

## 2024 Legislative Priorities Poll Report

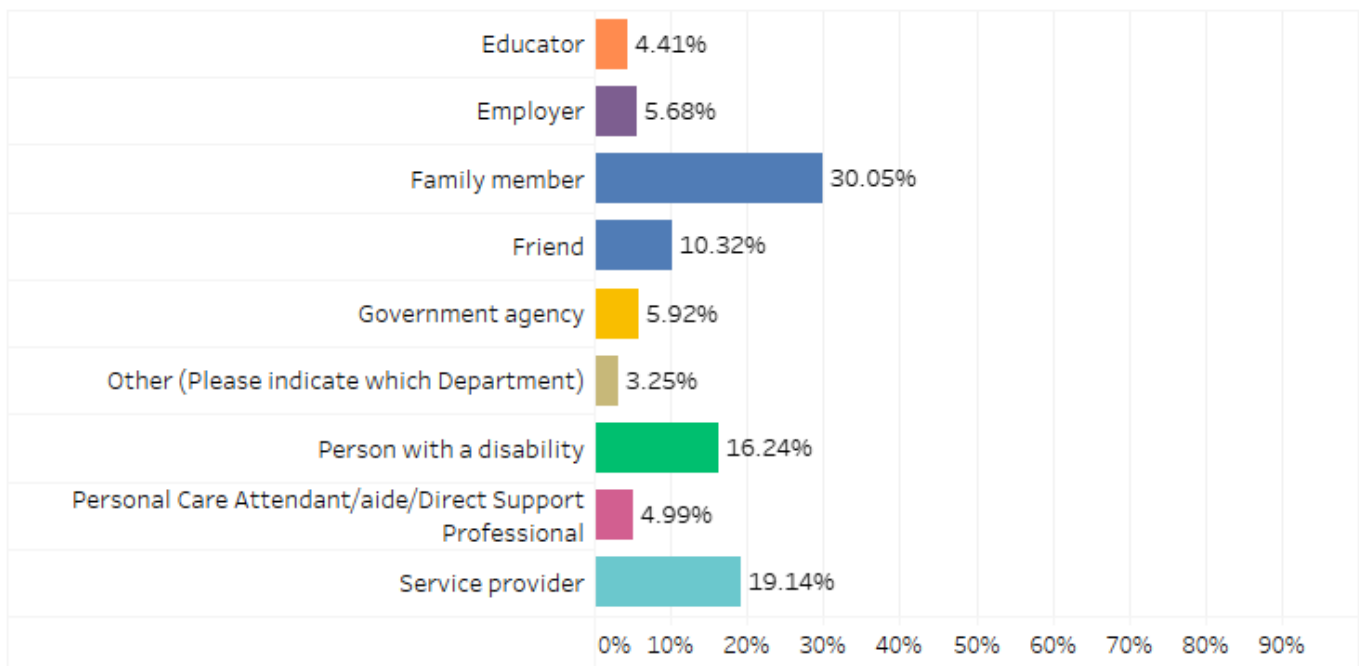
The Governor’s Council on Disability recently conducted its annual poll to determine the level of importance disability related issues have to Missourians impacted by disability through their personal and/or professional lives. The results will be shared with council members, the Governor, state legislators, and other interested groups. The poll was available to individuals via the Governor’s Council on Disability listservs, Twitter, Facebook, website, personal contacts, and other organization contacts. It was provided in Microsoft Word, PDF and Qualtrics formats.

**Four hundred ninety-seven (497) polls were returned.**

The top four priorities for the Governor’s Council on Disability for the coming year are determined by the questions which receive the highest combined percentage of strongly agree and agree responses and overall responses. The 2025 priorities will be:

1. **The State of Missouri updating websites to include more language that is direct and easy to understand for those with reading or writing difficulties**
2. **The Personal Care Attendant/Aide/Direct Support Professional workforce providing critical services**
3. **Transportation needs**
4. **Care workforce needs**

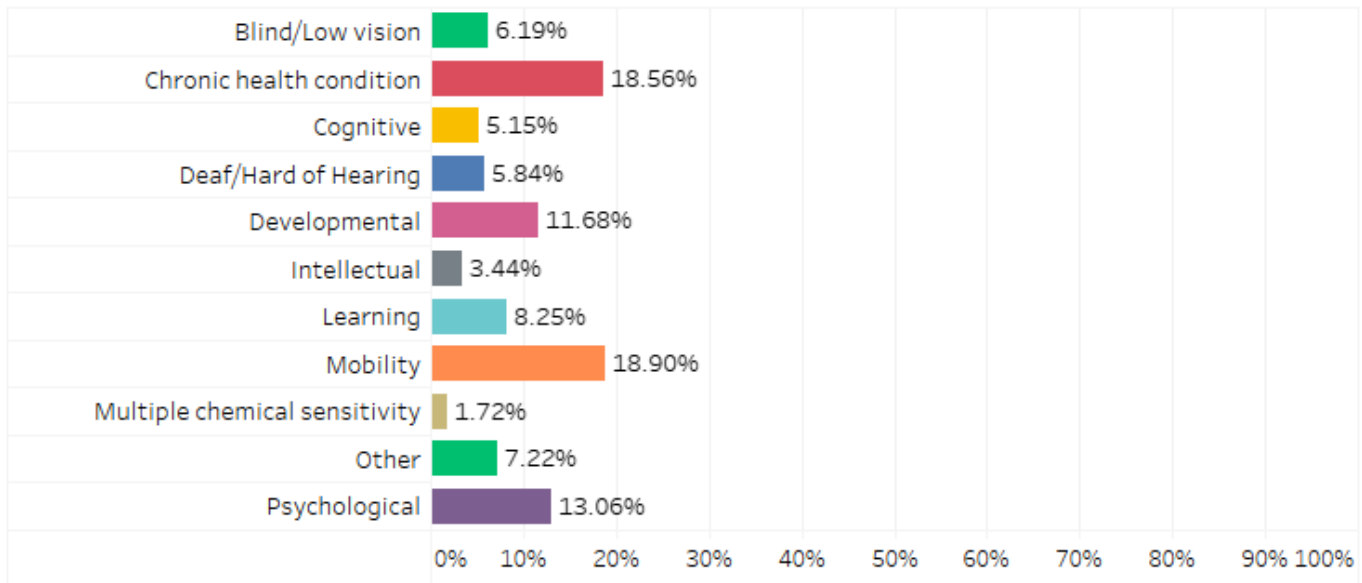
**Respondents were given the opportunity to indicate the group or groups to which they belonged:** person with a disability, family member, friend, government agency employee, service provider, educator, employer, personal care attendant/aide/direct support professional, other. 140 (16.24%) were a person with a disability, 259 (30.05%) were a family member, 89 (10.32%) were a friend, 51 (5.92%) represented a government agency, 165 (19.14%) were service providers, 38 (4.41%) were educators, 49 (5.68%) were employers, 43 (4.99%) were personal care attendant/aide/direct support professional, and 28 (3.25%) marked other.



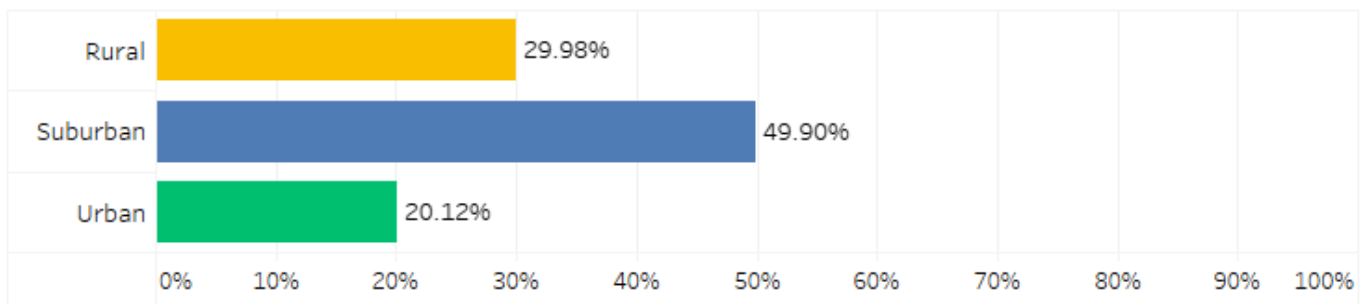
**Individuals with disabilities were given the option to indicate what type or types of disability they have:**

blind/low vision, chronic health condition, multiple chemical sensitivity, cognitive, deaf/hard of hearing, developmental, learning, mobility, psychological, intellectual, other

18 (6.19%) blind/low vision, 54 (18.56%) chronic health condition, 5 (1.72%) multiple chemical sensitivity, 15 (5.15%) cognitive, 17 (5.84%) deaf/hard of hearing, 34 (11.68%) developmental, 24 (8.25%) learning, 55 (18.90%) mobility, 38 (13.06%) psychological, 10 (3.44%) intellectual, and 21 (7.22%) other.



**Individuals were asked to indicate what county they reside in and whether they live in an urban, suburban, or rural area.** For the purposes of this report, the City of St. Louis is considered a county. Of the one hundred fifteen counties, seventy-one are represented. For the number of respondents per county see Appendix. As indicated by self-report, 100 (20.12%) live in urban areas, 248 (49.90%) live in suburban areas, and 149 (29.98%) live in rural areas.

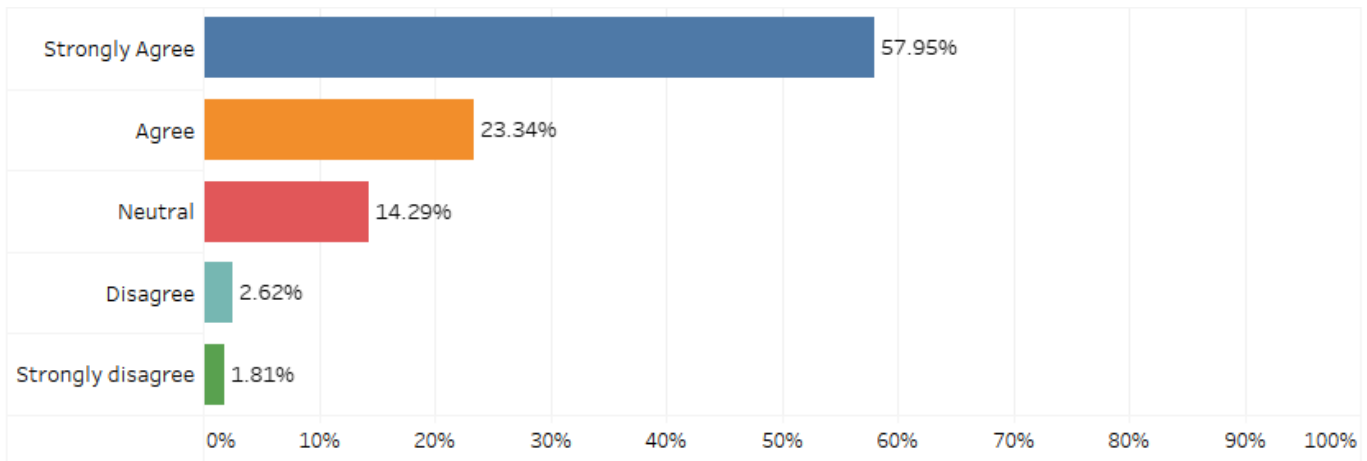


The following are the individual question results. These were broken into sections of accessibility, education, assistance services and health care, housing, employment, and transportation. Each section included at least one open response question. Some respondents did not answer every question.

The accessibility section included the following questions:

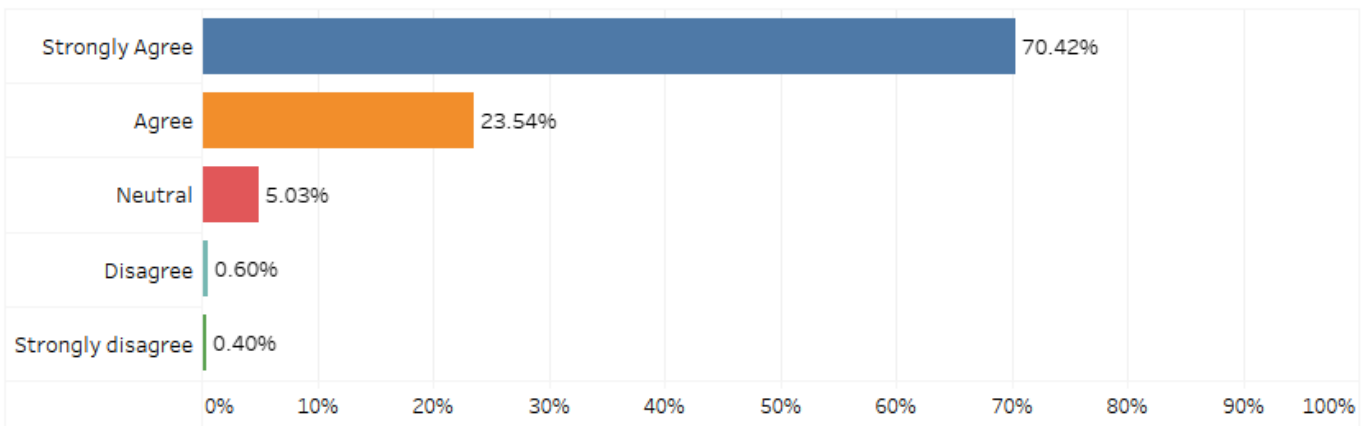
**1. The State of Missouri should ensure person first language is used on all state associated websites.**

57.95% strongly agree, 23.34% agree, 14.29% are neutral, 2.62% disagree, and 1.81% strongly disagree.



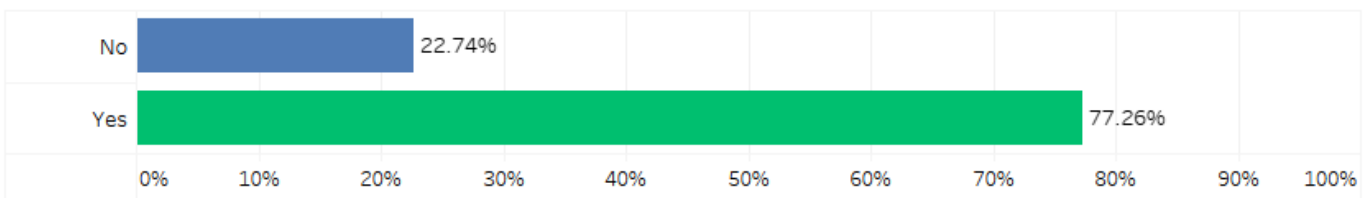
**2. The State of Missouri should update websites to include more language that is direct and easy to understand for those with reading or writing difficulties.**

70.42% strongly agree, 23.54% agree, 5.03% are neutral, 0.60% disagree, and 0.40% strongly disagree.



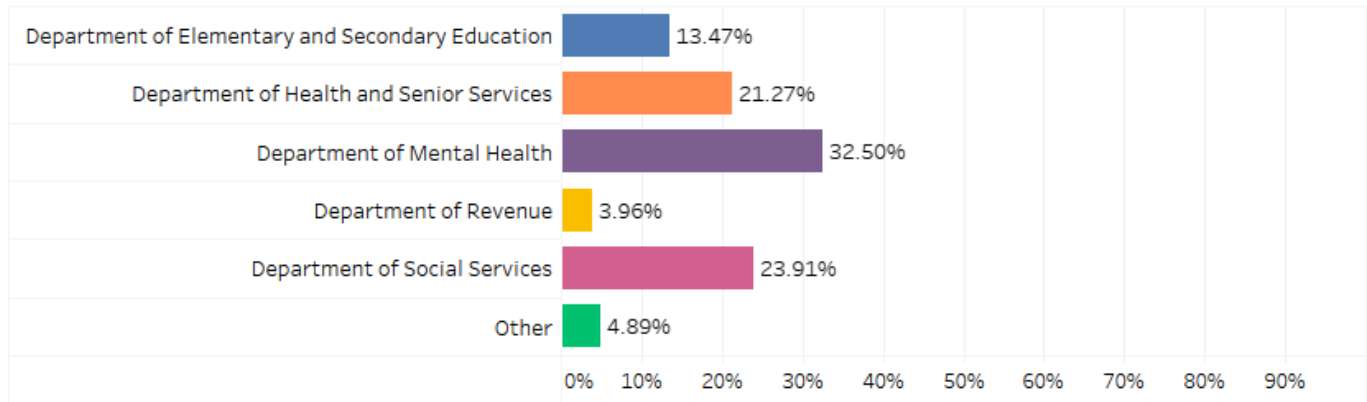
**3. Have you or others had difficulty accessing services from a state department.**

77.26% Yes, 22.74% No.



4. **Which department(s) have you had difficulty accessing services from?** Only answered by those who marked Yes to the previous question.

13.47% Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 21.27% Department of Health and Senior Services, 32.50% Department of Mental Health, 3.96% Department of Revenue, 23.91% Department of Social Services and 4.89 Other along with indicating which department.



5. **What is the most important issue with accessibility in Missouri for people with disabilities and what changes could state legislators make to improve it?**

Issues

- Understanding processes to obtain services, ability to have questions answered
- Funding of services for people with disabilities
- Long waiting periods for services
- Transportation

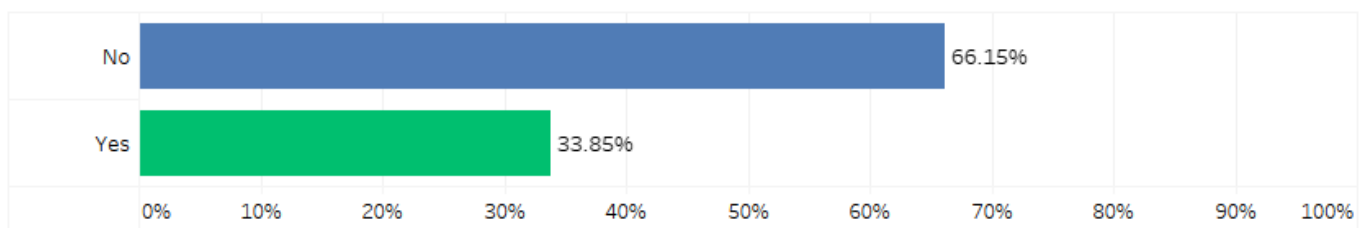
Changes

- Make it easier to find things on websites
- Have enough staff to answer questions
- Increase funding/ provide more waivers
- Include a designation for communication issues/disabilities on driver’s licenses

The **education** section included the following questions:

1. **If you are a parent of a school-age child with a disability, have you experienced any difficulties in making sure your child has an appropriate education?**

33.85% Yes, 66.15% No



2. **What challenges do you experience making sure your child receives an appropriate education?** Only answered by those who marked Yes to the previous question.

- Schools not allowing or following IEPs and 504 plans
- Testing and evaluation issues
- Lack of supports and staff

3. **What is the most important issue with education in Missouri for people with disabilities and what changes could state legislators make to improve it?**

Issues

- Not enough paraprofessionals and teachers/professionals with specialization such as teachers for students with visual impairments and orientation and mobility
- Lack of transition services in high school
- Lack of resources and funding
- Not enough training for all school staff on disabilities and how to work with students with disabilities

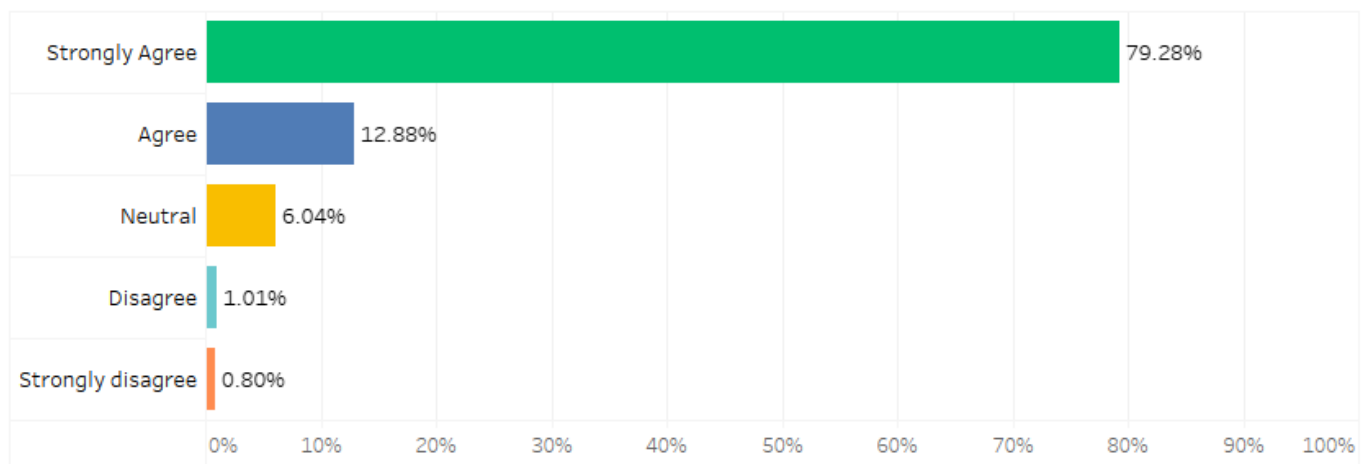
Changes

- Increase teacher/staff pay and funding
- Make the teachers for students with visual impairments certification/recertification process through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education less confusing
- Increase transition services from high school to adulthood

The **assistance services/health care** section included the following questions:

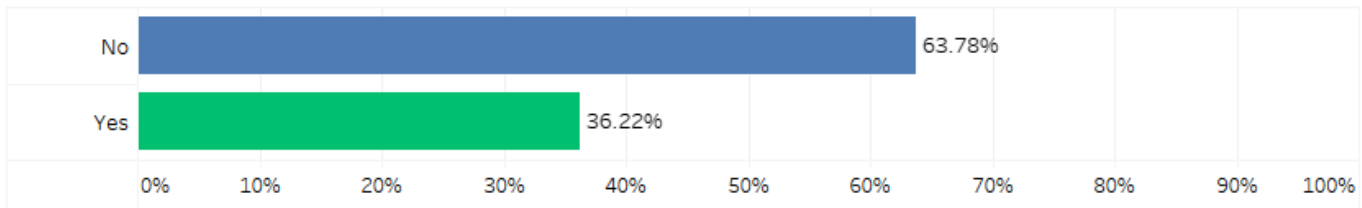
1. **The personal care attendant/aide/ direct support professional workforce provides critical services to people with disabilities.**

79.28% strongly agree, 12.88% agree, 6.04% are neutral, 1.01% disagree, and 0.80% strongly disagree.



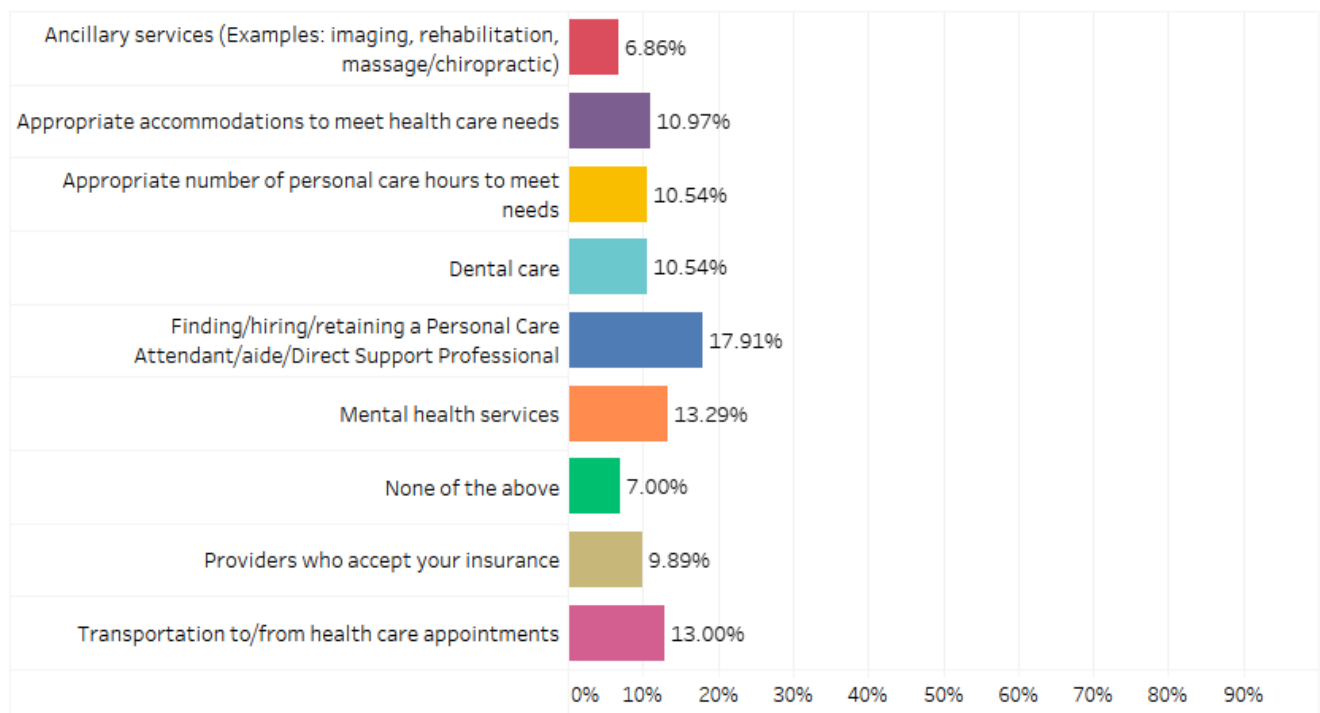
**2. Do you use Personal Care Attendant/aide/ Direct Support Professional services?**

36.22% Yes, 63.78% No.



**3. Indicate which, if any health care services they have difficulty with.**

17.91% Finding/hiring/retaining Personal Care Attendant/aide/Direct Support Professional, 10.54% appropriate number of personal care hours to meet needs, 10.54% dental care, 13.29% mental health services, 10.97% appropriate accommodations to meet health care needs, 13.00% transportation to/from health care appointments, 9.89% providers who accept individual’s insurance, 6.86% ancillary services, 7.00% none of the above



**4. What is the most important issue with personal assistance services or health care in Missouri for people with disabilities and what changes could state legislators make to improve it?**

Issues

- Lack of providers who accept MO HealthNet in all areas and parts of Missouri
- Lack of education on disabilities and providing accommodations by health care staff
- Low pay and high turnover rates of direct support professionals and personal care attendants
- Transportation to appointments

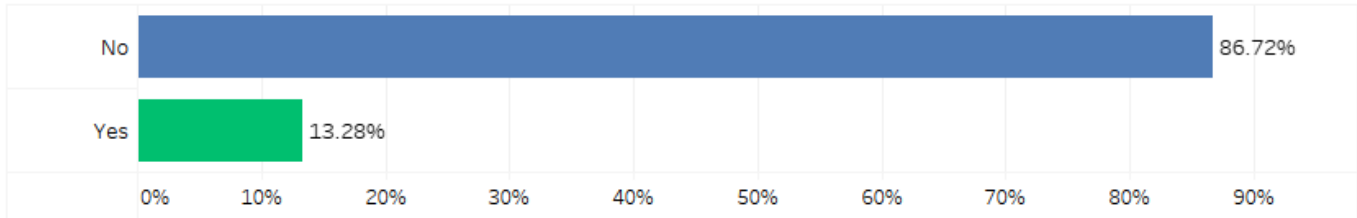
Changes

- Allow parents/guardians to be paid caregivers
- Provide personal assistance services regardless of income so families and individuals don’t deplete savings paying for care
- Increase reimbursement rates and restore funding for intellectual and developmental disabilities providers
- Make dental care and mental health care easier to access for people with disabilities
- Fund nontraditional health care options
- Increase funding for centers for independent living which provide personal care assistance services and equipment
- Increase funding for support service professional program

The **Housing** section included the following questions:

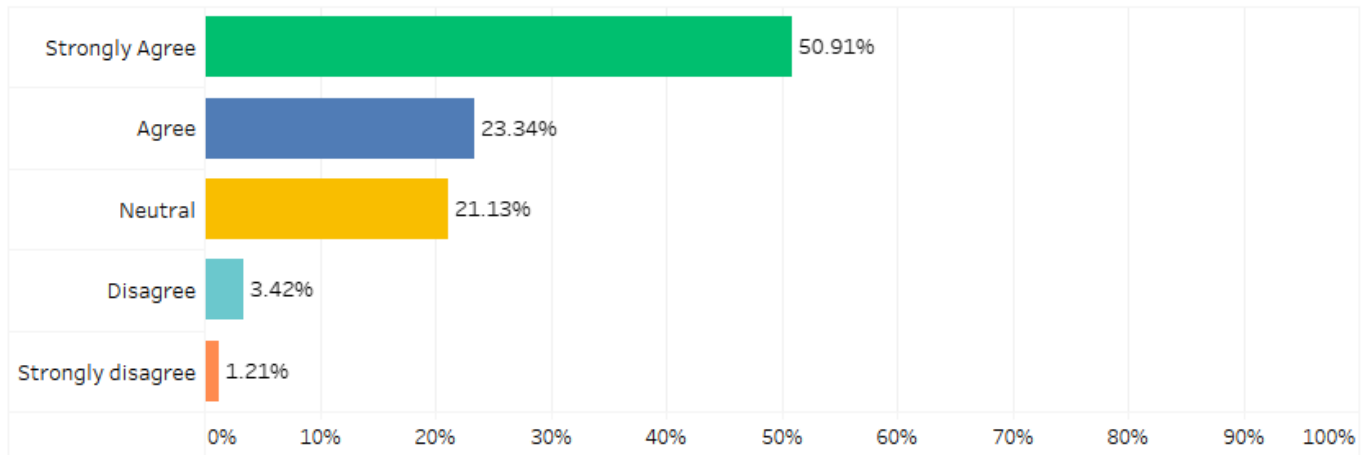
**1. Do you or someone you know with a disability no longer have a home because of increasing property taxes?**

13.28% Yes, 86.72% No



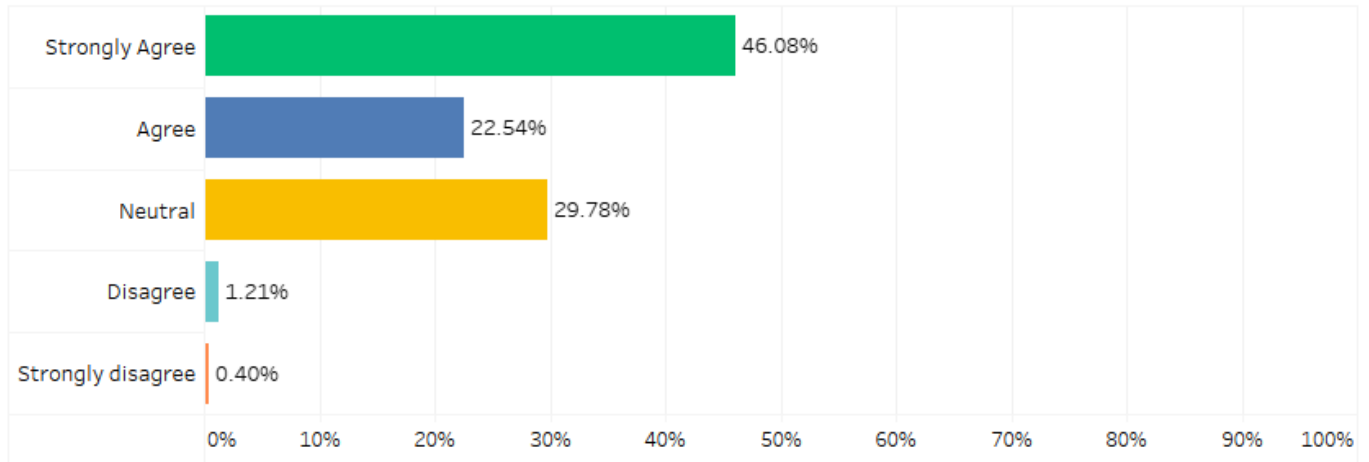
**2. There should be a freeze (stay the same) on property taxes for people with disabilities.**

50.91% strongly agree, 23.34% agree, 21.13% are neutral, 3.42% disagree, and 1.21% strongly disagree.



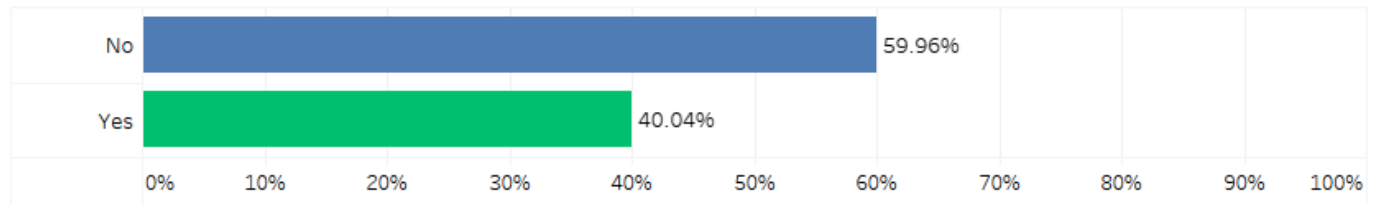
**3. The Senior Citizen Property Tax Credit (circuit breaker) needs to be updated.**

46.08% strongly agree, 22.54% agree, 29.78% are neutral, 1.21% disagree, and 0.40% strongly disagree.



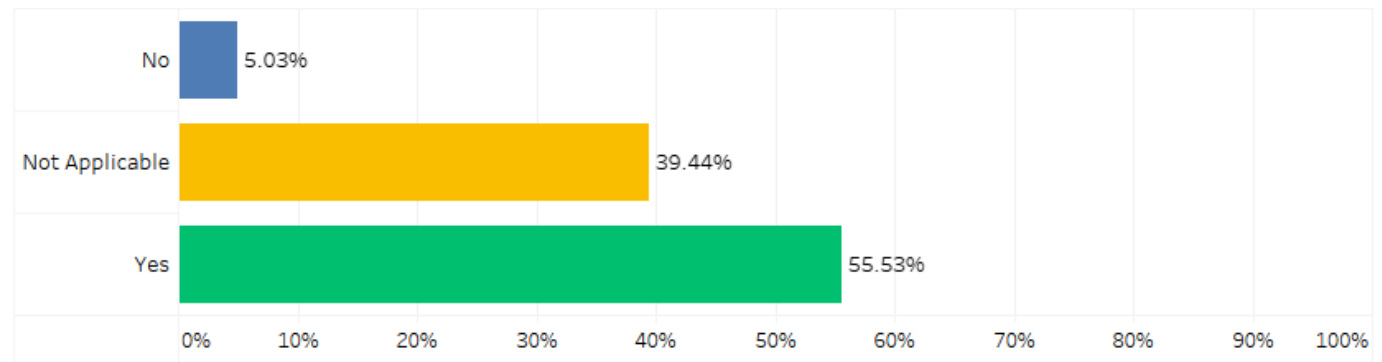
**4. Is accessible housing available in your community?**

40.04% Yes, 59.96% No



**5. Do you have difficulty finding available rental properties that are affordable and meet your needs?**

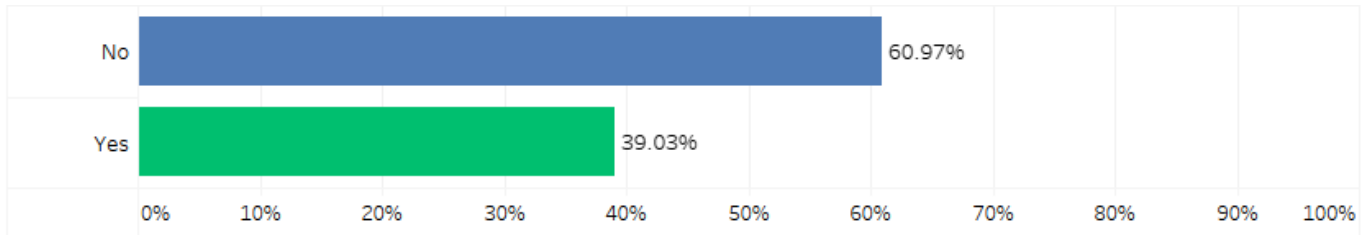
55.53% Yes, 5.03% No, 39.44% Not applicable





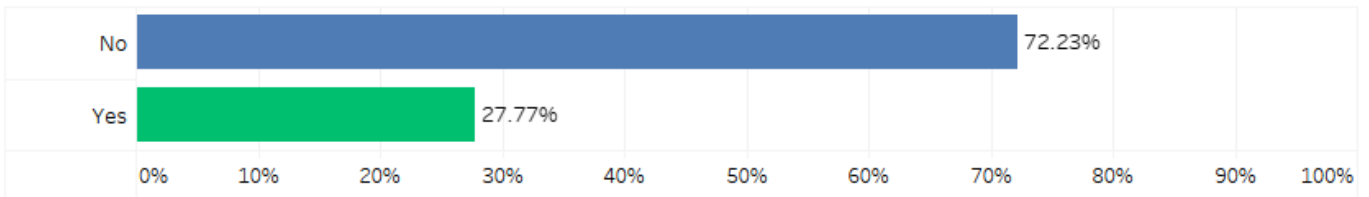
**6. Have you or someone you know experienced discrimination in renting because of a disability?**

39.03% Yes, 60.97% No



**7. Have you or someone you know experienced rental application rejections because of a disability?**

27.77% Yes, 72.23% No



**8. What is the most important issue with housing in Missouri for people with disabilities and what changes could state legislators make to improve it?**

Issues

- Cost-high rent, amount needed to make accessibility renovations, funds for mowing/snow removal
- Availability
- Lack of all types of housing-group, independent supported living, accessible
- Housing locations-not in safe areas or near other things
- Rules and regulations set by landlords and programs

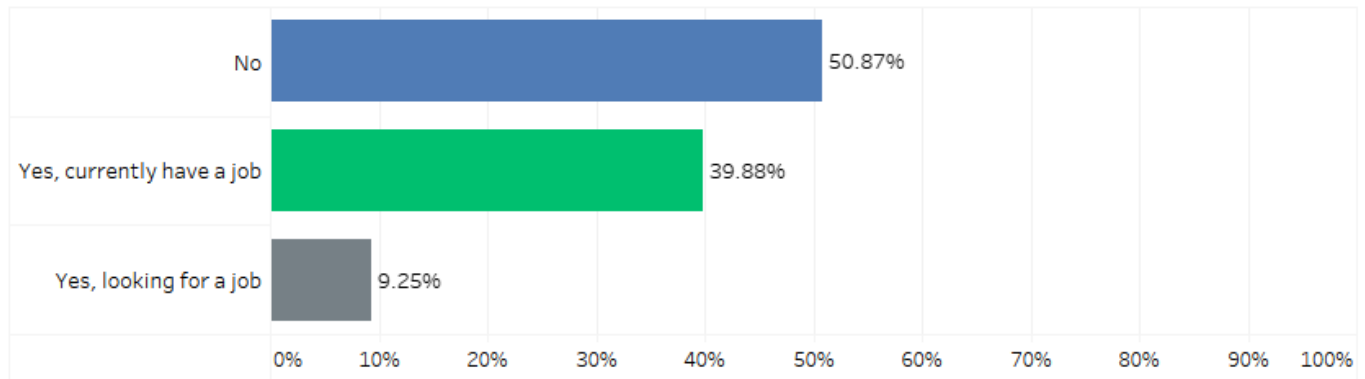
Changes

- Assistance with housing costs-grants, assistance programs, loans, tax credits for landlords/housing providers and people with disabilities
- Encourage building of affordable housing
- Increase universal design and accessible options
- Allow areas of the state to share housing waivers to assist with waitlists

The **Employment** section included the following questions:

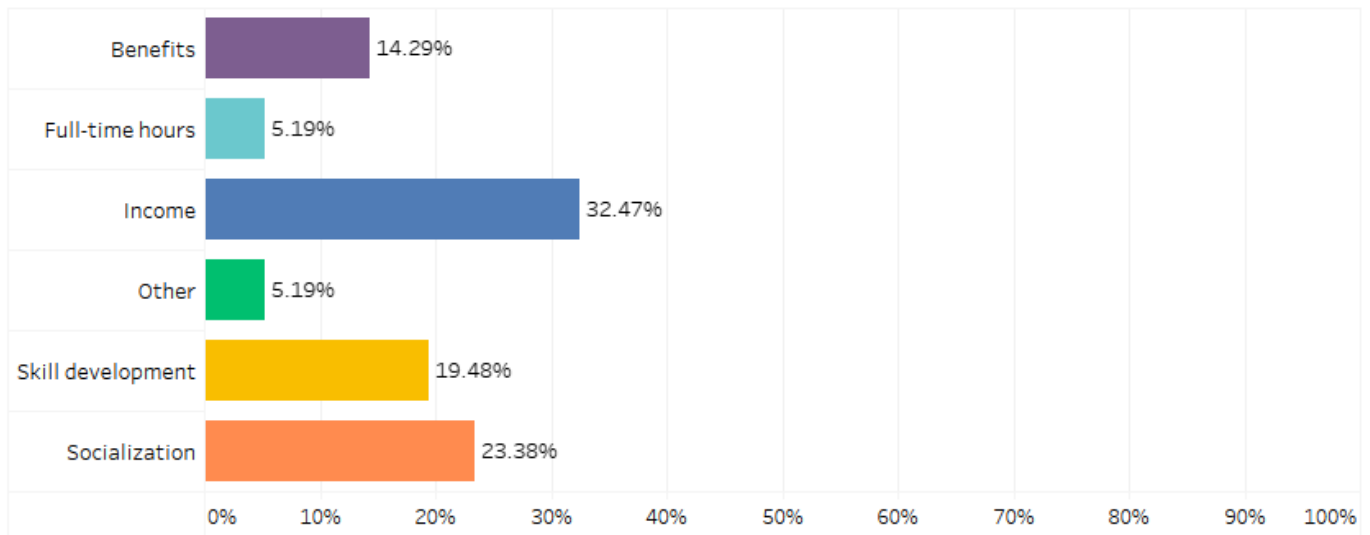
**1. If you have a disability, do you currently have a job or are looking for a job?**

39.88% Yes, currently have a job, 9.25% Yes, looking for a job, 50.87% No



**2. What motivates you to get a job?** Only answered if Yes, looking for a job was marked in the previous question

32.47% income, 19.48% skill development, 5.19% full-time hours, 23.38% socialization, 14.29% benefits, 5.19% other



**3. Describe any barriers people with disabilities may experience when attempting to obtain employment.** This was an open answer response. Responses included:

- Attitudes and beliefs of employers
- Lack of knowledge/understanding by employers
- Employers not being willing to hire people with disabilities
- Long wait times for employment provider services
- Transportation access
- Gaps in employment history
- Lack of accessibility

- Not providing accommodations during interviews or employment
- Fear of losing benefits/not being able to keep much money due to rules of benefit programs

**4. What is the most important issue with employment in Missouri for people with disabilities and what changes could state legislators make to improve it?**

Issues

- Employers not being willing to hire people with disabilities
- Employers not being willing/able to provide accommodations
- Lack of transportation
- Not enough employment supports

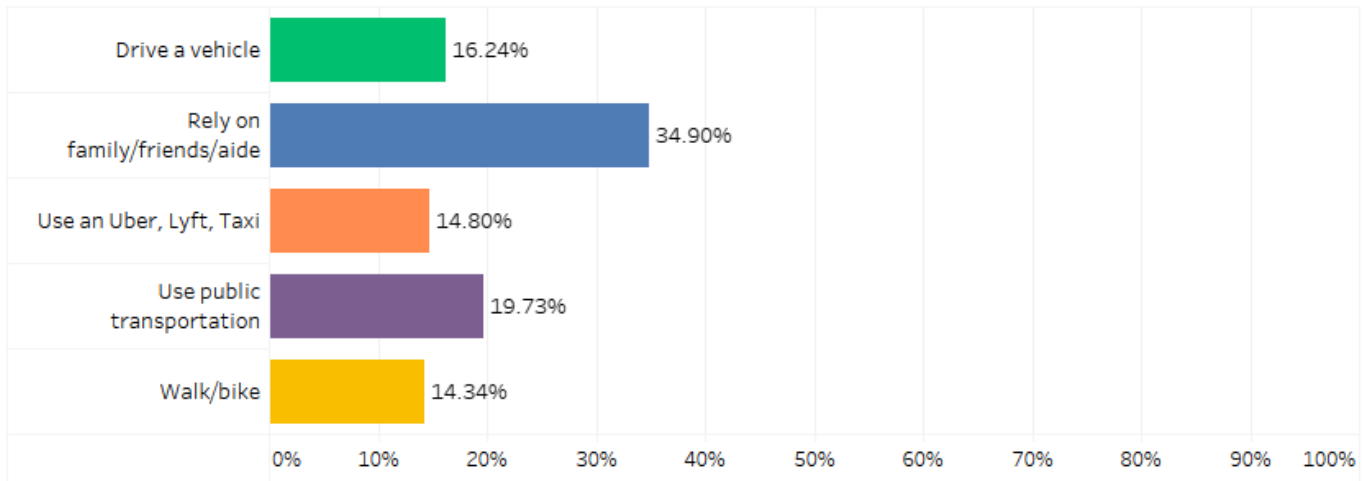
Changes

- Create employer incentives for hiring people with disabilities
- Fund employment supports including long-term such as job coaches
- Increase transportation funding and availability
- Keep sheltered workshops open for those who cannot work in competitive employment

The **transportation** section included the following questions:

**1. What types of transportation do people with disabilities use in your community?**

16.24% Drive a vehicle, 14.80% Use an Uber/Lyft, taxi, 34.90% Rely on family/friends/aide, 14.34% Walk/bike, 19.73% Use public transportation



**2. What barriers does a lack of transportation provide for people with disabilities?** This was an open answer response. Responses included:

- Ability to be employed
- Ability to obtain medical care
- Ability to obtain groceries
- Ability to engage in community activities
- Ability to attend religious services

**3. What is the most important issue with transportation in Missouri for people with disabilities and what changes could state legislators make to improve it?**

Issues

- Lack of access to transportation across the state
- Lack of accessible/alternate options
- Transportation vehicle costs
- Safety for individuals who are blind/deaf blind

Changes

- Expand transportation options in all counties
- Fund transportation
- Increase reimbursement rates for providers
- Incentivize companies to provide rides to people with disabilities, have Uber for people with disabilities

All graphs and citizen responses to the open response questions are available on the online dashboard. The dashboard can be accessed on the [Annual Legislative Priorities Poll web page](#).

Governor’s Council on Disability, 2024 Legislative Priorities Poll

**Appendix**

County	Number	County	Number	County	Number
Adair	7	Harrison		Phelps	8
Andrew	3	Henry		Pike	1
Atchison		Hickory		Platte	8
Audrain	1	Holt		Polk	2
Barry	1	Howard	3	Pulaski	3
Barton		Howell	2	Putnam	1
Bates		Iron		Ralls	
Benton	1	Jackson	35	Randolph	1
Bollinger	1	Jasper	13	Ray	5
Boone	22	Jefferson	10	Reynolds	
Buchanan	13	Johnson	6	Ripley	
Butler	2	Knox		St. Charles	33
Caldwell	1	Laclede		St. Clair	1
Callaway	6	Lafayette	2	Ste. Genevieve	2
Camden	15	Lawrence	1	St. Francois	1
Cape Girardeau	6	Lewis		St. Louis	107
Carroll		Lincoln		St. Louis City	35
Carter		Linn	1	Saline	1
Cass	1	Livingston		Schuyler	
Cedar	1	Macon	1	Scotland	
Chariton	2	Madison		Scott	
Christian	2	Maries		Shannon	
Clark	2	Marion	4	Shelby	
Clay	38	McDonald		Stoddard	1
Clinton	6	Mercer		Stone	1
Cole	17	Miller	1	Sullivan	
Cooper		Mississippi		Taney	2
Crawford		Moniteau	1	Texas	
Dade		Monroe		Vernon	4
Dallas	2	Montgomery		Warren	2
Daviess		Morgan	2	Washington	
De Kalb	1	New Madrid		Wayne	
Dent	1	Newton	5	Webster	3
Douglas	1	Nodaway	4	Worth	
Dunklin	1	Oregon	2	Wright	1
Franklin		Osage	1		
Gasconade	1	Ozark			
Gentry	2	Pemiscot			
Greene	17	Perry	1		
Grundy		Pettis	5		