

# Champaign Park District Community Survey

July 2017

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**CHAMPAIGN**  
**PARK DISTRICT**



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# **Executive Summary**

## **Champaign Park District Participation**

More than 3/4 of all respondents had visited CPD parks and/or natural areas in the last year, and 58% had been to the Virginia Theater at least once.

Those who are using parks and natural areas use them pretty regularly; 38% visit them more than twice a month, on average, and an additional 22% visit at least once a month.

## **Other Recreation, Parks, and Exercise Facilities Participation**

Although only 25-35% of respondents used the YMCA or private/commercial providers in the last year, those who did were frequent users. 55% of YMCA users visited at least twice a month, on average, and 62% of private/commercial facility users visited at least twice a month.

## **Satisfaction**

### *Overall Satisfaction with Champaign Park District*

Overall, the vast majority of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Park District. Satisfaction was particularly high in two areas: 1) general maintenance and care of facilities (89% of active users were satisfied or very satisfied and only 2% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied) and 2) staff and instructors (80% of active users were satisfied or very satisfied and none were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied).

### *Satisfaction with Programs and Events*

Survey respondents gave high marks to special events and to programs and events at the Virginia Theatre. 85% of active users were satisfied or very satisfied with Virginia Theatre concerts/comedy/theatrical events and only 2% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. 84% of active users were satisfied or very satisfied with Virginia Theatre Reel Deals/News-Gazette Film Series and only 1% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. 83% of active users were satisfied or very satisfied with special events and only 1% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Youth Basketball and Senior Programs received lower ratings, although the number of active users in both cases was somewhat small (N=38 for Youth Basketball, N=48 for Senior Programs). 61% of active users were satisfied or very satisfied with Youth Basketball and 11% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. 65% of active users were satisfied or very satisfied with Senior Programs and 10% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

### *Satisfaction with Fees and Services*

In this category, survey respondents were the most satisfied with the in person registration system and Virginia Theater movie tickets. In both of these areas, more than 80% of active users were satisfied/very satisfied (81% for in person registration and 83% for Virginia Theater movie tickets) and very few were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (1% in both cases).

Areas in which respondents were less satisfied include fees and day pass fees at Dodds Tennis Center (46% satisfied/very satisfied, 11% unsatisfied/very unsatisfied); day pass fees at Sholem Aquatic Center (70% satisfied/very satisfied, 13% dissatisfied/very dissatisfied); season pass fees (66% satisfied/very satisfied, 11% dissatisfied/very dissatisfied) at Sholem Aquatic Center; and membership fees at Leonhard Recreation Center fees (66% satisfied/very satisfied, 11% dissatisfied/very dissatisfied).

#### *Satisfaction with Facilities and Amenities*

Overall, respondents were very positive about Park District facilities and amenities. The Virginia Theater received the highest ratings: Of the 213 active users, 94% were satisfied or very satisfied and none were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. In five other cases, none of the active users were dissatisfied with facilities, although they had significantly fewer active users (N=34-42). These facilities are the Douglass Community Center; Douglass Senior Annex; Douglass Park Splash Pad & Playground; Dodds Park Disc Golf Course; and Spalding Skate Park.

#### *Satisfaction with General Maintenance and Care of Facilities*

This is one of two areas where respondents were the most satisfied. Overall, 89% of active users were satisfied or very satisfied with general maintenance and care of facilities and 2% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Active users gave the highest marks to the care of Exteriors of Buildings & Facilities: 88% were satisfied or very satisfied and none were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

One area that may need attention is restrooms: 68% of active users were satisfied/very satisfied, while 13% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

#### *Satisfaction with Staff*

This is the other area where respondents were the most satisfied. Overall, 80% were satisfied or very satisfied with Park District staff and none were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Among the specific staff areas surveyed, the Virginia Theater received the highest marks: 92% of active users were satisfied or very satisfied and none were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

### **Effectiveness**

Unless otherwise noted, the percentages in this section are calculated as the percent of those with an opinion – in other words, those who chose “Don’t Know” were removed.

In most areas, respondents indicated that the Park District was effective or very effective. The strongest areas were:

- Providing a family-friendly atmosphere where all participants feel welcome and safe (89% felt the PD was effective/very effective, while only 1% indicated that the PD was ineffective/very ineffective)
- Providing life-long recreational opportunities (83% felt the PD was effective/very effective)

- Providing first-time opportunities for participants to engage in recreation and cultural arts programs (80% felt the PD was effective/very effective)
- Providing parks, recreation, and cultural arts that are affordable for all (80% felt the PD was effective/very effective)

Areas that appear to have room for improvement include the following:

- Involving community in the planning of future projects (50% felt the PD was effective/very effective)
- Providing transparency as a publicly funded entity (52% felt the PD was effective/very effective)
- Providing community leadership on environmental issues (59% felt the PD was effective/very effective)

These three items also had relatively higher numbers of respondents who chose “Don’t Know” (43-49% of all respondents).

### **Opinion**

Among those with an opinion, 82% said that Park District residents receive a good value for the taxes they pay and 72% said the Champaign Park District was important to their household.

Regarding the opportunities we asked about, in both cases more respondents were opposed to them rather than in favor of them. Among those with an opinion:

- 48% were opposed to charging an entrance fee to Prairie farm, while 22% were in favor.
- 38% were opposed to the Park District selling facility naming rights, while 28% were in favor.

However, it should be noted that 22-25% of respondents said they “Don’t Know” and a significant number of those with an opinion were neutral, indicating that there is quite a bit of room for public opinion to change.

### **Features of a New Recreation Center**

If the Champaign Park District develops a new Community Recreation Center, the five most requested features were:

1. Indoor Walking Track (chosen by 40% of respondents)
2. Indoor Aquatic Center (chosen by 31% of respondents)
3. Indoor Adventure Playground (chosen by 24% of respondents)
4. Indoor Lap Pool (chosen by 24% of respondents)
5. Multi-Purpose Space (chosen by 24% of respondents)

## **Facilities to Develop or Expand**

Natural areas and open space were the highest priority when it came to facilities, followed by pools. The five most requested facilities for the Park District to develop or expand were:

1. Wildlife Areas/Natural Areas (chosen by 27% of respondents)
2. Preservation of Open Space (chosen by 16% of respondents)
3. Small Neighborhood Parks (chosen by 15% of respondents)
4. Warm Water Therapy Pool (chosen by 13% of respondents)
5. Indoor Leisure Pool (chosen by 13% of respondents)

## **Spending Priorities**

When asked how they would spend \$1.00 on Park District priorities over the next five years, the five items that received the most funding were:

1. Don't Know (15.9 cents)
2. Maintain existing parks & facilities (10.8 cents)
3. Other project (9.9 cents)
4. Construction of indoor therapy pool (9.0 cents)
5. Additional walking trails and paths (6.8 cents)

## **Programs to Develop or Expand**

Nature was also the highest priority when it came to programs, followed by fitness/wellness and senior programs. The five most requested programs for the Park District to develop or expand were:

1. Nature/Environmental Programs (chosen by 22% of respondents)
2. Health & Wellness Programs (chosen by 16% of respondents)
3. Adult Fitness/Wellness Programs (chosen by 15% of respondents)
4. Water Fitness Programs (chosen by 12% of respondents)
5. Senior Programs & Trips (chosen by 11% of respondents)

## **Marketing**

The Program Guide is by far the most frequently used source for information about Park District offerings; 77% of respondents had used it to learn about programs and services. Friends and neighbors (37%) and the News Gazette Newspaper (36%) were the second and third most frequently used sources.

When respondents were asked how they want to receive the Program Guide, the top choice was for the Park District to continue providing a printed Guide through the mail (this was the #1 choice for 43% of respondents). The second most popular option was for the Park District to mail postcards and emails directing residents to a website version of the Guide (#1 choice for 16% of respondents), and the third was to print a much shorter Guide and mail it to all households (#1 choice for 16% of respondents).

## **Recommendations**



Priorities are listed in order of importance related to the response, ORPR's perceptions of CPD's resident needs and desires and consultant experience.

- *"Take care of what we have."* When asked how residents would allocate budget dollars if they could choose, the number one response was to "take care of what we have." This is a common response of park district residents in Illinois. It may be a combination of high quality offerings and concern to sustain this quality coupled with fiscally conservative ideals amid difficult budgetary times at the state level. All speculation aside, it is important for CPD to be good stewards of their residents' tax dollars and resources.
- *Environmental Services & Programming.* Results ranked natural areas, wildlife, open space preservation and environmental education offerings as the top area to expand. When comparing use patterns with the 2012 CPD survey, additional evidence to support this need includes increased use of the Champaign County Forest Preserve and Urbana Park District sites. Both agencies are known to lead in these aforementioned areas.
- *Prairie Farm Fees.* A high number of respondents would choose to keep Prairie Farm as a free resource for the community and would not charge a user fee. Judging solely from high turnout for the farm's anniversary party last year, there may be some interest in soliciting donations to support this operation.
- *Continue to print and mail program guide.* Online needs continue to grow and will continue to shift in this direction in the years to come, however, CPD experienced the typical survey response: Continue to print and mail the program guide.
- *Continue to invest in staff training and resources.* Community response gave CPD staff higher than national average satisfaction ratings. Investment in high quality continuing education opportunities for staff will continue to pay future service dividends.
- *Investigate Public Perceptions.* Responses to statements gauging CPD's effectiveness related to public involvement in the planning process and government transparency were mediocre. From the consultant's perspective, it is not from lack of trying, but possibly awareness of how the park district has succeeded in specific scenarios. Other park districts have recently launched a transparency portal, which may be of interest.
- *Focus groups for younger population.* It is increasingly difficult to engage young people (teen to college graduate) in programs, services and planning efforts. This survey is not an exception. If possible, it would be useful to engage with this group to identify needs. As Champaign County continues to grow, it is important to recognize that CPD's offerings will be a factor in retaining young, talented workers in the community. Therefore, it is important to make sure their needs are being met.

- *Collect, analyze and synthesize growing data.* Data collection and analysis systems continue to evolve, and these systems can support decision making, validate expenditures, and show use patterns. In particular, data collection related to park use patterns is growing and should be investigated. Also, Park Districts often quantify facility use by memberships, but actual use is increasingly meaningful in light of the major mental, physical and substance abuse challenges faced by our society. Increasing the quality of the community's use of facilities and parklands should have an impact on health and quality of life. As health care costs continue to rise, quantifiable user data will continue to help park districts advocate for their importance.

CPD has made efforts to analyze services, find out resident needs and develop plans. Efforts to synthesize these projects would be useful for long-range planning efforts.

- *Majority of positive comments.* Written comments at the end of a survey can be a key indicator of an agency's successes or challenges. A majority of the time, themed needs or issues emerge. There are also a number of comments related to specific operational issues that need immediate correction or engagement. However, in this survey there were a large number of positive comments. The park district is meaningful to residents in that many respondents took the time to hand write accolades.

# **Project Overview**

## **Champaign Park District Survey Project History**

### **Project Overview**

#### *Purpose*

A partnership between the Office of Recreation and Park Resources (ORPR) and the Champaign Park District (CPD) was developed to collect feedback through a community survey regarding CPD's resident's needs and interests. A survey serves multiple purposes. First, it allows tax paying residents to have the opportunity to voice their opinions related to future services and desired amenities. Second, a community survey provides residents with the opportunity to rate their satisfaction with current services and amenities. Next, community survey results may also be used to identify and clarify concerns and also inform leadership decisions related to financial resource allocation, customer service, marketing, trends, quality and cleanliness, programming, partnerships and use patterns. A community survey is also an important step in the strategic planning process. Finally, collecting relative information from the park district's constituency should help a park district create achievable and practical goals and objectives to allocate finite resources into the future.

#### *Goals*

CPD and ORPR established multiple priorities for the community survey. The overarching goal was to determine the attitudes and interests of CPD's residents related to the park district and its future plans. Specifically, the study looked to identify particular needs of residents and their satisfaction with current offerings. The next goal was to create a statically valid and reliable survey. As the results and emergent themes of the survey surface, the third goal of the study will become evident: to provide a starting point for CPD's Board of Commissioners and staff to engage in dialogue concerning the future development of and planning for parks, programs and services.

#### *Objectives:*

1. To determine the residents' satisfaction with current parks, programs, facilities, and personnel services.
2. To determine current participation rates with existing parks, programs, and facilities.
3. To determine the quality of existing parks, programs, and facilities.
4. To encourage input from residents on needs for expansion or development of new parks, facilities, and/or programs.
5. To determine if residents are willing to increase their tax support for the possible development/expansion of recreation facilities and parks.
6. To determine the most effective form of publicity.
7. To obtain demographic and personal characteristics of Champaign Park District residents.

Ultimately, this study will be used as a tool to help shape the future of parks and recreation within the Champaign Park District.

## **Study Procedures**

### *Introduction*

This community survey was sent to a random sample of Champaign Park District residents. An overview of the study population, questionnaire development, and response rate is presented in the following sections.

### *Population*

The Champaign Park District serves and is supported by a population exceeding 80,000 within its district boundaries. A survey was mailed to a total of 3,500 households and an adult member (over the age of 18) was asked to complete the survey on behalf of themselves and members of their household. 2,000 survey households were randomly selected from within CPD's boundaries. In an effort to ensure an adequate number of survey responses from groups that traditionally have low response rates, an additional 1,500 households were randomly selected from neighborhoods north of University Avenue. This strategy yielded a geographically balanced response (for more information see Demographics, in the Survey Findings section).

### *Initial Meetings*

In January of 2017, ORPR staff met with Joe DeLuce, Executive Director, to discuss goals and objectives for the creation of a community survey. At the close of the meeting, a survey template and drafts of other park district surveys were provided to CPD to review. A questionnaire was synthesized from these examples which also included additional questions of interest. Questions from the previous CPD survey were also considered to continue to establish benchmarking data for CPD's comprehensive park and recreation services. The Office of Recreation and Park Resources developed a first draft of the questionnaire, which was submitted to CPD for review. A series of revisions and drafts were produced as the board of commissioner and staff teams reviewed the drafts. 13 drafts were created in total. The final community-wide questionnaire received approval to mail on 03/09/17.

### *Collection Procedures*

The data collection procedures began with an advanced notification postcard which mailed to 3,500 CPD households on 03/28/17. The six-page survey, cover letter and SASE business reply envelope arrived at the local United States Post Office on 04/04/17. The cover letter and questionnaire are provided in the Appendix. A follow-up postcard was mailed on 04/18/17. The timing of all communication was guided by best practices as detailed by Dillman et al. (2014, p. 382-383) and took into account the Unit 4 and University of Illinois spring break. Initially, the survey closed on 04/28/17, however, the deadline was extended to 05/05/17 after additional responses continued to trickle in.

### *Response Rate*

Survey response yielded 341 usable questionnaires. Four hundred surveys were returned as vacant or bad addresses in the initial mailing, which lowered the initial mailing numbers to 3,100. This produced a response rate of 11% and a precision of at least +/-7.5% (**e.g., the true population value is within +/- 7.5% of the sample value**). These numbers represent the confidence level from which this survey can be generalized to the population of individuals residing within the boundaries of the Champaign Park District. A response that would have generated less than 300 usable surveys related to this population size would have warranted continued solicitation of response in other communities of similar size to reach a generalizable number.

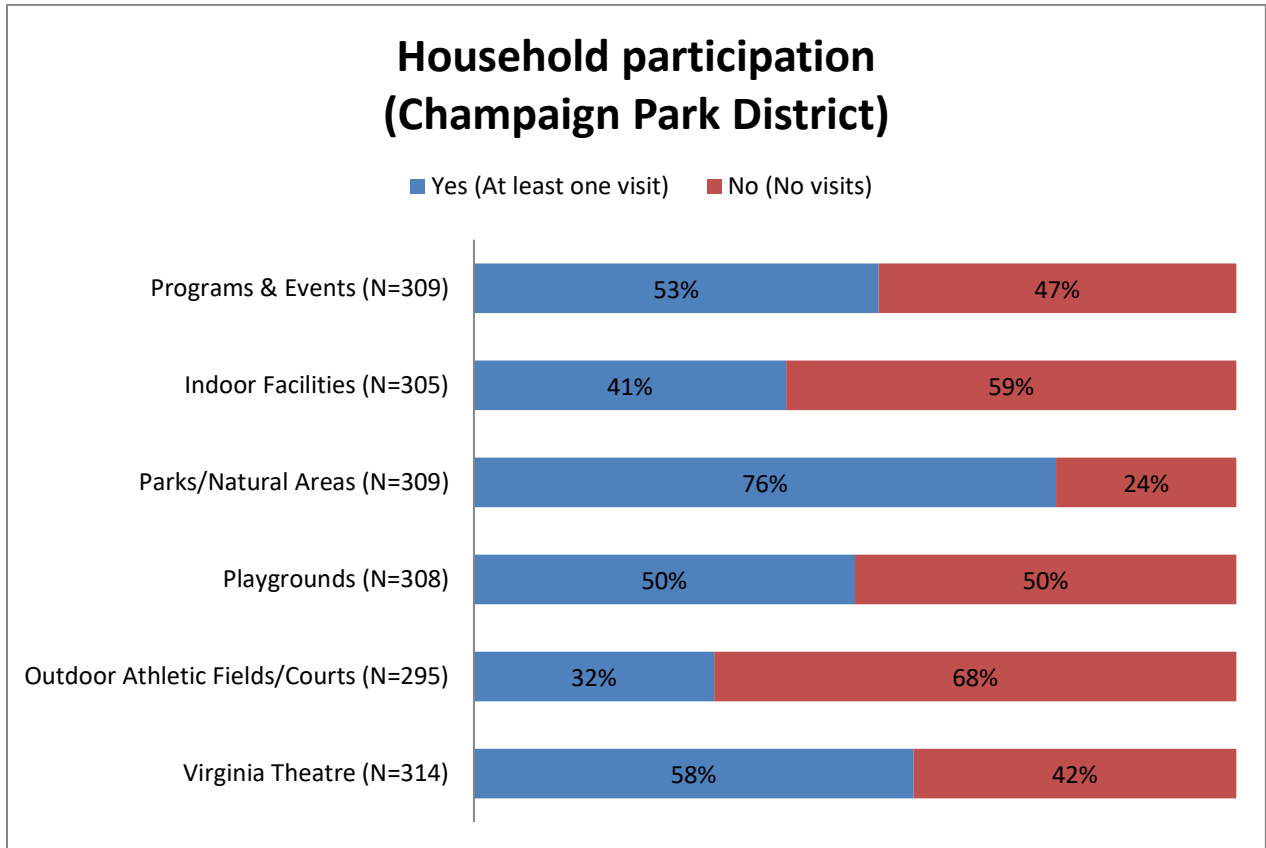
Data collection was terminated on May 5, 2017. Respondents had two options to complete the survey, through the mail or online. As each survey response was received, the Office of Recreation and Park Resources staff checked the data for completeness and accuracy prior to analysis.

### Reference:

Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

## **Study Findings**

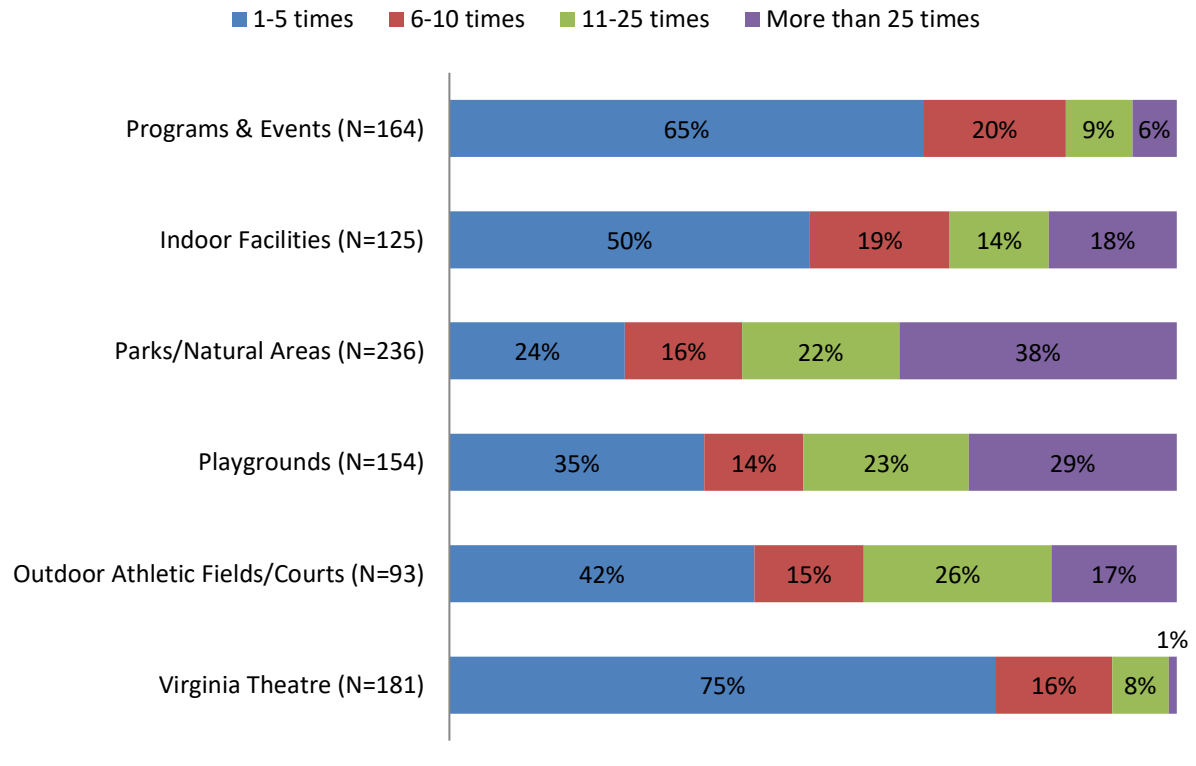
## Participation



Note: Percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered the question (N).

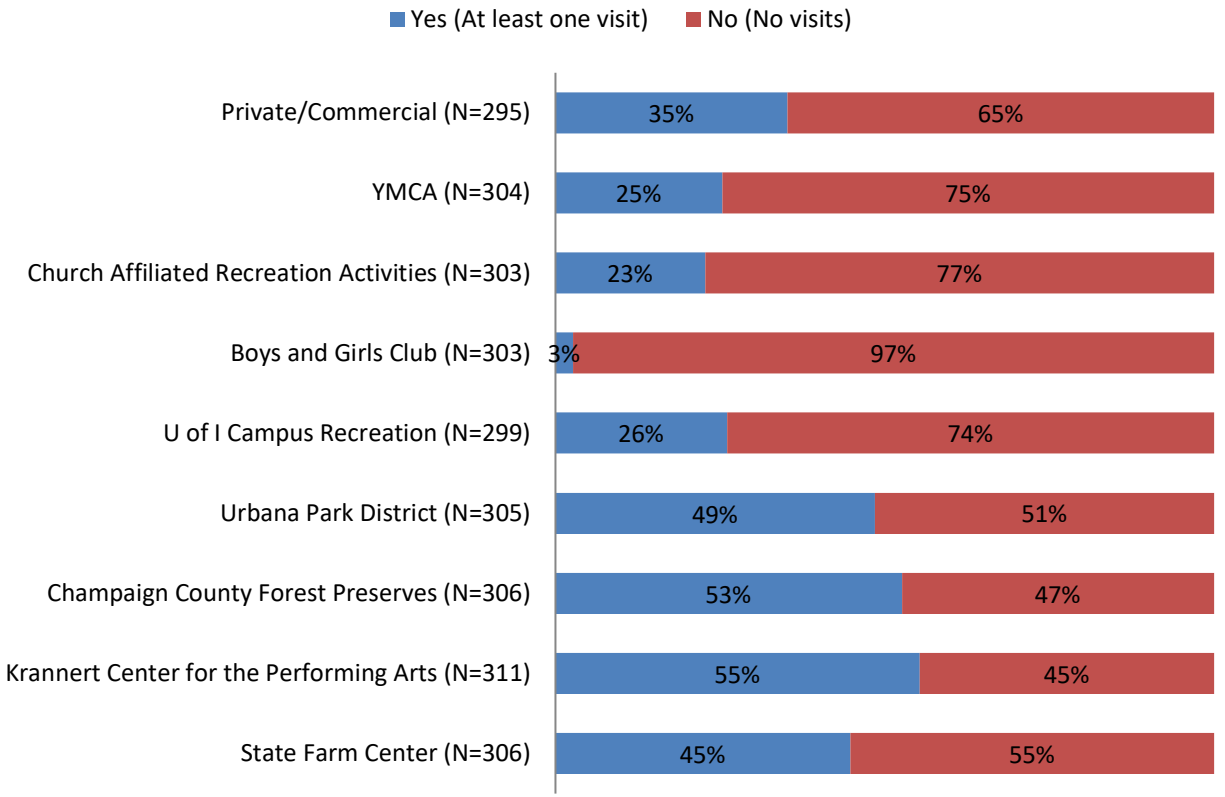


## Participation frequency among active users (Champaign Park District)



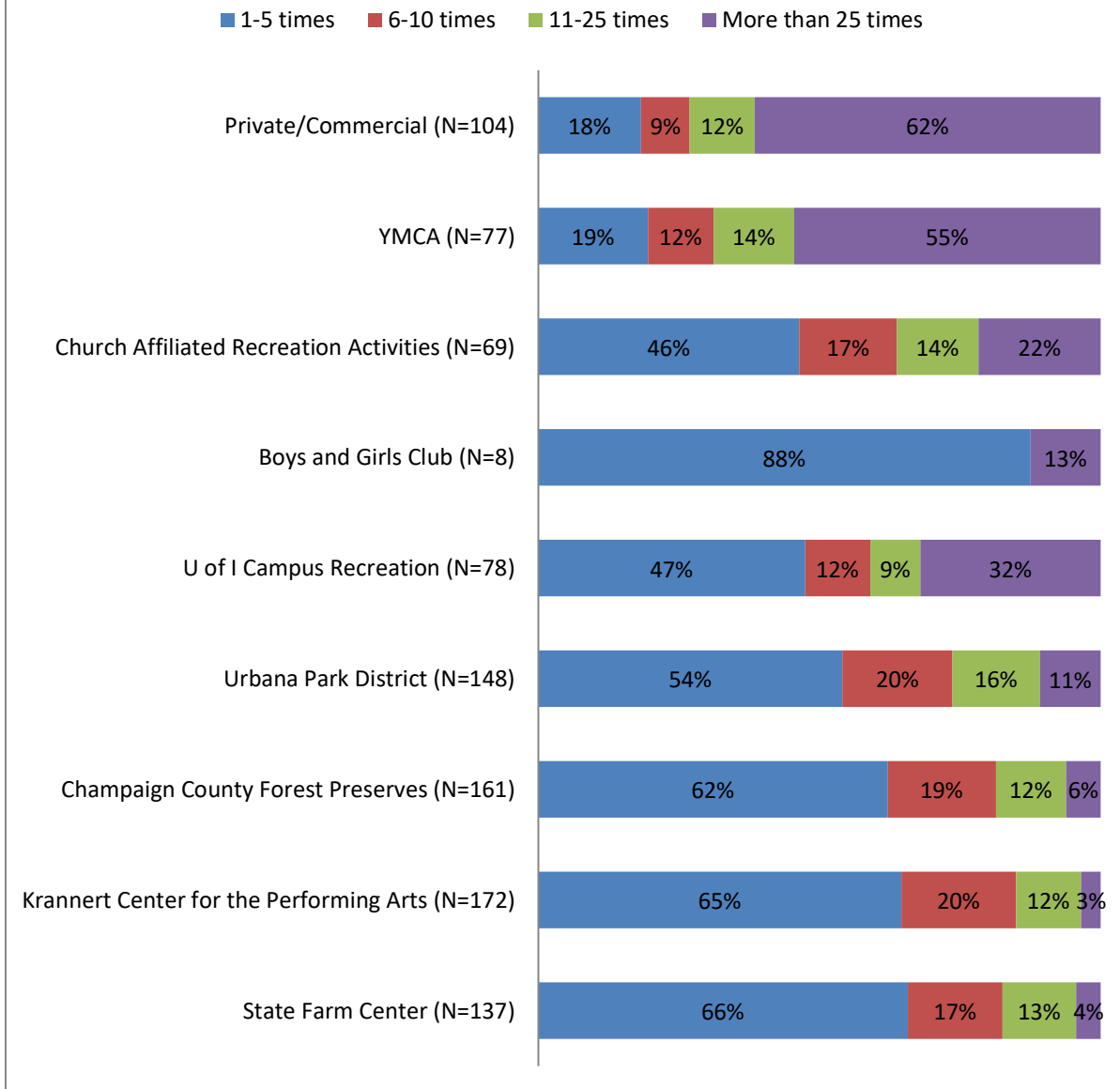
Note: Percentages are based on the number of respondents who visited/participated in the past year (N).

## Household participation (Other providers)



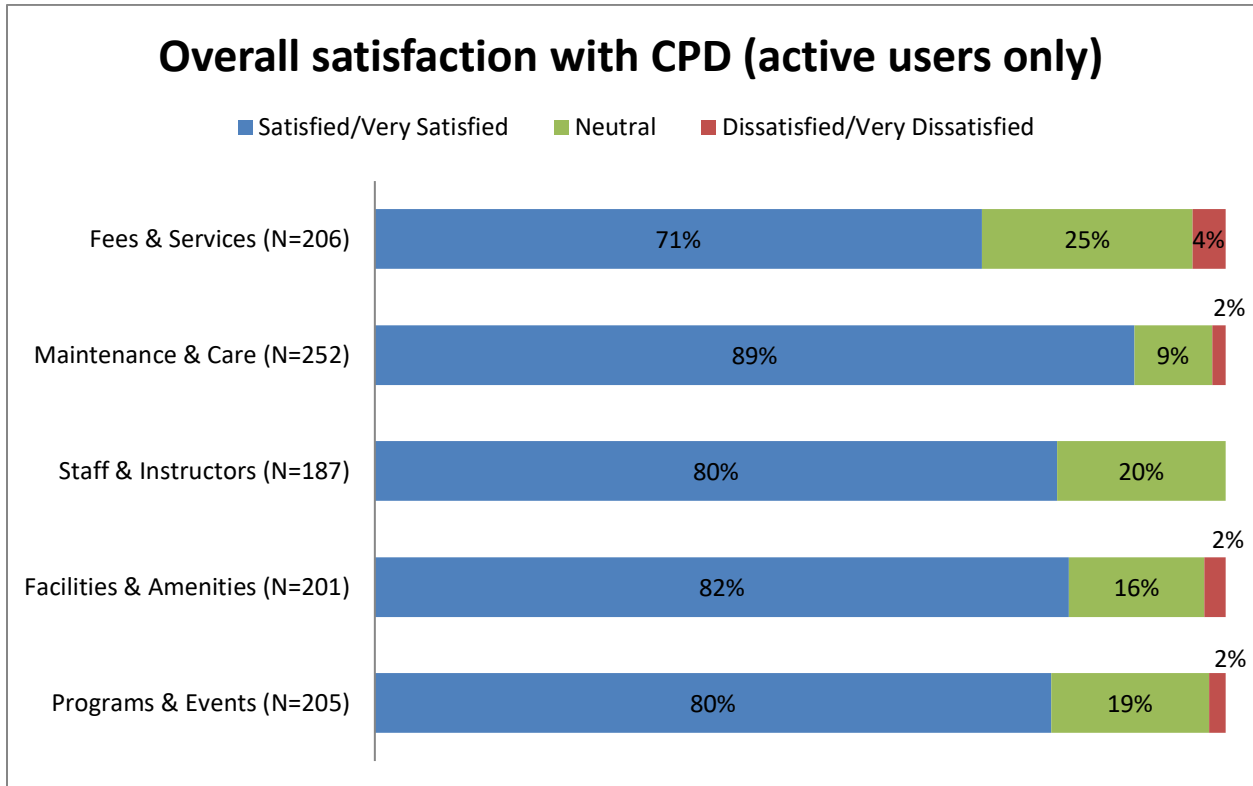
Note: Percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered the question (N).

## Participation frequency among active users (other P&R providers)



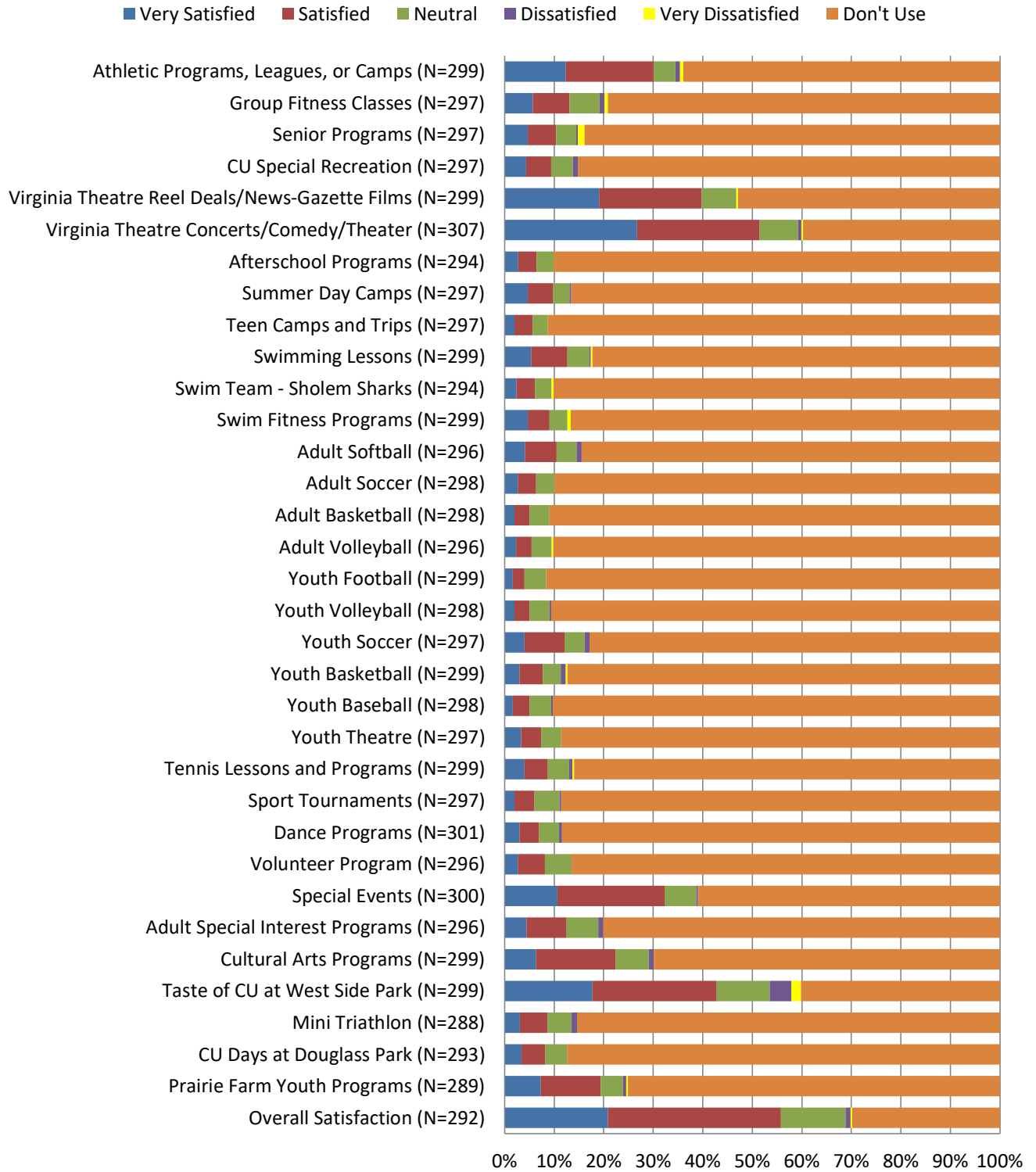
Note: Percentages are based on the number of respondents who visited/participated in the past year (N).

## Satisfaction



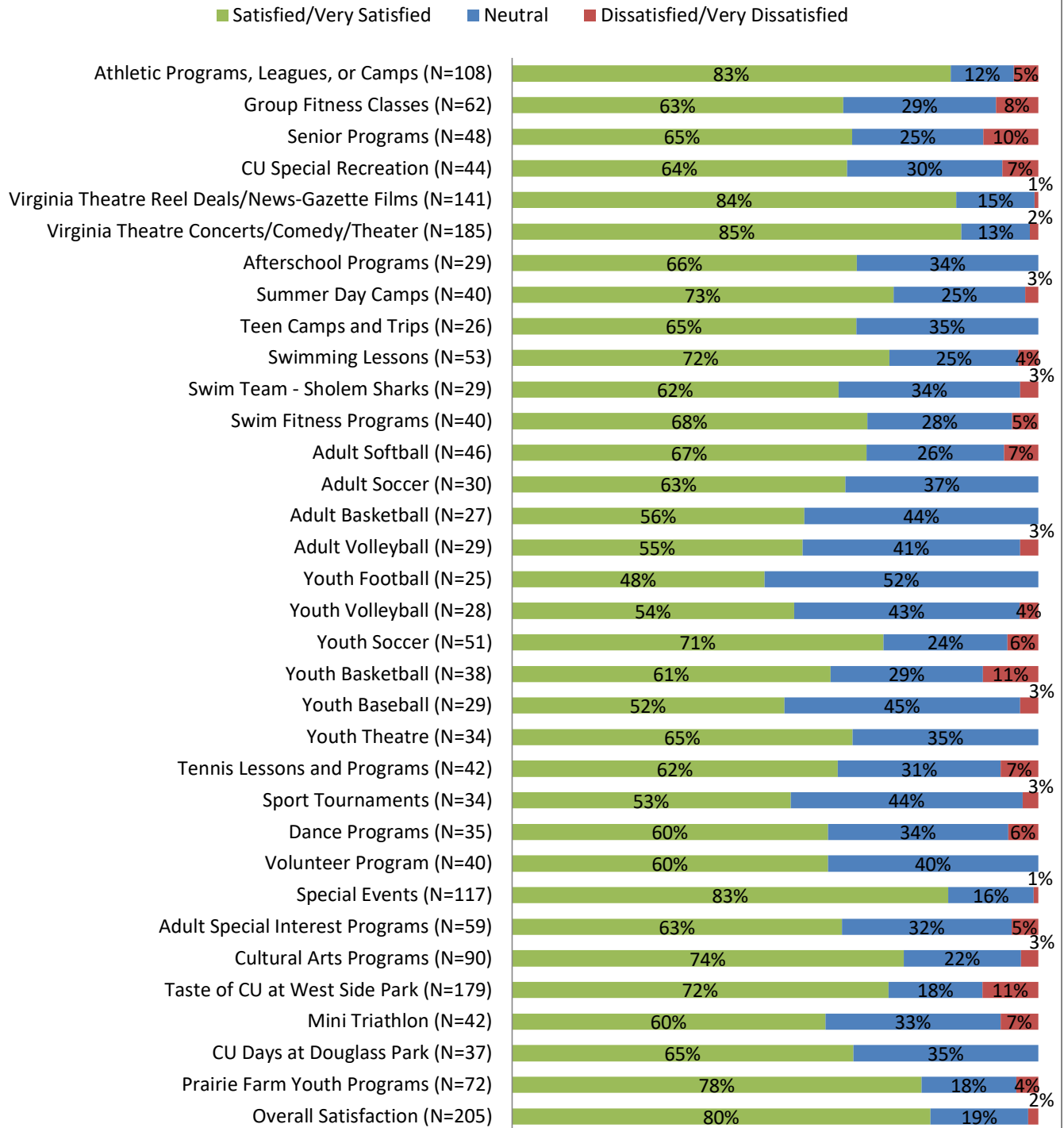
Note: Percentages are based on the respondents who expressed an opinion (“Don’t Use” responses have been omitted).

## Satisfaction with programs & events (all responses)



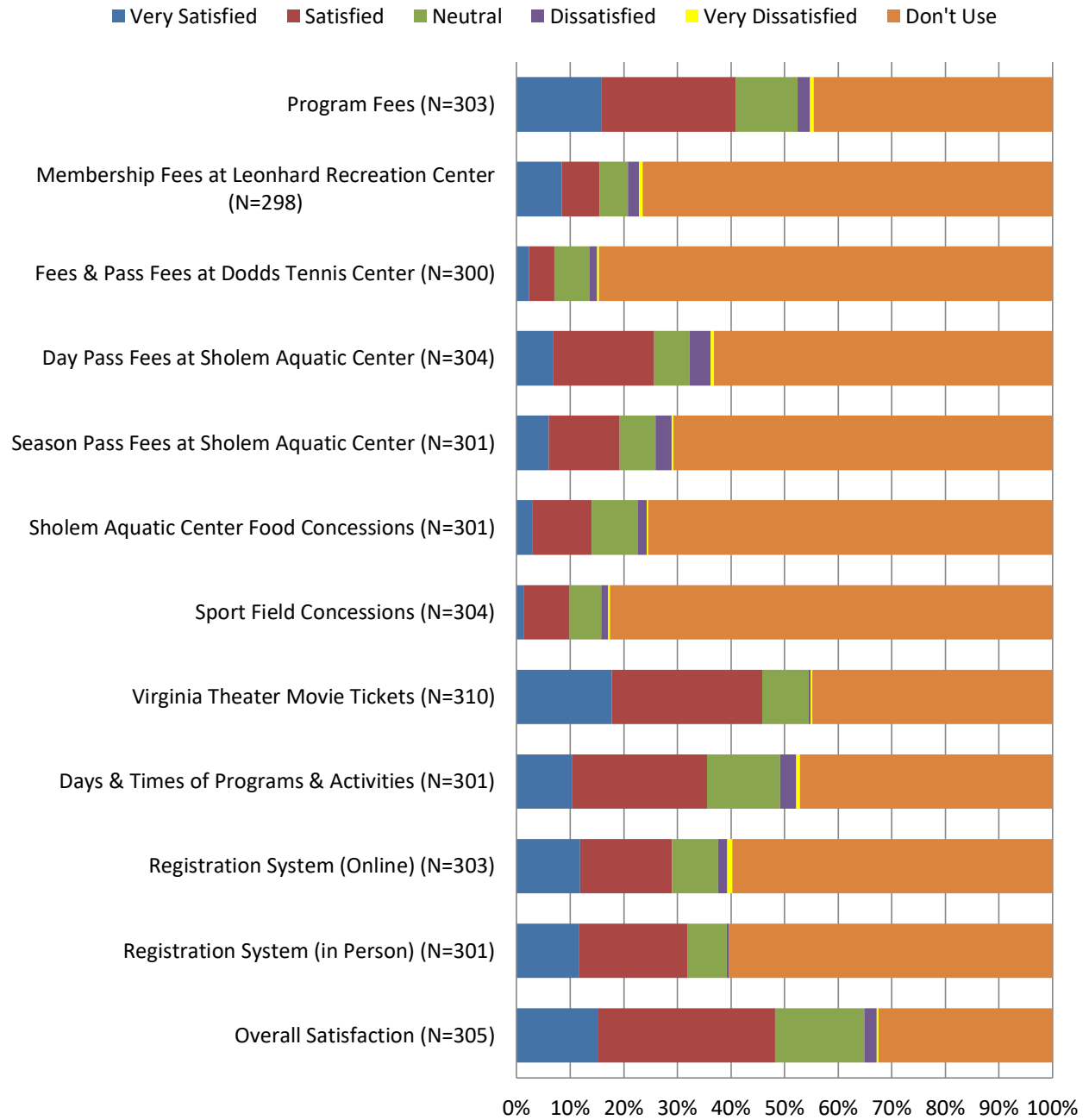
Note: Percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered the question (N).

## Satisfaction with programs & events (active users only)



Note: Percentages are based on the respondents who expressed an opinion (“Don’t Use” responses have been omitted).

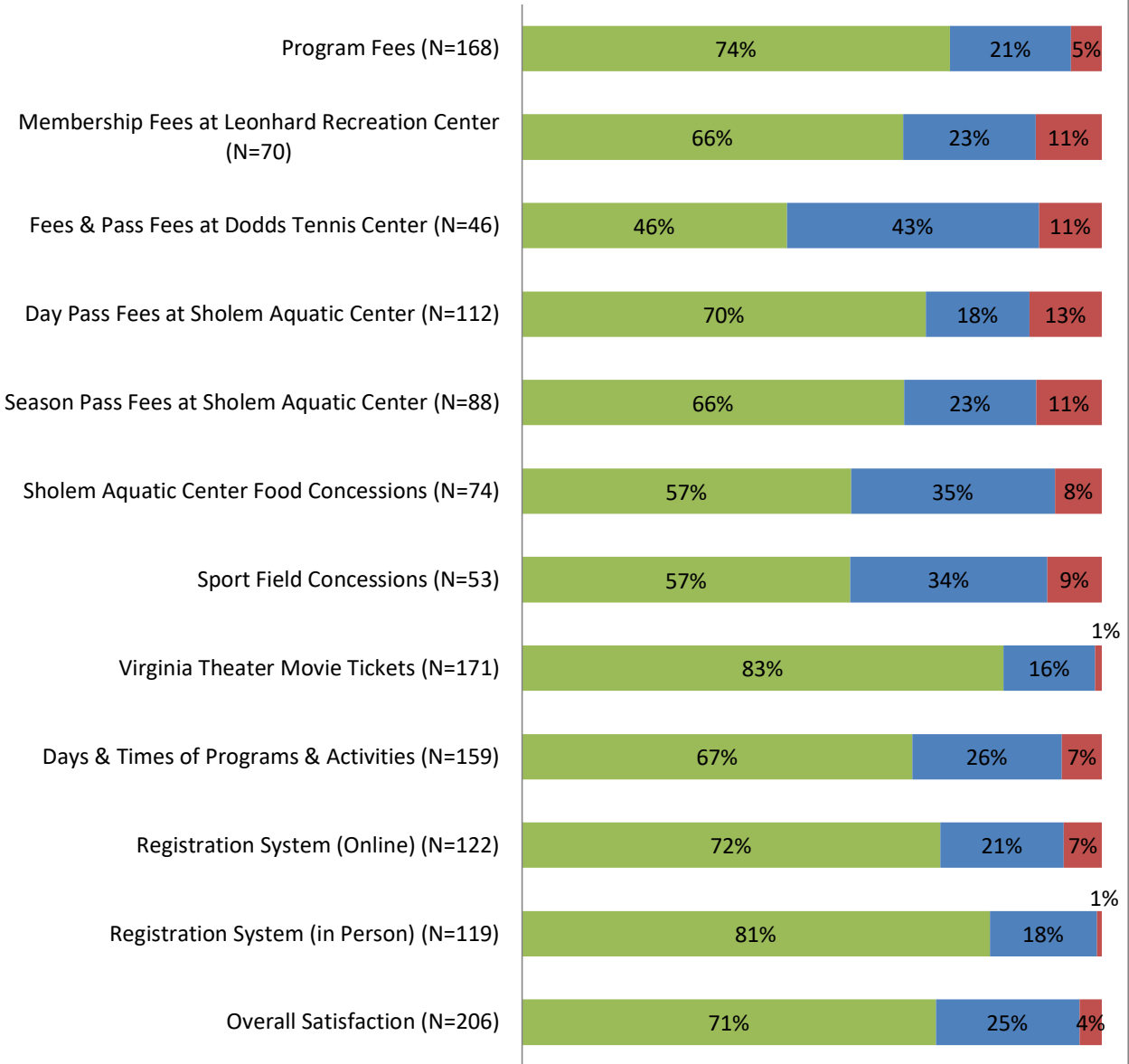
## Satisfaction with fees & services (all responses)



Note: Percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered the question (N).

## Satisfaction with fees & services (active users only)

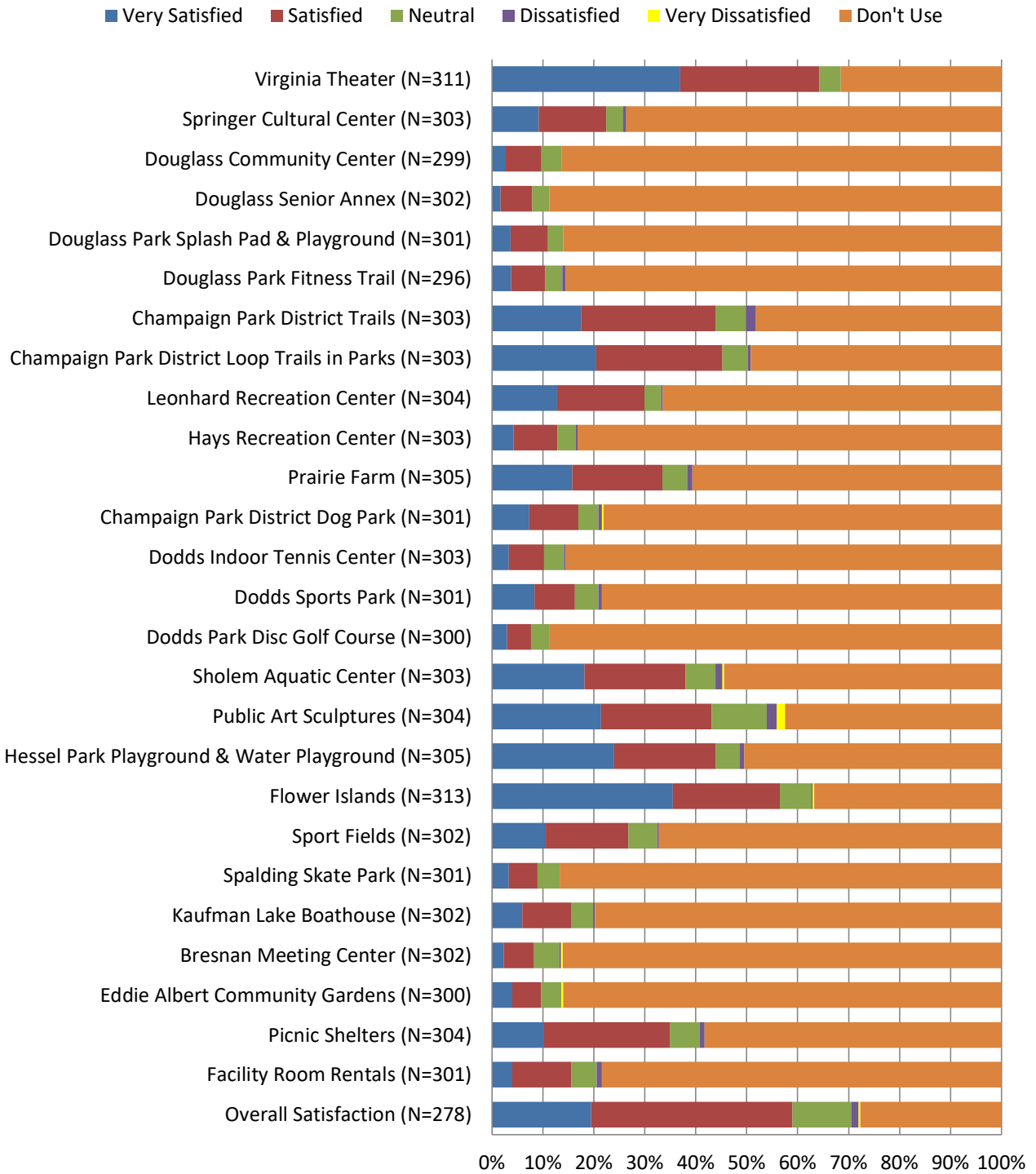
■ Satisfied/Very Satisfied   
 ■ Neutral   
 ■ Dissatisfied/Very Dissatisfied



Note: Percentages are based on the respondents who expressed an opinion (“Don’t Use” responses have been omitted).

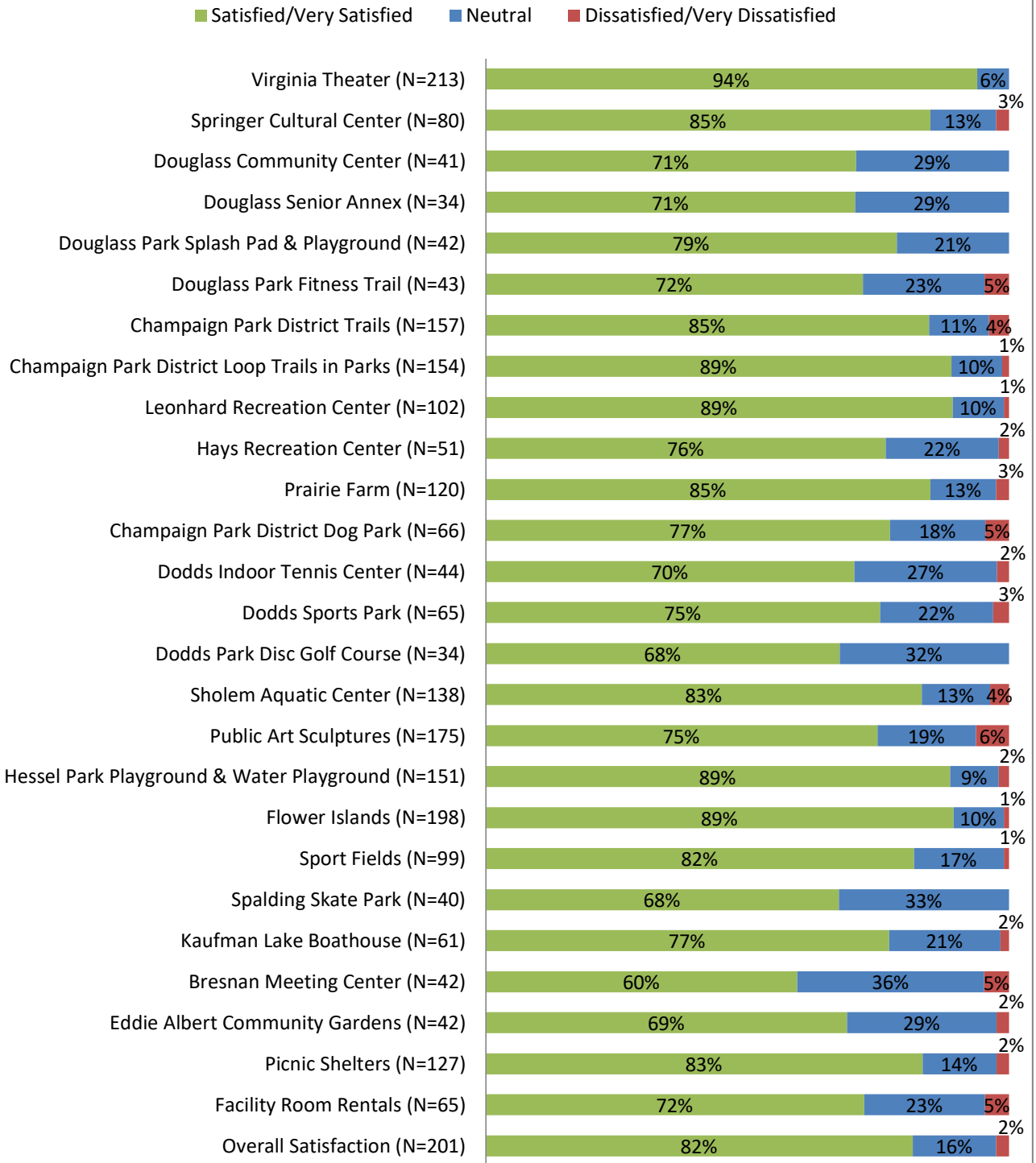


## Satisfaction with facilities & amenities (all responses)



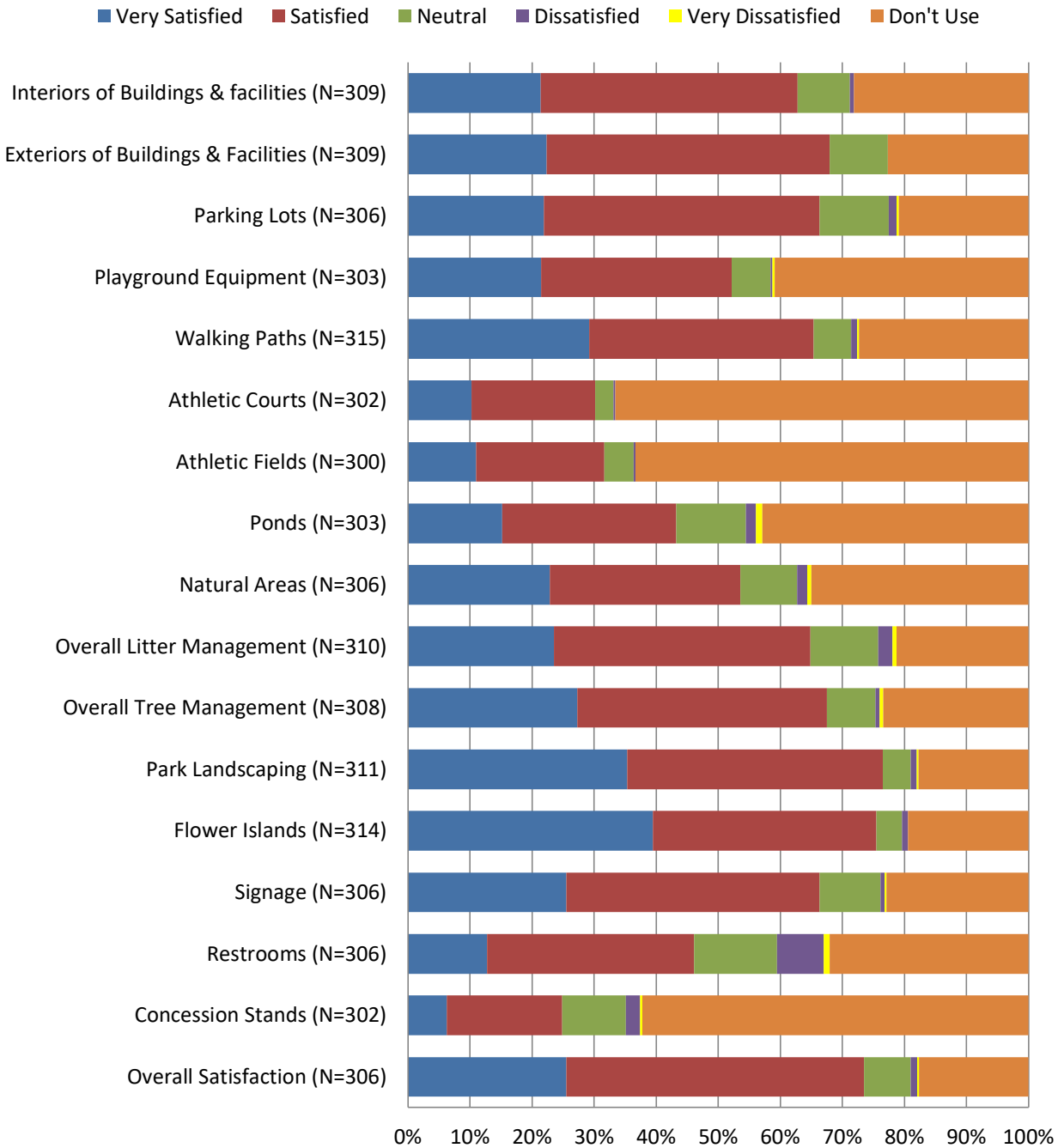
Note: Percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered the question (N).

## Satisfaction with facilities & amenities (active users only)



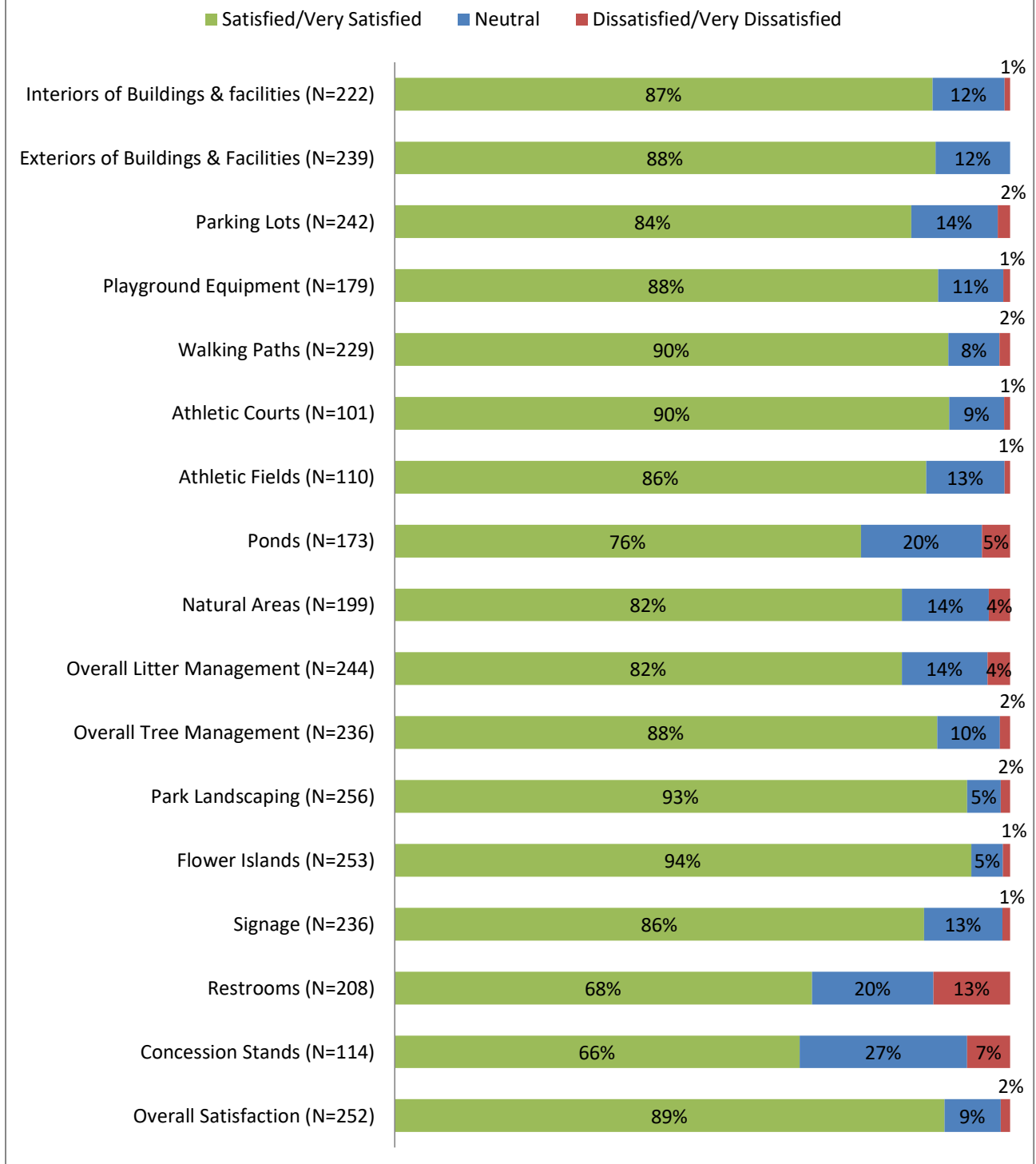
Note: Percentages are based on the respondents who expressed an opinion (“Don’t Use” responses have been omitted).

## Satisfaction with general maintenance & care of facilities (all responses)



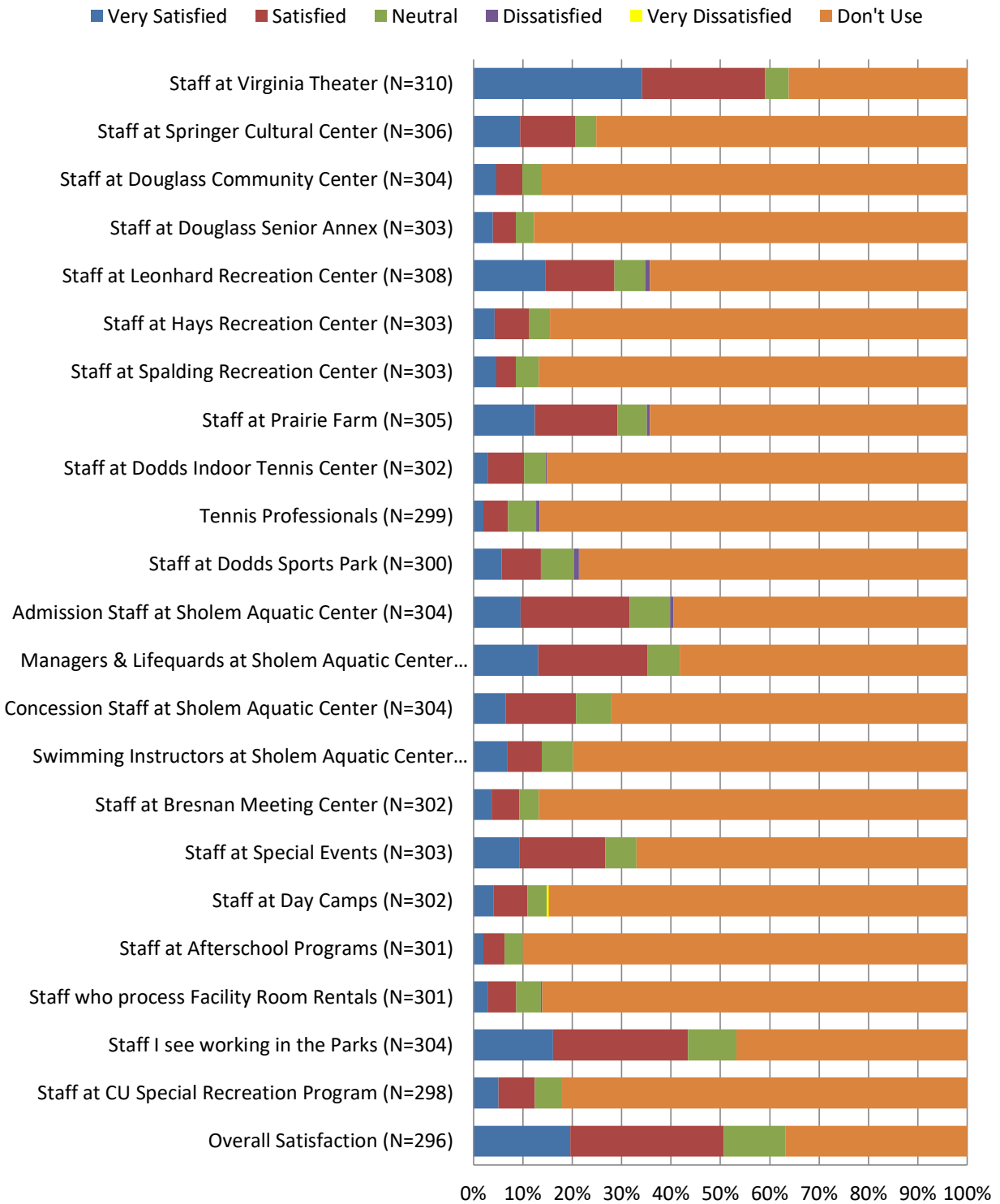
Note: Percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered the question (N).

## Satisfaction with general maintenance & care of facilities (active users)



Note: Percentages are based on the respondents who expressed an opinion (“Don’t Use” responses have been omitted).

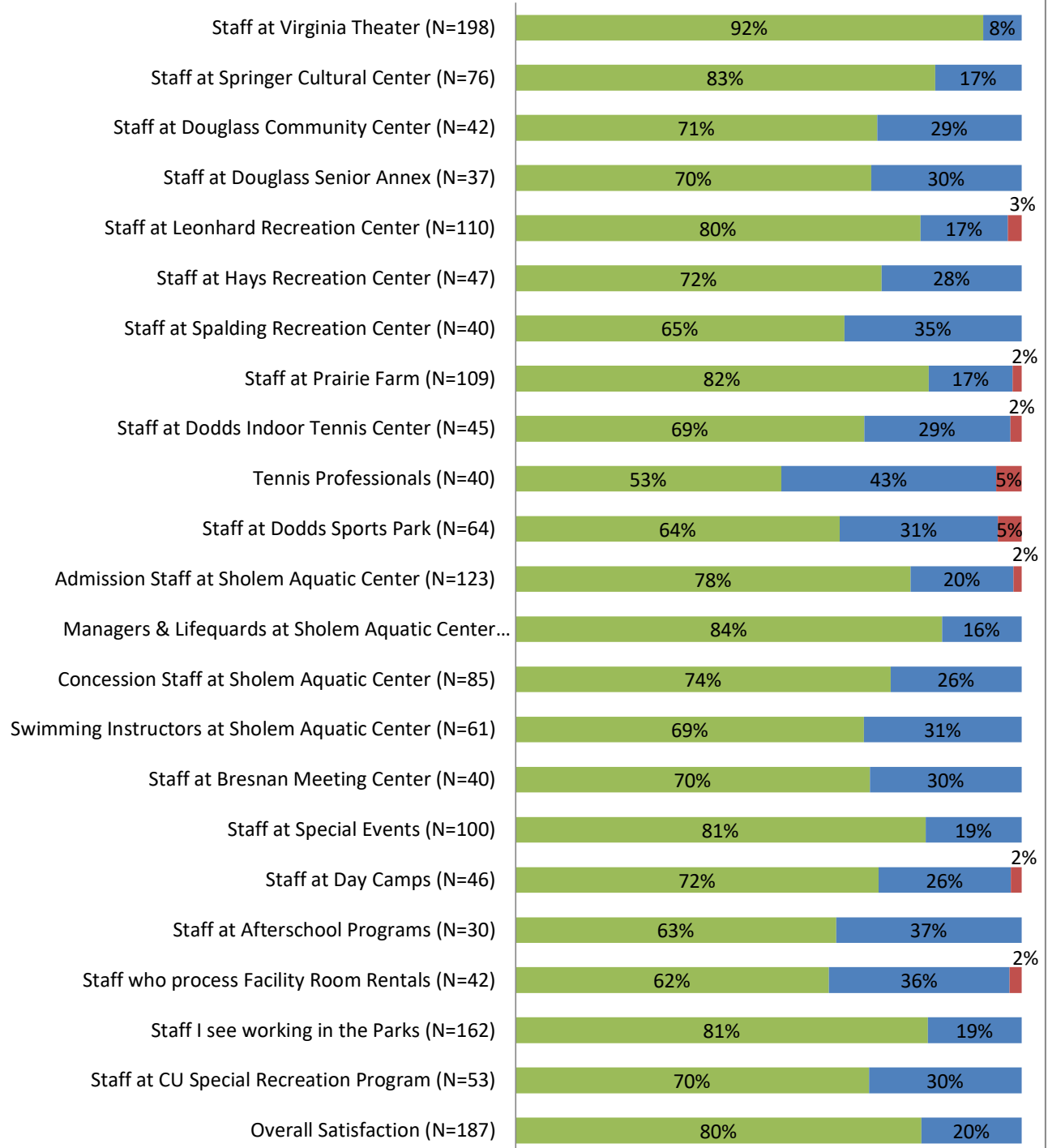
## Satisfaction with staff (all responses)



Note: Percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered the question (N).

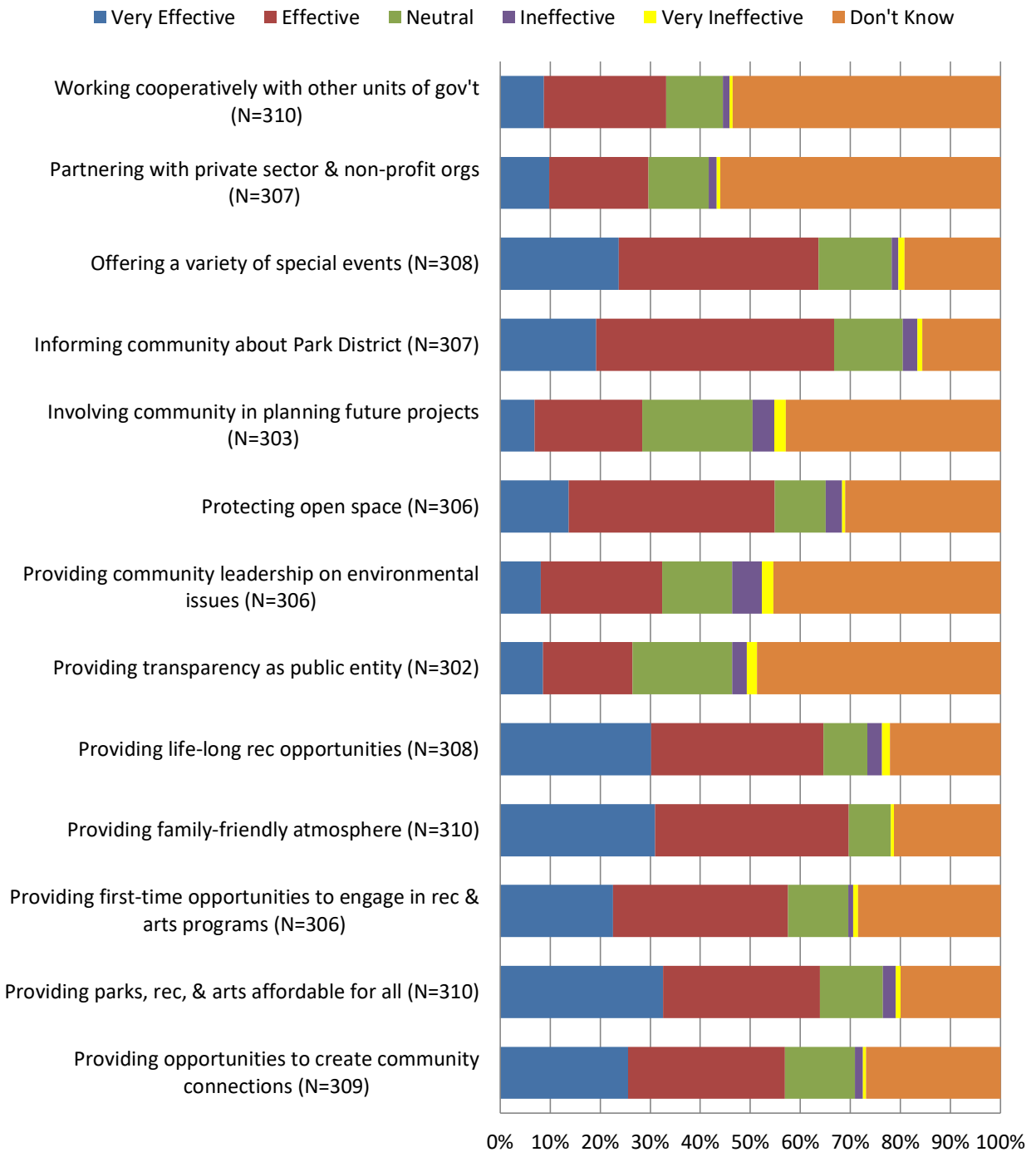
## Satisfaction with staff (active users only)

■ Satisfied/Very Satisfied   ■ Neutral   ■ Dissatisfied/Very Dissatisfied



Note: Percentages are based on the respondents who expressed an opinion (“Don’t Use” responses have been omitted).

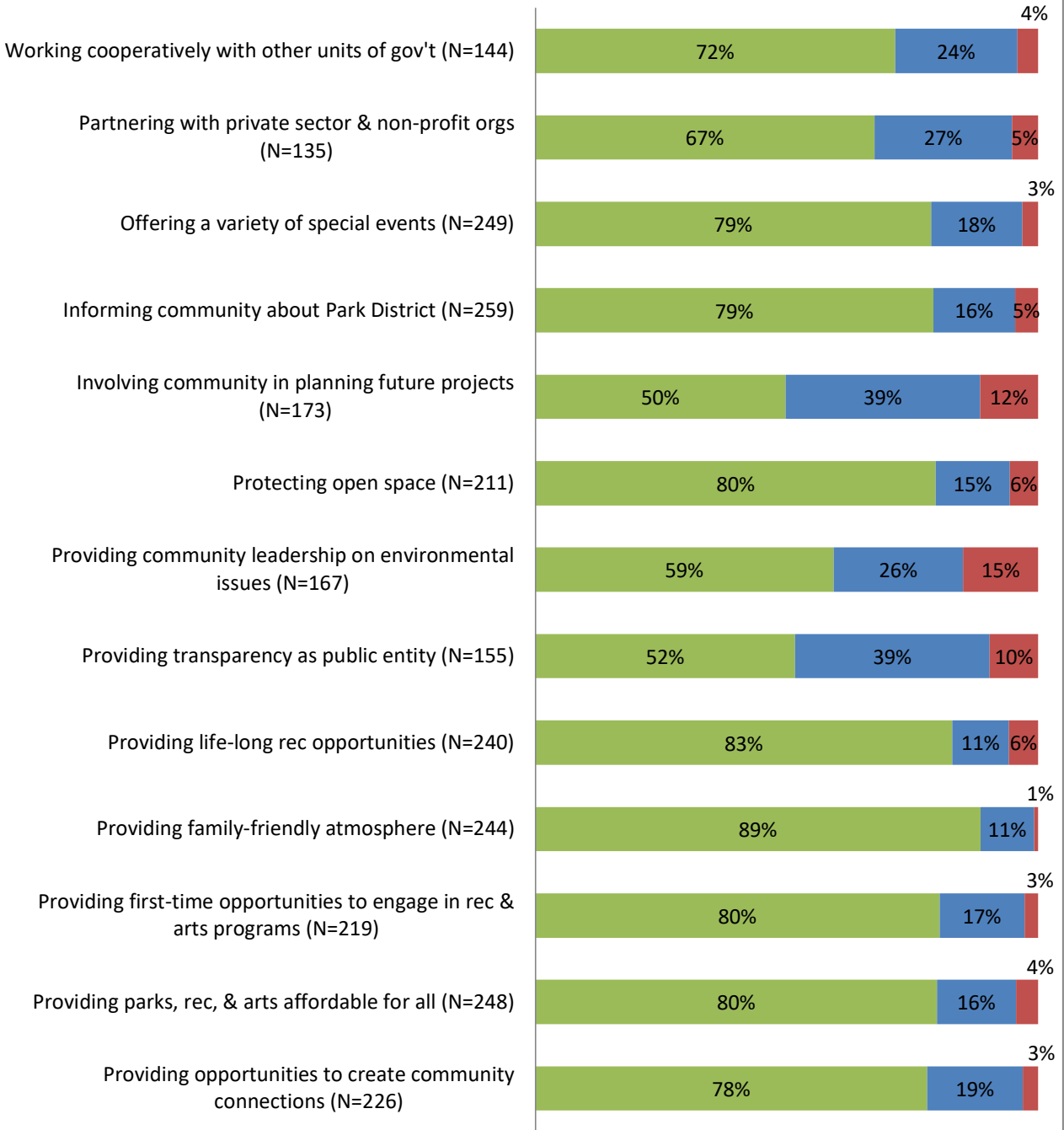
## Effectiveness (all responses)



Note: Percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered the question (N).

## Effectiveness (active users only)

■ Effective/Very Effective   ■ Neutral   ■ Ineffective/Very Ineffective

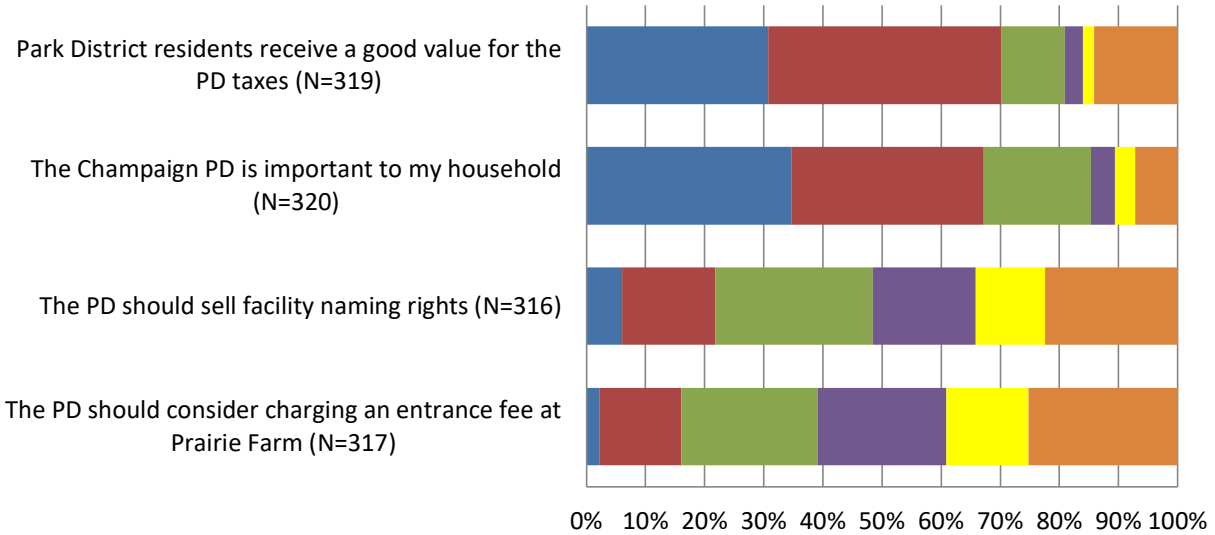


Note: Percentages are based on the respondents who expressed an opinion (“Don’t Know” responses have been omitted).



## Opinion (all responses)

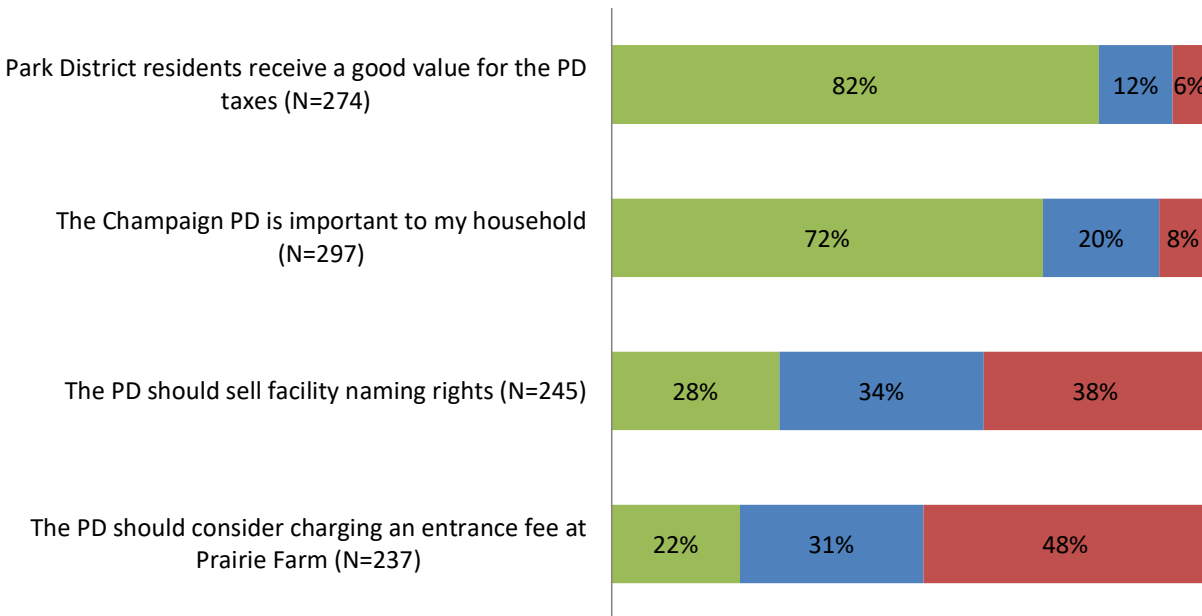
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Don't Know



Note: Percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered the question (N).

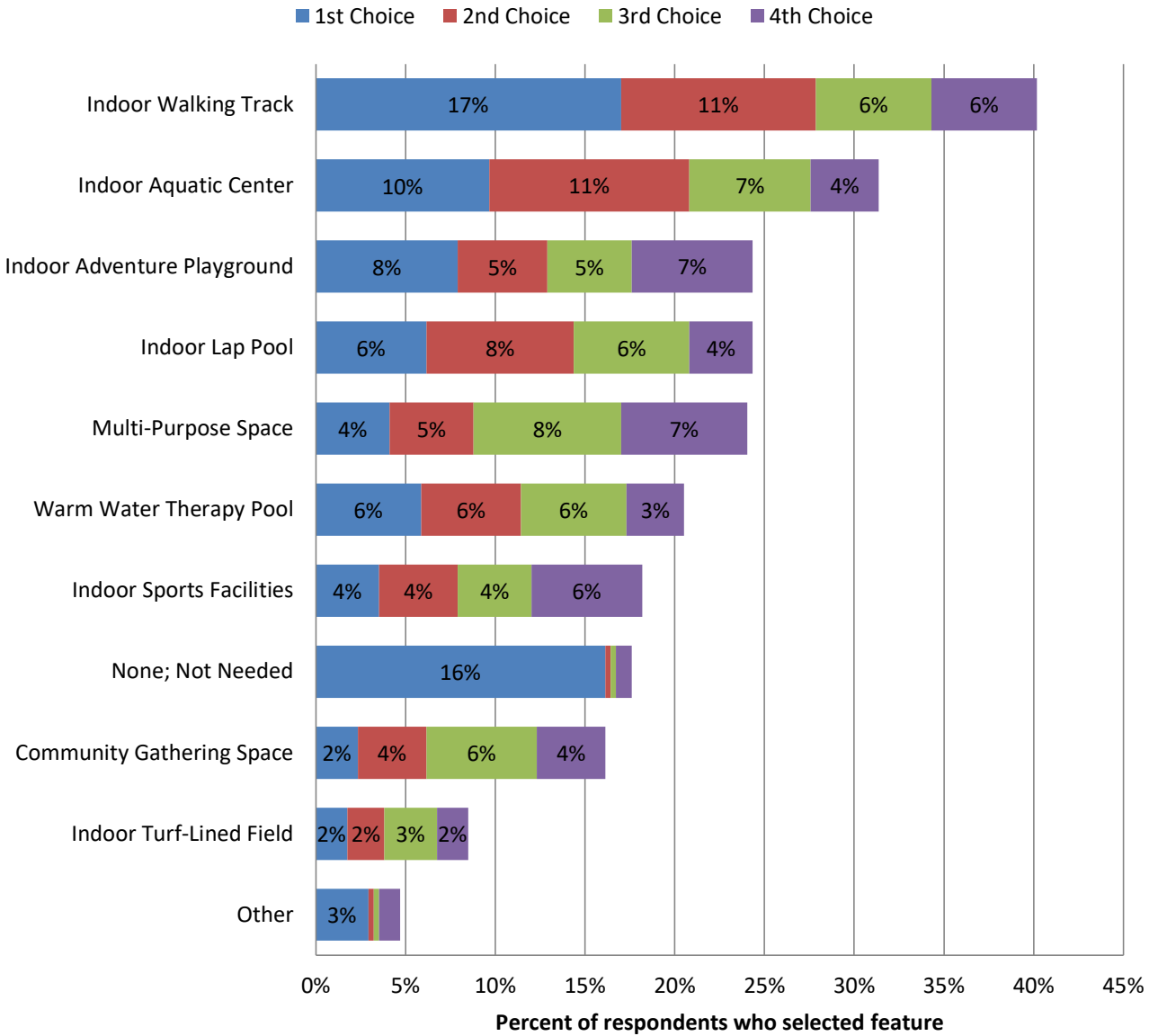
## Opinion (respondents with an opinion)

Agree/Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree/Strongly Disagree



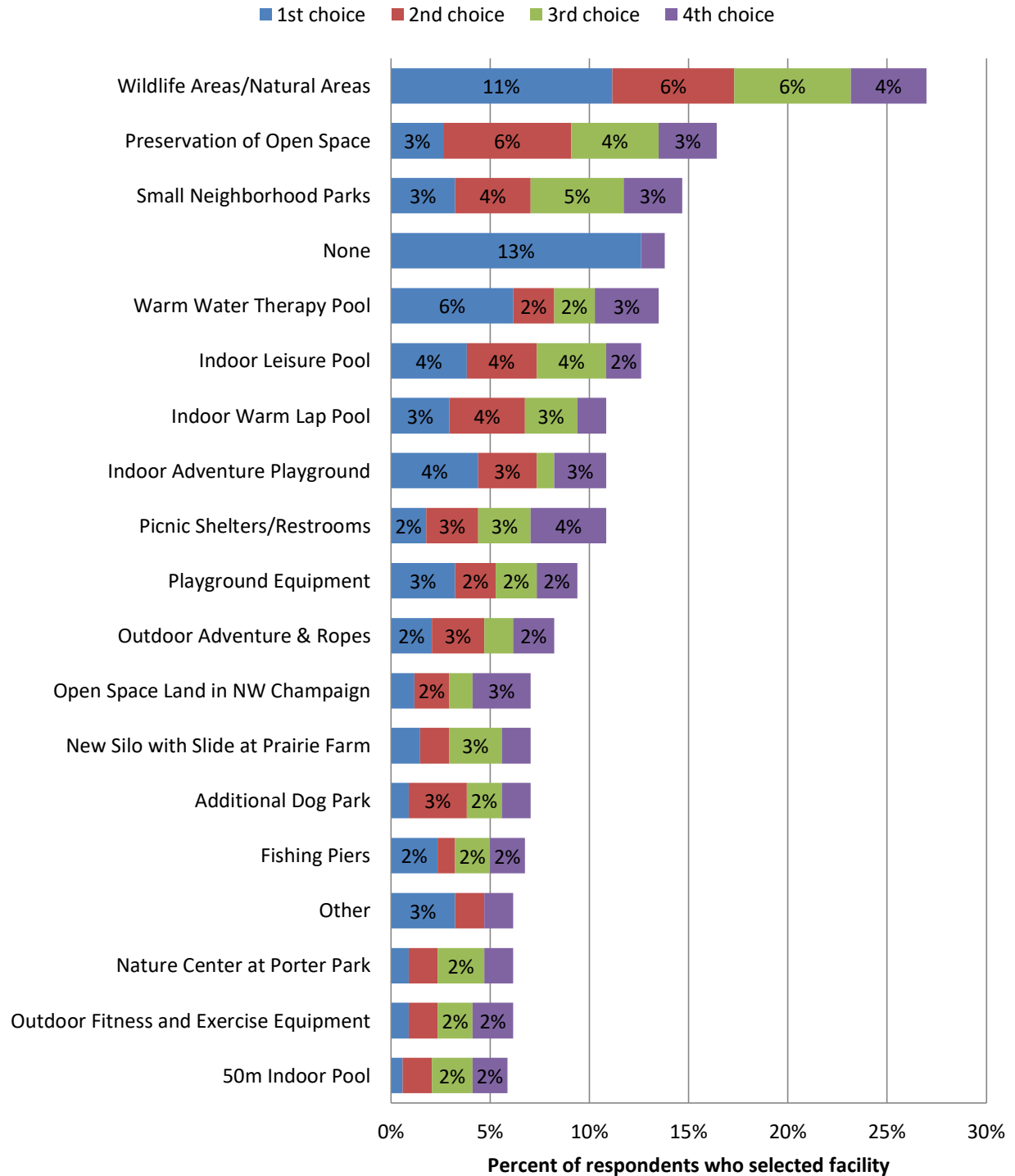
Note: Percentages are based on the respondents who expressed an opinion ("Don't Know" responses have been omitted).

## Top features for new Recreation Center (N=341)



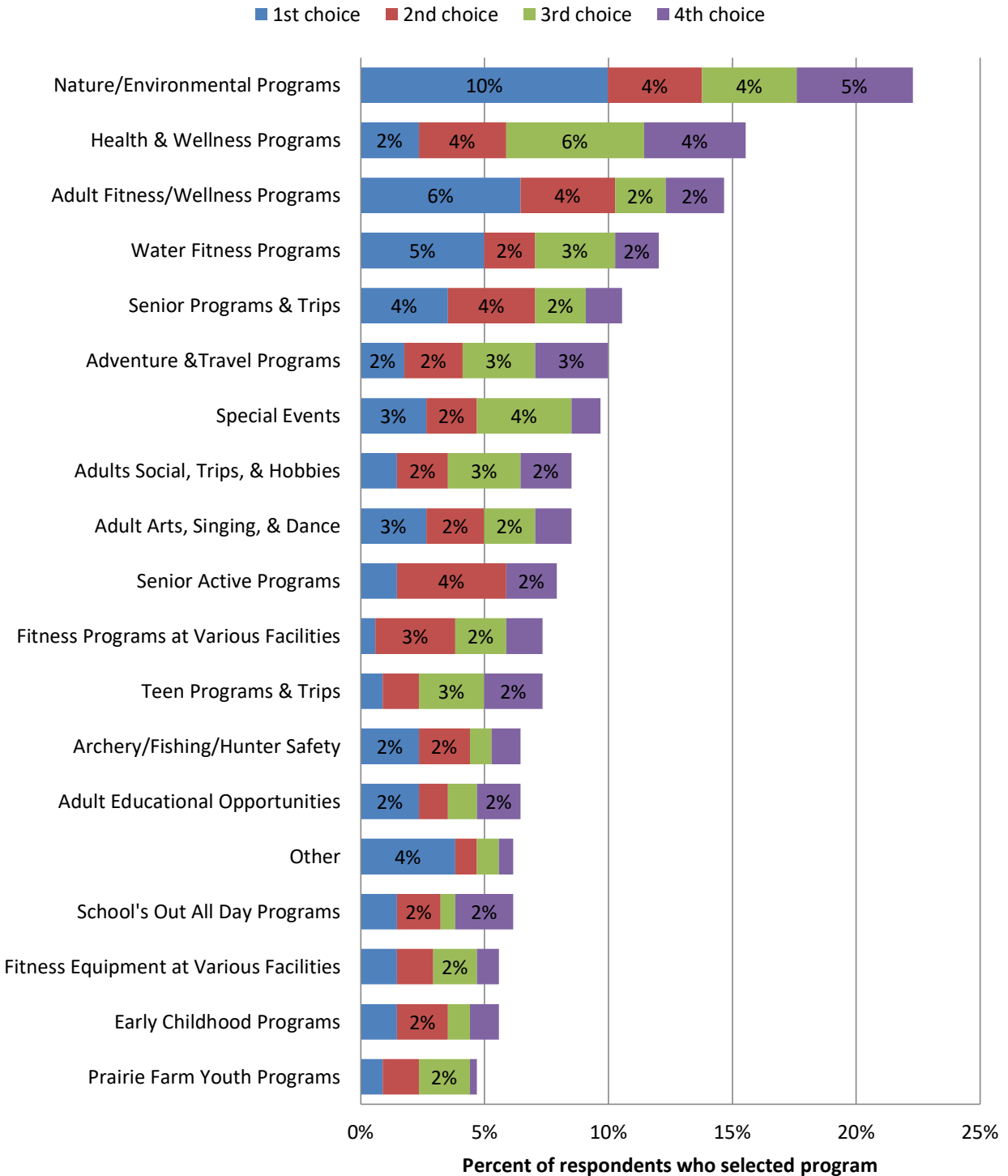
Note: Respondents could choose multiple items. Percentages are based on the total number of survey respondents. Segments that are not labeled represent fewer than 2% of all respondents, and features chosen by fewer than 5% of respondents are not shown.

## Top facilities to develop or expand (N=341)



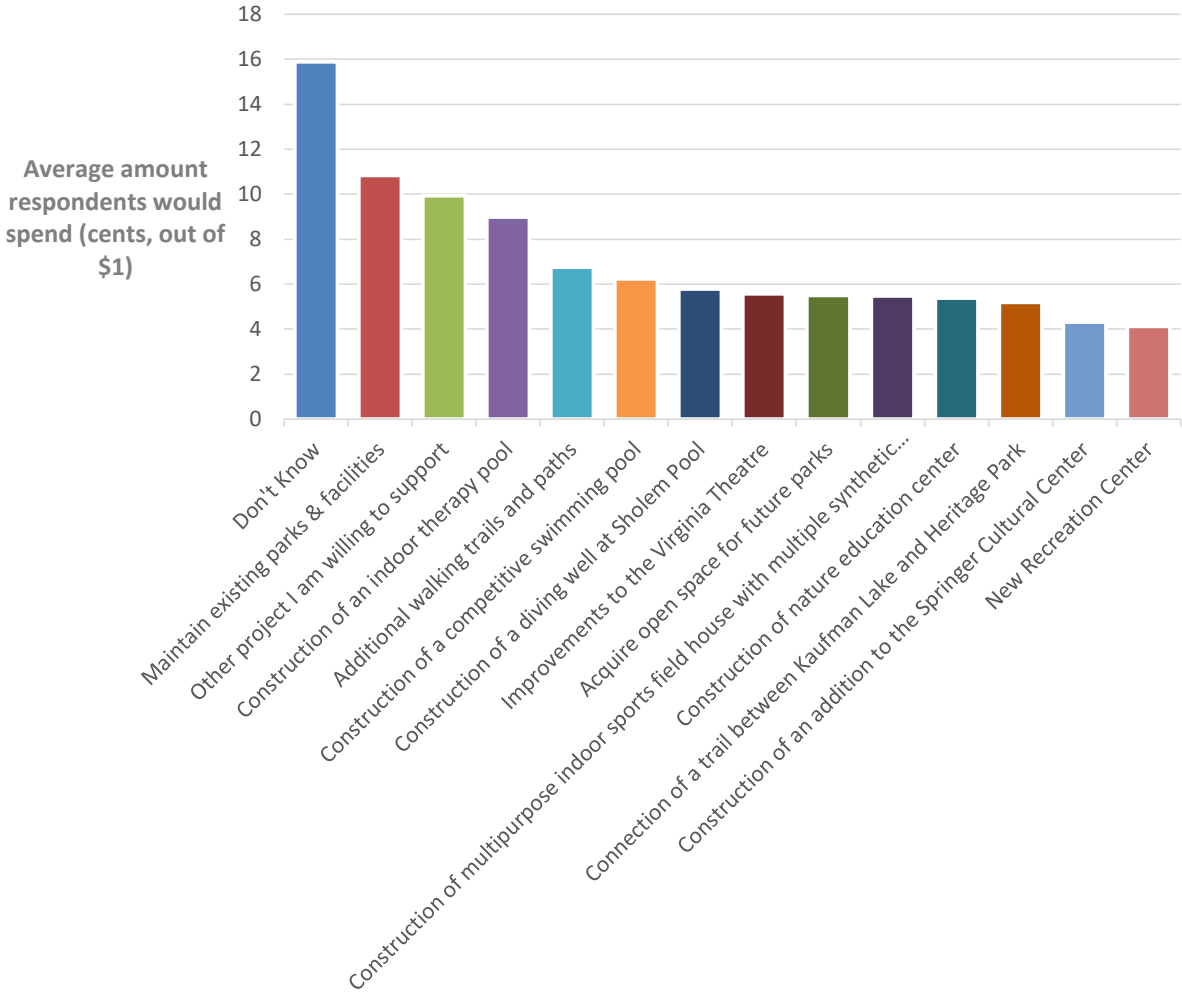
Note: Respondents could choose multiple items. Percentages are based on the total number of survey respondents. Segments that are not labeled represent fewer than 2% of all respondents, and facilities chosen by fewer than 5% of respondents are not shown.

## Top programs to develop or expand (N=341)

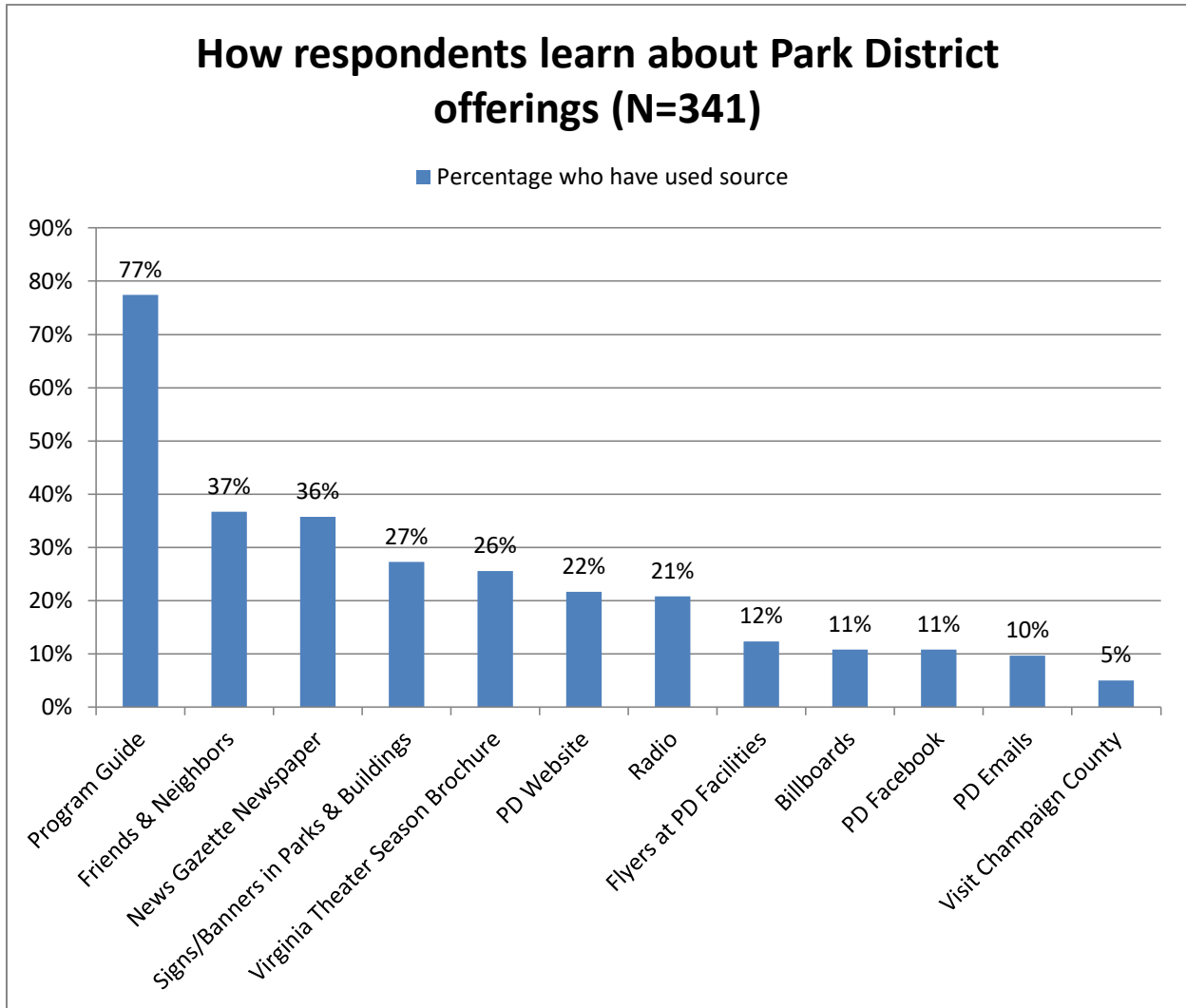


Note: Respondents could choose multiple items. Percentages are based on the total number of survey respondents. Segments that are not labeled represent fewer than 2% of all respondents, and programs chosen by fewer than 5% of respondents are not shown.

### Spending priorities given \$1 to spend

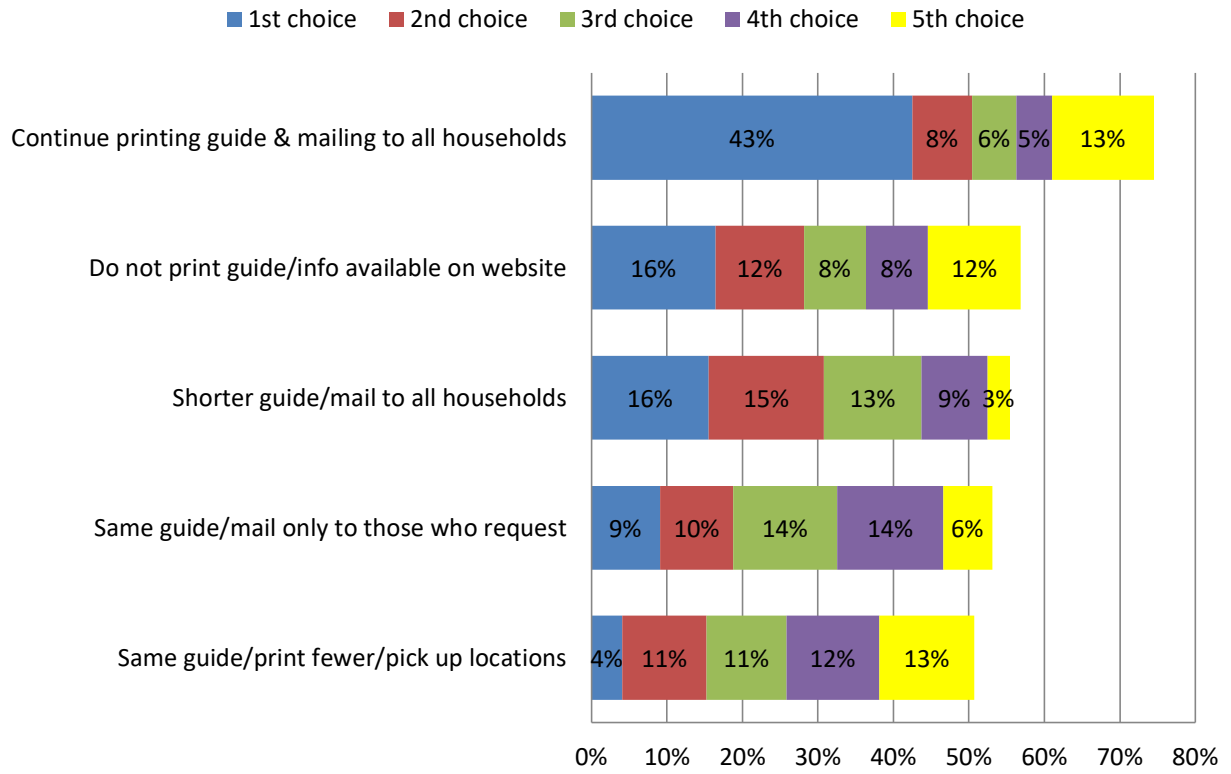


## Marketing



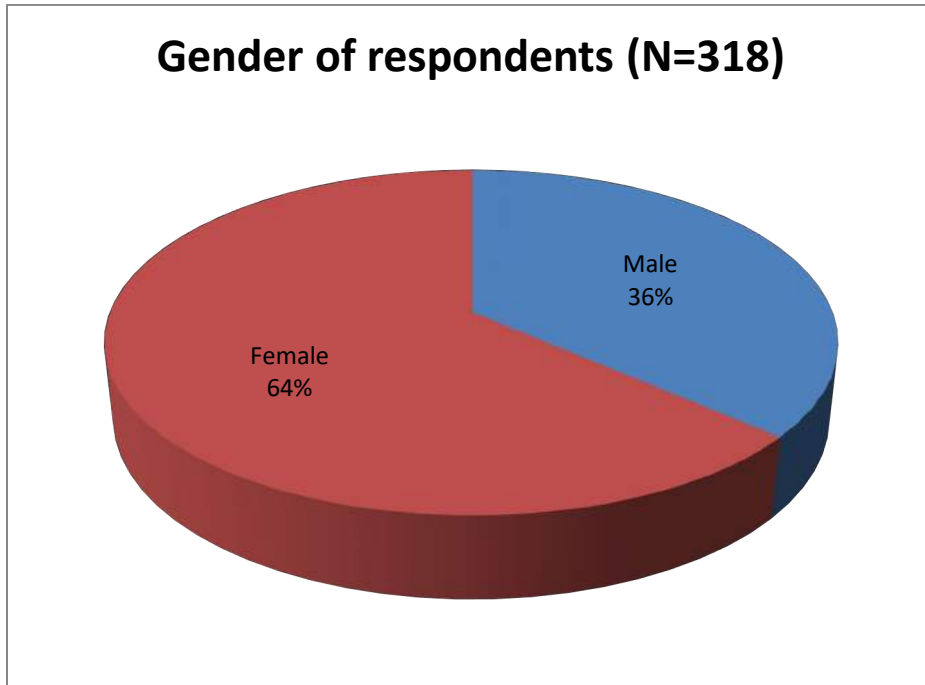
Note: Respondents could choose multiple items. Percentages are based on the total number of survey respondents. Sources chosen by fewer than 5% of respondents are not shown.

## Preferred method of receiving Program Guide (N=341)



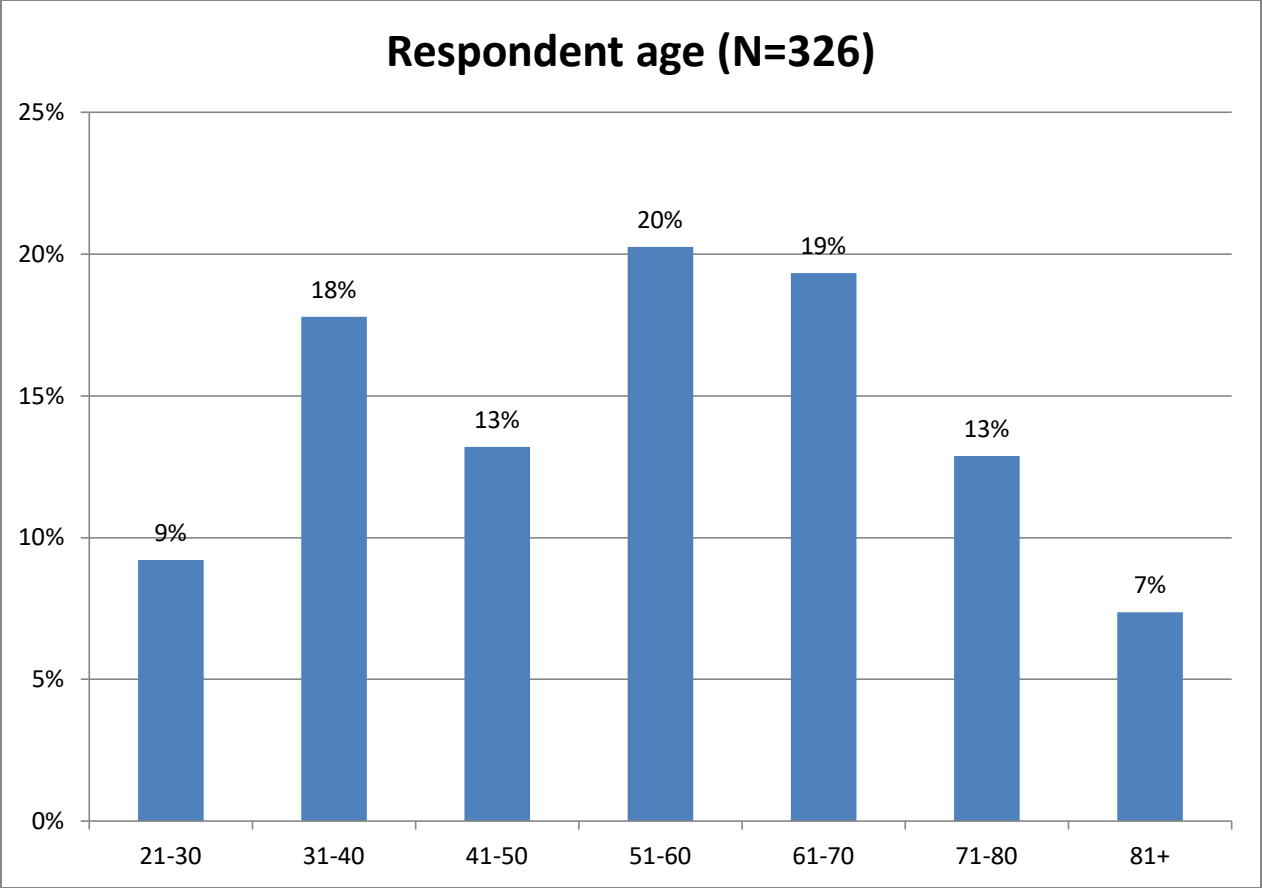
Note: Percentages are based on the total number of survey respondents.

**Demographics**

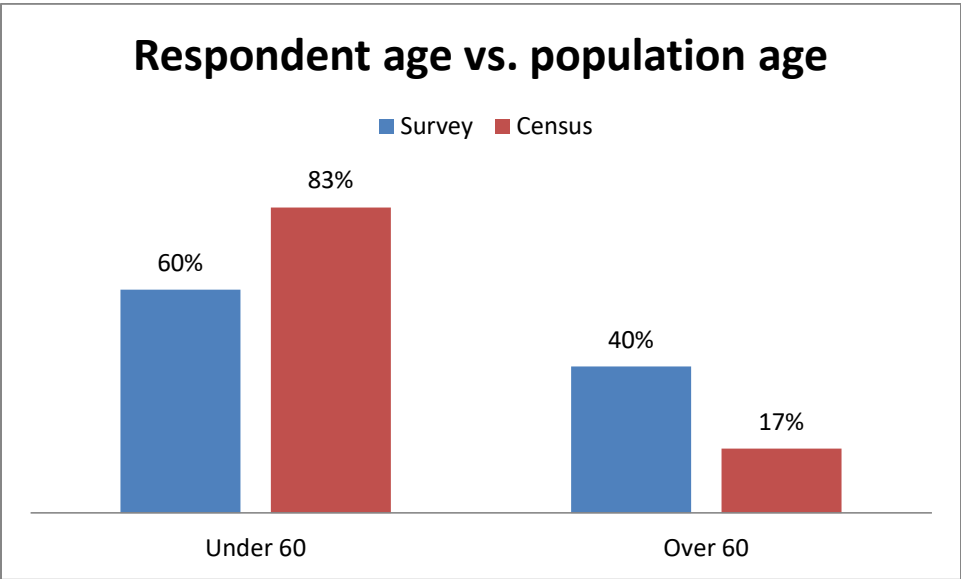


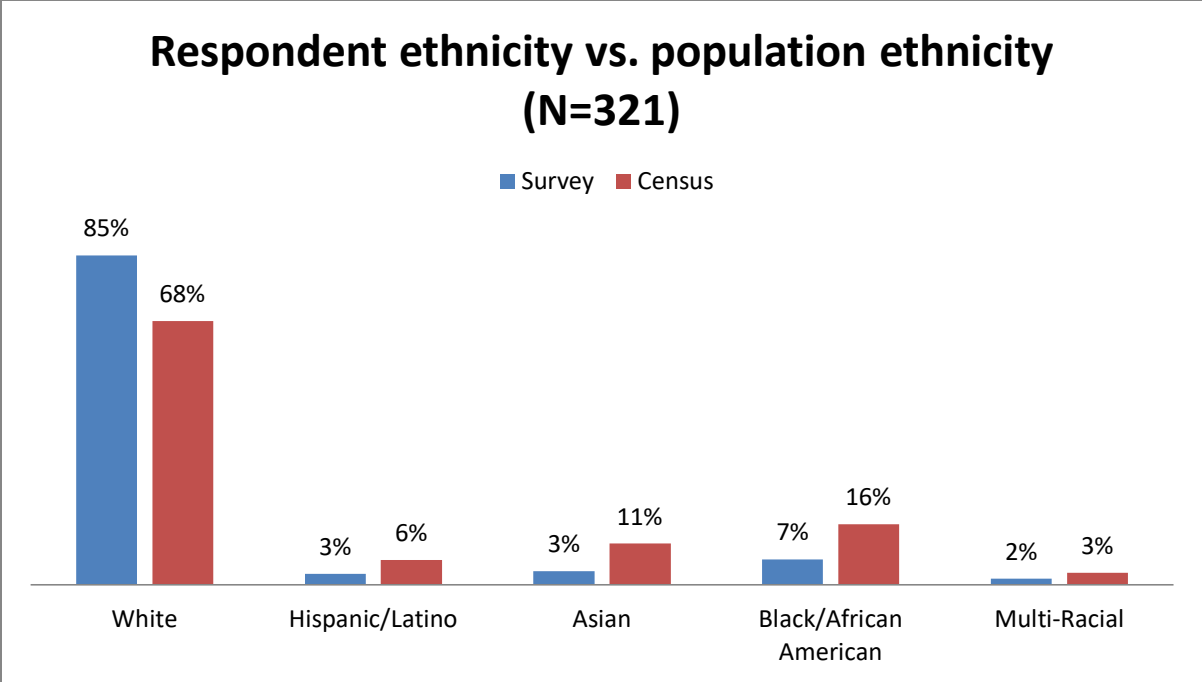
The 2015 census estimate indicates that 49.8% of Champaign residents are female and 50.2% are male.



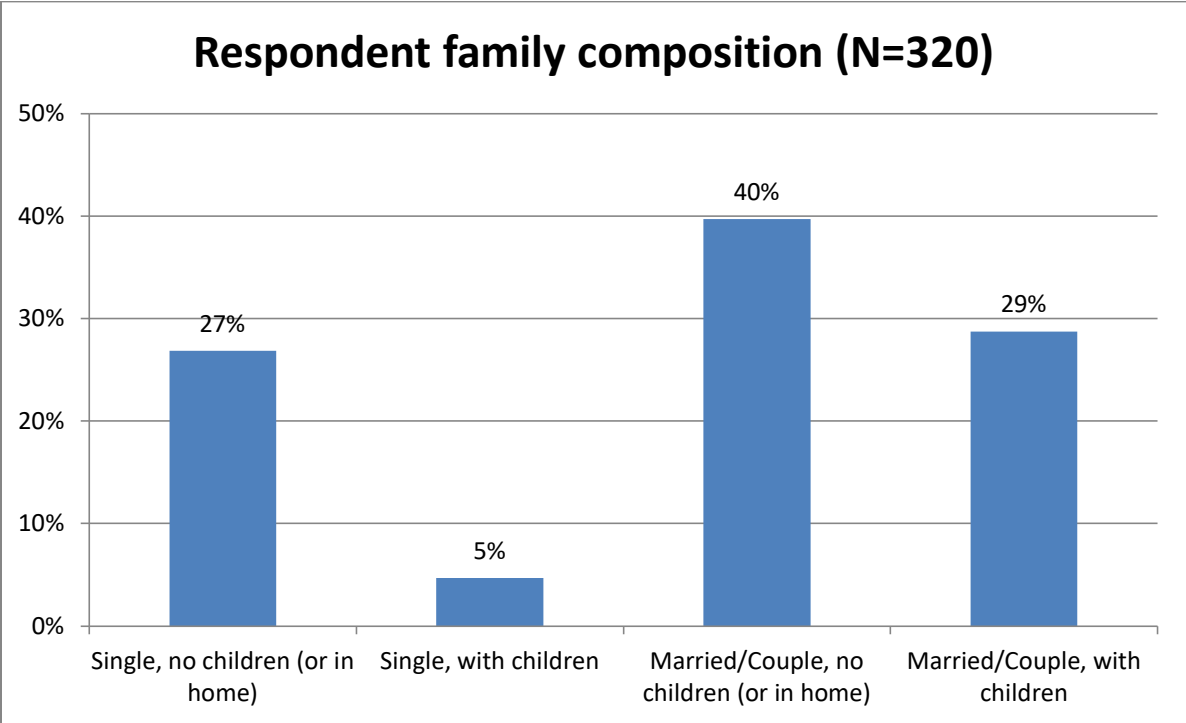


Note: Percentages are based on the respondents who answered the question (N).

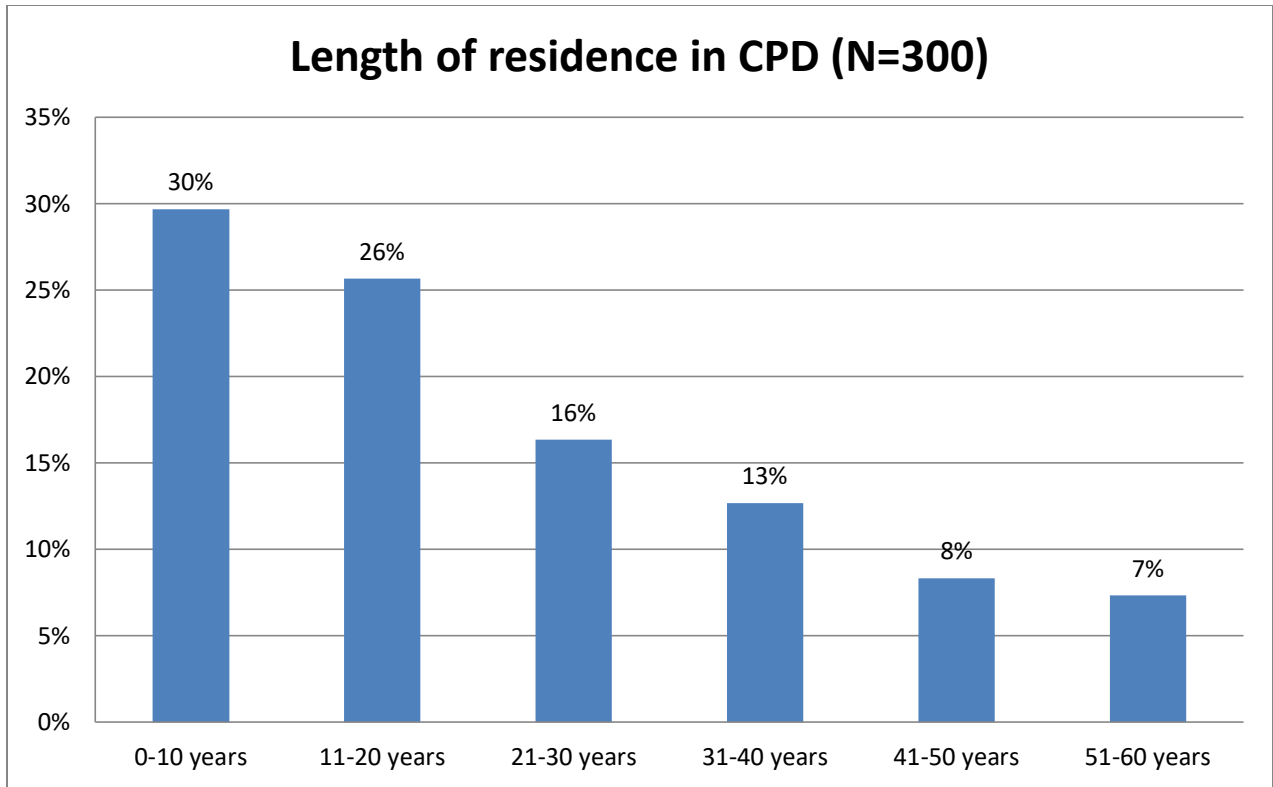




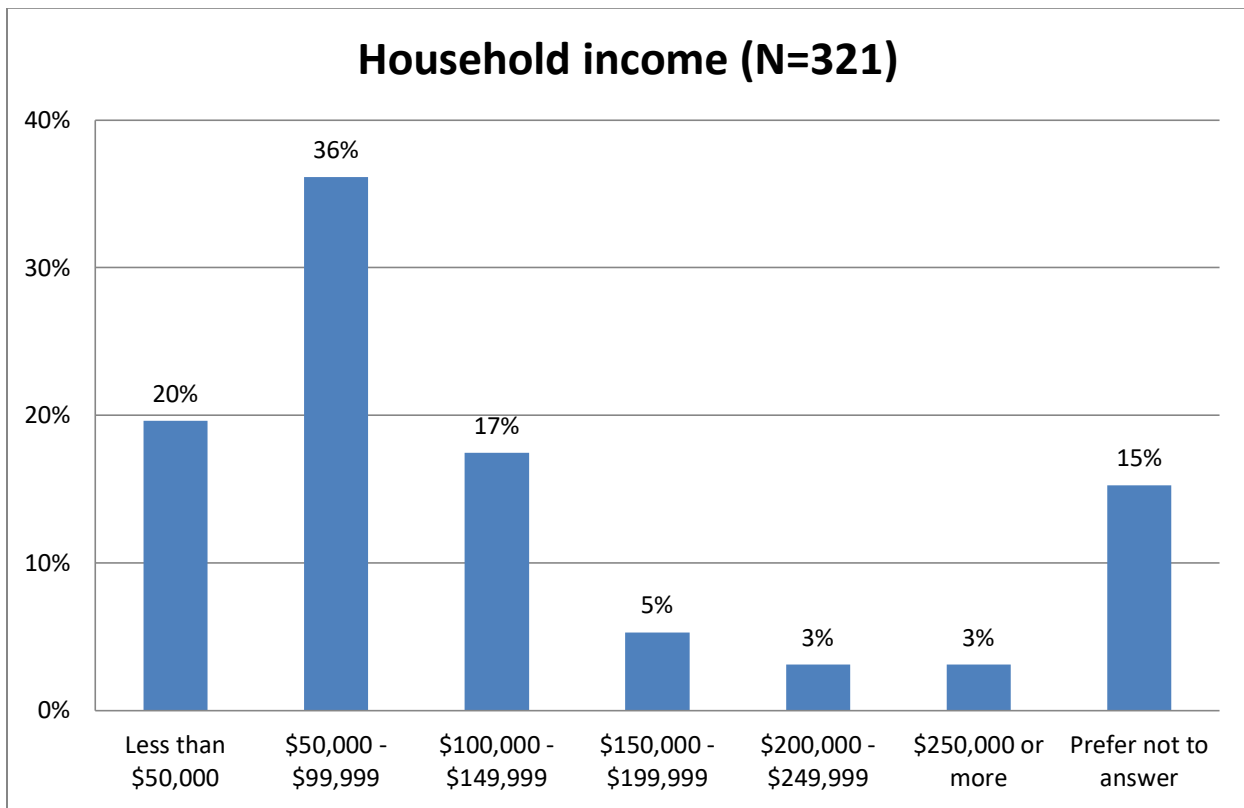
Note: Respondents could choose multiple items. American Indian/Alaska Native are not shown (survey = 0, census < 1%). Fewer than 1% chose "Other." Percentages are based on the respondents who answered the question (N). Census numbers total to more than 100% because Hispanics may also be included in other categories.



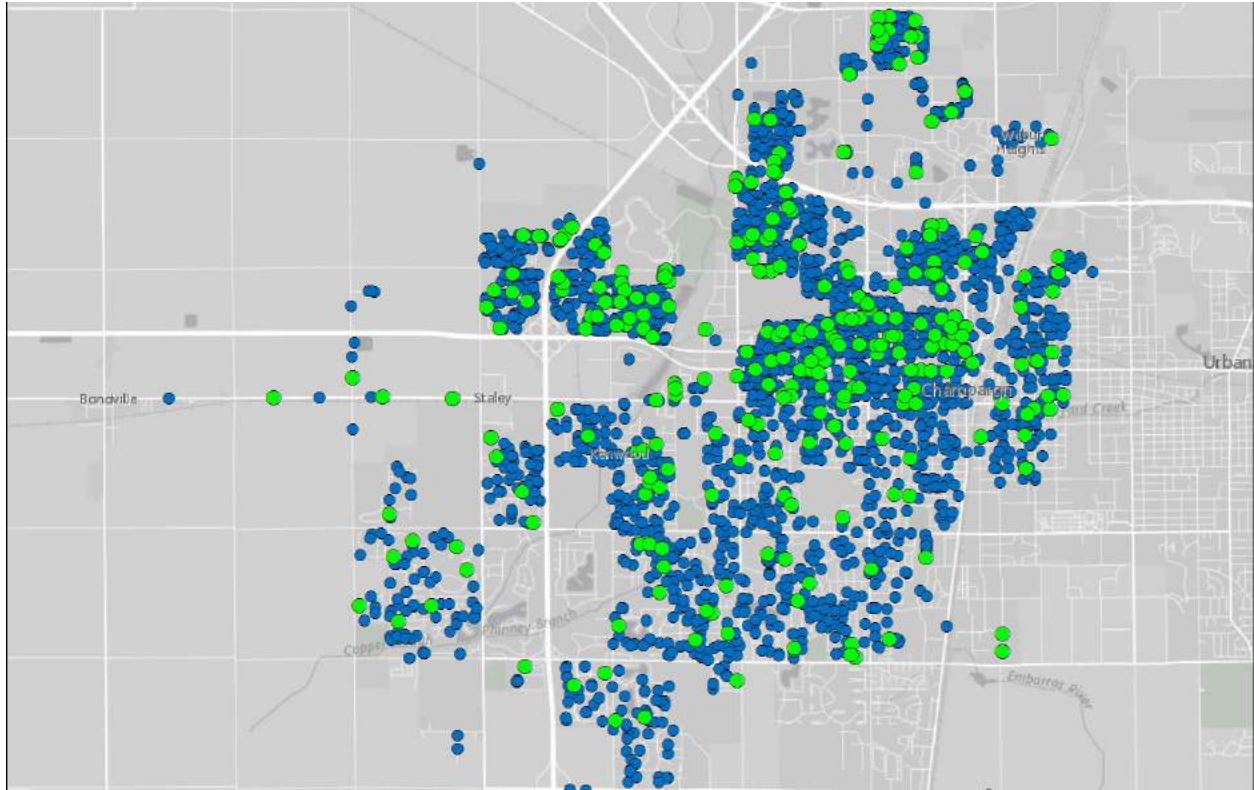
Note: Percentages are based on the respondents who answered the question (N).



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Note: Percentages are based on the respondents who answered the question (N).



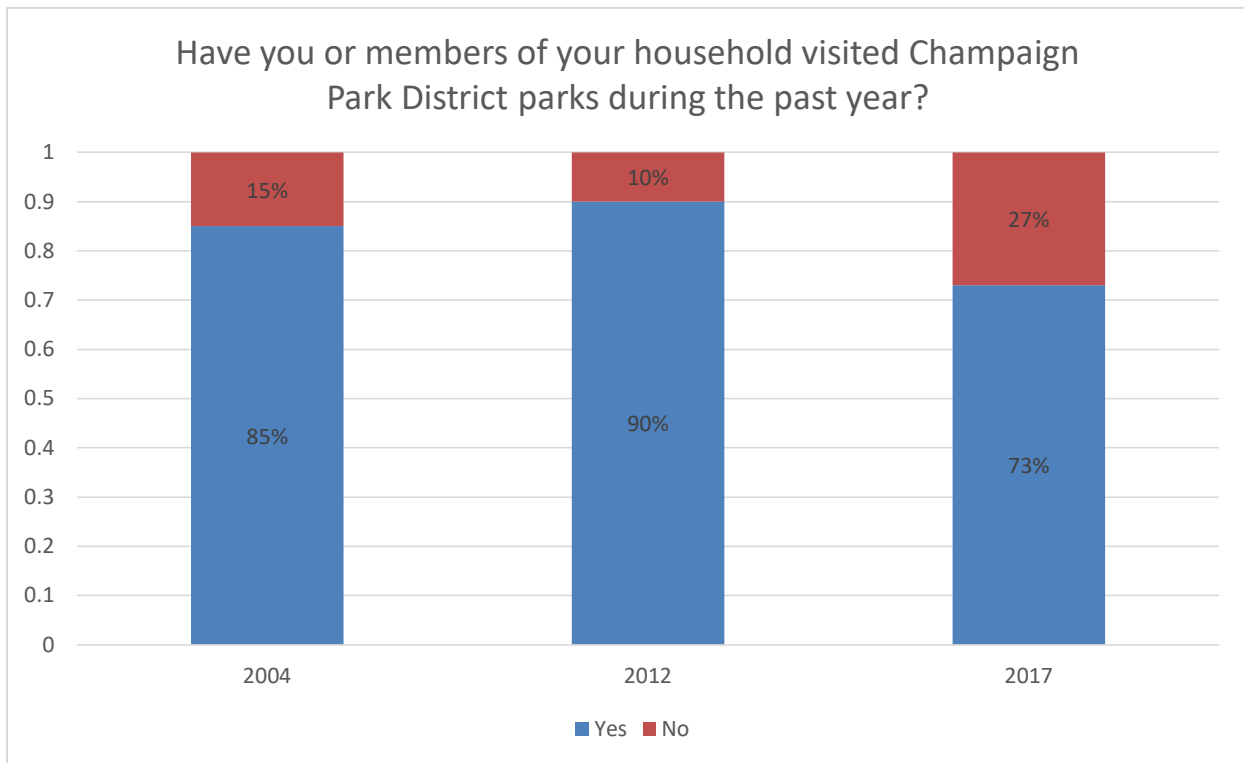
Note: Blue dots represent households where surveys were mailed to (3,500), and green dots represent households that responded to the survey mailing (341). The map shows that responses were spatially representative across the whole district, particularly in areas that tend to produce a poorer response rate (i.e. north of University Avenue).

### Comparison with 2004 & 2012 Studies

Comparatives were generated to analyze differences in residents' responses over time. Two survey questions were found to be similar across the 2004, 2012, and 2017 surveys. They are:

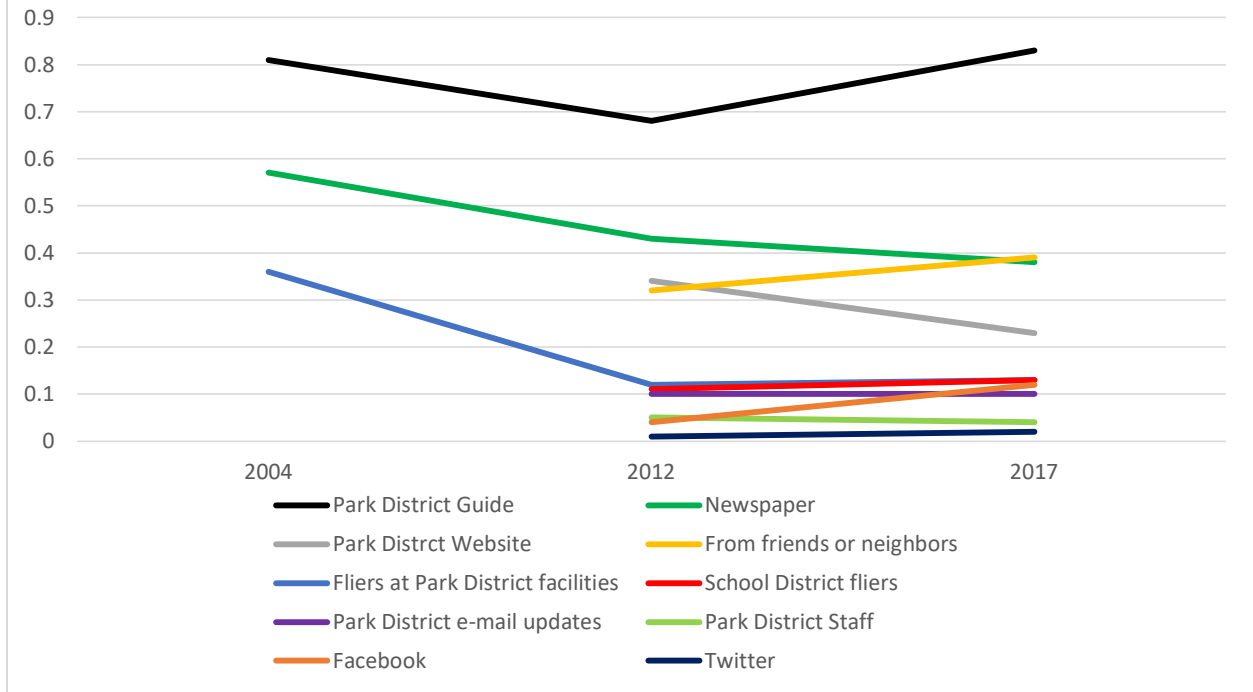
1. Have you or members of your household visited any of the Champaign Park District parks during the past year?
2. In what ways does your household learn about Park District programs?

Generally, the 2004/2012 survey questions were not compatible with the 2017 survey questions. The most recent version of the Champaign Park District survey (2017) asked more detailed questions and tended to include batteries of questions with multiple items (i.e., *Please rate your satisfaction with the following programs*) rather than single item questions (i.e., *How would you rate the quality of all programs you participate in?*) to generate a more complete understanding of resident opinions and priorities on multiple facets of the Park District such as program satisfaction. The graphs below illustrate resident responses from 2004, 2012, and 2017 for the two compatible survey questions.

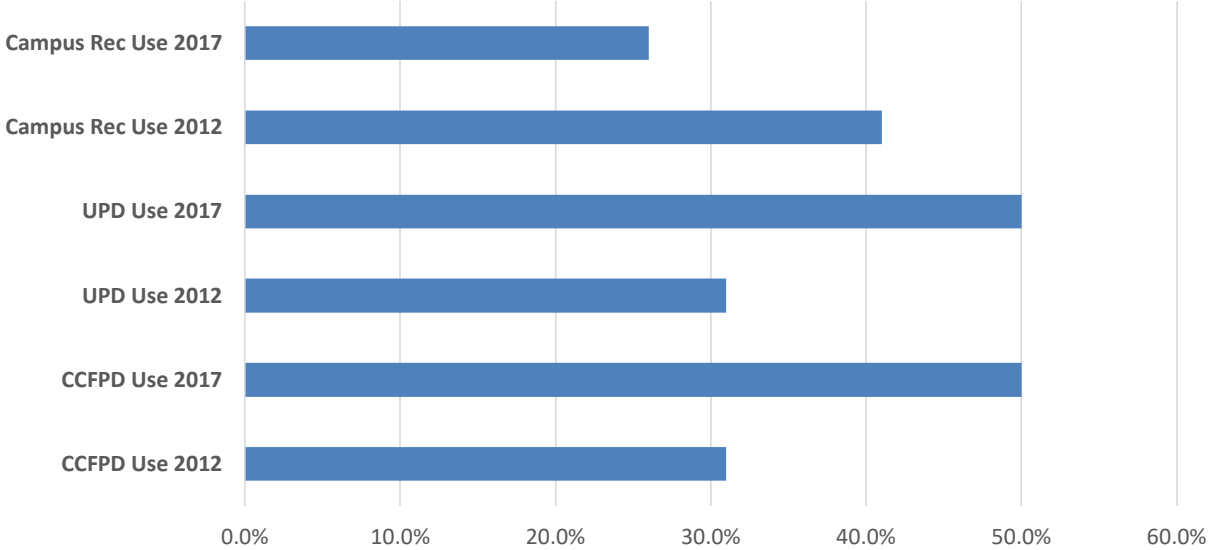


Note: This question was asked as a single-item question in the 2004/2012 survey but was asked as one of many other items on Park District participation in the 2017 survey.

## Ways households learn about Park District programs



### Use Patterns for "Other" Providers



## **General Comments**



## Thank You / Well Done

- Our park district is FANTASTIC! We are so lucky.
- We love the Park District. Love Clark Park.
- I think CPD continues to do a good job for our community. Thank you!
- We love Clark Park and Hessel Park!
- CPD does a great job.
- I'm proud of our Park District!
- Champaign has beautiful parks and nice playgrounds for families!
- Champaign Parks are great! Keep up your hard and rewarding work. We appreciate what you do!
- CPD is a huge factor in why I enjoy living in Champaign, My favorite activities are neighborhood concerts, youth agents, and play grounds.
- From what I have observed, the park district does a fine job for the cities of Urbana and Champaign.
- Grateful for the Parks!
- Great park service for our community! Virginia Theater is FANTASTIC!
- I appreciate all the opportunities available although I don't use them all. I work with young people and adults who need the necessity of activities processed. My grandchildren enjoy the parks & picnics especially. I see neighbors and their children active in the parks. Sport and other activities which is so much more important than spending all their time on electric devices. Thank you all so much!
- I believe Champaign Park District does a great job for our community. It is our fault that we do not take advantage of all the programs that are offered.
- I don't know much about the program or facilities but it seems like CPD has a lot going on! I am impressed and I will try to get more involved. I work for UPD but live in Champaign now.
- I love running at the Champaign/Urbana parks. You guys do a great job keeping the park well kept and clean! I appreciate all you do in the community.
- Love the dog park. Love the expansion of the natural area. We have used so many facilities and programs over the years, thank you!
- Overall Champaign District is/have done great community service!!
- We love CPD-have used many programs over the years, especially when our kids were younger. Keep up the great work!
- While we do not use the park facilities, we feel you run an excellent program for those who use the parks. The best system we've seen is the five towns we have like over the last 85 years. Keep up the good work.
- You guys are doing a good job.
- We enjoy the many programs the Champaign Park District has to offer. We enjoy the various concerts the park district puts on as well as the fact that the Virginia Theater now offers beer/wine for concerts. Keep up the good work!
- The dog park rocks!

- We are proud of the park district in CU
- Great parks

## Facilities & Amenities

### *Aquatics/Pool*

- Need an aquatic center like UPD.
- We would like to see a pool return to Spaulding Park or another location near downtown Champaign.
- Indoor pool with lap lanes or outdoor pool with lap lanes.
- An indoor pool would be nice.
- What at least 25 people I know well and would use (and pay a fee for, if on a sliding scale) is a warm water therapy (and lap) pool. The pool @ UAC is too cold but I'll go there before Spaulding. PLEASE attend to the much underserved needs of my population: retired (partially or wholly) or still working adults over age 40 who need warm water therapy/exercise to keep arthritis and other joint and related issues under control (or to improve these). The Y does NOT serve that need... the only places that now do are the (illegible) Suites (hotel) (somewhat too cold, too crowded, too shallow) and the Carle North Annex pool available for independent access (too small - (illegible) - & too limited in hours, esp. in the morning and late afternoon /early evening (e.g., through 9 am. and before 6:30 pm). The community desperately needs such a facility (also for tot classes year round) as the old small pool at the Old YMCA.
- Indoor Pool Please! Urbana's is small & poorly managed. The outdoor pools are great but unusable 9 mos. of the year.
- An indoor pool that offered year round swimming lessons would be fantastic; we current use UIAC.
- I became disabled 2 years ago, a warm water therapy pool is the only thing to help with the pain. I have been a part of the park district pool and water classes for many, many years but had to switch to the YMCA this year. The pool is often too crowded since I live on 1,039,00/month. I couldn't go there without a scholarship.
- Please build an indoor aquatic pool center on a multi-purpose pool and gymnasium center. Need an indoor lap and therapy pool. Will be happy to support center. Happy to pay fees to use.
- Please coordinate with Champaign schools to share costs for an indoor swim facility with a large, deep water warm pool for therapy and seniors.
- Keep the pool open later and/or cover part of the pool (I don't go in hot, burning sun). Keep cooperating with Urbana Park District, I used aquatic center, Lap swim hours are too early.
- Please add an aquatic facility for special needs people. For therapy swim, swim lessons, and fun play. There is nothing for them in this county and it's long overdue!

### *Trails*

- I have lived in Muncie, IN; Indianapolis, IN; & Covington, IN. Each of these towns have an extensive trail system within their communities (Cardinal Greenway, Monon Trail, & Circle Trail).

These are all excellent models on various scales that Champaign-Urbana could use to replicate a similar functional trail system. For me, I like to have a trail that is safe, long, accessible & bike/pedestrian friendly.

- Would like to see more and better connected off-street bike & walking trails
- Bike path/trails
- I would love to see more walking trails embedded within the community. However, I would like to see more dynamics trails not all paved walking more soft/grass walking surface more use of grasses/prairie trees on paths. Art would be nice along the path.
- I didn't know there were any trails or wooded areas. It might be good to advertise underserved areas.

#### *Open Space/Green Space*

- Less infrastructure and more lawns, more attraction on connected open space and passive recreation opportunities.
- More woods.
- My husband and I live in a house that backs on to Greenbelt! That space was an empty field when we bought the houses 50 years ago and when we learned that it was about to become a development with 6 more houses we gathered our neighbors, send our kids out to get on a petition to the Park District to purchases the land and gained some money to help pay for it. It is a great pleasure to us to sit at our dining room and watch.
- We would also like to see parking lot space in downtown (e.g. One Main area) turned to greenspace. Additionally, Unit 4's plans to tear down homes to add parking space, and potentially remove greenspace in Spaulding are terrible. The City should work to preserve these old neighborhoods.

#### *Other*

- I believe our community would benefit from a kitchen (certified) & healthy cooking classes. I'd be happy to discuss it further. Xxx xxx xxx-xxx-xxx [xxxxx@xxxxxx.xxx](mailto:xxxxx@xxxxxx.xxx)
- An Indoor Soccer Field would be nice
- Please look at the toxicity of any kind of artificial turf the Park District is thinking of laying down if that option comes to fruition. (If the CPD develops a new Community Recreation Center: Indoor Turf-Lined Fields) No! Unless it's the non-cancer causing type!!
- I would love to have a hot spring center! WOW!! I have been to several ones. Natural and man-made. One even had 5 small pools with different temperatures. Really takes the stress out of you both physically and mentally! Good for all people!!
- I wish there were restrooms at some of the smaller parks
- More exercise equipment @ Leonhard
- Please add benches around new play area at Hessel Park.
- We would definitely go to an indoor golf driving range if it was available especially during the winter time. Thank you.

- Also Meadowbrook like place would be great.
- A shelter or shaded area. Gets so hot in the summer. Love the dog park but the areas where grass does not grow each year is a pain. They fenced off area which includes water fountains. Have to carry water from the water pump. I think concrete with a water would be better.
- I feel the large sculptures in some parks (e.g., Porter Park) are a waste of money. That money could be put to better use in facility maintenance or programs.
- Public art installments are a blight on Champaign tasteless and absurd. Please stop spending \$ on them, I beg of you.
- (Indoor Adventure Playground) for autism/special needs
- (Flower Islands) Hopefully all noninvasive species and pollinator attractors
- Gazebo in West Side Park is rarely used & often attracts vagrants. What about constructing a cafe near it so someone can keep a better eye on it?
- We live in Westlake and 3 blocks from Powell Park we used to take out older kids all the time when they were young. 30-40 years ago new playground equipment was installed which was much worse than the previous equipment. It is now the worst Park District Playground in town. Despite its proximity, we never take our 4 year old there and chose to drive to other parks.
- Path lights would be appreciated.
- (Sholem Aquatic Center: Dissatisfied) No diving board
- I have been to Dodds Park to watch ball games, very disappointed. Concessions stand on West side is not open all the times. I have been told only when trail tournament is going on. The people who are from out of town do not pay for this. People of Champaign do. Open the stands!
- (Douglas Community Center) add spaces
- I also have young grandchildren. I would like to see the prairie farm open in the a.m. because kids nap in the afternoon. Hours seem too limited and season is waaay too short.
- (New Rec Center) Learning center for adults, variety of interests

## **Programs & Events**

### *Adult/Senior Programs*

- I like the Park District and recognize some of the improvements made and would like to see more. I would love to see more programs that accommodate working parents. There are fitness programs I would love to use but have to take off work to participate in and/or find a sitter.
- Add more adult classes (New Recreation Center)
- Still working but aging adults like myself do not need/cannot use ""senior activities"" like potlucks and outings on buses to Chicago (tho good if (illegible) are popular)
- 50+ programs; Many over 50 still have daytime jobs that do not allow for mid-day activities. Some of these around the available evenings (5:30 or regular) and weekends.
- You do a good job but selfishly I'd like to see more for seniors. I will also say the adult swimming lessons are useless, but I like swimmer water aerobics.
- I am 66, I am not interested in potholes day trip or cards. I have had 2 hip replacements and want to stay active. There are no active warm pools for exercise or classes. The "Y" is too far

from downtown for me to get to since I still work. I can still walk Hessel but I need a range of motion. Something in mid Champaign would be outstanding my husband plays senior softball and has played softball since the 1980s. This year they moved to Dexter. Not exactly Dodd's quality. Hmm, interesting way CPD serves people over 60.

- I would participate in some senior activities but I am too young!
- Many were very negative towards newcomers. I have shared this with others who also were treated rudely. Would love to go on some of the outings. Because of the reception of the group will not be registering for the 50+ at Douglass. The overseer at Douglass very pleasant and helpful young man.

### *Events*

- Taste of Champaign is TOO EXPENSIVE! The choices are too limited and the portions are TOO SMALL!:-)
- We hate alcohol at the taste of CU
- We enjoy the events we have attended in the past. Particularly at the Virginia Theater.
- Really enjoy how affordable the movies are at the Virginia but concert is usually too expensive.
- The Virginia Theater needs more publicity. When Los Lonely Boys were here, I was disappointed that there were not many patrons that night.
- Sometimes better coordination with the CUMTD is needed for event accessibility
- Better signage at the taste of Champaign for cash Vs credit ticket lines.
- More should be done to promote and support the kite festival--music, concessions, more publicity. And perhaps another date would be better. It could be so much more than it has been--something that families from all parts of the community could enjoy.
- I wish I got emails on their events so I could use the system more

### *Other*

- Taichi
- Tai Ch
- There are few programs for teens 14-16.
- I would also love to see a community wide challenge maybe a month long pedometer challenge where we have a collective goal. Would be great to continue to build the infrastructure the incentive to be a walking city. How with that more indoor walking activities for winter (Leonhard Center is great!)
- Would also love to see food/nutrition programming may be even using park space to have a garden. Cooking canning, gardening classes. I would also love to volunteer. xxxxx@xxxxx.com-xxxxx xxxxx
- Would like to see more/better options for water aerobics.
- You can cut programs to save money.
- Sometimes better coordination with the CUMTD is needed for event accessibility
- For softball, we need better communications on weather problems

- Special needs persons need more opportunities to grow and show their love and abilities to sing, act, and perform.

### **Maintenance**

- (Restrooms) monitor regularly for cleanliness and supplies
- We love all the playgrounds! There is often trash at Centennial Park when we go to play there, and the soft black surface (old tires?) could use repair in a few spots. Minor concerns aside, keep up the great work! Thanks!
- I hope the Hessel Park splash pad is under construction soon.
- Walking paths in the Ridge (w/ Champaign). Twigs and leaves under trees aren't collected before mowers begin. Sprouts under trees are not cut down.
- As a frequent user (walking, running, relaxing) of Champaign parks, I see too many off-leash dogs and encounter too much "dog waste." I would like to see much more active patrols and enforcement of current let laws.
- I think the best thing that the Park Service could do for this community would be to provide adequate garbage and recycling cans throughout the city. When I moved here a few years ago, I was shocked by the lack of public means for garbage disposal. Too many "packs" of dogs. More garbage cans
- Just keep the dog stations full of bags. At least then I get something for my tax dollars.
- Better upkeep with bulbs in Westside Park

### **Staff & Elected Officials**

- xxxx xxxx, the xxxx xxxxxx is outstanding. I very much appreciate everything about the way he does his job.
- We appreciate the Park District so much. Amazing group fitness instructors xxx xxxxx (xxx xxxx) and xxxx xxxxxx (xxxxx xxxx).
- Elected officials who volunteer time, although are beneficial to the community should abide by previous commitments to staff, organizations and retiree staff whether or not these commitments are implied or written. Integrity is an essential element of board or abiding by members. Playing policing instead of abiding by past agreements is divisive.

### **Cost/Fees**

- (Senior Programs) provide scholarships
- We need more scholarships for low-income kids. We need more low-cost activities that don't require scholarships. A variety of tour at the poverty line can't afford pool season or proses...
- Seniors should pay NO fees. We've paid taxes for 55+ years for park district. Able bodies kids & adults should pay or "work" at park dist. or elsewhere to pay their fees, no free rides especially when they walk in w/ \$200 Nike shoes
- I walk at the mall to save the \$50.00 fee because money is very tight

- (Season Pass Fees at the Sholem Aquatic Center) Too cold & season too short & hours not good for deep water aerobic exercise, but too pricey, too
- Make membership more affordable for families and residents of Champaign County.
- I wish Savoy could be included into Champaign Park District. We would use programming more if included as resident or at least a little more affordable.
- We are on the fringe of the city limits so have to pay xtra for everything we do & always have. Therefore we don't see too many they are free.

### **Priorities**

- We are a sporty family, but we believe the park district focuses too much on sports, and not enough on passive and community recreation. Please take the resources you have spent on our fantastic sporting facilities (which we love) and redirect them towards developing natural, cultural and conservation-minded resources.
- Too much emphasis on activities and events for children and their families. Too little emphasis on seniors and programs. Downgrading Hays from a senior center resulted in only one center located in an area where majority of seniors don't reside or are fearful of going into the area where it is located.
- Please direct resources toward in-fill before developing the peripheries of this town.
- The flower islands are a pet peeve of mine. I hate that money are being spent to water flowers instead of on programming or facilities.

### **How Would You Prefer to Receive Program Guide?**

- I don't think it's good to send only to those that want, because we have so many new people in the community who may miss out!
- Put guide online, as Urbana Park District does
- Visual and like to write in (illegible) / hard copy
- Catalog is nice, but not a necessary cost.
- (Continue providing a printed catalog to residents through mail) Giving option to opt out

### **Taxes**

- Park taxes are too high! Parks are trying to take on too much & be all to everyone!
- I am single earning 30000 per year. Property taxes are too high and I don't have of the necessary the taxed are for.
- I do not like being taxed more and more on facilities/programs I do not like. Enough is enough.
- Taxes should be collected so that parks etc. can be free to these who want to go. Thank you!

### **Survey**

#### *Thank You*

- Thank you for taking the time to assess the needs & wants of the community you serve.

- Thank you for requesting opinions!
- Thank you for your questionnaires.

#### *Survey Length*

- I enjoyed completing this survey - it really made me think about issues and priorities. However, I can't imagine anyone being able to finish in 10-15 minutes, especially with thoughtful answers! I may be slow, but it took me almost an hour. It was worth it.
- The survey is too long, discourages residents from completing.
- Too much detail

#### *Other*

- Good questions - good thought –
- Thank you for sending out this survey! It helps let me know that I need to learn more about and take advantage of more of the programs and facilities that the park district already offers!
- After doing this survey we might look up some programs that we can join
- Hate Surveys and Paperwork
- I am the wrong person to ask to fill out your survey
- Sending me this survey was a waste of your time and mine. I would suggest that in the future you develop a target group rather than a bulk mailing!

#### **Miscellaneous**

##### *Used to Use*

- In the past my husband and I used facilities a great deal, tennis, walking paths, adults softball, Virginia Theater. I strongly support Park District activities and proudly show the flower islands and parks to visitors. Our children and grandchildren used to facilities a lot. Keep up the good work!
- In the past years, when my children were young (now all grow and gone away). They participate in all the park activities programs. It is wonderful all the programs they have and hope they will continue to do so. Champaign Park district is #1.
- Used when child young

##### *Other*

- Mobility issue
- Sorry, I am a senior handicapped person so I never use any of the Parks
- I can't use most facilities
- widowed w/ children
- We are unfortunately both at points professionally that do not allow us enough time to explore Park District offer us as much as we would like.
- We respect choices of elderly seniors citizen with mental and physical limitation.



- Lived in Mahomet before
- I believe the state of ILL is broke. I will be 72 in September of this year, being born in 1945 & I work 4 part time jobs! I will probably live another 20 or 30 years & see the state of ILL go permanently broke.
- I was part of a group that worked, after the old Y pools closed, to get the Park District to take over that facility or work toward building a new one. I am very disgruntled that the Champaign Park District has made no progress toward building an indoor aquatic facility to serve seniors and others need a deep warm water pool. At this point I much prefer the Urbana Park District offerings.
- COOPERATE more with U4SD locating school buildings
- Naming rights seek is a very bad way to raise money encourages egotistic narcissism and were stick with the name for who knows how long. Don't do it! Too much "branding" already.
- You should consider merging with Urbana Park District or the City of Champaign if the same level of facilities, programs, and services can be maintained.
- Would love to see Champaign and Urbana park districts offer playground and facility use.
- We just moved here from California so we have not taken advantage of these programs. This summer our grandchildren will be visiting so we will be signing them up for summer program.
- Too much fighting in the park gangs.
- Recyclable Easter eggs for Easter hunts.
- No plastic whirligigs for filling empty flower beds.
- (Informing the community about PD) individual flyers would help
- (Providing community leadership) communicate more about park districts role

# Appendix

## Survey Cover Letter & Instrument

Dear Resident,

The Champaign Park District in cooperation with the Office of Recreation & Park Resources (ORPR) at the University of Illinois is conducting a survey to learn your present and future needs for park district programs, facilities and parklands. The Champaign Park District wants to know how you think they are doing and what you would like the park district to focus on in the future.

We appreciate you taking the time to complete the enclosed questionnaire, as your participation is crucial to the success of the study and the future direction of your park district. The survey has been designed to be easy for a member of your household over the age of 18 to complete, which will take about 10-15 minutes of your time. Please consider the views of your entire household when answering the questions. Written comments are welcome and spaces are available for these comments on the survey. If you have any questions about the survey, please feel free to contact Jarrod Scheunemann, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign at (217) 265-5296.

Your feedback is confidential. The survey results will be grouped together and will not identify any individual answers or comments. The final report will be made available through the park district for your review upon completion of the survey.

For your convenience, we have included a business reply envelope for returning your completed survey by April 28, 2017. You may also complete the survey online at the following website:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/champaignpd17>

Once again, thank you for your help in this very important project.

Sincerely,

Timothy P. McMahon  
Board President

Joe DeLuce  
Executive Director