Parenting Children Ages 0-3 in California

Key Findings from a Parent Survey Conducted June 15-August 7, 2026

The Children's Partnership

FM3 RESEARCH | OPINION RESEARCH & STRATEGY

BRINGING UP CALIFORNIA
Racial Justice for Children, Families, and Communities

320-1266

Survey Methodology

Dates	June 15-August 7, 2026
Survey Type	Online survey of parents using opt-in online panels and community participation
Research Population	California parents of children 3 and under or expecting
Total Interviews	1,390 parents
Contact Methods	 Email invitations  Text invitations
Data Collection Modes	 Online interviews
Languages	English & Spanish

(Note: Not All Results Will Sum to 100% Due to Rounding)

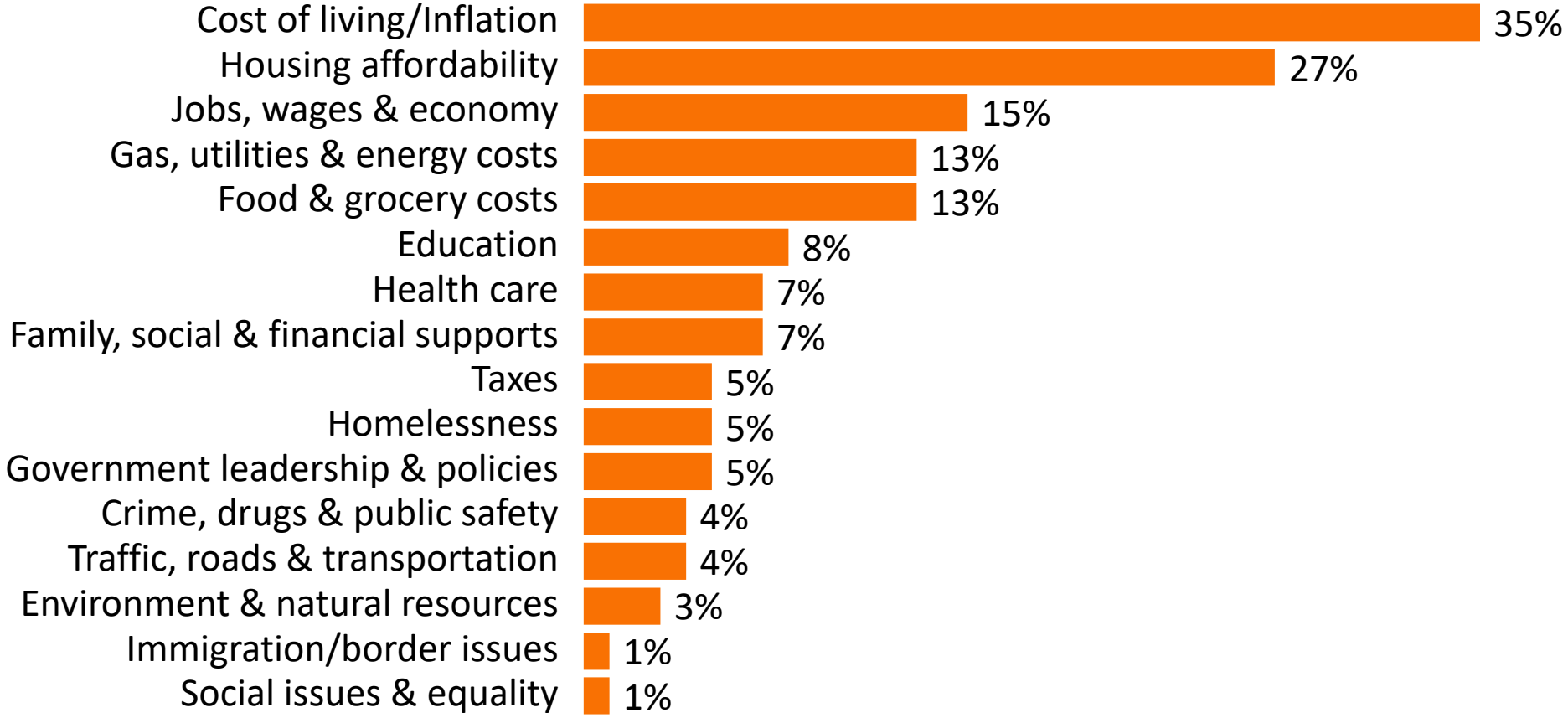
Qualitative Research Specifics & Methodology

Methodology	**Two Qualitative Research Methodologies:** 1. Online discussion boards (QualBoard) held on October 21-24, 2025 2. Two online focus groups held on December 17, 2025
Total Participants	**Discussion Boards:** 23 total participants **Focus Groups:** 5-6 participants per session
Overall Research Population	**Discussion Boards:** Parents with children ages 3 and under and/or are pregnant **Focus Groups:** African American and Latino parents with children ages 3 and under and/or are pregnant

Issue Context

Parents are most concerned about the cost of living and housing affordability.

First, in your own words, what are the biggest challenges you and your family face living in California that you would like state government to address?
(Open-ended)



Q9.

Verbatim Comments Describing Top Problems

High cost of living, rent especially, it continues to rise, yet salaries are not. Even if salaries rise, the cost of living increases so that people cannot feel the benefits of increased wages. Others are the homelessness problem, wild fires and lack of affordable health care.

The cost of living would be my first, most important issue that needs to be addressed.

Poverty and inflation.

I'd like for the state to address the homeless problem and drug addiction here. Also the outrageous housing costs.

How expensive everything is. Housing and homelessness is a huge problem.

The cost of living, it's crazy.

Prices. Everything goes to bills. We can barely buy food to last for the month.

The amount of money that I have to spend for health care.

High medical costs and access to doctors and/or other health practitioners.

Cost of groceries and gas. Basic needs are getting expensive. Diapers and feminine products are so expensive. Babies and moms should have access to free things, like tampons, pads and diapers.

Q9. First, in your own words, what are the biggest challenges you and your family face living in California that you would like state government to address?

Top Challenges for Parents

- The most pressing challenges mentioned included financial strain, access to affordable child care, and feeling unsupported once families begin working.
- Some specifically mentioned the cost of child care exceeding their take-home pay, causing them to have to work extra hours and take more time away from family.
- Others mentioned issues like safety, violence in school, and stable housing.

Female, African American/Black Parent: I'm a single mom so making enough even with the county's help is very difficult. So, you just have to pull from where you can, to try to make ends meet.

Female, Latino Parent: Rent is expensive, food is so expensive, like, I have my baby in diapers, they are so expensive. So, just the cost of living to what our salary is, I feel like it's not good at all.

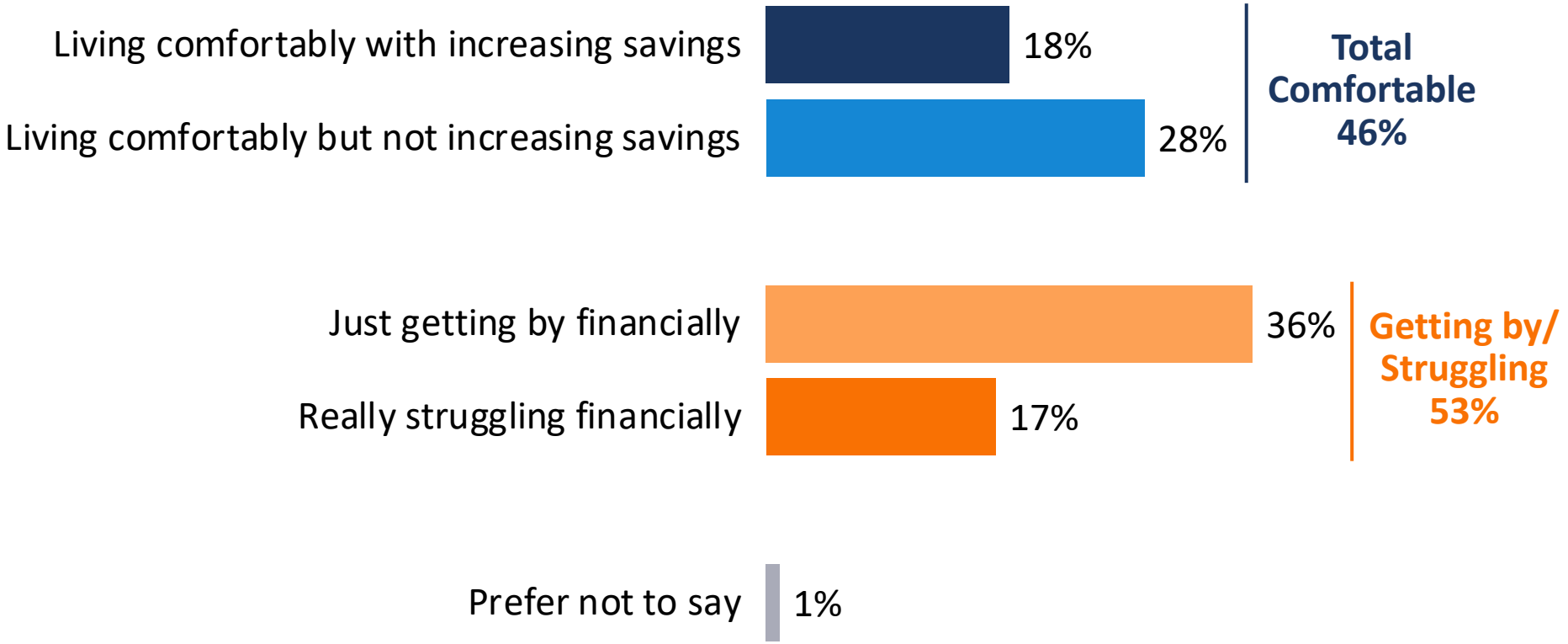
Female, African American/Black Parent: As a single mother you don't want to be in an area where you and your children don't feel safe. But, I mean, it is expensive to live in an area where there are gates and security and everything like that.

Female, Latino Parent: When I was on maternity leave, I was on disability not making my regular income and I was able to get WIC, SNAP benefits. But now that I went back to work and I'm trying to provide for my son, I'm not able to get any of those benefits.

Experiences with Financial Security

Fewer than one in five California parents said they are increasing savings.

Overall, how would you describe your family's current financial situation: living comfortably with increasing savings, living comfortably but not increasing savings, just getting by financially, or really struggling financially?



Q10.

Just two in five parents of color felt financially stable.

Demographic Group	Living Comfortably, Increasing Savings	Living Comfortably, Not Increasing Savings	Getting By/ Struggling	Don't Know
All Parents	**18%**	**28%**	**53%**	**1%**
Race/Ethnicity				
White Parents	22%	32%	46%	0%
Latino Parents	15%	25%	58%	2%
African American Parents	18%	23%	57%	2%
Asian/Pacific Islander Parents	16%	27%	57%	0%
All Parents of Color	16%	25%	58%	1%
Household Income				
<$25,000	10%	14%	74%	2%
$25,001-$50,000	8%	28%	64%	1%
$50,001-$75,000	13%	21%	65%	1%
$75,001-$100,000	16%	35%	49%	1%
$100,001-$125,000	26%	35%	39%	0%
>$125,001	41%	32%	27%	0%

Q10: Overall, how would you describe your family's current financial situation: living comfortably with increasing savings, living comfortably but not increasing savings, just getting by financially, or really struggling financially?

Those who reported being pregnant are twice as likely to say they are increasing savings compared to non-expecting parents.

Demographic Group	Living Comfortably, Increasing Savings	Living Comfortably, Not Increasing Savings	Getting By/ Struggling	Don't Know
All Parents	**18%**	**28%**	**53%**	**1%**
Residence				
Homeowners	31%	33%	36%	0%
Renters	10%	24%	65%	1%
Employment Status				
Employed	21%	30%	48%	1%
Unemployed/On Leave	3%	11%	86%	0%
Foreign Born				
Yes	12%	32%	54%	2%
No	19%	27%	53%	1%
Pregnant				
Yes	28%	28%	43%	1%
No	14%	28%	58%	1%

Q10: Overall, how would you describe your family's current financial situation: living comfortably with increasing savings, living comfortably but not increasing savings, just getting by financially, or really struggling financially?

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Parents living in counties surrounding Los Angeles expressed the most financial instability.

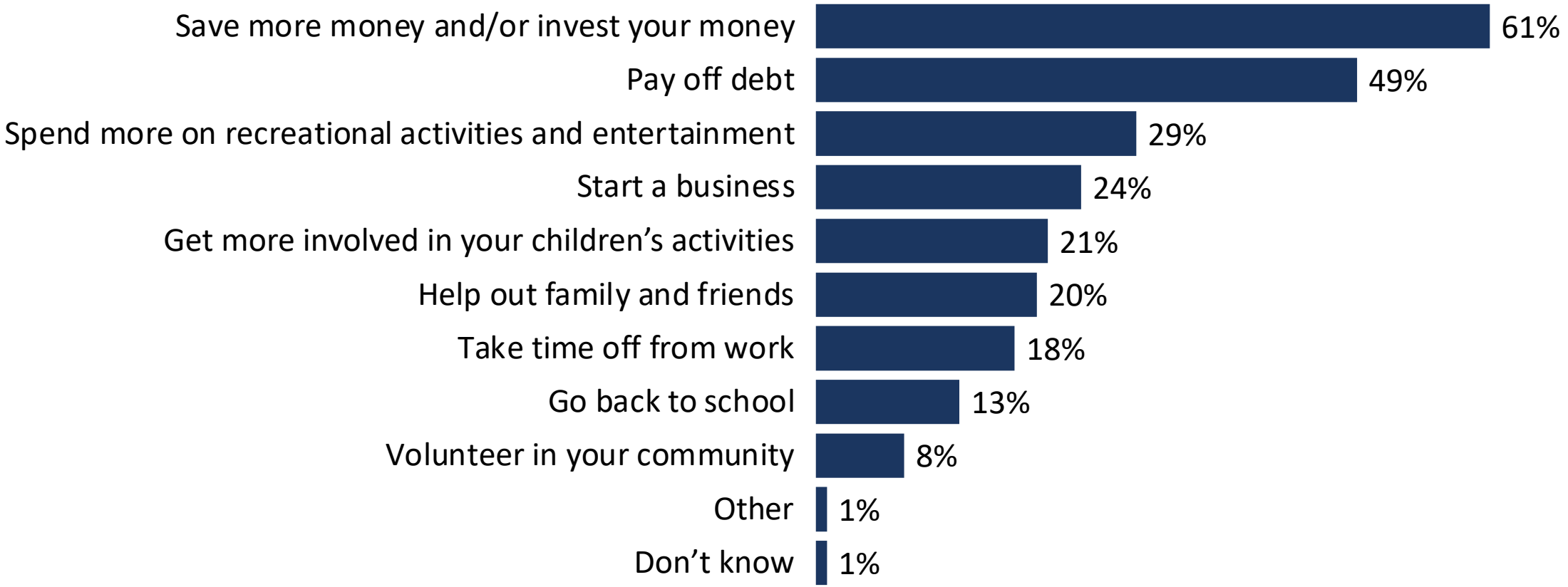
Demographic Group	Living Comfortably, Increasing Savings	Living Comfortably, Not Increasing Savings	Getting By/ Struggling	Don't Know
All Parents	**18%**	**28%**	**53%**	**1%**
Region				
Los Angeles County	26%	24%	49%	1%
Counties Surrounding Los Angeles	11%	24%	64%	1%
Bay Area	21%	28%	50%	1%
San Diego	16%	32%	52%	0%
Sacramento/Rural North	18%	37%	44%	1%
Central Valley/Central Coast	12%	28%	59%	1%

Q10: Overall, how would you describe your family's current financial situation: living comfortably with increasing savings, living comfortably but not increasing savings, just getting by financially, or really struggling financially?

Parents would save and invest funds and pay off debt, if they were able to increase their savings.

Next, suppose you and your family were living comfortably and increasing savings. Which of the following would you be most likely to do if you had additional income? You can select up to three.

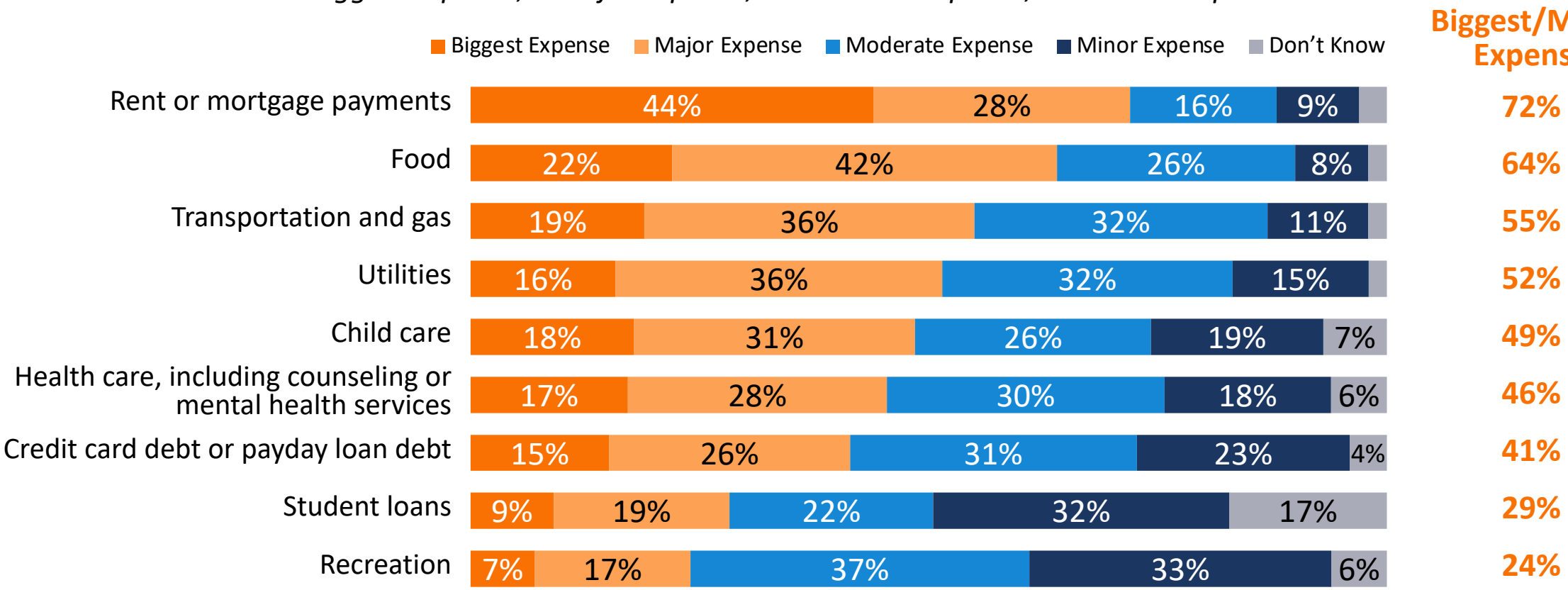
(Three responses accepted; asked of those not increasing savings, n=1,125)



Q11.

Housing was by far the biggest expense facing families.

Thinking about typical monthly household expenses, do you consider each of the following items to be the biggest expense, a major expense, a moderate expense, or a minor expense?

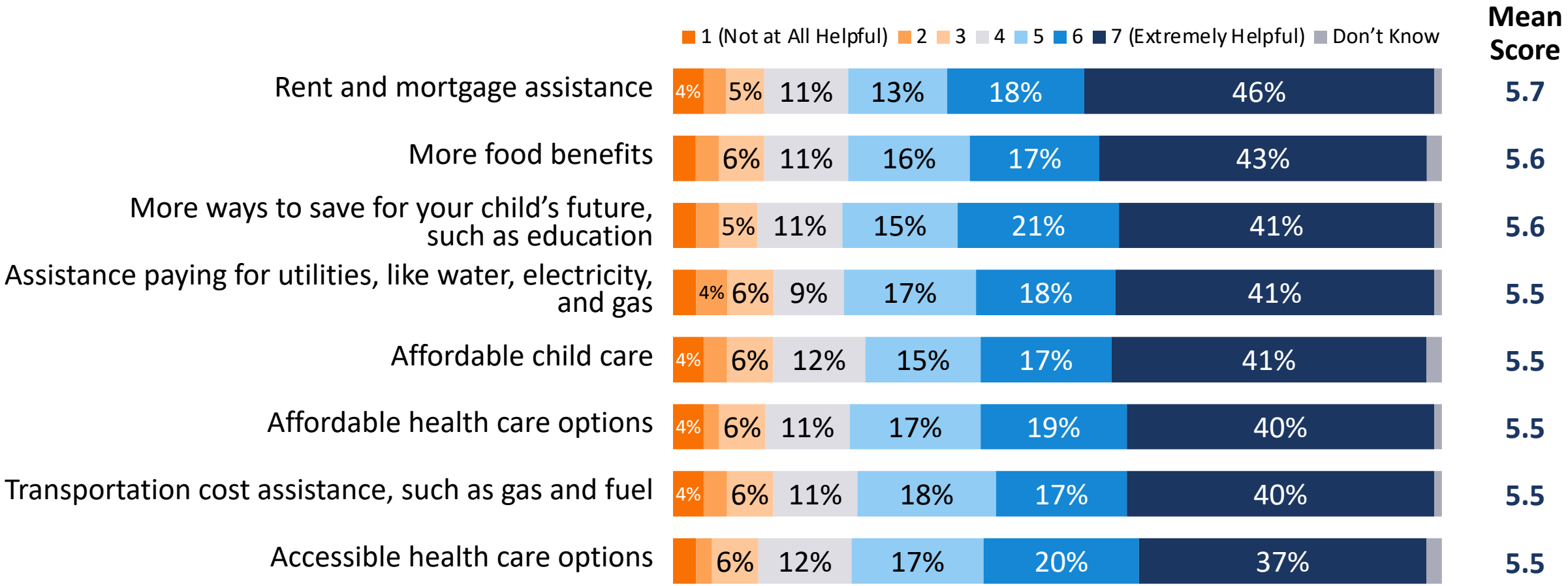


Rent and mortgage payments are the biggest expense across income levels.

Q12.

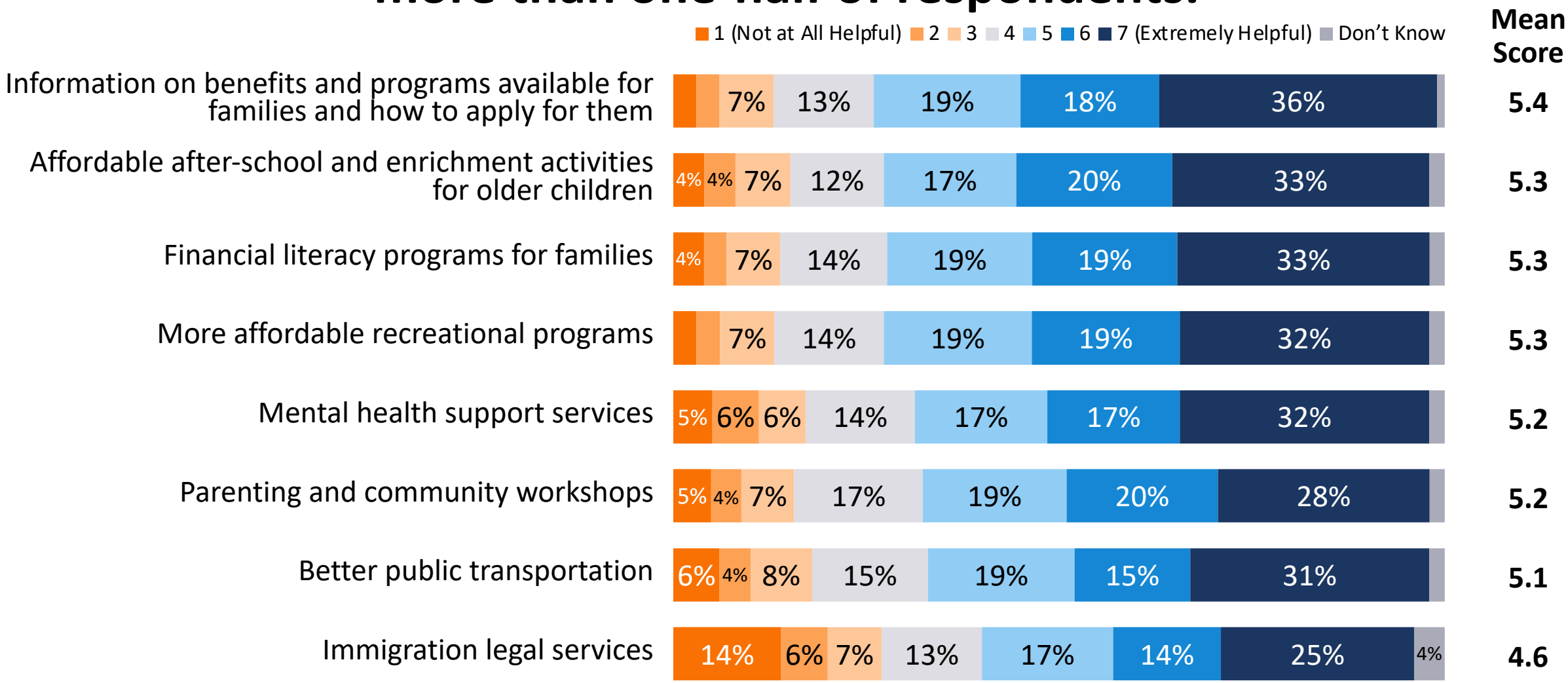
Consistent with the biggest expenses, housing and food benefits, along with educational savings, were seen as the most helpful supports.

Next, here is a list of services and supports. On a scale of one to seven, please rate how helpful this support or service would be for you and your family, where a one indicates "not at all helpful" and a seven indicates "extremely helpful."



Q13.

Immigration legal services were seen as a helpful support by more than one-half of respondents.



Q13. Next, here is a list of services and supports. On a scale of one to seven, please rate how helpful this support or service would be for you and your family, where a one indicates "not at all helpful" and a seven indicates "extremely helpful."

Rent and mortgage assistance were seen as most helpful across ethnicities.

Service/Support	Extremely/Very Helpful (6/7)						
	All Parents	Ethnicity					Spanish Speakers
		White Parents	Latino Parents	AA Parents	AAPI Parents	All Parents of Color	
Rent and mortgage assistance	**64%**	68%	60%	69%	62%	62%	66%
More ways to save for your child's future, such as education	**61%**	66%	55%	64%	60%	58%	63%
Assistance paying for utilities, like water, electricity, and gas	**60%**	63%	58%	61%	52%	58%	66%
More food benefits	**59%**	61%	58%	63%	55%	58%	63%
Affordable health care options	**59%**	63%	53%	64%	58%	56%	60%
Affordable child care	**58%**	64%	52%	61%	54%	54%	56%
Accessible health care options	**58%**	63%	52%	62%	56%	55%	63%
Transportation cost assistance, such as gas and fuel	**57%**	60%	54%	63%	50%	55%	58%
Information on benefits and programs available for families and how to apply for them	**54%**	58%	51%	59%	52%	52%	61%
Affordable after-school and enrichment activities for older children	**53%**	59%	48%	57%	48%	49%	57%

Q13. Next, here is a list of services and supports. On a scale of one to seven, please rate how helpful this support or service would be for you and your family, where a one indicates "not at all helpful" and a seven indicates "extremely helpful."

White parents cited all services as more helpful; Spanish speaking parents were slightly more likely to say immigration services were very helpful.

Service/Support	Extremely/Very Helpful (6/7)						
	All Parents	Ethnicity					Spanish Speakers
		White Parents	Latino Parents	AA Parents	AAPI Parents	All Parents of Color	
Financial literacy programs for families	**52%**	60%	45%	58%	44%	47%	53%
More affordable recreational programs	**51%**	58%	47%	55%	43%	47%	51%
Mental health support services	**49%**	57%	41%	54%	47%	45%	51%
Parenting and community workshops	**48%**	55%	37%	56%	50%	43%	41%
Better public transportation	**46%**	52%	38%	51%	50%	43%	46%
Immigration legal services	**39%**	49%	32%	41%	31%	33%	43%

Q13. Next, here is a list of services and supports. On a scale of one to seven, please rate how helpful this support or service would be for you and your family, where a one indicates "not at all helpful" and a seven indicates "extremely helpful."

Rent and mortgage assistance along with food benefits ranked highest among the lowest income levels.

Service/Support	Extremely/Very Helpful (6/7)						
	All Parents	Household Income					
		<$25K	$25K-$50K	$50K-$75K	$75K-$100K	$100K-$125K	>$125K
Rent and mortgage assistance	**64%**	61%	65%	68%	66%	67%	60%
More ways to save for your child's future, such as education	**61%**	58%	60%	62%	64%	65%	60%
Assistance paying for utilities, like water, electricity, and gas	**60%**	60%	64%	63%	58%	62%	50%
More food benefits	**59%**	64%	60%	60%	60%	64%	50%
Affordable health care options	**59%**	55%	58%	52%	64%	69%	55%
Affordable child care	**58%**	53%	51%	59%	65%	67%	54%
Accessible health care options	**58%**	57%	52%	59%	59%	65%	55%
Transportation cost assistance, such as gas and fuel	**57%**	62%	55%	63%	55%	59%	46%
Information on benefits and programs available for families and how to apply for them	**54%**	53%	51%	57%	57%	62%	47%
Affordable after-school and enrichment activities for older children	**53%**	50%	50%	54%	56%	56%	53%

Q13. Next, here is a list of services and supports. On a scale of one to seven, please rate how helpful this support or service would be for you and your family, where a one indicates "not at all helpful" and a seven indicates "extremely helpful."

Households in the $100K-$125K income range were most likely to view mental health support services as important.

Service/Support	Extremely/Very Helpful (6/7)						
	All Parents	Household Income					
		<$25K	$25K-$50K	$50K-$75K	$75K-$100K	$100K-$125K	>$125K
Financial literacy programs for families	**52%**	53%	49%	50%	53%	62%	48%
More affordable recreational programs	**51%**	50%	43%	45%	54%	61%	60%
Mental health support services	**49%**	53%	42%	44%	50%	61%	48%
Parenting and community workshops	**48%**	48%	38%	46%	51%	60%	47%
Better public transportation	**46%**	50%	41%	41%	45%	61%	44%
Immigration legal services	**39%**	35%	32%	32%	45%	52%	40%

Q13. Next, here is a list of services and supports. On a scale of one to seven, please rate how helpful this support or service would be for you and your family, where a one indicates "not at all helpful" and a seven indicates "extremely helpful."

Public Benefits Experience

Public Benefits and System Navigation

- Benefits are viewed as **lifelines**, especially for children's health care, pregnancy/postpartum care, food stability, and chronic conditions.
- Respondents were most familiar with programs like **Medi-Cal, WIC, and CalFresh and SNAP**.
- Public benefit system navigation is often described as difficult: delays, confusing rules, and county-by-county differences.
- A sharp **benefits cliff** was a recurring theme: earning slightly more can reduce help without creating stability.
- Some families mentioned limiting participation due to **stigma or immigration-related fears**, particularly when sharing personal information is involved.

Female, Young Parent: My family receives CalWorks, CalFresh, and Medi-Cal benefits. In my own experience, it was not easy to obtain these benefits because they took forever to kick in.

Female, African American/Black Parent: A lot of people tell me to quit my job so that I can get more benefits.

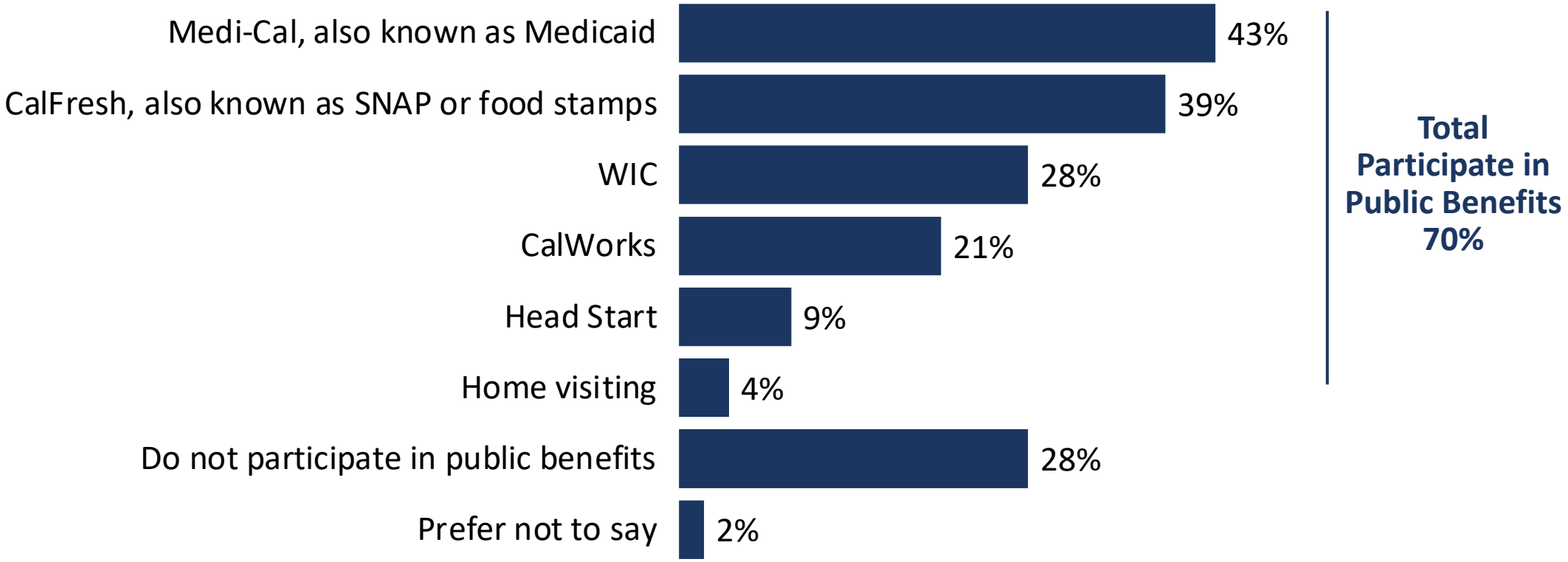
Male, Latino Parent: Even when I have great benefits, I don't use them. I don't go to the dentist. I don't do any of that.

Female, Young Parent: My kids have Medi-Cal, and it covers the basics like their physicals and dentist appointments. My daughter needed speech therapy, so it covered all of that for her. It would be so expensive otherwise.

Parents most commonly participated in Medi-Cal and CalFresh.

Next, does your family participate in any of the following public benefits?

(Multiple responses accepted)



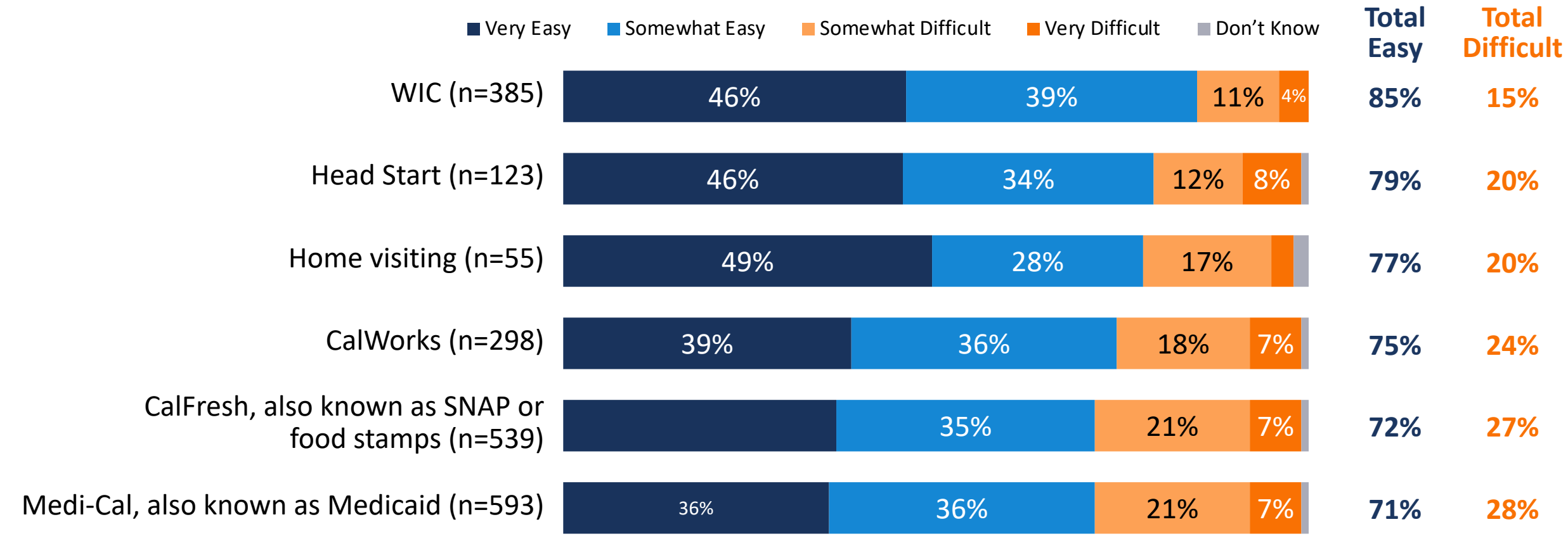
It is important to note that some of these public benefits, such as CalWorks, have lower income thresholds to qualify. This therefore limits the number of people who can apply for some of these benefits.

Q15.

Parents tended to say it was easy to apply for public benefits.

In your experience, was it very easy, somewhat easy, somewhat difficult, or very difficult to apply for the public benefits you participate in?

(Asked of those who participate in public benefits)

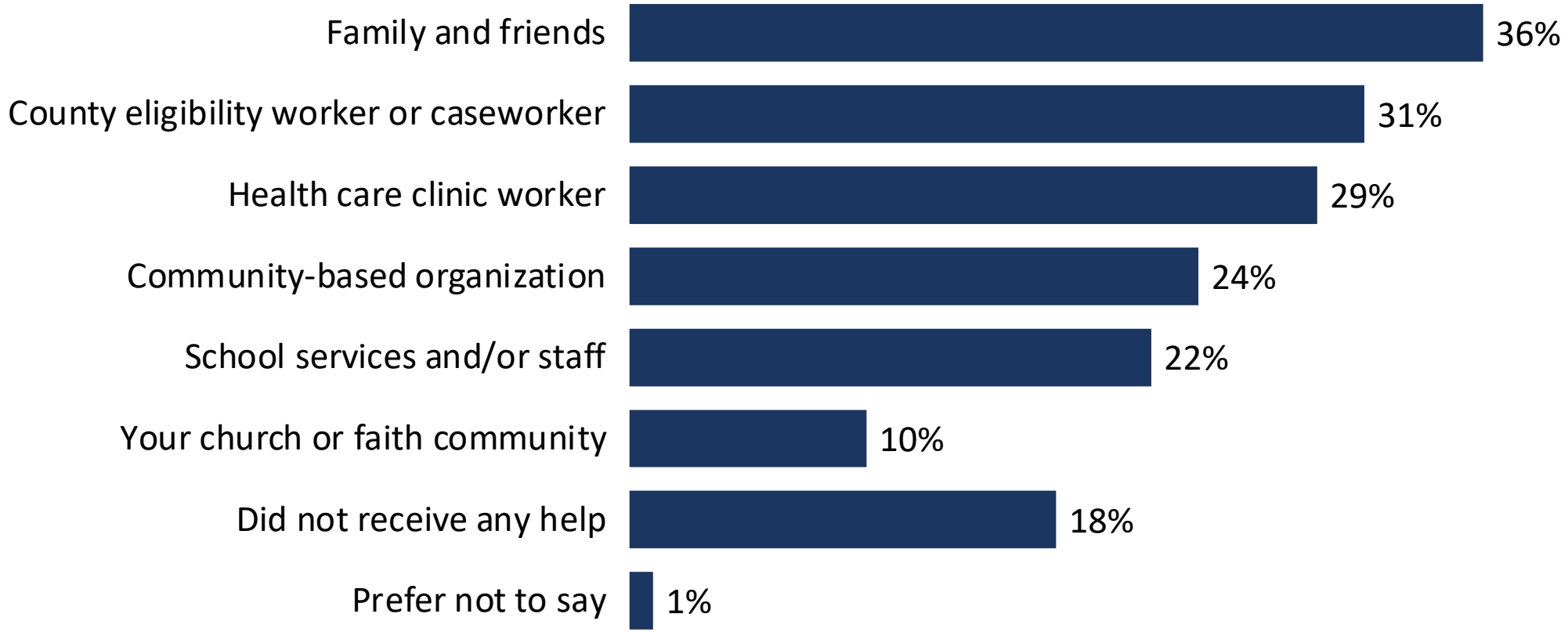


Q16.

Parents tended to receive support from family and friends, caseworkers, and health care clinic workers.

Did you receive assistance from any of the following people or organizations when applying for public benefits?

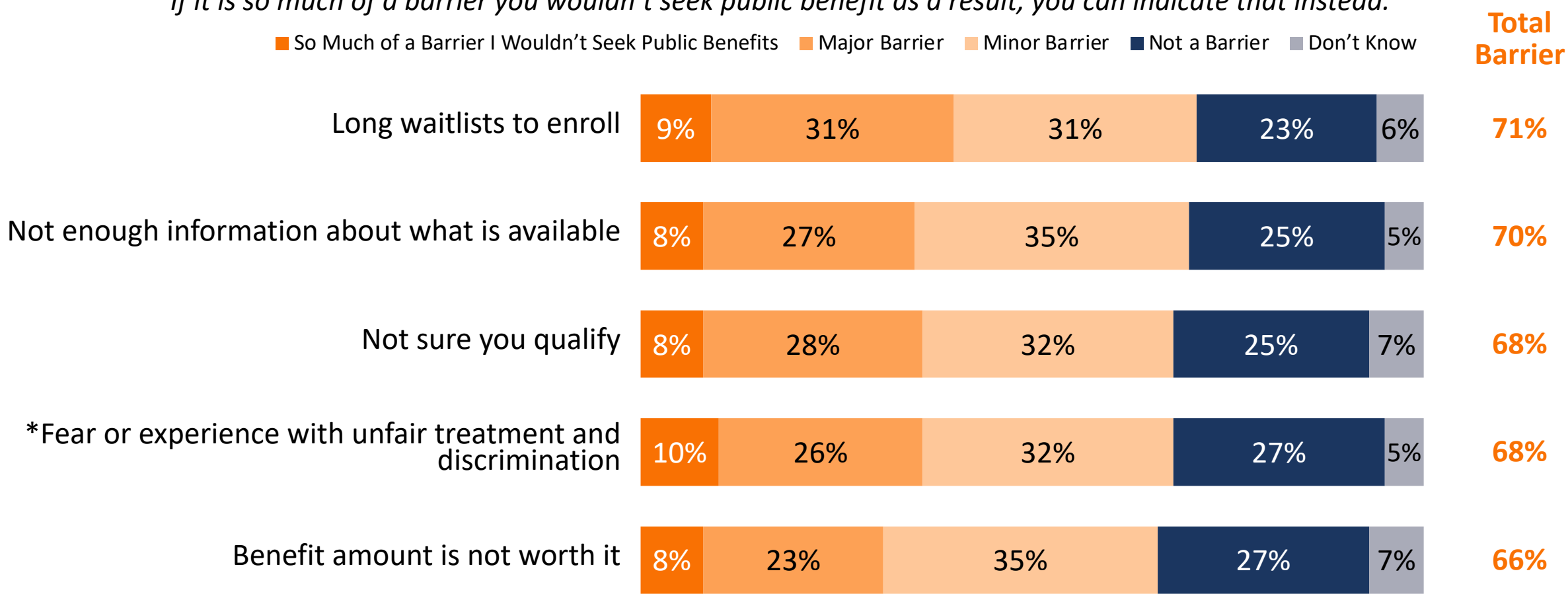
(Multiple responses accepted; asked of those who participated in public benefits, n=978)



Q17.

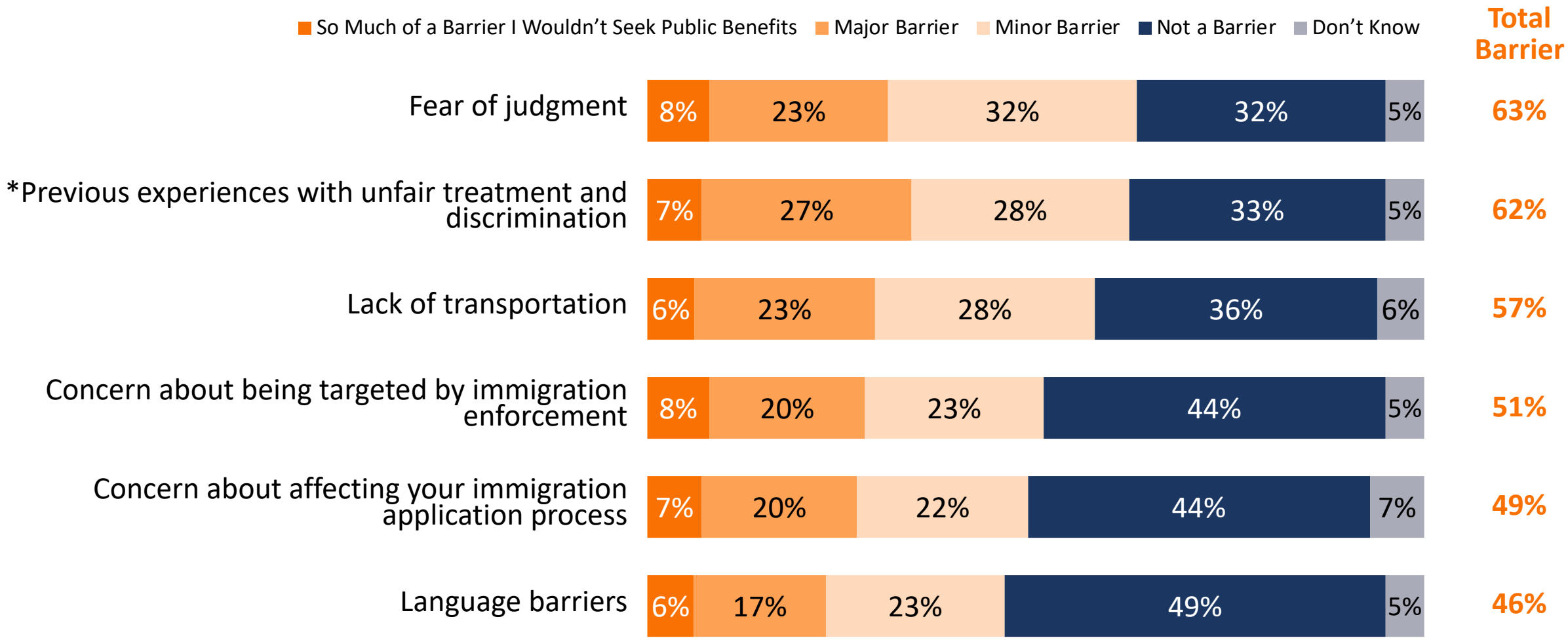
Waitlists, a lack of information on what is available, and uncertainty about whether they qualify were the most common barriers parents experienced.

Next, please consider the following potential barriers to applying for public benefits. For each one, please indicate whether it is a major barrier, a minor barrier, or not a barrier to you personally. If it is so much of a barrier you wouldn't seek public benefit as a result, you can indicate that instead.



Q18.

Immigration and language concerns were seen as barriers by roughly one-half of respondents.



Q18. Next, please consider the following potential barriers to applying for public benefits. For each one, please indicate whether it is a major barrier, a minor barrier, or not a barrier to you personally. If it is so much of a barrier you wouldn't seek public benefit as a result, you can indicate that instead.

Long waitlists and lack of info served as the biggest barriers for parents of color.

Barrier	Total Barrier					
	All Parents	Ethnicity				
		White Parents	Latino Parents	AA Parents	AAPI Parents	All Parents of Color
Long waitlists to enroll	**71%**	70%	74%	71%	66%	71%
Not enough information about what is available	**70%**	69%	75%	71%	63%	70%
Not sure you qualify	**68%**	69%	69%	70%	70%	69%
Fear or experience with unfair treatment and discrimination	**68%**	65%	72%	69%	71%	70%
Benefit amount is not worth it	**66%**	69%	65%	71%	59%	64%
Fear of judgment	**63%**	63%	66%	65%	59%	63%
Previous experiences with unfair treatment and discrimination	**62%**	67%	61%	64%	56%	59%
Lack of transportation	**57%**	62%	56%	65%	49%	55%
Concern about being targeted by immigration enforcement	**51%**	53%	56%	49%	45%	50%
Concern about affecting your immigration application process	**49%**	52%	50%	51%	44%	48%
Language barriers	**46%**	50%	45%	53%	41%	44%

Q18. Next, please consider the following potential barriers to applying for public benefits. For each one, please indicate whether it is a major barrier, a minor barrier, or not a barrier to you personally. If it is so much of a barrier you wouldn't seek public benefit as a result, you can indicate that instead.

The highest earners were least likely to experience barriers.

Barrier	Total Barrier						
	All Parents	Household Income					
		<$25K	$25K-$50K	$50K-$75K	$75K-$100K	$100K-$125K	>$125K
Long waitlists to enroll	**71%**	70%	73%	72%	69%	77%	60%
Not enough information about what is available	**70%**	71%	74%	72%	61%	76%	63%
Not sure you qualify	**68%**	70%	67%	67%	61%	76%	66%
Fear or experience with unfair treatment and discrimination	**68%**	68%	68%	66%	62%	79%	66%
Benefit amount is not worth it	**66%**	66%	66%	67%	61%	77%	58%
Fear of judgment	**63%**	60%	57%	66%	61%	75%	60%
Previous experiences with unfair treatment and discrimination	**62%**	64%	57%	70%	55%	74%	56%
Lack of transportation	**57%**	66%	60%	54%	52%	72%	44%
Concern about being targeted by immigration enforcement	**51%**	47%	51%	44%	52%	68%	46%
Concern about affecting your immigration application process	**49%**	48%	45%	43%	52%	67%	42%
Language barriers	**46%**	49%	43%	41%	45%	61%	40%

Q18. Next, please consider the following potential barriers to applying for public benefits. For each one, please indicate whether it is a major barrier, a minor barrier, or not a barrier to you personally. If it is so much of a barrier you wouldn't seek public benefit as a result, you can indicate that instead.

Three in four Spanish speakers cite fear of unfair treatment and discrimination as a barrier.

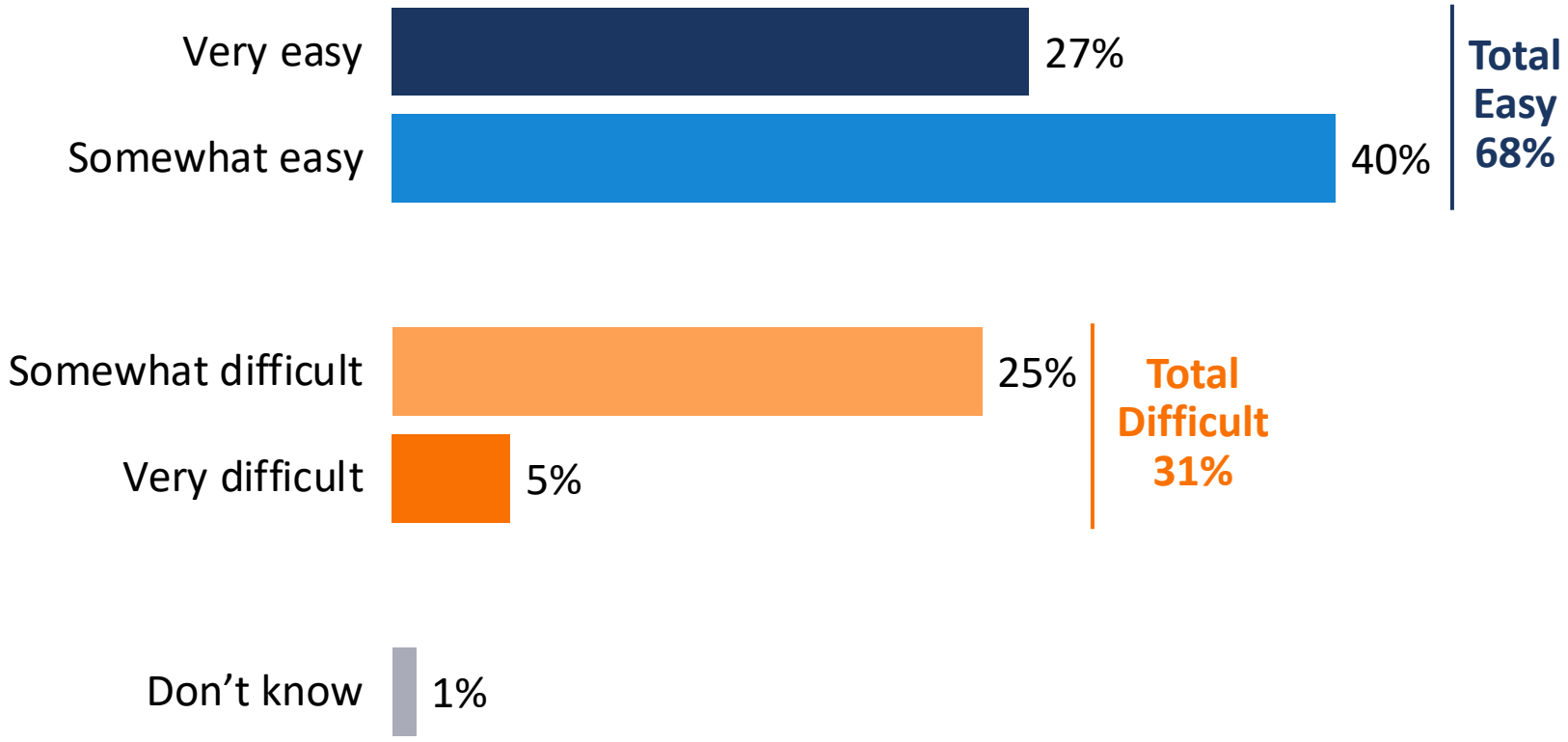
Barrier	Total Barrier			
	All Parents	Spanish Speakers	Foreign-Born	
			Yes	No
Long waitlists to enroll	**71%**	72%	67%	71%
Not enough information about what is available	**70%**	73%	70%	69%
Not sure you qualify	**68%**	71%	73%	68%
Fear or experience with unfair treatment and discrimination	**68%**	75%	66%	68%
Benefit amount is not worth it	**66%**	62%	59%	66%
Fear of judgment	**63%**	62%	62%	64%
Previous experiences with unfair treatment and discrimination	**62%**	61%	59%	62%
Lack of transportation	**57%**	60%	49%	58%
Concern about being targeted by immigration enforcement	**51%**	56%	52%	51%
Concern about affecting your immigration application process	**49%**	53%	59%	48%
Language barriers	**46%**	42%	47%	46%

Q18. Next, please consider the following potential barriers to applying for public benefits. For each one, please indicate whether it is a major barrier, a minor barrier, or not a barrier to you personally. If it is so much of a barrier you wouldn't seek public benefit as a result, you can indicate that instead.

Experiences with Health Care

Two-thirds said it was easy for them to receive health care in their community.

In general, is it very easy, somewhat easy, somewhat difficult, or very difficult to receive health care for you and your family in your community?

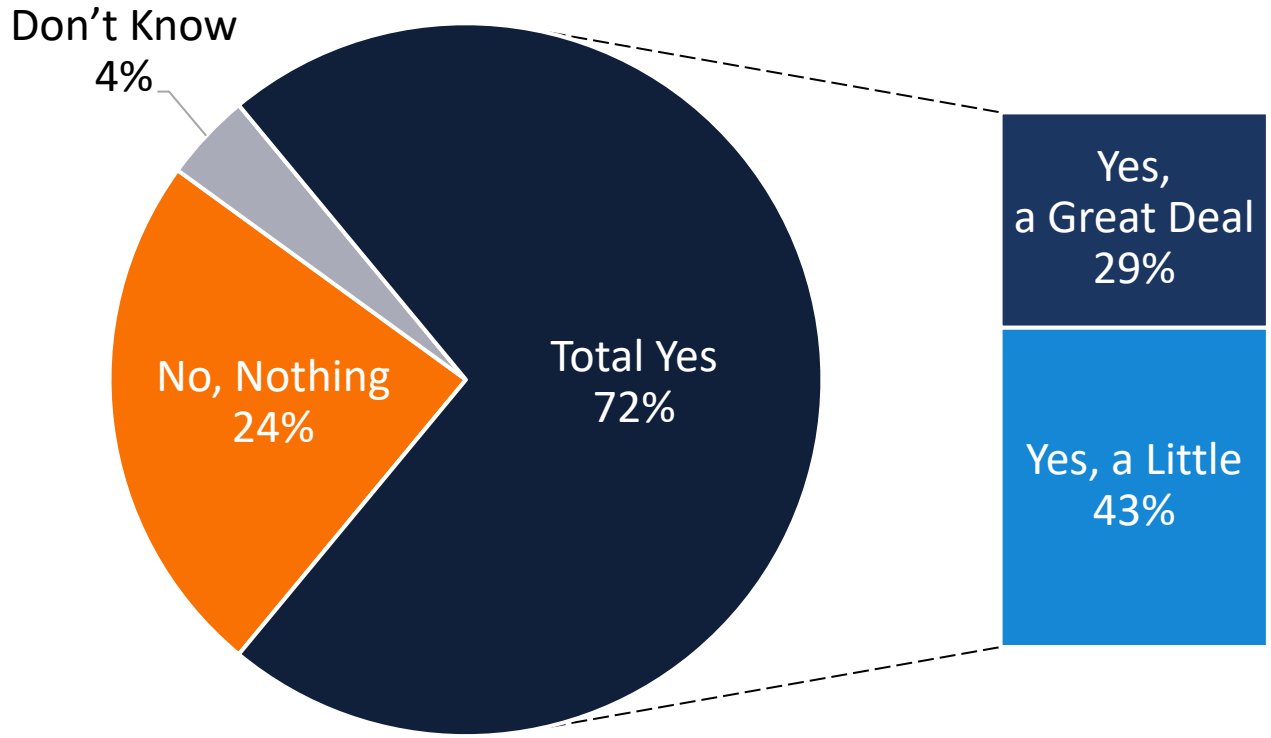


Those most likely to say it was difficult were: native Chinese speakers, born outside the U.S., native Spanish speakers, people who don't speak English well, and larger households.

Q19.

Seven in ten parents have heard of policy changes reducing funding for Medi-Cal.

Next, recent federal and state policy changes have reduced funding for Medi-Cal. Have you heard, seen or read anything about these changes?

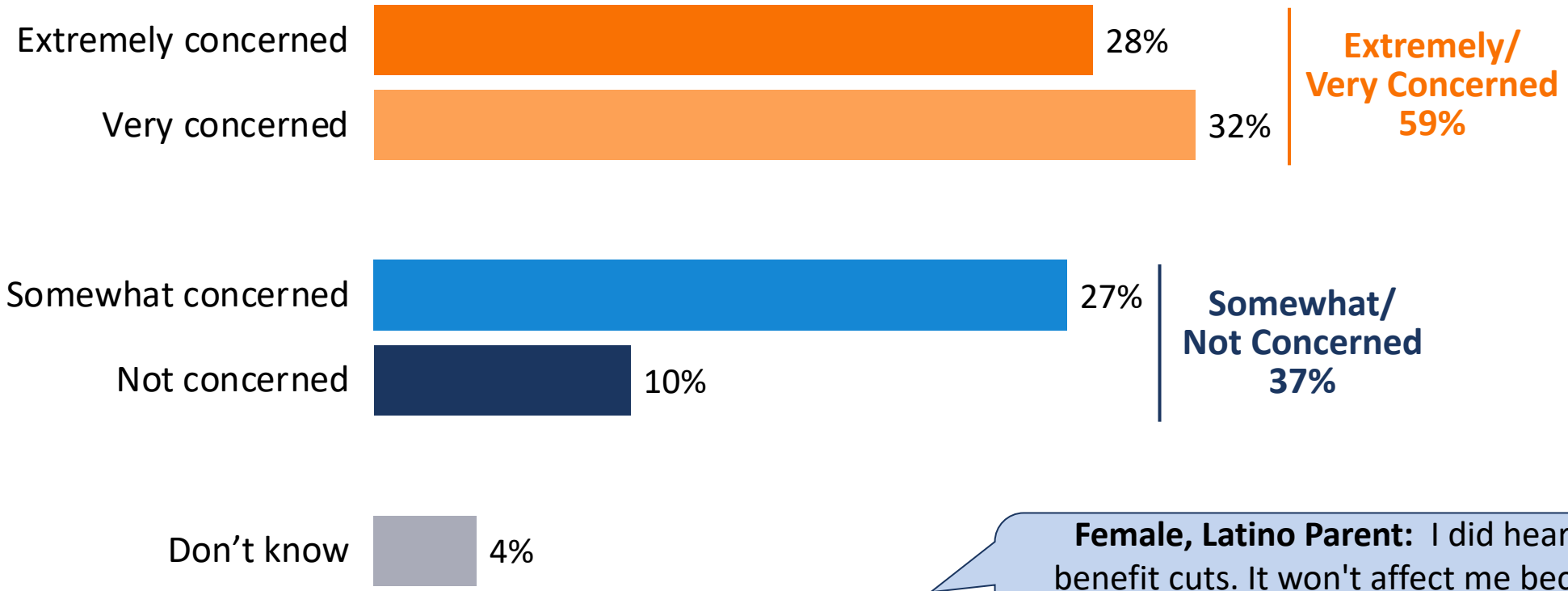


Those most likely to say they have heard a great deal were:
in Sacramento and the Rural North, had incomes between $100K-$125K, college-educated, and expecting.

Q20.

A majority were concerned about the impact of these budget cuts on their family.

Next, how concerned are you that these budget cuts could reduce funding for health care services that you and your family rely on?



Female, Latino Parent: I did hear about the benefit cuts. It won't affect me because I don't have any benefits, but my family talks about it, and I know it stresses them out a lot.

Q21.

African American and white parents expressed the most concern about cuts.

Demographic Group	Extremely/Very Concerned	Somewhat/ Not Concerned	Don't Know
All Parents	**59%**	**37%**	**4%**
Race/Ethnicity			
White Parents	62%	35%	3%
Latino Parents	57%	39%	4%
African American Parents	63%	33%	4%
Asian/Pacific Islander Parents	60%	35%	5%
All Parents of Color	58%	38%	4%
Household Income			
<$25,000	67%	29%	4%
$25,001-$50,000	57%	37%	6%
$50,001-$75,000	60%	36%	4%
$75,001-$100,000	57%	41%	2%
$100,001-$125,000	70%	29%	0%
>$125,001	48%	47%	5%

Q21. Next, how concerned are you that these budget cuts could reduce funding for healthcare services that you and your family rely on?

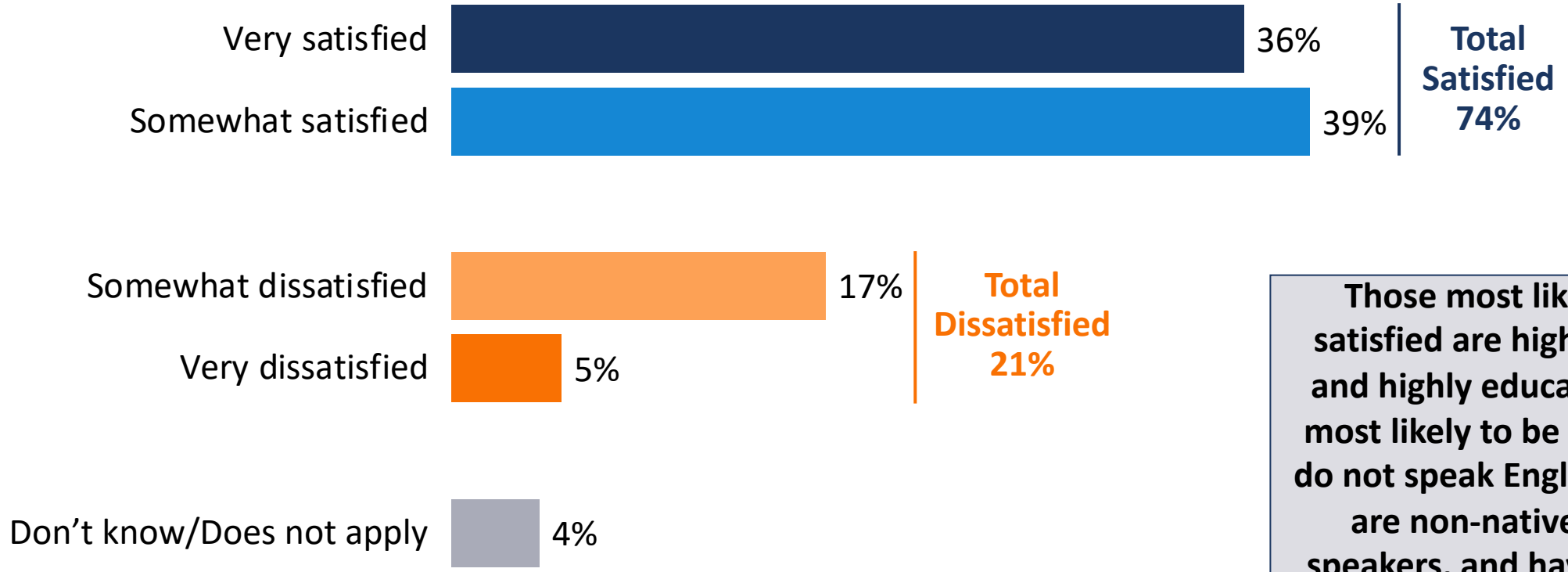
Those in Sacramento/Rural North and pregnant parents were particularly concerned.

Demographic Group	Extremely/Very Concerned	Somewhat/ Not Concerned	Don't Know
All Parents	**59%**	**37%**	**4%**
Region			
Los Angeles County	55%	43%	2%
Counties Surrounding Los Angeles	54%	40%	6%
Bay Area	62%	34%	4%
San Diego	65%	33%	3%
Sacramento/Rural North	73%	23%	5%
Central Valley/Central Coast	56%	40%	4%
Foreign Born			
Yes	59%	37%	4%
No	60%	36%	4%
Pregnant			
Yes	67%	27%	5%
No	56%	41%	3%

Q21. Next, how concerned are you that these budget cuts could reduce funding for healthcare services that you and your family rely on?

Three-quarters were satisfied with the care they or their partner received while expecting.

Next, would you say that you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the health care you (or your spouse/partner) received during pregnancy?

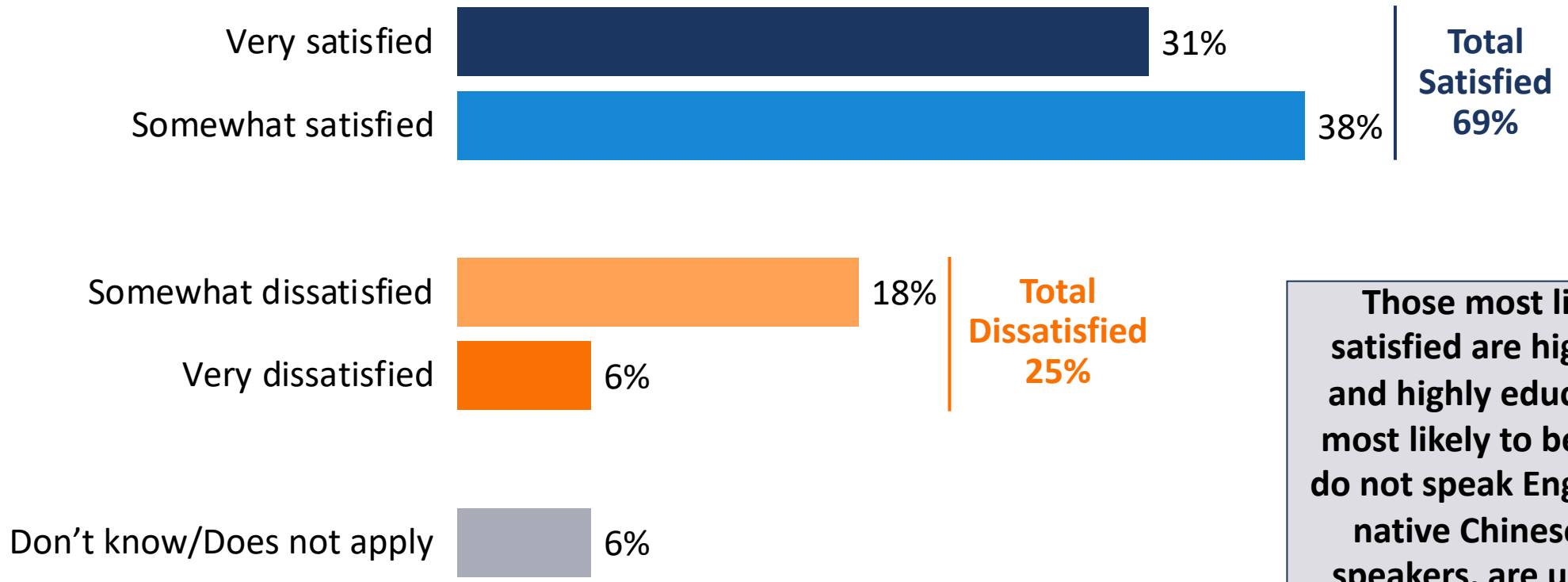


Those most likely to be satisfied are higher income and highly educated. Those most likely to be dissatisfied do not speak English well and are non-native English speakers, and have incomes below $75,000.

Q24.

More than two-thirds were satisfied with their postpartum care.

Next, would you say that you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the health care you (or your spouse/partner) received postpartum?



Those most likely to be satisfied are higher income and highly educated. Those most likely to be dissatisfied do not speak English well, are native Chinese language speakers, are unemployed, and born outside the U.S.

Q25.

Complications with Pregnancy

- High-risk and medically complex pregnancies were frequently mentioned as challenges.
- Some participants felt unseen or unheard in the health care system, and said they felt unnecessary dangers because of this lack of attention – including pre-eclampsia and mistaken diagnoses.
- Many experienced economic pressures; respondents mentioning job loss, low pay, and an absence of supports ranging from baby showers to child care.
- Many had given birth during the pandemic, which created unique challenges such as restricted hospital access, the fear of COVID-19 infection, and the absence of partners during medical visits.

Female Respondent: I had a lot of terrible symptoms during both of my pregnancies, and both times the OBGYN dismissed my concerns.

Male Respondent: During COVID it was very difficult to deal with getting access in the hospital. Scheduling and being able to deal with not having a babysitter.

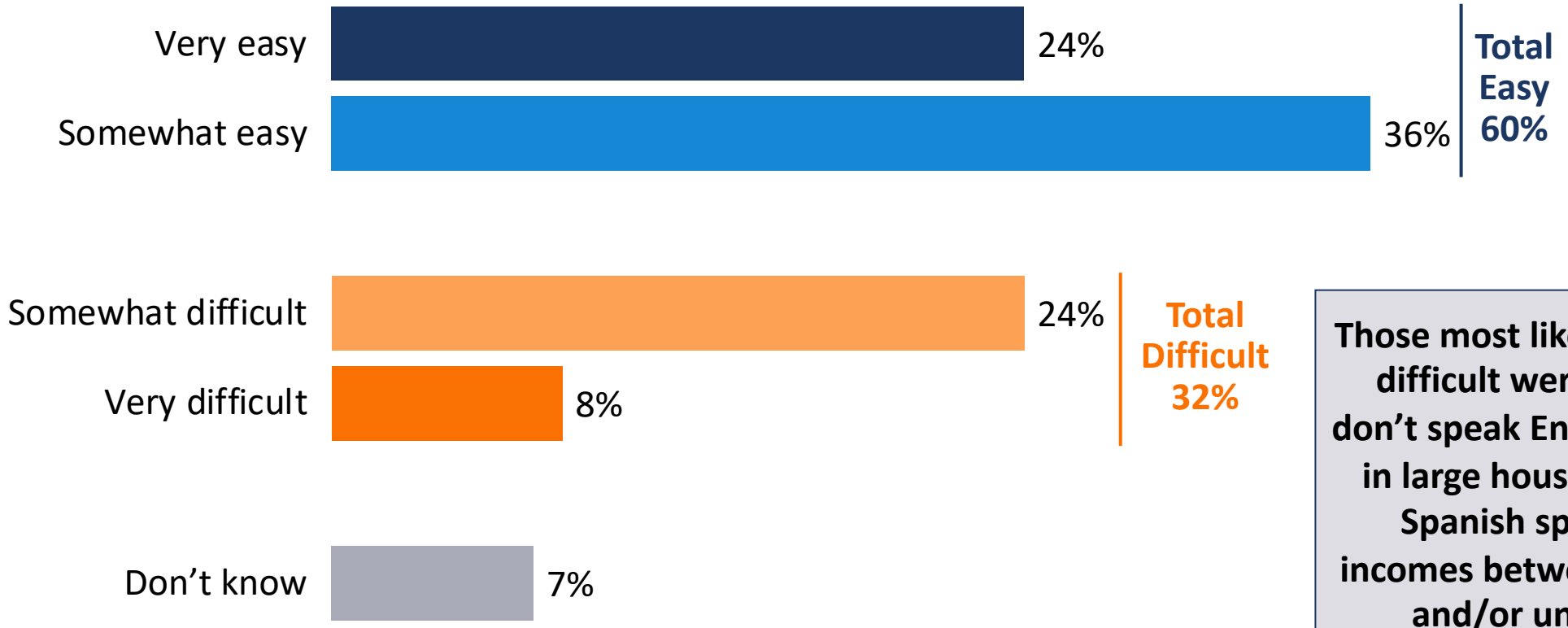
Female Respondent: Financially we were OK. We had two miscarriages, so there was a constant fear of something going wrong up until she came out and we heard her cry.

Male Respondent: We were pregnant during partial shutdowns, so I was unable to attend some appointments and limited in how I could help.

Female Respondent: As a Black woman in health care, my complaints are often overlooked.

Three in five said it is easy for parents to receive therapy and mental health support services.

In general, is it very easy, somewhat easy, somewhat difficult, or very difficult to receive therapy or other mental health support services <u>for parents</u> in your community?



Those most likely to say it was difficult were: those who don't speak English well, living in large households, native Spanish speakers, had incomes between $25K-$75K, and/or unemployed.

Q26.

Parental Mental Health

- Mood struggles were common among parents and were often linked to stress and feeling overwhelmed.
- Many believed that their children pick up on their stress, which makes them less patient and available.
- When it comes to support, participants mainly mentioned relying on their partners, family, and personal networks.
- Some specifically mentioned seeking professional support for postpartum depression or other specific diagnoses; most said they would consider seeking support if needed.
- Participants identified cost, insurance coverage, lack of time, and difficulty finding a trusted provider as barriers to receiving mental health treatment.
- Black parents emphasized the importance of having a mental health professional who could relate to their background.
- Participants in both groups alluded to potential stigma with seeking mental health supports, and parents in the African American group expressed fear of discrimination.

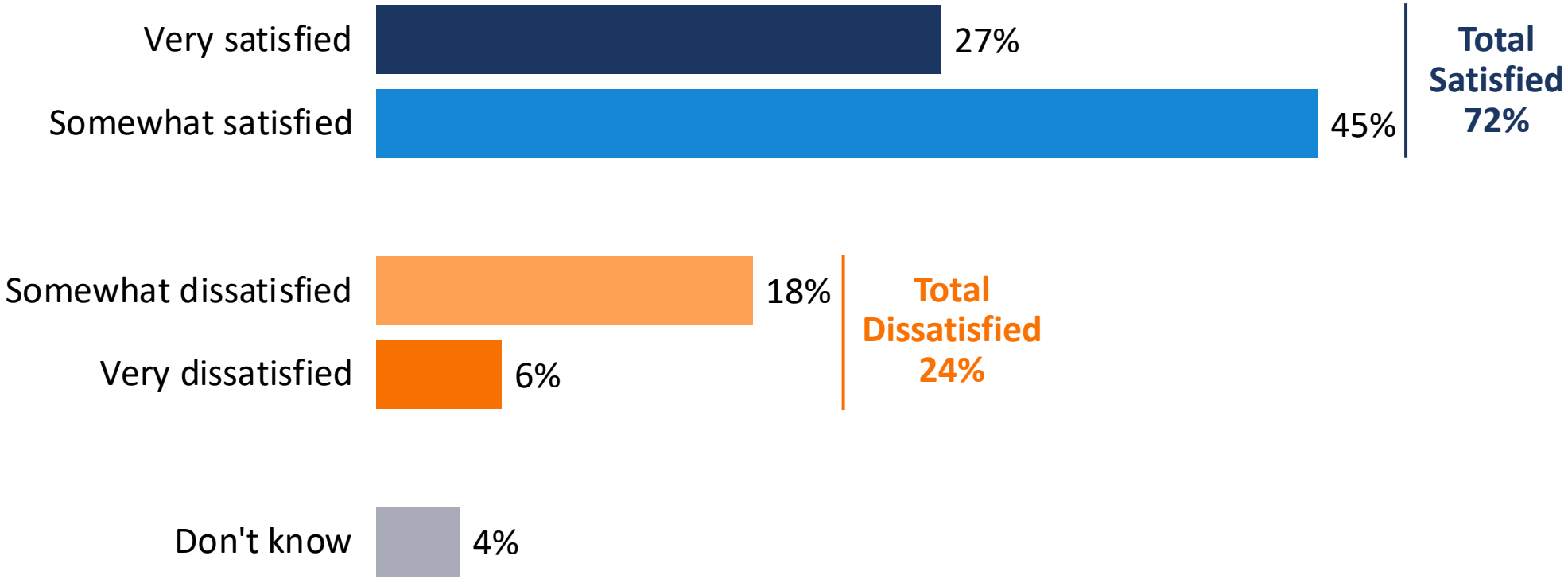
Female, African American/Black Parent: There have been times when my daughter is just like, “Oh, you are not around as much or you’re in a down mood.” So, I think stress definitely affects your ability to parent, and yes, your kids notice.

Female, African American/Black Parent: With my last baby, talking to a professional helped me to identify that I was actually going through it because I didn't know. I just knew that, wow, I'm having a really hard time right now. It helped give myself the grace to kind of work through it without feeling like something was wrong with me.

Female, Latino Parent: If I’m ever struggling with depression, I just try to handle it on my own, or like, with my family. I don’t have time for anything else.

Overall, nearly two-thirds were satisfied with the health care their child receives.

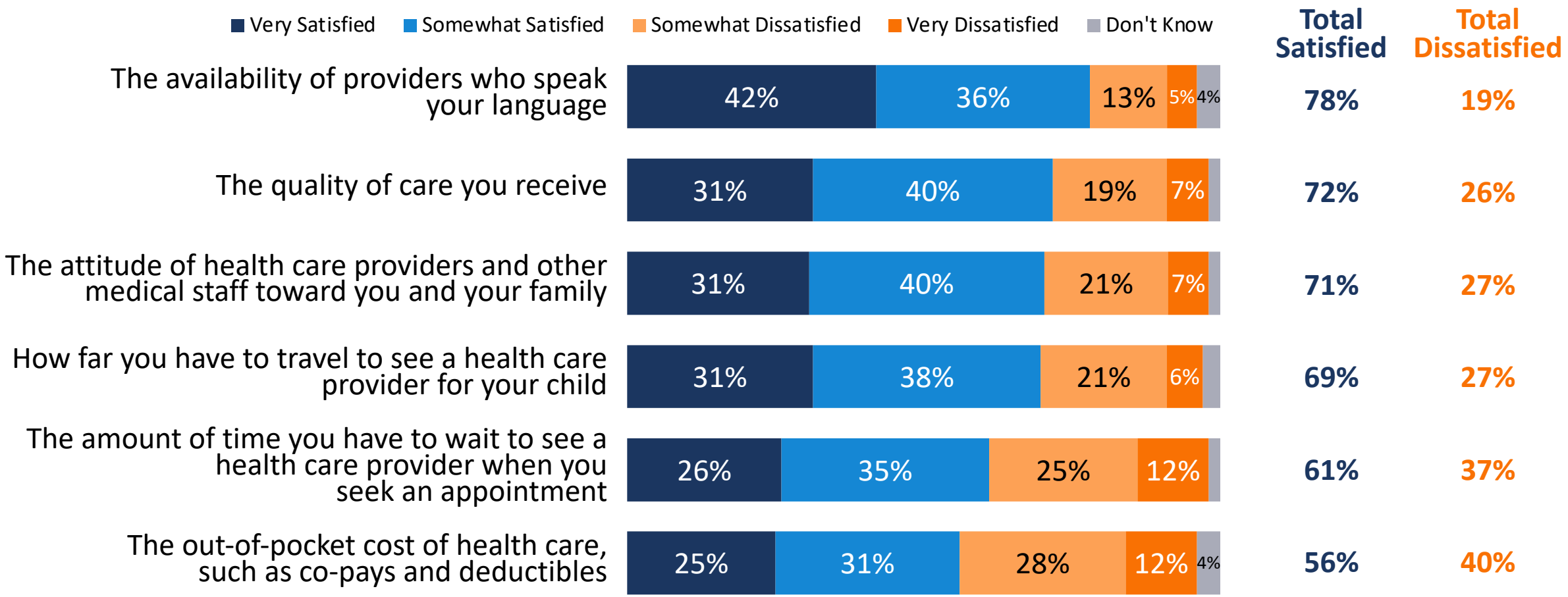
Next, would you say that you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the health care your child receives overall?



Q22.

More than three quarters were satisfied with the availability of providers who speak their language and the quality of care their children receive.

Next, here are some different elements of health care services your child/children receive. For each one please indicate whether you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with it.



Q23.

Latino parents express the lowest levels of satisfaction with out-of-pocket costs.

Health Care Services	Total Satisfied					
	All Parents	Ethnicity				
		White Parents	Latino Parents	AA Parents	AAPI Parents	All Parents of Color
The availability of providers who speak your language	**78%**	84%	70%	77%	79%	74%
The quality of care you receive	**72%**	78%	66%	71%	72%	68%
The attitude of health care providers and other medical staff toward you and your family	**71%**	78%	64%	72%	65%	66%
How far you have to travel to see a health care provider for your child	**69%**	77%	65%	72%	60%	65%
The amount of time you have to wait to see a health care provider when you seek an appointment	**61%**	70%	52%	64%	53%	55%
The out-of-pocket cost of health care, such as co-pays and deductibles	**56%**	67%	45%	63%	53%	50%

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Q23

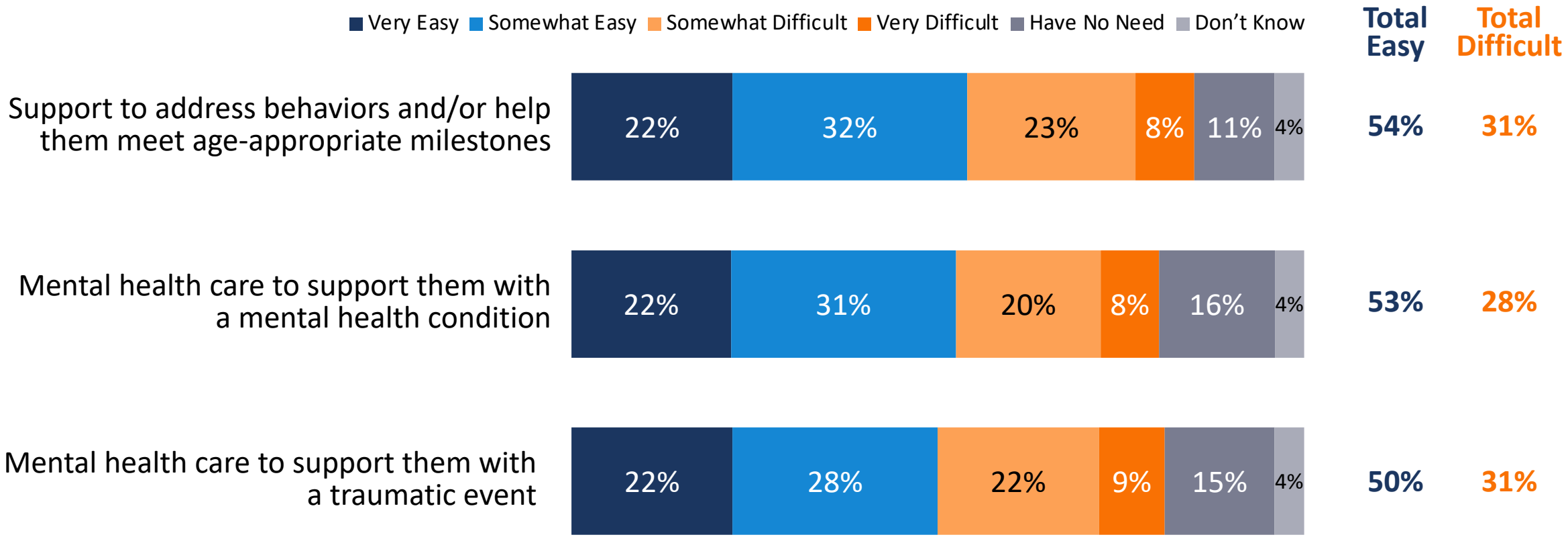
Those who received Medi-Cal expressed slightly higher satisfaction.

Health Care Services	Total Satisfied				
	All Parents	Foreign Born		Spanish Speakers	Medi-Cal Participants
		Yes	No		
The availability of providers who speak your language	**78%**	71%	79%	71%	81%
The quality of care you receive	**72%**	60%	73%	63%	74%
The attitude of health care providers and other medical staff toward you and your family	**71%**	59%	72%	64%	73%
How far you have to travel to see a health care provider for your child	**69%**	65%	70%	67%	72%
The amount of time you have to wait to see a health care provider when you seek an appointment	**61%**	53%	62%	42%	61%
The out-of-pocket cost of health care, such as co-pays and deductibles	**56%**	47%	57%	44%	59%

Q23.

A majority said getting services for their children's mental health was easy, although fewer than one in four said it was "very easy."

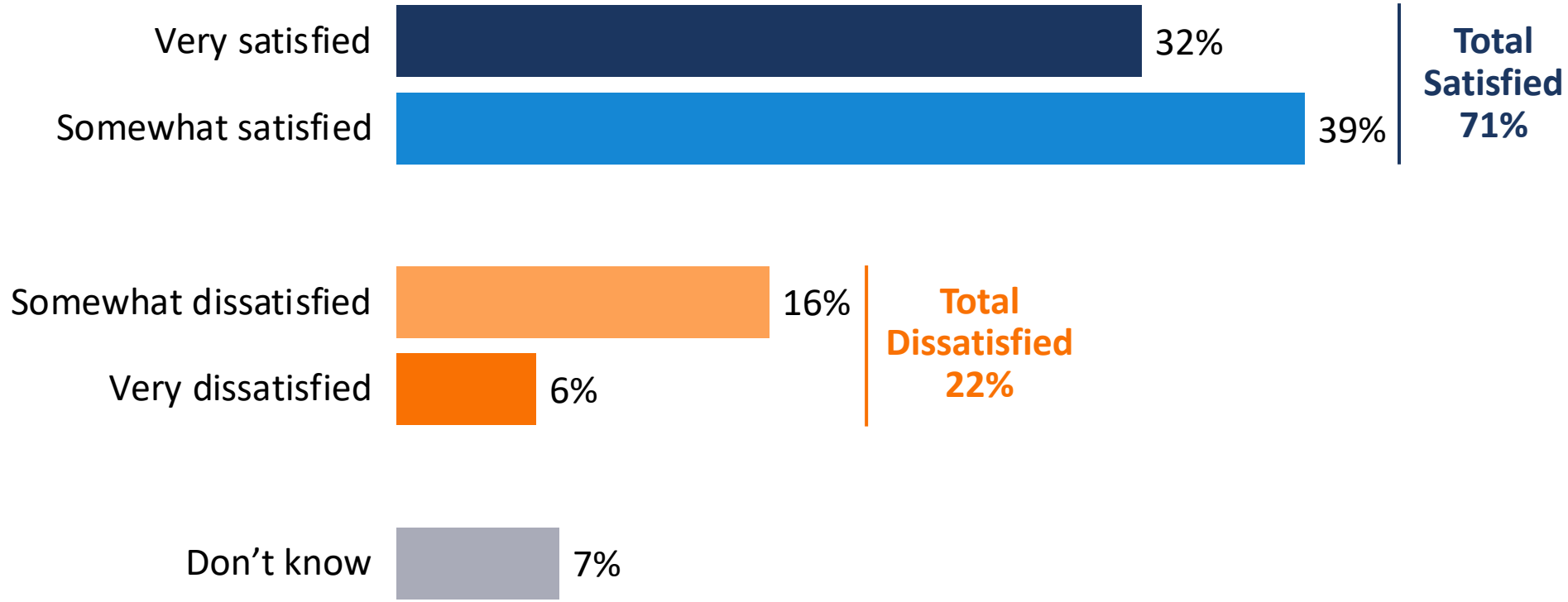
Next, below is a list of specific health care services. For each one, please indicate it was very easy, somewhat easy, somewhat difficult, or very difficult to find these health care services for your child. If your child has not needed this service, please select that option.



Q27.

Seven in ten whose child received behavioral or mental health supports were satisfied.

Overall, were you satisfied with the care your child received for behavioral or mental health support?
(Asked of those who indicated their child received support, n=1,218)

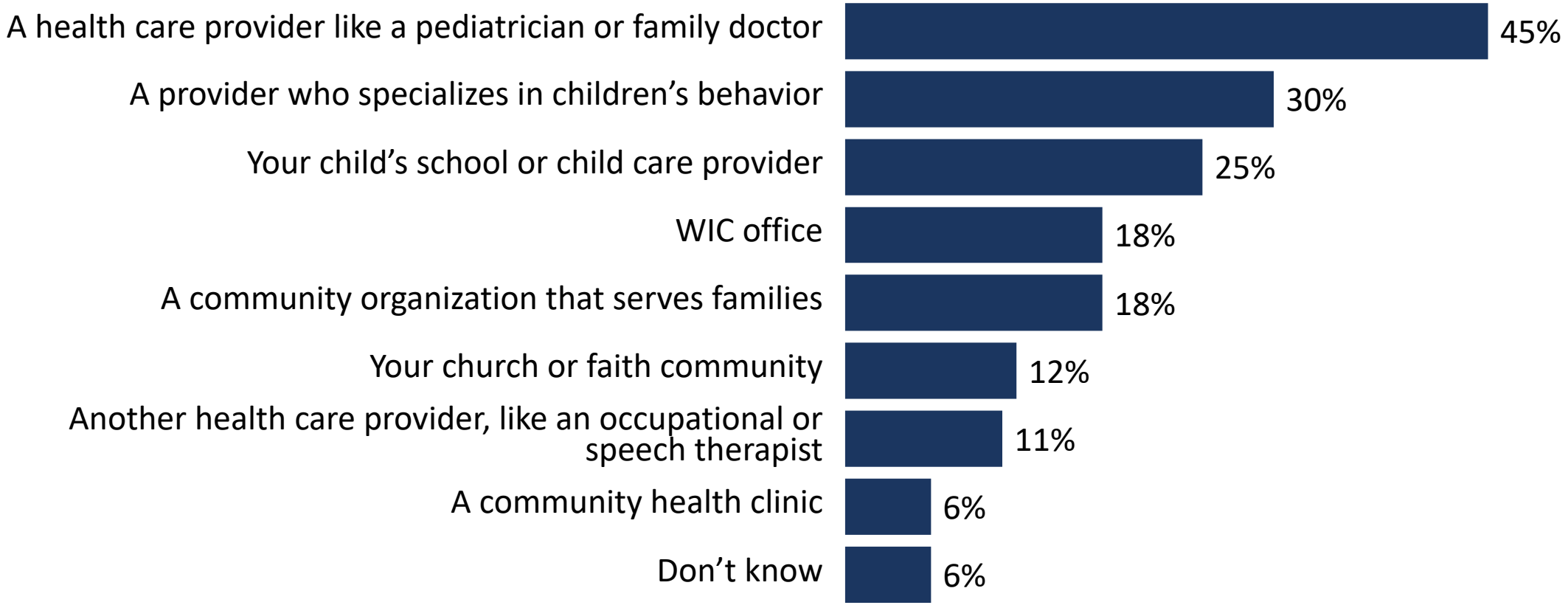


Q28.

They most commonly received services from a health care provider and a provider who specializes in children's behavior.

Where did you go to receive behavioral and/or mental health care for your child?

(Multiple responses accepted)



Q29.

Children Mental Health

- Many parents identified behavioral changes in their children and recognized that some may need mental health support.
- Participants emphasized wanting providers who understand their culture, identity, and values so that their children feel more comfortable opening up.
- Some noted the importance of breaking generational cycles and supporting their children's mental health.
- Logistics like time and travel are seen as the main barriers to child mental health care, though a couple mentioned telehealth has helped to improve their access.

Female, African American/Black Parent: Because kids are being exposed to so much, we do what we can to teach them, but we cannot shield them from everything that is going on, and we need to create safe places for them to speak to us and for them to speak to someone else if they need to.

Female, Latino Parent: I started picking up on little things that he started doing that were not normal for a three-year-old at the time. He was always very angry and didn't know how to express it, so he was just aggressive with people. So, I did take him to behavioral therapy.

Female, Latino Parent: I feel like therapy is important to help our children, you know, be able to speak to us better in the future. Tell us when something is wrong. For us to be their safe place.

Male, African American/Black Parent: COVID really helped with getting more telehealth options. So, credit to that because prior it had to be in person, and it always was an hour and a half each way.

Experiences with Immigration Enforcement

Immigration Concerns

- Parents are highly aware of increased immigration enforcement and ICE activity.
- Most said they have not been personally detained or targeted, but many still felt **fear, anxiety, and stress**, especially families of color and mixed-status households.
- For mixed-status and many Latino families, **daily routines have changed**: limiting errands, reducing time in public, being around only trusted companions, and prioritizing essentials only.
- Children absorb fear and disruption and experience anxiety about school drop-off/pick-up and distress when peers disappear.
- Latino parents were most likely to mention **avoiding care and going without public benefits** due to immigration-related concerns and not wanting to share personal information.

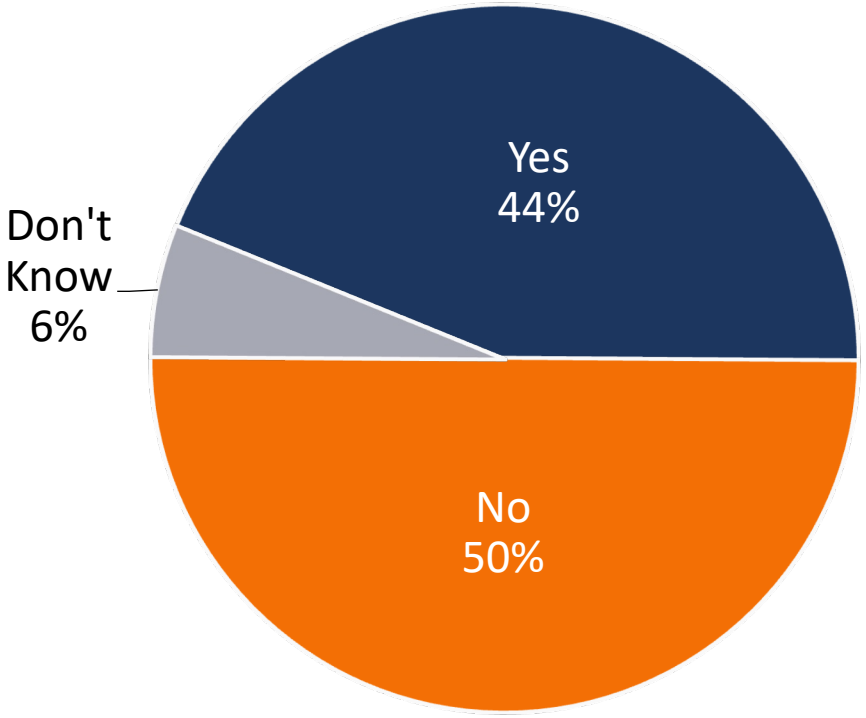
Female, Latino Parent: Well, I try not to go out too much, I try to stay in my home. I don't go to our Mexican markets or Home Depot, places like that, that have been raided. I try to take my children to parks in other cities, since they have raided parks as well. I don't share where I am going with anyone but my husband.

Male, Young Parent: We are more cautious of where we go and are always aware of our surroundings when we are out. We don't share any personal information with anyone, and we most definitely don't like to talk or interact with people, especially Americans, like we used to before.

Female, African American/Black Parent: One of my son's friends at school was taken. And so, it affected him and he was very upset about it. And that was kind of interesting for me to even have that conversation with him.

More than two in five know someone who has been affected by the recent immigration raids.

Next, as you may have heard, the federal government has increased immigration enforcement and detainment, including ICE raids in California. Do you know someone who has been affected directly by the recent immigration raids?

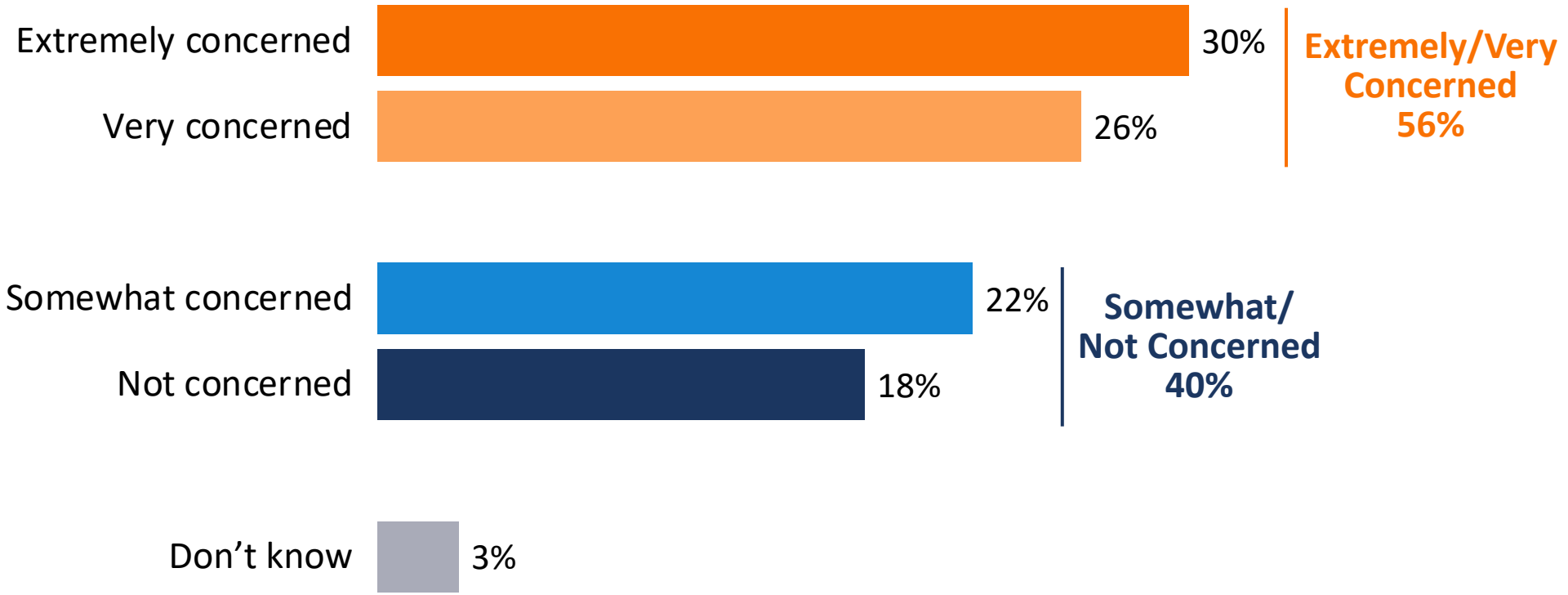


Spanish speakers and those in Sacramento and rural Northern California were especially likely to know someone who had been affected.

Q30.

A majority are concerned that members of their community may be targeted by immigration raids.

Next, how concerned are you that members of your community may be targeted by these immigration raids?



Q31.

Spanish speaking parents expressed the most concern about neighbors being targeted by immigration raids.

Demographic Group	Extremely/Very Concerned	Somewhat/ Not Concerned	Don't Know
All Parents	**56%**	**40%**	**3%**
Race/Ethnicity			
White Parents	64%	35%	1%
Latino Parents	52%	43%	5%
African American Parents	62%	34%	5%
Asian/Pacific Islander Parents	44%	51%	6%
All Parents of Color	51%	44%	5%
Foreign Born			
Yes	48%	49%	3%
No	57%	40%	3%
Spanish Speaker			
Yes	**67%**	30%	2%

Q31. Next, how concerned are you that members of your community may be targeted by these immigration raids?

Parents in Sacramento and the Rural North expressed the highest level of concern.

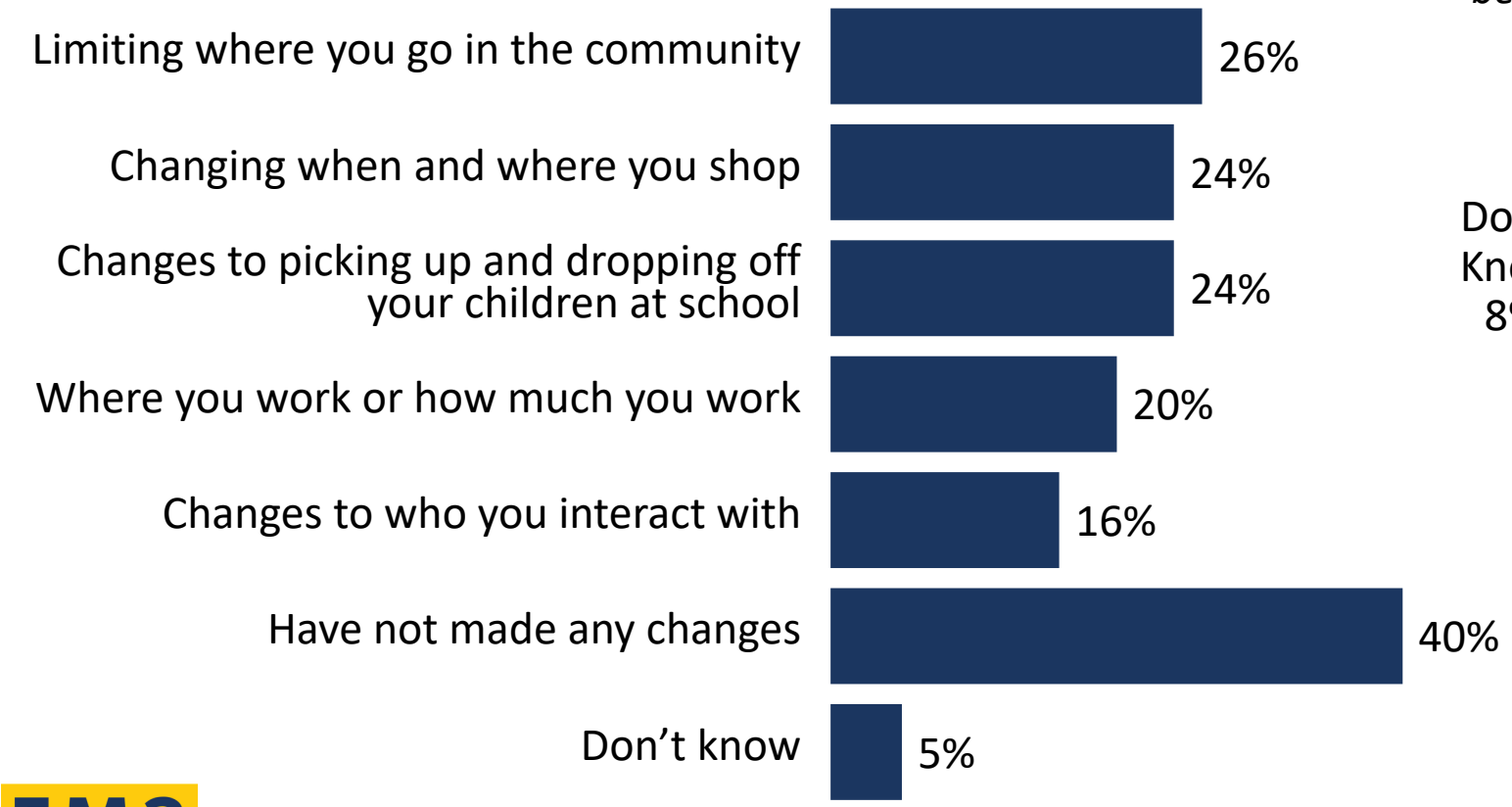
Demographic Group	Extremely/Very Concerned	Somewhat/ Not Concerned	Don't Know
All Parents	**56%**	**40%**	**3%**
Region			
Los Angeles County	57%	40%	2%
Counties Surrounding Los Angeles	49%	46%	5%
Bay Area	52%	45%	4%
San Diego	60%	36%	4%
Sacramento/Rural North	72%	26%	2%
Central Valley/Central Coast	55%	42%	3%

Q31. Next, how concerned are you that members of your community may be targeted by these immigration raids?

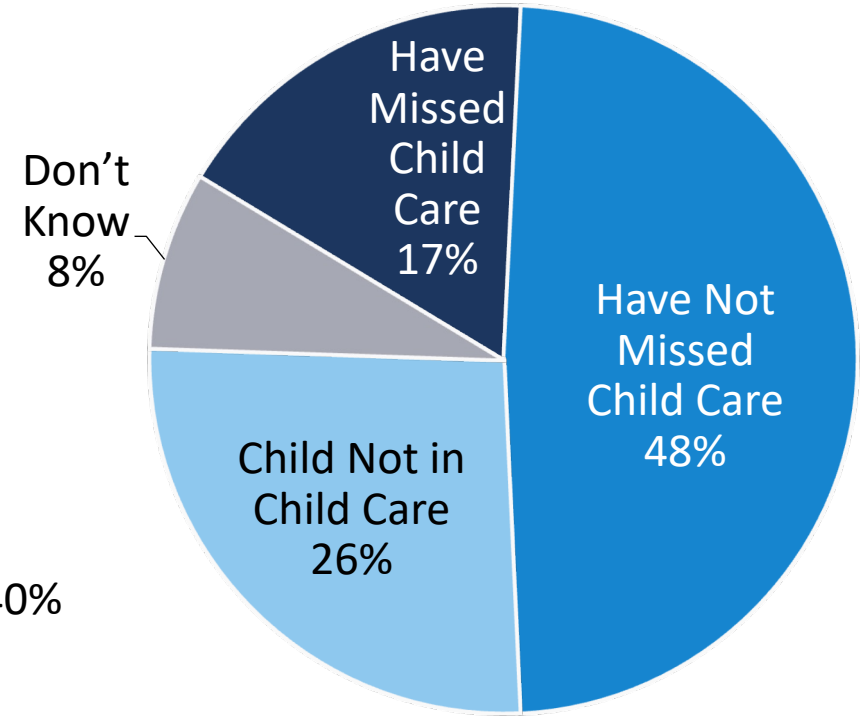
Three in five say they have made some changes in lifestyle because of recent immigration actions.

Have you and your family had to make any of the following changes in lifestyle due to recent immigration actions? If you have not made any changes you can select that option.

(Multiple responses accepted)



Next, many child care providers have closed during immigration raids, and families may be afraid of dropping their children off because of the presence of ICE in the community. Has your child ever missed child care because of immigration raids in your community?



Q32 & Q33.

One-third of foreign-born parents reported limiting where they go in the community.

Lifestyle Change	Demographic Group							
	All Parents	Ethnicity					Foreign Born	
		White Parents	Latino Parents	AA Parents	AAPI Parents	All Parents of Color	Yes	No
Limiting where you go in community	**26%**	27%	28%	25%	24%	25%	32%	25%
Changing when/where you shop	**24%**	27%	25%	30%	15%	22%	21%	24%
Changes to picking up/dropping off children	**24%**	29%	23%	26%	18%	21%	24%	24%
Where you work/how much you work	**20%**	25%	17%	20%	20%	18%	19%	21%
Changes to who you interact with	**16%**	16%	17%	16%	16%	16%	18%	16%
Have not made any changes	**40%**	39%	37%	39%	48%	41%	39%	41%

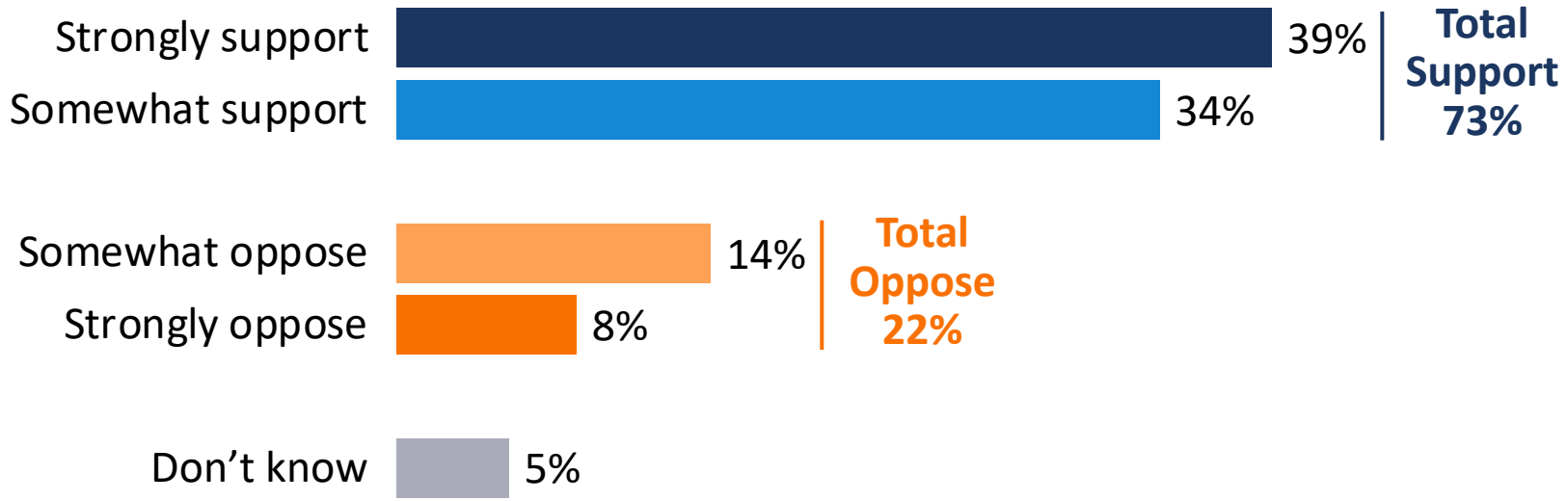
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Q32. Have you and your family had to make any of the following changes in lifestyle due to recent immigration actions? If you have not made any changes you can select that option

Support for Policy Proposals

Nearly three quarters of parents of young children offered support for taxing California's highest earners to fund public services.

The next question is about proposals that are being considered in California. Some people have proposed increasing taxes on highly profitable corporations and on California's highest earners, for example the top 2%, to fund public services throughout the state. Generally speaking, does this sound like something you would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose?



Q14.

Strong support cut across gender, ethnicity, and education lines.

Demographic Group	Total Support	Total Oppose	Don't Know
All Parents	**73%**	**22%**	**5%**
Gender			
Men	78%	20%	2%
Women	70%	23%	7%
Race/Ethnicity			
White Parents	79%	18%	3%
Latino Parents	68%	25%	7%
African American Parents	68%	28%	4%
Asian/Pacific Islander Parents	73%	21%	6%
All Parents of Color	70%	24%	6%
Education			
Some College or Less	68%	26%	6%
Four-Year College or More	82%	16%	2%

Q14. The next question is about proposals that are being considered in California. Some people have proposed increasing taxes on highly profitable corporations and on California's highest earners, for example the top 2%, to fund public services throughout the state. Generally speaking, does this sound like something you would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose?

Parents across the state offered support for the proposal.

Demographic Group	Total Support	Total Oppose	Don't Know
Region			
Los Angeles County	75%	22%	3%
Counties Surrounding Los Angeles	66%	25%	9%
Bay Area	72%	25%	2%
San Diego	74%	22%	4%
Sacramento/Rural North	81%	14%	5%
Central Valley/Central Coast	76%	19%	4%

Q14. The next question is about proposals that are being considered in California. Some people have proposed increasing taxes on highly profitable corporations and on California's highest earners, for example the top 2%, to fund public services throughout the state. Generally speaking, does this sound like something you would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose?

Conclusions

Conclusions

- Cost of living was one of the biggest challenges facing families with young children, with very few living comfortably and accruing savings.
- Housing and food were the biggest expenses for families.
- A broad majority had experience with at least one public benefit, and they tended to view these as easy to apply for.
- The most common barriers to participation were a lack of information and long waitlists.
- Parents expressed high satisfaction with the health care system, but a majority were concerned about potential cuts to health care.
- Nearly half know someone who has been targeted by immigration actions, and one-third of foreign-born parents changed where they go in the community because of these.

FM3 RESEARCH

BAY AREA | LOS ANGELES | PORTLAND

Lucia Del Puppo
Lucia@FM3research.com

Suzanne Brewster
Suzanne@FM3research.com

From Research to Action: Turning Parents' Voices into a Platform for California's Next Governor

Choose Children: Parents' Voices, Statewide Platform

What families told us is shaping the agenda for California's next governor

1 Families named the pressures

- Cost of living, housing, and food
- Worry about cuts to health care
- Fear from immigration enforcement
- Hard-to-find information and long waitlists

2 The platform answers them

- Economic security
- Early learning and care
- Birth justice
- Health coverage and access
- System navigation
- Governance

3 Advocates carry it forward

- A Planning Council of 40+ organizations built the platform together
- Took it to the candidates for governor through debates, commitments, and site visits

The research doesn't sit on a shelf. Every recommendation that follows comes from what parents told us they need.

Policy Recommendations

Economic Security

Ensure families have the financial stability to raise healthy children

- Expanded child tax credits
- Strengthened and extended paid family leave
- Housing subsidies and homelessness prevention for families with young children
- Basic income and poverty reduction strategies
- Continued support for CalFresh, CalWORKS, and Medi-Cal access
- Continued preservation of state-level funding flexibility in the face of federal cuts

Early Learning and Care

Guarantee access to affordable, high-quality early care and education from birth to age 5

- Continued implementation and expansion of Transitional Kindergarten
- Increased availability of infant and toddler care
- Child care provider pay and benefits that reflect the true value of their care
- Culturally and linguistically affirming care options
- Support for family child care and mixed-delivery systems

Birth Justice

Protect the health and dignity of birthing people and newborns

- Expanded access to doulas and midwives
- Trauma-informed, culturally responsive maternity care
- Expanded home visiting programs
- Full postpartum coverage and mental health supports
- Enforcement and implementation of maternal health protections
- Investment in workforce diversity within maternal health professions

Health Coverage & Access

Ensure continuous, affordable health coverage for all children

- Continuous Medi-Cal coverage for young children
- Simplified renewal processes
- Preservation of ACA marketplace subsidies
- Strong state protections to federal Medicaid and SNAP cuts
- Protection of health care access regardless of immigration status

System Navigation

Make it easier for families to access the services they already quality for

- Streamlined enrollment systems across agencies
- Simplified eligibility and reduced paperwork
- Multilingual and culturally responsive navigation support
- Stronger investment in family-facing community navigators
- Better coordination between health care, early learning, and economic support programs

Governance

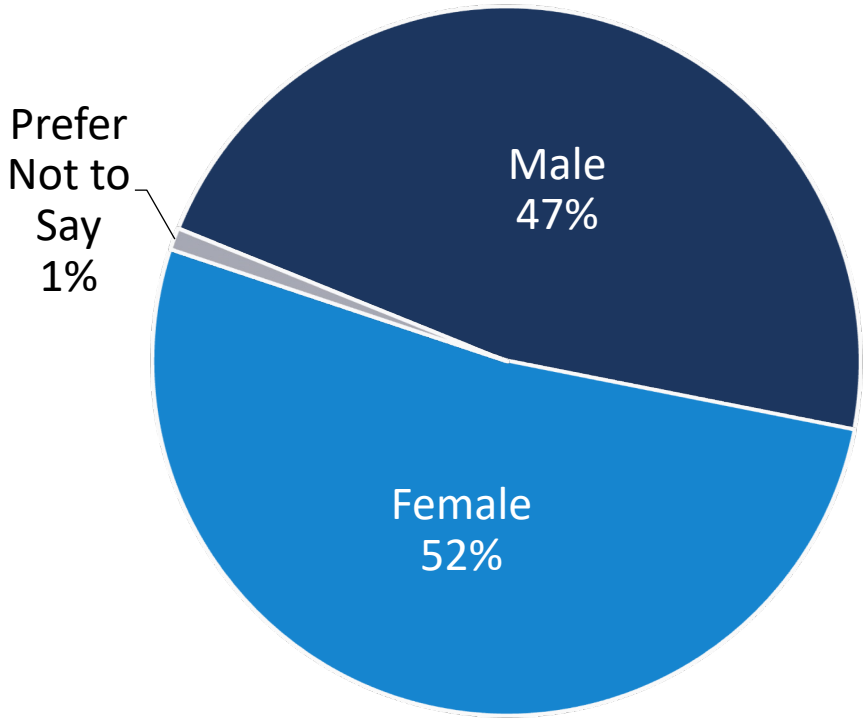
Create stronger, more aligned state leadership for young children

- Clear accountability within state government for early childhood outcomes
- Improved cross-agency coordination and oversight of early childhood programs
- Protection of state-level funding flexibility in the face of federal cuts
- Sustained and intentional utilization of First 5 Commissions in all 58 counties

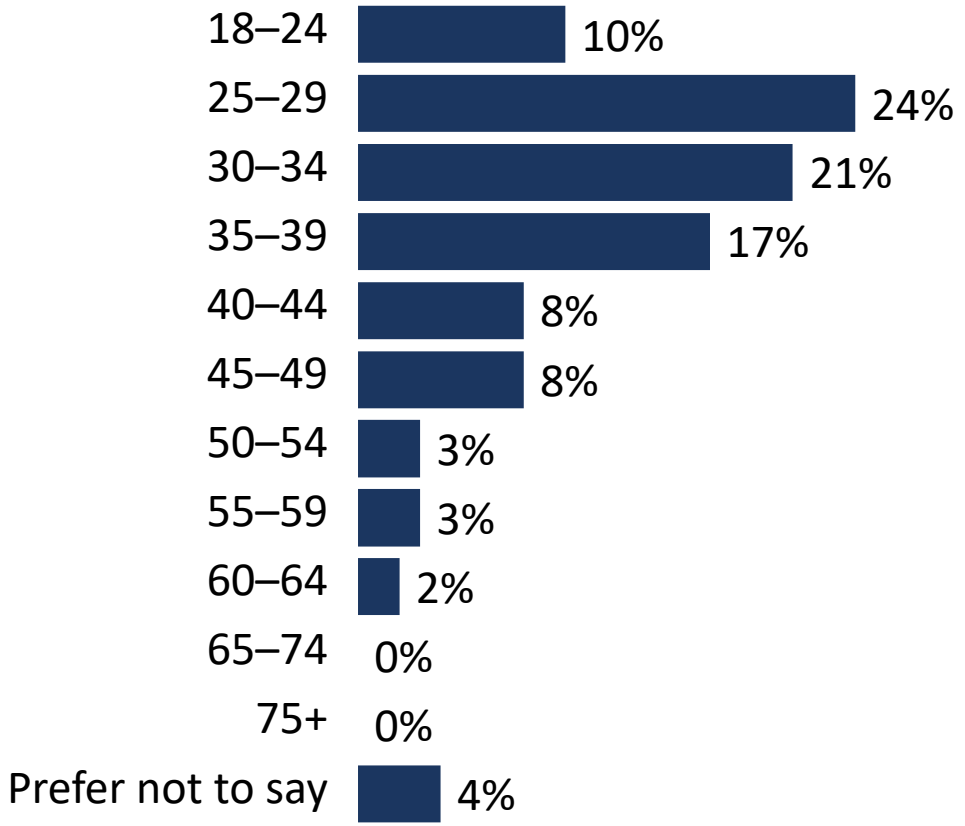
Profile of Respondents

Gender & Age

What is your gender?



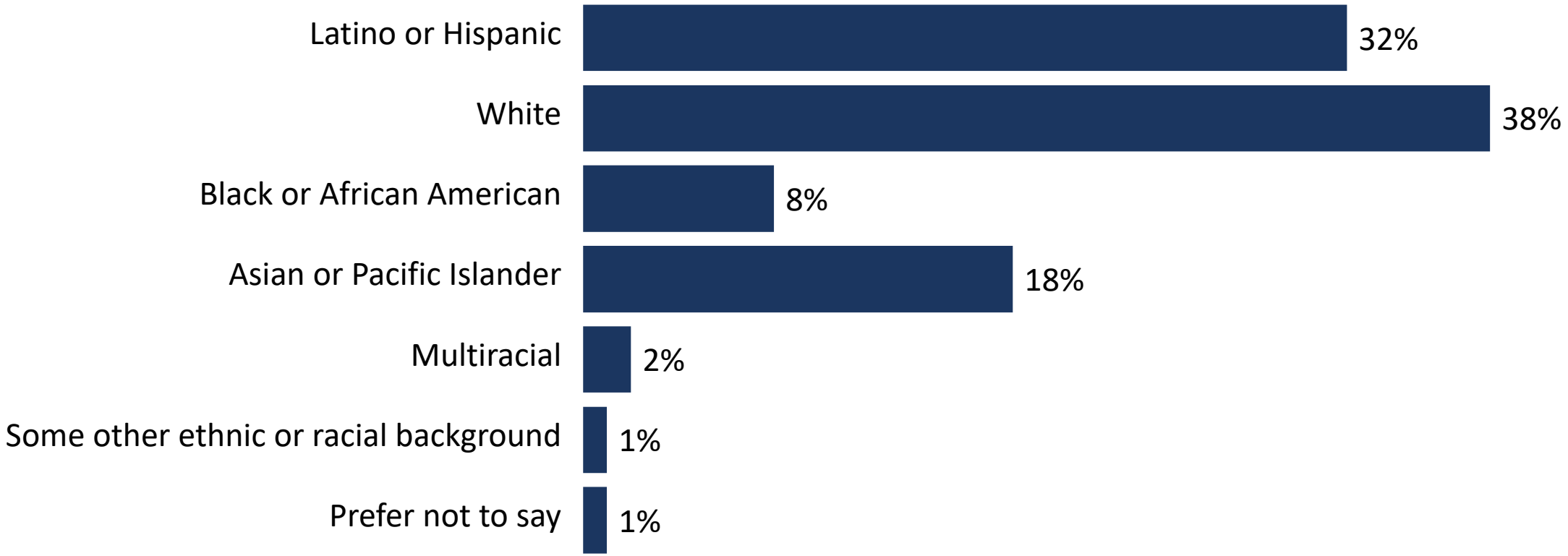
Next, in what year were you born? (Age ranges)



Q6 & Q8.

Race & Ethnicity

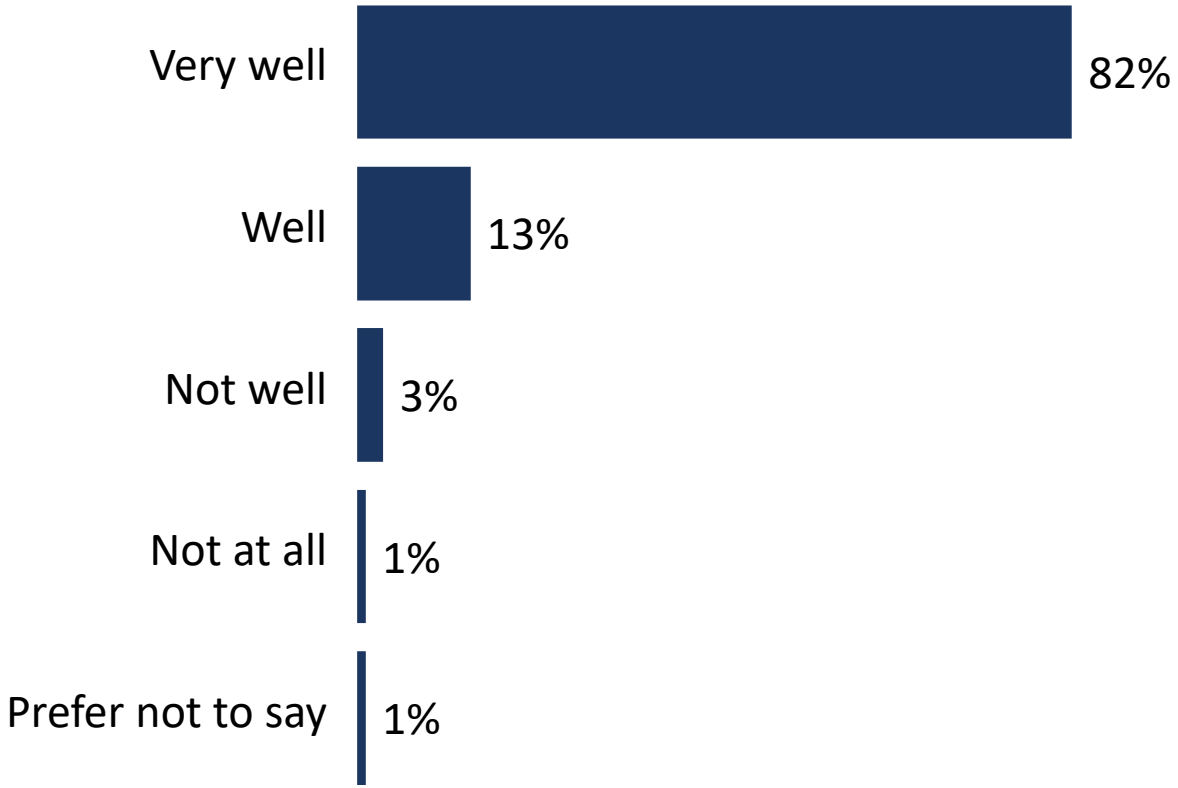
With which racial or ethnic group do you identify yourself?



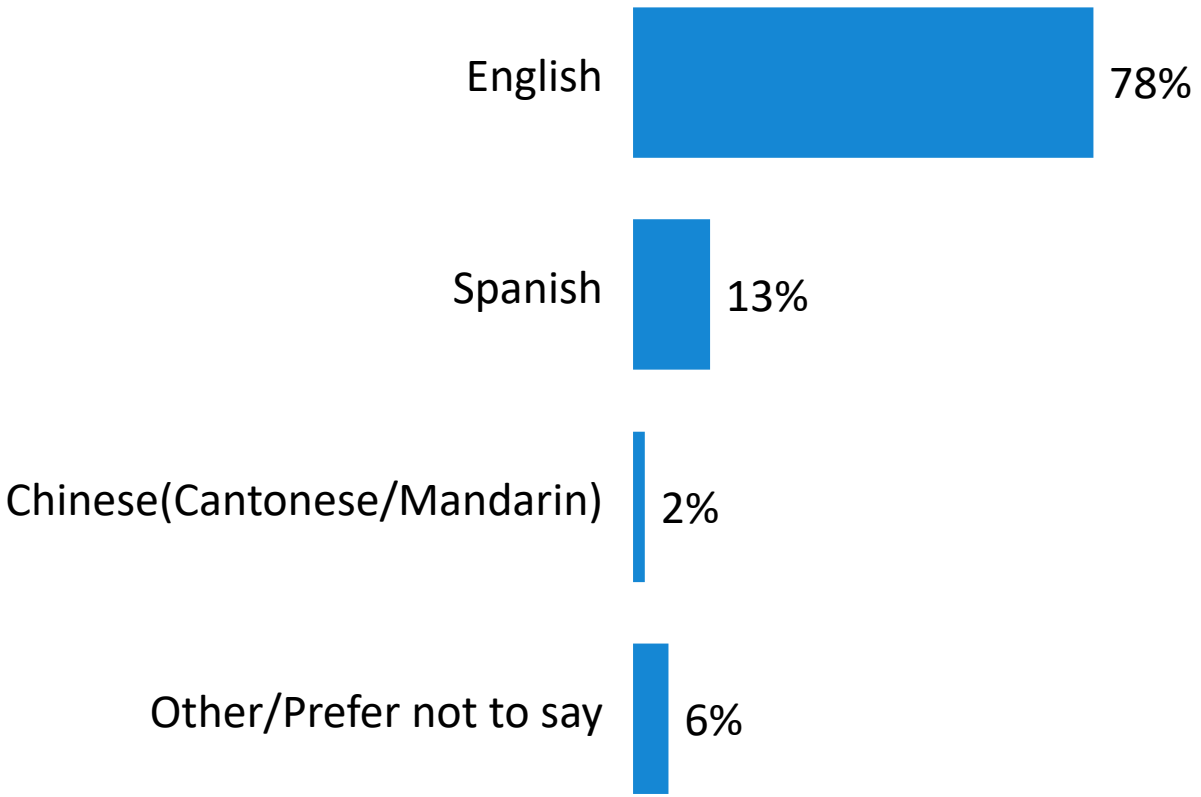
Q7.

English Proficiency and Native Language

Please identify how well you speak English.



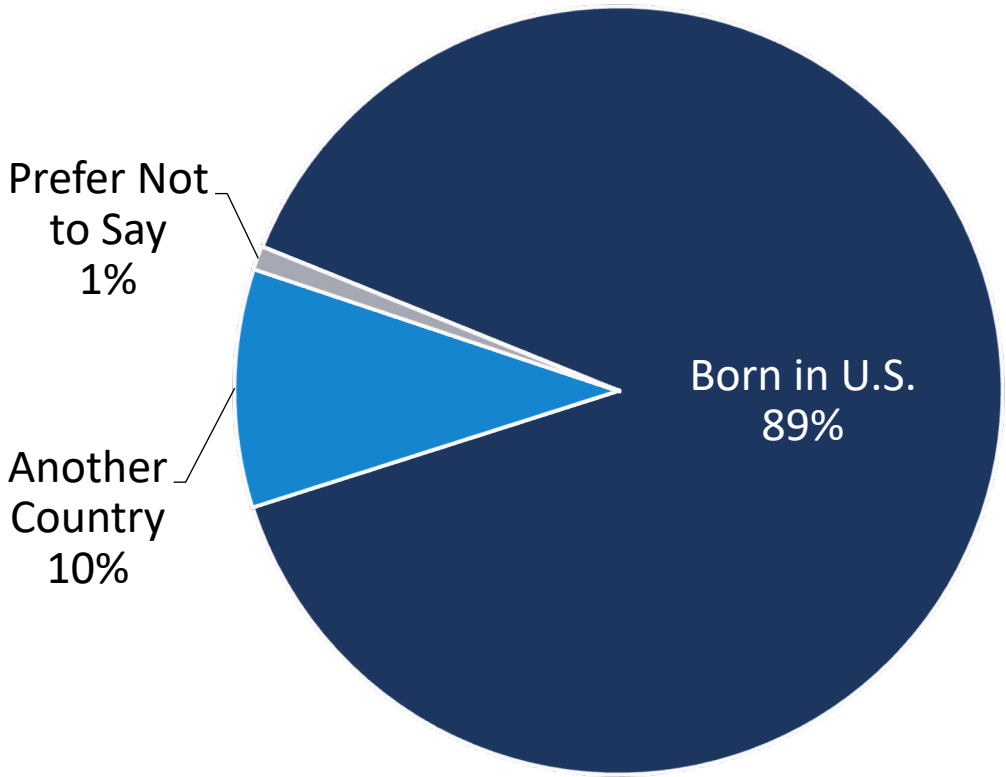
What is your native language?



Q39 & Q40.

Country of Origin

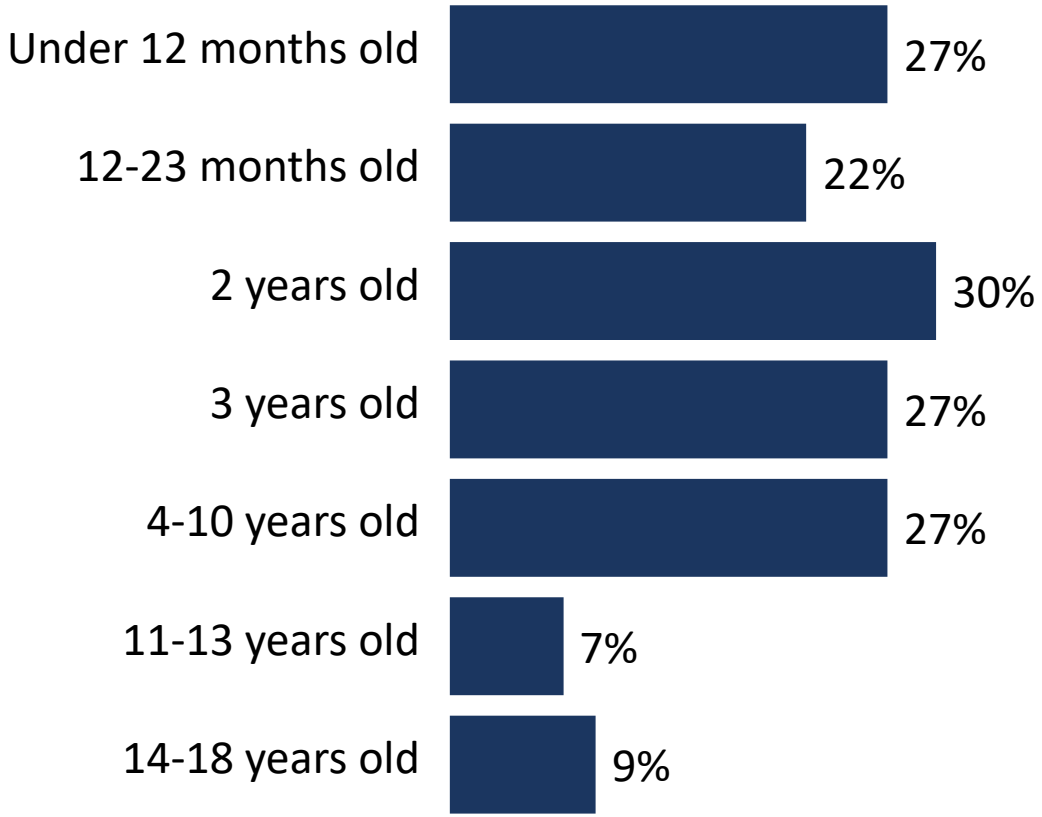
Were you born in the U.S. or in another country?



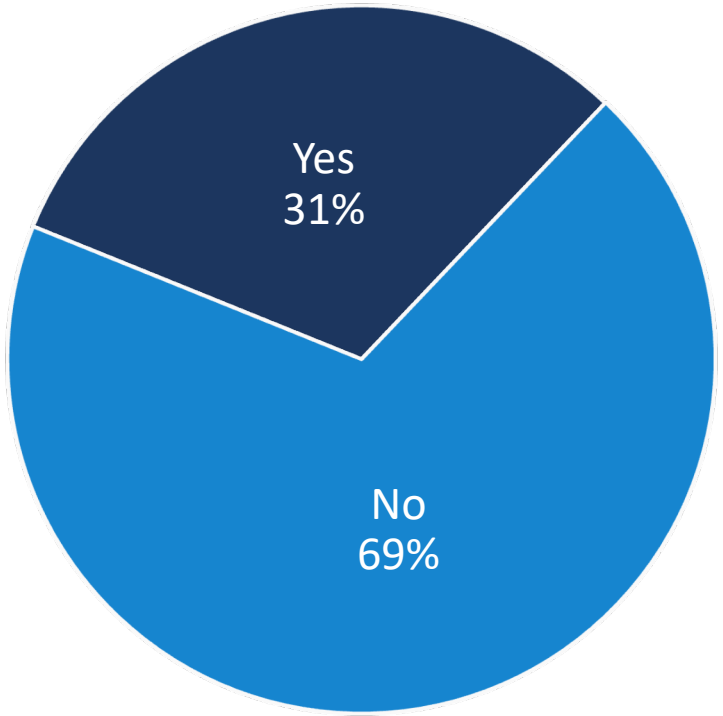
Q41.

Age of Children & Pregnancy Status

How old are your children under 18?
(Asked of parents/guardians only; multiple responses accepted, n=1,335)



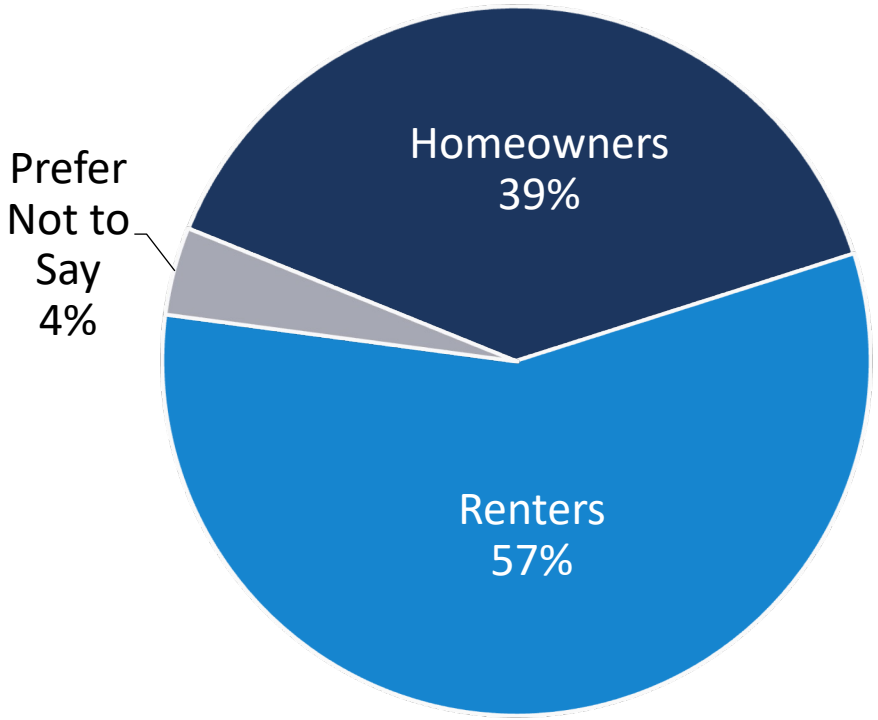
Are you or your spouse/partner pregnant?



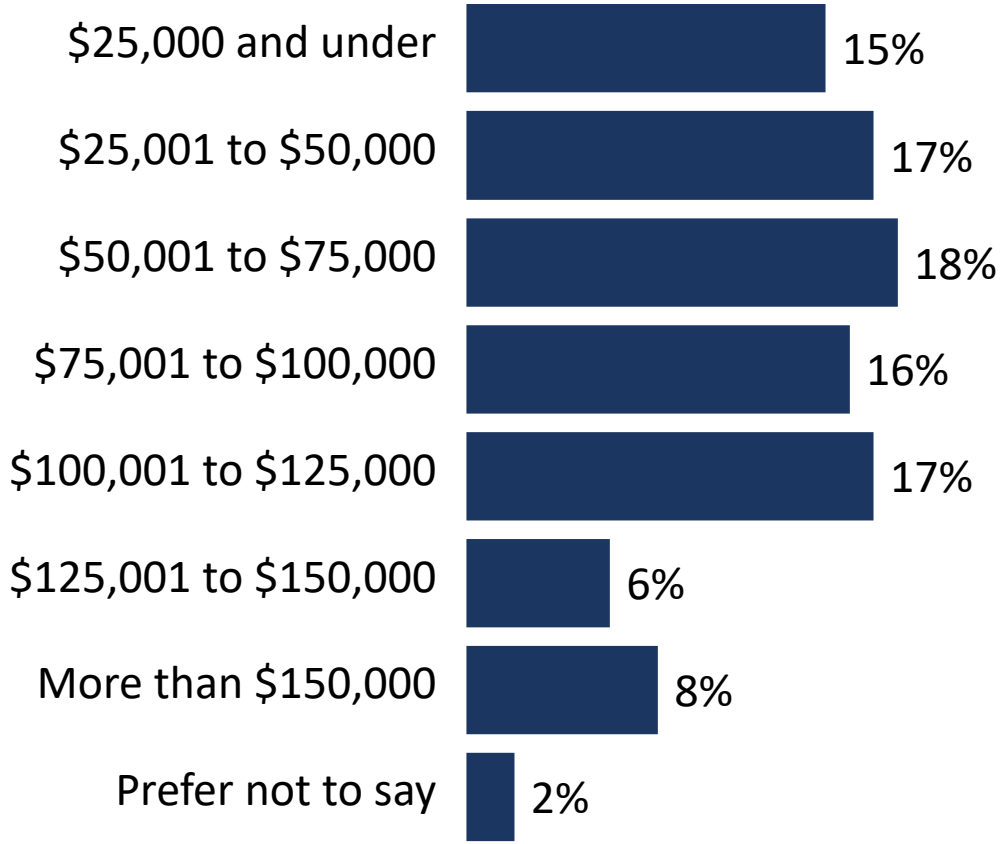
Q4 & Q5.

Homeownership and Household Income

Do you own or rent your home or apartment?



What is the total combined income for all the people in your household before taxes in 2025?

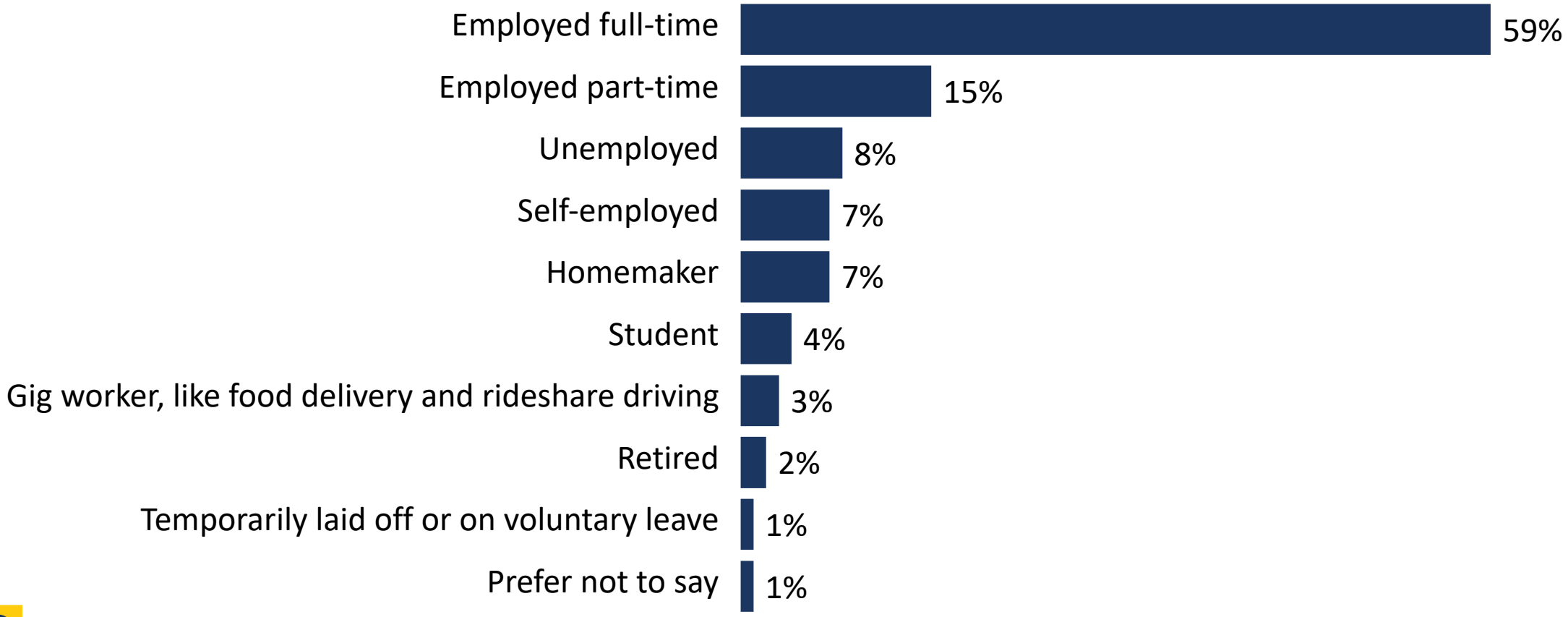


Q35 & Q36.

Employment Status

What is your current employment status?

(Multiple responses accepted)



Q38.

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