## 2022 Statewide Needs Assessment Survey

# Envisioning the Future: Gila County

Arizona Cooperative Extension conducted a statewide needs assessment survey in Fall 2022 to better understand community needs and priorities. Cooperative Extension users, topical experts, and members of the general public from each county were invited to participate via online or paper survey. Participants were shown 99 items across topics relevant to Cooperative Extension and asked to rank how important it is to prioritize each item in their community on a 5-point scale.

Apache County had 150 survey responses.

### **Top Priorities** Identified by Gila County Respondents

Percent of respondents who selected "extremely" or "very" important

Recruitment	and	retention of	of o	ualified	teachers.	97%
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Water conservation, 95%

Planning for and reducing the severity of wildfires, 95%

Child abuse and neglect prevention, 95%

Domestic violence prevention, 95%

Quality K-12 education, 95%

Helping all young people graduate high school or get a GED, 94%

Having enough medical, dental, and mental health providers, 93%

Having enough, quality water for irrigation and livestock, 93%

Water quality, 92%

Promoting parenting skills, 92%

Water-efficient farming and ranching, 91%

Infant and child health, 90%

Healthy forests, forest restoration, and forest product development, 90%

Water policy and water rights, 89%

Access to good, affordable child care and preschools, 89%

Access to affordable, healthy food, 89%

Planning for and reducing drought effects, 89%

Services for veterans, 89%

Mental health and stress management, 89%

Supports for youth in the foster care system, 89%

Soil health, 89%

Suicide prevention, 89%

Substance abuse prevention and treatment services, 89%



Health and community wellbeing

Education and youth development

Agriculture

Natural resources and the environment

Community and economic development



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Child abuse and neglect prevention	70%		26% 3 <mark>%2%</mark>		
Domestic violence prevention	69%	2	27% 4% <mark>1%</mark>		
Having enough medical, dental, and mental health providers	60%	33%	4% 2 <mark>% 1%</mark>		
Promoting parenting skills	55%	37%	7% <mark>1%</mark>		
Infant and child health	57%	33%	9% 1%		
Access to good, affordable child care and preschools	48%	41%	8% 2%		
Access to affordable, healthy food	53%	36%	9% 2%		
Services for veterans	46%	43%	10% 2%		
Mental health and stress management	54%	35%	8% 3 <mark>% 1</mark> %		
Supports for youth in the foster care system	56%	32%	8% 3%		
Suicide prevention	53%	35%	8% 2 <mark>%1%</mark>		
Substance abuse prevention and treatment services	50%	38%	8% 2% <mark>2</mark> %		
Supports for grandparents and other friends and family raising children	49%	38%	11% 2%		
Healthy aging and quality long-term care options	43%	44%	9% 3%1%		
Access to affordable health insurance	58%	27%	9% 5%		
Healthy physical activity	35%	50%	12% 2 <mark>%</mark>		
The physical and mental health of mothers before, during, and after pregnancy	43%	42%	13% 2 <mark>%1%</mark>		
Screenings and early intervention for young children who may have developmental delays	49%	36%	12% 2%1%		
Chronic disease prevention and management (e.g., cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes)	40%	44%	1% 14% 1%		
Understanding and navigating the health care system	45%	38%	14% 2 <mark>%</mark> 2%		
Personal and family financial planning	34%	49%	16% <mark>1%</mark>		
Preparing healthy food	35%	45%	17% 2 <mark>%</mark>		
Oral health, including affordable dental care	33%	47%	16% 3% <mark>1%</mark>		
Food safety (for homes and businesses)	43%	37%	18% <mark>2%</mark>		
Infectious disease prevention and response	40%	37%	19% 2 <mark>%2%</mark>		
Reproductive health and family planning	37%	39%	18% 5% <mark>1%</mark>		

Between 129 and 133 participants responded to each item in this section.

■ Extremely ■ Very ■ Somewhat ■ A little ■ Not at all

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### **EDUCATION AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT Priorities ranked by "extremely" + "very important"**

Recruitment and retention of qualified teachers	Recruitment and retention of qualified teachers 68%				
Quality K-12 education	71%		24% <mark>5%</mark> 1%		
Helping all young people graduate high school or get a GED	60%	3	4% <mark>5%</mark> 1%		
Early childhood reading and language skills	55%	32%	9% 2% 1%		
Youth internships, apprenticeships, and mentoring for career development	42%	45%	10% 3%		
Supports for at-risk youth (e.g., low-income, homeless, English language learners)	47%	40%	9% 5%		
In-school student resources (e.g., counselors, nurses, substance use prevention)	47%	39%	10% <mark>4%</mark> 1%		
Resources for children and youth with disabilities	39%	43%	13% 5% 1%		
Recreational activities and resources for youth	39%	42%	15% 4% 1%		
Social-emotional learning and youth mental health (e.g., managing feelings, relationship skills)	43%	37%	12% 6% 1%		
Quality preschools	45%	36%	<b>16%</b> 3% 1%		
Youth leadership and civic engagement (e.g., volunteering, community involvement)	38%	42%	17% 3%		
Entrepreneurial skills for youth	34%	41%	22% 3%		
Naking sure everyone who wants to go to college or university can	34%	32% 20	10% 4%		

Between 127 and 131 participants responded to each item in this section.

Extremely Very Somewhat A little Not at all

### **AGRICULTURE Priorities ranked by "extremely" + "very important"**

Having enough, quality water for irrigation and livestock	65%	2	8% 6% 1%
Water-efficient farming and ranching	66%	2	5% 8% <mark>2</mark> %
Soil health	56%	32%	8% 4%
Identifying and managing pests (e.g., insects, weeds, diseases)	35%	50%	11% 4%
Food safety in agricultural production	45%	39%	14% 2%1%
Support for new farmers and ranchers	49%	34%	13% 2% 2%
Sustainable and regenerative agriculture	42%	41%	14% 3%
Preserving family or individually-owned farms and ranches	48%	35%	14% 2%1%
Crop nutrient management (fertilizer and soil amendment)	36%	45%	15% 3% 1%
New agricultural technologies (e.g., smart agriculture)	38%	43%	13% 4% 2%
Rangeland health	48%	32%	16% 3%1%
Farm and ranch profitability	40%	40%	16% 3% 2%
Having enough well-trained agricultural workers	38%	41%	19% 2%
Local food system development (e.g., home and community gardens, farmers markets)	41%	38%	17% 4%
Learning where food comes from	41%	36%	<b>19%</b> 4% 1%
Agricultural producer and worker health, safety, and training	35%	42%	20% 4%
Having access to scientific information about plant and animal systems	37% 38%		18% 5% 2%
Having access to climate and weather outlooks	31%	44%	<b>18</b> % <b>5</b> % <b>2</b> %
Food and agricultural business support (e.g., marketing, sales and tax management, succession planning)	25%	45%	22% 5% 2%
Traditional Native American agricultural practices	25%	36% 22%	11% 6%
Organic agriculture	28%	33% 25%	12% 2%
Agricultural tourism and ecotourism	15% 26%	44%	11% 4%

Between 124 and 132 participants responded to each item in this section.

■ Extremely ■ Very ■ Somewhat ■ A little ■ Not at all

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Prepared by the Community Research, Evaluation & Development (CRED) Team, January 2023

### **NATURAL RESOURCES Priorities ranked by "extremely" + "very important"**

Between 115 and 133 participants responded to each item in this section.						
Water conservation	71		24% <mark>3%</mark> 2%			
Planning for and reducing the severity of wildfires	70%			25%	<mark>2% 2</mark> %	
Water quality	63%			29%	6% <mark>2</mark> %	
Healthy forests, forest restoration, and forest product development	59%		31%		<mark>6% 3%1%</mark>	
Water policy and water rights	58%		31%		<mark>7% 3%</mark> 1%	
Planning for and reducing drought effects	56%		33%		8% 2%	
Preparing for and reducing the severity of natural disasters and other emergencies	47%		36%		1% <mark>5%</mark> 1%	
Sustainable landscaping (e.g., low water use, pollinator, wildlife-friendly)	44%		35%	16	5% <mark>5</mark> %	
Air quality	44%	36%		16	% 5%	
Preserving and restoring open spaces, natural ecosystems, and wildlife habitats	47%	47% 32%		12%	8% 2%	
Protecting native plants and animals	47%		30%		% <mark>3%1</mark> %	
Recycling and waste reduction	41%	33	33%		<mark>4%</mark> 1%	
Natural spaces for outdoor recreation	35%	37%	37%		<b>5% 2</b> %	
Recognizing connections between animal, environmental, and human health	39%	32%	32%		5% 3%	
Preserving and restoring wetland and riparian areas	40%	29%	29%		3% 5%	
Energy conservation and energy efficiency (e.g., weatherization, low-energy appliances)	36%	31%	31%		10% 2%	
Protecting cultural resources (including Native American sacred sites)	39% 28		21%		8% 4%	
Preserving dark night skies and natural quiet	32%	30%	28%		7% 3%	
Renewable energy (e.g., solar, wind)	Renewable energy (e.g., solar, wind) 38%		23	% 9	9% 7%	
Higher heat (heat island effects) in urban areas	23%	33%	31%	6	<b>11% 2</b> %	
Addressing climate change	38%	17%	21%	8%	16%	

Between 115 and 133 participants responded to each item in this section.

■ Extremely ■ Very ■ Somewhat ■ A little ■ Not at all

#### University of Arizona Cooperative Extension

Prepared by the Community Research, Evaluation & Development (CRED) Team, January 2023

### **COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** Priorities ranked by "extremely" + "very important"

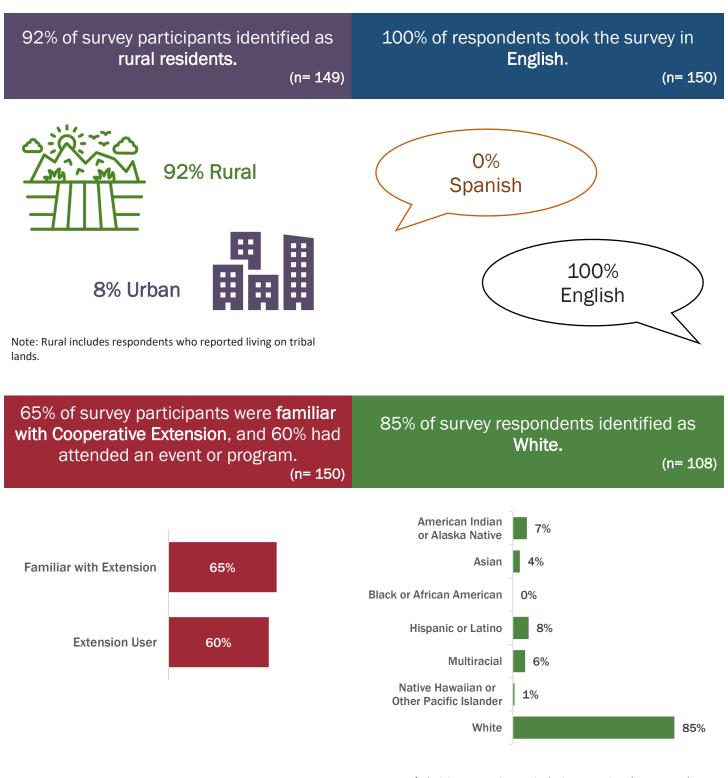
Small and local business support	53%		33%		14	<mark>%</mark> 1%
Access to reliable, high-speed internet	50%		35%		12%	<mark>% 2</mark> % 2%
Well-paying job opportunities at all skill levels	40%		44%		13% 1 <mark>%</mark> 2%	
Affordable housing	61%		23%		<b>12</b> %	5 <mark>3%</mark> 1%
Job training and workforce development	44%		39%		15%	<mark>6 1</mark> % 2%
Reducing homelessness	44%		37%		<b>14%</b>	<mark>3%</mark> 2%
Safe and healthy homes	44%		37%		<b>15</b> %	<mark>2%</mark> 3%
Job opportunities that keep people in their home communities	38%		42%		17%	<mark>1%</mark> 3%
Accessibility in community spaces (particularly for individuals with disabilities and seniors)	29%		47%		8%	<mark>5%</mark> 1%
Support for entrepreneurs	43%		32%		3%	3%
Safe community spaces for recreation and social connection	29%	29% 45%		2:	1%	<mark>2%</mark> 3%
Civic engagement and community leadership (e.g., volunteering, community involvement)	30%	43%		23	%	<mark>3%</mark> 1%
Safe, reliable, and affordable transportation (e.g., public transit, walking, biking)	31%	39%		20%	1	<mark>8%</mark> 2%
Building social connections and reducing social isolation	26%	43%		% 25%		<mark>6%</mark> 1%
Supporting nonprofit organizations and community leaders	31%	31% 35%		22%	8	<mark>% 3%</mark>
Cultural and language revitalization in Native American communities	34%	27%		26%	7%	7%

Between 113 and 119 participants responded to each item in this section.

Extremely Very Somewhat A little Not at all

University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Prepared by the Community Research, Evaluation & Development (CRED) Team, January 2023

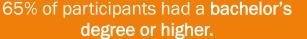
### WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE SURVEY?



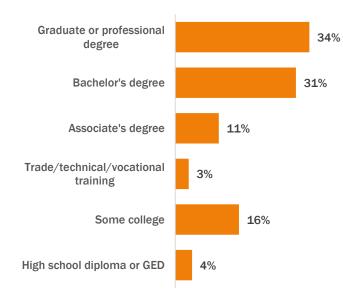
Note: Race/ethnicity categories are inclusive, meaning that respondents are included in each category they selected.

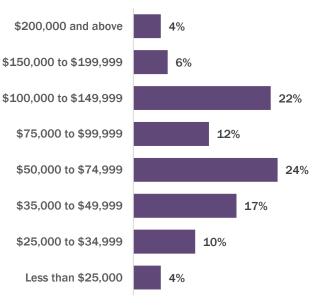
31% of participants had an annual household income of less than \$50,000.

(n = 89)



(n = 117)



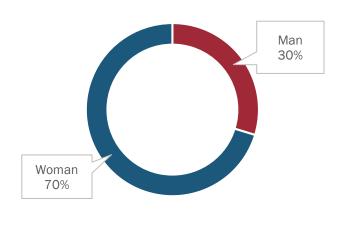


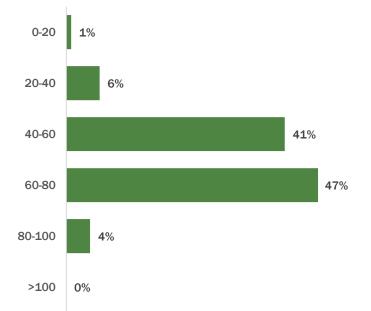
70% of survey respondents identified as **female.** 

(n <u>= 111)</u>



(n = 112)





### **ABOUT THIS REPORT**

**Arizona Cooperative Extension** is the outreach arm of the University of Arizona and the Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinarian Sciences, and Cooperative Extension (ALVSCE) with the mission of engaging with people through applied research and education to improve lives, families, communities, the environment and economies in Arizona and beyond. Arizona Cooperative Extension has offices in every county and five tribal reservations. It is part of a nationwide network of scientists and educators who work with communities to solve problems using scientific and local knowledge.

To better understand community needs and priorities, Arizona Cooperative Extension partnered with the Community Research, Evaluation, and Development (CRED) team within the Norton School of Human Ecology to lead a statewide needs assessment survey effort in 2022. The results summarized in this report can be used to inform strategic planning efforts and to facilitate dialogue about how best to meet community needs.

**The needs assessment survey**, available in English and Spanish, included 99 items across the following topics:

- Health and community well-being (26 items)
- Education and youth development (14 items)
- Community and economic development (16 items)
- Agriculture (22 items)
- Natural resources and the environment (21 items)

Participants were asked to rank how important it is to prioritize each item in their community using the following scale: (5) extremely important, (4) very important, (3) somewhat important, (2) a little important, (1) not at all important, or I don't know (not included in analysis).

Both a web-based version and a paper and pencil version were available in English and Spanish. More details about the survey development and methods can be found in the statewide report.

**Gila County** had 150 total survey respondents. Counties used various methods to distribute the survey including tabling at community events, posting to social media and listservs, and initiating snowball sampling by asking friends, family, and community partners to distribute the survey via their own social media, listservs, and personal contacts.