NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH SURVEY: KEY FINDINGS

Voter awareness of local public health departments, July 2020

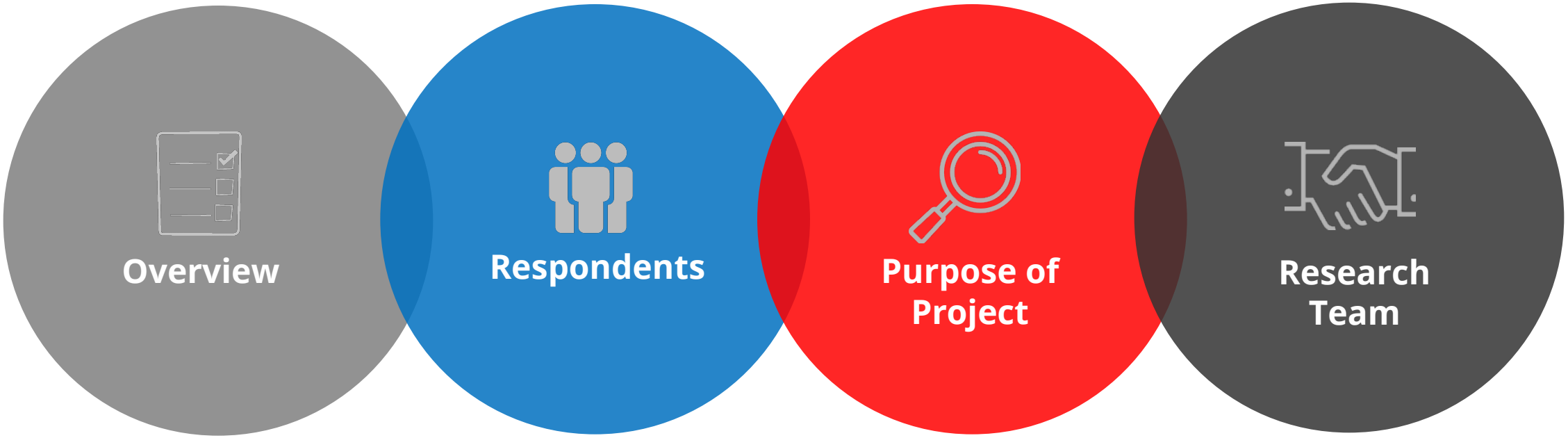
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PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES
turning questions into answers

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METHODOLOGY



- Public Opinion Strategies conducted a national telephone survey among registered voters from July 7-13, 2020.

- N=800 registered voters.
- The margin of error for N=800 is ±3.46%.

- The survey was a track of a core set of questions from the public health national telephone survey of registered voters that Public Opinion Strategies conducted in 2018 on behalf of the de Beaumont Foundation.

- Elizabeth Harrington was the principal researcher for this project.
- Tori Miller was the project director and Russell Brunner provided research support.

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OBJECTIVE

To track:

- Voters' familiarity with and perceptions about public health departments.
- The perceived value of public health department services.
- Support levels for paying more in state/local taxes to ensure all communities have access to public health department services.

KEY FINDINGS

- The coronavirus is clearly having an impact on voters' perceptions about healthy communities and the importance of public health departments.
- Public health departments are viewed as having an important role in creating a healthy community. 73% of voters believe this to be true, compared with 56% in 2018.
- Voters continue to value all public health services at least as much as in 2018. The increased importance of preventing the spread of disease has not taken away from support for other public health work.
- 61% of voters say they'd be willing to pay more in state and local taxes to increase funding for local health departments.
- Familiarity with public health departments is up since 2018, but voters who say they are "very familiar" remains stable and low. This lack of familiarity with local public health departments shows there is room for continued public education about what public health departments do and the services they provide in local communities.

ATTITUDES TOWARD PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

As anticipated, the COVID-19 environment is impacting attitudes about the importance of public health departments and healthy communities.

- More than 7 in 10 voters (73%) now say public health departments are important in creating a healthy community, compared with 56% in 2018.
- There were significant increases from 2018 to 2020 in the importance ratings of all the different organizations tested. However, the relative rank order within the top tier of organizations being rated as most important for healthy communities is consistent with the 2018 survey. Hospitals, schools, and fire departments still rank as the top tier of importance.
- Also noteworthy is the significant increase in the percentage of voters saying businesses are important to creating a healthy community.
- 61% of voters say they'd be willing to pay more in state and local taxes to increase funding for local health departments.

QUESTION LANGUAGE/SCALE:

At the local level, many factors go into having a healthy community where people can live, work, and play. I am going to read you a list of some different types of organizations or things that can help create a healthy community.

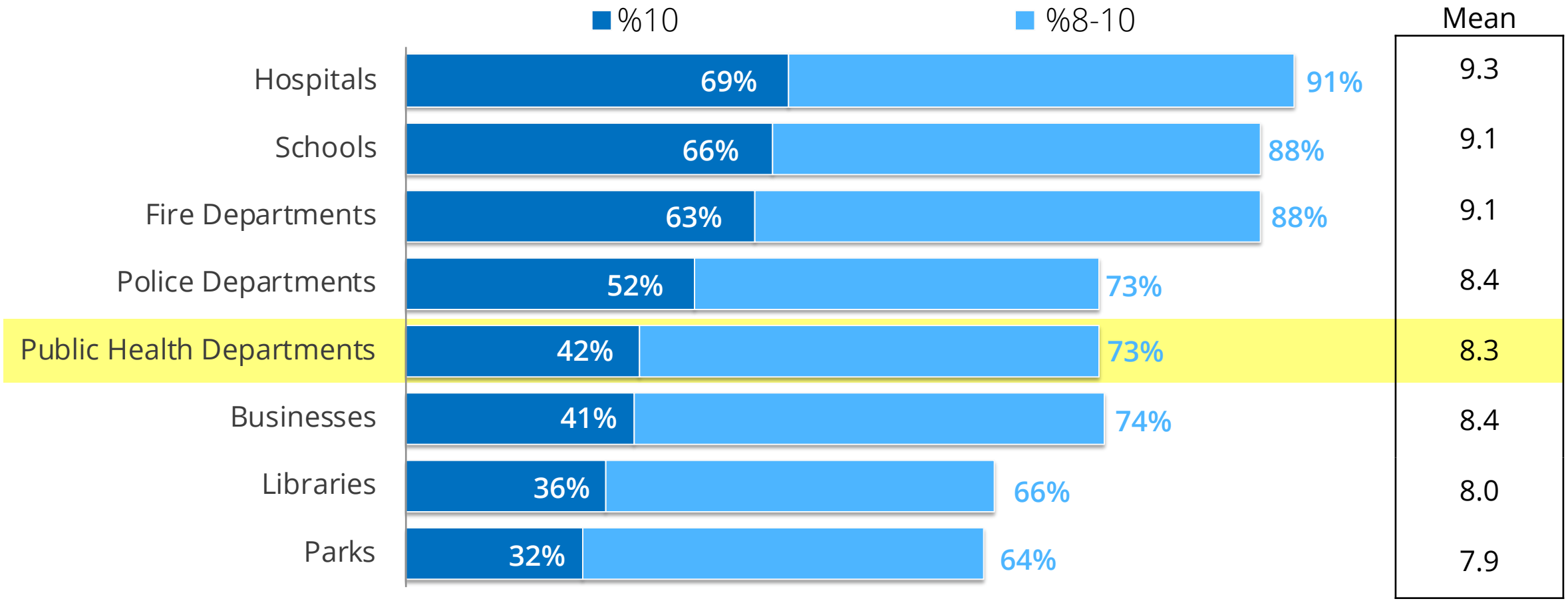
For each, please tell me how important of a role you think it has in creating a healthy community for you and your family?

Please use a 1 to 10 scale, with 1 meaning it is NOT AT ALL important in creating a healthy community and 10 meaning it is VERY important in creating a healthy community.



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Hospitals, schools, and fire departments continue to be viewed as the most important organizations in creating a healthy community.



Please use a one to ten scale, with one meaning it is NOT AT ALL important in creating a healthy community and ten meaning it is VERY important in creating a healthy community. You can choose any number between one and ten depending on how you feel. The (first/next) one is...

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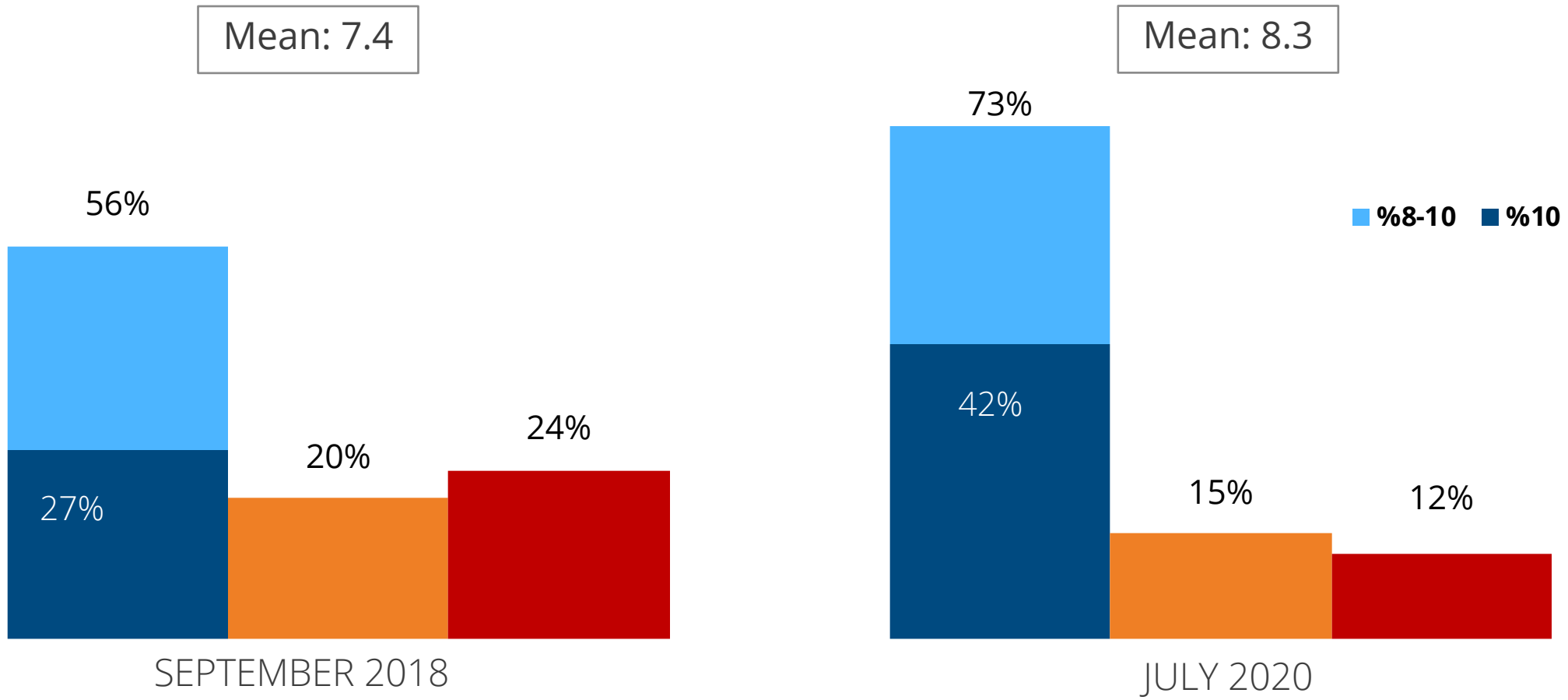
Not surprising given the COVID-19 environment, there were significant increases from 2018 to 2020 in the importance ratings across most of the organizations tested.

Ranked by Shift in % 8-10 Importance Rating - Net Difference Increase From 2020	2018	2020	Net Difference (2020-2018)
Businesses	42%	74%	+32%
Libraries	47%	66%	+19%
Public Health Departments	56%	73%	+17%
Fire Departments	72%	88%	+16%
Schools	75%	88%	+13%
Hospitals	79%	91%	+12%
Parks	52%	64%	+12%
Police Departments	68%	73%	+5%

Please use a one to ten scale, with one meaning it is NOT AT ALL important in creating a healthy community and ten meaning it is VERY important in creating a healthy community. You can choose any number between one and ten depending on how you feel. The (first/next) one is...

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More than 7 in 10 voters now say public health departments are important in creating a healthy community, with a plurality saying they are “very important.”



Please use a one to ten scale, with one meaning it is NOT AT ALL important in creating a healthy community and ten meaning it is VERY important in creating a healthy community. You can choose any number between one and ten depending on how you feel. The (first/next) one is...

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The sub-groups whose importance rating of public health departments increased the most from 2018 to 2020:

Public Health Departments Importance % Rating 10

Top Sub-Groups Increased Importance Rating % 10	2018	2020	2020-2018
All Voters	27%	42%	+15%
WHITE WOMEN	26%	51%	+25%
PERSONAL HEALTH: FAIR/POOR	30%	54%	+24%
INDEPENDENT WOMEN	29%	53%	+24%
RURAL RESIDENTS	26%	50%	+24%
MIDWEST REGION	20%	43%	+23%
AGES 65+	25%	45%	+20%
RETIRED	25%	45%	+20%
WHITES	21%	41%	+20%
SOFT DEMOCRATS	29%	48%	+19%
BABY BOOMERS	25%	44%	+19%

Public Health Departments Importance % Rating 8-10

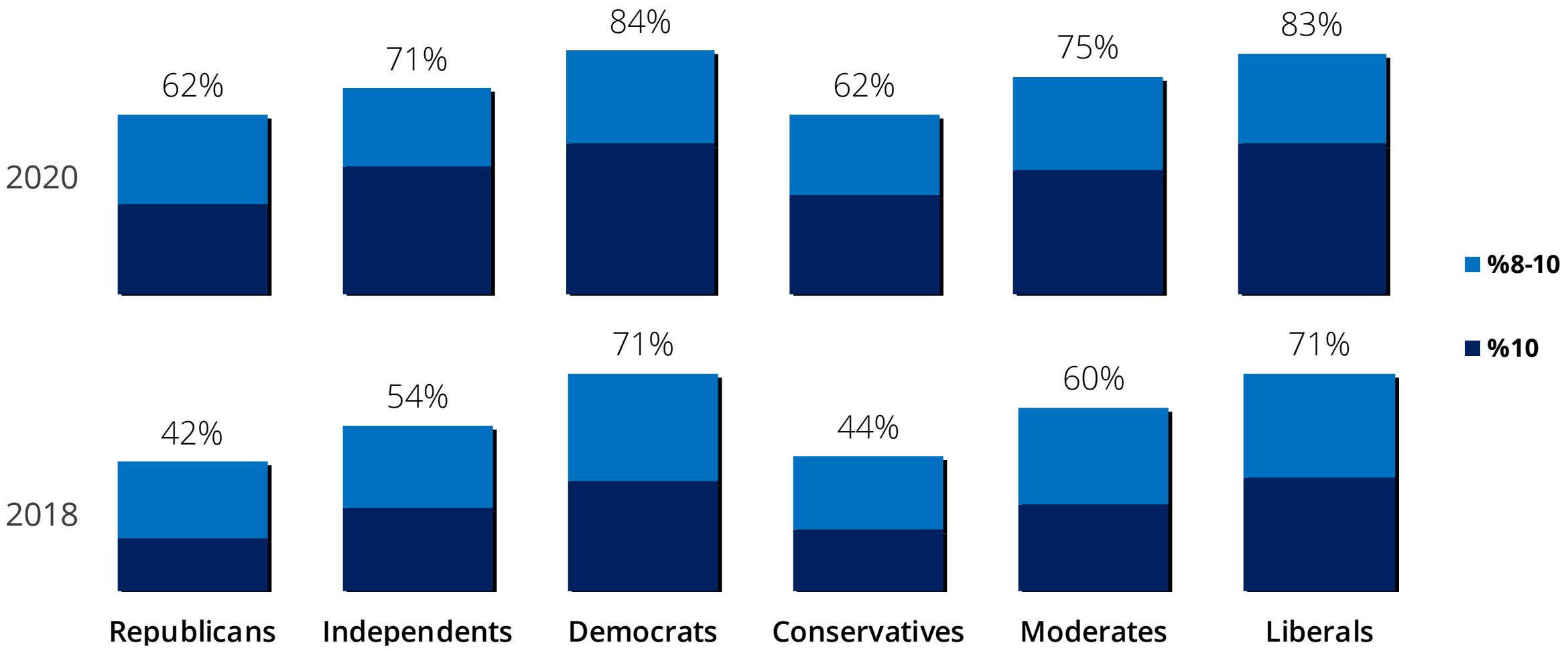
Top Sub-Groups Increased Importance Rating % 8-10	2018	2020	2020-2018
All Voters	56%	73%	+17%
WHITE MEN	38%	65%	+27%
MEN COLLEGE+	41%	67%	+26%
REPUBLICAN MEN	31%	56%	+25%
AGES 45-54	48%	71%	+23%
STRONG REPUBLICANS	38%	61%	+23%
SOFT DEMOCRATS	63%	85%	+22%
DEMOCRATIC MEN	63%	85%	+22%
INDEPENDENT WOMEN	60%	82%	+22%
WHITES	50%	71%	+21%
MIDWEST REGION	50%	71%	+21%
MEN AGES 45+	42%	63%	+21%

*Sub-groups in common are highlighted in yellow.

Please use a one to ten scale, with one meaning it is NOT AT ALL important in creating a healthy community and ten meaning it is VERY important in creating a healthy community. You can choose any number between one and ten depending on how you feel. The (first/next) one is...

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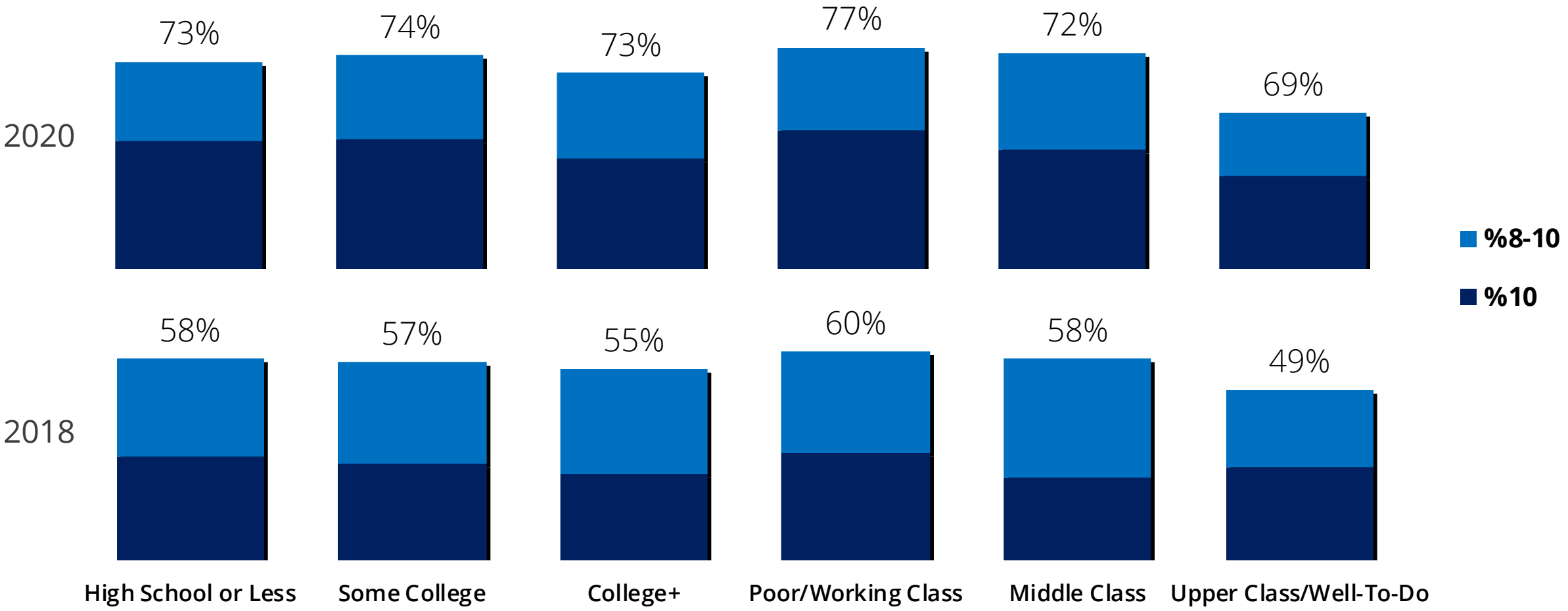
Importance of Public Health Departments in Creating a Healthy Community, by Party and Ideology



Please use a one to ten scale, with one meaning it is NOT AT ALL important in creating a healthy community and ten meaning it is VERY important in creating a healthy community. You can choose any number between one and ten depending on how you feel. The (first/next) one is...

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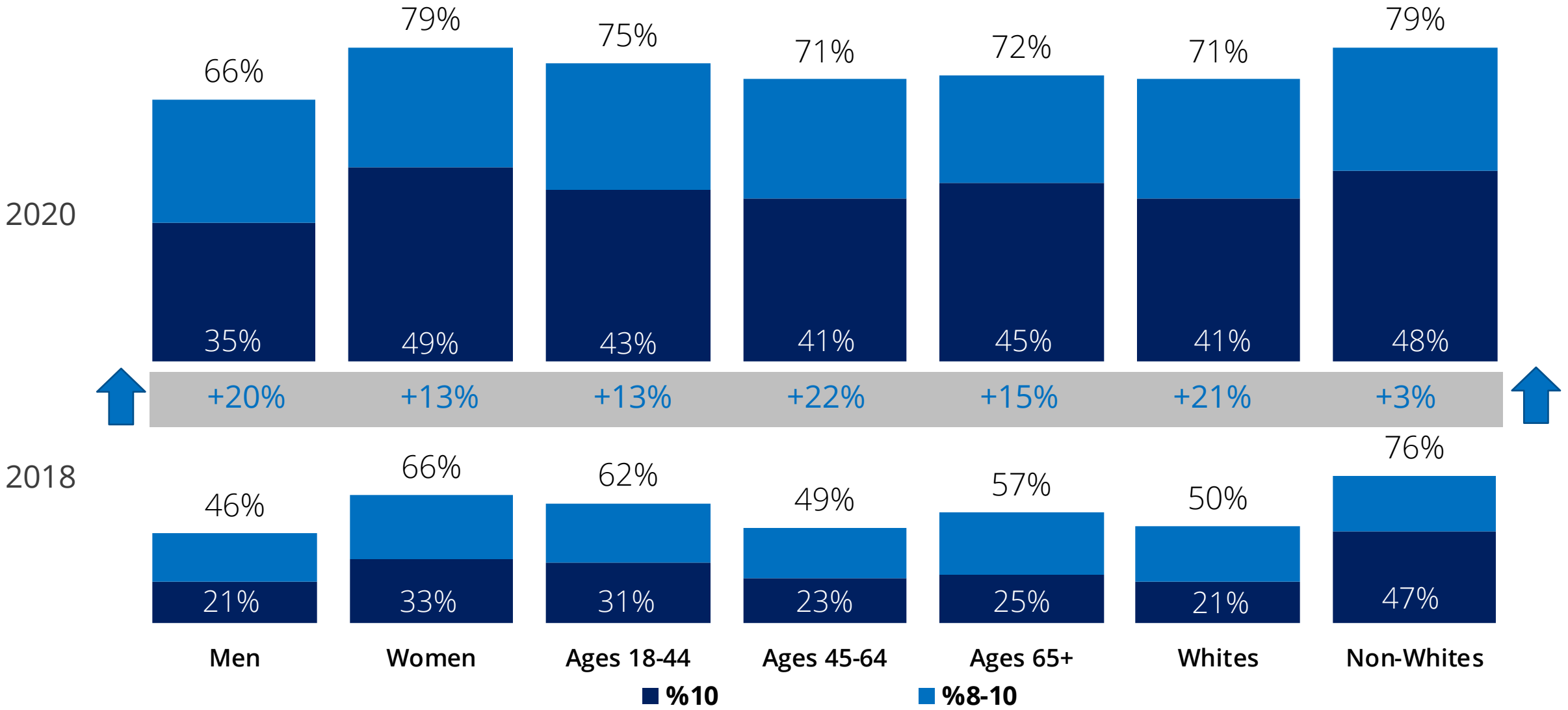
Importance of Public Health Departments in Creating a Healthy Community, by Education and Self-Reported Economic Status



Please use a one to ten scale, with one meaning it is NOT AT ALL important in creating a healthy community and ten meaning it is VERY important in creating a healthy community. You can choose any number between one and ten depending on how you feel. The (first/next) one is...

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Importance of Public Health Departments by Gender, Age, and Ethnicity



Please use a one to ten scale, with one meaning it is NOT AT ALL important in creating a healthy community and ten meaning it is VERY important in creating a healthy community. You can choose any number between one and ten depending on how you feel. The (first/next) one is...

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The sub-groups who rate the importance of public health departments the highest tend to be African Americans, Hispanics, women, those in lower socio-economic households, those living in urban areas, younger voters, and Democrats. These groups are consistent with 2018.

September 2018 Top Sub-groups: %8-10 (56%)	
African Americans	78%
Women Ages 18-34	77%
Hispanics	75%
Moms	72%
Democrats	71%
Liberals	71%
Retired	69%
Urban Residents	67%
Millennials	66%
Women	66%
Ages 18-34	66%
Working Women	65%
Women Ages 35-54	64%
Women Ages 55+	61%
White Women	61%
Poor/Working Class	60%
Independent Women	60%
Moderates	60%

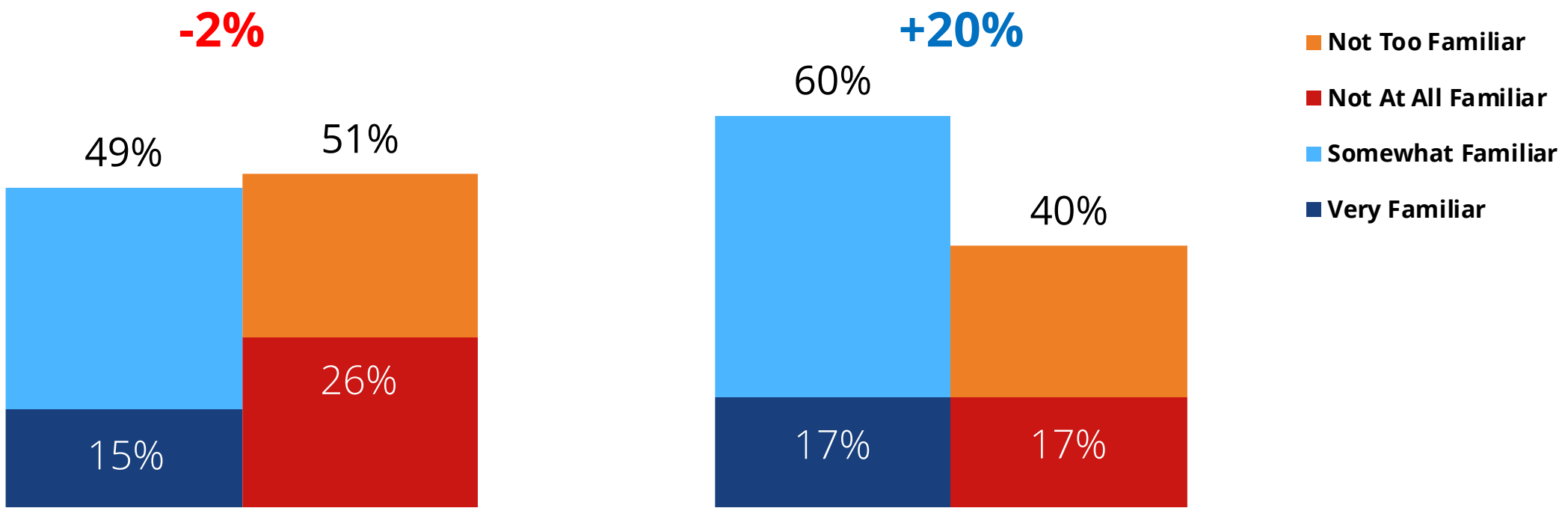
July 2020 Top Sub-groups: %8-10 (73%)	
Democrats	84%
2016 Clinton Voters	84%
Liberals	83%
Independent Women	82%
African Americans	81%
Women	79%
Total Non-Whites	79%
Ages 18-34	78%
Hispanics	77%
White Women	77%
Urban Residents	77%
Poor/Working Class	77%

*Sub-groups in common are highlighted in yellow.

Please use a one to ten scale, with one meaning it is NOT AT ALL important in creating a healthy community and ten meaning it is VERY important in creating a healthy community. You can choose any number between one and ten depending on how you feel. The (first/next) one is…

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There has been an increase in voters reporting they are familiar with their local health departments, though intensity (those “very familiar”) remains as low as 2018.



Most communities across the country have public health departments. How familiar would you say you are with your local public health department? Are you...

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The sub-groups who report being most familiar with public health departments continue to be women, African Americans, Hispanics, and Democrats.

September 2018 Top Sub-groups: Total Familiar (49%)	
African Americans	62%
Work in Healthcare	61%
Moms	58%
Republican Women	57%
Hispanics	56%
Strong Democrats	55%
Democratic Women	55%
Ages 55-64	55%
Working Women	55%
Women	54%
Baby Boomers	53%

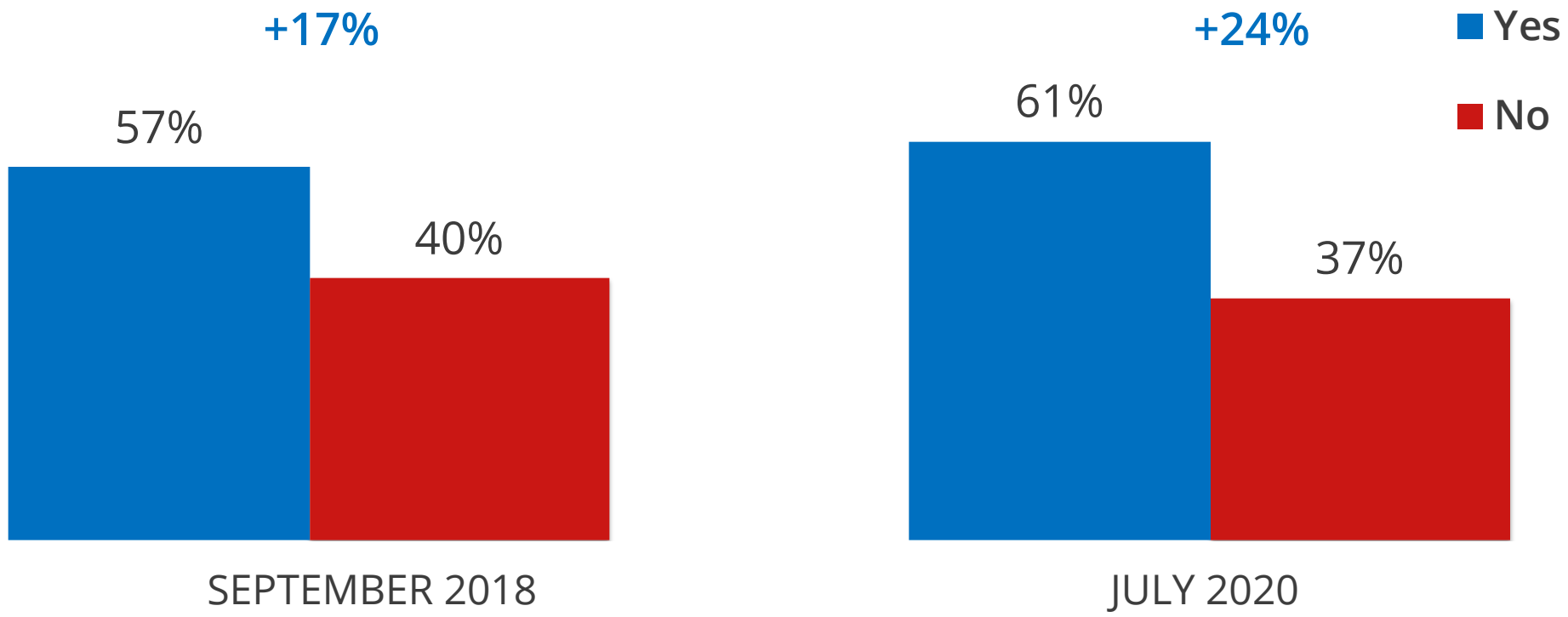
*Sub-groups in common are highlighted in yellow.

July 2020 Top Sub-groups: Total Familiar (60%)	
African Americans	72%
Rural Residents	69%
Total Non-Whites	68%
Independent Women	68%
Ages 45-54	67%
Strong Democrats	67%
Women Ages 18-44	66%
2016 Clinton Voters	66%
Generation X	66%
Hispanics	65%
Democratic Women	64%
College Graduates	64%
Urban Residents	64%
Women	62%

Most communities across the country have public health departments. How familiar would you say you are with your local public health department? Are you...

Willingness to Pay More in Annual State/Local Taxes

After hearing about all the services local public health departments do in communities, majorities of voters say they are willing to pay more in state/local taxes to increase funding for local public health departments. This is a slight increase from 2018 (just above the margin of error).



Thinking some more about this, would you be willing to pay MORE in state and local taxes EACH YEAR in order to increase funding to ensure that every community in (STATE) receives ALL of these public health services from their local public health department?

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IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

Survey respondents were read 11 services their local Public Health Department could do or provide in their community.

They were asked to rate how important each item was to them personally on a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 meaning it is not at all important and 10 meaning it is very important that their local public health department does it in their community.



For each item, please tell me how important it is to you personally that your local health department does this in your community.

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- All 11 public health department services tested were viewed by voters as being important for public health departments to do in their community.

- The MOST important service is:
  - ✓ Helping to stop the spread of communicable diseases

- Also rated high in importance are these services:
  - ✓ Supporting women's and children's health
  - ✓ Reaching out to people that are at greatest risk of poor health outcomes
  - ✓ Ensuring environmental health, such as clean air and clean water
  - ✓ Working together with the broader healthcare system to address problems before they become health crises
  - ✓ Providing critical un-biased information on how to respond/what to do in a crisis to protect yourself and those close to you

The most important public health department service continues to be helping stop the spread of communicable diseases in communities.

Public Health Department Services Personal Importance – Ranked by %8-10	%10	%8-10	Mean
Help stop the spread of communicable diseases, such as coronavirus, Meningitis, Salmonella, and the flu. (N=400)	65%	82%	8.8
Support women's and children's health, such as pre-natal care and appropriate nutritional assistance.	55%	82%	8.7
Reach out to people that are at greatest risk of having poor health outcomes, such as the elderly, disabled, or low-income families.	51%	80%	8.6
Help stop the spread of communicable diseases, such as Meningitis, Salmonella, and the flu. (N=400)	52%	79%	8.5
Ensure environmental health, such as clean air and clean water.	53%	78%	8.5
Work together with the broader healthcare system, such as with local hospitals and community clinics to address problems before they become health crises.	51%	77%	8.6
Provide you with critical un-biased information on how to respond and what to do in a crisis to protect yourself and those close to you.	54%	76%	8.5
Bring others in government, like police and fire departments and state authorities, together to respond to public health emergencies, such as those resulting from natural and human caused disasters, and rebuild afterward.	49%	76%	8.5
Establish prevention programs in the community to address chronic disease and injury, such as diabetes and domestic violence.	46%	75%	8.3
Work to improve other local community services such as public education, housing, and employment opportunities	41%	67%	8.0
Promote policies that protect people's health such as increasing seatbelt use and encouraging employers to offer paid maternity leave.	39%	66%	7.8
Work with partners to help create strong local policies that support health, such as smoke-free workplace laws.	32%	61%	7.6

Next, I am going to read you some things that your local public health department could do in your community. For each item, please tell me how important it is to you personally that your local health department does this in your community.

Importantly, none of the public health services dropped in importance since 2018. The services that received higher importance ratings in 2020 than they did in 2018 are:

Public Health Department Services Personal Importance % 10 – Ranked by Net Difference	2018	2020	Net Difference (2020-2018)
Provide you with critical un-biased information on how to respond and what to do in a crisis to protect yourself and those close to you.	42%	54%	+12%
Work together with the broader healthcare system, such as with local hospitals and community clinics to address problems before they become health crises.	40%	51%	+11%
Reach out to people that are at greatest risk of having poor health outcomes, such as the elderly, disabled, or low-income families.	44%	51%	+7%
Work to improve other local community services such as public education, housing, and employment opportunities	34%	41%	+7%
Support women's and children's health, such as pre-natal care and appropriate nutritional assistance.	49%	55%	+6%
Establish prevention programs in the community to address chronic disease and injury, such as diabetes and domestic violence.	40%	46%	+6%

Next, I am going to read you some things that your local public health department could do in your community. For each item, please tell me how important it is to you personally that your local health department does this in your community.

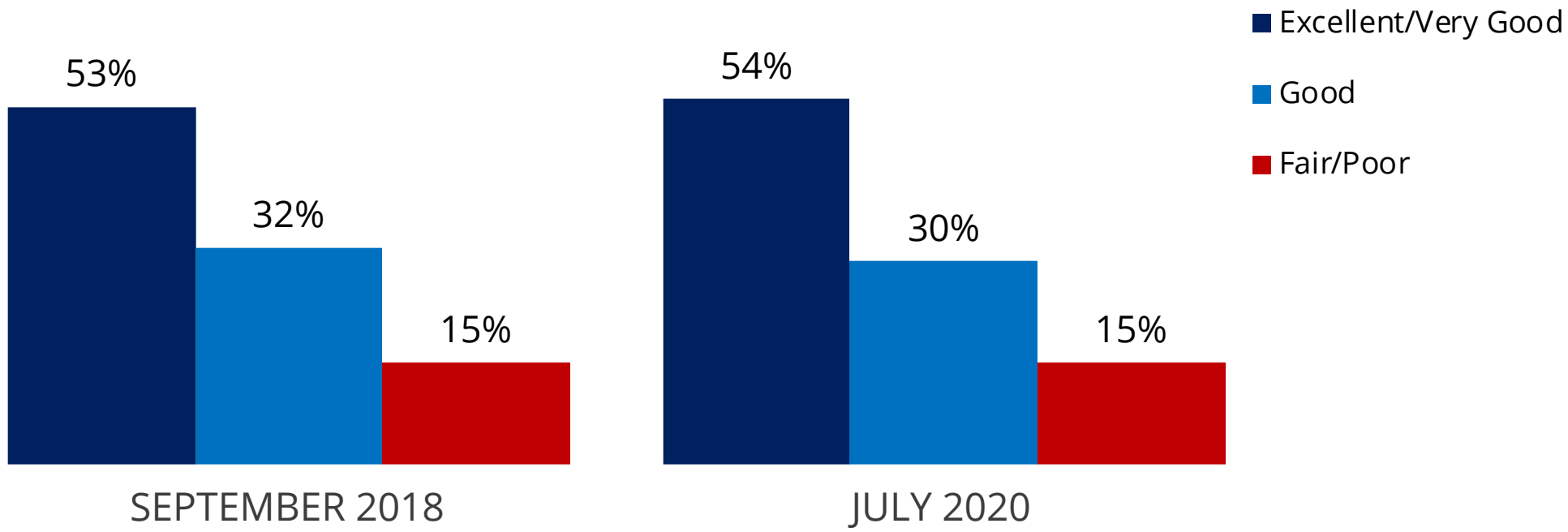
Services with ratings consistent with 2018 are:

Public Health Department Services Personal Importance % 10 – Ranked by Net Difference	2018	2020	Net Difference (2020-2018)
Promote policies that protect people's health such as increasing seatbelt use and encouraging employers to offer paid maternity leave.	36%	39%	+3%
Ensure environmental health, such as clean air and clean water.	52%	53%	+1%
Help stop the spread of communicable diseases, such as Meningitis, Salmonella, and the flu. (N=400)	51%	52%	+1%
Bring others in government, like police and fire departments and state authorities, together to respond to public health emergencies, such as those resulting from natural and human caused disasters, and rebuild afterward.	48%	49%	+1%
Work with partners to help create strong local policies that support health, such as smoke-free workplace laws.	32%	32%	-0-

Next, I am going to read you some things that your local public health department could do in your community. For each item, please tell me how important it is to you personally that your local health department does this in your community.

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT HEALTH & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Self-Reported Health

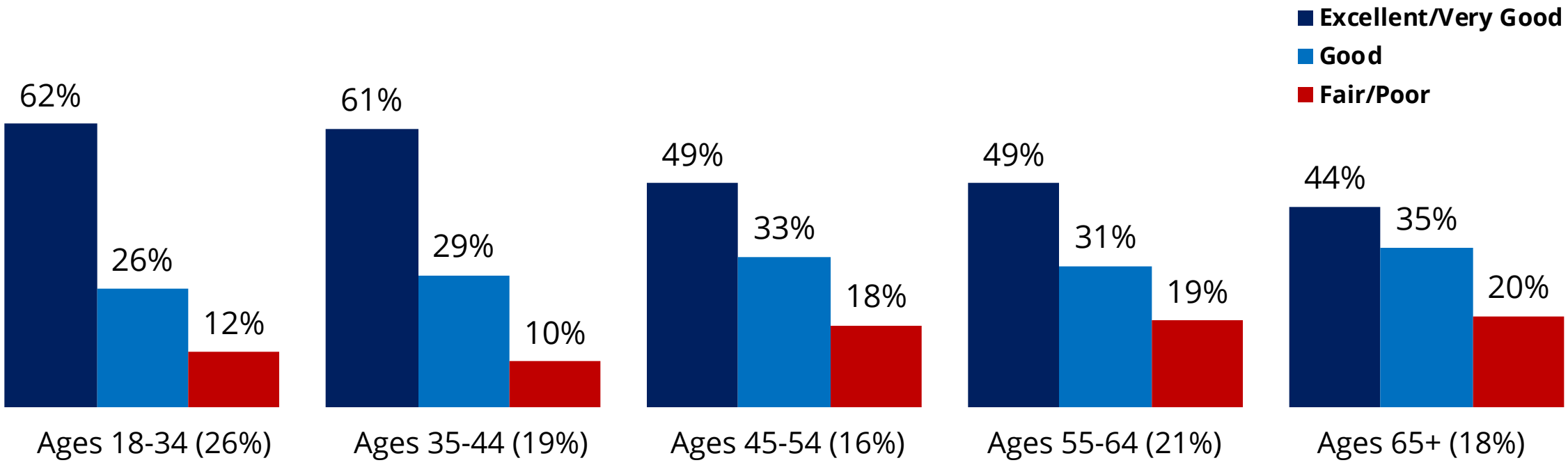


In general, how would you describe your own health, is it...

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Self-Reported Health, by Age

Younger voters are more likely than older voters to describe their health as "excellent/very good."



In general, how would you describe your own health, is it...

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Self-Reported Health, by Employment, Gender/Education & Economic Circumstances

Socio-economic factors have a significant impact on self-reported health.

	Excellent/ Very Good	Good	Fair/ Poor
Employed (57%)	60%	31%	8%
Unemployed (11%)	37%	32%	30%

	Excellent /Very Good	Good	Fair/ Poor
Men <College (26%)	52%	34%	13%
Men College+ (20%)	60%	34%	6%
Women <College (28%)	42%	28%	29%
Women College+ (25%)	64%	26%	10%

	Excellent /Very Good	Good	Fair/ Poor
Poor/Working Class (33%)	40%	33%	26%
Middle Class (43%)	56%	33%	11%
Upper Class/ Well-to-do (22%)	73%	20%	7%

In general, how would you describe your own health, is it...

Self-Reported Health, by Urban/Rural and Ethnicity

Where a person lives, and ethnicity also have an impact on self-reported health.

	Excellent/ Very Good	Good	Fair/Poor
Urban (33%)	52%	30%	18%
Suburban (51%)	56%	32%	12%
Rural (16%)	51%	27%	21%

	Excellent/ Very Good	Good	Fair/Poor
Whites (72%)	55%	31%	13%
Total Non-Whites (26%)	48%	29%	22%
African Americans (12%)	49%	29%	21%
Latinos/Hispanics (10%)	47%	31%	22%

In general, how would you describe your own health, is it…

For more information, visit:
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