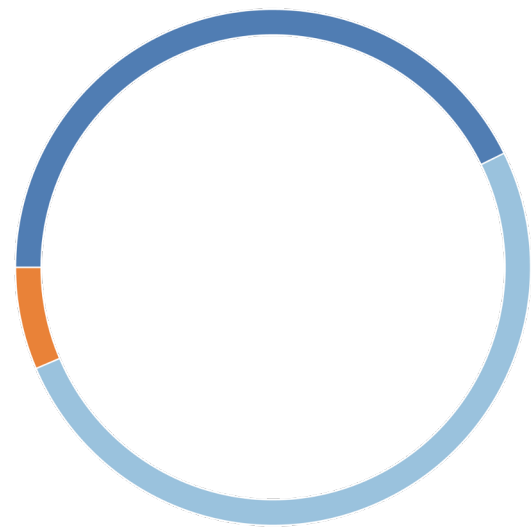
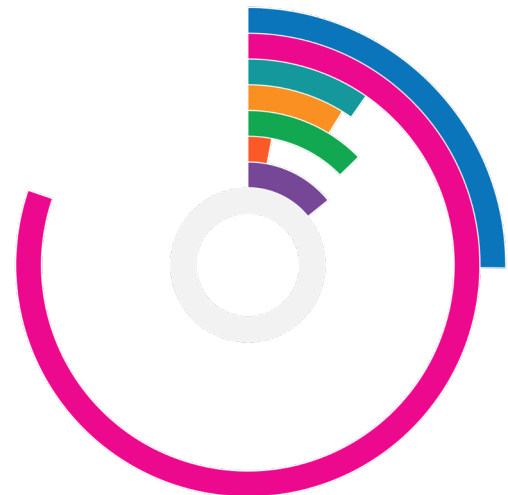
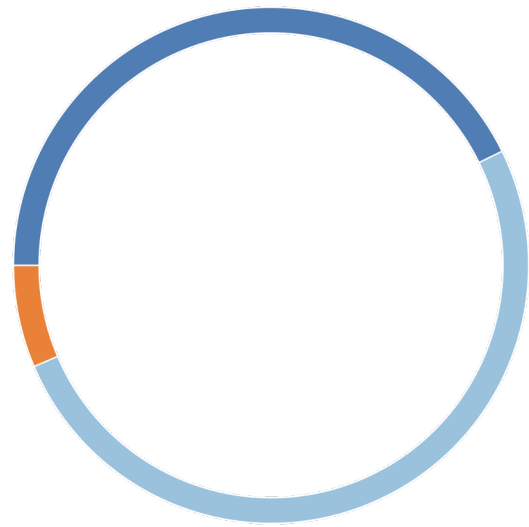




North Sound ACH

2025 Well-Being Report





North Sound ACH

2025 Well-Being Report

This report was prepared by North Sound ACH:

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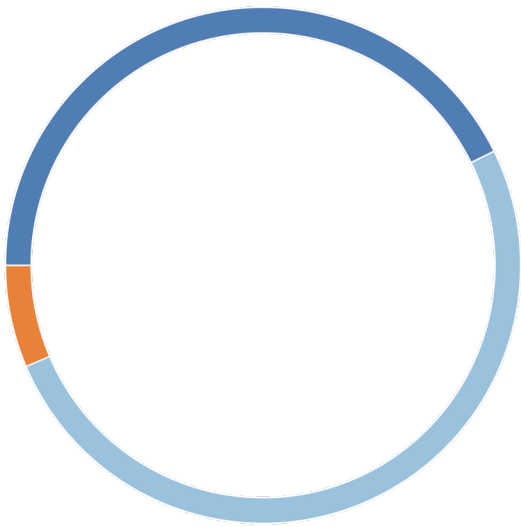
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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	pg. 1
The North Sound Well-Being Survey	pg. 2
Cantril's Ladder	pg. 3
Report Considerations	pg. 4
Demographics	pg. 5
Individual Well-Being	pg. 11
Individual Well-Being Summary	pg. 31
Community Well-Being	pg. 32
Open Response	pg. 36
What Contributes to Community Well-Being?	pg. 37
What Gets in the Way of Community Well-Being?	pg. 54



The North Sound Well-Being Survey

The North Sound Well-Being Survey was developed by a community of practice assembled in January 2024 with the goal of measuring well-being in the North Sound region. Over the course of that year the survey designed and piloted, with a full regional release January – April 2025. Surveys were collected in both digital and paper formats and were available in both English and Spanish.

The survey consisted of 20 questions, and asked for information regarding individual health and well-being, community well-being, financial well-being, and demographics including age, race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and geography.

685 responses were gathered, with analysis conducted from May-July 2025.

Special thanks to the following members of the North Sound Measuring Well-Being Community of Practice - whose efforts made this survey possible.

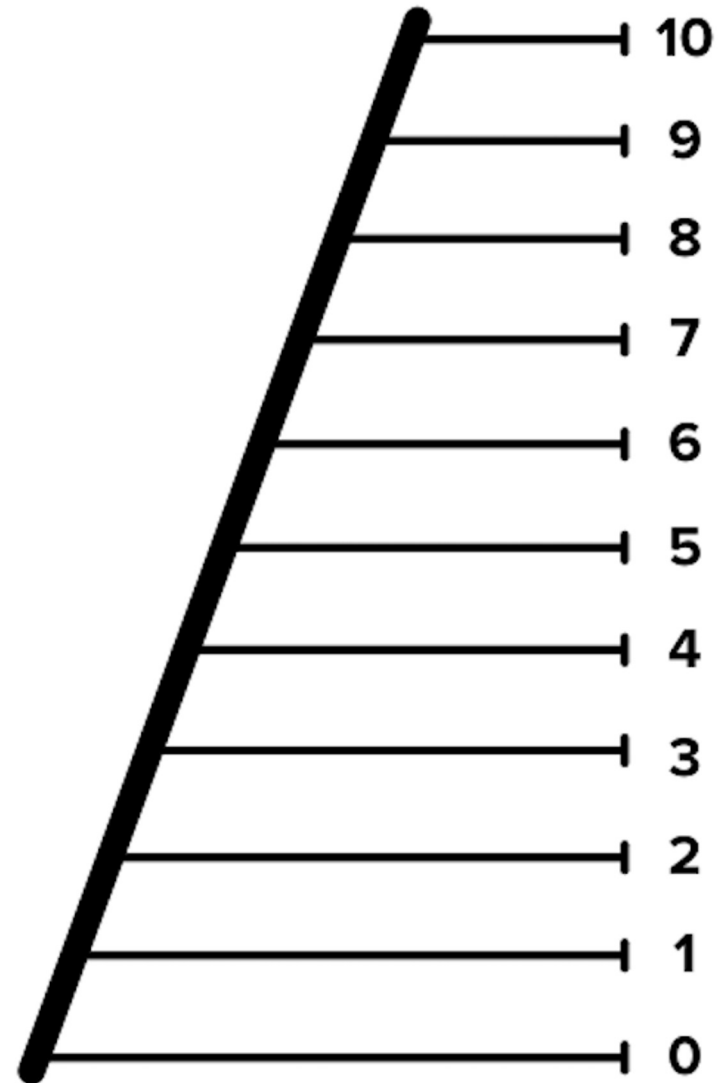
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Eowyn Savela	Mt Baker Planned Parenthood
Monte Roulier	Community Initiatives
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Cantril's Ladder

The Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale, also called the Cantril Scale or Cantril's Ladder, is a well-used and validated measure that determines an individual's subjective perception of their own well-being at a point in time. It asks you to imagine a ladder with steps 0-10. The bottom step (0) of the ladder represents your worst possible life, while the top step (10) represents your best possible life. It then asks two questions:

- *Where on the ladder do you feel you stand at this time?*
- *Where on the ladder do you feel you'll stand five years from now?*

With these two data points a calculation can be run to determine levels of **thriving**, **struggling**, and **suffering**. The Cantril Scale forms the core component of the North Sound Well-Being Survey, with additional questions regarding health, well-being, belonging, and demographics included to provide context and nuance to the data.



Report Considerations



What this report is:

Cantril's Ladder provides a snapshot view of the respondent's subjective well-being. Gallup's regular surveying for their Global Happiness Report shows cultural and geopolitical events (*e.g. the COVID-19 pandemic or the 2008 housing market crash*) can be reflected in the reports of individual subjective well-being.

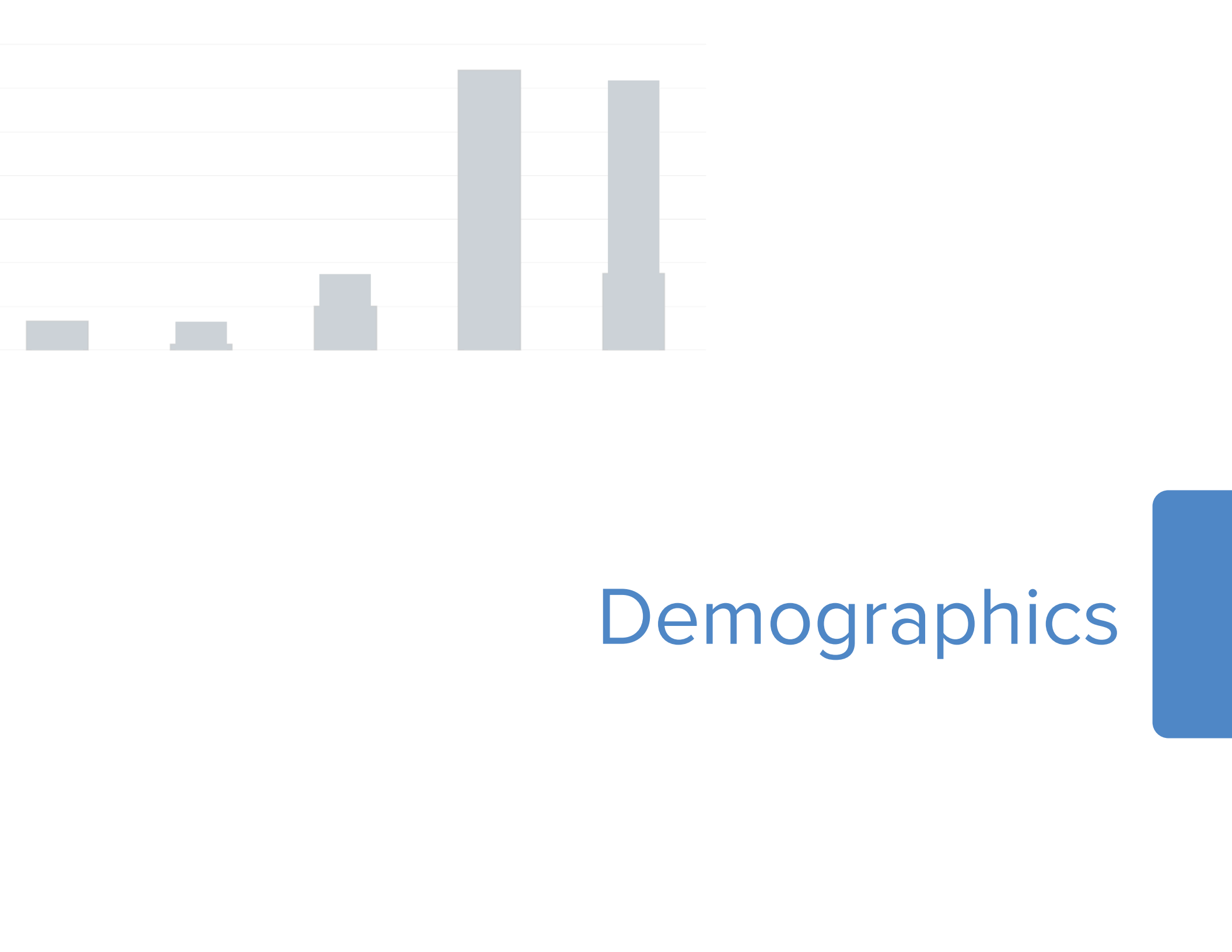
This report should be considered a first step in a longer-term effort to measure changes in well-being in the North Sound region over time. It seeks to raise questions about what factors are contributing to well-being in the North Sound region, what factors are getting in the way of well-being, and to allow the reader to think about where they, their organization, or their community is positioned to effect positive change.



What this report is not:

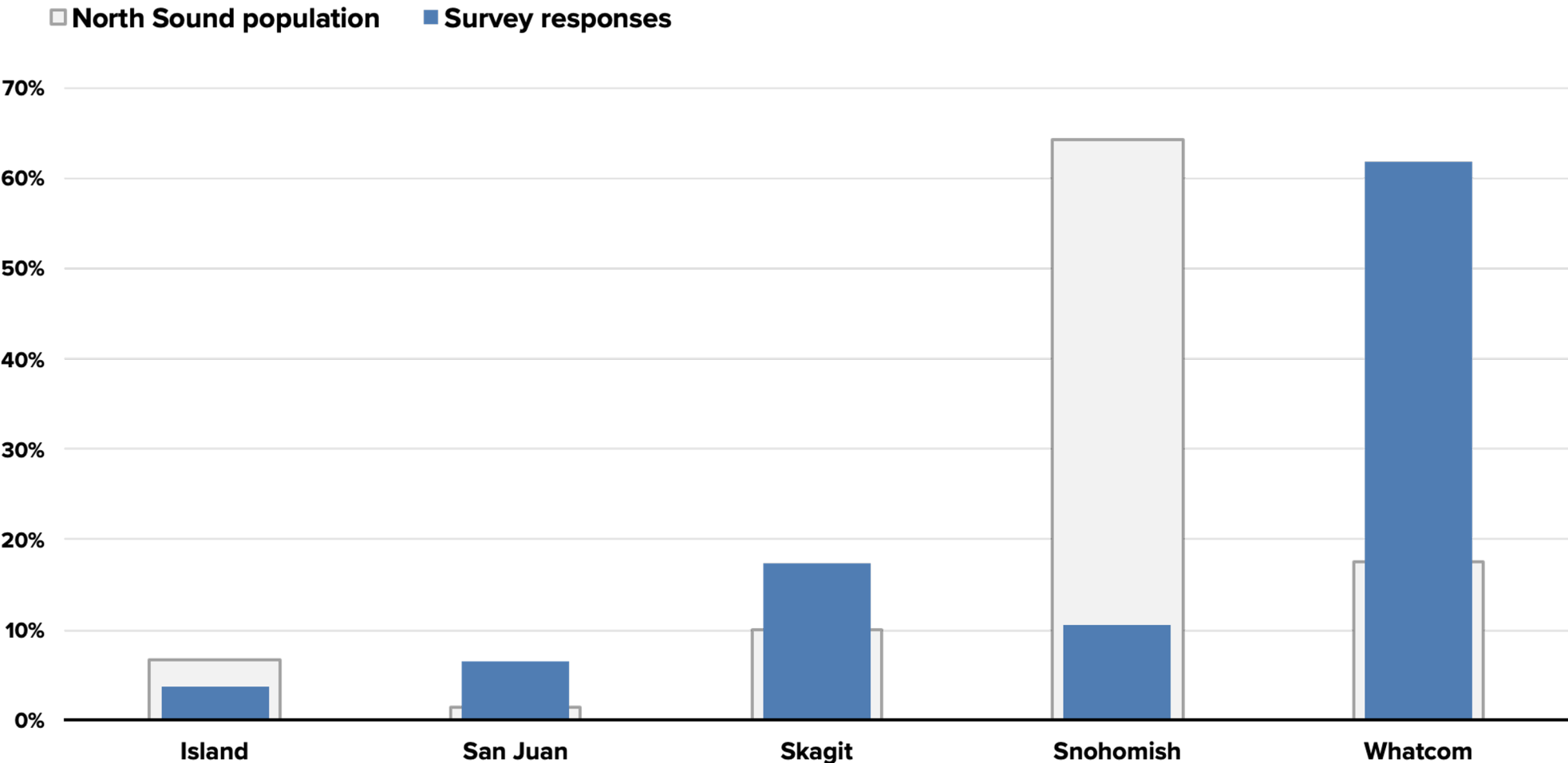
This report does not seek to give definitive answers about what solves the circumstances that lead to individual struggling and suffering, or to paint all geographies or demographic groups with a broad brush. Everyone is situated differently, and what may be true for one member of a community may not be true for another.

Further, some gaps in the data will exist. Some geographies or demographic groups are under-represented in this data; the geographic distribution of Collaborative Action Network partners who helped distribute this survey, as well as national political factors certainly played a role in the areas this survey was deployed and who felt comfortable responding.



Demographics

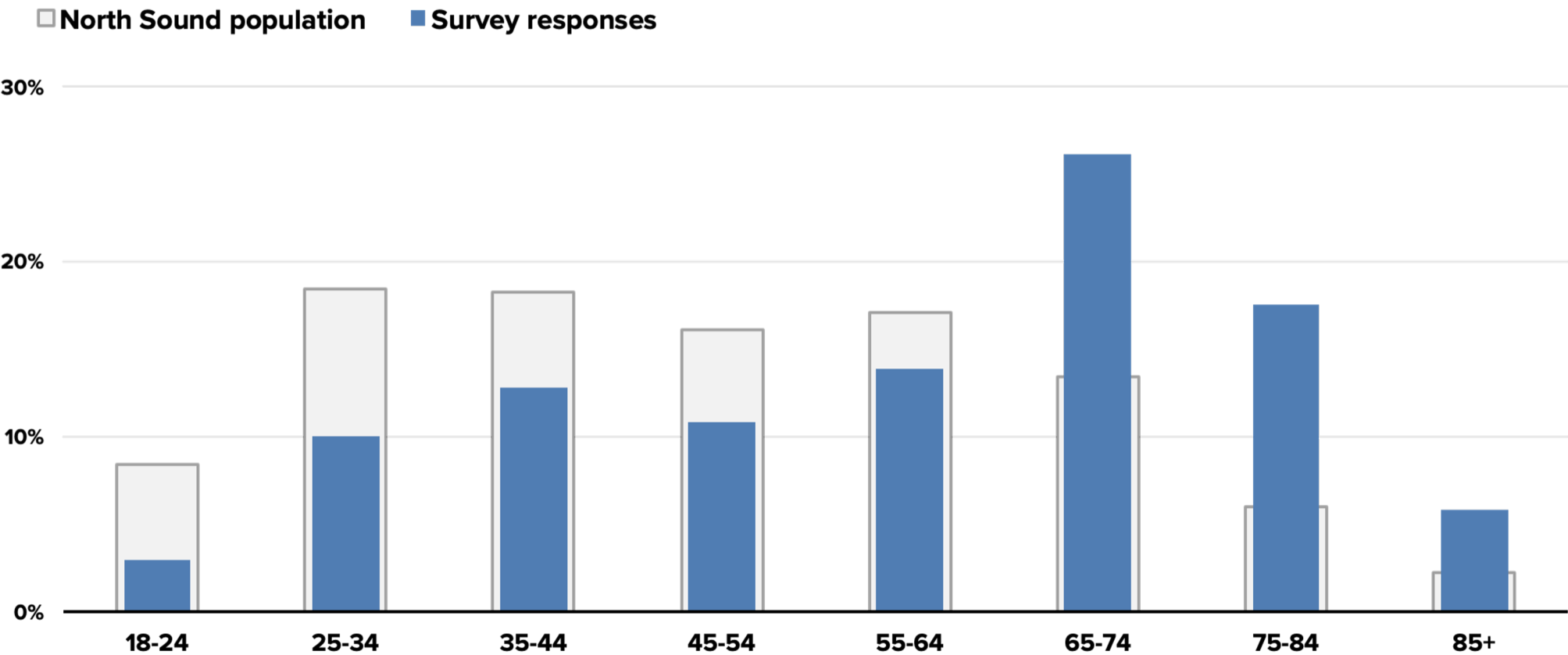
North Sound Well-Being Survey response rate by geography



Because a majority of the Collaborative Action Network partner organizations who helped distribute the Well-Being Survey were located in Whatcom County, as well as Collaborative Action Network membership being concentrated in Skagit and Whatcom Counties, a majority of responses came from these areas. The greatest level of under-representation in geography was in Snohomish County, with just over 10% of responses coming from that county, which contains over 60% of the region’s population.

	North Sound population	Survey responses
Island	6.7%	3.8%
San Juan	1.4%	6.5%
Skagit	10.0%	17.4%
Snohomish	64.2%	10.5%
Whatcom	17.6%	61.9%

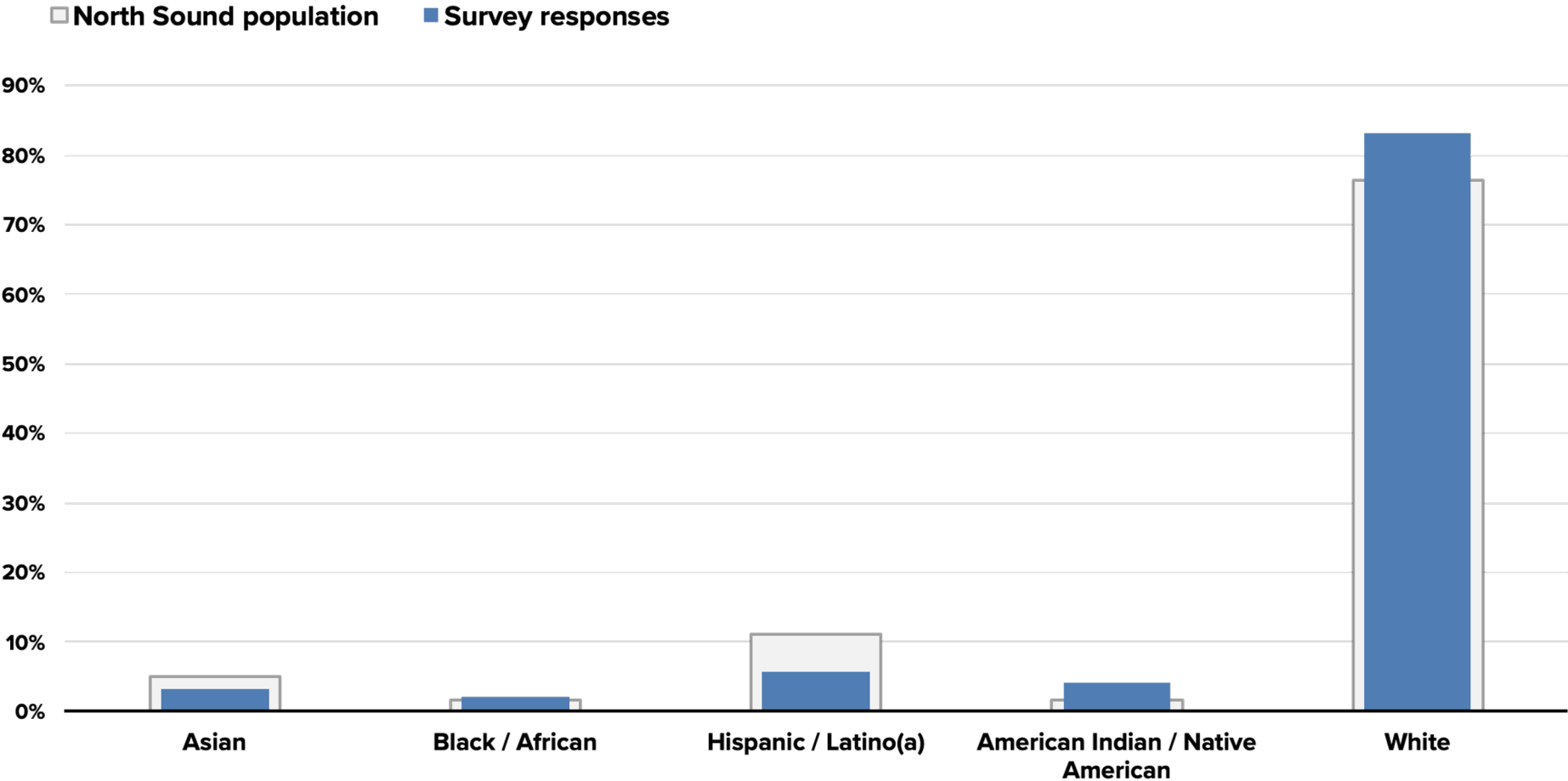
North Sound Well-Being Survey response rate by age



Aging Well Whatcom, and the network of Whatcom County senior centers as well as Meals on Wheels, provided support with surveying their client base during the survey period. Their outreach efforts led to very high representation in the 65+ population, specifically in Whatcom County.

	North Sound population	Survey responses
18-24	8.4%	3.0%
25-34	18.5%	10.0%
35-44	18.2%	12.8%
45-54	16.1%	10.8%
55-64	17.1%	13.8%
65-74	13.4%	26.2%
75-84	6.0%	17.5%
85+	2.3%	5.8%

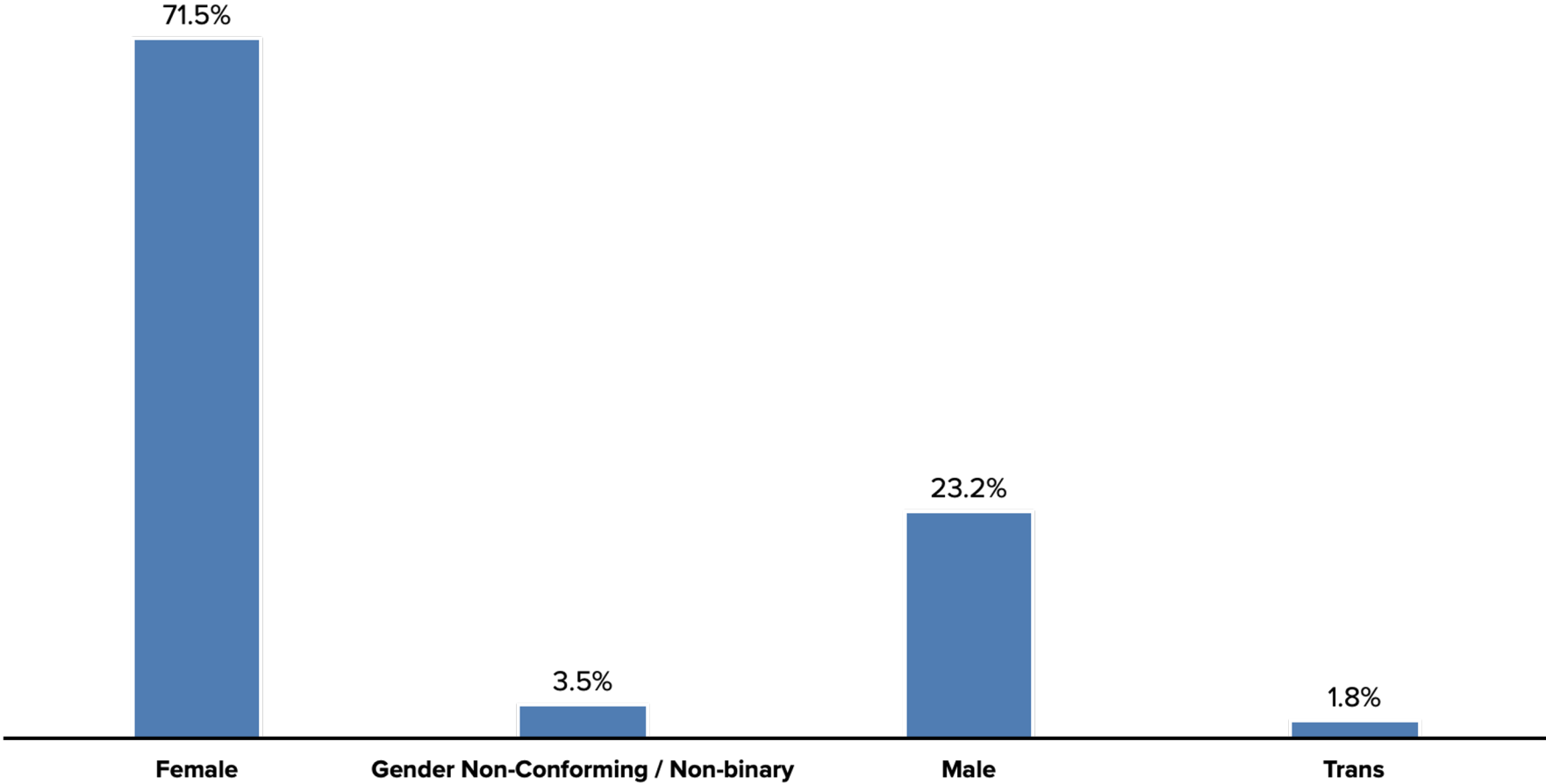
North Sound Well-Being Survey response rate by race/ethnicity



When comparing the North Sound Well-Being Survey’s response rate by race/ethnicity to the regional population, outliers were less extreme than in other comparisons. The percentage of those who identified as American Indian/Native American in the survey was more than double that of the regional population, while the percentage of those who identified as Hispanic/Latino(a) was just under half of the regional population.

	North Sound population	Survey responses
Asian	5.0%	3.2%
Black / African	1.7%	2.1%
Hispanic / Latino(a)	11.1%	5.8%
American Indian / Native American	1.6%	4.2%
White	76.5%	83.1%

North Sound Well-Being Survey response rate by gender identity

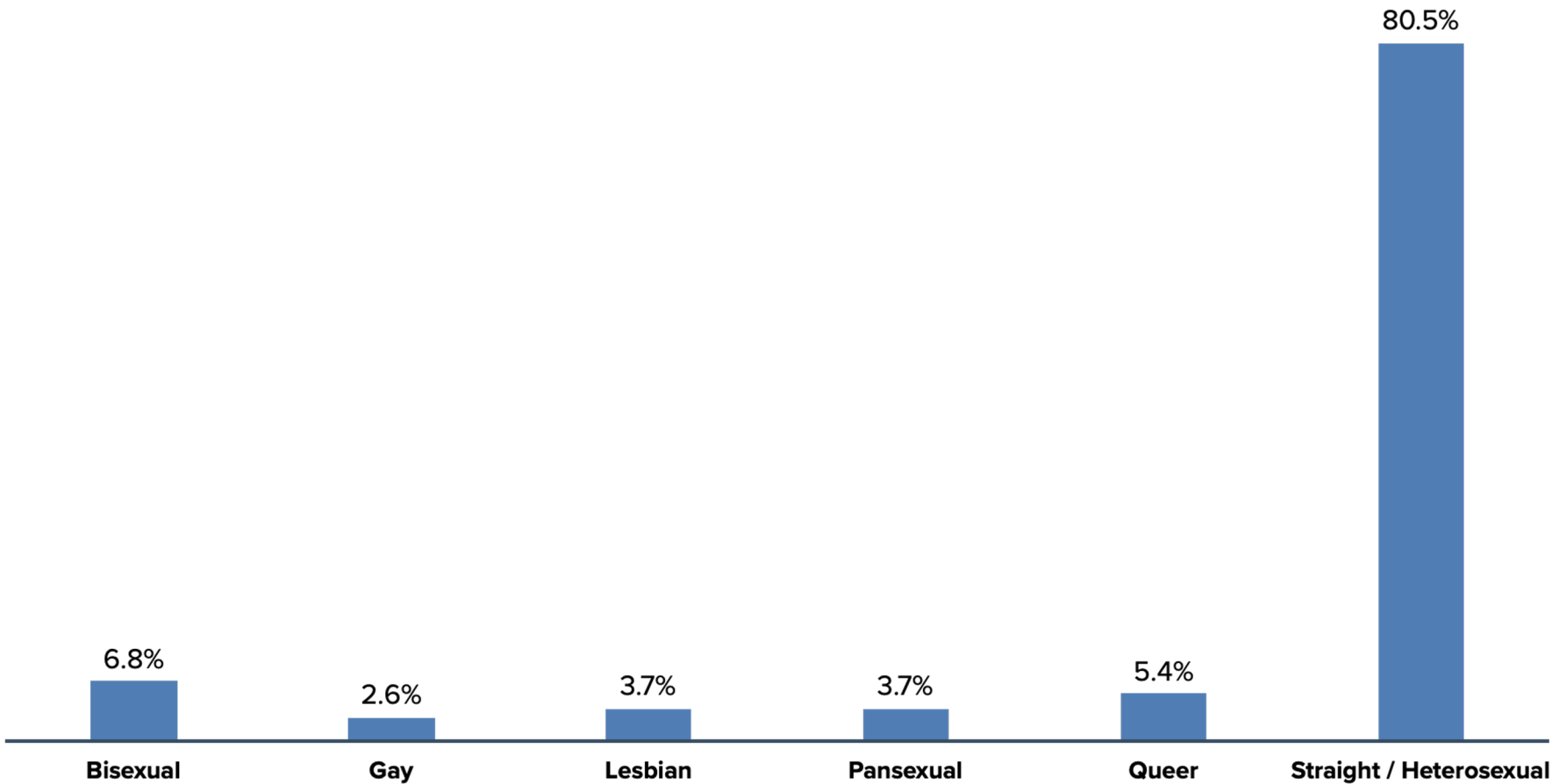


Of those responding to the North Sound Well-Being Survey, a majority identified as female. Those identifying as male made up just under a quarter of respondents, with smaller percentages identifying as gender non-conforming / non-binary or identifying with a trans identity.

Due to difficulty identifying regional demographic data for those identifying as gender non-conforming / non-binary or trans, no regional comparison is made here.

	Survey responses
Female	71.5%
Gender Non-Conforming / Non-binary	3.5%
Male	23.2%
Trans	1.8%

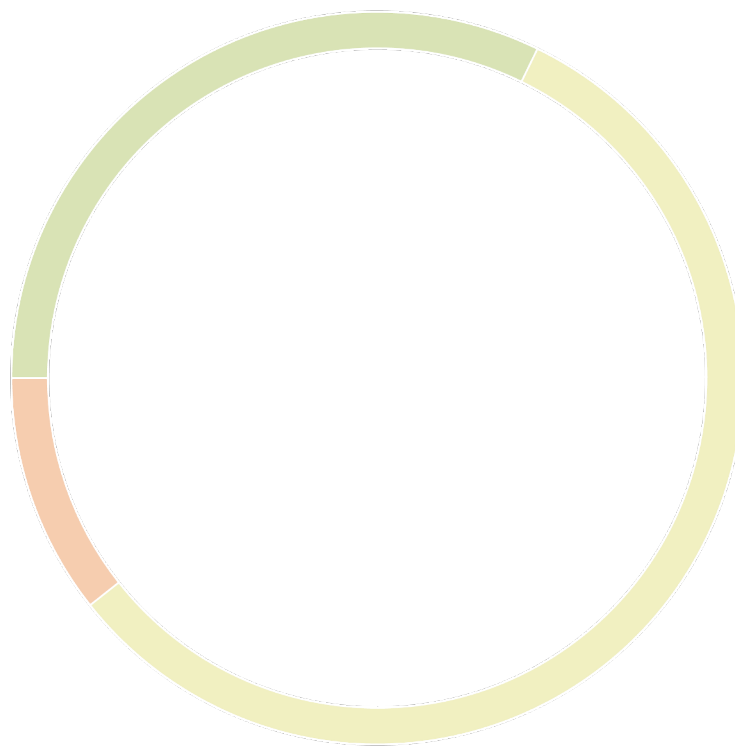
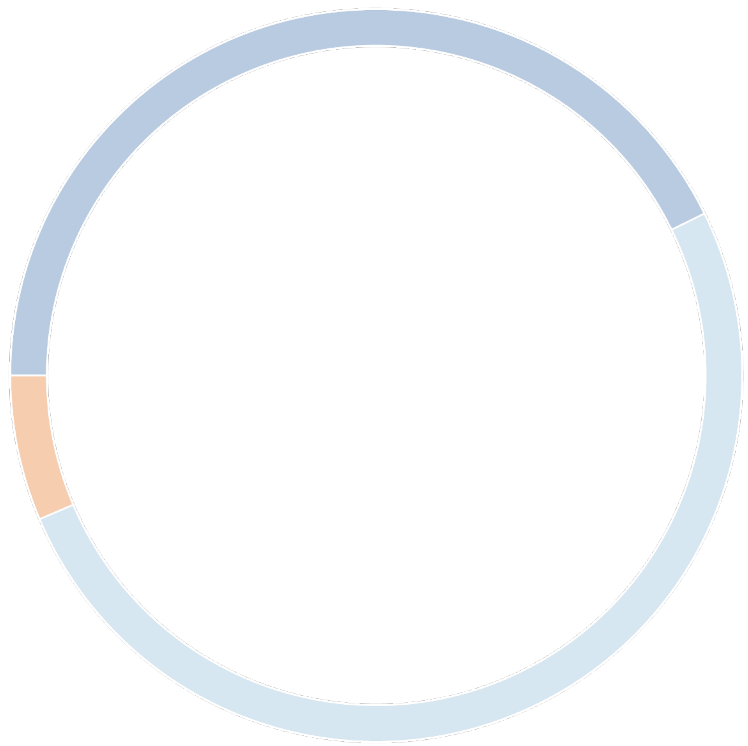
North Sound Well-Being Survey response rate by sexual orientation



Those who identified as straight / heterosexual made up 80.5% of responses, with those identifying as bisexual making up the largest portion of the LGBTQIA+ community responses at 6.8%. Those who identified as gay made up the smallest portion of responses, with just 2.6%.

As with gender identity data, identifying data for a regional comparison of LGBTQIA+ population proved challenging, so no regional comparison was made here.

Survey responses	
Bisexual	6.8%
Gay	2.6%
Lesbian	3.7%
Pansexual	3.7%
Queer	5.4%
Straight / Heterosexual	80.5%



Individual Well-Being:

Who is **thriving**, **struggling**
and **suffering**?





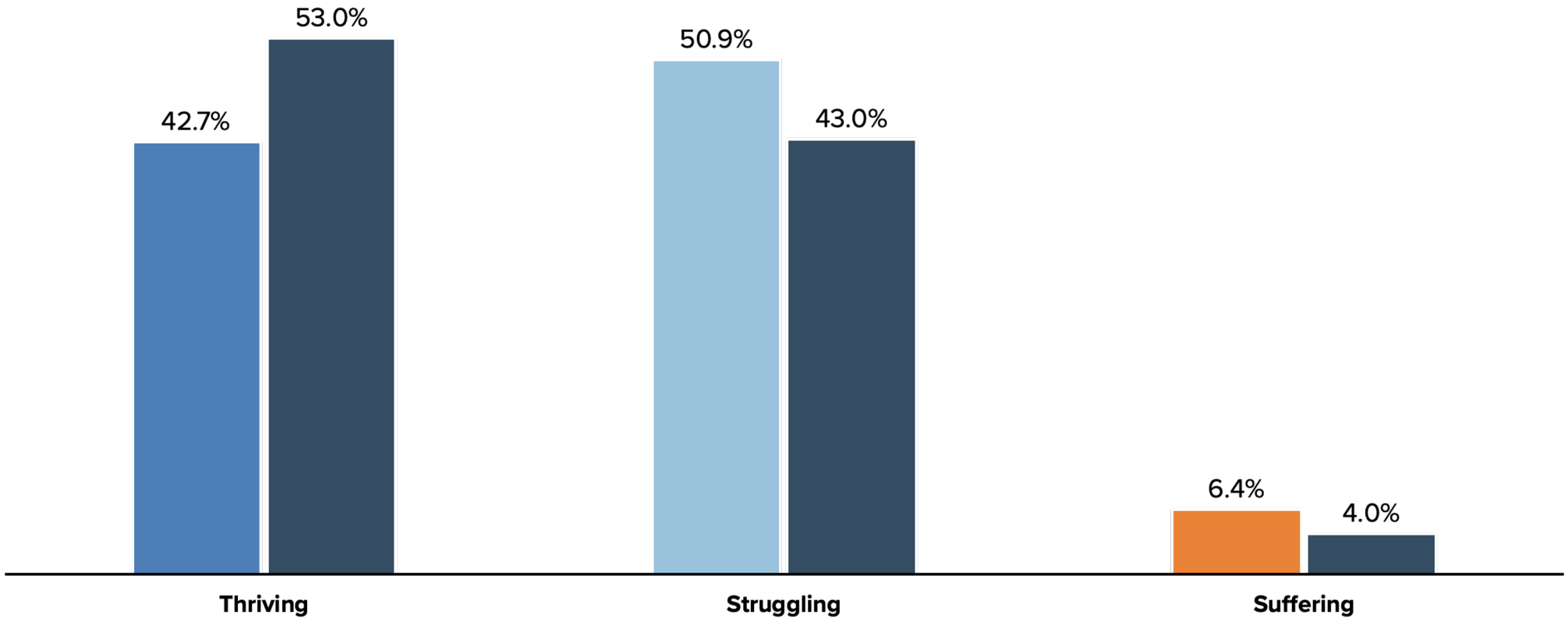
Less than half of respondents to the North Sound Well-Being Survey reported that they were **thriving** based on answers to the Cantril Scale, meaning that they rated their current life situation at least a 7 out of 10, and their future life situation an 8 or higher; their current outlook is excellent and they expect things to stay that way over the next five years.

Those who were **suffering**, meaning that their current and future outlook is negative, made up 6.4% of responses. A response of 4 or below on both current and future life situation indicates **suffering** on the Cantril Scale.

Just over half of respondents, 50.9%, reported **struggling**. A **struggling** response on the Cantril Scale can be more complex than other responses; it can indicate that someone rates their current life situation highly (7+) but expects things to get worse in the future, that someone rates their current life situation in the **suffering** range (4 and below) but expects things to get better, or that they find themselves in the middle of the scale with no outlook for things to worsen or improve.

Thriving, struggling, and suffering in the North Sound region compared to the United States

■ US (Gallup - June 2024)



Respondents to the North Sound Well-Being Survey indicated a lower level of thriving and higher levels of struggling and suffering when compared to Gallup's most recent national survey.



Thriving
32.2%

Financial well-being in the North Sound Region

Struggling
57.1%

Suffering
10.6%

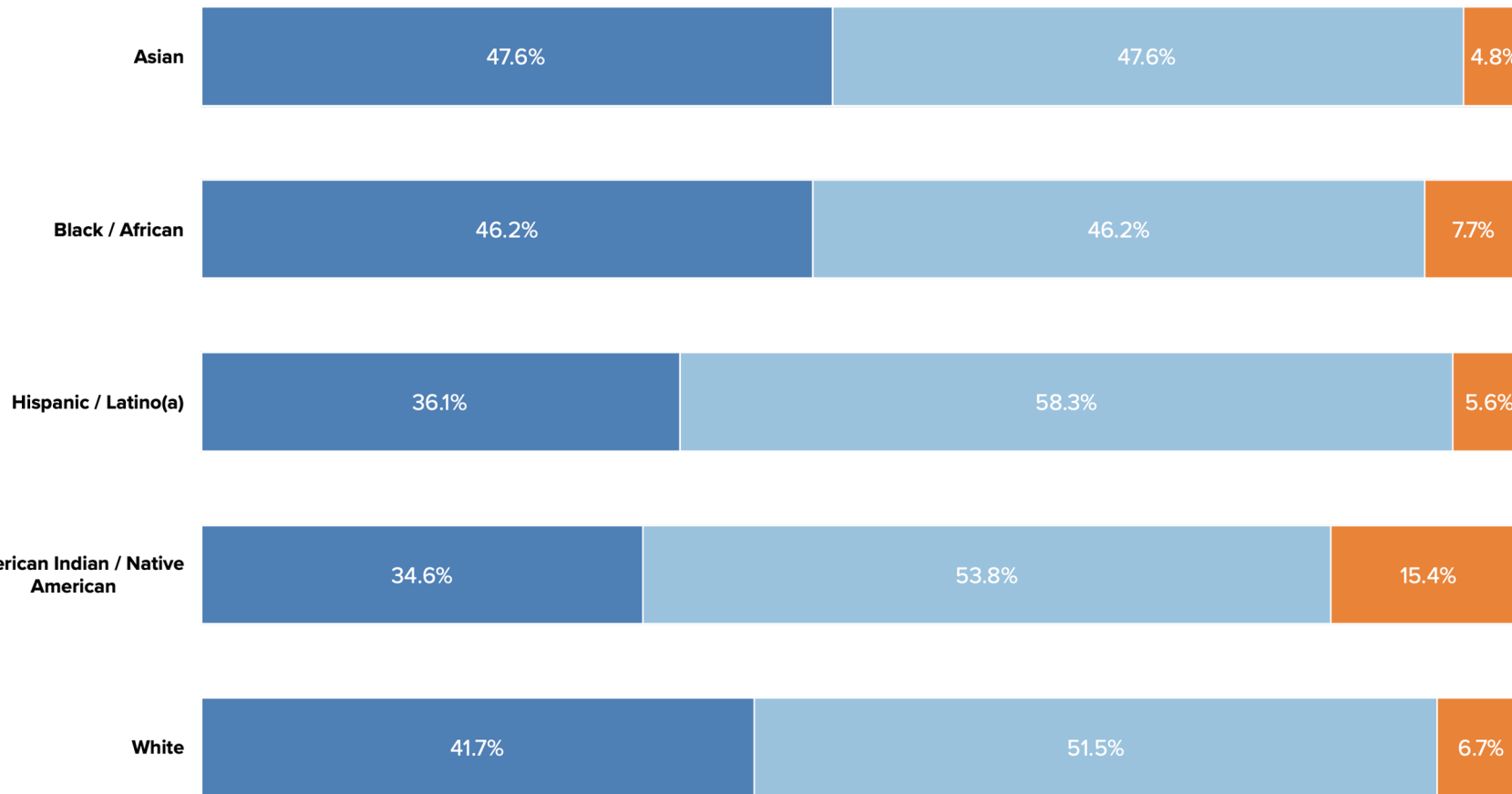
In addition to their general well-being, respondents were also asked to rate their financial well-being using the Cantril Scale. The rate of **thriving** financially was lower than reported for general well-being, 32.2% compared to 42.7%. Rates of **struggling** and **suffering** increased when comparing financial well-being to general well-being.

For the most part, financial well-being followed this trend throughout this section of the survey; levels of **thriving** trailed general well-being while levels of **struggling** and **suffering** were amplified.

	General well-being	Financial well-being
Thriving	42.7%	32.2%
Struggling	50.9%	57.1%
Suffering	6.4%	10.6%

Rates of well-being across race/ethnicity

■ Thriving ■ Struggling ■ Suffering

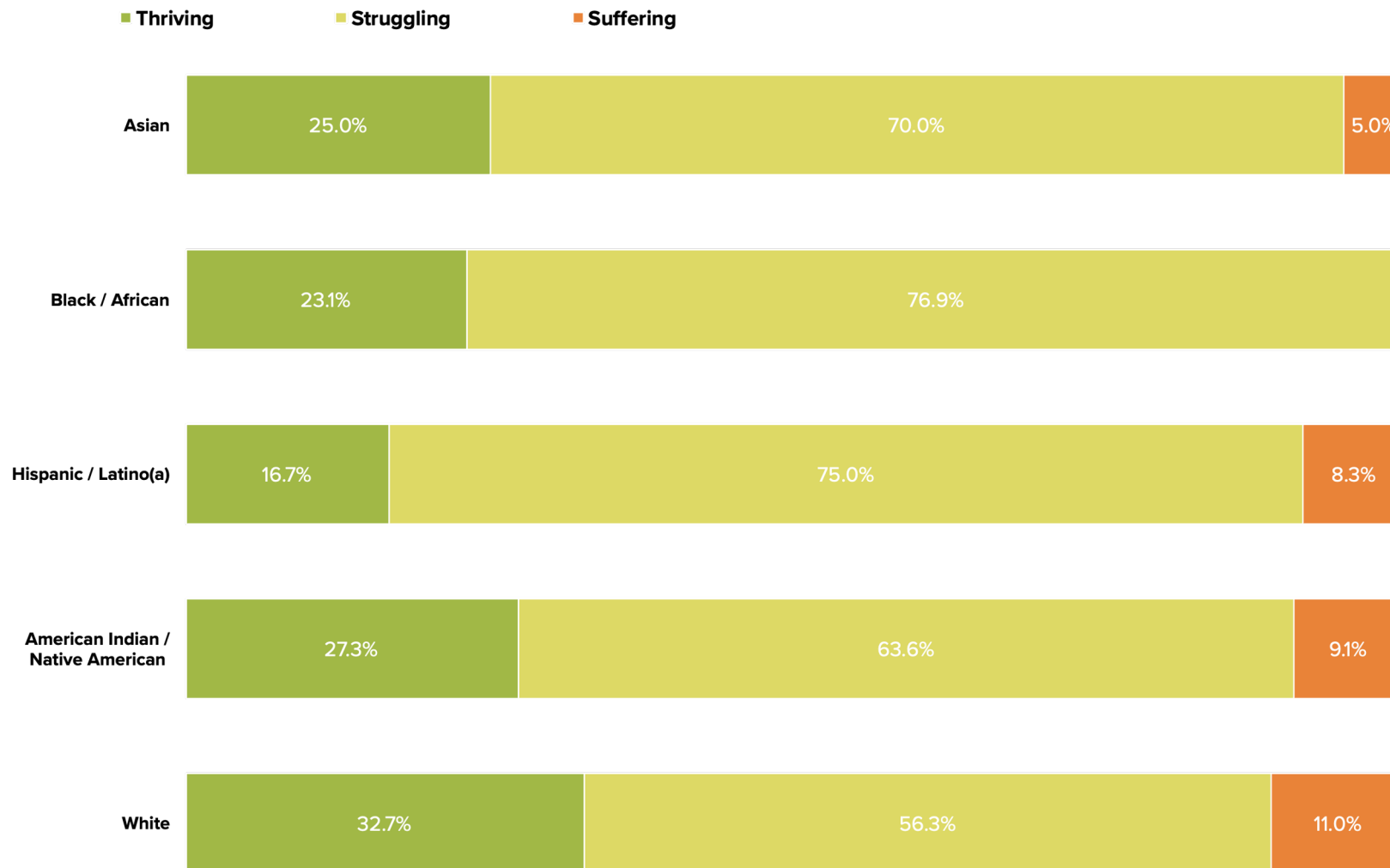


Those who identified as American Indian / Native American reported the lowest level of **thriving** out of all demographic groups, followed by those identifying as Hispanic / Latino(a). The highest levels of **thriving** were reported by those identifying as Asian followed by Black / African, which were also the only demographic groups that reported levels of **thriving** above the regional average.

Those who identified as Hispanic / Latino(a), American Indian / Native American, and White reported levels of **struggling** above the regional average.

Those identifying as American Indian / Native American reported the highest levels of **suffering**, more than double the regional average.

Rates of financial well-being across race/ethnicity

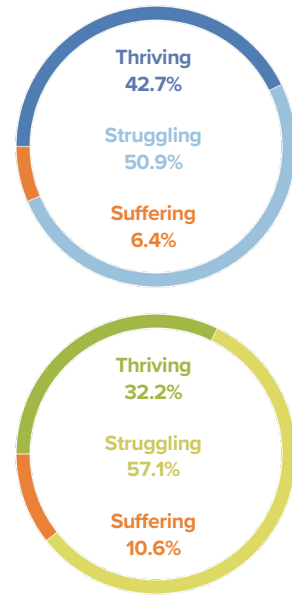
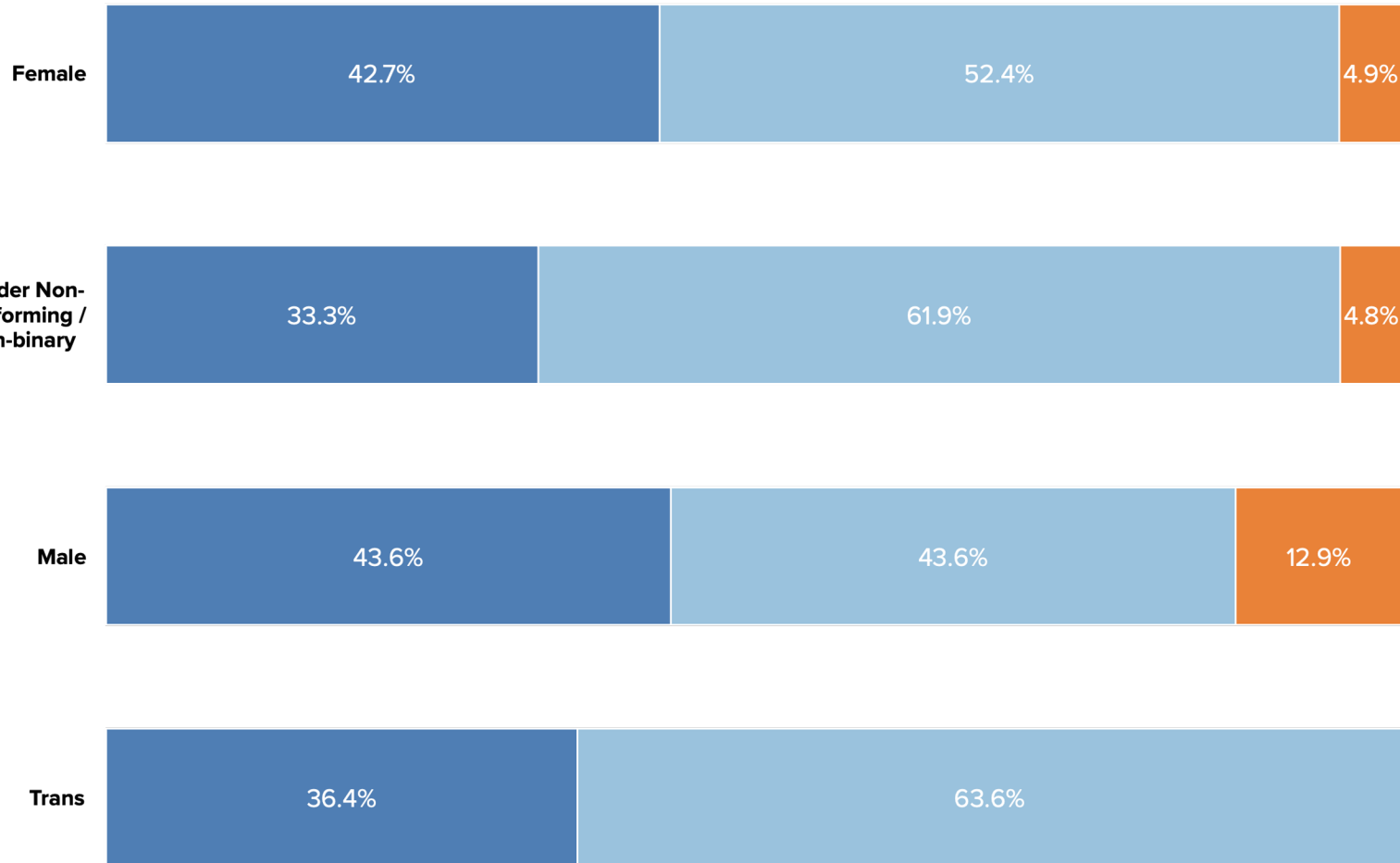


Those who identified as White reported levels of **thriving** financially at a rate just higher than the regional average, while those identifying as Hispanic / Latino(a) reported the lowest levels of **thriving** financially at just 16.7%.

Those identifying as Black / African reported the highest level of **struggling** financially at 76.9%, though none identifying as Black / African reported **suffering** financially. Those who identified as White were the only race/ethnicity demographic that reported levels of **struggling** financially lower than the regional average.

Rates of well-being across gender identity

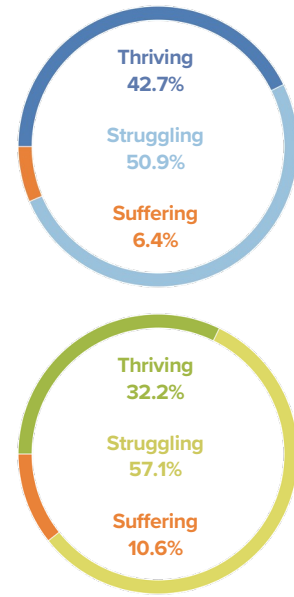
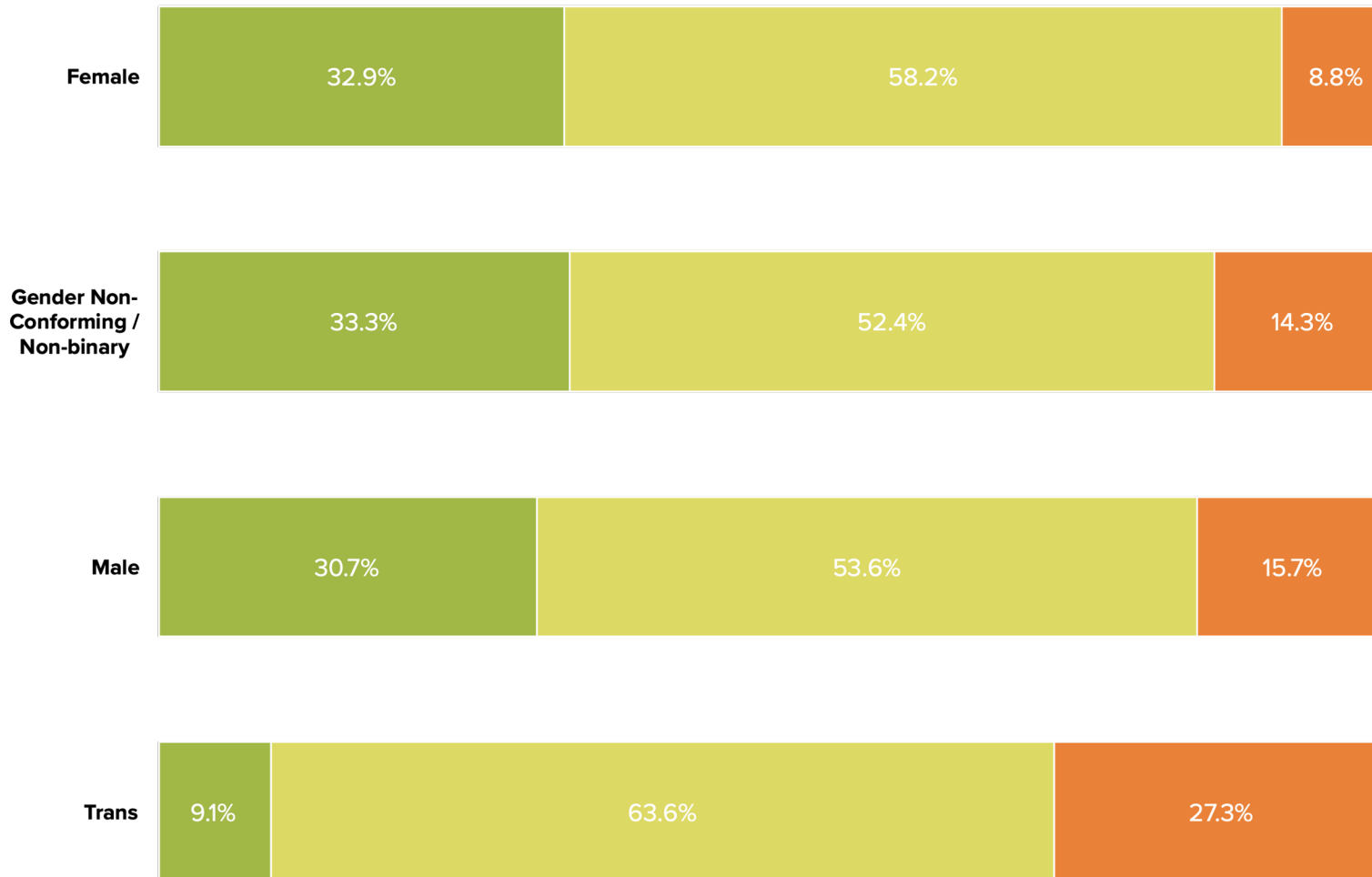
■ Thriving ■ Struggling ■ Suffering



Men reported rates of **thriving** above the regional average, the only gender identity demographic to do so. However, they were also the only gender identity demographic to report rates of **suffering** above the regional average, at more than double the rate. Those identifying as trans saw the highest levels of **struggling**, and those identifying as gender non-conforming/non-binary reported the lowest levels of **thriving**, followed by those who identified as trans.

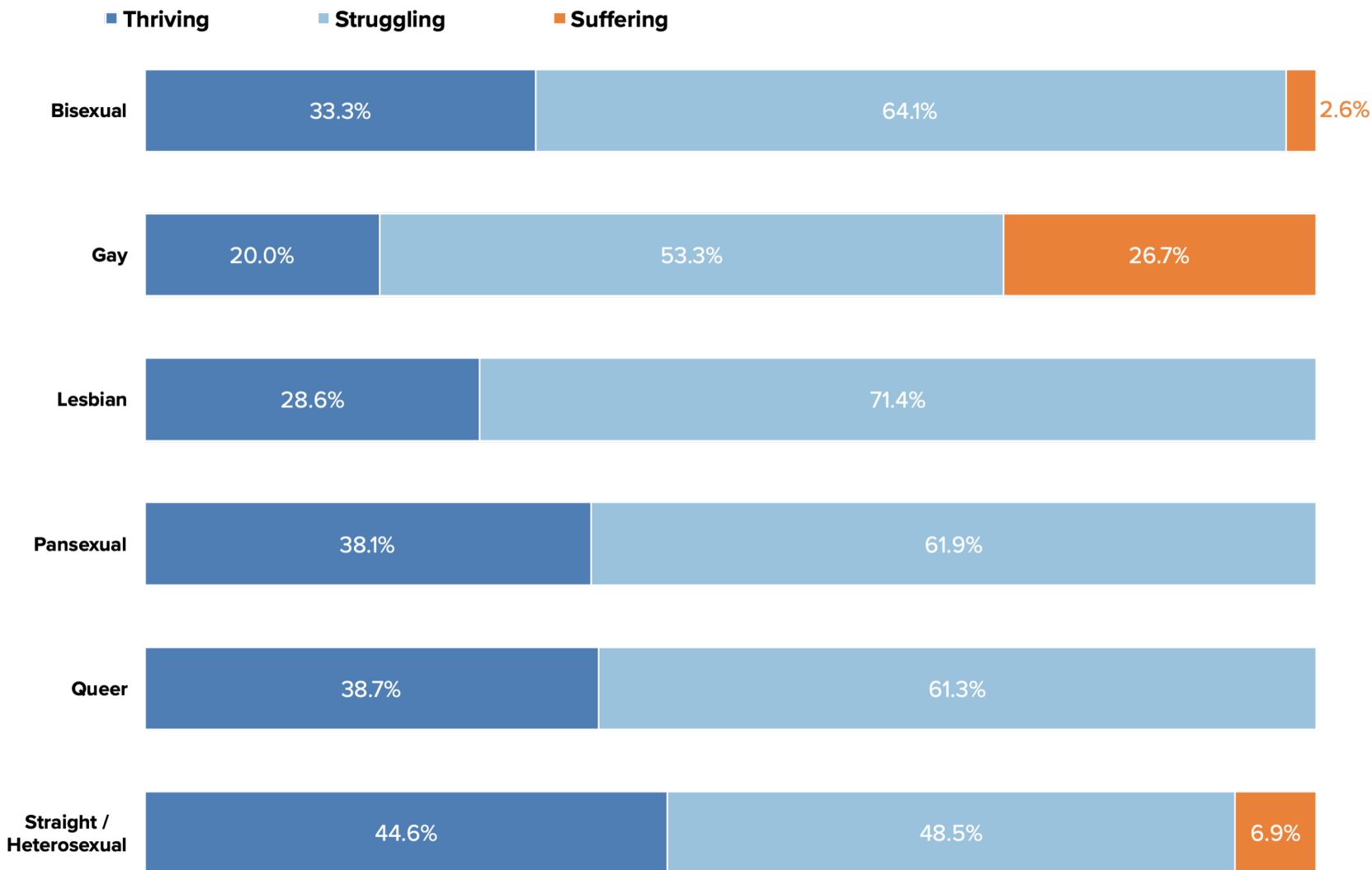
Rates of financial well-being across gender identity

■ Thriving ■ Struggling ■ Suffering



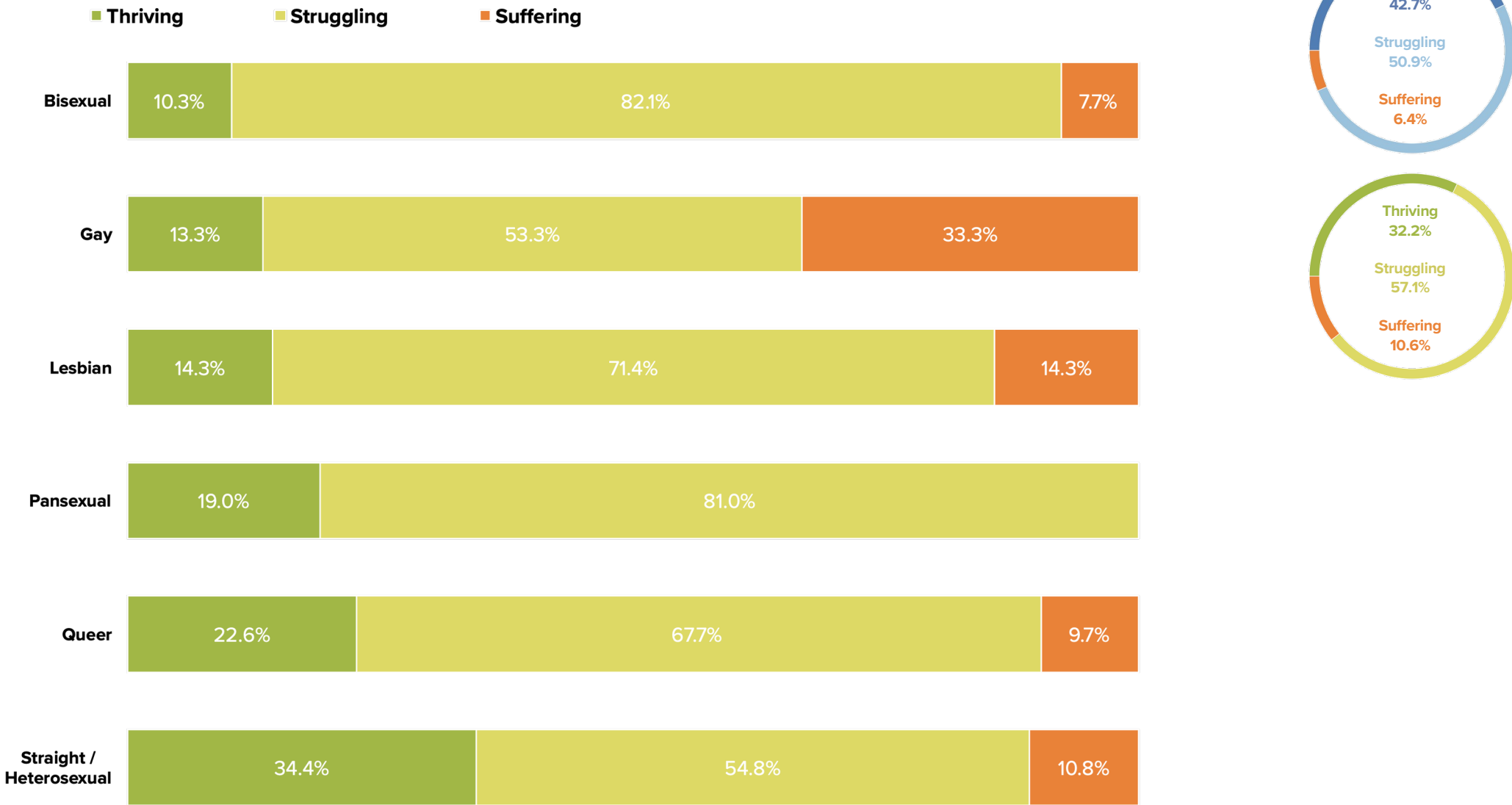
Only 9.1% of those who identified as trans reported **thriving** financially, and they also reported levels of **suffering** financially that were more than double the regional average, 27.3% compared to 10.6%.

Rates of well-being across sexual orientation



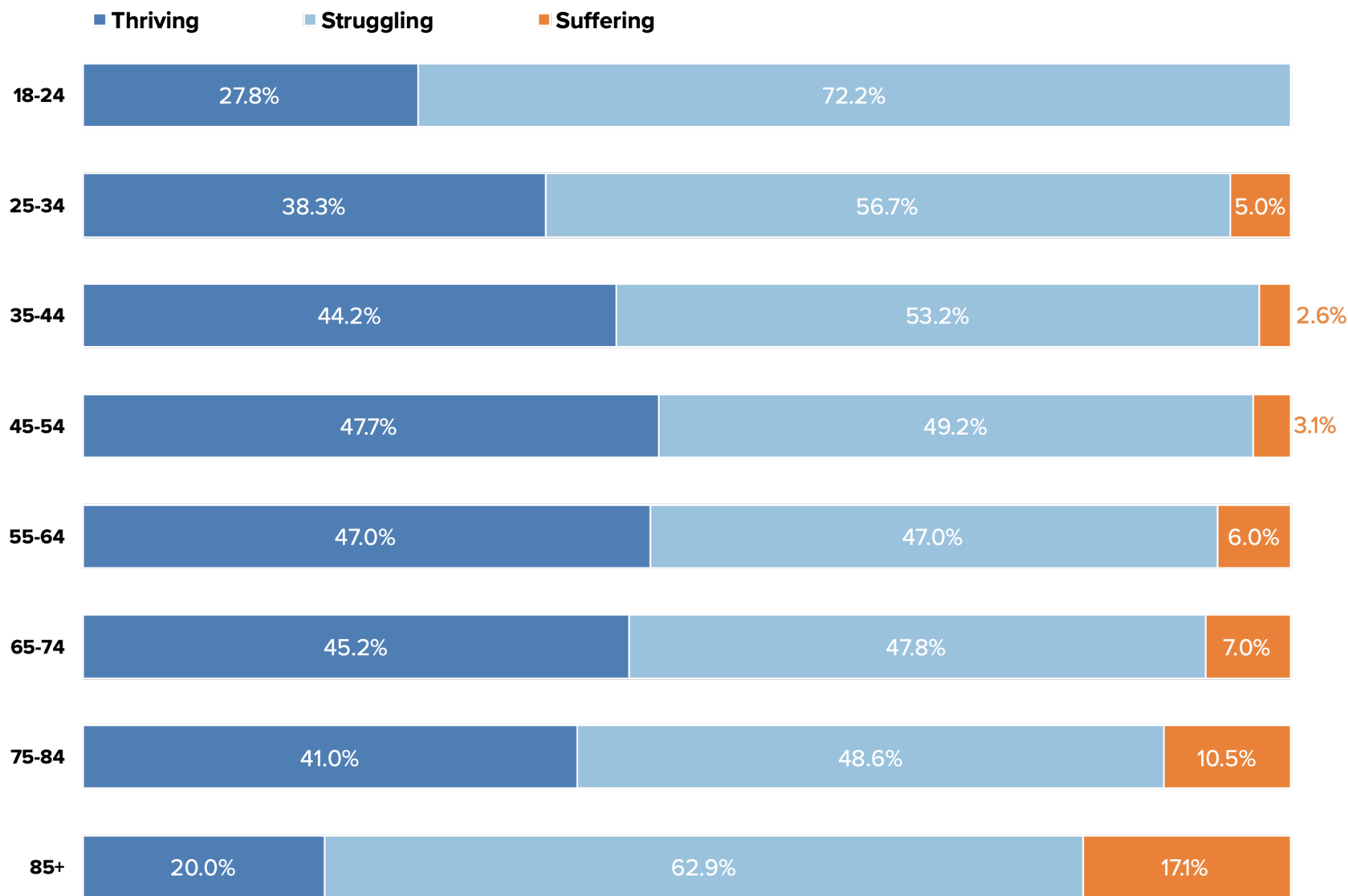
Those identifying as straight/heterosexual were the only group who reported levels of **thriving** higher than the regional average, and levels of **struggling** below the regional average. Those identifying as gay reported the lowest levels of **thriving** at just 20.0%, and the highest level of **suffering** at 26.7%. All who reported being a part of the LGBTQIA+ community reported above average levels of **struggling**.

Rates of financial well-being across sexual orientation



All who reported an identity within the LGBTQIA+ community reported levels of **thriving** financially that were far below the regional average, with those who identified as bisexual reporting the lowest levels of **thriving** at 10.3%.

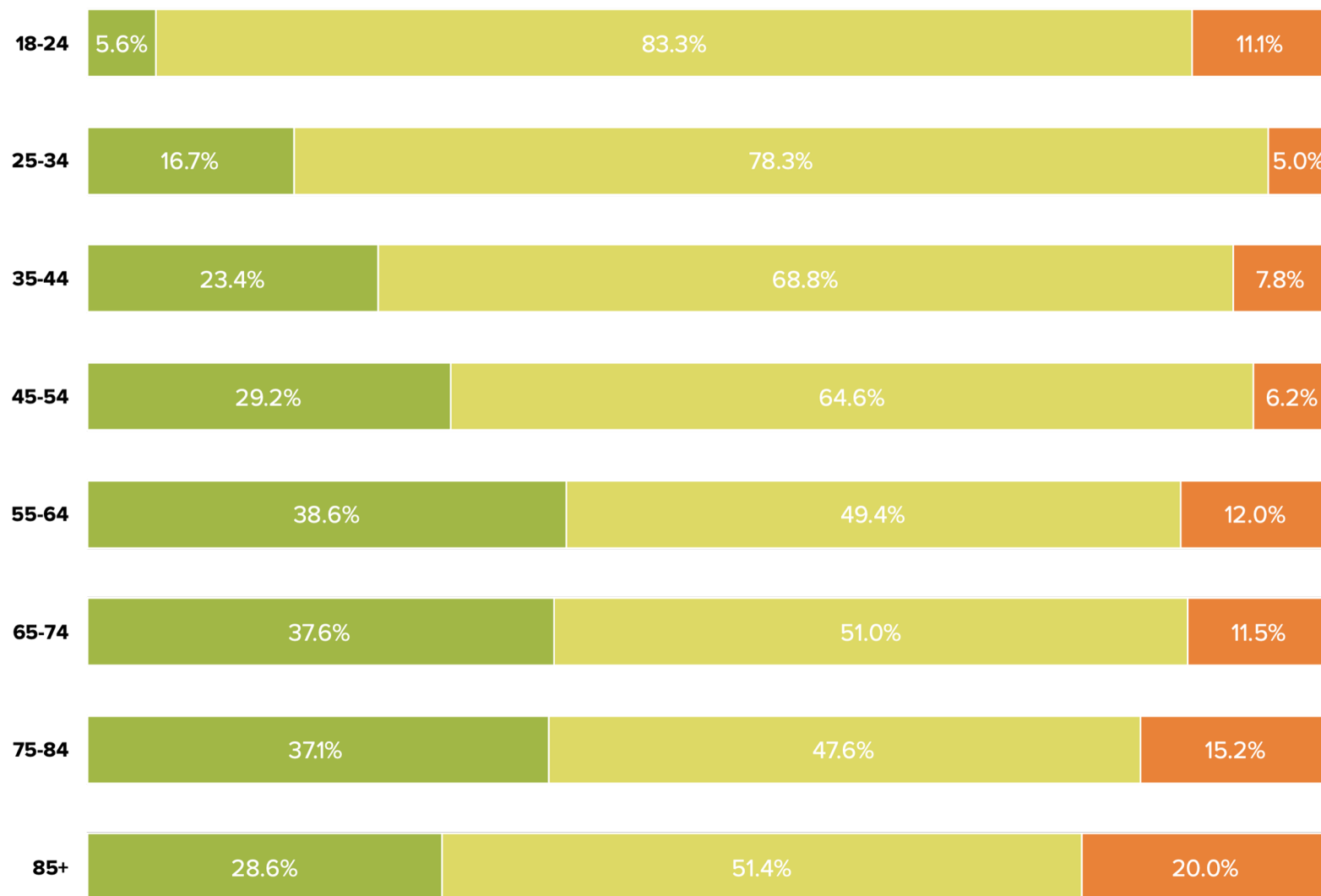
Rates of well-being across age



Rates of **thriving** increased with age, until peaking with the 45-54 age group and starting a moderate decline. Rates of **suffering** also began to rise steadily from the 35-44 age group on, capping out with 17.1% of the 85+ demographic reporting **suffering**. Youth 18-24 reported the highest levels of **struggling** at 72.2%, well above the regional average.

Rates of financial well-being across age

■ Thriving ■ Struggling ■ Suffering

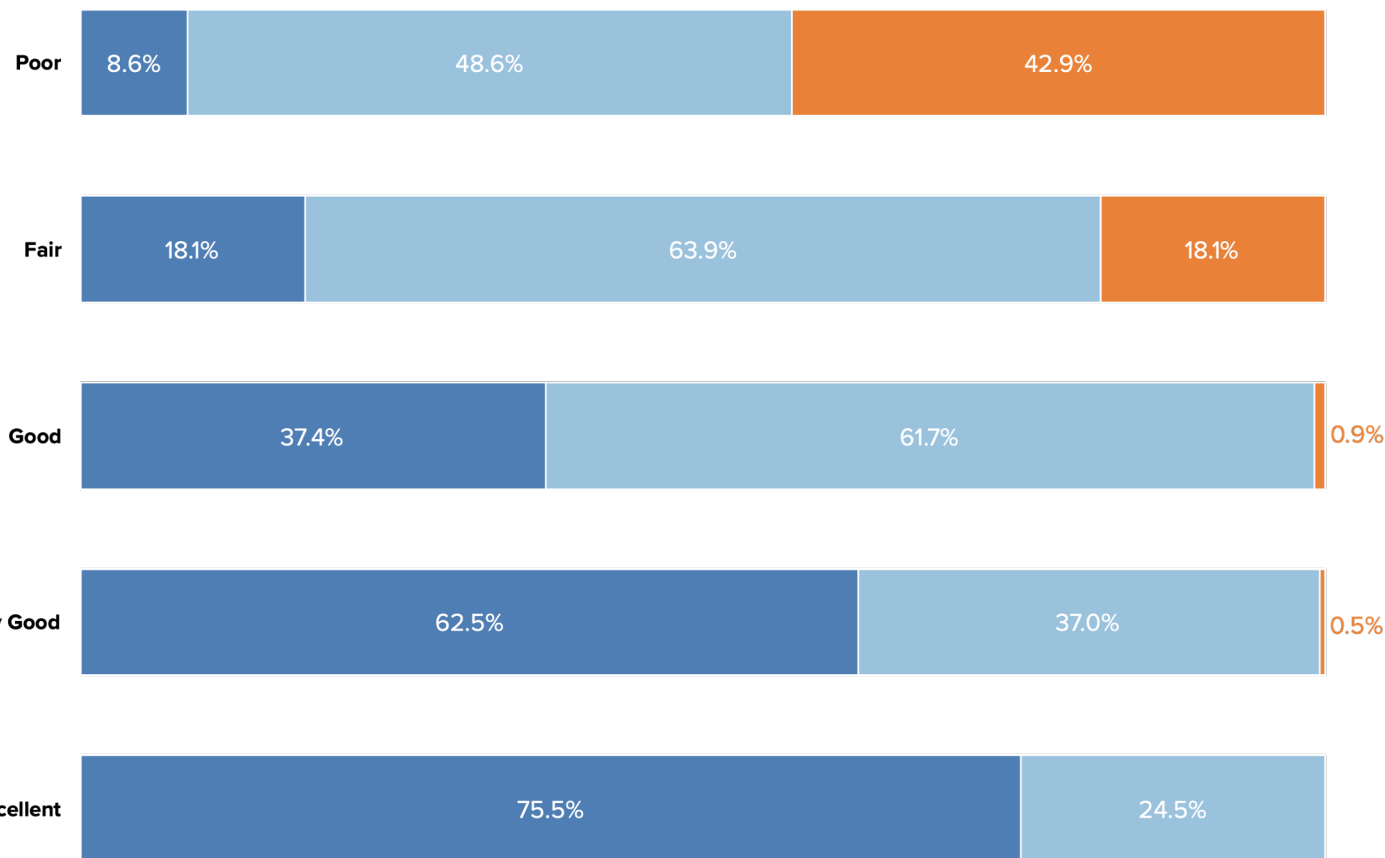


Rates of **thriving** by the 18-24 age group decreased dramatically when compared to the rate of general well-being **thriving**, while the those who reported **struggling** financially rose to 83.3%; the highest rate of **struggling** in any demographic area.

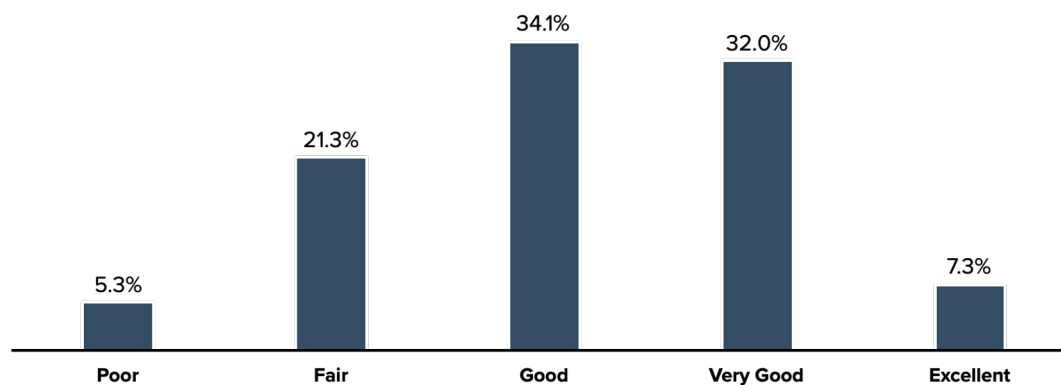
On the other hand, the 85+ age group was the only demographic group to see an increase in **thriving** when comparing financial and general well-being, rising from 20.0% to 28.6%.

In general, how would you rate your physical health?

■ Thriving ■ Struggling ■ Suffering



In general, how would you rate your physical health? (total responses)

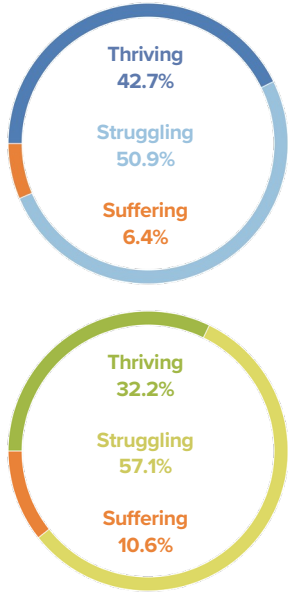
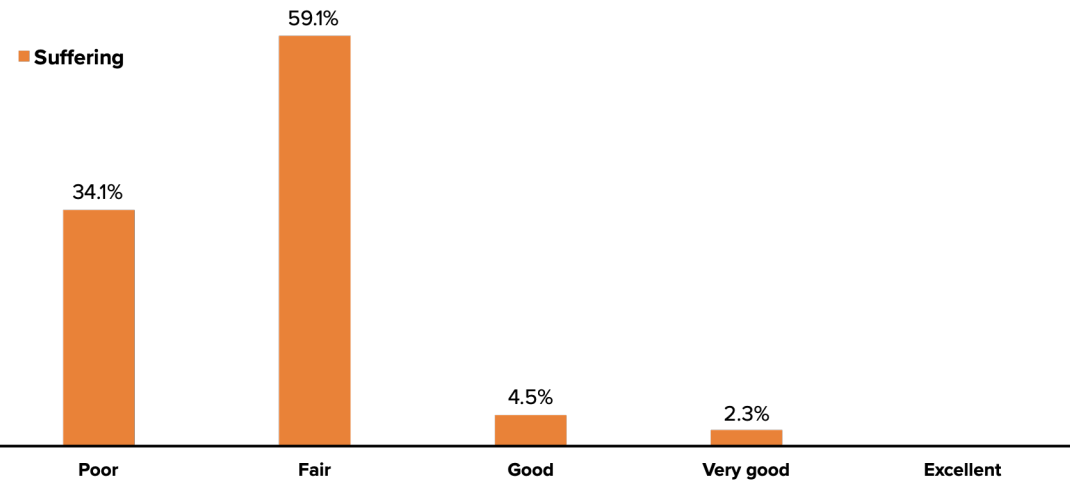
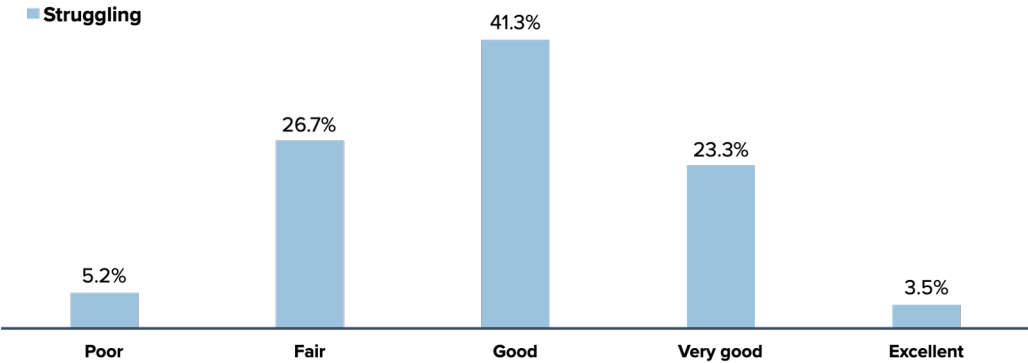
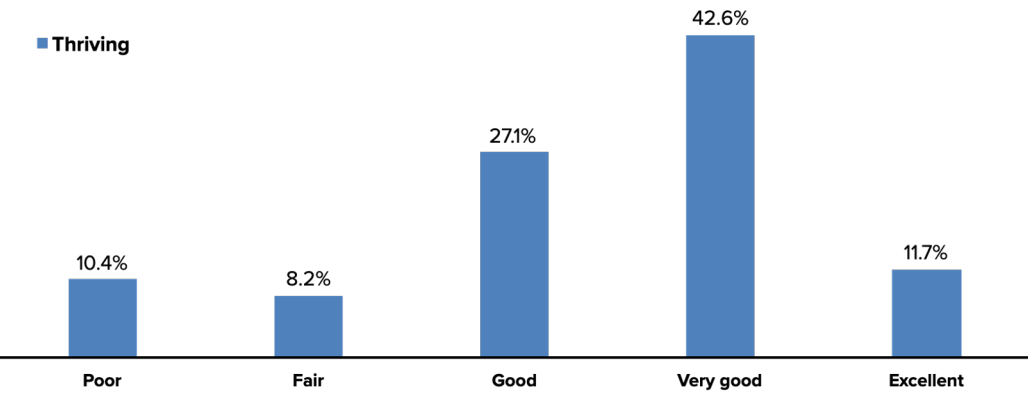


Respondents were most likely to report their physical health as being 'good' or 'very good'.

While a small amount, 7.3% of responses, indicated that their physical health was excellent, most of those responses came from those who reported **thriving** on Cantril's Ladder.

For those who indicated poor health, levels of **suffering** were well above the regional average and levels of **thriving** were far below the regional average.

In general, how would you rate your physical health?



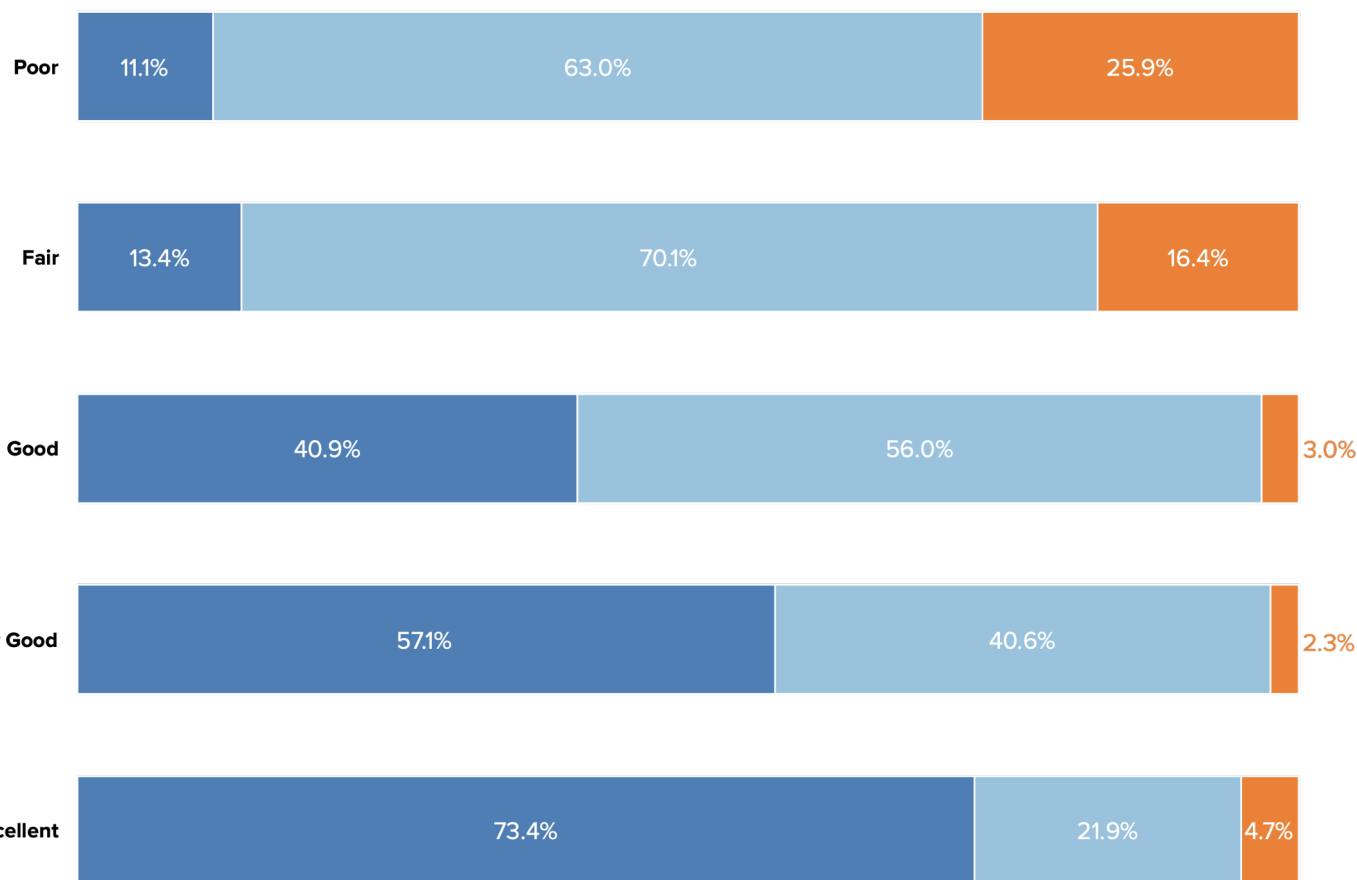
These visuals shows the distribution of those who were **thriving**, **struggling**, and **suffering** when asked to rate their physical health.

Responses that indicated **suffering** on Cantril's Ladder were concentrated in the lower end of the scale, with over 90% of those responses indicating that their health was either '*fair*' or '*poor*'. None who were suffering responded that their health was '*excellent*'.

Those who were **struggling** were distributed more evenly throughout the scale, with the highest concentration reporting their health was '*good*', while those who were **thriving** tended to answer higher on the scale and were less evenly distributed.

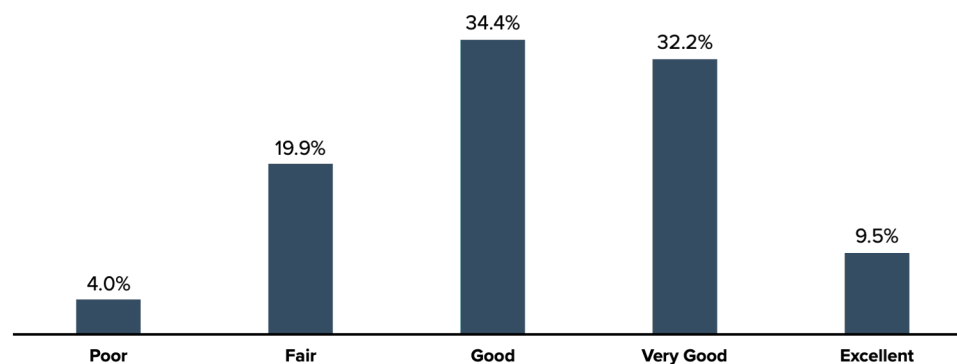
In general, how would you rate your mental health?

■ Thriving ■ Struggling ■ Suffering

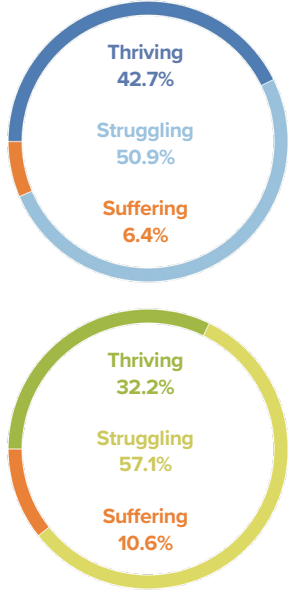
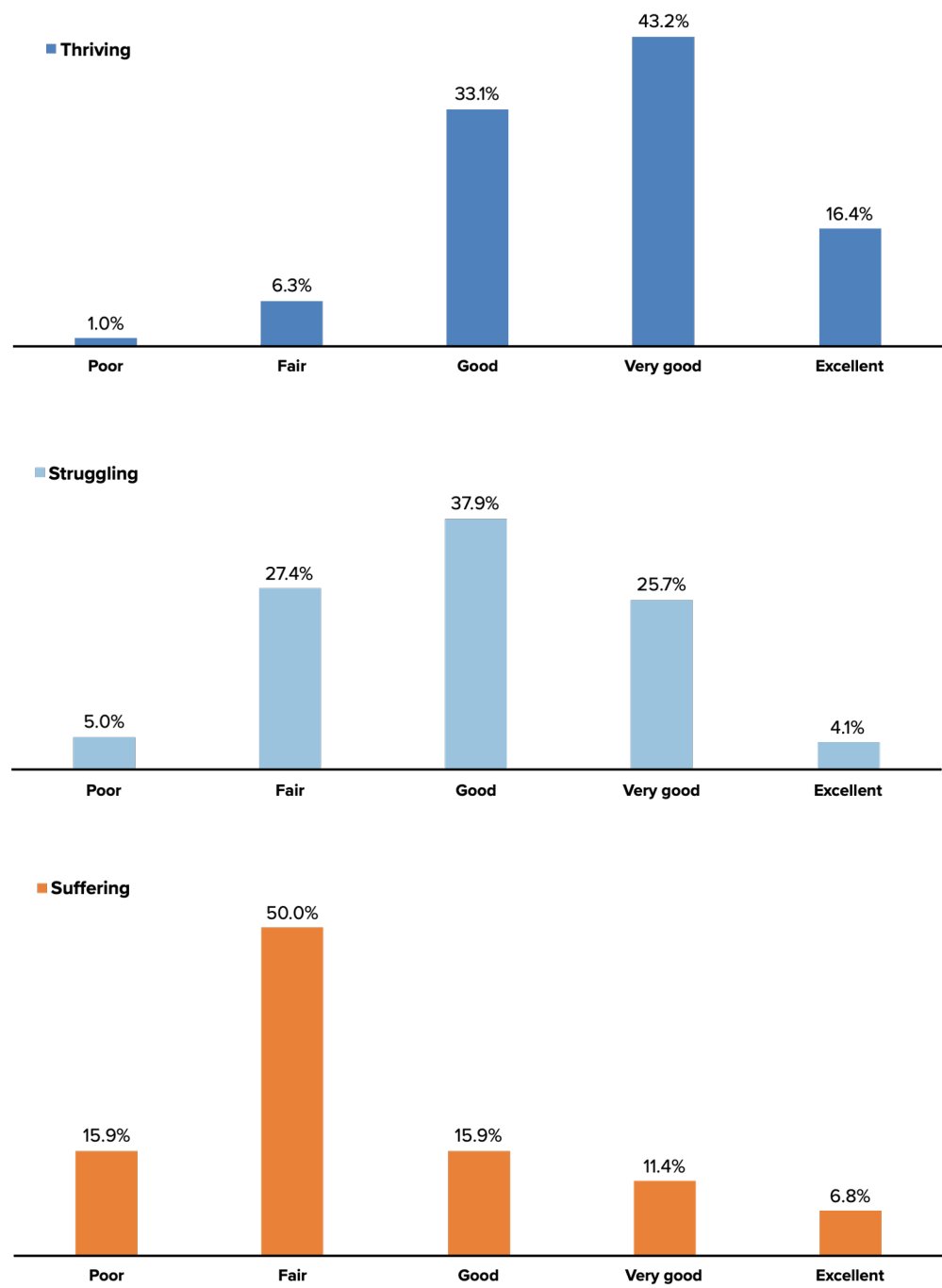


Respondents rating their mental health followed similar lines as when rating their physical health, but were slightly more positive. A majority of responses still fell in the 'good' to 'very good' categories though those who were **suffering** made up slightly larger percentages of those responses.

In general, how would you rate your mental health? (total responses)



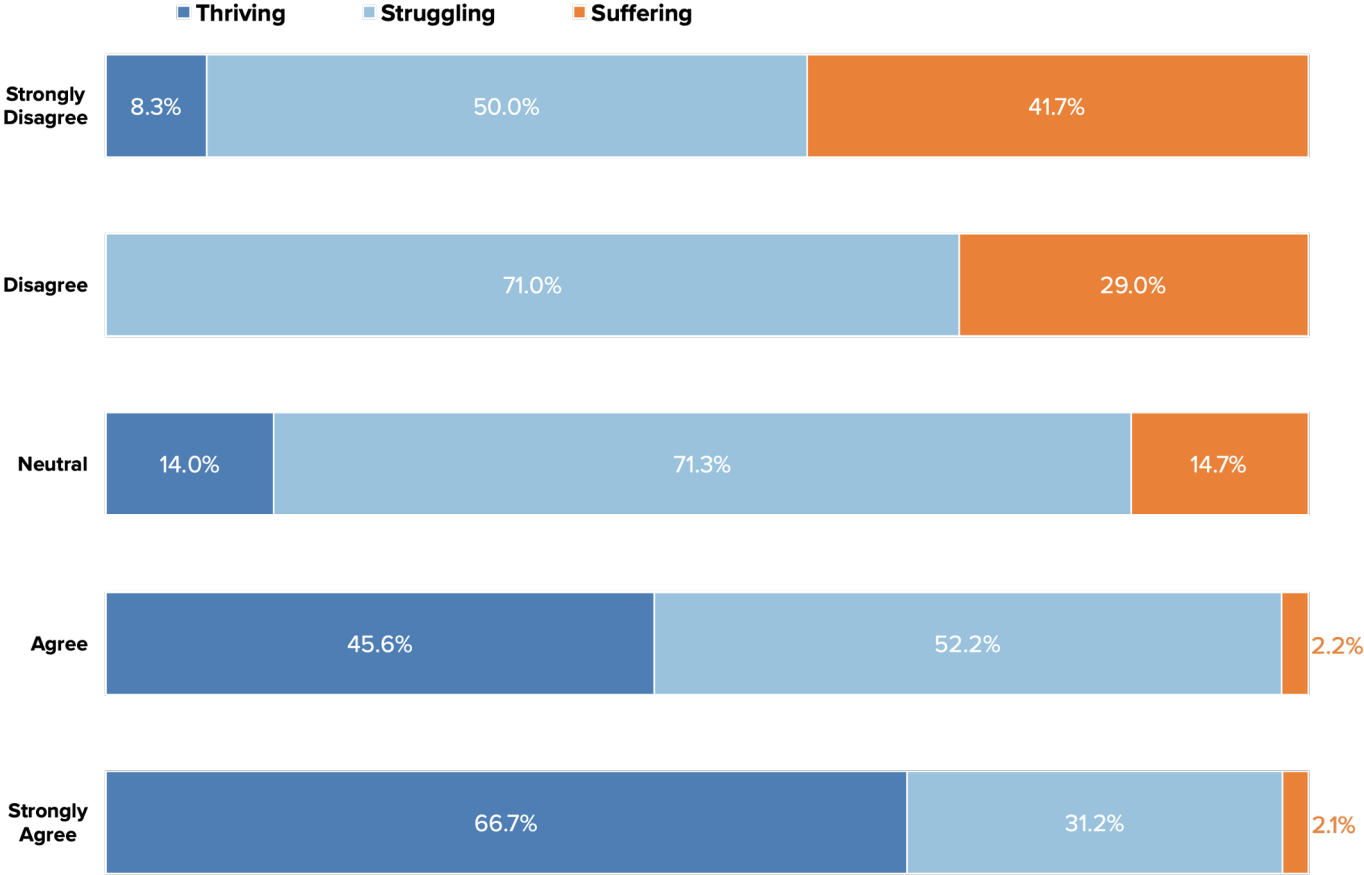
In general, how would you rate your mental health?



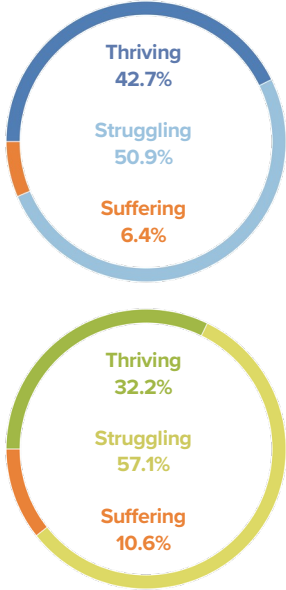
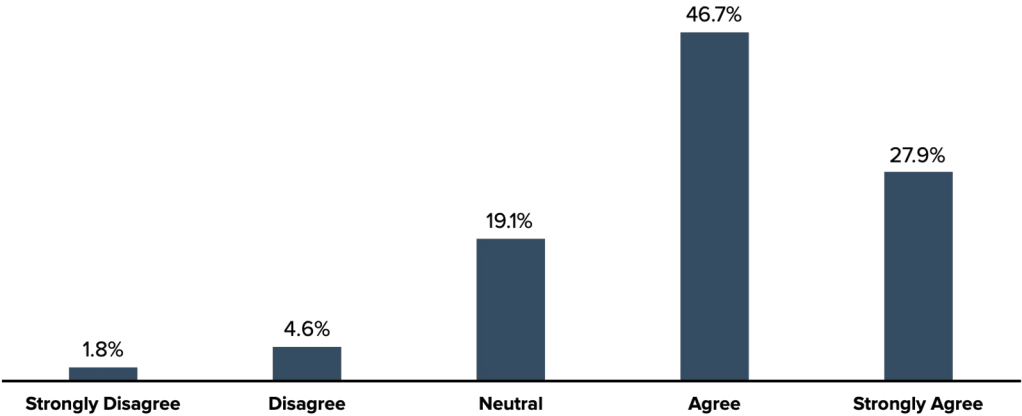
Those who reported **thriving** on Cantril's Ladder were more concentrated on the higher end of the mental health scale than on the physical health scale, with the percentages of those responding 'poor' and 'fair' shrinking as the percentages of 'very good' and 'excellent' responses grew.

Those who were **struggling** and **suffering** saw a more even response throughout the scale, though those who were **suffering** were still more likely to respond on the bottom end.

How strongly do you agree with this statement: "I lead a purposeful and meaningful life"



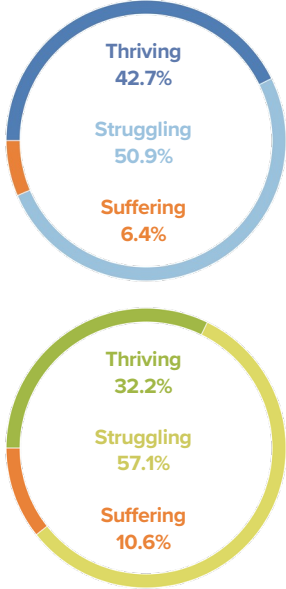
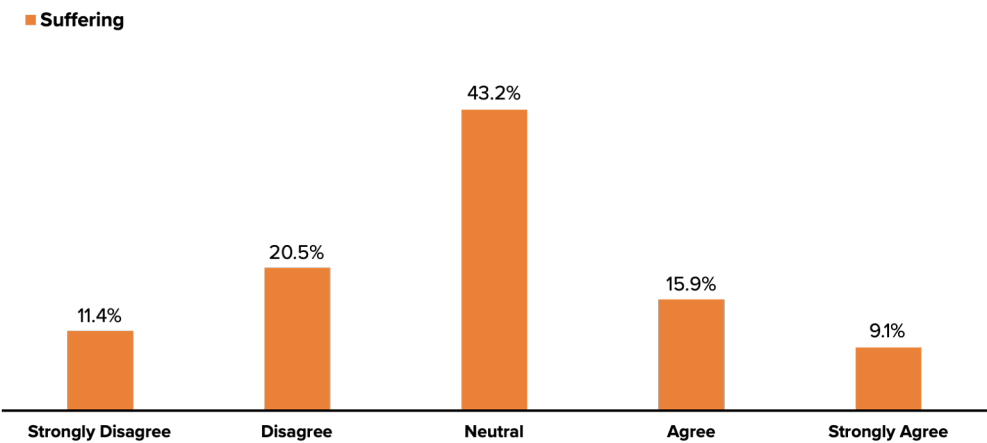
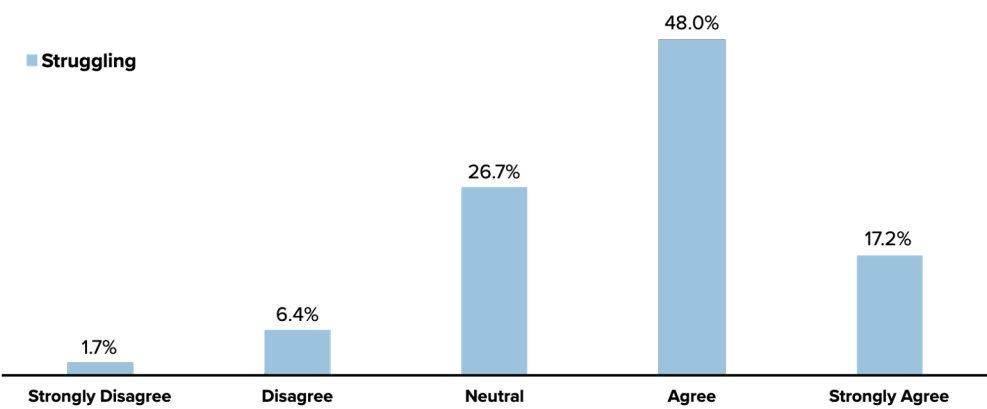
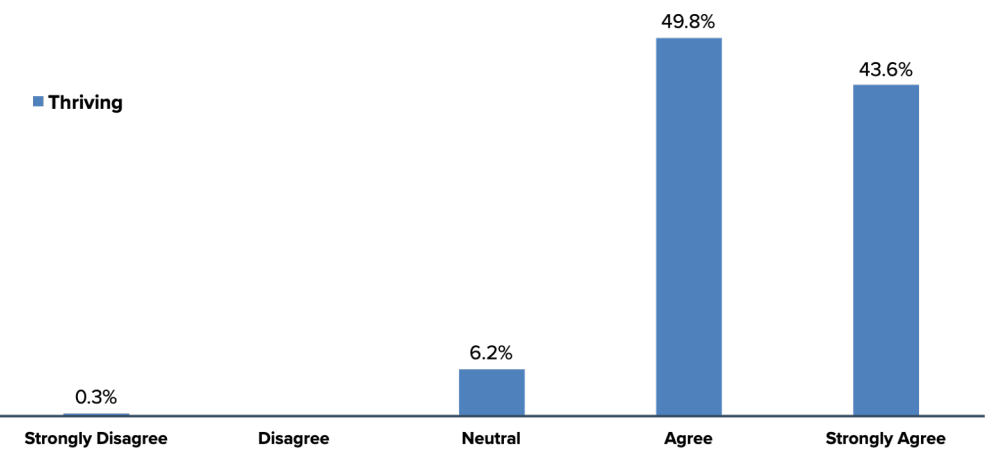
How strongly do you agree with this statement: "I lead a purposeful and meaningful life" (total responses)



Most respondents to this question stated that they ‘*agreed*’ or ‘*strongly agreed*’ that they lead a purposeful and meaningful life.

Respondents who were **thriving** made up a majority of the ‘*strongly agree*’ responses, but from ‘*neutral*’ and below levels of **thriving** saw a dramatic drop off.

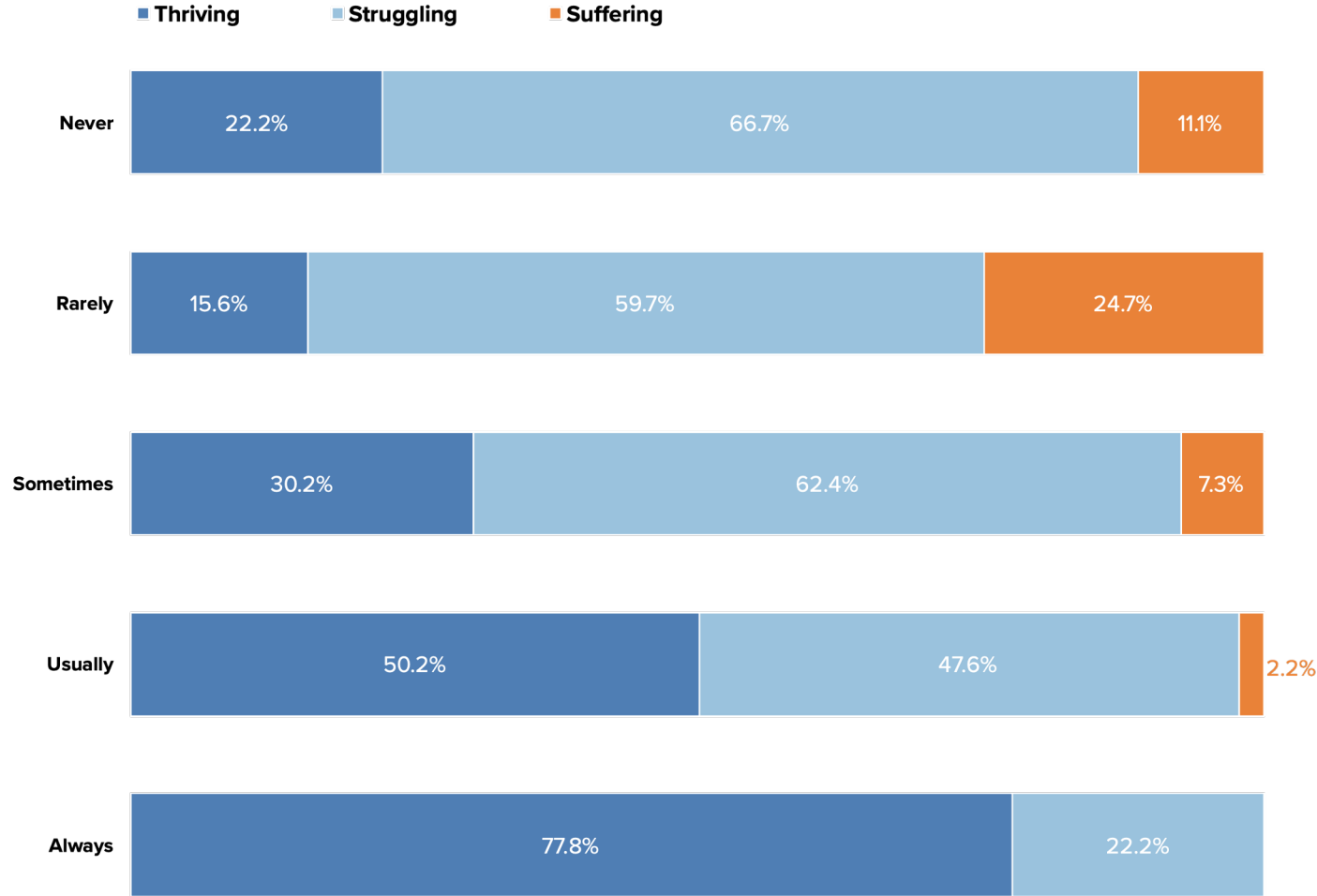
How strongly do you agree with this statement: “I lead a purposeful and meaningful life”



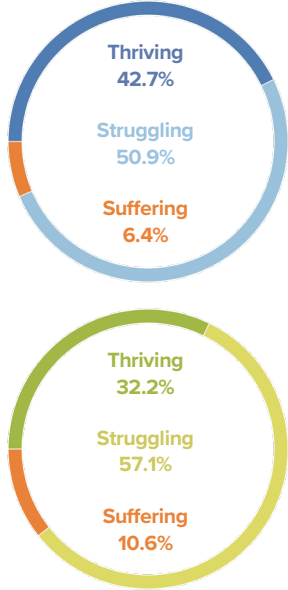
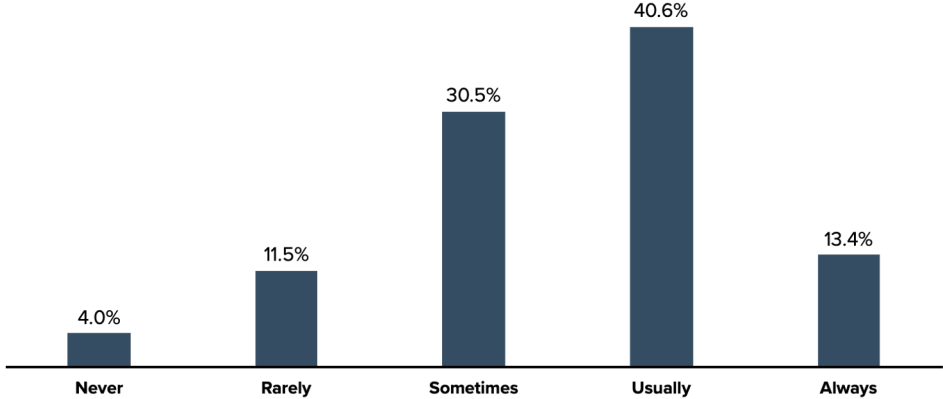
Those who were **struggling** and **thriving** tended to agree that they led a purposeful and meaningful life, with over 60% of those who were **struggling** answering either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’, and over 90% of those who were **thriving** answering the same.

Responses from those who were **suffering** were most concentrated in the ‘neutral’ category, with the remaining responses spread throughout the scale.

How often do you get the social and emotional support you need from your community?



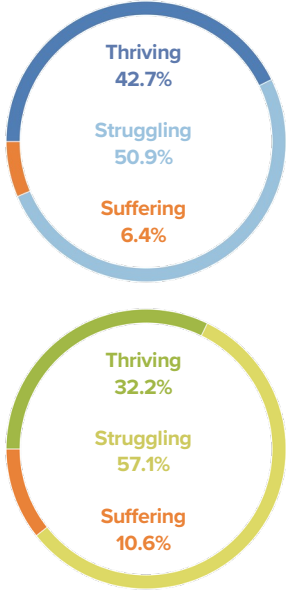
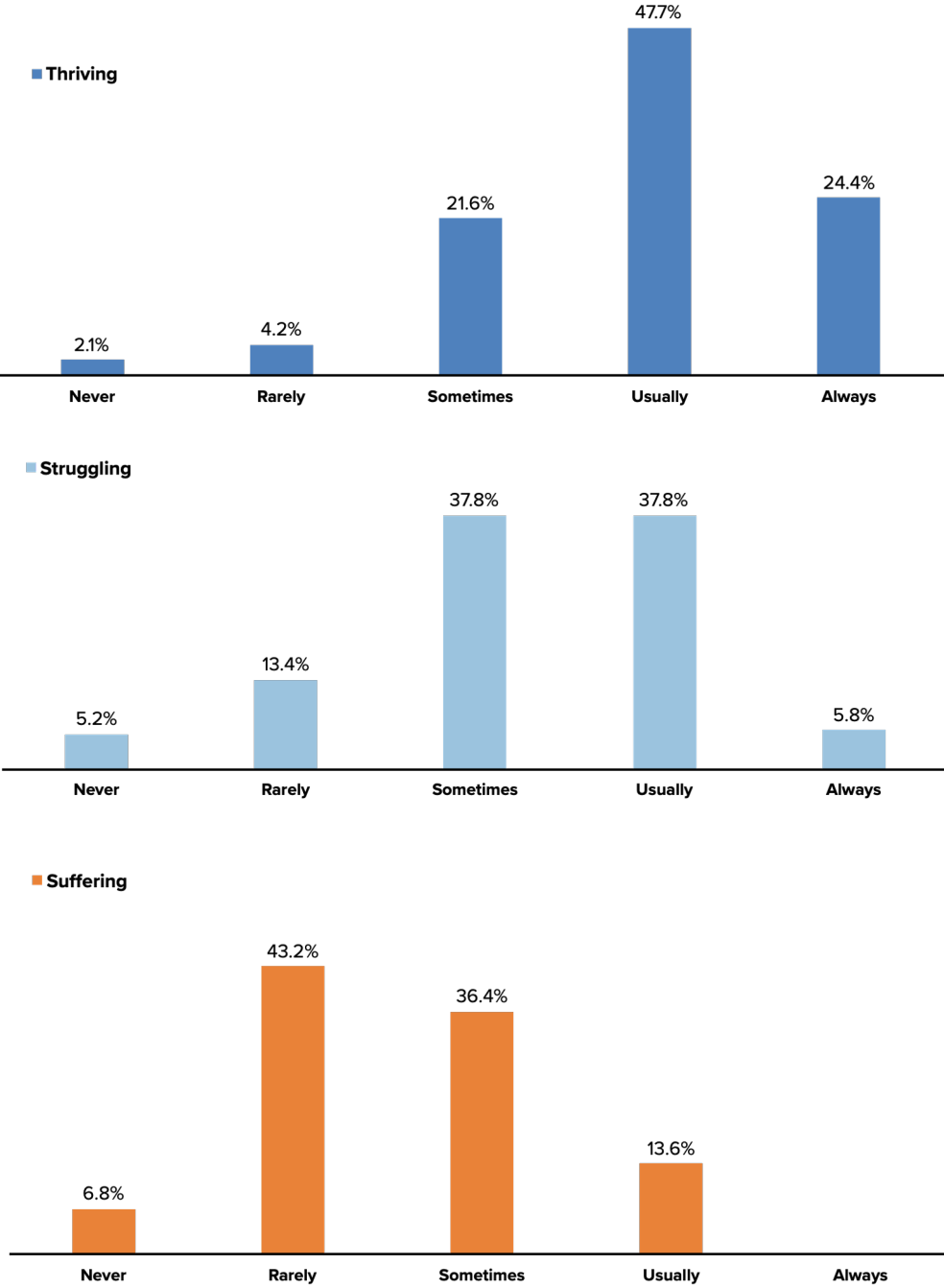
How often do you get the social and emotional support you need from your community? (total responses)



Responses of ‘usually’ and ‘always’ saw levels of **thriving** above the regional average, while **struggling** and **suffering** were below the regional averages.

Respondents were most likely to state that they ‘usually’ or ‘sometimes’ received the social and emotional support they needed from their community.

How often do you get the social and emotional support you need from your community?



Similar to other response patterns, responses from those who were **thriving** tended to concentrate in the higher end of the scale, with 72.1% of those **thriving** stating that they usually or always receive the social and emotional support they need from their community, compared to 43.6% of those **struggling** and just 13.6% of those **suffering**.

Again, responses from those **suffering** and **struggling** were more distributed throughout the scale, with responses from those **suffering** trending lower than responses from those who were **struggling**.

Individual Well-Being Summary



In every multiple choice health and community well-being/belonging question, responses to the highest two levels of each question's scale (e.g. 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' or 'Very Good' and 'Excellent') experienced higher levels of **thriving** when compared to the regional average. Below these levels, **thriving** dropped below the regional average and levels of **struggling** and **suffering** began to rise higher.



Responses from those who were **struggling** tended to cluster in the upper middle of each response scale on community health and well-being questions. Youth ages 18-24 saw levels of **struggling** with general well-being at 72.2% and levels of **struggling** financially at 83.3%, the highest level of any demographic group. Those who identified as LGBTQIA+ also experienced higher than average levels of **struggling**.



Responses from those who were **suffering** tended to concentrate on the lower ends of the scales. They were less likely to report receiving adequate social and emotional support and reported worse rates of physical and mental health than those who were **struggling** and **thriving**.

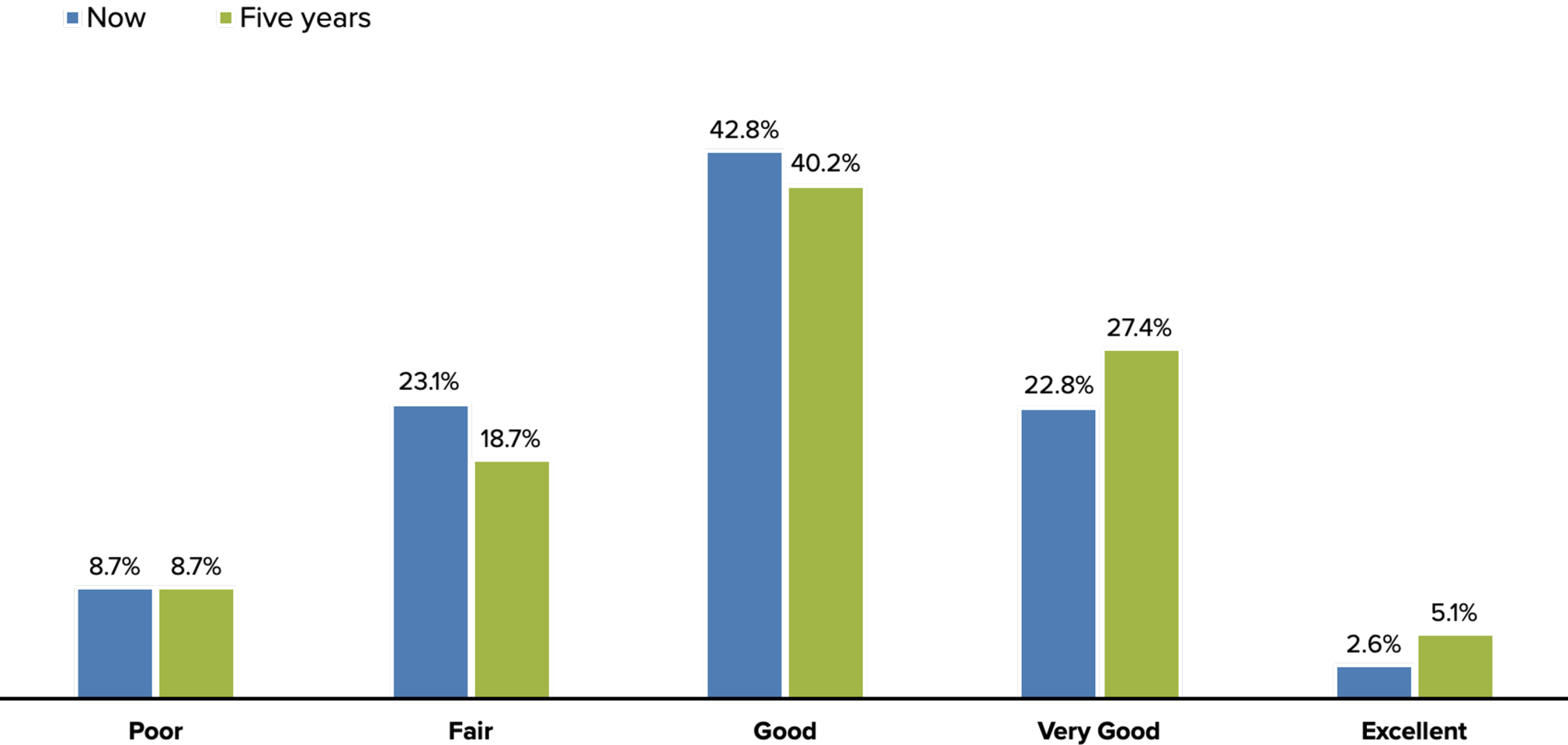




Community Well-Being:

What creates thriving
communities?

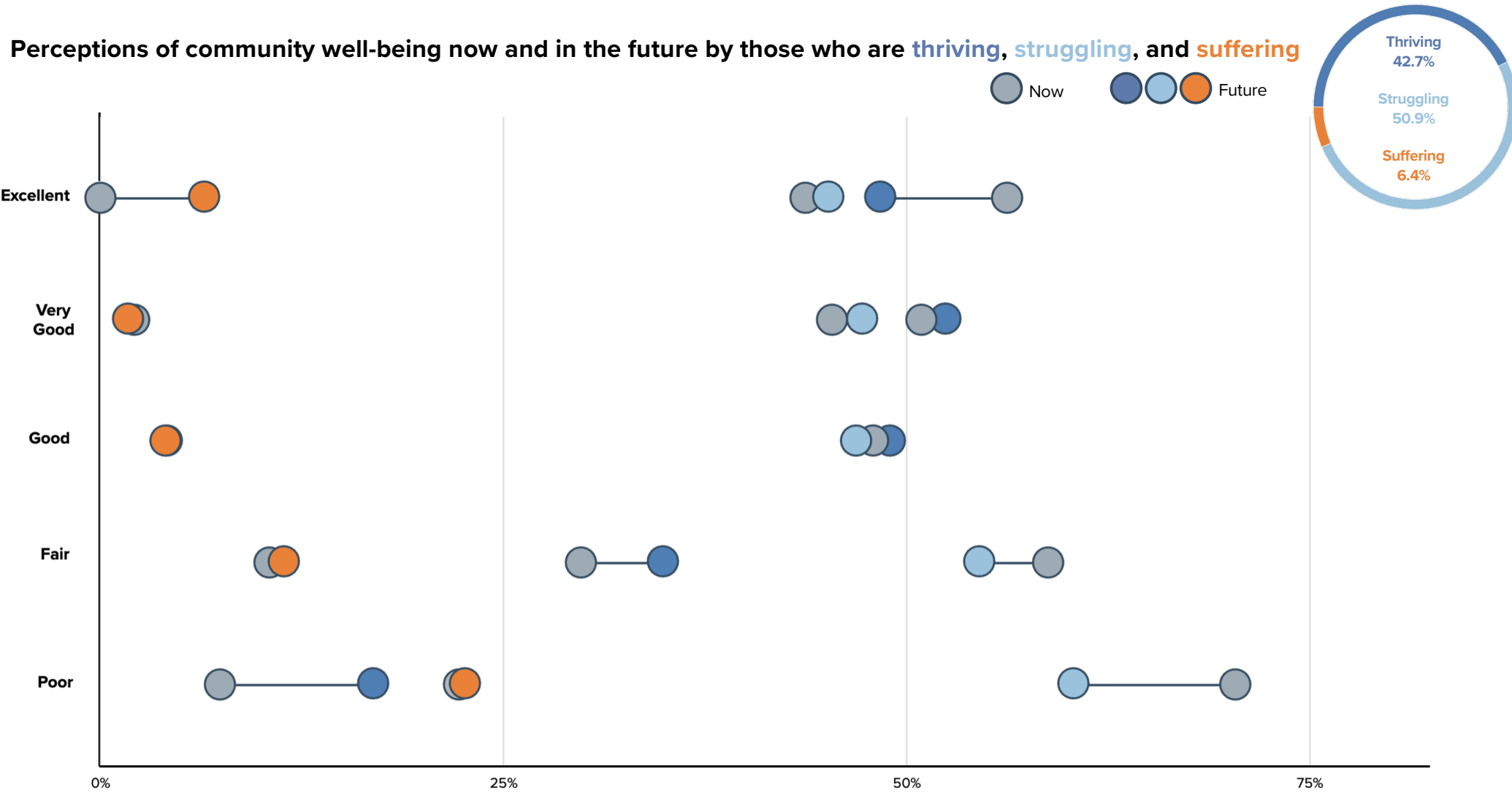
How would you rate the well-being of your community?



Respondents were most likely to rate their community’s well-being as ‘good’ both when thinking about the present and the future. When thinking about the future there was generally some optimism – those who perceived their community’s well-being as ‘very good’ grew from 22.8% to 27.4%, and those who perceived it as ‘excellent’ grew from 2.6% to 5.1%. Notably, there was not a change in the percentage of ‘poor’ responses, which remained steady at 8.7%.

	Now	Five years
Excellent	2.6%	5.1%
Very Good	22.8%	27.4%
Good	42.8%	40.2%
Fair	23.1%	18.7%
Poor	8.7%	8.7%

Perceptions of community well-being now and in the future by those who are thriving, struggling, and suffering

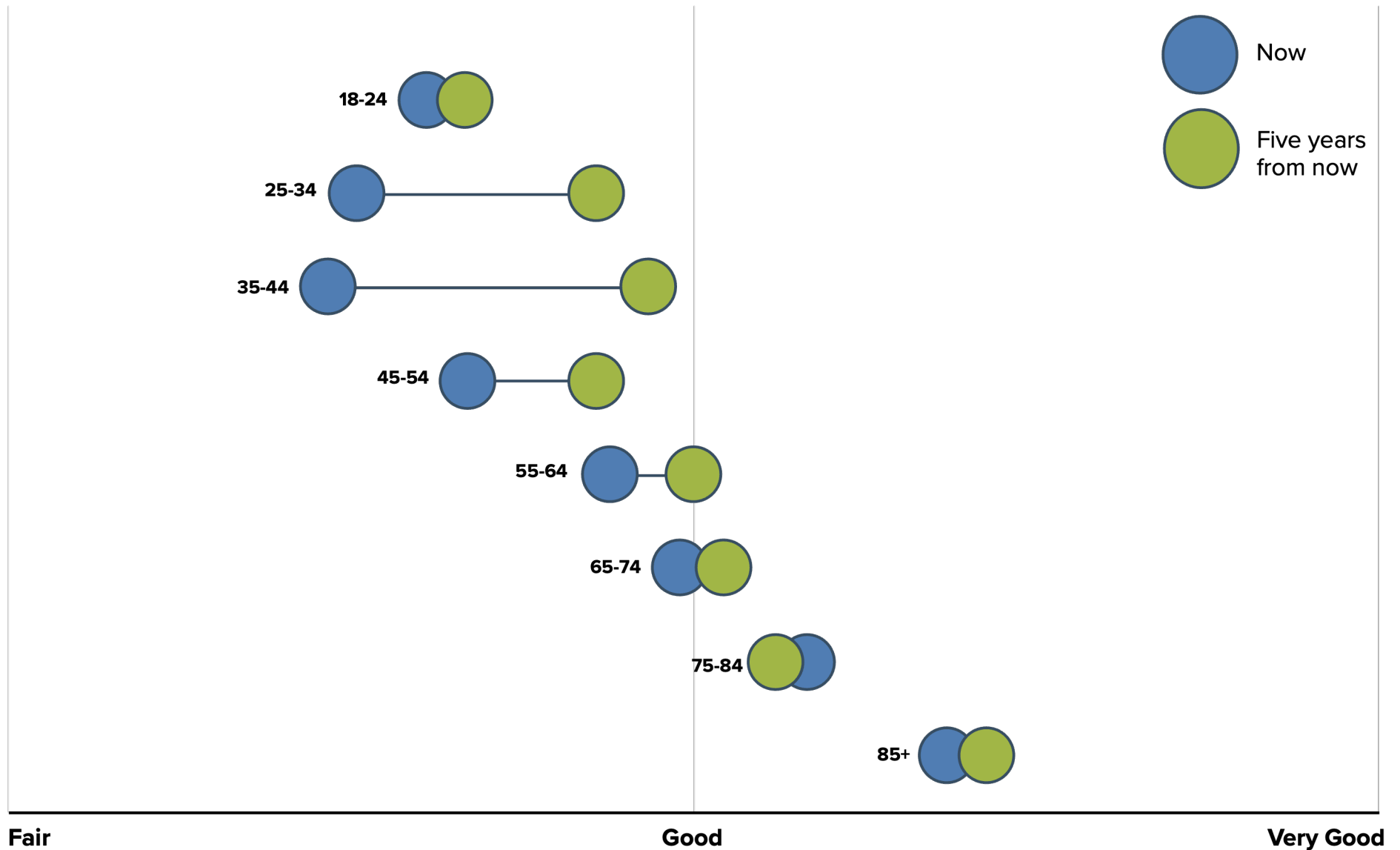


Among those who rated their current community well-being as ‘*excellent*’ none were **suffering**, while when looking at future community well-being that number rose to 6.5%. The percentage of those **thriving** who saw their current community well-being as ‘*excellent*’ saw change in the opposite direction, dropping from 56.3% to 48.4% when thinking about future well-being of their community.

Those who were **struggling** made up a majority of those who perceived both current and future community well-being as ‘*poor*’. Notably, the ‘*poor*’ category saw the largest shifts between perceptions of current and future community well-being, with those who were **thriving** growing from 7.4% to 17.0%, and those who were **struggling** dropping from 70.4% to 60.4%.

	Now			Future		
	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering
Excellent	56.3%	43.8%	0.0%	48.4%	45.2%	6.5%
Very Good	52.5%	45.4%	2.1%	50.9%	47.3%	1.8%
Good	47.9%	47.9%	4.2%	49.0%	46.9%	4.1%
Fair	35.0%	54.5%	10.5%	29.8%	58.8%	11.4%
Poor	7.4%	70.4%	22.2%	17.0%	60.4%	22.6%

Average perception of current community well-being compared to expectations of community well-being in five years: by age group



In general, the older the respondent was, the more likely they were to have a higher perception of their community's current well-being. The exceptions were the 18-24, 25-34, and 35-44 age groups, which had the lowest average perception of their community's current well-being. While the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups also expected the greatest change over time, youth 18-24 on average expected little change and had the lowest expectations for their community's well-being in five years. Only the 75-84 age group expected their community's well-being to get worse over time.

Open Response

Survey respondents were asked the following open response questions regarding their community:

- What contributes to well-being in your community?
- What gets in the way of well-being in your community?

The question ‘What contributes to well-being in your community’ received 536 responses, while the question ‘What gets in the way of well-being in your community’ received 524 responses. Each response was analyzed and coded to any of the Vital Conditions for Well-Being that were relevant to the response’s subject matter, as well as a sub-code with more specificity. An example of this process is to the right.

In this way a general overview of how the Vital Conditions for Well-Being apply to community well-being is established, as well as the ability to dive deeper into specific Vital Conditions to see where patterns may emerge.

Example

Question:

What contributes to well-being in your community?

Response:

“Acceptance and support. Food and Housing security. Network of family and/or friends.”

Codes Applied:

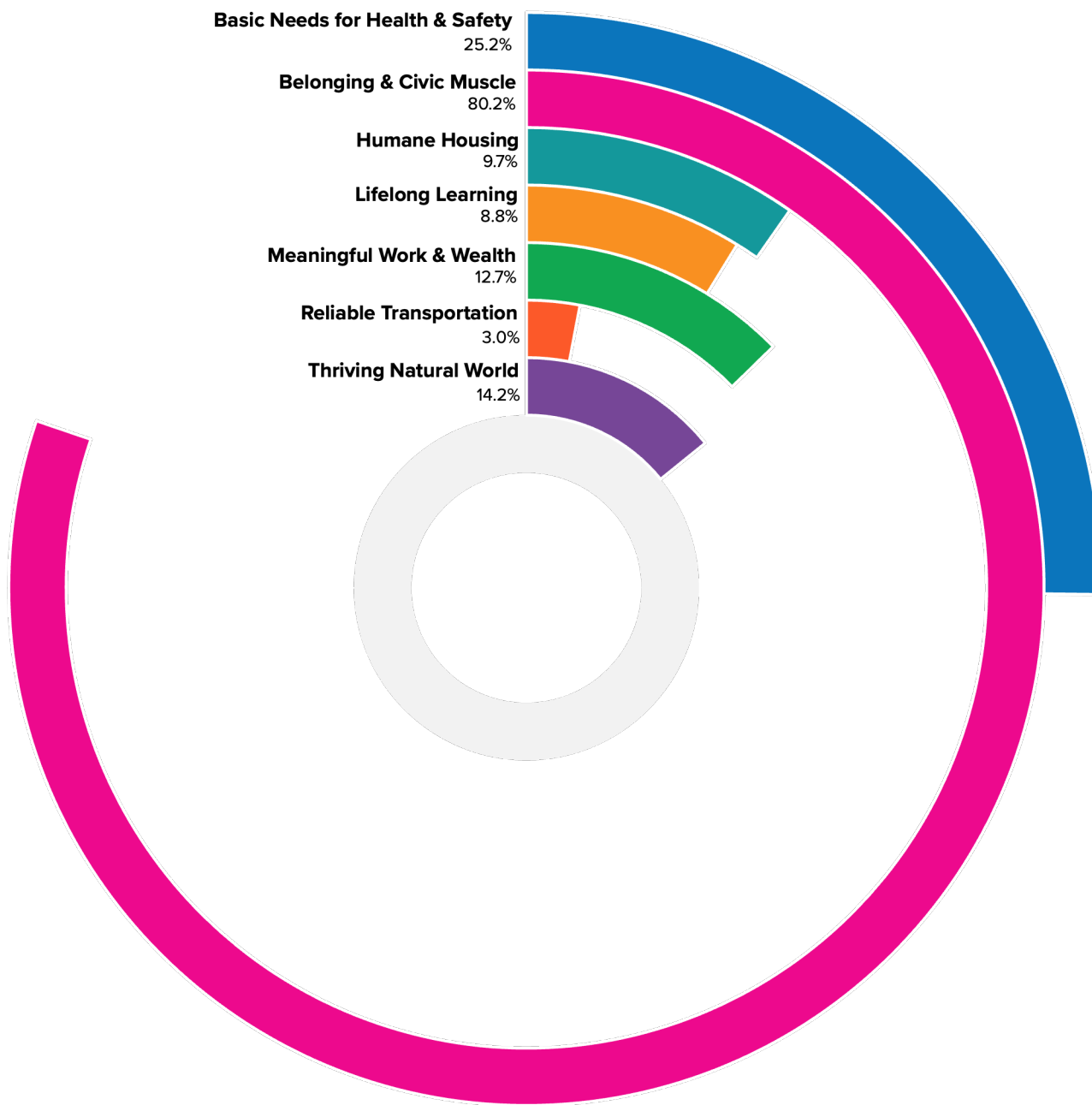
- **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**
- **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- **Humane Housing**

Sub-codes Applied:

- **Food**
- **Family Support**
- **Social Support**
- **Access to Housing**



What contributes to community well-being?

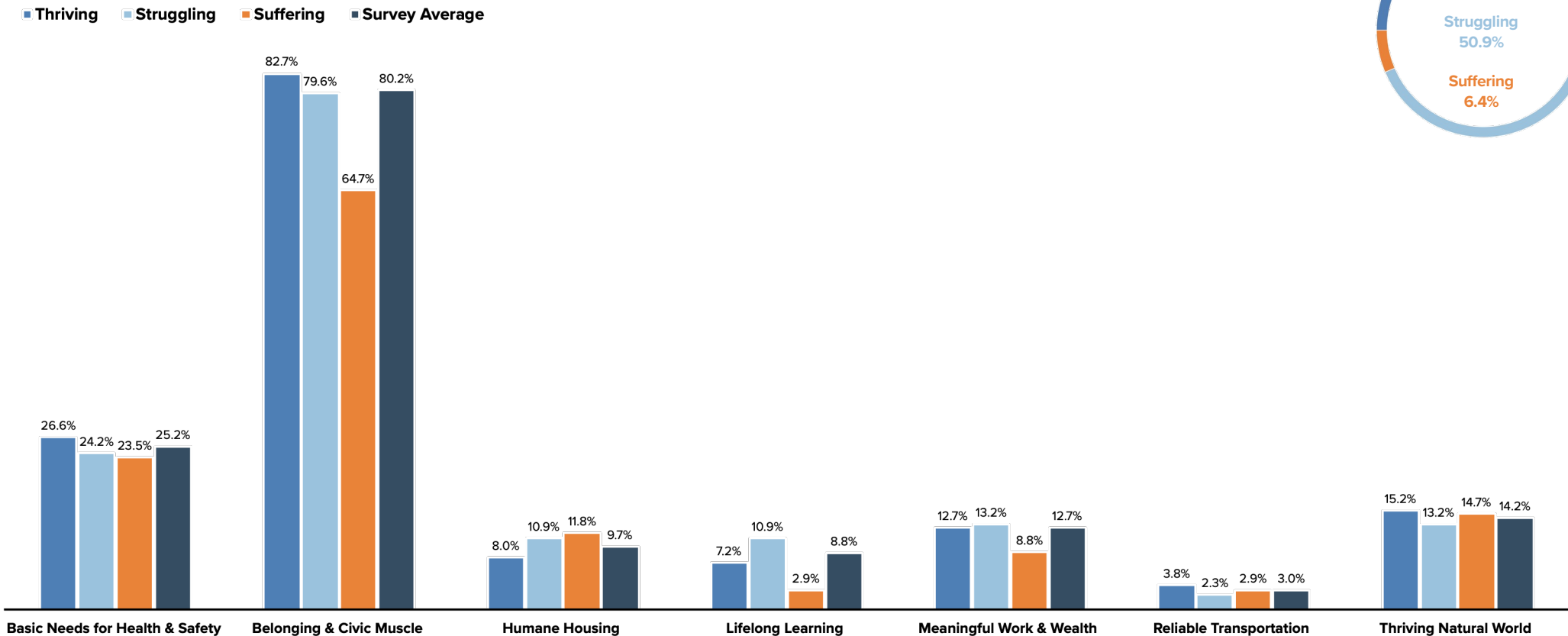


When asked what contributes most to their community's well-being, respondents were most likely to answer with areas having to do with **Belonging & Civic Muscle**, at over triple the rate of the next most commonly referenced vital condition, **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**.

Reliable Transportation and **Lifelong Learning** were the least mentioned vital conditions that positively impacted community well-being.



Responses to the question "What contributes to community well-being?" by those who are thriving, struggling and suffering

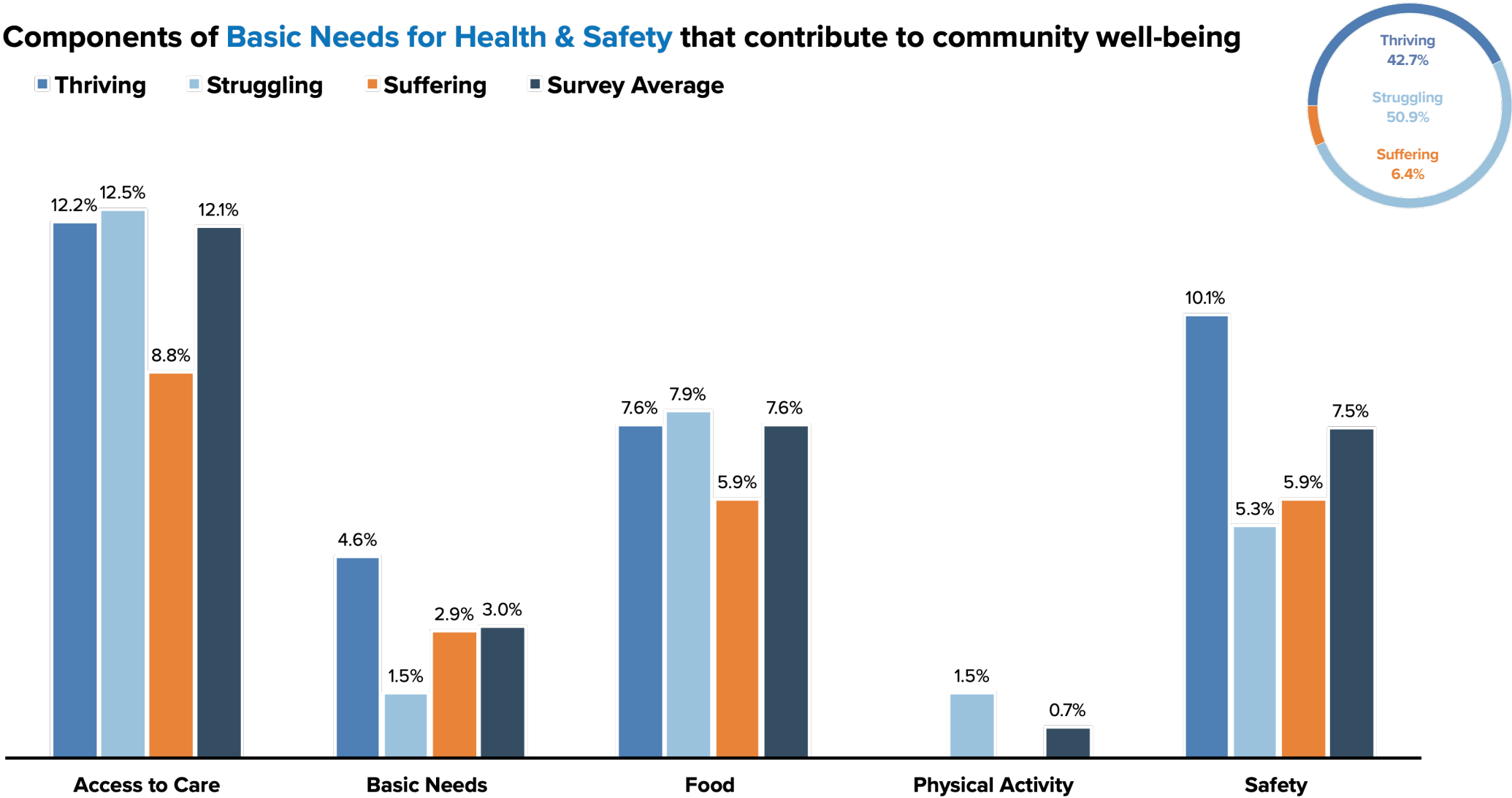


While **Belonging & Civic Muscle** was referenced most frequently by respondents, with 80.2% of all responses making some mention of the vital condition, on average it was a higher priority for those who were **thriving** than those who were **struggling** or **suffering**.

Basic Needs for Health & Safety, **Reliable Transportation**, and **Thriving Natural World** saw the least variation between **thriving**, **struggling** and **suffering** groups.

	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Survey Average
Basic Needs for Health & Safety	26.6%	24.2%	23.5%	25.2%
Belonging & Civic Muscle	82.7%	79.6%	64.7%	80.2%
Humane Housing	8.0%	10.9%	11.8%	9.7%
Lifelong Learning	7.2%	10.9%	2.9%	8.8%
Meaningful Work & Wealth	12.7%	13.2%	8.8%	12.7%
Reliable Transportation	3.8%	2.3%	2.9%	3.0%
Thriving Natural World	15.2%	13.2%	14.7%	14.2%

Components of **Basic Needs for Health & Safety** that contribute to community well-being



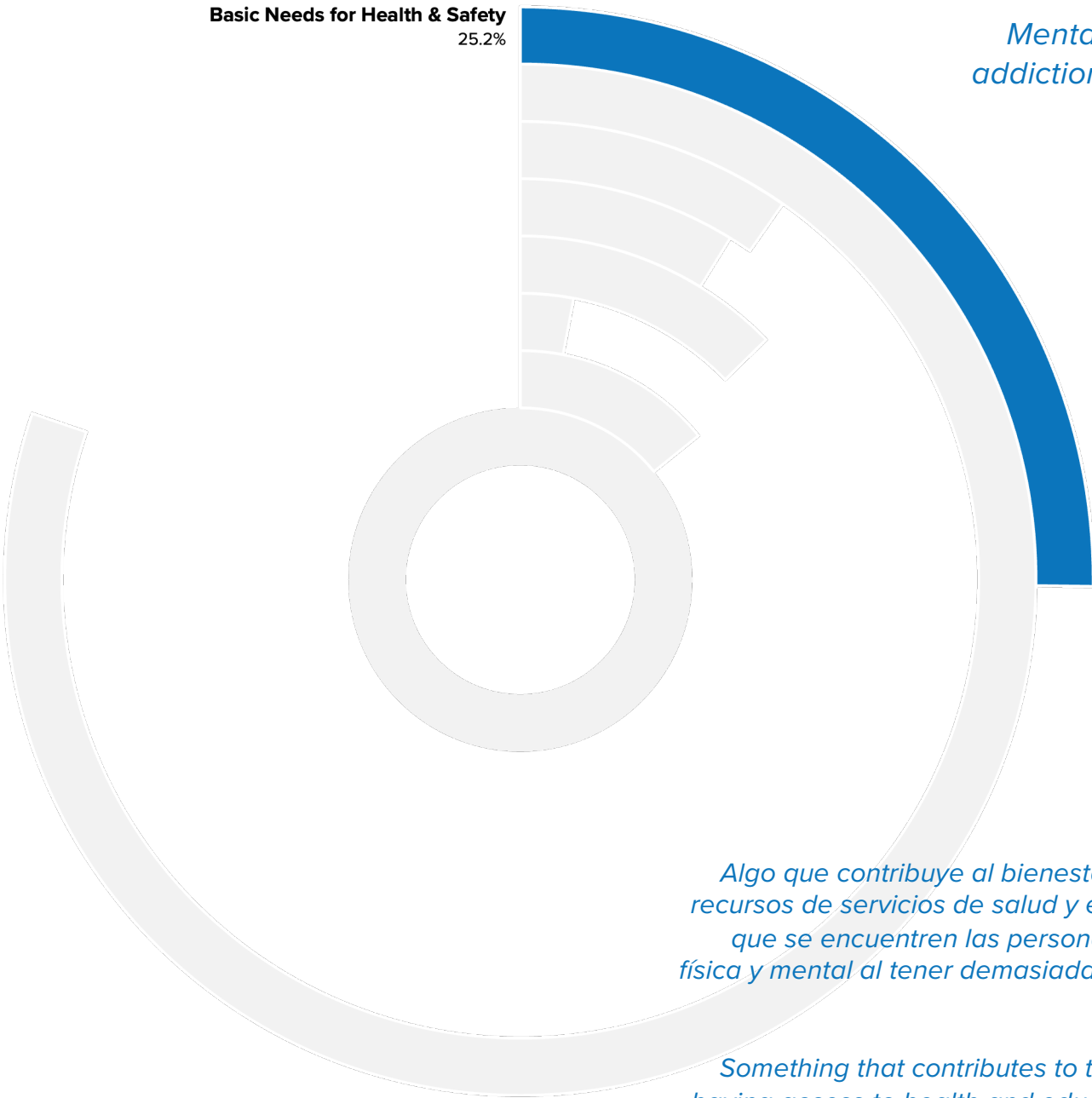
Access to care was the most commonly referenced area of **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**, and more often referenced by those who were **thriving** or **struggling** than those who were **suffering**.

Those who were **thriving** placed a higher priority on attaining and maintaining basic needs and safety for their community’s well-being than other groups.

	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Survey Average
Access to Care	12.2%	12.5%	8.8%	12.1%
Basic Needs	4.6%	1.5%	2.9%	3.0%
Food	7.6%	7.9%	5.9%	7.6%
Physical Activity	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.7%
Safety	10.1%	5.3%	5.9%	7.5%

What contributes to community well-being?

Basic Needs for Health & Safety
25.2%



“
Mental health services and drug addiction treatments. No guns and drugs that kill people.

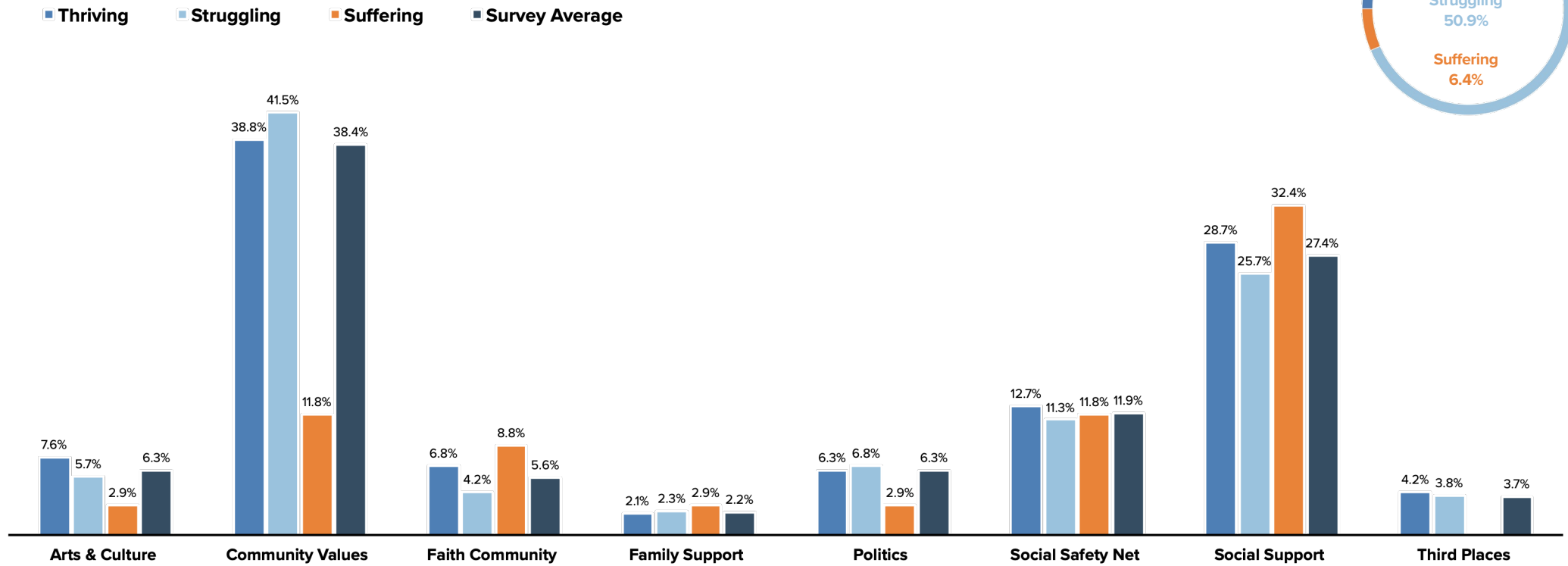
“
Access to affordable health care, and support to alleviate financial burden or coverage gaps

“
Access to basic needs and a relatively safe environment

“
Algo que contribuye al bienestar de mi comunidad sería tener acceso a recursos de servicios de salud y educación sin importar el estado legal en que se encuentren las personas, muchas personas empeoran su salud física y mental al tener demasiadas limitaciones alrededor de necesidades básicas.

“
Something that contributes to the well-being of my community would be having access to health and education resources regardless of a person's legal status. Many people's physical and mental health worsens due to having too many limitations around basic needs.

Components of **Belonging & Civic Muscle** that contribute to community well-being



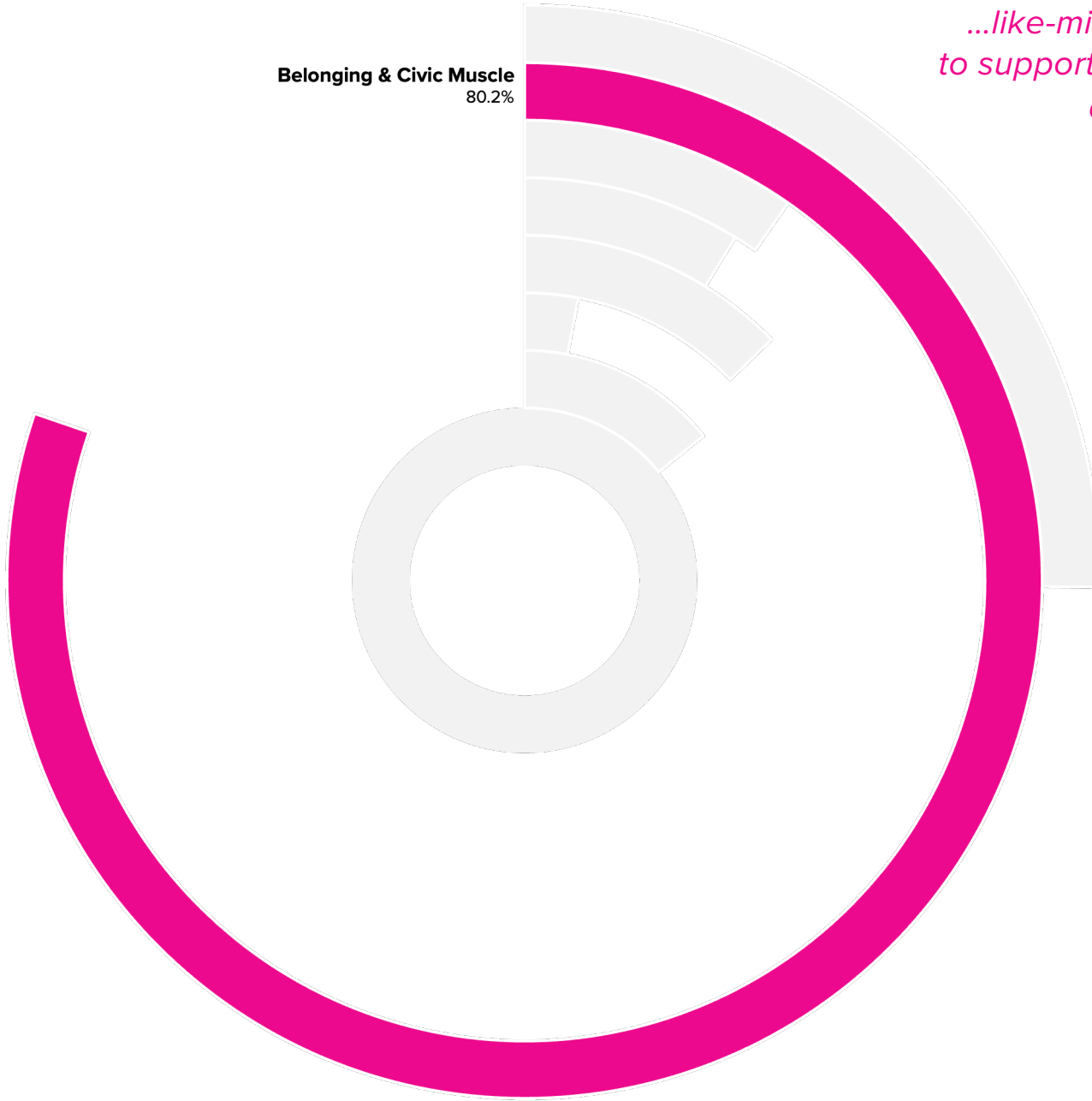
Belonging & Civic Muscle had the largest variety of themes emerge, and priorities varied widely between those who were **thriving**, **struggling**, and **suffering**.

Those who were **suffering** placed a higher emphasis on interpersonal and focused community support, responding with the themes of faith community, family support, and general social support at a higher rate than others. Those who were **thriving** and **struggling** were more likely to prioritize areas that were more outside of their immediate interpersonal sphere such as arts & culture, their community’s values, politics, and third places.

	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Survey Average
Arts & Culture	7.6%	5.7%	2.9%	6.3%
Community Values	38.8%	41.5%	11.8%	38.4%
Faith Community	6.8%	4.2%	8.8%	5.6%
Family Support	2.1%	2.3%	2.9%	2.2%
Politics	6.3%	6.8%	2.9%	6.3%
Social Safety Net	12.7%	11.3%	11.8%	11.9%
Social Support	28.7%	25.7%	32.4%	27.4%
Third Places	4.2%	3.8%	0.0%	3.7%

What contributes to community well-being?

Belonging & Civic Muscle
80.2%



“

...like-minded people coming together to support each other while recognizing and accepting our differences

“

Lots of community programs to support those in need, activities to bring communities together.

“

Connection, a strong sense of community, acts of service and working together, fun, vulnerability.

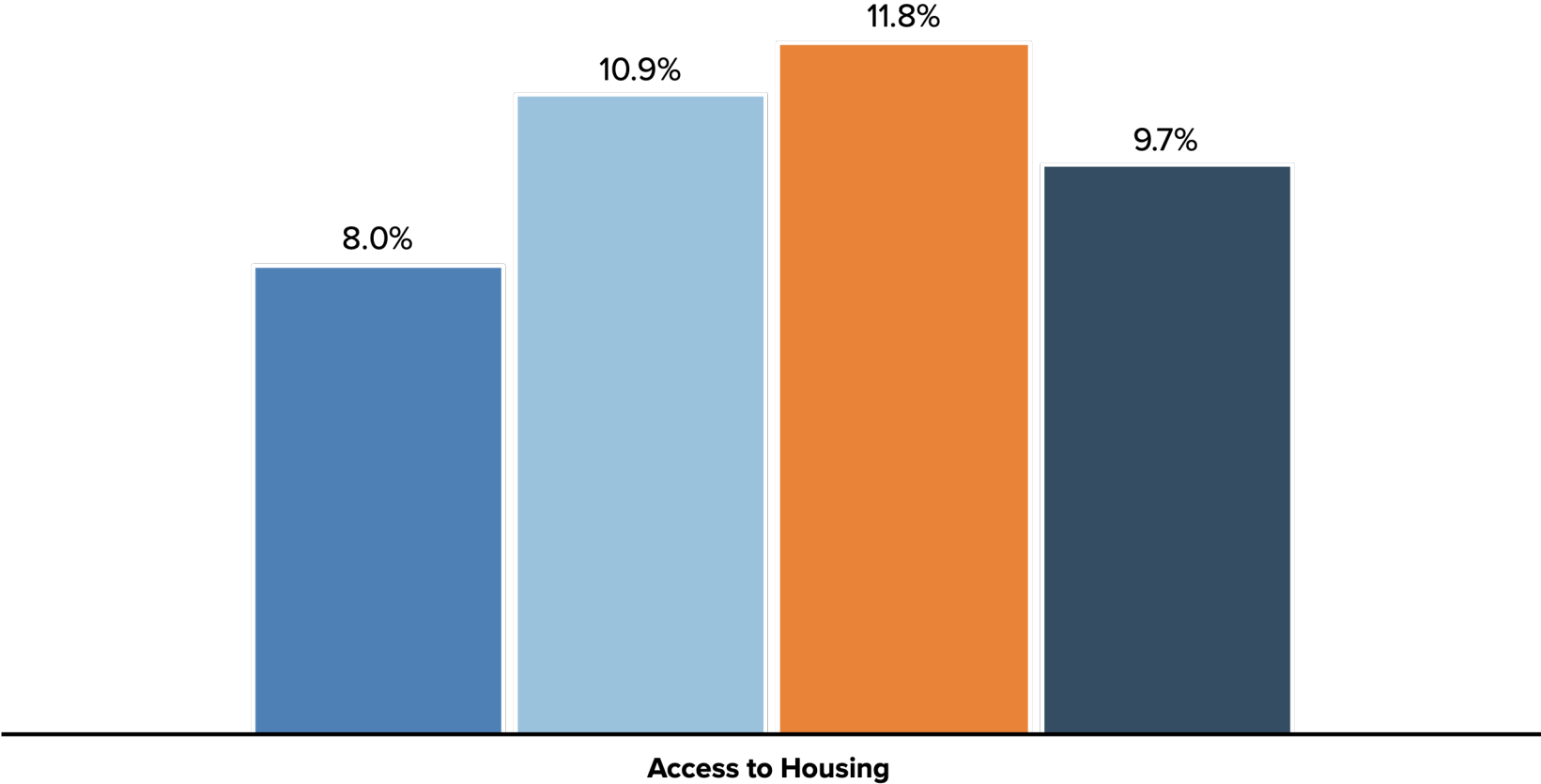
“

A sense of community and neighborliness. Seeing people interact in all the microcosms of life and seeing people help each other or at least be kind to one another. Shared resources are a good thing.



Components of Humane Housing that contribute to community well-being

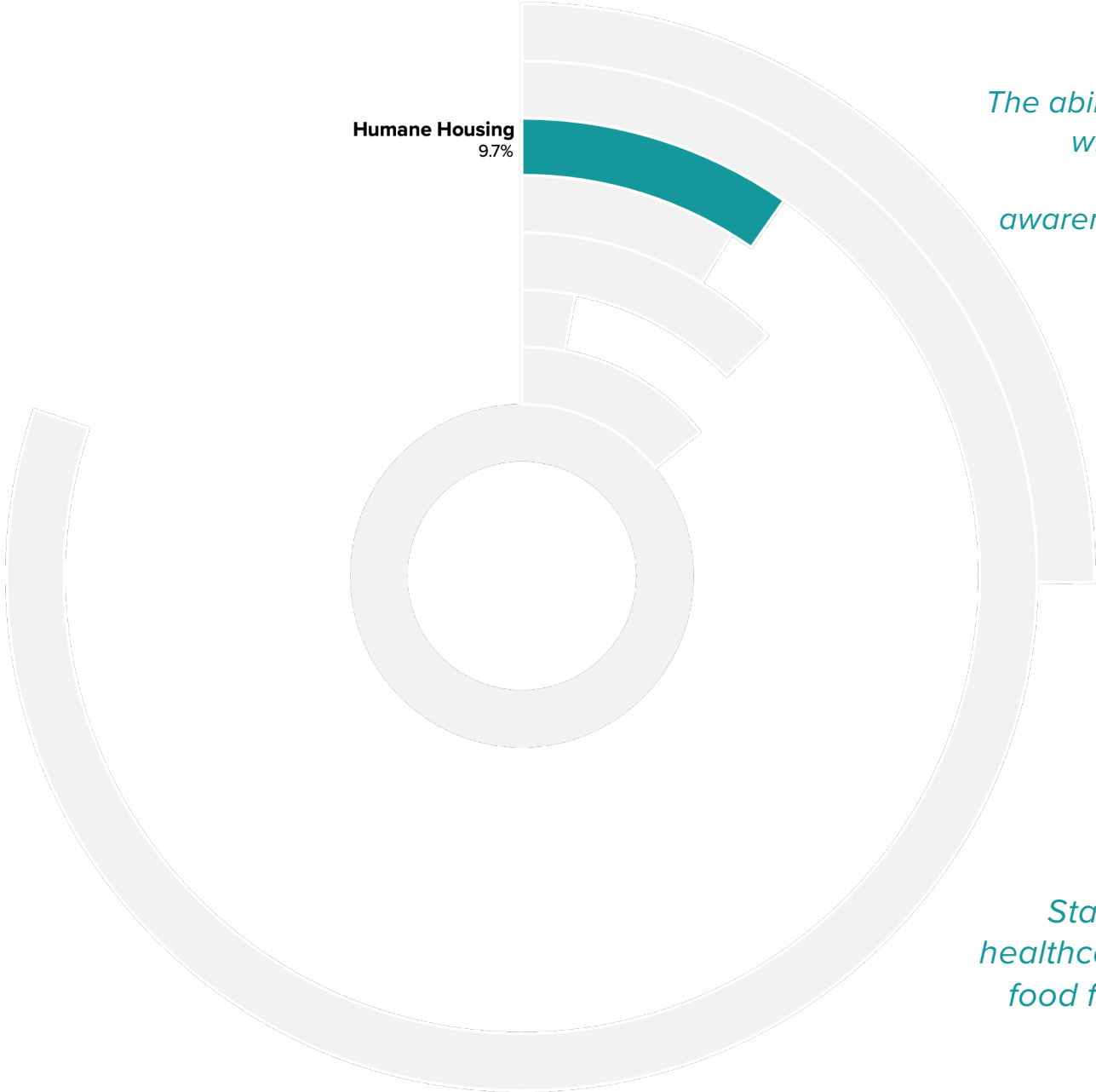
■ Thriving ■ Struggling ■ Suffering ■ Survey Average



Where **Humane Housing** was mentioned, it was most commonly associated with the phrase ‘access to housing’. Those who were **suffering** mentioned access to housing at a higher rate than average, 11.8% of responses compared to the average rate of 9.7%, as did those who were **struggling** at 10.9%.

	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Survey Average
Access to Housing	8.0%	10.9%	11.8%	9.7%

What contributes to community well-being?



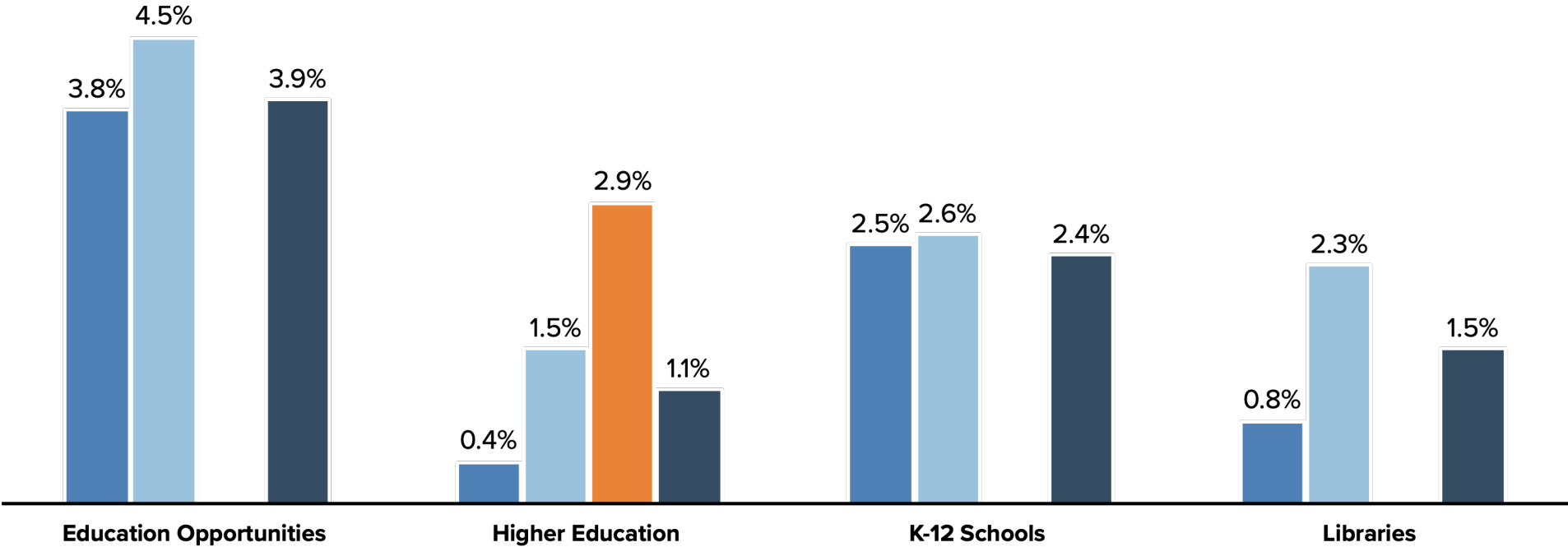
“
The ability to have opportunities to live where you want, stability in food, shelter and basic necessities, awareness of community resources, a sense of belonging

“
Accessible housing, food, medical care for everyone.

“
Stable housing for all, adequate healthcare for all, affordable healthy food for all, meaningful community experiences for all

Components of Lifelong Learning that contribute to community well-being

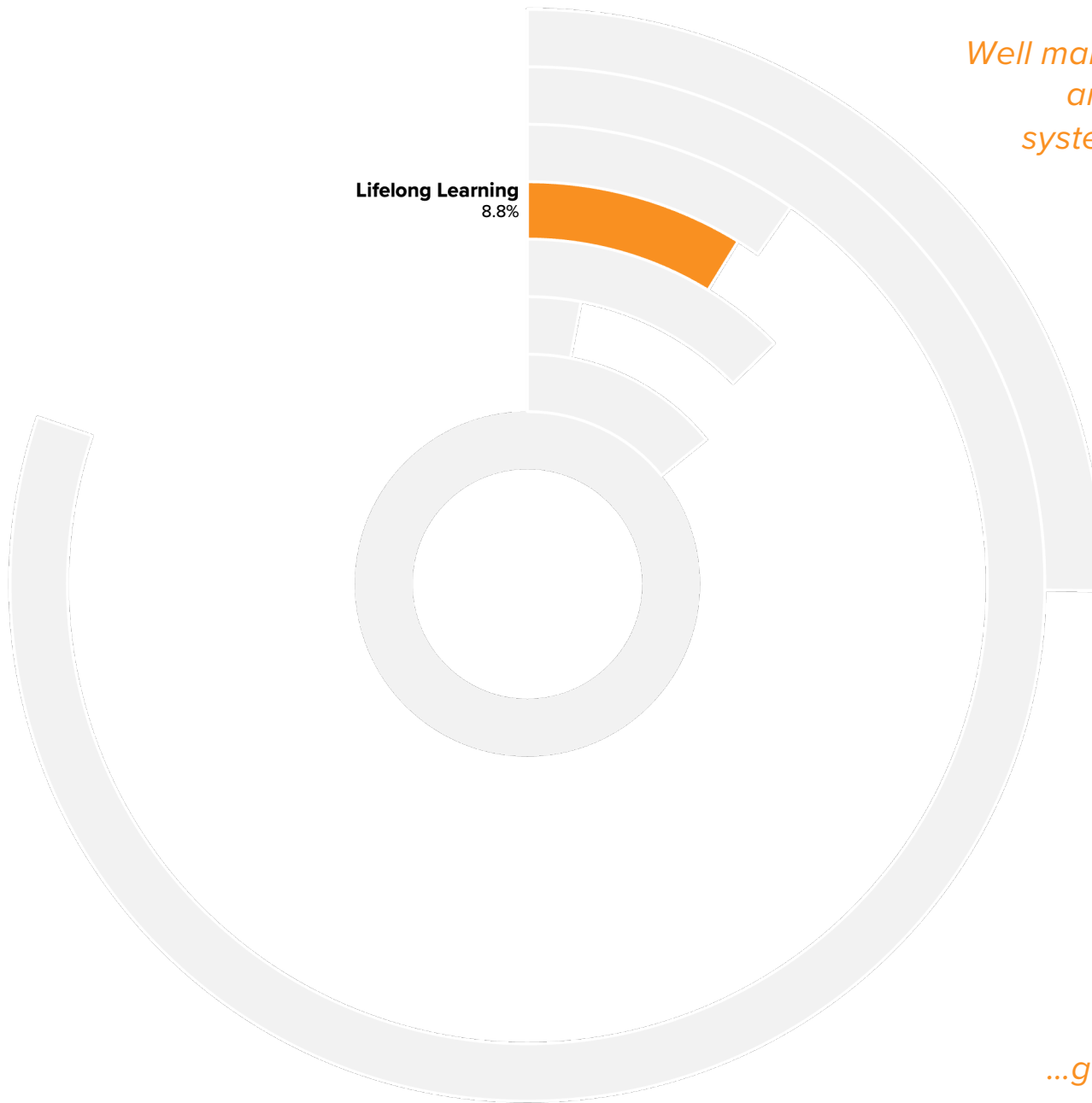
■ Thriving ■ Struggling ■ Suffering ■ Survey Average



Those who were **thriving** or **struggling** were more likely to bring up the presence of K-12 schools, libraries, or other community education opportunities as contributing to their community’s well-being. Those who were **suffering** placed a higher emphasis on the presence of higher education.

	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Survey Average
Education Opportunities	3.8%	4.5%	0.0%	3.9%
Higher Education	0.4%	1.5%	2.9%	1.1%
K-12 Schools	2.5%	2.6%	0.0%	2.4%
Libraries	0.8%	2.3%	0.0%	1.5%

What contributes to community well-being?



“

Well maintained green spaces, thriving arts community, excellent library system, largely accepting of a wide variety of people.

“

Opportunities for learning and growth for all ages and abilities.

“

Access to places to learn.

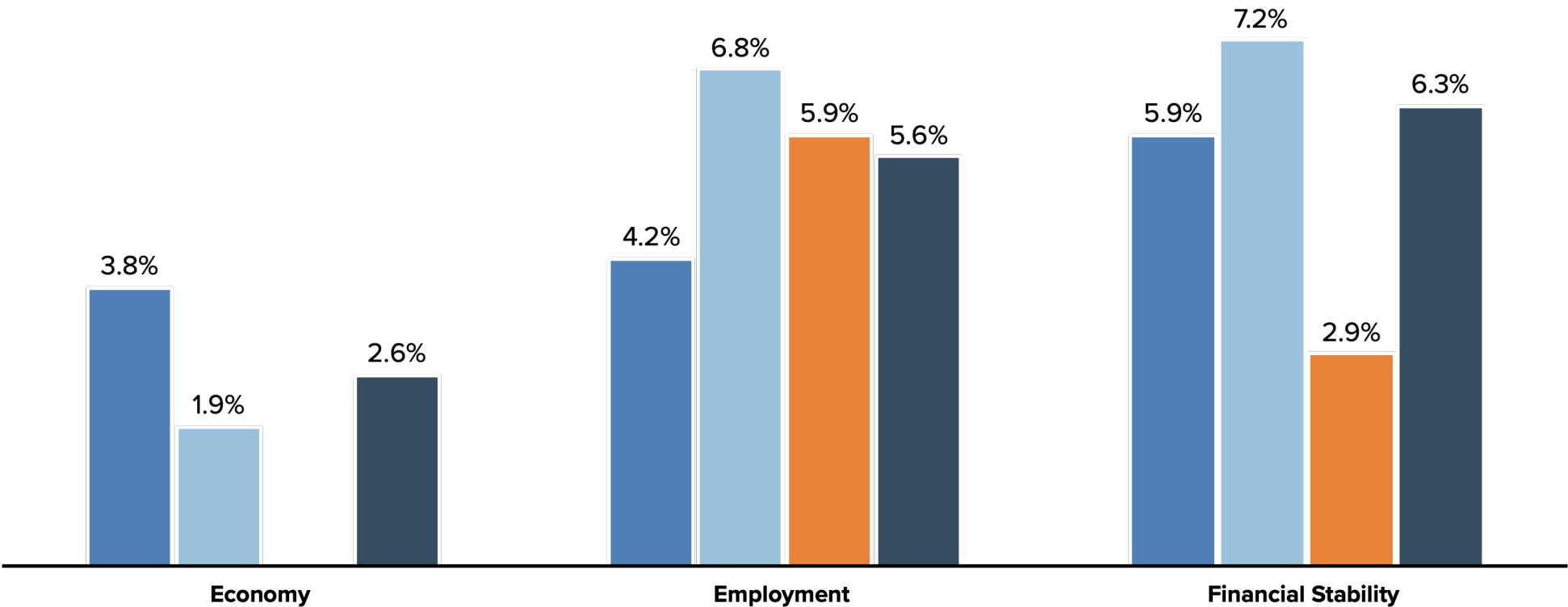
“

...good schools, higher education.



Components of Meaningful Work & Wealth that contribute to community well-being

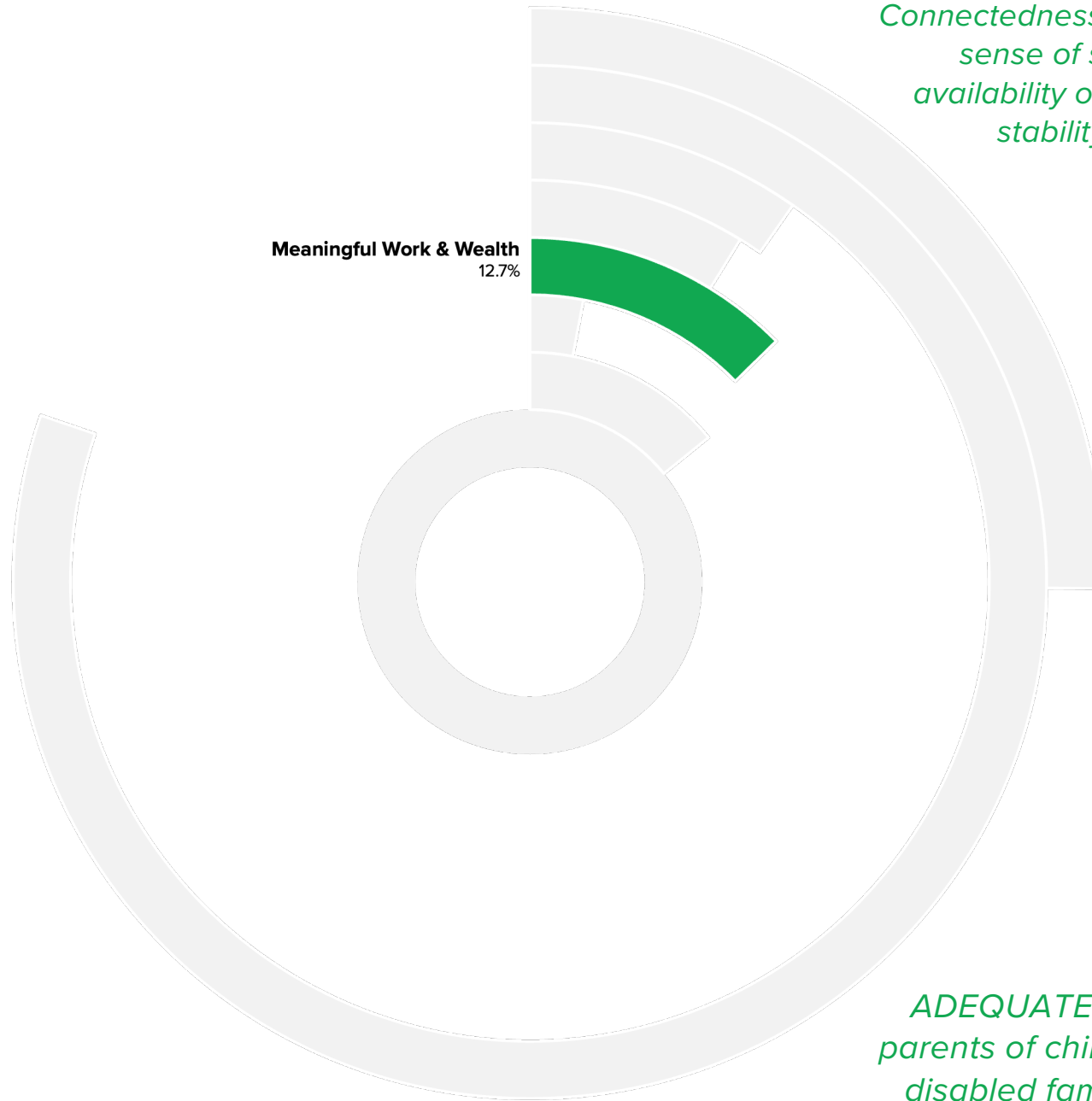
■ Thriving ■ Struggling ■ Suffering ■ Survey Average



For those who were **struggling** and **suffering**, the ability to gain employment was mentioned at a higher than average rate, while those who were **struggling** also mentioned financial stability at a higher rate. A healthy economy was only mentioned at a higher rate by those who were **thriving**, and not at all by those who were **suffering**.

	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Survey Average
Economy	3.8%	1.9%	0.0%	2.6%
Employment	4.2%	6.8%	5.9%	5.6%
Financial Stability	5.9%	7.2%	2.9%	6.3%

What contributes to community well-being?



“

Connectedness, meaningful vocations and relationships, sense of stability/security (like stable housing, jobs, availability of healthcare across the lifespan), financial stability through hardship, vibrant public spaces.

“

Stability – financial well-being. Meaningful work. Sense of purpose.

“

Relatively high minimum wages and good social services.

“

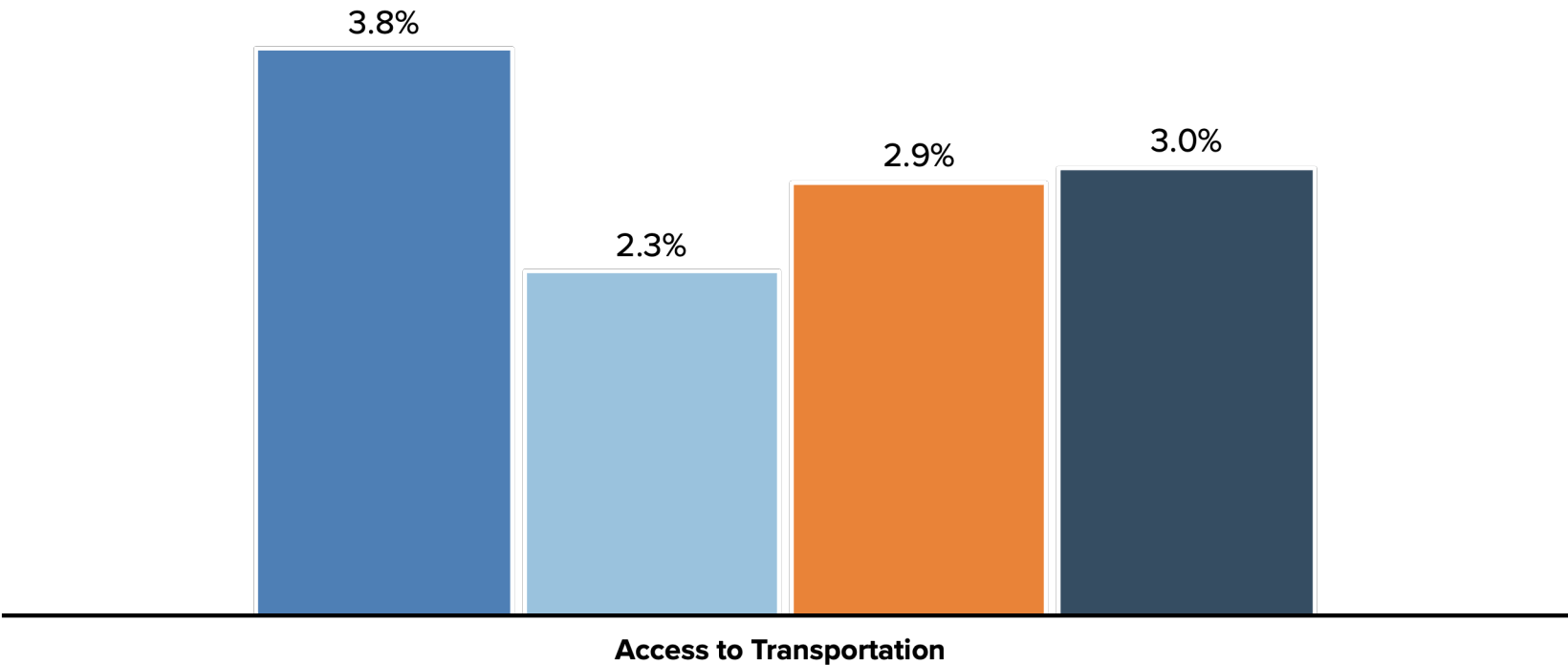
ADEQUATE support scaffolding for working parents of children, those caring for elderly or disabled family members or children, livable wage...



Components of **Reliable Transportation** that contribute to community well-being



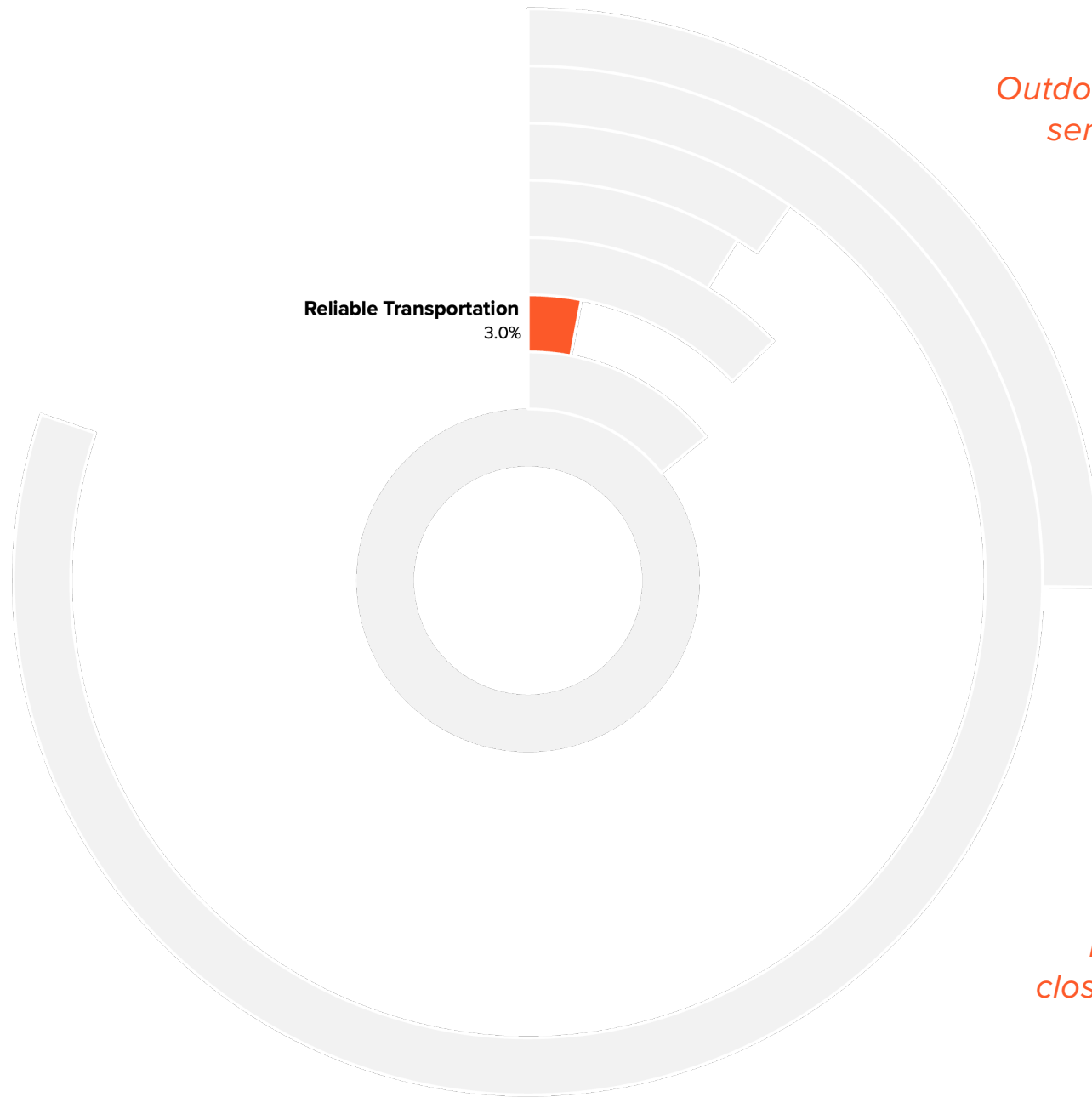
■ Thriving ■ Struggling ■ Suffering ■ Survey Average



When transportation was mentioned it often included references to public transit or walkable communities, indicating that a variety of options for transportation contributes to community well-being. This vital condition was mentioned more by those who were **thriving** than those who were **struggling** or **suffering**.

	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Survey Average
Access to Transportation	3.8%	2.3%	2.9%	3.0%

What contributes to community well-being?



“

Outdoor opportunities, access to services, transportation (WTA here is just amazing)

“

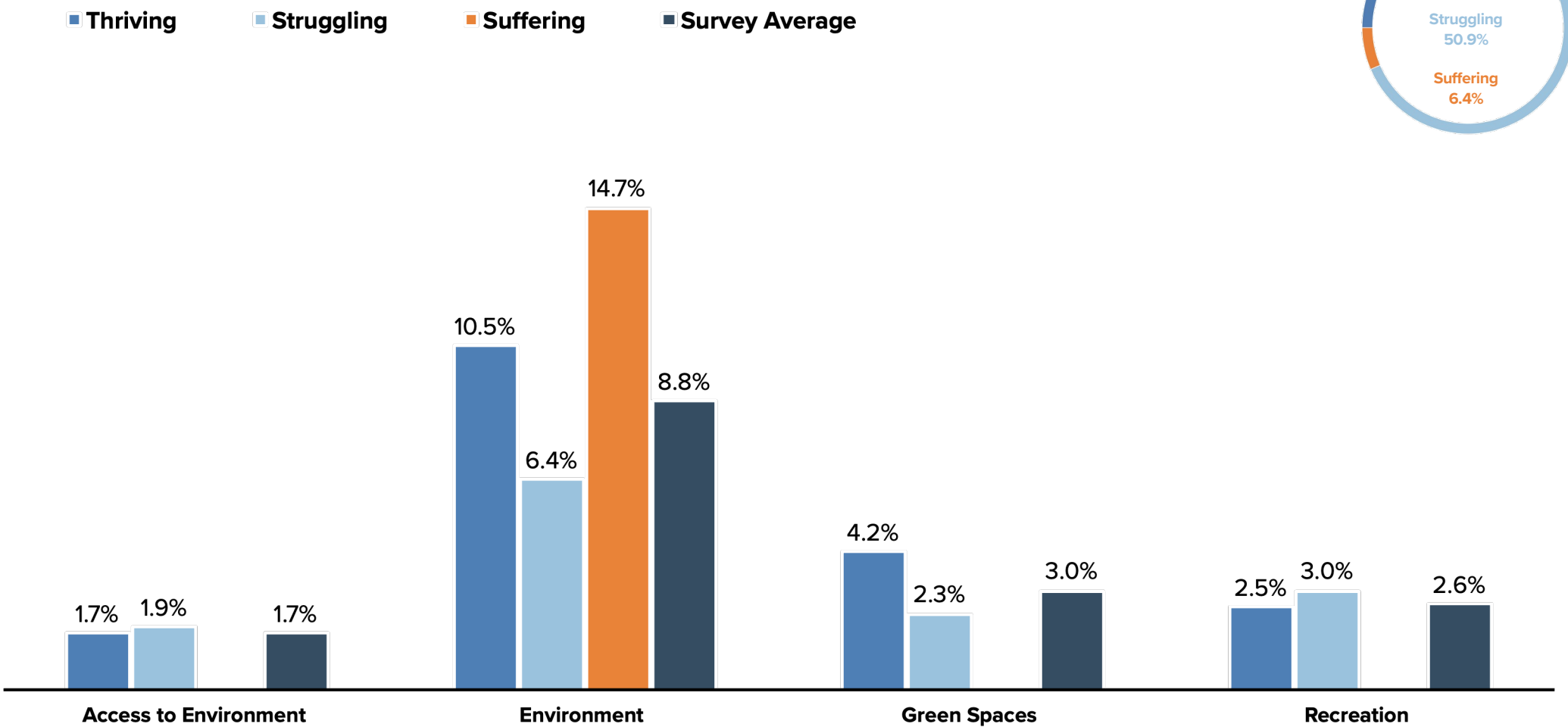
Having walkable towns and cities, social places to meet and for unplanned encounters

“

People being able to be in close proximity/within walking distance to each other



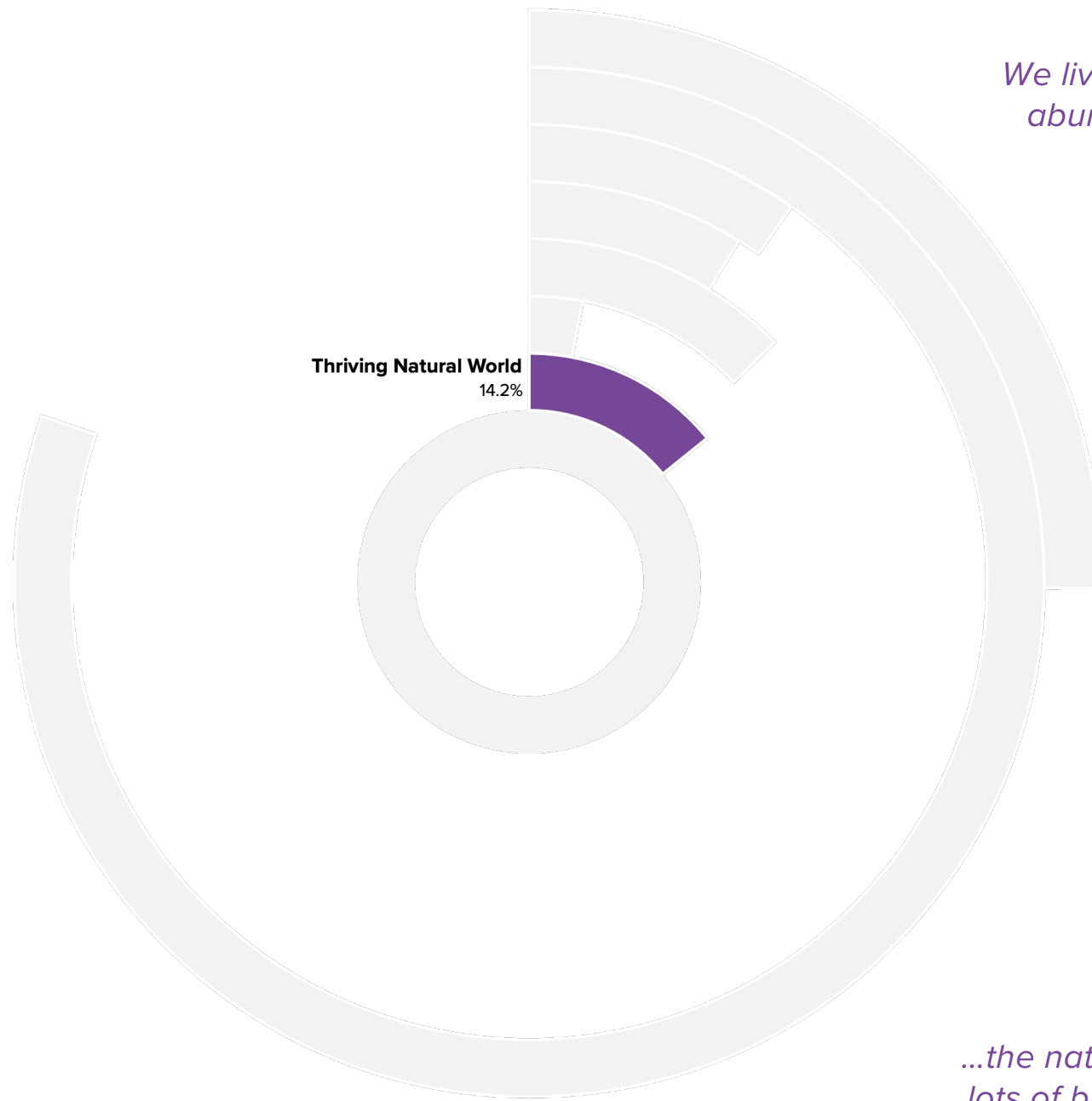
Components of **Thriving Natural World** that contribute to community well-being



Those who were **thriving** or **struggling** had a wider variety of responses in this area, mentioning access to the environment, green spaces (parks, greenways, etc) and recreation as well as the more generalized environment. Those who were **suffering** mentioned only the environment in this area, focusing on the region’s natural setting as a contribution to community well-being.

	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Survey Average
Access to Environment	1.7%	1.9%	0.0%	1.7%
Environment	10.5%	6.4%	14.7%	8.8%
Green Spaces	4.2%	2.3%	0.0%	3.0%
Recreation	2.5%	3.0%	0.0%	2.6%

What contributes to community well-being?



“

We live in a beautiful area with abundant opportunities to be outdoors at no cost

“

Access to nature, community gatherings, and good neighbors

“

We have a unique natural energy from the water, trees and mountains

“

...the natural world, especially lots of big trees. Emphasis on outdoor play and time



What contributes most to community well-being?



Most common contributors to community well-being

Community Values	38.4%
Social Support	27.4%
Access to Care	12.1%
Social Safety Net	11.9%
Access to Housing	9.7%
Environment	8.8%
Food	7.6%
Safety	7.5%
Arts & Culture	6.3%
Politics	6.3%
Financial Stability	6.3%
Faith Community	5.6%
Employment	5.6%
Education Opportunities	3.9%
Third Places	3.7%
Basic Needs	3.0%
Access to Transportation	3.0%
Green Spaces	3.0%
Economy	2.6%
Recreation	2.6%
K-12 Schools	2.4%
Family Support	2.2%
Access to Environment	1.7%
Libraries	1.5%
Higher Education	1.1%
Physical Activity	0.7%

Top five contributors to community well-being by those who were thriving

Community Values	38.8%
Social Support	28.7%
Social Safety Net	12.7%
Access to Care	12.2%
Environment	10.5%

Top five contributors to community well-being by those who were struggling

Community Values	41.5%
Social Support	25.7%
Access to Care	12.5%
Social Safety Net	11.3%
Access to Housing	10.9%

Top five contributors to community well-being by those who were suffering

Social Support	32.4%
Environment	14.7%
Community Values	11.8%
Social Safety Net	11.8%
Access to Housing	11.8%

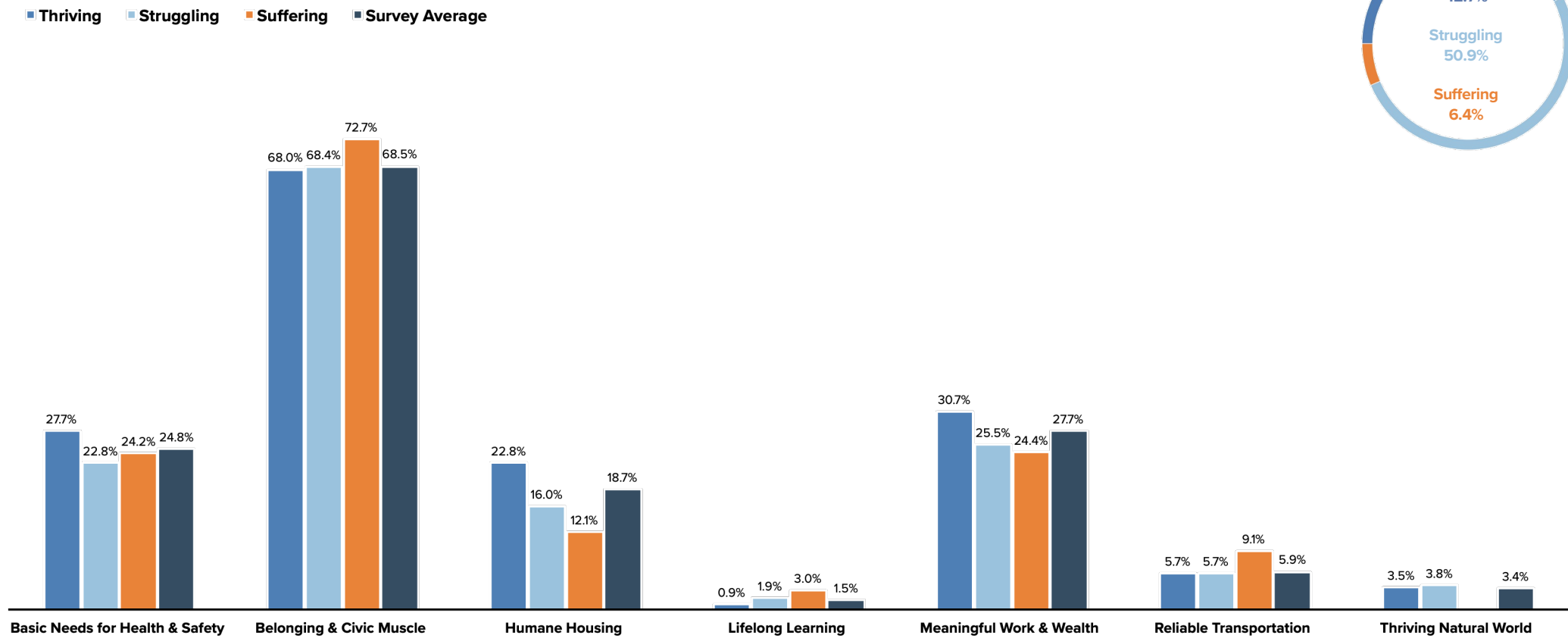
What gets in the way of community well-being?



Areas where **Belonging & Civic Muscle** were lacking were most often referenced as barriers to community well-being; **Meaningful Work & Wealth** was mentioned second-most frequently.

Lifelong Learning and **Thriving Natural World** were least mentioned as barriers to community well-being.

Responses to the question "What gets in the way of community well-being?" by those who are thriving, struggling and suffering

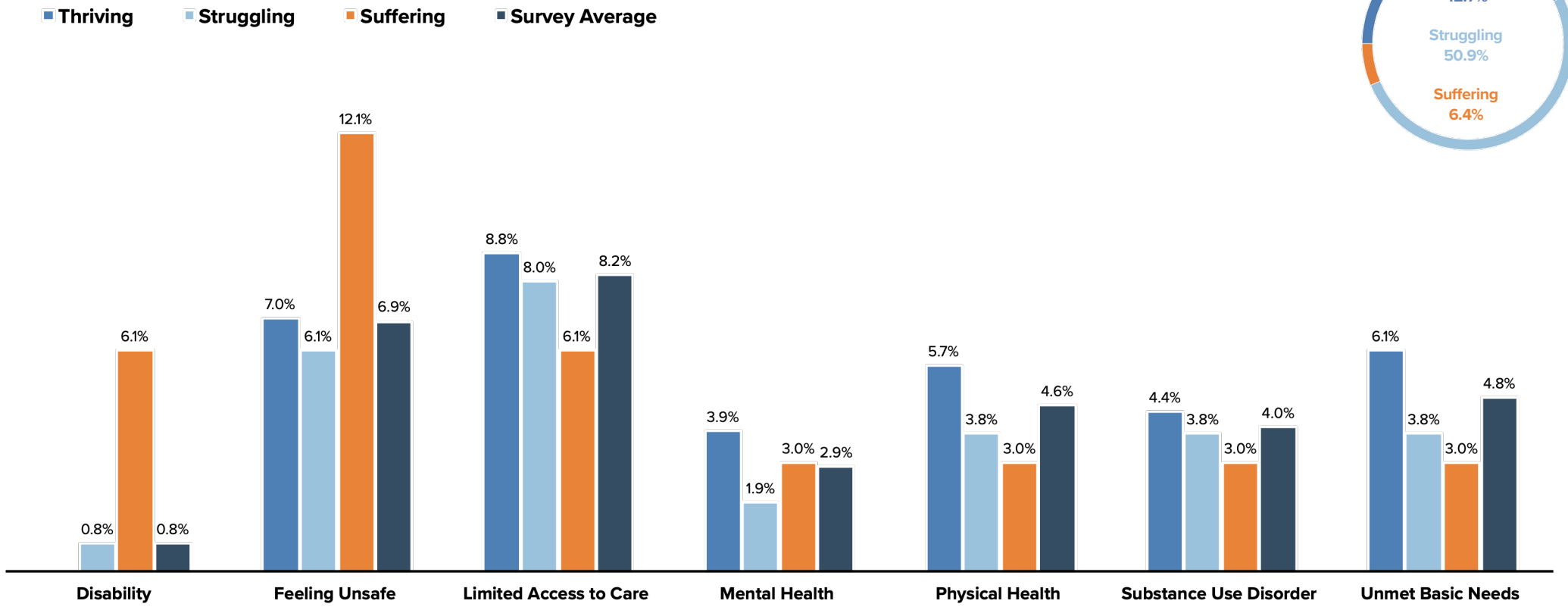


As with the responses to what contributes to community well-being, **Belonging & Civic Muscle** was the most referenced vital condition when it came to what gets in the way of community well-being. However, those who were **suffering** responded there at a higher rate than average, a reversal from the contribution question.

Those who were **thriving** responded with factors related to **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**, **Humane Housing**, and **Meaningful Work & Wealth** at an above average rate, while those who were **struggling** tended to stay closer to the average throughout.

	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Survey Average
Basic Needs for Health & Safety	27.7%	22.8%	24.4%	24.8%
Belonging & Civic Muscle	68.0%	68.4%	72.2%	68.5%
Humane Housing	22.8%	16.0%	12.1%	18.7%
Lifelong Learning	0.9%	1.9%	3.0%	1.5%
Meaningful Work & Wealth	30.7%	25.5%	24.4%	27.7%
Reliable Transportation	5.7%	5.7%	9.1%	5.9%
Thriving Natural World	3.5%	3.8%	0.0%	3.4%

Components of **Basic Needs for Health & Safety** that get in the way of community well-being



Those who were **suffering** were most likely to respond that their community’s well-being was negatively impacted by a lack of safety, as well as issues around accessibility for those with disabilities. In all other categories those who were **thriving** mentioned areas of **Basic Needs for Health & Safety** at a higher rate than average.

	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Survey Average
Disability	0.0%	0.8%	6.1%	0.8%
Feeling Unsafe	7.0%	6.1%	12.1%	6.9%
Limited Access to Care	8.8%	8.0%	6.1%	8.2%
Mental Health	3.9%	1.9%	3.0%	2.9%
Physical Health	5.7%	3.8%	3.0%	4.6%
Substance Use Disorder	4.4%	3.8%	3.0%	4.0%
Unmet Basic Needs	6.1%	3.8%	3.0%	4.8%

What gets in the way of community well-being?



Seeing and meeting so many people who are on the street and without a safe place to sleep and eat and take care of themselves.



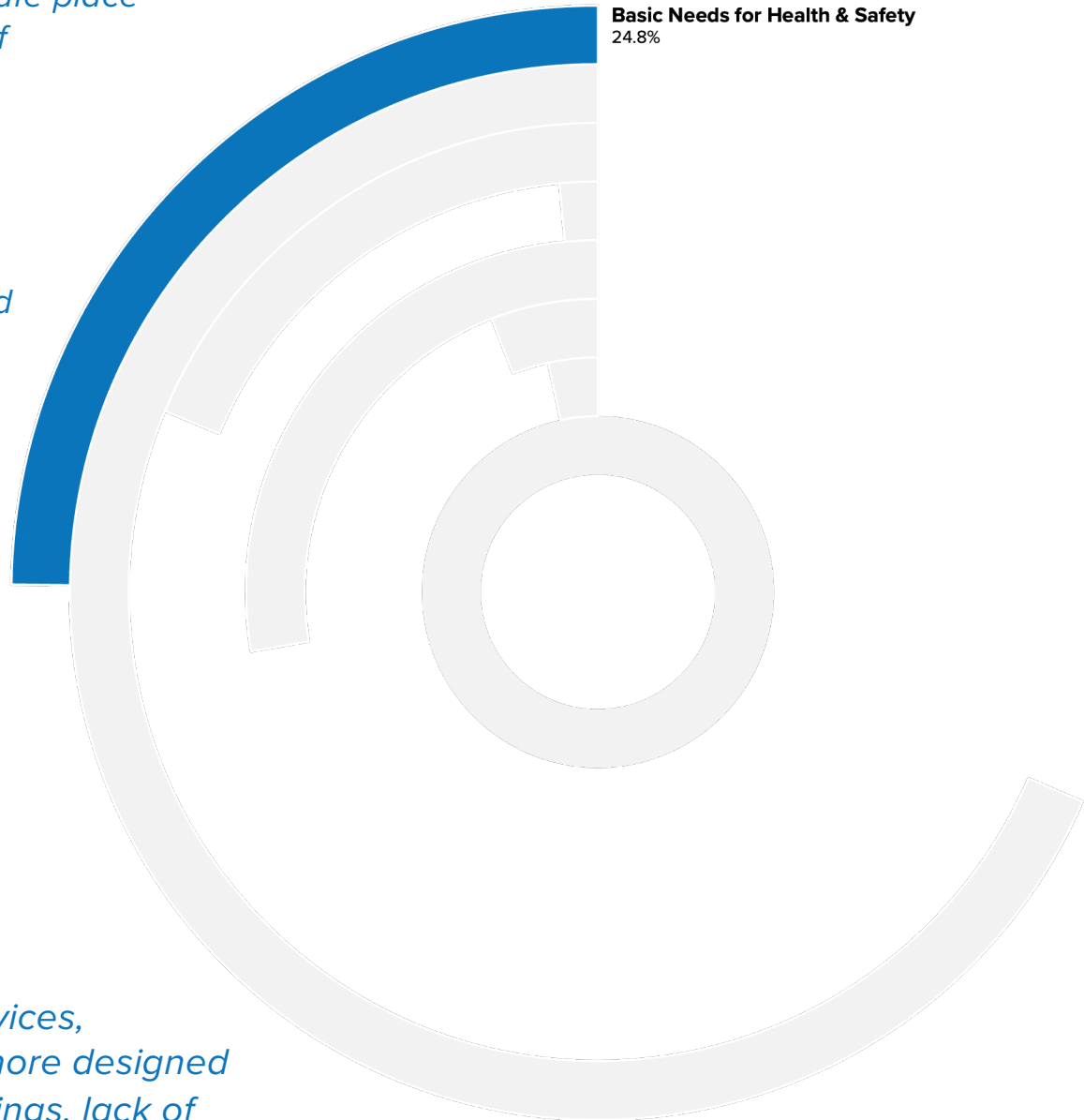
Very limited access to affordable food and housing. Very limited access to local healthcare and medical/dental/mental health providers.



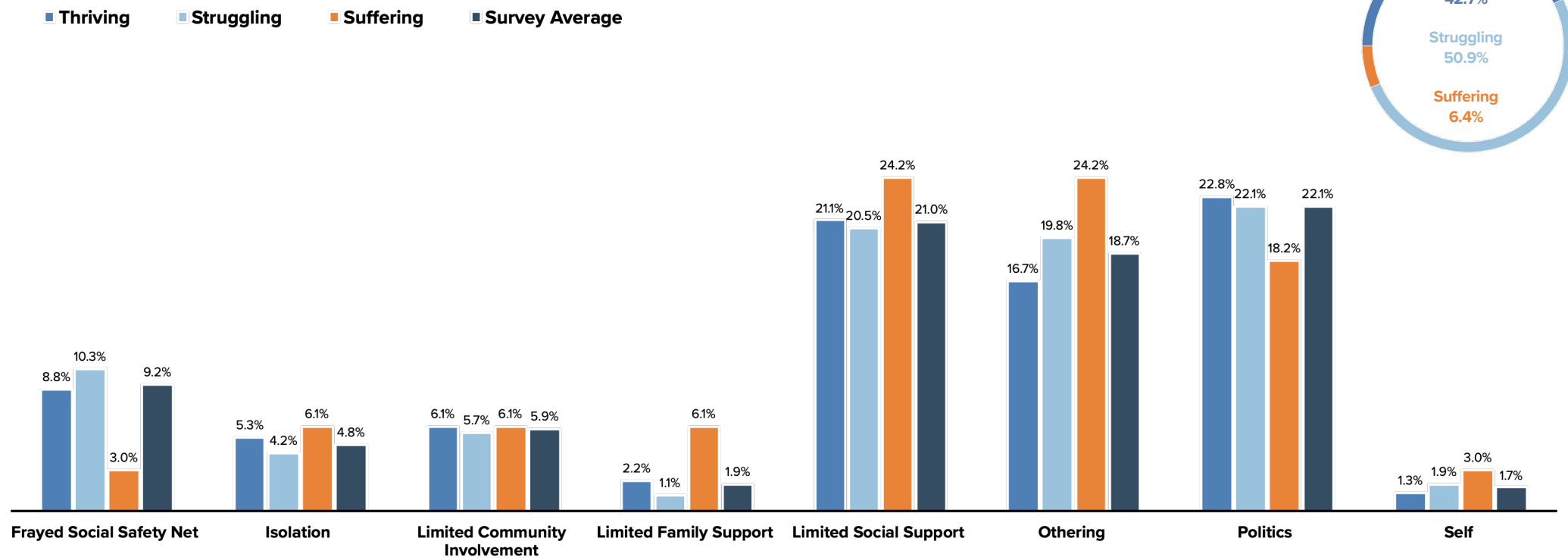
Threat of ICE raids and family separation.



... not enough mental health services, programs from Commerce are more designed for large cities and not rural settings, lack of access to and consistent medical care...



Components of **Belonging & Civic Muscle** that get in the way of community well-being



Politics was most frequently offered as a negative impact to community well-being, with 22.1% of total responses considering it a negative factor. Responses here were not limited to one political party or alignment; the general divisiveness of political discourse was most often mentioned, with parties on the left and right specifically mentioned as well. Those who were **thriving** mentioned this area above average.

Other responses most commonly focused on othering and limited social support, with mentions of bigotry, racism, classism, and feelings of disconnection. Those who were **suffering** were more likely to respond with themes in these areas.

	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Survey Average
Frayed Social Safety Net	8.8%	10.3%	3.0%	9.2%
Isolation	5.3%	4.2%	6.1%	4.8%
Limited Community Involvement	6.1%	5.7%	6.1%	5.9%
Limited Family Support	2.2%	1.1%	6.1%	1.9%
Limited Social Support	21.1%	20.5%	24.2%	21.0%
Othering	16.7%	19.8%	24.2%	18.7%
Politics	22.8%	22.1%	18.2%	22.1%
Self	1.3%	1.9%	3.0%	1.7%

What gets in the way of community well-being?

Political distrust

Rigid thinking on values and not listening to one another

Republicans

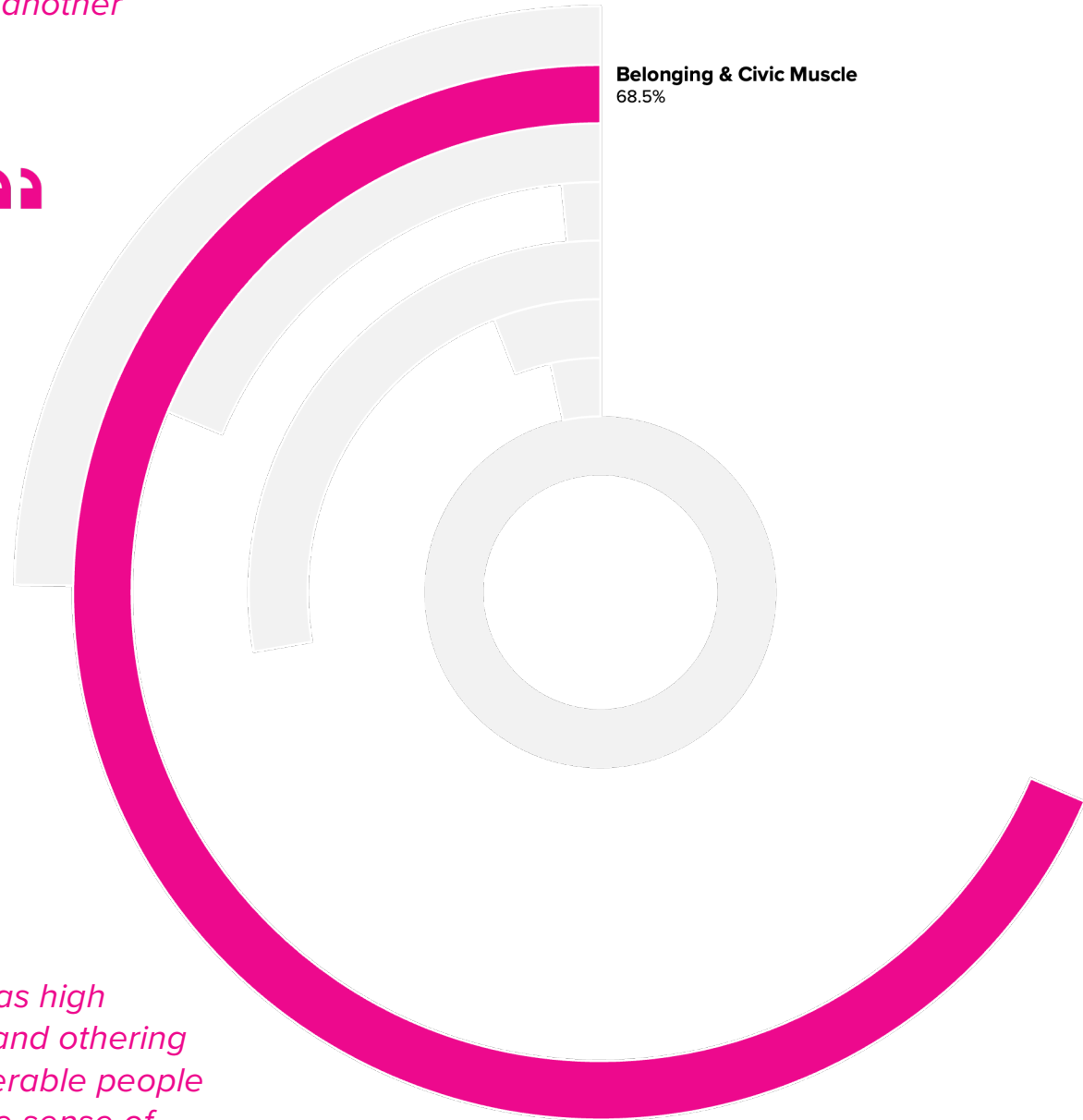
Our liberal politicians

I don't have one community that I can really rely on

Los estereotipos, la falta de fondos, el racismo y sobre todo la desigualdad

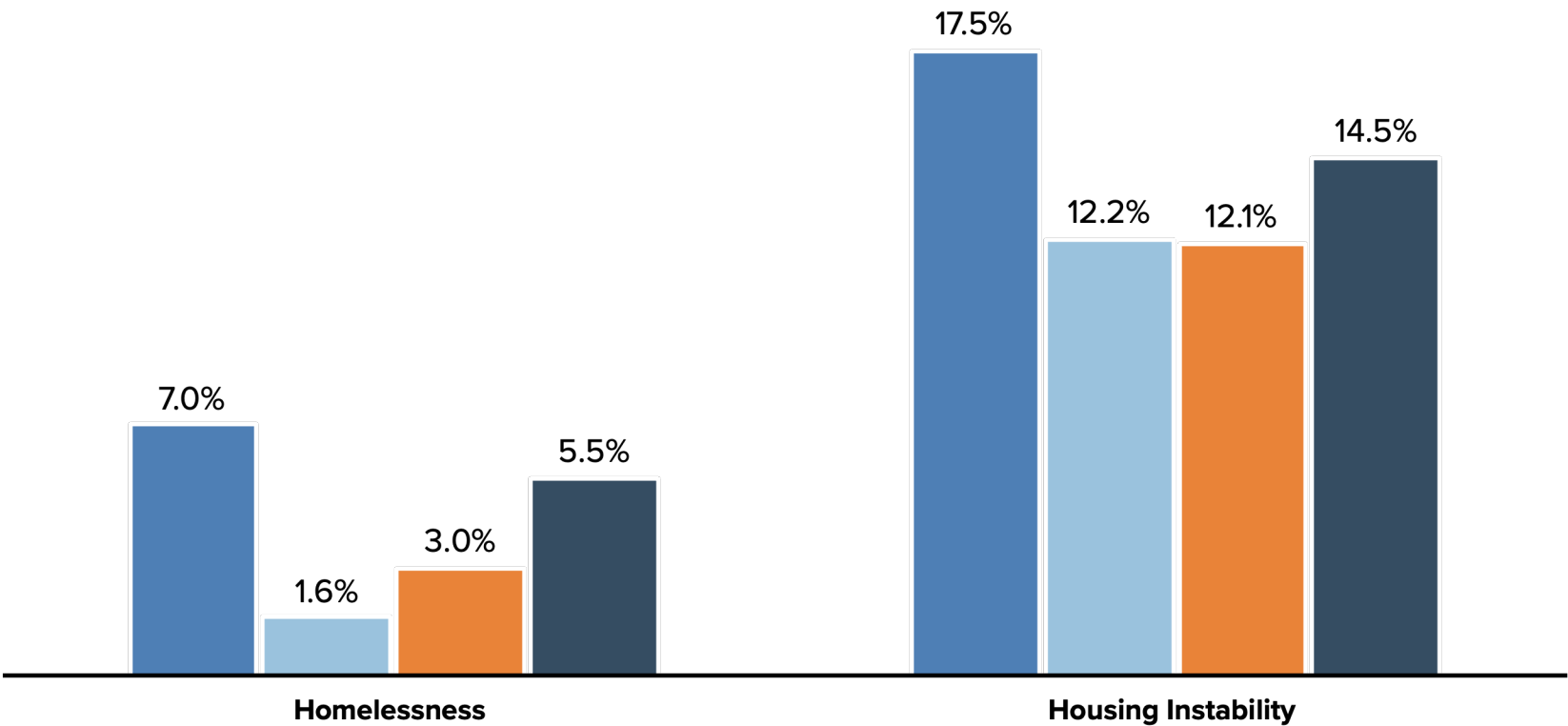
Stereotypes, lack of funding, racism and above all inequality

Legal/penal system, as well as high schools, too often expelling and othering and removing the most vulnerable people in our communities. This false sense of "safety" leads to more addiction, gangs and broken generational cycles.



Components of Humane Housing that get in the way of community well-being

■ Thriving ■ Struggling ■ Suffering ■ Survey Average



Where Humane Housing was mentioned as a barrier to community well-being, it most often had to do with housing instability and came alongside mentions of high costs and financial instability. However, homelessness and gaps in homeless services were also mentioned at a notable rate, 5.5% of all responses.

	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Survey Average
Homelessness	7.0%	1.6%	3.0%	5.5%
Housing Instability	17.5%	12.2%	12.1%	14.5%

What gets in the way of community well-being?



I'm retired now and when my spouse retires, we won't be able to afford our home so we'll need to move in the next two years... I worry about housing in our future.



Lack of affordable housing and shelter... Lack of community support and services for unhoused people. Services for unhoused people being restrictive.



High rental and home prices. Unclear info regarding levies (vote for taxes) – unexpected property taxes.

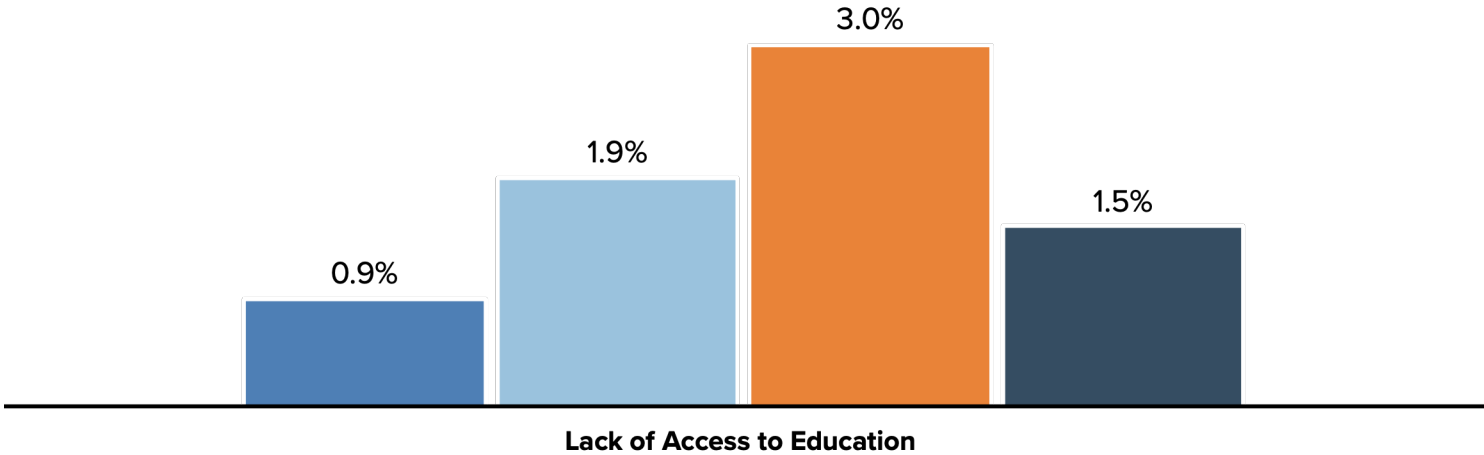


It is very difficult to get simple home maintenance performed, as contractors do not wish to cross the border (time, cost, and requires a passport), so some homes are in serious disrepair and some should not be inhabited at all (but residents have no alternative and must continue living in them despite safety and health risks).



Components of Lifelong Learning that get in the way of community well-being

■ Thriving ■ Struggling ■ Suffering ■ Survey Average



Lifelong Learning was mentioned the least out of all of the vital conditions as a negative impact to community well-being, appearing in 1.5% of responses. The most commonly referenced issues were lack of early childhood education, and lack of access to education in general. Those who were **thriving** mentioned this area at a below-average rate, while those **struggling** and **suffering** mentioned it at an above-average rate.

	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Survey Average
Lack of Access to Education	0.9%	1.9%	3.0%	1.5%

What gets in the way of community well-being?



...under funding of public schools, and the lack of affordable and accessible childcare (e.g. pre-K, K-12 summer programming) services.

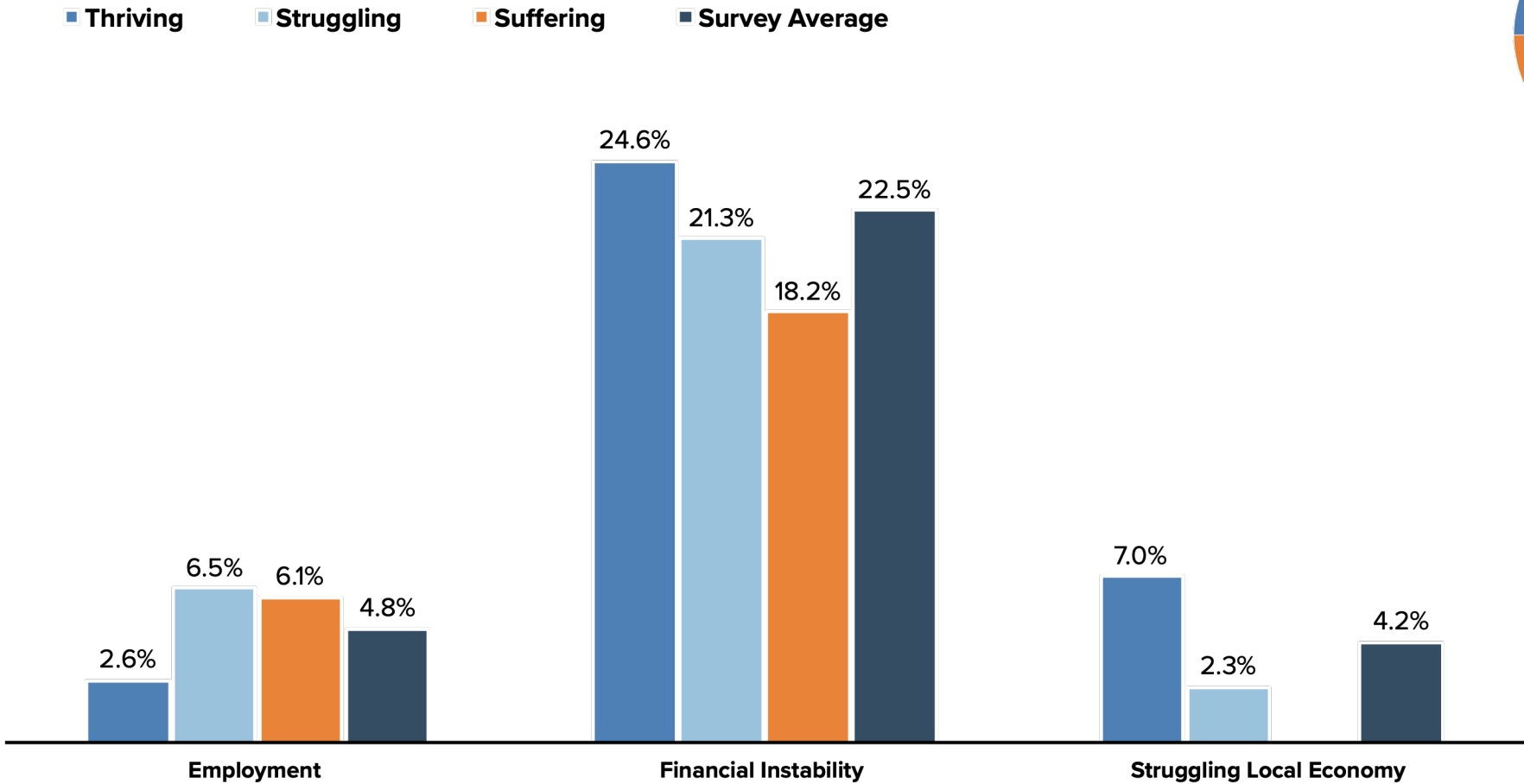


Lack of education. Ignorance and unsupported beliefs.



Lifelong Learning
1.5%

Components of **Meaningful Work & Wealth** that get in the way of community well-being



Financial instability was the most commonly referenced barrier to community well-being, both in the area of **Meaningful Work & Wealth** and as a whole. Close to a quarter of all responses from those who were **thriving**, 24.6%, mentioned financial instability as a barrier to community well-being.

Employment, either lack of employment, issues with work/life balance, or issues around living wages was mentioned at an above-average rate by those who were **struggling** or **suffering**, while issues around local economy were mentioned by those who were **thriving** at a higher rate.

	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Survey Average
Employment	2.6%	6.5%	6.1%	4.8%
Financial Instability	24.6%	21.3%	18.2%	22.5%
Struggling Local Economy	7.0%	2.3%	0.0%	4.2%

What gets in the way of community well-being?

“

...all the jobs for non-profits supporting these rural communities are in urban areas... ...most of our businesses and buildings are owned by people who live on the I5 corridor and extract the wealth...

“

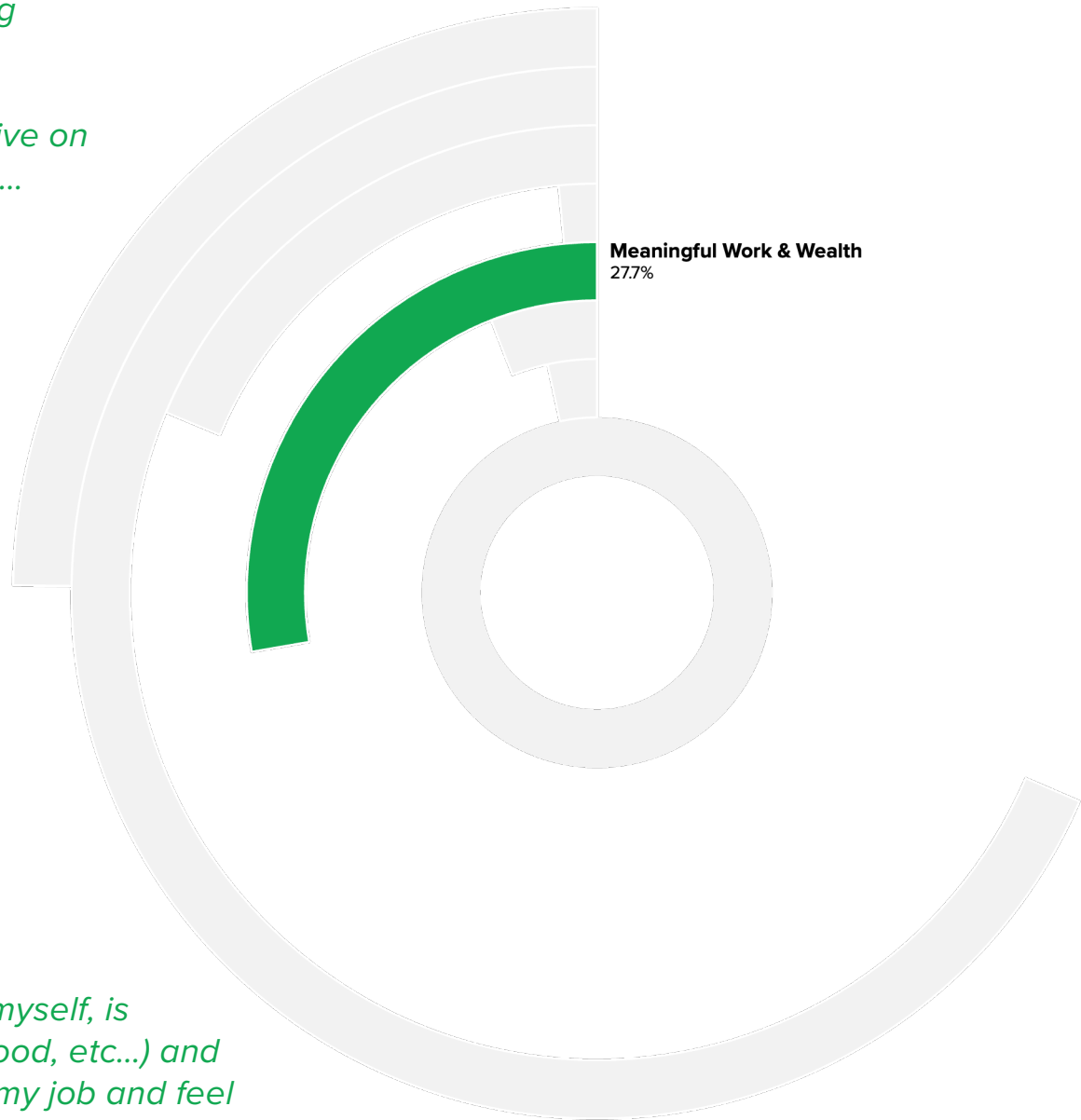
Financial uncertainty... uncertainty about the future

“

The enormous income gap – people either have 3 homes or 3 jobs.

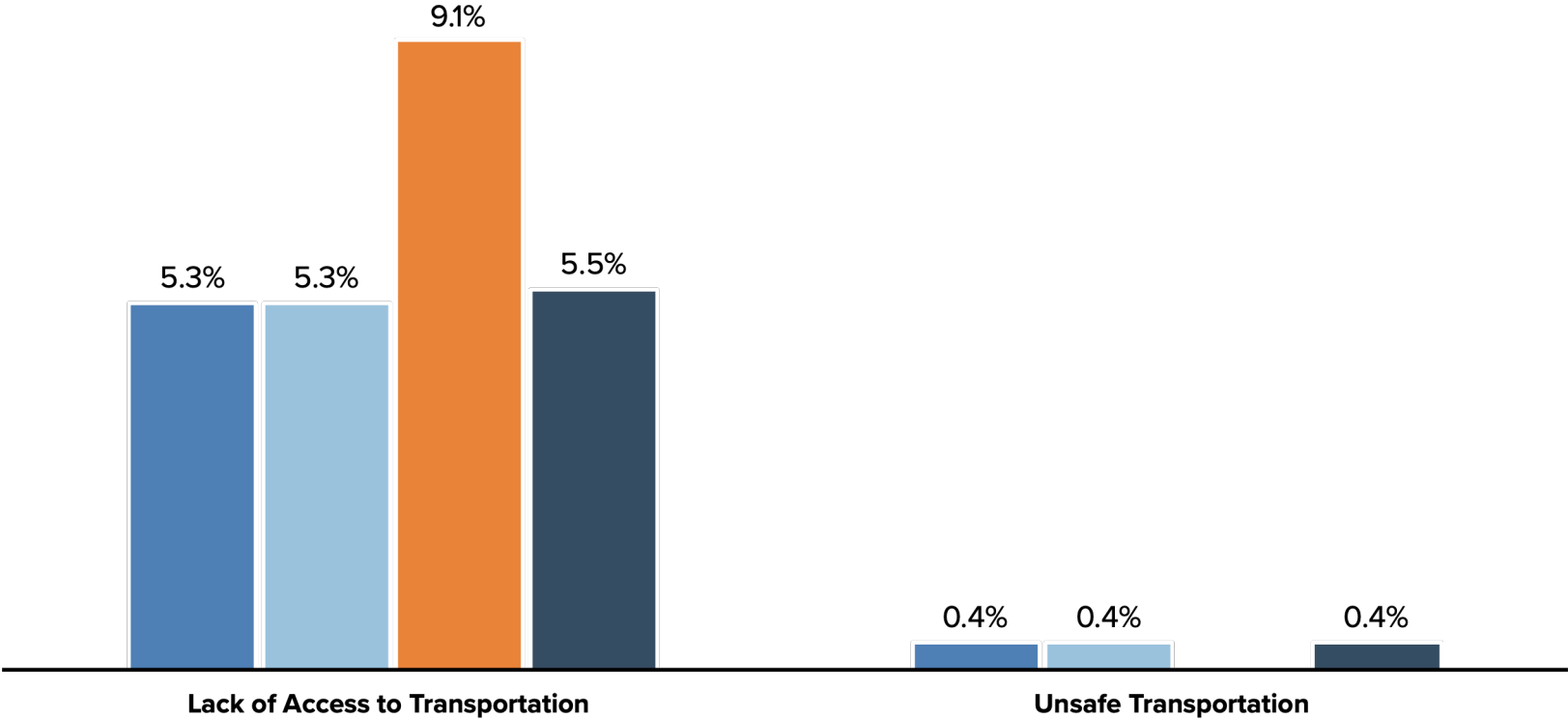
“

Everyone I see around me, including myself, is struggling with rising costs (housing, food, etc...) and working with limited resources. I love my job and feel that I have a good work life balance, but it is still difficult to balance parenthood, self care, and work.



Components of **Reliable Transportation** that get in the way of community well-being

■ Thriving ■ Struggling ■ Suffering ■ Survey Average



While **Reliable Transportation** was not the most referenced vital condition, it played an outsized role for those who were **suffering**. Lack of access to transportation was mentioned in 9.1% of responses by those who were **suffering**, much higher than the average of 5.5%.

	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Survey Average
Lack of Access to Transportation	5.3%	5.3%	9.1%	5.5%
Unsafe Transportation	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.4%

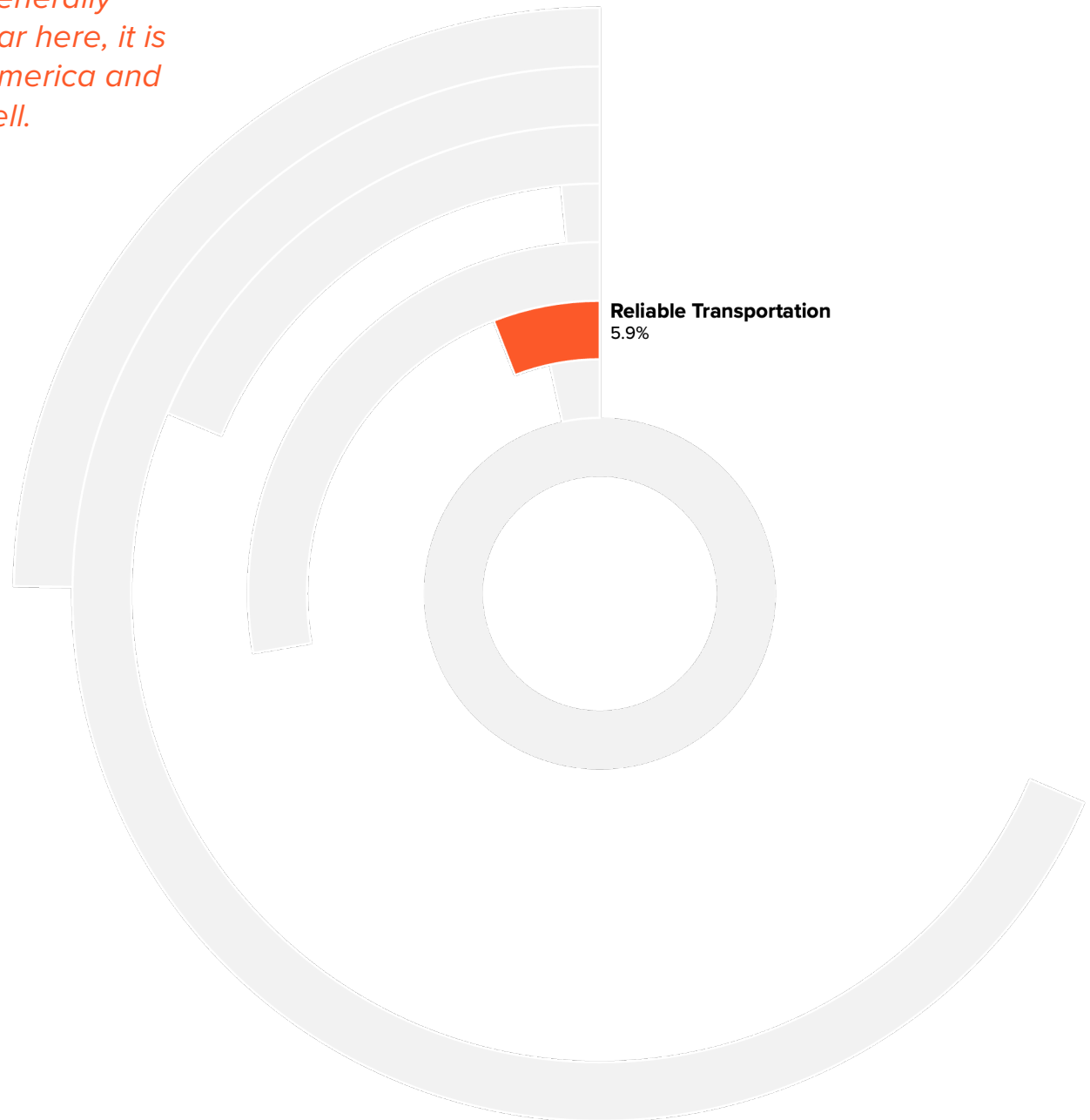
What gets in the way of community well-being?

Towns and society generally revolve around the car here, it is a problem for rural America and other countries as well.

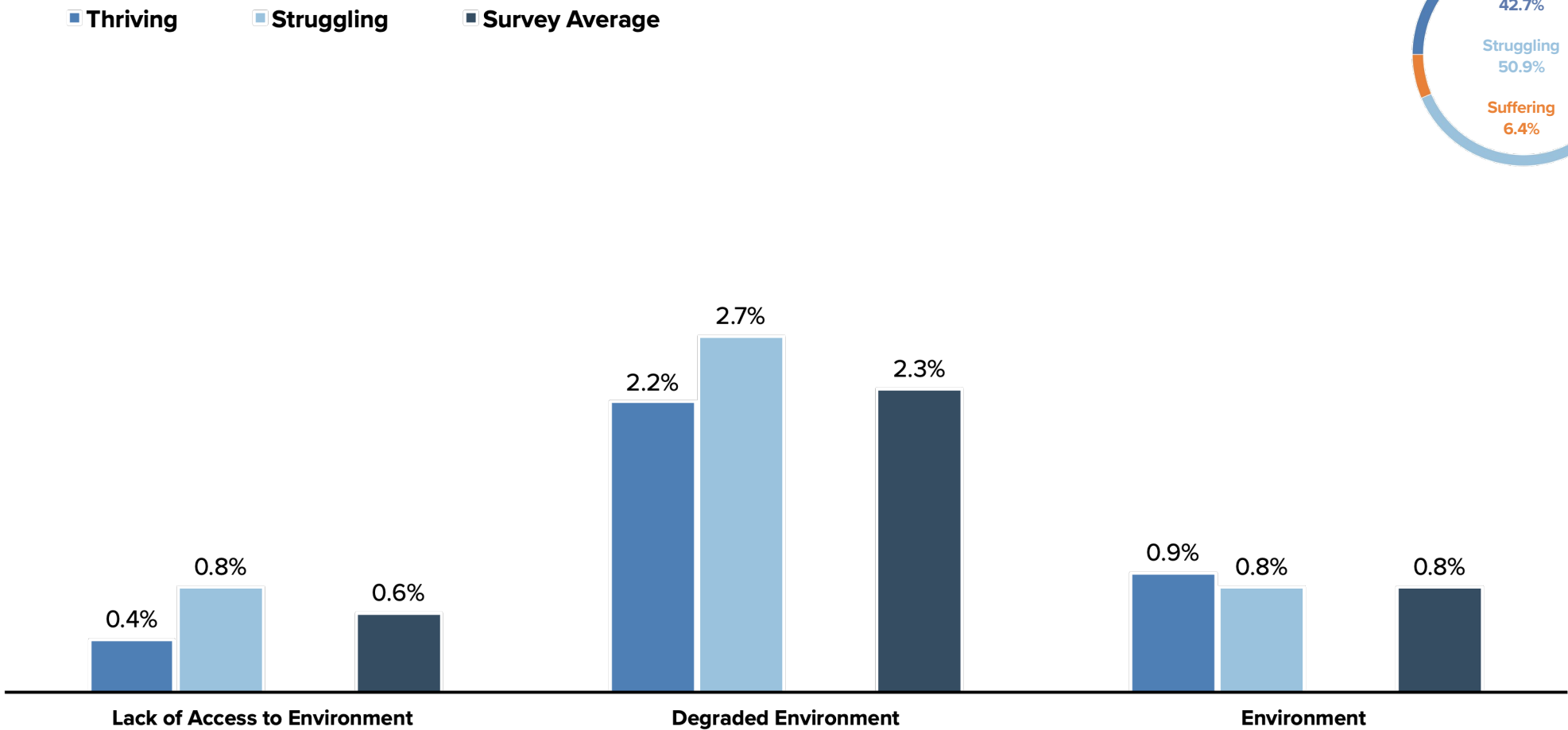
Inadequate alternatives to cars for transportation (including pedestrian friendly and bike friendly transport), particularly outside of the downtown areas...

Disruptions in ferry service

Businesses struggle to thrive and traffic is a barrier to people staying for a visit.



Components of **Thriving Natural World** that get in the way of community well-being



Where issues around a **Thriving Natural World** were mentioned, they were mentioned only by those who were **thriving** or **struggling**; those who were **suffering** did not make any mention of this vital condition being a barrier to their community’s well-being. The most commonly referenced area here was related to environmental damage and degradation, while a smaller subset focused on lack of access to outdoor areas and the general environment, specifically winter or rainy seasons, as barriers.

	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering	Survey Average
Lack of Access to Environment	0.4%	0.8%	0.0%	0.6%
Degraded Environment	2.2%	2.7%	0.0%	2.3%
Environment	0.9%	0.8%	0.0%	0.8%

What gets in the way of community well-being?



The City of Seattle owns our waterfront to subsidize their environmental damage to the Skagit, but does not share it with us...



...two toxic refineries in our town and noise pollution from the Air Force jets



Lack of sidewalks and neighborhood parks



...lack of efficient bus transportation (doesn't go to many neighborhood parks so cuts people off from community and well-being through access to the outdoor spaces).





What most gets in the way of community well-being?



Most common barriers to community well-being

Financial Instability	22.5%
Politics	22.1%
Limited Social Support	21.0%
Othering	18.7%
Housing Instability	14.5%
Frayed Social Safety Net	9.2%
Limited Access to Care	8.2%
Feeling Unsafe	6.9%
Limited Community Involvement	5.9%
Homelessness	5.5%
Lack of Access to Transportation	5.5%
Unmet Basic Needs	4.8%
Isolation	4.8%
Employment	4.8%
Physical Health	4.6%
Struggling Local Economy	4.2%
Substance Use Disorder	4.0%
Mental Health	2.9%
Degraded Environment	2.3%
Limited Family Support	1.9%
Self	1.7%
Lack of Access to Education	1.5%
Disability	0.8%
Environment	0.8%
Lack of Access to Environment	0.6%
Unsafe Transportation	0.4%

Top five barriers to community well-being by those who were thriving

Financial Instability	24.6%
Politics	22.8%
Limited Social Support	21.1%
Housing Instability	17.5%
Othering	16.7%

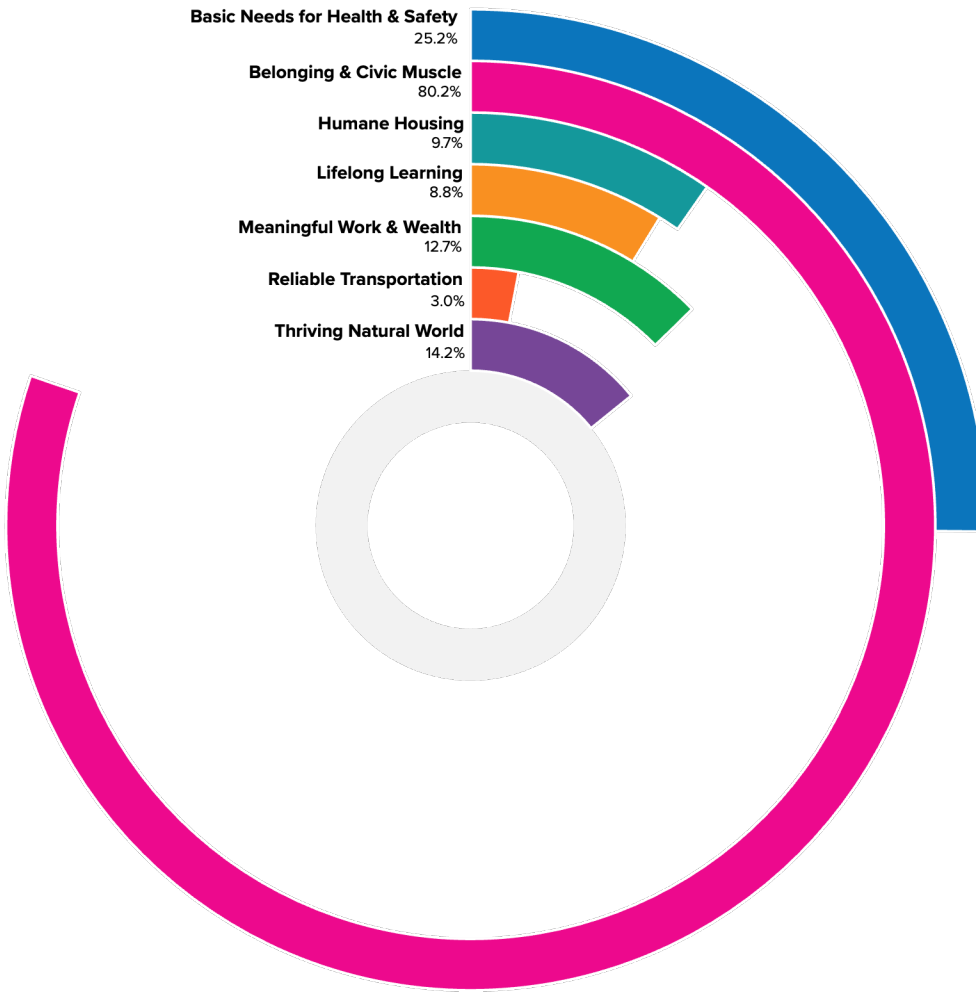
Top five barriers to community well-being by those who were struggling

Politics	22.1%
Financial Instability	21.3%
Limited Social Support	20.5%
Othering	19.8%
Housing Instability	12.2%

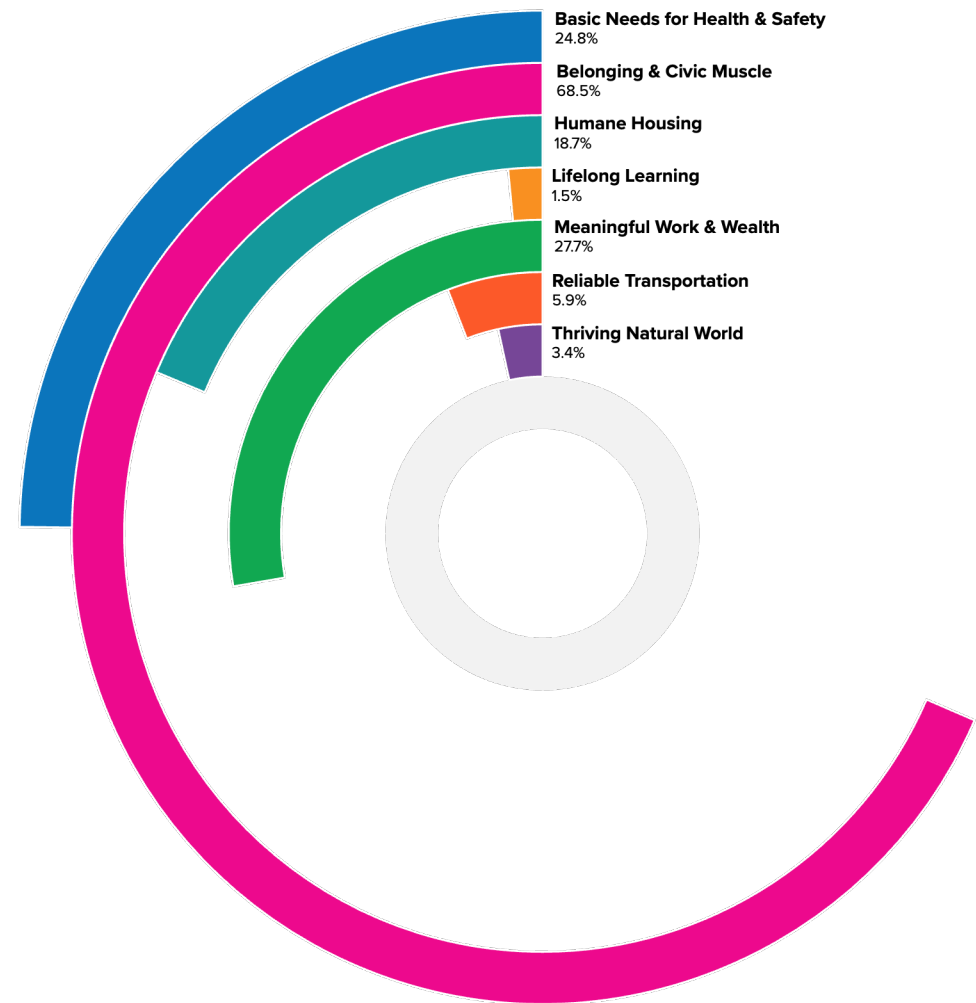
Top five barriers to community well-being by those who were suffering

Limited Social Support	24.2%
Othering	24.2%
Politics	18.2%
Financial Instability	18.2%
Feeling Unsafe	12.1%

What contributes to community well-being?



What gets in the way of community well-being?



While respondents were more likely to credit factors around **Belonging & Civic Muscle** with contributing to community well being than getting in the way, it was still the most referenced vital condition in both questions. **Lifelong Learning** and **Thriving Natural World** were more referenced as contributors to community well-being, while **Humane Housing**, **Meaningful Work & Wealth**, and **Reliable Transportation** played larger roles when it came to factors that respondents felt got in the way. **Basic Needs for Health & Safety** was the most balanced vital condition between the two questions.

	Contributes	Gets in the way
Basic Needs for Health & Safety	25.2%	24.8%
Belonging & Civic Muscle	80.2%	68.5%
Humane Housing	9.7%	18.7%
Lifelong Learning	8.8%	1.5%
Meaningful Work & Wealth	12.7%	27.7%
Reliable Transportation	3.0%	5.9%
Thriving Natural World	14.2%	3.4%



This report was compiled from
May 2025 - July 2025
from data gathered in the
2025 North Sound Well-Being Survey.

For questions please reach out to
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