

Community Housing Equity and Access Survey

Summary of Results

395

Total Complete Responses from Bellingham Residents

Date Opened: April 12, 2022

Date Closed: June 30, 2022



High-Level Summary: Who we heard from

See the
“Demographics”
section for
complete
demographic data.



395 Bellingham residents (or 0.4% of Bellingham’s total population – a pretty good sample size).



People at all income levels (proportionate with Bellingham’s total population).



More homeowners than renters (homeowners were overrepresented in our sample).



Mostly white, non-Hispanic folks (proportionate with Bellingham’s total population).



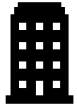
Families with children (families with kids were overrepresented in our sample).



Folks with disabilities (proportionate with Bellingham’s total population).

High-Level Summary: *Who we didn't* hear from

See the
"Demographics"
section for
complete
demographic data.



Renters (37% of our survey respondents compared to 55% of Bellingham's general population).



Asian American and Pacific Islanders (only 0.8% of respondents, compared to 5.6% of Bellingham's population) and **Black/African American folks** (only .3% of survey respondents compared to 1.6% of Bellingham's population).



Hispanic and Latinx folks* (about 5% of our survey respondents compared to 9.6% of Bellingham's general population).



Young people (we didn't specifically ask a question about age but based on the percent of respondents who are homeowners and have children, it's reasonable to assume our large population of young people ages 20-24 were underrepresented).



People who live outside of Bellingham (the survey was limited to those people who reside here and didn't count people who work in Bellingham but live outside the city).

High-Level Summary: Priorities

- Of the strategies the City is already using, the top priority for the community among the options given was **construction of permanently affordable apartments**. This priority was consistent among income levels.
- Of the strategies that the city is not already using, the top priorities were to **require all new developments to provide some affordable housing for low-income residents** (inclusionary zoning) and to **support limited-equity housing cooperatives** (non-profit condominiums).
- The factors that were identified as most contributing to inequality here in Bellingham were **lack of access to opportunity due to high housing costs** and the **location and type of affordable housing**. Issues like discrimination, environmental hazards, and schools ranked very low.

High-Level Summary

The comments below are representative of the most common feedback we received in response to open-ended questions.

Increase taxes on landlords, developers, and/or investors

Lower taxes in general

Institute a cap on rents/rent control

More homes, condos, etc. for ownership rather than more rental housing

Density, density, density! No more single-family zoning

Stop providing services for people who aren't "from" here

More publicly and/or cooperatively owned housing and mobile home parks

Eliminate parking requirements.
Do NOT eliminate parking requirements.

Discrimination

Community survey respondents

- 57 of 395 respondents said they had faced some type of housing discrimination.
- 38% of these respondents said the discrimination was for something not protected by Fair Housing law.
- The most commonly-reported discrimination based on a legally protected class was **source of income discrimination**.

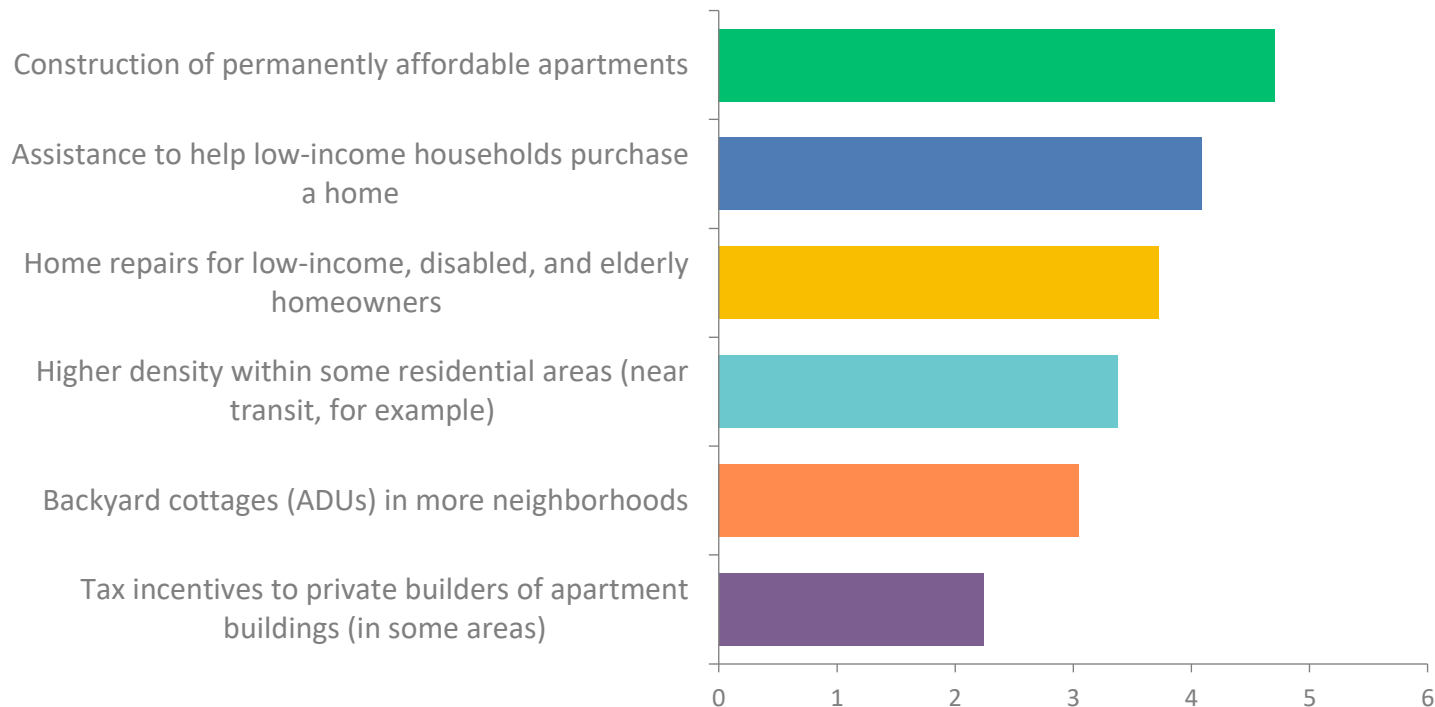
Targeted survey respondents (landlord-tenant mediators)

- We sent a targeted survey to professionals who work with both low-income tenants and landlords/property managers.
- 85% said they'd had a client who faced source of income discrimination, 50% said race or ethnicity discrimination, and 50% said discrimination based on disability status or reasonable accommodation.

Complete survey response data

Below are some ways the City is currently trying to increase access to housing and improve housing equity. Please rank these from highest to lowest priority. The City should prioritize:

Answered: 366 Skipped: 29



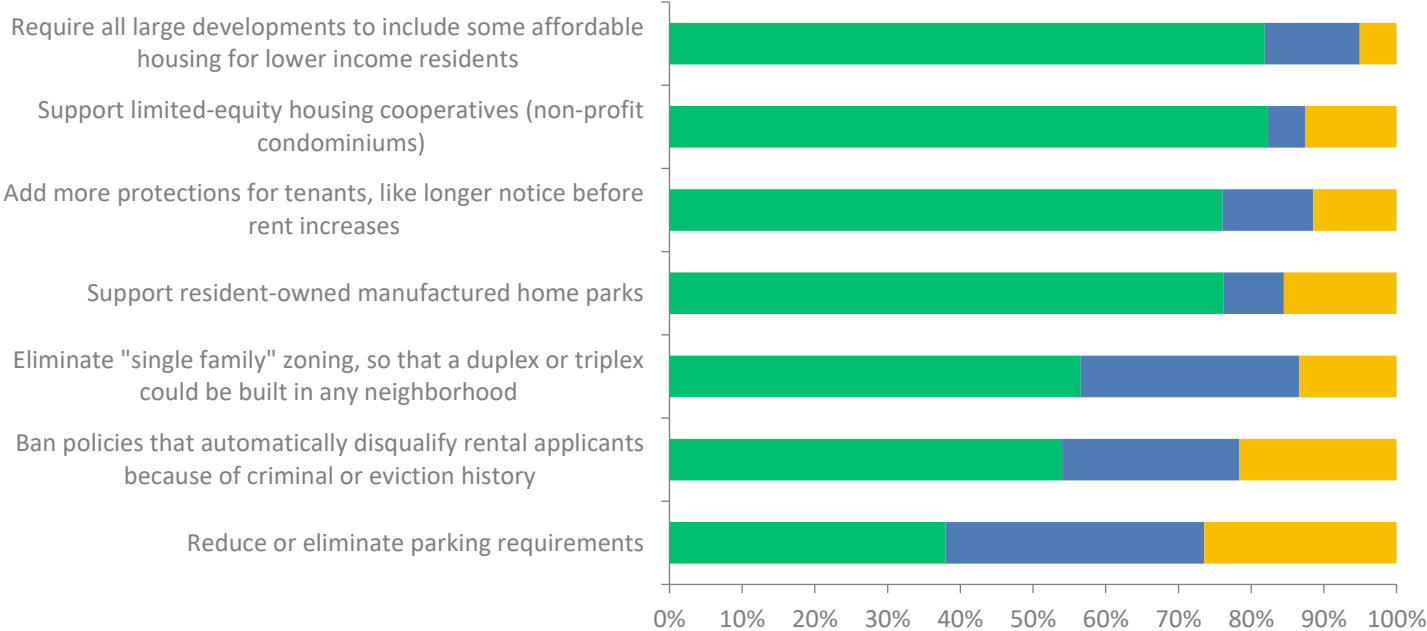
Below are some ways the City is currently trying to increase access to housing and improve housing equity. Please rank these from highest to lowest priority.

Answered: 366 Skipped: 29

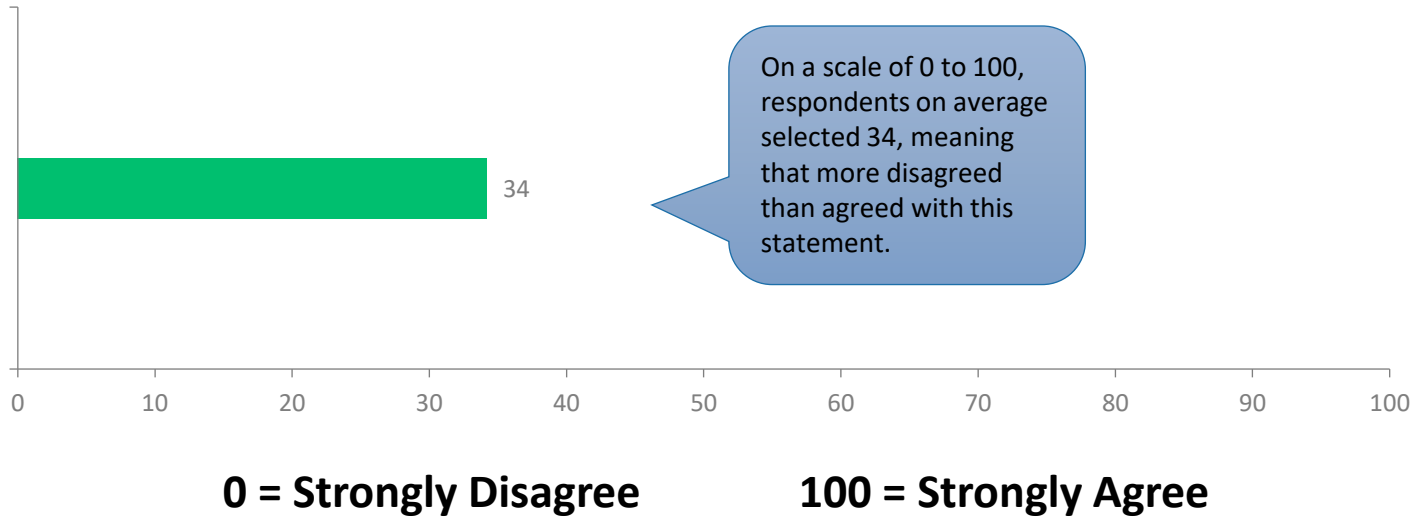
	1	2	3	4	5	6	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Construction of permanently affordable apartments	45.85% 160	17.48% 61	15.47% 54	8.88% 31	7.74% 27	4.58% 16	4.71
Assistance to help low-income households purchase a home	23.70% 82	23.99% 83	18.79% 65	14.16% 49	10.12% 35	9.25% 32	4.09
Home repairs for low-income, disabled, and elderly homeowners	11.05% 39	22.10% 78	23.51% 83	18.98% 67	19.55% 69	4.82% 17	3.72
Higher density within some residential areas (near transit, for example)	12.00% 42	18.00% 63	17.14% 60	17.14% 60	20.29% 71	15.43% 54	3.38
Backyard cottages (ADUs) in more neighborhoods	7.74% 27	12.89% 45	16.05% 56	20.92% 73	24.36% 85	18.05% 63	3.05
Tax incentives to private builders of apartment buildings (in some areas)	3.48% 12	6.38% 22	9.57% 33	18.55% 64	15.36% 53	46.67% 161	2.24

Below are some other options which the City could use to improve equitable access to housing, but is not currently. Please indicate which ideas you support.

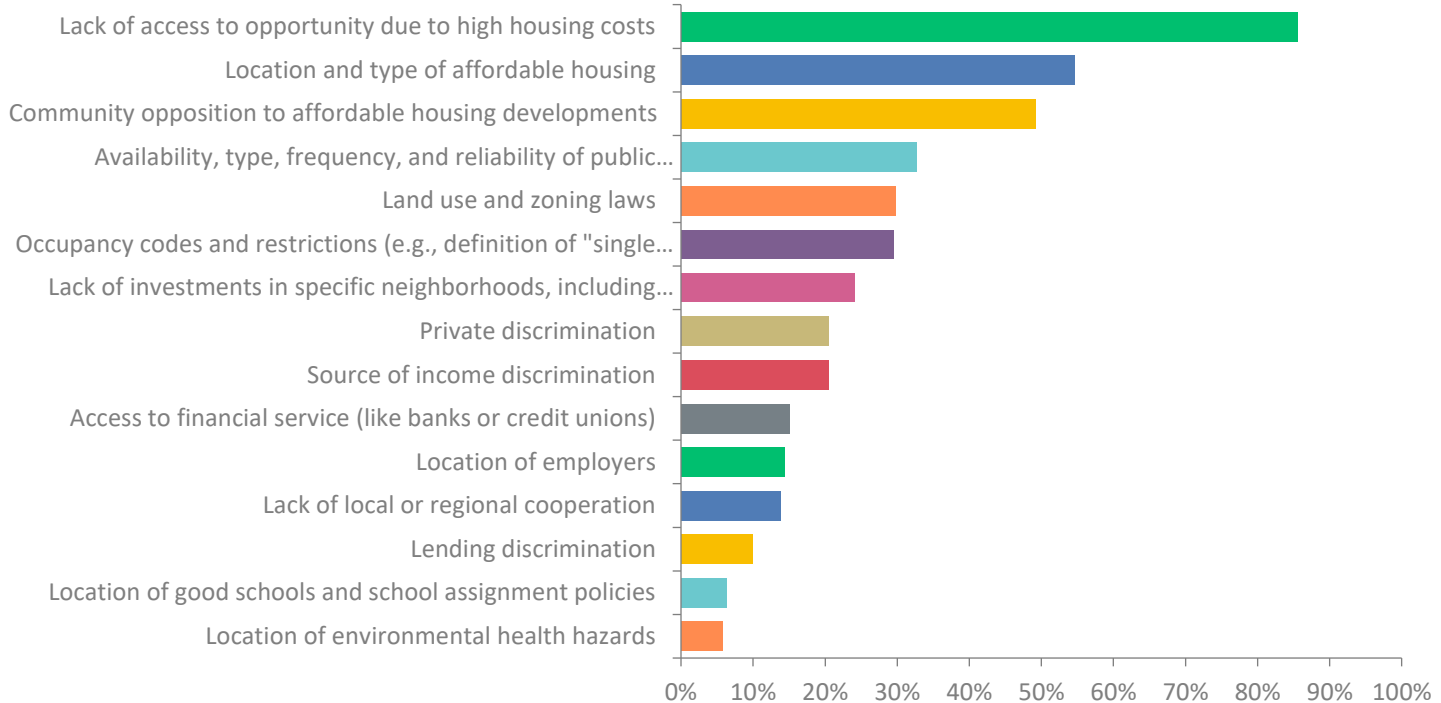
Answered: 377 Skipped: 18



How much do you agree with the following statement?
"Everyone in Bellingham has equal access to opportunities, regardless of their personal characteristics (race, gender, national origin, etc.) or what neighborhood they live in."



Below are factors that might lead to unequal access to opportunity. Please choose the top 4 factors that you think increase disparities here in Bellingham.



Please choose the top 4 factors that you think increase disparities here in Bellingham

Answered: 333 Skipped: 62

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Lack of access to opportunity due to high housing costs	85.59%	285
Location and type of affordable housing	54.65%	182
Community opposition to affordable housing developments	49.25%	164
Availability, type, frequency, and reliability of public transportation	32.73%	109
Land use and zoning laws	29.73%	99
Occupancy codes and restrictions (e.g., definition of "single family")	29.43%	98
Lack of investments in specific neighborhoods, including services or amenities	24.02%	80
Private discrimination	20.42%	68
Source of income discrimination	20.42%	68
Access to financial service (like banks or credit unions)	15.02%	50
Location of employers	14.41%	48
Lack of local or regional cooperation	13.81%	46
Lending discrimination	9.91%	33
Location of good schools and school assignment policies	6.31%	21
Location of environmental health hazards	5.71%	19

Discrimination protected under Fair Housing Law

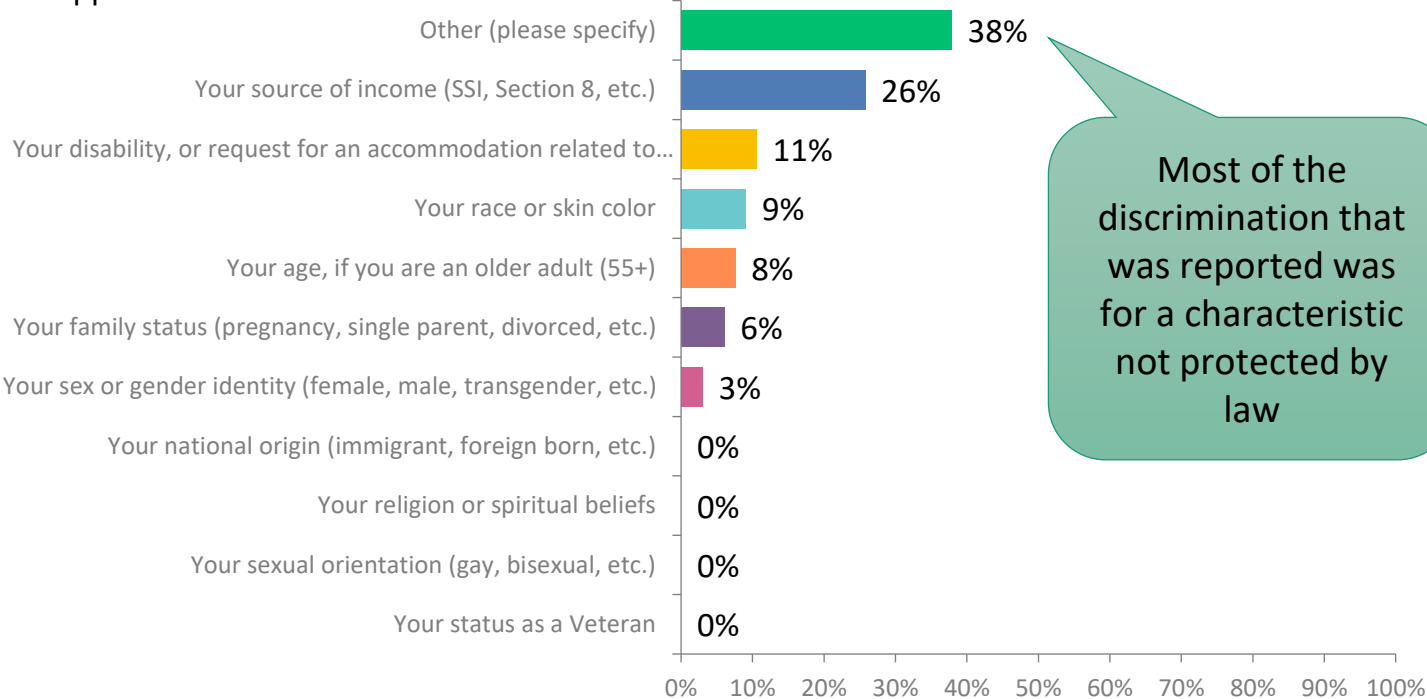
Do you believe you've experienced housing discrimination in Bellingham?

• Answered: 358 Skipped: 37

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	15.92%	57
No	74.86%	268
I'm not sure	9.22%	33
TOTAL		358

What personal characteristic do you think was behind this discrimination?

Answered: 66 Skipped: 329



Who discriminated against you?

• Answered: 65 Skipped: 330

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
property manager or property management company	38.46%	25
landlord or property owner	33.85%	22
real estate agent or appraiser	1.54%	1
mortgage lender, bank, or insurance agent	4.62%	3
housing authority or non-profit staff person	4.62%	3
government employee or representative (federal, state, or local)	1.54%	1
neighbor	0%	0
Other (please specify)	15.38%	10
TOTAL		65

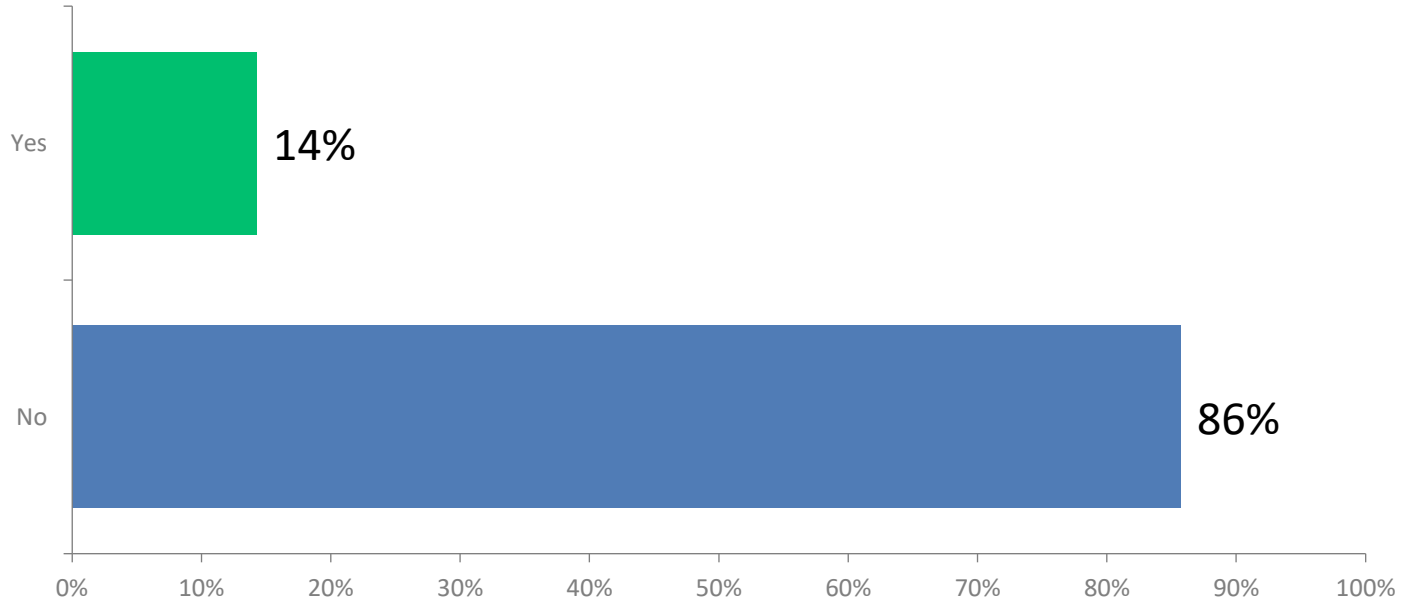
Where did the act of discrimination occur?

- Answered: 60 Skipped: 335

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
apartment complex	51.67%	31
public, housing authority, or nonprofit housing	10.0%	6
condo development	3.33%	2
mobile or manufactured home park	3.33%	2
single-family neighborhood	35.00%	21
when applying for government programs	5.00%	3
Other (please specify)	15.00%	9
TOTAL		74

Was the discrimination reported?

• Answered: 63 Skipped: 332



Was the discrimination reported?

- Answered: 63 Skipped: 332

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	14.29%	9
No	85.71%	54
TOTAL		63

If no, why did you not report the discrimination?

• Answered: 58 Skipped: 337

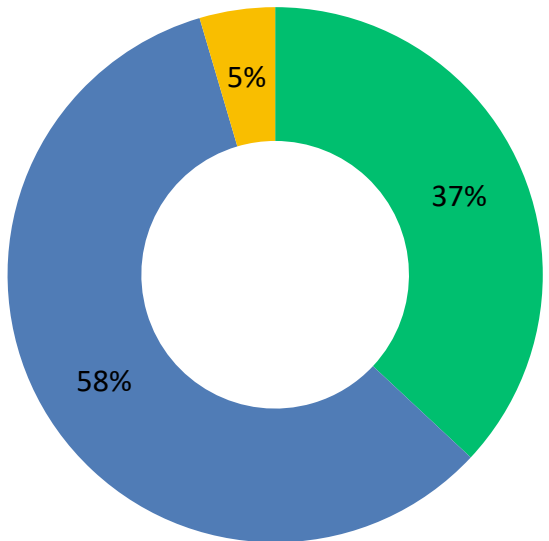
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Don't know where to report	20.69%	12
Afraid of retaliation	6.90%	4
Don't believe it makes any difference	48.28%	28
Too much trouble	1.72%	1
Other (please specify)	22.41%	13
TOTAL		58

Demographics

- Profile of survey respondents

Do you own or rent your home?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0



■ Rent ■ Own ■ Other (please specify)

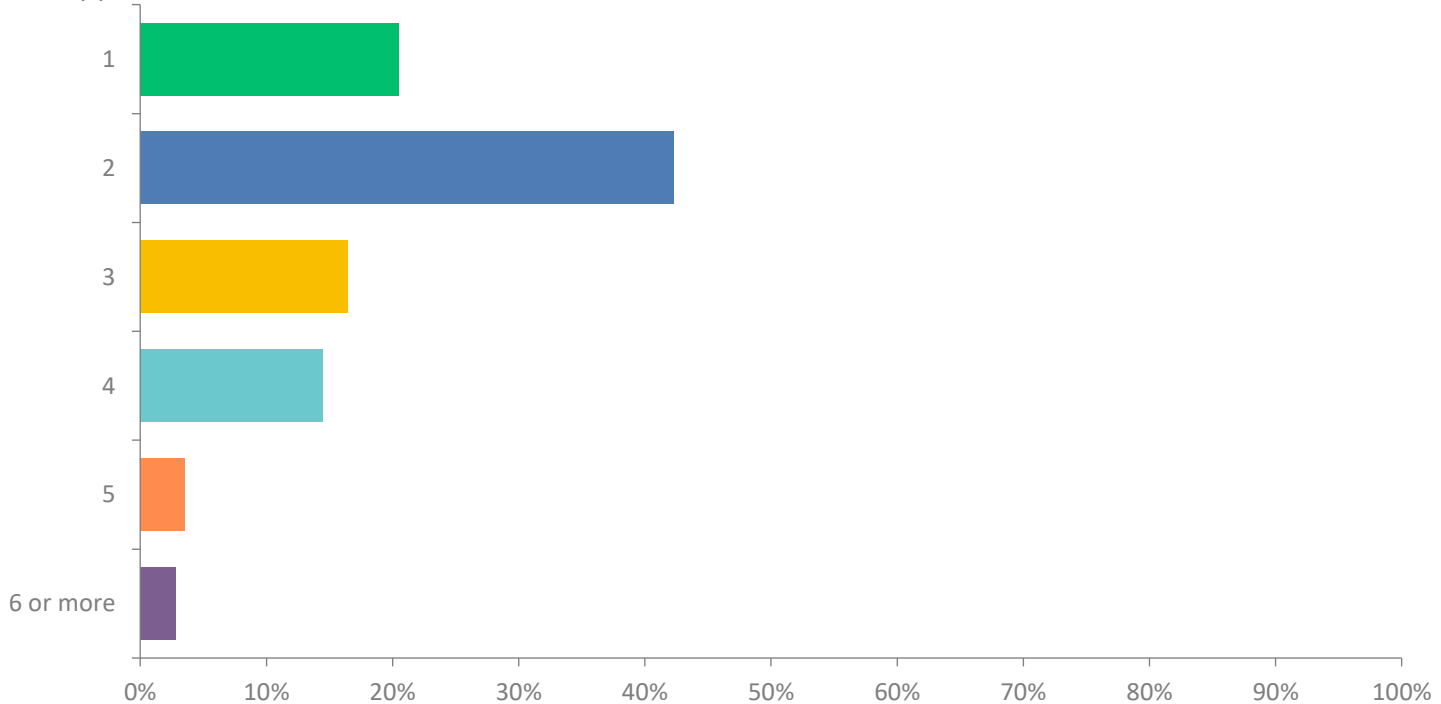
Do you own or rent your home?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Rent	36.96%	146
Own	58.48%	231
Other (please specify)	4.56%	18
TOTAL		395

How many people live in your household, including yourself?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0



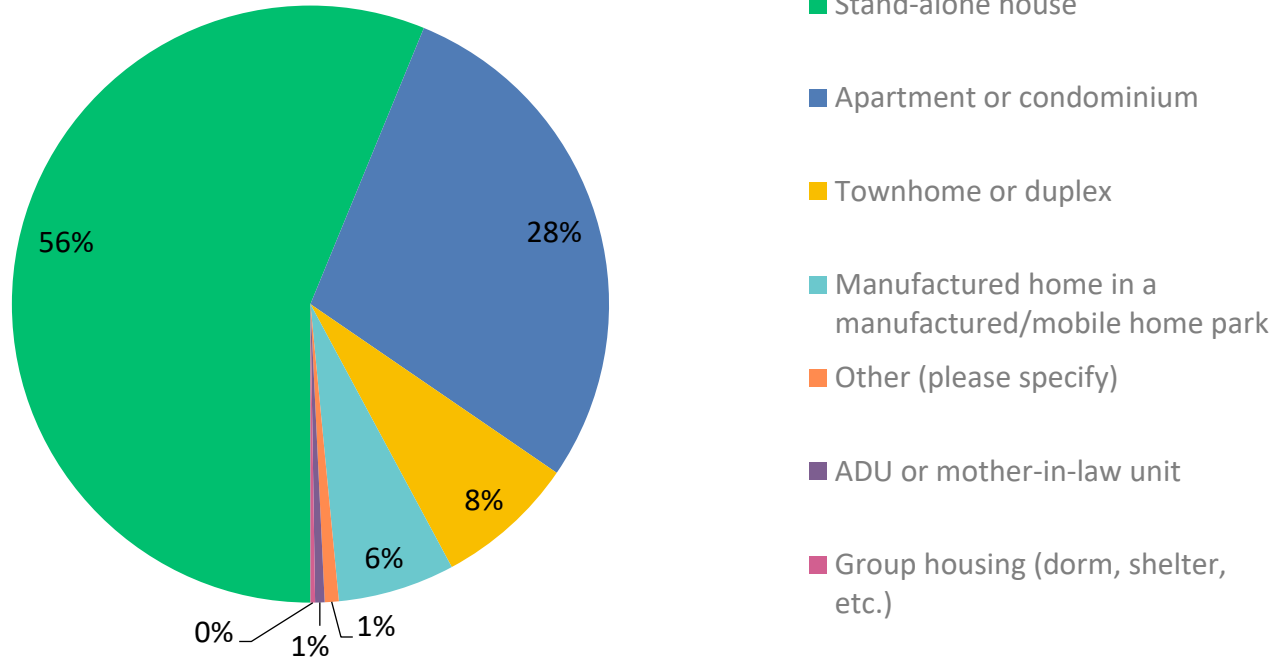
How many people live in your household, including yourself?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1	20.51%	81
2	42.28%	167
3	16.46%	65
4	14.43%	57
5	3.54%	14
6 or more	2.78%	11
TOTAL		395

What type of housing do you live in?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0



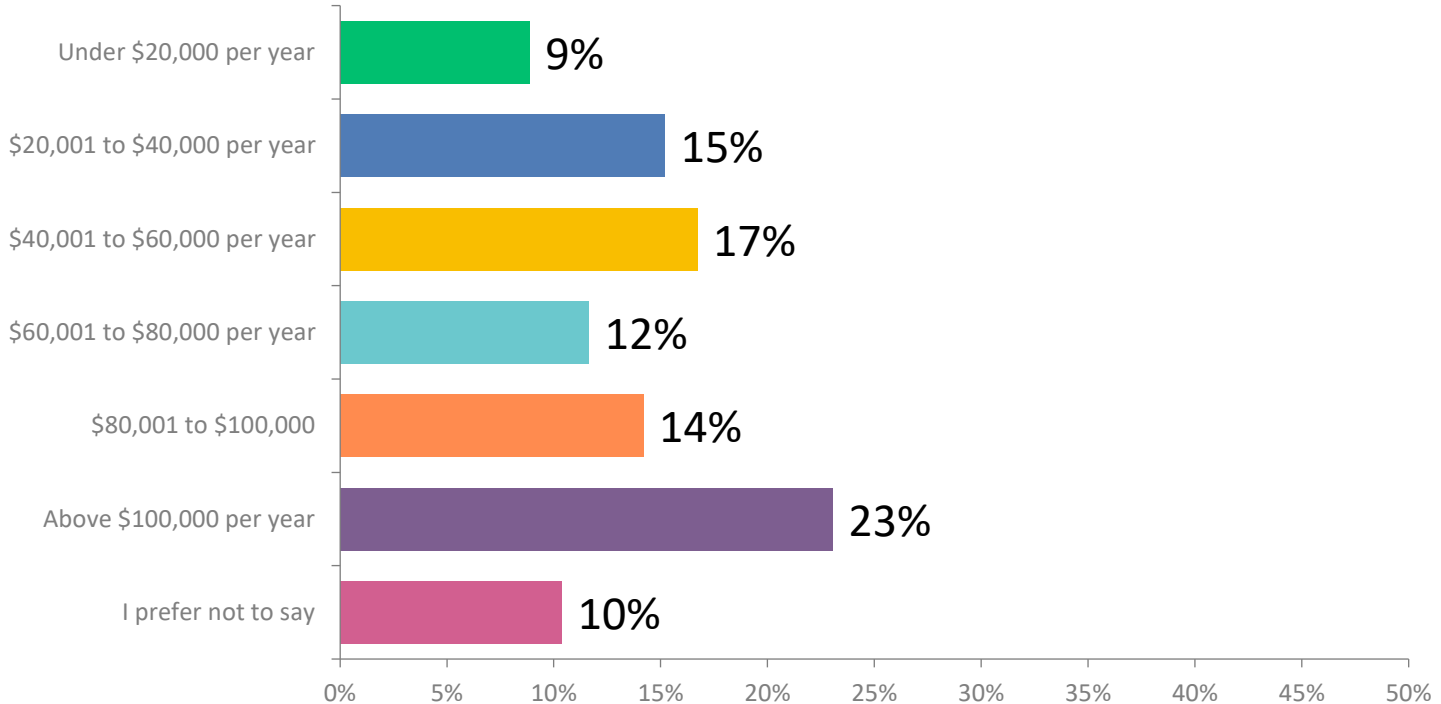
What type of housing do you live in?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Stand-alone house	56.20%	222
Apartment or condominium	28.35%	112
Townhome or duplex	7.59%	30
Manufactured home in a manufactured/mobile home park	6.33%	25
Other (please specify)	0.76%	3
ADU or mother-in-law unit	0.51%	2
Group housing (dorm, shelter, etc.)	0.25%	1
TOTAL		395

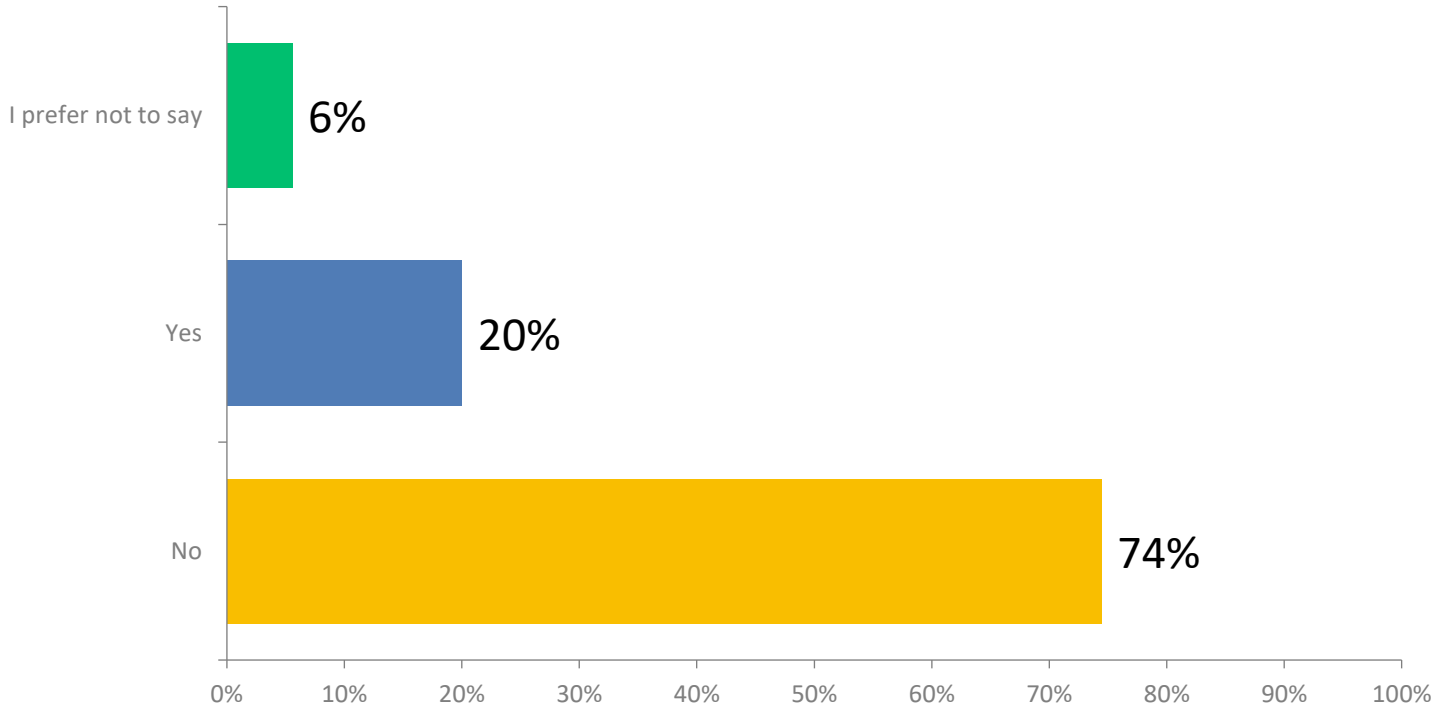
What is your household income?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0



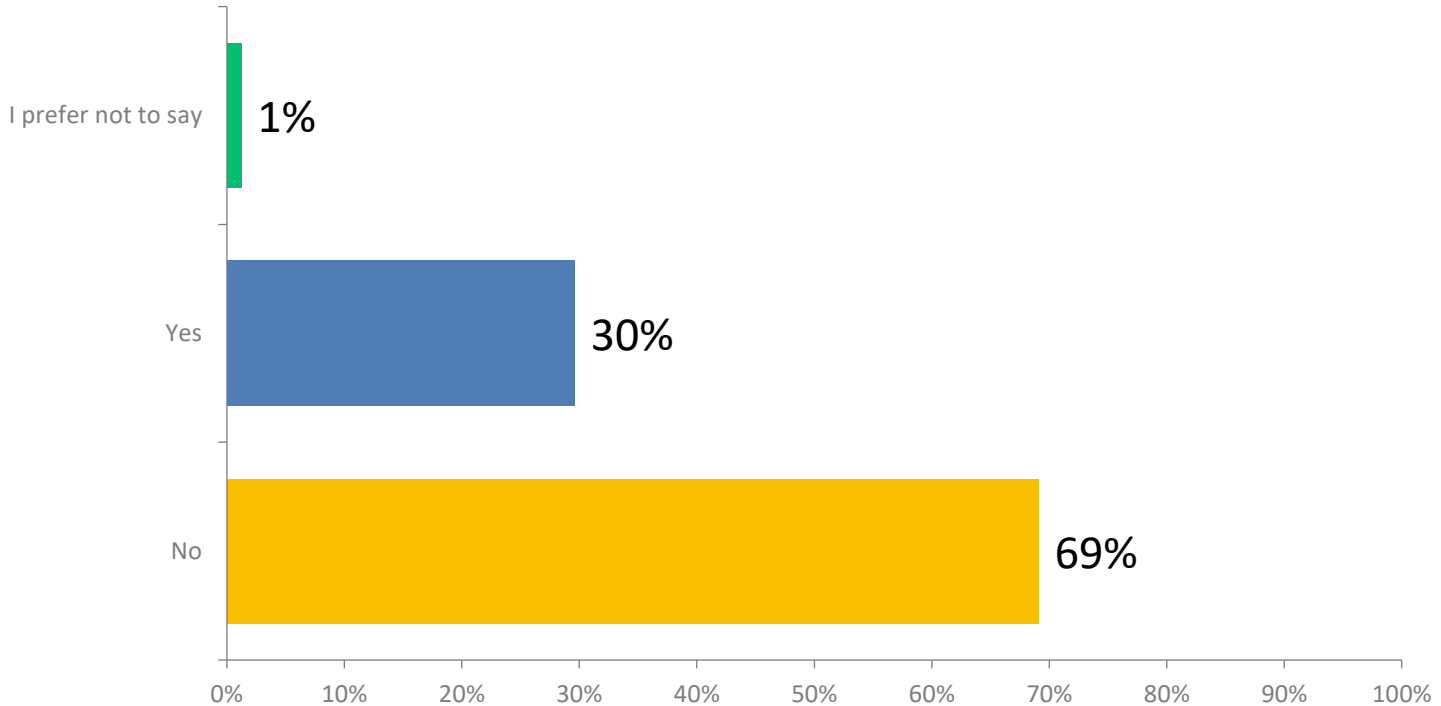
Do you or a member of your household have a disability?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0



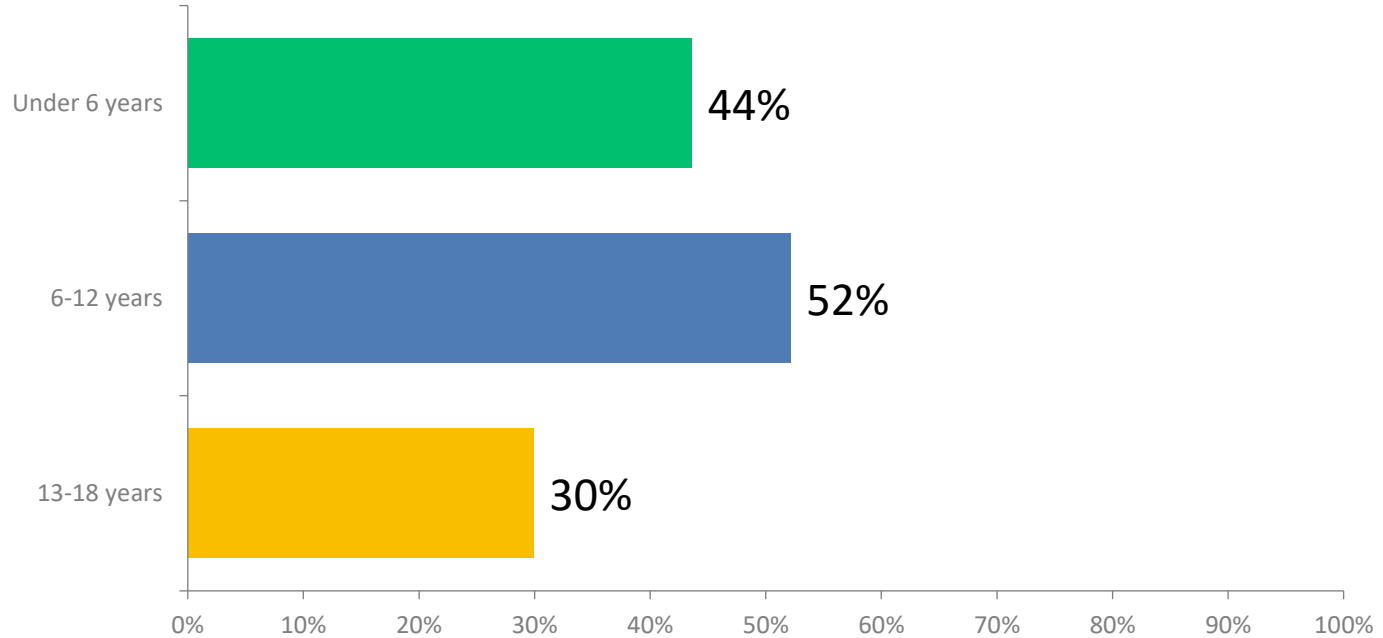
Do any children live in your household?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0



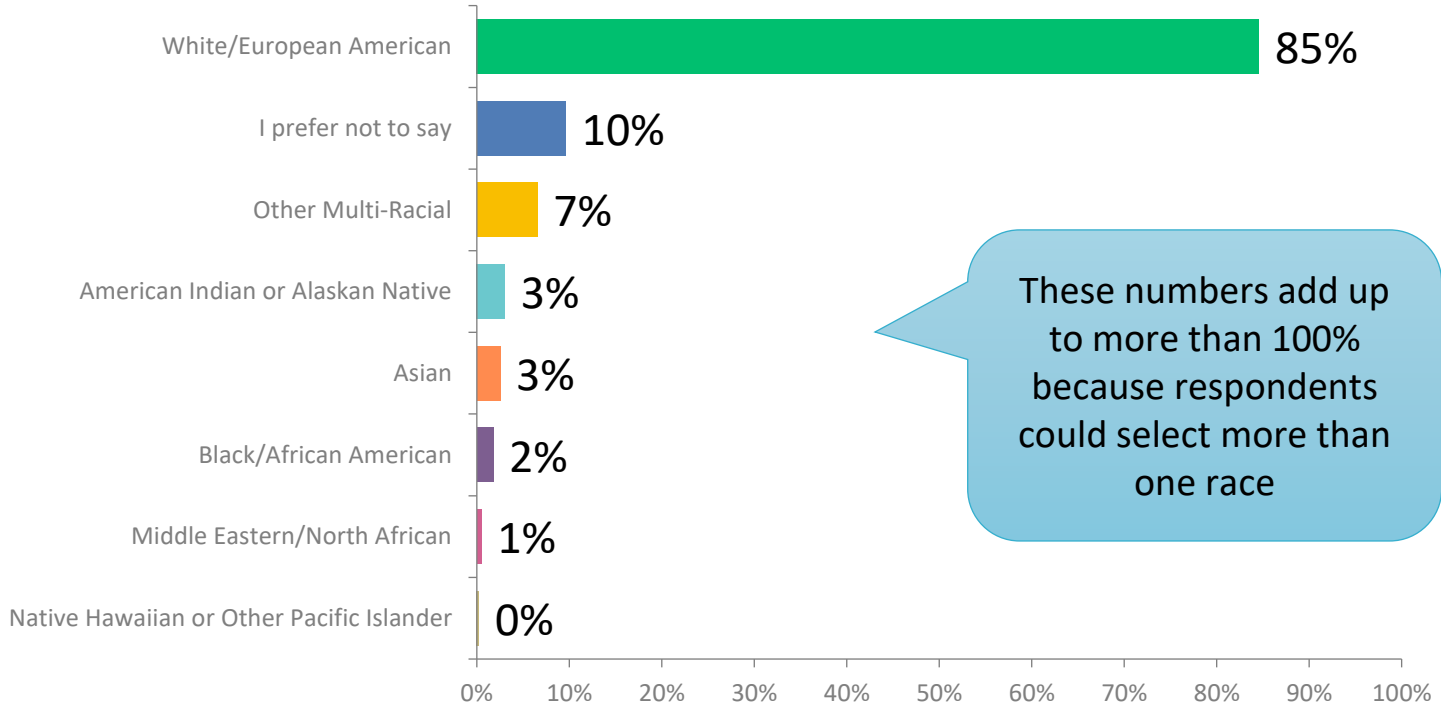
If yes, what are the age(s) of the children?

Answered: 117 Skipped: 278



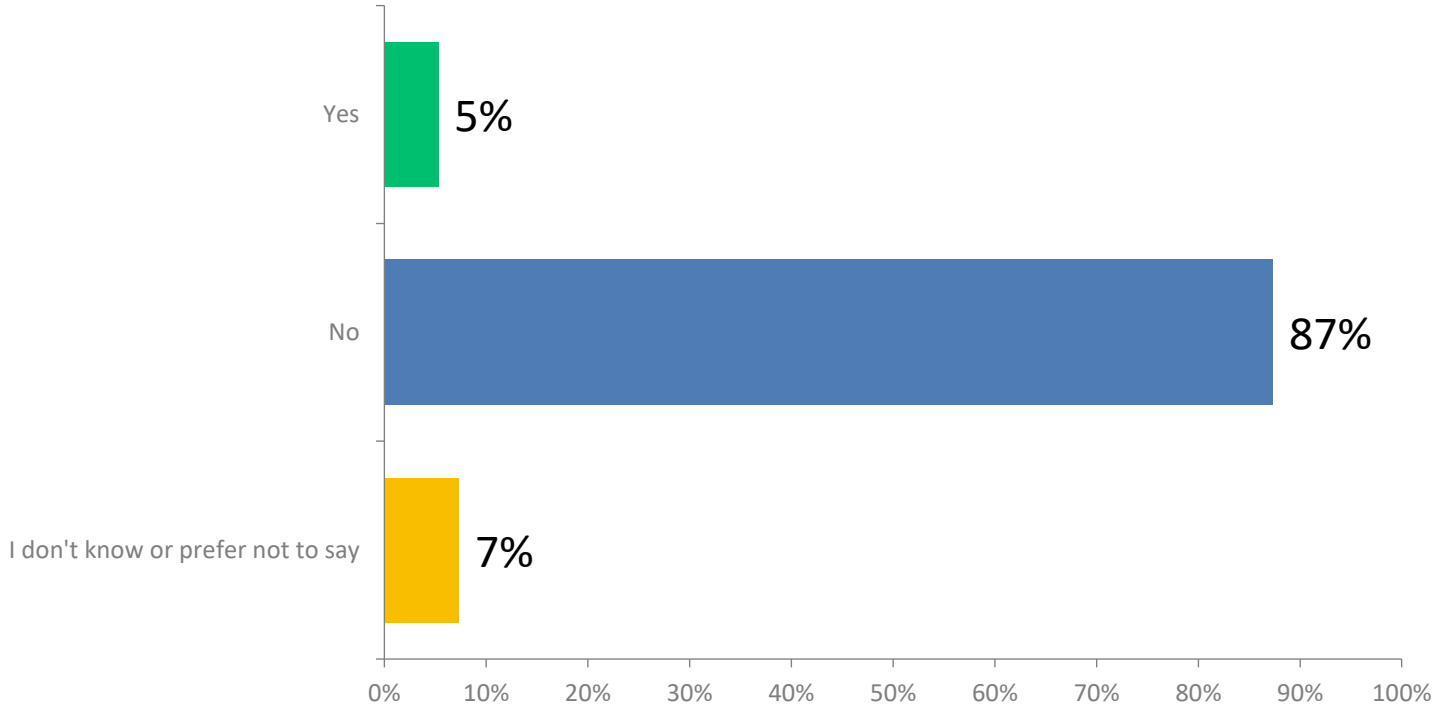
What is your race? (please select ALL that apply)

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0



Are you Hispanic or Latino(a)?

Answered: 395 Skipped: 0



Here is how our respondents compared to Bellingham's overall population

Bellingham's demographic data is based on 2020 Census; sources can be found at data.census.gov

- **There is an overrepresentation of homeowner respondents:** 59% of respondents own their home and 37% rent, compared to 55% renters and 45% homeowners in Bellingham's general population.
- **The survey respondents were roughly representative of Bellingham's predominant racial groups,** where 82% of the population identifies as White alone, and 5.8% identify as being multi-racial. Of our survey respondents, 85% identified their race as White alone. The second largest group identified as multi-racial (5%). **People who identify as Asian were underrepresented in our survey results** (only 0.8% of respondents, compared to 5.6% of Bellingham's population).
- **There was an underrepresentation of respondents who identified as being of Hispanic or Latinx ethnicity.** Twenty-one respondents (6%) identified as Hispanic or Latinx, which is significantly lower than the overall 9.6% Hispanic population of Bellingham.
- **20% of respondents have a member of their household who is disabled,** which is consistent with the 12.5% of Bellingham residents who have a disability.
- Most survey respondents live in either a 2-person (42%) or 1-person (21%) household. This is similar to Bellingham's average household size, where about 70% of the population lives in either a 1- or 2-person household.
- **We had an overrepresentation of families with children;** 18.5% of households in Bellingham have children under 18 years of age, while nearly 30% of the survey respondents have children living in the home.