



SUMMARY REPORT

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The Conversations

Introduction

Legacy Foundation commenced its 25th anniversary by asking Lake County, Indiana, residents to come together to discuss the positive work happening in their communities as well as the challenges their communities face. On September 26, 2017, residents joined together in *On the Table* conversations. This conversation-oriented initiative was an opportunity for friends, families, neighbors, colleagues, and strangers to gather around a shared meal and have a real dialogue about what is important to them with the intention of fueling meaningful change.

Legacy Foundation organized *On the Table* with support from The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Knight Foundation brought *On the Table* to 10 cities across the country in 2017.

Following the conversations, participants had the opportunity to take a survey about their *On the Table* experience. Knight Foundation invited the University of Illinois at Chicago's (UIC) Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement (IPCE) to serve as the research partner for this *On the Table* initiative. The full Impact Report and the data itself can be accessed at www.legacyfdn.org/onthetable.

On the Table 2017 Highlights

133 Conversations

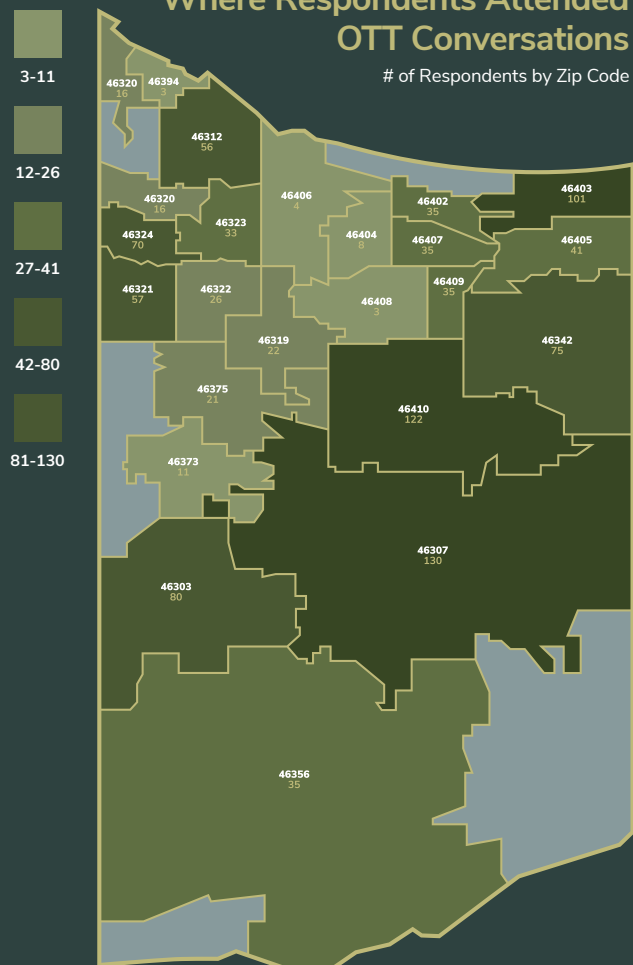
25 Zip Codes

1,352 Adult Participants

1,179 Responded to the Survey (87%)

Where Respondents Attended OTT Conversations

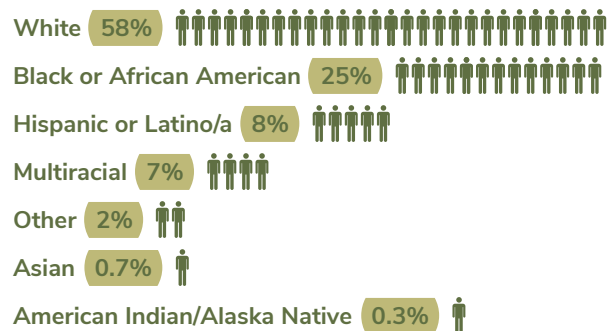
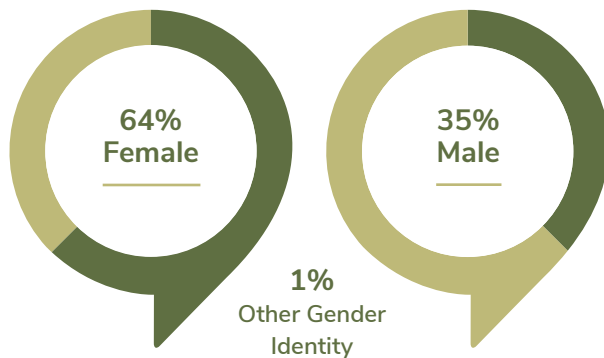
of Respondents by Zip Code



Who Responded?

Participant Info

Overall, those who responded were female, over the age of 40, holding at least a bachelor's degree, and white. Nearly one-half (47%) of respondents indicated they were long-term residents who have lived in their local community for 20 or more years. At 17%, newcomers, or those who have lived in their local community for 0-4 years, featured the next greatest number of respondents. Regarding homeownership, 73% of respondents reported owning their primary residence.



Graduate Degree

28%

Bachelor's Degree

30%

Associate/Vocational Degree

9%

Some College

19%

High School Diploma or GED

12%

Less than High School

2%

60s & Up

33%

50s

19%

40s

18%

30s

18%

18 to 29

12%

Highly Engaged and Motivated

The respondent group is a highly engaged group who donates, volunteers, and is active in community affairs at greater rates than the national average. At 70%, respondents were most likely to say they donated more than \$25 to a charitable organization within the past year, and 68% said they volunteered within the past year. Over one-half (53%) of respondents reported attending a public meeting about community affairs within the past year. Finally, 43% said they worked with people in their neighborhood to fix or improve something in the past year. When asked how often they vote in local elections, 73% responded that they always vote. Compared to national rates, more respondents felt very attached to their communities and felt they could make a big impact.



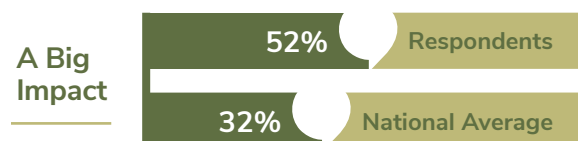
Engagement Activities in the Past Year

% of respondents (n=1,143) compared to National Rate
Source: US Census, Current Population Survey, September 2015: Volunteer Supplement

Donated money, assets, or property with a combined value of more than \$25 to charitable or religious organizations	Comparison	
	70% Respondents	50% National Average
Did volunteer activities through or for an organization	68% Respondents	24% National Average
Attended public meetings in which there was discussion of community affairs	53% Respondents	8% National Average
Worked with people in my neighborhood to fix or improve something	43% Respondents	8% National Average

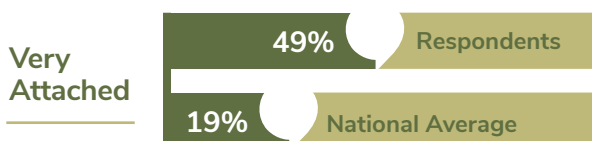
How much impact do you think people like you can have in making your community a better place to live?

% of respondents (n=1,144) compared to National Rate
Source: Pew Research Center. November, 2016, 'Civic Engagement Strongly Tired to Local News Habits'



In general, how attached do you feel to your local community?

% of respondents (n=1,150) compared to National Rate
Source: Pew Research Center. November, 2016, 'Civic Engagement Strongly Tired to Local News Habits'

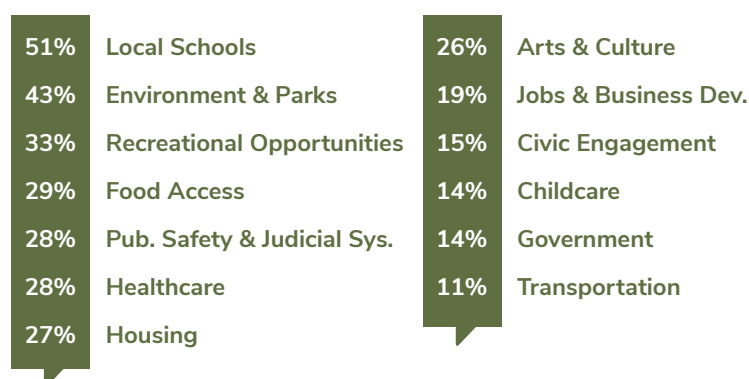


Proud but Wanting More Services

Respondents, overall, maintain areas of pride and areas of concern regarding their communities. When asked what they are most proud of in their local community, respondents provided a variety of responses. The top six responses include sense of community (17%), the people in their local community (16%), education and schools (14%), community involvement (11%), nature and parks (10%), and diversity (10%). Over one-half (51%) of respondents indicated they are happy with the quality of local schools, 43% said they are happy with the quality of environment and parks, and 33% of respondents specified they are happy with the quality of recreational opportunities.

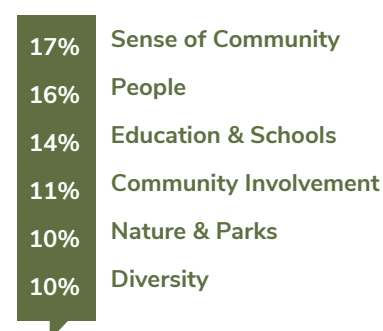
I'm happy with the quality of the following services in my community

Results for all respondents (n=950)



What are you most proud of in your local community?

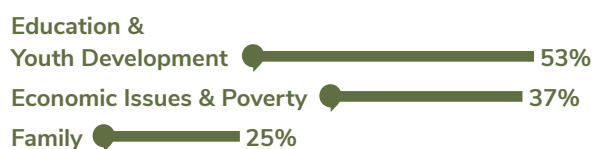
Results for all respondents (n=750)



Respondents also identified the top issues they would like to see their community address and services they wish they had more of in their community. They most want education and youth development (53%), economic issues and poverty (37%), and family (25%) issues addressed. When asked about services desired, the top responses included transportation services (23%), youth services (15%), recreational services (11%), economic and employment services (10%), education services (10%), shopping and food services (10%).

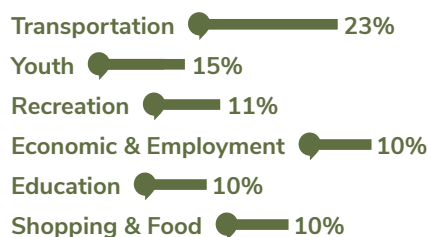
What are the top three (3) social issues you'd like to see your community address?

Results for all respondents (n=1,003)



What services do you wish you had more of in your community?

Results for all respondents (n=726)



How Did the Conversations Go?

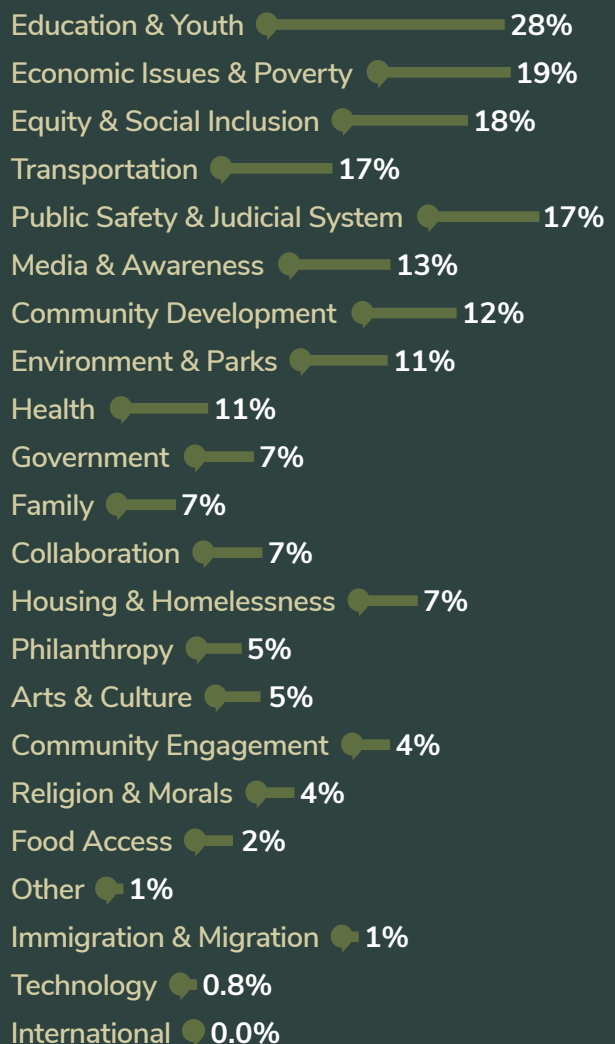
Who, What, Why

Respondents reported participating in *On the Table* for a number of reasons. Over two-thirds (67%) of respondents said they participated to discuss and address important issues in their community, and 56% said they wanted to learn from and listen to others. Furthermore, 33% of respondents wanted to support the organizer of the conversation, 31% participated to get more involved in their community, and 30% intended to meet and build relationships with new people.

A majority of respondents (73%) reported raising an issue of concern in their conversation. Respondents touched on a range of issues, with the top five being education and youth development (28%), economic issues and poverty (19%), equity and social inclusion (18%), transportation (17%), and public safety and the judicial system (17%). In addition to the discussion and dissection of issues in conversations, 59% of respondents said their conversation(s) generated a specific solution.

Issues Raised During the Conversation

Results for all respondents (n=789)



How Did Conversations Impact Respondents?

Meaningful Connections

On the Table participants connected with new people. Over one-half (53%) of respondents reported speaking with one or more attendees they did not already know before and/or after the conversation. Another 20% of respondents exchanged contact information with one or more attendees they did not already know, and 17% made specific plans to work with one or more attendees.



One-quarter (25%) of respondents indicated they have a much better understanding of how they, personally, can help address the issues facing their community after participating in their conversation. Likewise, 42% of respondents said they have a somewhat better understanding of how to help address issues following their conversations.

A large majority (87%) of respondents indicated they are somewhat-to-very likely to take action. Of the actions or next steps respondents are likely to take, 62% expressed interest in building relationships and collaborating, 57% said they wanted to raise awareness and educate others, 53% hoped to get more involved in community, and 45% indicated they intend to volunteer.

To encourage On the Table participants to take action on solutions generated in their conversations, Legacy Foundation announced the Community Action Awards. The awards were open to any individual or organization that took part on September 26. Applicants were asked to submit a 60 to 120 second video or a brief narrative describing their project and its impact on the community. Legacy Foundation received over 25 submissions. Ten projects were awarded \$1,000 to kick-start implementation. Projects include a positive news podcast, an exchange program for girls from different communities, a community photo contest, monthly community networking dinners, and student led beautification activities.

Youth

Younger Perspectives

Legacy Foundation developed a youth component to *On the Table* in order to support engagement in schools across Lake County. After their *On the Table* conversations, youth were encouraged to reflect on their experience in a post-event activity. They were asked to use the outline of a person to reflect on the idea discussed in conversations that has the most potential to bring about change in their community (head), the issue they care about most in their community (heart), and the action they could take to address that issue (feet).

We received Head, Heart, and Feet exercises from 116 anonymous individual youth participants, as well as eight anonymous group summary sheets from classrooms. Altogether, the data reflect information shared from conversations that involved approximately 150 youth from Gary and Hammond.

Youth respondents identified a range of issues that they perceive to be affecting their communities. According to their exercises, the top three issues mentioned were violence and gangs, youth and family, and economic issues. When reflecting on their discussion, some youth respondents said they felt they wanted to help and make a difference and others said they felt sad and upset given the issues discussed. The youth respondents who said they wanted to help and make a difference sounded optimistic in their ability to bring about change.



150 Youth Responded

from Gary and Hammond

Frequency of Codes for Youth Head, Heart, and Feet Responses

CATEGORY	CODE	RESPONSES	% RESPONSES
ISSUES	Violence and Gangs	52	42%
	Youth and Family	30	24%
	Economic Issues	18	15%
	Health	17	14%
	Bullying	16	13%
	Parks and Recreation	14	11%
	Public Safety	14	11%
	Lack of Respect for Community	13	11%
	Poverty	12	10%
	Schools and Education	12	10%
	Abandoned Houses/Buildings	11	9%
	Discrimination	10	8%
	Environment	8	7%
	Transportation	5	4%
FEELINGS	Want to Help/Make a Difference	15	12%
	Sad/Upset	15	12%
	Angry	5	4%
	Disappointed	5	4%
	Love and Care	5	4%
	Good/Happy	4	3%
	Want to Unite	3	2%
	Hopeless	2	2%
SOLUTIONS	Build Up/Improve Community	45	36%
	Help Others	44	36%
	Speak Up/Take a Stand	28	23%
	Be a Better Person	16	13%
	Come Together/Organize	16	13%
	Create Opportunities	13	11%
	Work Harder	11	9%

Conclusion

Moving Forward

On the Table provided the opportunity for residents to share their vision for improving Lake County and allowed Legacy Foundation to hear from residents and learn what they have envisioned for their communities in their conversations. As part of this commitment to listen to and learn from Lake County residents, Legacy Foundation will use feedback generated from the On the Table conversations in its strategic planning process. Additionally, the Foundation will use this information to guide its future grant-making and to establish new connections and collaborations, and it will share the information with leaders and residents throughout Lake County to help individuals and organizations better understand the needs of the community.

This report was an exploratory study examining the content of On the Table conversations and information about survey respondents. While results cannot be generalized to the broader Lake County population, this study reveals important insights that are worth highlighting.



Respondents were a highly engaged group across all measured considered.

The majority of respondents said they are involved in community and neighborhood activities, with many reporting having donated and volunteered this past year.

Education/youth development and family stood out as high priorities for respondents.

These issues consistently ranked within the top three issues for most important social issues to respondents, social issues to which respondents contribute their time, talent, and/or financial resources, and social issues respondents would like to see their community address. Additionally, these issues were among the top issues that featured the least amount of disparity between social issues respondents consider to be most important and social issues to which they contribute.

Transportation ranked first as a service respondents wished they had more of in their community and ranked last as a service in their community with which they are happy regarding its quality.

Overall, respondents were concerned with the accessibility of public transportation and wanted to see efforts to improve access to underserved and disadvantaged groups across the county. Respondents tended to name buses as a mode of transit where more are needed.



On the Table was an opportunity for residents of Lake County to get together with old friends and new acquaintances to have conversations about the issues that they care about the most.

In doing so, many people came together to share their experiences about life in Lake County and how they would like to see it become an even better county that serves all of its residents. Conversations served as a catalyst for generating ideas and potential actions and created a space for participants to make personal connections so that they might find ways to ignite change with fellow residents.



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