

2026 YOUNG RESIDENTS SURVEY

GREATER BOSTON  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
**FOUNDATION**

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APRIL 2026

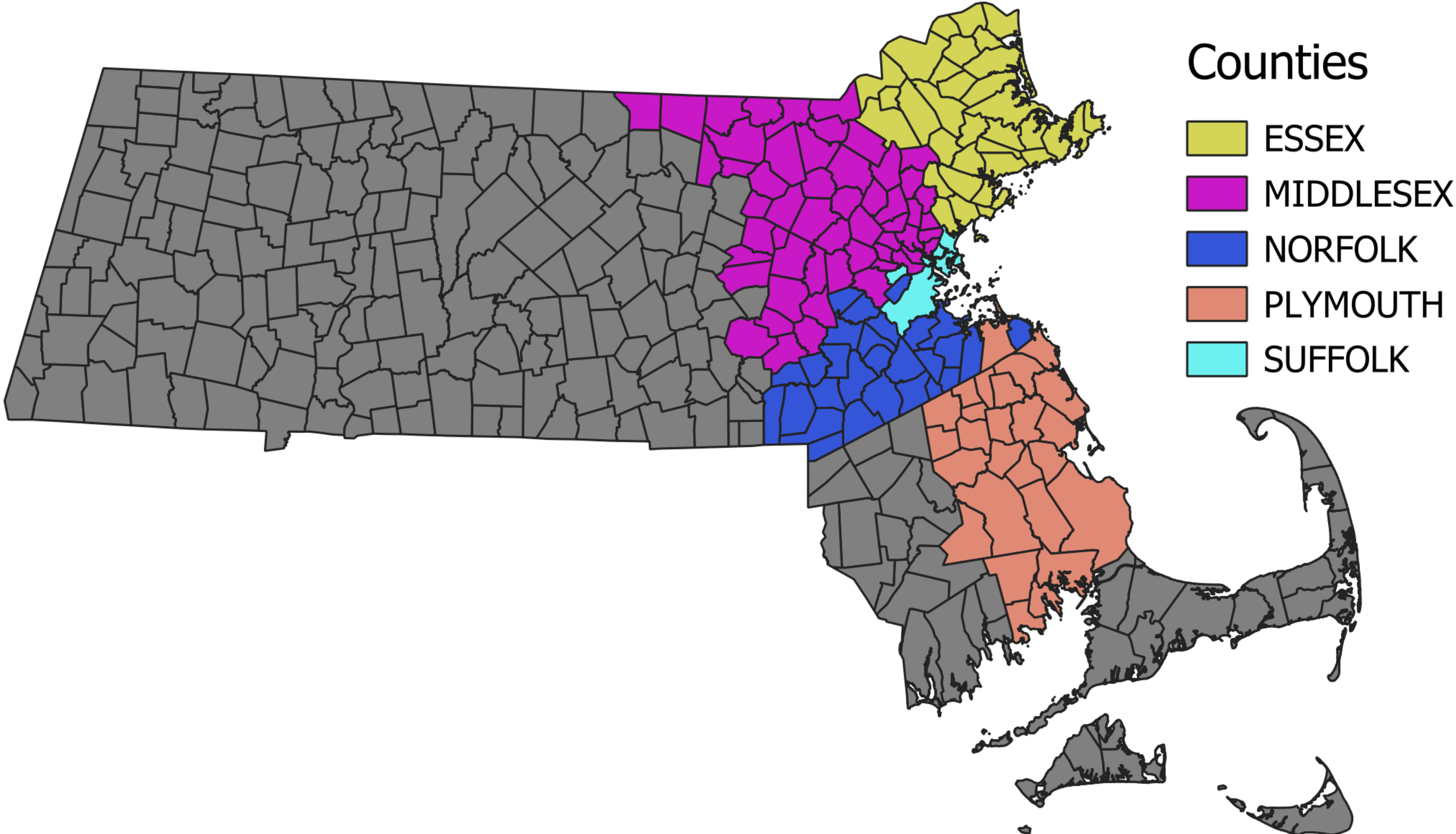
GREATER BOSTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION  
& HIT STRATEGIES

# OBJECTIVES

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- 1. Understand**  
Understand the barriers that push young residents to leave Greater Boston and alternatively, understand what positive factors encourage young residents to stay in the region.
- 2. Identify**  
Identify what factors and programming would encourage retention of young people in Greater Boston and motivate them towards employment, civic, and community engagement.
- 3. Identify**  
Identify trends that have significantly changed or remained the same among young Greater Boston residents since the 2023 survey.

# Greater Boston Map: Polled Counties



# KEY DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES FROM 2023

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- 1.** **Housing that is affordable remains a top priority.**  
50% of young residents think housing that is affordable is the most important issue that local officials should prioritize, followed by health care accessibility (37%) and availability of quality jobs (34%).
- 2.** **Just like in 2023, about a quarter of young residents are planning to leave Massachusetts.**  
26% of young residents say they plan on leaving Massachusetts in the next five years. Of those planning to leave, the majority are looking to move to states in the Southwest (23%) and the Southeast (23%).
- 3.** **Overall satisfaction remains high but is declining.**  
79% of young residents report satisfaction with their day-to-day life in Greater Boston, down from 89% in 2023.
- 4.** **It is getting easier to build community.**  
64% of young residents report some ease in building community in Greater Boston—up 17% since 2023.

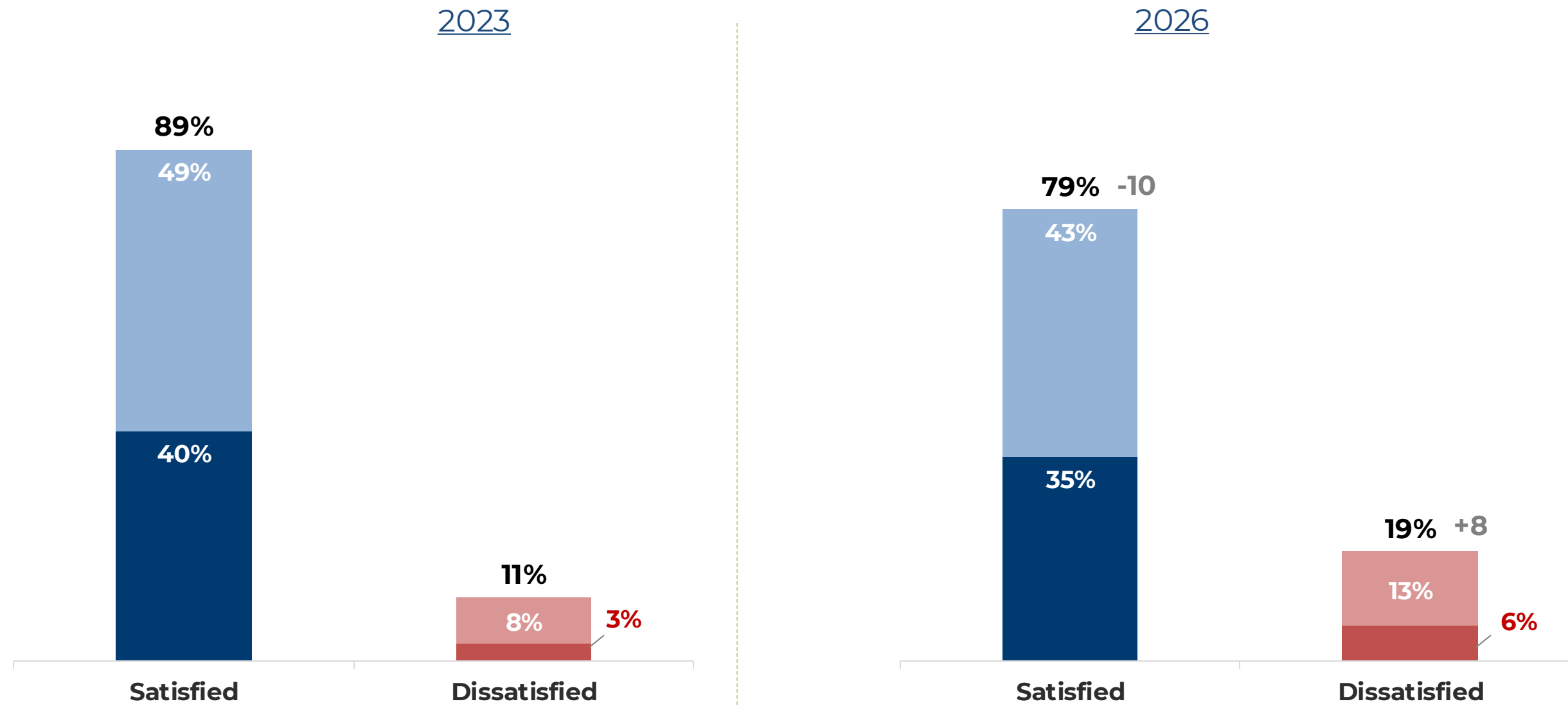


# Quality of Life

# Most young residents continue to be satisfied with their day-to-day lives in Greater Boston, but 10% less compared to 2023.

Q17. Thinking about your day-to-day life, how satisfied are you with Greater Boston as your place of residence?

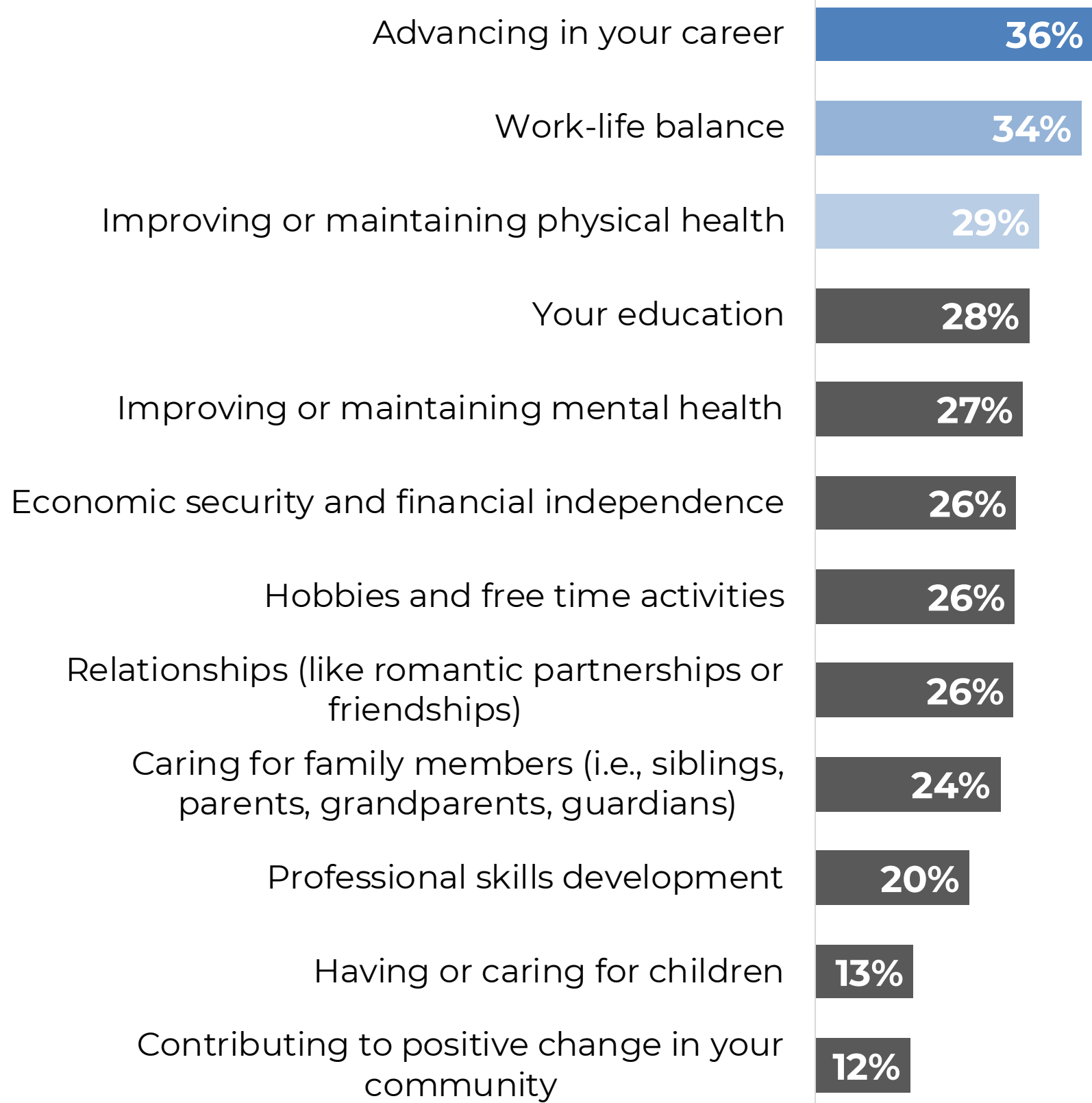
■ Very Satisfied   
 ■ Somewhat Satisfied   
 ■ Somewhat Dissatisfied   
 ■ Very Dissatisfied



2026	White	Black	Latino	AAPI	Essex	Middlesex	Norfolk	Plymouth	Suffolk	Men 20-24	Men 25-30	Women 20-24	Women 25-30
<b>Total Satisfied</b>	82%	86%	82%	54%	57%	79%	83%	75%	88%	66%	79%	83%	85%
<b>Total Dissatisfied</b>	16%	8%	14%	46%	40%	19%	13%	22%	10%	32%	21%	12%	12%

# The priorities of young residents vary, but many are focused on advancing in their careers and prioritizing work-life balance.

Q21. Thinking about this chapter of your life, which three of the following do you currently prioritize most?



- Women ages 25-30 were most likely to prioritize **mental health** (36%) and **relationships** (30%).
- **Men and women ages 25-30** were more focused on **physical health** (34%, 35% respectively).
- **Women ages 20-24** are most likely to prioritize **hobbies and free time activities** (31%), and **men ages 20-24** are most likely to prioritize **professional skills development** (22%).

# Young Greater Boston residents cautiously indicate being likely to advance in their career and housing situation.

Q22. Please indicate how likely or unlikely you think you are to do each of the following in the next 5 years, or indicate if it is something you have already done.

Very Likely    Somewhat likely    Somewhat unlikely    Very unlikely

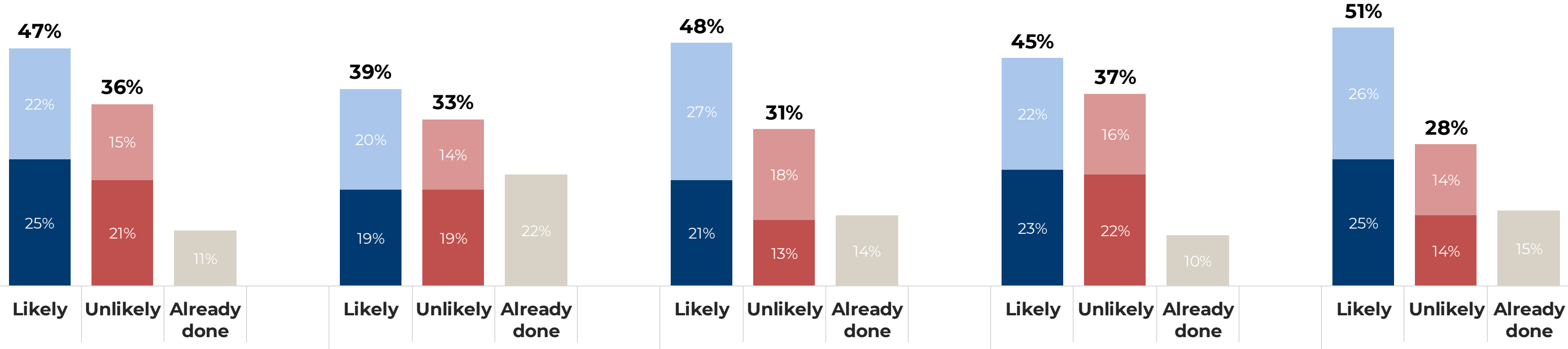
Purchase a Home

Live Alone without Roommates

Switch Careers or Job Fields

Start or Grow Business

Go Back to School or Get Additional Job Training



- **Men ages 20-24** (31% total likely) are **less likely to purchase a home in the next 5 years.**
- **Men ages 20-24** (34% total likely) are **less likely to switch careers or job fields.**
- **Women** surveyed (59% total likely) are **more likely to go back to school or get additional job training.**

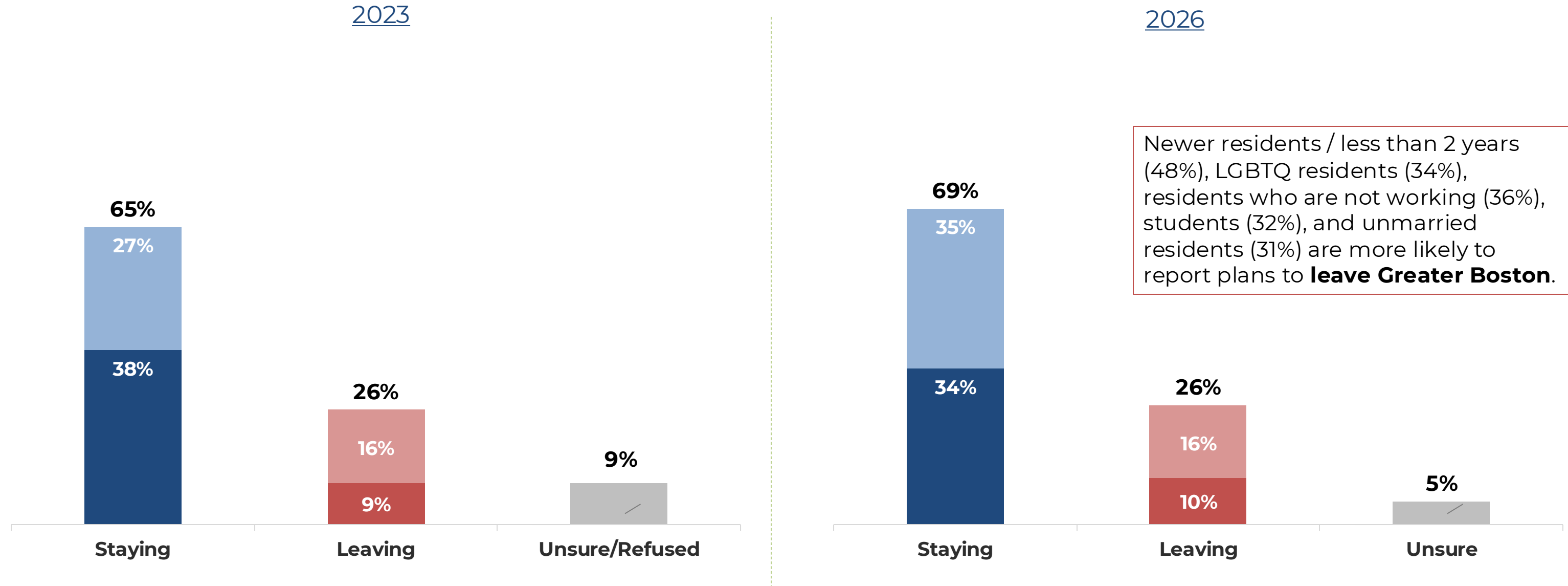
# About a quarter of young residents say they are likely to leave Greater Boston in the next 5 years; no significant change from 2023.

Q23. Looking ahead to the next 5 years, how likely are you to stay in the Greater Boston area, or leave to another city/state?

Very Likely to Stay   Somewhat Likely to Stay   Somewhat Likely to Leave   Very Likely to Leave

2023

2026



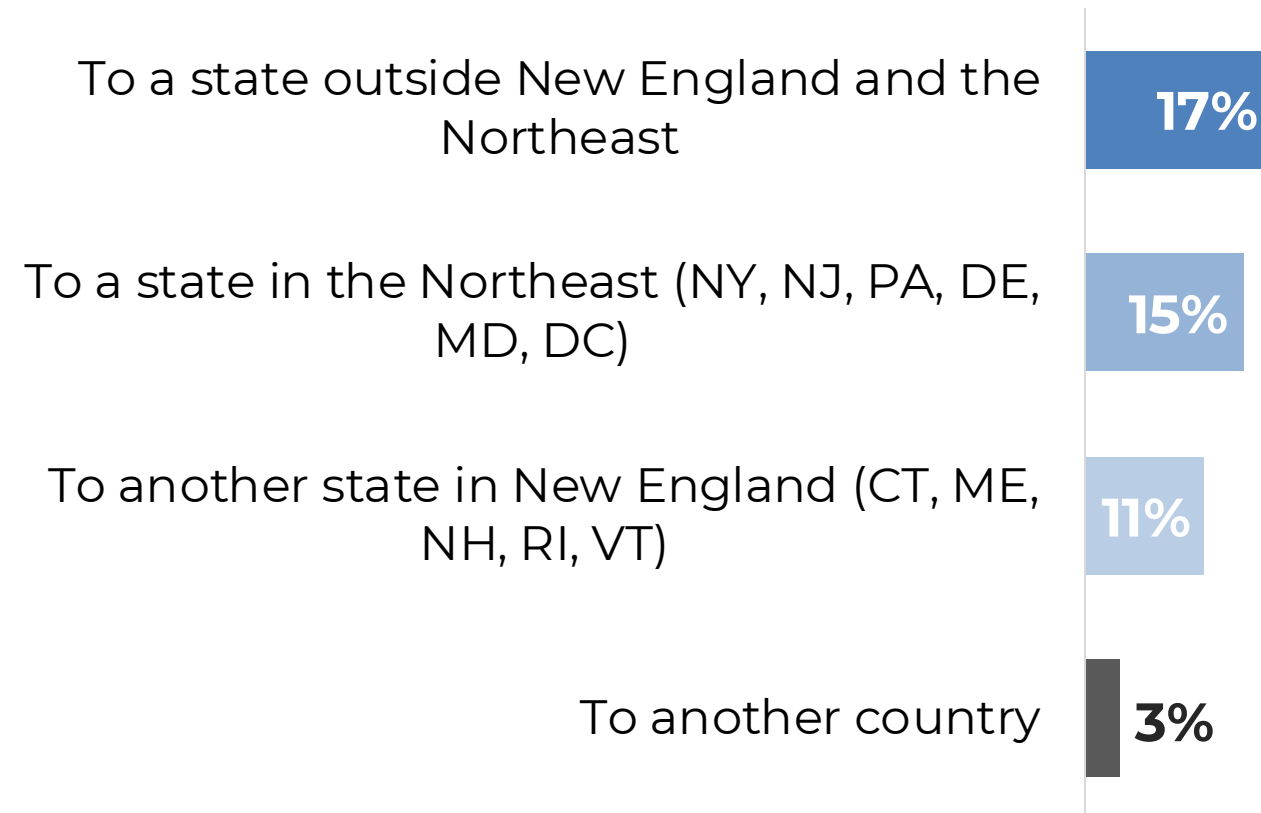
Newer residents / less than 2 years (48%), LGBTQ residents (34%), residents who are not working (36%), students (32%), and unmarried residents (31%) are more likely to report plans to **leave Greater Boston**.

2026	White	Black	Latino	AAPI	Essex	Middlesex	Norfolk	Plymouth	Suffolk	Men 20-24	Men 25-30	Women 20-24	Women 25-30
<b>Total Staying</b>	69%	66%	60%	84%	58%	71%	74%	74%	68%	63%	74%	69%	66%
<b>Total Leaving</b>	27%	29%	33%	13%	40%	24%	21%	24%	26%	31%	22%	27%	29%

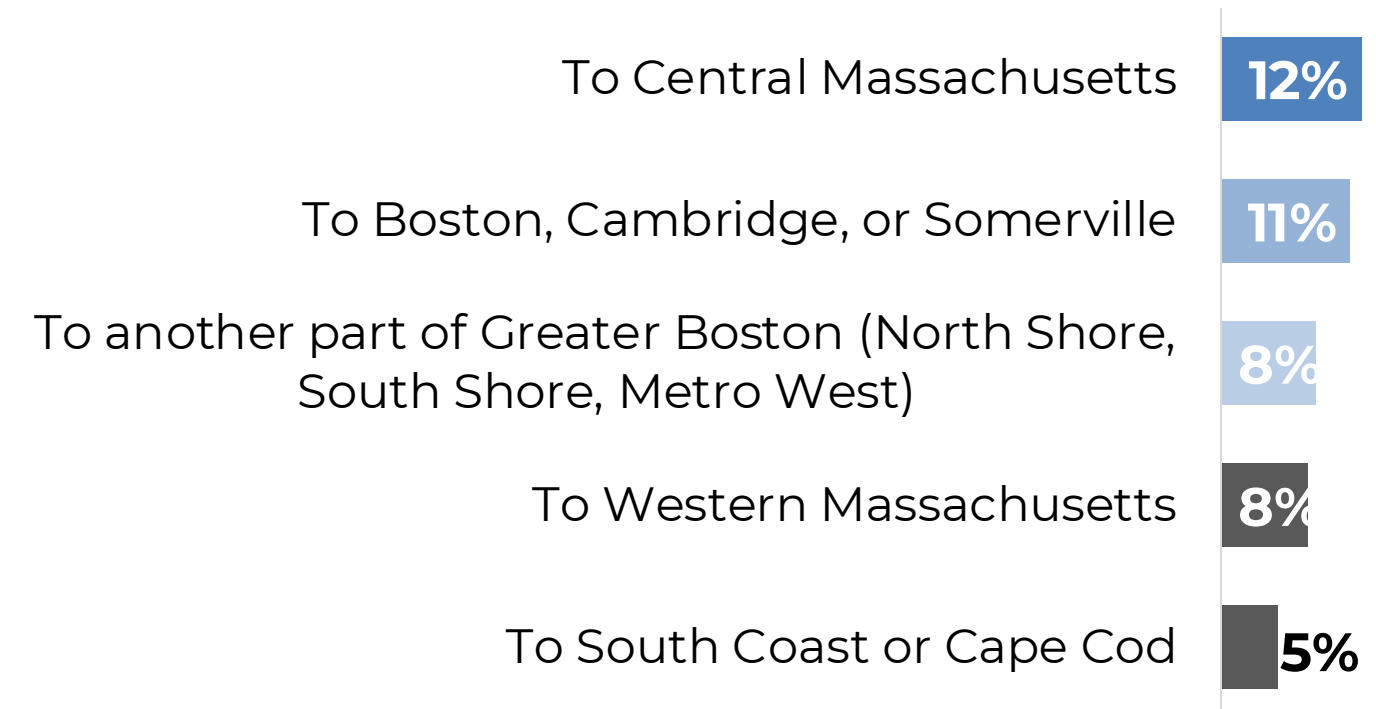
# Those who are likely to move in the next 5 years are split between moving within MA or to another state.

Q24. To where do you want to move?

**46% of those likely to leave are looking to move out of the state of MA**



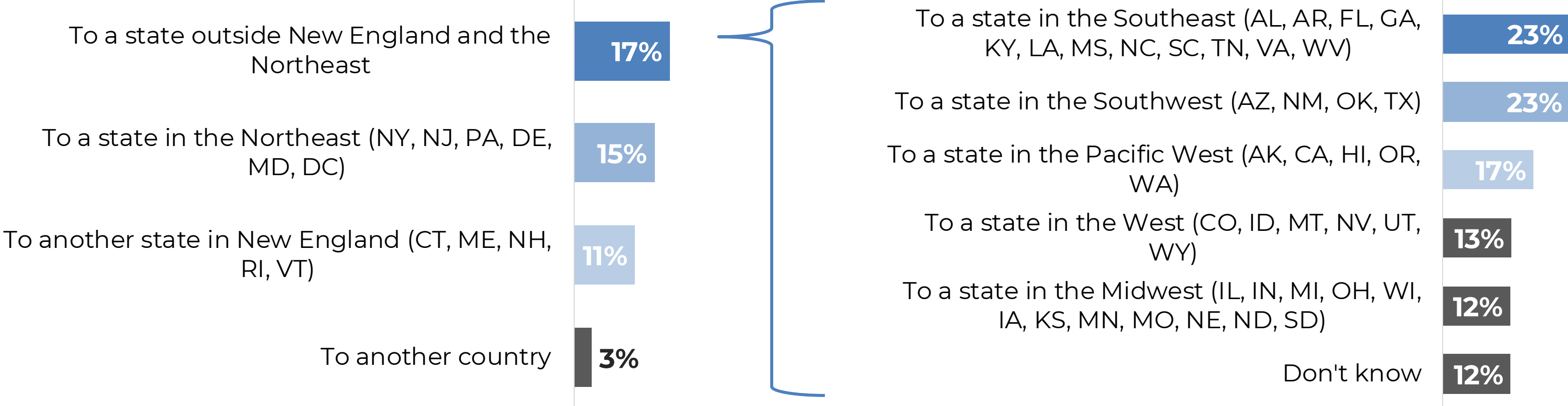
**45% of those likely to leave are looking to move within the state of MA**



# Among those leaving the state, the Southeast or Southwest are the biggest draws.

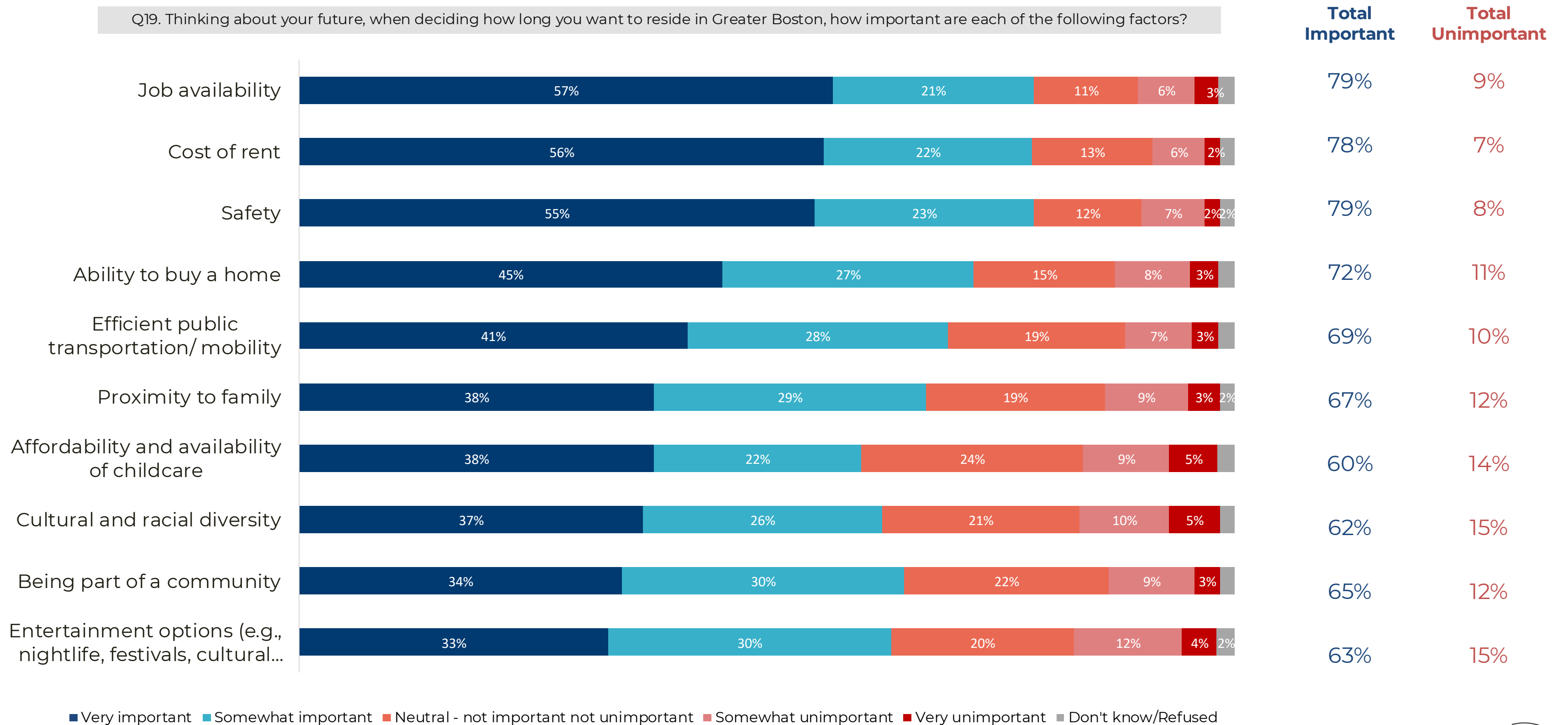
Q24. To where do you want to move?

**46% of those planning to leave Massachusetts are looking to move to the Southeast and Southwest.**



# Job availability and cost of rent rise to the top as most important factors when deciding how long to reside in Greater Boston, alongside safety.

Q19. Thinking about your future, when deciding how long you want to reside in Greater Boston, how important are each of the following factors?

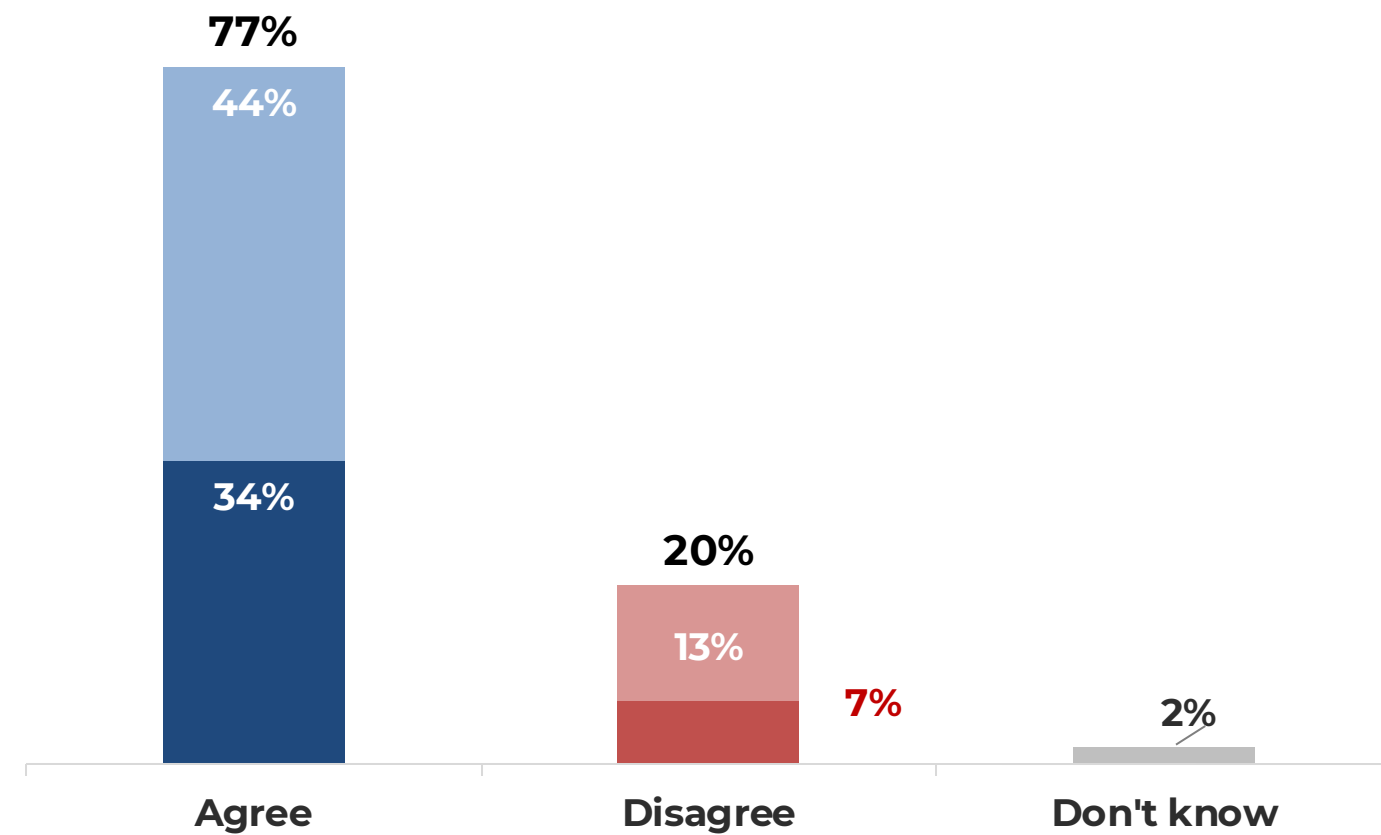


# Community

# While most residents say they feel belonging in Greater Boston and respected in the workplace, Black, AAPI, men ages 20-24, and LGBTQ residents are less likely to feel so.

Q30. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement:  
**Greater Boston feels like a place where people with my background, values, and identity belong.**

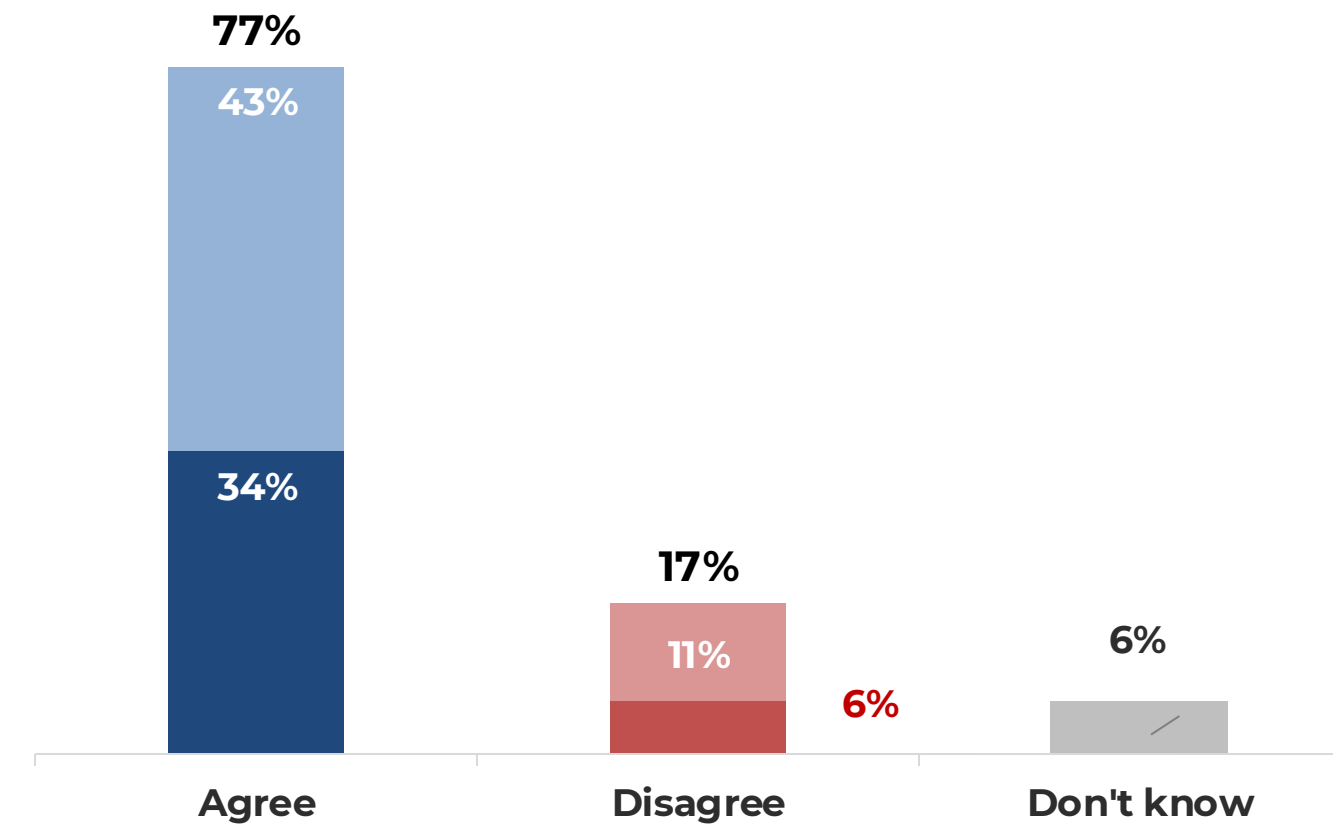
Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree



	White	Black	Latino	AAPI	Men 20-24	Men 25-30	Women 20-24	Women 25-30	LGBTQ
<b>Total Agree</b>	81%	74%	74%	69%	66%	81%	80%	83%	70%
<b>Total Disagree</b>	17%	26%	23%	29%	32%	18%	17%	14%	26%

Q33. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement:  
**My employer creates a welcoming workplace where I feel respected.**

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

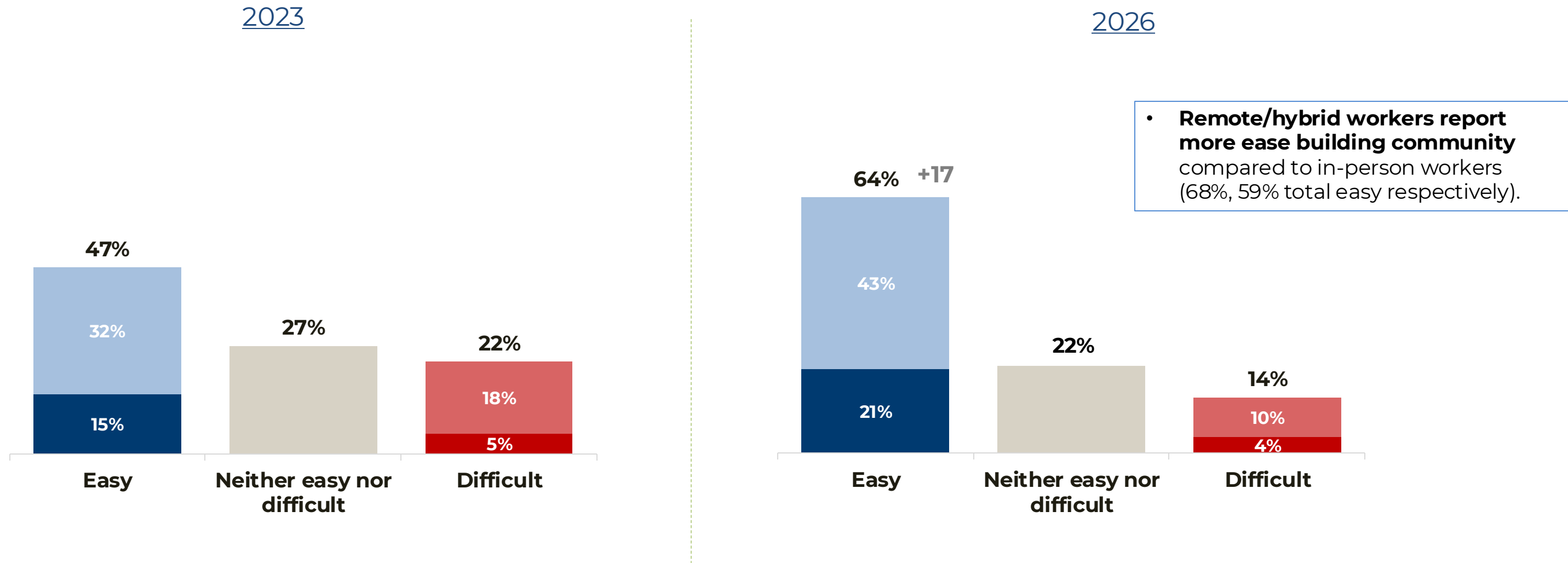


	White	Black	Latino	AAPI	Men 20-24	Men 25-30	Women 20-24	Women 25-30	LGBTQ
<b>Total Agree</b>	79%	70%	76%	78%	71%	81%	77%	80%	60%
<b>Total Disagree</b>	16%	19%	17%	18%	24%	15%	15%	14%	27%

# Most young residents in Greater Boston report at least some ease in building community, up 17% compared to 2023.

Q27. How easy or difficult is it for you to build community relationships in Greater Boston?

■ Very Easy  
 ■ Somewhat Easy  
 ■ Neither Easy or Difficult  
 ■ Somewhat Difficult  
 ■ Very Difficult

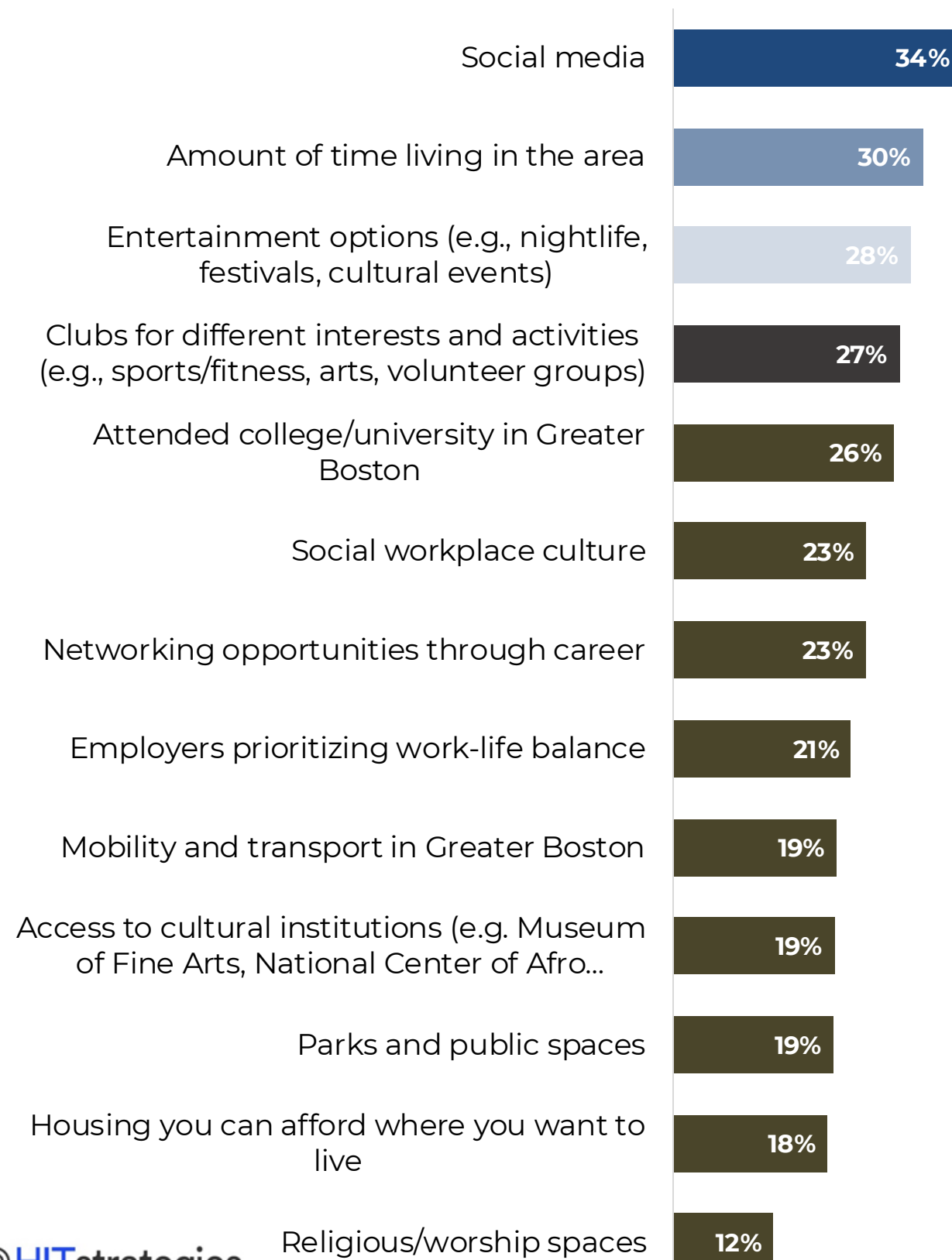


2026	White	Black	Latino	AAPI	Essex	Middlesex	Norfolk	Plymouth	Suffolk	Men 20-24	Men 25-30	Women 20-24	Women 25-30
<b>Total Easy</b>	68%	57%	54%	67%	55%	68%	66%	60%	64%	70%	71%	48%	65%
<b>Neither</b>	17%	26%	30%	26%	17%	21%	25%	23%	24%	18%	18%	36%	19%
<b>Total Difficult</b>	16%	17%	16%	6%	28%	11%	9%	18%	12%	13%	11%	16%	16%

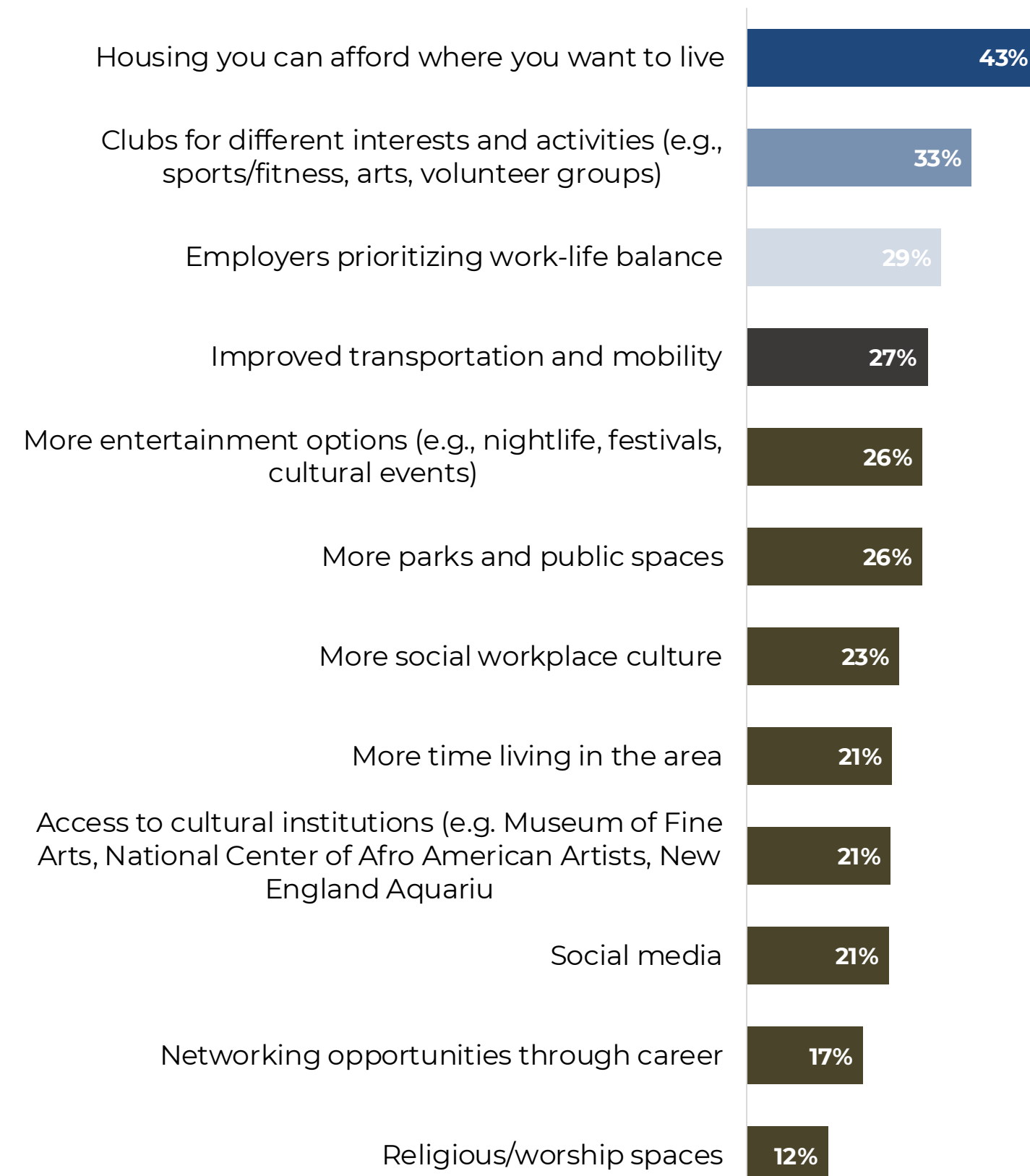
# For those finding it difficult to build community, housing they can afford where they want to live would make a difference, as well as clubs and work-life balance.

Q20. How easy or difficult is it for you to build community relationships in Greater Boston?

[IF EASY] Which of the following made it easy for you to build community and relationships in Boston? Select the top two reasons you feel contributed most.



[IF DIFFICULT] Which of the following would make it easier for you to build community relationships in Boston? Select the top two factors you feel would contribute most.

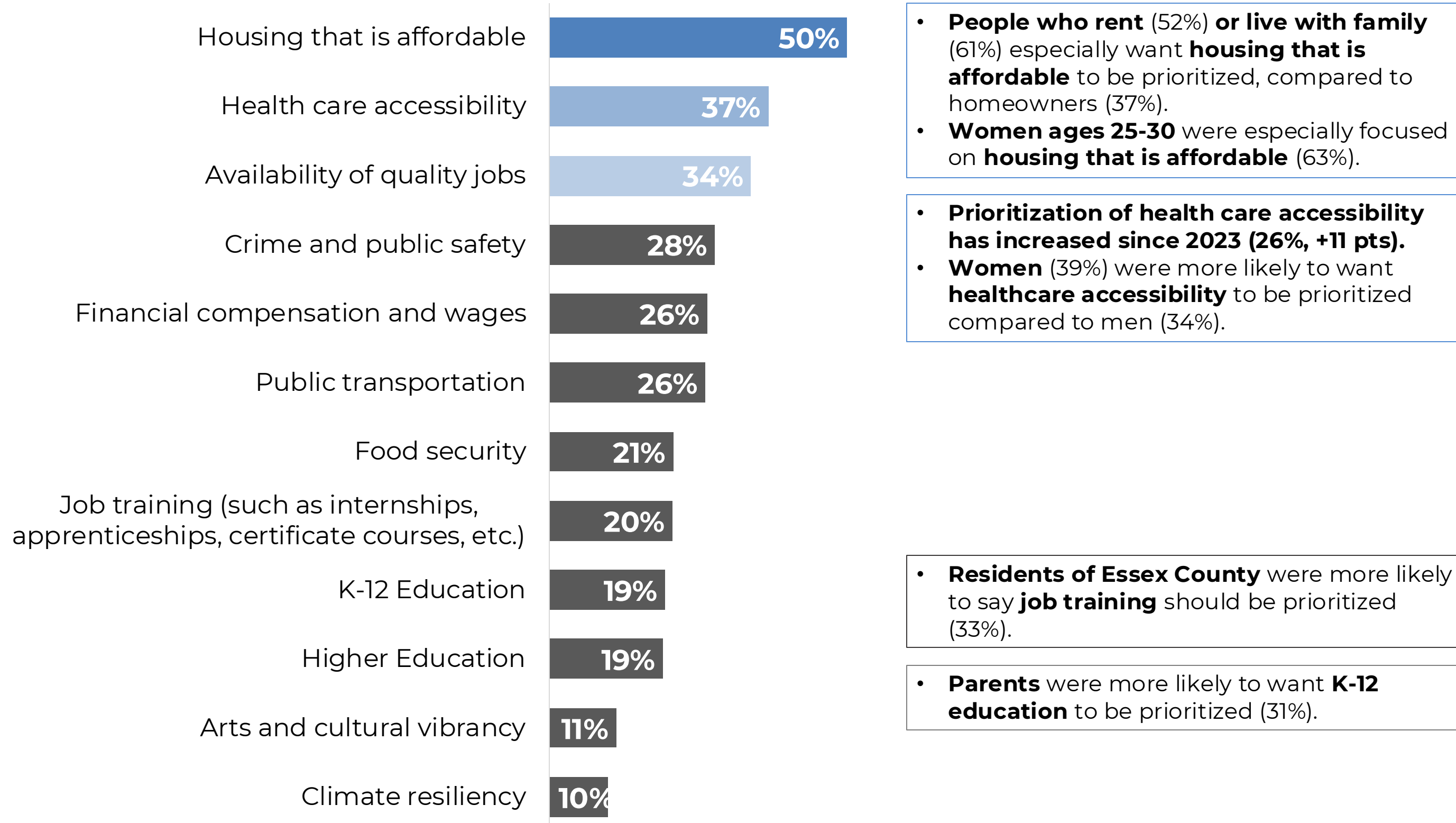




# Civic Issues & Engagement

# There is high agreement among young Greater Boston residents that local leaders should prioritize housing that is affordable, as well as health care accessibility and availability of quality jobs.

Q18. Which of the following are the most important issues that you think local leaders should prioritize? Please select three.



- **People who rent (52%) or live with family (61%)** especially want **housing that is affordable** to be prioritized, compared to homeowners (37%).
- **Women ages 25-30** were especially focused on **housing that is affordable** (63%).

- **Prioritization of health care accessibility has increased since 2023 (26%, +11 pts).**
- **Women (39%)** were more likely to want **healthcare accessibility** to be prioritized compared to men (34%).

- **Residents of Essex County** were more likely to say **job training** should be prioritized (33%).

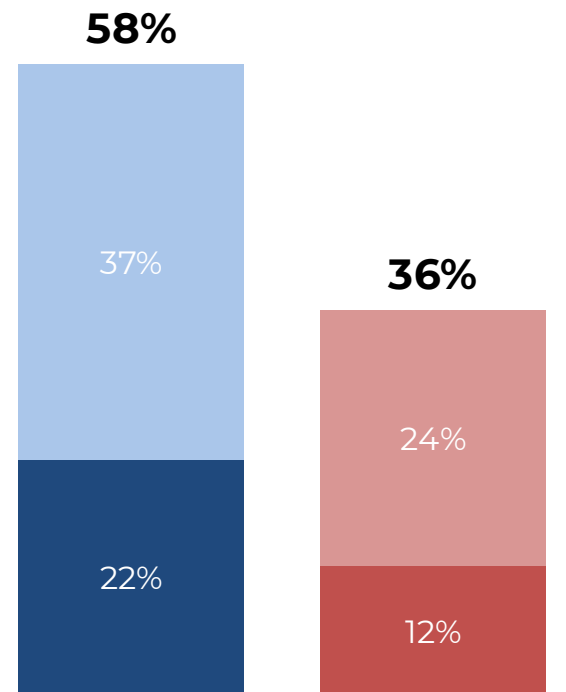
- **Parents** were more likely to want **K-12 education** to be prioritized (31%).

# There is still room to grow in making young people's voices heard in their places of employment, with 40% reporting they have little to no power to make change where they work.

Q19. How much power do you feel you have to make change on the issues you care about in each of the following environments?

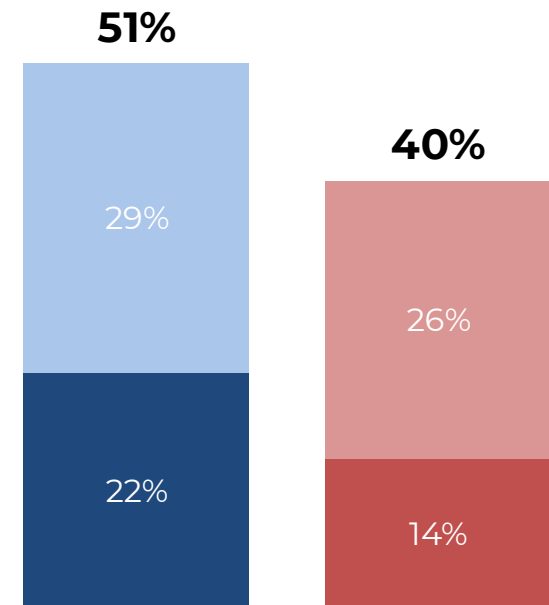
■ A lot of power    
 ■ Some power    
 ■ Very little power    
 ■ No power at all

## City/Town



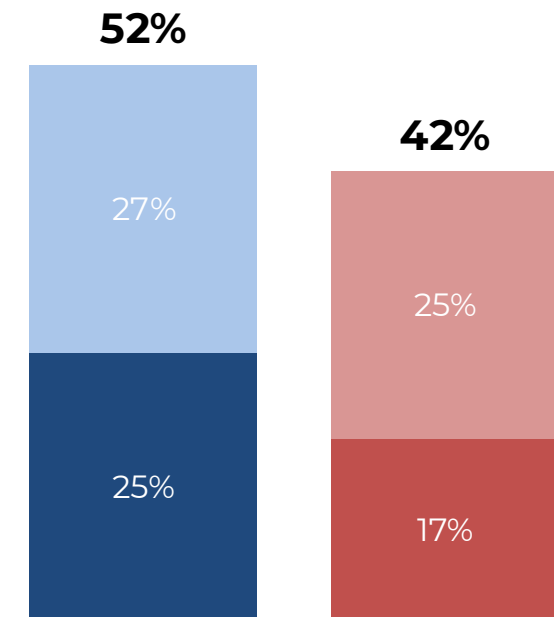
**Total A lot or Some Power**  
**Total Little to No Power**

## Company of Employment



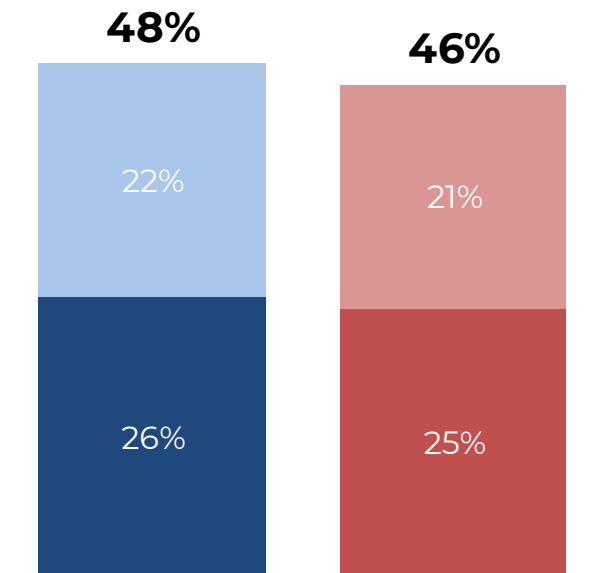
**Total A lot or Some Power**  
**Total Little to No Power**

## State Government



**Total A lot or Some Power**  
**Total Little to No Power**

## Federal Government



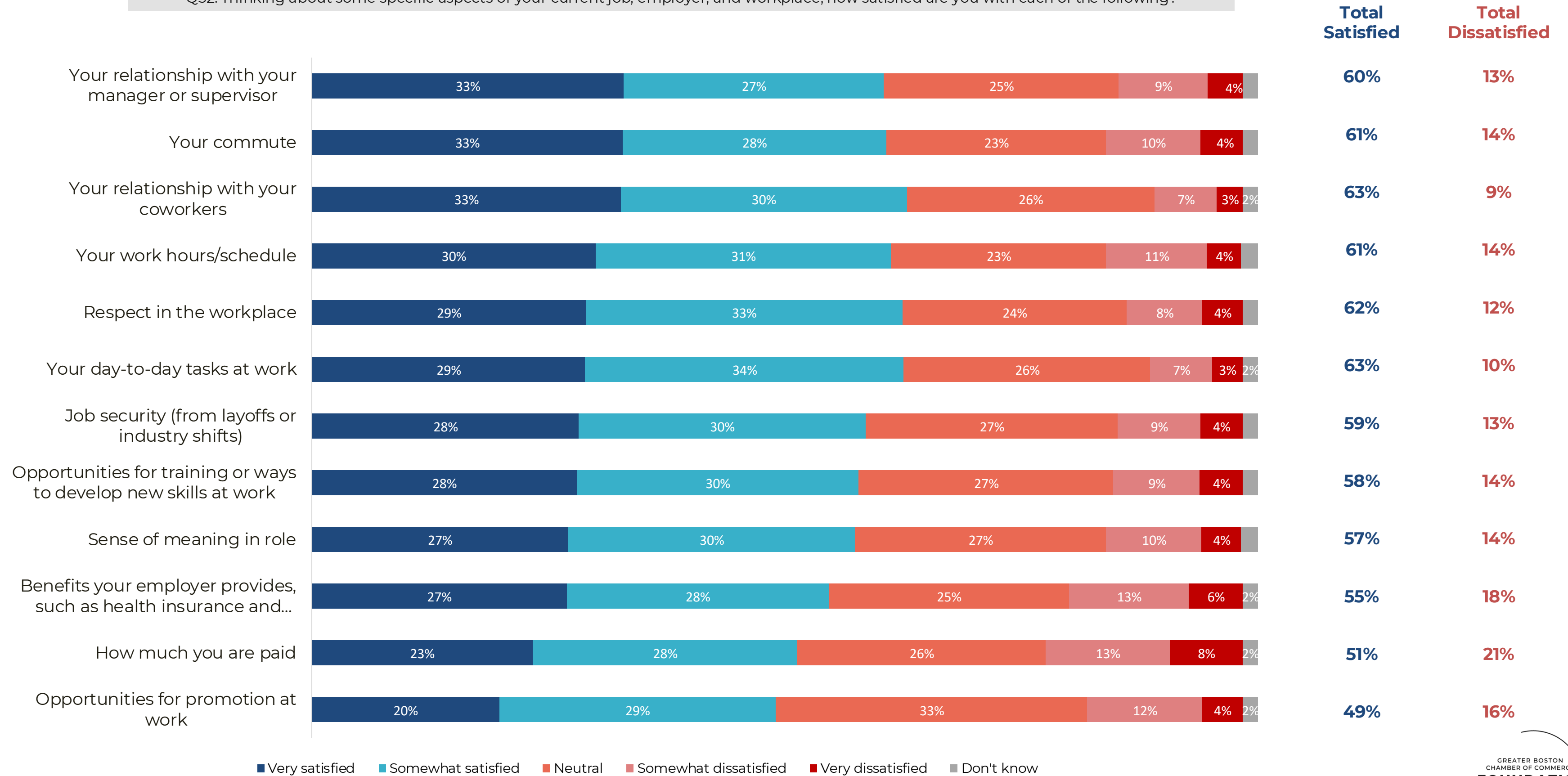
**Total A lot or Some Power**  
**Total Little to No Power**



# Job, Career & Professional Life

# A majority are satisfied with many elements of their work life, especially those related to relationships. Pay and opportunity for promotion show the least satisfaction.

Q32. Thinking about some specific aspects of your current job, employer, and workplace, how satisfied are you with each of the following?



■ Very satisfied  
 ■ Somewhat satisfied  
 ■ Neutral  
 ■ Somewhat dissatisfied  
 ■ Very dissatisfied  
 ■ Don't know

# Young Greater Boston residents are interested in a variety of training opportunities, especially on-the-job training for advancement and certificate courses or other education.

Q37. Please select how likely you would be to participate in the following types of job trainings.

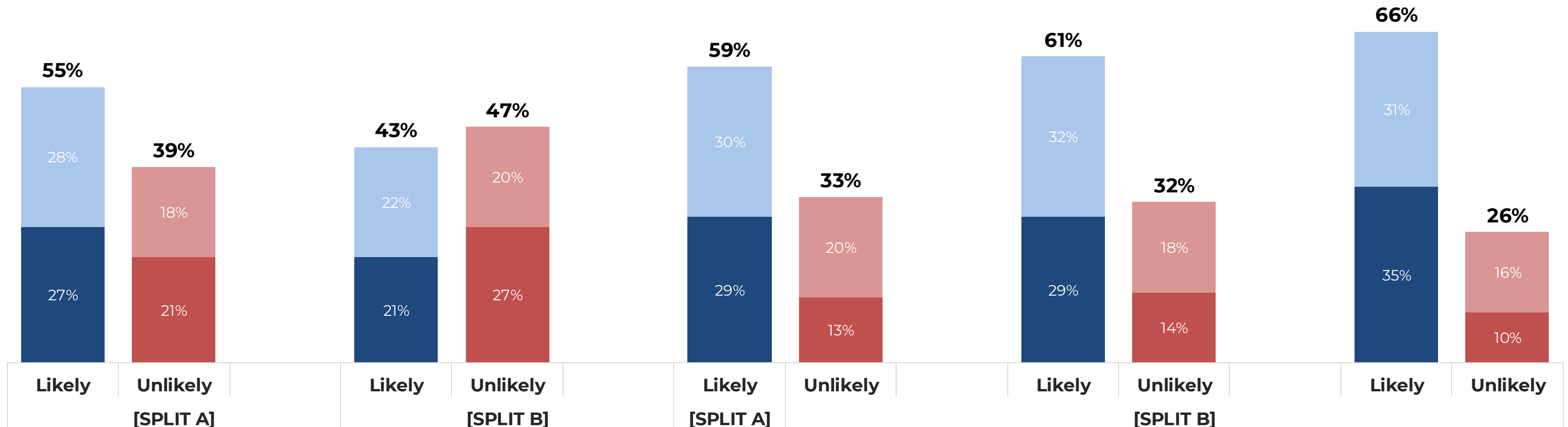
**Paid** apprenticeship or internship in new field of work

**Unpaid** internship in new field of work

Certificate course or other education **during work hours paid by your employer**

Certificate course or other education **outside of work hours you pay for yourself**

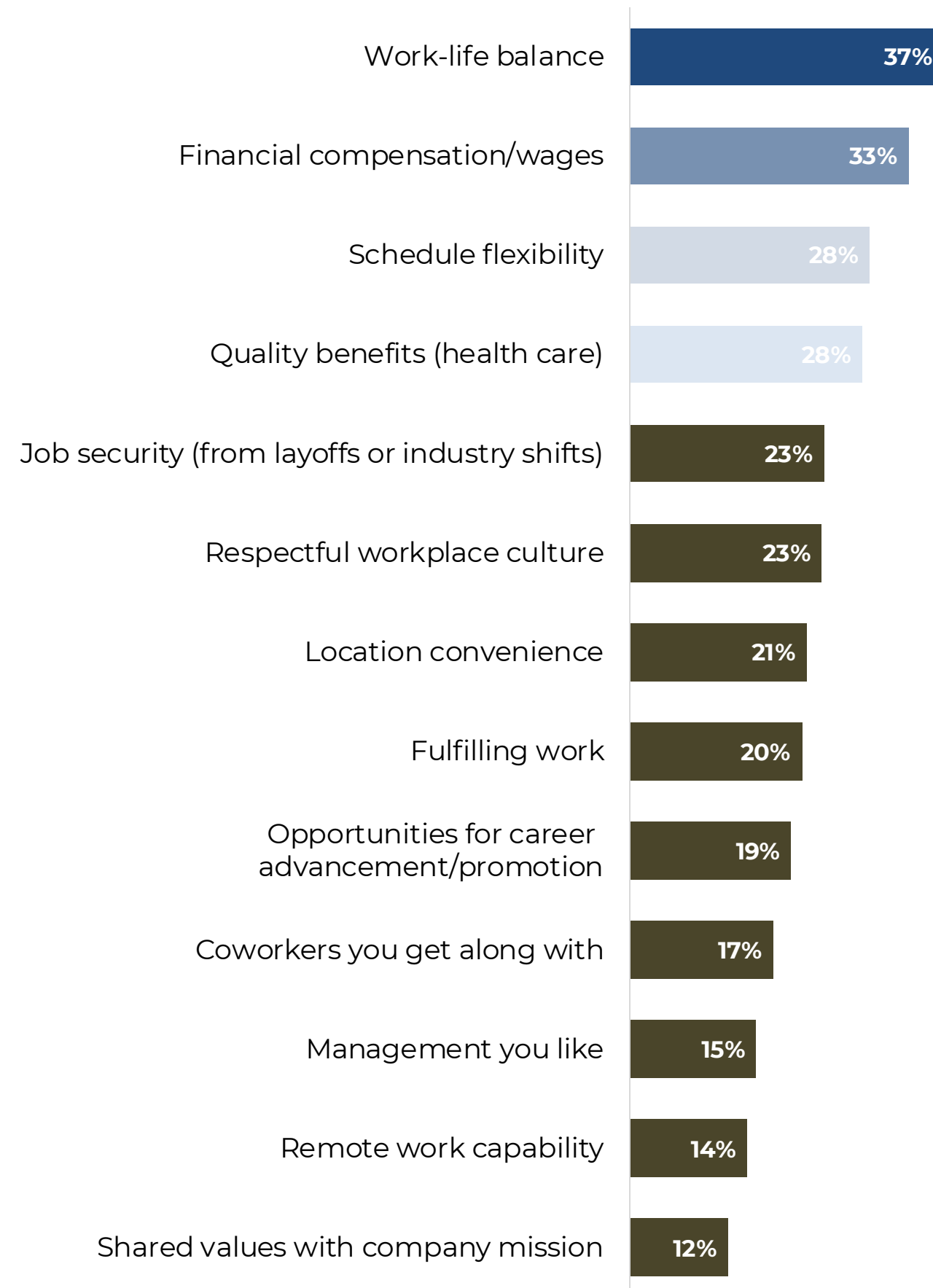
**On-the-job training for advancement** in your current field of work



• The popularity for “on-the-job training for advancement” aligns with the lower level of satisfaction with opportunities for promotion at work, suggesting a desire for trainings with explicit potential or promotion or raises.

# Young residents prioritize work-life balance and wages when seeking a job, while other priorities are shaped by current work experience.

38. Thinking about your ideal job and workplace, what qualities do you prioritize most when seeking a job? You may select up to three.



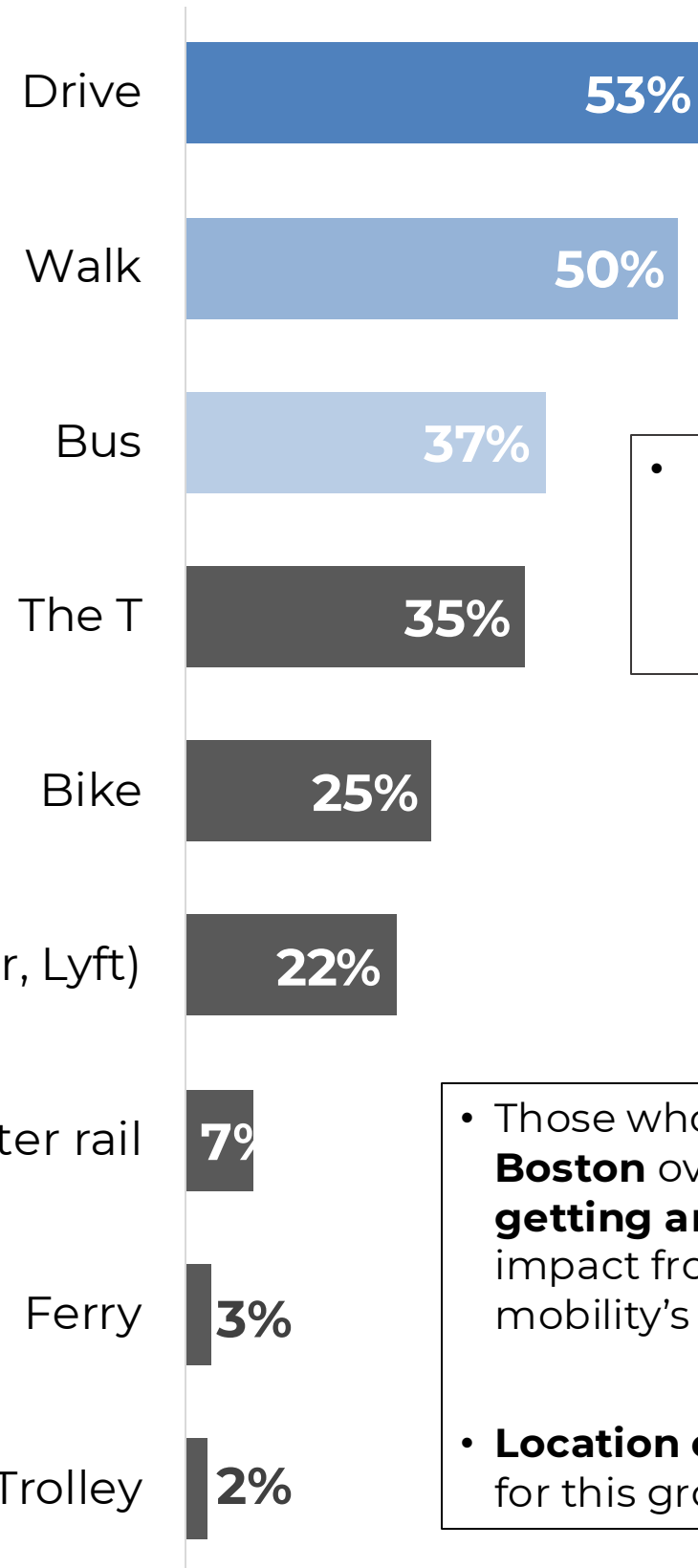
- **Manual or trade labor workers** (31%) more likely to prioritize location convenience.
- Office-based professionals especially likely to **prioritize wages** (40%) and **benefits** (30%).
- **Service industry workers** more likely to prioritize **job security** (32%).
- Healthcare professionals more likely to prioritize a **respectful workplace culture** (30%).

- **Women ages 20-24** especially likely to prioritize **schedule flexibility** (36%).
- Women (22%) more likely to **prioritize coworkers they get along with when seeking a job**.

# Transportation

# Driving and walking are the most common ways of getting around Greater Boston,

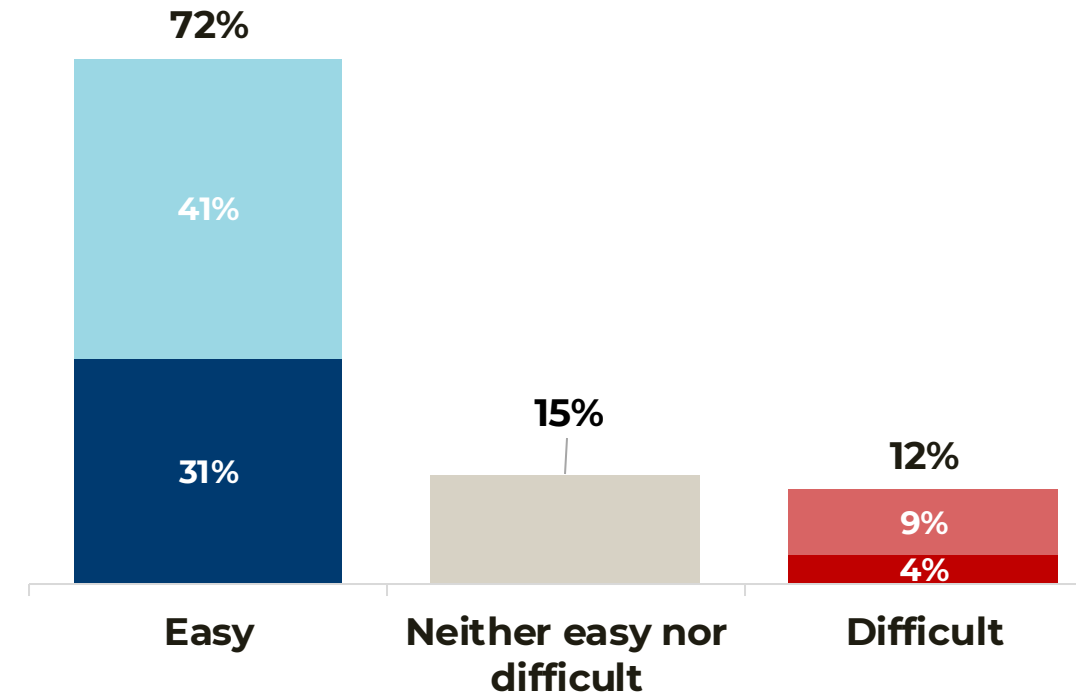
Q39. What modes of transportation do you use most? Please select up to three modes you use most.



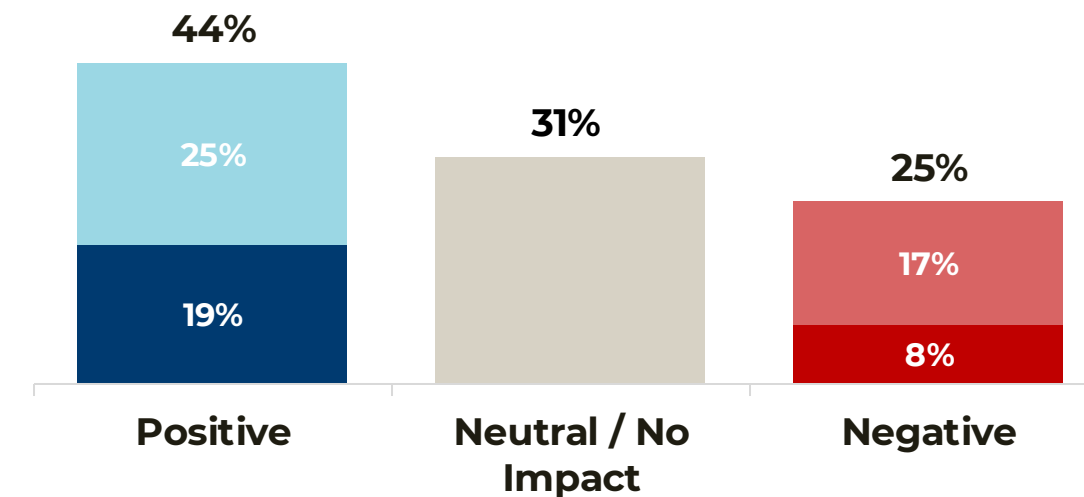
- Those who **work in person** more impacted by public transit in their quality of life, with 30% saying it has a **negative impact**.

- Those who report being **dissatisfied with Greater Boston** overall also report **greater difficulties getting around** (26% difficult) and negative impact from public transport (46%), suggesting mobility's role in satisfaction with Greater Boston.
- Location convenience** was also more important for this group when considering an ideal job (30%).

Q40. When it comes to transportation and mobility in the Boston area, how easy or difficult is it for you to get where you need to go on a daily basis?



Q41. What kind of impact does public transportation in Greater Boston have on the quality of your everyday life?



# Conclusion

# CONCLUSION

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## Investments in on-the-job training and advancement opportunities may incentivize young people to grow in their current place of employment.

- The appetite for various training opportunities, and to advance in their careers more generally, suggests motivation among young residents to participate in trainings if offered.
- While there is some interest in switching jobs or career fields, the trainings that offer opportunities to advance *in current field of work* were most popular, suggesting that offering these opportunities may encourage retention.

## Young residents are finding it easier to build community, but access to affordable, third spaces could continue this momentum.

- Affordability and work-life balance are top themes throughout the survey.
- Even though the majority of young residents find it easier to build community now compared to 2023, many rely on social media and the amount of time they have lived in the area to make connections.
- An interest in affordability, work-life balance, clubs, and activity groups suggests that access to affordable, third spaces — social environments outside of home and work — may help young residents build community.

## Support in housing and healthcare could help improve young residents' quality of life.

- Housing that is affordable has high importance throughout survey, impacting not only finances but also social opportunities.
- The importance of healthcare for young residents has increased significantly since 2023. To encourage retention, employers should emphasize how they can offer support in this area.

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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
**FOUNDATION**

# Thank you

For more information, please contact:  
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[www.GBCCFoundation.org](http://www.GBCCFoundation.org)

*Funded by the Barr Foundation, the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce Foundation commissioned the Young Residents Survey from HIT Strategies.*

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# APPENDIX



# METHODOLOGY

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- These findings are from a proprietary survey conducted by HIT Strategies on behalf of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce. This survey consisted of 600 young adults (ages 20-30) residing in the Greater Boston area. The survey was conducted via online panel and text-to-web. The survey fielded February 27 - March 20, 2026, and the margin of error is +/- 4.12%. Margin of error is higher among subgroups.