2025

The Connection Opportunity

Insights for Bringing Americans Together Across Difference

Spotlight on Kansas City

More in Common

About More in Common

More in Common seeks to understand the forces driving us apart, find common ground, and help bring Americans together to tackle shared challenges. We work with over 200 groups across civil society, business, education, and philanthropy to conduct actionable research that informs policymakers, community leaders, and the public.

Website: www.moreincommonus.com
Email: us@moreincommon.com

Authors
Daniel Yudkin, Ph.D. — Senior Advisor
Calista Small — Research Manager
Jordan Wylie, Ph.D. — Research Fellow
Ashley Fabrizio, Ph.D. — Head of Research
Kate Carney — Deputy Director

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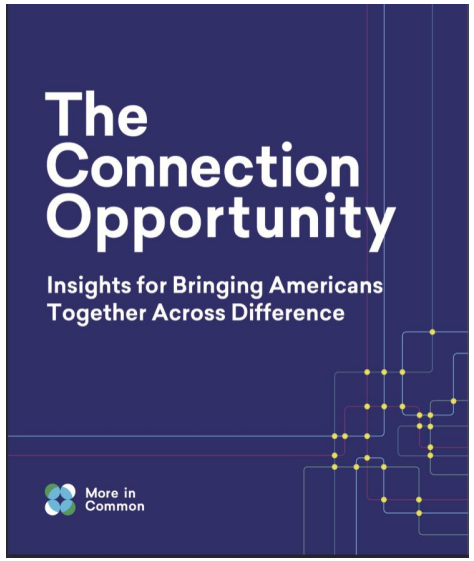
Foreword

Research shows that social connection isn't just important for individual well-being—it's also essential to societal and democratic health as well. Yet, these days, Americans are increasingly disconnected and divided, reporting record high levels of loneliness and also distrust in both institutions and each other.

One solution to this problem is clear: Americans need to reconnect, especially across lines of difference. But: do they want to? Do they value connecting with those who have different backgrounds and beliefs? And if so, what's preventing them from forging those ties?

To answer these questions, More in Common conducted a wide-ranging investigation of Americans' attitudes toward connection across difference, involving more than 6,000 survey respondents across the United States, with a regional spotlight on three metro areas: Kansas City, Houston, and Pittsburgh.

This publication focuses specifically on findings from the Kansas City metro area and provides broad recommendations for how to foster more connections across lines of difference in the region. We hope these insights help stakeholders working to build a stronger culture of connection in Kansas City engage new audiences in their work.



This deck serves as a companion piece to our main report. To explore all the insights from this project, visit our website.

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Section One

Our Approach

OUR APPROACH

Defining Terms

What is “connection across difference”?

Connection across differences refers to meaningful engagement or communication between individuals from different social, cultural, political, or demographic groups. These interactions help bridge divides and promote understanding and trust across lines of difference.

A focus on four lines of difference

This deck examines connection across four lines of difference: race/ethnicity, political viewpoint, socioeconomic status, and religion.

Why Kansas City?

This deck highlights insights from the Kansas City metro area and makes comparisons to the US national average. Kansas City was selected as one of three regions of focus for this study because of its unique bi-state geography (spanning Missouri and Kansas), relative size and importance in the Midwest, and recent demographic changes.

As a case study, this research attempts to identify broad trends and is not seeking to capture the full complexity of connection across difference in Kansas City. Future work should continue to investigate topics studied in this report at a more granular level.

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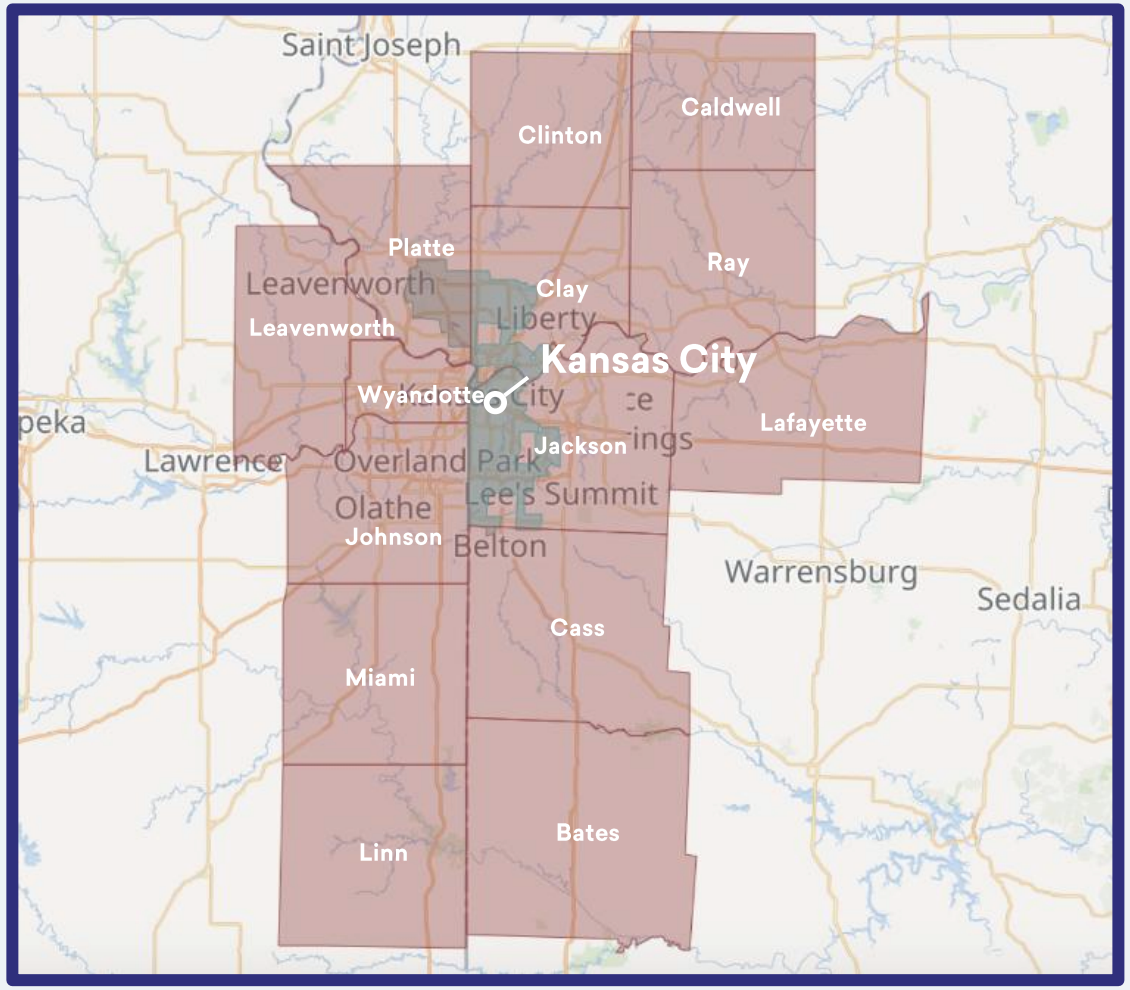
WHAT IS THE KANSAS CITY METRO AREA?

Kansas City MSA

The Kansas City metropolitan statistical area (MSA) is a bi-state metropolitan area anchored by Kansas City, Missouri.

It has 14 counties which straddle the border between the U.S. states of Missouri and Kansas.

Learn more about the population of Kansas City MSA via data from the US Census Bureau here.



Map of Kansas City MSA

The map is derived from an image from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kansas_City_metropolitan_area#/map/0.

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METHODS: DATA COLLECTION

Quantitative Research

More in Common partnered with the international polling firm YouGov to conduct quantitative survey research.

For the **national survey**

- *N* = 4,522 U.S. adults
- The data collection period was from December 21, 2023 to January 18, 2024
- The margin of error for the US average is ±1.46%

For the **Kansas City MSA Survey**

- *N* = 532 U.S. adults from KC MSA
- The data collection period was from April 30 to May 16, 2024
- The margin of error for the Kansas City MSA average is ±4.24%

Qualitative Research

More in Common partnered with the qualitative research firm ROI Rocket to convene five focus groups of Kansas City residents.

Residents were grouped by:

1. Party ID (Democrat, Republican, Independent)
2. Feelings of belonging in Kansas City (high vs. low)

Focus groups consisted of 6 to 8 residents each. Discussions were held online from July to August 2024.

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Section Two

Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (1/3)

Interest in Connection

- The majority of Kansas City residents value connection across lines of difference—more so than the national average.
    - Compared to the national average, Kansas City residents are more likely to:
        - believe they have a responsibility to connect across lines of difference (78 percent vs. 70 percent nationally)
        - be interested in activities that build connection across lines of difference (66 percent vs. 56 percent nationally)
- Kansas City residents, on average, are most interested in activities involving working across lines of difference to "achieve a mutual goal in their community" (over 8 in 10 express interest) and are least interested in "talking about group tensions" (about 6 in 10 express interest).
- Kansas City residents are least interested in connection with people who have a different political viewpoint than them, a finding that aligns with national trends.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (2/3)

What predicts interest in connection?

In our main report, we identified three strong predictors of interest in connection. These are highlighted in below, along with data from the Kansas City metro area.

1. **Perceived Community Norms of Connection**: The more people think others in their community are connecting across lines of difference (the more they feel this is a "social norm"), the more interested they are in connecting as well. While a majority (65 percent) of Kansas City residents agree or are "neutral" that people in their community support connecting across lines of difference, much fewer (54 percent) think these connections are common in the region.

2. **Frequency of Cross-Group Interaction**: How much someone currently interacts across lines of difference is positively correlated to interest in future connection. Only 51 percent of Kansas City residents report "frequently" engaging across lines of political difference, compared to 65 percent who report "frequently" interacting with people from different races/ethnicities.

3. **Local Community Belonging**: Feeling a sense of local community belonging is related to interest in connection with others from different backgrounds. 53 percent of Kansas City residents report a strong sense of community belonging (similar to national trends).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (3/3)

Barriers to Connection & Trusted Messengers

- Kansas City residents most commonly report a “lack of opportunity” as a barrier to connection for all lines of difference– except for politics.
    - For politics, residents most commonly cite that such interactions are "not important" (28 percent), that they "lack the energy" to interact (28 percent), and that they think the interaction would be "uncomfortable" (23 percent).
    - Specific social and environmental barriers, such as racial segregation and public transportation accessibility, were cited in focus groups as barriers to all types of social connection.

- Kansas City residents place the most trust in close connections, doctors, and veterans—while social media influencers and government officials are trusted the least. Respondents seek out local TV news the most to know what is happening locally.

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Section Three

Connecting Across Difference

Section Three Topics

01 **Connective responsibility**

02 Interest in connection across difference

03 Attitudes towards integrated communities

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Section Three Topics

01 **Connective responsibility**

02 Interest in connection across difference

03 Attitudes towards integrated communities

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DEFINING TERMS

What is connective responsibility ?

UNDERSTANDING CONNECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Connective responsibility refers to the belief that individuals have a moral obligation to engage with people from different backgrounds.

MEASURING CONNECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: [1- Strongly disagree to 7 - Strongly agree]

1. In a complex society, we all have a shared responsibility to engage with people whose backgrounds and viewpoints are different from our own.

of Kansas City MSA residents agree that we have a shared responsibility to connect across difference.

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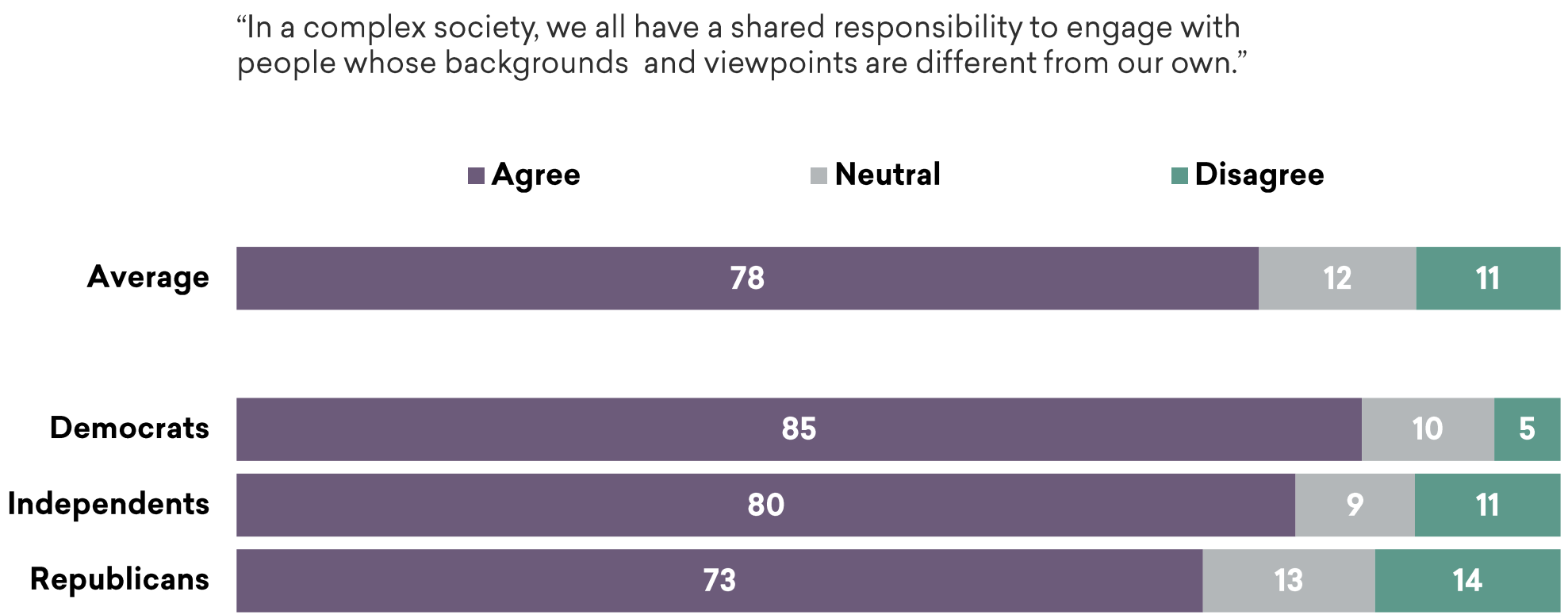
Note: Agreement was calculated as a value higher than “4” on the agreement scale.
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA, conducted in 2024.

There is broad bipartisan agreement among Kansas City MSA residents that we have a shared responsibility to engage with others who have different backgrounds and beliefs.

Numbers indicate percentages of Kansas City MSA residents.



Question: "Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements." (1 - Strongly Disagree to 7 - Strongly Agree)
Note: Responses of 1–3 are categorized as disagreement; 4 as neutral; 5–7 as agreement.
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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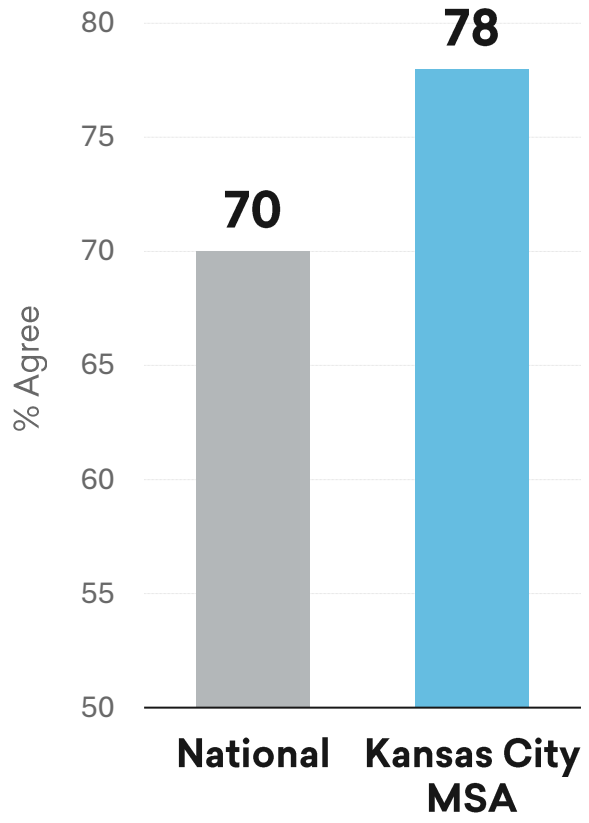
KANSAS CITY MSA VS. USA

A larger proportion of Kansas City MSA residents endorse this belief compared to the national average

"In a complex society, we all have a shared responsibility to engage with people whose backgrounds and viewpoints are different from our own."



Question: "Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements." (1 - Strongly Disagree to 7 - Strongly Agree)
Note: Responses of 5–7 are classified as agreement.
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 4,522 U.S. adults and 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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Section Three Topics

01 Connective responsibility

02 **Interest in connection across difference**

03 Attitudes towards integrated communities

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DEFINING TERMS

We asked respondents to report how interested they would be in participating in a range of activities. We then averaged their responses together.

MEASURING INTEREST

Thinking about the near future, please indicate how interested you are in doing each of the following with someone from a different [group] than you:* [1 - Not at all interested, 2 - Slightly interested, 3 - Moderately interested, 4 - Very interested, 5 - Extremely interested]

1. Engaging in an extended conversation
2. Talking about [group] tensions
3. Forming a close friendship
4. Inviting into your home as a guest
5. Working in the same work group
6. Going to a function or social event
7. Working to achieve a mutual goal that improves your community

*This question was repeated for each line of difference. Items have been edited for clarity.

of Kansas City MSA residents are at least moderately interested in activities involving connecting across differences.

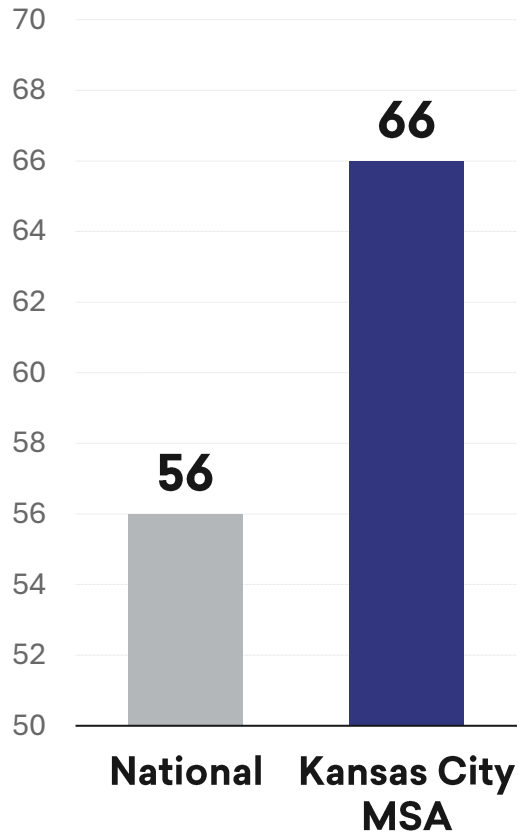
Note: "Moderately interested" was defined as 3 or higher on a composite measure of interest in future contact, which is where we averaged of all seven items across all lines of difference and then binarized scores at or above a 3 to create an overall proportion of interest in connection across difference.

Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA, conducted in 2024.

KANSAS CITY MSA VS. USA

A greater proportion of Kansas City MSA residents are interested in activities involving connecting across differences, compared to the national average.

% of people at least moderately interested in activities involving cross-group connection (on average)*



*Note: This uses a composite measure of the interest in future contact items with scores 3 ("moderately interested") and above included. The difference between the national and Kansas City average is statistically significant.
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 4,522 U.S. adults and 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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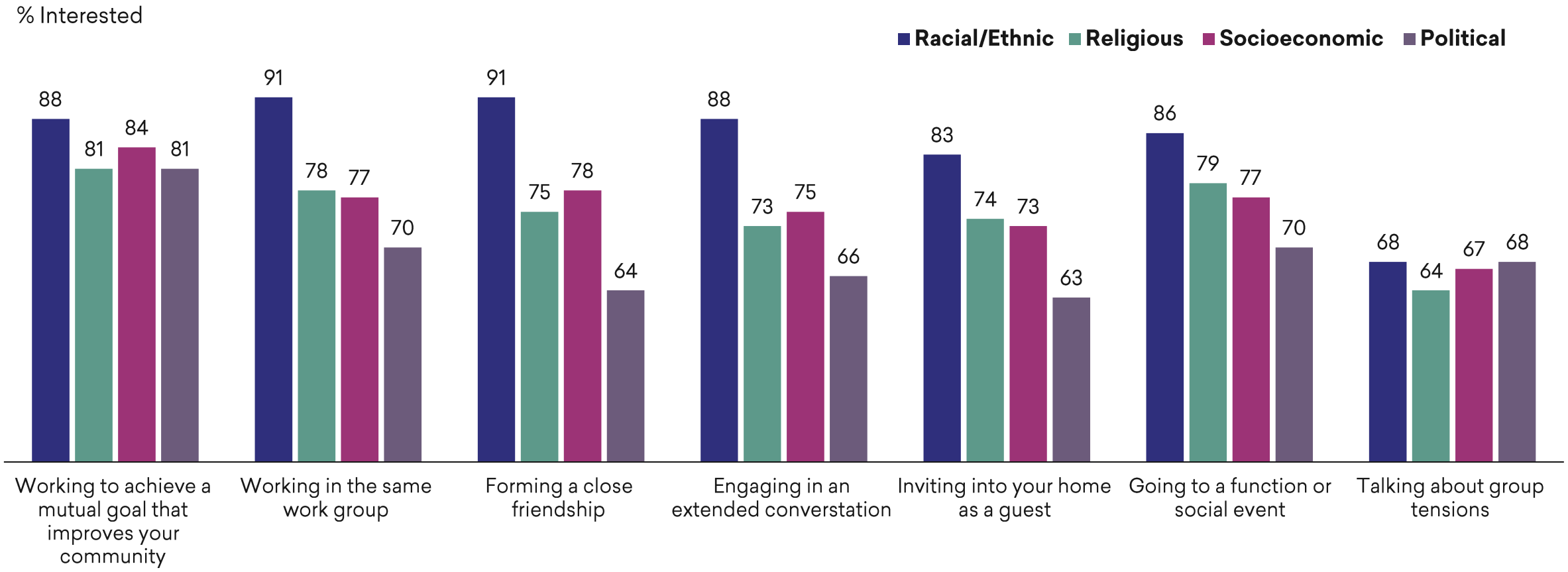
At the individual item level, interest in connecting across lines of difference is highest, on average, for activities that involve working together.

"Thinking about the near future, please indicate how interested you are in doing the following with people from a different [group] background than you."



Note: % Interested = "Moderately Interested" + "Very Interested" + "Extremely Interested." Item wording has been edited lightly for clarity.
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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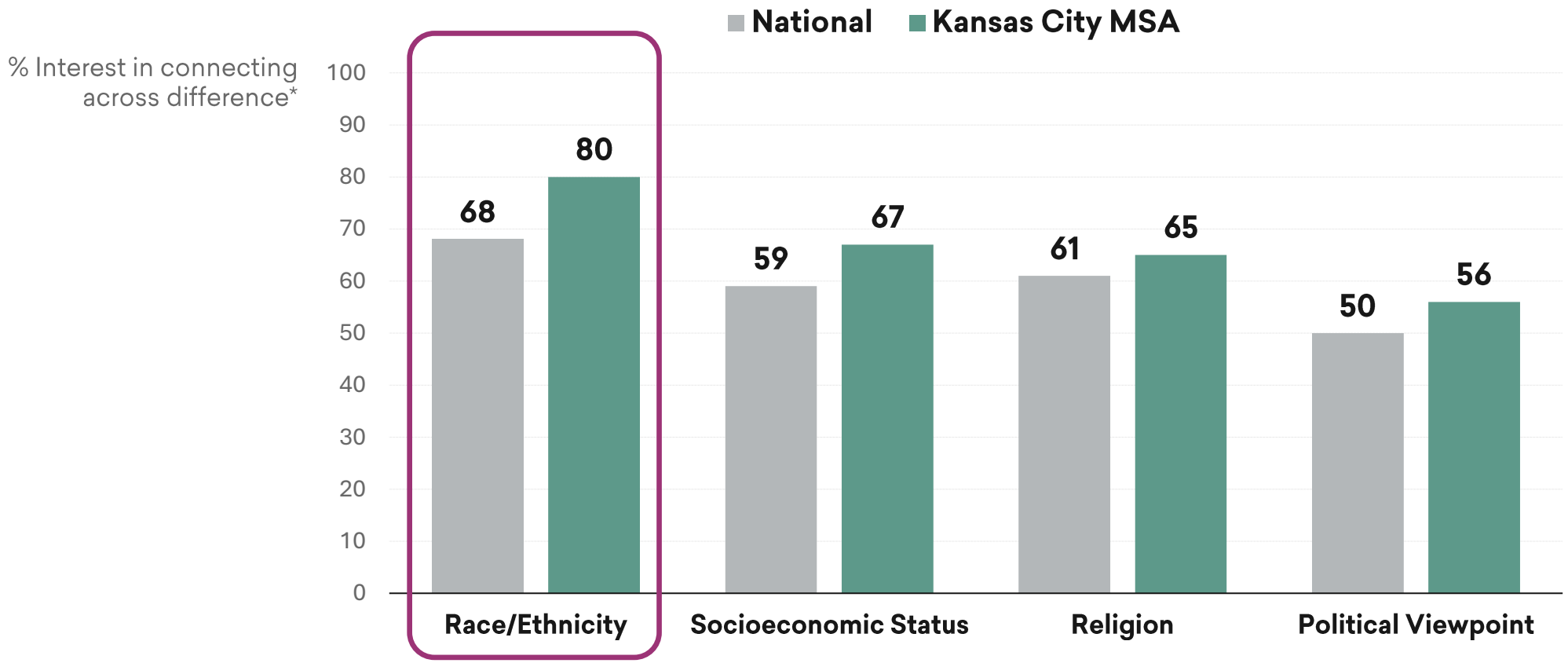
Compared to other lines of difference, Kansas City MSA residents are most interested in connecting across racial and ethnic lines.



*Note: This uses a composite measure of the interest in future contact items with scores 3 ("moderately interested") and above included.
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 4,522 U.S. adults and 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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We find a desire for connection from both longtime residents and newer arrivals in Kansas City.

"I am really making really good friends here just in two years that I live in Kansas City. So, **I know different people from other ethnicities, cultures, countries, and we are great friends.** So, [people here] are very open to know people with different things in common."

Emily, Millennial, biracial woman from Kansas City

"They have a lot of things going on all year round, but this is a particular walk that they have. And the whole point of the walk is to not just walk with my husband...is to try to introduce yourself and meet different people with different backgrounds and different religious backgrounds and backgrounds in race. And it's really interesting, and it's humbling because you've just got to realize that there's a whole big world out here...Living here in the Midwest...it's kind of cool because **I like to have the opportunity to do that–to meet the different people that live here**."

Lily, Baby Boomer, white woman from Kansas City

Source: More in Common (2025). Person icons made by Pixel Perfect from www.flaticon.com

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Section Three Topics

01 Connective responsibility

02 Interest in connection across difference

03 **Attitudes towards integrated communities**

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DEFINING TERMS

We asked respondents how much they would support greater mixing and integration of people with different backgrounds in their community.

MEASURING ATTITUDES TOWARDS INTEGRATED COMMUNITIES

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:* [1 - Strongly disagree to 7 - Strongly agree]

1. Greater integration of people with different [group] viewpoints/backgrounds would make the Kansas City metropolitan area a better place to live.

2. I would like to live in a community where there is greater mixing and interaction among people with different [group] viewpoints/backgrounds than what exists where I live today.

*This question was repeated for each line of difference.

of Kansas City MSA residents support greater integration in their communities.

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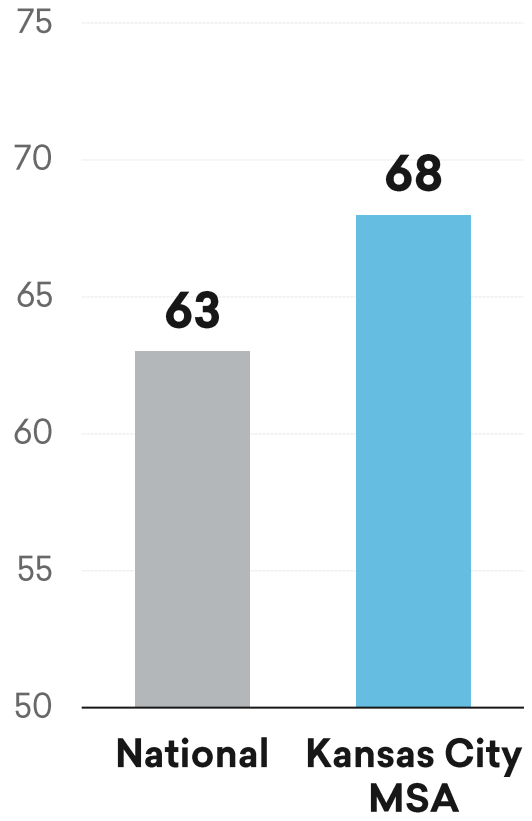
Note: This is based on an average score higher than "4" on a composite measure of attitudes toward integration.
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA, conducted in 2024.

KANSAS CITY MSA VS. USA

On average, Kansas City MSA residents show slightly higher levels of support for integration, compared to the national average.

Percentage of people that support integrated communities*



*Note: This is based on an average score higher than "4" on a composite measure of attitudes toward integration. The difference is statistically significant.
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 4,522 U.S. adults and 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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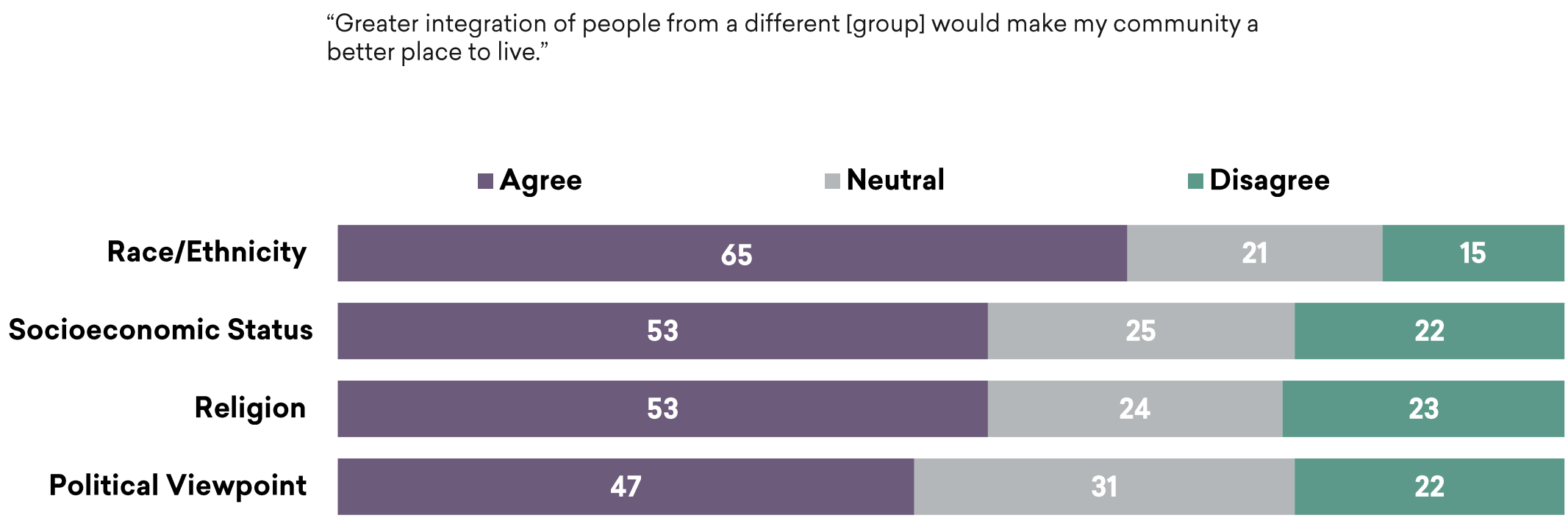
Broken down by line of difference: Kansas City MSA residents overwhelmingly support racial/ethnic integration, and about 1 in 2 support greater socioeconomic, religious, and political integration.

Numbers indicate percentages of Kansas City MSA residents.



Question: "Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements." (1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree)
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 4,522 U.S. adults and 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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Section Four

Predictors of Interest in Connecting Across Difference

Predictors of Interest

01 **Perceived Community Norms of Connection**

02 Frequency of Cross-Group Interaction

03 Belonging In Kansas City MSA

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DEFINING TERMS

What are perceived community norms of connection?

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY NORMS OF CONNECTION

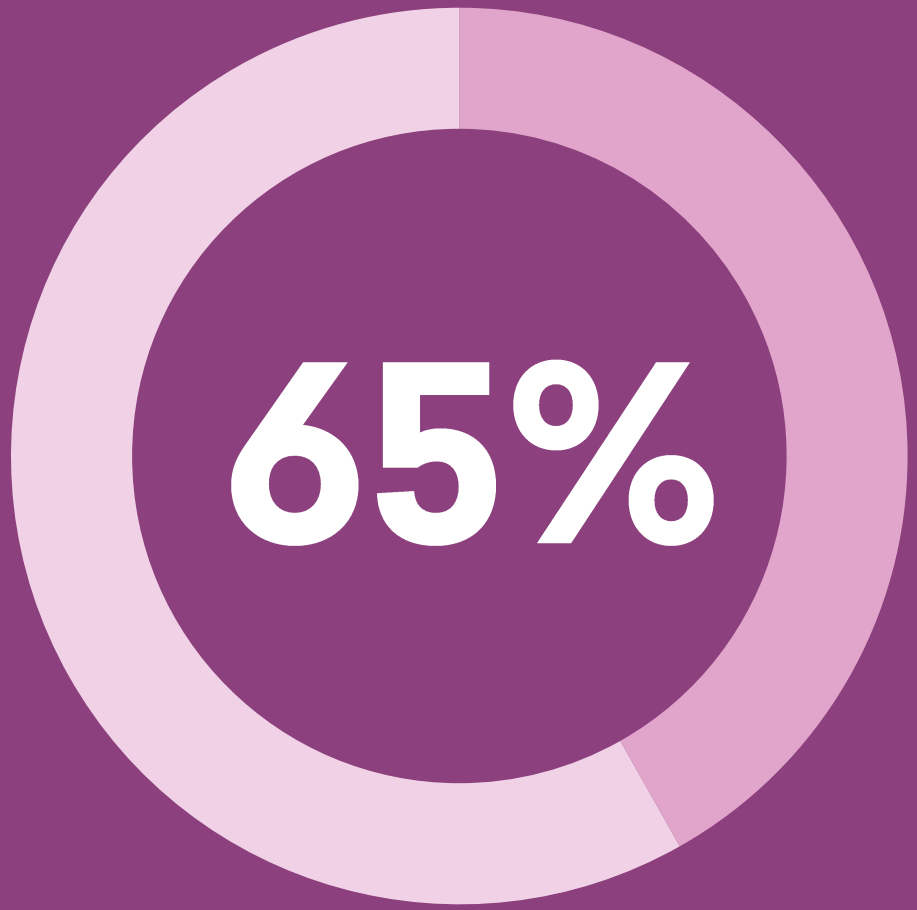
Norms are informal standards that describe typical or desirable behavior—and have a powerful influence over how people behave in a society. In this report, we focus specifically on perceived community norms of cross-group interaction, meaning beliefs about how common and acceptable it is to connect across differences in one's community.

MEASURING PERCEIVED COMMUNITY NORMS OF CONNECTION

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:* [1 - Strongly disagree to 7 - Strongly agree]

1. If given the choice, people should spend time with people from different [group] backgrounds than them because it is the right thing to do.
2. People in my local community often spend time with people whose [group] is different than them.

*This question was repeated for each line of difference.



of Kansas City MSA residents agree that connecting across lines of difference is the "right thing to do."

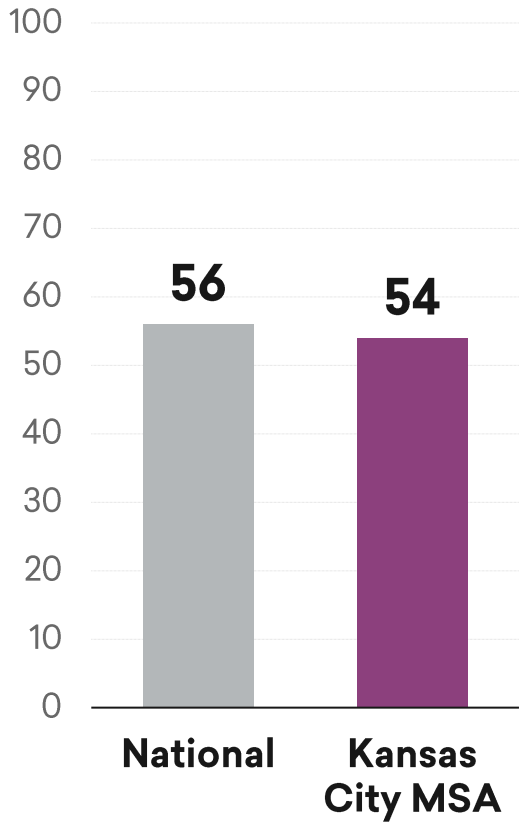
Note: This is approximately the same as the national percentage. Percentage is based on people having a score of “4” or higher on a composite score on the first norm item, after averaging across all four lines of difference.

Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA, conducted in 2024.

KANSAS CITY MSA VS. USA

The proportion of people in Kansas City MSA who think that connection is common is similar to the national average.

% of people who say connecting across difference is common in their community



Note: Percentage is based on people having a score of "4" or higher on a composite score on the first norm item, after averaging across all four lines of difference.
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 4,522 U.S. adults and 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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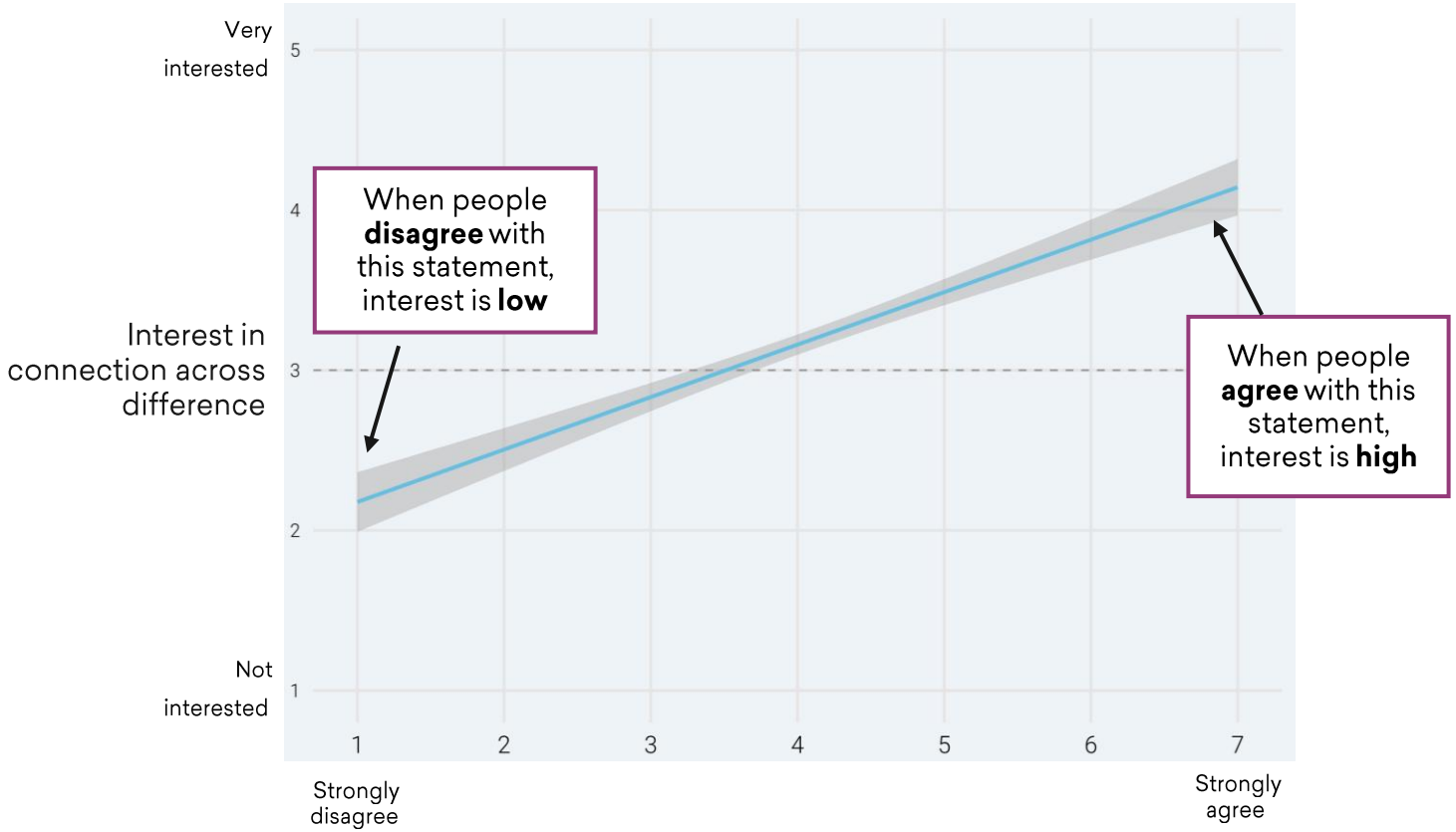
The more people think *others* in their community are crossing lines of difference, the more interested they are to do so as well.



Note: The measure on the y-axis is a composite of all seven interest items averaged across all four lines of difference.
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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FURTHER INSIGHTS FROM FOCUS GROUPS

Some Kansas City residents see the workplace as a place where connecting across difference is normalized.

"I think for me at work, **there's a lot of diversity built in**. I work in a mid-sized company, I don't know, maybe around five or hundred or so people within my group. There are about a dozen of us. And I think for the dozen people in my group, there's probably six or seven different national origins, different sexualities, different... you name it. So, it is interesting to get different people's perspectives on the same event or the same idea, but it's built in. It's not forced. It's not mandated. **It's just the way it is working and living in a city like this**."

Jim, Gen X, white man from Kansas City

Source: More in Common (2025). Person icons made by Pixel Perfect from www.flaticon.com

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FURTHER INSIGHTS FROM FOCUS GROUPS

Other Kansas City residents describe how community events bring people together, reinforcing norms of connection across difference.

"The first thing I did that was fun when I got to the Kansas City area, it was a music festival. I think it was either Jazz or a Caribbean Festival, and it was at the World War I Museum in that area, and it was full of all types of people. So, I think music brings us together. And anything with food. There's been a lot of food festivals. So, **the food festivals and the music festivals I think are the biggest things that I've seen in this area that bring us all together**."

Andres, Baby Boomer, Hispanic man from Kansas City

Source: More in Common (2025). Person icons made by Pixel Perfect from www.flaticon.com

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Predictors of Interest

01 Perceived Community Norms of Connection

02 **Frequency of Cross-Group Interaction**

03 Belonging In Kansas City MSA

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DEFINING TERMS

How do we measure frequency of cross-group interaction?

DEFINITION

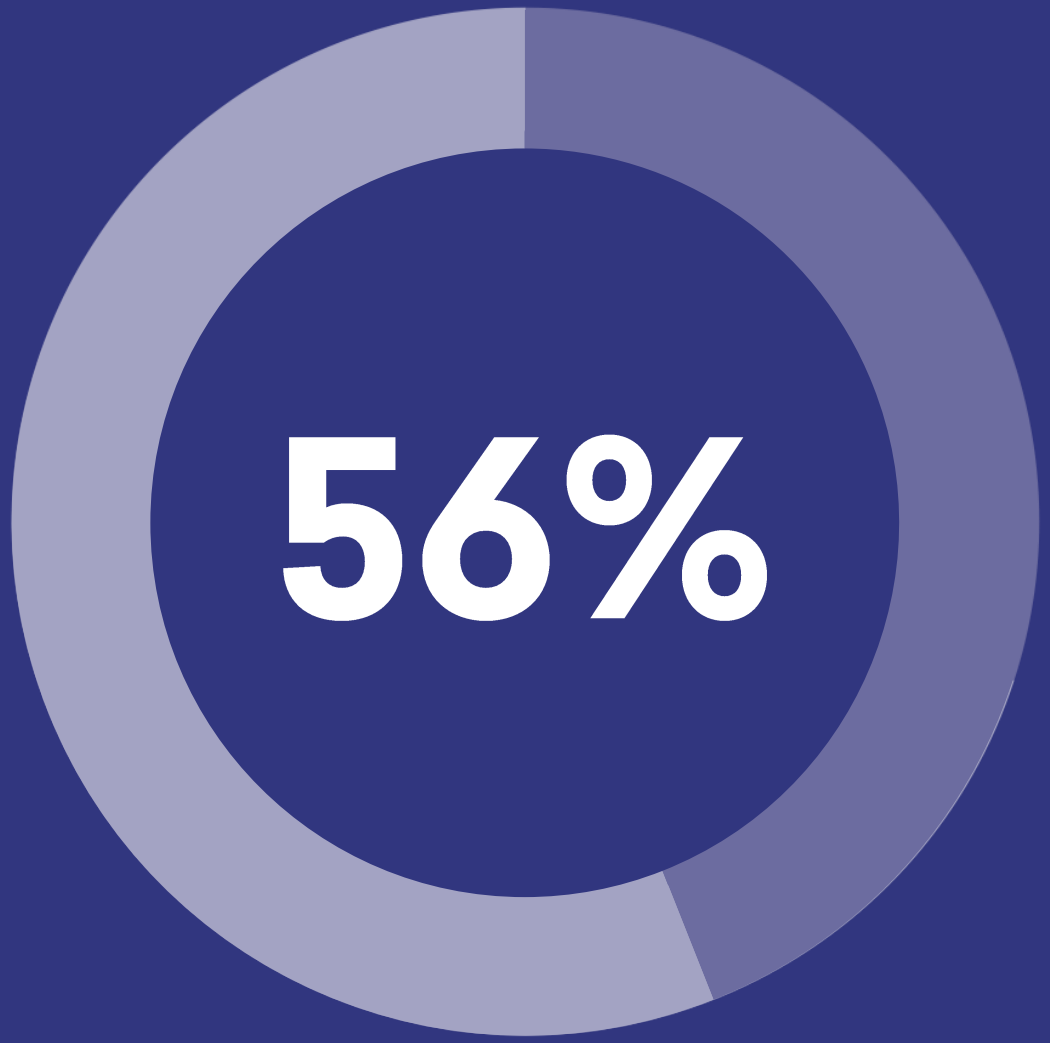
Frequency of cross-group interaction is a measure of how often individuals themselves report contact with people from different racial and ethnic, political, socioeconomic, and religious backgrounds than them.

MEASUREMENT

In your day-to-day life, how often do you find yourself interacting with people from a different [group] than you?*

1 - Never
2 - Rarely
3 - Sometimes
4 - Often
5 - All the time
6- I don't know

*This question was repeated for each line of difference. People who reported "I don't know" were removed.

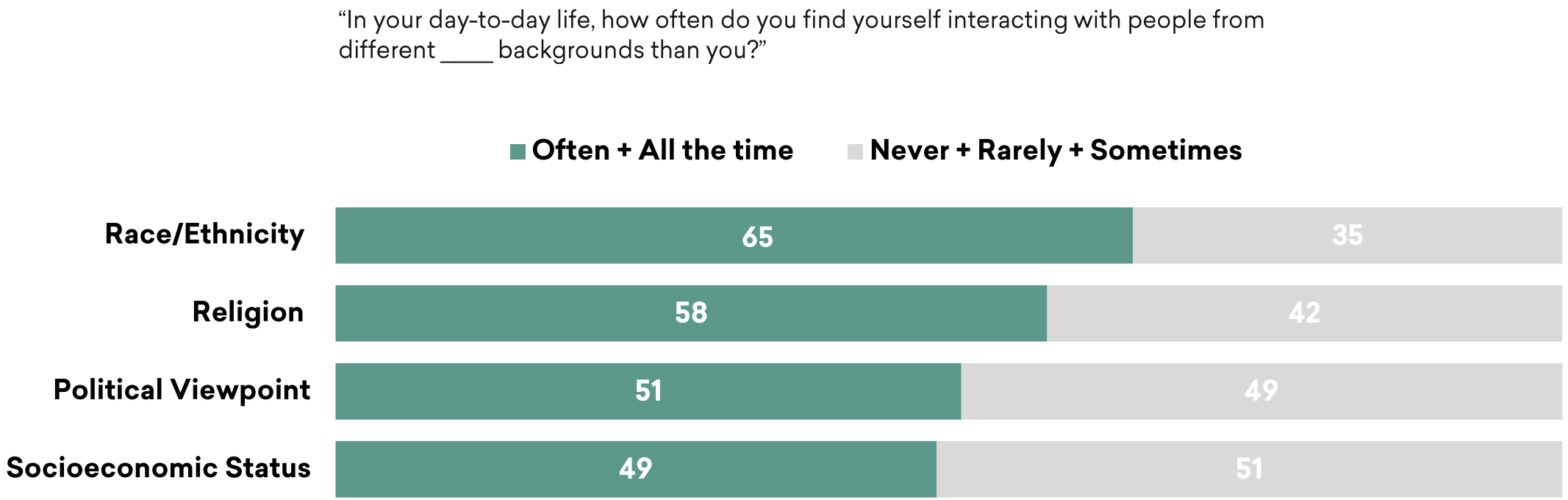


of Kansas City MSA residents self-report that they connect frequently across lines of difference.

Note: This is based on people having a score higher than 3 or "Sometimes," after averaging across all four lines of difference.
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA, conducted in 2024.

Kansas City MSA residents report interacting more often across racial and ethnic lines of difference.

Numbers indicate percentages of Kansas City MSA residents.



Note: "I don't know" responses were excluded.
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 4,522 U.S. adults and 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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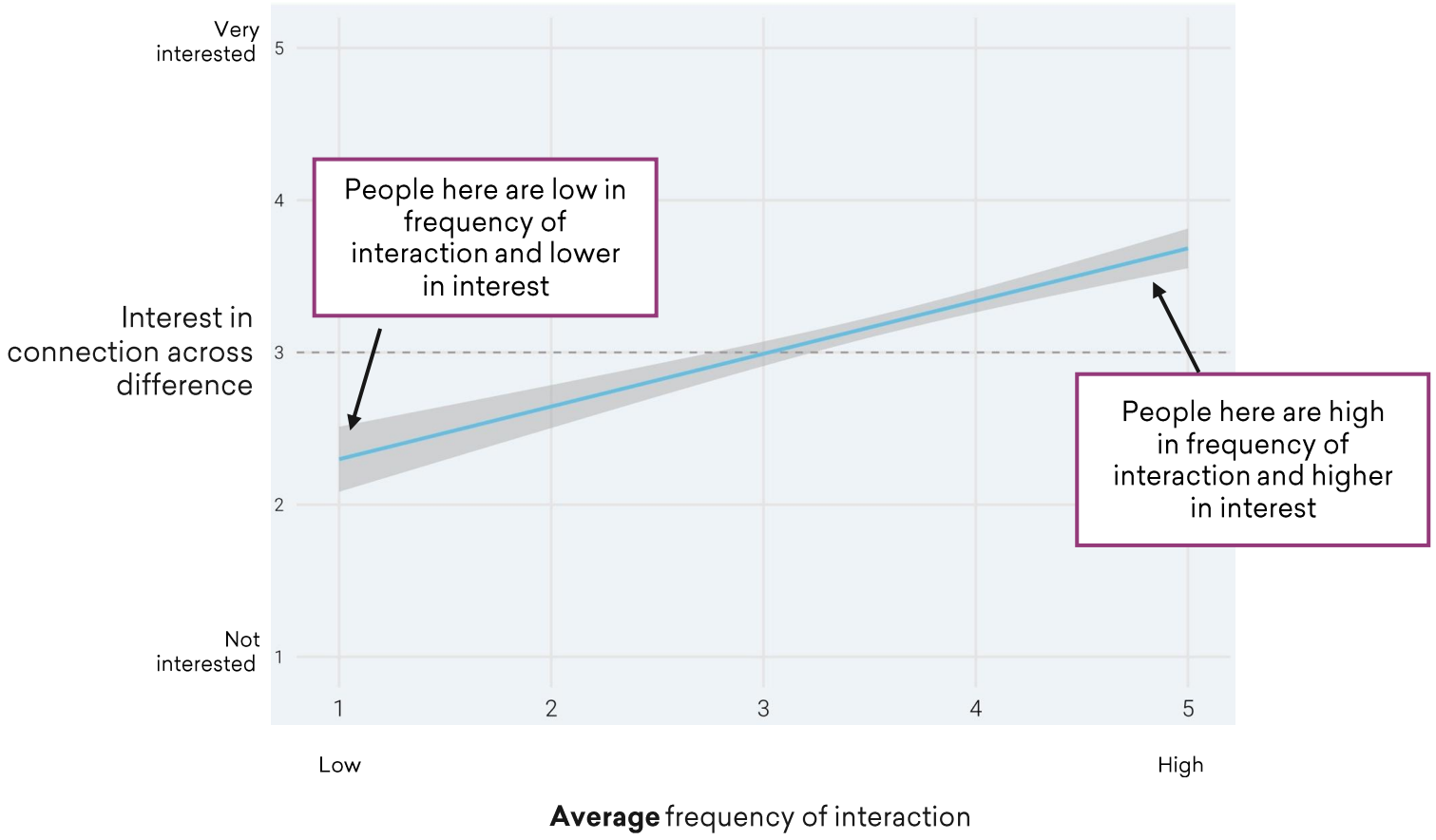
The more frequently people interact across lines of difference in their community, the more interested they are in connection in the future.



Note: The measure on the y-axis is a composite of all seven interest items averaged across all four lines of difference. The x-axis is the average across all four lines of difference.
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 4,522 U.S. adults and 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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Predictors of Interest

01 Perceived Community Norms of Connection

02 Frequency of Cross-Group Interaction

03 **Belonging In Kansas City MSA**

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DEFINING TERMS

What does it mean to feel local community belonging?

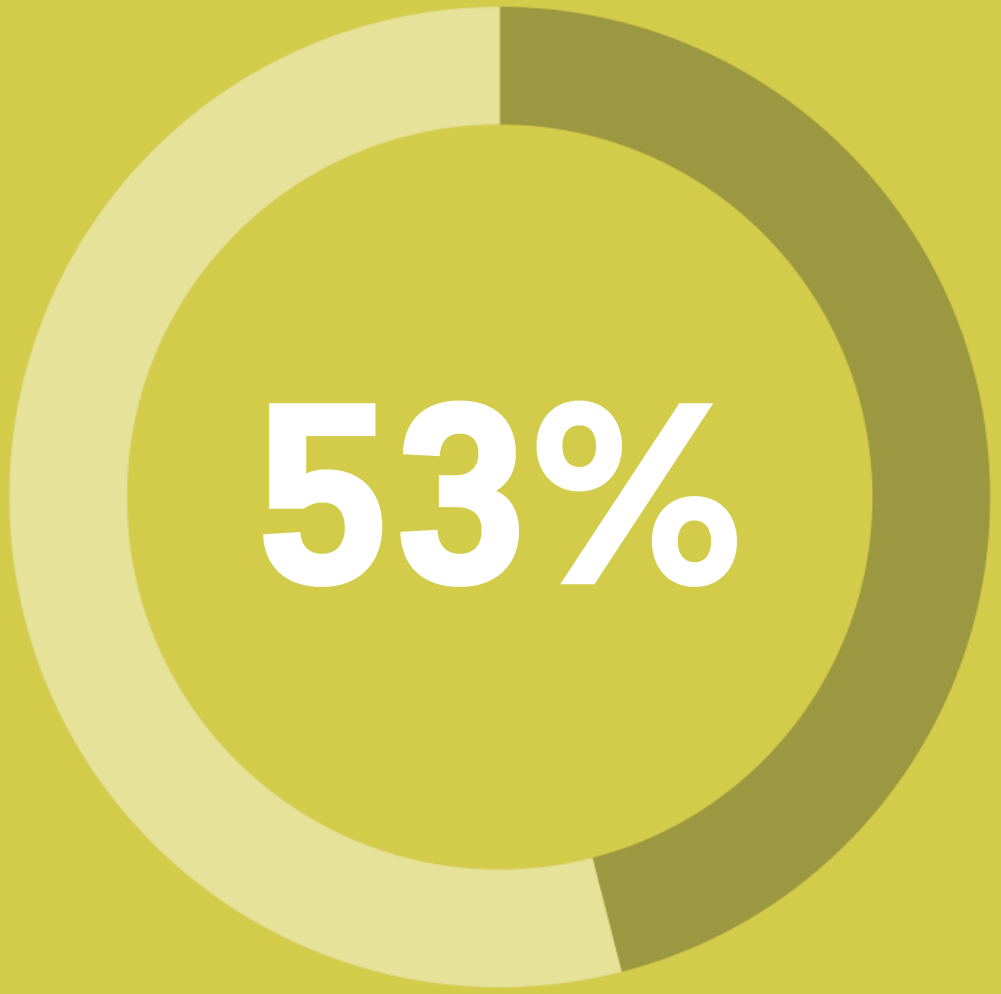
DEFINITION

The feeling of being socially connected, accepted, and valued within one's local group or community

MEASUREMENT

Think about your relationship with your **local community**. Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with the following statements: [1- Strongly disagree to 7 - Strongly agree]

1. People in my community welcome and include me in activities.
2. People in my community value me and my contributions.
3. My relationships with others in my community are as satisfying as I want them to be.
4. I feel like an "insider" who understands how my community works.
5. I am comfortable expressing my opinions in my community.
6. When interacting with people in my community, I feel like I truly belong.



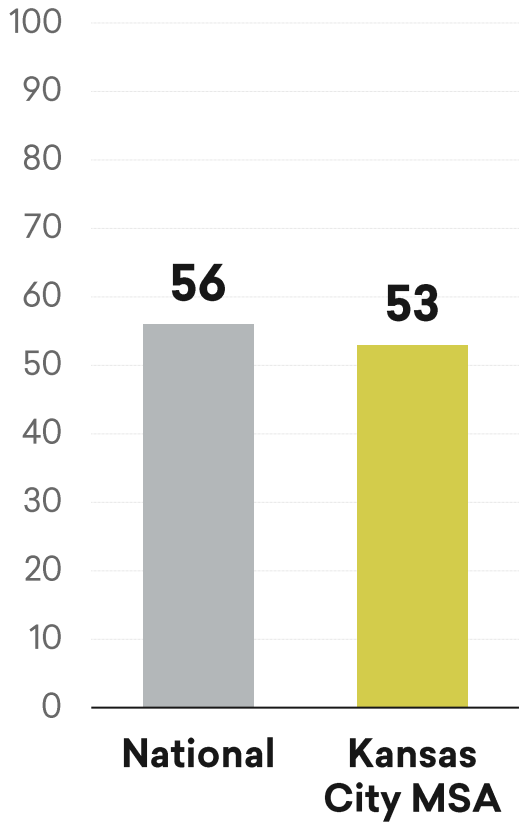
of Kansas City MSA residents report a strong sense of local community belonging.

Note: This is based on an average score higher than “4” on a composite measure of local community belonging.
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA, conducted in 2024.

KANSAS CITY MSA VS. USA

Kansas City MSA residents report similar levels of local community belonging, compared to the national average.

% reporting a strong sense of local community belonging*



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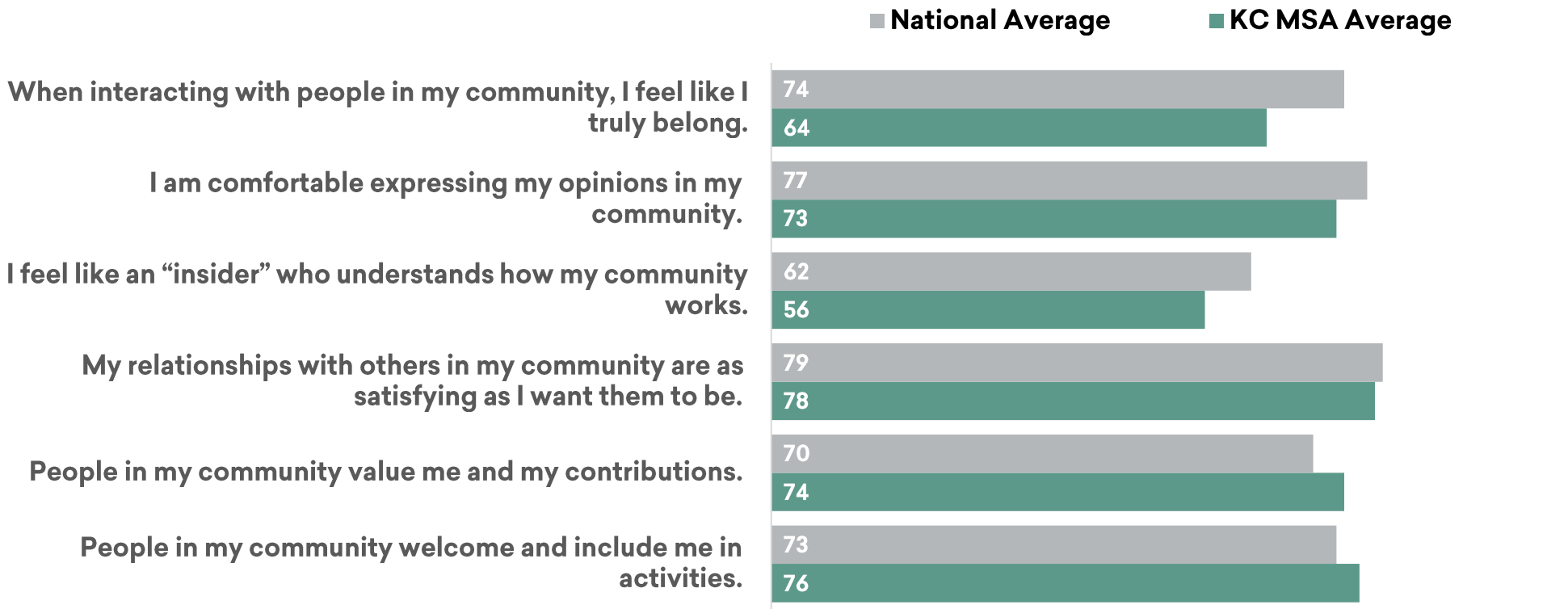
*Note: This is based on an average score higher than "4" on a composite measure of local community belonging.
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 4,522 U.S. adults and 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

Agreement with local community belonging statements varies slightly across the six items.

Numbers indicate percentages.

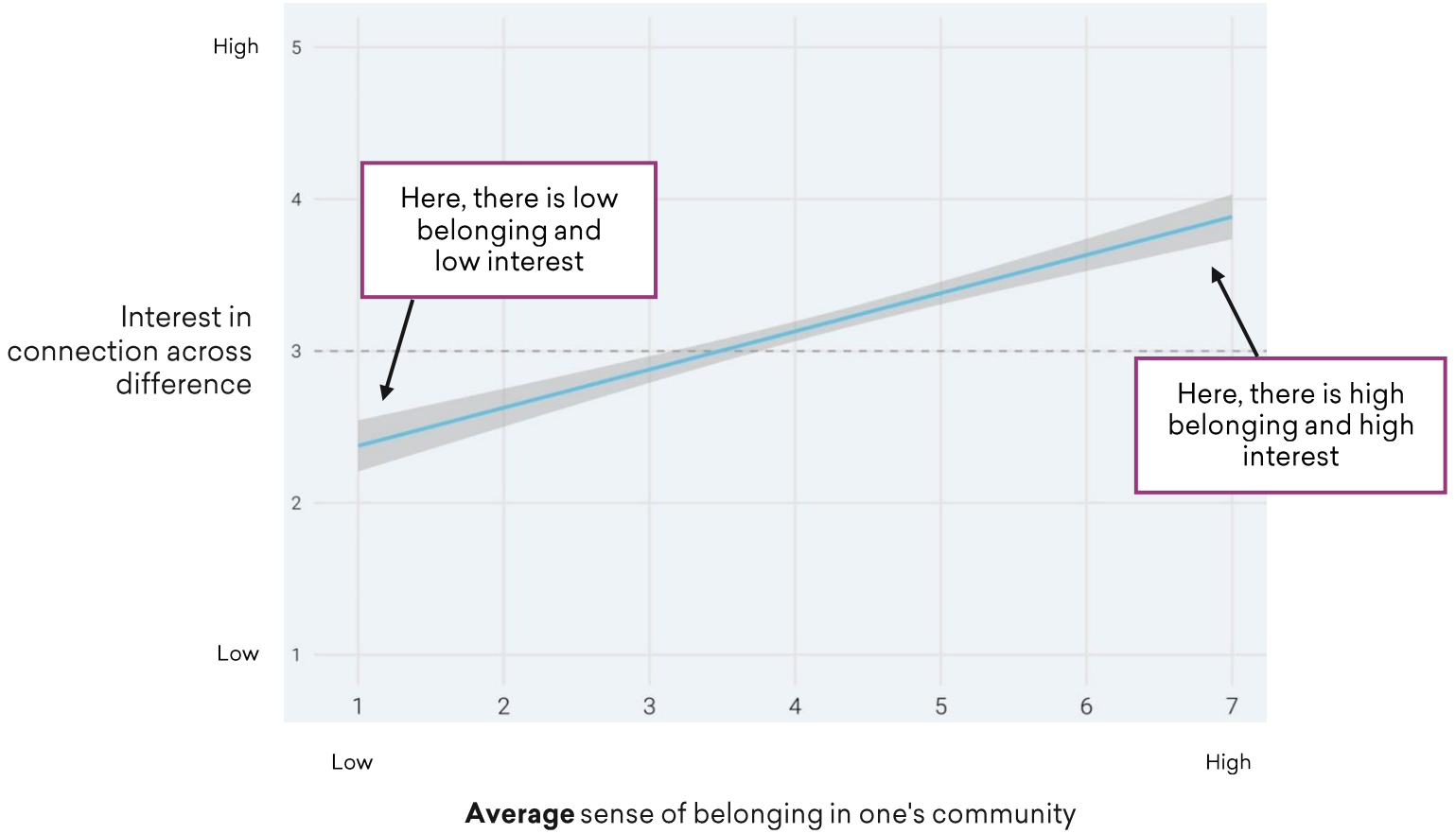
"Think about your relationship with your local community. Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with the following statements:"



Question: "Think about your relationship with your local community. Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with the following statements." [1- Strongly disagree to 7 - Strongly agree]
Note: These numbers reflect the percentage of respondents who scored 4 or higher on each statements.
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 4,522 U.S. adults and 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

More in Common

The more belonging people feel at the local community level, the more interested they are to engage across lines of difference.



Note: The measure on the y-axis is a composite of all seven interest items averaged across all four lines of difference. Belonging (x-axis) was averaged across all six items into a single measure of belonging.
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 4,522 U.S. adults and 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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FURTHER INSIGHTS FROM FOCUS GROUPS

One way residents feel a sense of local community belonging is when they see neighbors helping each other.

"I was born and raised here, and **I feel like I do belong here because one thing about the people in Kansas City, they really know how to pull together when certain things happen as a community**. They really know how to come together and help their neighbor. Because where I stay, we've had two fires in two different apartment complexes. And just to see everybody just come together for them—whether it was clothes or food or making calls for them to see if there's somewhere they could go or things like that– it really gives you a sense of community, and it gives you a sense of belonging."

Daphne, Millennial, Black woman from Kansas City

Source: More in Common (2025). Person icons made by Pixel Perfect from www.flaticon.com

FURTHER INSIGHTS FROM FOCUS GROUPS

Lack of local community belonging can come from neighbors questioning their presence in the community.

"I remember when we moved in, all of the looks and the stares, and people were asking, 'Well, what do you do for a living to be able to move here?' And when I told them that I'm retired, they couldn't believe that. They said, 'You don't look like a person that's retired.' You know what I'm saying? What does a retired person looks like? 'Where do you come from? What did you used to do?' We were asked all these questions, and I told my husband, I said, 'It's because of the way that we look.' **They don't think that we belong here or that we should be able to afford to be here**."

Asha, Baby Boomer, Black woman from Kansas City

Source: More in Common (2025). Person icons made by Pixel Perfect from www.flaticon.com

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Section Five

Barriers to Connecting Across Difference

DEFINING TERMS

What are barriers to connection across difference?

UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO CONNECTION

Factors that hinder meaningful interactions across people from different social groups. These can be psychological (e.g. prejudice, anxiety about the interaction), social (e.g. threats to safety), environmental (e.g. lacking opportunity, time constraints), or a combination of one or more of the above.

MEASUREMENT

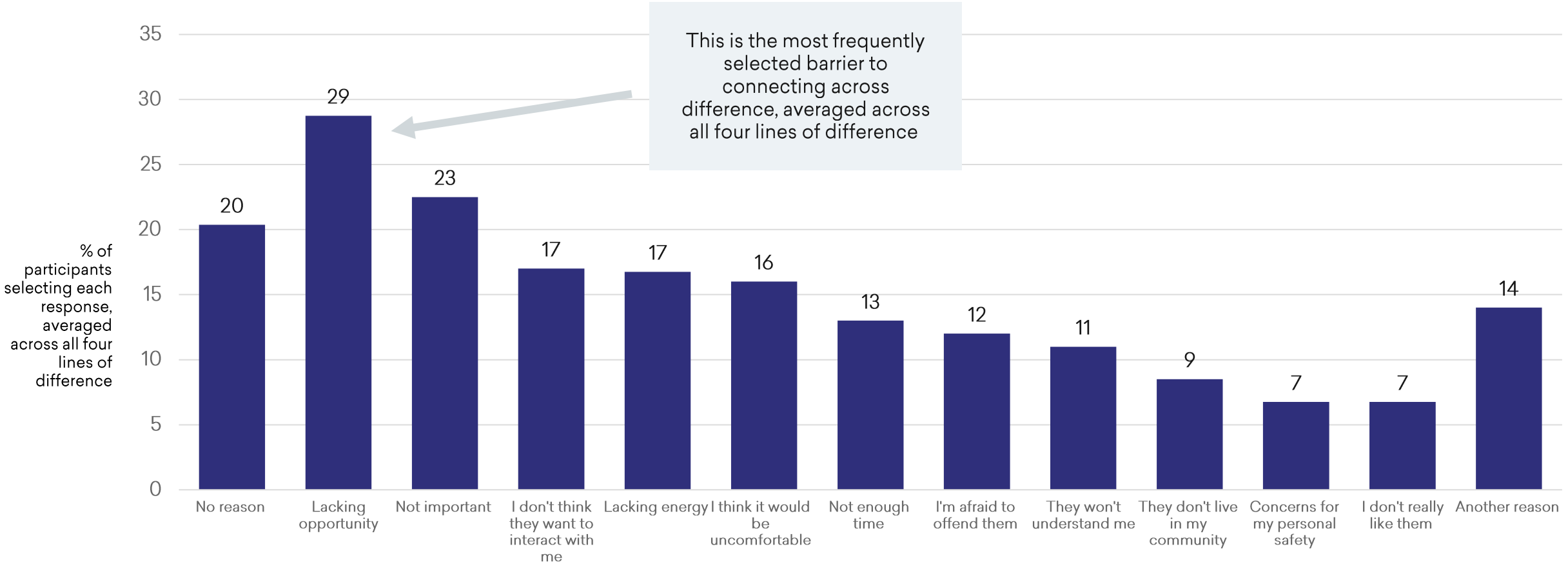
Which of the following factors best reflects what might make it challenging for you to interact with people of a different___than you? (Please select all that apply)*

1. Lacking opportunity
2. Not important
3. Lacking energy
4. I think it would be uncomfortable
5. They won't understand me
6. Other people won't approve
7. Lacking social support
8. I don't think they want to interact with me
9. I'm afraid to offend them
10. Not enough time
11. They don't live in my community
12. Concerns for my personal safety
13. I don't really like them
14. No reason
15. Another reason

*This question was repeated for each four lines of difference. Item wording has been shortened here for brevity.

A plurality of Kansas City MSA residents lack the opportunity to connect across lines of difference.

"Which of the following factors best reflects what might make it challenging for you to interact with people of a different [group] than you? (Please select all that apply)"



Note: Percents do not add to 100 due to multiple response. The items "I don't think other people in my life would approve" and "I don't have the social support to do this" were omitted due to low percentages across all lines of difference.

Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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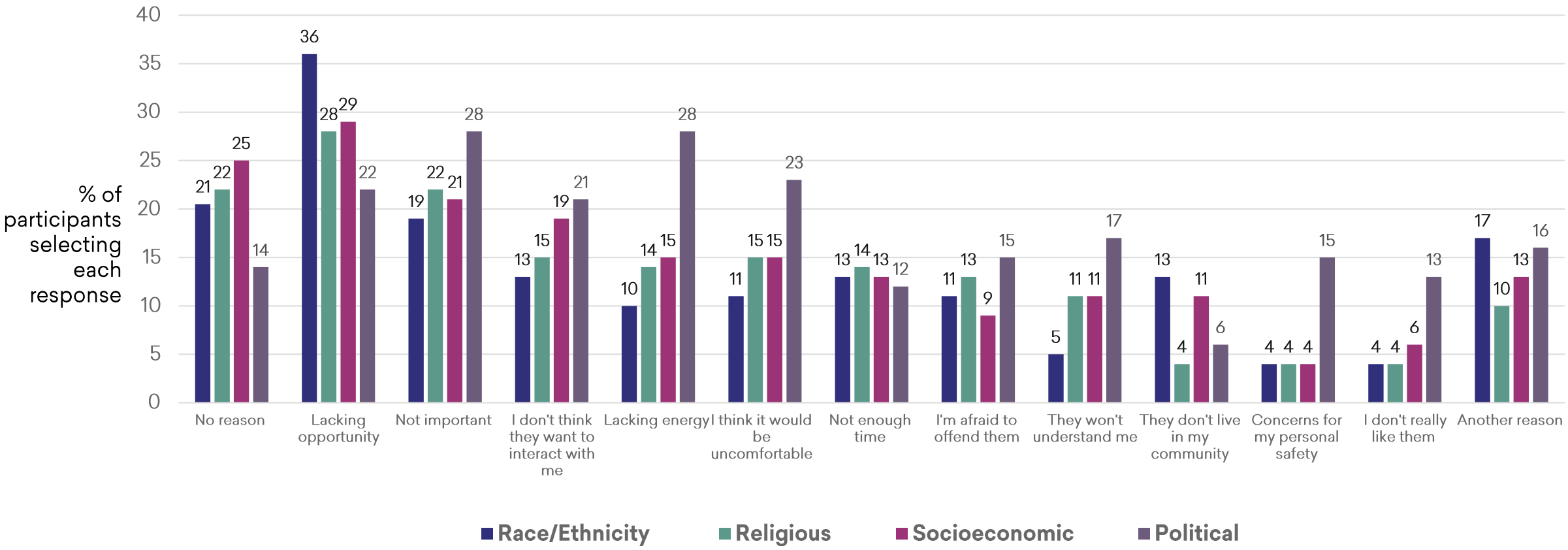
The barriers to connection that Kansas City MSA residents face vary by line of difference.

"Which of the following factors best reflects what might make it challenging for you to interact with people of a different [group] than you? (Please select all that apply)"



Note: Percents do not add to 100 due to multiple response. The items "I don't think other people in my life would approve" and "I don't have the social support to do this" were omitted due to low percentages across all lines of difference.

Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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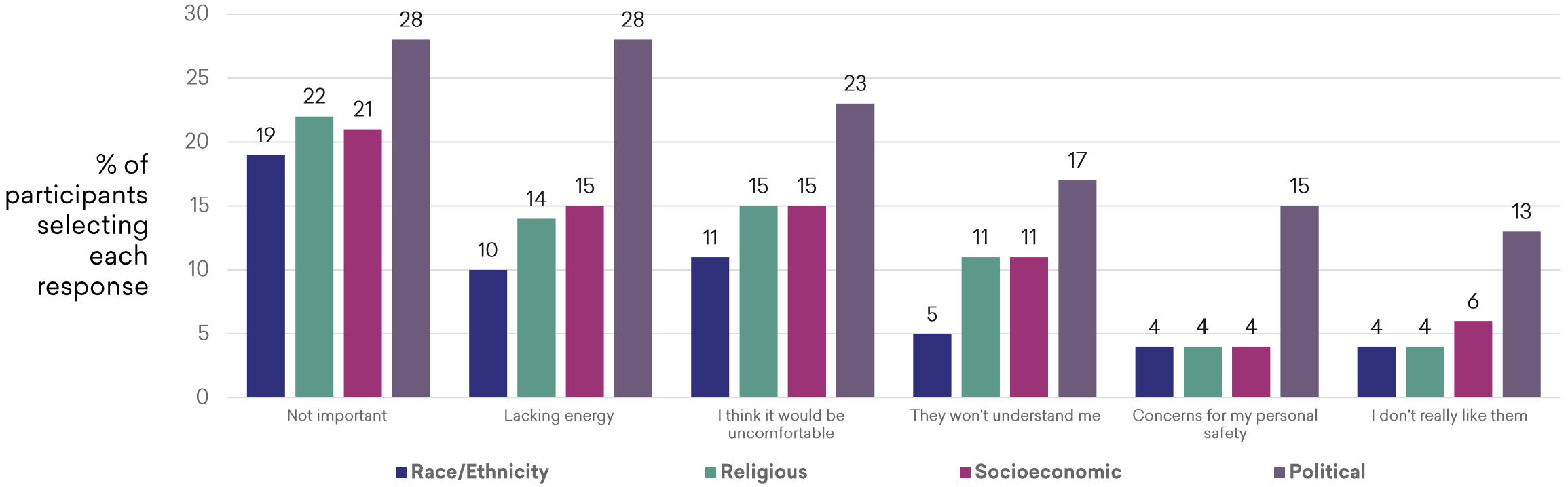
Lines of political difference present unique challenges for Kansas City MSA residents due to perceived discomfort, lack of energy, safety concerns, general dislike, and a sense that interaction is unimportant.

"Which of the following factors best reflects what might make it challenging for you to interact with people of a different [group] than you? (Please select all that apply)"



Note: Percents do not add to 100 due to multiple response.
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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FURTHER INSIGHTS FROM FOCUS GROUPS

In focus groups, political tensions are often mentioned as a barrier to all kinds of connection.

“I've never had anybody say anything or try to start an argument in real life with politics. But **there's two neighbors who won't even talk to my family anymore after we had political signs in our yard for an election**. And one of them took an opposite viewpoint, and I was super nice, but she started sending me nasty messages. And I was like, ‘Well, I disagree, but thanks for sharing your viewpoint or that's something I'll consider.’ But it's never face to face. It's only on social media. And those neighbors, they didn't even ask what our reasoning for our viewpoints or thoughts were. It was just assumptions based on sign in a yard.”

Eliza, Gen X, white woman from Kansas City

Source: More in Common (2025). Person icons made by Pixel Perfect from www.flaticon.com

The present-day impact of racial segregation in the Kansas City MSA is commonly mentioned as a challenge to connection across both race and socioeconomic status.

"There is a pretty big racial divide in Kansas City, and people mentioned they wouldn't feel safe on Troost Avenue... **Historically, Troost Avenue was literally enforced by law, a racially dividing line for the city. And I think those divides are very evident today, and it's unfortunate**. But it's been built into the city for a hundred years or so."

Jim, Gen X, white man from Kansas City

"I think Kansas City has always maintained a very discriminatory type of city... **around some neighborhoods are more gentrified than others, which makes a lot of racist things go on here...**"

Stella, Gen X, Native American woman from Kansas City

Source: More in Common (2025). Person icons made by Pixel Perfect from www.flaticon.com

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Residents also highlight the challenges of navigating the city, linking these difficulties to the area's recent population growth.

"The buses are so infrequent that a lot of people can't go to work or can't do jobs because they can't get there. That's a big problem in, like I said, Kansas City suburbs where I live at, in Gladstone, right where [another participant's] mom lives at, **there's not enough bus transportation**. They have all these other categories they have, like share rides, but they cost more than the bus would cost."

Stella, Gen X, Native American woman from Kansas City

"That's the thing, it's getting more busier and busier each year. There's more coming—more they bring to Kansas City, **more people, more overcrowded that we get**. And when you get a certain age, you get too much overwhelming."

Sara, Gen X, Black woman from Kansas City

Source: More in Common (2025). Person icons made by Pixel Perfect from www.flaticon.com

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FURTHER INSIGHTS FROM FOCUS GROUPS

Some, specifically low-belonging residents, mention not feeling safe in their neighborhoods, preventing them from meeting more people in the city.

"But as far as my neighborhood, I've been here two and a half years now. I only know one neighbor and he's a retired deputy that lives up the street from me that's been kind enough to come down and help me out when he saw me doing a few things I shouldn't have been doing. But, I think I moved from Johnson County where I was close to friends and felt much safer than I do now. **I hear occasional gunshots where I'm at, and so all of that kind of keeps me staying at home** and staying more indoors than I would like."

Tessa, Baby Boomer, white woman with low feelings of community belonging from Kansas City

Source: More in Common (2025). Person icons made by Pixel Perfect from www.flaticon.com

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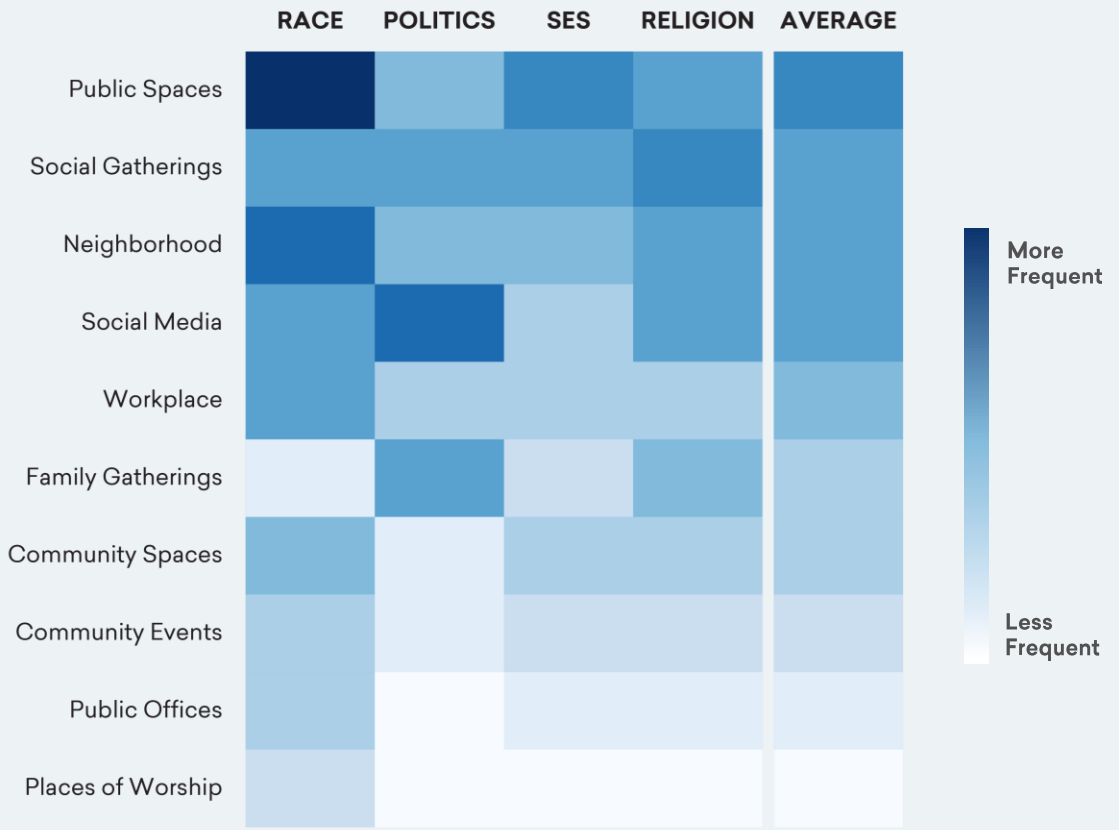
Section Six

Places of Connection

WHERE PEOPLE SELF-REPORT THEY CONNECT

People report the most connections happening in public spaces and at social gatherings.

For political viewpoint, social media and family gatherings stand out as salient places of connection.



Question: "We would like you to think about your day-to-day interactions—if any—with people from different [group] than you. Where do these interactions usually take place? [Select as many that apply]"
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 4,522 U.S. adults and 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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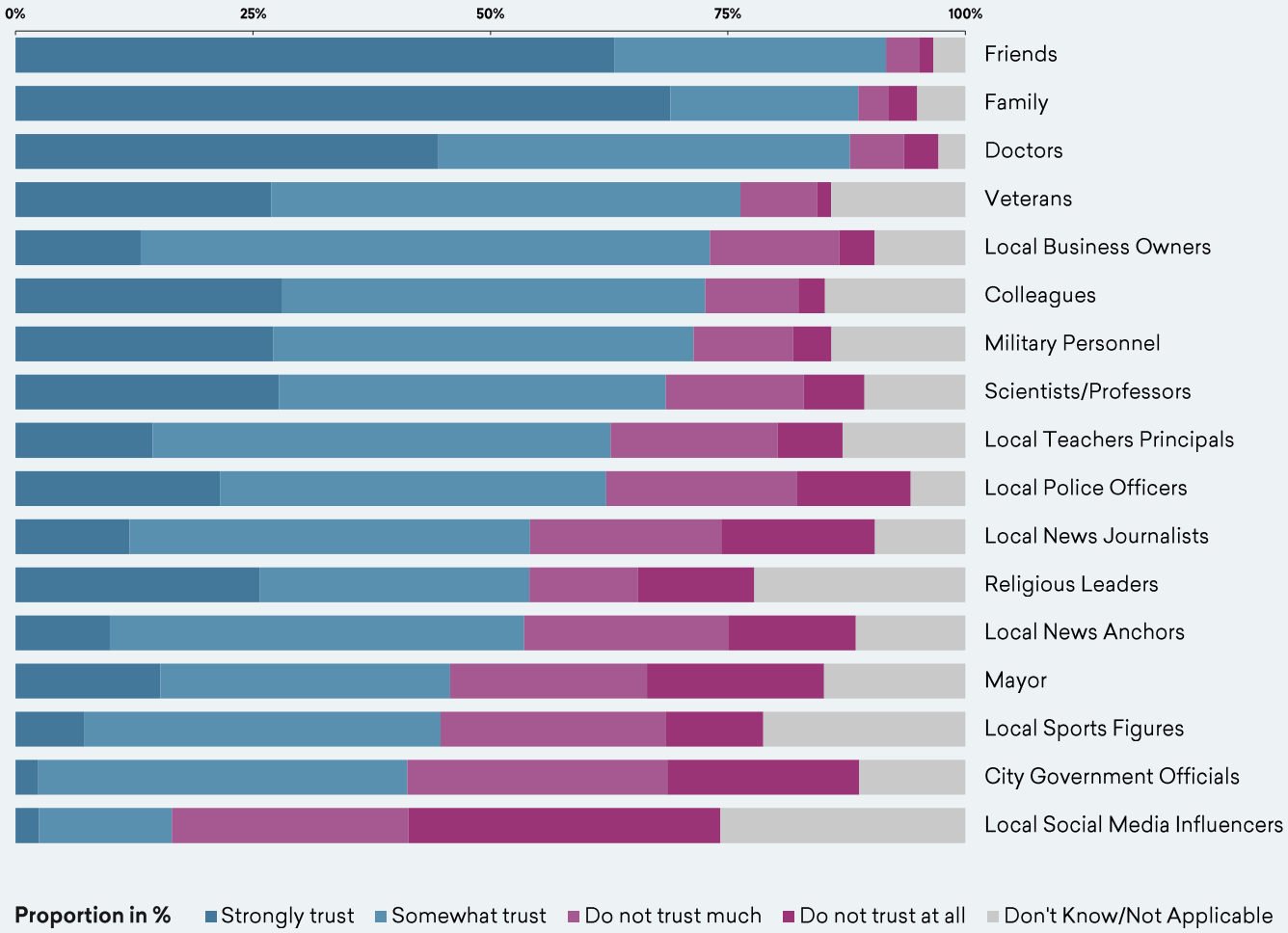
Section Seven

Trusted Messengers

TRUSTED MESSENGERS

In the Kansas City MSA, people place the most trust in close connections, doctors, and veterans—while local social media influencers and city government officials are trusted the least.



Question: "Please indicate to what extent, if at all, you trust the following people in the Kansas City metropolitan area?"
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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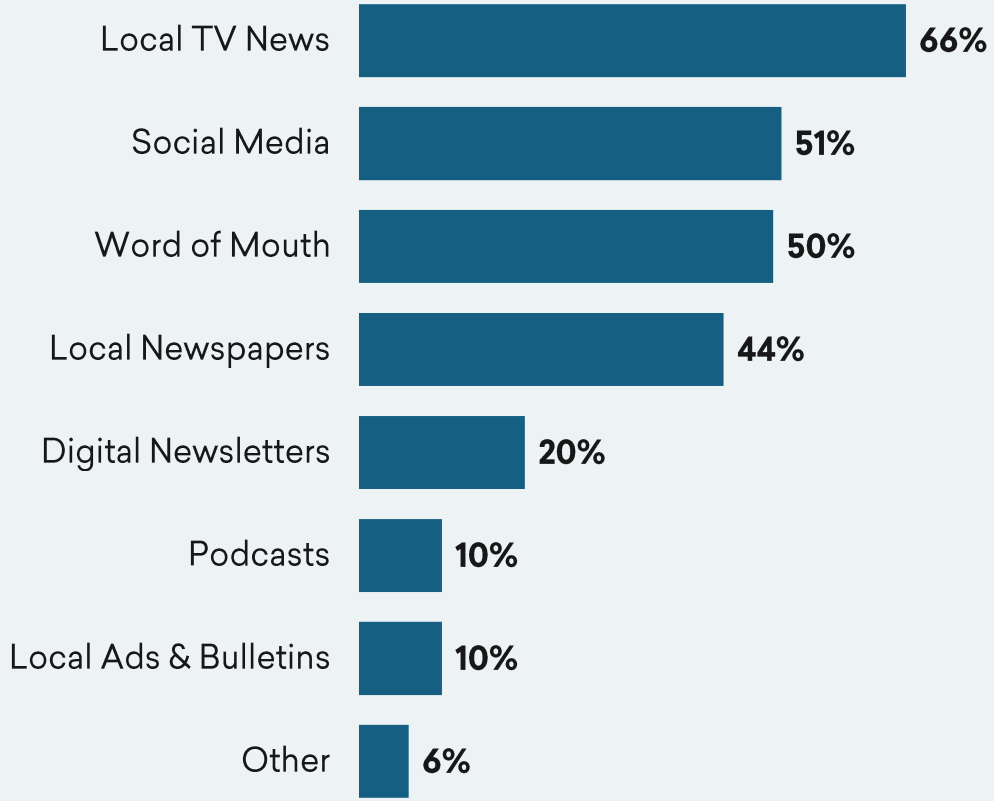
SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Respondents seek out local TV news the most to know what is happening locally

Question: If you want to find out what is happening locally in the Kansas City metropolitan area, including news on sports, traffic, weather, politics, events, lifestyle, etc., what source are you most likely to turn to? [Select one]



Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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Section Eight

Levers of Change

LEVERS OF CHANGE

Six recommendations for fostering more connection across difference

1 Provide more opportunities for Kansas City residents to connect across lines of difference.

Our research identifies a "lack of opportunity" as the most frequently cited barrier to building these connections, especially for differences of race/ethnicity, region, and socioeconomic status. One clear strategy for resolving this is also the most straightforward: create more opportunities for people to make connections in their daily lives. This can be done in two main ways: 1) provide more opportunities for meaningful connection in spaces where people are already coming together, and 2) design environments where new connections can happen naturally.

2 Increase the perception that connecting across difference is the "community norm."

Perceived community norms that support connection across difference are the strongest predictor of interest in connecting across all four lines of difference we explored. This suggests that strengthening these norms of connection can be a powerful lever for change. See our main report for practical guidance on how to achieve this.

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LEVERS OF CHANGE

Six recommendations for fostering more connection across difference

3 Foster community belonging in Kansas City.

Our data show that the more people feel like they belong in their local community, the more they express interest in connecting across lines of difference. Therefore, fostering a sense of community belonging is likely an important aspect of supporting people's willingness to bridge differences.

4 Focus on commonalities, like shared goals, to broaden the appeal of bridging activities.

Kansas City residents report that they would be more interested in connecting across lines of difference if the interactions focused on working to achieve a mutual goal in the community. As such, creating opportunities that emphasize shared community goals and activities may draw in more community members. In contrast, programs that invite people to come together to talk about potential sources of tension or conflict—which is frequently the focus of some traditional bridge-building efforts—may inadvertently "preach to the choir" and only entice those who already feel comfortable addressing group differences.

LEVERS OF CHANGE

Six recommendations for fostering more connection across difference

5 Emphasize the importance of “connective responsibility.”

A majority of Kansas City residents agree that they have a responsibility to connect across lines of difference. Community leaders can highlight this in public messages and also discuss ways in which collaboration across differences has been essential to advancements in the area.

6 Create longstanding programming to reinforce connections, as opposed to one-off events.

Our research finds that the more people engage across lines of difference (their "frequency of cross-group connection"), the more interested they are to do so again in the future. This suggests that experiences of and interest in connection may build on themselves in a self-reinforcing cycle. To take advantage of such cascading interest, organizations need to create sustained opportunities for engagement and bridging.

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See our full report for more guidance on how to turn these insights into action.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact us at us@moreincommon.com

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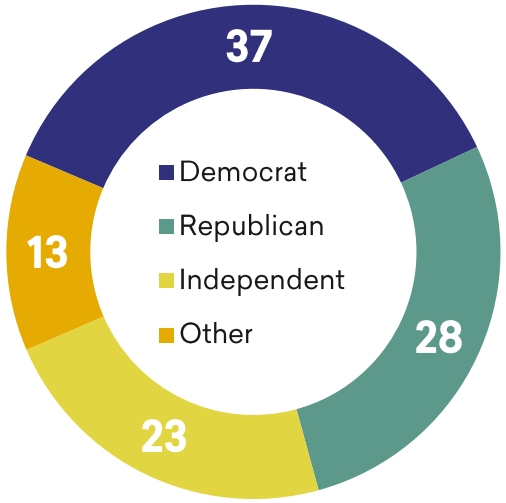
Section Nine

Appendix

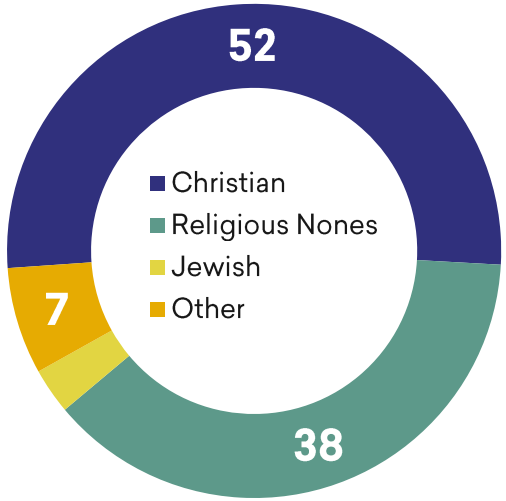
The Kansas City MSA sample consists of 532 adults. 84% have lived in the area for over 10 years.

Numbers indicate percentages.

Political Party Identification

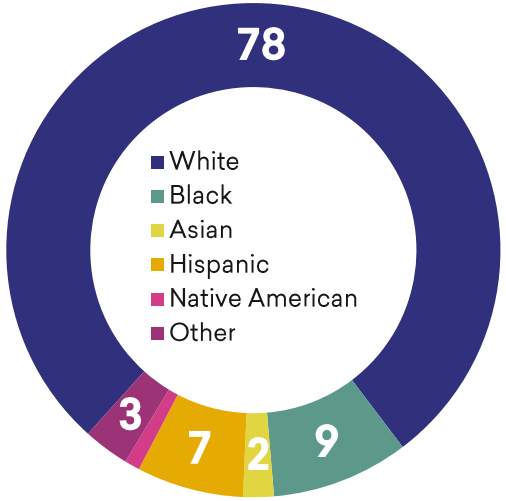


Religion



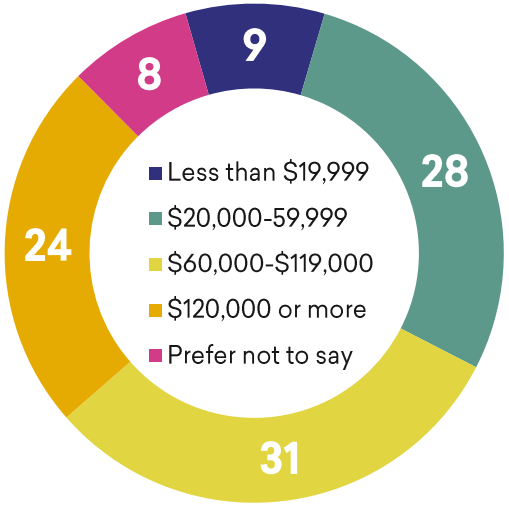
Christian = Protestant, Catholic, LDS. Religious Nones = Atheist, Agnostic, "Nothing in Particular" . Other = Buddhist, Hindu, "Something Else". There were no Muslim participants in the sample.

Race



Other = Two or more races and "Other". There were no Middle Eastern participants in the sample.

Family Income



Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 532 adults in the Kansas City MSA conducted in 2024.

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