



Deep South | CINC

Arkansas Public Information Need Survey

June 9 - 18, 2026

About Embold Research

Who We Are



Embold Research helps leaders better understand Americans' wants and needs. We have a fresh take on public opinion measurement. Our team brings expertise in methodological innovation, research design, public opinion, and strategic consulting. Embold is the nonpartisan business unit of Change Research and launched in 2021.

Our Unique Approach



All of our surveys are completed online. We recruit fresh participants for every survey using targeted advertisements on websites and social media platforms, text messaging, and selective online panels.

Our Products



In addition to custom polling, we offer:

- **Magnify** AI targeting (custom modeling)
- **Voices** qualitative research (in-depth interviews and text-based chats)
- **ReSpark** Renewable energy project viability and tracking (standardized and cost-effective polling)

METHODOLOGY

Embold Research conducted this research on behalf of Deep South and the Civic News Company to understand the local information needs of residents in Arkansas. The findings reveal where residents get their news, what topics matter most, which sources they trust, and where gaps in access and coverage remain.



Survey n=1,011 adults in Arkansas from June 9 to June 18, 2026.



Respondents were recruited via dynamic online sampling, text-to-web, and an online panel marketplace to obtain a sample reflective of the population.



Post-stratification weighting was performed on age, gender, education, race/ethnicity, region, and 2024 presidential vote.



The modeled margin of error is 3.3%

SAMPLE OVERVIEW



51% Women
48% Men
1% Other



72% White
17% Black
7% Hispanic
1% AAPI
3% Other



29% Democrat
46% Republican
25% Independent



29% 18-34
24% 35-49
24% 50-64
23% 65+



52% <\$50k
16% \$50-75k
8% \$75-100k
7% \$100-150k
6% >\$150k



13% Northeast
30% Northwest
13% Pulaski County
37% Rest of Little Rock
7% South

KEY FINDINGS

01

Residents report more difficulty getting neighborhood- and city-level information than national or world news. POC and younger residents find it more difficult to get information in general, across all geographic levels.

02

Residents are broadly satisfied with everyday information like weather and dining, but satisfaction drops sharply for civic and economic topics such as local political information, housing, transportation, and economic opportunities.

03

For local news, residents lean on informal, discovery-based sources (friends and family; local online groups; online search), well ahead of traditional news outlets such as TV or radio.

04

Trust in local journalism relies on neutrality, corroboration, and verifiable detail. The top trust signals are the absence of a political agenda (41%), multiple sources agreeing (37%), and concrete details like names and dates (36%).

Information

ACCESS & SATISFACTION



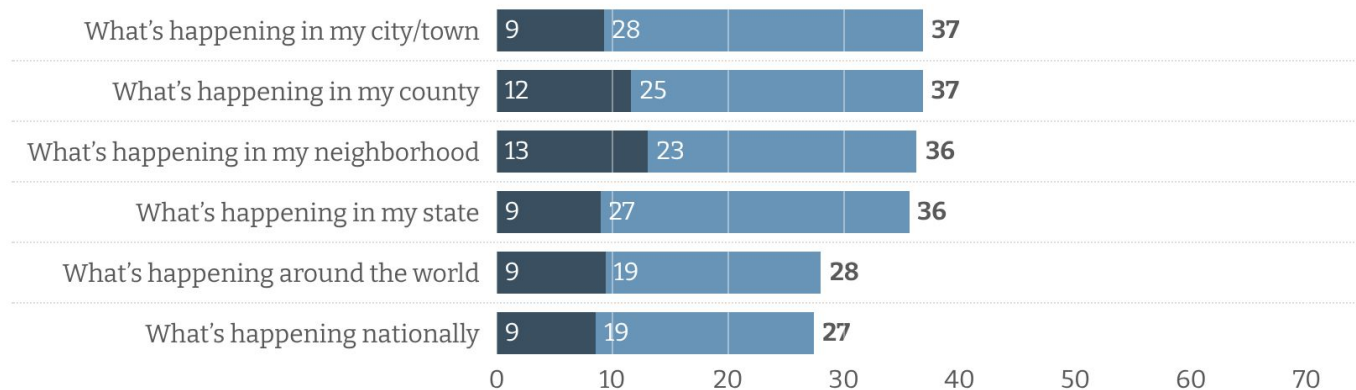
Arkansas residents find it more difficult to find local news than national news

Around 4 in 10 find it very or somewhat difficult to find out what's happening in their neighborhood/county, while only 27% report difficulty accessing national news.

EMBOLD research

How difficult is it for you to get information about each of the following in your day-to-day life?

● Very difficult ● Somewhat difficult

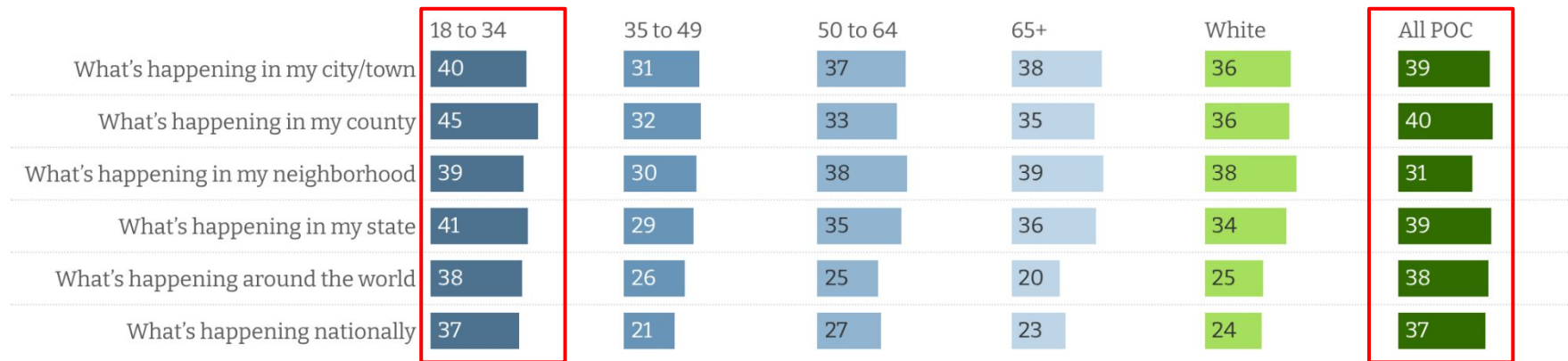


Difficulty accessing information varies by age and race/ethnicity

Younger residents find it more difficult to get information at all levels, while the proximity paradox does not hold for POC residents.

EMBOLD research

How difficult is it for you to get information about each of the following in your day-to-day life?



The bars represent the total of respondents who selected "Very difficult" and "Somewhat difficult"

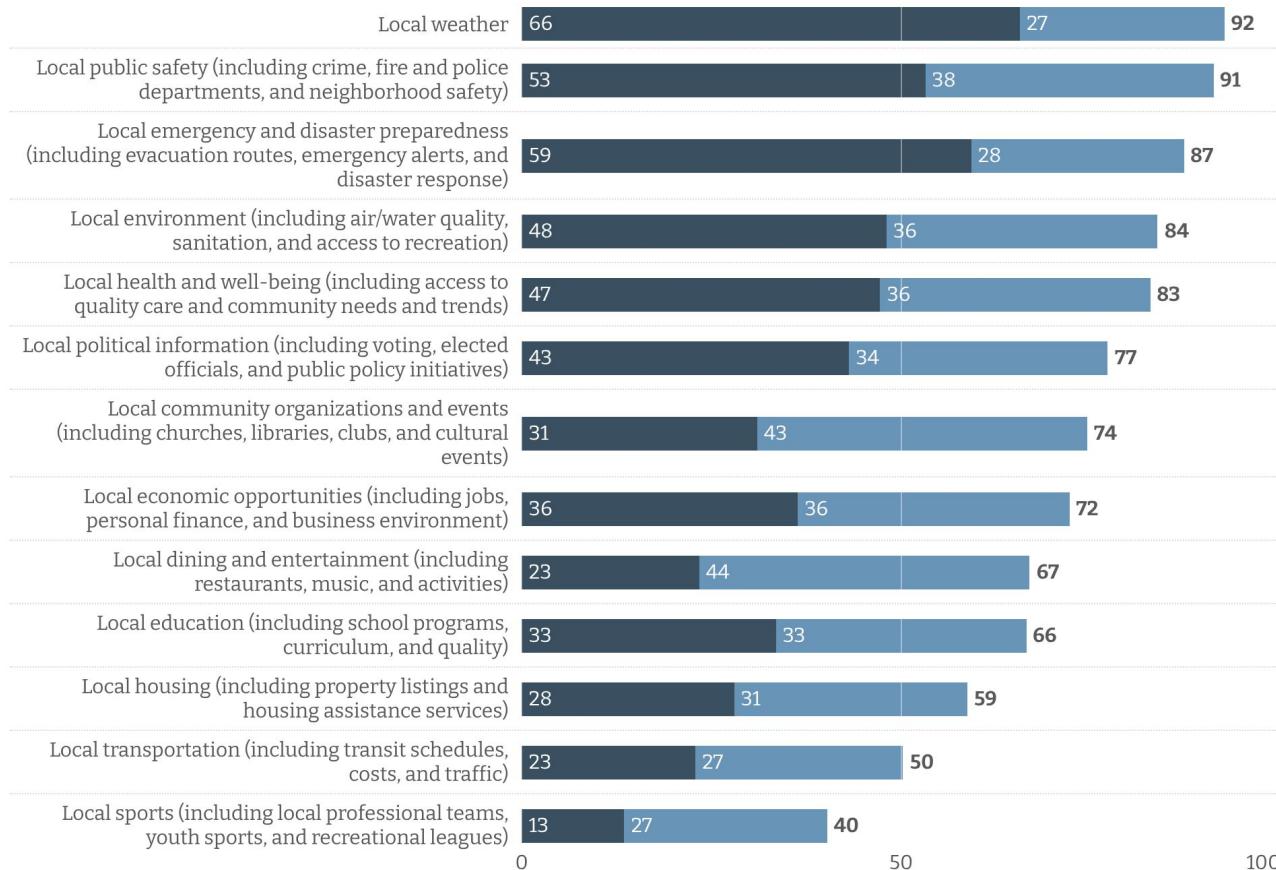


Local weather, public safety, and emergency and disaster preparedness are the most sought-after topics in Arkansas

EMBOLD research

How important is it for you to get information about each of the following topics in your everyday life?

● Very Important ● Somewhat Important



How important is it for you to get information about each of the following topics in your everyday life?

Younger and POC residents place higher importance on local economic opportunities, education, housing, and transportation information

	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	White	All POC
Local weather	86	93	96	97	94	88
Local public safety (including crime, fire and police departments, and neighborhood safety)	90	86	94	95	91	91
Local emergency and disaster preparedness (including evacuation routes, emergency alerts, and disaster response)	87	83	88	91	85	92
Local environment (including air/water quality, sanitation, and access to recreation)	86	82	87	80	82	88
Local health and well-being (including access to quality care and community needs and trends)	84	78	82	88	81	88
Local political information (including voting, elected officials, and public policy initiatives)	75	62	82	91	76	79
Local community organizations and events (including churches, libraries, clubs, and cultural events)	80	70	72	75	70	86
Local economic opportunities (including jobs, personal finance, and business environment)	83	75	74	53	68	83
Local dining and entertainment (including restaurants, music, and activities)	75	64	66	61	64	77
Local education (including school programs, curriculum, and quality)	77	68	66	52	62	78
Local housing (including property listings and housing assistance services)	76	57	54	43	53	76
Local transportation (including transit schedules, costs, and traffic)	70	45	44	36	43	70
Local sports (including local professional teams, youth sports, and recreational leagues)	48	40	39	32	34	58

The bars represent the total of respondents who selected "Very important" and "Somewhat Important."



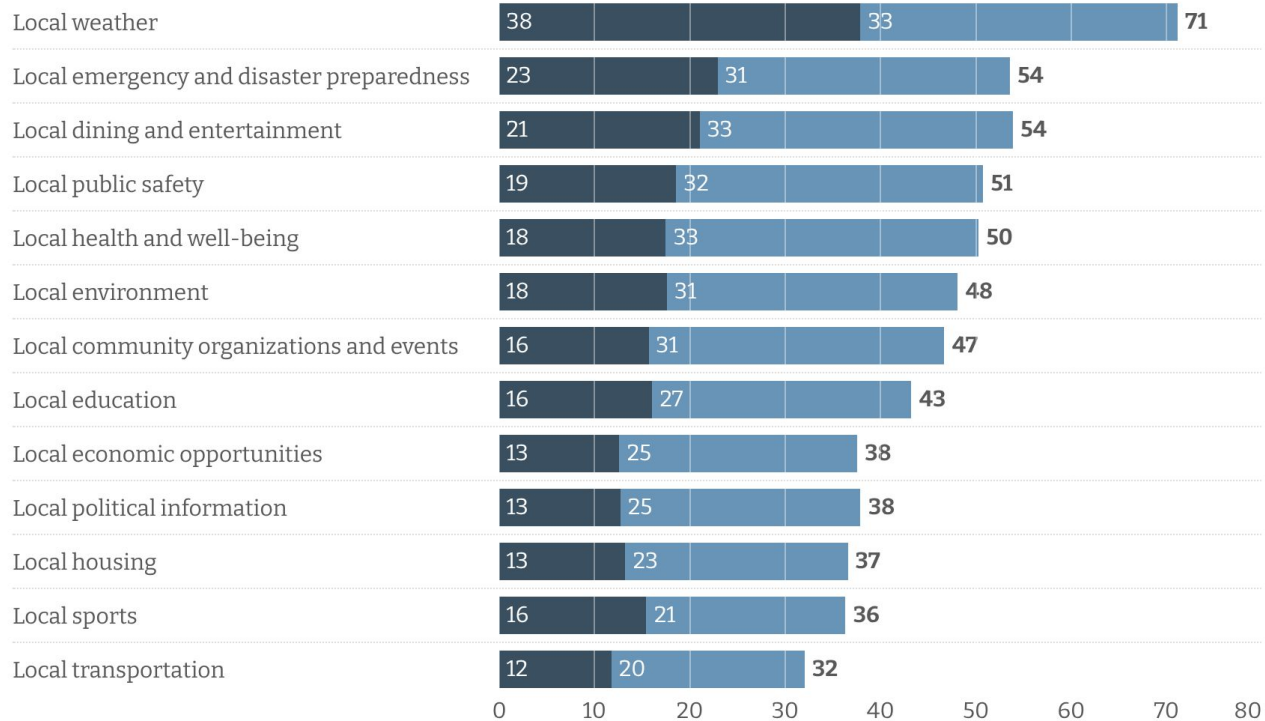
Residents report varying levels of satisfaction with available local news across topics

Residents are most satisfied with information on local weather, while local transportation is the weakest area.

EMBOLD research

When you seek out news and information about each of the following topics, how satisfied or unsatisfied are you with the information you are able to get?

● Very Satisfied ● Somewhat Satisfied



Satisfaction with local information is divided along age and race/ethnicity

Satisfaction is higher among POC residents, especially on housing, transportation, and economic opportunity.

Younger residents report higher satisfaction on similar topics; older residents on political information and weather

EMBOLD research

When you seek out news and information about each of the following topics, how satisfied or unsatisfied are you with the information you are able to get?

	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	White	All POC
Local weather	66	69	70	81	72	71
Local emergency and disaster preparedness	52	51	54	58	52	58
Local dining and entertainment	57	56	49	53	53	57
Local public safety	51	47	52	54	50	54
Local health and well-being	48	51	50	53	48	60
Local environment	50	46	46	49	46	56
Local community organizations and events	49	46	48	43	47	47
Local education	48	45	41	38	40	54
Local economic opportunities	43	38	37	32	34	48
Local political information	35	34	38	47	38	38
Local housing	44	36	34	30	32	49
Local sports	41	43	36	23	33	47
Local transportation	42	36	26	22	26	50

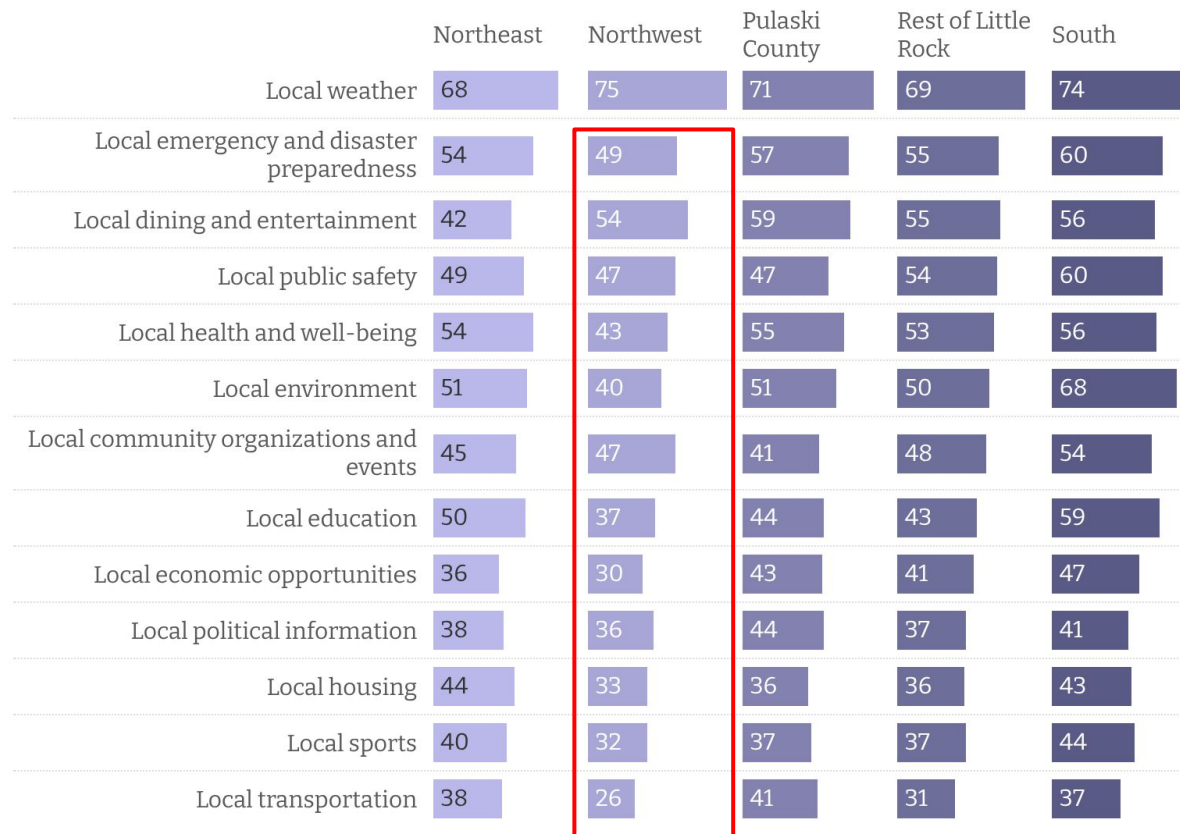
The bars represent the total of respondents who selected "Very satisfied" and "Somewhat satisfied."



When you seek out news and information about each of the following topics, how satisfied or unsatisfied are you with the information you are able to get?

Satisfaction with local information varies across regions

Northwest residents report the lowest satisfaction across most topics, including local health and well-being, environment, and economic opportunities.

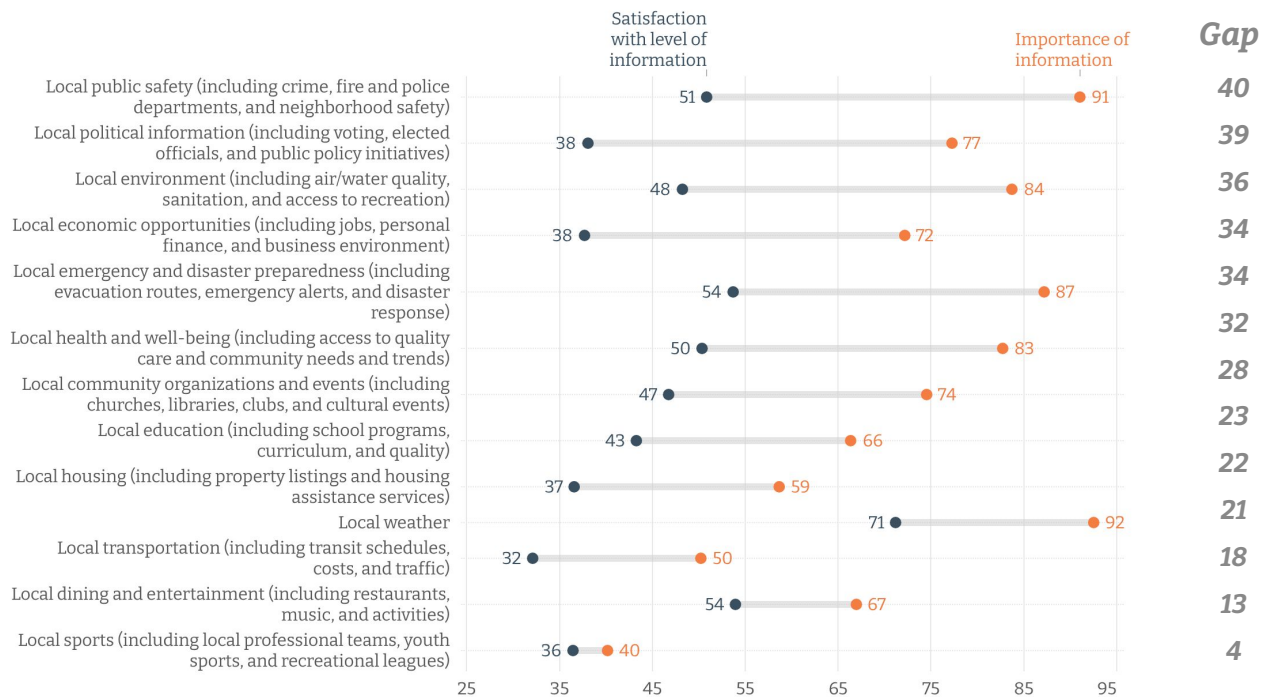


The bars represent the total of respondents who selected "Very satisfied" and "Somewhat satisfied." South Arkansas has a small sample (n=66); therefore, its estimates are directional and should be interpreted with caution.



The gap between the information residents care about and their satisfaction with what's available is largest in the areas of local public safety and local political information

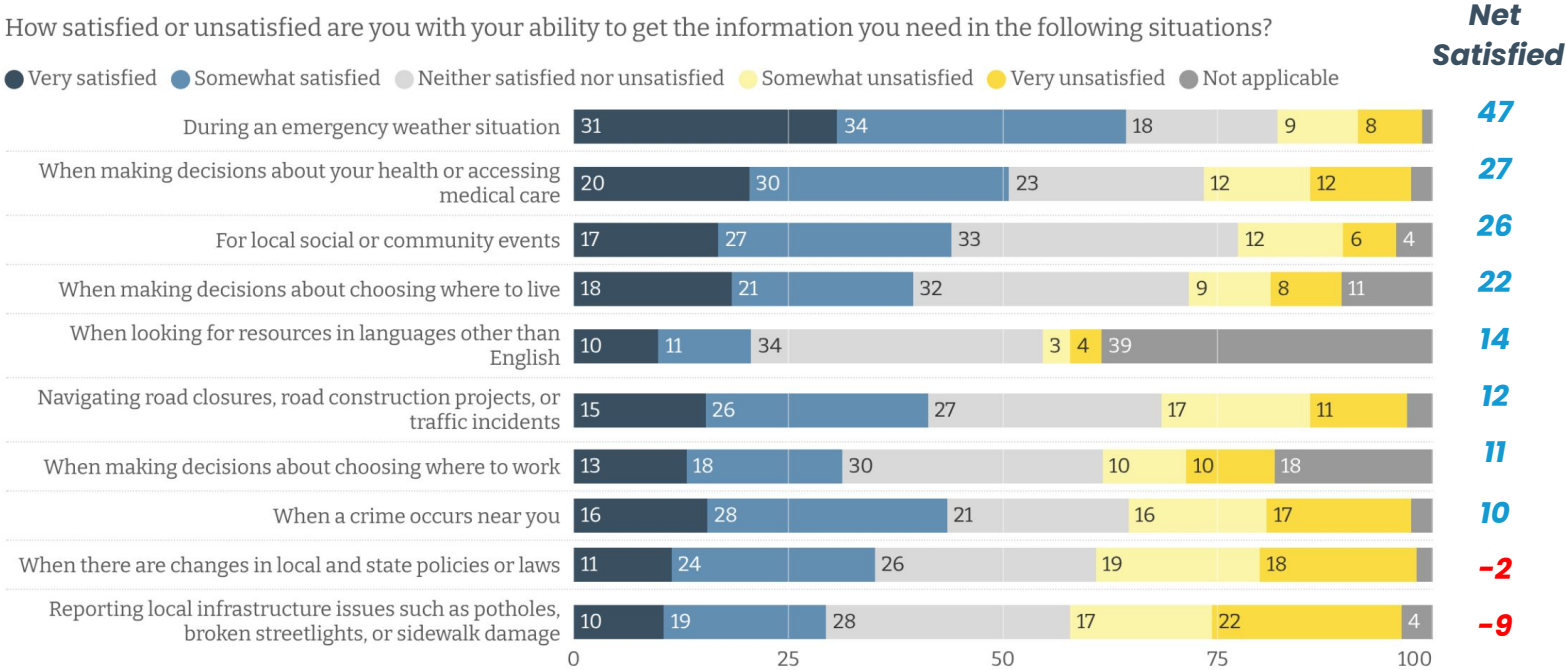
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Satisfaction with level of information is based on the share of respondents who report to be "Very satisfied" or "Somewhat satisfied" regarding the information about each topic. Importance of information is based on the share who reported that it is "Very important" or "Somewhat important" to stay informed about each topic.



Residents are most satisfied with information about weather emergencies, and most unsatisfied with information related to reporting local infrastructure issues

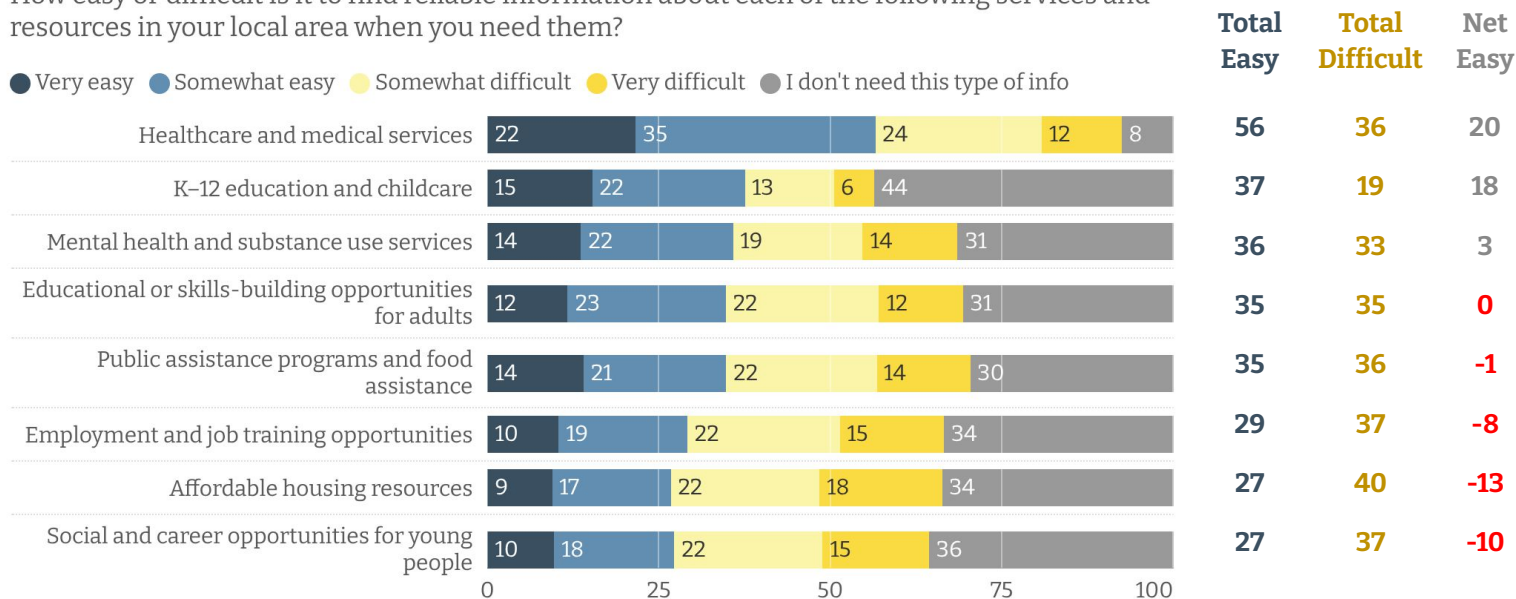


Among those who need it, healthcare and medical services information is easiest to access while affordable housing, employment and career opportunities are most difficult

EMBOLD research

How easy or difficult is it to find reliable information about each of the following services and resources in your local area when you need them?

● Very easy ● Somewhat easy ● Somewhat difficult ● Very difficult ● I don't need this type of info



News

SOURCES

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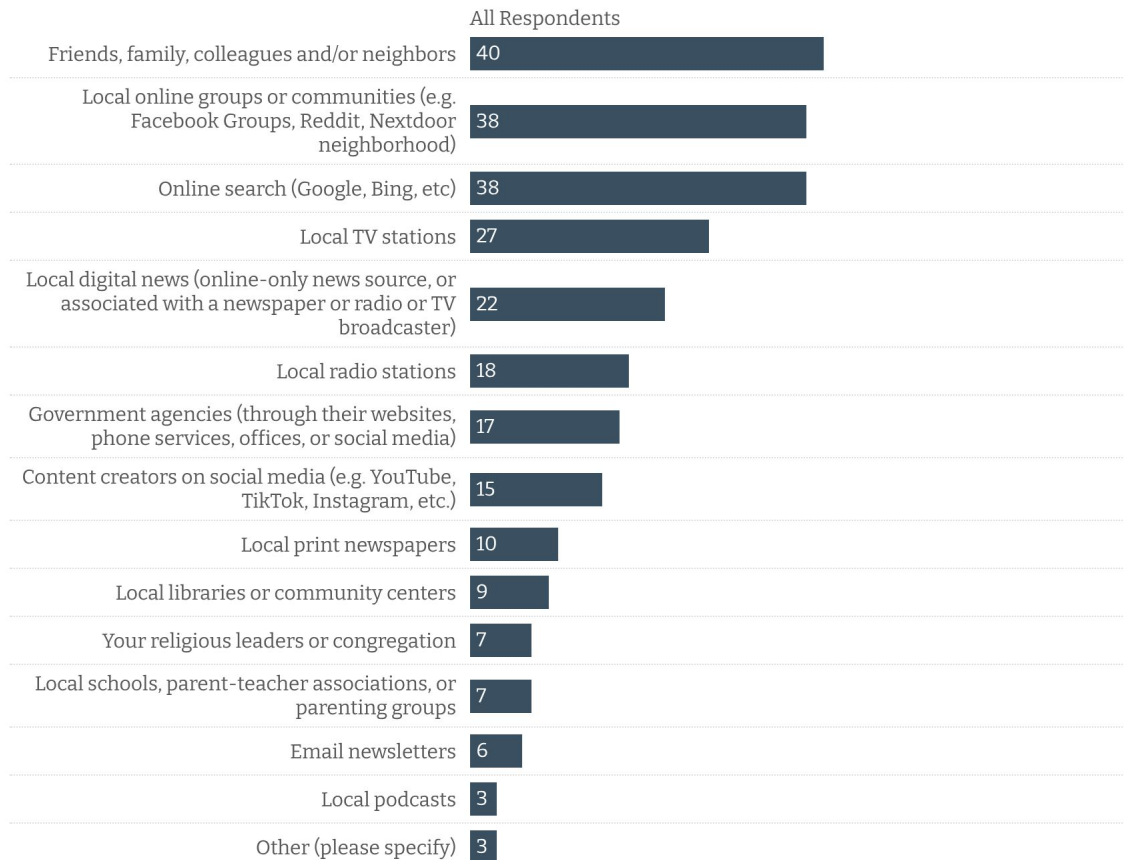
Residents turn to personal networks, online communities, and online search for local information

About 4 in 10 residents rely on their friends, family, colleagues and neighbors, followed by local online groups (38%) and online search (38%).



EMBOLD research

Which of the following sources are the most useful when it comes to getting high quality, local information? Select up to THREE



Which of the following sources are the most useful when it comes to getting high quality, local information? Select up to THREE.

	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	White	All POC
Friends, family, colleagues and/or neighbors	42	38	34	46	40	38
Local online groups or communities (e.g. Facebook Groups, Reddit, Nextdoor neighborhood)	32	45	44	35	42	28
Online search (Google, Bing, etc)	37	42	37	37	40	35
Local TV stations	16	24	30	41	28	25
Local digital news (online-only news source, or associated with a newspaper or radio or TV broadcaster)	19	25	28	18	23	22
Local radio stations	13	15	27	17	20	15
Government agencies (through their websites, phone services, offices, or social media)	16	15	19	18	16	19
Content creators on social media (e.g. YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, etc.)	23	12	10	12	13	20
Local print newspapers	11	8	9	11	9	12
Local libraries or community centers	15	6	5	9	9	8
Your religious leaders or congregation	7	2	8	11	7	8
Local schools, parent-teacher associations, or parenting groups	12	8	5	1	6	10
Email newsletters	9	5	4	6	6	8
Local podcasts	2	3	4	2	3	4
Other (please specify)	3	4	3	1	3	2

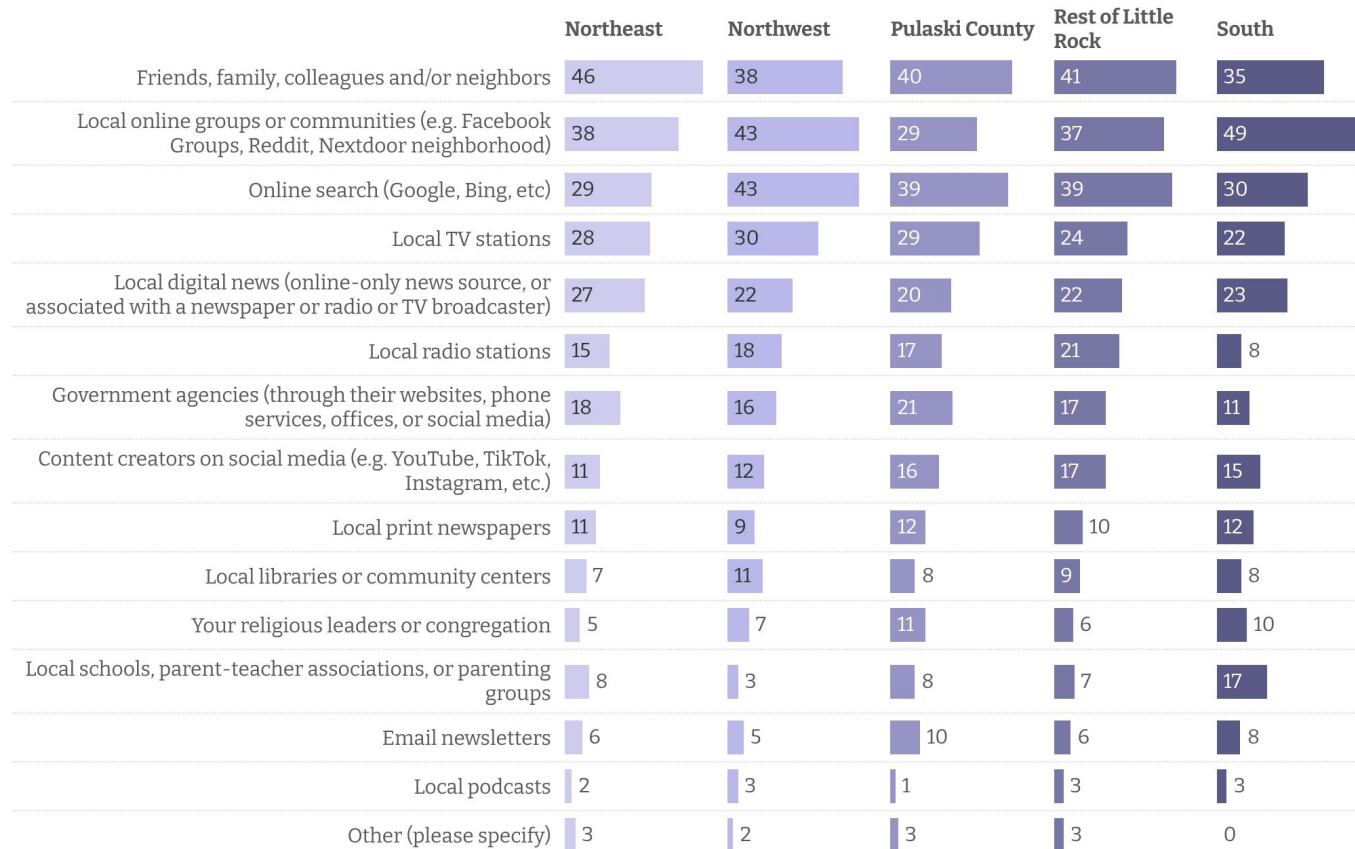
Personal networks and online search are widely used across all groups; TV skews older, social media creators younger, and community groups whiter



Which of the following sources are the most useful when it comes to getting high quality, local information? Select up to THREE.

Northwest residents lean slightly more on online groups and search, and Northeast residents on personal networks

Pulaski County residents rely less on online groups



South Arkansas has a small sample (n=66); therefore, its estimates are directional and should be interpreted with caution.

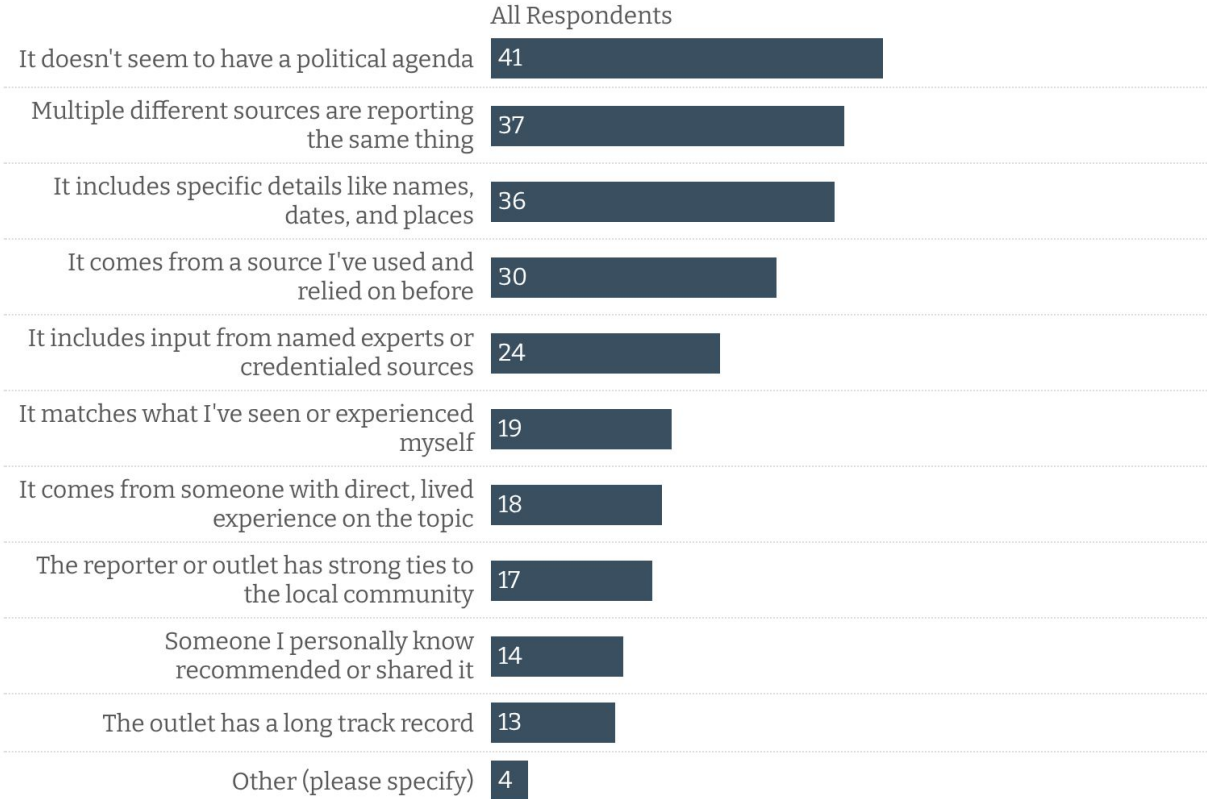


**Political neutrality,
cross-source
consistency and
corroboration, and
verifiable detail are
the top signals
residents use to
judge whether local
information is
trustworthy**



EMBOLDresearch

When figuring out whether local news or information is trustworthy, which of the following matter most to you? Select up to THREE.



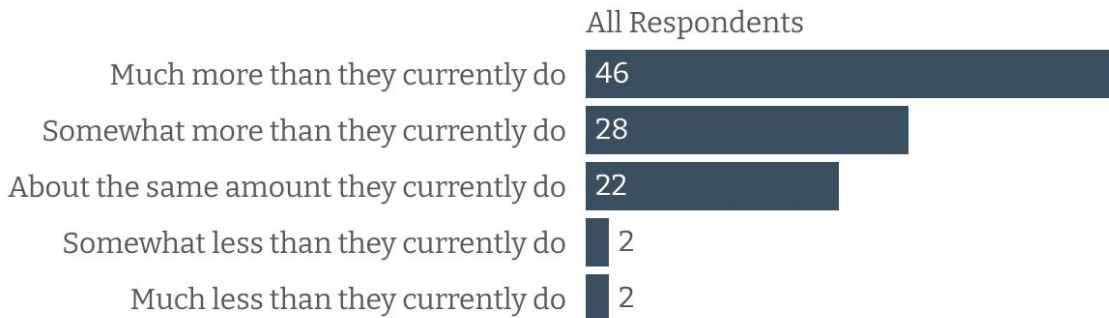
Nearly 3 in 4 residents say news organizations should do more investigative reporting, with 46% wanting *much more*

Demand for more investigative reporting spans party, age, and race.

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Some news stories take weeks or months to complete. Reporters dig deep into a single topic — looking into problems in government, business, or the community — to find out what is really going on. They often uncover wrongdoing or share information that powerful people would rather keep hidden. This type of reporting is called investigative journalism.

In your opinion, should news organizations in Arkansas do more investigative reporting, about the same amount, or less investigative reporting than they currently do?

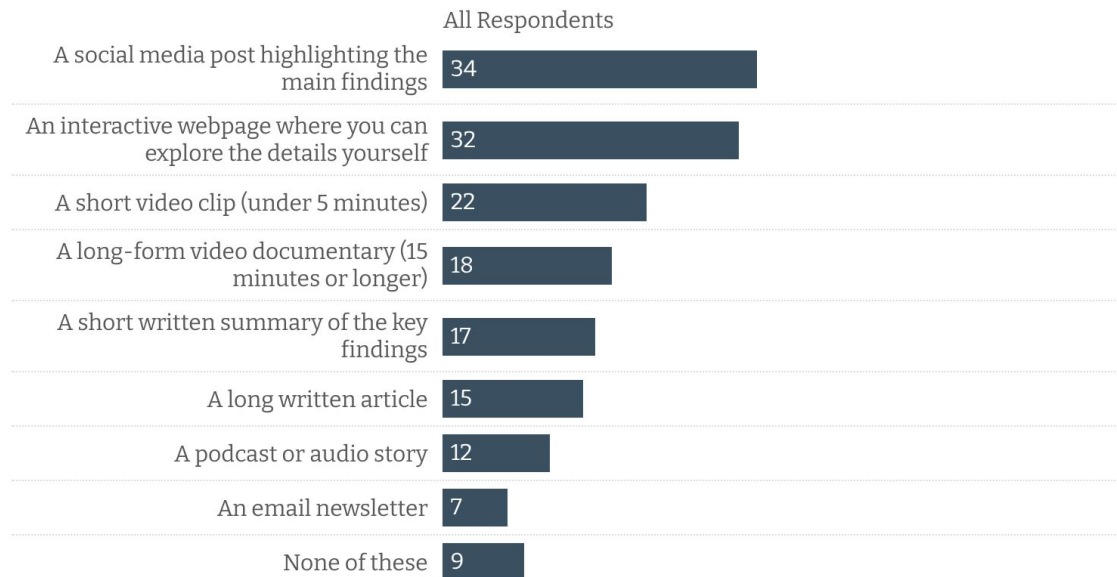


Residents prefer digital formats for investigative reporting

1 in 3 say they prefer social media postings and an interactive webpage to get information from an investigative report

EMBOLD research

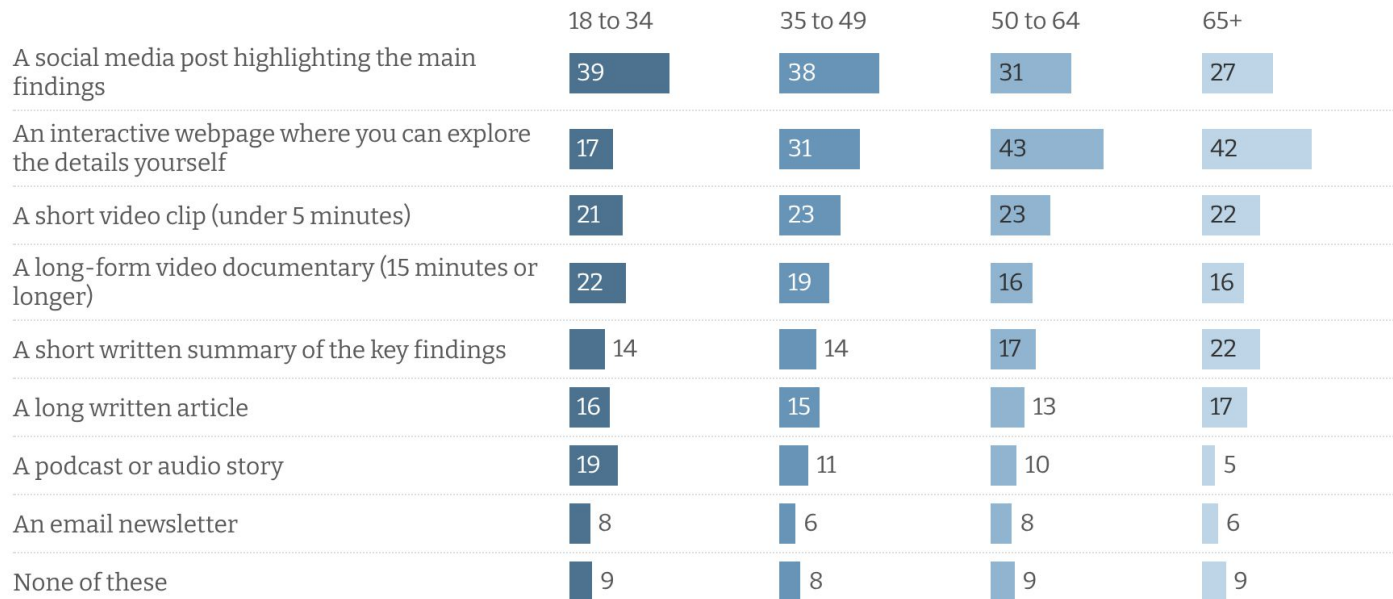
If a news organization published an investigative report, which of the following formats would you be most likely to use to get the information? Please choose up to TWO.



Younger generations lean more towards social media, video, and audio formats; older generations prefer interactive web pages and written summaries

EMBOLD research

If a news organization published an investigative report, which of the following formats would you be most likely to use to get the information? Please choose up to TWO.



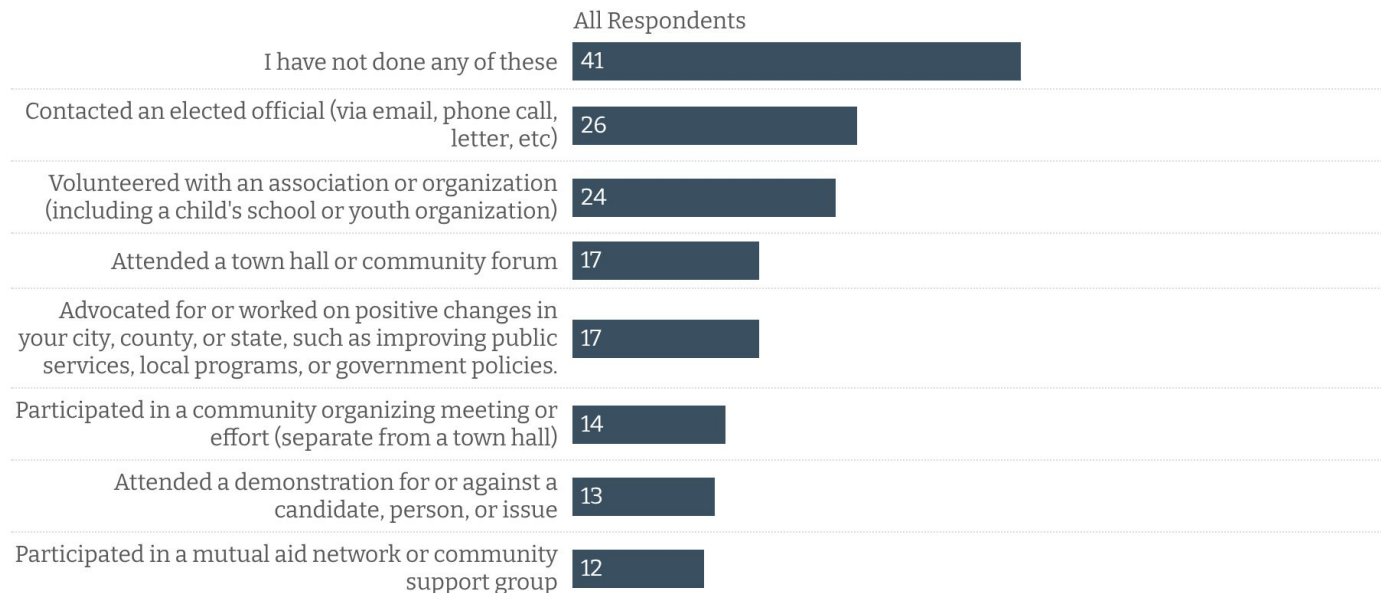
News &
CIVIC LIFE

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Contacting an elected official and volunteering are the most common forms of civic participation among Arkansas residents

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Here is a list of some ways people get involved with and try to improve the community or state they live in. Which of the following, if any, have you done in the last 12 months? Select all that apply.



Contacting an elected official and volunteering are the most common forms of civic participation

EMBOLD research

Here is a list of some ways people get involved with and try to improve the community or state they live in. Which of the following, if any, have you done in the last 12 months? Select all that apply.

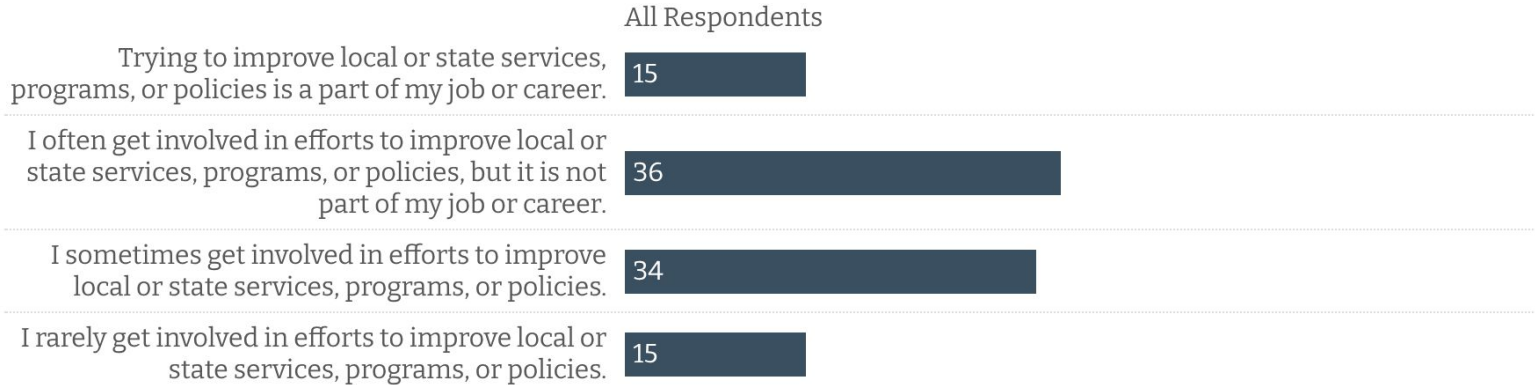
	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	White	All POC	Non-College	College	Democrats	Pure independents	GOP
I have not done any of these	40	41	42	42	44	36	46	26	34	49	42
Contacted an elected official (via email, phone call, letter, etc)	15	27	33	34	29	15	22	39	31	16	29
Volunteered with an association or organization (including a child's school or youth organization)	25	27	17	25	23	25	19	40	26	20	25
Attended a town hall or community forum	14	19	21	16	16	20	16	21	21	14	16
Advocated for or worked on positive changes in your city, county, or state, such as improving public services, local programs, or government policies.	25	17	12	14	15	22	15	24	23	20	12
Participated in a community organizing meeting or effort (separate from a town hall)	17	15	13	12	15	14	12	22	17	17	11
Attended a demonstration for or against a candidate, person, or issue	15	11	10	15	13	10	11	20	24	9	7
Participated in a mutual aid network or community support group	14	11	12	9	10	16	10	18	14	12	10



Among those who engage in advocacy or public improvement efforts, more than 8 in 10 advocates get involved at least sometimes – often, occasionally, or as part of their job

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Thinking about the ways you get involved in your city, county, or state, which of the following best describes you?



This question was only shown to respondents who indicated they had advocated for or worked on positive changes in their city, country, or state, such as improving public services, local programs, or government policies.



THANK YOU

QUESTIONS?