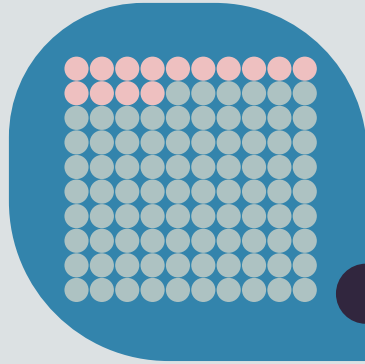


Specific Populations



Older Adults



14% of Bellevue residents are 65 years of age or older.

1 in 4 people that utilized Hopelink's Bellevue Center Food Bank were ages 55 and over.



Almost **1/3** of senior renters in Bellevue spend more than **50%** of their income on housing.

31% of the phone and online survey respondents rated lack of services for elderly persons as a major or moderate community problem.



In the US, individuals aged 65 and older account for **20%** of all suicide deaths.

About 8% of older adults in Bellevue age 65 and over had incomes below the Federal Poverty Level.



Older Adults

Key Findings

- Housing options are needed to address the huge shortfall of affordable housing for many older adults on a fixed income.
- The rising cost of living strongly impacts many older adults living on fixed incomes. More older adults will likely delay their retirement and work beyond the traditional retirement age of 65, primarily because they can't afford to retire.
- Millions of older adults are affected by elder abuse, including physical mistreatment, neglect in care, and financial exploitation.
- The demand for support services for older adults from other countries, including both those newly settled in Bellevue as well as long-time residents, continues to increase. These services include English classes, culturally sensitive healthcare, and activities that promote engagement in the community.
- Coordinated transportation for older adults in the community is a rising issue. As more older adults decide not to drive, they still need reliable, affordable transportation to medical appointments, employment, grocery stores, and to continue being involved in the community.

Brief Description

The aging of a large segment of the population profoundly impacts and shapes the type of services and supports that will be needed in our communities, not only in Bellevue, but throughout the county, state, and nation. In Bellevue, 14% of residents are 65 years of age or older.¹ BelRed, Downtown, Northeast Bellevue, Northwest Bellevue, and West Lake Sammamish have the largest share of their residents in the older adult cohort, 65 years and over.

People are living longer; over the last decade, the average life expectancy in King County climbed to 81.7 years, which exceeds the national average of 78.7 years and Washington State average of 80.2 years. Within King County, the North Region (81.2 years) and the South Region (79.3 years) have lower life expectancy compared to the King County average, whereas the East Region (83.9 years) and Seattle (83.4 years) both have higher life expectancies. As a result of longer life expectancy, people are more likely to need some type of long-term care services and supports (LTSS) and for many it will be a challenge to stretch retirement income and savings to pay these costs.

Racial (In)Equity Data Point: There exist noteworthy differences in life expectancy by location and race/ethnicity in King County. Life expectancy is highest among Asian (85.7 years) and Hispanic residents (84.0 years). Black residents have a life expectancy of 77.6 years old and the life expectancy of white residents is 81.6 years old. While estimates may be imprecise due to small population numbers, at 72.2 years, Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander residents have the lowest life expectancy of all racial/ethnic groups in King County.²

Older adults have diverse abilities, backgrounds, incomes, and needs. Members of the Bellevue Network on Aging (BNOA) identified a number of issues that they believe should be addressed for older adults in Bellevue. The top needs they reported are affordable housing, improved

transportation options for non-drivers, affordable long-term care options including opportunities that allow residents to stay in their homes, support for people with memory loss and their caregivers, safeguards for older adults related to elder abuse including scams and financial abuse, and the ability for older adults to “age in place” with dignity and grace.³

Bellevue ranks well for its age-friendly amenities and overall livability. The city has a Senior Score of 79, which is seven points higher than the national average and 11 points higher than the rest of the state. This proprietary ranking system analyzes more than 100 factors related to finances, health and safety, recreation and leisure and general quality of life.⁴

This chapter only provides information about goals 1 through 5 as they relate specifically to older adults. For a broader discussion of these areas, please see their respective chapters.

- Goal 1: Food to Eat and Roof Overhead
- Goal 2: Supportive Relationships
- Goal 3: A Safe Haven from All Forms of Violence
- Goal 4: Health Care to be a Physically and Mentally Fit as Possible
- Goal 5: Education and Job Skills to Help Individuals Reach their Full Potential
- Additional Topics for Considerations:
 - Disability Issues
 - Transportation
 - Increased Racial and Ethnic Diversity

We recognize that disparate outcomes based on race exist regarding prevalence of and responses to the issues covered in this chapter. As part of the City’s ongoing efforts to continue growing as a culturally competent and racially equitable organization and city, we have, when possible, highlighted racial disparities throughout this report, denoted by the phrase **Racial (In)Equity Data Point**.

While gender is a spectrum that includes transgender people and those who identify as neither male nor female, the sources referenced in this chapter reported data by male and female and did not report data encompassing the entire gender spectrum.

Goal 1: Food to Eat and Roof Overhead

- Roughly 1 in 4 people (26%) that utilized Hopelink’s Bellevue Center Food Bank in Fiscal Year 2019 were ages 55 and over. ⁵
- Bellevue Fire CARES reports that they have seen an increase in older adults who need help maintaining their homes and needing assistance with food insecurity.⁶
- Concerns about hunger in King County have primarily focused on families with children. Since the Great Recession, however, the need for food assistance among King County seniors has increased dramatically. In King County in 2016, adults aged 55 and older accounted for almost 1 in 3 food bank visits, up from 1 in 5 in 2010.⁷
- Nationally, roughly 7.3 million older adults are food insecure in the U.S., participation in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has steadily increased over the past decade, yet still only 48% of older adults who qualify are enrolled. Older adults with disabilities are more than 2.5 times as likely to be food insecure as their non-disabled peers.⁸

- In the U.S. in 2019 7% (5.2 million) of seniors were food insecure. For the Seattle-Bellevue-Tacoma area, 5.3% of older adults were food insecure.⁹
- **Racial (In)Equity Data Point:** Fifteen percent of older black adults reported experiencing food insecurity, compared to 8% of older adults who are Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and multi-racial, and 5% of older white adults.¹⁰
- As the pandemic continues, seniors face new challenges to put food on the table. Six three percent of senior households served by the Feeding America network reported they have had to choose between paying for food or medical care. Households that include an adult age 50 or older are at an increased risk of having someone with a chronic health condition that can often be mitigated by healthy food options, including depression, diabetes, and high blood pressure.¹¹
- In 2020, Sound Generations distributed 7,875 meals to home-bound seniors in Bellevue, and a total of 469,095 across King County. During deliveries, they also provide referral to other services, including transportation, caregiving, legal assistance and the Sound Generations Pathway's Information and Assistance Program.¹²
- In Bellevue, there are only 400 affordable (below market) rental units specifically for low-income older adults.¹³ Almost one-third (31%) of senior renters in Bellevue spend more than 50% of their income on housing.¹⁴
- Eastside Emergency Shelter providers for both single men and single women reported a large number of older adults needing homeless services, including shelters, safe parking for those living in their cars, and connection to resources.¹⁵ Crisis Connections of King County found that almost 25% of the calls they received in 2020 were from older adults in search of human services assistance.¹⁶
- ARCH offers tools to educate seniors, caregivers, and their families about housing choices in East King County when considering aging in place or transitioning to a new home.¹⁷
- Universal Design (UD) is an approach to design planning that recognizes and accommodates the ordinary changes people experience over their lives due to aging and life circumstances. This philosophy is beginning to impact the way new housing units are designed and built to enable older adults the maximum mobility in their homes, as well as people with disabilities and families with young children. Housing incorporating universal design elements, such as grab bars and low kitchen counters, can assist older adults in staying in their homes longer without having to move if they develop mobility challenges. The Northwest Universal Design Coalition advocates for these elements to be included in public planning such as streetscapes, sidewalks, transit and walking trails.¹⁸
- Fourteen percent of residents in Bellevue reported living in a home that needed major home repairs, a 7% increase from 2019 which is statistically significant.¹⁹ The City of Bellevue Major Home Repair Program serves around 35 low- and moderate-income households annually and the Minor Home Repair Program, provided by Sound Generations, provides about 35 households with smaller repairs annually. For both programs, over 80% of clients are age 65 or older. Bellevue Fire Department also can install grab bars and help older adults assess their homes for potential tripping hazards.

Shelter and housing options are needed for older adults with medical issues that require assistance.
 ~ Bellevue Fire CARES, Community Conversation

Goal 2: Supportive Relationships

- Thirty-one percent of phone and online surveys rated the lack of services for elderly persons as a major or moderate community problem.²⁰
- In the consumers survey, 18% of respondents stated that they could either never or rarely find services for older adults.
- Bellevue Fire CARES stated that case management services are needed for older adults to help them navigate the system and connect them to resources.²¹
- Due to COVID-19, many of the programs for older adults have taken place online. CISC staff reported that many of the older adults they serve are nervous to attend programs offered over Zoom and do not know how to log into a meeting. The cost of internet service is also a barrier.²²
- Forty-seven percent of the respondents in the Bellevue Aging Adult Recreation Plan Survey reported that their financial situation made it challenging to participate in social and/or recreation activities.²³
- 54% of older LGBTQ adults feel isolated from others, and only 15% of older LGBTQ adults access Senior Centers.²⁴
- LGBTQ older adults are more likely than non-LGBTQ older adults to be very concerned about having enough money (51% vs. 36%), experiencing loneliness in old age (32% vs. 19%), declining physical health (43% vs. 33%), not being able to take care of themselves (43% vs. 34%) or not having anybody to take care of them (30% vs. 16%).²⁵
- People are living longer and as a result of longer life expectancy, people are more likely to need some type of long-term care services and supports (LTSS) during their lifetimes. For many it will be a challenge to stretch retirement income and savings to pay these costs.²⁶
- Caregiving can take a toll on the emotional, physical and economic health of the caregiver. The total lost wages, social security benefits, and private pension losses due to caregiving could range from \$283,716 (for men) to \$324,044 (for women), an average of \$303,880. When this average is multiplied by the 9.7 million people over age 50 caring for their parents, the amount lost is nearly \$3 trillion.²⁷ The value of unpaid caregiving exceeded the value of paid home care and total Medicaid spending in the same year.²⁸
- **Racial (In)Equity Data Point:** Nationally, 62% of adult caregivers are white, 17% Hispanic (non-White, non-African American), 13% are African American and 6% are Asian. Over half of African American caregivers are more likely to reside with the care recipient and are more likely to find themselves “sandwiched” between caring for an older person and a younger person under age 18, or caring for more than one older person.
- 9% of caregivers self-identify as LGBTQ.²⁹
- Momentia is a grassroots movement empowering people with memory loss and their loved ones to remain connected and active in the community. Work has begun to create an Eastside Momentia focused in East King County. During Covid-19, Momentia has offered numerous virtual programs.³⁰
- Bellevue Fire CARES is a team of advocates that respond to the needs of some of Bellevue’s most vulnerable residents, as identified by fire crews and police officers during a 911 response. Advocates perform home visits to assess the client’s needs and provide case

management to connect the client to community resources. In 2020, CARES received 708 referrals and 263 people enrolled in the program, which is an increase from 2019 (529 referrals and 204 enrolled). 62% of the referrals were females (at an average age of 51.9) and 38% were males (average age of 53.7). The top two reasons for referrals were for mental health and medical issues; 47% of the clients served had mental health issues, 17% Substance Use Disorder Issues and 15% were unhoused. This data reports individuals who had at least one of these issues, but many had co-occurring issues.³¹

- Aging and Disability Services (ADS) provides a key link between federal and state funding for services for older residents and family caregivers in the Seattle-King County area and the community-based organizations that deliver the services. ADS partners with community-based organizations to provide adult day services, caregiver support, case management, elder abuse prevention, health maintenance, health promotion, information and assistance, legal support, nutrition, senior centers, and transportation services. The majority of these services are accessed by contacting Community Living Connections.³²

Goal 3: A Safe Haven from All Forms of Violence

- Approximately 1 in 10 Americans aged 60+ have experienced some form of elder abuse. It is estimated that only 7% of elder abuse cases are reported to authorities. Some estimates range as high as 5 million elders who are abused each year. Elders who experienced abuse, even modest abuse, have an increased risk of death by 300% compared to elders who have not been abused.³³ Prevalence rates by type of abuse relying on self-reports of abuse: psychological (11.6%), physical (2.6%), financial (6.8%), neglect (4.2%), and sexual (0.9%) abuse.³⁴
- Direct medical costs associated with violent injuries to older adults are estimated to add over \$5.3 billion to the nation's annual health expenditures, and the annual financial loss by victims of elder financial exploitation were estimated to be \$2.9 billion in 2009, a 12% increase from 2008.³⁵
- The Bellevue Police Department's data indicates an overall increase of Adult Protective Services (APS) referrals. Caregivers and family members have been encouraged to report any incident of assault, neglect or financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult, no matter how minor the incident may seem. In 2020, there were 89 APS referrals involving potential financial exploitation and 138 allegations of abuse. Out of these 227 referrals, 61 cases were assigned to a BPD Detective for further investigation (10 financial and 51 related to abuse).³⁶
- Elder fraud, also called elder financial abuse or elder financial exploitation, is defined as the misappropriation or abuse of financial control in a relationship where there is an expectation of trust, resulting in harm to the elderly victim. More than 334,000 scams and financial abuse cases targeting older adults in the US are reported to authorities every year for an estimated \$6.3 billion in damage. Most experts agree it is just the tip of the iceberg, with an estimated 1 in 23.5 incidents of elder fraud reported to authorities. A 2020 study found that elder financial abuse in the U.S. could be even more prevalent and costly than first thought, with an estimated 7.86 million cases of elder fraud occurring in the U.S. annually resulting in \$148 billion in losses. In Washington State, there were 9,375 reported incidents (\$147.6 million) for the estimated 220,323 incidents (\$3.5 billion) that occurred.³⁷
- Older people with dementia are particularly susceptible to abuse. Nearly one in two older adults with cognitive impairment is a victim of abuse. In addition to being dependent upon others for assistance, elders with dementia are more likely to experience deficits in memory,

communication, and judgment, making it harder for them to identify, prevent, and report mistreatment. Many may also be reluctant to report abuse by caregivers and others upon whom they rely. Older people with dementia are often at an increased risk of mistreatment because of pre-existing medical and mental health weaknesses.³⁸

I've seen a significant increase in the level of fear in older adults, especially Asian older adults. They are afraid to leave their house to run basic errand.

~ Bellevue Diversity Advantage Network,
Community Conversation

- **Racial (In)Equity Data Point:** King County Coalition Against Hate and Bias (KCCAHB) is a community-led initiative to address hate and bias incidents by strengthening and networking communities who experience racist and bigoted treatment and all forms of oppression. The Coalition Partners administrator a Hate and Bias Incident Response Survey which collects data from communities affected by hate and bias. (For more information, see Goal 3: Safe Haven from All Forms of Violence and Abuse). Chinese Information and Referral Services shared that 20.6% of the reports they received in King County are from individuals aged 55 and older. Similarly, KCCAHB and partnering EKC agencies collecting EKC-only data noted that 5.7% of the reports they received are also from individuals 55 and older.³⁹

Goal 4: Health Care to be as Physically and Mentally Fit as Possible

- Six percent of the phone and online survey respondents rated not being able to find home health care or day care for an elderly person as a major or moderate household problem.⁴⁰
- Alzheimer's disease remains the 3rd leading cause of death, affecting women more than men. Among adults older than 65, the rate of death from Alzheimer's among females was 1.8 times that of males.⁴¹
- 20% of older LGBTQ individuals and 44% of older transgender individuals believe their relationship with their healthcare provider would be adversely affected if their health provider knew their sexual orientation/gender.⁴²
- Twenty percent of people aged 55 years or older are estimated to experience some type of mental health concern. The most common conditions include anxiety, severe cognitive impairment, and mood disorders (such as depression or bipolar disorder). Mental health issues are often implicated as a factor in cases of suicide.⁴³ Depression is a significant predictor of suicide in elderly Americans. Comprising only 13% of the U.S. population, individuals aged 65 and older account for 20% of all suicide deaths, with white males being particularly vulnerable. Suicide among white males aged 85 and older (65.3 deaths per 100,000 persons) is nearly six times the suicide rate (10.8 per 100,000) in the U.S.⁴⁴
- Finding medical coverage can be challenging for older adults who are not eligible for Medicare. To qualify for Medicare, an individual must be 65 years or older, and/or not eligible for Medicaid, and must be low-income.
- Someone turning age 65 today has almost a 70% chance of needing some type of long-term care services and supports in their remaining years. The duration and level of long-term care will vary from person to person; the average time in long-term care is 3 years.⁴⁵

- Washington State passed a new law mandating public long-term care benefits for Washington residents. The Long-Term Care Act was created to reduce pressure on the Medicaid system and will be paid for by a 0.58% tax on employee wages. Residents have one opportunity to opt out of this tax by providing proof they have a long-term insurance policy in place by November 1, 2021.⁴⁶
- Washington has 3,568 senior living providers, which include 1,873 assisted living communities. In 2021, there are 131 licensed adult family homes in Bellevue. 96 of these accept Medicaid. Of the 2 Bellevue nursing facilities, 1 accepts Medicaid.⁴⁷ The monthly cost of assisted living in Washington State averages \$5,500, which is considerably more expensive than the national average of \$4,051. Assisted living facilities in Bellevue and surrounding parts of the Seattle metropolitan area typically charge \$6,500 per month or \$78,000 per year. In Washington State, expenses typically are the following: Adult Day Care (\$1,441), Assisted Living (\$5,500), In-Home Care (\$5,720), and Nursing Home Care (\$9,112).⁴⁸
- Nationally, nearly 1 million adults aged 65 and older live with a substance use disorder (SUD) which continues to be a growing issue in older adults. Chronic health problems associated with aging, including chronic pain, as well as stressors such as grief and loss of independence, may contribute to substance misuse. Alcohol is the most used drug among older adults, with about 65% of people 65 and older reporting high-risk drinking, which is defined as exceeding daily guidelines at least weekly in the past year. Although many behavioral therapists have been successful in treating substance use disorders in older adults, providers may confuse SUD symptoms with those of other chronic health conditions or with natural, age-related changes.⁴⁹
- Medicare is a health insurance program for people aged 65 and older, and some people under age 65 with certain disabilities. Low Medicare reimbursement rates continue to limit the number of older adults some doctors will serve. Dental care is not covered under Medicare, so some low- and moderate-income older adults postpone routine care until problems occur. Eye care and hearing aids are often unaffordable for people on Medicare because only limited services are covered.
- Medicaid Long Term Services and Supports assist low-income seniors and adults with disabilities with services they typically cannot access with Medicare or private health insurance. This includes home care, nursing care, assisted living, meals, nursing homes and other services. One in seven Medicare beneficiaries in Washington are enrolled in Medicaid.⁵⁰

Goal 5: Education and Job Skills to Help Individuals Reach their Full Potential

- Americans 55 and over made up 36.4% of the workforce in 2020.⁵¹
- More adults aged 65 and older left the labor force in 2020 than in any year since the U.S. began tracking such information in 1948. Many will likely never work again, which could jeopardize their immediate and long-term financial security. Between February 2020 (just before the pandemic hit the U.S.) and February 2021, the participation in the labor force fell 11.1 percent for people 65 and older, but only 1.2 percent for those ages 55 to 64, 2.2% for those ages 25 to 54, and 2.9 percent for those ages 16 to 24. In addition to the nearly 1 million workers aged 65 and over who permanently left the labor force during this timeframe, another 165,000 older workers remained in the labor force but joined the unemployment rolls while they looked for new employment. Older unemployed workers

generally take twice as long as their younger counterparts to become reemployed, and those who find work typically earn only half as much they did at their previous job.⁵²

- In King County, 21% of people 65 or older are low-income.⁵³ Older adults cannot meet their basic living expenses if they live at the federal poverty level and/or rely only on the average Social Security benefit. This is true for older adults, whether they rent or own a home. As shown in the 2020 Elder Economic Security Standard Index for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue Metropolitan Area (Figure 1), a person aged 65 or older renting a one bedroom apartment would have needed an income of about \$32,148 annually.⁵⁴ In 2021, the maximum income for someone receiving SSI is \$794 per month (\$9,528 annually) and the average Social Security benefit is \$1,543 per month (\$18,516 per year). Without other savings or assets, this person cannot make ends meet without other supports such as rent subsidies or assistance in covering supplemental health care costs.

Monthly and Yearly Totals 2020

Elder Index for Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue-Metropolitan Area						
Expenses	Single Elder			Elder Couple		
	Owner w/o Mortgage	Renter, one bedroom	Owner w/ Mortgage	Owner w/o Mortgage	Renter, one bedroom	Owner w/ Mortgage
Housing (incl. utilities, taxes, & insurance)	\$713	\$1,447	\$1,926.00	\$713	\$1,447	\$1,926
Food	\$272	\$272	\$272	\$498	\$498	\$498
Transportation	\$205	\$205	\$205	\$316	\$316	\$316
Healthcare (Good)	\$431	\$431	\$431	\$862	\$862	\$862
Miscellaneous	\$324.00	\$324	\$324.00	\$478.	\$478	\$478
Index Per Month	\$1,945	\$2,679	\$3,158	\$2867	\$3,601	\$4,080
Index Per Year	\$23,340	\$32,148	\$37,896	\$34,404	\$43,212	\$ 48,960

Figure 1 | Source: National Council of Aging⁵⁵

- According to AARP, in the U. S. about 50% of older adults rely on Social Security for about half of their income, and about a quarter depend on it for at least 90% of their income. In Washington State, about 19% of older adults rely on Social Security for 90% of their income.⁵⁶ Many retirees depend on slight cost of living (COLA) adjustments annually to help them pay their bills. In 2021, 65 million recipients received a 1.3% a cost-of-living increase, slightly less than the 1.6% provided in 2020. Social Security announced a 5.9% increase in 2022, a significantly larger increase than previous years.⁵⁷
- About 8% of older adults in Bellevue age 65 and over had incomes below the Federal Poverty Level. Although this percentage is about the same as the U.S. (9%) and King County (8%),⁵⁸ it still indicates a number of vulnerable older adults are impacted and illustrates the need for human services for these older adults.

- **Racial (In)Equity Data Point:** There are significant disparities in poverty rates among ethnic groups in Bellevue; according to data from the 2015-2019 ACS, 18% of African American older adults aged 60 + live in poverty in Bellevue, 11% of Asians, 16% of Hispanics and only 7% of Non-Hispanic Whites.⁵⁹

Additional Items for Consideration

Disability Issues

- 2 in 5 adults 65 and over have a disability in the U.S. In 2019, 19% of adults aged 65 and older reported they could not function at all or had a lot of difficulty with at least one of six functioning domains (hearing, seeing, mobility, communication, self-care, and cognition). In each domain, the percentage reporting any level of difficulty varied. Specifically, 22% reported trouble seeing (even if wearing glasses), 31% reported difficulty hearing (even if wearing hearing aids), 40% reported trouble with mobility (walking or climbing stairs), 8% reported difficulty with communication (understanding or being understood by others), 27% reported trouble with cognition (remembering or concentrating), and 9% reported difficulty with self-care (such as washing all over or dressing).
- There are an estimated 641,000 adults aged 60+ with cognitive and other disabilities (e.g., cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, traumatic brain injury). This number is projected to double to 1,242,794 by 2030, coinciding with the aging population of baby boomers born between 1946 and 1964.⁶⁰
- Although the average life span is increasing, many older adults' quality of life is affected by disability or activity limitations. Of adults in King County age 65 and older, 32% have a disability. Data shows that disabilities increase with poverty. In King County, for example, 45% of people age 65 and older who live in poverty have physical disabilities. In Bellevue, 66% of people age 65 and older who are living in poverty have at least one disability.⁶¹
- In Bellevue, estimates from the 2015-2019 ACS also demonstrate the likelihood that having a disability increases with age, as shown in Figure 2.⁶² The impact of an increased number of older adults with disabilities, including mental illness, is already being noted by human service providers, and will likely increase as does that population.

Age Distribution of People with a Disability (2015-2019)

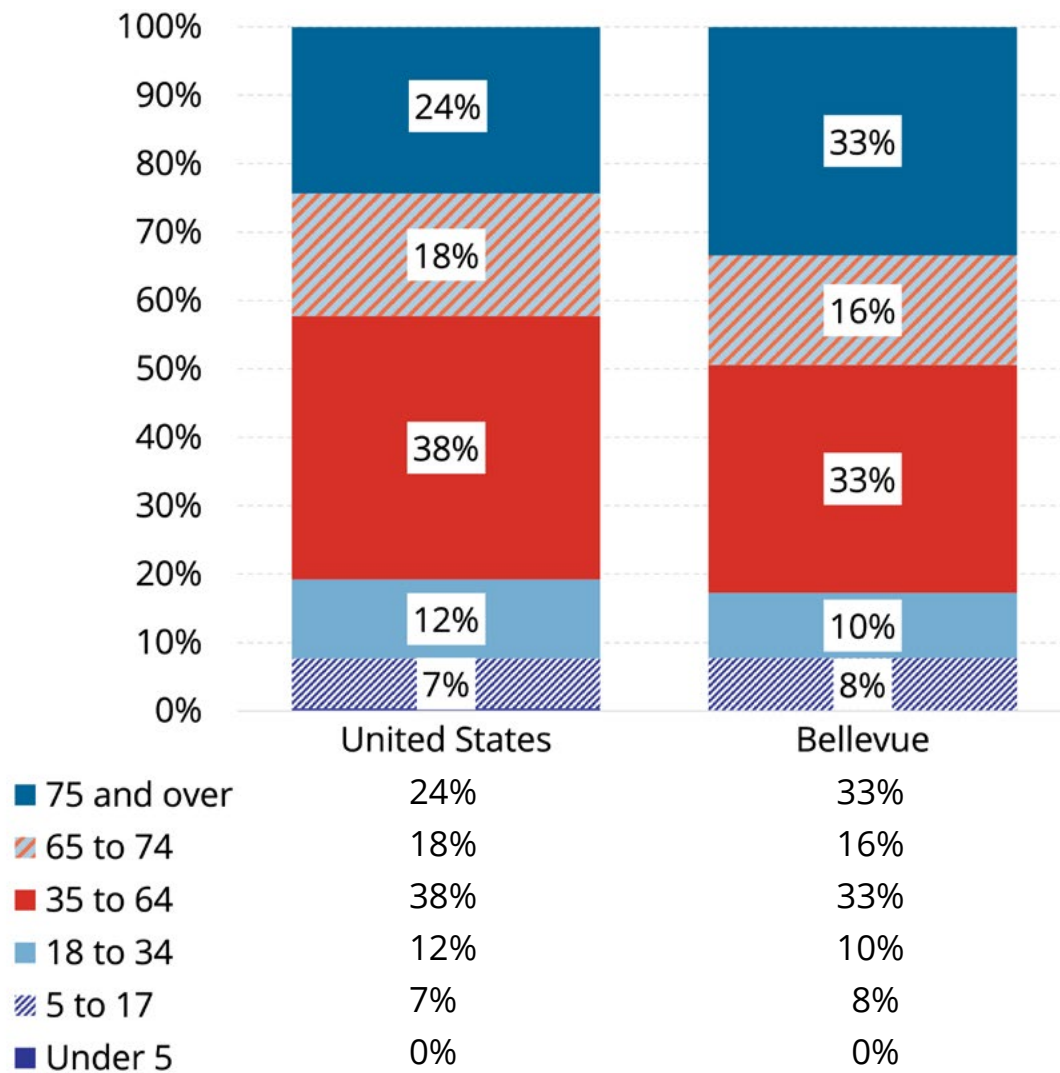


Figure 2 | Source: American Community Survey 5-year 2015-2019

- Nearly 25 percent of those aged 65 to 74 and 50 percent of those who are 75 and older have disabling hearing loss. Hearing loss can be misdiagnosed as dementia, and hearing loss can cause the degree of dementia to be overestimated. Some cognitive tests depend on being able to hear and understand spoken language. Additionally, there are some similarities between the characteristics of hearing loss and dementia, such as problems understanding, social isolation, and depression. Untreated hearing loss can affect relationships with family, friends and others, cause disengagement from social or group activities, make independent living difficult (such as hearing the doorbell or phone) and reduce the sense of self-confidence. In effect, untreated hearing loss can contribute to loneliness and isolation, as shown in the studies below.⁶³ One technology to assist people who are hard of hearing is called “Looping” which is a wireless audio loop that circles the walls within a room and is connected to a sound system which in turn is amplified through a person’s hearing aid. This technology greatly improves the ability of a person with hearing loss to hear in large spaces such as auditoriums or meeting rooms.⁶⁴ The City of Bellevue has added looping technology to a number of its public meeting spaces including the City Council Chamber, Conference Room, and some spaces at our community centers.

Transportation

- Bellevue Fire CARES reported that transportation for older adults to get to appointments is a huge challenge, especially when services are outside of East King County.
- Indian American Community Services (IACS), formerly Indian Association of Western Washington, reported that transportation is a huge barrier for a large number of the seniors in their community since many do not drive. This leads to isolation. IACS states that they have been advocating for improved services but have seen only small improvements.⁶⁵
- In the Bellevue Aging Adult Recreation Plan Survey, 56% of respondents reported that transportation is a challenge for participating in social and/or recreation activities.⁶⁶
- In King County, 26% of residents 65 and older report using public transportation to get to and from their neighborhoods, slightly higher than residents compared to the same group nationally.⁶⁷
- Households headed by an older adult in Bellevue are less likely to have a vehicle than are households headed by middle-aged people (defined as 35 to 64 years old). About 13% of all households headed by someone age 65 or older did not have a vehicle and 39% of renter households headed by someone age 65 or older did not have a vehicle.⁶⁸ Making the decision to stop driving either for health or financial reasons can have an impact on the number of older adults who need other forms of transportation in order to meet their basic needs such as doctor visits, shopping, and recreation.
- Lack of personal transportation is one of the main reasons older adults miss medical appointments and are less likely to participate in social, family, and/or religious activities which can result in physical fragility and social isolation.⁶⁹
- During community engagement activities conducted by Aging and Disability Services (ADS) in early 2019 and previously, residents described transportation challenges including the multiple barriers faced by those with special health needs, difficulty navigating the transportation system, and the acute need for improved transportation in rural areas. Approximately one-third of King County residents have some mobility challenge related to disability, age, or income. Additionally, due to lack of affordable housing, some of the highest-need populations are being displaced to suburban and rural areas that are not well-served by public transit. In a recent community needs survey conducted by ADS, cost was the most cited transportation challenge. Community transportation, also referred to as “special needs transportation,” serves as a lifeline that connects older adults to healthcare, supportive services, healthy food, and social and cultural engagement. Several public and private transportation agencies have convened as the King County Mobility Coalition to support innovative, coordinated community transportation and person-centered mobility management.⁷⁰
- Sound Generations provided one-way rides to 827 older adults living in Bellevue and 5,569 older adults in King County through their volunteer transportation program in 2020. Rides are provided for both medical and non-medical related needs rides. Due to Covid-19, both the number of volunteer and number of residents requesting rides had a significant decline. Even during the pandemic, Sound Generations kept the rate of denial low and offered rides through a ride-share app when a volunteer was not available.⁷¹
- In King County, Americans with Disability Act (ADA) paratransit services are provided by Metro’s Access Transportation. King County Metro’s Access program fills some of the need

for door-to-door service for eligible people with disabilities but continues to have gaps for many customers.

Increased Racial and Ethnic Diversity

- **Racial (In)Equity Data Point:** Indian American Community Services, formerly Indian Association of Western Washington, reported that older adults in the East Indian communities often experience isolation and depression as they adjust to American culture, and that more opportunities are needed to keep residents active and social in the community. COVID-19 has exacerbated the problem since people are not able to visit in their neighborhood community nor travel back and forth to India.⁷²
- **Racial (In)Equity Data Point:** About 29% of Bellevue residents age 65 and over speak a language other than English at home. The effects of a diverse older adult population in Bellevue continue to have an impact on service needs and delivery and will increase in coming years.⁷³

Race/Ethnicity of People 65 Years Old and Older in Bellevue, 2015-2019

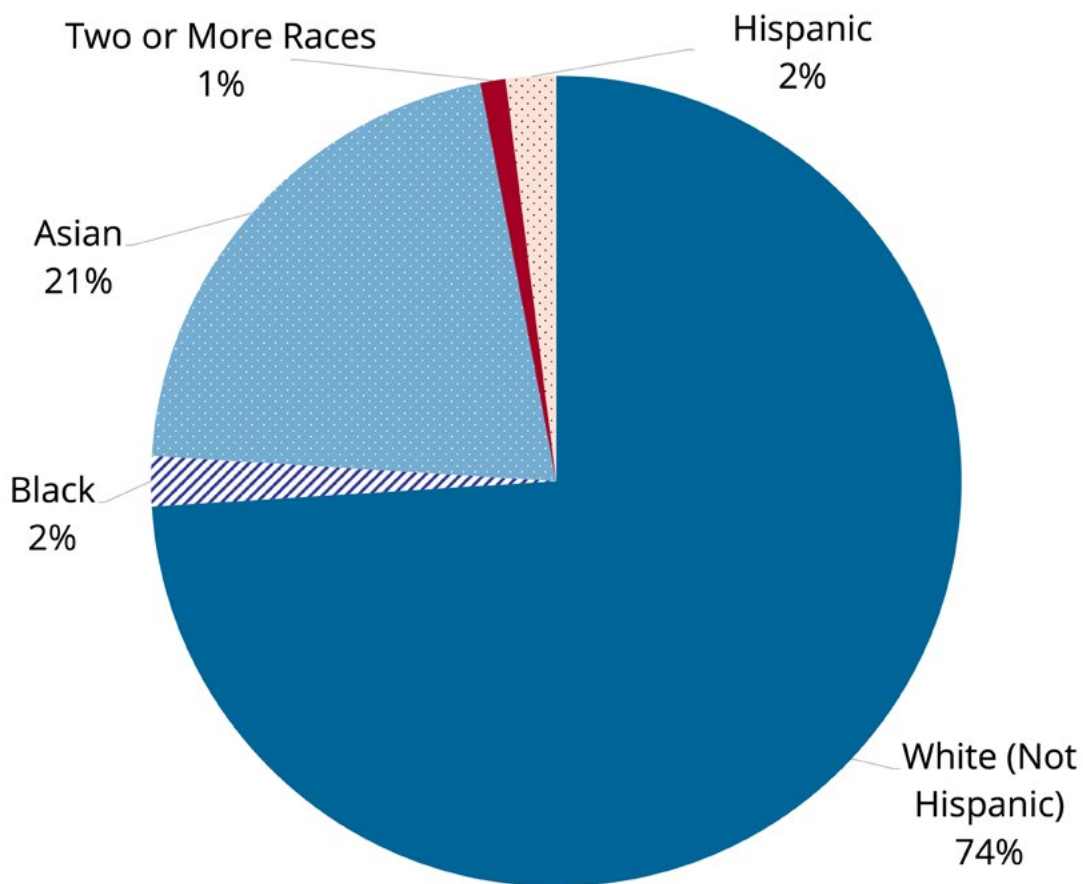


Figure 3 | Source: US Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey (5-year estimates), tables B01001B-I

- **Racial (In)Equity Data Point:** People of color will make up an increasing proportion of the older adult population as Americans reach retirement age. This trend is expected to continue in the foreseeable future. As indicated in Figure 4, data from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey reveals that age distribution in Bellevue is different for different racial and ethnic groups. Among the 65 year and older population of Bellevue, the largest racial groups are White Non-Hispanic (74%) and Asian (21%).

Endnotes

- 1 U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey, Table DP05.
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