

Business Survey Results

We contacted the Missoula Chamber of Commerce November 2016 to survey their membership. The Missoula Chamber of Commerce agreed to send the SPCC Qualtrics (UM survey software tool) survey link to their membership list of 800 businesses. The survey was open for 7 days and 102 businesses completed the survey for a thirteen percent response rate. Due to the relatively low response rate, we are cautious about the findings but do present some basic demographic information and statistically significant findings. Also, to remain consistent with the question we asked in the one-on-one interviews and data cards, similar questions were posed in the quantitative survey to businesses. For example, we asked questions such as: current strengths/challenges for the state of Montana, what the state should focus on for the future, relationships with UM, and types of skills a business is looking for in a college graduate.

Demographic Information

Table 1 presents the demographic information for the business community survey. Slightly less than half of the population is white men. The majority of respondents work for the financial sector, have a college degree, and are between the ages of 45-64. Keep in mind that some of the percentages do not equal 100 percent. This is explainable – respondents could opt to not answer a question.

Table 1: Demographics for Business Community Survey
Survey Respondents

		Survey Respondents
Gender	Male	45%
	Female	35%
Age	25-34	11%
	35-44	13%
	45-54	28%
	55-64	21%
	65-older	10%
Race/Ethnicity	White, non-Hispanic	71%
	Latino/Hispanic	0.8%
	American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.8%
	Other	12.3%
Level of Education	High School Degree	2%
	College Degree	56%
	Graduate or Professional Degree	20%
	Doctorate Degree	2%

We asked a series of questions, which are listed at the end of this report. Here we provide an overview of some of the responses.

For example, when asked, “Which of the following would you describe as *strengths* for the state of Montana,” respondents were asked to pick three from a long list of options. Figure 1 demonstrates the three top strengths, as perceived by the respondents: natural beauty, tourism & recreation, and access to higher education.

Figure 1: Strengths for the State of Montana

Which of the following would you describe as strengths for the State of Montana?

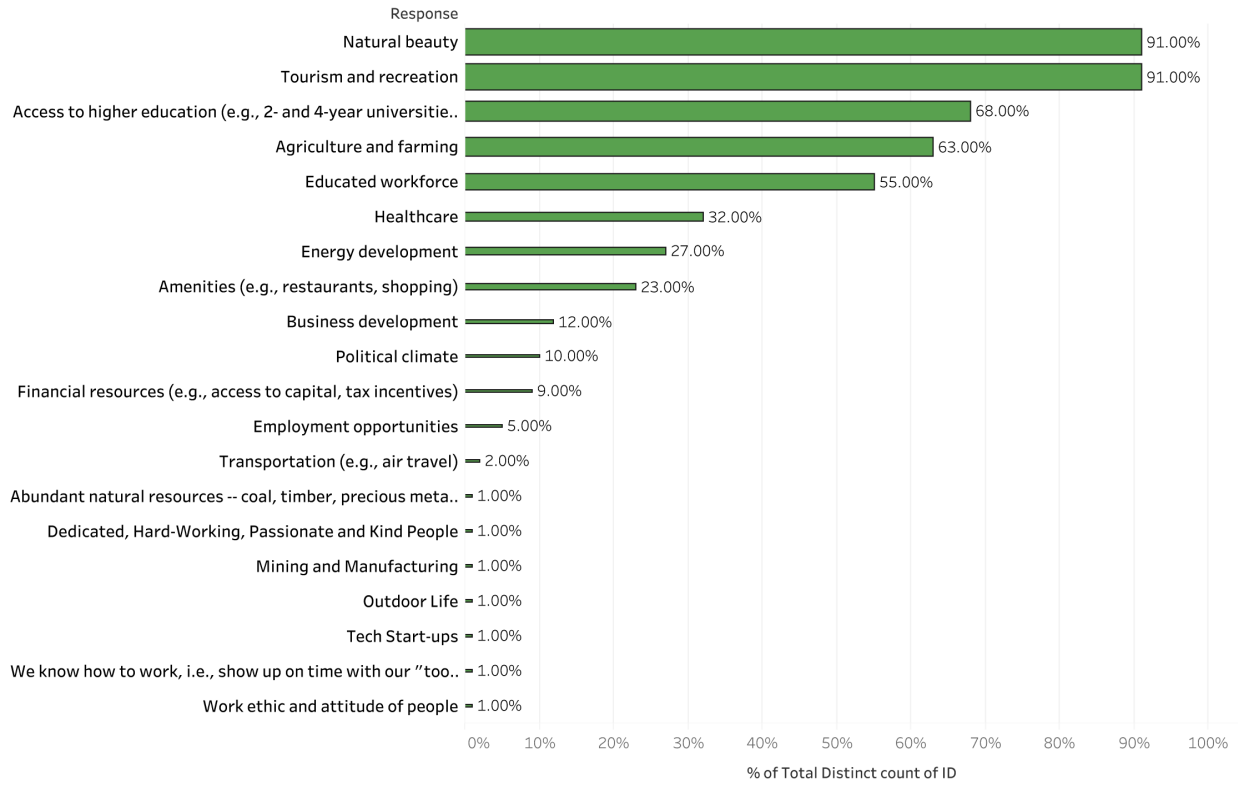


Figure 2 presents data for what Missoula area businesses classify as challenges for the State of Montana. The top three challenges identified include: business development, employment opportunities, and financial resources such as access to capital or tax incentives.

Figure 2: Challenges for the State of Montana

Which of the following would you describe as challenges for the State of Montana?

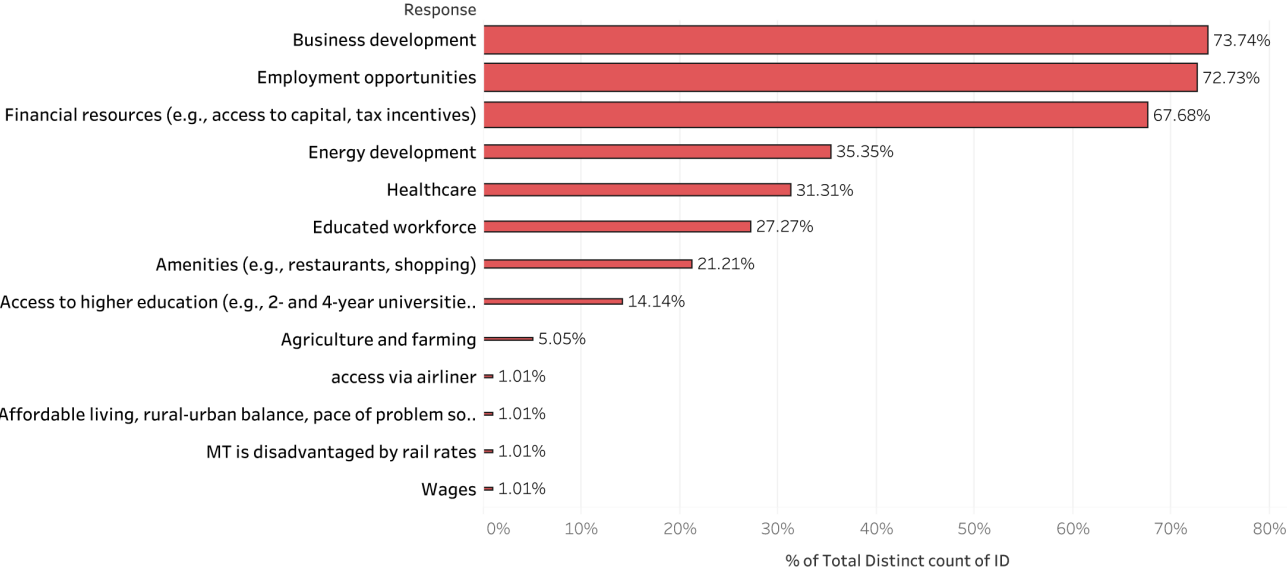


Figure 3 offers what respondents suggested should be the priorities for the state in the next 5 to 10 years. Respondents were asked to rank a series of questions on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The top priority for the state from a business perspective is to increase tax incentives. However, businesses would also like to see a focus on strengthening the relationships between business and government, increased access to affordable transportation, improvements to infrastructure, and incentives for college graduates to stay in the state after graduation.

Figure 3: Future Priorities

What are the priorities for the State of Montana in the next 5 to 10 years?

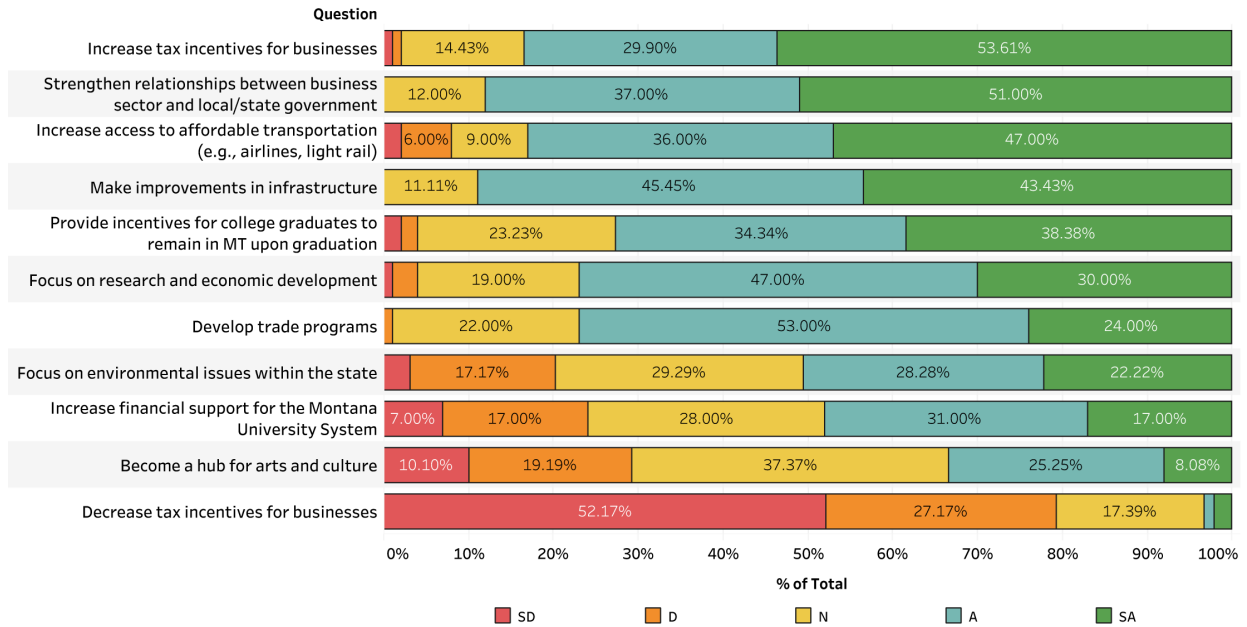


Figure 4 demonstrates that within the priorities for the future, women in business want to more strongly focus on increased access to affordable transportation, focus on environmental concerns, and increase financial support for the Montana University System. Comparatively, men more strongly oppose the decrease in tax incentives for businesses.

Figure 4: Future Priorities by Gender

What are the priorities for the State of Montana in the next 5 to 10 years?

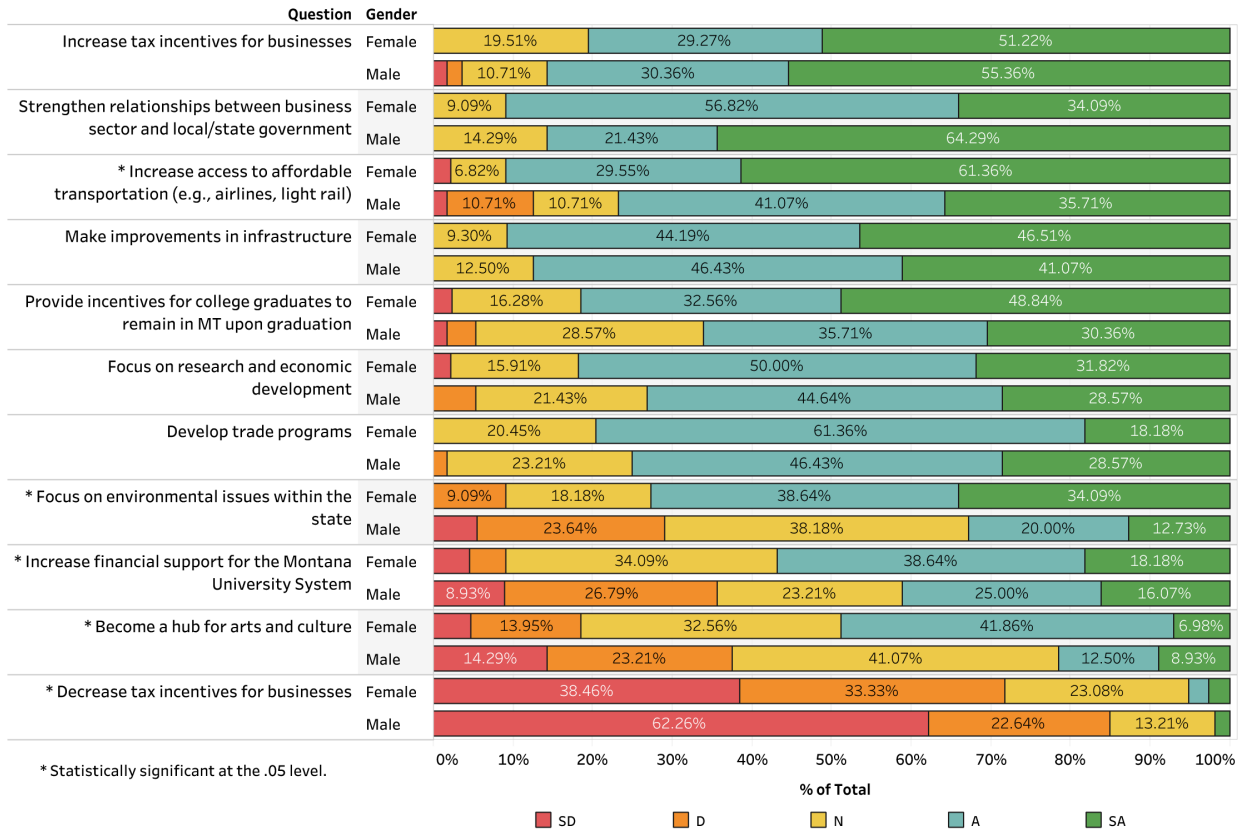
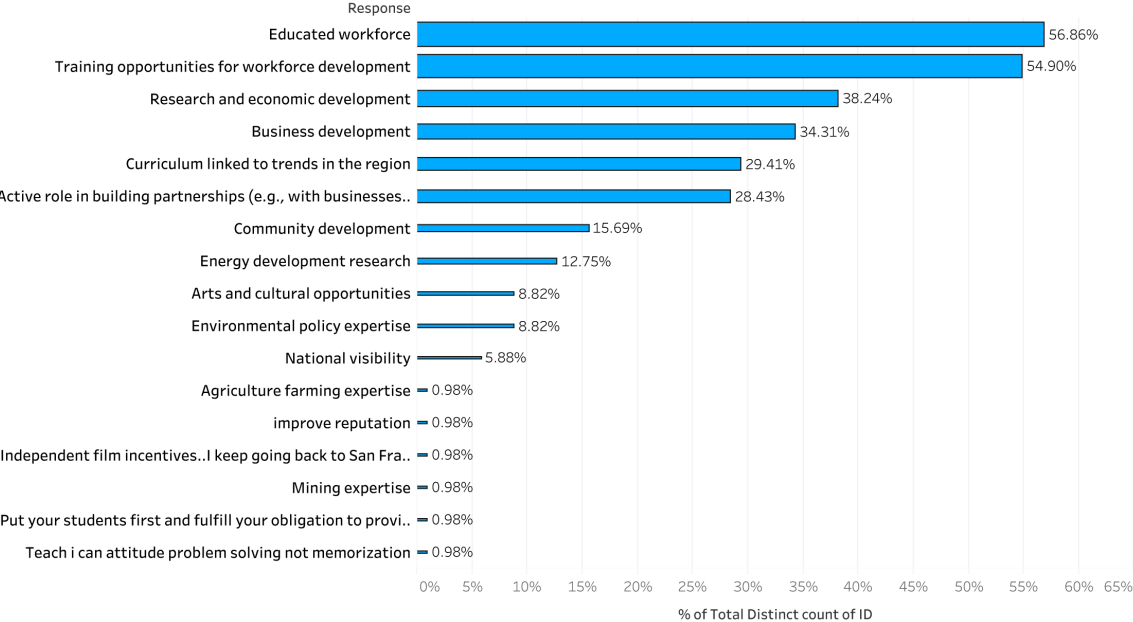


Figure 5 illustrates what the most important values UM should provide for the region and state. The top five were educated workforce, training opportunities for workforce development, research and economic development, business development, and curriculum linked to trends in the region.

Figure 5: UM Should Provide

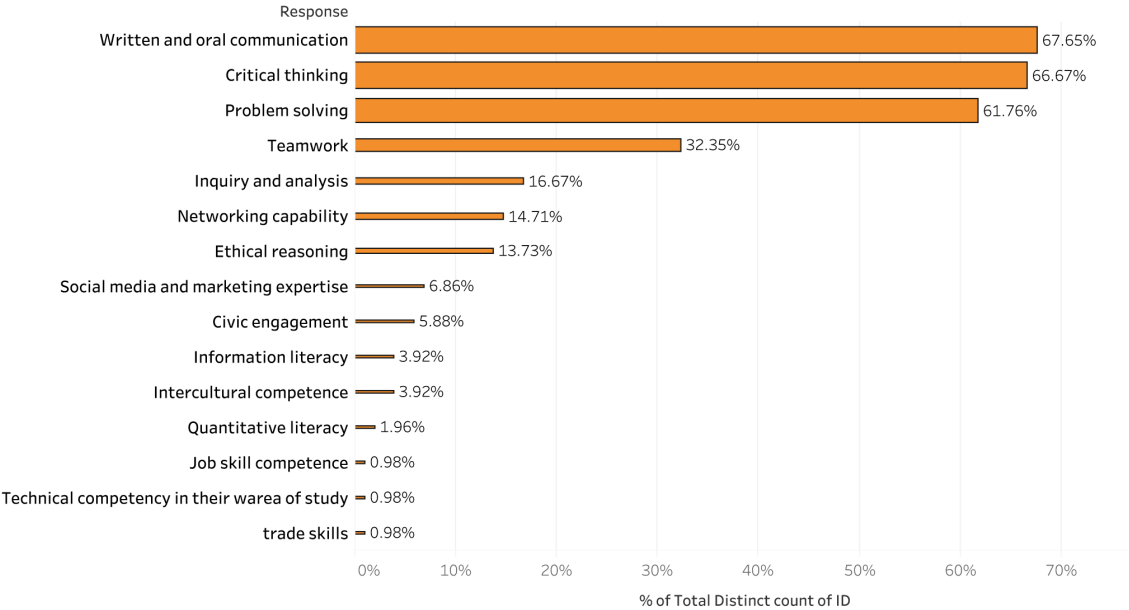
What are the most important values UM should provide for the region or state?



Businesses also outlined what they see as important skills and competencies UM students should gain through their coursework. These items, as listed in Figure 6, suggest UM students should have strong skills in written & oral communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork.

Figure 6: Skills and Competencies for College Graduates

What are the most important skills and competencies you look for from a college graduate?



Business Survey Responses Per Question

1. Which of the following would you use to describe as strengths for the state of Montana?

Please check all the strengths that apply.

- Financial resources (e.g. access to capital, tax incentives) – 7.3%
- Tourism and recreation – 75%
- Educated workforce – 45.2%
- Business development – 10.5%
- Amenities (e.g. restaurants, shopping) – 18.5%
- Healthcare – 25.8%
- Access to higher education (e.g. 2 and 4 year universities/colleges) – 55.6%
- Political climate – 8.1%
- Employment opportunities – 4%
- Natural beauty – 75%
- Transportation (e.g. airlines) – 2.4%
- Agriculture and farming – 50.8%
- Energy development – 21.8%
- Other – 5.6%

2. Which of the following would you use to describe as challenges for the state of Montana?

Please check all the challenges that apply.

- Financial resources (e.g. access to capital, tax incentives) – 54.8%
- Tourism and recreation - .8%
- Educated workforce – 21.8%
- Business development – 60.5%
- Amenities (e.g. restaurants, shopping) – 17.7%
- Healthcare – 25.8%
- Access to higher education (e.g. 2 and 4 year universities/colleges) – 12.1%
- Political climate – 44.4%
- Employment opportunities – 58.9%
- Natural beauty – 0.00%
- Transportation (e.g. airlines) – 55.6%
- Agriculture and farming – 4.8%
- Energy development – 28.2%
- Other (please elaborate): 4.8%

3. In thinking about the aforementioned state challenges, what role could or should the University of Montana play? Please use the space provided below to answer.

-See graphics in written portion above.

4. In your opinion, what actions would you like to see prioritized in the state of Montana in the next 5 to 10 years? Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, or don't know for each statement listed below.

Become a hub for arts and culture

-Strongly Disagree or Disagree: 28.7

-Neutral: 38.6%

-Agree or Strongly Agree: 32.7

Strengthen relationships between business sector and local/state government

-Strongly Disagree or Disagree: 0%

-Neutral: 12.7%

-Agree or Strongly Agree: 88.3%

Focus on environmental issues within the state

-Strongly Disagree or Disagree: 20%

-Neutral: 30%

-Agree or Strongly Agree: 50%

Increase financial support for the Montana University System

-Strongly Disagree or Disagree: 24.5%

-Neutral: 28.4%

-Agree or Strongly Agree: 47.1%

Increase Tax Incentives for Business

-Strongly Disagree or Disagree: 2%

-Neutral: 15.2%

-Agree or Strongly Agree: 82.8%

Decrease Tax Incentives for Business

-Strongly Disagree or Disagree: 78.7

-Neutral: 18.1%

-Agree or Strongly Agree: 3.2%

Make improvements in infrastructure

-Strongly Disagree or Disagree: 0%

-Neutral: 10.9%

-Agree or Strongly Agree: 89.1%

Provide incentives for college graduates to stay in MT upon graduation

-Strongly Disagree or Disagree: 4.0%

-Neutral: 23.8%

-Agree or Strongly Agree: 72.2%

Develop Trade programs

-Strongly Disagree or Disagree: 1%

-Neutral: 21.6%

-Agree or Strongly Agree: 77.4%

Research and Economic Development

-Strongly Disagree or Disagree: 3.9%

-Neutral: 19.6%

-Agree or Strongly Agree: 76.5%

Increase to Affordable Transportation

-Strongly Disagree or Disagree: 7.8%

-Neutral: 8.8%

-Agree or Strongly Agree: 83.3%

5. In your professional experience, how often have you worked with someone (e.g. faculty, staff, administrator, or student) at the University of Montana? (please select one of the options from the list below)

- 0 times (4%)
- 1-5 times (31.7%)
- 5-10 times (9.9%)
- 10-20 times (9.9%)
- More than 20 times (44.6%)

6. From the list below, what do you think is the *most important* value that the University of Montana should provide for the region or state? Please select **three** options from the list below.
- Community development (12.9%)
 - Training opportunities for workforce development (45.2%)
 - Arts and cultural opportunities (7.3%)
 - Active role in building partnerships (e.g. with businesses and/or government) (23.4%)
 - Educated workforce (46.8%)
 - Research and Economic Development (31.5%)
 - Business development (28.2%)
 - Agriculture and farming expertise (.8%)
 - Energy development research (10.5%)
 - Environmental policy expertise (7.3%)
 - National visibility (4.8%)
 - Curriculum linked to trends in the region (24.2%)
 - Other (4%)
7. From the list below, what are the *most important* skills and competencies you are looking for from a college graduate? Please select **three** options from the list below.
- Inquiry and analysis (13.7%)
 - Written and oral communication (55.6%)
 - Foreign language proficiency (0%)
 - Teamwork (26.6%)
 - Critical thinking (54.8%)
 - Quantitative literacy (1.6%)
 - Information literacy (3.2%)
 - Problem solving (50.8%)
 - Intercultural competence (3.2%)
 - Ethical reasoning (11.3%)
 - Civic engagement (4.8%)
 - Social media and marketing expertise (5.6%)
 - Networking capability (12.1%)
 - Other (3.2%)
8. The business I work for is best classified as:
- Construction (3%)
 - Manufacturing (5.9%)
 - Retail and Wholesale Trade (11.9%)
 - Finance and Business Services (27.7%)
 - Accommodations and Food (1%)
 - Mining (1%)
 - Other (38.6%)
 - Technology (3%)
 - Health Professions (7.9%)
9. I am (check one from the list below):
- Male (54.9%)
 - Female (43.1%)
 - Prefer not to answer (2%)

10. My highest level of education is (check one from the list below):
- High School Diploma (2%)
 - Some college (12.7%)
 - Bachelor's degree/4 year college degree (55.9%)
 - Master's degree (21.6%)
 - Professional degree (e.g. law degree) (2.9%)
 - Doctorate degree (3.9%)
 - Prefer not to answer (1%)
11. My age range is (check one from the list below):
- 18 to 24 (0%)
 - 25 to 34 (12.7%)
 - 35 to 44 (15.7%)
 - 45 to 54 (34.3%)
 - 55 to 64 (25.5%)
 - 65 or older (11.8%)
12. What is your race or ethnic background? (check all that apply)
- White, non-Hispanic (86.3%)
 - African American (0%)
 - Latino/Hispanic (.8%)
 - American Indian or Alaska Native (.8%)
 - Asian or Pacific Islander (0%)
 - Other (.8%)
 - Prefer not to answer (10.8%)