



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# ONE COMMUNITY ONE VOICE

2023 Community Input Report & Executive Summary  
YMCA OF THE FOX CITIES



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the Y, **Strengthening Community** is our cause. We believe a community is strong and equitable when:

- the community's needs are met.
- people and groups can pursue goals.
- all community members thrive.
- the community can mobilize resources when needed.

The Y, as a national movement, has listened to and responded to communities' most critical social needs for more than 179 years, and is determined to continue doing so. As part of our strategic planning process, the YMCA of the Fox Cities worked with key partners and stakeholders to understand our community's most pressing, compelling issues and learn from them how the Y can help best address those needs.

To gather comprehensive data and insights, the Y's Strategic Planning Steering Committee employed several quantitative and qualitative sources to inform our pathway and further engage our community. Internal and external sources included U.S. Census Data, the Fox Cities Life Study, United Way ALICE reports, Youth Risk Behavior, Y membership demographic, as well as a host of other sources.

In addition, the Y looked to engage the community through four different approaches:

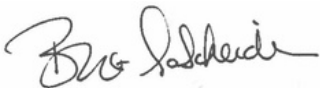
- Community Leader Forums
- Online Community Needs Questionnaire – YMCA Members Only
- Online Community Needs Questionnaire – YMCA Nonmember/General Public
- YMCA Staff and Volunteer Stakeholder Input Sessions

The information contained within this document represents the summarized results from each of those four input methods.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the dedicated community leaders, partners, board members, staff and the countless general community members who generously shared their voices and devoted their time to discussing the current and future needs of our community. These collaborative efforts have not only allowed us to pinpoint the specific needs of our community but have also identified opportunities for our organization to support collectively through strategic community partnerships. These alliances will further reinforce our commitment to driving our mission and enhancing our collective impact as a community.

**We view the information contained herein as the community's. As such, we invite you to use and share this information as you see relevant within your organizations and networks.**

In service,



**Bret Salscheider**  
President & CEO

# COMMUNITY LEADER FORUMS

In September, the Y held four separate community forums at Riverview Gardens, convening more than 75 influential community leaders and stakeholders to collaborate in impactful community discussions. Among the attendees were individuals from diverse business sectors, each possessing extensive networks and connections that mirror the rich tapestry of the Fox Valley community. Their collective presence exemplified a commitment to inclusivity, fostering dialogue, and championing initiatives that resonate with the varied demographics of our region's residents.

### Sectors Represented:

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- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health Care</li><li>• Education</li><li>• Government / Civic</li><li>• Economic Development</li><li>• Youth &amp; Child Serving Organizations</li><li>• Donors</li><li>• Basic Needs</li><li>• Nonprofits</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public Health</li><li>• Community Safety</li><li>• Faith</li><li>• Business / Corporate Members</li><li>• Funders (Foundations, United Way)</li><li>• Service Organizations / Clubs</li><li>• Behavioral Health</li><li>• Advocacy</li></ul> |
|---|--|

### Demographic / Population Served

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- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• General Community</li><li>• Youth</li><li>• Low-Income</li><li>• Aging</li><li>• Rural</li><li>• Hmong</li><li>• Refugees</li><li>• African American</li><li>• Y Members</li><li>• Y Board Members</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Under / Un-Insured</li><li>• Disabilities</li><li>• English as a Second Language</li><li>• LGBTQ+</li><li>• Preschool</li><li>• Latinx</li><li>• Families</li><li>• Hmong</li><li>• Muslim Community</li><li>• YMCA Non-Members</li></ul> |
|--|---|

The forums were structured around four main areas for individuals to engage in meaningful conversations. Those four areas were:

- 1. Seeking Greater Community Impact:** Identification of the critical social issues or pressing challenges facing our community and how we see that changing over the next 5 years.
- 2. Strengthening Community:** Discussion on the key strengths of the Y and what role it needs to play in strengthening our community based upon those community challenges.
- 3. Building for the Future & Partnering with Others:** Understanding that complex social issues require a collaborative approach, who should the Y seek or deepen existing partnership to positively impact change.
- 4. Community Solutions:** Stakeholder discussion and feedback on what they believe should be the Y's top priorities.

The results of those forums have been summarized on the following pages.

## TOP COMMUNITY NEEDS

The themes identified by community leaders encompass a broad range of concerns and challenges present in the community, touching upon family, mental and physical health, education, workforce, and social dynamics. They are listed below in no particular order.



### Childcare & Family Support:

The affordability and accessibility of quality licensed childcare is a top community concern, with particular emphasis on its impact on workforce development and the challenges experienced by marginalized families. Furthermore, the shifting family structures and demographics have underscored the urgent need for enhanced family strengthening supports. To address these issues comprehensively, there is a collective call for coordinated childcare efforts and expanded support for families.



### Youth Development

There is a need to prioritize new and/or expanded youth programming that promotes physical activity, play, socialization, and reduced screen time for youth while addressing challenges such as mental health and post-education uncertainty. There is also a need to support those youth who are considered at-risk by enriching existing youth development initiatives, extending education beyond traditional classrooms, and other out-of-school time activities that prepare them for future workforce demands. Programs and supports that increase resilience, home stability and family strengthening while decreasing negative youth behaviors.



### Mental Health:

There is a high need for increased access to quality mental health services and support (both formal and informal) due to the increased strain on individual mental health and well-being, particularly for youth and families in our community.



### Community & Social Isolation:

People are seeking a sense of community and belonging to help eliminate the effects of social isolation, exacerbated by factors such as technology and remote work. This frequently occurring theme connects with the U.S. Surgeon General's Epidemic Advisory and its impacts on physical well-being. Built environments and programs that represent safe places that promote and enhance connection are needed.



### Healthcare and Wellness

Ensuring healthcare accessibility and affordability was noted as a top concern – this includes dental and mental health services. Embracing health equity principles and recognizing social determinants of health is essential to combat rising healthcare costs, the prevalence of chronic conditions, and addressing the underlying issues that affect healthcare outcomes. Extending care beyond medical treatment to encompass a more holistic, lifestyle medicine approach as part of the continuum of care through increased opportunities for physical activity – from youth to seniors.

## TOP COMMUNITY NEEDS CONTINUED



### Workforce & Economic Challenges

Workforce recruitment and retention, due to labor shortages, continues to be a significant concern. This coupled with concerns about the number of individuals who have left the workforce has impacted our region's economic development. Economic disparity, especially concerning low wages and the disappearing middle class, was also identified within this theme. Concurrently, the importance for employers to navigate the evolving workforce landscape will also need to take into consideration the mental health aspects of employability and productivity.



### Senior Population & Intergenerational Programming:

Challenges such as social isolation, access to affordable healthcare, and opportunities for meaningful engagement are all concerns facing an increasing demographic in our community. Meeting these needs is crucial for promoting the overall well-being of seniors and ensuring they can lead fulfilling lives in their later years. Additionally, fostering connections with younger generations can enrich their experiences and contribute to a sense of belonging within the community.



### Housing:

The scarcity of affordable housing, particularly for low and middle-income families, has detrimentally affected financial stability and take-home pay. This issue exacerbates existing socioeconomic disparities, making it increasingly challenging for individuals and families to meet their basic needs and save for the future. Addressing this challenge requires comprehensive solutions that prioritize the creation of affordable housing options and equitable access to homeownership opportunities, ultimately fostering economic resilience and prosperity for all.



### Social Issues and Inequality:

Social issues such as substance abuse, addiction and homelessness are a concern, along with socioeconomic disparities and their impact on various aspects of life. These challenges often intertwine with factors such as poverty, lack of affordable housing and limited access to mental health resources.



### Community Engagement and Support:

Although the Fox Cities region is predominately white/Caucasian, it is recognized that there is a growing shift in the community's diversity and marginalized populations. There is a need for organizations to strengthen community ties and foster meaningful connections with vulnerable populations including immigrant individuals and families, LGBTQ+ individuals and families, among others.



### Technology and Social Impact:

The impact of technology on social interactions are interfering with relationship building. Challenges associated with excessive screen time and its effects on mental and social well-being are also a high concern.

## PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION

Community leaders identified key partners with whom the Y should deepen its relationship and collaborate to help address the community's current and future needs. These recurring partners and themes reflect a comprehensive approach to community engagement, health and wellness, education, and inclusivity, demonstrating a commitment to collaboration and addressing diverse community needs.

### Organizational and Institutional Partners Identified Were:

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- Government agencies.
- School districts.
- Organizations and Other Nonprofits (e.g., Babes, Harbor House, NAMI, Brigade, Boys and Girls Club, Even Start, World Relief, etc.).
- Healthcare Providers, Systems and Payors.
- Faith communities.
- Public Health Organizations.
- Law enforcement and Public Safety.
- Large Employers and Businesses.
- Park and Rec Departments.
- Educational institutions (e.g., Lawrence University, Fox Valley Technical College, Charter Schools, Head Start, Junior Achievement).
- Community Development Entities (e.g., Chamber, Thrivent, VIDA, Adapted and Inclusive programming).
- Specialized agencies (e.g., Casa Hispania, People of Progression, African Heritage, INDUS, Native American, Special Olympics).

### Ideas and Themes Included:

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#### Healthcare:

A focus on collaboration and partnerships with providers that include expanded healthcare access, mental health services, onsite facilities for convenient access to holistic well-being support. Collaborating with insurance providers to offer memberships or discounts.



#### Education:

Deepen the existing, strong partnerships with schools and educational institutions that enhances out of school time/school age programming and wrap-around care programming. Leverage greater community outreach for new youth development programming opportunities (e.g. like pop-up programming in parks.)



#### Advocacy & Community Engagement:

Leverage the Y's social and political capital to engage with local governments, identify unmet community needs, and help convene and collaborate with various stakeholders to address challenges that fosters comprehensive community solutions.



#### Accessibility & Inclusivity:

Efforts included greater community outreach and expanding YMCA accessibility to remote or underserved areas. Moreover, partner with organizations to provide and utilize their resources to support vulnerable or marginalized populations, engage with underserved communities and identify their unique needs. Additionally, continual focus on establishing YMCA facilities as a safe, inclusive, judgement-free space. These initiatives prioritize community wellness and inclusivity, ensuring everyone has access to resources for their physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.



#### Collaboration On Built Environments:

Encourage collaboration among various partners, leveraging strengths and resources, explore shared spaces and facilities to optimize resources and services. With the Y's physical presence in the region and service reach, collaboration with other partners on built environments would expand its reputation as a community hub and the opportunity to address health equity.



#### Engagement & Awareness:

Promoting community-wide awareness about YMCA services and programs, bridge gaps in knowledge about YMCA offerings, particularly for low-income individuals, create social outlets and connections, especially for families with special needs and older adults.



## COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS | THE Y's ROLE

Community leaders identified a variety of areas where the Y can play a role in leveraging its strengths to meet the needs of and strengthen our community.

- 1. Childcare and Youth Development:** Addressing child care needs and youth development, including nutrition, wellness, and access to programs, is crucial for supporting families and fostering healthy development in children and adolescents.
- 2. Community Access and Engagement:** Enhancing access to YMCA services and creating safe, inclusive spaces fosters a sense of belonging and strengthens community connections, promoting overall well-being and social cohesion.
- 3. Collaborations and Partnerships:** Deepening collaborations with other nonprofits, schools, and community organizations enhances program effectiveness and ensures comprehensive support for community members, leveraging collective resources and expertise.
- 4. Values and Inclusivity:** Emphasizing core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility, while promoting inclusivity and diversity, fosters a welcoming environment where all individuals feel valued and supported, regardless of background or ability.
- 5. Volunteering and Community Involvement:** Encouraging volunteering, mentoring, and leadership opportunities promotes civic engagement and empowers individuals, particularly youth, to contribute positively to their communities, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility.
- 6. Program Diversification and Enhancement:** Expanding and improving programs to meet diverse community needs, from health and wellness initiatives to educational and career development opportunities, ensures the YMCA remains relevant and responsive to evolving community dynamics.
- 7. Advocacy and Awareness:** Advocating for critical community needs and raising awareness of the YMCA's role and offerings ensures that key issues are addressed and that community members are informed and engaged in shaping local initiatives and solutions.
- 8. Adaptation and Innovation:** Remaining adaptable to changing circumstances and exploring innovative approaches, such as leveraging technology or establishing satellite locations, allows the YMCA to effectively meet emerging community needs and maintain relevance in a dynamic environment.

Recognizing the YMCA's potential as a catalyst for community development, key leaders emphasize its pivotal role in addressing diverse needs. Through strategic collaborations with healthcare providers and insurance companies, the YMCA can broaden access to essential healthcare services, including mental health support, ensuring inclusivity and affordability. Additionally, strengthened partnerships with schools and educational institutions enhance youth development programming, offering invaluable support for families and promoting lifelong learning opportunities.

Advocating for comprehensive community solutions, the YMCA can leverage its influence to engage with local governments and stakeholders, facilitating dialogue and action to address unmet needs effectively. Moreover, the YMCA's commitment to enhancing accessibility and inclusivity is evident through its efforts to extend services to underserved areas and support vulnerable populations through partnerships with community organizations. By establishing YMCA facilities as safe, inclusive spaces and promoting community-wide awareness, the organization strengthens its already strong social connections and fosters a sense of belonging for all members of the community.

Encouraging collaboration on built environments and resource optimization with partners, the YMCA will reinforce its position as a community hub and health equity center, ensuring equitable access to vital resources and services.

Through these collective efforts, it was felt by community leaders, the YMCA will be able to fulfill and remain dedicated to promoting community wellness, resilience, and social equity, serving as a beacon of hope and support for generations to come.

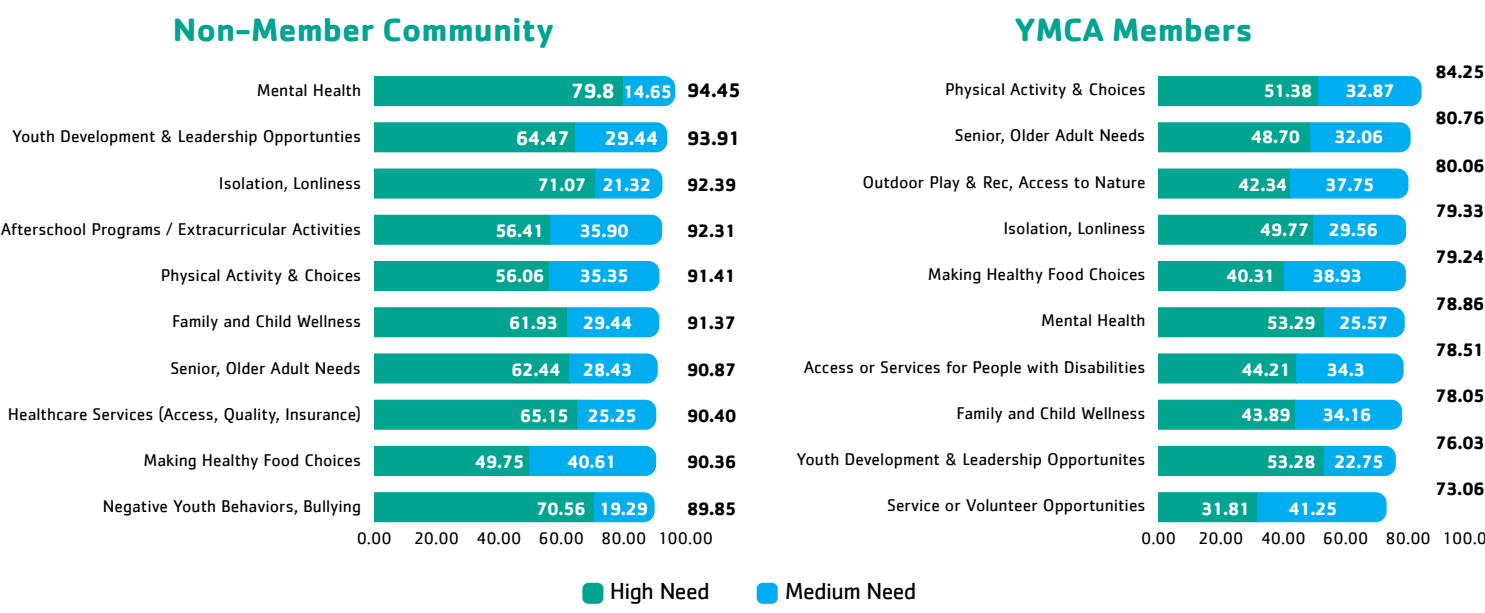


# **YMCA MEMBER & GENERAL PUBLIC COMMUNITY INPUT**

The Y, recognizing the importance of community input, conducted two comprehensive surveys among Y members and the general public. These surveys aimed to gather valuable insights into the most pressing needs within our community and enabled the Y's Strategic Planning Task Force to facilitate more informed decision-making and prioritization of its support initiatives. By engaging with a diverse range of community members, the Y gained valuable insights that both enlightened and affirmed key community issues.

Thirty-five (35) broad community issues were provided as options asking individuals to rate each of the issues on a high, medium, low, or no need. The below chart presents the most pressing needs identified by each group as rated by High and Medium Need.

Community Needs Assessment



You can find the rating for all 35 key community issues by visiting [ymcafoxcities.org/strategic-plan](https://ymcafoxcities.org/strategic-plan) or scanning the QR code. The data identifies 7 out of the 10 top issues overlapping between the two groups with an 8th area on health & well-being.

- 1.Mental Health
- 2.Youth Development & Leadership Opportunities
- 3.Isolation & Loneliness
- 4.Senior, Older Adult Needs
- 5.Family & Child Wellness
- 6.Infant/Toddler Care
- 7.Negative Youth Behaviors, Bullying
- 8.Health & Well-Being (physical activity, access to health care services)



# COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT: GAP ANALYSIS

Community members were invited to assess the significance of nine key topics, distinguishing between issues impacting teenagers and youth versus those affecting adults and families. Using a rating scale ranging from 1 to 10, with 1 representing "Not Important" and 10 indicating "Very Important," participants evaluated the importance of each topic. Subsequently, they rated their satisfaction with the community's efforts in addressing these issues on a similar scale, where 1 signified "Not Satisfied" and 10 denoted "Very Satisfied." This gap analysis is instrumental in pinpointing areas where additional time and resources can be allocated to bridge existing disparities and enhance community support in critical domains.



## Youth & Teens

Youth & Teens: Importance vs. Satisfaction	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Presence of safe community spaces where youth can develop connections with others	9.25	5.79	3.46
Availability of academic support structures for youth outside of school (tutoring, mentoring, etc..)	8.67	5.36	3.31
Children enter into kindergarten prepared for success	8.13	5.59	2.54
Youth have opportunities to build good character	9.08	5.80	3.28
Availability of service or volunteer opportunities for youth	8.37	5.39	2.98
Youth are supported in practicing positive habits that include physical activity and healthy eating	9.00	5.57	3.43
Youth exit high school with college or career readiness skills	8.94	5.31	3.63
Youth have convenient access to structured activities in a community facility	8.69	5.43	3.26
Availability of non-athletic programs that draw out youth skills, creativity, and confidence	8.90	5.20	3.70

As it pertains to Youth & Teens, the data highlights the importance of providing safe community spaces for youth to develop connections, fostering opportunities for character building and promoting positive habits like physical activity and healthy eating. However, significant gaps exist, particularly in the availability of non-athletic programs that nurture youth skills, creativity, and confidence, as well as in preparing youth for college or career readiness. Addressing these gaps is essential to ensure holistic support and development for youth and teens in our community.

### Highest Importance:

- 1. Presence Of Safe Community Spaces Where Youth Can Develop Connections With Others
- 2. Youth Have Opportunities To Build Good Character
- 3. Youth Are Supported In Positive Habits Including Physical Activity & Healthy Eating

### Highest Gaps:

- 1. Availability Of Non-Athletic Programs That Draw Out Youth Skills, Creativity, And Confidence
- 2. Youth Exit High School With College Or Career Readiness Skills
- 3. Presence Of Safe Community Spaces Where Youth Can Develop Connections with Others.

Adults & Families

Adults & Families: Importance vs. Satisfaction	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Availability of services aimed at engaging the entire family unit	8.22	5.62	2.60
Adults are supported in practicing positive habits that include physical activity and healthy eating	8.54	6.08	2.46
Availability of service or volunteer opportunities for adults	7.89	6.21	1.69
Presence of safe and secure community spaces for adults	8.52	6.18	2.34
Presence of community spaces where adults can develop connections with others	8.62	6.03	2.59
Adults receiving support from groups within the community	8.59	5.73	2.87
Availability of learning opportunities for adults	8.41	6.08	2.32
Availability of services that engage senior populations	8.79	5.96	2.83
Adults have convenient access to structured activities in a community facility	8.48	6.21	2.28

As it pertains to Adults & Families, the data underscores the importance of providing services that engage senior populations, establishing community spaces for adults to foster connections, and supporting positive habits like physical activity and healthy eating among adults and families. However, notable gaps exist, particularly in providing support from community groups for adults and ensuring the availability of services tailored to engage senior populations. Additionally, addressing the need for community spaces where adults can develop connections remains a priority for enhancing overall well-being and social cohesion among adults and families in our community.

Highest Importance:

- 1.Availability of Services That Engage Senior Populations
- 2.Presence of Community Spaces Where Adults Can Develop Connections with Others
- 3.Adults Are Supported in Positive Habits Including Physical Activity & Healthy Eating

Highest Gaps:

- 1.Adults Receiving Support From Groups Within The Community
- 2.Availability of Services That Engage Senior Populations
- 3.Presence of Community Spaces Where Adults Can Develop Connections with Others



# SURVEY METHODOLOGY

## YMCA Membership Survey:

- The survey instrument was distributed online as part of a member experience and engagement survey.
- The survey opened on August 16, 2023, and closed on September 25, 2023.
- Respondents were asked to rate several potential community issues as high, medium, or low need.
- **Total Responses and Validity:** 12,723 surveys were administered with a 7.89% response rate.

## General Community Needs Survey / YMCA Non-Members:

- The survey instrument was distributed online to non-Y members and general community members.
- Over 25,000 electronic surveys were sent out.
- The survey opened on September 21, 2023, and closed on October 18, 2023.
- Respondents were asked to rate several community issues as high, medium, or low need.
- The survey resulted in a 95% confidence level and the stated results are within 5% of what is being reported.

# COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT: HOW THE Y CAN HELP SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY’S NEEDS

Survey participants from both groups were asked open-ended questions to provide further insight on ways the Y can help support our communities most pressing needs. The following themes emerged:

## Community Collaboration

Respondents emphasized the importance of partnering with other community organizations, agencies, schools, and businesses to address various community needs effectively.

## Awareness and Education

Many respondents called for raising awareness about community issues and providing educational resources to help community members.

“Position the Y as a community center, not only a place to exercise your body, but also your voice, your soul, your membership in the community as a whole.”

“The Y is in a position to support community needs as a facilitator of conversations, being able to bring the right people to the table to discuss and identify which programs the Y offers can support these needs or identify other organizations/programs in our community that can support these needs.”

## Program Expansion

A few respondents suggested support areas, such as providing resources for seniors, increasing program availability, and collaborating with other organizations.

## Advocacy and Support

Suggestions included providing support, activities, and programs tailored to specific groups such as seniors, youth, and individuals with disabilities.

## Outreach and Communication

Effective communication, community outreach, and interaction with other organizations are key aspects mentioned.

“Childcare and adult care are two big issues facing the nation and any assistance in these areas would really benefit everyone.”

This section aims to showcase additional impacts the YMCA is making on individuals and its community through the experiences of its members. By highlighting diverse perspectives, it provides insight into the multifaceted role of the YMCA beyond traditional programs and services, emphasizing its broader impact on well-being, personal growth, and community cohesion.

# SINCE JOINING THE Y...



78%

Feel they have become more physically active.

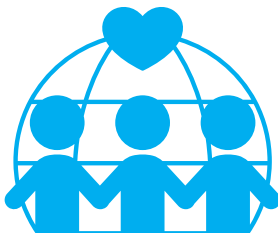


Nearly 40% have found opportunities to help others.



Over 50% of member say they have begun eating healthier.

9/10



Feel more connected to their community.



6/10

Have developed new knowledge, skills and abilities.



Over 50% have developed new, supportive relationships.

70%



Feel a sense of belonging.

"The Y allows my kids experiences they wouldn't have otherwise had through sports and camp."

74%



Have met different types of people.

"The Y is critical in helping my husband keep his blood sugar in check without medication. The Y has helped to ensure my daughter is safe around water. The Y's growth and development courses helped my daughter be on track, if not ahead of her peers, in terms of social and emotional development ahead of starting formal school."

# Y MEMBERS AGREE...



8/10

The Y is an important community resource for nurturing the potential of every child.



73%

The Y provides an opportunity to give back and support their neighbors.



73%

The Y gives them the opportunity to be a positive role model.



73%

The Y helps strengthen the community.



9/10

The YMCA creates a supportive, friendly and caring environment.



90%

The Y is an important resource for improving health and well-being.



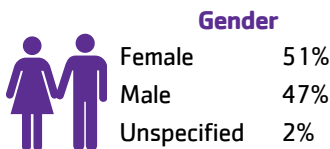
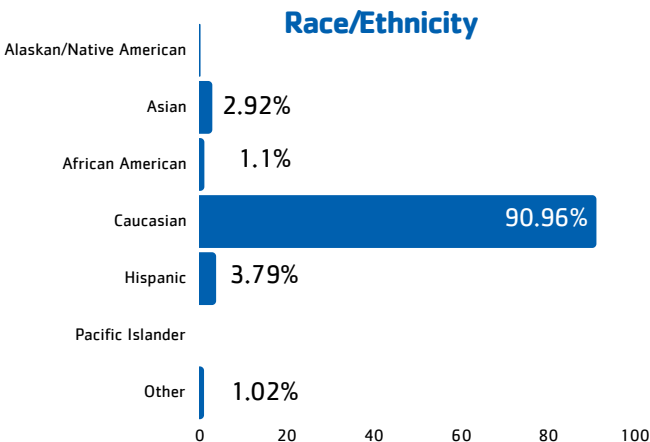
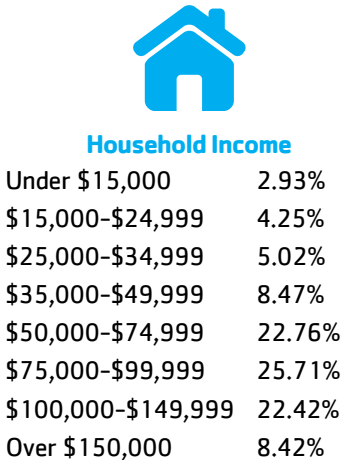
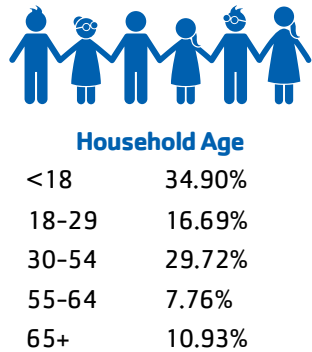
# DATA SETS

# DATA SETS

The Y relied on a wide range of data sources – both internal and external – to collect vital information about the community it serves. This included demographic data as well as trends and patterns within the community. By analyzing this data. The Y was able to gain a better understanding of the most pressing issues facing the community and use this information to guide discussions and engage with different stakeholder groups.

REPORT	SOURCE
Youth Risk Behavior	Wisconsin Department of Instruction
U.S. Census Data	U.S. Census Bureau
<u>LIFE Study</u>	Community Foundation of the Fox Valley Region United Way Fox Cities
ALICE Report (Asset, Limited, Income Constrained, Employed)	United Way Fox Cities
<u>Imagine Fox Cities Well-Being Survey</u>	Imagine Fox Cities
Community Health Assessments Community Health Improvement Plans	<u>ThedaCare</u> Ascension Calumet County Outagamie County Winnebago County City of Appleton
Community Commons	
Real Estate Development & Asset Optimization Study	GRO Development
YMCA Member Data	Daxko

## YMCA OF THE FOX CITIES | MEMBER DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW\*

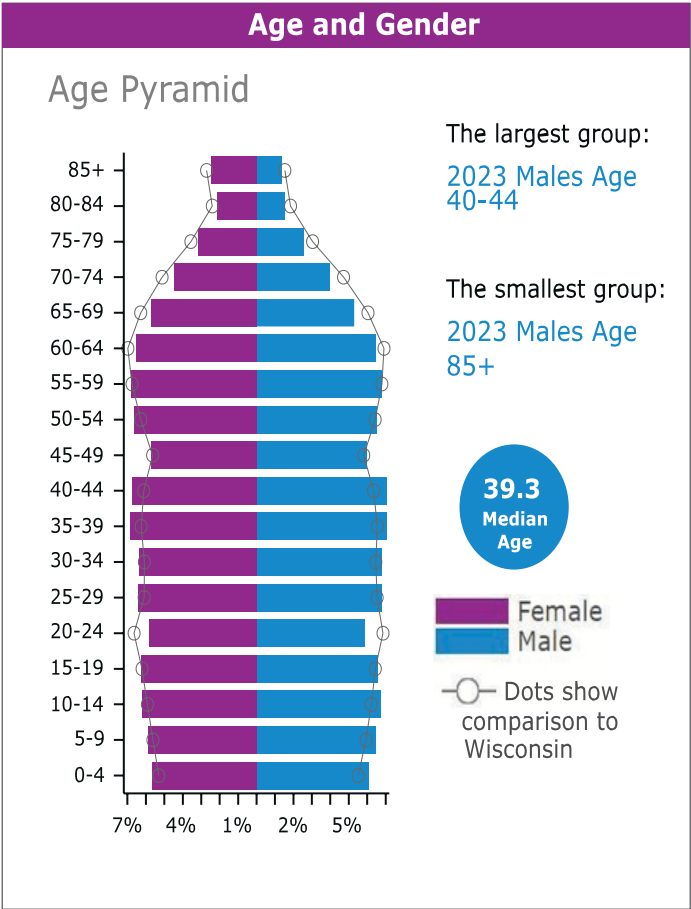
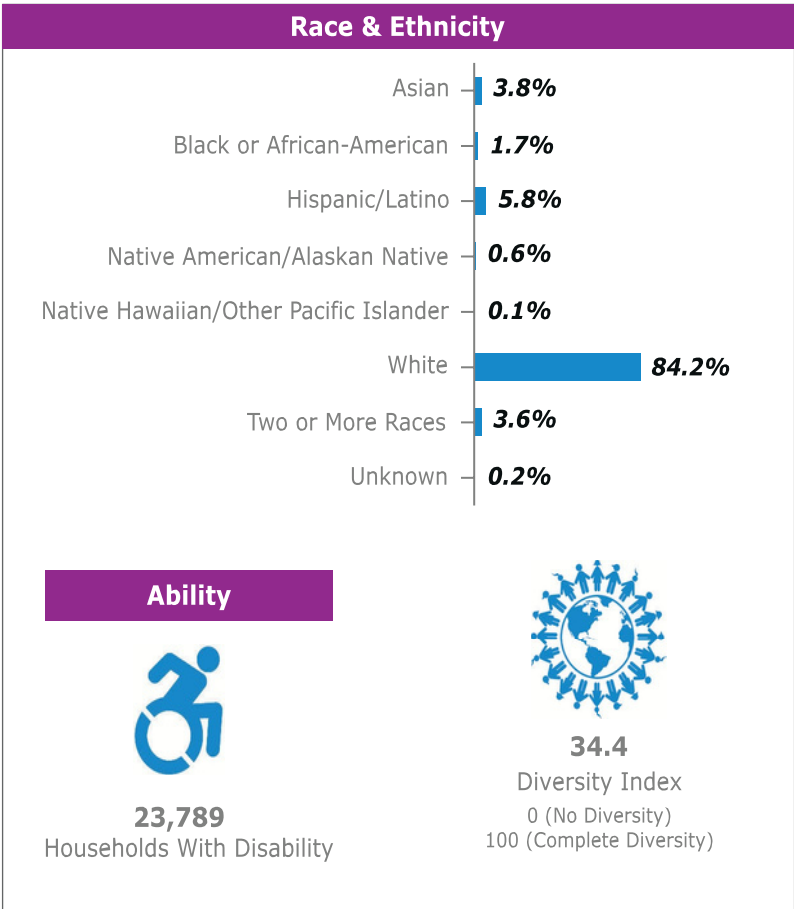
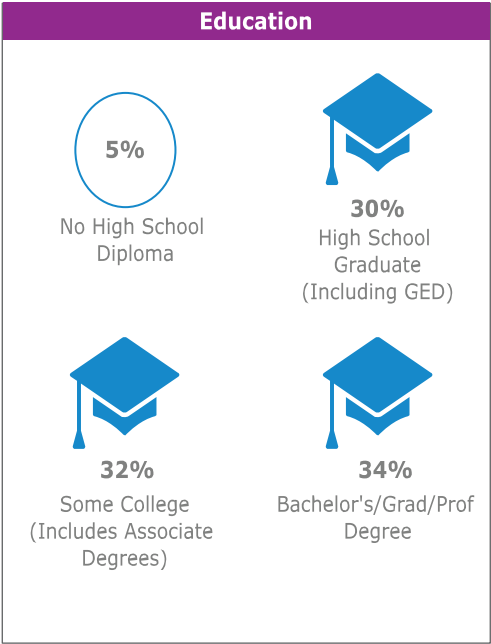
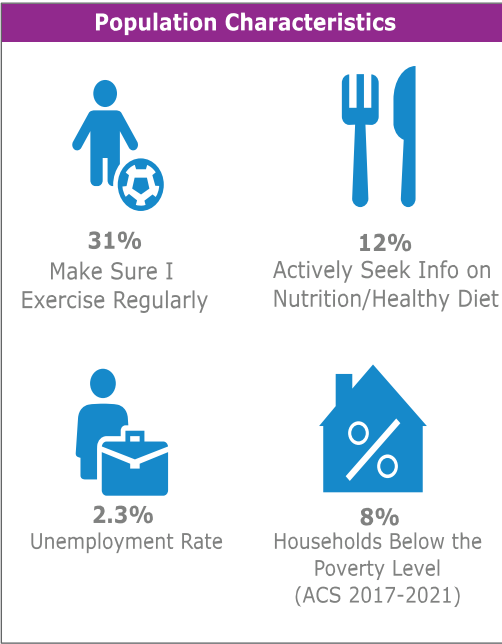
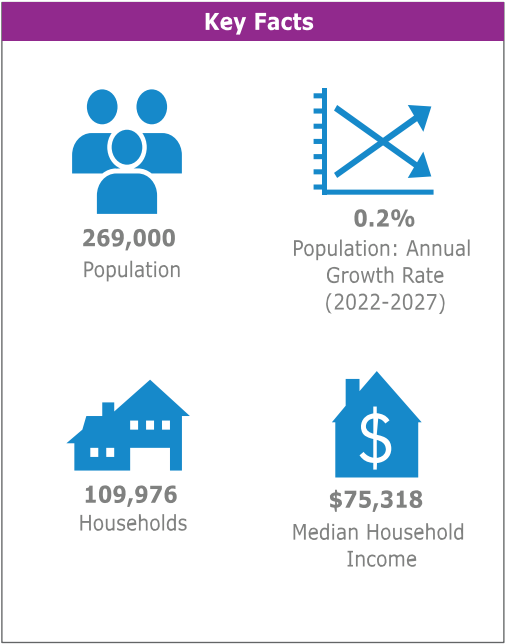


\*As of February 2024

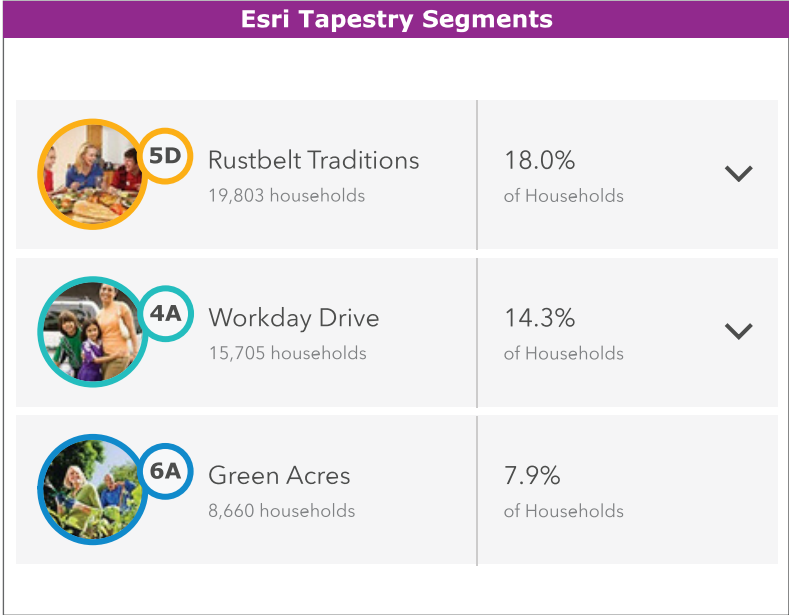
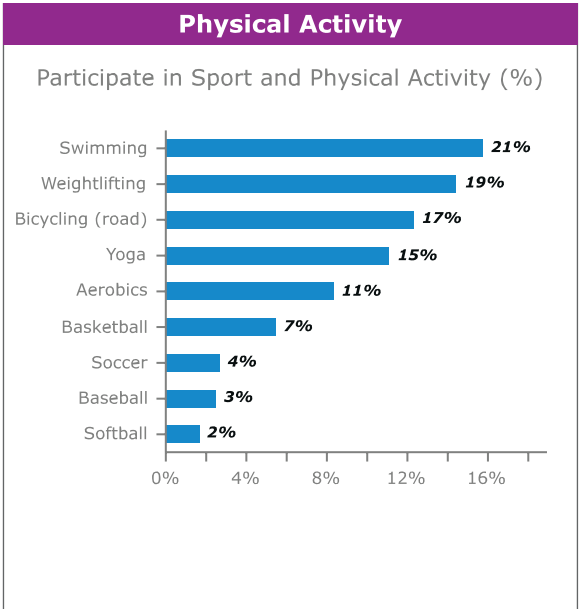
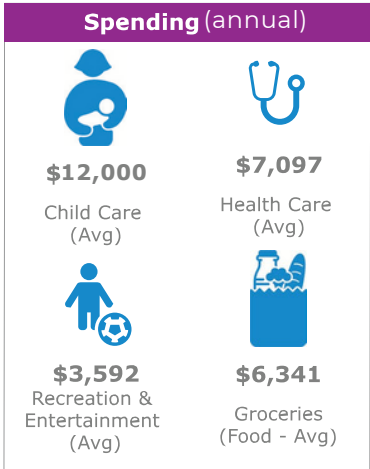
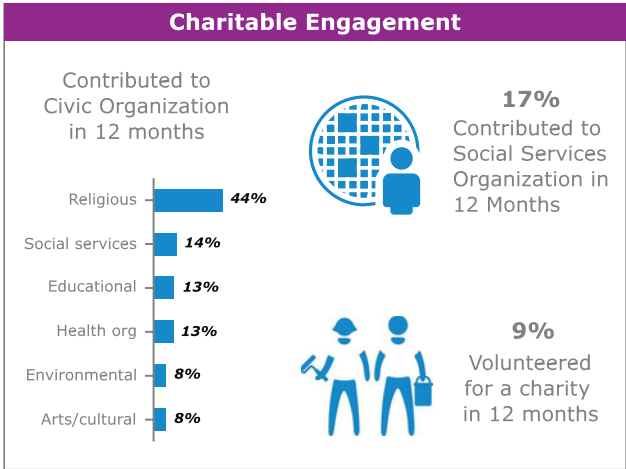
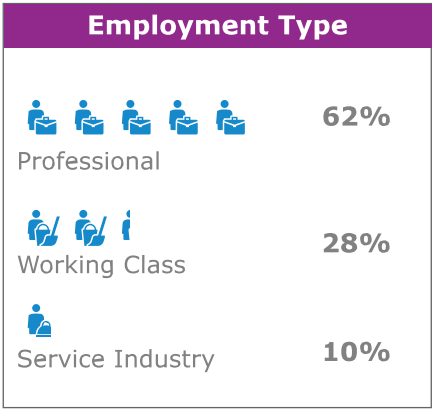
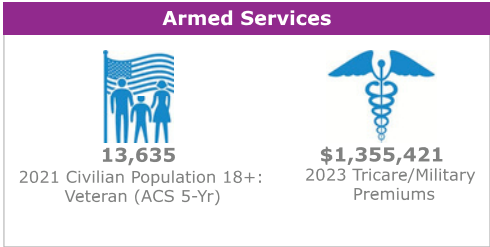
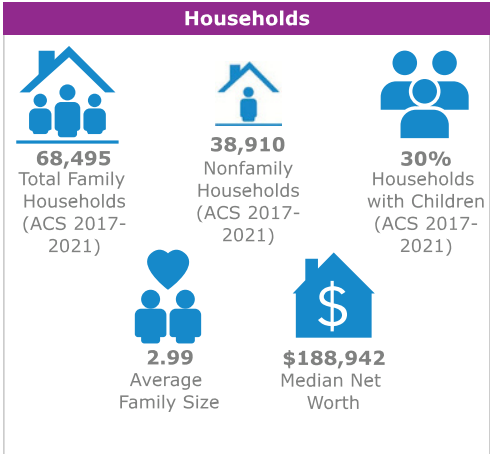
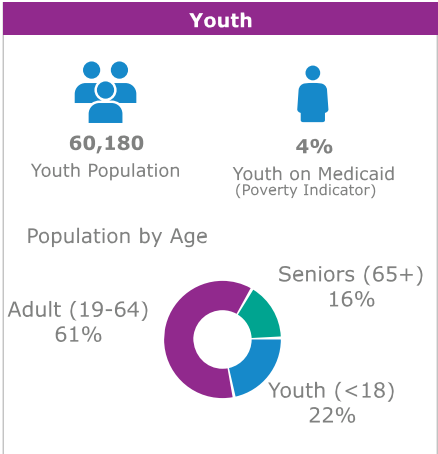
# Y-USA COMMUNITY PROFILE

YMCA of the Fox Cities Inc (12 Minute Drive Time Aggregate)

Prepared by Business Analyst for ArcGIS Pro

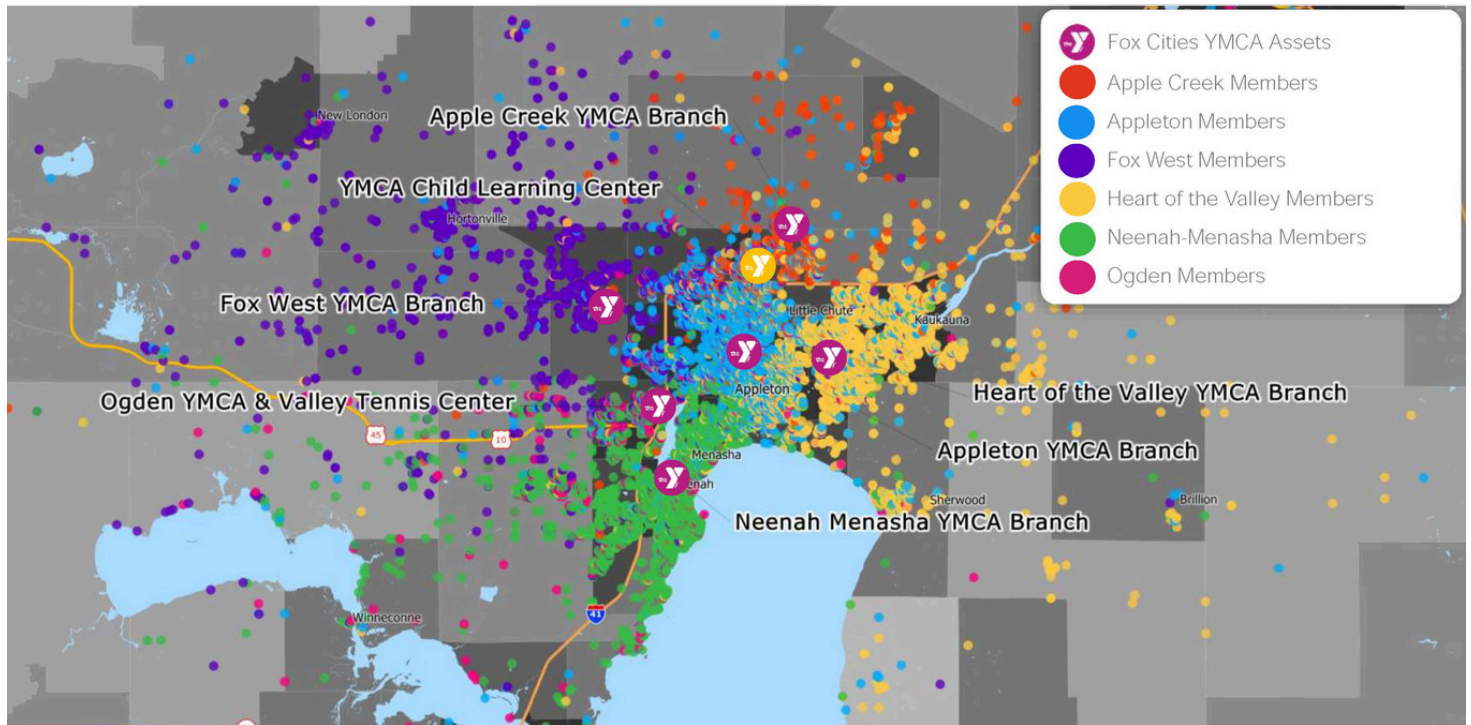


# Y-USA COMMUNITY PROFILE (cont.)



Note: The Tapestry Segments LifeMode labels are proprietary to Esri, a third party provider of U.S Census and supplemental data, and may not be a sensitive representation of labels/language most appropriate for your community. [Learn More from Esri](#)

# YMCA of the Fox Cities Membership Tapestry



## YMCA of the Fox Cities (All Sites)

