

CNY Arts and the Arts & Culture Leadership Alliance of CNY

Community Perception Study of the Arts & Culture in CNY July 2024

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About Research and Marketing Strategies, Inc.

Research & Marketing Strategies, Inc. (RMS) is a full-service market research firm in Central New York. Formed in 2002, RMS helps organizations that are looking to know more about their customers and/or potential customers. It conducts surveys, focus groups, mystery shopping, studies, and analyses. Each project is customized and gets personal attention so that actionable, data-driven findings are delivered. RMS has a reputation for getting results. RMS offers an independent, professional means to conduct telephone, on-line, and mail surveying, In-depth interviews, intercept interviews, and participant recruitment, as well as discussion group hosting through QualiSIGHT, its onsite call center and focus group facility. It has a proven reputation for successfully recruiting and moderating focus groups, community forums, and town meetings. CNY Arts and RMS have partnered on various projects in the past, sharing mutual interests and a passion to champion and support the arts in CNY.

“

Cultural activities and arts create and enhance the community. They are a shared experience that brings people together and speaks to who we are as a community.”

- Study participant

This report details the community's perception of arts and culture in the CNY region. This study was conducted in Spring 2024.

Further detail is provided throughout this report. However, key themes that emerged from the data are:

- Onondaga County was the most represented county in this study while Cayuga and Cortland Counties had fewer study participants.
- The respondent data suggests that the active arts community is generally older-aged. However, the CNY population aged 35 to 55 is expected to grow.
- Individuals expressed a compelling case regarding the importance of the arts in CNY sharing that it helps connect the community and allows people to embrace new perspectives while celebrating different cultures and experiences.
- Many desire to see some big-ticket/headliners come to the area, sharing that they feel Syracuse is passed over for other regional markets (Buffalo or Albany). However, awareness of events in the community was also low, so the issue may be twofold: (a) low awareness of who is coming to Syracuse (and once people learn, tickets are sold out) and (b) Syracuse should do more to attract headliners to the area.
- The data suggests there is a desire for many kinds of arts in this community. Immersive (i.e., art that blends the viewer and the artwork) and traveling exhibitions are definitely in demand.
- COVID continues to have some impact on in-person arts participation; the data suggests that most people feel they are not yet participating at the same level as they were before the pandemic.



Key Finding’s THEMES (Cont’d)

- The aggregate awareness was a 3.4 overall (on a 1 to 5 scale where 1 indicates “not at all” and 5 indicates “extremely” aware) with Madison and Oswego Counties having the lowest awareness levels. The survey represented individuals from Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, and Oswego Counties. RMS recommends that a strong awareness score is above 4.0.
- Although overall awareness levels were low, the vast majority expressed “moderate to good” support for the arts with an aggregate mean of 3.8. This demonstrates that there is recognition of the value arts bring to the community. The open-ended comments spoke of how the arts enrich and bring a vibrancy to the community as well.
- The most popular arts activities the respondents enjoyed attending were:

Activity	Response %
Music Concerts	84%
Performing Arts	83%
Museums	67%
Local Artist Shops and Wares	66%
Arts Festivals & Fairs	61%
Visual Art Exhibitions	53%

- Many indicated that they are looking for multi-sensory and immersive art & culture events and performances. Respondents also prefer smaller venues (a possible by-product of COVID).



Background & Methodology

- In the spring of 2024, CNY Arts and the Arts & Culture Leadership Alliance (ACLA) contracted with RMS to conduct a community profile and perception study regarding the area's arts and cultural offerings. The findings from this research will help CNY Arts and ACLA develop strategies to build greater community engagement and audience participation with arts, entertainment, and cultural events.
- RMS, CNY Arts, and ACLA partnered to design a custom online survey that included ranking, multiple-choice, Likert-style, and open-ended questions. RMS then sampled residents in the primary market area – the CNY region, including Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, and Oswego Counties. RMS first surveyed its eligible ViewPoint panel members and then promoted the survey to email distribution lists provided by respective CNY Arts and ACLA organizations.
- The survey was promoted through a general participation link. Additionally, email invites were sent to the RMS CNY ViewPoint panel, ACLA patron lists, as well as an email list provided by the OnCenter. The intent was to get as many CNY residents as possible to respond and share their thoughts. Fieldwork lasted twelve weeks through the spring of 2024.
- Ultimately 3,046 individuals participated in the survey, reflecting a 3% response rate and a Margin of Error of ± 1.17 . The industry standard Margin of Error is ± 5.0 at a 95% confidence interval. **This figure of ± 1.17 indicates very strong statistical reliability among the aggregate responses.** RMS cleaned and ensured all responses were verified and then analyzed the data. RMS calculated descriptive statistics (percentages and means) with the final dataset. In some cases, crosstabs were calculated to highlight experiences among sub-groups or to show differences in the needs, desires, or expectations among the variety of respondents.



Results



Figure 1. 72% of participants live in Onondaga County, suggesting strong relationships in the county.

One of the initial survey questions asked individuals to select the county they live in with the option to select one of six counties within the Primary Market Area (PMA) defined by CNY Arts. Respondents could also select an “other” option. A strong majority selected Onondaga County (72%). The remaining participants were evenly distributed geographically as detailed in Table 1. Many counties in New York State were represented. Tompkins County was the only non-PMA county that represented over 1% of the overall responses. Throughout this report, data are disaggregated by county and compared to all responses collected.

Table 1. Responses by County

County	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total
■ Onondaga	2206	72%
■ Oswego	178	6%
■ Madison	147	5%
■ Oneida	137	4%
■ Cayuga	104	3%
■ Cortland	78	3%
■ Other	196	6%
Total	3,046	100%

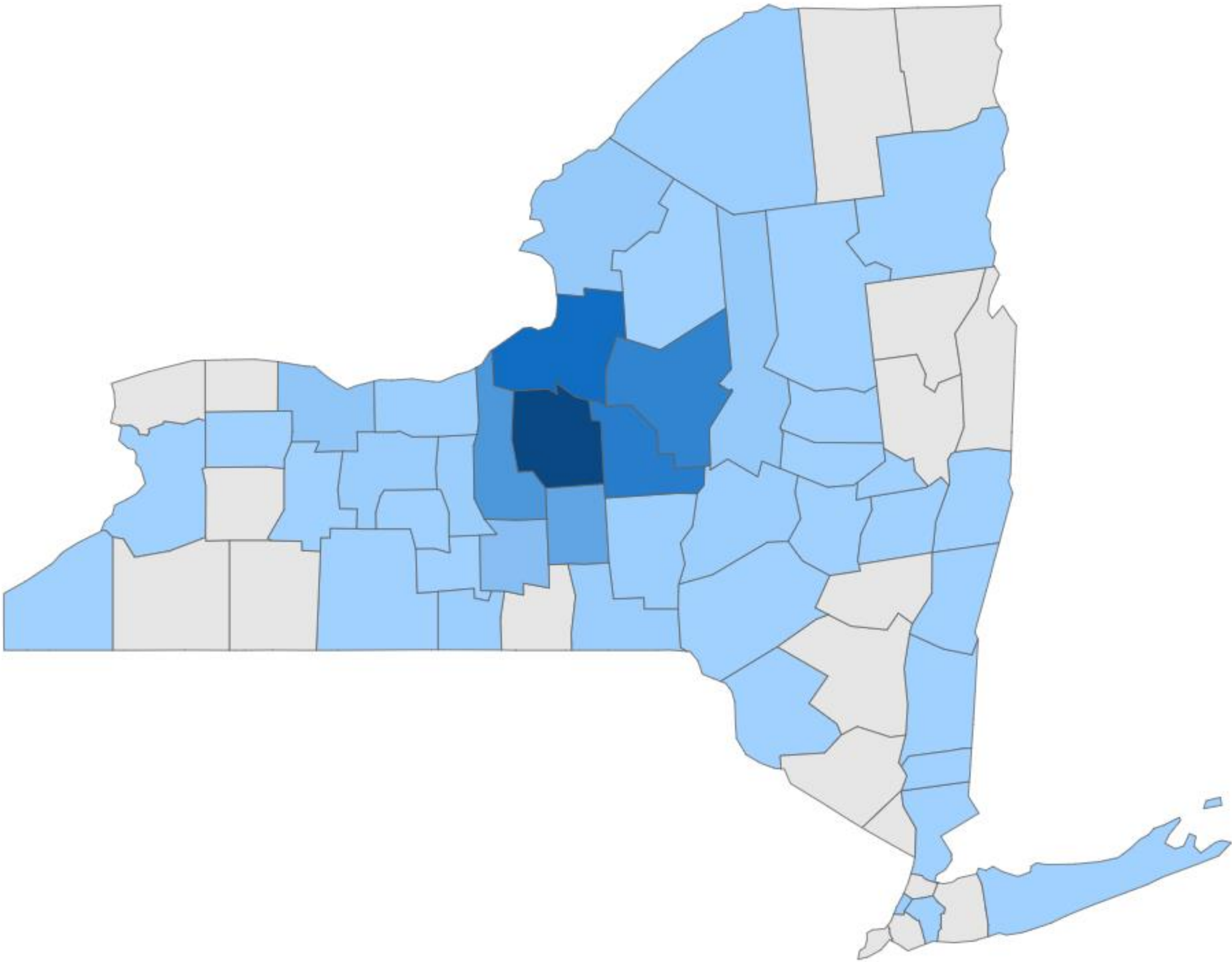
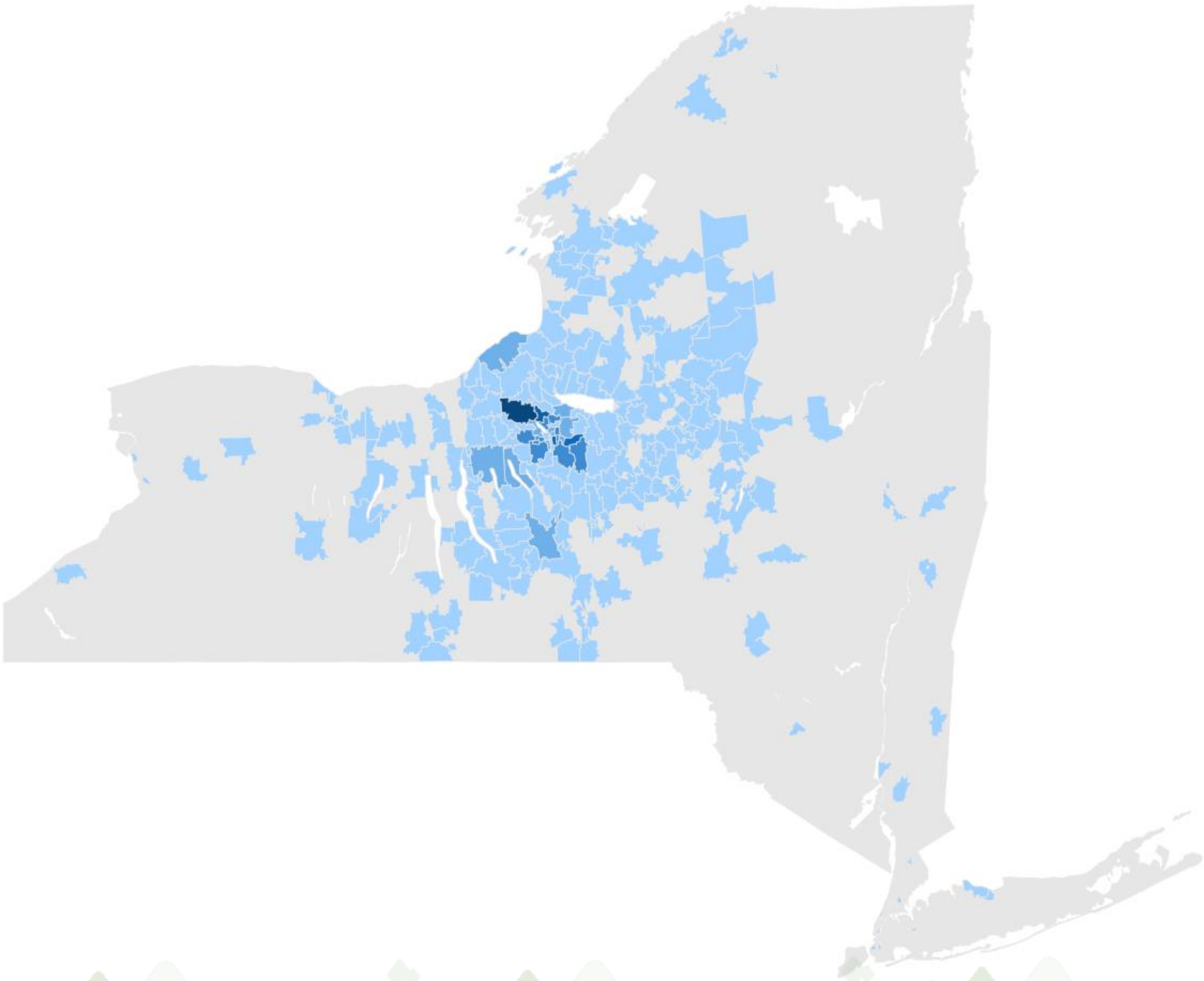


Figure 2. The most represented locations were Baldwinsville, Liverpool, Fayetteville, and Syracuse.

The top ZIP Codes represented were in Onondaga County with 13027 (Baldwinsville), 13090 (Liverpool), 13066 (Fayetteville), and Syracuse (13210), being the most represented areas.

Table 2. Top Responses by ZIP Code

ZIP Code	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total	County
13027	229	8%	Onondaga
13090	139	5%	Onondaga
13066	132	4%	Onondaga
13210	128	4%	Onondaga
13104	99	3%	Onondaga
13224	91	3%	Onondaga
13219	89	3%	Onondaga
13088	83	3%	Onondaga
13078	81	3%	Onondaga
13215	81	3%	Onondaga
13212	79	3%	Onondaga
13031	79	3%	Onondaga
13206	79	3%	Onondaga



“The arts provide outlets for creative expression and spaces for people to connect. When we can have a shared arts experience that is both where people feel welcome, differences can be bridged, and community can be created.”

- Study participant

Figure 3. Most individuals who participated are age 55 plus.

60% of respondents in this survey were over the age of 55. When analyzed by each county, the findings are very similar with the majority of participants over the age of 55. Since the sample for this survey was provided to RMS, this finding suggests two important trends: (a) those actively engaged in the arts community tend to be age 55 plus, and (b) there may be a disconnect between the arts community and younger demographics. This report will further explore the different needs, preferences, and expectations of the arts community based on age.

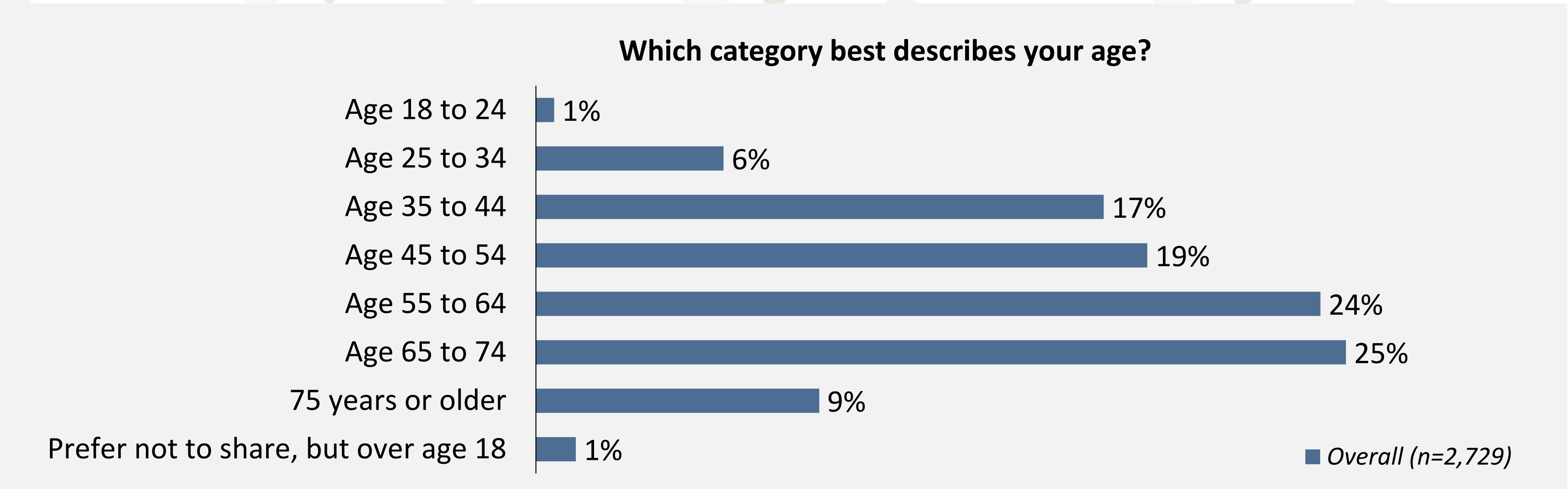


Table 3. Respondents Age by County

Age Category	Cayuga (n=99)	Cortland (n=66)	Madison (n=125)	Oneida (n=118)	Onondaga (n=1,974)	Oswego (n=155)	Other (n=191)	Overall (n=2,729)
Age 18 to 24	0%	2%	0%	0%	1%	2%	0%	1%
Age 25 to 34	7%	5%	3%	8%	6%	6%	5%	6%
Age 35 to 44	14%	18%	17%	20%	17%	23%	16%	17%
Age 45 to 54	14%	15%	15%	12%	19%	20%	20%	19%
Age 55 to 64	25%	24%	29%	26%	23%	22%	23%	24%
Age 65 to 74	33%	32%	26%	25%	24%	21%	21%	25%
75 years or older	6%	5%	9%	6%	9%	5%	12%	9%
Prefer not to share, but over age 18	0%	0%	1%	2%	1%	0%	3%	1%

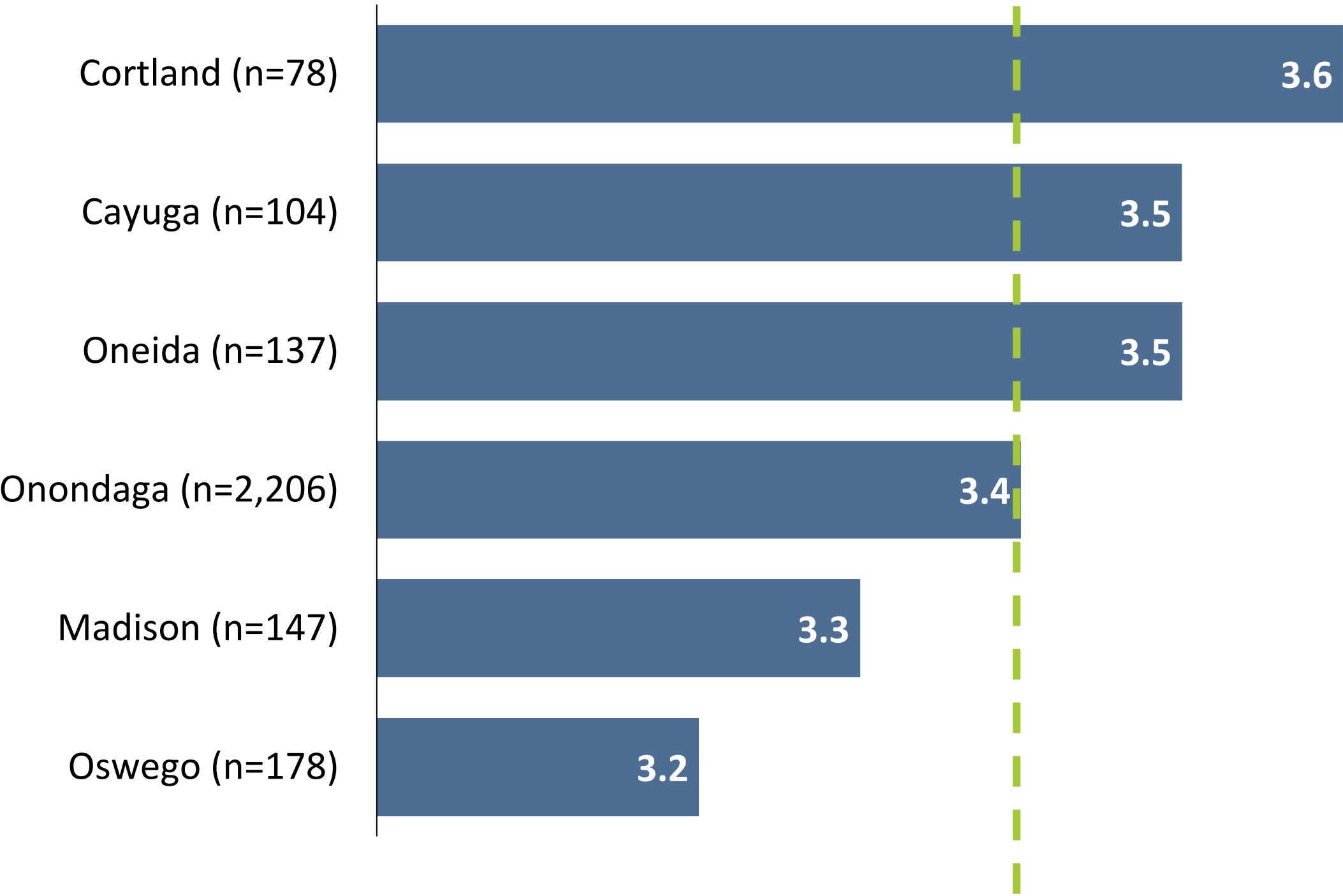
Note. The overall number of responses is 2,729 for this questions, as ASM requested we do not ask any identifiable information from the sample list provided to RMS to support the study.



Figure 4. Across all markets, awareness of art and cultural activities is low.

Individuals were asked to rank their awareness of community arts and cultural activities using a scale from not aware (1) to very aware (5). RMS considers any score above 4.0 to be favorable. The highest score was Cortland (3.6) while the overall mean score provided was 3.4. This data suggests a very strong opportunity to increase awareness of the arts across CNY.

Awareness of Community’s Arts & Cultural Activities (Mean)



Response	Cayuga	Cortland	Madison	Oneida	Onondaga	Oswego	Other	Total
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	9%	10%	13%	15%	14%	17%	14%	14%
3	49%	35%	49%	39%	43%	51%	36%	43%
4	25%	37%	29%	30%	32%	24%	35%	31%
Very Aware - 5	17%	18%	9%	16%	11%	8%	15%	12%

Note. Scores are calculated as a weighted mean, on a scale of 1 (not aware) to 5 (very aware).





Community members generally perceive themselves as “Occasional Participants.”

In addition to individuals citing low awareness of the arts, most participants also consider themselves “occasional participants” regarding their engagement in the arts. This is an important detail to consider when thinking about different membership models, and how marketing should become targeted towards different types of consumers. In addition, 376 individuals shared they volunteer for an arts organization.

Table 4. Participants Engagement Type

Engagement Category	Cayuga (n=104)	Cortland (n=78)	Madison (n=147)	Oneida (n=137)	Onondaga (n=2,206)	Oswego (n=178)	Other (n=196)	Total (n=3,046)
Active Participant	37%	33%	28%	34%	30%	16%	39%	30%
Occasional Participant	47%	54%	50%	48%	53%	69%	47%	53%
Subscriber/Donor/Member	14%	12%	22%	17%	16%	12%	13%	16%
Volunteer	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%

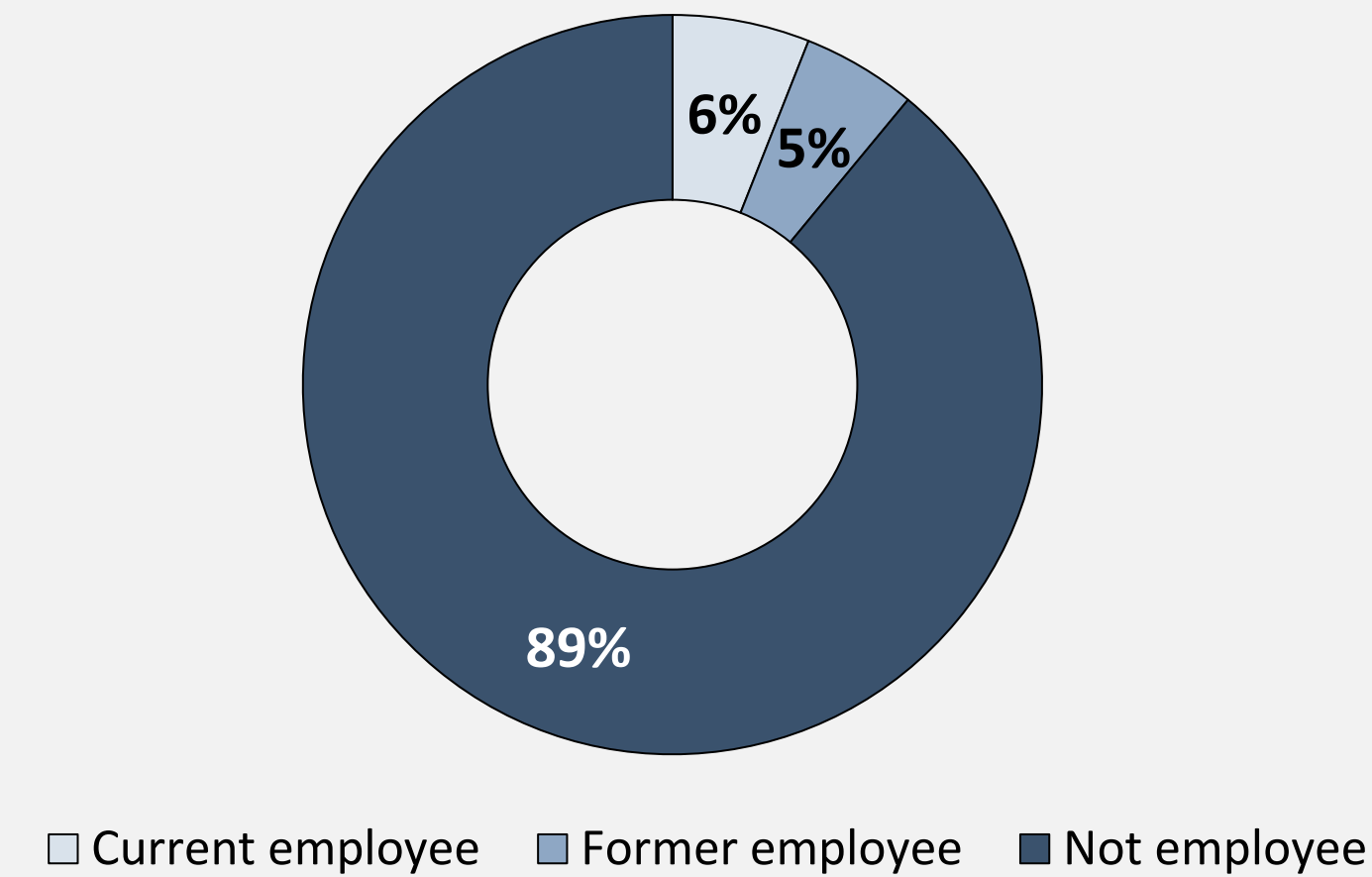
Note. This question asked individuals their perception of their involvement, and they self-selected their level of engagement.



Figure 5. Few survey participants are current or former employees of an arts/cultural organization.

A strong majority (89%) of those who participated are **not** former or current employees of an arts/cultural organization.

Current or Former Employee of an Arts/Cultural Organization



Organizations of Current/Former employees:

- Those who are current or former employees of an arts/cultural organization represented many different types of arts organizations – groups such as The Everson, CNY Arts, CNY Jazz, the Erie Canal Museum, the MOST, Syracuse City Ballet, and various art galleries/volunteer positions were cited.



Figure 6. Individuals expressed moderate to good support for the arts.

Survey participants were asked to share how supportive they are of the arts and/or cultural activities within the community based on a scale from 1 (*not supportive*) to 5 (*very supportive*). The **mean score was 3.8**, which suggests that participants perceive their support as “moderate.” When assessed by age, those aged 18 to 24 and those over 75 provided a 4.0, while the lowest score was provided by those age 55 to 64 (3.7). This is an important finding as the most responsive age demographic to this survey rated their support in the arts the lowest. This finding suggests (a) an opportunity to better define “supportive” within the community and (b) fine-tune communications regarding activities and how to become more engaged.

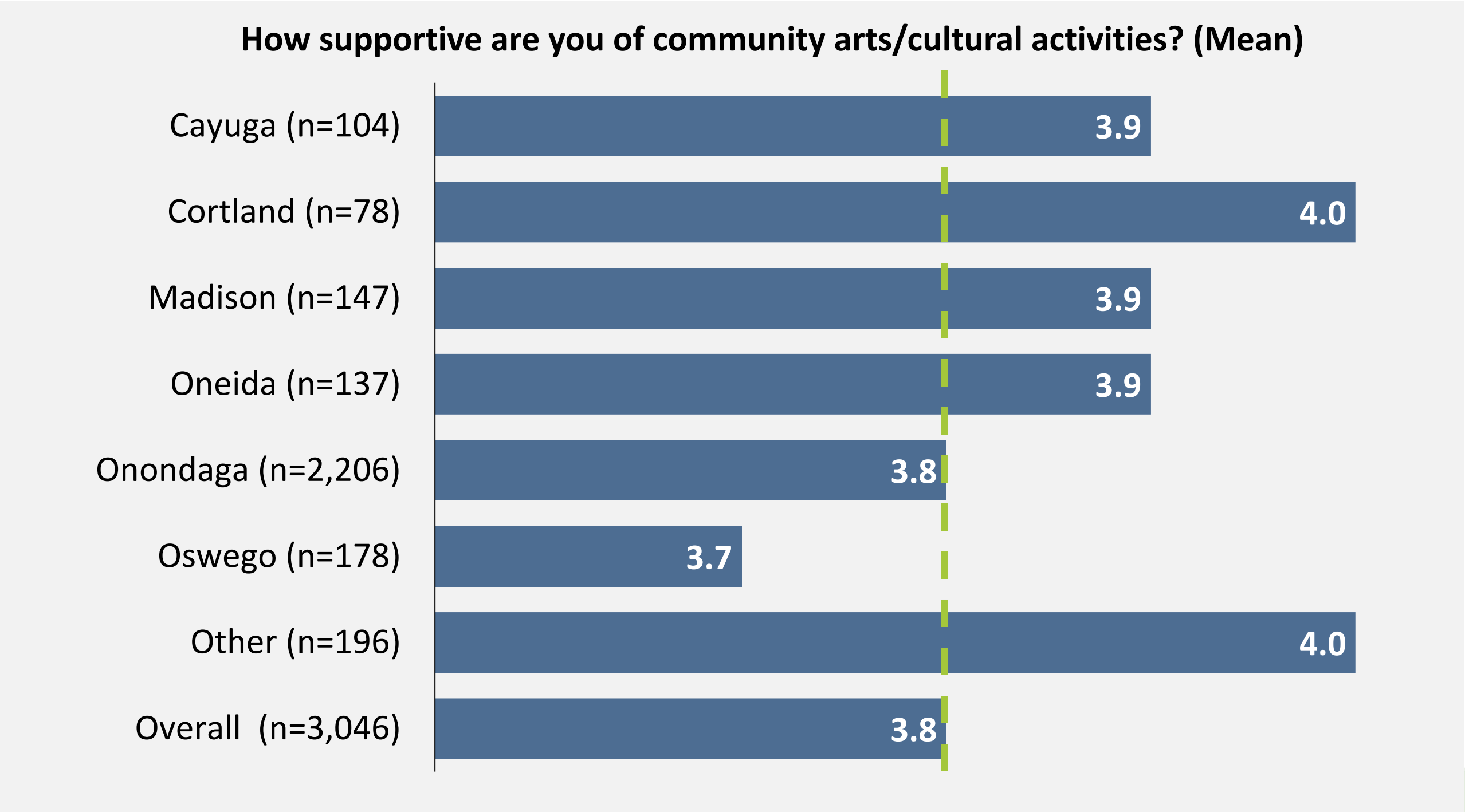


Table 5. Additional Context – Why Selections Were Made

Score	Quotes
2	“I haven’t been participating a lot since kids.” “Cultural activities tend to be pricey and don't hold particular appeal to my interests, so I am an infrequent participant but do support with a modest donation.” “I would like to participate but find it difficult to know how.”
3	“I am not aware of as many art/cultural activities as I would like to be so don't attend as many as I would like. I only materially support CORA (ArtRage) and the Baldwinsville Center for the Arts.” “I am a former music teacher and very supportive of all fine arts in the community. I am not as involved as I would like to be, but definitely when I can.” “I support and am a member of arts venues but don’t often find events that interest me.”
4	“I subscribe to multiple arts group performances and also attend some stand-alone events.” “I think arts culture are incredibly important to our community and having programs and opportunities for everyone to experience these things is important. I try to bring my family to events that support the art when we have the opportunity.” “The community of artists in the area is tight knit, passionate, creative, and ambitious. I want to encourage that.”
5	“I enjoy being able to go to theater, classical music, pop music, country/folk music, the Everson, special events.” “Donor to many arts organizations and regularly attend performances.” “I majored in the arts and believe they are vital to our communities and lives.”

Most participants enjoy attending music concerts and performing arts performances.

Respondents were asked what types of arts and cultural activities they most enjoy attending. An overwhelming majority enjoy attending music concerts and performing arts, while many also enjoy museums, shopping for locally made arts/crafts, and festivals. When asked to further describe the types of music they enjoy, many shared “all kinds” and several noted specific genres such as jazz, classic rock, classical, bluegrass, and folk.

Table 6. Preferred Activities by County

Activity	Cayuga (n=104)	Cortland (n=78)	Madison (n=147)	Oneida (n=137)	Onondaga (n=2,206)	Oswego (n=178)	Other (n=196)	Total (n=3,046)
Music Concerts	82%	91%	79%	85%	84%	83%	82%	84%
Performing Arts (theater, dance)	82%	79%	83%	80%	84%	78%	77%	83%
Museums	65%	56%	67%	70%	67%	65%	76%	67%
Shopping locally made arts	67%	63%	63%	58%	67%	69%	52%	66%
Arts Festivals	61%	60%	57%	58%	62%	52%	61%	61%
Visual Art Exhibitions	53%	54%	59%	58%	52%	40%	67%	53%
Film screenings	34%	31%	39%	46%	31%	25%	41%	32%
Workshops/Classes	32%	36%	37%	37%	30%	36%	40%	32%
Lectures and Spoken Word	33%	18%	32%	31%	27%	24%	40%	28%
Other (please specify)	1%	1%	3%	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%

Note. Respondents could select all that apply.



Participants have moderate interest in art exhibitions but may desire more multi-sensory events.

The next question asked respondents how likely they are to view different types of visual art exhibitions on a scale from 1 (*not at all likely*) to 5 (*very likely*). Participants shared they are most likely to attend a multi-sensory exhibit (combined event with a food tasting, music/concert, hands-on, etc.). Attending pop-up events was the least likely exhibition participants may attend.

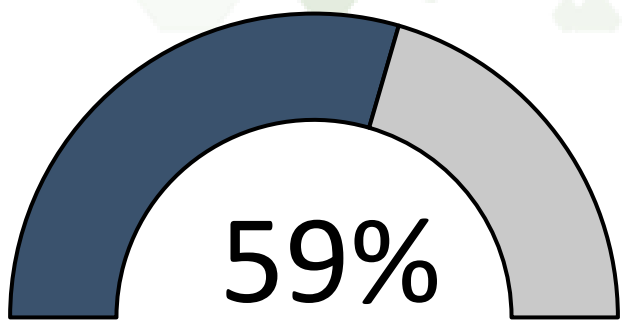
Table 7. Participants Likelihood of Attending Art Exhibitions (Mean)

How likely are you to attend an exhibition....	In a museum?	At a pop-up location?	That is multi-sensory?
Cayuga (n=104)	3.6	3.4	3.8
Cortland (n=78)	3.5	3.2	3.8
Madison (n=147)	3.6	3.3	3.8
Oneida (n=137)	3.7	3.4	3.9
Onondaga (n=2,206)	3.5	3.2	3.7
Oswego (n=178)	3.2	3.2	3.7
Other (n=196)	3.9	3.5	3.8
Total (n=3,046)	3.5	3.2	3.7



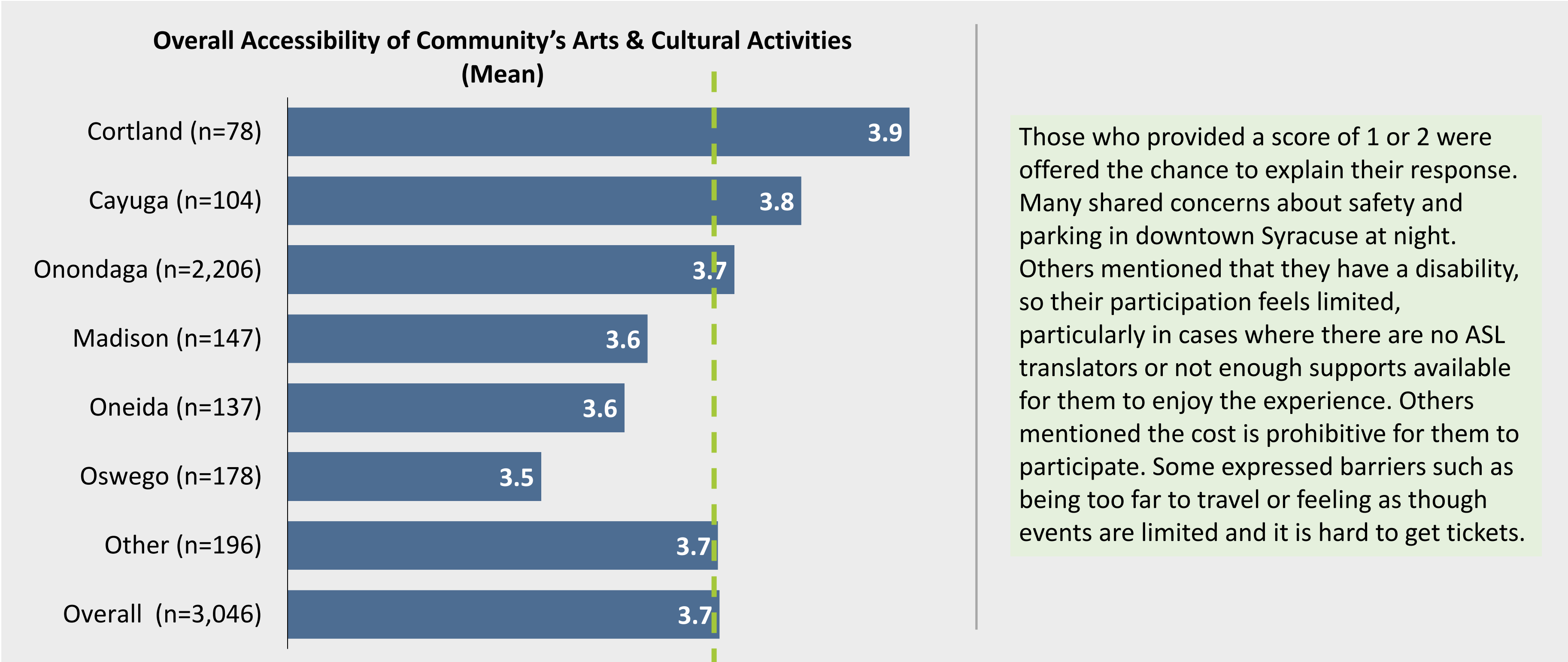
Figure 7. The Oswego County mean score for “accessibility” was the lowest of all counties surveyed at 3.5 out of 5.0.

Participants were asked to rate on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*) how accessible the arts are in their community. **No county** ranked their score higher than 4.0, with an overall mean of 3.7.



Of respondents think that arts & cultural events in the community are accessible (provided a rating of 4 or 5).

“*I think art contribute to the overall well being of our community by allowing people another way to express themselves as well as tell stories and share ideas. It gives people an outlet, it helps people heal and deal with issues, it allows people to see ideas or concepts in a new way.*”
- Study participant



Respondents believe the arts are part of a community's social fabric.

Individuals shared that they believe that the arts bring people together and are good for an entire community, as they enrich social connections, expose people to new cultures, and enhance the vibrancy of the community. Individuals shared powerful quotes about the importance of art in the community. Some of these quotes include:

- *"It joins us together for an exploration of creativity and fun and shows how unique and universal we all can be!"*
- *"They provide an avenue for children to learn more about culture, arts and interests in the community."*
- *"Arts and cultural activities are essential to the overall well being of the community. We must be surrounded by it. Our students must be exposed and have access to it. Life is art, music, and beauty."*
- *"Provide entertainment/ something to do also provide opportunities to get involved."*
- *"Brings all types of people together, fellowship."*
- *"It's essential to feeling engaged in the community."*
- *"Imperative! cannot overstate the importance of the arts....a way to people to gather to make art or enjoy art, a wonderful way of self expression and to celebrate what we have in common, what inspires us.....especially important to expose children....all children to their self expression and joy."*
- *"They bring people together and expose them to new and enriching ideas and experiences."*
- *"Arts and cultural events bring people from different backgrounds together and help to build community."*
- *"They are crucial to a vibrant city."*
- *"They foster creativity, inspiration, and awe. They bring people together."*
- *"Arts events draw both from within and outside the community, adding patrons to local stores and restaurants. Arts groups draw participation from local citizenry, fostering community interest. And arts groups support local artists who bring a broadening of perspectives to the municipal and larger discourses."*
- *"Promotes creativity and an event for community members to join."*
- *"Arts are what help teach us to be human, to understand and empathize with others."*

Many believe that art events could be better communicated in CNY.

Study participants were asked to share what they believe could be done to improve the arts community. Many shared that they desire improved communications to increase awareness of events. This might include an improved shared community calendar or improved outreach (community centers, within schools, or publicity). Others shared a desire for a better smaller concert facility and lower-cost options, which would help make the arts more accessible. Some key quotes include:

- *"A centralized location of a calendar for what I see happening, where and a description"*
- *"A CONCERT FACILITY in the new I-81 reconstruction area."*
- *"A culture fair with representatives from all cultures living in the area- food, wears, displays, art."*
- *"A few more low-cost options - better advertising - you found me for a survey, but I don't get anything else from CNY Arts - a weekly calendar online and emailed to subscribers would be amazing."*
- *"Accessibility through videos for those physically impaired."*
- *"Better advertising and information about parking which seems to be the main complaint of people coming into the city from suburbs. Also, Syracuse should have a beautification program. More trees and multi-color flowers - not the same purple hanging plants every year. Needs to be jazzed up. South Townsend St. needs to have flowers or plants planted on the medians in the middle of the road. English Ivy or wildflowers would be good, less maintenance."*
- *"I know many older people who no longer drive at night, so I wish there were more opportunities for them to attend performances like Syracuse Orchestra, Syr Friends of Chamber Music, I think Syracuse offers a lot for a small city."*
- *"I want to say I love events that catch my eye in a world where I feel inundated by all the possibilities every day, but we also have a very packed life with kid activities so at this stage, it's hard to say we could reliably take advantage."*
- *"I wish there was a comprehensive calendar of events in the area. Syracuse.com has some, but it is difficult to find online since their online presence is so complicated."*
- *"More children's theater, they are the future subscribers. I am speaking of both children in plays and plays for children to visit schools. Also, children writing plays/choreographing and adults can direct the children in those works, show a process, get the arts flowing. Children's art exhibits, we need more. I think people lose sight that it does not have to be good, and it is probably not going to be, the point is that words can come alive, ideas can be painted, thoughts/feelings can be danced."*
- *"With the MFA program in writing at Syracuse University and the Downtown Writers Center one might think there would be more programs out in the community for interested writers to engage in quality programming. It is really limited to the downtown area and membership in the YMCA. Local libraries offer a variety of programs, but not for the serious writer. Additionally, The Everson Museum needs repair on the outside of the building (sidewalks, etc.). It does not have a welcoming presence, visually speaking. The adjacent parking lot is in disrepair and the signage is poor. A lot can be done to make the downtown venues more accessible with better parking, lighting on the streets, etc. This comes down to the city and county governments providing funding much more so that donations."*

Study participants desire more immersive art and diversity of performances.

Respondents were asked to share what is missing from the arts and culture community in Central New York. Many shared they would like to see more immersive types of shows, while others added they would like a smaller music venue for concerts. Some shared that there is a “good mix” of events but feel better advertising and communications could help promote said events. Several shared they wanted to see more events celebrating Indigenous communities along with other marginalized groups. Several also shared more fine arts events would be desirable. Some key quotes include:

- *“Immersive traveling shows, e.g., Van Gogh.”*
- *“More small venue music concerts.”*
- *“More high-end art and craft shows.”*
- *“They all exist but I find many less professional, few and far between. Professional dance. Professional musicians that are not just the biggest folk on music charts.”*
- *“Festivals and music in the spring, local talent shows, hands on make and take classes.”*
- *“LGBTQAI+, those with Differing Abilities.”*
- *“It would be great to see more Indigenous cultural events given the history of the land where we live.”*
- *“Need more ballet and opera; more accessible historic exhibits (OHS) tough to get to; more fine arts events.”*
- *“The things that are missing, e.g., blockbuster museum shows, are impractical for CNY, and we go to other cities for them. I like the smallness and often local focus of our events.”*
- *“We don’t have enough arts experiences that celebrate Black, Indigenous, Latino, Asian, new American, or People with Disabilities.”*
- *“As I said before, high-quality contemporary theater and dance.”*
- *“Arts representing people of different racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds religious art”*
- *“Maybe interactive exhibitions. My 40-year-old son and his wife recently went to a candlelight concert. Reflecting on the experience, he said it was quite different from his normal concert going expectation and he and his wife enjoyed the calm, beautiful atmosphere. They have never attended a symphony concert.”*
- *“Interactive art installations. For example: Bring in an artist(s) and let them design, build, construct, compose, create a performance or display. Cover the process for a “The There is a lot going on, particularly in the summer. SU is doing things all the time but it's hard to find out about them. Red house and new plays are great but it's always too late when I hear about things. This is true across the board. I'm an active Facebook and social media user so I wonder why there isn't more online.”*

Figure 8. Several individuals cited COVID has impacted their participation in the arts.

39% of respondents shared that COVID has changed how they participate in the arts. Within each county, the numbers are generally the same, with Cortland County sharing the highest impact (40%). Individuals who shared that COVID has impacted their participation in the arts commented that they have attended fewer events, become more fearful of public gatherings, and did not renew some memberships. Although for some, COVID has changed their experience as to how they engage with the art, many shared that they are starting to become re-engaged and go to more events and gatherings. Some shared that they prefer or try to attend smaller gatherings. **62%** shared their participation has been the same since the onset of the pandemic.

“As soon as Covid restrictions lifted, I immediately started going back to attend local theater performances, concerts, all of which were either indoor or outdoor. During the pandemic, I realize just how critical those things are to not only my mental health, but also to me as a person in general. My happiness was greatly diminished when I was not able to attend live performances.”

- Study participant

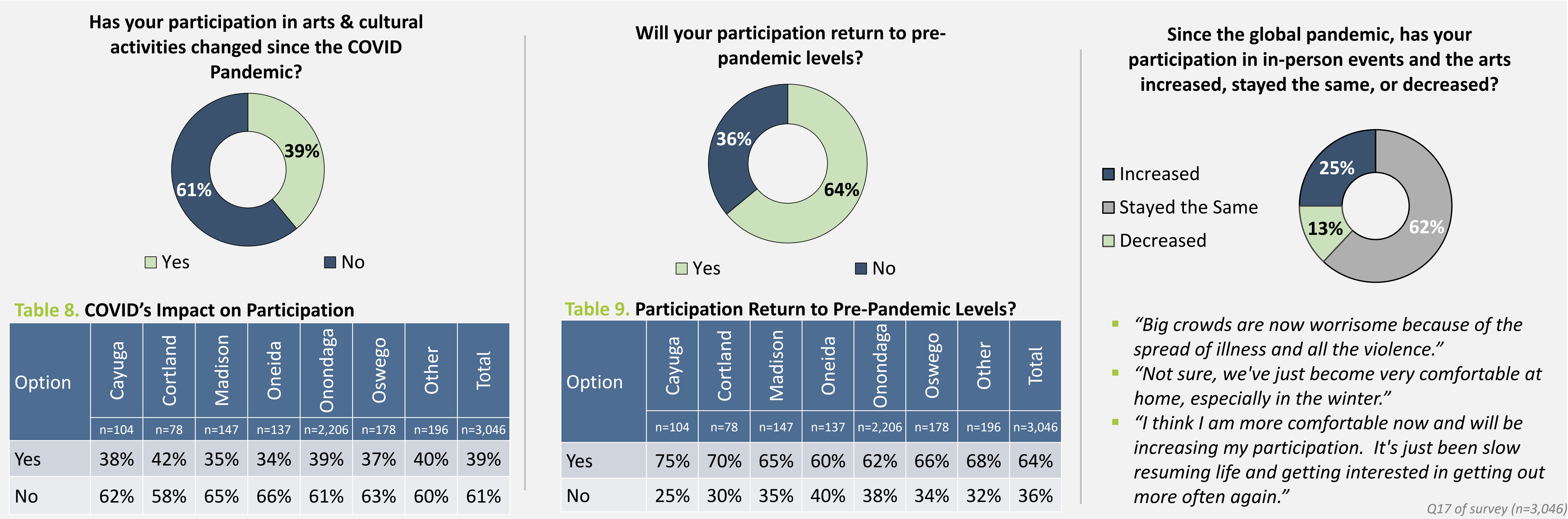


Figure 9. Concerts and live music are desired activities, but the community values diversity.

Participants were asked what types of arts and cultural activities they would like to see more of in the CNY region. A majority would like to see additional **concerts and live music**, along with more **craft and artisan shops**. However, the data shows that community members value a diversity of offerings as many response items scored high (above 40%).

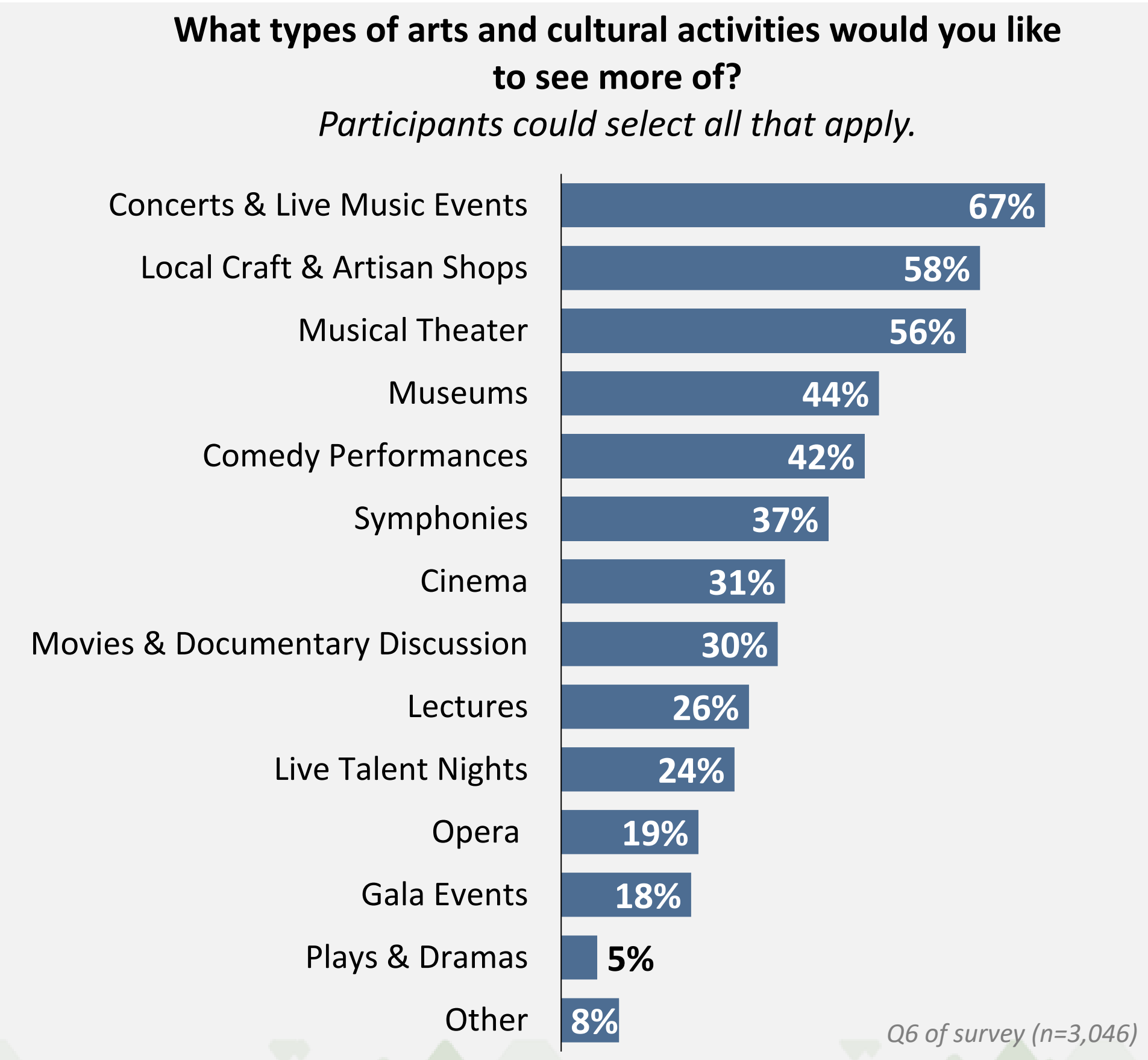


Table 10. Most Desired Arts & Cultural Activities

Activity	Cayuga (n=104)	Cortland (n=78)	Madison (n=147)	Oneida (n=137)	Onondaga (n=2,206)	Oswego (n=178)	Other (n=196)
Concerts and Live Music Events	76%	69%	61%	76%	67%	71%	63%
Museums	44%	40%	42%	42%	44%	38%	58%
Local craft and artisan shops	63%	42%	56%	56%	58%	63%	55%
Plays and Dramas	56%	50%	50%	53%	54%	53%	52%
Musical Theatre	52%	47%	51%	56%	57%	64%	43%
Symphonies	46%	35%	27%	43%	37%	36%	35%
Movies and Documentary Discussion	29%	19%	32%	34%	30%	22%	34%
Comedy Performances	45%	54%	39%	45%	42%	49%	33%
Lectures	33%	19%	26%	31%	26%	21%	33%
Cinema	37%	32%	34%	35%	31%	28%	28%
Opera	21%	15%	17%	17%	19%	16%	23%
Live Talent Nights	27%	18%	17%	26%	24%	29%	21%
Gala Events	20%	24%	16%	16%	18%	17%	16%
Other	6%	5%	9%	7%	8%	3%	8%

Note. Respondents could select all that apply.



Figure 10a. 35- to 54-year-olds tend to desire more lectures and local craft and artisan shops.

When analyzed by age, the 35- to 54-year-old group tends to desire more lectures, local crafts, and artisan shops. Other activities tend to be similar across all ages. The 18 to 24 group should be interpreted with caution due to a small sample size (n=15).

Table 10a. Most Desired Arts & Cultural Activities by Age

Activity	Age 18 to 24 (n=15)	Age 25 to 34 (n=155)	Age 35 to 44 (n=469)	Age 45 to 54 (n=505)	Age 55 to 64 (n=648)	Age 65 to 74 (n=669)	75 years or older (n=234)
Concerts and Live Music Events	33%	35%	33%	33%	31%	30%	29%
Local craft and artisan shops	40%	53%	56%	48%	43%	32%	20%
Musical Theatre	47%	70%	68%	74%	68%	63%	61%
Plays and Dramas	27%	26%	25%	24%	16%	12%	9%
Museums	27%	26%	18%	24%	29%	29%	35%
Comedy Performances – National Comedians	33%	31%	27%	30%	26%	17%	10%
Symphonies	73%	65%	61%	64%	60%	53%	44%
Cinema	27%	26%	27%	30%	34%	28%	34%
Movies and Documentary Discussion	53%	56%	51%	48%	40%	42%	43%
Lectures	53%	58%	60%	60%	54%	50%	50%
Live Talent Nights	13%	21%	21%	17%	15%	21%	27%
Opera	7%	7%	6%	6%	8%	8%	10%
Gala Events – auctions, fashion, award shows, charity events	40%	47%	52%	57%	52%	53%	55%
Other	27%	30%	37%	39%	32%	37%	47%

Note. Respondents could select all that apply.



Figure 10b. Women show more interest in the arts, particularly with symphonies and lectures.

When analyzed by gender, women tend to show higher levels of interest in local craft and artisan shops, plays and dramas, symphonies, and lectures.

Table 10b. Most Desired Arts & Cultural Activities by Gender

Activity	Female (n=1,428)	Male (n=561)	Nonbinary (n=76)
Concerts and Live Music Events	31%	34%	47%
Local craft and artisan shops	42%	34%	38%
Musical Theatre	67%	65%	53%
Plays and Dramas	20%	14%	24%
Museums	29%	29%	44%
Comedy Performances – National Comedians	24%	22%	32%
Symphonies	63%	41%	71%
Cinema	32%	32%	56%
Movies and Documentary Discussion	48%	42%	62%
Lectures	58%	44%	50%
Live Talent Nights	20%	19%	29%
Opera	8%	8%	12%
Gala Events – auctions, fashion, award shows, charity events	54%	52%	50%
Other	37%	40%	29%

Note. Respondents could select all that apply.



Participants shared in their own words what they would like to see. Many shared they want more contemporary art opportunities and diversity of performances.

Participants were asked what types of arts and cultural activities they would like to see more of in the CNY region. An overwhelming majority would like to see more diverse offerings here in CNY. Other responses include:

- *"I especially like opera, because it combines orchestra, singers and dancers. I am a fan of "serious" music and theater, Sondheim rather than Mean Girls."*
- *"I'd appreciate more opera performances, spontaneous concerts"*
- *"Music, arts and crafts, plays, musicals"*
- *"I feel like we do a pretty good job, but more diverse culture internationally is always good. We're a pretty diverse city. More food and music for those cultures. Maybe things for their holidays for the public and on a bigger scale."*
- *"My personal preference is stage plays, I enjoy especially musicals and comedy, but a good drama is always entertaining as well. I like plays that engage teenagers/ young adults so I can bring my grandchildren to something they enjoy."*
- *"Multicultural, accessible, diverse, inclusive art. multi sensory, educational, uplifting stuff, promote local talent."*
- *"More traveling exhibits (museums), and (inter)national music groups"*
- *"Art displays, Art lessons, musical events, opportunities for more children's theatre in the summer,"*
- *"More Afro-Indigenous events and not have them centered in those neighborhoods they are represented....should be welcomed anywhere!"*
- *"Touring dance/ballet companies (I'm old enough to remember when Syracuse had a dance series that presented them)"*
- *"More opportunities for family inclusion at reasonable prices."*
- *"As I run a dance academy I will be interested in more diverse performances. We don't get invited to big programs by big companies as we are in the minority and people don't even know about us. I think cultural diversity in the art scene is very important but missing at present."*
- *"More uplifting plays. Less pop culture and more rooted forms of music, such as folk music and classical. Gatherings and events in which people can participate, such as folk singing and hands on art events and workshops. Golden age musicals."*
- *"High-quality contemporary theater and dance."*
- *"More national acts. I'd also like to see more offerings of local talent (possibly combined with national acts). Historical type events and information. Events on how to preserve our natural resources while also enjoying what the earth has to offer in a sustainable way. More offerings on sustainability. Events on how we can grow our own food indoors."*
- *"I love opera and musical theater. I would like to see more family focused events. I would even like to see more educational talks that are done in conjunction with art shows or theater. One time I went to an opera and before the show, the musical director help a talk to explain some of the themes of the music and helped us identify things to listen out for. It made me appreciate the opera so much more."*

Q8 of survey (n=661)

Individuals commented on their desire for more festivals and explained the types they desired to see locally.

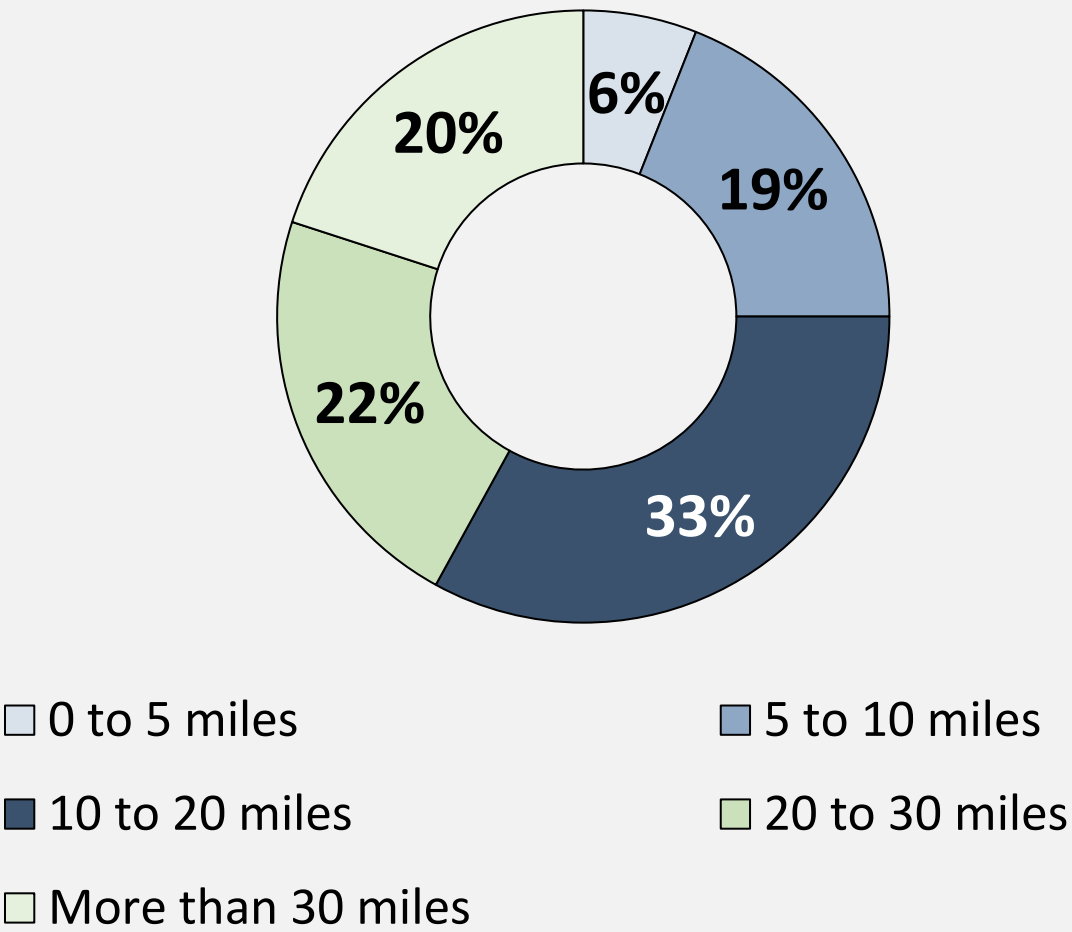
Many individuals shared they wanted to see more festivals or felt that certain types of festivals were missing from the region. Some desired festivals that celebrate the diversity and heritage of the region while others wanted to see film, folk, or dance festivals. Key quotes include:

- *"A wider array of artistic impressions from Black American, Middle Eastern, Native American, and Asian artists. Also higher quality festivals that celebrate Black American heritage and culture."*
- *"Adding additional festivals that feature local talent."*
- *"Bring back the Fringe Festival!"*
- *"Film festivals access to more independent films."*
- *"Fine arts and crafts festival, Native American educational event, International food festival, Local agriculture festival."*
- *"I think the culture and arts events/activities are prevalent- the only suggestion I would have is for all of the school districts to engage in a cultural festival to celebrate the diversity within the area."*
- *"I'd like to see a large book festival with authors, book signings, events, etc."*
- *"I'd like to see more art festivals and cultural offerings held in the city of Syracuse."*
- *"Integration and maybe an international festival incorporating all aspects. Coordination between cultural venues with the art opportunities"*
- *"Less food-based festivals."*
- *"More cross/multi-disciplinary festivals."*
- *"More ethnic music/dance events -- consider an event modeled after SF Ethnic Dance festival... <https://www.worldartswest.org/sfedf-update.html>."*
- *"More festivals involving diverse foods, cultural traditions, and music; traveling art exhibitions (like impressionist works that are well-known to many people), and more dance troupes."*
- *"More film festivals would be cool."*
- *"More performing arts and cultural experiences for kids, more live music, more museums, more festivals and exhibits that include young and emerging artists."*
- *"More street musical festivals and more chances to publish literature."*
- *"Really like performances in outdoor venues in the summer months - Skaneateles Festival at Anyela's, Symphoria (now the Syracuse Orchestra) concerts in the park - it's too nice to be inside during CNY summers."*
- *"Return of cultural festivals."*
- *"Some more live musical acts. Food festivals would be fun too."*
- *"Street festivals, small music events like folk."*

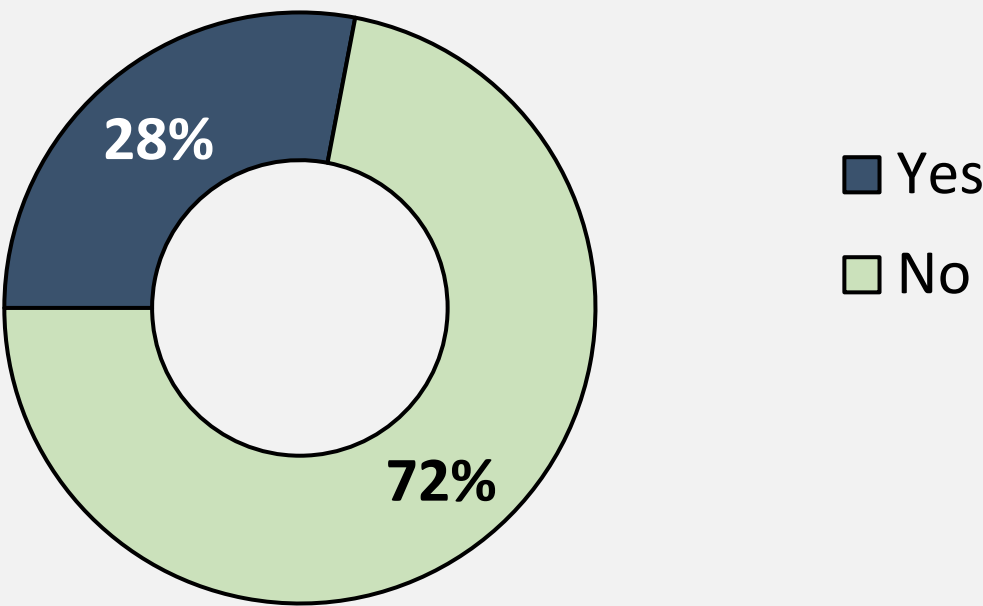
Figure 10. Individuals are willing to travel to see shows, events, or art exhibits of interest.

Most individuals travel 5 to 10 miles to participate in community art/cultural activities, while 62% have traveled outside their local community. Those living outside of Onondaga County tend to travel further for the arts suggesting there is a need to increase opportunities to participate and engage in the arts outside of Onondaga County. Most believe that I-81 construction will not impact the arts and cultural activities in the area.

On average, how far do you typically travel to participate in community art/cultural activities?



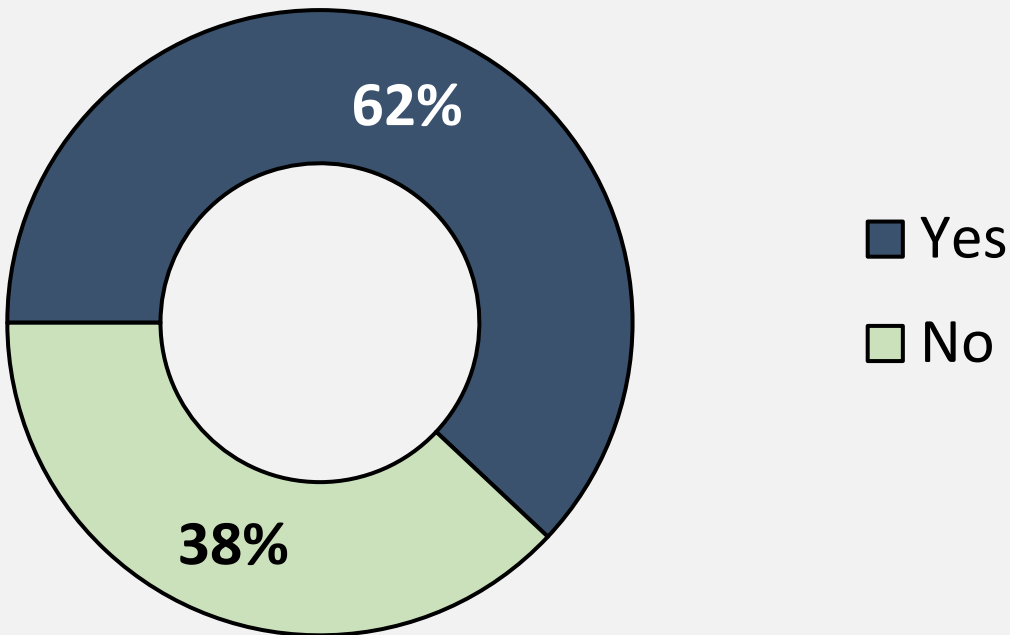
Do you expect the construction around the I-81 corridor to impact your participation in the area’s arts & cultural activities?



- If yes, please explain:
- “It may make it harder to attend events.”
 - “I think it’s going to impact everything to be honest. I live and work in Syracuse. I’m imagining lots of detours and traffic, dust, debris. I won’t know until construction is underway, but I can only imagine there will be times that I don’t want to deal with it and therefore won’t attend an event unless it’s necessary.”
 - “They are restricting access to downtown Syracuse. I imagine traffic will be a nightmare with only one way into and out of the city.”

Q12a of survey (n=845)

Have you recently traveled outside the local community to see a show, event, or art exhibit?



- If yes, where did you travel?
- Individuals often traveled to NYC, Washington, Boston, or cities such as Rochester, Buffalo, and Albany.
- If yes, what did you see?
- Many individuals traveled to see a specific show, museum, or play. No major trends emerged around a common play, exhibit, or activity; the responses were generally vague.

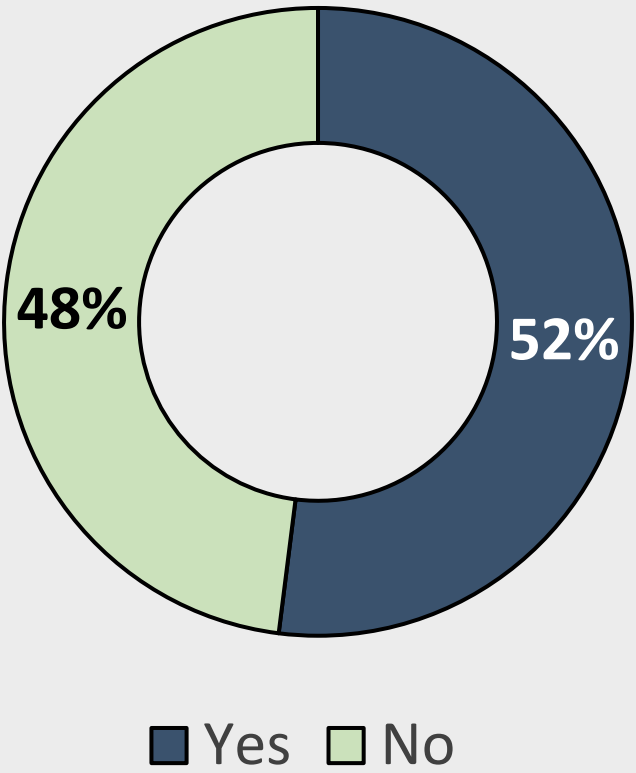
Q12a of survey (n=1,186)



Figure 11. Individuals shared low awareness of CNY Arts resources.

The next series of questions asked participants about their familiarity with the [CNY Arts website](#) and newsletter, including the events calendar. The data suggests low awareness of the newsletter, and only about half of the participants have viewed the CNY Arts website. The findings are consistent across all counties.

Have you visited the CNY Arts website? (%)



Overall Awareness of CNY Arts Events Calendar & Bi-Weekly Newsletter

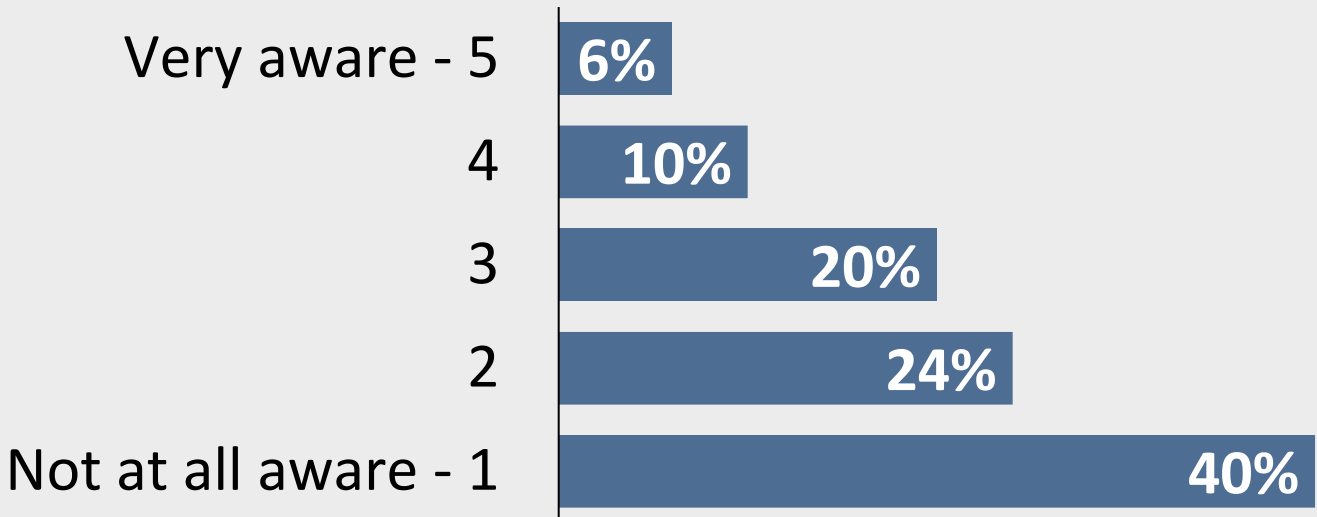


Table 11. Mean Scores – Awareness

County	Mean Score (out of 5)
Cayuga	2.2
Cortland	2.4
Madison	2.3
Oneida	2.3
Onondaga	2.2
Oswego	2.1
Other	2.0
Total	2.2

Table 12. How often do you read the e-Newsletter?

Option	Cayuga n=104	Cortland n=78	Madison n=147	Oneida n=137	Onondaga n=2,206	Oswego n=178	Other n=196	Total n=3,046
Always	0%	2%	5%	6%	5%	5%	6%	5%
Frequently	5%	7%	9%	12%	9%	10%	15%	10%
Sometimes	29%	38%	39%	39%	35%	29%	44%	35%
Never	66%	54%	46%	44%	51%	56%	35%	51%

Table 13. How often do you visit the CNY Arts Events Calendar?

Option	Cayuga n=104	Cortland n=78	Madison n=147	Oneida n=137	Onondaga n=2,206	Oswego n=178	Other n=196	Total n=3,046
Never	45%	41%	28%	39%	32%	33%	35%	33%
Daily	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Occasionally	47%	52%	60%	45%	53%	50%	46%	52%
Weekly	5%	2%	2%	4%	4%	3%	2%	4%
Monthly	3%	5%	9%	13%	10%	14%	16%	11%



Figure 12. Summer and weekends are the most likely time individuals will participate in arts and cultural events.

Individuals shared that the summer is the time of year they are most likely to participate in activities, particularly if it is on the weekends. Winter was the lowest ranked season.

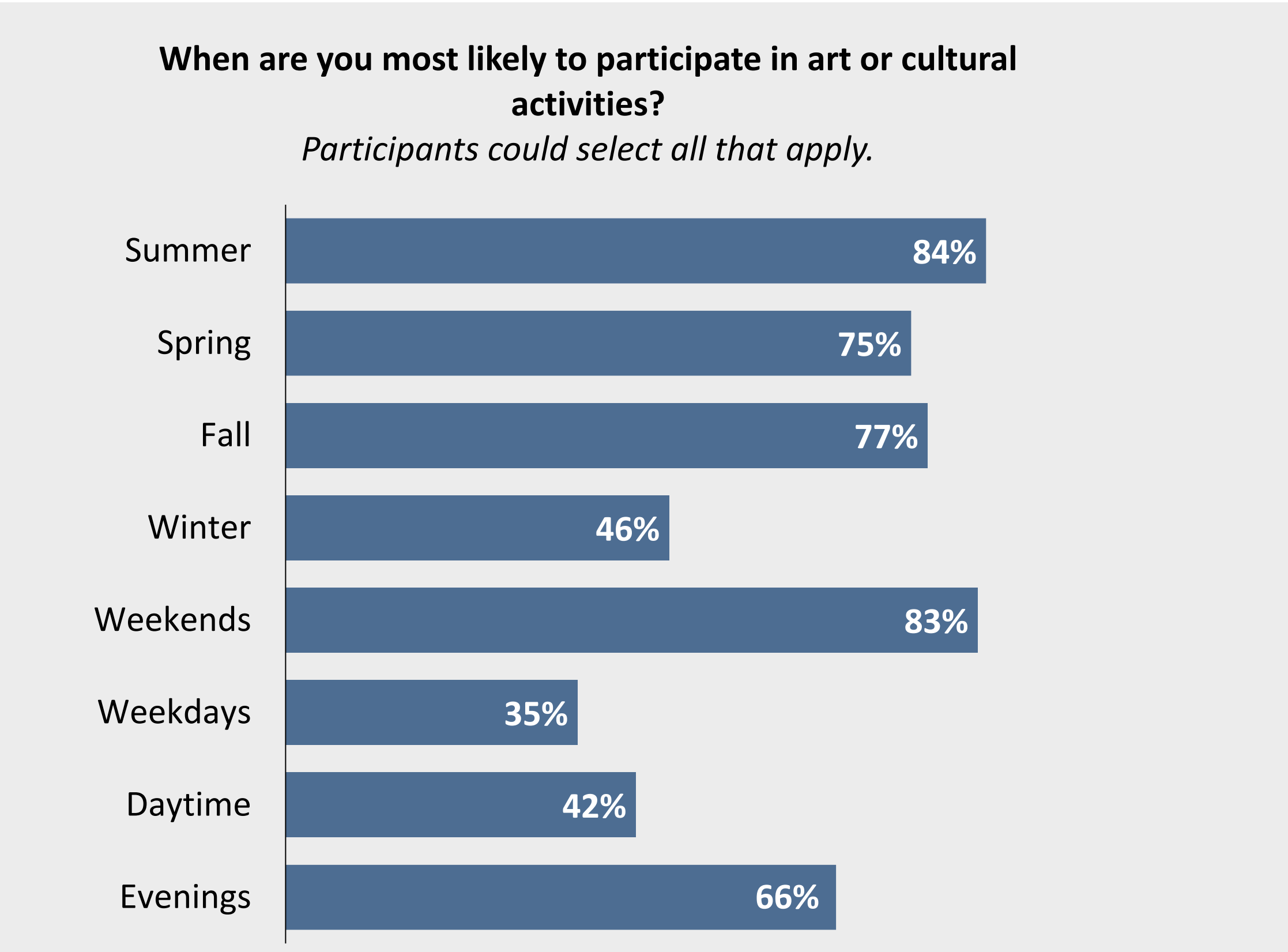
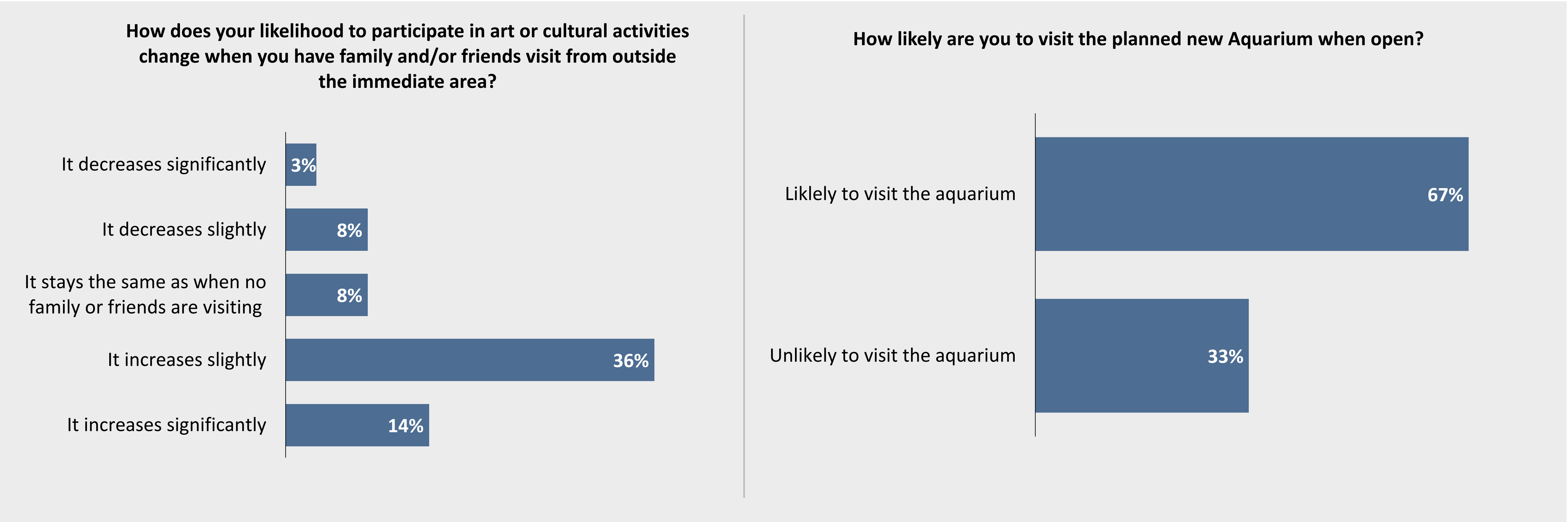


Table 14. When are you most likely to participate in art/cultural activities?
Participants could select all that apply.

Option	Cayuga	Cortland	Madison	Oneida	Onondaga	Oswego	Other
	n=104	n=78	n=147	n=137	n=2,206	n=178	n=196
Summer	87%	88%	86%	86%	83%	83%	87%
Spring	75%	65%	69%	77%	75%	74%	75%
Fall	80%	71%	74%	80%	78%	75%	80%
Winter	45%	41%	47%	43%	48%	40%	40%
Weekends	79%	78%	81%	74%	84%	75%	80%
Weekdays	40%	32%	33%	36%	35%	28%	37%
Daytime	46%	42%	46%	38%	42%	33%	46%
Evenings	66%	67%	59%	68%	66%	53%	60%

Figure 13. Participation in the arts increases when friends and family are in town.

50% of respondents shared that they participate in more cultural activities in the community when family/friends are in town. Most people plan to visit the new aquarium when complete (67%).



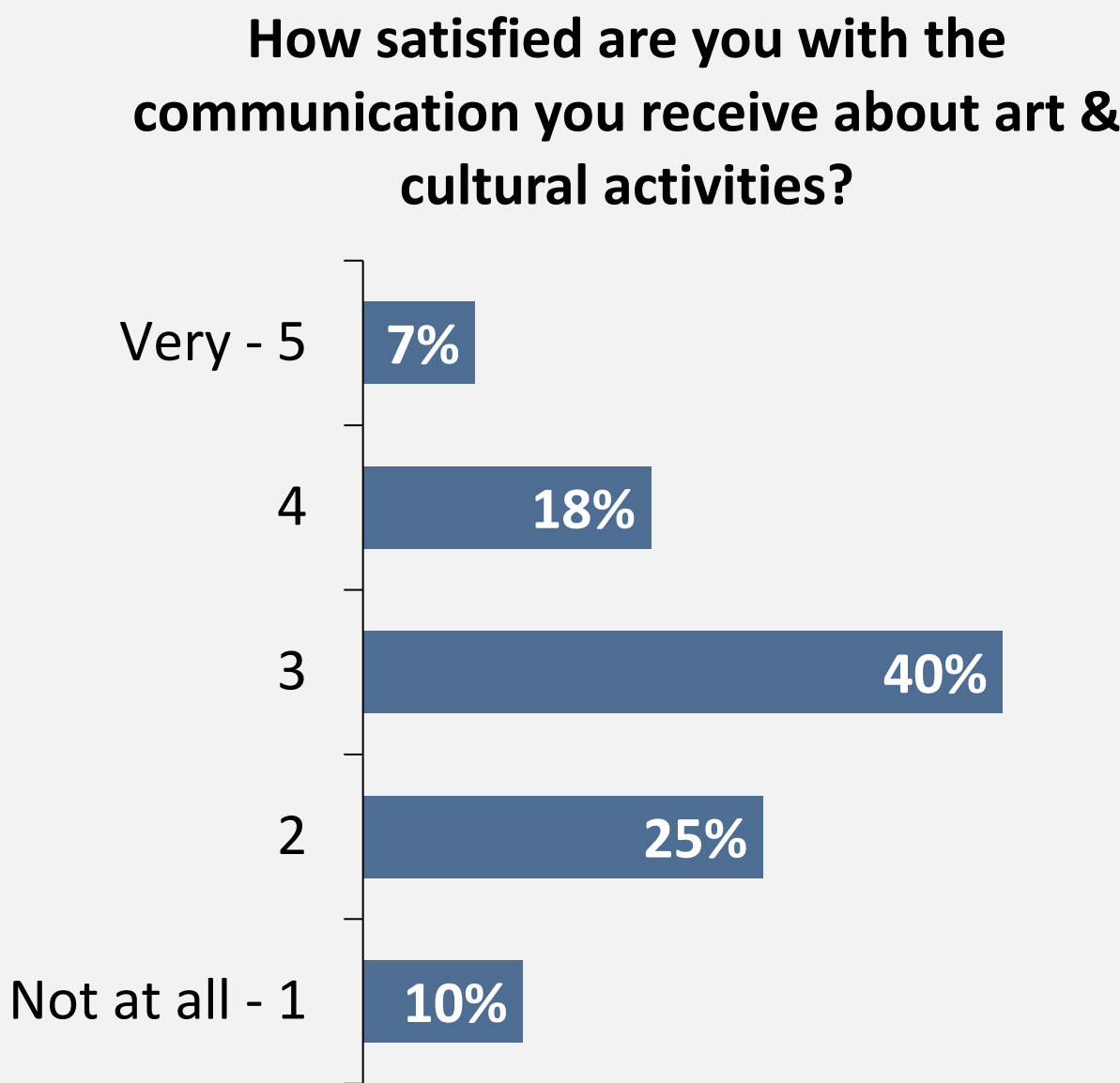
“

The arts keep us connected in a non-competitive, non-adversarial way. The arts shows us beauty.”
- Study participant

Figure 14. Many feel communications about the arts could be improved.

Individuals were largely **neutral** about the types of communication they receive, suggesting an area of improvement for CNY Arts and ACLA. Social media, friends/neighbors, and the website are all important communication channels to promote events and opportunities, too.

- 68% of respondents shared they have visited websites to learn about events occurring locally; some of the websites include:**
- Syracuse.com
 - Broadway websites
 - Museum home pages
 - Social media and Facebook groups

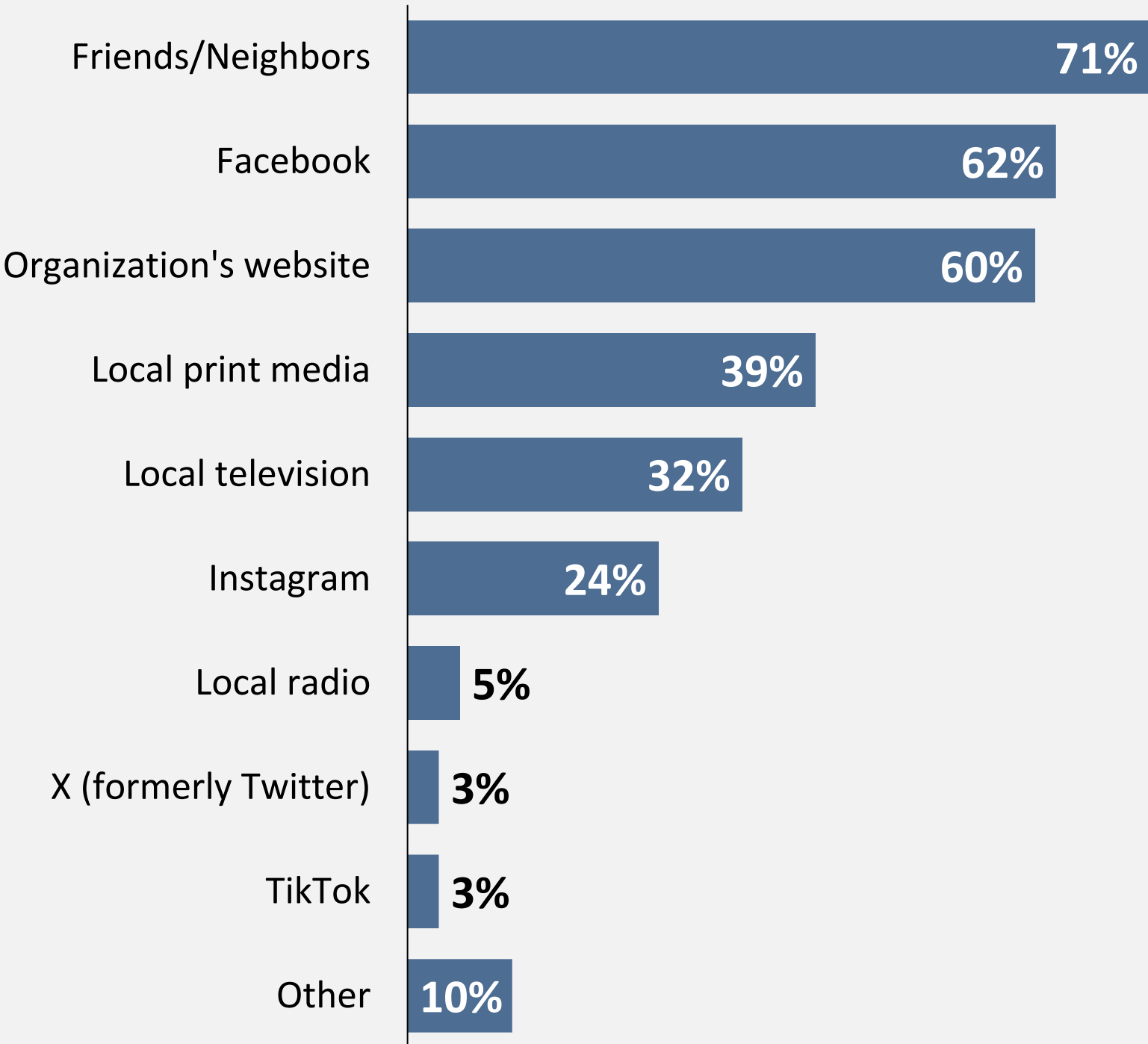


- 3 ways communications be improved:**
- *More engaging social media posts*
 - *Better emails with newsletters*
 - *Improved website*

80% of respondents
who visit websites to learn about community art & cultural activities have visited the Eventbrite website.

Q15 of survey (n=2,044)

Where do you get your information about community arts & cultural activities? (%)
Participants could select all that apply.



Other Sources of Information:
Email lists, social media (generic and group pages), web searches



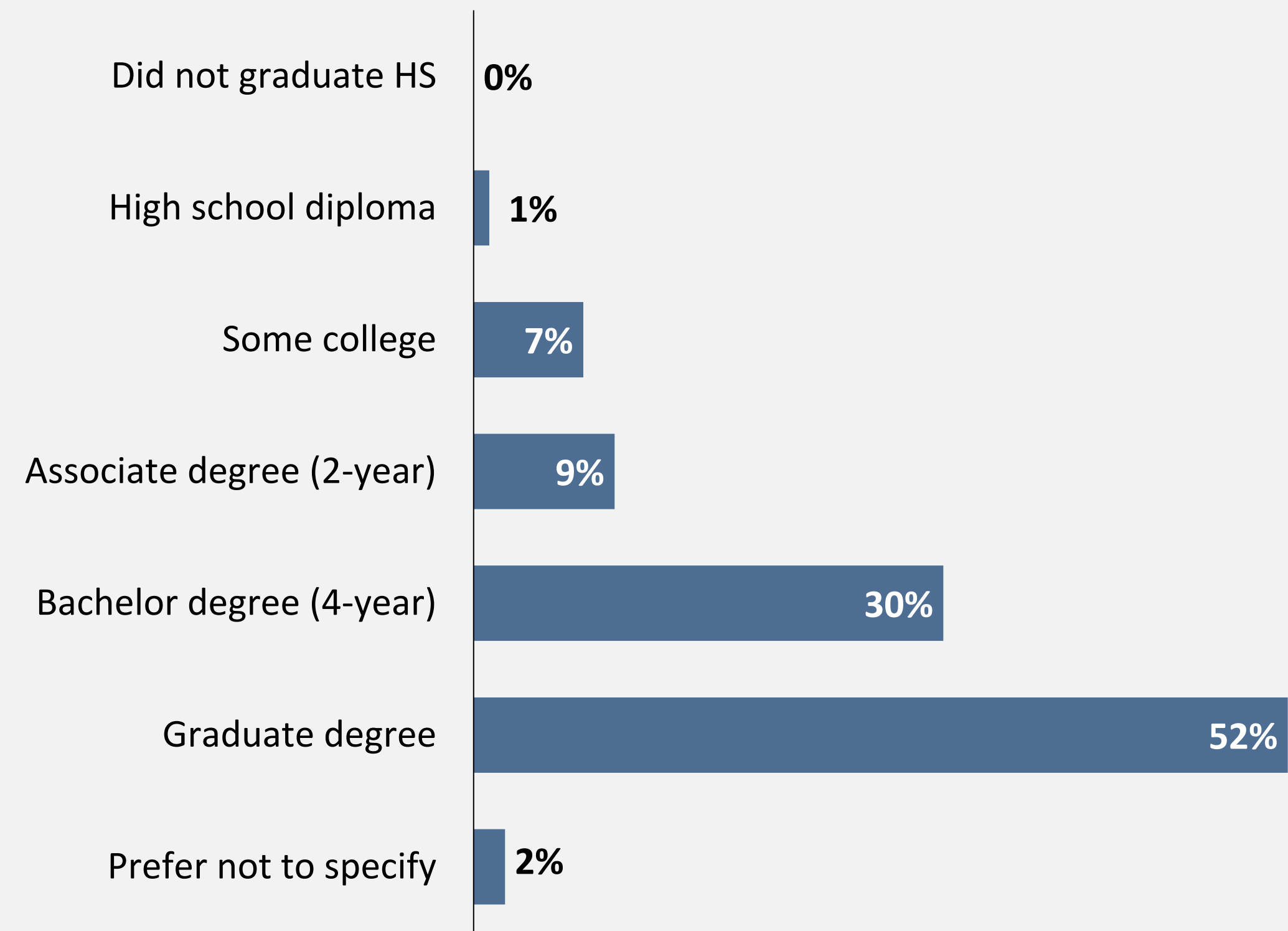
Demographics



Demographics (1 of 3)

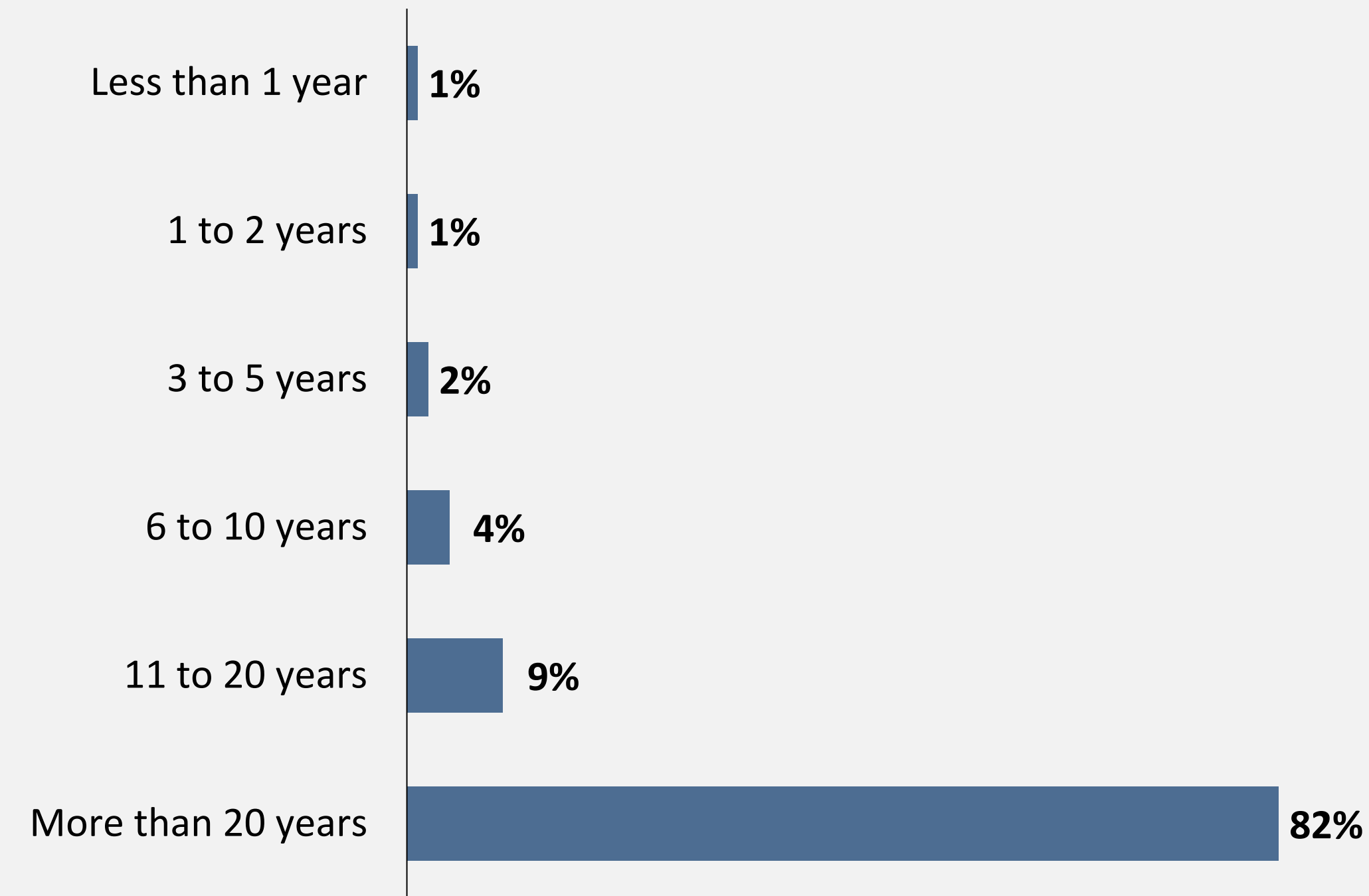
Most people in this study had either a graduate degree (52%) or a bachelor’s degree (30%), and a strong majority have lived in the community for more than 20 years. From these data points, RMS can infer that CNY may want to consider identifying ways to reach a younger and less educated audience. Also, with expected population increases in the area, CNY Arts should be prepared to “welcome” new artists and patrons into the community.

Highest Level of Education



D1 of survey (n=2,149)

Total Years in CNY



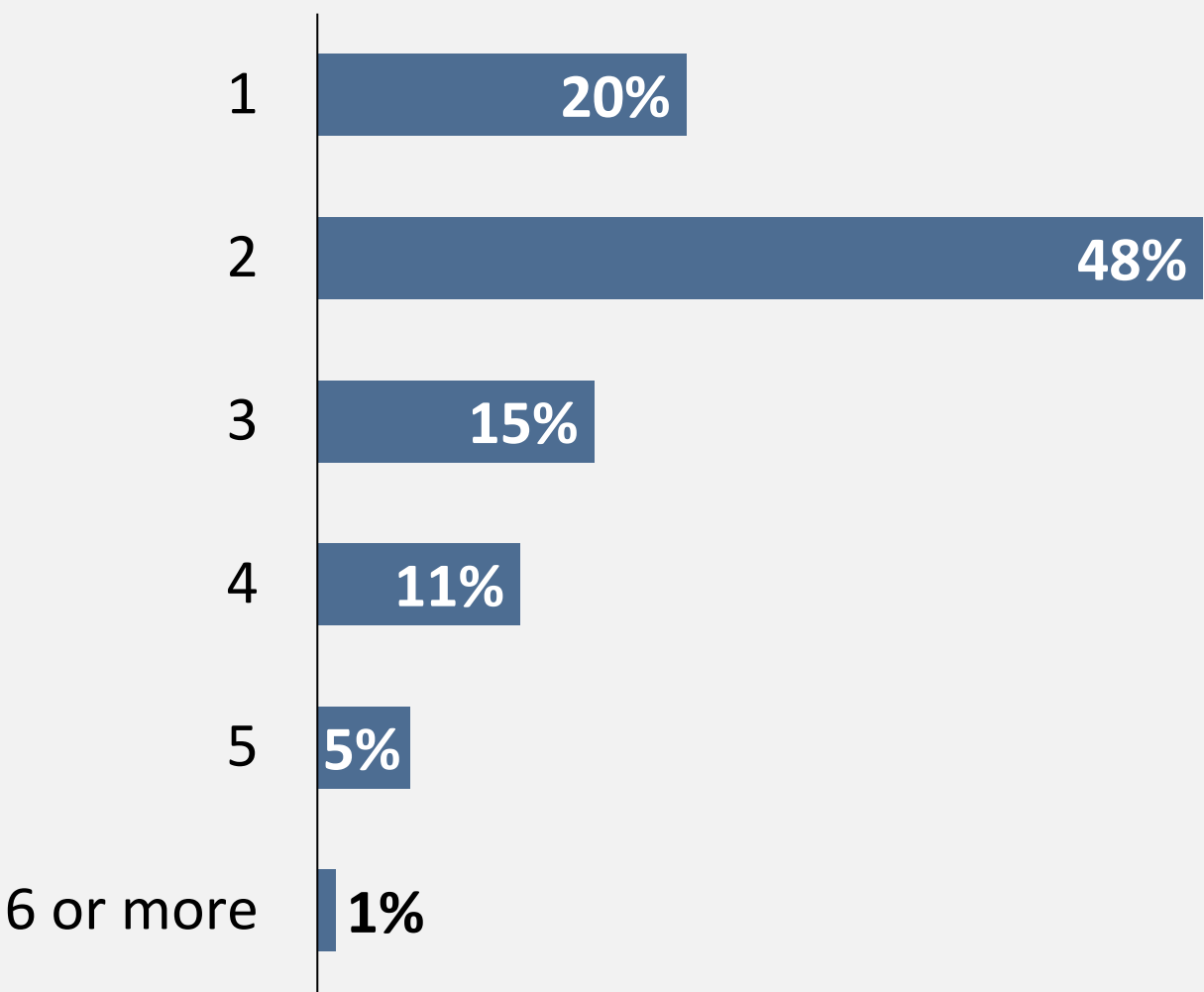
D1 of survey (n=3,014)



Demographics (2 of 3)

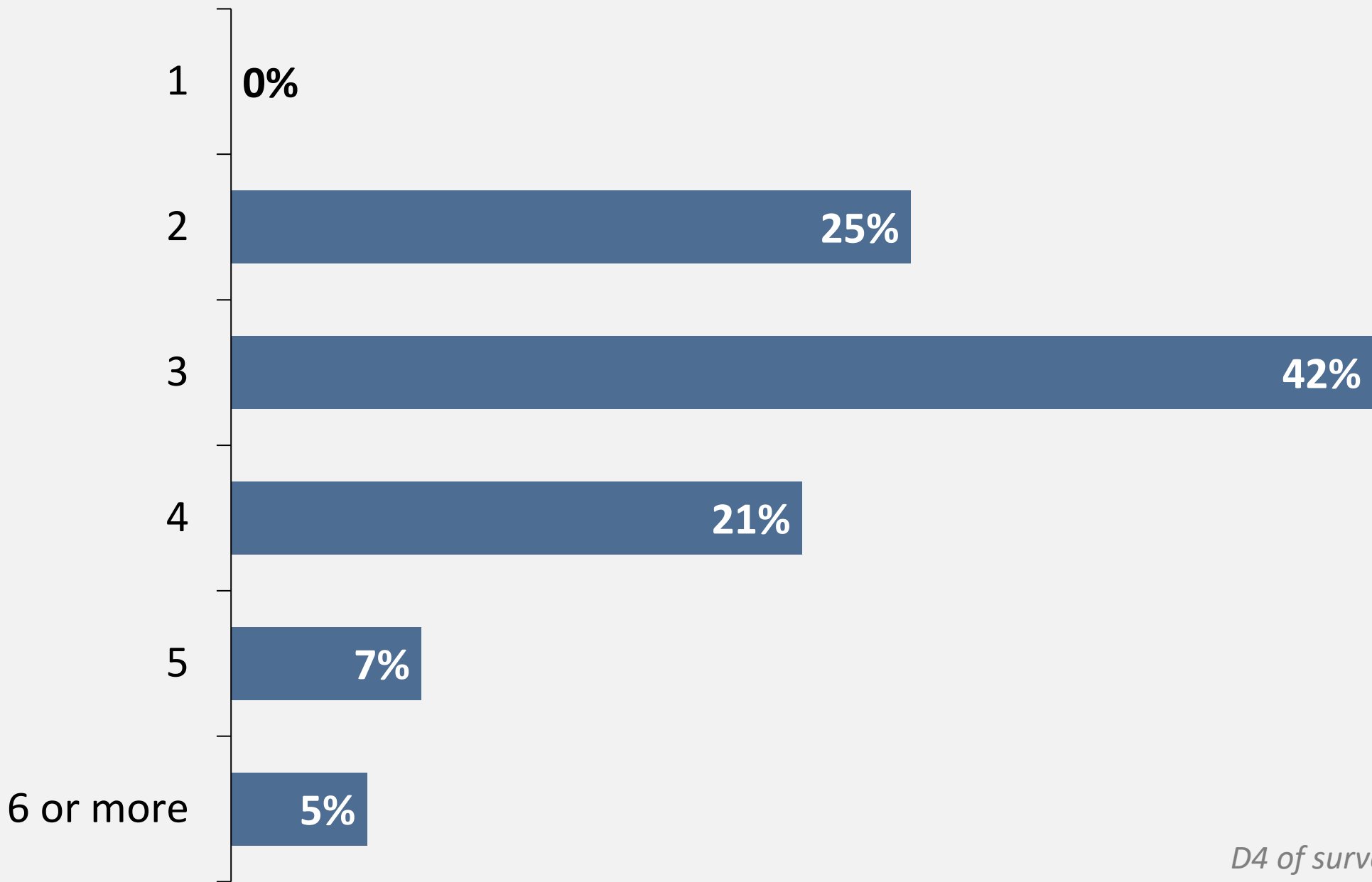
Most who participated in this study shared two (48%) or one (20%) person(s) live in their home. For those with children in their home, many had three children under the age of 18 living within their house (42%), while some had two (25%) or four (21%). Most had children in middle school or older; however, 50% also shared their child is in elementary school or not yet school age.

How many people reside in your household?



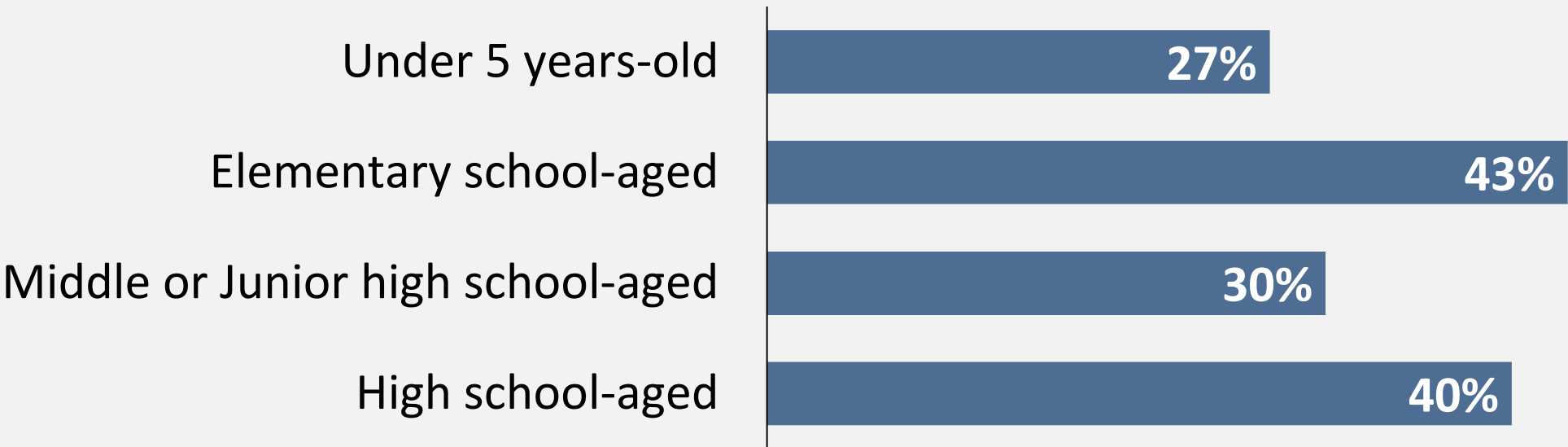
D3 of survey (n=2,115)

How many children (<18) reside in your household?



D4 of survey (n=906)

Age Categories of Children

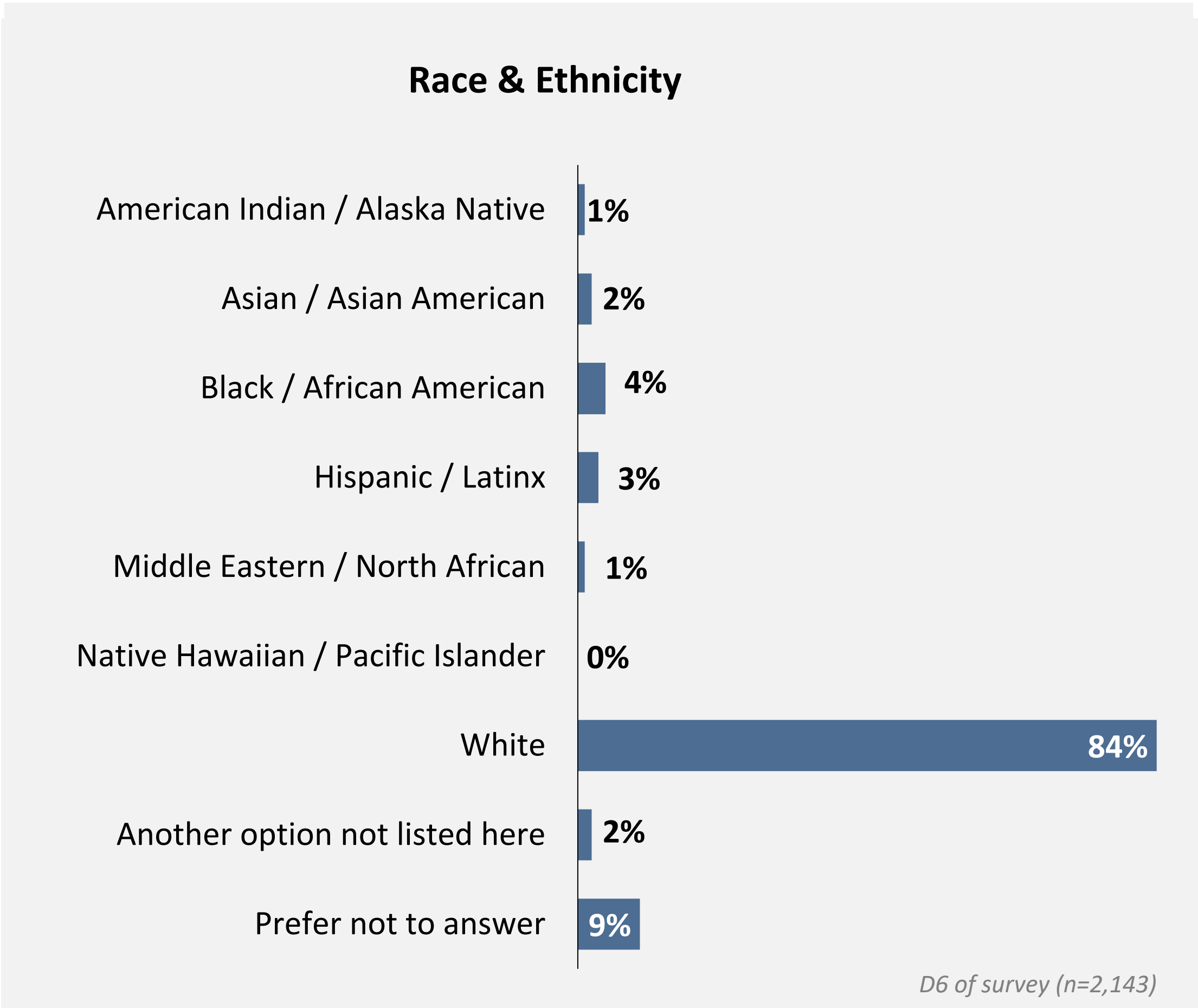
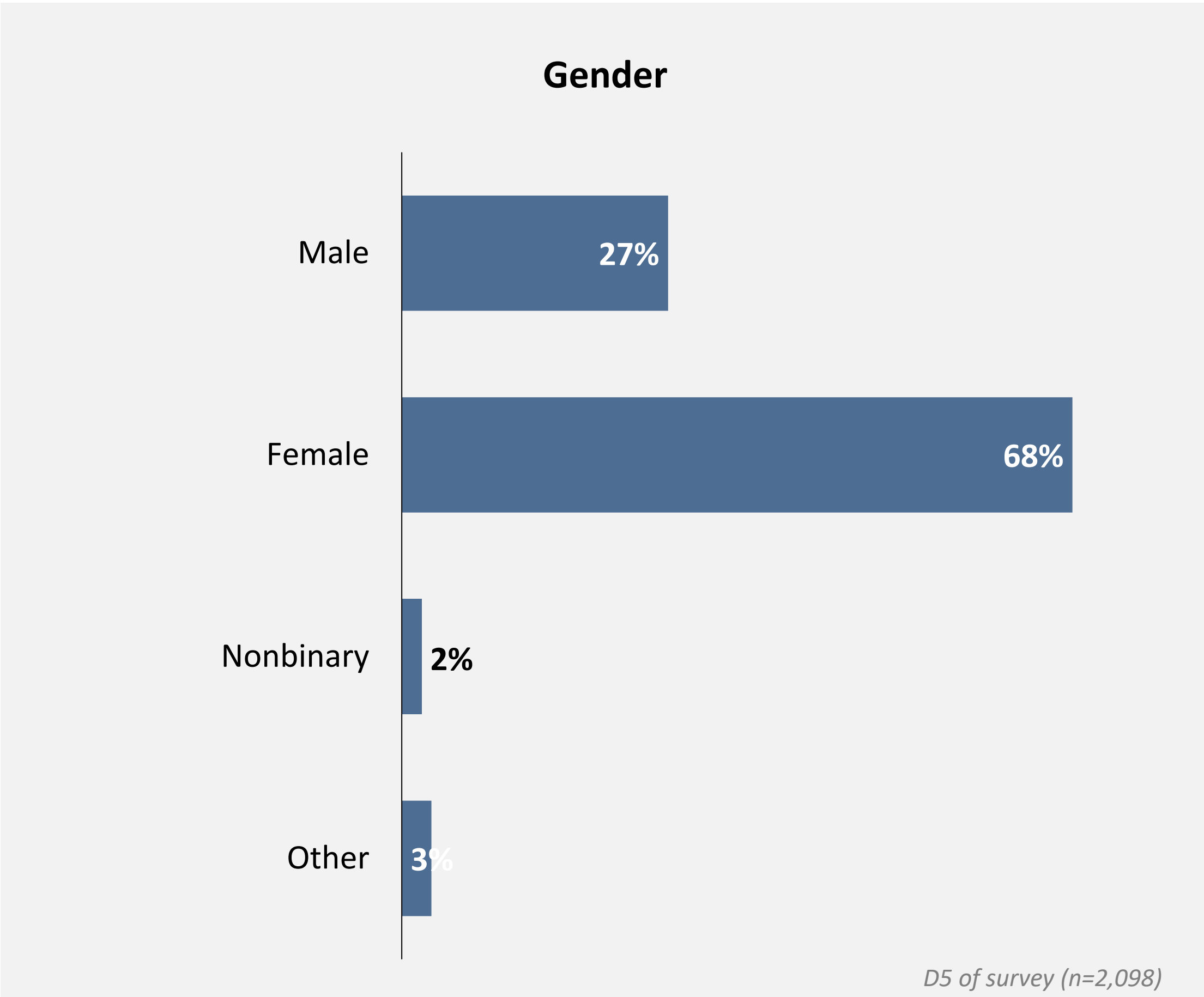


D4a of survey (n=507)



Demographics (3 of 3)

68% of respondents in this survey shared they identify as female while 27% shared they identify as male. A strong majority of participants were white.



Recommendations



Recommendations (1 of 3)

Based on the findings of this report, RMS offers the following recommendations. Some of these recommendations may already be in place at CNY Arts and the results from this research can validate existing strategies. For initiatives that are not currently underway, RMS encourages CNY Arts' leadership to review and incorporate as feasible.

Continue to promote the consolidated calendar of arts and cultural events throughout the CNY Region – a central resource

- Respondents desired an easy-to-use, shared calendar to find events in the area. Many shared they do not know where to look or where to go to find events, and a centralized calendar would be helpful to them. CNY Arts should continue the promotion of its calendar and continually assess outreach efforts and marketing campaigns of the resource.

Share testimonials of people participating in the arts

- The study suggests that the general arts community in CNY tends to be an older demographic. Those who are younger and those with children expressed desires to participate more in the arts but felt they do not have time to fit into already busy schedules or struggle to know what events or opportunities exist. CNY Arts should ensure that advertisements are targeted toward the specific needs of users. Collecting testimonials and sharing them across social media could be a powerful way for people to hear and learn about events within the community.

Create a task force to help ensure there are events for all communities

- Many shared they are looking for more diverse artistic options; CNY Arts should research ways to best ensure that all members in the community feel their cultures and art are celebrated and promoted. CNY Arts has evidence of this occurring, such as the UNIQUE Exhibit, but the challenge seems to be reaching the right audiences and sharing more broadly with the community.

Create a “Welcoming Committee” for new artists entering the community

- Creating a program specifically for new artists in the area may be a useful way to help people connect with the community. As the population is expected to grow and change in the coming years, a welcoming committee can help people familiarize themselves with our community and learn how they can become engaged locally with arts and cultural activities.

Recommendations (2 of 3)

Help the community better define what it means to be “engaged” in the arts

- An interesting data point about this study was how the arts community scored their engagement fairly low with regard to engagement. However, open-ended responses suggest their participation may be somewhat higher. CNY Arts may want to consider employing different ways/means to help people feel connected or engaged and create campaigns that share unique ways to become engaged in the arts. For example, donating supplies and gently used materials, making connections, or sharing “open-mic” social media formats for residents to share their thoughts can be ways to stay engaged in the arts beyond just making monetary donations or being a member of an arts organization.

Solicit and recruit “famous” artists from the area to talk about their experiences

- Central New York has many famous artists or individuals who have left the area to further work on their passions. CNY Arts is in a unique position where it can serve as the connector of these individuals bringing them back into the community. For example, hosting Zoom events, bringing artists for meet and greets, and asking them to host a “master class” all serve the purpose of building community while also celebrating the local arts community to nurture and grow our talent. CNY Arts may want to consider assuring those who have “made it” to stay connected to CNY.

Increase opportunities in the North Country (Oswego County)

- Those outside of Onondaga County, particularly Oswego County, shared they don’t feel as engaged in the arts and culture stating there are fewer opportunities to participate in them. CNY Arts should look at campaigns to bring smaller events to the area and work to build community with local artists in counties beyond Onondaga County yet still in their service area.

Develop a standardized tool to measure the satisfaction of patrons, pre- and post-events

- CNY Arts should look to build a standardized satisfaction tool to send to all parties after experiencing and/or participating in an arts event. This will help collect closer-to-real-time feedback and assess satisfaction with the arts and gauge what else is missing locally.

Recommendations (3 of 3)

Expand/Increase work within schools to encourage youth engagement in the arts and get their parents on board

- Many shared desires for events geared towards children or encouraging youth to participate in the arts. CNY Arts should continue to engage with schools and develop or expand partnerships to bring artists into schools, host summer camps, or share events to have children more engaged in the arts. In doing so, this will naturally bring more parents into the fold and perhaps encourage them to rekindle a passion for the arts or engage in a new way during parenthood.

Develop an inventory of art exhibitions traveling around US and frequently gauge community interest if they should come to CNY

- CNY Arts should maintain an inventory of emerging exhibitions and popular traveling exhibitions around the US and use their membership to quickly gauge if there is interest in said shows to assist in their events planning. Using market research strategies, CNY Arts can essentially do this research without anyone knowing they are sponsoring the work and can collect important information regarding user needs without setting expectations that a show/event will be coming to the area.

Build partnerships to bring “big ticket” musicians to the area

- Throughout this study, individuals shared they wanted to see “big ticket” artists, comedians, and musicians come to the area. Some felt like Syracuse is often passed over for Buffalo or Albany. Many shared that a different type of venue is needed in Syracuse – a smaller venue for concerts and more intimate shows. However, given the awareness of the arts is low in Syracuse, the data may suggest that more marketing of Syracuse venues or promotion of events could help people see Syracuse is able to bring headliners into the area.

Create a CNY Arts and ACLA Ambassador program

- CNY Arts has a unique opportunity of creating a “panel” or “ambassador program” with those community residents who are engaged and then have these individuals help spread the word about the arts and the available resources in the community.

Target area hotel, bed and breakfast, and AirBnB owners

- Build a weekly outreach approach with area hospitality service providers so that they are aware of various arts and cultural activities available within CNY on a weekly basis. Area residents are more likely to attend an arts and cultural event when family and friends are in town. This strategy can help capitalize on this fact.

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Certified by: Mark Dengler
Mark Dengler, President
Research & Marketing Strategies, Inc.

Date: July 15th, 2024





If you would like to discuss how your information is protected or have additional questions, please reach out to Patrick Fiorenza, Director of Research Analytics at RMS. He can be reached at: patrickf@rmsresults.com and by phone, 315-635-9802 ext. 214.

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