

White Center Community Development Association

2016 Community Survey Report

White Center CDA
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Seattle, WA 98146

May 2016

WHITE CENTER
promise



White Center Community Development Association
605 SW 108th St, Seattle, WA 98146

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Summary

This report presents key findings from the 2016 Community Survey administered by the White Center Community Development Association. The survey asked about community strengths, community vision for the future, and community priorities by topic. A total of 590 adults and youth completed the survey in person and online in March and April 2016.

The White Center Community Development Association and its partner organizations will use information from the 2016 Community Survey to develop strategies, organize residents, and advocate for community priorities. Activities will be grouped into three strategic areas: family development, community building, and neighborhood revitalization.

For more information or to get involved, please contact:

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Methods

The White Center Community Development Association administered the 2016 Community Survey as a follow-up to the pilot 2015 Community Survey. The survey was shortened, and questions were improved with input from community, nonprofit, and government stakeholders. A pilot 2016 Youth Survey was also developed for middle and high school students.

The 2016 Community Survey was available from March 7 through April 17, 2016. The survey was available both online and in person for adults who live or work in White Center. Five pre-scheduled in person survey sessions were advertised on electronic and paper flyers posted in the neighborhood in English and Spanish. Staff from the White Center Community Development Association and its partner organizations recruited respondents from diverse backgrounds and provided language interpretation when necessary. Outreach strategies were tailored to capture a survey sample that approximates the demographics of the neighborhood.

The pilot 2016 Youth Survey was available during the same time frame, in person for middle and high school students who live, go to school, or attend after school programs in White Center.

Incentives were provided in the form of Safeway gift cards. Adults who completed the 2016 Community Survey received \$10, and youth who completed the 2016 Youth Survey received \$5. Gift cards were mailed to those who completed the 2016 Community Survey online.

At the end of the survey, respondents had the option to provide their contact information and language preferences so they could be informed of the survey results.

Respondent Demographics

A total of 590 people took the surveys: 432 adults completed the 2016 Community Survey, and 158 middle and high school students completed the 2016 Youth Survey.

Community Connection:

- 79% of adults reported they live in White Center, 29% reported they work in White Center, and 98% reported they shop, eat, or play in White Center.
- 84% of youth reported they go to a public neighborhood school in White Center (Mount View Elementary, White Center Heights Elementary, Cascade Middle School, or the Evergreen High School Campus).

Racial and Ethnic Diversity:

- 52% of adults and 59% of youth reported that they speak a language other than English at home.
- 66% of adults and 91% of youth reported that they identify as people of color or mixed race.

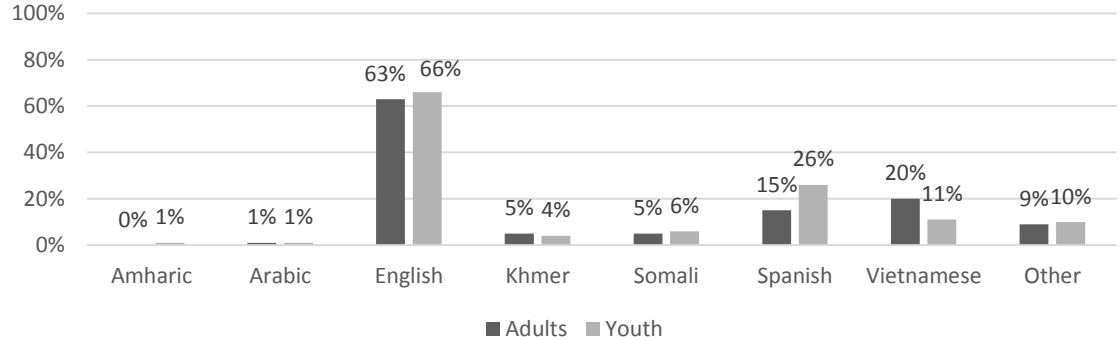


Figure 1. Percent of respondents who reported speaking each language at home. Totals for this “Check all that apply” question may exceed 100%.

Respondent Demographics

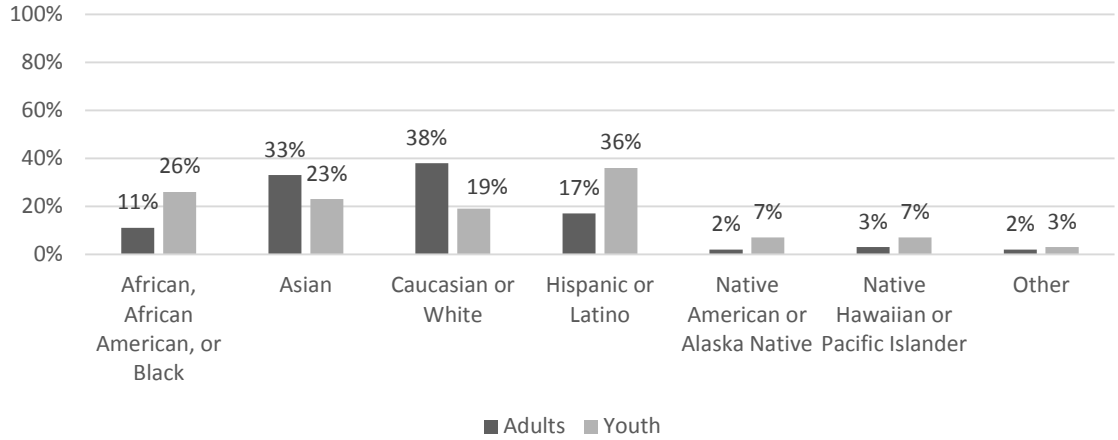


Figure 2. Percent of respondents who identified with each race. Totals for this “Check all that apply” question may exceed 100%.

Age and Life Stage:

- 9% of youth reported they were in grades 6-8, and 91% reported they were in grades 9-12.
- 80% of adults reported they were age 18-59, and 20% reported they were age 60 or older.
- 38% of adults reported they were a parent or guardian for one or more children age 0-18.

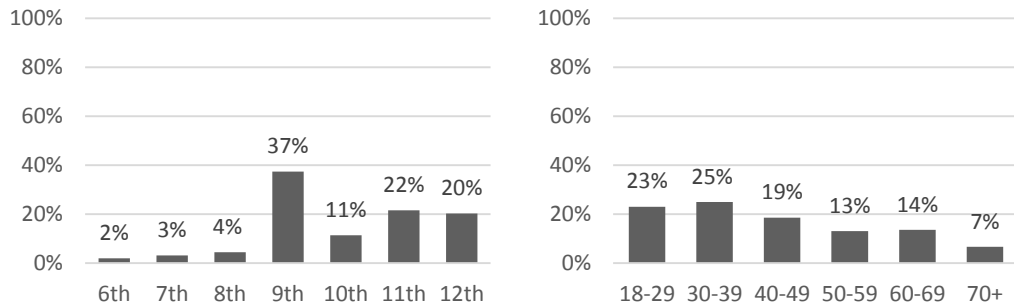


Figure 3. Percent of youth respondents in each grade (left), and percent of adult respondents in each age group (right).

Key Findings

Community Strengths

- 53% of adults and 46% of youth reported they were “Satisfied” or “Very satisfied” with White Center as a community.
- Adults and youth were asked the open-ended question, “What do you like about White Center as it is now?” Top themes from adult and youth responses are ranked by prevalence in Tables 1 and 2.

*Table 1. Top White Center assets identified by **adults**.*

Rank	Theme	Selected Quotes
1	Diversity	“The vibrancy of immigrants” “Lots of different kinds of people to learn from”
2	Businesses and restaurants	“Small business” “Little stores are fun and interesting” “We love the diversity of the restaurants and shops”
3	Services and amenities	“Close to downtown” “Access to business, services, and transportation options”
4	Community connectedness	“Small community feel” “The sense of loyalty and community”
5	Built environment	“New homes/project really makes the neighborhood look safe and maintained as for safety & health”

*Table 2. Top White Center assets identified by **youth**.*

Rank	Theme	Selected Quotes
1	Community connectedness	“I like that White Center has people who really care” “Everyone is family”
2	Services and amenities	“All the different community centers and stuff” “The Boys & Girls Club”
3	Diversity	“The diversity – everything and everyone is so colorful”
4	Built environment	“It’s getting better, turning cleaner” “Has a good park”
5	Safety and security	“There isn’t as much crime as it’s known for” “Not a super unsafe environment”

Key Findings

Community Vision

- Adults and youth were asked, “What should community organizations focus on to improve White Center?” Top three adult priorities were safety, housing, and the economy. Top three youth priorities were safety, health, and housing.
- Youth were asked the open-ended question, “What would make White Center a better place for kids and teenagers?” Adults were asked, “What is your vision for the future of White Center?” Top themes from adult and youth responses are ranked by prevalence in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Adult vision for the future of White Center.

Rank	Theme	Selected Quotes
1	Safety and security	“Safe environment for families” “Not being afraid to walk alone”
2	Economic development	“Thriving business core” “An invigorating town center on 16 th Ave S” “Bernie & Boys lot is in good use”
3	Diversity	“The epicenter of change & inclusion” “Empowered leaders of color, immigrant, and refugees”
4	Community connectedness	“Neighborhood interaction, friendships, and strong families”
5	Built environment	“Safer and cleaner environments” “Bike lanes, sidewalks, and street lamps”

Key Findings

Community Vision (Continued)

Table 4. **Youth** vision for the future of White Center.

Rank	Theme	Selected Quotes
1	Safety and security	“Safer to get from place to place” “No more gangs” “No guns”
2	Support for youth	“More learning opportunities” “Give health care to all students/need” “More interactive activities for youth”
3	Built environment	“More basketball court” “More playground fields” “Make it cleaner”
4	Community connectedness	“More volunteer in this area” “Community center”
5	Drugs and alcohol	“Not having as many drug dealers” “More drug prevention”

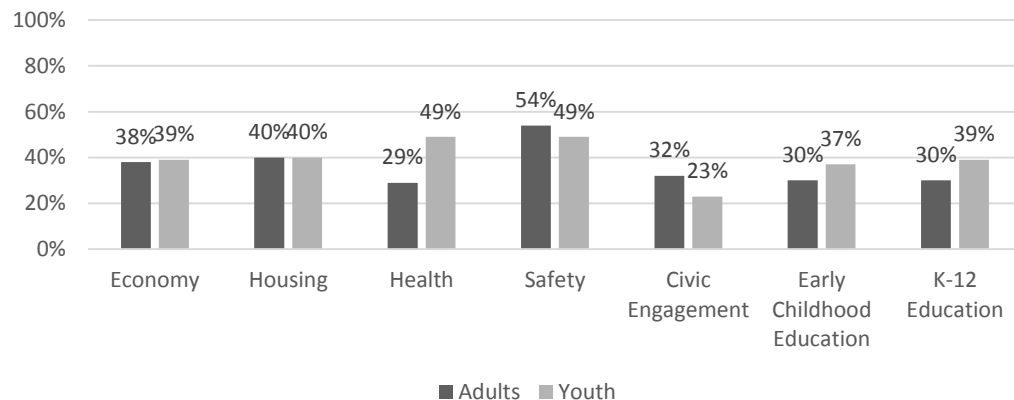


Figure 4. Topics that adults and youth think community organizations should focus on to improve White Center, with percent who indicated each priority. Totals for this “Check all that apply” question may exceed 100%.

Community Priorities by Topic

Economy

Overview of Community Priorities

Community members identified the following priorities for improving the economy in White Center:

- Create more and higher paying jobs
- Support small businesses
- Make public spaces more welcoming

More and Higher Paying Jobs

- The top two challenges adults reported regarding the White Center economy were “Not enough jobs” (35%), and “Jobs don’t pay well” (31%).
- 61% of adults reported that they have a job. Of adults that have a job, 28% reported that their annual household income is under \$30,000.
- Overall, the top two challenges to finding a job reported by adults were “Lack of job openings” (19%), and “Need more education or training” (19%).
- The top two challenges to finding a job reported by parents with children age 0-18 were “Child care” (35%), and “Hours don’t fit with family needs” (25%).
- Adults were asked what skills they would want to use in a job, if such a job was available. Top skills reported were: “Cooking” (22%), “Computers/technology” (21%), and “Taking care of children” (19%).
- Adult suggestions for creating more and higher paying jobs included: “Higher minimum wage,” and “Better pay and benefits.”

Small Businesses

- The third and fourth most prevalent challenges adults reported regarding the White Center economy were “Too hard to keep a small business running” (21%), and “Too hard to start a new small business” (14%).
- Of adults that reported having a job, 10% reported they work for “My own business/self-employed.”
- 12% of adults reported that they have “Sales or business” skills that they would want to use in a job, if such a job was available.
- Adult suggestions for supporting small businesses included: “A group organized to get all businesses working together (all ethnicities),” and “Financial assistance for small business owners.”

Community Priorities by Topic

Economy (Continued)

Public Spaces

- Approximately 15% of adults wrote in suggestions relating to improving the feeling of safety and security, and making the physical environment more clean and inviting.
- One adult wrote, “Many businesses are walking distance from our house, but we are frightened to walk around White Center anytime after dusk.”
- Adult suggestions for improving public spaces included: “Better security, police enforcement,” “Improve the physical condition of the retail core,” and “Sidewalks, actual working street lights.”

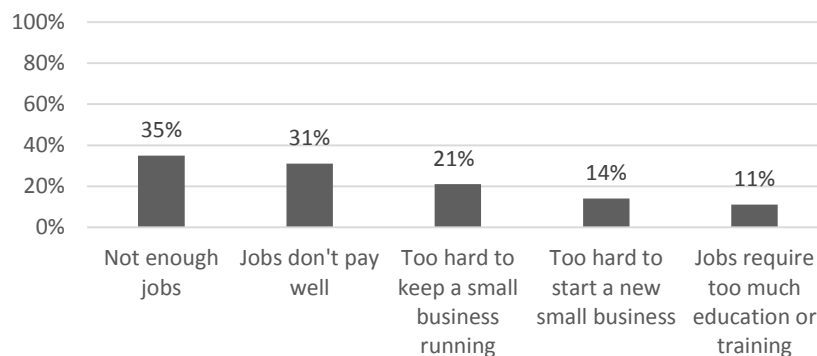


Figure 5. Top 5 challenges to the economy in White Center, with percent of adults who agreed. Totals for this “Check all that apply” question may exceed 100%.

Community Priorities by Topic

Housing

Overview of Community Priorities

Community members identified the following priorities for improving housing in White Center:

- Reduce housing costs
- Support people experiencing homelessness
- Improve housing quality

Cost of Housing

- The number one challenge adults reported regarding housing in White Center was “Cost of rent or mortgage” (38%).
- Of those who reported having a child age 0-18, 52% reported that “Cost of rent or mortgage” is a top challenge, compared to 33% of those without children.
- 8% of adults reported that “Eviction or foreclosure” was a top challenge in the neighborhood.
- Adult suggestions for reducing the cost of housing included: “Some type of rent control where there is a limit placed on how much a landlord can hike up the rent,” and “Vouchers or funding that can maintain diversity in the face of eventual gentrification.”

Supporting the Homeless

- The number two challenge adults reported regarding housing in White Center was “Homelessness” (20%).
- Adult suggestions for addressing homelessness included: “Social services for homeless and drug addicted,” and “Solutions for homelessness in certain areas.”

Community Priorities by Topic

Housing (Continued)

Housing Quality

- The third most prevalent challenge adults reported regarding housing in White Center was “Cost of home repair” (17%).
- 40% of adults reported their home needs repairs for at least one of twelve conditions listed. Most prevalent conditions were “Carpet needs replacement” (16%), “Mold or bad ventilation/air flow” (13%), “Broken locks, doors, or windows” (10%), and “Peeling paint or broken plaster” (10%).
- Adult suggestions for improving housing quality included: “Community group help in yard/home maintenance,” “More attention to building & compliance codes,” and “Maybe start a small-funds grant program to help folks maintain their homes/properties and/or attract additional development for affordable housing.”

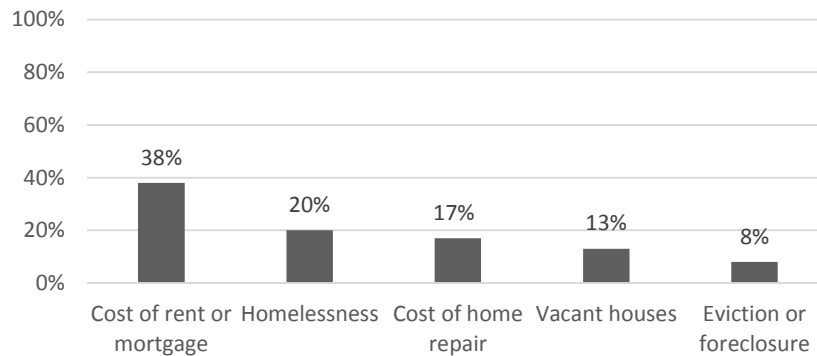


Figure 6. Top 5 challenges to housing in White Center, with percent of adults who agreed. Totals for this “Check all that apply” question may exceed 100%.

Community Priorities by Topic

Health

Overview of Community Priorities

Community members identified the following priorities for improving health in White Center:

- Reduce drug and alcohol use
- Make healthy food more affordable
- Reduce cigarette and tobacco use

Drugs and Alcohol

- The number one challenge adults reported regarding health in White Center was “Alcohol or drug abuse” (49%).
- 9% of youth surveyed admitting to using alcohol in the past 30 days, and 11% admitted to using marijuana.
- Adult suggestions for reducing the prevalence of drugs and alcohol included: “Mental health and substance abuse services,” “A stop of all the drug lords but to find a newer solution vs just arresting people,” and “To close marijuana stores.”
- Youth suggestions for reducing the prevalence of drugs and alcohol included: “Less people publicly drinking or smoking.”

Healthy Food

- The number two challenge adults reported regarding health in White Center was “Cost of healthy food” (29%).
- 22% of adults reported there are “Not enough places that sell healthy food,” and 16% reported that “Hunger or food insecurity” is a top challenge in the neighborhood.
- 40% of adults reported that they ate fresh fruits or vegetables every day in the past 7 days. Of people who identified as people of color or mixed race, 36% reported they ate fresh produce every day, compared to 45% of people who identified as white only.
- Adult suggestions for making healthy food more accessible included: “Farmers’ market quality foods at affordable/accessible prices,” “Open one healthy food store in Greenbridge,” and “Businesses that have organic fruits and vegetables.”
- Youth suggestions for making healthy food more accessible included: “Better school lunches,” “A community garden,” and “Offer fruit & vegetables to kids who can’t afford school lunches.”

Community Priorities by Topic

Health (Continued)

Cigarettes and Tobacco

- The third most prevalent challenge adults reported regarding health in White Center was “Cigarette or tobacco use” (25%).
- 10% of adults and 2% of youth admitted to using cigarettes or tobacco in the past 7 days.
- 2% of adults and 3% of youth admitted to vaping or using e-cigarettes in the past 7 days.
- Adult suggestions for reducing cigarette and tobacco use included: “Cut down on smoke shops and bars,” and “Less smoking by creating more non-smoking areas.”
- Youth suggestions for reducing cigarette and tobacco use included: “Making smoking seem less cool.”

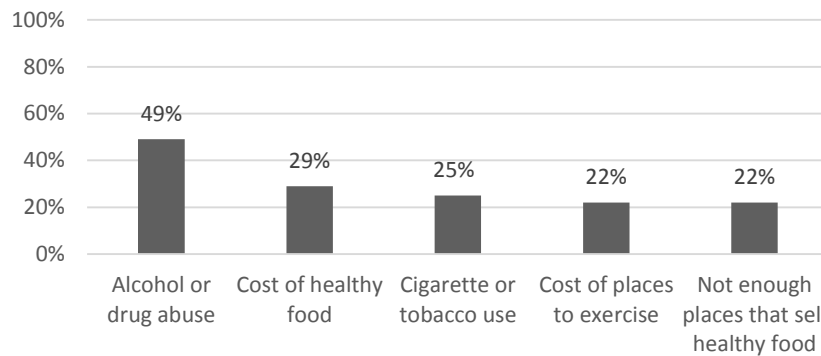


Figure 7. Top 5 challenges to health in White Center, with percent of adults who agreed. Totals for this “Check all that apply” question may exceed 100%.

Community Priorities by Topic

Safety

Overview of Community Priorities

Community members identified the following priorities for improving safety in White Center:

- Reduce drug activity
- Reduce crime and violence
- Make public spaces more welcoming

Drug Activity

- The number one challenge adults reported regarding safety in White Center was “Drug activity” (64%).
- Adult suggestions for reducing drug activity included: “More resources for homeless and addicts,” “More security and control with the drug sale in the bus stop,” “Stronger internal family support, gang culture alternatives, safe drug use sites, decriminalizing minor drug use, infrastructure for individual empowerment,” and “Please close the marijuana stores.”

Crime and Violence

- The number two challenge adults reported regarding safety in White Center was “Burglary and robbery” (50%).
- 33% of adults reported “Violent crime” is a top challenge, 33% of adults reported “Gangs” are a top challenge, and 18% of adults reported “Domestic violence” is a top challenge to safety in White Center.
- 25% of adults reported they called the police to report a crime in White Center in the past 12 months. Of those who reported a crime, 46% reported they were “Satisfied” or “Very satisfied” with the police response.”
- 74% of adults agreed their home is safe, 51% agreed local schools are safe, and 44% agreed businesses in White Center are safe.
- 69% of youth agreed or strongly agreed that their school is safe, and 73% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel safe traveling to school.
- Adult suggestions for reducing crime and violence included: “Need more police at night,” “Lower waiting time when we call the police,” “Community efforts to encourage safety through unifying the people of White Center,” and “Educating law enforcement or hiring law enforcement that can connect or relate to the community.”

Community Priorities by Topic

Safety (Continued)

Public Spaces

- The third most prevalent challenge adults reported regarding safety in White Center was “Litter, trash, or dumping” (39%).
- 27% of adults reported there is “Not enough street lighting,” 25% reported that “Abandoned or vacant buildings” are a top challenge, and 15% reported that “Poorly maintained parks or playgrounds” are a top challenge.
- 69% of adults agreed that during the day it is safe to walk around White Center, and 16% agreed that at night it is safe to walk around White Center.
- Adult suggestions for improving public spaces included: “Better lighting in parks and businesses,” “Better lighting on back streets at night,” “More cleanup/maintenance of public spaces,” and “Safe walking conditions such as sidewalks and bike lanes.”

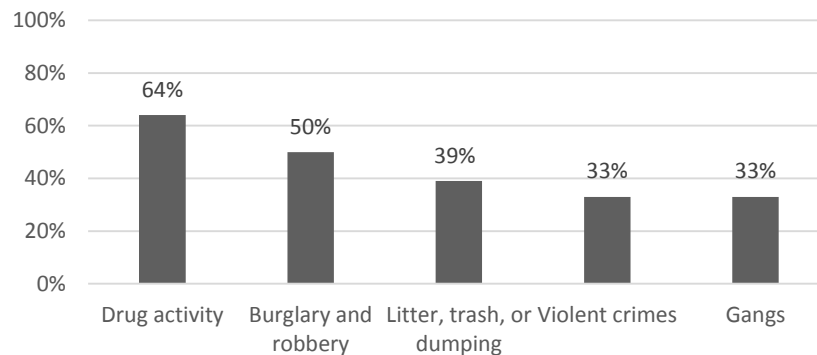


Figure 8. Top 5 challenges to safety in White Center, with percent of adults who agreed. Totals for this “Check all that apply” question may exceed 100%.

Community Priorities by Topic

Civic Engagement

Overview of Community Priorities

Community members identified the following priorities for improving civic engagement in White Center:

- Bridge across cultural barriers
- Organize more community events
- Outreach more about civic issues

Bridging Across Cultures

- The number one and number three challenges adults reported regarding civic engagement in White Center were “Language barriers limit civic engagement” (41%) and “People from different cultures don’t know each other” (39%).
- 68% of adults reported they interact with someone of a different race at least once a day.
- 91% of adults reported they view the many different races and cultures of White Center as a strength.
- Adult suggestions for building bridges across cultures included “Community gatherings, maybe focusing on different cultures to help educate people,” “Provide translators for events,” “Providing informational fliers for activities in multiple languages,” and “Active encouragement and reaching out to support those who may have language barriers.”

Community Events

- The second most prevalent challenge adults reported regarding civic engagement in White Center was “Neighbors don’t know each other” (40%).
- 32% of adults reported they participated in a community event in White Center in the past 12 months. 24% of adults born outside the U.S. reported they participated in a community event, compared to 40% of those born in the U.S.
- Adult suggestions for improving community events included: “A farmers’ market, a carnival, community projects that the community can get involved in,” “Community events to voice concerns,” and “Small events. A few blocks at a time. Roving dinners.”

Community Priorities by Topic

Civic Engagement (Continued)

Outreach about Civic Issues

- Approximately 10% of adults wrote in suggestions relating to communication and outreach.
- 24% of adults reported they are not registered to vote. Of those not registered, 18% reported they “Don’t’ know how to register.”
- 37% of adults and 62% of youth reported they know “Nothing” about possible White Center annexation.
- 72% of adults and 55% of youth reported they usually use email to communicate or access information. 58% of adults and 63% of youth reported they use Facebook. 49% of adults and 72% of youth reported they usually use texting. 55% of adults and 65% of youth reported they usually use phone calls.
- Adult suggestions for improving outreach about civic issues included: “Advertised community events,” and “Appealing more to the younger generation through social media and engaging activities.”

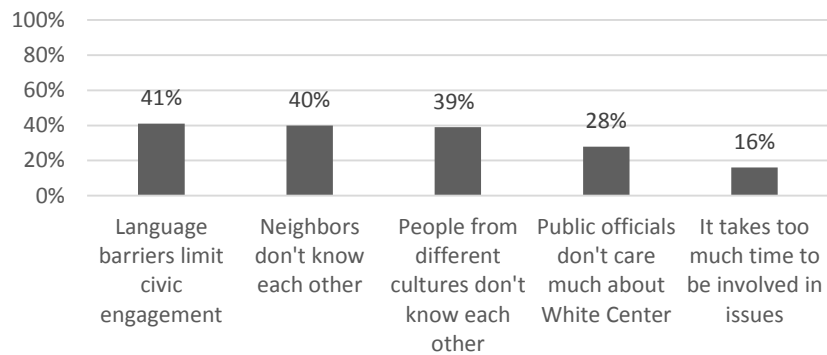


Figure 9. Top 5 challenges to civic engagement in White Center, with percent of adults who agreed. Totals for this “Check all that apply” question may exceed 100%.

Community Priorities by Topic

Early Childhood Education

Overview of Community Priorities

Parents of young children identified the following priorities for improving early childhood education in White Center:

- Make child care more affordable
- Improve quality of early learning opportunities
- Outreach more about child care options

Cost of Child Care

- The number one challenge parents of young children reported regarding early childhood education in White Center was “Child care is too expensive” (54%).
- 50% of parents of young children reported that someone besides a parent or guardian takes care of the child at least 10 hours per week. Of those using a caregiver, 58% reported a relative takes care of the child and 42% reported a formal child care center takes care of the child.
- Suggestions from parents of young children for reducing cost of child care included: “Make it affordable for parents to put multiple kids in child care,” “More spots for children,” “Preschool should be part of public education,” “Access without DSHS,” and “Something that provides a bridge for families who are barely ineligible for subsidy, and can’t afford private pay.”

Quality of Early Learning

- The number two challenge parents of young children reported regarding early childhood education in White Center was “Child care is low quality” (25%).
- Of those parents who reported that someone besides a parent or guardian takes care of the child at least 10 hours per week, 26% reported that 6 or more children are usually cared for together, in the same group at the same time.
- Suggestions from parents of young children for improving quality of early learning included: “Having more educated people in child education,” “More play & learns in different languages,” and “There needs to be a stronger push for literacy and school planning.”

Community Priorities by Topic

Early Childhood Education (Continued)

Outreach about Child Care Options

- The third most prevalent challenge parents of young children reported regarding early childhood education in White Center was that it is “Too hard to find out what child care options exist” (16%).
- Suggestions from parents of young children for improving outreach about services included: “Make it easy to research where to find affordable child care,” and “More options for parents to provide child care while keeping their own child with them.”

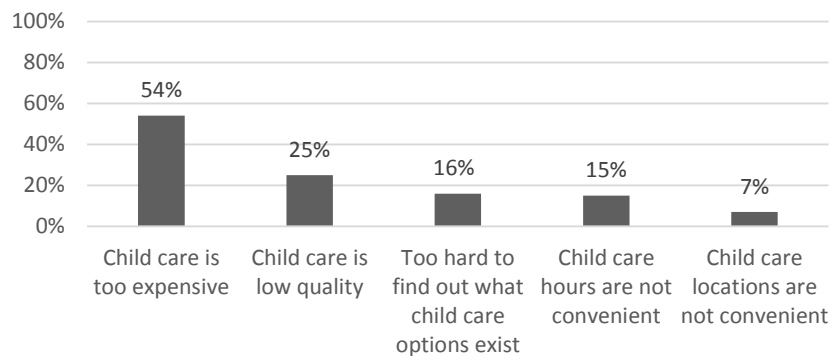


Figure 10. Top 5 challenges to early childhood education in White Center, with percent of parents of young children who agreed. Totals for this “Check all that apply” question may exceed 100%.

Community Priorities by Topic

K-12 Education

Overview of Community Priorities

Parents of school-age children, and youth in grades 6-12 identified the following priorities for improving K-12 education in White Center:

- Set high standards for students
- Support students outside the classroom
- Engage parents in the schools

Student Standards

- The number one challenge parents of school-age children reported regarding K-12 education in White Center was “Standards for students are too low” (28%).
- 58% of parents of school-age children reported they talk to their child about applying to college “Sometimes” or “Often,” and 63% reported they talk about jobs the child might apply for after high school “Sometimes” or “Often.”
- Suggestions from parents of school-age children for raising student standards included: “More project-based learning, more internships,” and “Stop standardized testing.”

Out-of-School Support for Students

- The number two challenge parents of school-age children reported regarding K-12 education in White Center was “Students miss too much school” (22%).
- 29% of parents of school-age children reported their child missed over a week of school this year. Of those whose child missed more than a week of school, 47% missed school due to “Illness,” 19% were “Traveling out of the area,” and 17% were “Not interested in going to school.”
- 28% of youth reported that to graduate from high school they will have to overcome “Not enough money,” 23% report they will “Have to work (a job outside of school,” and 20% report that “Family commitments” will be a barrier to graduating.
- Suggestions from parents of school-age children for increasing support for students included: “More teachers with after school hours,” and “More after school programs or activity.”
- Suggestions from youth for increasing support for students included: “More motivation and support,” and “More library and high school community center.”

Community Priorities by Topic

K-12 Education (Continued)

Parent Engagement

- The third and fourth most prevalent challenges parents of school-age children reported regarding K-12 education were “Teachers are not responsive to families” (15%), and “School administrators are not responsive to families” (15%).
- 72% of parents of school-age children agreed that “Teachers work closely with me to meet my child’s needs.”
- 56% of parents of school-age children agreed that “I have opportunities to influence what happens at the school.” Of parents who identified as people of color or mixed race, 50% agreed with this statement, compared to 66% of parents who identified as white only.
- Suggestions from parents of school-age children for increasing parent engagement included: “More diversity training to the staff in the schools,” “More interaction with children and with the teachers on the part of the parents,” and “A tight integration between schools and communities instead of schools as islands separated from the neighborhood by walls and regulations and fear.”

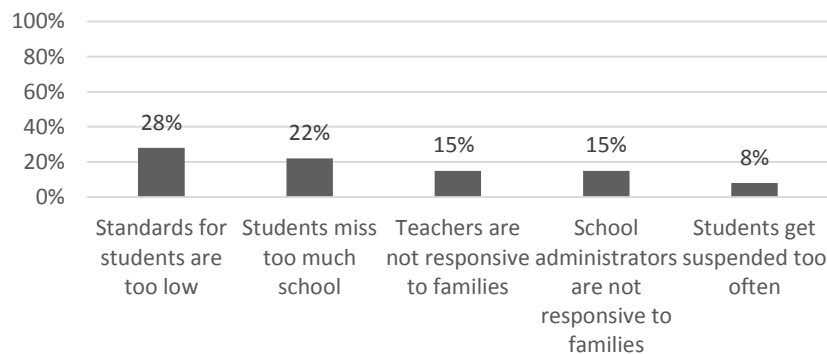


Figure 11. Top 5 challenges to K-12 education in White Center, with percent of parents of school-age children who agreed. Totals for this “Check all that apply” question may exceed 100%.

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