



Beyond Ready Youth Survey

Key findings from a national survey of 1,116 teenagers conducted online
August 27 – September 9, 2024

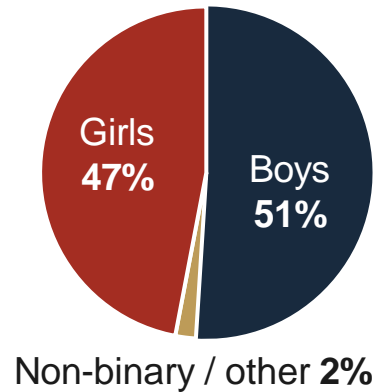


Methodology and Sample Overview

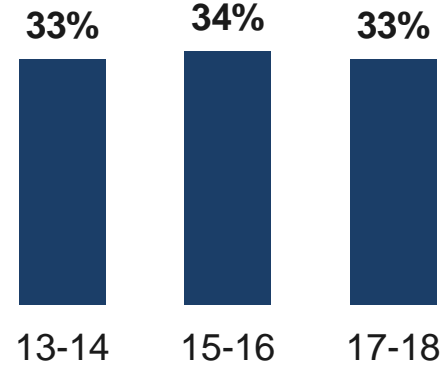
Methodology

- Online survey with 1,116 13-18-year-olds, including 273 interviews with 4-H participants.
- Fielded August 27 – September 9, 2024.
- Credibility interval ± 2.93 percentage points for full sample, higher tolerances for subgroups.

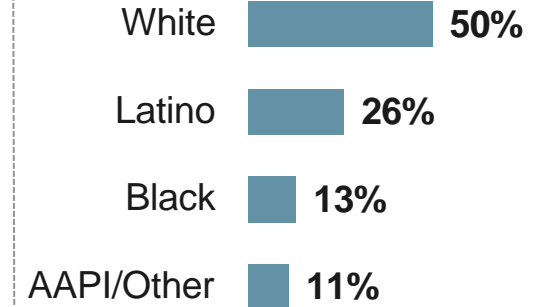
Gender



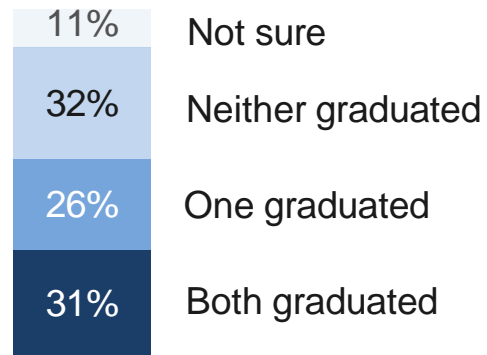
Age



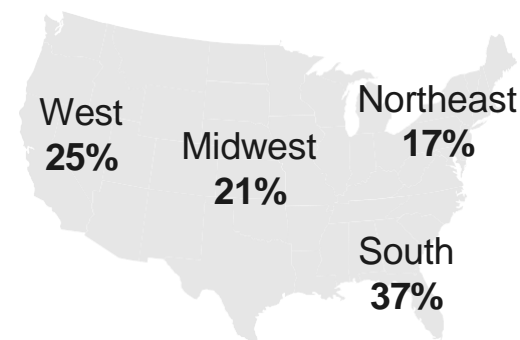
Race



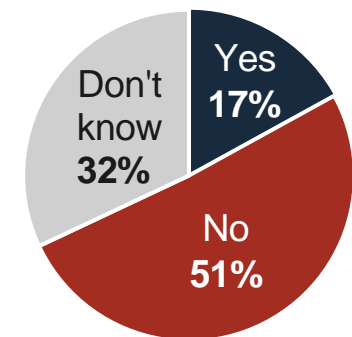
Parents' College Education



Region



4-H Participation



Executive Summary

1

Out of school programs, like 4-H, and extracurricular activities are critical for skill development and setting important expectations for the workplace. Teens feel much more prepared to apply life skills in the workplace than technical (or “hard”) skills. Those who have participated in 4-H programs and internships recognize the importance of, and feel prepared to, apply both life and technical skills in the workplace. Out of school programs also better help teens work well in a team, build confidence, bounce back from disappointment, and handle stress compared to school alone.

2

Teens want – and believe – they can lead a good life, and participation in programs like 4-H gives them greater confidence that they will also have a career and life with purpose and meaning. When considering their goals, teens aspire to own a home, be financially well-off and debt-free, and raise a family. While teens seek a career that pays well and provides financial security, they also want it to be in a field that personally interests them. However, while most teens believe they can achieve financial stability, 4-H'ers and teens who have completed internships express greater confidence in their ability to go beyond that. They feel more assured in their capacity to make a positive impact in their communities, succeed in their own businesses, contribute to scientific progress, and participate in environmental programs.

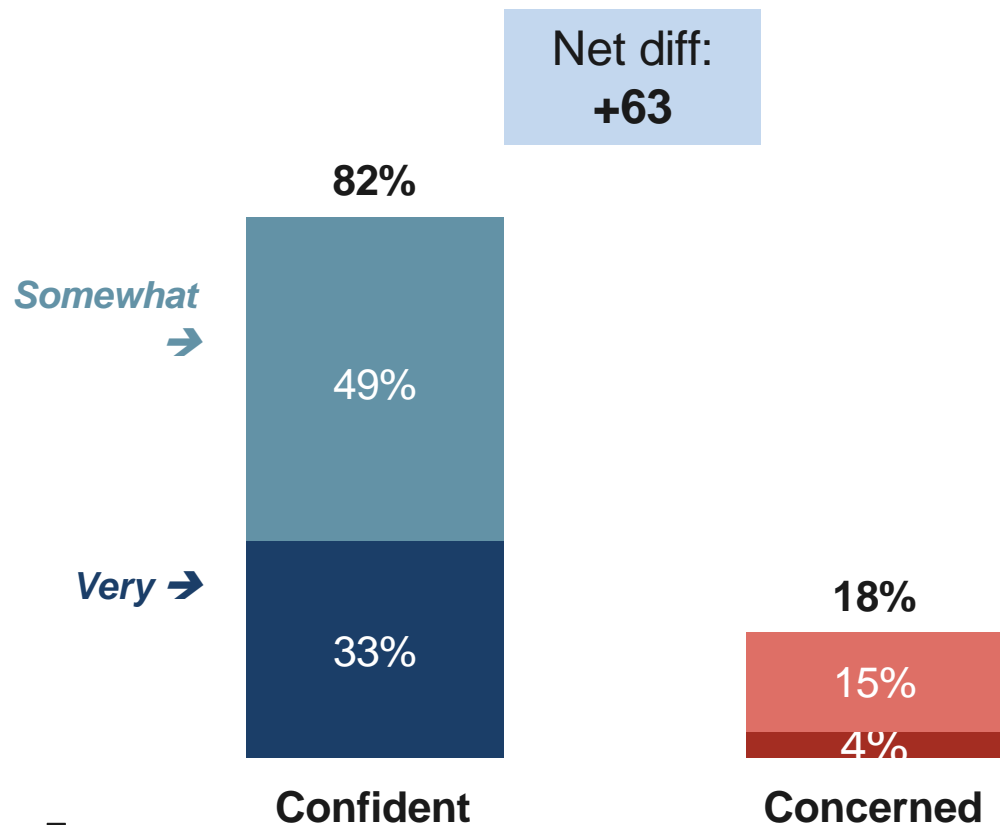
3

Most teens feel less prepared to apply math, tech, and writing skills in the workplace compared to life skills, while teens who have participated in 4-H programs feel more prepared. Many teens understand that technical skills are necessary for success in the workplace, they do not view them as equally important as life skills. Teens also believe they are less prepared at this stage to apply many of these technical skills. However, 4-H'ers feel more prepared to apply both technical and life skills in the workplace.

Outlook on Life and Career Success

Teens are more optimistic about their future, but most don't have a clear idea of what it exactly looks like.

When it comes to being able to achieve your career and life goals later in life, do you feel...?



Which of these best describes you right now?

38% I have a clear idea of what I want to do later in life.

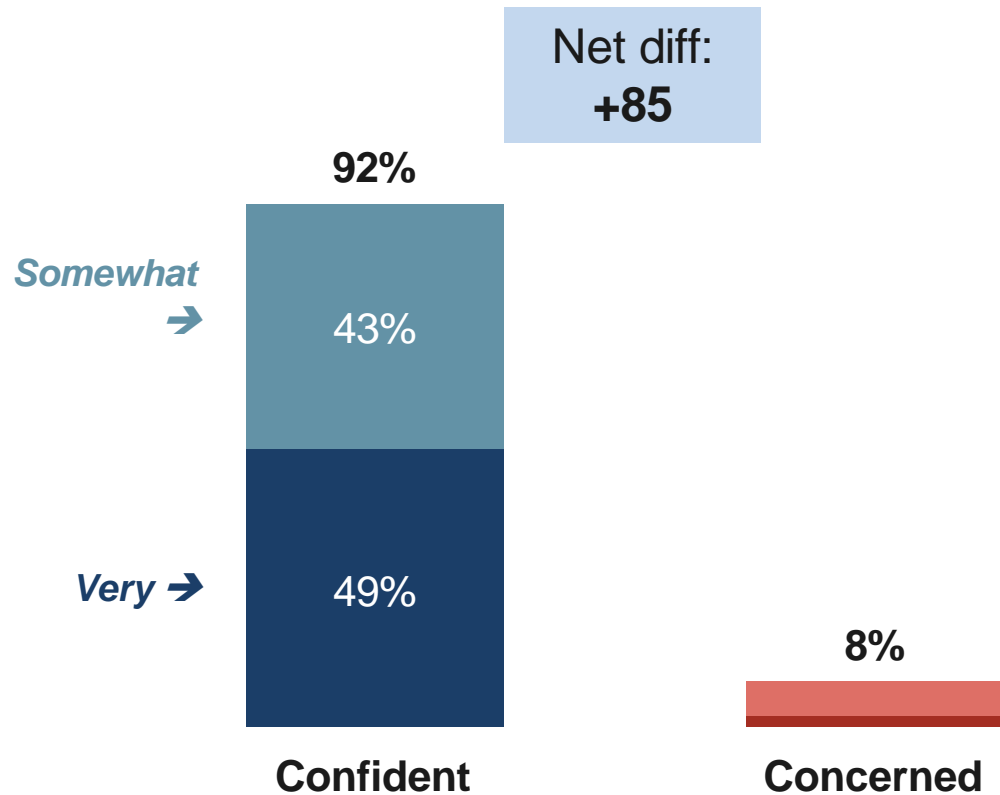
43% I have a few ideas but haven't decided exactly what I want to do.

10% I have many different ideas and options I'm thinking about.

9% I'm not sure at this point.

4-H'ers: Not only are 4-H'ers even more confident in their futures, but a plurality have a clear idea of what it looks like.

When it comes to being able to achieve your career and life goals later in life, do you feel...?



Which of these best describes you right now?

48% I have a clear idea of what I want to do later in life.

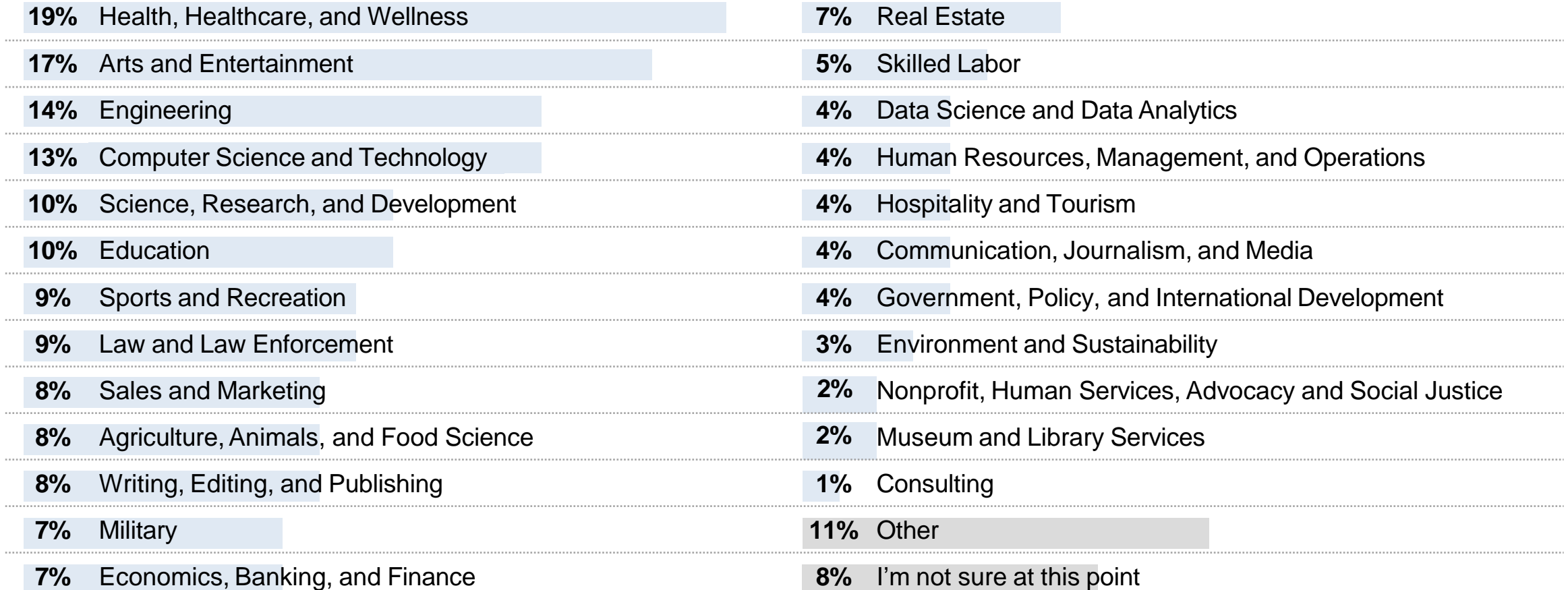
39% I have a few ideas but haven't decided exactly what I want to do.

9% I have many different ideas and options I'm thinking about.

4% I'm not sure at this point.

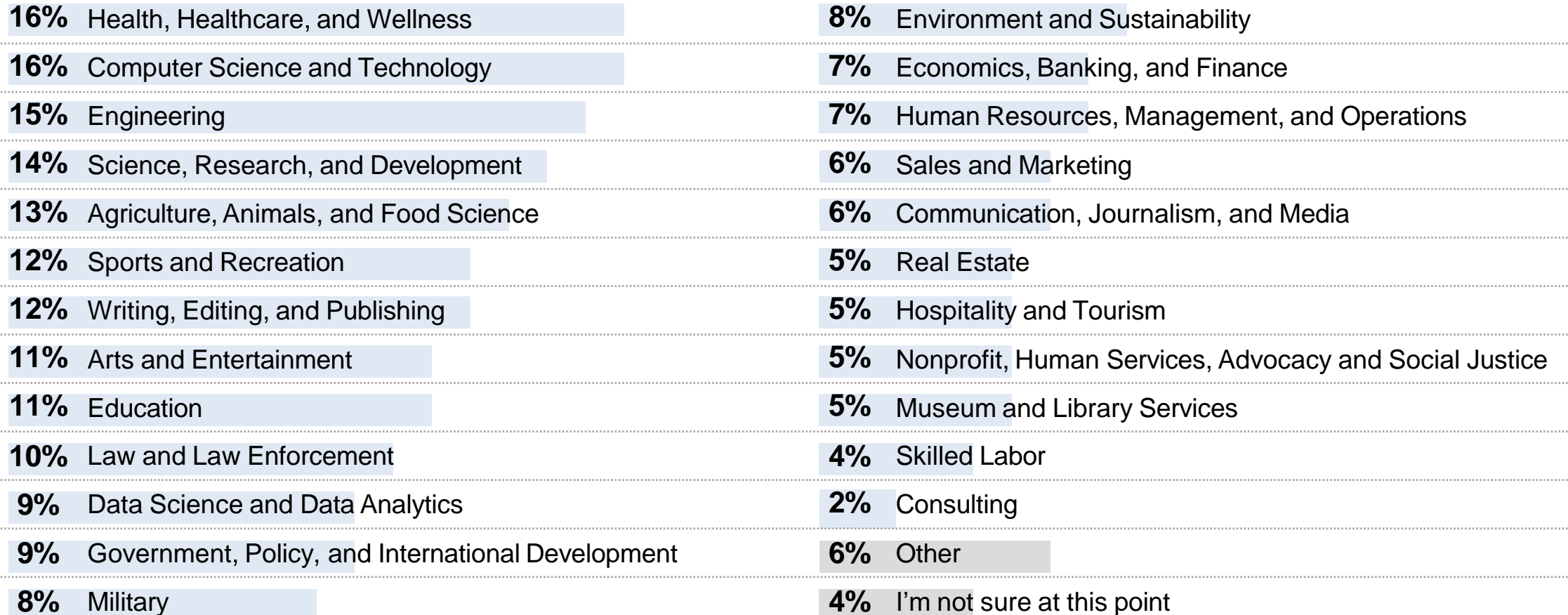
Many industries interest young people, with health, arts and entertainment, engineering, and computer science top choices.

Which industries are you most interested in working in as an adult? (Top Three)



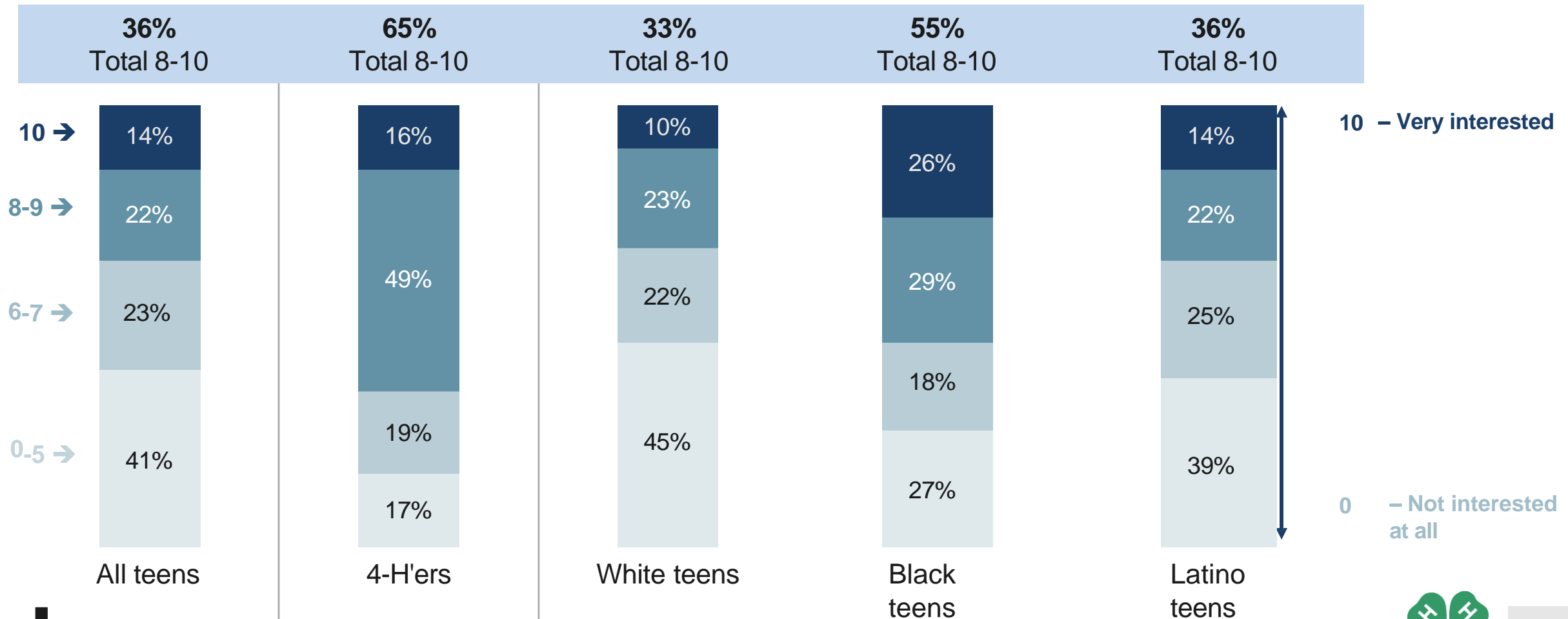
4-H'ers: Healthcare and STEM fields are the industries that most attract youth in 4-H.

Which industries are you most interested in working in as an adult? (Top Three with 4-H'ers)



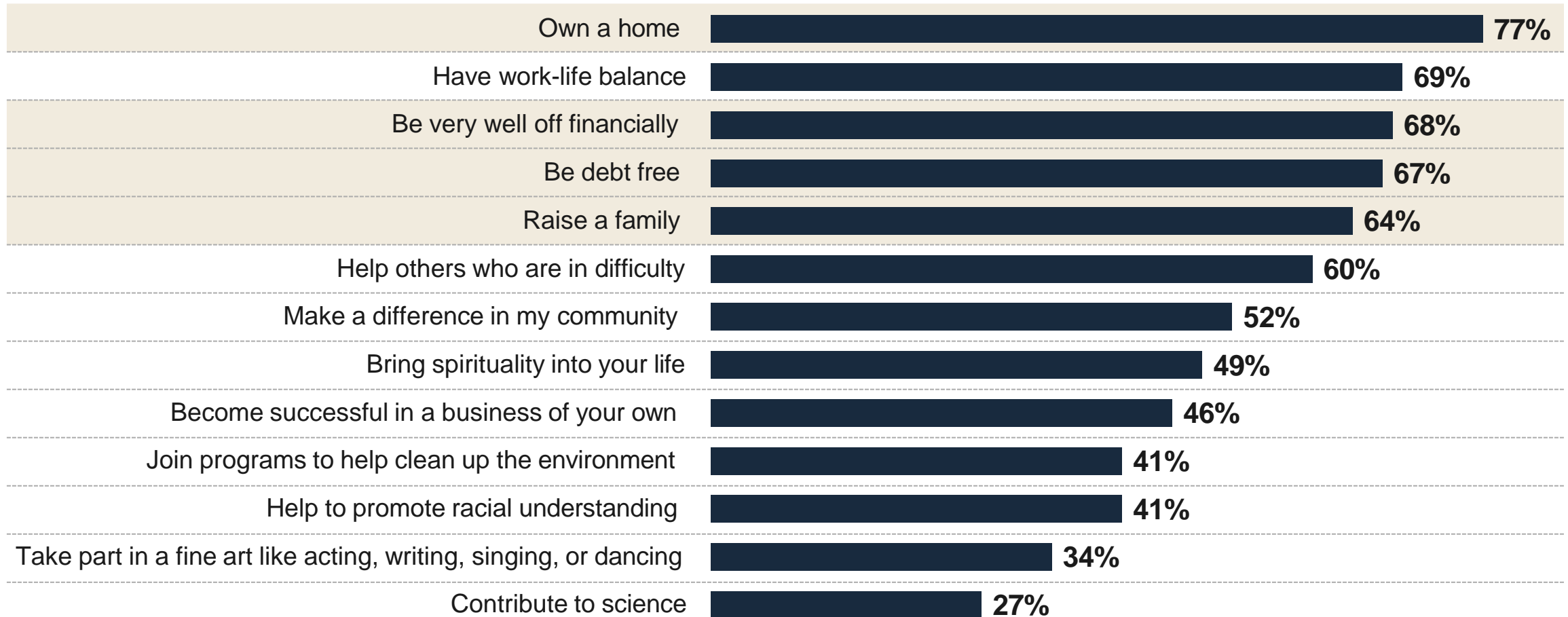
4-H'ers and Black teens express a lot more interest in starting a business.

How interested on a 0 or 10 scale are you in starting a business or becoming an entrepreneur as an adult?



Most young Americans believe they can achieve many aspects of the lifelong dreams like home ownership, family, and financial security.

Thinking about my career and life goals, I want to do this and believe I can:



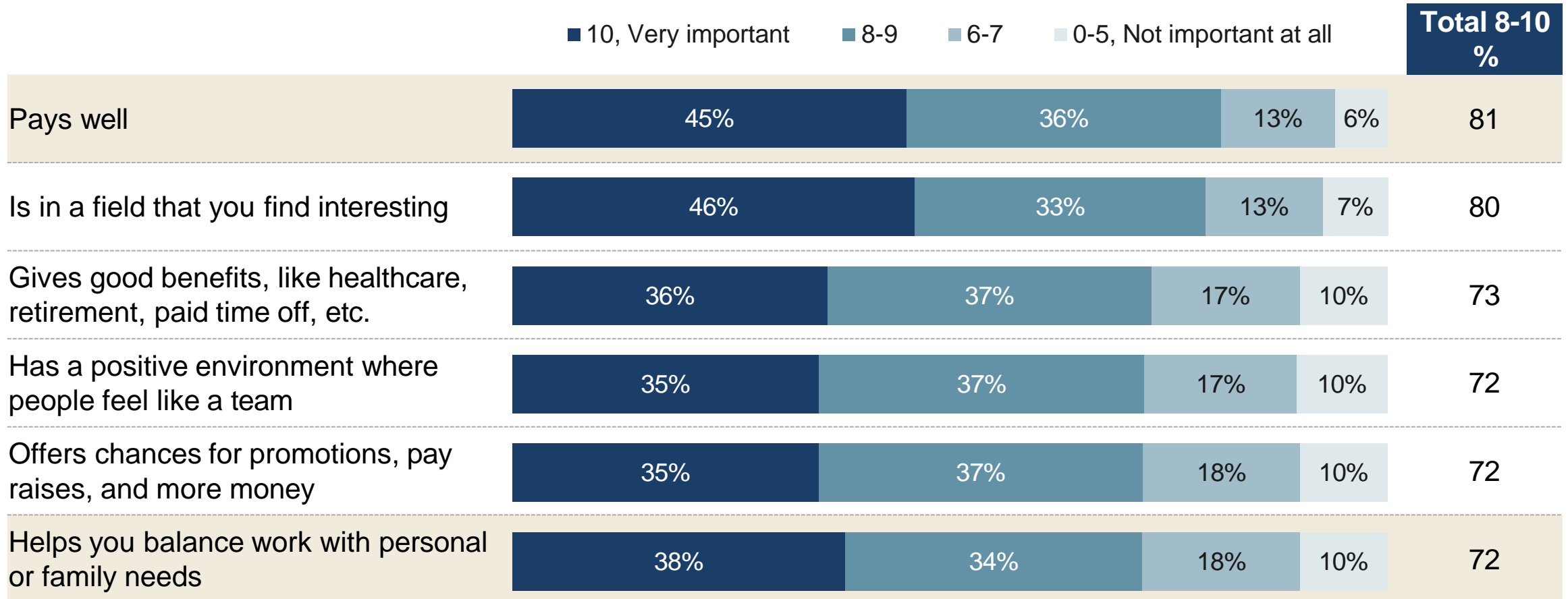
Among the youth who want to achieve these goals, 4-H'ers feel much more confident in their ability to reach them.

Difference between “I want to do this, and I believe I can” minus “I want to do this, but I don’t think I can”:

BELIEVE I CAN <i>minus</i> I DON'T THINK I CAN	All Teens	4-H'ers
Own a home	+58	+59
Have work-life balance	+46	+53
Raise a family	+46	+57
Be very well off financially	+43	+53
Be debt free	+40	+47
Help others who are in difficulty	+31	+37
Bring spirituality into your life	+28	+33
Make a difference in my community	+20	+37
Become successful in a business of your own	+16	+45
Help to promote racial understanding	+12	+31
Take part in a fine art like acting, writing, singing, or dancing	+10	+19
Join programs to help clean up the environment	+9	+25
Contribute to science	+3	+35

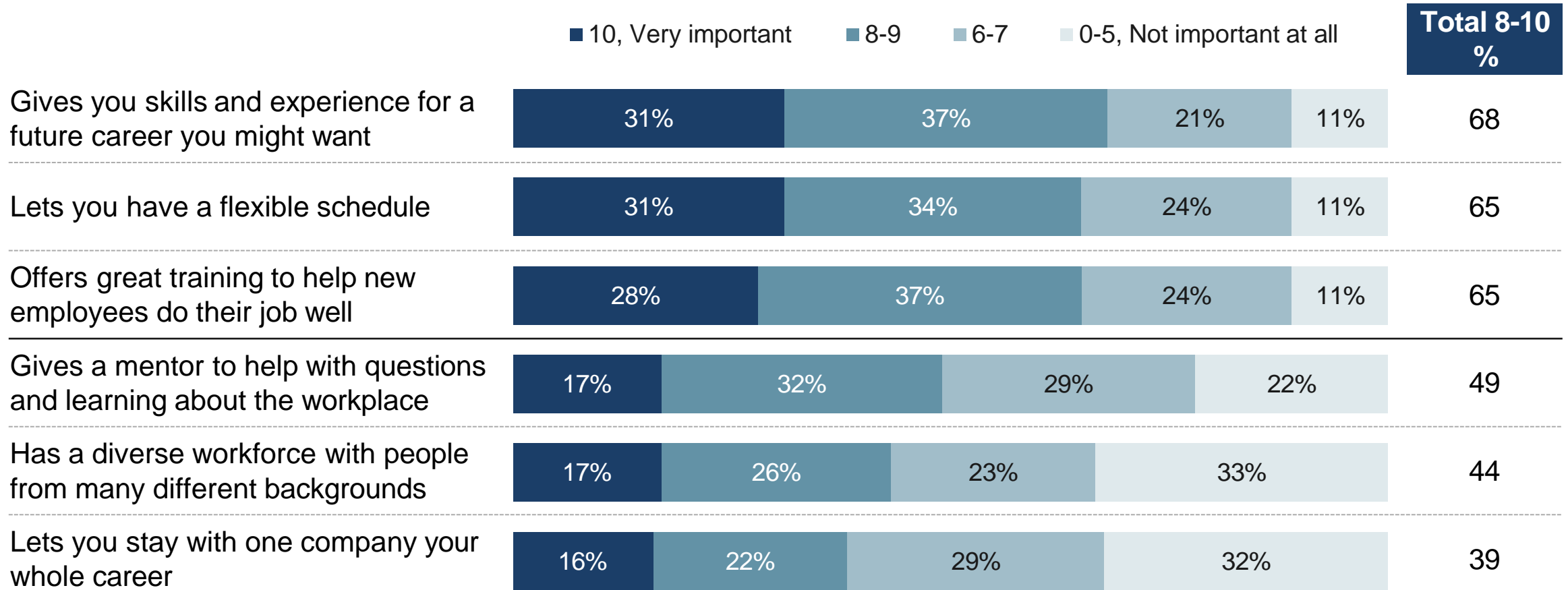
Young Americans prioritize a career that pays well over work-life balance.

How important on a 0 to 10 scale is it for you to have a career that...?



Teens also value gaining on-the-job skills, training, and a flexible schedule for their future careers.

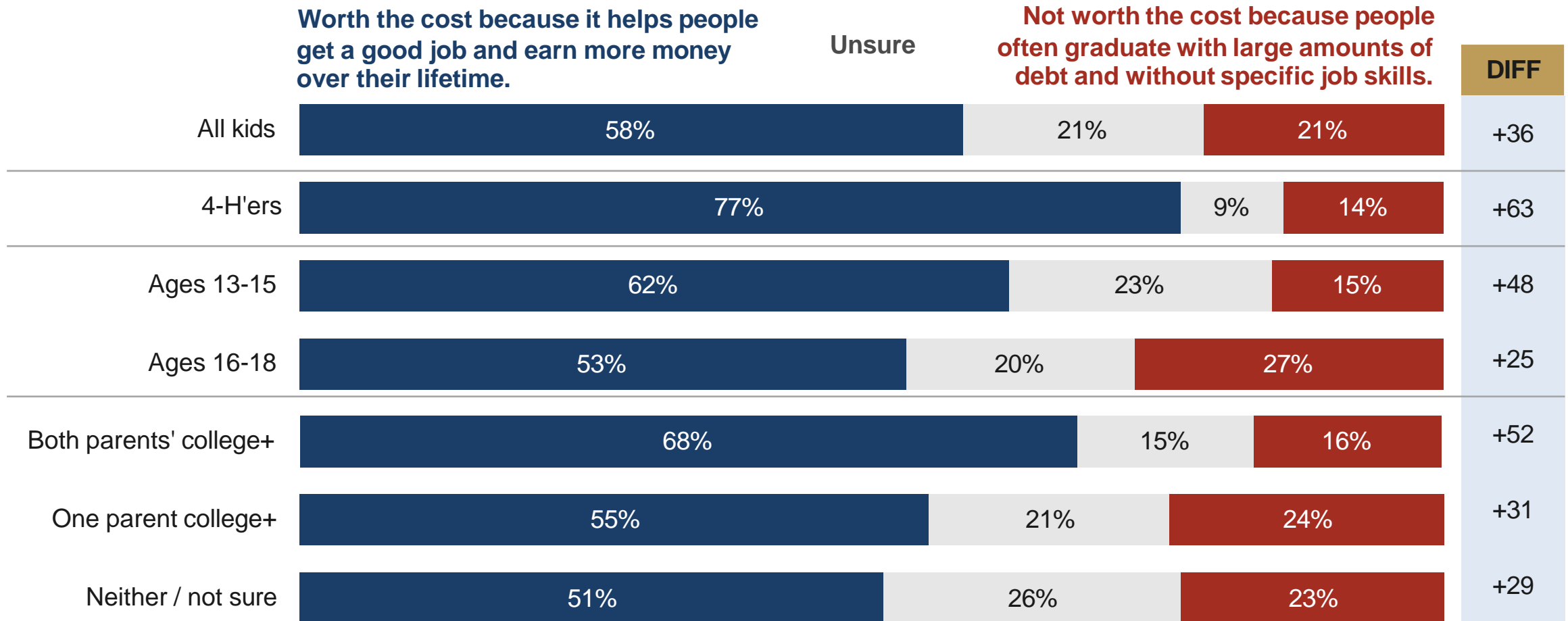
How important on a 0 to 10 scale is it for you to have a career that...?



Post High School Graduation

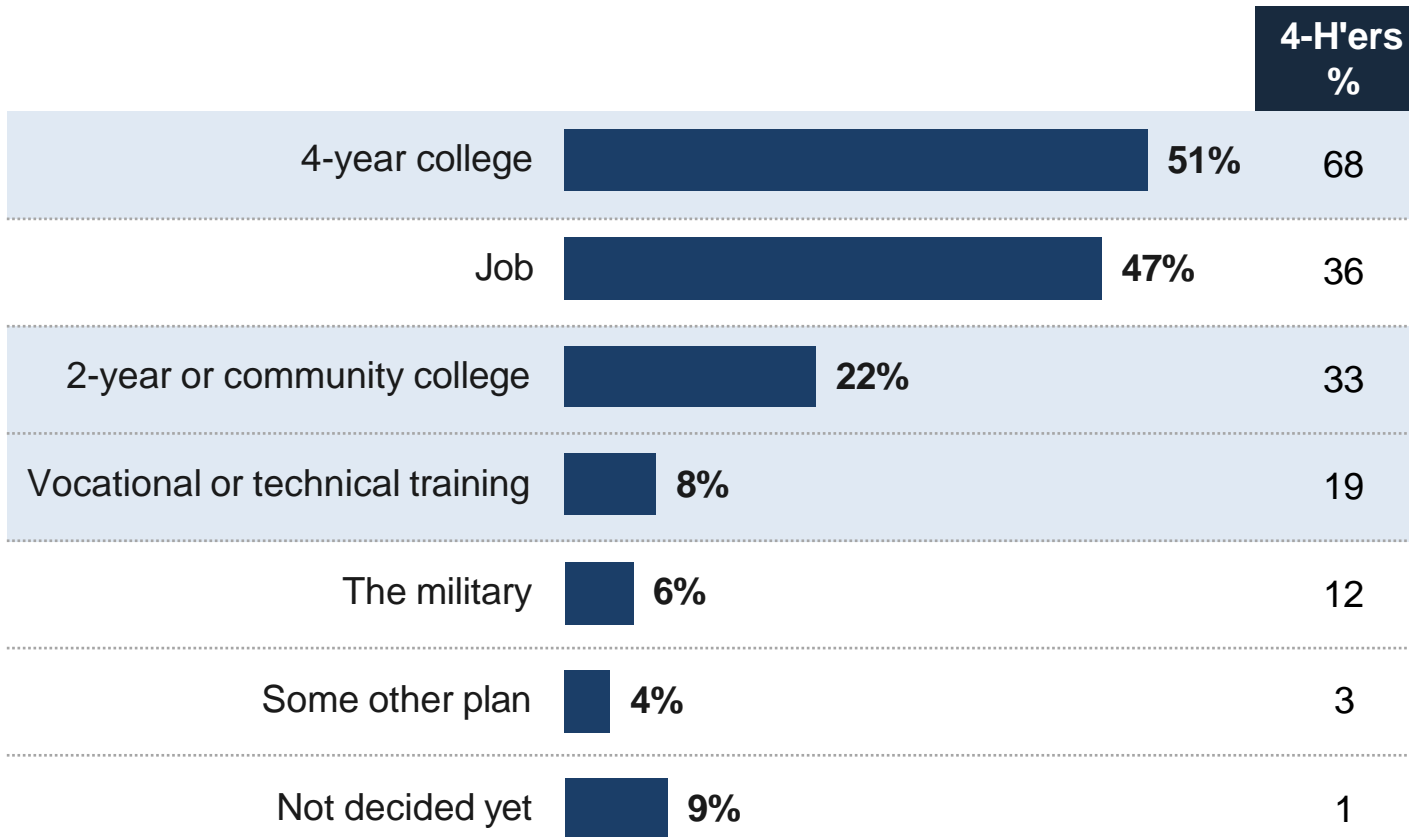
Most youth still think college is worth the cost, especially 4-H'ers and youth from households where both parents have college degrees.

When thinking about a four-year college degree, which statement matches your view?



Over 60% of youth still plan to pursue a degree immediately after high school, even higher for 4-H'ers.

As of right now, what are or were your plans immediately after high school?
(Multiple answers acceptable)



62% plan to pursue a 2- or 4-year college degree

Highest degree plan to earn...	Degree seekers %
Vocational or technical diploma	4
2-year or community college	7
4-year college	48
Graduate or professional degree	40

*Degree seekers include all young people who say they plan to enroll or have already enrolled in vocational or technical training, 2-year or community college, and/or 4-year college.



Cost is the major worry for youth who want to pursue a college degree, especially with Latino teens.

Are you worried about finishing your degree because of any of these reasons?
(Among 2-year or 4-year college degree seekers)

		White teens %	Black teens %	Latino teens %
The cost of going to college	49%	45	42	63
My mental health	34%	29	29	39
Not being able to keep up with the schoolwork	33%	31	24	38
The need to get a full-time job	32 %	30	27	41
Having family responsibilities back home	19%	14	22	26
Being too far from my family and friends	19%	15	27	22
Not being able to find a community in college	13%	12	13	16
Something else	1%	-	2	-
I do not have any concerns about finishing	26%	31	28	15

All youth worry about cost and schoolwork, but mental health is a bigger concern for girls, especially girls of color.

*Top three worries about finishing degree by gender and gender/race:
(Among 2-year or 4-year college degree seekers)*

Boys	Girls	White boys	White girls	Boys of color	Girls of color
Cost (46%)	Cost (51%)	Cost (41%)	Cost (48%)	Cost (51%)	Cost (54%)
Need a full-time job (34%)	My mental health (39%)	Need a full-time job (31%)	My mental health (32%)	Need a full-time job (36%)	My mental health (46%)
Keeping up with the schoolwork (31%)	Keeping up with the schoolwork (33%)	Keeping up with the schoolwork (30%)	Keeping up with the schoolwork (29%)	Keeping up with the schoolwork (33%)	Keeping up with the schoolwork (36%)

For White and Black teens NOT going to college, cost is the reason. Latino teens give equal weight to cost and not liking school.

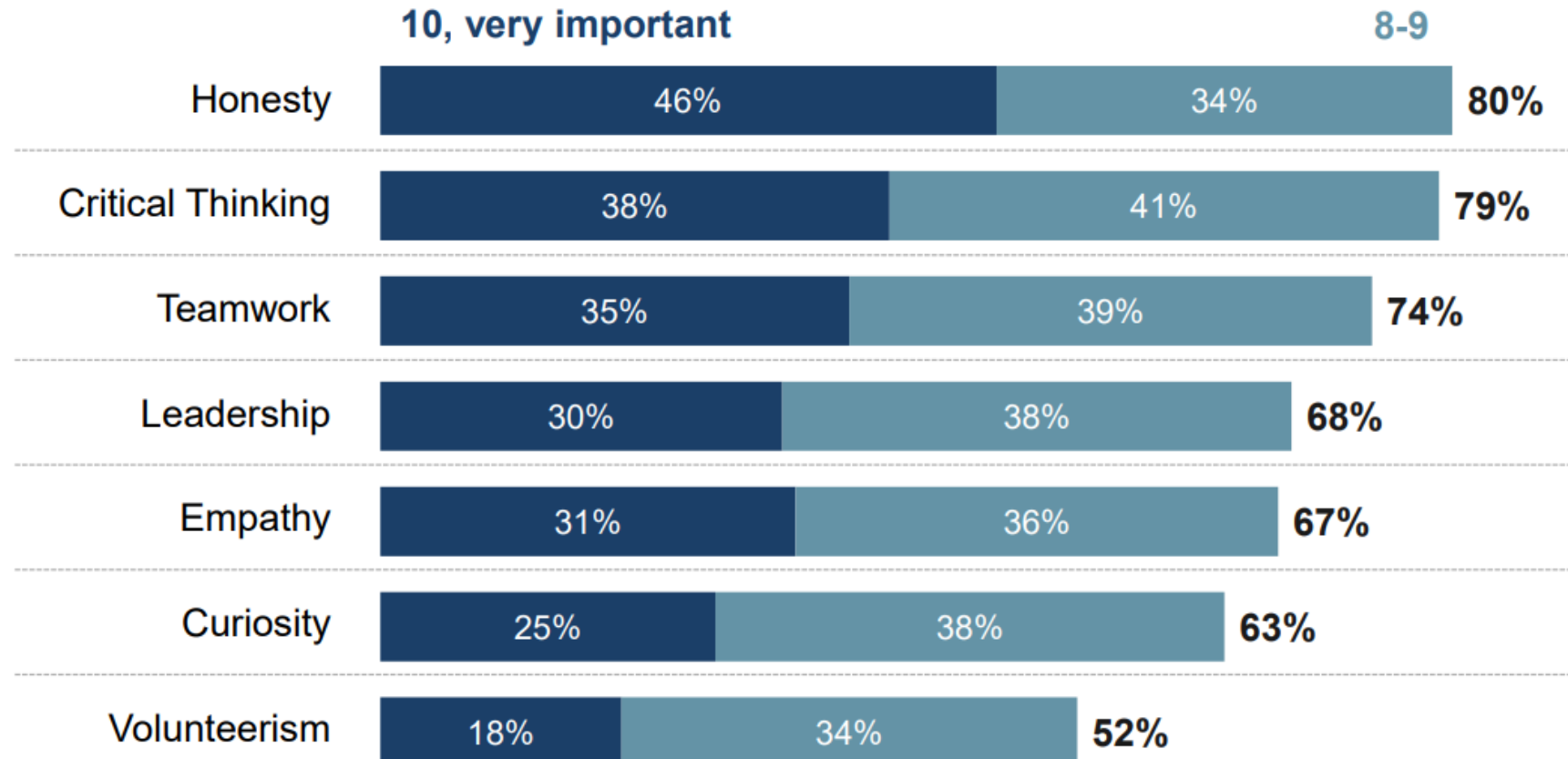
*This factor affects my decision to attend college after graduation:
(Among non-college degree seekers)*

			White teens %	Black teens %	Latino teens %
The cost of going to college		48%	51	45	44
I do not like school		36%	34	27	41
I have interests and opportunities that do not require college		33%	34	32	32
The need to get a full-time job		27%	26	36	27
I have family responsibilities		16%	15	13	18
I do not have good enough grades to go to college		13%	13	5	19
I plan to enroll in the military		7%	6	8	7
Something else		4%	5	2	2

Skills Needed to Succeed in the Workplace

Honesty, critical thinking, and teamwork are the most important to building the character of young people.

This is an important (8-10 on a 0 to 10 scale, where 10 means very important) quality:



Youth give higher importance to softer skills rather than technical skills.

This is important (8-10 on a 0 to 10 scale, where 10 means very important) for succeeding in your career and life:

	Soft Skills		4-Hers %	
	10, very important	8-9		
Problem solving or critical thinking	41%	37%	78%	82
Ability to manage stress	40%	35%	75%	76
Collaboration and teamwork	34%	40%	74%	84
Communication and interpersonal skills	37%	36%	73%	81
Leadership and team management skills	33%	37%	70%	79
AVG. SOFT SKILLS			74%	80

	Hard Skills		4-Hers %	
	10, very important	8-9		
Writing skills	24%	32%	56%	72
Computer and technology skills	23%	32%	55%	67
Data and analytical skills	21%	33%	54%	64
Math skills	20%	29%	49%	67
Ability to understand and use AI tools	17%	24%	41%	58
AVG. HARD SKILLS			51%	66

Do teenagers today feel beyond ready?

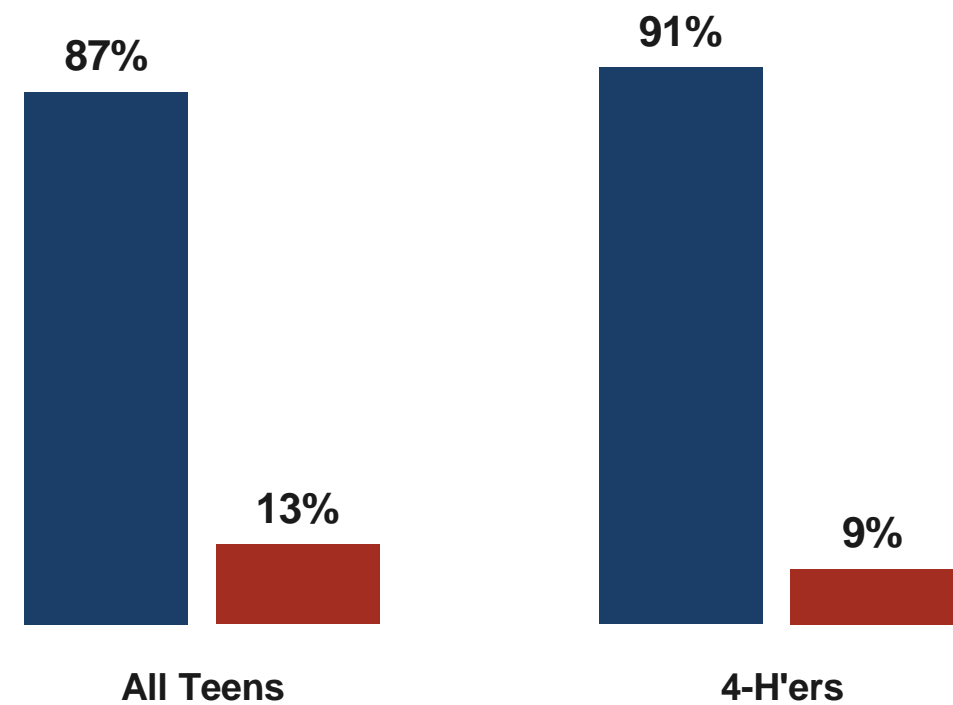
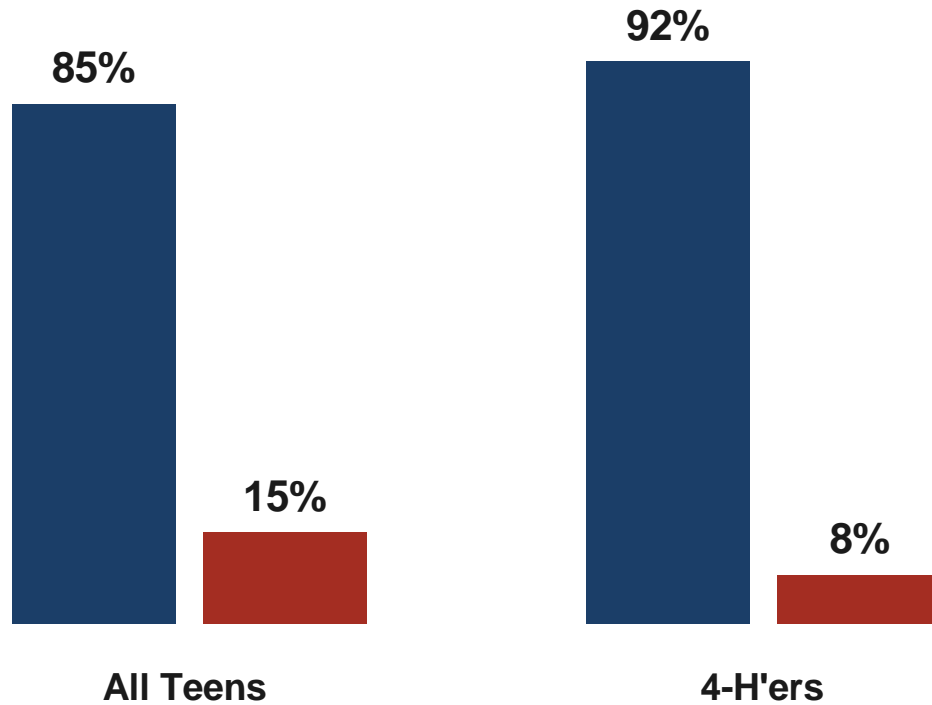
Young Americans believe they have the support that they need at home and at school.

When it comes to your future career and life, do you feel you have the support you need to be successful from your...?

■ Yes ■ No

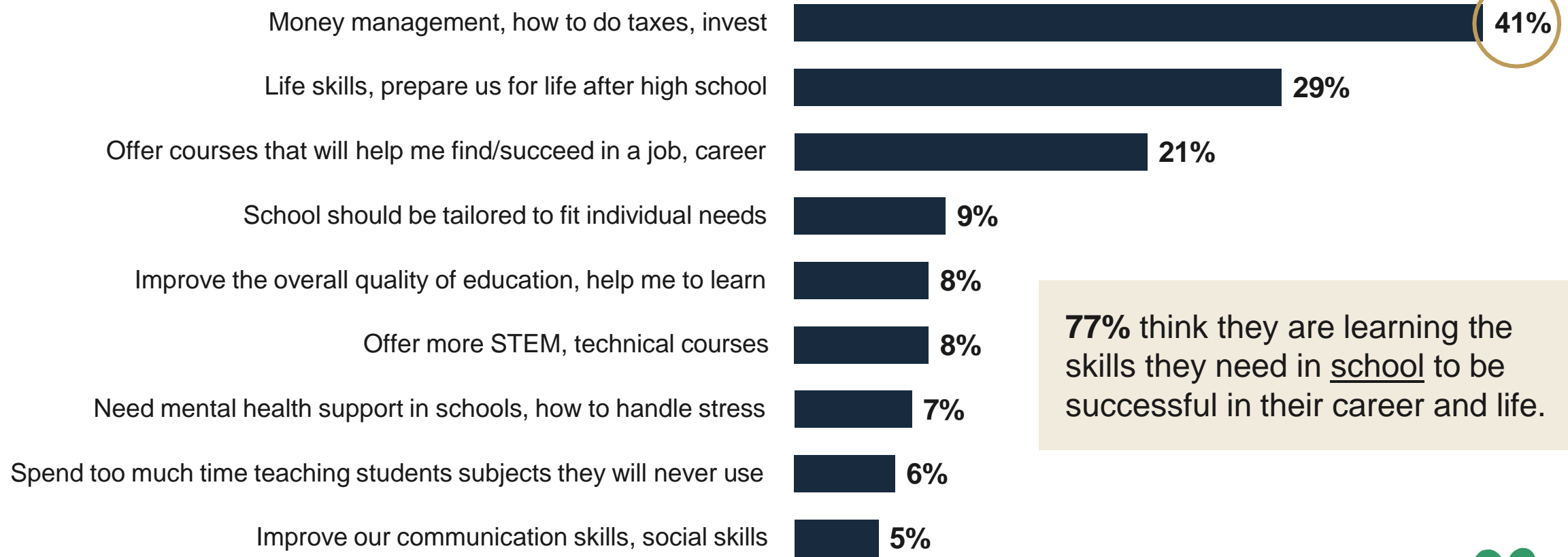
Educators and Mentors

Parents



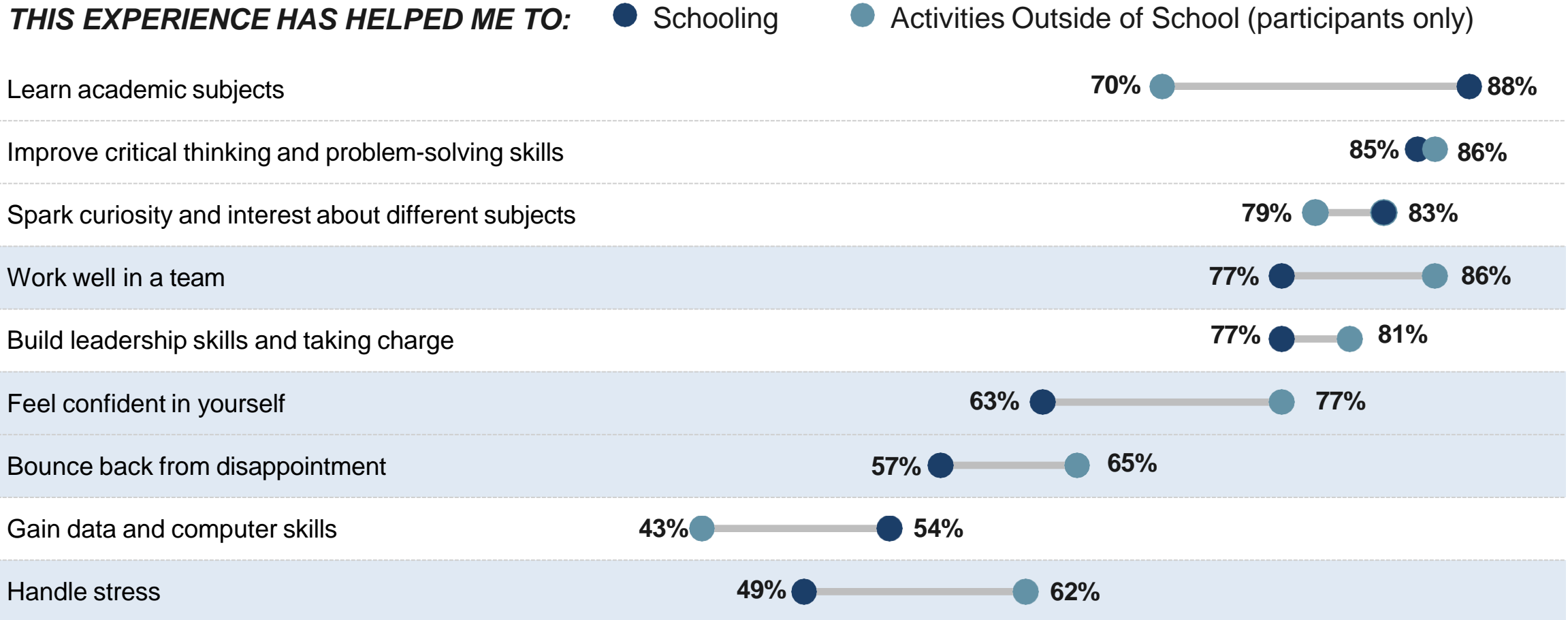
Even though schools are preparing young people for success, they would like to learn more about money management.

What do you wish you were learning in school to help you be more successful in your career and life?
(Asked among those who said they are not learning the skills needed for success in career and life)



77% think they are learning the skills they need in school to be successful in their career and life.

Youth believe they are more likely to develop some key life skills through activities outside of school than school activities.



Skill ratings reflect what teens see as key for career and life success, but there's a bigger gap between the importance and their preparation for soft skills.

Skills by Importance and Preparation to Apply:

● Total 8-10 important for career and life success ● Total 8-10 prepared to use skill in work environment

