

2023 Gulfport Litter Survey

Key Points

Presented by
One CLEAN Gulfport

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One **CLEAN** Gulfport

Clean * Land * Environment * And * Neighborhoods

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Background of study

Purpose of Study

- One CLEAN Gulfport (OCG) is committed to making data-driven decisions that will help minimize and prevent litter, illegal dumping and property blight in Gulfport, Mississippi.
- This survey establishes a baseline to help measure success of initiatives, actions and messaging.
- Future research will be conducted to determine progress, and where to focus efforts.

Keep America Beautiful Model

- Keep America Beautiful, the nation's leading nonprofit community improvement organization, conducted a landmark national litter study released in 2021.
- The 2023 Gulfport Litter Survey is based on that study. This allows OCG to compare its results with national data.



Methodology

- The 2023 Gulfport Litter Survey was conducted online, and data collection ended in May, 2023.
- The survey was publicized through the OCG and the City of Gulfport websites, OCG's social media, and local news media.
- Based on 2020 U.S. Census Bureau data, Gulfport's population is 73,000. To achieve the research standard of 95% reliability and 5% margin of error, a sample size of 386 was required. This survey has 392 respondents.

Importance of the study

Gulfport is not unique in having a litter problem, but it must be addressed so that solutions can be found. The 2023 Gulfport Litter Survey is a step forward in achieving a cleaner, healthier, and more prosperous community.

Litter pollutes our land and infringes on the rights of others. Litter also has been shown to have a direct effect on increasing crime, since it indicates that residents don't care about their neighborhood so they become more vulnerable. Litter even has an effect on mental health, by decreasing a person's sense of well-being and increasing stress. A littered area attracts more litter, thereby compounding the problem.

Across the nation, U.S. residents agree that litter is a problem where they live. Ninety percent (90%) of U.S. residents reported that litter is a problem in their state. (KAB Study, 2021)

Americans understand that litter has a strong negative impact on their communities. Large majorities of U.S. residents (75 to 97 percent) recognize that litter negatively affects the environment, waterways, property taxes, home values, tourism and businesses, quality of life, and health and safety in their communities. (KAB Study, 2021)

The Gulfport Litter Survey encompasses both behavioral and attitudinal aspects of littering. By understanding who is littering, and why, we can develop the most effective strategies for change.

Key findings

1. Ranking of litter, illegal dumping and property blight in Gulfport (pg. 10)

- Respondents ranked these three issues a “7” average on a scale of 10, with 1 = Not at all a problem, to 10 = Terrible problem
- The ranking for how well the city is handling these three issues is an average “3” on a scale of 10, 1 = Terrible job, to 10 = Great job

2. How serious of a problem is litter in Gulfport? (pg. 11)

- An average of 86% of respondents agreed with eight negative effects of littering in Gulfport.

3. Litter and waterways (pg. 13)

- 62% live near a body of water in Gulfport, and 78% think litter is a problem for waterways.

4. What, when, where and why of litter in Gulfport (pg. 15)

- 91% of respondents say fast food packaging is the main type of litter seen, 83% see it thrown from car windows, 88% see most litter on secondary roads, 83% have seen people litter, 86% think people litter because they don't care about the effects.

Key findings

5. Who is littering in Gulfport? (pg. 20)

- 86% of respondents say they do not litter, which indicates that 14% of people are causing 100% of the litter in Gulfport.
- 87% of respondents said the people most likely to litter are under age 35.

6. Penalties of littering in Gulfport (pg. 23)

- 93% of survey respondents do not know of anyone who has been caught or fined for littering in Gulfport.
- 90% think it is unlikely that anyone littering in Gulfport will be caught or fined.
- 34% of respondents correctly chose the answer of \$500 for the amount a person in Gulfport can be fined for littering.

7. Reaction to observing litterers (pg. 24)

- 64% of respondents say they would report litterers to a hotline
- 50% would ask the litterer to pick it up
- 43% would do nothing if they saw someone littering

Key findings

8. Reporting litter in Gulfport (pg. 25)

- The top three reasons why respondents think people in Gulfport do not report littering are:
 - Do not know how to report littering-69%
 - Do not want to risk a confrontation with someone who is littering-64%
 - No one gets convicted or penalized a fee for littering-56%
- Respondents were asked if they personally know how to report littering in Gulfport. 82% said they do not know how to report littering.

9. Litter prevention messaging (pg. 27)

- 67% of survey respondents said they have not seen, read or heard any litter prevention messages in Gulfport.
- When asked the frequency that they've seen, read or heard litter prevention messages in Gulfport, the responses were: 38%-never, 45%-rarely, 13%-sometimes, and 2%-often.

Key findings summary

People in Gulfport consider litter to be a serious problem that affects their property values, environment, and quality of life. The majority (62%) live near a body of water and think that litter affects water quality but they don't realize just how much litter damages waterways (up to 80% of litter eventually ends up in waterways).

People don't think the City of Gulfport is doing a good job in preventing and cleaning up litter. This is largely due to not knowing how to report litter, and not believing that reporting it will make a difference as there are not strong enough deterrents in place.

Most people don't litter in Gulfport (86%) but they frequently see people who do. The main types and causes of litter are people throwing fast-food bags and cigarette butts out of vehicle windows on secondary roads. People under age 35 are thought to be the worst offenders.

Litter prevention messaging is too low to create significant awareness. Most people have not heard anti-litter messaging. Only 15% of survey respondents said they have heard or seen anti-litter messaging "often" or "sometimes."

Data-based action plan

Litter, illegal dumping, and property blight go hand-in-hand. The 2023 Gulfport Litter Survey is one step on the path to improving our community.

One CLEAN Gulfport has found the City to be very receptive to wanting improvement, but it has limited resources. A coordinated effort by all relevant environmental groups, businesses, schools, churches, community organizations, and other stakeholders is needed for short- and long-term change.

Data from the 2023 Gulfport Litter Survey will be used to formulate strategic actions. This baseline survey, as well as future surveys, will guide efforts in fighting litter, illegal dumping, and property blight, and to measure success of initiatives.

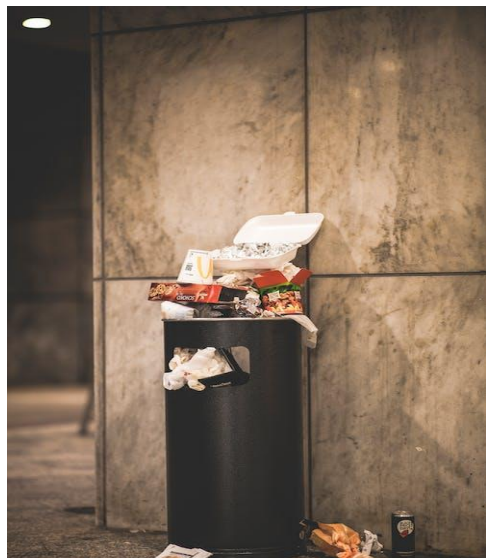
Using this survey data, OCG will formulate quantifiable strategies in these three areas of litter prevention:

1. Anti-litter public messaging
2. Litter violation awareness and punishment
3. Educational efforts to prevent litter

How do survey respondents rank the issues of litter, illegal dumping, and property blight In Gulfport?

And how do survey respondents rank the efforts of the City in handling these issues?

- Respondents ranked the severity of the three issues a “7” on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 = Terrible Problem
- Respondents ranked the City’s efforts in resolving these three issues a “3” on a scale of 10 = Great Job





Perceptions of litter impact

Respondents were asked their level of agreement with eight statements about the impact of litter.

1. Litter is an environmental problem-90% agree.
2. Litter eventually ends up in our waterways-91% agree.
3. Litter impacts my quality of life-87% agree.
4. Litter leads to increased crime-60% agree.
5. Litter poses a health and safety risk to people and animals-96% agree.
6. Litter negatively impacts tourism and businesses-96% agree.
7. Litter reduces property values-95% agree.
8. Litter causes taxes to increase because of cleanup costs-76% agree.

Q: In general, do you strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with the following:

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/no answer	Overall
Litter is an environmental problem	268 68.37%	88 22.45%	17 4.34%	9 2.3%	7 1.79%	3 0.77%	392 100%
Litter eventually ends up in our waterways	230 58.67%	125 31.89%	25 6.38%	4 1.02%	2 0.51%	6 1.53%	392 100%
Litter impacts my quality of life	201 51.28%	140 35.71%	32 8.16%	12 3.06%	6 1.53%	1 0.26%	392 100%
Litter leads to increased crime	129 32.91%	106 27.04%	75 19.13%	37 9.44%	18 4.59%	27 6.89%	392 100%
Litter poses a health and safety risk to people and animals	249 63.52%	125 31.89%	10 2.55%	2 0.51%	5 1.28%	1 0.26%	392 100%
Litter negatively impacts tourism and businesses	317 80.87%	60 15.31%	4 1.02%	4 1.02%	6 1.53%	1 0.26%	392 100%
Litter reduces property values	307 78.32%	67 17.09%	11 2.81%	2 0.51%	3 0.77%	2 0.51%	392 100%
Litter causes taxes to increase because of clean-up costs	182 46.43%	117 29.85%	49 12.5%	8 2.04%	16 4.08%	20 5.1%	392 100%

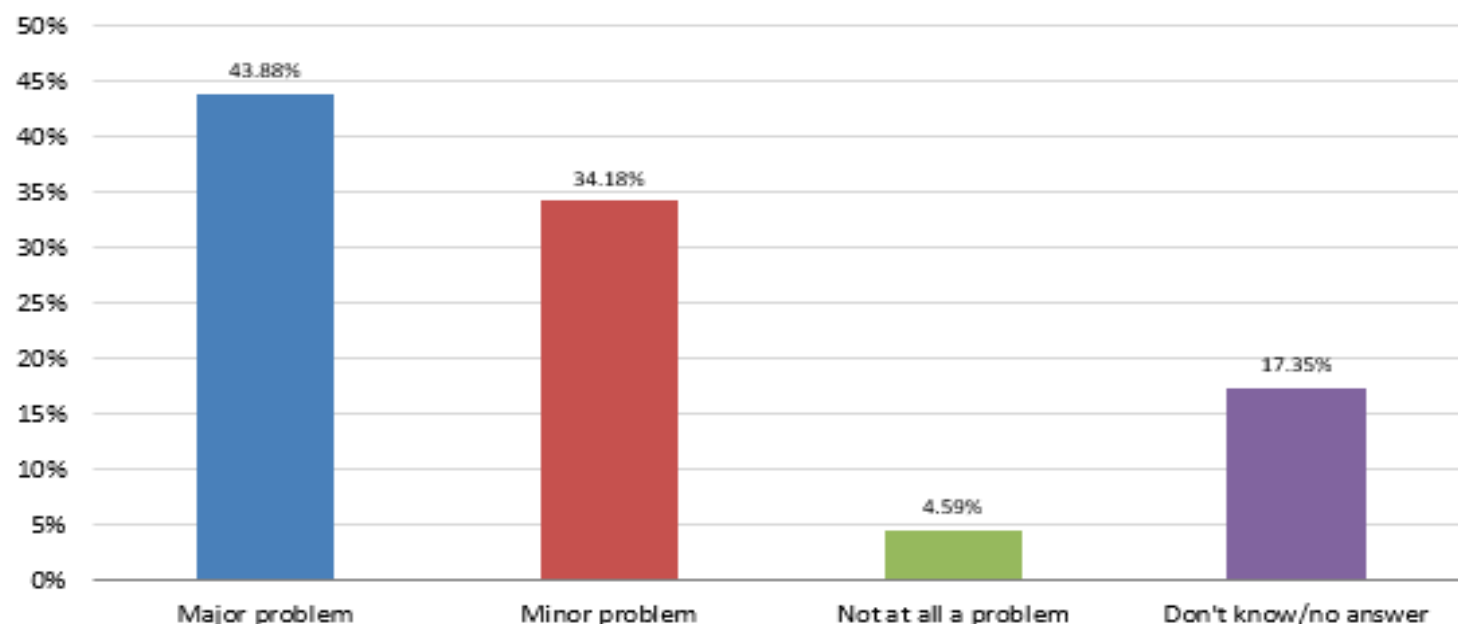
What impact does litter have on our waterways?



Studies have indicated that up to 80% of litter ends up in waterways. In Gulfport, this is a critical concern because of the many bodies of water nearby.

- 62% of survey respondents live near a river, lake or the Gulf of Mexico in Gulfport.
- 44% think litter causes a major problem in waterways, 34% think it is a minor problem, 5% think it is not at all a problem, and 17% don't know if litter causes a problem in waterways or did not answer.

Q: Would you say litter in streams, rivers, lakes or other bodies of water in Gulfport is a major problem, minor problem, or not at all a problem?



The what, when, where and why of litter in Gulfport



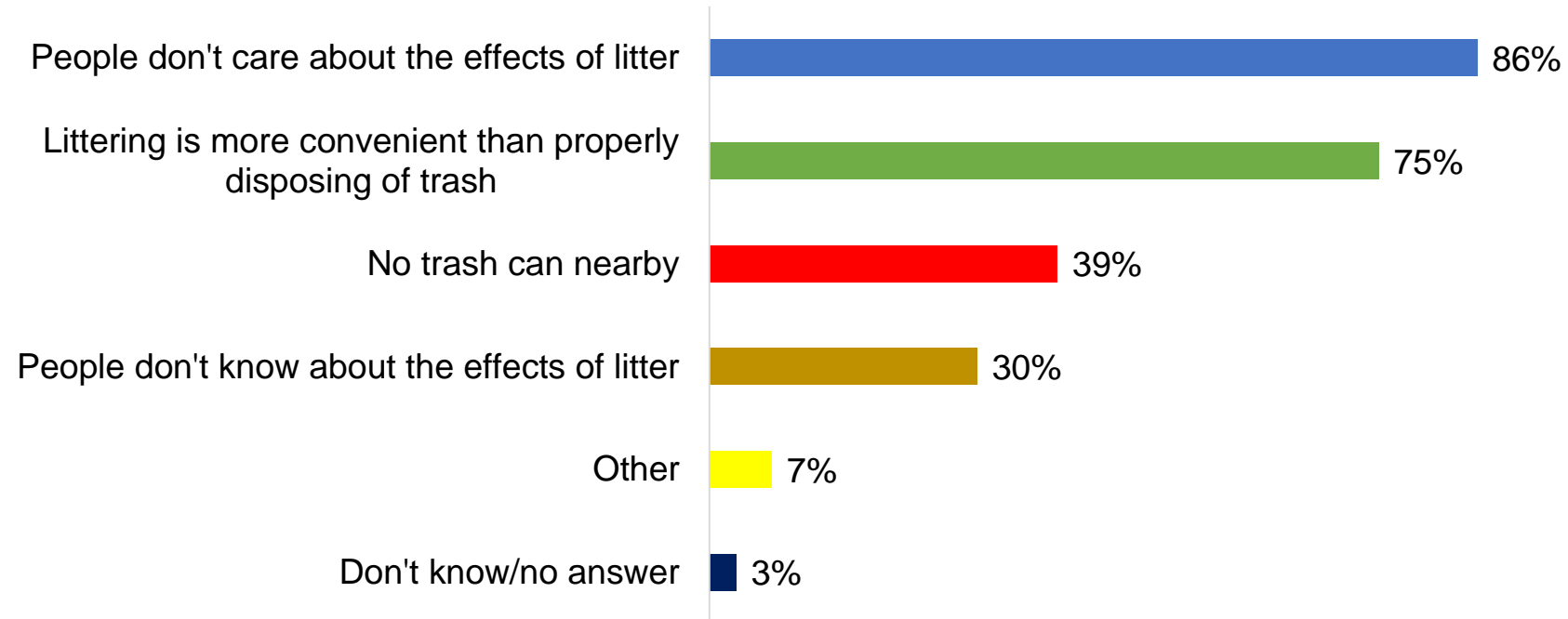
- The top three types of litter that respondents report seeing are fast food packaging (91%), snack food wrappers (78%), and non-alcoholic beverage containers (73%).
- The primary source of litter is from vehicle drivers and passengers throwing trash out their windows (83%).
- Litter is seen the most on roadways (88%), other than interstate highways, which is observed less than half as much (40%).
- The most common littering behavior observed is discarding cigarette butts (63%).
- 40% of people say they often see people littering, and 43% say they sometimes see people littering.
- The top reason why respondents think that people litter is because “they don’t care about the effects of littering” (86%).



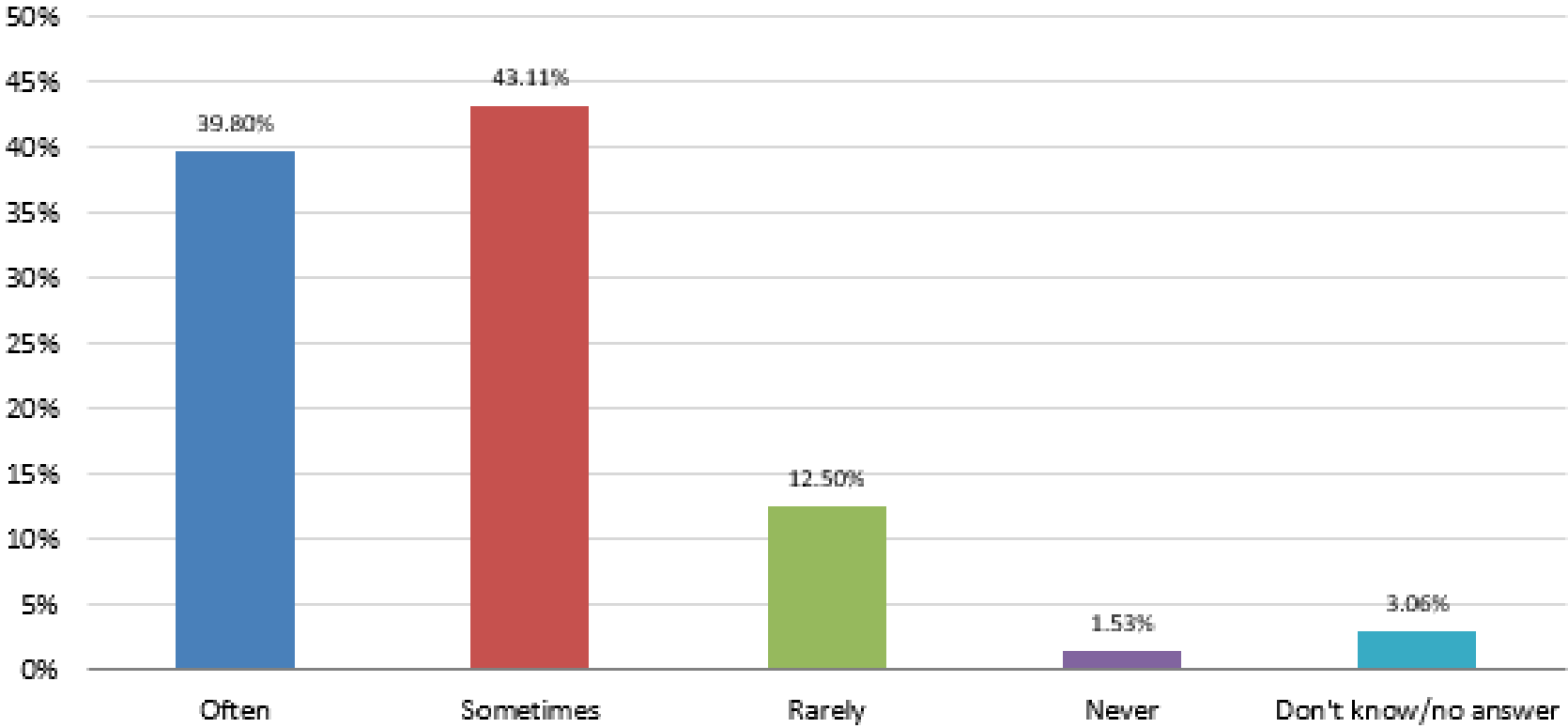
Cigarette butts #1

- The Keep America Beautiful litter study stated that cigarette butts are the single most-littered item in the nation.
- The Gulfport Litter Survey asked respondents if they consider cigarette butts to be litter: 95% said yes, and 5% said no.
- Respondents who said that cigarette butts are not litter answered that it is because they believe that they're small, they're biodegradable, and holding onto them is a health and fire hazard.
- 4% of respondents said they're likely to throw cigarette butts on the ground.

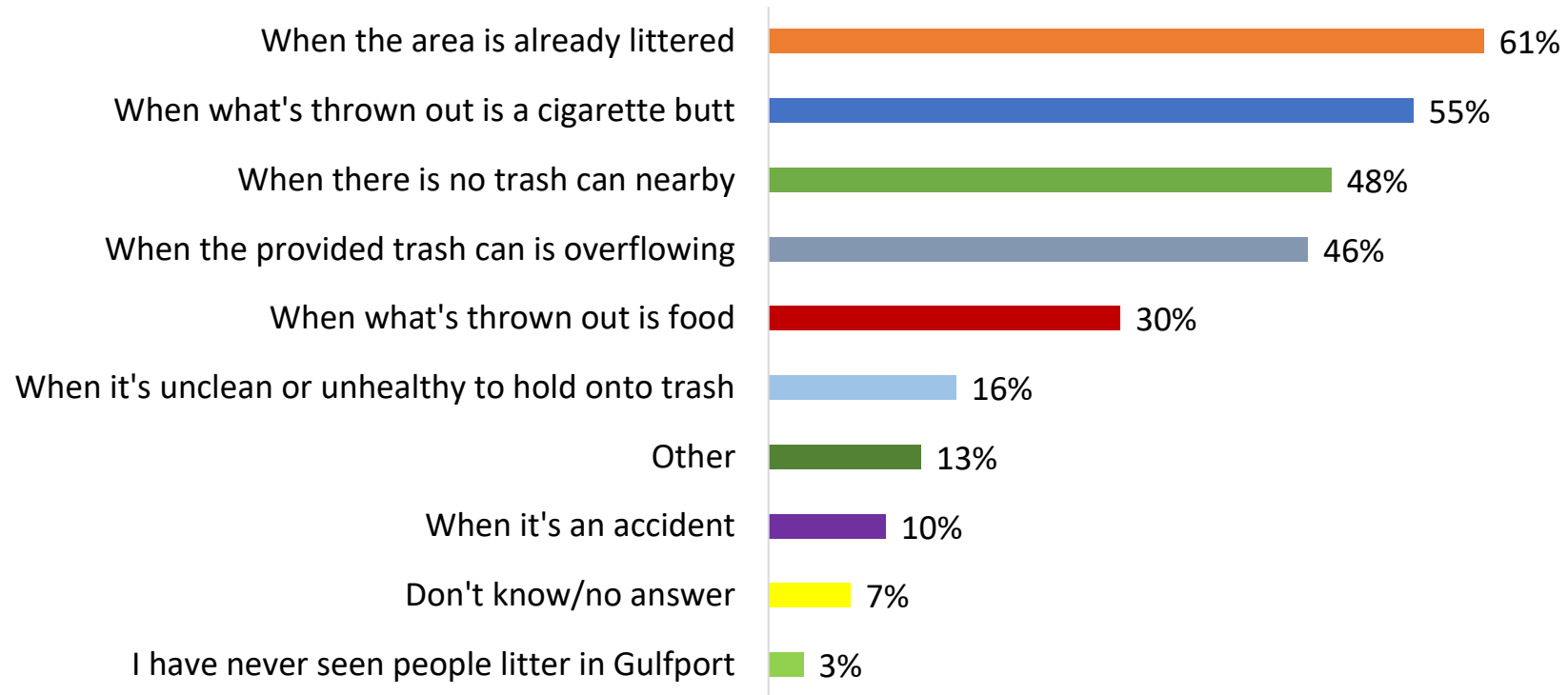
Q: In your observation, why do people litter in Gulfport? (choose all that apply)



Q: How frequently do you see people litter in Gulfport?



When People Observe Littering



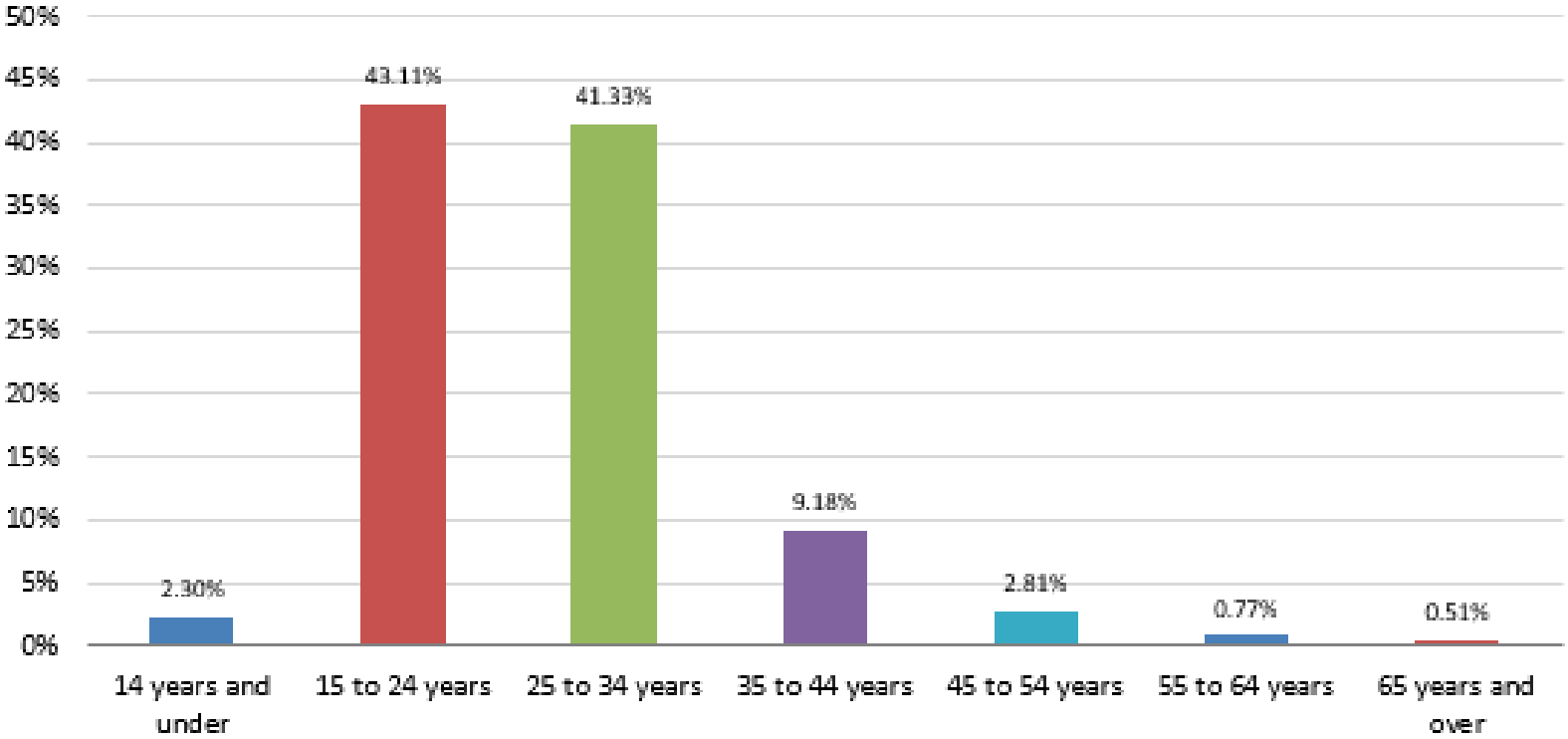


Who is littering?

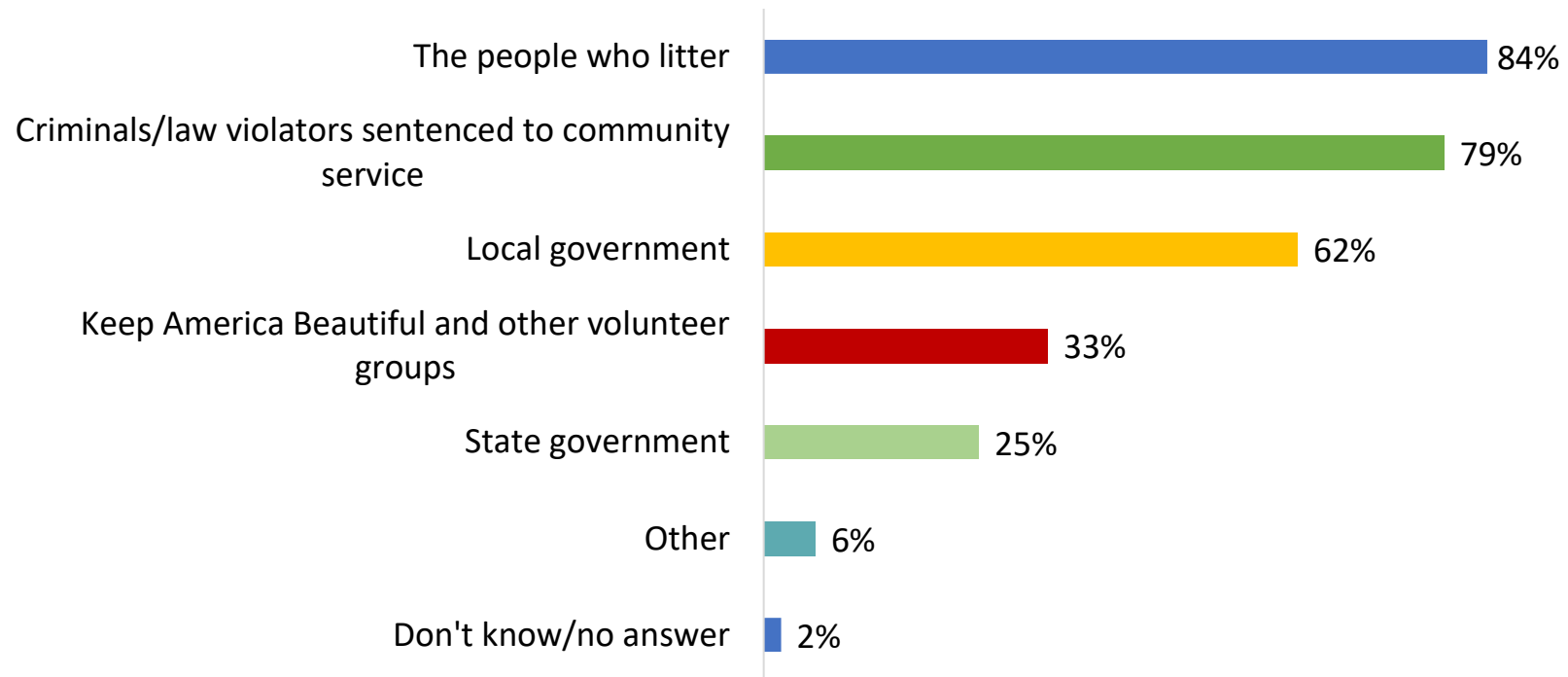
AND WHO SHOULD CLEAN IT UP

- 86% of survey respondents said they do not litter. This indicates that 100% of litter is caused by 14% of the people in Gulfport.
- Respondents said the people who are most likely to litter are age 34 and under (87%).
- Cleaning up litter should be done by the people who litter (84%), followed by criminals/law violators sentenced to community service (79%), and local government (62%).

Q: In your opinion, what age group is most likely to litter?



Q: In your opinion, who should be responsible for cleaning up litter in Gulfport? (choose all that apply)



The penalties of littering



- 93% of survey respondents do not know anyone, or know of anyone, who has been caught or fined for littering in Gulfport.
- 90% think it is unlikely that anyone littering in Gulfport will be caught or fined.
- 34% of respondents correctly chose the answer of \$500 for the amount a person in Gulfport can be fined for littering.



What would YOU do?

Survey respondents were asked, “If you saw someone littering, how likely would you be to do each of the following?”

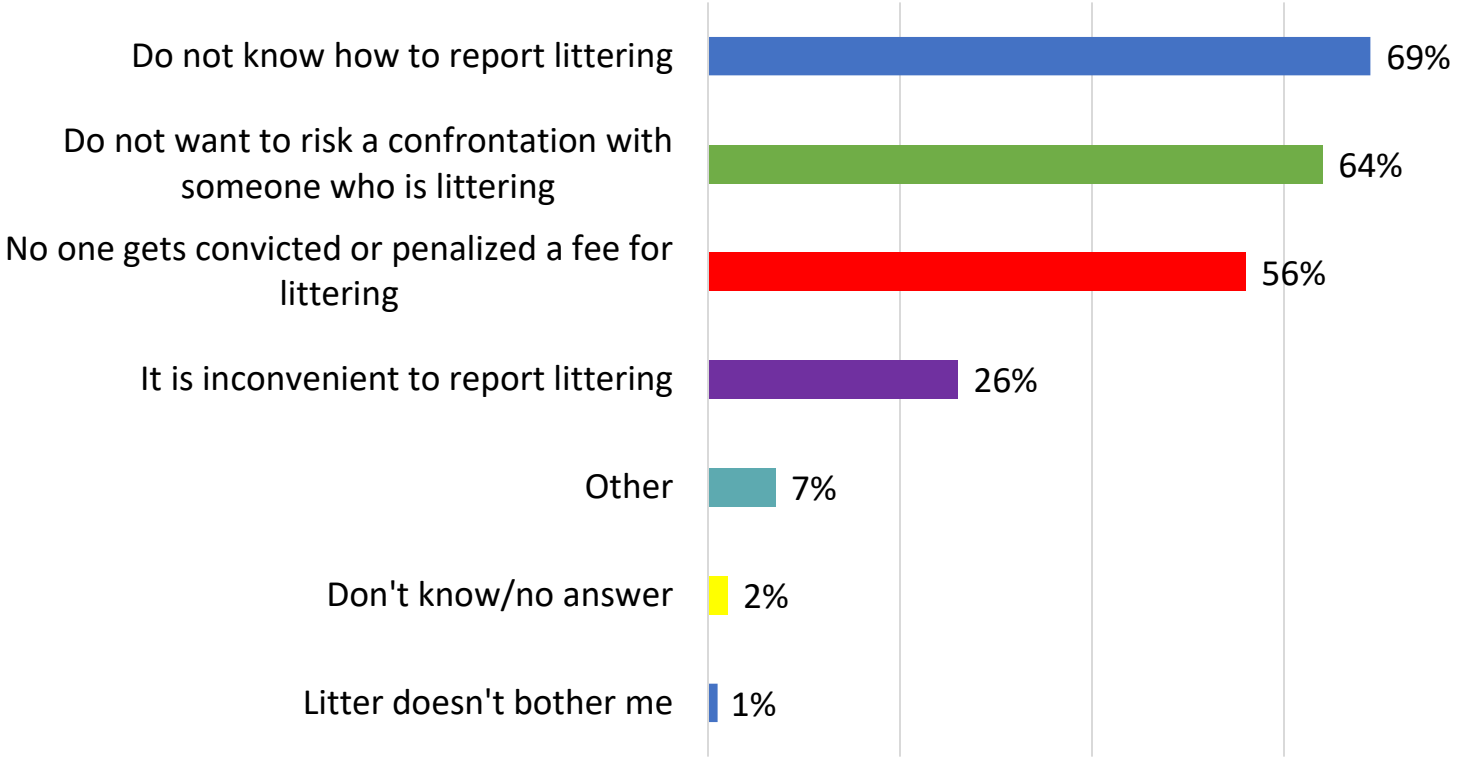
- Report the litterer to a hotline: Very likely-35%, somewhat likely-29%, not at all likely-26%, don’t know/no answer-10%
- Ask the litterer to pick it up: Very likely-20%, somewhat likely-30%, not at all likely-42%, don’t know/no answer-8%
- Do nothing: Very likely-14%, somewhat likely-29%, not at all likely-42%, don’t know/no answer-15%



Reporting litter

- The top three reasons why respondents believe people in Gulfport do not report littering are:
 - Do not know how to report littering-69%
 - Do not want to risk a confrontation with someone who is littering-64%
 - No one gets convicted or penalized a fee for littering-75%
- Respondents were asked if they personally know how to report littering in Gulfport. 82% said they do not know how to report littering.

Q: In your opinion, why do people in Gulfport not report littering? (choose all that apply)



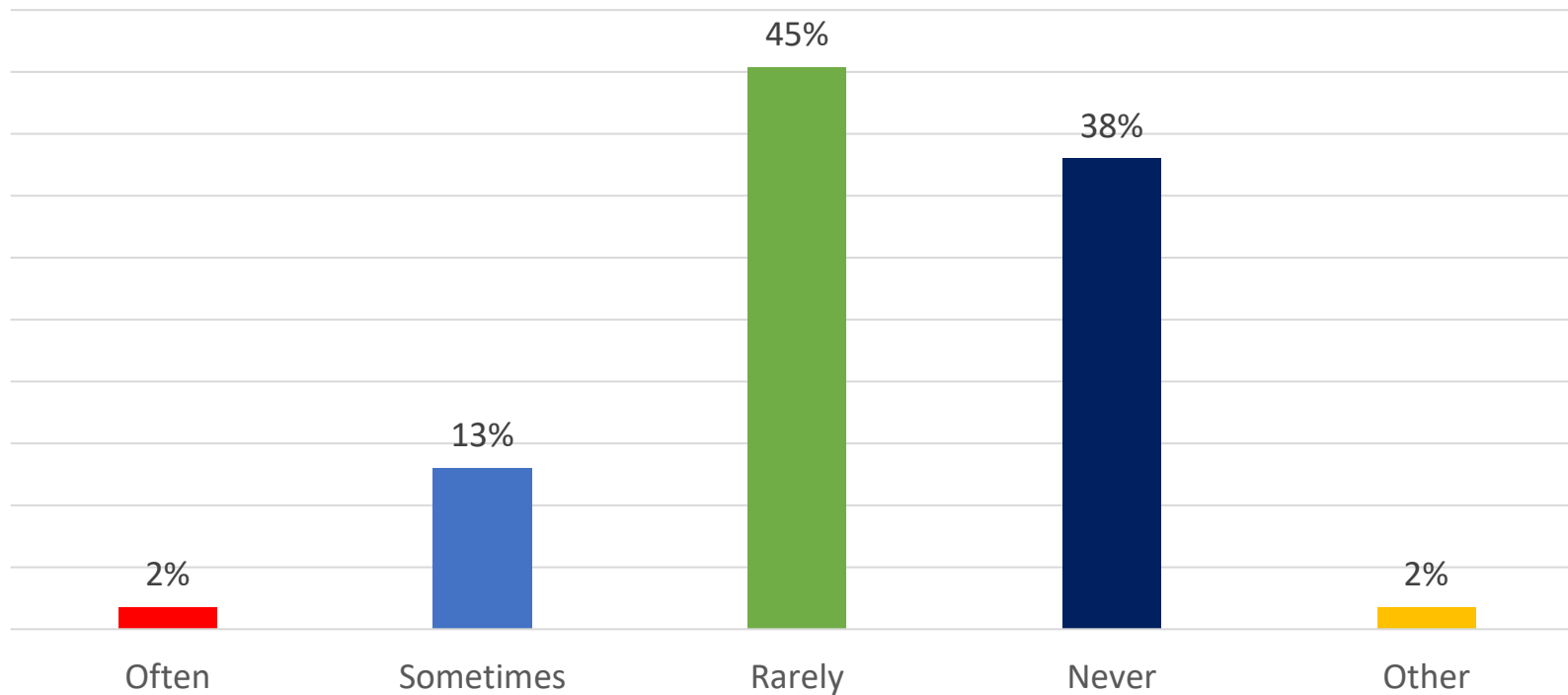


Have you heard?

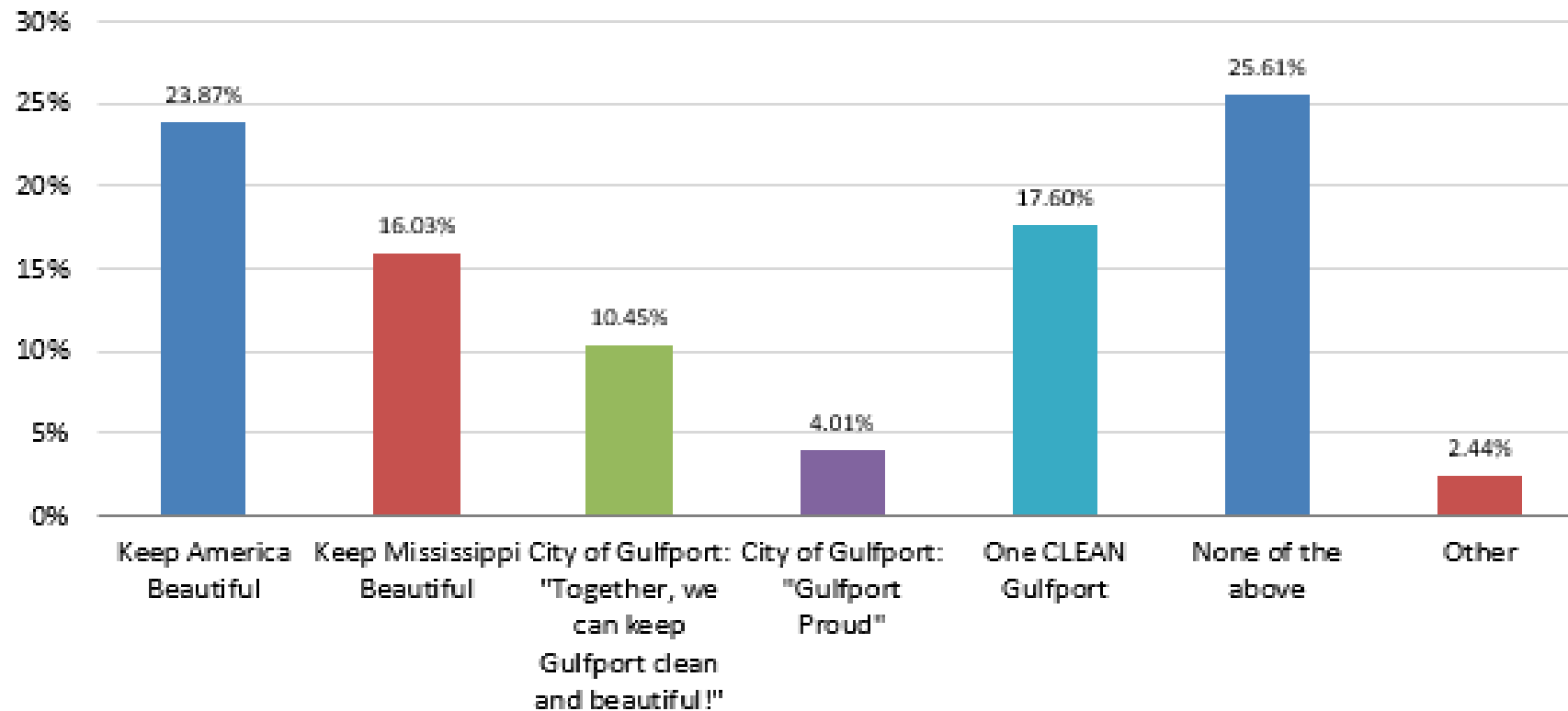
LITTER PREVENTION MESSAGING

- 67% of survey respondents said they have not seen, read or heard any litter prevention messages in Gulfport.
- When asked the frequency that they've seen, read or heard litter prevention messages in Gulfport, the responses were: 38%-never, 45%-rarely, 13%-sometimes, and 2%-often.

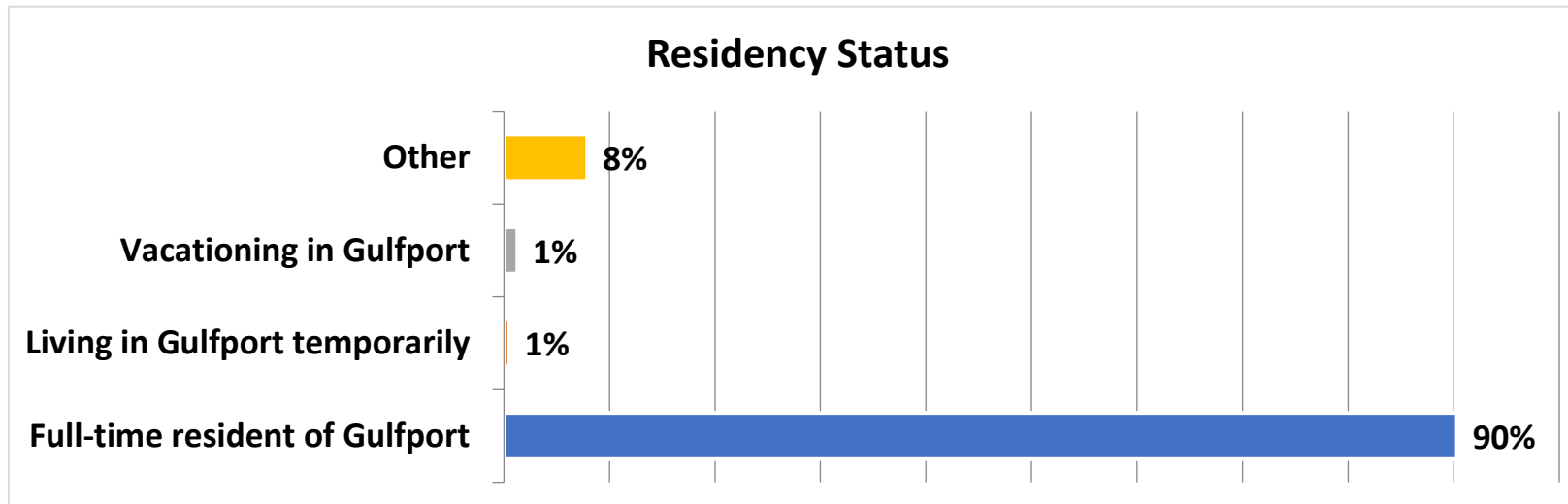
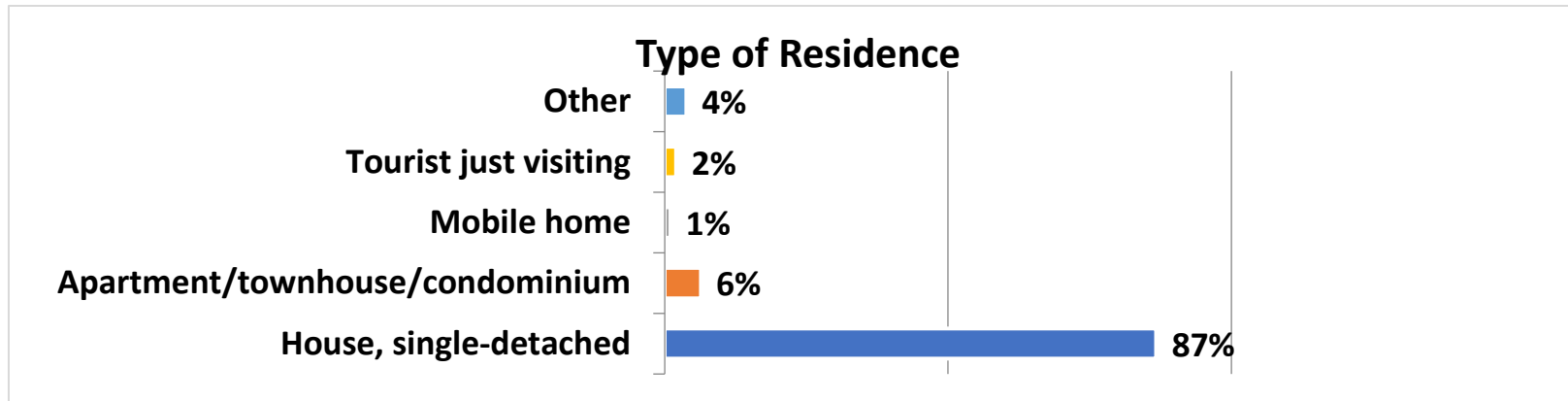
How frequently would you say that you see, read, or hear litter prevention messages in Gulfport? Would you say often, sometimes, rarely, or never?



Q: Which of these litter prevention messages have you seen, read, or heard? (choose all that apply)

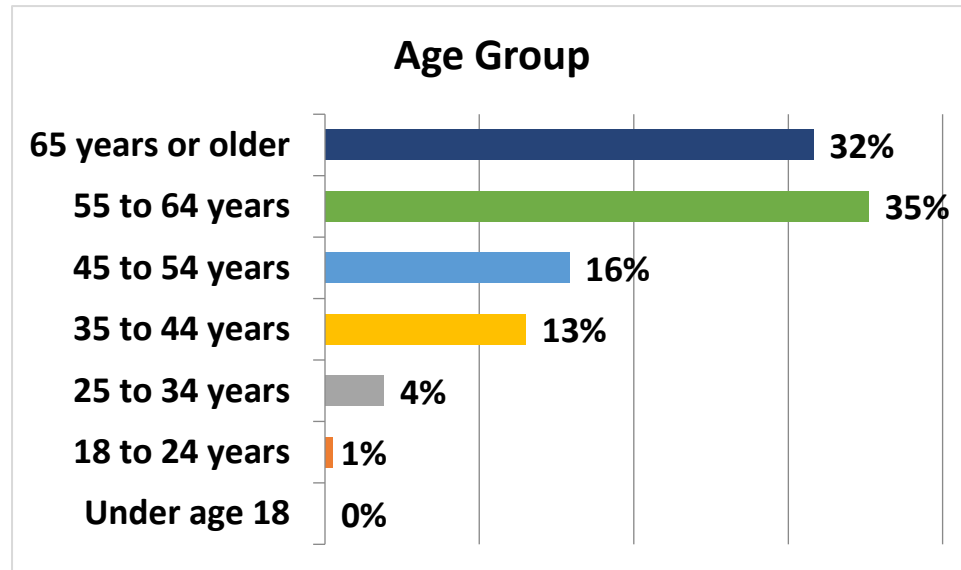


Respondent profiles

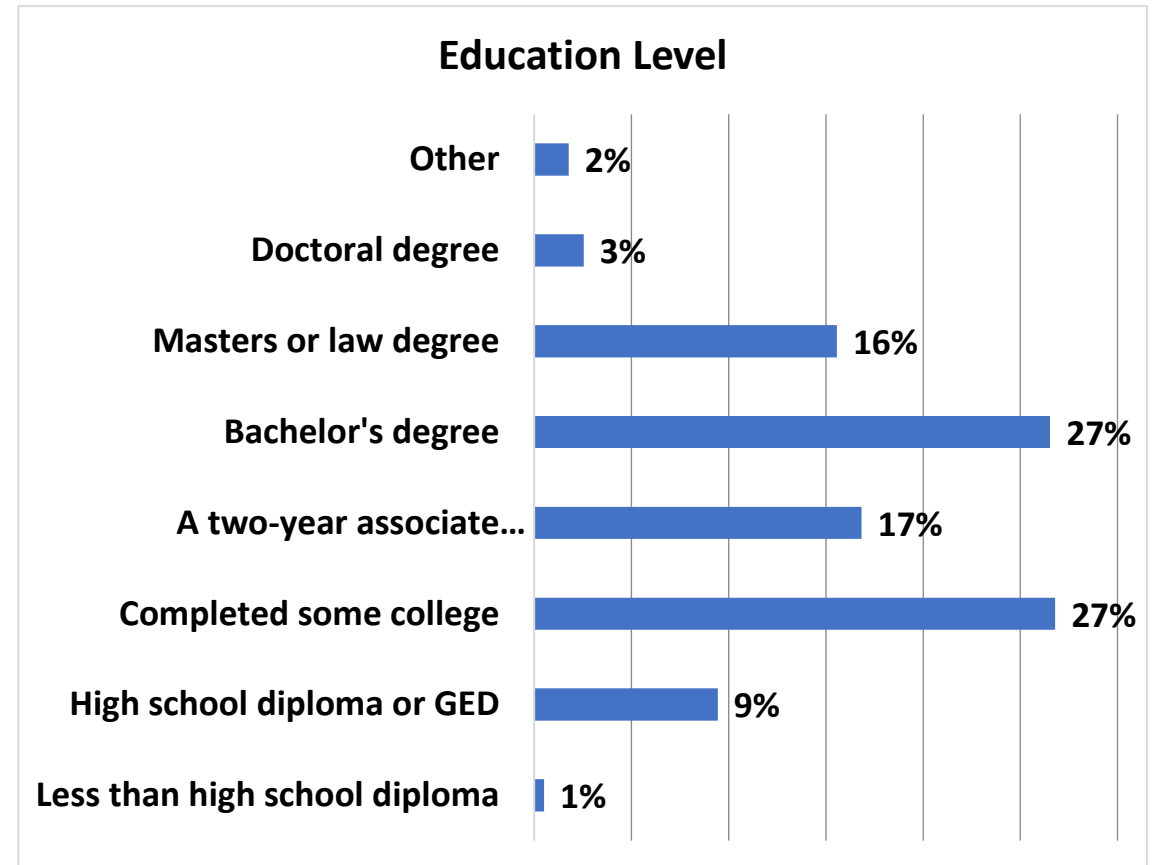


Own or Rent in Gulfport	
Own	84%
Rent	10%
Tourist just visiting	3%
Other	4%

Respondent profiles



Gender	
Female	59%
Male	38%
Prefer not to answer	3%
Other (specify)	0%





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