



# Trust In Civil Society

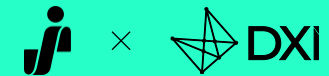
Headwinds and opportunities for  
American nonprofits and foundations



Independent Sector is the only national membership organization that brings together a diverse community of changemakers, nonprofits, foundations, and corporations working to strengthen civil society and ensure all people in the United States thrive.

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

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





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# Public trust is the currency of the nonprofit sector.

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

Trust is what makes it possible for us to partner with local communities to do the hard work of systemic change. Our trusted voices as advocates for our missions helps drive policy change. Our trusted status makes us an essential partner to government and industry. Trust is essential in the recruitment of volunteers and in the sector's work to "bridge" across difference in a divided America. And, without trust, raising the resources we need to do our work becomes infinitely harder, if not impossible.

For each of the last four years, Independent Sector has partnered with Edelman Data and Intelligence to survey the American public, exploring the nuances of trust in American nonprofit and philanthropic organizations. These are the largest, nationally representative surveys of their kind, surveying over 3000 adults. And, this year, we added qualitative research, in the form of on-line focus groups, to the effort. Given the outsized importance of trust to our sector, it is imperative to regularly assess the status of that trust so that, ultimately, we can fashion the policy and practice changes needed to build that critical asset.

We are grateful for the deep and growing partnership with Edelman Data and Intelligence in the conduct of this work and look forward to discussing the implications of, and potential responses to, these findings in our forthcoming Health of the U.S. Nonprofit Sector Reports.



# Key Findings

The fourth annual study of trust in civil society found that the observed decline in trust in nonprofits accelerated in 2023. Trust in philanthropy, while lower, held steady.

This year's report reveals the broader headwinds contributing to nonprofits' trust decline, as well as the impact of factors unique to the sector.

The data also provides insight into how individual nonprofits and foundations can manage and enhance trust in the current environment.

**Specific findings include...**



1.

## Nonprofits remain among the most trusted institutions, though sector trust significantly declined in 2023

Small businesses and nonprofits are the only institutions trusted by a majority of the American public today (55% and 52%, respectively.) Trust in the federal government (24%), corporations (26%), and the news media (24%) remains considerably lower.

However, after seeing years of small trust declines in line with other major institutions, nonprofit trust dropped by a statistically significant 4-points in 2023. This was the largest year-over-year change in trust of any institution tested. This report aims to shed light on the factors contributing to that decrease.

2.

## Trust in philanthropy held steady but remains much lower than nonprofit trust

Americans' familiarity with philanthropy is considerably less than that of nonprofits, and this continues to result in lower overall trust in the sector. 34% of Americans trust philanthropy, unchanged since 2022.

However, distrust in philanthropy increased 5-points, to 26%. This increase in distrust was driven by a substantial uptick in skepticism of high net-worth individual giving.

3.

## Expectations for the sector continue to increase

As seen across waves of the Trust survey, Americans identify nonprofits almost exclusively with charities – and this significantly colors their perceptions and expectations of it.

Overwhelmingly, they say the sector exists to serve the needy and less fortunate. It is expected to operate in the “gaps,” places or issues where government, business and other institutions are ignoring or failing to make an impact.

And, they expect to see demonstrated results, that nonprofit operations are “moving the needle” on whatever social ills or issues they are founded to address.

4.

## Trust correlates with personal financial health and outlook amid a cost-of-living crisis

While we have not entered a recession and the labor market remains strong, many Americans are facing a cost-of-living crisis. Given the sector's identification with charities, the public sees this crisis and asks – where is the sector? What impact is it making?

Unsurprisingly, trust in nonprofits is strongly correlated with financial health and outlook. Trust in nonprofits is 22-points higher among Americans rating their finances as excellent or good compared to those giving ratings of poor or fair, and the gap is even wider when considering their outlook on the future.



5.

### Trust is small and local

The public shows a strong preference for institutions that are small and locally-operated; small businesses and local government are more trusted than corporations and the federal government.

The nonprofit sector is not immune from this trend. Many Americans distrust large or national nonprofits. They feel that as an organization grows so too does its internal bureaucracy – and the danger of misappropriated funds or ulterior motives from staff members increases.

They also see small, local nonprofits as more agile, understanding of and responsive to the communities they serve.

6.

### Political polarization shades perceptions of some nonprofit subsectors

While many subsectors, such as human services, health, wildlife conservation, and youth development enjoy strong bipartisan trust, others are experiencing the effects of partisan polarization.

Democrats are considerably less likely to trust places of worship compared to Republicans, whereas Republicans are more likely to be skeptical of civil rights organizations.

Civic organizations are the least trusted among all subsectors tested. There is concern across the political divide about partisan bias impacting their activities.

7.

### Engagement with the public is more important than ever as sector trust declines

To know the nonprofit sector is to love it: consistent with past studies, familiarity remains strongly correlated with trust. But beyond basic familiarity, personal engagement is critical. Those who attend worship, participate in a youth development organization or nonprofit sports league, or receive services from a charity report high trust in the sector overall – and the effect grows as engagement frequency increases.

8.

### Communications that emphasize the sector's values move the needle

Nonprofit messaging that focuses on charities, health and human services, and benefit for all is most effective at building sector trust. Sector messaging should focus on values statements rather than solely data points, which are less effective.



## Quantitative Online Survey

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

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

**Sample Size:** n = 3,000

**Margin of Error:** +/- 2%

**Timing:** May 16 – June 1, 2023

## Qualitative Online Discussion Boards

**Edelman DXI conducted two (2) online qualitative discussion boards to gain deeper insights and add texture to the 2023 Trust survey findings.**

Boards were divided by political party self-identification (Republicans vs. Democrats) and each included a total of twenty-five (25) participants.

Both boards included a mix of participants by US region, gender, age, race, education, income level, and reported personal financial outlook to ensure a range of perspectives.

Boards were conducted August 1 to 3, 2023.

\*Wave 1 of Nonprofit 2020 study was fielded December 2 – 19, 2019 with n=3,000 participants  
\*Wave 1 of Philanthropy 2020 study was fielded February 28 – March 16, 2020 with n=3,000 participants  
\*Wave 2 of Nonprofit study was fielded April 29 – May 18, 2021 with n=6,000  
\*Wave 2 of Philanthropy study was fielded April 29 – May 18, 2021 with n=3,000  
\*Wave 3 combined Nonprofit and Philanthropy studies in a single survey with n = 3,015 participants and was fielded in February 2022



A group of people, including an elderly man with a beard, looking at a document together. The image is overlaid with a dark blue filter.

# Trust Metrics

2023 Trust Metrics for  
Nonprofits and Philanthropy

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# Measuring Trust Capital

Based on overall trust on a 9-point scale:

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

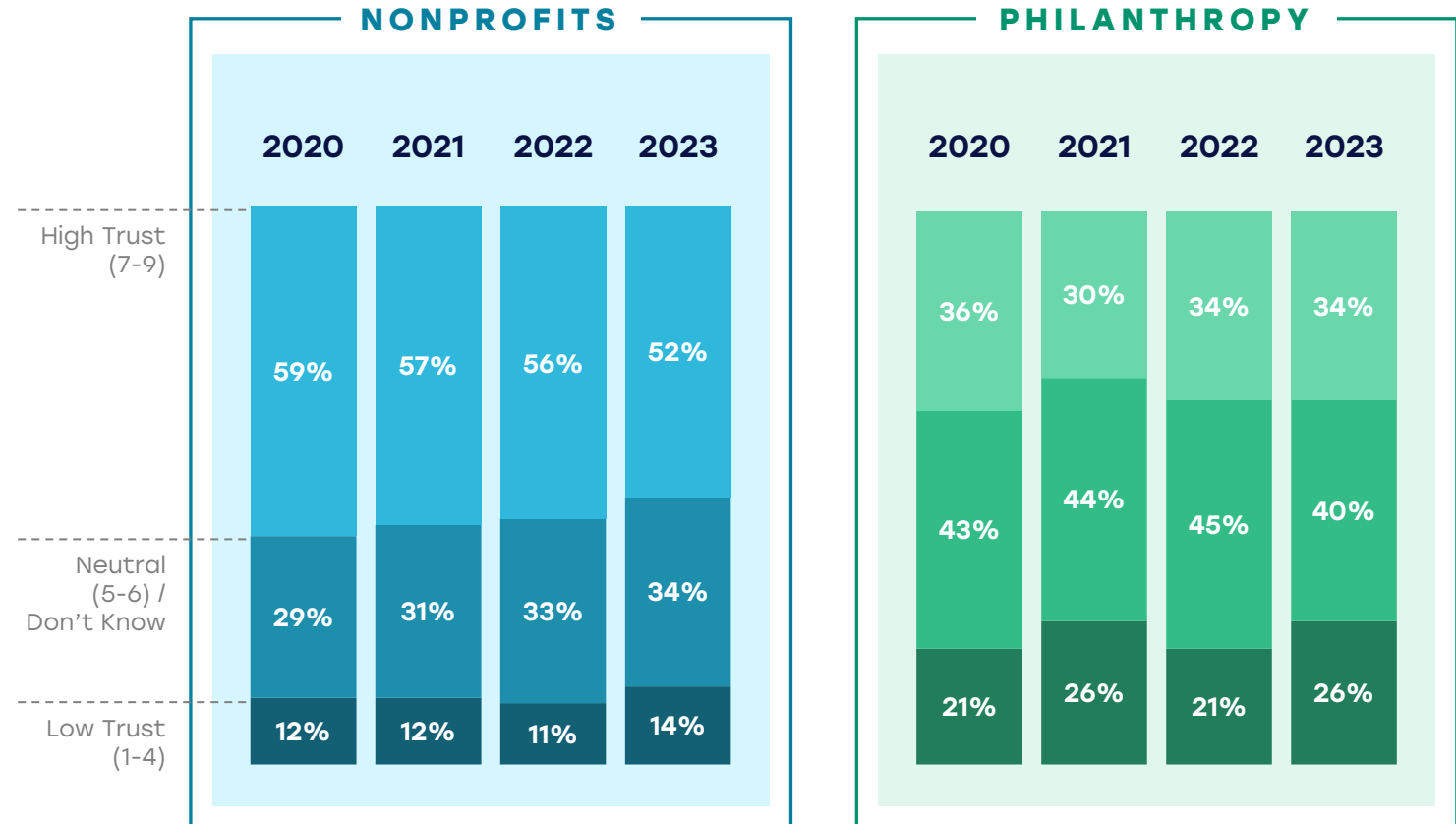
High Trust: 7 - 9

Neutral: 5 - 6

Low Trust: 1 - 4

## Trust in nonprofits fell 4-points in 2023 after years of small declines

Trust in philanthropy held steady at 34% - though more than 1 in 4 Americans distrust it.



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



# Trust Across Nonprofit Subsectors

Based on overall trust on a 9-point scale:

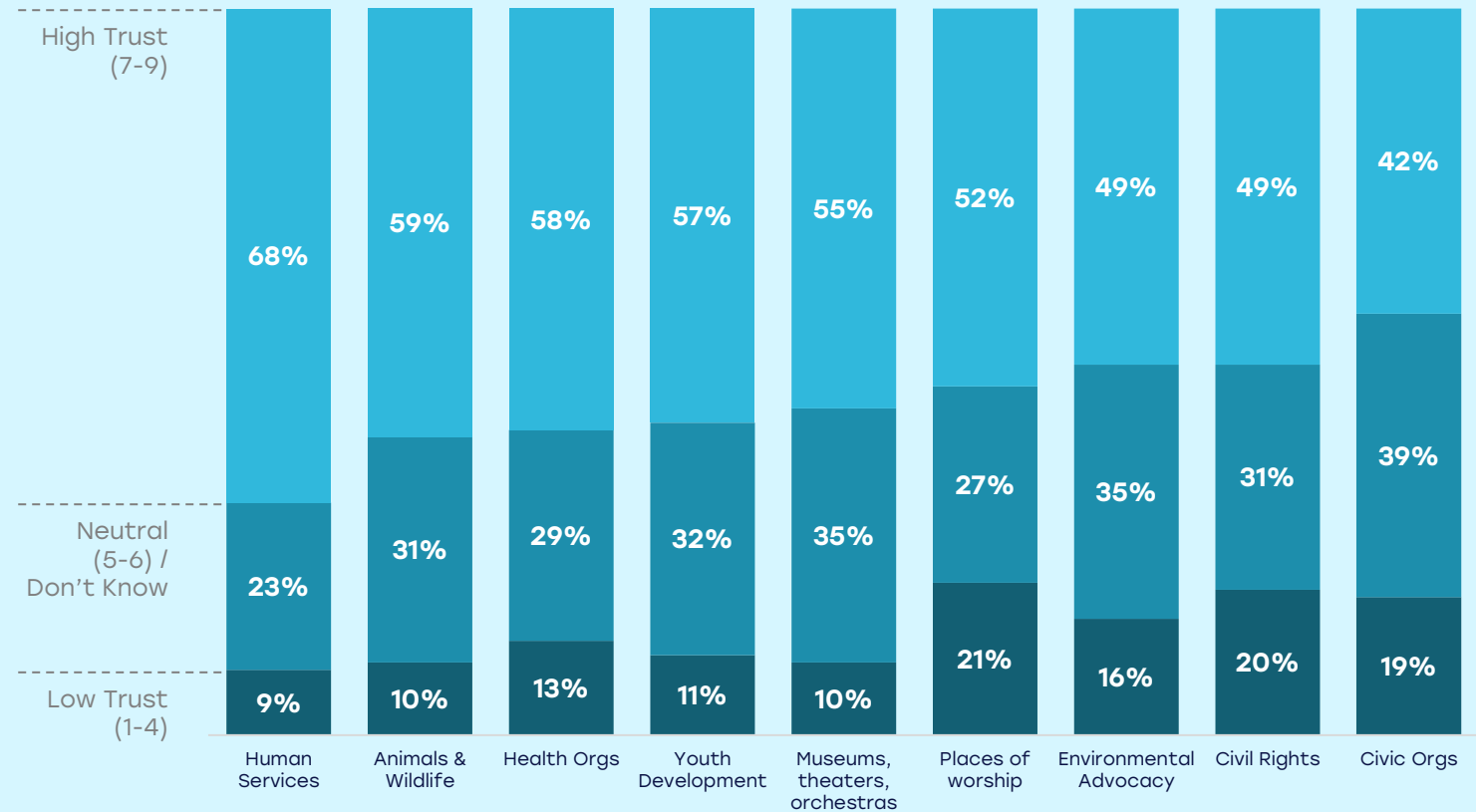
**“How much do you trust X to do what is right?”**

**High Trust: 7 - 9**

**Neutral: 5 - 6 / Don't Know**

**Low Trust: 1 - 4**

**Trust varies widely by subsector; human services, animals and wildlife, health, and youth development nonprofits are most trusted**



**Q23:** How much do you trust the following types of nonprofit organizations to do what is right?  
Total Base Size n=3,000



# Trust Capital Across Philanthropy Subsectors

Based on overall trust on a 9-point scale:

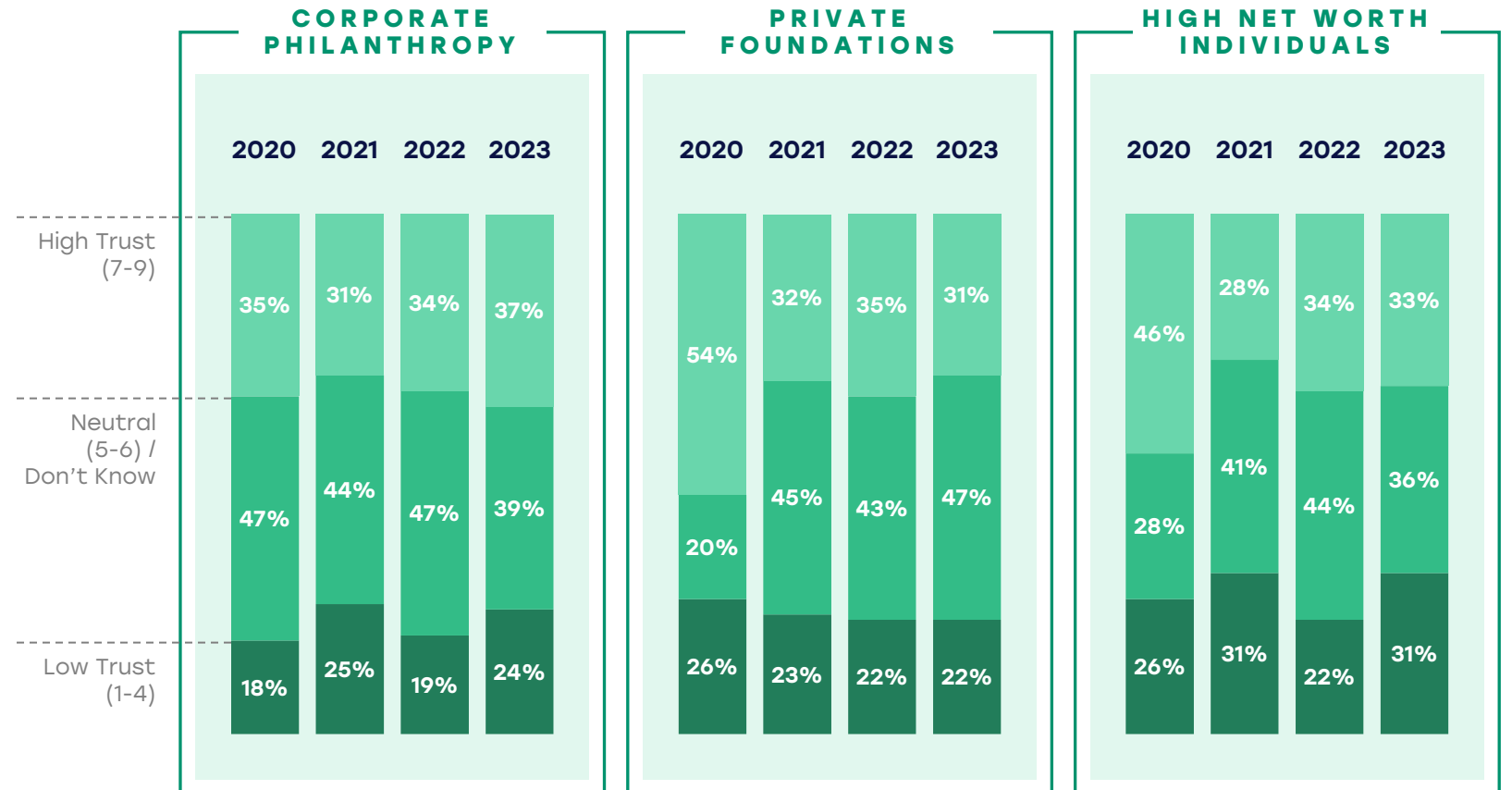
“How much do you trust X to do what is right?”

High Trust: 7 - 9

Neutral: 5 - 6

Low Trust: 1 - 4

## Distrust of high net-worth philanthropy significantly increased in 2023



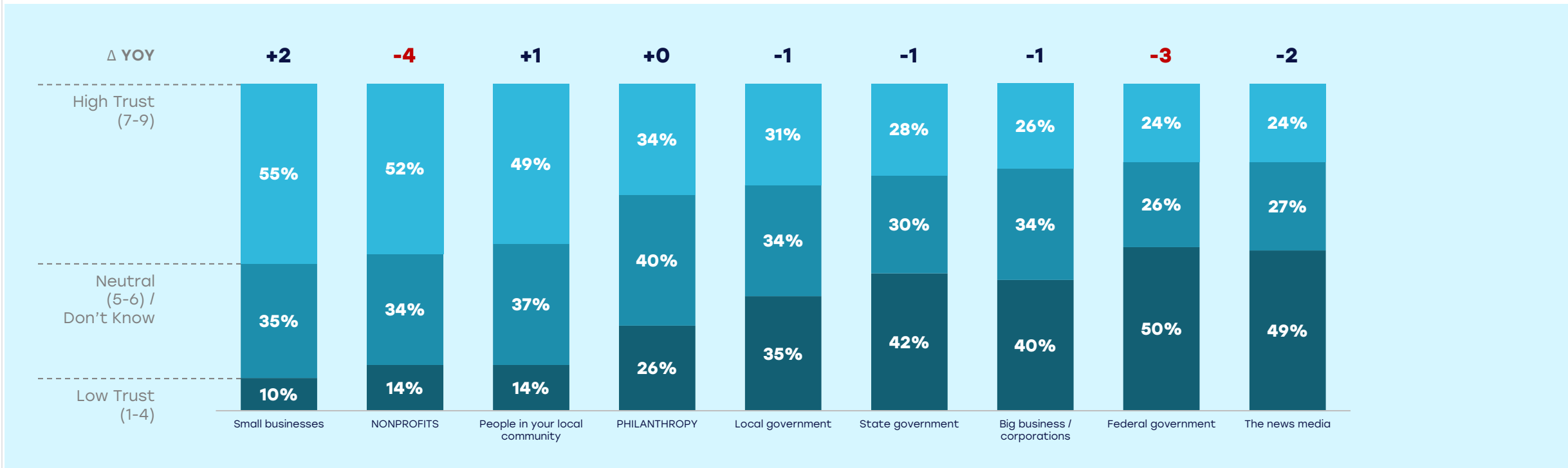
Q29: How much do you trust companies that engage in corporate philanthropy to do what is right? Base Size: n=1,002, Q36: How much do you trust private foundations to do what is right? Base Size: n=999, Q43: How much do you trust high net worth individuals engaged in philanthropy to do what is right? Base Size n=999





# Nonprofits saw the largest trust decline of any American institution in 2023

Despite the decline, nonprofits are still trusted by a majority of the public – enjoying higher trust than any institution except for small businesses.



Q50: How much do you trust the following institutions to do what is right?  
Total Base Size n=3,000

A man and a woman in business attire are smiling and looking at a document together. The man is on the left, and the woman is on the right. They are both looking at a document held by the man. The background is a blurred office setting. The entire image has a dark blue overlay.

# Sector Headwinds

Why Trust Fell

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# The public's expectations of nonprofit impact are high – and increasing

8 in 10 want to see proof of impact in exchange for continued support.



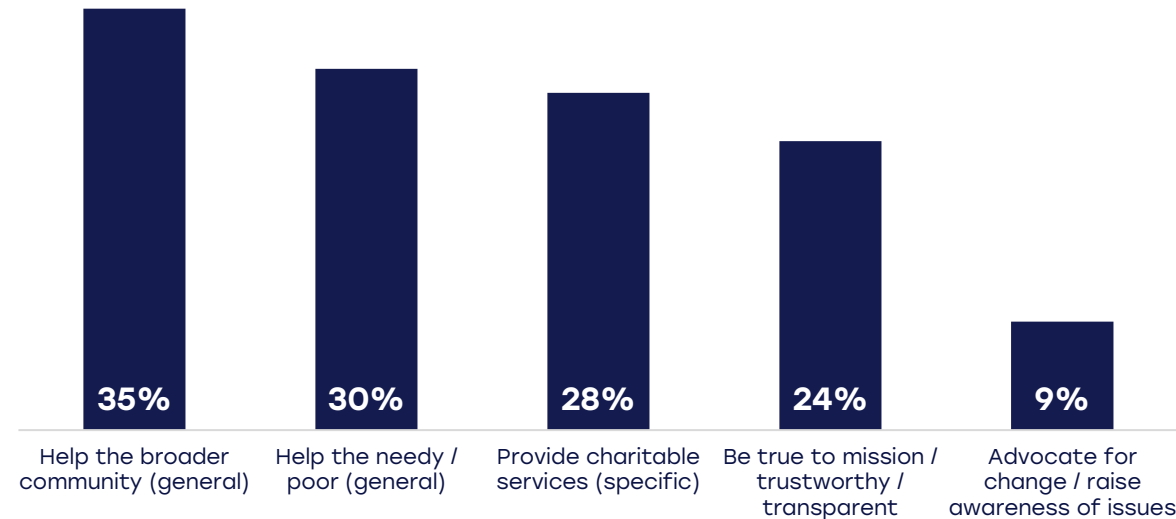
**Q13:** Generally speaking, how well do each of the following statements describe your relationship with the nonprofits you choose to support?  
Base Size: n=3,015



# The nonprofit sector is almost completely identified with charities in the mind of the public; its role is seen as providing aid and support to those in need

## Perceived Role of Nonprofits in Society

Shown: Categorized Survey Verbatim Responses



“ They should help the people in the community by providing food, clothing, housing, education, and information in how to better their situations. They should also be a go-between for the people and the government.”

“ To be a source for help in many areas. If someone is going to lose their home, help with financing or give them a job so they can keep their home. Buy land and build small homes near employment.”

“ They should be spending time and resources offering various services to the community that fill a need for certain groups of disadvantaged people/those that require some kind of assistance, either financial, medical, or food/resources.”

Q15: In your opinion what is the proper role of nonprofit organizations in America today? In other words, how should these organizations be spending their time and resources? Base Size n=3000





# Nonprofits are expected to step in and fill the “gaps,” places or issues that have been ignored or where government and business have failed to make an impact

## Perceived Role of Nonprofits in Society

Shown: Verbatim Responses



Nonprofits serve to fill in the gaps left by government and private business. The government and private business aren't doing a good enough job to combat homelessness? Therein lies a place for a nonprofit to pick up the slack.”



Nonprofits should fill gaps in public services and address issues that may not receive adequate attention from the government or for-profit sectors.”



Nonprofits should fill the void between what support the government can provide and the limitations of what corporate America is capable of doing for the public good because of their fiduciary responsibility to their shareholders. (i.e., a corporation isn't going to choose to help a person or a cause if it's potentially going to hurt their bottom line.)”



I believe that the proper role of nonprofit organizations in America today is to address social and environmental issues that are not being sufficiently tackled by either the government or the private sector. Nonprofit organizations should aim to create positive social change by providing services and resources to those who need it most, whether it's through education, advocacy, healthcare, or community development.”

Source: August 2023 Qualitative Board Discussion



## Amid a national cost-of-living crisis, the public expects nonprofits to step up



53%

**AGREE:**

“The nonprofit sector needs to do more to support Americans who have fallen on hard times”



Our country is currently in disarray. Prices are going up, interest rates are climbing, yet people's salaries remain the same. I believe that nonprofit organizations need to be more supportive of people and bring about awareness of local issues.”

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[One of the main functions of a nonprofit is] not to fully support everyone, but just to help people during a hard season, so they can pay it forward.”

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I believe there is more that can be done [by nonprofits]. Affordable housing is a big one since in South Florida it has become so expensive to rent or own a home.”

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These issues [the environment, housing, wealth distribution] have gotten so much worse even though we see so many new [nonprofit] organizations trying to tackle the same issues.”

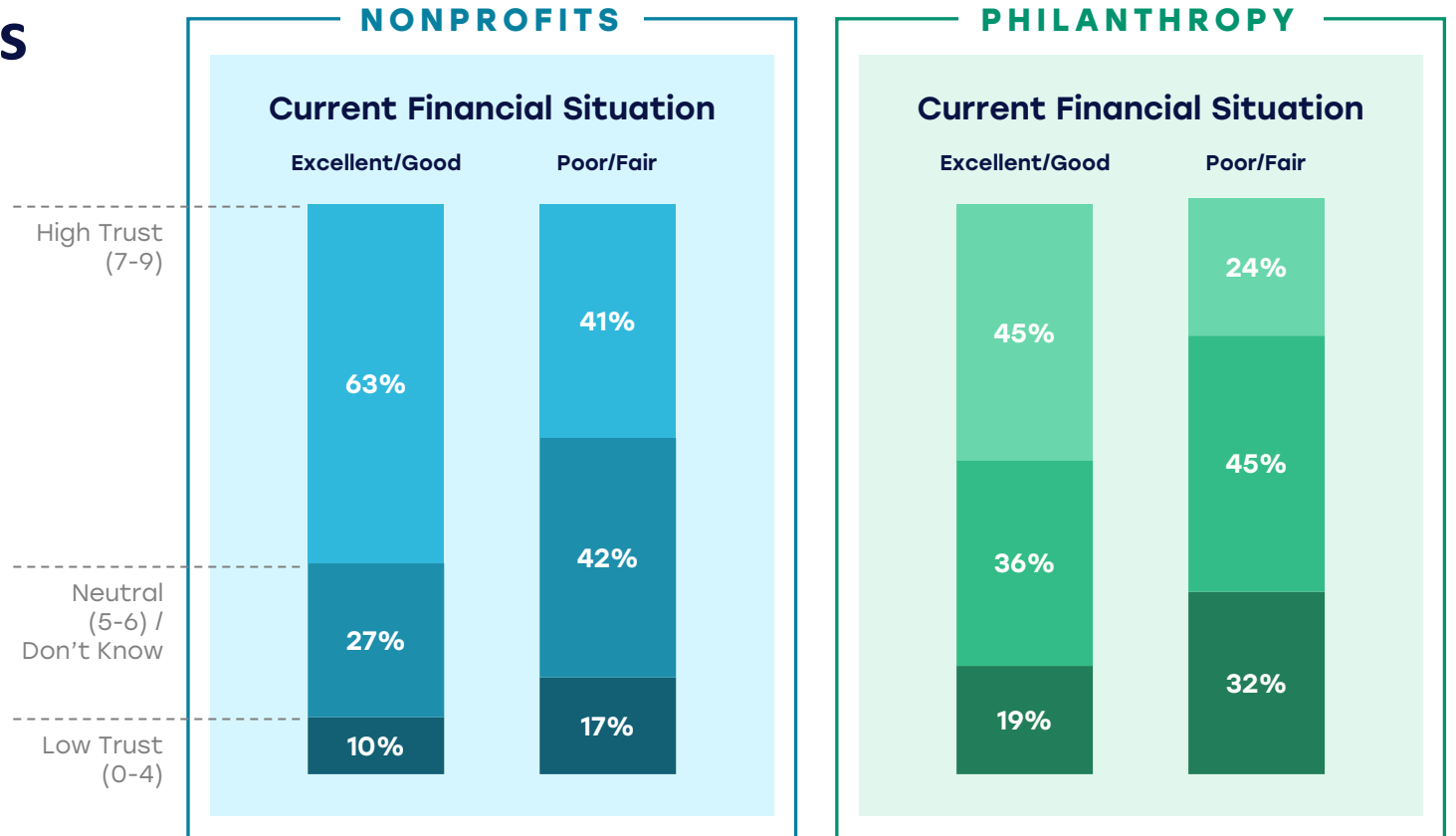
**Q24:** How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about nonprofit organizations? Base Size: n=3000  
Quotes are sourced from the August 2023 Qualitative Board discussion



# Unsurprisingly given the current environment, health of personal finances is strongly correlated with trust

Trust in nonprofits is 22-points higher among Americans rating their finances as excellent or good compared to those giving ratings of poor or fair.

The share of Americans describing their finances as “Poor” or “Fair” increased by 3-points in 2023 to 52%



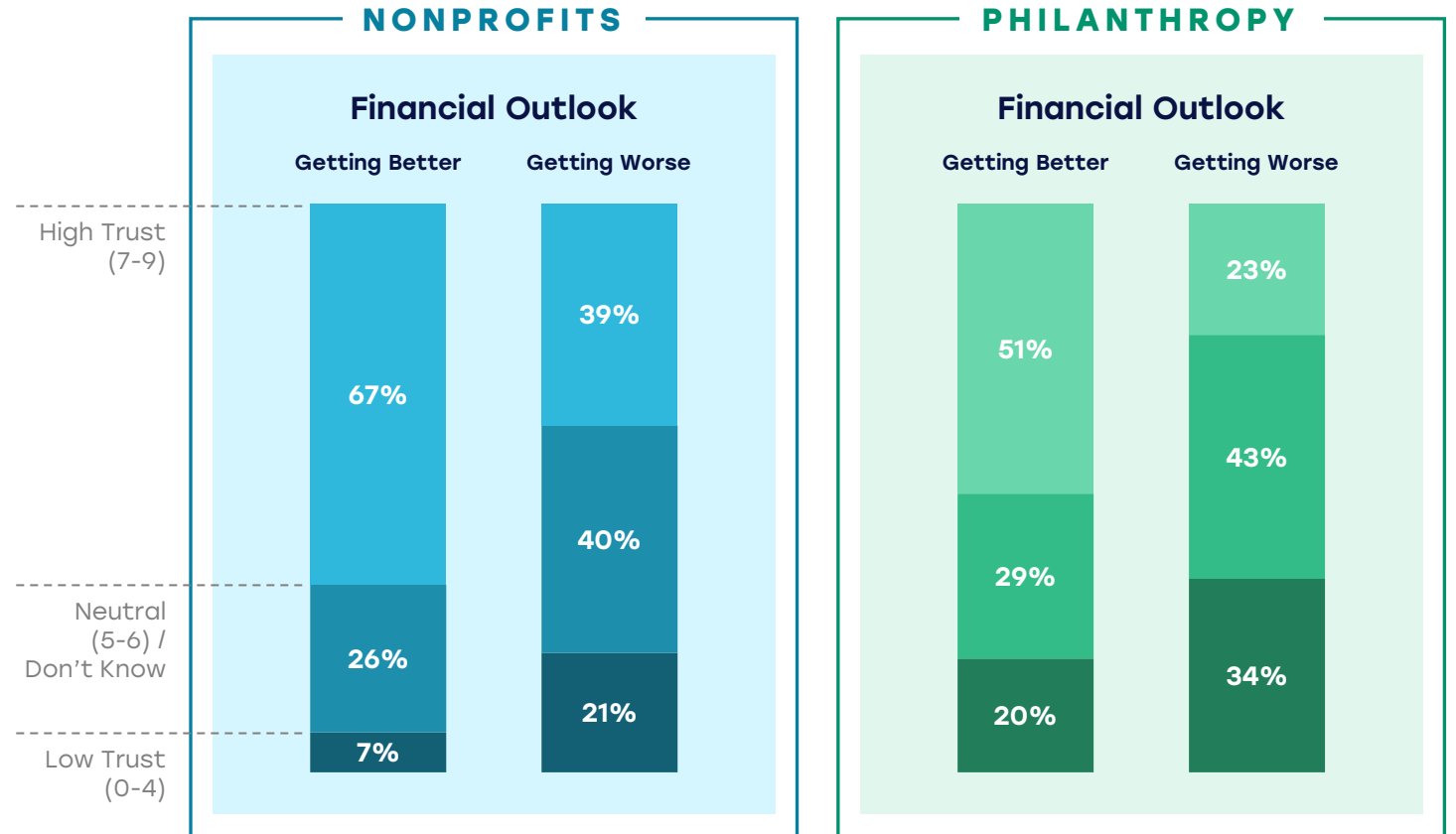
D10: How would you rate your financial situation today? Q16: How much do you trust nonprofit organizations to do what is right? Q29/36/43: How much do you trust [companies that engage in corporate philanthropy, private foundations, high net worth individuals engaged in philanthropy] to do what is right? Base size: Financial situation: Good/Excellent n=1570, Poor/Fair n=1431



# The trust disparity is even larger when considering financial outlook

Trust in both sectors is 28-points higher among Americans who see their finances improving.

The share of Americans reporting their finances “getting worse” increased from 30% to 35% in 2023



D11: Right now, do you think your financial situation as a whole is getting better or getting worse? Q16: How much do you trust nonprofit organizations to do what is right? Q29/36/43: How much do you trust [companies that engage in corporate philanthropy, private foundations, high net worth individuals engaged in philanthropy] to do what is right? Base size: Financial outlook: Getting better: 773, Getting worse: 1054





## Additionally, the public is deeply skeptical of large institutions, expressing a strong preference for small, local nonprofits over larger or national organizations

# 69%

Are more likely to trust nonprofits that have a presence in their local community\*

# 44%

Agree nonprofits need more accountability and oversight



The larger [nonprofits] get, the more they tend to suffer from corruption from those in managerial positions who, in many cases, are unnecessary.”



Some of the larger nonprofits seem to spend way too much on advertising & administrative.”



I think most organizations try to be as honest as possible, but greed will always exist, no matter what the organization's mission is. I trust local, specific-need based non-profits over larger organizations.”



Overall I think that most nonprofit organizations are performing well, they are meeting their goals. It's much easier to track and hold the smaller organization accountable to its mission because there is much more visibility. This gets harder with some of the larger and international organizations. At the end of the day, you have to put a lot of faith in a nonprofit because there is only so much we can see.”

\*Source: 2022 Wave, Independent Sector Trust Report  
Quotes are sourced from the August 2023 Qualitative Board discussion



# Critiques of nonprofit oversight and impact can substantially damage trust in the sector

Baby Boomers and Americans struggling financially are more likely than average to say hearing these critiques decreased their trust in nonprofits.

## Nonprofit Opposition Message – Lack of Oversight

The amount of government funding and staff allocated for nonprofit oversight has declined by 30% in the last decade, while the number of nonprofits increased exponentially. Nonprofits are particularly susceptible to waste, fraud, or abuse by bad actors.

# 36%

Say hearing this decreases their trust in nonprofits

50% - Boomers

44% - Finances “Getting Worse”

## Nonprofit Opposition Message – Lack of Impact

Nonprofits have not made the lives of people in my family or community better. Americans are worried about their ability to afford groceries, rent, and their children’s holidays. It is not evident nonprofits are making the situation better or helping families make ends meet.

# 34%

Say hearing this decreases their trust in nonprofits

40% - Finances “Getting Worse”

40% - Boomers

36% - “Poor”/”Fair” Finances Rating

Q25: Next, you are going to read some statements people might make about the nonprofit organizations in the United States today. For each statement, please tell us how it impacts your overall trust in the nonprofit sector. Base Size n=3000



# Populist messaging also has the potential to seriously erode trust in philanthropy

Baby Boomers, Americans struggling financially, Republicans, and suburbanites are most likely to be moved by these arguments.

## Philanthropy Opposition Message - Elites

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

# 52%

Say hearing this decreases their trust in philanthropy

- 67% - Boomers
- 60% - Finances "Getting Worse"
- 56% - Republicans
- 56% - Suburbanites
- 56% - "Poor"/"Fair" Finances Rating

## Philanthropy Opposition Message – Funding Favoritism

1% of nonprofit grantees capture half of all grant dollars given by foundations.

# 31%

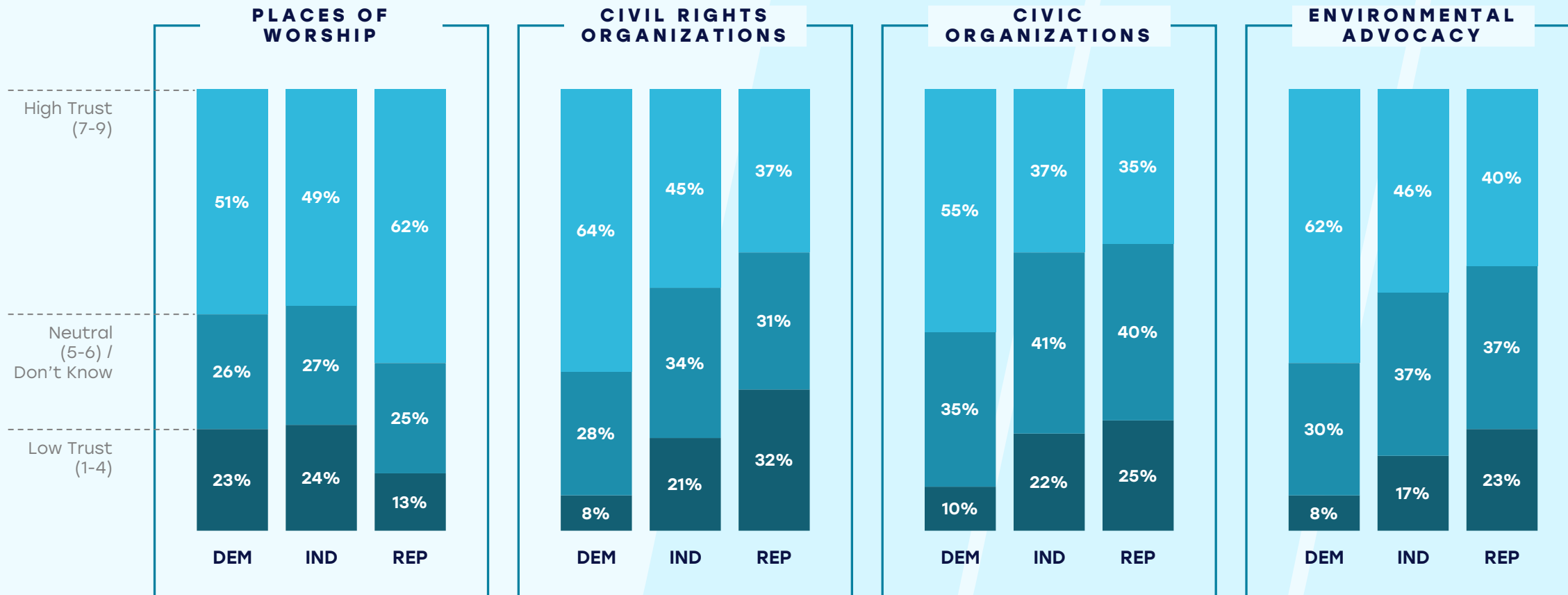
Say hearing this decreases their trust in philanthropy

- 41% - Boomers
- 39% - Finances "Getting Worse"
- 34% - Republicans
- 33% - Suburbanites
- 33% - "Poor"/"Fair" Finances Rating

Q49: For each statement, please tell us how it impacts your overall trust in American philanthropy. Base Size n=3000



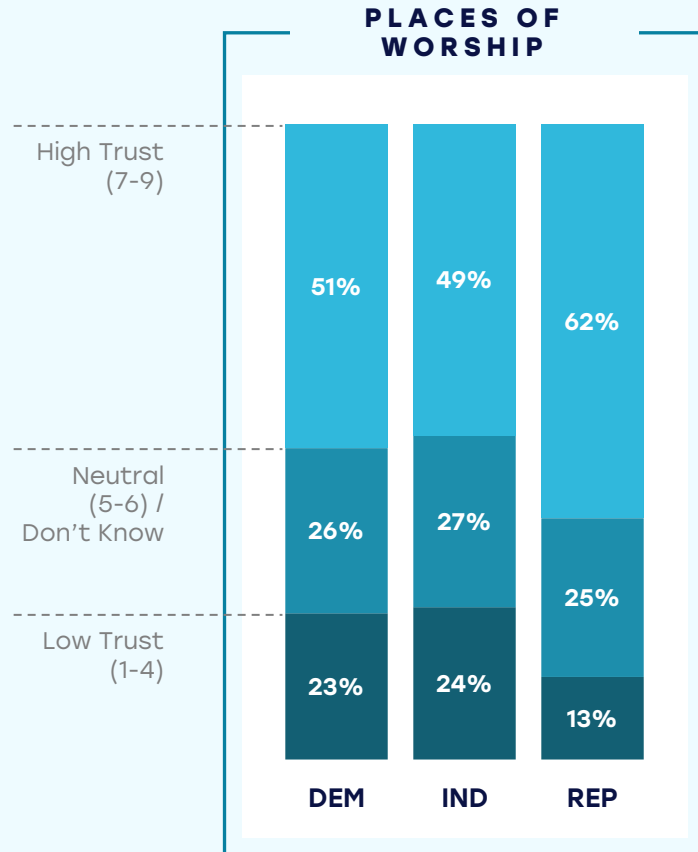
# Political polarization is also at play, with large trust disparities by political party observed for some nonprofit subsectors



Q23: How much do you trust the following types of nonprofit organizations to do what is right?



# Among many Democrats and Independents, places of worship have become identified with right-wing causes



“ [I don't trust] churches with big fancy buildings. I don't understand why they are tax exempt, clearly their tax-exempt money goes to things that don't help anyone but themselves.”  
- Democrat

“ I know there are some churches with goals that are harmful enough that they don't seem worthy of their tax-exempt status (if churches should even be getting that in the first place).”  
- Democrat

“ Some churches give money to bad causes (ex. conversion therapy) and use it to affect politics.”  
- Democrat

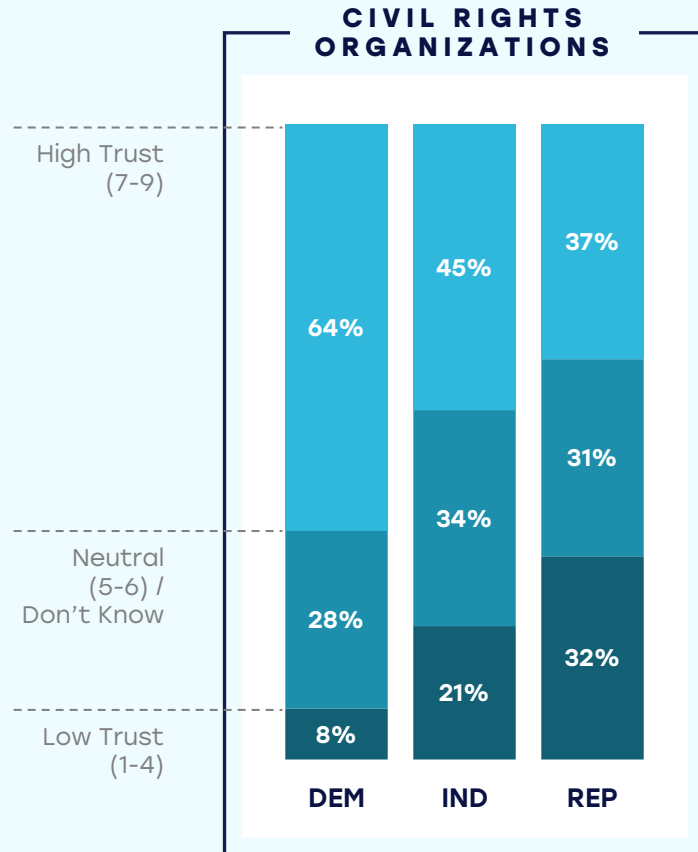
“ In Kansas, we had a vote on abortion rights in 2022. The Catholic Church twisted the verbiage and the message around this important issue. In other words, they were forcing private citizens to follow their religion. When a church is so involved in people's personal bodies, they should not be considered nonprofit and should be paying taxes.”  
- Democrat

“ Churches and religious organizations are untrustworthy and discriminatory.”  
- Democrat

Q23: How much do you trust the following types of nonprofit organizations to do what is right?  
Quotes are sourced from the August 2023 Qualitative Board discussion



# Republicans view civil rights organizations with skepticism – many believe they are ineffective, divisive, or misuse funds to benefit themselves



Black Lives Matter used millions of dollars for personal use, houses, cars, clothes, etc. It seems like some of the civil rights organizations do the exact opposite of solidarity but separate the races and classes.”

– Republican



[Civil rights orgs.] are important but in practice their actions are counterproductive. They're not interested in addressing root causes and have flawed solutions.”

– Republican



I believe in helping people to succeed, but not when they limit it to just one race.”

– Republican



I know they have historically been a very positive force behind a lot of rights people were given over the decades. I have however also heard that a lot of the newer civil rights organizations are not honest with where the money goes, and I've heard some of the heads of these organizations had gotten very rich in unethical ways.”

– Republican



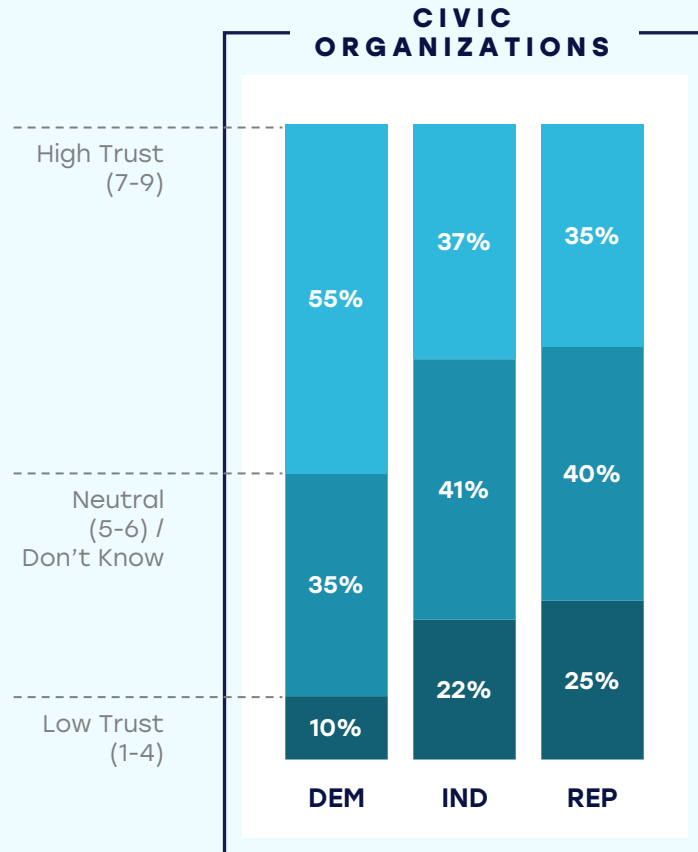
I just don't trust any civil rights organizations. I'm sure they claim to help people, but I would honestly like to see how they spend their funds and resources. From what I've heard and seen, these civil rights organizations seem to have their own agenda as to why they claim to help certain people and certain causes.”

– Republican

Q23: How much do you trust the following types of nonprofit organizations to do what is right? Quotes are sourced from the August 2023 Qualitative Board discussion



# While trust is lowest among Republicans, many Democrats and Independents worry about partisan bias in civic organizations



I believe these types of organizations would help you vote for THEIR chosen candidate. There aren't many good organizations like this that won't tell you who to vote for."

- Democrat



I think most of these are set up in strategic areas to help their side get more votes. They aren't about more people voting, they are about more of their side voting."

- Republican



It seems most civic orgs are driven by a hidden agenda...an unseen hand that tries to force one side over the other."

- Democrat



I trust civic organizations the least. For example, orgs that encourage voting are fundamentally untrustworthy. Individuals who would not vote without being told to vote, should not vote. Low information voters are not informed and should be discouraged from voting."

- Republican



I feel like they are easy to be abused by those with money for political gain and I think many often have a hidden agenda."

- Republican

Q23: How much do you trust the following types of nonprofit organizations to do what is right? Quotes are sourced from the August 2023 Qualitative Board discussion

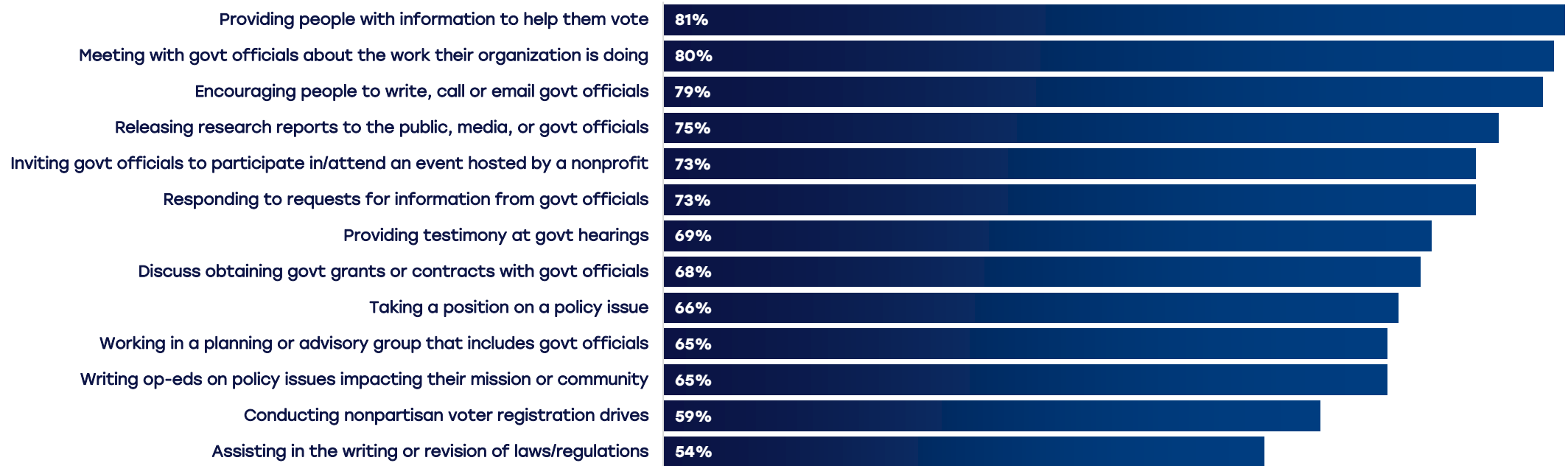




# Despite the effects of polarization, large majorities believe it is appropriate for nonprofits to engage with policymakers and advocate for causes and the communities they serve

## 'Appropriateness' of Nonprofit Advocacy Activities

Shown: Percent Select – 'Yes, Appropriate'



Q12A: Many nonprofits educate the public and government leaders on a range of issues related to their mission and values. For each type of action below, please tell us whether you think it is appropriate or not appropriate for nonprofits to do this. Base Size n=3000



# Nonprofits engaging in issue or government advocacy are expected to be transparent, focus on issues in an unbiased way, and avoid political partisanship

## Expectations of Nonprofit Advocacy

Shown: Verbatim Responses



Nonprofits should spend their time helping the needy in a nonpolitical manner. I'd like to see less politically motivated nonprofits."

– Republican



The only time [engaging with policymakers] would be inappropriate is if they are pushing the wrong issues without the people having some sort of say in the matter."

– Republican



I think advocating and educating government officials can cross the line if they will only meet with one party but not the party on the other side of the opinion, if you will."

– Democrat



I am on the fence about lobbying because it can very easily cause corruption depending on the circumstance. If it is just reaching out and telling officials their mission that is fine but when nonprofits are making donations to campaigns as long as the donors to the nonprofit are informed, it is appropriate."

– Republican



If the policies are truly for the general greater good and they are transparent about the association, that should not be a problem. If they are using this association to push a political agenda, I certainly DO NOT think that is appropriate."

– Democrat

Quotes are sourced from the August 2023 Qualitative Board discussion

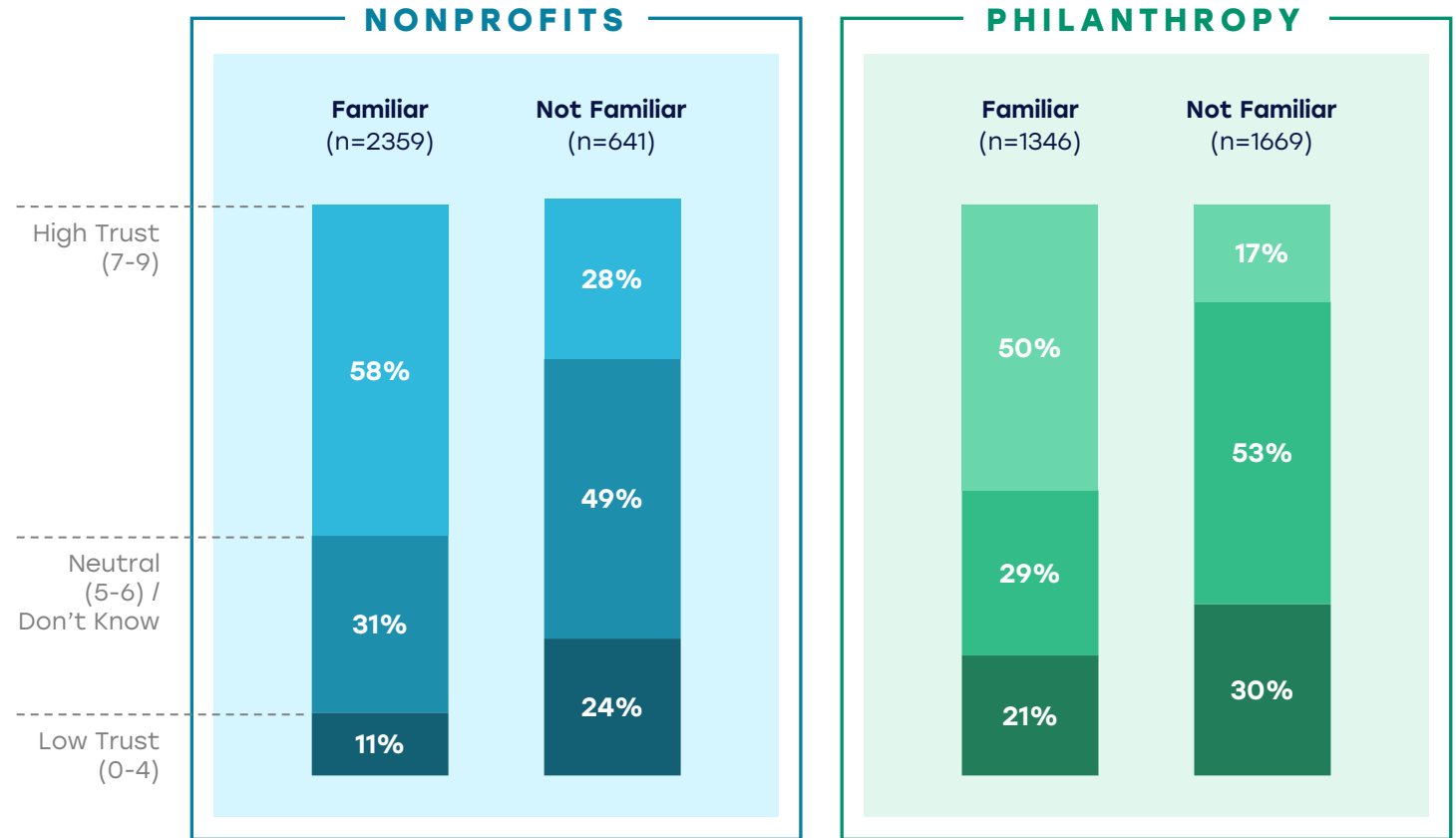
# Building Trust

A group of people's hands are stacked in a circle, symbolizing teamwork and trust. The image is overlaid with a dark blue semi-transparent filter. The text "Building Trust" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font across the center of the image. A thin, light blue horizontal line is positioned near the bottom of the image.



# Familiarity breeds trust in the sector

Those familiar were 30-points and 33-points more likely to trust nonprofits and philanthropy, respectively, compared to those unfamiliar.



Q14: Prior to this survey, how familiar were you with nonprofit organizations? Q28: Prior to this survey, how familiar were you with the concept of corporate philanthropy? Q35: Prior to this survey, how familiar were you with the concept of private foundations? Q42: Prior to this survey, how familiar were you with the concept of high net worth individual philanthropy? Q16: How much do you trust nonprofit organizations to do what is right? Q29/36/43: How much do you trust [companies that engage in corporate philanthropy, private foundations, high net worth individuals engaged in philanthropy] to do what is right? Total Base Size n=3000

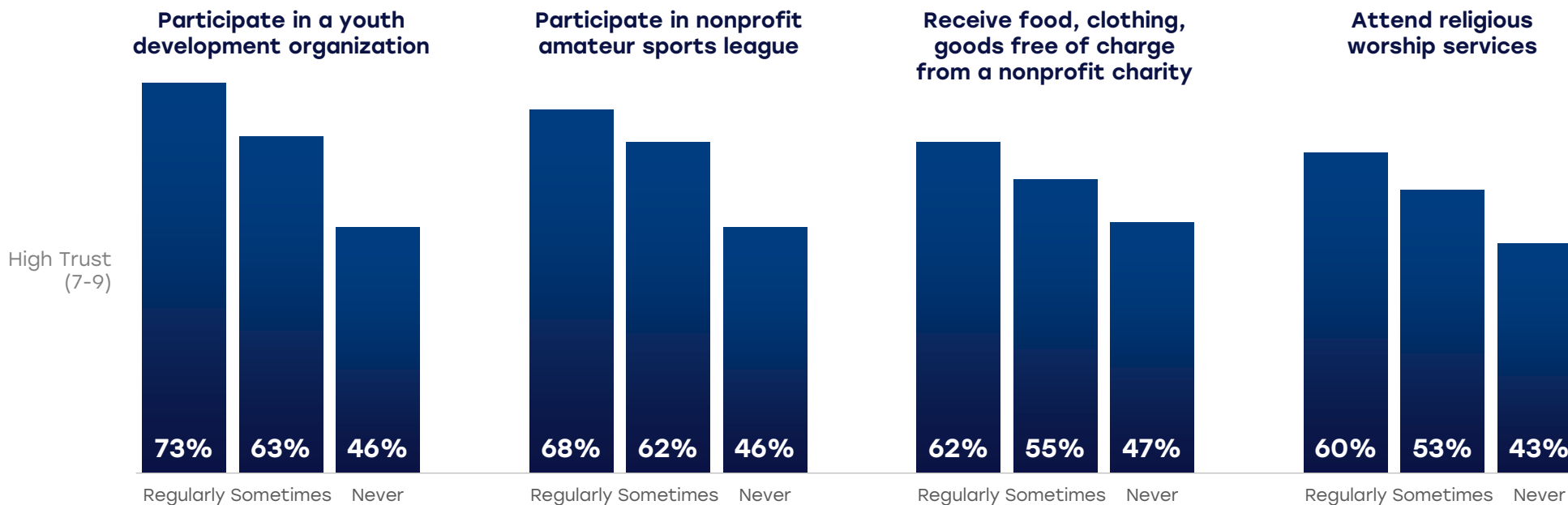


# Beyond basic familiarity, frequency of engagement with nonprofits correlates strongly with high sector trust

The effect is observed across a range of nonprofit types and engagement models.

### Trust in the Nonprofit Sector – By Engagement Type and Frequency

Shown: Nonprofit High Trust (7-9)



Q7A: In the past 12 months about how often did you, or any members of your household, do each of the following actions relating to nonprofit organizations? Q16: How much do you trust nonprofit organizations to do what is right? Base size n=3000



# Nonprofit messaging that focuses on charities, health and human services, and benefit for all is most effective at building sector trust

Messaging that stresses values over data proof points is also generally more effective.

	Impact on Nonprofit Trust Shown: Percent Selected, "Increases My Trust a Lot / a Little"		Impact on Nonprofit Trust Shown: Percent Selected, "Increases My Trust a Lot / a Little"
<b>VALUES - Charities Work for All</b> A wide range of charities work together to meet the needs of everyone in your community, regardless of age, education, or income.	<b>70%</b>	<b>VALUES - The Work of Nonprofits</b> Nonprofits work hard to help ensure your friends, family and neighbors can access healthcare, receive a quality education, play safely in local parks, worship, and give back to the community through youth programs.	<b>68%</b>
<b>DATA - Economic Contribution</b> Nonprofits mobilize millions of volunteers each year that contribute \$167 billion to the U.S. economy	<b>63%</b>	<b>DATA - Who Nonprofits Serve</b> Most nonprofits serve a wide range of people. 55% have programs that serve the general public, and 45% have programs that focus on people and families below the federal poverty level.	<b>61%</b>
<b>VALUES - Spaces for Connection</b> Nonprofits provide spaces for my family, neighbors, and friends to build meaningful relationships with a wide range of people and feel more connected to our community.	<b>60%</b>	<b>VALUES - Nonprofits over Government</b> Charities and churches caring for those in need is a better alternative than turning to more government programs.	<b>57%</b>
<b>DATA - Nonprofit Size</b> Most nonprofits are small and focus on the needs of their local communities (with 75% reporting annual revenue less than \$100K)	<b>55%</b>	<b>DATA - Serving Marginalized Groups</b> Many nonprofits provide programs that focus on historically marginalized groups, including people who are Black or African American, Hispanic, Indigenous, Native American, or Alaskan Native, and LGBTQ.	<b>47%</b>

Q25: Next, you are going to read some statements people might make about the nonprofit organizations in the United States today. For each statement, please tell us how it impacts your overall trust in the nonprofit sector. Base Size n=3000



# Philanthropy communications that highlight funding of charities and broad-based community benefit are also most effective at building trust

	Impact on Philanthropy Trust Shown: Percent Selected, “Increases My Trust a Lot / a Little”		Impact on Philanthropy Trust Shown: Percent Selected, “Increases My Trust a Lot / a Little”
<b>VALUES – Wide Variety of Causes Funded</b> Foundations enable individuals, families, and corporations to donate more money to a wider variety of causes, particularly small, local charities.	<b>61%</b>	<b>VALUES – Ensuring Everyone Gets Help</b> Foundation investment in nonprofit programs ensure every member of a community can get the help he or she needs, not just those who are a member of the voting majority.	<b>60%</b>
<b>DATA – Funding Nonprofits</b> Foundations provide critical, flexible funding for nonprofits that pay the rent for the space where community members meet, fund volunteer training for disaster response, and support staff to help veterans educate leaders about what they need to lead independent lives.	<b>60%</b>	<b>VALUES – Funding at the Local Level</b> Foundation investments enable people and nonprofits closest to the problem in local communities devise effective solutions, rather than relying on one-size-fits-all government programs.	<b>59%</b>
<b>DATA – Increased Giving</b> Giving by foundations has grown for 11 consecutive years, totaling \$91 billion dollars in 2022.	<b>56%</b>	<b>VALUES – Fair Platform for Investment</b> Foundations serve as a fair platform to enable people to invest in organizations and people closest to problems facing local communities.	<b>55%</b>

Q49: For each statement, please tell us how it impacts your overall trust in American philanthropy. Base Size n=3000



# Appendix:

Demographic Cuts

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## Economic “winners” – college-educated and upper-income Americans – continue to report higher than average trust in both sectors

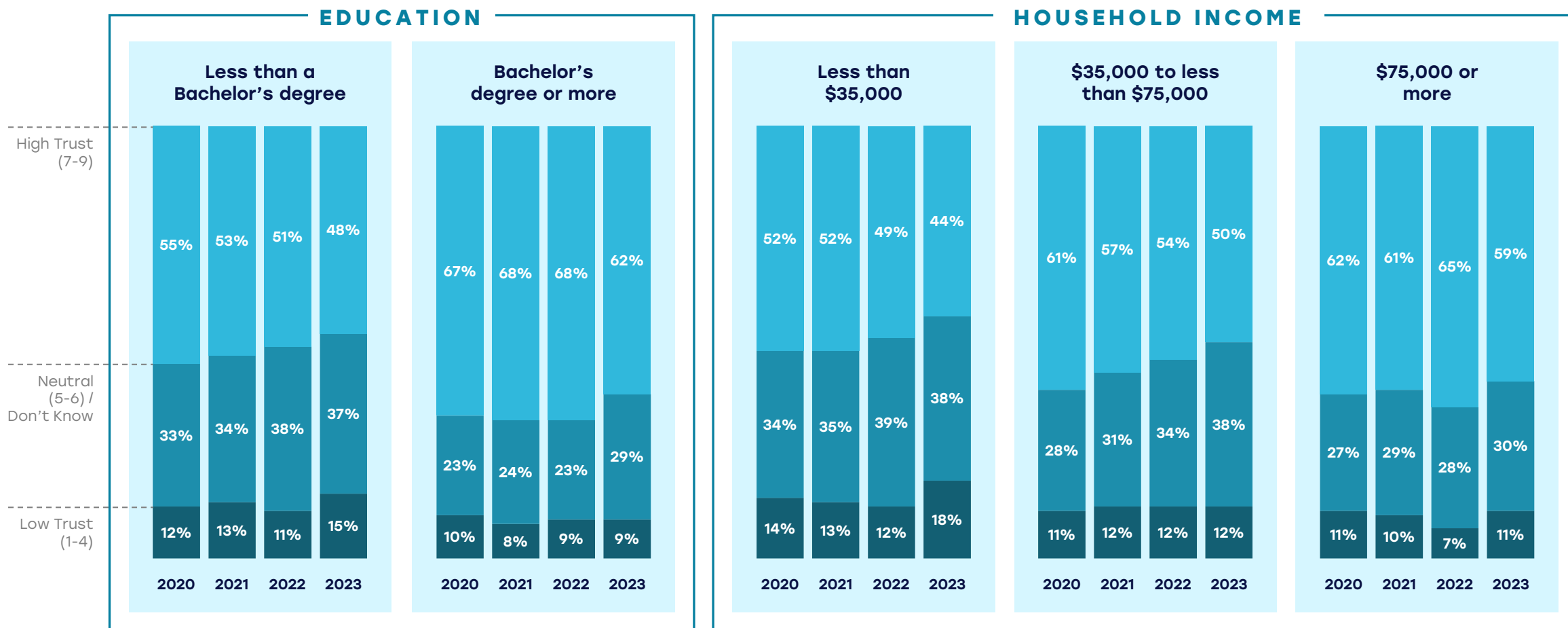
<b>NONPROFITS</b>	<b>%-age Point Difference from Average Trust</b>
College-educated	<b>+10</b>
Liberal politics	<b>+8</b>
HHI \$75k+	<b>+7</b>
Black American	<b>+6</b>
Urban resident	<b>+5</b>
Millennial generation	<b>+3</b>
Men	<b>+3</b>
<b>GENERAL POPULATION TRUST</b>	<b>52%</b>
Moderate politics	<b>-2</b>
Women	<b>-4</b>
Rural resident	<b>-5</b>
Non-college	<b>-6</b>
HHI < \$35k	<b>-8</b>
Gen Z	<b>-10</b>
Apolitical / “other” politics	<b>-20</b>

<b>PHILANTHROPY</b>	<b>%-age Point Difference from Average Trust</b>
College-educated	<b>+14</b>
HHI \$75k+	<b>+8</b>
Liberal politics	<b>+7</b>
Black American	<b>+7</b>
Urban resident	<b>+9</b>
Men	<b>+6</b>
Millennial generation	<b>+4</b>
<b>GENERAL POPULATION TRUST</b>	<b>34%</b>
Conservative politics	<b>-3</b>
Women	<b>-6</b>
Non-college	<b>-7</b>
HHI < \$35k	<b>-7</b>
Rural resident	<b>-8</b>
Gen Z	<b>-12</b>
Apolitical / “other” politics	<b>-19</b>



# Less than half of Americans without college degrees trust nonprofits

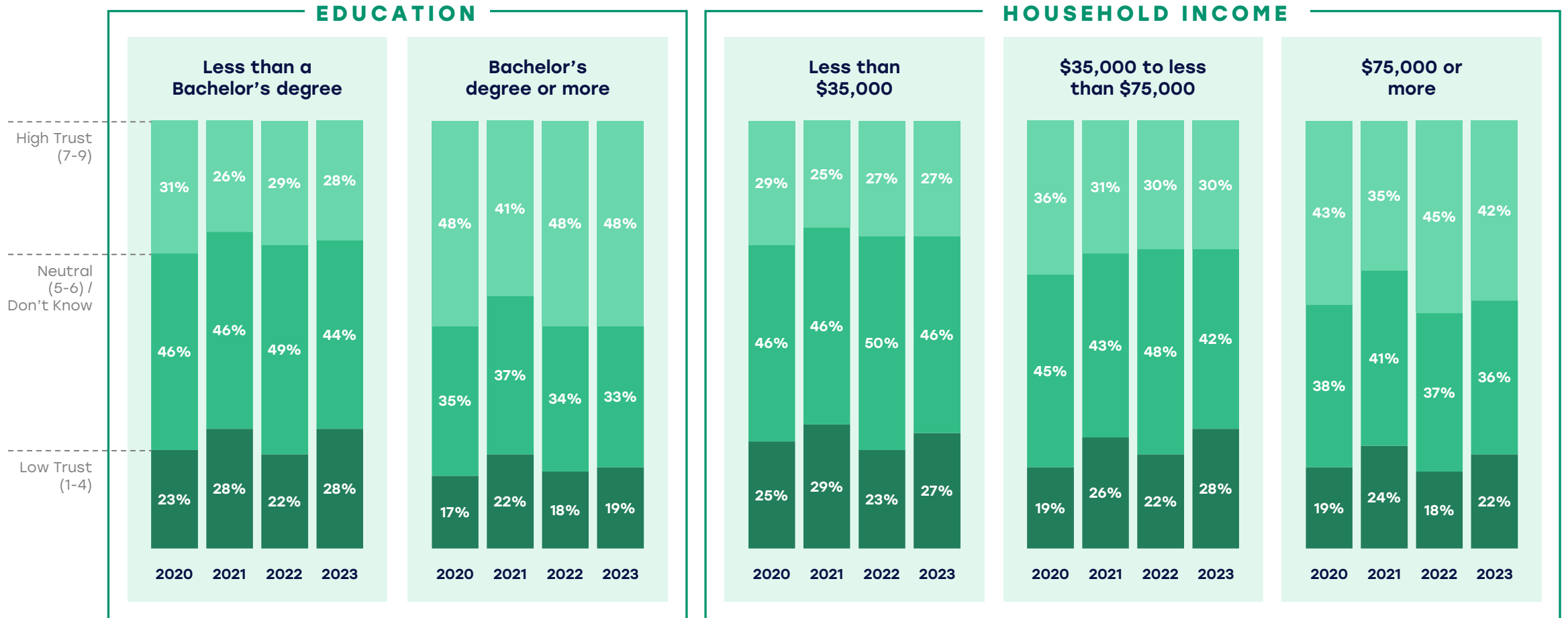
Trust fell across all income groups but remains higher among the affluent and college-educated.



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



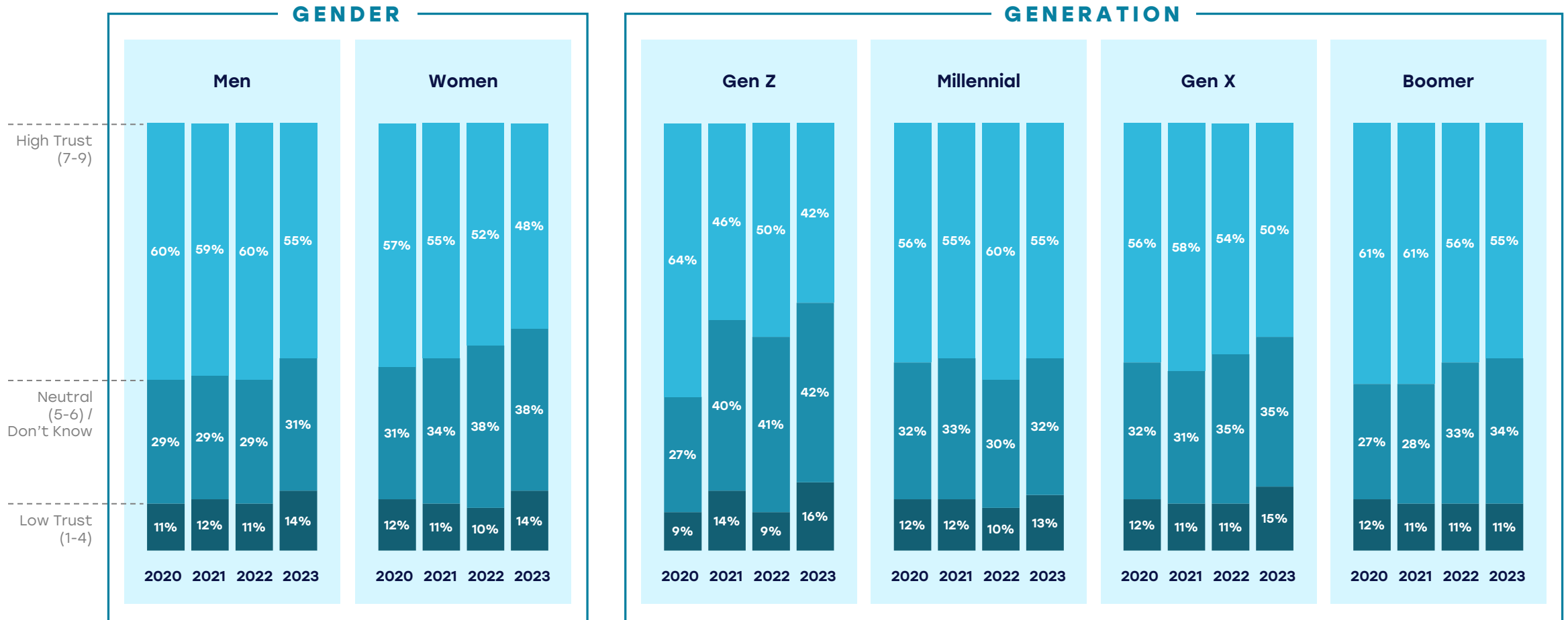
# Distrust in philanthropy has increased among non-college Americans



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



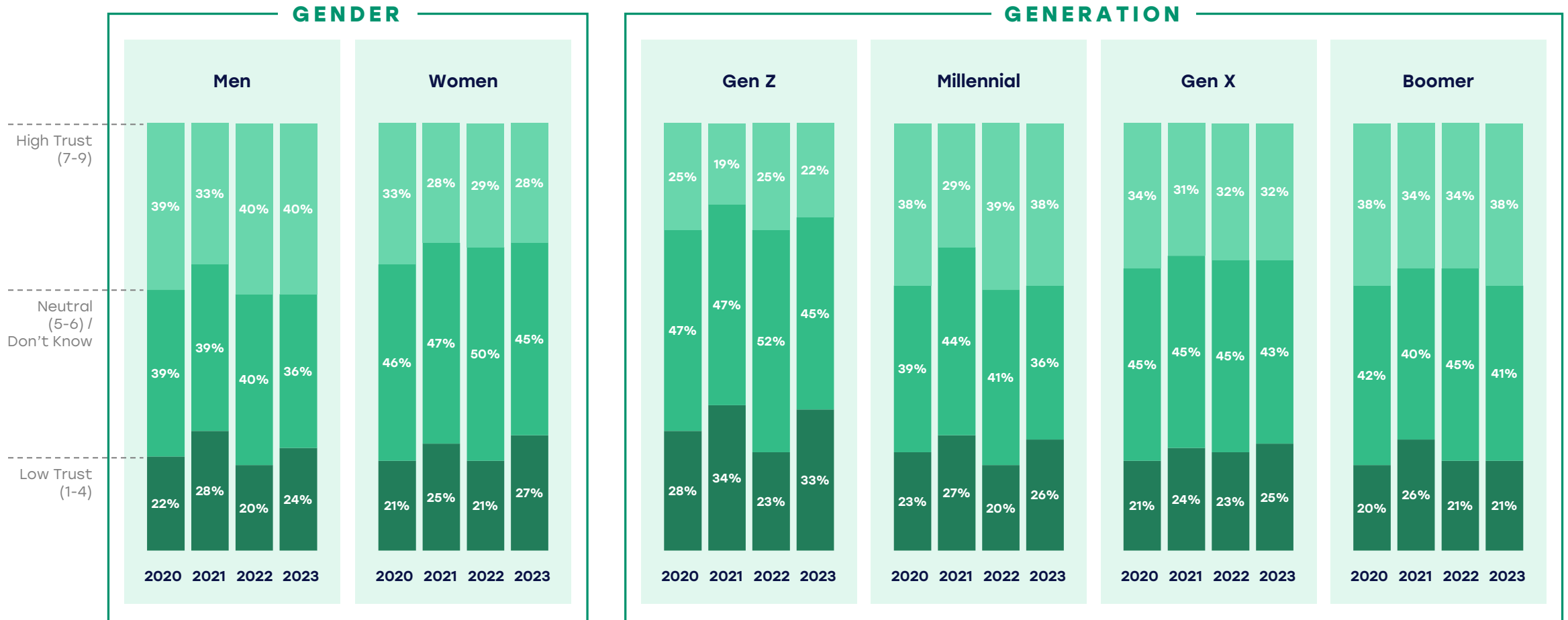
# Nonprofit trust continues to trend down among women and Gen Z



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



# As with nonprofits, trust capital dropped among women and Gen Z

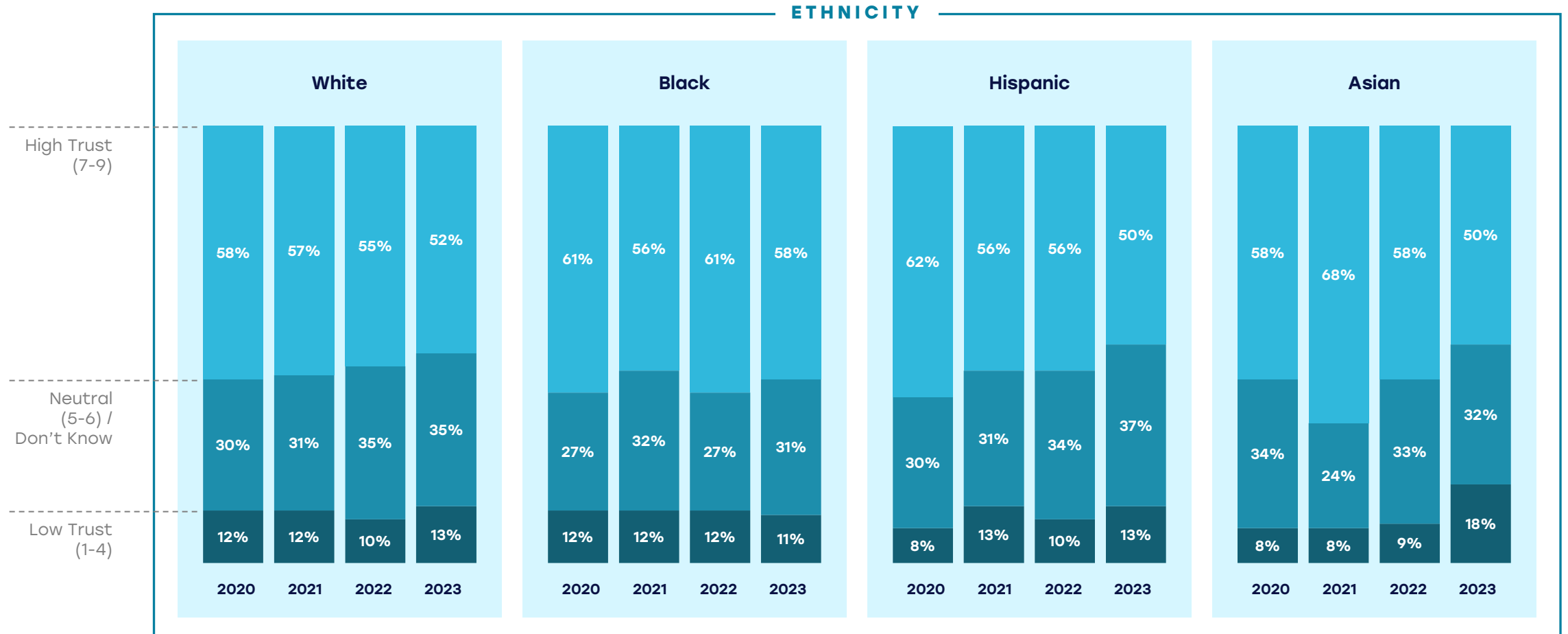


Q29/36/43: How much do you trust companies that engage in [corporate philanthropy/private foundations/high net worth individuals] to do what is right? Philanthropy 2020 Base size n=3000, 2021 n=3000, 2022 n=3015, 2023 n=3000



# Trust in nonprofits is highest among Black Americans

All racial groups reported declines in trust this year, though these drops were most pronounced for Hispanics (-6) and Asians (-8).

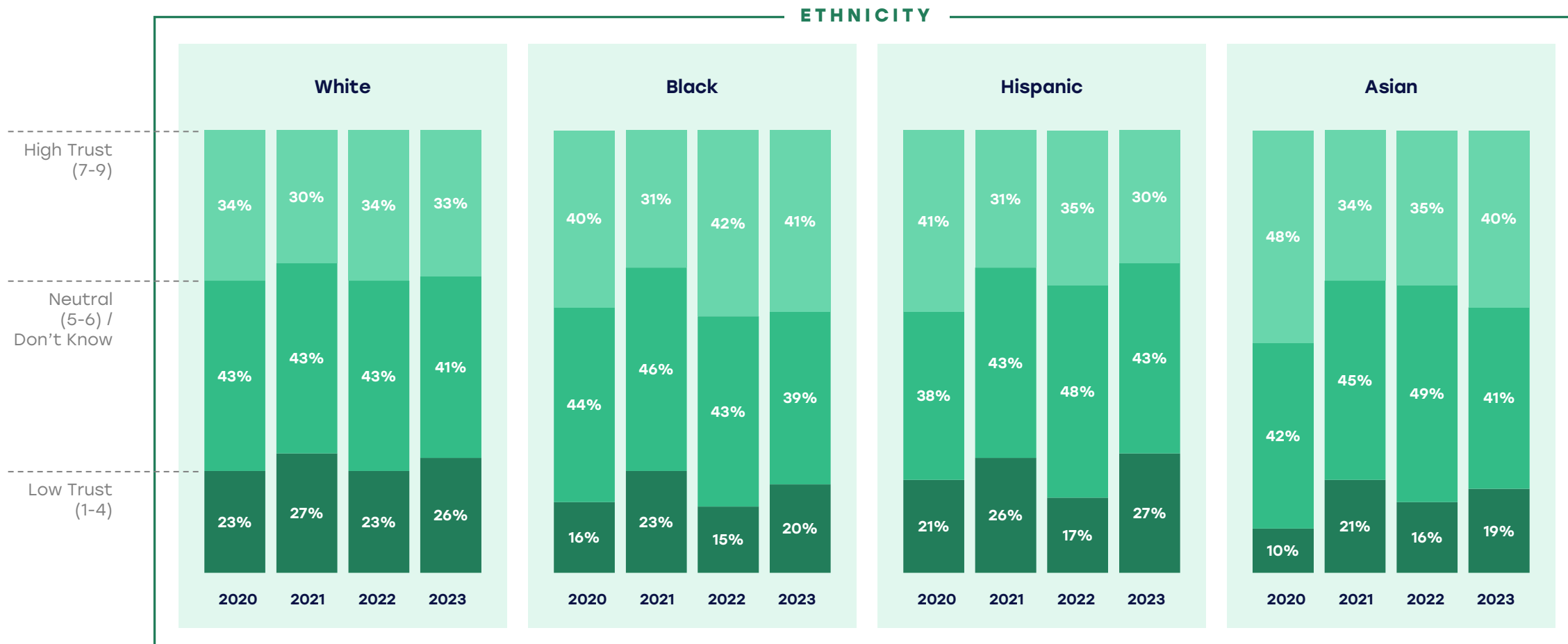


Q16: How much do you trust nonprofit organizations to do what is right?  
Nonprofit 2020 Base Size n=3000, 2021 n=5000, 2022 n=3015, 2023 n=3000





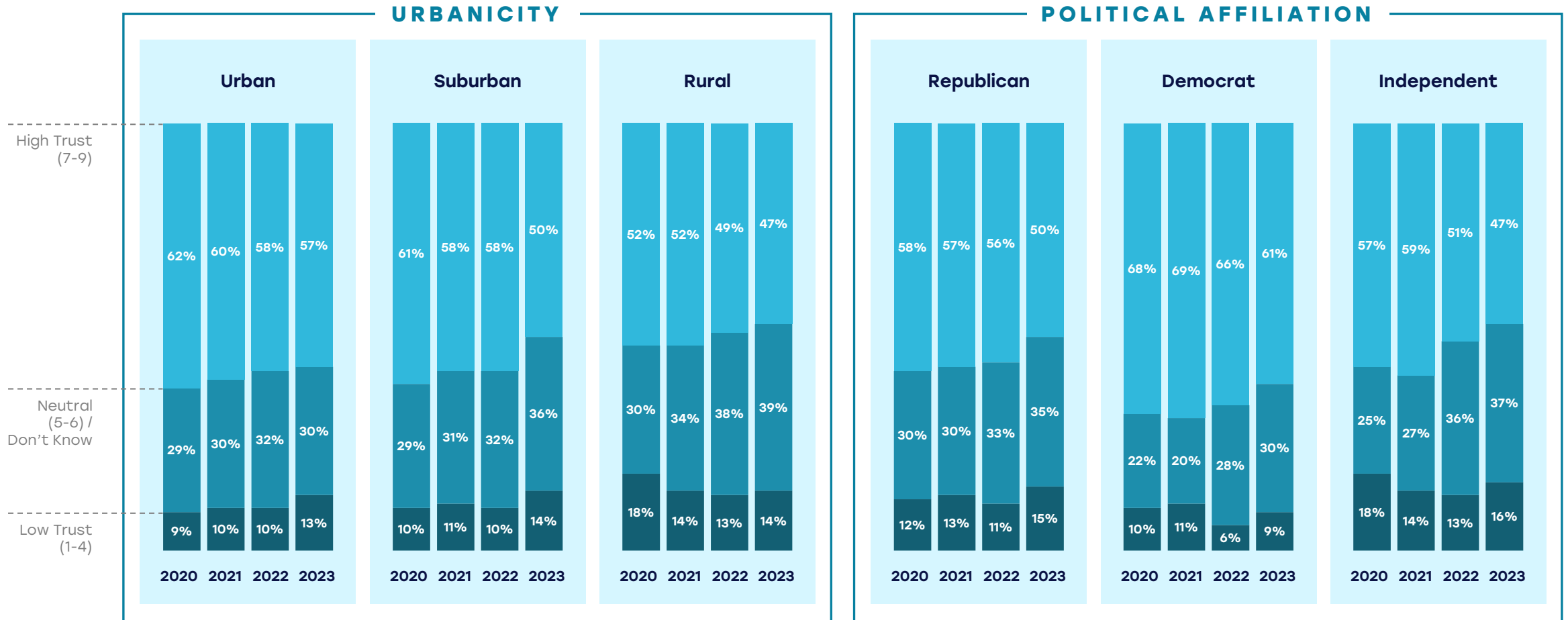
# Distrust of philanthropy increased across all major racial groups



Q29/36/43: How much do you trust companies that engage in [corporate philanthropy/private foundations/high net worth individuals] to do what is right? Philanthropy 2020 Base size n=3000, 2021 n=3000, 2022 n=3015, 2023 n=3000



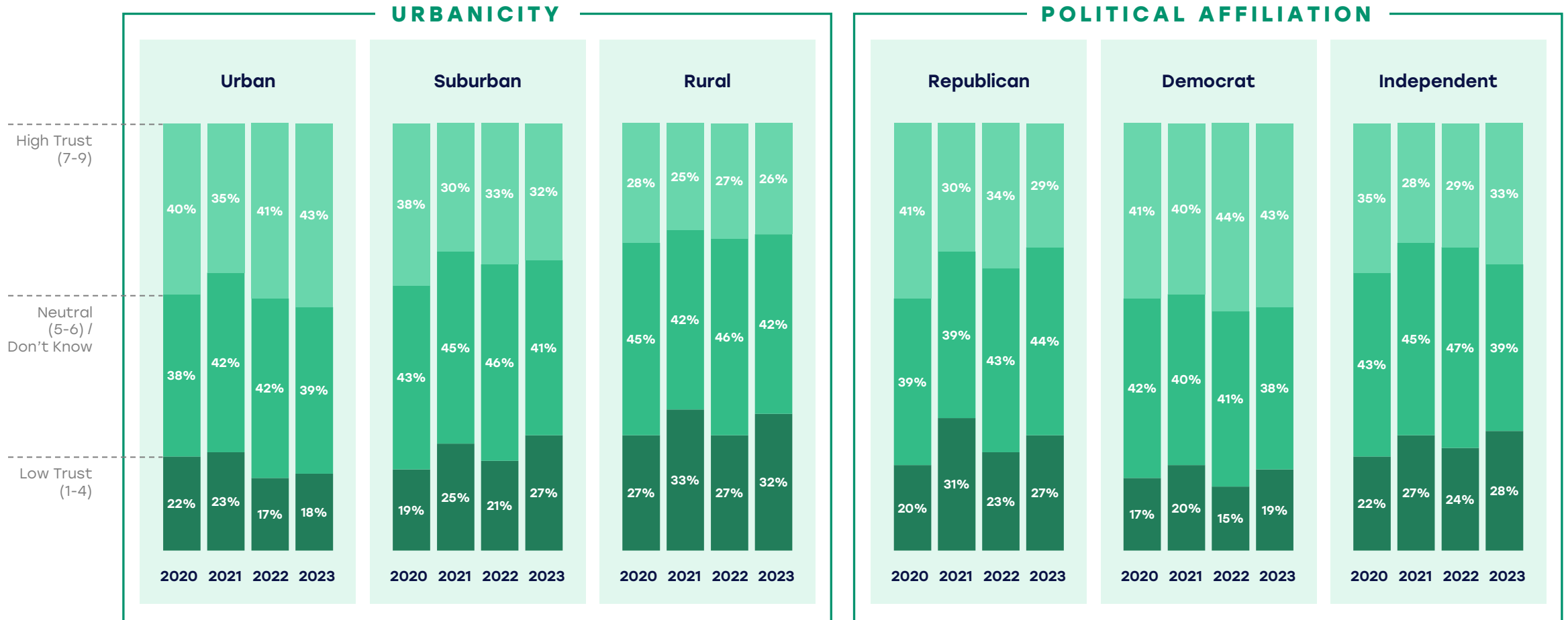
# Trust in nonprofits fell significantly in the suburbs while holding mostly steady in cities and rural communities



Q16: How much do you trust nonprofit organizations to do what is right? Nonprofit 2020 Base Size n=3,000, 2021 n=5,000, 2022 n=3,015, 2023 n=3000



# Republicans' trust in philanthropy has declined by 12-points since 2020



Q29/36/43: How much do you trust companies that engage in [corporate philanthropy/private foundations/high net worth individuals] to do what is right? Philanthropy 2020 Base size n=3000, 2021 n=3000, 2022 n=3015, 2023 n=3000



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