

DEMANDS FOR A NASHVILLE PEOPLE'S BUDGET 2021-2022



A black and white photograph of a person sitting on grass, holding a large black protest sign with white text. The sign reads "DEFUND PO", "DIVERSITY", and "CARE NO". A heart symbol is painted on the sign. The person is wearing shorts and sneakers. There are flowers and a hat on the grass next to them.

Summary

Demands for a Nashville People's Budget | Fiscal Year 2022

Here is how nearly 3,000 Davidson County residents say we should spend our taxpayer dollars. What will Metro Council do about it?

HOW THE PEOPLE SAY WE SHOULD **DIVEST**

Metro Nashville Police Department | ↓ **\$108-150 million**

Reduce MNPD's share of the General Fund from the current 20% to between 6-10%, for a divestment of between **\$108-150 million**.

School Resource Officers | ↓ **\$6.8 million**

Cut the **\$6.8 million** MNPD spends on school resource officers and use it to directly support students instead.

Davidson County Sheriff's Office | ↓ **\$38-59 million**

Reduce DCSO's share of the General Fund from the current 7.5% to between 2-4%, for a divestment of between **\$38-59 million**.

District Attorney | ↓ **\$5 million**

Reduce the DA's share of the General Fund from the current 0.7% to 0.3%, for a divestment of more than **\$5 million**.

HOW THE PEOPLE SAY WE SHOULD INVEST

Affordable Housing | ↑ \$106–148 million

Increase the share of the General Fund devoted to affordable housing from the current **0.9%** to between **11–15%**, for an investment of between **\$106–148 million**.

Infrastructure & Transportation | ↑ \$53–95 million

Increase the share of the General Fund devoted to Infrastructure & Transportation from the current **5.9%** to between **11–15%**, for an investment of between **\$53–95 million**.

Non-Police Violence Prevention & Interruption | ↑ \$63–105 million

Increase the share of the General Fund devoted to non-police violence prevention and interruption from the current **0%** to between **6–10%**, for an investment of between **\$63–105 million**.

Non-Police First Responders | ↑ \$11–53 million

Increase the share of the General Fund devoted to FIRE, EMS, and additional non-police first responders from the current **5%** to between **6–10%**, for an investment of between **\$11–53 million**.

Property Tax Relief | ↑ \$6–48 million

Increase the share of the General Fund devoted to property tax relief from the current **0.4%** to between **1–5%**, for an investment of between **\$6–48 million**.

Social Services | ↑ \$56–98 million

Increase the share of the General Fund devoted to social services from the current **0.7%** to between **6–10%**, for an investment of between **\$56–98 million**.

Health & Hospitals | ↑ \$18–60 million

Increase the share of the General Fund devoted to public health and hospitals from the current **9.3%** to between **11–15%**, for an investment of between **\$18–60 million**.

Parks, Recreation, & Libraries | ↑ \$10–31 million

Increase the share of the General Fund devoted to parks, recreation, and libraries from the current **7.1%** to between **8–10%**, for an investment of between **\$10–31 million**.

Metro Arts Commission | ↑ \$7–49 million

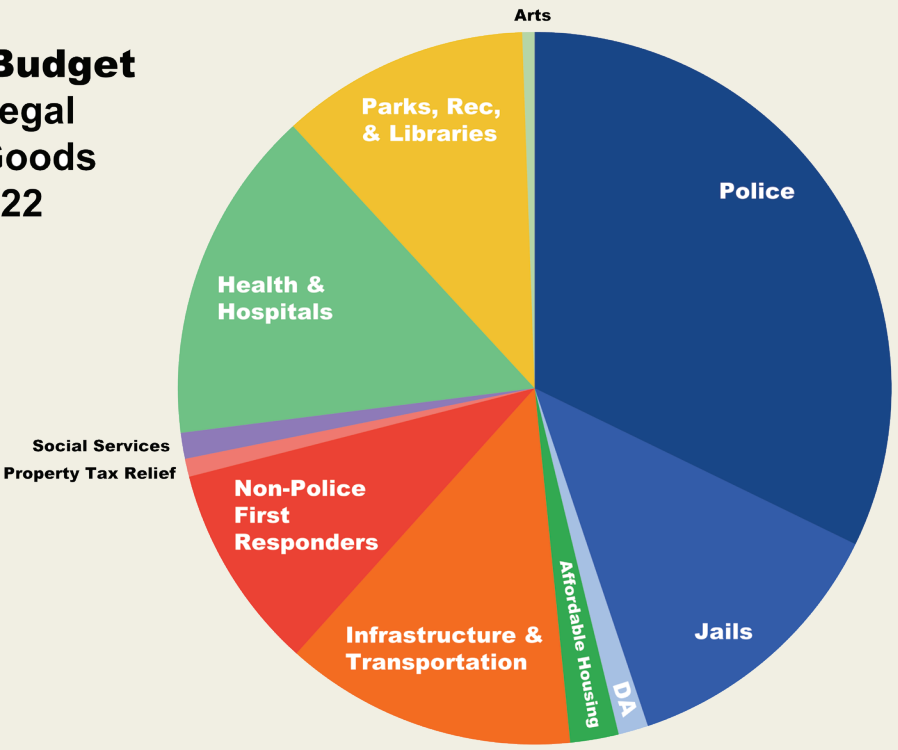
Increase the share of the General Fund devoted to the Metro Arts Commission from the current **0.3%** to between **1–5%**, for an investment of between **\$7–49 million**.

Education | ↑ \$80–180 million

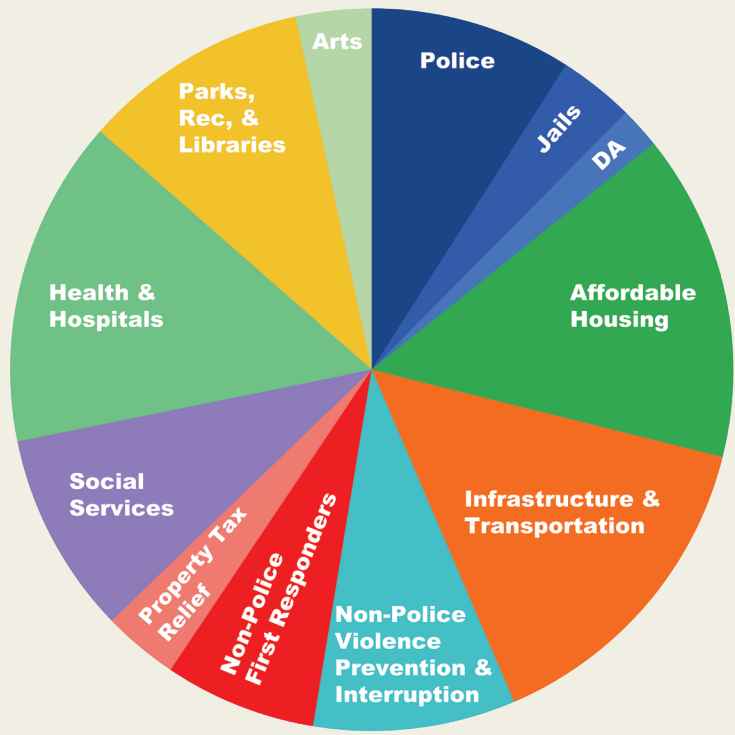
Increase the share of the total operating budget devoted to education from the current **37%** to between **41–45%**, for an investment of between **\$80–180 million**.

How a People's Budget Compares to the Mayor's Proposed Budget

Mayor's Budget
Criminal Legal
& Public Goods
(GSD) | FY22



People's Budget
Criminal Legal
& Public Goods
(GSD) | FY22



A black and white photograph of a protest. In the foreground, a person wearing a bandana and sunglasses holds up a large sign. The sign features a drawing of a piggy bank with a dollar sign on its forehead, labeled 'POL' with an 'x' mark. To the right of the piggy bank is a jagged shape labeled 'ICE'. Between them are several dollar signs. Below the piggy bank, there are several hands drawn on the sign, each with a label: 'HEALTHCARE' and 'FOOD'. In the background, other protesters are visible, some wearing masks. One person holds a sign that says 'NO JUSTICE NO PEACE'. Another person holds a sign that says 'LGB BLM'.

Demands for a Nashville People's Budget

Fiscal Year 2022

In the spirit of participatory budgeting and popular democracy, our demands for a Nashville People's Budget are the demands of the nearly 3,000 Davidson County residents who completed our 2021 survey.

All budgetary figures below represent the median of all survey responses. Each demand for divestment and investment is listed as a range because we posed the answer options for each budget-specific question as a range of percentage (of GSD General Fund) and corresponding dollar amount. The total for figures on the low end of the range across all categories add up to a figure that approximates what the mayor proposes to spend on these city services. The totals for figures on the high end of the range across responses exceed what the city currently proposes to spend on these services. Rather than dismiss these figures on the basis of this fact, we should take them seriously as a tangible reflection of people's desire to drastically change how we fund critical public goods in our city.

For full survey results, see the final section of this report.

What do we value most?

What keeps our communities safe?

When asked to **rank city services** based on importance, a majority of our nearly 3,000 respondents listed **affordable housing, education, and transportation and infrastructure** as their top priorities. A majority of respondents listed **police** as least important.

When asked “**what keeps your community safe,**” a majority of respondents selected quality education, safe and affordable housing, non-police first responders, dignified and accessible social services, and non-police violence prevention and interruption as their top choices. Only 30% of respondents included police in their list.

How the people say we should **Divest**

↓ **Metro Nashville Police Department | \$108–150 million**

81% of respondents said we should reduce MNPD's budget.

68% of respondents said we should cut MNPD's budget by more than half.



Based on the median of all survey responses, MNPD's share of the General Fund should be reduced from the current **20%** to between **6–10%**. That is a reduction of between **\$108–150 million**.

↓ **School Resource Officers | \$6.8 million**

80% of respondents said we should repurpose the \$6.8 million MNPD spends on school resource officers to directly support students instead.



↓ Davidson County Sheriff's Office | \$38–59 million

82% of respondents said we should reduce the Sheriff's budget.

72% of respondents said we should cut the Sheriff's budget by more than half.

Based on the median of all survey responses, DCSO's share of the General Fund should be reduced from the current 7.5% to between 2–4%. That is a reduction of between \$38–59 million.



↓ District Attorney | \$5 million

82% of respondents said we should reduce the District Attorney's budget.

66% of respondents said we should cut the Sheriff's budget by more than half.

Based on the median of all survey responses, the DA's share of the General Fund should be reduced from the current **0.7%** to **0.3%**. That is a reduction of more than **\$5 million**.



How the people say we should **Invest**

↑ **Affordable Housing | \$106–148 million**

83% of respondents said we should drastically increase funding for affordable housing.

Based on the median of all survey responses, affordable



housing's share of the General Fund should be increased from the current **0.9%** to between **11–15%**. That is an increase of **\$106–148 million**.

↑ **Infrastructure & Transportation | \$53–95 million**

83% of respondents said we should drastically increase funding for infrastructure & transportation.



Based on the median of all survey responses,

Infrastructure & Transportation's share of the General Fund should be increased from the current **5.9%** to between **11–15%**. That is an increase of **\$53–95 million**.

↑ **Non-Police Violence Prevention & Interruption** | ↑ **\$63–105 million**

87% of respondents said we should drastically increase funding for non-police violence prevention and interruption.

Based on the median of all survey responses, the share of the General Fund devoted to non-police violence prevention and interruption



should be increased from the current **0%** to between **6–10%**. That is an increase of between **\$63–105 million**.

↑ **Non-Police First Responders** | **\$11–53 million**

79% of respondents said we should drastically increase funding for fire, EMS, and additional non-police first responders, including mental health first responders.

Based on the median of all survey responses, the share of the General Fund devoted to FIRE, EMS, and additional non-police first responders should be increased from the current **5%** to between **6–10%**.

That is an increase of between **\$11–53 million**.



↑ Property Tax Relief | \$6–48 million

79% of respondents said we should more than double funding for property tax relief.

Based on the median of all survey responses, the share of the General Fund devoted to property tax relief should be increased from the

current **0.4%** to between **1–5%**. That is an increase of between **\$6–48 million**.



↑ Social Services | \$56–98 million

84% of respondents said we should drastically increase funding for social services.

Based on the median of all survey responses, the share of the General Fund devoted to social services should be

increased from the current **0.7%** to between **6–10%**. That is an increase of between **\$56–98 million**.



↑ Health & Hospitals | \$18–60 million

80% of respondents said we should drastically increase funding for public health and hospitals.



Based on the median of all survey responses, the share of the General Fund devoted to public health and hospitals should be increased from the current **9.3%** to between **11–15%**. That is an increase of between **\$18–60 million**.

↑ Parks, Recreation, & Libraries | \$10–31 million

74% of respondents said we should increase funding for parks, recreation, and libraries.

Based on the median of all survey responses, the share of the General Fund devoted to parks, recreation, and libraries should be increased from the current **7.1%** to between **8–10%**. That is an increase of between **\$10–31 million**.



↑ Metro Arts Commission | \$7–49 million

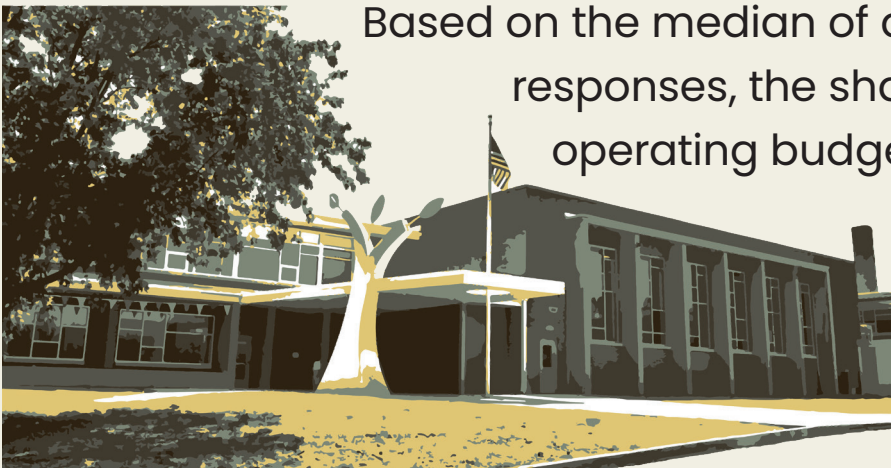
75% of respondents said we should increase funding for the Metro Arts Commission.

Based on the median of all survey responses, the share of the General Fund devoted to the Metro Arts Commission should be increased from the current **0.3%** to between **1–5%**. That is an increase of between **\$7–49 million**.



↑ Education | \$80–180 million

82% of respondents said we should increase funding for education.



Based on the median of all survey responses, the share of the total operating budget devoted

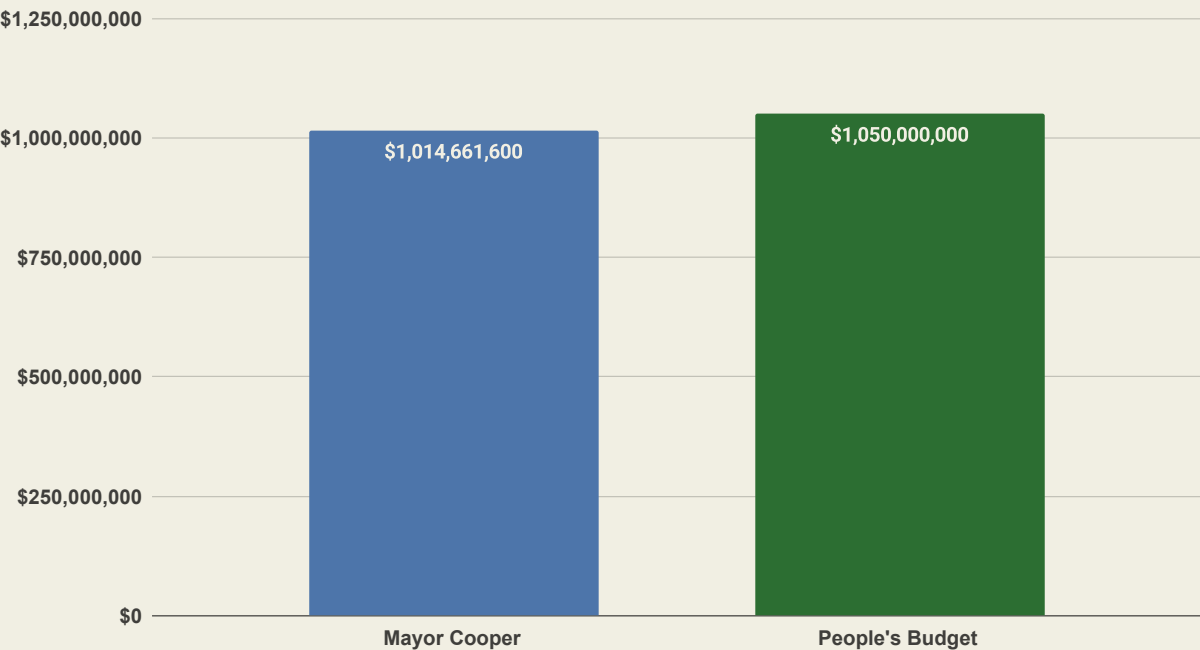
to education should be increased from the current **37%** to

between **41–45%**. That is an

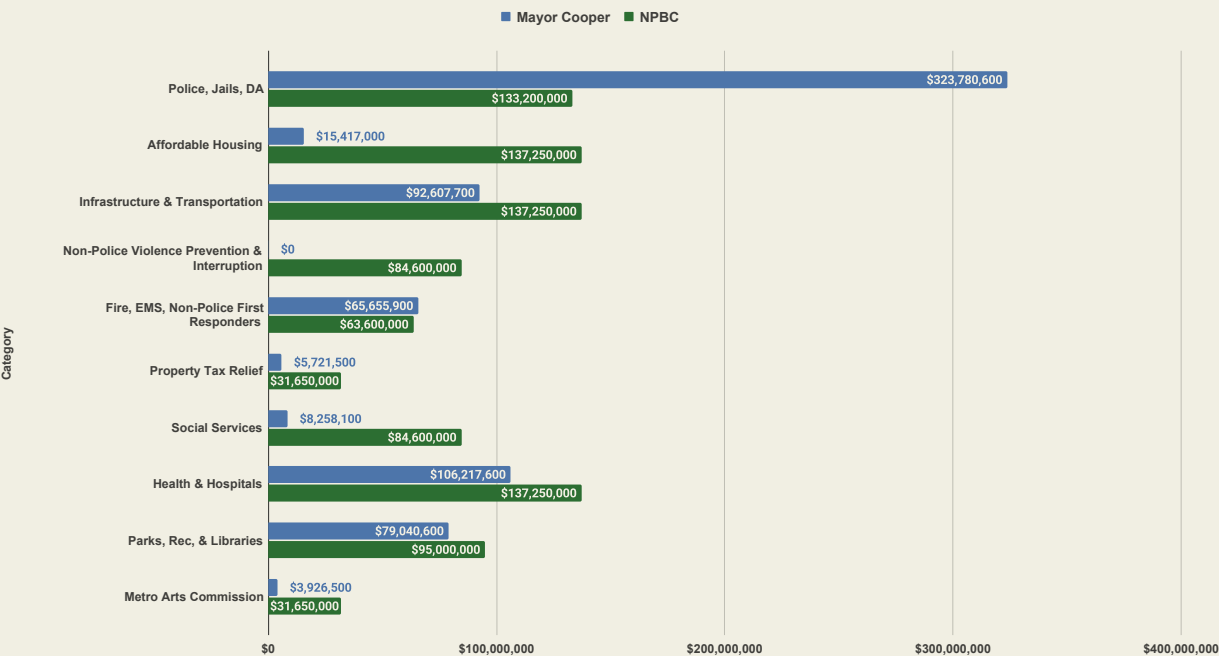
increase of between **\$80–180 million**.

How a People's Budget Compares to the Mayor's Proposed Budget

Education - Mayor Cooper vs. NPBC | FY22



Budget Proposals | Mayor Cooper vs. NPBC | FY22





How We Arrived At These Demands

Metro Nashville's budgeting process deliberately excludes residents from the process of determining how their tax dollars will be spent. In order to help reverse this trend, and in the spirit of participatory budgeting, the Nashville People's Budget Coalition held a series of monthly People's Movement Assemblies from January through April 2021 to determine budget priorities among predominantly working class residents.

In addition to People's Movement Assemblies, for the second year in a row, we launched an online "People's Budget Survey" to obtain thorough input on how Davidson County residents believe the city should allocate funds. The survey was available for a total of 38 days between April 24 and June 5. Hundreds of residents and organizations distributed the survey through door-to-door canvassing, emails, texting, and social media.

A total of 2,722 Davidson County residents living in nearly every zip code completed the 20-question survey. Questions invited respondents to rank city services based on importance, and to select what percentage and amount of the General Fund should be allocated to the following departments, services, and resources.

Each question listed the current percentage and amount allocated for each:

- Metro Nashville Police Department
- Davidson County Sheriff's Office
- District Attorney
- Affordable Housing
- Infrastructure & Transportation
- Non-Police Violence Prevention & Interruption
- Fire, EMS, & Additional Non-Police First Responders (e.g. mental health first responders)
- Property Tax Relief
- Social Services
- Health & Hospitals
- Parks, Recreation, & Libraries
- Metro Arts Commission
- Education

This list leaves out a number of departments, services, and portions of the city's operating budget. The items left out tend to require more education and explanation, and so were not a good fit for an online survey.

The survey specifically did not require respondents to answer in such a way that responses to line-item-based questions added to 100%. We did not require this, first, because the survey does not include all possible expenditures, but only a sampling, making a well-rounded total unfeasible for this particular survey. Secondly, we did not require responses to add up "correctly" because the

purpose of the survey was to gauge residents' feelings and wishes about how their taxpayer dollars should be spent. Even if some respondents' answers do not add up in a way that would work for a fiscal budget, their answers still signify something we all need to hear about how residents from a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives believe the city should spend our money.

We also asked respondents to select which of the above city services "makes your community safe," as well as a question regarding whether the city should allocate \$6.8 million to keep police in schools or to support Metro students directly.

Eighty-seven percent of respondents also answered seven optional demographic-based questions, which included:

- City Council District
- Race/Ethnicity
- Current Housing Status
- Current Employment Status
- Age
- Gender
- Sexuality

We used the online survey platform Typeform to conduct the survey. The survey took an average of 9 minutes to complete. We accepted submissions only from Davidson County residents, and deleted duplicate submissions from the same IP address.

From Survey to Demands

We named our coalition the Nashville People's Budget Coalition because we believe that the people of Nashville – everyday residents from a range of identities and backgrounds – deserve a more prominent role in shaping how the city spends our collective money. For weeks, people have asked us “what are you proposing?” We did not know what we were proposing until the people told us. The nearly 3,000 survey respondents have helped us do just that.

In order to best represent the full spectrum of responses, we have opted to hone in on the median range for every budget-specific question.

It appears the police tried to hijack our survey

Before we ever went public with our survey online, we passed out fliers with a link to the survey during the 24 Hour Display of Power on April 24, hosted by community organizations to address both the violence within our neighborhoods and the violence perpetrated by police upon our people. Within a few hours of those events, several hundred mostly anonymous respondents completed the survey within a short period of time, with answers heavily skewed toward the police and sheriff,

voting to keep their funding the same, and to reject all possible increases for public goods. The few respondents who included their name were easily identifiable through simple searches as employees of the Metro Nashville Police Department. All signs point to a coordinated campaign to influence survey results by law enforcement who knew about our survey before we ever posted about it online.



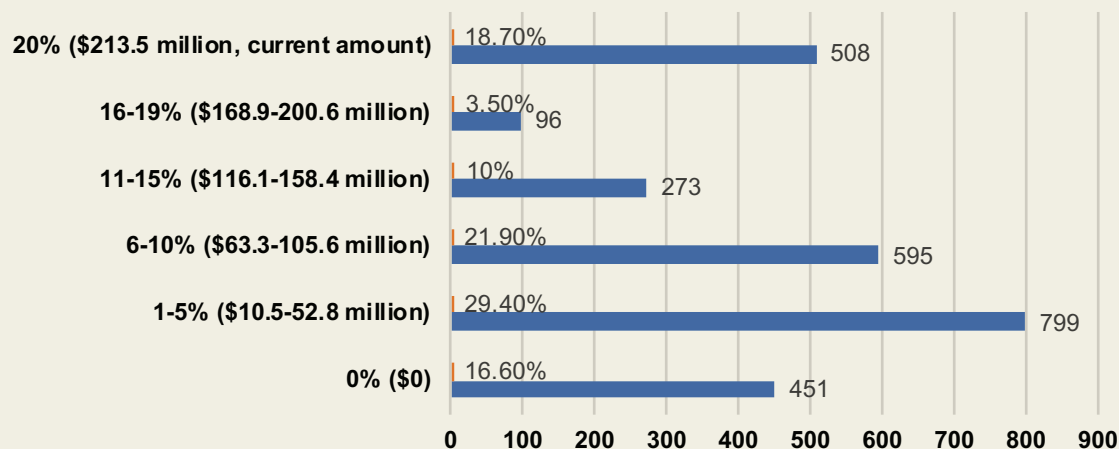
2021 Nashville People's Budget

Full Survey Results

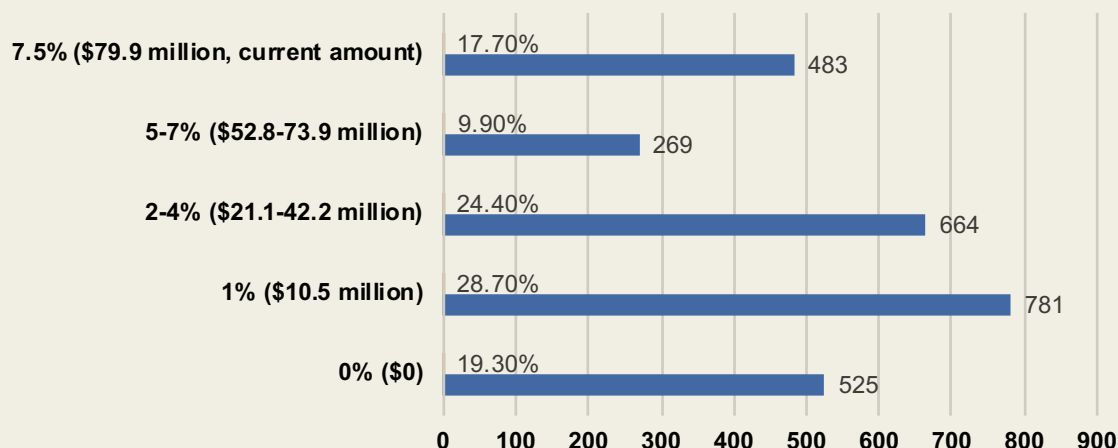
Budget Questions

Here is the full breakdown of our 2021 Nashville People's Budget Survey.

What percentage of the General Fund should the city give to the Metro Nashville Police Department (MNPd)? (2722 responses)

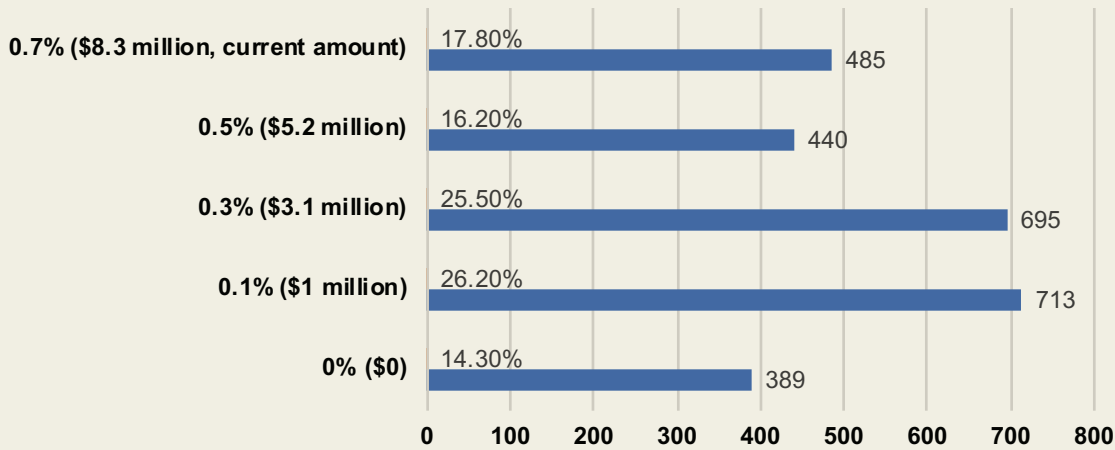


What percentage of the General Fund should the city give to the Davidson County Sheriff's Office (DCSO), which operates the city's jails? (2722 responses)



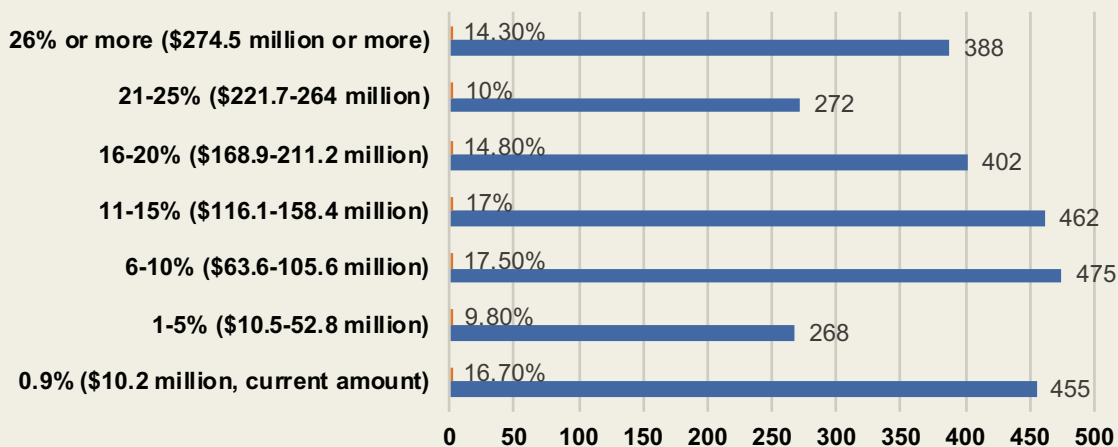
What percentage of the General Fund should the city give to the District Attorney (DA), which prosecutes criminal cases?

(2722 responses)



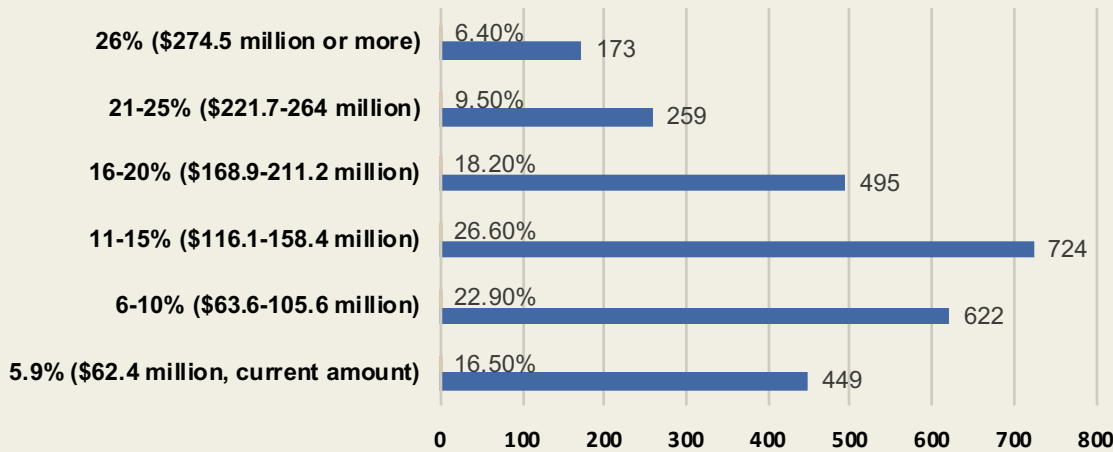
What percentage of the General Fund should the city give to AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

(2722 responses)



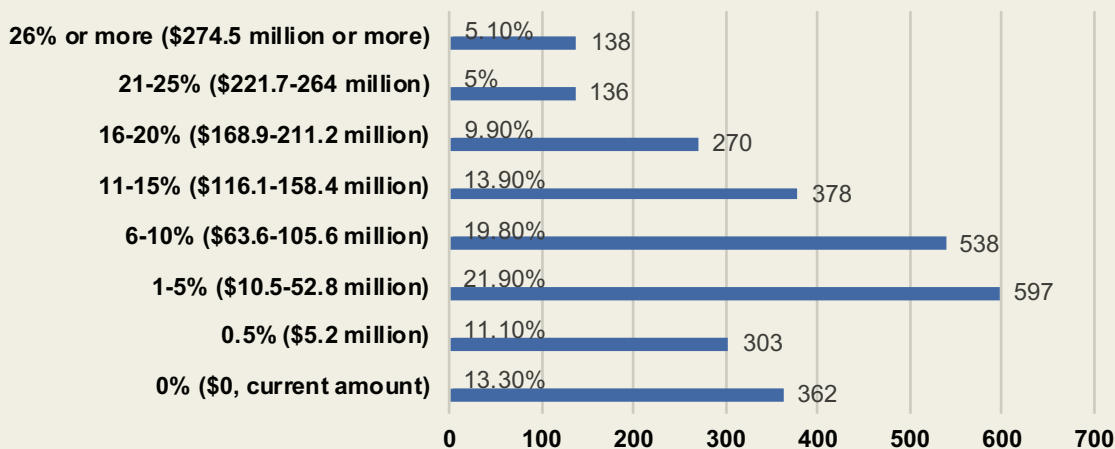
What percentage of the General Fund should the city give to INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORTATION?

(2722 responses)

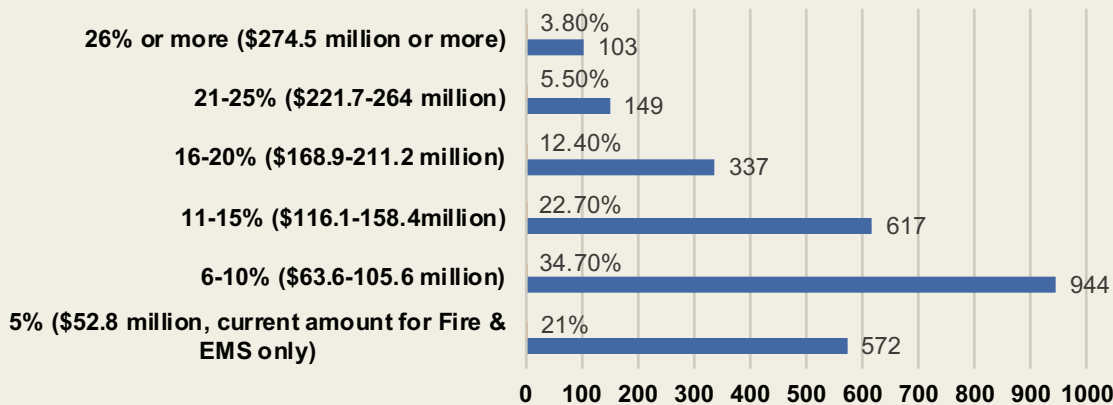


What percentage of the General Fund should the city give to NON-POLICE VIOLENCE PREVENTION & INTERRUPTION?

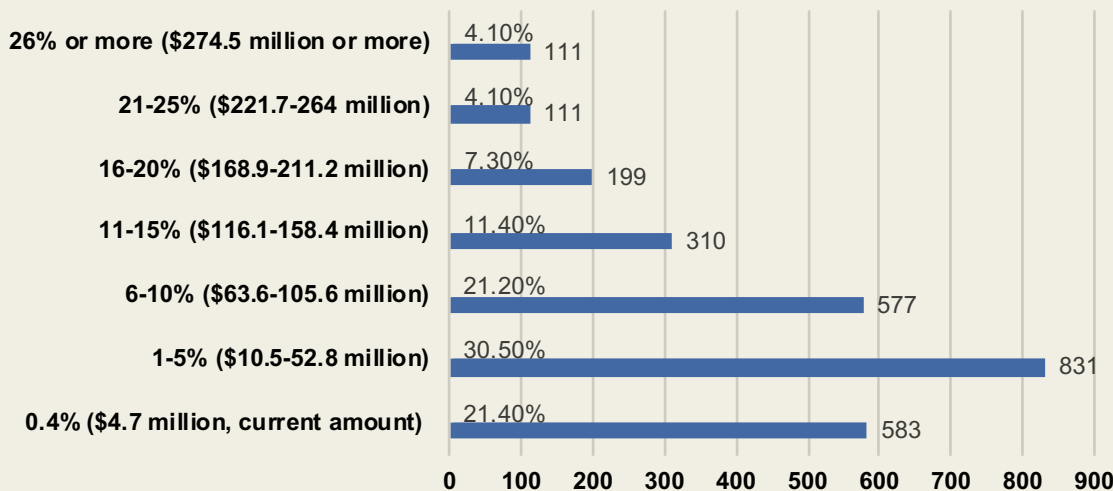
(2722 responses)



What percentage of the General Fund should the city give to Fire, EMS, & additional NON-POLICE FIRST RESPONDERS (e.g. mental health first responders)?
(2722 responses)

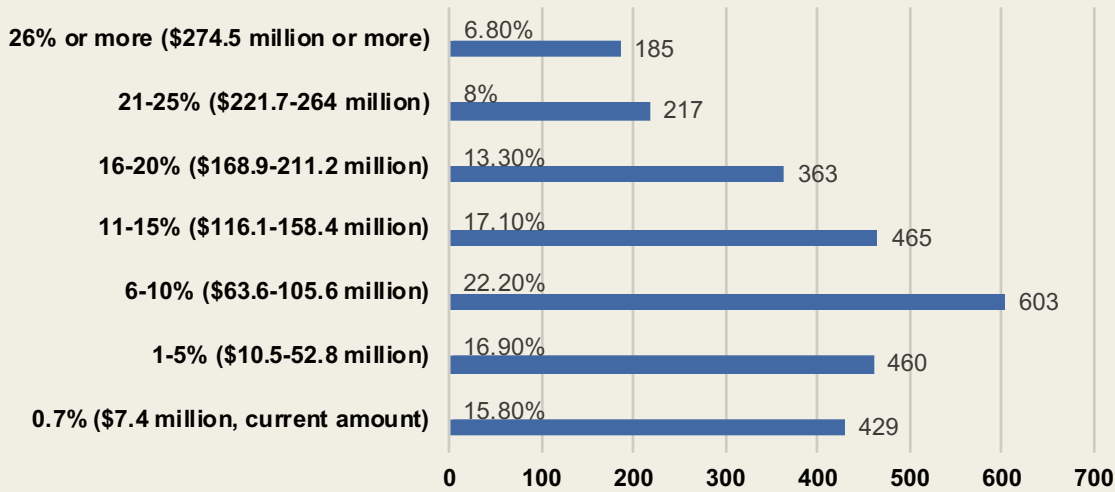


What percentage of the General Fund should the city give to PROPERTY TAX RELIEF?
(2722 responses)



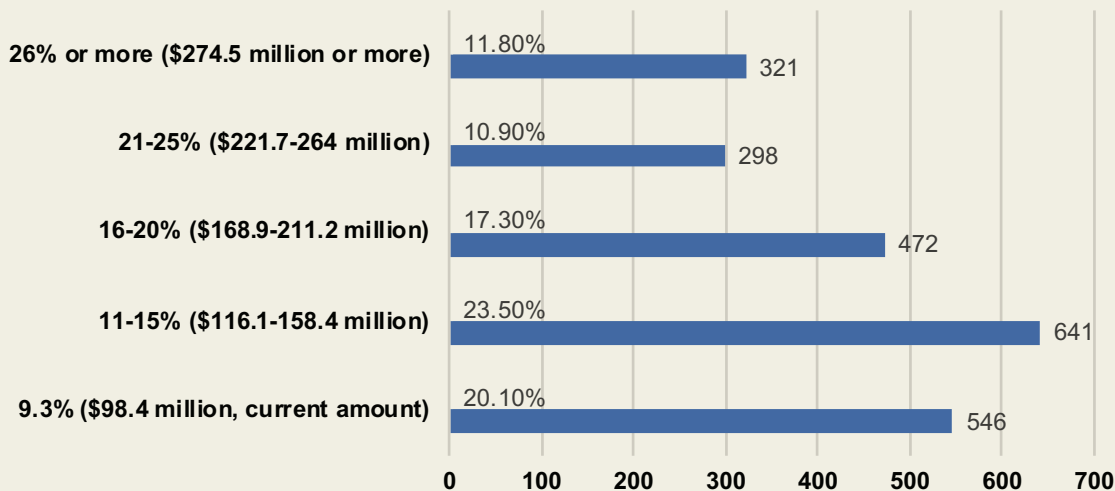
What percentage of the General Fund should the city give to SOCIAL SERVICES?

(2722 responses)



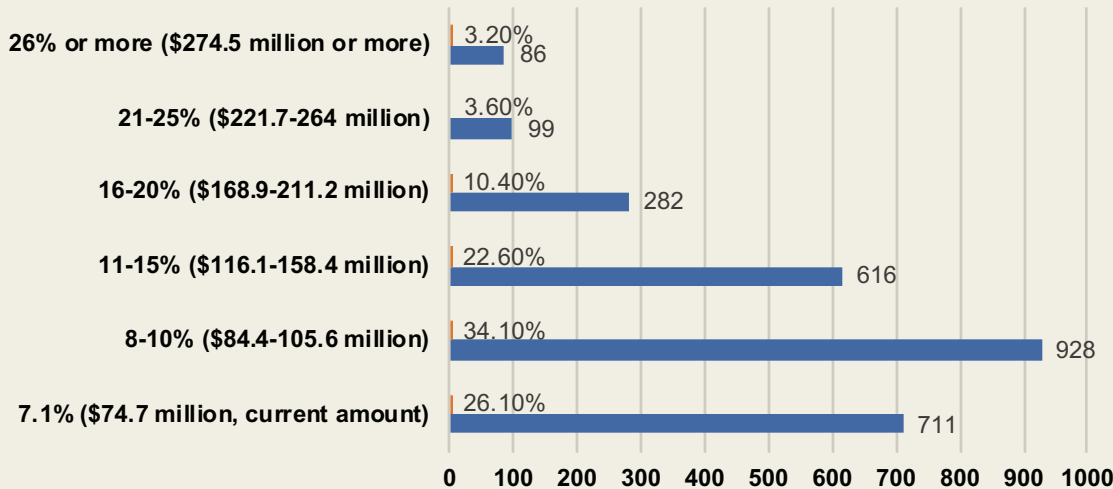
What percentage of the General Fund should the city give to HEALTH & HOSPITALS?

(2722 responses)



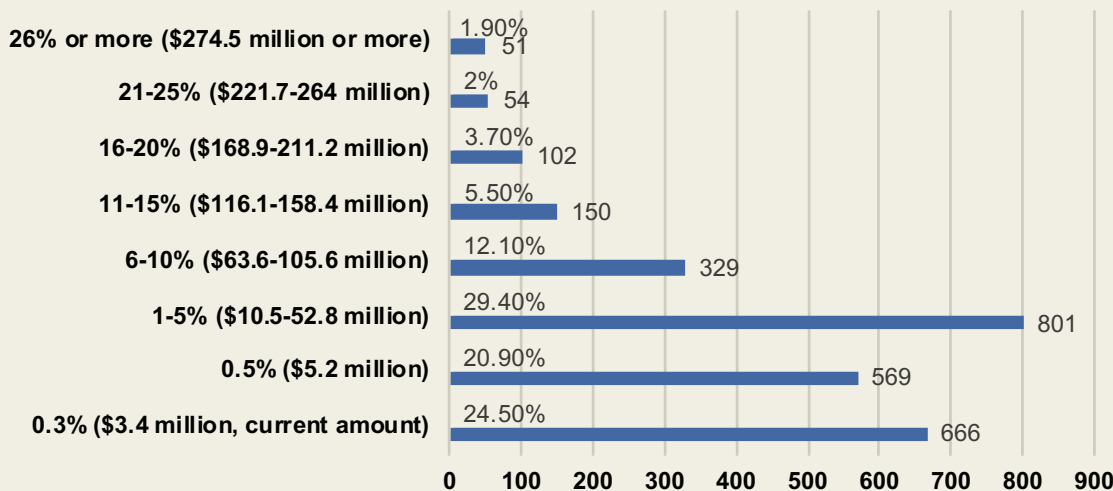
What percentage of the General Fund should the city give to PARKS, RECREATION, & LIBRARIES?

(2722 responses)

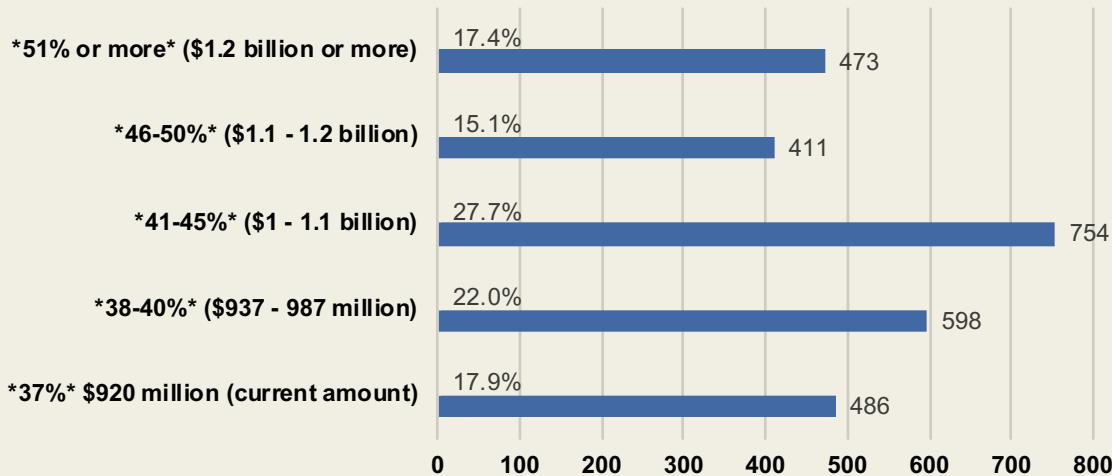


What percentage of the General Fund should the city give to the METRO ARTS COMMISSION?

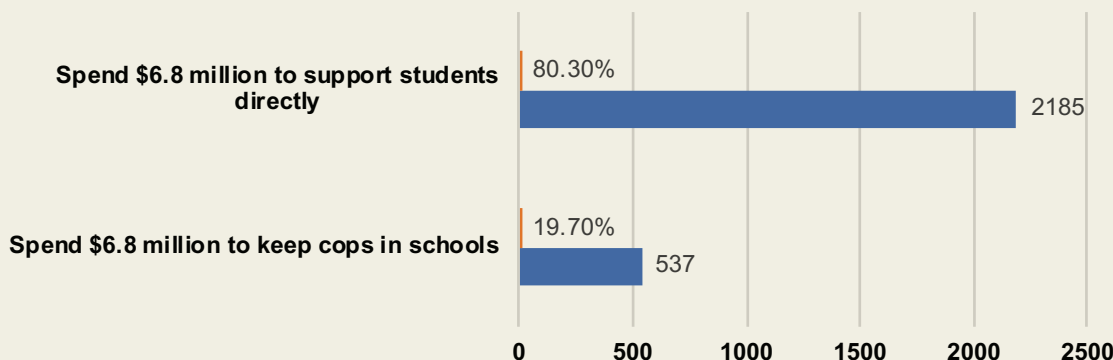
(2722 responses)



**What percentage of the total operating budget
should the city give to EDUCATION?
(2,722 respondents)**

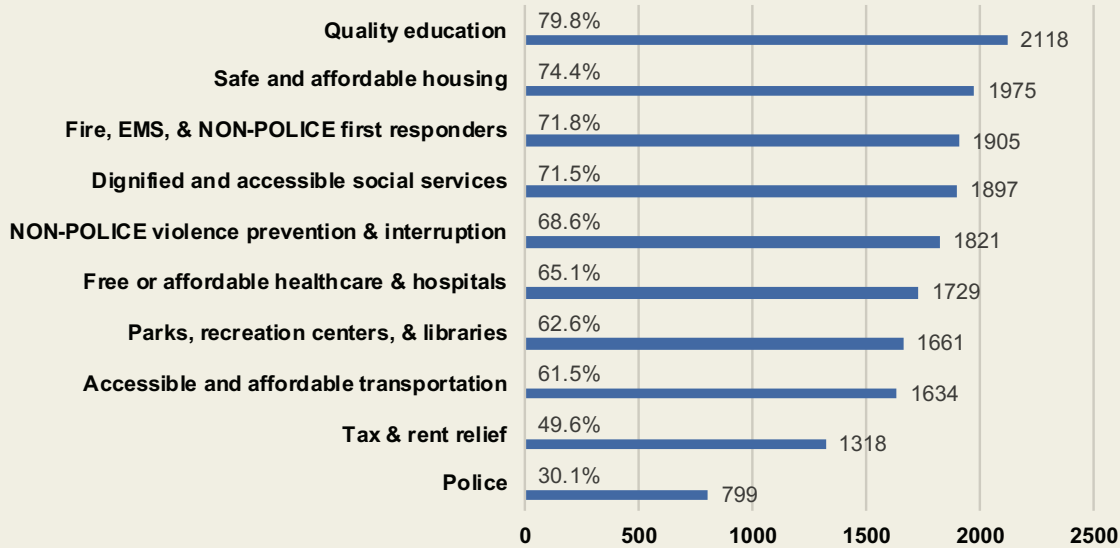


**Would you rather spend \$6.8 million on cops in
schools, or on direct support for students (e.g.,
counselors, infrastructure, school supplies, non-
punitive forms of accountability, and other forms
of student support)?
(2,722 respondents)**



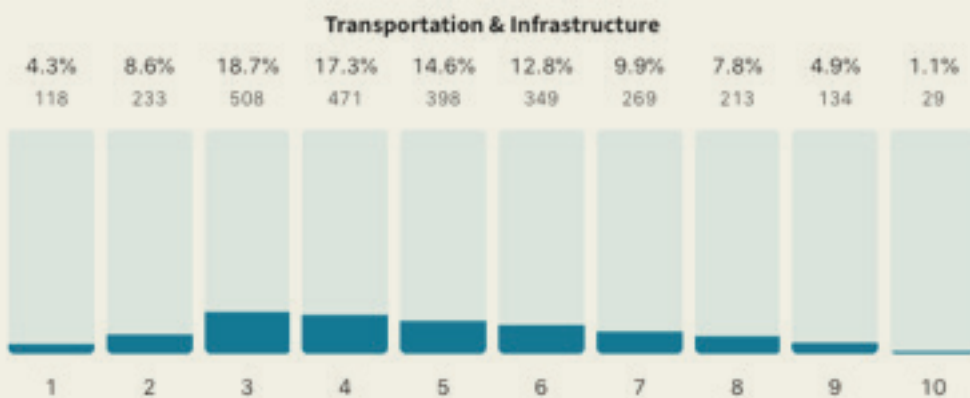
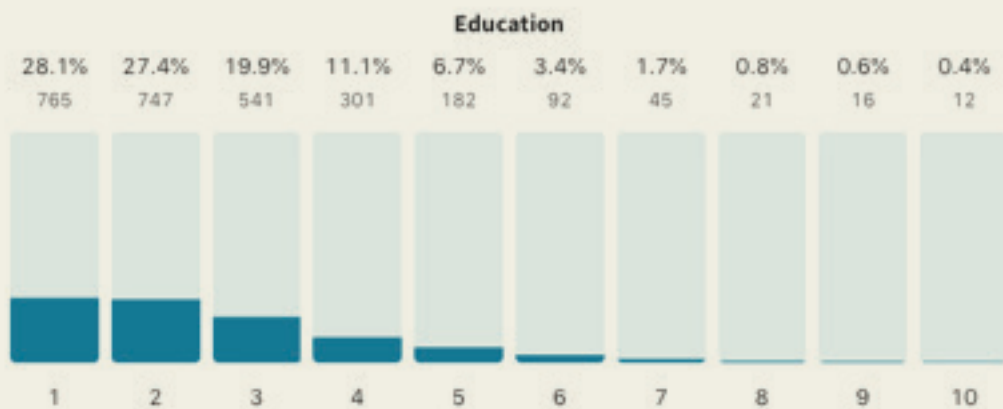
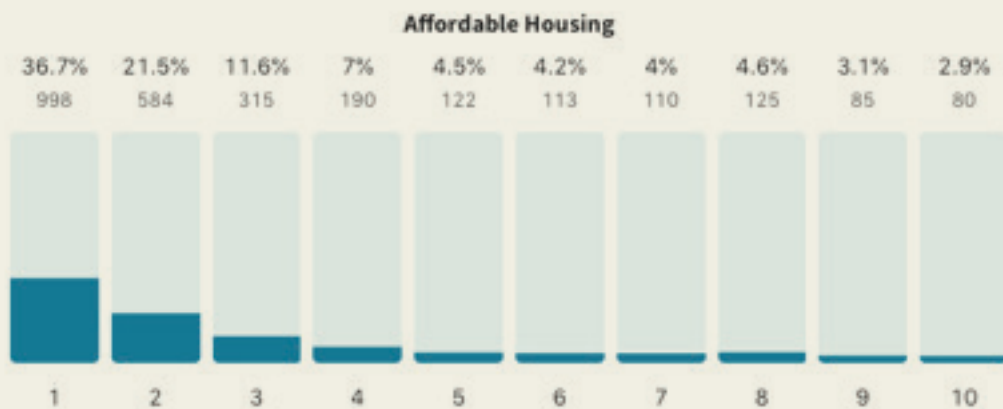
What makes your community safe?

(2,655 respondents)

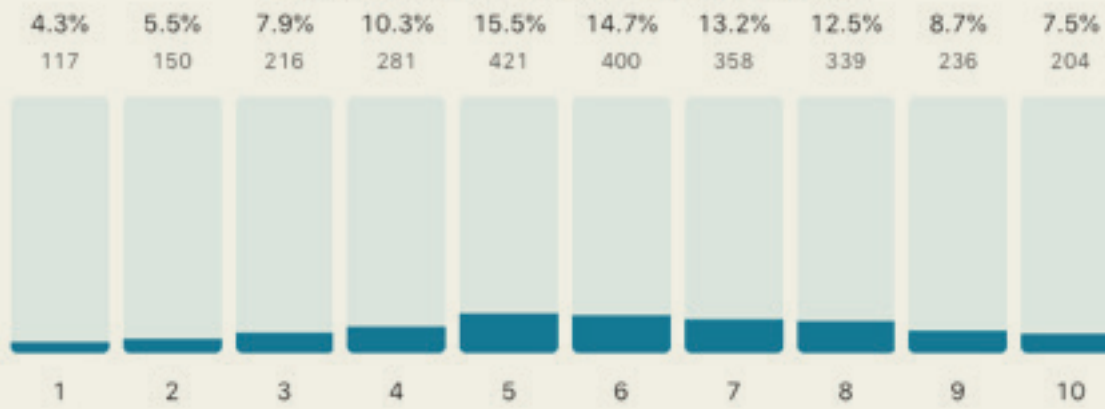


Rank the following existing and potential city services based on importance from 1 to 10 (1 = most important / 10 = least important)

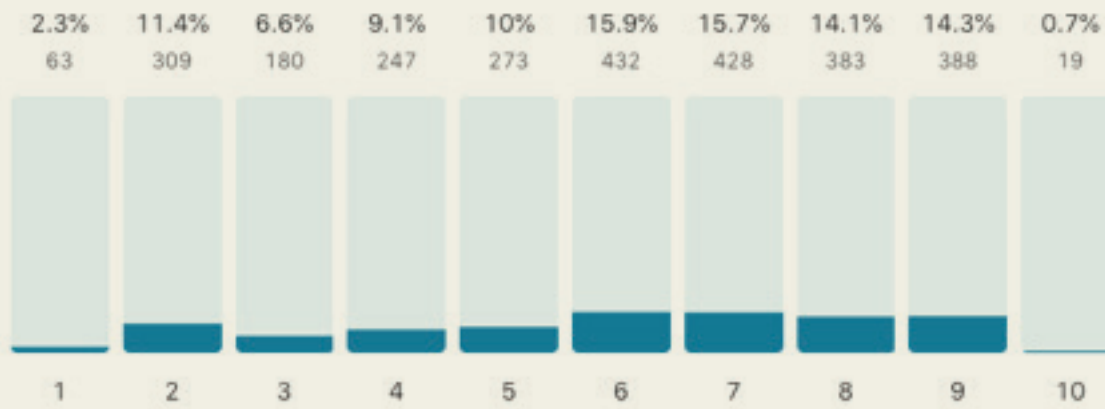
2722 out of 3246 answered



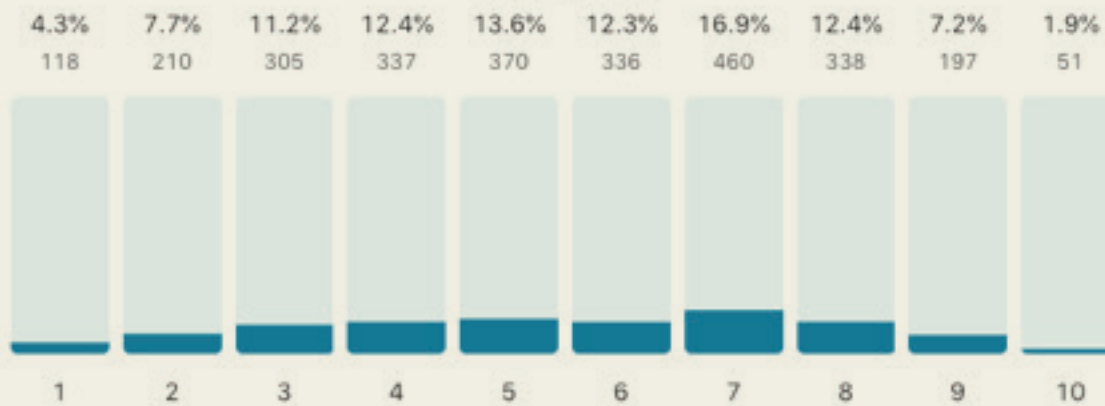
NON-POLICE Violence Prevention & Interruption



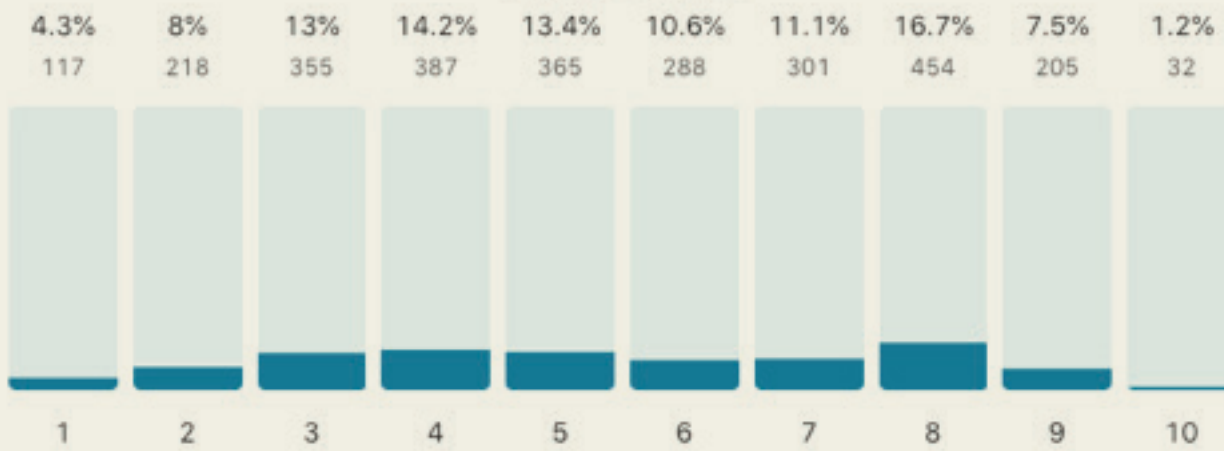
Fire, EMS, & NON-POLICE First Responders



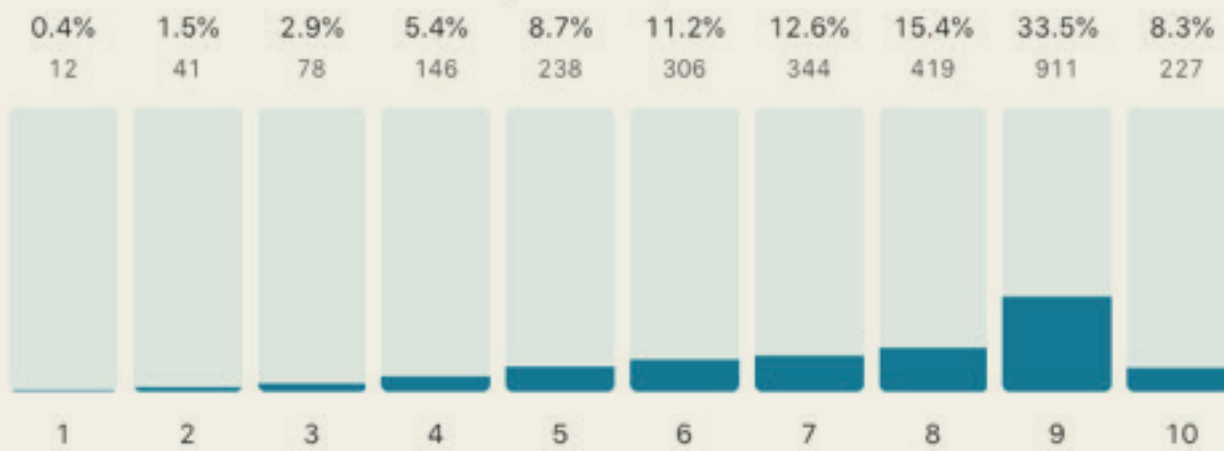
Social Services



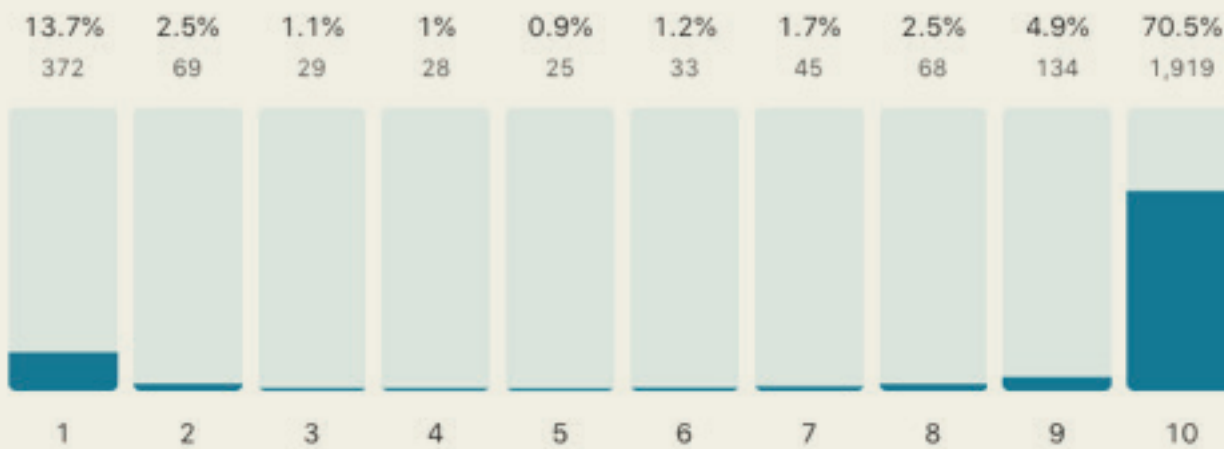
Health & Hospitals



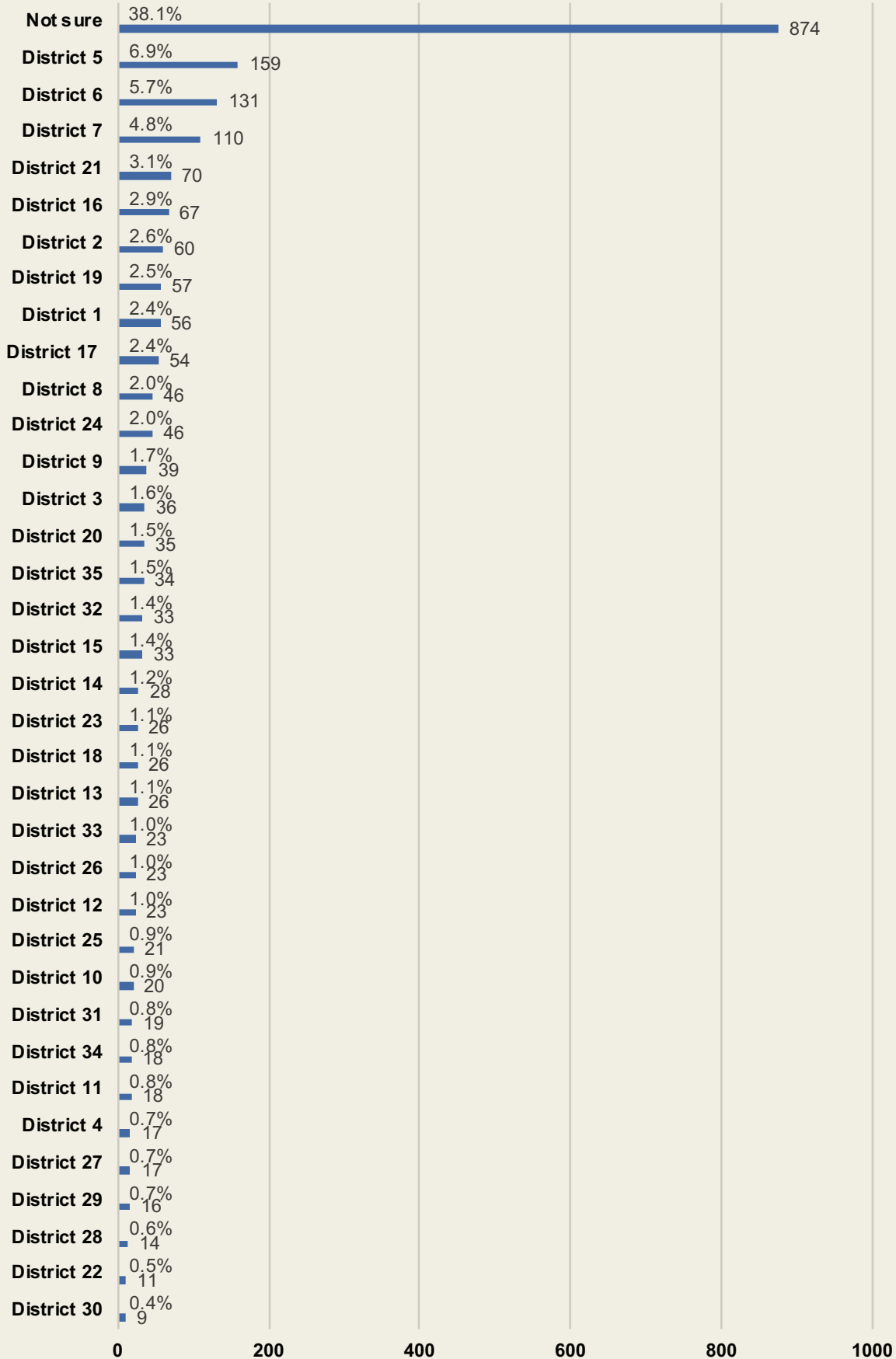
Parks, Recreation, & Libraries



Police

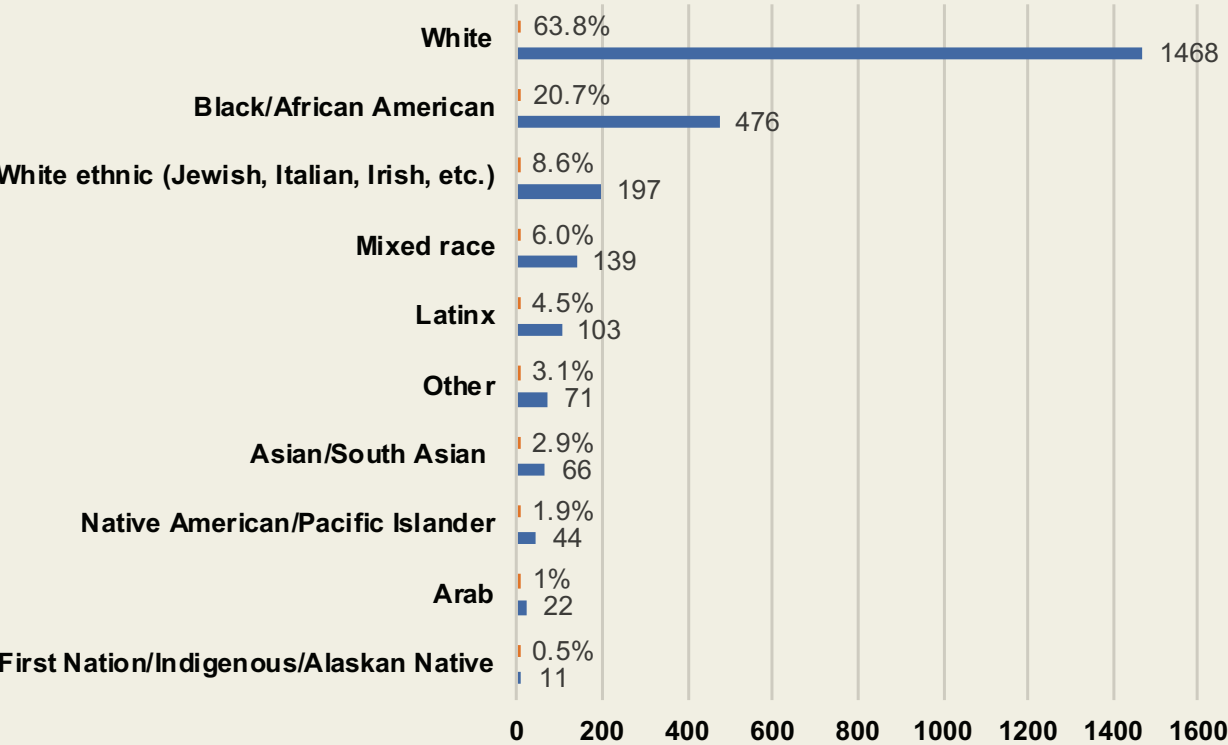


City Council District (2,295 respondents)

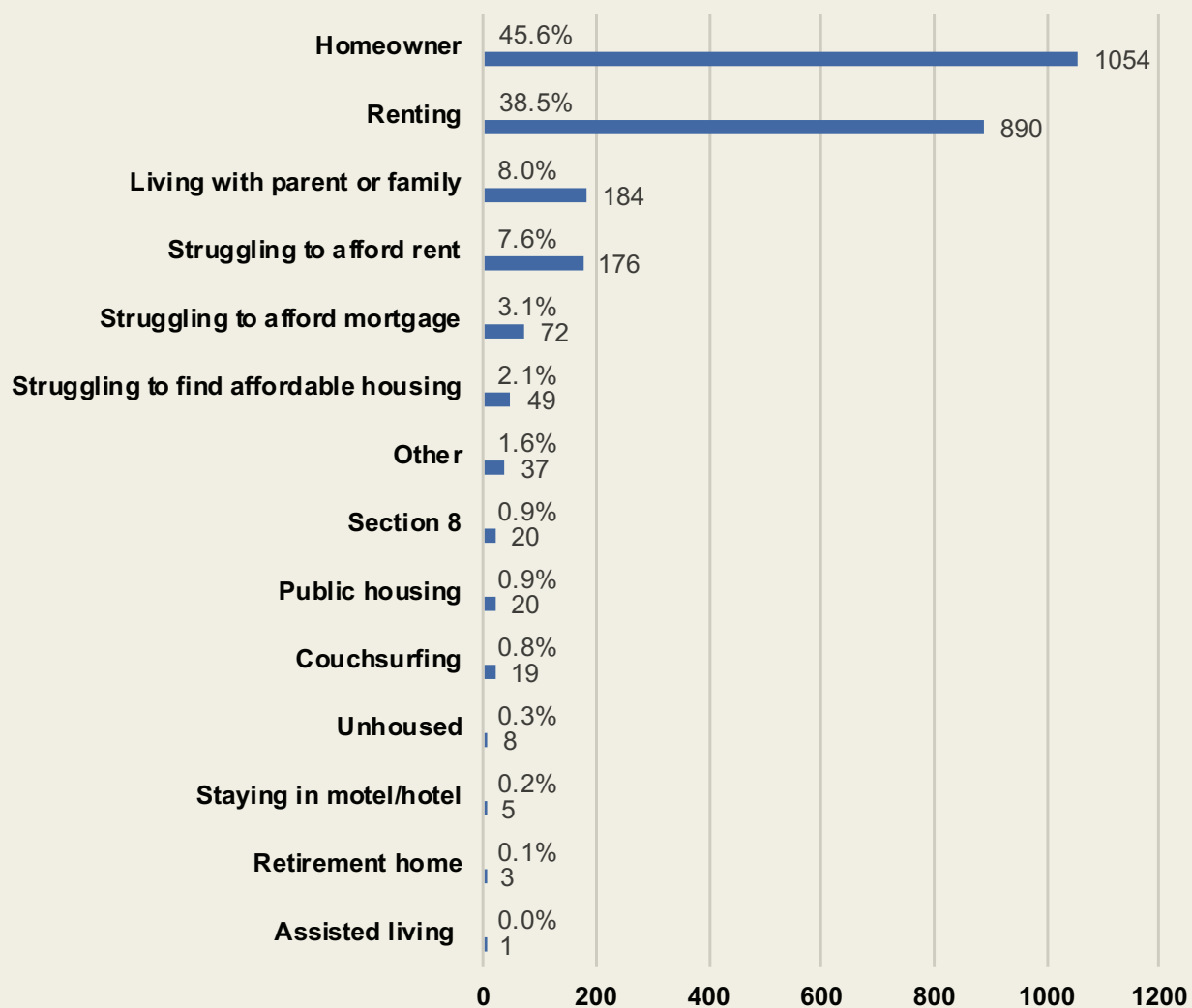


Survey Demographics

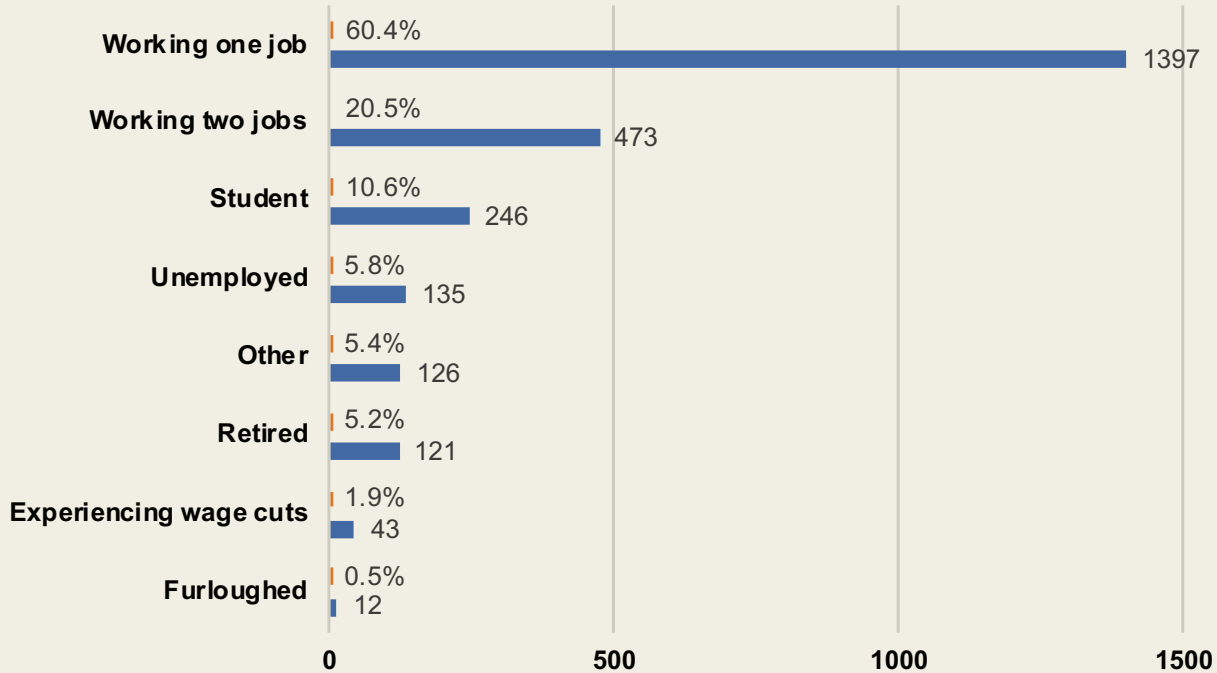
Race / Ethnicity
(2302 respondents)



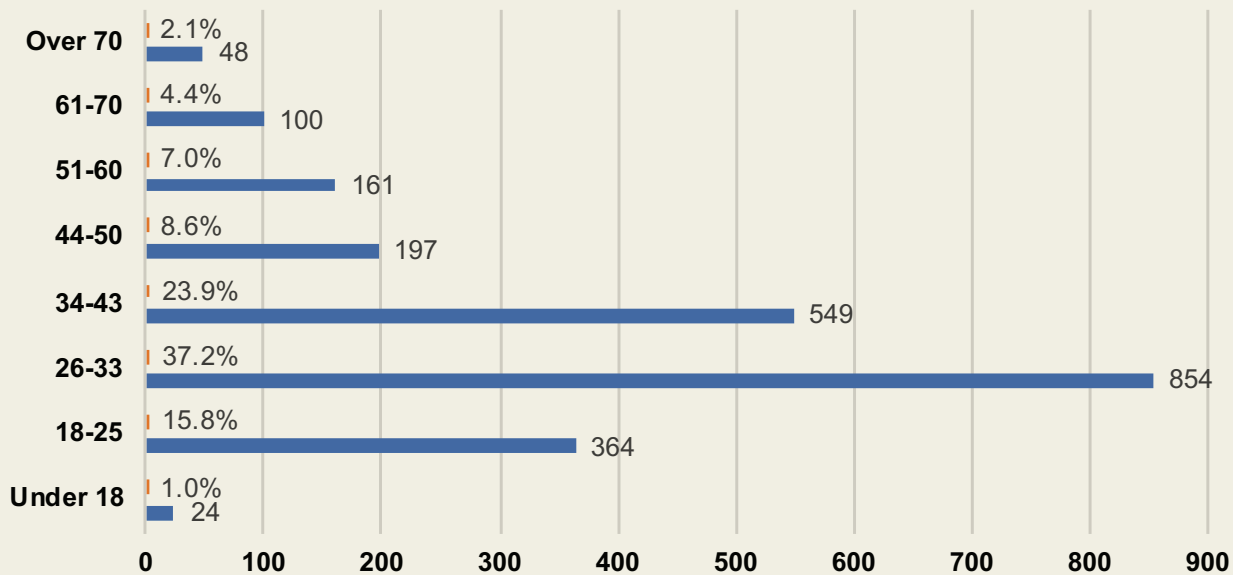
Housing Status (2309 respondents)



Current Employment Status (2,312 responses)

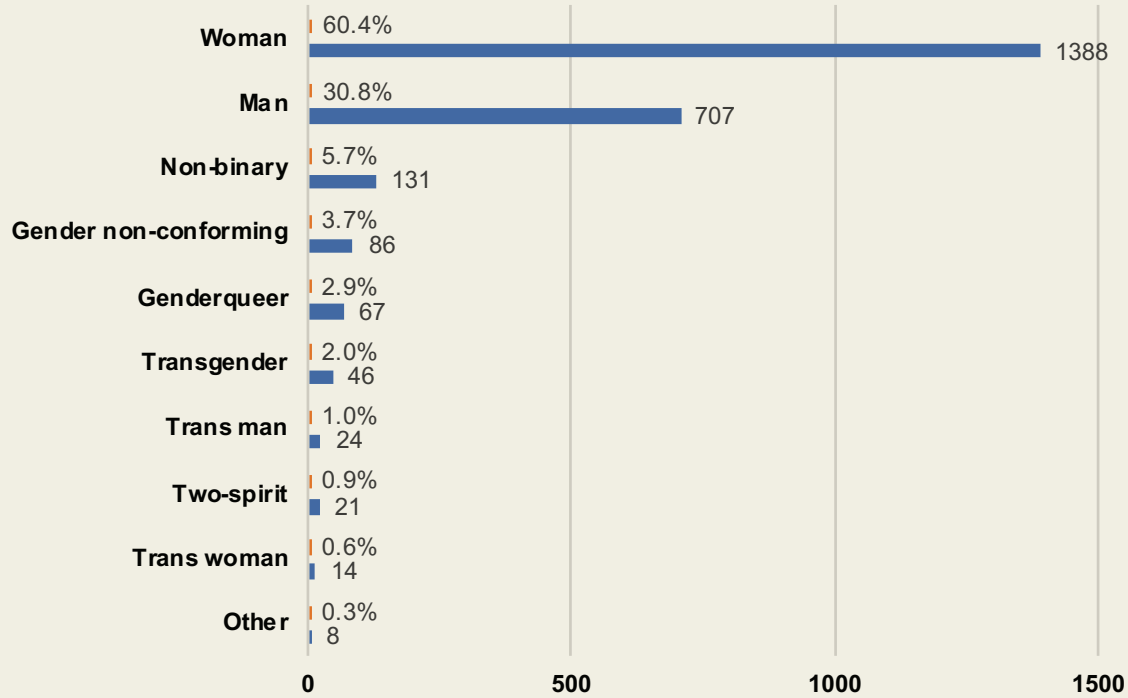


Age (2,297 responses)



Gender

(2,997 responses)



Sexuality

(2,283 responses)

