




M-NCPPC, Prince George's County
Department of Parks and Recreation

Information Seeking by Under-Represented Communities

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Contact Information

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Deliverables (link to zip file)

[Link to Google Drive download page.](#)

1. Online Survey

The online survey delivered on Open Town Hall and in-person, in English and Spanish

2. Data Collected from Survey Results

All the data collected are available as a clean CSV file

3. [Tableau Public Link](#)

Annotated visualizations on Tableau Public

Introduction

Prince George's County Parks and Recreation offers recreation programs, facilities, and services throughout the entire county to its residents and visitors. The county operates and maintains more than 27,000 acres of parkland for parks, picnic areas, athletic fields, historic sites, community centers, and recreation facilities. The county also seeks to preserve parts of this parkland as buffers and natural open space.

Parks and Recreation services include art and nature programs, fitness and sports programs, live performances, more than 90 miles of hiker/biker/equestrian trails, outdoor festivals, self-improvement classes, summer camps, teen and senior activities, and trips.

While the county offers these various services and programs, more initiatives are needed to understand how Prince George's County residents are using these programs and services, or even if they are using them. Understanding how members of underrepresented communities use these services will allow the Department to better tailor what they offer for the benefit of all its residents.

Through this project, the Parks and Recreation Department seeks to better understand how its residents, in particular how underrepresented communities, use its services and programs. The Department wants to know their information seeking behavior, whether different groups use the parks differently, and if certain parks features are being used more or less.

To gather this information, an online and in-person survey, developed by the team member authors, was administered at various events, beginning in September 2019 and finishing in December 2019.

The main point of contact throughout this project was Edith Michel, a certified Parks and Recreation Professional with more than 20 years of experience in local government within the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Other key Parks and Recreation staff who we worked with are Alex Teaff, the Community Outreach Manager and Kira Lewis, the Acting Chief of the Public Affairs & Marketing Division.

Methods

The original project scope included advocating for the importance of the upcoming 2020 Census but with the County's large undocumented population we felt that effort might deter County residents from filling out the survey and so it was removed from the scope.

Our first goal was to identify which events to attend, an important part of the data collection process. We chose three events: the American Indian Festival because it could provide data on Native Americans as well as other county residents, Oktoberfest because of its variety of attendees, and Councilmember Dannielle Glaros' Fall Festival, which is bilingual. The American Indian Festival was our most successful in terms of the number of surveys collected.

Next, we needed to develop a survey, and we did so with County parks and communication staff. In the 12-question survey, 11 asked about Parks and Recreation. The remaining question asked respondents to participate further in a focus group. The questions asked what services respondents used and why, would they recommend the Parks and Recreation, how they get park and program information, and their demographic information. Questions went through multiple drafts with Parks and Recreation before arriving at the final survey.

The online survey portals Open Town Hall / Google Forms delivered limited results with the number of responses far below ideal. In addition, the team was concerned that survey data from this method would not result in the ability to gain data with our projects desired communities. It is possible that they would have limited access to this method.

Collected data was aggregated in an easily transferable format—Google Sheets—a spreadsheet with each survey question as a field. After ensuring the data was clean and standardized, it was visualized using Tableau suite of data tools that allowed us to showcase data trends in an understandable way. After cleaning up the data we were able to create a story of nine primary visuals highlighting various findings.

Challenges in this project included a lack of proficiency in Spanish and French, which made collecting survey results more difficult. Conducting surveys also seemed to be a challenge, especially for the male team members. However, learning to allow personal conversations, made carrying out the surveys easier. There was a delay in getting the survey online at Open Town Hall, which was eventually resolved with the County's help. Finally, only three people were willing to participate in a focus group and so we decided not to pursue this, since it would skew the data.

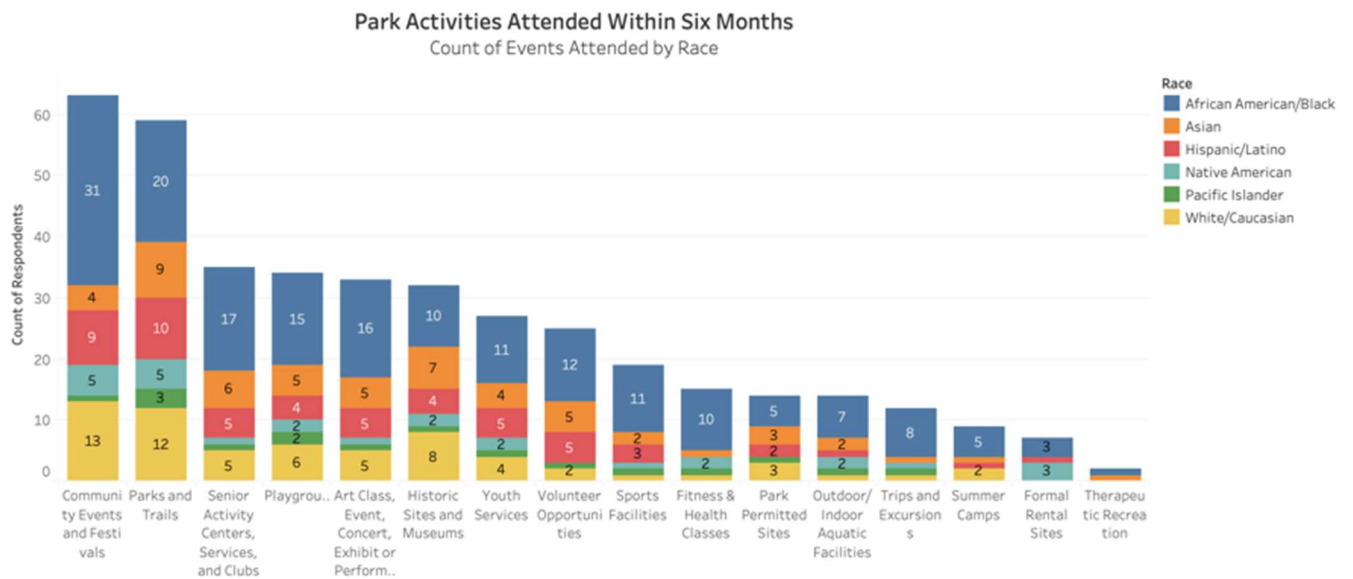
Deliverables and Findings

The project deliverables are:

1. **Survey Questionnaire:** A survey question distributed online through Open Town Hall, an online survey collection tool offered through the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation, Google Forms, and in-person at three Prince George's County community events.
 - a. **Purpose:** The survey was the primary means to gather data from County residents, particularly from the County's underrepresented communities.
2. **Survey results:** Data, and additionally, analysis of this data from the online and in-person survey results.
 - a. **Purpose:** This data is a resource that will allow Park and Recreation staff to reference when reviewing the data analysis. Additionally, data analysis will give staff insight on what the data means and implications of the findings.
3. **Report document:** This document explains how the Department's resources are used by County residents, particularly by members of underrepresented communities
 - a. **Purpose:** The final document is a resource that staff can use when explaining and justifying future initiatives to improve how the Department can better serve its residents.

Study Results

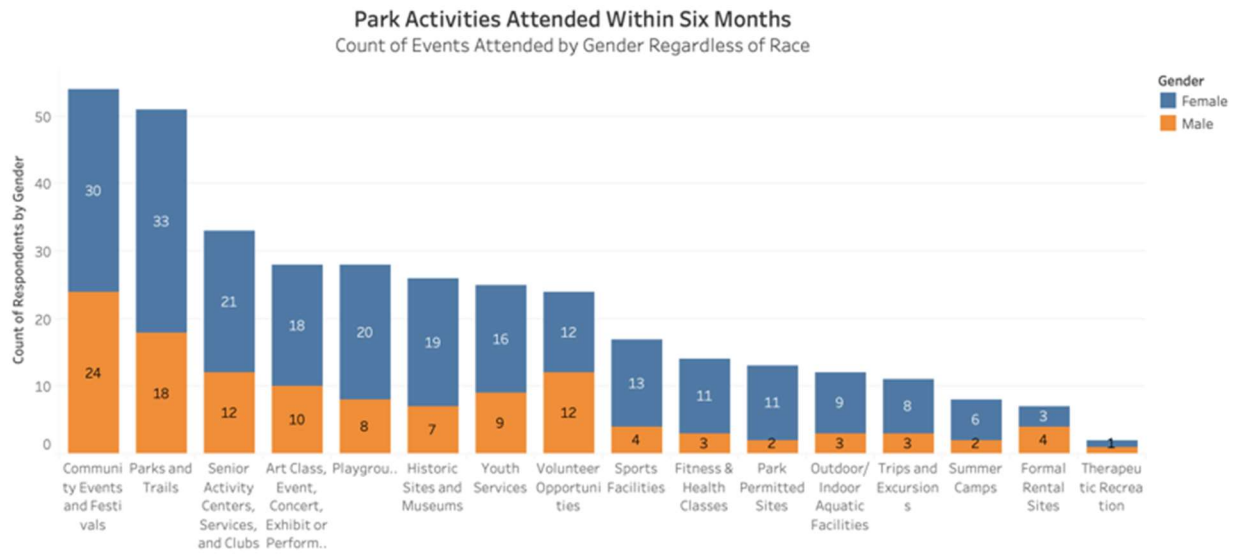
Finding 1: Events/Festivals and Parks/Trails are the Most Attended Programs



Distinct count of Indexing for each Check All Uses. Color shows details about Race. Details are shown for Check All Uses. The view is filtered on Check All Uses, which excludes Null.

Within the past six months, among all respondents, community events and festivals were the most attended services offered by the Prince George's County Parks and Recreation Department. They were most attended by African Americans/Black (31 respondents) and Native Americans (5 respondents). For Hispanics/Latinos, the top reported attended activities were Parks/Trails (9 respondents). At the other end of this spectrum, the least attended activity was Therapeutic Recreation Activities.

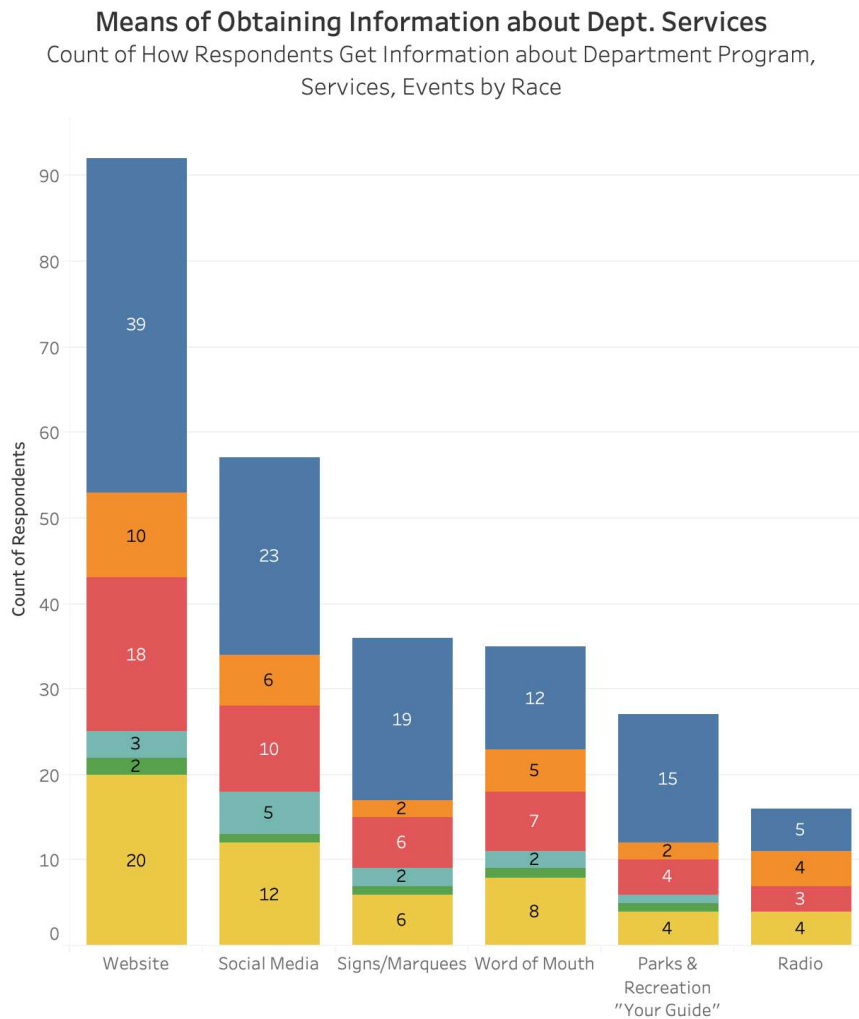
Finding 2: Events/festivals and parks/trails are the most attended services offered by gender



Distinct count of indexing for each Check All Uses. Color shows details about Gender. The view is filtered on Check All Uses, which excludes Null.

Both Community Events/Festivals and Parks/Trails are still well attended when the distinction is made by gender. Of the respondents, 30 females and 24 males attended community events/festivals within the past six months while 33 females and 18 males have reported using to parks/trails within the past six months. Because of this, community events and festivals are more popular among males while parks and trails are more popular among females.

Finding 3: Most users find out about Department services online



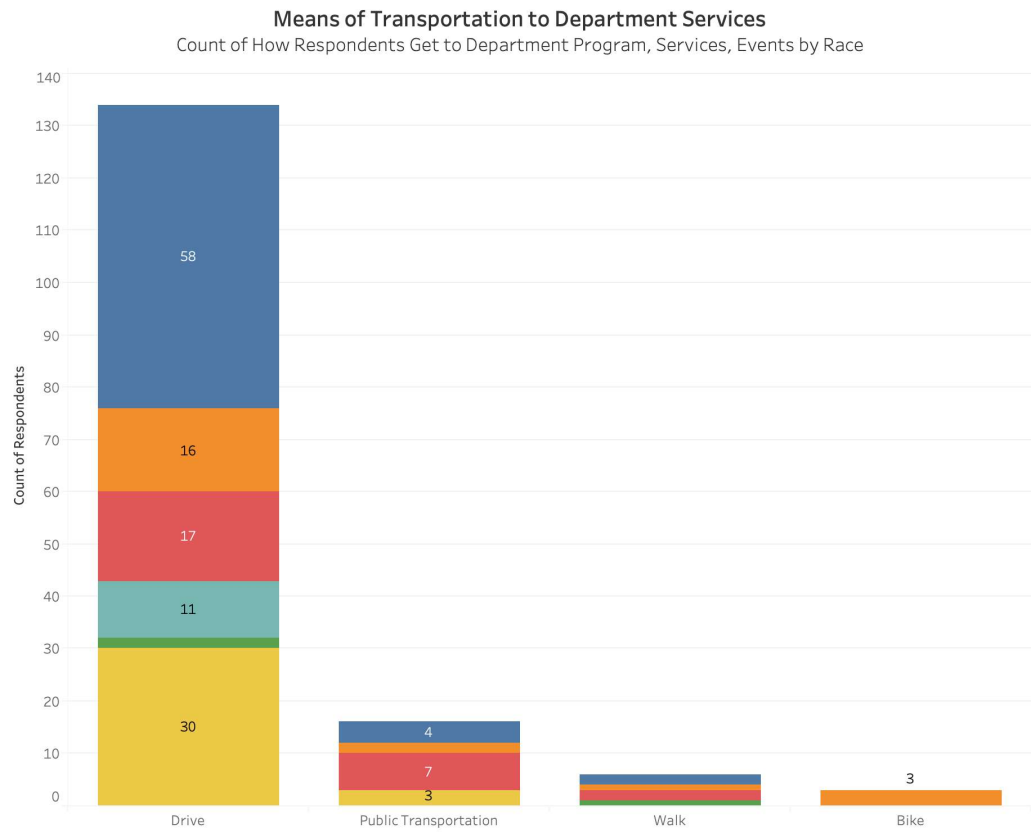
Of all the available options most respondents reported finding out about Department programs, services, and events through the internet. Of all respondents, 82 reported obtaining information through the Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation website and 50 reported obtaining this information through the Department's social media. More specifically, 39 African Americans and 18 Hispanics/Latinos reported obtaining information through the Department's website, while Native Americans mainly obtained information through social

media (5 respondents). The least effective way of obtaining information were through school, previously attended events, Prince George's County emails, and the Laurel newspaper; each with only 1 respondent identifying each outlet.

Finding 4: The Department website is the most popular outlet for information about programs among five racial groups

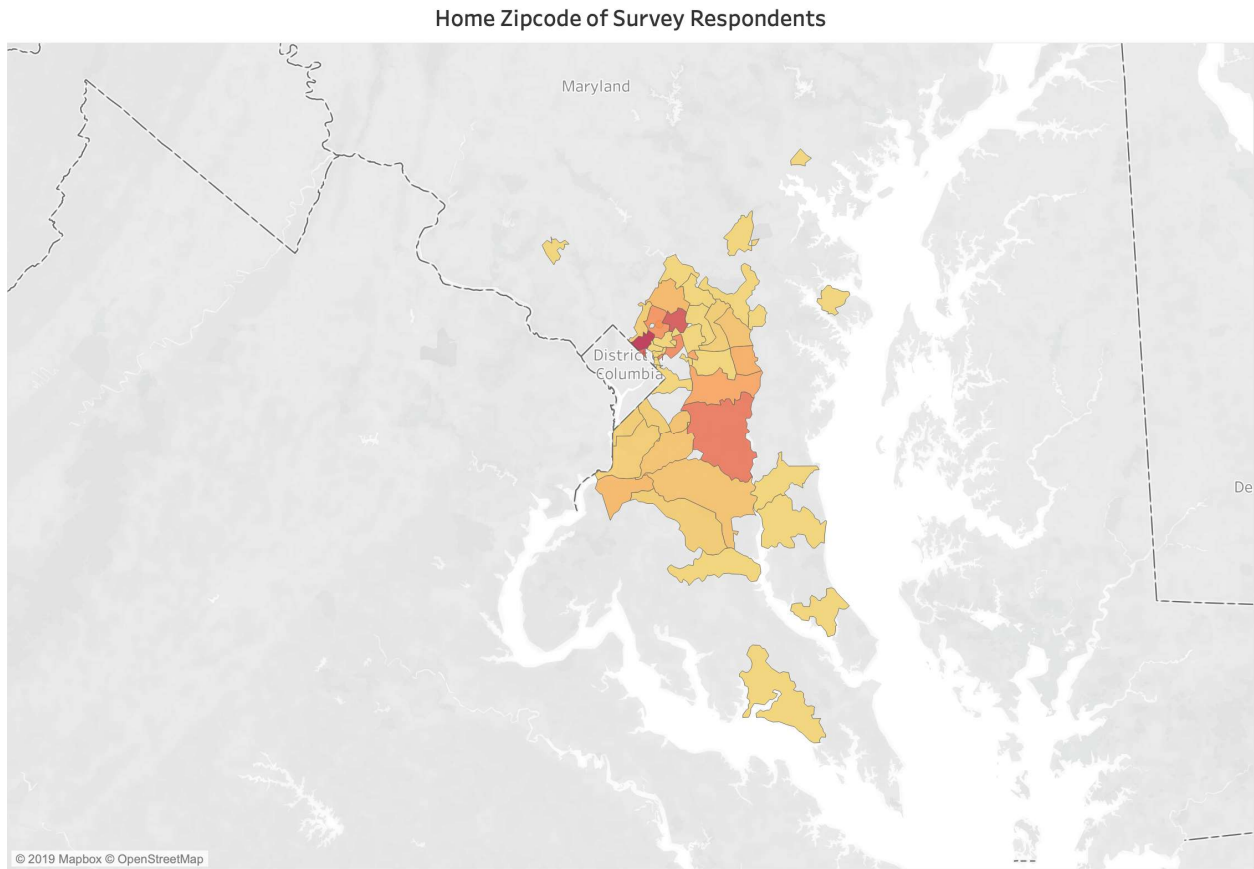
The Department website is the primary means of obtaining information about the Department's services for five racial groups– African Americans/Blacks (39 respondents), Asians (10 respondents), Hispanics/Latinos (18 respondents), Native Americans (2 respondents), Whites/Caucasians (20 respondents). On the other hand, for Native Americans, social media was the most popular outlet (5 respondents). Additionally, Pacific Islanders got most of their information through signs/marquees and word of mouth (2 respondents each).

Finding 5: Most respondents drive to services, but public transportation is also popular among Hispanic/Latinos



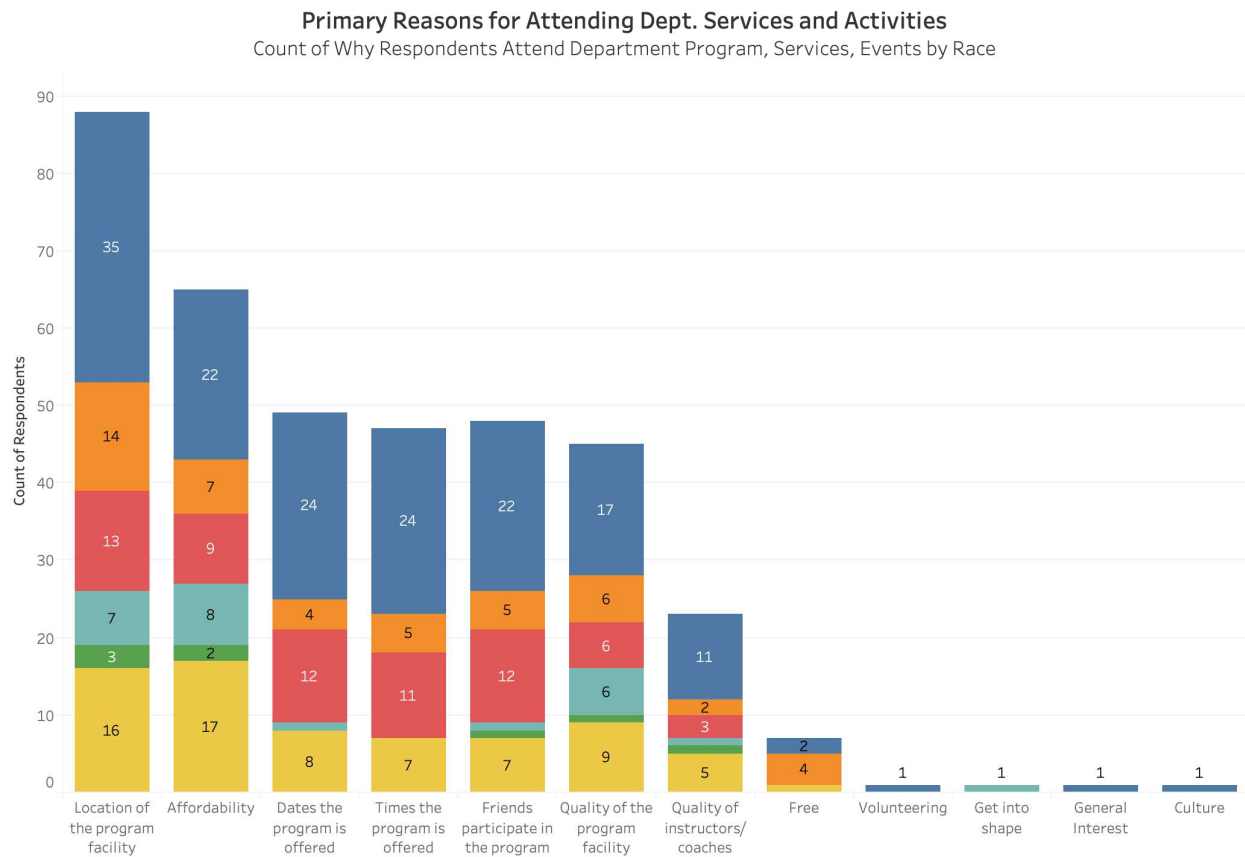
For African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and Native Americans, driving was the most popular means of transportation. Of the respondents, 58 African Americans, 17 Hispanics/Latinos, and 2 Native Americans reported to traveling by car to parks and events.

Finding 6: Most survey respondents were from central and northern Prince George's County



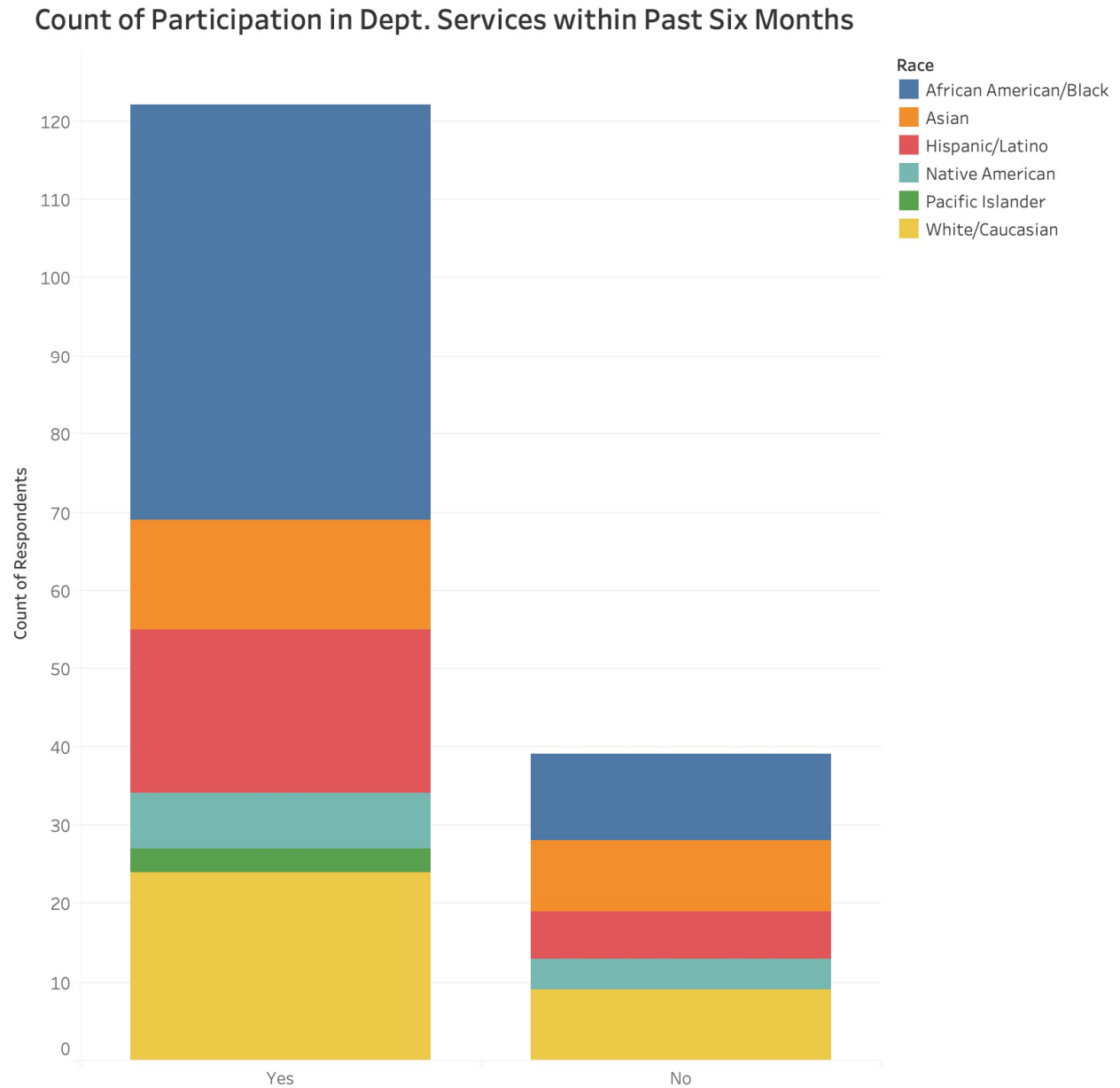
While survey respondents come from throughout the County, most come from the center and northern parts of the county.

Finding 7: Location is the most important factor in attending the services and activities



More than 80 respondents reported attending services and activities because of the program location. It was the most popular reason among African Americans (35 respondents), Hispanics (13 respondents), and Native Americans (3 respondents). The second most popular reason was affordability, as reported by more than 60 respondents, specifically 22 African American respondents, 9 Hispanics/Latinos respondents, and 2 Native American respondents.

Finding 8: Most respondents participated in Department services within the past 6 months



Most African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and Native Americans responded that they had participated in the Department’s services within the past six months, with 53 out of 64 African Americans, 21 out of 27 Hispanic/Latinos, and 7 out of 11 Native Americans responding with “yes.”

Recommendations & Future Work

Based on the findings, the team recommends that the Department continue to push more information onto their website and social media. It should also improve the site's user to allow more people to easily find information, especially under-represented people. The Department should also continue using Parks and Recreation "Your Guide" but limit outreach via radio.

Additionally, we recommend continuing popular community events/festivals and parks/trails, but also improving sports facilities to involve more people. Finally, the Department should consider the location of events/festivals because most people attend based on location and affordability.

Future work on this project, should include someone fluent in Spanish or French to go to these under-represented communities to learn their needs and concerns. Instead of trying to catch them at events, which can skew the results; data is needed from the whole community.

Additionally, only collecting survey data only at events could lead to an inaccurate representation of how services are used. It is essential to meet a wider group of county residents to get a more accurate representation of park and service use. Possible locations include houses of worship and Asian, Hispanic, and African supermarkets. Survey data could also be collected through door-to-door canvassing, to get the most accurate data.

Conclusion

Even from the survey's limited data, findings point toward the future success of Parks and Recreation initiatives linked with outreach on internet platforms. To further accommodate under-represented communities, more data is needed. We hope this will be one step of many in understanding and meeting the needs of these communities.