

Marathon County

LIFE Survey 2022

To assess important issues regarding the quality of life in Marathon County, the LIFE Steering Committee issued a survey to Marathon County residents in June of 2022. During June and July 2022, the Survey Research Center (SRC) from University of Wisconsin-River Falls collected data on behalf of the 2023 LIFE Report. The 2022 survey mirrored similar surveys done in previous years.

Data were gathered in three ways:

- A six-page survey was sent to 1,434 households in Marathon County. 75% of the surveys were mailed to a random sample of County residents and 25% to the populations under age 35, households with incomes under \$25,000, and people of color, to ensure representation in the sample from three populations that are sometimes challenging to reach with surveys.
- 100 surveys were distributed to selected Marathon County non-profit partners by United Way of Marathon County.
- Emailed an invitation to a panel of approximately 2,000 Marathon County residents.

The SRC used the Dillman Total Design Survey Method for the 1,434 households in the mail survey. Each person in the sample was sent a survey initially. Those who had not returned their survey within two weeks were sent a postcard reminding them to complete the survey. Two weeks after the postcard, those who had still not responded received a second postcard.

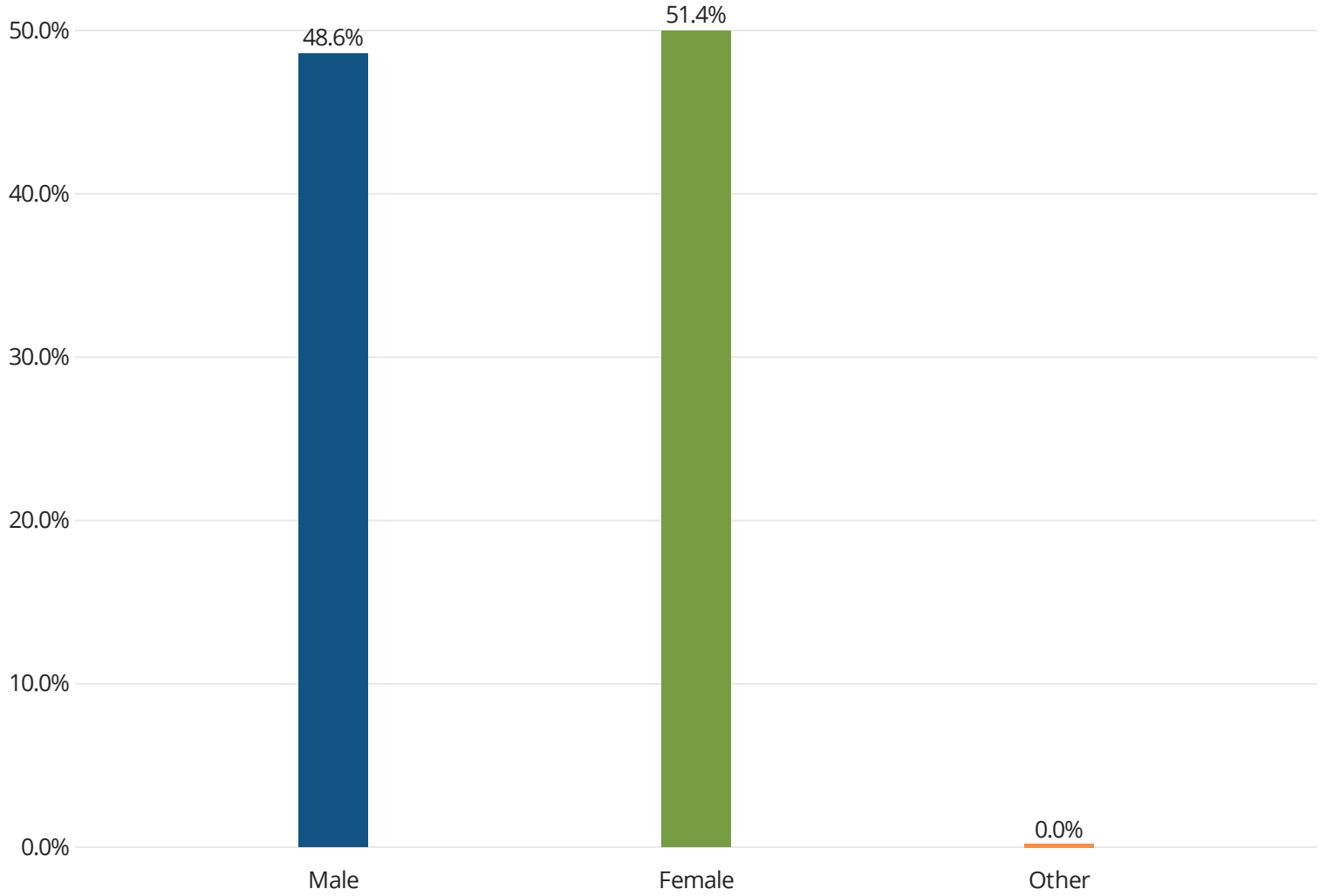
The SRC received the following number of responses from these three sources:

- 402 paper surveys from the mail out and from non-profit partners
- 61 on-line surveys

According to the US Census (2019, 1-Year Estimates) there are approximately 54,785 households in Marathon County. Based on that number, SRC did receive an adequate number of completed questionnaires (>381) to produce estimates that are expected to be accurate to within plus/minus 5% with 95% confidence.

What is your Gender?

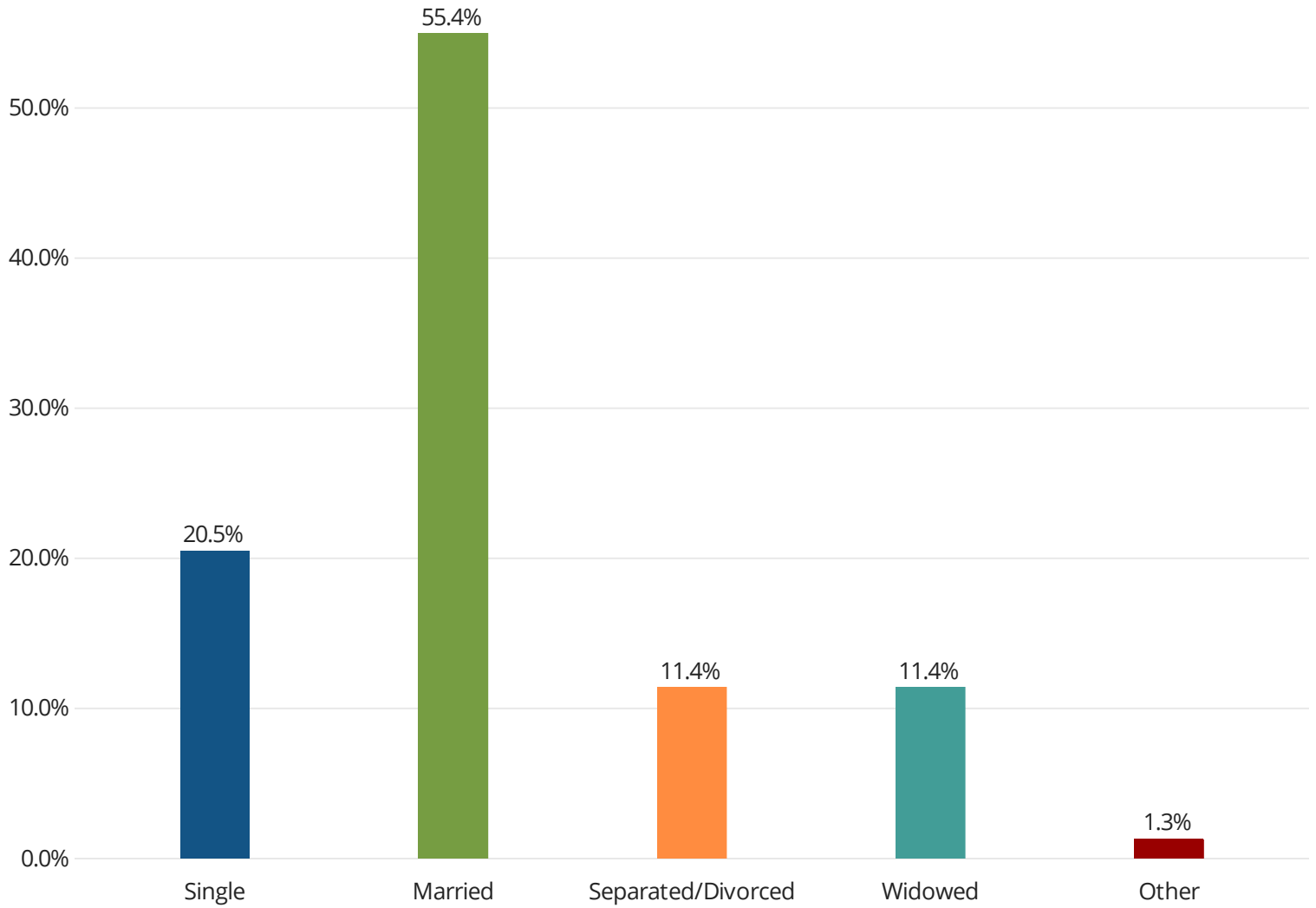
389 Responses



Gender	Responses	Gender	Percentage
Male	189	Male	48.6%
Female	200	Female	51.4%
Other	0	Other	0.0%

What is your Marital Status?

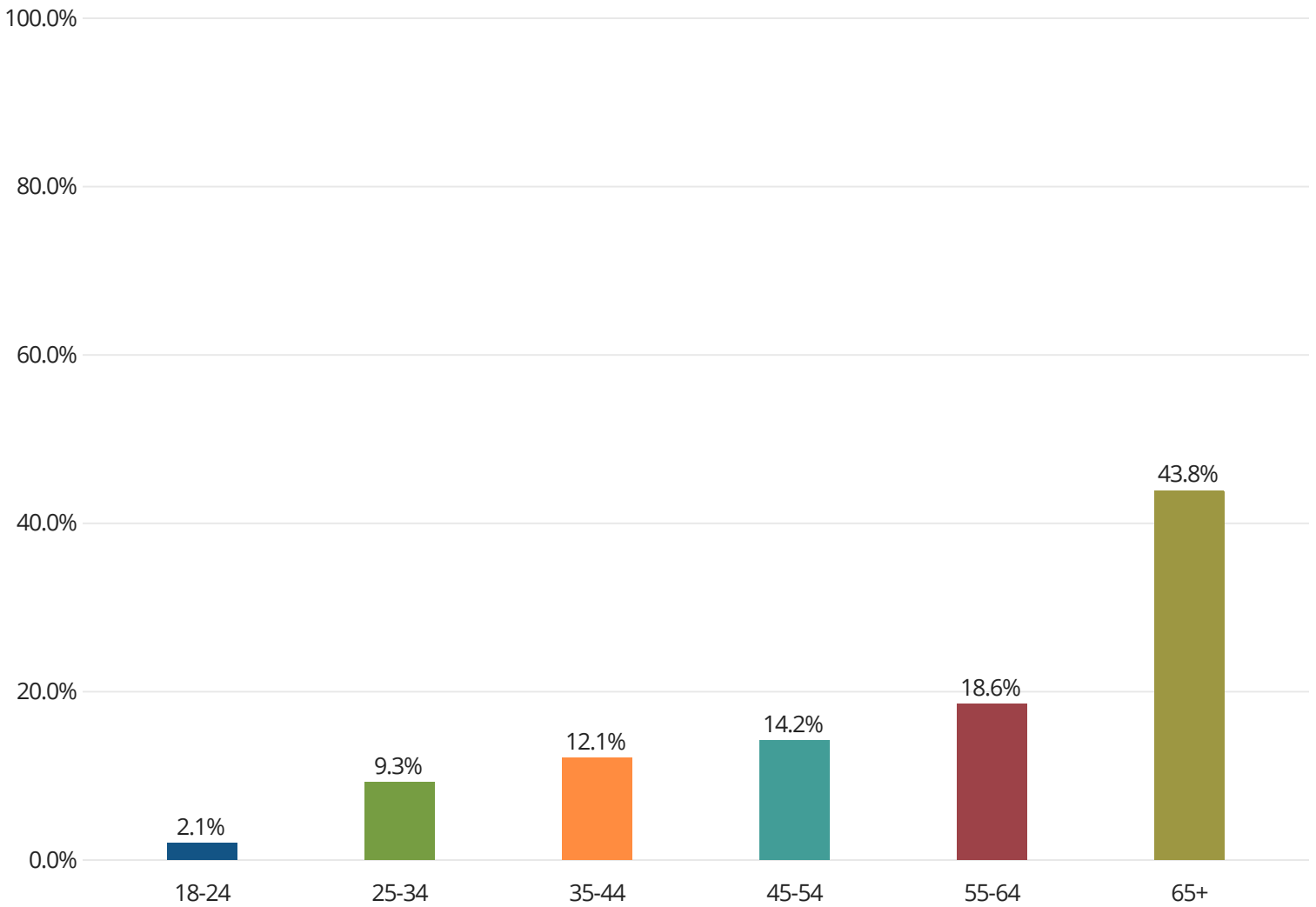
386 Responses



Marital Status	Responses	Marital Status	Percentage
Single	79	Single	20.5%
Married	214	Married	55.4%
Separated/Divorced	44	Separated/Divorced	11.4%
Widowed	44	Widowed	11.4%
Other	5	Other	1.3%

What is your Age?

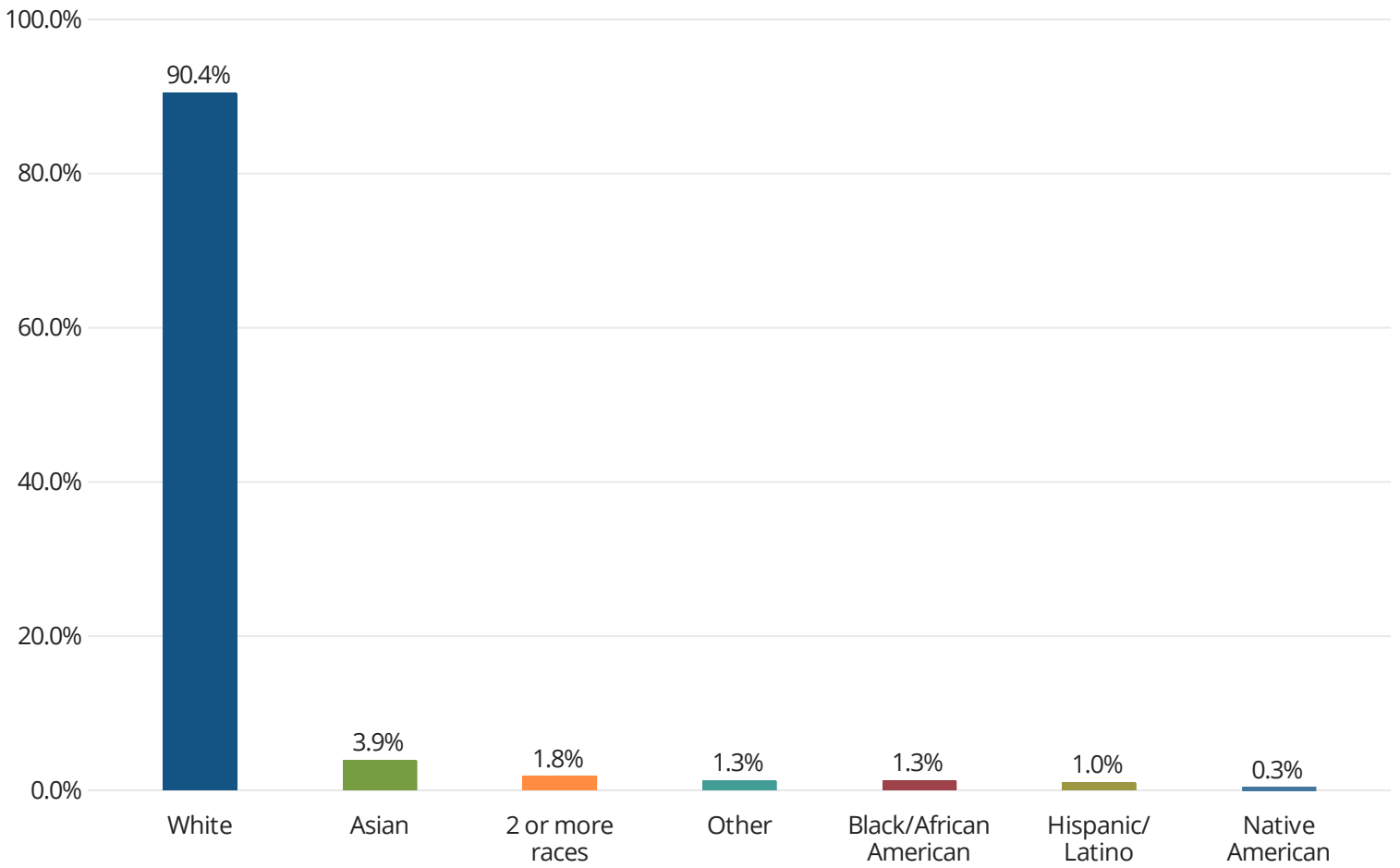
388 Responses



Age	Responses	Age	Percentage
18-24	8	18-24	2.1%
25-34	36	25-34	9.3%
35-44	47	35-44	12.1%
45-54	55	45-54	14.2%
55-64	72	55-64	18.6%
65+	170	65+	43.8%

What racial or ethnic category best describes you?

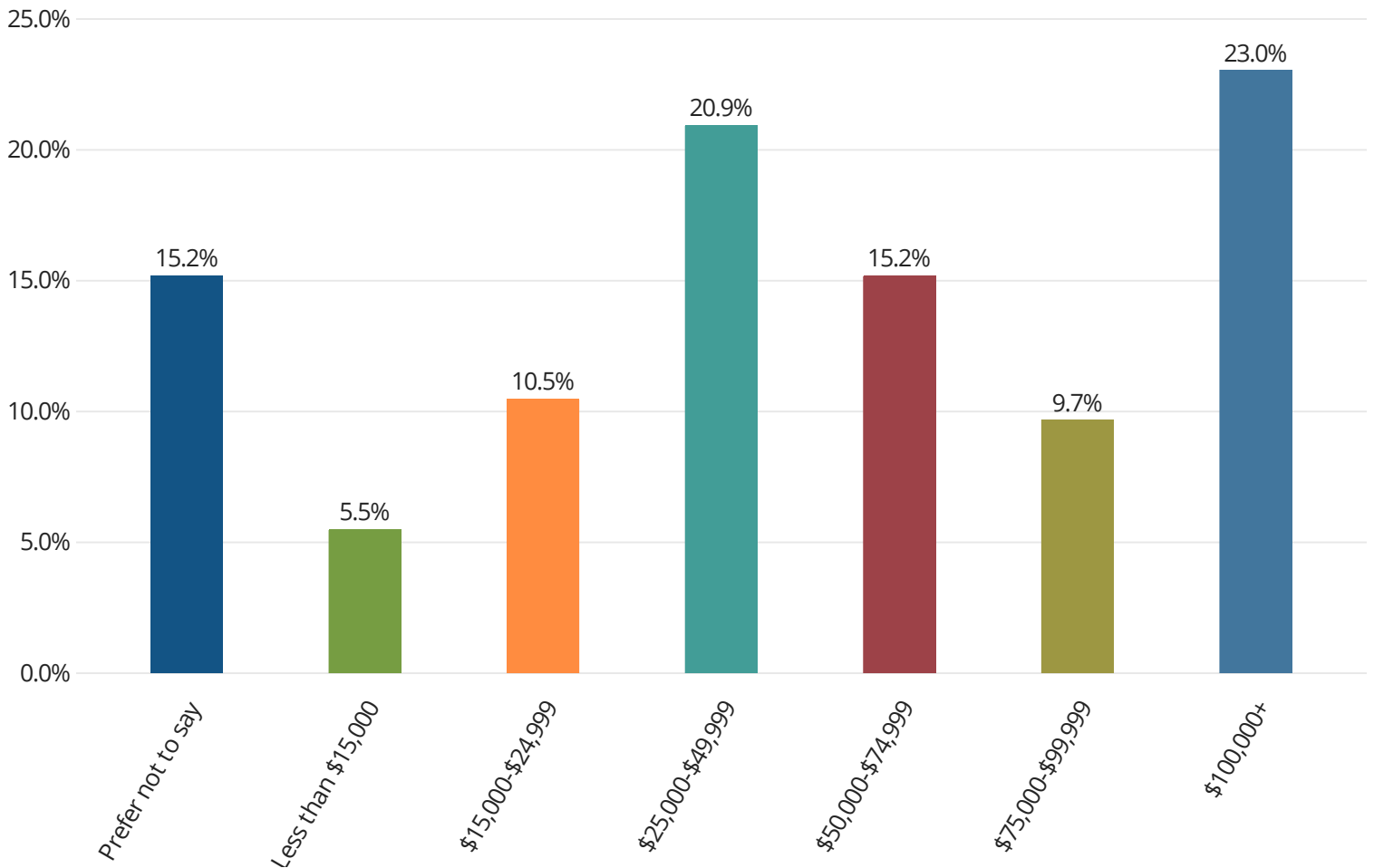
387 Responses



Race or Ethnicity	Responses	Race or Ethnicity	Percentage
Asian	15	Asian	3.9%
Black/African American	5	Black/African American	1.3%
Hispanic/ Latino	4	Hispanic/ Latino	1.0%
Native American	1	Native American	0.3%
White	350	White	90.4%
2 or more races	7	2 or more races	1.8%
Other	5	Other	1.3%

What is your household's annual income range?

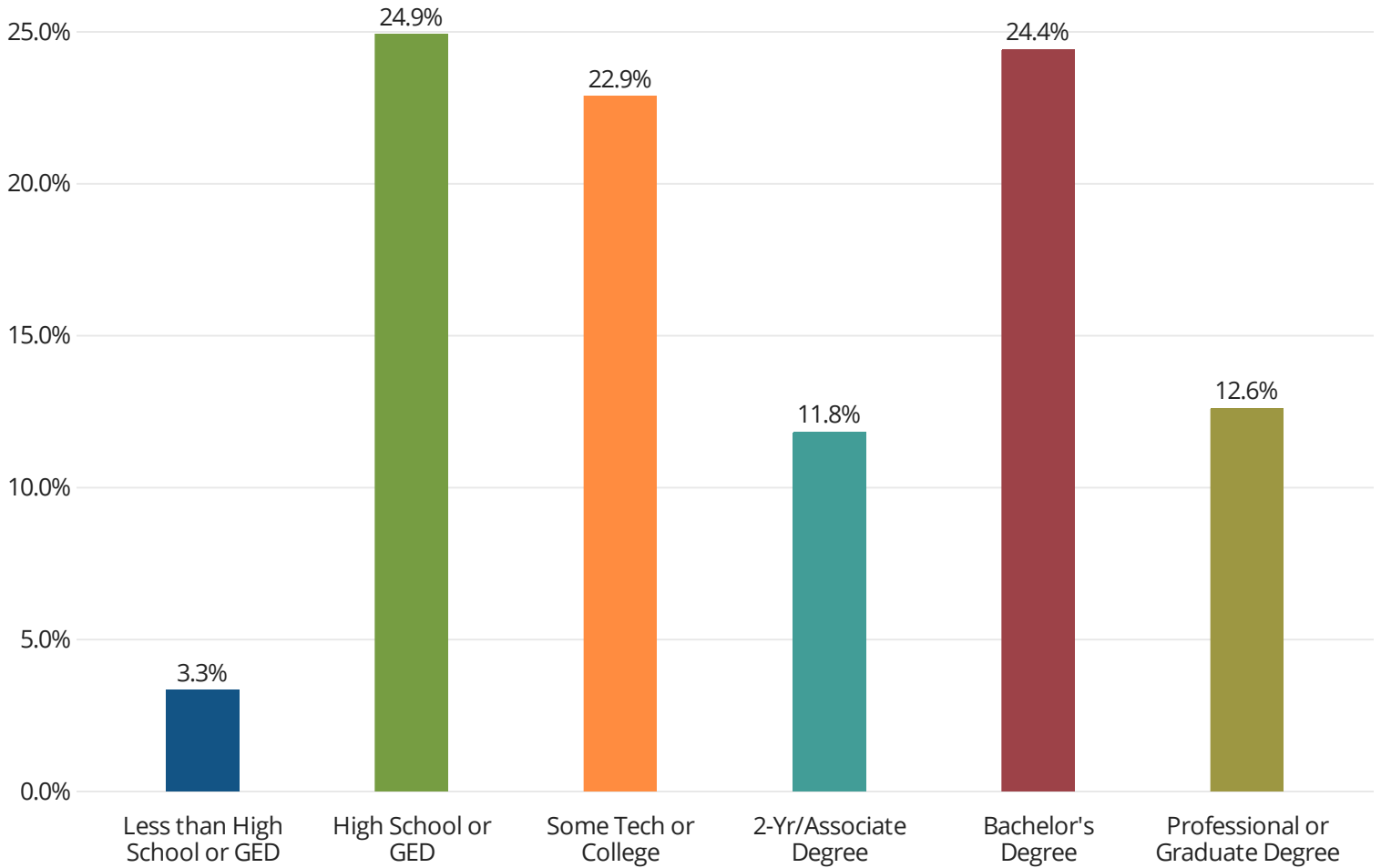
382 Responses



Income	Responses	Income	Percentage
Prefer not to say	58	Prefer not to say	15.2%
Less than \$15,000	21	Less than \$15,000	5.5%
\$15,000-\$24,999	40	\$15,000-\$24,999	10.5%
\$25,000-\$49,999	80	\$25,000-\$49,999	20.9%
\$50,000-\$74,999	58	\$50,000-\$74,999	15.2%
\$75,000-\$99,999	37	\$75,000-\$99,999	9.7%
\$100,000+	88	\$100,000+	23.0%

What is the highest level of education that you've completed?

389 Responses



Education

Responses

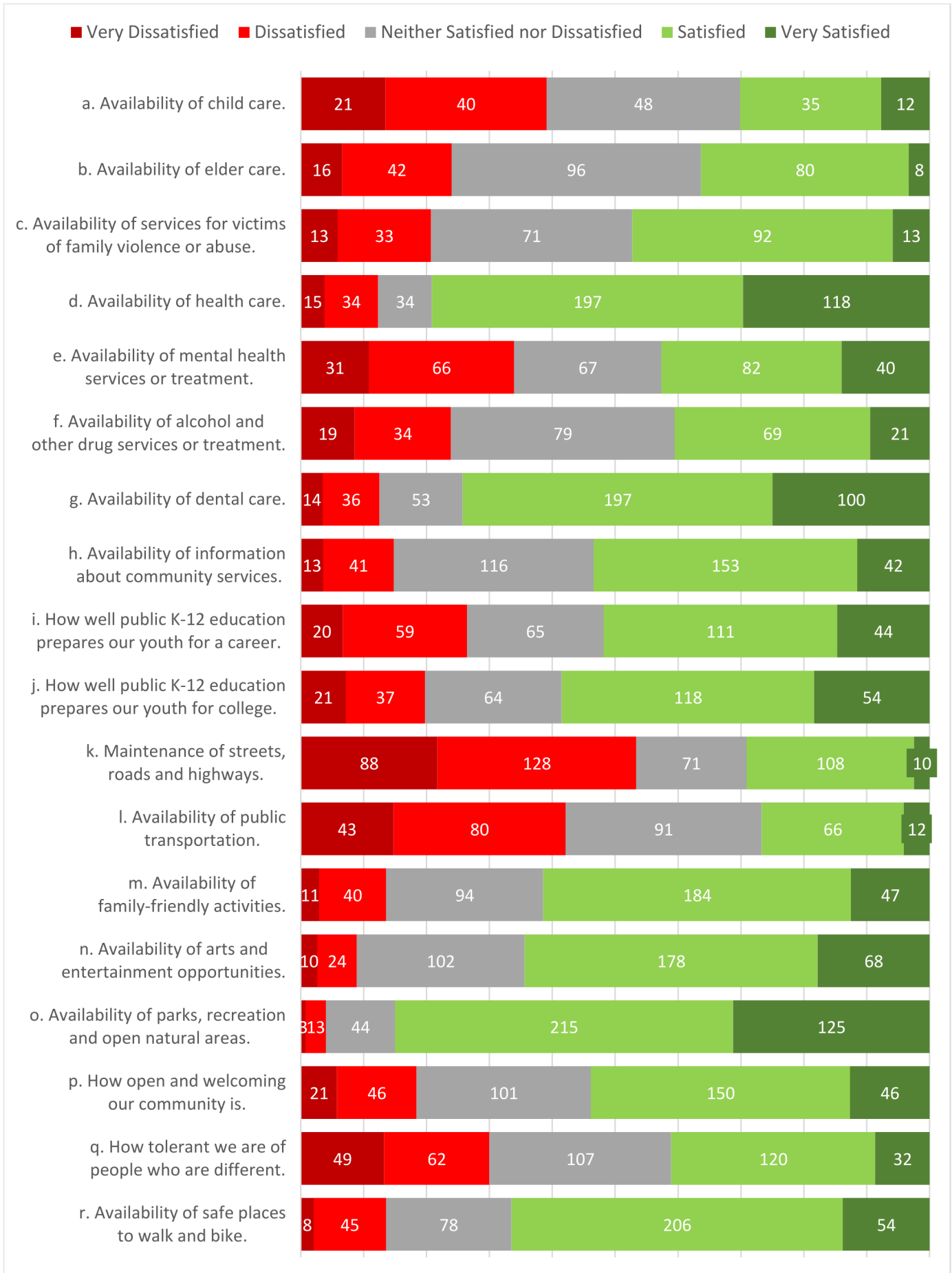
Less than High School or GED	13
High School or GED	97
Some Tech or College	89
2-Yr/Associate Degree	46
Bachelor's Degree	95
Professional or Graduate Degree	49

Education

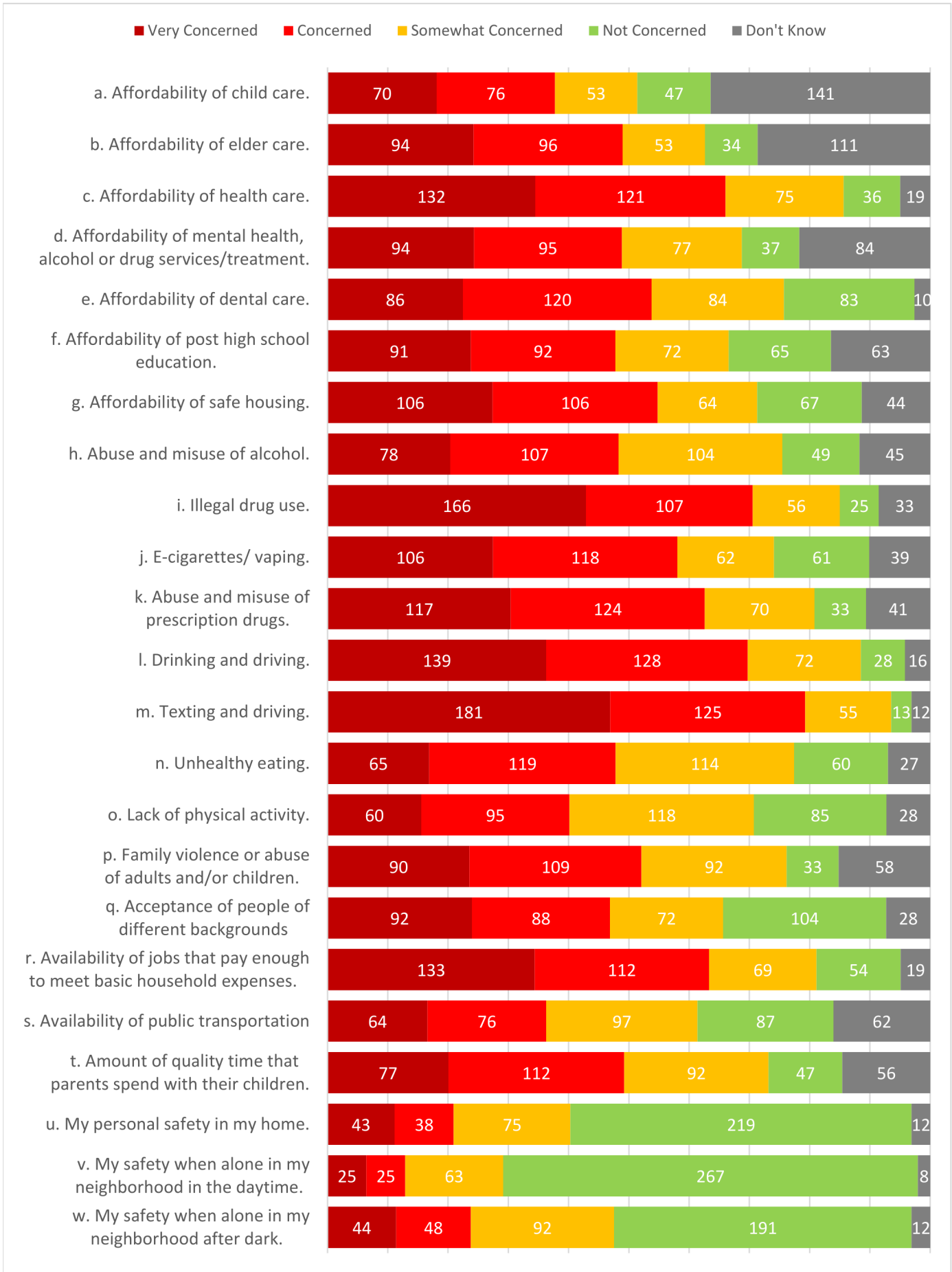
Percentage

Less than High School or GED	3.3%
High School or GED	24.9%
Some Tech or College	22.9%
2-Yr/Associate Degree	11.8%
Bachelor's Degree	24.4%
Professional or Graduate Degree	12.6%

1. How SATISFIED are you with the following in your community?



1. How CONCERNED are you with the following in your community?



3. The THREE issues that most concern you.

Total Responses: 1,290

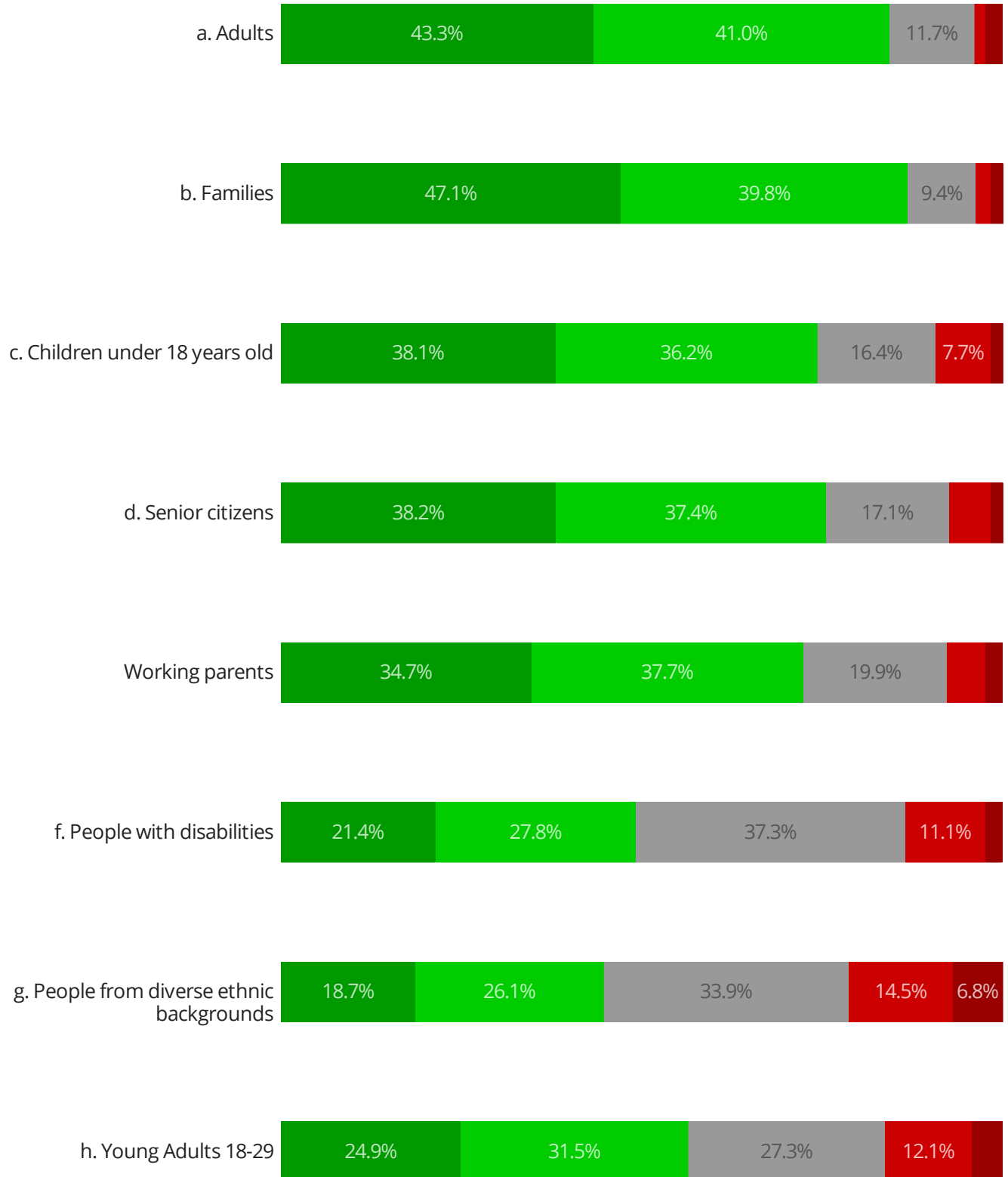
Total Respondents: 336

Count	Percent	Concern
120	12.2%	I Illegal drug use
106	10.8%	C Affordability of health care
77	7.8%	R Availability of jobs that pay enough to meet basic household expenses
71	7.2%	M Texting and driving
64	6.5%	L Drinking and driving
63	6.4%	G Affordability of safe housing
51	5.2%	B Affordability of elder care
48	4.9%	Q Acceptance of people of different backgrounds
38	3.9%	A Affordability of child care
35	3.6%	E Affordability of dental care
34	3.5%	K Abuse and misuse of prescription drugs
34	3.5%	D Affordability of mental health, alcohol or drug services/treatment
30	3.1%	P Family violence or abuse of adults and/or children
30	3.1%	W My safety when alone in my neighborhood after dark
29	3.0%	F Affordability of post high school education
27	2.7%	H Abuse and misuse of alcohol
27	2.7%	N Unhealthy eating
26	2.6%	T Amount of quality time that parents spend with their children
20	2.0%	S Availability of public transportation
14	1.4%	U My personal safety in my home
12	1.2%	J E-cigarettes/ vaping
11	1.1%	V My safety when alone in my neighborhood in the daytime
11	1.1%	O Lack of physical activity
5	0.5%	Other

4. Do you agree or disagree that Marathon County is a good place to live for:

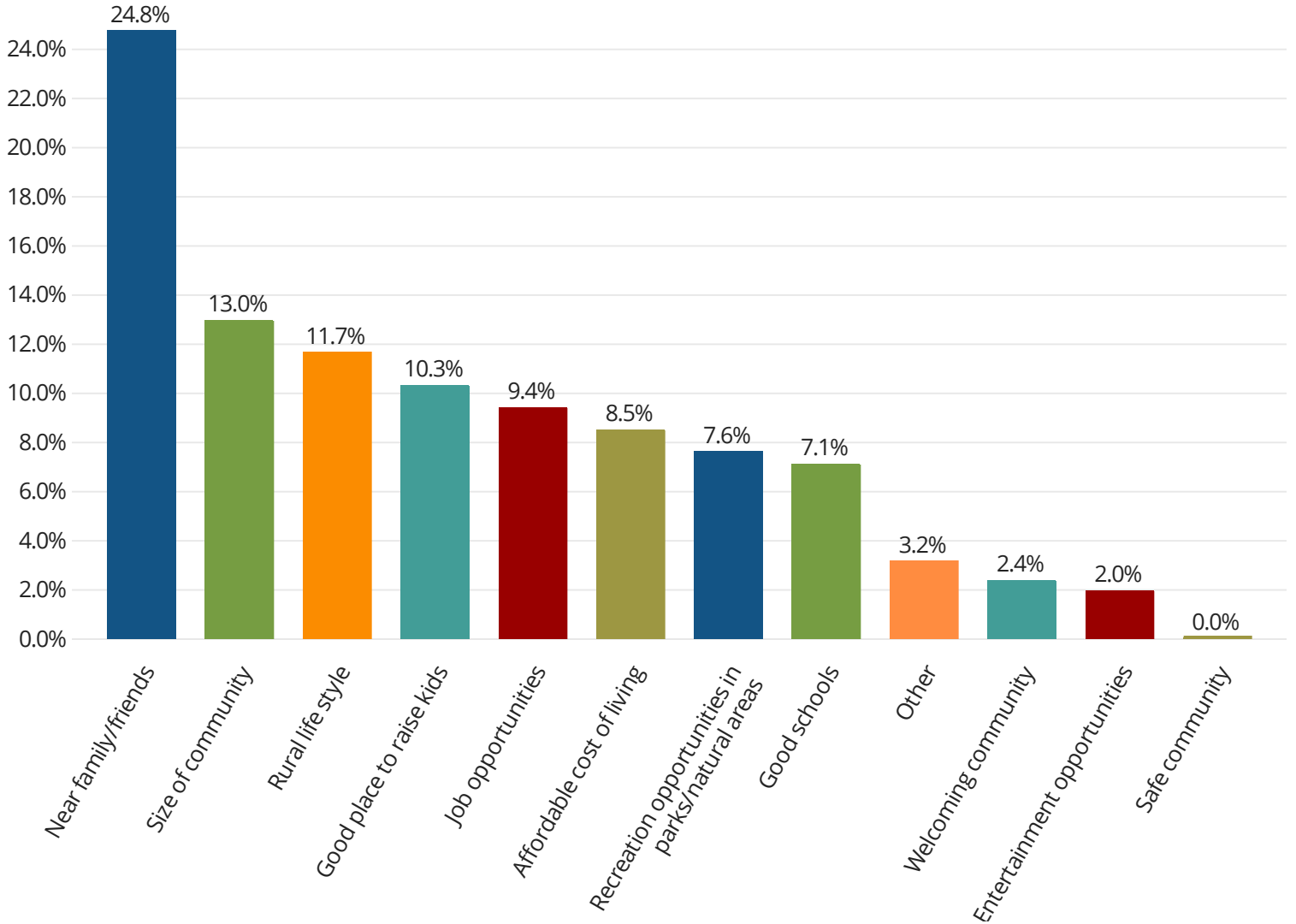
384 Responses

● Strongly Agree ● Somewhat Agree ● Neither Agree nor Disagree ● Somewhat Disagree ● Strongly Disagree



5. Of the following, which are the THREE most important reasons you've chosen to live in Marathon County? (Mark up to three reasons only)

383 Responses

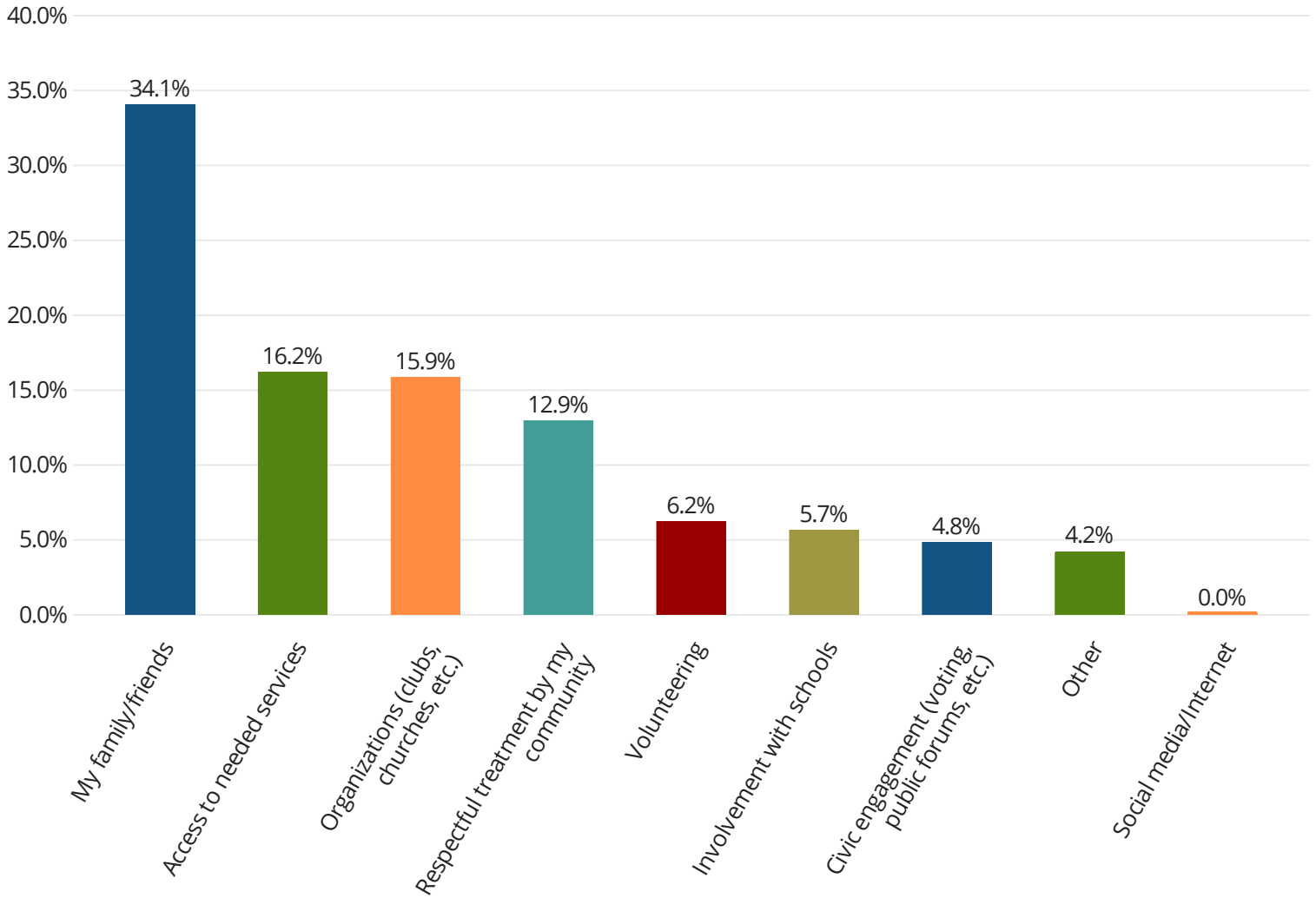


Reason	Choice Count
Near family/friends	250
Size of community	131
Rural life style	118
Good place to raise kids	104
Job opportunities	95
Affordable cost of living	86
Recreation opportunities in parks/natural areas	77
Good schools	72
Other	32
Welcoming community	24
Entertainment opportunities	20
Safe community	0

Reason	Percentage of Choices
Near family/friends	24.8%
Size of community	13.0%
Rural life style	11.7%
Good place to raise kids	10.3%
Job opportunities	9.4%
Affordable cost of living	8.5%
Recreation opportunities in parks/natural areas	7.6%
Good schools	7.1%
Other	3.2%
Welcoming community	2.4%
Entertainment opportunities	2.0%
Safe community	0.0%

6. Which three of the following most connects you to your community in Marathon County?

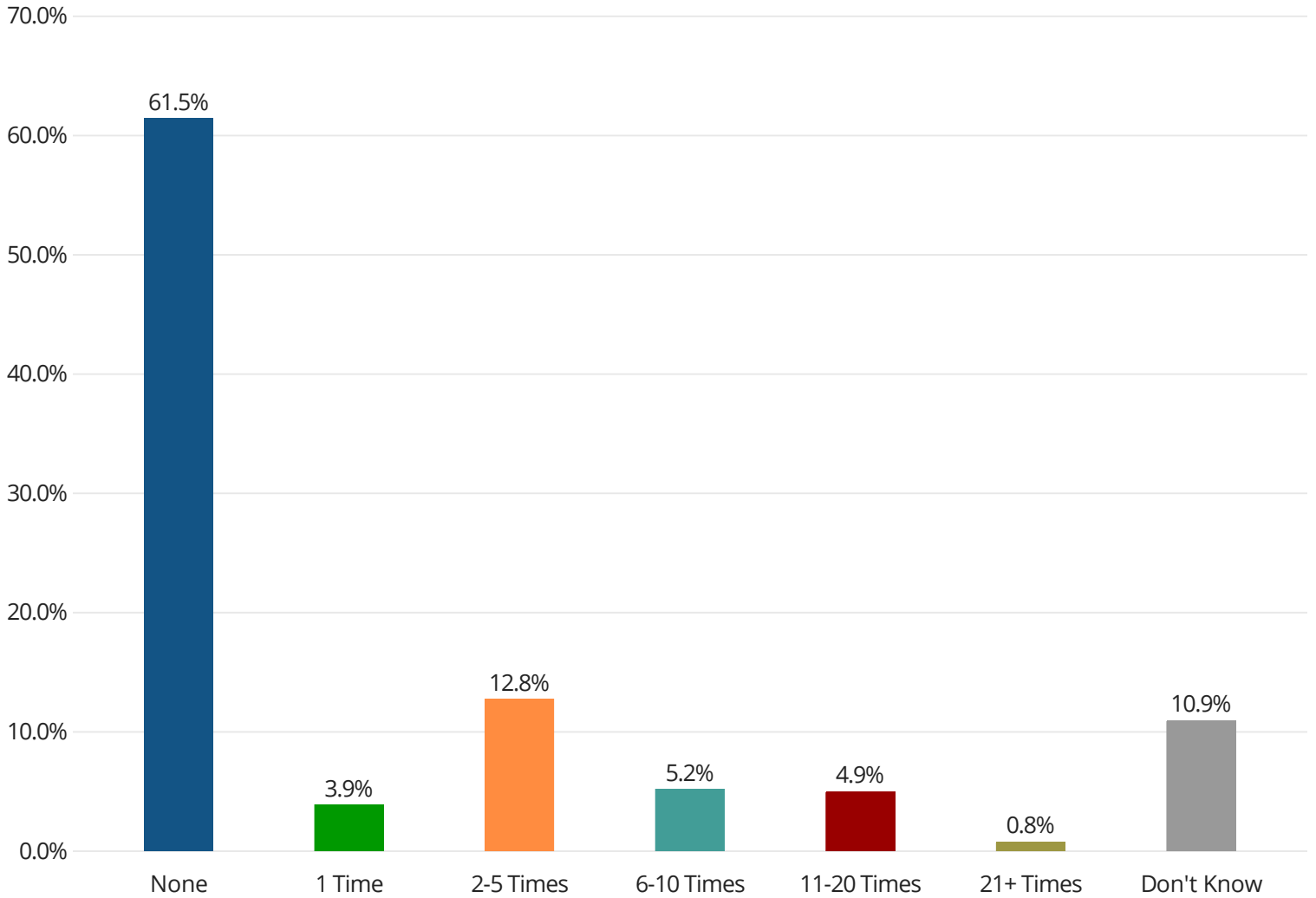
378 Responses



Connection	Choice Count	Connection	Percentage of Choices
My family/friends	324	My family/friends	34.1%
Access to needed services	154	Access to needed services	16.2%
Organizations (clubs, churches, etc.)	151	Organizations (clubs, churches, etc.)	15.9%
Respectful treatment by my community	123	Respectful treatment by my community	12.9%
Volunteering	59	Volunteering	6.2%
Involvement with schools	54	Involvement with schools	5.7%
Civic engagement (voting, public forums, etc.)	46	Civic engagement (voting, public forums, etc.)	4.8%
Other	40	Other	4.2%
Social media/Internet	0	Social media/Internet	0.0%

7. Discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfairly based upon personal characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, income, religion, disability or handicap, etc. During the past year, how many times have you/members of your household experienced discrimination in Marathon County?

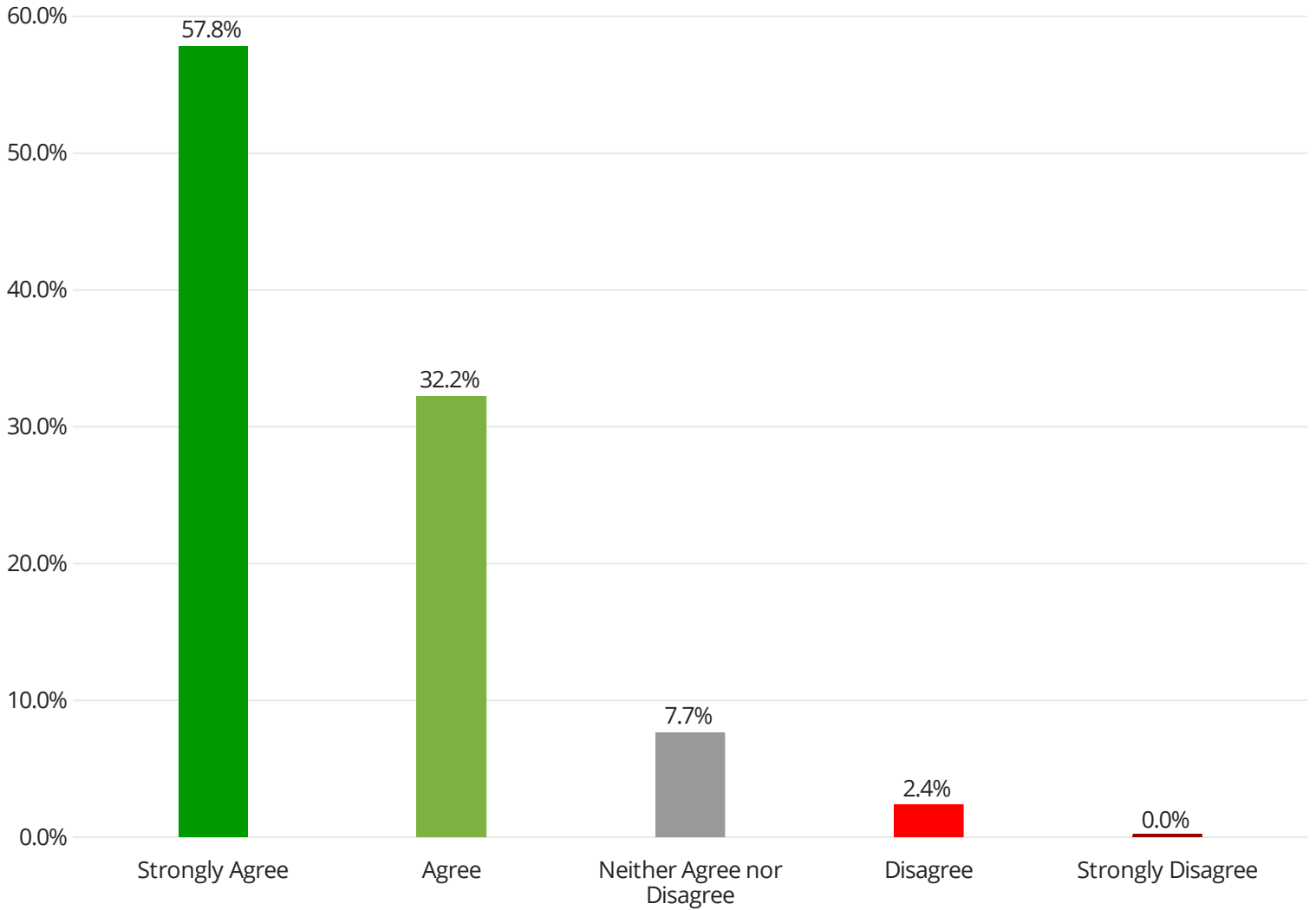
384 Responses



Occurrences	Choice Count	Occurrences	Percentage
None	236	None	61.5%
1 Time	15	1 Time	3.9%
2-5 Times	49	2-5 Times	12.8%
6-10 Times	20	6-10 Times	5.2%
11-20 Times	19	11-20 Times	4.9%
21+ Times	3	21+ Times	0.8%
Don't Know	42	Don't Know	10.9%

8. The people with whom I currently work, or with whom I used to work, would say I have a strong work ethic.

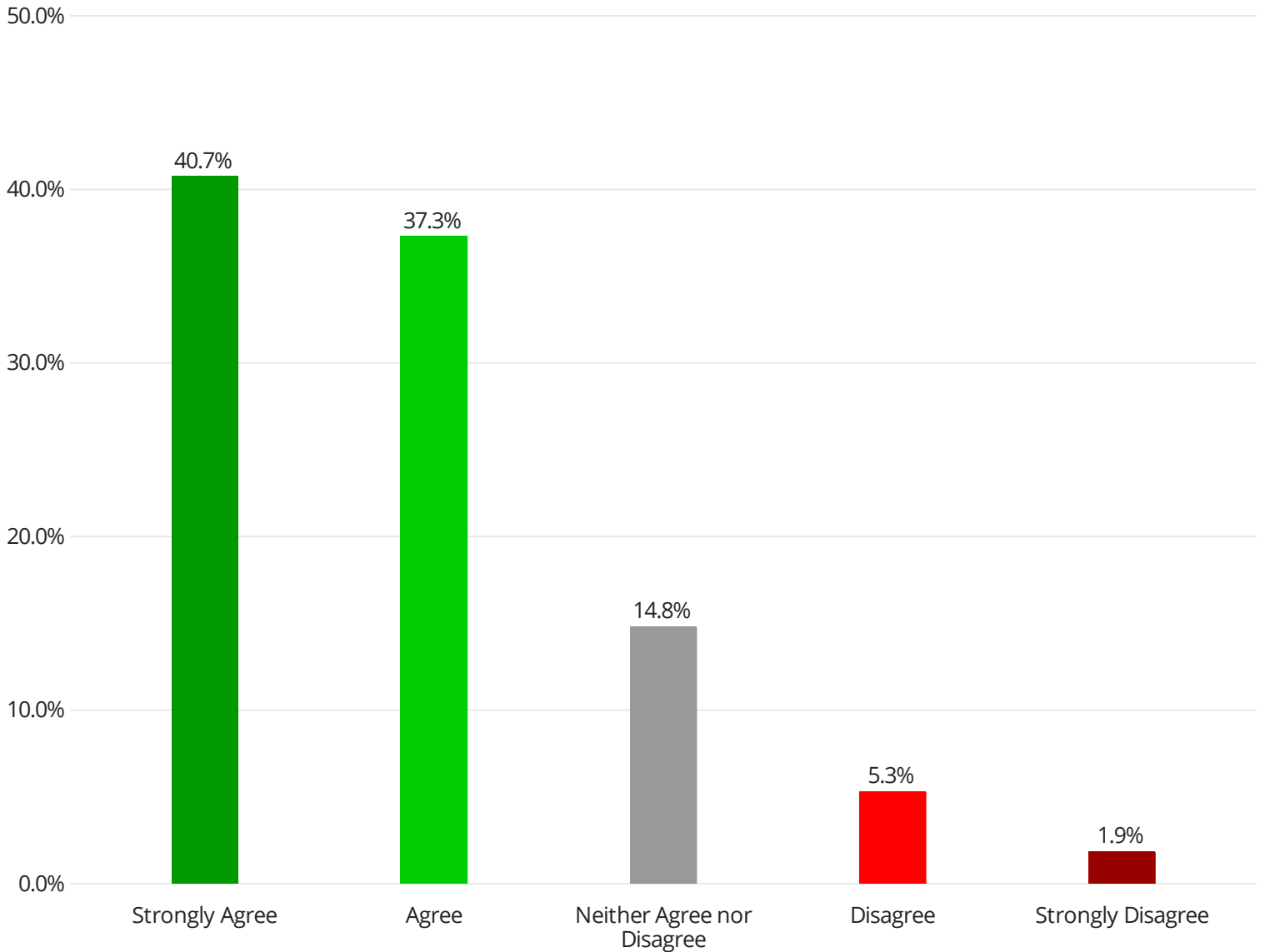
379 Responses



Result	Choice Count	Result	Percentage
Strongly Agree	219	Strongly Agree	57.8%
Agree	122	Agree	32.2%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	29	Neither Agree nor Disagree	7.7%
Disagree	9	Disagree	2.4%
Strongly Disagree	0	Strongly Disagree	0.0%

9. I get satisfaction from my current job, or the one I most recently had.

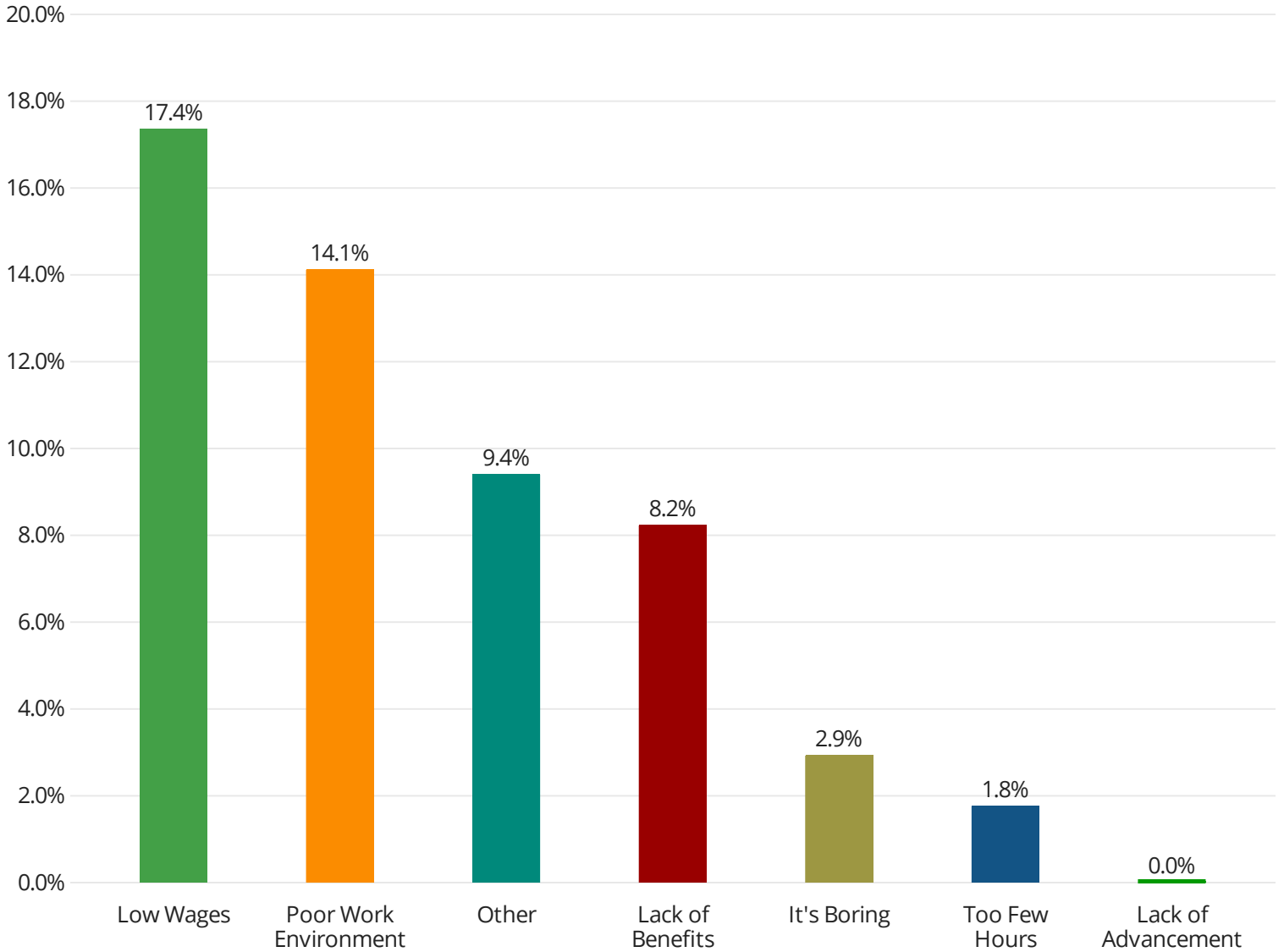
378 Responses



Result	Choice Count	Result	Percentage
Strongly Agree	154	Strongly Agree	41%
Agree	141	Agree	37%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	56	Neither Agree nor Disagree	15%
Disagree	20	Disagree	5%
Strongly Disagree	7	Strongly Disagree	2%

10. If you don't get satisfaction from your current job, or the one you had most recently, which of the following are reasons for your dissatisfaction? (excluding "Not Applicable")

269 Responses

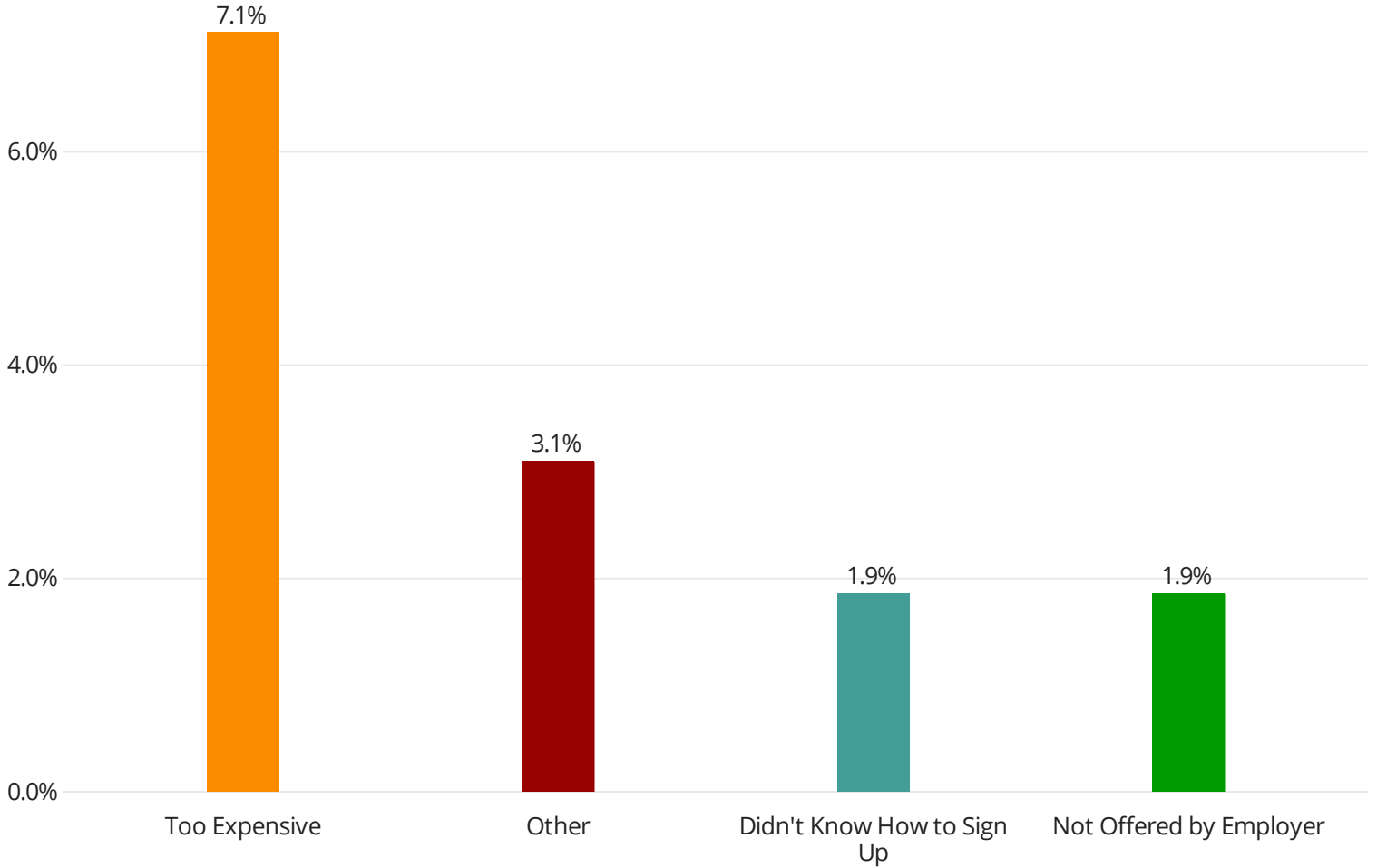


Result	Choice Count
Not Applicable	157
Low Wages	59
Poor Work Environment	48
Other	32
Lack of Benefits	28
It's Boring	10
Too Few Hours	6
Lack of Advancement	0

Result	Percentage of Choices
Not Applicable	46.2%
Low Wages	17.4%
Poor Work Environment	14.1%
Other	9.4%
Lack of Benefits	8.2%
It's Boring	2.9%
Too Few Hours	1.8%
Lack of Advancement	0.0%

11. If you've not had health insurance (Medicare, Medicaid, Badgercare, Private Insurance) at any time during the past 12 months, which of the following is the most important reason?

323 Responses



Result	Percentage
Not Applicable	86.1%
Too Expensive	7.1%
Other	3.1%
Didn't Know How to Sign Up	1.9%
Not Offered by Employer	1.9%

Result	Choice Count
Not Applicable	278
Not Offered by Employer	6
Too Expensive	23
Didn't Know How to Sign Up	6
Other	10

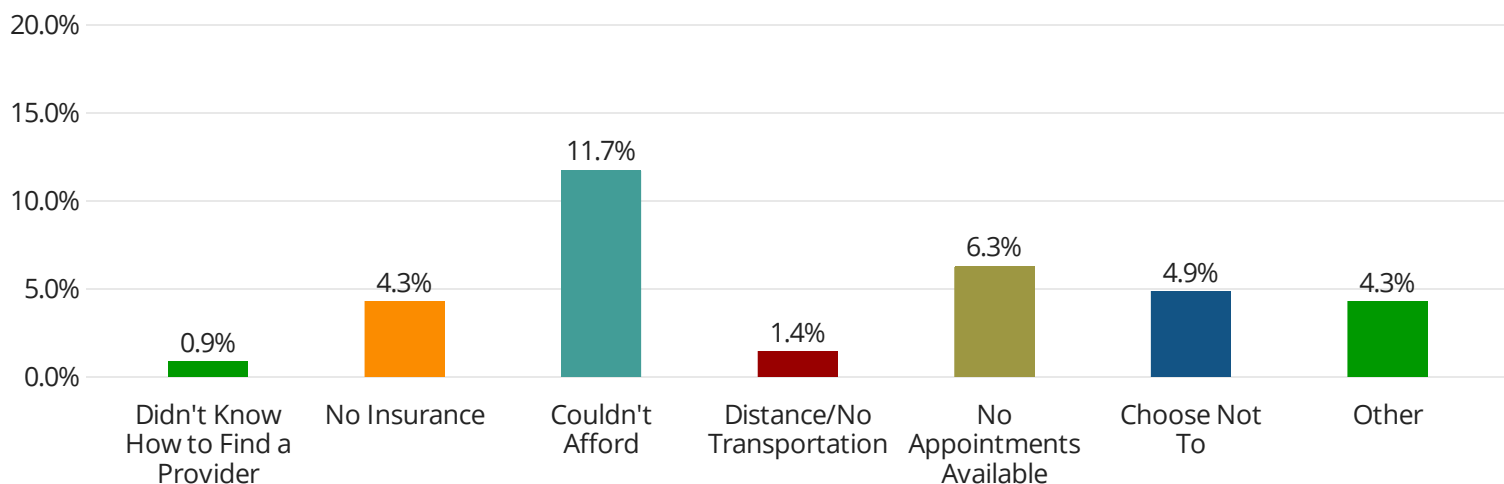
Other - Text

- Business owner/self-employed
- I have Insurance
- Lost insurance through a parent
- Religious Temptation
- Retired
- The state requests information I do not have access to.
- have

12. In the last 12 months, has there been a time when you or someone in your family should have seen a doctor but didn't? If so, please indicate why.

Doctor

343 Responses



Result	Choice Count	Result	Percentage of Choices
Not Applicable	232	Not Applicable	66.3%
Didn't Know How to Find a Provider	3	Didn't Know How to Find a Provider	0.9%
No Insurance	15	No Insurance	4.3%
Couldn't Afford	41	Couldn't Afford	11.7%
Distance/No Transportation	5	Distance/No Transportation	1.4%
No Appointments Available	22	No Appointments Available	6.3%
Choose Not To	17	Choose Not To	4.9%
Other	15	Other	4.3%

12a Other - Doctor

Availability of appointments in the evening after 5

Covid

I rely on family for childcare as I cant afford it, so when I'm not at work I don't have someone to watch my kids to give me time to see a therapist. I struggle to find childcare for Dr and dentist appointments as it already is.

It was for my son. Provider left and clinic didn't have any appointments before son left for college.

My friend- who now finds out she has stage 4 cancer

No one accepting new patients with badgercare

Not in my network or healthcare plan

Not many options for male providers in the area.

Also health insurance doesn't cover until a high deductible is met.

Providers too specialized, say they aren't right for my needs. Many not taking patients.

Strong lack of quality doctors in this area.

They don't believe my complaints, wasted my time

Vacation

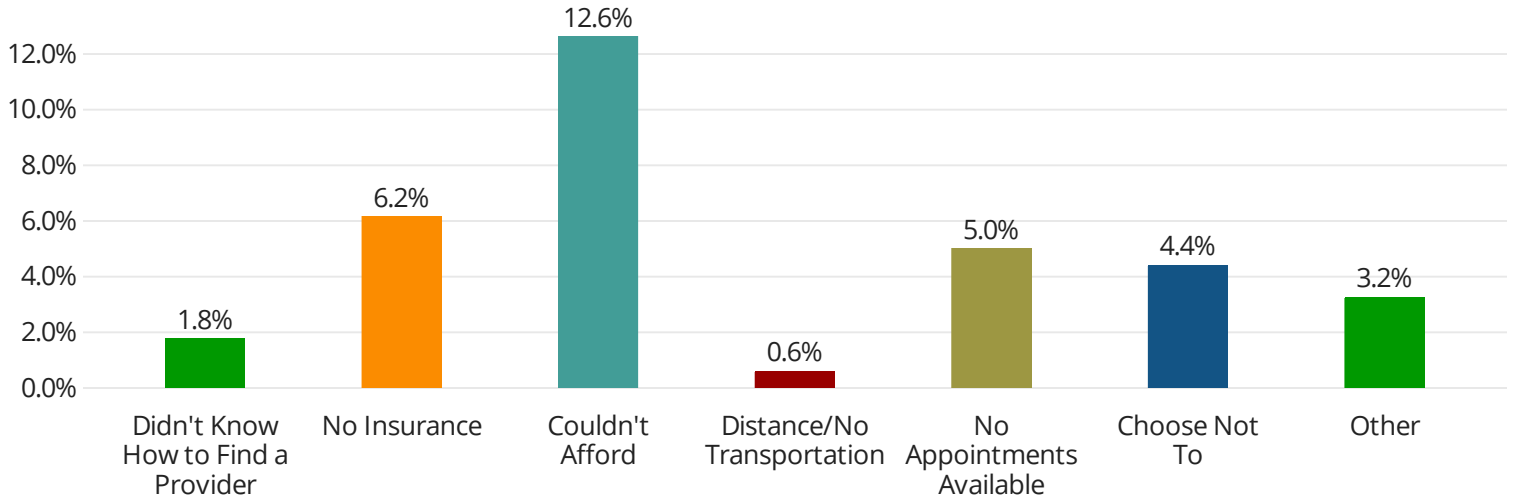
Waste of time, they try to get you to leave without understanding the problem.

rejected by society

12. In the last 12 months, has there been a time when you or someone in your family should have seen a dentist or mental health provider but didn't? If so, please indicate why. (excluding "Not Applicable")

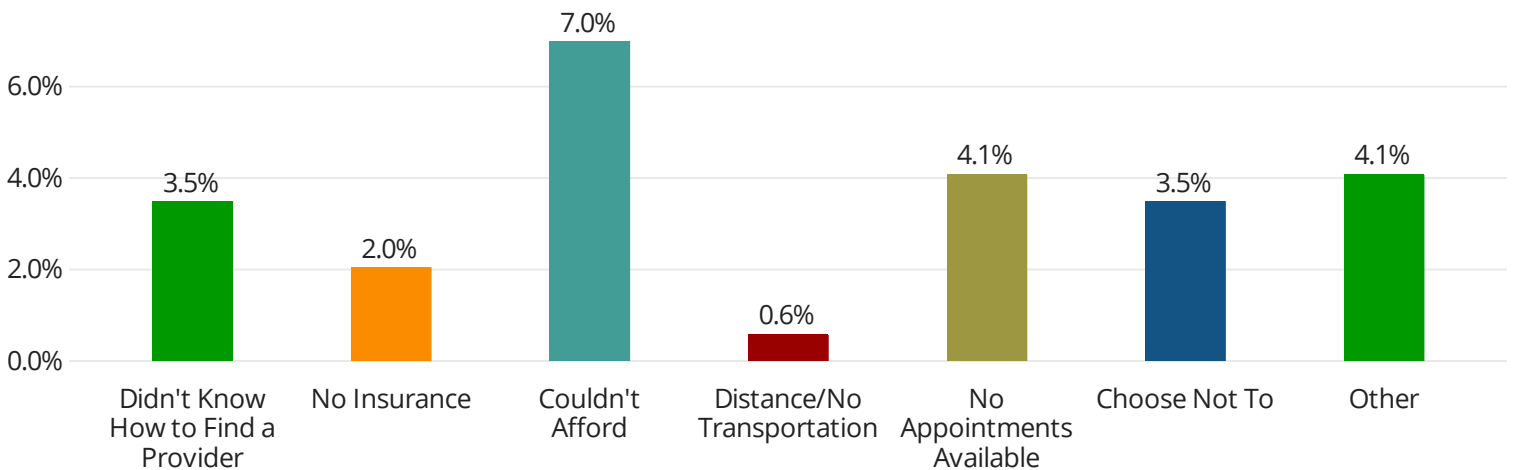
Dentist

338 Responses



Mental Health

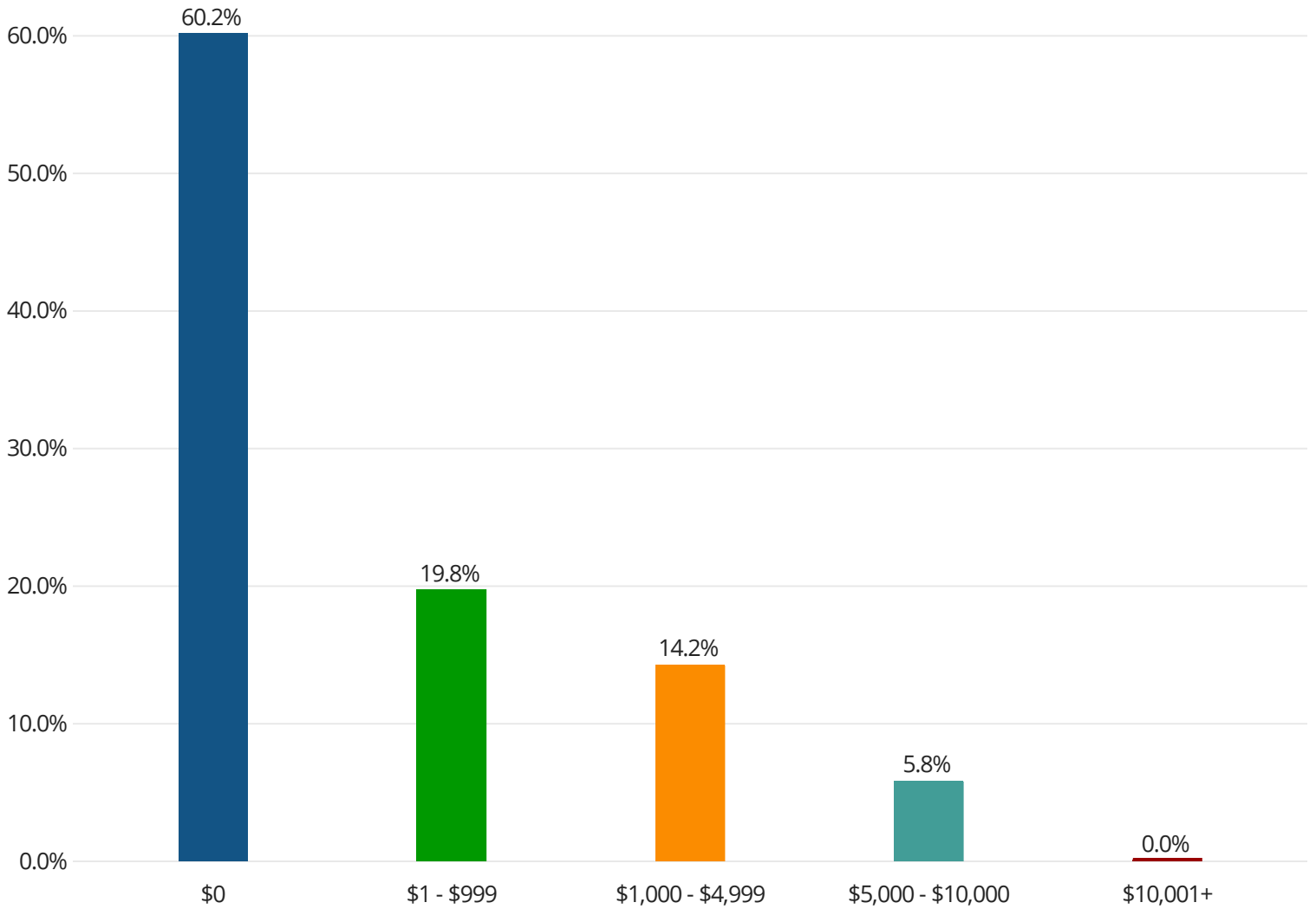
336 Responses



Result	b. Dentist	c. Mental Health	Result	b. Dentist	c. Mental Health
Not Applicable	225	258	Not Applicable	66.2%	75.2%
Didn't Know How to Find a Provider	6	12	Didn't Know How to Find a Provider	1.8%	3.5%
No Insurance	21	7	No Insurance	6.2%	2.0%
Couldn't Afford	43	24	Couldn't Afford	12.6%	7.0%
Distance/No Transportation	2	2	Distance/No Transportation	0.6%	0.6%
No Appointments Available	17	14	No Appointments Available	5.0%	4.1%
Choose Not To	15	12	Choose Not To	4.4%	3.5%
Other	11	14	Other	3.2%	4.1%

13. Which of the following best describes your current family/household medical debt?

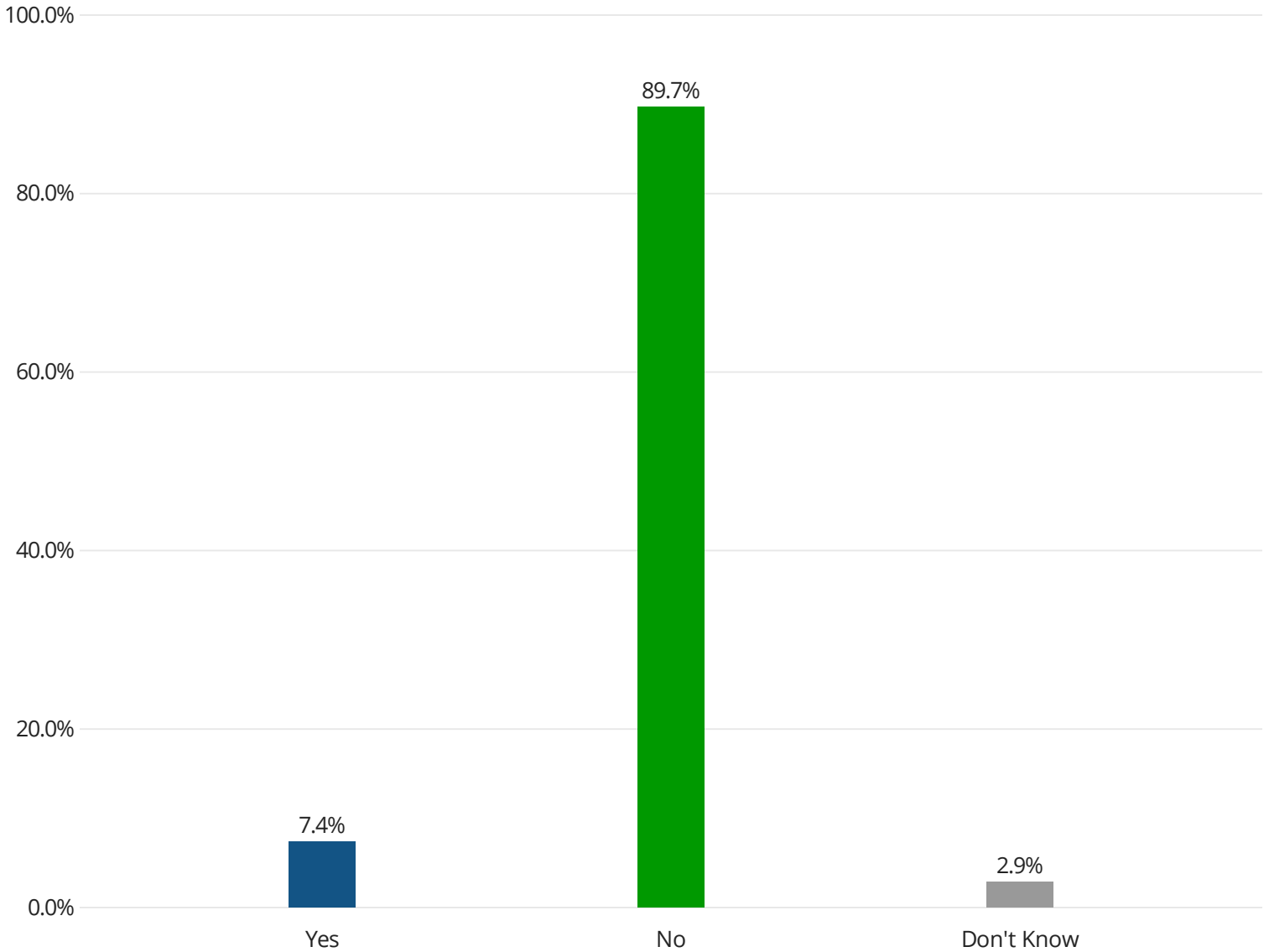
344 Responses



Debt	Choice Count	Debt	Percentage
\$0	207	\$0	60.2%
\$1 - \$999	68	\$1 - \$999	19.8%
\$1,000 - \$4,999	49	\$1,000 - \$4,999	14.2%
\$5,000 - \$10,000	20	\$5,000 - \$10,000	5.8%
\$10,001+	0	\$10,001+	0.0%

14. In the past year, have you been concerned about someone in your family misusing drugs (prescription or illegal)?

379 Responses

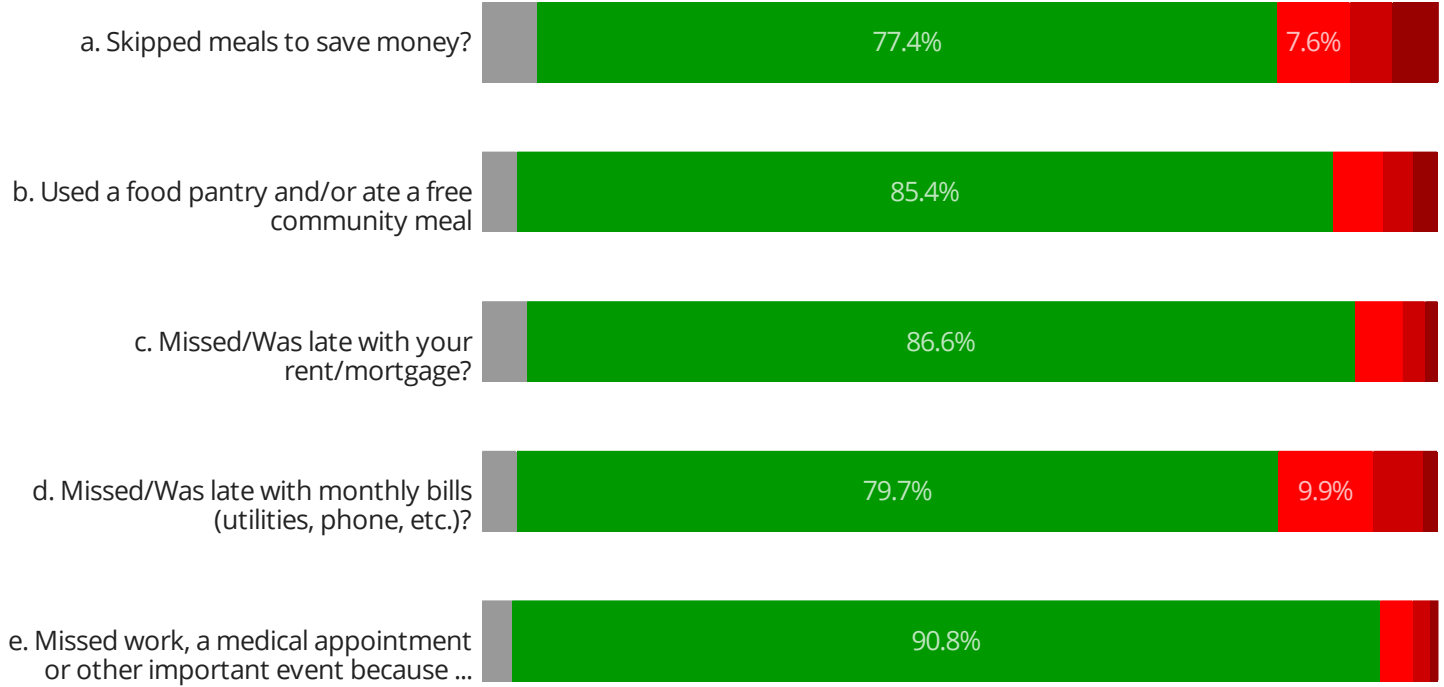


Answer	Choice Count	Answer	Percentage
Yes	28	Yes	7.4%
No	340	No	89.7%
Don't Know	11	Don't Know	2.9%

15. During the past year, in how many months have you/someone in your household:

384 Responses

● Don't Know ● 0 ● 1-2 ● 3-6 ● 7+



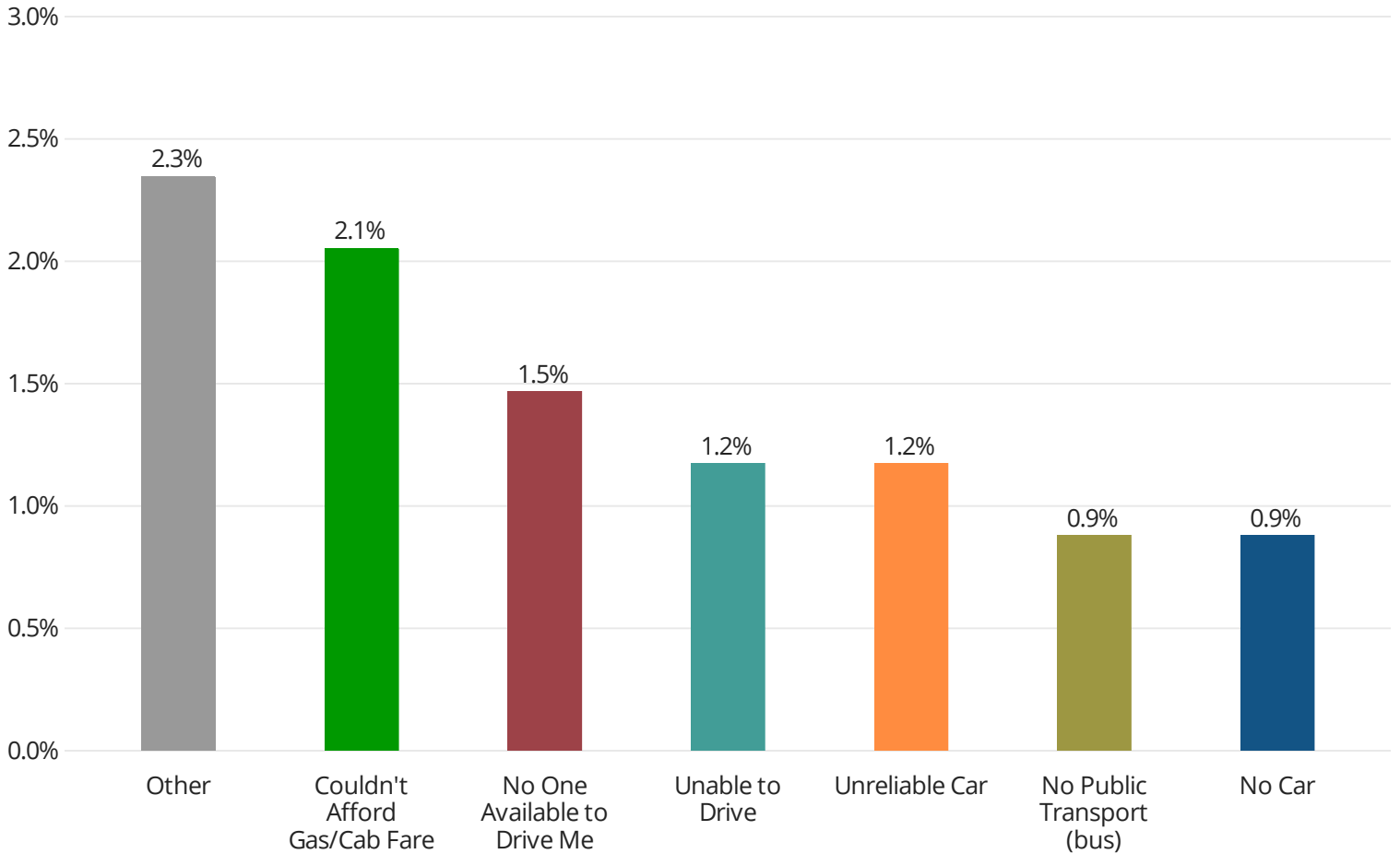
Count	a. Skipped meals to save money?	b. Used a food pantry and/or ate a free community meal	c. Missed/Was late with your rent/mortgage?	d. Missed/Was late with monthly bills (utilities, phone, etc.)?	e. Missed work, a medical appointment or other important event because you had no transportation?
Don't Know	22	14	18	14	12
0	295	327	329	306	347
1-2	29	20	19	38	13
3-6	17	12	9	20	7
7+	18	10	5	6	3

Percent	a. Skipped meals to save money?	b. Used a food pantry and/or ate a free community meal	c. Missed/Was late with your rent/mortgage?	d. Missed/Was late with monthly bills (utilities, phone, etc.)?	e. Missed work, a medical appointment or other important event because you had no transportation?
Don't Know	5.8%	3.7%	4.7%	3.6%	3.1%
0	77.4%	85.4%	86.6%	79.7%	90.8%
1-2	7.6%	5.2%	5.0%	9.9%	3.4%

3-6	4.5%	3.1%	2.4%	5.2%	1.8%
7+	4.7%	2.6%	1.3%	1.6%	0.8%

16. If, during the past year, you or someone in your household missed work, a medical appointment or other important event because you had no transportation, which of the following caused this problem? (Excluding "Not Applicable")

335 Responses



Answer	Choice Count
Not Applicable	307
Other	8
Couldn't Afford Gas/Cab Fare	7
No One Available to Drive Me	5
Unable to Drive	4
Unreliable Car	4
No Public Transport (bus)	3
No Car	3

Answer	Percentage of Choices
Not Applicable	90.0%
Other	2.3%
Couldn't Afford Gas/Cab Fare	2.1%
No One Available to Drive Me	1.5%
Unable to Drive	1.2%
Unreliable Car	1.2%
No Public Transport (bus)	0.9%
No Car	0.9%

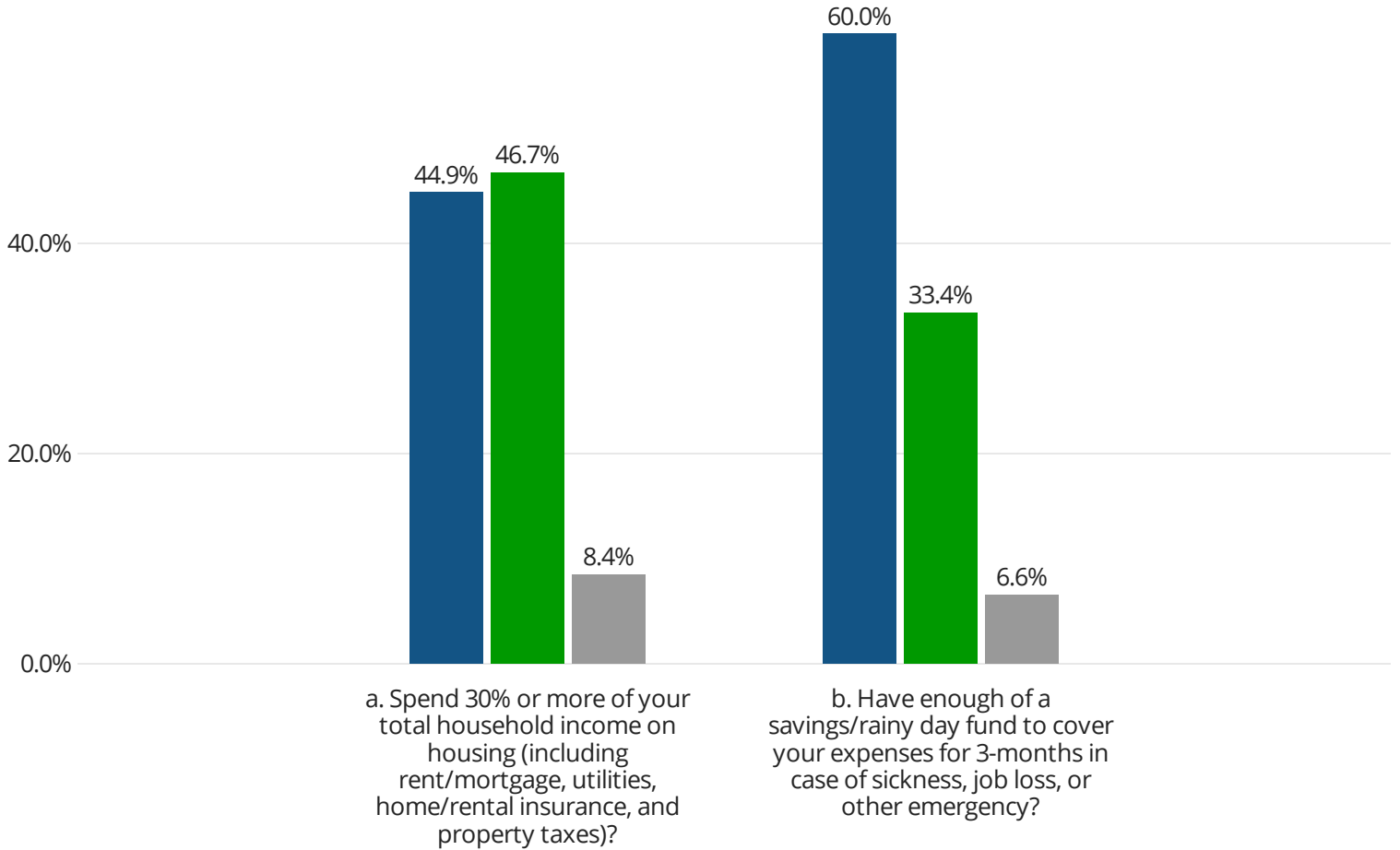
Other - Text

- Vehicle broken down
- unrelated taxi service
- none

17. Do you/your household:

381 Responses

● Yes ● No ● Don't Know



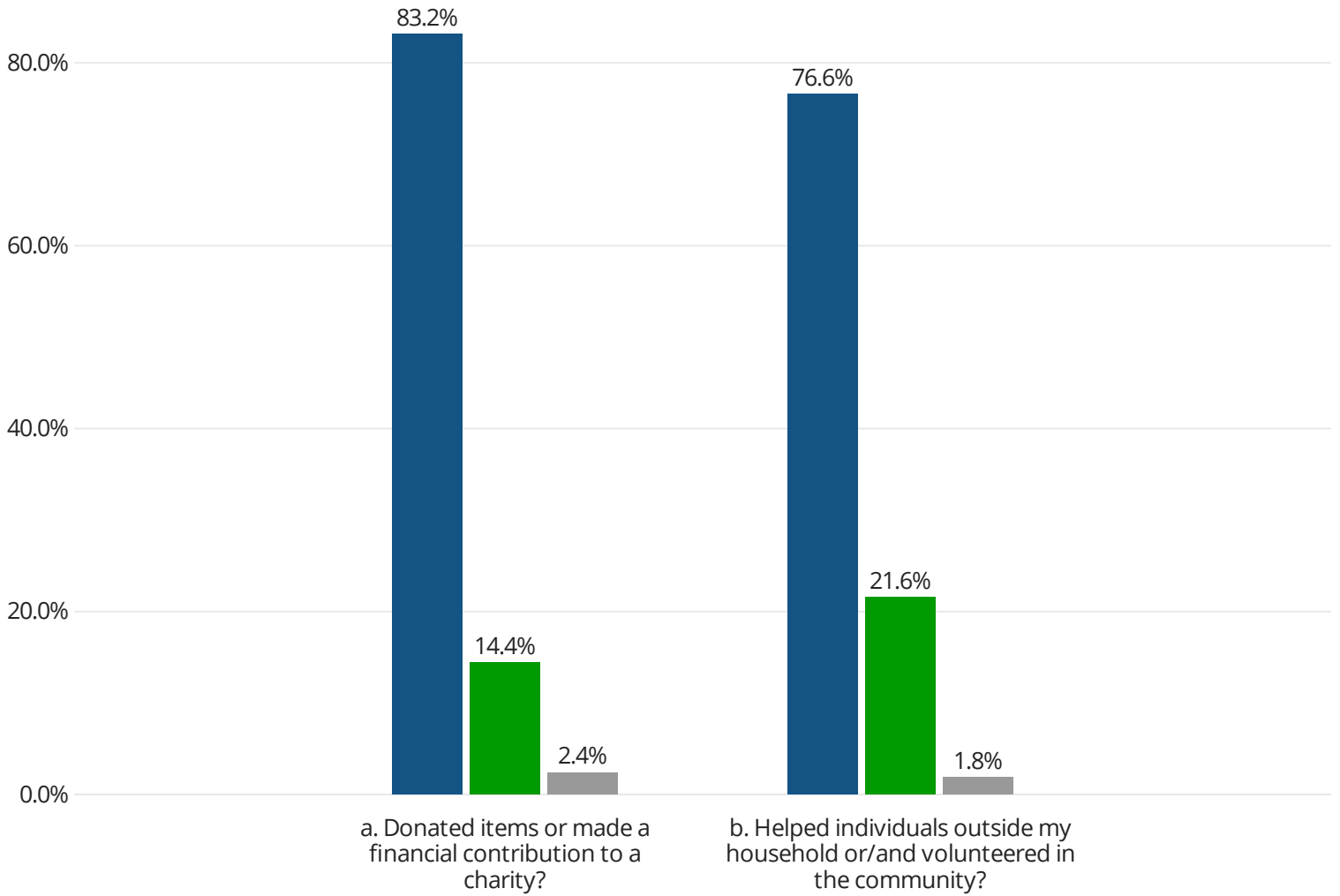
Count	Yes	No	Don't Know
a. Spend 30% or more of your total household income on housing (including rent/mortgage, utilities, home/rental insurance, and property taxes)?	170	177	32
b. Have enough of a savings/rainy day fund to cover your expenses for 3-months in case of sickness, job loss, or other emergency?	228	127	25

Percent	Yes	No	Don't Know
a. Spend 30% or more of your total household income on housing (including rent/mortgage, utilities, home/rental insurance, and property taxes)?	44.9%	46.7%	8.4%
b. Have enough of a savings/rainy day fund to cover your expenses for 3-months in case of sickness, job loss, or other emergency?	60.0%	33.4%	6.6%

18. In the past year, have you:

383 Responses

● Yes ● No ● Don't Know

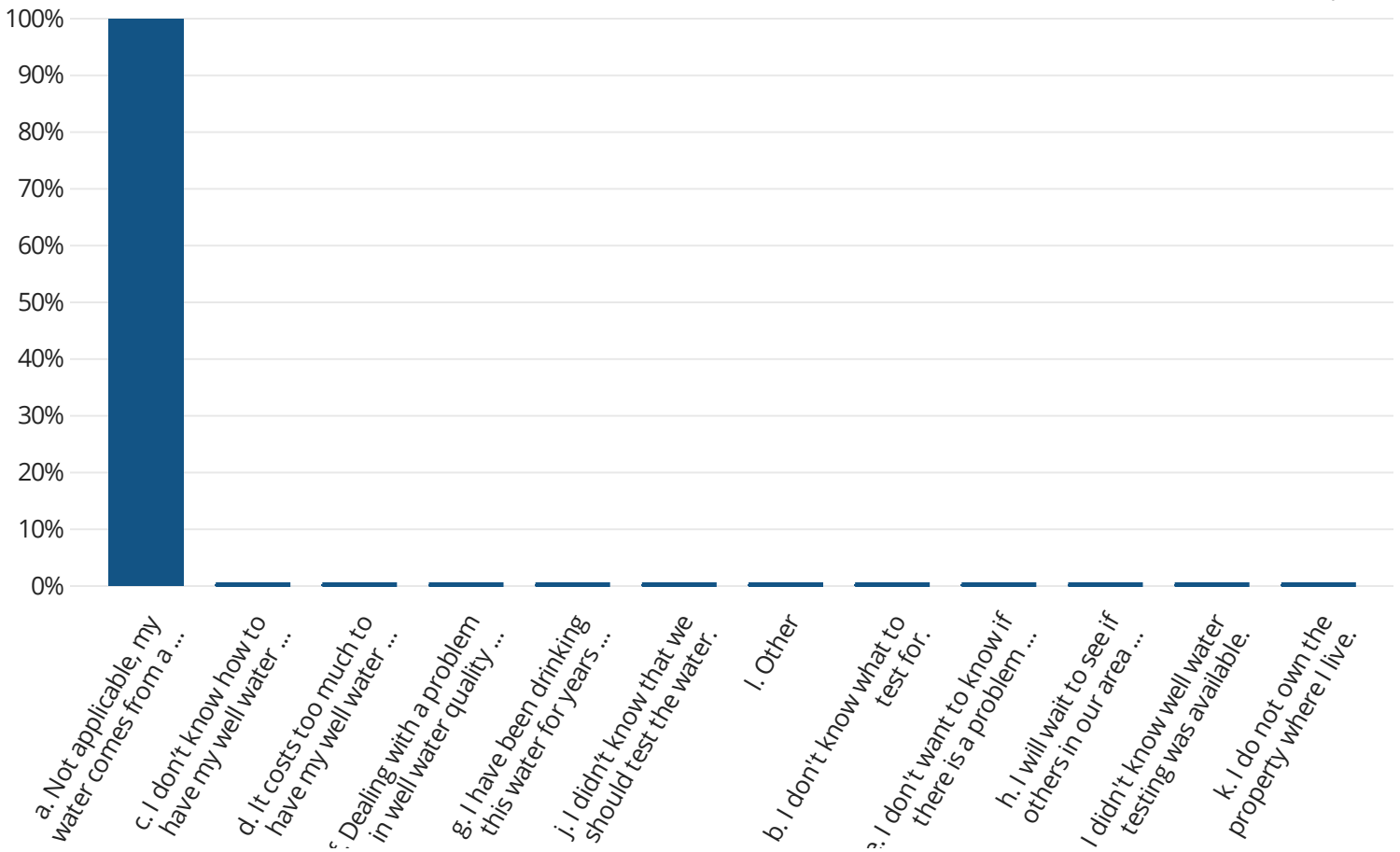


Count	Yes	No	Don't Know
a. Donated items or made a financial contribution to a charity?	317	55	9
b. Helped individuals outside my household or/and volunteered in the community?	291	82	7

Percent	Yes	No	Don't Know
a. Donated items or made a financial contribution to a charity?	83.2%	14.4%	2.4%
b. Helped individuals outside my household or/and volunteered in the community?	76.6%	21.6%	1.8%

19. If you have NOT tested your well water in the last year, what are your main reasons?

226 Responses



Result	Choice Count	Result	Percentage of Choices
a. Not applicable, my water comes from a municipal water system.	226	a. Not applicable, my water comes from a municipal water system.	100%
b. I don't know what to test for.	0	b. I don't know what to test for.	0%
c. I don't know how to have my well water tested.	0	c. I don't know how to have my well water tested.	0%
d. It costs too much to have my well water tested.	0	d. It costs too much to have my well water tested.	0%
e. I don't want to know if there is a problem with my well water.	0	e. I don't want to know if there is a problem with my well water.	0%
f. Dealing with a problem in well water quality would be too expensive.	0	f. Dealing with a problem in well water quality would be too expensive.	0%
g. I have been drinking this water for years without any problems.	0	g. I have been drinking this water for years without any problems.	0%
h. I will wait to see if others in our area have problems with well water.	0	h. I will wait to see if others in our area have problems with well water.	0%
i. I didn't know well water testing was available.	0	i. I didn't know well water testing was available.	0%
j. I didn't know that we should test the water.	0	j. I didn't know that we should test the water.	0%
k. I do not own the property where I live.	0	k. I do not own the property where I live.	0%
l. Other	0	l. Other	0%

19. If you have NOT tested your well water in the last year, what are your main reasons?, Continued

Other

Already treating water for nitrate. We have our own weep

Bother of doing it

Closed Well

Convenient place to have it

Did not take the time

Do not believe there's a problem.

Has well tested

Haven't seen the need

I am a rentor

I rent

I rent but the water isnt good

Linve in RCAC

Not Applicable

Not concerned, newly maintained and repaired well

Not well water

Our Municipality Water

Purchase water for drinking

Recently just sold my house, moving out of town

Tested 2 years ago, then a reverse osmosis drinking system was installed

Tested by US Water - Safe

Tested the well = Passed

The environment should have been in Q2 - a top concern for me

Used to test twice/yr

Water tested semi annually

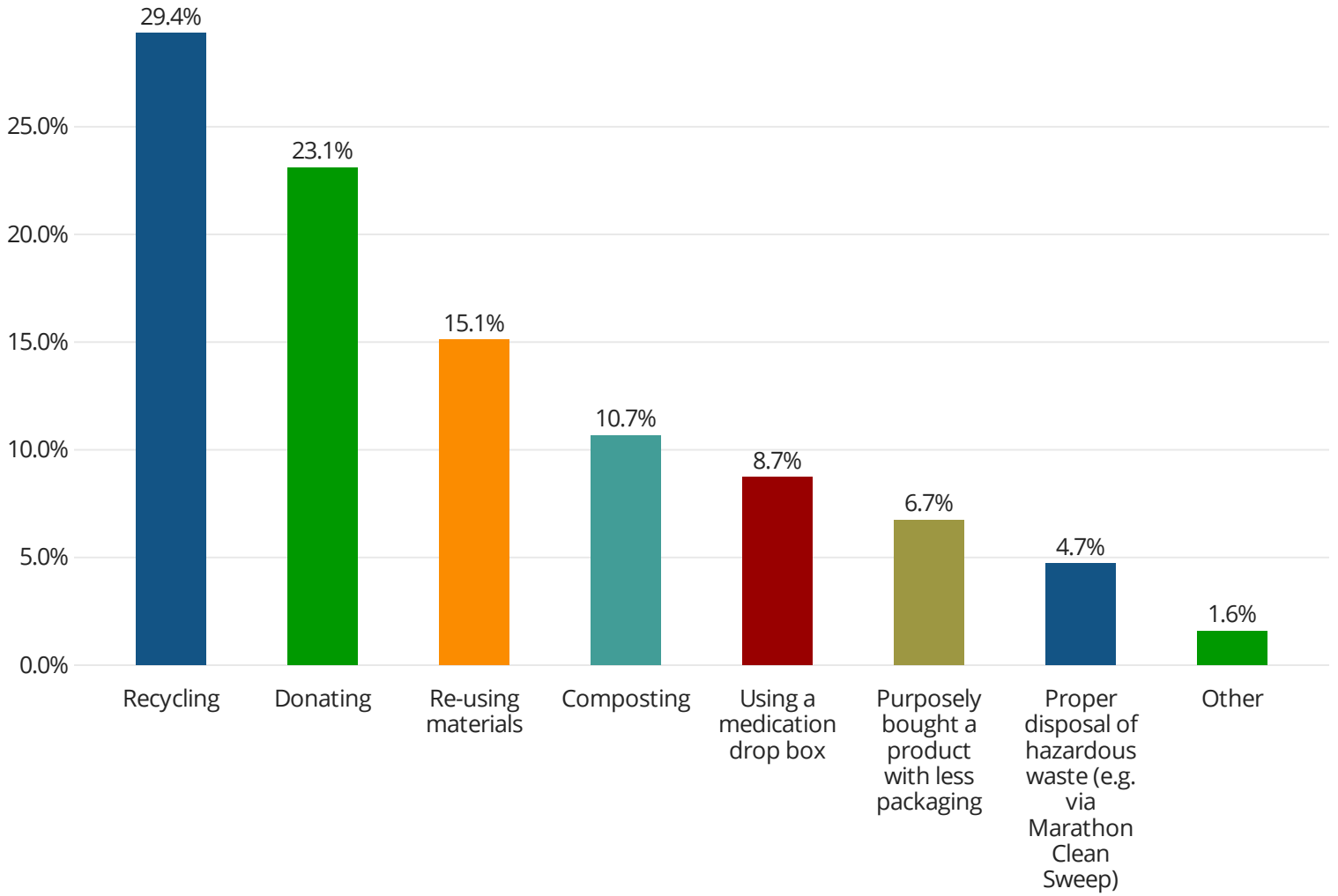
city water

just haven't done it

n/a

20. In addition to trash hauling, over the last year have you disposed of things by any of the following?

363 Responses



Result	Choice Count	Result	Percentage of Choices
Composting	122	Composting	11%
Donating	264	Donating	23%
Recycling	336	Recycling	29%
Re-using materials	173	Re-using materials	15%
Using a medication drop box	100	Using a medication drop box	9%
Proper disposal of hazardous waste (e.g. via Marathon Clean Sweep)	54	Proper disposal of hazardous waste (e.g. via Marathon Clean Sweep)	5%
Purposely bought a product with less packaging	77	Purposely bought a product with less packaging	7%
Other	18	Other	2%

20. In addition to trash hauling, over the last year have you disposed of things by any of the following?, Continued

Other - Text

E-Recycling

Electronic drop off(Good news project)

Eyeglass recycling

Incineration

Need a place to drop off tree branches

Reusable bags

Reuse many items so we aren't tossing so much stuff!

Rummage sale

Village Yard Waste Site

Yard waste site

Yard waste site

Yearly clean up at town hall.

haul my own garbage to township dump

n/a

none

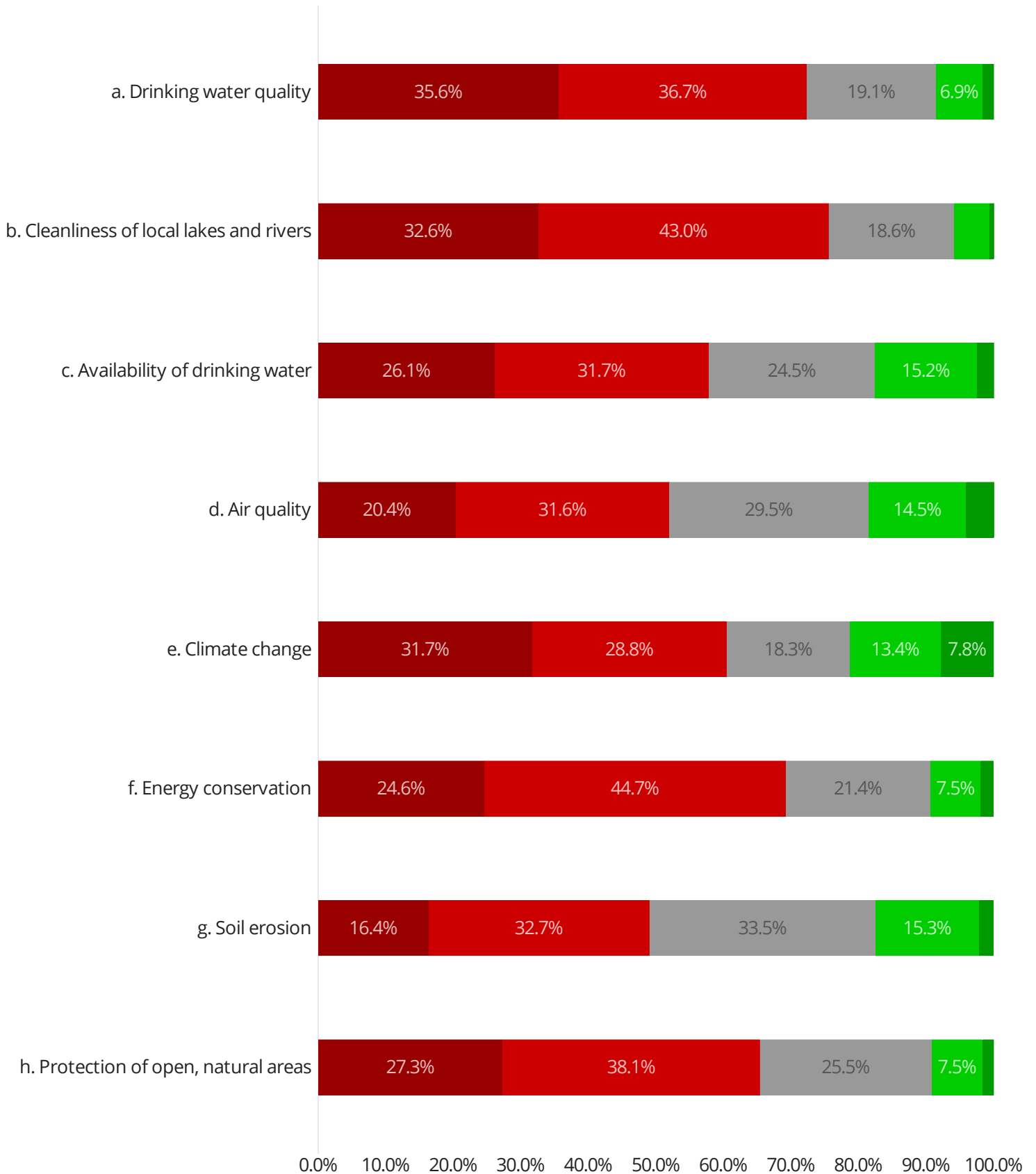
trash

yard waste sale

21. Please indicate how concerned you are about the following in Marathon County.

379 Responses

● Very Concerned ● Concerned ● Neither Concerned nor Unconcerned ● Unconcerned ● Very Unconcerned



21. Please indicate how concerned you are about the following in Marathon County, Continued

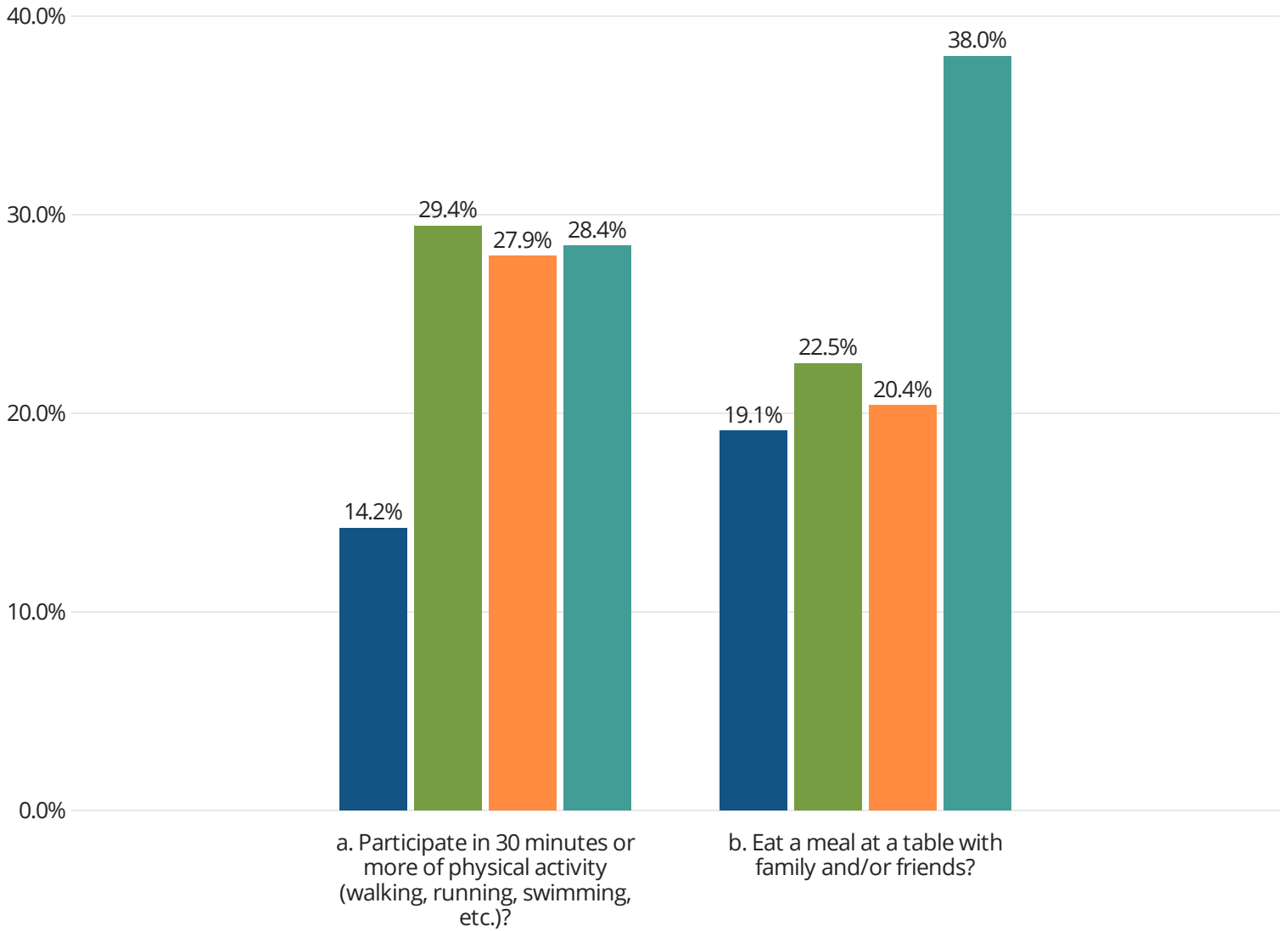
Result	Very Concerned	Concerned	Neither Concerned nor Unconcerned	Unconcerned	Very Unconcerned
a. Drinking water quality	134	138	72	26	6
b. Cleanliness of local lakes and rivers	123	162	70	20	2
c. Availability of drinking water	98	119	92	57	9
d. Air quality	76	118	110	54	15
e. Climate change	118	107	68	50	29
f. Energy conservation	92	167	80	28	7
g. Soil erosion	61	122	125	57	8
h. Protection of open, natural areas	102	142	95	28	6

Result	Very Concerned	Concerned	Neither Concerned nor Unconcerned	Unconcerned	Very Unconcerned
a. Drinking water quality	35.6%	36.7%	19.1%	6.9%	1.6%
b. Cleanliness of local lakes and rivers	32.6%	43.0%	18.6%	5.3%	0.5%
c. Availability of drinking water	26.1%	31.7%	24.5%	15.2%	2.4%
d. Air quality	20.4%	31.6%	29.5%	14.5%	4.0%
e. Climate change	31.7%	28.8%	18.3%	13.4%	7.8%
f. Energy conservation	24.6%	44.7%	21.4%	7.5%	1.9%
g. Soil erosion	16.4%	32.7%	33.5%	15.3%	2.1%
h. Protection of open, natural areas	27.3%	38.1%	25.5%	7.5%	1.6%

22. In a typical week, how many times do you:

394 Responses

● None ● 1-2 days ● 3-4 days ● 5-7 days



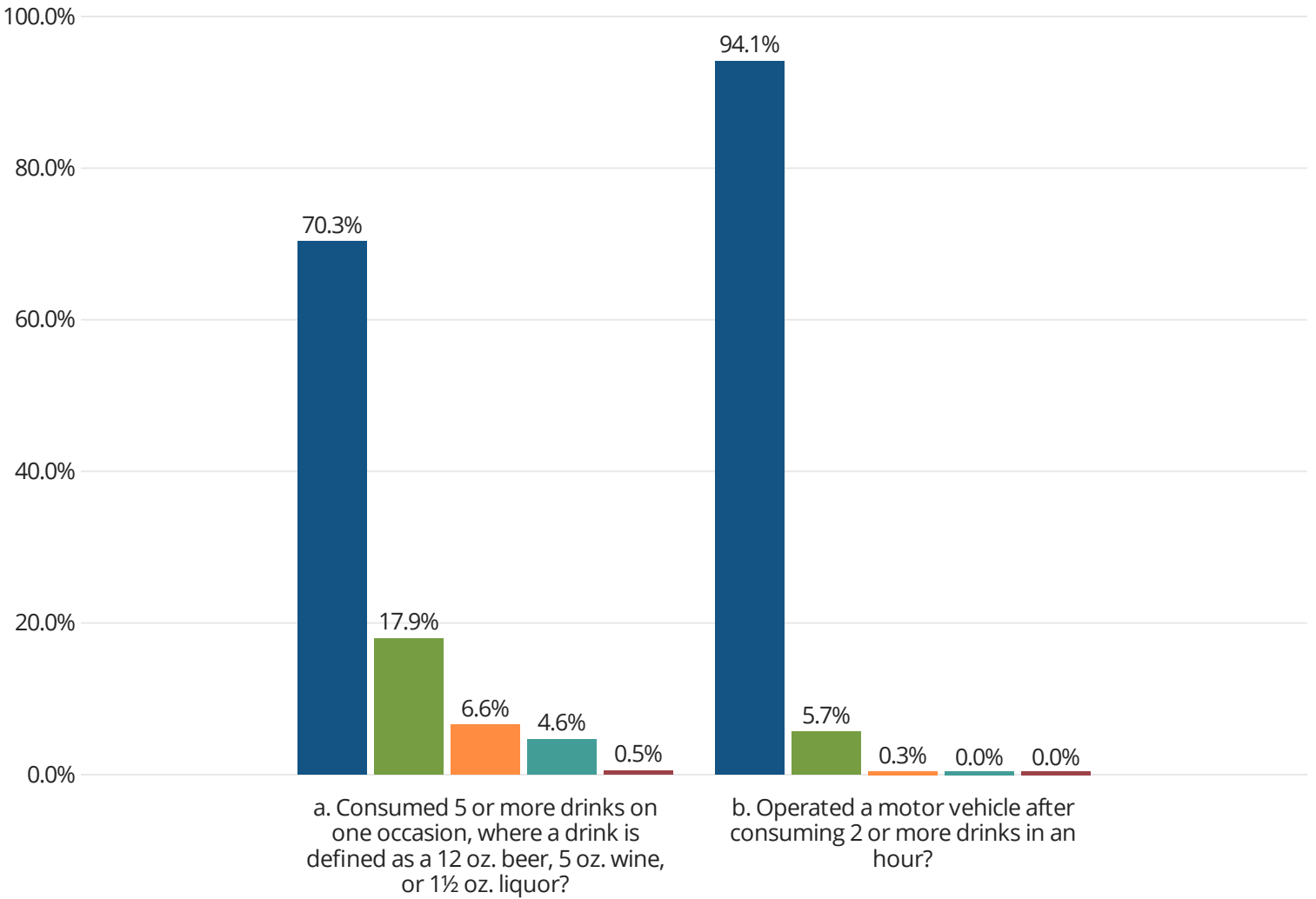
Result	None	1-2 days	3-4 days	5-7 days
a. Participate in 30 minutes or more of physical activity (walking, running, swimming, etc.)?	56	116	110	112
b. Eat a meal at a table with family and/or friends?	74	87	79	147

Result	None	1-2 days	3-4 days	5-7 days
a. Participate in 30 minutes or more of physical activity (walking, running, swimming, etc.)?	14.2%	29.4%	27.9%	28.4%
b. Eat a meal at a table with family and/or friends?	19.1%	22.5%	20.4%	38.0%

23. In the past 30 days, how many times have you:

392 Responses

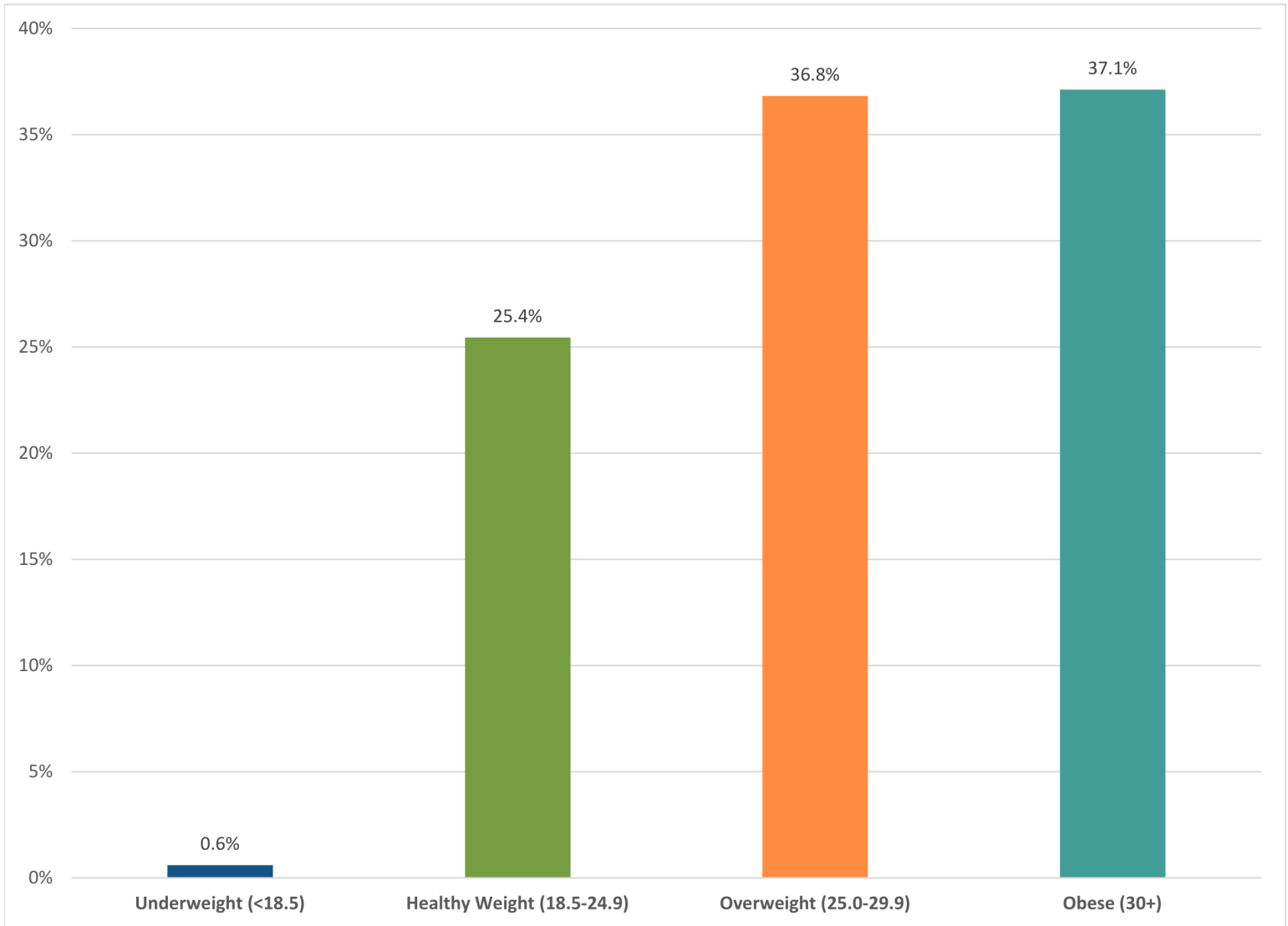
● None ● 1-2 times ● 3-5 times ● 6-9 times ● 10+ times



Result	None	1-2 times	3-5 times	6-9 times	10+ times
a. Consumed 5 or more drinks on one occasion, where a drink is defined as a 12 oz. beer, 5 oz. wine, or 1½ oz. liquor?	275	70	26	18	2
b. Operated a motor vehicle after consuming 2 or more drinks in an hour?	364	22	1	0	0

Result	None	1-2 times	3-5 times	6-9 times	10+ times
a. Consumed 5 or more drinks on one occasion, where a drink is defined as a 12 oz. beer, 5 oz. wine, or 1½ oz. liquor?	70.3%	17.9%	6.6%	4.6%	0.5%
b. Operated a motor vehicle after consuming 2 or more drinks in an hour?	94.1%	5.7%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%

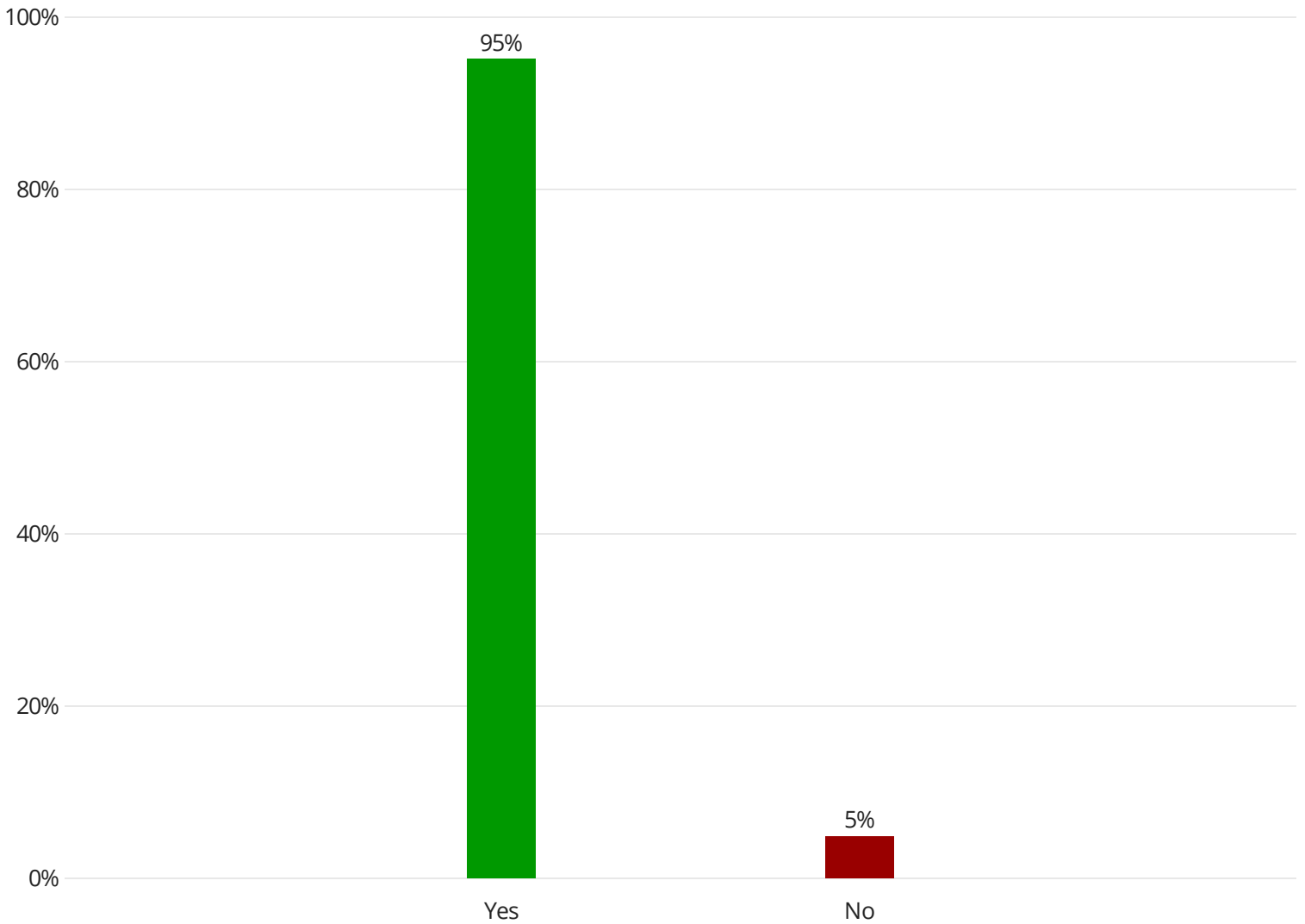
24/25. What is your BMI?



Choice	Count	Percent
Underweight (<18.5)	2	0.6%
Healthy Weight (18.5-24.9)	85	25.4%
Overweight (25.0-29.9)	123	36.8%
Obese (30+)	124	37.1%

27. Do you have at least one person you can talk to if you have a personal problem?

368 Responses



Result	Choice Count	Result	Percentage
Yes	350	Yes	95.1%
No	18	No	4.9%