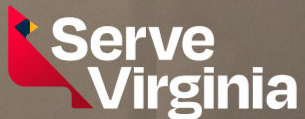


VIRGINIA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INDEX

PART 02

The Current State of Engagement





“

The process of building the VCEI as a Core Team helped to develop and strengthen the relationships that will carry our ability to put these findings to their fullest use — developing strategies, programs, and partnerships to meet our communities’ greatest needs.

VANESSA DIAMOND

SVP, Civic Innovations, Community Foundation for a Greater Richmond;
Board Member and Global Affiliate Chair, Points of Light;
Board Member, Virginia Governor’s Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism;
Board Member, America’s Service Commissions



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VIRGINIA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INDEX – PART 2

Our Process: Building the VCEI

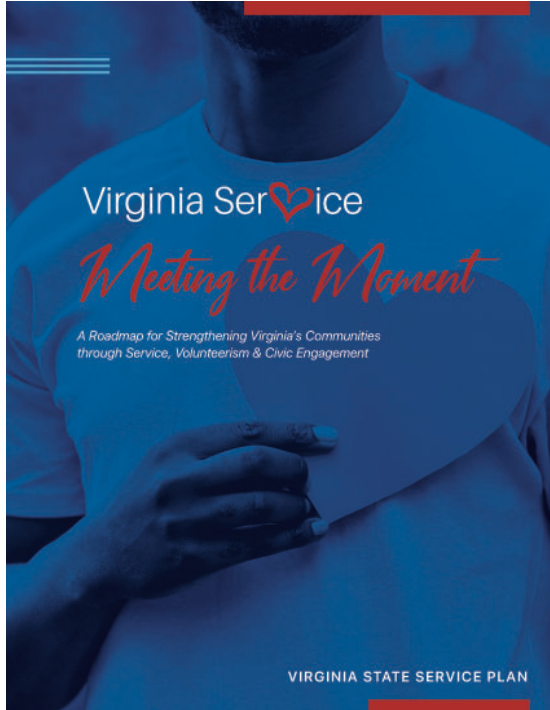


OUR PROCESS: BUILDING THE VCEI

Background



DELIVERING ON OUR 2022-2024 STATE SERVICE PLAN



STRATEGY 1

Build a Stronger Culture of Service, Volunteerism, and Civic Engagement



STRATEGY 2

Build a More Representative, Integrated, and Aligned Network of Partners



STRATEGY 3

Build a More Robust Resource and Support Infrastructure

The Data and Insights Gained from the Virginia Community Engagement Index Answers Key Questions to Advance All Three Strategies



Our State Service Plan Mandate:

Develop a study that can assess how residents are engaging and what they prioritize in their communities, while also gaining insights that can:

- Lead to a fuller understanding of the service landscape
- Identify strategies for promoting greater awareness of opportunities on the part of residents
- Inform tactics for boosting volunteer recruitment and program development.



What Our Stakeholders Told Us:

STATE SERVICE PLAN FINDINGS

84%

Said it was very important to gain a greater understanding of community-level needs and priorities.

60%

Said community organizations lack the volunteer cultivation, training, and recruitment resources to boost volunteerism rates effectively.

63%

Said limited awareness and understanding on the part of residents for how they can serve was an important barrier to address.

55%

Said they felt there was limited inclusivity of “community-level” service in how we, as a sector, think about and measure engagement.

OUR PROCESS: BUILDING THE VCEI

Objectives



Building the VCEI

Where to Start?

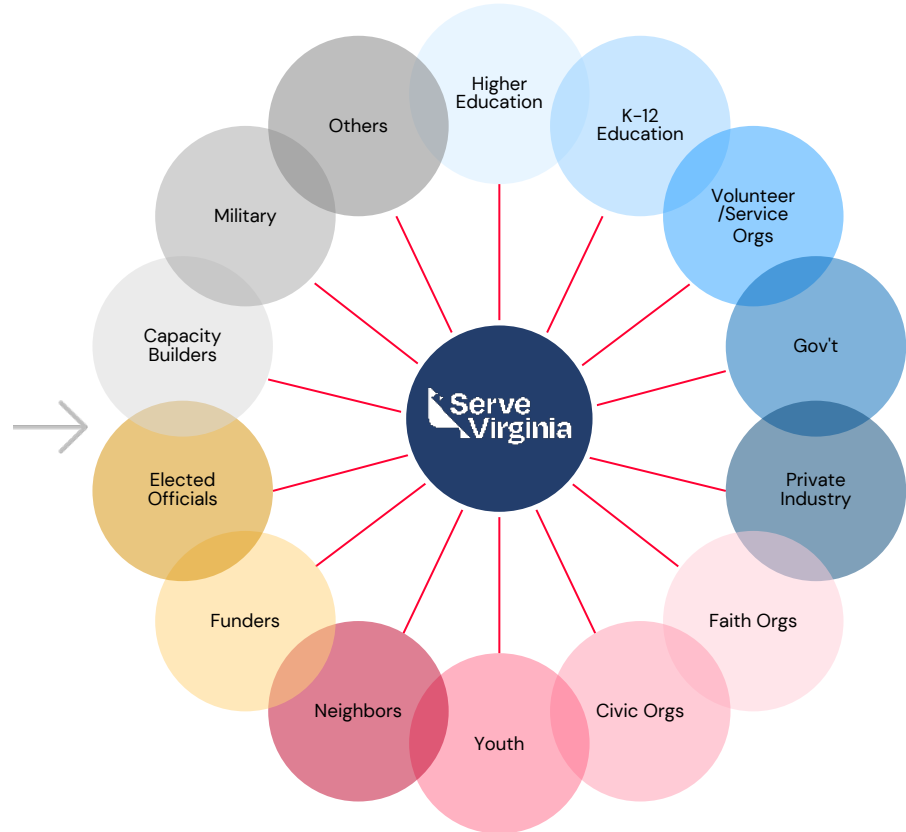


**BUILD A COALITION &
ASSESS THE LANDSCAPE**



Our core team consisted of
representatives from **38 ORGANIZATIONS
THROUGHOUT VIRGINIA**

- What do we, as an ecosystem, truly want this study to accomplish?
- What specific data and insights will be most beneficial to members of each sector?
- Are there any national models and partners we can leverage?



Building the VCEI

Aligning on Goals



WHAT THIS STUDY NEEDED TO BE

- More unique to Virginia.
- More encompassing of all avenues of community engagement (formal service and volunteering, informal neighborly acts, civic and democratic action, etc.).
- More illustrative of community priorities – where should we be channeling resources and volunteers.
- More indicative of messaging and strategies to drive recruitment and retention.
- Measurable over time.



WHAT WAS OUT THERE



A widely used tool that looks at a variety of civic participation indicators, primarily leveraging data from the Community Engagement & Volunteering Supplement to the U.S. Census, sponsored by AmeriCorps.



Formalizing Our Goals



OUR PROCESS: BUILDING THE VCEI

Methodology



Building the VCEI

Developing Our Survey



LEVERAGING INSIGHTS FROM OUR CORE TEAM TO
PINPOINT MOST ACTIONABLE AREAS OF INQUIRY

LEVERAGING NATIONAL PARTNERS FOR THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



Building the VCEI

Distributing Our Survey

Survey was fielded January 30 through March 8, 2023.



Survey responses have been weighted to more accurately reflect Virginia's geographic and demographic diversity.

Note: For detailed respondent demographic information, see Addendum 1 at the end of this report.



What Makes this Sample Unique

Our sample affords us an unprecedented, in-depth look at engagement within the volunteerism, service, and civic engagement ecosystem.

3,099 Participants

Purchased through research panel providers Qualtrics and CINT

Potentially more apt to be engaged because they've agreed to be part of a research panel

3,294 Participants

Procured through 38 Core Team member organization distribution channels

Significantly more likely to be engaged because they're already in the ecosystem

6,393 Total Participants

These should be thought of as "engaged Virginians" not "everyday Virginians"

What the sample as constructed will tell us from a data perspective:

Our volunteer engagement numbers are higher than what is being reported nationally.

This is an **intentional choice** that allows us to discern with greater nuance and reliability:

- The strengths of the ecosystem.
- The motivations that most directly correspond with increased engagement.
- The barriers that can help us understand why volunteerism may be declining.
- The ways people are engaging that don't fit in the traditional "volunteerism" bucket.

Through our analysis, we sought to answer the following key questions:

What are our most top-of-mind and pressing community needs and priorities?

How effective at addressing community needs do we perceive each of the following action areas to be?



To what extent are we currently engaging in acts that advance each of these action areas — and why?

How do we inspire and mobilize more people to act?



VIRGINIA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INDEX – PART 2

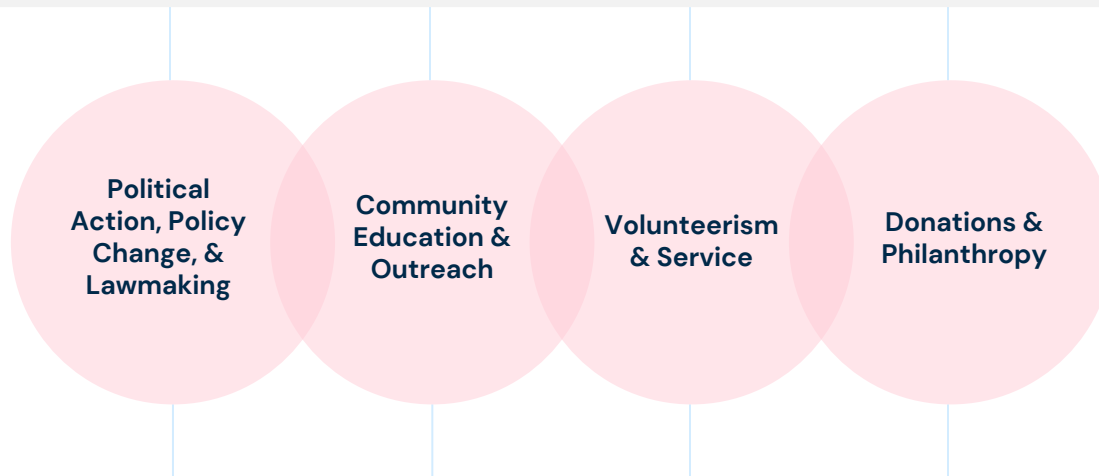
Service, Volunteerism, and Civic Action



Through our analysis, we sought to answer the following key questions:

What are our most top-of-mind and pressing community needs and priorities?

How effective at addressing community needs do we perceive each of the following action areas to be?



To what extent are we currently engaging in acts that advance each of these action areas — and why?

How do we inspire and mobilize more people to act?





VIRGINIA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INDEX – PART 2

“Informal” & “Organizational” Acts of Service

Understanding the Current State of Engagement

“Informal” and “Organizational” Acts of Service

Those who “formally” volunteered in the past 12 months often did so with organizations within the highest-ranked priority areas, such as education, health and well-being, and hunger relief. Beyond formal volunteerism, however, respondents also engaged in “informal” acts of neighborly kindness that suggest a significant amount of service is happening on the community level — acts that aren’t traditionally measured when we examine service and volunteerism’s impact on the community but do in fact contribute to the strength of our social fabric.

 **7** out of **10**

Virginians said they help their neighbors through “informal” acts of service, and 55% said they did so more than once a month.

 **67%**

Said they “formally” volunteered with an organization in the past 12 months unaided, and 79% have either maintained or increased their frequency of volunteering.

 **Top 5**

Respondents most often volunteered with youth/educational organizations, houses of worship, hunger relief organizations, health organizations, and recreational associations.

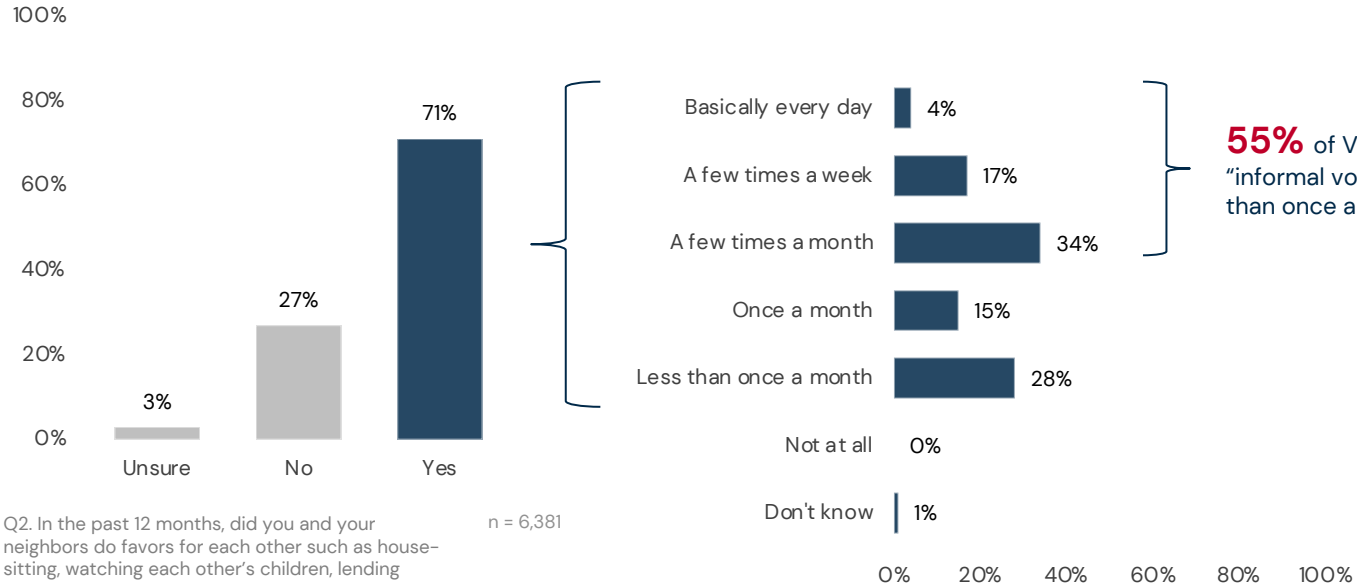


Neighbors Helping Neighbors...

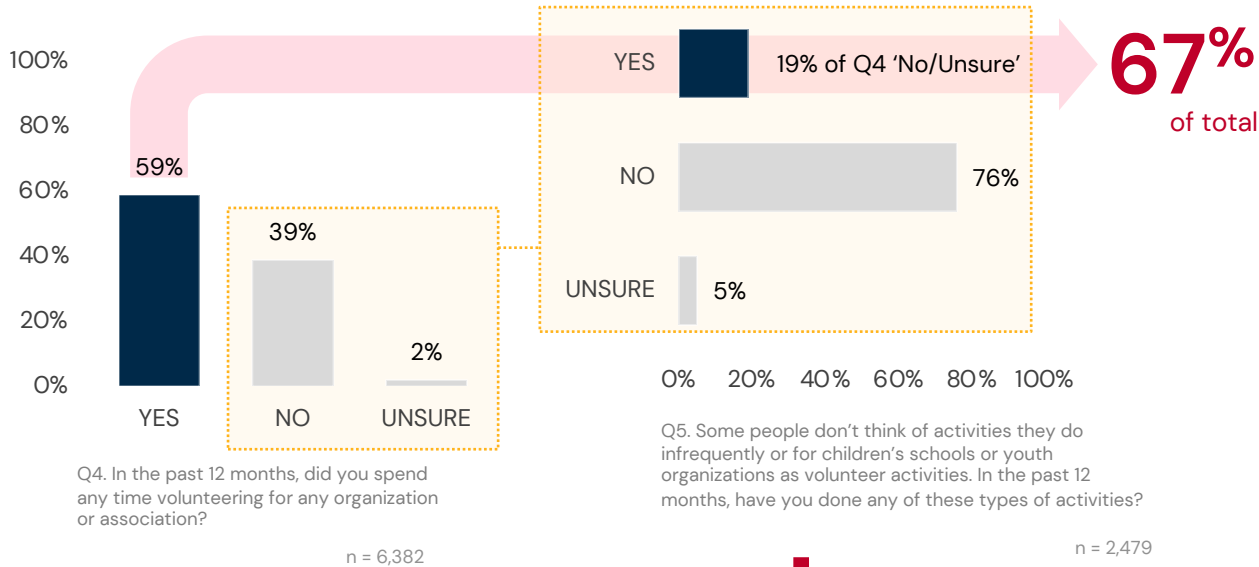
Roughly 7 in 10 Virginians embraced “informal” forms of helping their neighbors...



...and more than half of those who engaged in “informal” service said they did so more than once a month.



Percentage of Respondents Who Have Volunteered in the Past 12 Months:



Unaided, nearly 3 out of 5 Virginians said they volunteered with an organization in the past 12 months.

However, when prompted to consider activities that may fly under the radar of traditionally held notions of "volunteering," an additional 19% self-identified as a volunteer.

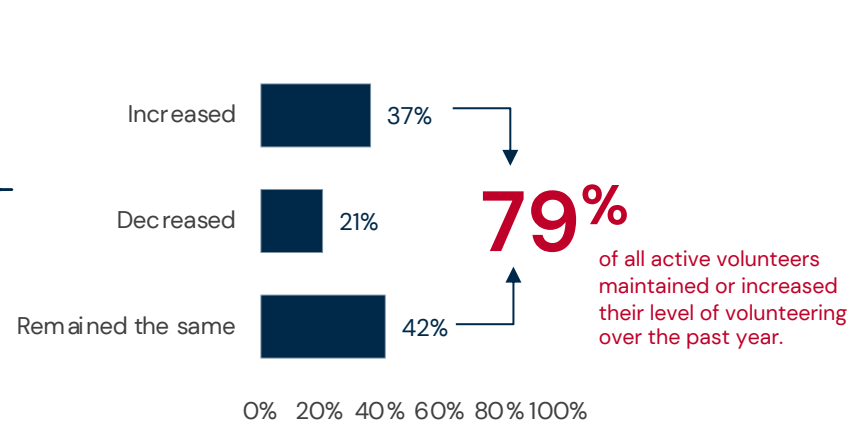
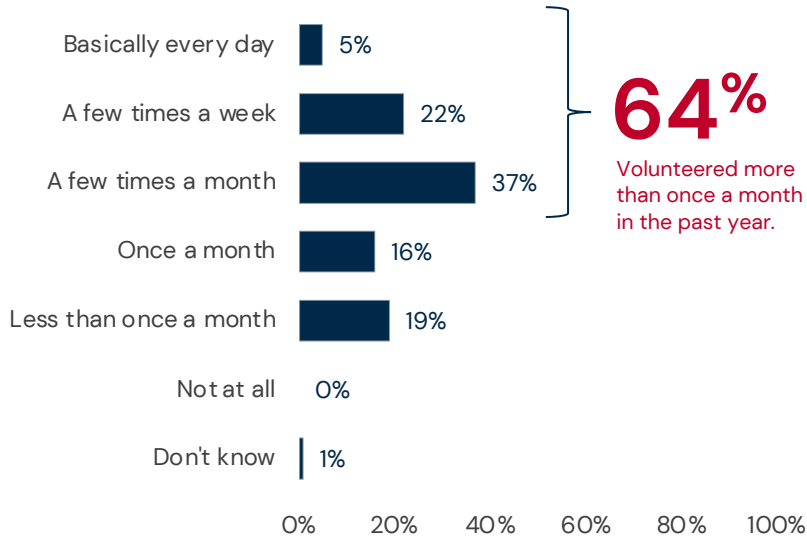


DEMOGRAPHIC FINDING

Black (25%) and Hispanic/Latino (23%) respondents were more likely than White respondents (16%) to change their answer to "yes" when prompted to broaden their definition of volunteerism.

How Often they Volunteer

Nearly two-thirds of active volunteers said they served multiple times per month, and the vast majority maintained or increased their level or frequency of volunteering in the past year.



Q8. Has your level of volunteering or service increased or decreased in the past 12 months?

n = 4,353

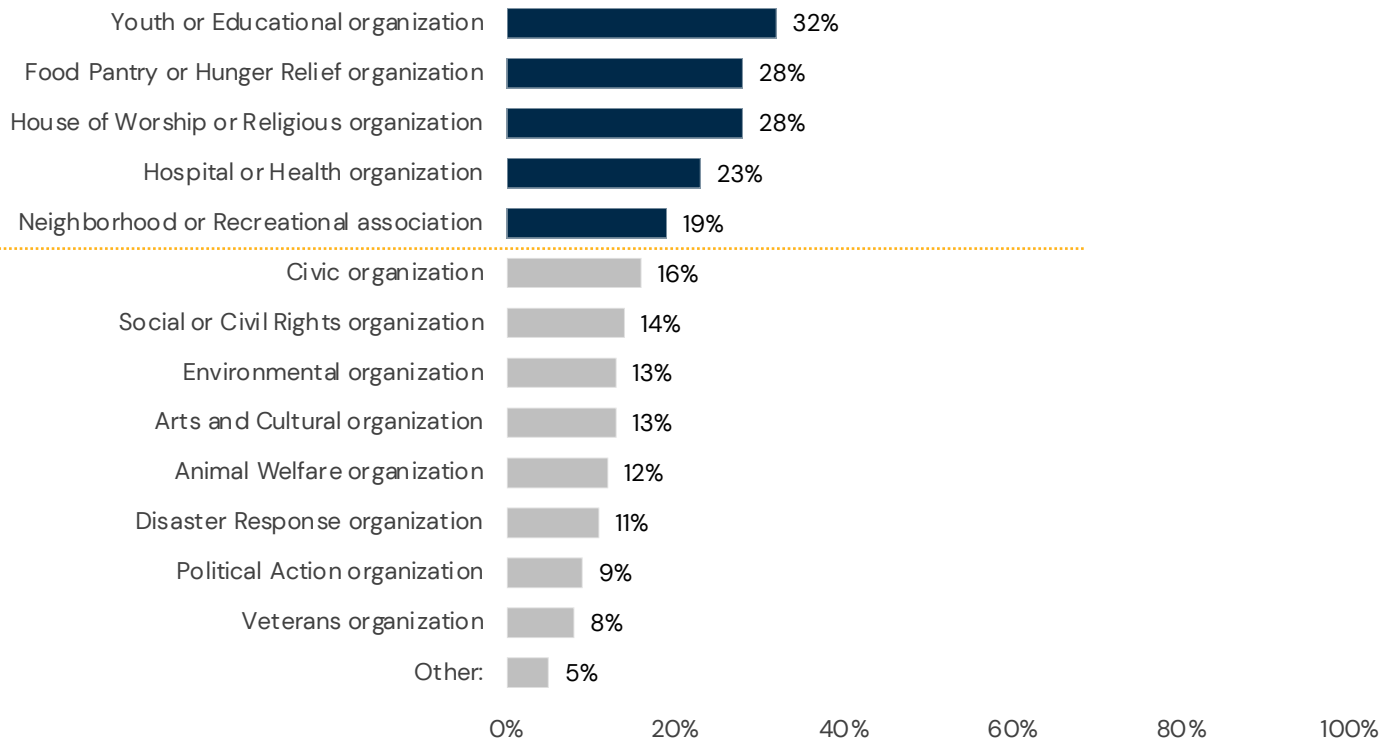
Q7. How often did you volunteer?

n = 4,354



Where they Volunteered

Respondents reported volunteering most often in the areas of youth or educational services, hunger relief, and health. In addition, houses of worship and neighborhood/recreation associations saw high levels of engagement.



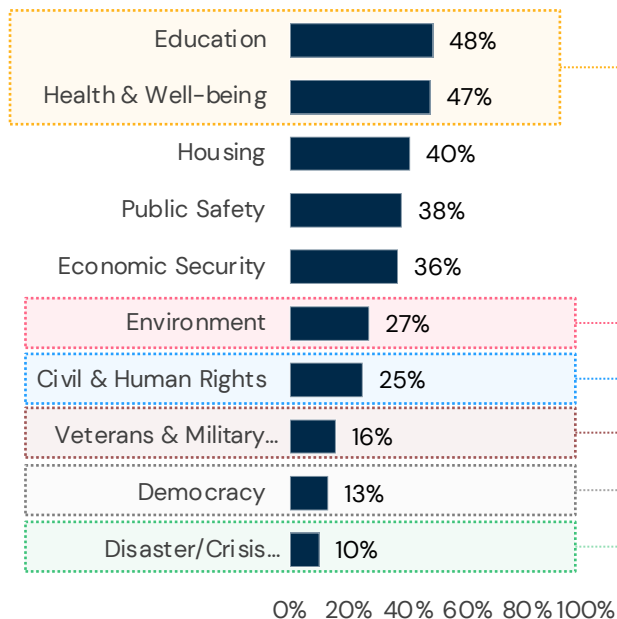
Q6. Which types of organizations have you volunteered for in the past 12 months? *Select all that apply.*

n = 4,353

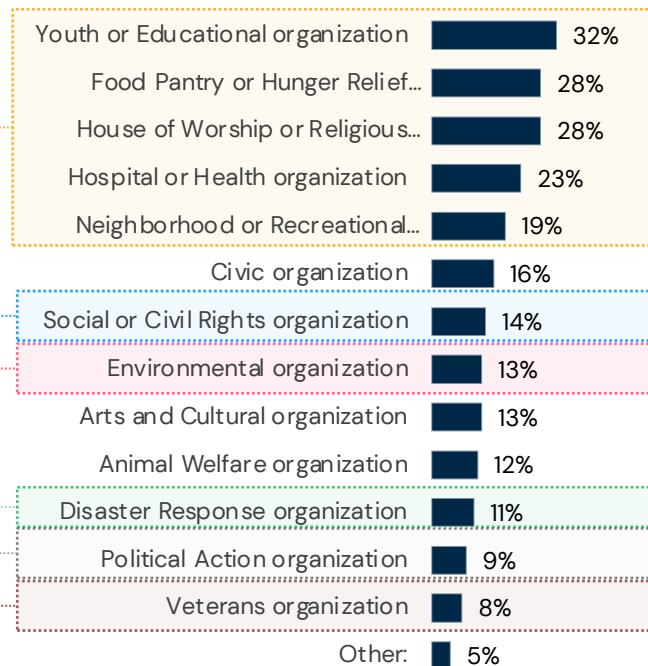
Volunteering to Meet Needs

Where respondents volunteered roughly aligns with how they ranked community needs, particularly the top two priorities of education and health and well-being. That said, gaps exist when considering the number of people who prioritize issues like the environment, civil and human rights, and veterans, and the degree to which volunteers reported engaging with organizations in those fields.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES



WHERE THEY VOLUNTEER



Q13. Of the following options, what should be the Top 3 priorities for where you live?

n = 6,374

Q6. Which types of organizations have you volunteered for in the past 12 months? *Select all that apply.*

n = 4,353



VIRGINIA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INDEX – PART 2

Civic Action

Understanding the Current State of Engagement

Civic Action

Voting was the primary mechanism through which respondents made their voices heard, with **68 percent reporting having voted** in the past year. In addition, **51 percent of respondents also used their means to support non-political organizations**. When it comes to using their voices and actions to advocate for causes, educate others, or discuss community issues through channels such as social media, petitions, public meetings, or rallies, respondents reported much lower levels of engagement. However, respondents did report engaging in more “informal” conversations with people of different cultural backgrounds and viewpoints.

 **34%**

said they posted or shared content on social media related to a political or social cause.

 **23%**

said they attended a public meeting to discuss a local issue.

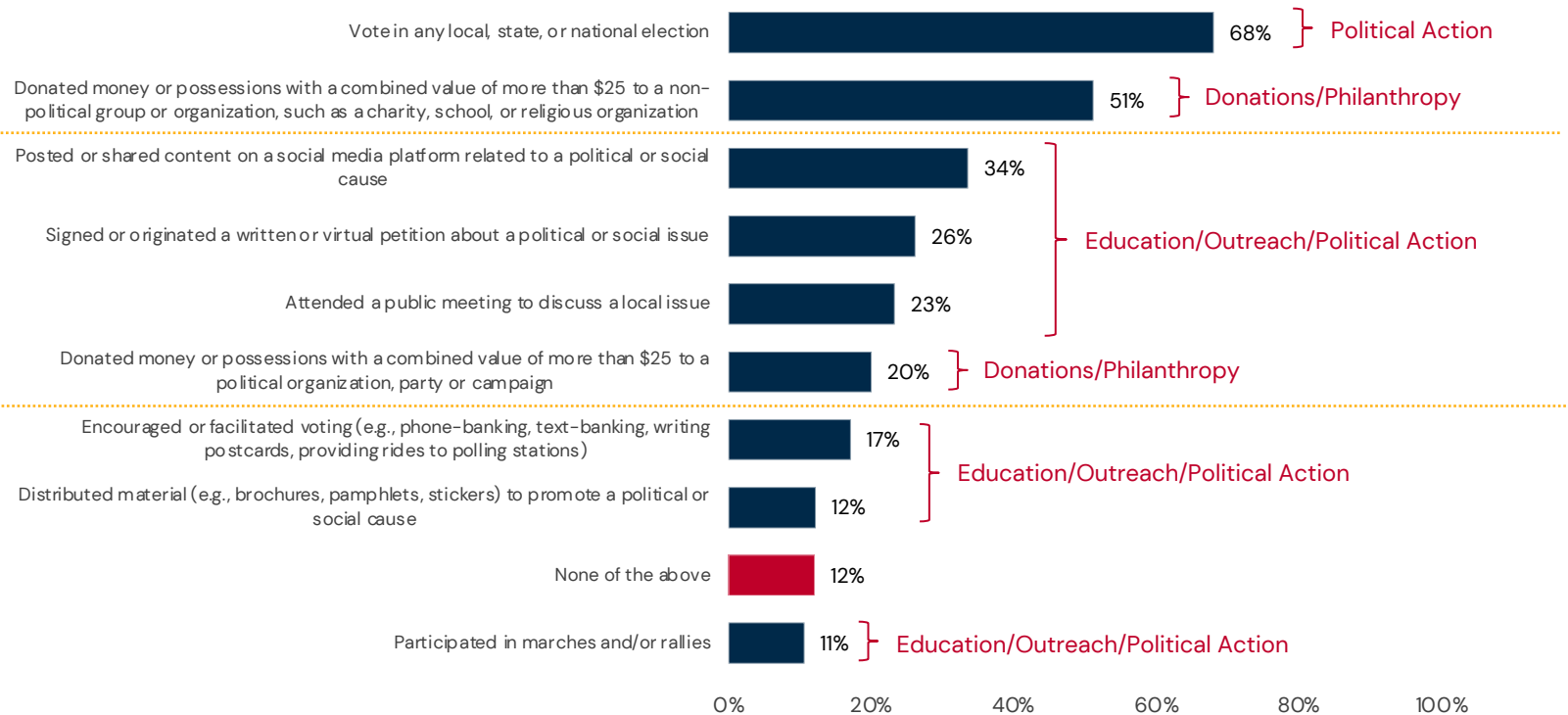
 **49%**

said they discussed local issues and topics with people whose views differ more than once a month.



Civic Action

Voting was the top way respondents made their voices heard, far outpacing efforts to inform others or influence public officials through social media, petitions, public meetings, or rallies.



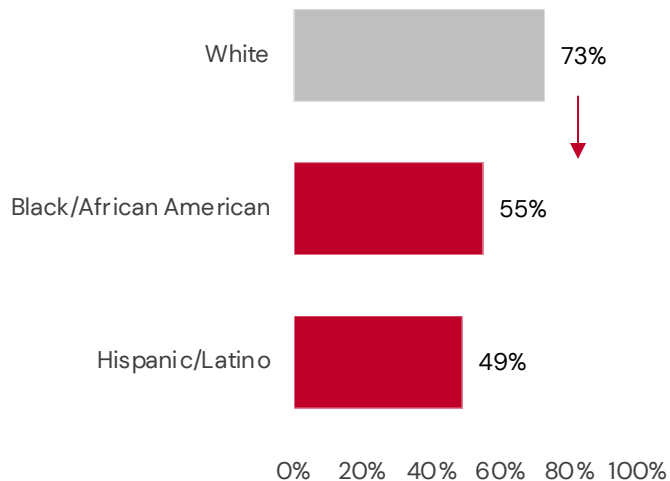
Q30. In the past 12 months, did you do any of the following? *Select all that apply.*

n = 6,259

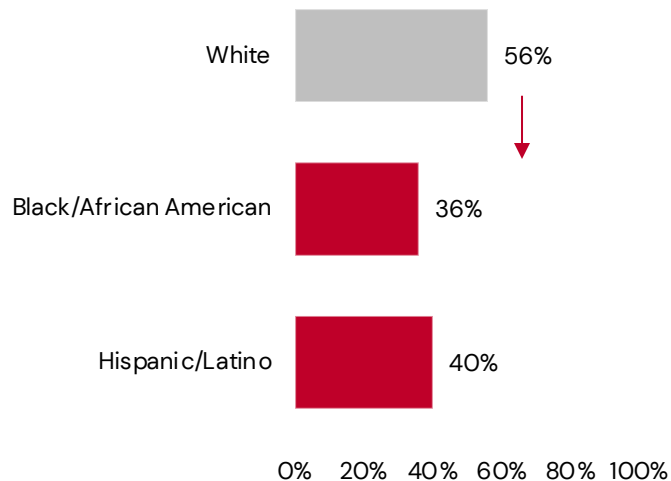
Civic Action

Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino respondents were less likely to engage in either of the top two most chosen civic actions.

Voted in any local, state, or national election



Donated money to a non-political group or organization

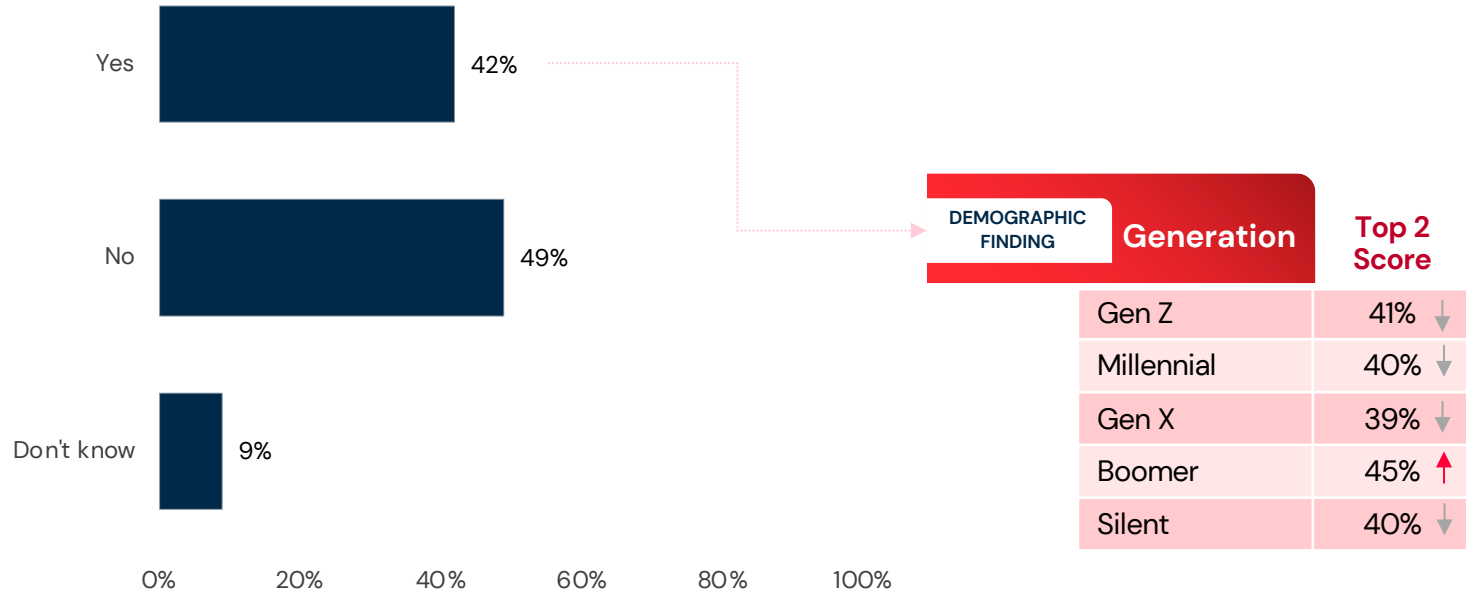


Q30. In the past 12 months, did you do any of the following? *Select all that apply.*

Black/African American n = 939
 Hispanic/Latino n = 399
 White n = 4,455

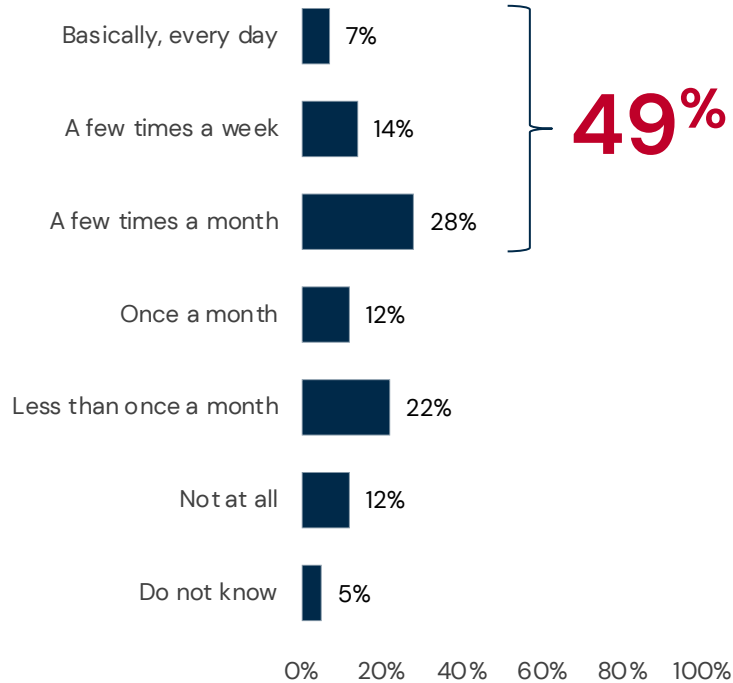
Civic Action

PURCHASE POWER: More than 40 percent of respondents said they have altered their purchasing decisions in the past year based on the values and practices of companies, with Boomers being more apt to have started or stopped buying products or services.



Issues-based Dialogue

Nearly half of respondents said they discussed local issues with people who hold different views more than once a month, with Gen Z and Millennial respondents more apt to engage in such conversations.

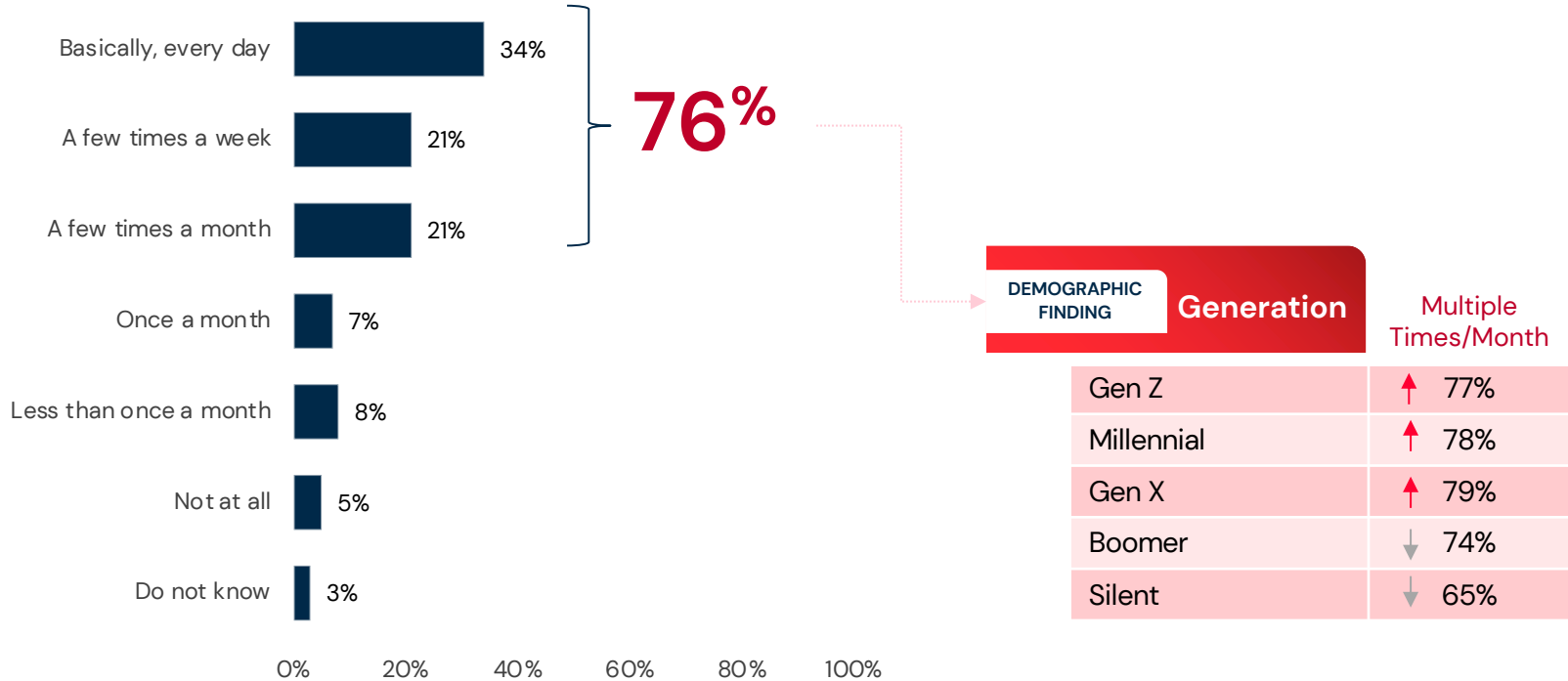


DEMOGRAPHIC FINDING	Generation	Multiple Times/Month
	Gen Z	↑ 54%
	Millennial	↑ 53%
	Gen X	↓ 46%
	Boomer	↓ 46%
	Silent	↓ 47%



Cross-cultural Dialogue

More than three-quarters of respondents said they spent time or conversed with people of differing cultural backgrounds more than once a month, with Boomer and Silent Generation respondents being less likely to engage in this manner.



Q34. In the past 12 months, how often did you talk to or spend time with people from a racial, ethnic, or cultural background that is different from yours?

n = 6,239

VIRGINIA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INDEX – PART 2

Institutional Trust and Agency



The Current State of Engagement

The Influence of Trust & Agency

Recall that “Political Action, Policy Change, & Lawmaking,” as well as “Community Education & Outreach” were most often rated as a top-two action to take to address local needs. However, respondents reported much higher overall levels of “Volunteerism & Service” than acts that influence policy or spread awareness of issues beyond voting. In short, respondents are engaging most often with the organizations and institutions they trust and the areas where they can see the results of their actions.

 **31%**

Fewer than one-third said they trust the government “to do what is right,” making it the third least-trusted institution in the Commonwealth.

 **25%**

Only one-quarter of respondents felt bringing issues before their local government would be an effective action to take...

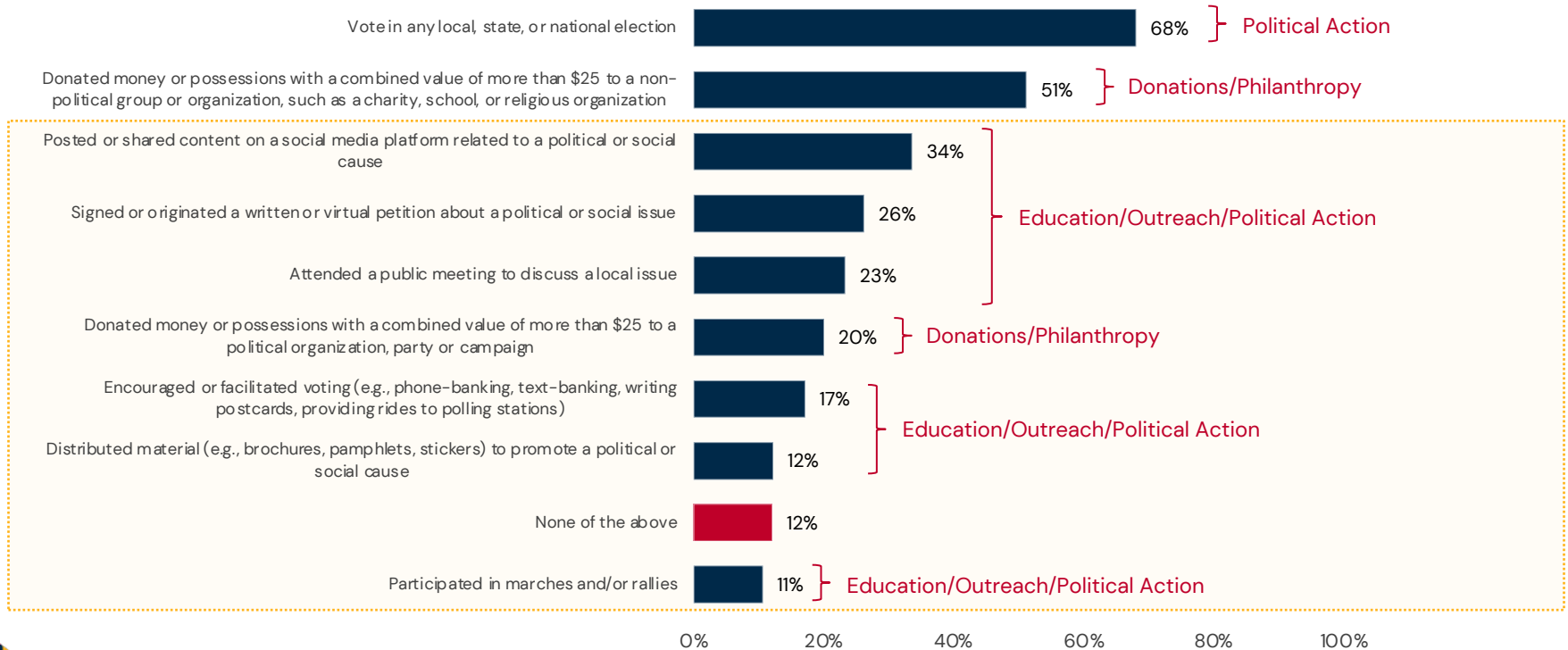
 **23%**

...as a result, only 23% said they attended a public meeting to discuss a local issue in the past year.



Civic Action

Recall that respondents felt political action, policy change, and lawmaking is a top-two action to take to address community issues, yet voting and donations were the only civic acts in which more than half engaged. This finding begs the question: **why aren't respondents engaging in politically motivated acts beyond voting?**



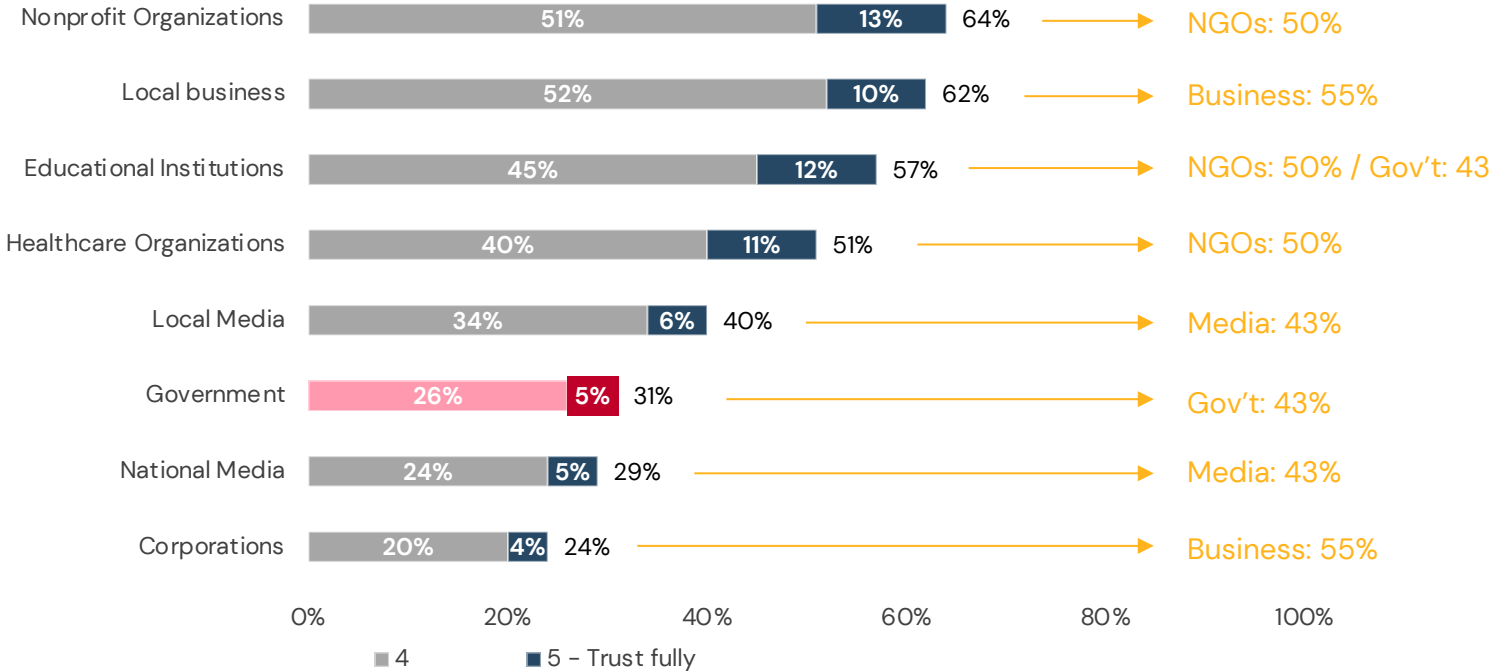
Q30. In the past 12 months, did you do any of the following? *Select all that apply.*

n = 6,259

One Potential Answer?

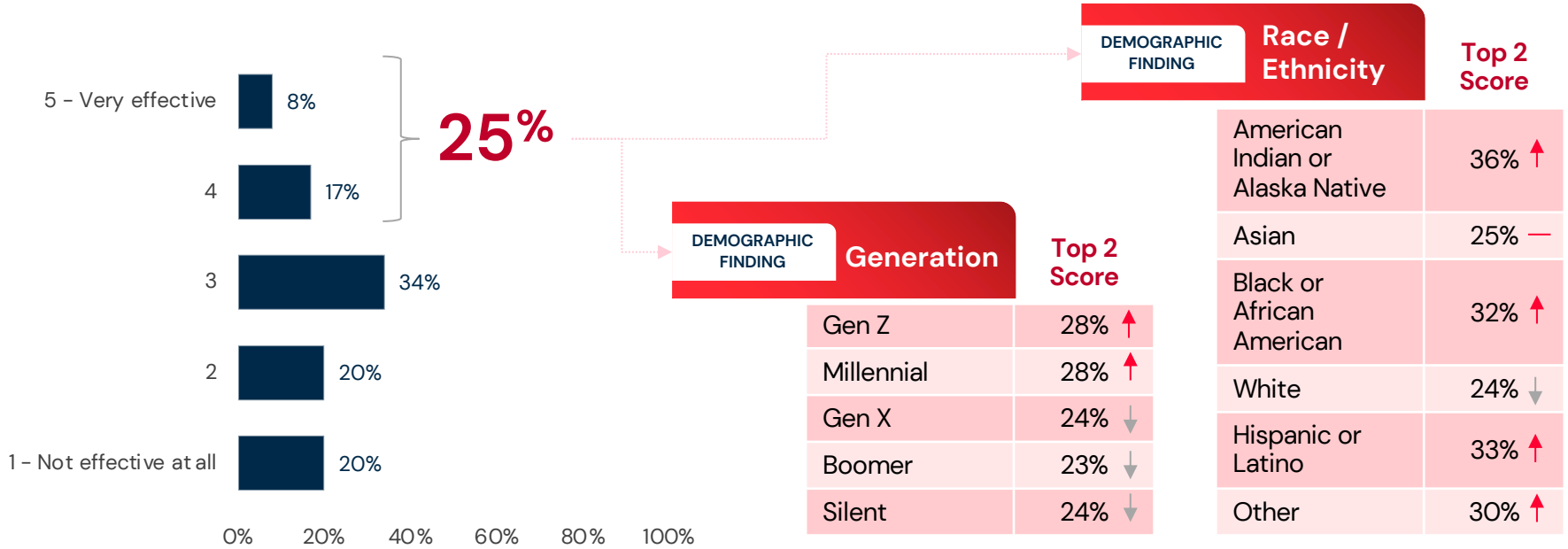
TRUST: Fewer than one-third of respondents said they trust the government to do what is right. Meanwhile, nonprofits and local businesses garnered the highest trust ratings, with educational organizations rounding out the top-three most trusted institutions.

2023 Edelman Findings: U.S.



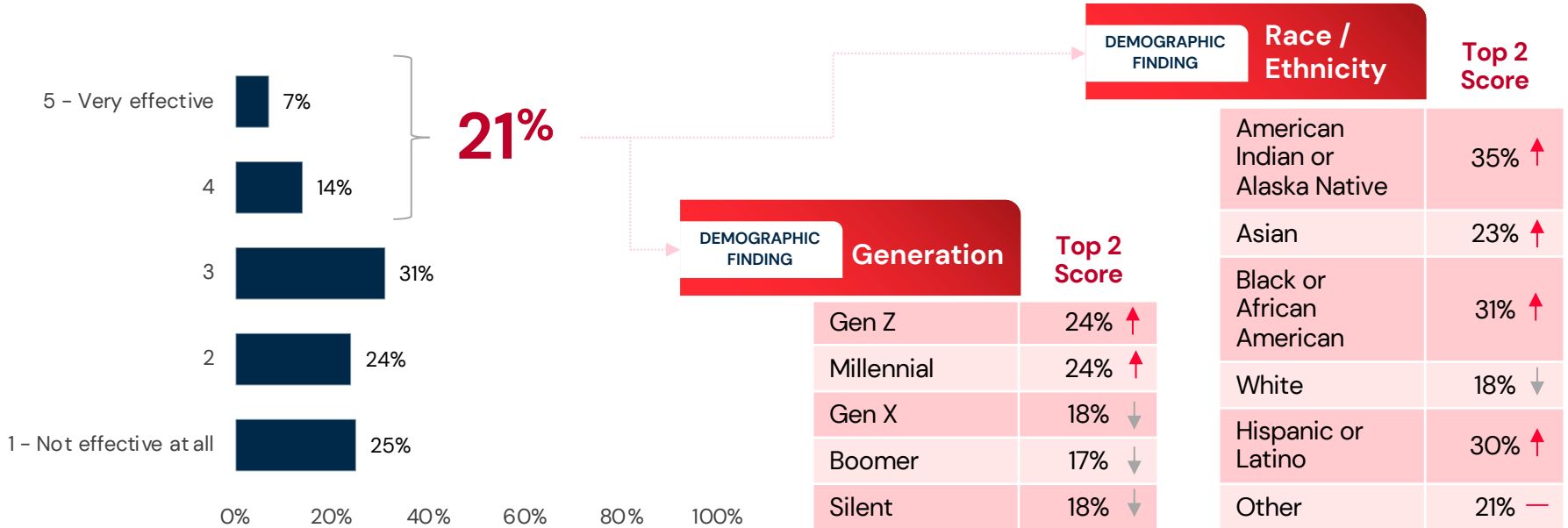
Another Answer?

PERCEIVED AGENCY: Overall, only 1 in 4 respondents felt bringing an issue before their local government would be an effective use of their time and voice, though a slightly larger percentage of younger generations and some minority groups felt their voices would be more heard.



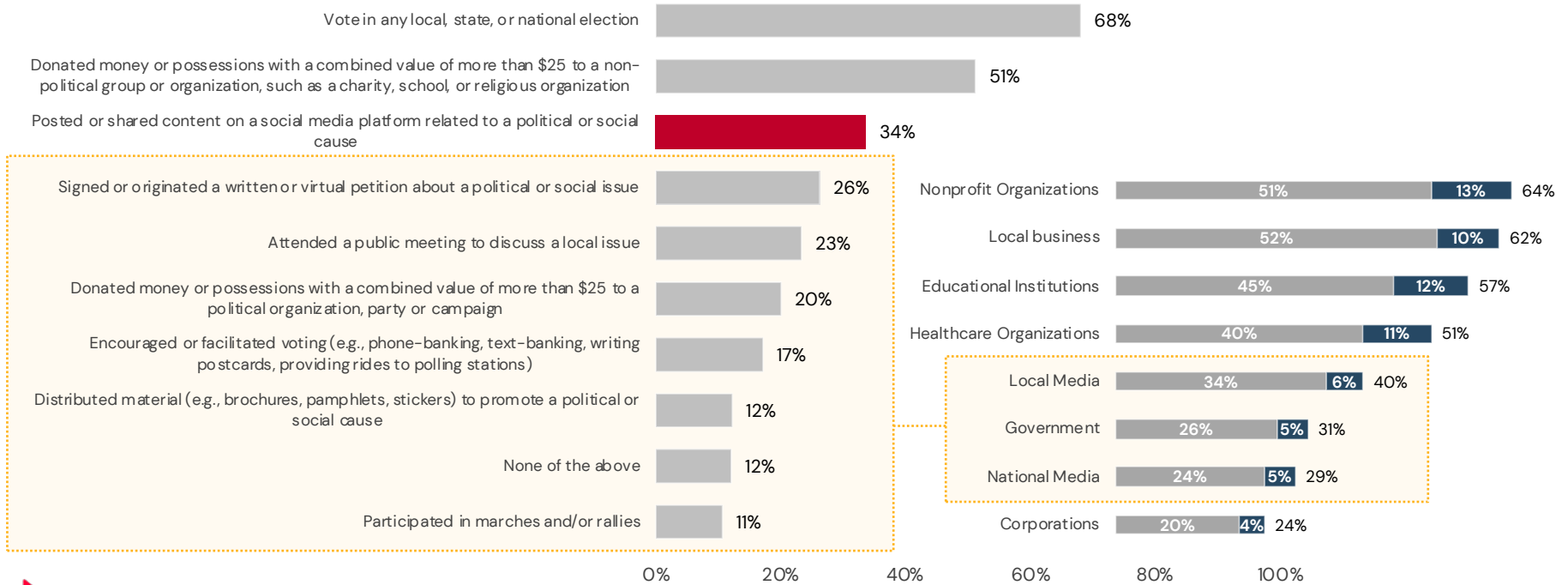
Another Answer?

PERCEIVED AGENCY: Even fewer respondents felt bringing an issue before their state government would be an effective use of their time and voice, though a slightly larger percentage of younger generations and minority groups felt their voices would be more heard.



Engaging Where they Have Agency

With faith in the responsiveness of government lacking, and trust in traditional forms of media low, respondents most often turned to avenues like social media where they may feel more seen and heard than to bring issues into the spheres of public forum or debate.



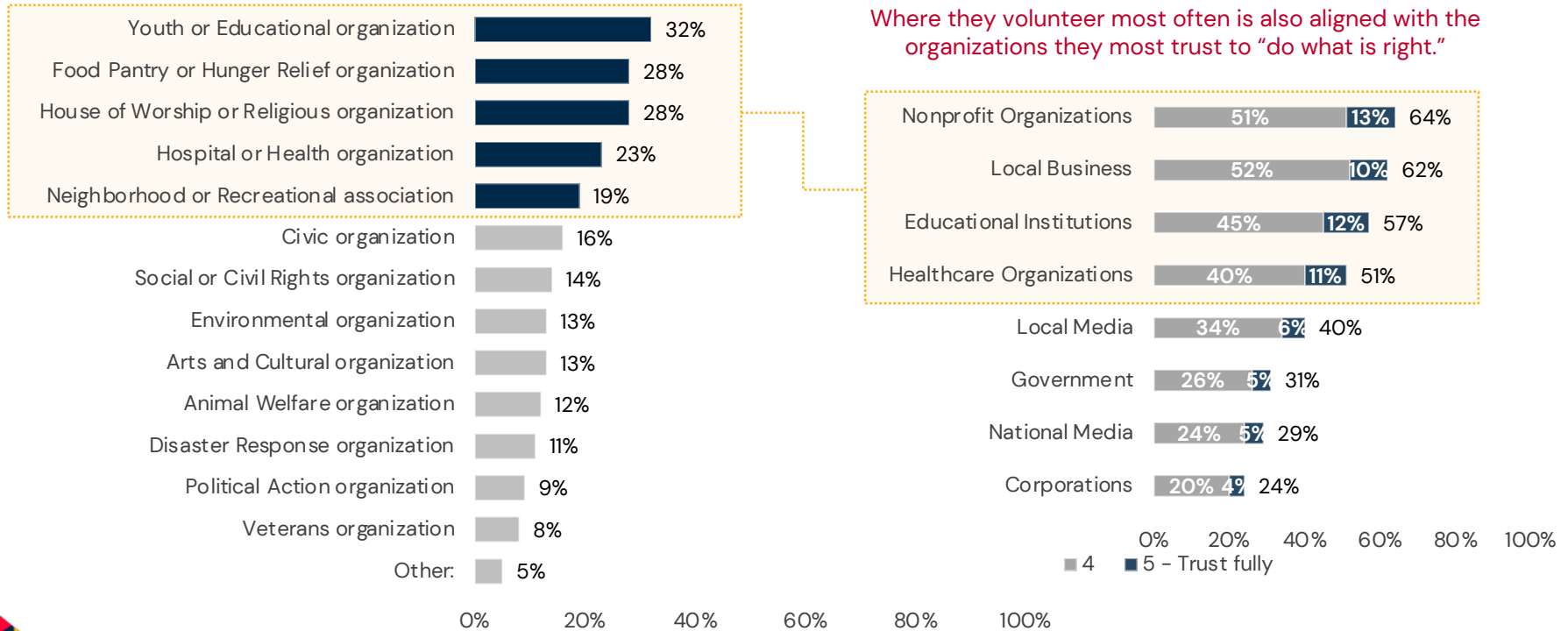
Q30. In the past 12 months, did you do any of the following? *Select all that apply.*

Q29. How much do you trust the following institutions to do what is right?

n = 6,259
Avg n = 6,257

Local Trust = Local Action

Where respondents most often reported volunteering often aligns with whom they trust to address their greatest needs and priorities. In addition, where they volunteer also suggests a desire to support organizations that tend to have a unique local presence, reflect local character, or even function as community spaces.



Q6. Which types of organizations have you volunteered for in the past 12 months? *Select all that apply.*
 Q29. How much do you trust the following institutions to do what is right?

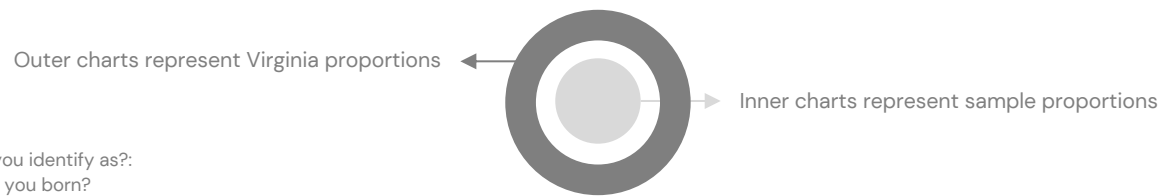
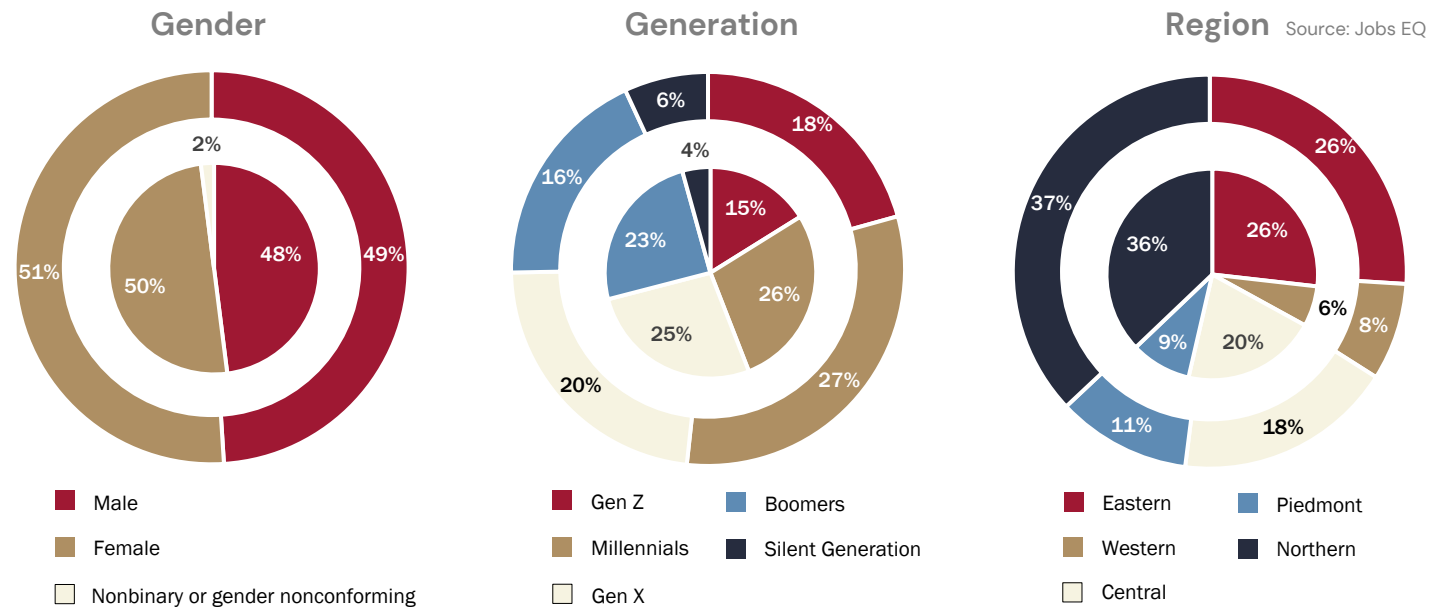
n = 4,353
 Avg n = 6,257

VIRGINIA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INDEX – PART 2

Key Respondent Demographics



Recall: Total Sample = 6,393

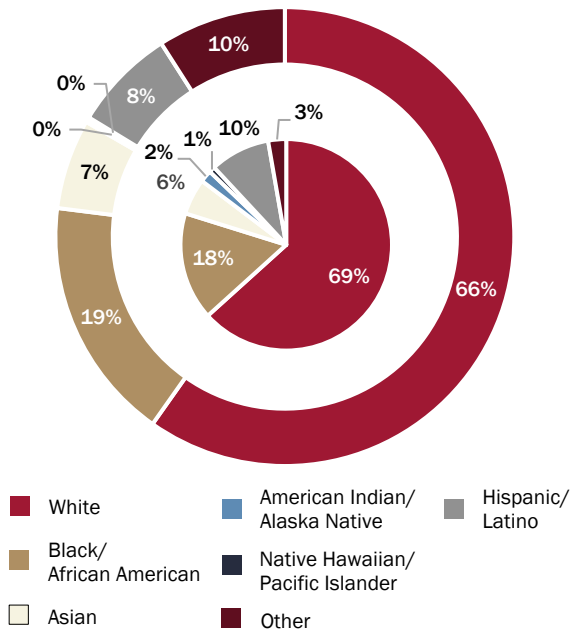


Q52. What gender do you identify as?:
 Q38. In what year were you born?
 Q1. What is your home ZIP code?

Note: Nearly all questions included a "prefer not to answer" option. The proportion selecting "prefer not to answer" is not presented above, so percentages may not sum to 100 percent.
 *Sample weighted to be representative of age, gender, and ethnicity

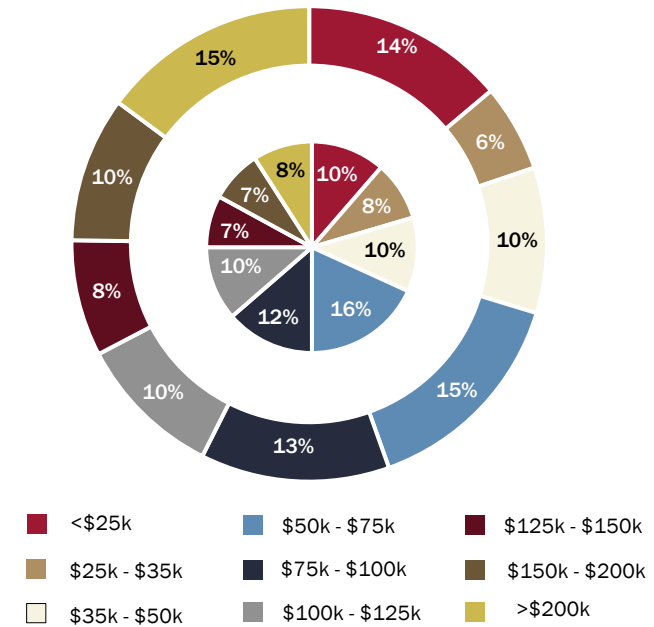


Race/Ethnicity

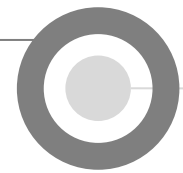


Income

Sources: Jobs EQ, Claritas, March 2022



Outer charts represent Virginia proportions



Inner charts represent sample proportions

Q40. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin?

Q41. Which of these do you consider yourself to be? *Please select all that apply.*

Q43. Which of the following best represents your total combined annual household income?

Note: Nearly all questions included a "prefer not to answer" option. The proportion selecting "prefer not to answer" is not presented above, so percentages may not sum to 100 percent.

*Sample weighted to be representative of age, gender, and ethnicity



DEMOGRAPHIC	GROUP	REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE PROPORTION*	VIRGINIA PROPORTION <small>Source: Jobs EQ</small>
GENDER (n = 6,167)	Male	48%	49%
	Female	50%	51%
	Nonbinary or gender nonconforming	2%	--
GENERATION (n = 5,678)	Generation Z (born 1997–2012)	16%	~18%
	Millennials (born 1981–1996)	28%	~27%
	Generation X (born 1965–1980)	27%	~20%
	Boomers (born 1946–1964)	25%	~16%
	Silent Generation (prior to 1946)	4%	~6%
GEOGRAPHIC AREA (n = 6,179)	Urban/City	28%	--
	Suburban	47%	--
	Small town/rural area	25%	--

*Sample weighted to be representative of age, gender, and ethnicity

Q52. What gender do you identify as?:

Q38. In what year were you born?

Q39. What best describes the area where you currently live?

Note: Nearly all questions included a “prefer not to answer” option. The proportion selecting “prefer not to answer” is not presented above, so percentages may not sum to 100 percent.



DEMOGRAPHIC	GROUP	REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE PROPORTION*	VIRGINIA PROPORTION <small>Source: Jobs EQ</small>
HISPANIC ETHNICITY (n = 6,175)	Hispanic or Latino	10%	10%
	Not Hispanic or Latino	87%	90%
RACE (n = 6,178)	White	69%	66%
	Black or African American	18%	19%
	Asian	6%	7%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	0.3%
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%	0.1%
	Other	5%	8%

*Sample weighted to be representative of age, gender, and ethnicity

Q40. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin?

Q41. Which of these do you consider yourself to be? *Select all that apply.*

Note: Nearly all questions included a "prefer not to answer" option. The proportion selecting "prefer not to answer" is not presented above, so percentages may not sum to 100 percent.



DEMOGRAPHIC	GROUP	REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE PROPORTION*	VIRGINIA PROPORTION Source: Claritas, March 2022
EMPLOYMENT STATUS (n = 6,179)	I am a student and employed full time.	4%	--
	I am a student and employed part time.	5%	--
	I am a student and unemployed.	3%	--
	I am employed full time.	47%	--
	I am employed part time.	9%	--
	I am unemployed and seeking employment.	5%	--
	I am retired.	19%	--
	I am currently unemployed and unable to work.	3%	--
	I am currently unemployed and not seeking employment.	3%	--
HOUSEHOLD INCOME (n = 6,178)	Less than \$25,000	10%	14%
	\$25,000 - \$34,999	8%	6%
	\$35,000 - \$49,999	10%	10%
	\$50,000 - \$74,999	16%	15%
	\$75,000 - \$99,999	12%	13%
	\$100,000 - \$124,999	10%	10%
	\$125,000 - \$149,999	7%	8%
	\$150,000 - \$199,999	7%	10%
	\$200,000 or more	8%	15%

Q43. Which of the following represents your current employment status?

Q42. Which of the following best represents your total combined annual household income?

Note: Nearly all questions included a "prefer not to answer" option. The proportion selecting "prefer not to answer" is not presented above, so percentages may not sum to 100 percent.

*Sample weighted to be representative of age, gender, and ethnicity



DEMOGRAPHIC	GROUP	REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE PROPORTION*
EMPLOYER TYPE (n = 3,820)	Nonprofit Organization	15%
	Philanthropic Foundation	2%
	Public K-12 School	6%
	Private K-12 School	2%
	College, University, or other Higher Education Institution	10%
	Healthcare Organization	12%
	Federal Government Agency or Department	7%
	Virginia State Government Agency or Department	9%
	Local Government Agency or Department	8%
	House of Worship; Faith-based Organization	1%
	Private Company or Corporation	30%
	I am self-employed	10%
	Other	6%

*Sample weighted to be representative of age, gender, and ethnicity



Q44. Which type of organization do you work for? *Select all that apply.*

Note: Nearly all questions included a “prefer not to answer” option. The proportion selecting “prefer not to answer” is not presented above, so percentages may not sum to 100 percent.

DEMORAPHIC	GROUP	REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE PROPORTION*	VIRGINIA PROPORTION <small>Source: Jobs EQ</small>
REGION (n = 6,183)	Eastern	27%	26%
	Western	6%	8%
	Central	20%	18%
	Piedmont	10%	11%
	Northern	38%	37%
EDUCATION LEVEL (n = 6,173)	Less than middle school	0%	--
	Middle school	0%	--
	Some high school	2%	8%
	High school diploma or GED	14%	23%
	Some college	17%	19%
	Associates Degree	9%	8%
	Bachelor's Degree	28%	24%
	Master's Degree	20%	18%
	Professional Degree	5%	
	Doctorate or Ph.D.	3%	

*Sample weighted to be representative of age, gender, and ethnicity



Q1. What is your home ZIP code?

Q51. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

Note: Nearly all questions included a "prefer not to answer" option. The proportion selecting "prefer not to answer" is not presented above, so percentages may not sum to 100 percent.

DEMORAPHIC	GROUP	REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE PROPORTION*
SPIRITUALITY (n = 6,157)	Spiritual	68%
	Not spiritual	25%
RELIGION/HOUSE OF WORSHIP AFFILIATION (n = 6,164)	Affiliated	45%
	Not affiliated	49%
MILITARY SERVICE (n = 6,162)	Served	14%
	Did not serve	84%
VETERAN STATUS (n = 6,157)	Veteran	13%
	Not a veteran	84%
LGBTQ+ (n = 6,162)	Identifies as a member of the LGBTQ+ community	11%
	Does not identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community	86%
DISABILITY STATUS (n = 6,161)	I have a disability	15%
	I do not have a disability	80%

*Sample weighted to be representative of age, gender, and ethnicity

Q47. Do you consider yourself a spiritual person?

Q48. Are you actively affiliated with a particular religion or house of worship?

Q49. Did you ever serve on active duty in the U.S. armed forces?

Q50. What is your veteran status?

Q53. Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

Q54. What is your disability status?

Note: Nearly all questions included a “prefer not to answer” option. The proportion selecting “prefer not to answer” is not presented above, so percentages may not sum to 100 percent.



VIRGINIA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INDEX – PART 2

Acknowledgements



Acknowledgements

The Virginia Community Engagement Index simply would not have come to fruition without the dedication and support of our Core Team, our Research Advisory Team, and our research and strategy partner, SIR.

To all who gave their time and energy over the course of several months to inform our goals and methodology, distribute our survey, and help develop our key findings and takeaways, we offer our gratitude, praise, and hope for continued partnership.



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