

The Wisconsin Homeowners Alliance (WHA) is a 501(C)(4) organization dedicated to representing the interests of Wisconsin homeowners and protecting Wisconsin's quality of life one home at a time. As part of this effort, the WHA conducts a series of statewide public opinion surveys designed to help us understand what homeowners are thinking and talking about. This monthly publication is intended to share issues of importance and concern to homeowners with decision makers around the state.

HOME OWNERSHIP

When it comes to perceived barriers and incentives to buying a home in Wisconsin, there are indications that women are more sensitive to economic issues than men. Women were more likely than men to see four major economic measurements as barriers rather than as incentives to home buying in Wisconsin. For example, while 40 percent of men saw the economy in their community as a barrier to home buying, 50 percent of women said it was a barrier. By a smaller margin (51% compared to 47%), women were more likely to see the current state economy as a barrier. A majority of both men and women were concerned about current wage levels in Wisconsin, but women outnumbered men 57 percent to 51 percent in seeing current wages as a barrier. And, while 53 percent of men saw the availability of affordable housing as an incentive, only 44 percent of women saw it in the same light.

Interestingly, while clear majorities saw local services and the quality of local schools as incentives, higher percentages of men were likely to see these items as incentives. For example, 79 percent of men, compared to 70 percent of women, saw the quality of local services as an incentive, while 79 percent of men and 71 percent of women saw the quality of local schools as an incentive.

EDUCATION

While significant majorities of all Wisconsin residents see the quality of local public schools as an incentive to home ownership in their communities, there are interesting regional variations. Statewide, 75 percent of us classify the quality of our local public schools as an incentive to home buying. However, in the Milwaukee area a smaller majority of residents (66%) see their local schools as an incentive as compared to other regions. For example, 82 percent of the residents of the La Crosse-Eau Claire region, 79 percent of respondents in the Madison area, and 80 percent of those in the Fox River Valley saw local schools as an incentive.

HOMEOWNER SATISFACTION TRENDS

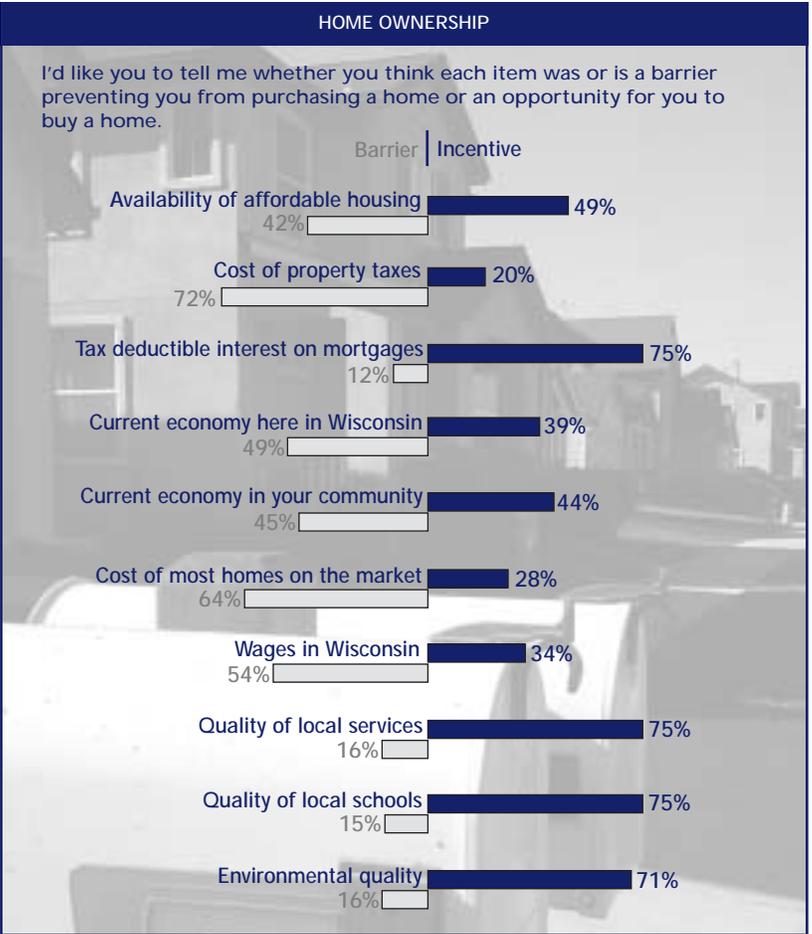
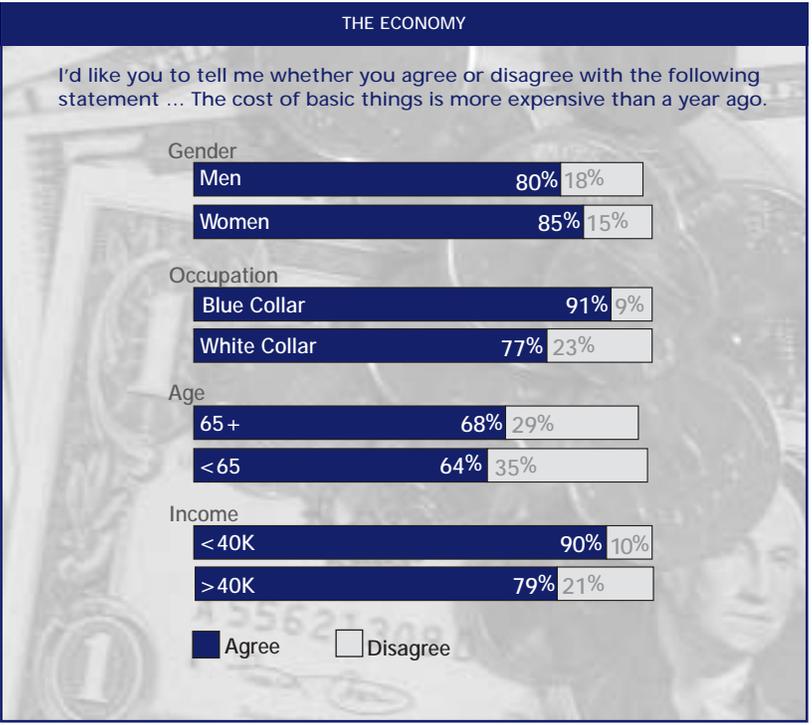
	<p>HOME OWNERSHIP</p> <p>Overall, Wisconsin residents feel there are many incentives to purchasing a home, but there is a clear difference in the percentage of women and men who perceive current factors in Wisconsin such as wages, the economy and local services as incentives or barriers when buying a home.</p>
	<p>QUALITY OF EDUCATION</p> <p>The percentage of residents who agree quality public schools are an important incentive to home buying varies from region to region.</p>
	<p>THE ECONOMY</p> <p>Residents 65 years of age and older report concerns about rising economic costs and many do not feel things will get better for them in the next year.</p>
	<p>TAX ISSUES</p> <p>A significant amount of Wisconsin residents worry about the affordability of property taxes. However, many distinctions exist between age, gender and regional groups.</p>

THE ECONOMY

We reported last month that public concerns about costs and the overall health of the economy continue to surface and that once again, those over 65 years of age tend to be more pessimistic. Here's a bit more detail on that phenomenon. While lots of Wisconsin residents agree that the cost of basic goods is more expensive today than it was a year ago, 90 percent of those 65 and older agree, compared to 80 percent of those under 65. That response is particularly troubling given the fact that while three-fourths of those under 65 report household incomes in excess of \$40,000 a year, more than half (55%) of respondents 65 and older report incomes of \$40,000 or less a year. Only 16 percent of the 65 and older population believe things will get better for them personally despite the fact that 68 percent of them say they are pretty optimistic about the state's economy improving.

TAXES

Gender, regional and age variables are also reflected in how our citizens respond to tax issues. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of those 65 years of age and older, for example, are worried about being able to afford their property taxes, while less than half (48%) of those under 65 express similar concerns. Similarly, women are more likely to be worried than men by a margin of 57 percent to 47 percent. And, respondents in the La Crosse-Eau Claire (56%), and Madison (57%) areas are more slightly likely to be worried than those in the Fox River Valley (48%) and Milwaukee (50%) areas.



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