

Voter Messaging in the Time of COVID-19

Partnership with the Future of California Elections

Download survey fact sheet at: <https://cid.usc.edu/fact-sheets>

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- Luis Sanchez, Power California
- Stephanie Doute and Dora Rose, California League of Women Voters
- Jonathan Stein, California Common Cause
- Mike Sanchez, LA County Registrar

Research Approach

- Online survey - sample of 11,913 eligible voters (cvap)
- Allowed us to study CA's largest racial and ethnic groups, age and income
- Survey fielded from July 22-29
- Measure influence of voter messaging on likelihood of turnout
- Opinions on voting this November: concerns, information, voting method, assistance, timing of voting
- The full report will be released by the end of August

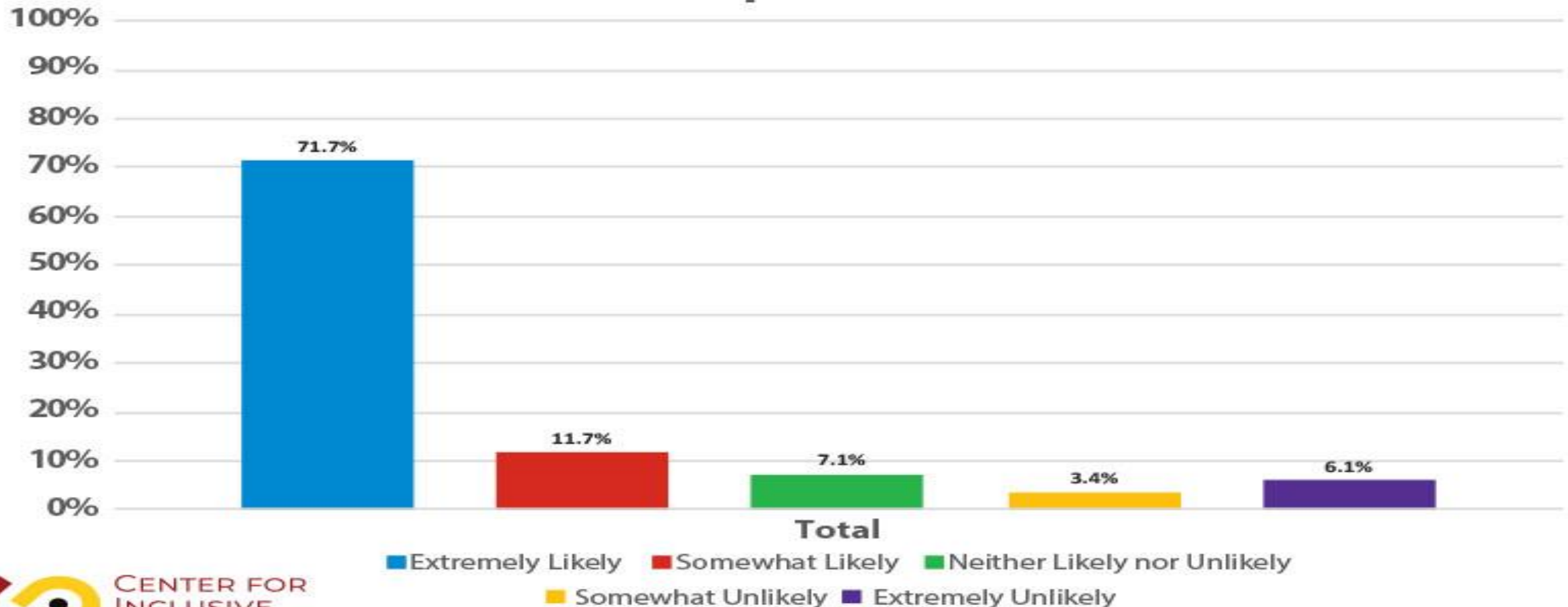
Tested Messages

We randomly divided our respondents into seven groups (including a control)

1. “Voting Options” message explaining voter’s option in the general election
2. “Voting Options” message only explaining vote-by-mail in the general election
3. “Voting Options” message with the addition of safety language
4. “Voting Options” message with the addition of community empowerment language
5. “Voting Options” message from trusted community messengers
6. “Voting Options” message with addition of safety message from trusted community messengers

Control Group

How Likely are you to vote in the November 2020 presidential election?

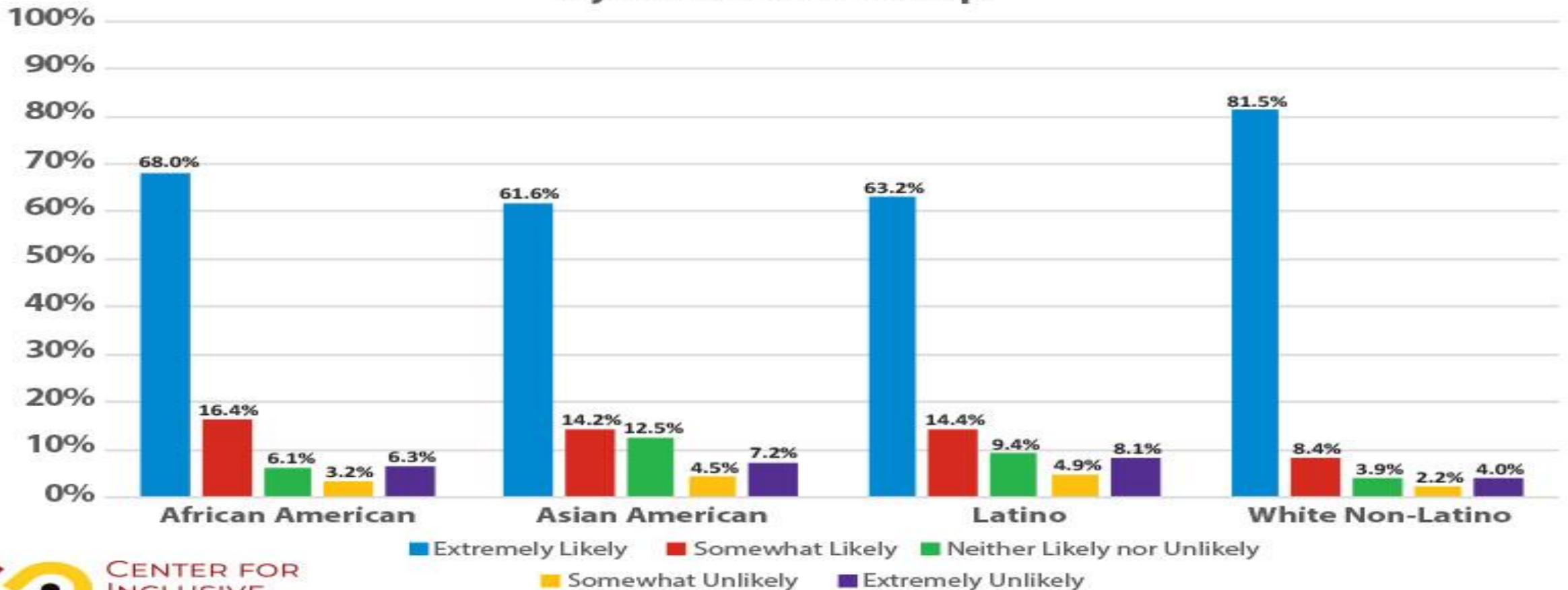


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Data source: CID Voter Messaging Survey

Control Group

**How Likely are you to vote in the
November 2020 presidential election?
By Race/Ethnic Group**



“Voting Options” Message

Voting is easier than ever before. You choose how and when to vote. Every registered voter in California will automatically get a ballot in the mail, even if they did not request one. You have three options to return your ballot. You can return it by mail, drop it off at a ballot drop-box or a voting location near you. You can also vote in-person at a voting location starting the weekend before Election Day and through Election Day.

“Voting Options” Message – with Safety

Vote Safe California. Voting is safer than ever before. You choose how and when to vote. Every registered voter in California will automatically get a ballot in the mail, even if they did not request one. You have three options to return your ballot. You can return it by mail, drop it off at a ballot drop box or a voting location near you. Voters who can vote-by-mail will help ensure safe physical distancing at voting locations You can also vote in person at a voting location starting the weekend before Election Day and through Election Day. Social distancing and health measures will be in place at voting locations.

“Voting Options” Message – with Community Empowerment

Voting is easier than ever before. You choose how and when to vote. Every registered voter in California will automatically get a ballot in the mail, even if they did not request one. You have three options to return your ballot. You can return it by mail, drop it off at a ballot drop box or a voting location near you. You can also vote in-person at a voting location starting the weekend before Election Day and through Election Day. The future is ours to build by voting together. We have work to do. The first step is to vote. We must vote for our families. Vote for our communities. Vote for our future.

“Voting Options” Message by Trusted Messenger

A message from California civil rights organizations:

Voting is easier than ever before. You choose how and when to vote. Every registered voter in California will automatically get a ballot in the mail, even if they did not request one. You have three options to return your ballot. You can return it by mail, drop it off at a ballot drop box or a voting location near you. You can also vote in-person at a voting location starting the weekend before Election Day and through Election Day.

“Voting Options” Message - with Safety by Trusted Messenger

A message from California civil rights organizations:

In order to protect each person’s right to vote and offer safe and secure ways to vote, every registered voter in California will automatically get a ballot in the mail, even if they did not request one. You have three options to return your ballot. You can return it by mail, drop it off at a ballot drop box or a voting location near you. You can also safely vote in-person at a voting location starting the weekend before Election Day and through Election Day.

“Voting Options” Message – VBM Only

Voting is easier than ever before. Every registered voter in the state will get a ballot in the mail, even if they did not request one. You have three options to return your ballot. You can return it by mail, drop it off at a ballot drop box or a voting location near you through 8pm on Election Day.

Messaging Impact

Of the six messages the survey tested...

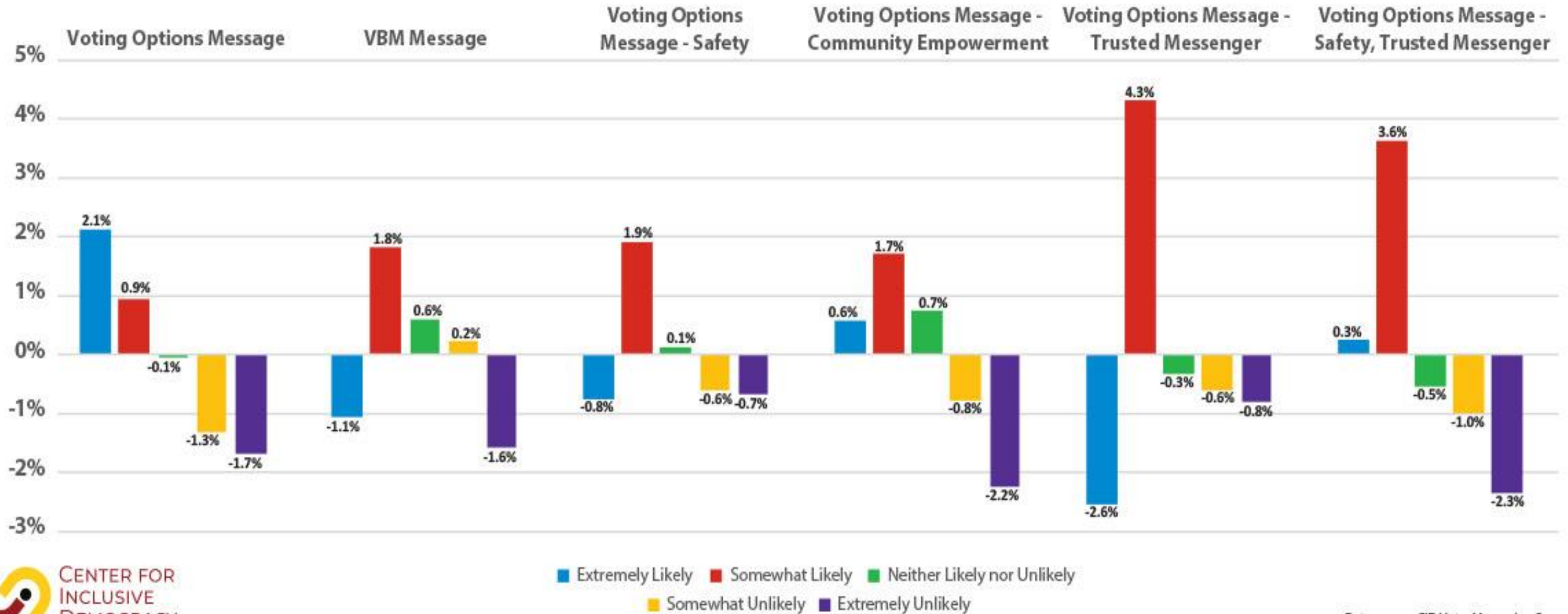
Those with the largest effect on the likelihood of voting are the core voting options message and the version that is accompanied by community empowerment language

The voting options message with added safety language did not have as large a positive impact on the likelihood of voting as these other messages

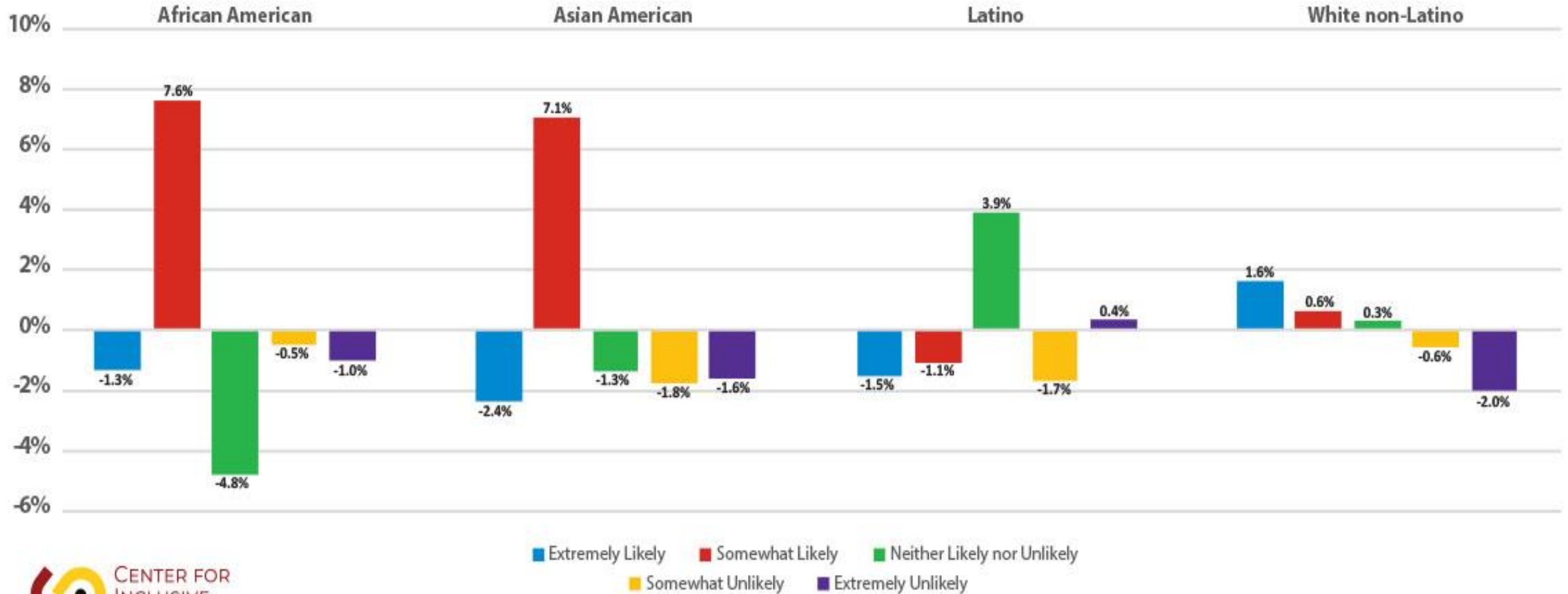
But the effect of the safety message was greater when delivered by a trusted messenger

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Differences in Likelihood of Voting by Type of Voter Message



Differences in Likelihood of Voting Voting Options Message by Race/Ethnic Group



Part Two:

Eligible Voter Concerns on Voting, Preferences on How and When to Vote, and Trusted Information Sources

Voter Concerns

Respondents could choose multiple options

31.2% said they have concerns when it comes to casting their ballot in the November 2020 presidential election

Of those who have concerns:

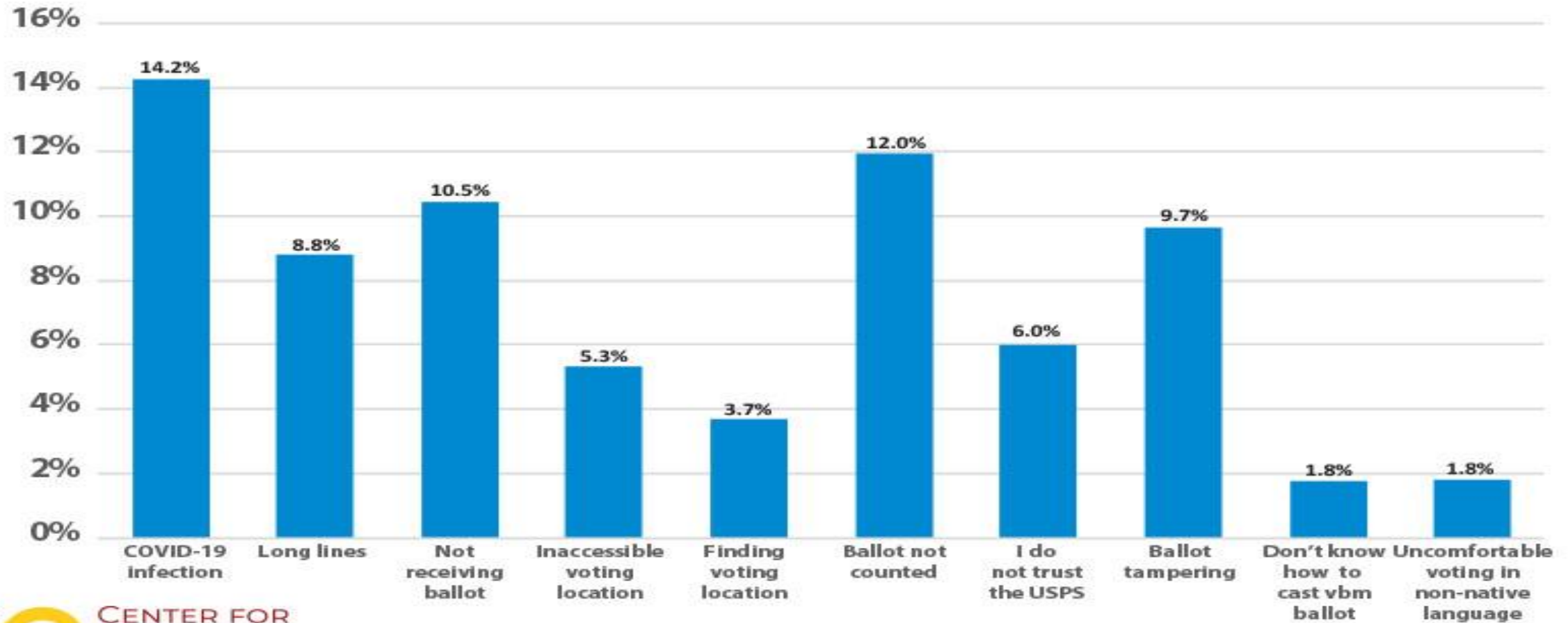
14.2% said they are concerned they would become infected with COVID-19 when casting their ballot

12.0% - concerned their ballot would not be counted accurately

10.5% - concerned they would not receive their ballot.

Note: Greater percentages of those who vote in person don't trust the USPS

What kinds of concerns do you have when it comes to casting your ballot in the November 2020 presidential election?



Voter Concerns by Group

Of those who have concerns:

30.0% of African-American eligible voters indicated they are concerned about contracting COVID-19 voting

13.4% – Asian Americans

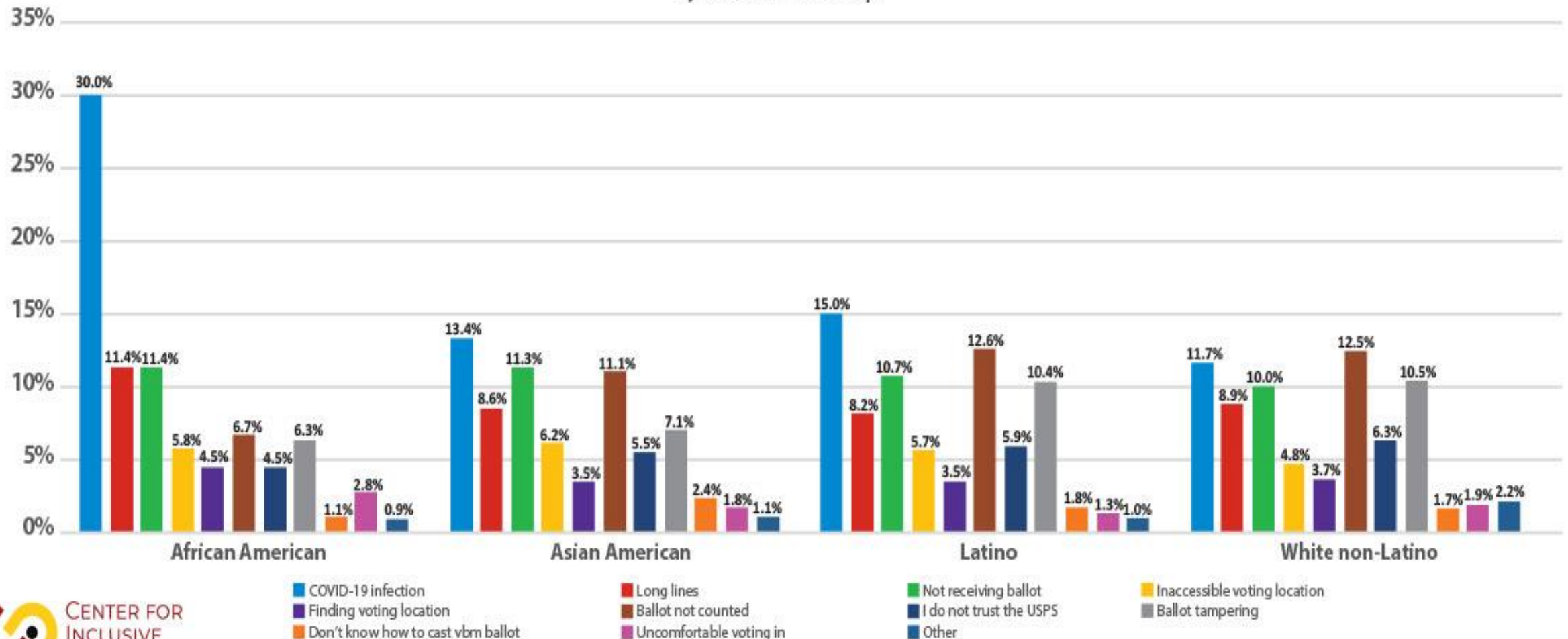
15.0% - Latinos

11.7% - white, non-Latinos

18.9% - age 18-24

What kinds of concerns do you have when it comes to casting your ballot in the November 2020 presidential election?

By Race/Ethnic Group



When do in-person voters plan on voting?

32.4% - Election Day

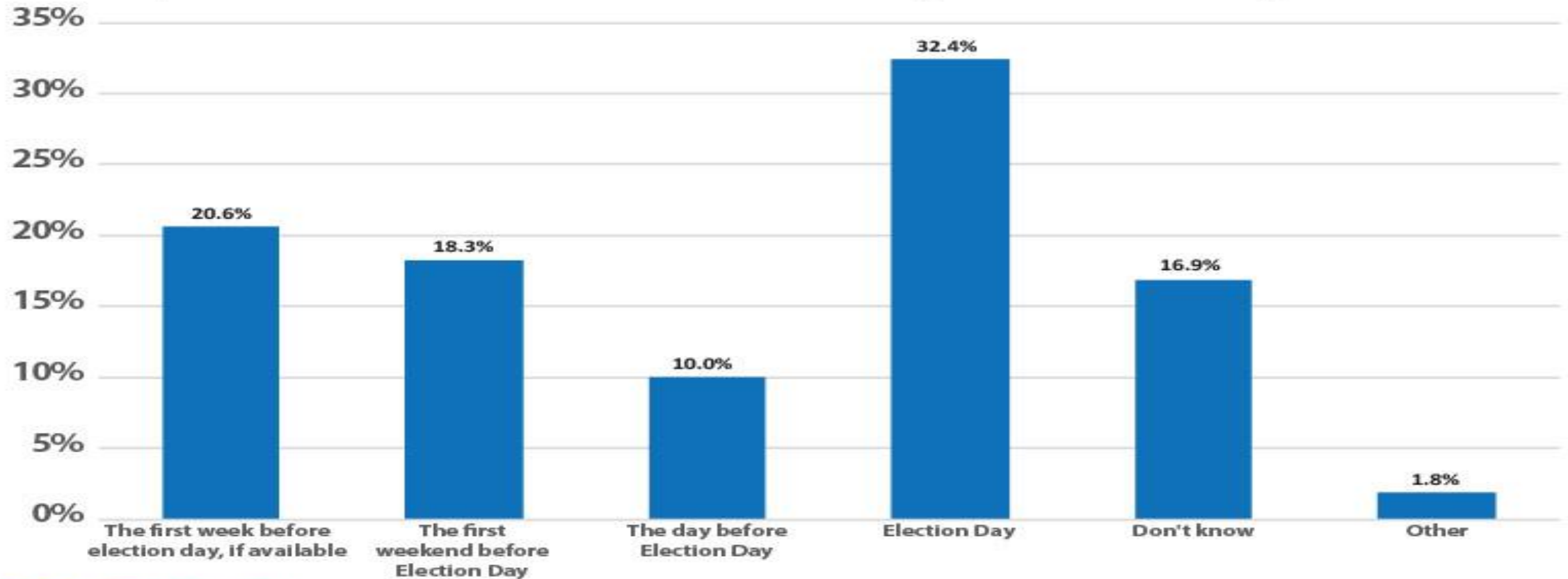
10.0% - day before Election Day

18.3% - weekend before Election Day

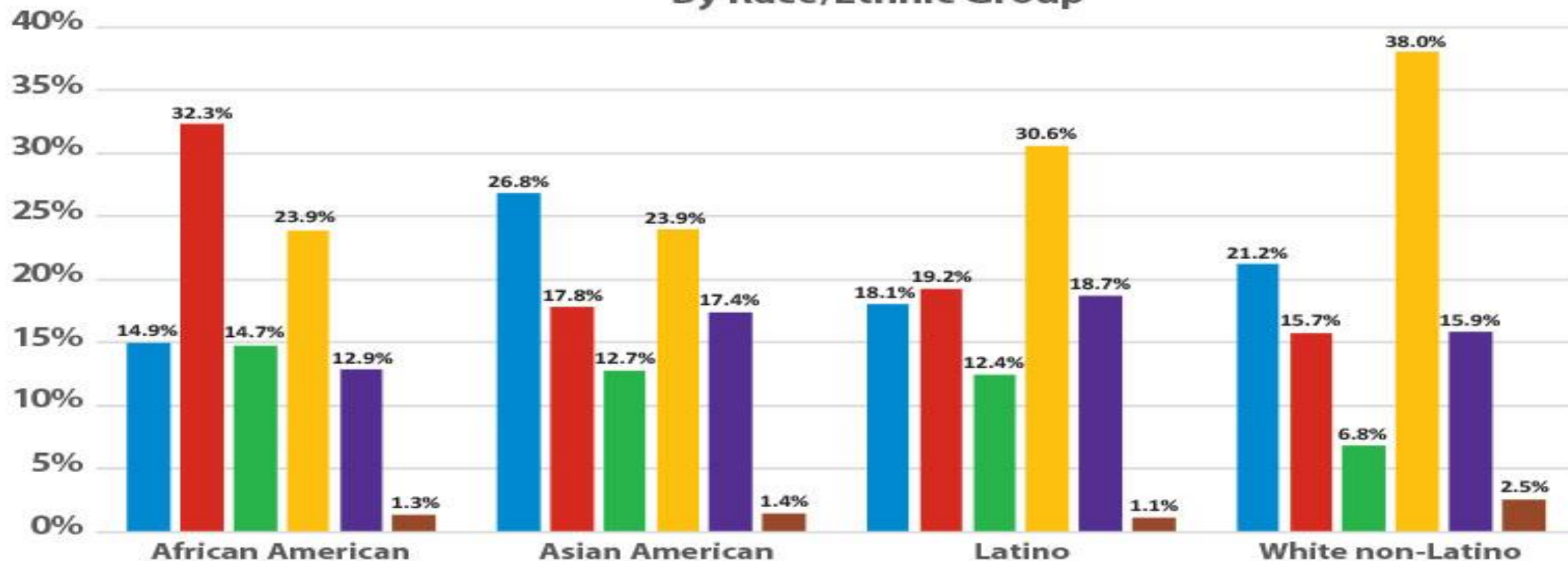
20.6% - week before election day, if available

Greater percentages of voters color and those age 18-24 prefer to vote before Election Day

If you vote in-person in the November 2020 presidential election, when are you most likely to vote?



If you vote in-person in the November 2020 presidential election, when are you most Likely to vote? By Race/Ethnic Group



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■ The first week before election day, if available ■ The first weekend before Election Day
■ The day before Election Day ■ Election Day ■ Don't know ■ Other

Data source: CID Voter Messaging Survey

Most Preferred Way to Cast a Ballot

41.8% - mailing in their ballot

30.8% - vote in person whether on Election Day or three days before Election Day

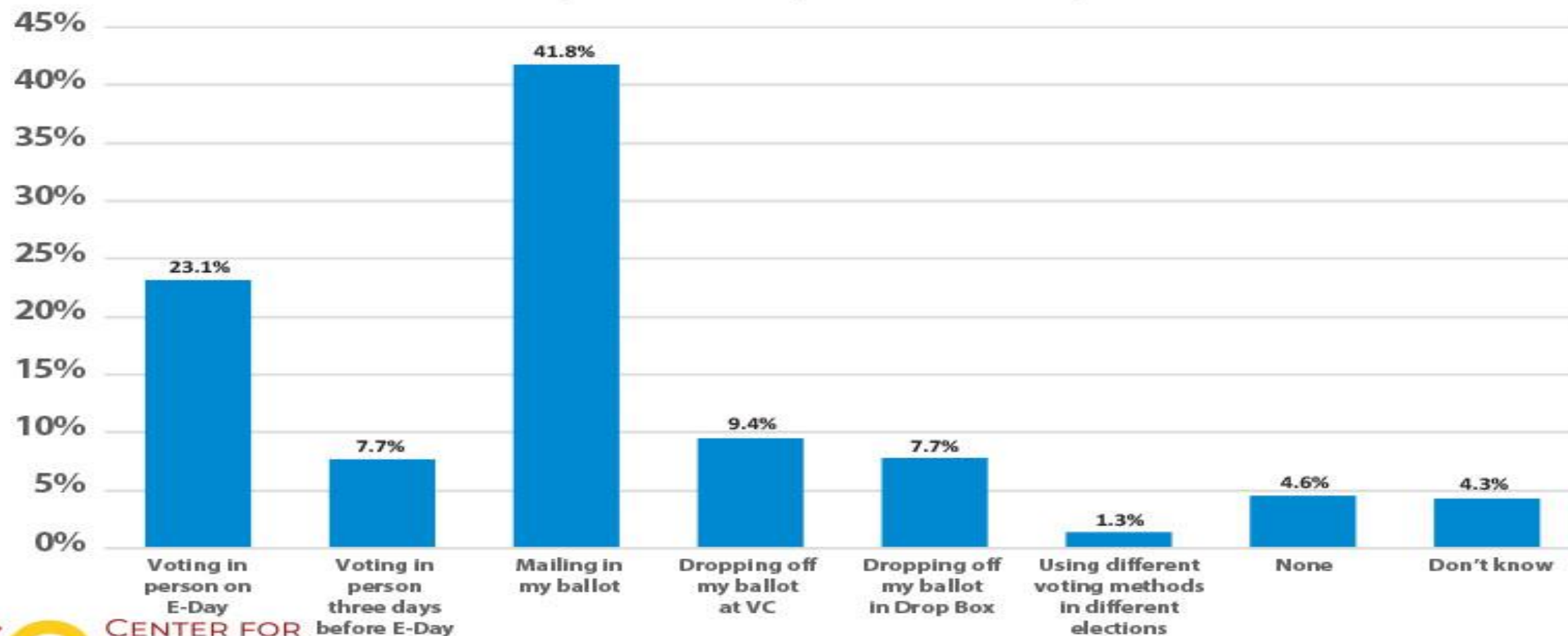
9.4% prefer drop of their ballot at a voting location

Greater percentage of African-Americans prefer to vote in person

Lower percentages of African-Americans and Latinos prefer to mail in their ballot

Lower percentage of 18-24 age group prefer to mail in their ballot

Thinking ahead to the November 2020 presidential election, what would be your most preferred way to cast a ballot?

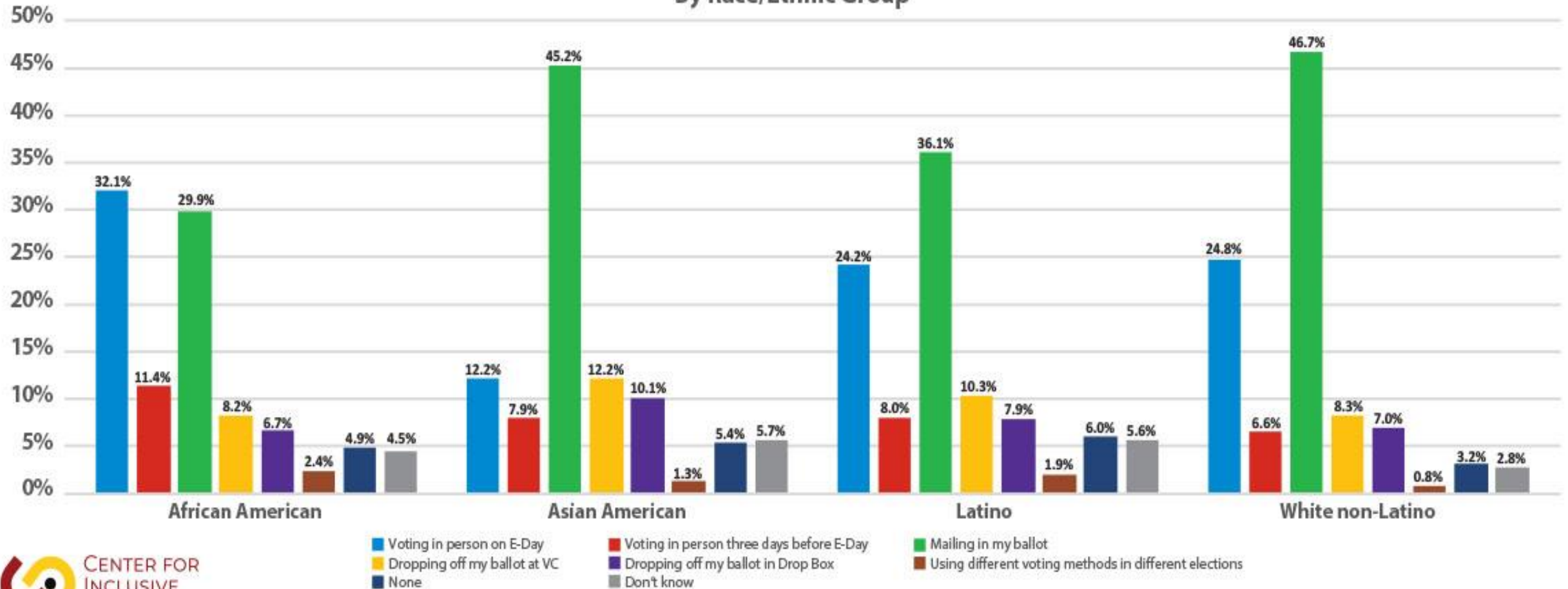


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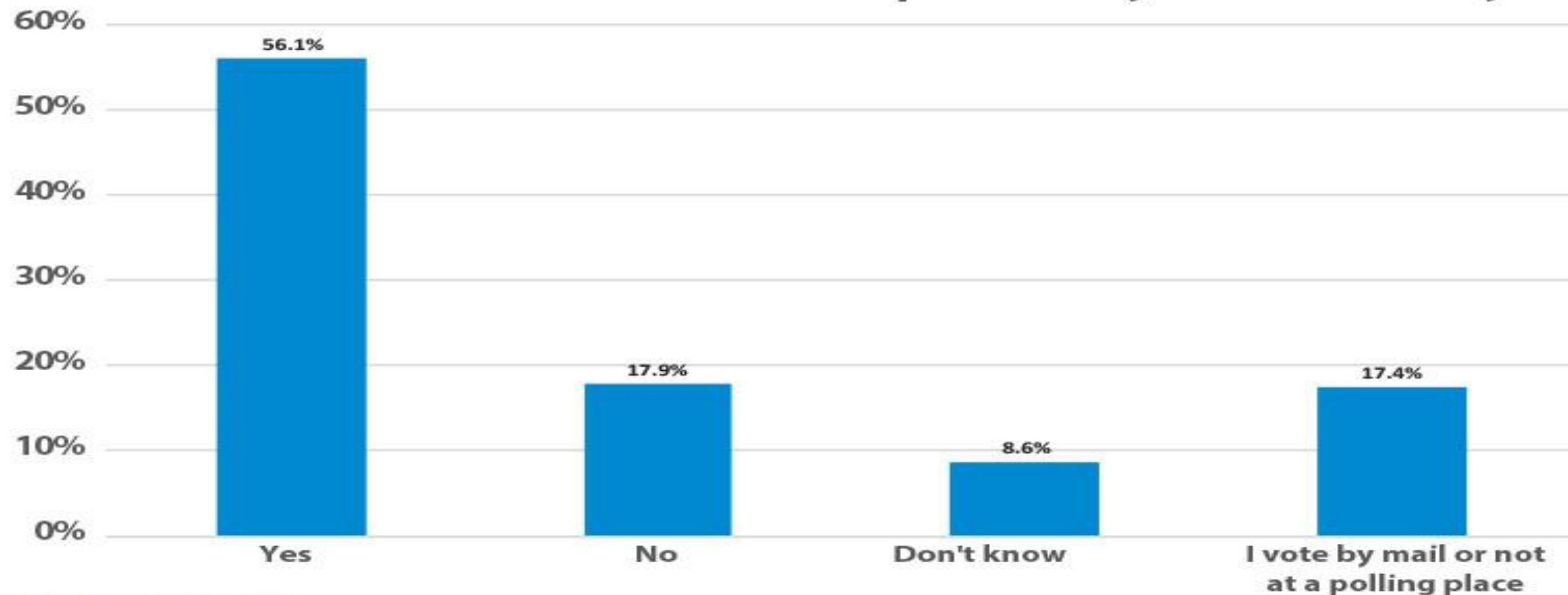
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Thinking ahead to the November 2020 presidential election, what would be your most preferred way to cast a ballot?

By Race/Ethnic Group

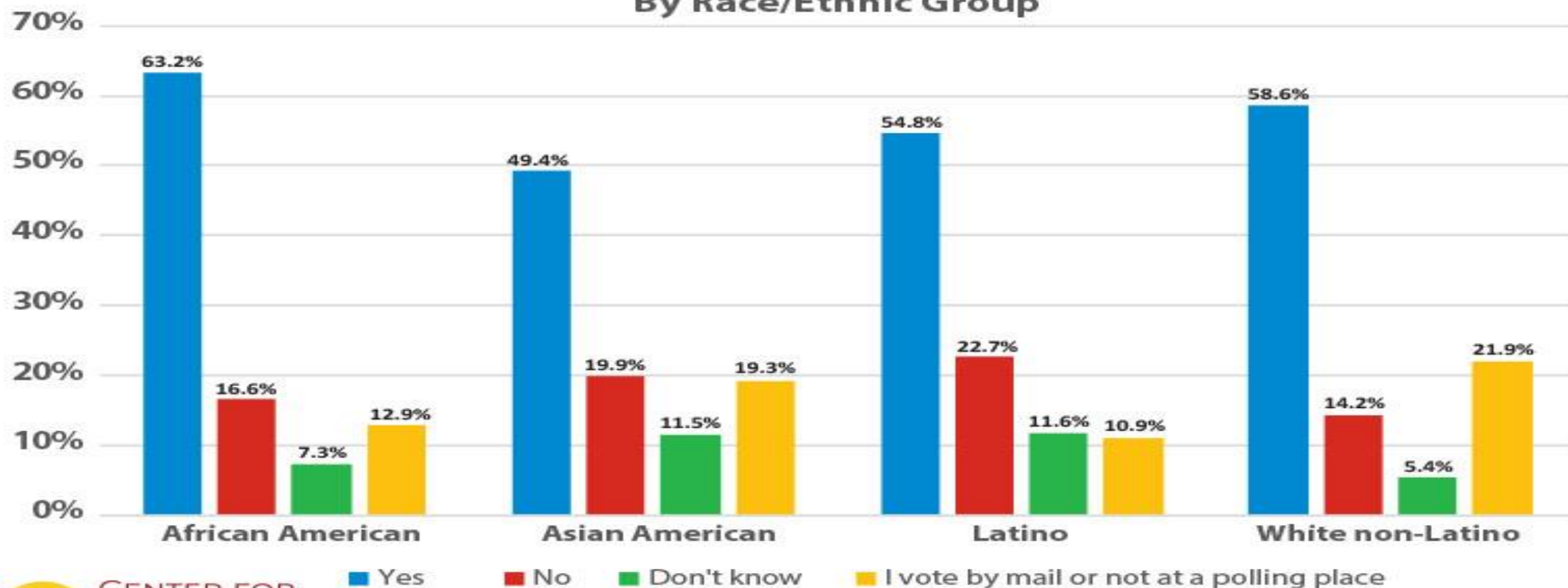


Do you happen to know where to find information on the locations of where to vote in-person in your community?

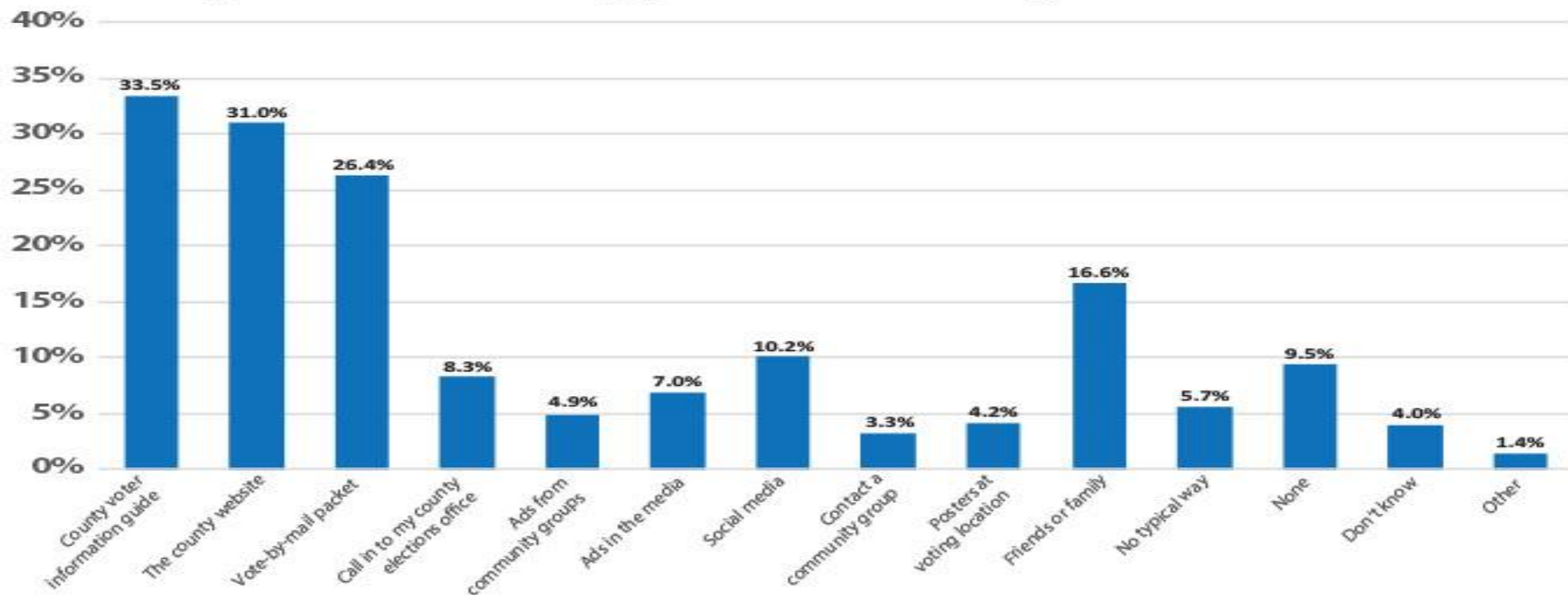


Do you happen to know where to find information on the locations of where to vote in-person in your community?

By Race/Ethnic Group



Where do you typically turn to for help with questions about registration or voting procedures, or important election dates?

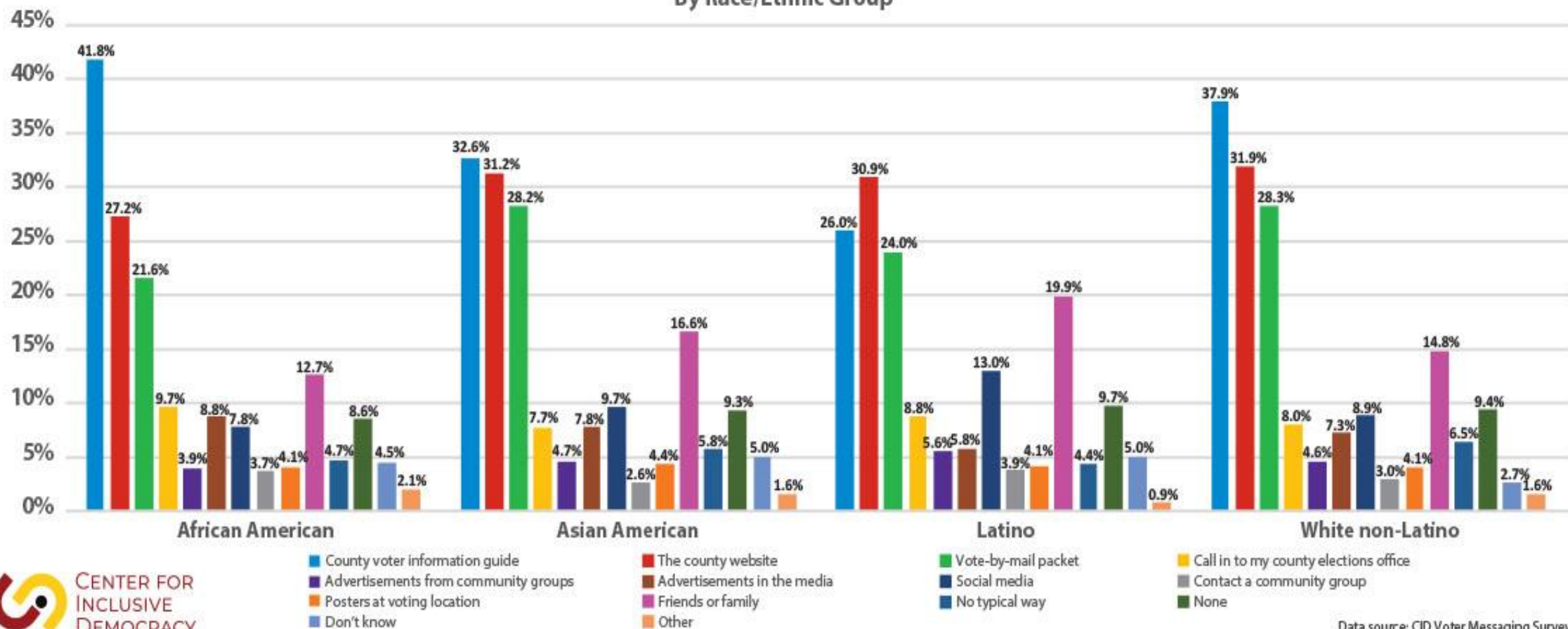


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Where do you typically turn to for help with questions about registration or voting procedures, or important election dates?

By Race/Ethnic Group



Questions?

Thank you!

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