
Experience Albion Phase I Summary

Albion Community Foundation
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The experienced adults in Albion are **ACTIVE!!**

82.5% of respondents are **donors!**

72.8% of respondents are **volunteers!**

54.3% of respondents are **lifelong learners!**

21.3% of respondents are in a **post-retirement career!**

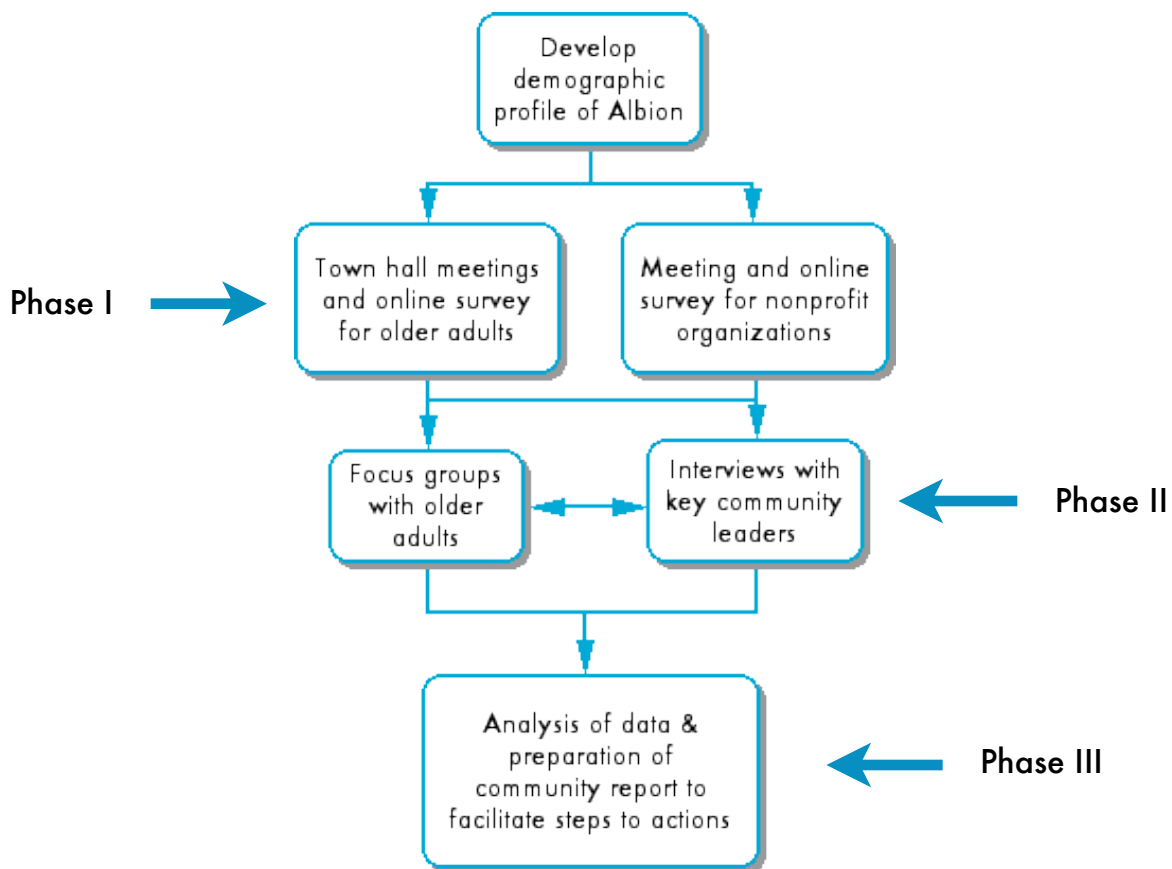
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Background

The Albion Community Foundation received a Community Experience Partnership grant in order to assess the current environment and identify the tools necessary to mobilize the time, talent, and experience of older Americans to revitalize the community. Engaging the nonprofit organizations in the process is critical as well because there could be unidentified barriers preventing active civic engagement of older adults in the community.

The basic outline of tasks associated with the Experience Albion project is shown in the graphic below. The process began in summer 2008 with the development of survey protocols and the identification of demographic data. The town hall meetings and meeting with nonprofit organizations took place in September and October 2008. The focus groups and key leader interviews will take place between November 2008 and January 2009. The final report will be ready for the community in March 2009, but the Albion Community Foundation plans to use data as it is available to improve programming and outreach to experienced adults.

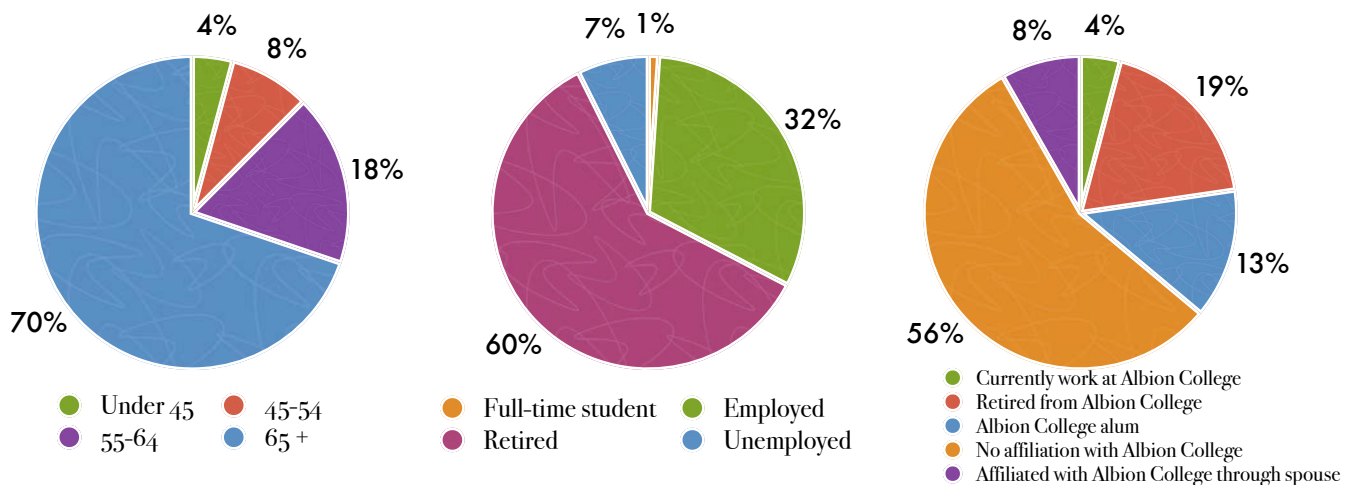


Demographics

The 2000 Census (www.census.gov) for the zip code of 49224, which covers most of the greater Albion area, is the most accurate and recent data available. However, in the past eight years there have been many changes in the Albion community, including the closing of some major employers, which impacts the census data. Therefore, it needs to be understood that this may not be the most accurate representation of Albion today.

Demographic	Percentage (2000 Census)	Number (2000 Census)
Total population		14,815
Number of households		5,999
Age 19 and younger	31.2%	4,622
Age 20 - 54	46.2%	6,844
Age 55 and older	22.6%	3,348
White	72.7%	10,770
Black or African American	22.5%	3,338
High school degree or higher	82.1%	12,163
Bachelors degree or higher	13.3%	1,970
Married (age 15 and older)	50.0%	5,859
Household income <\$25,000	36.8%	2,208
Household income >\$150,000	1.2%	72

A total of 103 community members participated in the five town hall meetings. The meetings were held at Bellemont Manor at Albion College, the library, and the Forks Senior Center. The first four questions on the town hall survey focused on some demographic information to provide descriptive data about who was participating in the survey. From these questions, it was determined that the majority of respondents were long time Albion residents (92.2% lived in the Albion community for 7 years or more), over 65 years of age (69.8%), retired (60%), and not affiliated with Albion College (55.6%).



Positive Issues & Issues Needing Improvement

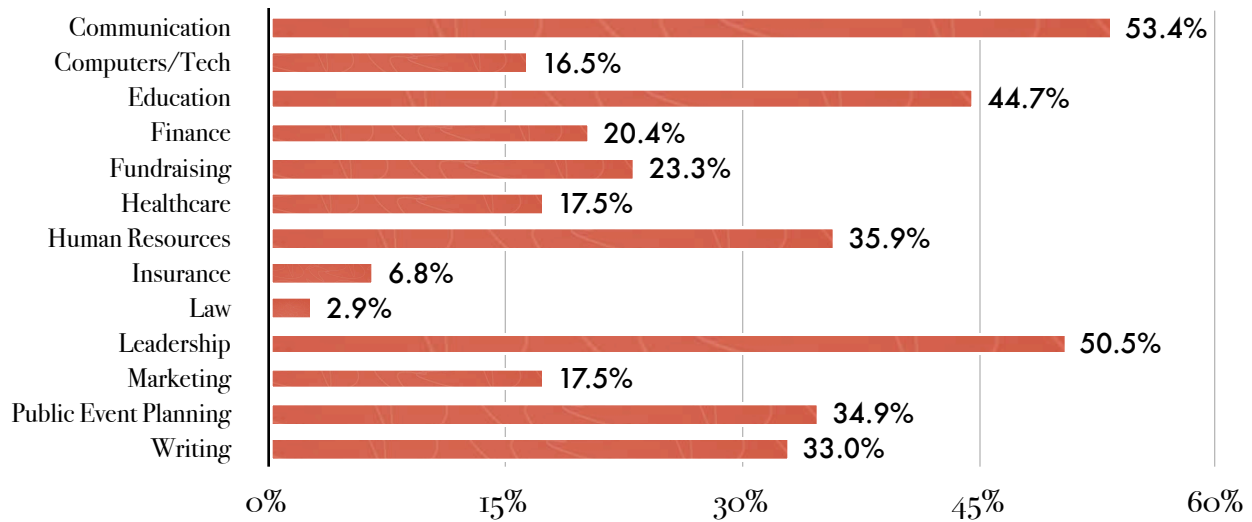
The Albion Community Foundation previously conducted a community needs assessment to identify the critical issues facing the community. From that needs assessment, ten key issues emerged. The town hall participants were asked to rank the ten issues based on what they see the needs of the community are today. The top issue was identified as being five times as important as the last issue. The top four issues were all significantly higher than the last six issues on the list.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Quality of K-12 Education | 6. Transportation |
| 2. Job growth/unemployment | 7. Teen pregnancy |
| 3. Living wage | 8. Crime |
| 4. Poverty | 9. Safety |
| 5. Substance abuse | 10. Obesity |

In discussions during the town hall meetings, other issues came up as being important to the community right now including: the poor image Albion has in the county, roads and sidewalks in disrepair, accessible transportation to other communities, lack of quality retail establishments in the downtown area, lack of accessible urgent care or hospital facility, abandoned homes and absentee landlords, too much subsidizing housing, no place for teens to hang out, flight of families out of Albion, 400+ children using schools of choice to go outside of Albion Public Schools, and more grocery stores.

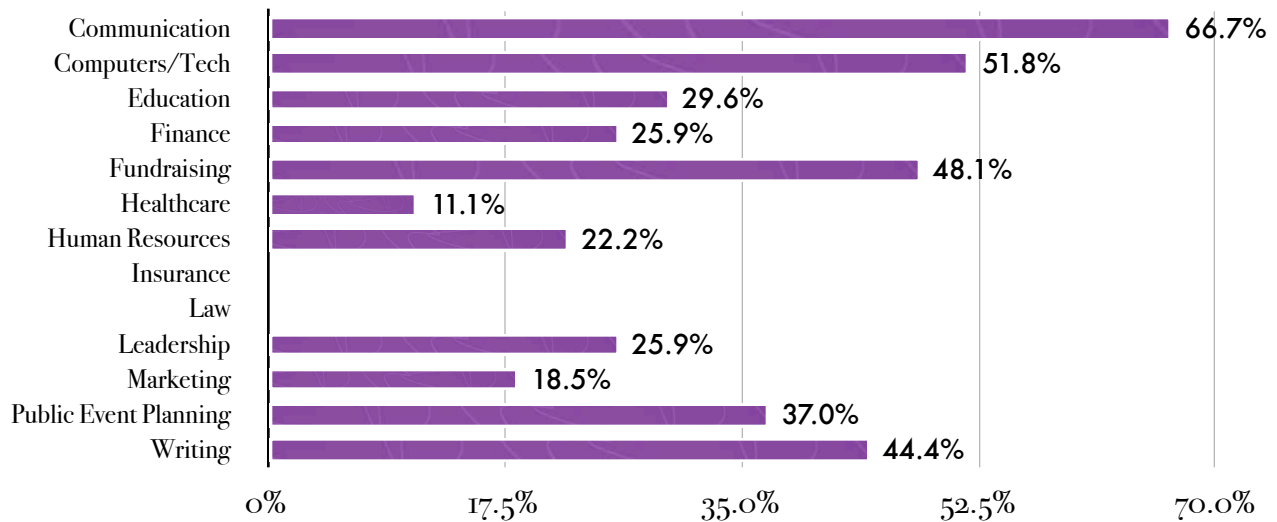
The discussion did not just focus on the issues in Albion that need to be addressed, the discussion also identified a list of skills that the respondents have that could be helpful to the community and things people felt positively about the Albion community. People listed many more positive things about the community than they did issues facing the community. Some of the positive things the respondents identified about Albion included: friendly people, town willing to work together especially in a crisis, Albion College, Albion Community Foundation, less traffic than larger cities, Albion Academy of Lifelong Learning, Philanthropic Women's Group, Citizens to Beautify Albion, Kids 'N' Stuff, natural resources, parks, location on I-94, diversity, "never quit" attitude, churches, youth recreation program, Family Health Center, neighborhood health visitors, Kids at Hope, AIM, Wildcat Wellness Center, 4-H, Kellogg Community College, Starr Commonwealth, concerts in the park, sports teams, Forks Senior Center, green space, local festivals, inexpensive real estate, spirit of volunteerism, historical significance, and the feeling of a traditional small town. In addition, the skills, and the number of respondents who said they possess these skills, is shown in the graph below:

Skills Respondents (Older Adults) Possess



Simultaneous to the town hall meetings held with Albion experienced adults, there was an online survey for nonprofit organizations (n=12) and a meeting where nonprofit representatives could complete the survey in person (n=15). Some of the matches for desires by nonprofit organizations and skills possessed by experienced adults are beneficial: communication, public event planning, and writing. However, the discrepancies will be the focus of additional conversations. For example, nonprofit organizations want volunteers who are good with computers/technology and fundraising, yet those are low on the skills possessed side. On the other hand, experienced adults feel they can share their knowledge about education and leadership, but those aren't high needs on the nonprofit side.

Skills Nonprofit Organizations Want in Volunteers



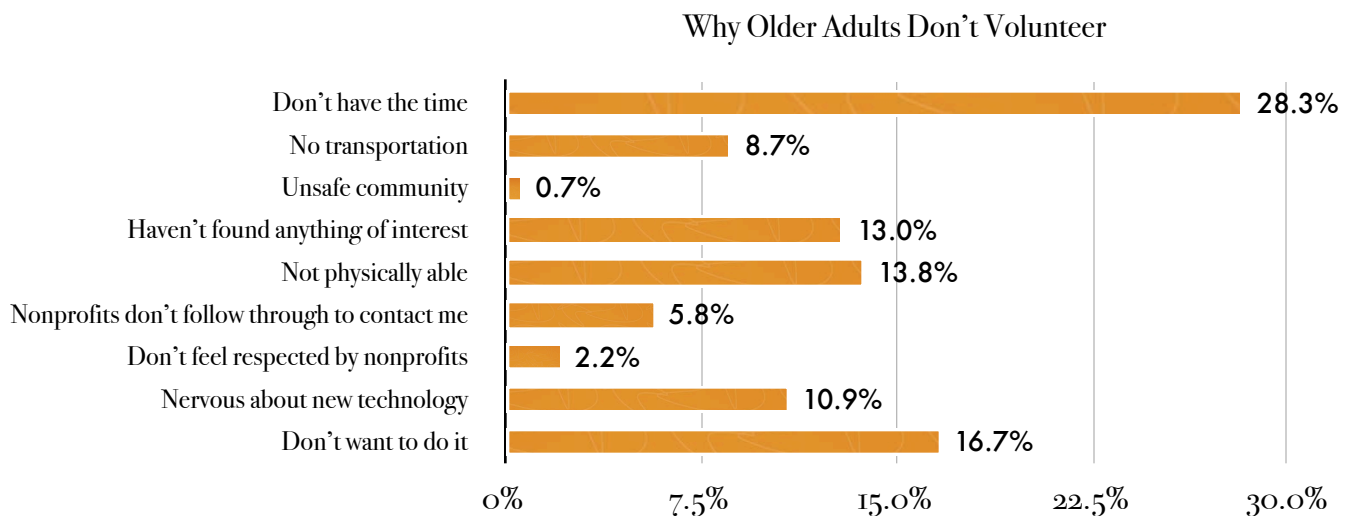
The older adults see a lot of positive elements in Albion, and they have identified skills they possess that could help the community. However, only 62.3% of the respondents generally feel valued in the community. What can the community do differently to value our experienced adults? The respondents identified some things that are important to them in creating good experiences in the community:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Positive attitudes | 5. Commitment to common values |
| 2. Respect | 6. Diversity |
| 3. Opportunity to learn | 7. Humor |
| 4. Opportunity to share | |

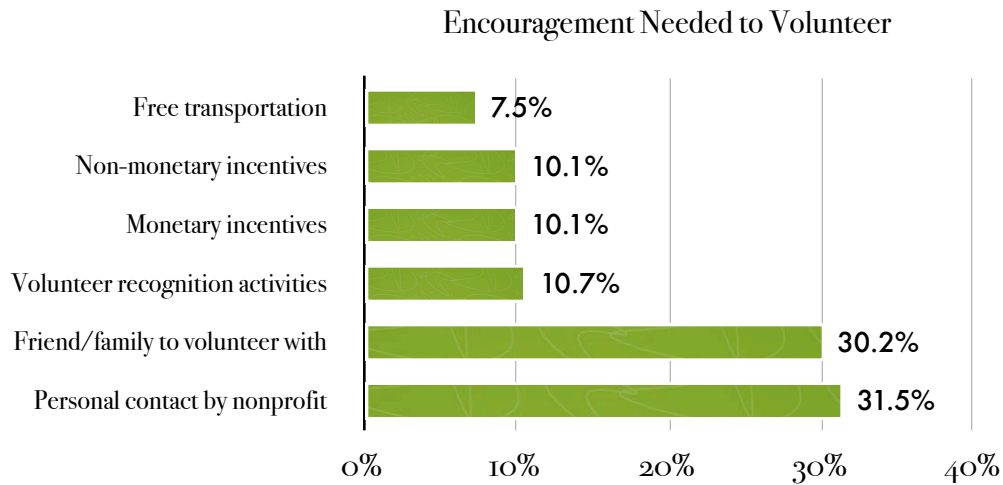
The respondents really do love the Albion community. 50% of the respondents would consider purchasing a home in an Albion retirement community if one were developed - they want to stay connected in the area. Only 32% said they definitely weren't interested in it.

Experienced Adults as Volunteers

The majority of participants in the town hall meetings are already active volunteers (71.3%), and almost half of those who aren't currently volunteering are interested in starting (13.8%). The respondents were then asked why they don't volunteer, or for those who do volunteer, why friends of theirs say they don't volunteer:

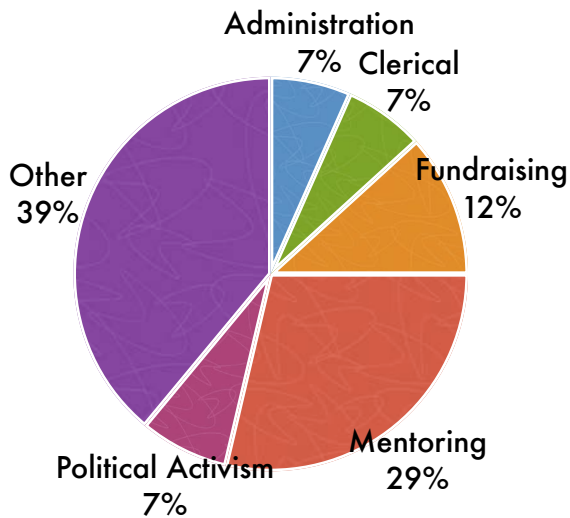


Some of the things that would help encourage older adults to volunteer were discussed during the town hall meetings. Again, if the respondents were already volunteering, they were asked to share perspectives heard from friends, neighbors, etc.

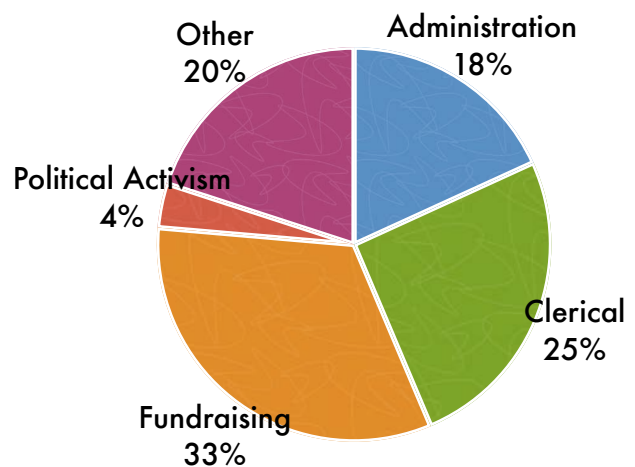


The types of volunteer opportunities the experienced adults were interested in is shown below, as are the types of volunteering opportunities the nonprofit organizations can offer. Again, there are some discrepancies with a high need for fundraising, clerical, and administrative volunteers yet a low percentage of experienced adults wanting to do those things.

Volunteering Experienced Adults Want

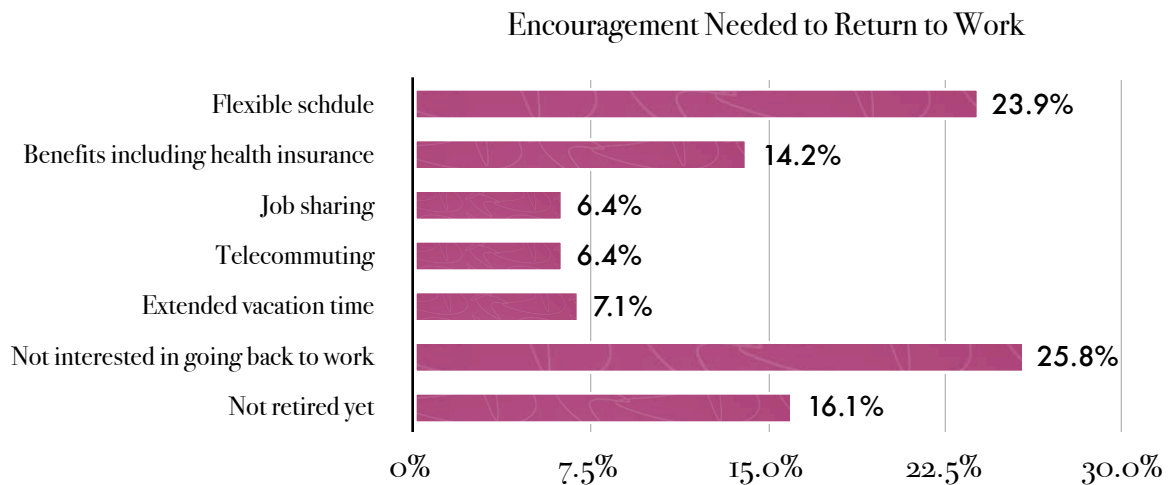


Volunteers Nonprofits Need

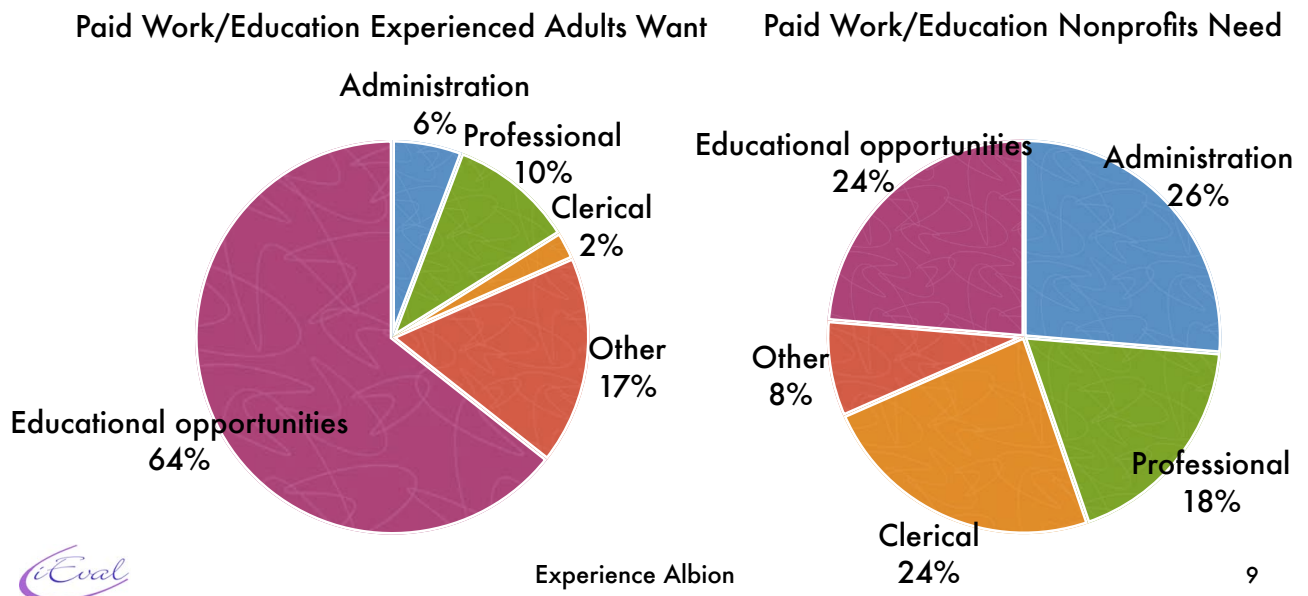


Other Community Engagement

There are many other ways experienced adults can be engaged in the community beyond volunteering. While the majority of the respondents weren't interested in other engagement opportunities (72.7%), there was some interest in mentoring someone who wants to start a business (11.1%), running for public office (9.1%), and starting a business (7.1%). Some of the things that would encourage retired adults to go back to work include:



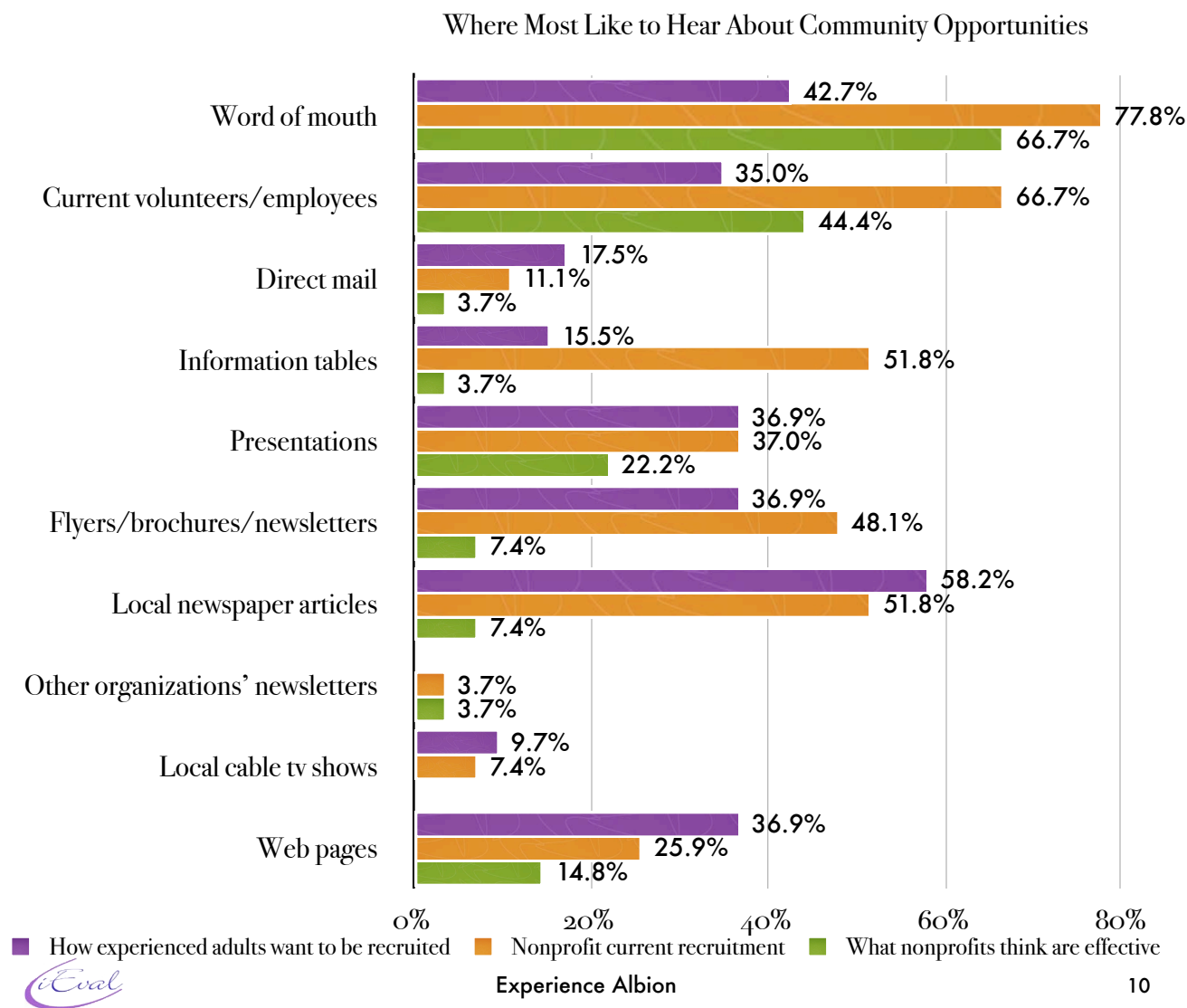
The types of paid employment or educational experiences the experienced adults were interested in is shown below, as are the types of paid opportunities the nonprofit organizations can offer. Again, there are some discrepancies with a high need for administrative, professional, and clerical employees yet a low percentage of experienced adults wanting to do those things.



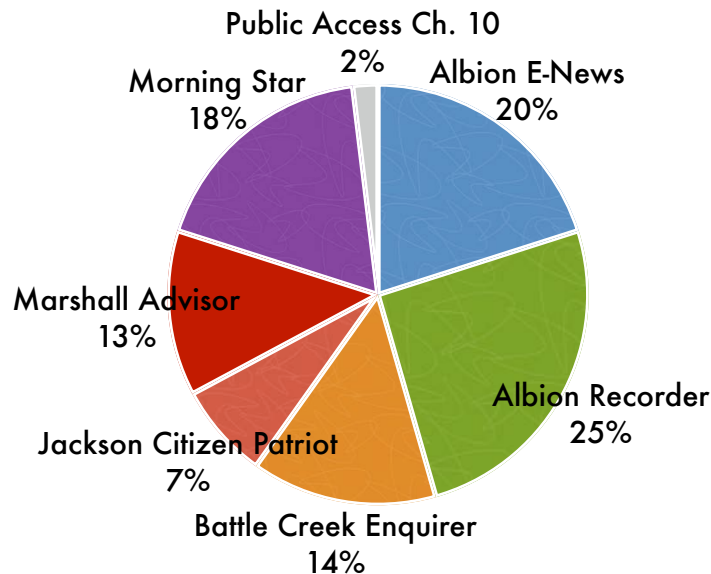
Many of the respondents are currently involved in volunteer and educational opportunities. Some of these opportunities include: Forks Senior Center (35.6%), Albion Academy for Lifelong Learning (27.9%), AARP Seniors to Work (9.3%), CAA Foster Grandparents (2.3%), and Kellogg Community College Lifelong Learning (1.6%).

Marketing to Experienced Adults

The participants in the town hall meetings look to a variety of resources for information on how to get involved in community activities. The nonprofit organizations also have opinions on how they currently do recruitment and what methods they believe are the most effective. Among the comparisons in the chart below, it shows that experienced adults use newspaper articles the most, yet nonprofit organizations believe those to be highly ineffective. The nonprofit organizations identified needing the most technical assistance in doing presentations to local community groups.



The top specific media sources the respondents refer to for information on community involvement are:



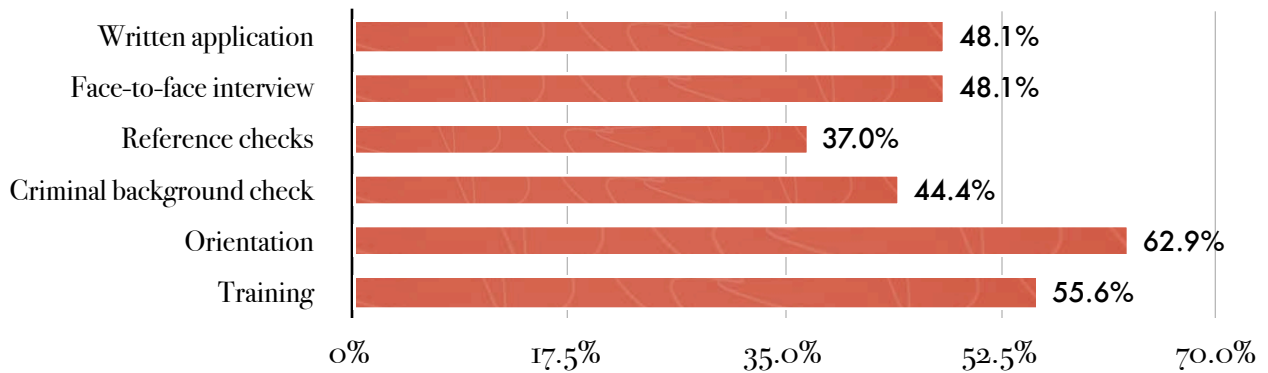
The town hall participants do not totally rely on media resources for their information, however. They are quite proactive and 34.4% directly contact the organization they want to volunteer for or find out information from. The places the respondents go in order to get volunteer information, in order, are:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. The organization I want to volunteer for | 4. Forks Senior Center |
| 2. My church | 5. Newspaper |
| 3. Albion Volunteer Service Organization | 6. Internet |
| | 7. Albion Community Foundation |
| | 8. 211 |

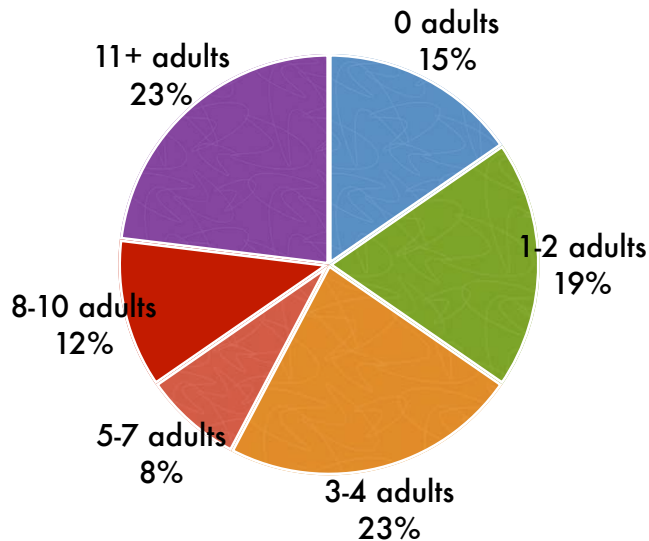
Nonprofit Organizational Needs & Practices

68% of the nonprofit organizations that responded to the survey use the same strategies to recruit experienced adults as volunteers, employees, etc. that they use for everyone else. In order for any adult to become engaged with their organization, there are specific requirements that must be met. The graph below illustrates what percentage of the organizations require each element. Whether or not these requirements are barriers for engagement for the experienced adults will be explored more during Phase II (focus groups).

Requirements for Becoming Engaged at Nonprofit Organizations



The majority of the nonprofit organizations have projects available for experienced adults to work on under 10 hours per week (54%), yet there are 12% of the respondent organizations that are looking for significant commitments of time from experienced adults (more than 20 hours per week). The nonprofit organizations are typically looking for help during the day, either morning or afternoon, and can be flexible to the needs of the experienced adults. The respondent organizations indicated that they are looking for the following number of experienced adults to start working or volunteering with them:



Next Steps

The next step in the Experience Albion project is to use the data in this report to create focus group and interview protocols for Phase II. It is anticipated that Phase II will be complete by January 2009.