

Food Waste Issues Among Alameda County Residents

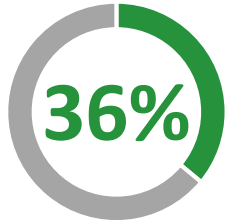
Key Findings of a Survey Conducted
September 15-24, 2018

Methodology

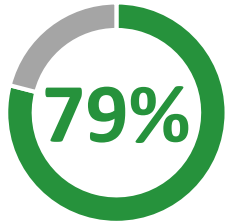
- ✓ 519 interviews with adult Alameda County residents
- ✓ Interviews conducted September 15-24, 2018
- ✓ Interviews online, on landlines and cell phones (offered in Spanish and Chinese for phone interviews)
- ✓ Sample was compiled from a random selection of residential addresses, matched to public and commercial databases for contact information
- ✓ Census data was used to set demographic quotas
- ✓ Margin of sampling error of $\pm 4.3\%$ at the 95% confidence interval
- ✓ Some percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding
- ✓ Select comparisons to past surveys of Alameda County parents (2016) and of residents with green curbside bins (2015)



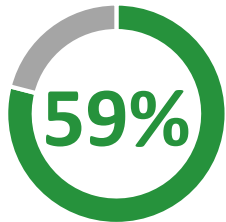
Key Numbers



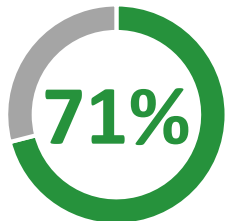
Believe food-soiled paper products should be disposed of in their green bins.



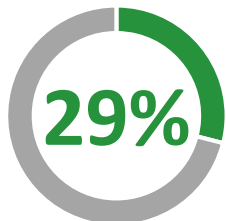
Feel less guilty about throwing out uneaten food knowing it will be eventually composted



Are modestly-to-not-concerned about the amount of food that is thrown out uneaten or wasted at home



Claim they are “extremely” or “very likely” to take steps to prevent food from going to waste at home

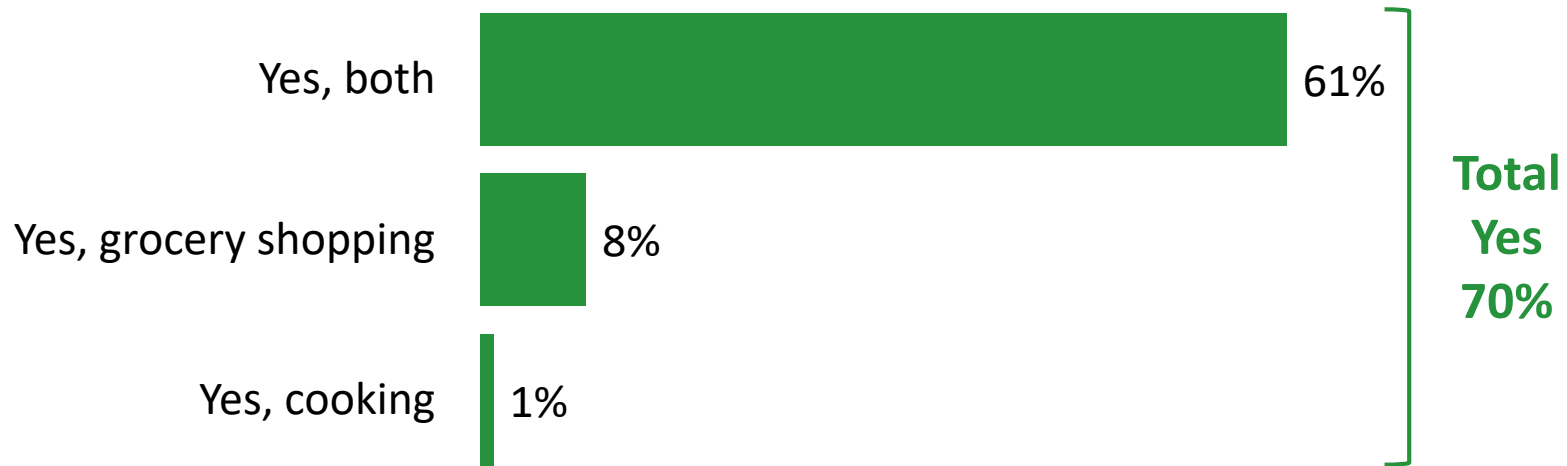


Have heard anything about a campaign urging Alameda County residents to waste less food

Current Food Purchasing and Waste Practices

Three in five respondents said they are responsible for both grocery shopping and cooking in their households.

Are you the person primarily responsible for purchasing and preparing food in your household?

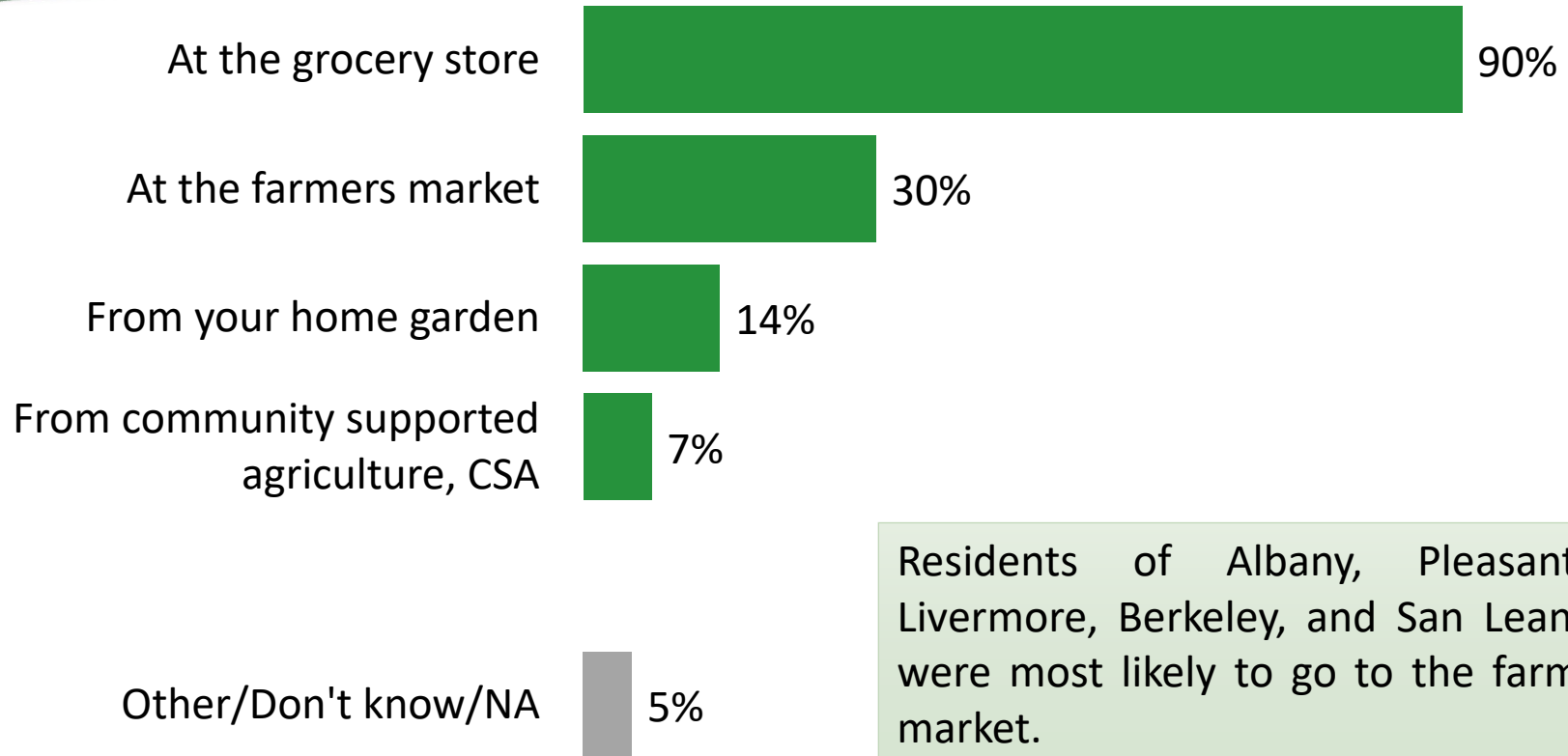


72% of women are responsible for both, compared to 50% of men

Nine in ten get their produce at the grocery store; few have home gardens.



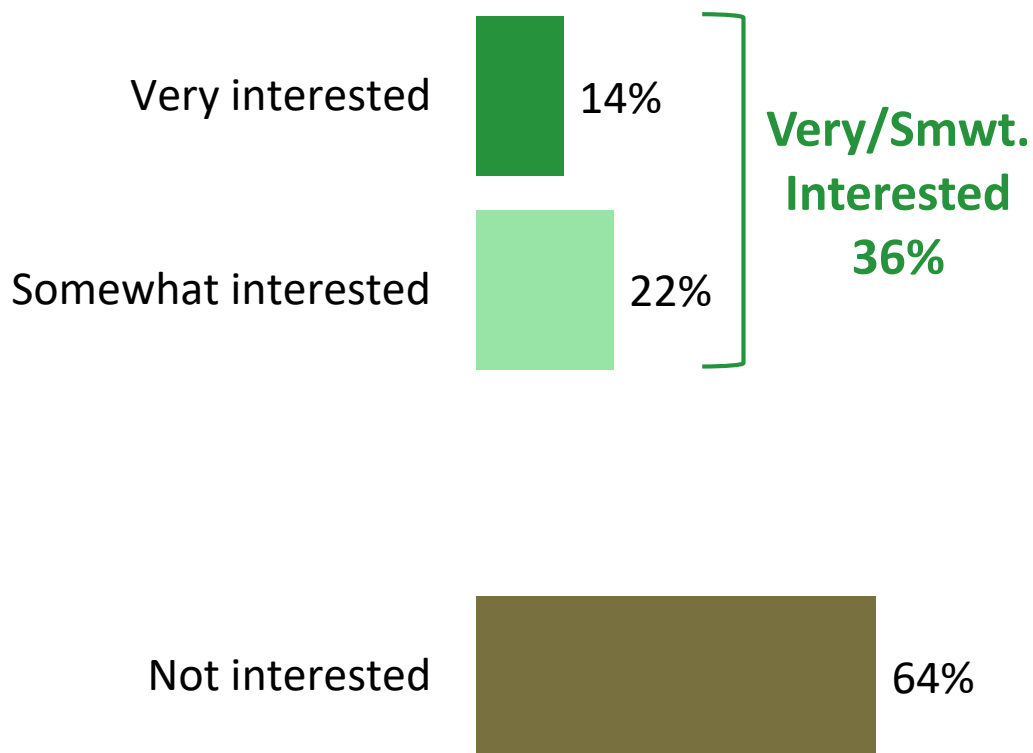
Where do you get your produce, such as fruits and vegetables?



Residents of Albany, Pleasanton, Livermore, Berkeley, and San Leandro were most likely to go to the farmers market.

Only about one-third are interested in a home garden.

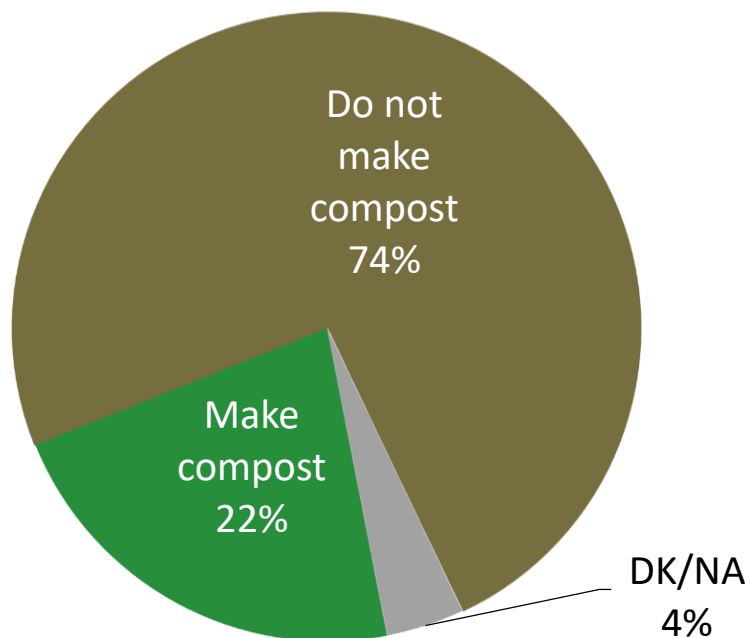
*Would you be interested in learning more about starting a home garden to grow fresh herbs, fruit or vegetables?
(Asked of Those Who Do Not Currently Have a Home Garden)*



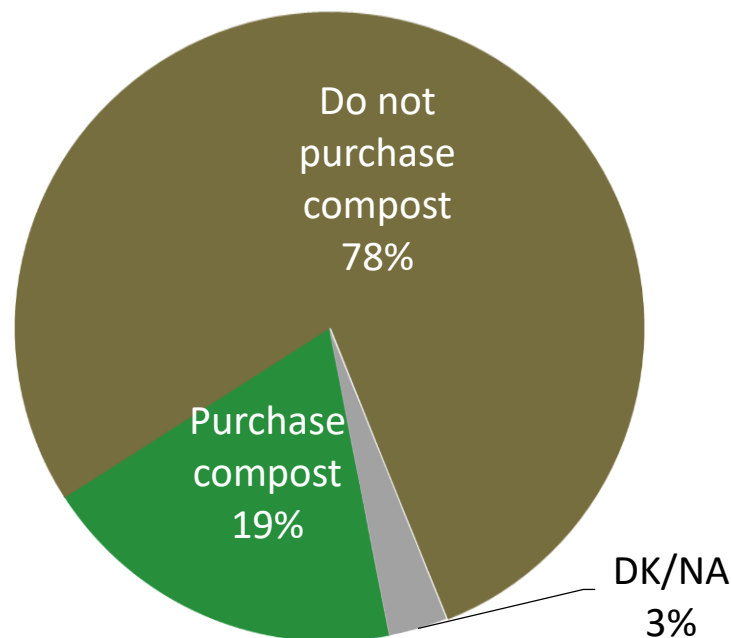
Demographic Group	Very/Smwt. Interested	% of Sample
All Residents	36%	100%
HH Income \$75,000-\$100,000	54%	11%
Four-year College Graduates	47%	25%
Ages 50-64	45%	21%
African-Americans	45%	13%
Four-year College or More	44%	43%
Women Ages 50+	43%	18%
Oakland	41%	26%
Ages 30-39	41%	19%

One in five residents make compost and a similar number say they purchase compost.

First, do you make compost at home in an at-home compost bin, compost pile, or worm bin?

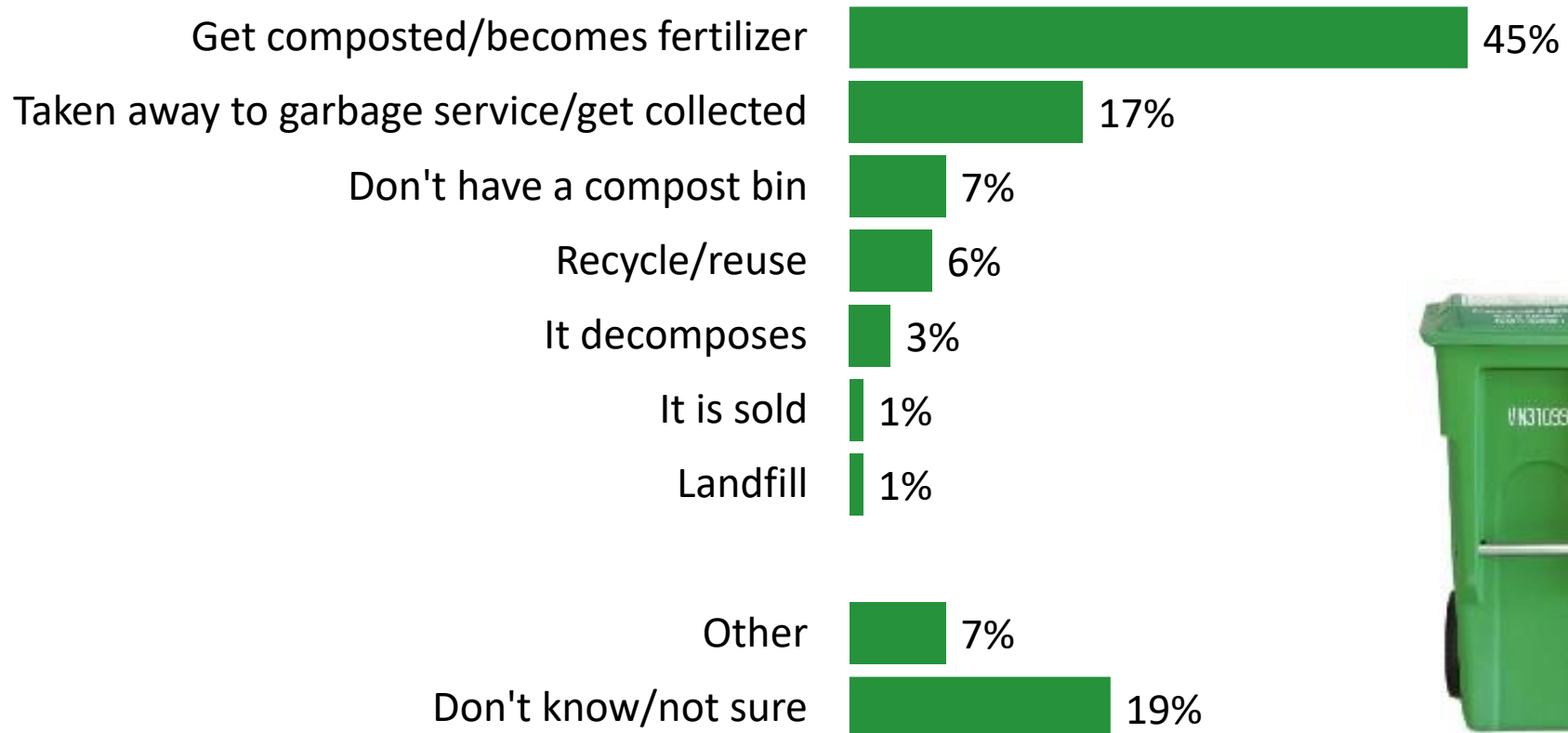


Next, do you ever purchase compost for use at home?



Nearly half of people have some familiarity with details of the composting process.

To the best of your knowledge, what happens to the food scraps you place in your green compost bin?



Food Disposal Practices

Food-soiled products and pizza boxes tend to cause the most confusion, when it comes to disposal.

Note: Confusion about food soiled products and pizza boxes cuts across demographic groups, but those with some awareness of the campaign had a slightly better understanding.

Items	Trash Bin	Recycling Bin	Yard/ Compost Bin
Food-soiled paper products, such as used paper coffee cups, and paper towels, plates or napkins	28%	27%	36%
Pizza boxes	11%	54%	29%
Uneaten food at the end of a meal	21%	3%	52%
Vegetable and fruit scraps from meal preparation	15%	3%	66%
Bones and meat scraps from meal preparation	35%	4%	45%
Spoiled food, such as wilted lettuce and old dairy products	20%	3%	62%
Food that is past its expires by, sell by, best buy date	24%	4%	48%
Plastic bottles	2%	93%	1%
Cereal boxes	4%	90%	3%
Junk mail	9%	87%	2%

Comparisons to 2015 Survey

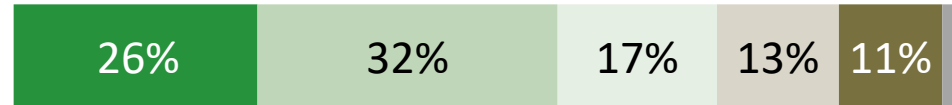
- Confusion about pizza boxes and food soiled paper products persist, with no statistical improvement in the number of people who are disposing of these items correctly.
- Residents' understanding of appropriate disposal improved for all other compost items.

When unsure of how to dispose of an item, residents are most likely to look on the package for information or just recycle it.

I am going to read a list of things you may do when you are uncertain of how to dispose of something. Please indicate if you are extremely likely, very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely to take this action when you don't know how to dispose of something.

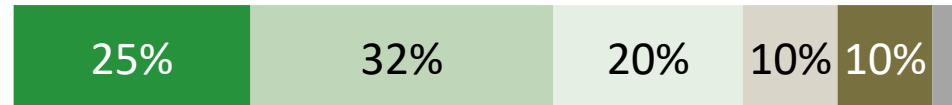
■ Ext. Lkly. ■ Very Lkly. ■ Smwt. Lkly. ■ Not Too Lkly. ■ Not at All Lkly. ■ DK/NA **Ext./Very Lkly.**

Look for information on how to dispose the item on the package



57%

Recycle it



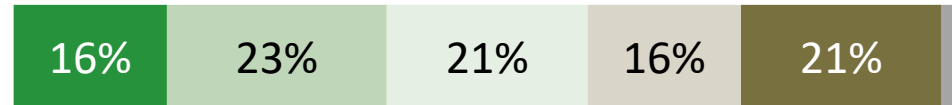
57%

Put it in the garbage



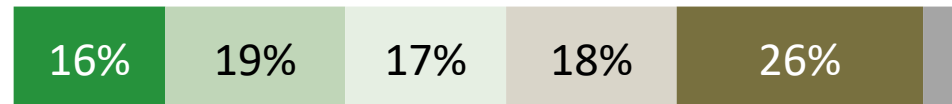
50%

Look for information on how to dispose the item online



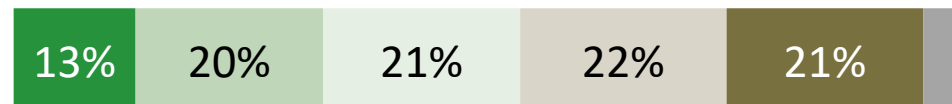
40%

Put it in the compost bin



35%

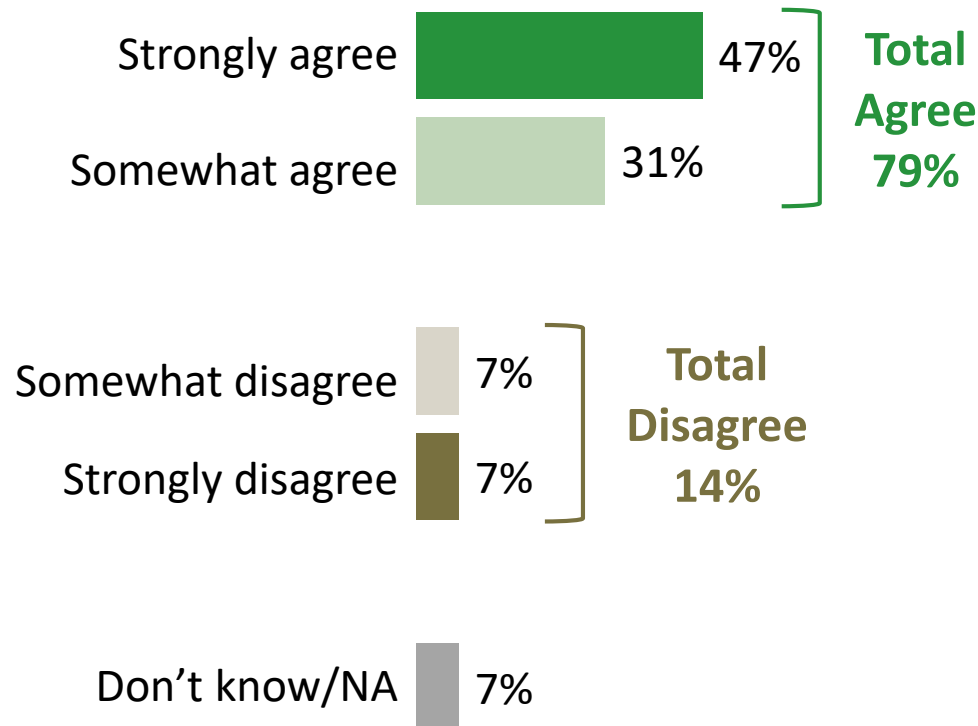
Ask someone else



33%

Nearly four in five agree that they feel less guilty throwing food out if it is composted.

Do you generally agree or disagree with the following statement: I feel less guilty about throwing out uneaten food if I know it will be eventually composted or if I will compost it myself at home.

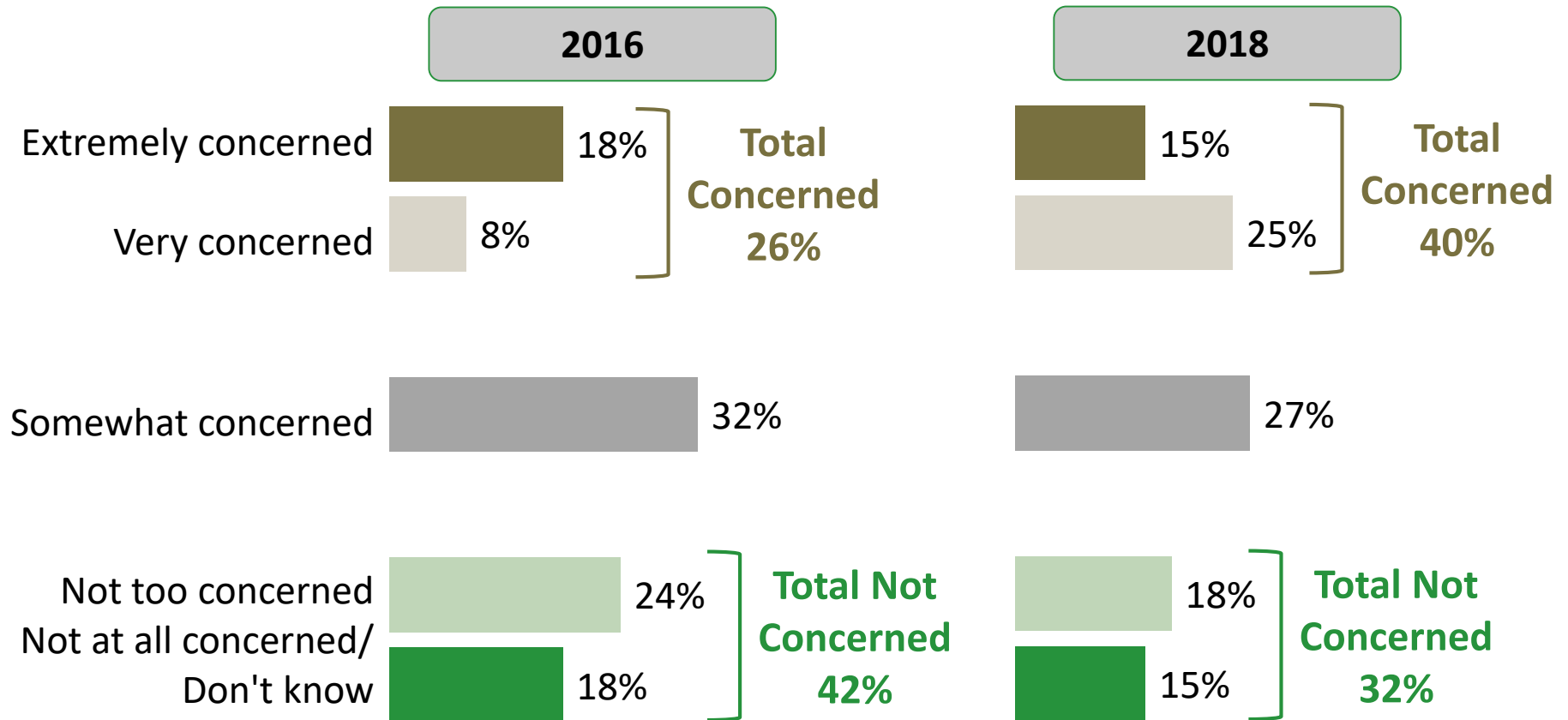


Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	% of Sample
All Residents	47%	100%
HH Income <\$50,000	57%	24%
Latinos	55%	19%
Asians/Pacific Islanders	54%	24%
North County	53%	49%
Ages 18-29	53%	20%
No Young Children at Home	52%	58%
Total Unemployed	52%	35%
Oakland	52%	26%

Attitudes Toward Food Waste

Two in five are concerned with the amount of food wasted in their homes.

How concerned are you about the amount of food that is thrown out uneaten, or wasted, in your home: extremely concerned, very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?



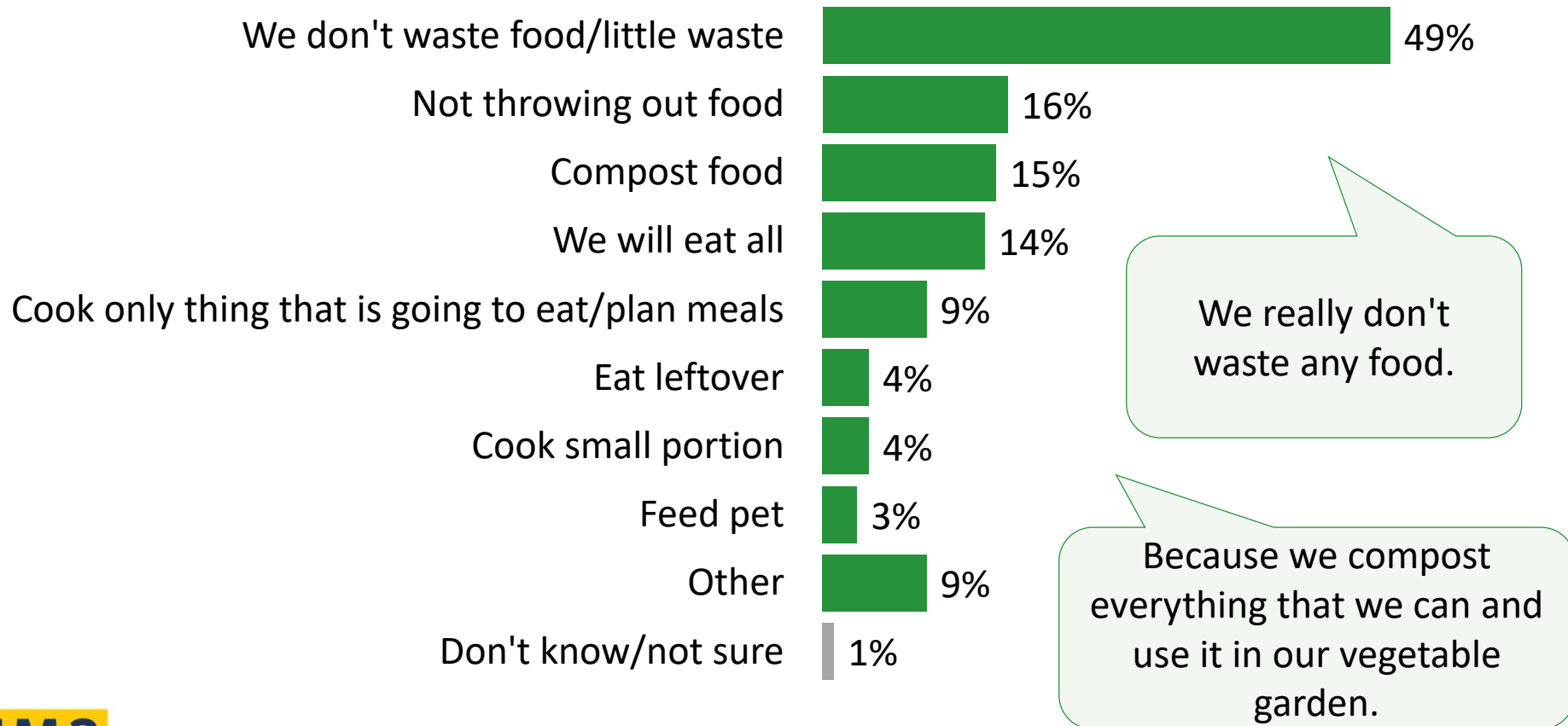
The 2016 sample included parents only, which could explain some of the difference in concern.

The demographic profiles of respondents by level of concern is...

Extremely/Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Total Not Concerned
40% of the Electorate	27% of the Electorate	33% of the Electorate
African-Americans	Fremont	Valley Region
Oakland	Ages 30-39	Post-Graduate Educated
HH Income \$50,000-\$75,000	South County	High School Educated
Women Ages 50+	Women Ages 18-49	Whites
HH Income <\$50,000	Moms	Men
Ages 65+	HH Income \$75,000-\$100,000	Asians/Pacific Islanders

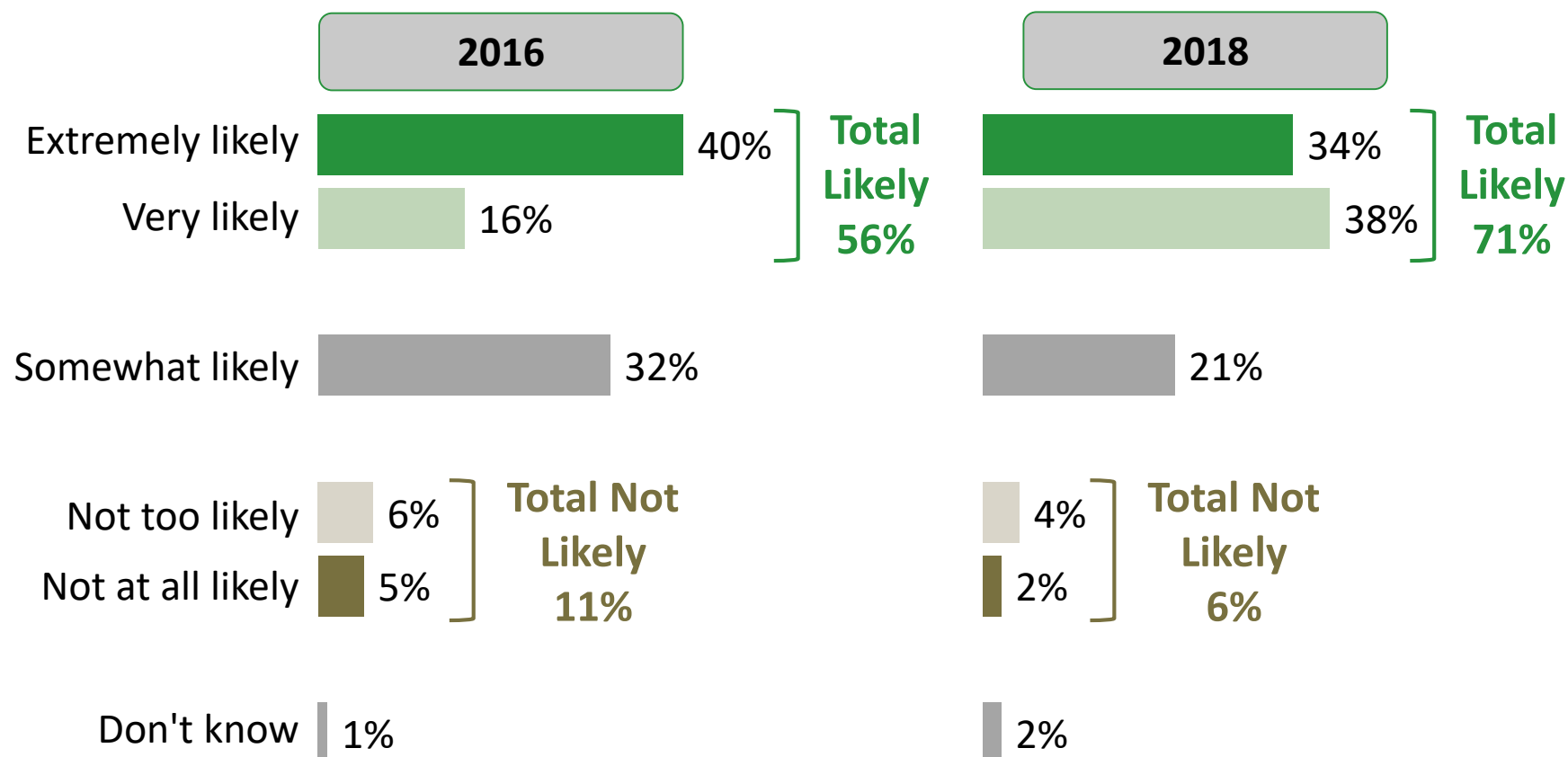
Those who are not concerned say they do not tend to waste food.

*Why are you **NOT TOO/NOT AT ALL** concerned about the amount of food that is thrown out uneaten, or wasted, in your home?
(Open-Ended; Asked of Those Not Too/Not at All Concerned)*



Seven in ten say they are extremely or very likely to prevent food waste in their home.

On a daily basis, how likely are you to take steps to prevent food from going to waste in your home: extremely likely, very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?



Older residents are more likely to take steps to prevent food waste.

Demographic Group	Extremely Likely	Extremely/Very Likely
Gender		
Men	36%	72%
Women	31%	70%
Age		
18-29	20%	59%
30-39	34%	66%
40-49	29%	77%
50-64	42%	78%
65-74	45%	77%
75+	42%	79%
Parents		
Parents	29%	68%
Non-parents	19%	74%

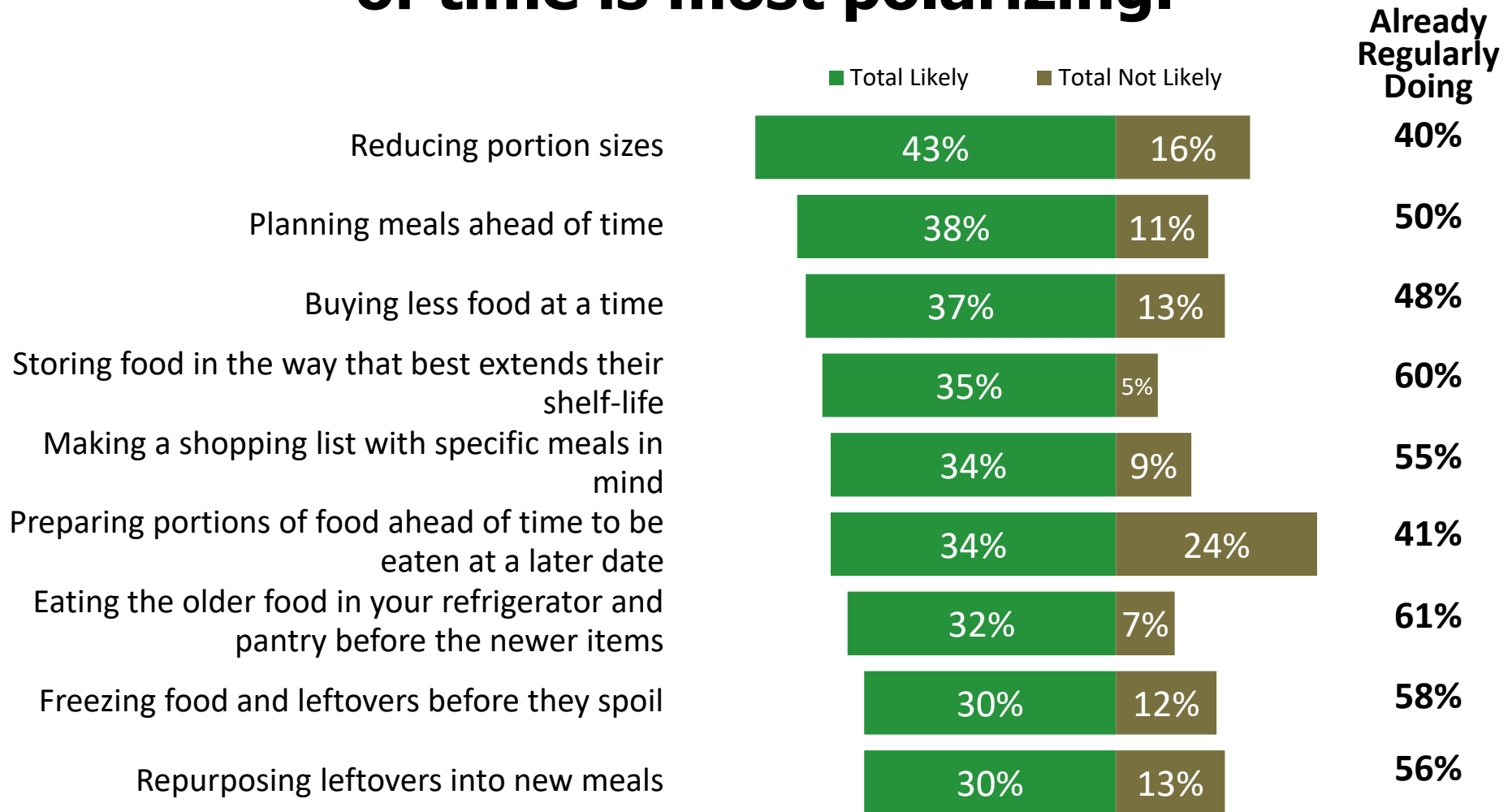
African-American and Asian residents are most likely to say they'll avoid wasting food.

Demographic Group	Extremely Likely	Extremely/Very Likely
Ethnicity		
Latinos	26%	70%
African-Americans	47%	82%
White	30%	68%
Asian-Pacific Islanders	40%	74%
All Residents of Color	35%	73%
Income		61%
<\$50,000	35%	67%
\$50,000-\$75,000	34%	84%
\$75,000-\$100,000	32%	66%
\$100,000+	31%	70%
Education		
College- Educated	32%	71%
Non-College Educated	36%	53%

With a few exceptions, likelihood of preventing waste is consistent across the County.

Demographic Group	Extremely Likely	Extremely/Very Likely
City		
Alameda	42%	65%
Berkeley	26%	74%
Fremont	25%	68%
Hayward	37%	69%
Livermore	34%	60%
Oakland	36%	74%
Pleasanton	33%	71%
San Leandro	31%	73%
Union City	51%	67%
County Region		
North County	35%	74%
South County	31%	69%
Valley	35%	66%

Reducing portion sizes is the action people are most likely to take; preparing portions ahead of time is most polarizing.



Middle-income families tended to be more likely to already be doing food waste prevention activities.

Already Regularly Doing

Things You Can Do	All Residents	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000-\$75,000	\$75,000-\$100,000	\$100,000+
Eating the older food in your refrigerator and pantry before the newer items	61%	59%	63%	69%	56%
Storing food in the way that best extends their shelf-life	60%	62%	63%	58%	54%
Freezing food and leftovers before they spoil	58%	52%	80%	62%	54%
Repurposing leftovers into new meals	56%	50%	65%	54%	55%
Making a shopping list with specific meals in mind	55%	51%	65%	57%	50%
Buying less food at a time	48%	54%	52%	51%	47%
Preparing portions of food ahead of time to be eaten at a later date	41%	49%	64%	45%	42%
Reducing portion sizes	40%	42%	39%	47%	39%

Respondents point to preparing less food, better meal planning, and smaller portions as the things they are most likely to do to reduce waste.

Given everything we have discussed, what's the one thing you can do to reduce the amount of uneaten food that goes to waste in your household?

(Open-Ended)



Verbatim Comments on Reducing Food Waste

Buy less so I don't waste as much that doesn't get eaten.

Maybe reduce what I buy in the store.

Buy items that are more likely to go bad faster in less quantity.

Have less picky children.

Shop more frequently and buy less at a time.

For example, I try to reuse what I already have so as not to throw it away or combine it.

Don't overdo the groceries and just get enough for one week.

I say we have to go shopping more frequently so that there is less chance of produce going bad.

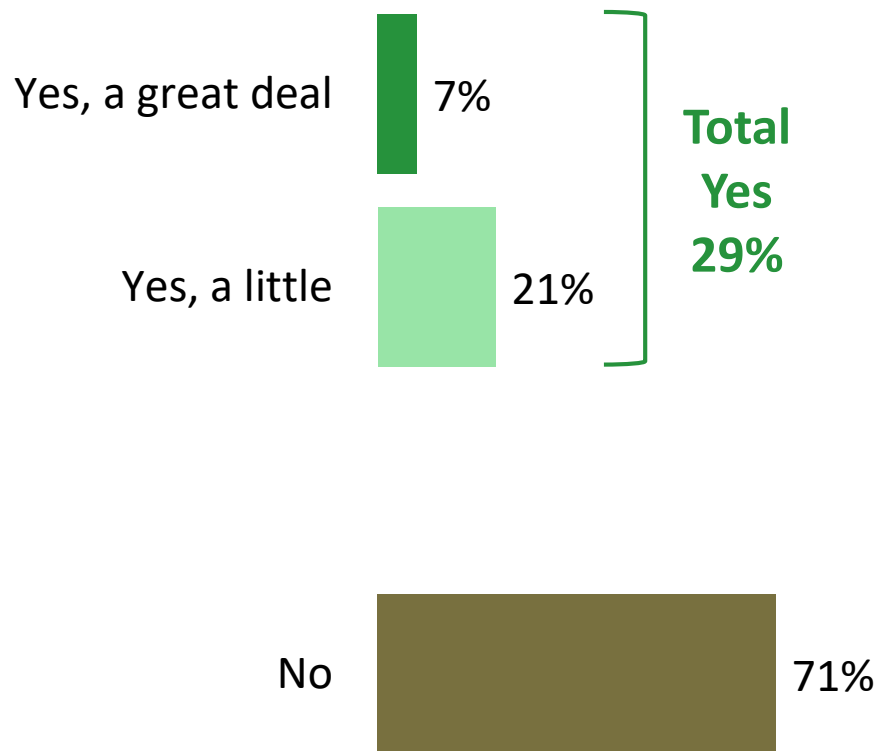
Force my kids to eat more leftovers.

Boil my eggs and cook meats before they go bad to use later.

Food Waste Campaign Awareness

About a quarter of Alameda County residents are familiar with the food waste campaign.

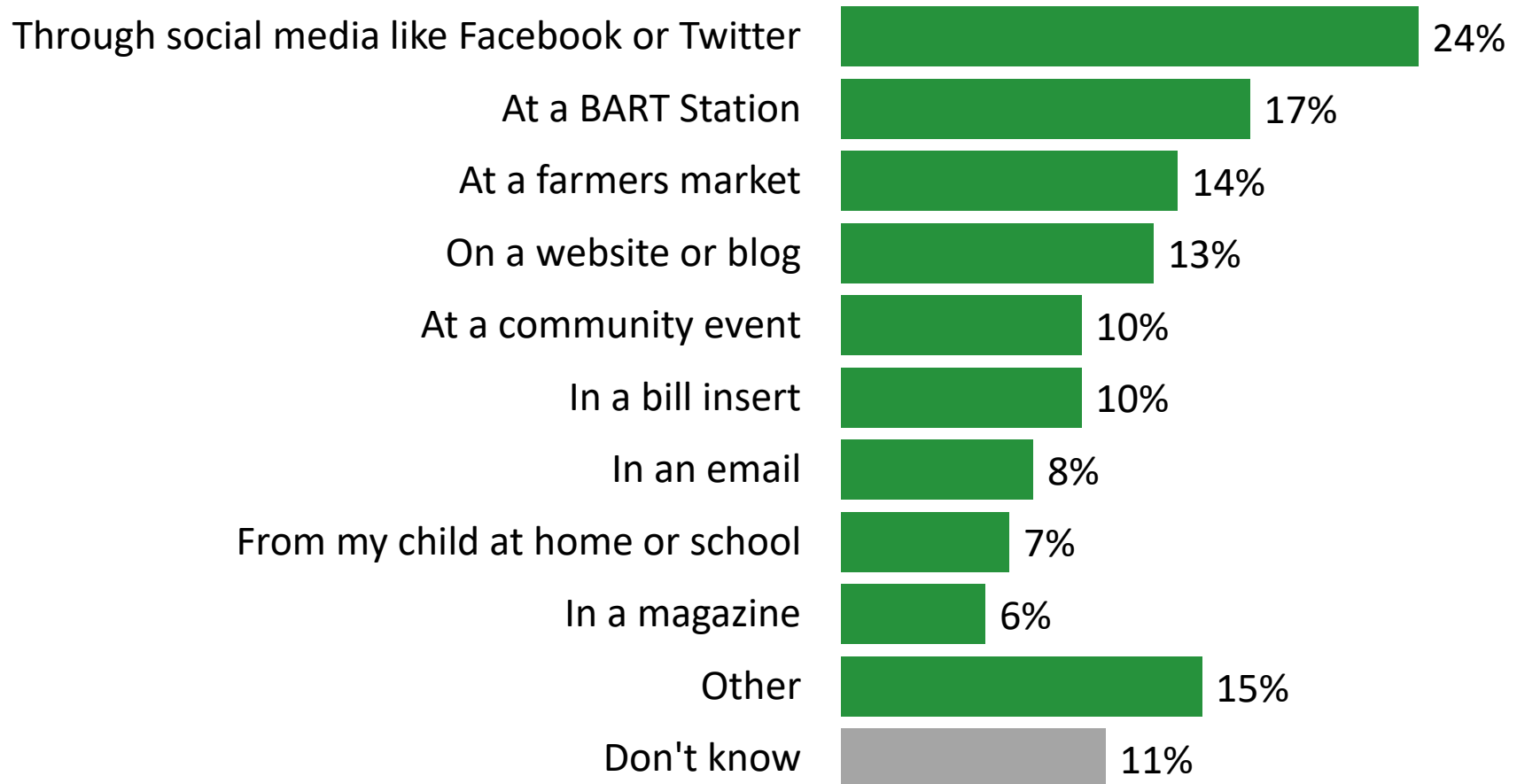
Have you seen, heard or read anything about a campaign urging Alameda County residents to waste less food?



Demographic Group	Total Yes	% of Sample
All Residents	29%	100%
Ages 65+	47%	15%
Post-Graduate Educated	35%	18%
Ages 50+	34%	38%
Men Ages 50+	34%	19%
Women Ages 50+	34%	19%
HH Income \$100,000+	33%	38%
Total Unemployed	33%	35%
Oakland	33%	26%

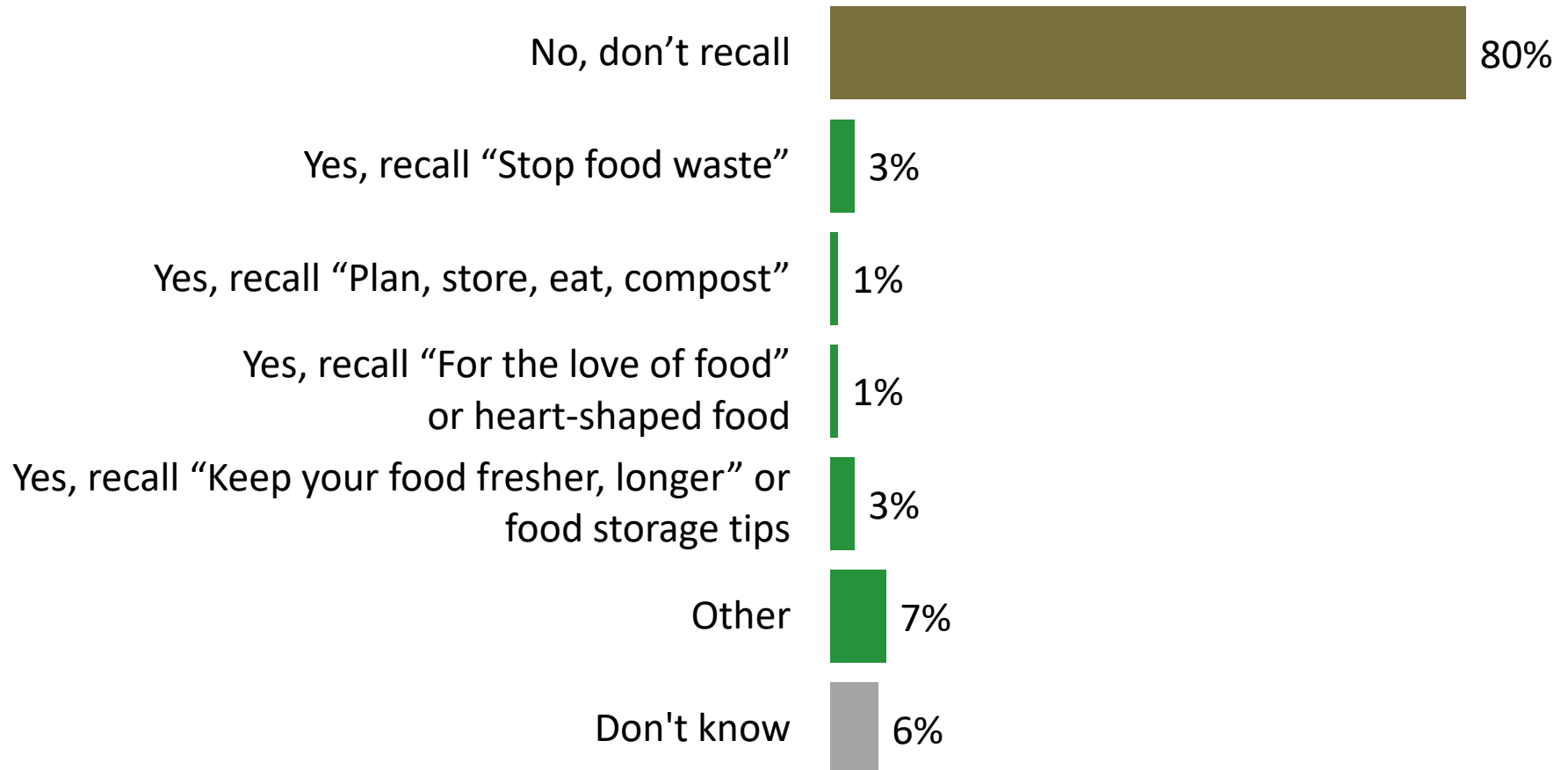
Social media, BART, and the farmers market are the most common places people have seen the campaign.

Where have you heard, seen or read about it?



Most respondents don't remember the specific messaging.

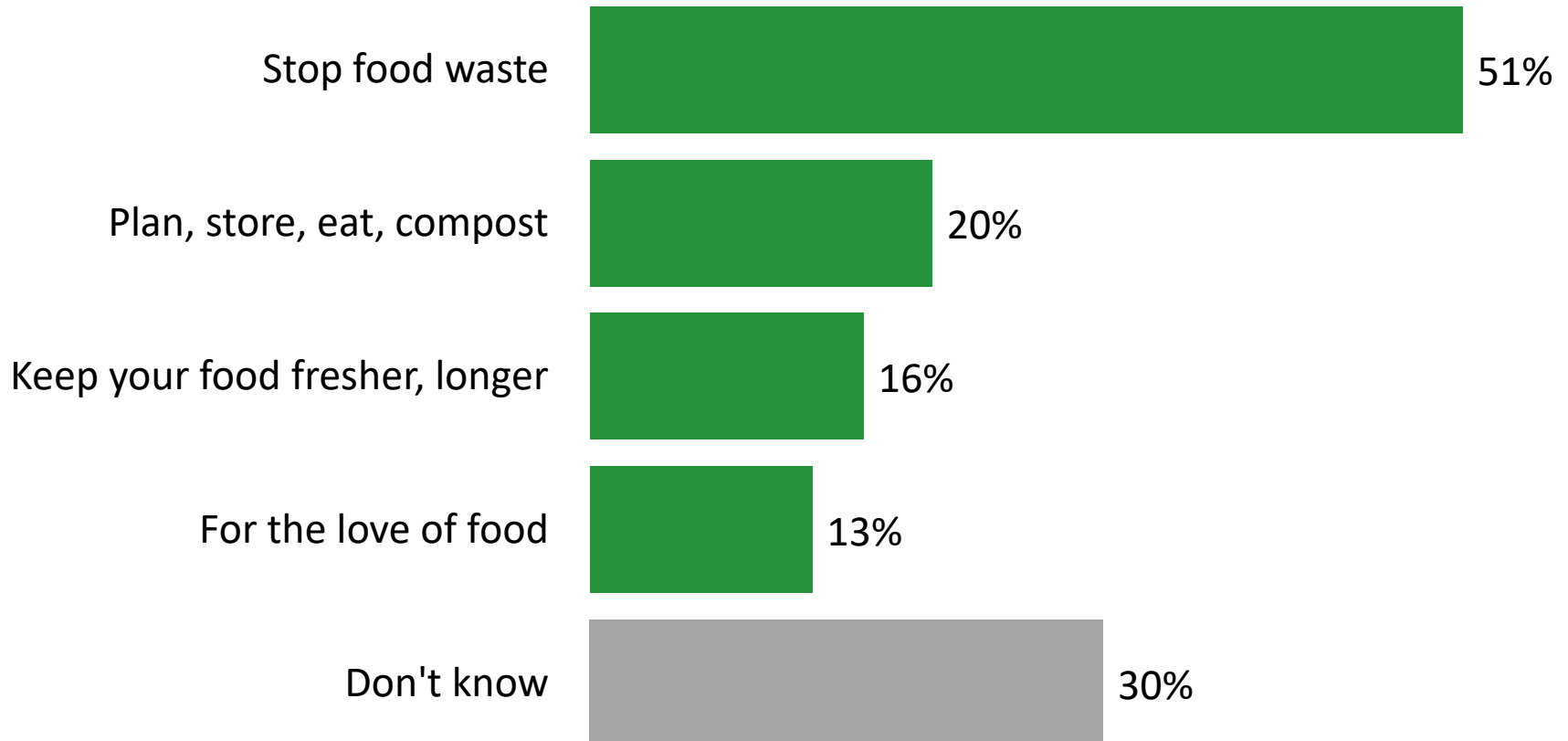
Do you recall the name or slogan of the campaign, or any of the images the campaign was communicating?



But when offered the slogans, “stop food waste” was most commonly recognized.

In that case, have you heard or read any of the following phrases related to this campaign?

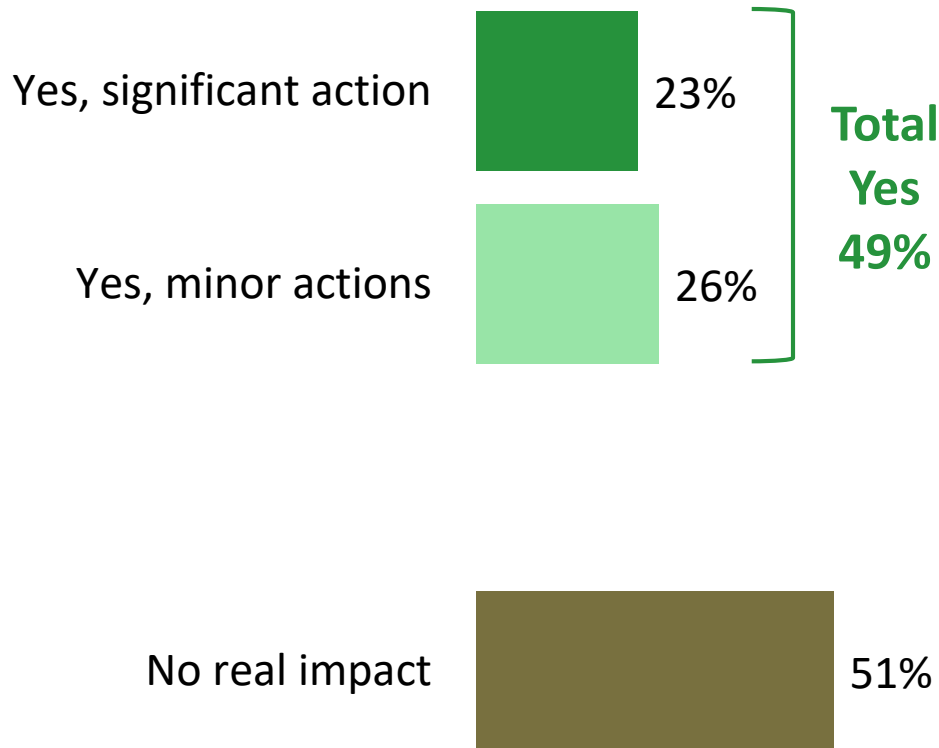
(Asked Only of Those Who Could Not Volunteer a Slogan)



Respondents are divided on whether the campaign affected their food waste habits.

Next, did this campaign result in you taking any actions to reduce the amount of food that is thrown out uneaten, or wasted, in your home, or did it have no real impact?

(Asked Only of Those Who Had Seen a Food Waste Campaign)



Total Yes	No Real Impact
49% of the Electorate	51% of the Electorate
Women Ages 18-49	Ages 50-64
Latinos	Men Ages 18-49
Moms	Dads
HH Income \$75,000-\$100,000	Berkeley
High School Educated	Whites
Asians/Pacific Islanders	Men
South County	HH Income \$100,000+
HH Income <\$50,000	Post-Graduate Educated
Ages 40-49	Other Ethnicity
Women	Four-year College or More
All Residents of Color	Four-year College Graduates
Fremont	Men Ages 50+

Conclusions

Conclusions

- ✓ Two in five residents say they are “extremely” or “very” concerned about food waste at home.
 - Those who are not concerned about food waste largely feel like they are not wasting food currently and/or are composting their waste.
- ✓ Seven in ten say they are likely to take steps to prevent food waste.
 - Older residents, African-American residents and Asian and Pacific Islanders are most likely to say they are “extremely likely” to reduce waste.
 - Younger residents and Latino residents appear to be key targets for growth on food waste behaviors.
- ✓ For many of the common food items, a plurality of residents attributes them to the correct disposal method.
 - The most confusion comes with food-soiled paper products and pizza boxes
- ✓ A problem is that a majority of residents say that when they are unsure of what to do with an item, they recycle it, potentially contaminating the recycling.
- ✓ Nearly three in ten claim to have heard something about the food waste campaign; however, only 7 percent have heard a “great deal.”
- ✓ Residents have very low levels of recall about the actual campaign slogans and a solid majority who say they remember seeing the campaign cannot identify a single slogan.
- ✓ However, about half of those who have heard of the campaign claim that it resulted in them taking some level of action.

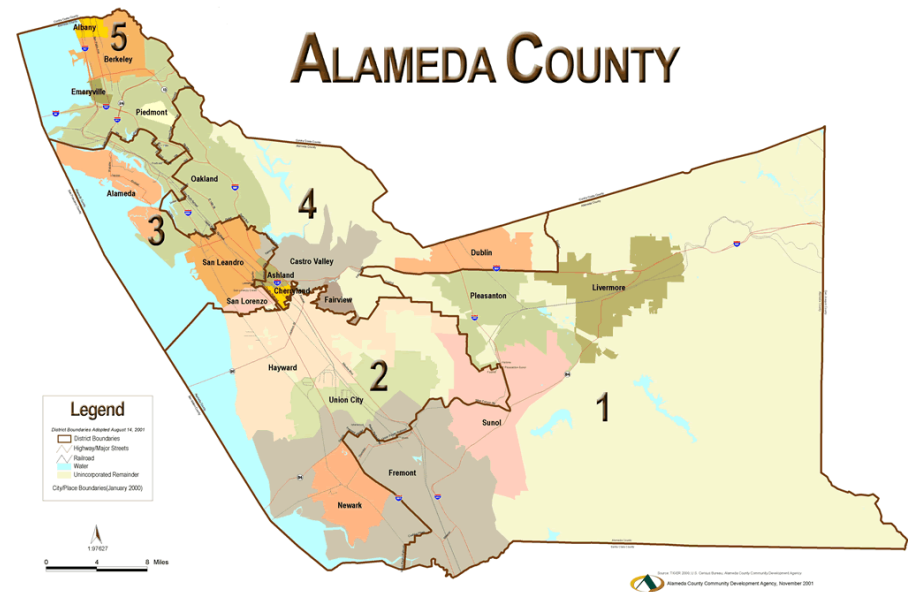
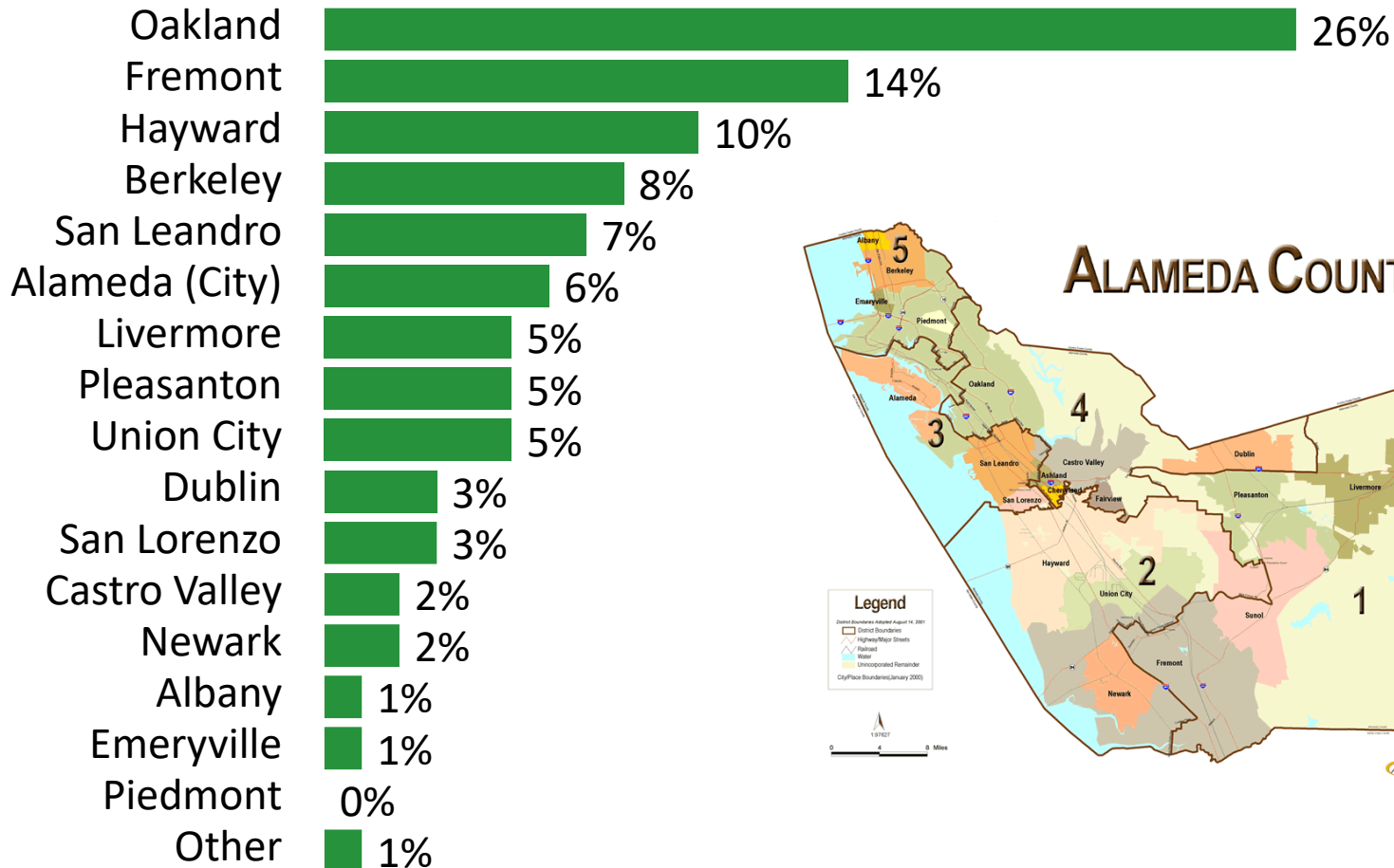
Potential Areas of Future Focus

- ✓ What can be done to better educate residents about the proper ways to dispose of food-soiled paper products?
- ✓ What is the right balance between reducing food waste and encouraging composting so that composting doesn't provide permission to worry less about food waste?
- ✓ What can be done to get residents to take active steps to figure out how to dispose of confusing items?
- ✓ Is there a disconnect between concerns about household food waste and reality? If so, what can be done to bridge that gap?
- ✓ What can be done to broaden the reach of the Stop Food Waste campaign beyond older, higher-income, more-educated residents?

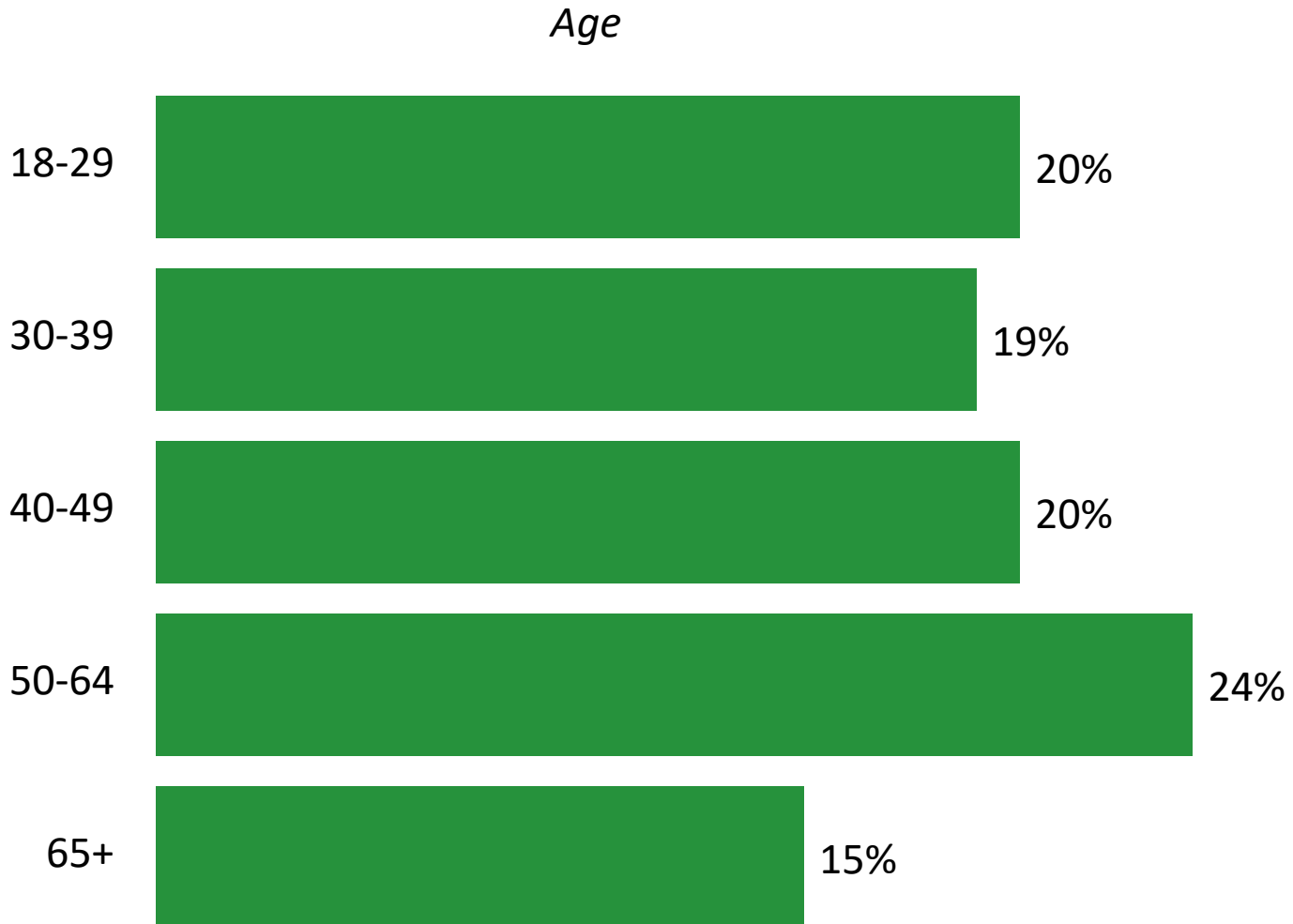
Key Demographic Characteristics

Respondents are representative of the County's population.

Are you a resident of Alameda County? In which City do you live?

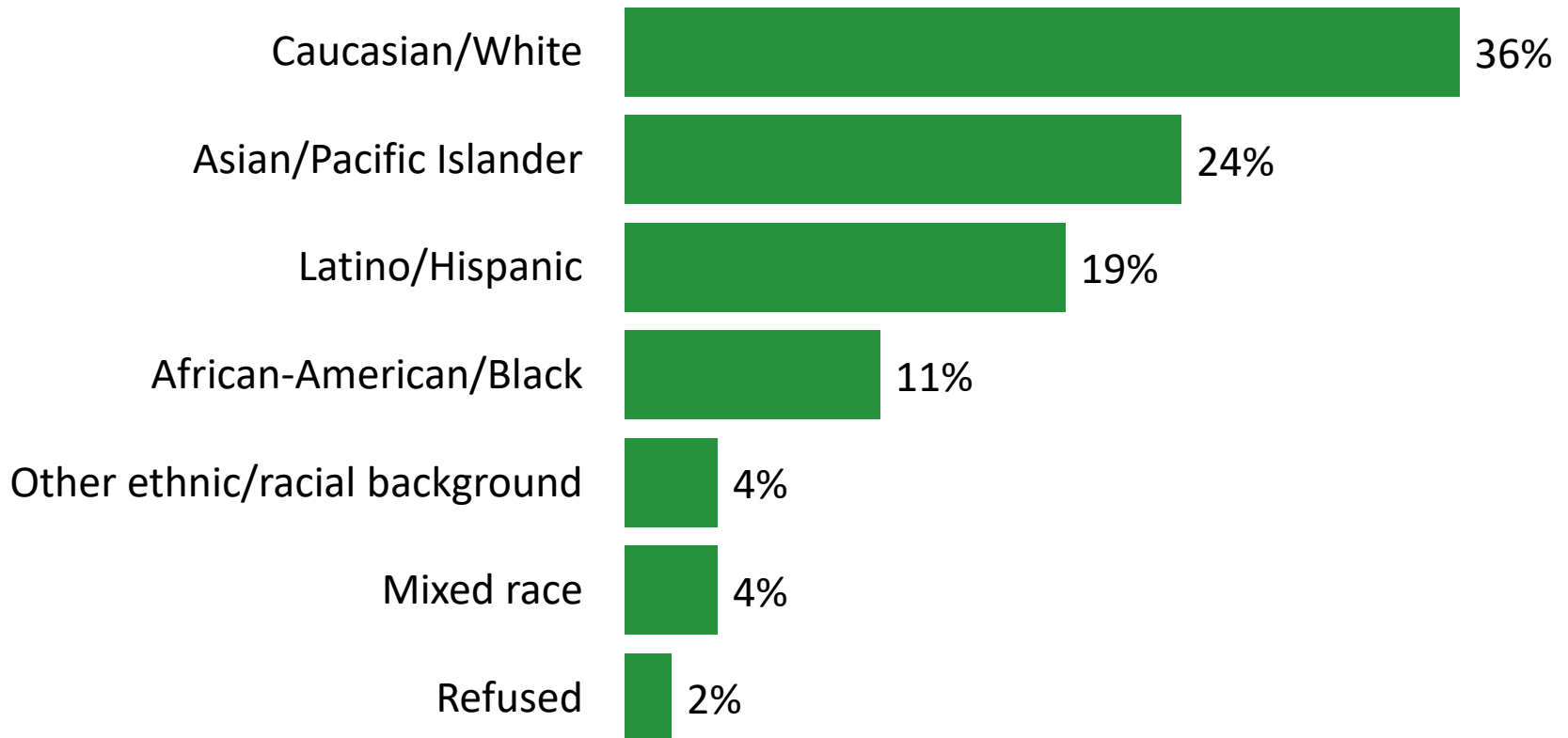


All major age groups over the age of 18 are represented in the survey.



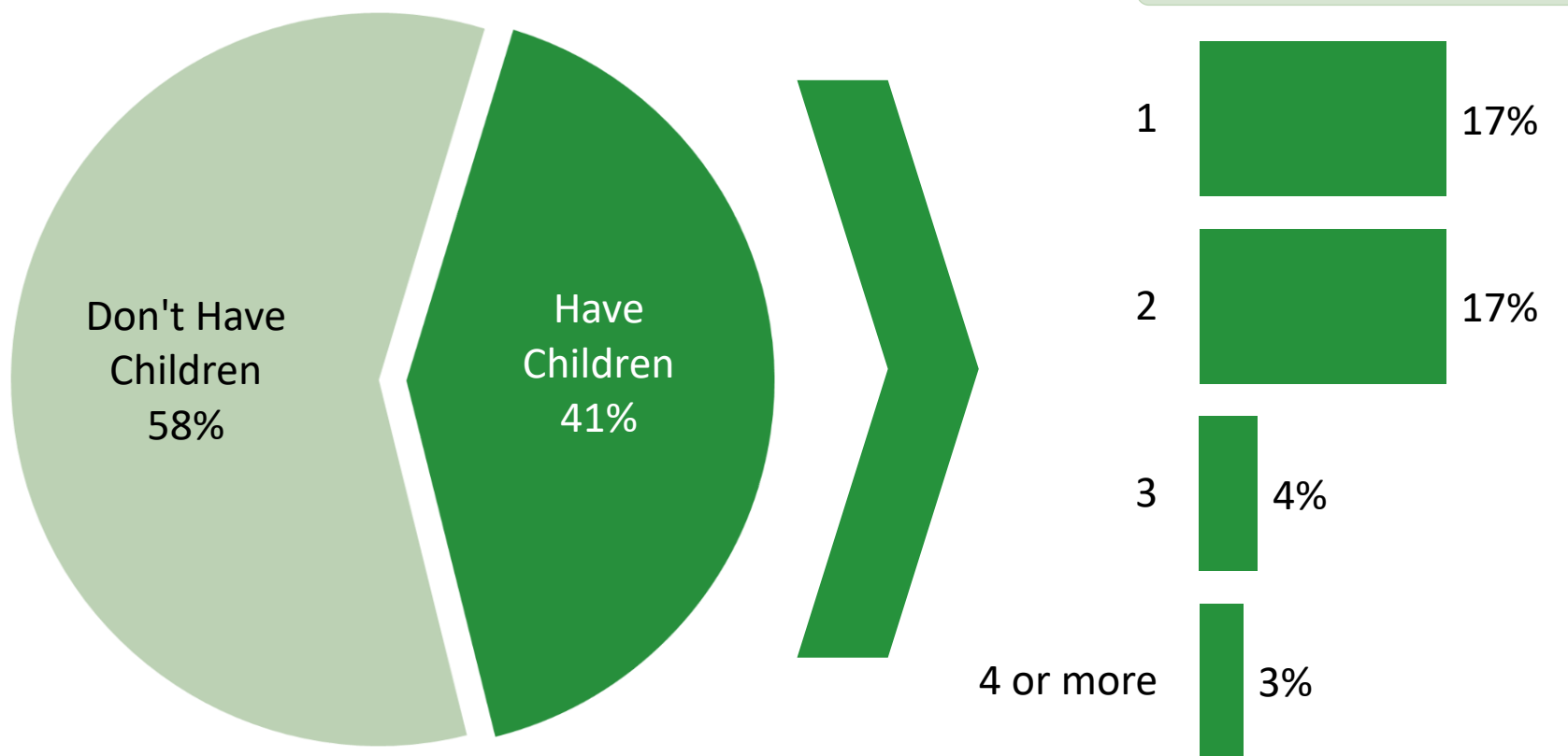
Survey respondents are ethnically diverse.

With which racial or ethnic group do you identify yourself: Latino or Hispanic, African-American or Black, White or Caucasian, Asian or Pacific Islander, or some other ethnic or racial background?



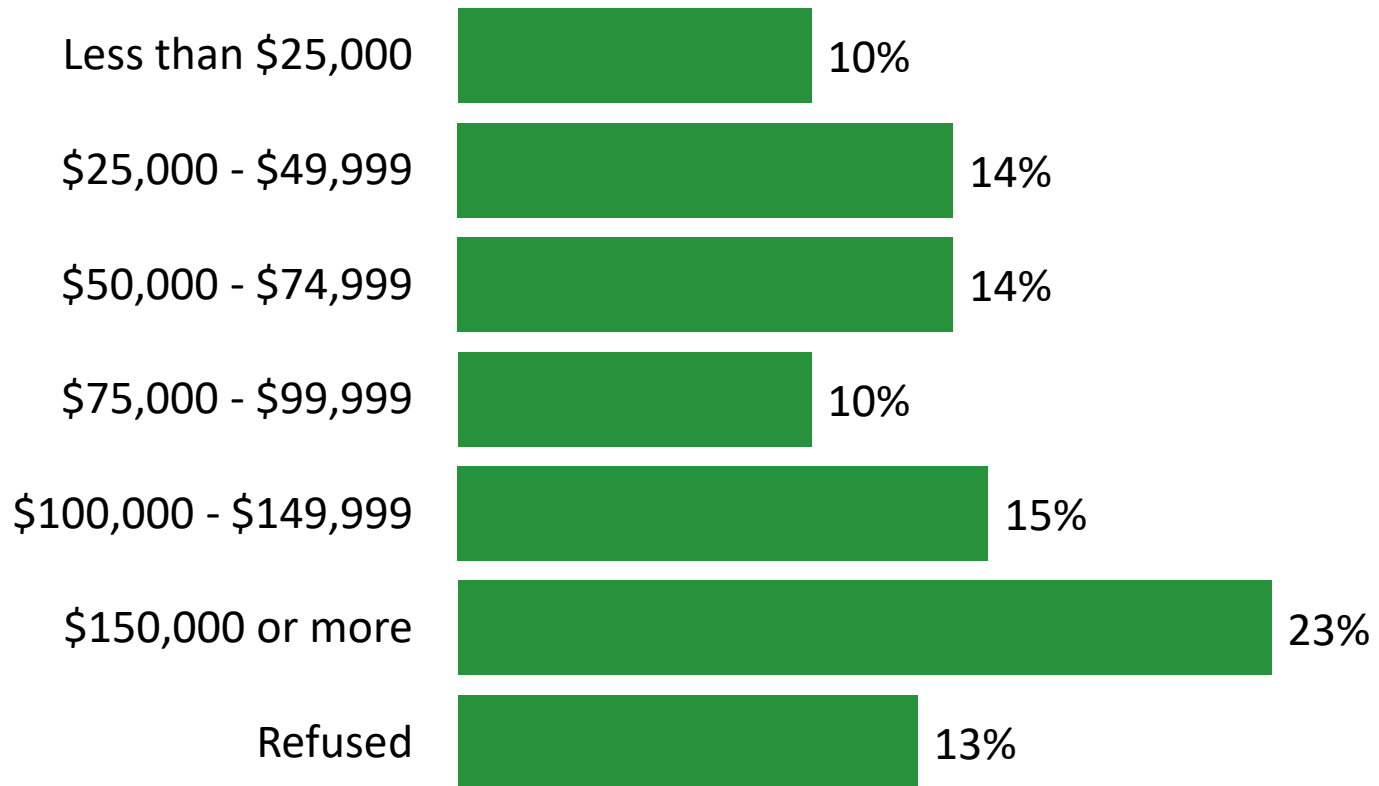
Two in five respondents have children, most have only one or two.

How many children under 18 live in your house?



A wide array of household incomes are represented in the research.

I don't need to know the exact amount, but I'm going to read you some categories for household income. Would you please stop me when I have read the category indicating the total combined income for all the people in your household before taxes in 2017?



Comparing Past Samples

Demographic Group	2018 All Residents	2016 Parents	2015 Residents with Green Bin
Age			
18-50	59%	48%	59%
50+	39%	37%	39%
Ethnicity			
Latino	19%	13%	19%
African-American	11%	10%	11%
White	36%	53%	36%
Asian/Pacific Islander	24%	13%	24%
Region			
North County	49%	41%	47%
Valley	37%	44%	38%
South County	13%	15%	16%
Income			
<\$50,000	24%	11%	17%
\$50,000-\$75,000	14%	11%	16%
\$75,000-\$100,000	10%	16%	15%
\$100,000+	38%	39%	26%

For more information, contact:



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