

Health Equity in Erie County

2023 Health and Wellness Survey Report



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2023 Health and Wellness Survey Report

Presenters:

Kelly Marie Wofford - OHE Director

Michael Wiese - Epidemiologist

Lara Nkurunungi - Epidemiologist



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Land Acknowledgement

The Erie County Office of Health Equity would like to begin this report by acknowledging that we, as Erie County residents, are on the land of Indigenous peoples. Traditionally, these lands were home to many nations, including the Neutral, Erie, Wenro, Huron, and other peoples. Today, these lands are still regarded as the traditional homelands of the Seneca and other Haudenosaunee peoples. We respect the treaty rights of the Six Nations—the Seneca, Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Tuscarora—and the obligation of the United States and New York governments and American society to adhere to them.



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We would like to honor the legacy of the many ancestors and elders who made this land their home and infused it with their spirit for thousands of years. We also honor the Original Peoples who remain on the ancestral homelands of Turtle Island and who have survived centuries of colonialism, genocide, and land theft. We honor those whose lives have been impacted by historical and intergenerational trauma across lifespans and generations, including land dispossession, forced relocation, and forced assimilation through boarding schools like the Thomas Indian School, which was located on the Cattaraugus Territory in Erie County. Finally, we honor those who are not here, but who might have been, were it not for this history of violence.

With hearts and minds focused on healing and truth, we remember the powerful example of democracy and federalism set by the Haudenosaunee, embodied in the Great Law of Peace. Through this inspiration, we commit ourselves to advocate for inclusion and acknowledge and address past atrocities. May we all aspire to a world of reconciliation, guided by the example of the Haudenosaunee themselves, so that our weapons of war are buried forever and mutual respect and equality prevail among all peoples and nations.



Enslavement & Labor Acknowledgement

The Erie County Office of Health Equity (ECOHE) respectfully acknowledges our debt as a society to the people past and present whose labor was and continues to be stolen through unjust practices, including the exploited labor of incarcerated people. We acknowledge our debt to the enslaved people, primarily of African descent, whose labor and suffering built and grew the economy and infrastructure of a state that did not abolish the practice of enslavement until July 4, 1827. While not a Southern state, New York had the largest population of enslaved people of any Northern state and was second to last in abolishing the practice.



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Erie County, established in 1821, became an integral part of the journey to freedom for enslaved Black people via the Underground Railroad. The homes, businesses, and land of abolitionists were used to assist the enslaved making their way to Canada to live as free people. Landmarks such as Freedom Park are historical hallmarks of the Underground Railroad. The very land on which the Edward A. Rath Building is built was the former home of abolitionist and attorney George W. Jonson.

Ramifications from the practice of enslavement in our country are still present today, visible in the systemic racism perpetuated in our institutions, in the segregation of our residents, the exploited labor of incarcerated people, and in many of the inequities in the social determinants of health and health disparities experienced by their descendants. The spirit of freedom embodied by our ancestors, enslaved and free, persists as well, visible in our social justice movements, increased awareness of historical and ongoing inequities, and advocacy for change. The ECOHE will embrace and embody this same spirit of freedom to help eradicate the systemic racism, poverty, and oppression plaguing so many of our Erie County communities.



Community Recognition & Acknowledgement

The Erie County Office of Health Equity (ECOHE) would like to take this time and space to recognize and acknowledge the often overlooked and forgotten work of community in the fight for equity and justice. Everyday community members, community activists, and organizations have been engaging in equity and justice work long before the term became commonplace. Most of the staff of the ECOHE have their roots in community work and bring that framework to this government setting.



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Governments, corporations, organizations, and people in positions of power have a history of erasure, historical revision, and appropriation of the work of others as their own innovation, rather than naming and uplifting and adopting community-grown solutions. We must be purposeful in acknowledging and crediting frameworks and foundations, and intentional in acknowledging the roots upon which we build and grow.

Following in the footsteps of cultures documenting their journeys through storytelling and oral history passed through the generations, we seek to keep the work of those that came before us alive. We are the descendants of people that may never be named or credited for their contributions, yet the work we do is imbedded in our DNA, an intergenerational wealth of knowledge beyond measure.

To name a few community organizations and leaders in this space would be to miss the multitude. There are so many contributors to this work, most of whom have no title or office. The progress our Erie County community has made is rooted in the efforts and accomplishments of countless individuals and community organizations.



Presentation Overview

- OHE Overview and background
- Project Timeline and Methods
- Survey Demographics
- Social Determinants of Health
- Survey Results



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Office of Health Equity

- Established in 2021 by Erie County Law
- The Office of Health Equity's **vision** is for all disadvantaged, marginalized and diverse populations in Erie County, who presently experience higher rates of poor health outcomes, to achieve maximum health and wellness.
- EC Law outlines the key activities that guide the activities of the office and helped shape survey and subsequent report.



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Key Areas of Health Equity Law

- Analyze health disparities
- Understand & connect factors
- Make recommendations to improve delivery & access
- Pilot models & programs
- Promote public awareness
- Report, report, report!



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The 2023 OHE Annual Report

- Acknowledgements - Land, Enslavement and Labor, and Community Recognition
- History and Background of the Office of Health Equity
- Program Summaries
- Community Wellness Survey
- Appendices



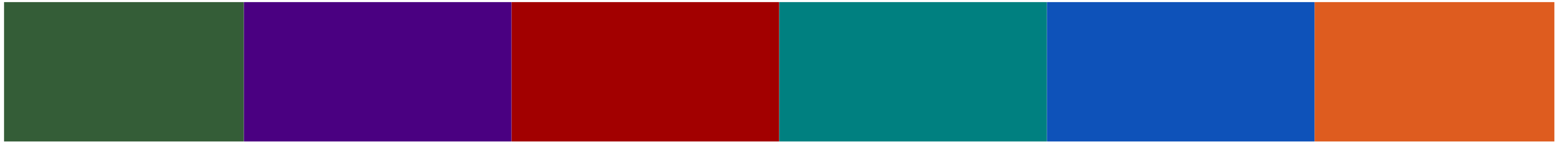
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Survey and Focus Group Timeline

February 2022

ECOHE convened a Community Survey Workgroup to advise on survey development.

June-December 2022

Staff from ECOHE attended community events and invited Erie County residents to complete the survey. Survey was also available online.

March-May 2023

Cleaned survey data in Tableau Prep and preliminary analysis to guide focus group selection.

July-September 2023

Conducted 14 focus groups.

March-May 2022

Survey writing and creation of online survey

April-July 2023

Planned focus groups. Determined groups and questions. Reached out to community leaders to help organize and recruit participants

October-December 2023

Analyzed survey data in Tableau Desktop and wrote report.



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Limitations and Lessons Learned

- Lack of pilot survey due to time constraints
- Usability of open-ended questions
- Small sample size in certain groups
- Non-representative sample



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Erie County Office of Health Equity

2022-2023 Health and Wellness Survey

- 41 questions
- Questions on demographics, health behaviors, and SDOH factors
- Mostly multiple choice, a few Likert scale and few open-ended questions

Lack of transportation has been a barrier to (select all that apply):

- Accessing medical care
- Buying food and other needed goods
- Finding and/or keeping a job
- Recreation
- Lack of transportation is not a challenge for me
- Other _____
- Do not wish to say

Do you have friends or family you can rely on for:

Practical help? (child care, transportation, household repairs etc..)

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Emotional support?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Having fun?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Demographics of Respondents

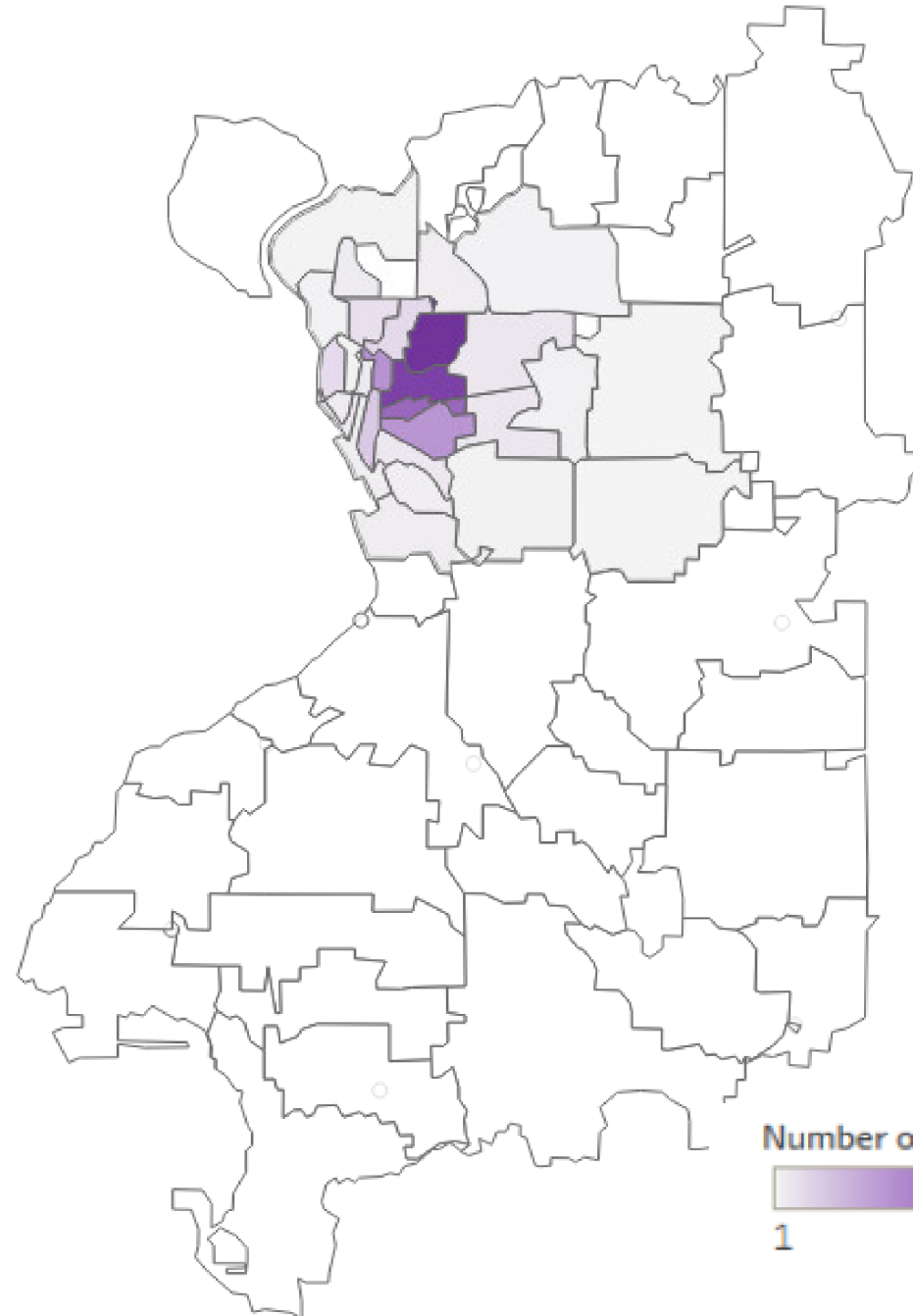
The Witness Project of WNY is a wellness program with the mission of educating, empowering, and navigating the community to preventative services.



www.nationalwitnessproject.org

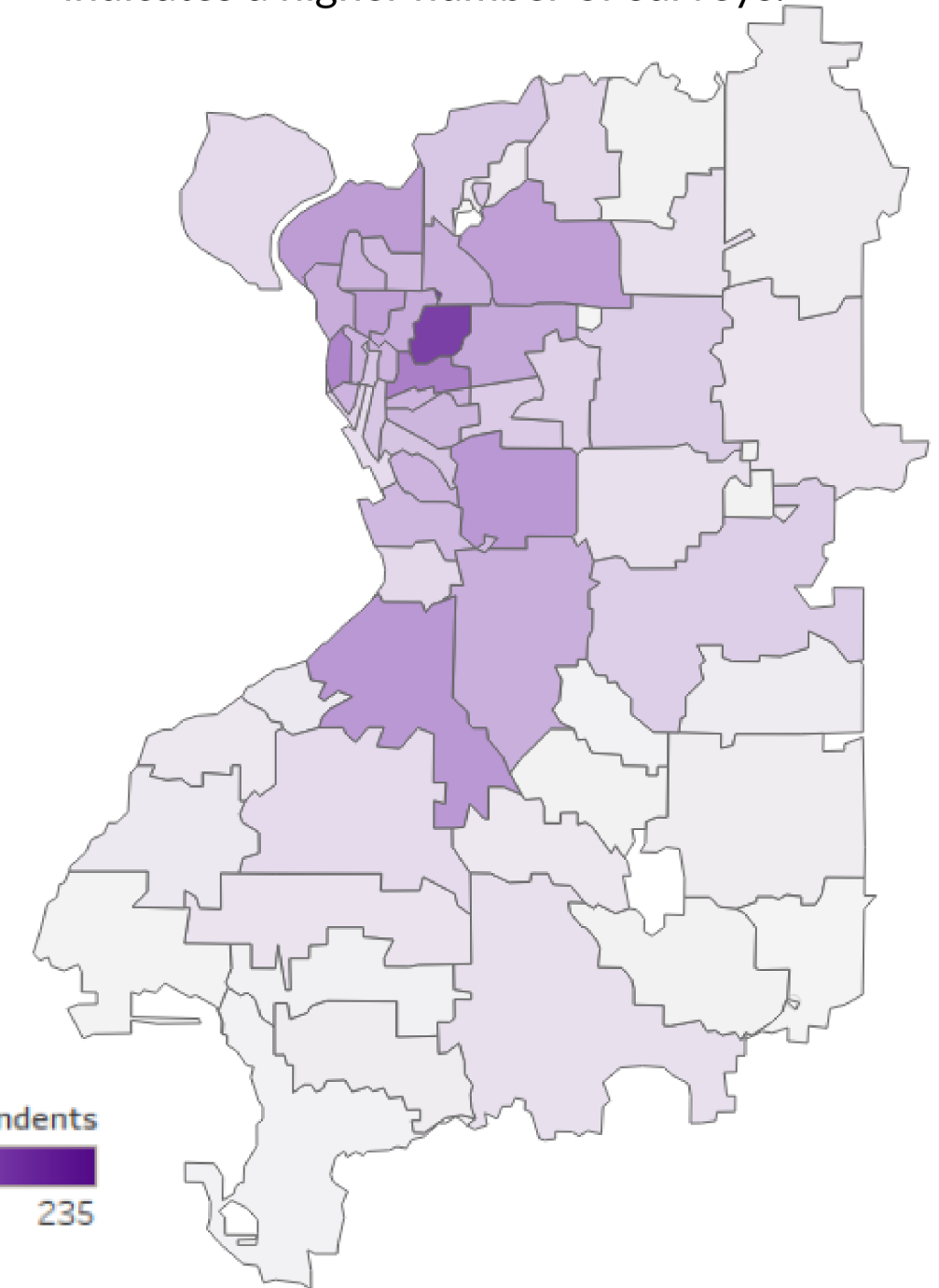
Witness Project Outreach

Location and numbers of surveys collected by the Witness Project. Darker purple indicates a higher number of surveys.



OHE Outreach

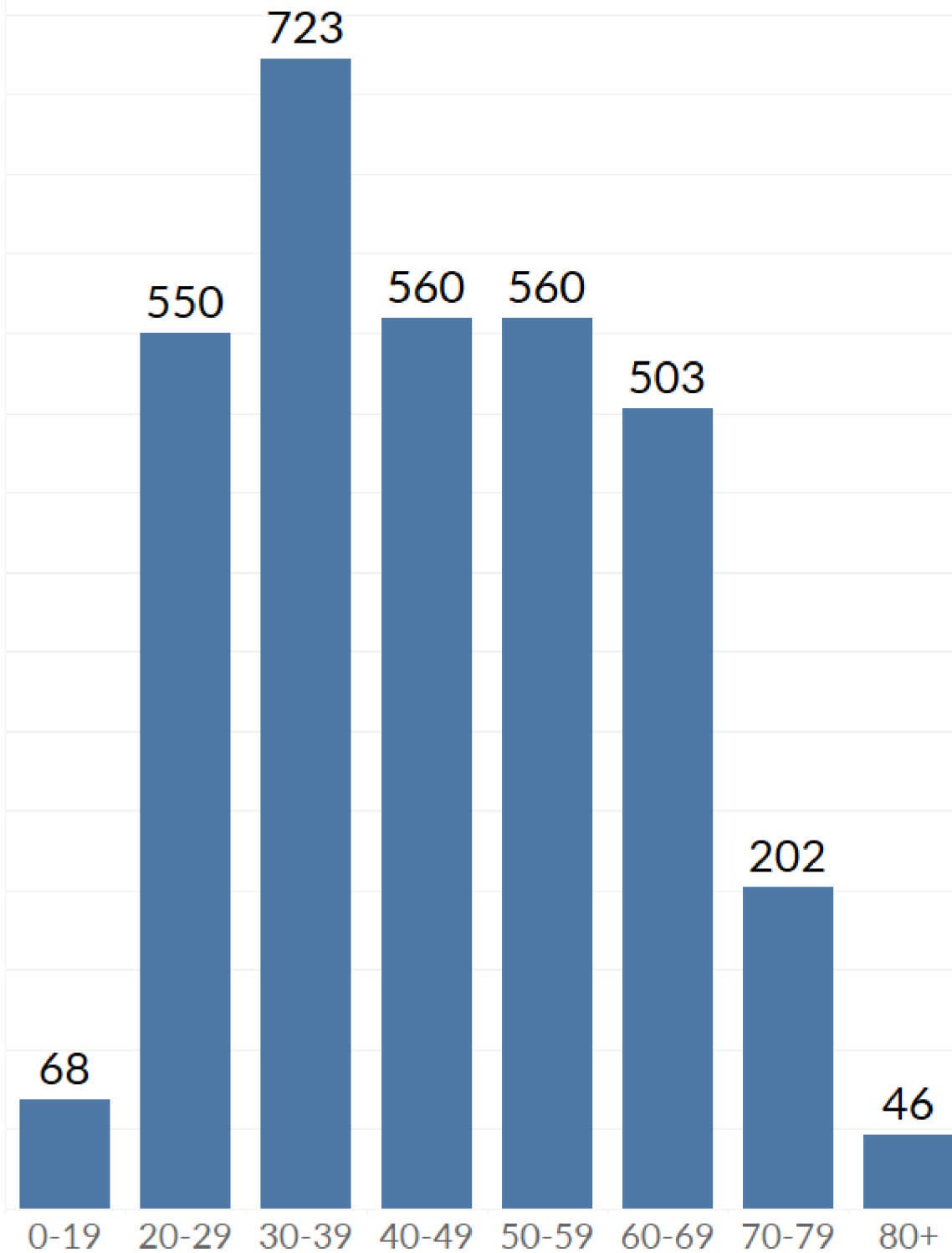
Location and numbers of surveys collected by the OHE Outreach. Darker purple indicates a higher number of surveys.



ECOHE collected 2,423 responses throughout the county. The Witness Project collected 1,028 responses in their targeted ZIP codes. Overall 3,451 responses were included in analysis.

Demographics of Respondents

Age



Race

American Indian or Alaska Native	29
Asian	107
Black	1,389
Middle Eastern or North African	34
Pacific Islander or Hawaii Native	6
White	1,445
More than 1 race	111
Other	31
Do not wish to say/Did not respond	297

Ethnicity

Hispanic/Latino	269
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	2,399
Do not wish to say	781

Gender

Man	1,004
Man of trans experience	14
Nonbinary/Gender Nonconforming/Gender Expansive	32
Woman	2,288
Woman of trans experience	8
Not sure/questioning	7
Do not wish to say	96

Sexual Orientation

Asexual	188
Bisexual	170
Gay	105
Lesbian	55
Pansexual	39
Queer	28
Straight/Heterosexual	2,420
Other Sexual Orientations	7
Not sure/Questioning	21
Do not wish to say/No response	416



Demographics of Respondents

Immigration

I was born in the U.S. (Excluding the U.S. territories, e.g., Puerto Rico, Guam, etc.)	2,892
I was born in one of the U.S. territories (e.g., Puerto Rico, Guam etc.)	105
I was born outside the U.S.	218
Do not wish to say/No response	234

Education

Post-Graduate degree	441
Bachelor's degree	686
Associate's degree	375
Some college	678
High School or GED equivalency	804
Did not finish High School	292
Do not wish to say	173

Employment

Not Currently Employed	1,136
Currently Employed	1,888
Do not wish to say	425

History of Incarceration

No History of Incarceration	2,868
History of Incarceration	306
Do not wish to say/No response	275

Disability Status

No Disability	2,482
Has a Disability	618
Do not wish to say	349

History of Military Service

No Military Service	3,140
Military Service	173
Do not wish to say	136



Health Behaviors Question Topics

- Challenges to maintaining a healthy diet
- Challenges to getting enough exercise
- Struggling with the use of any kind of substance



Health Outcomes Questions

Do you experience any of the following health conditions? (select all that apply):

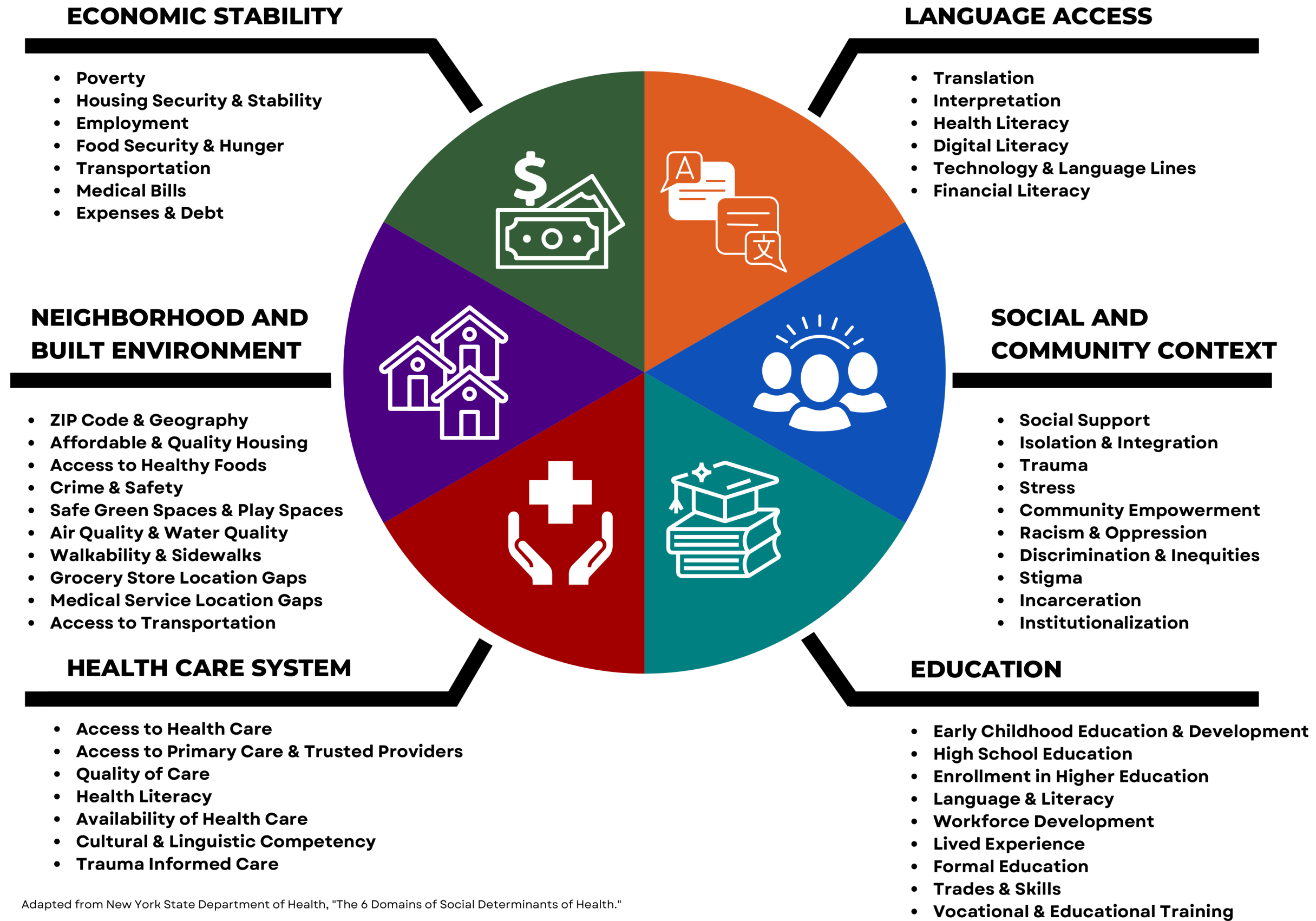
- Asthma
- Other lower respiratory disease (e.g., COPD/Emphysema)
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Kidney disease
- Cancer (any type)
- Disease of the heart
- Disease of the liver (e.g., Hepatitis, cirrhosis)
- Obesity
- Anxiety/Depression
- Long term COVID-19 symptoms
- None of these
- Do not wish to say

Have you lost a close friend or relative to COVID-19?

- Yes
- No
- Do not wish to say

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

FACTORS THAT CAN INFLUENCE YOUR HEALTH



Adapted from New York State Department of Health, "The 6 Domains of Social Determinants of Health."

ECONOMIC STABILITY

ECONOMIC STABILITY

- Poverty
- Housing Security & Stability
- Employment
- Food Security & Hunger
- Transportation
- Medical Bills
- Expenses & Debt



Related Topics Explored by Survey Questions:

Employment

Financial Situation

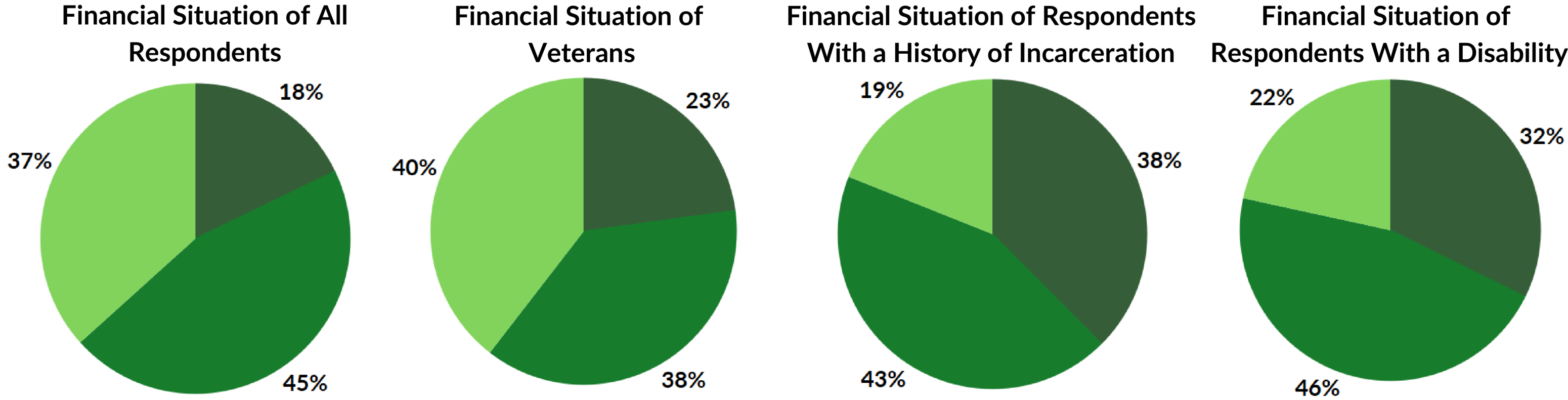
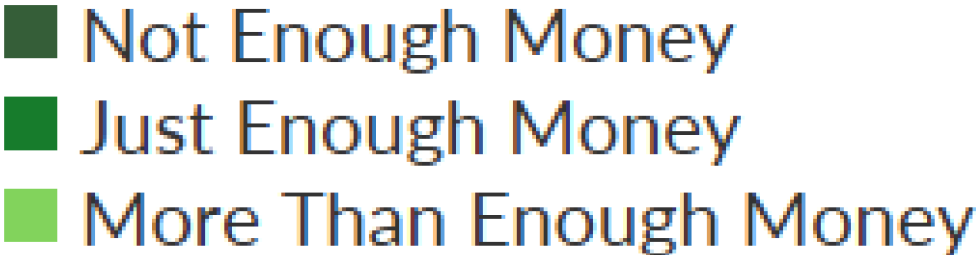
Hopes for Finances

“I mean, I think a lot of it's finance: what you—what you have that you can live on, and you don't have a lot maybe, and um so there's just things you can't do, places you can't go, things you can't get because of the poverty they're in.”

ECONOMIC STABILITY

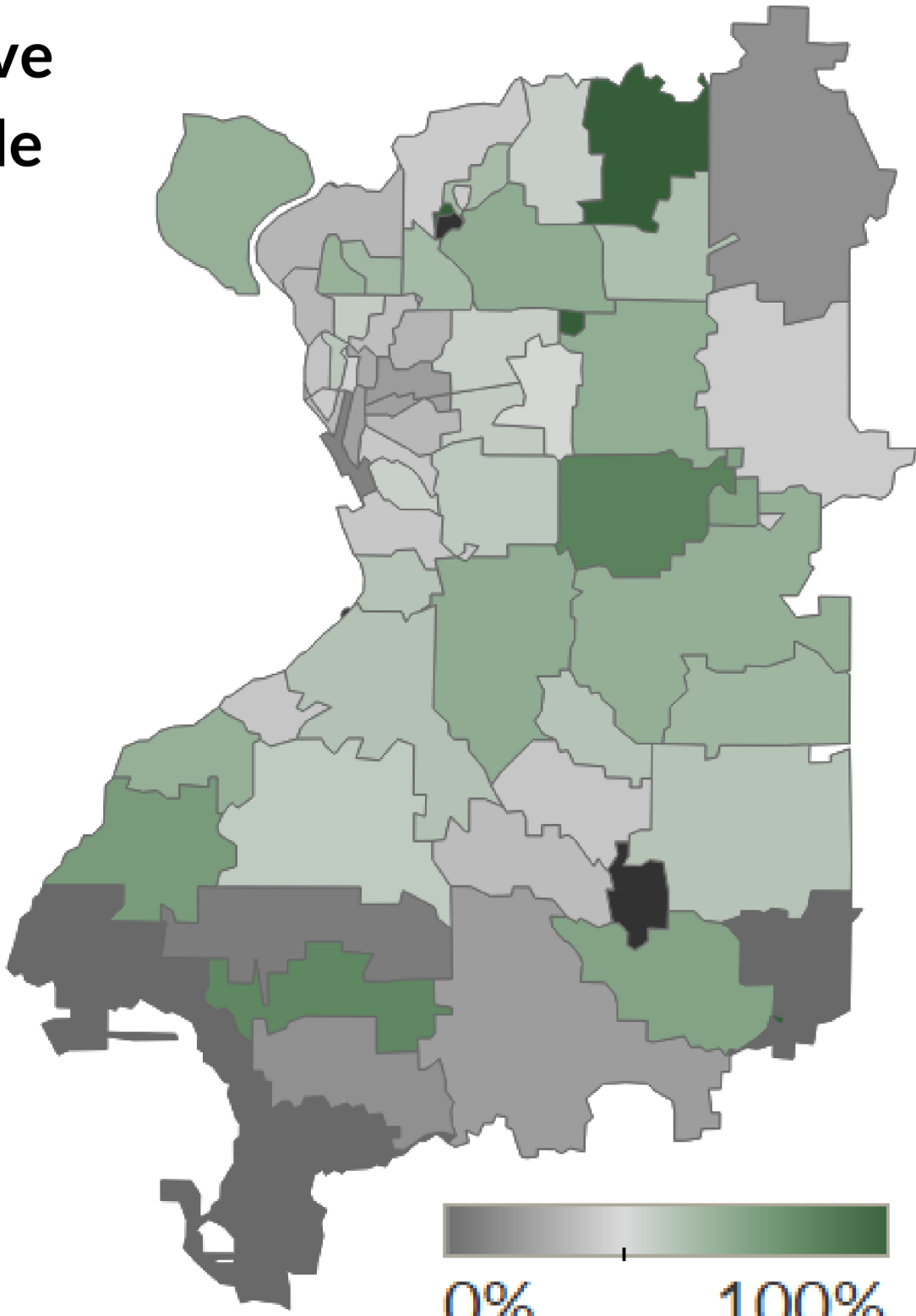
Which of the following best describes your financial situation?

- I have enough money that I am able to save some, invest some, or buy things that I want but don't need (More Than Enough Money)
- I have just enough money to pay for housing, day-to-day needs and bills (Just Enough Money)
- I am unable to pay for all of my household's day-to-day needs and bills (Not Enough Money)
- Do not wish to say

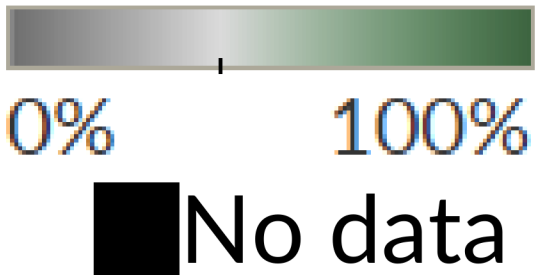


ECONOMIC STABILITY

Percentage of Respondents Who Have More Than Enough Money by ZIP Code



Some ZIP codes have fewer than 10 respondents. Therefore, the rates depicted on the map may not be representative of the community within these areas.



ECONOMIC STABILITY

Which of the following best describes your food situation? (select all that apply)

- My household is able to buy enough food with salary/wage money
- My household uses SNAP, WIC, etc., to buy food
- My household gets some of our food from food pantries
- My household is able to get enough food but not healthy food
- My household is not able to get enough food
- Do not wish to say

1 in 5

(or 22%) respondents who *Use SNAP/WIC to Buy Food* also said their household is *Not Able to Get Enough Food*.

ECONOMIC STABILITY

Which of the following best describes your food situation? (select all that apply)

- My household is able to buy enough food with salary/wage money
- My household uses SNAP, WIC, etc., to buy food
- My household gets some of our food from food pantries
- My household is able to get enough food but not healthy food
- My household is not able to get enough food
- Do not wish to say

Food Access and Financial Status

Food Access Challenges

No Food Access Challenges

More Than Enough Money	11%	86%
Just Enough Money	50%	44%
Not Enough Money	85%	12%

ECONOMIC STABILITY

Health Conditions Based on Financial Situation

21%

of respondents who stated they have *Not Enough Money* listed *Obesity* as a health condition, compared to only 15% with *More Than Enough Money*.

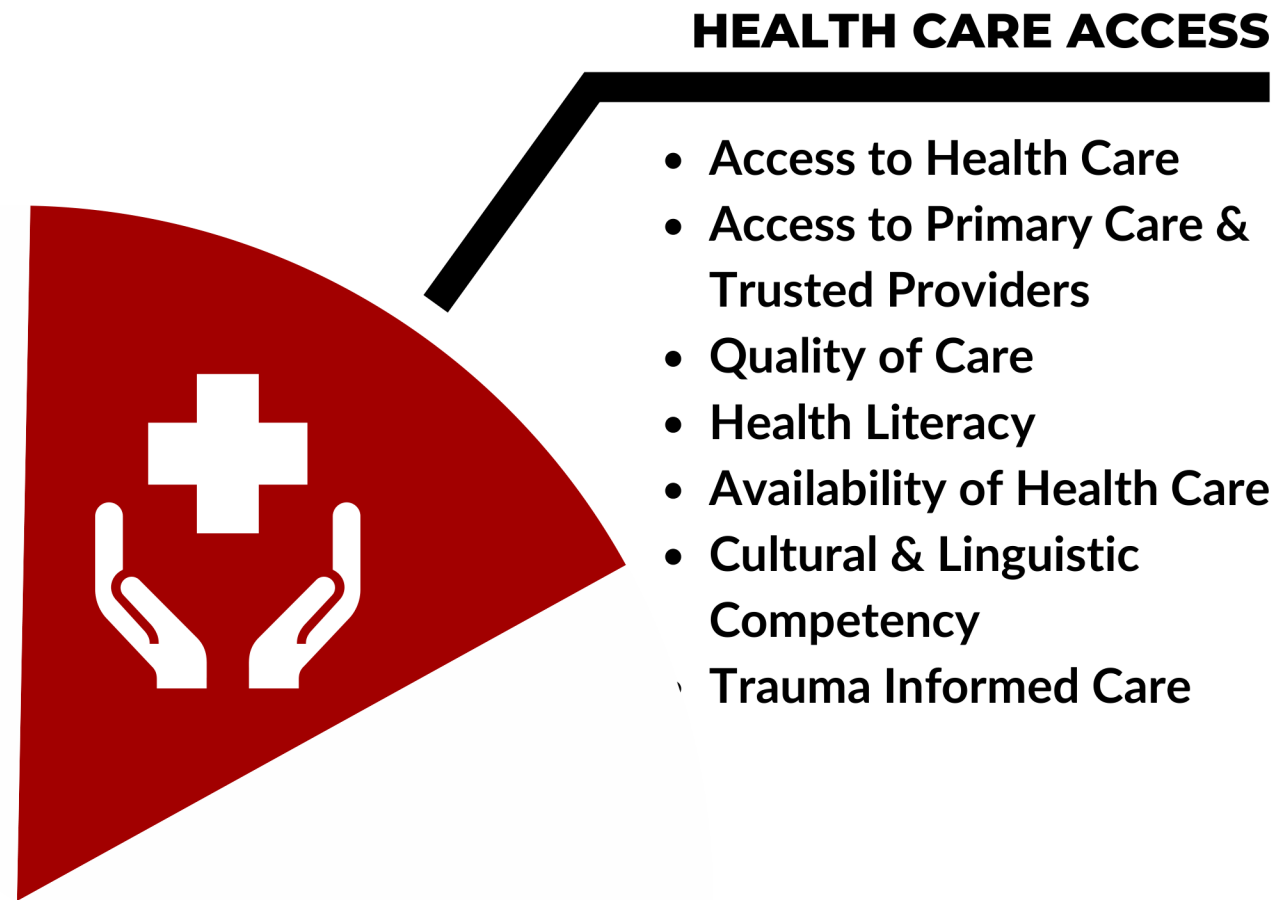
31%

of respondents who stated they have *Not Enough Money* listed *High Blood Pressure* as a health condition, compared to only 20% with *More Than Enough Money*.

40%

of respondents who stated they have *More Than Enough Money* selected *None of These* listed health conditions compared to only 28% with *Just Enough Money* and 24% with *Not Enough Money*.

HEALTH CARE ACCESS



Survey Questions

Challenges Accessing to Health Care

Treatment by Health Care Providers

Health Outcomes

Loss of Loved Ones to COVID-19

“The health care system [...] needs a lot of improvement because if you walk into [a hospital] and you go in there with a Medicaid card, as opposed to a [private insurance] card, [...] they're going to fast track you. Oh, you've got [private insurance]. Oh, we're going to put you in a room. We're going to deal with this. We're going to run all these extra tests. [...] You're not being treated equally because of your choice [...] of health care, [but] because of your lack of resources to obtain such health care.”

HEALTH CARE ACCESS

Survey respondents were asked to use the scale of NEVER to ALWAYS for the following questions:

When I receive medical care

- I feel the providers respect me.
- I feel the providers believe me.
- The providers speak to me in a way that I understand.
- I feel the providers are competent in treating people like me.

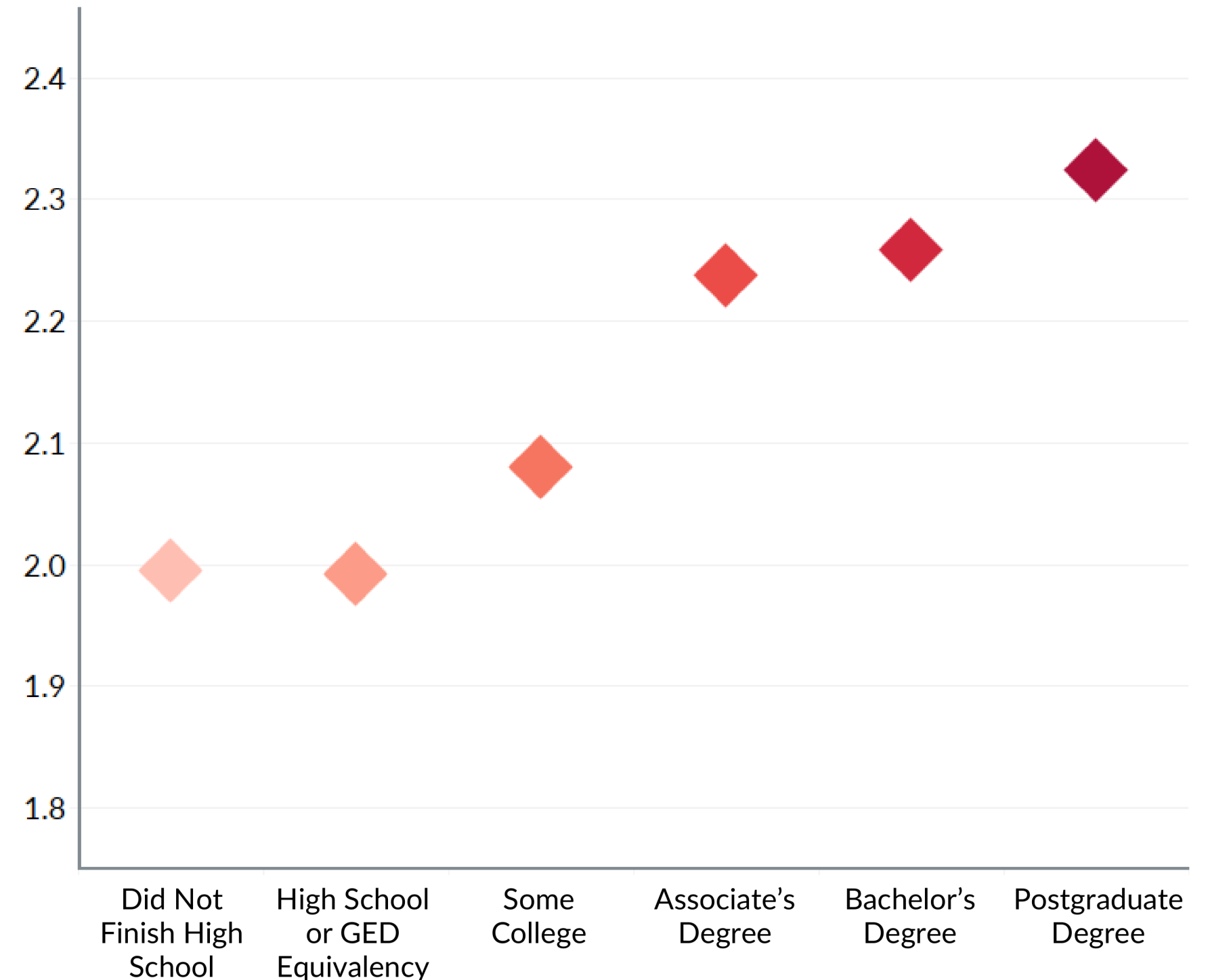
The responses to these questions were converted into a numerical scale (0-4). The values for the four questions were then combined and then averaged. The result is a measure of how well the respondents felt health care providers treated them.

0 = Never 1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Often 4 = Always

18%

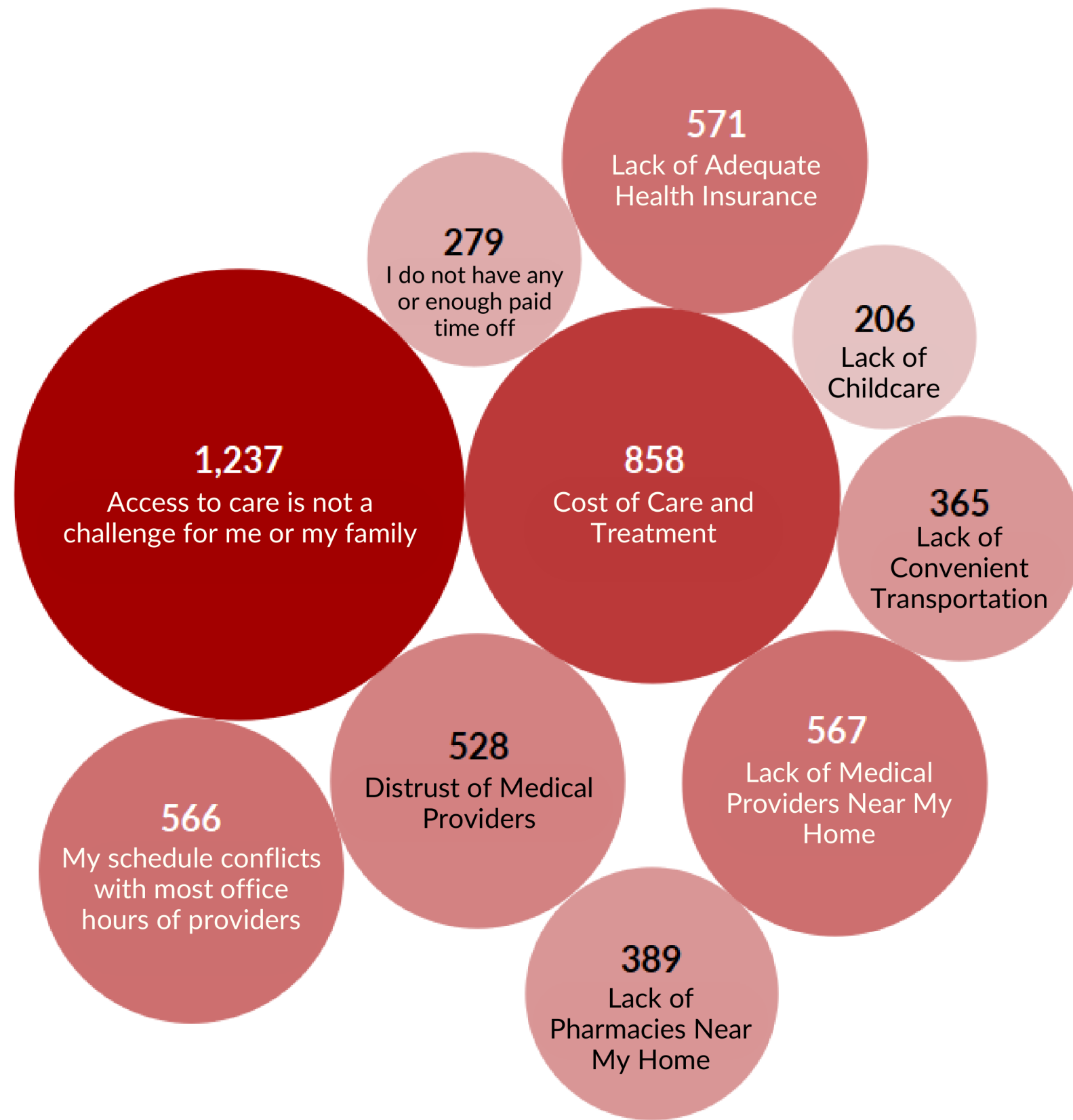
of respondents of Trans, Nonbinary, and All Other Genders felt they were always *believed* by providers, compared with **35%** and **37%** of respondents who indicated a gender of Man or Woman.

Treatment by Providers by Education Attainment (Combined averages of the 4 statements)



HEALTH CARE ACCESS

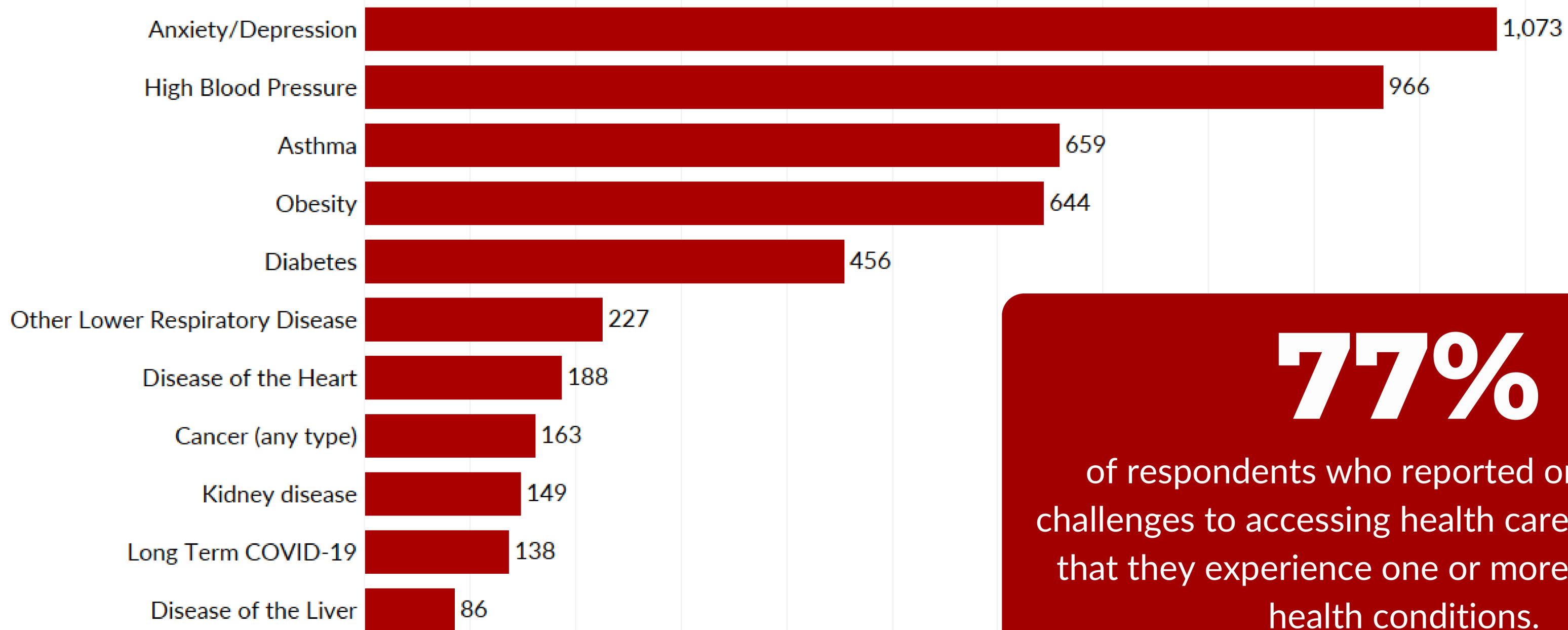
All Responses for “Which of the following are challenges to accessing health care for you and your family? (Select all that apply)”



Types of challenges to accessing care varied across demographic factors. For example, respondents between the ages of 20-40 were more likely to report *Conflicting Schedule, Lack of Childcare, and Lack of Paid Time Off* than the older respondents.

HEALTH CARE ACCESS

Health Conditions Overall



77%

of respondents who reported one or more challenges to accessing health care also reported that they experience one or more of the listed health conditions.

By comparison, only 61% of respondents who reported that accessing care is not a challenge, reported that they experience any of the list health conditions.

EDUCATION

EDUCATION

- Early Childhood Education & Development
- High School Education
- Enrollment in Higher Education
- Language & Literacy
- Workforce Development
- Lived Experience
- Formal Education
- Trades & Skills
- Vocational & Educational Training



Survey Questions

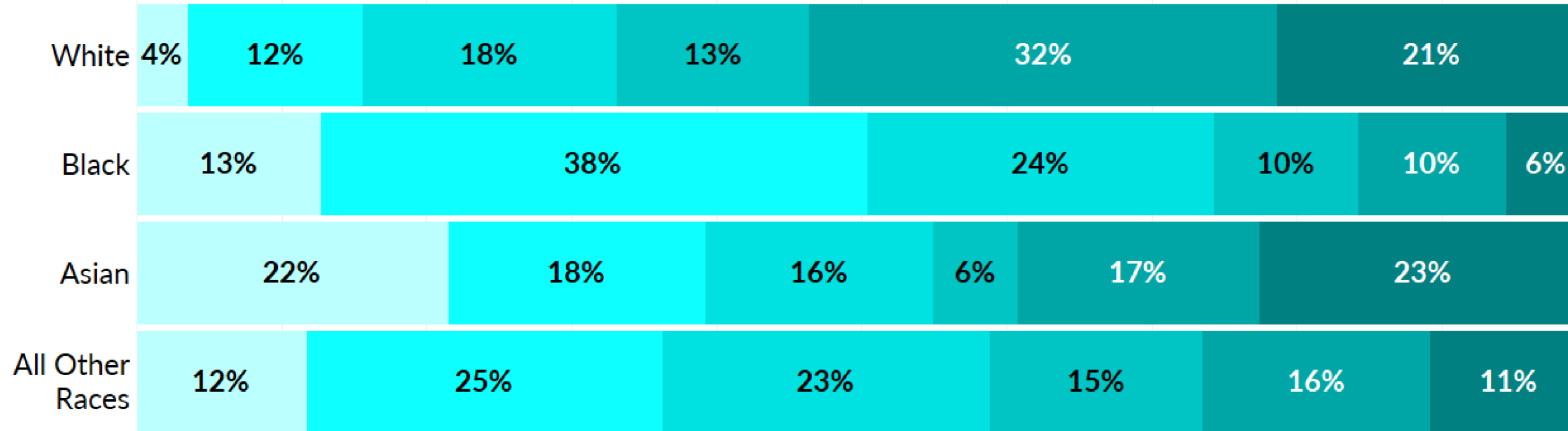
Formal Educational Attainment

“Everyone is college-focused and I think we need to understand that a lot of our kids are not going to college, and so they're being limited on opportunities.”

EDUCATION

Educational Level by Race

The percentage of respondents and their educational level. Because of smaller numbers of respondents, anyone who did not identify as Asian, Black or White is grouped into Other Races.



- Postgraduate Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Associate's Degree
- Some College
- High School or GED Equivalency
- Did Not Finish High School

62%

of respondents *With a Disability* had No College Degree compared to 45% *Without a Disability*.

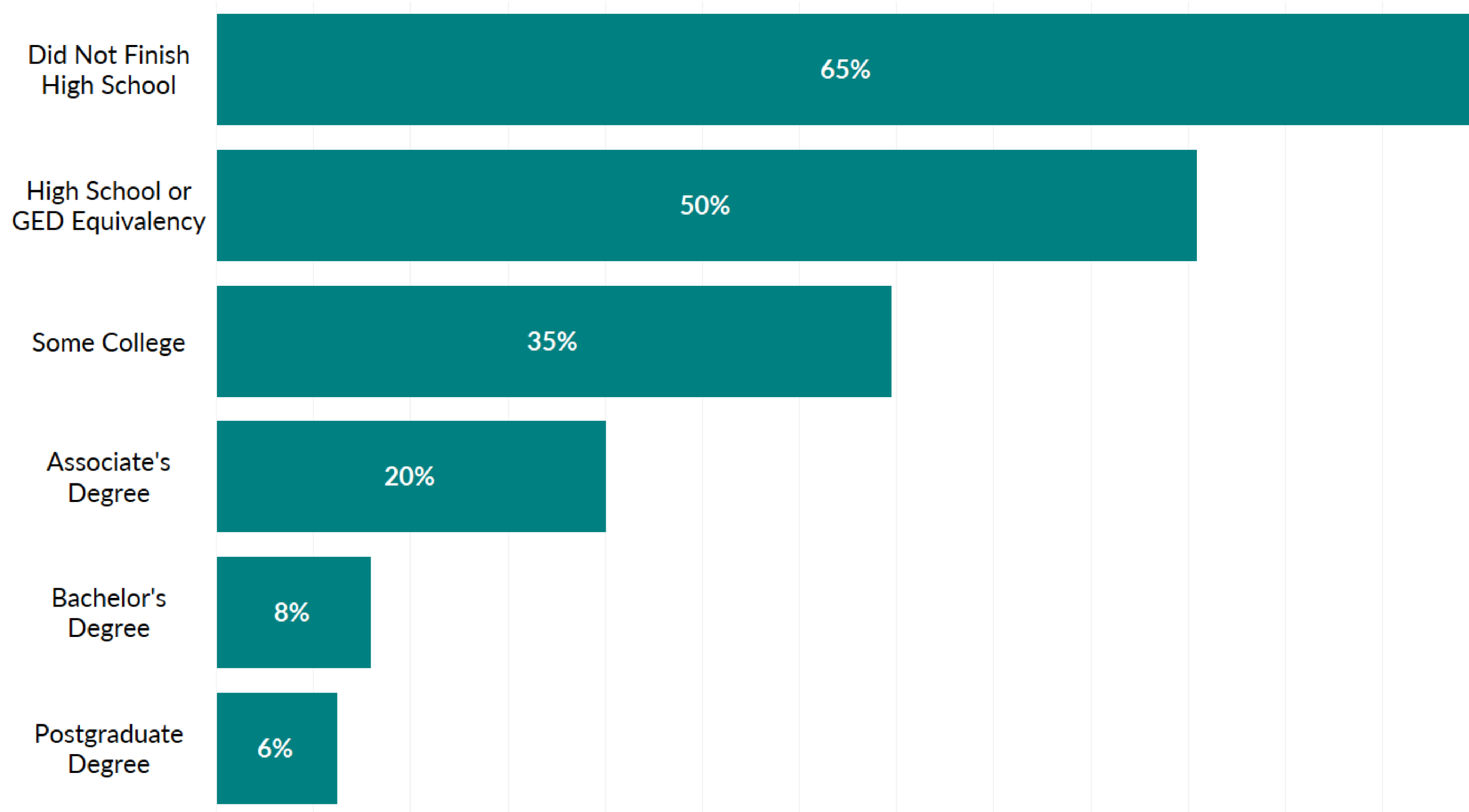
82%

of respondents with a *History of Incarceration* had No College Degree compared to 46% with *No History of Incarceration*.

EDUCATION

Percentage of Respondents Unemployed by Educational Level

The percentage of respondents at each educational level who said they were *Unemployed* is displayed below. This table also excludes anyone younger than 18 (as they are likely still in school) and respondents who indicated that they are *Retired*.



EDUCATION

Challenges to a Healthy Diet by Educational Level

Respondents could select multiple options. The percentage of responses for each challenge at each educational level is below. The higher the percentage of responses, the darker the cell is shaded.

Respondents that selected *My diet is mostly healthy* are excluded from this table.

	Did Not Finish High School	High School or GED Equivalency	Associate's Degree	Some College	Bachelor's Degree	Postgraduate Degree
Affordability	26%	29%	44%	37%	35%	33%
Time	15%	10%	21%	17%	31%	38%
Knowledge	22%	22%	9%	15%	9%	7%
Taste	14%	16%	12%	13%	13%	10%
Availability	6%	12%	9%	10%	7%	6%
Interest	9%	6%	2%	4%	3%	5%
Transportation	8%	6%	3%	5%	2%	1%

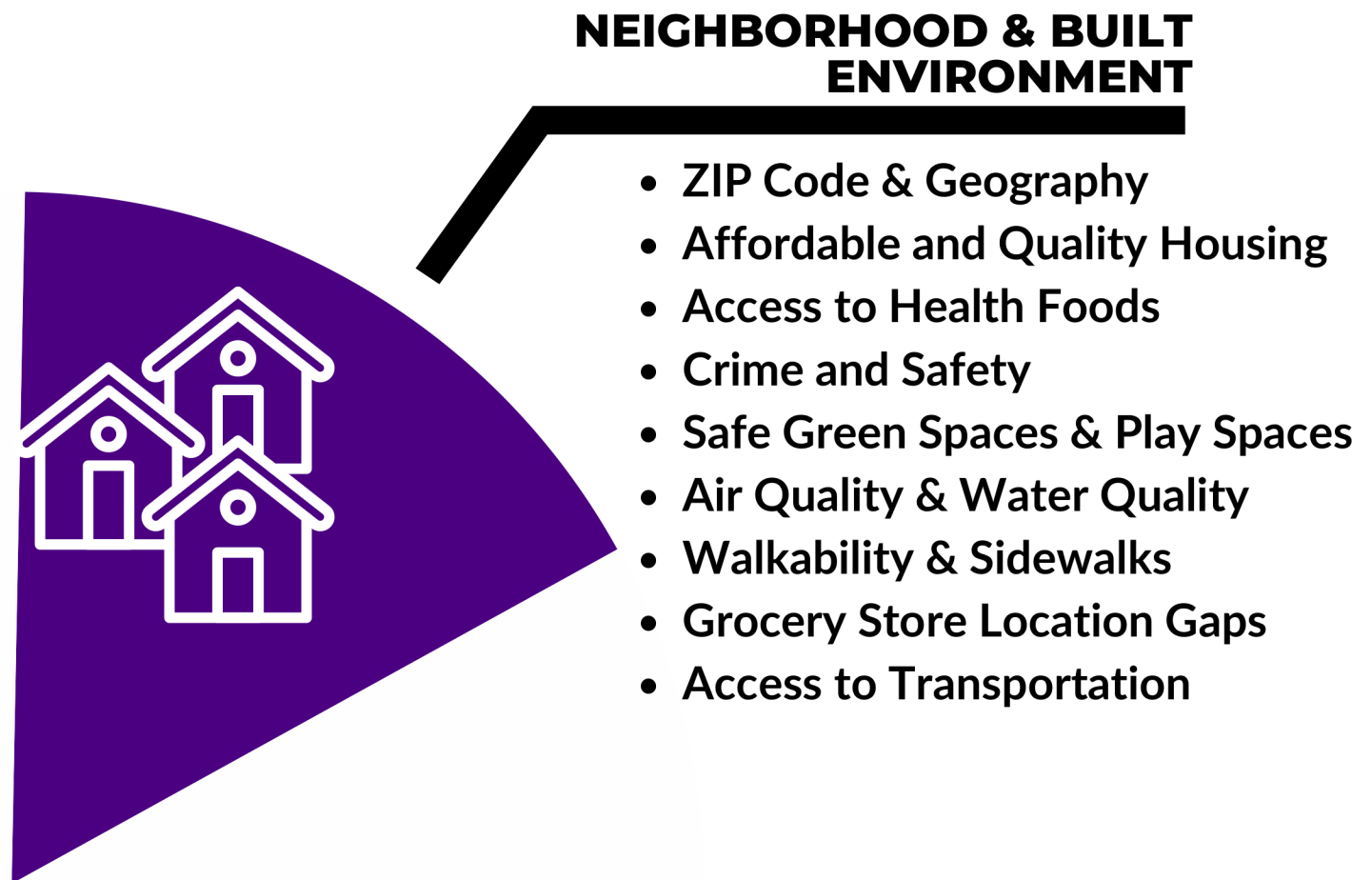
Challenges to Exercise by Educational Level

Time was the leading challenge to getting enough exercise for those with a *College Degree*. This was followed by *Pain or Illness*, then *Gym Access*. As levels of formal education decreased, respondents increasingly reported *Gym Access* as a challenge.

20%

of respondents who *Did Not Finish High School* listed *Gym Access* as a challenge to exercise compared with only 9% of respondents with a *Postgraduate Degree*.

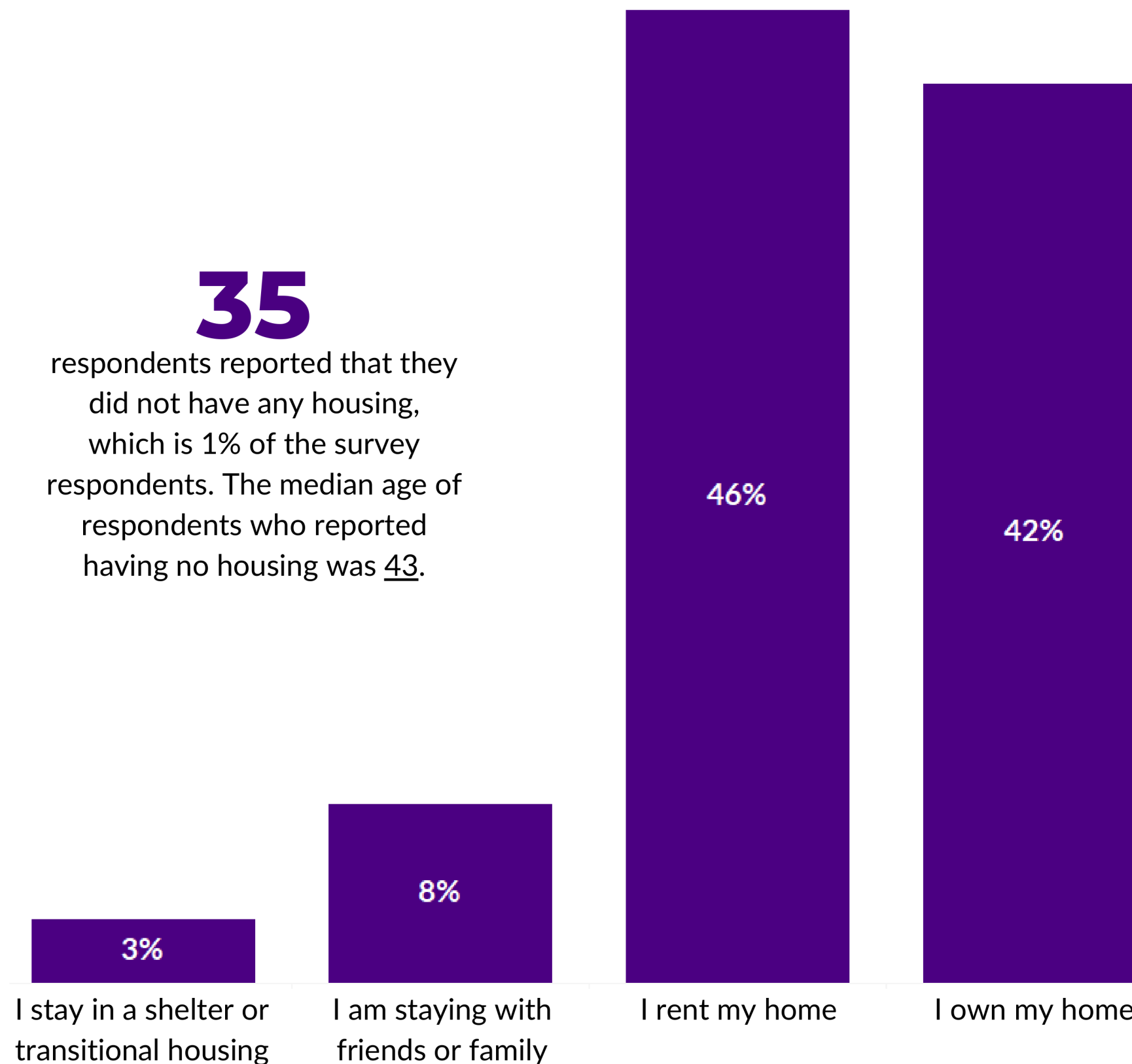
NEIGHBORHOOD & BUILT ENVIRONMENT



“Gentrification. Big deal. People are getting pushed out of their areas. [...] You know, and in the field that I work with, one of the biggest social determinants that our patients experience is housing. Our prices, our rents have gone from \$450 to \$600 to \$1200, \$1600 with the minimum wage. The pay that you're making at work has not changed. But yeah, we don't have enough subsidy to cover those housing need[s].”

NEIGHBORHOOD & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Which describes your housing situation?



35

respondents reported that they did not have any housing, which is 1% of the survey respondents. The median age of respondents who reported having no housing was 43.

57%

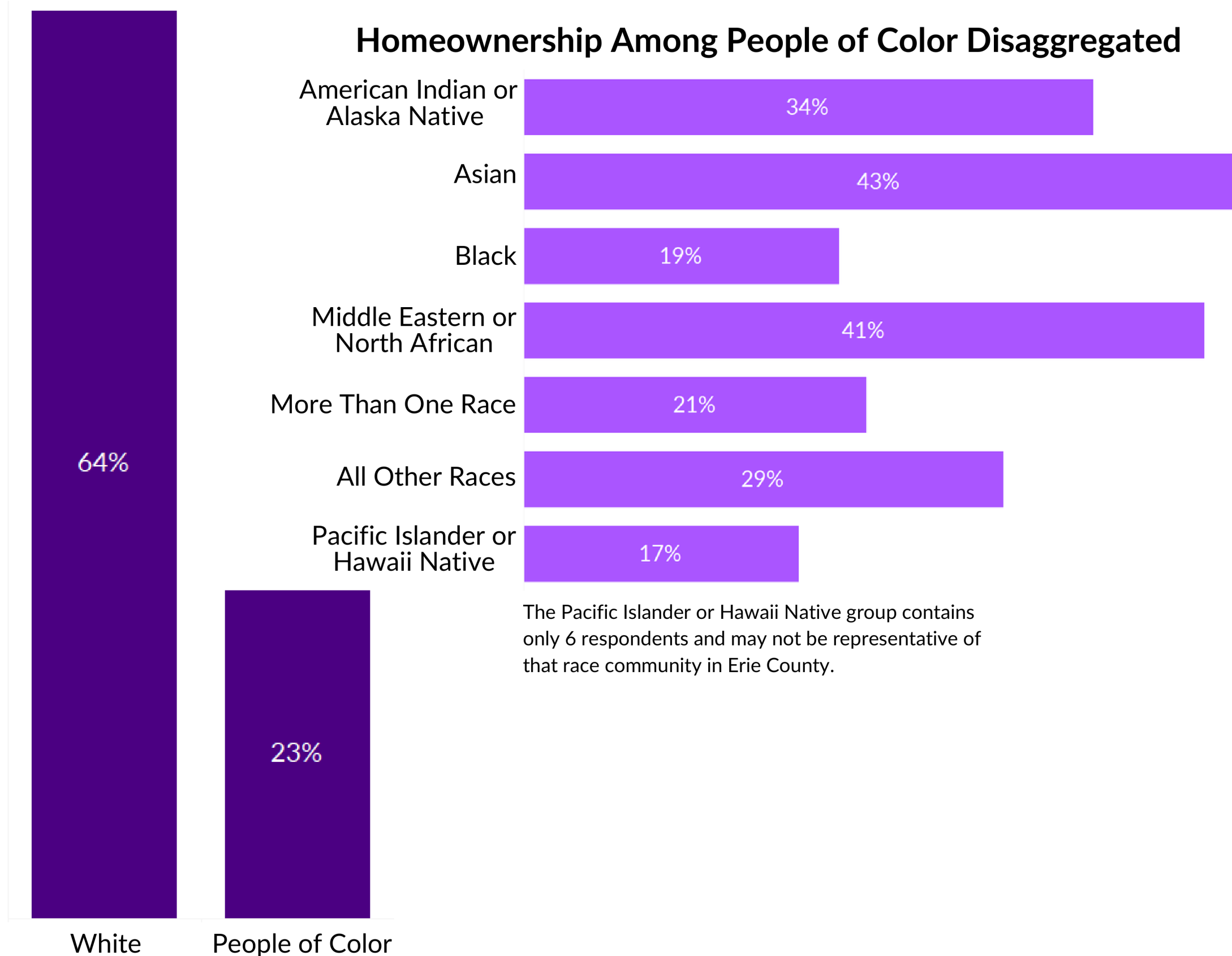
of the 35 respondents who reported that they are **Unhoused** also reported that they **Have a Disability**.

53%

of respondents who **Own** their home reported that they have **More Than Enough Money** to pay for day-to-day expenses, while **24%** of respondents who **Rent** their homes reported having **More Than Enough Money**.

NEIGHBORHOOD & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Homeownership by Race



Homeownership by Ethnicity

31%

of Hispanic/Latino respondents reported owning their homes compared to

48%

of Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents.

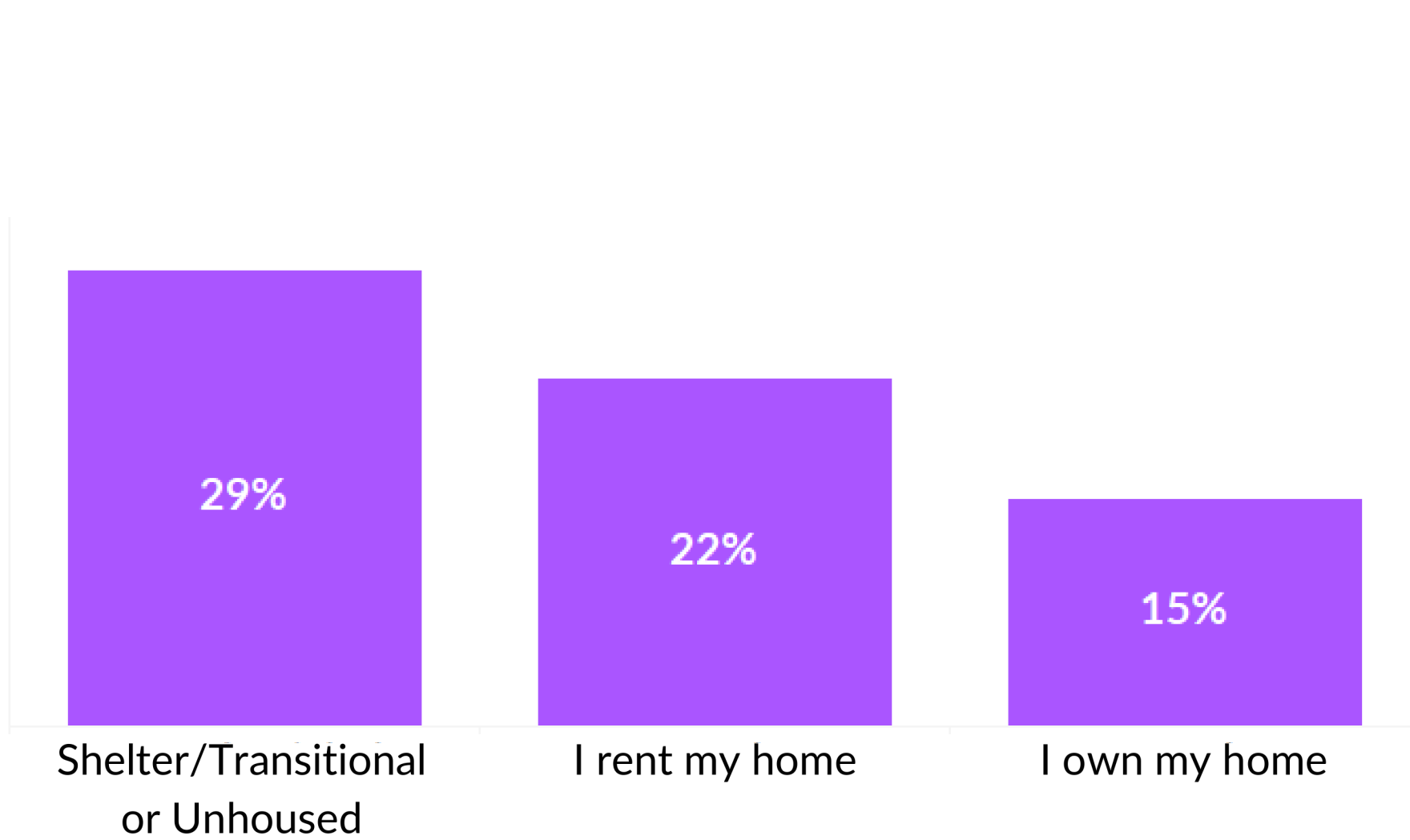
NEIGHBORHOOD & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Homeownership by Race and Educational Attainment

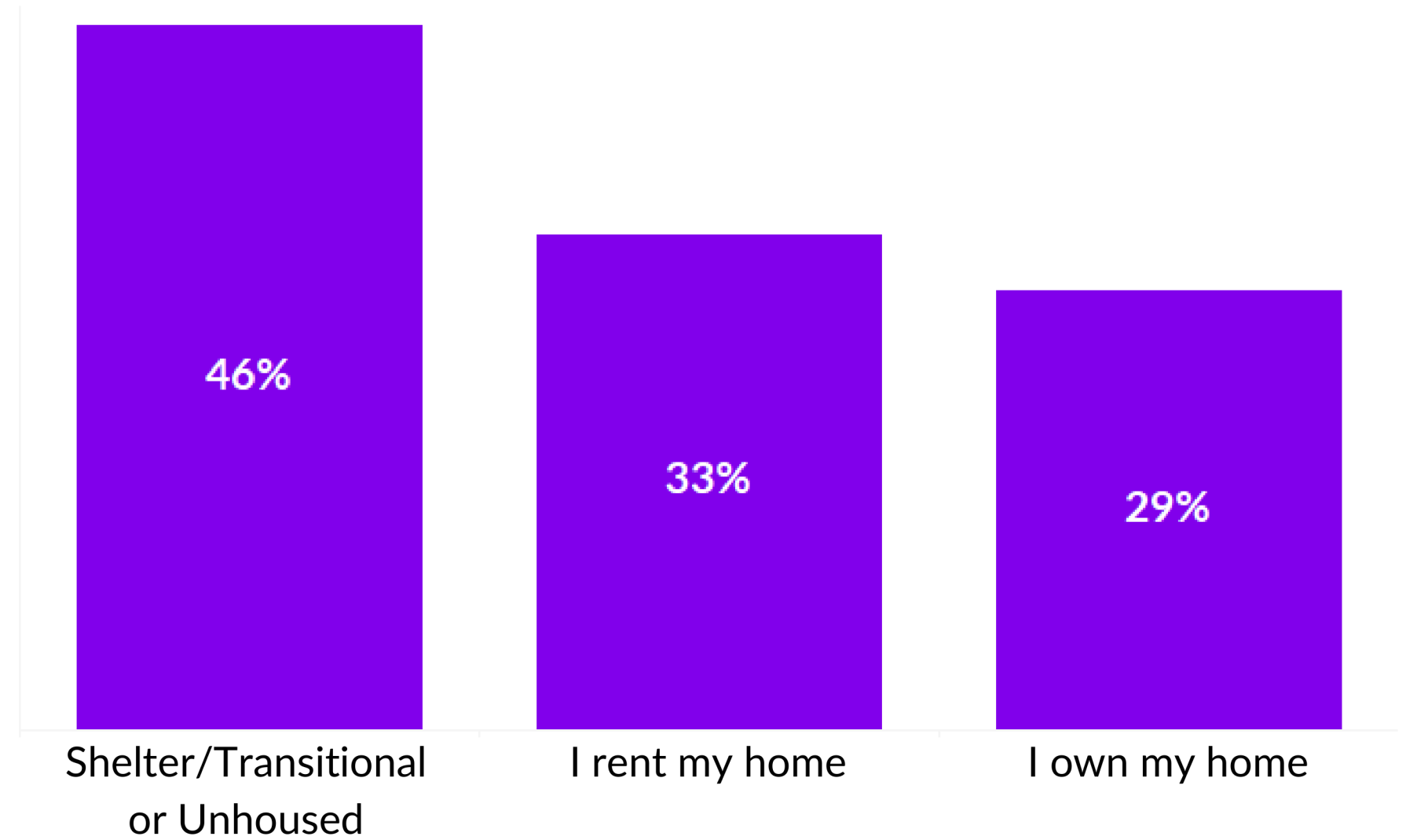
	Did Not Finish High School	High School or GED	Some College	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Postgraduate Degree
Asian	48%	22%	36%	33%	60%	73%
Black	14%	11%	19%	32%	38%	53%
White	15%	49%	54%	73%	68%	79%
All Other Races	11%	18%	22%	39%	43%	64%

NEIGHBORHOOD & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Reported Asthma by Housing Situation



Reported Anxiety or Depression by Housing Situation



LANGUAGE ACCESS

LANGUAGE ACCESS

- Translation
- Interpretation
- Health Literacy
- Digital Literacy
- Technology
- Language Lines
- Financial Literacy



Survey Questions

Language Speaking Ability

“So once I had a doctor who had a phone {...} and there was a translator on the phone [who] was assisting me with translation- was terrible. But then once the translator hung up the phone, he told me in English. ‘Next time you need to bring someone that can translate for you.’ With a really bad attitude.”

LANGUAGE ACCESS

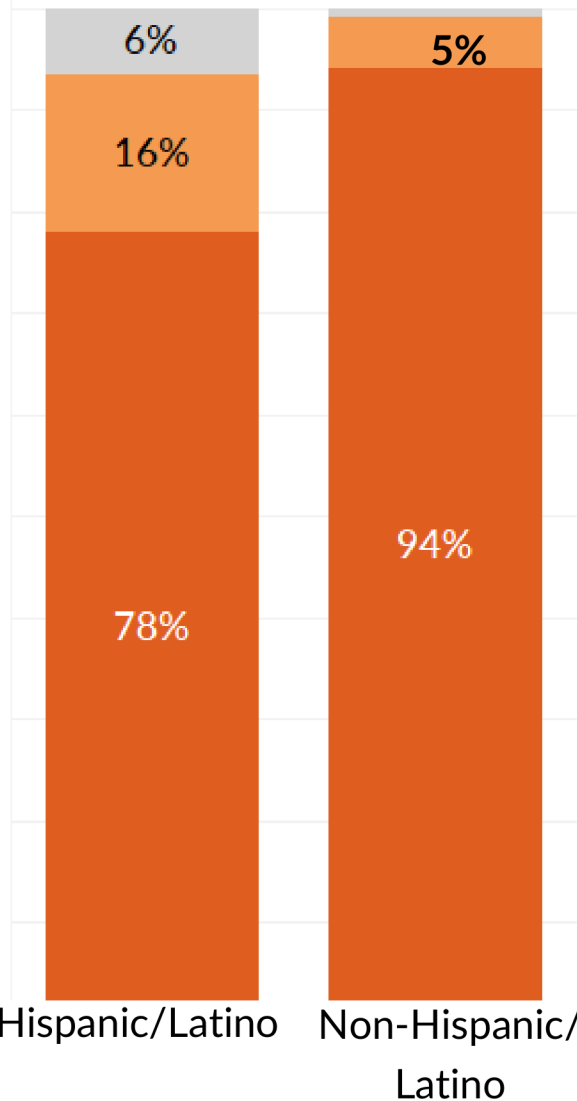
How well do you speak English?

- Very well
- Well
- Not well
- Not at all
- Do not wish to say

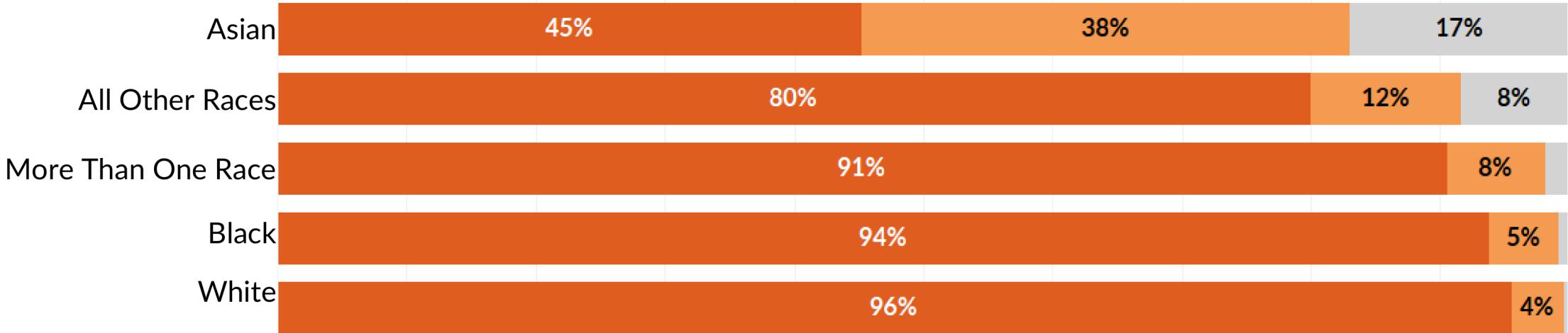
How well do you speak English?

- Less Than Well
- Well
- Very Well

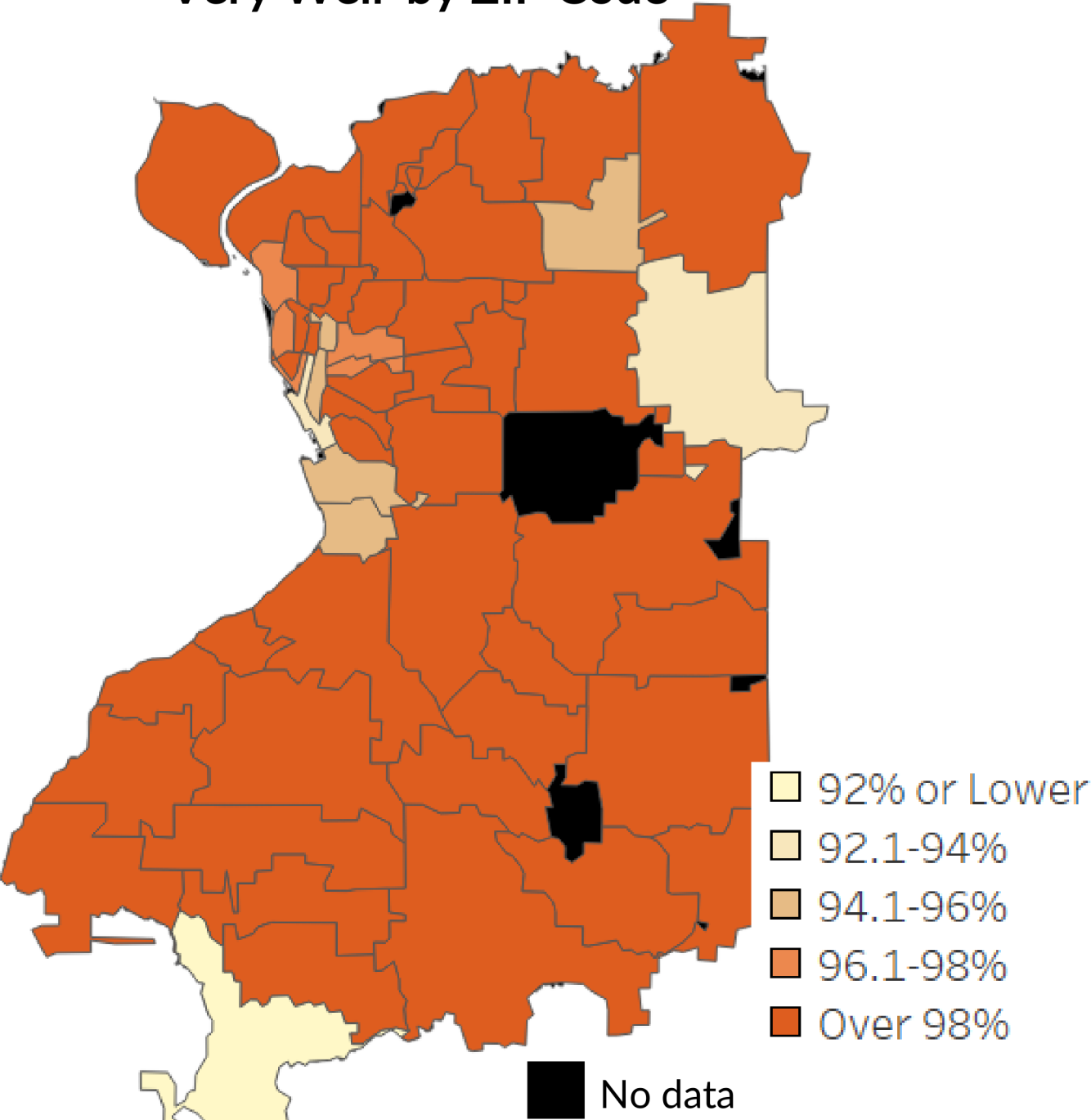
English Speaking Ability by Ethnicity



English Speaking Ability by Race



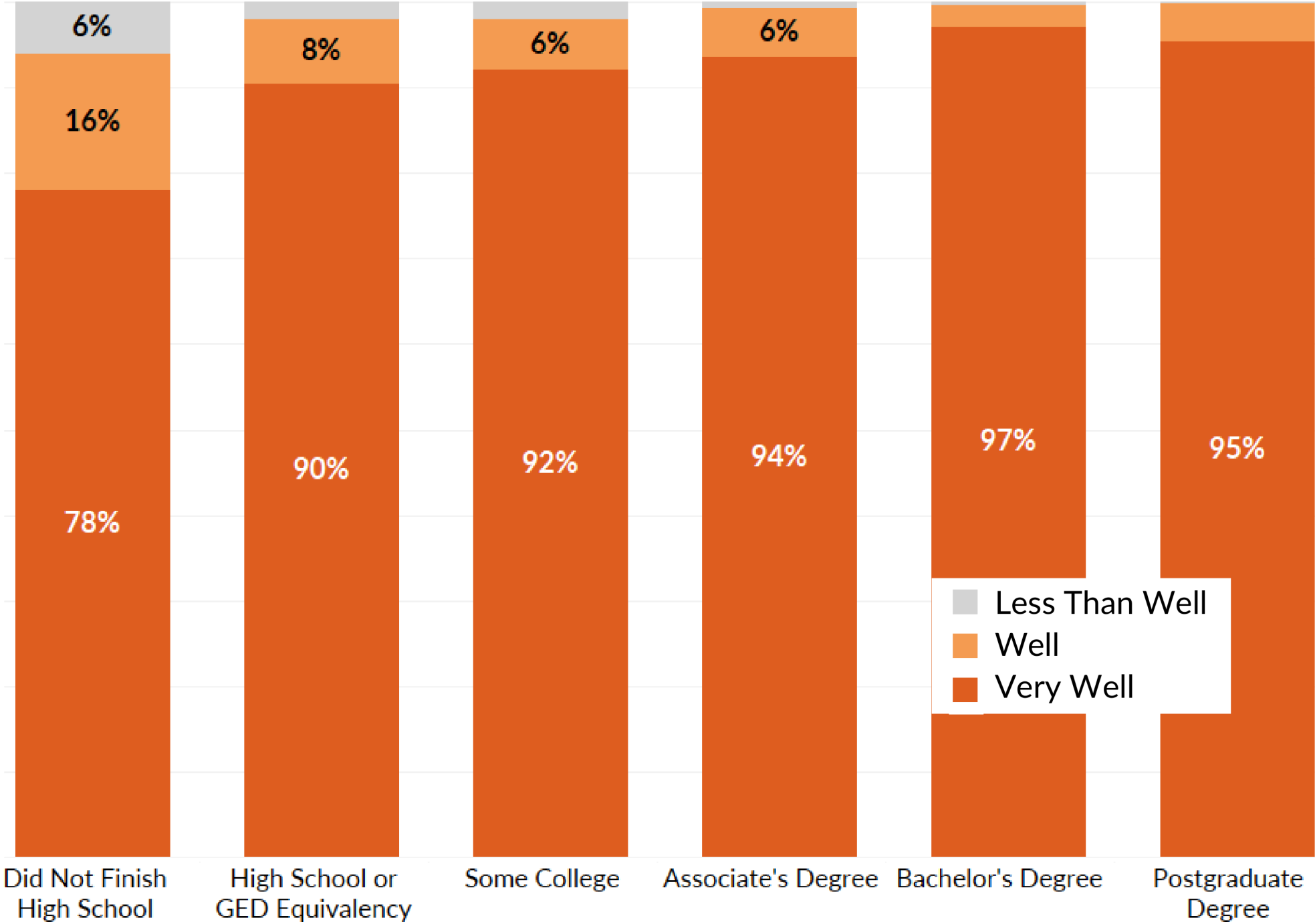
Ability to Speak English 'Very Well' by ZIP Code



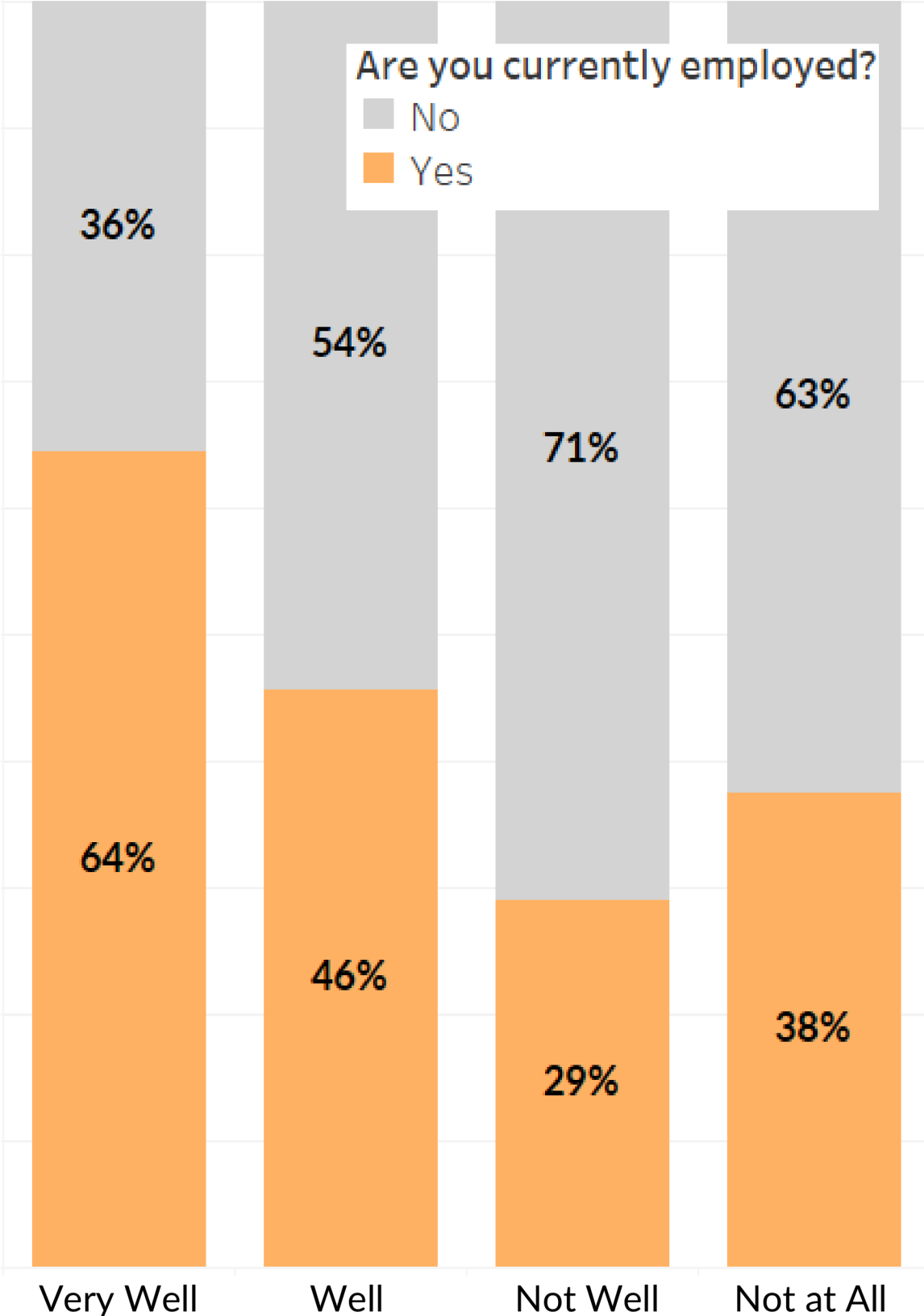
Some ZIP codes have fewer than 10 respondents. Therefore, the rates depicted on the map may not be representative of the community within these areas.

LANGUAGE ACCESS

English Speaking Ability and Education



Employment & English Speaking Ability



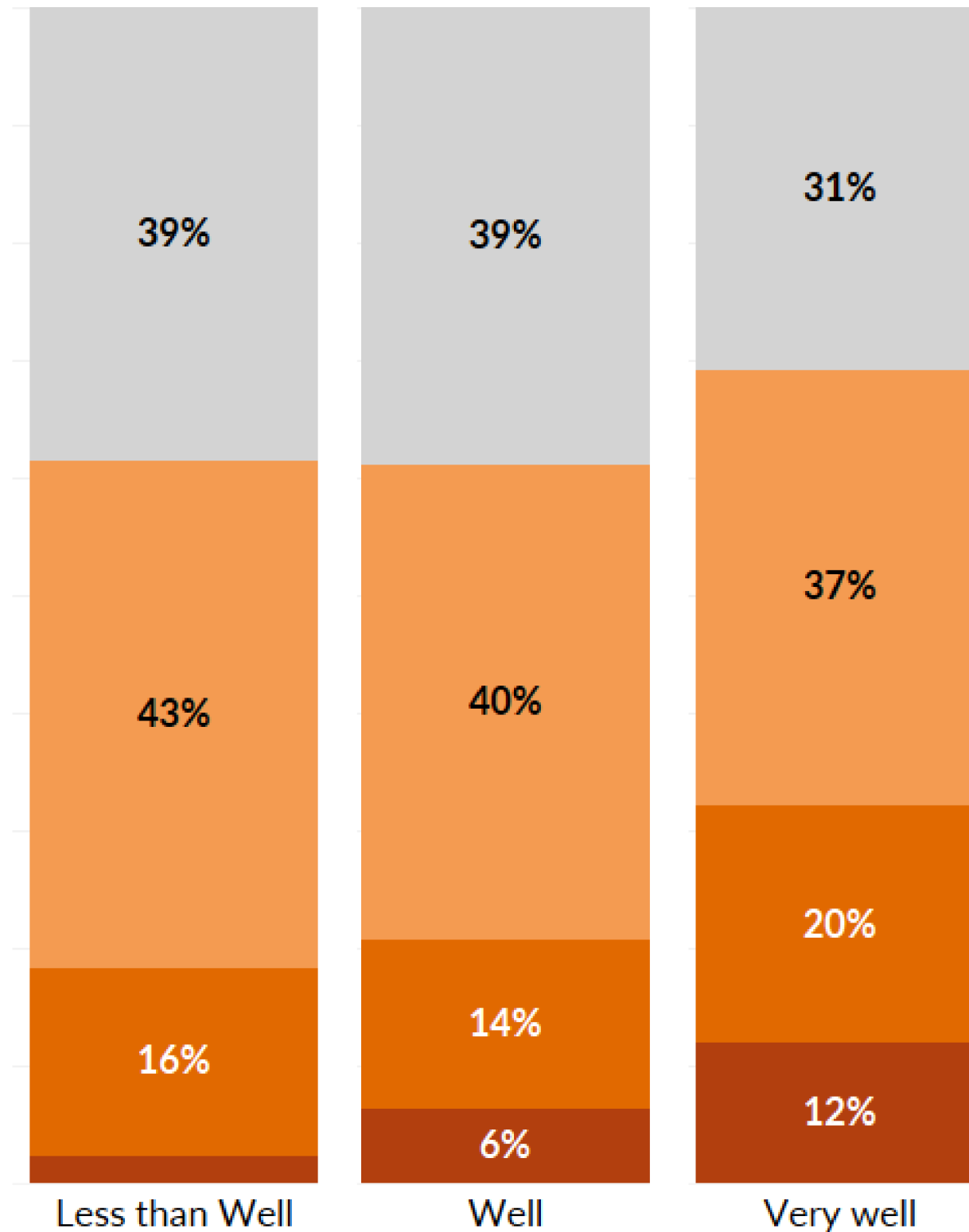
LANGUAGE ACCESS

Reported Health Conditions by English Speaking Ability

Do you experience any of the following health conditions? (select all that apply):

- Asthma
- Other lower respiratory disease (e.g., COPD/Emphysema)
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Kidney disease
- Cancer (any type)
- Disease of the heart
- Disease of the liver (e.g., Hepatitis, cirrhosis)
- Obesity
- Anxiety/Depression
- Long term COVID-19 symptoms
- None of these
- Do not wish to say

- None of These
- Physical Illnesses Only
- Mental and Physical Illnesses
- Anxiety/Depression Alone



SOCIAL & COMMUNITY CONTEXT

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY CONTEXT



- Social Support
- Isolation & Integration
- Trauma
- Stress
- Community Empowerment
- Racism & Oppression
- Discrimination & Inequities
- Stigma
- Incarceration
- Institutionalization

Survey Questions

Access to Social Supports

Responsibility for Young Children

Living with an Adult who Requires Care

History of Incarceration

Place of Birth

“Socialization is one of the biggest things that affect your health. And people don't realize it. If you can't get out, and just the idea of talking to somebody, how that uplifts your spirits. So you want to eat, you want to get out. You want to—you want to do things. We are very, very isolated here that way.”

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Survey respondents were asked to rate to frequency of the following statements:

Do you have friends or family you can rely on for:

- Emotional Support?
- Having Fun?
- Practical Help? (child care, transportation, household repairs)

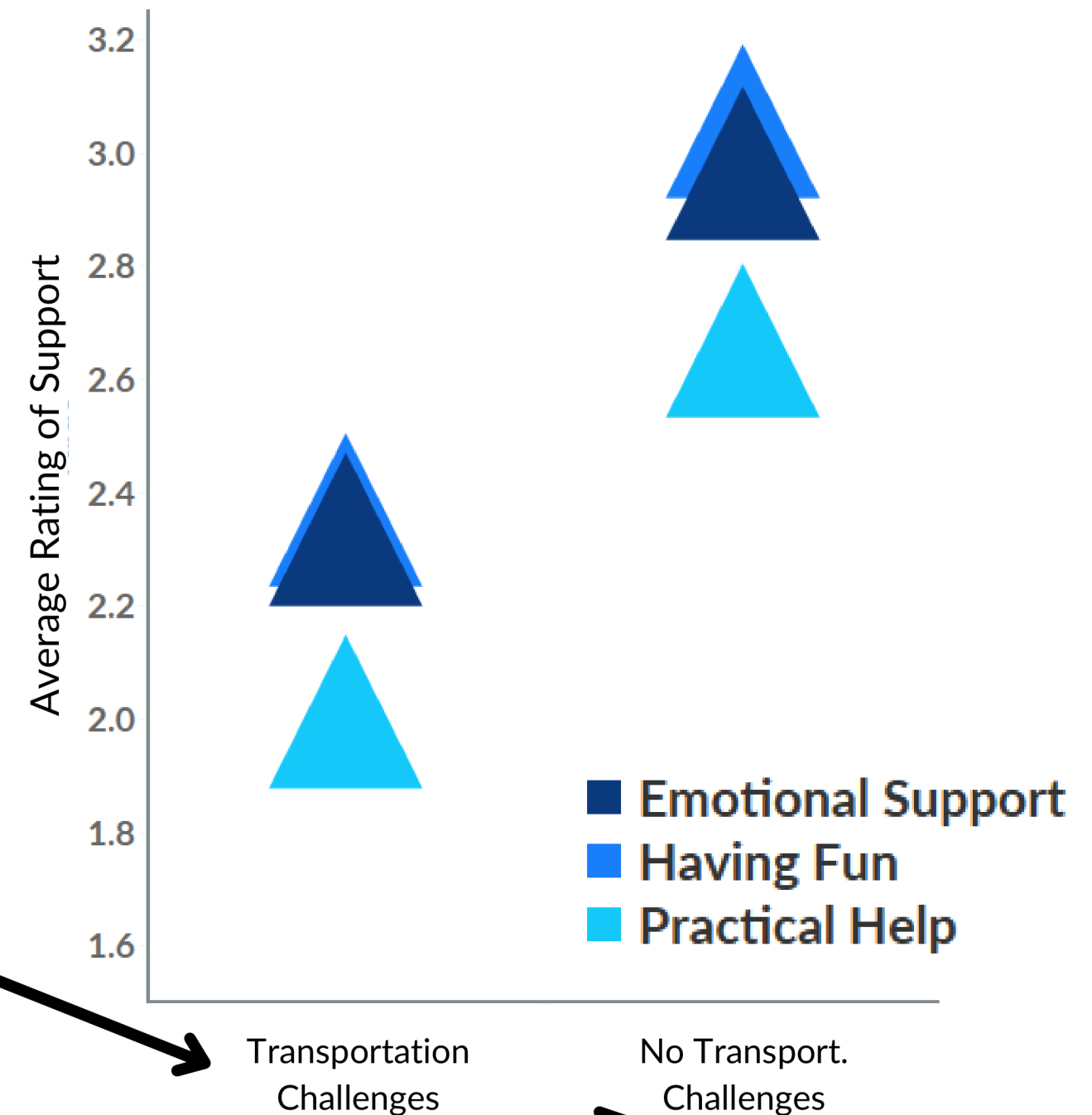
The responses to these questions were converted into a numerical scale (0-4). The values for the four questions were then combined and then averaged. The result is a measure of how often respondents feel they receive social support when needed.

0 = Never 1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Often 4 = Always

What are the challenges to accessing transportation? (select all that apply)

- Not affordable (e.g., buying a car, gas, bus passes)
- Inadequate public transportation (e.g., no bus routes near my home)
- Physical mobility challenges (e.g., difficult to get in and out of vehicles)
- Accessing transportation is not a challenge for me.
- Other _____

Social Supports by Transportation Access



SOCIAL & COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Survey respondents were asked to rate to frequency of the following statements:

Do you have friends or family you can rely on for:

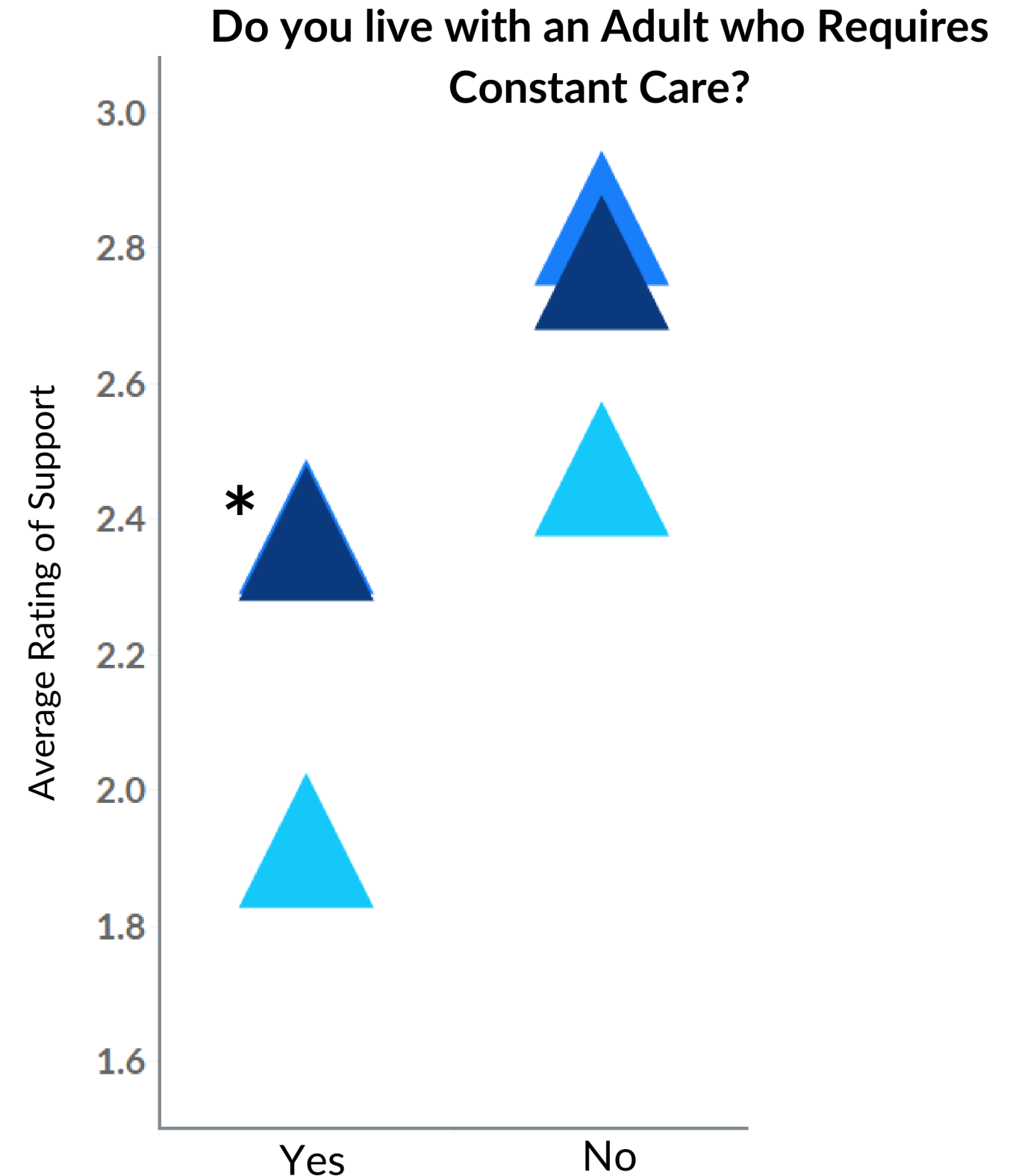
- Emotional Support?
- Having Fun?
- Practical Help? (child care, transportation, household repairs)

The responses to these questions were converted into a numerical scale (0-4). The values for the four questions were then combined and then averaged. The result is a measure of how often respondents feel they receive social support when needed.

0 = Never 1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Often 4 = Always

Is there an adult in your home who needs constant care?

- Yes
- No
- Do not wish to say



* *Emotional Support* and *Having Fun* have nearly identical values for those with in the Yes category.

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Survey respondents were asked to rate to frequency of the following statements:

Do you have friends or family you can rely on for:

- Emotional Support?
- Having Fun?
- Practical Help? (child care, transportation, household repairs)

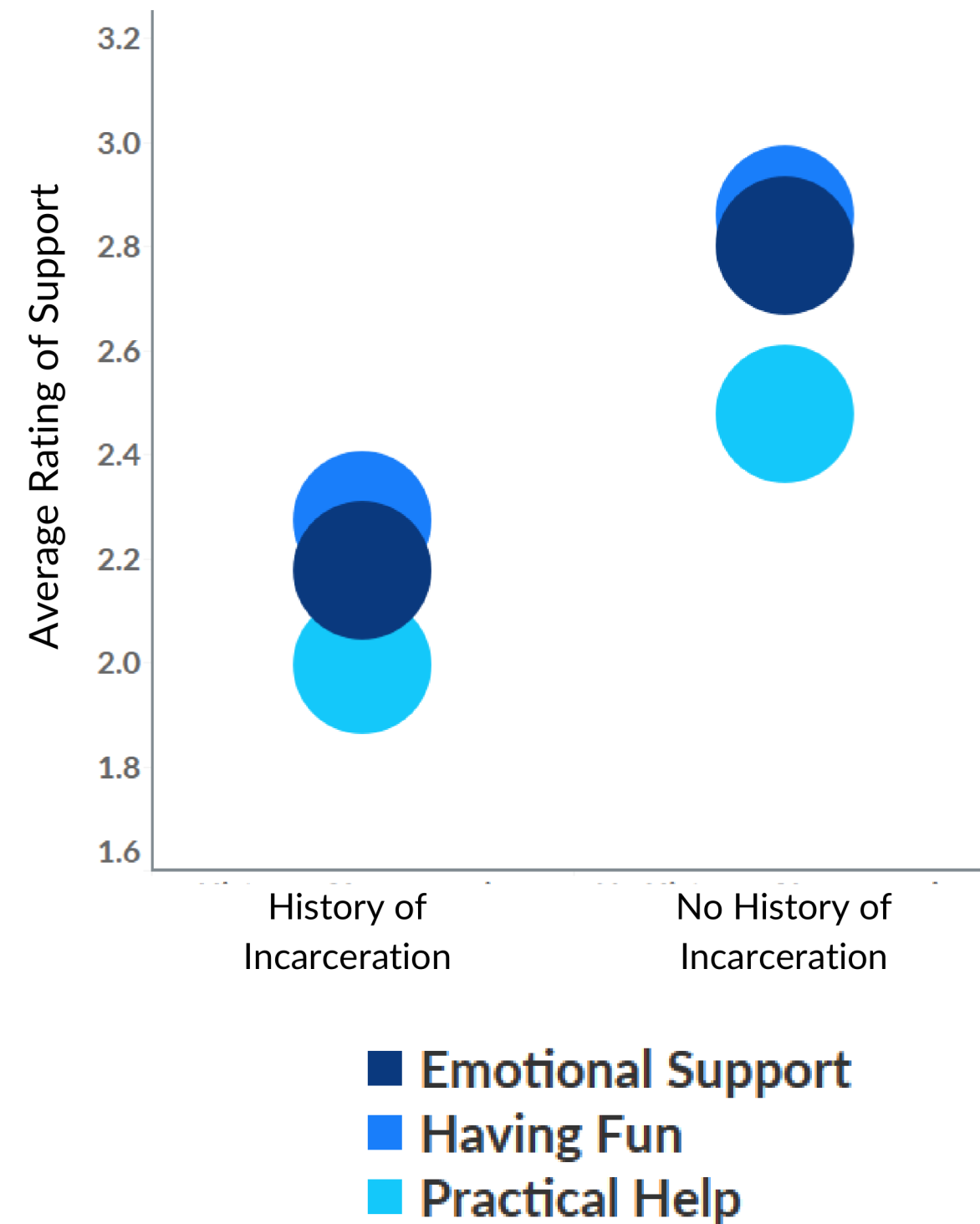
The responses to these questions were converted into a numerical scale (0-4). The values for the four questions were then combined and then averaged. The result is a measure of how often respondents feel they receive social support when needed.

0 = Never 1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Often 4 = Always

Have you ever been incarcerated?

- Yes
- No
- Do not wish to say

Social Supports by Incarceration History



SOCIAL & COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Survey respondents were asked to rate to frequency of the following statements:

Do you have friends or family you can rely on for:

- Emotional Support?
- Having Fun?
- Practical Help? (child care, transportation, household repairs)

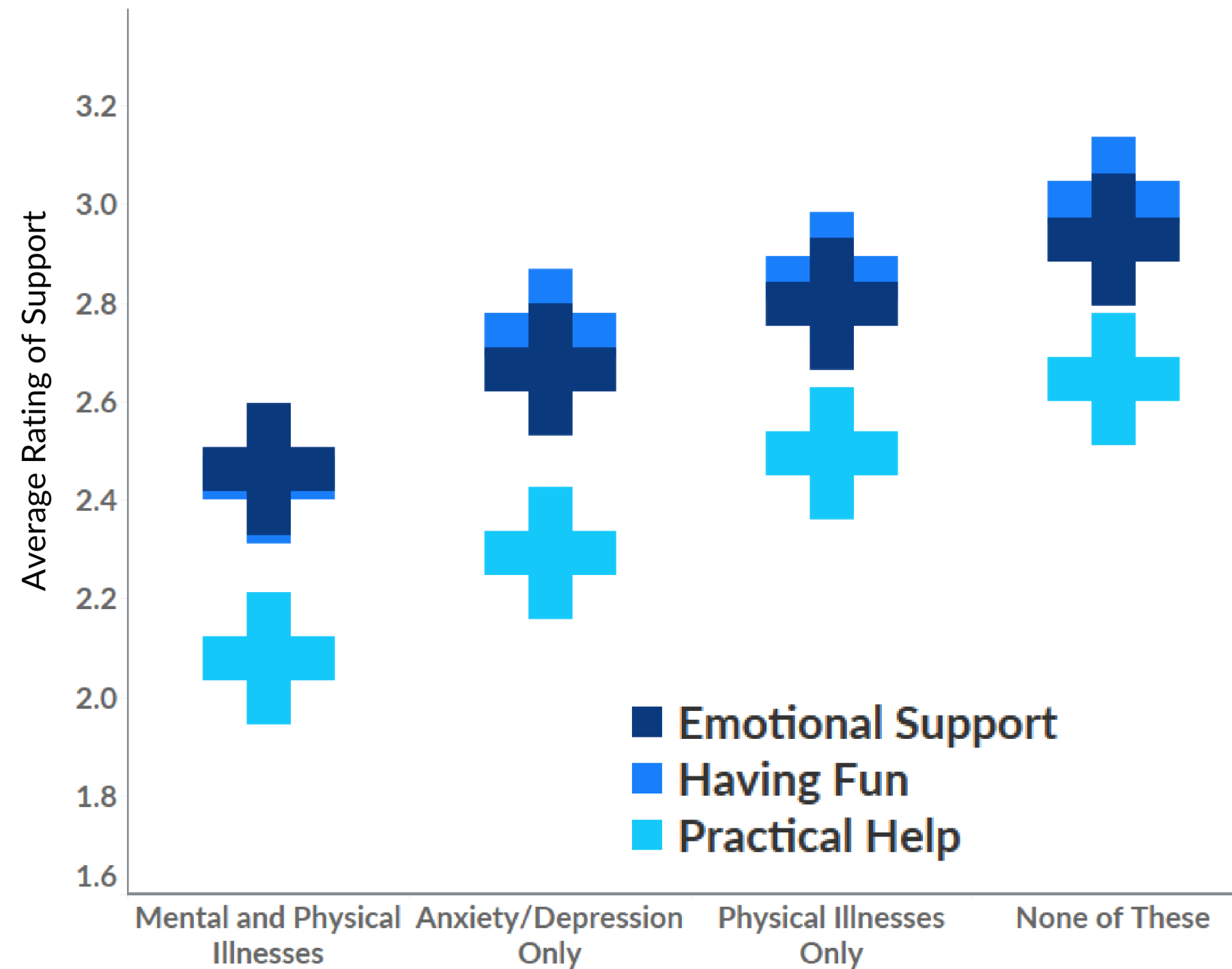
The responses to these questions were converted into a numerical scale (0-4). The values for the four questions were then combined and then averaged. The result is a measure of how often respondents feel they receive social support when needed.

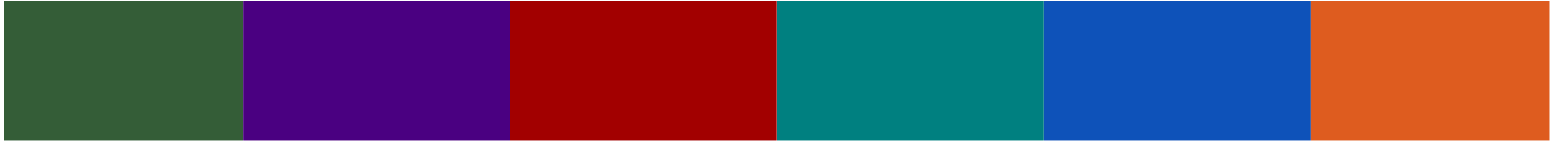
0 = Never 1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Often 4 = Always

Do you experience any of the following health conditions? (select all that apply):

- Asthma
- Other lower respiratory disease (e.g., COPD/Emphysema)
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Kidney disease
- Cancer (any type)
- Disease of the heart
- Disease of the liver (e.g., Hepatitis, cirrhosis)
- Obesity
- Anxiety/Depression
- Long term COVID-19 symptoms
- None of these
- Do not wish to say

Social Supports by Health Conditions





Questions?



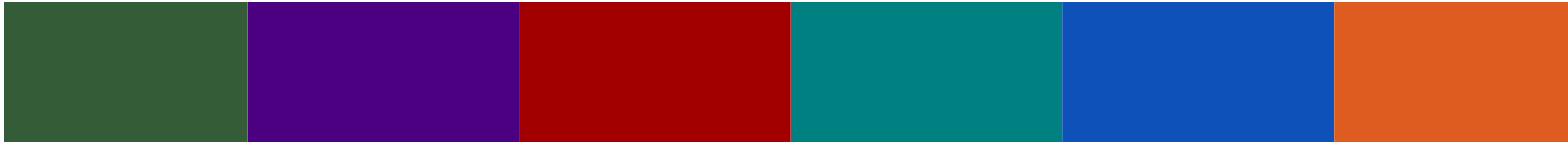
**Erie County
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View the whole report and learn more about the
Erie County Office of Health Equity at:

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NEED HEALTH EQUITY TECHNICAL SUPPORT?

If you would like to see breakdowns and charts of survey data not presented in this report, email your request to the ECOHE at healthequity@erie.gov.



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