



# *Reston Community Center Community Survey*

2019 Report

Prepared by the Center for Survey Research  
Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service  
University of Virginia

## ***About this Report***

The Center for Survey Research at the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center conducted a survey for the Reston Community Center during the summer of 2019 to assess awareness and support for RCC; to understand current and projected use of programs; to identify barriers to RCC use; to assess the level of support for a performing arts center; and to identify accessible sources for information on leisure activities.

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**Weldon Cooper Center**  
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Center for Survey Research

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Center for Survey Research at the University of Virginia conducted the 2019 Reston Community Center (RCC) Community Survey during the summer of 2019 to assess awareness and support for RCC; to understand current and projected use of programs; to identify barriers to RCC use; to assess the level of support for a performing arts center; and to identify accessible sources for information on leisure activities. Highlights of responses are identified below.

A total of 1,906 community members participated in the survey; 1,089 of these completions were probability-based and 817 were non-probability. A probability sample ensures that results reflect the community across demographic categories and present more accurate reflections of the community's attitudes. A non-probability sample offers the opportunity for anyone who is interested to offer their views, but also may reflect views that are not representative of the community taken as a whole. Across these samples, the survey was able to capture the wide range of experiences and opinions of Reston community members. In particular, the probability sample successfully reached residents relatively new to Reston (34% have lived in Reston less than 5 years) as well as residents with a range of experiences in using RCC. While the probability and non-probability samples vary somewhat in demographics and experiences with RCC, the two samples often responded comparably on opinion items, including on support for a new arts venue.

Because of the scientific methods used to recruit the probability sample, statistical results from the probability respondents can be generalized to the Reston population with a certain level of confidence (95%). For results based on the probability sample, the margin of error due to sampling is +/- 3.7%. Because of this, highlighted findings focus on responses from the probability sample, though there is occasional reference to the non-probability results as well. For complete responses across both samples, please see Appendix B of this report.

## AWARENESS OF RESTON COMMUNITY CENTER

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There were high levels of awareness and support for RCC.

- More than four out of five (84%) probability respondents said they were “very familiar” or “somewhat familiar” with RCC. This figure jumps to 96% of non-probability respondents.
- Strong majorities said RCC makes Reston a more attractive place to live (90%) or have a business (76%); these figures are nearly identical among the non-probability sample. Nearly half (47%) of probability respondents said that RCC is “very important” to the overall quality of life in Reston; 62% of non-probability respondents consider RCC “very important” to Reston.
- Over half of probability respondents (54%) said that they or a family member have participated in an RCC-sponsored event or class in the past twelve months. Among the respondents whose households had not attended RCC in the past year, 52% had attended an RCC program or event at some point in the past. In contrast, 81% of non-probability households had attended RCC in the past year, and among the households who had not attended in the past year, 73% had attended at some point in the past.

## USE OF PROGRAMS

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- Community events (40%), the Professional Touring Artist Series at the CenterStage (31%), drop-in swim (23%) and rental of RCC space (22%) were the most widely used programs/services among probability respondents. These were also the same top four used programs/services by non-probability respondents, though with higher rates of participation.
- Among probability respondents, lifelong learning had the highest level of potential interest (63%) yet only 17% participation. Similarly, land-based fitness and wellness programs were of interest (61%) with relatively low actual participation (17%).

Three in four probability respondents (76%) expressed a desire to participate in RCC programs more than they currently do, with classes being the area of greatest interest. Eighty percent of non-probability respondents would like to participate more than they do.

## BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

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Across samples, respondents express being “too busy” as the primary reason for not participating in RCC programs as much as they would like. In addition, they selected “current programs are scheduled at inconvenient times” and “lack of awareness of existing programs” as the other top reasons for not participating more.

## SUPPORT FOR A PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

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The topic of a performing arts center has drawn wide public attention with Reston residents holding passionate views. Survey findings suggest:

- There is widespread support for this type of center in Reston. Two-thirds (68%) of probability respondents were at least somewhat interested in Reston having a larger venue for performing arts, with half being either interested or very interested. These proportions of support are closely matched among non-probability respondents as well.
- Over 80% of probability respondents were at least somewhat supportive of RCC operating the arts venue if it were built by a developer; 68% of respondents were either supportive or very supportive of this. Support was again very similarly reported within the non-probability sample.
- The majority of probability respondents (56%) were supportive of RCC financing the building of a new arts venue by means of a bond issue, though support was comparatively lower than other scenarios. Nearly 40% of probability respondents were either supportive or very supportive of this financing route, and these percentages are comparable among non-probability respondents as well.

## COMMUNICATIONS

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RCC is committed to serving the entire Reston community and was interested in the types of media respondents regularly use, as well as respondents' sources for finding information on recreational activities.

- Online and print journalism, radio, broadcast television, and Facebook were the most widely used media, with approximately half of respondents regularly using each of these media.
- The RCC seasonal program guide was the most widely used source for information about RCC programming.
- Friends, family, and internet searches were the most widely cited source for general leisure/recreational information, followed by social media and local newspapers.





## **I. Introduction**

### **About the Survey**

The 2019 Reston Community Center Community Survey was conducted by the Center for Survey Research (CSR) during the summer of 2019. The purpose of the survey was to assess awareness and support for RCC; to understand current and projected use of programs; to identify barriers to RCC use; to assess the level of support for a performing arts center and to identify accessible sources for information on leisure activities.

The 2019 survey follows the 2009 Reston Community Center Citizen Satisfaction Survey, which CSR conducted for RCC in the fall of 2009. Since that time, the Reston population, like much of Northern Virginia, has grown<sup>1</sup>. The total Reston population has increased by over 10% in the last decade, with the number of adults and households also increasing. The proportion of residents who are renters increased from 31% in 2009 to 39% in 2019. The population is also older, with a higher proportion of residents aged 65 and older. In addition, there is now a higher proportion of residents who identify as Hispanic or Latino than there was in 2009. Finally, the population's annual household income is higher, with a greater proportion in 2019 of households with an annual income over \$150,000, adjusted for inflation.

In addition to these demographic shifts, Reston has experienced significant changes in infrastructure. In 2014, the Silver Line officially opened, which facilitated travel in and out of Reston. Following the Silver Line extension, new zoning areas have been established that permit higher densities of mixed-use and residential building. With these changes, ongoing development, and increased population size, Reston residents continue to face high traffic congestion. Reston Community Center itself has undergone changes since the last survey, including the Aquatics Center renovation undertaken at the start of 2019. As RCC considers its plans for the next ten years, the results of this survey are intended to provide RCC with greater understanding of the current community's practices, needs, and priorities as they relate to recreation, leisure-time and culture.

### **Survey Methodology**

The RCC's Board of Governors Long Range Planning Committee developed a conceptual outline to serve as the basis of the questionnaire. Using the conceptual outline and previous surveys conducted by the Center for Survey Research with residents of the Reston community, a questionnaire was developed and later pretested by a focus group convened at RCC on June 4, 2019. During the focus group, participants were first asked to individually complete the questionnaire. In group discussion, they were then given the opportunity to provide feedback on the content of the questionnaire and ask questions regarding the intent of the survey. Based on pretest feedback, significant edits were made to the questionnaire, including clarification of the survey's purpose, reformatting of the questionnaire, and reorganization of questions to

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<sup>1</sup> Comparisons drawn between 2009 and 2019 are based on figures for Reston from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

improve flow and facilitate conditional logic, or skip patterns within the questionnaire. See Appendix E for a copy of the final questionnaire.

To support community-wide participation and maintain statistical integrity, the survey followed a mixed-probability and mixed-mode design. More specifically, the final sample was acquired through both probability and non-probability methods, and data were collected through both mail-in paper questionnaires as well as an online option. The questionnaires across sample types and modes were identical in terms of their content.

The probability sample was based on a stratified address-based sample (ABS) of 5,500 Reston households, meaning the probability survey was only available to Reston residents. These participants were first mailed an advance letter followed by a questionnaire packet that contained a cover letter and postage-paid return envelope. Non-respondents were sent a second questionnaire packet that provided instructions to participate in the survey online as an alternative to the included paper questionnaire. A closeout postcard was sent as a final reminder to non-respondents from the probability sample.

Non-probability participation was available to any individual over 18 who sought out the survey. RCC posted to their website a publicly available, open-access link to the online questionnaire. In addition, RCC made available 400 paper survey packets that community members could pick up, complete, and mail back directly to CSR.

For both samples, the questionnaire was available online in English and Spanish, and was available on paper in English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, and Arabic.

A timeline of key dates during survey design and data collection is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Survey tasks and dates**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Date</b>
Pretest focus group	June 4, 2019
Mail advance letters (probability)	July 3, 2019
Mail first questionnaire packets (probability)	July 15, 2019
Mail reminder letter (probability)	July 15, 2019
Open-source web survey launched (non-probability)	August 5, 2019
Mail second questionnaire, web-referral packets (probability)	August 15, 2019
Mail closeout reminder postcard (probability)	August 30, 2019
Close data collection (all)	September 16, 2019

Data collection for probability and non-probability responses ended on September 16, 2019. CSR managed the tracking of responses and performed data entry for all paper completions. Data entry validation was performed on 15% of submitted questionnaires.

## Survey Response

A total of 1,906 complete responses were collected, 1,089 of which were probability-based and 817 were non-probability. The survey response rate (based on completions from the probability sample) was 19.8%, with a margin of error of  $\pm 3.7$  percent at the 95 percent level of confidence<sup>2</sup>. For a detailed discussion of the survey methodology, including sampling design and weighting procedures, please see Appendix H.

## Demographic Overview

An early task in the analysis of any survey data is comparing the demographics of the survey sample with the demographics of the population being studied. For example, surveys often over-represent women and people in higher socio-economic categories. When there are discrepancies between the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents and the full population, it is wise to “post-weight” the data in order to compensate for these differences. In post-weighting, greater statistical weight is assigned to respondents who are in categories under-represented in the survey results compared to the population, whereas those in over-represented groups are given lesser weight. Put differently, applying weights allows the survey sample to more closely mirror the demographics of Reston.

These weights are calculated by matching the survey sample’s percentages to the population percentages on selected variables. The weighting procedure leads to small differences in the survey results but increases their accuracy by making them more reflective of the actual study population.

The probability survey data were post-weighted to the population (Reston residents) on a single characteristic: homeownership status by race. This means that survey responses from individuals in under-represented race/homeowner categories will be given greater weight so that the final data file more closely matches the distribution of these categories in the population. The non-probability results cannot be weighted because it is unknown what population this sample represents (e.g., some non-probability respondents live in Reston while others work in Reston but live elsewhere, others may live and work in a nearby area but still attend RCC events, and so on). For a complete description of the weighting procedures, including the base weighting conducted to counteract the effects of the probability sampling design, see Appendix H.

Table 2 provides the proportion breakdowns across racial/ethnic affiliation and homeownership within the samples and population. The first column shows the count and proportions of these variables among the non-probability sample, which as noted, cannot be weighted. The second column of the table shows the results from the probability sample prior to any weighting. The third column shows the results of the probability sample after all weighting has been applied. The narrative of the report focuses on the weighted probability sample as it is this data that provides the study’s ability to draw statistical inference and

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<sup>2</sup> This margin of error is calculated using the finite population correction factor (fpc), which was 0.978 for this survey, and incorporating the design effect due to weighting, which was 1.625.

generalize survey results to the population of Reston. The fourth column presents estimates of the Reston population, when available. These population estimates are from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

As seen in Table 2, renters were under-represented across racial/ethnic affiliations, and White homeowners were over-represented. Post-stratification weighting helped to bring the probability sample in closer alignment to the Reston population on this measure. Specifically, the percentage of White homeowners in the weighted probability sample was brought down to 52%, and the percentage of White renters was brought up to 28%. The percentages of African American/Black renters, Asian renters, and Multiracial/Other race renters were also brought up to more closely match the Reston population.

**Table 2. Sample and population distributions across racial/ethnic affiliation and homeownership status**

	Non-probability Sample		Probability Sample Unweighted		Probability Sample Weighted		Reston	
	Own	Rent	Own	Rent	Own	Rent	Own	Rent
White	76.9%	7.4%	73.4%	10.1%	52.4%	27.5%	51.6%	27.1%
African American/Black	2.5%	1.5%	2.6%	1.2%	2.9%	4.2%	2.8%	5.2%
Asian	3.4%	0.5%	5.9%	1.8%	5.2%	4.1%	5.1%	4.5%
Multiracial/Other race	6.6%	1.2%	4.2%	0.7%	1.3%	2.5%	1.3%	2.4%
<i>Total</i>	<i>89.4%</i>	<i>10.6%</i>	<i>86.2%</i>	<i>13.8%</i>	<i>61.8%</i>	<i>38.2%</i>	<i>60.8%</i>	<i>39.2%</i>

While the post-stratification weighting only incorporated race by homeownership, other demographic proportions within the weighted probability sample were impacted. The following demographic overview discusses additional characteristics of the weighted probability data. Complete demographics for the full sample can be found in Appendix B.

As seen in Table 3, approximately 61% of the weighted probability respondents were female. The non-probability sample had an even larger portion female (78%). Slightly more than a third of the weighted probability respondents (34%) were over 64 years old, 29% were between the ages of 50 and 64, 13% were ages 40 to 49, and 24% were under 40 years of age. The probability respondents were slightly younger than respondents from the non-probability sample, though both still skewed older than the population. The average age of the weighted probability sample was 55 years old.

Approximately 62% of weighted probability respondents were married, with 21% of weighted probability respondents reporting that they had children living in the household. Both the probability and non-probability samples reflect the population well in the proportion of households with children.

**Table 3. Sample and population distributions across gender, age, marital status, children, Hispanic origin, and language**

	Non-probability Sample		Probability Sample Unweighted		Probability Sample Weighted		Reston	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Gender</b>								
Male	146	22.3%	410	39.8%	397	38.7%	22958	47.0%
Female	508	77.7%	619	60.2%	630	61.3%	25879	53.0%
<i>Total</i>	<i>654</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>1029</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>1028</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>48837</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
<b>Age</b>								
18-29	10	1.6%	41	4.1%	73	7.5%	8943	18.3%
30-39	86	14.0%	146	14.7%	163	16.8%	9774	20.0%
40-49	114	18.5%	135	13.6%	124	12.7%	8940	18.3%
50-64	154	25.0%	286	28.9%	279	28.6%	12184	25.0%
65 and above	251	40.8%	382	38.6%	336	34.4%	8996	18.4%
<i>Total</i>	<i>615</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>990</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>975</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>48837</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
<b>Marital status</b>								
Married	469	69.9%	689	66.1%	647	62.2%	25586	52.4%
Divorced or Separated	88	13.1%	142	13.6%	150	14.4%	6835	12.4%
Widowed	47	7.0%	79	7.6%	83	7.9%	1871	3.8%
Single	67	10.0%	132	12.7%	160	15.4%	14545	29.8%
<i>Total</i>	<i>671</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>1089</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>1040</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>48837</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
<b>Household has children in the home</b>								
No children	467	70.4%	738	77.5%	741	78.8%	18987	74.6%
Yes, have children	196	29.6%	214	22.5%	199	21.2%	6451	25.4%
<i>Total</i>	<i>663</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>952</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>939</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>25438</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
<b>Hispanic/Latinx origin</b>								
Yes	17	2.6%	51	5.0%	55	5.4%	5284	10.8%
No	628	97.4%	959	95.0%	954	94.6%	43553	89.2%
<i>Total</i>	<i>645</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>1010</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>1009</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>48837</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
<b>Primary language spoken at home</b>								
English	660	96.6%	985	93.5%	965	91.6%	35431	72.5%
Language other than English	23	3.4%	68	6.5%	88	8.4%	13406	27.5%
<i>Total</i>	<i>683</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>1053</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>1053</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>48837</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

Five percent of probability respondents identified themselves as being of Hispanic or LatinX origin, which is a greater proportion than represented in the non-probability sample, though both show underrepresentation compared to the population of Reston.

Nine in ten weighted probability respondents (92%) reported English to be the primary language spoken in their household, compared to 73% in the population. Of those reporting

languages other than English, nearly one-quarter (24%) reported Spanish and an additional one-fifth (20%) reported Chinese as the primary language spoken in their household.

As seen in Table 4, 54% of weighted probability respondents were working full-time, an additional 9% were either working part-time or were self-employed, and 28% percent were retired. Of those reporting their income, 12% had annual household incomes less than \$50,000, over one-quarter (28%) earned \$50,000 to \$100,000, one-fifth (22%) earned \$100,000 to \$150,000, and two-fifths (39%) earned \$150,000 or more. The survey samples did skew toward a higher average income than the general population, though representation is fairly well matched in the middle-income categories from \$50,000 to \$149,999.

**Table 4. Sample and population distributions across employment status, income, and education**

	Non-probability Sample		Probability Sample Unweighted		Probability Sample Weighted		Reston	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Employment status<sup>1</sup></b>								
Working full-time	297	44.1%	521	50.0%	562	53.8%	--	--
Working part-time	43	6.4%	62	5.9%	59	5.6%	--	--
Working self-employed	38	5.6%	51	4.9%	39	3.7%	--	--
Homemaker	28	4.2%	35	3.4%	39	3.8%	--	--
Retired	244	36.2%	340	32.6%	290	27.8%	--	--
Other	24	3.6%	34	3.3%	54	5.2%	--	--
<i>Total</i>	<i>674</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>1043</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>1043</i>	<i>100.0%</i>		
<b>Household income</b>								
Less than \$50,000	40	8.6%	61	7.8%	94	11.7%	4276	16.8%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	118	25.4%	179	22.8%	222	27.5%	6668	26.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	110	23.7%	182	23.2%	177	21.8%	5709	22.4%
\$150,000 and higher	197	42.4%	362	46.2%	316	39.0%	8785	34.5%
<i>Total</i>	<i>465</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>784</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>804</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>25438</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
<b>Education</b>								
Some college or less	65	9.7%	128	12.3%	152	14.7%	17794	36.4%
4-year college	179	26.7%	286	27.4%	302	29.0%	16991	34.8%
Some graduate school or more	426	63.6%	630	60.3%	586	56.3%	14052	28.8%
<i>Total</i>	<i>670</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>1044</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>1040</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>48837</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

<sup>1</sup> Comparable categories are not available in the American Community Survey

Approximately 15% of weighted probability residents' highest achieved educational level was some college or less. Twenty-nine percent had attained a four-year college degree. Over half

(56%) had done some graduate work or completed a graduate program. Both survey samples did skew toward more education than the general Reston population.

Turning to measures specific to the survey, over two-thirds (69%) of the employed weighted probability respondents had a job located somewhere other than Reston (Table 5); this proportion was much lower among the non-probability respondents, where there was a more even split. About one-third of weighted probability respondents (34%) were relatively new to Reston, having lived there for less than five years. Fifteen percent had lived in Reston five to nine years, 24% had lived there 10 to 24 years, and 27% had lived there more than 25 years. The non-probability respondents had generally lived in Reston longer.

**Table 5. Sample distributions across job location, length of residence, awareness of RCC, and use of RCC**

	Non-probability Sample		Probability Sample Unweighted		Probability Sample Weighted	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Job location</b>						
Reston	162	48.20%	166	29.2%	182	30.8%
Elsewhere	174	51.80%	402	70.8%	410	69.2%
<i>Total</i>	336	100.0%	568	100.0%	592	100.0%
<b>Length of residence in Reston</b>						
Less than 5 years	86	13.70%	268	25.2%	358	33.7%
5 to 9 years	82	13.10%	146	13.7%	163	15.4%
10 to 24 years	199	31.70%	291	27.3%	251	23.6%
25 years or more	261	41.60%	359	33.7%	290	27.3%
<i>Total</i>	628	100.0%	1064	100.0%	1061	100.0%
<b>Heard of Reston Community Center</b>						
Yes	799	97.80%	1026	95.5%	1010	94.0%
No	18	2.20%	48	4.5%	64	6.0%
<i>Total</i>	817	100.0%	1074	100.0%	1074	100.0%
<b>Used Reston Community Center in last 12 months</b>						
Yes	635	81.20%	547	55.1%	527	54.1%
No	147	18.80%	446	44.9%	448	45.9%
<i>Total</i>	782	100.0%	993	100.0%	975	100.0%

Ninety-four percent of the weighted probability sample had heard of RCC, and 54% had someone in their household who participated in or attended an RCC program or event in the past 12 months. RCC use was much higher among the non-probability respondents with 81% having had someone in their household participate or attend an RCC event in the last 12 months.

For complete frequencies of the probability sample, see Appendix A. For additional comparison between the probability and non-probability samples, see Appendix B.

## Analysis

### *Open-end Responses Coding*

To provide respondents ample opportunity to fully share their experiences and opinions with RCC, the survey questionnaire contained multiple open-ended questions where respondents could write-in their answers. CSR performed thematic coding across all the open-ended responses, which entails an inductive and iterative process. When a similar or related response appears repeatedly for a given question, a code is assigned to represent that response category. These codes were tracked, assigned, and tallied using Microsoft Excel. Coding schemes were also reviewed by a second analyst to improve integrity of the subjective coding process.

For the close-ended questions that contained an open-end answer choice (e.g., an “Other, please specify”), new categories were added to the quantitative data file and analysis was rerun when the new category had a critical mass of cases (typically at least five cases). If an open-ended response was given by just one case, then a new category was not added to the data file because the count size would be too small for meaningful analysis. Additionally, if a respondent gave an open-ended response that matched one of the existing categories, their response was reassigned to the existing category.

For the free-form open-ended questions (e.g., “What programs or facilities would you like to see RCC offer that it does not currently?”), a summary is provided in the narrative of the recurrent common themes that emerged across those responses. The complete list of open-ended responses, by question, can be viewed in Appendices F and G.

### *Group Comparisons*

For this study, two types of comparison analysis were prepared: cross-tabulations and means comparisons. Across both types of comparison, statistical significance tests were performed to verify the existence of statistical differences among various subgroups. For the cross-tabulations, Chi-Square tests of independence were used to determine statistical significance; t-tests were run to determine statistical significance across the means comparisons. Put simply, if a survey result is found to be statistically significant, then we can confidently expect the same finding to exist in our population (i.e., Reston).

The cross-tabulation analysis examines most of the attitudinal and behavioral measures by five demographic variables:

- Age
- Zip code
- Homeownership status
- Length of residence in Reston
- The presence of children in the home

The results of the demographic cross-tabulation analysis are presented in Appendix C.



The means comparison analysis breaks down a subset of attitudinal and behavioral measures by the following demographic variables:

- Marital status
- Gender
- Education
- The presence of children in the home
- Length of residence in Reston
- Homeownership status
- Zip code
- Age
- Employment status
- Location of job
- Ownership status of commercial/rental property in Reston
- Ownership status of a business in Reston
- Primary language spoken in the home
- Hispanic identification
- Racial/ethnic identification
- Annual household income

The results of the means comparison analysis can be found in Appendix D.

Unless otherwise noted, the analysis and summary of findings in this report are based on weighted probability responses only, which provide the measures of prevalence and enable inference to the larger Reston community.

While the scientifically drawn probability sample provides the statistical inference for the study, it was still vital to include non-probability data collection as well for several reasons. First, unlike the probability sample, the non-probability method allowed non-residents of Reston to participate in the survey. This is especially important as RCC serves not just those who live in Reston but all members of the Reston community, including those who work in Reston but may live elsewhere. Additionally, the non-probability design permitted additional household members to respond, not just those selected from the ABS sample, making the survey process more inclusive. Finally, the non-probability design provided the opportunity for any individual to express their experiences with and opinions about RCC. Because of that, the non-probability platform very well may have attracted more active and involved respondents, compared to the probability cases, as these were individuals who sought out the survey.

For complete non-probability responses, see Appendix B, which includes a comparison of non-probability respondents to probability respondents across all responses, and see Appendix G for non-probability respondents' open-ended comments.

## **II. Familiarity and Awareness**

To begin, respondents were asked whether or not they had heard of Reston Community Center (RCC). Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated that they had heard of RCC, with 94% answering “yes” to this question. Only respondents who had heard of RCC were asked the remaining questions. Respondents who had not heard of RCC were asked to skip to the last section of the questionnaire – demographics.

Respondents who had heard of RCC were then asked about their familiarity with RCC’s program offerings. Approximately four out of five respondents (83%) were at least somewhat familiar with RCC programming. There were several statistically significant demographic differences regarding familiarity. Residents who have children at home, own their homes, and/or are retired are more familiar with RCC programming. Additionally, familiarity increases with age as well as length of residence in Reston. See Appendix D (Mean Comparisons) for additional comparisons.

### **Importance of RCC**

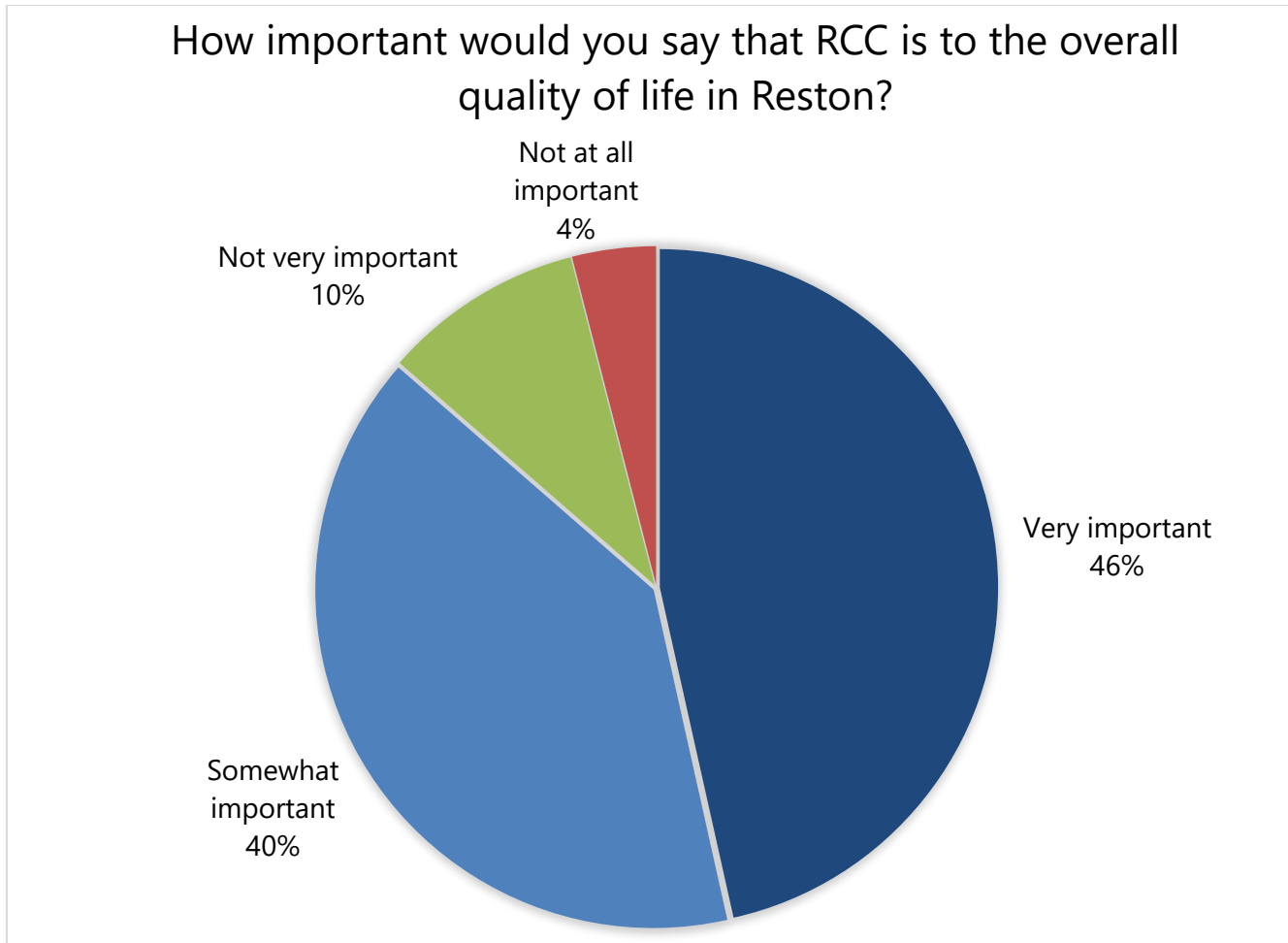
To gauge the general importance of RCC to the Reston community, respondents were asked a series of questions about RCC’s impact on the quality of life in Reston and the extent to which RCC makes Reston a more attractive place to live and/or work.

#### *Quality of life in Reston*

When asked how important they consider RCC to the overall quality of life in Reston, respondents overwhelmingly agreed it was important (Figure 1). Nearly half of respondents (46%) said RCC was “very important,” and an additional 40% said “somewhat important.”

Reported importance was highest among residents who are older, work in Reston, speak a language other than English at home, whose household income is below \$50,000, and/or those who have lived in Reston for longer than 24 years (Appendix D).

**Figure 1. Importance of RCC to overall quality of life in Reston**



***Reston as a more attractive place to live***

Nine out of ten respondents (90%) think RCC makes Reston a more attractive place to live. Agreement to this sentiment was highest among respondents who are younger than 29 and those older than 49 (Appendix C).

***Reston as a more attractive place for businesses***

In addition to RCC’s impact on Reston as a place to live, respondents were asked their opinion on RCC’s impact on Reston as a place for businesses. Three-quarters (76%) of respondents reported that RCC makes Reston a more attractive place for a business to locate.<sup>3</sup> Respondents over 64 years old and those without children agreed with this sentiment at a statistically higher rate (Appendix C).

<sup>3</sup> The 76% who answered “yes” reflects the valid percent, meaning between respondents who answered “yes” or “no,” 76% said “yes.” Two other answer categories were available for respondents – “it depends” and “don’t know.” These categories are excluded from the valid percent calculation, but counts and percent totals for all four categories are presented in Appendix C. It is worth noting that sizeable portions of respondents did select one of these two other categories.

### **III. Participation and Interest in RCC Programming**

#### **Use in Past Twelve Months**

To assess current participation, respondents were asked, *"In the past 12 months, have you and/or a household member attended a performance, class, workshop, or event at RCC or RCC-sponsored event?"* Approximately half of respondents (54%) indicated that they or a household member had attended RCC in the last 12 months.

Participation in RCC programs in the past 12 months did vary by select demographic characteristics. Older respondents reported recent household participation at a higher rate than younger participants did. Rate of participation also increased with length of residence and the presence of children in the home (Appendix C).

#### *Age of participants*

Respondents who indicated their household had used RCC in the past 12 months were asked the ages of all household members who had recently participated. Over 40% of respondents reported a household member older than 65 who had used RCC, and this was the most reported age group. Participants ages 50 to 65 (reported by 33% of respondents) were the second most common age group of household RCC participants. For the complete age breakdown, see Appendix A.

#### *Frequency of participation*

Respondents whose households had used RCC programs in the last 12 months were also asked how frequently they or their household members participated. Most respondents (64%) indicated that they/their household members participate only occasionally. Seventeen percent participate a few times a month, 9% participate once a week and 10% participate multiple times a week.

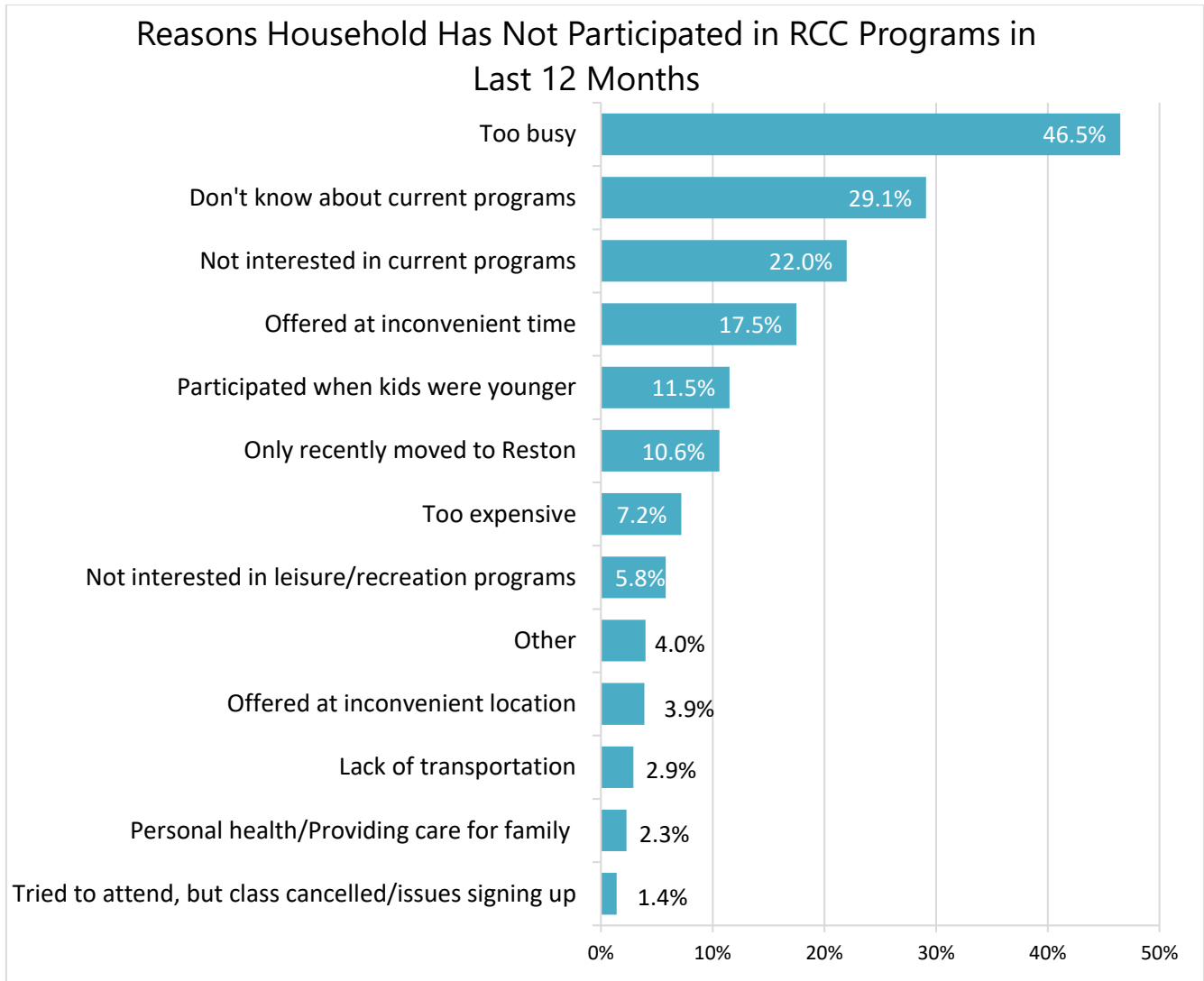
#### *Reasons for not attending in past twelve months*

Respondents whose household had *not* participated in RCC programs in the past 12 months were asked the reason(s) for having not attended.<sup>4</sup> As can be seen in Figure 2, being too busy was the most widely reported reason, with nearly 50% of respondents providing this answer. The next most common reason for not attending was a lack of awareness about current programs (29%), followed by a lack of interest in current RCC program offerings (22%). Percentages in Figure 2 total to more than 100 percent because respondents could offer more than one reason for not attending.

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<sup>4</sup> Additional categories were added in post-coding of open-ended responses: "Personal health constraint or providing care for family member" and "Tried to attend, but difficulty signing up/class was cancelled."

**Figure 2. Reasons household has not participated in RCC programs in last 12 months**



*Lifetime participation*

Respondents who indicated they had not attended or participated in an RCC or RCC-sponsored event in the last 12 months were then asked if they or members of their household had ever attended an RCC program or event. Of these respondents, slightly over half (51.6%) indicated that they had participated in RCC at some point in the past.

**Participation and Interest per Program Type**

To assess use of different programs, all respondents were asked to rate their participation or interest across a series of program types. Specifically, for each program, the respondent could indicate if they "Have participated/currently participate," "May be interested in participating," or were "Not ever interested in participating." The list of programs was:

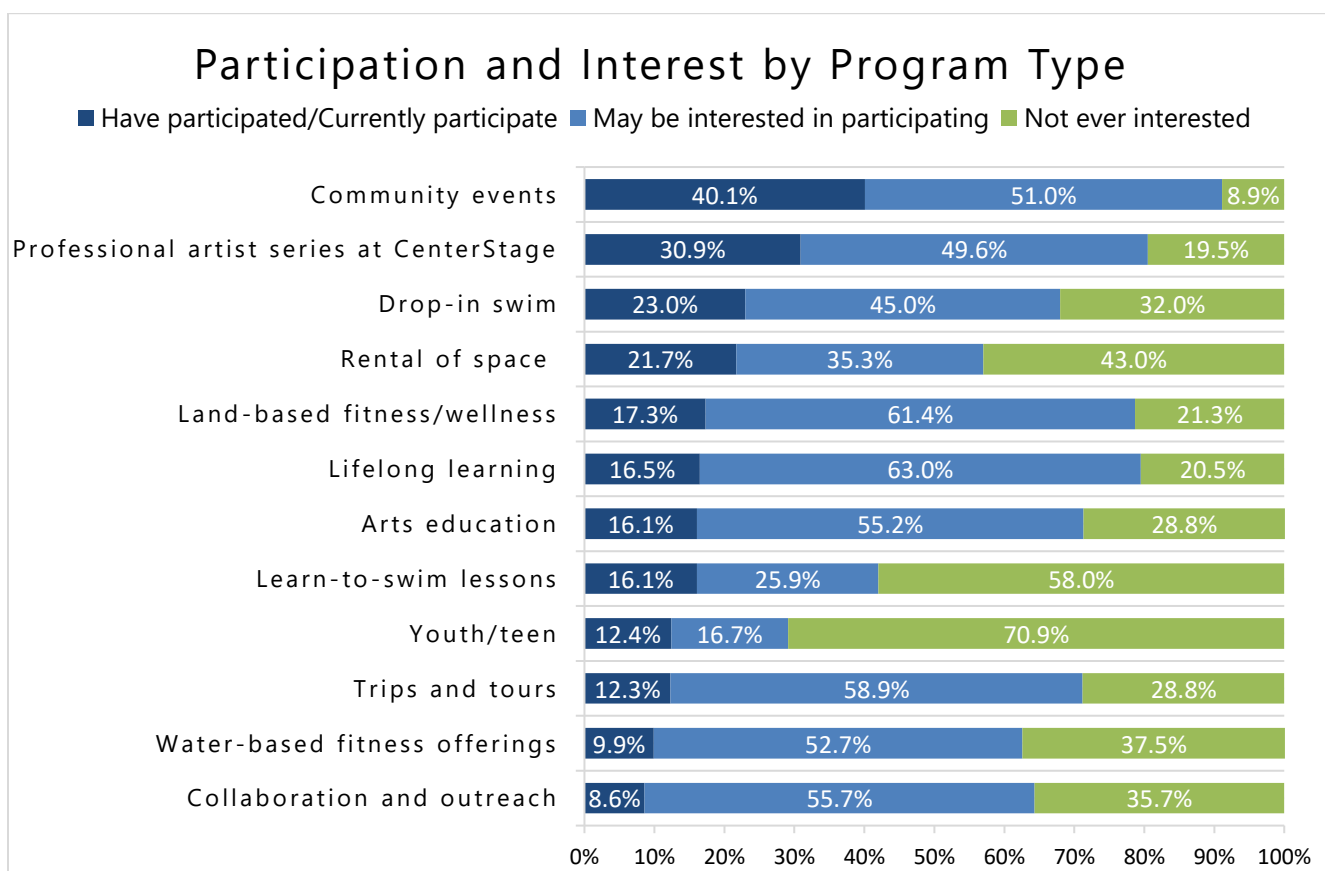
- Rental of space
- Drop-in swim

- *Learn-to-swim lessons*
- *Water-based fitness offerings*
- *Arts education*
- *Community event*
- *Professional Touring Artists Series at the CenterStage*
- *Youth/teen*
- *Lifelong learning*
- *Land-based fitness/wellness*
- *Collaboration and outreach*
- *Trips and tours*

As seen in Figure 3 below, community events are the most widely used program type with 40% of respondents' households having attended an RCC community event. An additional 51% of respondents are potentially interested in participating in a community event.

The Professional Touring Artist Series was the second most participated-in program type (31%), followed by drop-in swim (23%). It is worth noting that during 2019, swimming at RCC was prevented by the year-long renovation of the aquatics venue.

**Figure 3. Participation and interest by program type**



In terms of programs with high interest but relatively low participation, both lifelong learning and land-based fitness/wellness each had over 60% of respondents express interest.

Specifically, 63% of respondents reported potential interest in lifelong learning, while just 17% had participated in that program. Sixty-one percent of respondents expressed potential interest in land-based fitness/wellness with only 17% having participated. These two program types are followed closely in terms of potential interest by trips and tours, with 59% of respondents reporting interest compared to just 12% of respondents having participated.

### *Most relevant existing programs*

Based on the previous list of program types, respondents were then asked in an open-ended question which programs they consider the most relevant to their household. Of the 854 respondents who answered this question, at least 25% *each* included community events, lifelong learning, land-based fitness, and/or the professional touring artist series in their response of programs most relevant to their household. Water-based fitness offerings and arts education were also popular choices, with both appearing in one in five respondents' list of programs. If one includes non-probability responses in the analysis of open-ended response, these same six program types are the most frequently cited. The complete lists of open-ended responses can be viewed in Appendices F and G.

### *Programs residents would like to see offered*

Respondents were quite varied in their responses to the open-ended question, "*What programs or facilities would you like to see RCC offer that it does not currently?*" The most common responses included more age-specific programming, fitness/sports programming, and additional lifelong learning/educational courses.

Approximately one in five probability respondents who answered this question referenced age-specific programming. In terms of which age range(s) respondents wanted to see programming geared towards, answers were again varied. Many respondents mentioned senior programming specifically, while others suggested "adult only" programming aimed towards middle-aged adults. With respect to programming for youth and teens, it seemed that respondents were interested in more highly targeted programming for specific age groups. For example, one respondent cited a lack of programming for children under the age of 7, while others saw a need for infant care specifically. Other respondents mentioned programming specific to "tweens" (10-12 years old). Thus, while RCC has youth/teen cohort-specific programming already, respondents would like to see a greater number of programs, as well as programs that cater to specific, narrower, age ranges.

Fitness/sports programming and additional lifelong learning/educational courses each accounted for approximately 10% of responses. In terms of fitness/sports, some respondents listed specific sports/activities (tennis and yoga were among the more popular suggestions) while others simply suggested more of the existing fitness programs. Yoga came up in these responses as well, with a few respondents indicating that the current yoga offerings are too infrequent and are often full. A subset of respondents also requested fitness classes catered to individuals with limited mobility. Lastly, respondents also suggested offering fitness/sports programs that cater to working adults, mentioning either early mornings, later in the evenings,

or more weekend fitness/sports programming. For lifelong learning/education courses, responses were highly varied with little consistency. The suggestions for lifelong learning ranged from real estate classes, to cooking classes, to STEM training, to gardening, to various craft classes.

Lastly, a substantial number of respondents who answered this question (over 20%) indicated that they had no additional suggestions or were not sure what else RCC could offer. Given the other responses, it may be that some respondents are satisfied with the type and variety of programs already offered, but perhaps would like more varied hours or additional offerings of existing programming. The full list of open-ended responses from probability respondents can be reviewed in Appendix F, and the non-probability responses in Appendix G.



## IV. Access and Barriers to Participation

### Desired Frequency and Type of Participation

The next series of questions examined respondents' intended use of RCC facilities and programs. First, respondents were asked how often they would like to participate in RCC programs and activities. Approximately one-quarter (27%) of respondents would like to participate regularly, over one-third (37%) would like to participate occasionally, and one-quarter (26%) are interested in a few times a year. Only one in ten respondents (11%) had no current interest in participating.

When asked if they would like to participate in RCC programs/activities more than they currently do, over three-fourths (76%) of respondents said they would. In response to a follow-up question on the kinds of programs/activities that respondents would like to participate in more,<sup>5</sup> nearly four in five respondents (79%) said they would like to take a class. Over 50% of respondents said either a workshop or performance. Participating in an RCC trip was the fourth most common response with 39% of respondents indicating interest in participating in these more. For the complete frequency, see Appendix A.

### Barriers to Participation

#### *Reasons for not attending as frequently as desired*

Given that three in four respondents (76%) would like to participate in RCC more than they currently do, it is important to examine the factors preventing desired participation. To that end, respondents were given a list of potential barriers and asked to rate each item on a scale of one to five, with one representing "Not at all a barrier" and five indicating a "Significant barrier." The list of items was:

- *Cost/too expensive*
- *Lack of transportation*
- *Locations of programming too far/not convenient*
- *Duration of commitment, not enough time/too busy*
- *Current programs are scheduled at inconvenient times*
- *Program schedule is inconsistent*
- *Classes/programs that respondent wants to take overlap*
- *Lack of awareness for existing programs*
- *Difficulty with registration*
- *Classes/programs always full*
- *Something else<sup>6</sup>*

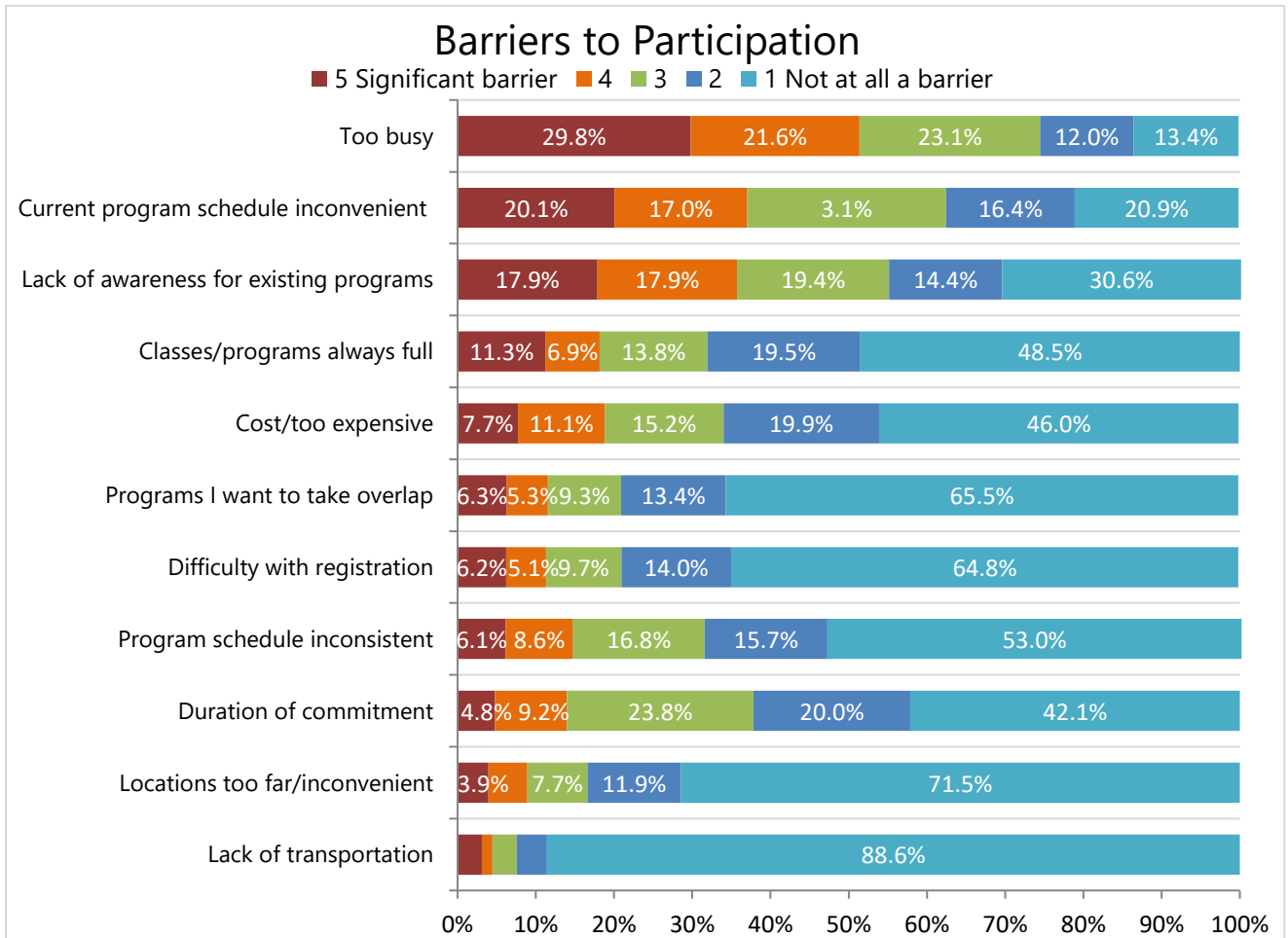
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<sup>5</sup> Additional categories were added in post-coding of open-ended responses: "Swimming/pool related" and "Fitness/sports activity."

<sup>6</sup> The category of "Something else" was excluded from the graph because the number of responses was far fewer than for other categories, and the resulting percentages were then misleading. To review the frequency table for "Something else" and the other categories, see Appendix A.

Not having enough time/being too busy had the highest average rating (3.19), meaning it was the most widely reported barrier. Over 50% of respondents rated being too busy as either a four or five on the barrier scale (Figure 4). Respondents who have children, who are employed, and/or are between 30 and 64 years old rated this barrier significantly higher than did other respondents.

**Figure 4. Barriers to more frequent RCC participation**



The scheduling of current programs at inconvenient times was the second most widely reported barrier, based on the average of 2.92 on the one to five scale. Over a third (37%) of respondents rated this barrier as either a four or five. This barrier was rated significantly higher by respondents who are between 30 and 64 years old, whose educational level is less than a 4-year college degree, and those whose annual income is less than \$50,000.

A lack of awareness for existing programs was the third most cited barrier (mean of 2.61) with 36% of respondents rating this barrier as a four or five. This barrier was rated significantly higher by respondents who have lived in Reston for less than 10 years, work full-time, and/or are 30-39 or 50-64 years old.

Many other barriers' ratings also significantly differed by demographic characteristics. Of note, lack of transportation was rated significantly higher by respondents who are retired and/or

over 64 years old. Additionally, cost was a highly rated barrier by respondents who have children, are renters, whose educational level is less than a 4-year college degree, and/or whose household primarily speaks a language other than English. Unsurprisingly, the rating of cost as a barrier had an inverse linear relationship with household income. In other words, families with lower income rated cost as a greater barrier than did families with higher income. For the complete analysis of barrier ratings by demographic characteristics, please see Appendix D.

### **Strategies to Enable Participation**

After respondents identified potential barriers to participation, they were then asked in an open-ended question, *“What could RCC do to enable you or your family to use RCC more?”* Approximately one in three respondents indicated that a wider range of classes and scheduling of programs would enable greater participation. The variety of this category of responses closely mirrored the program suggestions from the previous section. Again, respondents mentioned offering programming at additional times to accommodate working adults as well as age-specific programming.

In addition to a wider range of classes and a more accommodating schedule, approximately a quarter of respondents indicated that better communication would also enable greater participation. Multiple respondents indicated that they would like event alerts, either through text or through email. Online communication and advertising also came up regularly, with respondents encouraging RCC to better promote programs and activities around the community (using library billboards, etc.) and perhaps to implement some kind of regular newsletter that would allow potential participants to stay up-to-date on RCC events and programs. Some respondents also suggested using Facebook or other social media platforms. Complete responses can be found in Appendices F and G.

## V. Facilities

### Current Demand

Respondents were asked the extent to which they think the existing recreational and cultural facilities in and around Reston meet the current demand. Most respondents reported that existing facilities either “definitely” (18%) or “probably” (57%) meet current demand.

However, in a separate question, respondents were asked if they had encountered any difficulty signing up for RCC programs specifically, due to classes/facilities already being full. Over 40% either had encountered difficulty trying to sign up or hadn’t even bothered to try because they anticipated issues with demand being too high. RCC may consider adding additional classes/programs for high demand offerings in order to fully accommodate that demand.

### Desired Facility Updates

Respondents were asked how important they consider it for RCC to continue to update existing facilities and carry out renovations. Over two-thirds of respondents considered RCC updates to be either “important” (35%) or “very important” (32%), and an additional one-fourth (26%) consider it either “somewhat” or “slightly” important for RCC to continue performing updates.

With a few exceptions, this opinion did not differ significantly by most demographic characteristics. However, it is worth noting that respondents who were newer to Reston (had lived in Reston less than five years) and/or worked in Reston did place significantly more importance on RCC updates and renovations.

Respondents who reported RCC updates and renovations being carried out as either “very important,” “important,” or “somewhat important,” were then asked an open-ended follow-up question as to what updates or renovations they would like to see done at either RCC facility.

Regarding the Hunters Woods facility, the most common response (reported by approximately one-quarter of respondents) dealt with expansion and/or renovation of the performing arts space, fitness rooms/locker rooms, and casual lounge areas. Regarding the current performance space, respondents specifically requested improvements to the acoustics and seating. The survey results don’t offer enough detail to determine if respondents were referring to the performance attributes of the CenterStage or the Community Room, but based on utilization, those comments likely pertain to the Community Room. The second most common comment referred to the pool, with respondents eager for the reopening following the improvements already underway.

Other recurrent responses were nonspecific routine maintenance/upkeep (20%) as well as updates related to aesthetic improvements (18%), like painting, landscaping, replacing the carpet, and updating the lighting and furniture. Additionally, one in ten respondents requested improved parking/access and increased security of the parking lot and area surrounding the Hunters Woods facility, especially at night.

Similar themes emerged in the requested updates to the Lake Anne facility. The most common response again referred to expansion and/or renovation of existing facilities (26%). Specifically,

respondents would like to see larger fitness spaces that are more private, larger and improved meeting spaces/classrooms, and renovated bathrooms. Approximately 19% of respondents described general upkeep, 11% requested aesthetic improvements, and 10% would like more parking available at Lake Anne.

## **Performing Arts Center**

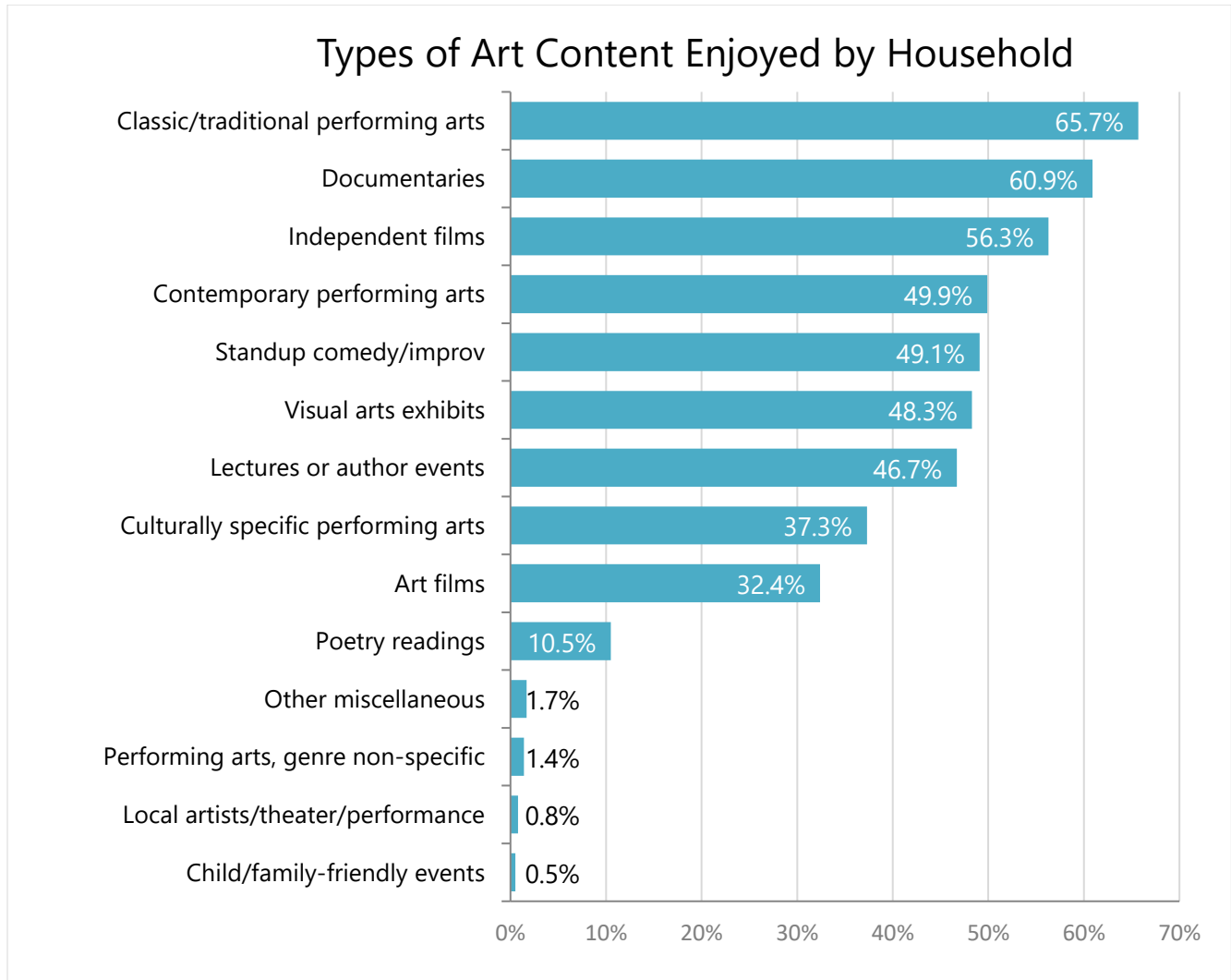
In order to assess the Reston community's perspectives on expanding RCC's cultural and arts venues, respondents were asked a series of questions about their cultural consumption, interest in a larger performing arts venue, and level of support for different funding scenarios of a new performing arts center.

First, respondents were asked about the types of art content that their household likes.<sup>7</sup> The most reported preferred art content was music, dance, and theater from America and Europe, which was liked by two-thirds of responding households. Documentaries (61%) and independent films (56%) were the second and third most cited types of art content. For the full range of responses, see Table 5 on the following page.

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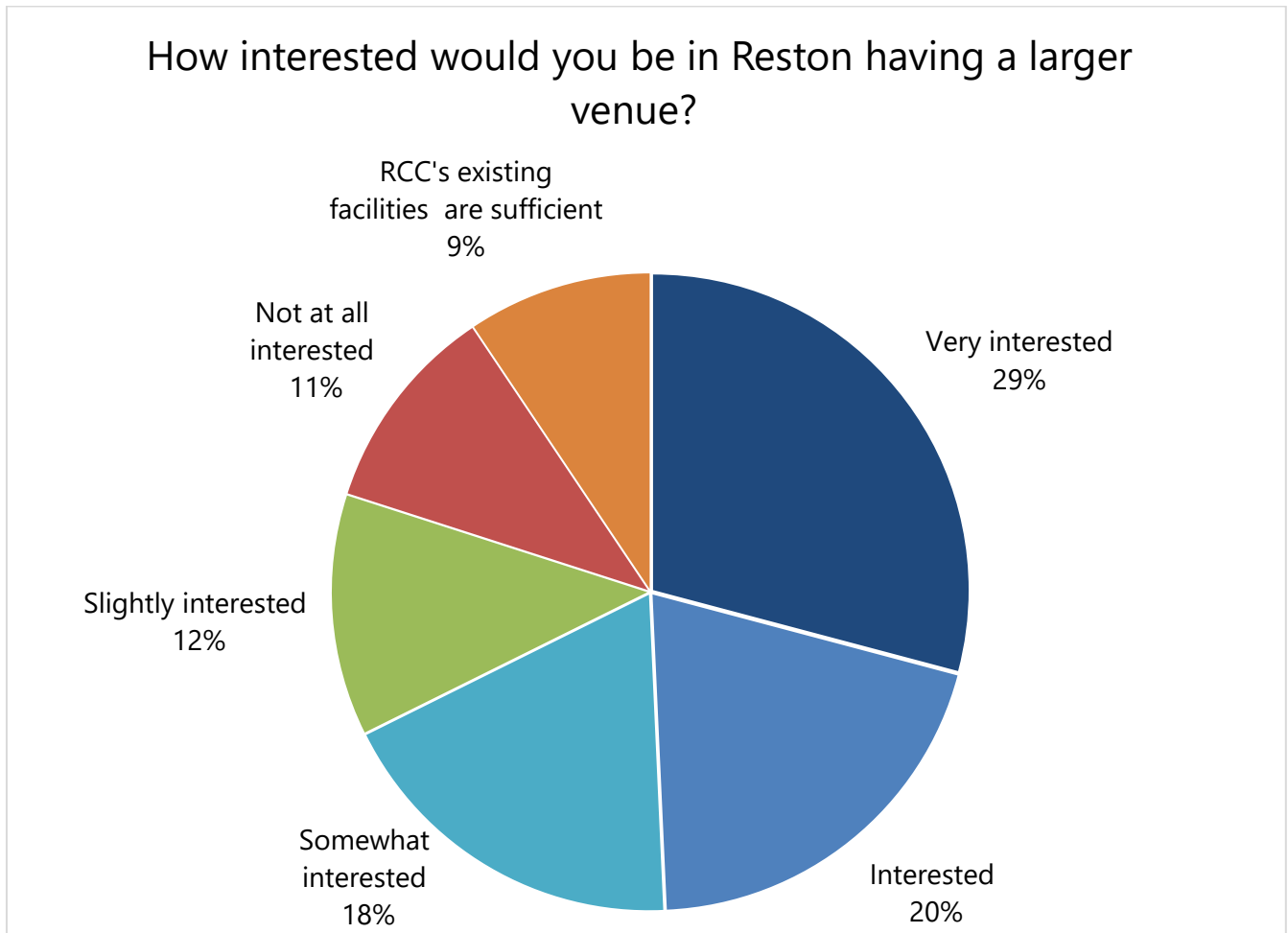
<sup>7</sup> Additional categories were added in post-coding of open-ended responses: "Children/family-friendly events," "Local artists/theater/performance" and "Music, dance, or theater, genre non-specific."

Figure 5. Types of art content enjoyed by household



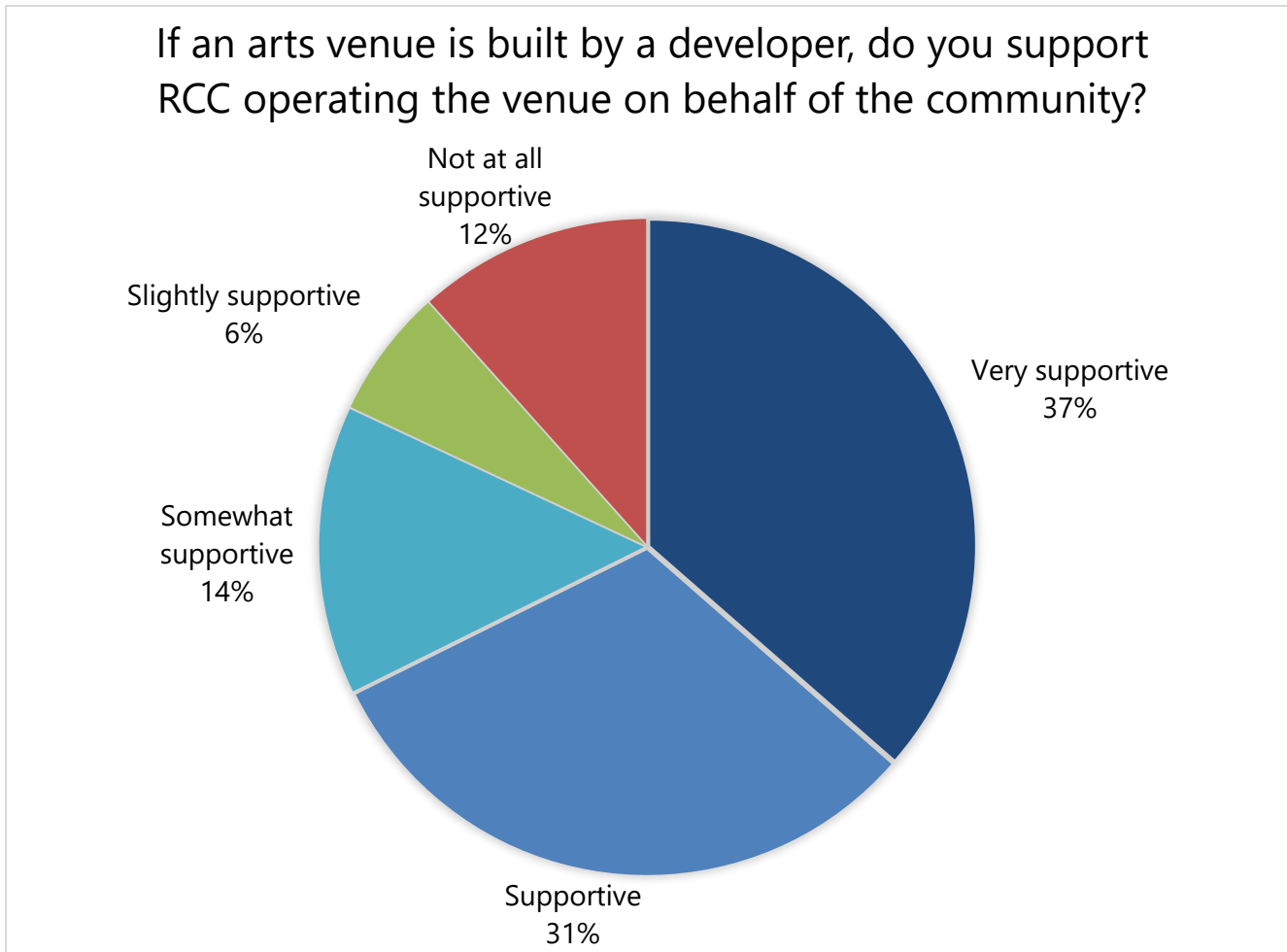
Respondents overall were interested in Reston having a larger venue in which to see music, dance, film screenings, and other types of performances, with two-thirds (67%) being at least somewhat interested (Figure 6). More specifically, half (49%) of respondents were either “very interested” or “interested,” and an additional 12% were “slightly interested.” Eleven percent of respondents are not at all interested, and another 9% think RCC’s existing facilities are sufficient.

**Figure 6. Interest in a larger venue in Reston**



Regarding the construction of a performing arts center, there was broad support for a scenario in which a developer builds the venue and RCC operates the venue on behalf of the community (Figure 7). Four in five respondents (82%) were at least somewhat supportive of this scenario, with two out of three (68%) being either "very supportive" or "supportive." Twelve percent of respondents are "not at all supportive" of this scenario.

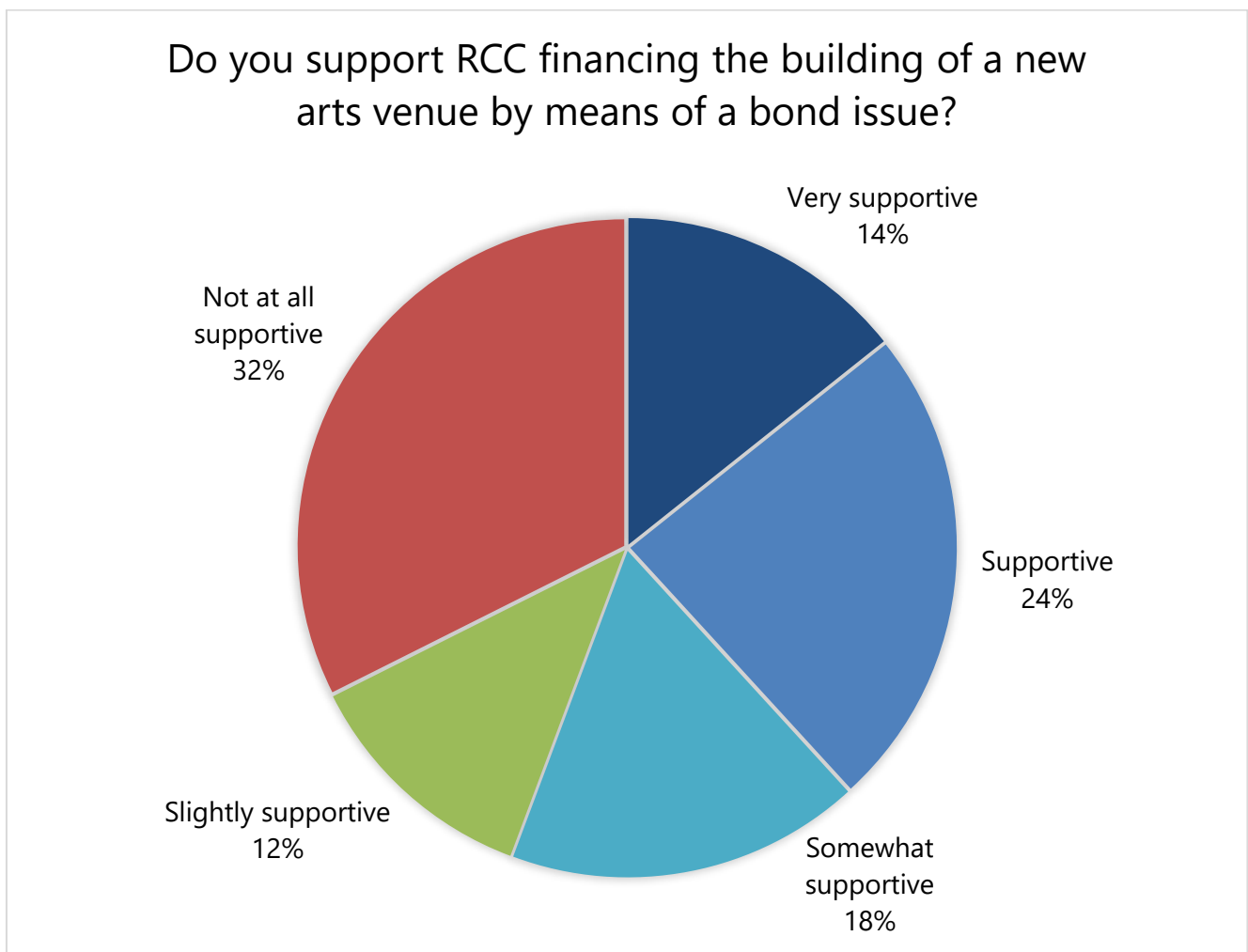
**Figure 7. Support for arts venue built by developer and operated by RCC**





Respondents were asked about their support for an alternative scenario in which there is not a developer and instead RCC undertakes a bond referendum to obtain authority from Reston to borrow funds in order to build the new facility. The majority supported this scenario, though at a lower rate than if the venue were constructed by a developer, and there was a much larger share of respondents who are not at all interested in this route of construction. While over half of respondents (56%) were at least somewhat supportive of RCC financing the building of a new arts venue by means of a bond referendum, almost one-third (32%) of respondents were not at all supportive of this scenario (Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Support for arts venue financed and built by bond issue**



### RCC Financing

To measure the public’s awareness of RCC’s funding mechanism, respondents were given a brief description of the property tax and tax rate used to fund RCC and then asked if they were aware of this. Less than half (46%) were aware of RCC’s funding structure prior to the survey.

Respondents were then presented with the following scenario and question: *“When property tax values rise in our area, revenues raised from property taxes go up, too. If more tax money was*

available to RCC due to new revenue, which of the following statements comes closest to your view? RCC should..." Listed answer categories were:

- *Increase the number/types of programs*
- *Increase accessibility to programming by lowering prices/fees*
- *Add features to programs and facilities*
- *Something else*

Respondents who selected "something else," had the space to write in an answer. CSR reviewed and coded these other responses, and established four additional categories:

- *A combination of the first three listed categories*
- *Lower property taxes/return funds to taxpayers*
- *Maintenance of current facilities*
- *Build a new/additional facility*

Approximately 34% would like RCC to use the new revenue to increase accessibility to programming by lowering fees. An additional 32% would like to see RCC increase the number and types of programs, and 23% would like RCC to add features to their programs and facilities. Just 4% of respondents would like RCC to lower property taxes or return the funds to taxpayers. For the full frequency, see Appendix A, and for the complete lists of write-in responses, see Appendices F and G.

In the context of funding and fees, respondents were also asked the extent to which they support RCC continuing to offer an income-based fee waiver program to help people with limited means participate in RCC programming. Respondents were overwhelmingly supportive of this program, with nearly 90% being at least somewhat supportive. Only 4% of respondents were not at all supportive of the fee waiver system. For the full frequency, see Appendix A.

Approximately two percent of respondents provided a write-in "Depends" response to this question. Among these respondents, a portion explained they simply needed more information about the current fee waiver program and requirements. Others felt the program needed modification or were accepting of the program so long as the applicants were effectively vetted, and benefits had limits. The complete lists of responses can be viewed in Appendices F and G.

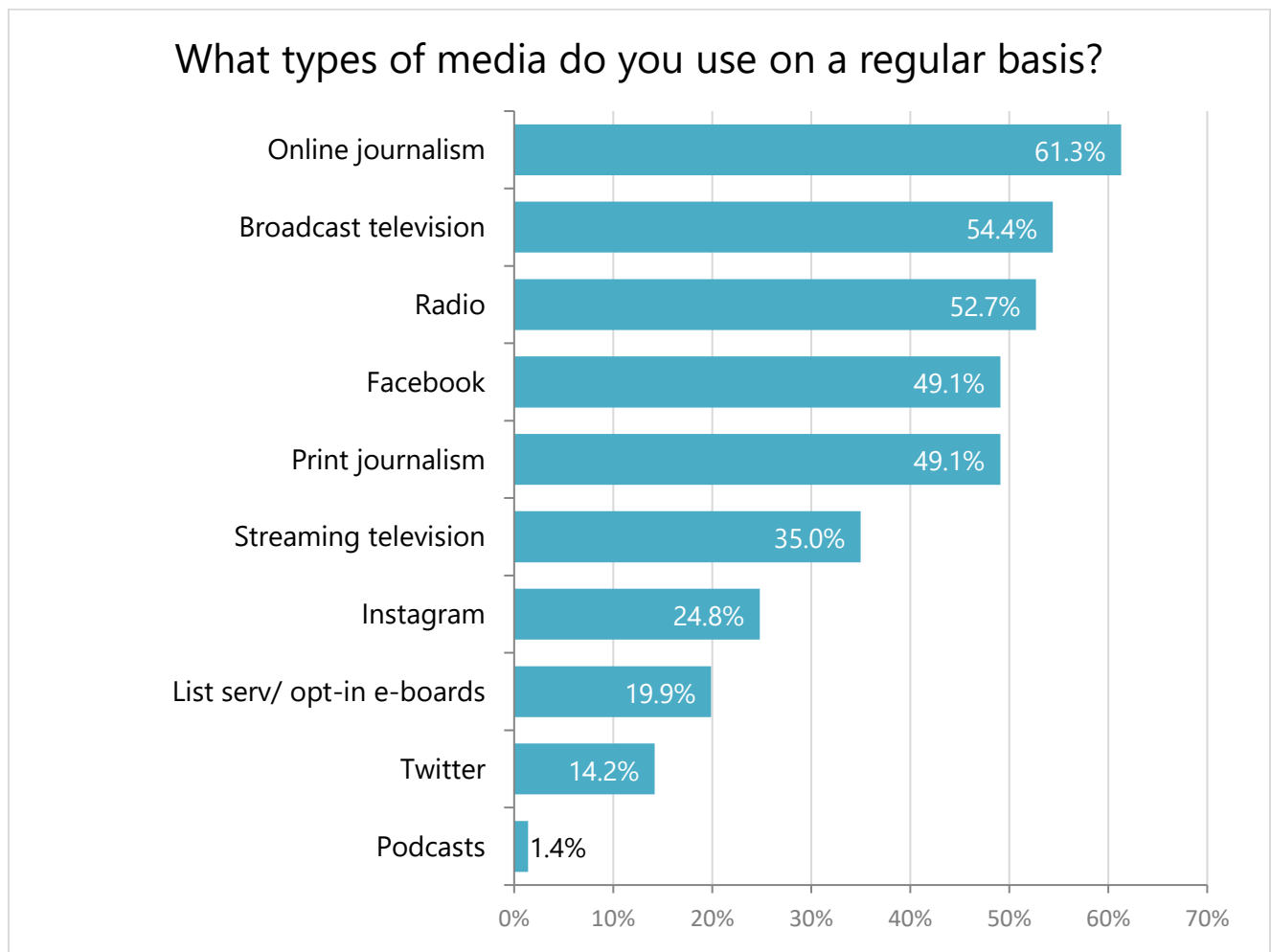
## VI. Communications and Outreach

To be sure that RCC is effectively sharing information with the Reston community, RCC was interested in learning about residents’ media habits and current sources for information on leisure and recreational activities.

### Regularly Used Media

Respondents were asked about the types of media they use on a regular basis, and they could select multiple media types.<sup>8</sup> As seen in Figure 9 below, online journalism was the most commonly consumed media (61%), followed by broadcast television (54%), radio (53%), Facebook (49%) and print journalism (49%).

**Figure 9. Types of media used on a regular basis**



The types of media regularly used by respondents did significantly vary by several demographics.

<sup>8</sup> Additional categories were added in post-coding of open-ended responses: “Non-media activity/source,” “local publications,” “email,” “Internet searches/other websites,” and “podcasts.”

Online journalism use varied by age but did not follow a linear pattern. Instead, use of online journalism was highest among middle-aged adults, with three in four respondents (75%) age 40-49 regularly reading it, which is the highest of all age groups. Respondents with children reported higher use compared to respondents without children in the home. Additionally, use of online journalism was highest among residents who were newer to Reston, with use of this type of media decreasing in prevalence among residents who have lived in the area longer.

Broadcast television significantly increased in prevalence with age. Just 13% of respondents aged 18-29 reported regularly watching broadcast television; in contrast, 75% of respondents over 64 reported regularly watching. Regular use of broadcast television was also higher among homeowners, residents who have lived in Reston longer, and those without children in the home.

Listening to the radio was higher among homeowners than renters but did not significantly vary by other demographic traits.

Regular use of print journalism varied by age, with older respondents regularly reading it at a higher rate than younger respondents. Regular consumption of print journalism was also higher among homeowners and residents who have lived in Reston longer.

Facebook use was more common among younger respondents, with over 70% of those 18-29 years old using the platform compared to just 32% of respondents over 64 years old. Perhaps related to age, use of Facebook also varied by length of residence in Reston, with use highest among respondents who have lived in Reston less than five years. Respondents with children were also more likely to regularly use Facebook. For additional demographic comparisons of media use, please see Appendix C.

### *Broadcast Television/News Outlets*

Respondents were also asked about their use of specific stations and news outlets within the broader media categories. Regarding local broadcast television,<sup>9</sup> NBC 4 was the most widely watched channel (45%), followed by CBS 9 (31%), ABC 7 (20%), and FOX 5 (20%). For local news outlets, the most widely read outlet was the Washington Post/WP Weekender (47%). In addition, the Reston Association-published Reston magazine was regularly read by over a third of respondents (34%), followed by Reston Now (28%), Reston Patch (28%), Reston Connection (27%) and Around Reston (27%).<sup>10</sup>

While respondents reported a large variety of radio stations,<sup>11</sup> a handful were regularly listened to by sizable portions of the sample. Channel 103.5 WTOP was the most widely listened to station (36%), followed by 88.5 WAMU (34%), and 90.9 WETA (26%). For the complete tables

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<sup>9</sup> Additional categories were added in post-coding of open-ended responses: “PBS/WETA/WAMU,” “Cable” “Other broadcast station.”

<sup>10</sup> Additional categories were added in post-coding of open-ended responses: “Non-local news outlet” and “non-print/online media outlet.”

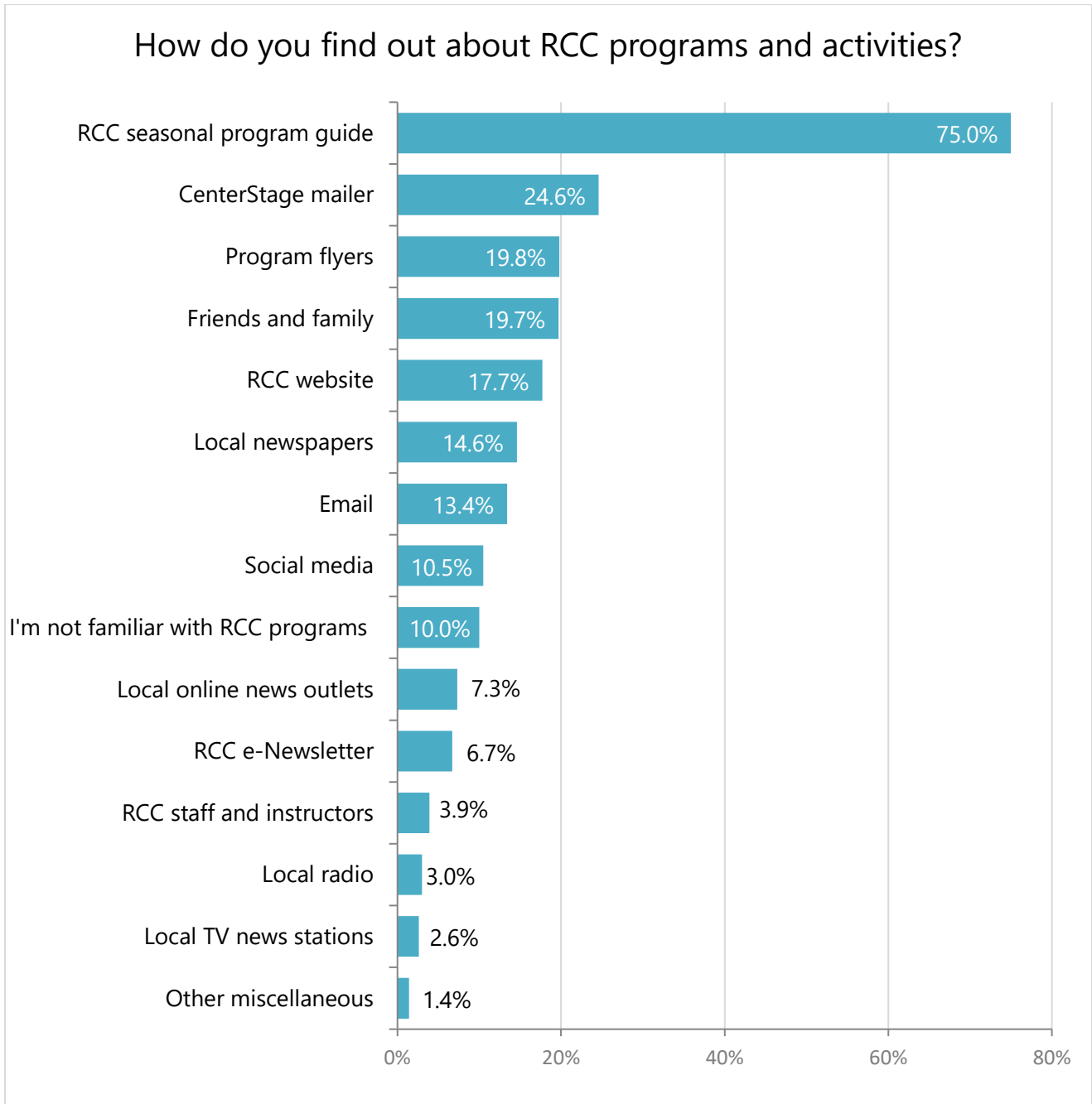
<sup>11</sup> Additional categories were added in post-coding of open-ended responses: “101.1(WWDC),” “SiriusXM,” “97.1(WASH),” “89.3(WPFW),” and “91.9(WGTS).”

of frequencies for radio stations as well as news outlets and broadcast television, see Appendix A.

### **Sources for Leisure/Recreation Information**

Respondents were asked how they find out about RCC-specific programs and activities. By far the most widely reported source was the RCC seasonal program guide, which three in four respondents (75%) selected as a source for their RCC information (Figure 10). The CenterStage Professional Touring Artist Series mailer was the next most commonly cited source for information (25%), followed by program flyers (20%), friends and family (20%), and the RCC website (18%).

**Figure 10. Source of information about RCC programs and activities**



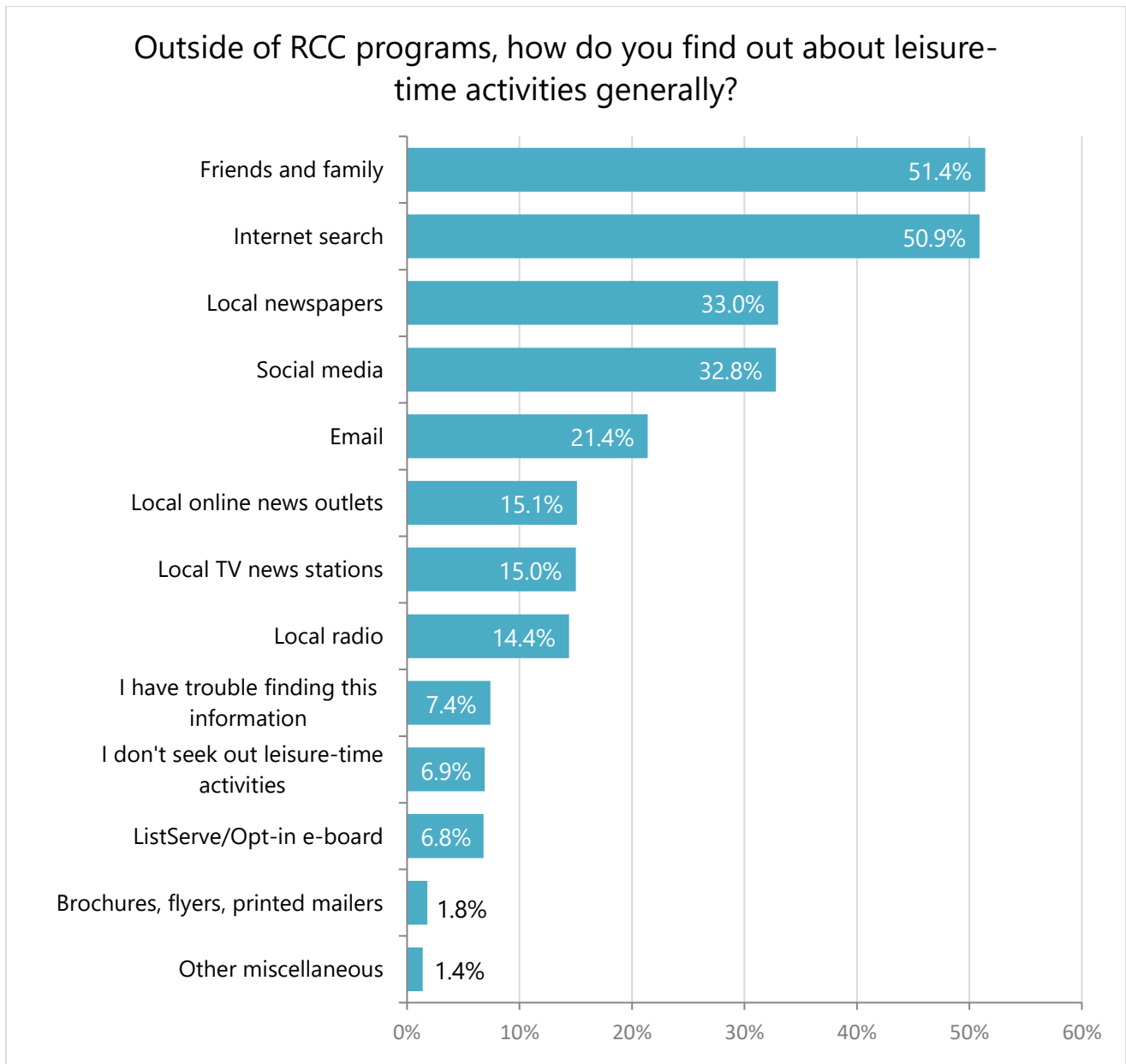
The prevalence of these different sources of information did vary by demographic characteristics. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the groups for which these top sources are most widely reported are also the groups already involved at RCC: respondents who are older, have lived in the area longer, have children at home, and are homeowners.

Respondents were also asked how they find out about leisure-time activity options generally,<sup>12</sup> outside of RCC programs. As seen in Figure 11, the top sources of information for leisure

<sup>12</sup> An additional category was added in post-coding of open-ended responses: “Brochures, flyers, printed mailers.”

activities were friends and family (51%), internet searches (51%), local newspapers (33%) and social media (33%).

**Figure 11. Source of information about leisure-time activities in general**



Prevalence in use of these different sources of information did vary significantly by demographic traits. Friends and family as a source of information on leisure-time activities was most common among homeowners and respondents with children. Use of local newspapers as a source for leisure information was highest among older respondents, homeowners, long-time residents and those without children in the home. Both internet searches and social media were more widely used by younger respondents, residents who have not lived in Reston as long and those who have children.

Should RCC wish to direct program information to younger respondents or residents newer to the area, they should ensure their information is readily available online and regularly promoted on social media. This effort could be in addition to their ongoing printed publications (RCC seasonal guide and CenterStage mailer), which appear effective in reaching respondents who are older, long-time residents and homeowners.



## **VII. Summary**

The Reston Community Center Community Survey was designed to assess awareness and support for RCC, current and projected use of programs, barriers to use, level of support for a performing arts center, and accessible sources for information on leisure activities.

### **Awareness of RCC**

In general, there were high levels of awareness and support for RCC. More than four out of five respondents (83%) said they were “very familiar” or “somewhat familiar” with RCC. In addition, strong majorities said that RCC makes Reston a more attractive place to live (90%) or to have a business (76%). Approximately half (47%) of respondents said that RCC is “very important” to the overall quality of life in Reston.

Over half of respondents (54%) said that they or a family member have participated in an RCC-sponsored event or class in the past twelve months. Among respondents who have not recently used RCC, the most common reason for not attending was being too busy (47%), followed by a lack of awareness about current RCC programs (29%). Respondents also cited inconvenience of scheduling as an impediment (18%).

### **Use of Programs**

In evaluation of use across different types of RCC programs, community events were the most widely participated in program type, with 40% of respondents reporting having attended an event. An additional 51% reported possible interest in attending a community event in the future. The second most widely attended program type was the Professional Touring Artist Series at the CenterStage (31%), followed by drop-in swim (23%) and rental of RCC space (22%). Lifelong learning was the program type with the highest level of potential interest (63%) but only 17% participation, indicating great potential for growth in participation. Land-based fitness and wellness programs had a comparable ratio of interest (61%) to actual participation (17%). These two program types may be areas RCC should further explore and consider in terms of greater promotion and more flexible scheduling for the Reston community.

### **Barriers to Participation**

Three in four respondents (76%) expressed a desire to participate in RCC programs more than they currently do, with classes being the area in which respondents are most interested in increasing their participation. The barriers cited for not attending RCC as much as one would like mirror many of the same reasons given by respondents who had not attended RCC in the past year. Reston residents express being too busy as the primary reason for not participating more in RCC, followed by finding RCC programs to be scheduled at inconvenient times and being unaware of existing programs.

And while three-quarters (75%) said that existing recreational facilities of all types in and around the Reston area meet the current demand, 43% of respondents either experienced difficulty trying to sign up for RCC programs or had not even bothered to try due to high

demand. RCC could explore ways to adjust their programming schedule to better accommodate potential patrons.

## Support for a Performing Arts Center

The topic of a performing arts center has drawn wide public attention with Reston residents holding a variety of passionate views. In general, the survey findings suggest there is widespread support for this type of center in Reston. Specifically, two-thirds of respondents (68%) were at least somewhat interested in Reston having a larger venue for performing arts, with half being either interested or very interested. In terms of how that venue could be funded, four out of five respondents (82%) were at least somewhat supportive of RCC operating the arts venue if a developer built it; two-thirds of respondents were either supportive or very supportive of this. As an alternative funding scenario, support was comparatively lower for RCC financing the building of a new art venue by means of a bond issue, and a sizeable portion of respondents were not at all interested in this option (32%). Notwithstanding that, the majority of respondents (56%) were still at least somewhat supportive of this financing route, and nearly 40% were either supportive or very supportive of the bond-issue option.

## Communications

RCC is committed to serving the entire Reston community, which necessitates sharing RCC information on programming through a variety of channels in order to reach all Reston residents. As already noted, lack of awareness of the existing offerings and schedule was a commonly cited reason for not attending RCC more recently and/or more often. RCC was interested in the types of media respondents already regularly use and respondents' sources for finding information on recreational activities. Online and print journalism, radio, broadcast television, and Facebook were the most widely used media, with roughly half of respondents (ranging from 49% to 61%) regularly using each of these media. Regarding commonly used sources for information on RCC programming, the RCC seasonal program guide was by far the most widely used; three out of four respondents (75%) cited using it. When respondents were asked where they find out about leisure-time activities generally (not RCC-specific), "friends and family" and internet searches were the most widely cited sources for information, followed by social media and local newspapers. These results indicate that RCC would be well served to continue producing their seasonal program guide, to expand their online presence, and to share RCC program information widely via social media (Facebook in particular) and local news outlets.

## Conclusion

The Reston Community Center's mission is to provide meaningful leisure-time and cultural experiences as a means to improve the quality of life for the entire Reston community. In their long-range planning, RCC and the Board of Governors are mindful of including community preferences and patron feedback, which was the impetus for the 2019 Reston Community Center Community Survey. The survey results indicate support for expanded program options and continued exploration of the potential for a new performing arts center in Reston. Findings also show the vast majority of residents would like to attend RCC events and programs more

than they currently do. Further, RCC can more effectively reach more community members by expanding the approaches used to communicate with potential patrons. Reston Community Center is a community institution with strong connections to its constituents and capacity for growth, and it will continue to value and incorporate public feedback.



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