

South Wood County Area 2017 Community Survey Report



incourage

Welcome!

Following are results of the South Wood County area 2017 Community Survey

- Results include responses to a probability survey that was mailed to a random sample of south Wood County residents in seven zip codes (Nekoosa, Pittsville, Port Edwards, Rome, Rudolph, Vesper, Wisconsin Rapids)
- Results also include additional responses collected by Incourage
- In total, nearly 4,000 residents engaged with the survey, either by responding directly to survey questions or by participating in a community conversation based on survey questions

[To view the survey click here](#)

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Background information about the Survey

The researchers



Network Impact supports individuals and institutions with research and tools to build networks for social impact.

Over the last decade, Network Impact has contributed to the design and evaluation of a wide range of network initiatives in the U.S., including network organizing to support policies that benefit rural people and places, regional collaborations to end homelessness, and place-based efforts to increase civic engagement.



The Center for Survey Research (CSR) is a full-scale academic survey research center that conducts basic and applied research contributing to knowledge and understanding of important social issues.

CSR maintains a professional interviewing staff, computer assisted telephone facilities and survey sampling capacity, as well as the ability to conduct mail- and web-based surveys. Since 1971, CSR has provided methodological expertise to a range of university scholars and public and private agencies.

Purpose

In 2012...

Incourage partnered with Edge Research to conduct its first Community Survey. The survey gathered information about residents' hopes and concerns and their priorities for the south Wood County community.

In November 2017...

Incourage conducted a follow-up survey to understand how residents' goals and perspectives have changed.

Questions on the surveys explore...

- Overall satisfaction with south Wood County area, strengths/positives of the community as well as most important problems facing the community
- Key words or phrases that residents use to describe their community
- How well different organizations are doing in addressing community challenges
- Residents' priorities for the future
- Resident participation in civic activities
- Respondent demographic characteristics – age, education, zip code, time living in area, income

2017 Survey Process

FALL 2017

- Incourage engaged Network Impact to conduct the 2017 follow-up community survey
- Network Impact partnered with the Center for Survey Research (CSR) at the University of Massachusetts to administer the survey to south Wood County residents in selected zip codes

NOV – DEC 2017

- CSR mailed a 4-page survey to a random sample of 2,500 households via mail requesting youngest adult (18+) in household to respond
 - 491 eligible responses received
 - Margin of error for the sample as a whole is +/- 4.4 % percentage points at the 95% confidence level
 - Response rate = 20.3%

DEC 2017 – JAN 2018

- Incourage conducted outreach to gather additional responses to the community survey. Available in English, Spanish and Hmong
 - 1817 eligible responses received
- Simultaneously, Incourage volunteers led community conversations with residents
 - Over 600 residents participated
 - 59 people were trained conversation hosts

The data you will see throughout the presentation...

Three surveys

This presentation shares the results of the 2017 survey results while also comparing 2017 and 2012 results, where applicable.

Slide types

Icons in the upper-right corner of each slide indicate the data being presented

Orange depicts:

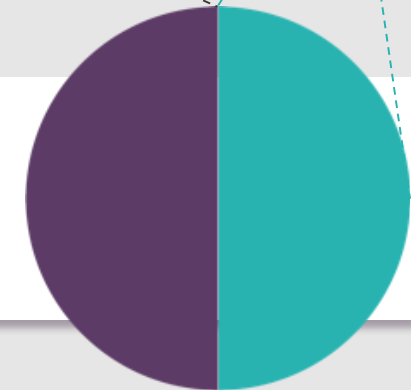
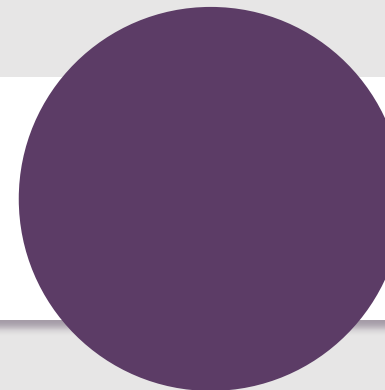
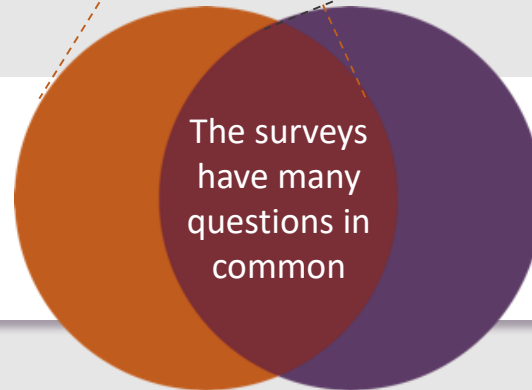
2012 Edge survey

Purple depicts:

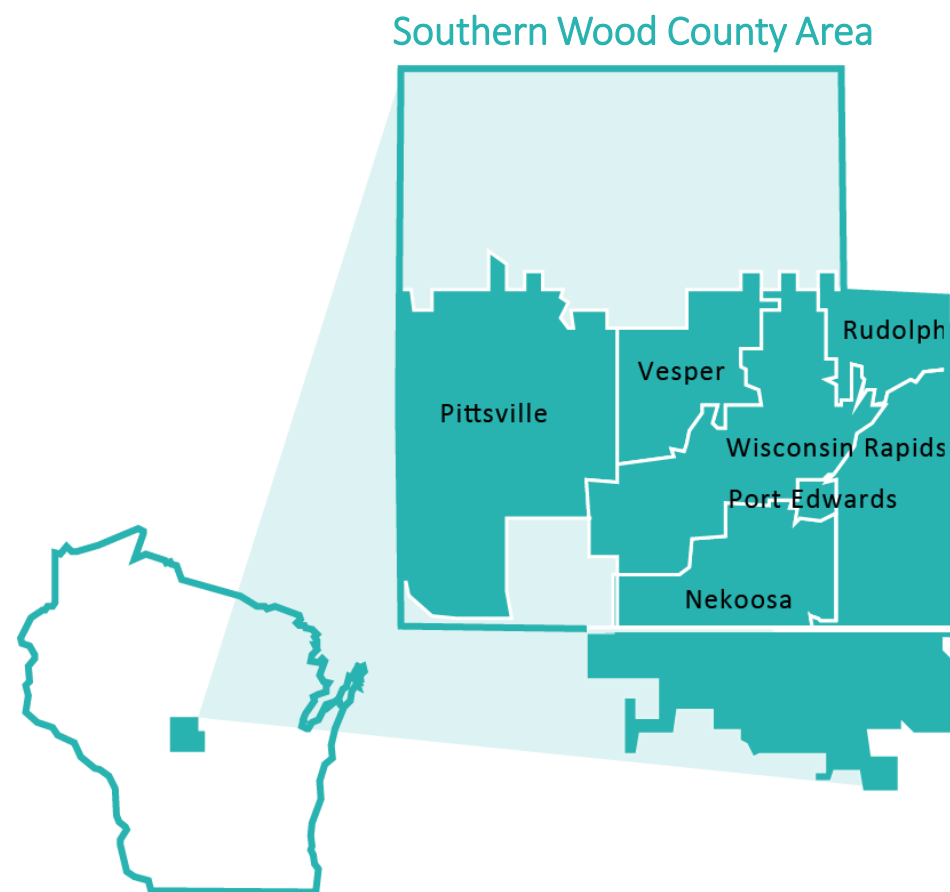
2017 CSR-led survey

Teal depicts:

2017 Incentive-led survey



Target zip codes for both 2012 and 2017 surveys



ZIPCODES:

54457	Nekoosa
54466	Pittsville
54469	Port Edwards
54475	Rudolph
54489	Vesper
54494	Wisconsin Rapids
54495	Wisconsin Rapids

Demographic characteristics of survey respondents



After weighting the sample to ensure that key demographic variables were consistent with 2010 Census data,* the CSR-led survey sample closely matches the population of south Wood County

	2017 CSR-led Survey	From 2010 Census	2012 Survey
GENDER			
Female	51%	51%	50%
Male	49%	49%	50%
AGE			
18-29	16%	15%	9%
30-44	23%	22%	31%
45-64	37%	39%	35%
65+	24%	24%	25%
EDUCATION			
HS or less	57%	57%	37%
Some College	28%	28%	18%
College +	15%	15%	45%

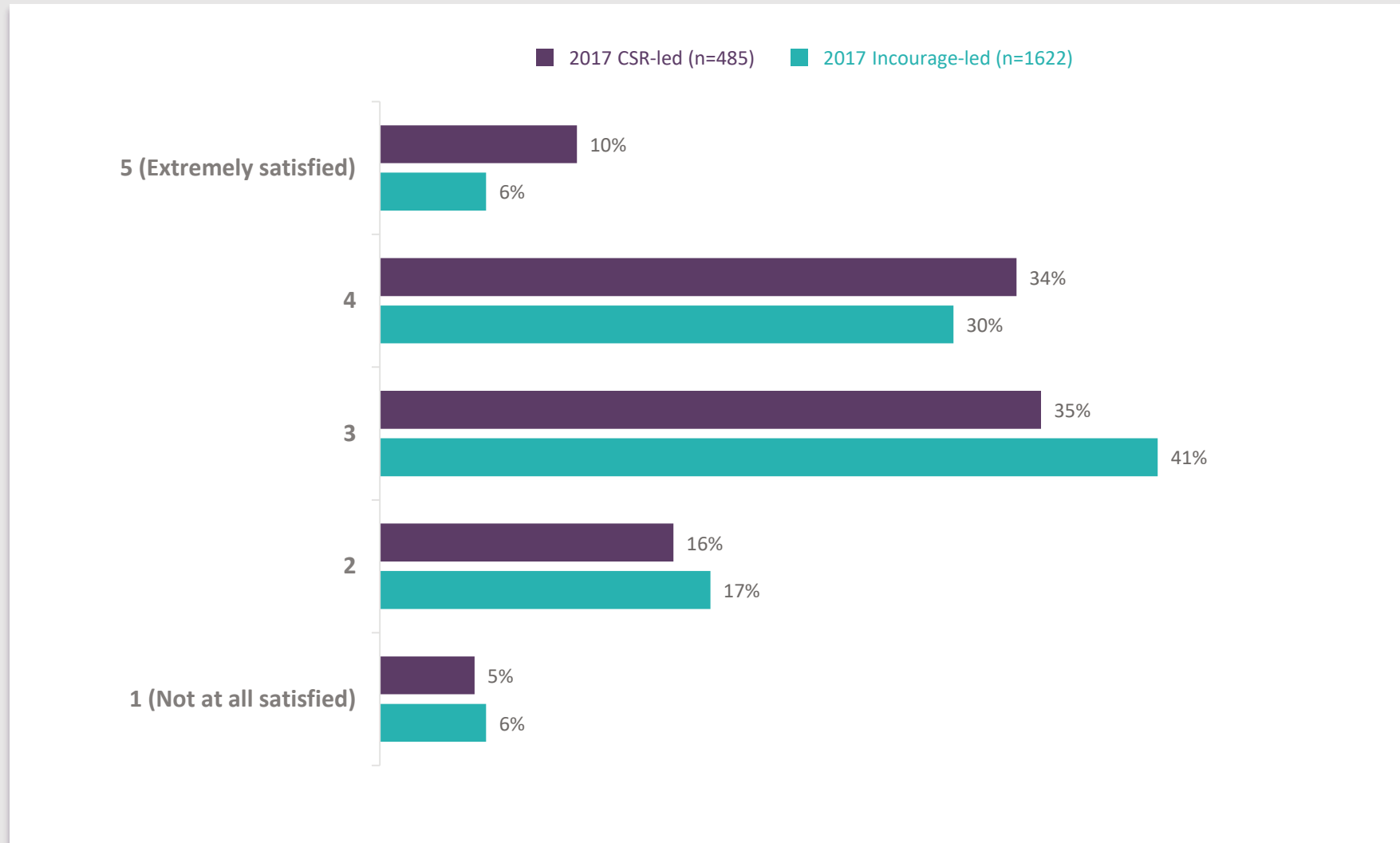
* Weighting is frequently used in survey research to ensure that key demographic groups are represented proportionally



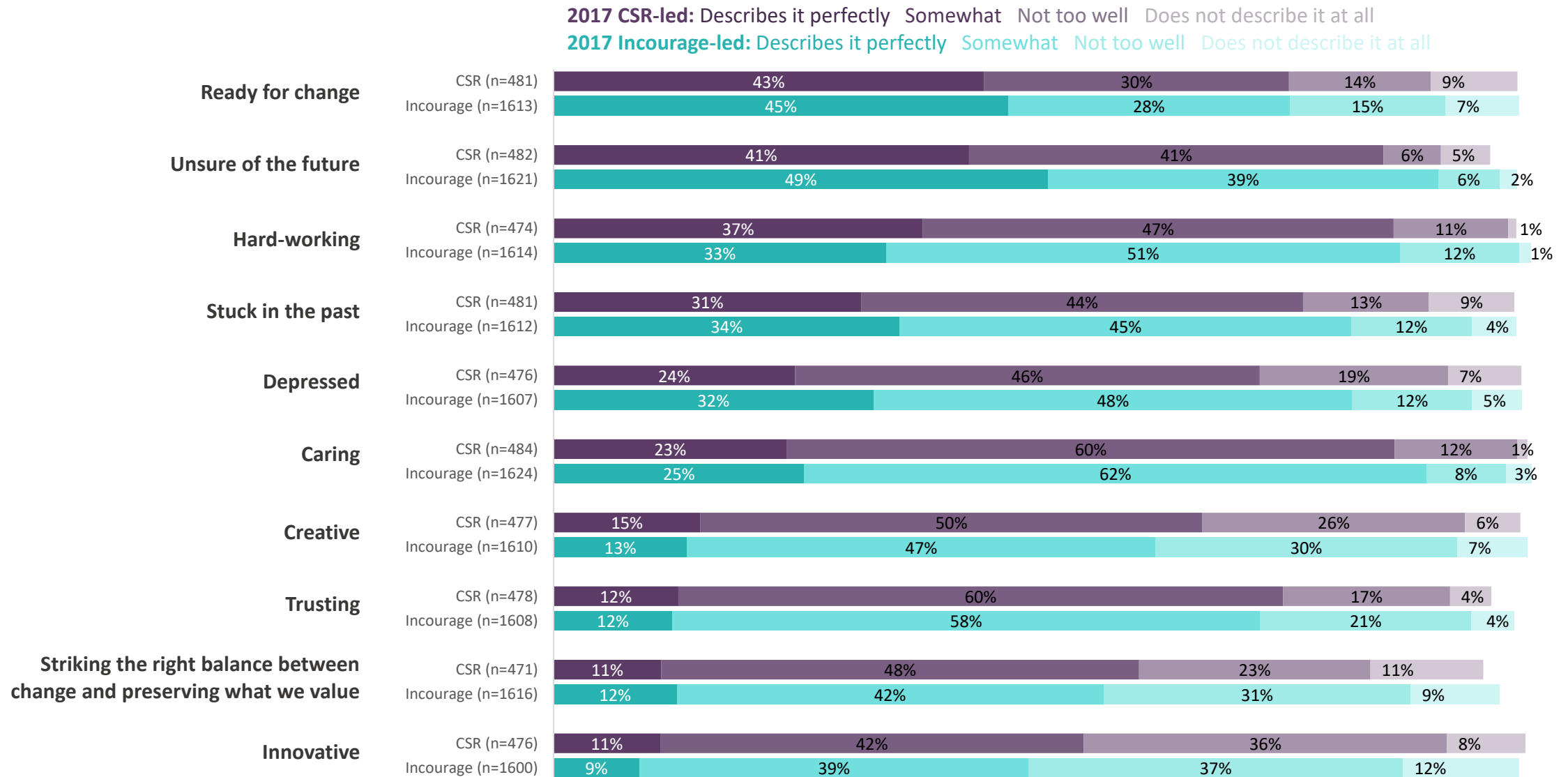
How residents describe their community

Here is a list of words and phrases that could describe the south Wood County area. How well do you think each word or phrase describes our community?

2017 results: Resident satisfaction with south Wood County area as a place to live



2017 results: How residents describe their community



*Note: The response category "Not sure" is not shown on the chart but is included in the total percentage

A community that is ready for change across all major demographic groups

Readiness for change is an essential condition for resident-led action on community priorities



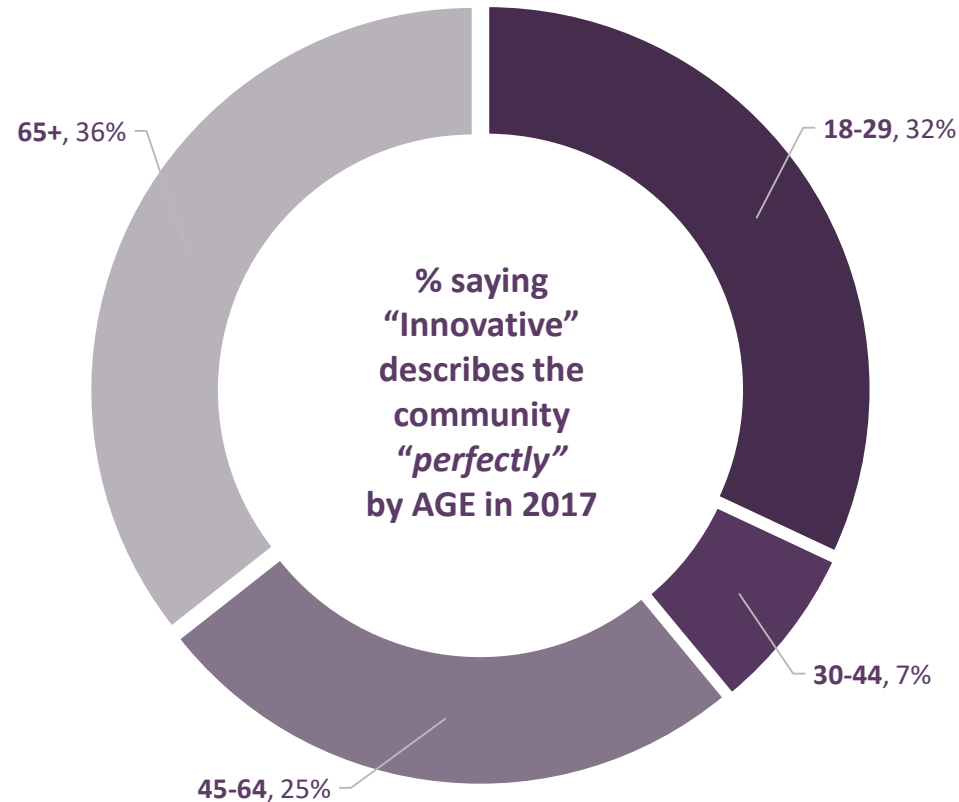
% saying “*Ready for Change*” describes the community “perfectly / somewhat”



2012 and 2017: How residents describe their community



- Residents continue to describe their community as **hardworking** and **caring**
- Large shares of residents in both 2012 and 2017 say that while **uncertain of the future**, they are **ready for change**. Larger shares of respondents to the 2017 survey say this describes their community perfectly
- Smaller shares of residents in both 2012 and 2017 describe their community as **innovative**.
 - Compared to other residents in 2017, younger residents and residents over 65 are more likely to say that **innovative** describes their community perfectly

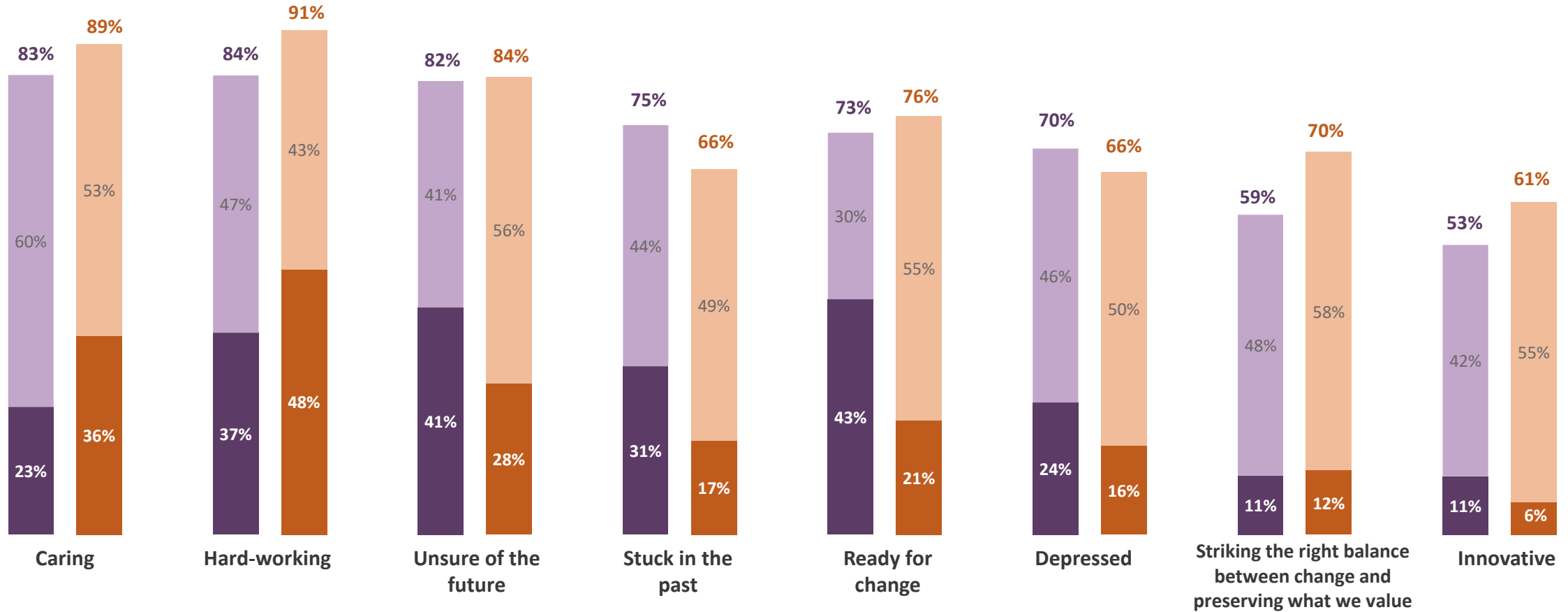


2012 and 2017: How residents describe their community



% saying describes the community “perfectly / somewhat”

2017: Describes perfectly Somewhat | 2012: Describes perfectly Somewhat





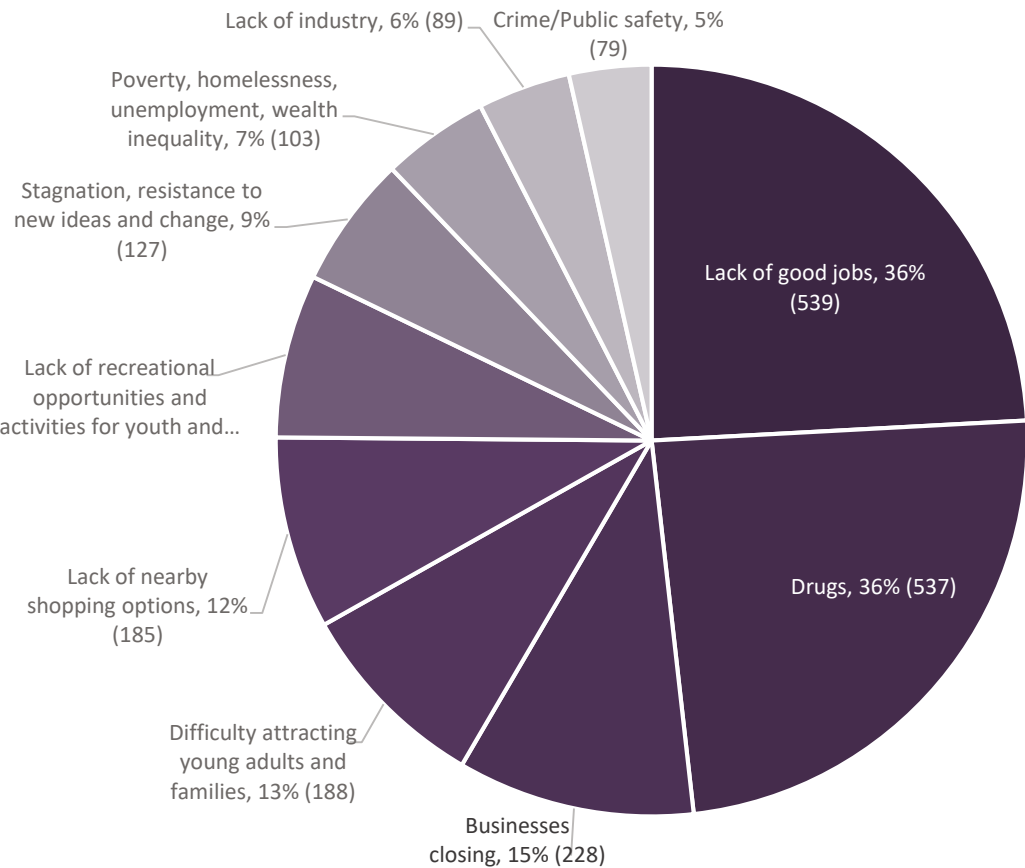
Overall, what do you see as the most important problem facing the south Wood County area?

2017 results: Most important problem facing the south Wood County area

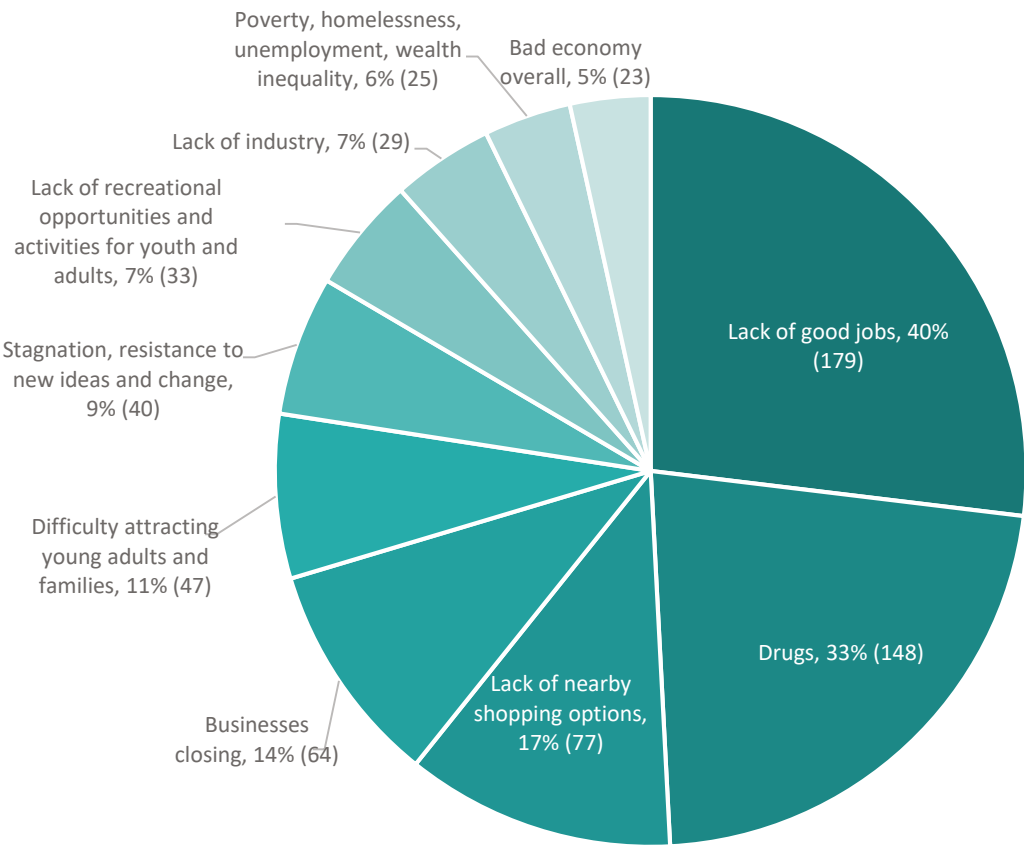


Top Categories

2017 CSR-led (n=444)



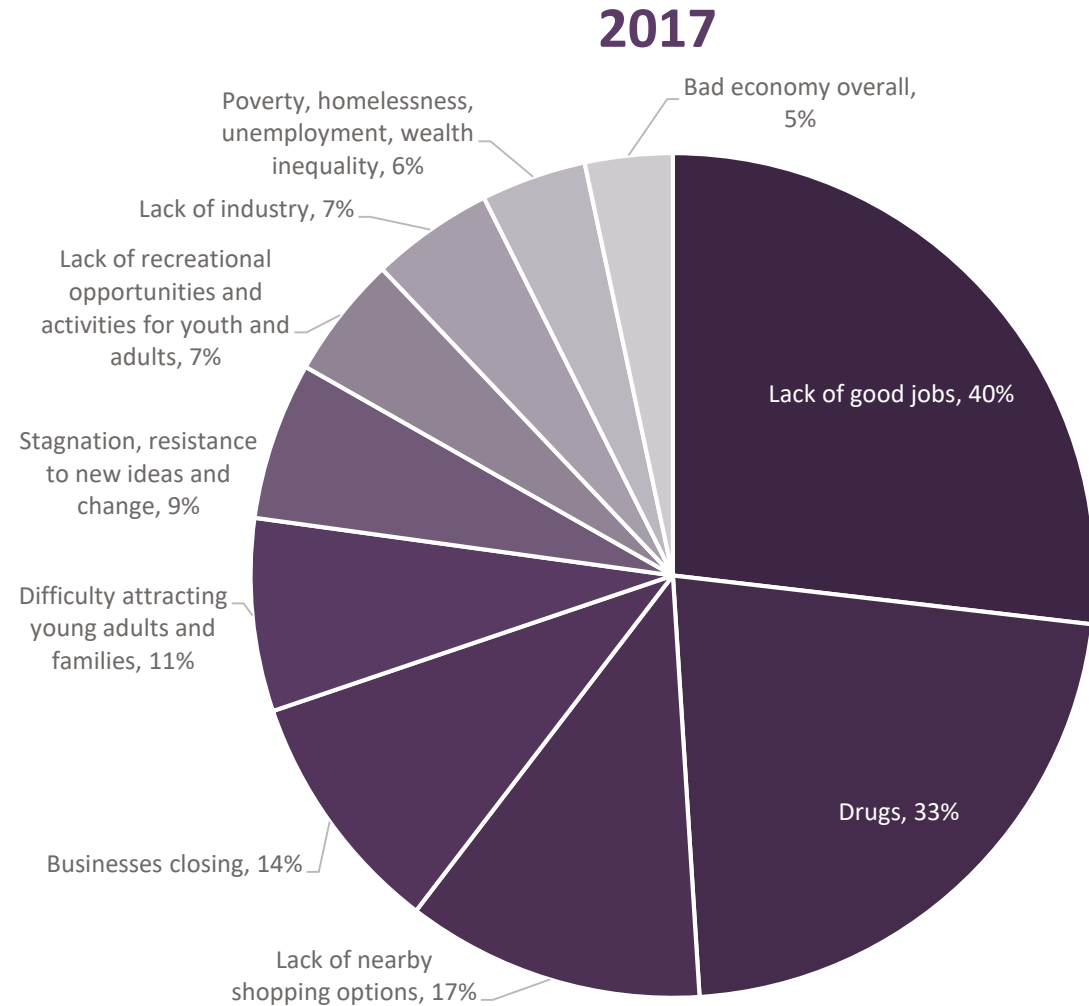
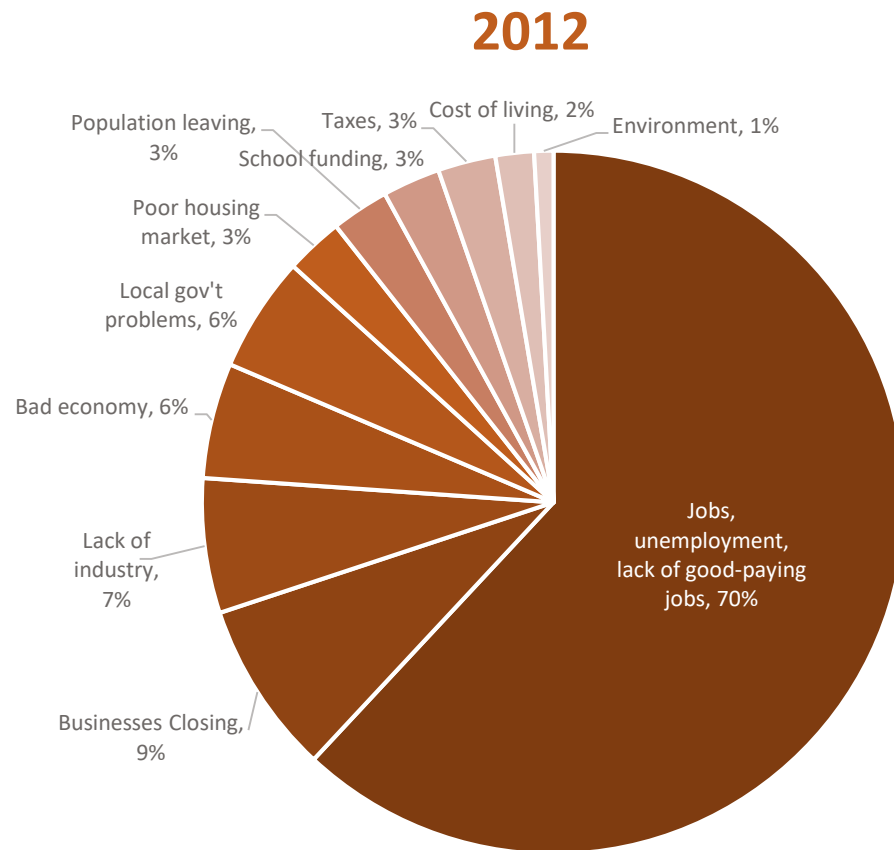
2017 Incurage-led (n=1483)



2012 and 2017 concerns: lack of good jobs, drug use and limited local amenities



Difficulty attracting and retaining young adults and families persists as a challenge in 2017



Community challenges and concerns



"We never used to have to lock our doors but we do now."

"Younger population has nothing to do. We want a vibrant downtown like Point."

"City council people need to stop turning away businesses... because we can't just rely on being a mill town."

"I can't afford a YMCA membership, so the new Y won't work for me. Needs to be options we can all afford."



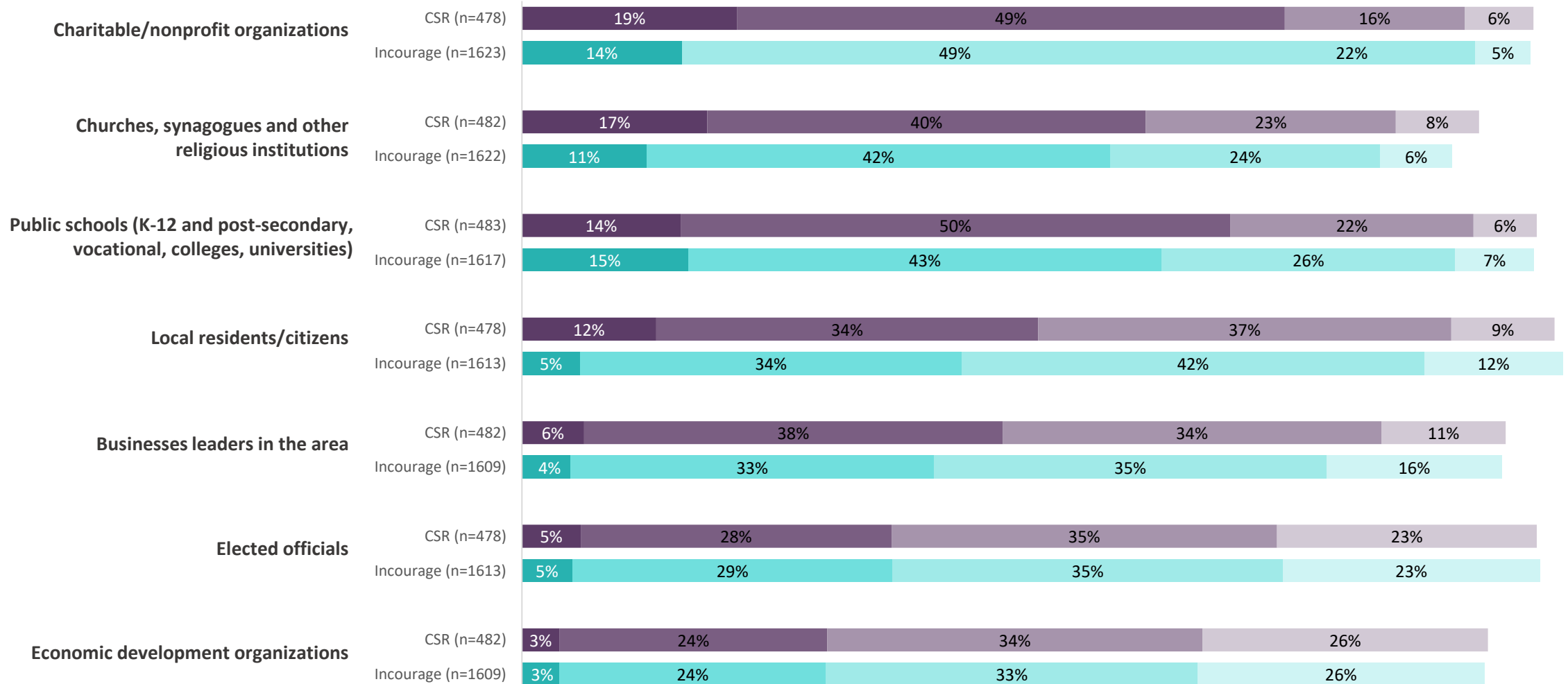
Who is meeting the challenges

How well are each of the following people or organizations doing in addressing challenges that the south Wood County area faces?

2017 results: Who is meeting the challenges?

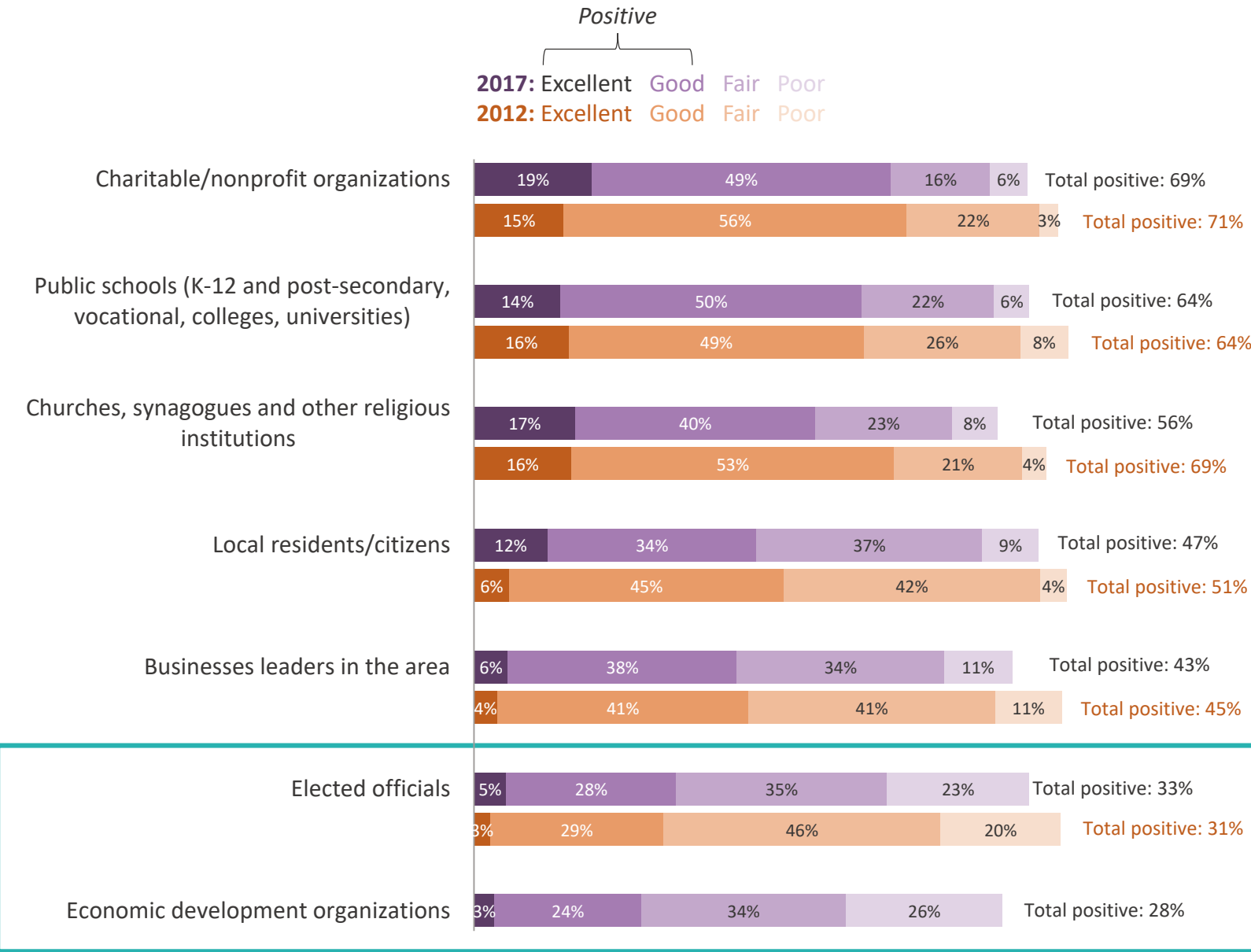


2017 CSR-led: Excellent Good Fair Poor
 2017 Incentive-led: Excellent Good Fair Poor



*Note: The response category "Not sure" is not shown on the chart but is included in the total percentage

2012 and 2017: Who is meeting the challenges?



Top takeaways

- In 2017, survey respondents gave charitable / nonprofit organizations and public schools their highest rating.
- In 2012 and 2017, elected officials are among the lowest performing

1/3 or less say positive



Community assets

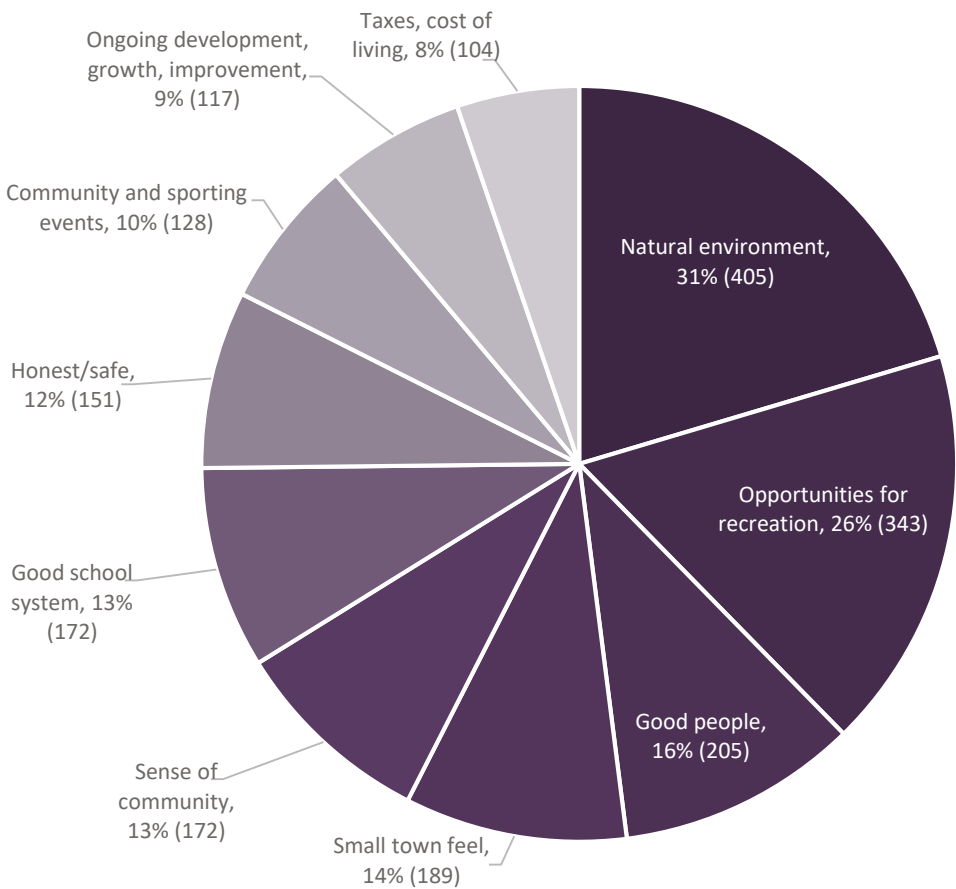
Overall, what do you see as strengths or positives of the south Wood County area?

2017 results: Strengths or positives of the south Wood County area

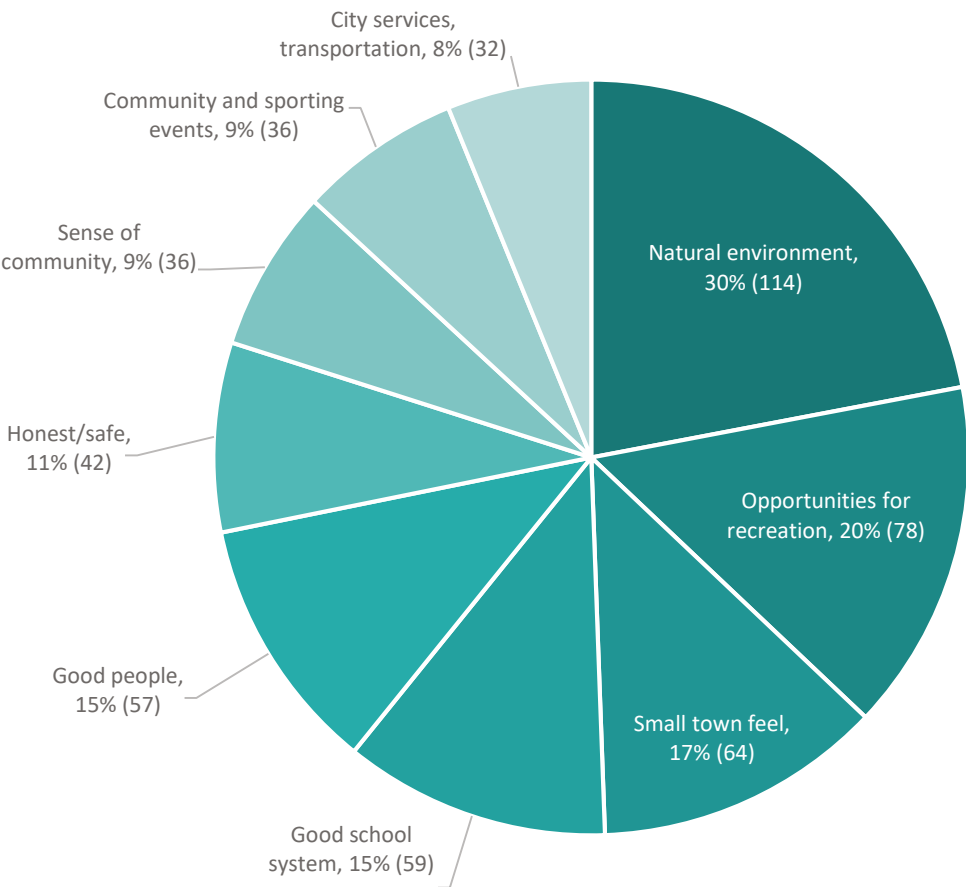


Top Categories

2017 CSR-led (n=386)



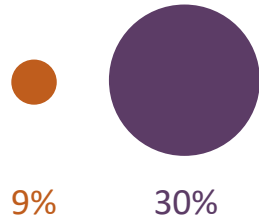
2017 Incommune-led (n=1307)



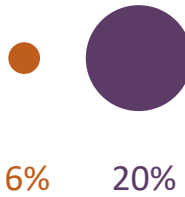


2012 and **2017** *Circle size corresponds to share of residents listing as a community asset*

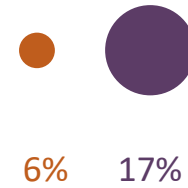
Natural environment



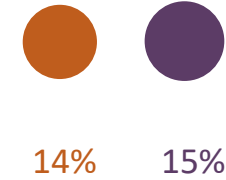
Recreation



Small town feel



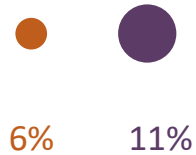
Good school system



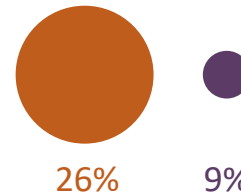
Good people



Honest / Safe



Sense of community



Community and sporting events



Community assets

*"This is a friendly place.
It is a safe community with
lots of good people."*

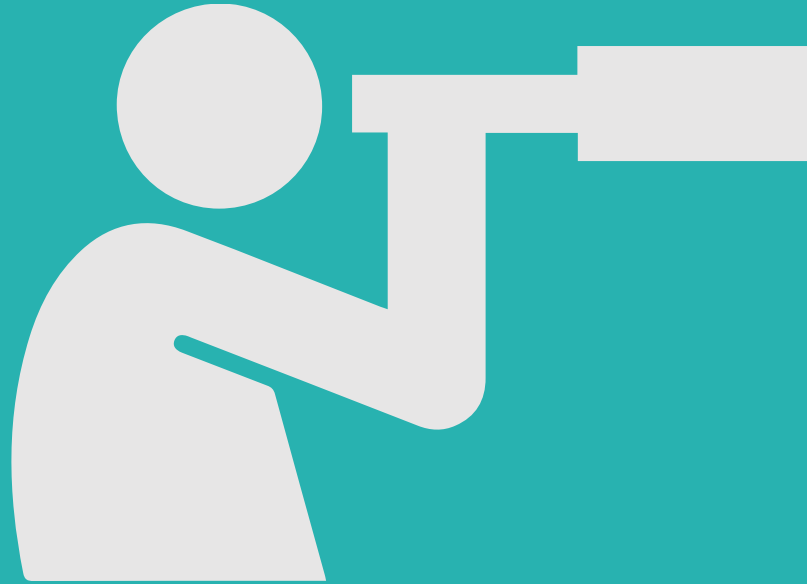
*"Lots of seniors
and that is nice for me
because my friends are all
still here."*

*"It's easier to get involved
in this community than in
the big cities."*

*"The local School District
works with outlying districts
in different areas of leadership
development and new teacher
orientation."*

*"There are efforts happening to
develop it for young families. The splash
pad on the west side was a fantastic addition,
and the addition of small businesses add something
to do (wine and beer shop, clothing shops, home
décor shops). I am excited about the YMCA/
Boys and Girls Club."*

*"The area offers many themed
events celebrating our natural
resources: cranberry fest, sand hill
cranes, monarch butterflies."*



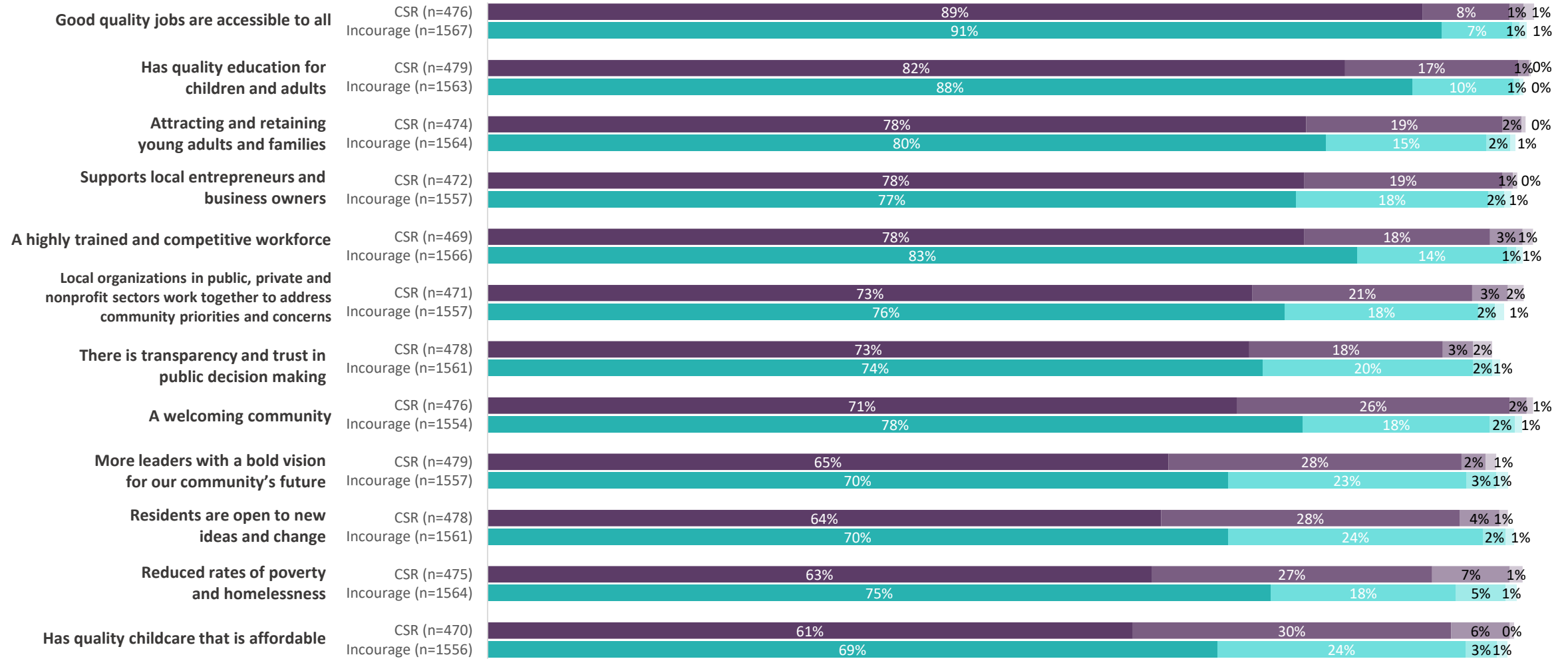
Looking to the future

Next is a series of statements that could describe the south Wood County area in the future. For each statement, indicate how important you think it is to achieve this (not at all important, somewhat important, very important).

2017 results: Priorities for the future of south Wood County (1 of 2)



2017 CSR-led: Very important Somewhat important Not too important Not at all important
 2017 Incourage-led: Very important Somewhat important Not too important Not at all important

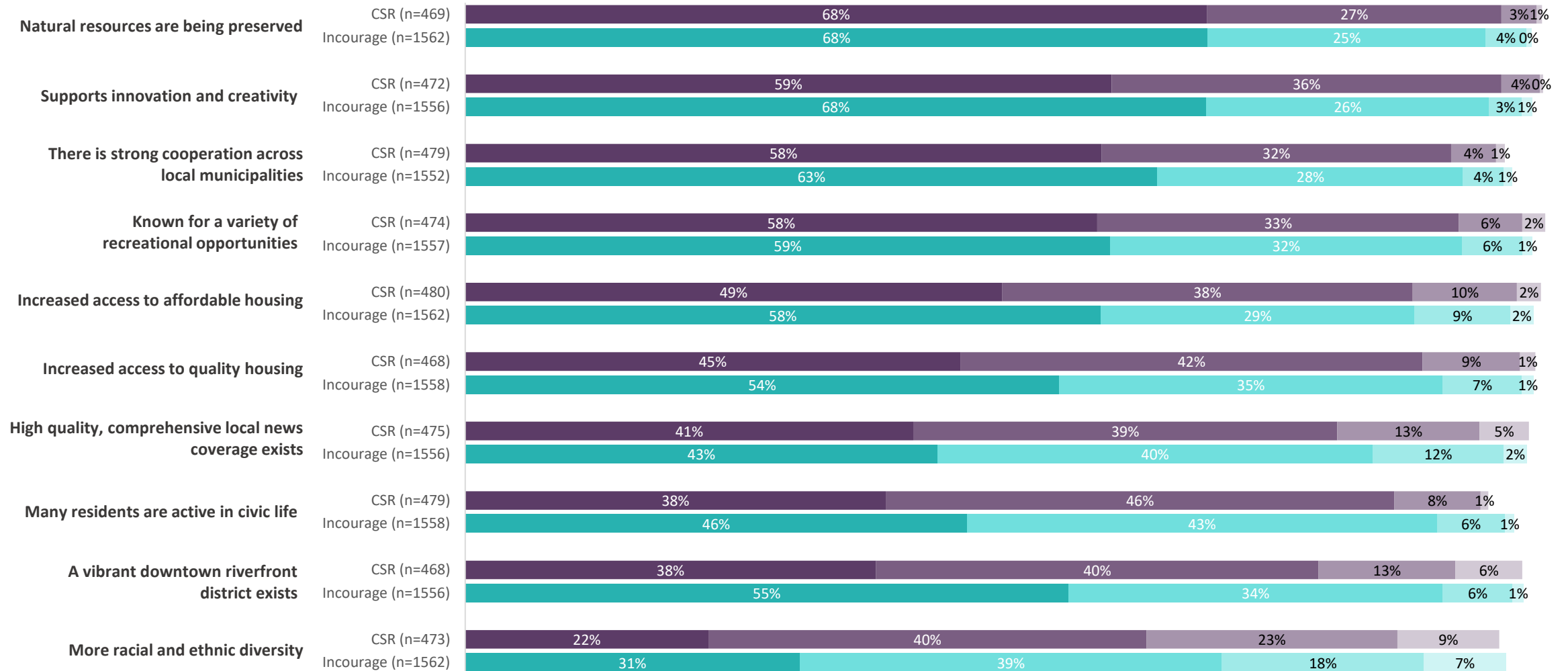


*Note: The response category "Not sure" is not shown on the chart but is included in the total percentage

2017 results: Priorities for the future of south Wood County CONTINUED (2 of 2)



2017 CSR-led: Very important Somewhat important Not too important Not at all important
 2017 Incourage-led: Very important Somewhat important Not too important Not at all important

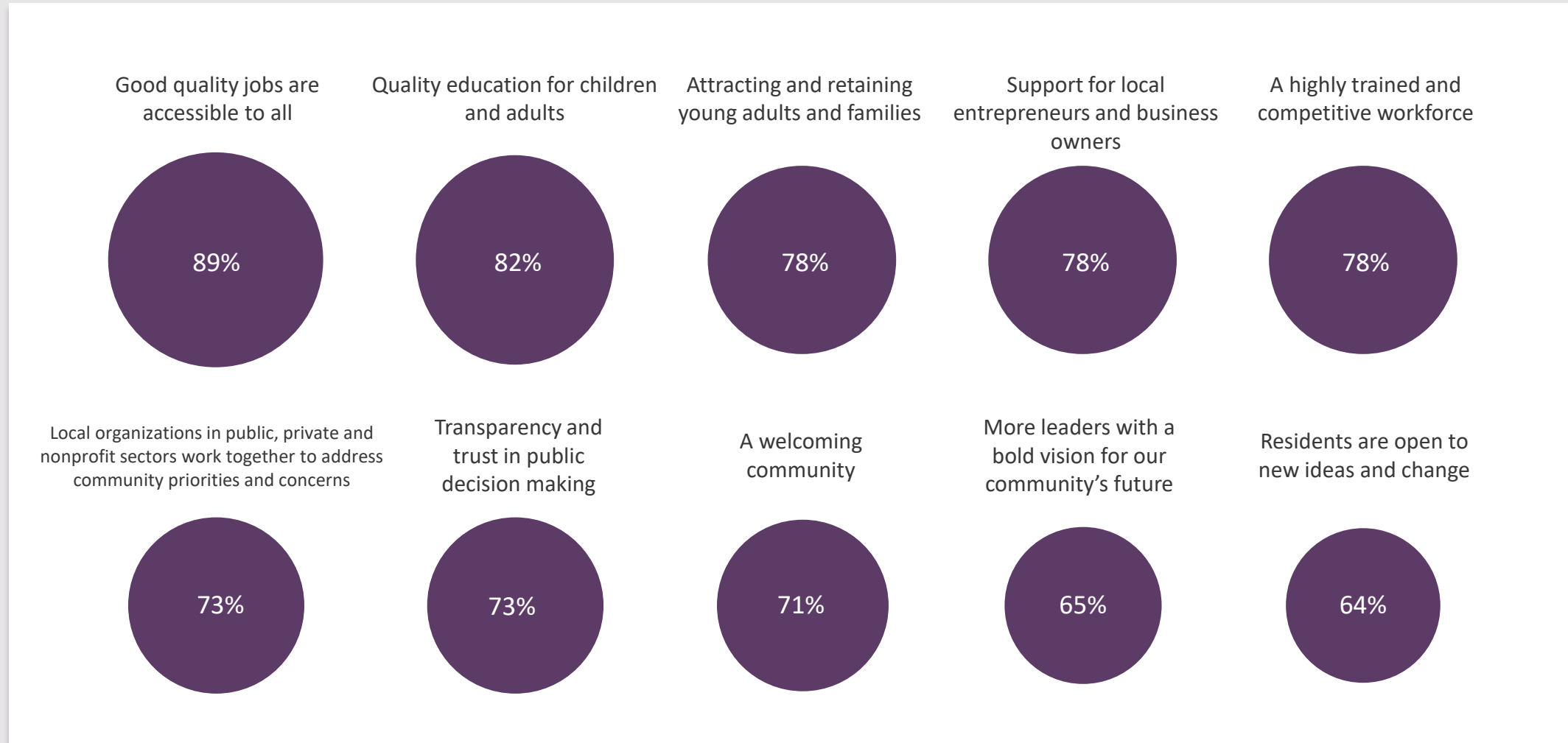


*Note: The response category "Not sure" is not shown on the chart but is included in the total percentage

2017: What is important for the future? Top 10

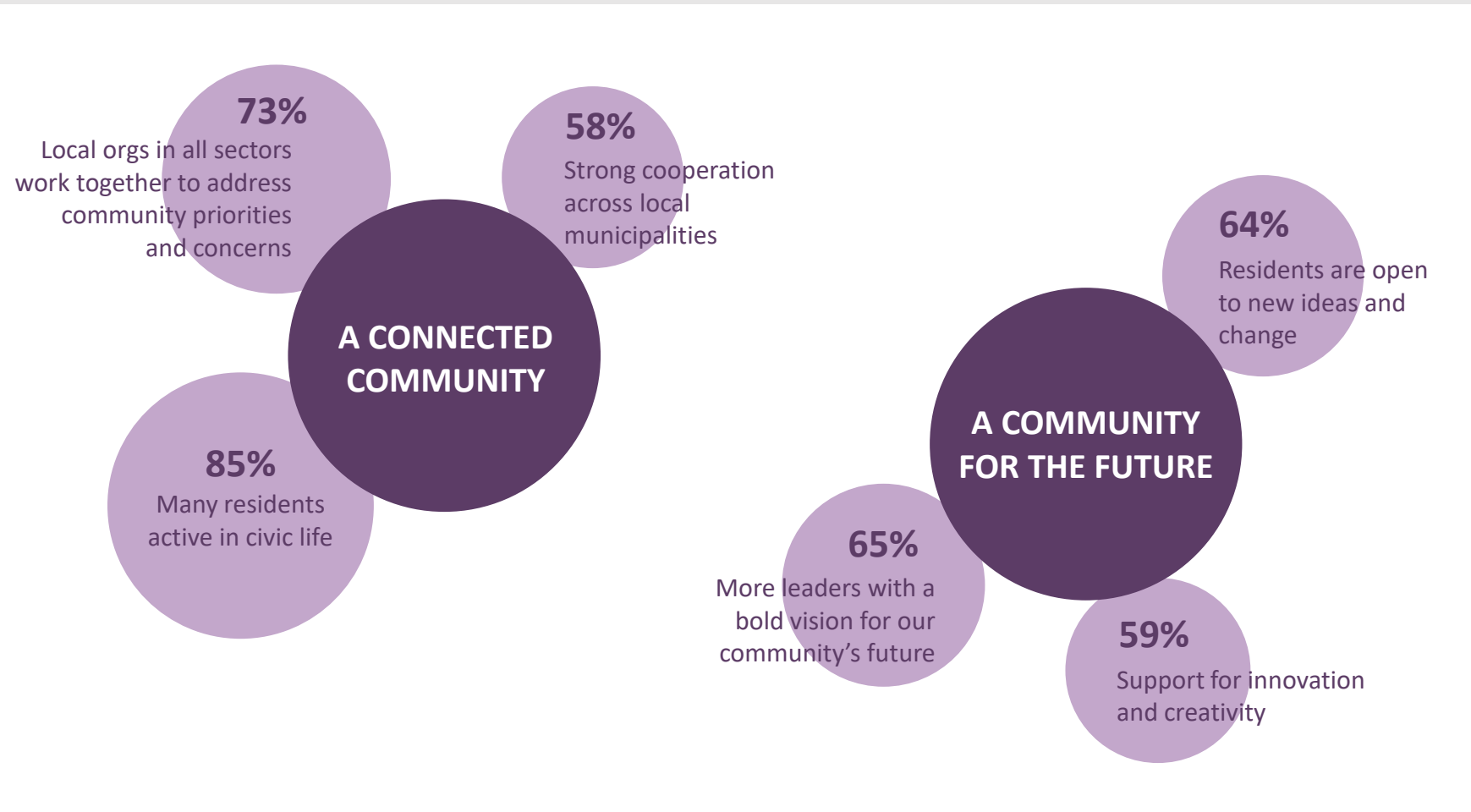


% saying “*Very important*” for south Wood County to achieve in the future





% saying “very important” for south Wood County to achieve in the future



2012 results are similar on comparable measures:

- Many citizens active in civic life 41% (2017 = 38%)
- Strong cooperation across local townships 61% (2017 = 58%)
- Visionary local leaders 65% (2017 = 65%)

Areas of agreement and disagreement across generations

All residents agree on the following priorities for the future of the community, **independent of age**
Over 50% say that these are important to achieve.

- A highly trained and competitive workforce
 - Our community supports local entrepreneurs and business owners
 - Our natural resources are being preserved
 - Our community is attracting and retaining young adults and families
 - Increased access to quality housing
 - Increased access to affordable housing
 - Reduced rates of poverty and homelessness
 - Leaders with a bold vision for our community's future
- } Economic priorities
- } Housing priorities

Areas of agreement and disagreement across generations

- Large shares of residents say that having *good quality jobs that are accessible to all* is very important. Residents 30-44 lead the way
- Over half of young people 18-29 say having *many residents who are active in civic life* is a priority for them
- Residents 45-64 express more concern about *transparency and trust in public decision making*
- Older residents are also more likely to say that *a community that supports innovation and creativity* is very important and that *high quality, comprehensive local news coverage* is a priority

% saying “very important”

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Total
Good quality jobs are accessible to all	82% ↓	98% ↑	92%	84%	90%
Many residents are active in civic life	53% ↑	29% ↓	45%	43%	42%
There is transparency and trust in public decision making	50% ↓	77%	87% ↑	83%	77%
Our community supports innovation and creativity	55% ↓	50%	64%	65% ↑	59%
High quality, comprehensive local news coverage	28%	23% ↓	44%	67% ↑	42%



For this statement, statistically significant differences exist between age groups. Arrows indicate highest and lowest %.



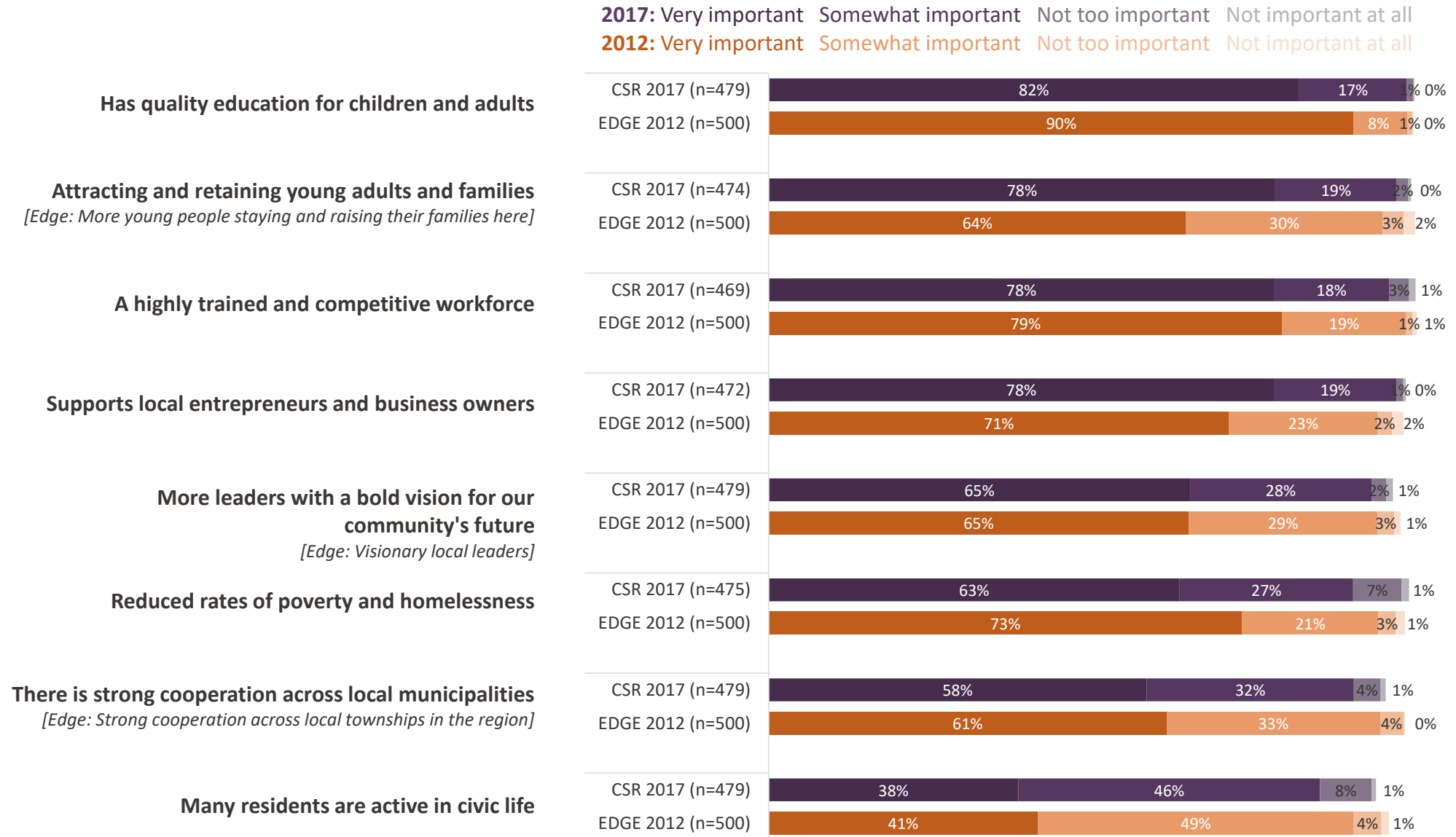
Compared to people who have lived in south Wood County for 10 years or less, people who have lived in the area for 11+ years are more likely to:

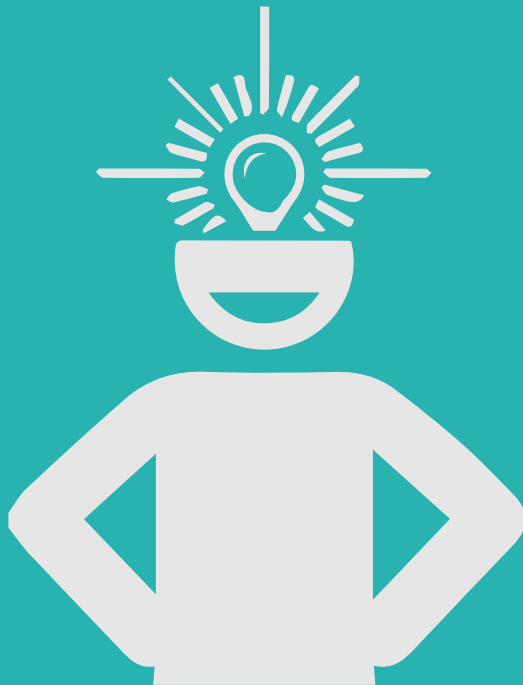
- Be employed full time
- Earn more income
- Have higher levels of educational attainment

The reverse is also true. Compared to people who have lived in south Wood County for 11+ years, people who have lived in the area for 10 years or less are more likely to:

- Be employed part time or are looking for work
- Earn less income
- Have lower levels of educational attainment

2012 and 2017: Priorities for the future of south Wood County

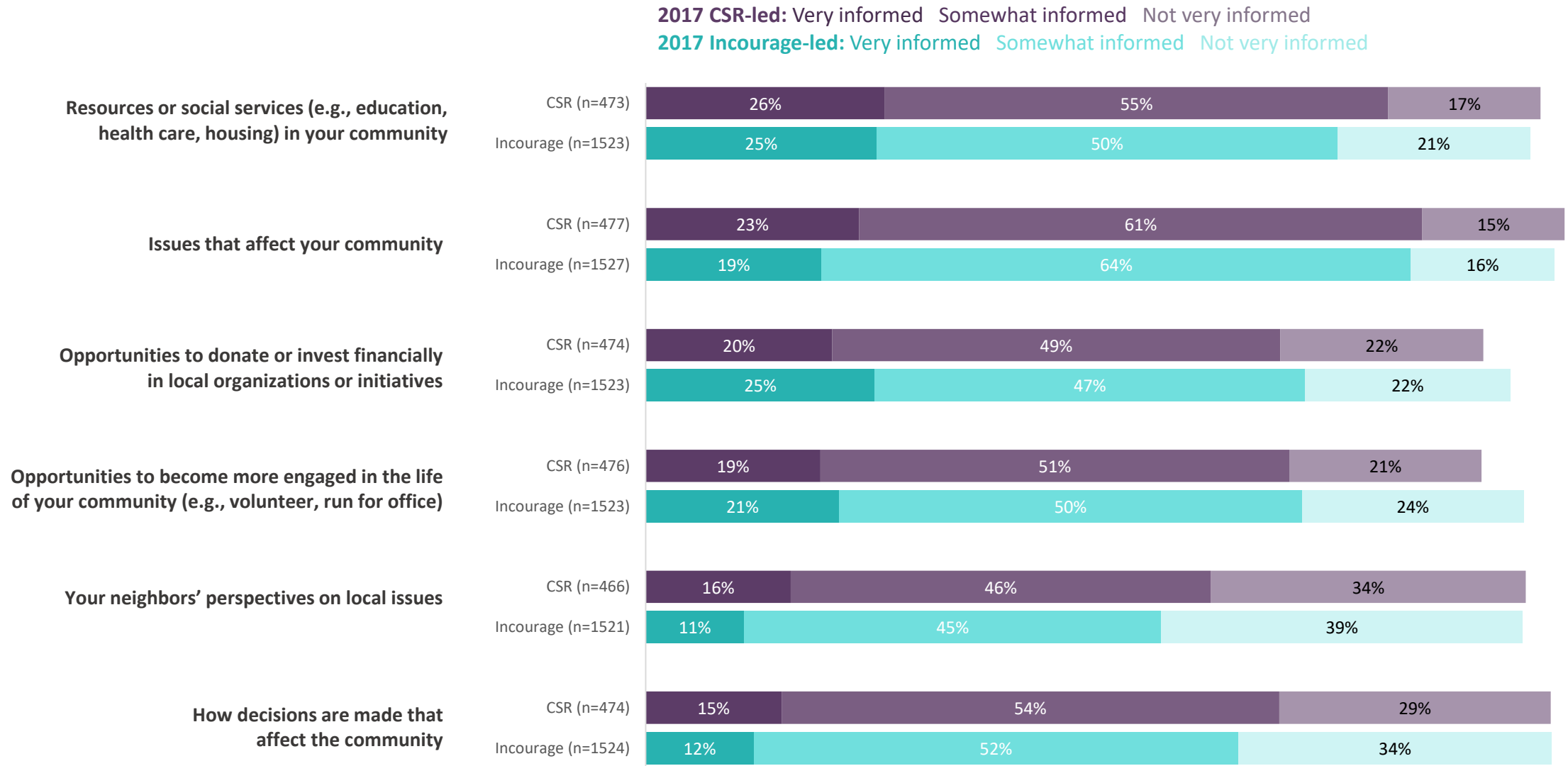




Toward an informed and engaged community

1. How informed do you feel about these things in your community?
2. Many obstacles keep people from becoming as engaged in their community as they would like. How much of an obstacle is each of the following for you?
3. Next is a series of statements that could describe the south Wood County area in the future. For each statement, indicate how important you think it is to achieve this.

2017 results: How informed do you feel about these things in your community



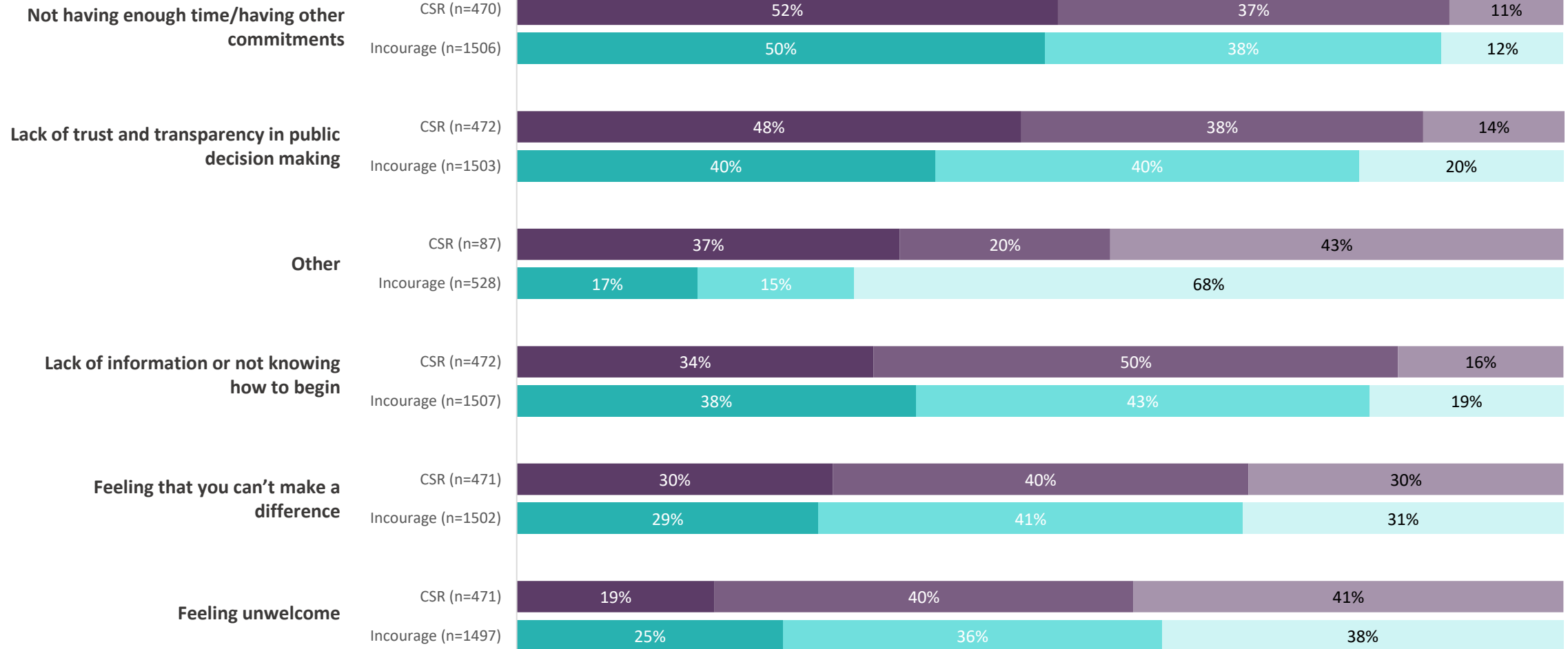
*Note: The response category "Not sure" is not shown on the chart but is included in the total percentage

2017 results: Obstacles that keep people from becoming engaged (1 of 2)



2017 CSR-led: Big obstacle Small obstacle Not an obstacle

2017 Incentive-led: Big obstacle Small obstacle Not an obstacle

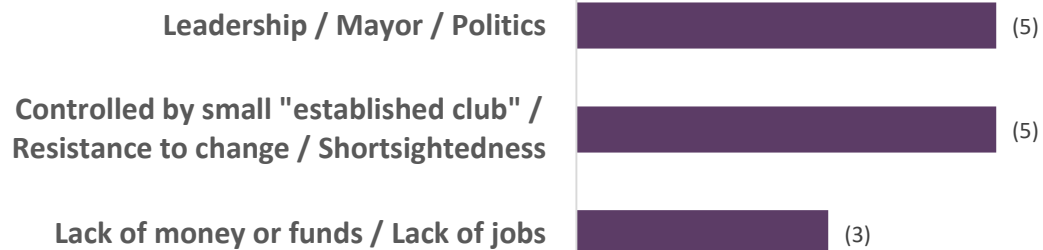


2017 results: Obstacles that keep people from becoming engaged CONTINUED (2 of 2)



Top “Other” Categories

2017 CSR-led (n=27)



2017 Incentive-led (n=88)



Toward an informed and engaged community



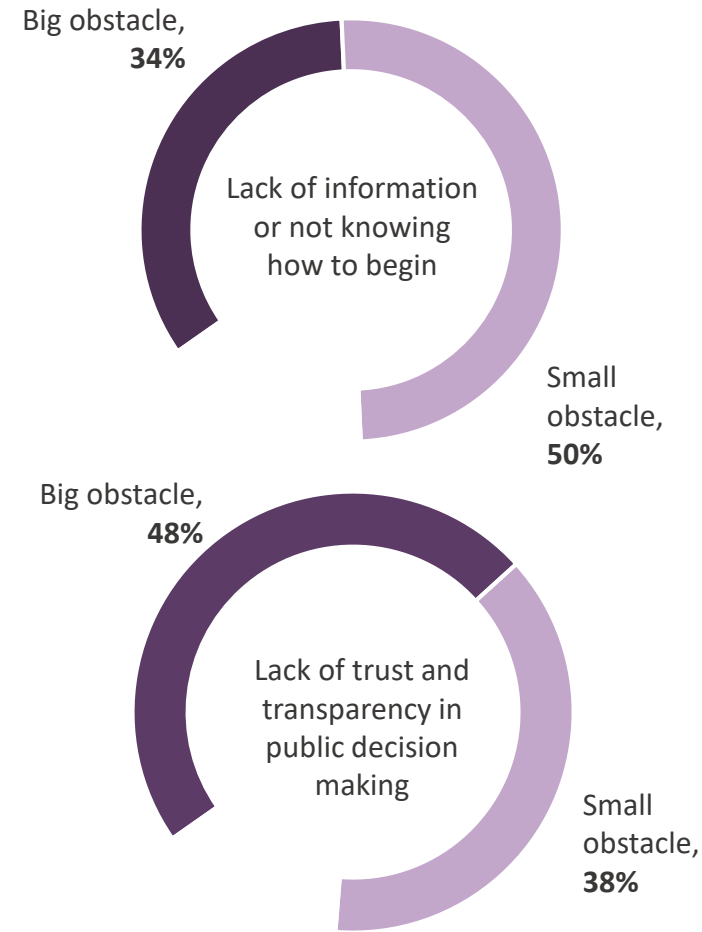
HOW INFORMED

% saying “Not very or somewhat” informed



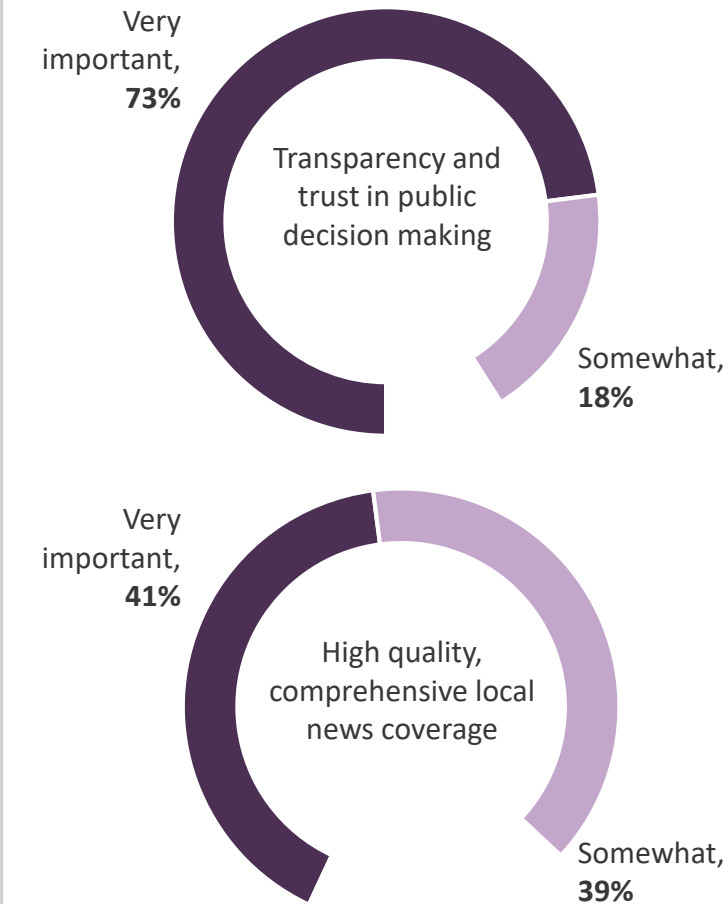
OBSTACLES

% saying this is a “Big or small obstacle” to engagement



OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

% saying “Very important” for south Wood County to achieve in the future

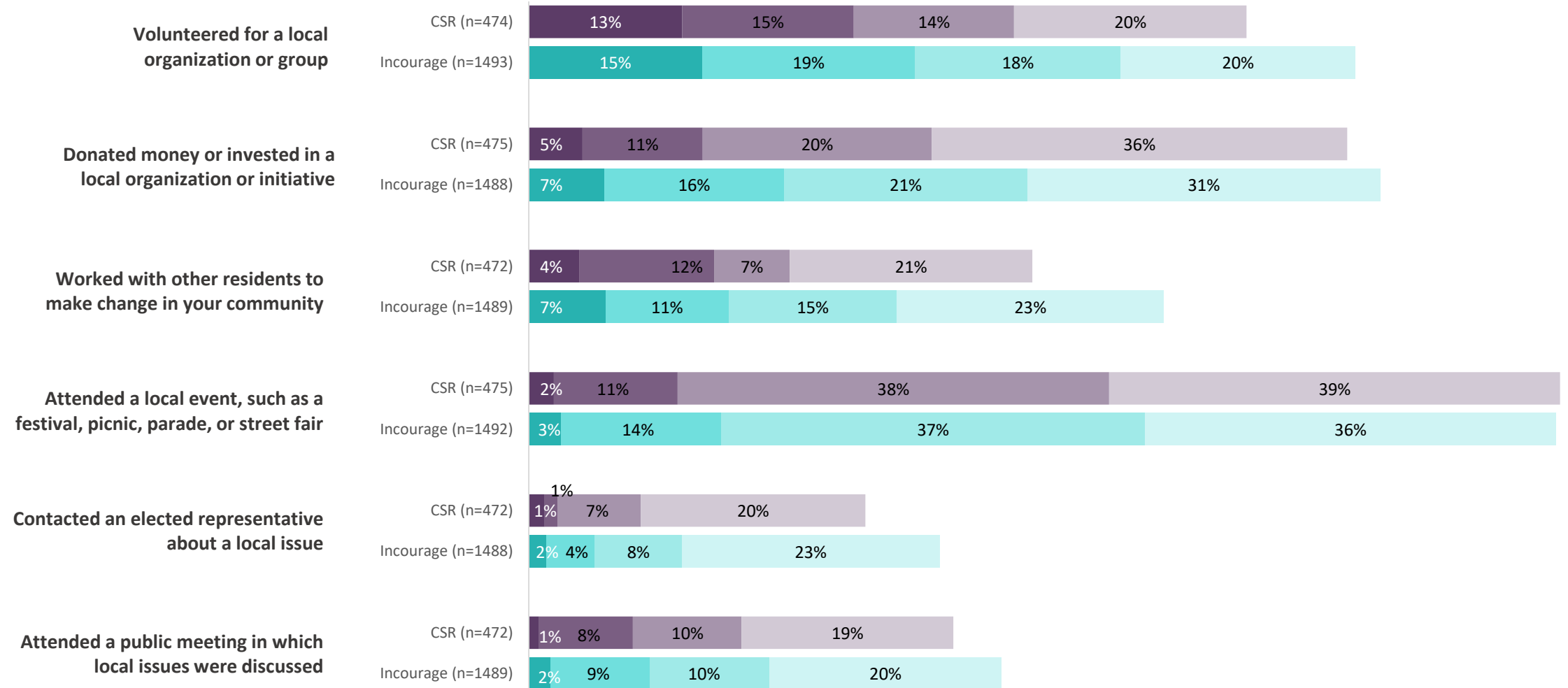


Q6: Next is a series of statements that could describe the south Wood County area in the future. For each statement, indicate whether you think it is not at all important to achieve this, not too important, somewhat important, or very important. If you are not sure, please indicate that.
Q7: How informed do you feel about these things in your community?
Q8: Many obstacles keep people from becoming as engaged in their community as they would like. How much of an obstacle is each of the following for you?

2017 results: Ways residents have engaged in the last 12 months



2017 CSR-led: At least once a week Once or twice a month Every couple of months Once or twice a year
2017 Incourage-led: At least once a week Once or twice a month Every couple of months Once or twice a year



2012 and 2017: Ways residents have engaged in the last 12 months



Donated money or invested in a local organization or initiative
[Edge: Donated money to local charities or causes]



Volunteered for a local organization or group
[Edge: Volunteered in the Community]



Attended a public meeting in which local issues were discussed
[Edge: Attended a community meeting/town hall]

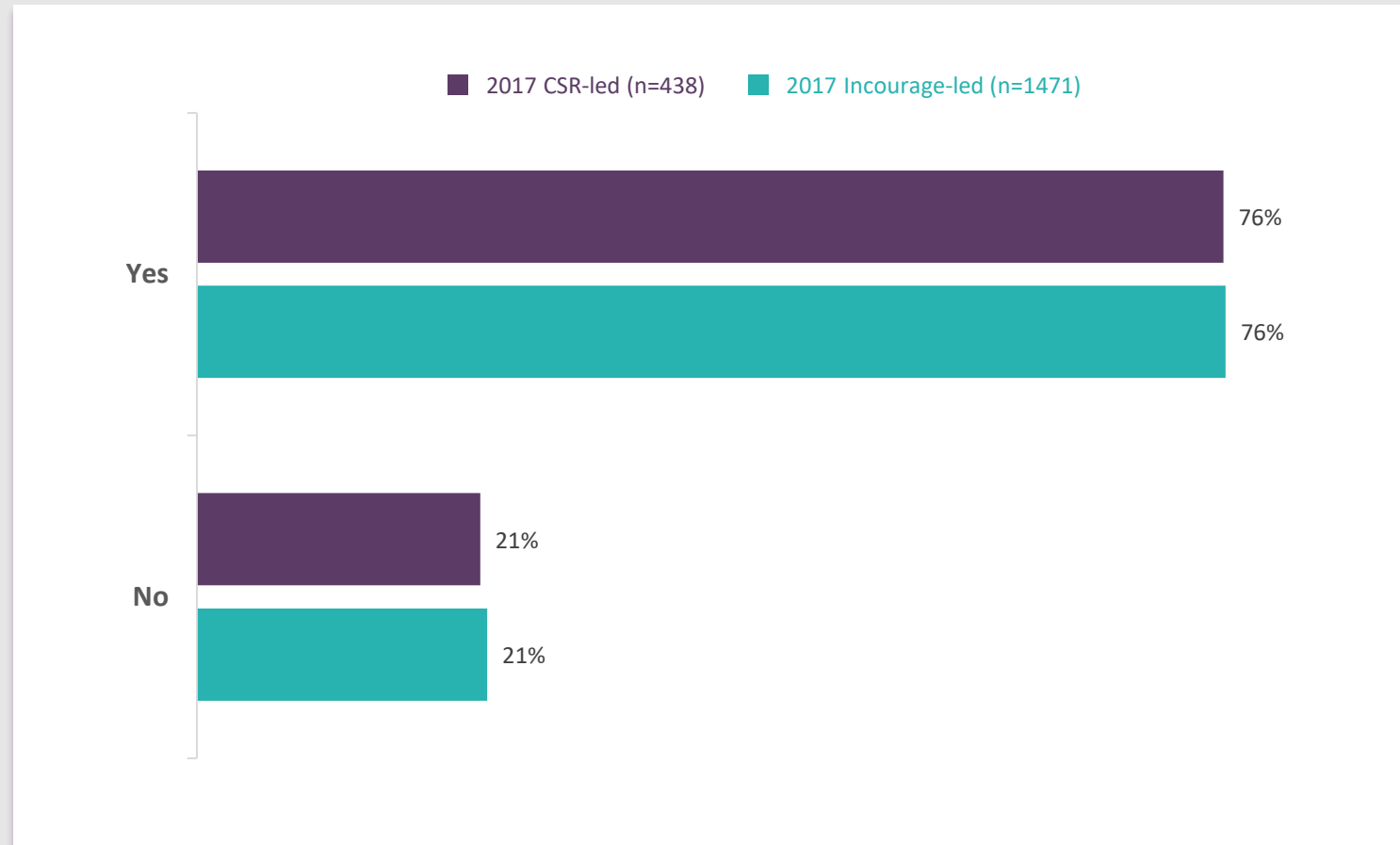


Contacted an elected representative about a local issue
*[Edge: (1) Sent mail to support or oppose an issue or legislation
 (2) Called an elected official (local, regional, etc.)]*



*Note: The 2017 results reflect engagement in any of the activities in the last 12 months. See slide 43 for more detailed 2017 results.

2017 results: Voting in local elections (in the last 12 months)



**Note: The response category "Not sure" is not shown on the chart but is included in the total percentage*



Residents' perspectives on Encourage priorities

Encourage focuses on long-term community development. In your opinion, how important are the following Encourage priorities and programs to the future of our community?

2017 results: Residents' perspectives on Incourage priorities



2017 CSR-led: Very important Somewhat important Not too important Not at all important
 2017 Incourage-led: Very important Somewhat important Not too important Not at all important





Survey demographics

Demographics: CSR-led survey results and Incentive-led survey results (1 of 2)



	CSR-led	Incentive-led
EMPLOYMENT		
Full-time employment	41%	44%
Part-time employment	13%	11%
Self-employed	0%	1%
Student	3%	5%
Unable to work	3%	12%
Homemaker	2%	3%
Unemployed, looking for work	2%	2%
Unemployed, not looking for work	1%	1%
Retired	30%	18%
Work more than one job	18%	16%

	CSR-led	Incentive-led
INCOME		
\$75,000 or more	25%	33%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	26%	19%
\$25,000 – \$49,000	25%	16%
Less than \$25,000	16%	13%
EDUCATION		
More than 4-year college degree	8%	21%
4-year college degree	8%	21%
Some college or 2-year degree	28%	32%
High school graduate or GED	49%	18%
Some high school but did not graduate	6%	8%
8 th grade or less	2%	1%

**Note: Where columns do not add up to 100%, the balance of respondents left the question blank or reported that they preferred not to say*

Demographics: CSR-led survey results and Incentive-led survey results CONTINUED (2 of 2)



	CSR-led	Incentive-led
GENDER		
Male	49%	32%
Female	51%	67%
Identify some other way	0%	1%
AGE		
18-29	16%	16%
30-44	21%	28%
45-64	38%	41%
65+	24%	16%
TIME IN AREA		
Lived in area less than 2 years	3%	4%
2-5 years	6%	5%
6-10 years	5%	7%
11-20 years	17%	21%
More than 20 years	69%	64%
Children in home	24%	41%

**Note: Where columns do not add up to 100%, the balance of respondents left the question blank or reported that they preferred not to say*

Demographics: 2017 CSR-led results and Edge Research 2012 results



	2017	2012
GENDER		
Male	49%	50%
Female	51%	50%
AGE		
18-29	16%	9%
30-44	21%	31%
45-64	38%	35%
65+	24%	25%
TIME IN AREA		
Lived in area less than 2 years	3%	2%
2-5 years	6%	5%
6-10 years	5%	7%
11-20 years	17%	16%
More than 20 years	69%	71%

	2017	2012
Children in home	24%	34%
EMPLOYMENT		
Full-time employment	41%	37%
Part-time employment	13%	11%
Not working	7%	11%
Retired	30%	32%
INCOME		
\$75,000 or more	25%	24%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	26%	21%
\$25,000 – \$49,000	25%	29%
Less than \$25,000	16%	14%
EDUCATION		
HS or less	57%	37%
Some college	28%	18%
College +	15%	45%