# **Exploring the Needs and Opportunities of Older Adult Homeowners**

Older Adult Homeowners Research Report



February 2024

**Prepared by Fannie Mae** 



## **Study Overview**

This project leverages a nationally representative survey of U.S. homeowners aged 60+ and an oversample of economically disadvantaged older adult homeowners to uncover the unique attitudes and needs of older adult homeowners and explore potential opportunities for Fannie Mae to support them.

#### **Research Objectives**

Understand the financial situation, retirement income, and homeownership needs of homeowners aged 60+ and identify those most in need of assistance from Fannie Mae

Provide deeper insight into how older adults might use their homes to provide income during retirement

Uncover services and products older adult homeowners need to make the most of their home during retirement

#### Methodology



#### **Quantitative Survey**



15-minute online survey with NORC's Foresight 50+ Panel



N=1,448 U.S. homeowners aged 60+

N=1,141 Nationally Representative Sample

N=307 Economically Disadvantaged Sample (an oversample of older adults with low income, low assets, and who are near/at retirement)



Conducted March 30-April 25, 2023



#### **Audience Criteria**

The Nationally Representative Sample is weighted to be representative of U.S. older adults aged 60+ along the following criteria:



**Employment/ Retirement Status** 



Race/Ethnicity



**Income** 



Region



## **Older Adult Homeowners Sample**

Throughout this report, results are based on the Nationally Representative Sample of 1,141 older adults (weighted to be representative of the national population of homeowning older adults aged 60+). At times, the Nationally Representative Sample is compared with the Economically Disadvantaged Sample to understand significant differences between the average older adult and economically disadvantaged older adults.



Nationally Representative Sample of Older Adult Homeowners

1,141 U.S. homeowners aged 60+ who own their homes outright or hold a mortgage





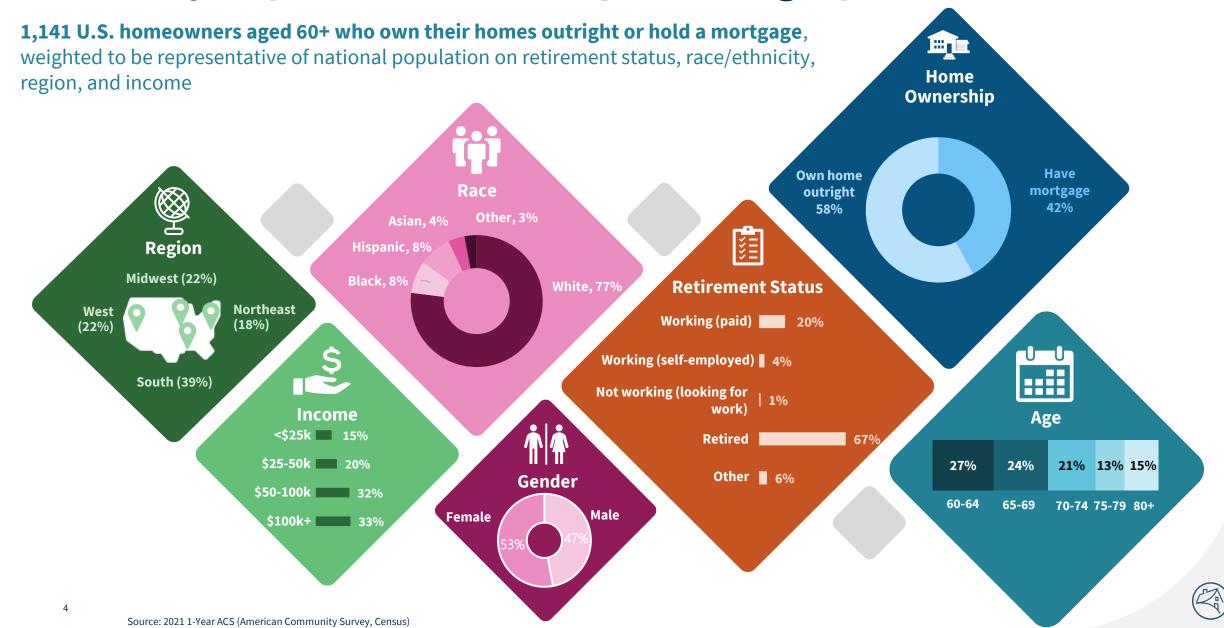
## **Economically Disadvantaged Older Adult Homeowners**

307 U.S. homeowners aged 60+ who 1) own their homes outright or hold a mortgage, 2) meet the following criteria:

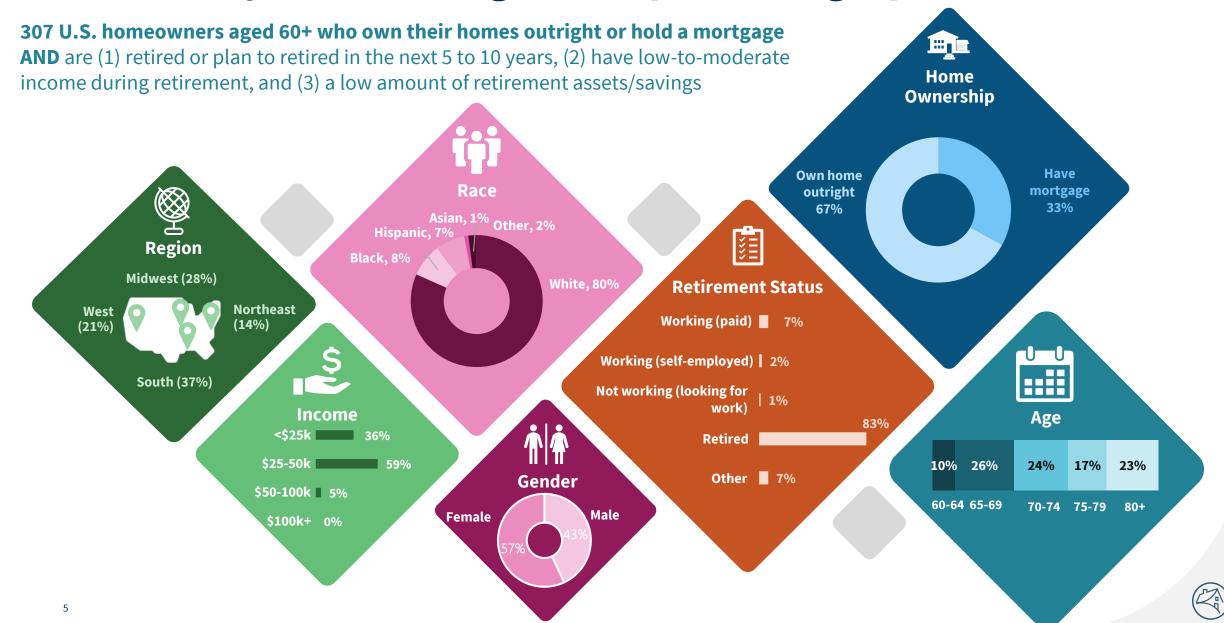
- Retired or plan to retire in the next 5 to 10 years
- Have low-to-moderate income during retirement (at or below 250% of the 2023 national poverty line which is \$50K or less if two-person household, and less than \$35K if single)
- Low amount of retirement assets/savings, defined as, beyond home equity:
  - < \$100k for single household
  - < \$300k for married household



## **Nationally Representative Sample Demographics**



## **Economically Disadvantaged Sample Demographics**



## **Executive Summary: Key Findings**



- Older Adults feel confident and knowledgeable: 72% of older adult homeowners feel confident about their finances and income in retirement. However, there is a small segment of older adults (15%) that do not feel confident.
- Many wish they had saved more and are open to financial advice: 61% of older adults wish they had saved more when they were younger, and a little more than a third would be open to financial planners/counseling.
- Mortgage borrowers have more debt and are more stressed: In comparison to outright owners, older adult
  mortgage borrowers have more debt, feel more stress, and are more concerned about housing expenses.



- Most older adults plan to stay in their homes during retirement: 56% say they will never sell, 27% say they might sell at some point, and only 17% say they have, or plan to, sell their home.
  - They "love their homes" is a top reason for staying in their home: Other top reasons include feeling comfortable where they live and having family/friends nearby.
  - Having a home that "fits their needs as they age" is a top reason for selling: Other reasons include moving closer to family/friends, living in an area with lower taxes/a lower cost house, and living in a warmer climate.
- Two-thirds of older adults who plan to stay in their homes say they will stay for as long as possible with no additional care/help: this does not change much as older adults get older, indicating a sense of optimism (or somewhat unrealistic expectations).



- Older Adults are most interested in a home maintenance/repair service designed for retirees at a lower cost: 48% of older adults expressed some interest in this product idea, the most across all financial product/services.
- Only 15% of older adults said they would consider using their home's equity for cash or income during retirement: The majority said "no" (41%) or "maybe" (43%).
- Top ways to use their equity for retirement would be 1) selling their homes or 2) taking out a small lump sum of home equity that can be repaid: Other slightly higher interest products would be a home improvement loan or HELOC.



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## **Executive Summary: Initial Implications/Opportunities**

#### **Home Equity**

### There is little interest in tapping into home equity

- While a small niche of older adults might be interested in using their home equity for income, older adults overall do not express much interest in taking on more debt, or in home equity loan products.
- It may be difficult to target the small segment who could be interested, and what financial product would be best suited for them, since they are not just low-income or mortgage borrowers.
- Having an "easy" way to tap into their home equity for use during retirement is another barrier, and most older adults think selling would be the easiest (and/or most economical).

#### **Financial Advice**

### Older Adults are receptive to financial advice / counseling

• Many are open to retirement financial counseling and advice, especially earlier in their retirement years.

### Home Maintenance/ Repair Services

#### Latent demand exists for home maintenance and repair services

- The most interest was expressed for home maintenance and repair services specifically designed for older adults (at a lower cost). This is probably due to older adults wanting to stay in their homes as long as possible, potentially not having the energy to find maintenance and contractor services, and/or wanting a discount on maintenance and repairs as they age on fixed incomes.
- A service like this could be an avenue to helping older adults sustain their home's value as they get older.



## 01 - Finances & Needs





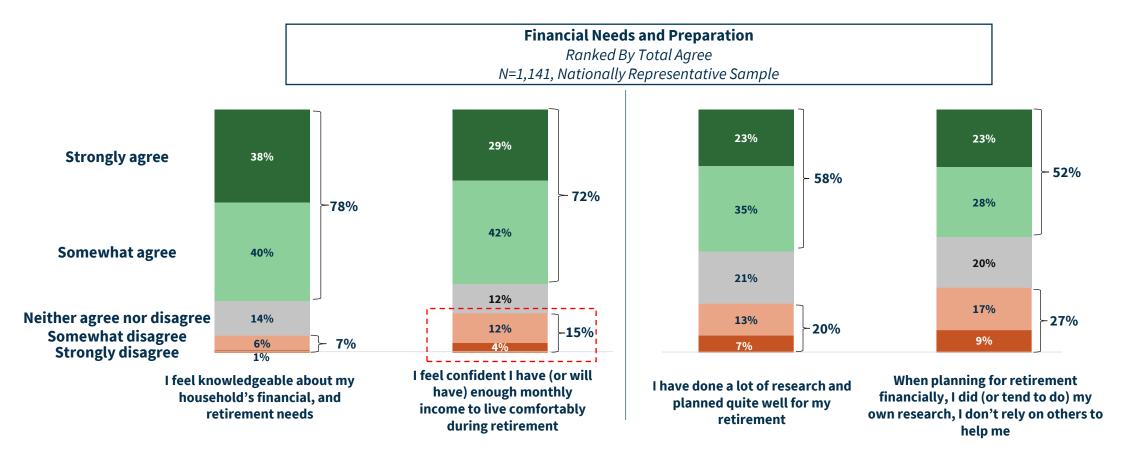


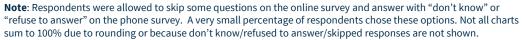


# Most older adult homeowners feel knowledgeable and confident about their finances in retirement

More than half have done their research and planning for retirement, many without the help of others.

However, 15% of older adults lack confidence that they have enough income for retirement.





**Q18:** Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

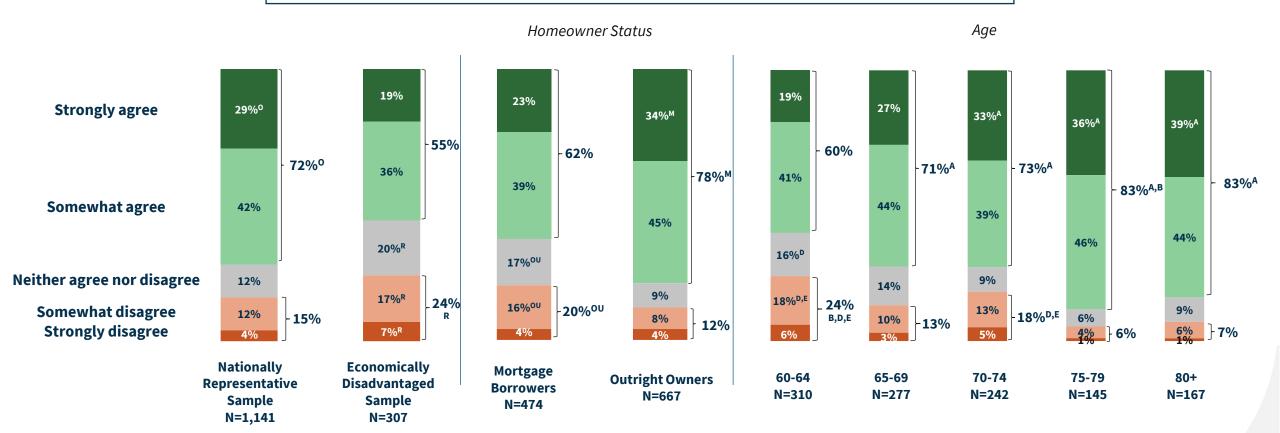


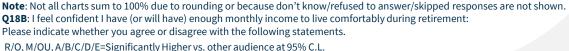
Q17: Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements on retirement planning.

## **Economically Disadvantaged and Mortgage Borrowers feel** slightly less confident in their ability to live comfortably

#### I Feel Confident I Have (or Will Have) Enough Monthly Income to Live Comfortably During Retirement

By Sample, Homeowner Status, and Age Breakouts by Homeowner Status and Age based on Nationally Representative Sample (N=1,141)



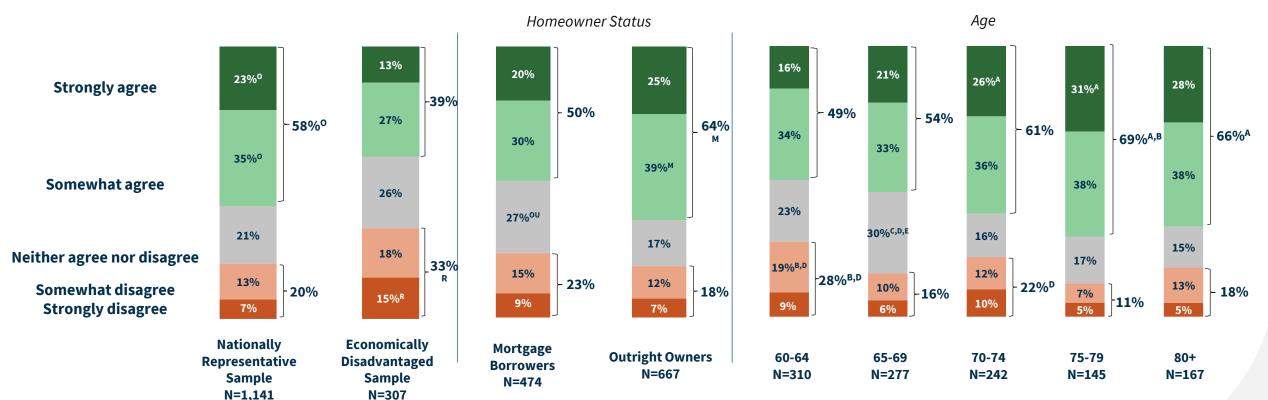


# Almost 60% of older adults feel they have planned quite well for retirement

Outright owners feel more confident in their planning than mortgage borrowers.

#### I Have Done A Lot of Research and Planned Quite Well For My Retirement

By Sample, Homeowner Status, and Age Breakouts by Homeowner Status and Age based on Nationally Representative Sample (N=1,141)



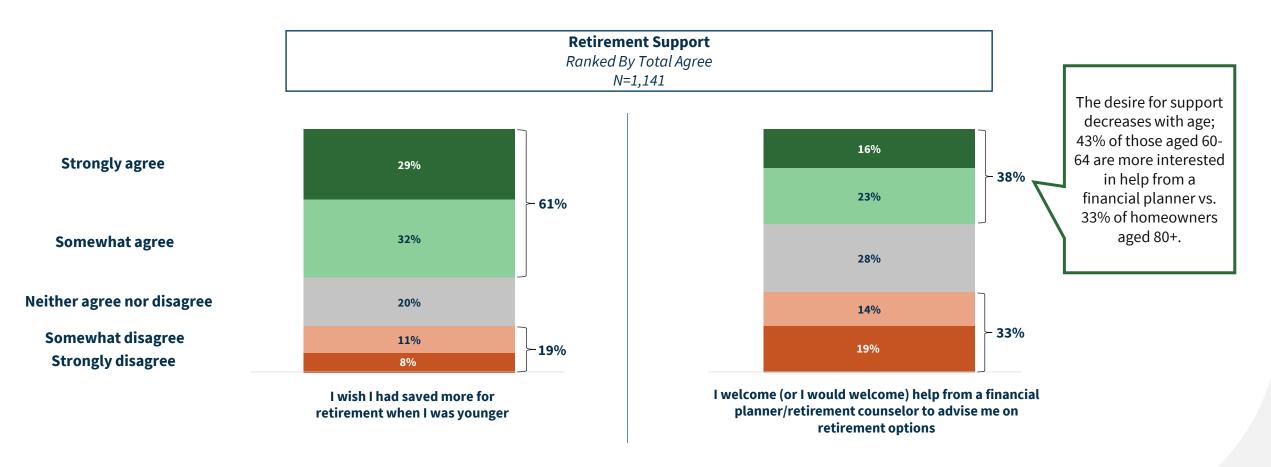
**Note**: Not all charts sum to 100% due to rounding or because don't know/refused to answer/skipped responses are not shown. **Q17C**: I have done a lot of research and planned quite well for my retirement:

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements on retirement planning. R/O, M/OU, A/B/C/D/E=Significantly Higher vs. other audience at 95% C.L.



# Many older adults wish they had saved more for retirement when they were younger

Additionally, 38% would welcome assistance from a financial planner.

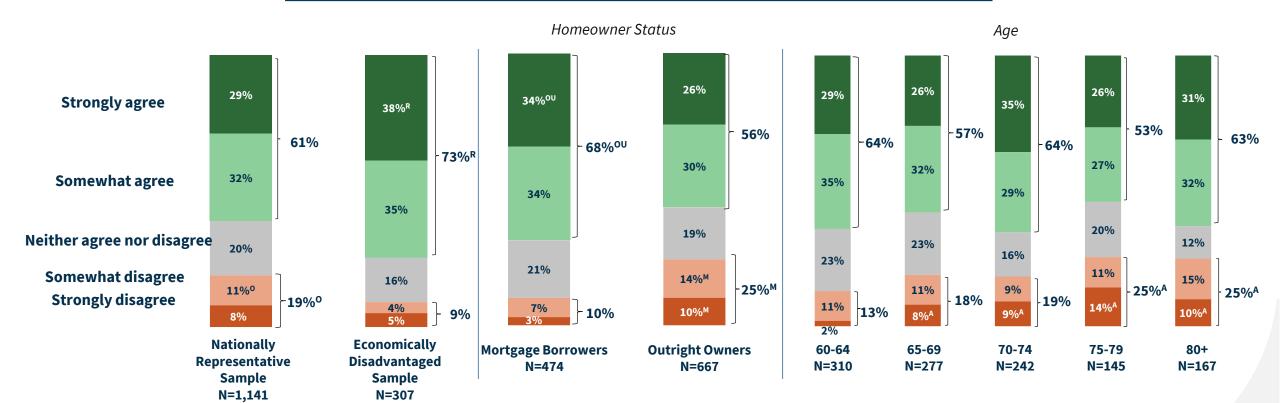




# Mortgage Borrowers are even more likely to wish they had saved more for retirement than Outright Owners

#### I Wish I Had Saved More for Retirement When I Was Younger

Showing Sample, Homeowner Status, and Age
Breakouts by Homeowner Status and Age based on Nationally Representative Sample (N=1,141)



**Note**: Not all charts sum to 100% due to rounding or because don't know/refused to answer/skipped responses are not shown. **Q18C:** I wish I had saved more for retirement when I was younger: Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

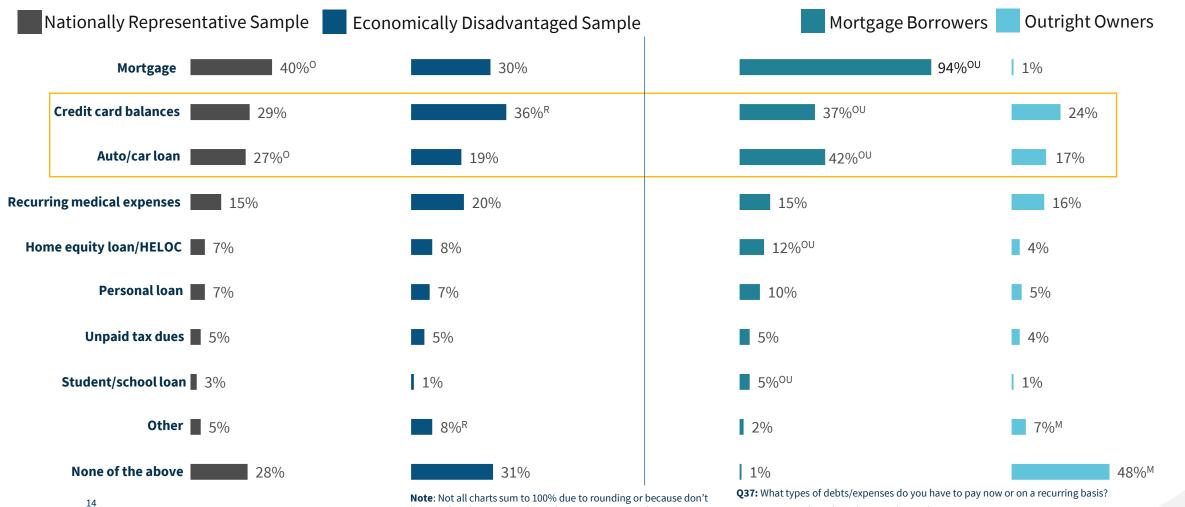


## Mortgage Borrowers report having more debt and expenses than **Outright Owners**



Ranked By Nationally Representative Sample

Nationally Representative Sample (R): N=1,141, Economically Disadvantaged (O): N=307, Mortgage Borrowers (M): N=474, Outright Owners (OU): N=667

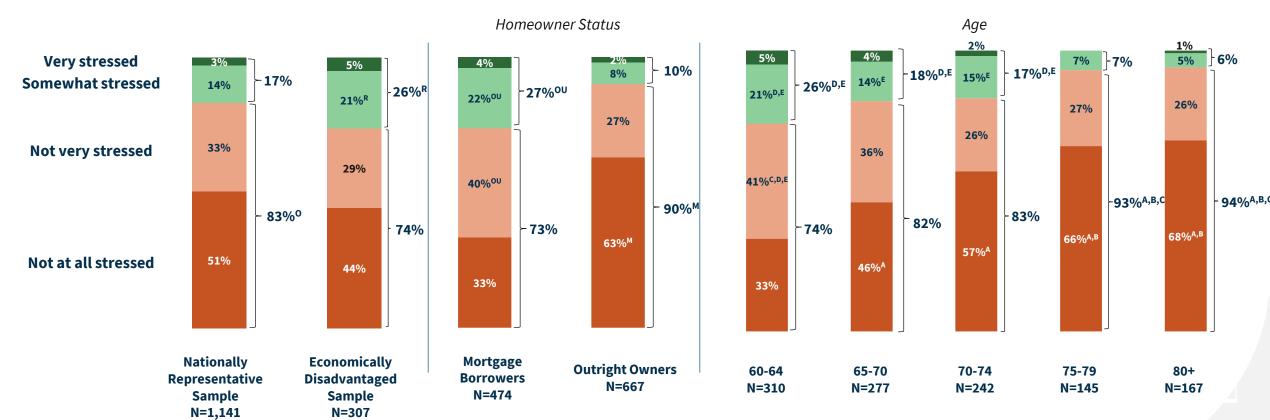


# **Economically Disadvantaged and Mortgage Borrowers feel more stress about paying their debts**

The stress of paying debts diminishes with age.

#### **Stress About Paying Debts**

By Sample, Homeowner Status, and Age
Breakouts by Homeowner Status and Age based on Nationally Representative Sample (N=1,141)

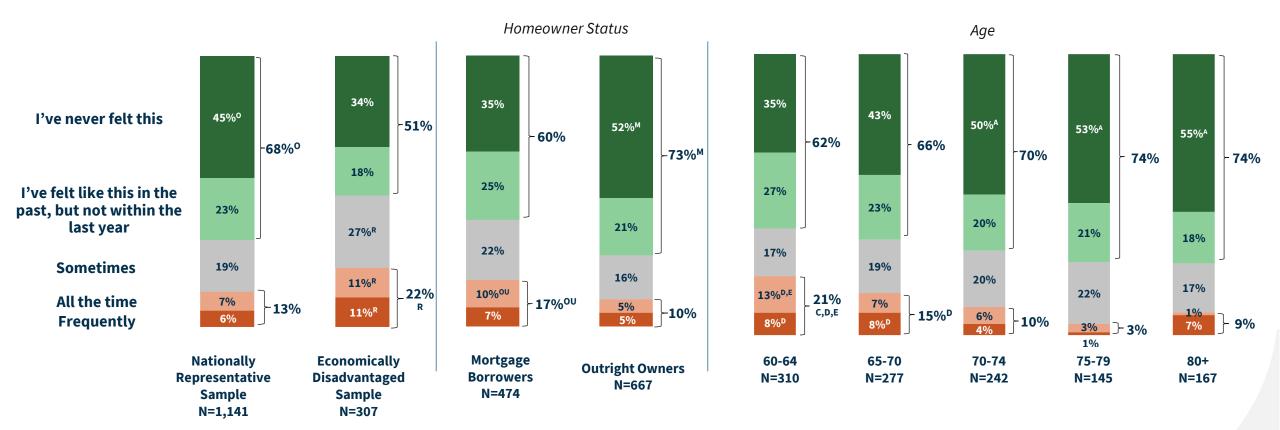




# Most older adults are comfortable with their housing expenses, Economically Disadvantaged & Mortgage Borrowers feel less so

How frequently have you felt that housing expenses were so high that you had little money left over for other things?

By Sample, Homeowner Status, and Age Breakouts by Homeowner Status and Age based on Nationally Representative Sample (N=1,141)

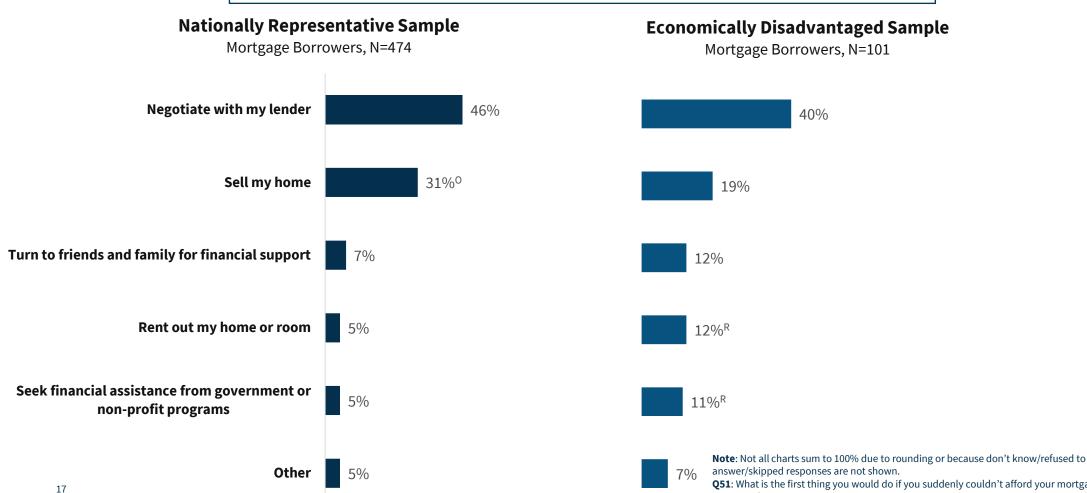




## If older adults face mortgage payment problems, negotiating with their lender would be their first course of action

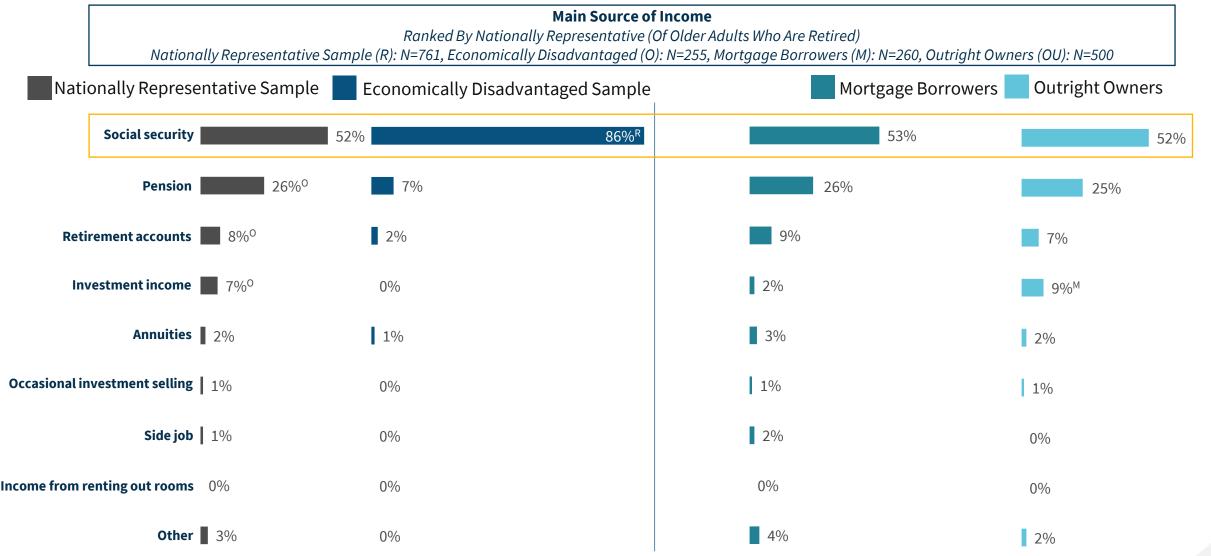
However, the more economically disadvantaged may be a little more likely to turn to family/friends or seek other assistance

What is the first thing you would do if you suddenly couldn't afford your mortgage payments? Mortgage Borrowers



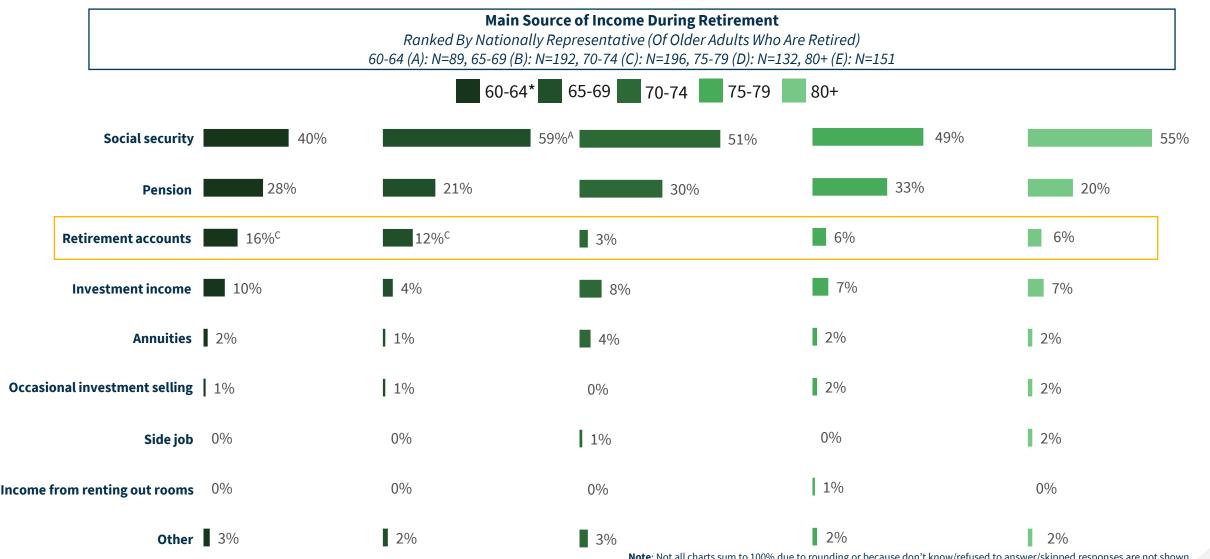


## Social security is the main source of income for the majority of retired older adults





# Among younger older adults, slightly more reliance on retirement and investment income could create income volatility



\*Denotes small n-size

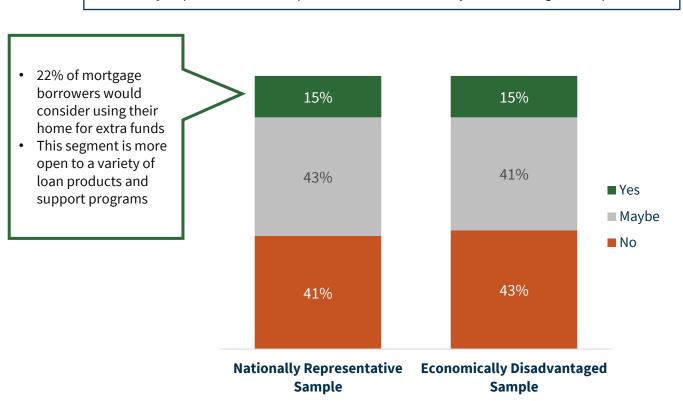


# Only 15% of older adults said "yes" they would consider using their home's equity for extra funds during retirement

Many feel they do not need extra funds or do not want to owe the bank anything.

#### **Would you Consider Using Home's Equity for Additional Funds**

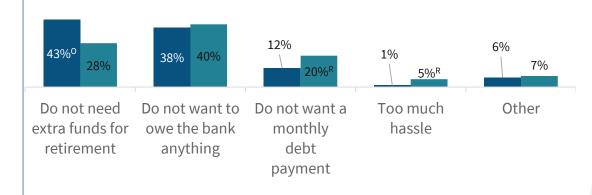
Nationally Representative Sample N=1,141, Economically Disadvantaged Sample N=307



#### **Reasons for Not Using Home Equity**

Ranked

Asked of those who said they would not use their home's equity to provide additional funds
Nationally Representative: N=464
Economically Disadvantaged Sample: N=132



■ Nationally Representative Sample ■ Economically Disadvantaged Sample

**Note**: Not all charts sum to 100% due to rounding or because don't know/refused to answer/skipped responses are not shown.

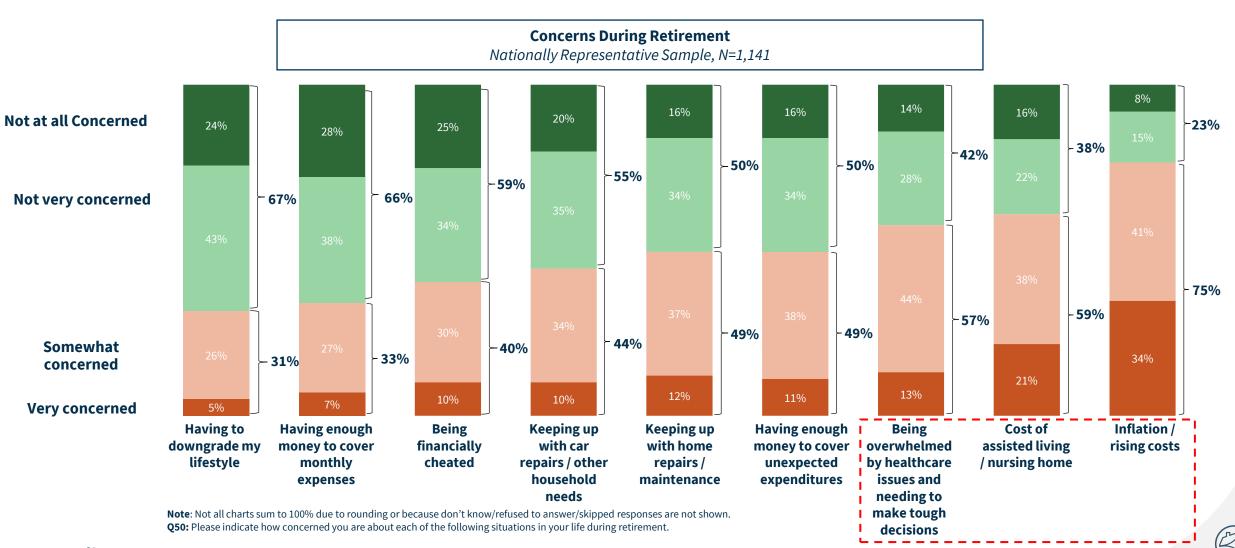
**Q53:** Would you consider using your home's equity to provide extra funds needed during retirement? For example, selling your home, or getting a home equity line of credit?

**Q54:** What is the primary reason you would not consider using your home's equity to provide extra funds during retirement?



# Older adults are concerned with inflation, and the financial and emotional issues related to health/getting older

Keeping up with repairs and maintenance is also a slightly higher concern



## 02 - Views on Selling their Home & Future Plans







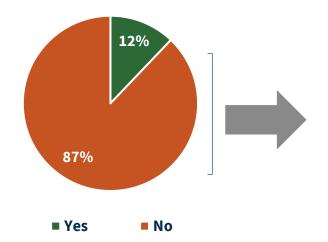


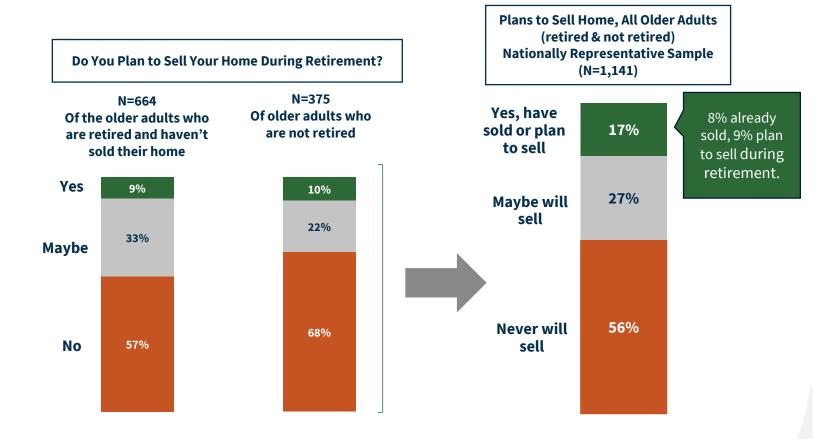
# Only 17% of older adults have sold their home, or plan to, during retirement

An additional 27% of older adults might sell, while over half say they will never sell



N=766 Question was asked of older adults who are retired





**Note**: Not all charts sum to 100% due to rounding or because don't know/refused to answer/skipped responses are not shown. Last column distribution derived from all 3 questions below:

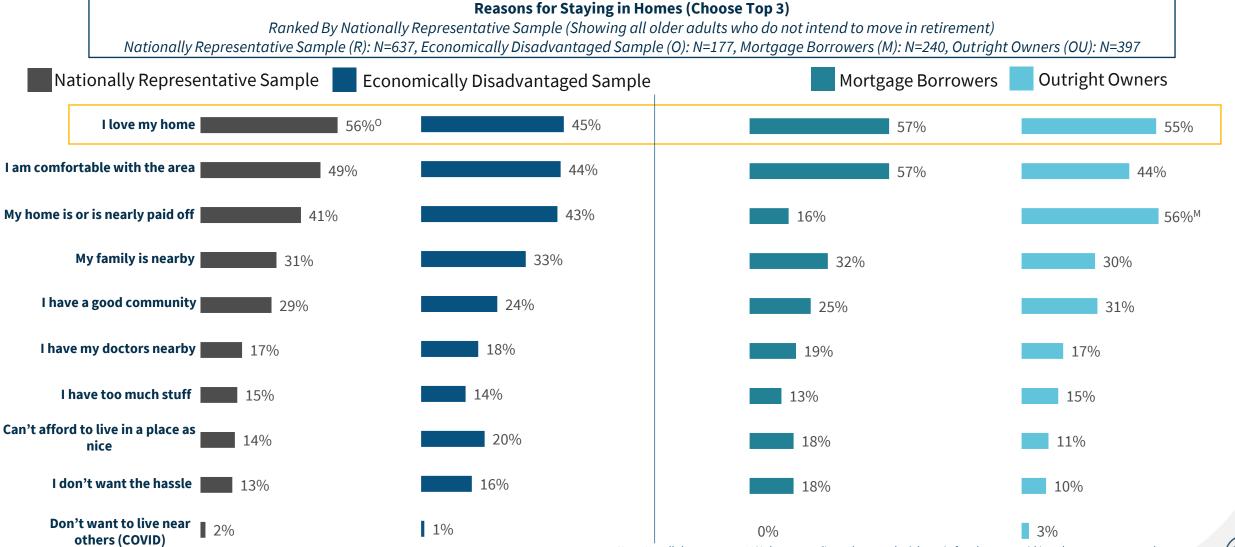
**Q21:** Since retiring, have you sold your primary residence?

**Q27:** At some point during retirement, do you plan to sell your current home?

**Q28:** When you retire, do you plan to sell your home?



# "Love of home" is the top reason older adults do not intend to move during retirement

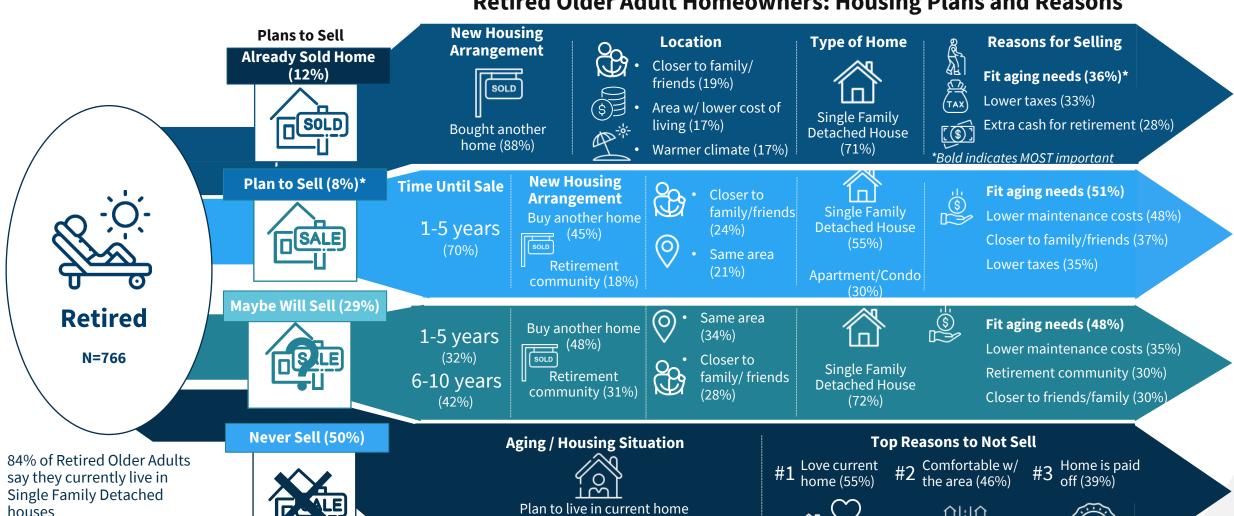




## Most retired older adults who sold their home bought another home to fit their aging and financial needs

Having a home that fits their needs as they age is a top reason for selling or thinking about selling.

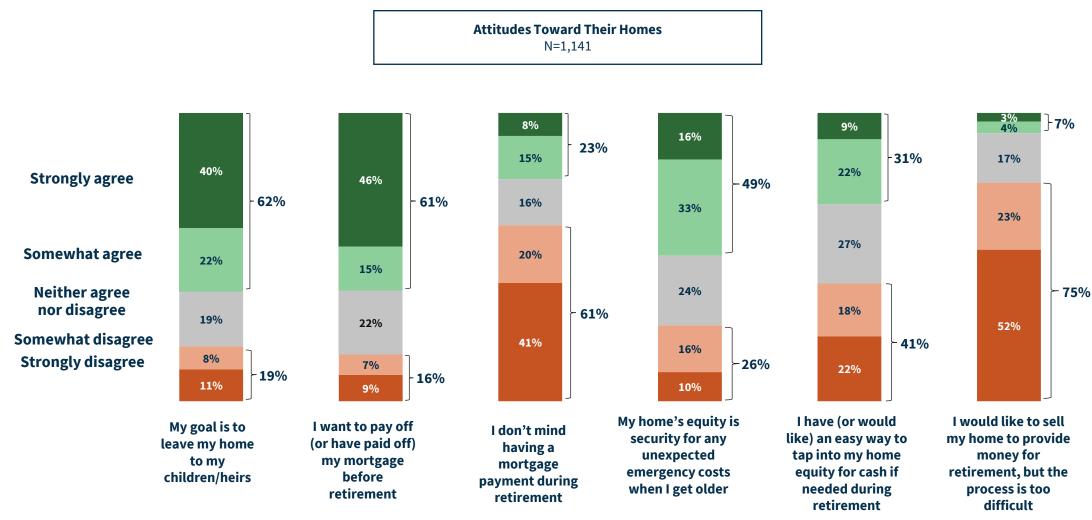
#### **Retired Older Adult Homeowners: Housing Plans and Reasons**



as long as possible, with no additional care (62%)

# Two-thirds of older adults would like to leave their homes to their heirs, and want to have their mortgage paid off

The home selling process does not appear to be a barrier, as only 7% said the process of selling would be too difficult.



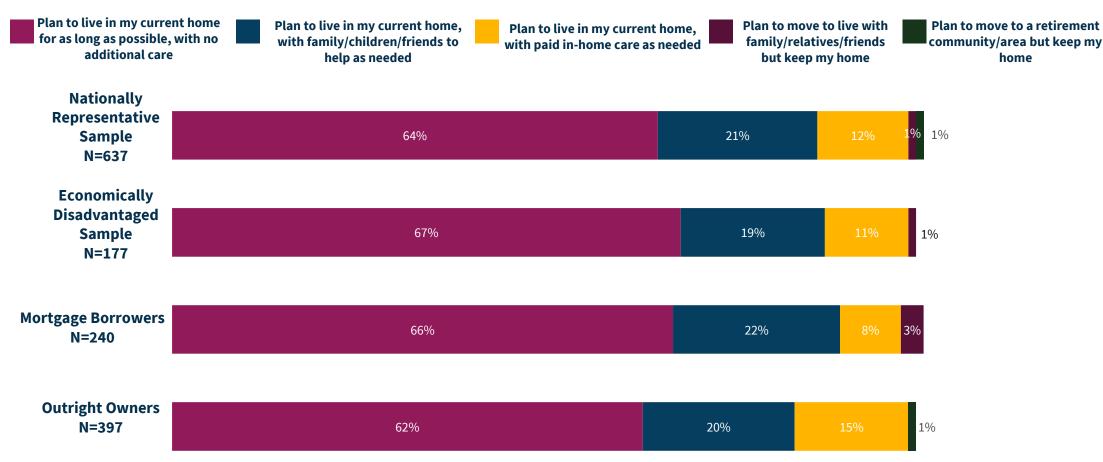


# Among older adults who do not plan to sell their home in retirement, many plan to stay in their homes with no additional care for as long as possible

#### Living Situation Plan as You Grow Older (Among those who will not sell)

Ranked Bottom To Top By Nationally Representative Sample (Question is asked of those who do not plan to sell their homes in retirement)

Nationally Representative Sample (R): N=637, Economically Disadvantaged Sample (O): N=177, Mortgage Borrowers (M): N=240, Outright Owners (OU): N=397





## 03 – Opportunities



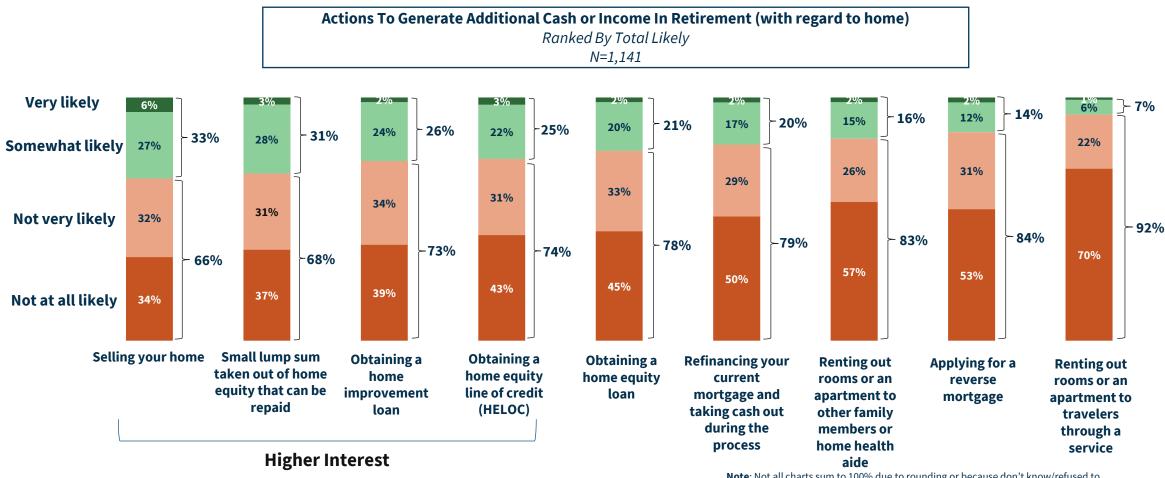






# To generate additional cash or income, older adults would more likely sell their home or take out a small lump sum of home equity

Renting out rooms or having a reverse mortgage has much lower interest.



**Note**: Not all charts sum to 100% due to rounding or because don't know/refused to answer/skipped responses are not shown.

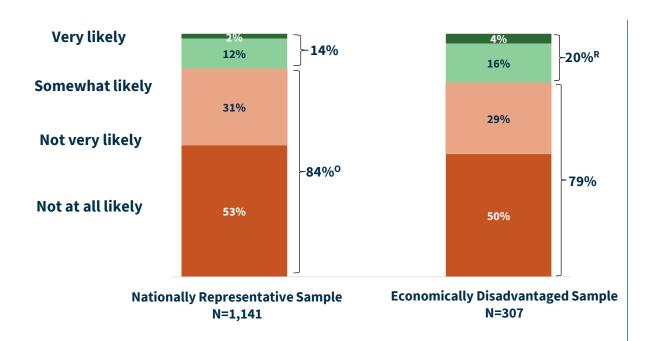
**Q55:** Thinking about your home and the future, how likely would you be to take each of the following actions as a way to generate additional cash or income during retirement?

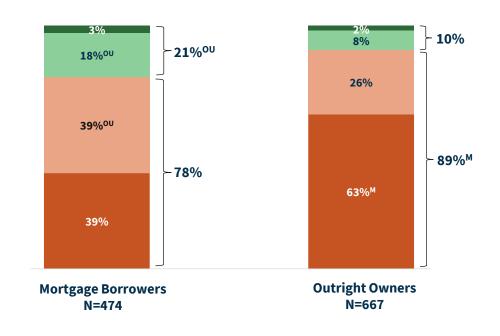


# Most are not interested in a reverse mortgage; Mortgage Borrowers and Economically Disadvantaged older homeowners are the most receptive

#### **Reverse Mortgage**

By Sample and Homeownership Status
Breakouts by Homeowner Status based on Nationally Representative Sample (N=1,141)





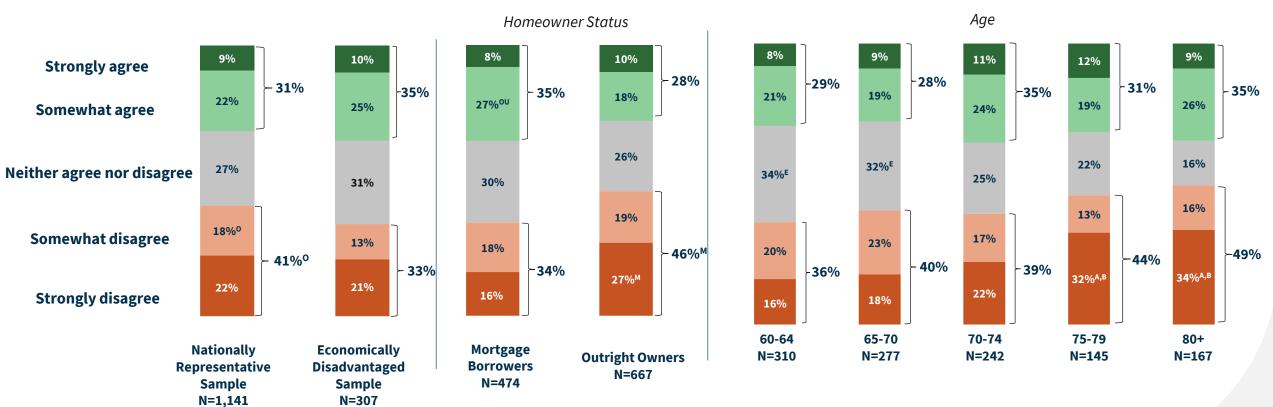


# Only a third feel they would have, or would like, an easy way to tap into their home equity if needed

Ease of access could be a significant barrier in using their home equity for cash or income.

## I Have (or Would Like) an Easy Way to Tap into My Home Equity for Cash if Needed During Retirement

By Sample, Homeowner Status, and Age Breakouts by Homeowner Status and Age based on Nationally Representative Sample (N=1,141)





## **Opportunities: Product and Service Ideas**



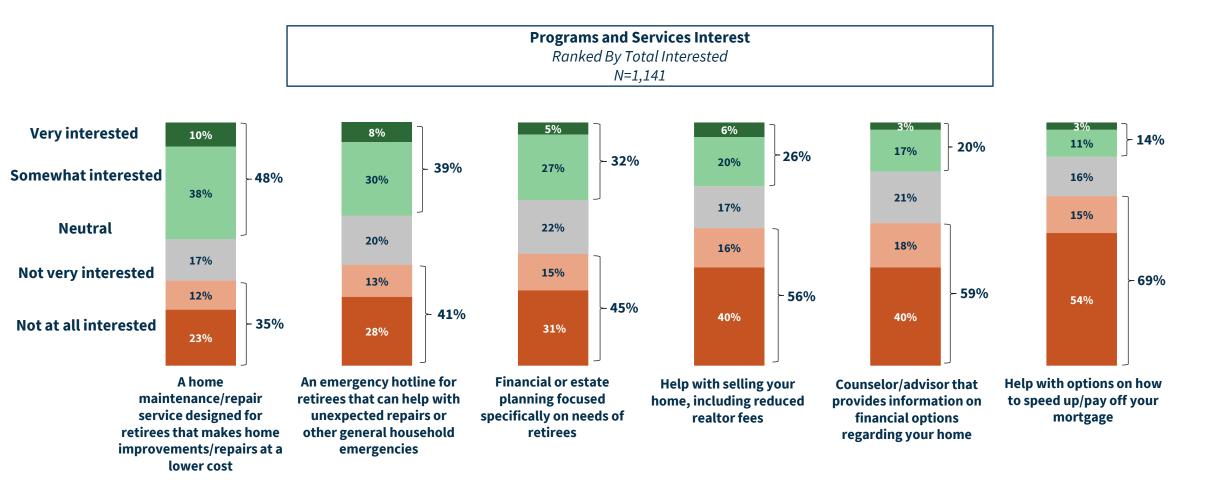






# Almost half of older adults are interested in a home maintenance program, the most of any program or product idea

An emergency hotline for unexpected repairs and financial planning are also interesting to older adults.

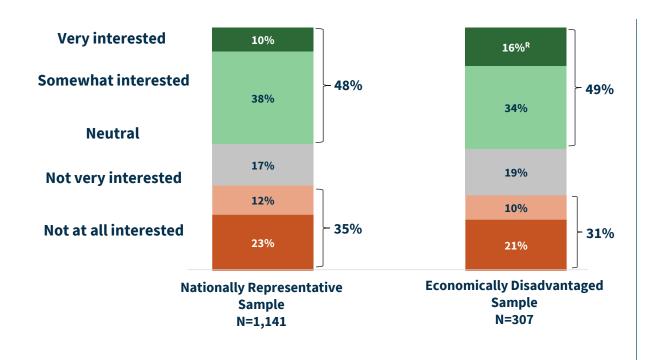


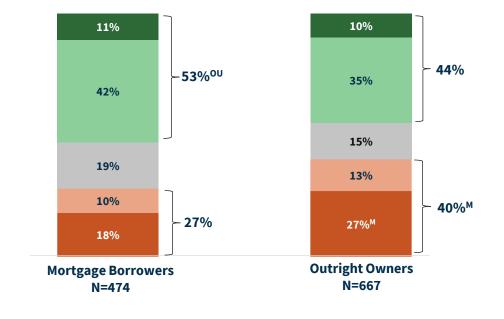


# There is interest in a home maintenance program across all homeowner segments

## Interest in Home Maintenance/Repair Service Designed for Retirees That Makes Home Improvement/Repairs at a Lower Cost

By Sample and Homeownership Status
Breakouts by Homeowner Status based on Nationally Representative Sample (N=1,141)

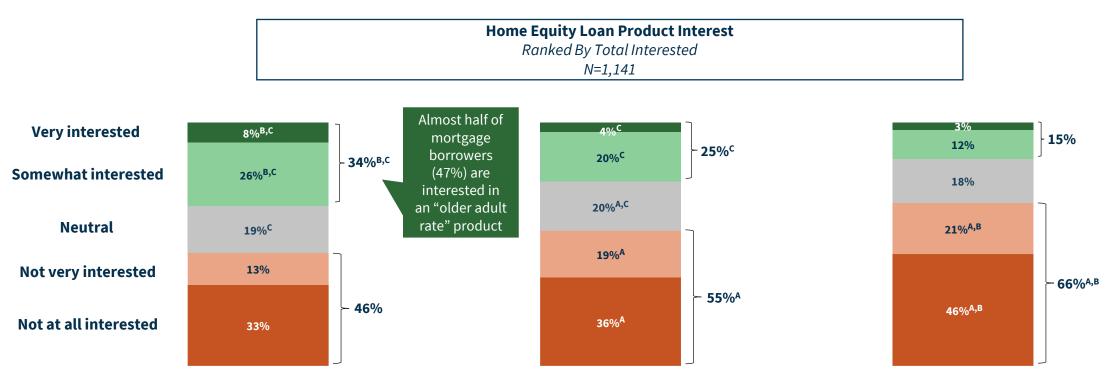






# Interest in an "older adult rate" product (below market rate) has significantly more interest than other financial product ideas

Those interested in using their home for cash or income in retirement are also significantly more interested in these home equity product ideas.



A "older adult rate" - a product with a better interest rate (below market rate) designed specifically for older adults/retirees

A home equity loan specifically designed for home improvements/renovations offered at a low interest rate

Using a small lump sum home equity loan with a low interest rate to pay off other higher interest rate debts



# Younger older adults are also more interested in an "older adult rate" product idea than those aged 80+

Interest in "Older Adult Rate" – a product with a better interest rate (below market rate) designed specifically for older adults/retirees

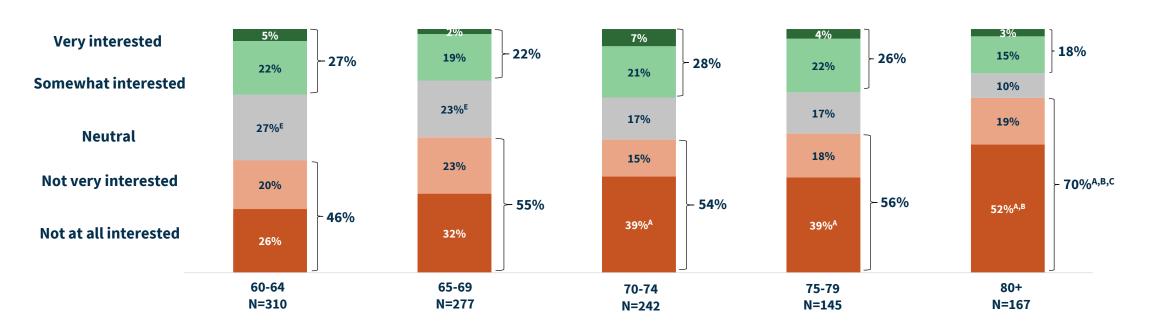
By Age





## Younger older adults are also slightly more likely to be open to a home equity loan for home improvements







### **Appendix**



### **Weighting Targets**

The Nationally Representative Sample is weighted to the 2021 1-year American Community Survey estimates detailed below

Race Targets
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White	76.5%
Black/African American	7.6%
Hispanic/Latino	8.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.7%
AIAN & Other	2.9%

#### **Income Targets**

Less than \$25k	14.9%
\$25k-\$49.99k	20.3%
\$50k-\$74.99k	18.3%
\$75k-\$99.99k	13.6%
\$100k-\$149.99k	15.6%
\$150k+	17.3%

#### **Region Targets**

17.4%
21.9%
38.9%
21.8%

#### **Employment Targets**

Employed and working	28.7%
Employed and not working	0.7%
Unemployed	1.4%
Not in labor force/Retired	69.2%

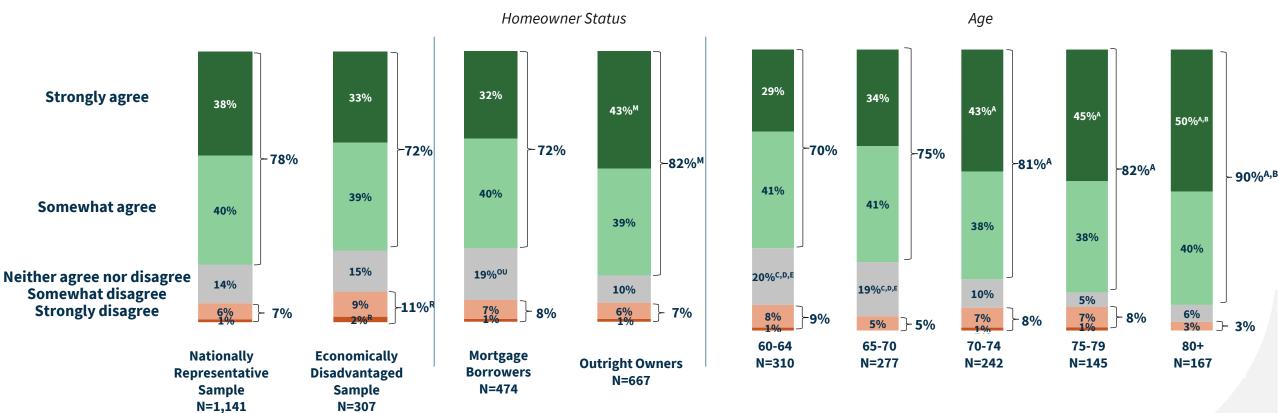


### A majority of older adult homeowners feel knowledgeable about their household's financial and retirement needs

Outright Owners and 70+ older adult homeowners feel slightly more knowledgeable about their needs than Mortgage Borrowers or their younger counterparts.

#### I Feel Very Knowledgeable About My Household's Financial and Retirement Needs

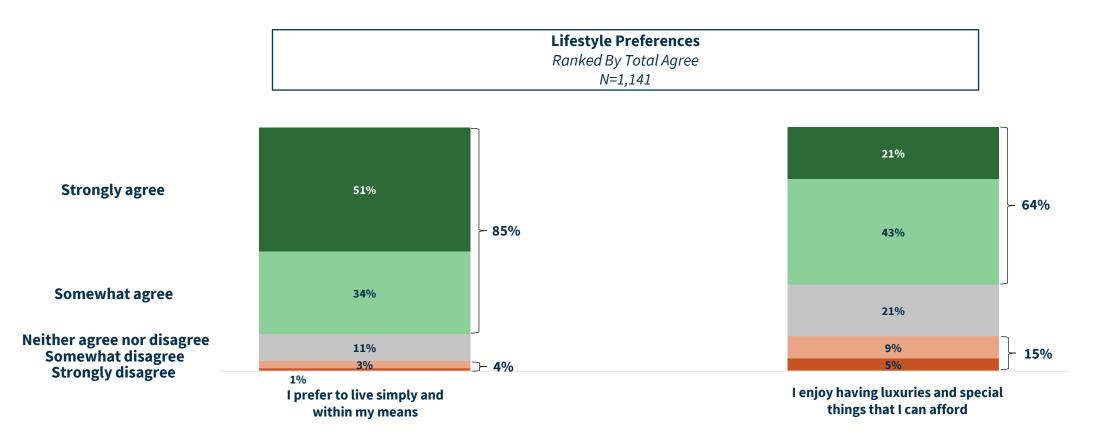
By Sample, Homeowner Status, and Age Breakouts by Homeowner Status and Age based on Nationally Representative Sample (N=1,141)





R/O, M/OU, A/B/C/D/E=Significantly Higher vs. other audience at 95% C.L.

# Most feel they live within their means and nearly two-thirds say they enjoy treating themselves to luxuries they can afford



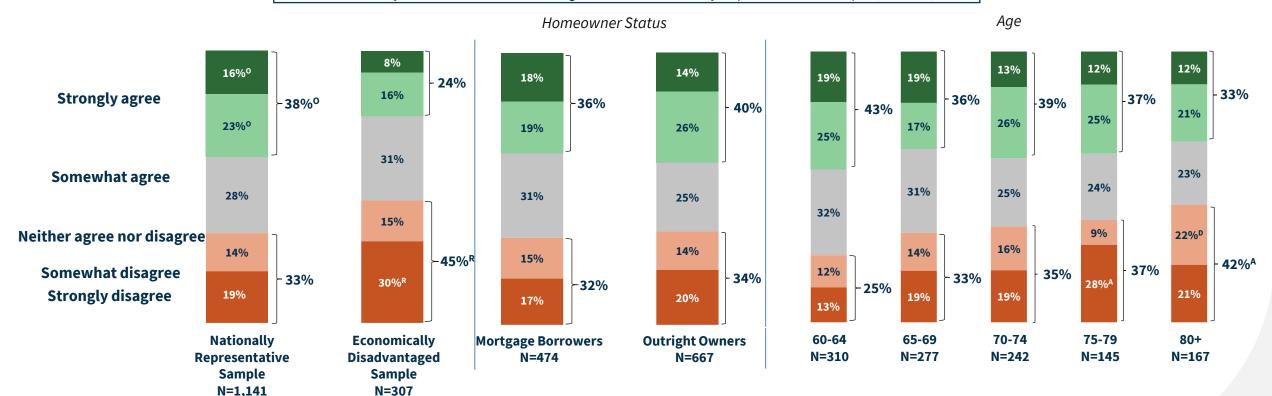


# Economically Disadvantaged older adults are less likely to be open to help from a financial planner or retirement counselor than the average older adult

However, Mortgage Borrowers are as open to help from a financial planner as their Outright Owner counterparts

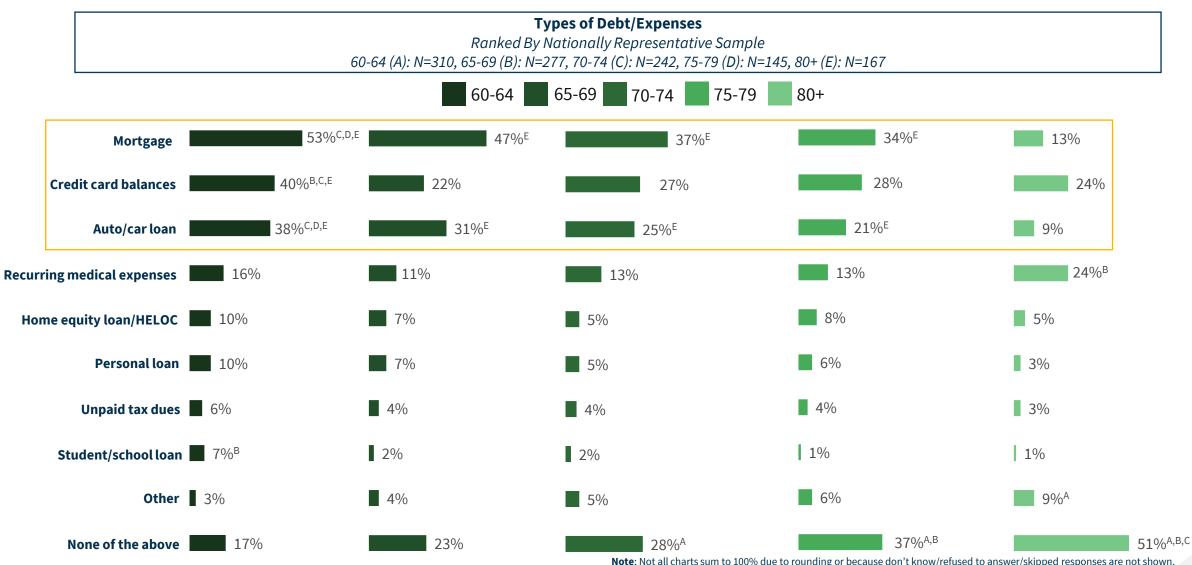
I Welcome (or I Would Welcome) Help From a Financial Planner/Retirement Counselor to Advise Me on Retirement Planning Options

Showing Sample, Homeownership Status, and Age Breakouts by Homeowner Status and Age based on Nationally Representative Sample (N=1,141)



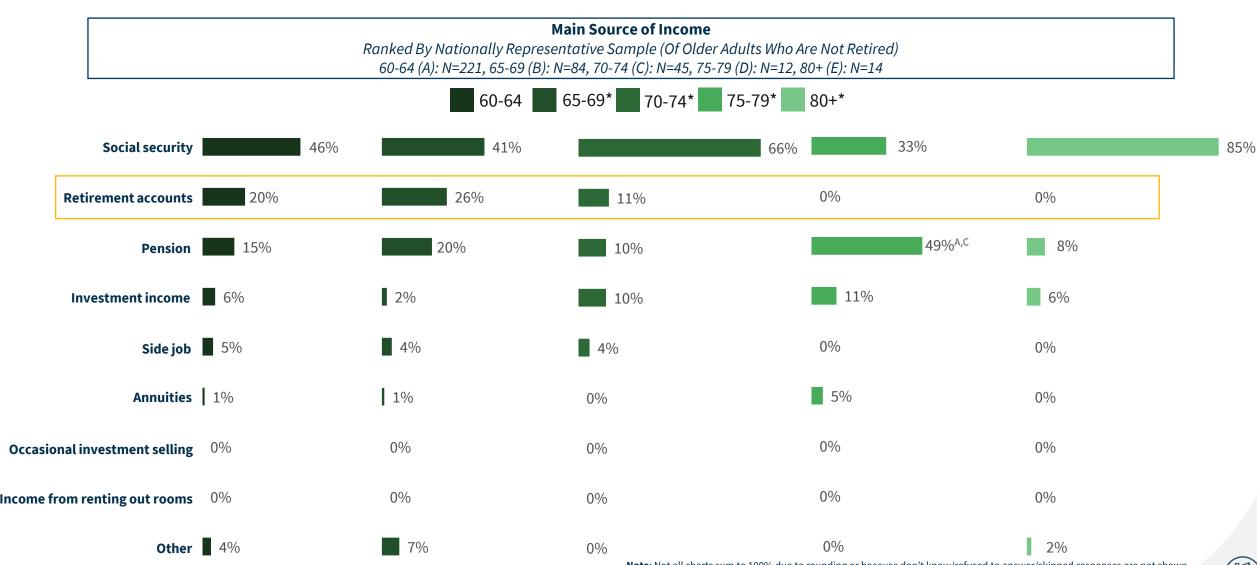


## Younger older adults are more likely to have mortgage, credit card, and auto loan debt than their older counterparts



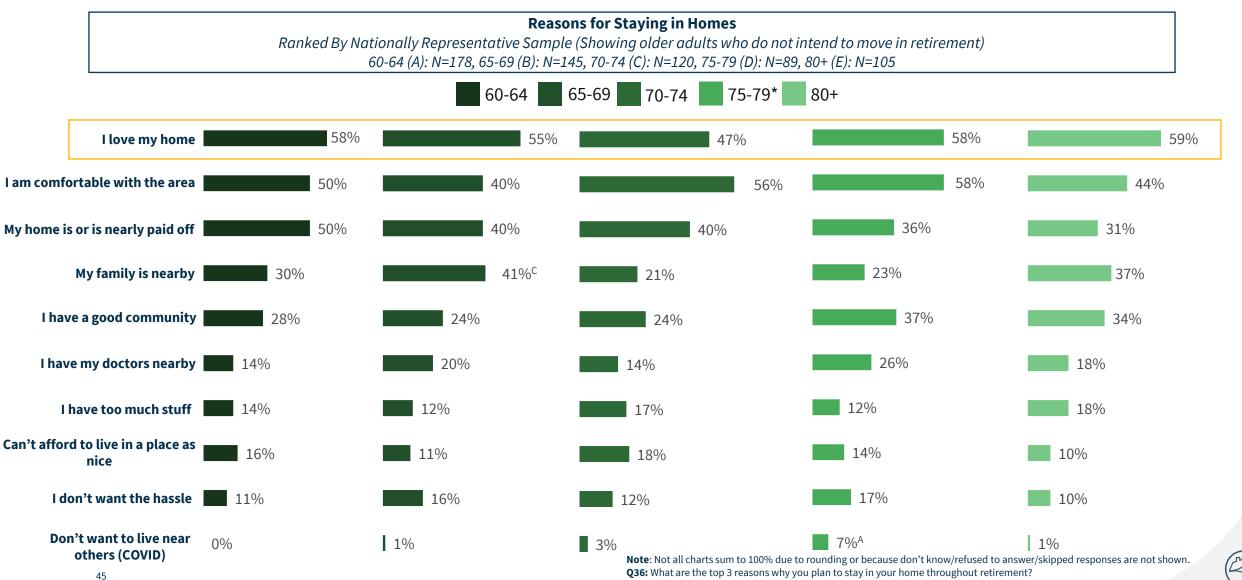


### Younger employed older adults are the most likely to say retirement accounts will be a main source of income





### Top reasons for staying in homes are relatively consistent across older adult age groups





### Older Adults Nearing Retirement: Housing Plans and Reasons

**New Housing** 

Arrangement

SOLD

Buy another

home (69%)

Sell

(43%)

(43%)

### **Time Until Plans to Sell** 1-5 years Yes/Maybe (31%) 6-10 years Never Sell (69%) **Nearing** retirement N=375

#### **Housing Plans and Reasons**

#### Location

- Closer to family/ friends (27%)
- Same area (19%)

### Single Family **Detached House**

(83%)

#### Type of Home **Move Motivators**

- Fit aging needs (55%)
- Extra cash for retirement (42%)
  - Lower maintenance costs (38%)
- Lower cost of living (38%)

\*Bold indicates MOST important

#### **Aging / Housing Situation**



Plan to live in current home

#### **Top Reasons to Not Sell**

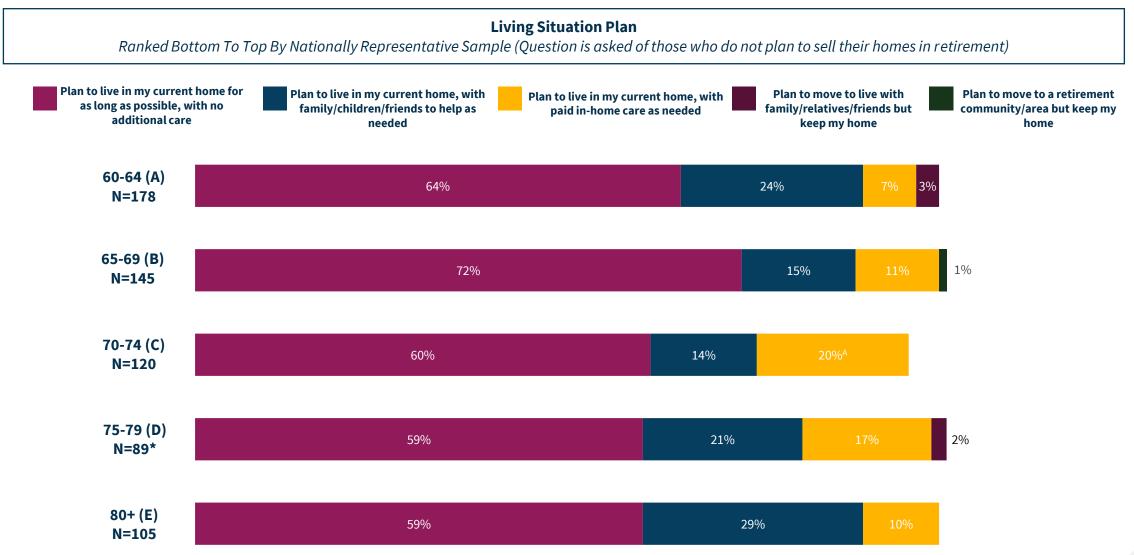
#1 Love current home (56%) #2 Comfortable w/ the area (51%) #3 Home is paid off (41%)







## Older Adults who are aged 70+ have a slightly greater acceptance of the potential need for in-home care

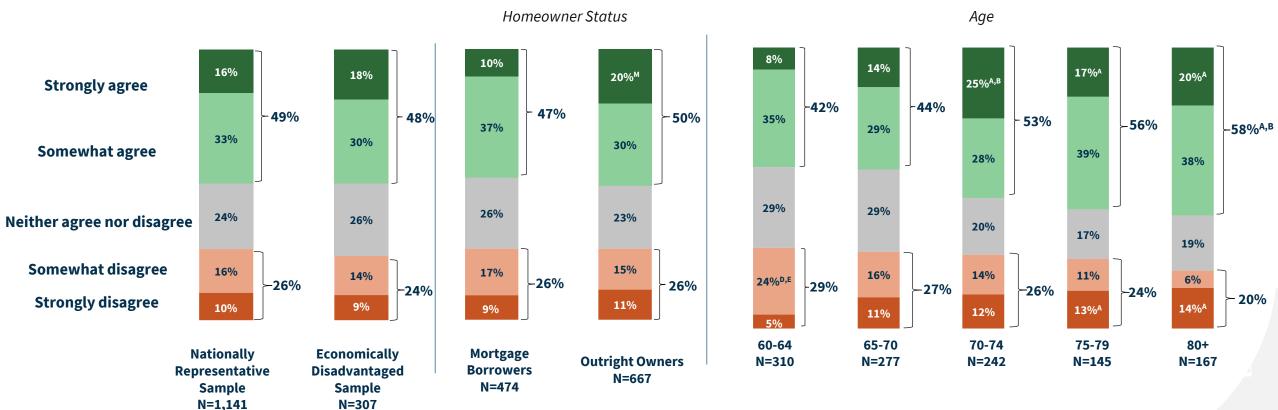




# Despite limited interest in leveraging their home equity, nearly half of all older adult homeowners view it as added security for unexpected future costs

#### My Home's Equity Is Security for Any Unexpected Emergency Costs When I Get Older

By Sample, Homeowner Status, and Age Breakouts by Homeowner Status and Age based on Nationally Representative Sample (N=1,141)

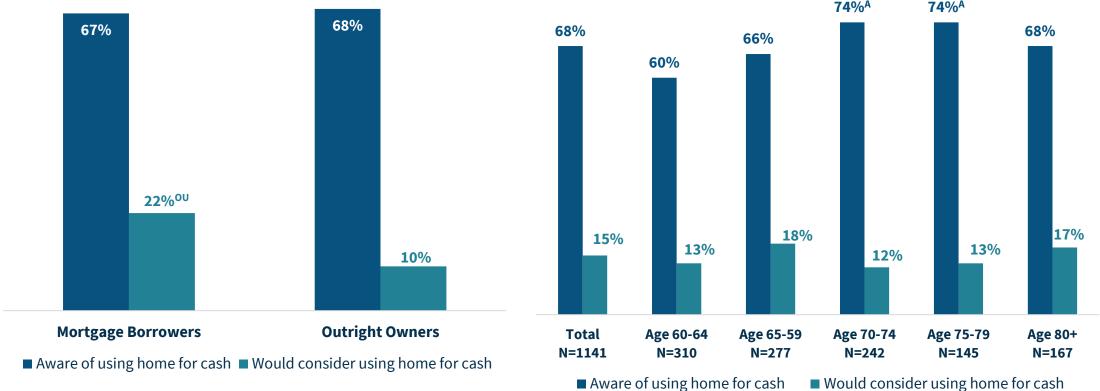




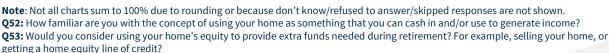
# Although they are equally aware that they can use their homes for cash, Mortgage Borrowers are more likely than Outright owners to consider doing so

#### Awareness and Interest in Using Home's Equity for Additional Funds

Mortgage Borrowers N=474, Outright Owners N=667 Breakouts by Age based on Nationally Representative Sample (N=1,141)





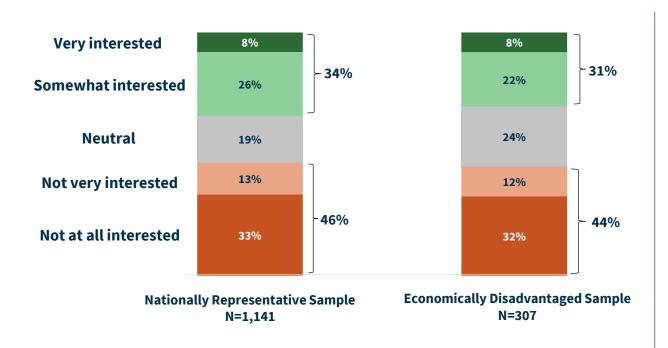




# Nearly half of current mortgage borrowers are interested in older adult rate products that offer better interest rates for older adults/retirees

Interest in "Older Adult Rate" – a product with a better interest rate (below market rate) designed specifically for older adults/retirees

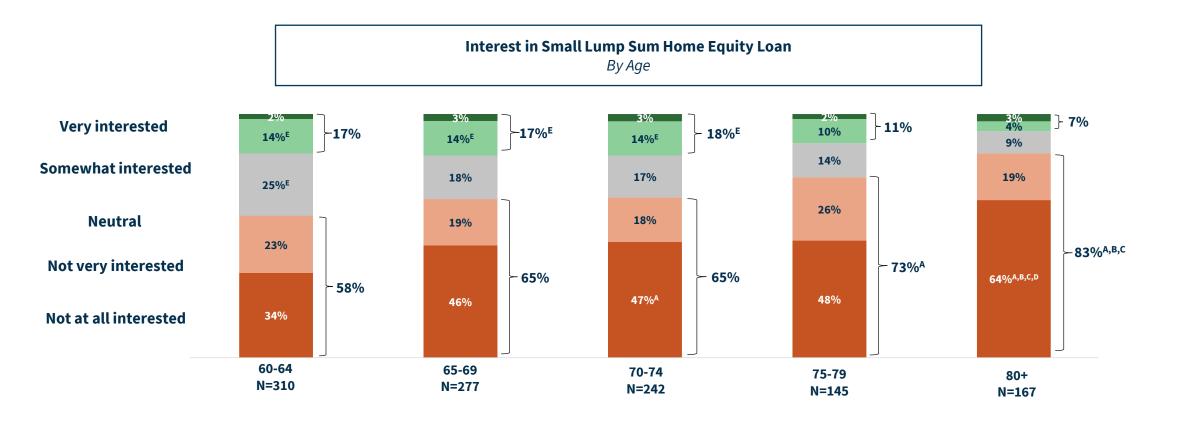
By Sample and Homeownership Status
Breakouts by Homeowner Status based on Nationally Representative Sample (N=1,141)





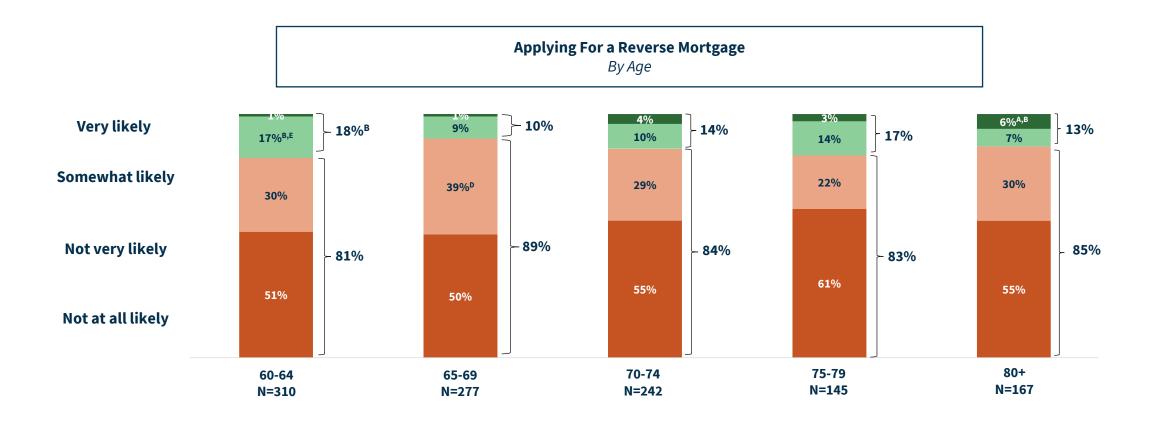


## Younger older adults are more open to a small lump sum home equity loan than those in older age ranges





## Younger older adults are the most likely age group to be interested in a reverse mortgage

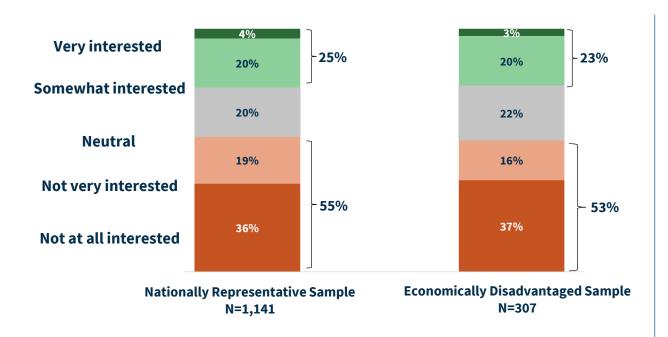


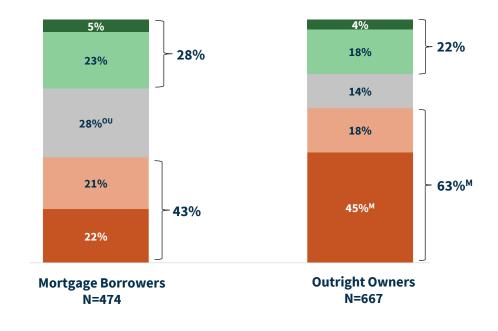


# Mortgage Borrowers are more open to the idea of a home improvement loan than Outright Owners

#### Interest in Home Equity Loan for Home Improvements/Renovations

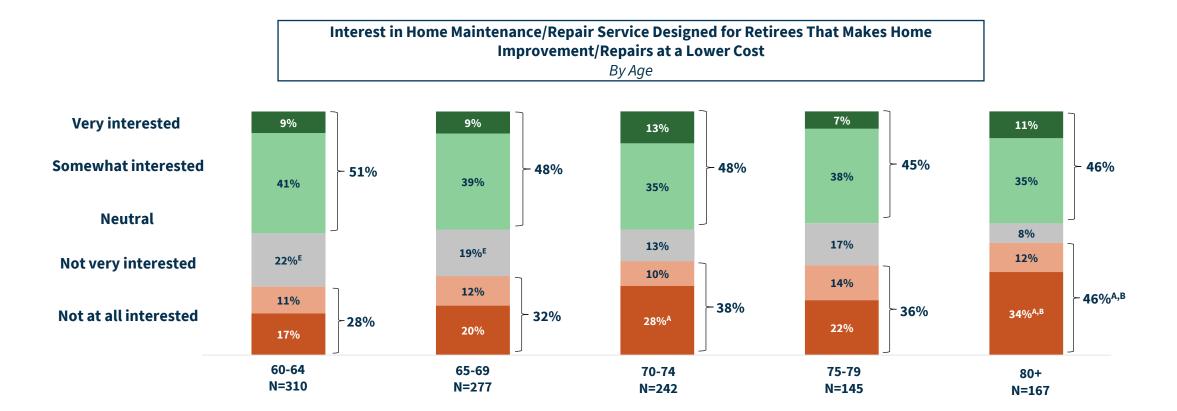
By Sample and Homeownership Status
Breakouts by Homeowner Status based on Nationally Representative Sample (N=1,141)







### And interest in maintenance services is high regardless of age

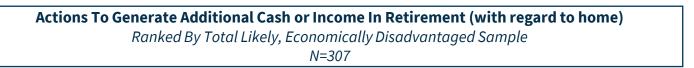


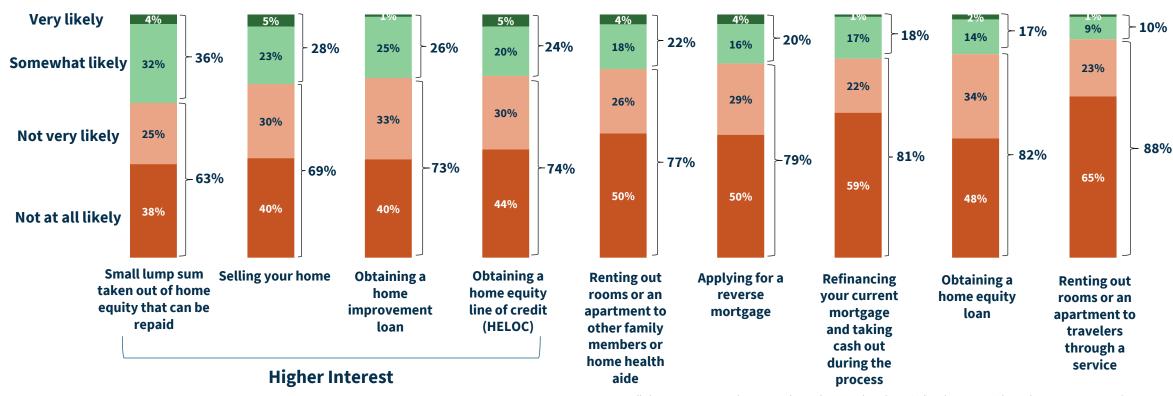


A,B,C,D,E=Significantly Higher vs. other audience at 95% C.L.

# Similar to the nationally representative sample, economically disadvantaged older adults would be more likely to take out a lump sum of home equity or sell their home to generate income

Renting out rooms or obtaining a home equity loan has much lower interest.



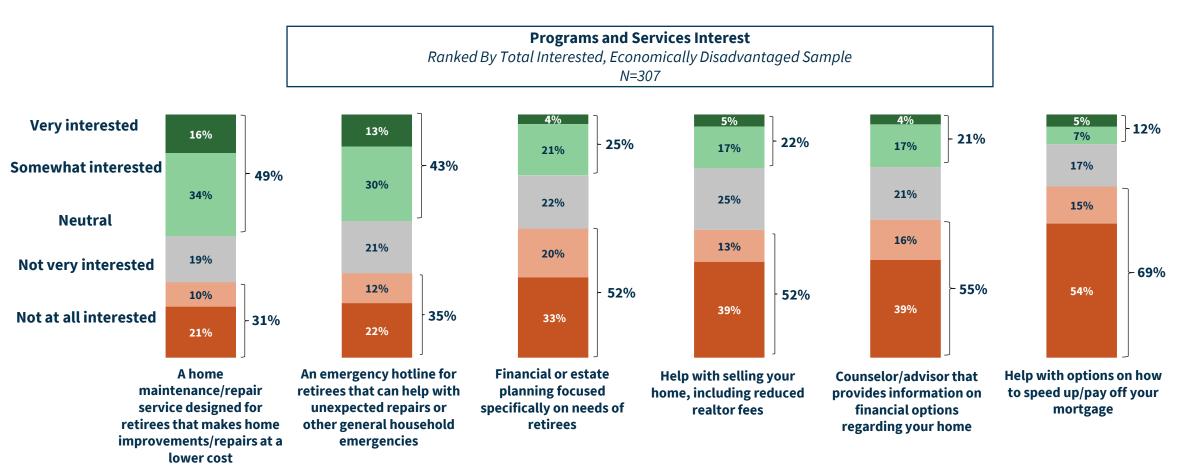


**Note**: Not all charts sum to 100% due to rounding or because don't know/refused to answer/skipped responses are not shown. **Q55:** Thinking about your home and the future, how likely would you be to take each of the following actions as a way to generate additional cash or income during retirement?



# Half of economically disadvantaged older adults are interested in a home maintenance program, the most of any program or product idea

An emergency hotline for unexpected repairs is also interesting to economically disadvantaged older adults.





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