

The Common Good: Volunteering in the Commonwealth

Serve Kentucky Citizen Survey, Overview of Findings

In the first month of 2021, Serve Kentucky conducted a survey to learn how and why people volunteer.

More than 1,200 Kentuckians from every region of the Commonwealth contributed their ideas.

We learned that Kentuckians volunteer at levels far above what we expected.

We learned we help each other in many settings and in many ways. And that there's more to be done.

We learned that, above all, Kentuckians agree on helping each other and making a difference.

We learned that we are all Team Kentucky.

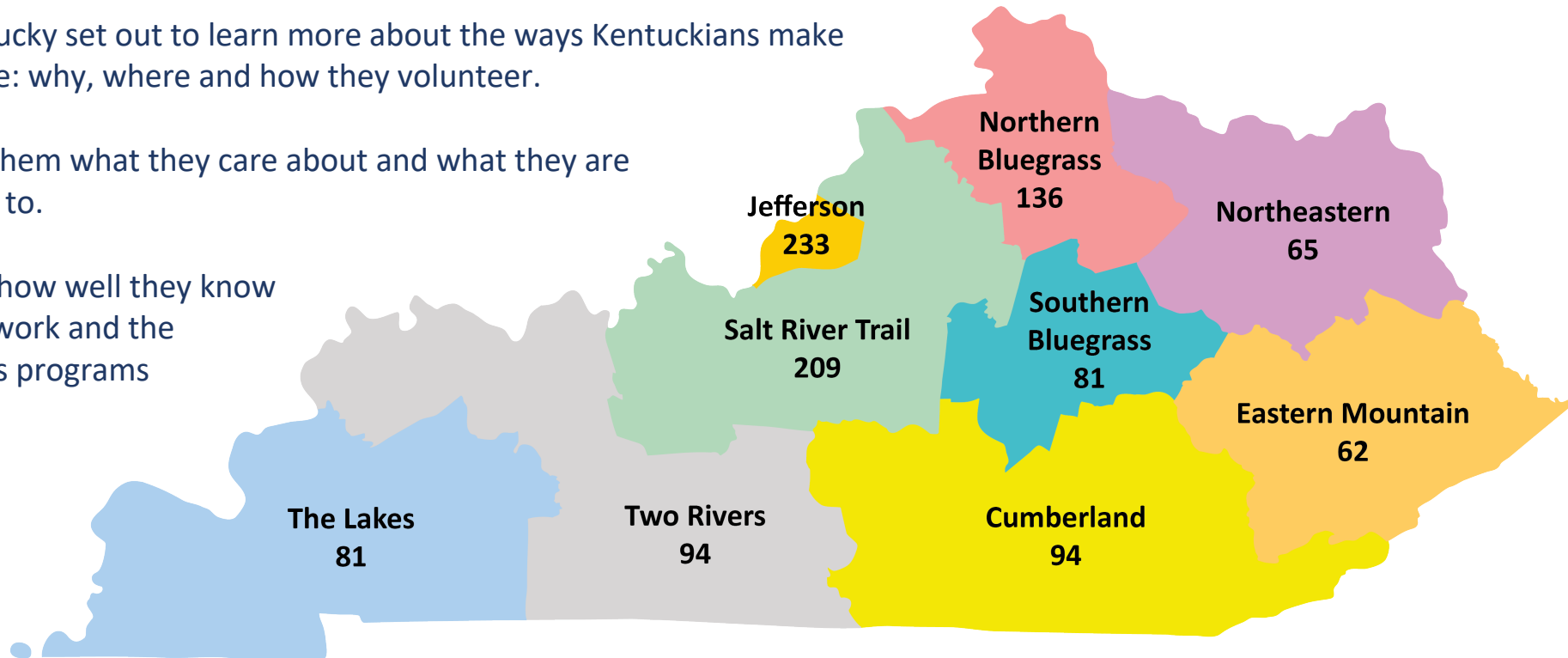


We heard from 1,264 people.

Serve Kentucky set out to learn more about the ways Kentuckians make a difference: why, where and how they volunteer.

We asked them what they care about and what they are committed to.

We tested how well they know about our work and the AmeriCorps programs we fund.



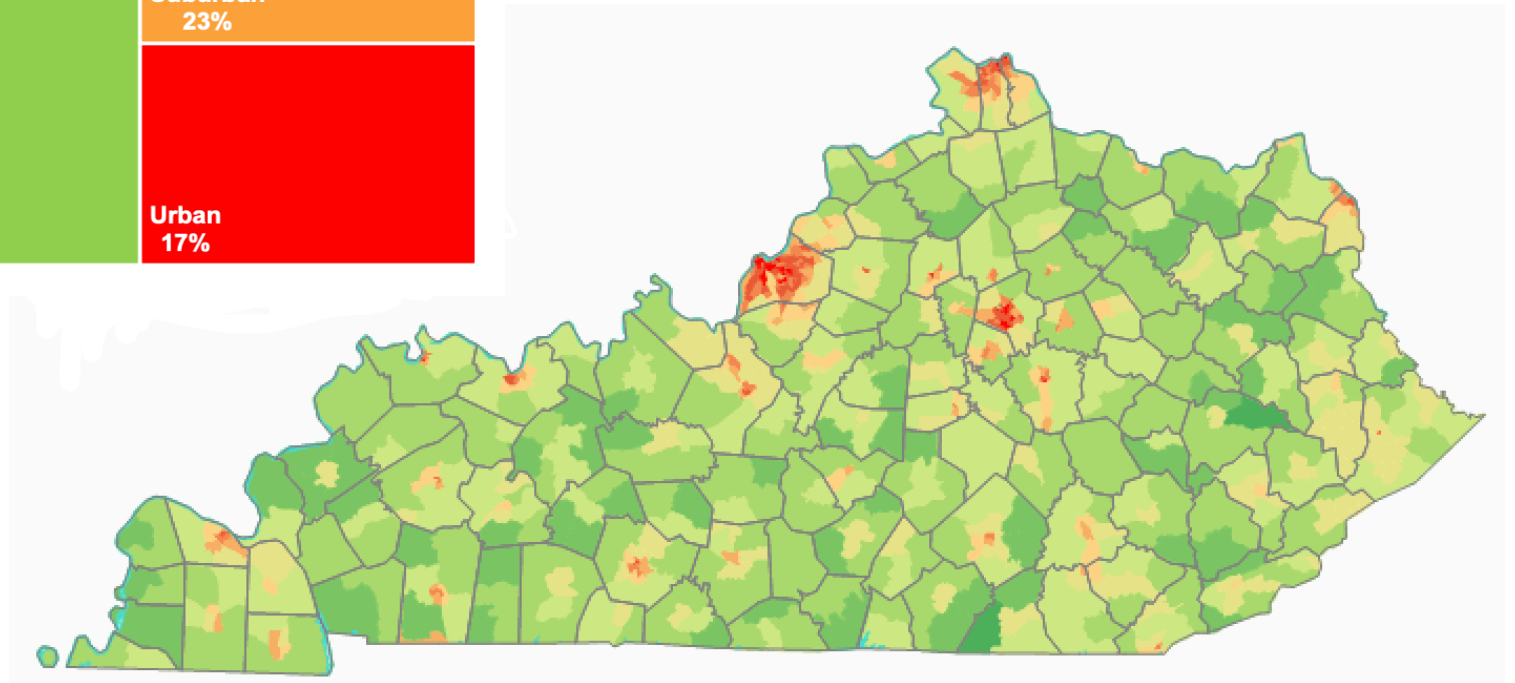
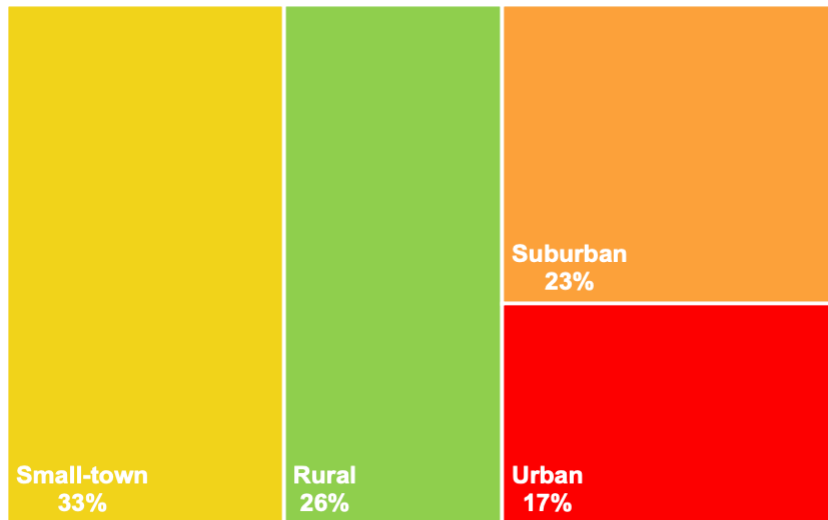
Using this map, Serve Kentucky asked respondents to indicate where they live in the state. The nine regions represent the service areas for the Kentucky Department of Community Based Services.

All regions are well represented. Serve Kentucky promoted the survey through social media and across Kentucky's faith, business and local community sectors. As far as we know, this matches or exceeds the response level of any state volunteer survey in the country.

Where people live reflects the Commonwealth.

A population heat map of Kentucky shows that much of the Commonwealth is made up of **rural** areas and **small-towns**.

The survey has slightly higher percentage of people living in small towns and rural areas than in the state itself. Nonetheless, Jefferson and Fayette Counties had the most responses, and **urban** and **suburban** Kentuckians are well-represented.



Faith, friends and family: Kentuckians help each other a lot, and in many ways.

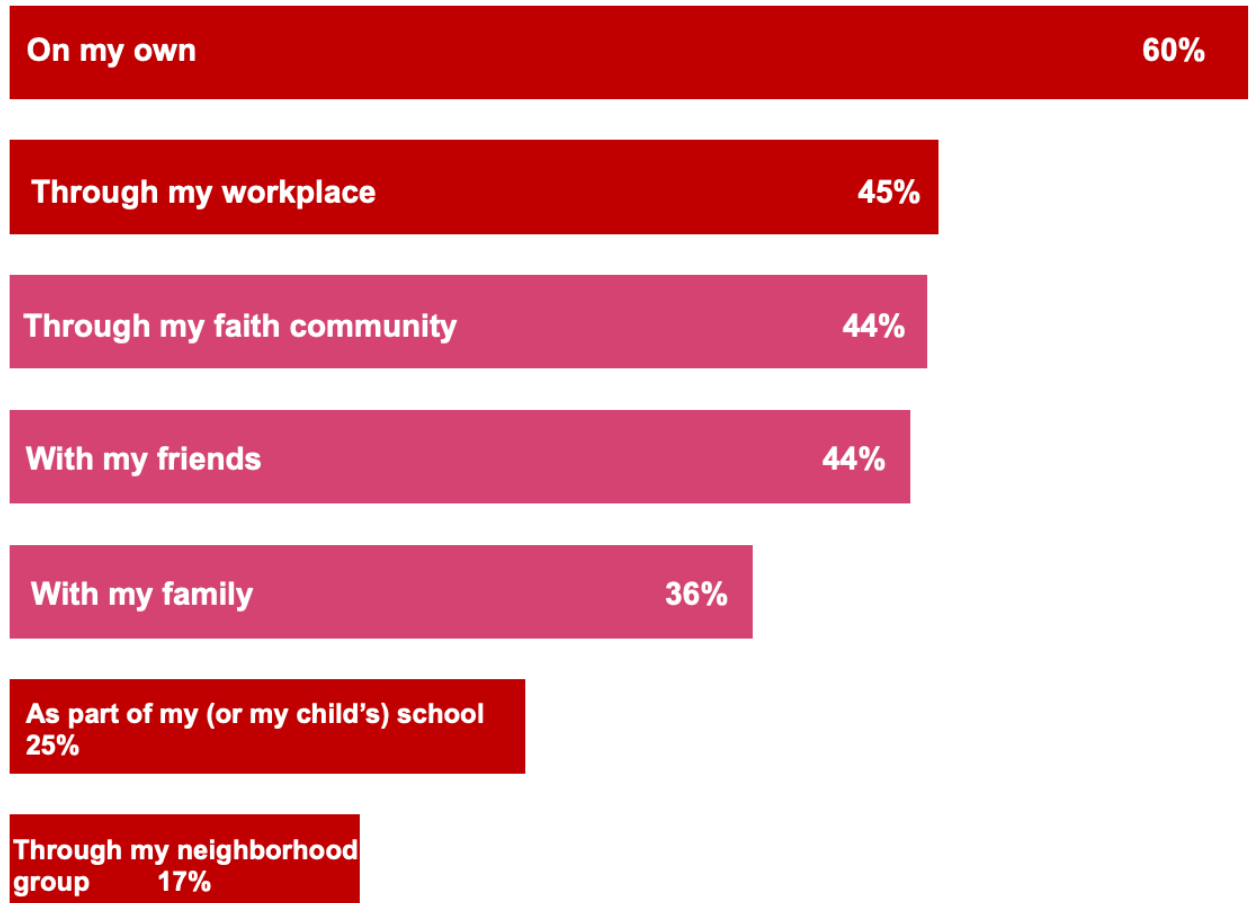
Typically, Kentuckians volunteer in more than one way (2.7 ways, in fact).

Kentucky's volunteers aren't one-trick ponies. They are work horses. One reports:

“I volunteer with my church and with my school. I am a National Honor Society adviser and an adviser for Kentucky Youth Assembly. I incorporate service into school instruction. I volunteer in Morgan, Rowan, and Magoffin Counties.”

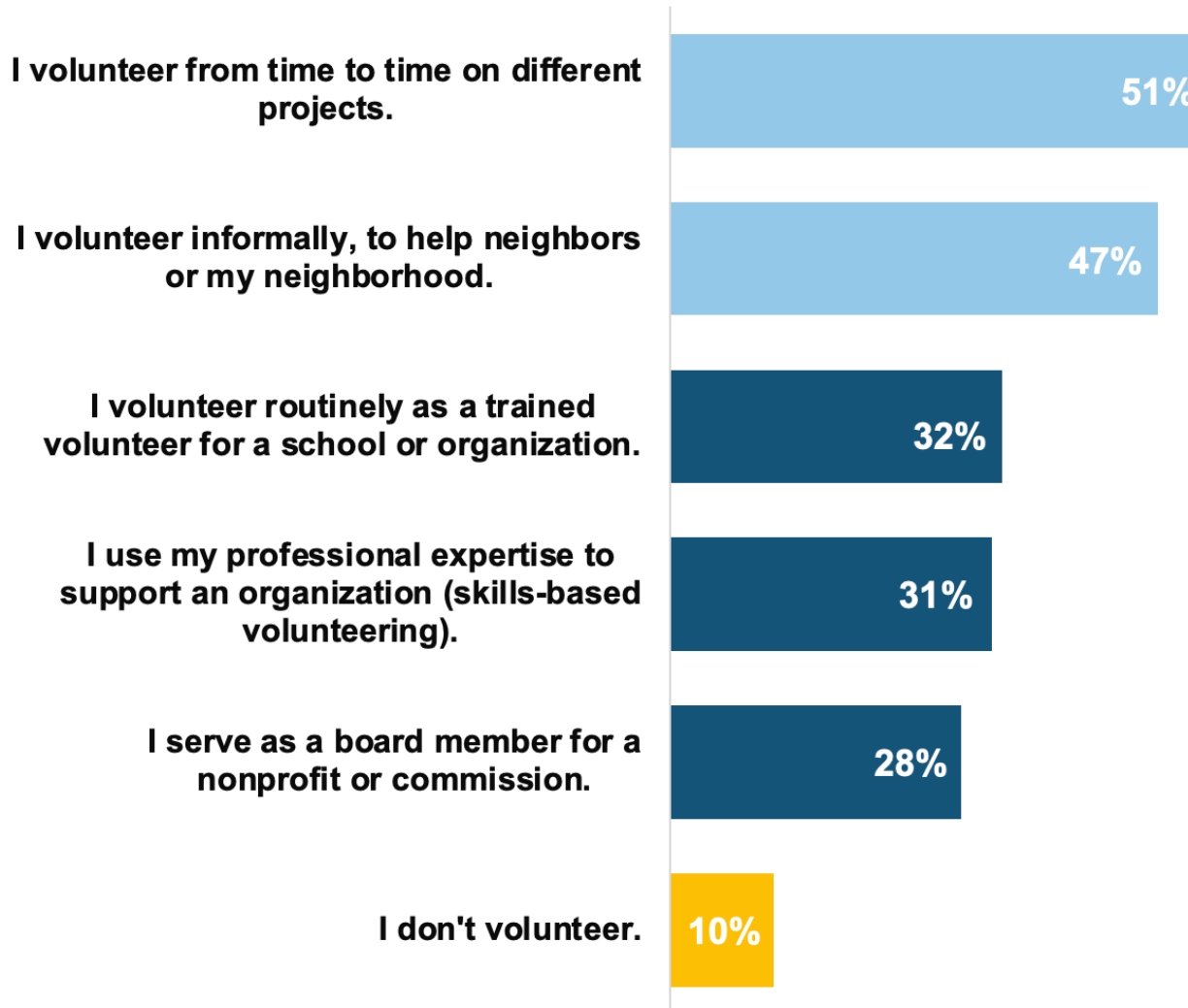
Workplace volunteering is significant, as well as serving through their faith community.

How (and with whom) do you volunteer?



...And Kentuckians volunteer in a number of different ways.

What kind of volunteering do you do?



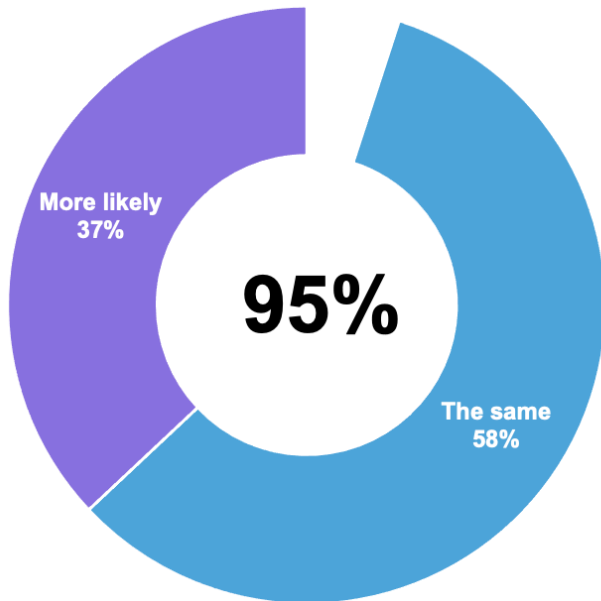
Many of Kentucky's volunteers do not serve formally, or with non-profit organizations.

Factoring in the help that neighbors give neighbors, **Kentuckians volunteer at much higher rates than in national surveys***.

When asked, "What do you do to make a difference, volunteer, serve others or contribute to your community," **71%** of respondents offered detailed examples. In fact, only one in 10 surveyed report that they do not volunteer.

*The 2018 *Volunteering in America* study states that **28.1%** of Kentucky residents volunteer, ranking it **39th** among states. Many studies track "neighbors helping neighbors," though these figures are not counted as volunteering, as in this study. Several methodologies of these studies are not the same.

After the pandemic, Kentucky's volunteers are ready to get back to volunteering.



Say they will maintain their current level of involvement or do more to get involved once the pandemic passes

Nonprofits in Kentucky tell us that giving is down, just at a time when people need the most help. The pandemic has also meant that organizations have had to cut back the amount of volunteer opportunities to serve people.

In May 2020, Points of Light published a study about the impact of the pandemic on nonprofits. Giving is down by 75% across the country, but there's a silver lining: requests to volunteer are up 85%. People are hungry to help.

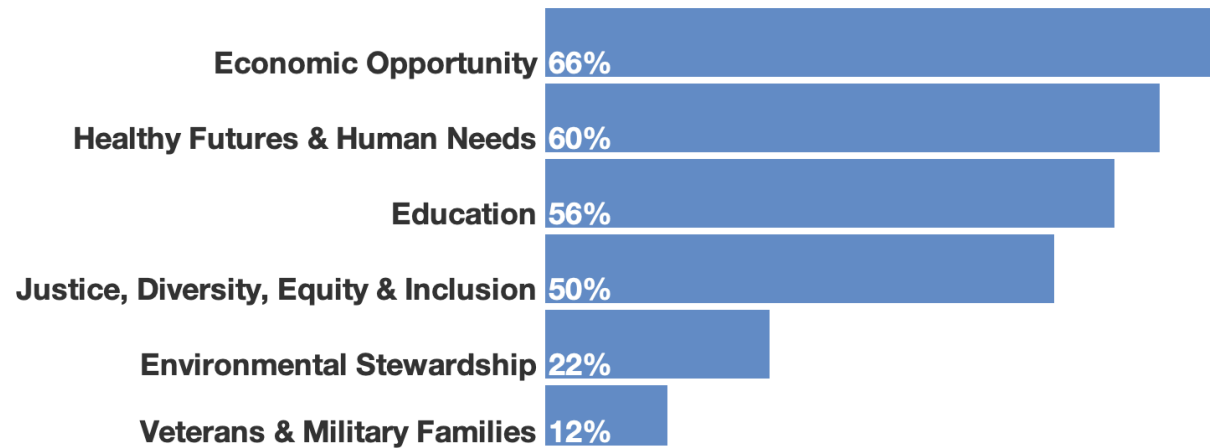
Serve Kentucky asked these same questions: whose responsibility is it "to get involved to rebuild our communities and country after COVID-19?" **Kentuckians scored fifteen points higher (97-82%)** on this question than national respondents.

When asked, "After the coronavirus pandemic passes, are you more or less likely to volunteer?" Kentuckians said "More likely" or "about the same" at exactly the same rate, **95%**, as the rest of the country.

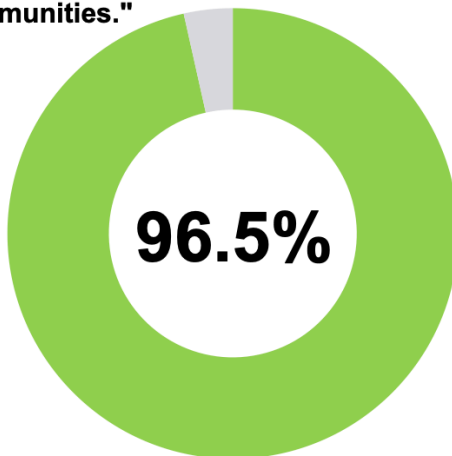
Here's what they care about most.

Serve Kentucky's priorities are Kentuckians' priorities.

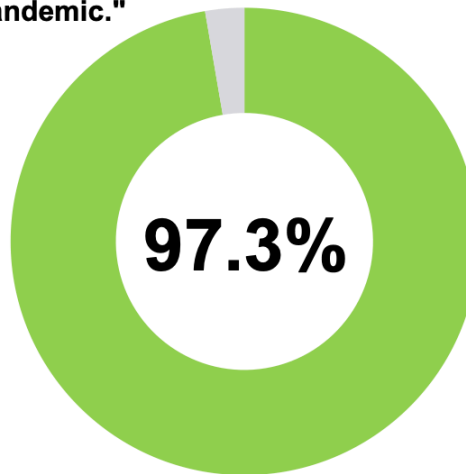
And in a time of disagreement, we all agree on helping others.



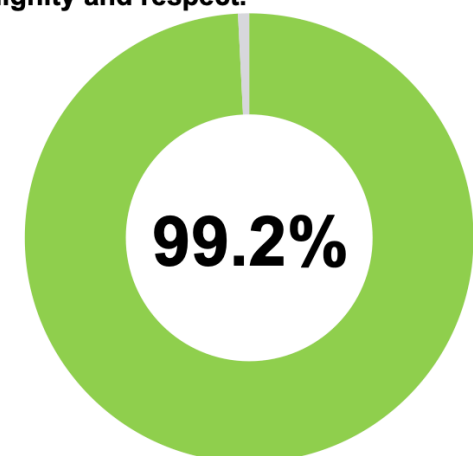
"I support the work of Serve Kentucky to engage Kentuckians in volunteerism and service to positively impact our communities."



"We must get involved to rebuild our communities after the coronavirus pandemic."



"I want to play my part in building a Kentucky where everyone is treated with dignity and respect."



The issues Kentuckians care about the most are interconnected: education, justice, health, and above all, economic prosperity. Through their volunteer efforts, Kentuckians are committed both to **fixing systems** and **addressing symptoms**.

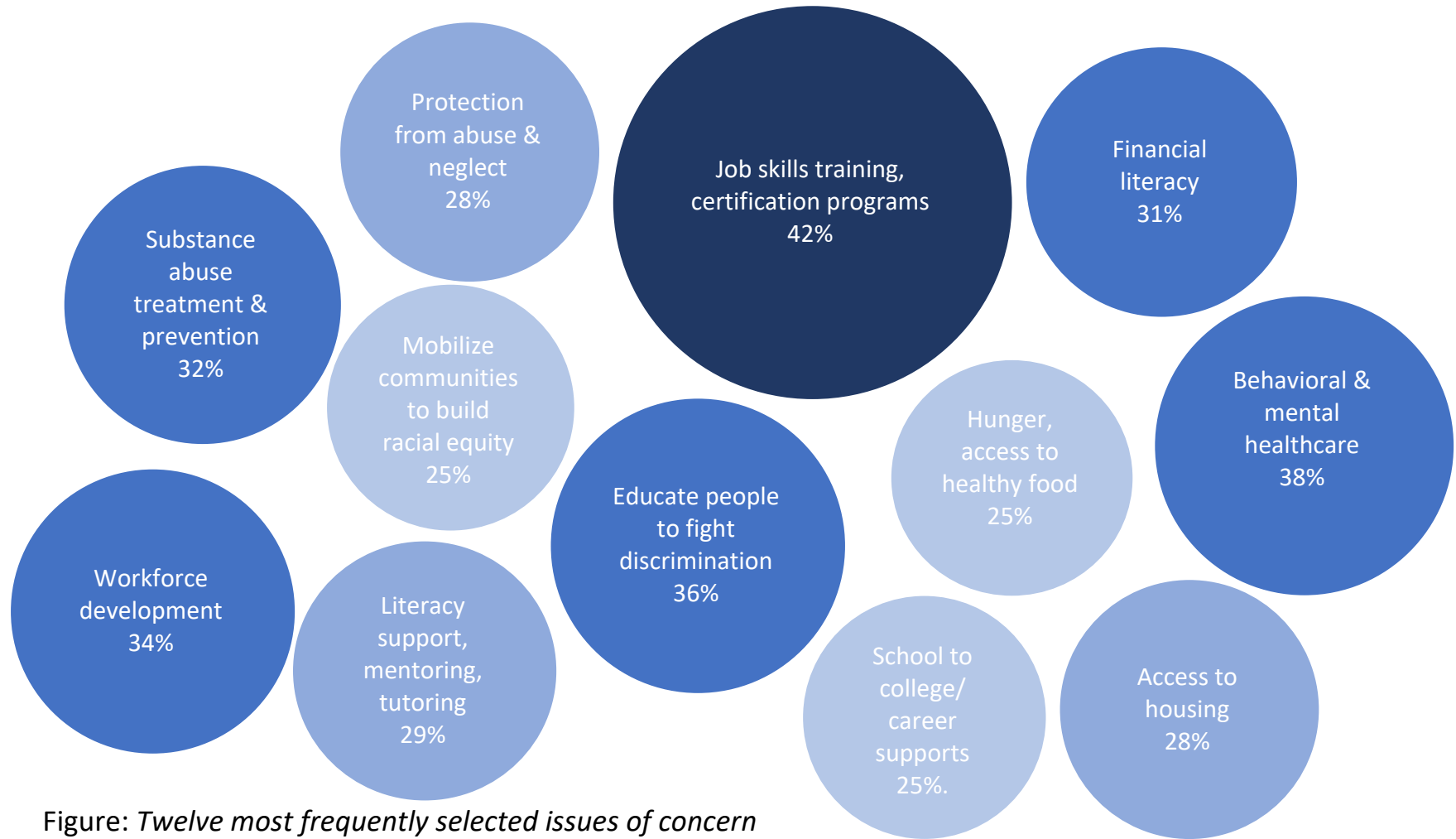


Figure: Twelve most frequently selected issues of concern

AmeriCorps has a great reputation...

It is difficult to put a rating on the reputation of an entire field.

One way to quantify how well people appreciate the AmeriCorps experience (across programs) is to use a Net Promoter Score.

In the business world, NPS¹ is considered to be the gold standard for measuring company performance, though its use in government and nonprofits is not common. AmeriCorps' NPS for surveyed Kentucky alumni is **43.35**. That **high rating** reflects the consistent **quality of Serve Kentucky's AmeriCorps programs**.

Nearly four times as many alumni recommend AmeriCorps as those who report they would not recommend it.



173 AmeriCorps Alumni completed the Net Promoter Score survey question, "How likely are you to recommend an AmeriCorps experience to a friend or colleague?"

¹ NPS ratings range from -100 (all detractors) to +100 (all promoters). Between 0 and 50 is considered good, 50-70 is excellent and above 70 is "world-class."

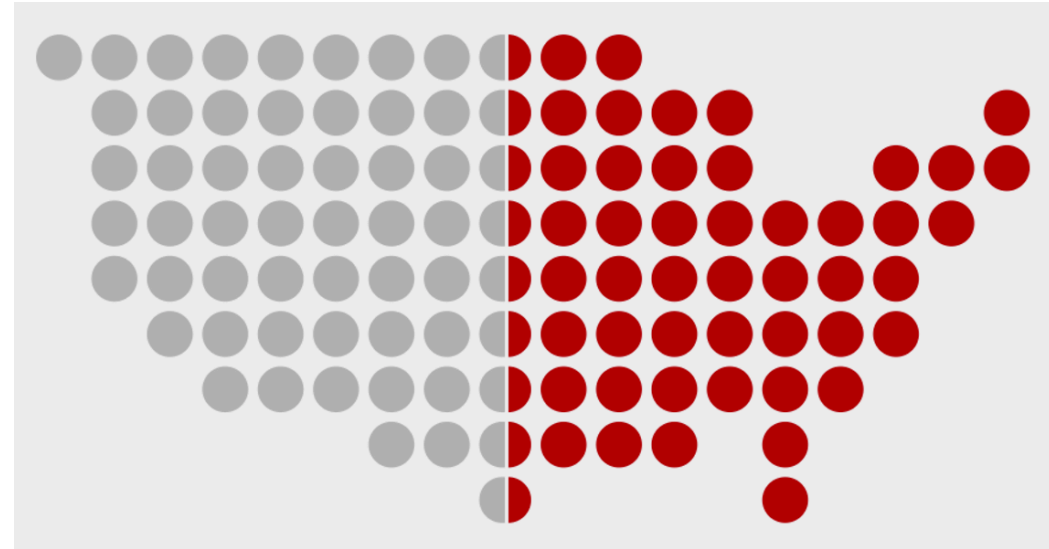
...But the public does not know us as well as they should.

After 25 years, awareness of AmeriCorps is mixed—all over the country.

Across the Commonwealth,
37% of Kentuckians
are **aware of AmeriCorps.**

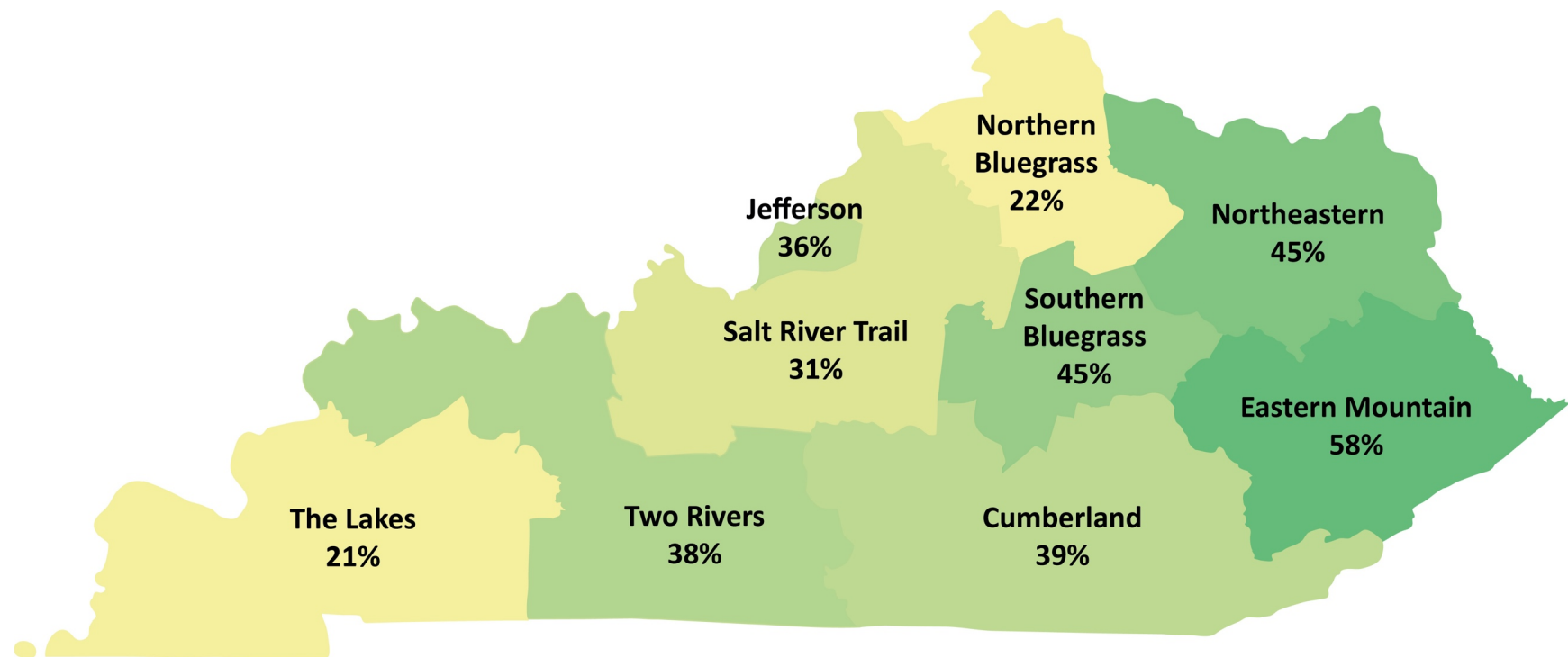


Nationwide,
50% of Americans
are **aware of AmeriCorps.**



For those who do know about AmeriCorps, their knowledge is deep: **one-third of Kentuckians can name a local AmeriCorps program.**

And in some areas of the state, more than half of the general public knows about AmeriCorps.



Percentage of people in each region of the Commonwealth who responded with a 4 or 5 on a scale of one to five to the question, "How familiar are you with AmeriCorps?"

We are excited to share these results with you, but this is just where the conversation starts. As Serve Kentucky crafts a state service plan for 2021-2024, we will be working in your communities to create, promote and support new volunteer opportunities. We will expand our great AmeriCorps programs, invent new ones, and look for new ways to build up local communities. To get things done for all Kentuckians, we need you. We are all Team Kentucky, and together we can create the common good in the Commonwealth.



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