EMBOLD research

Cityside | CINC

Marin County Civic Information Needs Census

May 14-22, 2026

METHODOLOGY

Embold Research conducted this research on behalf of Cityside and the Civic News Company to understand the local information needs of residents in Marin County, California. 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=832 adults in Marin County, California from May 14-22, 2026

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

Post-stratification weighting was performed on age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, and urbanicity.

The modeled margin of error is 3.6%

SAMPLE OVERVIEW

50% Women
48% Men
3% Other

72% White
2% Black
19% Hispanic
5% AAPI
2% Other

68% Kamala Harris
18% Donald Trump
6% Third Party

23% 18-34
21% 35-49
28% 50-64
28% 65+

15% <$50k
9% $50-75k
9% $75-100k
14% $100-150k
36% >$150k

29% Urban
68% Suburban
3% Rural

KEY FINDINGS

01 **Marin residents experience large gaps in availability and quality of the local information they want.** For instance, while 96% say staying informed about their city or town is important, 51% say it's hard to find information about it.

02 **Residents report large unmet information needs on topics that are most important to them.** Around 9 in 10 rate local political information, public safety, environment, and emergency preparedness as important, but no more than 6 in 10 are satisfied with the information they can find.

03 **More than 1 in 3 respondents contacted an elected official, volunteered, and attended a demonstration in the last year.** Still, most are not particularly confident about their ability to find information about their local government.

04 **Online search and local digital news sources are residents' most useful sources for local news.**

05 **Most Marin residents regularly seek out information about other parts of the county.** Top topics include leisure activities: dining, recreation, and entertainment. Low-income residents look for this kind of information less often.

Information

ACCESS

Staying informed about local news in Marin and the Bay Area is a near-universal priority

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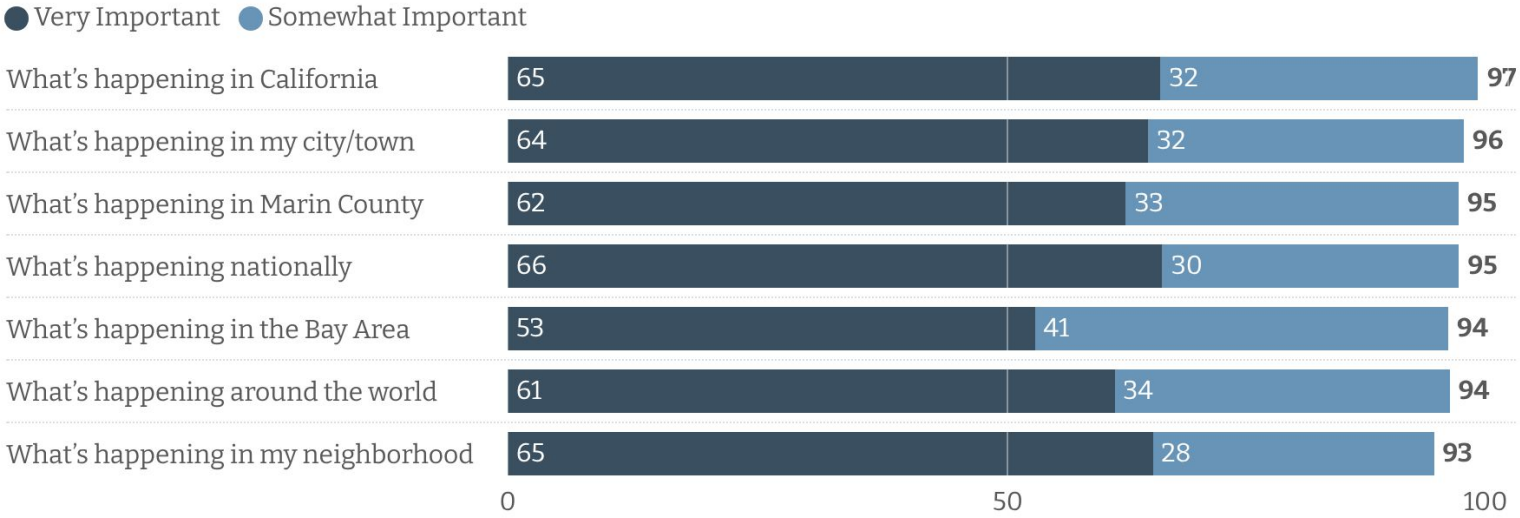
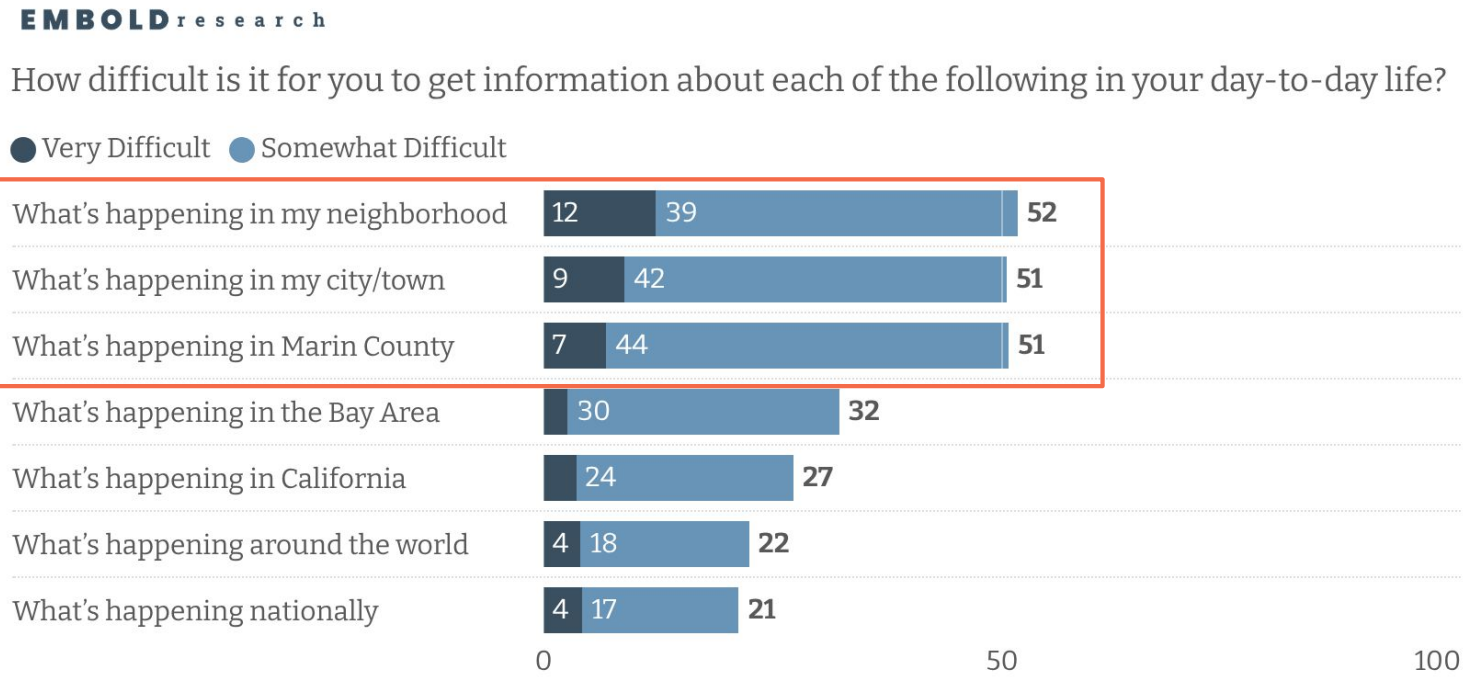
How important is it to you to stay informed about each of the following in your day-to-day life?



Despite its importance, Marin County residents find it more difficult to find local news than national news

More than half find it very or somewhat difficult to find out what's happening in their neighborhood, while only 21% report difficulty accessing national news



Difficulty accessing news varies by age and income

Younger residents and those earning under $50k report the most difficulty

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

	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Under $50k	$50,000 - $99,999	$100,000 - $149,999	$150,000 - $199,999	$200k +
What's happening in my neighborhood	61	61	51	38	59	50	51	45	52
What's happening in my city/town	61	57	50	38	55	50	45	45	52
What's happening in Marin County	61	62	50	35	57	50	51	40	50
What's happening in the Bay Area	33	40	32	27	41	31	30	24	33
What's happening in California	29	32	27	23	39	25	24	19	24
What's happening around the world	25	25	24	17	34	24	18	14	17
What's happening nationally	25	20	22	19	37	20	19	13	15

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

The gap between the information residents care about and the information they can easily find is three times as large for city and county news (46-47 pts) as national news (16 pts)

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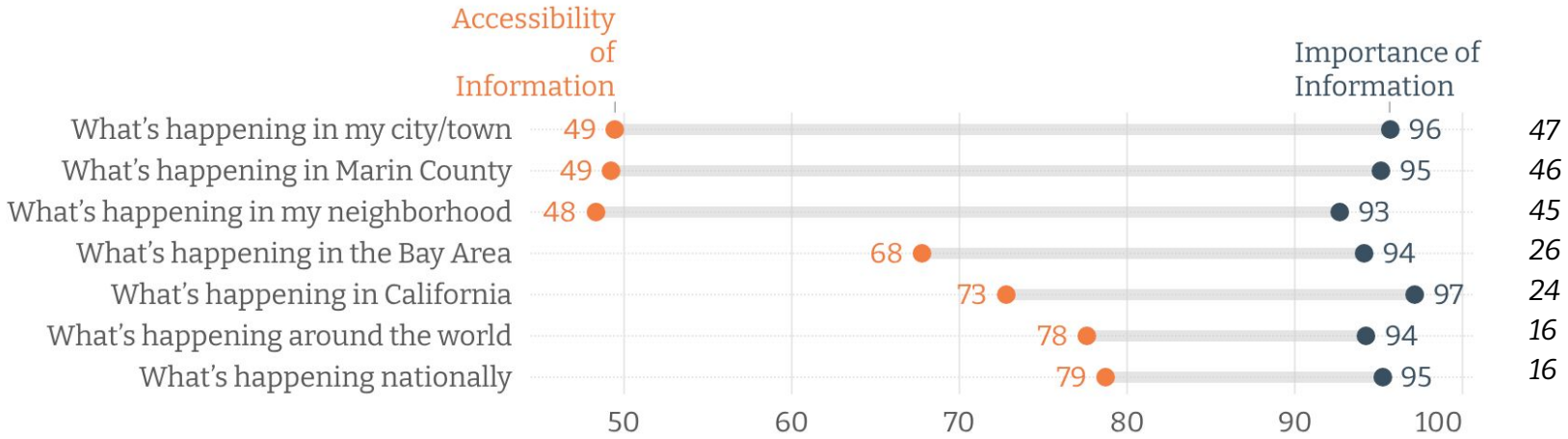
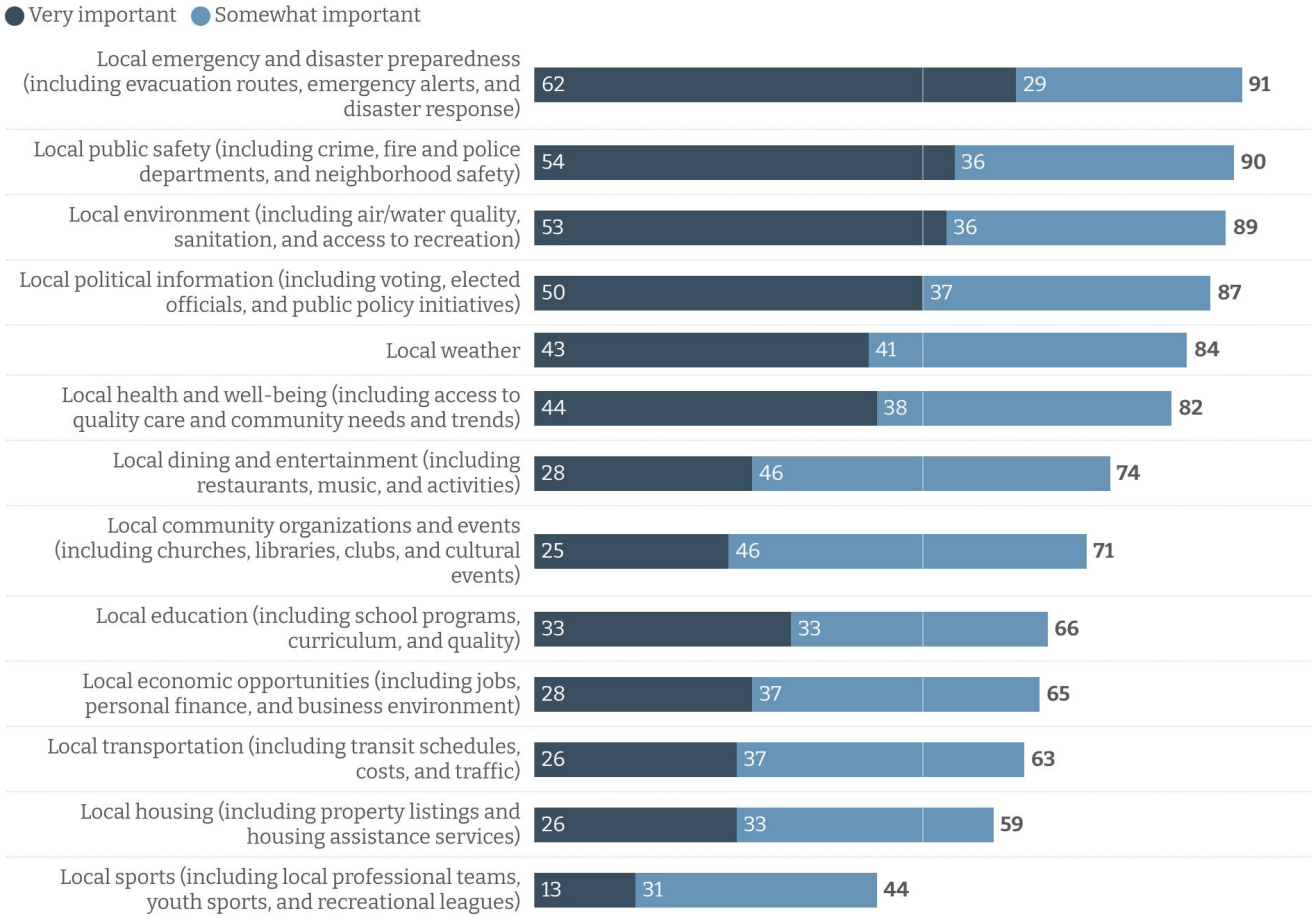


Accessibility of information is based on the share of respondents who report it is "not that difficult" or "not at all difficult" to find information about each topic. Importance of information is based on the share who report it is "very important" or "somewhat important" to stay informed about each topic.

Local emergency and disaster preparedness, environment, and public safety are the most sought-after topics in Marin County

EMBOLD research

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



Residents report moderate to high satisfaction with available local news across topics

Residents are most satisfied with information on local weather, while local economic opportunities, housing, and transportation are the weakest areas

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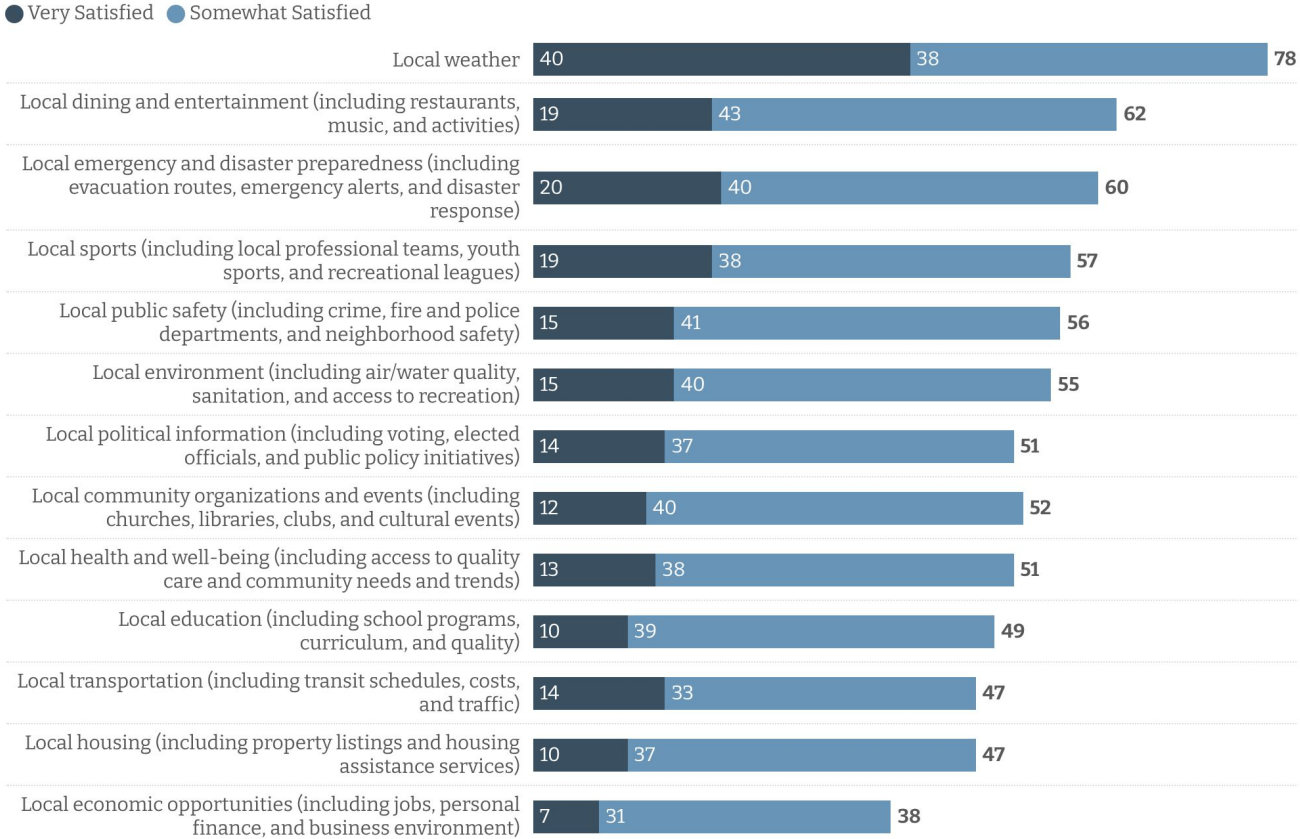
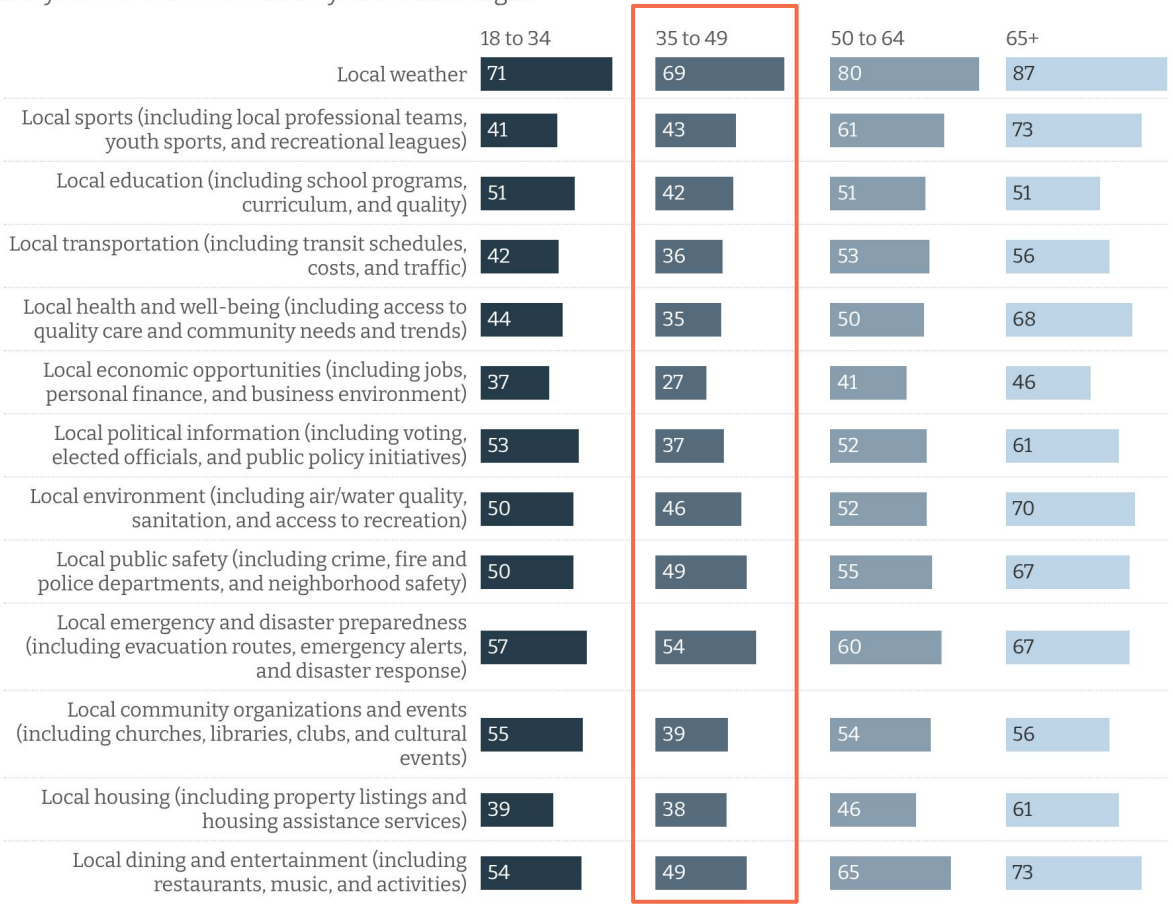
When you seek out news and information about each of the following topics, how satisfied or unsatisfied are you with the information you are able to get?



Residents under 50 – especially those between 35 and 49 – are less satisfied with available local information across nearly every topic

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?



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

The gap between the information residents care about and their satisfaction with what's available is largest in the areas of *local politics and local environment*

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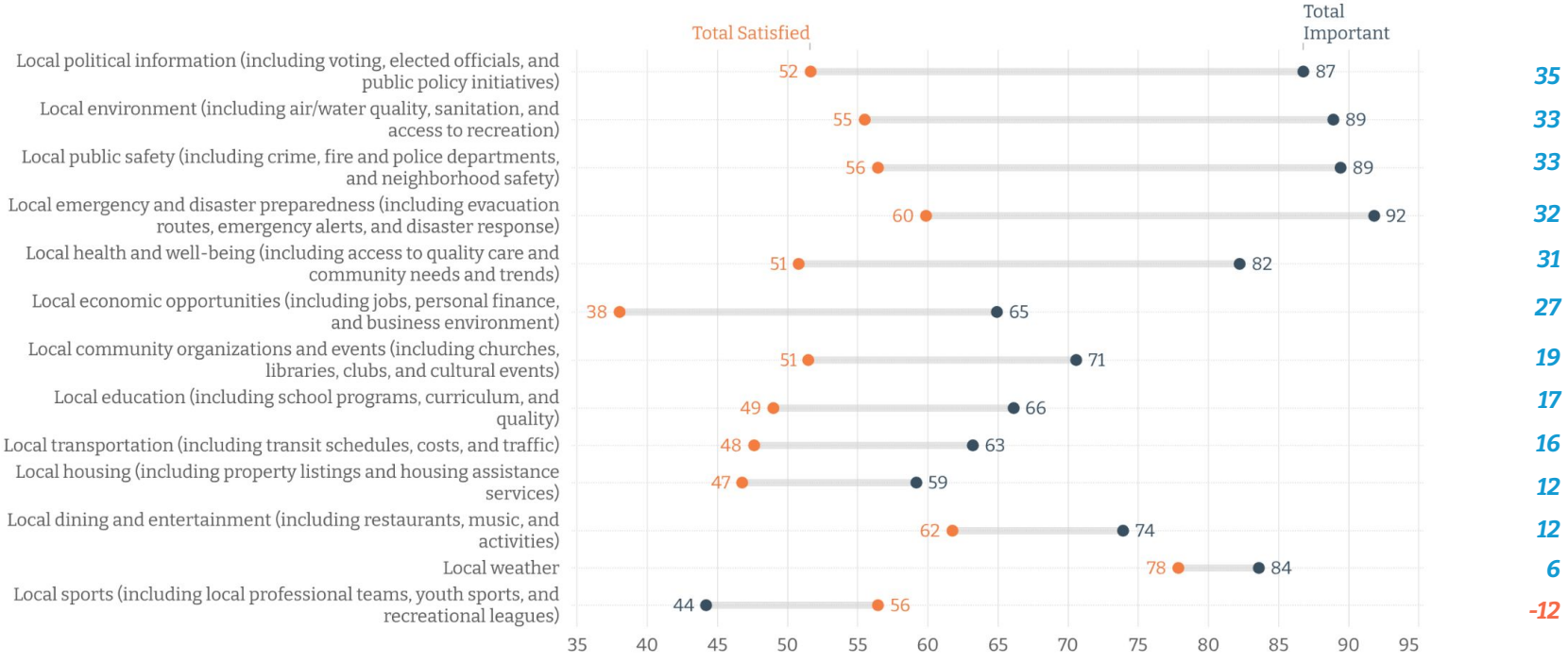
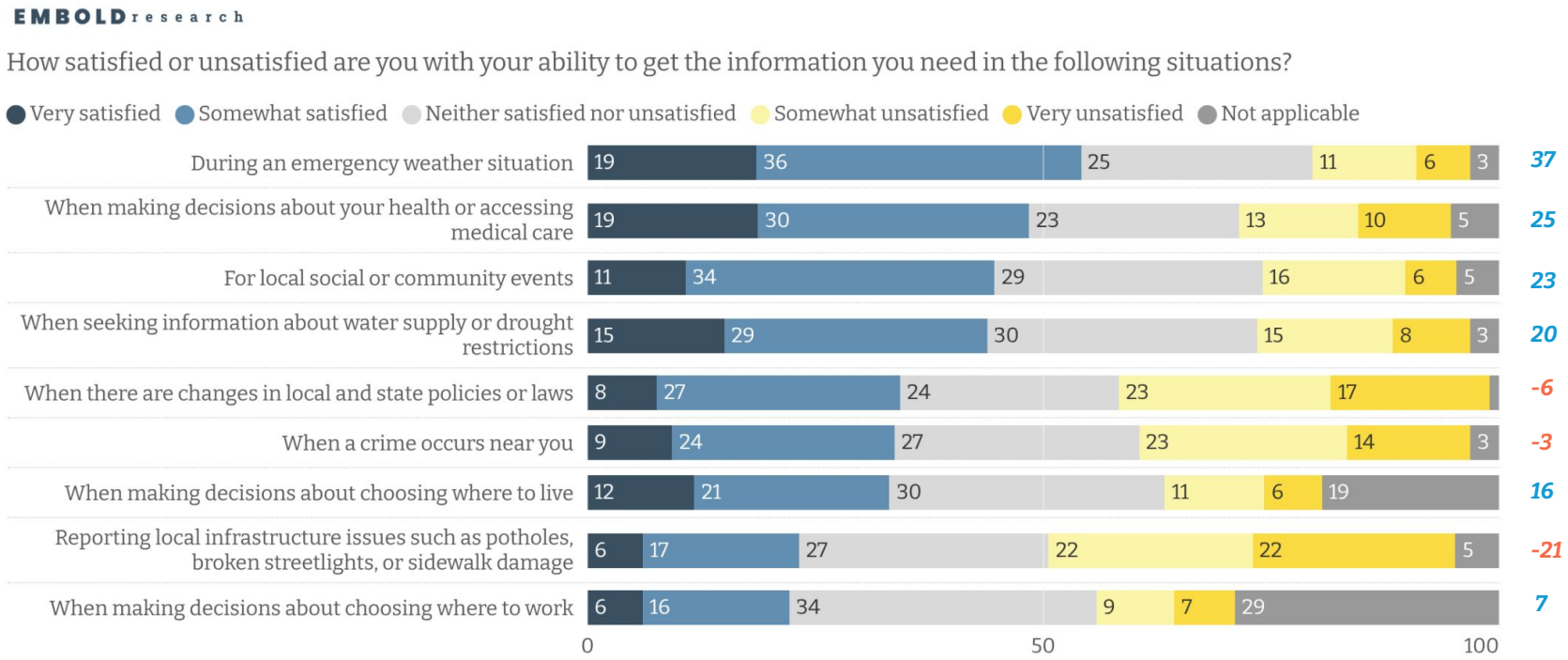


Residents are most satisfied with information about weather emergencies, and most unsatisfied with information related to reporting local infrastructure issues



Across a range of situations, residents under 50 – especially those from 35 to 49 – are again less satisfied with the information they can find

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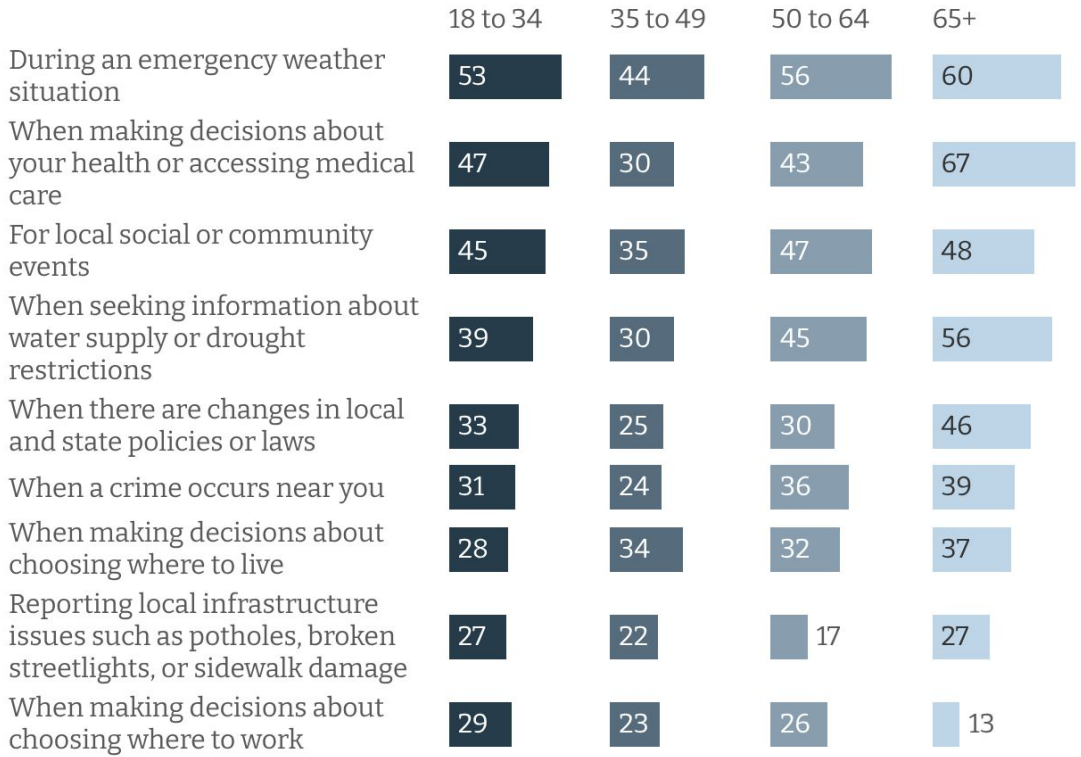
How satisfied or unsatisfied are you with your ability to get the information you need in the following situations?



The bars represent the total of "Very satisfied" plus "Somewhat satisfied."

News

SOURCES

Online search and local digital news are the most useful sources for local news

Younger residents find online search and local online groups more useful than other age groups, while older residents place greater value on local TV stations

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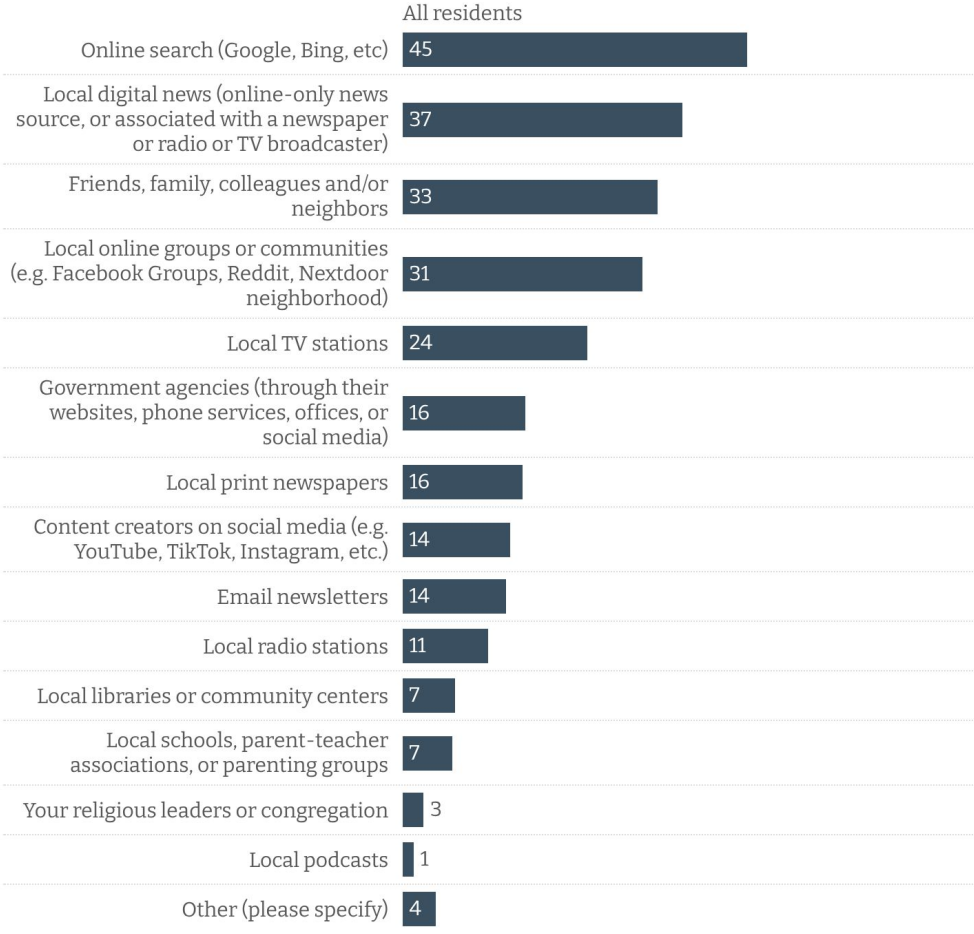
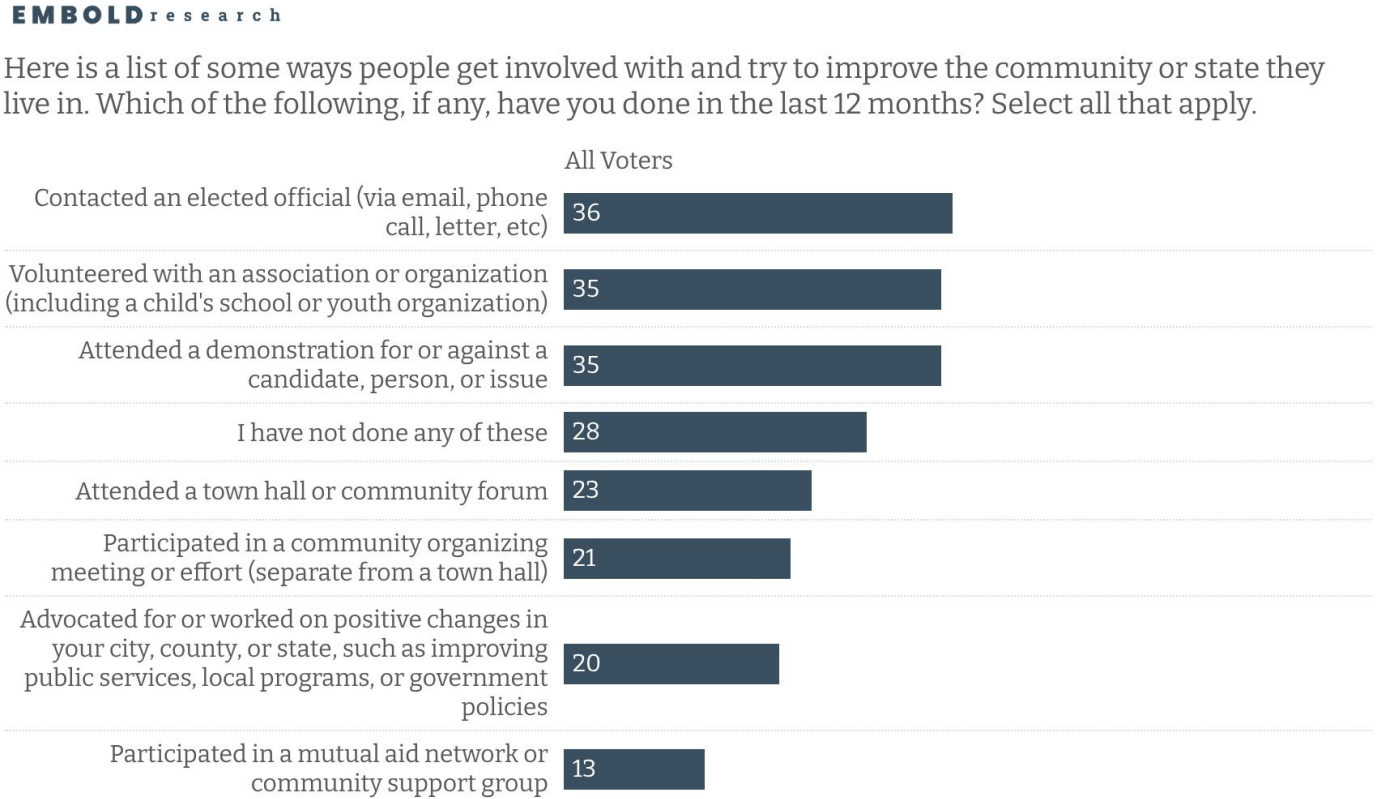
Which of the following sources are the most useful when it comes to getting high quality, local information? Select up to THREE.



News &

CIVIC LIFE

More than 1 in 3 respondents contacted an elected official, volunteered, and attended a demonstration in the last year



More than 1 in 3 respondents contacted an elected official, volunteered, and attended a demonstration in the last year

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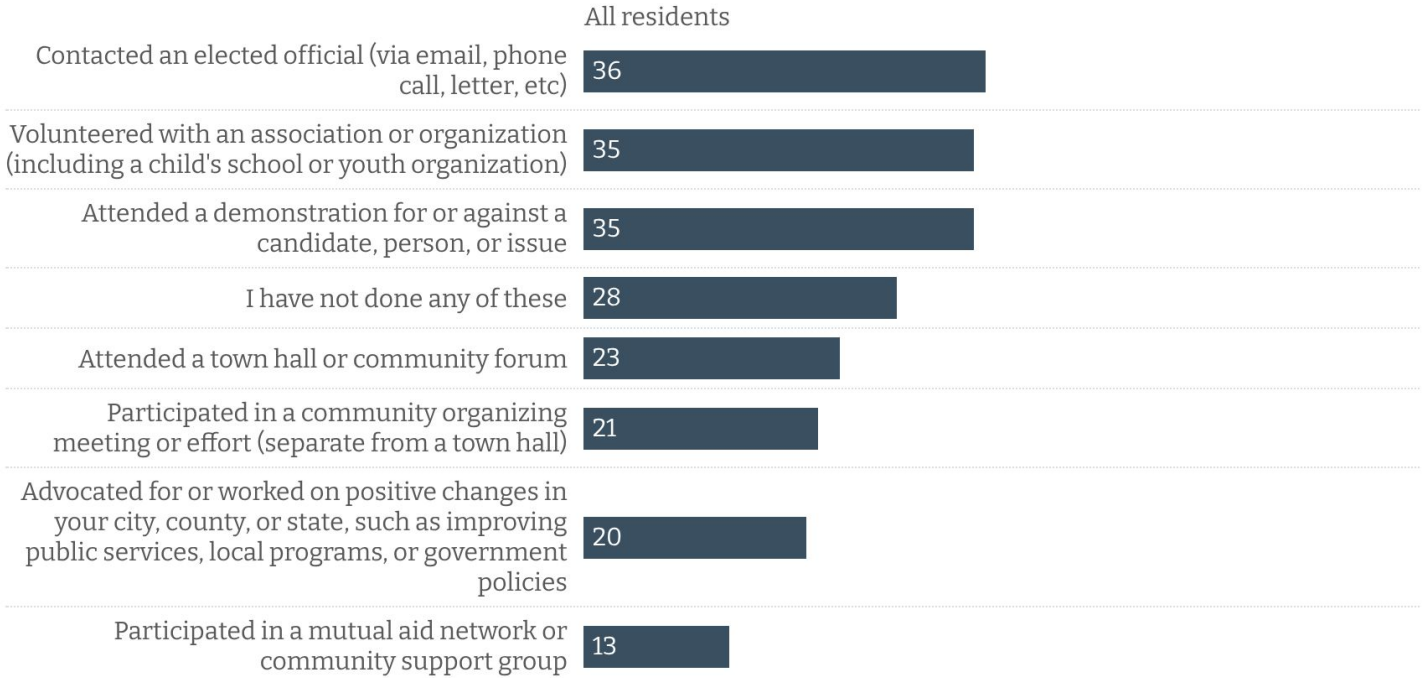
Here is a list of some ways people get involved with and try to improve the community or state they live in. Which of the following, if any, have you done in the last 12 months? Select all that apply.



Civic engagement varies by age, education, and politics

35 to 49 year olds disproportionately volunteer, while seniors and Harris voters disproportionately attend demonstrations

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+	Non- college	College	2024 Harris voter	2024 Trump voter
Contacted an elected official (via email, phone call, letter, etc)	27	38	40	38	30	40	43	35
Volunteered with an association or organization (including a child's school or youth organization)	37	44	33	29	34	36	40	21
Attended a demonstration for or against a candidate, person, or issue	25	31	38	41	30	38	47	2
I have not done any of these	36	30	26	22	35	22	20	34
Attended a town hall or community forum	12	25	25	27	19	26	25	23
Participated in a community organizing meeting or effort (separate from a town hall)	18	25	20	21	19	23	24	18
Advocated for or worked on positive changes in your city, county, or state, such as improving public services, local programs, or government policies	18	30	19	17	14	25	22	18
Participated in a mutual aid network or community support group	14	17	11	13	15	12	15	8

Seven in ten of those who have advocated for positive changes say they do so sometimes or often

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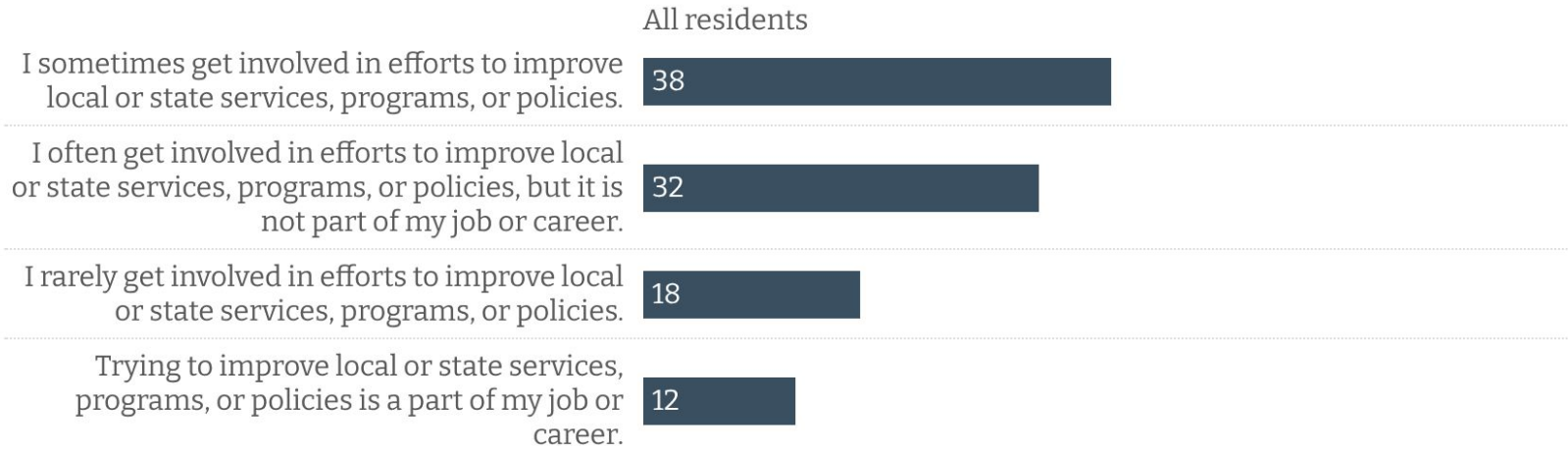
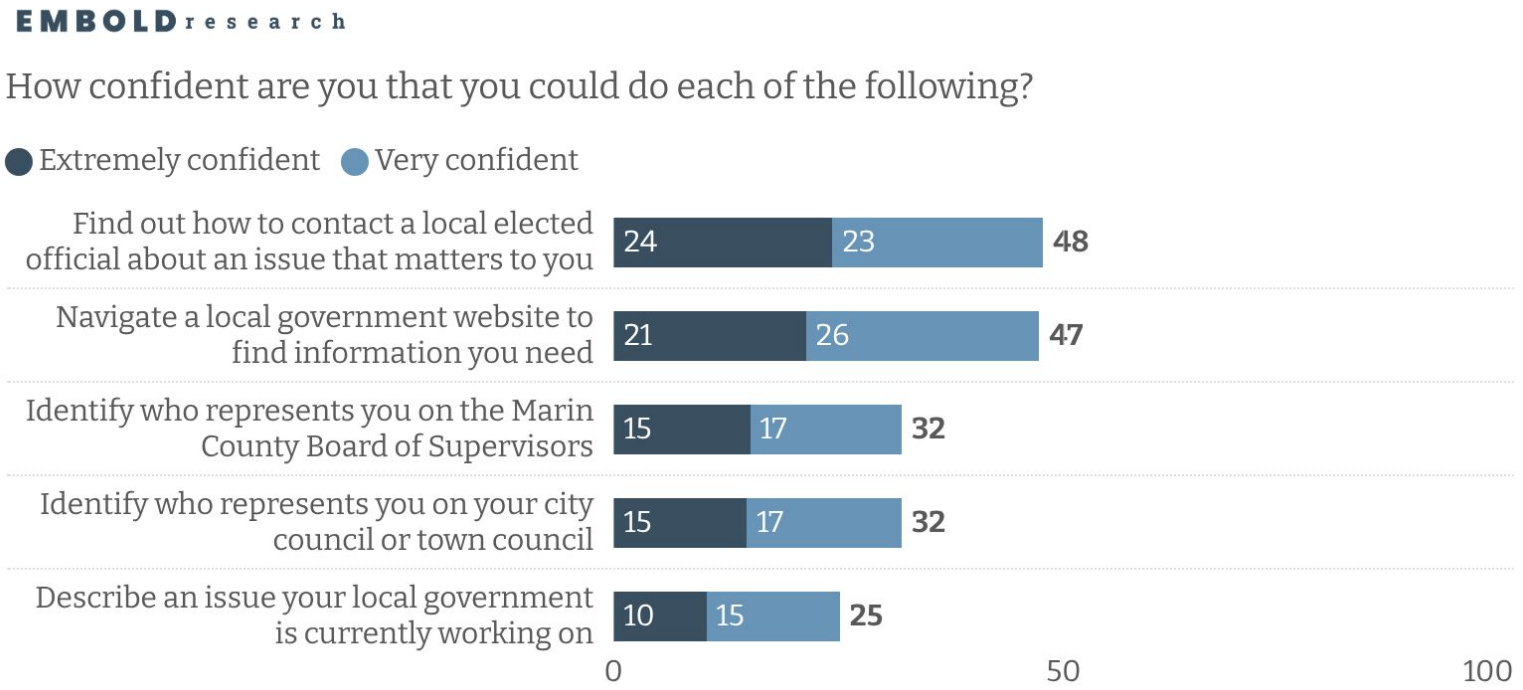
Thinking about the ways you get involved in your city, county, or state, which of the following best describes you?



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

Nearly half of residents feel quite confident about contacting elected officials and navigating government sites online

Fewer than 1 in 3 feel this way about identifying their local representatives or issues the local government is working on



Confidence engaging local government is highest among White and older residents

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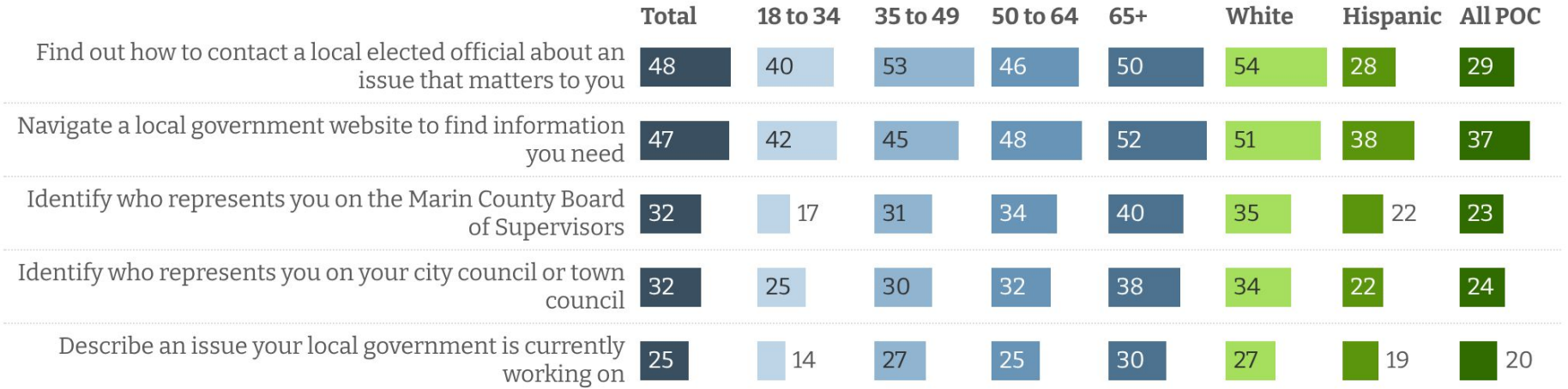
How confident are you that you could do each of the following?



Numbers above represent Total Extremely/Very Confident

News &

LIFE IN MARIN

Most residents regularly dine out, hike, and shop in parts of Marin County other than where they live

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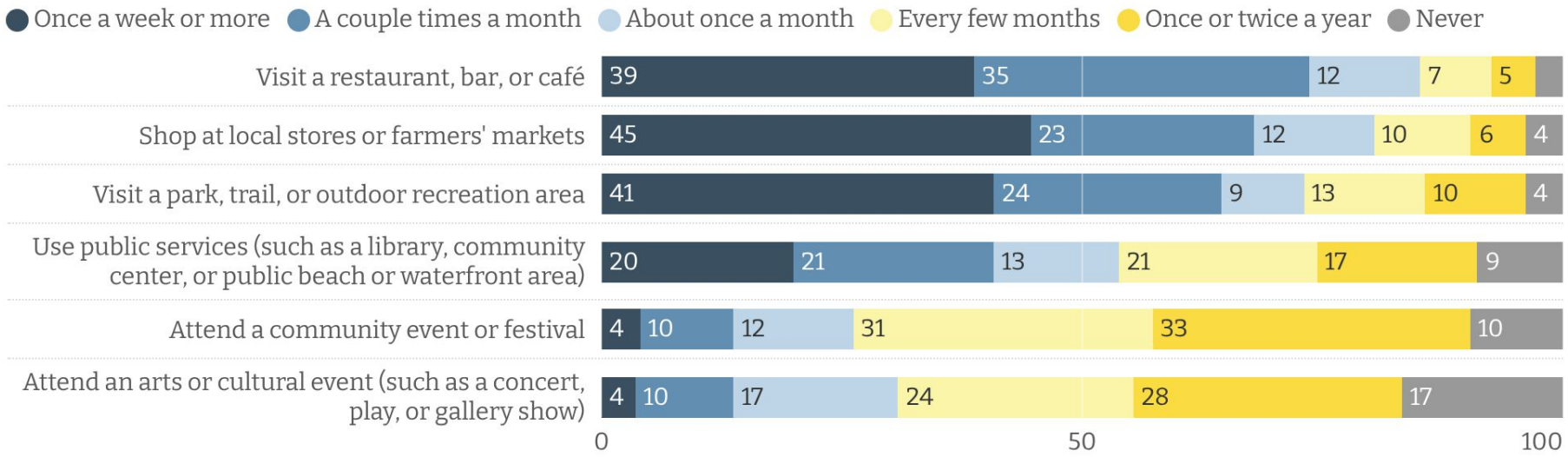
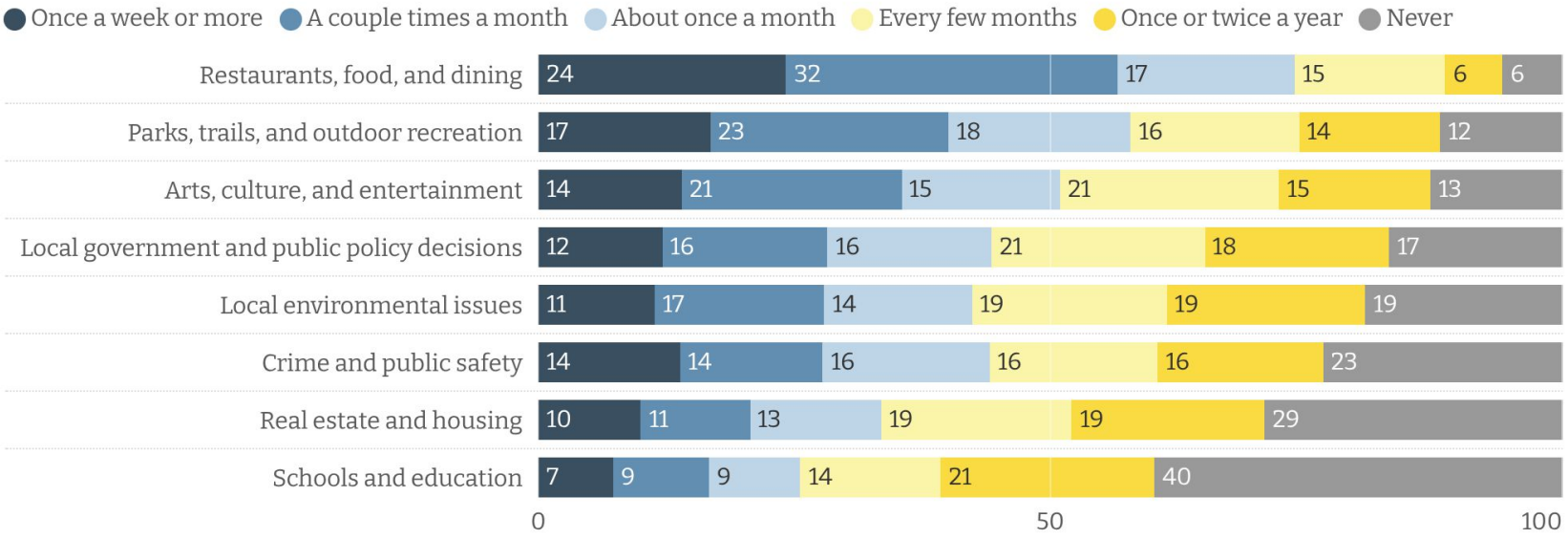
How often do you do each of the following in a part of Marin County other than where you live?



Most residents also seek out information about food and dining, outdoor recreation, and arts and culture in other parts of Marin at least monthly

EMBOLD research

How often do you find yourself looking for information about each of the following in a part of Marin County other than where you live?



RECOMMENDATIONS

Build local journalism that closes the local-vs-national information gap. Across every demographic group, residents find local news about Marin County harder to find (51-52%) than national news (21%) or Bay Area news (32%). Address this "proximity paradox" by building local journalism focused on the topics that are important to residents but where they feel underserved by existing sources. Key areas include local politics, environment, public safety, emergency preparedness, and health.

There is a particular opportunity to fill the local news and information gap for younger residents. While Marin's population skews older than other parts of the Bay Area, it is the 44% under 50 who are most dissatisfied with the information that they encounter about their local area.

Countywide content focused on popular activities such as dining, parks and trails, entertainment, and events, would best serve residents in different cities and towns. Marin residents frequently visit other parts of the county for recreation and entertainment, and seek out information to inform these outings.

MAGNIFY AI TARGETING

Magnify AI Targeting allows you to turn the results from **this survey** into action.

Magnify AI Targeting combines the latest AI and Embold's database of 250M data points to build custom targeting scores with as few as 500 survey responses. Magnify achieves better accuracy polling 500 respondents than the industry standard of 1,500 respondents.

Identify

Find the exact individuals who belong to your target audience

Contact

Target your ads, mail and field to your target audience

Maximize Resources

Avoid wasting money and time trying to target the wrong people

In Reach

Target residents in both big and small geographies

Broad Support: Young adults (18–34) show overwhelming support for clean energy—68% net support for solar farms and 81% for rooftop solar (Mar 2025); 76% support local renewable projects (Oct 2024).

Urgency for Transition: Gen Z leads in urgency, with 35% calling for a rapid shift to renewables and 96% supporting at least some transition away from fossil fuels (Oct 2024).

Economic Framing Resonates: Arguments about job creation, economic development, and energy independence resonate strongly—persuasiveness levels of 74–77% in a Texas poll (Jan 2024).

Not Without Concerns: Despite strong backing, 18–34-year-olds express concerns about cost, reliability, and whether their communities benefit from renewable energy investments (Aug 2023).

Embold Research Data Portal

Millions of data points at your fingertips—giving you instant access to your complete polling archive, a massive dataset of survey responses on policy and politics, and an AI-powered search tool that surfaces insights and trends in seconds.

GET IN TOUCH

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