



JUNE 2024

Trust in Nonprofits and Philanthropy

Strengths and Challenges
in a Time of Division

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH





About *Independent Sector*



Independent Sector is the only national membership organization that brings together the whole of the charitable sector – nonprofits, philanthropy, and corporate giving programs – to strengthen civil society and ensure all people in the United States thrive.

We believe that a healthy, equitable, and trusted nonprofit sector is essential to achieving a nation in which all people are thriving in a flourishing democracy and robust civil society. Therefore, it is critical that we regularly assess public trust in nonprofits and philanthropy. This report shares our latest findings.

We would like to thank Edelman Data and Intelligence for their ongoing partnership in the development of this report.





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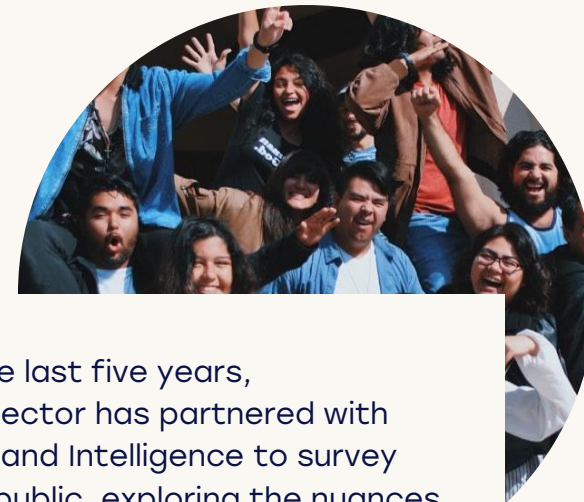




TRUST IN NONPROFITS
AND PHILANTHROPY

Introduction





Public trust is the currency of the nonprofit sector.

Without the public’s trust, everything we do to advance our collective missions becomes harder, if not impossible.

Trust is what makes it possible for us to partner with local communities to do the hard work of systemic change. Our trusted voices as advocates for our missions help drive policy change. Our trusted status makes us an essential partner to government and industry. Trust is vital in the recruitment of volunteers and in the sector’s work to bridge across difference in a divided America. And, without trust, raising the resources we need to do our work becomes infinitely harder.

For each of the last five years, Independent Sector has partnered with Edelman Data and Intelligence to survey the American public, exploring the nuances of trust in American nonprofit and philanthropic organizations. These are the largest nationally representative surveys of their kind, surveying over 3,000 adults. We also conduct online focus groups to provide richer context for our findings. Given the outsized importance of trust to our sector, it is imperative to regularly assess the status of trust so, ultimately, we can fashion the policy and practice changes needed to build this critical asset.





Research Methodology

n = 3,000

Sample Size

+/- 2%

Margin of Error

March 21 – April 7, 2024

Timing

QUANTITATIVE ONLINE SURVEY

Edelman Data & Intelligence (DXI) fielded a 20-minute online survey among U.S. adults ages 18+.

Results were weighted to ensure comparability to prior waves, and to be nationally representative across race, income, educational attainment, gender, age, region and urbanicity.

QUALITATIVE ONLINE DISCUSSION BOARDS

Three (3) online qualitative discussion boards to gain deeper insights and add texture to the 2024 Trust survey findings.

Two discussion boards were focused on nonprofit organizations, and the other was focused on philanthropy. The total between the three boards was seventy-two (72) participants.

All boards included a mix of participants by US region, gender, age, race, education, income level, and reported personal financial outlook to ensure a range of perspectives. The nonprofit boards were separated by political party ID (one group of Democrats/Democrat leaners and one of Republicans/Republican leaners).

Boards were conducted April 15 to 17, 2024.

*Wave 1 of Nonprofit 2020 study was fielded December 2 – 19, 2019 with n=3,000 participants
*Wave 1 of Philanthropy 2020 study was fielded February 28 – March 16, 2020 with n=3,000 participants
*Wave 2 of Nonprofit study was fielded April 29 – May 18, 2021 with n=5,000
*Wave 2 of Philanthropy study was fielded April 29 – May 18, 2021 with n=3,000
*Wave 3 combined Nonprofit and Philanthropy studies in a single survey with n = 3,015 participants and was fielded in February 2022
*Wave 4 combined Nonprofit and Philanthropy studies in a single survey with n = 3,000 participants and was fielded in May 16 – June 1, 2023



TRUST IN NONPROFITS
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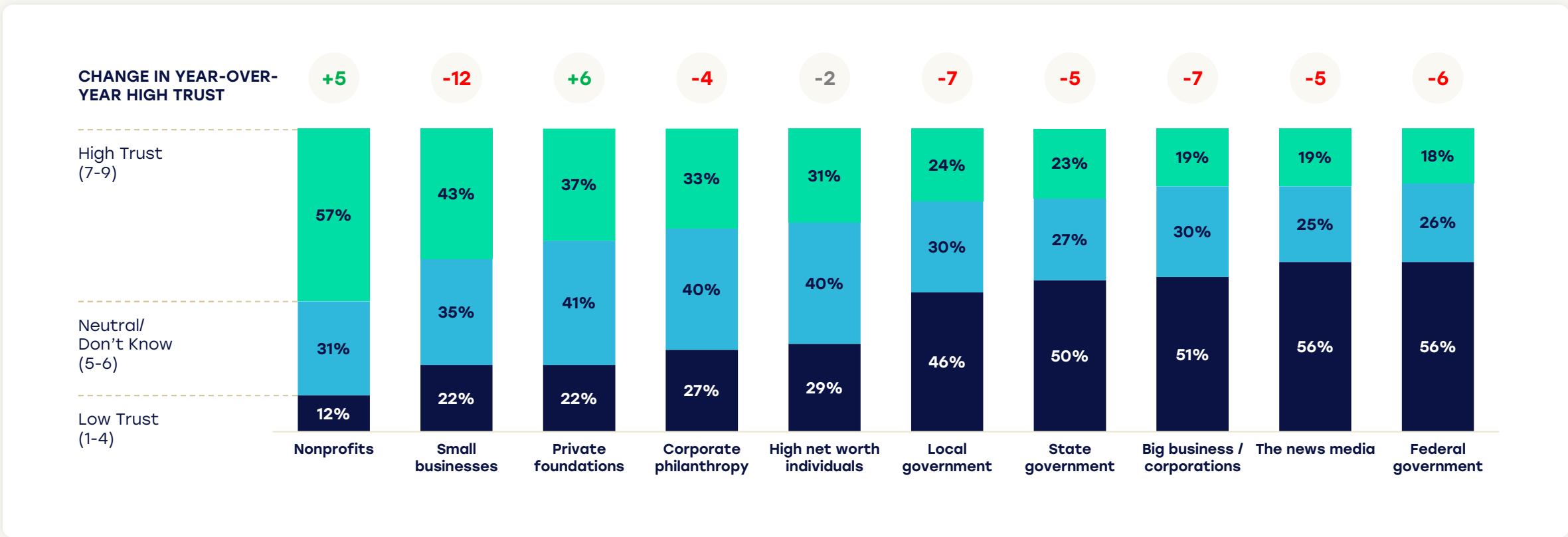
Key Findings

- 01.** After four years of decline, trust in nonprofits has rebounded by 5 points to 57%.
- 02.** Trust in philanthropy remains steady at 33%, lower than trust in nonprofits.
- 03.** Americans trust nonprofits to reduce national divisions more than they trust corporations, government, or media.
- 04.** Americans have less trust in nonprofits to advocate for public policies and conduct nonpartisan voter engagement.
- 05.** There are clear pathways for nonprofits to increase public trust in the sector.



After four years of decline, trust in nonprofits rebounded in 2024.

Trust in other sectors – like government, business, and media – continues to decline, leaving nonprofits the most trusted sector in this survey. Trust in philanthropy remains lower than trust in nonprofits, and trust in private foundations and high-net-worth individuals remains much lower than in 2020, the first year for which we have data.





Three-quarters of Americans are worried about the direction of the country, and 94% are worried about growing division and a lack of national unity.

Many Americans believe nonprofits can reduce national divisions and positively impact the most important issues facing the country.

High inflation and other pocketbook/ quality of life issues are top public concerns

58%

of respondents are worried about inflation / the rising cost of living

38%

of respondents are worried about crime

37%

of respondents are worried about jobs / the economy and immigration

There is trust in the nonprofit sector to make a positive difference towards various issues compared to other major institutions

45%

of respondents believe that nonprofits are making things better

80%

of respondents have confidence in nonprofits to make a positive difference on homelessness

76%

of respondents have confidence in nonprofits to make a positive difference on poverty



While overall trust in nonprofits has recovered, the American public is less trusting when asked about nonprofits engaging in public policy advocacy and nonpartisan voter engagement.

Many respondents have low trust in the ability of nonprofits to avoid partisan politics or to assist in writing or revising laws and regulations.

● HIGH TRUST ● NEUTRAL/DON'T KNOW ● LOW TRUST



24%

of respondents trust that nonprofits will avoid partisan politics



26%

of respondents trust nonprofits to assist in the writing or revision of laws and regulations



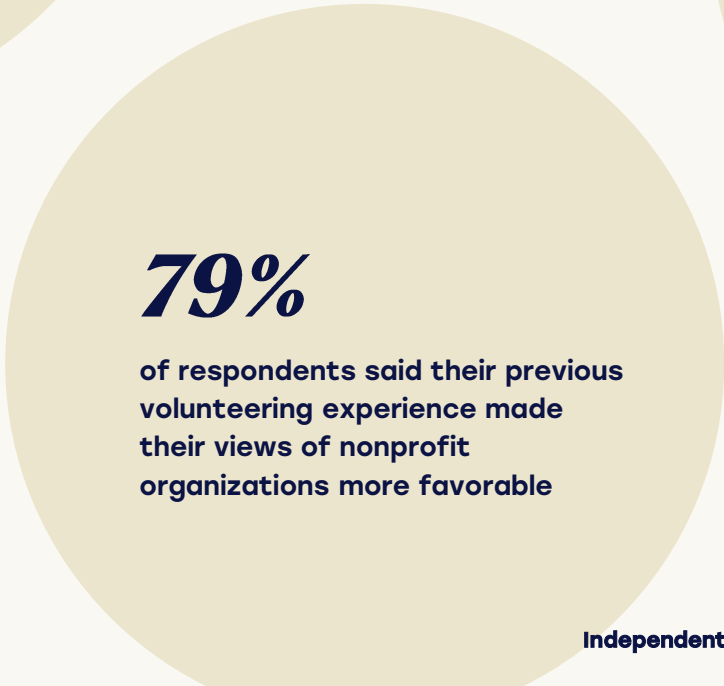
30%

of respondents trust nonprofits in providing factual, unbiased information about political candidates and policy issues



There are clear pathways for nonprofits to increase trust.

Four-fifths of Americans who volunteer say their experience made them view nonprofits more favorably, and a majority of Americans say their trust in a nonprofit would increase if it committed to “third party” standards for ethical operations and good governance practices.





From Data to Action

While the core purpose of this report is to share the data collected in our annual survey, the findings raise critical questions for how the charitable sector can best leverage the public trust it already holds, while also taking concrete actions to increase trust where it is needed:



Where and how can nonprofits be most effective in addressing the polarization and repairing divides that are so prevalent in American life?

▶

How do we better equip nonprofit leaders to advocate in ways that advance their missions while also building, not eroding, public trust?

▶

How do we contemporize our understanding of what good governance and ethical conduct by nonprofits looks like in an operating environment that is rapidly shifting?

▶



TRUST IN NONPROFITS
AND PHILANTHROPY

Trust Metrics



Measuring Trust Capital

Based on overall trust on a 9-point scale:

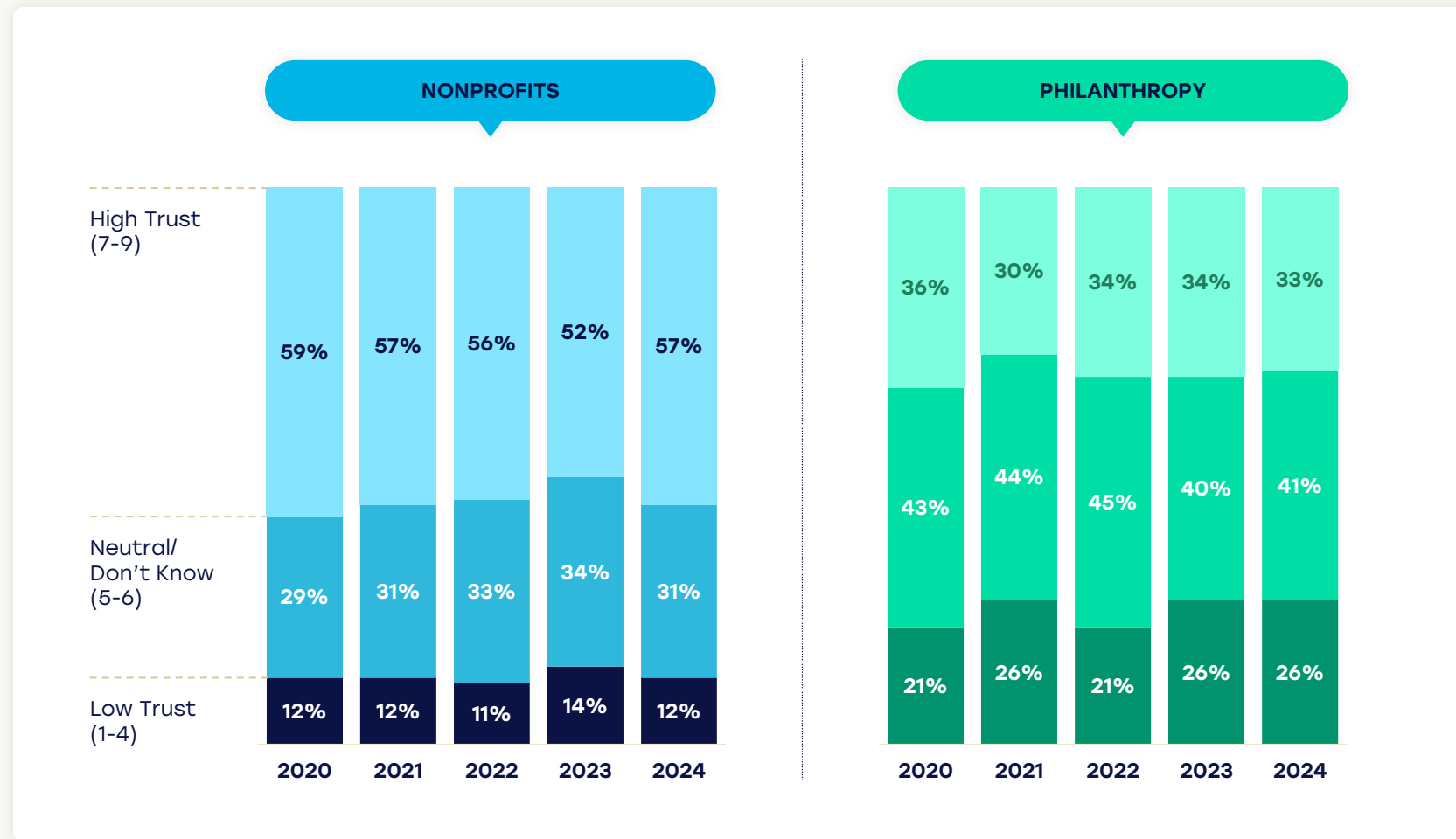
“How much do you trust X to do what is right?”

7-9	5-6	1-4
High Trust	Neutral	Low Trust

Q16: How much do you trust nonprofit organizations to do what is right? Q30/36/42: How much do you trust [companies that engage in corporate philanthropy, private foundations, high net worth individuals engaged in philanthropy] to do what is right? Total Base Size n=3,000

Nonprofit trust rebounded in 2024 while philanthropy trust held steady.

High trust in nonprofit organizations increased by 5 percentage points wave-over-wave.





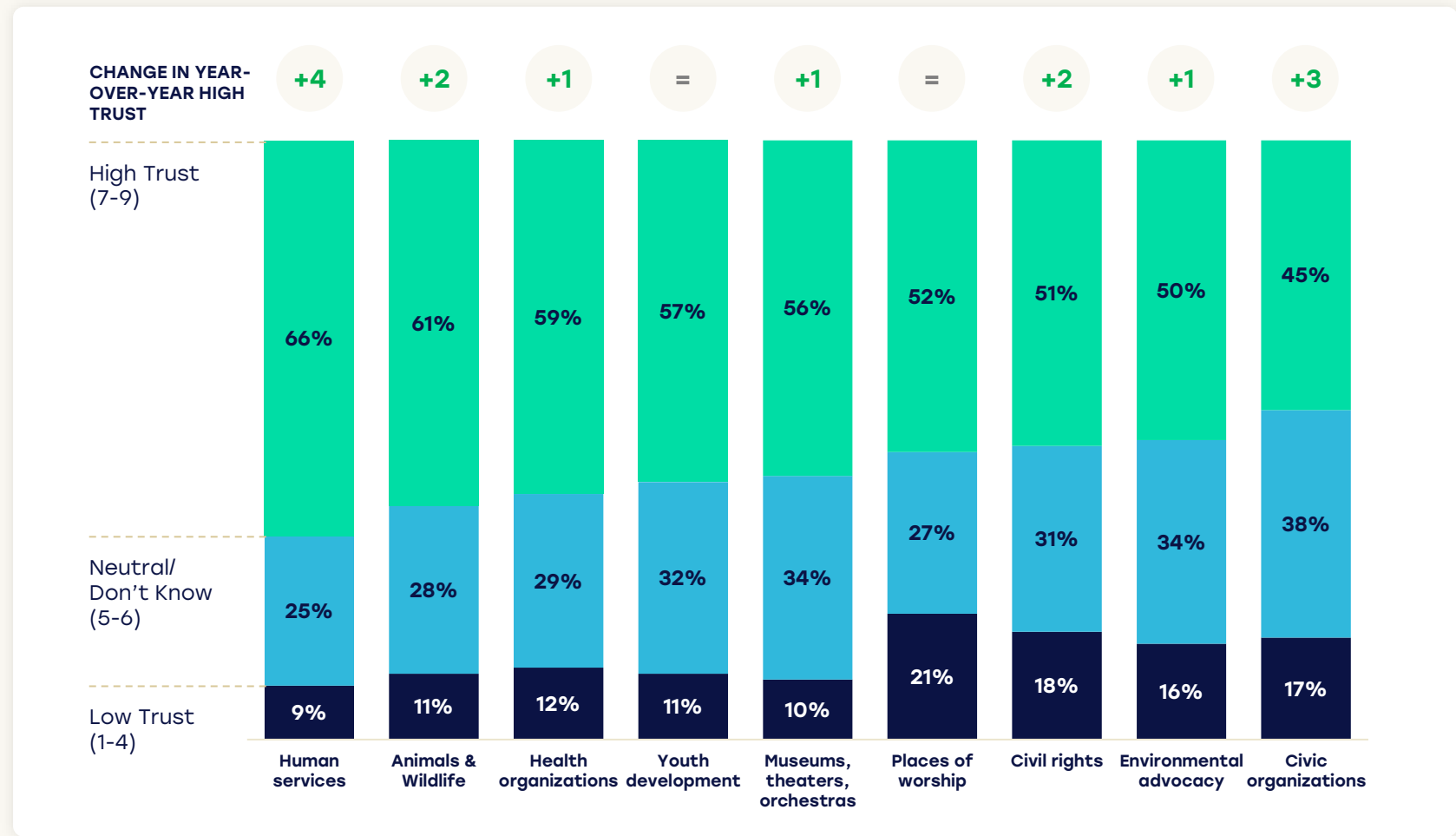
Trust Across Nonprofit Subsectors

Based on overall trust on a 9-point scale:

“How much do you trust X to do what is right?”

7-9	5-6	1-4
High Trust	Neutral	Low Trust

Trust continued to remain high in human services, animals and wildlife, health, and youth development nonprofits.



Q15: How much do you trust the following types of nonprofit organizations to do what is right? Total Base Size n=3,000



Trust Capital Across Philanthropy Subsectors

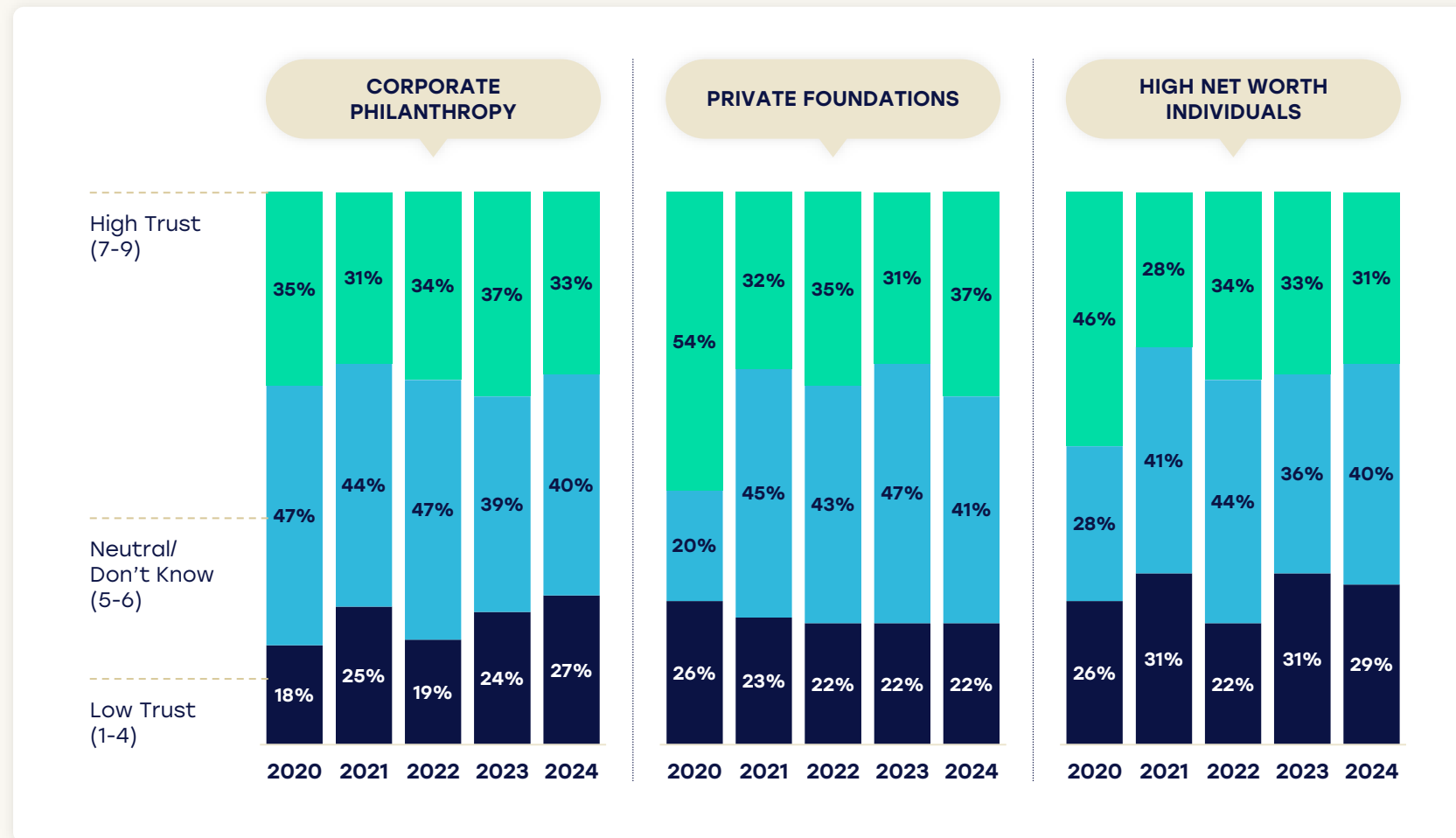
Based on overall trust on a 9-point scale:

“How much do you trust X to do what is right?”

7-9	5-6	1-4
High Trust	Neutral	Low Trust

Q18: How much do you trust corporate foundations to do what is right? Base Size: n=1004, Q22: How much do you trust private foundations to do what is right? Base Size: n=1010, Q26: How much do you trust high net worth individuals engaged in philanthropy to do what is right? Base Size: n=986

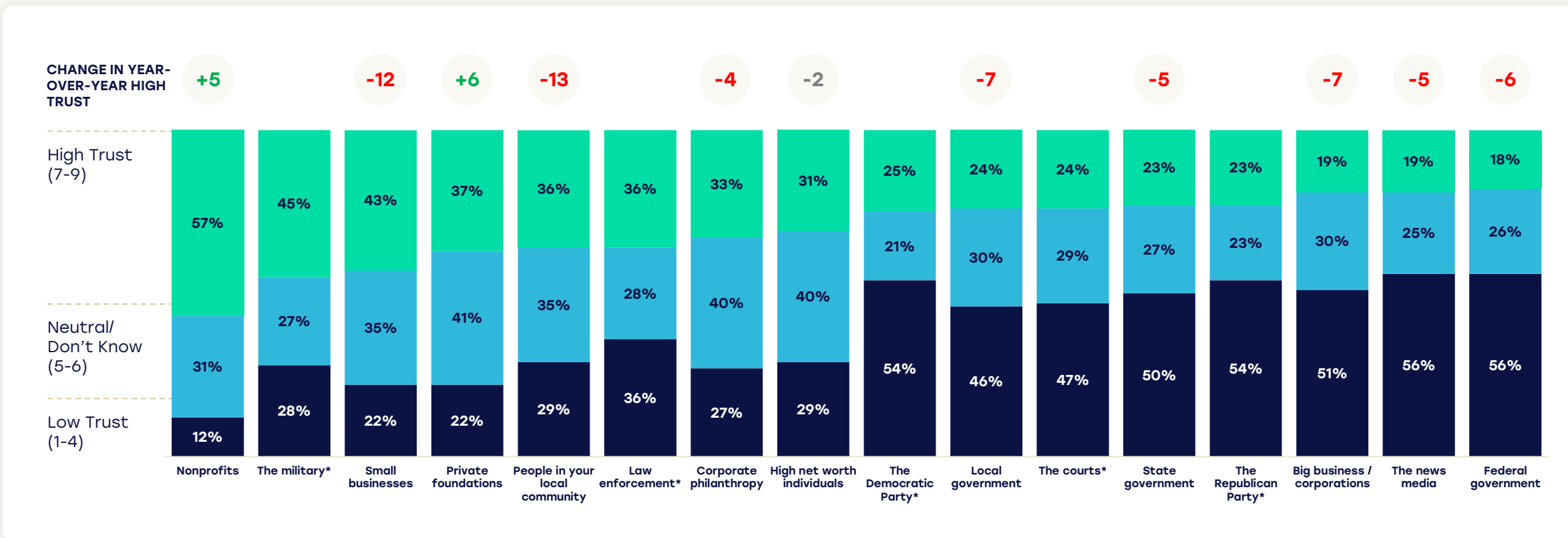
Trust in private foundations increased in 2024, while trust in corporate philanthropy and high net worth individuals dipped.





While trust in nonprofits increased, trust decreased across most other major entities.

Significant dips in trust can be seen among almost all societal institutions, most notably through local community connections and small businesses.



Q12. How much do you trust nonprofit organizations to do what is right? Base Size n=3,000, Q18: How much do you trust corporate foundations to do what is right? Base Size: n=1,004, Q22: How much do you trust private foundations to do what is right? Base Size: n=1010, Q26: How much do you trust high net worth individuals engaged in philanthropy to do what is right? Base Size: n=986, Q30: How much do you trust the following institutions to do what is right? Base Size n=3,000

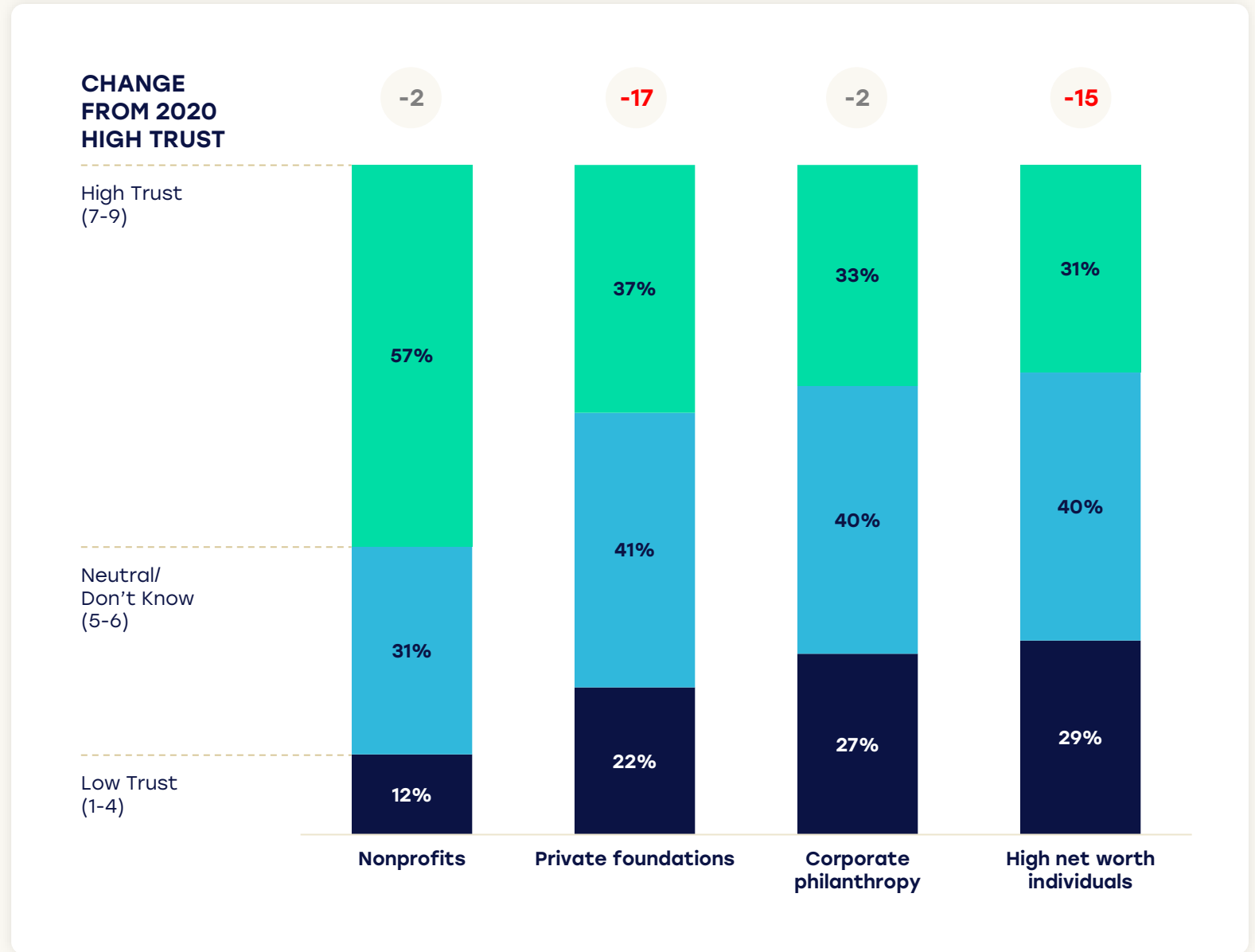
* Indicates new response option added in 2024



Private foundations and high net worth individuals have significant trust drops from 2020.

Looking back at the last presidential election year, trust in nonprofits and corporate philanthropy holds relatively steady.

Q12. How much do you trust nonprofit organizations to do what is right? Base Size n=3,000, Q18: How much do you trust corporate foundations to do what is right? Base Size: n=1,004, Q22: How much do you trust private foundations to do what is right? Base Size: n=1010, Q26: How much do you trust high net worth individuals engaged in philanthropy to do what is right? Base Size: n=986, Q30: How much do you trust the following institutions to do what is right? Base Size n=3,000





TRUST IN NONPROFITS
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Current Issues & Divisions



Americans are worried about the future of the country, with concerns focusing on pocketbook and quality of life issues.

74%

Are worried about the future direction of the United States



Q29: Thinking about the next 12 months, how do you feel about the direction of the United States? Base sizes: General Population (n=3000)
Q31: Out of the following issues facing our country, which are you most concerned about? Please rank your top five issues from the list, with "1" being the issue you are most concerned about.

TOP AREAS OF CONCERN - % Selected in Top 5





Economic uncertainty is not just a nation-wide concern, but also one that hits close to the individual.



**Female, 42,
Republican**

These prices these days are so high that it affects how I feed my family, how I get to work daily, my housing, etc. It's becoming quite expensive to just live life!!! The things I listed above, they are necessary because it is how I get by!!! We have to combat this inflation because the struggle is real especially for the middle class and below!"



**Male, 22,
Democrat**

Inflation has been a common issue through my entire life and it just seems ridiculous that prices vastly increase compared to people's wages."



**Male, 29,
Democrat**

I believe the United States has a huge growing debt issue that doesn't seem like it's slowing down anytime soon. Doesn't seem to be a real plan to get ahead of it. I believe it will take a combination of raising taxes and government spending cuts."



**Male, 28,
Republican**

Economic issues are always relevant...The United States is an incredibly wealthy nation, but the government spending has been out of control for quite some time. Something needs to be done to reverse the trend of growing debt."



**Male, 24,
Republican**

Prices continue to rise and companies are not keeping up with the market on how they pay their employees. Our dollars are losing value by the day and it is a major concern."

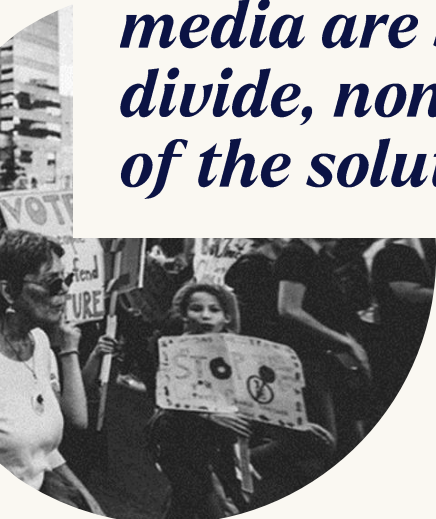


**Male, 49,
Democrat**

Housing prices have greatly exceeded salaries and even rents have become unaffordable."



Worry is high about societal division and a lack of national unity; while big business, government, and media are seen as worsening the divide, nonprofits are seen as part of the solution.



94%
Are worried about growing divisions and a lack of national unity



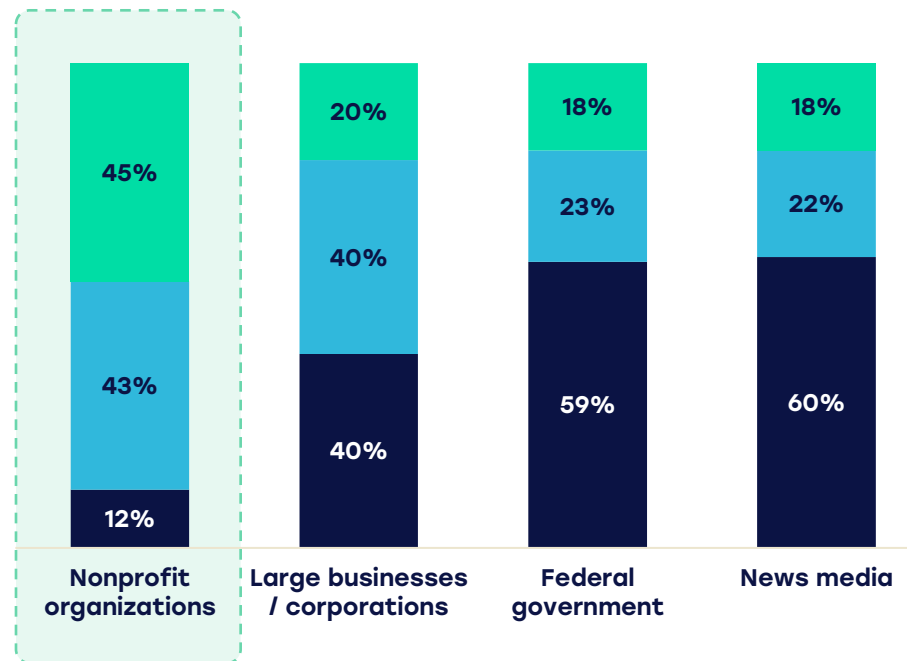
Q35. Many people say the United States is more divided today than at any point since the Civil War. How worried are you about growing divisions and a lack of national unity? Base size: General Population (n=3000)

Q36. Thinking about the divisions in America today, do you believe the following institutions are generally making things better or worse? Base size: General Population (n=3000)

● MAKING THINGS BETTER ● NO IMPACT ● MAKING THINGS WORSE

PERCEIVED IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONS ON NATIONAL DIVISIONS

Shown: % Selected Net: Somewhat/Much Better; No Impact; Net: Somewhat/Much Worse





Regardless of the November election outcome, respondents believe the divide will continue to worsen.



**Male, 24,
Republican**

The United States today seems to be more worried about arguing their sides than they are about coming together and working to improve our country as a whole. Especially with an election year coming up, I am afraid we are going to see a mass divide and neighbors turning against neighbors.”



**Male, 63,
Democrat**

I am somewhat concerned because of the ways the government is handling crisis in the United States. They are pushing their own party's agendas over the best interests of the country.”



**Male, 55,
Republican**

Common ground has disappeared. What one side stands for, the other opposes on almost every policy or event that occurs.”



**Male, 28,
Republican**

I think the political climate over the past 10-15 years has caused great division in this country. With the upcoming election appearing to be a repeat of the last election, it's hard to imagine an outcome that does not lead to even greater division.”



**Female, 41,
Democrat**

I am worried about the future as far as how we will move forward when so much of the political landscape is about preventing the other side from getting what they want and not focusing on what the people need.”



**Male, 25,
Republican**

There's a great divide in this country along party lines and neither group wants to come together to discuss a solution and find ways to bridge the gap.”



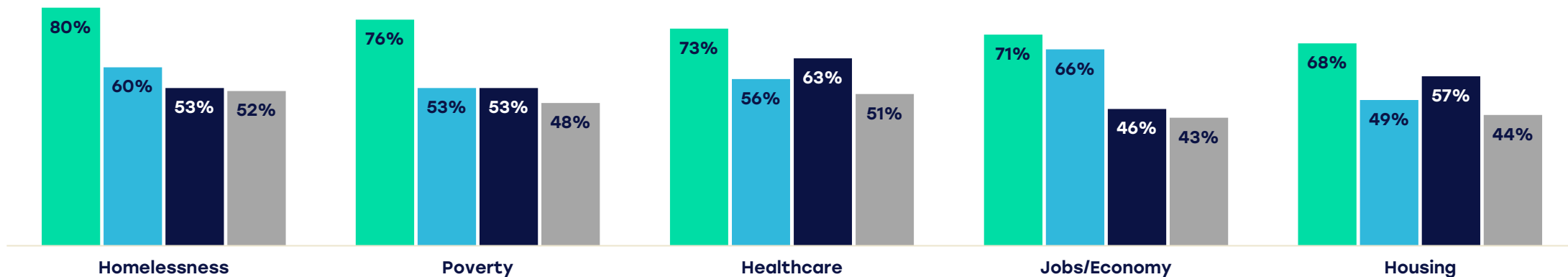
On the pocketbook and quality of life issues the public cares most about, confidence is highest in nonprofits to make a difference.

Confidence substantially outpaces the other three major institutions on all issues except for the economy overall, where business is close behind.

● NONPROFITS ● BUSINESS ● GOVERNMENT ● MEDIA

CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS TO MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE ON ISSUES

Shown: % Selected Net: Moderately/Very/Extremely Confident



Q32: You mentioned you are concerned about _____. How confident are you that the following institutions can make a positive difference on this issue? Base size: General Population (n=3000)

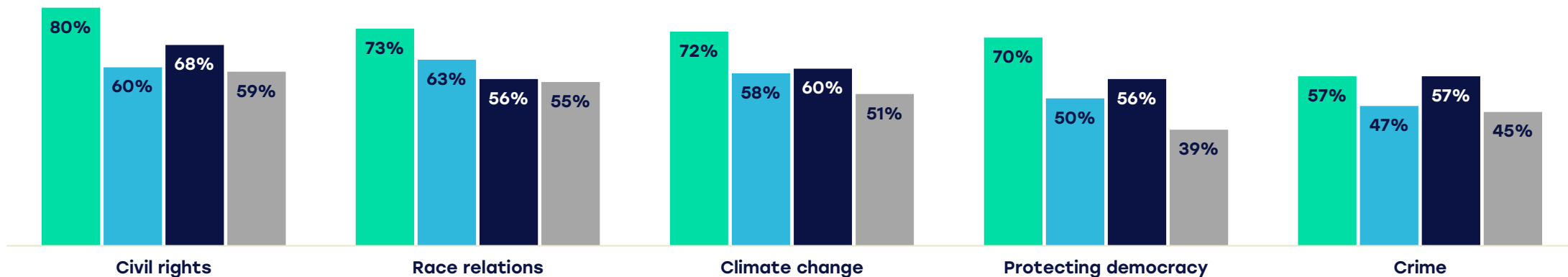


Nonprofits also lead in confidence to address the most divisive and politically polarized societal issues.

● NONPROFITS ● BUSINESS ● GOVERNMENT ● MEDIA

CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS TO MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE ON ISSUES

Shown: % Selected Net: Moderately/Very/Extremely Confident



Q32: You mentioned you are concerned about _____. How confident are you that the following institutions can make a positive difference on this issue?
Base size: General Population (n=3000)



Americans look to nonprofits as their last hope after seeing no positive impact from government or big business on the issues they care about.

94% of respondents are worried about the current societal divide in the U.S. and their future outlooks are not optimistic. The institutions that normally make impacts in their issues of top concern (with inflation / rising cost of living currently number one) like the federal government and big businesses / corporations have not been able to make change, resulting in double digit drops in trust this year.

When looking to solutions to bridge this divide, **nonprofits are the institution respondents trust the most to make a change** (45% of respondents believe nonprofits are making things better). And with the sustained impacts of their work that respondents see and believe in to help those in need, nonprofits are one of the few societal institutions that many believe can still give them the hope they need for a better future.

Q31: Out of the following issues facing our country, which are you most concerned about? Please rank your top five issues from the list, with "1" being the issue you are most concerned about. Base size: General Population (n=3000)

Q35. Many people say the United States is more divided today than at any point since the Civil War. How worried are you about growing divisions and a lack of national unity? Base size: General Population (n=3000)

Q36. Thinking about the divisions in America today, do you believe the following institutions are generally making things better or worse? Base size: General Population (n=3000)

Quotes are sourced from the April 2024 Qualitative Board discussion



Male, 63, Democrat

Nonprofits can have an effect on these [societal] issues by focusing on the people affected and giving them the resources and help they need. I think they have a huge potential impact [on] people's lives."



Female, 32, Democrat

Nonprofits exist to fill the gaps of greed that have limited anchor institutions like government to serve all the people."



Male, 69, Republican

I believe nonprofits would [be] more efficient in some areas such [as] helping those in need due to inflation / the cost of living."



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Nonprofit Civic Engagement

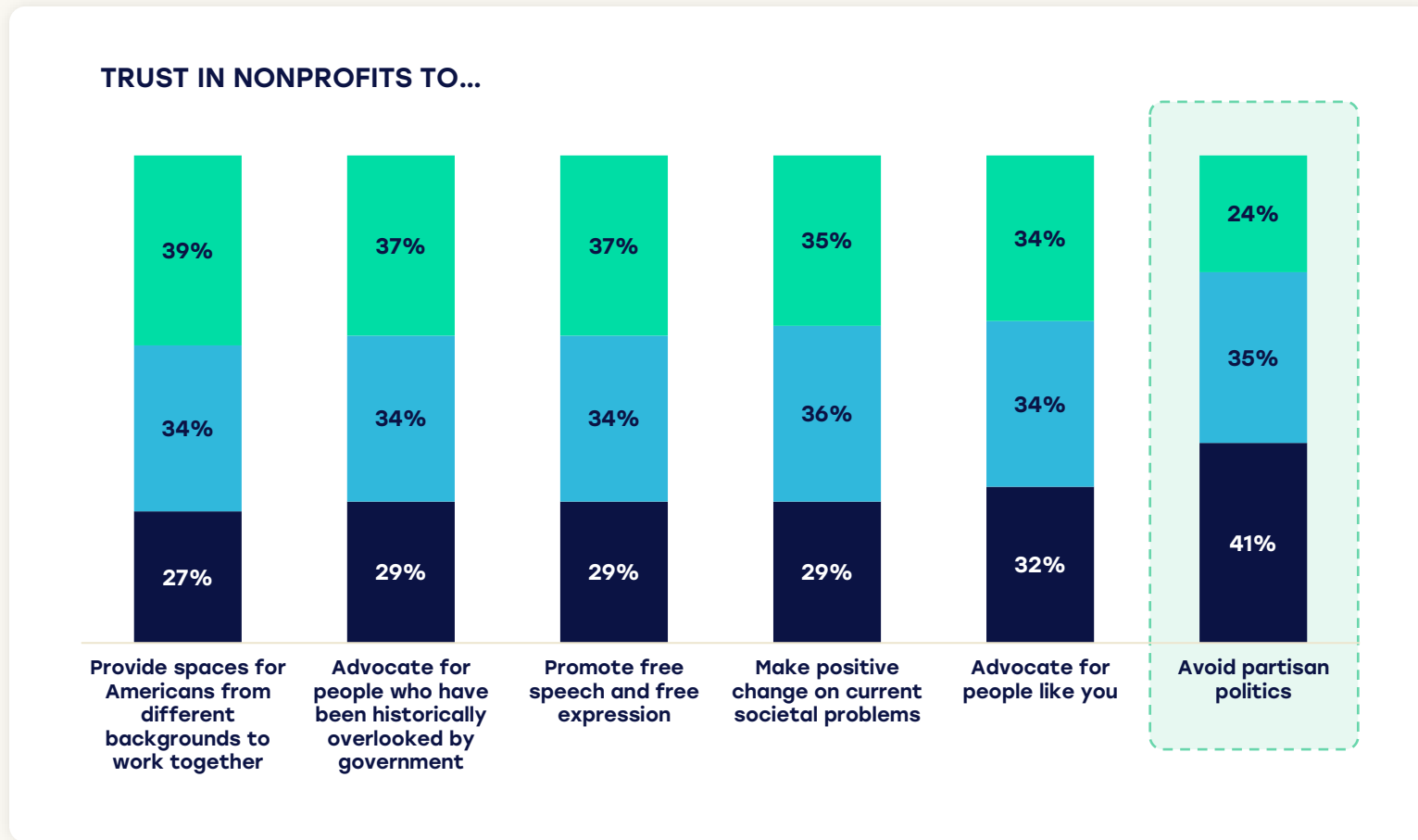




Trust in nonprofits softens considerably when it comes to advocacy-related actions.

A plurality (41%) do not trust nonprofits to avoid partisan politics.

● HIGH TRUST ● NEUTRAL/DON'T KNOW ● LOW TRUST



Q36A: How much do you trust nonprofit organizations to do each of the following?
Base size: General Population (n=3000)

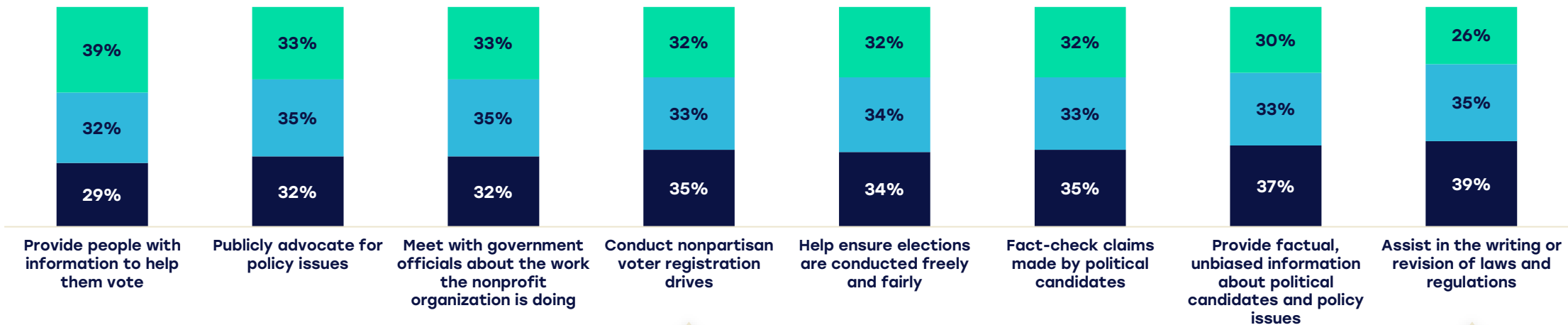


There is substantial skepticism of election-related nonprofit activities.

● HIGH TRUST ● NEUTRAL/DON'T KNOW ● LOW TRUST

Gen Z respondents are significantly less likely to trust nonprofits to provide factual, unbiased information about candidates and issues (40% low trust) compared to Boomers (33%) and Silent Generation (25%).

TRUST IN NONPROFITS: ELECTIONS AND PUBLIC POLICY ACTIVITIES



Low-income respondents are significantly less likely to trust nonprofits to conduct nonpartisan voter registration drives (44% low trust) compared to mid (32%) and high-income respondents (30%).

Black respondents are significantly more likely to trust nonprofits to assist in the writing or revision of laws and regulations (34% high trust) compared to White respondents (25% high trust).

Q37: How much do you trust nonprofit organizations to take the following actions related to elections and government policy?
Base size: General Population (n=3000)



Respondents believe nonprofit organizations and philanthropic foundations becoming engaged in politics is disingenuous to their stated purpose and mission.



**Male, 55,
Republican**

I only see [nonprofits] operating within the framework of civil rights and civic issues as the culprits in this battle. They have stoked issues that divide us, which is all driven by money and power.”



**Female, 56,
Republican**

I believe their giving is more politically related... they give money to groups but with a stipulation of using the money for the donors’ own agenda or interests which can be a detriment to our society.”



**Male, 43,
Democrat**

Being that these foundations have massive amounts of financial resources and can influence political parties, there is a lack of trust here. Political influence may allow limited ethical guidelines around operations or accountability to the leaders of these foundations.”



**Female, 32,
Democrat**

Nonprofits, especially national ones, are working to keep a problem (around) enough to keep their jobs. I think the country is divided because of greed and capitalism. We are so busy just trying to survive that big business, nonprofits and government can take advantage of all of us”



**Female, 42,
Republican**

I don't trust nonprofits to conduct any sort of nonpartisan voter registration. I don't trust it because in today's climate, it seems that everyone takes sides regardless of how much they might claim to not take sides.”



**Male, 48,
Republican**

Given the divisiveness of our politics, lax election laws in many jurisdictions, and the winner take all game of elections, my trust in "nonpartisan" voter registration efforts on NP is pretty low. There's incentive to do everything possible for your "tribe" and that opens the door for malfeasance.”



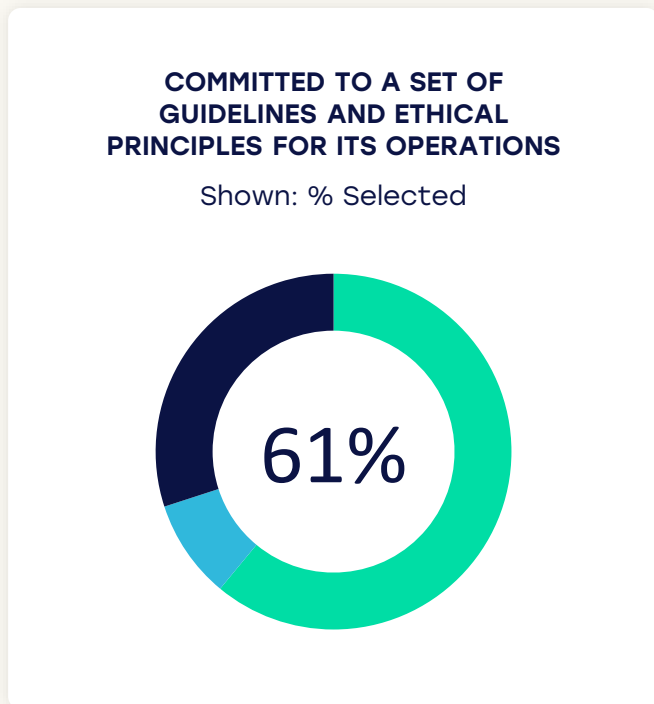
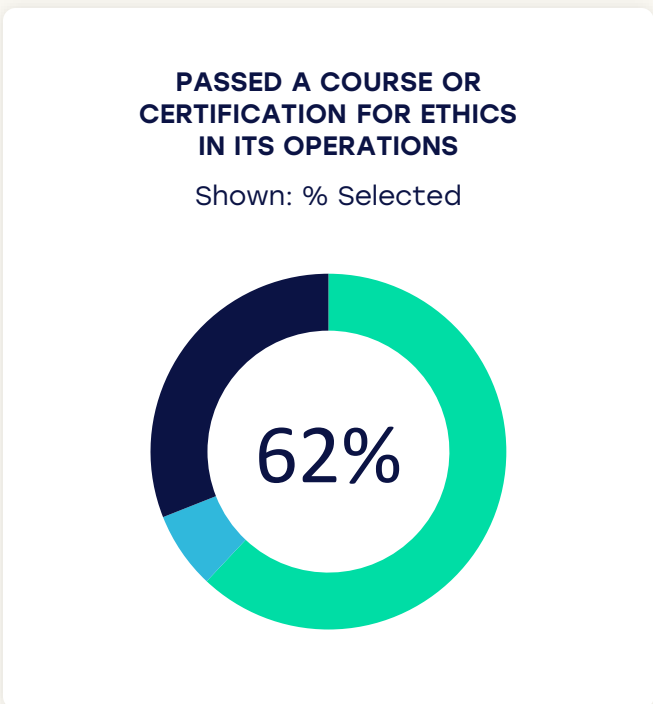
TRUST IN NONPROFITS
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Building Trust



Committing to a set of organizational guidelines or ethical principals can build trust in nonprofits.

● INCREASE TRUST ● DECREASE TRUST ● NO DIFFERENCE



“ Female, 46, Democrat

To increase trust, financial transparency is a must but most importantly I want to 'see' your work. I want to see the nonprofit doing the work they claim to do.”

“ Male, 54, Republican

A nonprofit adhering to guidelines in ethics for its operations would impact my trust tremendously.”

“ Female, 58, Democrat

Greater financial transparency would make me more likely to contribute to or think positively of this organization.”

Q16. How would hearing that a nonprofit organization took the following actions impact your trust in it? Base Size: General Population (n=3000)
Quotes are sourced from the April 2024 Qualitative Board discussion



First-hand experience with nonprofit organizations can also increase trust. Volunteering experiences create more favorable views of nonprofits.

Nearly 3 in 4 respondents have volunteered with a nonprofit within the last few years, with over 34% volunteering within the last month.

79%

Of respondents said their previous volunteering experiences made their views of nonprofit organizations more favorable

88%

Of respondents who have volunteered said they would do it again

45%

Of respondents chose to volunteer because they wanted to give back to their community



**Male, 28,
Republican**

I most recently volunteered with Habitat for Humanity. We were building a house for a family in need. It was a very cool experience because I was able to actually see the progress being made and could easily understand how my actions were helping the family in need. I felt more strongly about the nonprofit than I did prior to volunteering because I better understood their work and mission.”



**Male, 27,
Democrat**

I had a rewarding and fulfilling experience, I felt a sense of purpose and joy in knowing that I am making positive impact on the lives of others. It impacted my opinion of the organization positively.”

Q4. When was the last time you volunteered? Base size: General Population (n=3000)

Q7. How did your experience volunteering impact your views of nonprofit organizations, generally speaking? Base size: Those who have volunteered for a nonprofit (n=1543)

Q10. Still thinking about the last time you volunteered, would you do it again? Base size: Those who have volunteered (n=2194)

Quotes are sourced from the April 2024 Qualitative Board discussion



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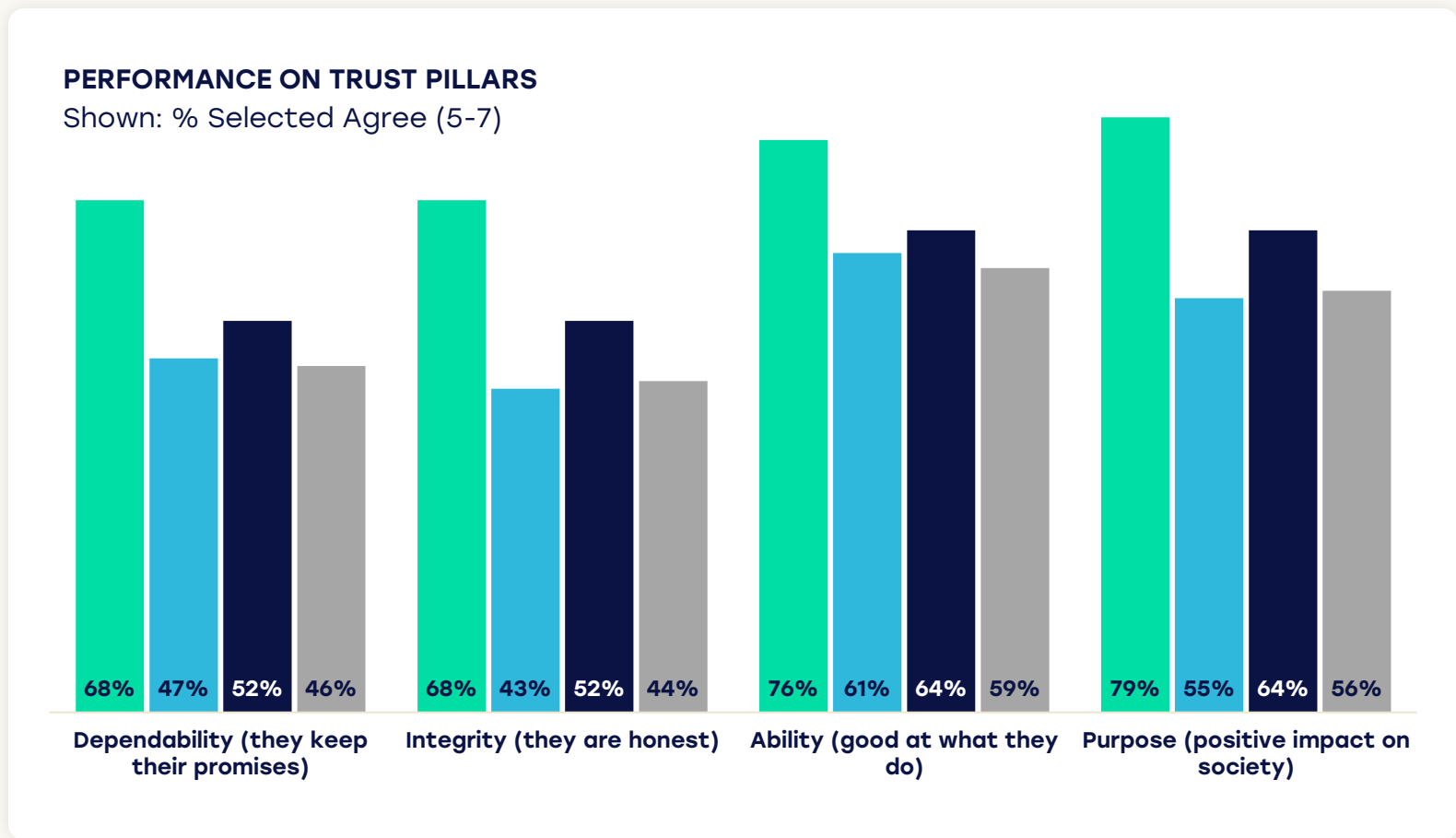
Appendix: Additional Data



Trying to have a positive impact on society and being good at what they do score especially high for nonprofits, resulting in the perceived impact nonprofits can have on issues that currently divide the U.S.

Nonprofits score higher than various philanthropic entities across all Trust pillars

● NONPROFITS ● CORPORATE FOUNDATIONS ● PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS ● HIGH NET WORTH INDIVIDUALS



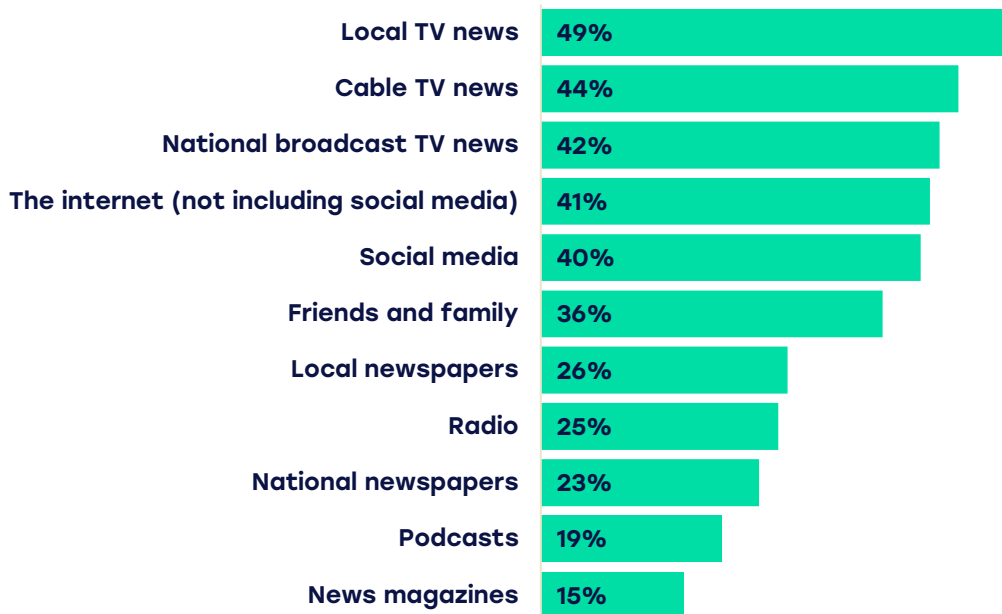
Q14/20/24/28: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about nonprofit organizations/corporate foundations/private foundations/high net worth individuals engaged in philanthropy? Base size: General Population (n=3000)



There is little consistency between most-used media sources and most-trusted media sources.

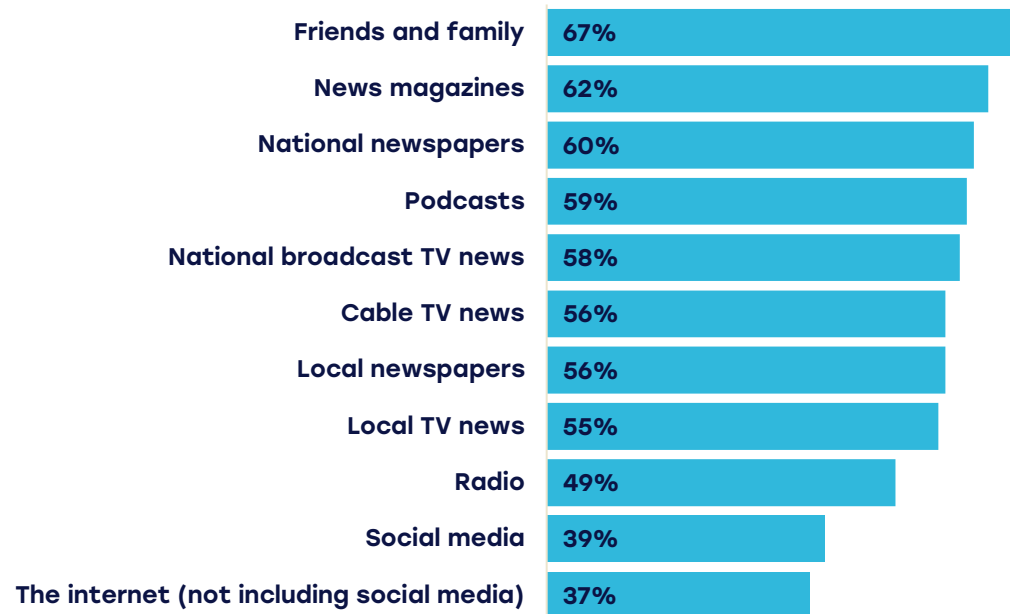
MEDIA USAGE

Shown: % Selected



MEDIA TRUST

Shown: % Selected High Trust (7-9)

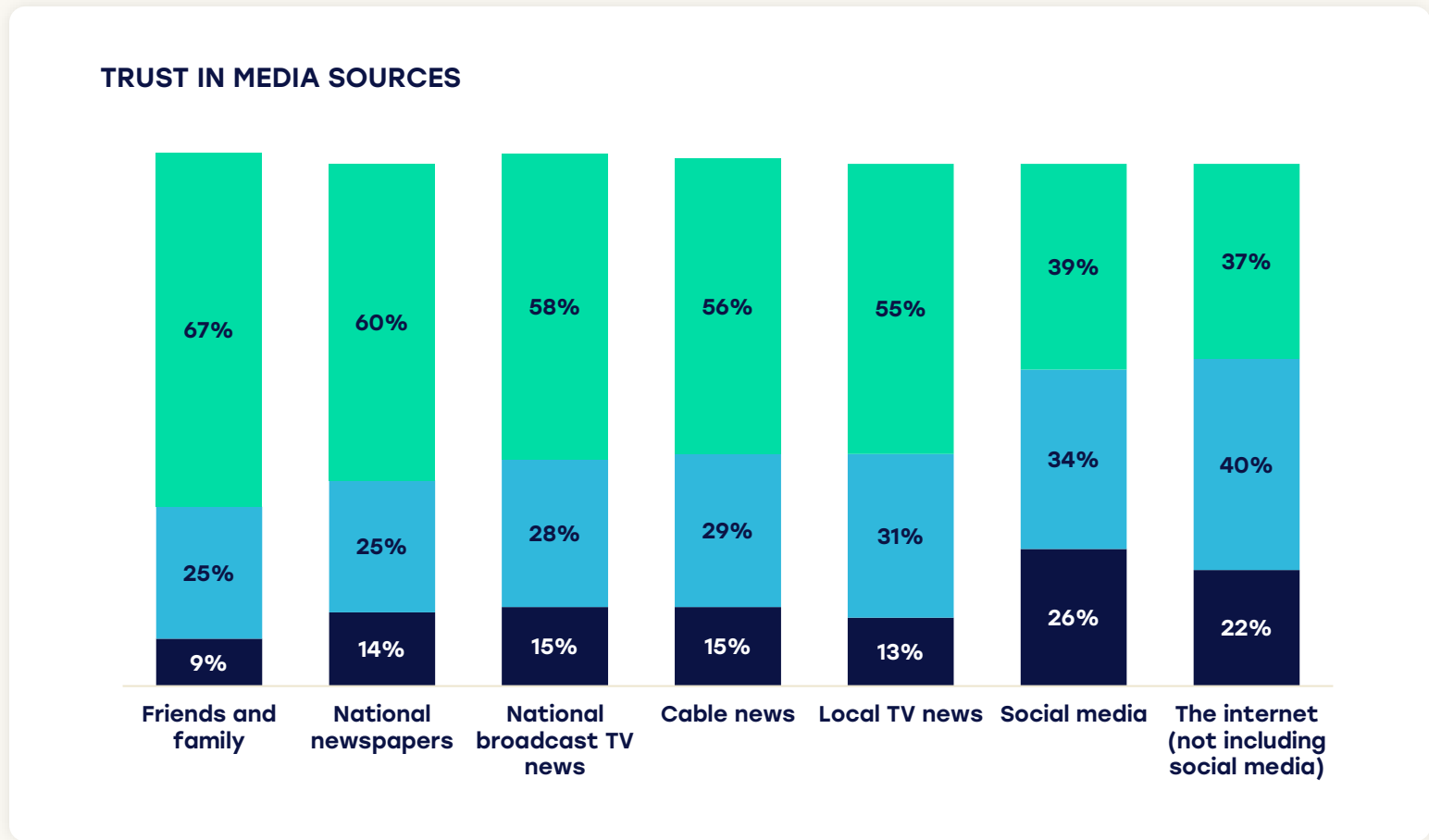


Q39: Which of the following sources do you regularly use for news and information about politics and current events?
Q41: How much do you trust the information about politics and current events you get from the sources you use?
Base size: General Population (n=3000)



Social media and the internet garner the lowest trust across media sources, but are still used regularly as a news source by four in ten respondents.

● HIGH TRUST ● NEUTRAL/DON'T KNOW ● LOW TRUST

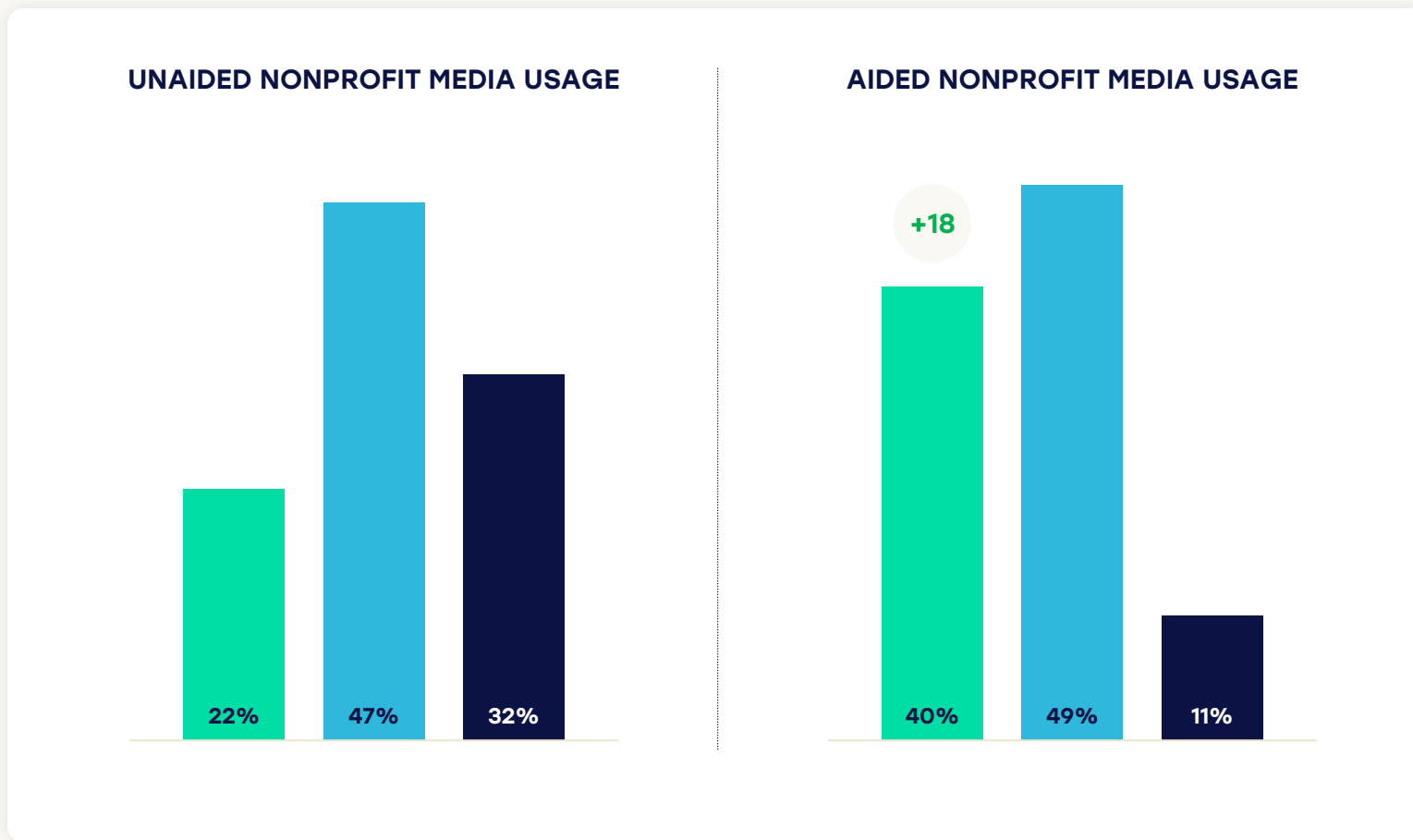


Q41: How much do you trust the information about politics and current events you get from the sources you use?
Base size: General Population (n=3000)



Unaided awareness of nonprofit media outlets is low, but once prompted, two in five regularly get news from a nonprofit media outlet.

● YES ● NO ● DON'T KNOW



Q42. Most news outlets in the United States operate as businesses for profit. However, there are some that operate as nonprofits, with funding coming from donations from the public and grants from charitable foundations. To the best of your knowledge, do you regularly get news from any nonprofit media? Q43. PBS, NPR, the Associated Press, C-Span, Wikipedia, AARP, and National Geographic are all examples of nonprofit media outlets. Knowing this, do you regularly get news from any nonprofit media? Base sizes: General Population (n=3000)



While one in three respondents trust nonprofit media more than for-profit, one in three say they see no difference.



Male, 36, Democrat

I trust nonprofit media more as they are not incentivized to create stories by donors.”

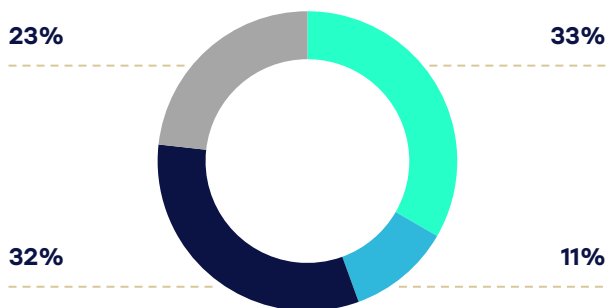


Male, 28, Republican

I trust nonprofits more because they would give the truth with no influence, hopefully, which in turn would give the people listening their own ability to make unaltered opinions and suggestions.”

- NONPROFIT MEDIA
- FOR-PROFIT MEDIA
- NO DIFFERENCE
- UNSURE

TRUST IN MEDIA
Shown: % Selected



Female, 41, Democrat

I’m skeptical about most sources of media nowadays. I have to consider the source and their funding to determine if I think it’s valid or biased information.”



Female, 42, Republican

I don't put much stock in nonprofit news outlets like NPR or the Associated Press. They are right up there with the CNNs and Fox News of the world in terms of emotional reporting instead of just sticking with the facts.”

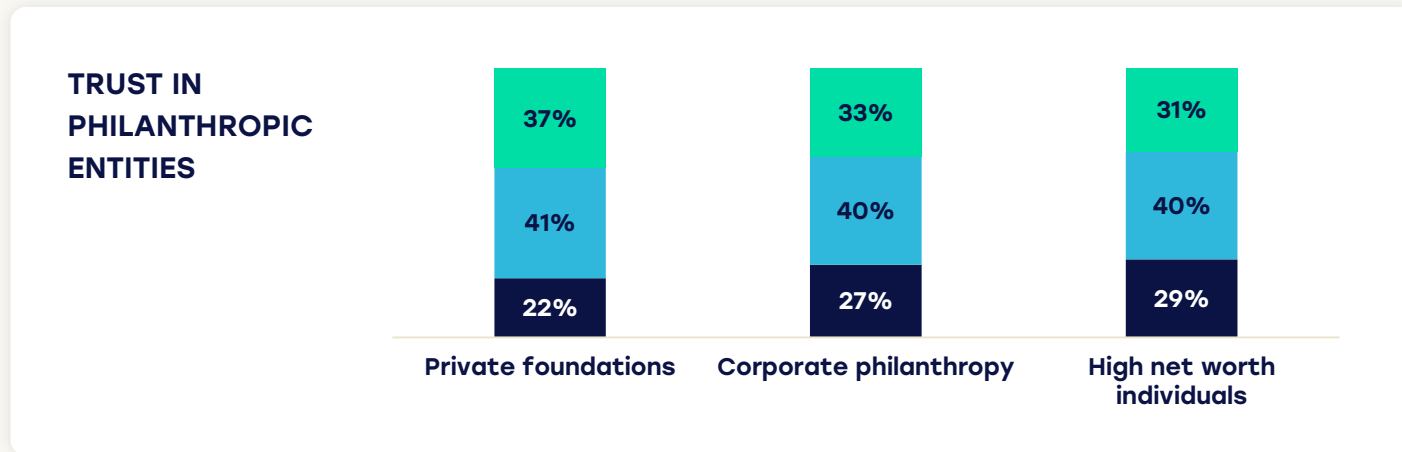
Q44. Generally speaking, what kind of media do you trust more for information about politics and current events? Base sizes: General Population (n=3000)
Quotes are sourced from the April 2024 Qualitative Board discussion



Foundations associated with large corporations or high net worth individuals inspire more distrust.

The high-profile status of those corporations and individuals causes distrust because respondents believe them to be out of touch with the general public

● HIGH TRUST ● NEUTRAL/DON'T KNOW ● LOW TRUST



“ Female, 37, Independent

Sometimes I worry it's only to make themselves (high net worth individuals engaged in philanthropy) look better and they do it just to save face.”

“ Male, 37, Unsure

Corporations tend to do what is best for their own profit and don't really care about the little guys.”

“ Female, 19, Other

These are major corporations. I would seriously have to be stupid to think their leaders cared about anything more than money.”

“ Female, 42, Independent

Something about the word 'private' makes me question it.”

“ Female, 29, Unsure

Money and fame tend to corrupt even the most well meaning of people.”

Q18: How much do you trust corporate foundations to do what is right? Base Size: n=1,004,
 Q22: How much do you trust private foundations to do what is right? Base Size: n=1010,
 Q26: How much do you trust high net worth individuals engaged in philanthropy to do what is right? Base Size: n=986,
 Q19B/23B/27B. Why do you not trust corporate philanthropy/private foundations/high net worth individuals to do what is right? Base Sizes: n=275, n=218, n=284



Overall respondents felt foundation messaging was clear and easy to understand. Specificity and transparency of finances was still desired.

A. “Foundations enable individuals, families, and corporations to donate more money to a wider variety of causes, particularly small, local charities.”



**Female, 24,
Democrat**

I think what is believable when it is talking about enabling people to donate to a wider variety of causes. Oftentimes people don't even know about a charity or organization until it is shown to them through ads or a foundation. I think it can bring so much more awareness to each cause.”

B. “Foundations serve as a fair platform to enable people to invest in organizations and the people closest to problems facing local communities.”



**Male, 24,
Republican**

I want to see and know exactly how this donated money is being allocated and spent. The people donating deserve to have a more detailed description and list of where the money is going or what is done with it.”

C. “Foundation investment in nonprofit programs ensure every member of a community can get the help he or she needs, not just those who are a member of the voting majority.”



**Male, 68,
Democrat**

I think the language is clear, but... ‘...every member of the community can get the help he or she needs..’ would cause anyone who has actually worked on front-line projects to roll their eyes.”

D. “Foundation investments enable people and nonprofits closest to the problem in local communities to devise effective solutions, rather than relying on one-size-fits-all government programs.”



**Female, 53,
Republican**

I think D is also pretty credible because people closest to the problem in communities would probably be able to tackle the problem better than a large governmental group.”

Quotes are sourced from the April 2024 Qualitative Board discussion



While many agreed with parts of the opposition statement, the “elites” word choice was particularly polarizing.

“Many foundations are run by elites that do not understand everyday Americans or their communities. They unfairly benefit from preferential tax treatment that allows them to influence public decisions even though they can’t be voted out of office.”



**Female, 46,
Democrat**

I agree with [this] statement because I don't have proof that these foundations are successful in their missions. I remain skeptical because of the negative press some foundations receive. Saying foundations 'do not understand everyday Americans' made me nod my head in agreement. I also nodded at the last statement about tax treatment because I suspect that's why a lot of foundations are created.”



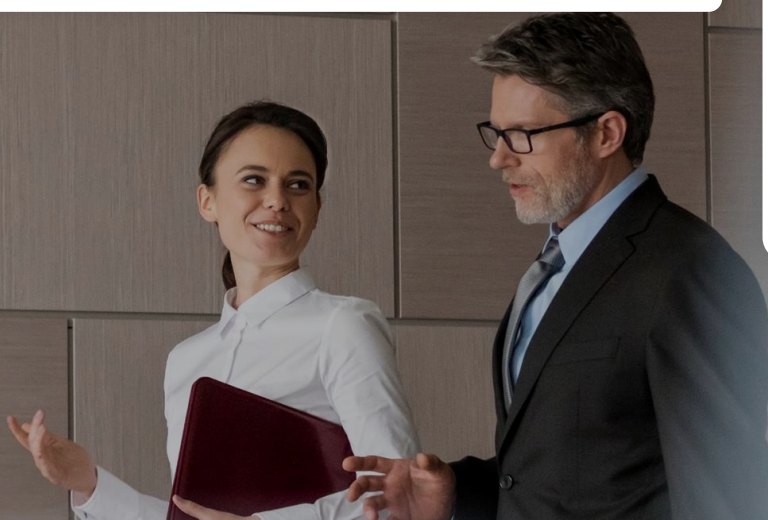
**Male, 35,
Republican**

This is a pretty negative statement. Some charities run by 'elites' are likely tax write offs and really aren't being done out of the goodness of their heart. But some are.”



**Male, 24,
Republican**

This sentence seems very opinionated and comes from a distrustful / angry source. Yes, a lot of the foundations are run by elites, but that does not necessarily mean that they do not understand the every American. Whether they choose to acknowledge American opinions is a different story. The fact that they benefit from preferential tax treatment is true. They do influence public decisions, and occasionally cannot be voted out, but that does not necessarily have to discredit them.”





TRUST IN NONPROFITS
AND PHILANTHROPY

Demographic Cuts: Nonprofit & Philanthropy Trust



NONPROFITS

Income & Education

Trust grew across all income and education groups.

● LIGHTER COLORS INDICATE 2020 - 2023

● DARKER COLORS INDICATE 2024

EDUCATION

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

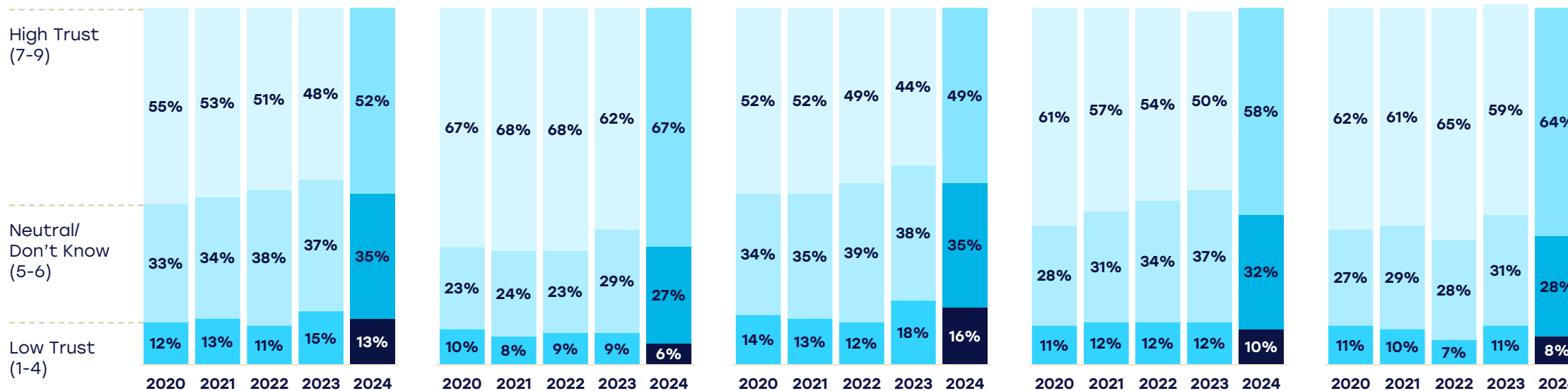
Less than a Bachelor's degree

Bachelor's degree or more

Less than \$35,000

\$35,000 to less than \$75,000

\$75,000 or more



Q12: How much do you trust nonprofit organizations to do what is right? Nonprofit 2020 Base Size n=3000, 2021 n=5000, 2022 n=3015, 2023 n=3,000, 2024 n=3000



PHILANTHROPY

Income & Education

● LIGHTER COLORS INDICATE 2020 - 2023 ● DARKER COLORS INDICATE 2024

EDUCATION

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

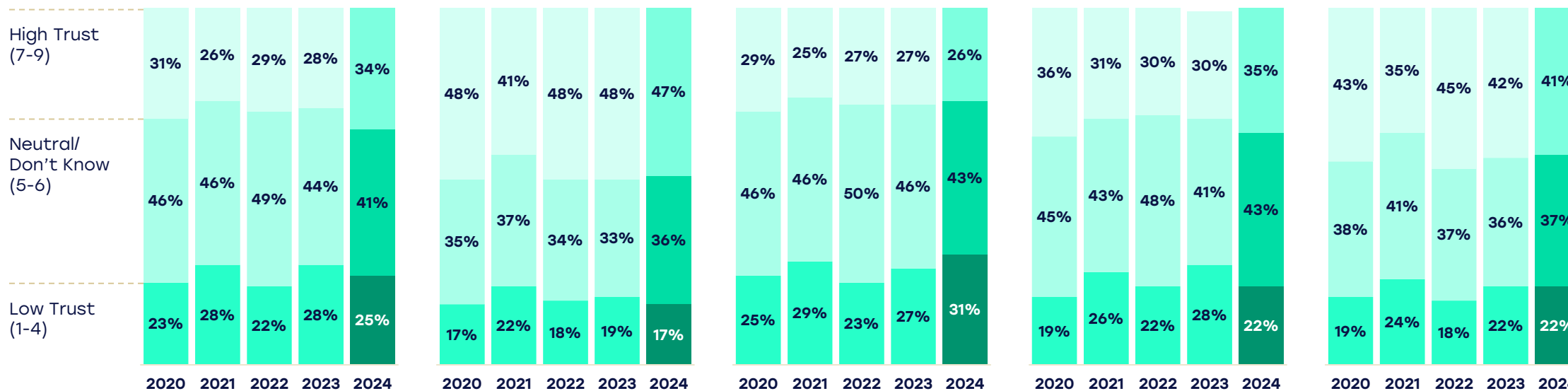
Less than a Bachelor's degree

Bachelor's degree or more

Less than \$35,000

\$35,000 to less than \$75,000

\$75,000 or more



Q18/2226. How much do you trust companies that engage in [corporate philanthropy/private foundations/high net worth individuals] to do what is right? Philanthropy 2020 Base size n=3000, 2021 n=3000, 2022 n=3015, 2023 n=3000, 2024 n=3000



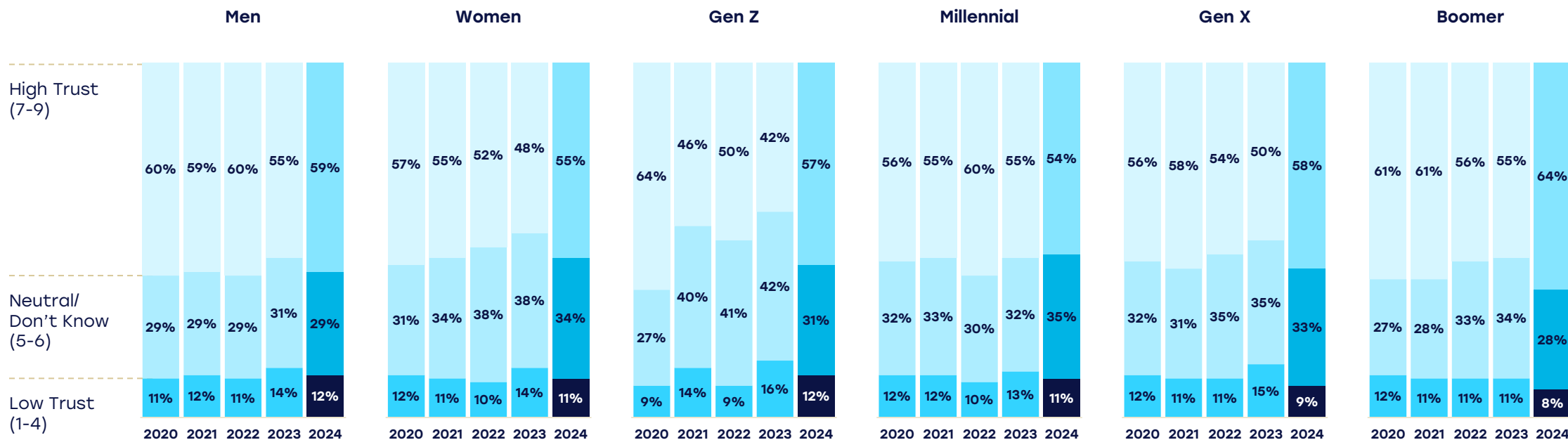
NONPROFITS

Gender & Generation

● LIGHTER COLORS INDICATE 2020 - 2023 ● DARKER COLORS INDICATE 2024

GENDER

GENERATION



Q12: How much do you trust nonprofit organizations to do what is right? Nonprofit 2020
Base Size n=3000, 2021 n=5000, 2022 n=3015, 2023 n=3000, 2024 n=3000



PHILANTHROPY

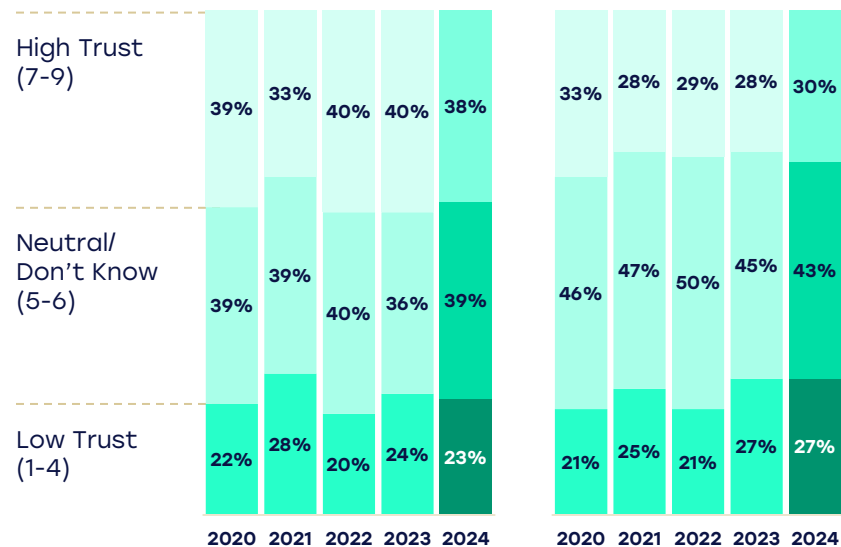
Gender & Generation

● LIGHTER COLORS INDICATE 2020 - 2023 ● DARKER COLORS INDICATE 2024

GENDER

Men

Women



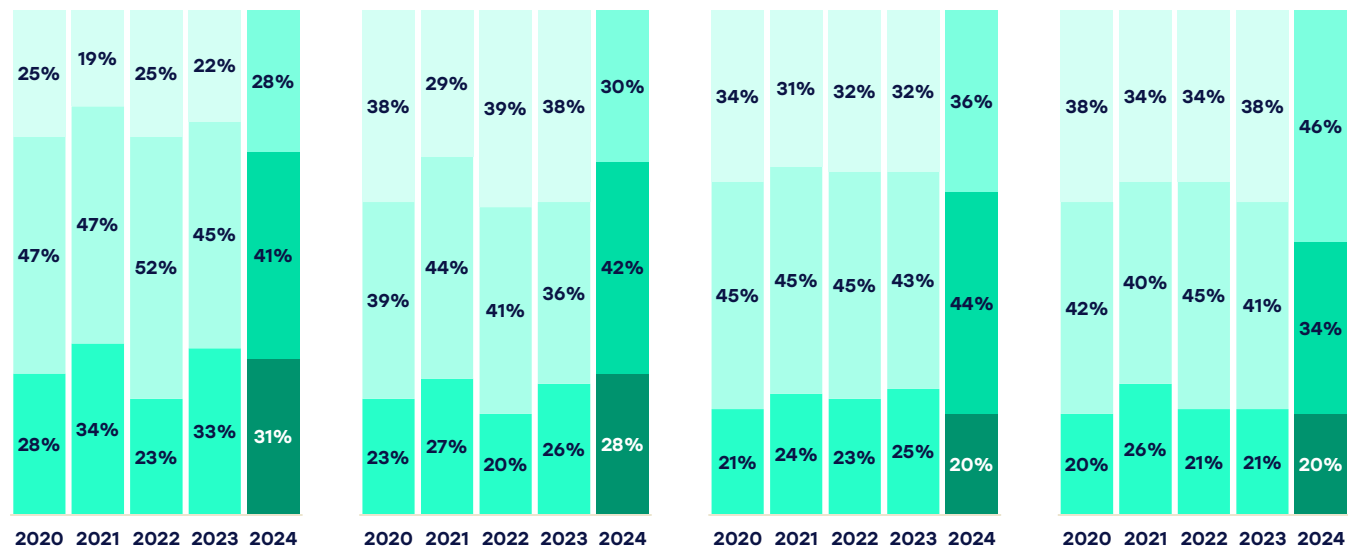
GENERATION

Gen Z

Millennial

Gen X

Boomer



Q18/2226. How much do you trust companies that engage in [corporate philanthropy/private foundations/high net worth individuals] to do what is right? Philanthropy 2020 Base size n=3000, 2021 n=3000, 2022 n=3015, 2023 n=3000, 2024 n=3000



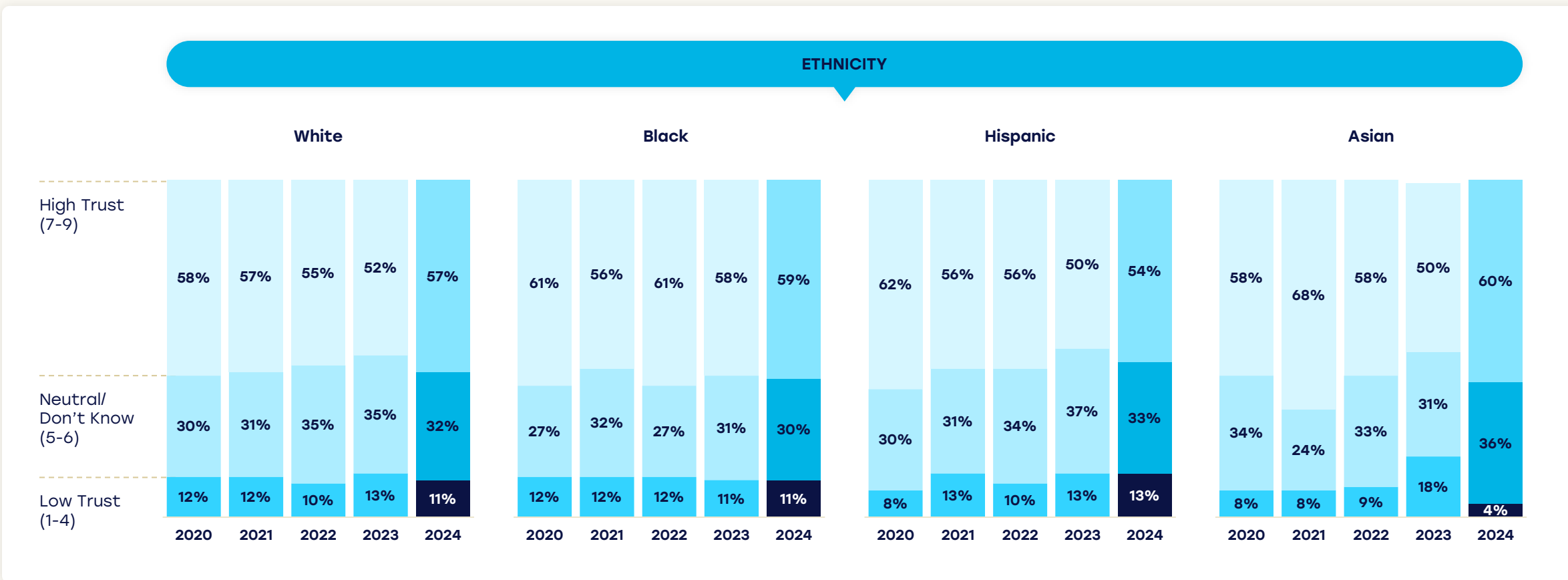
NONPROFITS

Ethnicity

All racial groups reported increases in nonprofit trust this year.

● LIGHTER COLORS INDICATE 2020 - 2023

● DARKER COLORS INDICATE 2024



Q16: How much do you trust nonprofit organizations to do what is right? Nonprofit 2020
Base Size n=3000, 2021 n=5000, 2022 n=3015, 2023 n=3000, 2024 n=3000

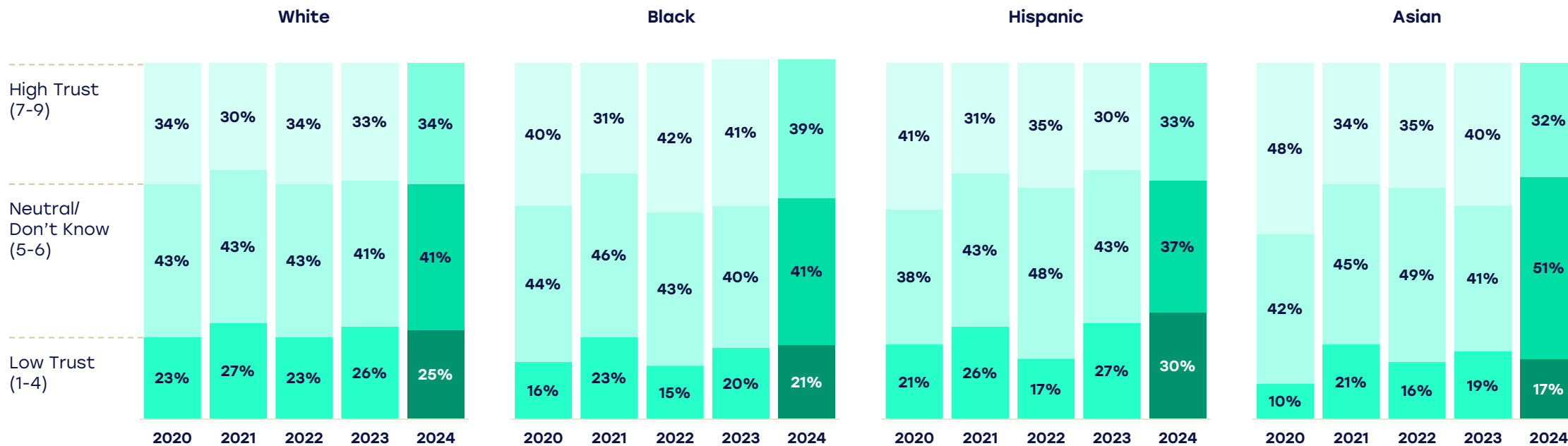


PHILANTHROPY

Ethnicity

● LIGHTER COLORS INDICATE 2020 - 2023 ● DARKER COLORS INDICATE 2024

ETHNICITY



Q18/2226. How much do you trust companies that engage in [corporate philanthropy/private foundations/high net worth individuals] to do what is right? Philanthropy 2020 Base size n=3000, 2021 n=3000, 2022 n=3015, 2023 n=3000, 2024 n=3000



NONPROFITS

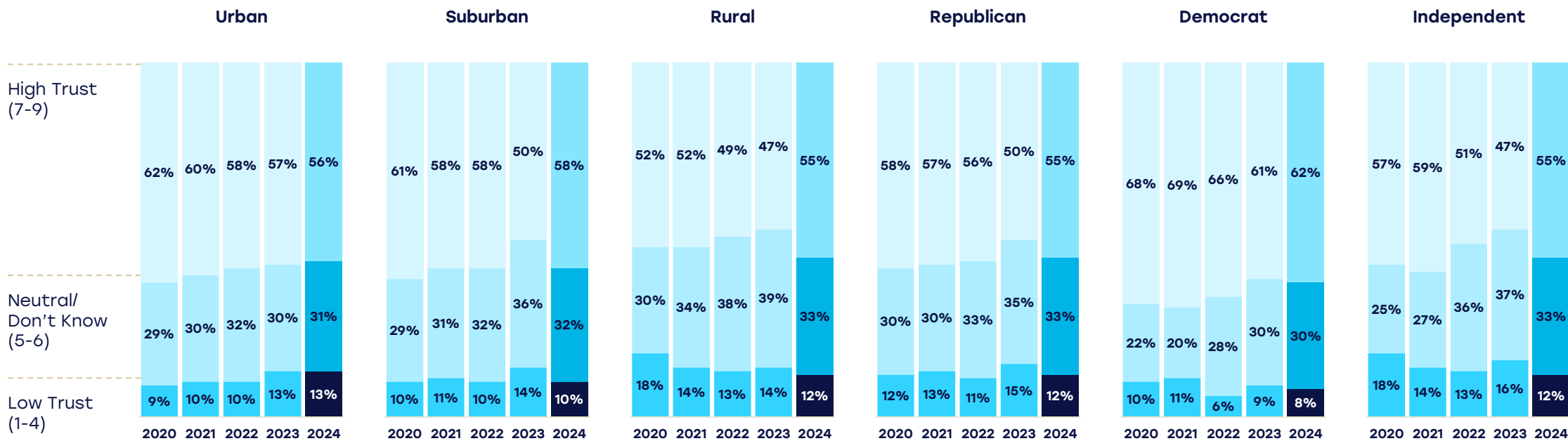
Urbanicity & Party ID

Nonprofit trust grew among Republicans and Independents more than among Democrats.

● LIGHTER COLORS INDICATE 2020 - 2023 ● DARKER COLORS INDICATE 2024

URBANICITY

POLITICAL AFFILIATION



Q12: How much do you trust nonprofit organizations to do what is right? Nonprofit 2020
Base Size n=3,000, 2021 n=5,000, 2022 n=3,015, 2023 n=3000, 2024 n=3000



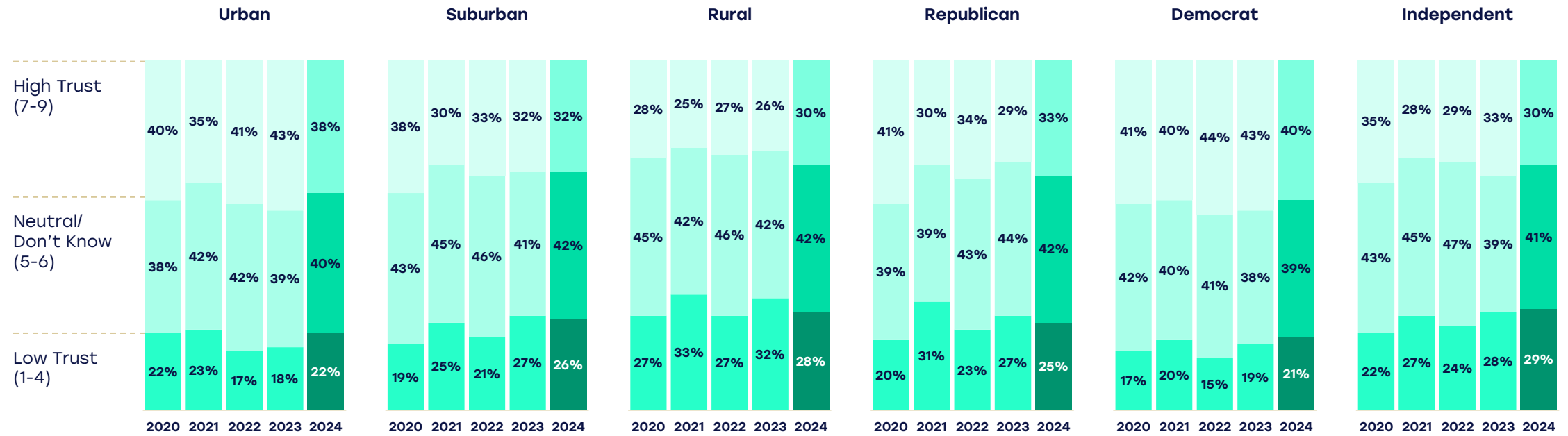
PHILANTHROPY

Urbanicity & Party ID

● LIGHTER COLORS INDICATE 2020 - 2023 ● DARKER COLORS INDICATE 2024

URBANICITY

POLITICAL AFFILIATION



Q18/2226. How much do you trust companies that engage in [corporate philanthropy/private foundations/high net worth individuals] to do what is right? Philanthropy 2020 Base size n=3000, 2021 n=3000, 2022 n=3015, 2023 n=3000, 2024 n=3000



NONPROFITS

High-education, high-income, and liberal Americans continue to report higher than average trust in nonprofit organizations.

NONPROFITS	%-AGE POINT DIFFERENCE FROM AVERAGE
College-educated	+10
Household income \$75k+	+7
Liberal politics	+6
Democrat voter	+5
Asian American	+3
Men	+2
Millennials	+1
GENERAL POPULATION TRUST	57%
Women	-2
Conservative politics	-2
Gen X	-3
Hispanic American	-3
Less than college education	-5
Household income <\$35k	-8
Apolitical / other politics	-11

Q18/2226. How much do you trust companies that engage in [corporate philanthropy/private foundations/high net worth individuals] to do what is right? Philanthropy 2020 Base size n=3000, 2021 n=3000, 2022 n=3015, 2023 n=3000, 2024 n=3000



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