



# Survey of Afghan Immigrants in Washington State

Community Perspective and Resettlement Experiences

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# Acknowledgments

## Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the Indigenous people that have and still continue to inhabit the land that this research was conducted on and the land that we occupy. We thank the Coast Salish peoples of this land, the land which touches the shared waters of all tribes and bands within the Duwamish, Puyallup, Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations for their protection and stewardship of this land, as we acknowledge the injustices that were and continue to occur to the Indigenous peoples.

## Community Acknowledgement

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- Hazara Community of Washington (HCWA)
- Kabul Washington Association (KWA)
- Afghan American Community of Washington
- Masjid Quba

We would like especially thank the Afghan community within Washington for taking the time to share information with us, participate in our research and efforts, and share our survey with others.

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# Introduction

- Immigration: A constant throughout human history shaped by geopolitical conflicts, persecution, and economic adversity."
- "Afghanistan's century-long history of persecution, migration, and large diaspora across the globe."
- "Mass exodus post-August 2021 resulted in overwhelming resettlement capacity in the US."
- "Afghan immigrants in Washington State, USA."
- "Survey-based approach to study resettlement and integration experiences in WA."
- "Primary question: How do Afghan immigrants experience resettlement, navigate the system, and integrate into society?"
- "Analysis of survey data collected from 197 Afghan immigrants/families in Washington State in 2023"

# Reason and Purpose

- **Afghanistan's Migration Narrative:** A century-long migration and forced displacement, providing key context and the basis for understanding contemporary immigration.
- **Contribution to Contemporary Immigration Literature:** Providing foundational insights into a community with significant and recent immigration experiences.
- **Insider and First-hand Account:** An insider's report of immigration and resettlement, offering a rich, authentic, and contextualized presentation of the experience as it unfolds.
- **Resettlement and Integration Challenges:** Focus on contemporary challenges faced by Afghan immigrants in Washington State, representing a step towards understanding immigration-integration issues.
- **Survey-Based Analysis:** Rigorous analysis of resettlement experiences through survey data collected in 2023 from 197 individuals.
- **Importance of Understanding Challenges:** Highlighting the unique challenges faced by Afghan immigrants for policy suggestions, tailored support, and integration initiatives.
- **Informing Policy and Resource Allocation:** Informing policy-making and resource allocation to address needs and contribute to harmonious and successful integration in the long term

# Survey Design

- Survey questionnaire, an online Google Doc form, starts with an introduction/information and consent form.
- Survey design covers the most important topics, including:
  - Immigration: timing and reasons
  - Family members: location and situation
  - Housing arrangements and issues
  - Service and support: key players (GOs and NGOs)
  - Pressing resettlement issues
  - Community support and social networking
- Design strategy ensures no important topics are left out, providing the full picture, comparing answers, and detecting unreliable responses.
- Key Informant Interviews with community leaders ensure fair representation of existing diversity – ethnic, gender, education level, arrival time, and immigration/visa status.

## The 6 sections of the questionnaire:

1. Demographics
2. Employment
3. Immigration
4. Housing
5. Health
6. Integration

## Literature Review

- Due to conflicts in Afghanistan, since the 1980's there has been rapid growth of Afghan immigrant populations
  - Major influx after 2021 Taliban takeover (86,000 relocated to the U.S. by 2022)
- Washington State resettled 5% of Afghans from 2001-2021
- Skew younger than foreign and U.S. born populations; higher marriage and citizenship rates
- ~25% of adults have not graduated high school, similar to other immigrant groups
- Overall lower English proficiency levels than the general immigrant population
- Despite receiving less education, employed Afghan men have higher employment rates than U.S. born men
  - Afghan women have 15% lower rates
- 2x as likely to live below the poverty line as other immigrants or native born individuals
- Mental health disorders are prevalent due to trauma, discrimination, and lack of interventions
- Settling in U.S. does not necessarily yield improved opportunities for mental health
- Language, and cultural barriers hinder their ability to access healthcare. need for culturally competent care
- Experiencing successful integration is increasingly important
  - Limited and outdated data on their specific experiences

# Methodology

## Methods and phases:

- Mixed method of data collection
  - 5 May 20 July 2023 (81 individuals)
  - 27 July 05 September 2023 (49 individuals)
  - 16 to 20 September 2023 (75 individuals)

## Quality control measures:

- Duplicate test
- Logic test (20 different tests)
- 8 cases were excluded from the data and analysis

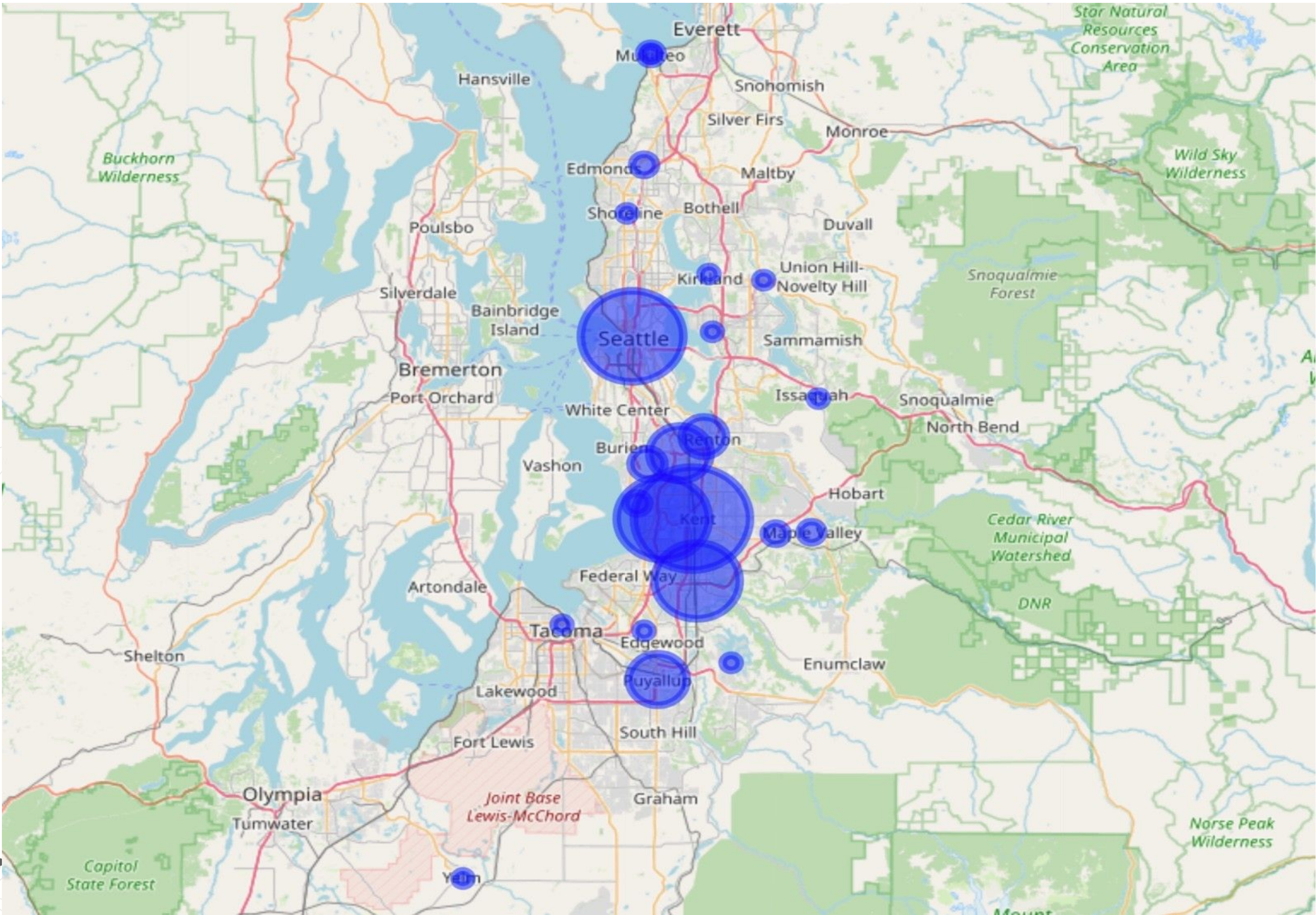
## Data collection:

- Questionnaire
  - Online Google form
  - 48 questions; 6 areas
  - Average data collection time: 30 minutes
- Methods to reachout respondents
  - Via phone from verified community members
  - In-person (community events, mosque, cultural and sport events, friday prayers)
  - Resettlement agencies
- Ethical standards
  - Consent form
  - No personal identifiable information



# Demographics

197 participants, 25 cities



# Demographics

## Gender:

- Males: 67%
- Females: 32%

## Arrival time:

- Before August 2021: 34%
- After August 2021: 66%

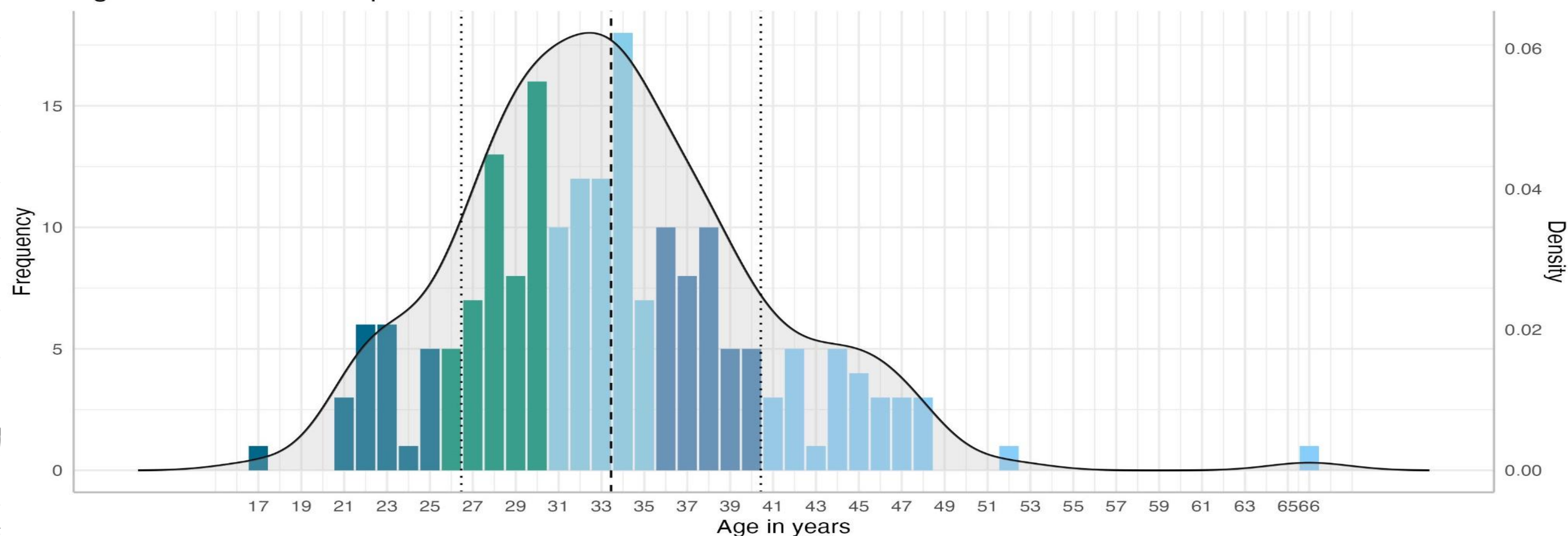
## Ethnicity:

- Hazara: 43%
- Pashtun: 33%
- Tajik: 21%
- Other ethnic groups: 3%

## Education level:

- No formal education: 19%
- Religious education: 2%
- School diploma: 27%
- University: 52%

Age Distribution of Respondents



Dashed line = Mean  
Dotted lines: 1SD

## Sections 1-3

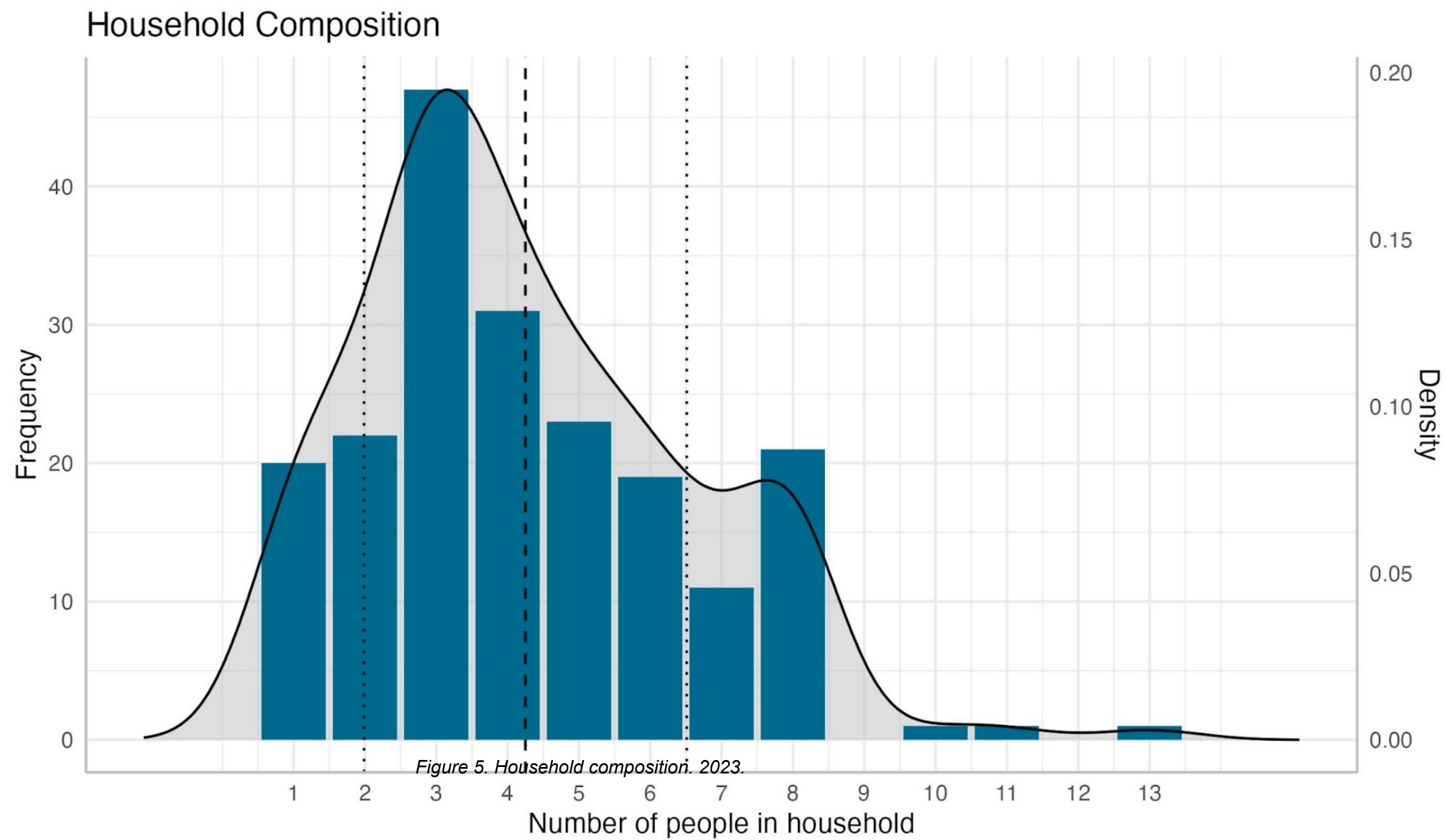


Figure 5. Household composition. 2023.

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# Sections 1-3

## Satisfaction with Current Employment

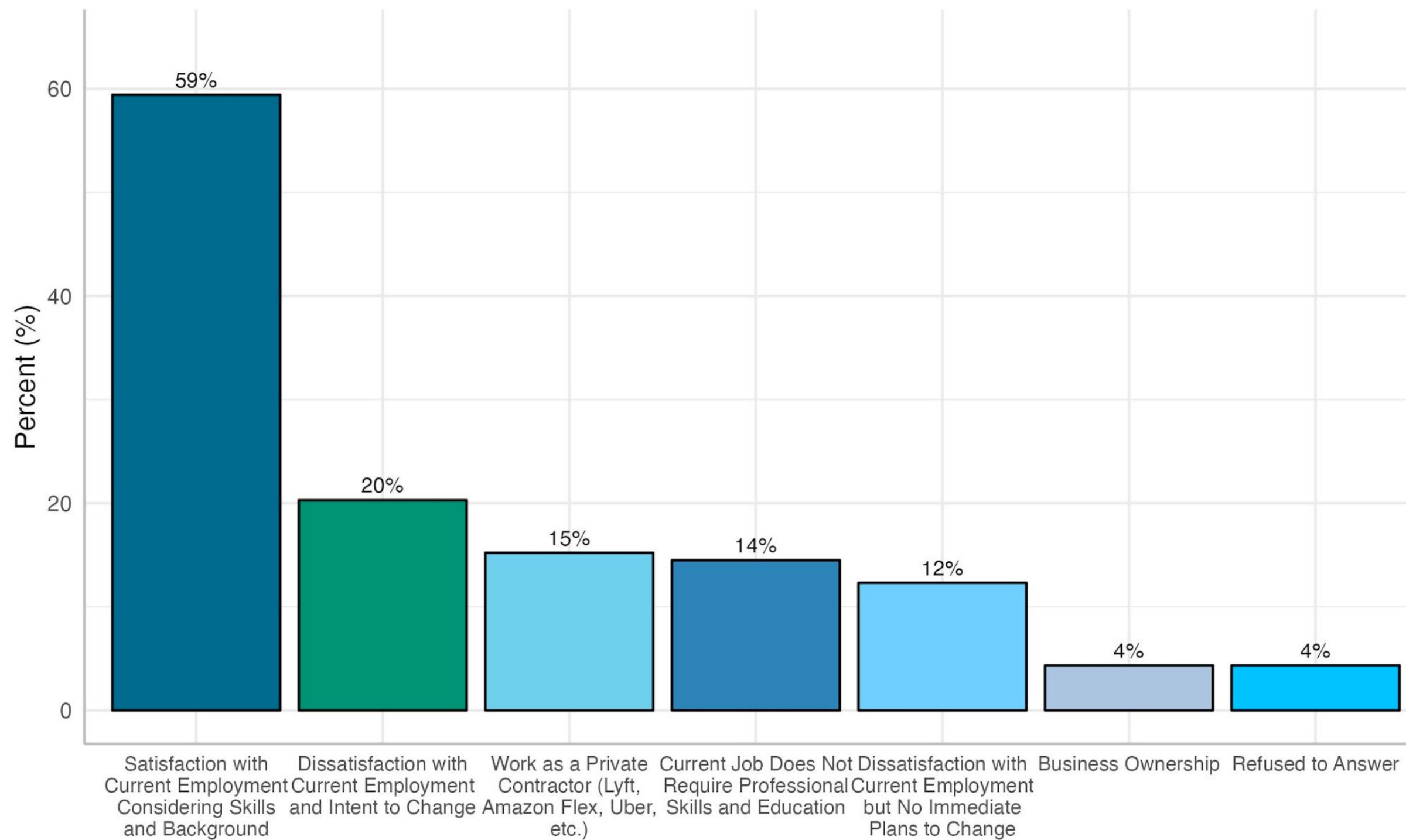


Figure 11. Respondents' satisfaction with current employment. 2023.

# Sections 1-3

## Years lived in Washington State

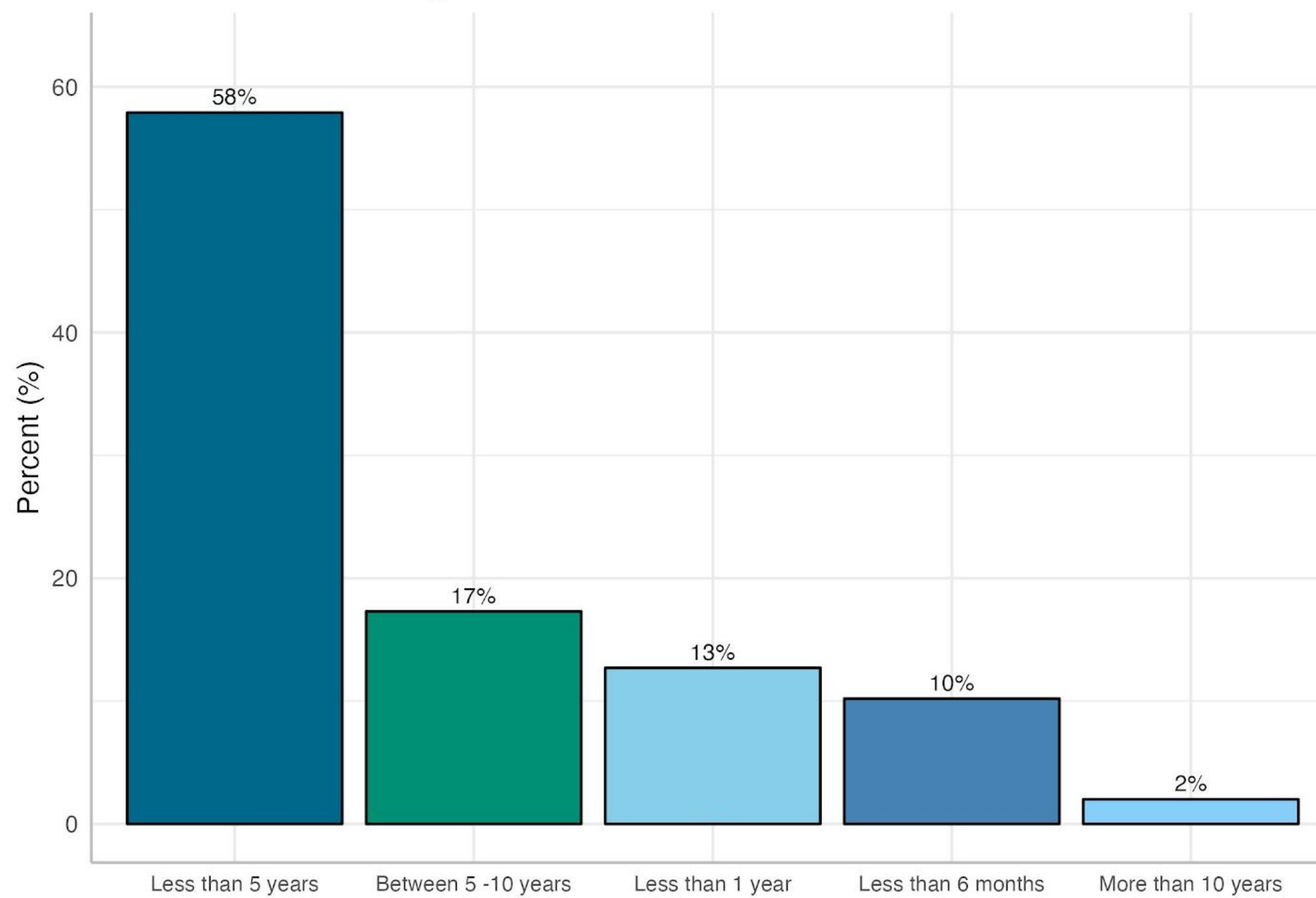


Figure 17. Self reported number of years spent living in Washington State. 2023.

## Sections 4-7

Civic and Political Participation in the U.S.

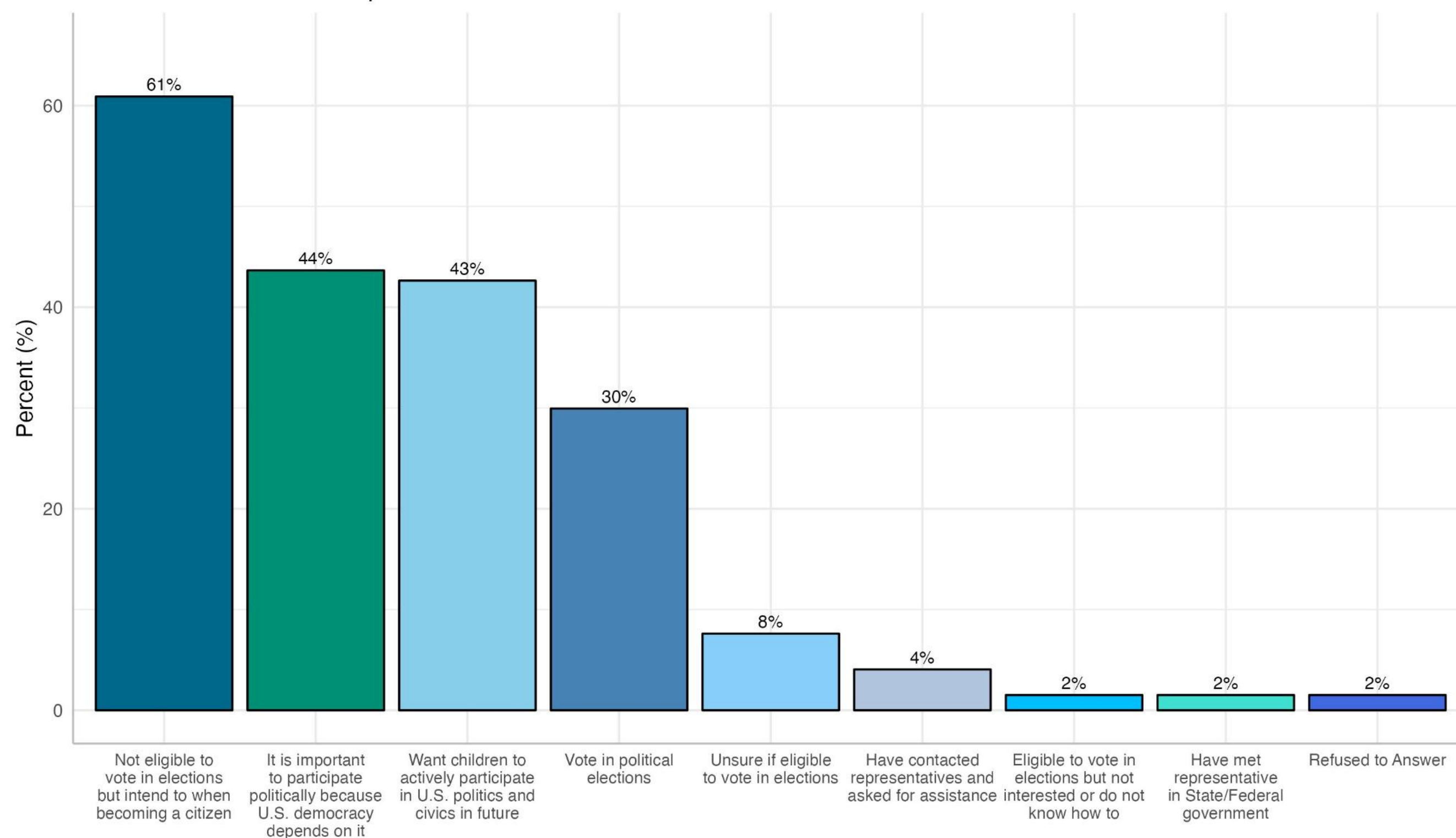


Figure 27. Afghan immigrant survey responses on civic and political participation within the U.S.

## Sections 4-7

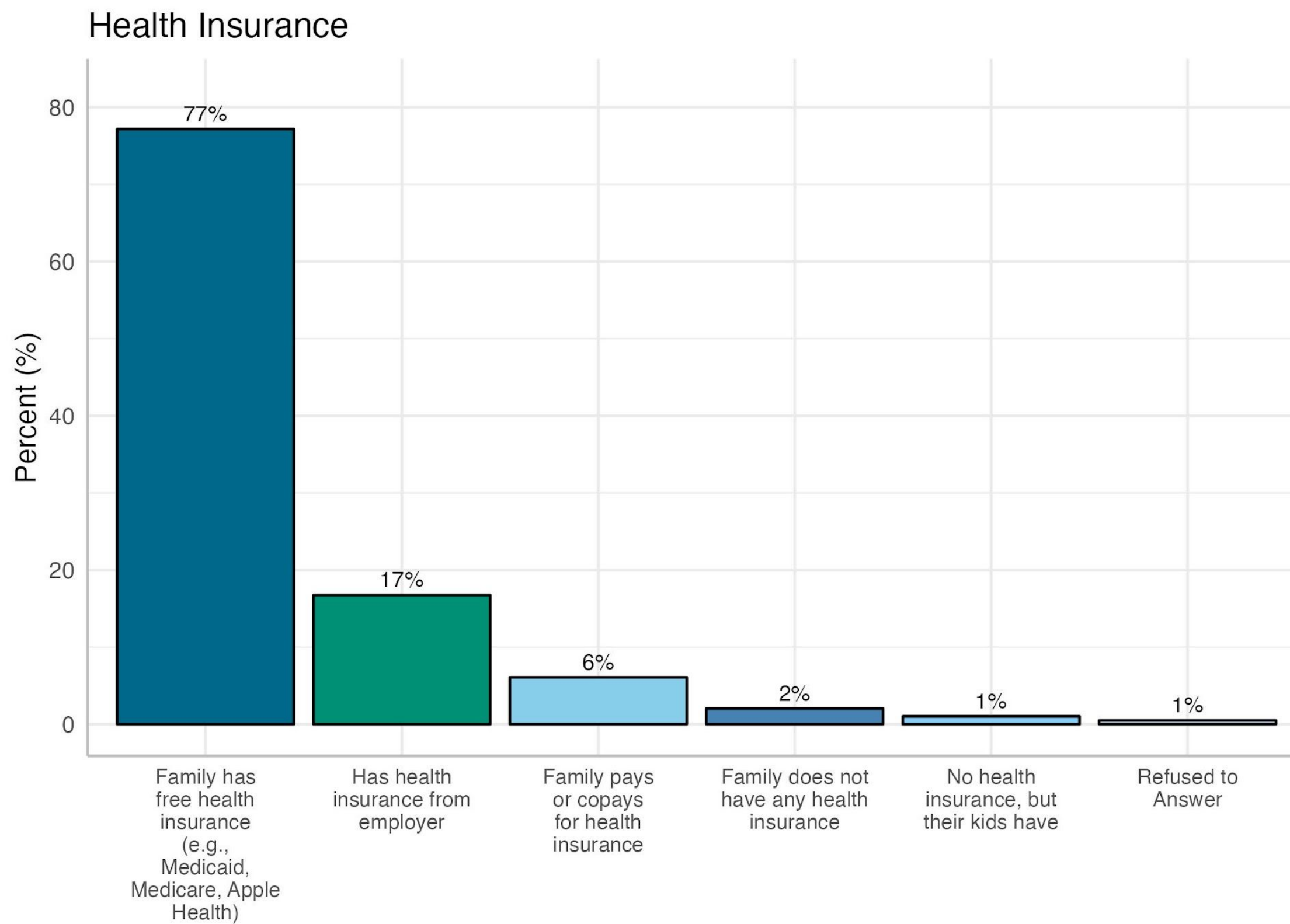


Figure 22. Self reported health insurance status of survey respondents. 2023.

# Sections 4-7

## Health Services Utilization

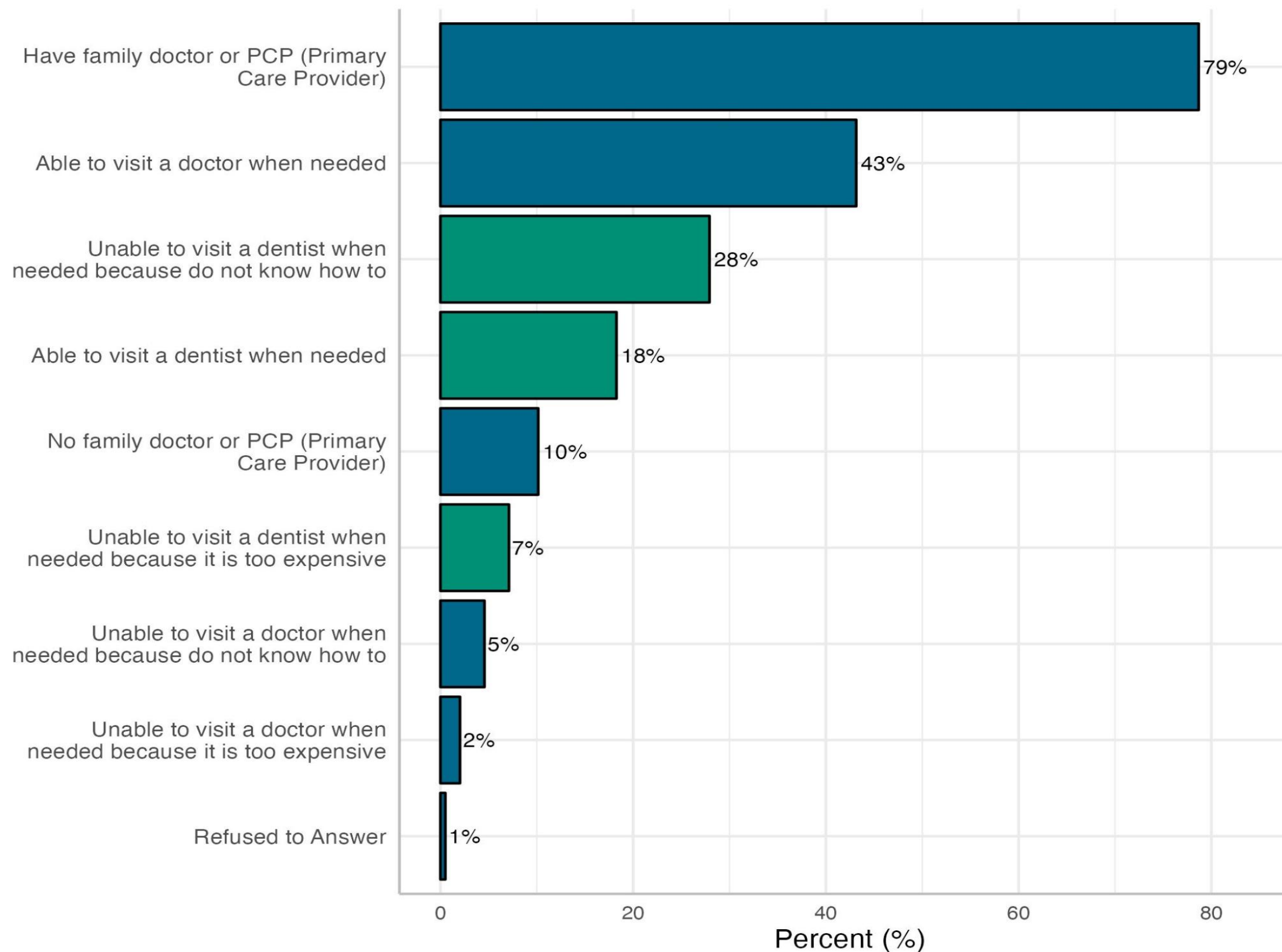


Figure 24. Self reporting of health services utilization by survey respondents. 2023.



# Sections 4-7

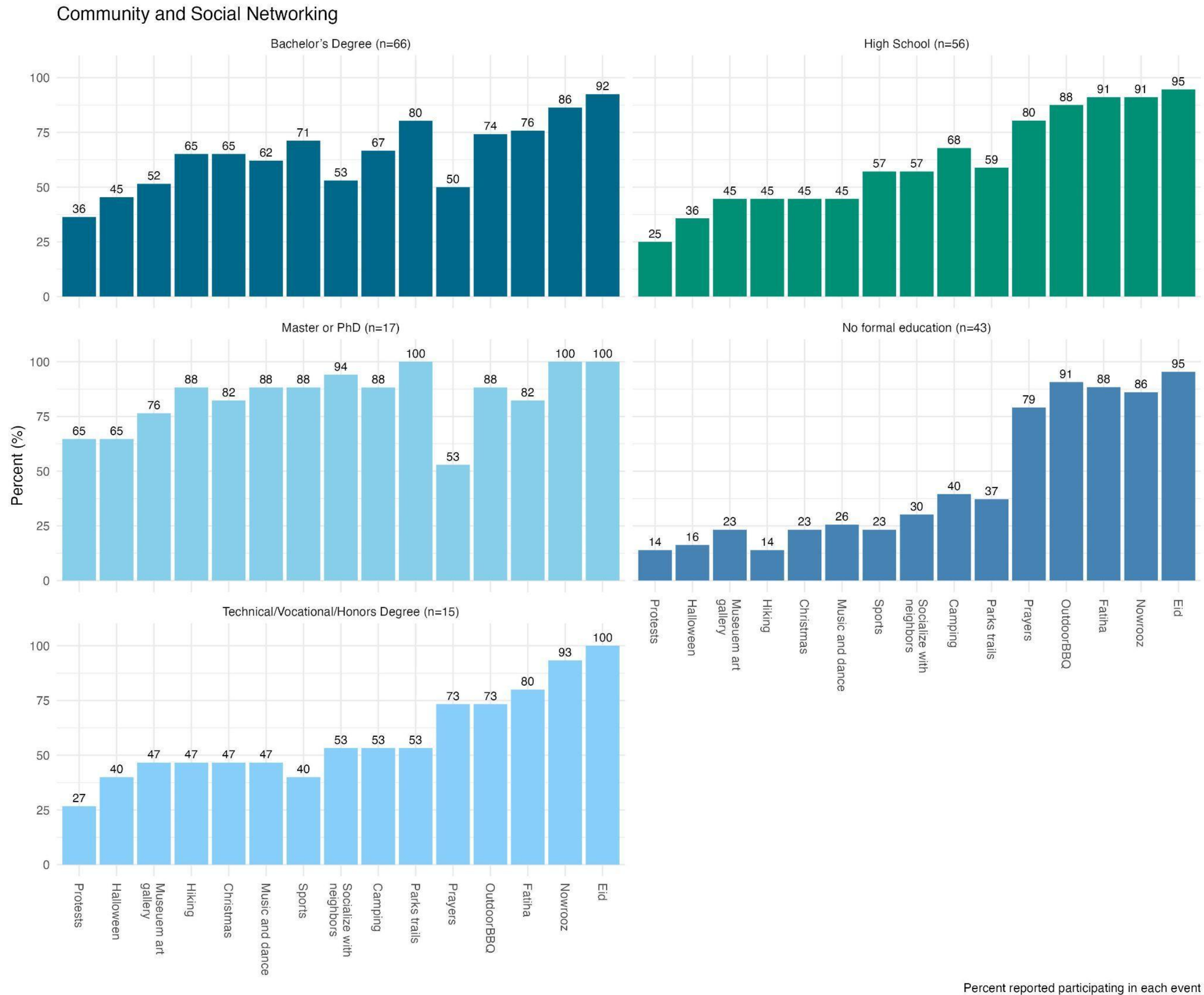


Figure 29. Social networking and participation correlation with education level

## Conclusions and Limitations

- **Data Gap in Literature:** Existing literature reviews on refugees and asylums highlight a lack of data on Afghan immigrants and their experiences.
- **Potential of Survey Data:** The data collected from this survey presents significant potential for understanding the Afghan immigrant experience and beyond.
- **Resource Development:** Findings aim to assist health providers, resettlement agencies, and policymakers in creating resources tailored to the needs of immigrants in Washington state.
- **Awareness and Consideration:** Data highlights the importance of considering the strengths and challenges of the immigrant community, informing efforts to address barriers to resettlement, and integration.

### Limitations of the study:

- **Researcher's Ethnicity Influence:** Hazara head researcher may impact survey results.
- **Survey Limitations:** Challenges include reliability, respondent comfort, confidentiality, and potential bias.
- **Timing of Reporting:** Reporting varies based on resettlement stages.
- **Lack of Gender Analysis:** Study did not compare experiences across genders.

## Recommendation for Future Research

- **Conduct Focus Groups:** Empower Afghan immigrant community for change.
- **Compare Migration Timelines:** Contrast experiences of migrants over 20 years vs. last decade.
- **Post-Arrival Surveys:** Evaluate experiences and system observations after 1 or 5 years.
- **Gender-Based Research:** Tailor social services, increase women in samples.
- **Resource Utilization Studies:** Evaluate local services and resources.
- **Increase Sample Size:** Enhance data validity for broader comparisons.
- **Study Other Immigrant Groups:** Compare immigration and integration experiences.
- **Adopt Methodology:** Integrate insider perspectives, such as this study, for balanced representation of both sides of the immigration story.

## Summary of Key Findings

- **Valuable Insights:** Exploratory survey sheds light on experiences of Afghan immigrants in Washington State.
- **Reasons for Immigration:** Majority fled Afghanistan post-2021 due to lack of security, primarily escaping Taliban.
- **Immigration Channels:** Predominantly entered the U.S. between 2021-2023 through SIV and Parole.
- **Ambition Amid Challenges:** Despite hurdles, Afghan immigrants display ambition to resettle, rebuild, and have an overall positive outlook.
- **English Proficiency:** Approximately 43% demonstrate English proficiency, with 10% acquiring skills in U.S.
- **Skills Utilization:** 64% feel current job in U.S. doesn't match skills and experience.
- **Public Assistance:** Despite reported housing challenges, not many complaints on other services such as health, education, employment (not counting job mismatch).
- **Education and Integration:** Higher education levels correlate with greater social networking and integration in wider U.S. society - **Original Question of the Study**

# Contributions

- **Utilization of Data:** Researchers wish for data to contribute practically and theoretically to academic and policy research.
- **Unexplored Resettlement Experience:** Resettlement experience of immigrant populations, including Afghans in the U.S., is understudied.
- **Contribution to Research/Literature:** Research aims to contribute to broader understanding of immigrant experience and inform evidence-based policy change and support allocation.
- **Addressing Integration Challenges:** Research seeks to bring immigrant community's perspective to discussions on modern immigration issues.
- **PR Policy Recommendations:** Porsesh Policy Research Institute aims to enhance academic discourse, create literature and recommend policies through such studies for a better tomorrow for all, specially for those most in need!

# Q & A





WE  
**THANK YOU**

FOR YOUR ATTENTION

For Any Question or Collaboration Please Email us at: [president@prresearch.us](mailto:president@prresearch.us)

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