

Homelessness – San Diego Police Department

September - October 2022

The structure of the report

01. Methodology

The sample, distribution method, and the research tools

02. Current situation & Concerns

What do respondents think about homelessness currently and what are their concerns

03. Causes & Interventions

What do respondents think cause the homelessness issue in the city and what interventions do they think would support

Summary

A top-down view of several hands of different skin tones working together to assemble white puzzle pieces on a light-colored wooden surface. The hands are positioned around the puzzle, with some already connected and others being placed. The image has a semi-transparent dark purple overlay.

01

Methodology

Methodology



950 sample survey
of San Diego adults,
18+



Respondents
recruited
via the internet



Fielded September
29th – October 23rd,
2022



Survey was
conducted in
English.



Data was weighted
to represent the
population in San
Diego

Methodology – how we ensure the sample is statistically valid

- 950 respondents were recruited online between September 29th and October 23rd, 2022, using targeted ads on various platforms (e.g., social media, apps for Android and IOS) as well as online survey panels.
- Using data from the Census Bureau, this survey employed quotas to match the distribution of race, age, and gender in San Diego, ensuring that the sample represents the entire city.
- To make sure our sample is representative, a technique called rake-weighting was used to balance out any remaining differences between the makeup of the survey respondents and the community. This process serves as a statistical safeguard against any demographic group being overrepresented or underrepresented in the final score calculations by giving overrepresented groups a lower weight and underrepresented groups a higher weight in the analysis.

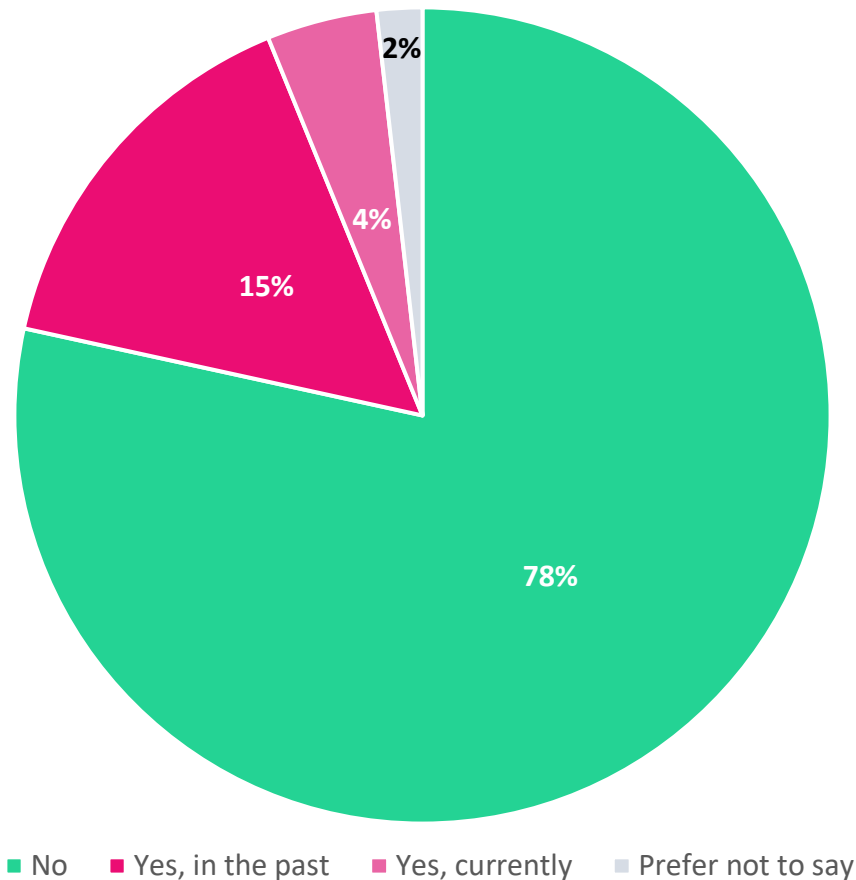


02

Current Situation & Concerns

Current situation: 19% of the sample responded that they either had in the past or are currently homeless (N = 188). The demographic breakdown of those respondents was found to be similar to that of the overall sample, with only slightly more males, younger, and Latino respondents.

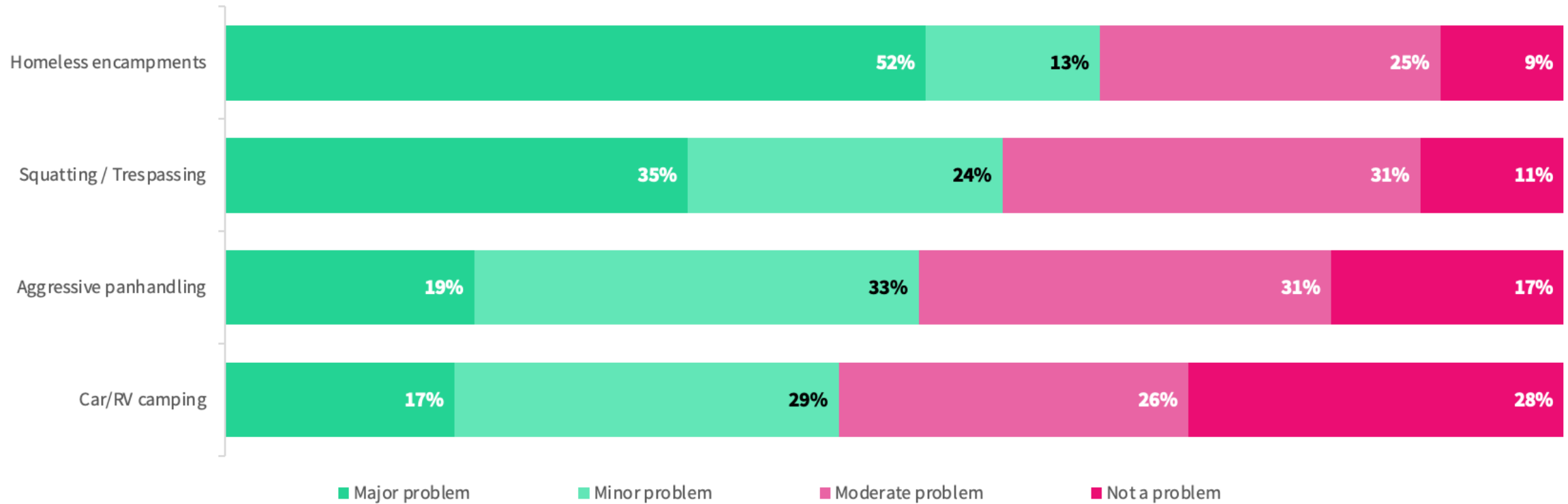
Q2: Have you yourself ever been homeless for any significant length of time, either in the past or currently?



Demographic breakdown of those who selected "Yes, currently" or "Yes, in the past"	
18-34	40%
35-54	41%
55+	14%
Female	45%
Male	51%
White	49%
Black	9%
Asian	13%
Latino	37%

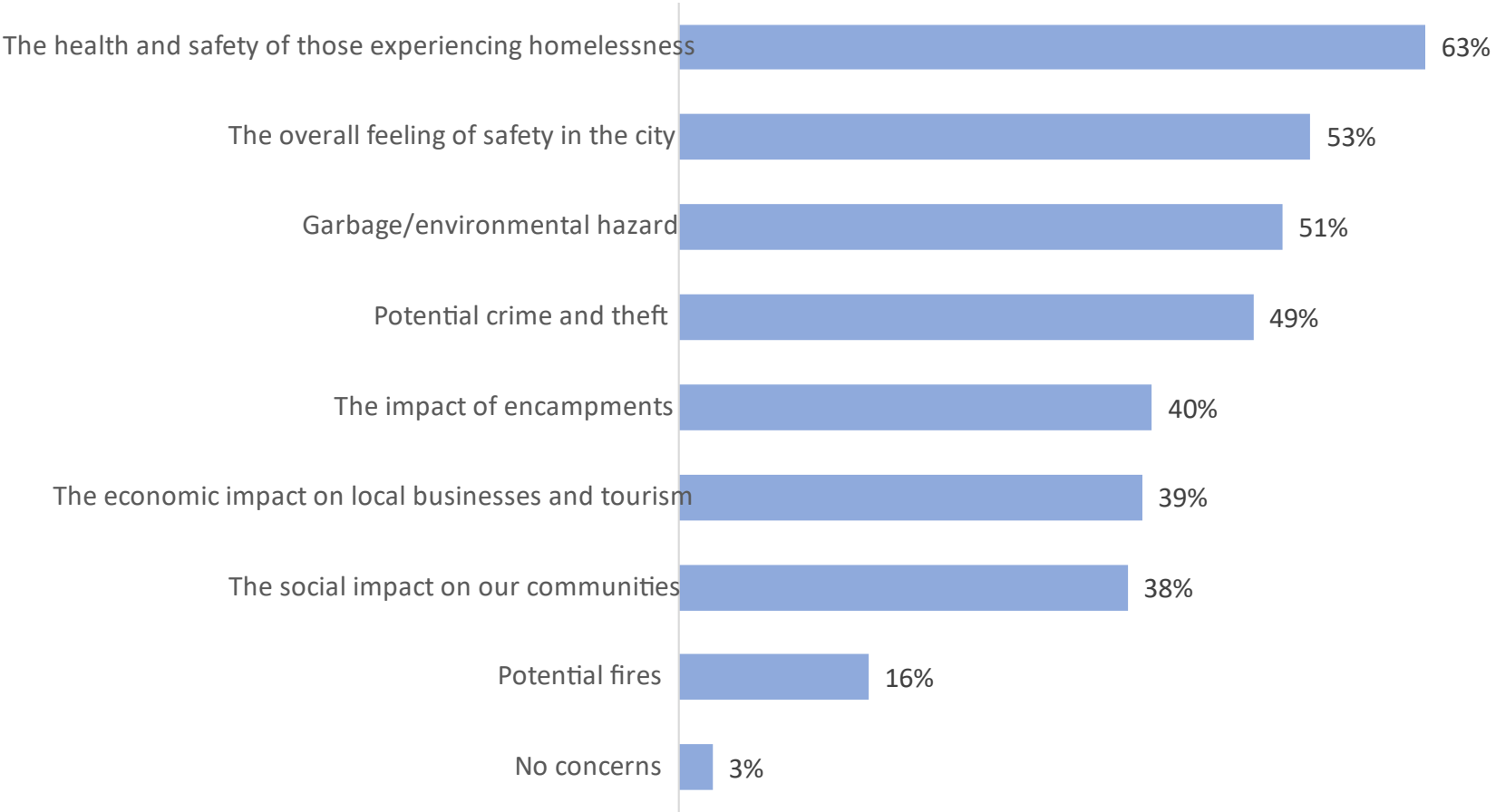
Serious issue: The majority of respondents reported homeless encampments as a major problem in the city (52%). On the other hand, car/RV camping and aggressive panhandling were only reported as major problems by under a fifth of respondents (17% and 19%, respectively).

Q3: Please indicate how serious each of the following issues is in the city



Top concern: The majority of respondents reported the health and safety of those experiencing homelessness, the overall feeling of safety in the city, and garbage/environmental hazards as their top homelessness-related concerns (63%, 53%, and 51% respectively). The health and safety of those experiencing homelessness was also the top concern across respondents of all age groups, gender, and race (except for Hawaiian Americans, for which it was their second most common concern).

Q4: What are your top concerns associated with homelessness in San Diego?

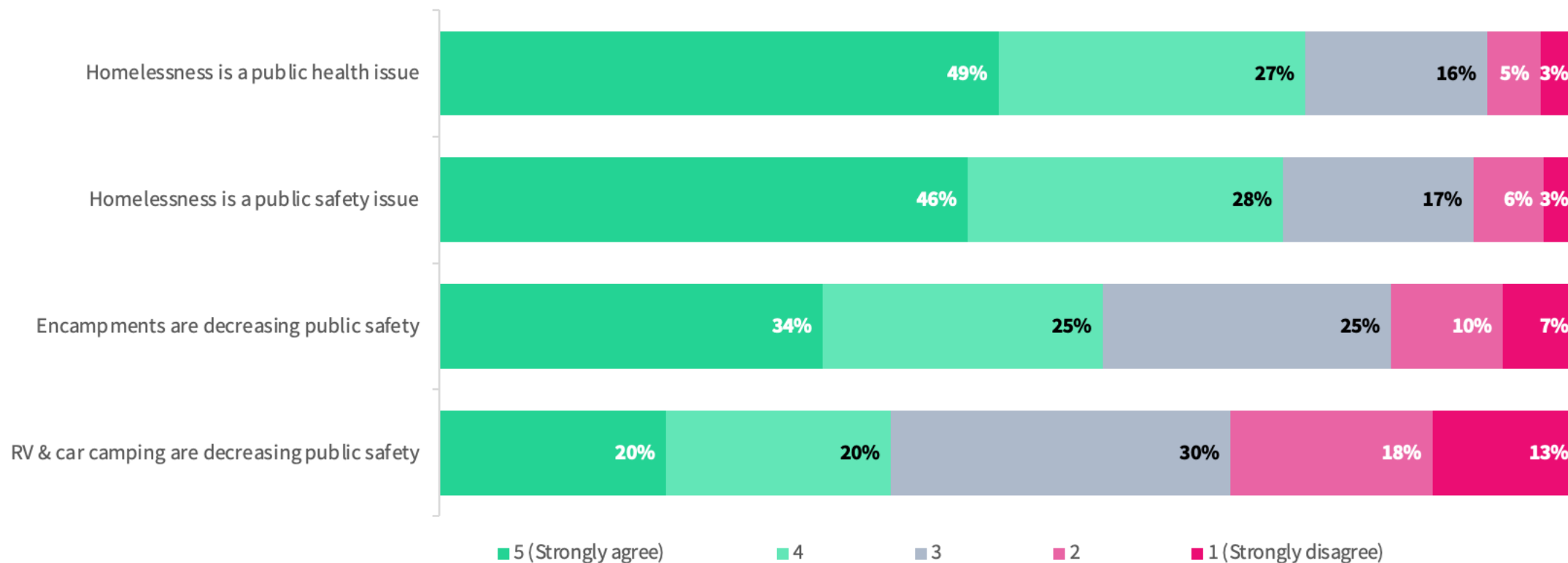


Demographic	Top Concern
18-34	Health & safety (65%)
35-54	Health & safety (64%)
55+	Health & safety (60%)
Male	Health & safety (57%)
Female	Health & safety (69%)
White	Health & safety (63%)
Black	Health & safety (70%)
Asian	Health & safety (70%)
Latino	Health & safety (66%)
Native American*	Health & safety (71%)
Native Hawaiian *	Overall feeling of safety (54%)

* Small sample size (between 30 – 50 respondents)

Concerns: Just under half of the respondents reported strongly agreeing that homelessness is a public health and public safety issue. However, only 20% of respondents reported strongly agreeing that RV and car camping are decreasing public safety and 31% reported strongly or somewhat disagreeing with the statement.

Q10: To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding homelessness in San Diego?



Concerns by demographic: Respondents across all analyzed demographic groups strongly agreed that homelessness is a public health and public safety issue the most. This was also found to be the case for respondents who were previously or are currently homeless.

Q10: To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding homelessness in San Diego?

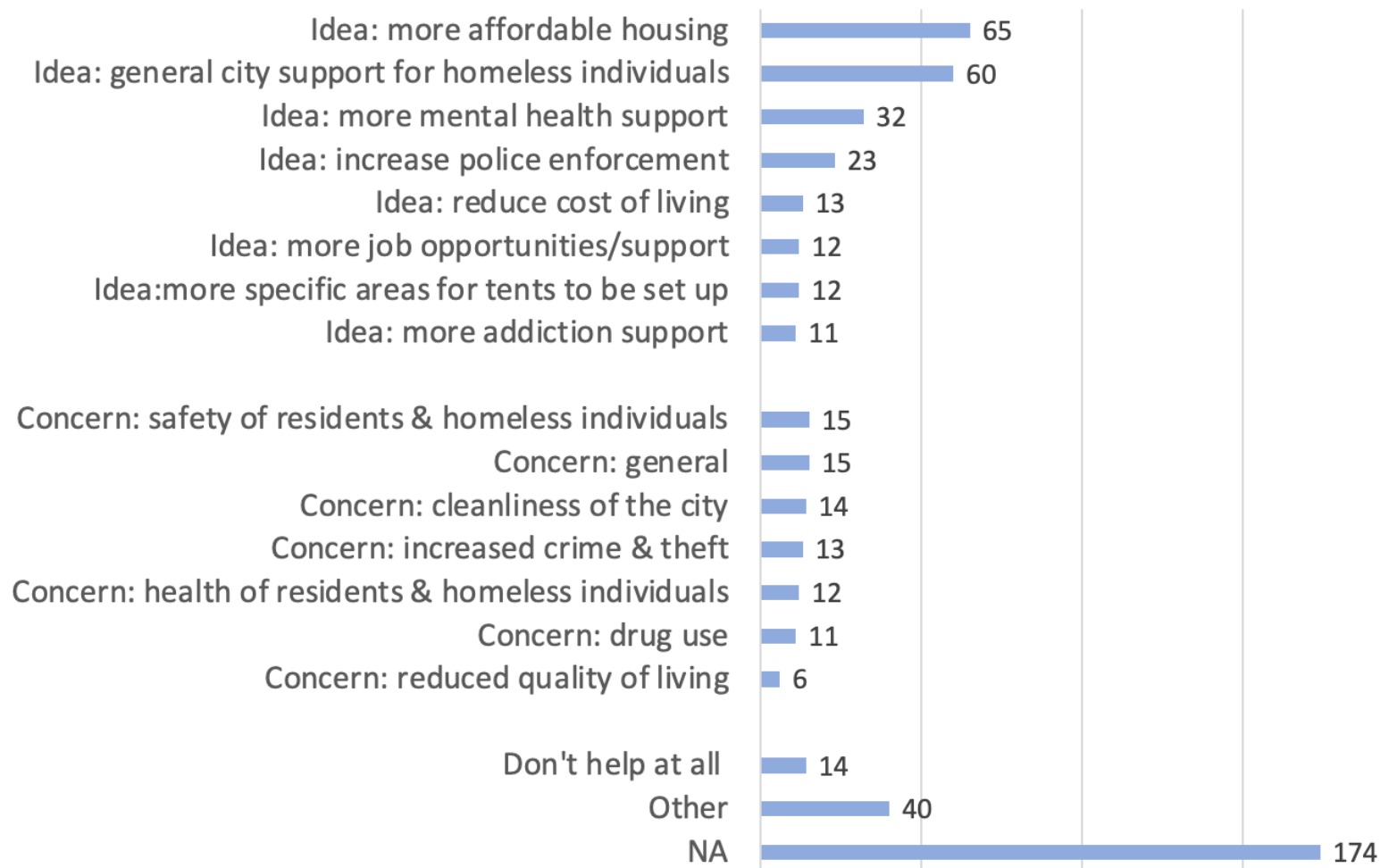
% Strongly agreed	Age			Gender		Homelessness status		
	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female	Have never been	Yes, in the past	Yes, currently*
Most common	Public safety issue (40%)	Public health issue (45%)	Public health issue (66%)	Public health issue (47%)	Public health issue (52%)	Public health issue (51%)	Public safety issue (38%)	Public health issue (51%)
Second most common	Public health issue (39%)	Public safety issue (41%)	Public safety issue (61%)	Public safety issue (46%)	Public safety issue (47%)	Public safety issue (49%)	Public health issue (37%)	Public safety issue (35%)

% Strongly agreed	Race/Ethnicity					
	White	Black	Asian	Latino	Native American *	Native Hawaiian *
Most common	Public health issue (54%)	Public health issue (41%)	Public safety issue (45%)	Public safety issue (41%)	Public health issue (47%)	Public health issue (44%)
Second most common	Public safety issue (48%)	Public safety issue (35%)	Public health issue (42%)	Public health issue (41%)	Public safety issue (44%)	Public safety issue (41%)

* Small sample size (between 30 – 50 respondents)

Other concerns & ideas: Respondents reported the provision of more affordable housing, general support of the City for homeless individuals, and provision of mental health support as the main ideas they had regarding homelessness. Most respondents did not share concerns, however, those who did, most commonly reported concerns about the safety of residents and homeless individuals, general homelessness concerns, and concerns about the cleanliness of the city.

Q11: Any other ideas or concerns regarding the issue of homelessness that you'd like to share with the city? (N = 542)



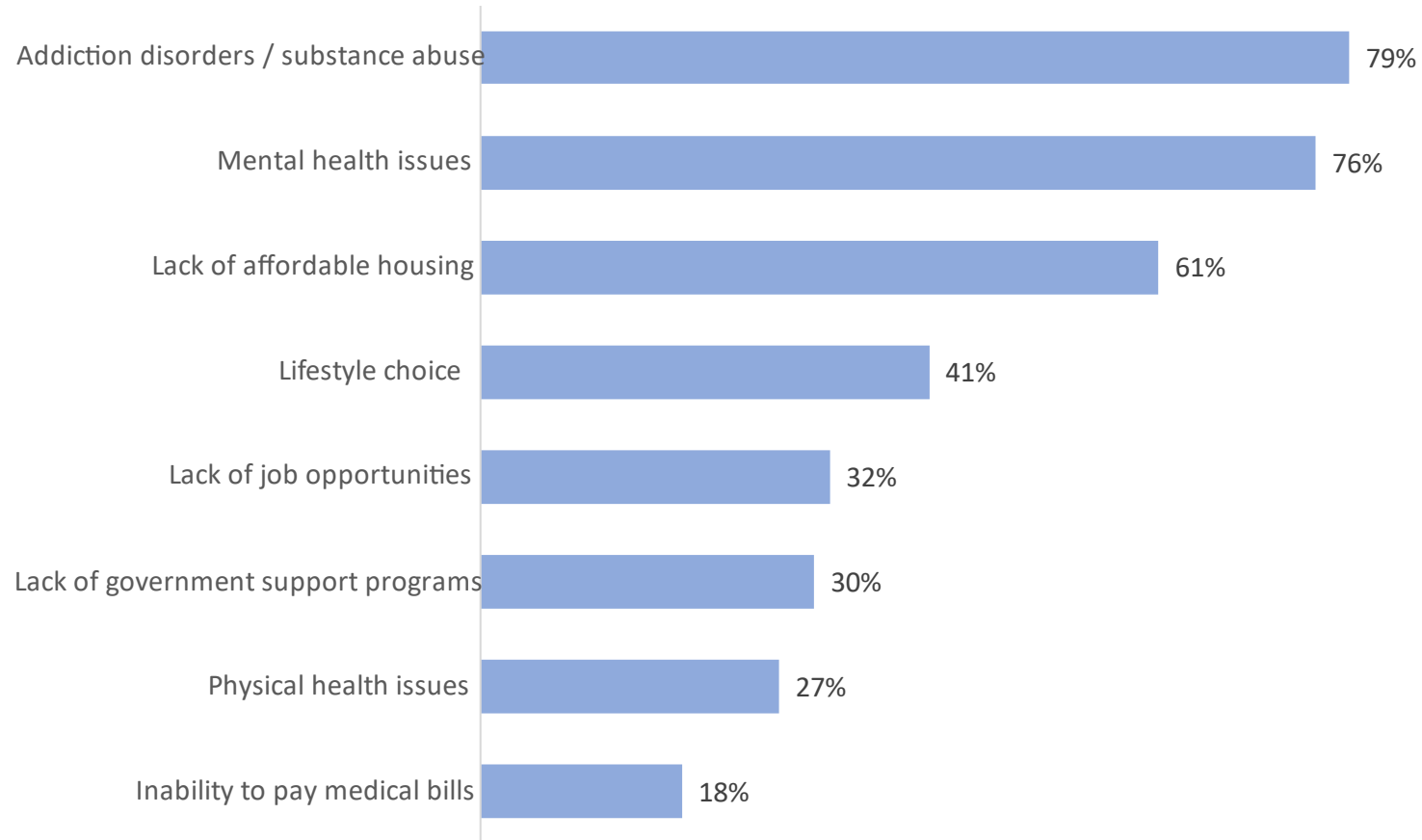


03

Causes & Interventions

Causes: Over 70% of respondents believe that addiction disorders and mental health issues are the main causes of homelessness. However, under 1/3 of the respondents believed that inability to pay medical bills, physical health issues, lack of government support programs, and lack of job opportunities were the main causes of homelessness (18%, 27%, 30%, and 32%, respectively).

Q5: In your opinion, what are the main causes of homelessness?



City investment: Respondents most commonly reported wanting the city to invest much more or somewhat more in addressing homelessness. This is particularly true for Black respondents and respondents over the age of 55 who both reported wanting the city to invest much more in addressing homelessness, as compared to the rest of the analyzed groups (40% and 38%, respectively).

Q6: How much should the city invest in addressing homelessness in relation to what is currently invested?



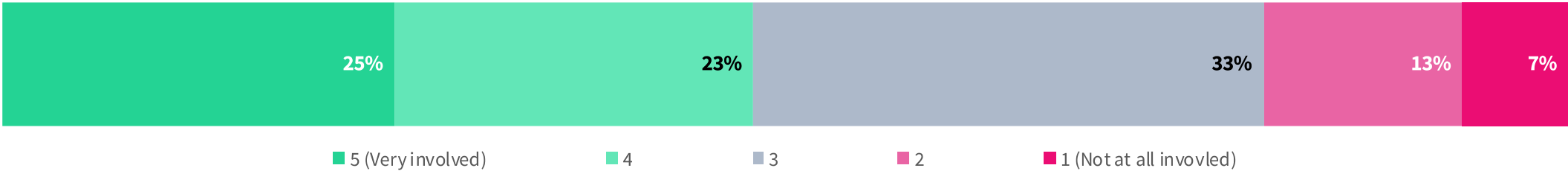
	Age			Gender		Homelessness status		
	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female	Have never been	Yes, in the past	Yes, currently*
Much more (%)	31%	32%	38%	33%	34%	33%	34%	37%
Much less (%)	7%	5%	9%	10%	5%	7%	9%	5%

	Race/Ethnicity					
	White	Black	Asian	Latino	Native American *	Native Hawaiian *
Much more (%)	35%	40%	32%	27%	25%	21%
Much less (%)	6%	8%	5%	8%	17%	13%

* Small sample size (between 30 – 50 respondents)

Police involvement: 48% of respondents reported believing that the police should be very involved or somewhat involved in addressing homelessness, as compared to 20% who wanted less or no involvement. Most of the groups analyzed shared similar opinions. However, respondents who are currently facing homelessness were more split between wanting and not wanting police involvement.

Q9: To what extent do you think the police should be involved in addressing homelessness?



	Age			Gender		Homelessness status		
	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female	Have never been	Yes, in the past	Yes, currently*
Involved** (%)	44%	44%	57%	51%	45%	50%	36%	39%
Not involved** (%)	24%	22%	13%	17%	21%	18%	25%	36%

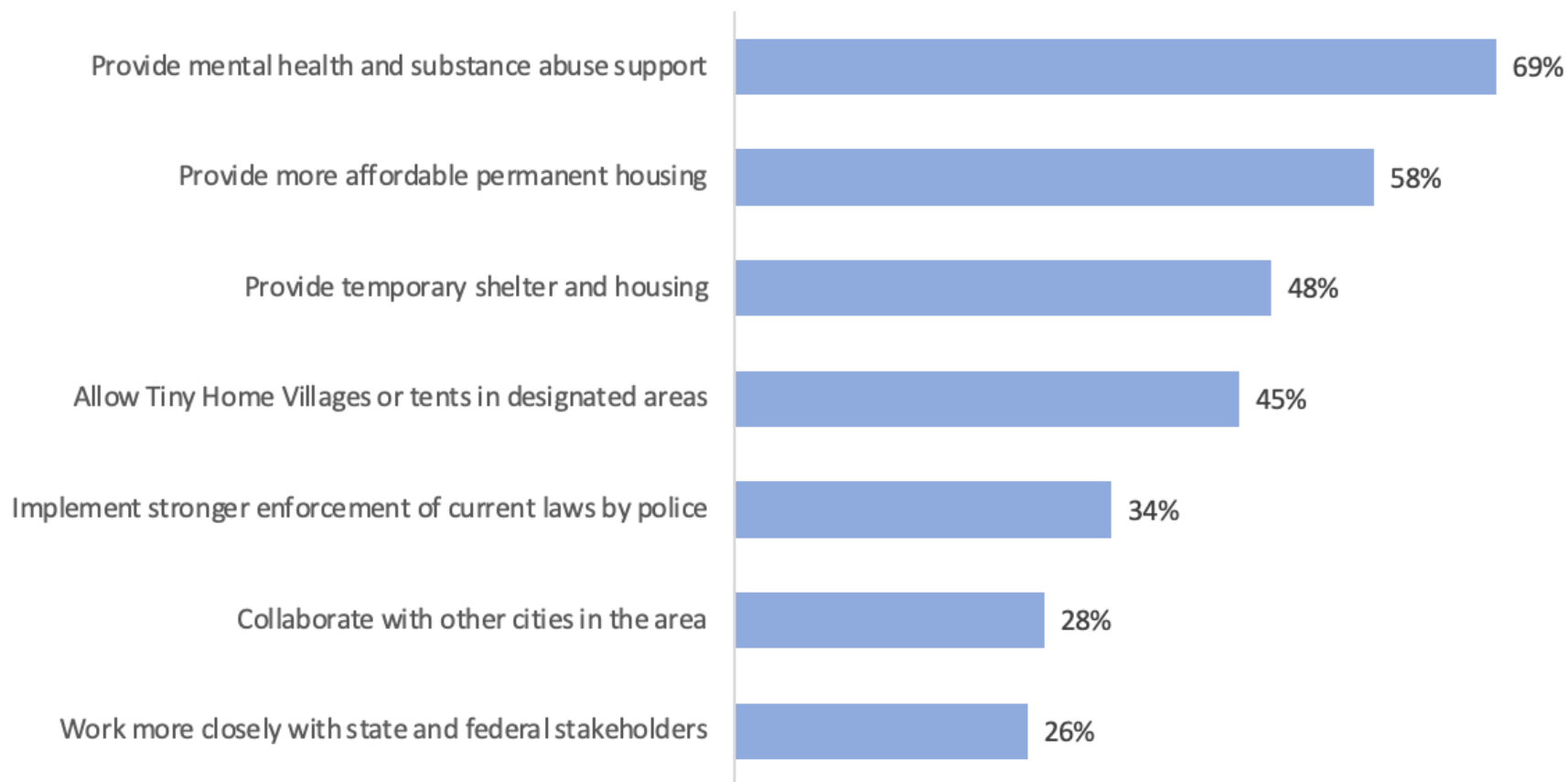
	Race/Ethnicity					
	White	Black	Asian	Latino	Native American *	Native Hawaiian *
Involved** (%)	47%	43%	48%	45%	48%	46%
Not involved** (%)	21%	25%	13%	22%	24%	15%

** Involved is 5 or 4 on the scale, not involved is 1 or 2.

* Small sample size (between 30 – 50 respondents)

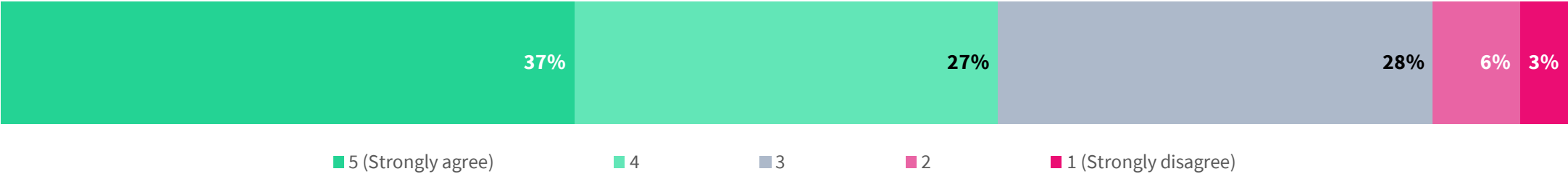
Interventions: The majority of respondents reported believing that the City of San Diego should provide mental health and substance abuse support and more affordable permanent housing in order to reduce homelessness (69%, and 58% respectively). Providing temporary shelter and housing and allowing Tiny Home Villages or tents in designated areas were also commonly chosen options (48% and 45%, respectively).

Q7: In your opinion, what should be done in order to reduce the issue of homelessness locally in San Diego?



Interventions: 64% of respondents reported that they would support court-appointed legal conservators being used as an approach to get mentally-ill homeless individuals’ treatment. Respondents over the age of 55 were much more likely to support this approach (75% support) as compared to Native American respondents and respondents who are currently experiencing homelessness who were more likely to oppose (17% and 15% oppose, respectively).

Q8: In California, courts may appoint legal conservators for people with serious mental illnesses, who may compel them to receive medication or other treatment for their conditions. Would you support or oppose using this approach to get treatment for mentally-ill homeless individuals?



	Age			Gender		Homelessness status		
	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female	Have never been	Yes, in the past	Yes, currently*
Agree** (%)	57%	61%	75%	65%	62%	65%	58%	55%
Disagree** (%)	10%	10%	6%	10%	8%	7%	13%	15%

	Race/Ethnicity					
	White	Black	Asian	Latino	Native American *	Native Hawaiian *
Agree** (%)	67%	62%	60%	55%	49%	51%
Disagree** (%)	9%	12%	6%	11%	17%	12%

** Agree is 5 or 4 on the scale, disagree is 1 or 2.

* Small sample size (between 30 – 50 respondents)



06

Summary

Summary



Current Situation

19% report currently or in the past **experiencing homelessness**

52% report **homeless encampments** as a major concern

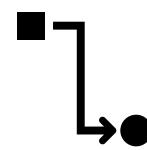


Concerns

63% are concerned about the **health and safety** of those experiencing homelessness

49% strongly agree that homelessness is a **public health issue**

46% strongly agree that homelessness is a **public safety issue**



Causes

79% believe that **addiction disorders** are a main cause of homelessness

76% believed that **mental health issues** are a main cause of homelessness



Interventions

33% believe that the **city should invest more** in addressing homelessness

48% believed that the **police should be very or somewhat involved** in addressing homelessness

69% believe that **mental health and substance abuse support** should be provided to reduce homelessness

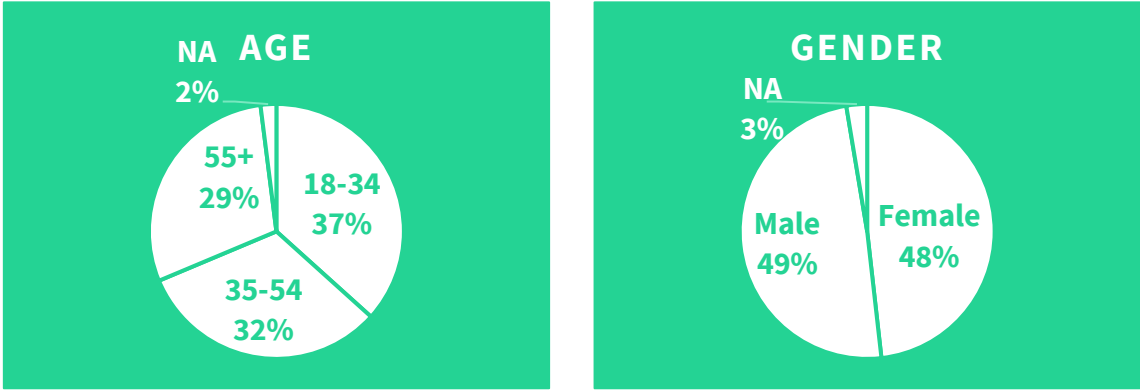
Thank You!

Survey respondents demographics – age, gender, ethnicity

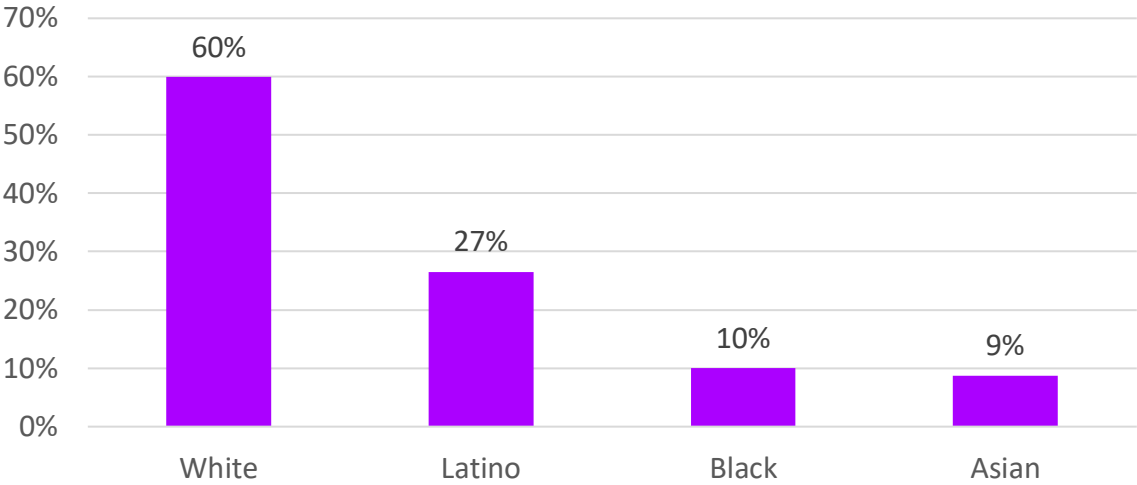
Unweighted demographics – the original sample



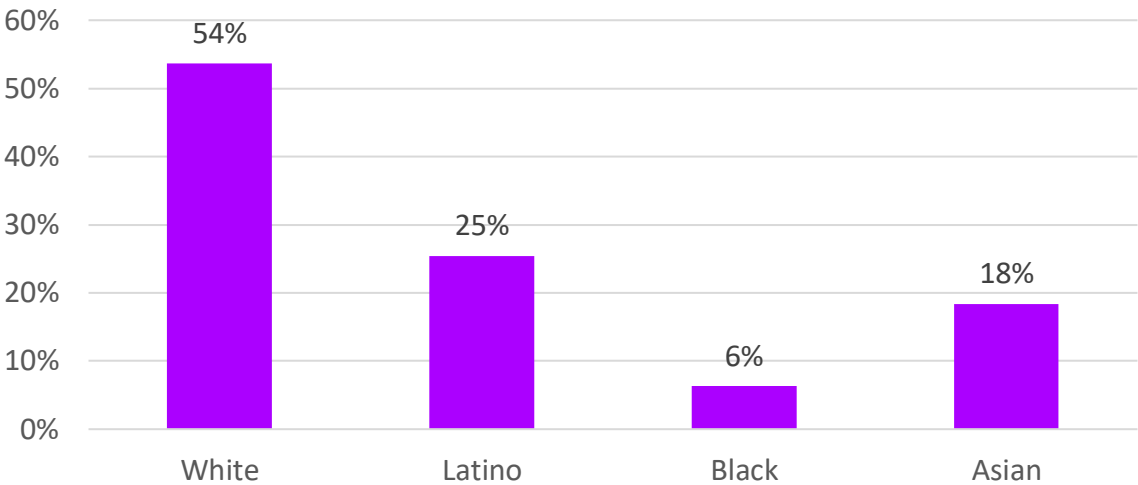
Weighted demographics – representative of the population




Ethnicity



Ethnicity





Link to Survey
Questions