



MAY 2021

The COVID-19 Resilience Poll

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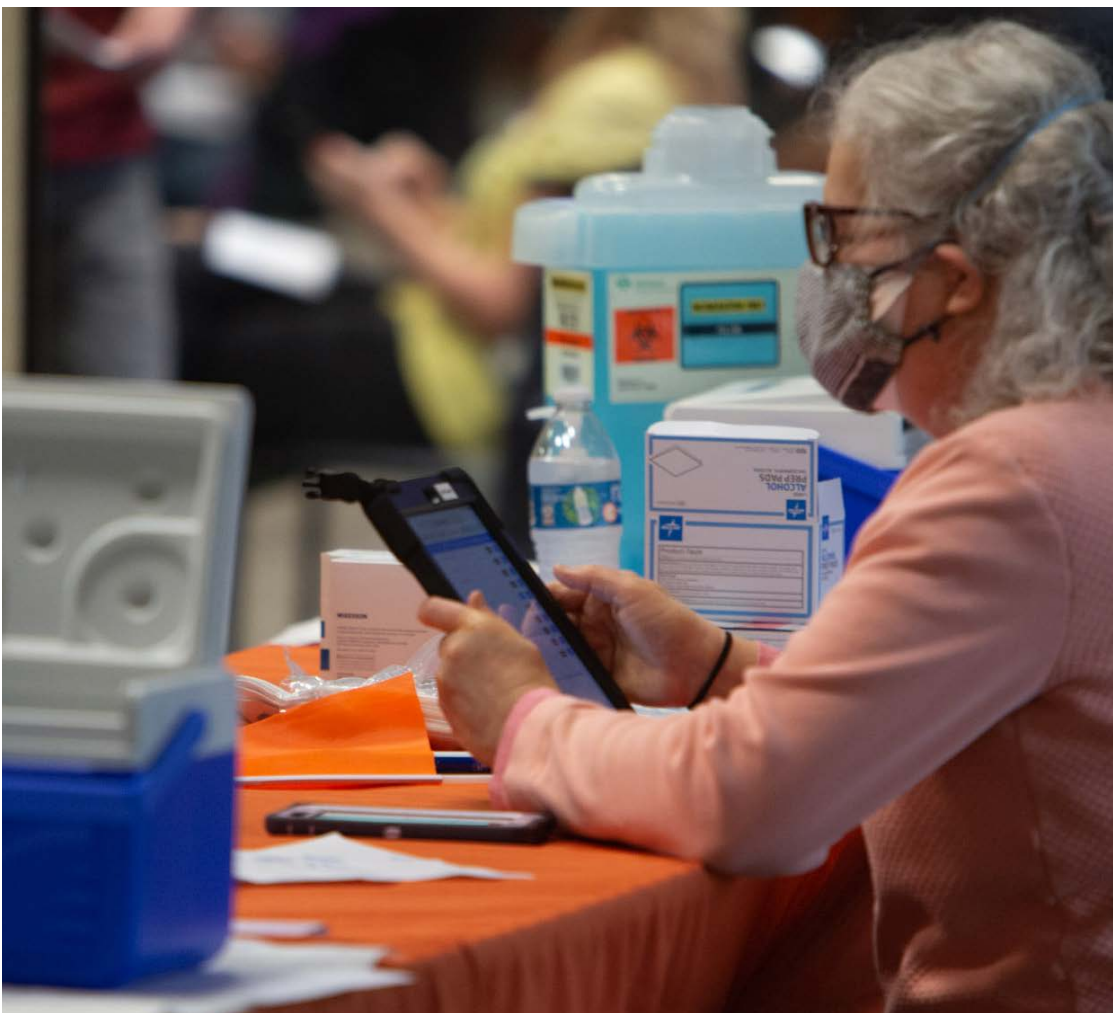
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A Special Report

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Valley Vision

For more than 25 years, Valley Vision has used research to help governments, businesses, foundations and community groups better understand the issues facing our region. We believe that knowing and understanding the facts is the best way to establish a common working foundation for collaborative problem-solving. That's why Valley Vision conducts, produces and interprets research including scientific public opinion polls, focus groups, community needs assessments, best practice studies and other research tools to bring to light the information local leaders need to improve our communities.

Capital Public Radio

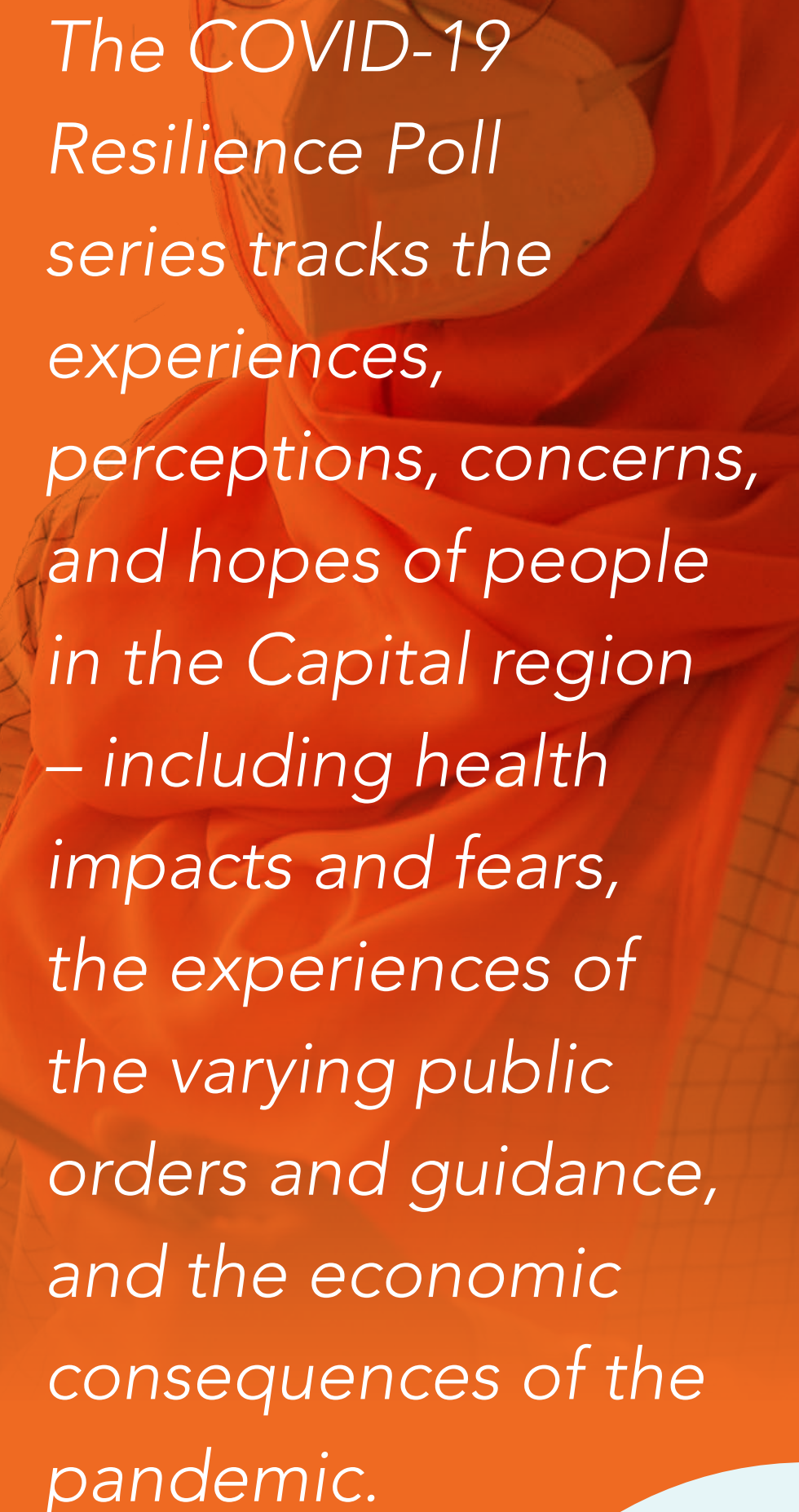
CapRadio serves California's Capital Region, Central Valley and Sierra Nevada as the public-supported alternative to for-profit media. As the NPR-member station based in Sacramento, CapRadio connects with communities through seven broadcast stations, live streaming, podcasts, digital communities, live experiences and more. Known for its award-winning newsroom, CapRadio is recognized as a leader in community-engaged journalism and state government reporting, and CapRadio Music is the exclusive broadcast source of classical and jazz in the region. With more than 500,000 weekly listeners on-air and online, CapRadio provides a trusted and indispensable source of information, music and events.

Sacramento State's Institute for Social Research

The Institute for Social Research at Sacramento State University supports community partners in improving programs and policies in the region and throughout the state. Located at the university's downtown location, the Institute offers a broad range of expertise conducting surveys and applied research. Since 1989, our collaborations with government agencies and nonprofit organizations have contributed to public accountability, program fidelity, and the strengthening of communities.

About the Polling Series

Valley Vision and the Institute for Social Research at Sacramento State conduct research via scientifically administered surveys of area resident attitudes. The survey data informs policymakers and stakeholders on key regional issues by providing on-the-ground public engagement data. The approach used is highly effective and unique — establishing a scientifically valid and demographically representative panel of regional residents that reflects a microcosm of the region as a whole. The panel size is consistently about 1,300 people from six counties — Sacramento, Yolo, El Dorado, Placer, Yuba, and Sutter. The panel is weighted to demographically represent the region and each survey achieves a statistical valid margin of error of not more than plus or minus three percent.



The COVID-19 Resilience Poll series tracks the experiences, perceptions, concerns, and hopes of people in the Capital region — including health impacts and fears, the experiences of the varying public orders and guidance, and the economic consequences of the pandemic.

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Community Foundation

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Regional Attitudes Polling Series: The COVID-19 Resilience Polls

A program of Valley Vision and CapRadio, fielded by Sacramento State's Institute for Social Research

Historic, unprecedented events have occurred over the course of 2020 that have reframed life as we had previously known it. Communities across the nation have been forced to seek new ways to regain economic and social footing in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and further fueled by widespread civic unrest stemmed from divisive political rhetoric and high-profile racial injustices.

The COVID-19 global health crisis fundamentally changed the complexion of social gatherings, school settings, and workplace environments. It devastated strong economies, with the greatest hardships felt by small businesses and the working class. And, it pushed millions into unemployment — or worse, homelessness. The pandemic also uncovered a troubling revelation that a disproportionate burden of illness and death afflicted racial and ethnic minority groups due to the inequitable conditions in which they live, learn, work, eat, and recreate.

The Black Lives Matter movement that reignited following the tragic death of George Floyd in May quickly exploded into a global call for systematic change that stands to reshape how policing, health care, education, economies, financing, and governments operate.

These circumstances leave countless questions surrounding how communities can and will recover. As communities begin to consider what shifts are needed to address systemic and institutional power imbalances that have adversely oppressed people of color, public pressure continues to mount calling for elected officials, community leaders, and corporations to alter social policies, leadership structures, and community investment strategies.

This report is the culmination of three separate public opinion polls fielded between May 2020 to March 2021 that gauged public viewpoints about these issues across the Sacramento region. Here we reflect on those findings and spotlight what we consider to be the most pressing issues needing to be addressed and the opportunities that have emerged that we can leverage to move the region to becoming a healthier, more livable place. We analyzed the results from all three COVID-19 polls and share our observations to help shape what social, civic, and economic changes our local leaders can and should take to make all of our communities inclusive, supported, safe, and equitable.

Best Regards,



Evan Schmidt
CEO



Joe Barr
Chief Content Officer



Shannon Williams
Executive Director





Executive Summary

The COVID-19 Resilience Poll series tracked the experiences, perceptions, concerns, and hopes of people living in California's Capital region. Three polls were conducted through a year of the COVID-19 pandemic from May 2020 to March 2021. The third and final poll in our series, was in the field March 12-29, 2021 and is demographically representative of the Capital region, encompassing Sacramento, El Dorado, Placer, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties, with a margin of error of plus or minus three percent.

This report provides a retrospective look at all three COVID-19 polls, pulling out key themes and clear trends in the data where system transformation has been most marked. The findings give us a sense of the unique challenges our region faces associated with late-pandemic conditions and all that has come as a result.

In the report that follows, we take a closer look at these five lead findings:

1. The COVID-19 Economy: The pandemic had a significant impact on income and financial well-being for many. Communities of color, those earning less, and those who are younger, have been impacted more severely than others, experiencing greater income loss, more difficulty affording basic necessities, and deeper fears and concerns about their financial security. In the most recent poll, forty-one percent of respondents overall reported a loss of income during the pandemic. For some communities that number is much higher, including Black, Hispanic, and Asian respondents,

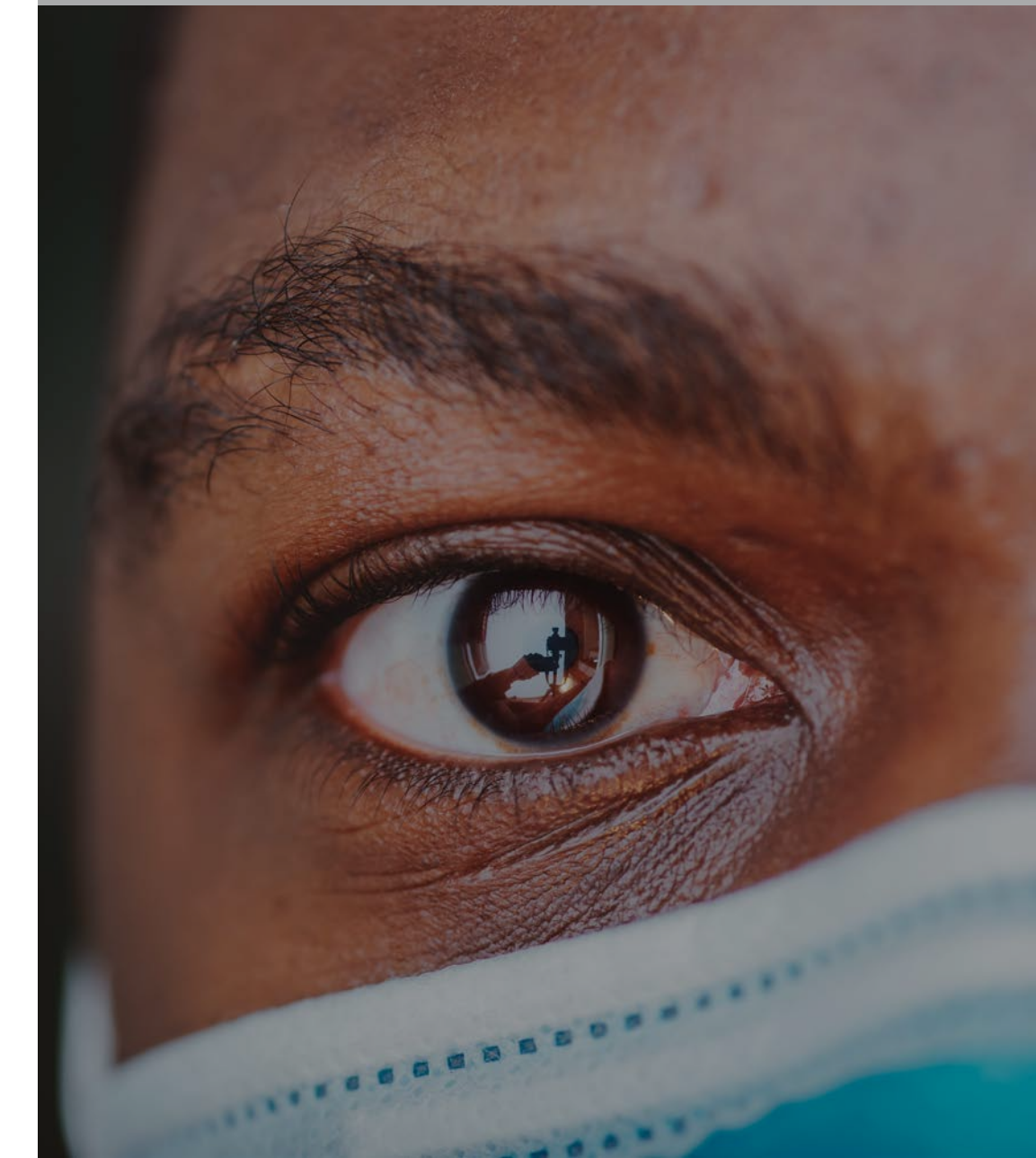


ranging from fifty-one to fifty-nine percent. Addressing economic inequities as well as helping those who have experienced income loss back on their feet is critical to our regional economic recovery.

2. Transformation of the Workplace: Over the course of one year, we have witnessed a ten-year transformation of the workplace as a result of the pandemic that includes the acceleration of three key components: remote work, automation, and e-commerce. Prior to the pandemic, sixty-two percent of the region's workforce had never worked remotely—yet our most recent poll shows that currently seventy percent of respondents now work at least partially from home. Overall, the pandemic has translated to feelings of less employability, especially by younger respondents. In the most recent poll, respondents aged 18 to 38 reported that they are concerned about availability of jobs, changes to their industry, and the relevancy of their own skills. At the same time, the pandemic has brought about loss of jobs and income and jobs are becoming more vulnerable to automation, especially those jobs more frequently held by lower wage workers, people of color, and women. Finally, small businesses were severely impacted by the shelter-in-place shut downs and increasing e-commerce. As part of an inclusive economic recovery, a regional strategy must proactively guard against widening equity gaps brought about by changes in the workforce and those posed by the future workplace culture shifts that we anticipate post-pandemic.

3. The Mental and Emotional Toll of the Pandemic:

The pandemic has created devastating increases in depression, anxiety and stress, concerns about substance use, and concerns about physical and emotional violence at home. These impacts have not been evenly shared across demographic groups, with people of color and younger people experiencing higher rates of mental and emotional health effects. Our most recent poll reveals a glimpse of some relief, with respondents reporting slightly less anxiety, stress, depression, and hopelessness. However, concerns about mental well-being during the pandemic remain higher with people of color than their white counterparts. Their heightened concerns show up across most measures, including personally contracting the virus, a family member contracting the virus, personal finances, job security, and access to medical care and groceries. Finally, younger respondents, Black respondents, and Hispanic respondents continue to experience disproportionate access to mental health and other medical services. As the pandemic begins to recede, it will be important to think about how to promote well-being, heal from the trauma inflicted over the past year, and address the unique needs of different communities.



"I am fighting to keep a roof over our heads, and having trouble accessing food and my meds."



4. Educating Through a Pandemic: A year of educating from home has been difficult on parents, students and teachers, and has caused a setback for children and young adults. More than two-thirds of parents are concerned about their children falling behind academically. Additionally, parents have shouldered the toll of educating children remotely, have experienced a greater degree of income loss and have had more difficulty doing their job than non-parents. As schools begin to open and welcome students back, it will be important to think about how children, young adults, and parents can get back on track academically, mentally, emotionally, and economically.

5. Moving Beyond COVID-19: People in our region — and all over the nation — are eager to reopen and resume community life. Through our most recent poll, we found that vaccination skepticism is likely to impact our region, with thirty-nine percent of respondents stating that they would probably not or definitely not get a COVID-19 vaccination when it becomes available to them. Concerns about side effects and that the vaccines are too new were the most

commonly cited reason that respondents will avoid them. Forty-three percent of respondents believe that we will get “back to normal” in 2021. However, achieving high levels of vaccination in our region will be a critical component of getting back to normal, whenever it occurs. Education and communication campaigns, as well as a concerted effort to outreach and engage vulnerable populations, like communities of color, people with lower incomes, English as a second language, and others will be needed.

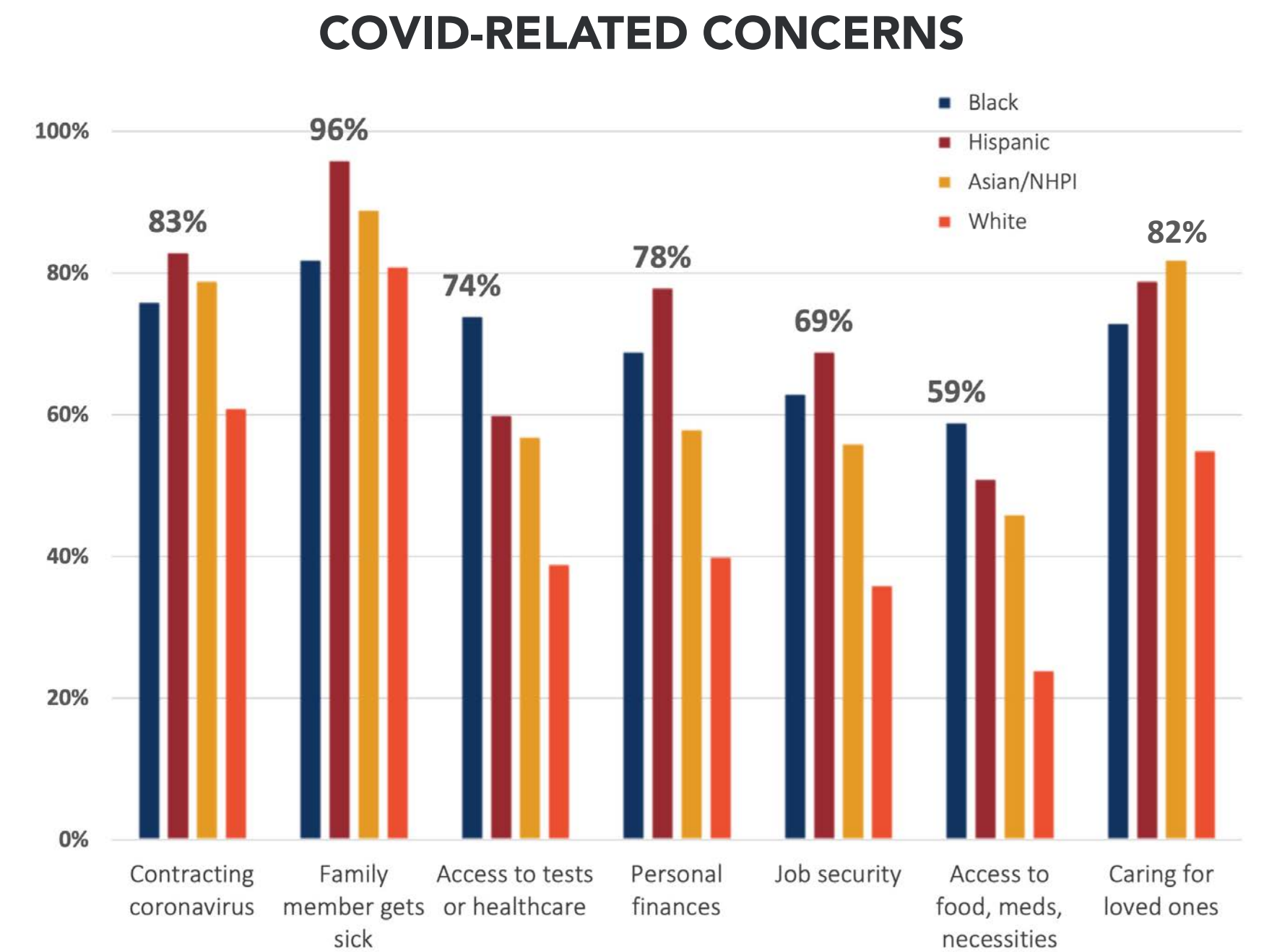
We stand at a point of inflection in pandemic recovery. We have seen that our systems can bend to respond to emergencies, but have not yet proven that systemic change is sustainable over time. We must listen to community voices, focus on equitable economic growth, draw on our common humanity to heal, and come together to solve these difficult problems. With focus and hard work, we can successfully reimagine and redesign complex systems and summon the will to sustain the change needed to build a better region for all.



Five Lead Spotlights

Spotlight #1: The COVID-19 Economy

The COVID-19 public health pandemic has had a tremendous effect on the people in our region — their daily life, their economic security, and their physical, mental, and emotional health. Communities of color, those earning less, and those who are younger, have been impacted more severely than others. What does this impact look like in our region, and how do we move from emergency relief and response to long-term inclusive recovery?

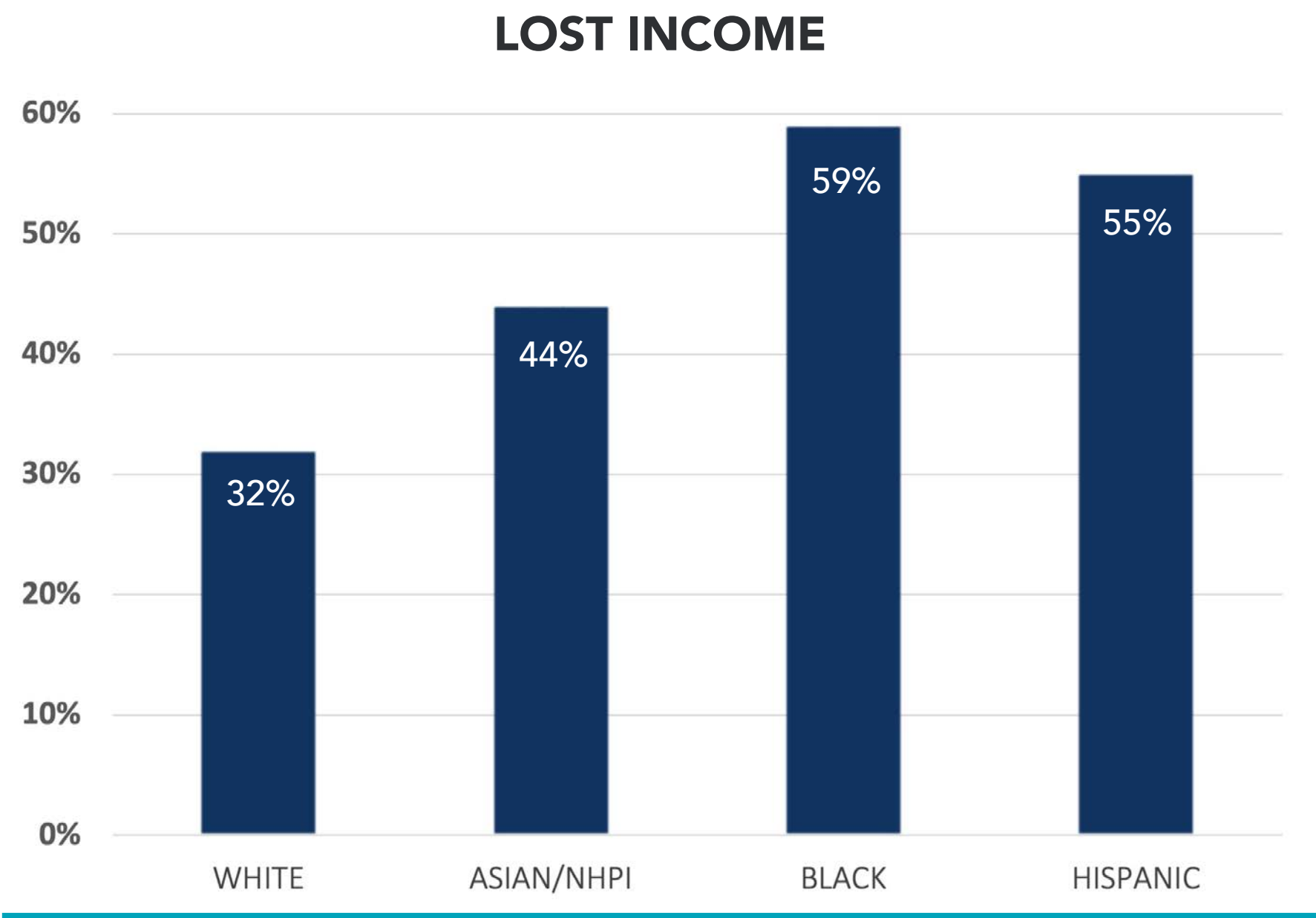


Percentage of those who are concerned across different measures, by race.

Overall, across the year, forty-one to forty-seven percent of respondents reported that they lost income somewhat or significantly.

These effects were not evenly distributed. People of color reported higher instances of reduced income as a result of the pandemic compared to white people. These numbers improved slightly for all racial groups between May 2020 to March 2021, but income loss was still much higher for people of color compared to those who are white.

Loss of income and financial setbacks marked the pandemic year.



In May 2021, the percent of those who reported loss of income, by race.

“My job cut pay to 65% and replaced my position — finding a job right now that pays comparably is extremely hard even though I’ve been with the same company for 8 years and have a Master’s — I’m unsure where I will work in the next 6 months when the 65% pay ends.”

Across the year, those who lost income consistently struggled to afford basic necessities.

Fifty-four to sixty-one percent of those with significantly reduced income couldn't afford an adequate food supply throughout the year, and fifty-nine to sixty-eight percent couldn't afford rent or mortgage. These financial losses and inability to afford basic necessities created deep hardship and inequity across the region. Overall, more than half of those making less than \$30,000 a year cannot or can barely afford rent or mortgage (55%), bills (56%), or paying down debt (53%); almost two-thirds cannot or can barely afford technology, such as internet service (62%); and over a third cannot or can barely afford adequate food supply (33%).

National Trends

These findings are consistent with what is taking place across the United States. A [study conducted by the Pew Research Center](#) in April 2020 found that 26% of middle-income adults and 53% of lower income adults could not pay their bills in full that month. Further, only 23% of lower income adults and 48% of middle-income adults reported having "rainy day funds" that would cover expenses for three months in case of an emergency, compared to 75% of higher income adults.

Those who are younger also tend to be more vulnerable to the economic insecurities brought about by the pandemic.

Respondents ages 18 to 38 are more likely to be concerned about personal finances, job security, access to necessities, and are more likely to have had their income reduced as a result of the pandemic. Moreover, thirty-nine to forty-seven percent of 18 to 38-year-olds overall couldn't afford to pay down debt during the year of the pandemic, representing a potential long-term financial setback for these young people.

"I'm no longer employed because of the pandemic and therefore I don't have any readily available funds. I have to currently depend on family and friends for support."



BOTTOMLINE

As our economy transitions to recovery, we must create a foundation of inclusive economic growth.

Key components include:

- Address gaps to basic needs and enact programs to support rent relief, food security, and transportation.
- Bridge the digital divide with broadband access, technology tools for each household, and digital skills to support inclusive pathways to the digital economy.
- Support an inclusive, just, and green economy. As climate change alters our environment and threatens our livelihoods, California is actively enacting policy to reduce carbon emissions and bring about a low carbon economy. The Capital region, with a focus on clean

mobility and other jobs, environmental justice, and climate action, can be an equitable, prosperous and clean economy innovator in the state.

- Support underinvested and aging neighborhoods with strategies to support affordable housing, livable neighborhoods, high quality education, and accessible opportunities for all.
- Support for our highest growth sectors, including life sciences, food and agriculture, and mobility. Supporting our tradable sectors, and creating inclusive pathways into jobs within these sectors ensures a growing and prosperous economy for years to come.

Many of these economic strategies are laid out in Our Path Forward: [The Prosperity Strategy](#). This inclusive economic development plan as well as other efforts are important tools to help reimagine our recovery by creating a more just and resilient economy than the one we had before.

Our region has experienced drastic changes. Businesses at all scales, government, educational and health institutions, and nonprofits have all been deeply affected. The Sacramento metropolitan area had an unemployment rate of four percent in January 2020, it rose to a peak of 14.4 percent in April 2020, and dropped to 6.9 percent as of March 2021. The sectors most impacted by employment and revenue loss have been leisure and hospitality, accommodation and food services, and arts, entertainment, and recreation. Additionally, small business, especially small minority-owned businesses, have been severely impacted. Community infrastructure gaps have also become apparent, including rapidly rising levels of food insecurity and gaps in access to broadband infrastructure and technology.

These findings lay bare the difficulties being lived every day, for over a year now, by many across the Capital Region. COVID-19 is a public health crisis, but it has also brought social and economic turmoil to a degree not seen in generations.

Guest Viewpoint:

The Challenges We Face
Left by a Once-in-a-Century
Pandemic



By **Chet P. Hewitt**, President and CEO, Sierra Health Foundation and The Center

Data like this helps us understand what's behind us and what lies ahead as we move to address the immediate and long-term needs of those in our community – work that should be impactful first steps toward a more equitable and just future.

Although the country has vaccinated more than a third of its residents and hope is growing that our lives will soon return to “normal,” the toll of COVID-19 has been heavy: [one in three people in the U.S. has lost someone to the virus](#).

Beyond a deep sense of loss and its impacts on our social and mental health, there's no denying that the pandemic has also had a tremendous effect on personal and community economic health — and communities of color, those earning less, and those who are younger, have been impacted more severely than others.

COVID-19 is a public health crisis, but it's also resulted in social and economic turmoil unlike anything we've seen in our lifetimes. Early reporting by the [COVID Racial Data Tracker](#) and continued studies have made it impossible for even skeptics to deny the correlations between poverty, the social environment and a person's physical health, as well as deepening inequities during the pandemic.

In the Capital region, the COVID-19 Resilience Poll has provided essential data on the impacts of the pandemic from the first shelter-in-place orders to social activism as a result of the death of George Floyd, a year of remote education, and the vaccine rollout.

Findings in the Resilience Poll make clear the challenges and concerns that many across the region have faced. And their concerns are founded: generational and widening

wealth gaps influence access to health care, higher education, high-paying jobs, healthy food, safe outdoor spaces and transportation, and other resources that impact their health and result in disproportionate COVID rates and deaths. In California, 55% of COVID cases and 46% of deaths have been in Latinx communities, although they are 38% of the state's total population. Similar disparities are showing up in vaccination rates, with 3.7% of Black Californians being vaccinated, despite being 6% of the state's population.

The challenges in front of us include wide systemic injustice; ongoing mental, social and economic inequities; and the ramifications we can't yet predict of a once-in-a-century global health crisis. Solutions require the acknowledgment of past harms, a reimagining of current systems, bold new ideas and a commitment to quickly act on them.

I've been truly inspired by the generosity and resilience of Sacramentans. Even as people faced uncertainty about their own economic stability, they stepped up to donate; essential workers risked their health to guarantee access to food, medical care and other necessities; community organizations increased services for those who needed nutritional, financial and other types of support; and new and long-time advocates have come together to support the needs of the region's unhoused population. At every turn, we've shown who we are and what we value. And we're not done yet.

Spotlight #2: Transformation of the Workplace

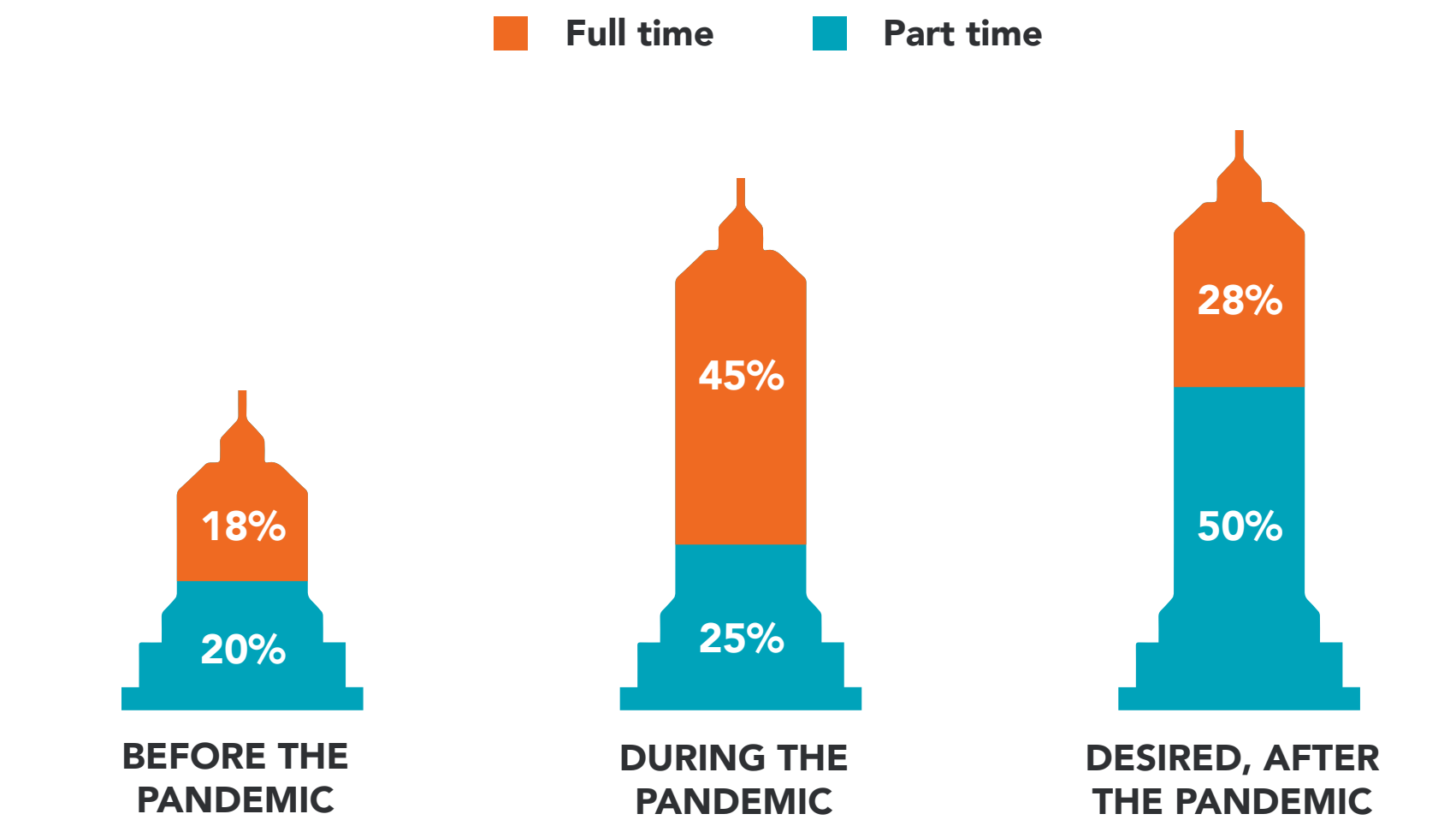
2020 brought about an unexpected and unimaginable workplace transformation that changed employment in three distinct ways: a move to remote work, a marked increase of e-commerce, and a sharp turn towards automation. The circumstances of the pandemic spurred a seemingly ten-year acceleration of these trends, which will continue to shape our workforce in the years ahead. The poll data illustrates how these changes are playing out in the Capital region.

Many have transitioned to working remotely, either part time or full time, due to the pandemic, and want to continue doing so even after restrictions have been lifted.

The percent of people who work from home either part or full time shot up from thirty-eight percent prior to the pandemic to seventy percent during the pandemic. By a wide margin, most respondents (78%) said they want to continue to work at home at least one day a week, even when restrictions are lifted, and twenty-eight percent said that they want to continue to work at home full time.

It's clear that, even when restrictions are lifted, there will be no "return to normal" in terms of where and how people work.

THE WORK WEEK: SHIFTING ATTITUDES



Percentage of those who were working at home prior to the pandemic; those who are working from home during the pandemic; and those who want to continue working from home once restrictions are lifted.

Increased remote work contributed to lowered carbon emissions in 2020 and could continue to do so, even as pandemic conditions change. Among the reasons cited by people for wanting to continue working from home part time or full time, almost half of respondents (49%) cited no commute to save time; and about a third cited no commute to save money and more flexible hours (36% and 30%, respectively).

People appreciate the flexibility that remote work brings to their lives, as well as being able to spend less and avoid the inconvenience of long commutes. Employers will need to evaluate how to adapt to this shift once restrictions are lifted. This requires an approach that accommodates a desire for flexibility, but also recognizes and resolves the novel challenges that may arise.



National Trends

This data from our region reflects trends at a national level. A [study conducted by the Pew Research Center](#) in December 2020 found that (54%) of adults who say that their jobs can be done at home would like to continue working from home most or all of the time.

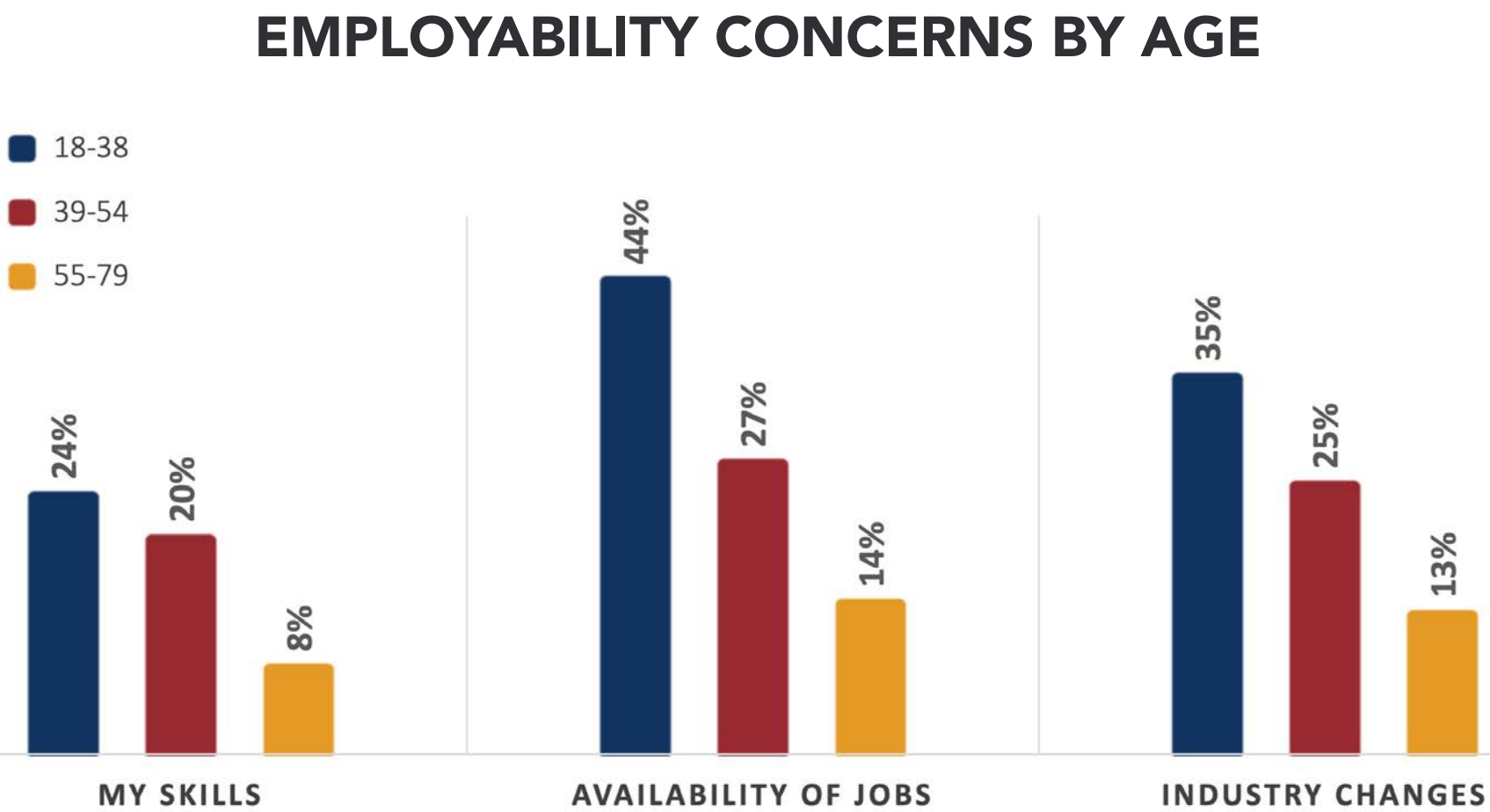
However, as the same study notes, working from home is not an option for everyone — lower income workers are less likely to even have the option to work from home. Further, even if most people find the idea of continuing to work from home appealing, the transition to remote work has not been easy for everyone — (32%) of workers ages 18 to 49 years old say that the transition has been difficult, and (53%) of workers ages 18 to 29 years old say that working from home has made it hard for them to feel motivated.

Anecdotally, many large companies whose innovative take on open office concepts — pods, ping pong tables, and kombucha on tap — were a defining feature of their pre-pandemic work culture have announced a shift towards remote work. [Salesforce](#), for example, was an early adopter. Following a survey conducted among employees in the early days of the pandemic, they created three new “ways of working” long-term, including a hybrid remote/ office, full time office, or full-time home schedule. As noted by their President and Chief People Officer, “the 9-5 workday is dead”; “this isn’t just the future of work, this is the next evolution of our culture.”

While companies and some workers embrace many aspects of remote work long-term, respondents cited many hardships of working at home, including lack of social interaction, weight gain due to inactivity, overwork, stress, and more.

In as much as the pandemic has changed the workplace, it has also significantly impacted the region’s workforce and the future of work.

Those who are younger (18 to 38 year-olds) are more likely to believe that the pandemic has made them less employable in terms of their skills and due to changes in their industry.



Percent of those who believe the pandemic has made them less employable due to these factors and based on their age bracket.

“I am completely exhausted and overworked from trying to do a high-quality job as an online teacher in my shutdown public school. My body is hurting from sitting in front of a computer all the time.”

BOTTOMLINE:

As part of an inclusive economic recovery, a regional strategy must proactively guard against widening equity gaps brought about by changes in the workforce and the future of work post-pandemic. The Sacramento regions' workers are especially susceptible to this negative impact.

National Trends

In a 2021 [report](#) on the future of work after COVID-19, the McKinsey Global Institute found that, worldwide, COVID-19 would likely accelerate the adoption of automation and AI technology in occupations that require "high physical proximity" (e.g., warehouses and grocery stores). As a result of this acceleration, McKinsey found that: "a markedly different mix of occupations may emerge after the pandemic across the eight economies. Compared to our pre-COVID-19 estimates, we expect the largest negative impact of the pandemic to fall on workers in food service and customer sales and service roles, as well as less-skilled office support roles. Jobs in warehousing and transportation may increase as a result of the growth in e-commerce and the delivery economy, but those increases are unlikely to offset the disruption of many low-wage jobs."

Long term shifts to remote work will need to contemplate a wide variety of quality-of-life issues for workers.

In a March 2020 [Automation Risk report](#) put together by Valley Vision and the North/Far North Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research found that of the 1.2 million jobs in the region, thirty-two percent are at high risk of automation, twenty-nine percent at medium risk of automation, and thirty-nine percent are at low risk of automation. Industries most at-risk of automation in the region are retail trade, accommodations and food services, and construction. In 2018, these industries accounted for nearly 300,000 jobs, or a quarter of all jobs in the area. Jobs in these three sectors are projected to grow by eight percent, adding another 23,500 jobs by 2023.

The Automation Risk report also noted that women in the region are at a slightly higher risk of being impacted by automation than men because they are disproportionately employed in high automation risk occupations, including office administration, retail, and food service. Of all ethnic and racial groups, historically minoritized workers are most at-risk of being impacted by automation due to the disproportionate concentration of these workers in high and medium automation risk occupations.

Some respondents in our poll noted career changes as a result of job loss: "The pandemic is affecting my income. I work part-time and my hours are reduced by 50%. However, I discovered some resources where I'm able to work towards an online certificate and could possibly position me to change careers."

Guest Viewpoint:

Needed: Pathways to
Opportunity



By **Pat Fong Kushida**,
President and CEO of the
Sacramento Asian Pacific
Chamber of Commerce

As a minority business woman I know that injustice and inequity are not just morally wrong, but stand in the way of innovation, opportunity and value creation.

Did you know that over the past 10 years America's minority entrepreneurs started over half of the two million new businesses in America? Or that 46% of all small businesses in California are minority owned? The power of minority enterprise is here and growing.

Then the global pandemic hit. Illness, death and widespread economic devastation followed. New federal data shows that the effects of COVID-19 on small businesses varied heavily from place to place, with coastal regions and large metros hardest hit, and industries like restaurants and retail — where minority entrepreneurs are more concentrated — suffering greater losses.

With the shutdown looming last year, the Asian Chamber launched its Business Triage Center that helped thousands of small businesses apply for disaster loans and grants, access PPE for their staff, connect to HR and employment law resources, and make the complicated transition to an online business model. In Sacramento, a relief campaign led by City leaders and administered by the Sierra Health Foundation set aside funds to support minority businesses struggling with the effects of the pandemic. The Asian Chamber, in partnership with a cohort of Sacramento's ethnic chambers, the Metro Chamber and Property and Business Improvement Districts, oversaw the distribution of grants to 220 minority businesses located along Sacramento's aging corridors that kept them afloat and their employees safe. These are just a few examples of how our communities are navigating the pandemic and getting back on our feet.

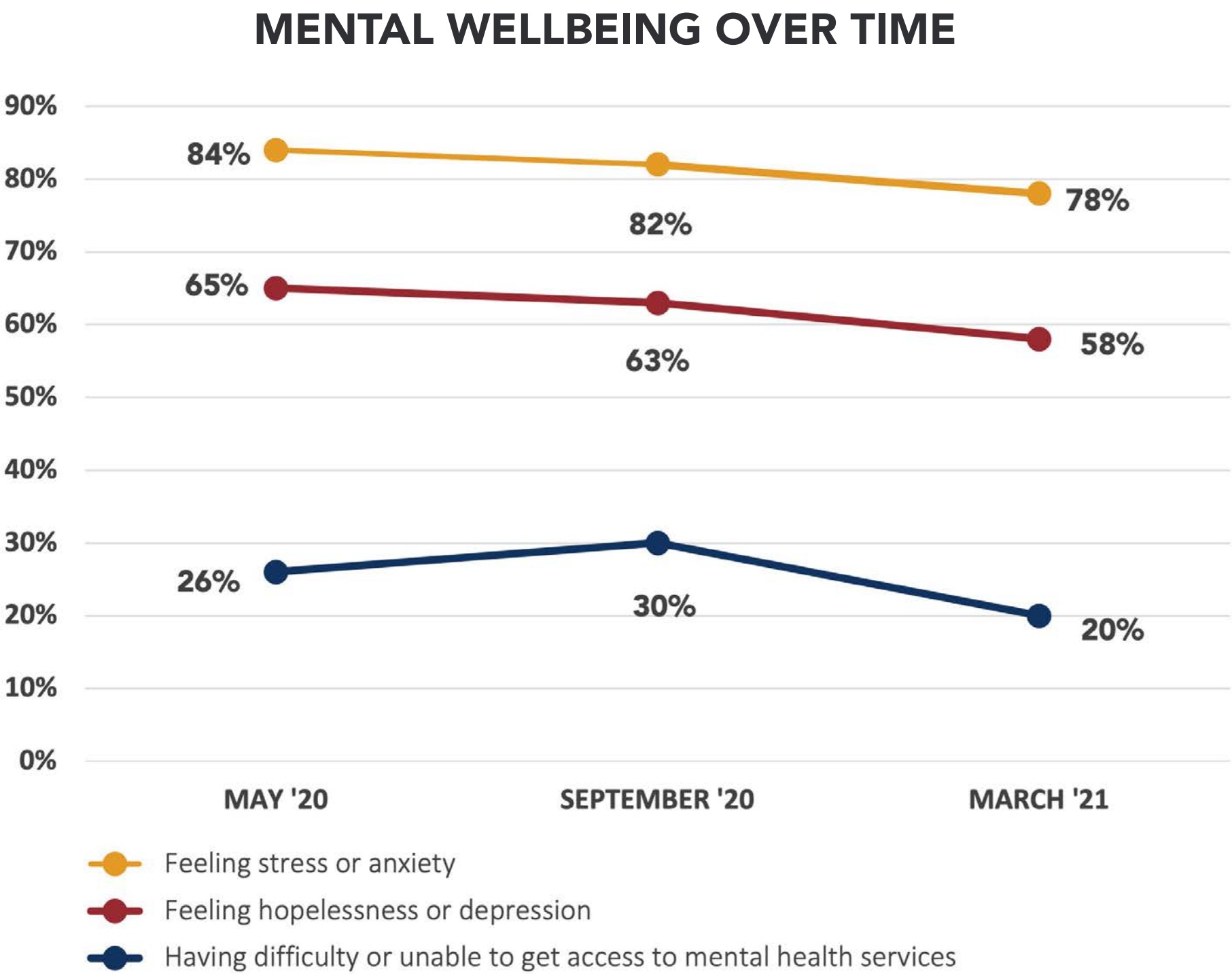
Today with the health crisis waning and the economy opening, three big forces confront us all. The first are the growing economic disparities in our communities that have been exposed by COVID. The second is the rapid growth of remote work, automation and digitization all accelerated by the pandemic. The third is the rise of racism, hate and violence directed at Asian Americans and other minority groups.

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that our future together is just not interconnected, but interdependent. Technology and global markets have seen to this. As a minority business woman I know that injustice and inequity are not just morally wrong, but stand in the way of innovation, opportunity and value creation. As we build back from the pandemic and create the next economy, we should all insist and expect that government policy and business practice becomes far more open, accepting, and inclusive. We all benefit when our minority businesses succeed.

Spotlight #3: The Mental and Emotional Toll of the Pandemic

In the last year, the pandemic has taken an immense mental and emotional toll on our communities. Throughout the year, between seventy-eight and eighty-four percent of respondents were experiencing feelings of stress or anxiety at least one day in the past week, and between fifty-eight and sixty-five percent were experiencing feelings of hopelessness or depression at least one day in the past week.

Despite high levels of mental and emotional health distress, the percentage of respondents having difficulty or unable to access mental health services was also significant throughout the year. At least one fifth of those struggling said that they were unable to access mental health services.

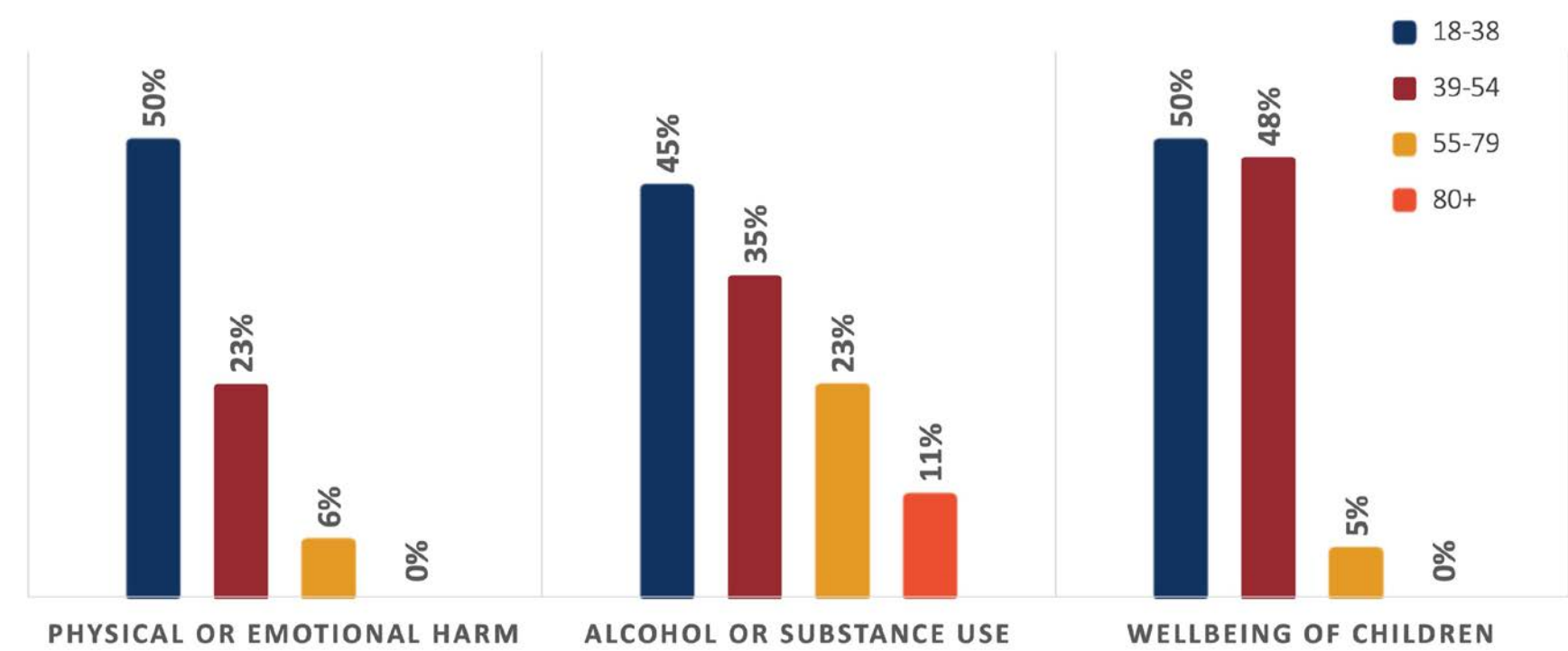


“The Coronavirus pandemic is currently impacting me the most as an inescapable toxic stress affecting all aspects of my life personally, professionally, spiritually, etc.”



In October, the mental toll was especially tough on those who are younger (18 to 38), those earning less, and people of color.

MENTAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH CONCERNS

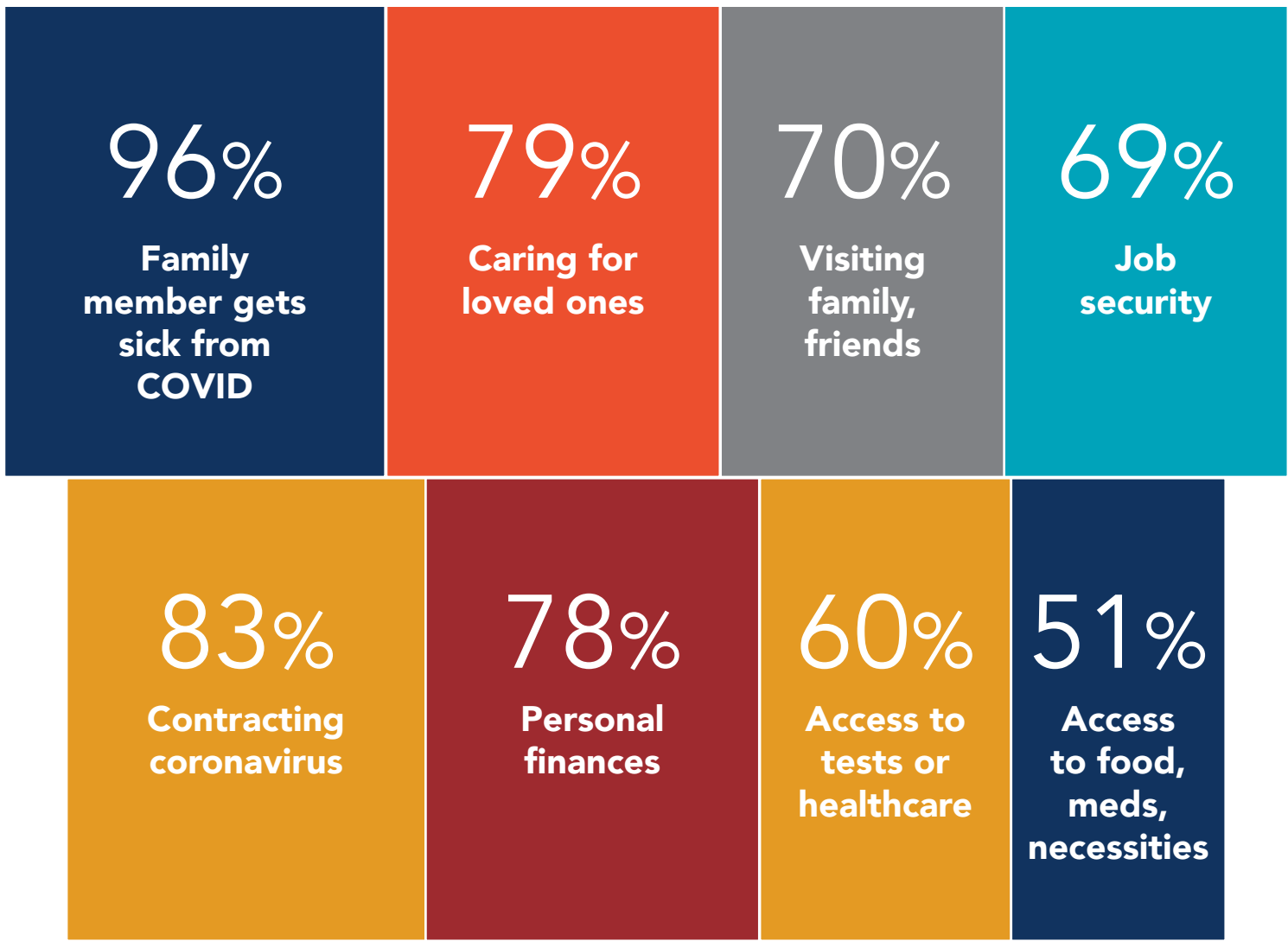


In October 2020, the types of feelings and concerns surrounding mental and emotional well-being varied among different age brackets. 18 to 38-year-olds experienced the highest levels of mental and emotional strain across all five categories measured.

In terms of income level, the likelihood of experiencing stress or anxiety, or depression or hopelessness, decreased as income level increased. Hispanic respondents were most likely to experience feelings of stress or anxiety at least one day in the last seven days (92%), followed by Asian/NHPI respondents (85%), and Black respondents (82%). Respondents who are white were least likely to have experienced these feelings (73%), although still at a high percentage. Hispanic respondents

were also most likely to experience feelings of hopelessness or depression at least one day in the last seven days (67%), followed by Asian/NHPI and Black respondents (both at 64%). Respondents who are white were least likely to have experienced these feelings (52%).

In most categories, Hispanic respondents reported more concern over factors brought on by COVID-19.



“The biggest impact of the coronavirus has been the stress of being isolated. Not being able to be social with friends and family has had a direct impact on my mental well-being.”





Unlike concerns over physical or emotional harm and alcohol or substance use, which decreased slightly from October 2020 to March 2021, concerns about the well-being of children have gone up. This could possibly be attributed to concerns over the effects of prolonged distance or hybrid learning, or the lack of or decrease in social activities for children.



BOTTOMLINE:

Although economic recovery often dominates the conversation, the emotional and mental toll of the last year has created a mental health crisis that, similar to the economic crisis, exposes the gaps in mental healthcare.

“The restrictions are causing mental harm to my family and children. COVID is real, but social isolation, boredom, and loneliness are real. Zoom and FaceTime don’t cut it.”

Guest Viewpoint:

The Long-Term Mental Health Consequences of COVID-19



By **Patricia Rodriguez**,
Senior Vice President and
Area Manager for Kaiser
Permanente

Even before the virus began its destructive path across our region and the nation, Kaiser Permanente was committed to building an overall stronger mental and emotional foundation among members and our communities.

Valley Vision's final poll report on COVID-19 validates what we have been seeing within our own patient population at Kaiser Permanente: Sadly, the pandemic has taken its toll on the physical, mental, and emotional health of individuals across our region.

People of color and younger individuals have fared worse, warranting a targeted approach to helping these hard-hit populations to heal from the trauma of this pandemic and to support their long-term well-being.

Even before the virus began its destructive path across our region and the nation, Kaiser Permanente was committed to building an overall stronger mental and emotional foundation among members and our communities.

In schools, workplaces, and through diverse partnerships, we continue to provide information, resources, and training to develop skills that help to protect and support physical, emotional, and mental health through adversity, trauma, and crises. And we continue to seek new ways to close health disparity gaps and remove barriers to accessing care, particularly in our Black and Hispanic communities.

Thankfully, we are seeing promising signs that the pandemic will soon be behind us, especially as millions line up for vaccinations. But the mental health consequences from COVID-19 – stress, anxiety, depression, and substance use disorder (SUD) – are expected to last long after the pandemic.

The psychological distress from COVID-19 caused a wave of people to cope by drinking alcohol and using drugs, while leading others to relapse. Soon after the quarantine began, substance use visits shot up by 51% at Kaiser Permanente. And while concerns about substance use have decreased since early to mid-pandemic times, they still remain high.

Tragically, stigma is the largest obstacle to recovery, treatment, and societal acceptance for people living with substance abuse and mental health conditions. Our work is contributing to ending stigma that keeps people silent and creating a culture of acceptance and support for mental health. This includes helping individuals understand how to build resilience, normalize the conversation around mental health, and remove barriers to care, including stigma.

By working together to bring mental health and wellness out in the open and creating a culture of acceptance and support, we can make a positive difference in our homes, workplaces, schools, and communities – even long after the pandemic has ended.

Spotlight #4: Educating Through a Pandemic

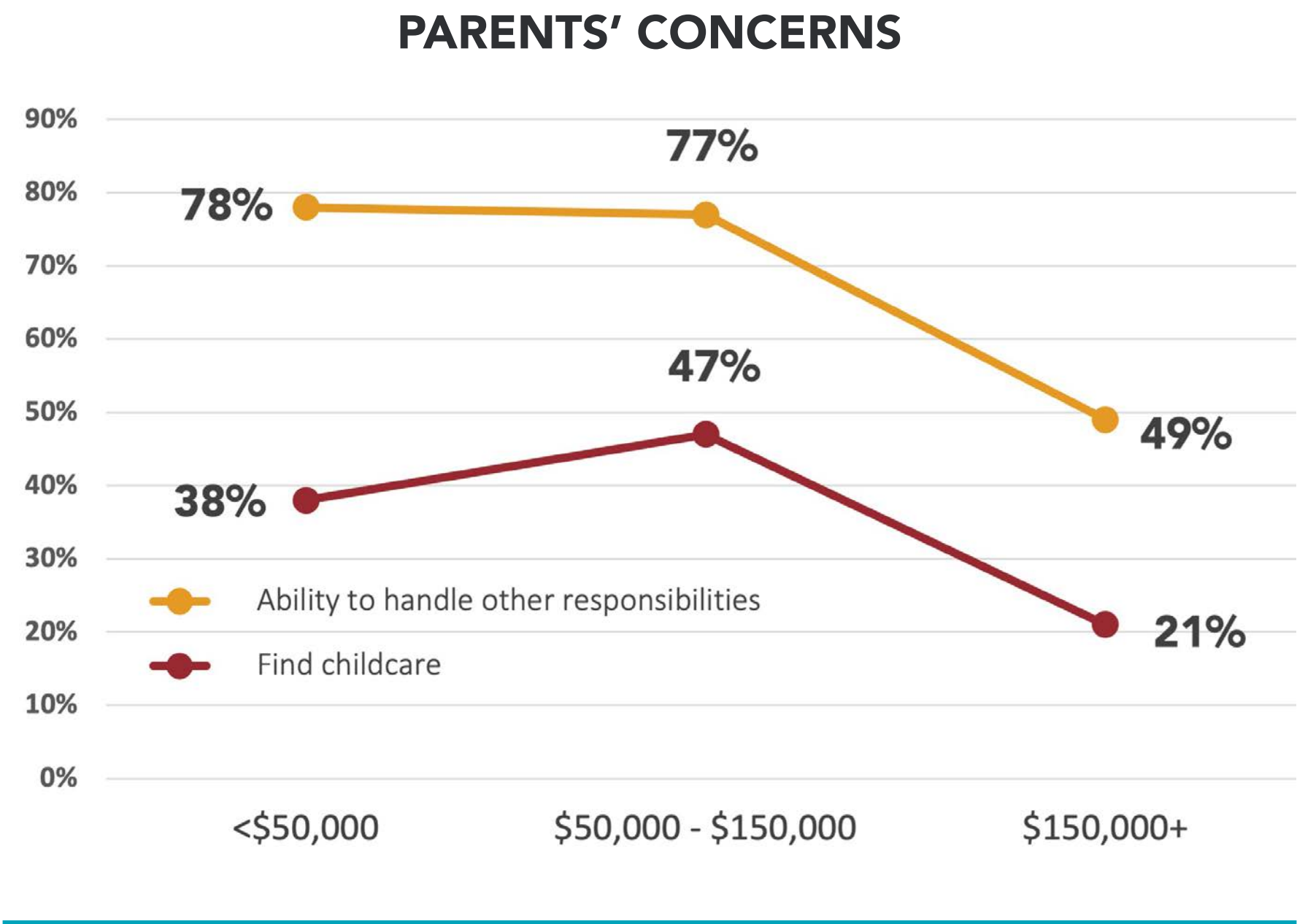
For most parents, it has been a year of educating from home. In July 2020, eighty-seven percent of those with children reported that their children were not going to school in person. In October 2020, thirty-three percent of those with children reported that their children were not currently going to school in person, and would not be in the coming school year. In March of 2021, thirty-three percent of those with children reported that their children were doing some kind of remote learning, and forty-six percent reported that their children were not going to school in-person at all.

Many parents are concerned about the impact that distant learning is having on their children.

Parents are especially concerned about their children falling behind academically (70%); the loss of services, such as school lunches (45%); and finding childcare (42%).

Additionally, educating children from home has also taken a toll on many aspects of parents' lives, including elements of their economic security. Those with children were more likely to have lost income due to the pandemic (54% as compared to 34%). Seventy-one percent of those with children reported

being concerned about their own ability to handle other responsibilities. Sixty-nine percent of parents reported that having children attend school partly or fully remotely was having a negative effect on their ability to do their job. Notably, those earning less were more likely to be concerned about handling other responsibilities and finding childcare.



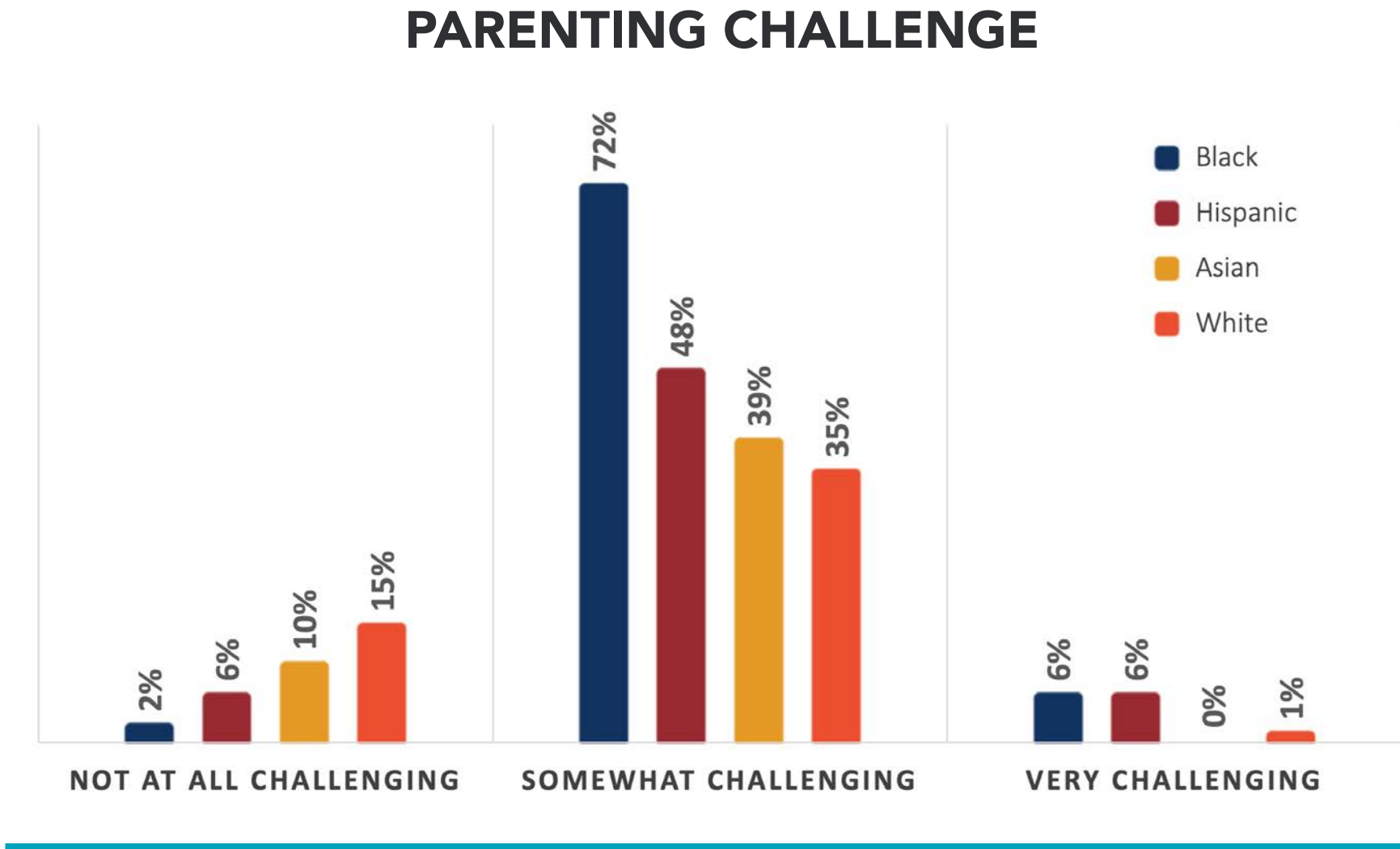
Percent of parents concerned, by income. The likelihood of having these concerns decreased as income level increased.

"I worry mostly about my 17-year-old and how he struggles with distance learning. He is in danger of not graduating and he is depressed. I also worry about the two year furlough pay cuts at my job. It's a big financial hit but I'm at least blessed to still be working."



Throughout the year, respondents with children under 18 living at home have struggled.

Asked to rate how challenging the experience has been from a one to a ten (one being the least challenging and ten being the most challenging), between one-fourth and one-fifth of parents said the experience was very challenging, with a rating of eight or higher. Further, people of color were more likely to report feeling somewhat or very challenged.



“The main impact in my household is on my children. I am concerned about their emotional and mental health as they continue to stay home and also as they transition back to school. Job security may also be an issue further down the line.”

BOTTOMLINE:

Many parents are overwhelmed and stretched thin by having to juggle home-schooling, work obligations, households and personal affairs. There is broad consensus that schools at all levels, from daycare and preschools to colleges and universities, should open with some form of adjustments. At the same time, sixty-eight percent of parents are concerned that reopening schools will lead to more virus outbreaks.



Guest Viewpoint:

How 2020 Changed the
Future of Higher Education



By **Robert Nelsen**,
President of Sacramento
State University

"The past year has changed us. The pandemic changed us. George Floyd's murder and the killing of Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery, and far too many others, changed us. The tumultuous 2020 elections and the insurrection in our nation's Capital changed us."

Decades of work in higher education did not prepare me for the day we had to tell the campus community to go home. We have always worked to bring people together at Sacramento State, but COVID-19 turned everything upside down and physically forced us apart.

On March 15, 2020, I sent a campus wide message that we were to immediately begin transitioning to fully remote learning and operations. We had to stay away from one another. It was antithetical to all that universities do. Faculty were forced to rethink their syllabi, including culminating experiences such as performances, final exams, senior projects, and thesis/dissertation defenses. Staff had to find creative ways to work remotely. Worst of all, students were forced to face the reality that they might never step foot on campus as a Sac State student again. It was devastating.

But the Hornet Family is resilient. Within days, our Information Resources and Technology (IRT) team was providing laptops and WIFI hotspots that our students, faculty, and staff needed to pivot to remote learning and work. Faculty began delivering classes virtually. Staff set up their home work spaces and hosted Zoom meetings. Students finished their semester, some completed their college careers, completely online.

Over the past year, we have continued to adapt. Our students, faculty, and staff with children have overcome unimaginable challenges. Unfortunately, the pandemic is not over, and we are facing a new post-COVID reality - one that we have to create together.

So, what will the post-COVID University look like? We are still working on that. We know that the fall semester will be different, but we are planning to be back on campus. Once one or more of the COVID vaccines are officially approved by the FDA (they are currently available through emergency use authorization), the California State University system and Sacramento State will require all students and employees who come to campus to be vaccinated.

We anticipate the majority of classes will be in-person. Our offices will be open. We will have performances. We will have sports, even football.

We will also apply the lessons we learned over the year. We will follow CDC public health guidelines, such as social distancing and face coverings. We will continue to offer virtual options to students and employees when possible. We will continually examine and improve our processes. We will offer wellness resources to students and employees and support them in any way possible, including fiscally.

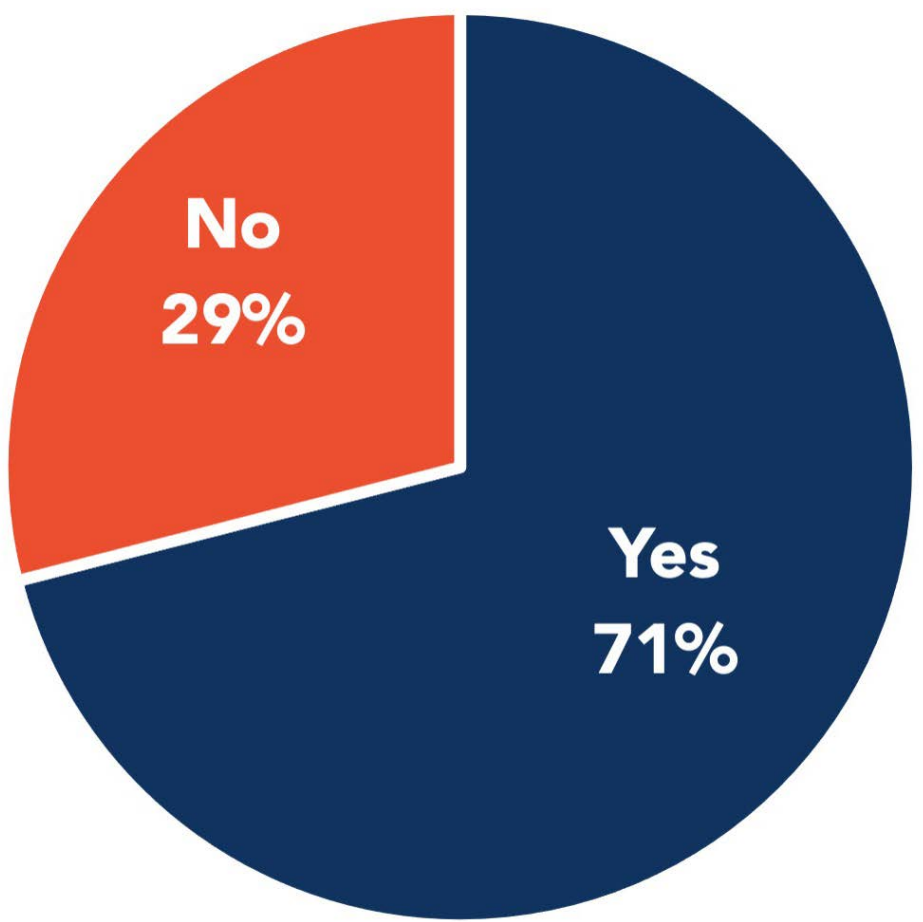
While we will be back together again, we will have changed. The past year has changed us. We have endured loss and fear, anger, and pain. But we have also learned about our own individual and collective abilities to adapt, and to evolve. We found a way to come together, even as we were forced to be apart.

Spotlight #5: Moving Beyond COVID-19

In Spring 2021, we are beginning to see the dimensions of post-COVID life. As of late April, more than 1.6 million doses of the vaccine have been given in the Capital region and we anticipate that everyone who wants a vaccine will be vaccinated by early summer 2021.

However, vaccination skepticism, children who can't yet get vaccinated, unknowns about variants, and other factors will likely continue to impact our lives through 2021 and beyond.

KNOW SOMEONE WITH CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASE

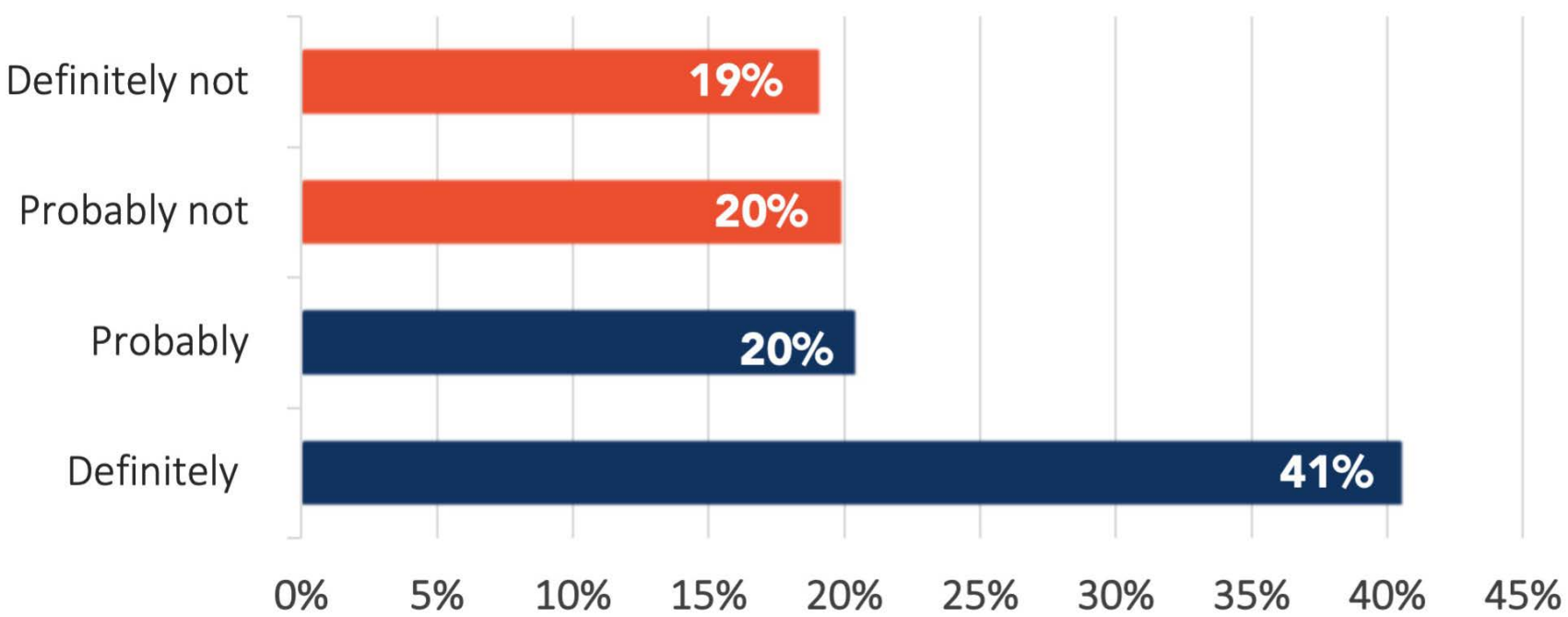


There is a significant amount of vaccine skepticism in the region.

When asked in March, of those respondents who had not yet received the vaccine at that time, forty-one percent said that they would definitely get the vaccine, twenty percent said they would probably get the vaccine, another twenty percent said they would probably not get the vaccine, and nineteen percent said they would definitely not get the vaccine.

The most commonly cited reason for not getting the vaccine was a concern about possible side effects (61%) followed by a concern that these vaccines are too new (53%).

WOULD YOU GET THE VACCINE?



My hope for the vaccine is "It will bring things back to normal and will lead to a breakthrough in RNA based vaccines for other illnesses."

Who is most concerned about vaccines?

From a political lens, Republicans are more skeptical than Democrats or Independents with fifty-six percent responding that they would probably or definitely not get the vaccine compared to twenty percent of Democrats and forty percent of Independents. Democrats were the most confident in the development and approval process with fifty-eight percent feeling very confident about it compared to thirty to thirty-one percent of Republicans and Independents.

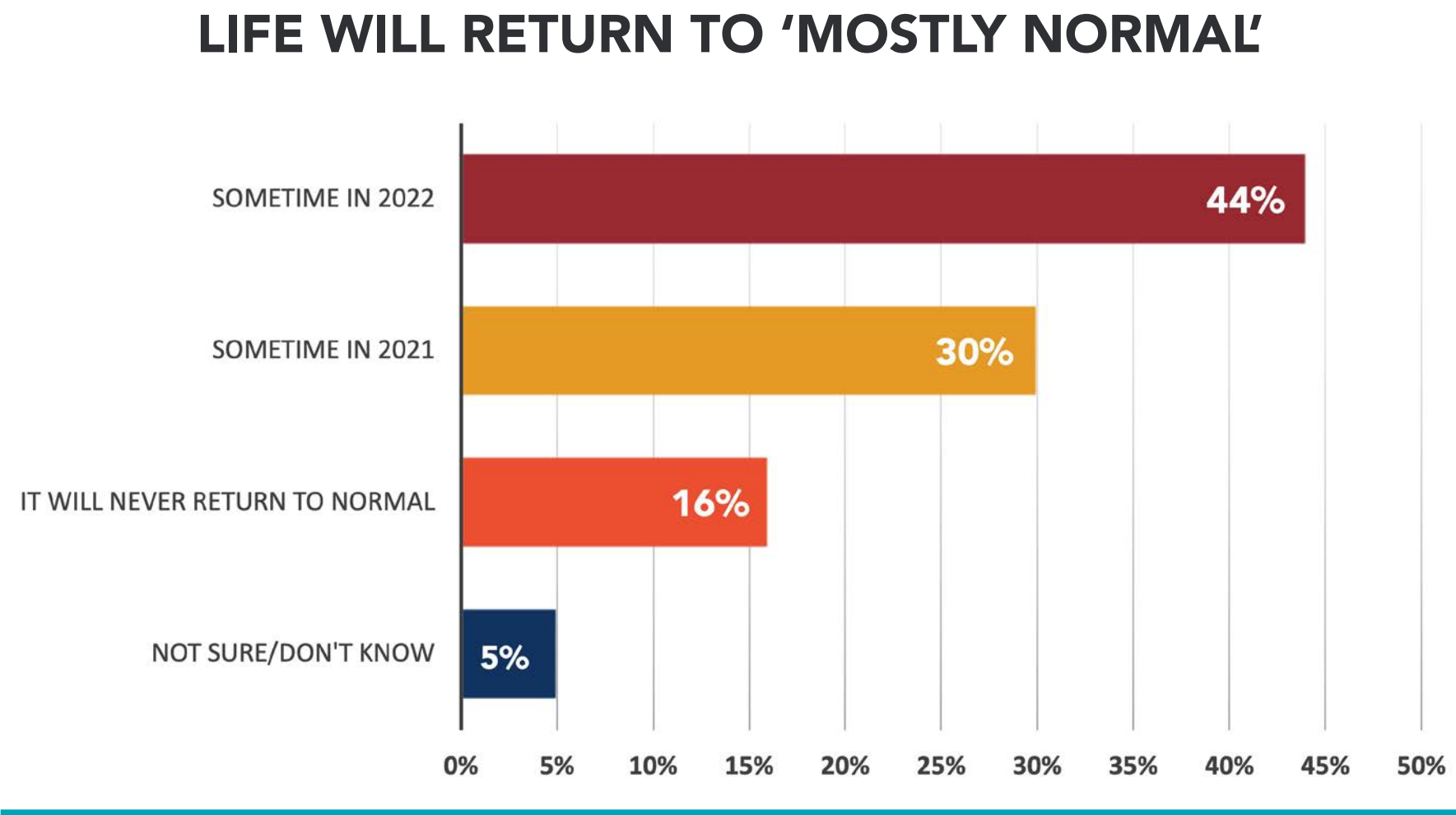
From a race and ethnicity lens, Black respondents were significantly more skeptical than other race/ethnicities, with sixty-five percent reporting that they probably or definitely would not get the vaccine compared to forty-four percent of white respondents, twenty-nine percent of Hispanic respondents, and fifteen percent of Asian/NHPI.

This reflects historic mistrust of government health programs and medical institutions based on past victimization and treatment by these institutions. From the poll, Black and Hispanic respondents were much less likely to trust the vaccine development and approval process than white or Asian/NHPI respondents.

Finally, looking across income categories, sixty-five percent of those making less than \$30,000 annually would probably or definitely not get the vaccine were it available to them. They were also more skeptical about the development and approval process of the vaccine, with thirty-two percent citing that they are not very/not at all confident compared to ten to fourteen percent in all other income categories.

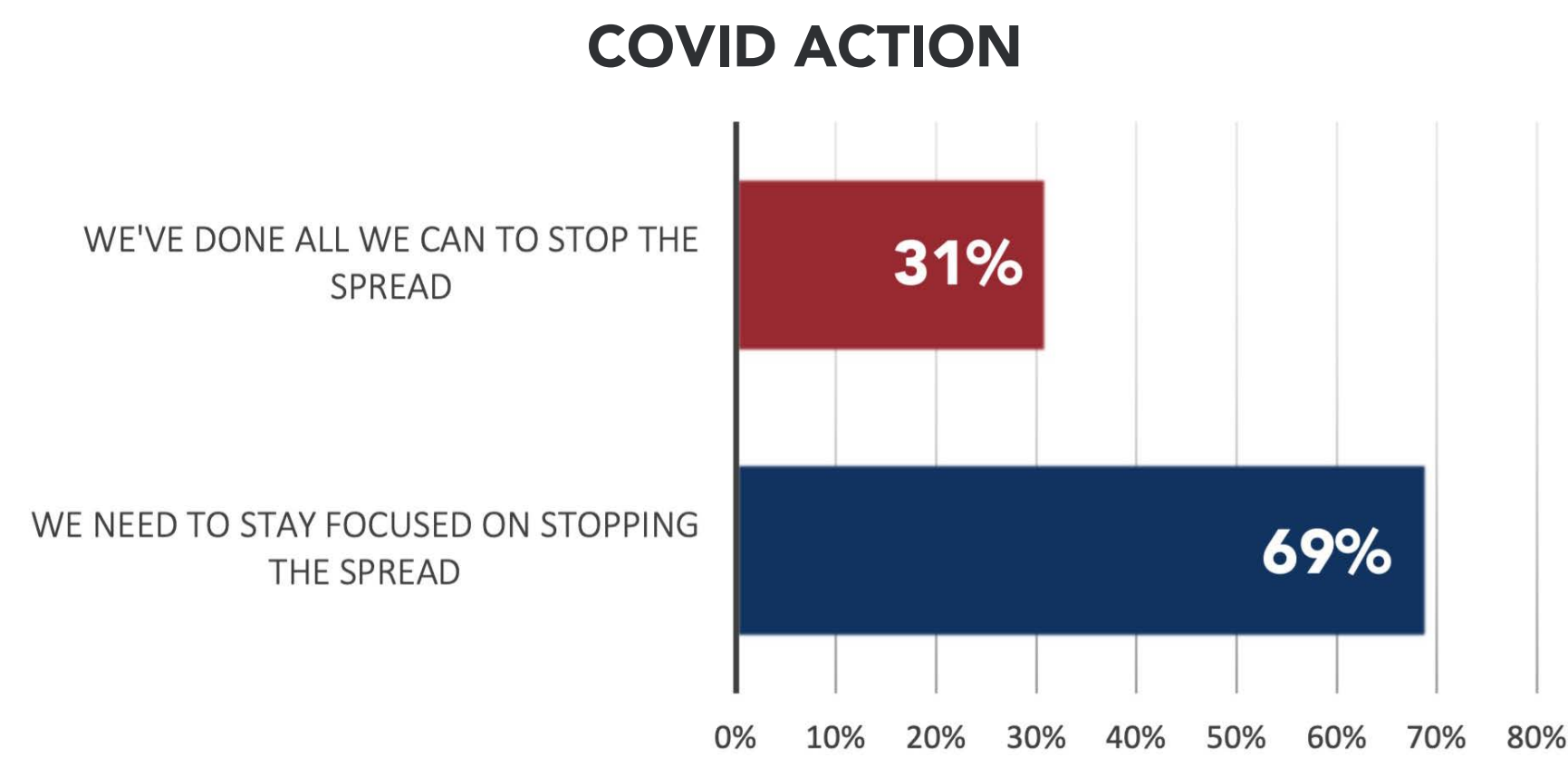
When will we get back to normal?

The majority of respondents didn't think life would return to normal until sometime in 2022. Thirty percent were more optimistic, citing the rate of community vaccinations that we began to see in March and April this year. Another sixteen percent were concerned however that we may never actually return to our pre-pandemic lifestyle.



*My concern about the vaccine is...
“It will exacerbate inequality and marginalized communities will be left behind in terms of vaccine availability.”*

Achieving high levels of vaccination in our region will be a critical component of getting back to normal, whenever it occurs.



BOTTOMLINE:

Overcoming vaccine skepticism will require a campaign that instills confidence and addresses mistrust by enlisting trusted messengers to engage hard-to-reach or skeptical communities. Education and communication campaigns as well as a concerted effort to outreach and engage vulnerable populations, like communities of color, people with lower incomes, English as a second language, and others will be needed.



“I’m enormously hopeful that vaccines will help us open back up and move forward. I hope that it will bring things back to normal and lead to a breakthrough in RNA-based vaccines for other illnesses. But, my concern is that it will exacerbate inequality, and that marginalized communities will be left behind in terms of vaccine availability.”

Valley Vision Vantage Point: From Relief to Recovery

Valley Vision CEO Evan Schmidt reflects on the state of the COVID-19 pandemic one year later, its effects on the region, and charts a vision for where we go from here

The impact of the 2020 pandemic will be felt for years to come and likely signify historic shifts in our social, political, and economic landscape. In addition to the toll taken on lives, well-being, and jobs, one constant throughout the pandemic has been the rapid-response to unprecedented system transformation.

We learned that bending our systems doesn't break them and that things we had previously thought would be impossible to achieve, turned out to be possible.

In so many significant ways, we were able to innovate long-standing norms:

Deliver education and health care over video platform?

Our region's health systems and education institutions did that in a period of a month.

More than double the number of people being assisted through food banks, restaurant programs, and community organization efforts? We did that through coordinated food assistance programs, expanded efforts of community-based organization and others, and community compassion.

Expand housing and services for those experiencing homelessness by repurposing motels into shelters and providing coordinated services? We did that through robust government investments and strong collaboration among the private-sector and community-based organizations.

Salvage our restaurateurs by reimagining permitting requirements to allow for in-street outdoor dining? We did that and are enjoying new walkable and vibrant spaces region-wide.

Vaccinate over one million people in our region? We are doing that through coordinated efforts across government, business, education, and health systems.



Evan Schmidt, Valley Vision
Chief Executive Officer

"We have been presented with an opportunity to build on the changes that have made life better, easier, and more equitable, and to reimagine a more resilient and socially just world."



This past year we also endured a record-breaking fire season, a divisive election, and an assault on our nation's Capital. In addition, in the face of high-profile racial injustices across the nation, we invigorated our commitment to social justice through public demonstrations and reforms. Our ability to transform systems over the past year has been a revelation. But, maintaining and pushing further system change in post-pandemic conditions is not guaranteed.

How do we build back different?

"Reimagine" and "resilience" are the buzzwords of 2021 and the recognition of the potential to make permanent system change for the better is widely recognized. These are big aspirations, but as our economy opens up - business resumes, schools restart, and recovery investment flows - Valley Vision believes it's critical that we adopt these values and advance actions that support equitable and responsive systems.

BOTTOMLINE:

Through our year of polling, we have identified important areas of focus based on the experiences of the people in our region: inequitable economic impacts of the pandemic, the transformation of the workplace, the mental and emotional toll of the pandemic, and the challenges of educating children remotely throughout the year.

The Bottomline

As we think about how to address the challenges we currently face and strive to work ourselves out of the hardships left in the wake of this pandemic, there are key values we must hold:

Listen to those most impacted by inequities:

We learned that the pandemic impacted different communities very disparately. Recovery must be guided by community voices in order to address racial inequity and invest in our youngest generations. Additionally, parents have been stretched beyond what is reasonable and children's education has had significant disruption.

It's critical that we address the racial and other inequities and listen to community voices.

Enact bold leadership from local and trusted institutions:

We learned that people in our region trust local institutions, including nonprofits, philanthropy, business, government, education, and health systems more than state or federal sources.

With the tremendous changes to our economy and institutions, local leaders play a unique role to shape our region. Brave, collaborative, and compassionate leadership is required if we are build on the momentum of change that has been enacted.

Lead and listen with care and compassion: Our poll shows that stress, anxiety, depression, substance use, and violence in the home have increased across the board. Additionally, trust in media, government, institutions, and each other is dangerously thin. In 2021 and beyond, we will have to cope with the longer affects of the trauma that people endured and attend to our civic fabric to make space for disagreement and prevent misinformation.

With increasing ability to re-enter community life, we will need to embrace each other and our collective humanity to find our way through the social turbulence of our changing times.



Valley Vision remains committed to addressing tough regional challenges as we have since our founding in 1994. Some areas where we are taking action include:

Advancing actionable research and leading community-engaged work: Engaging communities and leading with data is key to building ambitious initiatives for regional prosperity, equity, and sustainability. [Valley Vision's polling initiative](#), the data we collect, and our [community-centered work](#) — for example, the [Community Air Protection Program](#) — are creating a foundation for ambitious agendas for livable communities.

Inclusive Economic Recovery: Valley Vision supports an inclusive economy through our work implementing [Our Path Forward: The Prosperity Strategy](#). This regional inclusive economic development plan articulates market opportunities to build inclusive pathways to prosperity. Valley Vision is also supporting equitable economic recovery through growing our talent pipeline in the region. [We work with the workforce system](#), educational institutions, and employers to build a system of inclusive pathways — including training and job opportunities — into high growth regional sectors.

Digital Inclusion and Equity: The digital divide has never been so stark as in 2020. Valley Vision has enacted a holistic and multi-pronged approach to advance digital inclusion, including [supporting broadband access through infrastructure planning](#) and advocacy for affordable programs; technology and device access for all households, and digital skills training to ensure that all can access opportunities in an increasingly digital economy.

Advancing an Equitable Low Carbon Economy: The pandemic has required active emergency response. At the same time, California experienced record-setting fires across the state and our region was severely impacted by the resulting smoke. Addressing climate change continues to be a critical priority for us and California remains one of the most ambitious places in the world for enacting climate policy. The future for our region is growing a low carbon economy and it will be critical to center equity as we do. Valley Vision is growing a clean and just economy and [building equitable pathways to clean jobs](#).

This report focuses on the key themes that emerged from our year of public opinion polling about the effects of the pandemic. The data paints a vivid picture of transformation to day-to-day lives. It also provides a clear sense of direction by showing us the array of problems people face that we must address, as well as the bright spots of hope.

Listening carefully to the voices and stories of our region through this unprecedented time will be our north star if we stay focused on reimagining a resilient, just, prosperous, and vibrant future.



Survey Methodology

Institute for Social Research at Sacramento State University

Summary

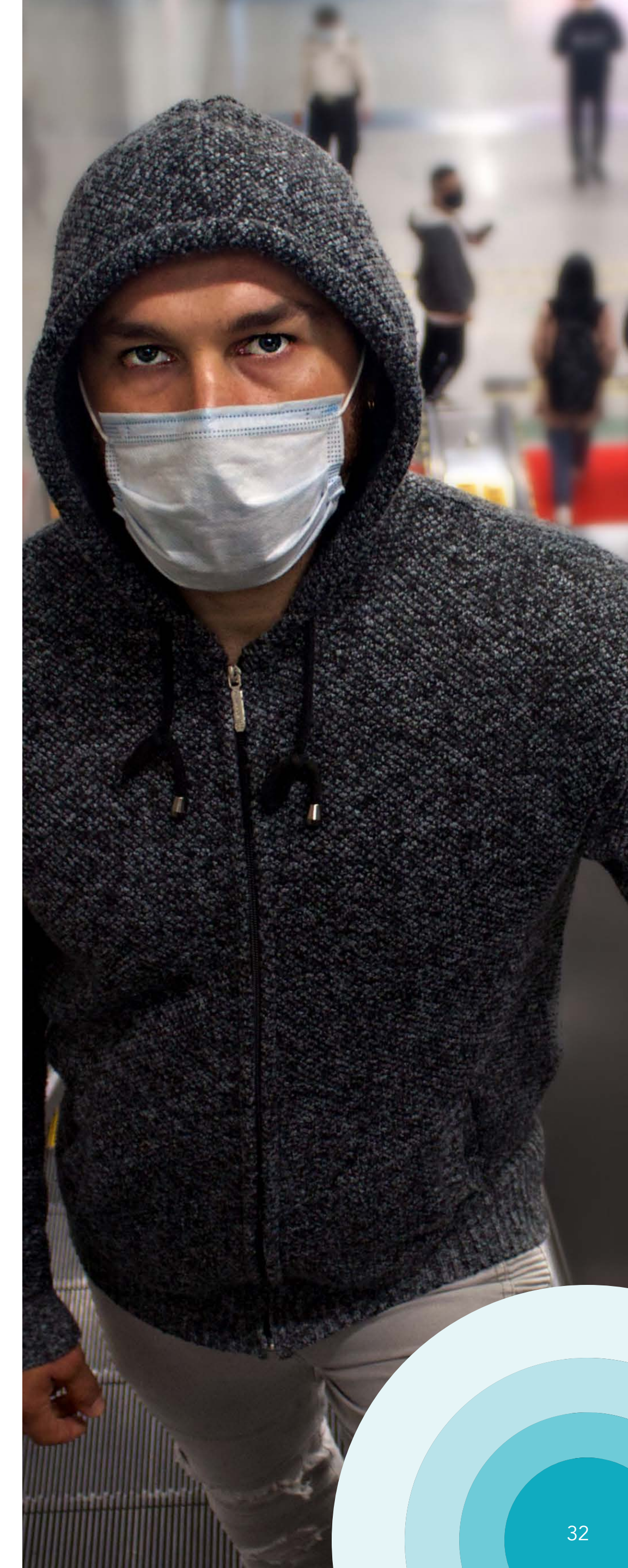
Since 2017, the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at Sacramento State University, in partnership with Valley Vision, have used an online survey panel to collect public opinion information about the Greater Sacramento Region. Survey panels are a representative group of individuals who have agreed to participate in multiple surveys over time. In response to the declining response rates and reliability associated with telephone surveys, online survey panels have become an alternative way to gather data about a specific region or population (e.g., GfK's Knowledge Panel, Yougov's Omnibus Panel, the National Opinion Research Center (NORC)'s Amerispeak Panel, and the Pew Research Center's American Trends).

Individuals were recruited into the panel by an invitation postcard, which was sent to a random sample of Sacramento Valley households. Any adult in the household could join the panel by going to the online profile or by calling ISR to indicate a preference to participate with mail-in surveys. The strength of this probability-based sampling method is that virtually everyone in the Greater Sacramento Valley had a chance of being included. The most recent recruitment for the Valley Vision panel occurred in January 2021.

The current panel is made up of 1,280 residents from El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Yuba, Sutter, and Yolo counties. Panelists have the option of receiving a \$5 electronic gift card every time they complete a survey. Statistical weighting is used to ensure that survey responses represent the Greater Sacramento Valley.

Survey Panel Methodology

Sampling and Recruitment | The Greater Sacramento Valley Panel uses probability-based sampling methods. Specifically, to recruit a random sample of Sacramento Valley residents we use the United States Postal Service Delivery Sequence File (USPS DSF) of California residential addresses (stratified geographically by county and Hispanic population), as a sampling frame. We send postcards or letters to the sampled residences and invite adult residents to join the panel (via a URL address, or by calling us to indicate a preference for mail participation). The strength of this sampling method is that virtually everyone in the population has a chance of being included in the sample, but those sampled must also choose to do so. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at California State University, Sacramento reviewed and approved recruitment procedures outlined above for protecting the rights of human research subjects.



Consent and Initial Profile | During recruitment (and at the beginning of each subsequent survey), panelists learn that their participation is entirely voluntary and that they have the right to opt out at any time. They also learn that their survey responses are strictly confidential. Immediately upon agreeing to join the panel, panelists complete a 15-minute survey that includes questions about their demographics, background, interests, personality, political identity, and household composition. This profile information is merged with future survey data collections, thereby reducing the need to ask panelists to answer these questions with each survey administered.

Survey Procedures | ISR uses the Qualtrics Research Suite online survey platform to administer surveys. The research team optimizes all surveys for completion on mobile phones and tablets, and provides Spanish translations. Panelists receive reminders to complete the surveys every three days following the initial invitation. All subsequent surveys have been offered in both English and Spanish. Each time a panelist completes a survey, s/he receives a \$5 Tango gift card, delivered directly to his or her email inbox (or home), which is redeemable at most online retailers. Panelists have the option to receive the Tango gift card or “donate” it back to the study so more people can participate.

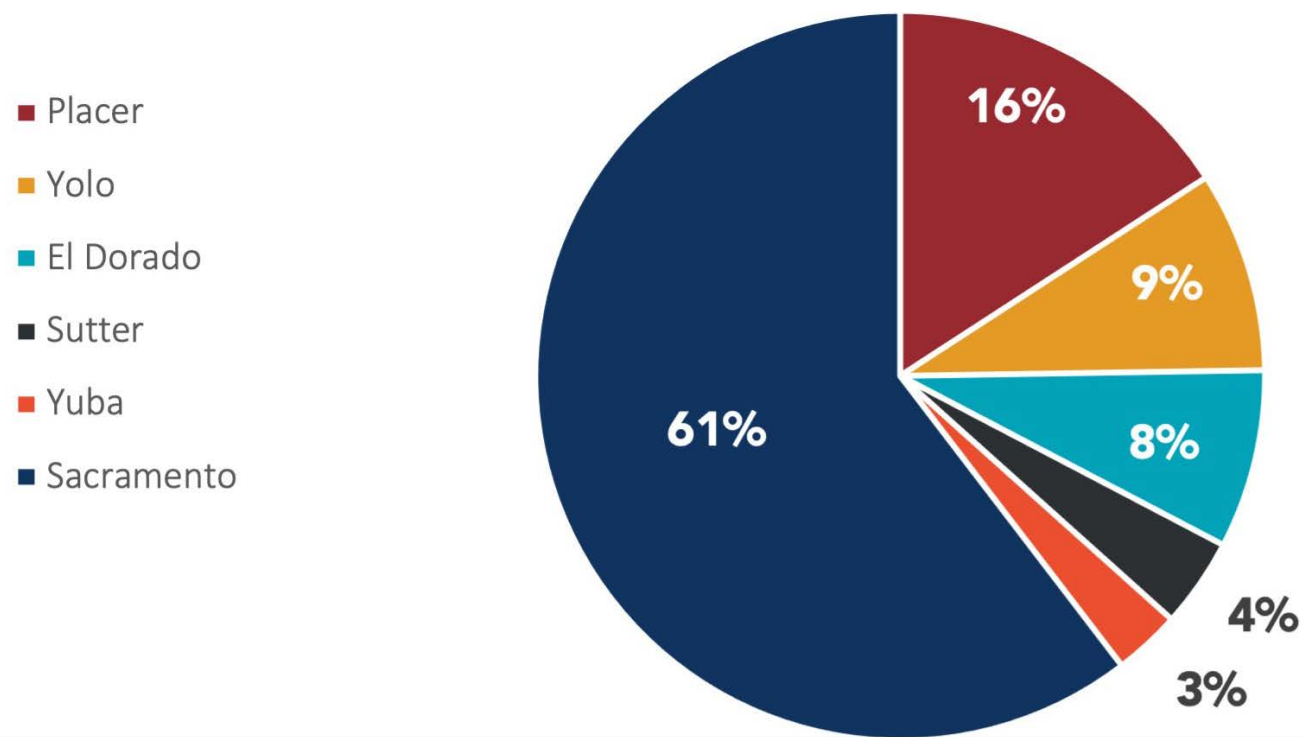
Survey Weighting and Analysis | For each survey, the weighting protocol proceeds in stages. First, the base weights are computed to reflect the various selection probabilities for respondents selected from different sampling frames. Second, we adjust for nonresponse and under-coverage by calibrating the base weights to known population-based control totals for gender and age, race/ethnicity, education, income and county using a ‘raking’ process. The population benchmarks are obtained from the most recent Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 5-year estimates and Nielsen Claritas estimates. Finally, we “trim” the raked weights to reduce extreme values. The weighting process ensures that the responses from the panelists responding to the survey will statistically represent the demographics of the Greater Sacramento Valley.

Surveys are analyzed by reporting out the percent of panelists (who are representative of the Greater Sacramento Valley) providing responses to the various questions. Survey results are also often broken down by panelist characteristics, such as gender, income levels, race, and other key demographic information. When the survey responses are broken down by these categories (or disaggregated into cross-tabulations), a statistical test is run to ensure that the differences among these groups are statistically significant (i.e., any differences are not the result of “noise” in the data).

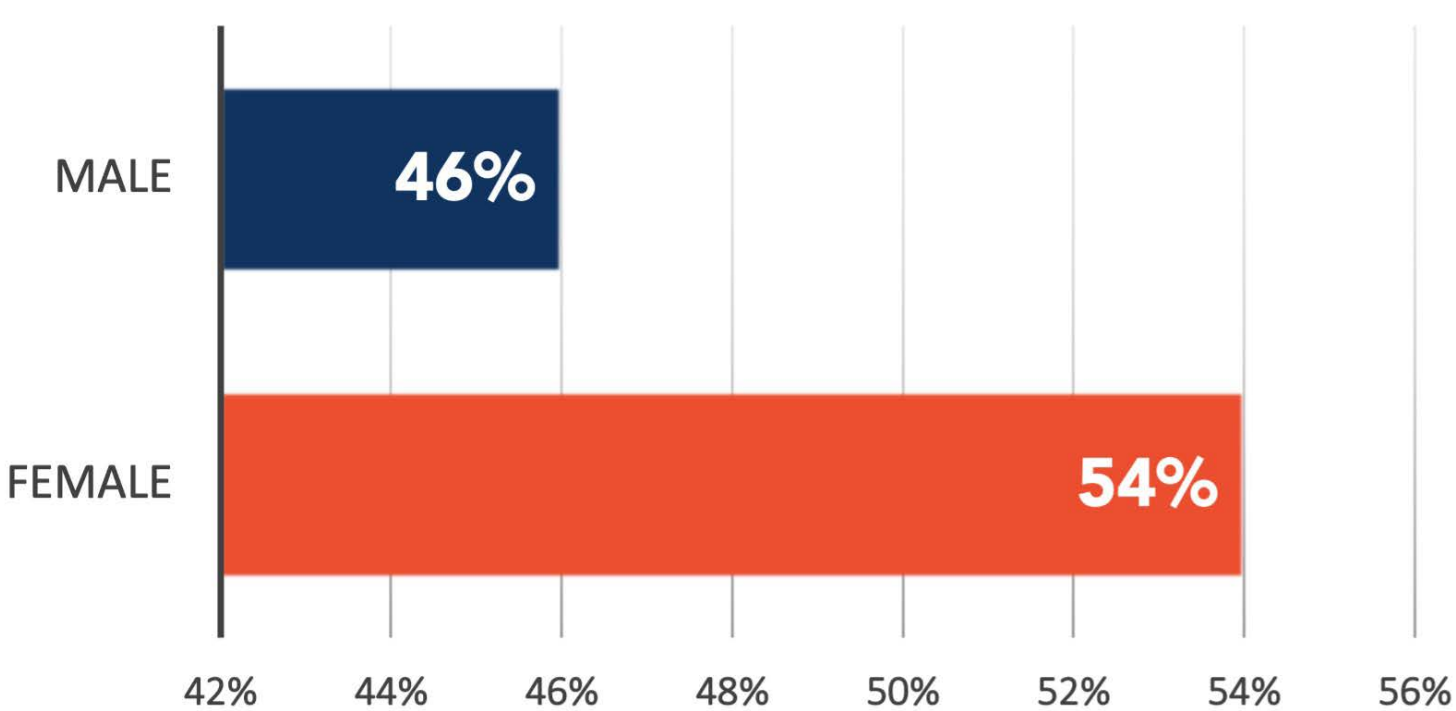


Survey Panel Demographics and Geographic Profile

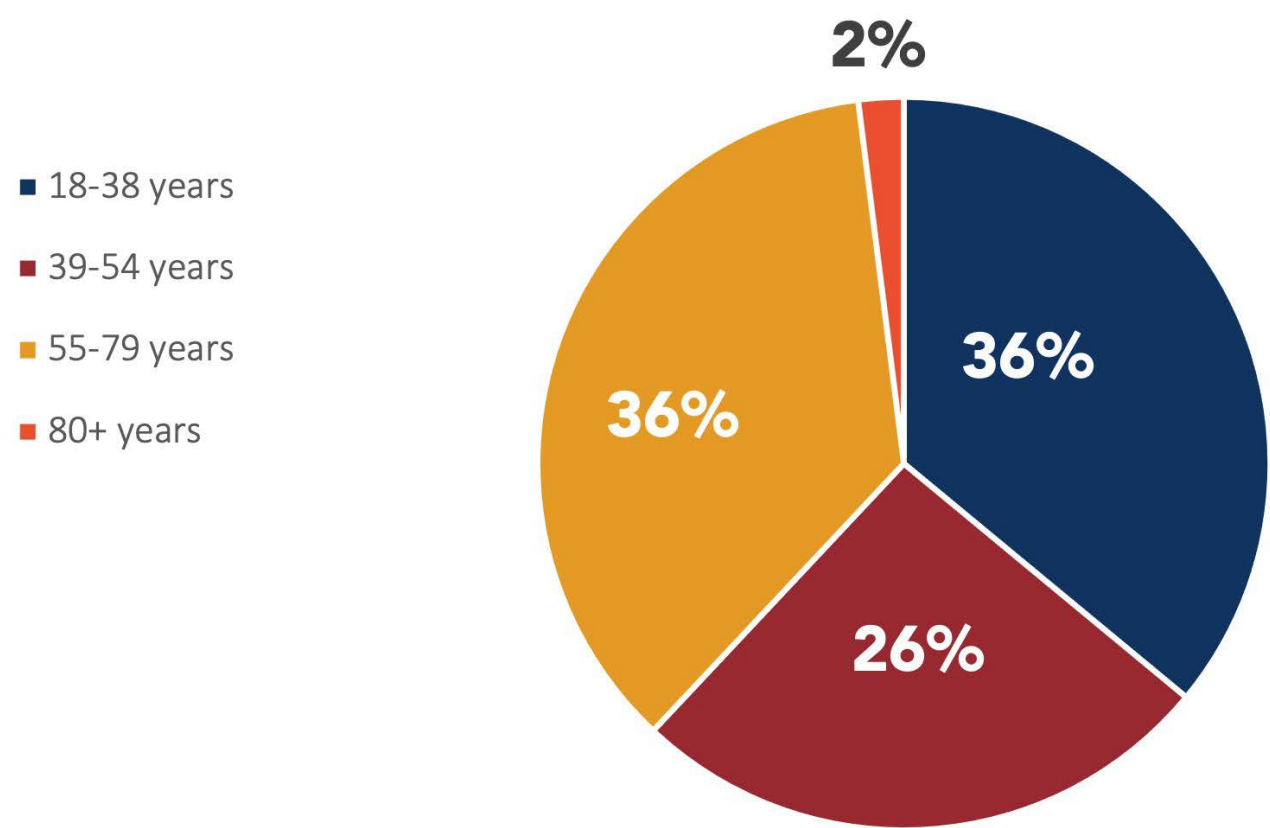
COUNTY OF RESIDENCE



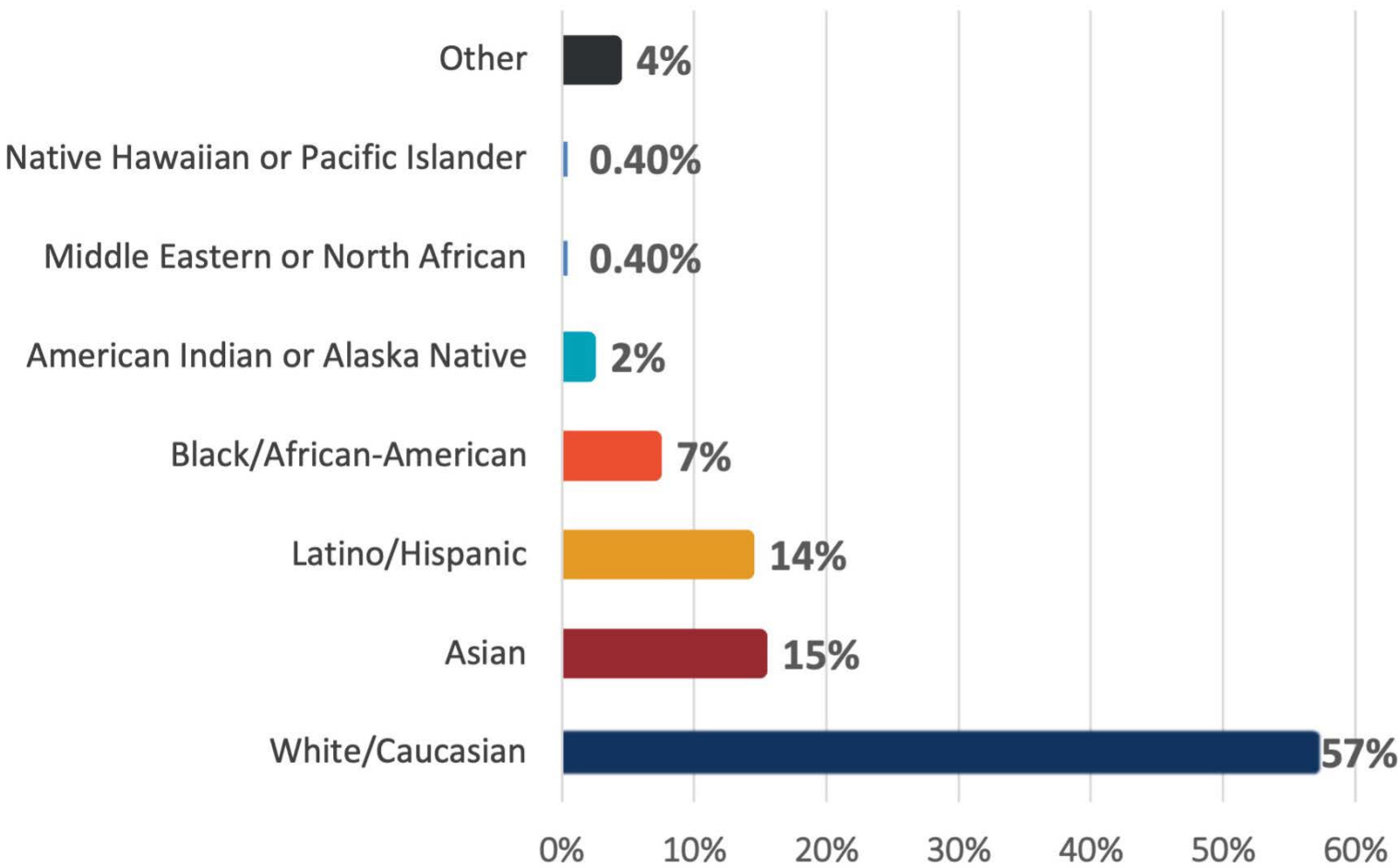
GENDER



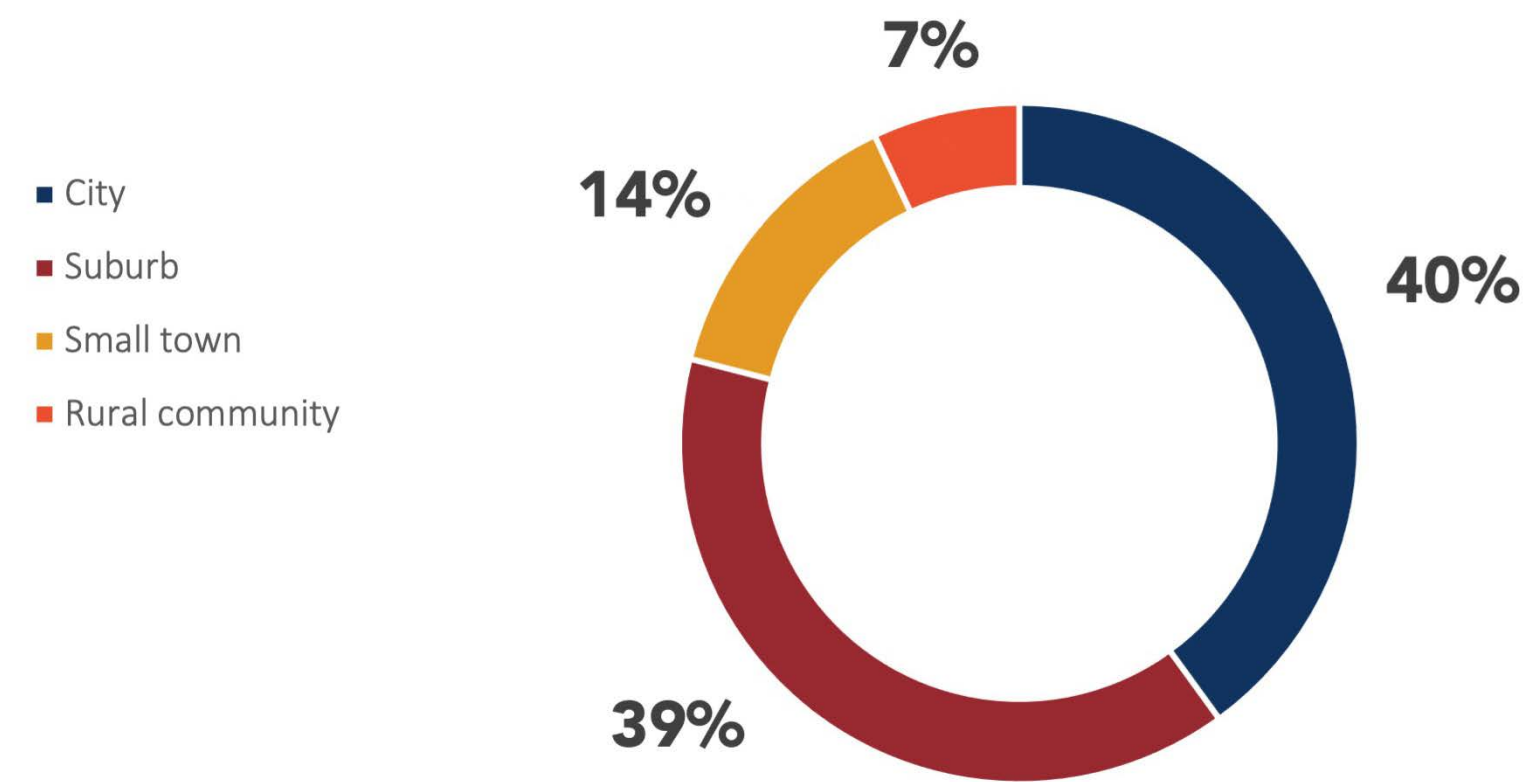
AGE



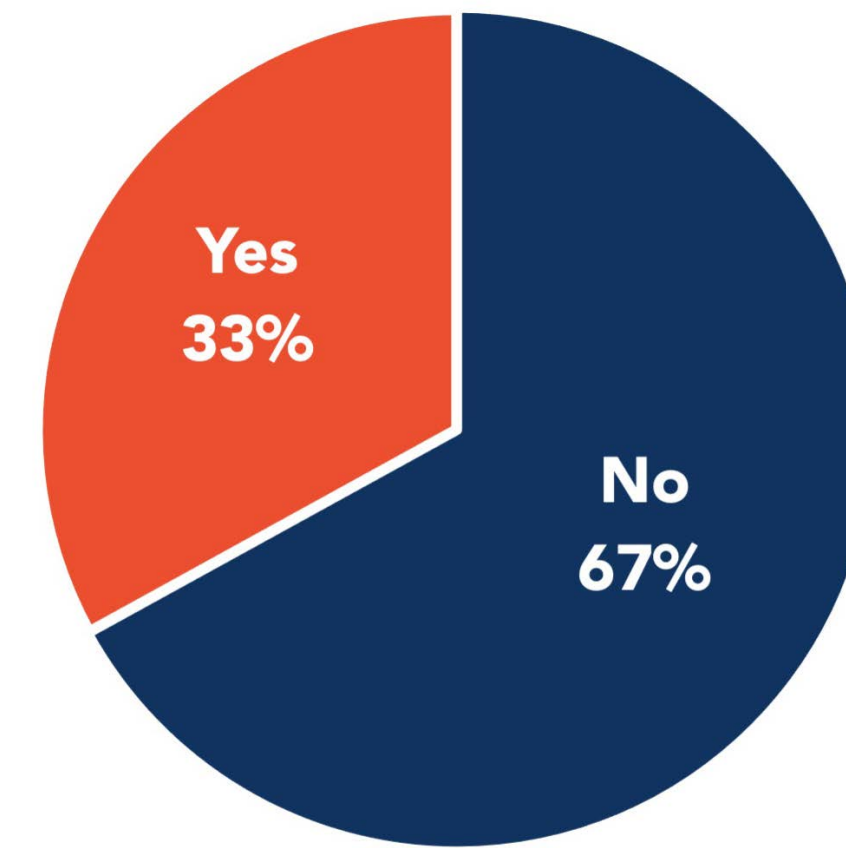
RACE



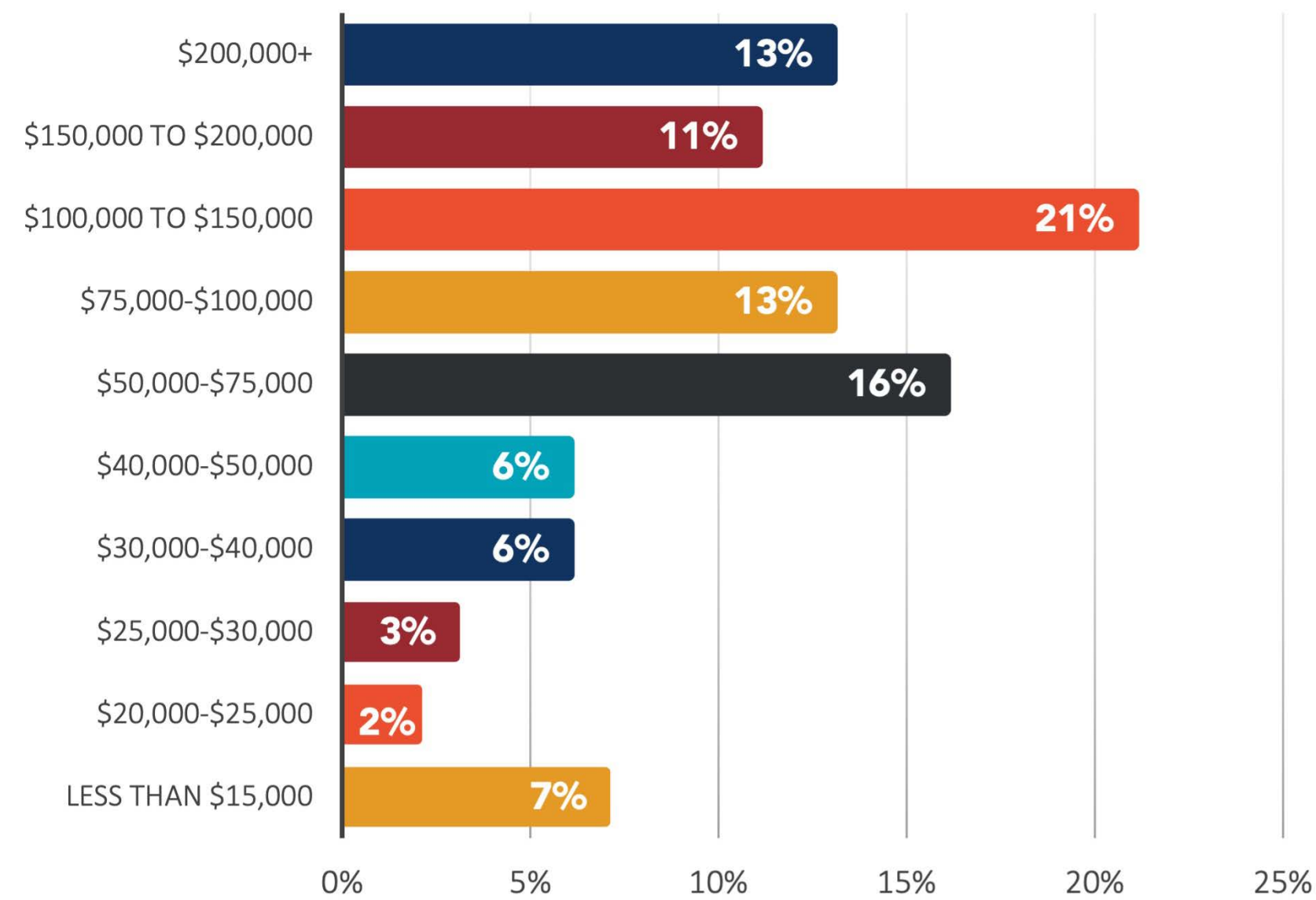
LIVE IN A ...



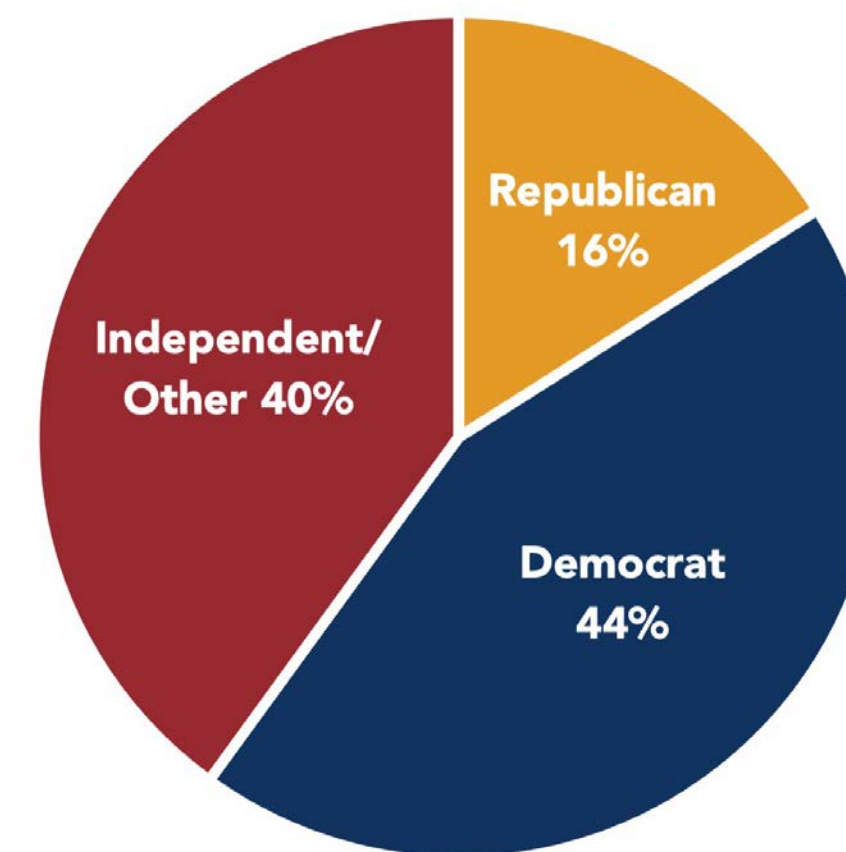
CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN THE HOME



INCOME



POLITICAL PARTY





valleyvision.org

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