%	25%	30%	23%
To start my own business	6%	7%	9%	7%

Move Factors	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
To retire	41%	31%	24%	38%
To take advantage of healthcare facilities	14%	18%	10%	17%
To find a desirable natural environment (to have better access to the outdoors)	64%	60%	66%	64%

Across all groups, quality-of-life factors were more important for movers compared to financial oriented factors. The following charts show move factors in order of importance by group. The highlighted sections emphasize the top and bottom five factors by importance.

Table 11: Newcomers Quality of Life per Group

Rural		Metro/Micro	
To find a desirable natural environment (to have better access to the outdoors)	64%	To find a desirable natural environment (to have better access to the outdoors)	60%
To find a less congested place to live	62%	To find a less congested place to live	48%
Take advantage of a slower pace of life	58%	Take advantage of a slower pace of life	43%
To live in a smaller community	58%	To live closer to relatives	42%
To find a safer place to live	44%	To live in a smaller community	41%
To live among people with similar values	42%	To find a good environment for raising children	39%
To retire	41%	To live among people with similar values	38%
To live closer to relatives	41%	To find a safer place to live	37%
To find lower priced housing	32%	To retire	31%
To find a lower cost of living	32%	To find a job that allowed for a better work-life balance	29%
To buy available land	29%	To find lower priced housing	29%
To find a good environment for raising children	27%	To find a job that matches my skills	28%
To find a job that allowed for a better work-life balance	20%	To find a lower cost of living	27%
To take on a new job	19%	To take on a new job	25%
To find a job that matches my skills	16%	To buy available land	22%
To live closer to friends	15%	to find higher quality schools	19%
To take advantage of health care facilities	14%	To find a higher paying job	19%
To find higher quality schools	10%	To take advantage of healthcare facilities	18%
To find a higher paying job	10%	To live closer to friends	17%
To find a better job for my spouse/partner	9%	To find a better job for my spouse/partner	15%
To start my own business	6%	To start my own business	7%
To live in a larger community	3%	To live in a larger community	7%

Workforce	
To find a desirable natural environment (to have better access to the outdoors)	66%
To find a less congested place to live	57%
Take advantage of a slower pace of life	53%
To live in a smaller community	51%
To find a safer place to live	44%
To find a good environment for raising children	43%
To live among people with similar values	41%
To live closer to relatives	38%
To find a job that allowed for a better work-life balance	35%
To find lower priced housing	33%
To find a lower cost of living	31%
To find a job that matches my skills	30%
To take on a new job	30%
To buy available land	28%
To retire	24%
To find higher quality schools	20%
To find a higher paying job	19%
To find a better job for my spouse/partner	17%
To live closer to friends	16%
To take advantage of health care facilities	10%
To buy or begin my own business	9%
To live in a larger community	5%

Moved to new zip	
To find a desirable natural environment (to have better access to the outdoors)	64%
To find a less congested place to live	58%
Take advantage of a slower pace of life	53%
To live in a smaller community	52%
To live closer to relatives	43%
To find a safer place to live	42%
To live among people with similar values	42%
To retire	38%
To find a good environment for raising children	34%
To find lower priced housing	32%
To find a lower cost of living	31%
To buy available land	27%
To find a job that allowed for a better work-life balance	25%
To find a job that matches my skills	23%
To take on a new job	23%
To take advantage of healthcare facilities	17%
To live closer to friends	16%
to find higher quality schools	15%
To find a higher paying job	15%
To find a better job for my spouse/partner	13%
To start my own business	7%
To live in a larger community	5%

Discussion Metro/Micro Move Factors

Analysis was completed comparing participants' reasons for moving to new communities as indicated by those who said they “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with the statement. Among individuals moving to metro/micro communities in Montana the most important move factors were finding a desirable natural environment and access to the outdoors (60%), finding a less congested place to live (48%), taking advantage of a slower pace of life (43%), living closer to relatives (42%), and living in a smaller community (41%). Similarly, the most important factors among individuals moving to rural areas were very similar. Four of the top five top factors were the same -- finding a desirable natural environment and access to the outdoors (64%), finding a less congested place to live (62%), taking advantage of a slower pace of life (58%), and living in a smaller community (58%). The only difference is that 44% of individuals moving to rural communities said that finding a safer place to live was important.

In contrast, living in a larger community, starting a business, and finding a better job for spouse/partner were the least popular reasons for moving to both metro/micro and rural areas. Among individuals moving to metro/micro areas, living closer to friends (17%) and taking advantage of health care facilities (18%) were the least important reasons. For individuals moving to rural areas, finding a higher paying job (10%) and finding higher quality schools (10%) were less important compared to those moving to metro/micro areas. The results for those moving to metro/micro areas were finding a higher paying job (19%) and finding higher quality schools (19%).

Ratings of New Community

Overall, movers seemed to have high levels of satisfaction with their new community.

The following tables indicate how well movers like various aspects of their new community.

The percentage included in Table 12 is a combination of respondents who answered, “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” to the following question: *For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement. By “community” we mean the city or town where you live now. By “region” we mean the larger area where you work, shop, and play.* The option for answering this question was a four-point scale which included Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. There was also the option of Don’t Know.

Table 12: Newcomers Community Ratings by Relocation Place (Rural/Metro), Workforce Group, and Zip Code Change

Community Ratings	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
I feel safe in this community	92%	90%	92%	93%
Overall, I am satisfied with living in this community	92%	92%	92%	93%
I trust the people living in this community	83%	83%	84%	85%
The schools in this community are of high quality	40%	58%	53%*	50%
There is satisfactory health care available in this region	79%	85%	81%	83%
Five years from now I will most likely still live in this community	76%	72%	74%**	75%**
This region offers many natural amenities and recreation opportunities for residents	92%	93%	93%	94%
I can fully use my existing skills, education and training in this community	64%	70%	75%	70%
I can find activities in this region that are interesting to me	90%	91%	92%	92%

Community Ratings	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
This community is welcoming of new residents	72%	74%	74%	75%
I am satisfied with my social life in this community	77%	79%	79%	80%
This region takes steps to increase the use of natural amenities and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors	66%	76%	72%	72%
It is easy to make friends in this community	71%	73%	73%	75%
I trust local government officials to do what is right	49%	53%	52%	52%
There are opportunities to access adult education and professional development in this region	45%	68%	58%***	57%***
I can find the goods and services that I need to purchase in this region	62%	80%	71%	72%
In general, the housing in this community is of high quality	50%	68%	59%	60%
There are enough economic opportunities in this region so that anyone who wants to work can find a job	46%	65%	57%	56%
I believe that the economy of this region will grow stronger in the next 5 years	64%	79%	74%	72%
It is easy to find housing in this community that is affordable for my household	36%	35%	35%	37%
I am satisfied with my broadband options in this community	53%	55%	52%	55%

**Note that 35% of Workforce and 40% of New to Zip respondents answered “I don’t know” to the question about schools. Only 39% of Workforce respondents had children.*

*** 15 percent of Workforce and 16 percent of New to Zip said “I don’t know” to the statement “I will live here in 5 years.”*

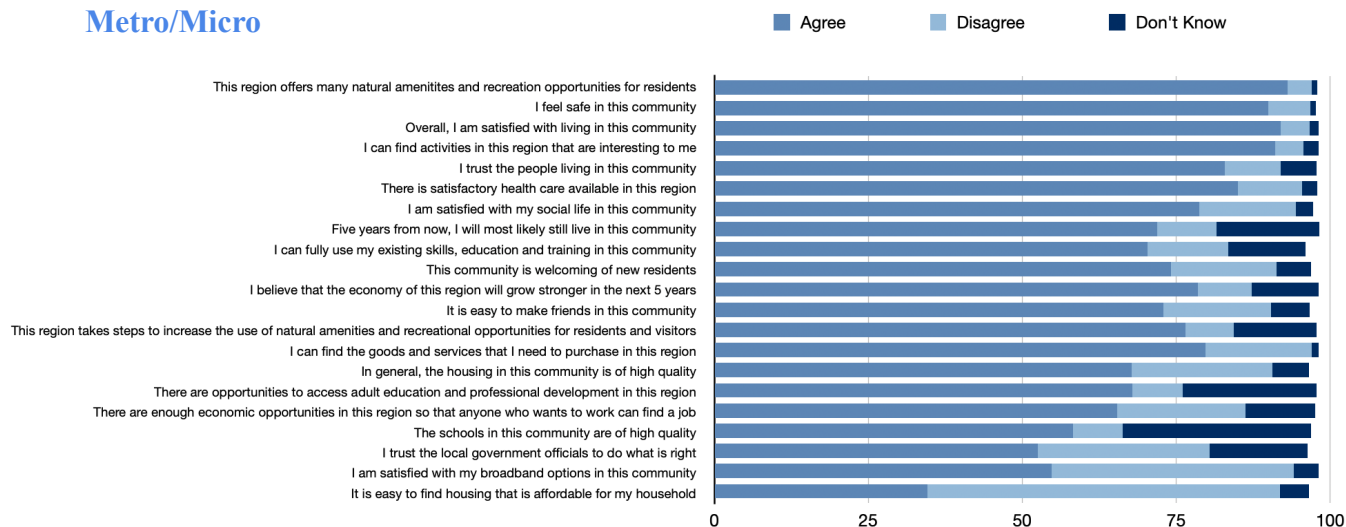
****24 percent of Workforce and New to Zip said, “I don’t know” to the statement about adult education opportunities.*

Tables 13, 14, and 15 are presented first on one page for comparison of community ratings, followed by larger versions for ease of readability.

Rural



Metro/Micro



Workforce

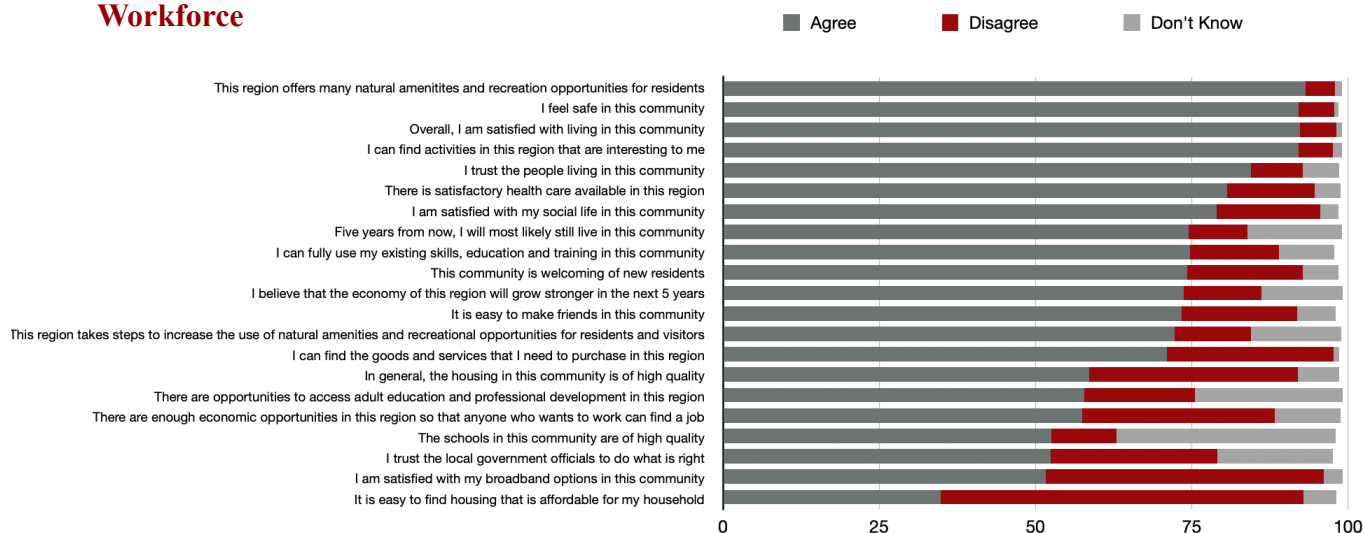


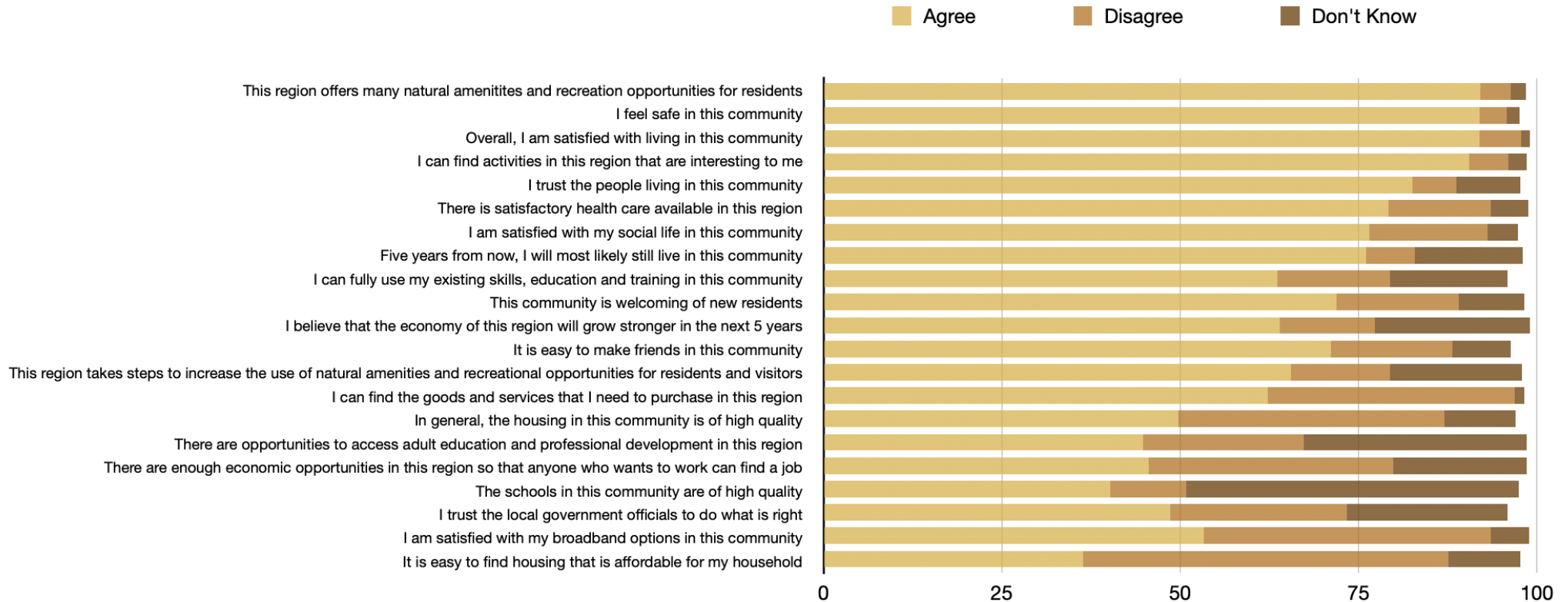
Table 13: Newcomers Rural Community**Rural**

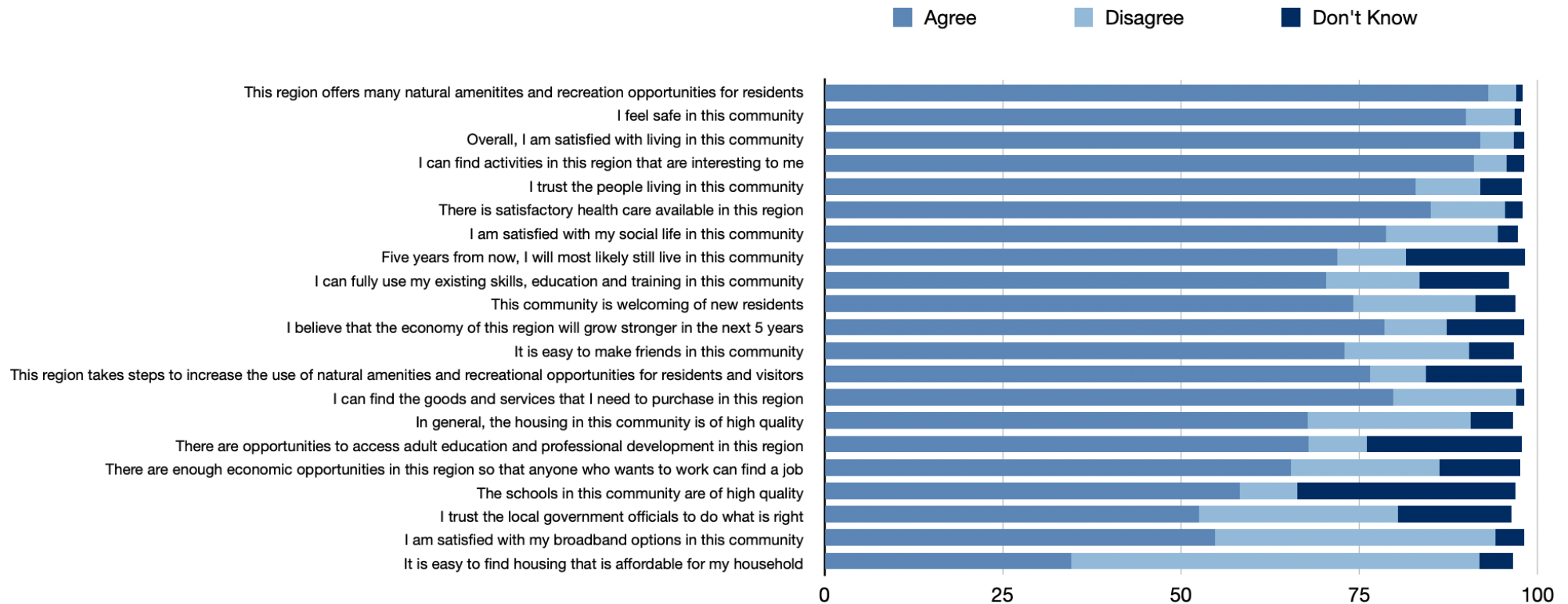
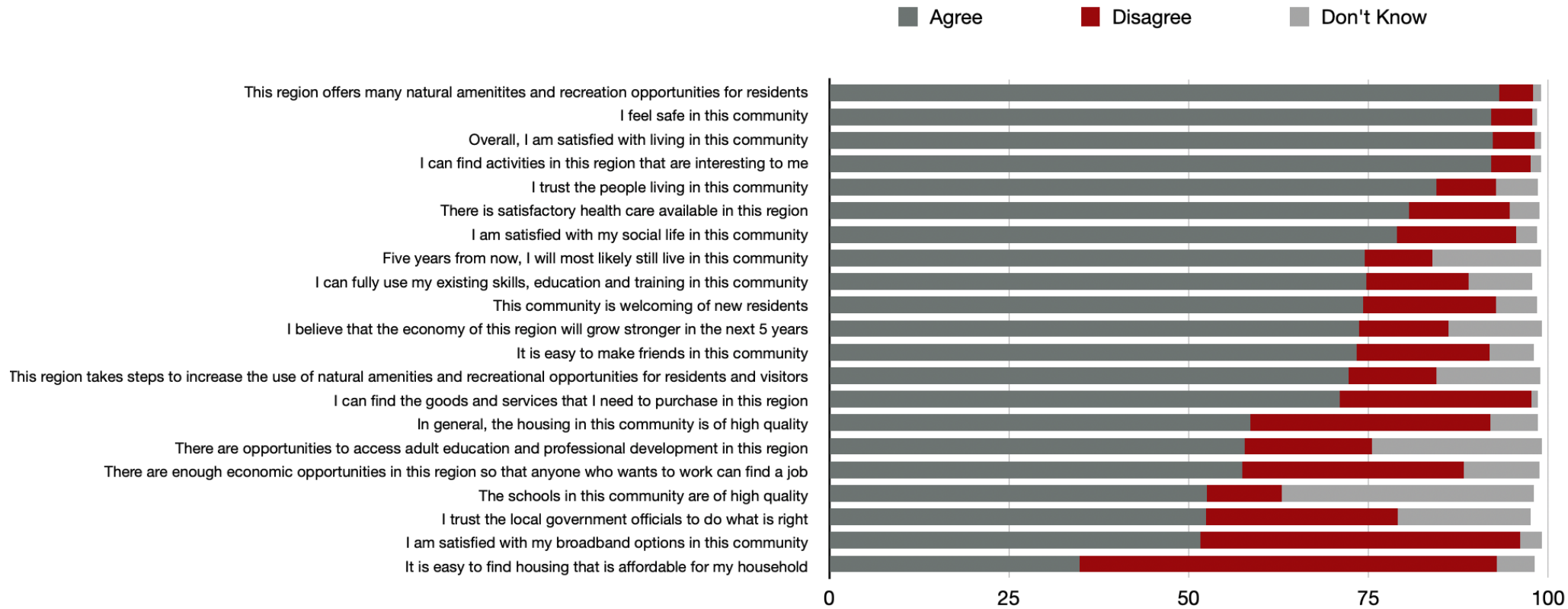
Table 14: Newcomers Metro/Micro CommunityMetro/Micro

Table 15: Newcomers Workforce Community**Workforce**

Use of Local Amenities

Respondents reported high use of local amenities which further supports the idea that movers are satisfied with their new community. The following tables indicate how often movers take advantage of amenities in their new community. The tables illustrate answers for the following question: *The COVID pandemic changed many behaviors. However, we are more interested in typical behaviors. How often do you attend or visit each of the following in your current community or region in a more typical year (or how often do you anticipate you will do so after the pandemic)?*

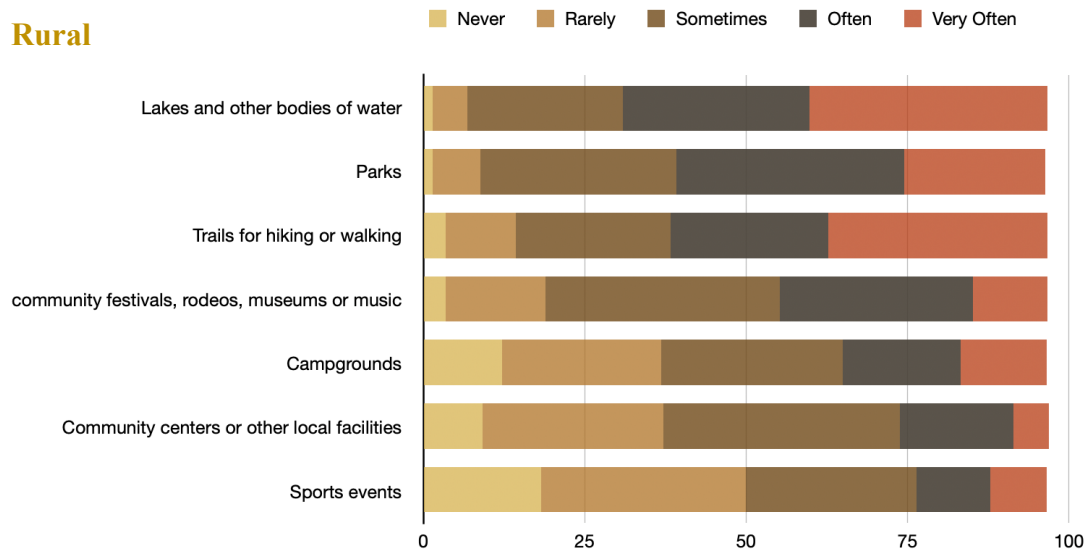
The option for answering this question was a five-point scale which included Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often and Very Often. Percentages in Table 16 include a combination of respondents who answered “Often” and “Very Often.”

Table 16: Newcomers Local Amenities by Relocation Place (Rural/Metro), Workforce Group, and Zip Code Change

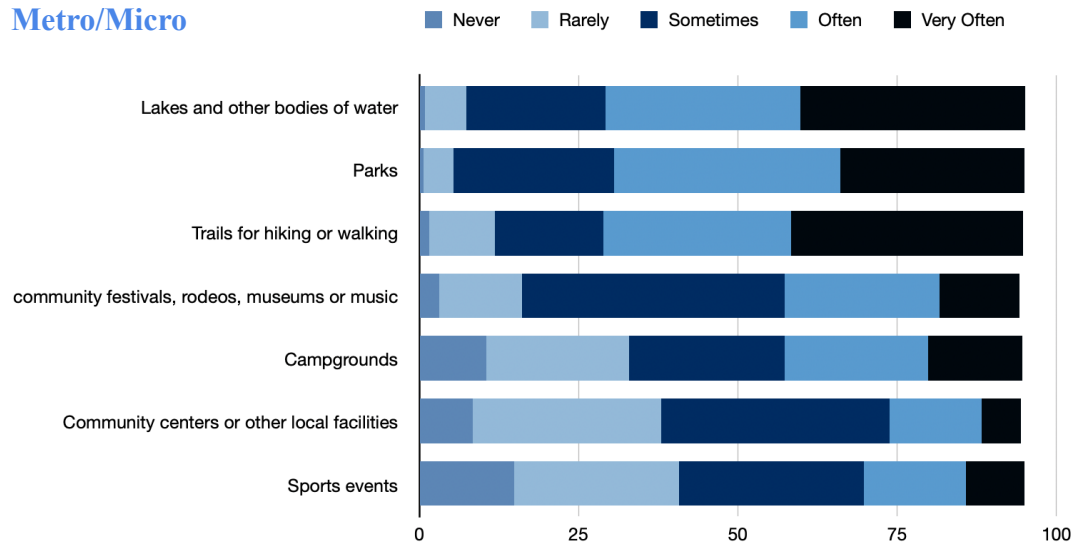
Asset Visitations	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
Lakes and other bodies of water	66%	66%	72%	69%
Cultural activities such as community celebrations, rodeos, museums or music	41%	37%	42%	41%
Community centers or other local facilities	23%	21%	23%	23%
Parks	57%	64%	67%	63%
Trails for hiking or walking	58%	66%	71%	65%
Campgrounds	32%	37%	40%	36%
Sports Events	20%	25%	26%	24%

Tables 17, 18 and 19 are presented first on one page for comparison of asset visitation, followed by larger versions for ease of readability.

Rural



Metro/Micro



Workforce

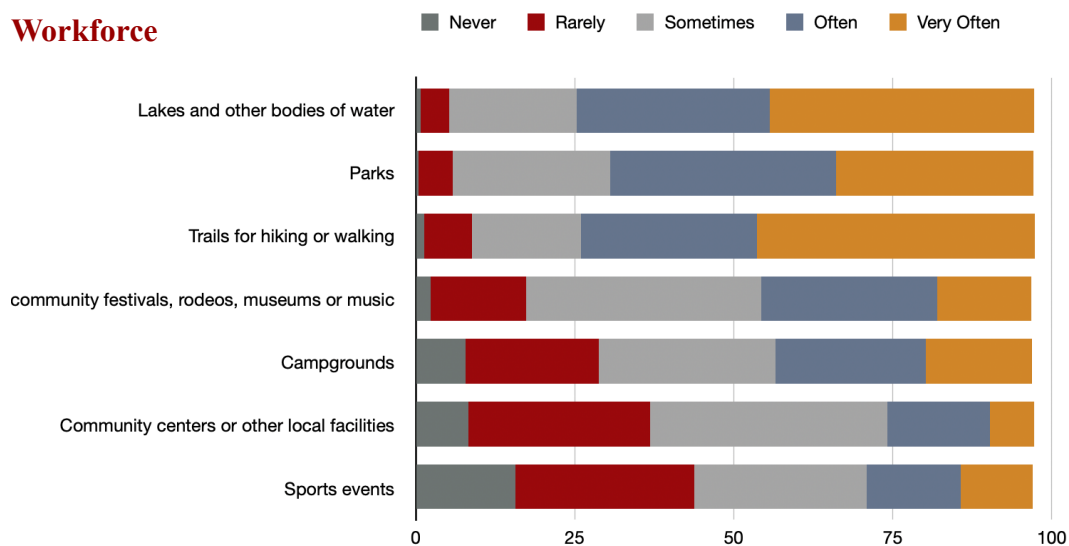


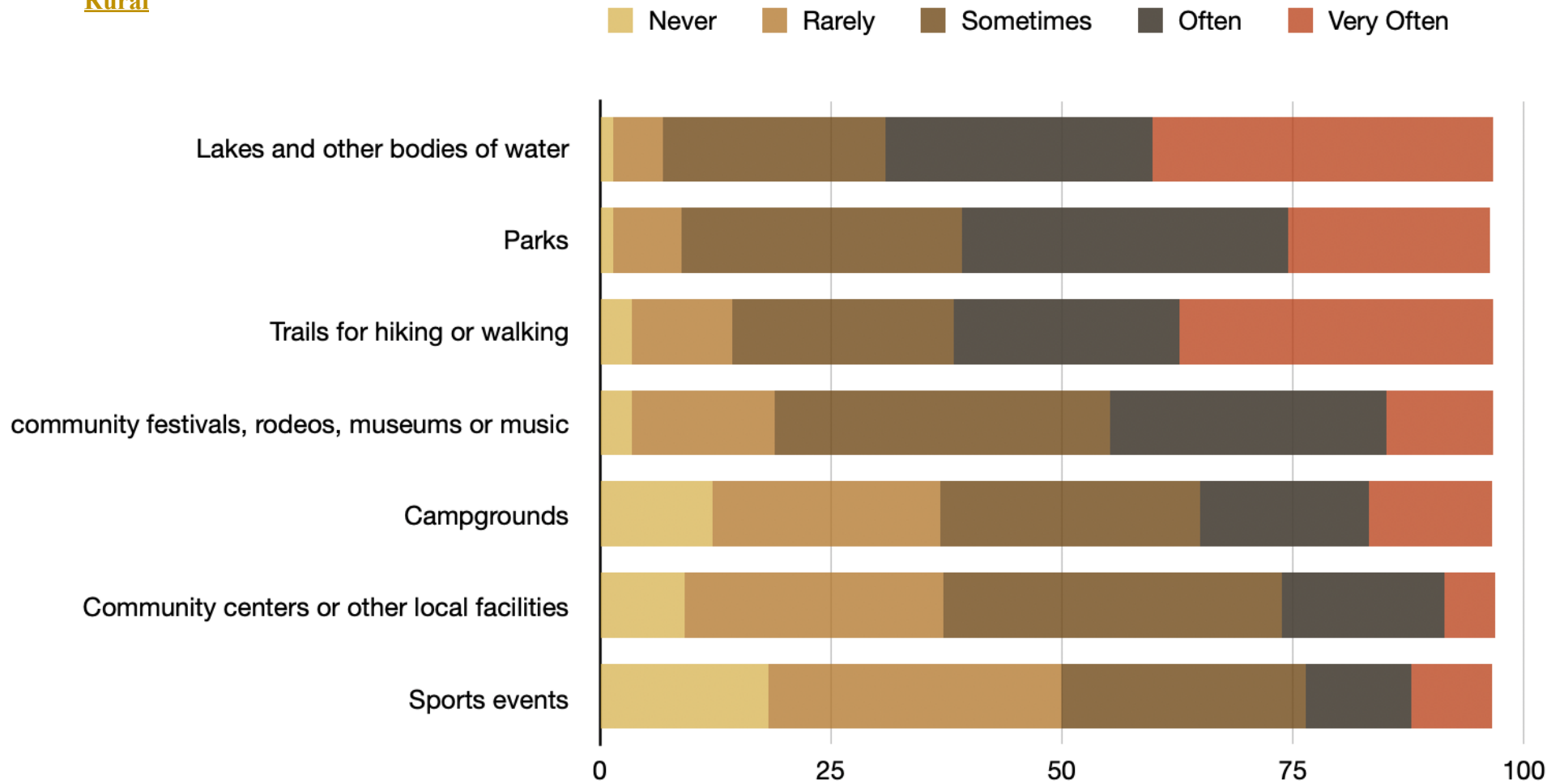
Table 17: Newcomers Rural Amenities: “How Often Do You Attend or Visit?”**Rural**

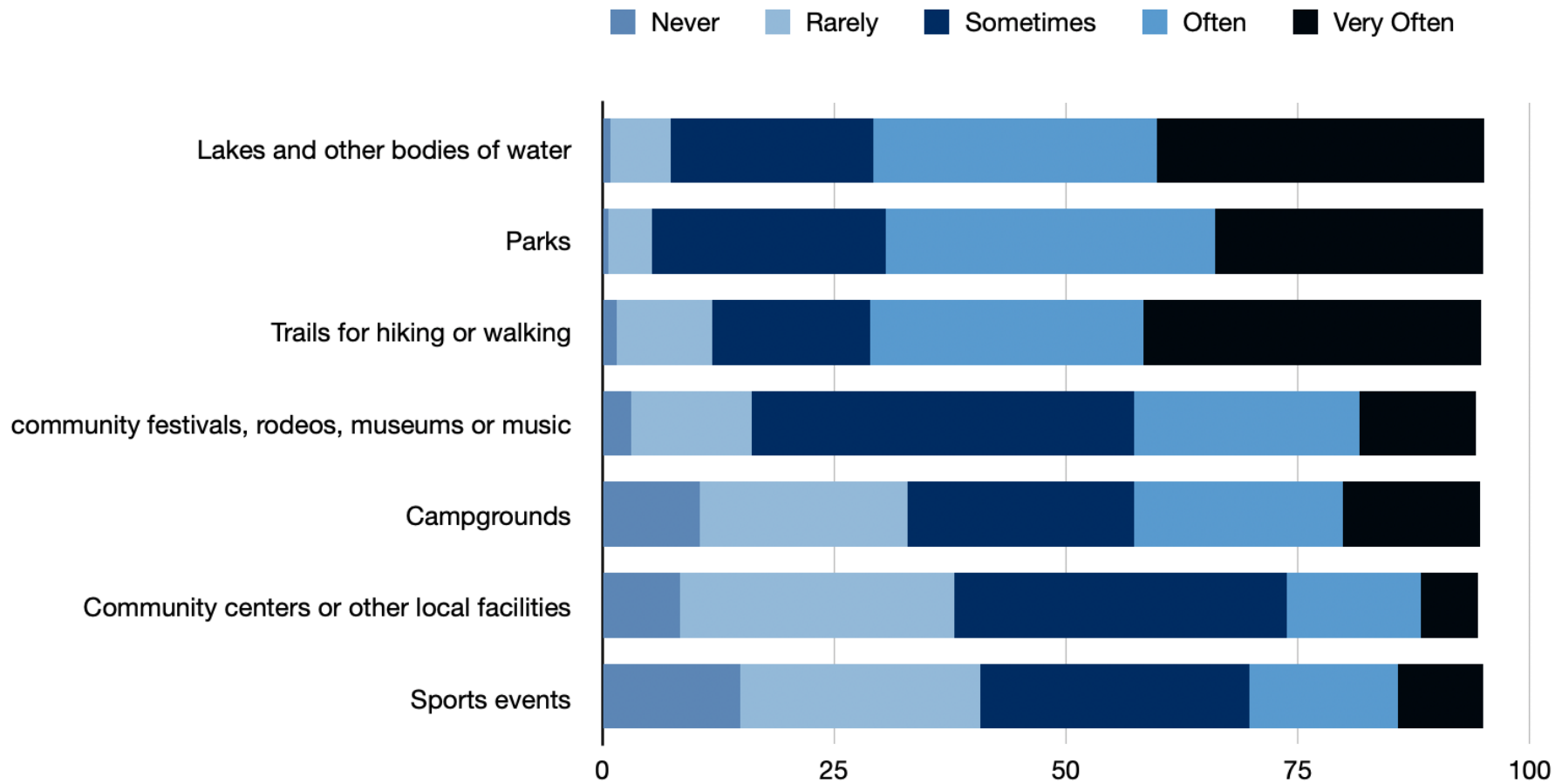
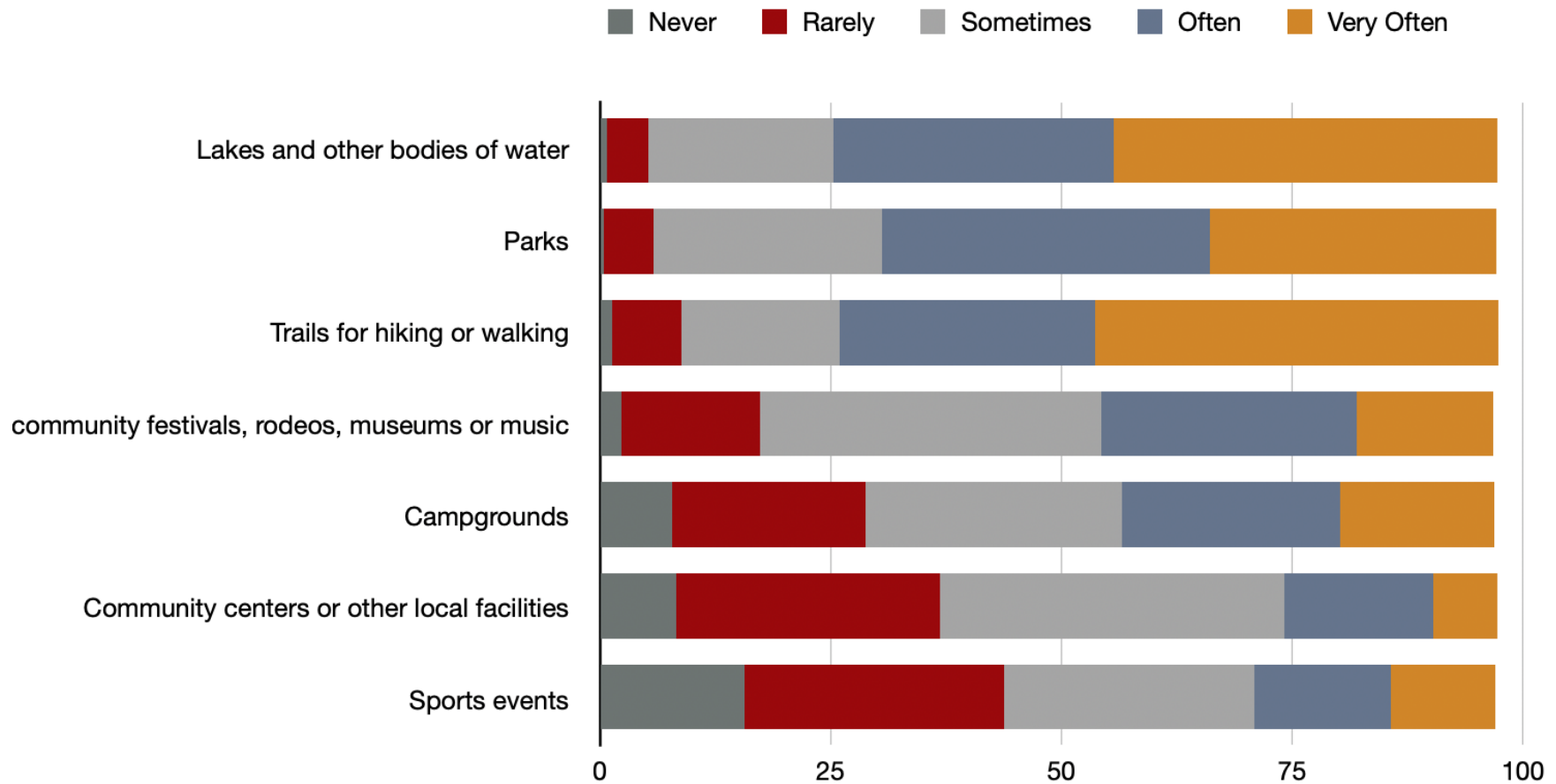
Table 18: Newcomers Macro/Micro Amenities: “How Often Do You Attend or Visit?”Metro/Micro

Table 19: Newcomers Workforce Amenities: “How Often Do You Attend or Visit?”**Workforce**

Engagement with New Community

Movers indicated a high level of engagement in their new community overall. The chart illustrates answers for the following question: *The COVID pandemic changed many behaviors. However, we are more interested in typical behaviors. How often do you engage in each of the following activities in your community or region in a more typical year (or how often do you anticipate you will do so after the pandemic)?*

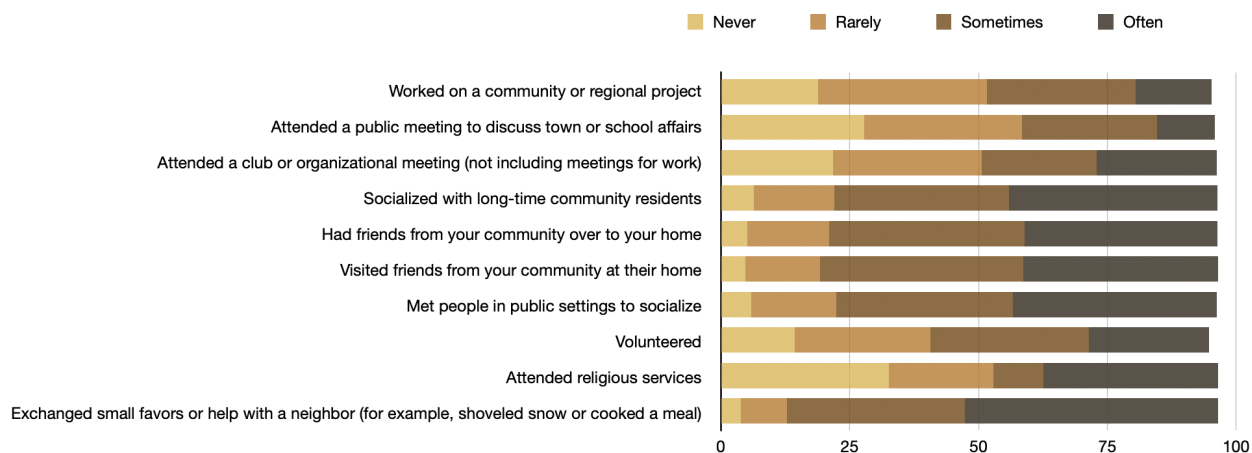
The option for answering this question was a five-point scale which included Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often and Very Often. The percentages shown in Table 20 include a combination of respondents who answered “Often” and “Very Often.”

Table 20: Newcomers Community Engagement by Relocation Place (Rural/Metro), Workforce Group, and Zip Code Change

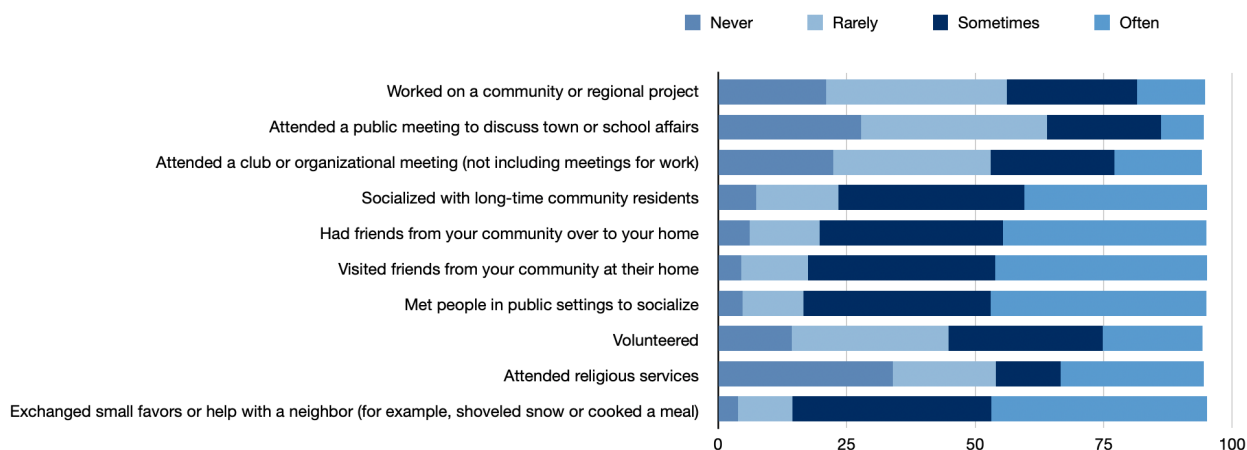
Community Engagement	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
Worked on a community or regional project	15%	13%	16%	15%
Attended a public meeting to discuss town or school affairs	11%	8%	12%	10%
Attended a club or organizational meeting (not including meetings for work)	23%	17%	22%	21%
Socialize with long-time community residents	40%	35%	41%	40%
Had friends from your community over to your home	37%	40%	45%	40%
Visited friends from your community at their home	38%	41%	46%	41%
Met people in public settings to socialize	40%	42%	47%	43%
Volunteered	23%	19%	23%	23%
Attended religious services	34%	28%	30%	32%
Exchanged small favors or help with a neighbor (for example, shoveled snow or cooked a meal)	49%	42%	47%	48%

Tables 21, 22, and 23 are presented first on one page for comparison, followed by larger versions for ease of readability.

Rural



Metro/Micro



Workforce

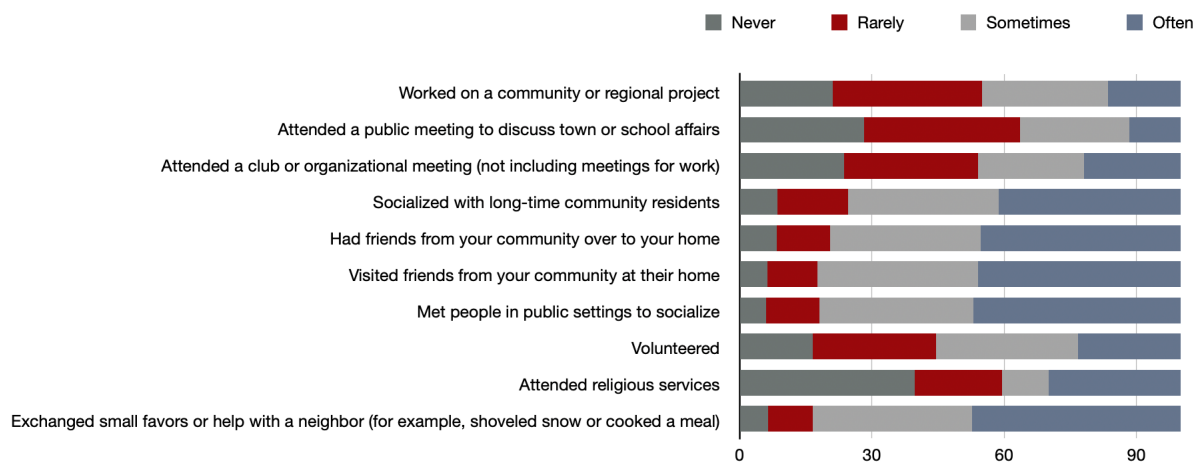


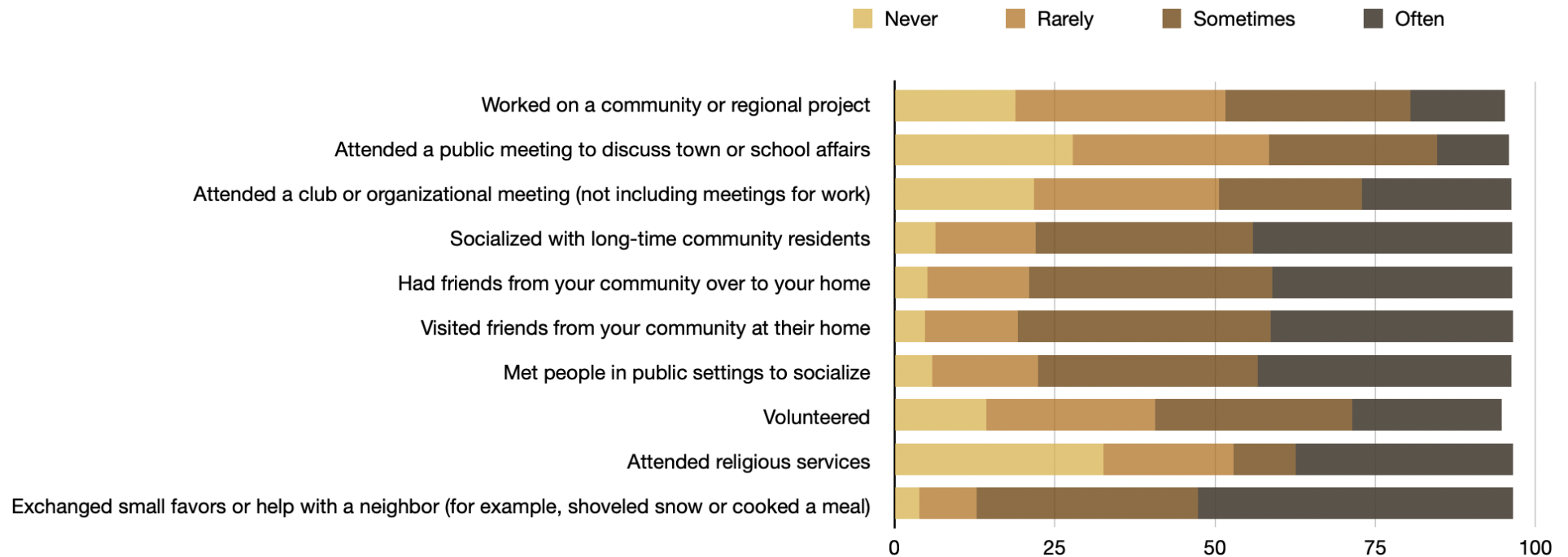
Table 21: Newcomers Rural Community Engagement: *How Often Do You Engage in the Following Activities?***Rural**

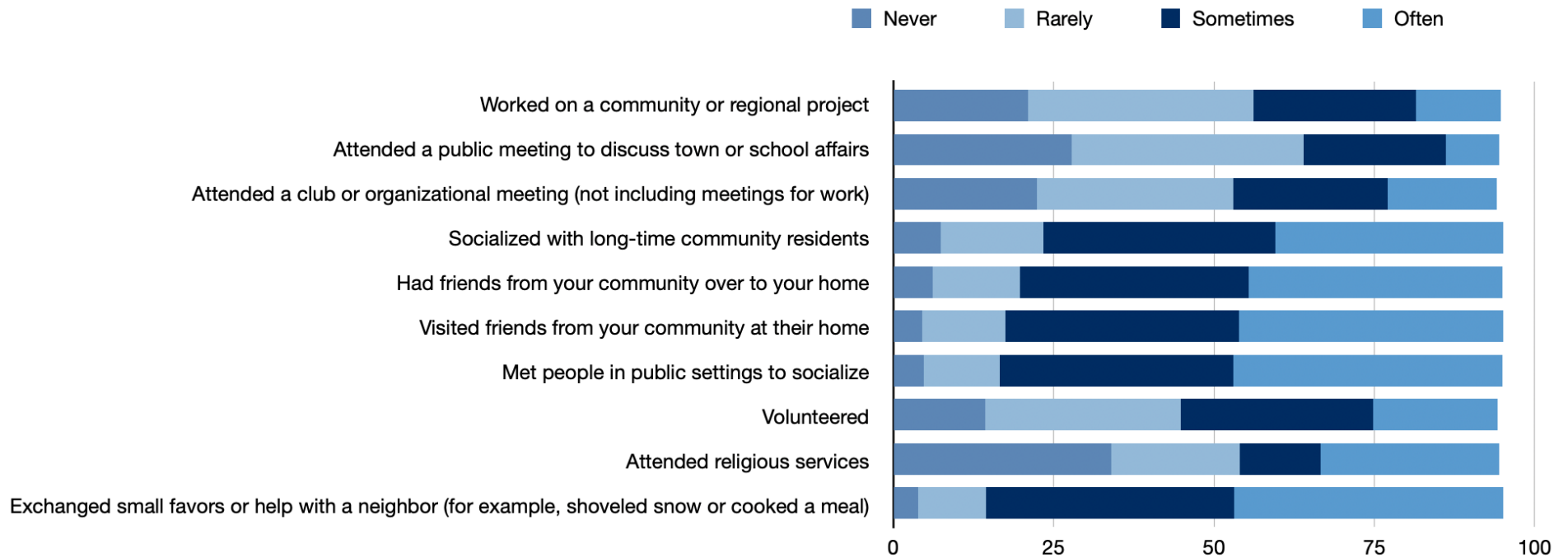
Table 22: Newcomers Metro/Micro Community Engagement: *How Often Do You Engage in the Following Activities?***Metro/Micro**

Table 23: Newcomers Workforce Community Engagement: *How Often Do You Engage in the Following Activities?***Workforce**

Demographics

The following table includes characteristics of respondents by group from the survey data collected.

Table 24: Newcomers Demographics by Relocation Place (Rural/Metro), Workforce Group, and Zip Code Change

Age Group	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
18-24	0.79%	0%	0.42%	.42%
25-34	10%	16%	13%	13%
35-44	15%	22%	18%	18%
45-54	13%	14%	13%	14%
55-64	23%	21%	22%	22%
65-74	26%	19%	23%	23%
75+	11%	6%	9%	9%
Blank	0.63%	1%	--	—
MULT	0%	0.17%	--	—

Female	53%	52%	45%	53%
Male	46%	45%	54%	45%
Prefer not to say/other	0.38%	0.35%	1%	.42%
Blank	0.79%	2%	--	—

White	86%	88%	87%	86%
Black or African American	0%	0.70%	0.49%	.33%
Hispanic or Latino	1%	2%	2%	1.41%
Asian	0.48%	0.70%	1%	.58%
MT Tribes or Nations	1%	0.17%	2%	.75%
Other Native American	2%	0.52%	5%	1%
Other	1%	0.17%	87%	.83%
Prefer not to disclose	4%	4%	0.49%	4%

Employed	51%	63%	78%	58%
Unemployed	3%	2%	4%	3%
Out of the Labor Force	44%	32%	16%	39%
Blank	2%	2%	1%	—
MULT	0.63%	0.17%	0.49%	—

Education

	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
H. S. Degree or less	12%	8%	8%	10%
Some College	35%	26%	22%	31%
Bachelor's Degree +	52%	64%	61%	59%
Currently a student (yes)	3%	4%	5%	4%
Blank/Other	0.95%	2%	0.86%	—

Household Characteristics

Size of household	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
1	21%	16%	14%	20%
2	49%	40%	40%	47%
3	11%	15%	16%	13%
4	9%	16%	17%	12%
5	4%	5%	7%	5%
6+	3%	3%	5%	3%
Blank	3%	4%	2%	—

Age of children	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
Infant	4%	4%	6%	5%
Toddler	6%	10%	--	10%
Preschool	5%	9%	10%	8%
Elementary School	11%	16%	19%	16%
Middle School	5%	9%	9%	8%
High School	6%	9%	11%	9%

Grandparents in household	4%	3%	4%	4%
Adult children in household	8%	10%	9%	10%
Other relatives in household	2%	3%	2%	3%

Living with spouse/partner	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
No	28%	23%	20%	26%
Yes	70%	74%	78%	74%
Blank	3%	3%	2%	—

Economic Characteristics

Household Income (2020)	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
< \$25,000	8%	4%	4%	6%
\$25,000 - \$49,999	19%	13%	12%	18%
\$50,000 - \$74,000	21%	17%	21%	22%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	17%	18%	19%	19%
\$100,000 or more	24%	38%	38%	34%
Blank/Other	12%	9%	7%	—

Home ownership	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
Rent*	0.48%	0.35%	0.49%	0.43%
Own	96%	95%	97%	99%
Some other arrangement	0.32%	0%	0.25%	0.17%
Blank/Other	3.16%	4.35%	2.59%	—

**Note that our sample came from State of Montana property ownership records so excludes renters and those living within reservations.*

Telecommuting? (work remotely)	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
Respondent	7%	7%	9%	7%
Spouse	3%	5%	6%	4%

Commute Times - Respondent	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
Work from home as self employed	5%	6%	7%	6%
some travel less than 15 min	21%	27%	32%	26%
Travel 15-30 min	8%	20%	19%	15%
Travel more than 30 min	9%	6%	10%	8%
Not applicable	43%	29%	18%	38%
Blank/Other	7%	6%	5%	—

Commute Times - Spouse	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
Work from home as self employed	6%	4%	6%	5%
some travel less than 15 min	12%	19%	21%	16%
Travel 15-30 min	6%	15%	15%	11%
Travel more than 30 min	8%	4%	9%	7%
Not applicable	60%	47%	40%	57%
Blank/other	5%	6%	4%	—

Business Owners

Currently Own a Business	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
Yes	19%	16%	23%	18%
No	81%	84%	77%	82%

Currently Own A Business*	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
Already existed	33%	38%	34%	35%
Created it	67%	62%	66%	65%

**Note: The responses included in this table are only from those who indicated that they currently own a business.*

Farm/Ranch Owners

Currently Own a Farm/Ranch	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
Yes	8%	2%	6%	5%
No	92%	98%	94%	95%

Currently Own a Farm/Ranch*	Rural	Metro/Micro	Workforce	Moved to new zip
Already existed	67%	60%	64%	65%
Created it	33%	40%	36%	35%

**Note: The responses included in this table are only from those who indicated that they currently own a farm or ranch.*

Metro/Micro Compared to Rural

The research team sought to uncover differences between those who moved to rural (non-metro/micro) areas compared to those that moved to metro/micro areas. The following discussion and analysis describe the main differences that were found between these two groups.

Differences in Reasons for Moving

What follows are some highlights followed by data tables and a more detailed discussion of the results.

- People moving to metro/micro areas were significantly more likely to be returning to those areas. People moving to rural areas were significantly more likely to have never lived there.
- People moving to metro/micro areas were significantly more likely to say that financial oriented reasons were important to their decision to move compared to those moving to rural areas.
- More people moving to rural areas were significantly more likely to say that qualities including the opportunity to buy available land, a safer place to live, a slower pace of life, a smaller community, live among people with similar values, and a less congested place to live were important in their decision to move than people moving to metro/micro areas.
- People moving to rural areas were significantly more likely to say that qualities related to lower cost-of-living were important compared to those moving to metro/micro areas including finding lower priced housing and overall lower cost-of-living.

The Chi-Square statistical procedure was used to examine the differences between categorical variables within the same population -- all survey responders who indicated they moved to a new zip code.

Table 25: Newcomers Returnee Chi-square Analysis

	Metro/Micro			Rural		
	%	St. Residual	Sig.	%	St. Residual	Sig.
Returnees (Self)						
Yes	32%	4.27	*	22%	-4.27	*
No	66%	-3.74	*	76%	3.74	*
Returnees (spouse)						
Yes	24%	4.289	*	14%	-4.289	*
No	54%	-3.383	*	64%	3.383	*

First, we conducted a chi-square analysis to see if there are significant differences in the likelihood of returning among returnees and their spouse/partner (if they have one). Overall, there were significant differences. 32% of metro/micro respondents were returners compared to only 22% of individuals returning to rural areas⁹. Similarly, 24% of metro/micro respondents' spouses/partners were returners compared to only 14% of rural respondents. These results suggest that both among returnees and their spouses/partners respondents moving to metro/micro areas are more likely to be returners.

Similarly, a series of chi-square analyses were conducted to explore whether the importance of reasons for moving to their new communities differed among individuals moving to metro/micro vs. rural areas. To align with research previously conducted by Ben Winchester and his colleagues, we looked at individuals who responded that the factor was "Important" or "Very Important."

⁹ Rather than reporting the overall chi-square analysis, we looked at differences between metro/micro and rural respondents for each row with significance determined when standardized residuals exceeded +/-2.

Table 26: Newcomers Importance of Factor in Moving Decision

	Metro/Micro						Rural					
	Important			Very Important			Important			Very Important		
	%	St. Residual	Sig.	%	St. Residual	Sig.	%	St. Residual	Sig.	%	St. Residual	Sig.
To live closer to relatives	10%	-0.955		31%	1.006		12%	0.955		28%	-1.006	
To live closer to friends	9%	-0.245		7%	1.632		10%	0.245		5%	-1.632	
To find lower priced housing	17%	0.655		11%	-2.574	*	16%	-0.0655		17%	2.574	*
To buy available land	12%	-1.004		10%	-2.825	*	14%	1.004		15%	2.825	*
To find higher quality schools	12%	3.566	*	8%	2.249	*	6%	-0.3566	*	4%	-2.249	*
To find a lower cost of living	17%	-0.46		10%	-2.316	*	18%	0.46		14%	2.316	*
To find a safer place to live	19%	-0.623		18%	-2.301	*	21%	0.623		23%	2.301	*
To find a desirable natural environment (to have better access to the outdoors)	25%	-0.358		34%	-1.281		26%	0.358		38%	1.281	
To find a good environment for raising children	13%	1.5		27%	4.094	*	10%	-1.5		17%	-4.094	*
Take advantage of a slower pace of life	20%	-1.934		23%	-3.839	*	25%	1.934		33%	3.839	*
To live in a smaller community	20%	-2.096	*	22%	-4.361	*	25%	2.096	*	33%	4.351	*
To live in a larger community	5%	2.91		1%	1.818		2%	-2.91		0%	-1.818	
To live among people with similar values	22%	1.473		17%	-2.919	*	18%	-1.473		23%	2.919	*
To find a less congested place to live	19%	-2.747	*	28%	-2.921	*	26%	2.747	*	36%	2.921	*
To find a higher paying job	10%	2.289	*	9%	3.861	*	6%	-2.289	*	3%	-3.861	*
To find a job that matches my skills	16%	3.487	*	12%	3.142	*	10%	-3.487	*	7%	-3.142	*
To find a better job for my spouse/partner	7%	1.021		8%	3.043	*	6%	-1.021		4%	-3.043	*
To find a job that allowed for a better work-life balance	15%	2.984	*	14%	2.212	*	10%	-2.984	*	10%	-2.212	*
To take on a new job	9%	1.122		16%	2.171	*	8%	-1.122		11%	-2.171	*
To start my own business	3%	0.15		4%	0.957		3%	-0.15		3%	-0.957	
To retire	13%	-0.166		18%	-4.062	*	13%	0.1116		27%	4.062	*
To take advantage of health care facilities	10%	0.733		8%	2.232	*	9%	-0.773		5%	-2.232	*

There were several significant differences among survey respondents that chose “Very Important.” Metro/micro respondents were significantly more likely to indicate finding higher quality schools (8% metro/micro versus 4% rural), a good environment for raising children (27% metro/micro versus 17% rural), a higher paying job (9% metro/micro versus 3% rural), a job that matched their skills (12% metro/micro versus 7% rural), a better job for spouse/partner (8% metro/micro versus 4% rural), a job that allowed for better work life balance (14% metro/micro versus 10% rural), the opportunity to take on a new job (16% metro/micro versus 11% rural) and taking advantage of health care facilities (8% metro/micro versus 5% rural) were of key importance.

In contrast, individuals wanting lower priced housing (11% metro/micro versus 17% rural), to buy available land (10% metro/micro versus 15% rural), to find a lower cost of living (10% metro/micro versus 14% rural), to find a safer place to live (18%-metro/micro versus 23% rural), to take advantage of a slower pace of life (23%metro/micro versus 33% rural), to live in a smaller community (2% metro/micro versus 33% rural), to live among people with similar values (23% rural versus 17% metro/micro), a less congested place to live (36% rural versus 28% metro/micro), and to retire (13% rural versus 18% metro/micro) were significantly greater among individuals moving to rural areas.

Among individuals indicating “Important” to the move factors, those from metro/micro areas were significantly more likely to say they moved to find higher quality schools (12% metro/micro areas versus 6% rural), to find a higher paying job (10% metro/micro areas versus 6% rural), find a job that matches their skills (16%-metro/micro versus 10% rural), and find a better work life balance (15% metro/micro areas versus 10% rural) (Table 26). In contrast, individuals moving to non-metro/micro areas are more likely to indicate living in a smaller

community (20% metro/micro versus 25% rural) and finding a less congested place to live were important (19%-metro/micro versus 26% rural).

Table 27: Newcomers Community Ratings

	Metro/Micro						Rural					
	Agree			Strongly Agree			Agree			Strongly Agree		
	%	St. Residual	Sig.	%	St. Residual	Sig.	%	St. Residual	Sig.	%	St. Residual	Sig.
Community Ratings												
I feel safe in this community	69%	2.187	*	21%	-2.994	*	63%	-2.187	*	28%	2.994	*
Overall, I am satisfied with living in this community	61%	2.003	*	31%	-2.065	*	56%	-2.003	*	36%	2.065	*
I trust the people living in this community	68%	0.38		15%	-0.321		67%	-0.38		16%	0.321	
The schools in this community are of high quality	42%	4.124	*	16%	3.51		31%	-4.124	*	9%	-3.51	
There is satisfactory health care available in this region	60%	-2.98		25%	6.319	*	68%	2.98		11%	-6.319	*
Five years from now I will most likely still live in this community	43%	1.707		29%	-3.287	*	38%	-1.707		38%	3.287	*
This region offers many natural amenities and recreation opportunities for residents	40%	0.242		53%	0.569		40%	0.242		52%	-0.569	
I can fully use my existing skills, education and training in this community	47%	0.483		23%	2.265	*	46%	-0.483		18%	-2.265	*
I can find activities in this region that are interesting to me	53%	-1.869		38%	2.174	*	58%	1.869		32%	-2.174	*
This community is welcoming of new residents	60%	0.248		14%	0.807		60%	-248		12%	-0.807	
I am satisfied with my social life in this community	64%	1.829		15%	-1.378		59%	-1.829		18%	1.378	
This region takes steps to increase the use of natural amenities and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors	46%	0.965		30%	3.213	*	44%	-0.965		22%	-3.213	*
It is easy to make friends in this community	59%	0.82		14%	-0.249		57%	-0.82		14%	0.249	
I trust local government officials to do what is right	47%	1.154		5%	-0.347		43%	-1.54		6%	0.347	
There are opportunities to access adult education and professional development in this region	51%	3.918	*	17%	6.563	*	39%	-3.918	*	5%	-6.563	*
I can find the goods and services that I need to purchase in this region	62%	3.302	*	18%	4.123	*	53%	-3.302	*	10%	-4.123	*
In general, the housing in this community is of high quality	55%	3.703	*	13%	4.469	*	44%	-3.703	*	5%	-4.469	*
There are enough economic opportunities in this region so that anyone who wants to work can find a job	47%	4.087	*	18%	4.187	*	36%	-4.087	*	10%	-4.187	*
I believe that the economy of this region will grow stronger in the next 5 years	48%	0.229		31%	5.672	*	47%	-0.229		17%	-5.672	*
It is easy to find housing in this community that is affordable for my household	28%	-0.838		6%	0.297		30%	0.838		6%	-0.0297	
I am satisfied with my broadband options in this community	44%	0.944		11%	-0.633		41%	-0.944		12%	0.663	

Differences in Rural, Metro/Micro Rating of New Community

What follows are some highlights of the findings related to rating of the new community followed by data tables and a more detailed discussion of the results.

- Individuals living in rural communities were significantly more likely to strongly agree that they are satisfied living in this community and that they feel safe in their community whereas individuals living in metro/micro communities were significantly more likely to just agree with these statements.
- Rural respondents are significantly more likely to say they will most likely be living in the community five years from now compared to individuals from metro/micro communities.
- People moving to metro/micro communities are significantly more likely to agree or strongly agree that they have access to amenities such as adult education and professional development, goods and services, high quality housing, and enough economic opportunities than people moving to rural communities.

Further, another set of chi square analyses were conducted to look at community factors among individuals moving to metro/micro and rural areas (Table 27). We explored whether there were significant differences in individuals who agreed and strongly agreed with statements describing the communities they currently live in. Among individuals who agreed with these statements, respondents living in metro/micro areas were significantly more likely to **Agree** that they feel safe in this community (69% metro/micro versus 63% rural), are overall satisfied with their community (61% metro/micro versus 56% rural), the schools in this community are of high quality (42% metro/micro versus 31% rural), there are opportunities to access adult education and professional development in this region (51% metro/micro versus 39% rural), they can find

goods and services to purchase in that region (62% metro/micro versus 53% rural), that in general the housing in the community is of high quality (55% metro/micro versus 44% rural), and there are enough economic opportunities in this region so that anyone who wants to work can find a job (47% metro/micro versus 36% rural). Rural respondents were not significantly more likely than metro/micro to indicate that they agree with any of these statements.

Individuals living in metro/micro areas were significantly more likely to **Strongly Agree** with the healthcare available in this region (25% metro/micro versus 11% rural), use of existing skills, education, and training in their community (23% metro/micro versus 18% rural), to find activities that are interesting to me (38% metro/micro versus 32% rural), that this region takes steps to increase the use of natural amenities and recreations opportunities for residents and visitors (30% metro/micro versus 22% rural), and residents believe that the economy of this region will grow stronger in the next five years (31% metro/micro versus 17% rural). Similar to individuals who agreed with statements, respondents living in metro/micro areas were significantly more likely to strongly agree that there are opportunities to access adult education and professional development in this region (17% metro/micro versus 5% rural), that they can find goods and services to purchase in that region (18% metro/micro versus 10% rural), that in general the housing in the community is of high quality (13% metro/micro versus 5% rural), and there are enough economic opportunities in this region so that anyone who wants to work can find a job (18% metro/micro versus 10% rural).

Whereas individuals living in metro/micro areas were significantly more likely to agree that they are satisfied living in this community and that they feel safe in their community; individuals living in rural areas were significantly more likely to strongly agree with these statements. For example, among individuals saying that they feel safe in the community 28% of

rural respondents said they feel safe compared with 21% of metro/micro respondents. 36% of rural respondents were satisfied living in their community compared to 31% of individuals living in metro/micro communities. Finally, 38% of rural respondents said they will most likely be living in this community five years from now compared to 29% of individuals from metro/micro areas.

Analysis of MT Workforce Compared to MN

The original version of this study was conducted by Ben Winchester and colleagues at the University of Minnesota Center for Rural Vitality to understand more about why people in the workforce move to communities in rural Minnesota. This data was sought to help economic developers and employers recruit workforce and was funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. At the time this whitepaper was written, the findings from the Minnesota study have been shared only in presentations. A published paper has been delayed due to the pandemic.

Ben Winchester's presentations of this data at the Reimagining Rural¹⁰ events have been transformative in raising awareness of the fact that people do find rural communities desirable and that there are people moving into rural communities as well as larger communities. Montana audiences indicated surprise by the data and overall positive message about rural living presented by Winchester. Even though the data was received positively by audiences in Montana, there was a clear question if the trends and motivations for moving found in the Minnesota study held true for Montana given that Montana has a lower population overall and a significantly lower population density than Minnesota. To eliminate any doubt about these important trends in rural migration, MSU and MSU Extension researchers sought to replicate this study in Montana. We examine the workforce age group in the Montana study to be able to compare our results to the results from Winchester's study in Minnesota.

One difference between the samples of the two studies is that the Minnesota study asked people to report their exact age and they included people 18-59 in their Workforce group. MSU's study asked people to indicate which U.S. Census age group they fit into and our age

¹⁰ Reimagining Rural is a program of Montana State University Extension and the Montana Community Foundation and other partners. Find out more here: <https://msuextension.org/communitydevelopment/reimagine-rural.html>

groups include 18-64 which includes slightly more older people than the Minnesota workforce group.

The Minnesota survey used a commercial mailing list and sent 20,903 surveys and received 1,610 responses back compared to Montana which sent 9,000 surveys and received 1,765 surveys back. In Minnesota, 618 of returned surveys fell into the Workforce age group compared to 811 in the Montana survey.

Respondent Characteristics

Some of the most surprising findings in the Minnesota study held true for the Montana study. In Minnesota, only 25 percent of movers had ever lived in the community before compared to 34 percent in Montana. Only about one-third of respondents said they moved primarily for a job (31 percent in MT; 35 percent in Montana). Slightly more people in Minnesota had children in their households compared to Montana (47 percent in MN; 39 percent in MT).

Demographics

Montana respondents were slightly more diverse than the Minnesota survey. In Montana, 87 percent indicated they were white compared to 97 percent in Minnesota. Education levels were similar between the two states with just less than 10 percent having a high school degree and 60-61 percent having a bachelor's degree or higher. In Minnesota, 51 percent said they have household incomes greater than \$100,000 compared to 38 percent in Montana. The percentage of renters in Minnesota was higher at 18 percent compared to less than 1 percent in Montana, since the mailing list in Montana came from property ownership records.

Reasons for Moving (Table 28, 29)

The top five reasons for moving in both Montana and Minnesota were quality of life oriented though there were slight differences between the states. In Montana, the top reason for moving was to have access to a desirable natural environment which was rated important or very important by 66 percent of respondents. This factor would have probably ranked highest in Minnesota, too, but the factor was excluded from their survey due to a printing error. The next most frequently chosen reason for moving by Montana respondents was to find a less congested place to live which was rated important or very important by 57 percent of respondents compared to 40 percent in the Minnesota study. The third most common reason for moving in Montana was “to take advantage of a slower pace of life” which 53 percent said was important or very important compared to only 44 percent in the Minnesota study. The factor in fourth place for Montana was “To live in a smaller community” which was also ranked fourth by Minnesotans though in Montana 51 percent rated this as important or very important compared to only 42 percent in Minnesota. The fifth spot in the top five reasons for moving given by Montana workforce was “To find a safer place to live”. In Montana, 44 percent rated this factor important or very important compared to 40 percent in Minnesota. The bottom three factors were the same in both states including health care facilities, buy or start a business and to live in a larger community.

Table 28: Newcomers Top Five Reasons for Moving (Important + Very Important):

	Rank MT	MT Workforce	MN Workforce
To find a desirable natural environment (access to outdoors)	1	66%	N/A
To find a less congested place to live	2	57%	40%
Take advantage of a slower pace of life	3	53%	44%
To live in a smaller community	4	51%	43%
To find a safer place to live	5	44%	40%

Table 29: Newcomers Bottom Five Reasons for Moving (Important + Very Important)

	Rank MT	MT Workforce	MN Workforce
To find a higher paying job	18	19%	29%
To find a better job for my spouse/partner	19	17%	23%
To take advantage of healthcare facilities	20	10%	11%
To buy or begin my own business	21	9%	9%
To live in a larger community	22	5%	5%

Community Ratings (Table 30, 31)

The survey asked respondents to rate their new community to get a sense of satisfaction with their move. Overall, the results for Montana indicate that movers are very satisfied with their new community. There were many similarities and some large differences between responses to this question from the two states.

The statement that the highest percentage of Montana respondents said they agree or strongly agree, was the statement “this region offers many natural amenities” (93 percent compared to 79 percent in MN). The statement that the second most Montanans (92 percent) said they agreed or strongly agreed with was “I feel safe in this community” compared to 94 percent in the Minnesota study. The third, fourth and fifth most positively ranked statements about their new community for Montana received similar in percentage points between the two states which include “I am satisfied with living in this community” (92% MT; 88% MN); “I can find activities that are interesting to me” (92% MT; 78% MN) and “I trust the people living in this community” (84% MT; 86% MN).

One major difference in the top community ratings for each state is that 84% of Minnesota respondents ranked “the schools in this community are of high quality” which was the third highest rated statement. In Montana, the “schools are of high quality” statement was the

fourth *lowest* rated factor with only 53 percent in Montana indicating they agreed or strongly agreed. The difference on this rating was the largest difference between the two states in this group at 31 percentage points difference. When evaluating this factor, it is important to note that in Montana, there were fewer respondents that had kids in school (39 percent in Montana; 47 percent in MN) which could have impacted the difference.

Table 30: Newcomers Top Five Community Ratings (Percent that said “Agree” + “Strongly Agree”)

	Rank MT	MT Workforce	MN Workforce
This region offers many natural amenities & recreation opportunities for residents	1	93%	79%
Overall, I am satisfied with living in this community	2	92%	88%
I feel safe in this community	3	92%	94%
I can find activities in this region that are interesting to me	4	92%	78%
I trust the people living in this community	5	84%	86%

In both states the statements with the fewest number of people that agreed or strongly agreed were “it's easy to find housing” and “I’m satisfied with broadband”. Montana’s score for “it is easy to find housing” was the factor with the fewest saying they agree or strongly agreed in both states at only 35 percent. Montanans ranked “trust of local government officials” 20 points lower than Minnesota did which could have been impacted by the timeframe these surveys were conducted. Montana’s numbers could be pandemic related or impacted by the large political divisions that occurred recently.

Table 31: Newcomers Bottom Five Community Ratings (Percent that said “Agree” + “Strongly Agree”)

	Rank MT	MT Workforce	MN Workforce
There are enough economic opportunities in this region so that anyone who wants to work can find a job	17	57%	66%
The schools in this community are of high quality	18	53%	84%
I trust the local government to do what is right	19	52%	72%
I am satisfied with my broadband options in this community	20	52%	55%
It is easy to find housing in this community that is affordable for my household	21	35%	57%

The Importance of Welcoming (Table 32)

Winchester examined the statement “This community is welcoming” closely in the Minnesota study because they found in the qualitative portion of their study that if a community is not welcoming, newcomers do not make connections, do not integrate into the community and may leave the community. Winchester did a cross tabulation of “This community is welcoming” and the factor “I am likely to live here in five years.” He found that if a person strongly disagreed that a community is welcoming, only 44 percent said they would be living in the community in five years. We did a similar calculation with the Montana data and found that only 20 percent of those that said they disagree or strongly disagree that the community is welcoming indicated they would be living in the community in five years. Welcoming appears to be even more important in Montana than in Minnesota regarding retention of newcomers (Table 32).

Table 32: The community is welcoming by likely to live here in five years.

	MT Workforce “Likely to live here in 5 years”	MN Workforce “Likely to live here in 5 years”
“This community is welcoming”		
Strongly agree	71%	86%
Agree	34%	77%
Disagree	26%	68%
Strongly Disagree	20%	44%

Visitation of Amenities

Montanans seemed to take advantage of the amenities offered in the community as indicated in Table 33. These high ratings further support the idea that movers are generally very satisfied with their move.

Table 33: How often do you attend or visit each of the following in a more typical year.

“Sometimes, often, or very often”

	Rank MT	MT Workforce	MN Workforce
Rivers, lakes and other bodies of water	1	92%	82%
Parks	2	91%	86%
Trails for hiking or walking	3	88%	70%
Cultural activities such as community celebrations, rodeos, museums or music	4	79%	70%
Campgrounds	5	68%	39%
Community centers or other local facilities	6	60%	51%
Sports events	7	53%	53%

Community Engagement

Understanding how engaged newcomers are in their new community is helpful to appreciate the value newcomers bring to the community and how they integrate once they arrive. Overall, the engagement of newcomers in Montana communities appears high (Table 34). The majority indicated that they worked on a community project, volunteered and became friendly with residents. Only a small number said they never socialized with community members in some way. Attendance at religious services was split with 40 percent saying they never attend and 41 percent saying they attend sometimes, often or very often.

Table 34: Community Engagement - Montana Workforce

	Never/ Blank	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Worked on a community or regional project	21%	34%	29%	12%	5%
Attended a public meeting to discuss town or school affairs	28%	35%	25%	9%	3%
Attended a club or organizational meeting (not including meetings for work)	24%	30%	24%	14%	8%
Socialize with long-time community residents	9%	16%	34%	31%	10%
Had friends from your community over to your home	8%	12%	34%	29%	16%
Visited friends from your community at their home	6%	11%	37%	30%	16%
Met people in public settings to socialize	6%	12%	35%	29%	18%
Volunteered	17%	28%	32%	14%	9%
Attended religious services	40%	20%	11%	10%	20%
Exchanged small favors or help with a neighbor (for example, shoveled snow or cooked a meal)	6%	10%	36%	33%	15%

Appendix

Montana New Resident Survey



INSTRUCTIONS: Please mark or enter text in the appropriate boxes and then return the completed survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to answer any question and may stop at any time. **Unless otherwise instructed, choose only one response for each question or statement.** As you complete the questionnaire, please note that by “community” we mean the city or town where you live now and by “region” we mean the larger area where you work, shop, and play.

1. In which year did you move into your current residence?

☐ 2021
☐ 2020
☐ 2019
☐ 2018
☐ 2017
☐ 2016
☐ Before 2016

2. In which month did you move to your current residence?

☐ January ☐ July
☐ February ☐ August
☐ March ☐ September
☐ April ☐ October
☐ May ☐ November
☐ June ☐ December

3. In which zip code is your current residence located? *[Please write in the box below.]*

4. Was your previous residence located in this same zip code?

☐ Yes *(SKIP to question #12)*
☐ No

5. Have you ever lived in your current community before?

☐ Yes
☐ No

6. Has your spouse or partner ever lived in your current community before?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I do not currently have a spouse/partner

7. In which zip code or other country was your previous residence located? *[Please write in the box below.]*

8. How long did you live in your previous community?

☐ 1 year or less
☐ 2-10 years
☐ More than 10 years

9. Did you move to your current community primarily for a job (for example, to accept a job offer or transfer to a business in this community?)

☐ Yes
☐ No

10. Was your move to your current community motivated by the COVID pandemic in any way?

☐ Yes *[Briefly describe in the box below.]*
☐ No

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Montana New Resident Survey

11. When you chose to move to this community, how important were each of the following factors for your household?

	Very important	Important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not important
To live closer to relatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To live closer to friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To find higher-quality schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To find lower-priced housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To buy available land	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To find a lower cost of living	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To find a safer place to live	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Very important	Important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not important
To find a desirable natural environment (to have better access to the outdoors)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To find a good environment for raising children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To take advantage of the slower pace of life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To live in a smaller community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To live in a larger community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To live among people with similar values	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To find a less congested place to live	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Very important	Important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not important
To find a higher-paying job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To find a job that matches my skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To find a better job for my spouse/partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To find a job that allowed a better work-life balance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To take on a new job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To buy or begin my own business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To retire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To take advantage of health care facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

[CODE]

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Montana New Resident Survey

12. For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement. By “community” we mean the city or town where you live now. By “region” we mean the larger area where you work, shop, and play.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The schools in this community are high quality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I trust the local government officials to do what is right.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is easy to make friends in this community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with my social life in this community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can fully use my existing skills, education, and training in this community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In general, the housing in this community is of high quality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is easy to find housing in this community that is affordable for my household.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I trust the people living in this community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This community is welcoming of new residents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel safe in this community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Five years from now, I will still live in this community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, I am satisfied with living in this community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This region offers many natural amenities and recreational opportunities for residents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This region has taken steps to increase the use of natural amenities and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I believe that the economy of this region will grow stronger in the next five years.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are enough economic opportunities in this region so that anyone who wants to work can find a job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can find activities in this region that are interesting to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with my broadband internet options in this community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can find the goods and services that I need to purchase in this region.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are opportunities to access adult education and professional development in this region.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is satisfactory health care available in this region.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Montana New Resident Survey

13. The COVID pandemic changed many behaviors. However, we are more interested in typical behaviors. How often do you attend or visit each of the following in your current community or region in a more typical year (or how often do you anticipate you will do so after the pandemic)?

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Rivers, lakes, or other bodies of water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural activities such as community celebrations, rodeos, museums, or music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community centers or other local facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parks (city, state, or national)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trails for hiking, walking, or biking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Campgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. The COVID pandemic changed many behaviors. However, we are more interested in typical behaviors. How often do you engage in each of the following activities in your community or region in a more typical year (or how often do you anticipate you will do so after the pandemic)?

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Work on a community or regional project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend a public meeting to discuss community or school affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend a club or organizational meeting (not including meeting for work)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socialize with long-time community residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have friends from your community over to your home or yard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visit friends from your community at their home or yard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meet people in public settings to socialize	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend religious services (not including weddings or funerals)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exchange small favors or help with a neighbor (for example, shovel snow or cook a meal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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15. In one or two words, please describe your job (for example, teacher, farmer, etc.) in the box below. *[You can skip this item if it is not applicable.]*

16. How many minutes does it normally (i.e., in non-COVID times) take you to travel from your home to your regular workplace?

- ☐ I work remotely for someone else
☐ I work from home as self-employed
☐ Some travel less than 15 minutes
☐ Travel 15-30 minutes
☐ Travel more than 30 minutes
☐ Not applicable

17. How many minutes does it normally (i.e., in non-COVID times) take your spouse or partner to travel from your home to their regular workplace?

- ☐ Works remotely for someone else
☐ Works from home as self-employed
☐ Some travel less than 15 minutes
☐ Travel 15-30 minutes
☐ Travel more than 30 minutes
☐ Not applicable

18. Do you rent or own your current residence, or do you have some other arrangement?

- ☐ Rent
☐ Own
☐ Some other arrangement

19. Including yourself, how many people total are in your household?

- ☐ 1 ☐ 6
☐ 2 ☐ 7
☐ 3 ☐ 8
☐ 4 ☐ 9
☐ 5 ☐ 10 or more

Please continue on back side

Montana New Resident Survey

20. Please indicate whether you have any children in each of the following age categories living in your household.

	Yes	No
Infant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toddler	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preschool	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elementary school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Middle school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21. Please indicate whether any of the following adults live with you in your household.

	Yes	No
Parent(s) / in-law(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adult child(ren)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other relative(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22. What was your total household income in 2020 before taxes?

- ☐ Less than \$25,000
☐ \$25,000 – 49,999
☐ \$50,000 – 74,999
☐ \$75,000 – 99,999
☐ \$100,000 or more

23. Do you currently own a business?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No (*SKIP to question #25*)

24. Did the business already exist, or did you create it?

- ☐ Already existed
☐ Created it

25. Do you currently own a farm?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No (*SKIP to question #27*)

26. Did the farm already exist, or did you create it?

- ☐ Already existed
☐ Created it

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Montana New Resident Survey

27. Please use the chart below to describe each **adult** living in your household (up to 4 maximum).

	You	Adult #2	Adult #3	Adult #4
Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44 <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54 <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64 <input type="checkbox"/> 65-74 <input type="checkbox"/> 75+	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44 <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54 <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64 <input type="checkbox"/> 65-74 <input type="checkbox"/> 75+	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44 <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54 <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64 <input type="checkbox"/> 65-74 <input type="checkbox"/> 75+	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44 <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54 <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64 <input type="checkbox"/> 65-74 <input type="checkbox"/> 75+
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say/other	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say/other	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say/other	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say/other
Living with a spouse or partner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Race or ethnicity [Choose all that apply.]	<input type="radio"/> White <input type="radio"/> Black <input type="radio"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="radio"/> Asian <input type="radio"/> Montana Tribes or Nations <input type="radio"/> Other Native Amer. <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to disclose	<input type="radio"/> White <input type="radio"/> Black <input type="radio"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="radio"/> Asian <input type="radio"/> Montana Tribes or Nations <input type="radio"/> Other Native Amer. <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to disclose	<input type="radio"/> White <input type="radio"/> Black <input type="radio"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="radio"/> Asian <input type="radio"/> Montana Tribes or Nations <input type="radio"/> Other Native Amer. <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to disclose	<input type="radio"/> White <input type="radio"/> Black <input type="radio"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="radio"/> Asian <input type="radio"/> Montana Tribes or Nations <input type="radio"/> Other Native Amer. <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to disclose
Education level	<input type="checkbox"/> High school or less <input type="checkbox"/> Some college / associate degree <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree +	<input type="checkbox"/> High school or less <input type="checkbox"/> Some college / associate degree <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree +	<input type="checkbox"/> High school or less <input type="checkbox"/> Some college / associate degree <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree +	<input type="checkbox"/> High school or less <input type="checkbox"/> Some college / associate degree <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree +
Currently a student?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Employment status	<input type="checkbox"/> Employed <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Retired/out of labor force	<input type="checkbox"/> Employed <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Retired/out of labor force	<input type="checkbox"/> Employed <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Retired/out of labor force	<input type="checkbox"/> Employed <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Retired/out of labor force

28. If you have any additional comments regarding your new resident experience to share with our research team, please write them in the box below. **Thank you for your participation!**

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