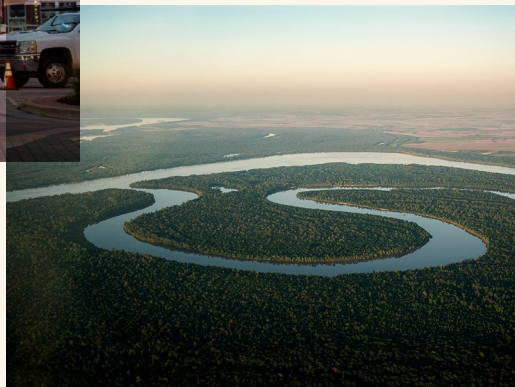


GALLUP®

WALTON FAMILY  
FOUNDATION

# HOW OPPORTUNITY TAKES ROOT

Understanding the Conditions for People  
and Places to Thrive



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# (01) A Message From the Walton Family Foundation

**Opportunity is America's foundation.** Yet at this pivotal moment in history, an essential question remains: Does this promise hold true? Two hundred and fifty years after our nation's founding, do people still believe they can shape their own futures to build better lives and stronger communities?

That is what this Gallup study, *How Opportunity Takes Root: Understanding the Conditions for People and Places to Thrive*, set out to explore. The findings reveal a complex picture. Two-thirds of Americans believe they have the power to decide the direction of their lives. But this belief alone is not enough to make opportunity attainable.

The data show that to tap into that powerful sense of self-empowerment, communities must create the conditions that help opportunity take root. When they do, people work together to build resilient communities. Today, three-quarters of adults believe their towns and cities are worth investing in. And those who feel their voices matter are twice as likely to feel motivated to give back and help improve their communities.

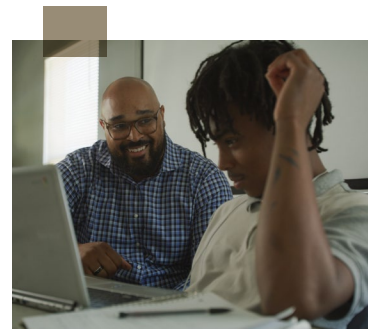
*That gap between belief in opportunity and the conditions required to sustain it may be one of the defining challenges of this moment.*

For nearly four decades, we have worked to close that gap. As we embark on our next five-year strategic plan, we are committed to ensuring those closest to the challenges are supported to speak up and contribute because they are often closest to the solutions.

For us, that means supporting local efforts that strengthen the systems Americans see as essential to expanding opportunity. More than eight in 10 Americans say access to nature improves the quality of life in their cities and towns. More than three-quarters believe housing is unaffordable, and nearly half say their communities do not offer enough stable jobs. We also know that people who perceive local K-12 schools as high quality for students are more satisfied with their communities and more optimistic about the future.

**Despite the challenges we face, Americans remain hopeful in what our country has to offer — and so do we.** About two-thirds of adults agree they have a great future ahead of them, a sense of optimism that's uniquely strong among Gen Z and younger millennials.

This study reaffirms what we've long known: Opportunity does not grow on its own; we must work together to create the right environment for it to flourish. It's why we remain committed to partnering with people and communities to address big challenges with urgency and a long-term perspective. And it is why our philanthropy continues to be guided by the conviction that people can achieve extraordinary things when they have the opportunity, encouragement and conditions to succeed. For us, "opportunity takes root" is more than our legacy — it is our roadmap for the future.



(02)

# Executive Summary and Key Findings

## Where — and why — does opportunity flourish in the United States?

This is the question driving new research conducted by Gallup and the Walton Family Foundation. Based on a nationally representative survey of nearly 7,000 U.S. adults, the study examines the concept of opportunity at both the individual and community levels. This includes an exploration of individual wellbeing, education, employment and optimism for the future, as well as Americans' assessment of the educational, environmental and interpersonal conditions in their communities.

The data show that opportunity is not confined to any particular locale or group of people. Rather, it expands in places that not only support core pillars like education and the environment but those that also empower their residents to suggest local solutions for local problems.

*Most importantly, opportunity thrives in communities that create conditions that allow their residents to say “I have the power to decide which direction my life will go in.”*

Overall, two-thirds of Americans feel like they can shape their own path most of the time; however, the remaining one in three feel like their lives are more often pushed by circumstances beyond their control. This lack of agency has an outsized influence on Americans' overall wellbeing: Just 25% of adults who mostly feel pushed by circumstance are thriving in their lives, compared with 63% of adults who feel more in control of the direction of their lives.

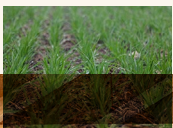


While agency may have an inherently individual focus, communities play a critical role in empowering their residents to reach their full potential. Americans who live in communities with strong employment markets, affordable housing and trusting relationships between neighbors are significantly more likely to feel like they can shape their own path. This is also true for those who live in communities that not only provide formal channels to share feedback but also take seriously the concerns and ideas for improvement that residents offer.

However, most Americans say that housing in the areas where they live is unaffordable. Just one in three believe that if they had an idea to improve their community, somebody would listen to them. Nearly half do not agree that people in their community look out for one another or work together to solve common problems. Six in 10 adults do not trust their local leaders to act in the best interest of the community. Younger and lower-income Americans are often the most likely to cite these concerns, and the least likely to feel in control of their destiny.

*But even in the face of these challenges,  
Americans remain hopeful.*

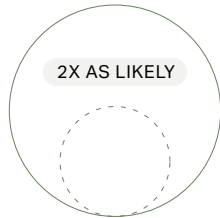
Nearly three-quarters of adults agree that their communities are worth investing in. When given the opportunity, they themselves are willing to invest in improving the towns and cities where they live. And in communities that build strong foundations and connections among their residents, individual opportunity — and as a result, wellbeing and optimism — flourishes.



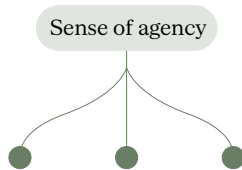
## Key Findings



**Two-thirds of U.S. adults feel like they can mostly shape their own paths**, even when things are difficult, while one in three mostly feel pushed by circumstances outside of their control. Younger adults and those in lower-earning households feel less in control of their lives than their peers.



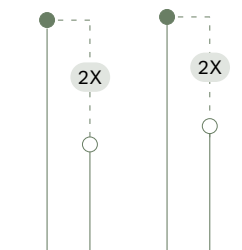
**Americans who feel a greater sense of agency are more than twice as likely** to be thriving in their lives overall (63% vs. 25%) and to believe that they have a great future ahead of them (77% vs. 37%).



**Individuals' sense of agency is closely tied to several aspects of their community**, including the extent to which they have collaborative, supportive relationships with their neighbors, the local job market and their perception of housing affordability.



**Nearly three-quarters of adults (72%) agree that their community is worth investing in**; however, about six in 10 do not trust their local leaders to act in their community's best interests (61%) and are also not confident that their ideas to improve the community would be listened to (66%).



Residents who are confident that local leaders would take their ideas to improve the community seriously are about twice as likely as their peers to feel both:

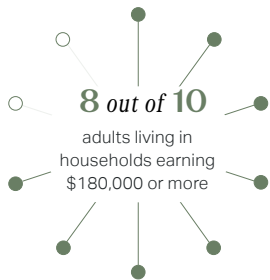
- a **sense of responsibility to give back to their town or city (71% vs. 33%)**, as well as
- **motivation to do so (72% vs. 37%)**.

# (03) Detailed Findings

Most Americans believe they have the power to shape their own path — but one in three do not.

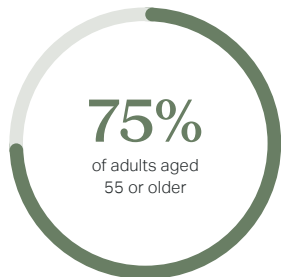
One of the foundational aspects of having “opportunity” is the ability of an individual to achieve their goals and live a great life, however they define it. This sense of agency is driven not only by personal tools and talents but also by communities and systems that support residents in fulfilling their potential.

Across the United States, two in three adults agree that they have the power to shape their own path, even when things are difficult. However, the remaining one in three adults say they have less influence over the direction of their lives, instead feeling mostly pushed by circumstances beyond their control.



**Household income is the strongest predictor of agency:**

Eight in 10 adults living in households earning \$180,000 or more — approximately the top 20% of earners — feel able to shape their own path. Meanwhile, just over half of those in the bottom quintile of earners (54%) feel that same sense of empowerment.



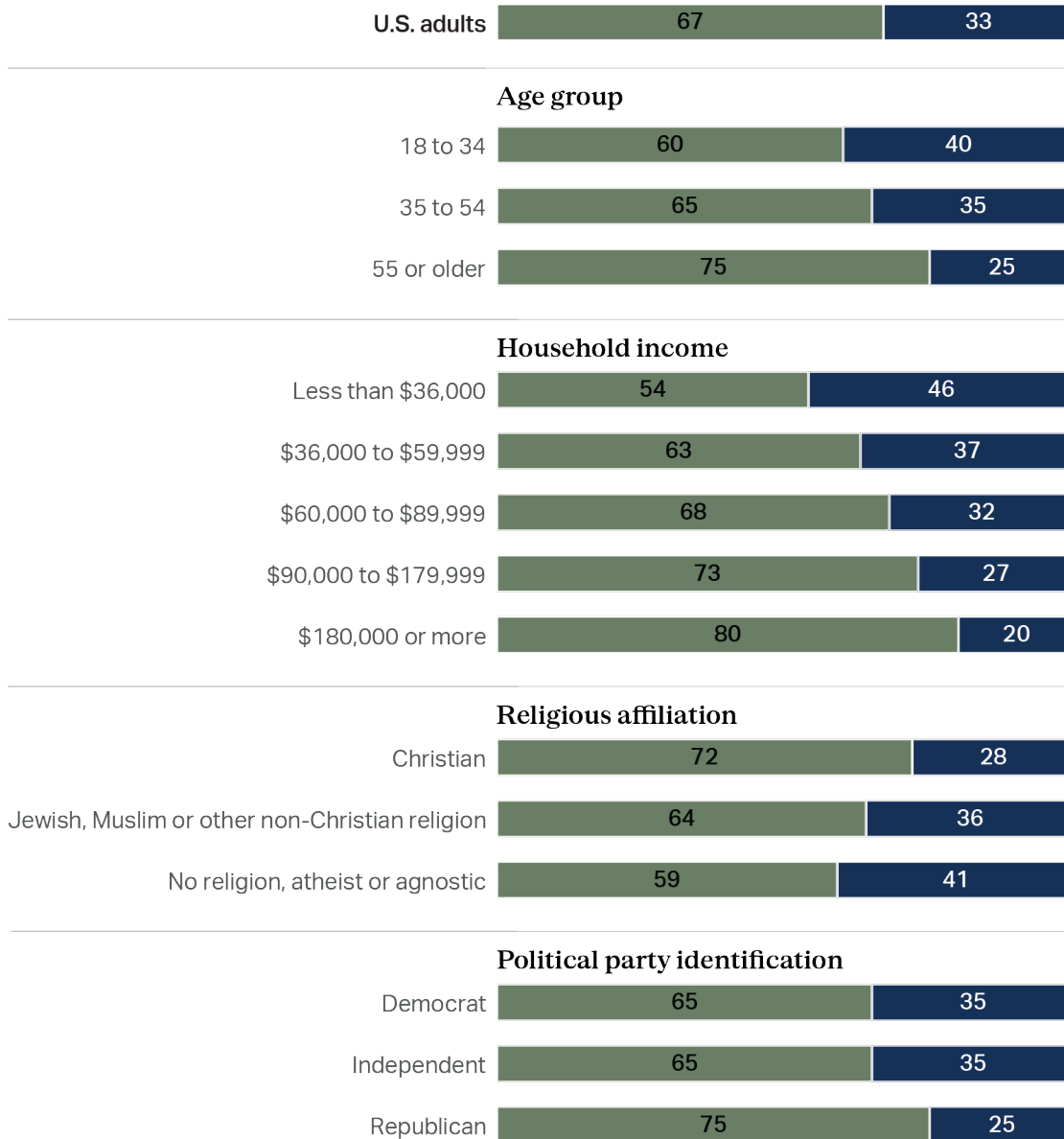
**Age is also closely related to this sentiment**, as 75% of adults aged 55 or older feel able to shape their own path, compared with 65% of 35- to 54-year-olds and 60% of adults 34 years and younger. While household income does tend to increase alongside age, this does not fully explain the greater sense of agency expressed by older Americans: Even within high-earning households, older adults are more likely to feel in control of the direction of their own lives than their younger, high-earning peers.

**CHART 1**

**Americans' Sense of Agency**

Which comes closer to how you feel right now?

- % I mostly feel able to shape my path, even when things are difficult
- % I mostly feel pushed by circumstances beyond my control



In addition to age and income, two additional communities feel uniquely in control of the direction of their lives. Adults who identify with a Christian denomination are markedly more likely than their peers — particularly those who are not affiliated with any religion — to agree they are able to shape their path. This is also true of Americans who self-identify as members of the Republican party. Once again, while Christian Americans are disproportionately likely to identify as Republican, and vice versa, these two identities are uniquely and separately associated with greater self-determination.

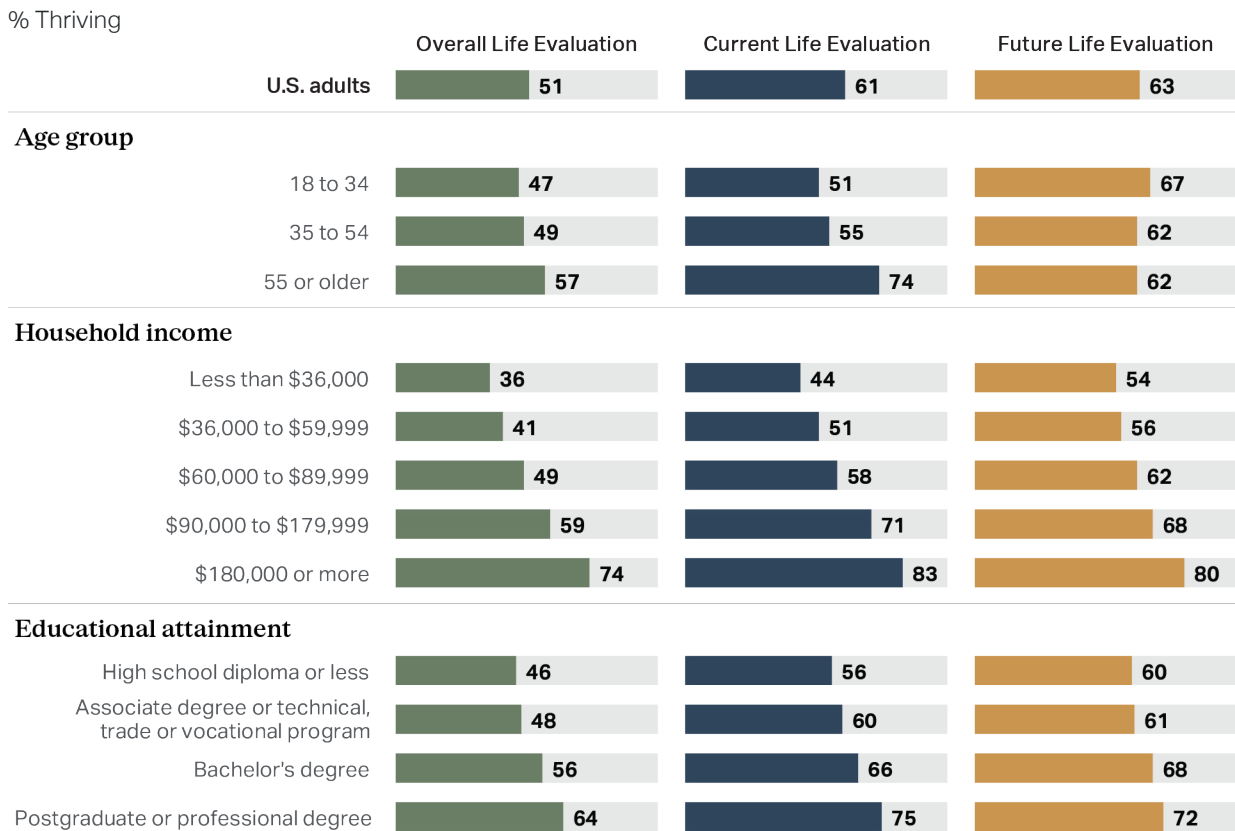
## Agency intersects with wellbeing and optimism.

While empowering individuals to shape their own path may be a desirable goal in and of itself, doing so is also an important mechanism for improving several additional measures of a great life.

Overall, about half of Americans are considered “thriving” in their overall life evaluation, indicating that they not only rate their current lives positively but also project that their life will rate highly five years in the future. Life evaluation is particularly positive among older adults, as well as those who have a college degree or live in higher-earning households. Though education and household income are closely correlated, education and income each contribute distinct and individual benefits to an individual’s life evaluation.

**CHART 2**

### Life Evaluation



Note: Respondents are asked to imagine a ladder with steps numbered from zero at the bottom to 10 at the top, where the top of the ladder represents the best possible life and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life. Respondents are asked to share which step of the ladder they feel they stand on at this time and which step they feel they will stand on in five years.

Respondents who rate their current life as a seven or higher are considered thriving in their current lives, while those who rate their future life as an eight or higher are considered thriving in their future lives. Respondents who are thriving in both their current and future lives are considered thriving in their overall life evaluation.

While young adults, those between the ages of 18 and 34, are least likely to be thriving in their lives overall, this is primarily due to their current life evaluation. Roughly half of this age cohort (51%) indicates they are thriving in their lives today. However, two-thirds of this same group believe they *will* be thriving in their future lives, a slightly higher percentage than their older peers forecast (62%).

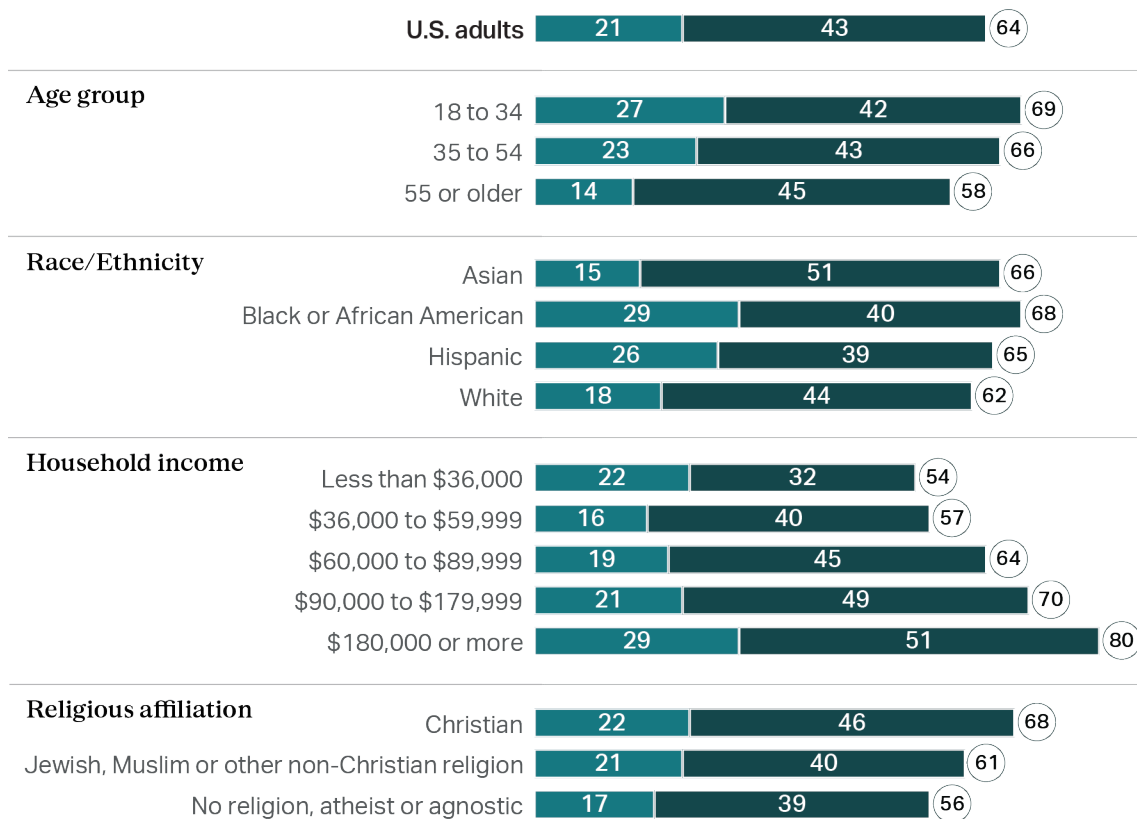
Similarly, while adults with greater levels of education and income are more likely than their peers to be thriving in both their current and future lives, the gaps in how different education and income groups evaluate their future lives are slightly narrower than the gaps in their current life evaluation scores. This indicates a heightened sense of optimism among those who are presently struggling in their lives overall.

These trends are mirrored in the percentage of adults who explicitly agree that they are optimistic about their futures. About two-thirds of U.S. adults (64%) agree or strongly agree that they have a great future ahead of them. This is especially high among young adults: 18- to 34-year-olds are 11 percentage points more likely to agree they have a great future ahead of them than adults 55 or older (69% vs. 58%) and are about twice as likely to strongly agree (27% vs. 14%).

**CHART 3**  
**Americans' Optimism for the Future**

I have a great future ahead of me.

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Agree ○ % Total



Note: Totals of response percentages are calculated based on addition prior to rounding. As such, totals listed here or in text may vary by ±1 percentage point from totals derived by adding rounded values.

As with future life evaluation, higher levels of household income are associated with greater optimism for the future. Additionally, religious — and particularly Christian — adults are most likely to agree they have a great future ahead of them, while Black and Hispanic adults are especially likely to strongly agree.

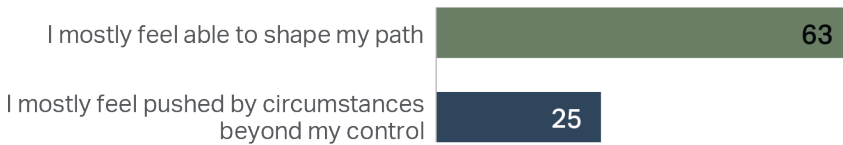
Although these subgroups may be more likely to rate their current or future lives more positively than their peers, demographics are not the most important factor in whether Americans are thriving, struggling or suffering in their lives. Even when controlling for differences in life evaluation across these characteristics, self-determination is the most important predictor of adults' outlook. Nearly two-thirds of adults who feel they are mostly able to shape their own path are thriving in their lives overall; among those who feel mostly pushed by circumstances beyond their control, just 25% are thriving.

**CHART 4**

**Relationship Between Agency and Life Outlook**

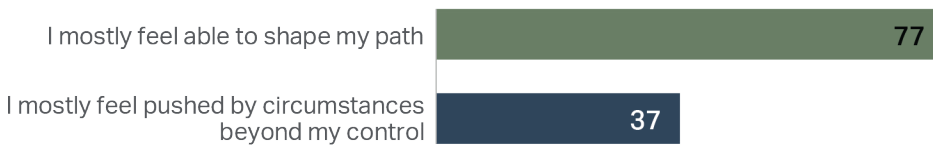
**Life Evaluation Index**

% Thriving



**I have a great future ahead of me.**

% Strongly agree + Agree



This relationship is nearly as predictive of an individual's optimism about their future: Adults who feel empowered in their lives are twice as likely to agree they have a great future ahead of them as those who feel less control over the direction of their lives (77% vs. 37%).

Adults who feel empowered in their lives are **twice as likely** to agree they have a great future ahead of them.



## Strong communities cultivate agency and opportunity.

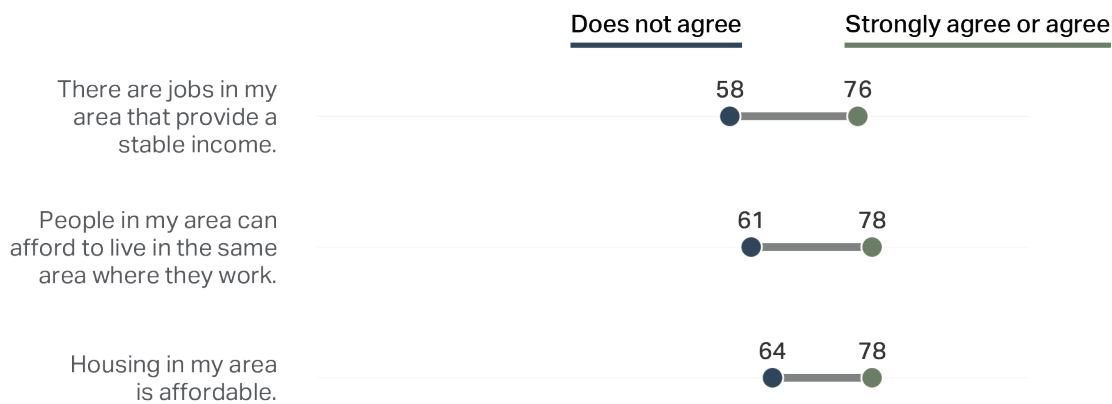
While in some ways, agency is intrinsic to individual characteristics — particularly its positive relationship with age — the data also demonstrate that several aspects of a community can help its residents lead choice-filled lives.

The strongest community-based predictors of agency are economic. Adults who agree that their community offers jobs that provide a stable income, as well as housing that is affordable and allows residents to live in the area where they work, are 14 to 18 percentage points more likely to say they can shape their own path than their peers who live in areas that do not offer stable jobs or affordable housing.

### CHART 5

#### Impact of Community Economic Conditions on Residents' Sense of Agency

% I mostly feel able to shape my path, even when things are difficult



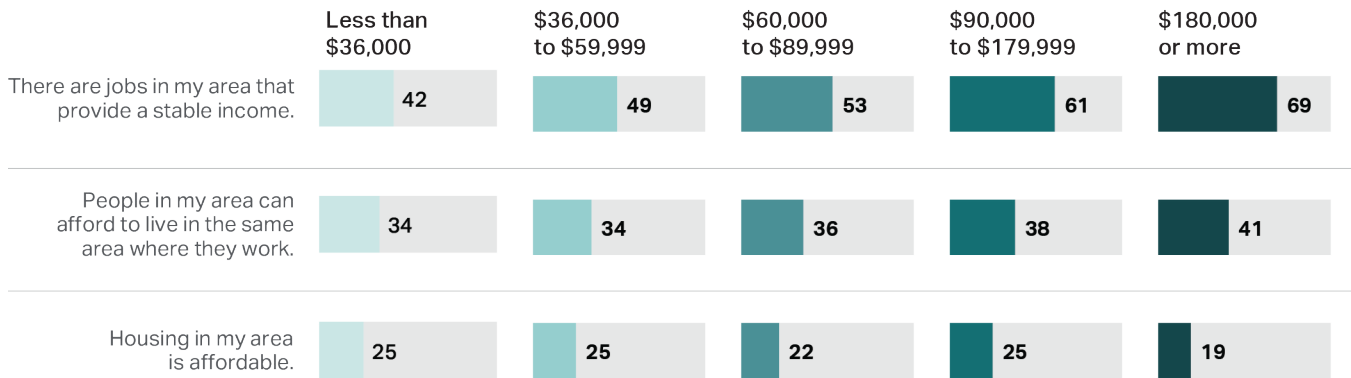
The outsized influence of these economic conditions on individuals' self-determination — and by proxy, their overall lives and outlook on the future — magnifies the gaps in these conditions that many Americans report. Nearly half of adults (46%) do not agree their community offers enough stable jobs, while sizable majorities do not agree that their community provides affordable housing (77%) or arrangements that allow residents to live near their workplaces (64%).

Concerns about employment are especially prevalent among Americans who are on the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum. While nearly seven in 10 Americans living in households in the top quintile of income agree their community provides steady employment, less than half of adults in households in the bottom quintile agree.

**CHART 6**

**Local Job and Housing Market Assessment, Based on Household Income**

% Strongly agree + Agree



Although household income influences these perceptions of the local job market, it does not appear to color the experience of housing affordability. Across the income spectrum, between 34% and 41% of adults agree that people in their community can afford to live near their workplace, and even fewer — between 19% and 25% of adults — agree that housing is affordable at all.



23% of Americans agree that **housing in their area is affordable.**

*In addition to providing economic essentials like jobs and housing, communities can empower residents by connecting them with one another.*

Americans living in places with closer interpersonal ties are also more likely to feel like they can still shape the direction of their own lives when things get difficult. This is presumably because they have a community to rely on during times of struggle.



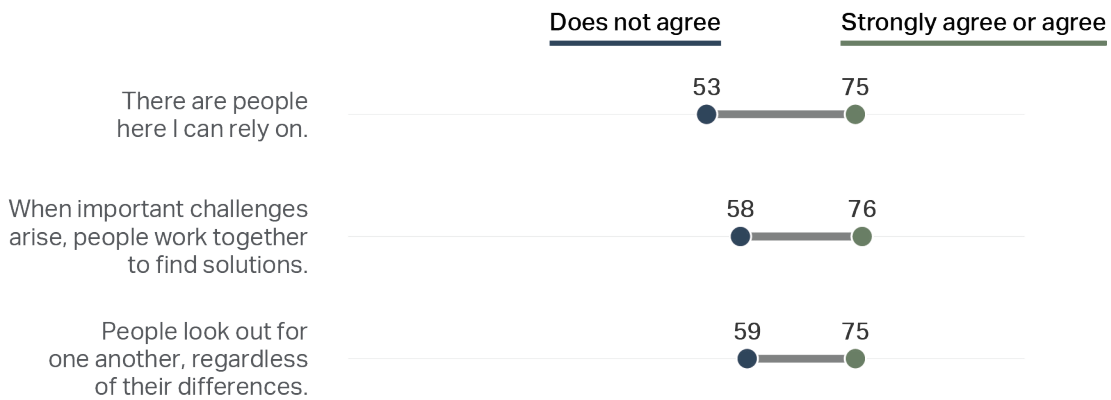
However, **one in three U.S. adults do not agree that there are people in their community they can rely on**, while nearly half reject the idea that people work together to solve important problems in the community (47%) or look out for one another (also 47%).

These Americans are 16 to 22 percentage points less likely to feel like they can shape their own path than their peers who agree that their communities are more collaborative and their neighbors more reliable.

**CHART 7**

**Impact of Community Relationships on Residents' Sense of Agency**

% I mostly feel able to shape my path, even when things are difficult



## Americans acknowledge flaws in their communities — but still believe they are worth investing in.

Many of the concerns raised about jobs, affordability, natural spaces and community relationships influence Americans’ assessment of the places where they live. About four in 10 adults (38%) are “very satisfied” with their communities, and 46% are “somewhat satisfied.” The remaining share are either “not too satisfied” (12%) or “not satisfied at all” (5%).

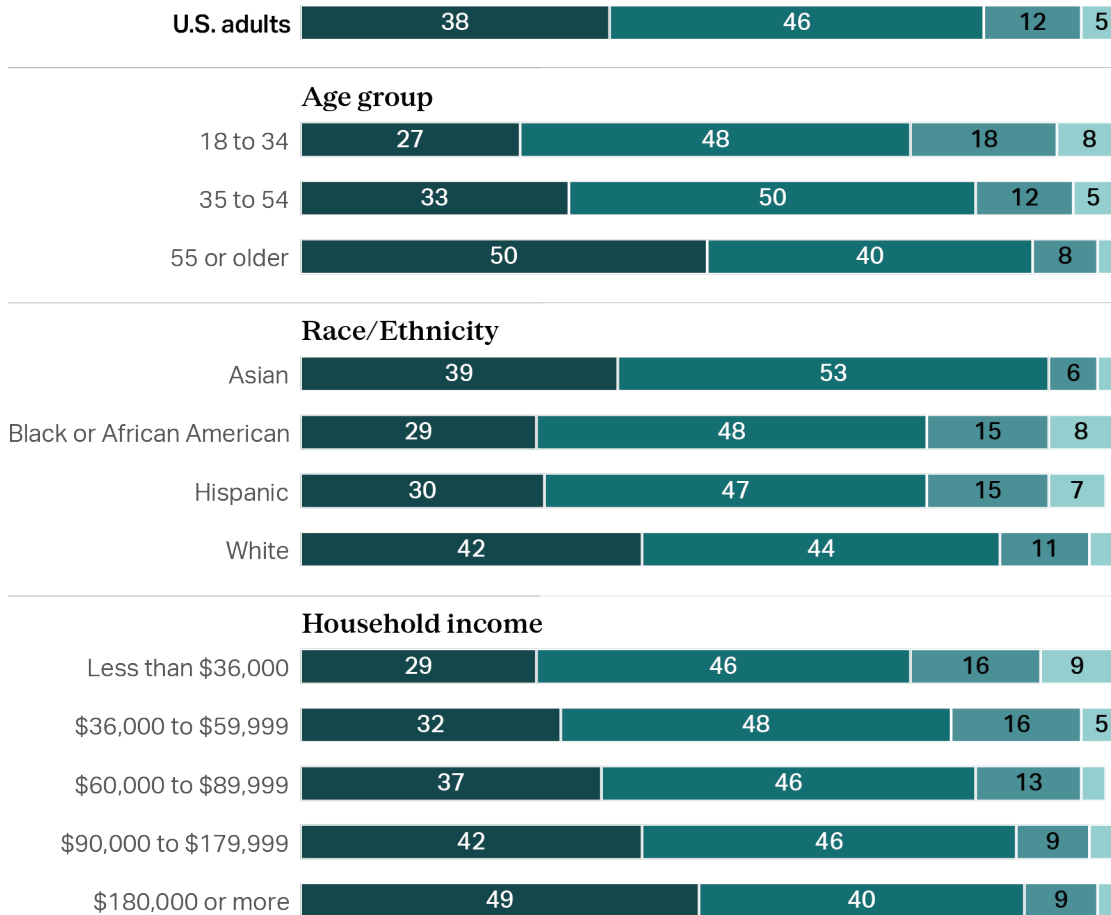
These percentages do not vary significantly based on respondents’ regional geography or urbanicity. Americans across the United States, living in large cities, smaller suburbs or rural areas, are about equally satisfied with their communities. However, as with several discrete aspects of the places they live, Americans’ satisfaction with their communities is closely correlated with their household income. About three in 10 adults in households earning less than \$60,000 per year are very satisfied with their communities, compared with nearly half of those living in households earning \$180,000 or more (49%).

### CHART 8

#### Americans’ Overall Satisfaction With Their Communities

How satisfied are you with the area where you live?

■ % Very satisfied ■ % Somewhat satisfied ■ % Not too satisfied ■ % Not satisfied at all



Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding. Data labels less than 5% are not displayed.

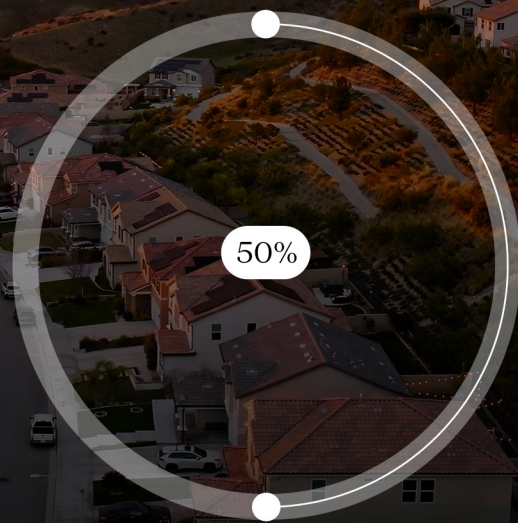
Just as most U.S. adults express at least some reservations about the quality of their community, they are also evenly split as to whether that community is moving in a positive direction. Half of adults say the town or city where they live is moving in a “very positive” (10%) or “somewhat positive” direction (40%). Most of the remaining adults feel their community is changing neither positively nor negatively (29%), while about one in five feel it is moving in a “somewhat negative” (17%) or “very negative” direction (4%).

Generally, this metric follows trends in overall community satisfaction, with wealthier adults and those 55 or older most likely to believe their community is moving in a positive direction. However, while about equally satisfied with their communities as their urban peers, rural Americans are slightly less likely to feel like their towns are making progress. At least half of adults living in large (51%), medium (50%) and small metro counties (53%) say their city is moving in a positive direction, compared with 44% of those living in nonmetro counties.

Conversely, while Black and Hispanic Americans are less satisfied with the current state of their communities than their Asian and White peers, about half of Asian (49%), Black (51%), Hispanic (50%) and White (50%) adults believe their towns and cities are moving in a positive direction.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, residents’ overall satisfaction with the community is closely related to the direction that they see the area moving in. Among adults who believe their community is moving in a positive direction, 93% are very or somewhat satisfied with their area, compared with 59% of those who say their community is moving in a negative direction.

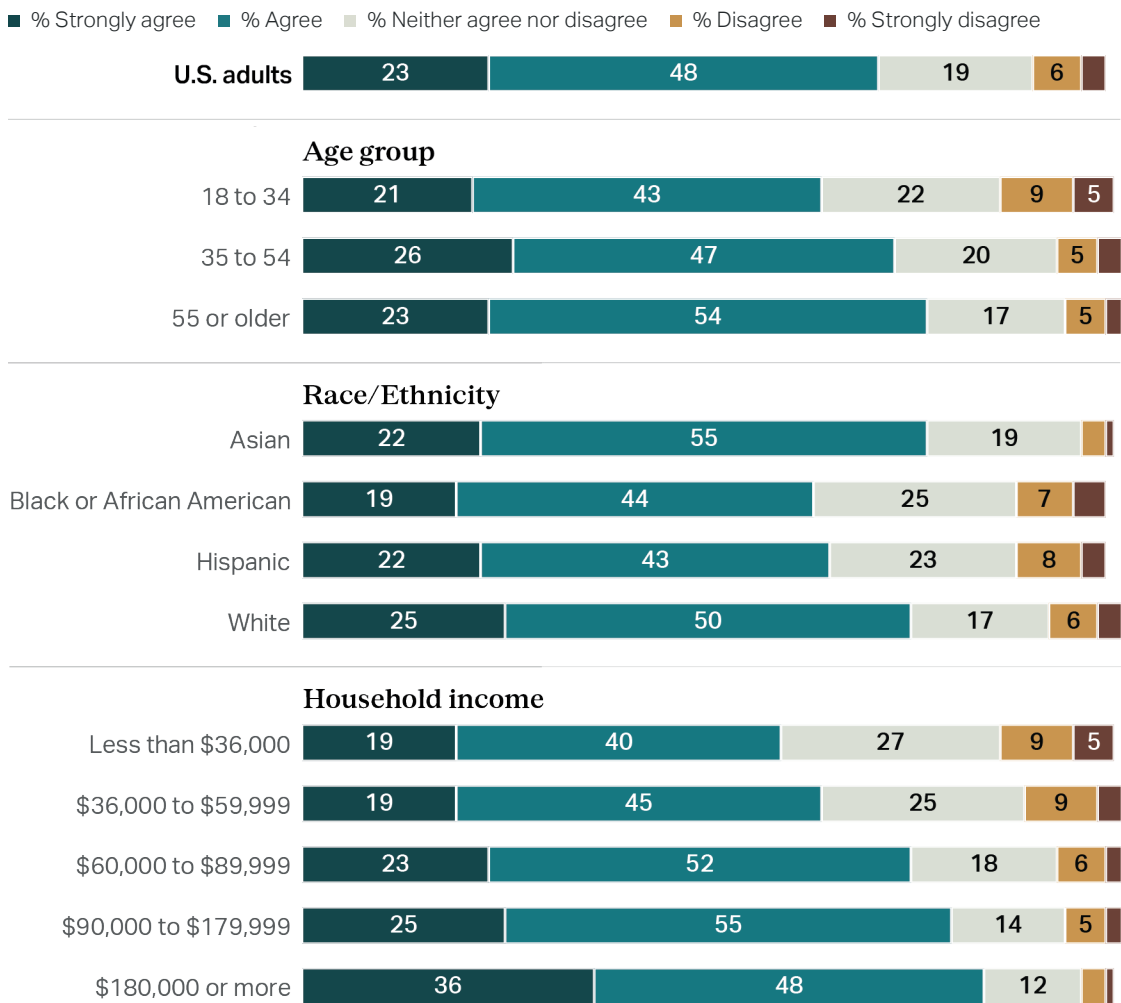
**Half of adults** say the town or city where they live is moving in a “very positive” (10%) or “somewhat positive direction” (40%).



While Americans are not overwhelmingly positive about the state of their communities, the data reveal signs of hopefulness. As with their personal lives, while most U.S. adults express at least some reservations about the present state of the places where they live, they also believe that the foundations of their communities are strong enough to build on and that doing so would be worthwhile. Though about two-thirds of adults note that there is room for improvement in their communities, nearly three-quarters also agree that the places where they live are worth investing in.

**CHART 9**  
**American Perceptions of the Long-Term Value of Their Communities**

The area where I live is worth investing in.



Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding. Data labels less than 5% are not displayed.

Still, the degree of improvement needed does influence whether residents feel their community is worth that level of effort: 31% of those who are not too satisfied or not at all satisfied with their area agree it is worth investing in, compared with 80% of those who are very or somewhat satisfied. As a result, many of the groups that are least satisfied with their communities — including younger, lower-income, and Black or Hispanic Americans — are also less likely than their peers to feel their communities are worth investing in.

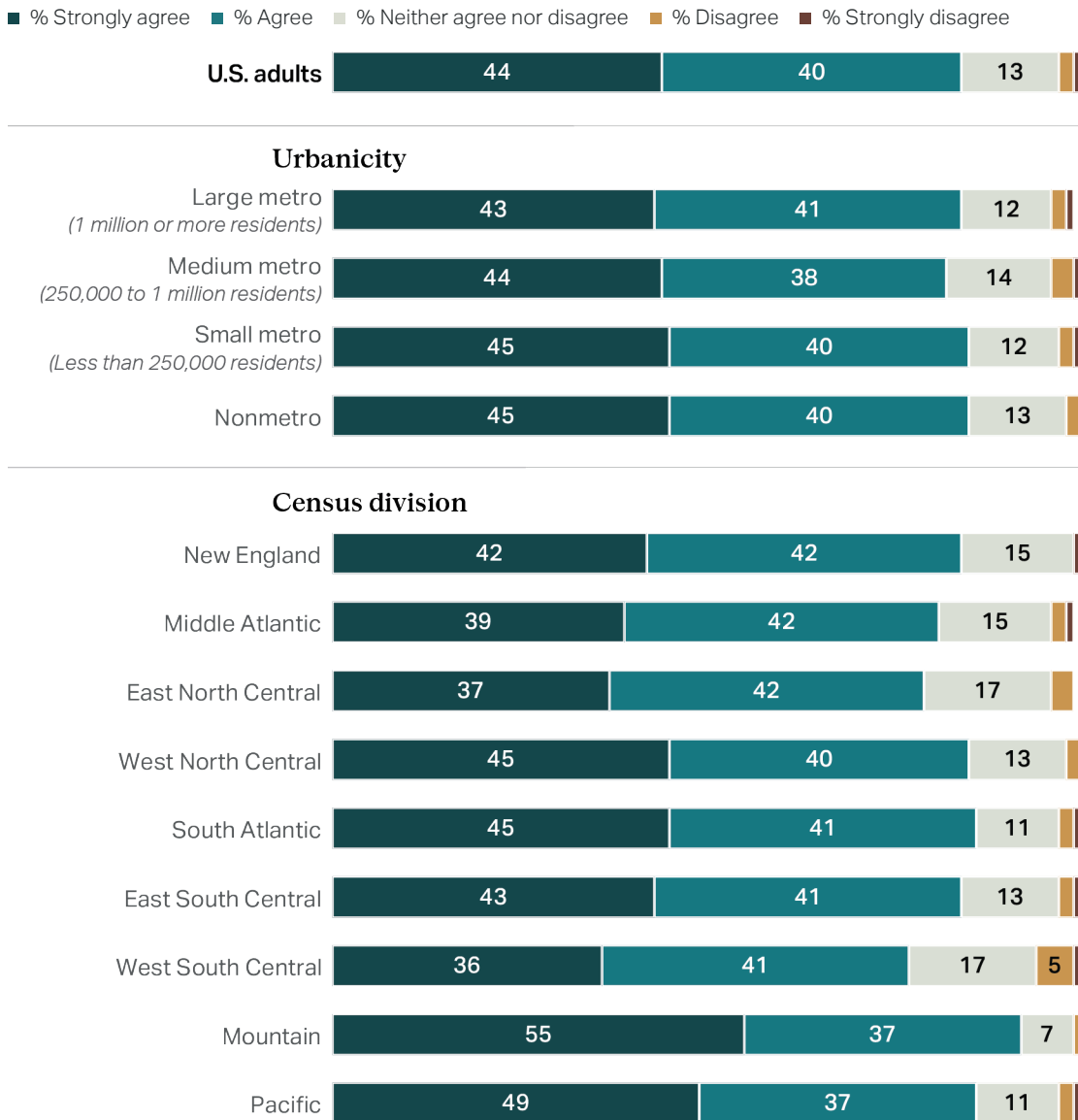
## Natural spaces play a key role in Americans' quality of life.

One broadly appealing investment opportunity for American communities is the preservation of natural spaces. The influence of these elements on residents' overall satisfaction is clear, and many adults identify concerns related to each. A healthy majority of Americans acknowledge the role nature plays in the wellbeing of their community. Over eight in 10 adults agree that access to nature improves the quality of life in their town or city.

**CHART 10**

### Impact of Nature on Americans' Quality of Life

Access to nature improves quality of life in my town or city.



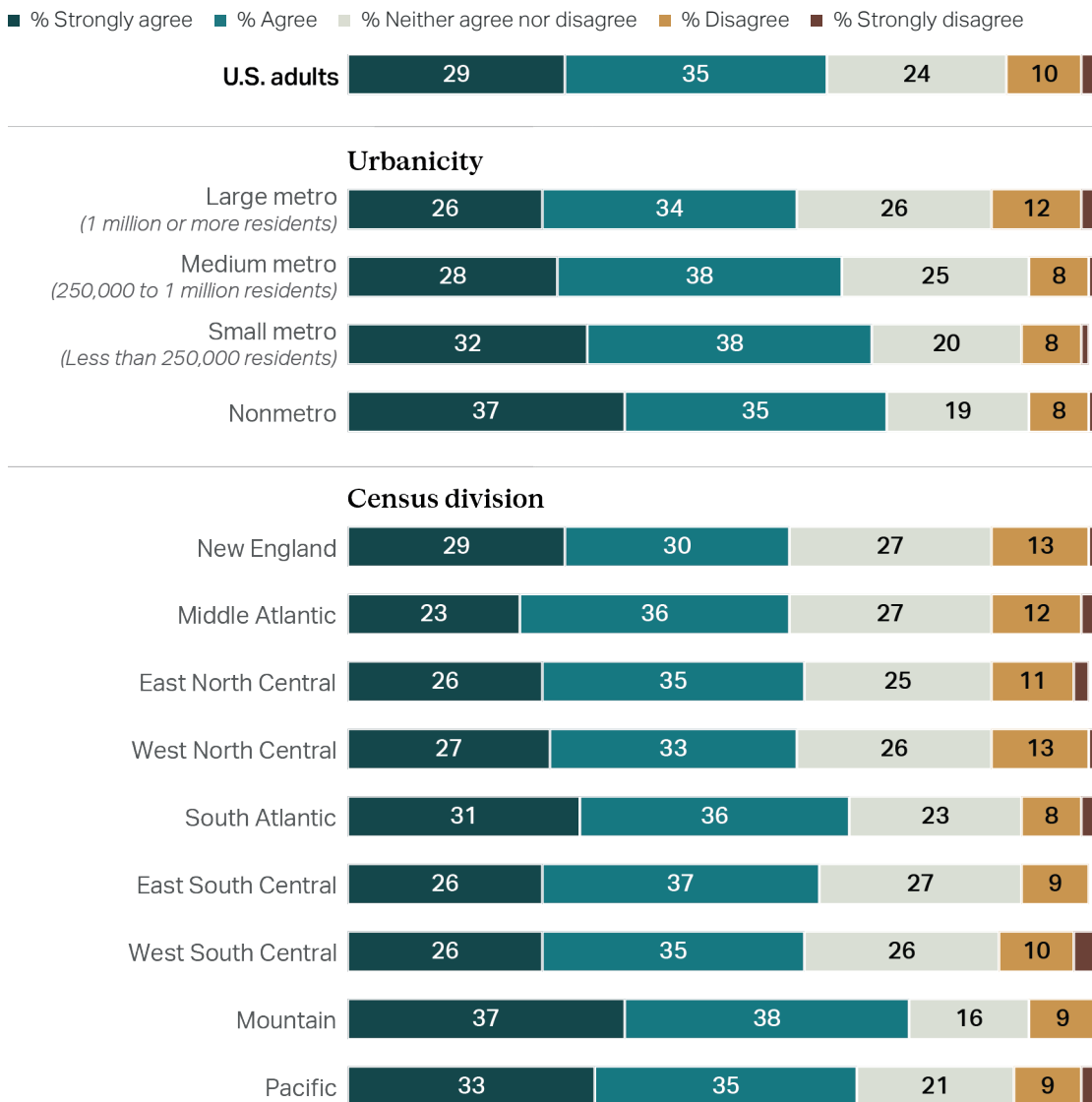
Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding. Data labels less than 5% are not displayed.

Importantly, this is not limited to certain regions or types of communities — this sentiment is widely held in both cities and rural communities, as well as all regions of the United States, though Americans living on the West Coast and in Mountain region states are particularly enthusiastic about the role nature plays in their wellbeing.

Though nature is, at minimum, a nice-to-have element of thriving communities across the United States, some regions are more likely to identify nature as core not only to the wellbeing of individuals, but also the health of the economy of their entire town or city. Overall, just under two-thirds of adults (64%) agree that nature is essential to their community’s economy, though states in the western United States, as well as on the southern East Coast, feel especially reliant upon their natural resources.

**CHART 11**  
**Importance of Nature to Local Economies**

Nature is essential to the economy in my town or city.



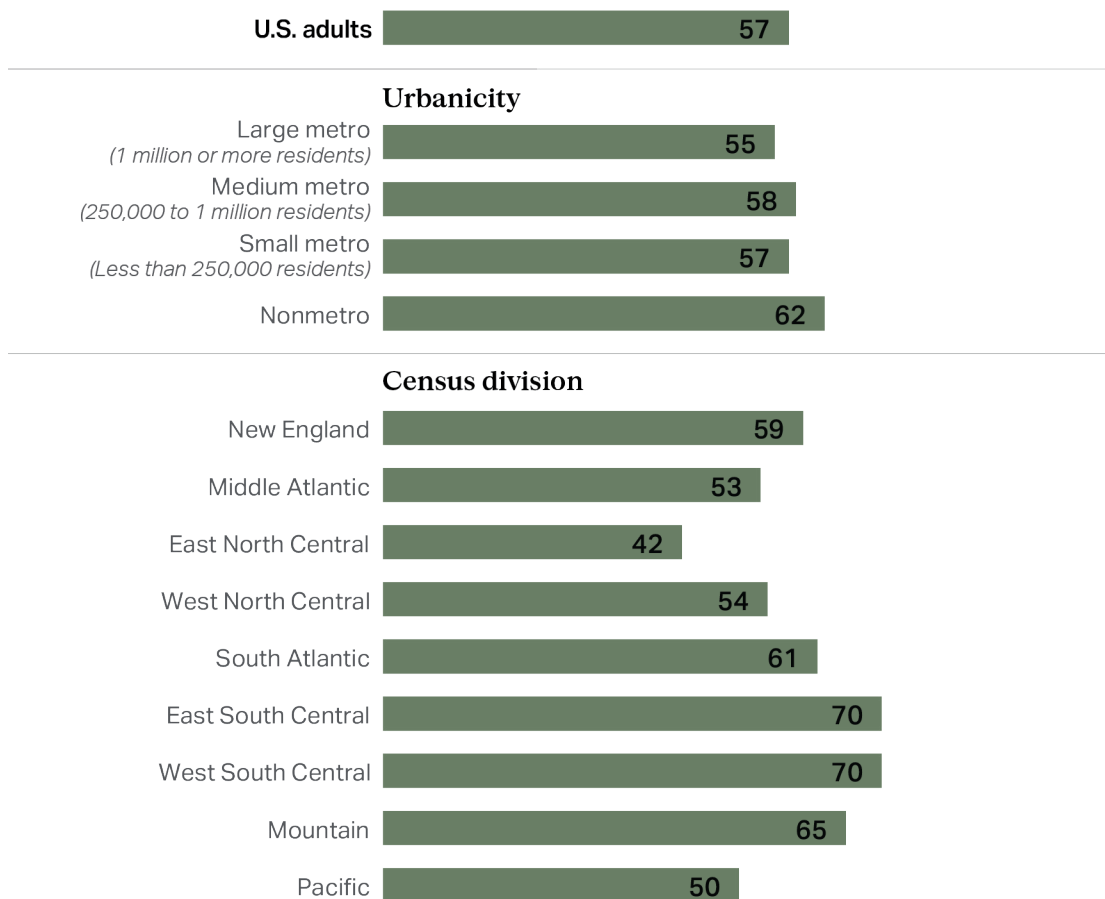
Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding. Data labels less than 5% are not displayed.

As with the widespread perception that nature plays an important economic role, about two-thirds of U.S. adults (64%) agree that people in their town or city are encouraged to take care of water, land and natural spaces in their community. This is especially true of communities that rely most on these resources: Three-quarters of Americans who agree that nature is essential to their town or city also agree that their community encourages its residents to guard these resources. Among adults who disagree that nature is key to their community’s economic wellbeing, less than half (46%) say they are encouraged to preserve these resources.

In addition to its economic role, nature also affects a significant percentage of the U.S. population via extreme weather events. Sizable segments of Americans say their community has been negatively impacted within the past year by either a lack of reliable access to safe water (14%), flooding (23%), drought (24%) or another type of damage due to extreme weather (38%). More than half of adults (57%) have been impacted by at least one of these.

**CHART 12**  
**Impact of Extreme Weather on American Communities**

% Impacted by at least one extreme weather event in the past year\*



\*Includes problems with access to clean, safe water; drought; flooding; or damage from other extreme weather

More than three in five Americans (63%) who have been negatively impacted by an extreme weather event within the past year are “very worried” or “somewhat worried” about that event reoccurring.

## Residents question their ability to improve their community — and whether their leaders are interested in doing so.

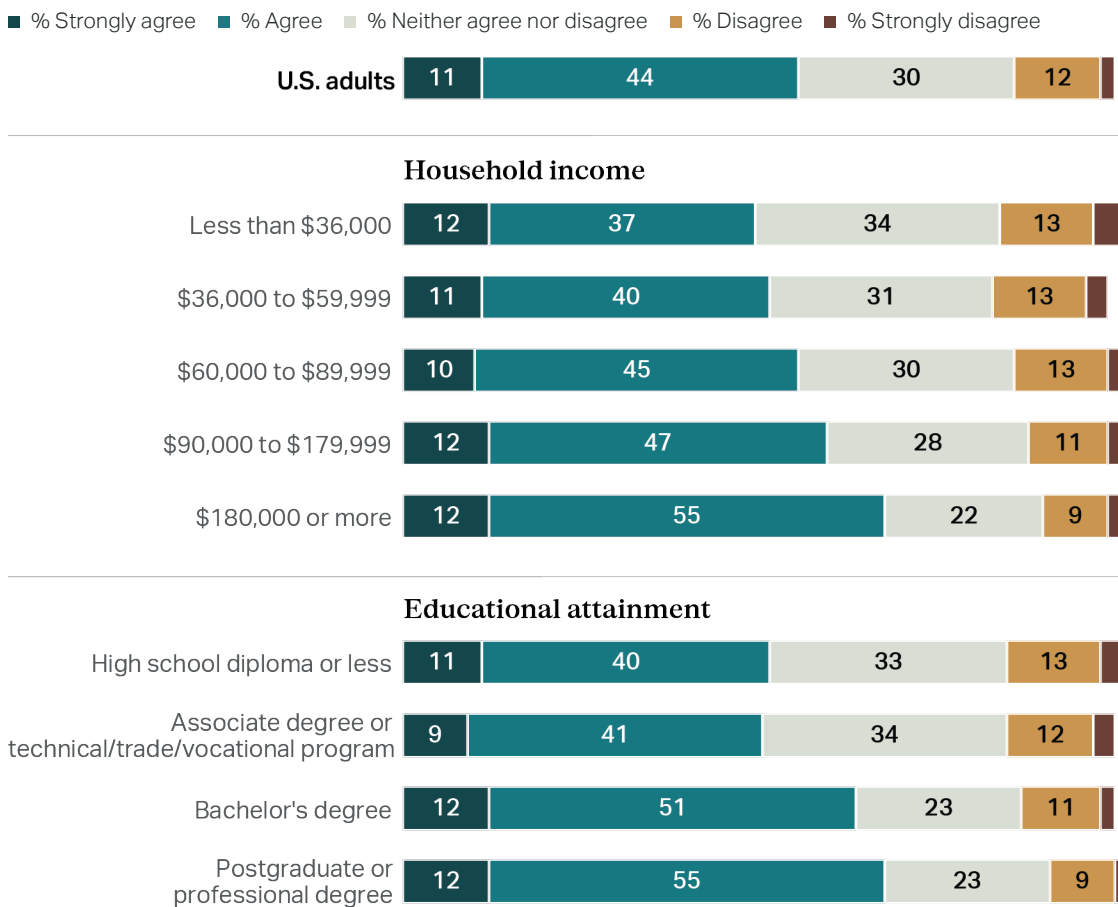
The 62% of Americans who are somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied or not at all satisfied with the areas where they live could likely identify specific aspects of their communities that they believe could be improved. However, many Americans question whether people like them can effect the change they are looking for, or even whether any of their local leadership would listen to their ideas.

When asked whether people like them are able to help solve local problems, just over half of all adults (56%) believe that they can. While this varies minimally by age, race and gender, education and household income both influence the extent to which residents feel they can solve local problems — particularly among those at the upper end of each spectrum. About two-thirds of those with at least a bachelor’s degree, as well as Americans in the top quintile of household income, believe they can help solve local problems.

**CHART 13**

### Influence of Residents to Solve Community Problems

People like me can solve local problems.



Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding. Data labels less than 5% are not displayed. Totals of response percentages are calculated based on addition prior to rounding. As such, totals listed here or in text may vary by ±1 percentage point from totals derived by adding rounded values.

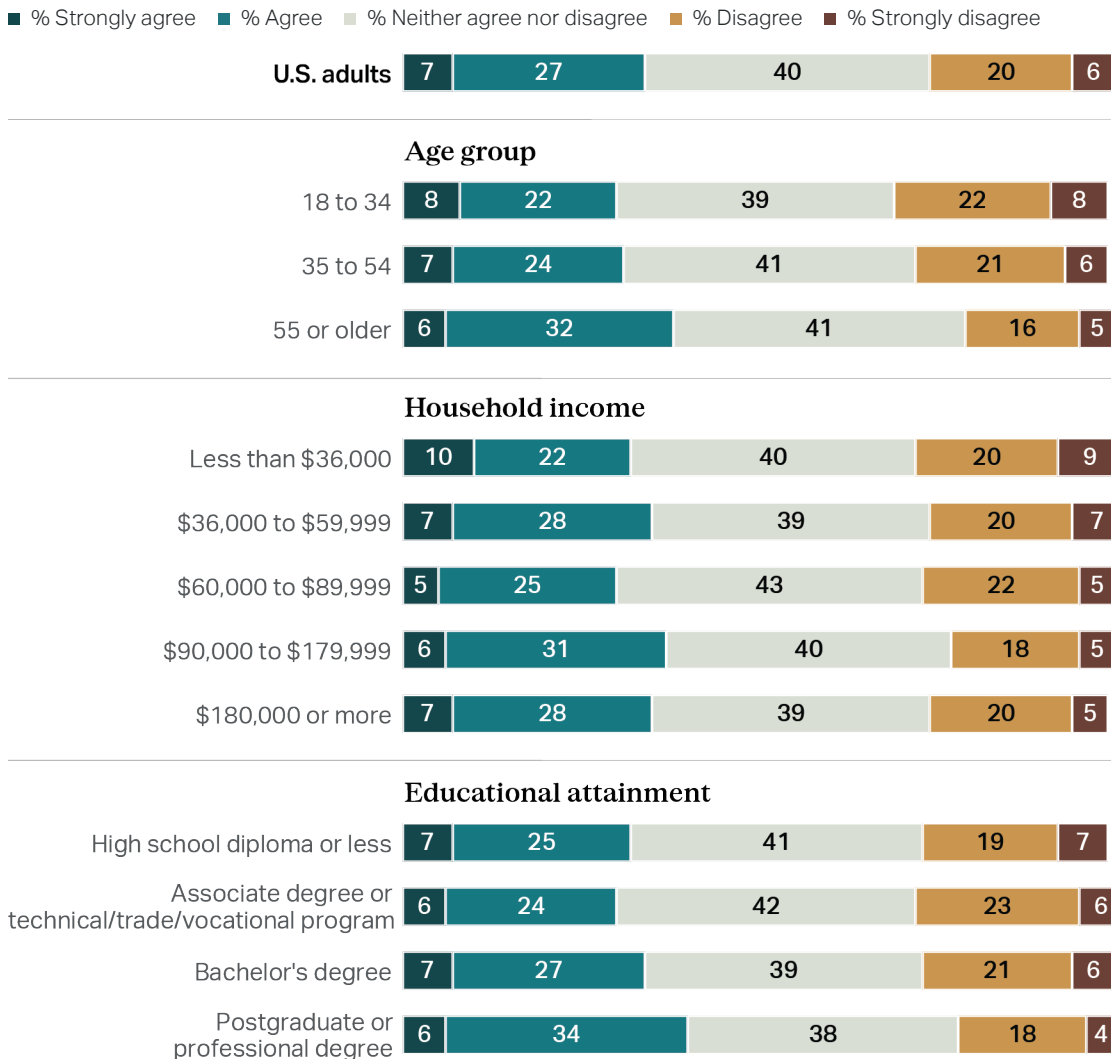
Perhaps more important than confidence in their ability to solve local problems is Americans' belief that if they had an idea for how to do so, somebody in their community would listen to it. However, Americans are even less confident in this: Just one in three adults (34%) agrees that somebody would listen to their ideas to improve their town or city.

While those with higher levels of education and income are more likely to believe they can positively impact their community, they are generally not more likely than their peers to feel heard. Across all five income quintiles, between 30% and 37% of adults agree somebody would listen to their ideas to improve the community. Similarly, about one in three adults with a high school diploma (33%), associate degree or certification (30%), or bachelor's degree (34%) agree their ideas would be heard; those with a postgraduate or professional degree (40%) are only marginally more likely to agree someone would listen to their ideas.

**CHART 14**

**Americans' Confidence Their Opinions About the Community Will Be Heard**

If I have an idea for how to improve my town or city, I know someone will listen to me.



Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding. Totals of response percentages are calculated based on addition prior to rounding. As such, totals listed here or in text may vary by ±1 percentage point from totals derived by adding rounded values.

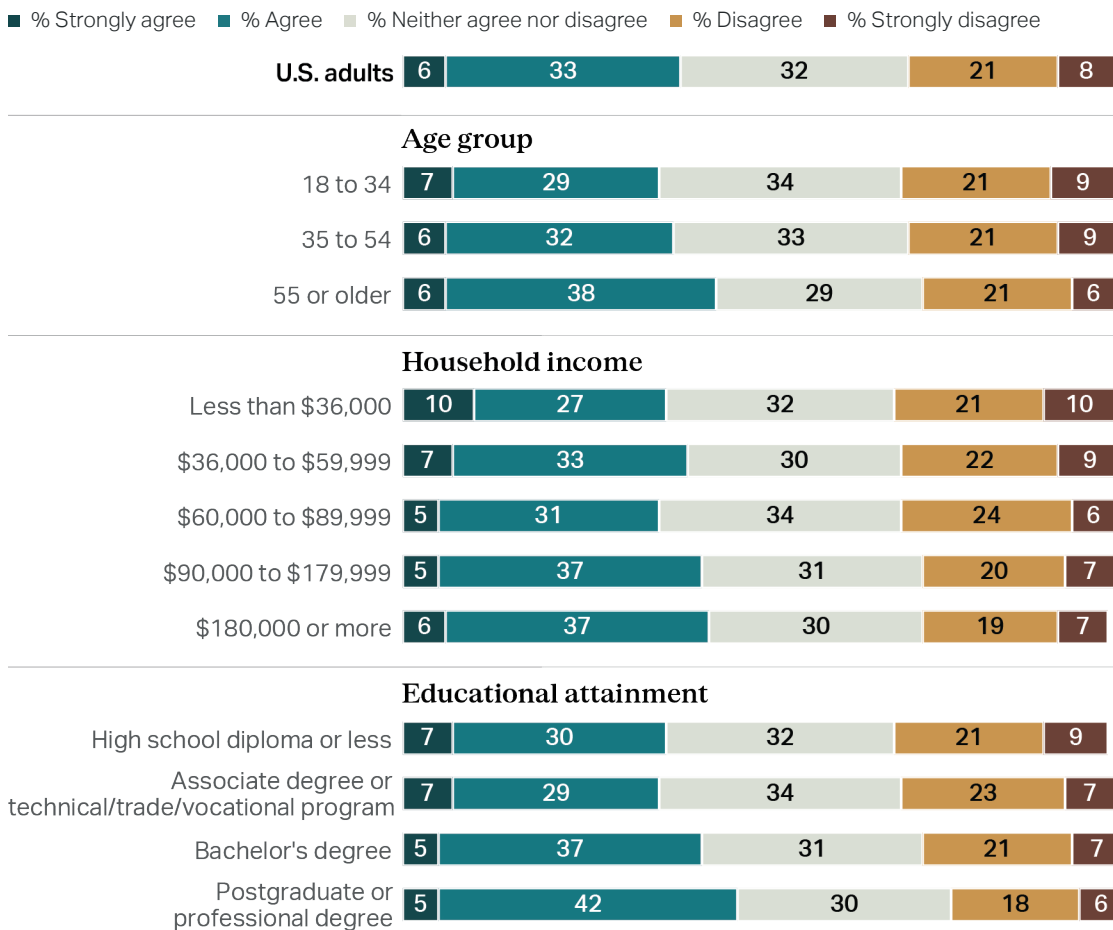
Once more, empowering residents to influence the direction of their communities is not only important for its own sake. It is also related to adults' assessment of their towns and cities. Americans who are very satisfied with the area where they live are 20 percentage points more likely than those who are not to agree people like them can solve local problems (68% vs. 48%) and are twice as likely to agree someone would listen to their ideas (50% vs. 24%).

The sense of disenfranchisement held by many adults across the United States is likely influenced by — and potentially a reflection of — the lack of trust that the public has in its local leaders. About four in 10 adults (39%) agree that they trust their local leaders to act in the best interest of their town or city, including just 6% who strongly agree.

**CHART 15**

**Americans' Trust in Community Leadership**

I trust local leaders to act in the best interest of my town or city.



Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding.

This trust is closely related to Americans' belief that someone would listen to their ideas to improve their town or city. About two-thirds of those who agree someone would listen (65%) also agree that they trust their local leaders, compared with just 13% of those who do not agree someone would listen to their ideas. As a result, the groups who are most likely to feel heard — namely, those with a postgraduate degree and the highest earners — are also slightly more likely to trust their local leaders.

## Empowered residents are inspired residents.

The disempowerment that most Americans feel in their communities is not for want of formal outlets to share feedback. Between 62% and 78% of adults say that there are opportunities in their town or city to share feedback through online forms or public comment, public meetings, direct lines of communication to local leaders or community organizations.

But while these feedback mechanisms may exist within the community, fewer adults are actually leveraging them. Between 16% and 33% of adults say that they have provided feedback through each of these channels within the past three months; just over half (53%) have taken advantage of at least one of them.

**CHART 16**

### Access to and Application of Community Feedback Channels

Opportunities to Provide Feedback or Improve the Community

% Yes

- If you wanted to speak up or get involved would there be an opportunity in the town or city where you live to ...
- In the past three months have you done any of the following?

#### Attend a public meeting

*(e.g., city council, school board, community meeting)*



#### Contact a local leader or decision-maker

*(e.g., city council, school leader or elected official)*



#### Participate in the clean-up or preservation of natural areas

*(e.g., parks, trails, rivers, lakes or oceans)*



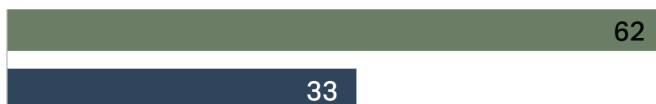
#### Join a local group that works on community issues

*(e.g., a neighborhood association, nonprofit, parent group or advocacy group)*



#### Share feedback through a formal channel

*(e.g., an online form, survey, petition or public comment process)*



Many Americans may avoid giving constructive feedback to their community because they doubt their voices will be heard. Just 43% of those who disagree someone would listen to their ideas have provided feedback through one or more channels in the past three months, whereas 70% of those who agree someone would listen to their ideas have done so.

This notion is further reinforced by adults' self-reported motivation to improve their communities. Overall, about half of adults agree they feel a sense of responsibility to help make their town or city better (49%) and that they feel motivated to give back to their community (46%). But those who agree that someone would listen if they had an idea to improve their community are about twice as likely as those who doubt anyone would listen to agree they feel motivated to give back to their community (71% vs. 33%) and that they feel a strong sense of responsibility to make their town or city better (72% vs. 37%).

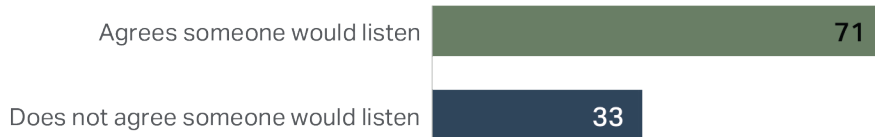
**CHART 17**

**Impact of Agency on Americans' Commitment to Improving Their Communities**

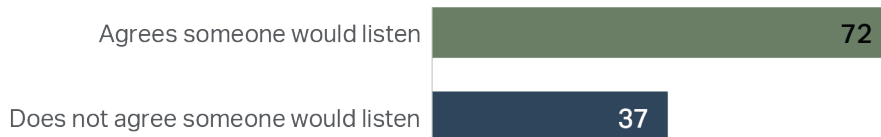
By response to "If I have an idea for how to improve my town or city, I know someone will listen to me"

*% Strongly agree + Agree*

**I feel motivated to give back to my town or city.**



**I feel a strong sense of responsibility to help make my town or city better.**



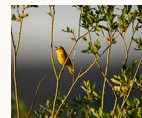
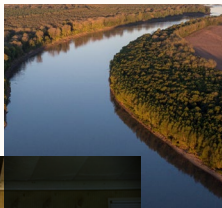
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# Methodology

Results for *How Opportunity Takes Root: Understanding the Conditions for People and Places to Thrive* are based on a Gallup Panel™ web study completed by 6,732 U.S. adults, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. All responses were collected between Feb. 26-March 6, 2026.

For results based on the overall sample of adults, the margin of sampling error at the 95% confidence level is  $\pm 1.5$  percentage points for response percentages around 50% and is  $\pm 0.9$  percentage points for response percentages around 10% or 90%. Margins of error for subgroups are higher.

All reported margins of sampling error include computed design effects for weighting. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.



**GALLUP®**

**World Headquarters**

The Gallup Building  
901 F Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20004

**t** +1.877.242.5587

**f** +1.888.500.8282

**[www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com)**