

Somerville Commission for Women

2013 Somerville Status of Women Report



Somerville Commission for Women

Project Management and Report Analysis

Sonja Darai (Director, Office of Somerville Commissions)

Report Authors

Sonja Darai (Director, Office of Somerville Commissions)

Valerie Berger (Graduate Student, Public Policy and Public Affairs, University of Massachusetts/Boston)

Heather MacIndoe (Assistant Professor, Public Policy and Public Affairs, University of Massachusetts/Boston)

City-wide Survey of Somerville Women

2005 Survey Designed and Implemented by

Maria Lucrecia Rodriguez (Intern, Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy, University of Massachusetts/Boston)

Lisa Allen Brown (Intern, The Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy, University of Massachusetts/Boston)

Lilly Motta (Intern, Sociology Department, Tufts University)

Sonja Darai (Executive Director, Somerville Commission for Women)

2012 Survey Re-designed and Implemented by

Valerie Berger (Graduate Student, Sociology and Public Affairs at the University of Massachusetts/Boston)

Sonja Darai, Director (Office of Somerville Commissions)

Heather MacIndoe (Assistant Professor, Public Affairs at the University of Massachusetts/Boston)

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Somerville Commission for Women

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Somerville Commission for Women

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Somerville is a vibrant place to live, work, play and raise a family. We perceive it with the hundreds of events in the City and we have survey results of Somerville women to show it.

Engagement in Somerville

The survey asked whether people volunteer in Somerville or out of the city. Overall, 63% of survey respondents said they volunteer with 44 percent volunteering in the City and 47% reporting that they volunteer out of Somerville. Additionally, 28% volunteered both in and out of the City and 37% did not volunteer at all. When asked why people could not volunteer, there were many answers but the largest response (38%) said they had no time while 30% of the responses said they were not aware of available activities, 30% had schedule conflicts, 29% had other work commitments, and 28% had family commitments. The survey allowed for multiple responses that fit the respondent's reasons for not participating.

The largest number of volunteering respondents gave time to nonprofit organizations (33%) and City meetings (27%). Additionally, 20% respondents said they voted, 13% volunteered with their religious center, and 7% volunteered specific to a culture.

The respondents reported that almost three-quarters used the City's website (72%) and half used the City's 311 Center.

Somerville Women's Priorities

The top three priorities women respondents listed in the city-wide survey in Somerville listing as "very important" were **Safer Pedestrian Access** (52%), **More Public Transportation** (49%), and **Child Care** (49%). When combining "very important" and "important," the top three priorities slightly change to **Safer Pedestrian Access** (79%), **More Public Transportation** (77%), and **Wellness Education** (such as nutrition) (74%).

By category, the top **Program and Services** "very important" priority is **Child Care** (49%). The highest **Education Issues** "very important" priority is **Wellness Education** (38%). The top **Policy Issues** "very important" priority is **Safer Pedestrian Access** (52%).

In conclusion, the Somerville Commission for Women survey found 63% of respondents volunteering, 72% using the web, and 50% utilizing the 311 Call Center. Of the respondents who were not volunteering, the largest reason listed was that they had no time. Half of the respondents had children in their home with the majority with children ten or under but eight percent who had adult kids at home. The survey also found that 77% work for pay. Respondents who were volunteering largely volunteered with either a nonprofit or the City of Somerville.

The top two priorities for Somerville women are Safer Pedestrian Access and More Public Transportation.

Somerville Commission for Women

Somerville Commission for Women (SCW) Mission

The Somerville Commission for Women was created in March 1988 by City ordinance. The SCW's mission is "to act as a centralizing force in the City of Somerville to ensure the equal status of women in educational, economic, political, health, legal, and social spheres... [and] to take any action considered appropriate by the SCW to ensure the equal status of women of every race, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, ability, age and sexual orientation." See <http://www.somervillema.gov/departments/health/somerville-commissions/women> for information on events and regular meetings.



Report Overview

The report is meant to be used as a tool by the Women's Commission, city agencies, and local community organizations to create the Commission's Action Agenda. The intention is for the Commission to look to the community for direction through surveys, data and survey reviews by other sources, hold and participate in community meetings, then work with community partners to affect change. The Women's Commission will present the report and discuss the findings in an open community process to assist the Commission to prioritize the needs identified from Somerville's women and create the Action Agenda.

Action Agenda

The SCW will partner with local specialists in the City of Somerville and local community service agencies to administer its Action Agenda. Additionally, the Commission will examine ways to best promote to the public existing resources and services to address high needs that match existing opportunities. The intention of Women's Commission activities and programs is to assist the city to allocate resources to women in an efficient and effective manner that reaches the needs of Somerville women and their families.

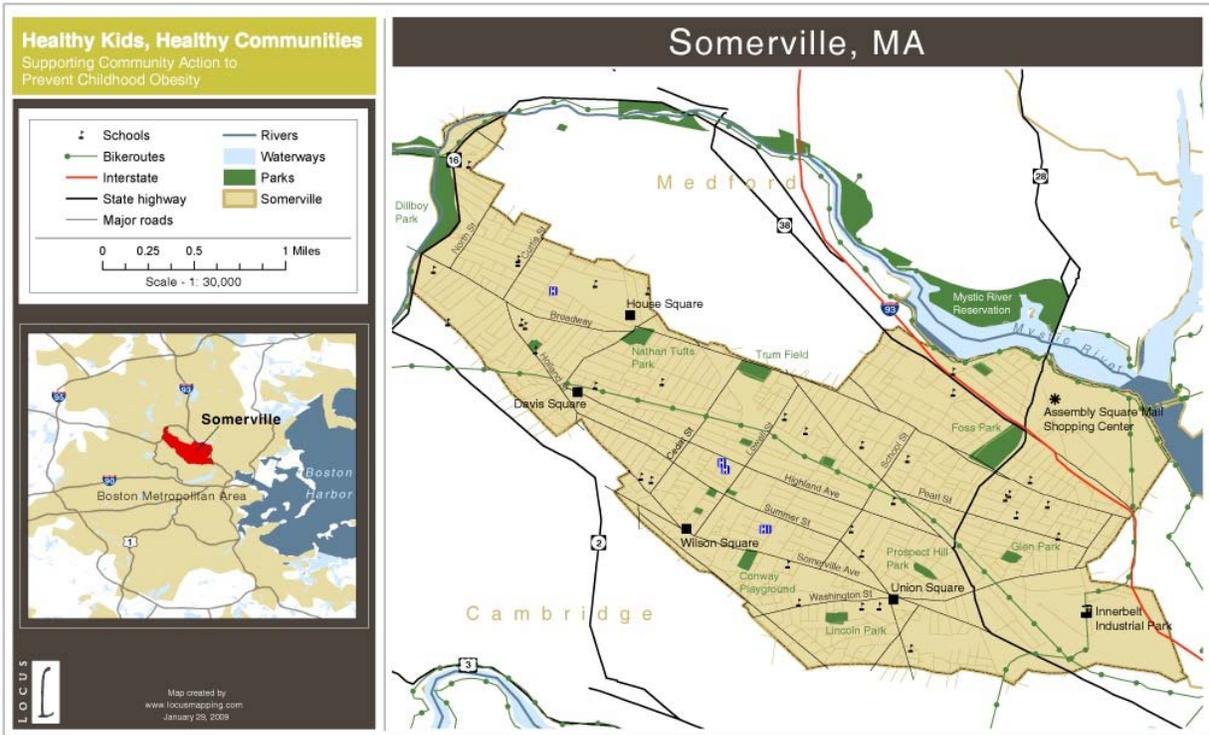


Somerville Status of Women

Somerville Demographics



Somerville Commission for Women



Map from: www.healthykidshealthycommunities.org/communities/somerville-ma

Zip codes: 02143, 02144, 02145.

Estimated median household income in 2009: \$69,471
(it was \$46,315 in 2000)

Somerville: \$69,471

Massachusetts: \$64,081

Estimated per capita income in 2009: \$32,112

Estimated median house or condo value in 2009: \$453,800
(it was \$262,000 in 2000)

Somerville: \$453,800

Massachusetts: \$338,500

Mean prices in 2009: All housing units: \$549,955; Detached houses: \$477,513; Townhouses or other attached units: \$412,026; In 2-unit structures: \$580,493; In 3-to-4-unit structures: \$635,268; In 5-or-more-unit structures: \$441,976

Median gross rent in 2009: \$1,307.

Data from:

www.city-data.com/city/Somerville-Massachusetts.html#ixzz27hLYIMep

Somerville Commission for Women

Population in 2010: 75,754. Population change since 2000: -2.2%

Males: 37,158 (49.1%)

Females: 38,596 (50.9%)

Median resident age: 31.4 years

Massachusetts median age: 42.8 years

For population 25 years and over in Somerville:

- High school or higher: 80.6%
- Bachelor's degree or higher: 40.6%
- Graduate or professional degree: 17.7%
- Unemployed: 3.5%

Mean travel time to work (commute): 27.8 minutes

Data and graphics from:

www.city-data.com/city/Somerville-Massachusetts.html#ixzz27hLYIMep



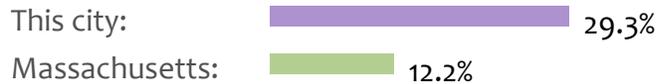
Well Foods Plus, (380 Somerville Ave, Somerville)
(Photo: Somerville Journal, 2011)

Somerville Commission for Women

For population 15 years and over in Somerville city:

- Never married: 51.6%
- Now married: 35.1%
- Separated: 1.7%
- Widowed: 5.5%
- Divorced: 6.1%

22,727 residents are foreign born
(13.3% Latin America, 8.8% Europe, 5.4% Asia).



Data and Graphics from:

www.city-data.com/city/Somerville-Massachusetts.html#ixzz27hLYIMep

Business QuickFacts	Somerville	Massachusetts
Total number of firms, 2007	6,015	596,790
Black-owned firms, percent, 2007	6.1%	3.4%
American Indian- and Alaska Native-owned firms, percent, 2007	S	0.4%
Asian-owned firms, percent, 2007	7.3%	4.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander-owned firms, percent, 2007	F	0.0%
Hispanic-owned firms, percent, 2007	8.3%	3.3%
Women-owned firms, percent, 2007	36.5%	29.8%

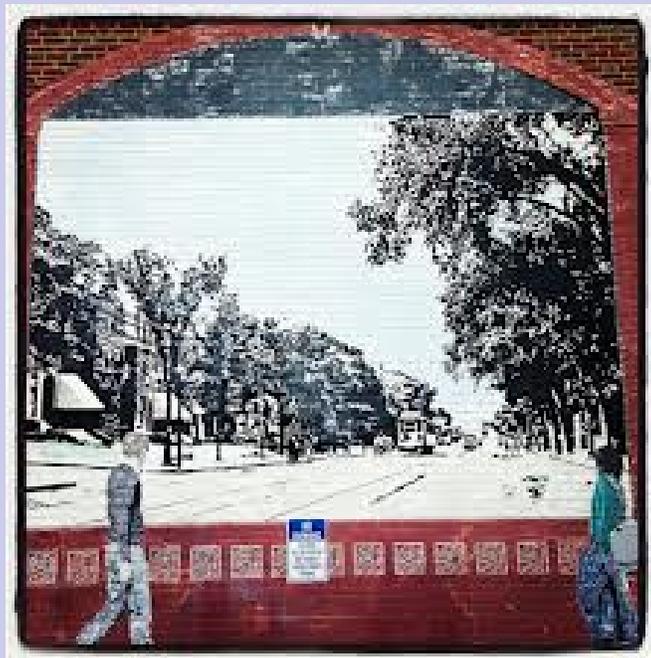
Graphic Chart from: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/25/2562535.html>



East Somerville Community School Mural by Kids
(Photo: Danielle Dreiling, Boston Globe)

Somerville Status of Women

Somerville Socioeconomics



Somerville Commission for Women

The Massachusetts Household Expense Budget provides exact figures for the cost of basic needs and income for each city, town, and village in the state. The purpose of the tool is to give families information to create a pathway to economic independence as well as inform policy makers and researchers. The Crittenton Women’s Union produced the Massachusetts Economic Independence Index 2013 report along with accompanying data on its website that provides detailed budgets for all types of family configurations from an individual adult up to two adults with five children with multiple age levels in between.

The 2010 figures of the MA Household Expense Budget for Middlesex County provides the latest data available for Somerville showing family needs by an hourly, monthly, and annual rate to meet their basic needs: housing, utilities, food, taxes, health care, child care, personal & household needs, transportation, and tax credits. When we think of our expenses summed up to show just how much folks need to make it, we might forget the realities of the costs we see individually and not believe the results. Also, many people may look at the charts on the next page and think they don’t pay that much for this or that. However, there are ways people get by to avoid some of the costs others may have to pay: grandparents watching children can save on child care, a multi-unit house with several related families can share a lot of resources, spouses who work opposite schedules so that child care costs are avoided. There are many folks—senior citizens, single parents—who may not have extended families to rely on, who live on fixed incomes, who lack mobility to get to large budget stores to save money.

The MA Economic Independence Index is based on minimum costs. Families living at the Standard level are not paying down debt or saving money. Expenses, such as food, are very minimal and does not include restaurant costs or extras. Transportation is kept to a bare minimum of costs for car, gasoline, maintenance, and insurance.

2013 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia

Persons in family/ household	Poverty guideline
1	\$11,490
2	15,510
3	19,530
4	23,550
5	27,570
6	31,590
7	35,610
8	39,630

The 2013 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia provides many government and non-governmental agencies use this chart to determine qualifying individuals and families for eligibility. The difference between the federal guidelines and the MA Economic Independence Index is the gap where many working families fall under sufficient resources to make most ends meet.

For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$4,020 for each additional person.

Source: *Federal Register*, Vol. 78, No. 16, January 24, 2013, pp. 5182-5183

Somerville Commission for Women

MA Economic Independence Index, 2010
Middlesex County

Monthly Costs	Adult	Adult + schoolage	Adult + schoolage + schoolage	2 Adults	2 Adults + schoolage	2 Adults + schoolage + schoolage
Housing	935	1,116	1,116	935	1,116	1,116
Utilities	182	217	217	182	217	217
Food	271	466	653	497	712	848
Transportation	166	189	189	327	353	353
Child Care	-	596	1,191	-	596	1,191
Personal & Household Needs	321	413	459	373	466	504
Health Care	175	300	438	346	483	518
Taxes	419	757	1,009	544	898	1,123
Tax Credits	-	(138)	(267)	-	(133)	(267)
Massachusetts Economic Independence Index Wage						
-Hourly	\$ 14.03	\$ 22.27	\$ 28.44	\$ 9.10	\$ 13.29	\$ 15.92
-Monthly	\$ 2,470.00	\$ 3,919.00	\$ 5,005.00	\$ 1,602.00	\$ 2,339.00	\$ 2,802.00
-Annual	\$ 29,635.00	\$ 47,026.00	\$ 60,061.00	\$ 38,450.00	\$ 56,125.00	\$ 67,251.00

Source: Crittenton Women's Union MA Household Expense Budget for Middlesex County (2010)
http://archive.liveworkthrive.org/docs/MassIndex_2010_complete_tables_030810.xls

In Somerville, a single adult needs to earn \$14.03 per hour (compared to our last report in 2005 of \$12.71) to meet their needs to be economically independent or an annual earning of \$29,635 (2005 annual amount was \$26,850). The expenses skyrocket when that single adult becomes responsible for a preschooler: \$22.27 per hour or an annual salary of \$47,026 (increased from \$23.75/hour and \$50,163 in 2005).

MA Economic Independence Index, 2010
Middlesex County

Monthly Costs	2 Adults	Adult + preschooler	Adult + infant + preschooler	Adult + infant + teenager	Adult + infant + preschooler + schoolage	2 Adults	2 Adults + infant + preschooler
Housing	935	1,116	1,116	1,116	1,335	935	1,116
Utilities	182	217	217	217	259	182	217
Food	271	396	512	608	686	497	714
Transportation	166	189	189	189	189	327	353
Child Care	-	1,160	2,243	1,083	2,838	-	2,243
Personal & Household Needs	321	399	426	448	527	373	473
Health Care	175	287	410	451	446	346	491
Taxes	419	930	1,327	953	1,816	544	1,454
Tax Credits	-	(133)	(267)	(217)	(350)	-	(267)
Massachusetts Economic Independence Index Wage							
-Hourly	\$ 14.03	\$ 25.92	\$ 35.07	\$ 27.55	\$ 44.01	\$ 9.10	\$ 19.30
-Monthly	\$ 2,470.00	\$ 4,561.00	\$ 6,173.00	\$ 4,849.00	\$ 7,745.00	\$ 1,602.00	\$ 3,397.00
-Annual	\$ 29,635.00	\$ 54,979.00	\$ 74,078.00	\$ 58,183.00	\$ 92,939.00	\$ 38,450.00	\$ 81,526.00

Source: Crittenton Women's Union MA Household Expense Budget for Middlesex County (2010)
http://archive.liveworkthrive.org/docs/MassIndex_2010_complete_tables_030810.xls

For a family of one parent with two children of different ages and expenses in Somerville, a single adult needs \$35.07 per hour or \$74,078 annually. A family with two incomes and two small children, each adult needs to earn \$19.30 per hour or a combined income annually of \$82,526.

Somerville Commission for Women

Somerville is a diverse community with about eighty percent of the population between 18 to 65 years (12% is younger than 20 years old; 9% is older than 65 years). The majority of the community is White/Non-Hispanic, yet we have 26% of the population who identify themselves as non-White in the last 2010 Census.

Financially, the community needs to have a minimum of \$29,635 (single adult) to meet their needs and be economically independent according to the MA Economic Independence Index (EII). For a family of four (two adults, two school-age children), the parents need to earn \$67,251 to meet their basic needs of housing, utilities, child care, food, transportation, health care, taxes, and household expenses. The 2013 Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for one person is \$11,490 and for four people is \$23,550.

The individuals and families who fall between the gap of the FPL and the EII need to make ends meet without qualifying for most government assistance. Seniors and single parents are most vulnerable to living below an independent economic level because they do not have another adult to share expenses. Knowing the MA Economic Independence Index, however, allows the community to come up with creative and supportive programs, support groups, and acknowledge that not every individual or family who is working is making ends meet. Individuals who can come together into groups can find support and begin to connect with their neighbors to find these creative ways to support each other and themselves.



Somerville Status of Women Survey Basics



Somerville Commission for Women

The Somerville Commission for Women (SCW) is glad to present the 2012 Somerville Status of Women Report.

Overview of the Needs Assessment Survey

The purpose of the project was to identify the priority needs of Somerville women by gathering survey data from a purposive sample of Somerville women. This year's survey had three foci: (1) to examine women's civic engagement, (2) to collect information about women's policy concerns and (3) to better understand women's view on education issues.



In the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, the Commission began discussing and planning a new needs assessment of Somerville women. Commissioner Heather MacIndoe, Ph.D. (Assistant Professor of Public Policy and Public Affairs, University of Massachusetts Boston) collaborated with Office of Somerville Commissions' Director Sonja Darai along with Master's candidate Valerie Berger (MSPA graduate, University of Massachusetts Boston) to lead this process.



The Commission reviewed the 2005 survey to determine the direction of inquiry in the 2012 survey. The survey team consulted with other Somerville researchers including Emmanuel Owusu (Housing Department of the City of Somerville) and Dennis Fischman (Community Action Agency of Somerville) to consider needed data and how to best collect. The survey team collaborated to revise the 2005 survey and plan the distribution and collection of the survey. Due to costs and timing concerns, we chose to pursue a purposive sampling frame, distributing the survey via the City website, local public libraries and nonprofit organizations, and to parents through the Somerville Public School system. Particular care was also made to conduct outreach to various ethnic communities in Somerville. Valerie Berger and Heather MacIndoe focused on revising the survey instrument and collecting the surveys. The entire team worked to find translators for the material. Sonja Darai distributed and

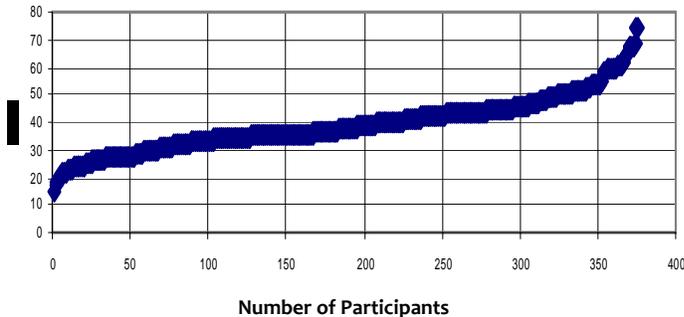
collected surveys from the schools. Valerie Burger prepared the online survey which was accessible on the City's website. Approximately 2,500 surveys in English, Portuguese, Haitian-Creole, and Spanish were distributed with significant assistance from each of the Somerville elementary public schools and Parent Information Center, CAAS, the Council on Aging, and a volunteer, Mrs. Evelyne Dalembert. We received 376 completed surveys.

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SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Due to financial constraints, the survey did not aim for a representative sample of respondents. Instead a purposive sample was pursued by distributing surveys through a variety of venues. In addition, significant outreach was made to diverse communities to attempt to give voice to as wide an array of view point as possible.

Respondents, by age distribution



Population in 2010: 75,754. Population change since 2000: -2.2%

Males: 37,158 (49.1%)

Females: 38,596 (50.9%)

Median resident age: 31.4 years

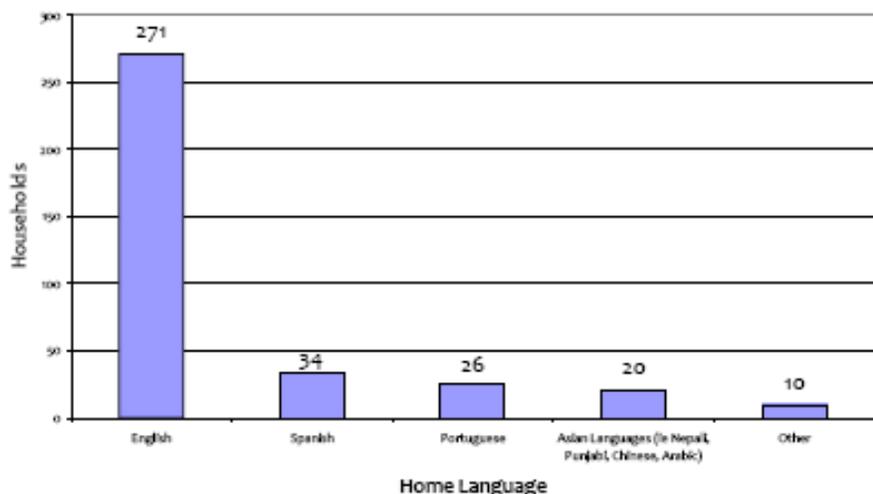
Massachusetts median age: 42.8 years

According to the 2010 Census, Somerville has 75,754 people with 50.9% women and a median resident age of 31.4 years which is more than 10 years younger than the median age of Massachusetts. The median age of the 2012 SCW city-wide survey respondents was 38 years old. The majority of respondents (72%) were between 26 to 45 years old.

From the 2010 Census, 31% of Somerville residents were born outside of the US. Twenty-eight percent of the respondents in this city-wide the survey speak another language other than English at home.

The Institute for Community Health reported breakdown figures with about nine percent of Somerville speaking Portuguese followed by about eight and a half percent who speak Spanish, about two and a half percent who speak an Indic language, two percent who speak Chinese, and less than two percent who speak French Creole (including Haitian).

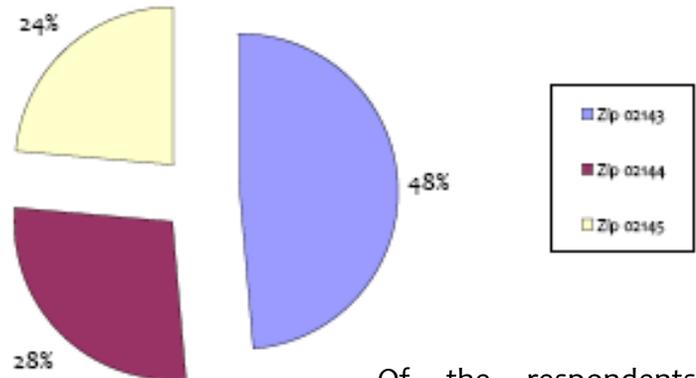
Respondents' Household Primary Language



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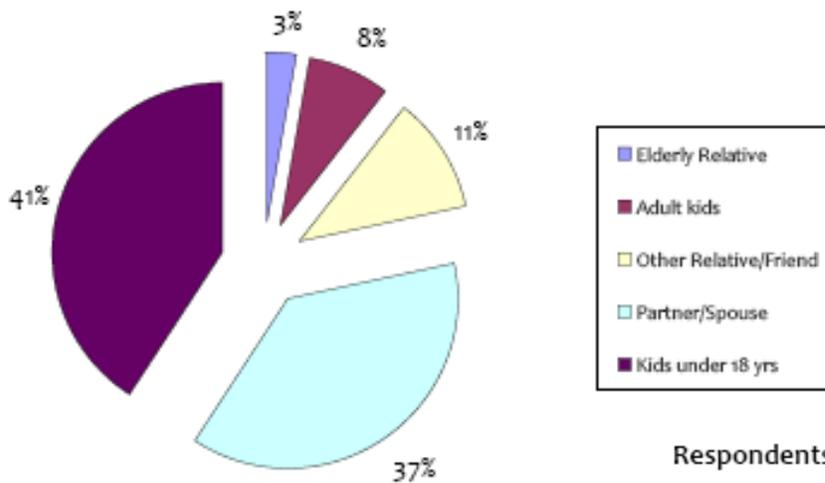
The survey collected information on respondents' neighborhoods. Almost half of the survey's respondents were from zip code 02143 which includes Inman Sq., Spring Hill, Union Sq., and Winter Hill. The remaining respondents were split between 02144 (28%) including Davis, Ball, Porter, and Teele squares. The last group of respondents lived in zip code 02145 (24%) encompassing Magoun Sq, Sullivan Square and Ten Hills.

Respondents, by home zip code



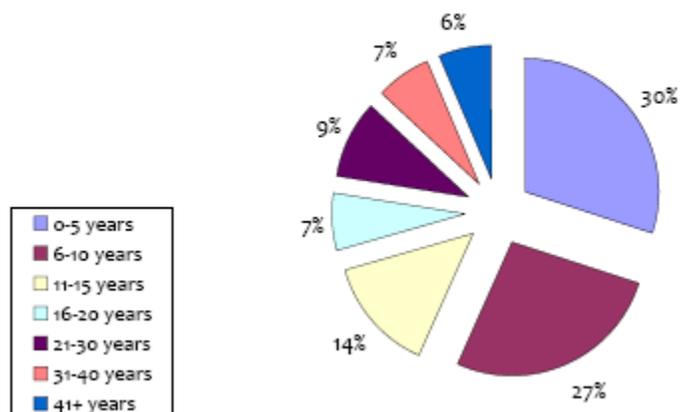
Of the respondents, forty-nine percent of the households have children—41% have kids under 18 and 8% with adult kids. The other types of households the respondents have include 37% with a partner or spouse, 16% with a friend or other relative, and 8% with an elderly relative. Eight percent of the respondents have adult children at home.

Respondents' Household Types



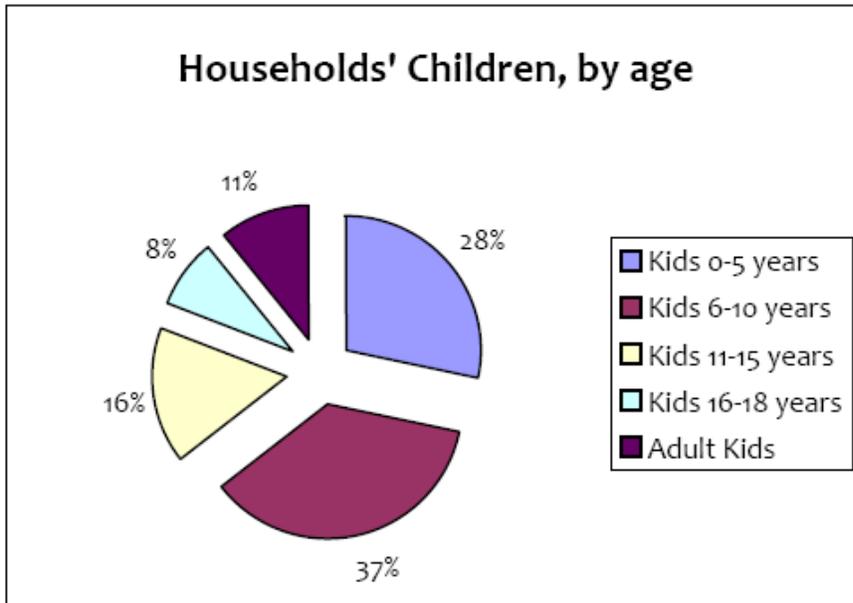
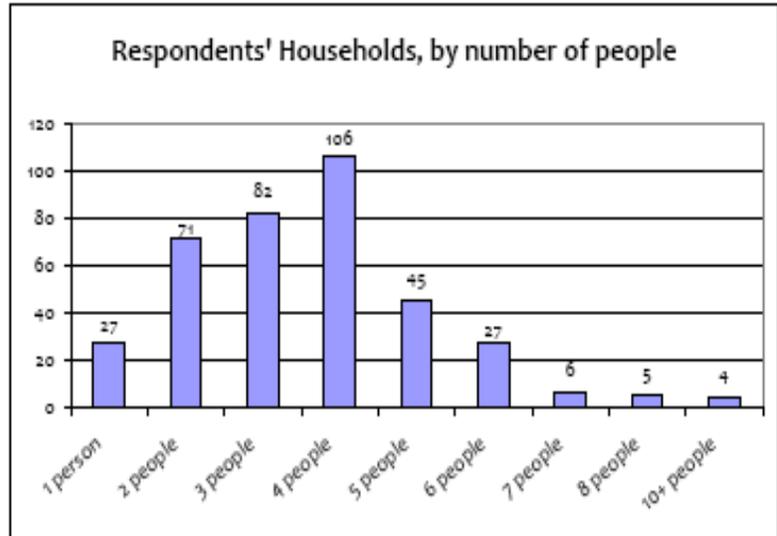
Survey respondents are primarily new to the Somerville area with 57% having lived in the city for 10 years or less. Approximately 22% of the respondents are long time residents, having lived in the city for 20 or more years.

Respondents' Years Lived in Somerville

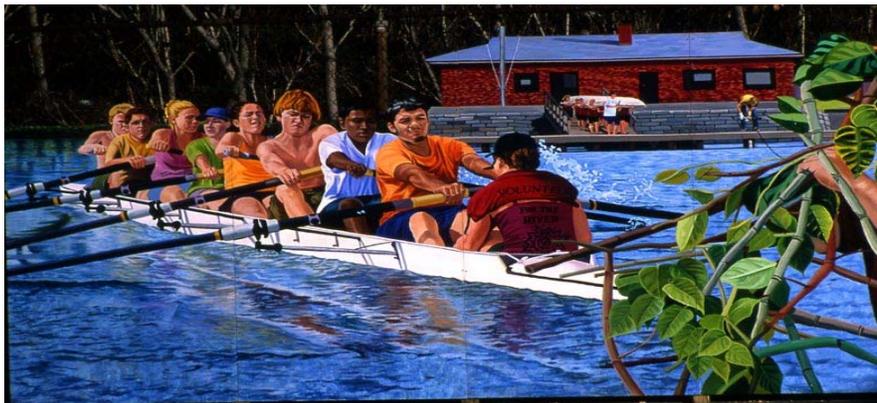


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Ninety-three percent of respondents live with one or more people. Twenty-three percent of the respondents' households have five or more people living at home. The majority of households have four people in the household.



Looking closer at households with children, most respondents' households had children 10 years old or younger (72%). The largest age group of kids in the respondents' households were 6-10 years old (37%).



Somerville Status of Women Survey Results

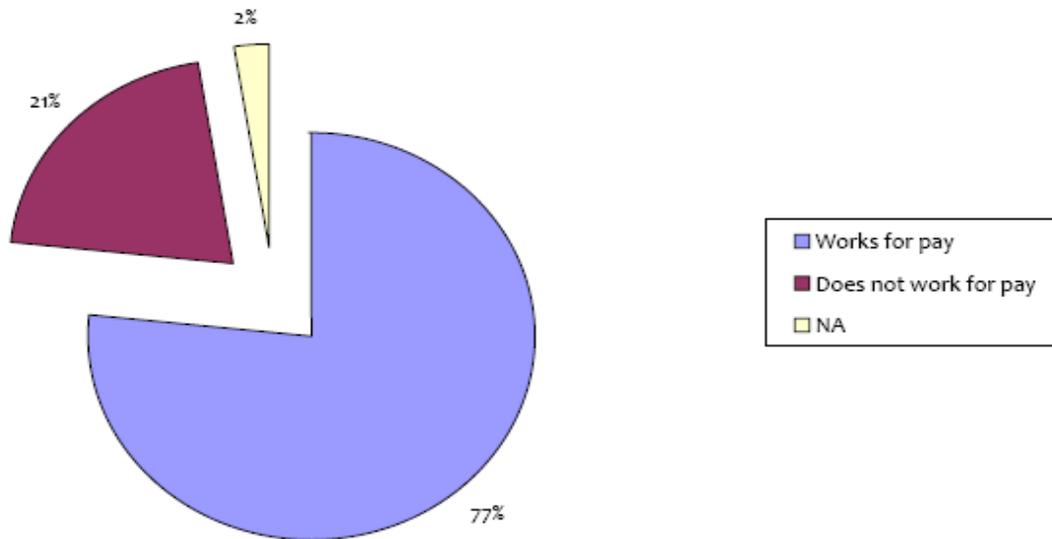


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EMPLOYMENT

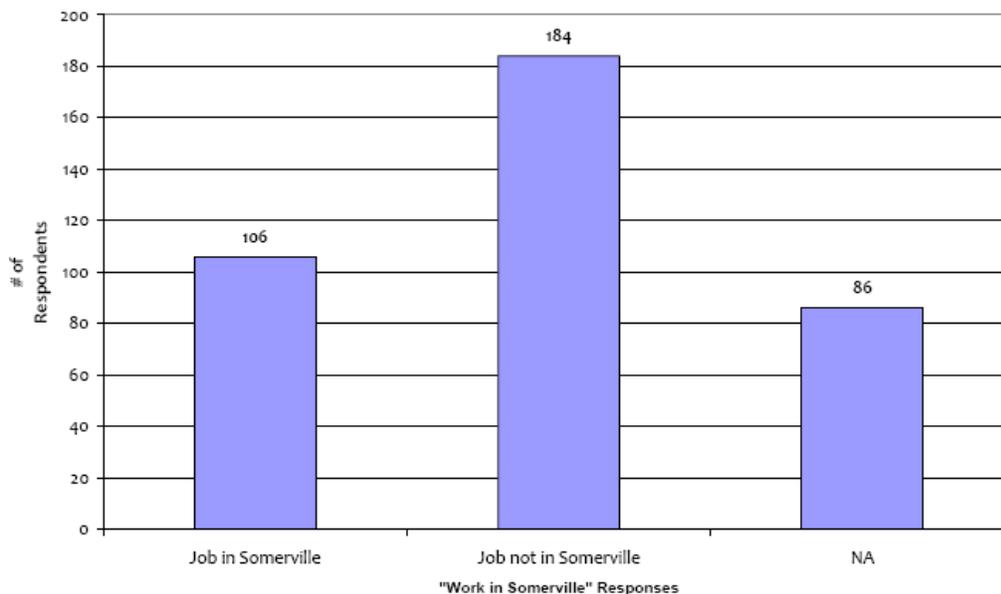
One of the goals of the 2012 Somerville Status of Women Survey was to develop a better understanding of the various activities that are part of women's lives, including employment, volunteering and other civic engagement. Survey questions focused on women's employment, civic engagement in Somerville and beyond, and opinions on various policy issues affecting women and their families.

Respondents Working for Pay



Of the responding women to our survey, 77% “work for pay” with 21% who do not.

Respondents Working in Somerville



We found 49% (184 people) who said their job was not in Somerville. There were 28% of the women (106 people) with a job inside of Somerville and 22% (86 people) who stated that the question was “not applicable.”

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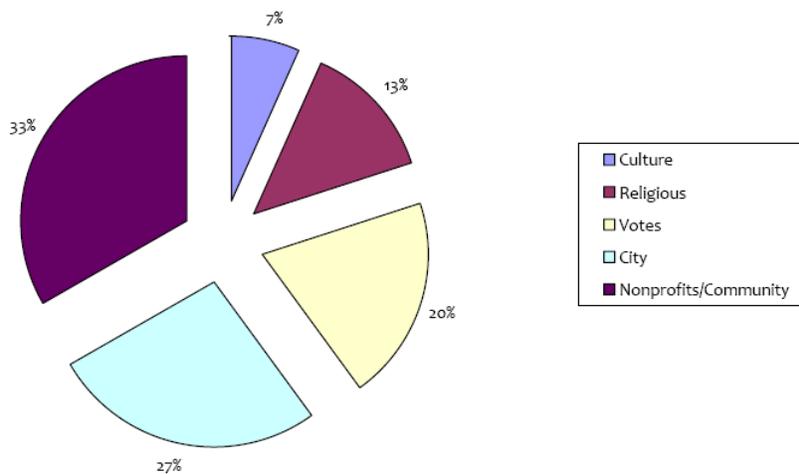
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Importance of Volunteering and Civic Engagement

“The City of Somerville is dedicated to strengthening communities, building neighborhood connections, improving education, and maintaining a city that is a great place to live, work, play and raise a family. By involving residents directly in City events and operations, we will continue to create and maintain an inclusive and exciting community for residents of all ages.”

Mayor Joe Curtatone (May 2011)

Respondents' Volunteering Types

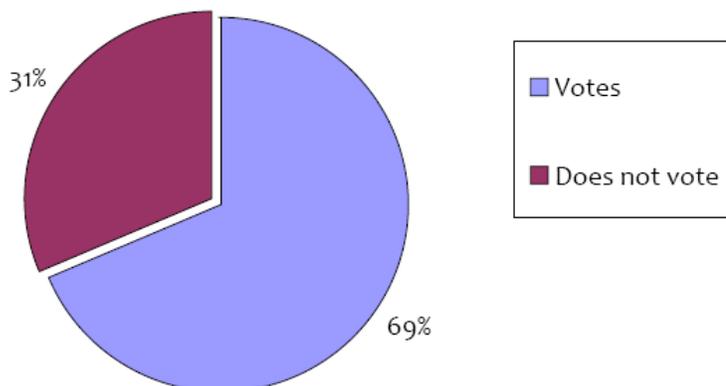


How do Somerville women engage in their community?

The responses of survey participants were spread across many volunteering opportunities to serve including: 33% nonprofits, 27% the City, 20% vote, 13% religious centers, and 7% with cultural groups.

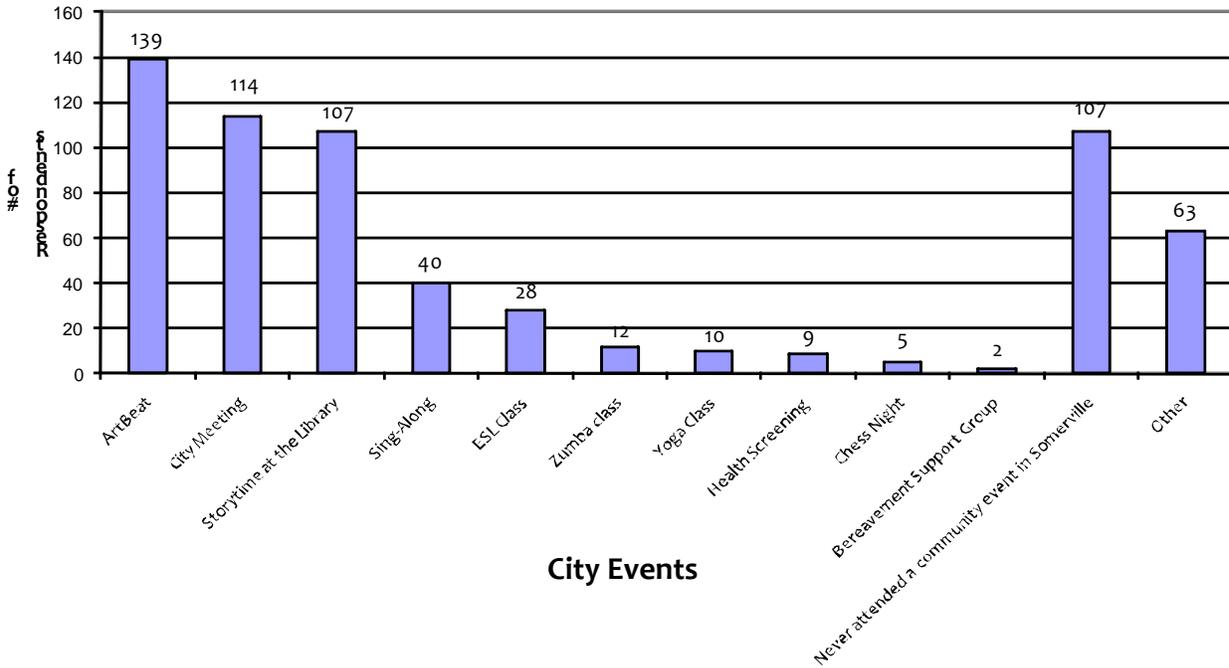
One measure of civic engagement is voting in public elections. Of our respondents, 69% said they voted. According to the “Registration and Party Enrollment Statistics as of October 15, 2008” (MA Elections Division; www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepfdst_county_town_enroll_breakdown_08.pdf), there were 44,673 voters or 59% of 75,754 population for the City of Somerville.

Respondents Who Vote



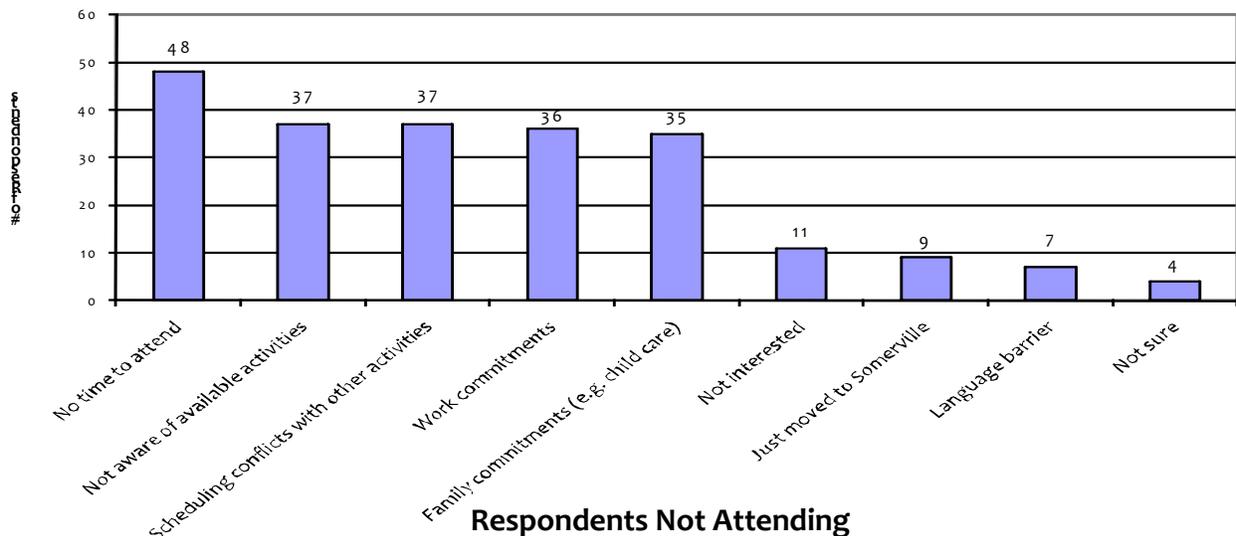
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City Events Attended



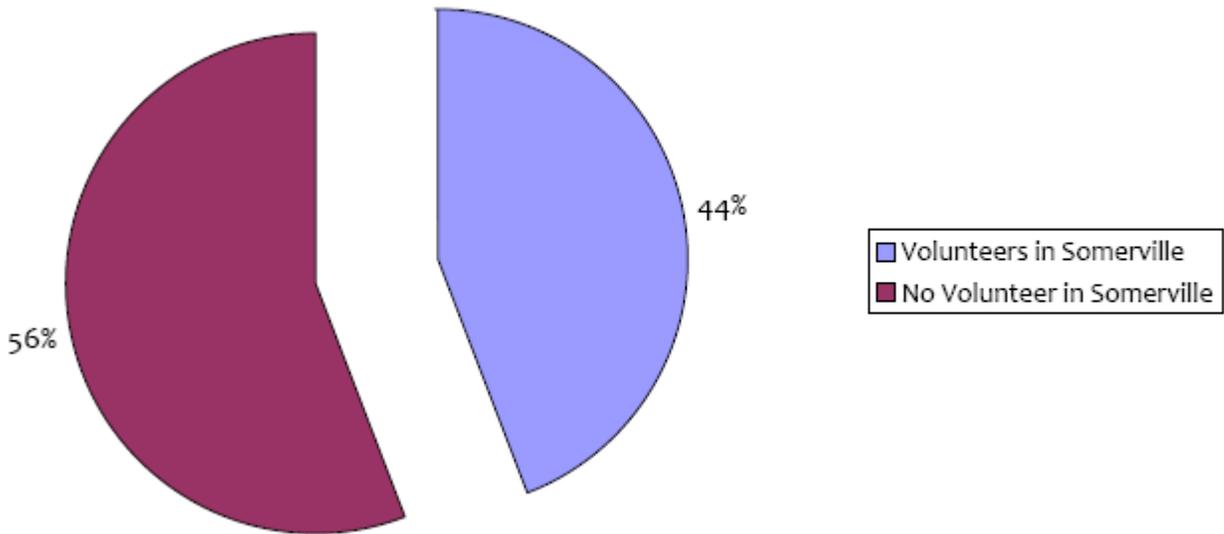
The survey asked respondents about their attendance at a variety of city events. The above table shows that most respondents reported attending ArtBeat (an annual arts festival held each July in Davis Square), a city meeting, or Storytime at the Somerville library. At the same time that many respondents reported various forms of specific engagement in Somerville, roughly 1/3 of respondents reported that they had never attended a city event. When asked why, women cited time pressures, scheduling conflicts or work and family commitments.

Not Attending City Events



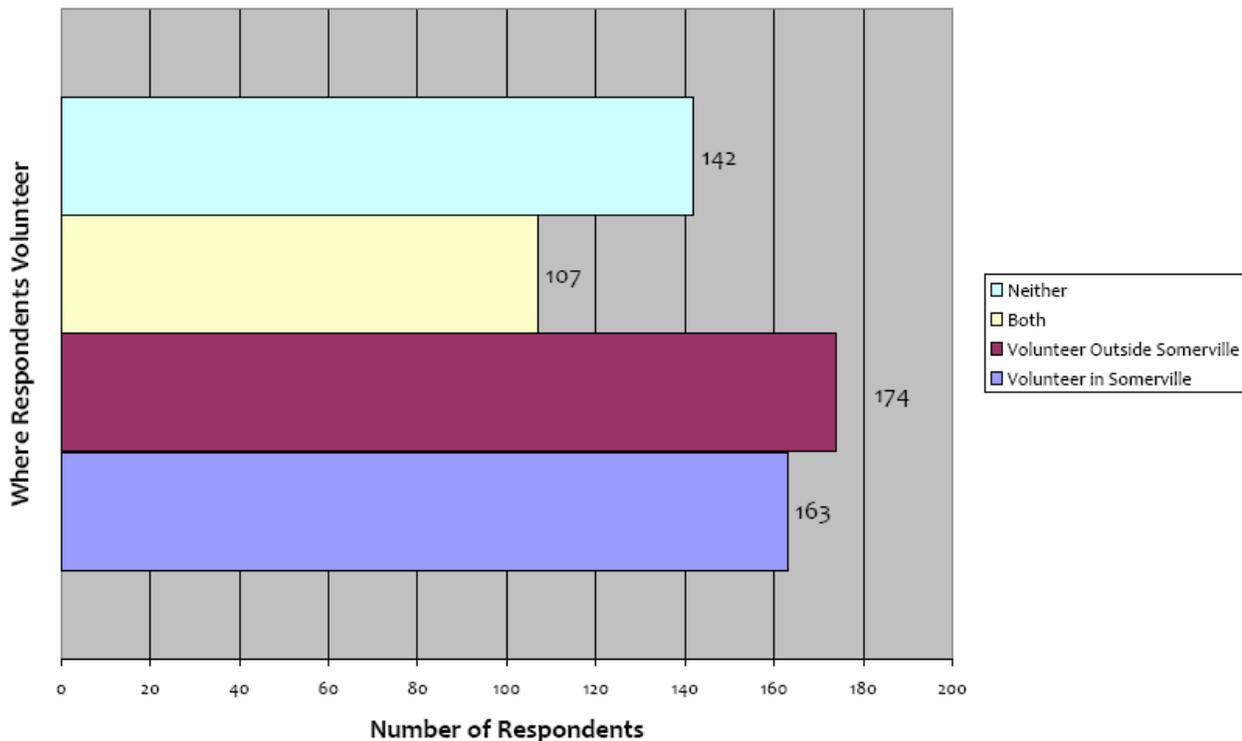
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Respondents Volunteering in Somerville



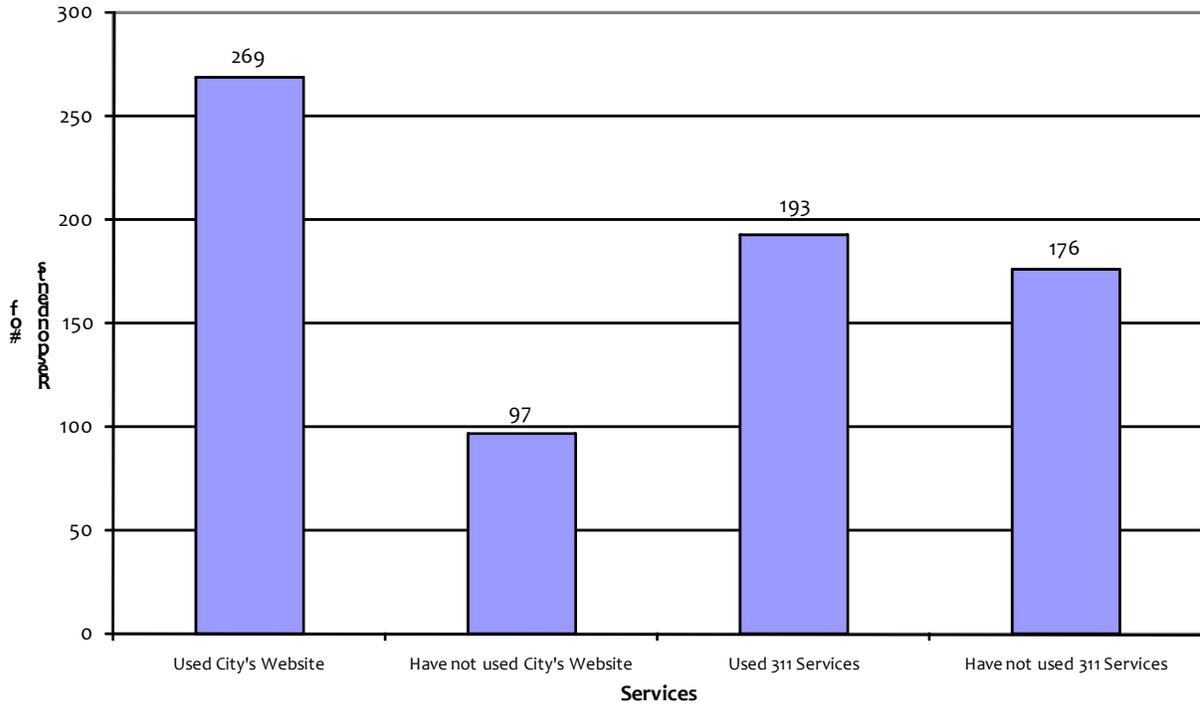
Somerville survey respondents reported that 44 percent volunteer inside Somerville (164 people). We asked people if they volunteer outside of Somerville with 47 percent of respondents reporting they did (174 people). While a larger number of people reported volunteering outside of Somerville than inside the city, a considerable number of survey participants report being engaged in volunteering.

Volunteering In or Out of Somerville

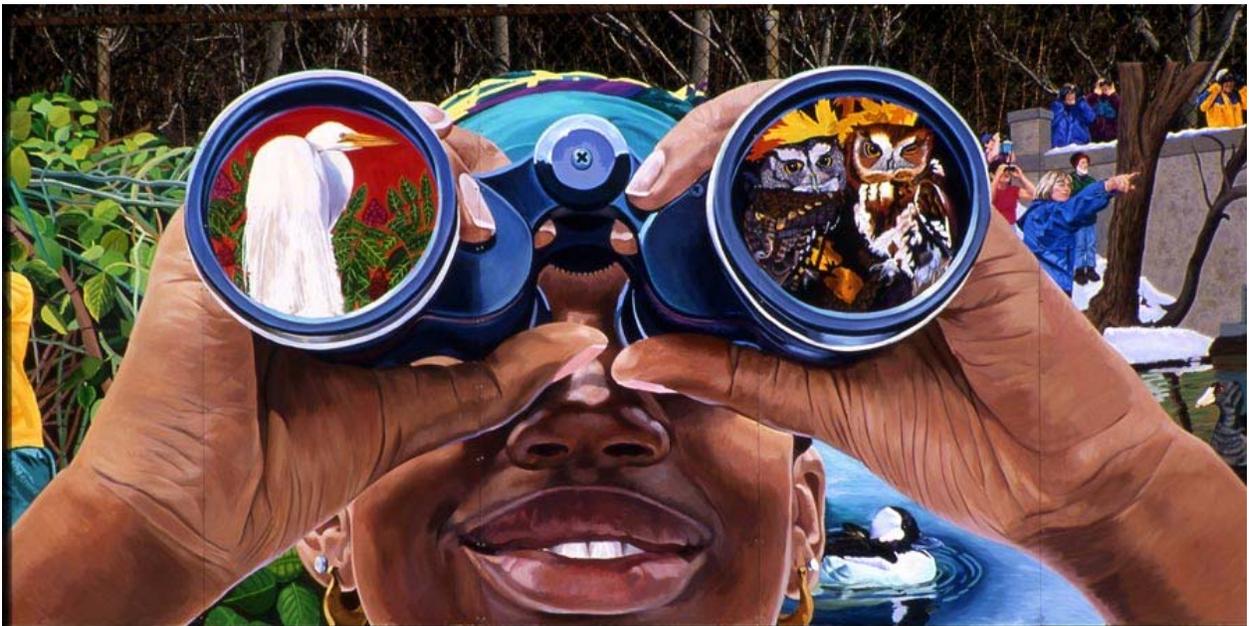


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Respondents Using City's Website and 311 Constituent Services



The City's Website and 311 Services are an important way the City of Somerville shares announcements, meeting details, program information. Almost 72% of survey respondents report using the City website, while just over 50% used the 311 call service.



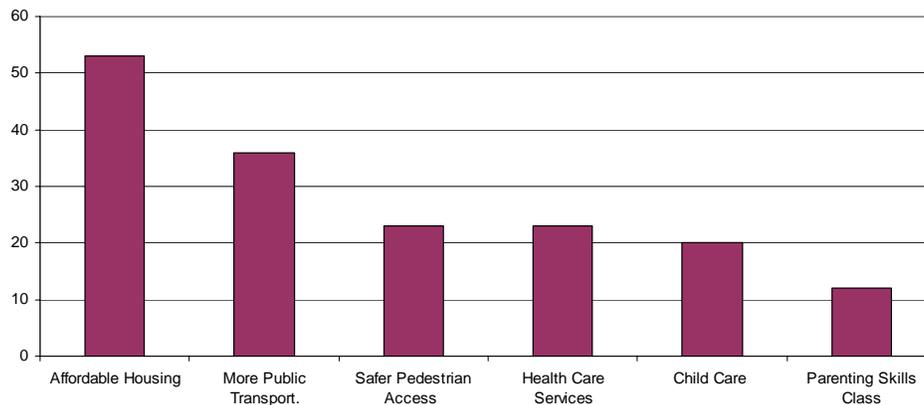
Somerville Commission for Women

IMPORTANCE OF CITY PROGRAMS

In the 2005 city-wide survey conducted by the Somerville Commission for Women, the top priorities of women that participants ranked as their first—out of three—needs were (in order): Affordable Housing, More Transportation, Safer Pedestrian Access, Health Care, Child Care, and Parenting Skills.

Women's Needs:

Priority One, top five

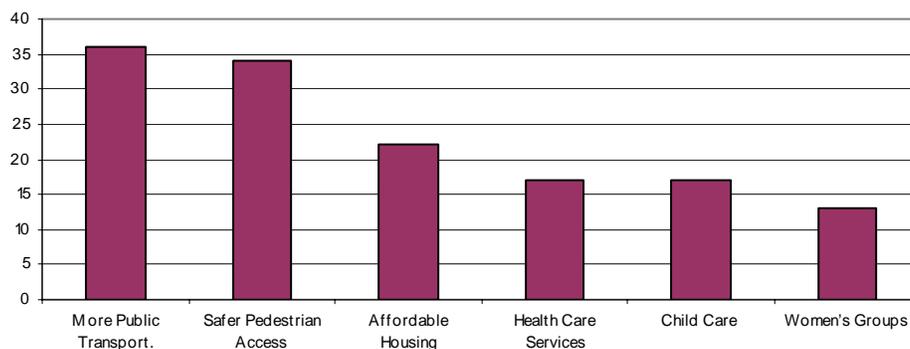


Source: Somerville Commission for Women, 2005

The top priorities of women as second important ranking of programs were (in order): Safer Pedestrian Access, More Transportation, Affordable Housing, Physical Activity Education, Child Care, Health Care, and Budgeting Classes.

Women's Needs:

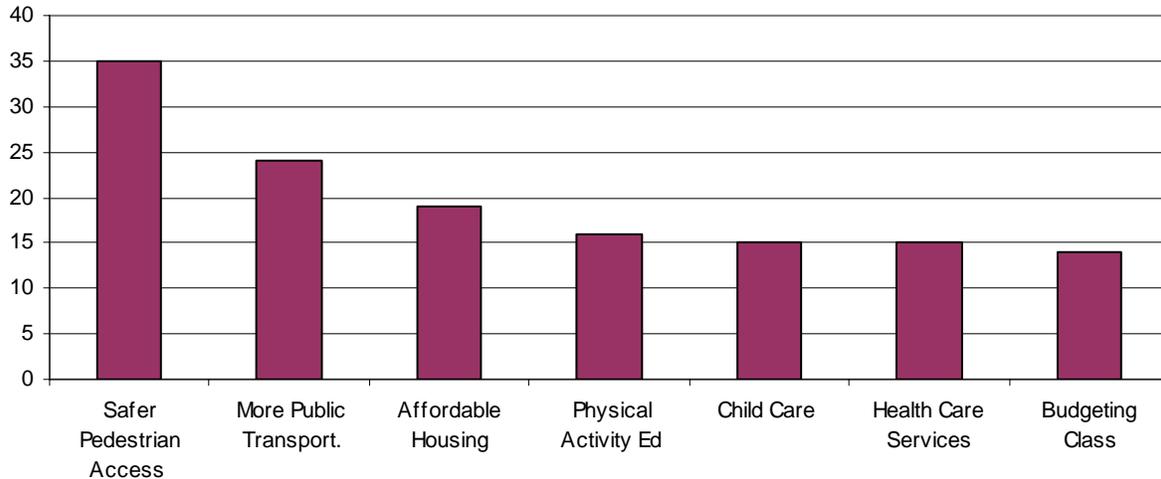
Priority Two, top six



Source: Somerville Commission for Women, 2005

Somerville Commission for Women

Women's Needs: Priority Three, top seven



Source: Somerville Commission for Women, 2005

Additionally, the 2005 city-wide survey asked participants to rank their third highest priority for women’s programming in the City. The respondents listed the following as their third top program of need (in order): Safer Pedestrian Access, More Transportation, Affordable Housing, Physical Activity Education, Child Care, Health Care Services, and Budgeting Class.



Somerville Commission for Women

"I think the future of Somerville looks great and bright. I remember the days when the people sitting here did not care like they do today. It's a major change and good for the city."

Mayor Joe Curtatone (January 2013)

The 2012 City-wide Survey of Women was updated to reflect available and potential services that can be provided today. Below is a full list of the survey question options.

Programs and Services

- Child care
- Job/career counseling
- Pregnancy/new baby support
- Walking/biking club
- Gardening club
- Women's health care services
- Women's support groups
- Food stamps

Education Issues

- Wellness education (e.g. nutrition, physical activity)
- Parenting skills class
- Basic money & budgeting class
- Saving & investing class
- GED (General Educational Development) certification
- ESL (English as Second Language classes)
- English practice groups (small social groups to practice English language)
- Computer skills training
- Domestic violence services
- Citizenship classes
- Self-Defense classes

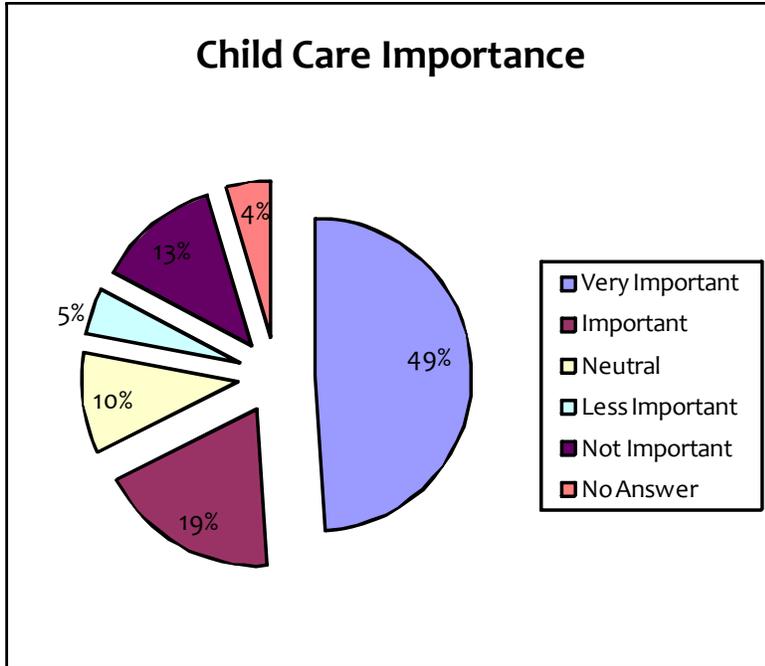
Policy Issues

- Safer pedestrian access (cross-walks, signals, speed limits)
- More public transportation
- Paid family leave
- More affordable housing

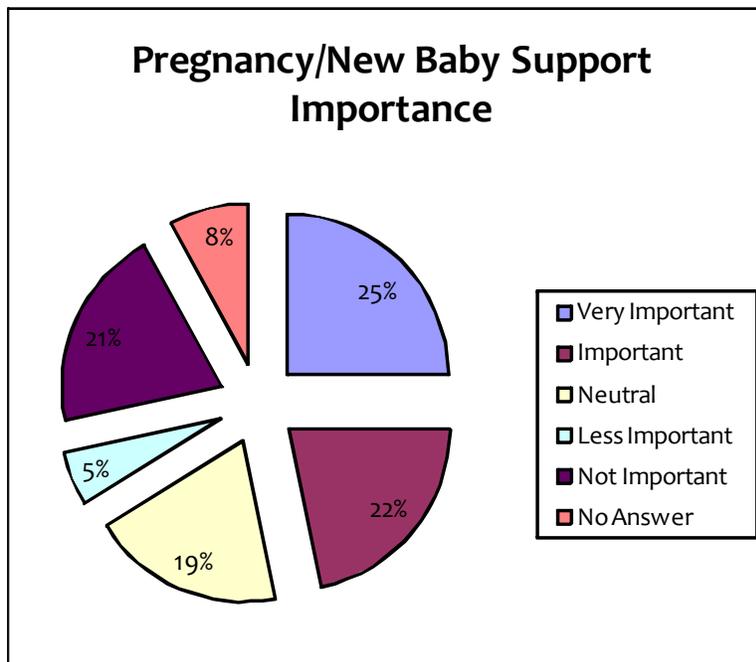
Somerville Commission for Women

One important aspect of the survey was to find women’s civic engagement in Somerville. Another key aspect on the Commission’s survey was to look at how women prioritized city programs. The survey examined a variety of programs that are available in Somerville including groups and services such as a Gardening Group or the Food Stamp program.

Almost seventy percent of the women reported that child care is very important or important. For Pregnancy and New Baby Support, forty-seven percent of the respondents prioritized these type of programs.



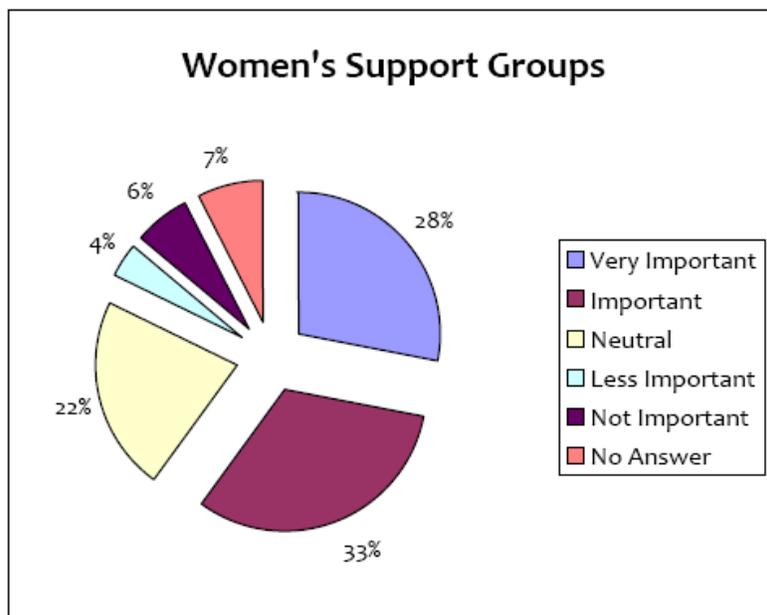
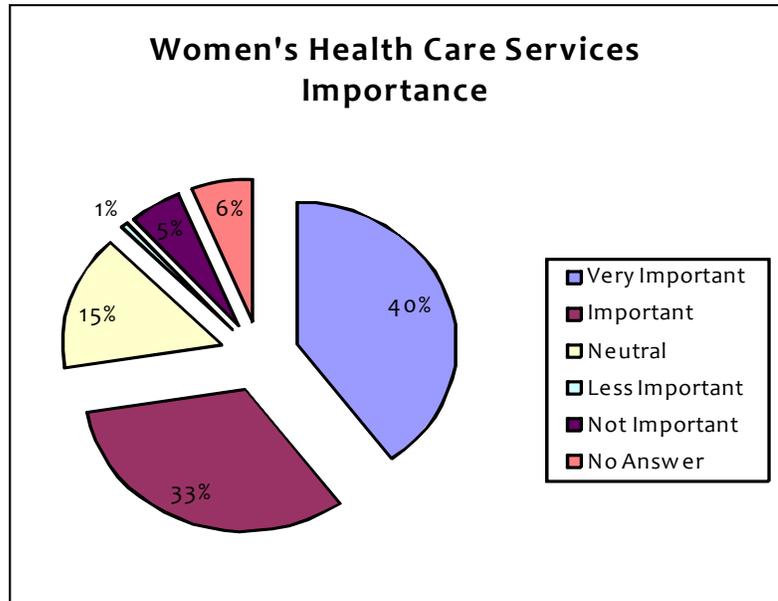
Child Care		
Very Important	184	49%
Important	70	19%
	254	68%
Pregnancy/New Baby Support		
Very Important	94	25%
Important	82	22%
	176	47%



Somerville Commission for Women

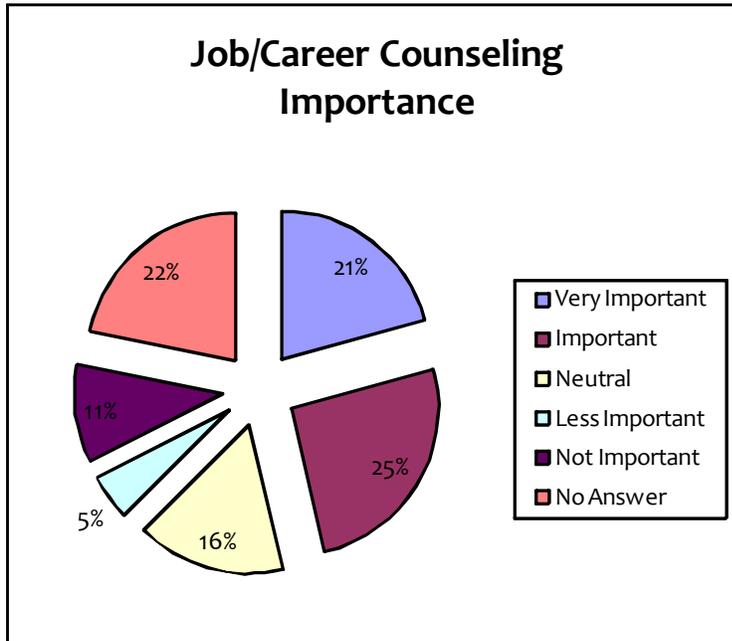
The survey looked at women’s prioritizing for Women’s Support Groups and Health Care Services. Over seventy percent of the respondents prioritized Health Care Services for women while sixty percent prioritized Support Groups.

Women’s Health Care Services		
Very Important	150	40%
Important	122	32%
Neutral	272	72%
Women’s Support Groups		
Very Important	105	28%
Important	121	32%
Neutral	226	60%

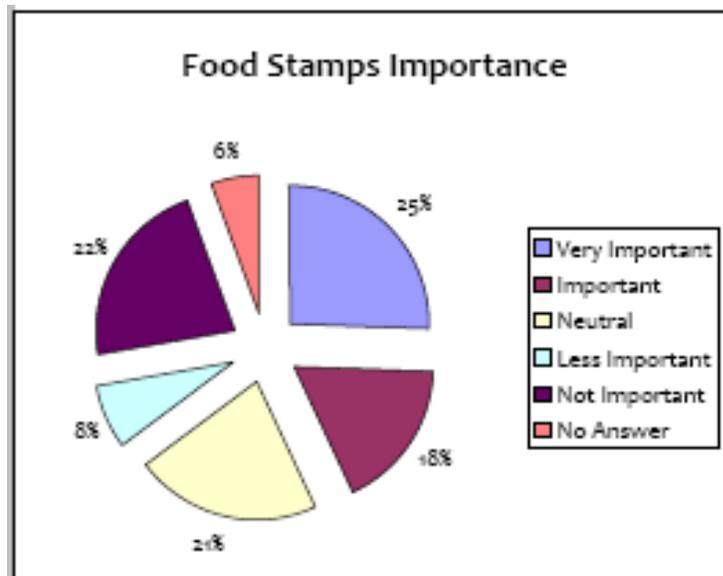


Somerville Commission for Women

In the most recent years with the difficult economy, the Commission wanted to identify how important programs like Job and Career Counseling and Food Stamps were to Somerville women. In the city-wide survey, fifty-five percent of respondents prioritized Job and Career Counseling while forty-three percent prioritized Food Stamps.

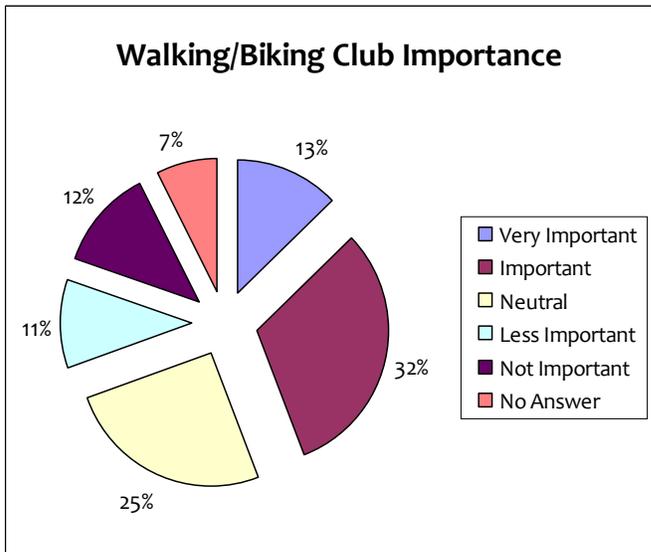


Job/Career Counseling		
Very		
Important	93	25%
Important	115	31%
	208	55%
Food Stamps		
Very		
Important	96	26%
Important	66	18%
	162	43%

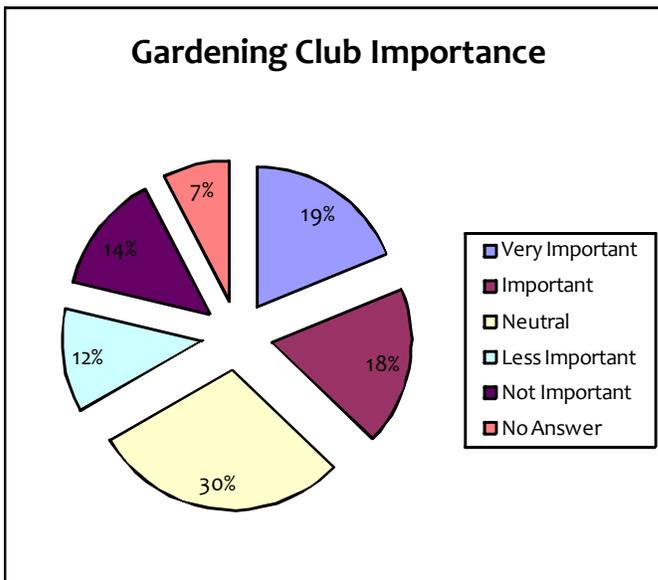


Somerville Commission for Women

There are many programs in the community that reflect the diverse interests of Somerville. The survey identified two programs for survey participants to consider for prioritization. The Gardening Club was considered very important to 22 percent and important to 21 percent of the Somerville women survey participants. Walking or Biking Clubs were considered very important to 13 percent and important to 31 percent. Both questions received about the same total prioritization by respondents with 43 or 44 percent total top priority for these programs.



Gardening Club		
Very Important	82	22%
Important	80	21%
Total Top Priority	162	43%
Walking/Biking Club		
Very Important	48	13%
Important	118	31%
Total Top Priority	166	44%



Somerville Commission for Women

The Commission looked at a variety of community level classes and services available through the Somerville Public Library, Police Department, School Department, and other programs. The highest priority to women respondents was Wellness Education with 74% as “very important” or “important.” The next top priorities were Self-Defense Classes (63%), Parenting Skills (61%), Saving and Investing (60%), Domestic Violence Services (59%), and Basic Money and Budgeting Classes (59%).

We can compare this with the 2005 highest priorities: Affordable Housing, More Transportation, Safer Pedestrian Access, Health Care, Child Care, and Parenting Skills (see Importance of City Programs section, page 27).

Additional programs respondents reviewed for prioritization include Computer Skills Class (56%), ESL (49%), English Practice Groups (48%), Citizenship Class (47%), and General Educational Development/ GED Certification (45%).

From the 2005 survey lower priorities, the programs were ranked by respondents as: Safer Pedestrian Access, More Transportation, Affordable Housing, Physical Activity Education, Child Care, Health Care, and Budgeting Classes (see Importance of City Programs section, page 27).

Wellness education (e.g. nutrition, physical activity)		
Very Important	144	38%
Important	136	36%
Neutral	51	14%
Less Important	9	2%
Not Important	14	4%
No Answer	22	6%
Parenting skills class		
Very Important	118	31%
Important	111	30%
Neutral	72	19%
Less Important	16	4%
Not Important	38	10%
No Answer	20	5%
Basic money & budgeting class		
Very Important	94	25%
Important	126	34%
Neutral	71	19%
Less Important	22	6%
Not Important	39	10%
No Answer	24	6%
Saving & investing class		
Very Important	82	22%
Important	143	38%
Neutral	76	20%
Less Important	19	5%
Not Important	28	7%
No Answer	28	7%
GED (General Educational Development) Certification		
Very Important	82	22%
Important	87	23%
Neutral	71	19%
Less Important	20	5%
Not Important	88	23%
No Answer	28	7%

Somerville Commission for Women

It should be pointed out that responses throughout the survey seem to follow more of the respondents' personal needs as opposed to what one would think the community-at-large might need.

For example, the respondents who prioritized child care was 49% with the number of respondents with children under 18 years old at 41%. Also, respondents speaking another language other than English as their first language for this survey was 28% while 28% of the respondents ranked ESL as "very important" and 25% ranked English Practice Groups as "very important."

We are gathering the ranking of priorities of individuals and looking at these numbers together. We did not ask people to consider the whole community and its needs. This is important as we determine if lower ranked programs should be supported or eliminated due to ranking.

ESL (English as Second Language classes)		
Very Important	107	28%
Important	80	21%
Neutral	51	14%
Less Important	20	5%
Not Important	90	24%
No Answer	28	7%
English practice groups (small social groups to practice English language)		
Very Important	94	25%
Important	87	23%
Neutral	60	16%
Less Important	20	5%
Not Important	88	23%
No Answer	27	7%
Computer skills training		
Very Important	85	23%
Important	125	33%
Neutral	68	18%
Less Important	24	6%
Not Important	51	14%
No Answer	23	6%
Domestic violence services		
Very Important	140	37%
Important	86	23%
Neutral	50	13%
Less Important	16	4%
Not Important	60	16%
No Answer	24	6%
Citizenship classes		
Very Important	85	23%
Important	90	24%
Neutral	74	20%
Less Important	20	5%
Not Important	77	20%
No Answer	30	8%

Somerville Commission for Women

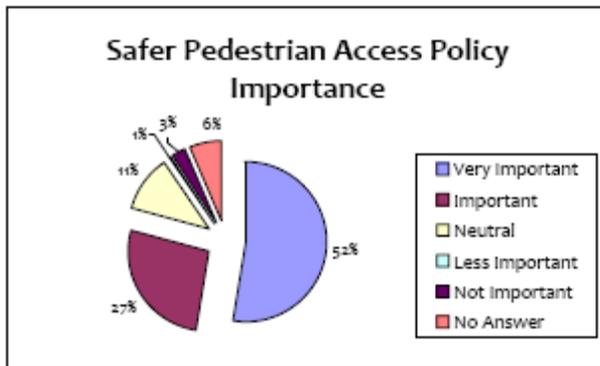
The participants of the survey ranked self-defense as a higher priority. There are different ways to look at this figure that would need further examination beyond this report. For example, do people feel less safe and therefore want to feel safer with the classes? Do people feel empowered with the kick-boxing style fitness programs and therefore prioritize activities that include a karate style exercise agenda? There are different programming beliefs from the Police Department and women's advocacy groups about the usefulness of self-defense classes which also asks for further examination regarding funding different program choices.

Self-Defense Classes		
Very Important	104	28%
Important	132	35%
Neutral	72	19%
Less Important	12	3%
Not Important	32	9%
No Answer	24	6%

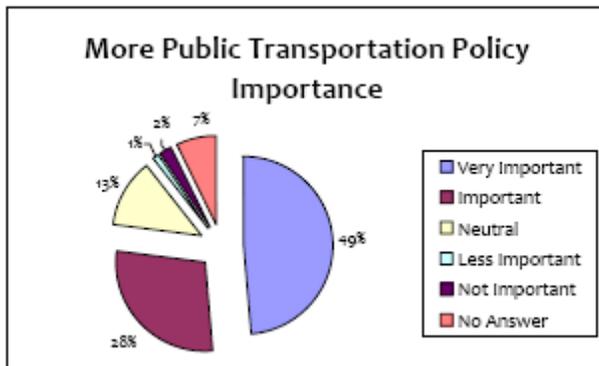


Somerville Commission for Women

POLICY ISSUES



We examined each policy individually. Safer Pedestrian Access Policy was selected as “very important” by 197 respondents (52%) with another 101 respondents (or 27%) selecting this policy as important. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents found this policy either very important or important. Of the respondents, only 21% found this topic less or not important (12% combined) or had a neutral priority for this issue (11%).



For both of the questions on pedestrian safety and more public transportation, there were a number of people who did not provide an answer. For Safer Pedestrian Access, there were 24 respondents who did not respond (6%). For More Public Transportation, there were 27 respondents who did not respond (7%).

We asked Somerville women how important some top policies and local issues are to them. We found that the largest number of people ranked safer pedestrian access policy the most important (52% of respondents said this was “very important”), followed by more public transportation (49%), more affordable housing (48%), and then paid earned sick time policy (42%).



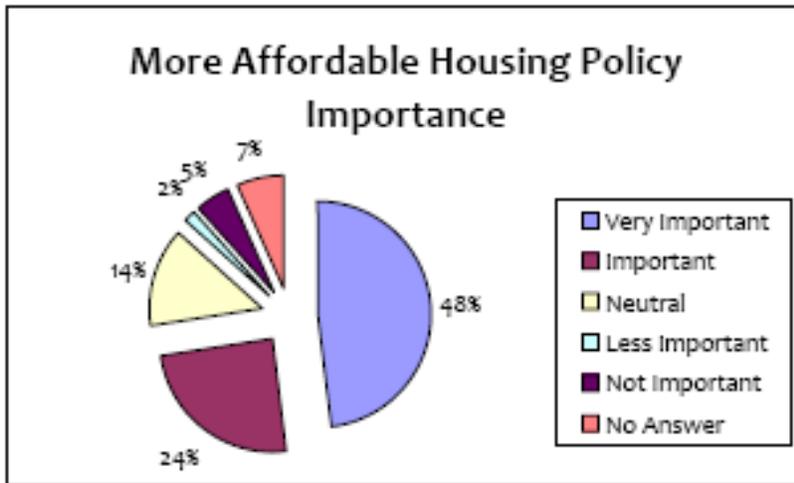
A pedestrian, forced into the street by blocked sidewalks, passes piles of snow. (AP)

Along the same lines, the survey asked respondents about More Public Transportation Policy. This policy was ranked as either very important or important by 77% of the respondents. A larger number of respondents—13%—found a neutral response while only a combined total of 3% found this policy less or not important.



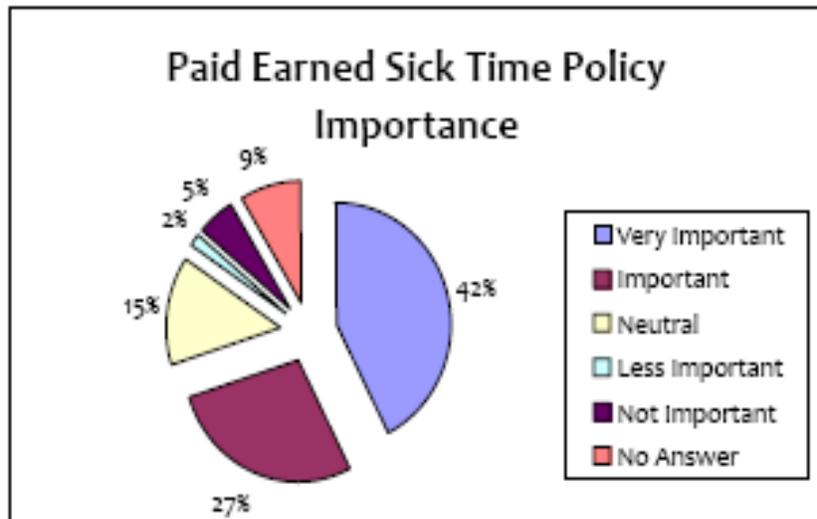
MBTA

Somerville Commission for Women



Additionally, the housing issue in our community continues to be important to a large number of respondents with 72% prioritizing policy development for more affordable housing.

Finally, the Commission of Women has co-sponsored legislation on paid sick time for workers in Massachusetts. This legislation is building momentum in the State House and was found to be prioritized by 69% of the respondents.



Somerville Status of Women Conclusion



Somerville Commission for Women

Somerville is a vibrant place to live, work, play and raise a family. We perceive it with the hundreds of events in the City and we have survey results of Somerville women to show it.

The Somerville Commission for Women conducted a city-wide survey of women in 2012 with 376 completed surveys collected. Of the collected surveys, there were 72% of the respondents who spoke English as a primary language with nine percent speaking Spanish, seven percent speaking Portuguese, five percent speaking an Asian language, and three percent speaking another language. According to the Institute for Community Health, about nine percent of Somerville speaks Portuguese followed by about eight and a half percent who speak Spanish, about two and a half percent who speak an Indic language, two percent who speak Chinese, and less than two percent who speak French Creole (including Haitian).

Fifty-one percent of Somerville is female and the median age is 38 years old. The respondents fell in that range as well with the majority between 26-45 years of age. The surveys were collected from respondents ranging from the three zip codes of Somerville: about half from 02143 and about a quarter from 02144 and 02145. Almost half of the respondents had children with 72% with kids 10 or younger and 8% with adult kids. A large majority of the respondents (57%) have lived in Somerville less than 10 years.

Financially, Somerville has a slightly higher median household income than the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with \$69,471 compared to \$64,081. From the MA Household Expense Budget needs for a family of four with two adults and two schoolage children, we know this family needs \$67,251 for economic independence. There is still work to do with 14.7% of Somerville residents living below poverty which is below the US level of 15.1% but higher than the state of 10.5%. Three-quarters of the respondents work for pay— as opposed to home care with own children or other nonpaying activities like retirement.

The Commission for Women sought to find out what women are engaged in for activities in Somerville, why they may not be participating in programs or events, and how women prioritize programming and policies.

The survey asked whether people if they volunteer in Somerville or out of the city. Overall, sixty-three percent of survey respondents volunteer. Respondents reported that 44 percent volunteer in the City with 47% reporting they volunteer out of Somerville. Additionally, respondents reported that 28% volunteered both in and out of the City and 37% did not volunteer at all. When asked why people could not volunteer, there were many answers but the largest response (38%) said they had no time while 30% of the responses said they were not aware of available activities, 30% had schedule conflicts, 29% had other work commitments, and 28% had family commitments. The survey allowed for multiple responses that fit the respondent's reasons for not participating.

The respondents reported that almost three-quarters used the City's website (72%) and half used the City's 311 Center.

Somerville Commission for Women

There are many ways to volunteer and survey respondents were diverse in their volunteering sites. The largest number of respondents volunteering gave time to nonprofit organizations (33%) and City meetings (27%). Additionally, respondents said they voted (20%), volunteered with their religious center (13%), or volunteered specific to a culture (7%).

The Commission for Women's survey took an in-depth look at women's prioritization of many program opportunities in the City. Respondents were asked to rank all of the options in to "very important," "important," "neutral," "less important," or "not important." The survey divided selections in to three categories of Programs & Services, Education Issues, and Policy Issues.

There are several ways to report the findings with different perspectives. Looking at only responses of "very important," the top three priorities women respondents listed in the city-wide survey in Somerville were **Safer Pedestrian Access** (52%), **More Public Transportation** (49%), and **Child Care** (49%). When combining "very important" and "important," the top three priorities change to **Safer Pedestrian Access** (79%), **More Public Transportation** (77%), and **Wellness Education** (such as nutrition) (74%).

Another perspective to review the priorities is to sort the options for the respondents by category. The top Program and Services "very important" priority is **Child Care** (49%). The highest Education Issues "very important" priority is **Wellness Education** (38%). The top Policy Issues "very important" priority is **Safer Pedestrian Access** (52%). These stay basically the same in these categories when viewing the combined "very important" and "important" responses except in Programs and Services which has **Women's Health Care Services** as the top priority (72%).

In conclusion, the Somerville Commission for Women survey found 63% of respondents volunteering, 72% using the web, and 50% utilizing the 311 Call Center. Of the respondents who were not volunteering, the largest reason listed was that they had no time. Half of the respondents had children in their home with the majority with children ten or under but eight percent who had adult kids at home. The survey also found that 77% work for pay. Respondents who were volunteering largely volunteered with either a nonprofit or the City of Somerville.

The top two priorities for Somerville women are Safer Pedestrian Access and More Public Transportation.

Somerville Status of Women

Appendix



Somerville Commission for Women

LIST OF PHOTOS

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 - 6 Map of Somerville at Robertwood Johnson Foundation’s “Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities,” created by Locus Mapping (2009)
 - 7 Well Foods Plus Grocer, photo by Somerville Journal (June 2011)
 - 8 East Somerville Community School Students’ Mural with David Fichter, photo by Danielle Dreilinger of the Boston Globe (2010)
 - 9 Winter Hill Post Office Mural, Broadway and Temple Street
 - 12 Mystic River Mural Project with original model posing with painting
 - 13 East Somerville Community School Students’ Mural
 - 14 Mystic River Mural Project
 - 14 Davis Square Statue Park, photo posted by Avenue 3 Real Estate Blog (2012)
 - 17 Mystic River Mural Project
 - 18 Celebrate Somerville Mural by Be Sergeant, Park Street
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 - 33 Kids in Window Mural, Rogers Foam Building on Central Street
 - 34 Pedestrian Walking in Street, photo by Associated Press
 - 34 Map of MBTA Green Line, photo by MBTA
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Somerville Commission for Women

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Somerville Commission for Women

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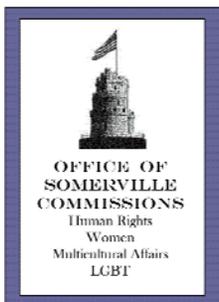
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Somerville Commission for Women



Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone
City of Somerville
Somerville Commission for Women



Office of Somerville Commissions
Program of the Health Department
City Hall Annex, 50 Evergreen Avenue
Somerville, MA 02145
(617) 625-6600, x2400
commissions@somervillema.gov

