

This report draws on data collected by the [Detroit Metro Area Communities Study](#) (DMACS) in partnership with [Outlier Media](#). This Detroit survey was administered from April 1 to April 12, 2024, and captures the views of a representative sample of 1,100 Detroit residents. This report focuses on Detroiters' views of the top priorities for U.S. government officials. Information about Detroiters' priorities was collected via open-ended questions, allowing Detroiters to report their priorities in their own words without the limitations imposed by a limited set of response options. Results have been weighted to reflect the population of Detroit. See [full results from DMACS surveys here](#).

INTRODUCTION

In both 2016 and 2020, the winning presidential candidate secured Michigan's 15 electoral college votes by some of the narrowest margins in the country. In 2016, President Donald Trump won Michigan by just 10,704 votes – less than half a percent of Michigan's electorate. In 2020, President Joe Biden won Michigan by 154,188 votes - less than 3% of the electorate. As the November 2024 election approaches, many are closely watching Michigan once again.

With over 630,000 residents¹ (and [some evidence suggests far more](#)), Detroit is the state's largest city and will have significant influence over the state's election outcome.

Detroiters will not only play a crucial role in determining the nation's next president but also in deciding the partisan majority of the U.S. Senate. U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) is not seeking reelection, and her seat is expected to be one of the most hotly contested Senate races in the nation.

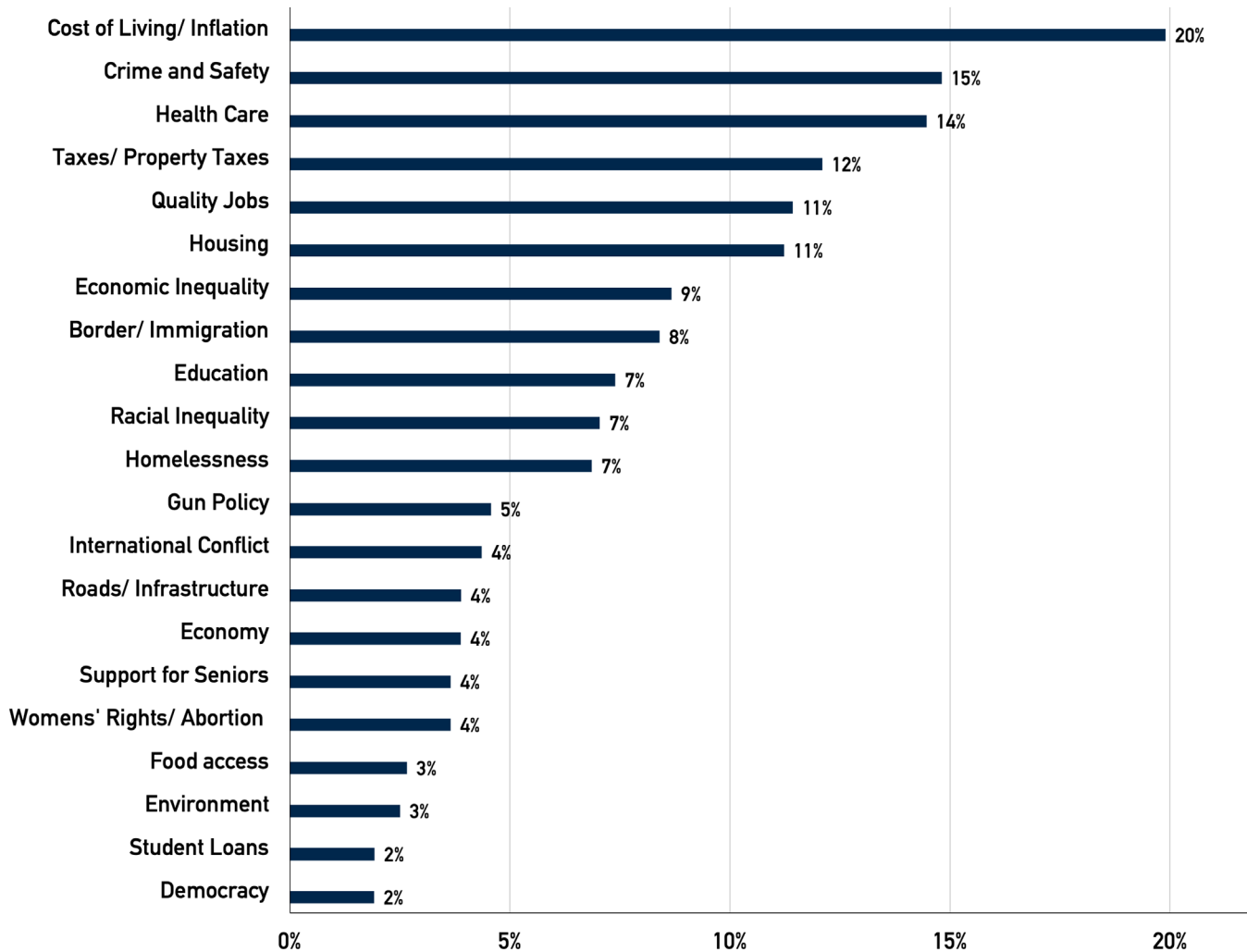
As Detroiters consider candidates for these and other offices, what are the key issues they want federal officials to address? This brief explores the concerns of Detroiters and provides insights into the issues they most want representatives serving them in federal office to tackle.

COST OF LIVING/INFLATION TOPS THE LIST OF ISSUES DETROITERS WANT TO SEE THE U.S. GOVERNMENT ADDRESS.²

- As shown in Figures 1 and 2, the cost of living and inflation emerged as the most frequently mentioned issues when Detroiters were asked about the most important issues they want the U.S. government to address. Twenty percent of respondents cited cost of living and inflation as one of the top two priorities for federal government officials. Specific quotes from respondents include calls for federal action to: "bring prices back down," "regulate the price of food, gas, utilities," and "lower prices on groceries and gas."
- Crime and safety was the next most frequently mentioned broad issue that Detroiters want U.S. federal officials to address, with 14.8% of Detroiters citing it as one of their top two priorities. While many respondents simply listed "crime" or "safety" as a concern, others specified particular types of crime and safety issues, such as "children getting killed," "rapists," "hate groups," and "killings."
- Health care was the third most frequently mentioned priority among Detroiters, with 14.5% of Detroiters indicating that health care access or quality should be a top priority for the U.S. government. Respondents who prioritized health care mentioned the need for "universal health care," "great health care for all without red tape," and "[better support and services for] mental health." One resident emphasized the unique challenges faced by many senior residents and highlighted that "senior citizens are paying for Medicare \$176 a month[,] I think that's too high and we have to pay for our own medicine at times [and receive] poor dental care."



Figure 2: Detroiters' Most Important Issues for U.S. Government to Address

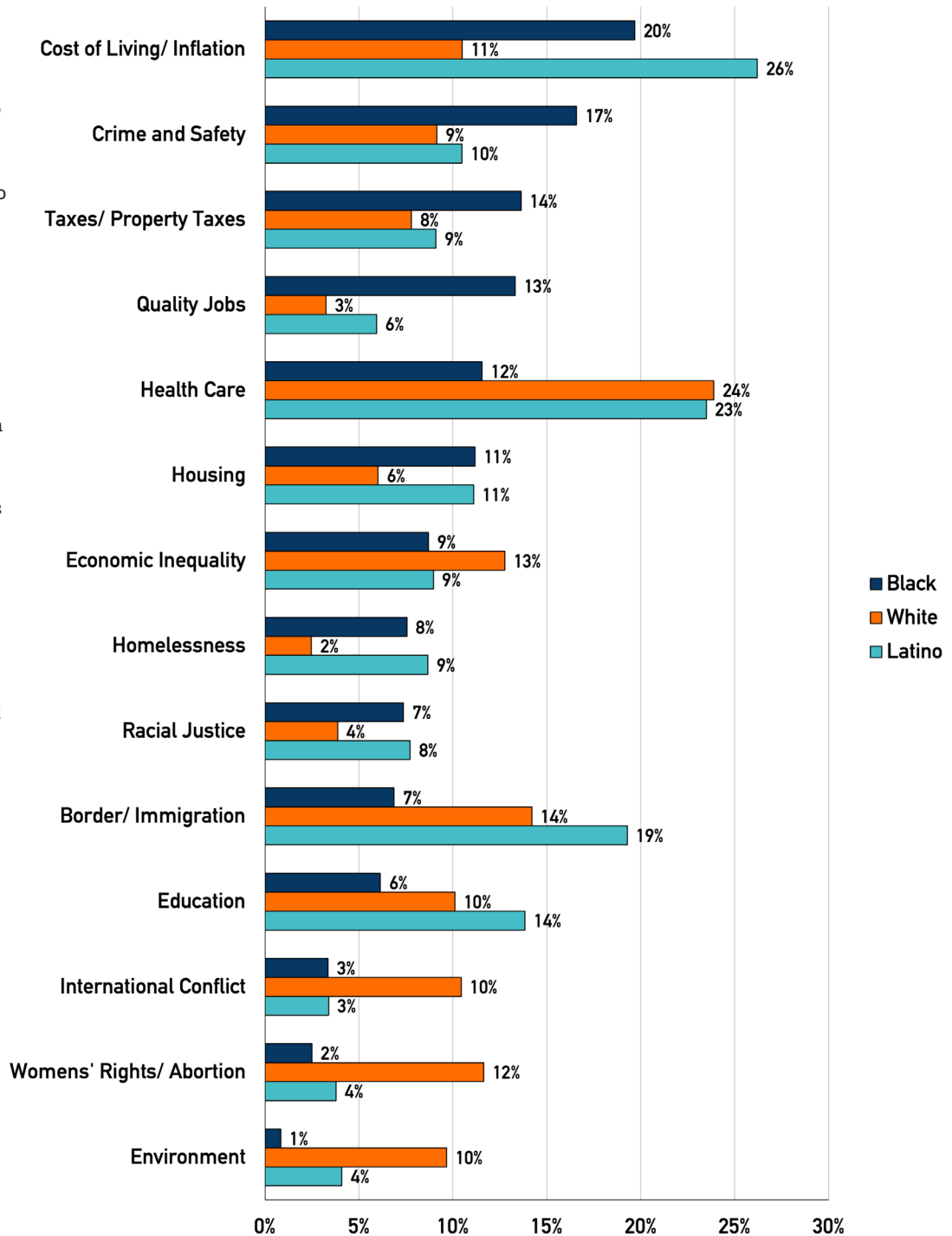


COST OF LIVING/INFLATION IS THE MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED ISSUE THAT BLACK AND LATINO DETROITERS WANT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS; HEALTH CARE IS THE MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED ISSUE AMONG WHITE DETROITERS.³

- Cost of living and inflation was more frequently listed as a priority by Black and Latino Detroiters compared to White Detroiters. Twenty percent of Black Detroiters and 26% of Latino Detroiters cited cost of living and inflation as important issues for the U.S. government to address, compared to 11% of White Detroiters.
- Black Detroiters were more likely to emphasize crime and safety and the creation of quality jobs (17% and 13%, respectively) as important issues for the U.S. government to address, compared to White (9% and 3%, respectively) and Latino (10% and 6%, respectively).

- Health care access and affordability was more likely to be mentioned as a top priority for federal officials among White and Latino Detroiters than it was among Black Detroiters. Nearly 1 in 4 White (24%) and Latino (23%) Detroiters listed health care access and affordability as a top issue that they wanted the U.S. government to address, relative to just over 1 in 10 Black Detroiters (12%).
- Immigration and border policy was also more likely to be mentioned as a top priority for federal officials among White and Latino Detroiters than it was among Black Detroiters. Nineteen percent of Latino Detroiters and 14% of White Detroiters listed immigration and border policy as a top priority, compared to only 7% of Black Detroiters.
- Womens' rights (12%), international conflict (10%), and the environment (10%) figure more prominently into the list of issues that White Detroiters want the U.S. government to prioritize relative to Black Detroiters (2%, 3%, and 1%, respectively) and Latino Detroiters (4%, 3%, and 4%, respectively).

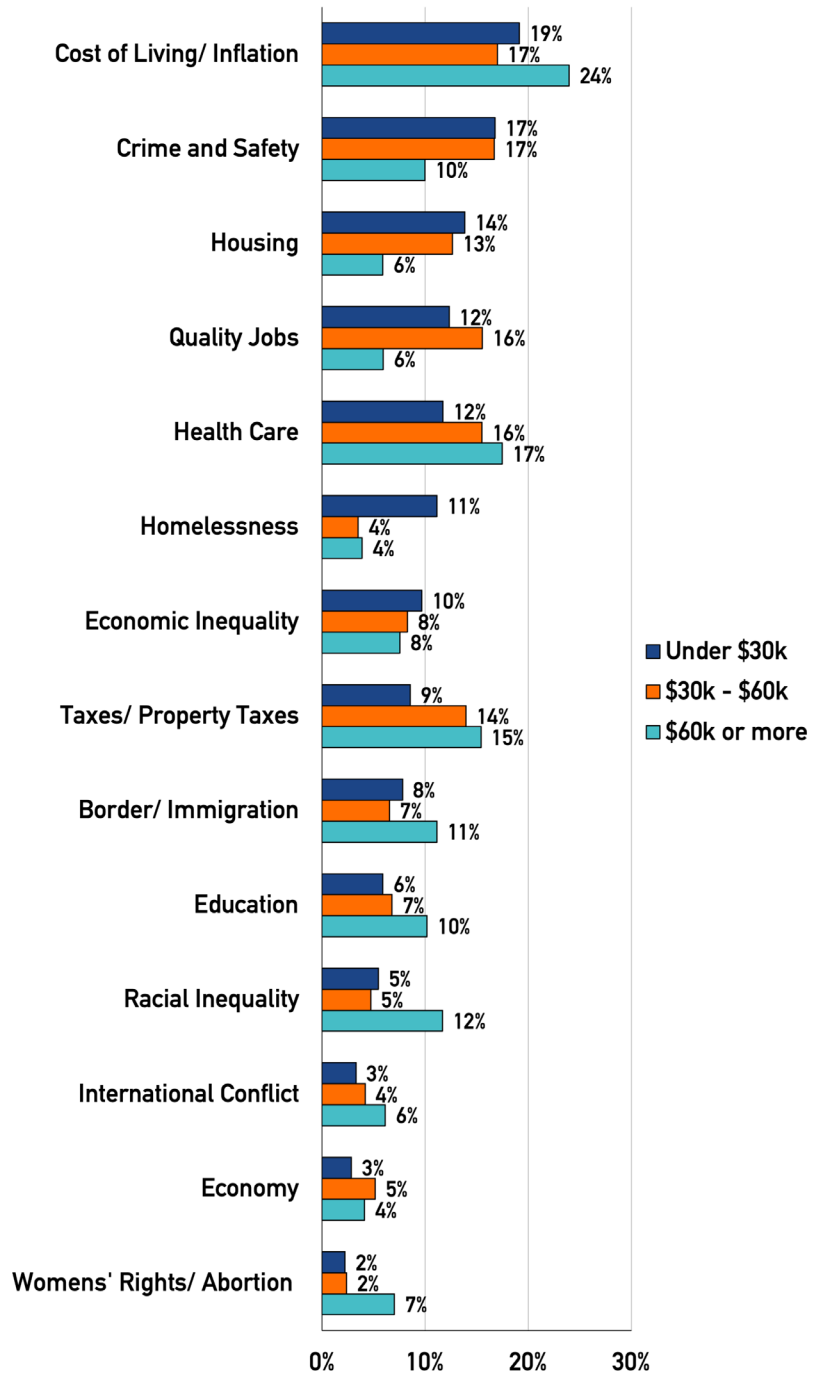
Figure 3: Detroiters' Most Important Issues for U.S. Government to Address, by Ethnoracial Identity



COST OF LIVING/INFLATION IS A TOP PRIORITY ACROSS INCOME GROUPS. CRIME AND SAFETY, HOUSING, QUALITY JOBS, AND HOMELESSNESS ARE NOT.

- Counter to what some might have expected, Detroiters with higher household incomes were no less likely to mention cost of living and inflation as a top priority for U.S. elected officials than Detroiters with lower household incomes. Across the income groups considered in our survey, cost of living and inflation was the most frequently mentioned issue that Detroiters want the U.S. government to address.
- Homelessness was a key concern among the lowest-income Detroiters. Detroiters with annual household incomes of less than \$30,000 were more likely to list homelessness as an issue that they want the U.S. government to address, relative to those with higher annual household incomes. More than 1 in 10 Detroiters with annual household incomes of less than \$30,000 (11%) listed homelessness as one of their top priorities for the U.S. government to address, compared to only 4% of Detroiters with annual household incomes between \$30,000 and \$59,999, and 4% of those with incomes of \$60,000 or more.
- Crime and safety, quality jobs, and housing are far less likely to be viewed as top issues for the U.S. government to address among higher-income Detroiters, relative to those with lower annual household incomes.
 - Among Detroiters with household incomes of \$60,000 or more, 10% listed crime and safety as a top issue, compared to 17% of Detroiters with annual household incomes of less than \$30,000 and 17% of Detroiters with annual household incomes of between \$30,000 and \$60,000.
 - Housing was listed as a top issue for the U.S. government to address among only 6% of Detroiters with household incomes of \$60,000 or more, compared to twice as many Detroiters with annual household incomes of less than \$30,000 (12%), and Detroiters with annual household incomes of between \$30,000 and \$60,000 (13%).
 - Only 6% of Detroiters with household incomes of \$60,000 or more listed quality jobs as a top issue. Twice as many

Figure 4: Detroiters' Top Priorities for U.S. Government to Address, by Income



Detroiters with annual household incomes of less than \$30,000 (12%) and nearly three times as many Detroiters (16%) with annual household incomes of between \$30,000 and \$60,000 listed quality jobs as a top issue.

- Detroiters with household incomes of \$60,000 or more were more likely to list racial inequality and women's rights as an important issue for the U.S. government to address, compared to those with lower annual incomes.

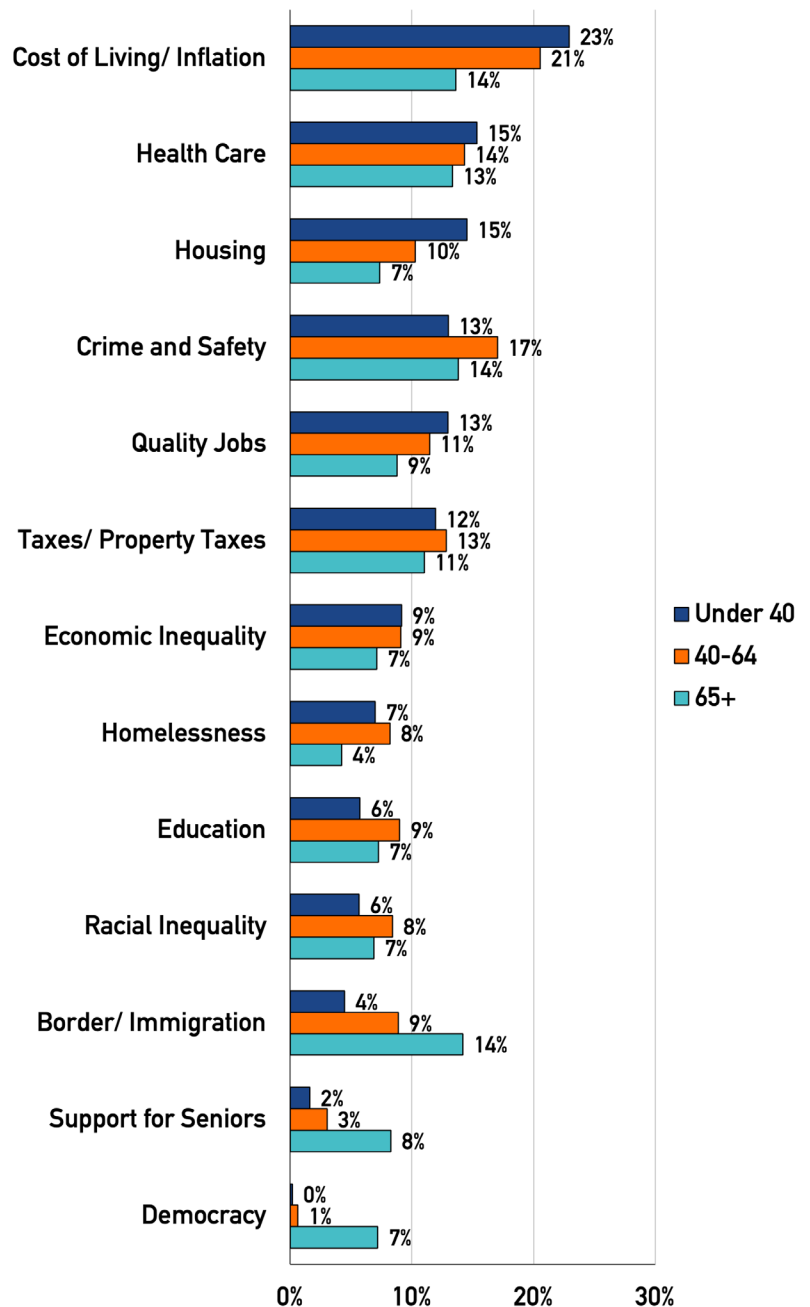
- Twelve percent of Detroiters with household incomes of \$60,000 or more indicated that racial inequality was among the most important issues for the U.S. government to address. In contrast, less than half as many Detroiters with annual household incomes between \$30,000 and \$60,000 (5%) or below \$30,000 (5%) listed racial inequality as among the most important issues for the U.S. government to address.

- Detroiters with annual household incomes of more than \$60,000 (7%) were more than three times as likely to list women's rights / abortion as among the most important issues for the U.S. government to address, relative to Detroiters with annual household incomes between \$30,000 and \$60,000 (2%) and those with annual household incomes below \$30,000 (2%).

AMONG DETROITERS UNDER 65, THE COST OF LIVING/ INFLATION STOOD APART AS THE ISSUE MENTIONED MORE THAN ANY OTHER. DETROITERS 65 YEARS AND OLDER WERE EQUALLY DIVIDED ON THE ISSUE THAT THEY MOST WANTED THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS.

- Among Detroiters 65 years and older, there was no single issue that stood out as the most frequently mentioned issue that Detroiters want the U.S. government to address. Roughly equal shares of Detroiters 65 years and older listed immigration and border policy (14%), crime and safety (14%), cost of living and inflation (14%), and health care (13%) as being among the most important issues for the U.S. government to address.
- Cost of living and inflation was the most frequently mentioned issue that Detroiters under 40 years old want the U.S. government to address. Just under one-quarter of Detroiters in this age group (23%) listed cost of living and inflation as among the most important issues for the U.S. government to address.
- Among Detroiters aged 40 to 65, cost of living and inflation emerged as the most frequently mentioned priority for the U.S. government to address, with approximately 1 in 5 (21%) of these Detroiters listing it as a top priority. Concerns about crime and safety were a close second among this age group, with 17% of Detroiters aged 40 to 65 listing it as a top priority for the U.S. government to address.

Figure 5: Detroiters' Most Important Issues for U.S. Government to Address, by Age



ENDNOTES

- 1 Profile: Detroit City, Michigan. United States Census Bureau. https://data.census.gov/profile/Detroit_city_Michigan?g=160XX00US2622000
- 2 We determined Detroiters' priorities by analyzing responses from the 944 individuals who provided valid answers to the following open-ended survey question: "On the whole, what are the two most important issues that you want the U.S. government to address?" Respondents entered their answers into two small text boxes. Three independent coders then inductively classified the responses into thematic categories. The coders met to agree on the categories and reevaluate any responses that had been classified differently.
- 3 [According to the U.S. Census](#), Black residents make up 77.8% of the city's population, 12.2% of residents identify as White and 7.5% of residents identify as Latino.

AUTHORS

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