

Memorandum

Date: September 23, 2026
To: John Loper, DuPage County
Rober Morris, NITA
From: Via Mobility, LLC and MUSE Community + Design
Subject: Phase I Engagement Summary

Phase I Engagement Summary

Introduction

The engagement strategy for this study is multifaceted, using multiple different access points to community members to ensure we reach a wide audience, especially hard to reach populations. The strategy is rooted in meeting people where they are, literally and figuratively, using a variety of activities, both digital and in-person, to gather feedback.

The engagement strategy for this plan is conducted across two primary phases. Phase I asks "where could we do better?" and coincided with the Existing Conditions Analysis and the Needs and Gaps Assessment phases of the LinkUp DuPage study. This phase focused on existing riders' travel behavior, identifying challenges, and areas for improvement.

Engagement Activities

Three activities were used in this project phase to gather both qualitative and quantitative feedback.

Qualitative Feedback Activities

Ridealongs

The project team joined two demand-response transportation routes operated by Pace to learn more about current rider experiences. The rides were organized by Pace for Tuesday, July 21, 2026 and Friday, July 24, 2026. Representatives from MUSE Community + Design, Fiona Kennedy and Lizbeth Carrazco; DuPage County, John Loper; and Pace, Charles Posejpal, were present for the first ride-along. Only the representatives from MUSE attended the second ride-along. Riders who talked with the team were gifted a portable charger with the LinkUp DuPage branding. A total of eight riders talked with the project team.



What we heard...

- Most issues arise due to a lack of communication between the schedulers and the driver or the schedulers and the rider.
- Riders have limited spontaneity in their lives due to the inability to schedule rides on the same day.
- Riders are learning about rules or standards after having already broken them.
- Drivers are well appreciated by riders, and issues with the system are not aimed at drivers.
- Riders are often late or need to schedule rides with a lot of leeway.
- This is the only form of transportation for many. Riders are grateful for the service and put up with challenges since it is their only option.
- "I understand how fortunate I am to have this, and I mean that. I plan to be late. I plan to wait because, what else can you do?" - Rider on 7/24/26



Listening Sessions

Two listening sessions were held in August 2026. The first was held at the Veteran Assistance Commission (VAC) Veterans Resource Fair, an annual fair that brings in roughly 500 attendees each year. The fair was held on Tuesday, July 25, 2026. A representative from MUSE Community + Design, Fiona Kennedy, was in attendance and shared a table with the Community Service representative for DuPage County. The project team asked attendees to vote for one demand-response transportation improvement that would be most important to them. The project team also gathered information about why non-riders do not ride.

The second listening session was held with AIM Center for Independent Living, a non-profit supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The event was held on Thursday, July 27, 2026, via Zoom. Representatives from MUSE Community + Design, Fiona Kennedy, and Lizbeth Carrasco were in attendance. The listening session focused on the "headaches & hopes" riders experience while taking demand-response transportation and the project team led the group through a series of questions. Across the two events, about 40 people were engaged.

What we heard...

- At the VAC resource fair, though attendees agreed all potential improvements are important, same-day or on-demand service was ranked the "most important" improvement.
- At the VAC resource fair, there was consensus between riders and non-riders that it is hard to know who to call to understand your eligibility or set up a ride.
- At the VAC resource fair, long and unreliable wait times were cited as a reason one rider no longer uses Ride DuPage and Pace Paratransit services.

- AIM-CIL session participants stated that Uber is more popular than Pace Paratransit and Ride DuPage due to the immediate ability to book rides.
- AIM-CIL session participants see an opportunity to improve Uber driver training if they are supporting this program.
- AIM-CIL session participants cannot rely on Pace Paratransit or Ride DuPage for time sensitive trips.
- AIM-CIL session participants feel very limited by the quarter mile buffer they are restricted to.

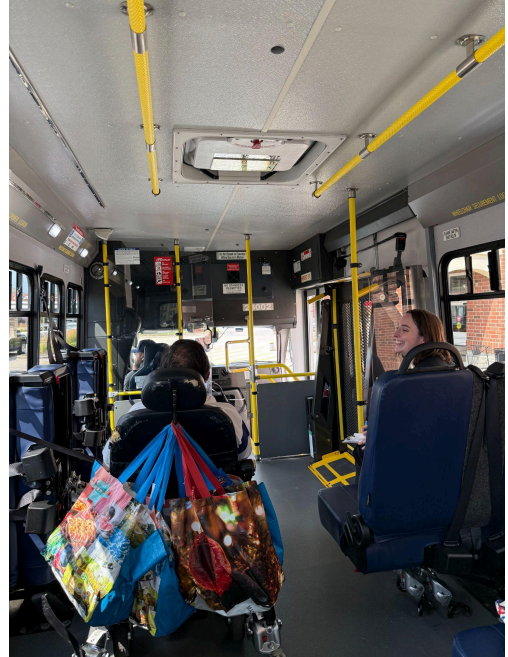
Qualitative Feedback Summary

Current riders want...

- Improved communication between the scheduling facility, drivers, and riders
- More reliable pick up and drop off times
- Same-day rides
- Less restrictive travel boundaries

Prospective riders want...

- Same-day rides
- A better understanding of who to contact to sign up and where they can ride



Quantitative Feedback Activities

Survey Methodology

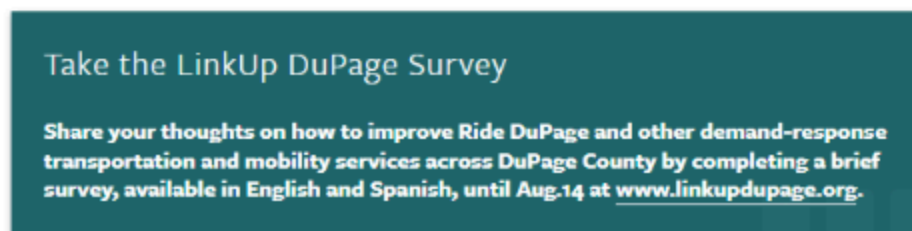
The Project Team employed a multi-channel engagement strategy to collect feedback from DuPage County residents and transit riders regarding current mobility patterns, challenges, and potential alternatives. The survey was disseminated to existing transit users and the general public to evaluate current travel habits, capture general mobility needs, daily travel patterns, and specific barriers related to demand-response transportation services across the county. To ensure broad community access, surveys were fielded in both English and Spanish. The survey was open to the public and received a total of 375 completed responses from community members across the region from July 6 through August 17, 2026.

To secure balanced geographic and demographic representation across DuPage County, the team executed a targeted community distribution plan. Outreach efforts specifically engaged active users of Ride DuPage, the Rideshare Access Program, Pace ADA Paratransit, municipal Dial-A-Ride services, as well as individuals who do not currently utilize public transit, in order to identify systemic barriers preventing transit adoption. A bilingual promotional flyer in English and Spanish was shared with municipal partners, agency contacts, and community networks for inclusion in digital newsletters and social media campaigns. Direct survey links were also hosted on the project website linkupdupage.org throughout the collection period. Specific promotional strategies for the survey included:

- Pace promoted the survey by adding a link on its [Ride DuPage website](#)
- Pace distributed a link to the survey to its demand-response communications listserv. By EOD July 22, 2026 following the e-blast, 537 recipients opened the email; 45 recipients clicked on the English survey, and 3 recipients clicked on the Spanish survey.
- City of Naperville promoted the survey in their newsletter and social media accounts, shown below.



Transportation and Parking



- Village of Lombard promoted the survey in their newsletters dated [July 23](#) and [July 30](#), 2026.
- The Village of Glen Ellyn promoted the survey in their newsletter, shown below.

Help Shape the Future of Transportation in DuPage County

DuPage County residents are invited to share their feedback on Ride DuPage and other demand-response transportation services through a new survey. Your input will help improve mobility options throughout the county. Participants who complete the survey will also be entered for a chance to win a \$100 Visa gift card.

[Click here to learn more.](#)



- Milton Township promoted the survey through several strategies:
 - Sent the survey to a high transit use area, the Colony Park Apartments in Carol Stream, and a partner Outreach Community Ministries.
 - Distributed the promotional flyer in our waiting room at Milton Township offices.
 - Distributed to all attendees of Senior Bingo in Wheaton at the VFW and some left at that location.
 - Distributed via Facebook and LinkedIn accounts operated by the Township.
- AIM CIL posted the promotional flyer to its Facebook account and Constant Contact lists, shown below.

The image is a screenshot of a Facebook post from the page "Achieving Independence and Mobility Center for Independent Living". The post is published by Michael Brynda and is 4 minutes old. The text of the post says: "Link Up DuPage is looking to improve demand-response transportation in DuPage County. If you use these services please fill out the survey below!". Below the text is a promotional flyer for the survey. The flyer has a blue header that says "Help shape the future of demand-response transportation in DuPage!". It includes two QR codes: one for taking the survey and one for a giveaway. The text on the flyer says: "Share your thoughts on how to improve Ride DuPage and other demand-response transportation services and mobility across DuPage county. Take our survey using the QR code, and enter our giveaway to win a \$100 Visa gift card!". There is also a Spanish version of the flyer with the text: "¡Ayude a forjar el futuro del transporte a la demanda en DuPage! Comparta sus ideas sobre cómo mejorar Ride DuPage y otros servicios de transporte a la demanda, así como la movilidad en el condado de DuPage. ¡Responda nuestra encuesta utilizando el código QR y participe en nuestro sorteo para ganar una tarjeta de regalo Visa de \$100!". At the bottom of the flyer, it says "Questions? / ¿Preguntas? See the website / Visite: website" and provides links for English and Spanish surveys. The Facebook interface shows the "Manage Page" sidebar on the left with options like "Professional dashboard", "Insights", "Planner", "Monetization", "Ad Center", "Create ads", "Boost Instagram post", and "Settings". The bottom of the post has a "Boost post" button.

Key Takeaways

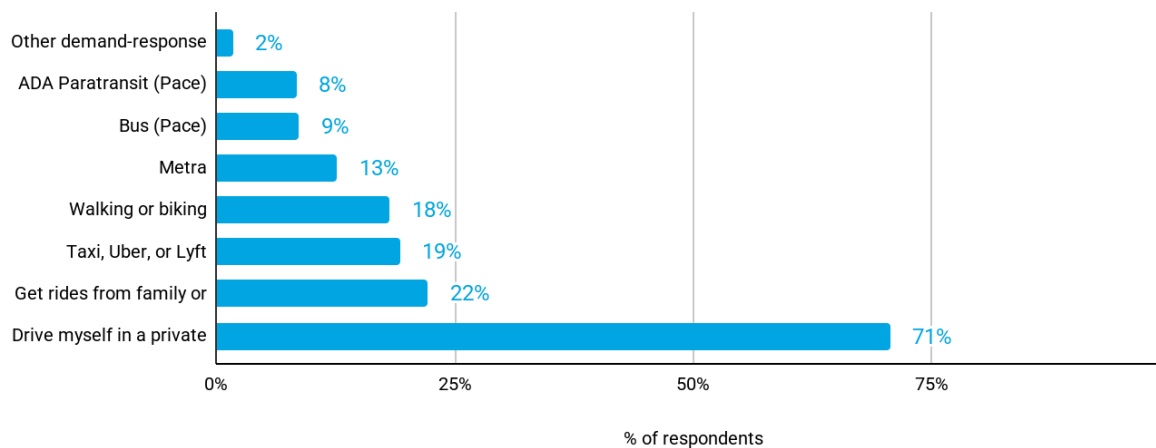
- **Most DuPage residents rely on private vehicles, and demand-response service remains a lesser known resource among respondents.** 71% typically get around by driving themselves, while only 8-19% use any form of demand-response, taxi/rideshare, or paratransit. 81% have never tried a demand-response service in the county at all, yet 31% of all respondents have missed work, school, or an appointment because they couldn't find transportation, suggesting unmet need by current demand-response services.
- **Among people who do use demand-response services, satisfaction is high, but reliability gaps still cause missed trips.** 71% of current users rated their satisfaction 7 or higher (out of 10). Still, 53% said they've been unable to make a needed trip in the past six months, most commonly because there was no service in their area (19%) or a scheduled ride didn't show up (14%), indicating that coverage and reliability, not service quality overall, is the primary challenge.
- **Confusing, inconsistent eligibility rules are a real barrier to access.** 42% of respondents were unaware that eligibility rules and policies differ across DuPage's demand-response services, and among those who were aware, a third (33% of all aware respondents) said this had caused them confusion or difficulty. This aligns with non-users' top cited reasons for not using demand-response: 20% said they were not eligible, and 8% cited difficulty with cross-County transfers, pointing to a clear opportunity around simplifying and unifying rider eligibility and enrollment.
- **Riders most want on-demand flexibility and simpler registration, more than vehicle upgrades or amenities.** 25% said the ability to request a same-day or on-demand ride would matter most to them among potential service improvements, followed by a clearer, easier registration process (17%). By contrast, vehicle or technology-related improvements like real-time tracking (5%), cleaner/newer vehicles (2%), and electric vehicles (1%) ranked far lower, suggesting investment should prioritize scheduling flexibility and ease of access over fleet upgrades.
- **Demand-response riders are disproportionately people with disabilities using the service for essential, hard-to-delay trips.** 45% of current users cite a disability or health condition as the main reason they use demand-response over other transportation, and half (50%) use it primarily for medical or dental appointments, far more than for errands (30%) or work (23%). This is despite 29% of all survey respondents overall reporting a long-term disability, underscoring how central these services are to a population with fewer transportation alternatives.
- **The respondent base skews older and is broadly smartphone-capable, supporting a potential shift toward app-based booking.** Nearly half of respondents (47%) are 65 or older, and 25% report no personal vehicle available at home, a population with real mobility constraints. At the same time, 96% use a smartphone, suggesting there's room to modernize booking (currently difficult for 4% of non-users) without excluding the broader eligible rider population.

Survey Results Highlights

Question: How do you typically get around DuPage County?

Asked of all of the respondents. N=375. Respondents could select multiple options for this question, so percentages do not sum to 100%.

How do you typically get around DuPage County?

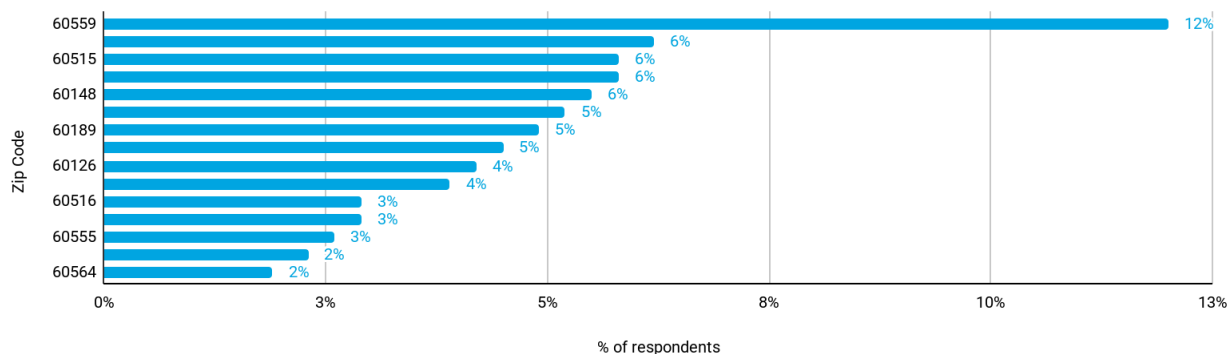


The large majority of respondents (71%) drive themselves in a private vehicle, followed by getting rides from family or friends (22%) and taxi, Uber, or Lyft (19%). Formal demand-response and paratransit options make up a small share of typical travel, Pace ADA Paratransit (8%) and other demand-response (2%), indicating these services currently serve a narrow segment of the county's overall mobility needs.

Question: What is your home zip code?

Asked to all respondents. N=308. This is a single-choice question; only the top 15 zip codes are illustrated in the graph.

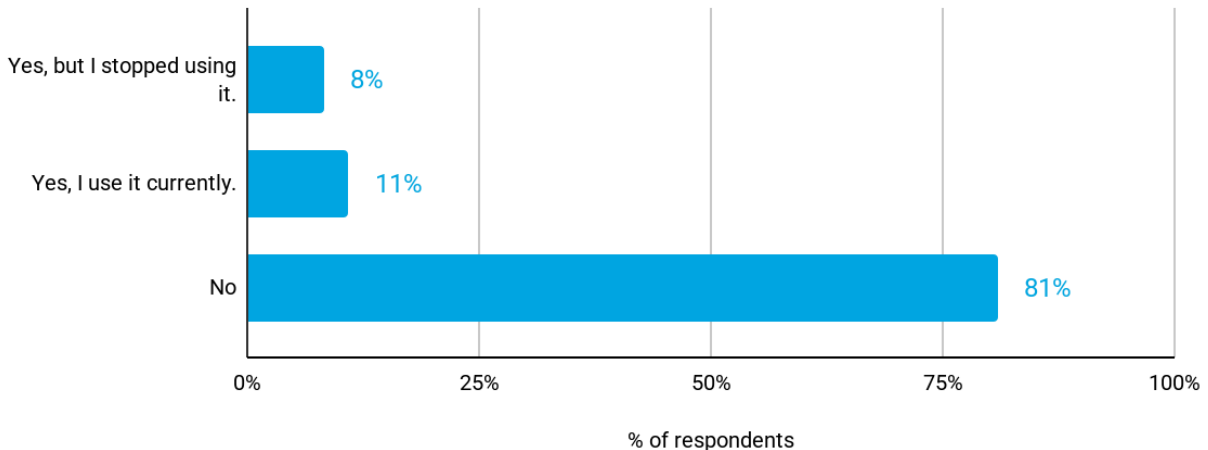
What is your home zip code? (top 15)



Question: Have you ever tried using a demand-response service in DuPage County?

Asked to all respondents. N=377. Single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

Have you ever tried using a demand-response service in DuPage County?

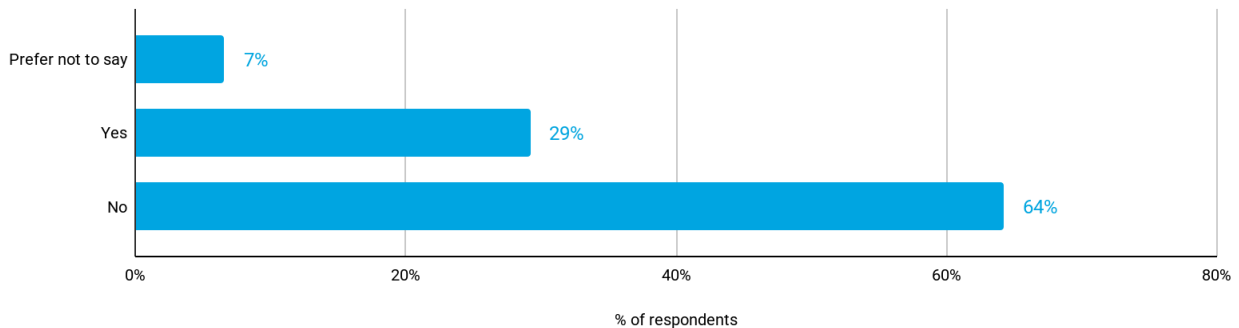


81% of respondents have never tried a demand-response service, while just 11% or ~40 respondents currently use one and 8% tried it but stopped. Combined with the finding that 31% of all respondents have missed a work, school, or appointment commitment due to lack of transportation, this points to a gap between existing unmet mobility needs and current demand-response awareness or uptake.

Question: Do you have a long-term disability that affects how you get around?

Asked to all respondents. N=318. Single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

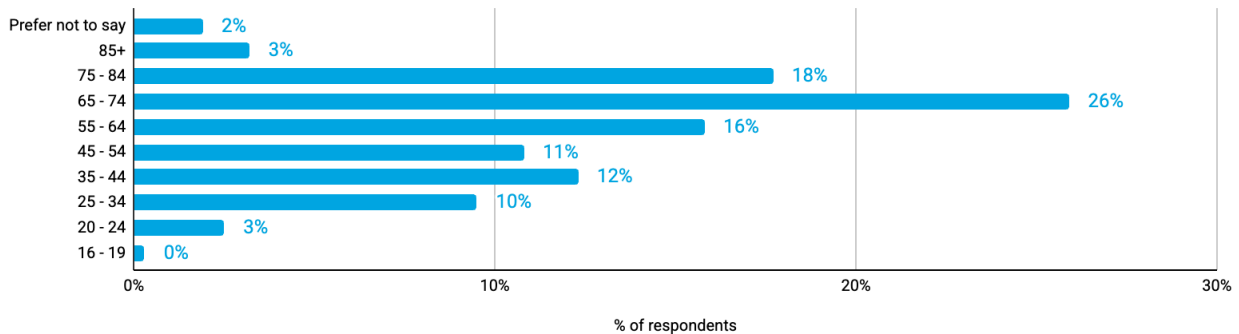
Do you have a long-term disability that affects how you get around?



29% of all respondents reported a long-term disability affecting their mobility, reinforcing that accessibility needs extend well beyond the current demand-response user base and should be a central design consideration for any new or expanded service.

Question: What is your age?

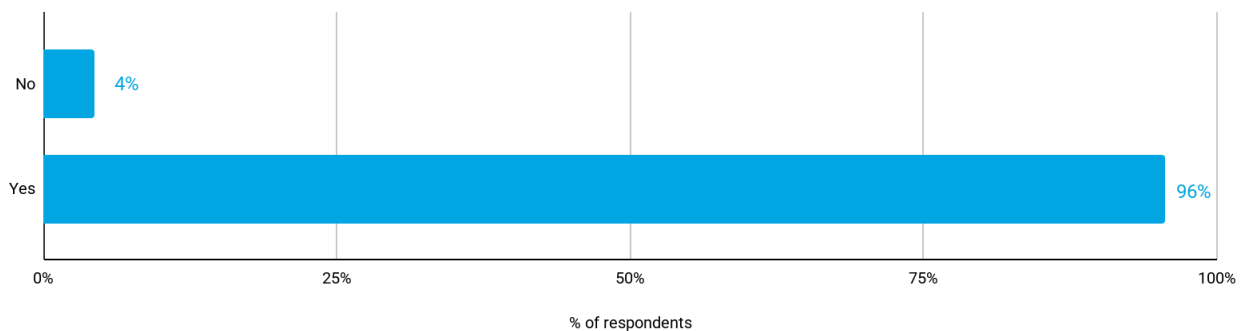
Asked to all respondents. N=316. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

What is your age?

Respondents skew notably older, with nearly half (47%) aged 65 or older (26% 65-74, 18% 75-84, and 3% 85+). Working-age adults are represented across the 25-64 range but in smaller shares (10-16% per bracket, 49% in this range total), and very few respondents are under 25 (3% ages 20-24, and less than one percent ages 16-19). This age distribution should be kept in mind when weighing survey findings, particularly around service preferences, technology use, and disability rates.

Question: Do you use a smartphone?

Asked to all respondents. N=316. Single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

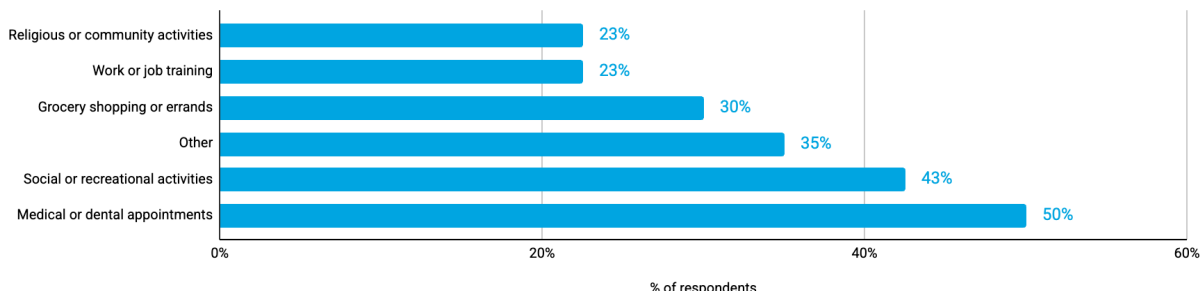
Do you use a smartphone?

The vast majority (96%) of respondents use a smartphone, indicating strong potential for app-based booking and communication tools, though the sizable older population (47% are 65+) means phone- or in-person booking options should remain available alongside any digital tools.

Question: What do you most commonly use these demand-response services for? (select all that apply)

Asked to respondents who use demand-response services in DuPage County. N=40. Respondents could select multiple options for this question, so percentages do not sum to 100%.

What do you most commonly use these Demand Response services for?

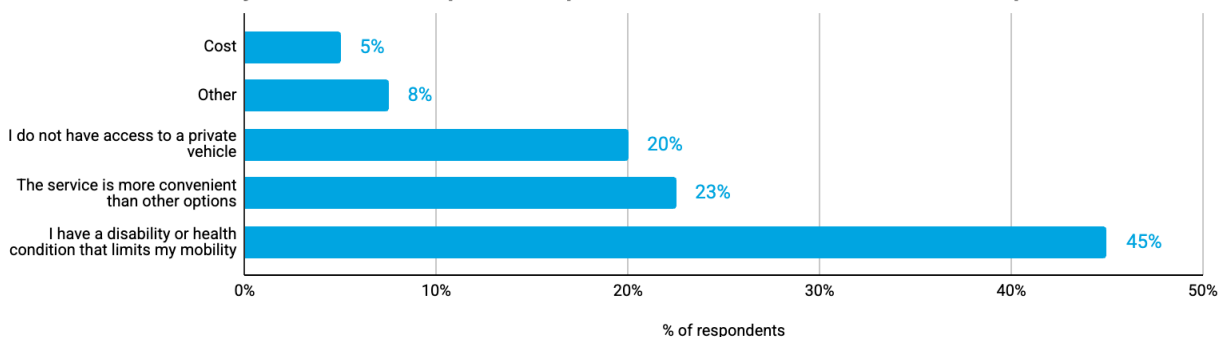


Medical or dental appointments (50%) and social or recreational activities (43%) are by far the most common uses of demand-response services, followed by grocery shopping or errands (30%). Work or job training and religious or community activities are each cited by about a quarter of users (23%). This spread reinforces that demand-response trips serve a wide range of essential and quality-of-life purposes beyond just medical needs, underscoring the importance of service spans and coverage that can accommodate varied trip types throughout the day.

Question: What is the main reason you use demand-response transportation rather than another means of transportation?

Asked to respondents who use demand-response services in DuPage County. N=40. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

What is the main reason you use demand-response transportation rather than another means of transportation?



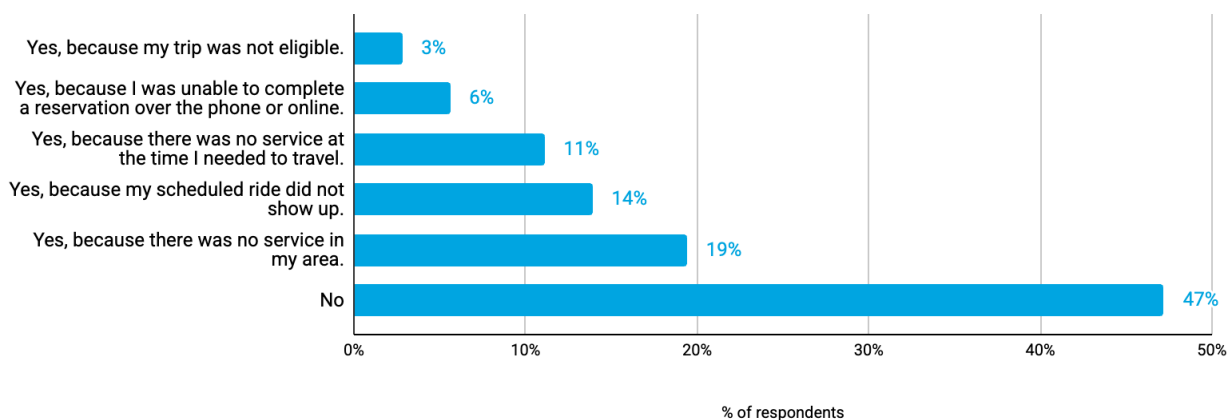
Among current users, 45% cite a disability or health condition that limits their mobility as the primary reason for using demand-response, well ahead of convenience (23%) or lack of access to a private vehicle (20%). This reinforces that the existing rider base leans heavily on these services out of necessity rather than preference.

Question: In the past six months, have you ever been unable to make a trip you needed because the service you rely on wasn't available?

Asked to respondents who use demand-response services in DuPage County. N=36.

Single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

In the past six months, have you ever been unable to make a trip you needed because the service you rely on wasn't available?



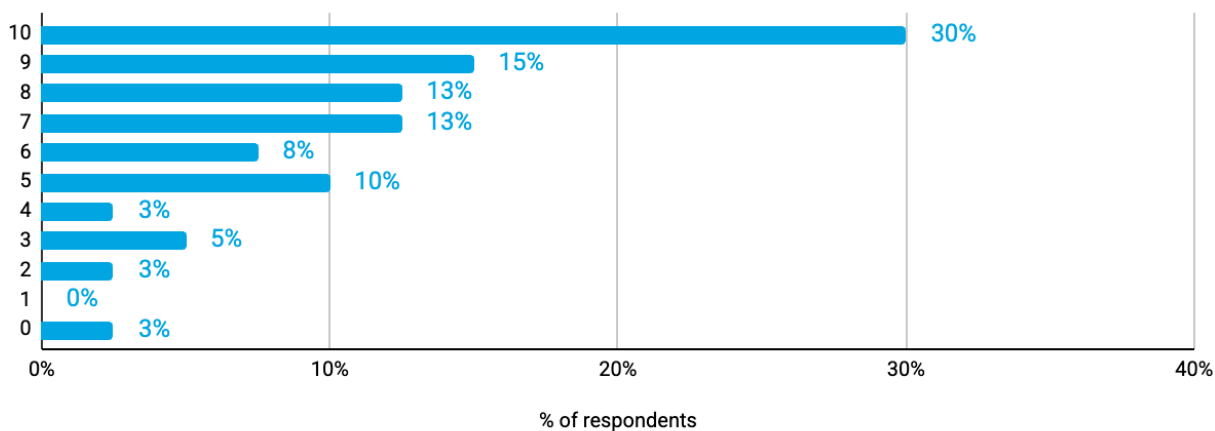
53% of respondents stated they had been unable to make a trip they needed in the last six months due to lack of transportation, most often because there was no service in their area (19%) or their scheduled ride didn't show up (14%). This suggests reliability and geographic coverage, rather than overall service satisfaction, are the leading obstacles to consistent use.

Question: How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the demand-response services you use?

Asked to respondents who use demand-response services in DuPage County. N=40.

Single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the demand-response services you use?

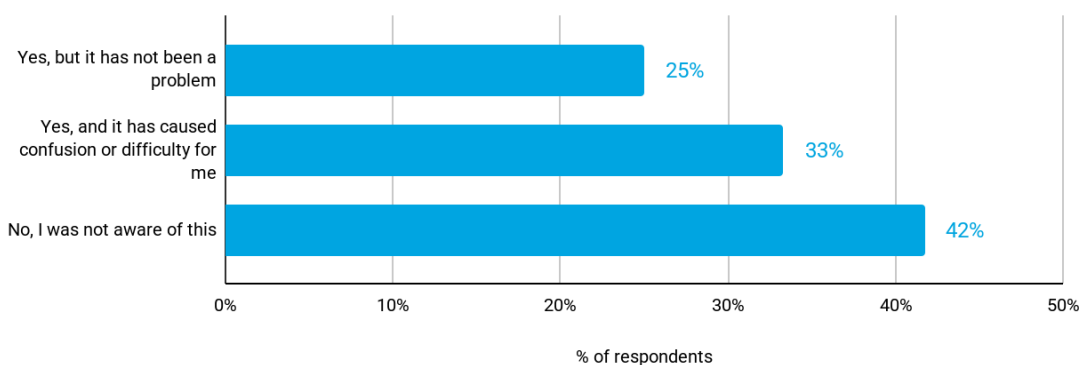


Satisfaction is generally high among current users, 30% gave the top rating of 10, and 71% rated their experience 7 or above. Still, a meaningful minority (roughly 14% rating 3 or below) reported real dissatisfaction, suggesting service quality is slightly inconsistent across the rider base.

Question: Are you aware that eligibility rules and travel policies may differ across different demand-response services in DuPage County?

Asked to respondents who use demand-response services in DuPage County. N=36. Single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

Are you aware that eligibility rules and travel policies may differ across different demand-response services in DuPage County?

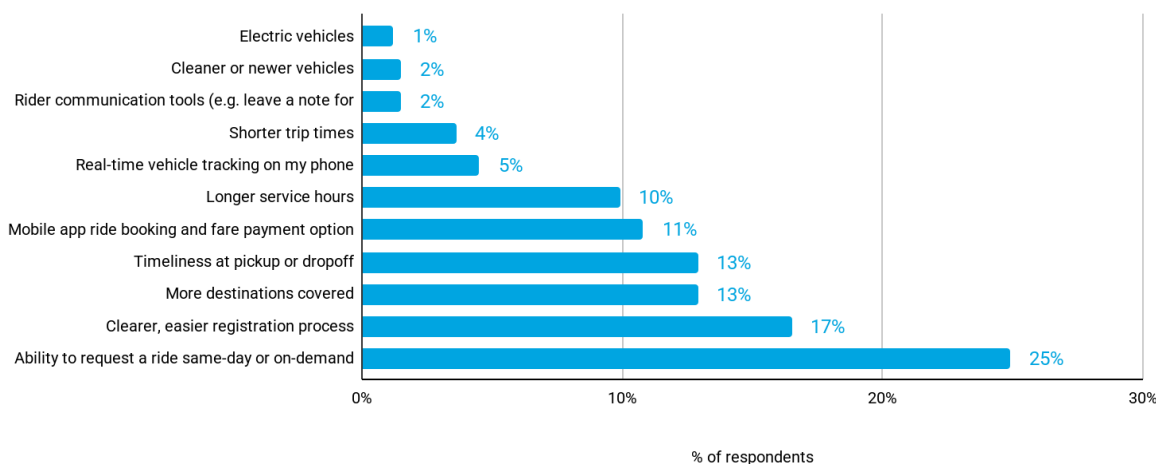


A plurality (42%) of respondents were not aware that eligibility and policies vary by service, and among those who were aware, roughly half (33% of the full sample) said this had caused confusion or difficulty. This is a clear signal that a more unified or clearly communicated eligibility framework could reduce a real barrier to access.

Question: Which of the following service improvements would matter most to you?

Asked to all respondents. N=334. Single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

Which of the following service improvements would matter most to you?



Same-day/on-demand ride requests (25%) and a clearer, easier registration process (17%) were the top-cited improvements, well ahead of more destinations covered (13%), timeliness (13%), or amenity-driven upgrades like real-time tracking (5%) or newer vehicles (2%). This should inform prioritization toward flexibility and simplified access over fleet investment.

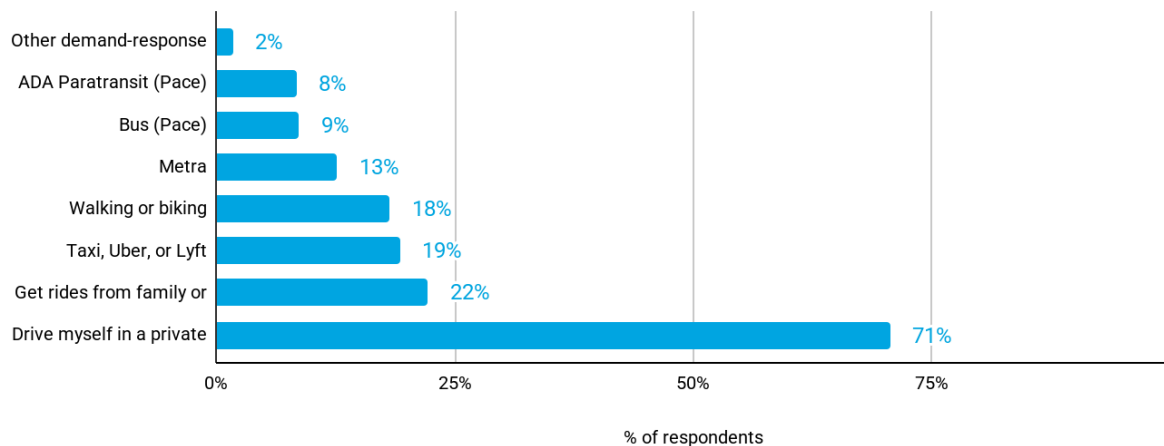
Appendix A: Online Survey Question Results

This appendix presents results for each individual question in the digital public survey, and sample sizes vary by question because respondents were not required to answer every question.

Q1. How do you typically get around DuPage County?

Asked to all respondents. N=375. Respondents could select multiple options for this question, so percentages do not sum to 100%.

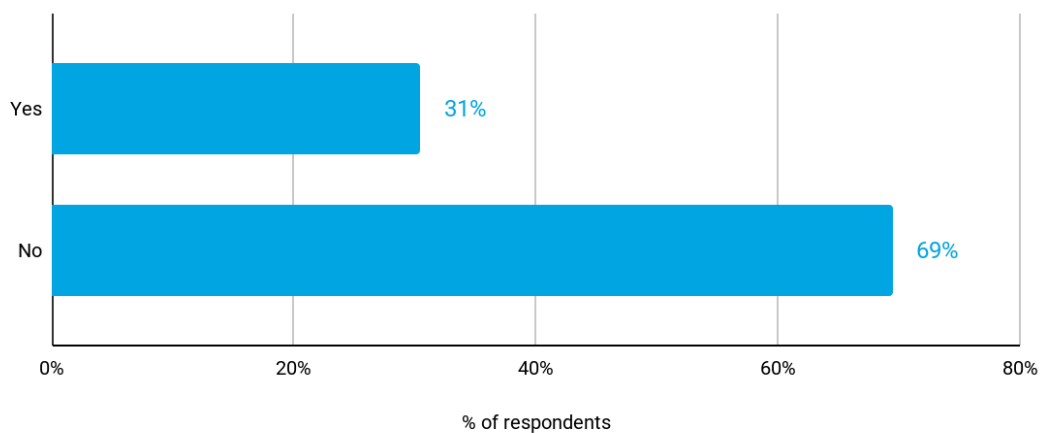
How do you typically get around DuPage County?



Q2. Have you ever missed work, school, or an important appointment because you could not find transportation?

Asked to all respondents. N=377. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

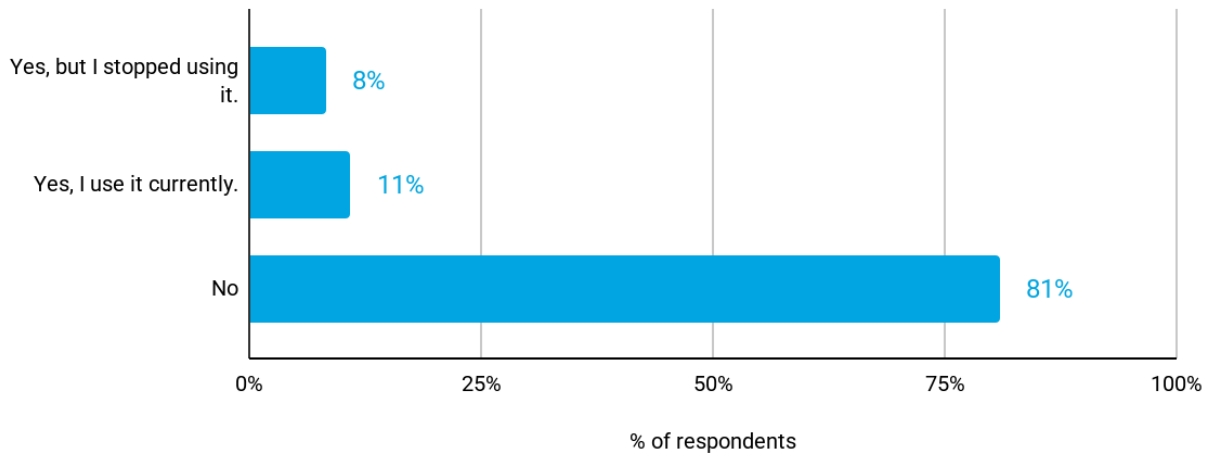
Have you ever missed work, school, or an important appointment because you could not find transportation?



Q3: Have you ever tried using a demand-response service in DuPage County?

Asked to all respondents. N=377. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

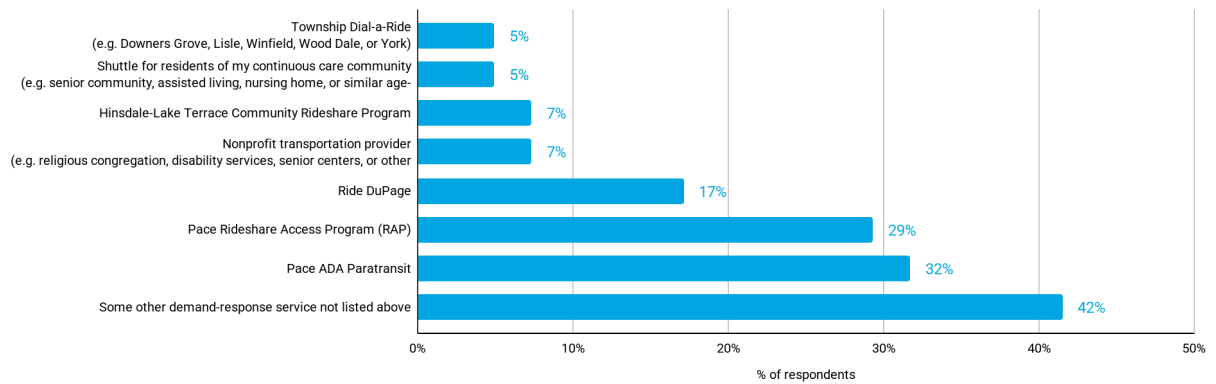
Have you ever tried using a demand-response service in DuPage County?



Q4. Which of the following transportation services do you currently use in DuPage County?

N=41. Respondents could select multiple options for this question, so percentages do not sum to 100%.

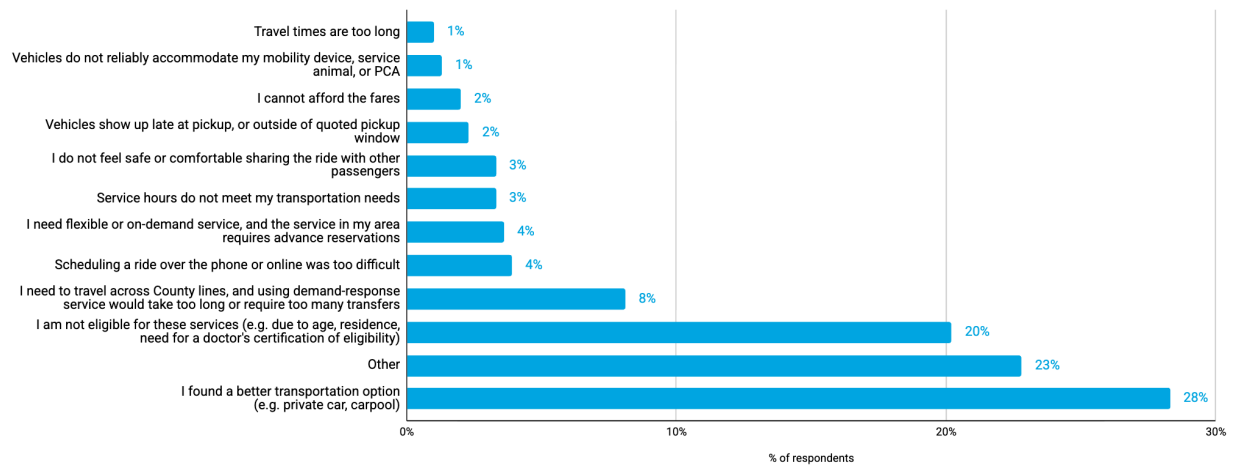
Which of the following transportation services do you currently use in DuPage County?



Q5. If you do not use, or have stopped using, any demand-response services in DuPage County, what is the main reason?

Asked to all respondents. N=307. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

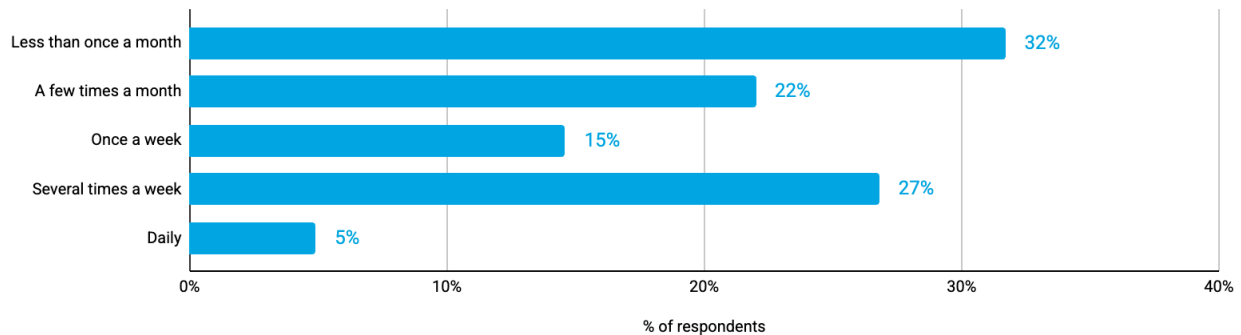
If you do not use, or have stopped using, any demand-response services in DuPage County, what is the main reason?



Q6. How often do you typically use these demand-response transportation services?

N=41. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

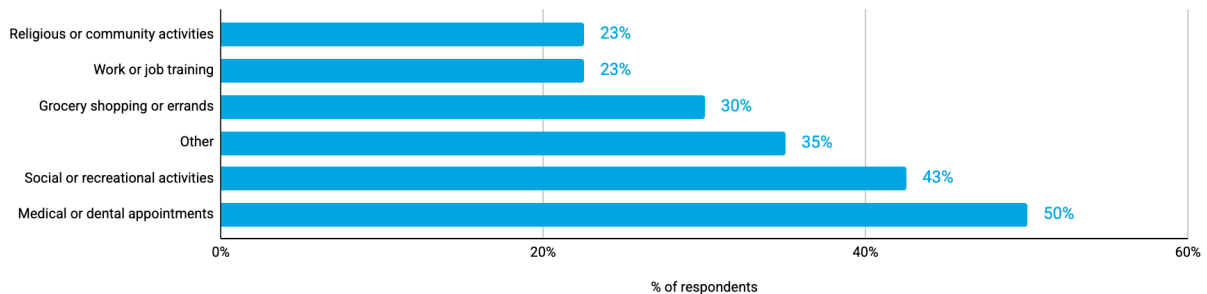
How often do you typically use these demand-response transportation services?



Q7. What do you most commonly use these demand-response services for? (select all that apply)

N=40. Respondents could select multiple options for this question, so percentages do not sum to 100%.

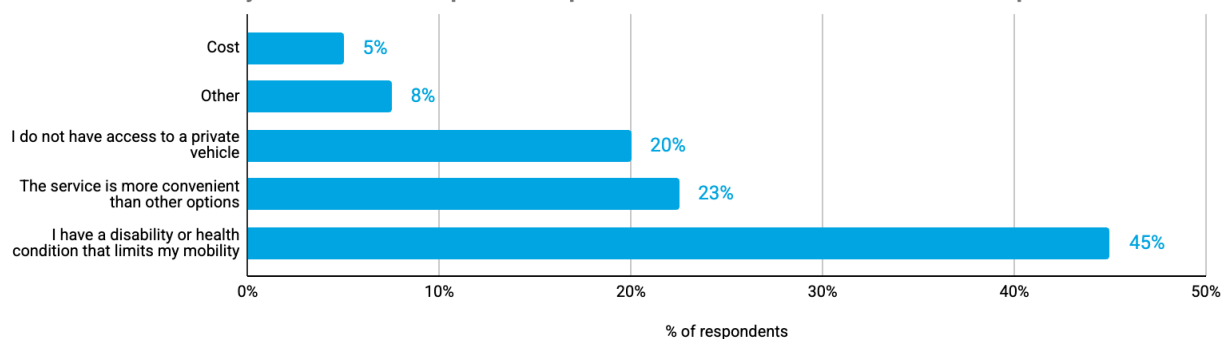
What do you most commonly use these Demand Response services for?



Q8. What is the main reason you use demand-response transportation rather than another means of transportation?

N=40. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

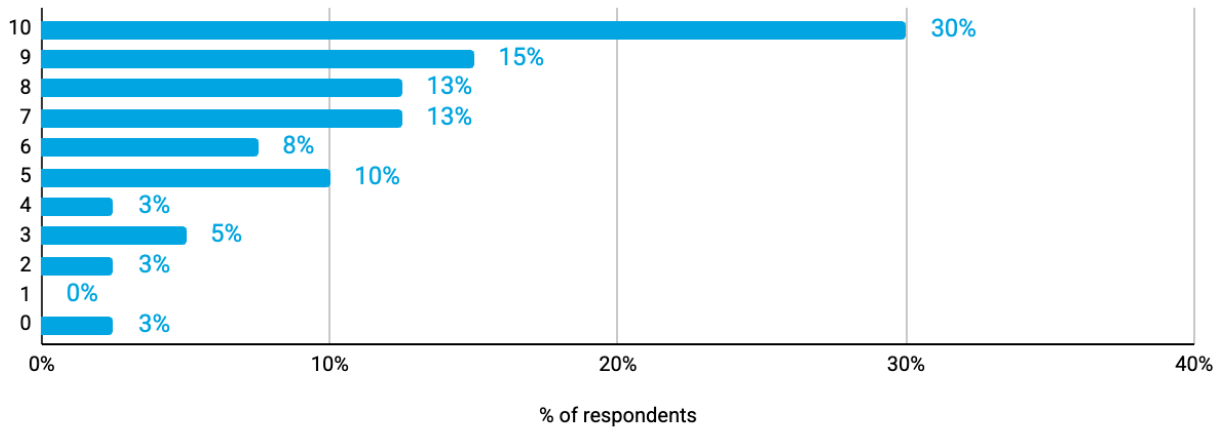
What is the main reason you use demand-response transportation rather than another means of transportation?



Q9. How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the demand-response services you use?

N=40. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

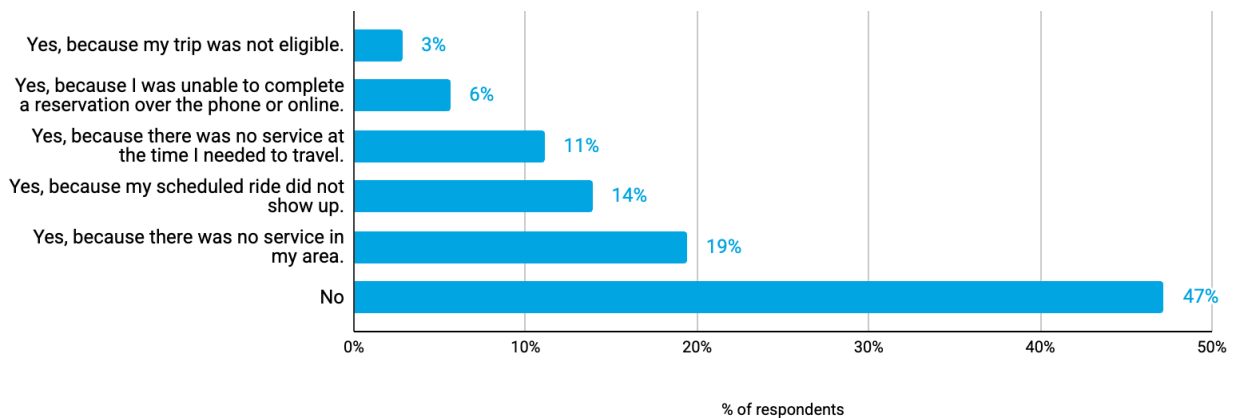
How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the demand-response services you use?



Q10. In the past six months, have you ever been unable to make a trip you needed because the service you rely on wasn't available?

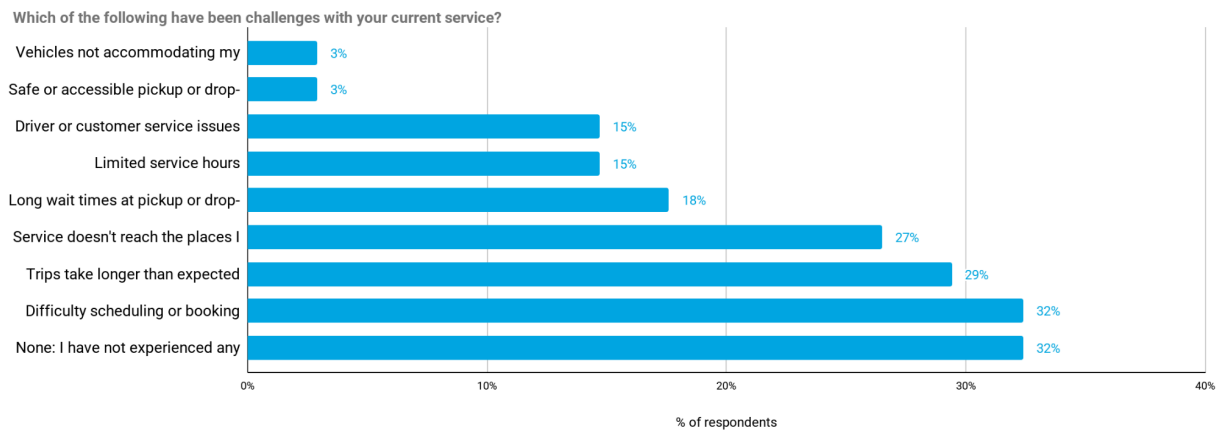
N=36. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

In the past six months, have you ever been unable to make a trip you needed because the service you rely on wasn't available?



Q11. Which of the following have been challenges with your current service?

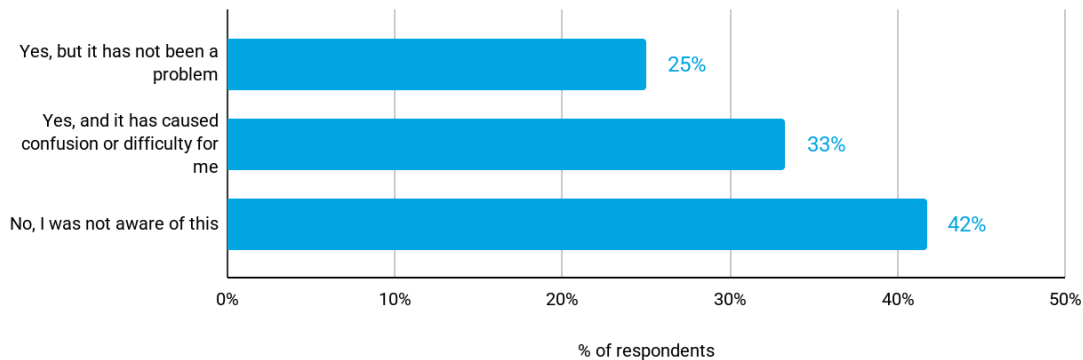
N=34. Respondents could select multiple options for this question, so percentages do not sum to 100%.



Q12. Are you aware that eligibility rules and travel policies may differ across different demand-response services in DuPage County?

N=36. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

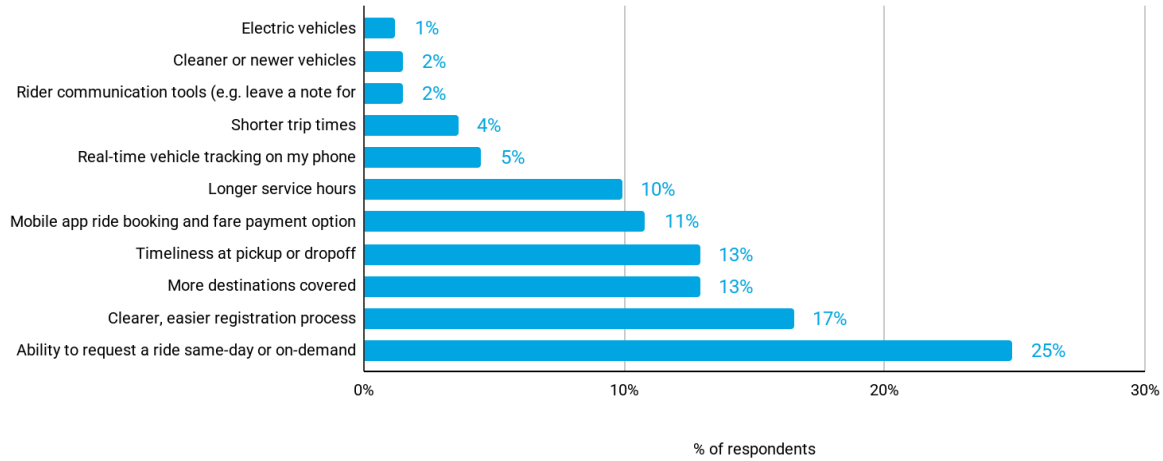
Are you aware that eligibility rules and travel policies may differ across different demand-response services in DuPage County?



Q13. Which of the following service improvements would matter most to you?

Asked to all respondents. N=334. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

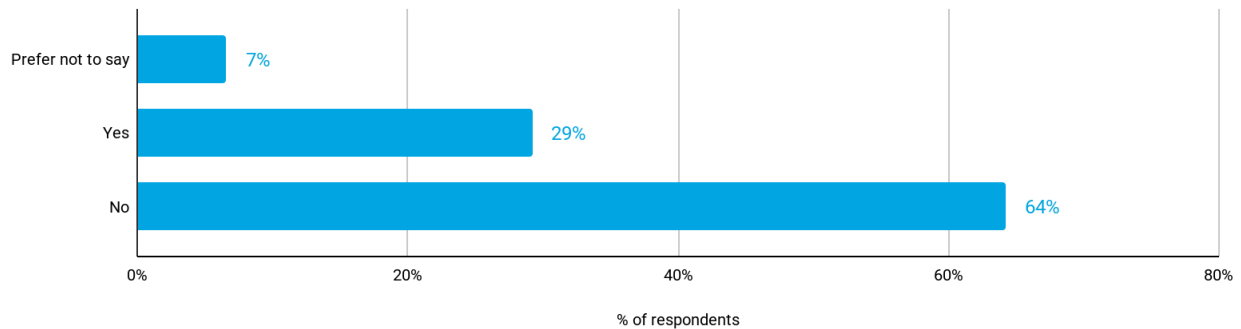
Which of the following service improvements would matter most to you?



Q14. Do you have a long-term disability that affects how you get around?

Asked to all respondents. N=318. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

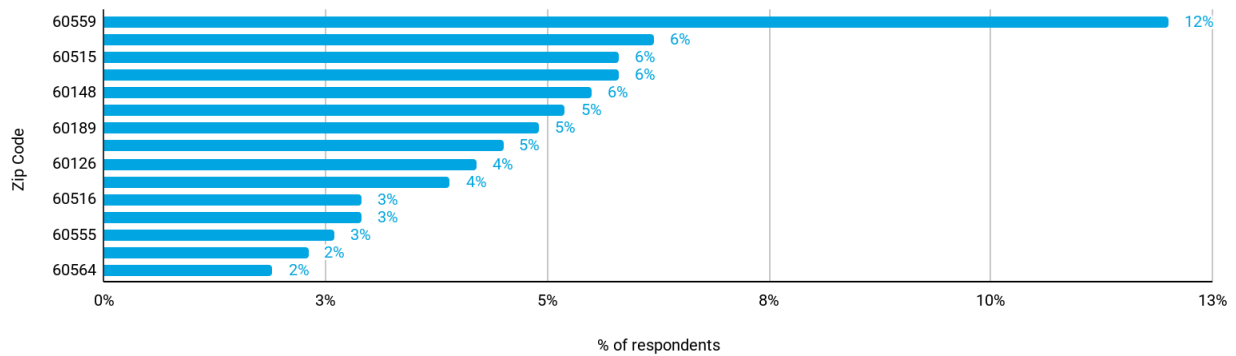
Do you have a long-term disability that affects how you get around?



Q15. What is your home zip code?

Asked to all respondents. N=308. This is a single-choice question; only the top 15 zip codes are illustrated below.

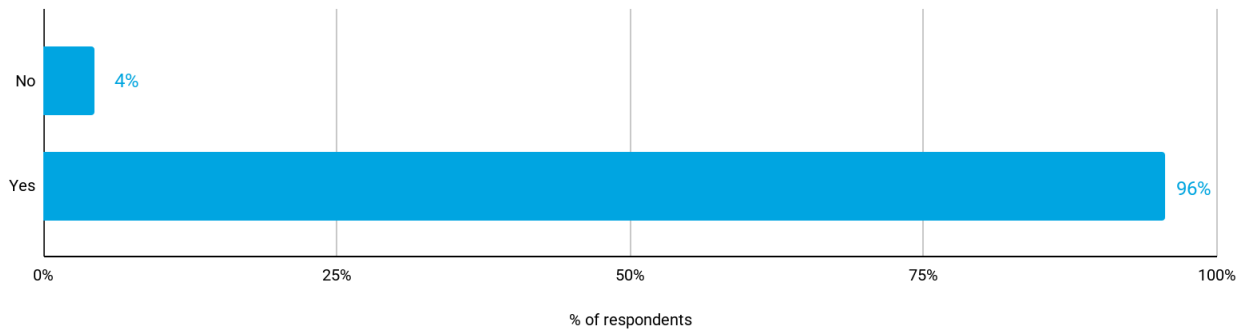
What is your home zip code? (top 15)



Q16. Do you use a smartphone?

Asked to all respondents. N=316. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

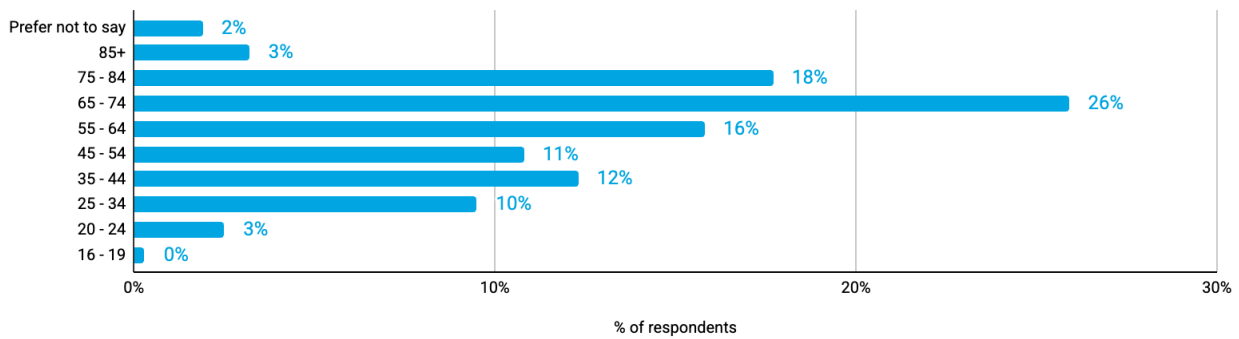
Do you use a smartphone?



Q17. What is your age?

Asked to all respondents. N=316. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

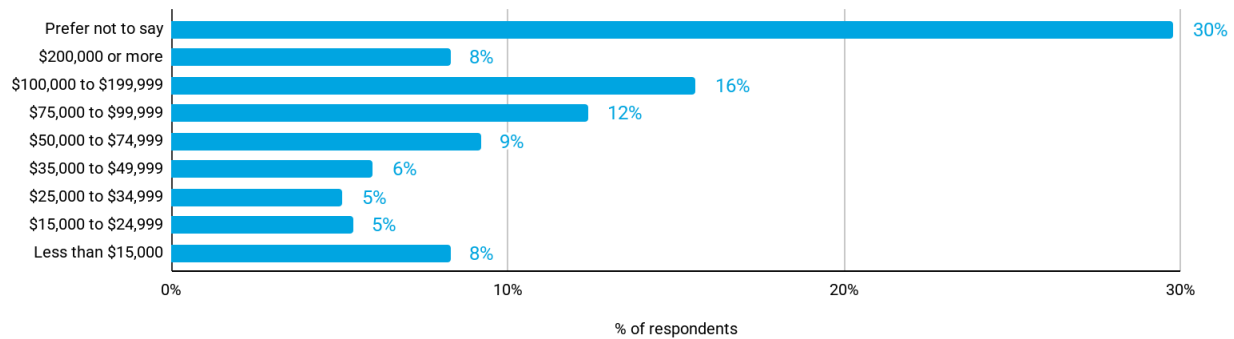
What is your age?



Q18. What was your household's annual income last year?

Asked to all respondents. N=315. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

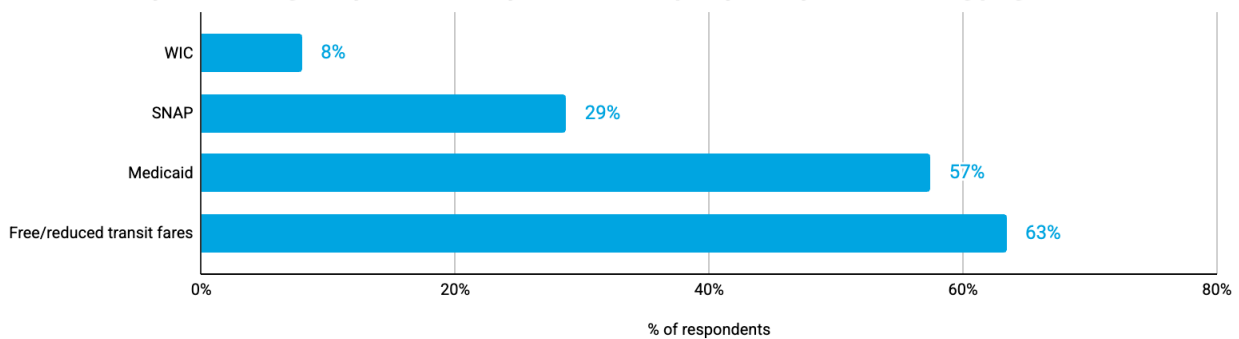
What was your household's annual income last year?



Q19. To the best of your knowledge, do you or those in your household qualify for any of the following programs?

N=34. Respondents could select multiple options for this question, so percentages do not sum to 100%.

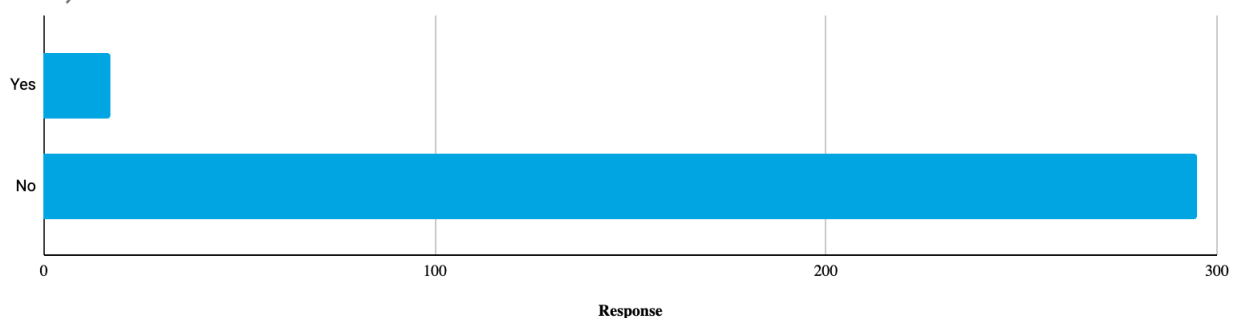
To the best of your knowledge, do you or those in your household qualify for any of the following programs?



Q20. Do you live in an age-restricted, continuous care community (e.g. assisted living, retirement community, or nursing home)?

Asked to all respondents. N=312. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

Do you live in an age-restricted, continuous care community (e.g. assisted living, retirement community, or nursing home)?



Q21. Do you have a personal vehicle available to you at home?

Asked to all respondents. N=313. This is a single-choice question; percentages sum to ~100%.

Do you have a personal vehicle available to you at home?

