

Maximize NWMO Alumni &
Resident 2025 Survey

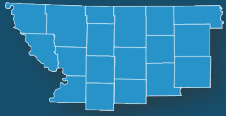
Worth County Findings

Table of Contents



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Executive Summary | 6. Important Factors for Where You Live |
| 2. Survey Background | 7. What Influences Your Moving Decisions |
| 3. Survey Demographics | 8. What Do You Support in Your Community |
| 4. What are the Best Things | 9. Community Belonging and Offerings |
| 5. Reasons for Where You Live by Moving Status | 10. What Changes Worry or Excite You |

Executive Summary



The NWMO Economy Trends



MAXIMIZE
NWMO

The Regional Vitality Initiative of the
Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri

The **Northwest Missouri (NWMO)** region is projected to have a population of 247,000 in 2025, reflecting a 0.9% decline in residents since 2020. Missouri's population grew by 1.8% during the same period. While the region has experienced modest job growth of 1.6% over the past five years, this pace falls short of the state's 9% employment expansion.

NWMO trends mirror much of rural America. This agricultural and manufacturing-based economy, however, benefits from a close proximity to a large metro area, a lower cost of living, and high social engagement, among other advantages, that can serve as foundational economic strengths to build on.

NWMO Sub-Group 2025 Estimates and (5-Year % Change)

Group 2:

Home to Maryville
38K Population **(-1.4%)**
17K Jobs **(+5.7%)**

Group 4:

Home to Trenton
41K Population **(0%)**
15K Jobs **(-8.5%)**

Group 1:

Home to St. Joseph
133K Population **(-2.0%)**
62K Jobs **(+2.6%)**

Group 3:

Home to Chillicothe
36K Population **(+3.1%)**
14K Jobs **(+5.0%)**



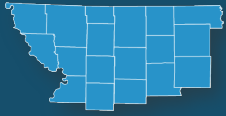
NWMO Thriving Communities – Selected Contribution Indicators

Some regional data indicate higher rates of civic participation and nonprofit/social associations, good indicators of social engagement.

Contribution Indicator	NWMO Region	Missouri	U.S.
Census Housing Unit Response Rate	93%	84%	83%
Voter Participation Rate	61%	64%	64%
Nonprofits Orgs per 100,000 Pop.	571	535	474
Social Associations per 100,000 Pop.	129	119	97

Sources: Lightcast for population and employment figures. [Thriving Communities](#) data from the University of Missouri Extension CARES and Community Development.

Exceed



Answering Why People Move



The Regional Vitality Initiative of the
Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri

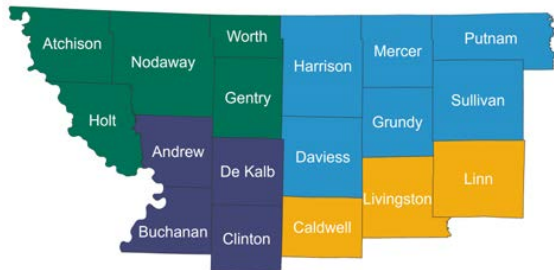
ALUMNI & RESIDENT SURVEY



2025

MAXIMIZE
NWMO

- Open for **four months**, from mid-June to mid-October, 2025.
- **Similar to the 2020 survey**, so comparisons could be made.
- Open to current and former residents of 18 Northwestern Missouri counties. Most responses from: **Worth, Buchanan, and Livingston** Counties.



Survey Goal: To Better Understand How to Retain and Attract Talent to Our Region

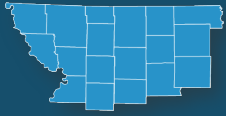
Survey Questions Asked About:

1. What do you value about your community?
2. Reasons for moving in or out of the NWMO region
3. What influences where you'll live in the coming years?
4. What your community offers, and how you support it.

1,082 People with NWMO Ties Responded to the 2025 Survey

- 71% were female, less than in 2020 (75%).
- 3 out of 4 were employed, similar to 2020.
- 59% had at least a Bachelor's degree, compared to 22% of the population.
- 35% were age 60 or older, an increase from 2020 (31%). This compares to 27% of the population.
- Overall, respondents in 2020 and 2025 were more likely to be female, have higher education attainment, and be older than the general population. This is common in community surveys, where response rates tend to be higher for populations with these characteristics.

Exceed



Respondent Breakouts



**MAXIMIZE
NWMO**

The Regional Vitality Initiative of the
Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri

Regional Groups of Counties

Group 2:

419 Responses (39%)
Home to Maryville

Group 4:

67 Responses (6%)
Home to Trenton



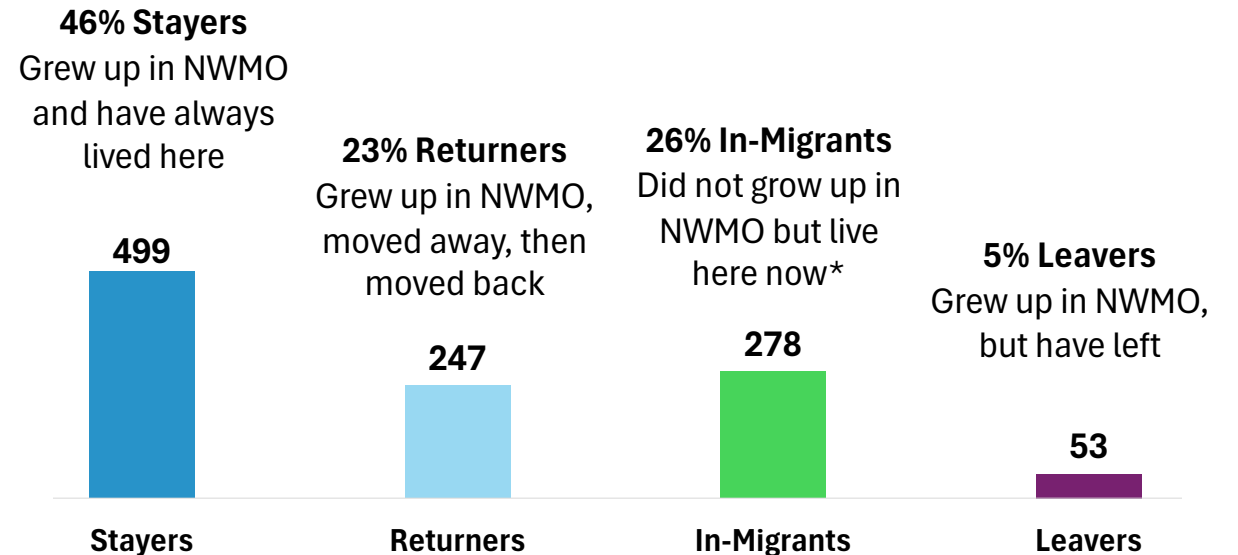
Group 1:

338 Responses (31%)
Home to St. Joseph

Group 3:

258 Responses (24%)
Home to Chillicothe

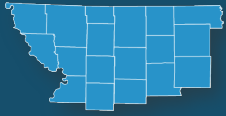
Population Groups by Moving Status



*An in-migrant in this analysis is someone who has moved into the NWMO region for the first time. This differs from "immigrant," which refers to international border migration.

Due to the analytical limitations of very small sample sizes, Group 4 and Leaver breakouts are excluded from the remaining information.

Exceed



Why Stay, Come Back, or Leave NWMO



MAXIMIZE
NWMO

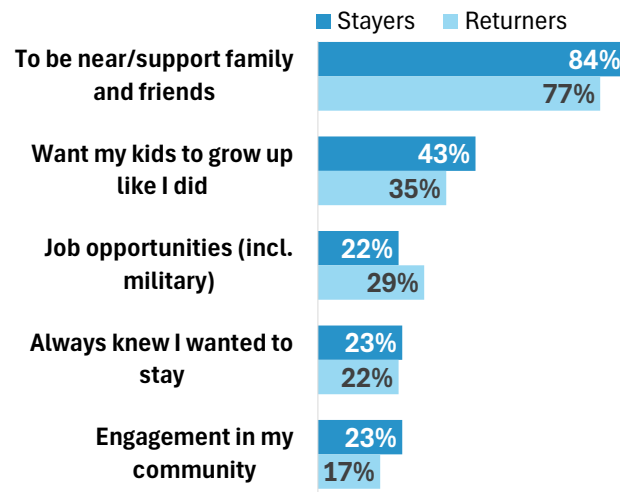
The Regional Vitality Initiative of the
Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri

Relationships remain critical, but **Job Opportunities** continue to be the most likely reason people move into or out of NWMO, and are becoming increasingly important.

Why Stay or Come Back to NWMO?

Family & Friends

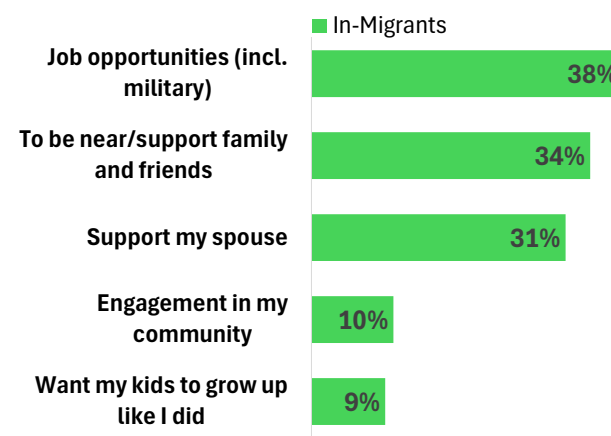
Top five 2025 reasons for STAYERS and RETURNERS (Same as 2020 top five). For RETURNERS, **Jobs** ranked #3.



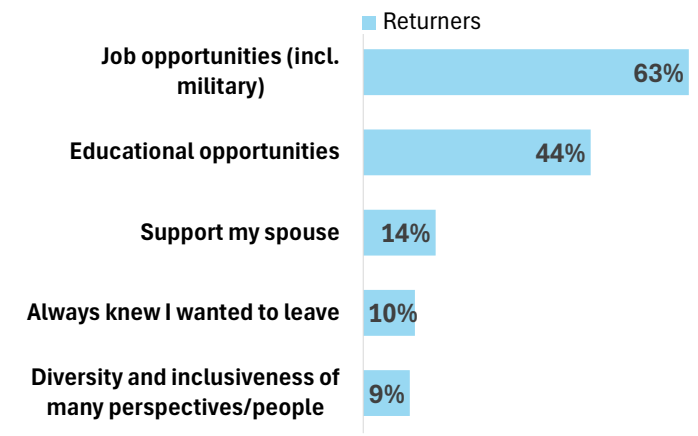
Why Move In or Out of NWMO?

Job Opportunities

Top five 2025 reasons for IN-MIGRANTS to **move into** NWMO (Same as 2020 top five). **Family & Friends** was #1 in 2020, but **Jobs** #1 now.



Top five 2025 reasons for RETURNERS to **move out of** NWMO (Same as 2020 top five). **Jobs** more important in 2025 vs. 2020. LEAVERS also had the same top reasons.



Exceed



The Best Thing about Where You Live?



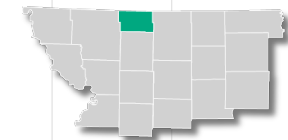
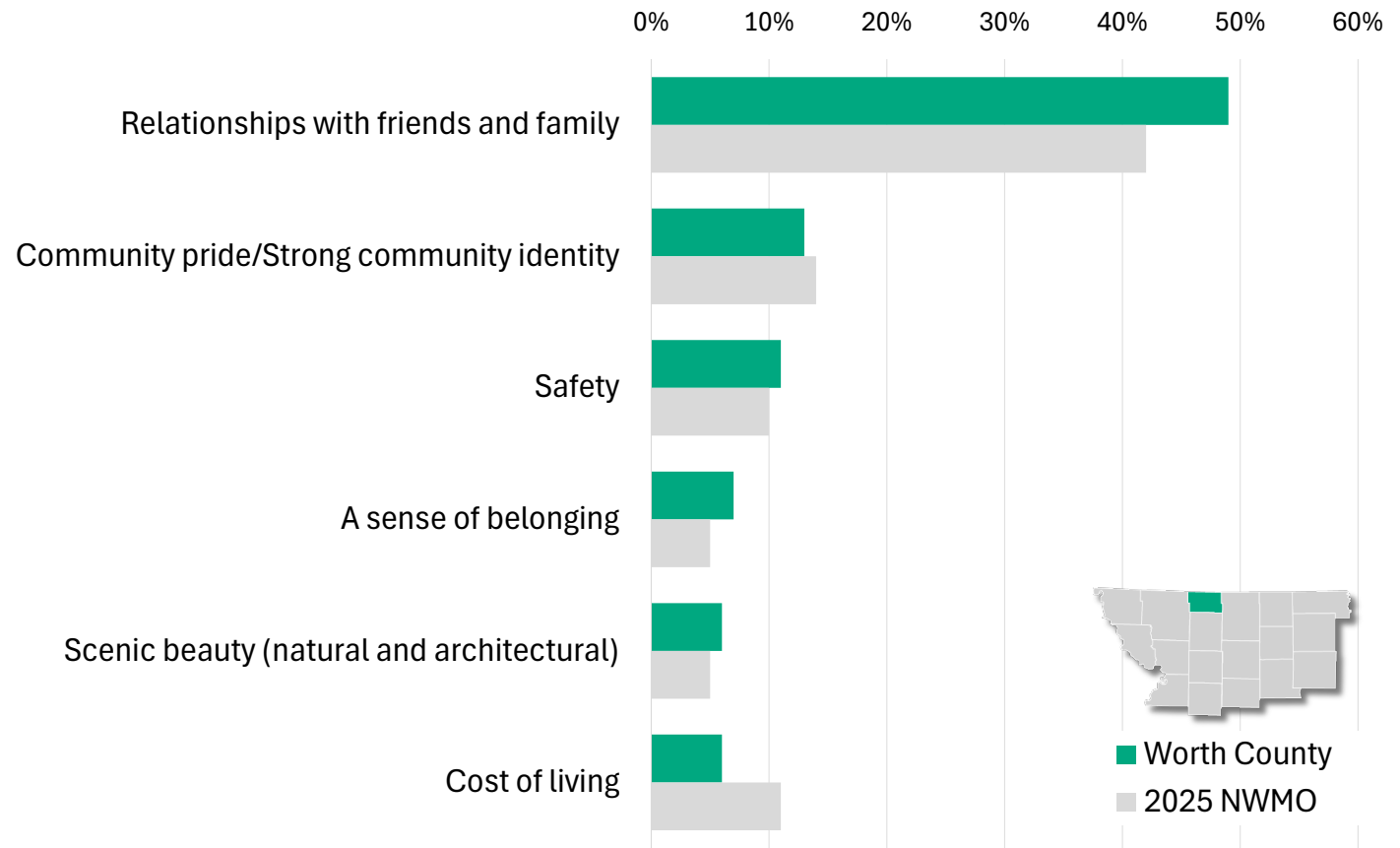
**MAXIMIZE
NWMO**

The Regional Vitality Initiative of the
Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri

Key Takeaway:

- Nearly half said **Relationships with Friends and Family** was the best thing about living in Worth County.

What is the very best thing about living and/or working in the region?



Exceed



What Do You Want In the Place You Live?



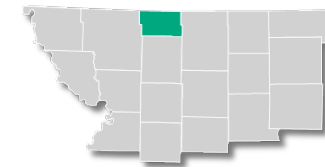
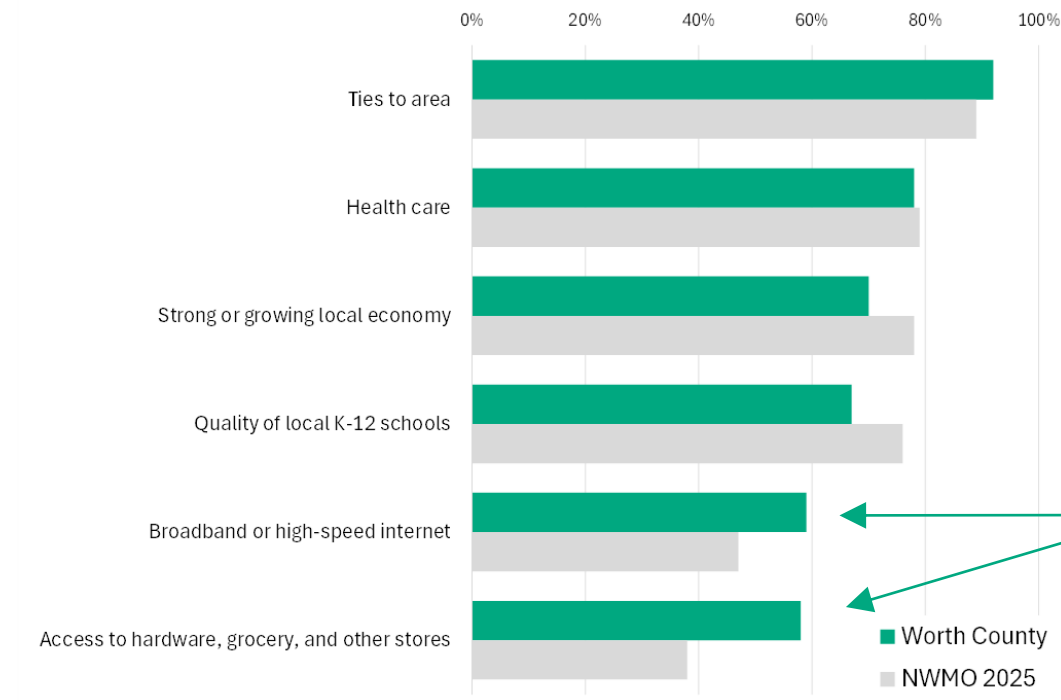
MAXIMIZE
NWMO

The Regional Vitality Initiative of the
Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri

Key Takeaways:

- Around **1 in 5** Worth County respondents are *Somewhat to Extremely Likely* to Move in the Next 5 years.
- **Ties to the Area** are the most important factor in where to live.
- **Healthcare, Strong Local Economy, and Quality Schools** top other factors:

What factors are most important about where you live in the next 5 years?



Broadband and Store Access are More Important in Worth County

Exceed



Moving Influences?



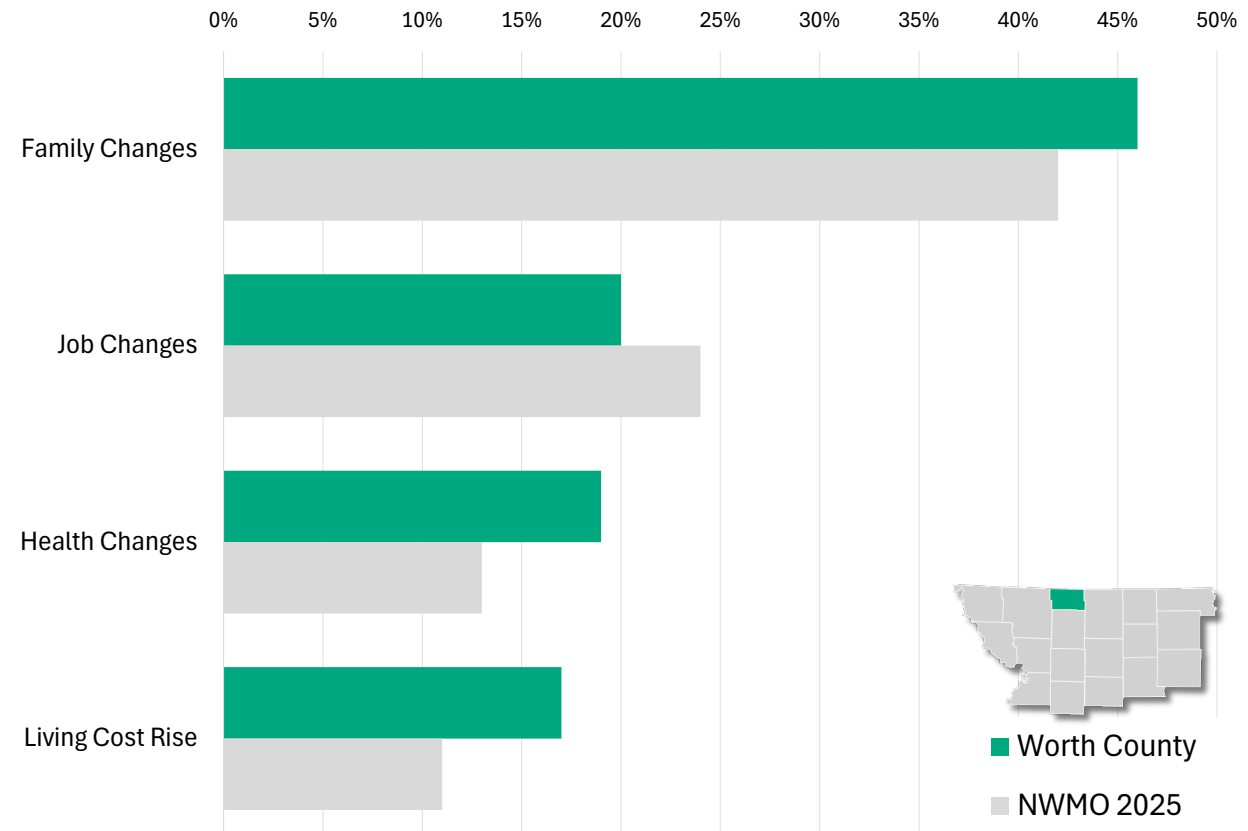
**MAXIMIZE
NWMO**

The Regional Vitality Initiative of the
Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri

Key Takeaways:

- **Family Changes**, such as retirement or children relocating, were the top reason for moving in Worth County.
- **Job Changes** were the second most likely reason, but less so than the regional average, as a higher share of respondents are retired.
- **Health Changes** and a **Living Cost Rise** were more important factors for Worth County respondents compared to the overall region.

What will influence your likelihood to move/stay the most?



Exceed



Community Trust and Belonging



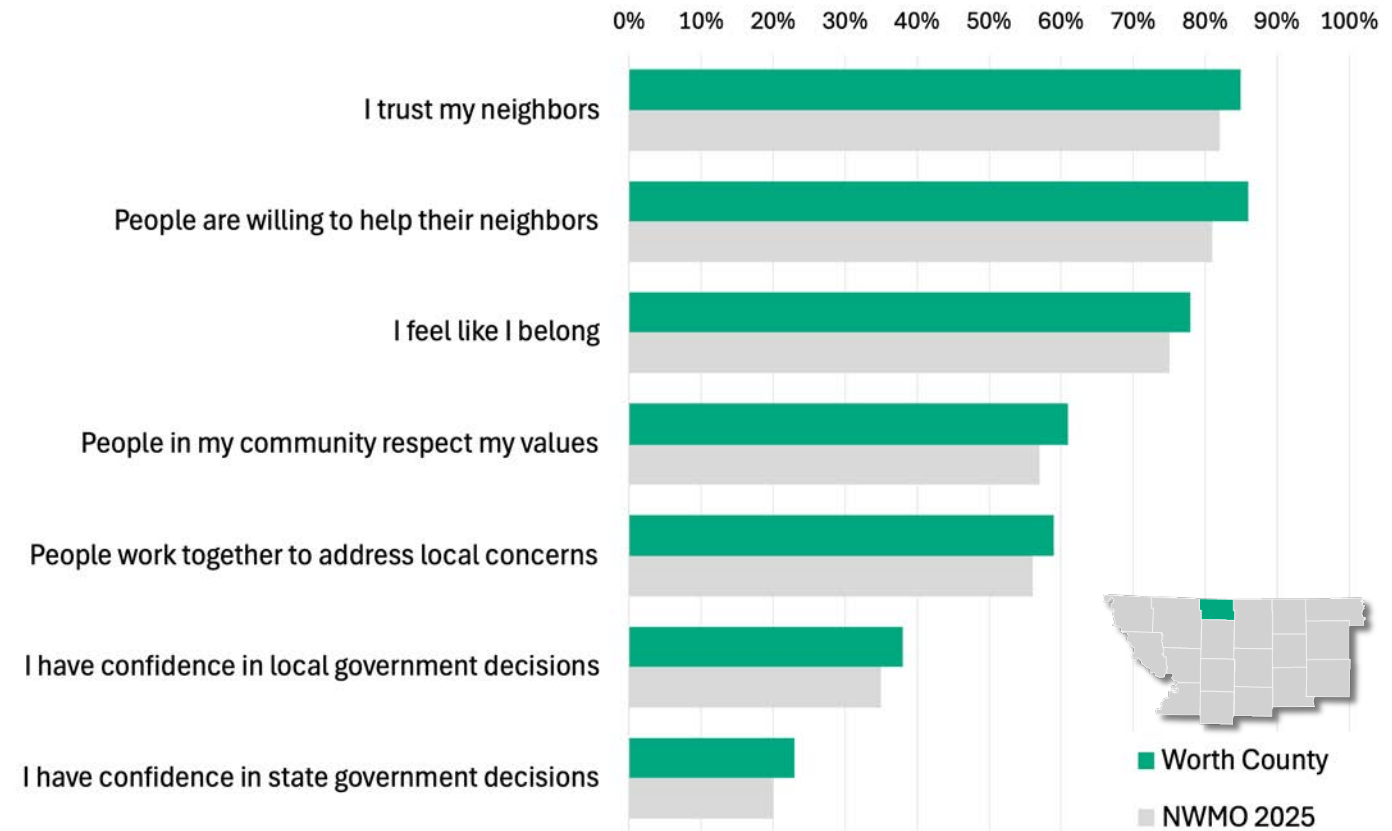
**MAXIMIZE
NWMO**

The Regional Vitality Initiative of the
Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri

Trust and belonging are felt by over **3 in 4** Worth County respondents as they:

- **Trust Their Neighbors**
- **Are Willing to Help Their Neighbors**
- **Feel Like They Belong**

In My Community...



Exceed



Efforts Supported in Their Communities



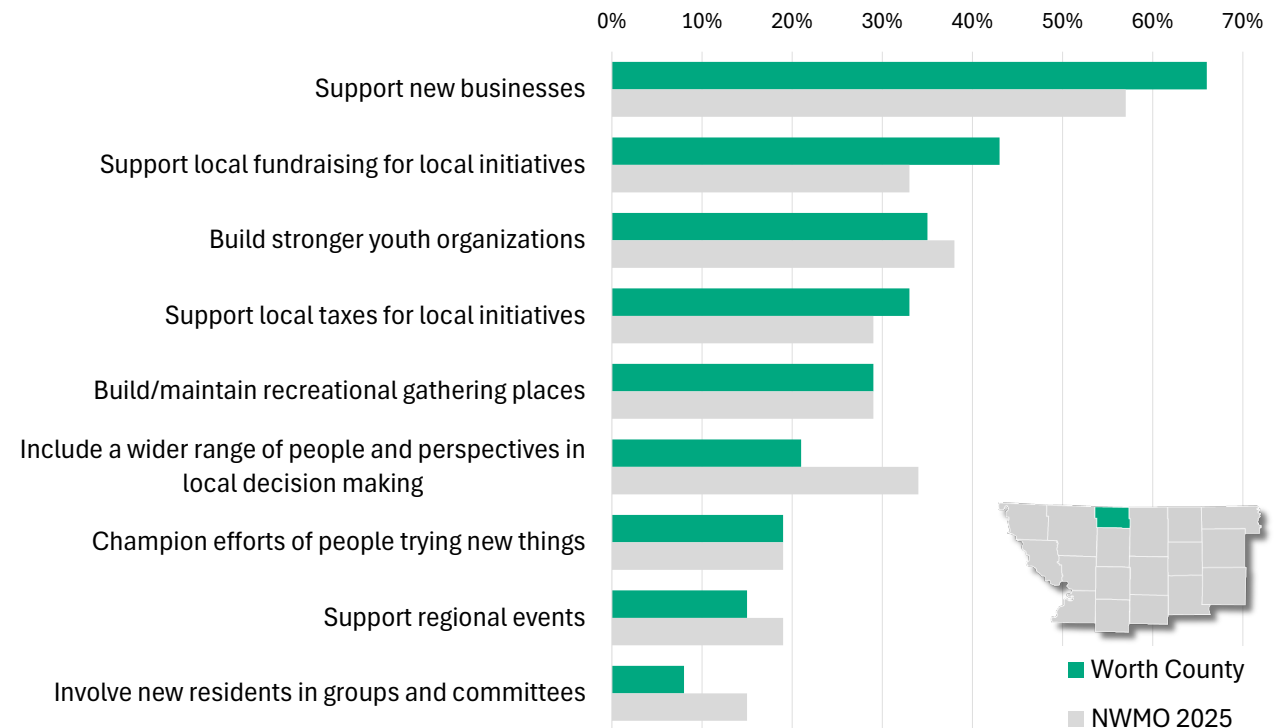
**MAXIMIZE
NWMO**

The Regional Vitality Initiative of the
Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri

Key Takeaways:

- **Supporting New Businesses** easily tops charts in Worth County, followed by **Support for Local Fundraising**. Both were supported at higher levels than the overall region.
- **Including a Wider Range of Perspectives**, however, was less supported than in the overall region.

What efforts would you support in your community?



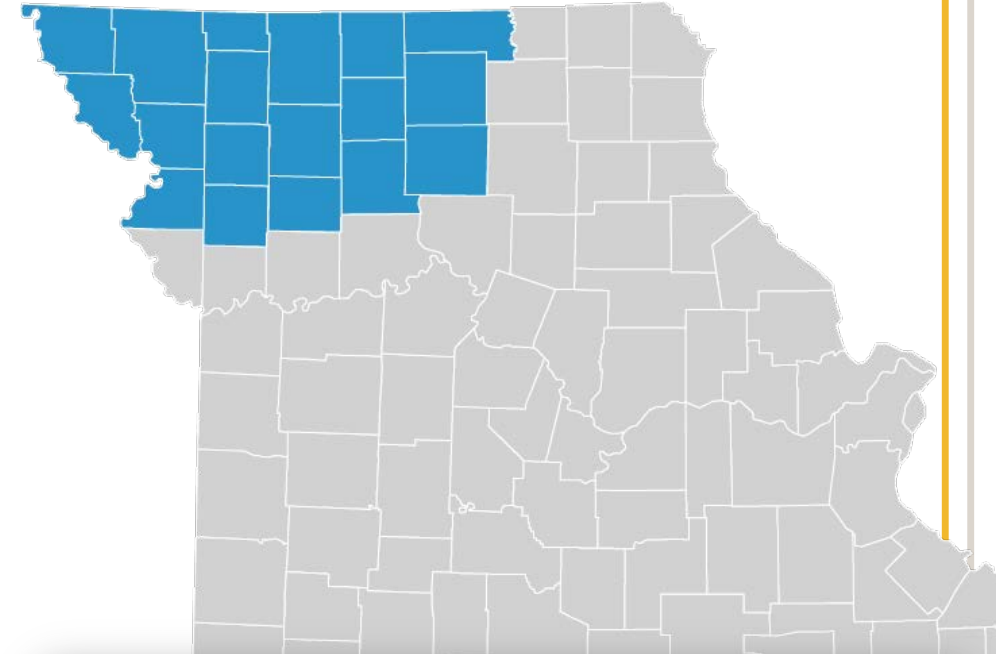
Exceed

Survey Background

[Back to Table of
Contents](#)

Northwest Missouri Survey Methodology

- The 2025 alumni and resident survey was initiated by The Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri and its [Maximize Northwest](#) initiative.
- The survey was conducted over a 4-month period, from mid-June to mid-October, and covered 18 Northwestern Missouri counties.
- The anonymous survey asked:
 - **Where you live and what you value about your community.**
 - **Reasons for moving in or out of the region if you did.**
 - **What influences where you'll live in the coming years?**
 - **What your community offers, and how you support it.**
- The survey used the same 2020 survey questions, with a few modifications, so comparisons could be made.

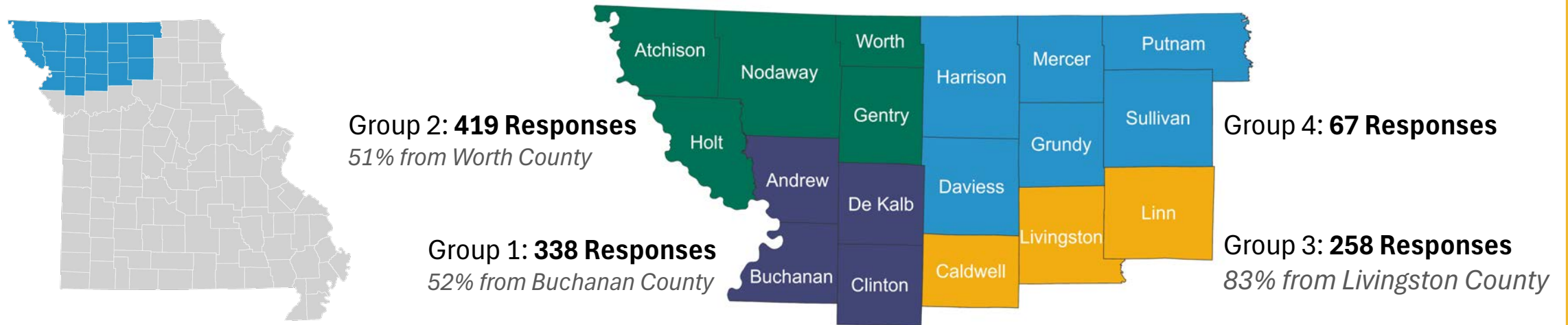


2025 Alumni & Resident Survey Questions

FULL SURVEY LINK: https://missouri.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dgSpb9WQnMwqmtU
SHORT LINK: <http://muext.us/NWMOsurvey>

2025 Survey Responses

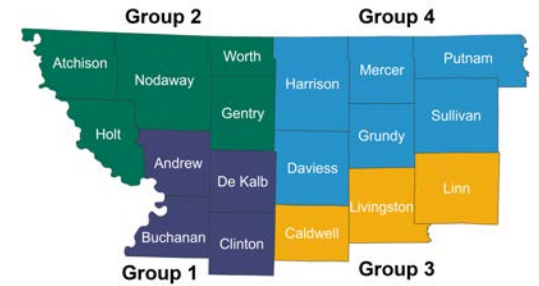
- The survey received over 1,090 responses, with **1,082 that identified specific NWMO county ties.**
- Where there were enough respondents*, breakouts of survey findings were developed for sub-groups and counties within the NWMO region.



*A minimum of 200 to 275 responses from a random, representative sample is typically required to achieve 90% confidence that survey results fall within a ± 5 percentage point margin of error for the overall population. This is a common standard in survey research. However, conducting representative community-level surveys is challenging due to the significant time and cost involved in collecting responses. With detailed demographic information, statistical weighting can help adjust for non-representative samples, though it will increase the margin of error and complicate comparisons with past surveys. To account for these limitations, this project reports results based on a minimum of 200 responses with minor exceptions. Additionally, responses that differ by more than 7 percentage points are highlighted as significantly different from the overall regional results.

Exceed

Northwest Missouri (NWMO) Economic Characteristics



Region	Population (2020)	Population (2025)	Population Change %	Age 60 or Over %	Bachelor's Degree or Higher %	Jobs (2020)	Jobs (2025)	Jobs Change %
NWMO Region	249,175	247,038	-0.9%	27.4%	22.0%	106,417	108,168	1.6%
NWMO Group 2	38,599	38,063	-1.4%	27.9%	23.3%	16,146	17,070	5.7%
Worth County	1,968	1,878	-4.6%	36.3%	18.6%	666	591	-11.3%
Missouri	6,154,744	6,264,227	1.8%	25.6%	32.6%	3,048,283	3,312,008	9%
United States	331,577,720	341,675,177	3.0%	24.6%	35.5%	158,475,045	177,097,024	12%

NWMO Top Job Sectors:

Top Employing Private Sectors

- Manufacturing: 17,600
- Health Care: 14,800

Top Sector Concentrations*

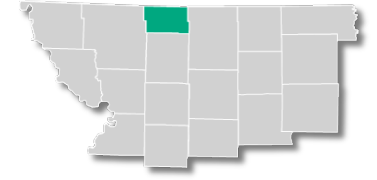
- Agriculture: 3.4X
- Manufacturing: 2.2X

Source Notes: Estimates from Lightcast data. *Concentrations describe how specialized a region is compared to the U.S. average. For example, a 2.0X concentration means the region is twice as concentrated in that sector's employment compared to the U.S. average.

Survey Demographics

[Back to Table of
Contents](#)

Respondent Age and Employment



Most respondents were aged 45 or older (64%), a lower share than the overall region (69%).

What is your age?

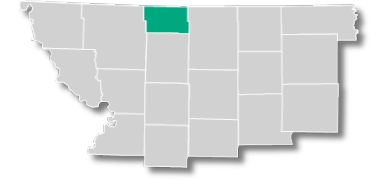
Field	Under 30	30-44	45-60	60+
Worth County	4%	32%	19%	45%
NWMO Region	5%	26%	34%	35%

65% were employed. A lower share than the regional average (74%). 1 in 3 were retired.

Describe your current employment status:

Field	Work as a paid employee	Self-employed business owner	Not working but looking for a job	No paid work (care for others/in school/etc.)	Retired
Worth County	51%	14%	1%	0%	34%
NWMO Region	60%	14%	1%	2%	23%

Respondent Gender and Education



Most respondents were women (62%), which was lower than the larger region's share.

Describe your gender:

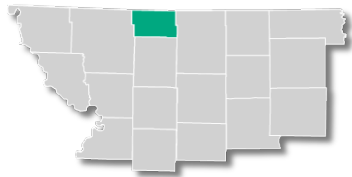
Field	Woman	Man	Prefer Not to Answer/Self-Identify
Worth County	62%	32%	6%
NWMO Region	71%	26%	4%

Nearly 5 in 10 respondents had a Bachelor's degree or higher in 2025.

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Field	Less than high school degree	High school degree or equivalent (GED)	Some college but no degree	Associate's/ Technical Degree or Apprentices.	Bachelor's degree or above
Worth County	1%	18%	18%	16%	47%
NWMO Region	0%	10%	16%	15%	59%

Respondent Household and Years at Location



Describe your household:

Most respondents lived in households with 2 or more adults (69%).

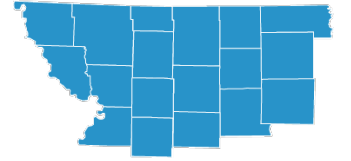
Field	I live by myself	I live with children under the age of 10	I live with children ages 10-18	I live with other adult(s) ages 19-64	other adult(s) ages 65+
Worth County	15%	18%	29%	37%	32%
NWMO Region	15%	17%	25%	46%	25%

How many years have you lived at this zip code?

Nearly 2 in 3 had lived at the same zip code for over 20 years.

Field	Less than 5 years	5-19 years	More than 20 years
Worth County	8%	28%	64%
NWMO Region	9%	35%	56%

Respondents Mostly Long-Time Residents

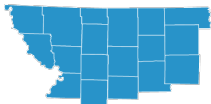


Have you ever moved into, moved out of, or moved back to Northwest Missouri?

- 46% have always lived in NWMO, called “Stayers”
- 49% moved into NWMO after leaving or for the first time
- 5% no longer live in NWMO, called “Leavers”

Choice	Label	Counts	2025	2020
			Percentage	Percentage
I grew up here and still live in the same county where I graduated high school	Stayer	311	29%	30%
I grew up here and have lived in multiple counties in Northwest Missouri		188	17%	16%
I moved out of the region, but I have since moved back to Northwest Missouri	Returner	247	23%	24%
I did not grow up here, I moved in and currently live in Northwest Missouri	In-Migrant	278	26%	21%
I no longer live in Northwest Missouri	Leaver	53	5%	9%

Respondent Demographics by Moving Status



Stayers have lower BA degree attainment and are generally younger than other groups.

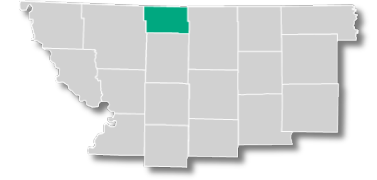
2025 Respondent Selected Demographics by Moving Status

Moving Status	% Employed	% Bachelor's degree or above	% Age 60+
Stayer	76%	48%	31%
Returner	76%	69%	38%
In-Migrant	71%	68%	39%
2025 Region	74%	59%	35%

The **Best Things** about NWMO and Worth County

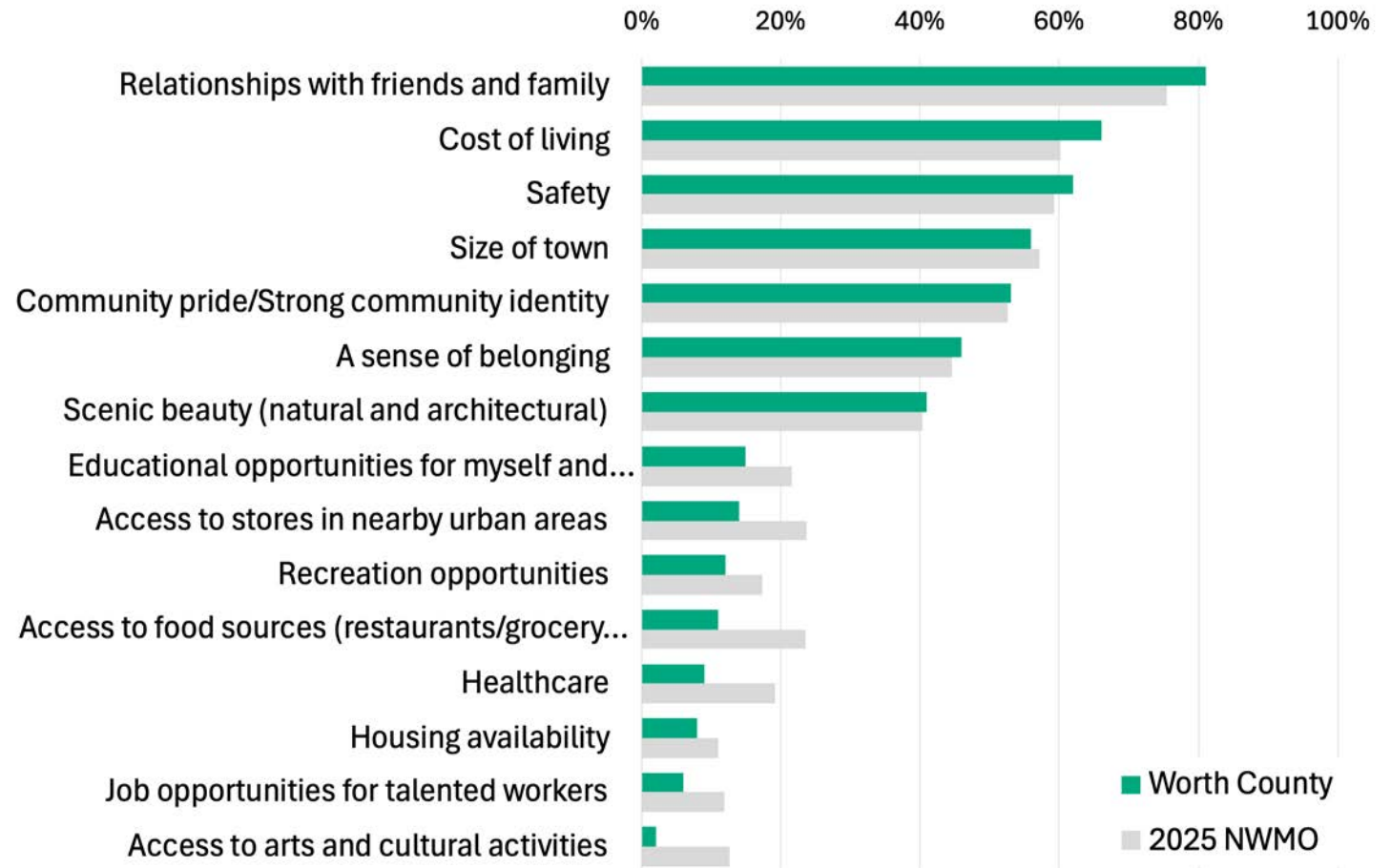
[Back to Table of
Contents](#)

What Do You Most Value: Relationships

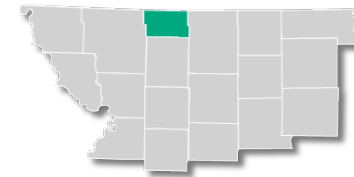


What did you value about the place you experienced in Northwest Missouri and Worth County?

- **Relationships, Cost of Living, and Safety** top the list.
- Worth County valued these factors more than the overall region respondents.

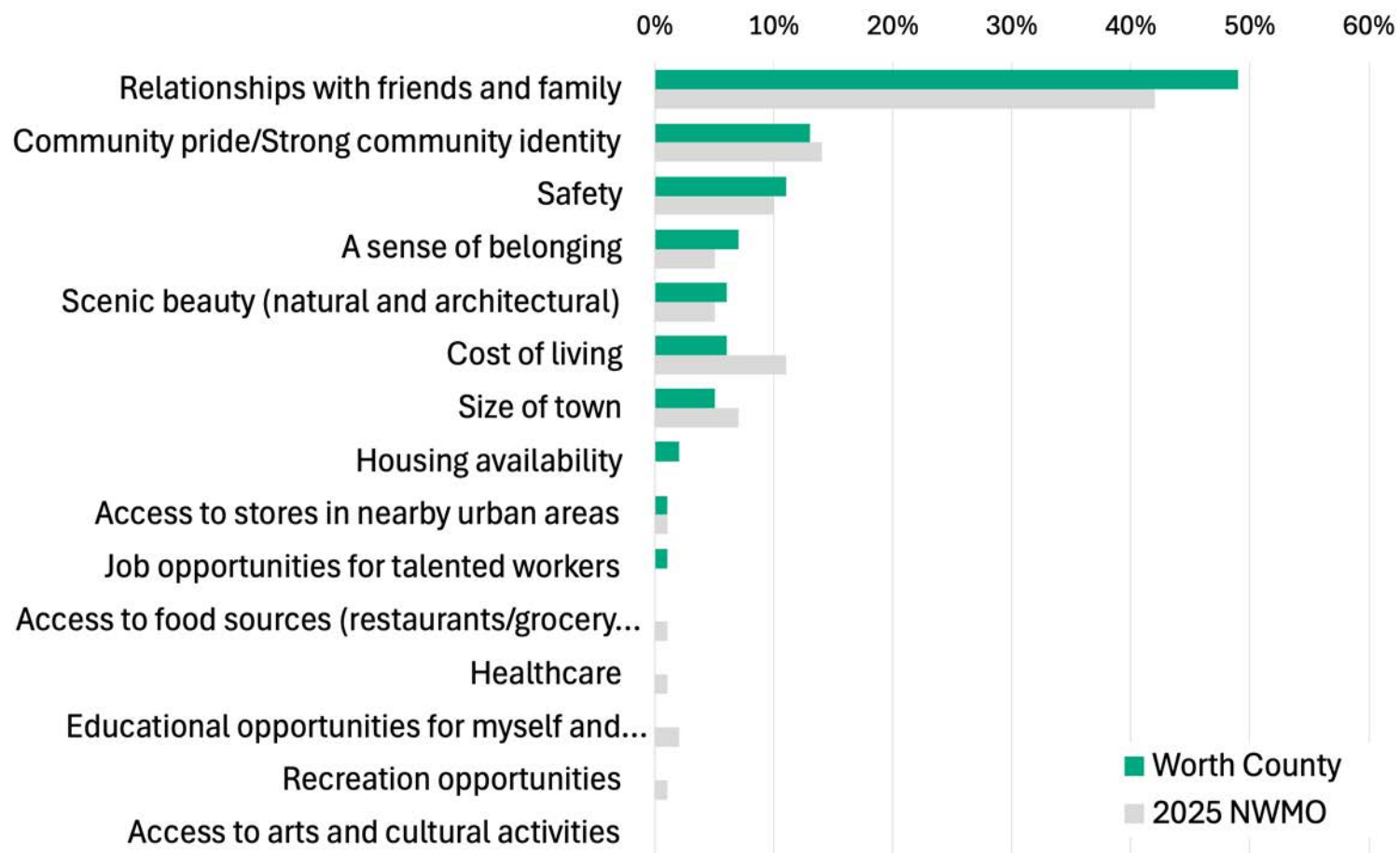


The Very Best Thing? Relationships Again



What is the very best thing about living and/or working in NWMO or Worth County?

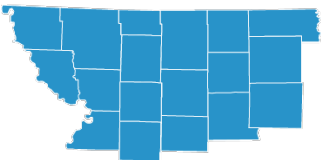
- When you can make only one choice, **Relationships** are top for nearly half of Worth County respondents.
- **Community pride** was the second choice, followed by **Safety**.



Reasons for **Where You Live** by Moving Status

[Back to Table of
Contents](#)

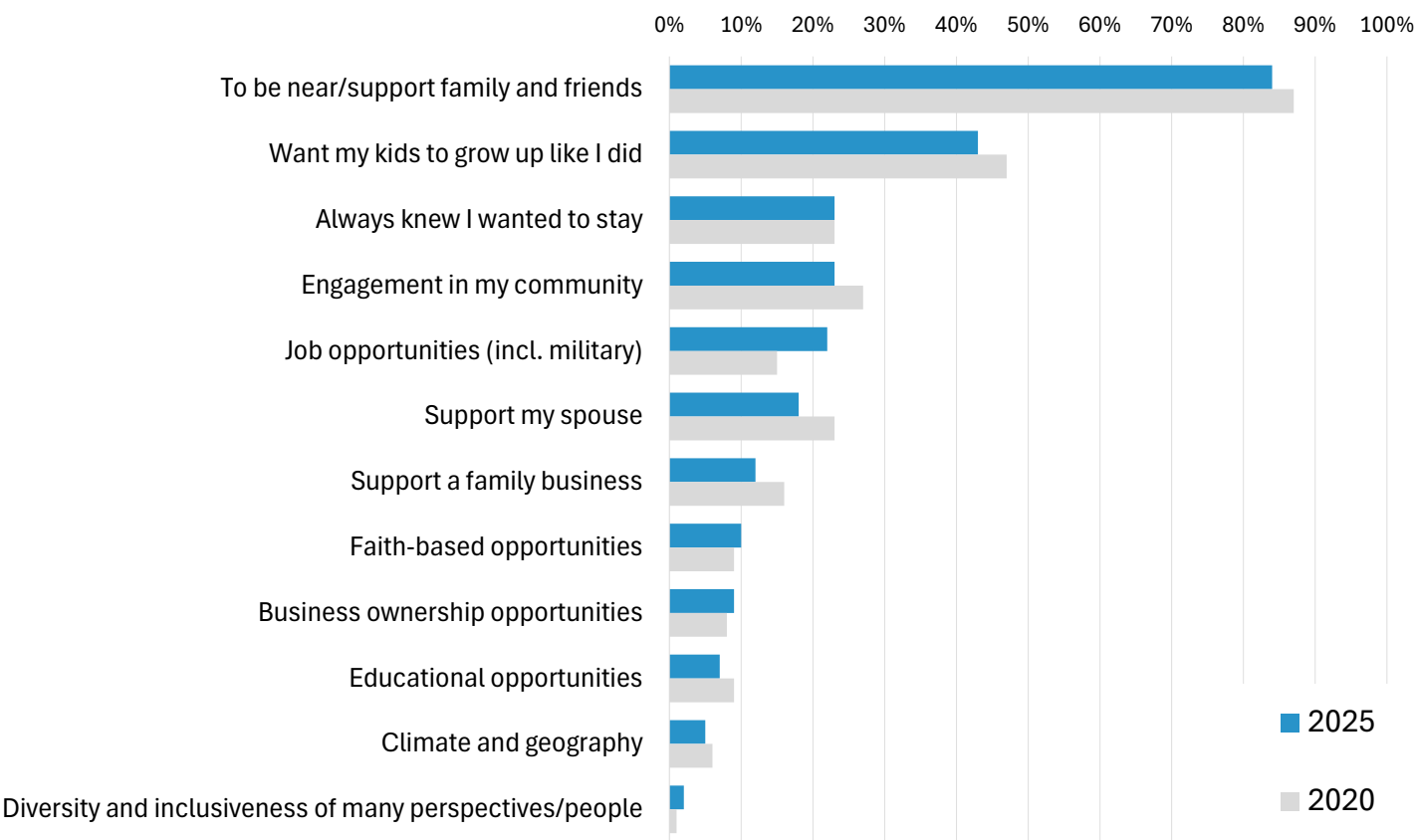
Stayers: Reasons for Remaining in Region



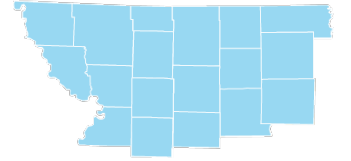
Which reasons contributed to your decision to stay in the region?

- **Near Family and Friends** is by far the main reason for 8 in 10 Stayers.
- **Wanting Kids to Grow Up Like I Did** was noted by 4 in 10 Stayers.
- Around 2 in 10 indicated they **Always Wanted to Stay** or that **Community Engagement, Job Opportunities, or Spouse Support** were reasons.
- Rankings were mostly consistent from 2020 to 2025.

Reasons for Staying...



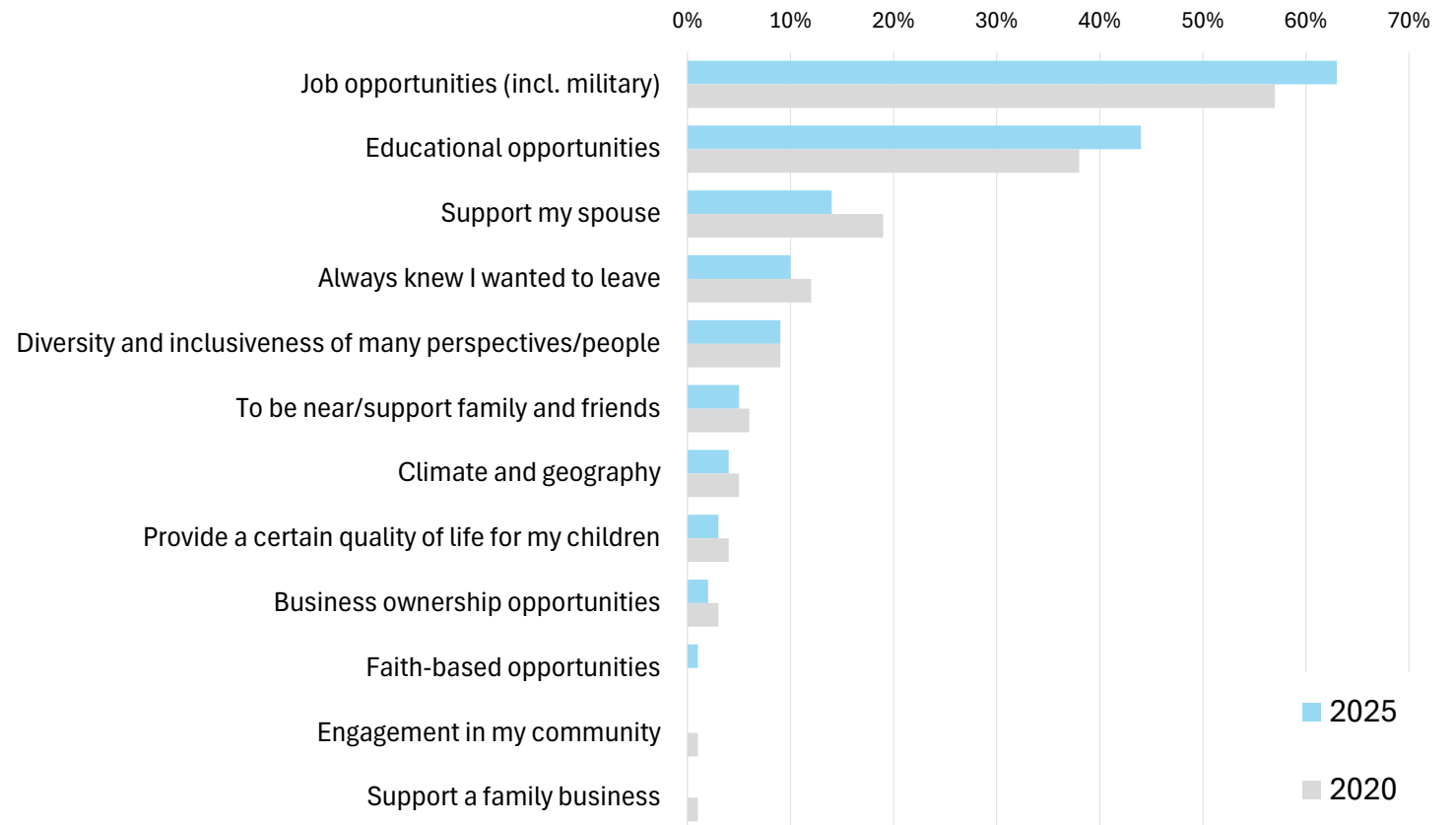
Returners: Reasons for Leaving the Region



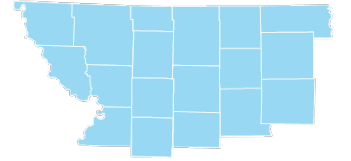
Which reasons contributed to your decision to leave the region?

- **Job Opportunities** were the top reason for leaving for 63% of Returners, up from 57% in 2020.
- **Educational Opportunities** were noted by 4 in 10 Returners.
- **Spouse Support** was a reason for 14% of Returners, down from 19% in 2020.
- Rankings were consistent from 2020 to 2025.

Reasons for Leaving...



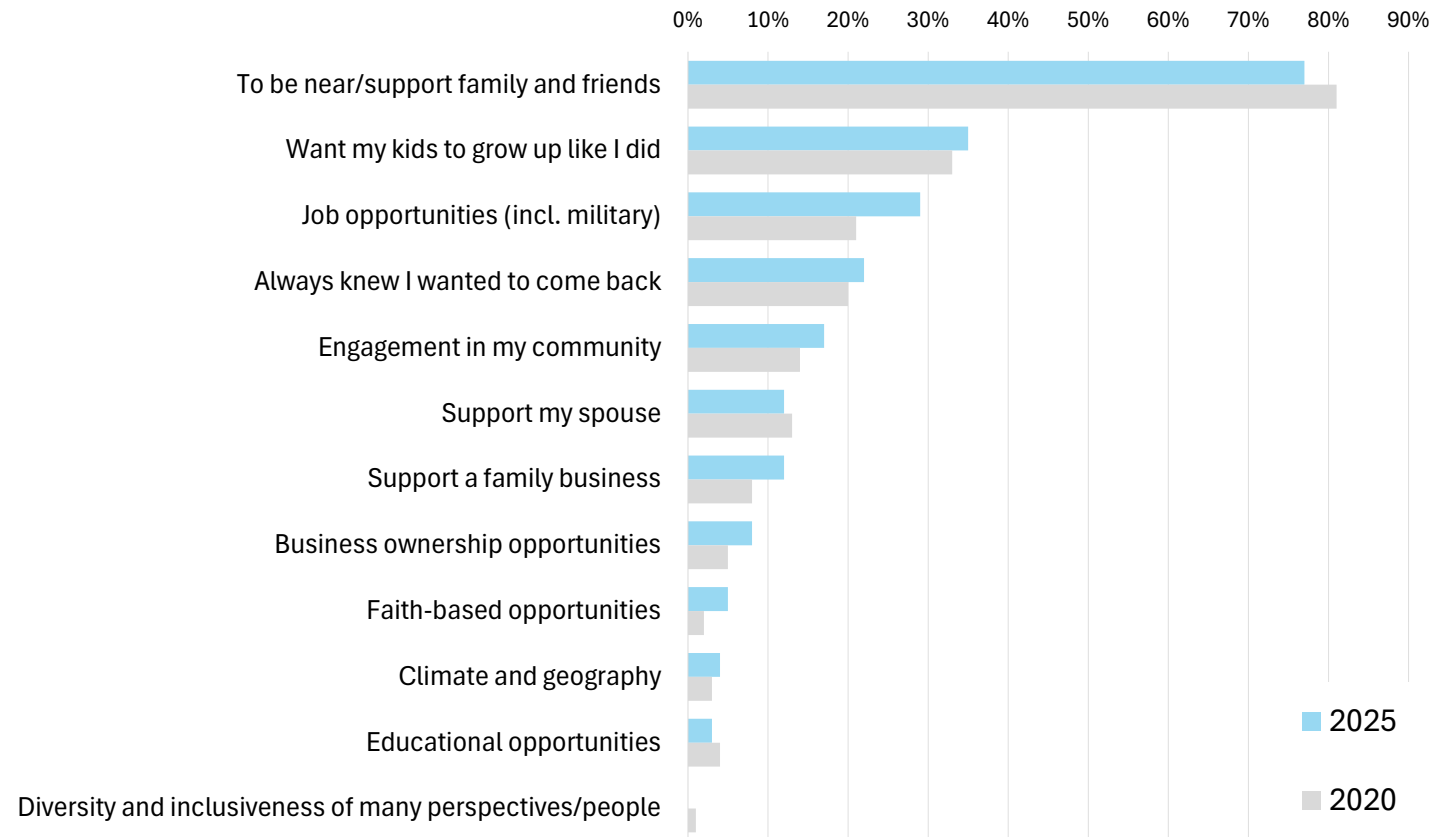
Returners: Reasons for Coming Back



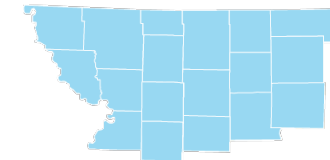
Which reasons contributed to your decision to come back to the region?

- **Near Family and Friends** is by far the main reason to return for 8 in 10 Returners.
- **Wanting Kids to Grow Up Like I Did** was noted by a third of Returners.
- **Job Opportunities** were the reason for nearly a third (29%) in 2025, up from 21% in 2020.
- Rankings were consistent from 2020 to 2025.

Reasons for Coming Back...



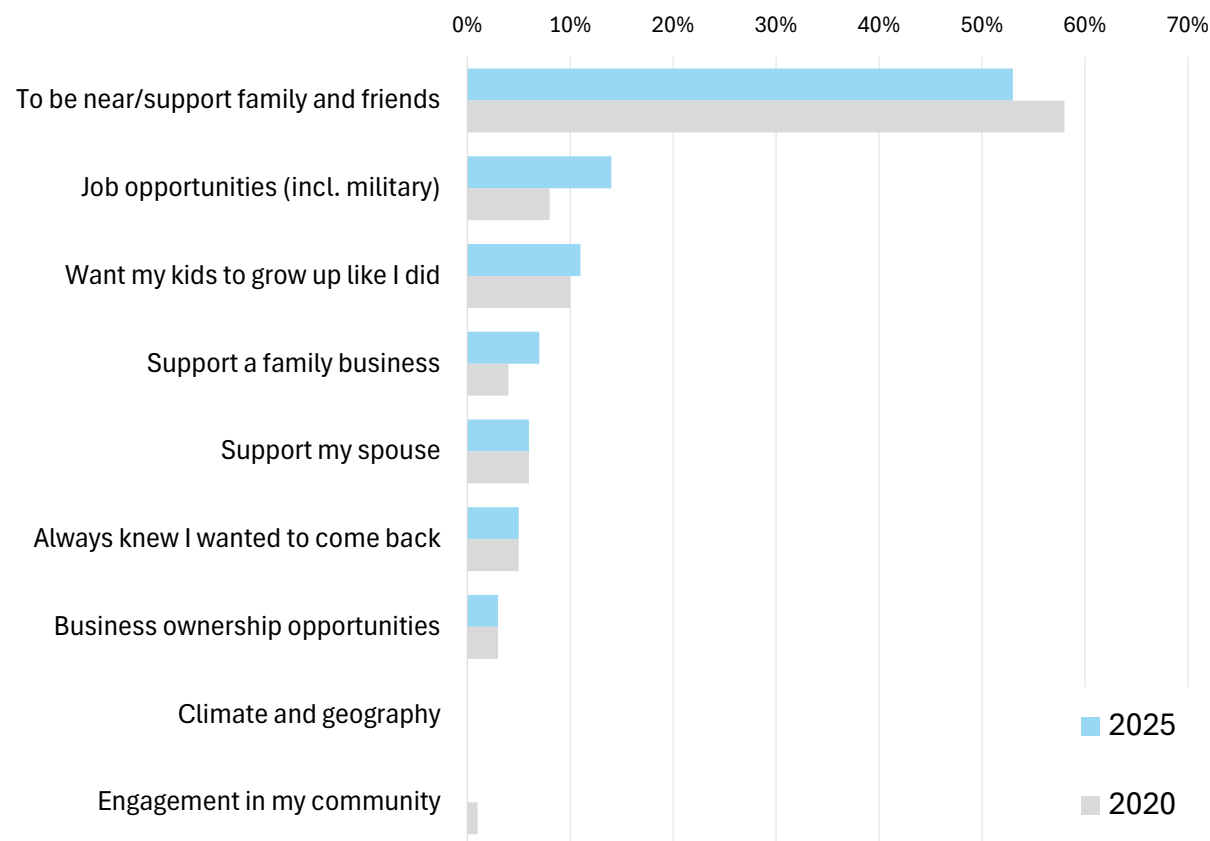
Returners: Primary Reason to Come Back



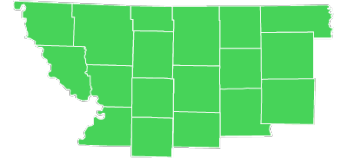
What was the **primary reason** you moved back to the region?

- **Near Family and Friends** was the primary reason for 53% of Returners, down from 58% in 2020.
- **Job Opportunities** were the second primary reason for 14% of Returners, and increase from 2020 (8%).
- **Wanting Kids to Grow Up...** was the top reason for roughly 10% of Returners in both years.

Primary Reason to Come Back...



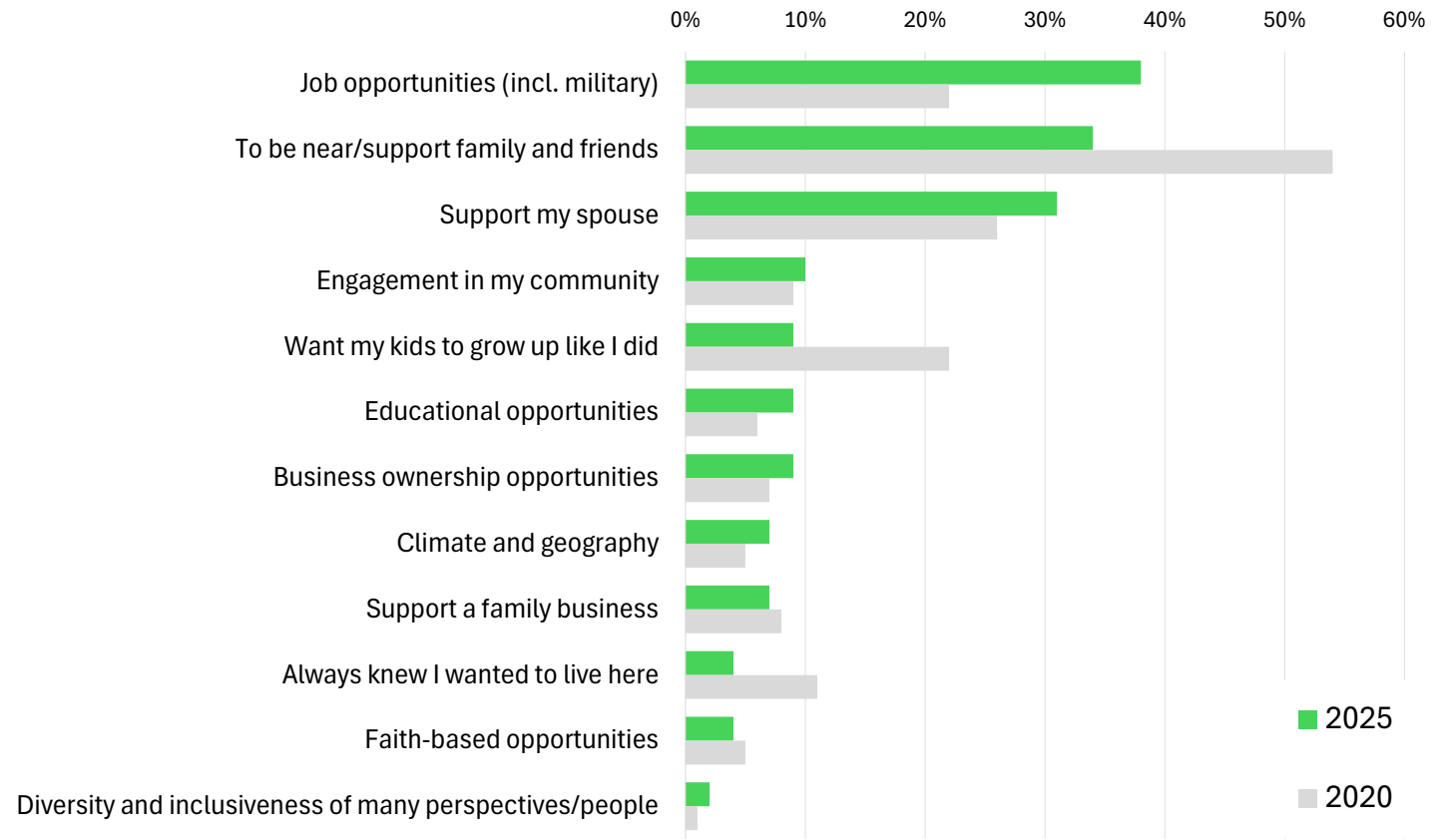
In-Migrants: Reason to Move into Region



Which reasons contributed to your decision to move into the region?

- **Job Opportunities** were the top reason for 38% of In-Migrants, a large increase from 2020 (22%).
- **Near Family and Friends** was the second most common reason for In-Migrants (34%), significantly lower than in 2020 (54%).
- **Spouse Support** was the third most common reason for 31% of In-Migrants.
- Other reasons were noted by 10% or less of In-Migrants.

Reason to Move Into Region...



Leavers: Jobs and Education Are Top Reasons for Leaving the Region



Leavers, while a small sample in 2025 (51), followed similar top reasons for leaving as the 2020 respondents.

Leavers: What reasons contributed to your decision to leave the region?

Choice	2025 Percentage	2020 Percentage
Job opportunities (incl. military)	63%	69%
Educational opportunities	33%	38%

Returners' reasons to leave the region were also similar to responses from Leavers:

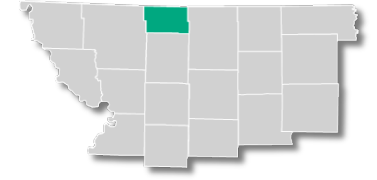
Returners: What reasons contributed to your decision to leave the region?

Choice	2025 Percentage	2020 Percentage
Job opportunities (incl. military)	63%	57%
Educational opportunities	44%	38%

What Are Important Factors for Where You Live?

[Back to Table of
Contents](#)

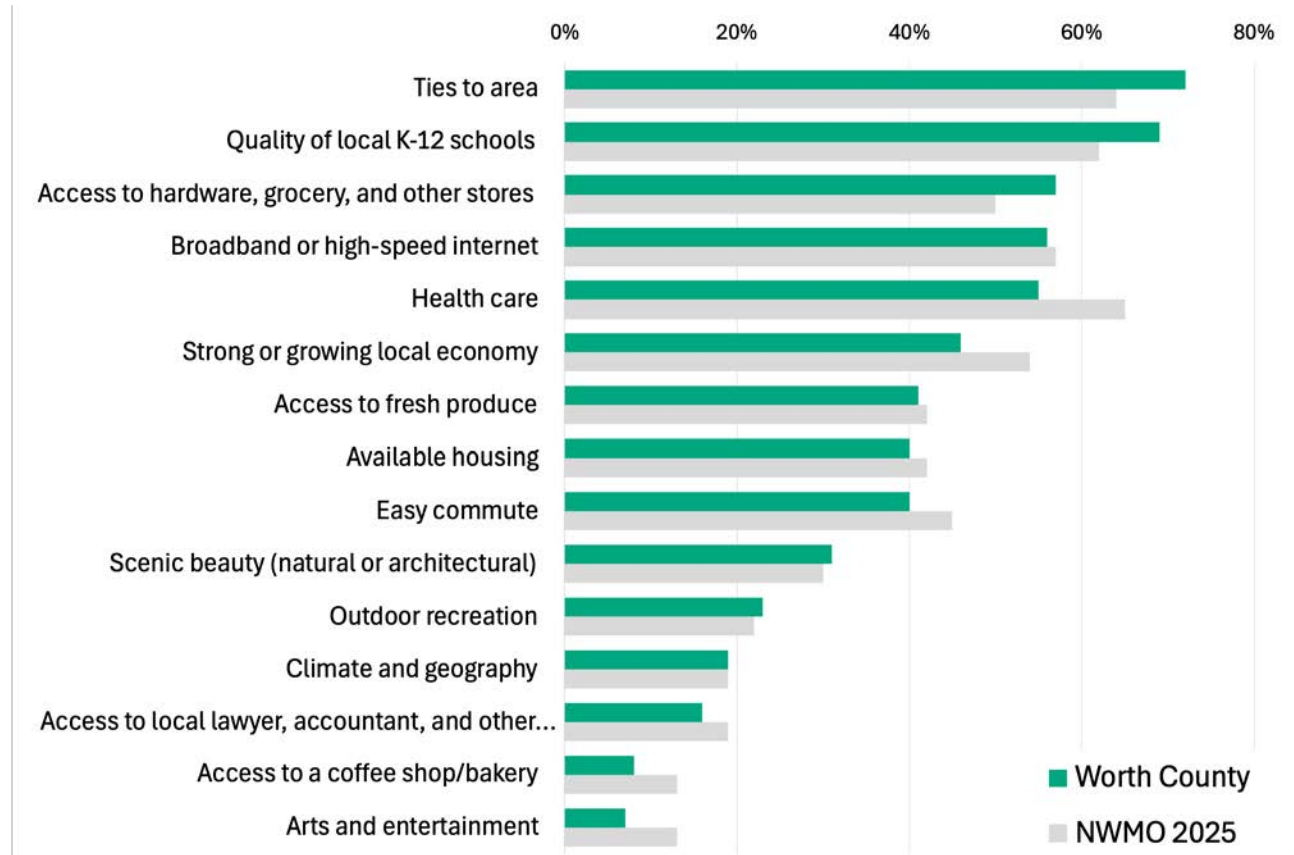
Important Factors for Where You Live



How important are each of the following factors in your decision about **where you will live** in the next 5 years?

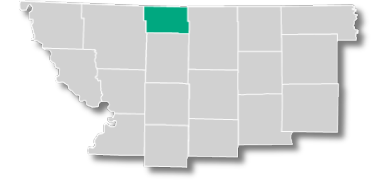
- **Ties to Area, Local School Quality, and Store Access** were rated as the most important factors for Worth County respondents.
- **Broadband and Healthcare** are next in importance.

Very Important Factors...



Exceed

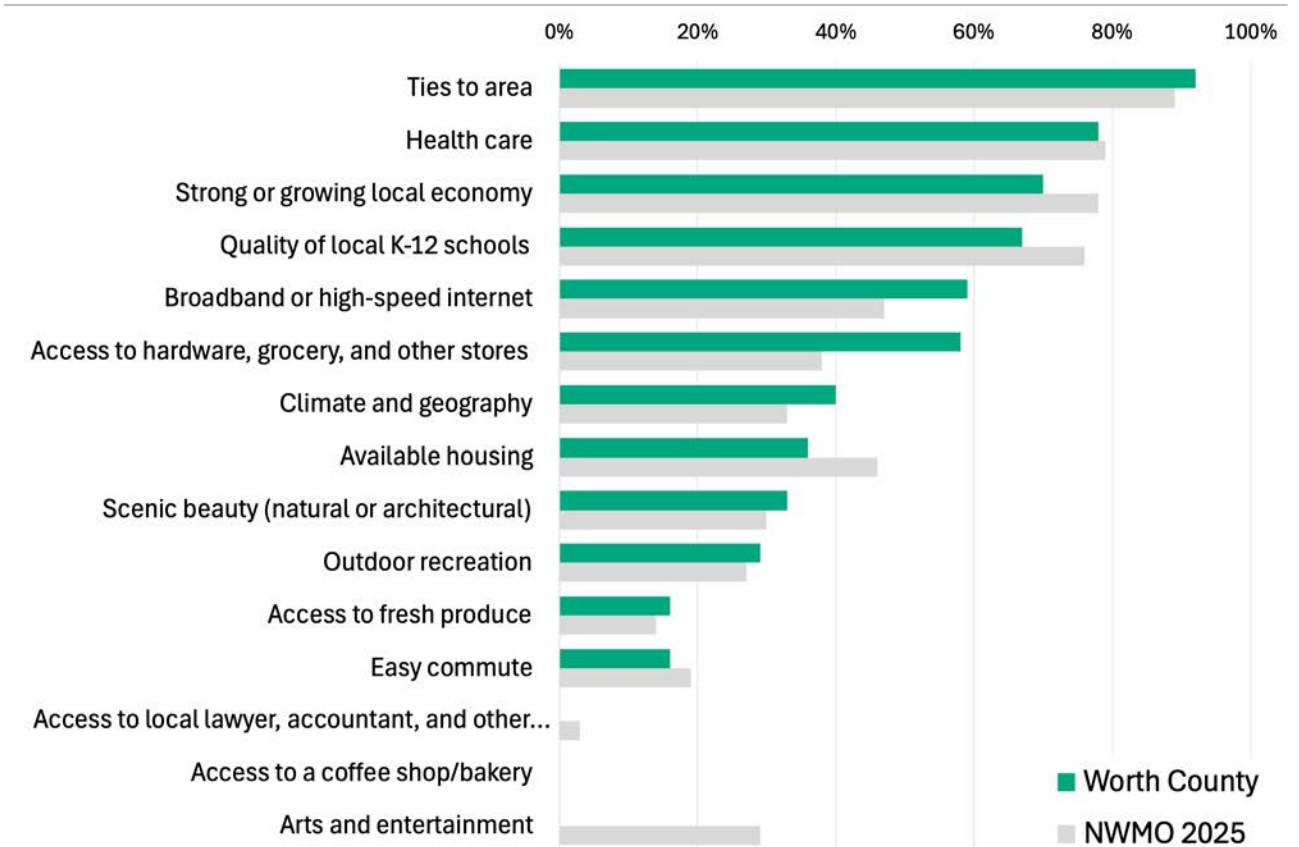
Most Important Factor for Where to Live



Which factor is the **most important** in your decision about where you live in the next 5 years?

- **Ties to the area** were the most important factor for where to live in NWMO and Worth County.
- **Health Care** was second, followed by a **Strong Economy**.
- **Quality Local Schools** rounded out the top four most important factors.

Most Important Factor...



What Influences Your Moving Decisions?

[Back to Table of
Contents](#)

How likely are you to move in the next 5 years?

Worth County respondents were less likely to move than respondents in the larger region.

1 in 5 were *Somewhat or Extremely Likely* to move in the next five years.

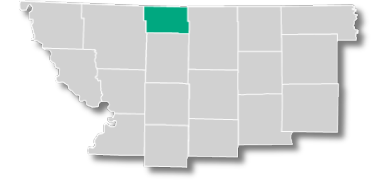
Worth County



NWMO 2025



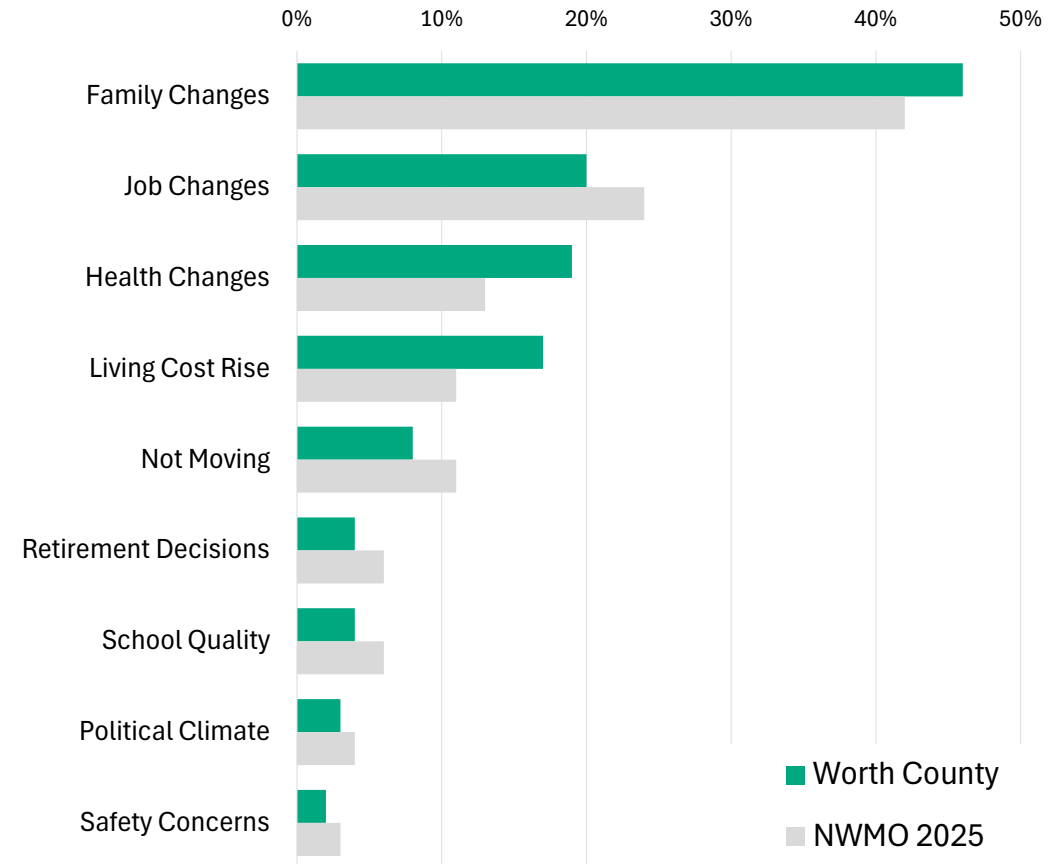
What Influences You to Move or Stay?



What will influence your likelihood to move/stay the most?

- **Family Changes**, such as kids moving, retirement, and spousal changes, were most mentioned, followed by **Job Changes**.
- **Health Changes** were third. Worth County respondents were more likely than overall region respondents to note this factor.
- **Rising Living Cost** was mentioned more by Worth County respondents, compared to the overall region.

Factors Influencing Moving Decisions...

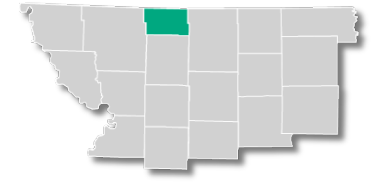


Survey Notes: Open-ended responses categorized by major themes.

38 Comments can have multiple themes assigned to them.

Exceed

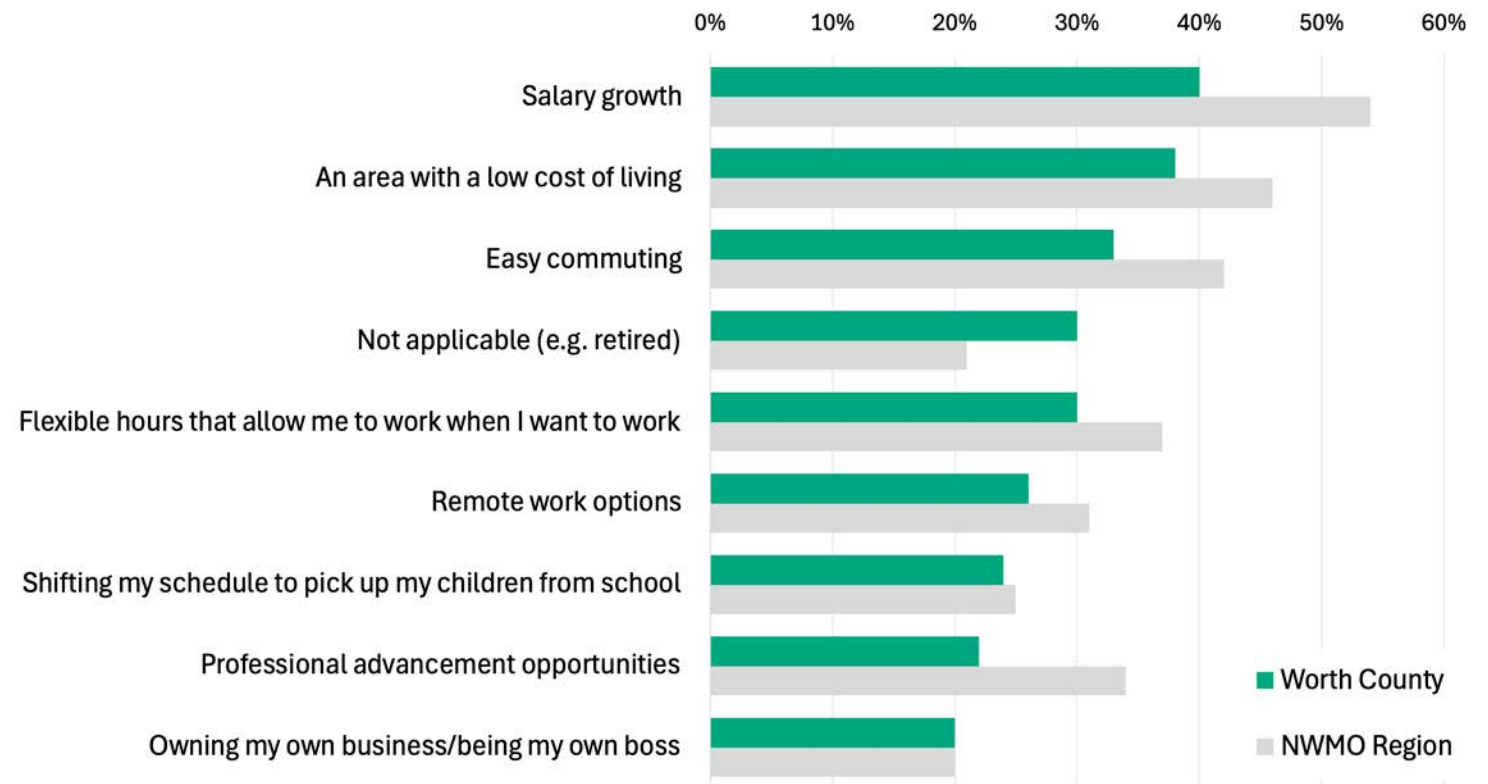
Jobs Influence Moving, So What Work Characteristics Are Important?



Which **work characteristics** are important to you?

- **Salary Growth** was the most important work characteristic for Worth County respondents, followed by a **Low Cost of Living** and **Easy Commuting**.
- More Worth County respondents were **Retired**, compared to the overall region, so they were generally less concerned with working factors.

Important Work Characteristics...

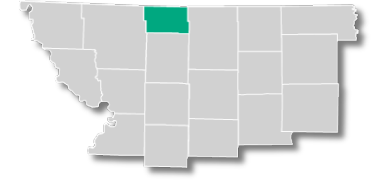


Exceed

What Do You Support in Your Community?

[Back to Table of
Contents](#)

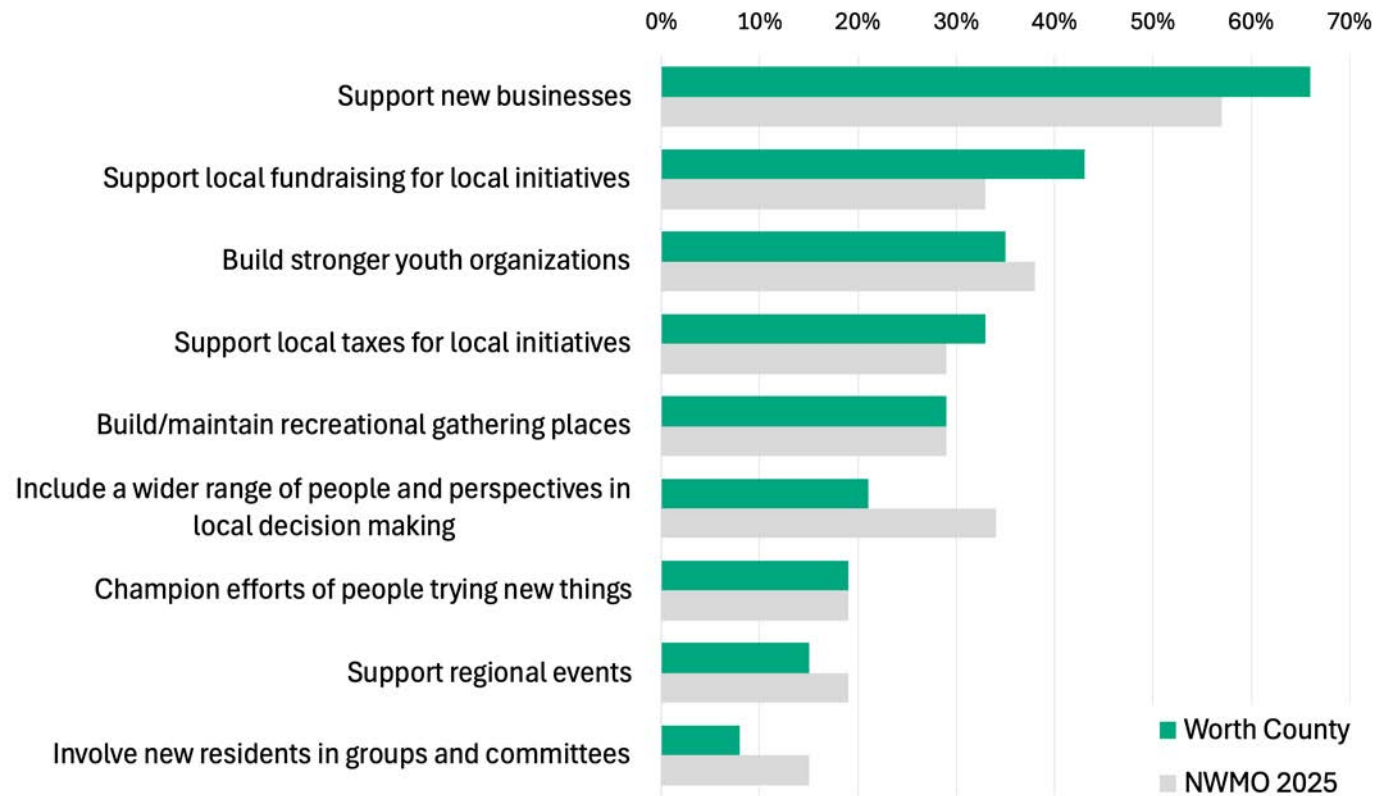
What Efforts Do You Support?



What efforts would **you** support in your community?

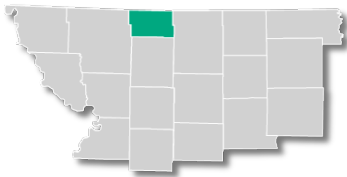
- **Supporting New Businesses** had the highest response, especially with Worth County respondents.
- **Supporting Local Fundraising** was second for Worth County respondents, followed by **Stronger Youth Organizations**.
- **Including a Wider Range of People**, was less supported in Worth County than in the overall region.

Efforts You Would Support...



Exceed

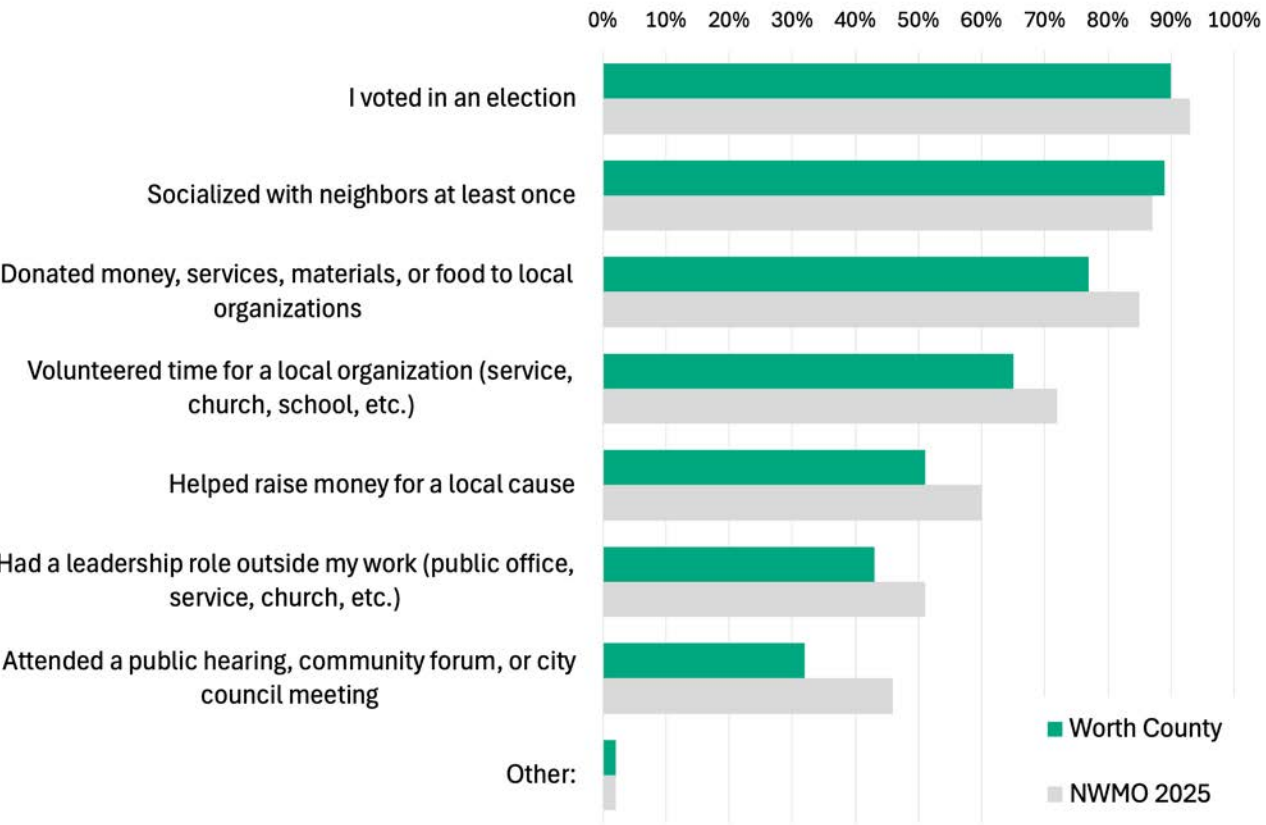
What Community Activities Did You Do?



Which activities did you do in your community in 2024?

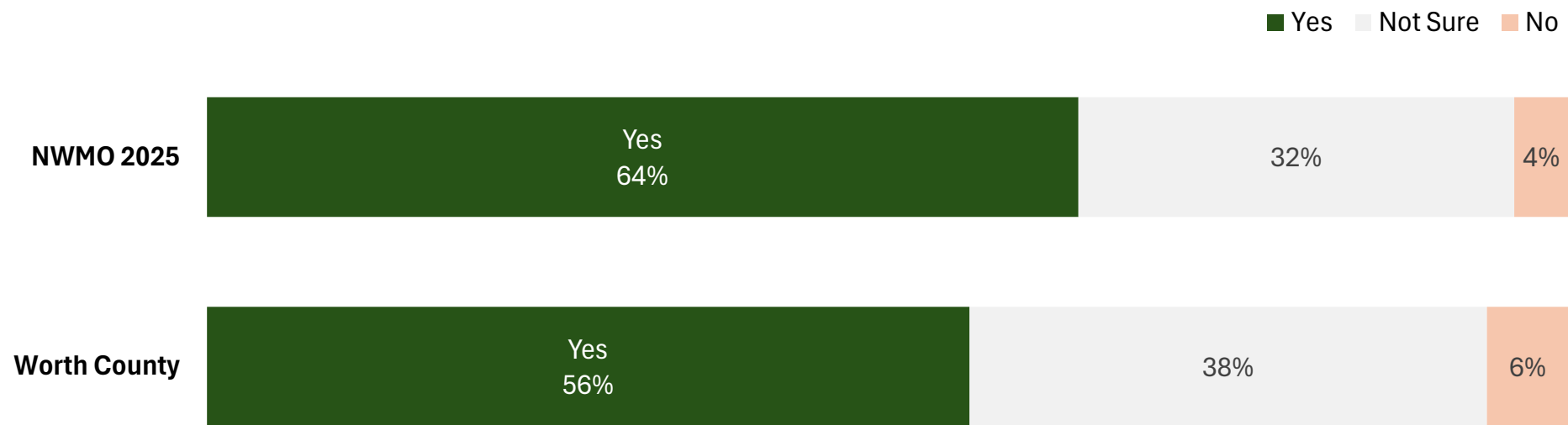
- Around 9 of 10 Worth County respondents **Voted** and **Socialized with Neighbors**.
- **Donating** and **Volunteering** were activities of more than half of Worth County respondents.

Community Activities...



Would You Participate in an Activity If Invited?

If invited, **would you try** any of the previously listed activities you haven't done before? Over half of Worth County respondents said "Yes", but fewer than the overall region respondents.

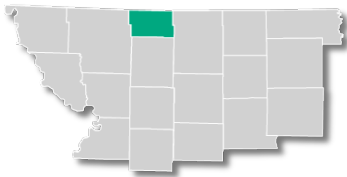


Community Belonging and Offerings

[Back to Table of
Contents](#)



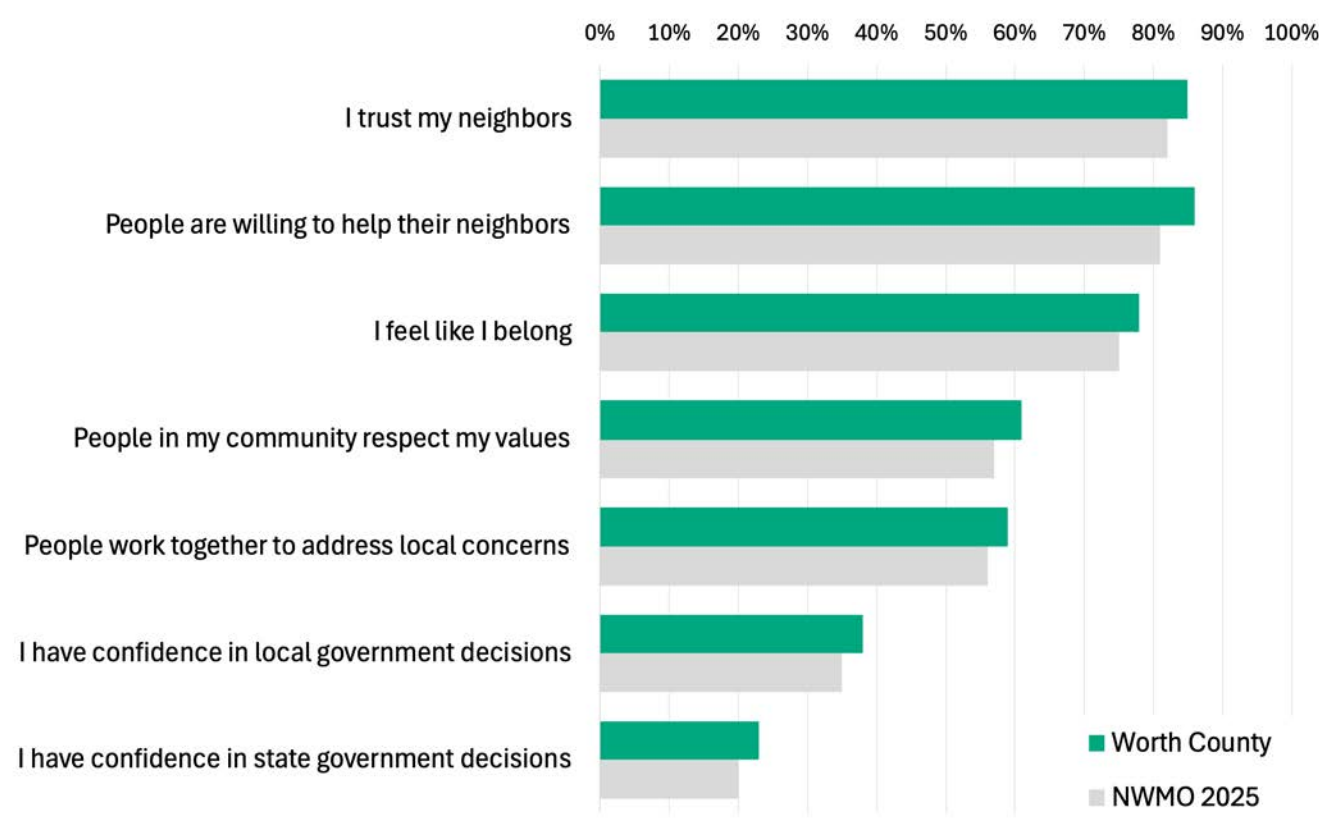
Community Trust and Belonging



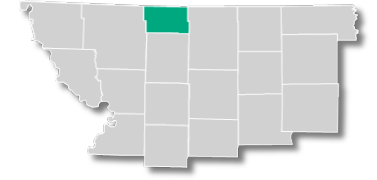
In my current community:

- Around 4 in 5 Worth County respondents **Trust** and are **Willing to Help Neighbors**, and **Feel Like They Belong**.
- 3 out of 5 felt that people **Respect My Values** and **Work Together**.
- Worth County respondents generally indicated a higher sense of community trust and belonging compared to the overall region.

In My Community...



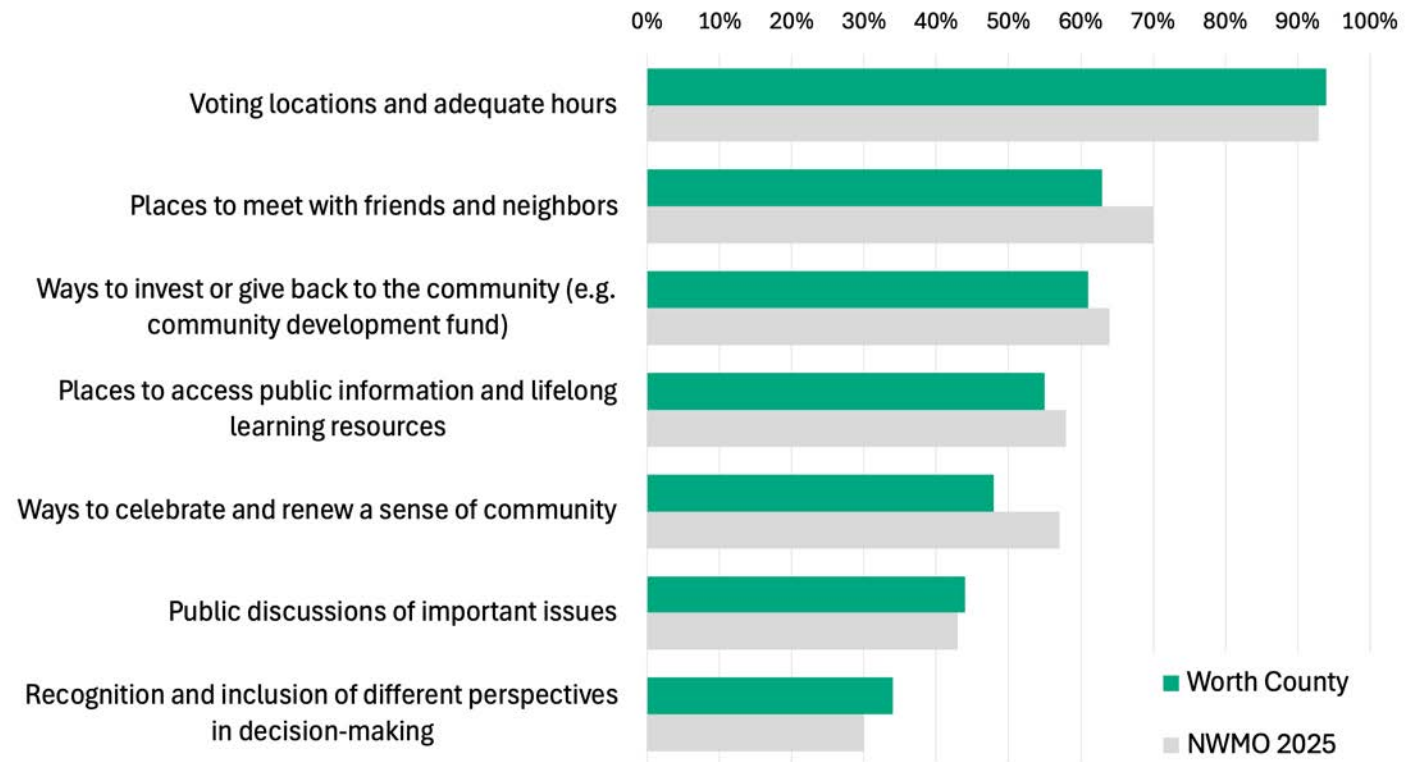
My Community Offers



My current community offers:

- 94% felt **Voting Locations and Adequate Hours** were available.
- 6 in 10 Worth County respondents believed there were **Places to Meet...** in their community.
- Worth County respondents were a bit less likely to say their community offered these things compared to the overall region.

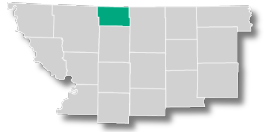
My Community Offers...



What Changes Excite or Worry You?

[Back to Table of
Contents](#)

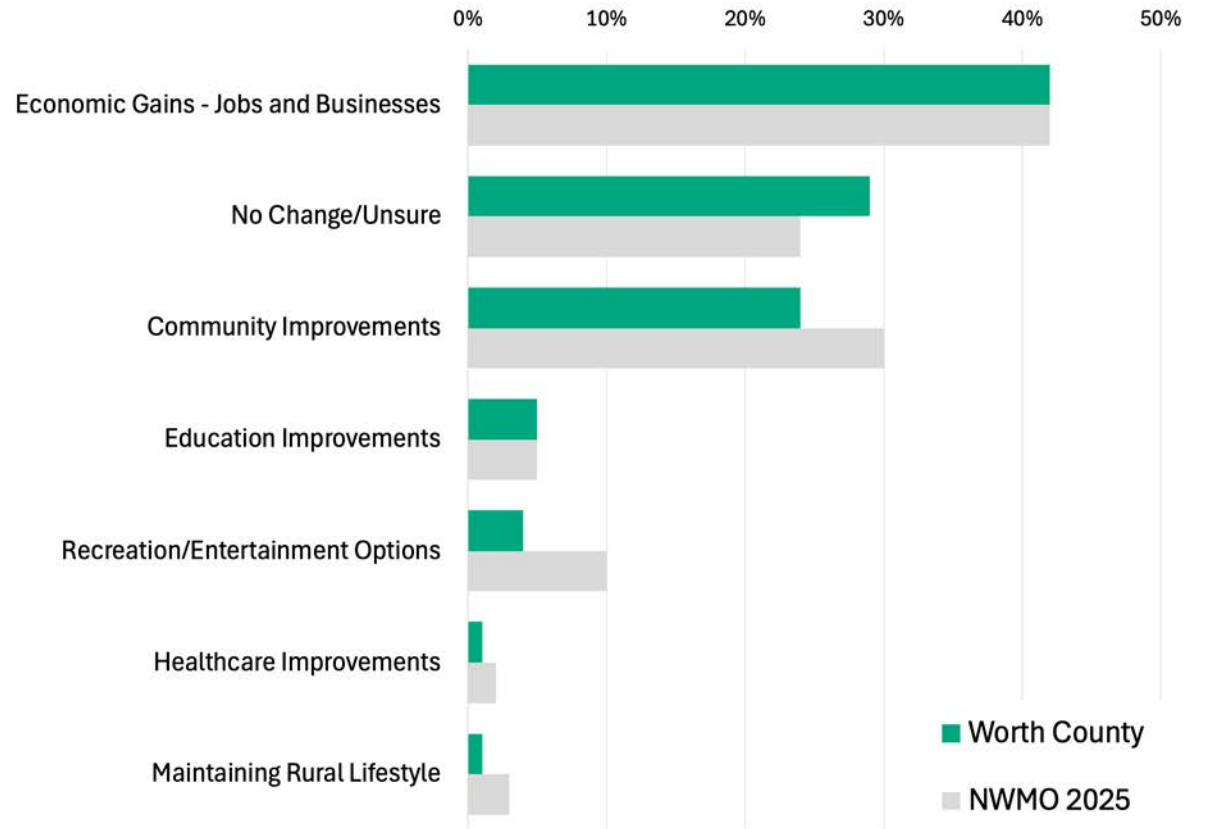
What Changes Excite You About The Future?



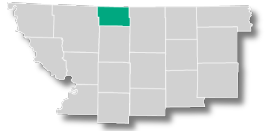
What changes are you **most excited** about for the future of Northwest Missouri?

- **Economic Gains**, such as more jobs and businesses, were mentioned by 4 in 10 respondents.
- **No Change or Unsure** was the second most common reply for Worth County respondents.
- **Community Improvements**, including infrastructure and working together more, were mentioned by 1 in 4 respondents, but less than overall region respondents.

Changes Most Excited For...



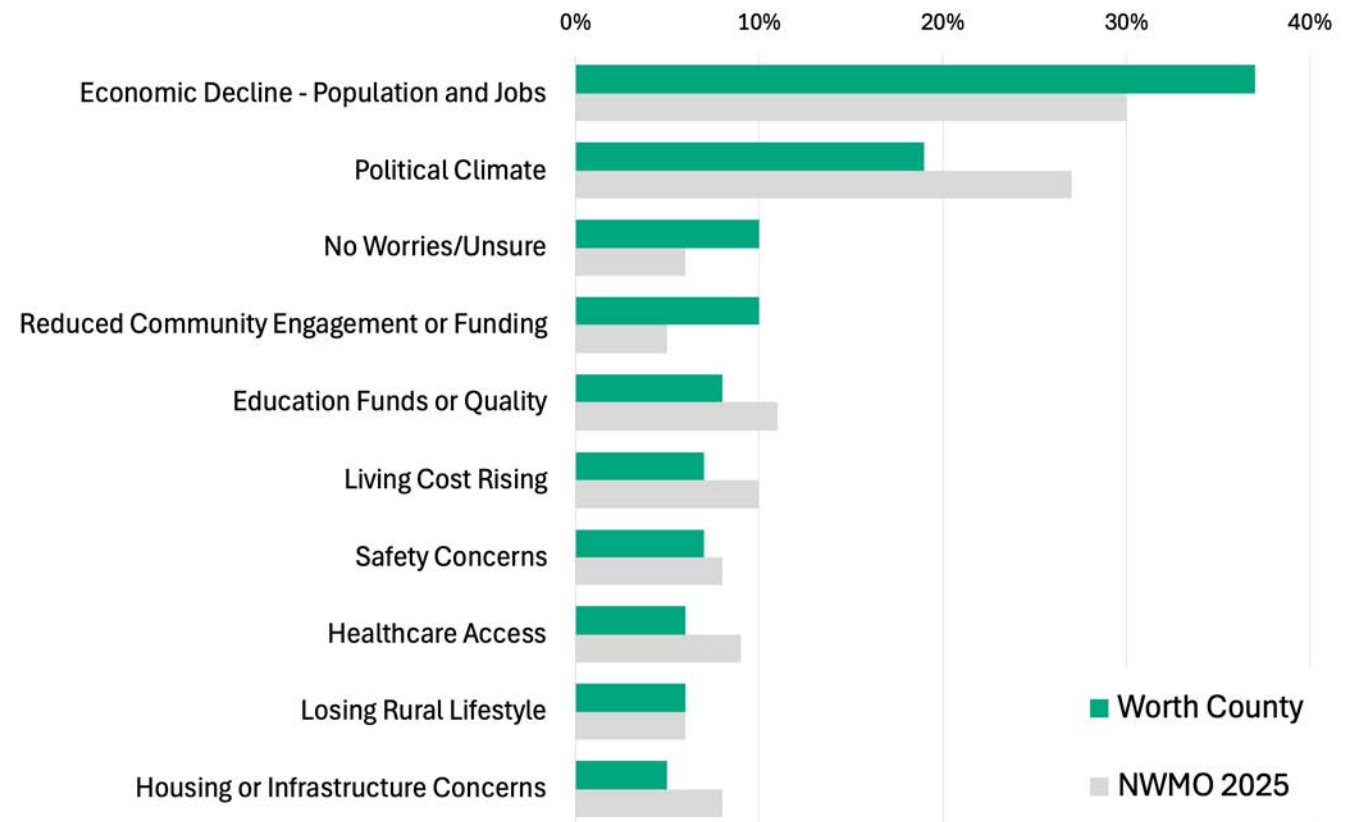
What Changes Worry You About The Future?



What changes **most worry** you about the future of Northwest Missouri?

- **Economic Decline**, like population and business loss, was mentioned by 37% of Worth County respondents. This was a greater concern than for overall region respondents.
- **Political Climate**, including mistrust of government, was mentioned by 19% of Worth County respondents, much less than the overall region.

Changes Most Worried For...



Survey Notes: Open-ended responses categorized by major themes.

End of Presentation

[Back to Table of Contents](#)