

Poll Findings: Arizona Voters' Perception of Postsecondary Attainment

Public Opinion Research by Education
Forward Arizona
October 2025

Setting the Scene: Polls to Date

Over the past two years, Education Forward Arizona conducted a series of public opinion polls on education and training beyond high school.

Poll 1 (2023): The first poll documented that all Arizona voters—Republicans, Democrats, and Independents—believe that some learning beyond high school is necessary for a person to be successful in today’s work world, whether that means attending a workforce certification program, a 2-year career-training degree or a 4-year degree.

Poll 2 (2024): The second poll surveyed Arizonans ages 18 to 40 about why they hadn’t attempted or finished an education degree or workforce certificate. The majority of respondents said they recognized that their lives would have been better if they had completed additional education or training. They reported that the largest obstacle to pursuing education and training opportunities was cost.

Poll 3 (2024): Our latest poll campaign reveals strong public demand for increased access to education and training after high school with some specific policies rising to the top with multiple policies receiving 90%+ support.

Poll 4: Revisiting Voters' Perceptions, Including ESAs, and Testing Solutions

Survey Methodology

Dates	September 2-8, 2025
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	Arizona Likely November 2026 Voters
Total Interviews	624
Margin of Sampling Error	(Full Sample) $\pm 4.0\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
Contact Methods	 Telephone Calls  Text Invitations
Data Collection Modes	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews
Survey Tracking	September 2023 & November 2024
Research Team	Bipartisan Research Team of FM3 Research (D) and HighGround Public Affairs (R)

Mood of Arizona Voters

Political Trends:

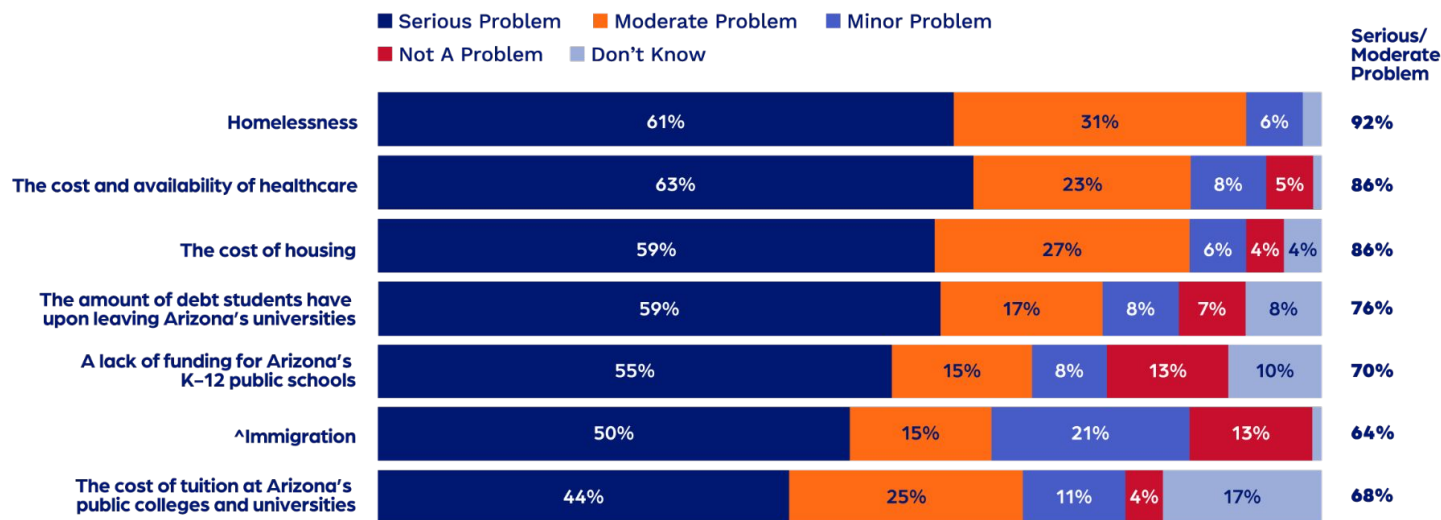
- Poll shows voters favorable and unfavorable opinions are roughly split 50/50 on both President Trump and Governor Hobbs
- While favorable for Gov. Hobbs politically (as this poll's sample skews more conservative), the results underscore Arizona's status as a true battleground state.
- For our purposes, the poll offers an accurate snapshot of Arizona's public mood.

Education Trends:

- Private universities and local public school districts **are gaining popularity.**
- Public universities have shown little to no movement over the last two years.
- Gains in popularity for local public school districts and private universities **are especially notable, given that they are rebounding from lower baseline support.**
- There is rising support for education overall.

Top Concerns for Arizonans

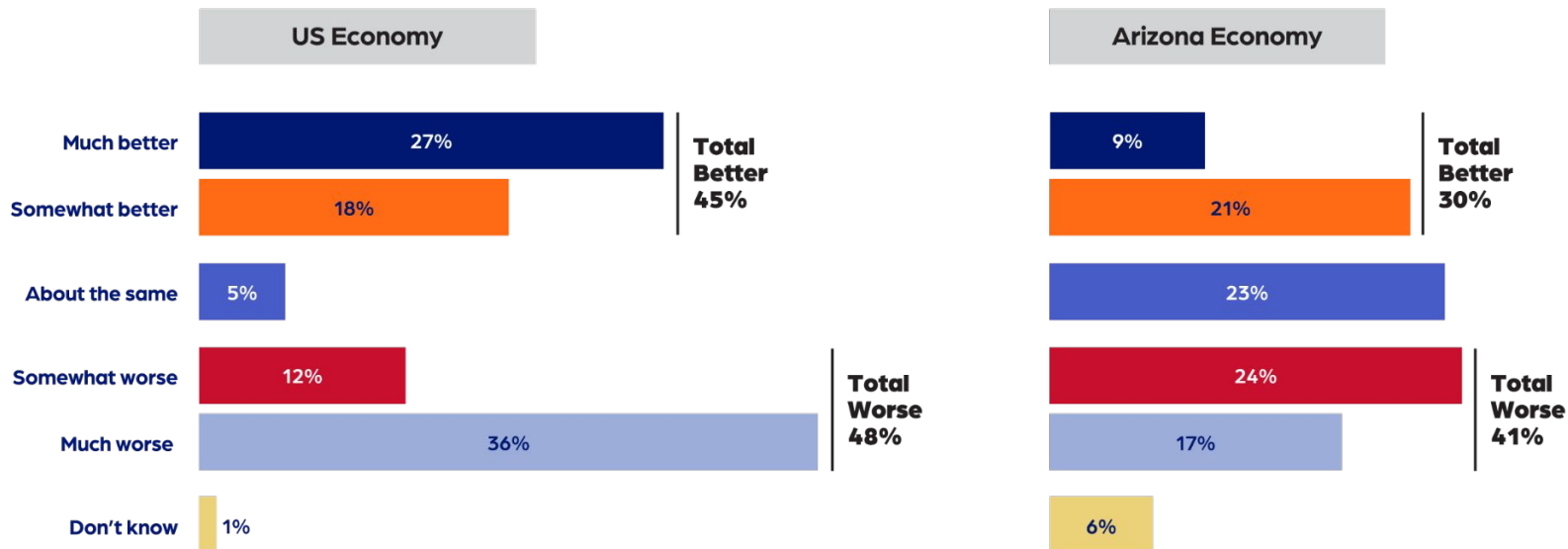
Healthcare, housing affordability, and homelessness are top of mind for voters with student debt and funding for K-12 public schools right behind.



^Not Part of Split Sample

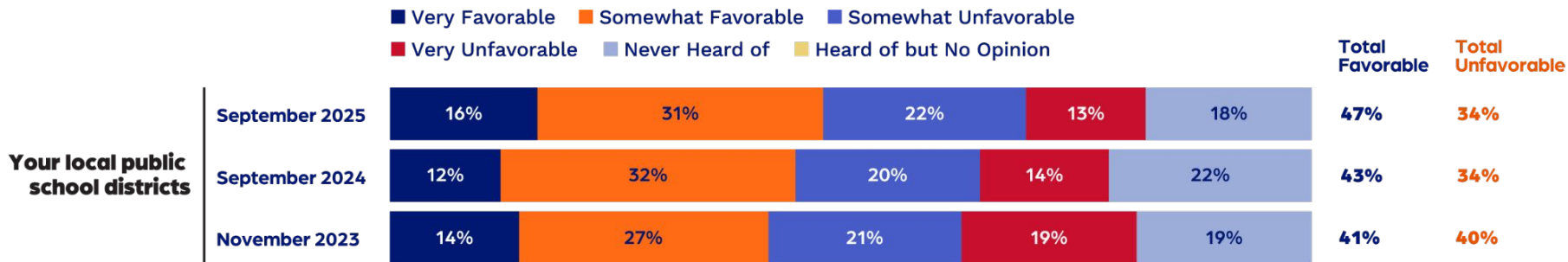
Outlook on Economy

In the short-term, voters are divided on how the nation's economy will perform, but a plurality does not feel optimistic about Arizona's economy.



Outlook on Local Schools

Voters' ratings of their local school districts continue to show modest improvement.



Outlook on Universities and Community Colleges

Views of Arizona's public universities and community colleges are consistent with past statewide surveys

Here are the names of people and organizations that are active in public life. Please indicate whether you have an overall favorable or unfavorable opinion of that person or organization.

■ Very Favorable ■ Somewhat Favorable ■ Somewhat Unfavorable
■ Very Unfavorable ■ Never Heard of ■ Heard of but No Opinion

**Total
Favorable** **Total
Unfavorable**

Arizona's public universities—
the University of Arizona,
Arizona State University and
Northern Arizona University

September 2025



63%

25%

September 2024



62%

20%

November 2023



61%

25%

Your local community or technical
college, such as Phoenix College,
Pima Community College,
Arizona Western College

September 2025



62%

11%

September 2024



63%

9%

November 2023



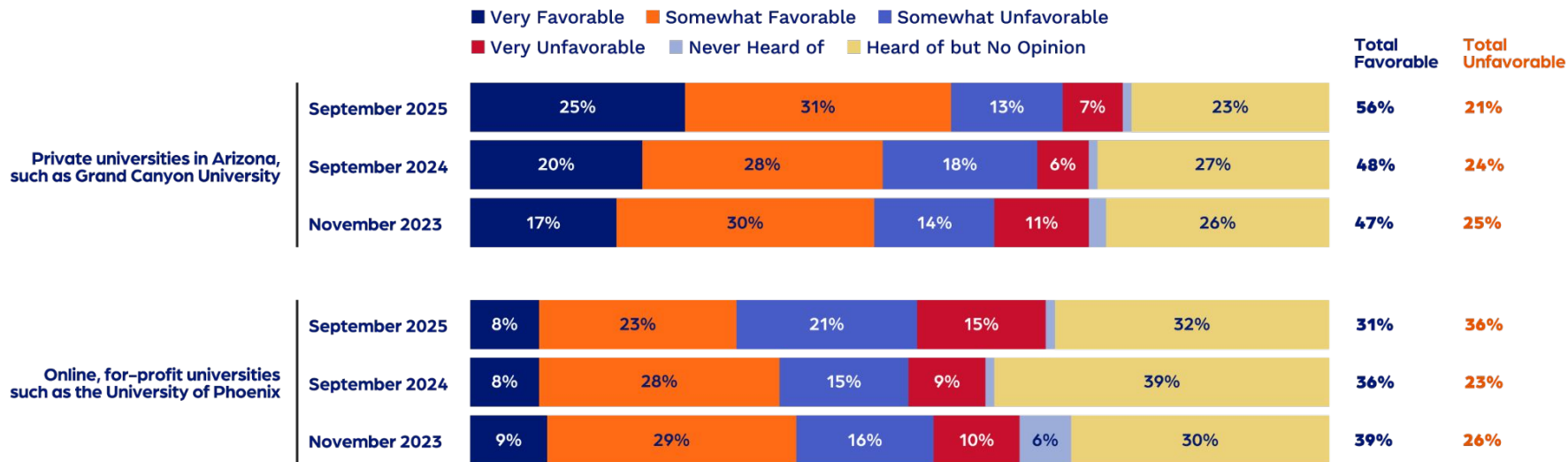
63%

10%

Outlook on Universities and Community Colleges

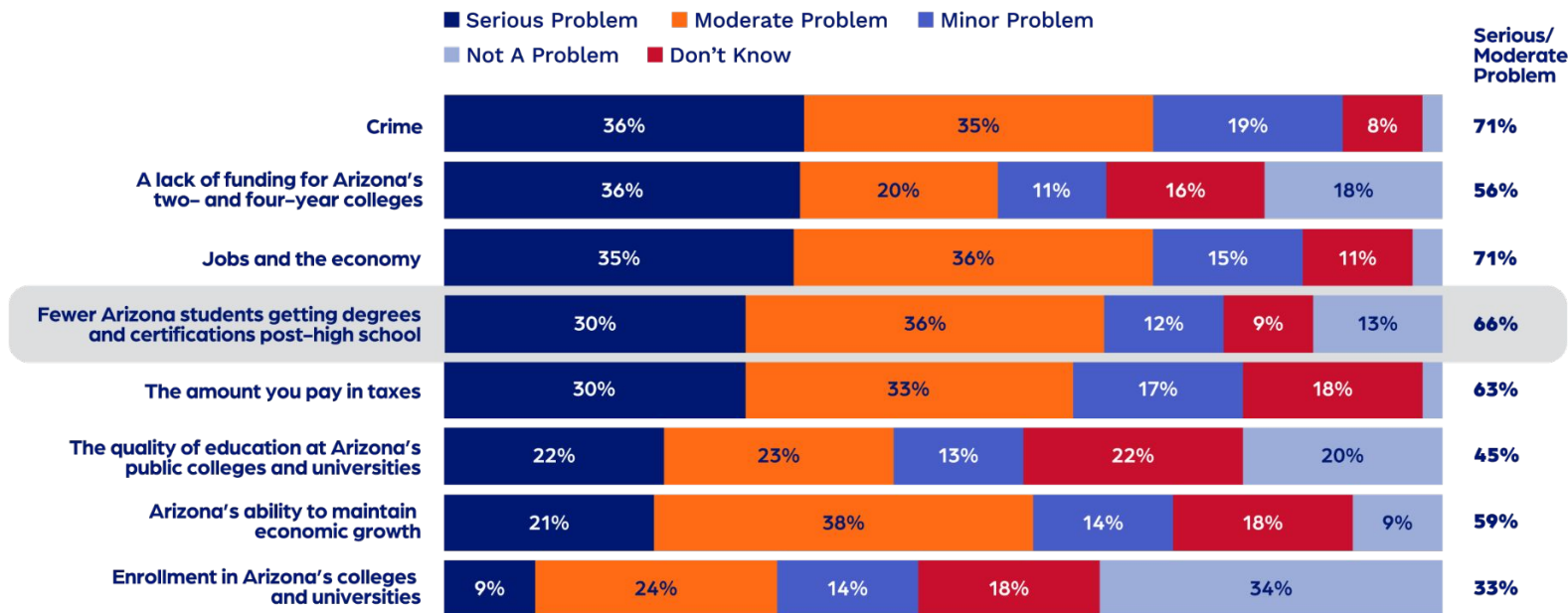
More than half now hold a positive impression of the state's private universities, but opinion of for-profit online universities is lower this year.

Here are the names of people and organizations that are active in public life. Please indicate whether you have an overall favorable or unfavorable opinion of that person or organization.



Outlook on Post-High School Education and Training

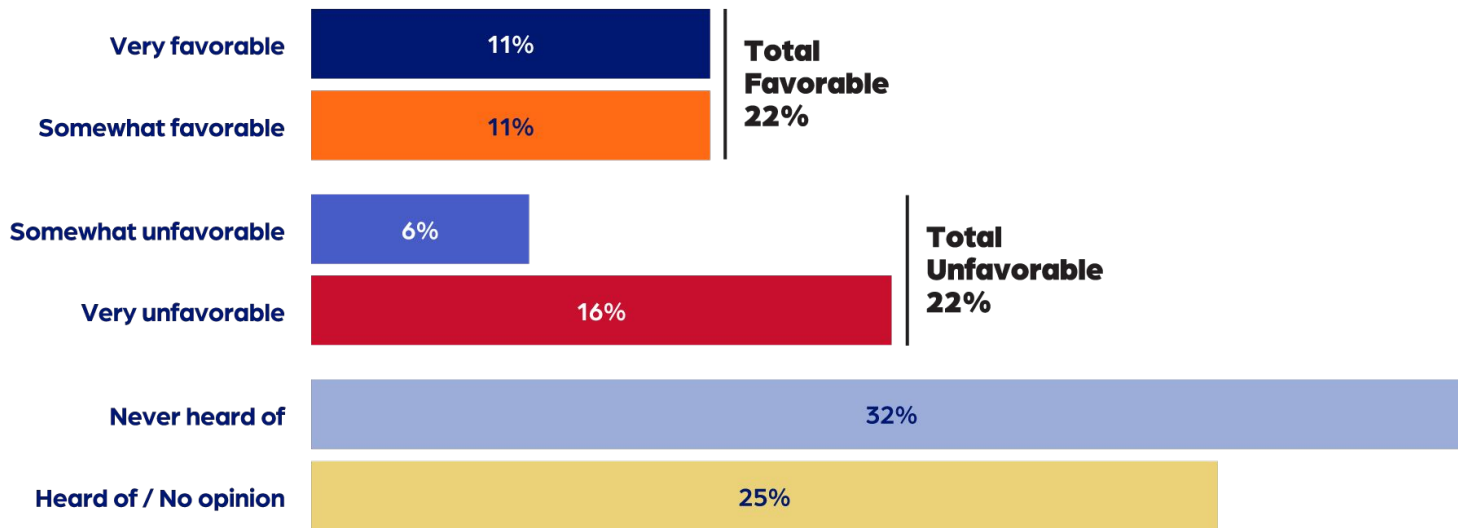
Two-thirds of Arizonans see it as a significant problem that not enough Arizona students get an education beyond high school.



Voter Perceptions: AZ's Empowerment Scholarship Account Program

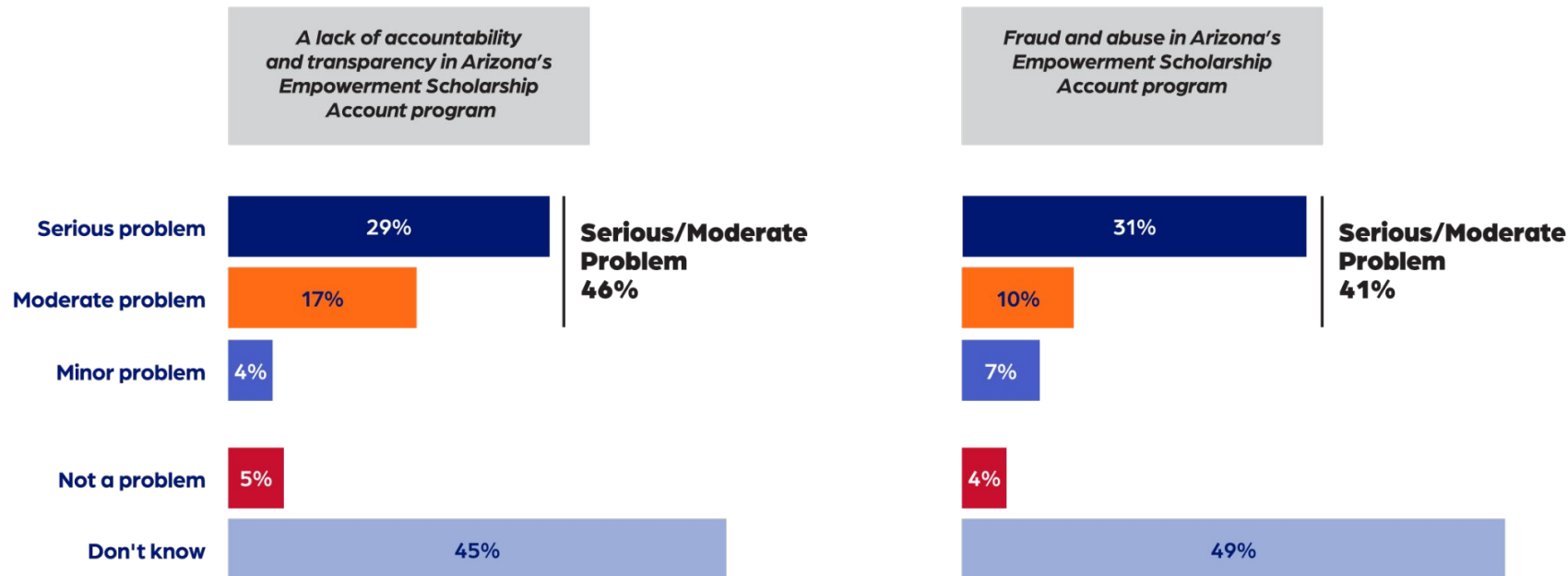
Outlook on ESAs

As part of the initial check of favorable vs. unfavorable a majority of voters did not express an opinion about Arizona's Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) program, but views of ESA's are divided among those who do express an opinion.



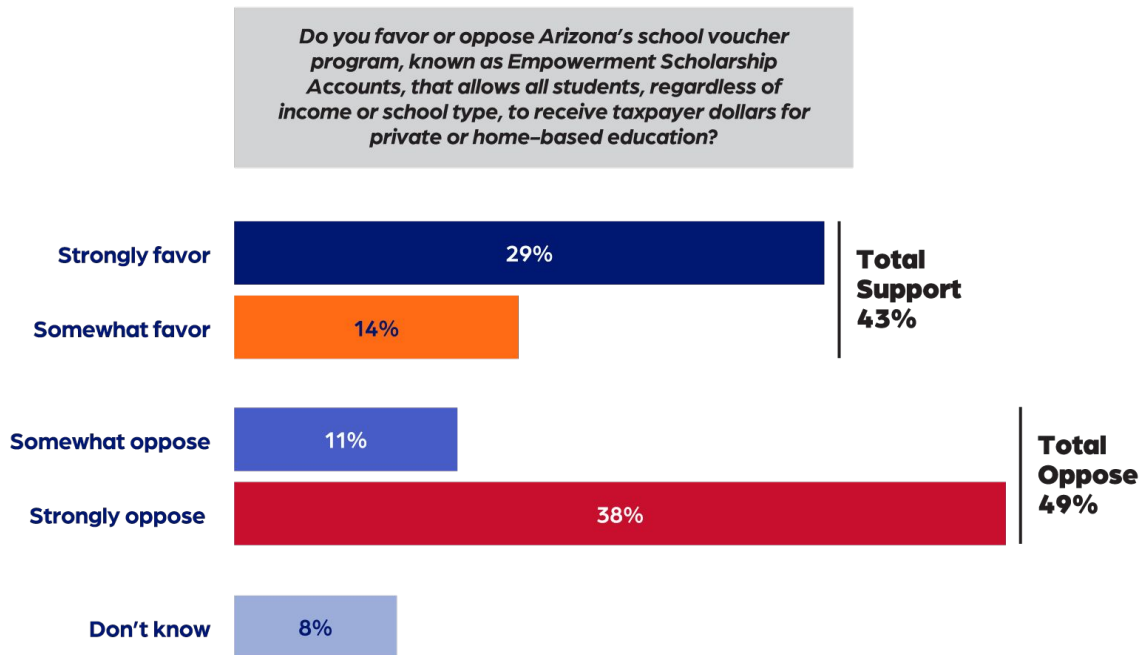
Accountability and Fraud

Of those with an opinion about Arizona's ESA program (in the fav / unfav), an overwhelming majority are highly concerned about the recently reported issues of both fraud and abuse or the lack of transparency and accountability (voters were asked one of the two questions).



Once Voters Know More, Opposition Increases

Later in the poll, when voters were provided a short description of ESA's, almost half oppose the program



Once Voters Know More, Opposition Increases

Opposition is high across the board.

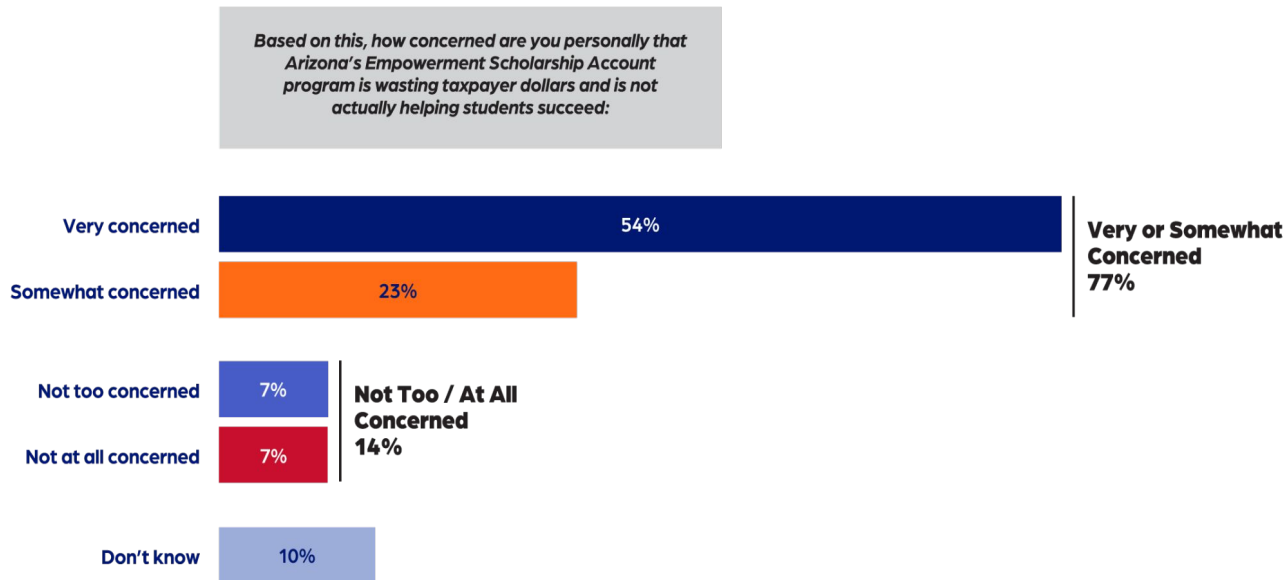
Demographic Group	Total Favor	Total Oppose	Don't Know
Gender			
Men	46%	46%	8%
Women	40%	51%	9%
Party			
Democrats	20%	74%	6%
Independents	36%	54%	10%
Republicans	64%	27%	9%
Ideology			
Liberals	13%	81%	6%
Moderates	34%	53%	12%
Conservatives	67%	27%	6%
Race / Ethnicity			
Whites	42%	50%	8%
Latinos	40%	51%	10%

Demographic Group	Total Favor	Total Oppose	Don't Know
Age			
18-49	39%	53%	8%
50+	45%	47%	8%
Education			
High/Vocational School Educated	61%	27%	12%
Associate Degree/Some College	43%	46%	11%
Four-Year College or More	37%	57%	6%
Urbancity			
Rural	45%	44%	11%
Suburban	47%	41%	12%
Urban	39%	58%	4%

Once Voters Know More, Opposition Increases

Highlighting allegations of waste, fraud and abuse in the ESA program raises a great deal of concern among voters that taxpayer dollars are not being used to help Arizona students.

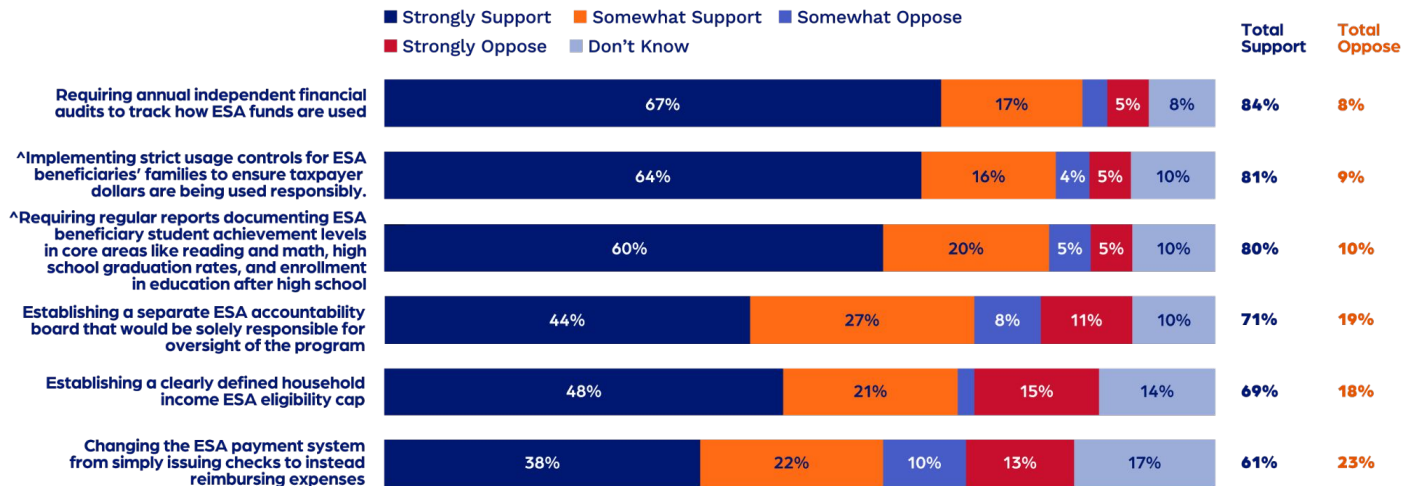
Multiple recent reports allege there has been widespread waste, fraud and abuse of Empowerment Scholarship Accounts because the program lacks the oversight, transparency and accountability required of most other educational institutions, resulting in the misuse of taxpayer dollars on things like out-of-state trips, luxury goods, or even the money simply being put into savings accounts.



ESA Reform

When asked about various reforms, voters are highly supportive of different policies to require greater oversight and accountability of how taxpayer funds are used.

Here are different proposals that have been made to increase oversight and accountability of Arizona's Empowerment Scholarship Account, or ESA, program to prevent waste, fraud and abuse, and ensure taxpayer dollars are used to help students succeed. Please indicate if you support or oppose that proposal.



Key Takeaways on ESAs

Notably, more than 80 percent of voters support:

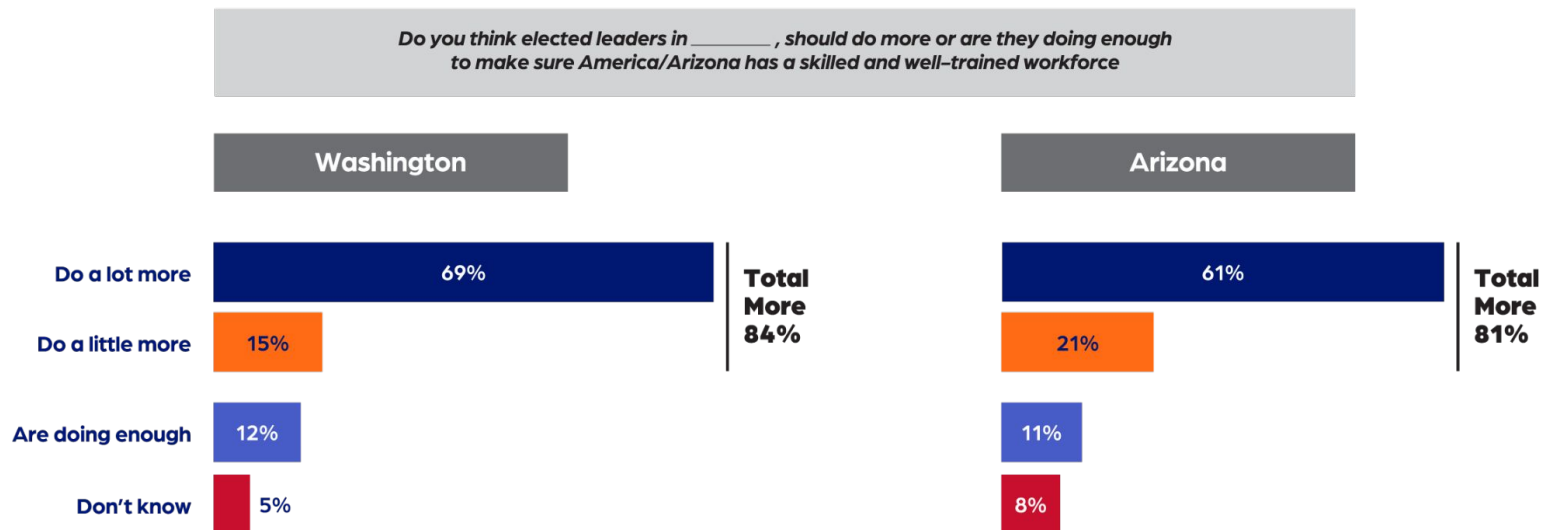
1. Annual independent financial audits to track ESA fund usage
2. Strict usage controls for ESA families to ensure responsible spending of taxpayer dollars
3. Regular reporting requirements on ESA student outcomes, including:
 - a. Achievement in reading and math
 - b. High school graduation rates
 - c. Postsecondary enrollment



Meeting Arizona's Need for a Well-Trained & Educated Workforce

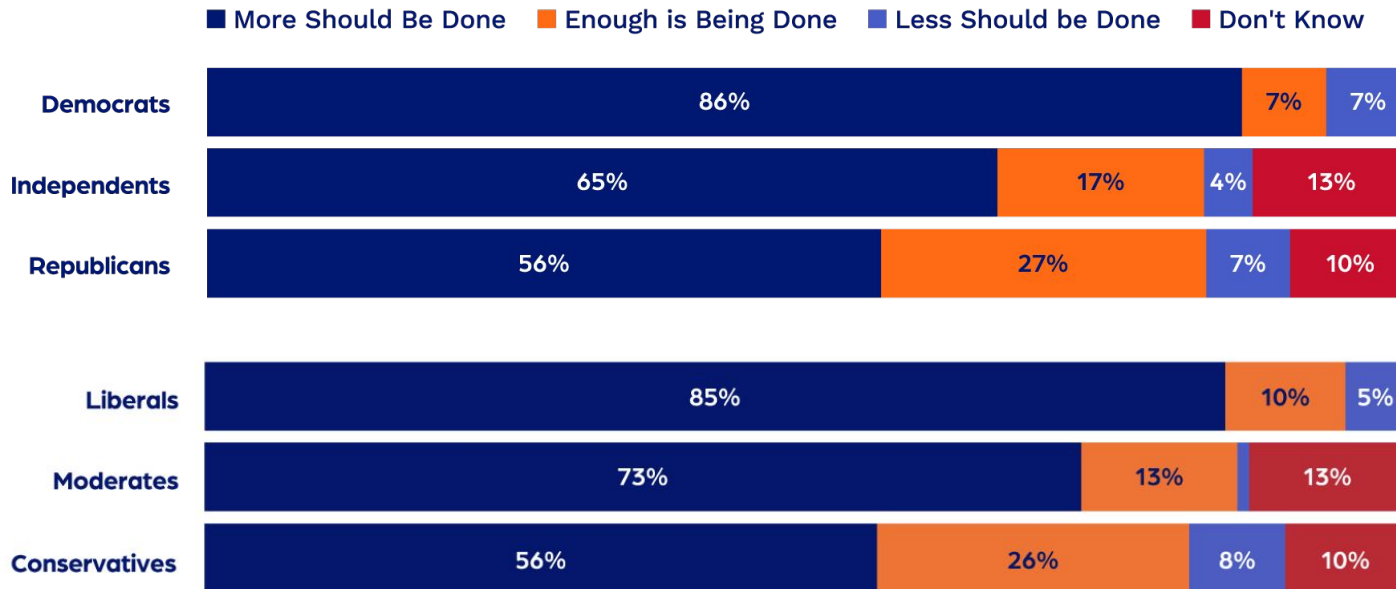
Federal vs State Leadership

Most think leaders in Washington and Arizona should be doing “a lot more” to ensure the nation and the state have skilled and trained workers.



Support by Party and Ideology

There is broad bipartisan support for doing more to increase post-high school education and career training in Arizona and views by ideology align closely with party affiliation.



Overwhelming Majority Says More Must Be Done – And the Number is Growing

Two-thirds are supportive of Arizona taking steps to meet the objective that 60% of its workforce obtain post-high school education, job training or certification for a career. **This number has grown 5 percent since last year.**

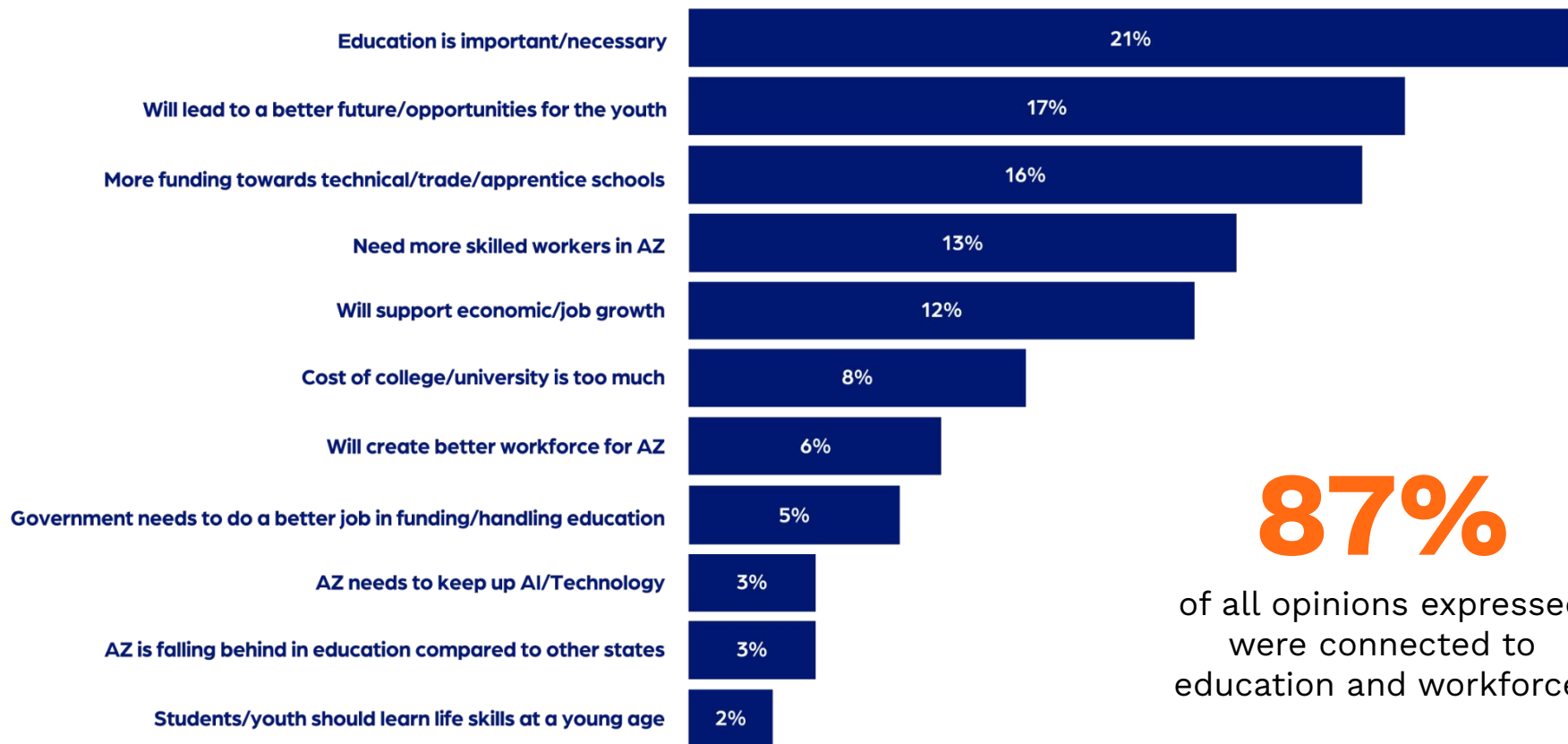
Arizona is working toward a goal that by 2030, at least **60% of Arizonans** ages 25-64 **will complete some education beyond high school**, including at a four-year college, community college, apprenticeship, or a workforce certification program to ensure the state has a skilled and educated workforce. **Currently, only 49% of Arizonans ages 25-64 are estimated to have earned some type of workforce certification or degree after high school.**

Response	September 2024	September 2025
More should be done	63%	68%
Enough is being done	23%	18%
Less should be done	5%	4%
Don't know	9%	10%

+5% change over one year

In your own words, please explain why you think more should be done to increase the share of Arizona students with education or training beyond high school.

(Open-ended; Asked of Those Who Responded More Should Be Done, n=425)



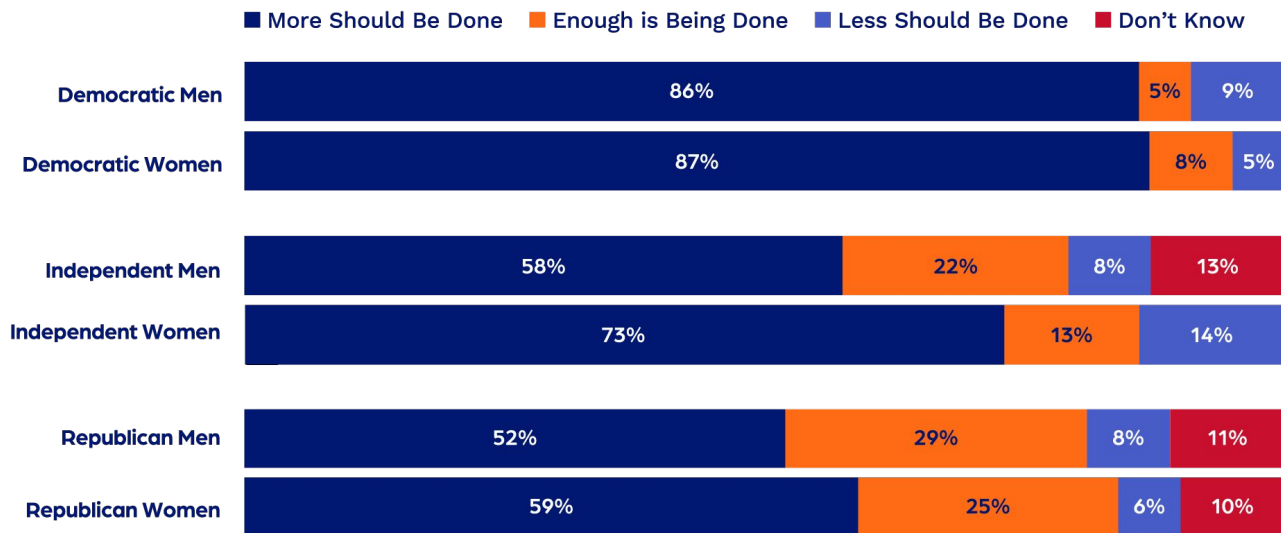
87%

of all opinions expressed
were connected to
education and workforce.

Support for a Well-educated and Well-trained Workforce by Demographic

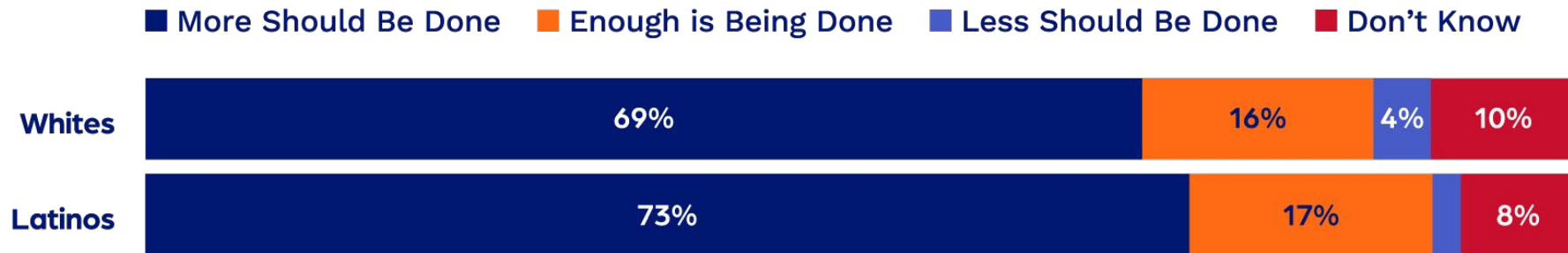
By Gender

A larger share of nonpartisan women are in favor of increasing the share of Arizonans who have post-high school education.



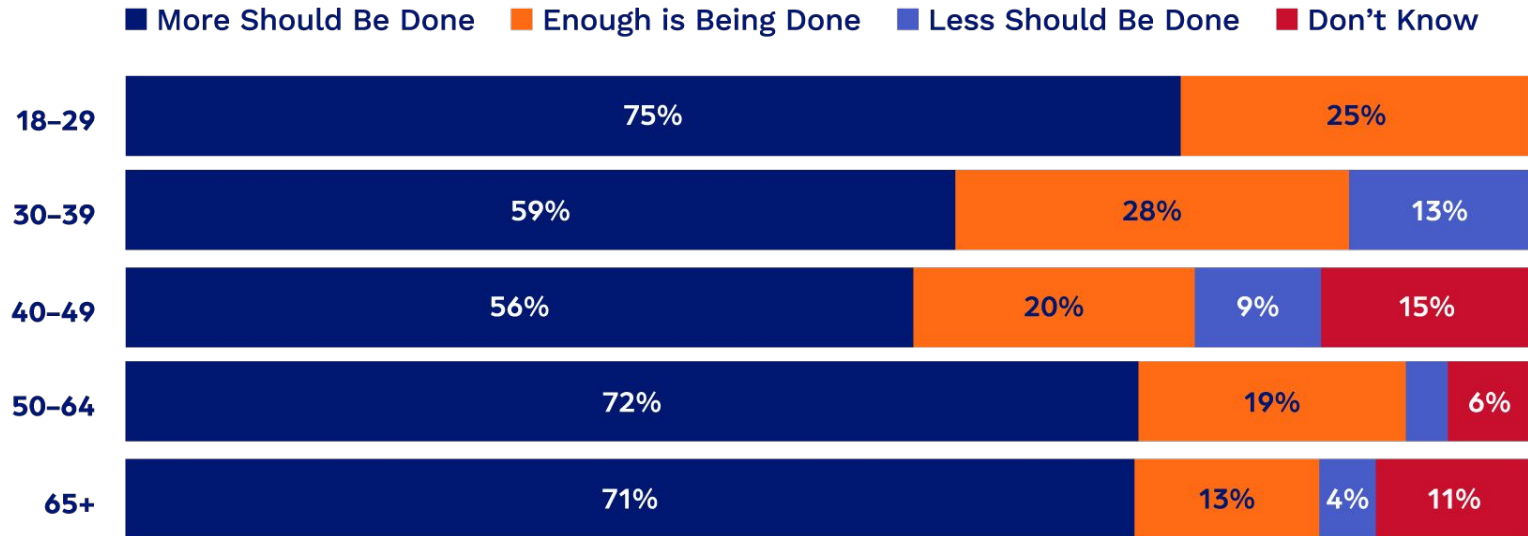
By Race

The vast majority of Latinos and whites favor taking action to meet the 60% post-high school education attainment goal.



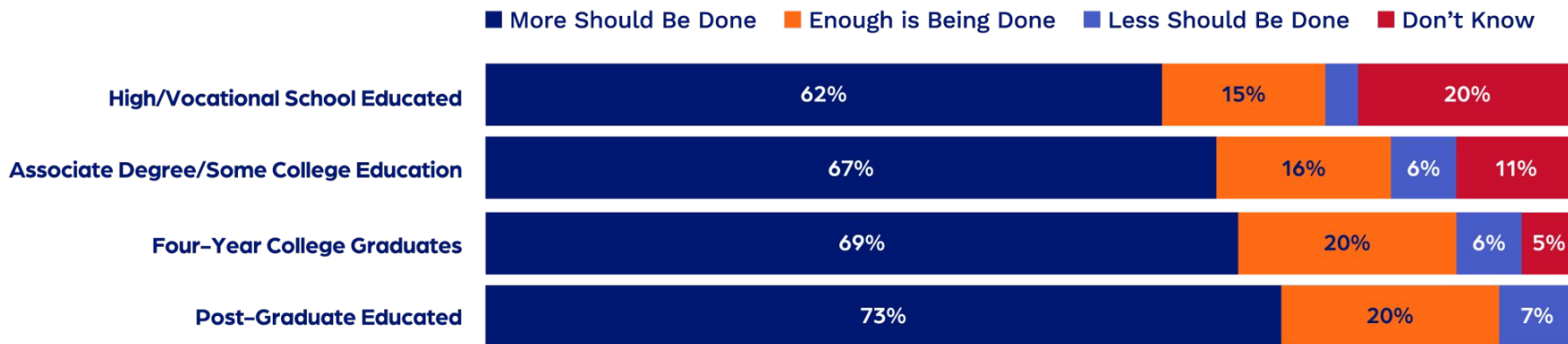
By Age

The youngest and oldest voters are most likely to support taking action to promote post-high school education and training.



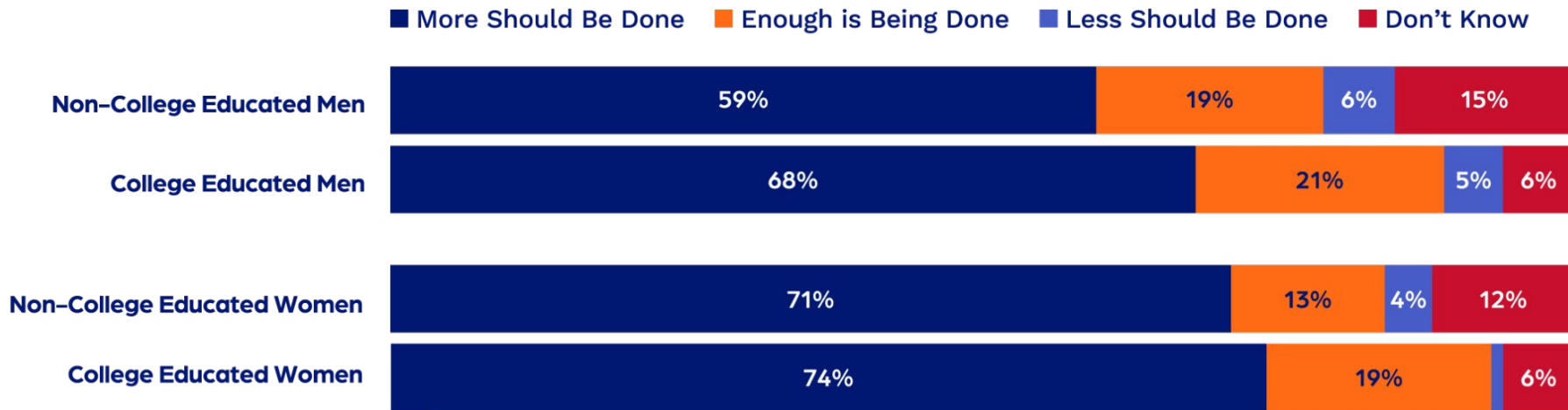
By Education Level

Support for doing more to meet Arizona's need for an educated and skilled workforce increases with voters' level of education.



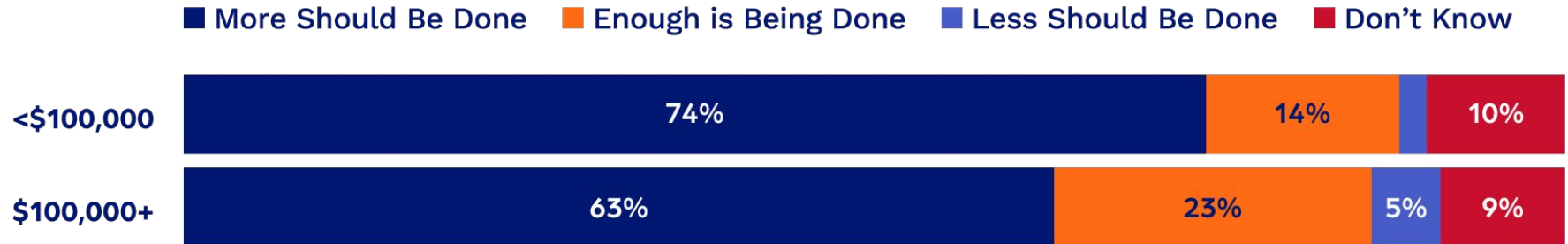
By Education Level & Gender

A larger share of college-educated men favor doing more than men without a college degree. However, most females, regardless of education level, are in favor.



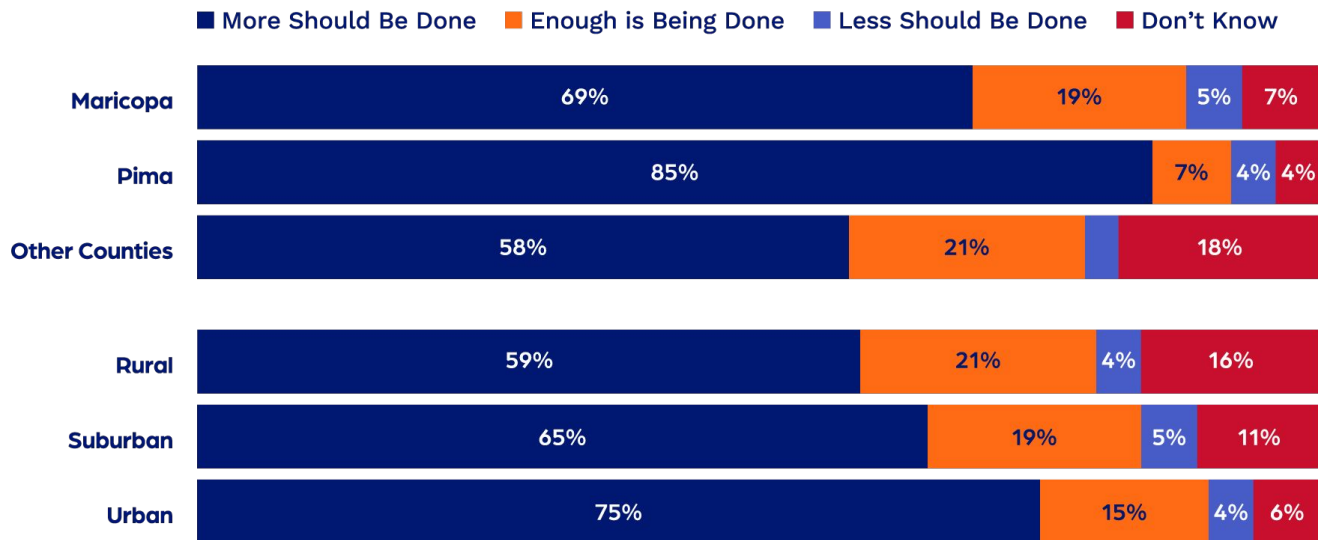
By Income

Three in four voters who earn less than \$100K per year favor doing more to increase the share of Arizonans who have post-high school education or training.



By Geography

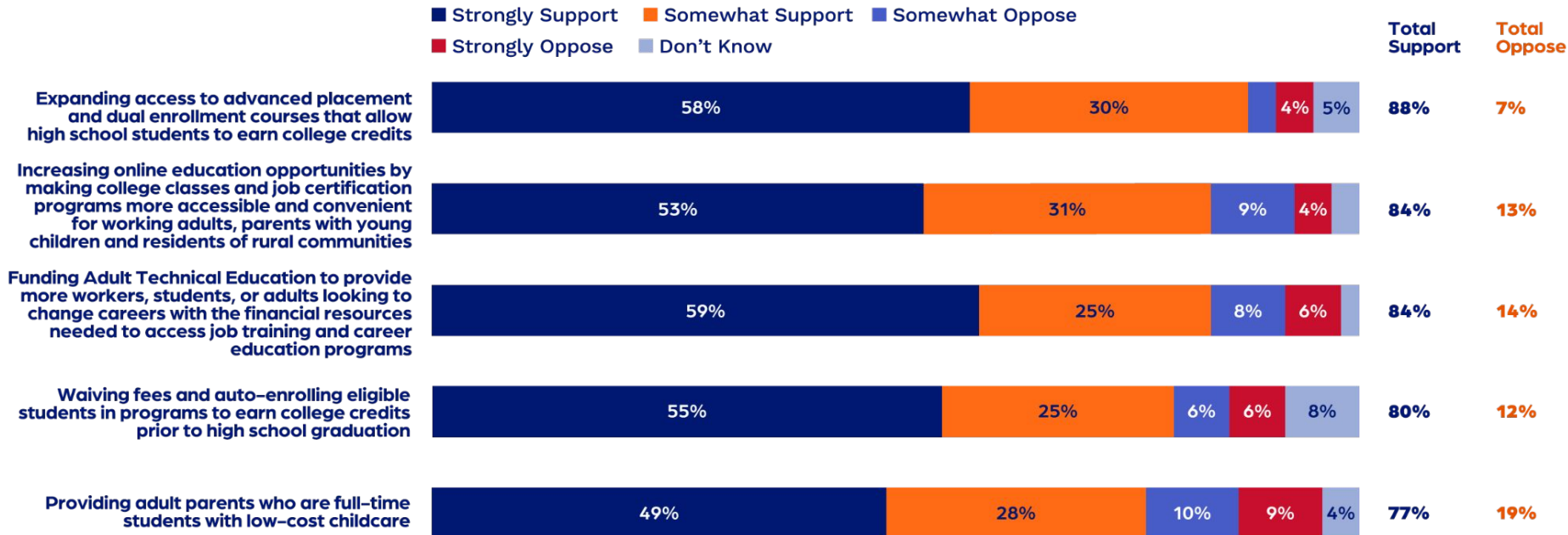
Pima County voters and those in urban communities believe more should be done to meet the education attainment goal.



Voters' Call to Action for Policy, Business, and Education Leaders

Voters express high levels of support for making post-high school education and job training programs more accessible and affordable.

Please consider the following proposals meant to support the goal that at least 60% of Arizonans complete education beyond high school by 2030. Please tell me whether you support or oppose it.



More than seven in ten also support hiring school counselors, free community college for qualifying low-income students and investing in teacher training.

Please consider the following proposals meant to support the goal that at least 60% of Arizonans complete education beyond high school by 2030. Please tell me whether you support or oppose it.

■ Strongly Support ■ Somewhat Support ■ Somewhat Oppose
■ Strongly Oppose ■ Don't Know

Total Support **Total Oppose**

^Increasing the number of counselors available to help high school students plan for college or a career program



76% **19%**

Providing two years of free community college for low-income students that exhaust federal and scholarship monies and increasing access to career training and readiness programs, including apprenticeships, internships, and professional certificate training programs



73% **24%**

^Increasing investments in the Arizona Teachers Academy to help train the next generation of teachers and provide resources, mentorship and pathways to help them reach their goals



71% **20%**

Major Majorities Support a Variety of Proposals

More than **80 percent** of voters support:

1. AP & Dual Enrollment Access
2. Expanded Online Education Options
3. Funding for Adult Job Training
4. Auto-Enrollment in College Credit

More than **70 percent** of voters support:

1. Hiring school counselors
2. Free community college for qualifying low-income students
3. Investing in teacher training

Summarizing Key Takeaways

Summary: Key Takeaways

Current and Future Outlook on Arizona

- Consistent with prior statewide surveys, voters' top concerns remain the cost and availability of healthcare, the cost of housing, homelessness, student debt and funding for Arizona's K-12 public schools.
- A plurality of voters believe that the state's economy will worsen a year from now.

Lack of Understanding of ESAs – and Concern Once Informed

- Most Arizona voters are not familiar with the state's Empowerment Scholarship Accounts program; however, there is skepticism of the program.
- Voters are highly troubled by allegations that it is widespread waste, fraud, and abuse, and they support enacting reforms to address these problems.

Summary: Key Takeaways

More Must be Done to Develop a Skilled and Educated Workforce

- Voters believe elected leaders at the federal and state levels should be doing more to ensure the nation and Arizona have a skilled and well-trained workforce.
- Therefore, it follows that the vast majority of Arizonans think “more should be done” to meet the goal that 60% of Arizonans have post-high school education, job training, or career education
- Consistent with previous statewide surveys, voters across all major demographic groups favor doing more to meet the attainment objective.

Summary: Key Takeaways

Votes Support a Variety of Policies to Accomplish Achieve60AZ

- Voters continue to support policies that will increase access to post-high school education and career education programs.
- This includes:
 - College-level dual enrollment for high school students
 - Expanding online education
 - Funding Adult Technical Education
 - Making education and career programs more affordable.

Resources

Find all of Education Forward Arizona's
Everything to Gain poll findings by
visiting:
everythingtogain.org/research-resources