

# 2013 Waterville Main Street

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## Consumer Survey

4/29/13

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## **Introduction**

The following report discusses the findings of a spring 2013 survey of 311 residents in the greater Waterville area. This survey was created to help better understand how to make the Downtown area more appealing to the community. Some of the objectives of the survey consisted of:

- 1) Determining what residents like and don't like about Waterville Main Street
- 2) Determining whether the local area residents are noticing any improvements
- 3) Determining how important local business are to the community
- 4) Determining what consumers would like to see for new businesses

## **Methodology and Limitations**

The survey was created by three Business Consulting Practicum students from Thomas College, located in Waterville Maine, with the coordination and approval of the Waterville Main Street Program. This is a study to collect information from local area residents.

Our sample size consisted of 311 local residents. These residents were from the following areas: Fairfield, Oakland, Waterville, Winslow, Sydney, and Vassalboro. A certain percentage of people from each town were represented: Fairfield (7%) Oakland (7%) Waterville (42%) Winslow (21%) Sydney (11%) and Vassalboro (12%). Each percentage from the towns were determined proportionally by the amount of residents in each town. All respondents were contacted between February and April by telephone.

After the collection process was done, we then coded the survey, entered the data into a software program called Minitab and analyzed the findings.

## Executive Summary

- 33% visit downtown Waterville one to two times a week
- 29% visit downtown Waterville in the afternoon, while 38% visit at no specific time
- 66% wouldn't be interested in longer store hours
- 55% visit downtown Waterville to eat and/or shop
- The primary reason for visiting downtown Waterville is to shop
- The little selection offered is the primary reason why the respondents don't enjoy visiting downtown Waterville
- 56% haven't noticed any improvements to the downtown area
- The 44% that noticed improvements, noticed the new stores added
- The top three stores that come to mind are: Maine Made Shop, Day's Jewelers, and Jorgensens
- To further improve the appearance of downtown Waterville, respondents suggest more stores and restaurants should be added and the area to be cleaned up
- 56% say the largest selection of products is the most influential factor when choosing where to shop
- 62% said it's very important to support local businesses
- 70% shop at malls/big-box stores once a month or more
- The top three business consumers would like to see added: clothing outlets, entertainments, and food
- 82% would prefer medium price/medium quality price points
- 52% feel downtown Waterville is the same as other downtowns they've been to
- 36% prefer other downtowns due to the lack of stores and variety downtown Waterville offers
- 36% shop outside the Waterville area less than once a month, while 33% shop one to two times a week
- 60% shop online less than once a month
- 64% have lived in the Waterville area for more than six years
- 29% were between the ages of 18-25, while 22% were 65 and older

- 50% had a household income between 15,000 and 50,000; there were many that didn't respond due to being uncomfortable answering this particular question
- 40% completed some form of college
- Out of the 311 respondents, 64% were males and 36% were females

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Table 1: Visiting Frequency

Q1. How frequently do you visit downtown Waterville?

	Number Reported	% Reported
1-2 times a month	104	33.44
3-4 times a month	79	25.40
5 or more times a month	100	32.15
Other	28	9.00
N= 311	n=311	100%

One-third of the respondents reported visiting downtown Waterville 1-2 times a month, one-third reported visiting 5 or more times a month, approximately 25% visited 3-4 times a month and of the 9 % who responded “other”, their responses consisted of: visiting every day, never, or rarely.

Table 2: Time of Day

Q2. When you visit downtown Waterville, is it generally in the:

	Number Reported	% Reported
Morning	53	17.04
Afternoon	91	29.26
Evening	50	16.08
No specific time	117	37.62
N= 311	n=311	100%

Approximately 17 % of the sample indicated they are more likely to visit Downtown Waterville in the morning. 29% stated they visit Downtown Waterville in the afternoon, and 16% said they visit in the evening. Almost 38% said there's no specific time they prefer to visit Downtown Waterville.

When comparing to the survey conducted in 2008, there was only a 1% decrease in the number of people who were more likely to shop in the morning and in the evening. There was an 8% increase in people who choose to visit Downtown Waterville in the afternoon. In 2013, there was a 7% decrease from 2008 that answered that there was no specific time in which they visited Downtown Waterville.

Table 3: Longer Store Hours

Q3. Would you be more interested in shopping in downtown Waterville if stores were open later in the evening?

	Number Reported	% Reported
Yes	106	34.08
No	205	65.92
N= 311	n=311	100%

Approximately 66% of the respondents stated that it would not make a difference to them if stores were open later and approximately 34% stated they would like it if stores would remain open later.

Compared to 2008, 6% are more likely not to be interested if stores were open later.

Table 4: When in Downtown Area

Q4. Are you more likely to visit downtown during:

	Number Reported	% Reported
Week days	95	30.55
Holidays	6	1.93
Weekends	95	30.55
No difference	115	36.98
N= 311	n=311	100%

The majority of the respondents (37%) stated there was no difference in visiting between week days, weekends and holidays. There were an equal percentage of 30.55 for both week days and weekends. A small percentage (1.9) of respondents said they would be likely to visit downtown Waterville during Holidays. Compared to 2008, people are 4% more likely to visit downtown during the weekdays, while 5% are more likely to visit during the weekends or holidays.

Table 5: What you do Downtown

Q5: When you visit the downtown area which of the following do you do most frequently?

	Number Reported	% Reported
Eat	188	60.45
Shop	203	65.27
Go to entertainment venues	54	17.36
Visit professional offices	23	7.39
Banking	102	32.79
Personal Care	46	14.79
Work	17	5.46
Bars/Pubs	66	21.22
Other	14	4.50
N= 311	n= 311	*

\* Totals to more than 100% due to multiple responses

Going out to eat and shopping was repeated by the majority of the sample. About 60% stated that going out to eat was something they did when visiting Downtown Waterville and about 65% stated shopping. A little under ¼ of the sample stated entertainment and approximately another ¼ stated personal care. Around 7% stated professional offices, 33% banking, 5% work, 21% bars and pubs, and approximately another 5% who responded “other”, their responses consisted of: walking, visiting a specific store, and getting a haircut.

Compared to 2008, people are 5% more likely to go downtown to shop. People that surveyed are also less likely to visit professional offices by 13% and 2% less likely to visit banks when downtown compared to 2008. However, 21% of people expressed an interest in visiting bars and pubs downtown, which wasn't included in the 2008 survey.

Table 6: Primary Reasons for Visiting Downtown

Q6: What is the primary reason for visiting downtown?

Reason	Number Reported	% Reported
Shopping	85	38.81
Banking	30	13.69
Eating	58	26.48
Bars/drinking	17	7.76
Other	87	39.72
N=311	n=219	*

\*The percentage is more than 100% because multiple responses were given

There were 219 responses regarding the primary reason for visiting downtown Waterville. The majority of those who responded stated shopping as their primary reason for visiting the downtown area, which was approximately 38.81%, banking which was approximately 13.69%, eating which was approximately 26.48%, and drinking and visiting bars which was approximately 7.76%. Around 30.72% stated other reasons for visiting the downtown Waterville area. Some of these answers included visiting specific stores and working.

Table 7: Reasons not to shop downtown

Q7: Are any of the following a reason why you don't enjoy visiting Downtown Waterville?

	Number Reported	% Reported
Parking	80	25.72
Little Selection	126	40.51
Prefer to shop big-box stores	69	22.18
Road conditions	24	7.71
High traffic	32	10.28
High Prices	47	15.11
Other	70	22.5
N= 311	n= 311	*

\*Totals to more than 100% due to multiple responses

There were 311 responses recorded regarding the primary reasons for why people don't enjoy visiting the downtown Waterville area. Out of the people that responded the majority of them stated that they don't enjoy visiting downtown due to the little selection offered, which was approximately 41%. Parking was the second reason which was approximately 26% and people preferred to shop big-box stores was approximately 22%. About 23% stated other reasons for why they don't enjoy visiting the downtown Waterville area, some of which included lack of stores, overall appearance, safety, no specific reason.

Table 8: Improvements

Q8: Have you noted any improvements in the past three years in the downtown Waterville area?

	Number Reported	% Reported
Yes	138	44.37
No	173	55.99
N=311	n= 311	100%

Over half of the sample reported that they have not noticed any improvements. Compared to the survey done in 2008, 23 more respondents have noticed improvements in the downtown Waterville area. Also 19 fewer respondents didn't notice improvements in the downtown Waterville area.



Table 9: Improvements Noticed

Q9: If yes, what improvements have you noticed?

Improvement	Number Reported	% Reported
New Stores	64	42.10
Cleaner	20	13.15
Building Improvements	20	13.15
Other	48	31.57
N=311	n=152	*

\* The percentage is more than 100% because multiple responses were given

There were 152 total responses regarding the changes noticed in downtown Waterville. The majority of respondents stated that the new stores in the downtown area as the most noticeable improvement, which was approximately 42.10%. The cleanliness of downtown Waterville and the building improvements tied for third in being the most noticeable improvement within the area at 13.15%. Approximately 31.57% of respondents noticed other improvements such as landscaping, traffic control, and parking.

Table 10: Stores that Come to Mind

Q10: When you think of Downtown Waterville, which stores come to mind?

Stores	Number Reported	% Reported
Family Dollar	28	10.07
Dollar Tree	29	10.43
Maine Made Shop	65	23.38
Mainley Brews	17	6.15
Cancun	23	8.27
Jorgenson's	47	16.90
Sign of the Sun	25	8.99
Day's	50	17.98
Waterville House of Pizza	24	8.63
Goodwill	21	7.55
Wal-Mart	23	8.27
Silver Street Tavern	24	8.63
You Know Who's Pub	11	3.95
Banks	25	8.99
Other	203	73.02
N=311	n=278	*

\*Totals equal more than 100% because multiple responses were given

There were 278 participants who answered this open-ended question. Out of these 278, 23.38% mentioned the Maine Made Shop, 17.98% mentioned Day's Jewelers, 16.90% mentioned Jorgenson's, 10.43% mentioned the Dollar Tree, 10.07% mentioned Family Dollar, 8.99% talked about Sign of the Sun, 8.99% brought up banking, 8.63% thought of Waterville House of Pizza, another 8.63% thought of Silver Street Tavern, 8.27% mentioned Silver Street Tavern, another 8.27% brought up Wal-Mart, another 8.27% thought of Cancun, 7.55% talked about Goodwill, 6.15% mentioned Mainley Brews, and 3.95% thought of You Know Who's Pub. Another 73.02 of participants mentioned other places such as People's Salon, Amici's Joseph's Meat Market.

The "other" category is very large. It represents numerous businesses, and none of them were reported frequently enough to be statistically significant.



Table 11: Appearance Suggestions

Q11: Specifically what do you suggest to further improve the appearance of downtown Waterville?

	Number Reported	% Reported
More stores and restaurants	114	36.65
Landscape and benches	100	32.15
Clean up	114	36.65
Fixed roads and sidewalks	61	19.61
Building renovations	94	30.22
New signs	37	11.89
Better parking and lighting	52	16.72
Art	23	7.39
More outside events and dining	66	21.22
Other	89	28.61
N= 311	n= 311	*

\*Totals to more than 100% due to multiple responses

A total of 311 people responded to the question on what they suggest to further improve the appearance of downtown Waterville. Of the responses, 36.65 percent answered more stores and restaurants, 32.15 percent answered landscape and benches, 36.65 percent answered clean up, 19.61 percent answered fix road and sidewalks, 30.22 percent answered building renovations, 11.89 percent answered new signs, 16.72 percent answered better parking and lighting, 7.39 percent answered art, 21.22 percent answered more outside events and dining and 28.61 percent answered “other”, their responses consisted of: no suggestion, more businesses, more greenery.

Table 12: Influential factors

Q12. What are the most influential factors when choosing where you shop?

	Number Reported	% Reported
Lower Prices	135	43.40
Larger Selection of Products	175	56.27
More stores in one convenience area	105	33.76
Mall Atmosphere	26	8.36
All Indoor Shopping	27	8.68
More convenient parking	62	19.93
Other	34	10.93
N= 311	n=311	*

\*Totals to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

Three responses were reported by the majority of those surveyed: 43.40 percent responded lower prices, more than half at 56.27 percent responded larger selection of products, 33.76 percent responded more stores in one convenience area; and the eleven percent who responded “other”, their responses consisted of: having unique items offered, customer service, location of store, quality of products.

Table 13: Customer Service vs. Price vs. Products/Services Offered

Q13. What is the single most important factor to you when shopping?

	Number Reported	% Reported
Customer service	86	27.74
Prices	76	24.52
Products/Services offered	148	47.74
N= 311	n=311	100%

Slightly more than fifty percent of the sample said that customer service or prices is more important to them when shopping. The remainder of the people said products/services offered is the most important factor to them when shopping.

Table 14: Local Business Support

Q14. How important to you is it to support your local businesses?

	Number Reported	% Reported
Very important	193	62.26
Somewhat important	104	33.55
Not important at all	13	4.19
N= 311	n=311	100%

Approximately sixty-two percent of the respondents feel that it is very important to them to support local business; about thirty-four percent feel that it is somewhat important; and four percent feel that it isn't important at all.

Table 15: Mall/Big Box Store Shopping

Q15. How frequently do you shop at malls/big box stores?

	Number Reported	% Reported
Once a month or more	216	69.90
Once every few months	69	22.33
Twice a year or less	19	6.15
Never	5	1.62
N= 311	n=311	100%

The above table indicates that the majority (70%) of the respondents said they shop at malls/big box stores once a month or more; twenty-two percent said they shop at malls/big box stores once every few months. The amount of people that shop at malls/big box stores either twice a year or less and never totaled seven percent.



Table 16: Stores consumers want added

Q16: If more businesses were added to downtown what kind of establishments would you like to see?

	Number Reported	% Reported
Entertainment	118	37.94
Food	107	34.40
Clothing outlets	151	48.55
Women's outlets	98	31.51
Men's outlets	88	28.29
Children's outlets	37	11.89
Book store	48	15.43
Jewelry	18	5.78
Toys	19	6.10
Grocery	39	12.54
Other	73	23.47
N= 311	n= 311	*

\*Totals to more than 100% due to multiple responses

Of the 311 people that answered, clothing outlets was the biggest establishment people would like to see be added to downtown, which was 48.55 percent. From the clothing outlets, 31.51 percent said women's outlets, 28.29 percent said men's outlets and 11.89 percent said children's outlets. The second biggest establishment was entertainment, which was 37.94 percent. Approximately 34.40 percent said food, 15.43 percent said book store, 5.78 percent said jewelry, 6.10 percent said toys, and the remaining 23.47 percent of respondents reported "other" various reasons.

Of the respondents who answered "other" to what kind of stores they would like to see in downtown Waterville, their responses were: an L.L bean, Reny's, music, clothing, hardware, and food.

Table 17: Price/Quality Points

Q17: If new businesses were to enter the downtown area what price/quality points would you like to see?

	Number Reported	% Reported
High Price/high quality	38	12.26
Medium Price/medium quality	254	81.94
Low Price/low quality	18	5.81
N=311	n=311	100%

A large majority of the respondents, which consisted of 81.94 percent, stated they would like to see medium price/medium quality price points in the downtown Waterville area. High price/high quality was the second highest, which consisted of 12.26 percent and low price/low quality was 5.81 percent.

Table 18: Downtown comparisons

Q18: How does Waterville’s downtown area compare to other downtowns you’ve been to?

	Number Reported	% Reported
Worse	94	30.32
Same	160	51.61
Better	56	18.06
N= 311	n= 311	100%

Out of the 311 respondents, 51.61 percent said that Waterville’s downtown area is the same as other downtowns in other Maine cities, while 30.32 percent said that Waterville’s downtown is worse and 18.06 percent said that Waterville is better. Compared to the survey conducted in 2008, the percentage of respondents who reported Waterville is worse increased by 15.8 percent and those who reported Waterville is better decreased by 2.07 percent. Also Waterville being the same as other downtowns decreased by 13.74 percent.

Table 19: Reasons other downtowns are preferred

Q19: If worse, why?

Reasons	Number Reported	% Reported
Dirty	15	17.64
Lack of Stores/variety	32	35.95
Road Conditions	5	5.61
Other	54	60.67
N=311	n=89	*

\* Totals equal more than 100% because multiple responses were given

There were 89 total people who stated why downtown Waterville was worse than other downtowns they had been to. Approximately 35.95% mentioned a lack of stores and variety, 17.64% mentioned the cleanliness of downtown, and 5.61% mentioned poor road conditions. Approximately 60.67% of respondents mentioned other reasons why downtown Waterville was worse than other downtowns. Some of these responses were the area being crowded, items cost more, the concourse is annoying, and the stores aren't open late.

Table 20: Shopping outside the Waterville area

Q20: In any given month how often do you shop outside the Waterville area?

	Number Reported	% Reported
Less than once a month	113	36.45
1-2 times a month	103	33.23
3-4 times a month	45	14.52
5 or more times a month	50	16.07
N= 311	n= 311	100%

Responses to the questions were in four different categories. 36.45 percent of the sample said they shopped outside the Waterville area less than once a month, 33.23 percent said one to two times a month, 14.52 percent said three to four times a month and 16.07 percent said five or more times a month.

Table 21: Online Shopping

Q21. In any given month how often do you shop online?

	Number Reported	% Reported
Less than once a month	184	59.35
1-2 times a month	71	22.90
3-4 times a month	35	11.29
5 or more times a month	20	6.45
N= 311	n=311	100%

The majority of the respondents (59%) said they shop online less than once a month; 21 percent shop online one to two times a month; 11 percent shop online 3 to four times a month; and 6 percent shop online five or more times a month.

Table 22: Residence

Q22: What town do you live in?

Town	Number Reported	% Reported
Fairfield	21	6.75
Oakland	21	6.75
Sidney	33	10.63
Waterville	131	42.12
Winslow	69	22.18
Vassalboro	36	11.57
N=311	n=311	100%

We had all 311 participants state which towns they're from. Approximately 6.75% participants were from Fairfield, 6.75% were from Oakland, 10.63% were from Sidney, 42.12% were from Waterville, 22.18% were from Winslow, and 11.57% were from Vassalboro. The number in the sample from each town was derived proportionally from the number of residents in the primary market area.

Table 23: Duration of Residency

Q23. How many years have you lived in the Waterville area?

	Number Reported	% Reported
Less than 1 year	21	6.80
1-3 years	56	18.12
4-6 years	33	10.68
More than 6 years	199	64.40
N= 311	n=311	100%

The majority of respondents (64.4%) said they have lived in the Waterville area for more than six years; eighteen percent said between one and three years; eleven percent said between four and six years; and seven percent have lived in the Waterville area for less than one year.



Table 24: Age Range

Q24. Your age range is between:

	Number Reported	% Reported
18-25	89	28.61
26-35	28	9.06
36-45	42	13.59
46-55	42	13.59
56-65	42	13.59
65 and older	68	22.01
N= 311	n=311	100%

Twenty-nine percent of the respondents were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five; nine percent were between the ages of twenty-six and thirty-five. The respondents between thirty-six and forty-five, forty-six and fifty-five, and fifty-six to sixty five accounted for thirty percent each. Twenty-two percent of the respondents were sixty-five and older.

Table 25: Income

Q25. Approximate annual household income

	Number Reported	% Reported
Less than 15,000	61	21.94
15,000-30,000	68	24.46
31,000-50,000	66	24.74
51,000-70,000	40	14.39
71,000-90,000	12	4.32
Over 90,000	31	11.15
N= 311	n=278	89.38%

The annual household income question was answered by 278 respondents. Out of the 278 who answered the question, 22 percent responded less than \$15,000; 24.4 percent responded \$15,000-\$30,000; 24.7% responded \$31,000-\$50,000; 14 percent responded \$51,000-\$70,000; 4 percent responded \$71,000-90,000; and 11 percent responded that their annual household income is over \$90,000. Out of the 311 respondents, 33 of them didn't feel comfortable answering this question and decided to skip it.

Table 26: Education

Q26. Your highest level of education attained

	Number Reported	% Reported
Did not complete high school	3	0.98
High School/ GED	71	23.13
Some College	123	39.54
Associate's Degree	19	6.19
Bachelor's Degree	65	21.17
Master's Degree	16	5.21
Advanced Graduate or Professional Degree	14	4.56
N= 311	n=311	100%

The majority of the respondents reported obtaining an educational level of high school/GED graduate, some college, or a Bachelor's Degree. Respondents, whom did not complete high school, have an Associate's Degree, Master's Degree or an Advanced Graduate or Professional Degree totaled seventeen percent.

Table 27: Gender

Q27. Gender

	Number Reported	% Reported
Male	199	63.75
Female	112	36.25
N= 311	n=311	100%

Approximately two-thirds of the respondents were female, leaving the males accounting for one-third of the respondents.

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a student at Thomas College working on a consulting project for the Downtown Waterville Main Street program. I would appreciate a few minutes of your time to complete a survey, which will help us understand how to make the Downtown Area more appealing to the community.

1. How frequently do you visit downtown Waterville? (read list)
  - 1-2 times a month
  - 3-4 times a month
  - 5 or more times a month
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. When you visit downtown Waterville is it generally in the (read list)
  - Morning
  - Afternoon
  - Evening
  - No specific time
  
3. Would you be more interested in shopping in downtown Waterville if stores were open later in the evening?
  - Yes
  - No
  
4. Are you more likely to visit downtown during (read list)
  - Week days
  - Holidays
  - Weekends
  - No difference
  
5. When you visit the downtown area which of the following do you do most frequently?  
(Check all that apply) (read list)
  - Eat
  - Shop
  - Go to entertainment venues
  - Visit professional offices
  - Banking
  - Personal care
  - Work
  - Bars/Pubs
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the primary reason for visiting downtown?

7. Are any of the following a reason why you don't enjoy visiting downtown Waterville?  
(Choose all that apply) (read list)

- Parking
- Little selection/variety
- Prefer to shop big-box stores
- Road conditions
- High traffic
- High Prices
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Have you noted any improvements in the past three years in the downtown Waterville area?

- Yes
- No

9. If yes, what improvements have you noticed?

10. When you **think** of **Downtown** Waterville, which stores come to mind? (Fill in)

11. Specifically what do you suggest to further improve the appearance of downtown Waterville? (check off all that apply) (don't read list)

- More stores and restaurants
- Landscape and benches
- Clean up
- Fixed roads and sidewalks
- Building renovations
- New signs

- Better parking and lighting
- Art
- More outside events and dining
- Other

12. What are the most influential factors when choosing where you shop? (check all the apply) (read list)

- Lower prices
- Larger selection of products/services
- More stores in one convenience area
- Mall atmosphere
- All indoor shopping
- More convenient parking
- Other (please specify)

13. What is the single **most** important factor to you when shopping? (choose only one)

- Customer service
- Prices
- Products/Services offered

14. How important to you is it to support your local businesses? (read list)

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important at all

15. How frequently do you shop at malls/ big box stores (read list)

- Once a month or more
- Once every few months
- Twice a year or less
- Never

16. If more business were added to downtown what kind of establishments would you like to see? (check all the apply) (read list)

- Entertainment
- Food
- Clothing outlets
- Women's outlets
- Men's outlets

- Children's outlets
- Book store
- Jewelry
- Toys
- Grocery
- Other (please specify)

17. If new business were to enter the downtown area what price/quality points would you like to see? (read list)

- High price/high quality
- Medium price/medium quality
- Low price/low quality

18. How does Waterville's downtown area compare to other downtowns you've been to? (read list)

- Worse
- Same
- Better

19. If worse, why?

20. In any given month how often do you shop outside the Waterville area? (read list)

- Less than once a month
- 1-2 times a month
- 3-4 times a month
- 5 or more times a month

21. In any given month how often do you shop online? (read list)

- Less than once a month
- 1-2 times a month
- 3-4 times a month
- 5 or more times a month

22. What town do you live in? (Fill in) \_\_\_\_\_



23. How many years have you live in the Waterville area? (read list)

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- More than 6 years

24. Your age range is between (read list)

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- 65 and older

25. Approximate annual household income (read list)

- Less than 15,000
- 15,000-30,000
- 31,000-50,000
- 51,000-70,000
- 71,000-90,000
- Over 90,000

26. Your highest level of education attained (read list)

- Did not complete high school
- High School/GED
- Some College
- Associates Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Advanced Graduate or Professional Degree

27. Gender (Don't ask—just fill in)

- Female
- Male