



 MORNING CONSULT[®]

VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Polling Presentation

MAY 2021


Bipartisan Policy Center

 Association
of American
Colleges and
Universities

KEY FINDINGS

1. **A majority of adults think getting a college degree is worth it, despite the money and time involved.** 60% of adults say getting a college degree is *worth it*, including 27% who think it is *definitely worth it*. Fewer than a third (29%) say it is *not worth it* to get a college degree.
2. When it comes to **prioritizing areas that can be developed through higher education**, adults think **critical thinking and problem-solving skills** (62%) and **effective communication skills** (59%) should be the most important priorities.
3. Majorities of adults say it is *very important* that higher education institutions prepare students for long-term career success by teaching **adequate technical skills** (63%), providing a **well-rounded education** (62%), and producing **versatile students who can adapt to problems as they arise** (59%).
4. **Critical thinking and problem solving skills are the most important developmental area to adults in regards to both higher education priorities and workforce success.** When ranked against other skills like technical abilities, effective communication, personal aptitudes, or civic education, adults prioritized critical thinking and problem solving skills above all other areas as the most important priority in a higher education and the most important skill to bring to the workforce.
5. **Adults are overall supportive of higher education institutions (68%) and policymakers (58%) working to ensure that higher education promotes racial equity.** Among Black and Hispanic adults, support is even stronger for higher education institutions and policymakers working to ensure higher education promotes racial equity than among white adults.

This poll was conducted between March 3-5, 2021 among a national sample of 2,200 adults. The interviews were conducted online and the data were weighted to approximate a target sample of adults based on age, educational attainment, gender, race, and region. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of +/- 2%.

AGENDA

VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

IMPORTANT PRIORITIES FOR HIGHER
EDUCATION

RACIAL EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION



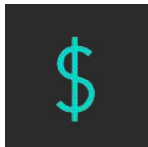
VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The value placed on a college degree or credential differs significantly across demographic groups:



EDUCATION LEVEL

Four in five adults with a post-graduate degree (84%) say getting a college degree is worth it, where 74% of those with a bachelor's degree and 51% of those who have not attended college say it is worth it.



INCOME LEVEL

Three quarters of adults with an income of \$100k or more (74%) say getting a college degree is worth it, compared to only half of adults with an income of \$50k or less (52%).



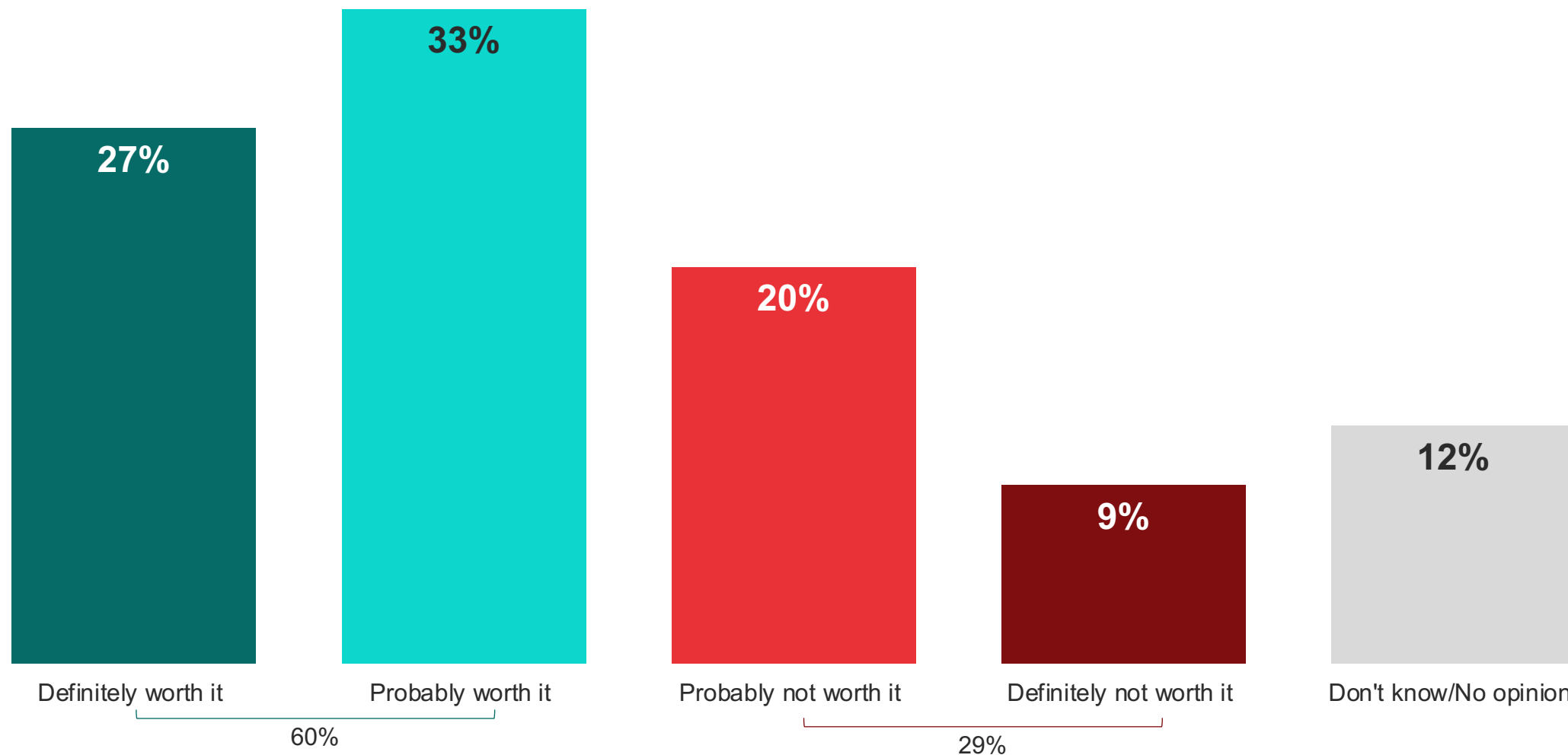
EMPLOYMENT STATUS

A majority of adults currently enrolled in college (86%) say getting a college degree today is worth it, but smaller shares of those working in the government (77%), private sector (63%), or who are self-employed (54%) say the same.

VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Considering the money and time involved in getting a college degree, 60% of adults think that getting a college degree is worth it, including 27% who think it is *definitely worth it*.

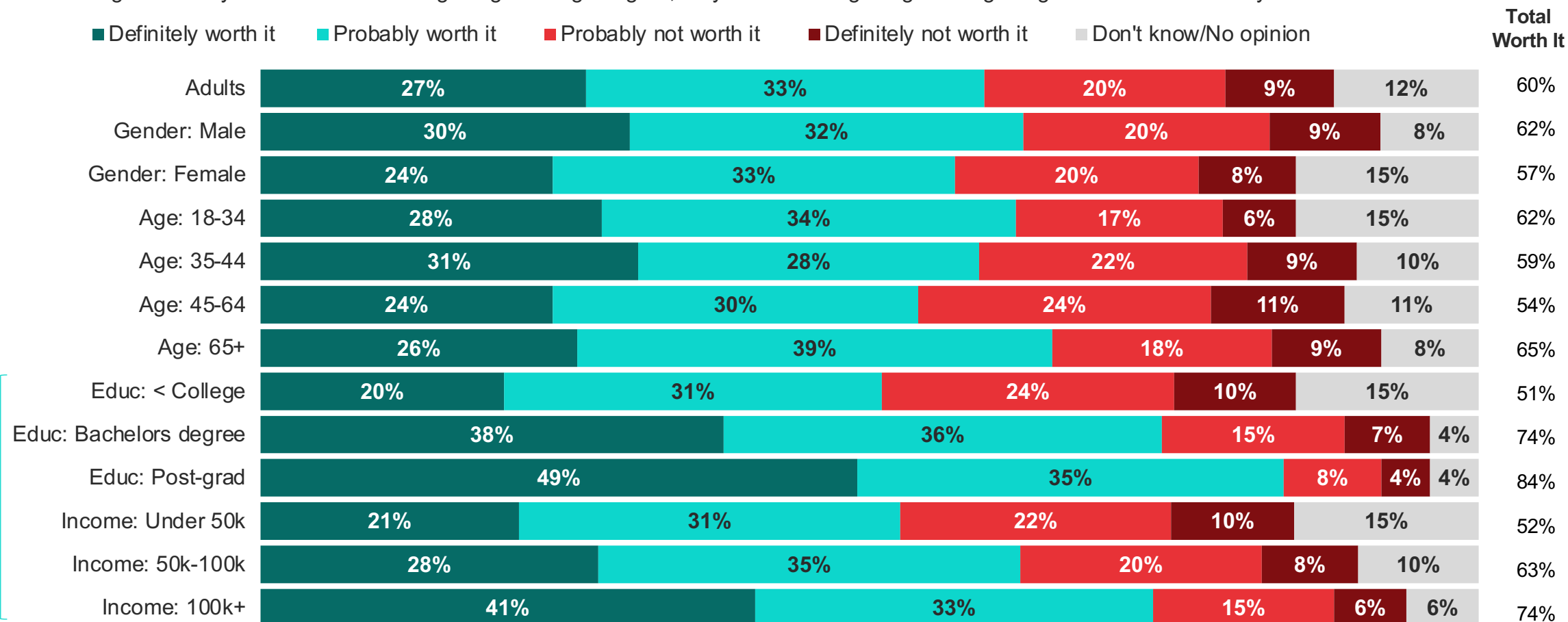
Considering the money and time involved in getting a college degree, do you think that getting a college degree or credential today is...



VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Adults with a higher level of education and income level are more likely to say getting a college degree or credential today is worth it. Specifically, half of adults with a post-graduate degree (49%) say getting a college degree is *definitely worth it*.

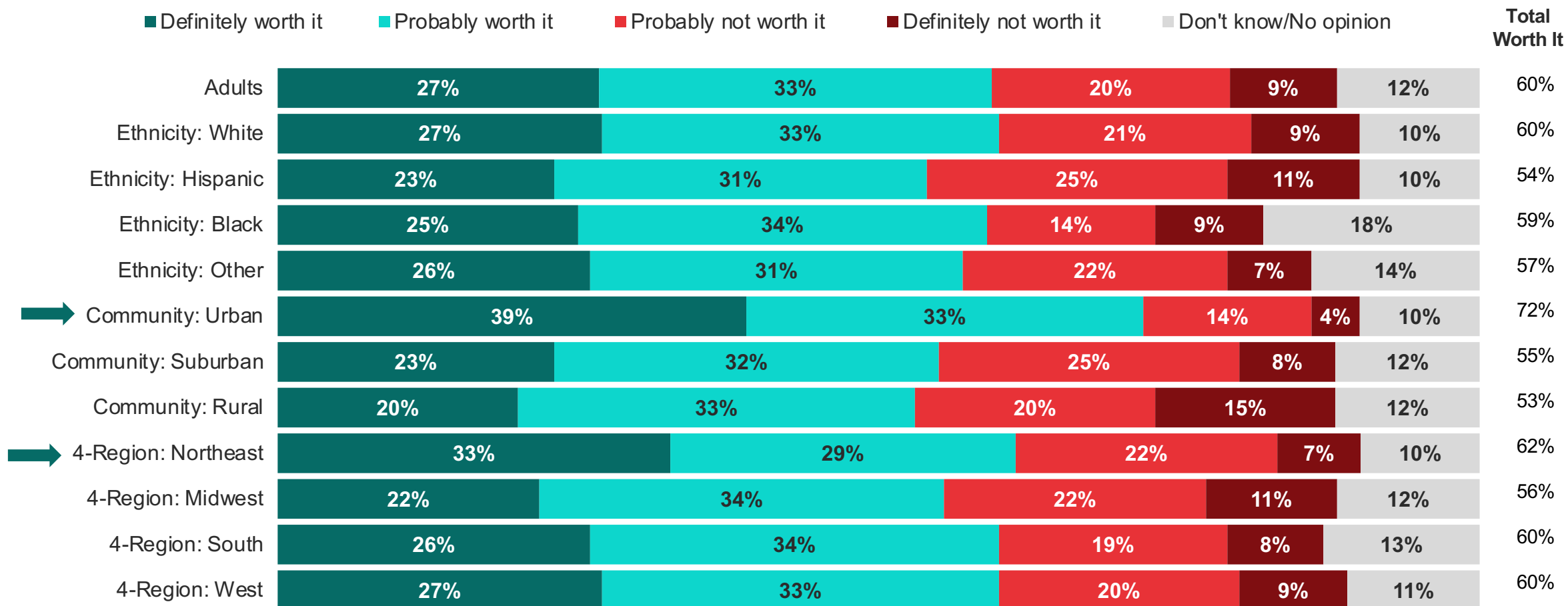
Considering the money and time involved in getting a college degree, do you think that getting a college degree or credential today is...



VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

At least a third of adults who live in urban communities (39%) and adults from the Northeast (33%) say getting a college degree today is *definitely worth it*.

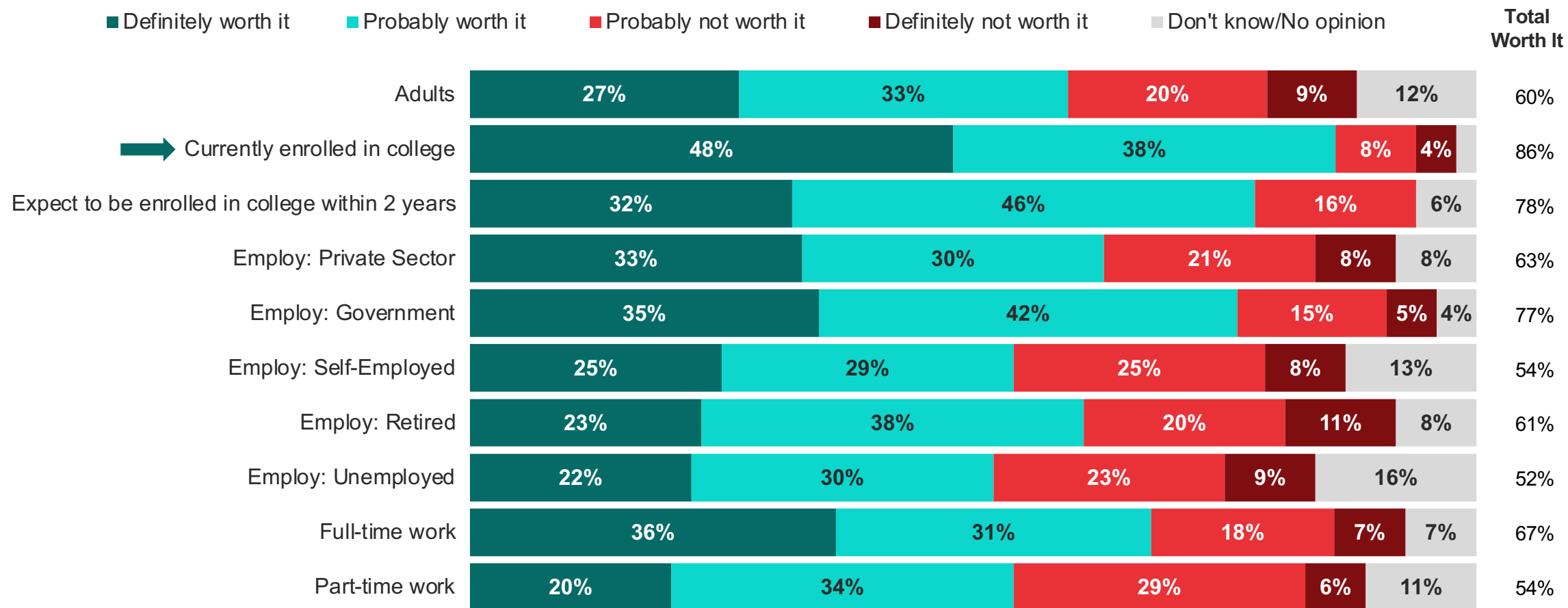
Considering the money and time involved in getting a college degree, do you think that getting a college degree or credential today is...



VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Half of adults currently enrolled in college (48%) say getting a college degree today is *definitely worth it*.

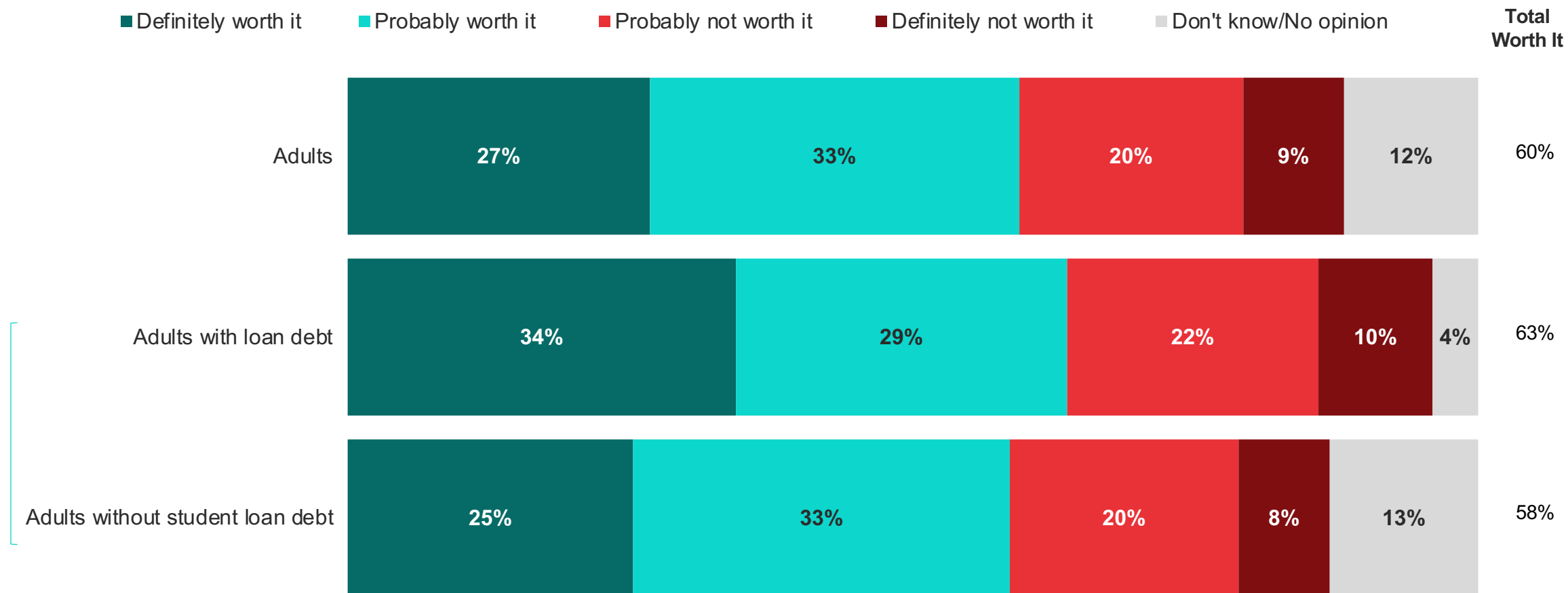
Considering the money and time involved in getting a college degree, do you think that getting a college degree or credential today is...



VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Adults with student loan debt are more likely than adults without student loan debt to say getting a college degree today is *definitely worth it* (34% vs. 25%).

Considering the money and time involved in getting a college degree, do you think that getting a college degree or credential today is...



AGENDA

VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

IMPORTANT PRIORITIES FOR HIGHER
EDUCATION

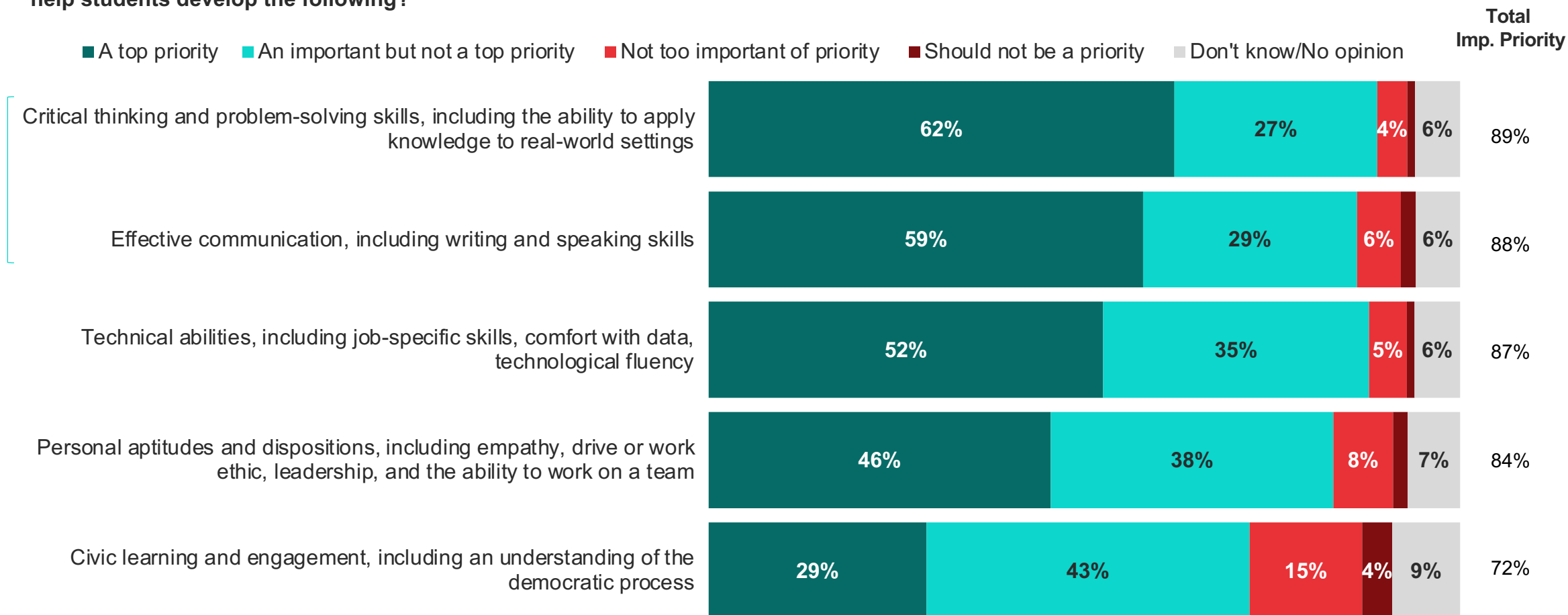
RACIAL EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION



IMPORTANT PRIORITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Three in five adults think higher education helping students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills (62%) and effective communication (59%) should be a *top priority*.

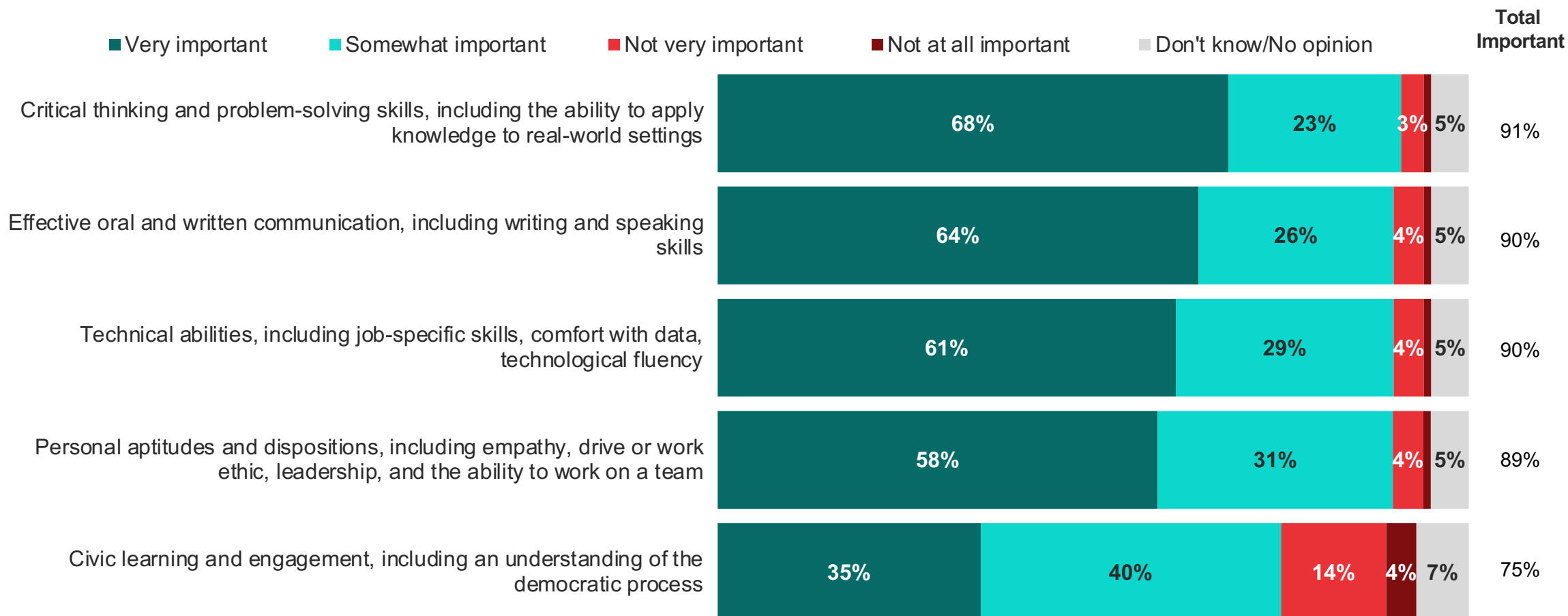
Below is a list of skills, knowledge areas, and personal characteristics. In your opinion, how much of a priority, if at all, should it be for **higher education to help students develop the following?**



IMPORTANT PRIORITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Of the tested options, adults are most likely to think critical thinking and problem-solving skills are *very important* to be successful in today's workforce (68%).

Below is a list of skills, knowledge areas, and personal characteristics. In your opinion, how important, if at all, are the following to **be successful in today's workforce?**



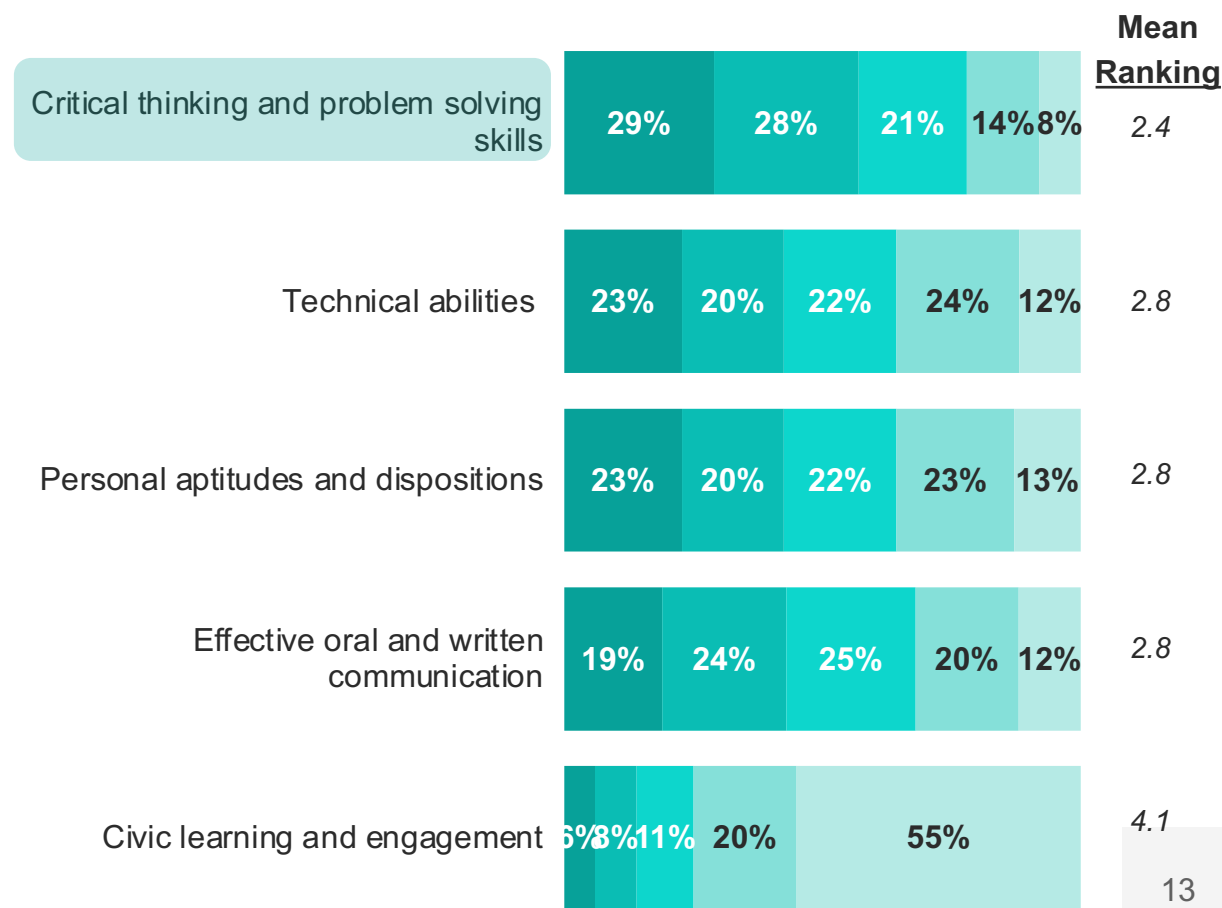
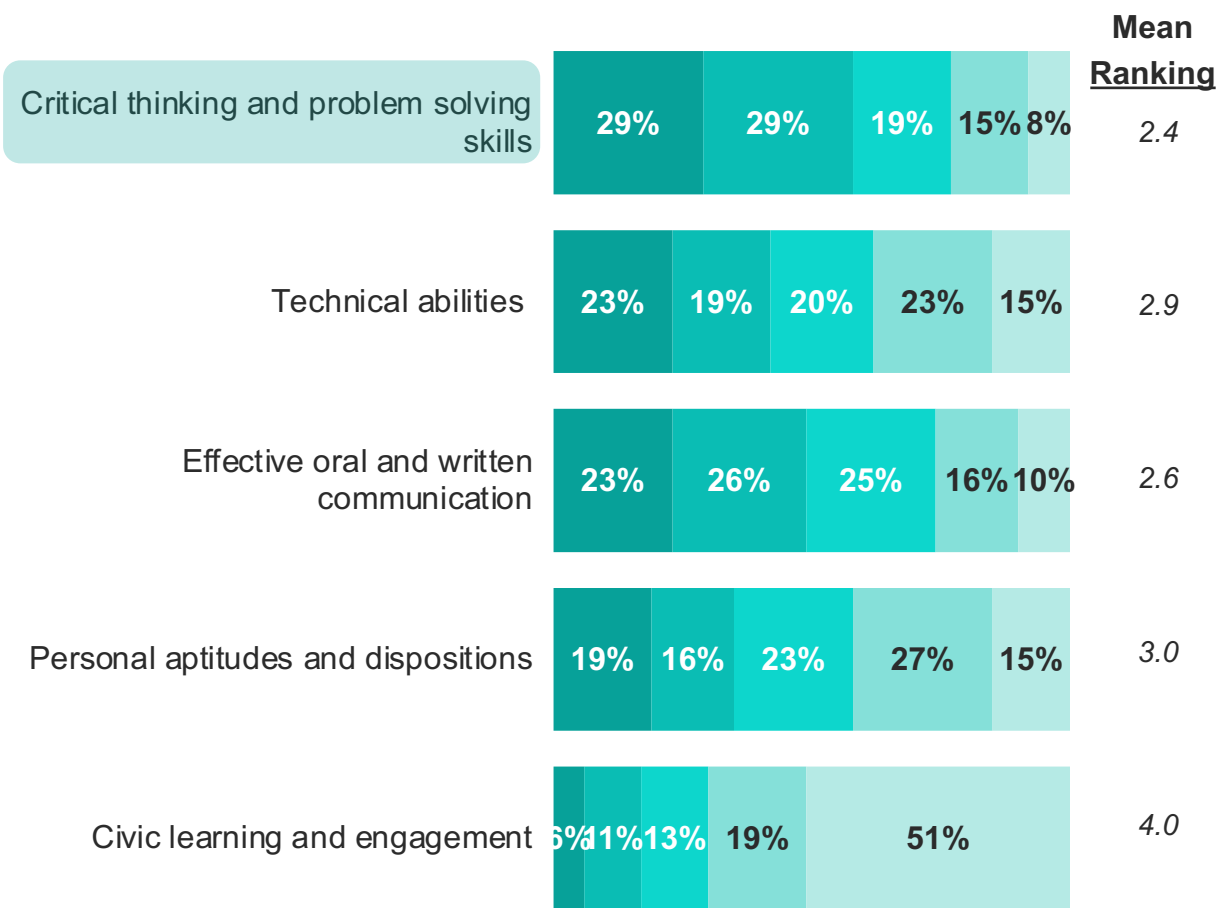
IMPORTANT PRIORITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

When asked to rank the tested options, a plurality of adults ranked *critical thinking and problem solving skills* as the most important priority for higher education and most important skill to be successful in today's workforce.

Please rank how important of a priority each of the following should be for higher education to help students develop the following?

Please rank how important each of the following are to be successful in today's workforce?

Rank 1 Most Imp. 2 3 4 Rank 5 Least Imp



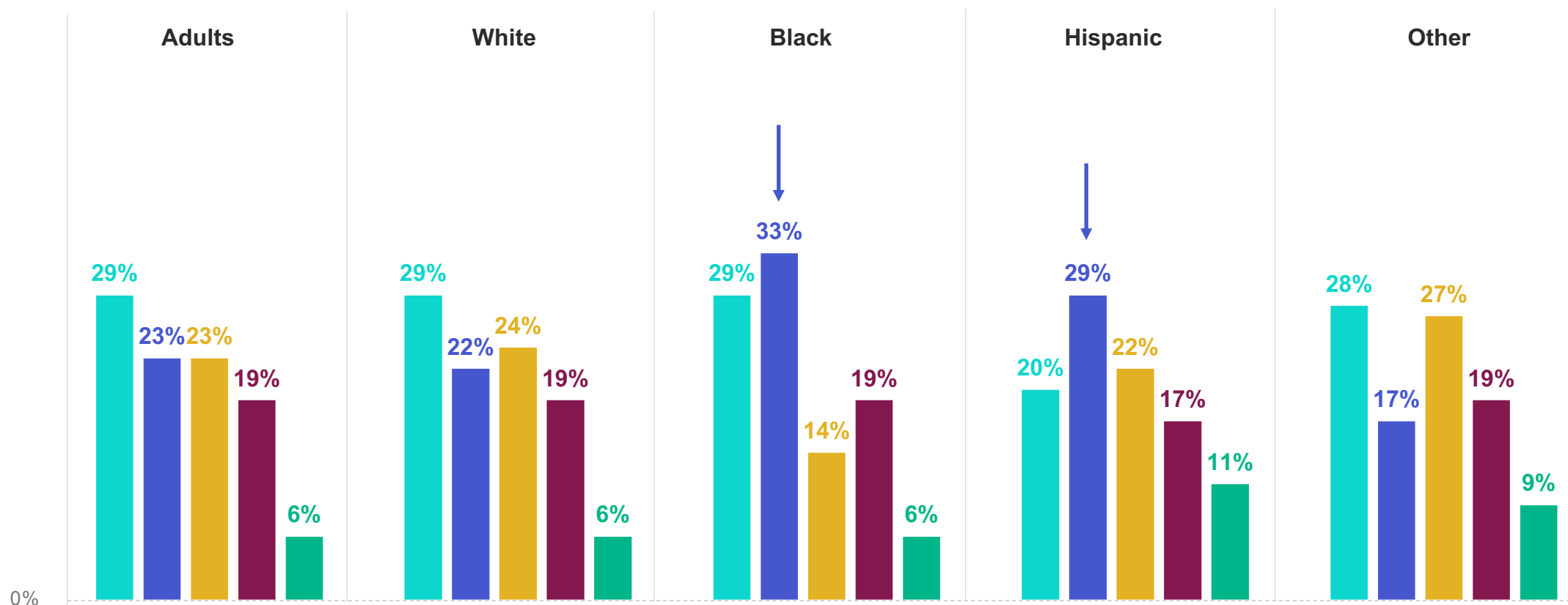
IMPORTANT PRIORITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

More Black adults (33%) and Hispanic adults (29%) rank **effective communication** as the most important priority for higher education than white adults (22%) or adults of other ethnicities (17%).

Please rank how important of a priority each of the following should be for **higher education to help students develop the following?**

Rank 1 (Most Important) by Ethnicity

- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Effective communication
- Technical abilities
- Personal aptitudes and dispositions
- Civic learning and engagement

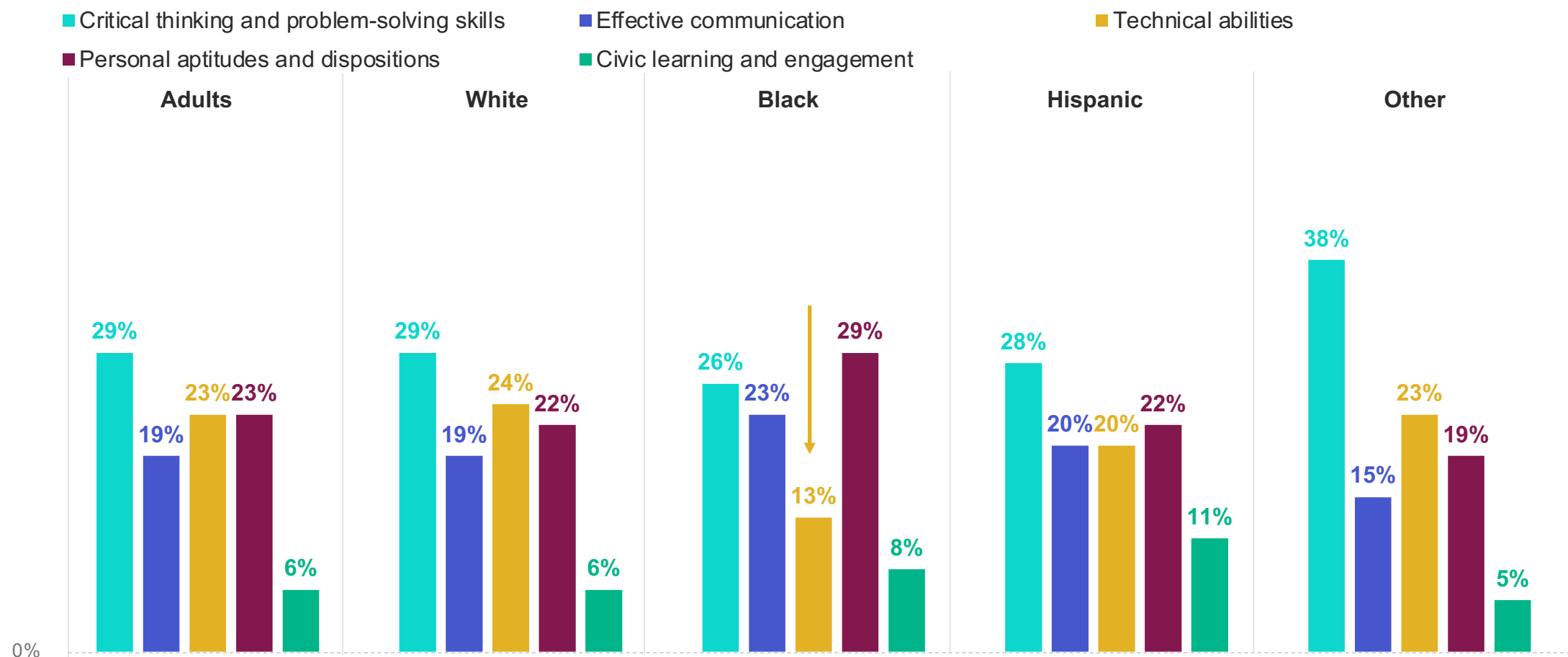


IMPORTANT PRIORITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Just 13% of Black adults rank **technical abilities** as the most important priority for higher education, compared to larger shares among White adults (24%), Hispanic adults (20%), or adults of other ethnicities (23%).

Please rank how important each of the following are to be **successful in today's workforce?**

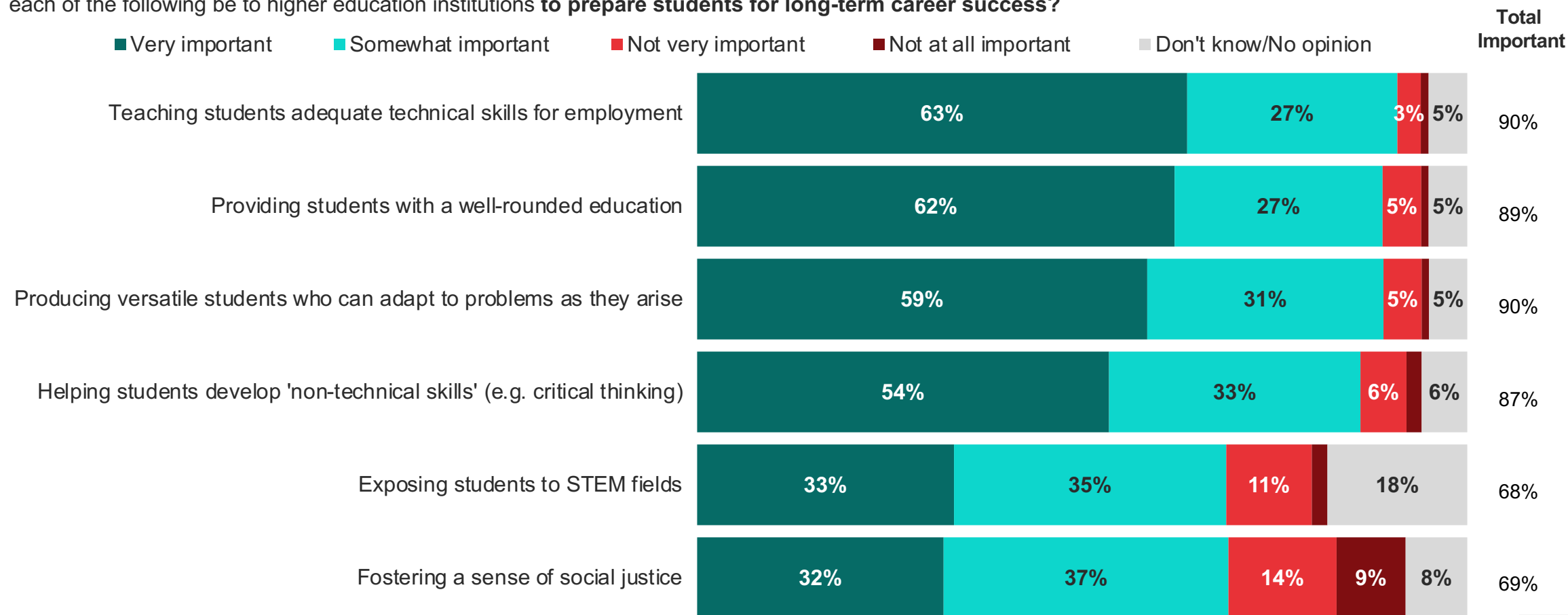
Rank 1 (Most Important) by Ethnicity



IMPORTANT PRIORITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Three in five adults say it is *very important* higher education institutions prepare students for long-term career success by teaching adequate technical skills (63%), providing a well-education (62%), and produce versatile students who can adapt to problems as they arise (59%).

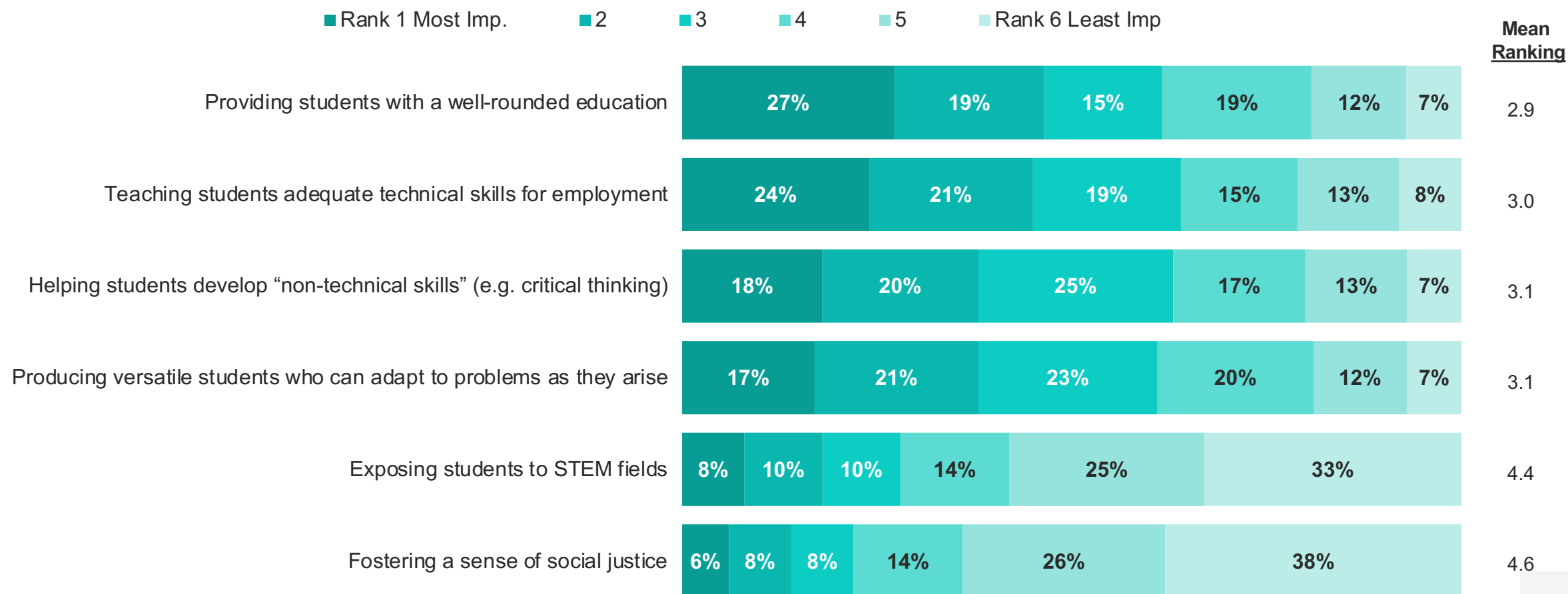
Below is a list of focus areas for higher education institutions to prepare students for long-term career success. In your opinion, how important, if at all, should each of the following be to higher education institutions **to prepare students for long-term career success**?



IMPORTANT PRIORITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Just over a quarter of adults (27%) rank **providing students with a well-rounded education** as the most important focus area for higher education institutions to prepare students for long-term career success.

Below is a list of focus areas for higher education institutions to prepare students for long-term career success. In your opinion, how important, if at all, should each of the following be to higher education institutions **to prepare students for long-term career success?**



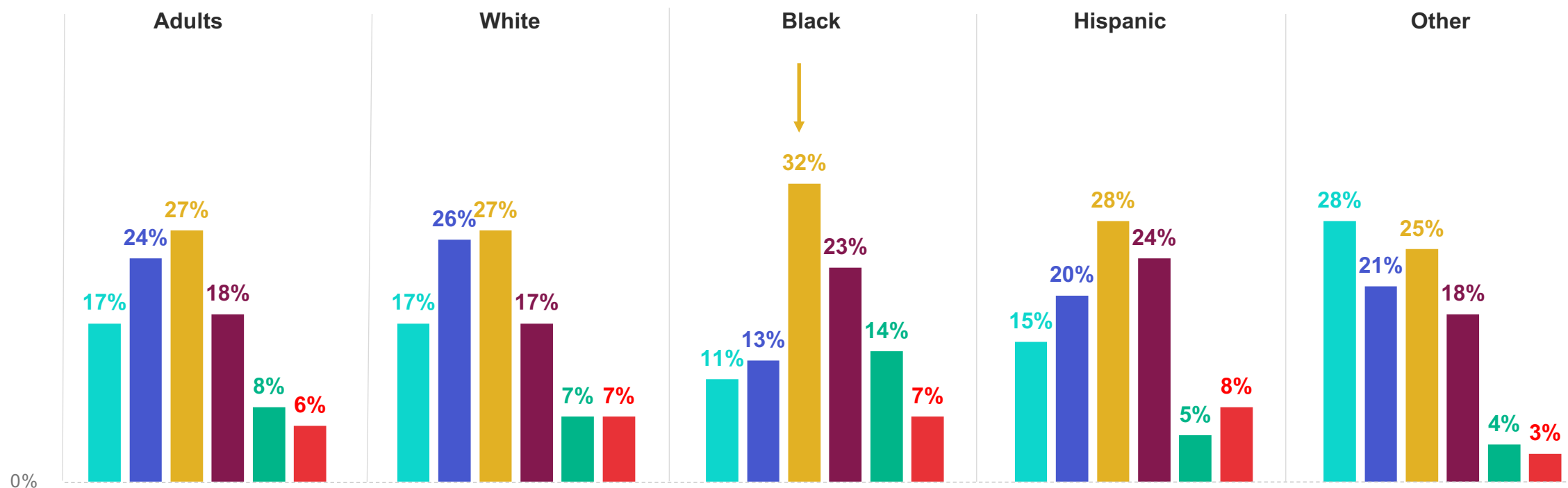
IMPORTANT PRIORITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Black adults (32%) are *more likely* than all other ethnicities to rank **providing students with a well-rounded education** as most important to being successful in today's workforce, but *less likely* than other ethnicities to say **teaching students adequate technical skills for employment** (13%) should be the most important priority..

Below is a list of focus areas for higher education institutions to prepare students for long-term career success. In your opinion, how important, if at all, should each of the following be to higher education institutions to prepare students for long-term career success?

Rank 1 (Most Important) by Ethnicity

- Producing versatile students who can adapt to problems as they arise
- Teaching students adequate technical skills for employment
- Providing students with a well-rounded education
- Helping students develop 'non-technical skills' (e.g. critical thinking)
- Exposing students to STEM fields
- Fostering a sense of social justice



AGENDA

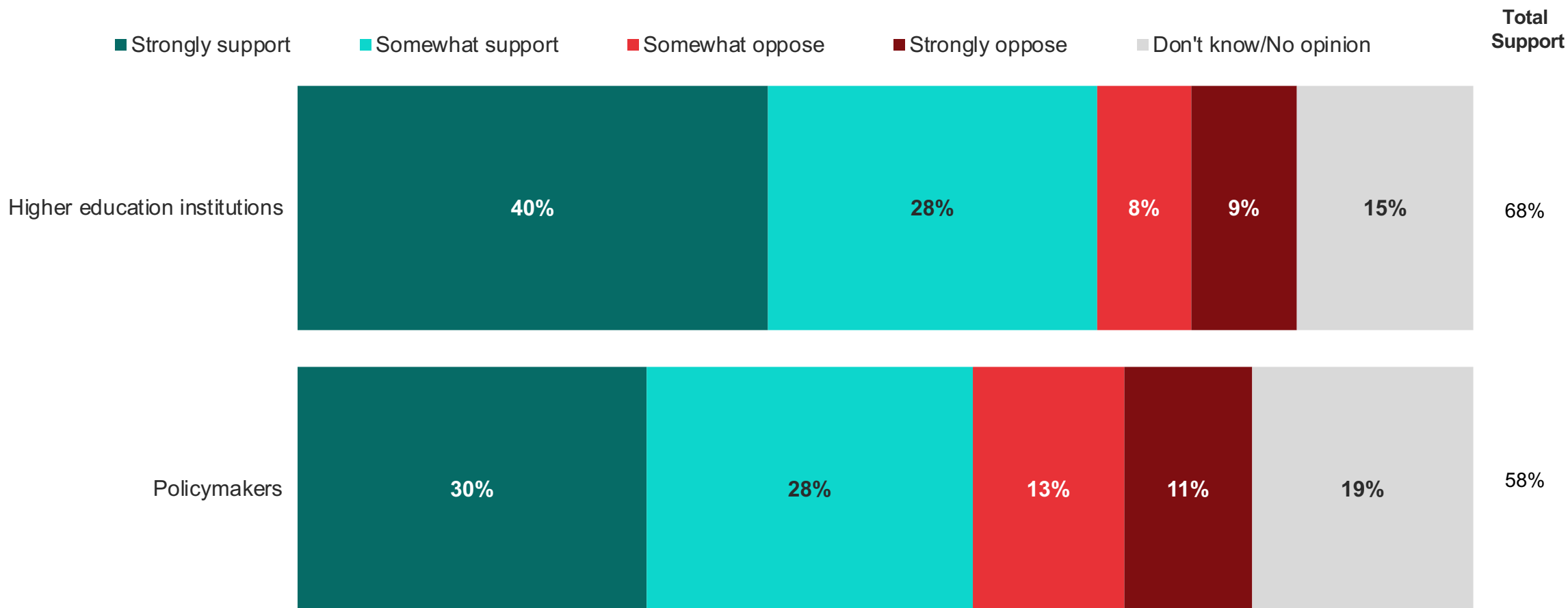
VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
IMPORTANT PRIORITIES FOR HIGHER
EDUCATION
RACIAL EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION



RACIAL EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A majority of adults support higher education institutions (68%) and policymakers (58%) working to ensure that higher education promotes racial equity.

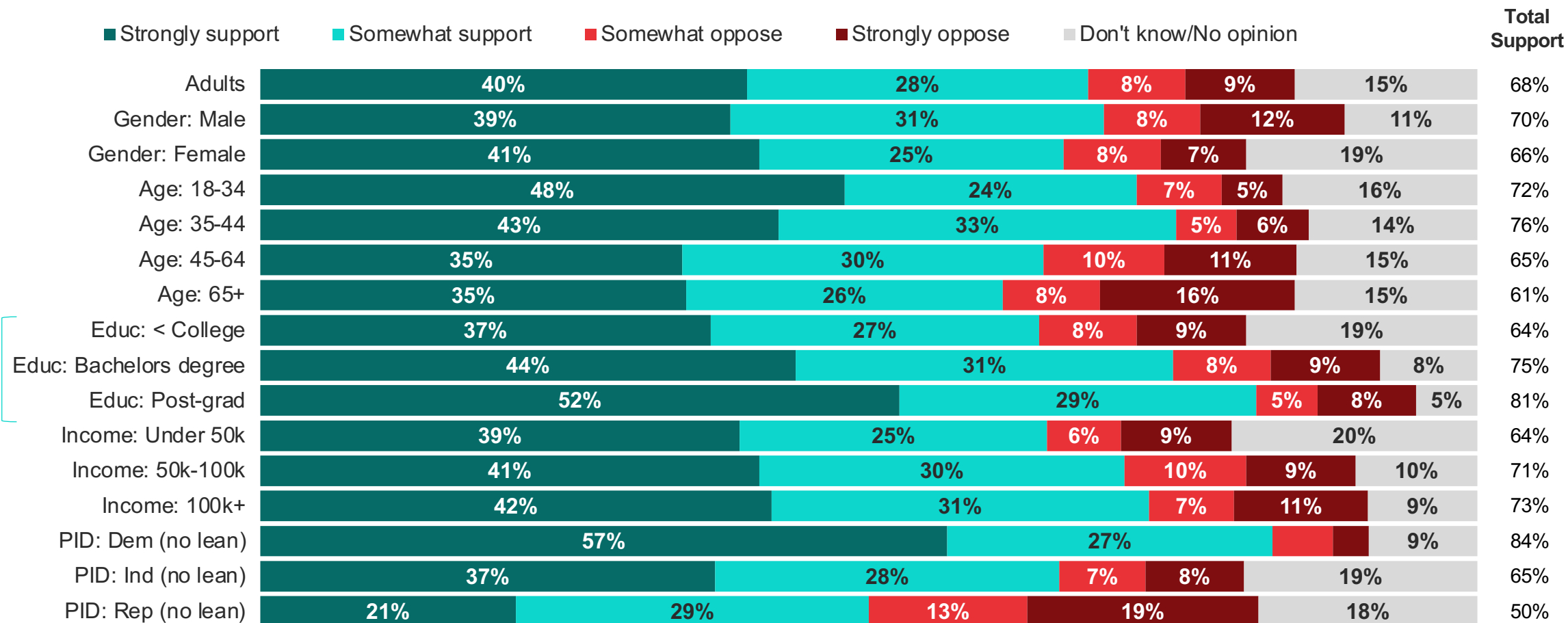
Do you support or oppose the following actors working to ensure that higher education promotes racial equity?



RACIAL EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Adults with a higher level of education are more likely to *strongly support* higher education institutions working to ensure that higher education promotes racial equity.

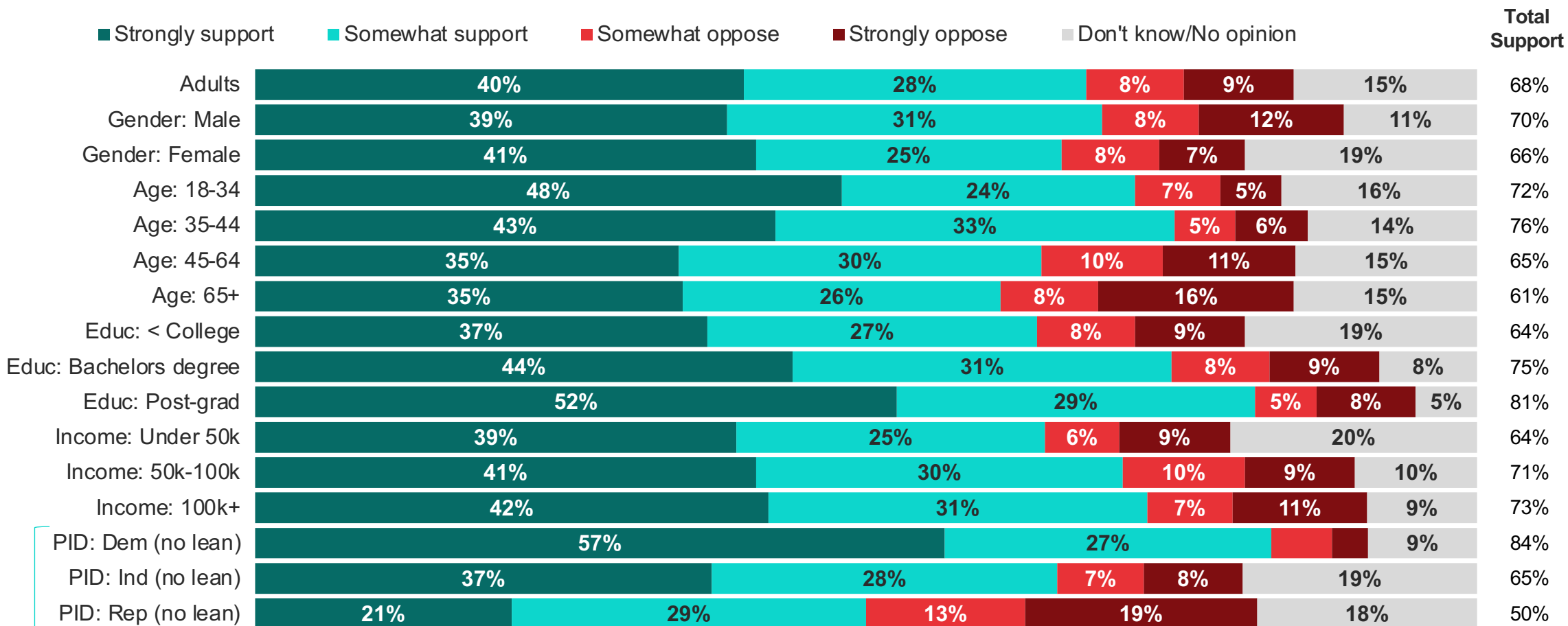
Do you support or oppose the following actors working to ensure that higher education promotes racial equity? **Higher education institutions**



RACIAL EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A bipartisan majority of adults support higher education institutions working to ensure that higher education promotes racial equity.

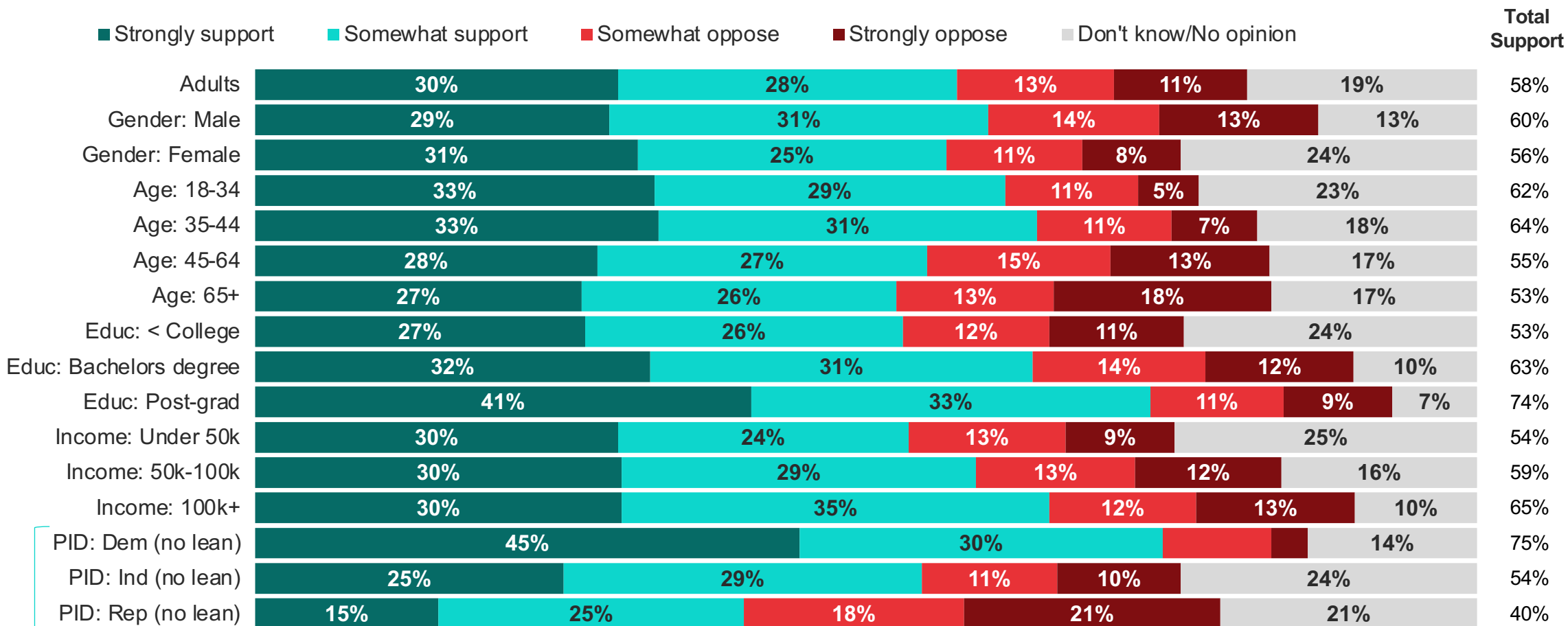
Do you support or oppose the following actors working to ensure that higher education promotes racial equity? **Higher education institutions**



RACIAL EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

However, policymakers working to ensure that higher education promotes racial equity is a partisan issue (75% Democrat support vs. 40% Republican support).

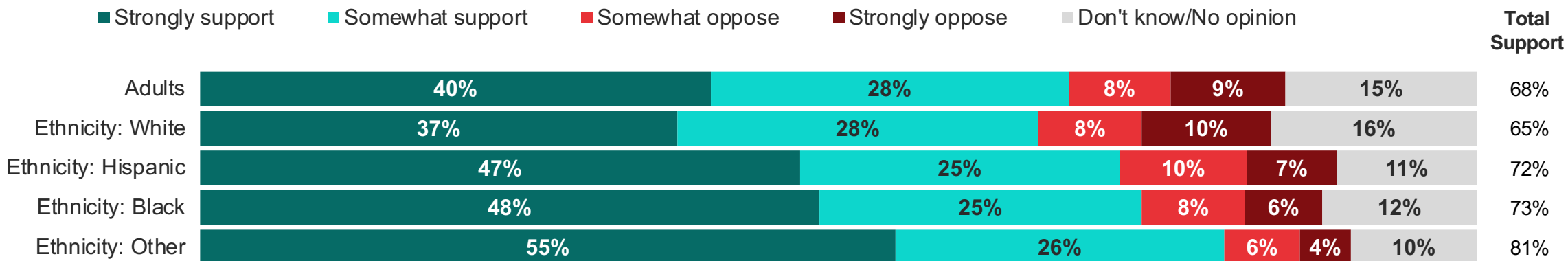
Do you support or oppose the following actors working to ensure that higher education promotes racial equity? **Policymakers**



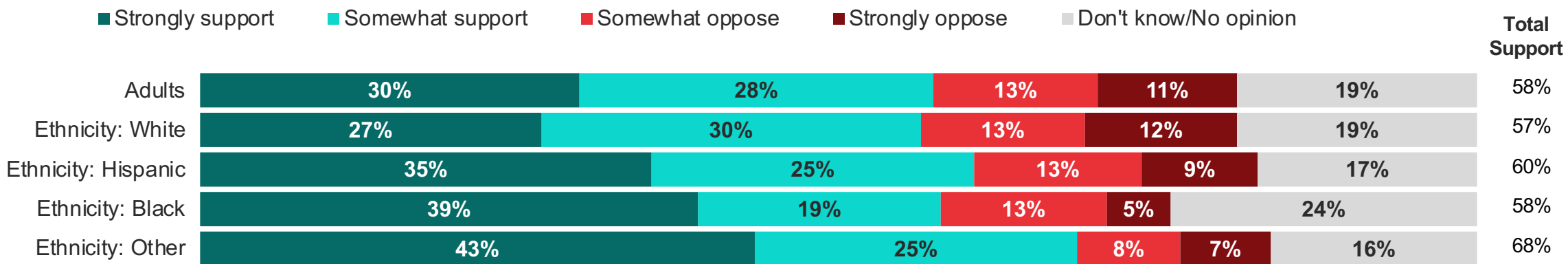
RACIAL EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Across racial and ethnic groups, support is stronger among people of color for higher education institutions and policymakers working to ensure higher education promotes racial equity.

Do you support or oppose the following actors working to ensure that higher education promotes racial equity? **Higher education institutions**



Do you support or oppose the following actors working to ensure that higher education promotes racial equity? **Policymakers**



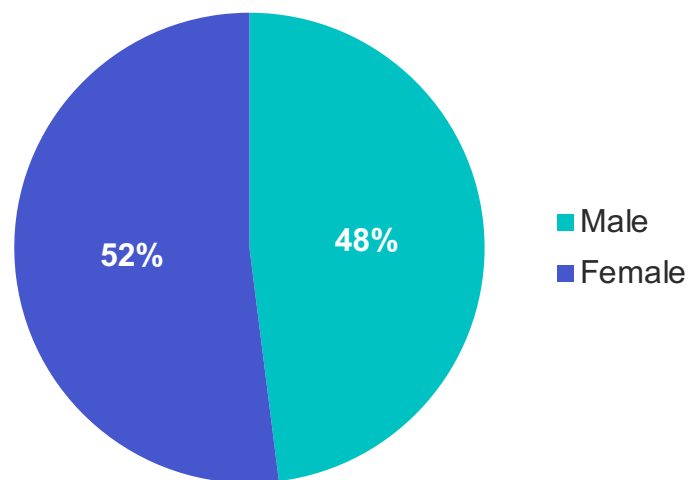


INTELLIGENT DATA,
INTELLIGENT DECISIONS

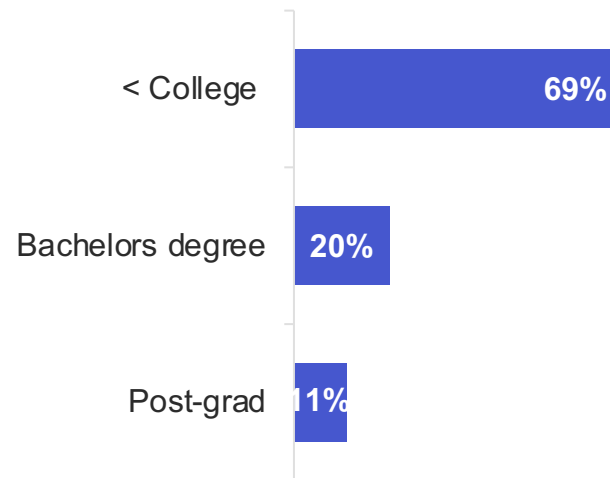
RESPONDENT PROFILE

Demographic Information

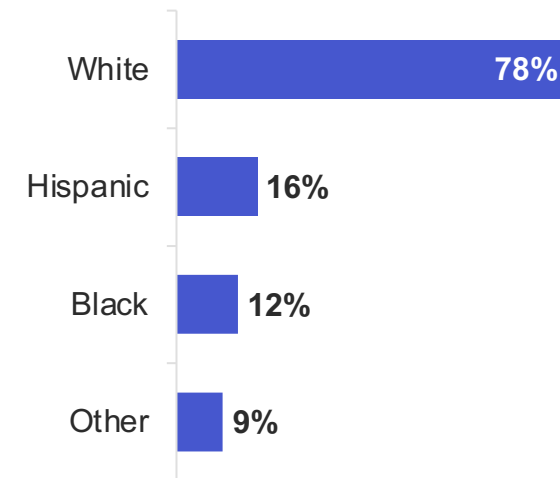
Gender



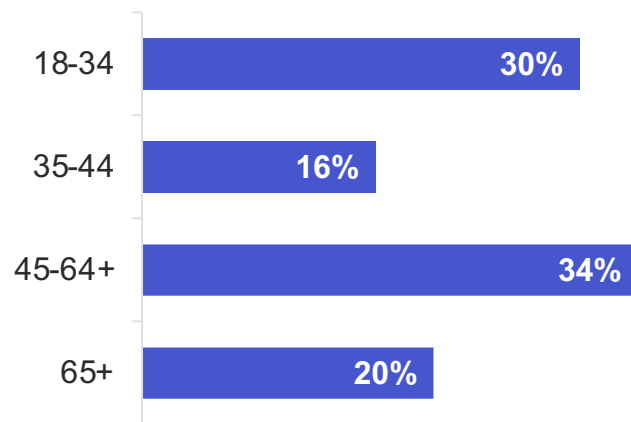
Education



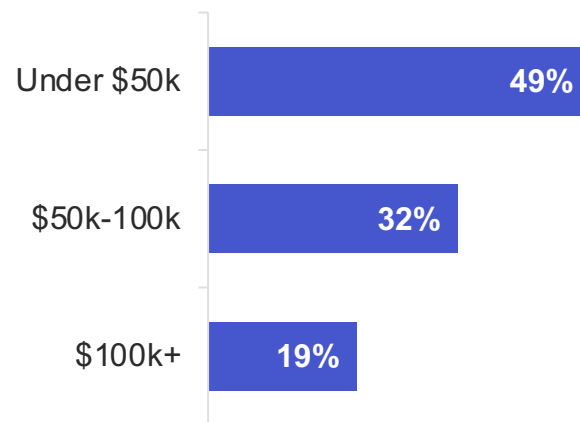
Ethnicity



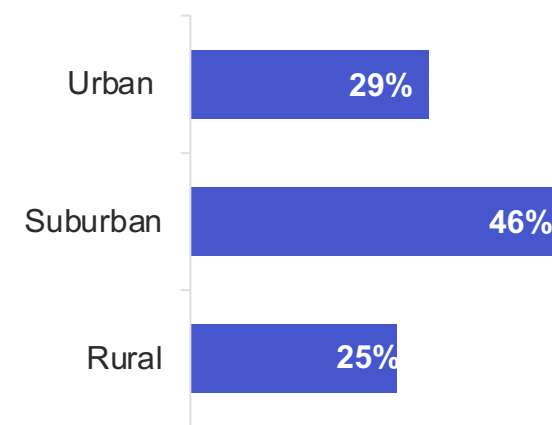
Age



Income



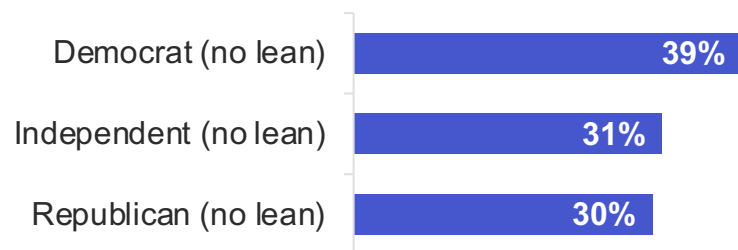
Community Type



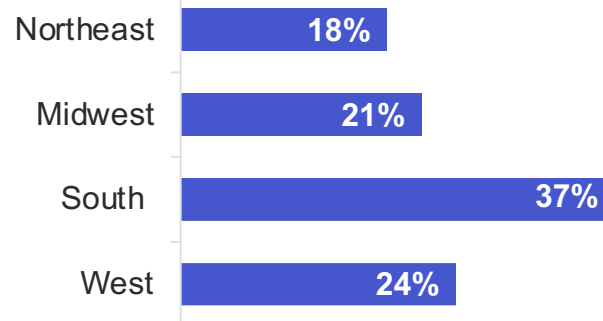
RESPONDENT PROFILE

Demographic Information (continued)

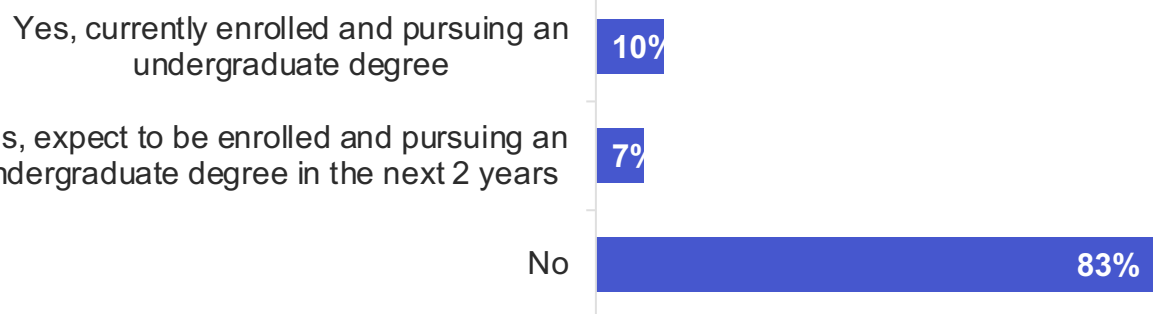
Partisanship



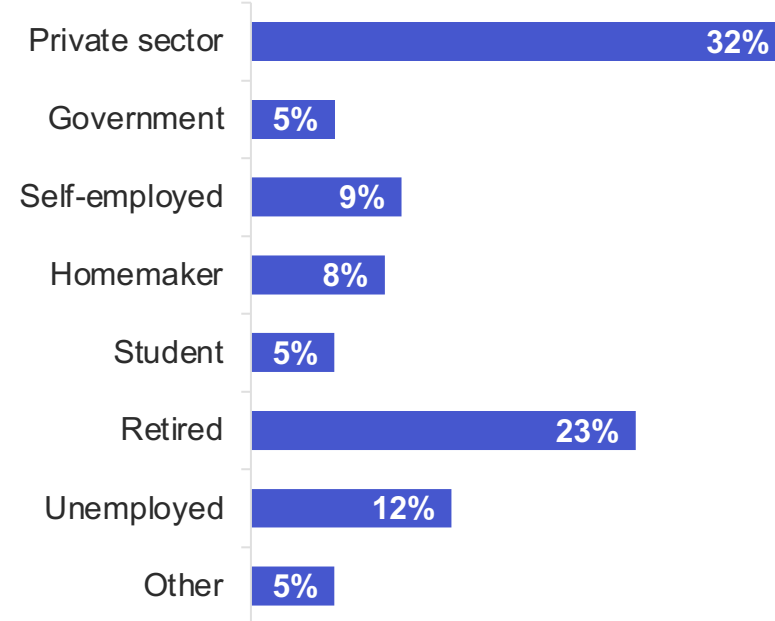
Region



Student Enrollment Status



Employment status



Student Loans

