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# 2024 Customer Satisfaction Study



**Report of Findings**

20 November 2024  
Confidential & Proprietary

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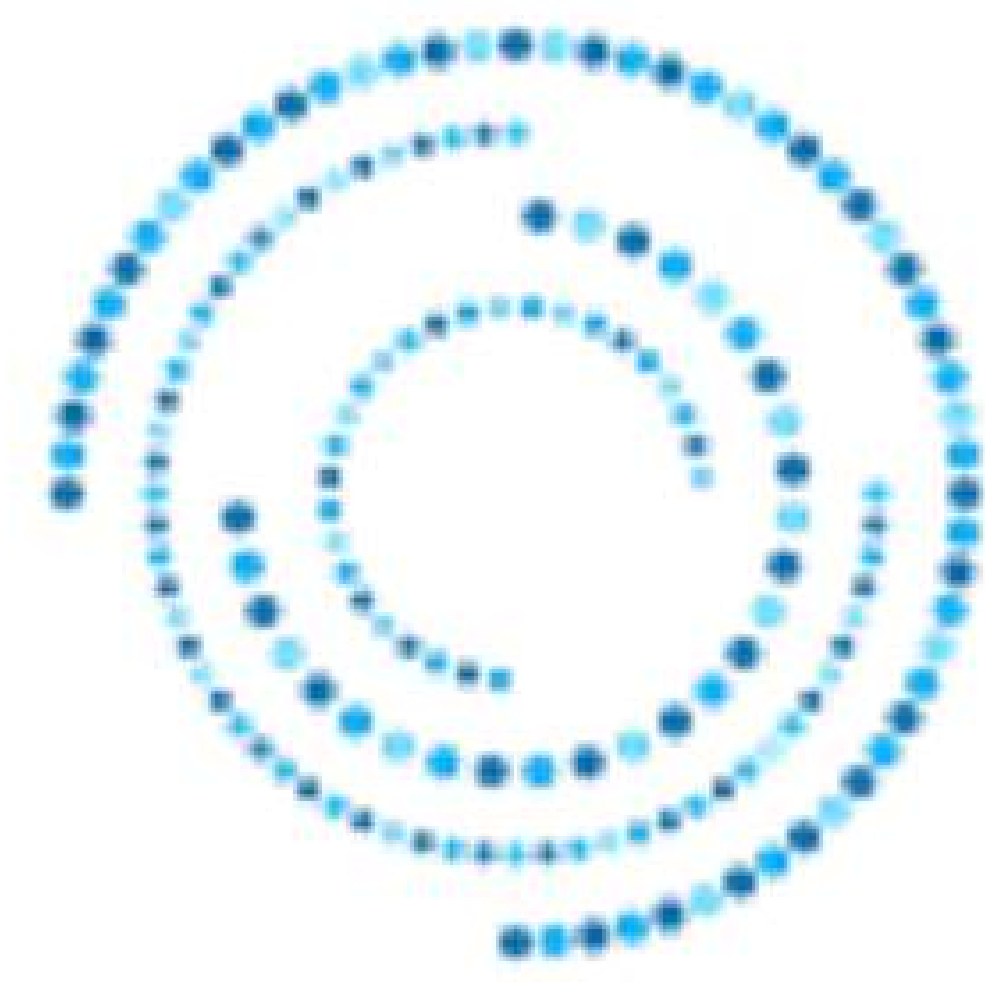
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# Harnessing the Power of Data

...to help clients achieve organizational goals.

 **Data** supporting strategic decisions to improve products and services. Since 1979, our experience with study and instrument design, data collection, analysis, and formal presentation assists our clients in identifying the “why” and “what’s next.”

 **Talent** with a knowledge base in a wide range of industries and methodologies ensures a 360° view of the challenges faced and the expertise to address them.

 **Solutions** that are customized to provide a personalized approach to understanding organizational, employee, and customer needs, allowing for more informed decisions.

## Methodologies:



Digital Surveys



Focus Groups



In-Depth Interviews

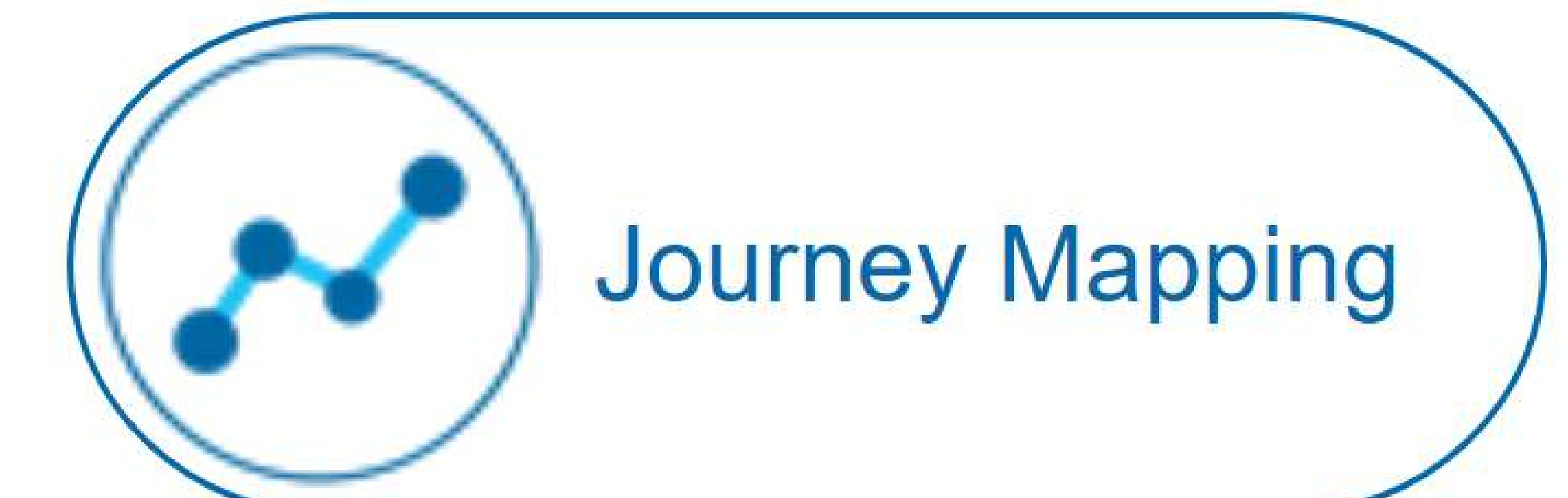
## Studies:



Awareness and Perception Studies



Customer and Employee Satisfaction Studies



Journey Mapping



Creative and New Concept Testing



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# Project Overview

## Research Objectives

- GreatBlue Research was commissioned by Shrewsbury Electric and Cable Operations (SELCO) to conduct comprehensive research among its residential customers to gain a deeper understanding of their perceptions of the utility and satisfaction with the services provided.
- The primary goals of this research study were to assess the effectiveness of SELCO's ability to serve its customers, identify areas for improvement, and isolate areas that may increase engagement.
- The outcome of this research will enable SELCO to a) more clearly understand, and ultimately set, customer expectations, b) act on near-term opportunities for improvement, and c) create a strategic roadmap to increase customer satisfaction.



## Areas of Investigation in 2024

The SELCO Residential Customer Satisfaction Study leveraged a digital research methodology to address the following areas of investigation:

- Rating SELCO's organizational characteristics
- Satisfaction with customer service personnel
- Awareness of SELCO's ownership model
- Assessment of the value of SELCO's communication platforms
- Awareness, use of, and satisfaction with SmartHub
- Perception of major storm response
- Anticipated electrification investments
- Awareness of SELCO's rebates and loan programs
- Awareness and interest in time-of-use rates
- Awareness and interest in participating in the Connected Homes program
- Demographic profiles of respondents



# Research Methodology | Snapshot

Methodology <b>Digital</b>	No. of Completes <b>535</b>	No. of Questions <b>62*</b>	Incentive <b>None</b>	Sample <b>Customer List</b>
Target <b>Residential Customers</b>	Quality Assurance <b>Dual-level**</b>	Margin of Error <b>+/- 4.1%</b>	Confidence Level <b>95%</b>	Research Dates <b>October 1 - November 5, 2024</b>

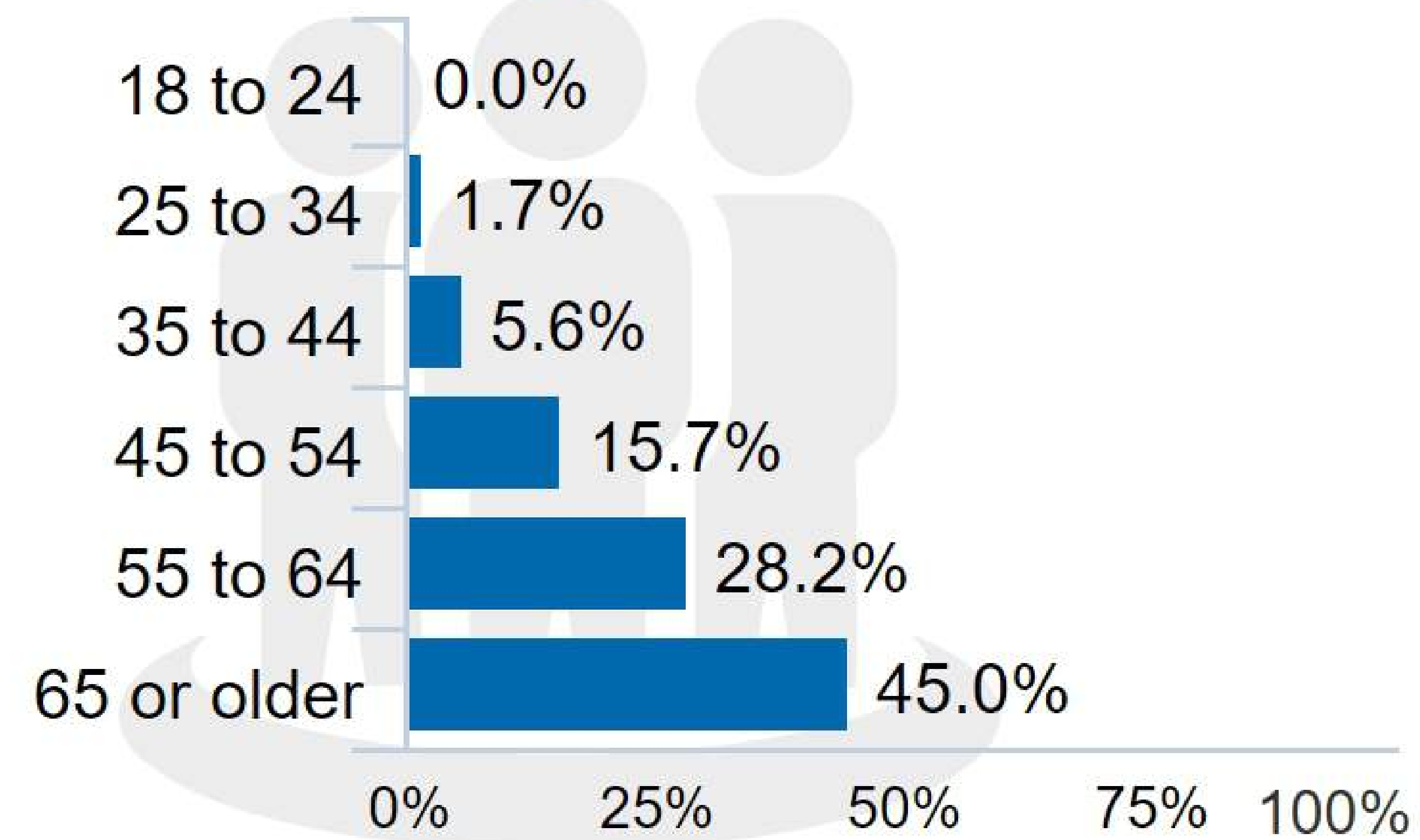
\* This represents the total possible number of questions; not all respondents will answer all questions based on skip patterns and other instrument bias.

\*\* Data quality personnel, in addition to a computer-aided interviewing platform, ensure the integrity of the data is accurate.



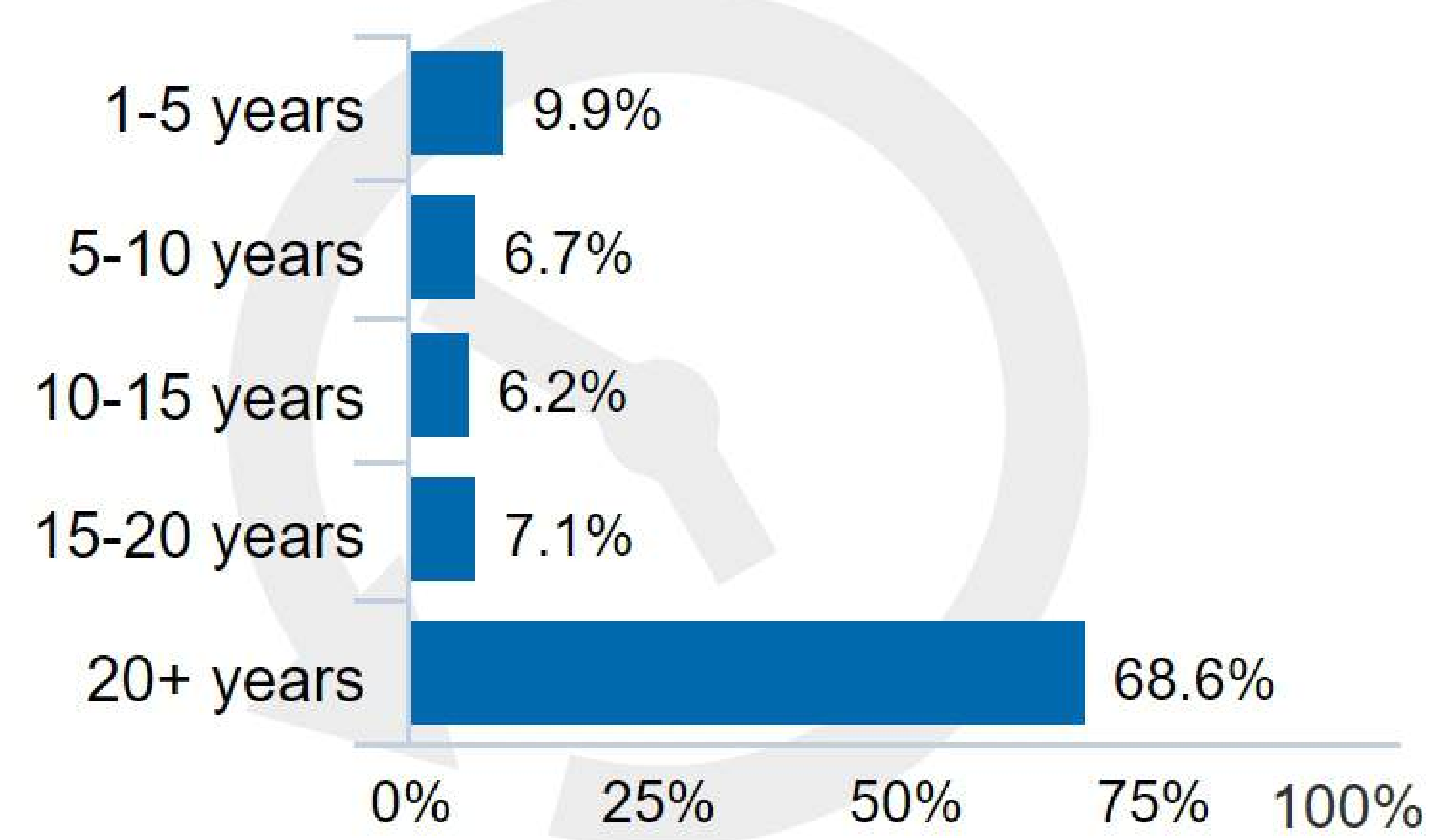
# Respondent Snapshot

## Age



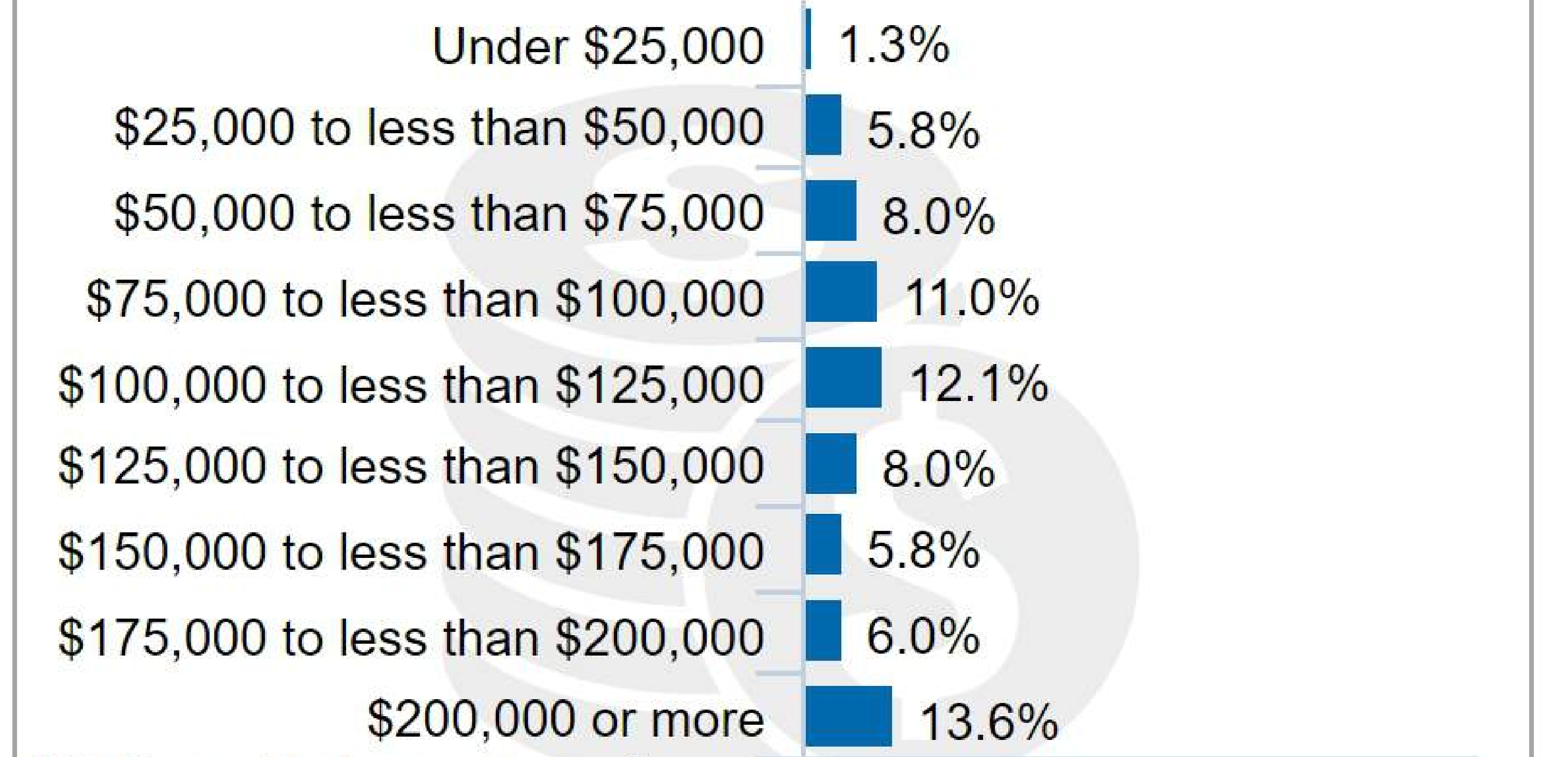
3.7% provided responses of "Prefer not to say."

## Resident Tenure



1.5% provided responses of "Prefer not to say."

## HH Income



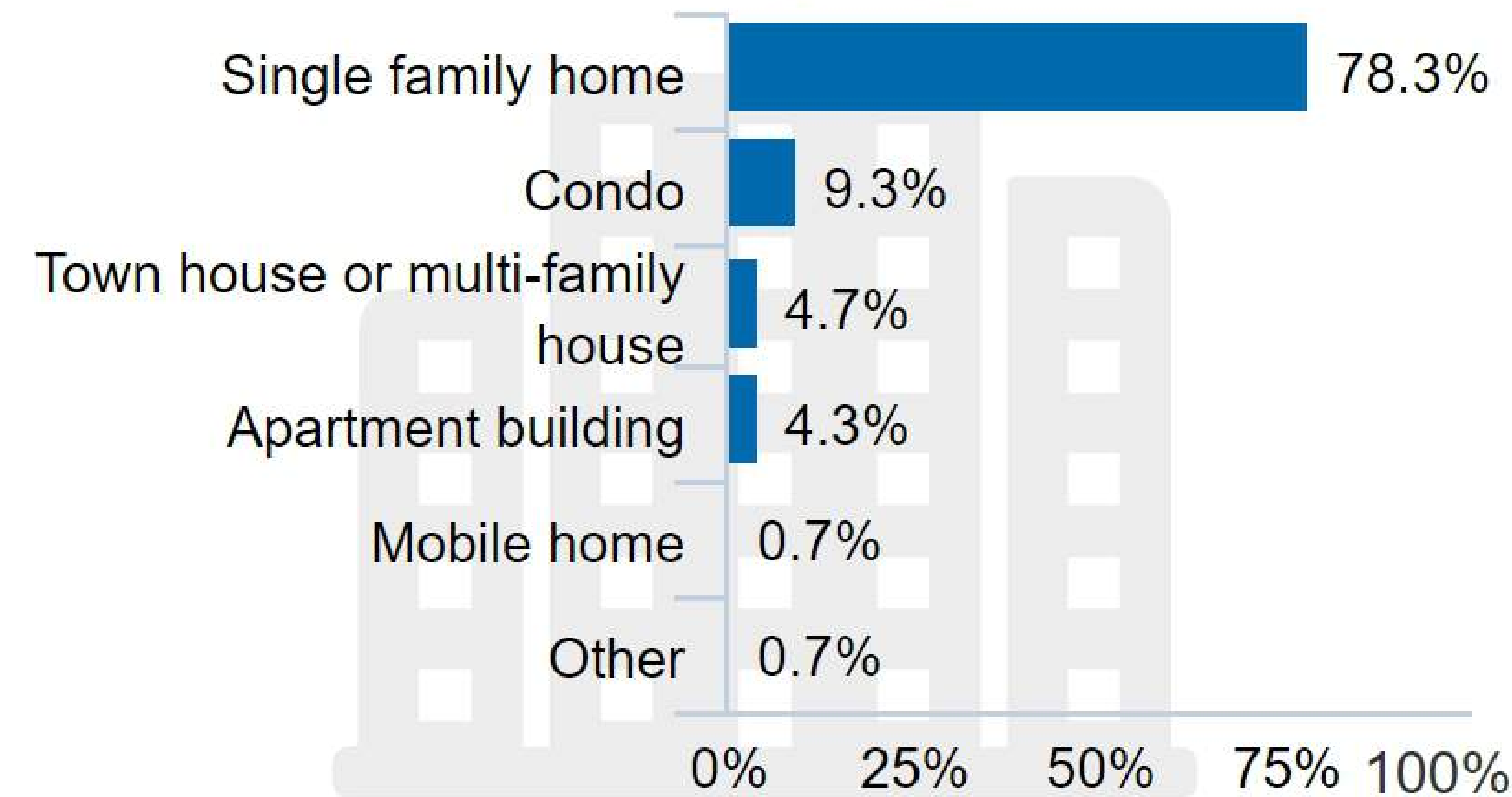
28.2% provided responses of "Prefer not to say."

## Rent or Own

**88.4% / 9.5%**  
Own Rent

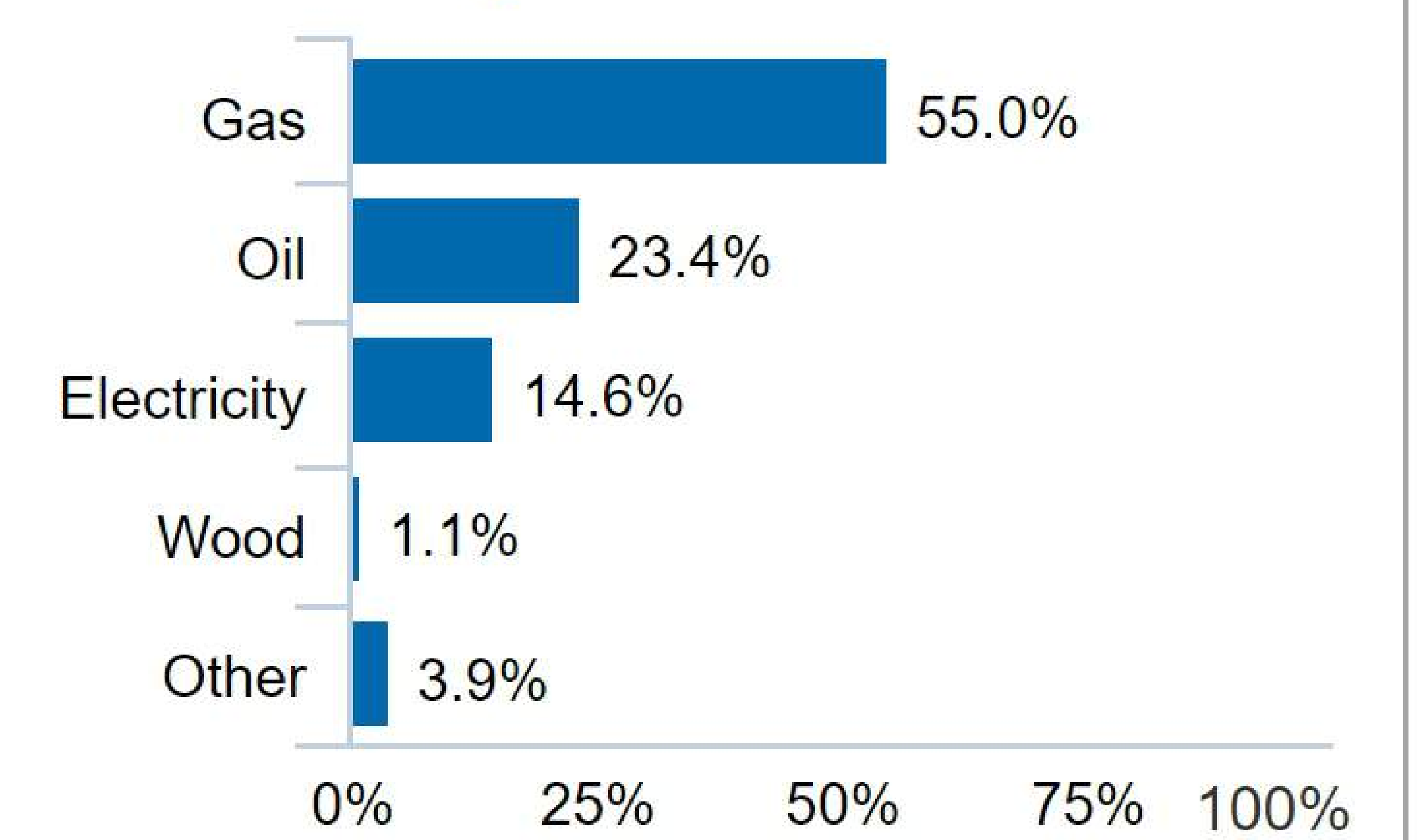
2.1% provided responses of "Don't know / Unsure."

## Dwelling Type



1.9% provided responses of "Prefer not to say."

## Heating Source



2.1% provided responses of "Prefer not to say."



# Guide to Footnotes

## General

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*n=362*

*The lowercase "n" is used to indicate the base size, or the amount of respondents who answered a particular question.*

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*NP+S*

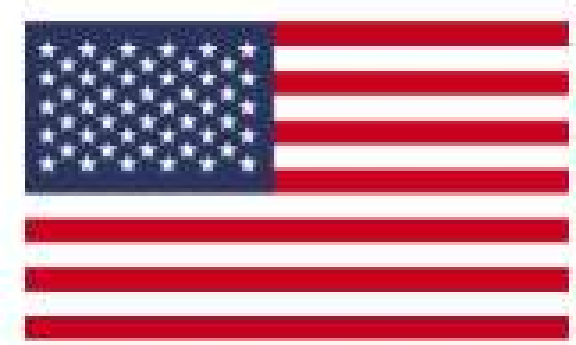
*The NP+S (net positive score) is a score based on a question asking respondents to describe their relationship with their utility. The score is an aggregation of the following responses: "an advocate of my utility," "a loyal customer," and "a satisfied customer."*

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*(+/-)*

*(+/-) indicate statistical significance at a 95% confidence level, with the color denoting whether it is higher or lower than the previous year.*

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*The American Flag indicates data leveraged from GreatBlue's proprietary Public Power Data Source (PPDS). PPDS leverages data collected from public power customers across the United States.*

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## Scale Questions

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*"Aggregate of ratings 7-10 shown"*

*This phrase indicates positive ratings from questions that use a 10-point scale. The positive ratings are defined as a rating of 7 through 10.*



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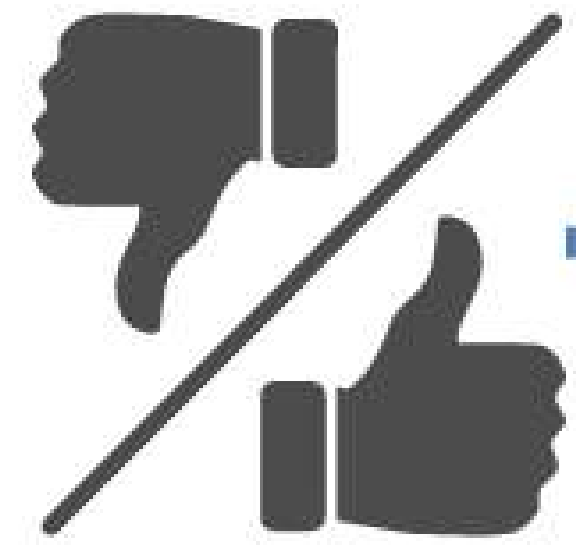
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# Key Study Findings



## Ratings

- SELCO achieved an average positive rating of 93.0% on a series of organizational characteristics (+5.0 percentage points over 2021). This was driven by strong positive ratings for “reliable service” (96.6%), “honesty / integrity” (96.2%), and “community service” (95.5%).
- Nearly all customers who had a recent interaction with SELCO (96.2%) were satisfied with their contact experience.
- 74.6% of customers who recently interacted with SELCO indicated the utility typically resolves issues on the first point of contact.
- SELCO received an NP+S (Net Positive Score) of 96.2%.
  - Among those, 40.9% of customers identified as “advocates of SELCO.”
- 63.9% of customers believe the prices they pay SELCO for electricity are lower than those of surrounding towns.



## Programs & Services

- Two-thirds of customers (66.9%) are aware of SELCO's programs and rebates, while over one-third (37.4%) have actually applied for one.
  - 77.9% of customers provided positive ratings for their overall satisfaction with the rebate process.
- One-quarter of customers (25.6%) are aware of SELCO's Connected Homes program, while 58.1% are not aware of it. However, nearly one-half of customers (45.1%) are interested in enrolling in the program.
- 63.7% of customers are interested in SELCO offering a time-of-use program.
- Nearly three-fifths of customers (57.3%) are aware of SELCO's rebates for purchasing and installing heat pumps.



## Communication

- Communication methods which provide customers with the most value are “SELCO's website” (85.0%) and “bill inserts + newsletters” (69.5%).
- 62.1% of customers are aware of the SmartHub mobile application, while 41.3% have actually used SmartHub.
  - Over three-quarters of customers (78.3%) provided positive ratings for the ease of understanding content on SmartHub.

## Public Power


- 93.6% of customers are aware that SELCO is a “community-owned municipal utility,” while over nine-out-of-ten customers (94.7%) agree that it is important to maintain local control of their municipal utility.
- A vast majority of customers (95.8%) agree that “SELCO Electric provides reliable service and responds quickly to outages.”



# Satisfaction | Organizational Characteristics

SELCO achieved a higher level of customer satisfaction, receiving a positive rating of 90% or higher for four (4) out of six (6) organizational characteristics. Customers provided the highest positive ratings for SELCO's "reliable service," "honesty / integrity," and their "community service."

Of note, the average positive rating for SELCO's organizational characteristics increased by 5.0 percentage points in 2024, which was driven by significant increases in ratings for "helping customers conserve electricity" (+8.9 percentage points), SELCO's "community service" (+8.9 percentage points), and "honesty / integrity" (+4.6 percentage points).

	SELCO			MEAM	
	2019	2021	2024	2024	2024
Customer interactions and communication	91.9%	91.5%	94.0%	92.2%	66.6%
Helping customers conserve electricity	87.3%	76.7%	85.6%	81.3%	58.7%
Honesty / Integrity	94.8%	91.6%	96.2%	94.1%	-
Reliable service	96.1%	94.3%	96.6%	97.1%	75.5%
Rates	89.5%	87.4%	89.9%	86.6%	65.4%
Community Service	94.7%	86.6%	95.5%	89.8%	63.6%
<b>Average</b>	<b>92.4%</b>	<b>88.0%</b>	<b>93.0%</b>	<b>90.2%</b>	<b>66.0%</b>

Aggregate of ratings 7-10 shown w/o "don't know" responses

n=535

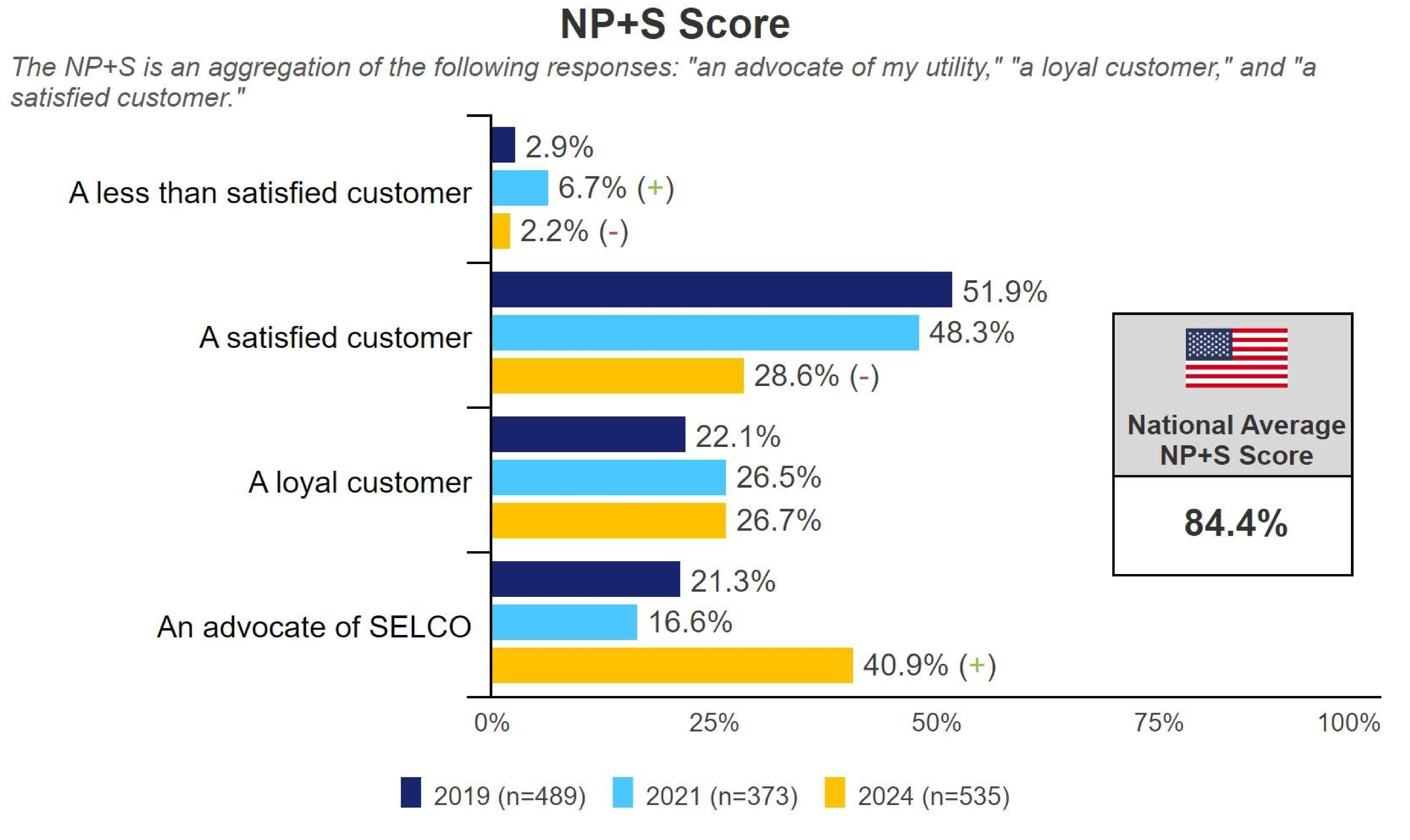
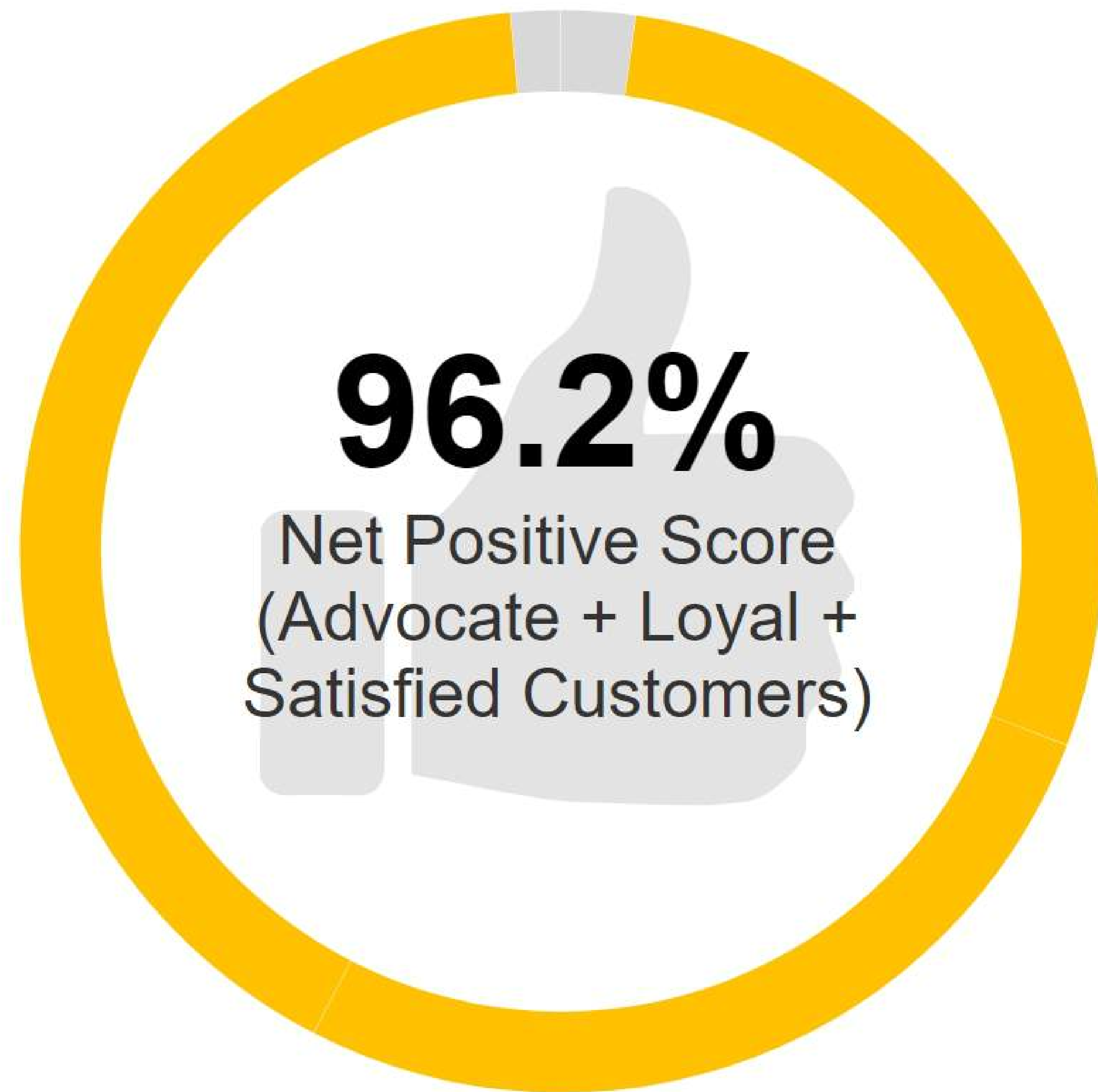
Q: For each organizational characteristic, please rate SELCO's electric service using a scale of one (1) to ten (10) where one (1) is "very poor" and ten (10) is "very good."

Green/red coloring indicates statistical significance at a 95% confidence level, denoting whether the data point is higher or lower than the previous year



# Satisfaction | NP+S Score

SELCO received a net positive score of 96.2%, which was 11.8 percentage points higher than the national average. Of note, two-fifths of customers identified as advocates of SELCO, which was significantly higher than those who considered themselves advocates in 2021 (+24.3 percentage points).



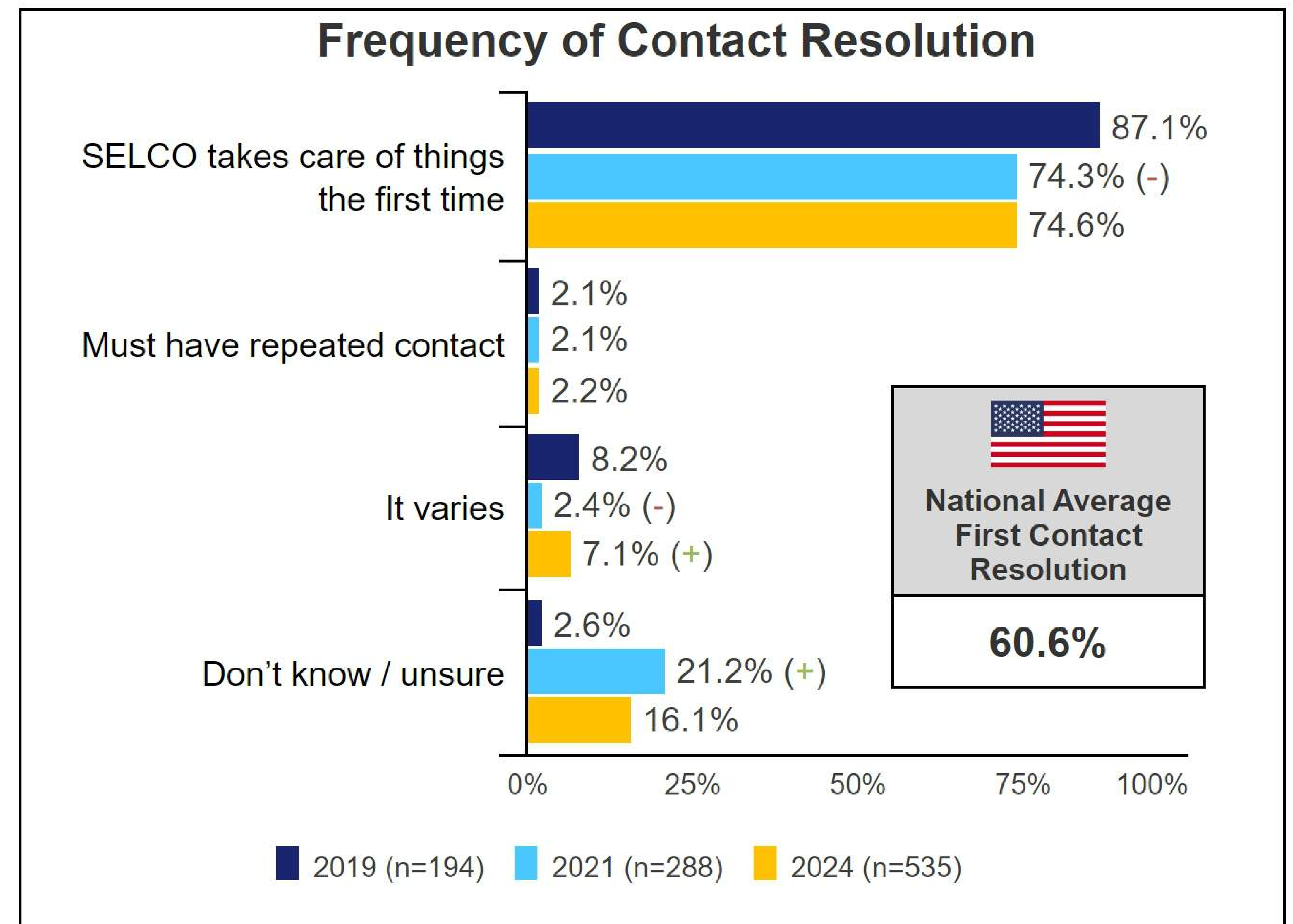
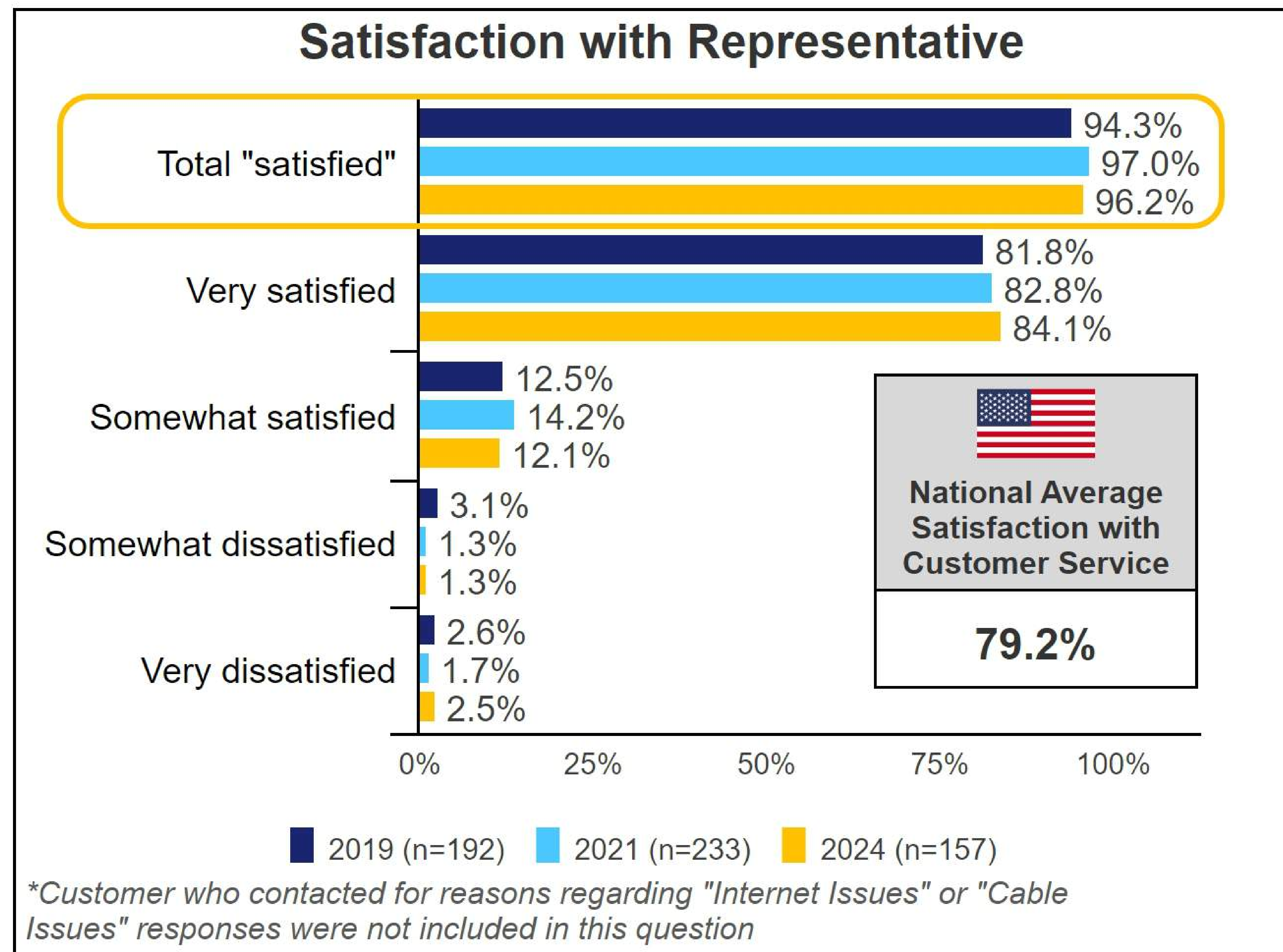
Q: Which of the following would best describe your relationship with SELCO? Would you say...("Don't know / Unsure" responses not shown)

(+/-) indicates statistical significance at a 95% confidence level, denoting whether the data point is higher or lower than the compared subgroup



# Satisfaction | Contact Resolution

Of those respondents who had contact with a SELCO customer service employee recently, nearly all were satisfied with the way the employee handled the call or visit. Further, nearly three-quarters of respondents reported that SELCO typically takes care of things the first time they contact the utility.



Q: If you have had a recent interaction with SELCO Electric, overall how satisfied were you with the way the SELCO Electric customer service employee handled the call or visit? (Without don't know responses)

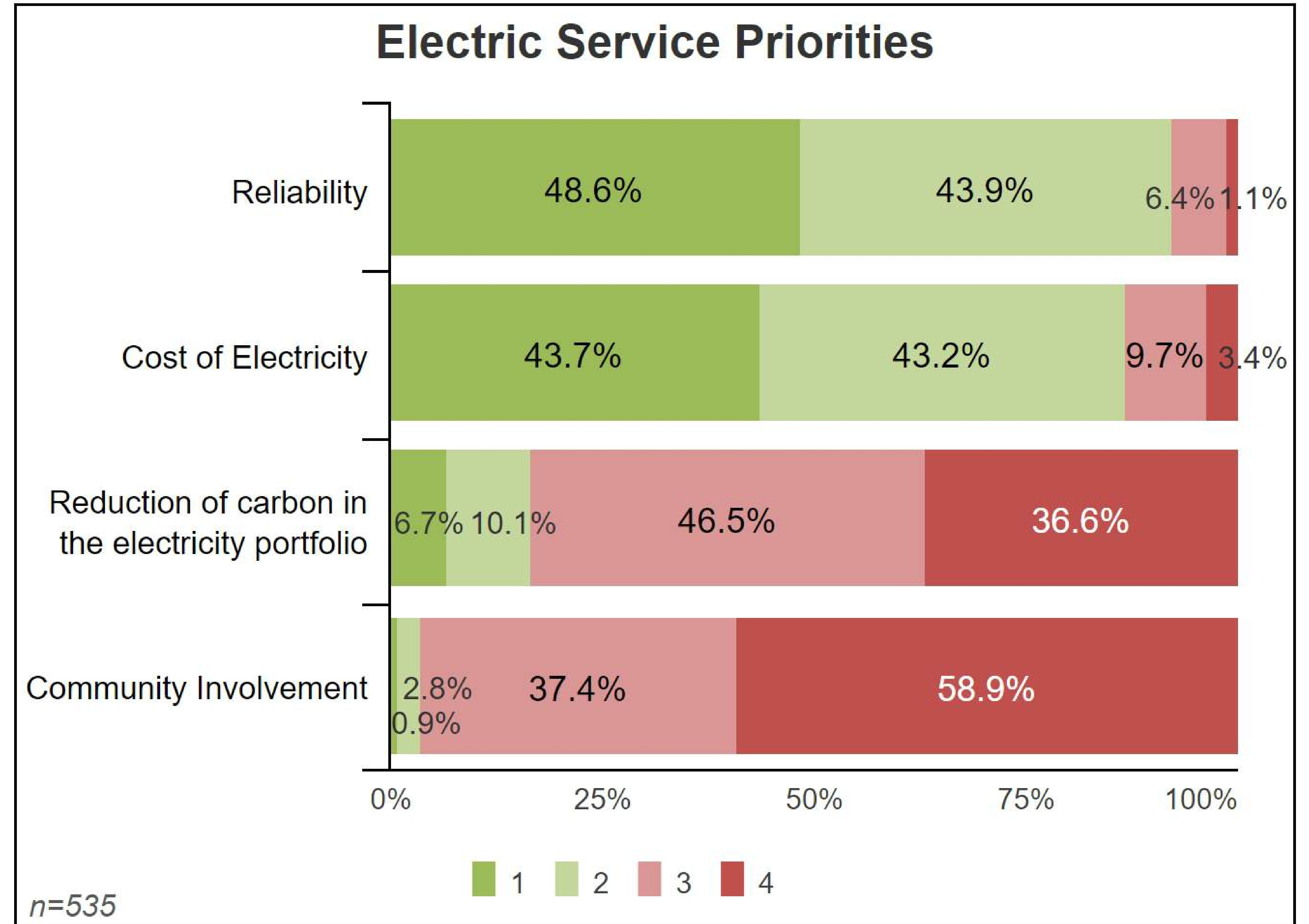
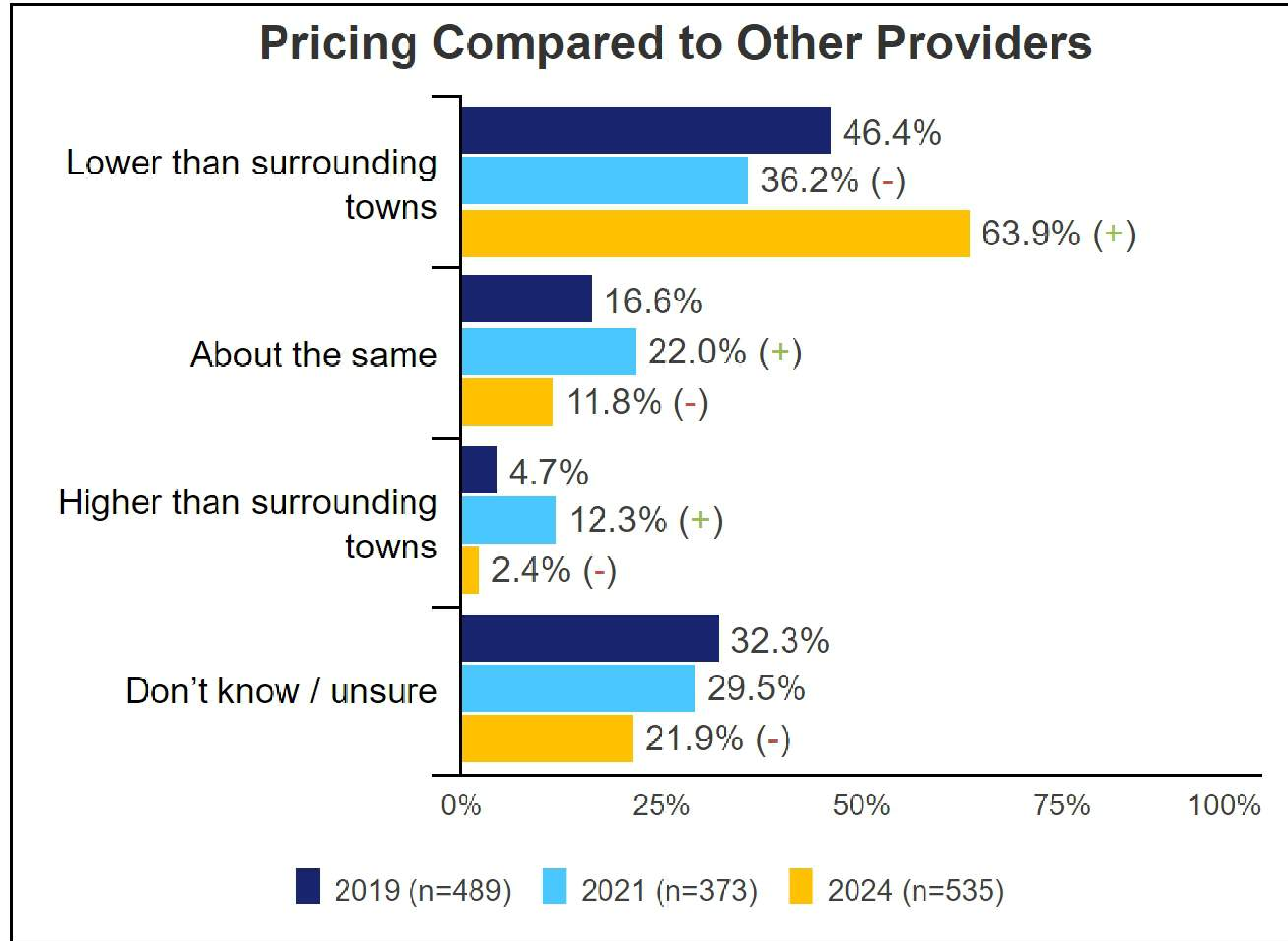
Q: Generally, when you contact SELCO Electric, are things taken care of to your satisfaction the first time, or must you have repeated contact with them?

(+/-) indicates statistical significance at a 95% confidence level, denoting whether the data point is higher or lower than the compared subgroup



# Satisfaction | Pricing & Priorities

Nearly two-thirds of customers believe that the prices they pay SELCO for electricity are lower than surrounding towns, which was a significant increase from those who reported the same in 2021 (+27.7 percentage points). When ranking their most important priorities for SELCO, nearly one-half of customers ranked "reliability" as their number one most important priority, followed closely by "cost of electricity."



Q: When thinking about the prices that you currently pay for electric service, would you say the prices you pay to SELCO for electricity are higher than surrounding towns, lower than surrounding towns, or about the same?

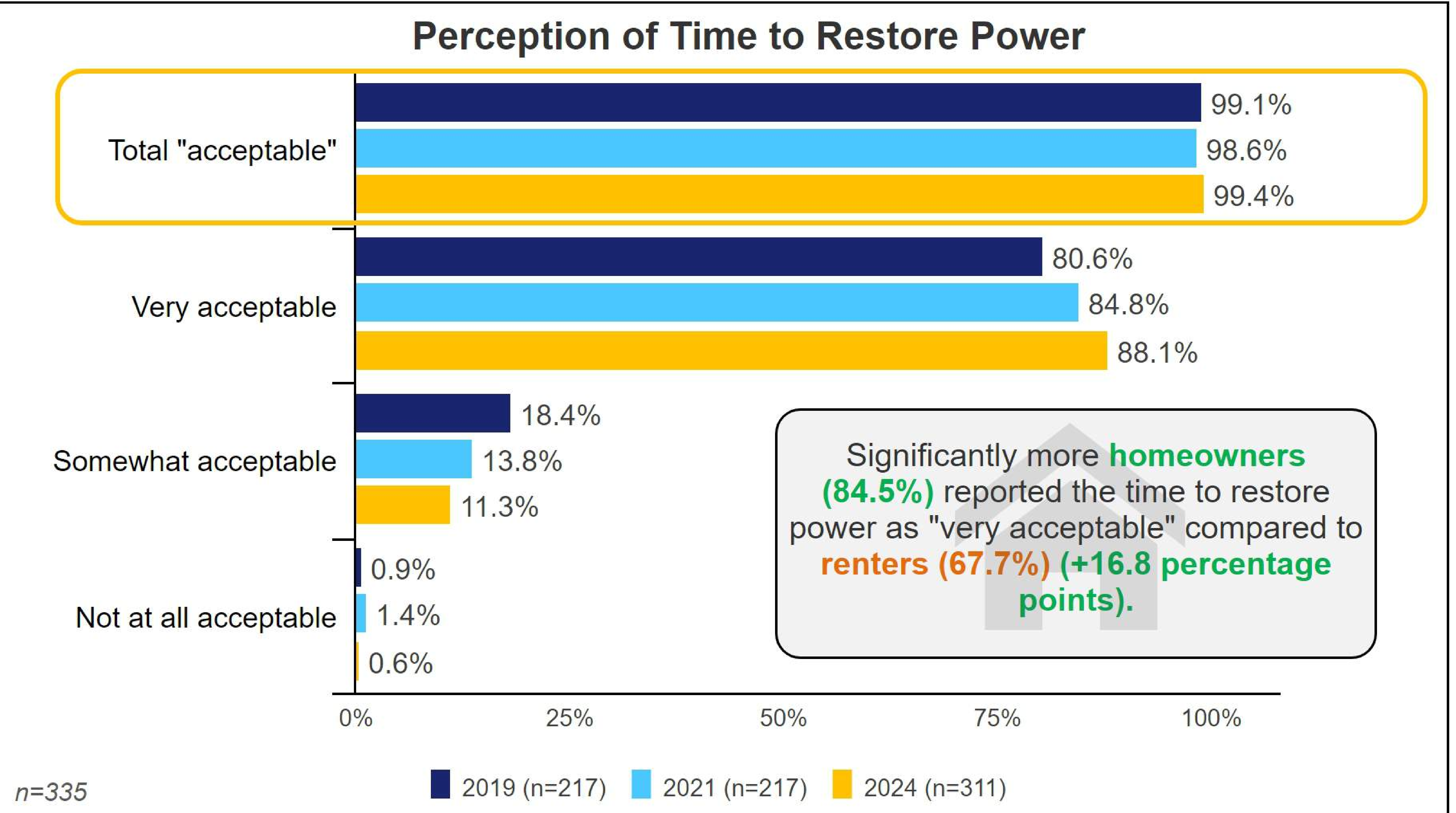
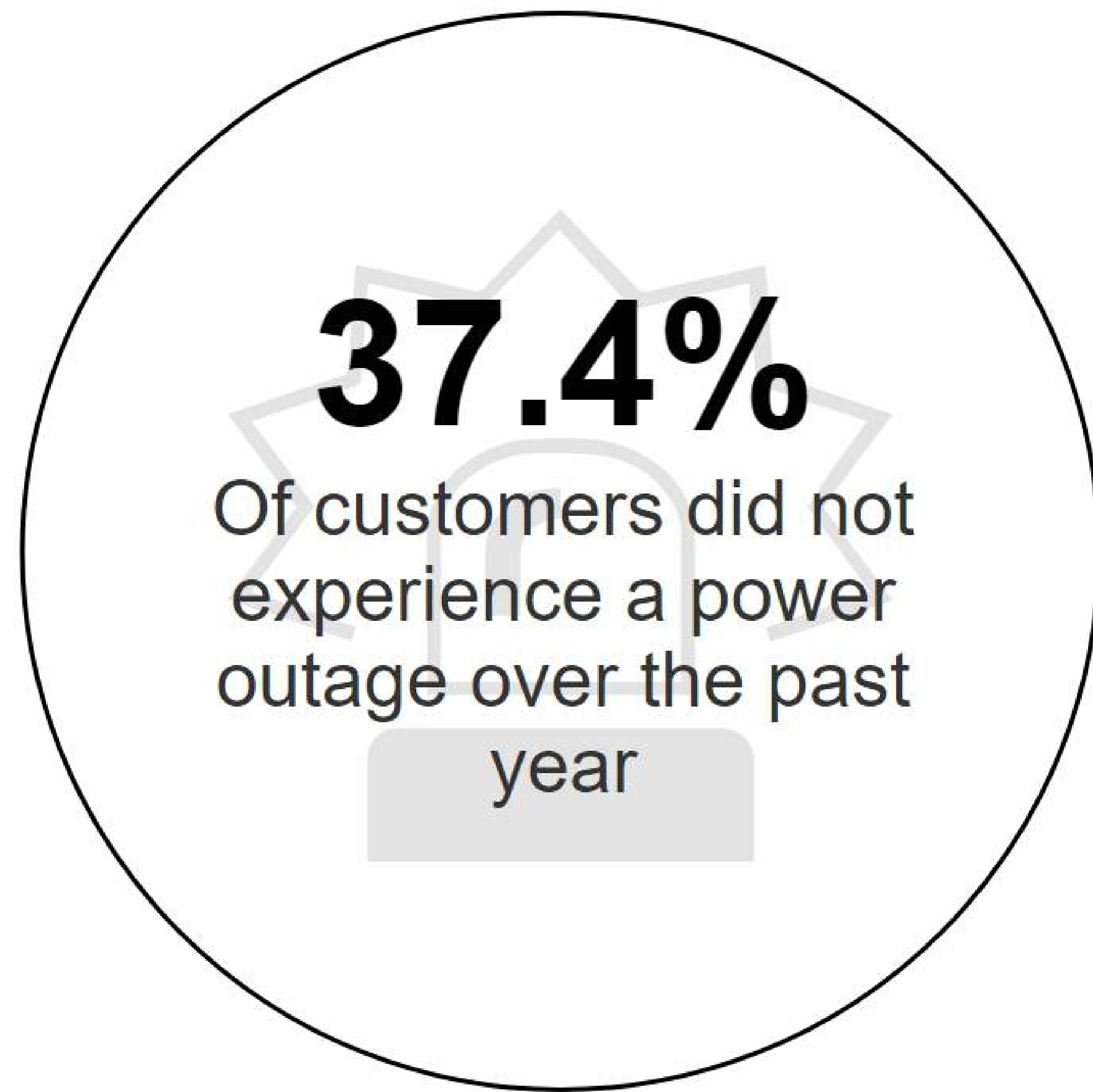
Q: Municipal utilities are directly accountable to customers and take customer desires into account in their long-term planning. When it comes to your local electrical service, please rank the following three topics from one (1) to four (4), where one (1) is most important and four (4) is least important.

(+/-) indicates statistical significance at a 95% confidence level, denoting whether the data point is higher or lower than the compared subgroup



# Satisfaction | Outage Restoration

Over one-third of customers reported not experiencing a power outage over the past year. Of those customers who have, nearly all rated the time it took SELCO to restore their power as either very or somewhat acceptable.



Q: If you experienced a power outage over the past year, how would you rate the time to restore power?








# Communication | Valuable Channels

When rating the value of communication methods provided by SELCO, over eight-out-of-ten customers indicated that the SELCO "website" was among the most valued platforms.

Of note, over two-thirds of customers valued "bill inserts + newsletters" and "direct mail" from SELCO.



Significantly more customers **Under 55 years of age** valued "social media" (**55.3%**) (+20.6 percentage points) and "SmartHub" (**69.9%**) (+10.5 percentage points) compared to those **55 and older** (**34.7%** and **59.4%** respectively).

	2019	2021	2024
 SELCO's website	81.0%	78.8%	<b>85.0%</b>
 Bill inserts + Newsletters	66.7%	61.9%	<b>69.5%</b>
 Direct mail	74.0%	<b>60.9%</b>	<b>69.0%</b>
 SmartHub	-	-	61.7%
 Social media (Facebook/X/Instagram)	36.8%	37.3%	39.4%

Aggregate of "Very valuable" and "Somewhat valuable" responses

n=535

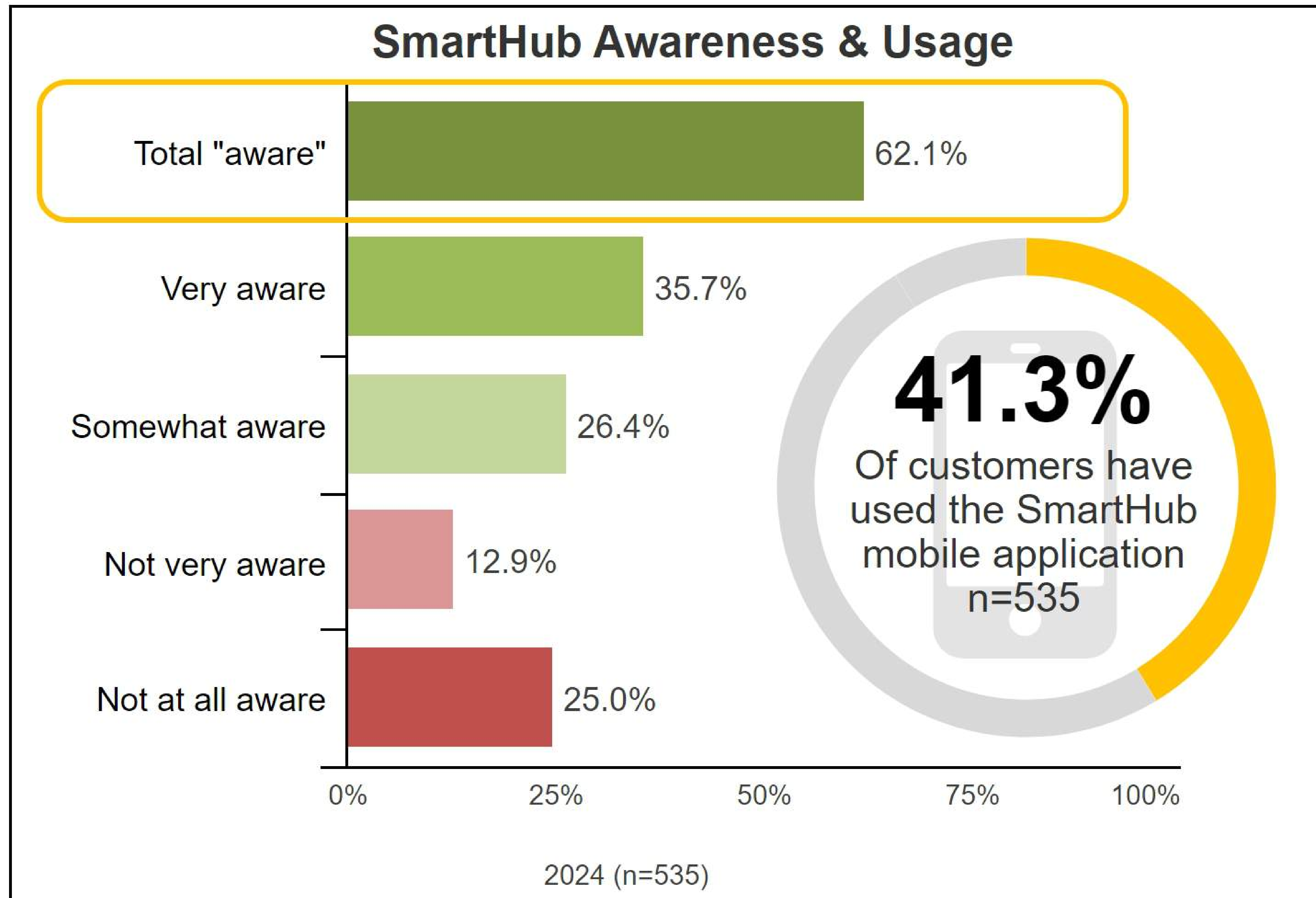
Q: How valuable do you find the following methods of communication from SELCO Electric?

Green/red coloring indicates statistical significance at a 95% confidence level, denoting whether the data point is higher or lower than the previous year



# Communication | SmartHub

Over three-fifths of customers are aware of the SmartHub mobile application, while over two-fifths reported having used the mobile application. Of those customers who have used SmartHub, over three-quarters provided positive ratings for the "ease of understanding content on the SmartHub app" and the "ease of navigating the SmartHub app."



## Satisfaction with SmartHub Performance

	2024
Ease of understanding content on the SmartHub app	78.3%
Ease of navigating the SmartHub app	77.4%
Delivering and communicating about available programs and services on the SmartHub app	66.5%

n=221

Q: How aware are you of the SmartHub mobile application?

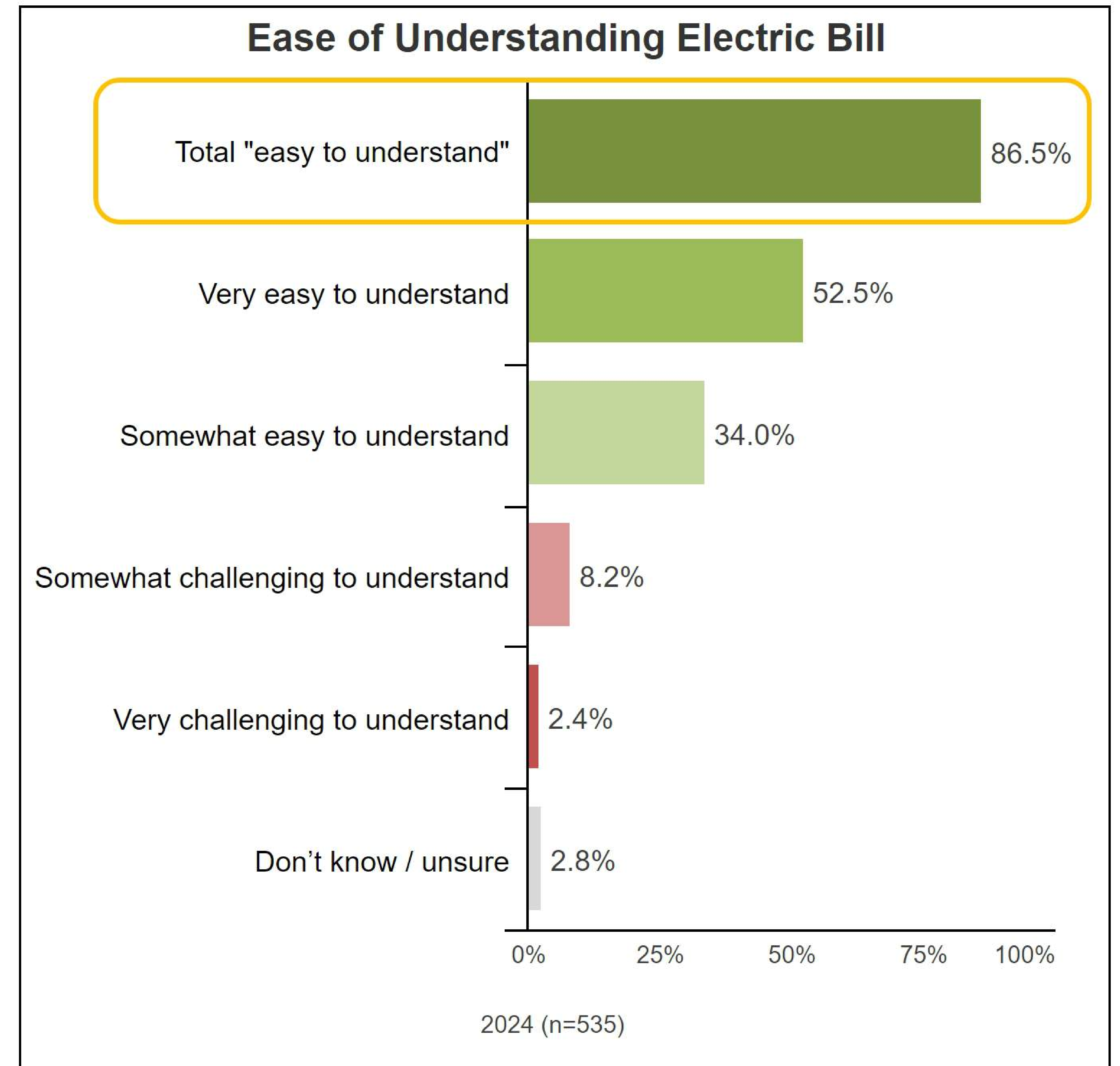
Q: Have you used the SmartHub mobile application?

Q: Please rate SmartHub's performance on a scale of one to ten where one (1) is "very poor" and ten (10) is "very good."



# Communication | Bill Perception

Nearly nine-out-of-ten customers reported their electric bill is either very or somewhat easy to understand, in terms of the ability to understand charges, outstanding balances, and account status.

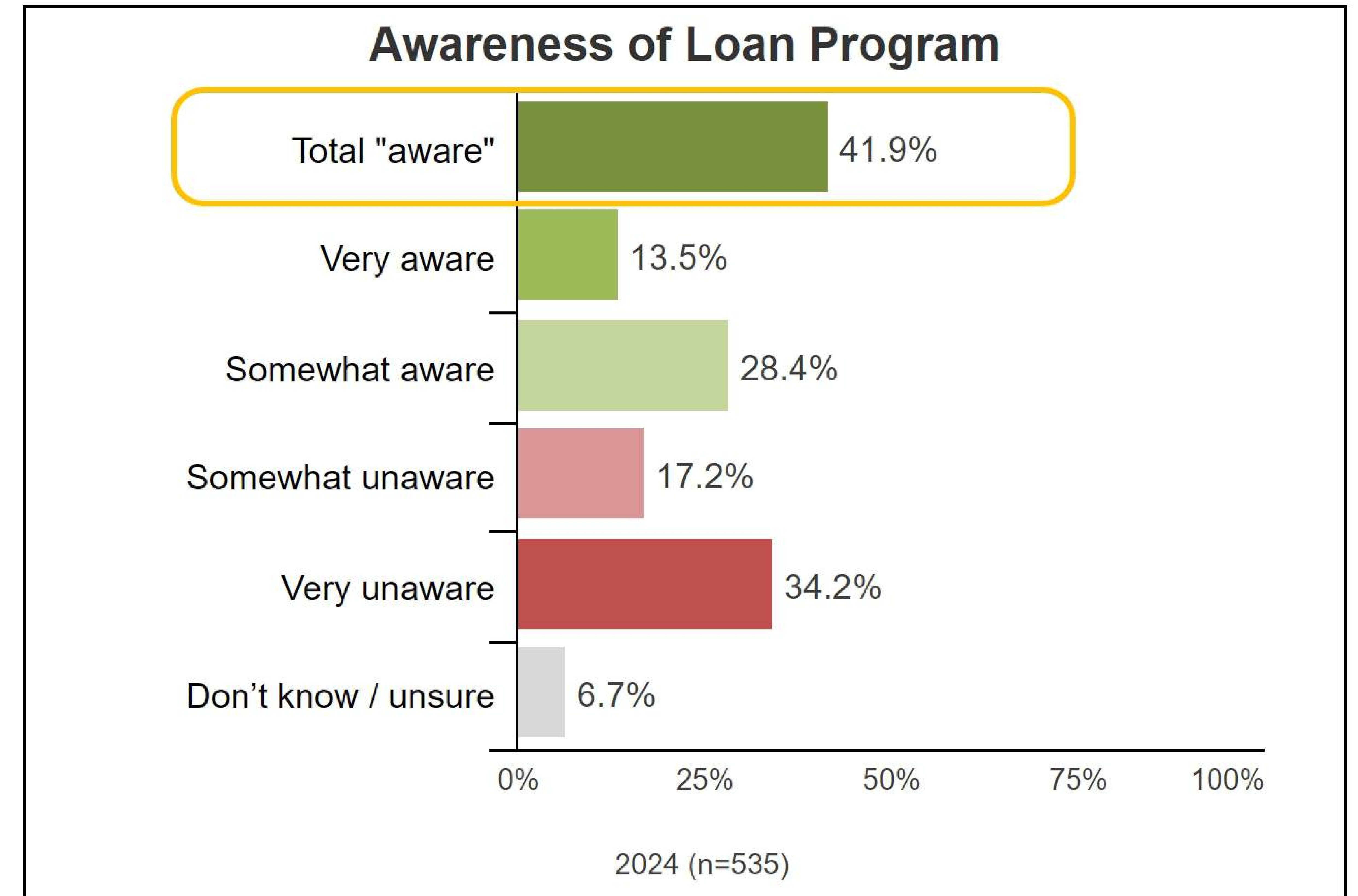
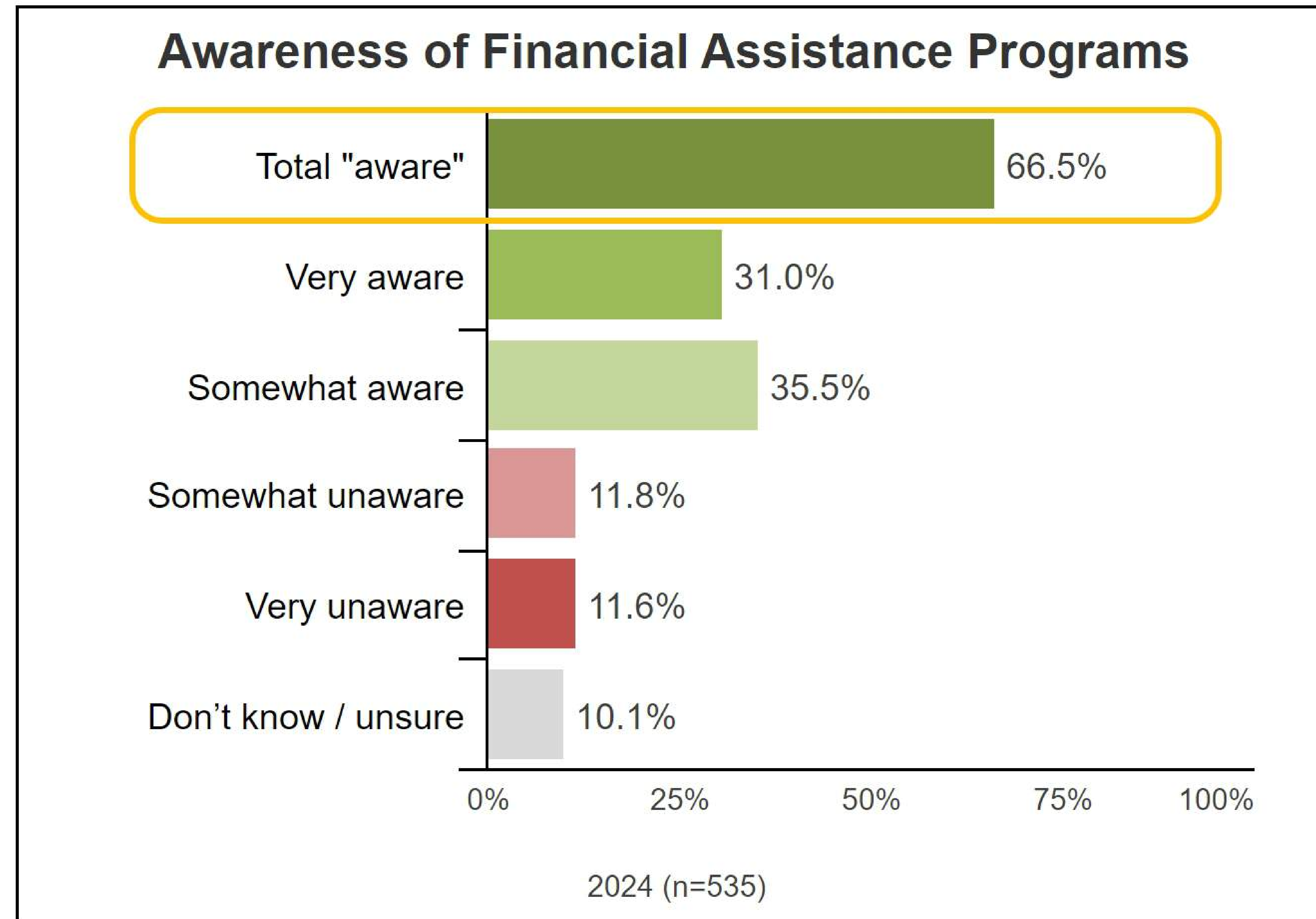


*Q: How would you rate the ease of understanding your electric bill in terms of your ability to understand your charges, outstanding balances, and account status?*



# Programs & Services | Financial Assistance

Two-thirds of customers are either very or somewhat aware of the financial and fuel assistance programs that SELCO helps customers access if needed. Further, over two-fifths of customers are aware of the 0% loan program SELCO offers for energy efficiency upgrades.



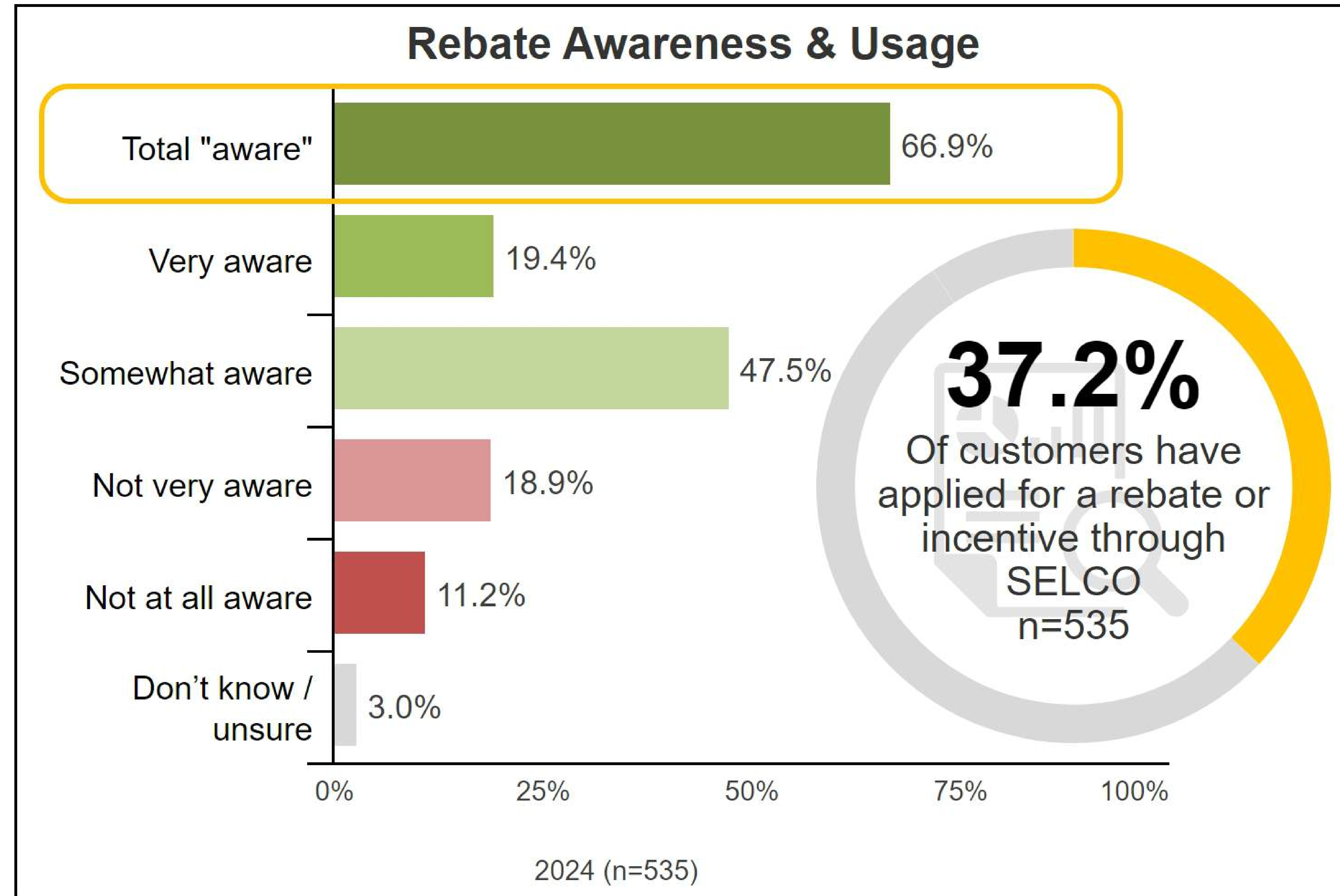
Q: How aware are you that SELCO provides assistance to customers in need by helping them access external financial and fuel assistance resources?

Q: How aware are you of SELCO's 0% loan program for upgrades such as weatherization, heating/cooling systems, solar panels, service upgrades, and home battery storage?



# Programs & Services | Perceptions

Two-thirds of customers are aware of programs and rebates offered by SELCO, while over one-third reported having applied for one. Of those customers who have applied for a rebate or incentive through SELCO, over three-quarters provided positive ratings for their "overall satisfaction with the incentive and rebate process."



### Satisfaction with Rebate Process

n=199

	2024
Overall satisfaction with the incentive and rebate process	77.9%
Length of time to complete the application	73.9%
The process of applying for and signing up for incentives and rebate programs	72.4%
Finding information about incentives and rebate programs	71.9%

Q: How aware are you of any programs and rebates offered by SELCO?

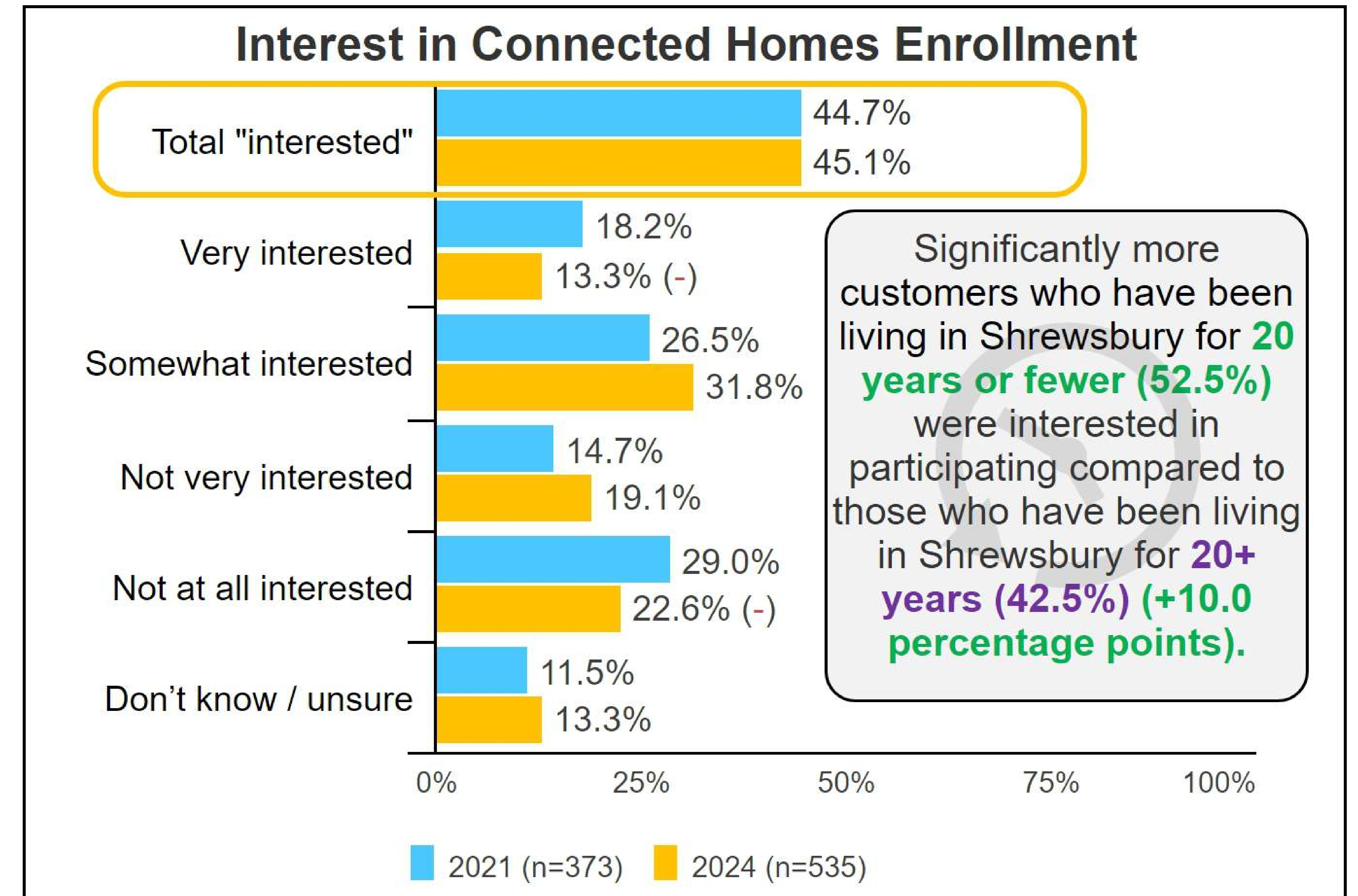
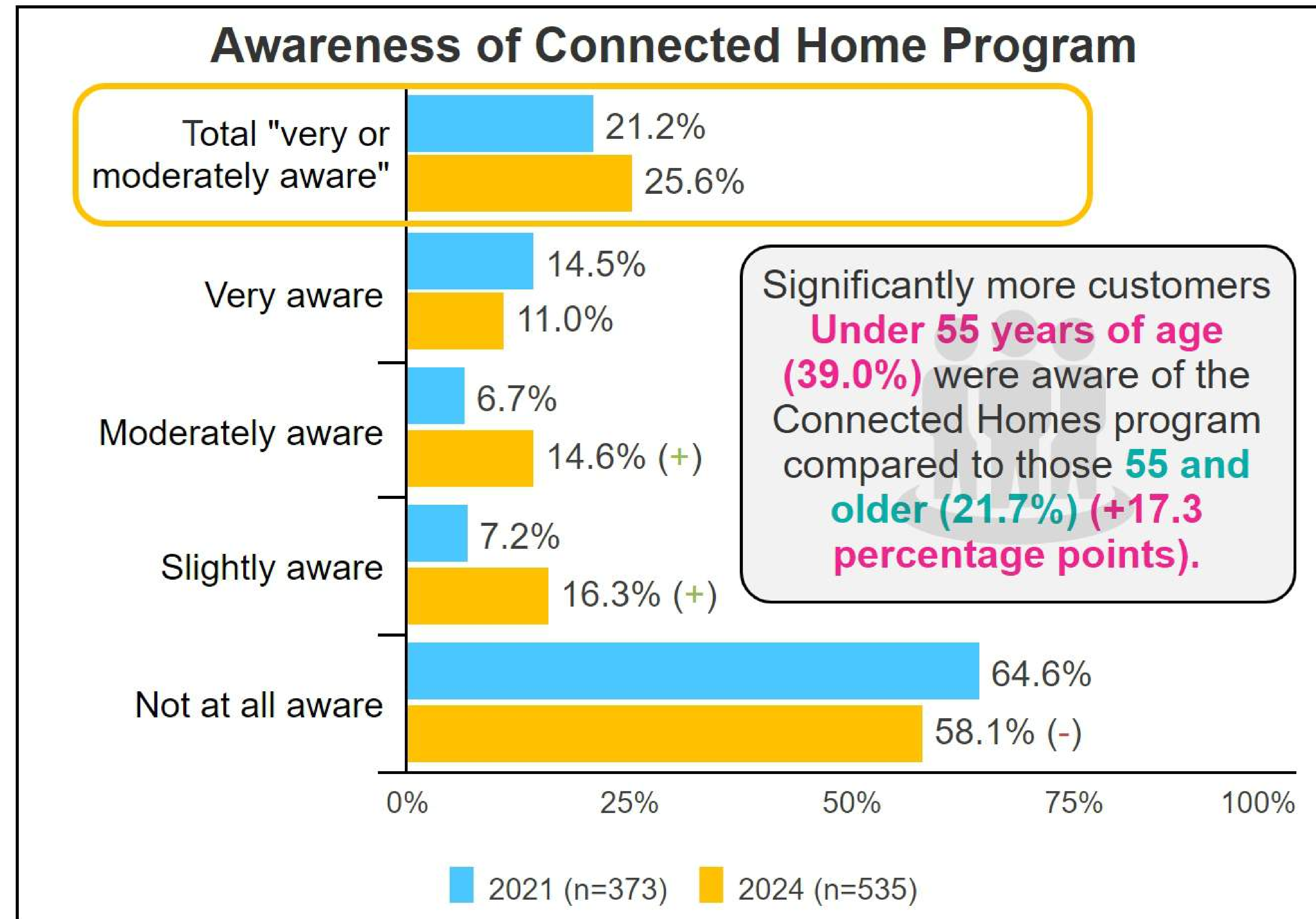
Q: Have you ever applied for a rebate or incentive through SELCO?

Q: On a scale of one to ten where one (1) is "very dissatisfied" and ten (10) is "very satisfied," please rate the following aspects of signing up for an incentive or rebate through SELCO.



# Programs & Services | Connected Homes

One-quarter of customers are either very or somewhat aware of SELCO's Connected Homes program, while nearly three-fifths are not at all aware. When reminded that they would receive a bill credit for participating in the program, nearly one-half of customers were either very or somewhat interested in enrolling in the program.



Q: How aware are you of SELCO's Connected Homes program? This program is where customers can agree to let SELCO make brief, limited adjustments to certain WiFi-connected devices like thermostats, EVs, hot water heaters, residential batteries and electric vehicle chargers, during times of peak electric demand, and are then rewarded with a SELCO bill credit.

Q: Knowing that you would receive a bill credit for participating in this program, how interested would you be in enrolling in the Connected Homes program?

(+/-) indicates statistical significance at a 95% confidence level, denoting whether the data point is higher or lower than the compared subgroup



# Programs & Services | Connected Homes Qualification

Over one-half of customers reported not currently owning any of the smart devices that would qualify for enrollment in the Connected Homes program.

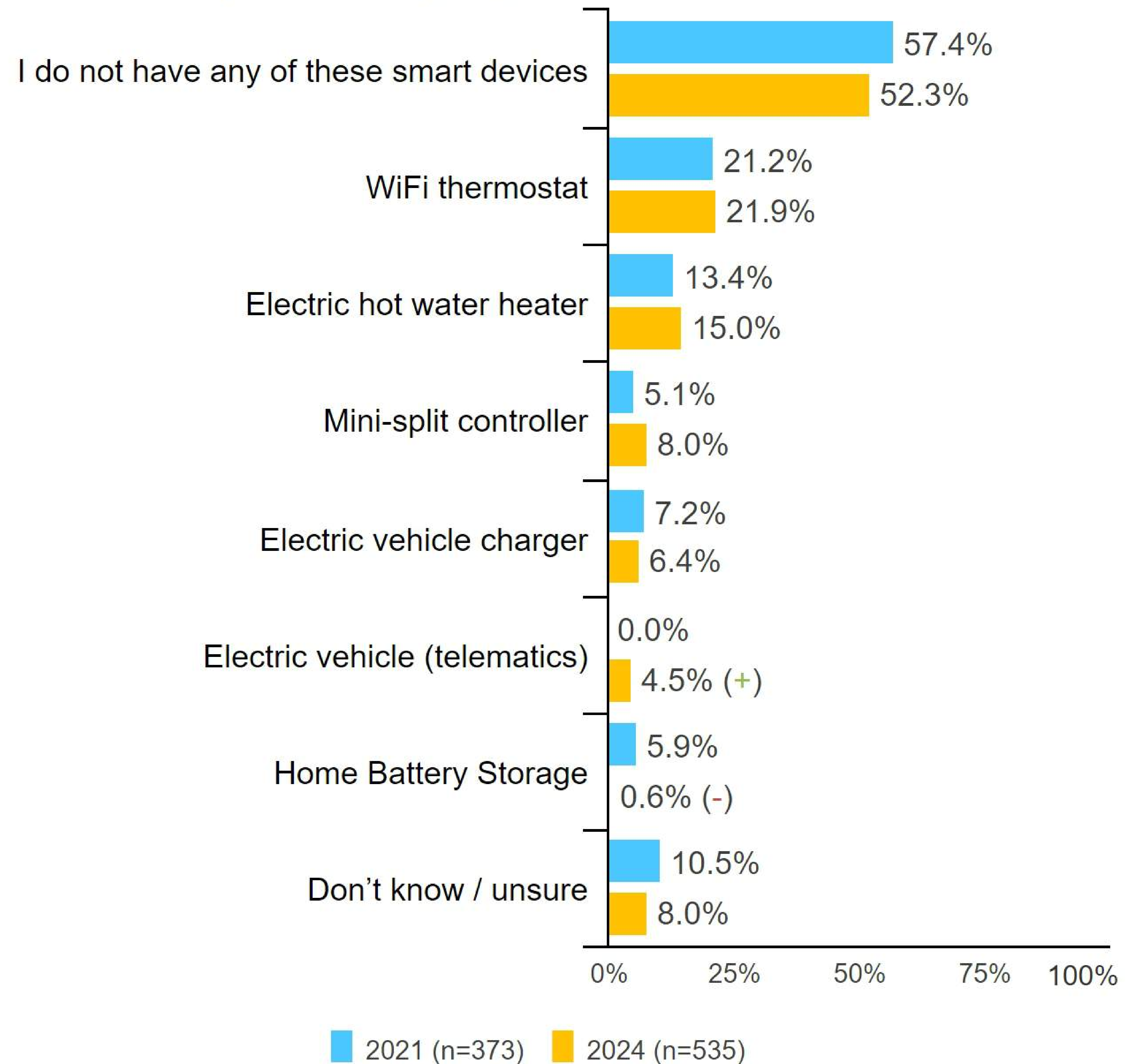
However, nearly one-quarter of customers currently own a "WiFi thermostat," followed by 15.0% who own an "electric hot water heater."



Significantly fewer customers **55 and older (49.5%)** have smart devices that qualify for the Connected Homes program compared to those **under 55 years of age (79.7%) (+30.2 percentage points).**

Q: Do you currently have any of the following smart devices at your home, that would qualify for enrollment in the Connected Homes program?

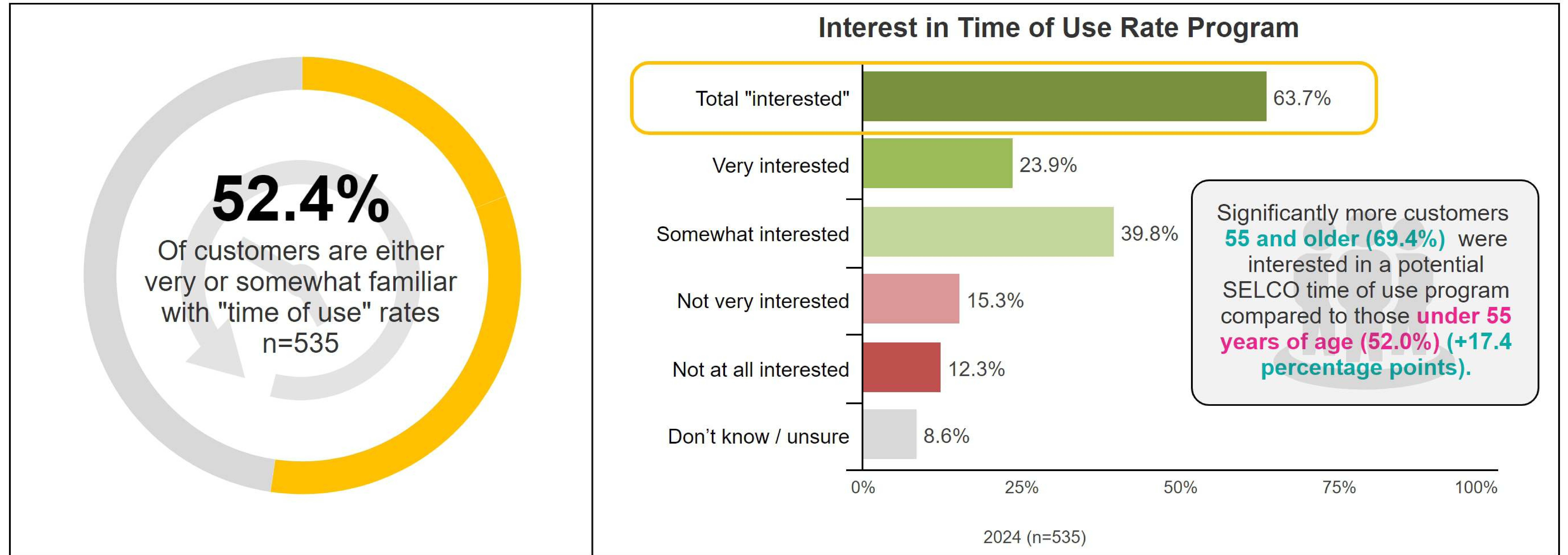
## Ownership of Qualifying Connected Homes Devices





# Programs & Services | Time of Use

Over one-half of customers are either very or somewhat familiar with the concept of "time of use" rates. When provided with a description of "time of use" rate programs, nearly two-thirds of customers were either very or somewhat interested. While wording was slightly adjusted in 2024, general interest in "time of use" rates was 14.1 percentage points higher than in 2021.



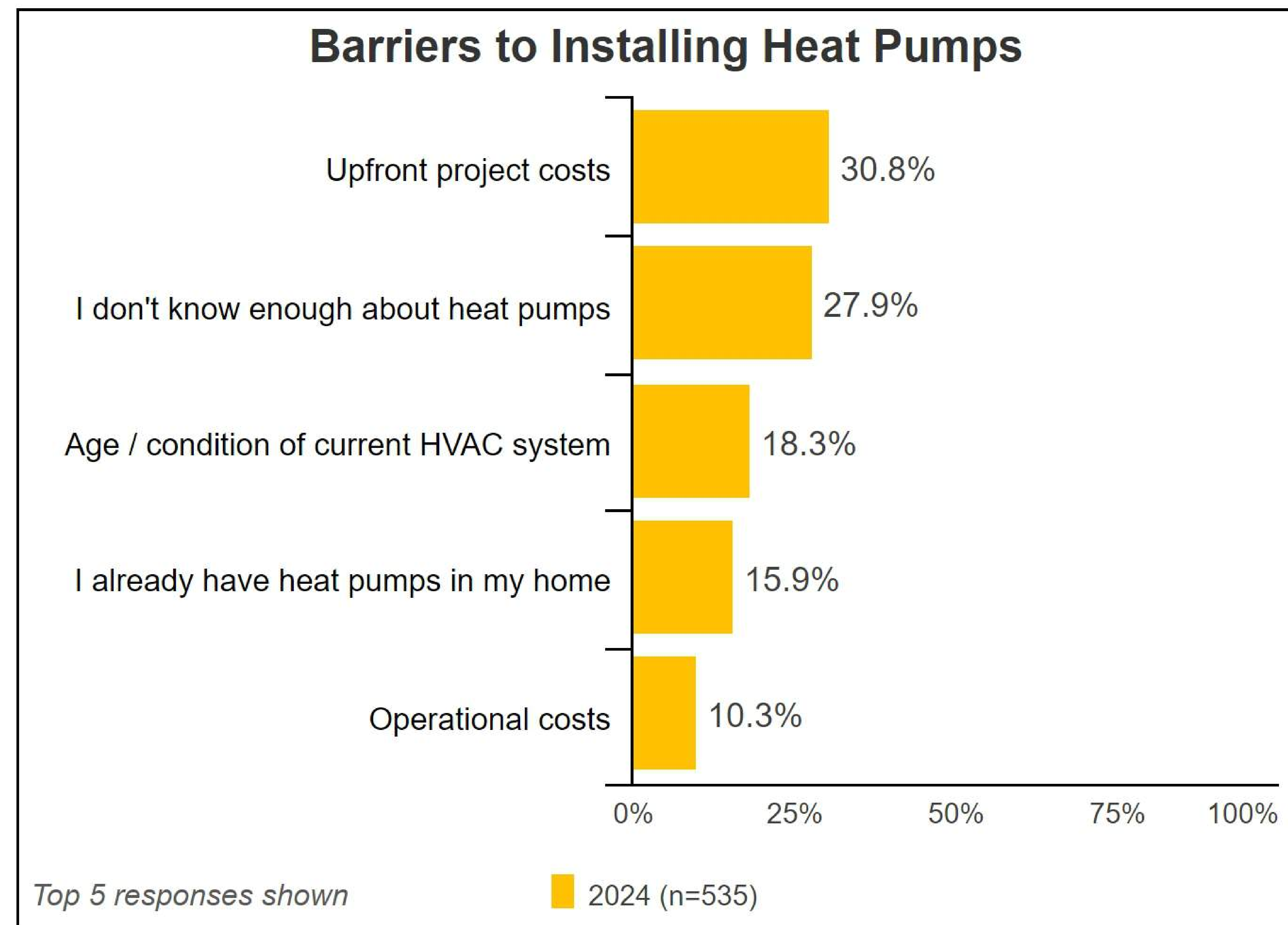
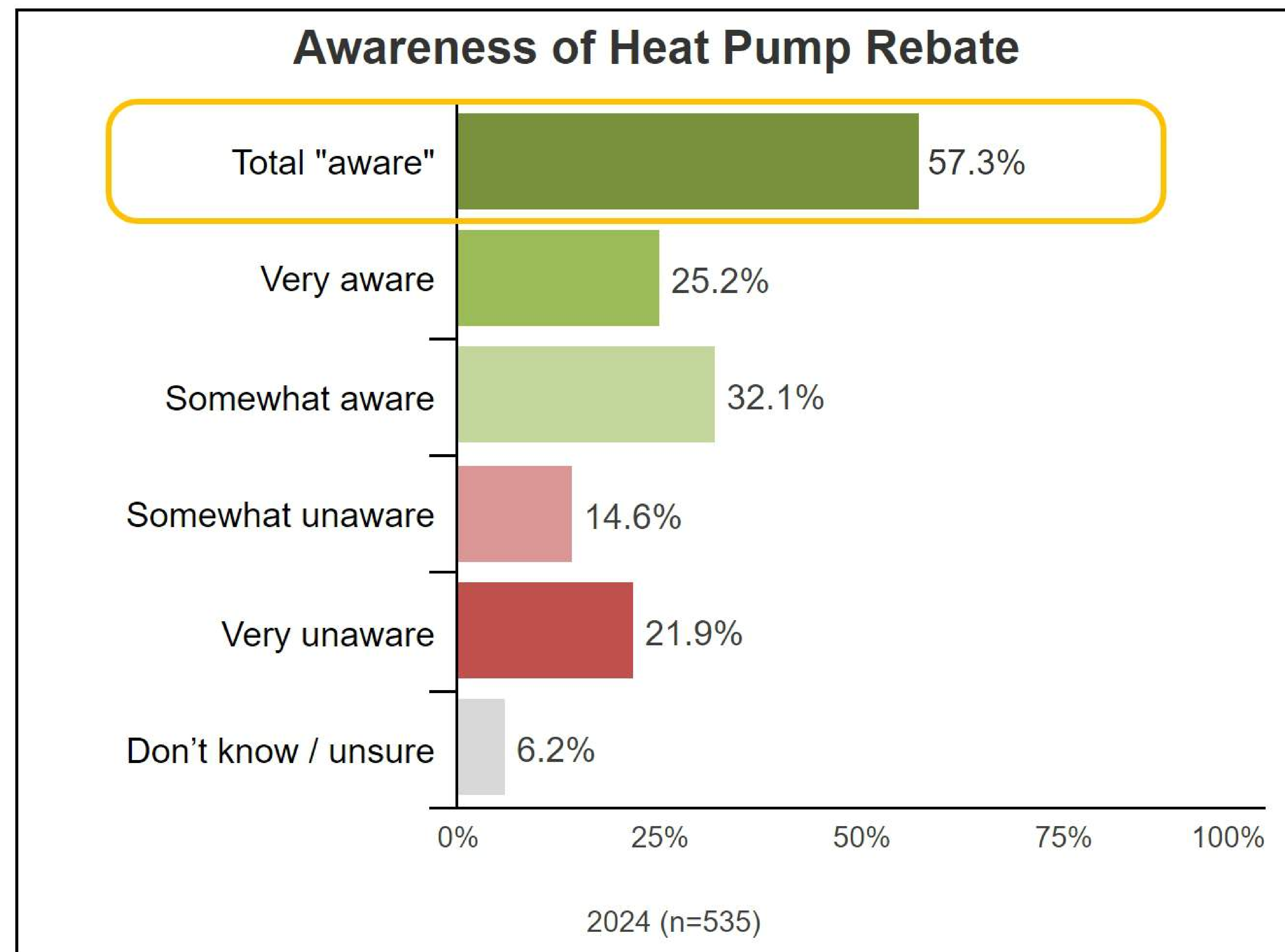
Q: How familiar are you with the concept of "time of use" rates?

Q: "Time of use" is a rate program where customers pay different electric rates at different times of the day (for example, a higher rate during the afternoon but lower during the overnight hours) with an aim to give individual customers more control over their bill costs and to help SELCO stabilize everyone's energy costs. How interested would you be in a potential SELCO time-of-use rate program?



# Programs & Services | Heat Pumps

Nearly three-fifths of customers are either very or somewhat aware of SELCO's rebates for purchasing and installing heat pumps. Nearly one-third of customers reported that "upfront project costs" would stop them from installing a heat pump, while over one-quarter "don't know enough about heat pumps."



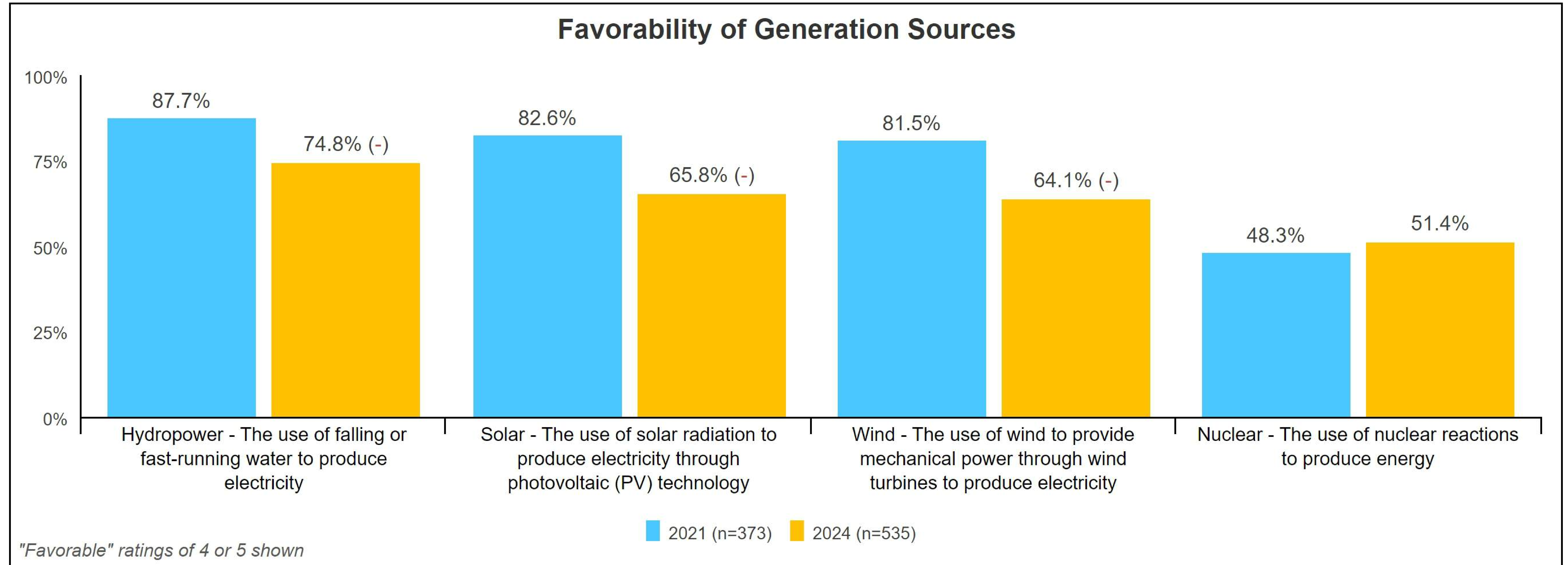
Q: How aware are you of SELCO's rebates for purchasing and installing heat pumps for heating and cooling?

Q: If you do not already have heat pumps in your home, what would stop you from installing them?



# Renewables | Energy Perceptions

Nearly three-quarters of customers have a favorable perception of "Hydropower," while nearly two-thirds have a favorable perception of "Solar" or "Wind." Conversely, one-half of customers have a favorable perception of "Nuclear" power.

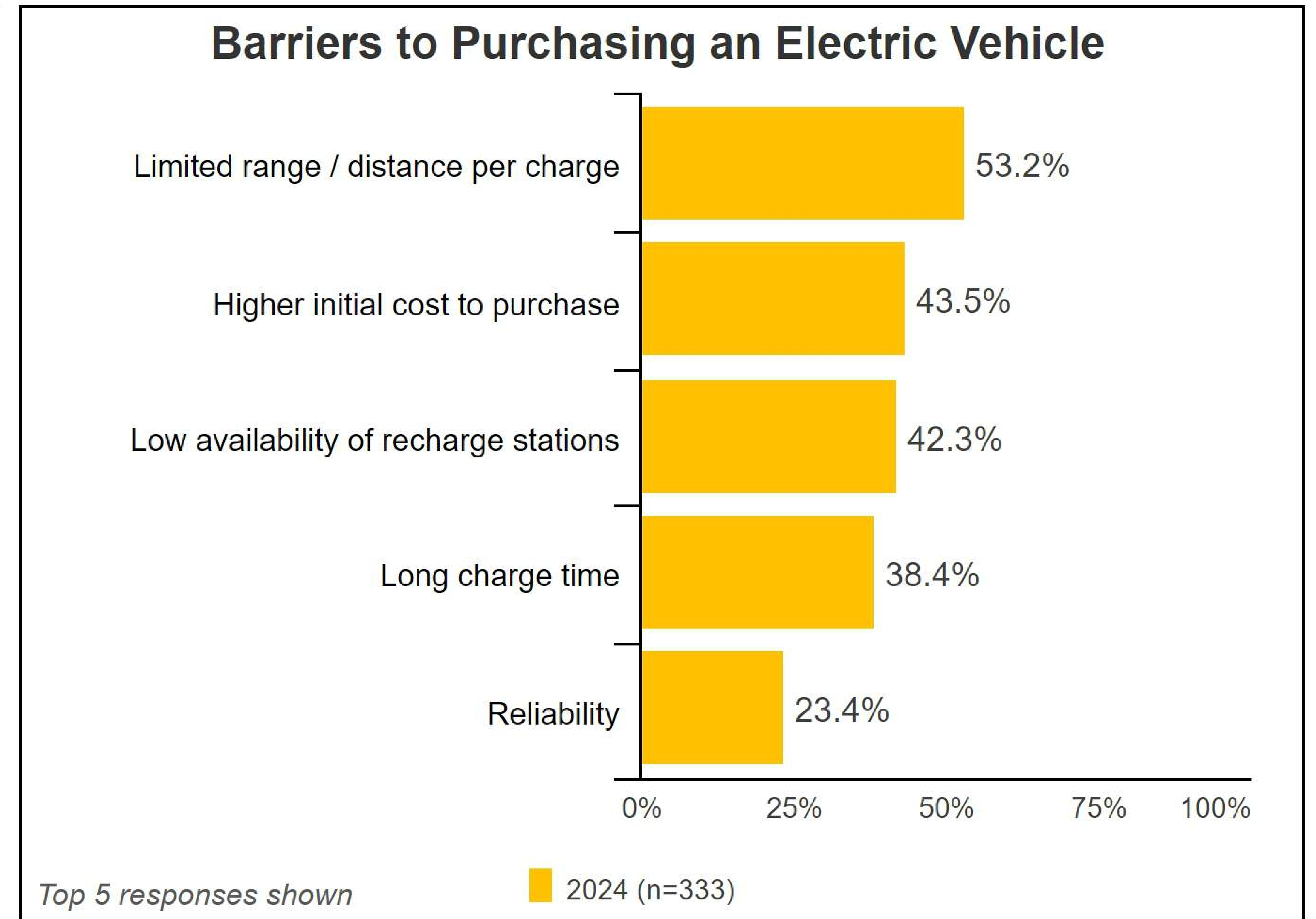
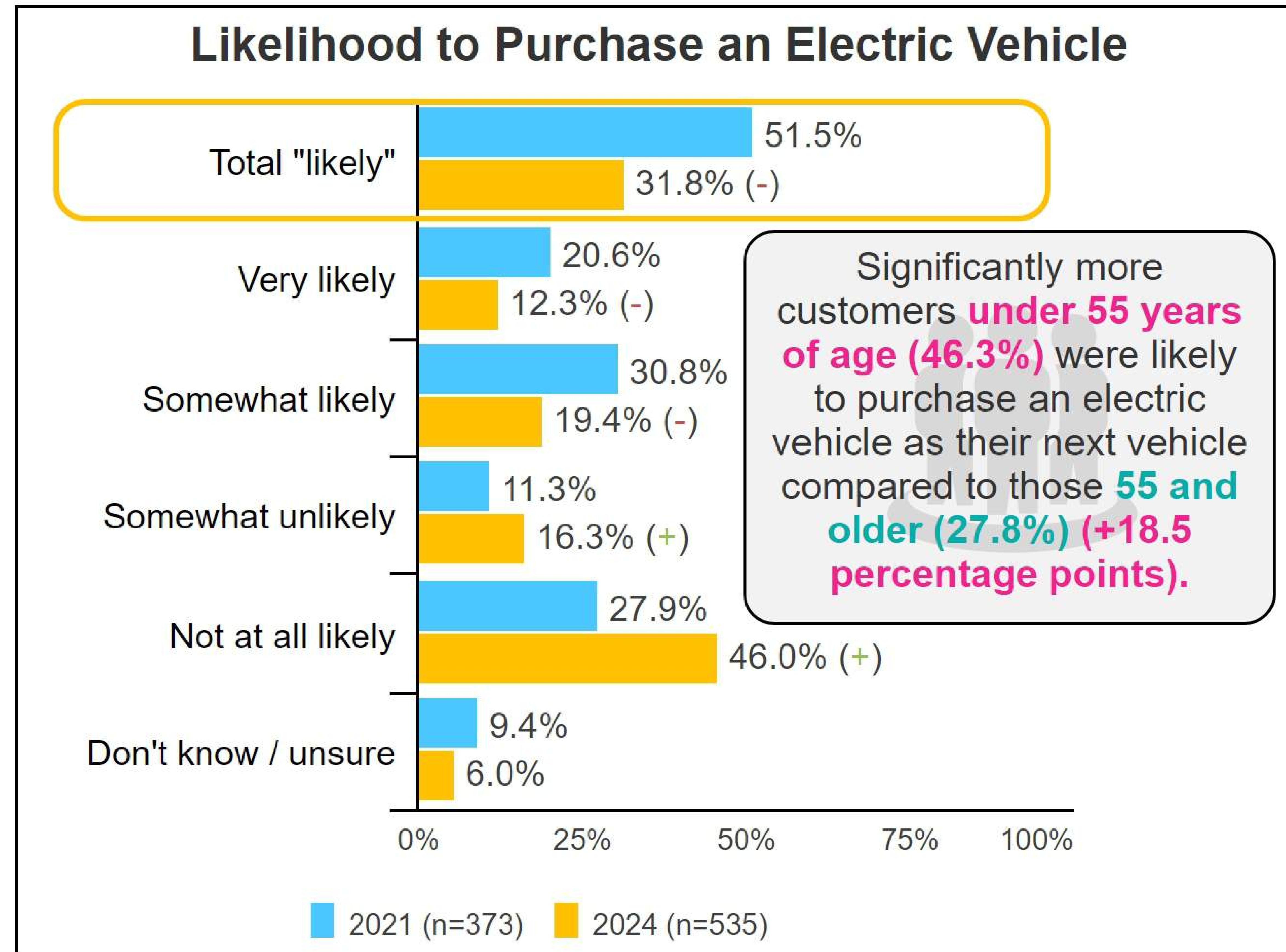


Q: Each of the generation sources below are carbon-free and are an important part of SELCO's clean energy future. Please rate your perception of each of these energy sources using a scale of one to five where one (1) is "unfavorable" and five (5) is "favorable."



# Renewables | Electric Vehicles

Nearly one-third of customers are either very or somewhat likely to purchase an electric vehicle as their next vehicle, which was significantly lower than those who reported the same in 2021 (-19.7 percentage points). Over one-half of customers reported they are not considering purchasing an electric vehicle because of their "limited range / distance per charge."



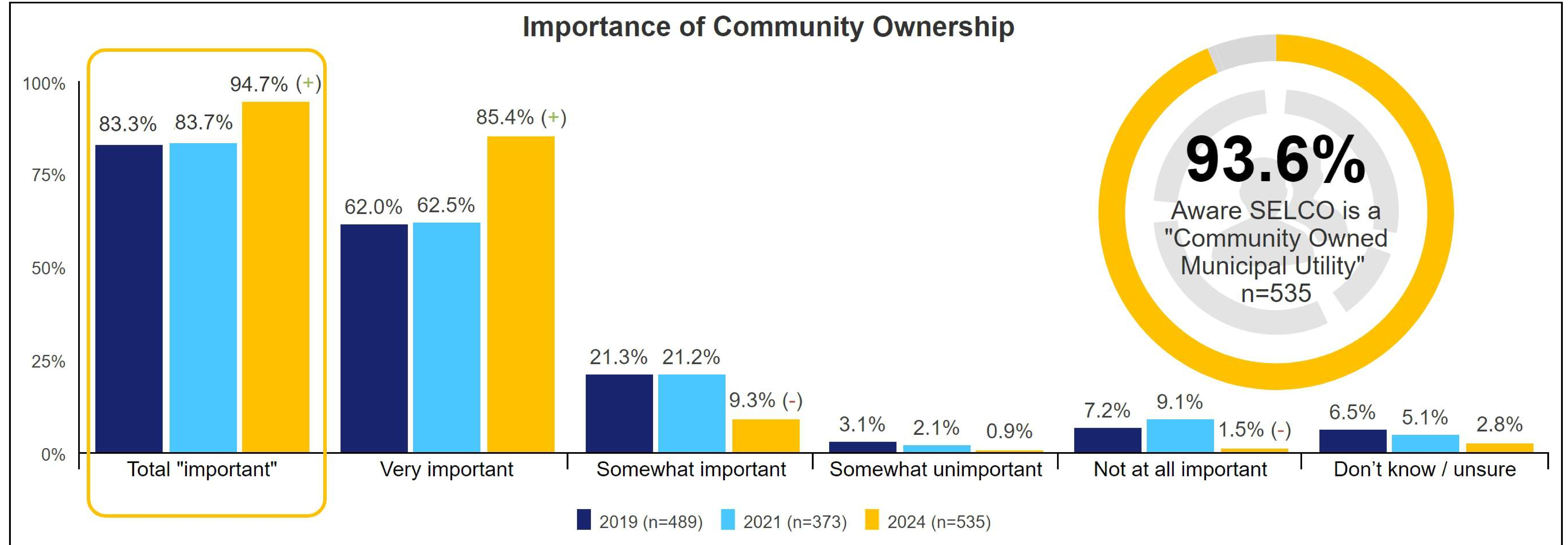
Q: How likely is it that your next vehicle purchase will be an electric vehicle?  
 Q: Why are you not considering purchasing an electric vehicle in the future?

(+/-) indicates statistical significance at a 95% confidence level, denoting whether the data point is higher or lower than the compared subgroup



# Public Power | Community Ownership

Over nine-out-of-ten customers are aware that SELCO is a "community-owned municipal utility." When asked how important it is for SELCO to maintain local control of their municipal utility, a vast majority reported it is either very or somewhat important, which was a significant increase from 2021 (+11.0 percentage points).



Q: Would you say that your own electric service is provided by a "Community Owned Municipal Utility" or a "Privately Owned Investor Company?"

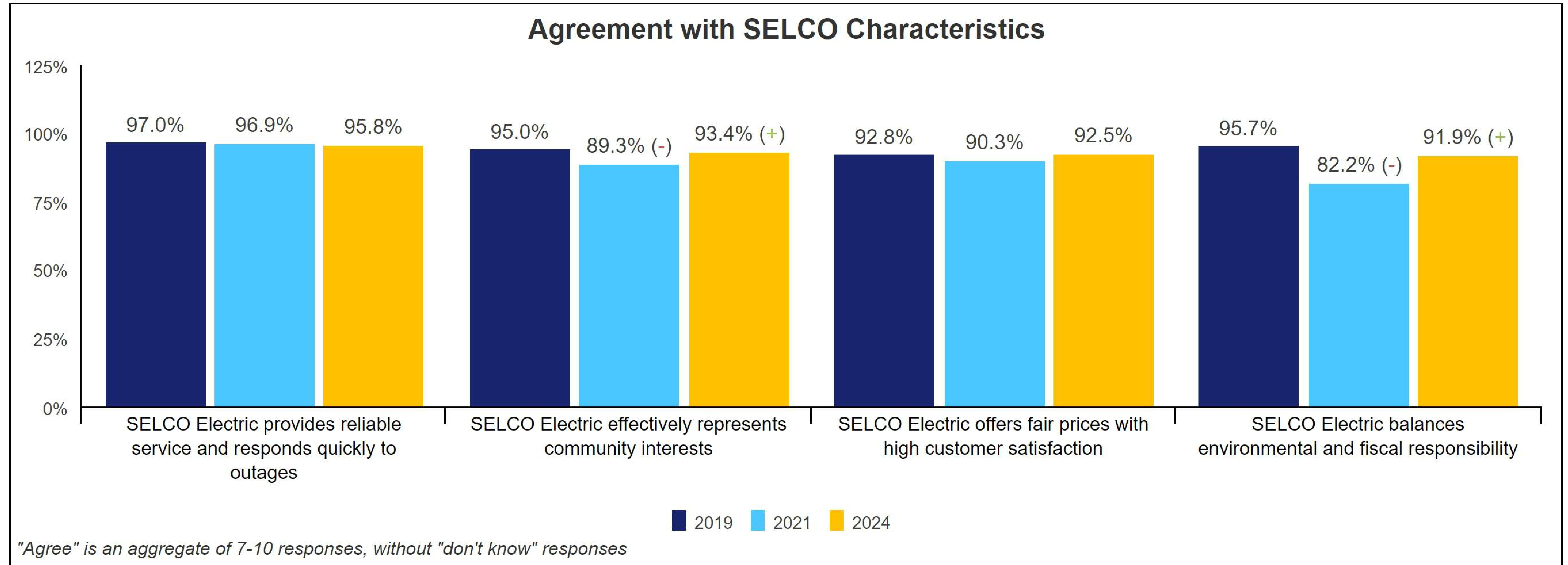
Q: SELCO is a "Community Owned Municipal Utility." How important to you is it to maintain local control of your municipal utility?

(+/-) indicates statistical significance at a 95% confidence level, denoting whether the data point is higher or lower than the compared subgroup



# Public Power | Perceptions

A vast majority of customers strongly agree that "SELCO Electric provides reliable service and responds quickly to outages," and that "SELCO Electric effectively represents community interests," which significantly increased from 2021 (+4.1 percentage points).



Q: Please rate how well each of the following characteristics describe SELCO Electric on a scale from one (1) to ten (10), where one (1) is "strongly disagree" and ten (10) is "strongly agree."

(+/-) indicates statistical significance at a 95% confidence level, denoting whether the data point is higher or lower than the compared subgroup



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# Considerations



## Enhance Awareness and Participation in Emerging Programs

While SELCO's customer satisfaction ratings are exemplary, there is a significant opportunity to increase awareness and engagement with newer programs such as the Connected Homes program and potential time-of-use rate offerings.

- **Awareness Gaps:** Only 25.6% of customers are aware of the Connected Homes program, with 58.1% being unaware. Similarly, while over half (52.4%) are familiar with the concept of "time of use" rates, further education and engagement could significantly increase participation in these offerings, especially with 63.7% expressing interest when informed about SELCO potentially offering a time-of-use program.
- **Device Adoption:** Over half of customers (52.3%) do not currently own smart devices required for participation in the Connected Homes program. Targeted communication to younger demographics (who report higher awareness and device ownership) and programs that incentivize the adoption of qualifying smart devices could drive participation.
- **Next Steps:** SELCO should focus on educational campaigns to promote these programs, emphasizing their benefits (e.g., energy savings and bill credits). Additionally, offering financial incentives or partnerships to reduce the cost of smart devices could help bridge the gap for customers without compatible technology.



## Expand Communication and Digital Engagement Channels

While SELCO's communication methods are well-regarded, there is an opportunity to further enhance engagement by leveraging underutilized digital platforms and tailoring communication strategies to younger demographics.

- **Digital Preferences:** SELCO's website received high praise, with 85.0% of customers valuing it as a communication platform. However, SmartHub usage remains relatively low, with only 41.3% of customers actively using the app despite 62.1% being aware of it. Expanding marketing around the app could increase its adoption and value with customers.
- **Generational Differences:** Younger customers (under 55 years of age) place significantly more value in SELCO's social media (+20.6 percentage points) and SmartHub (+10.5 percentage points) compared to older customers. This suggests an opportunity to further engage this segment through targeted strategies on platforms they prefer.
- **Next Steps:** Focus outreach efforts on younger demographics who already value mobile apps and digital tools. Use social media and targeted emails to showcase how SmartHub can align with their preferences. Also, gathering feedback from current users to understand barriers could help to broaden adoption and identify potential enhancements.





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