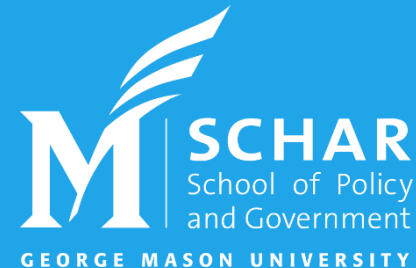


# What Kind of Incentives Do Voters Want?

## Exploring the Impact of Offering Different Incentive Options in a Multi-Wave Election Survey

*Methodological Brief*



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**2019 AAPOR**  
Annual Conference  
Toronto, ON

May 18, 2019



# Introduction

- Survey respondents have varied preferences for incentive formats.
- This research explores differences among respondents who choose different incentives of:
  - an Amazon gift code vs.
  - mailed cash incentive vs.
  - no incentive.
- And if this choice is associated with future survey participation.



# Methods

- The *Post-Schar School Battleground District Poll* was conducted to understand the opinions and considerations of voters living in 69 battleground congressional districts.
- Voter Registration Sample (RBS) pulled from 69 competitive districts (sample vendor: L2).
- A 1-page postal mailing and a 1-page mailed reminder sent to households – recruit to web or telephone IVR.
- 4,440 recruited participants (7% RR).
- Two “pulse polls” conducted prior to election day (46% & 49% cooperation rates).
- Election day poll had 2,699 participants (61% CR).



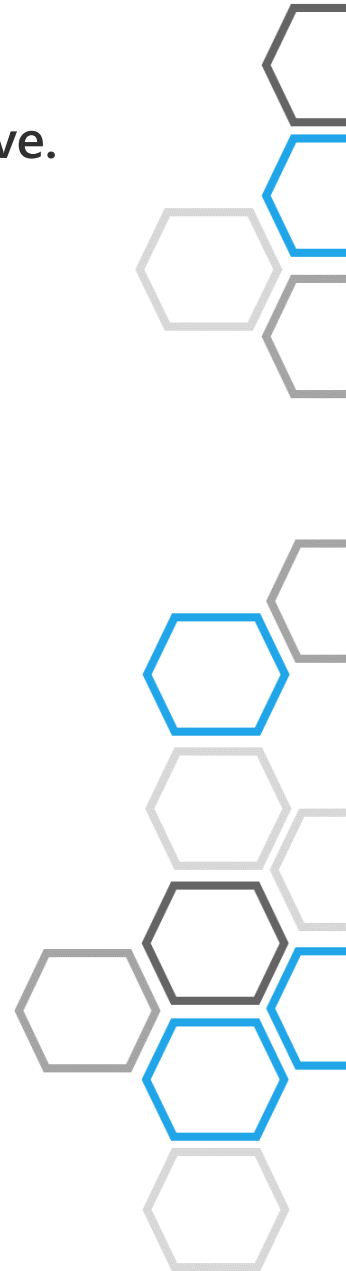
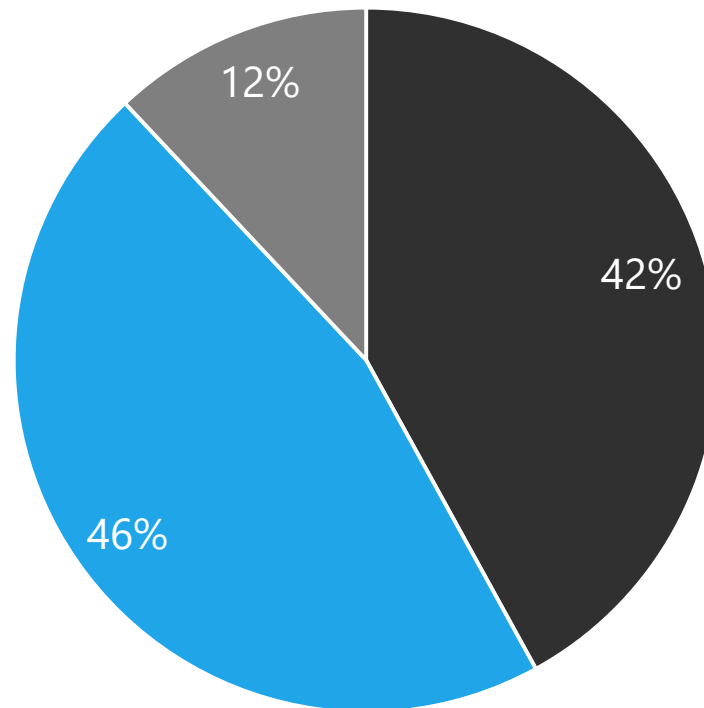
# Incentives

- Web participants offered:
  - \$5 for taking the first survey and agreeing to participate
  - \$2 after taking each of the two “pulse polls”
  - \$5 after taking the election day survey.
- During the registration survey, web participants given the options of:
  - \$5 Amazon gift code delivered immediately by email,
  - \$5 cash mailed to them within 2-3 weeks, or
  - to not accept any incentive.
- This choice was applied to all future surveys in the sequence.
- All incentives were “post incentives,” delivered to participants after completion of the requested survey.

Most participants selected the mailed cash option, followed closely by those selecting the Amazon gift code. Only a small segment chose to receive no incentive.

% of Participants

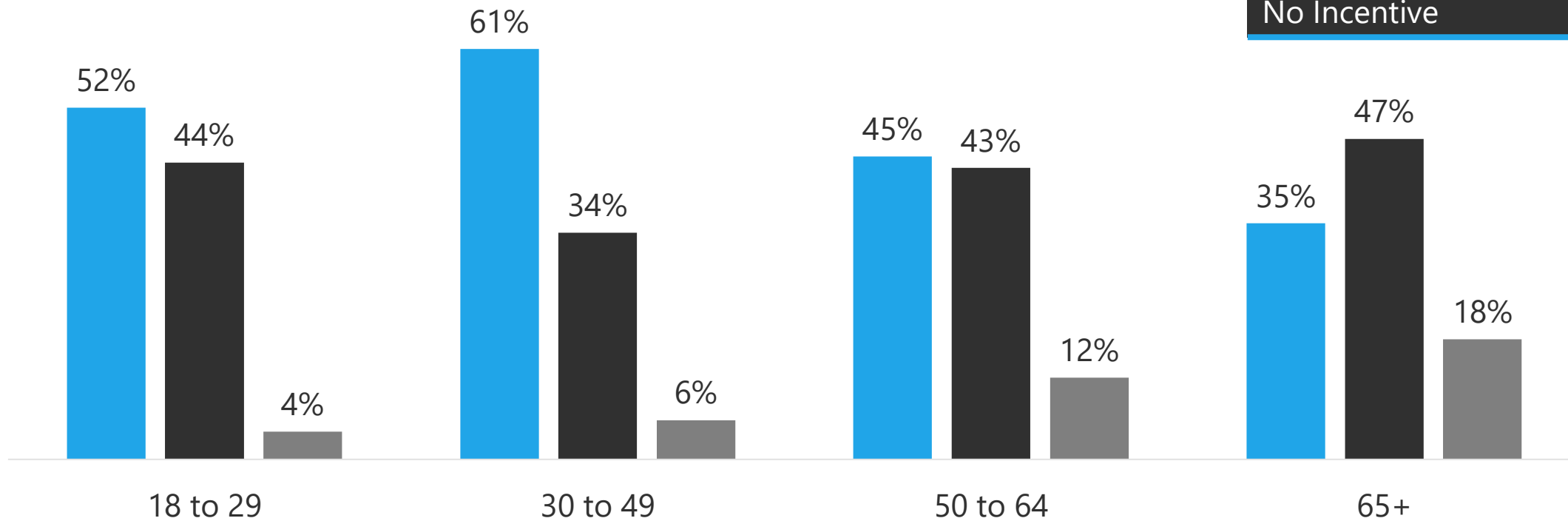
■ Amazon Gift Code ■ Cash Mailed ■ No Incentive



Younger people were more likely than others to select the Amazon gift code.  
Older people were much more likely than others to select no incentive.

### Incentive Choice by Age

■ Amazon Gift Code   ■ Cash Mailed   ■ No Incentive

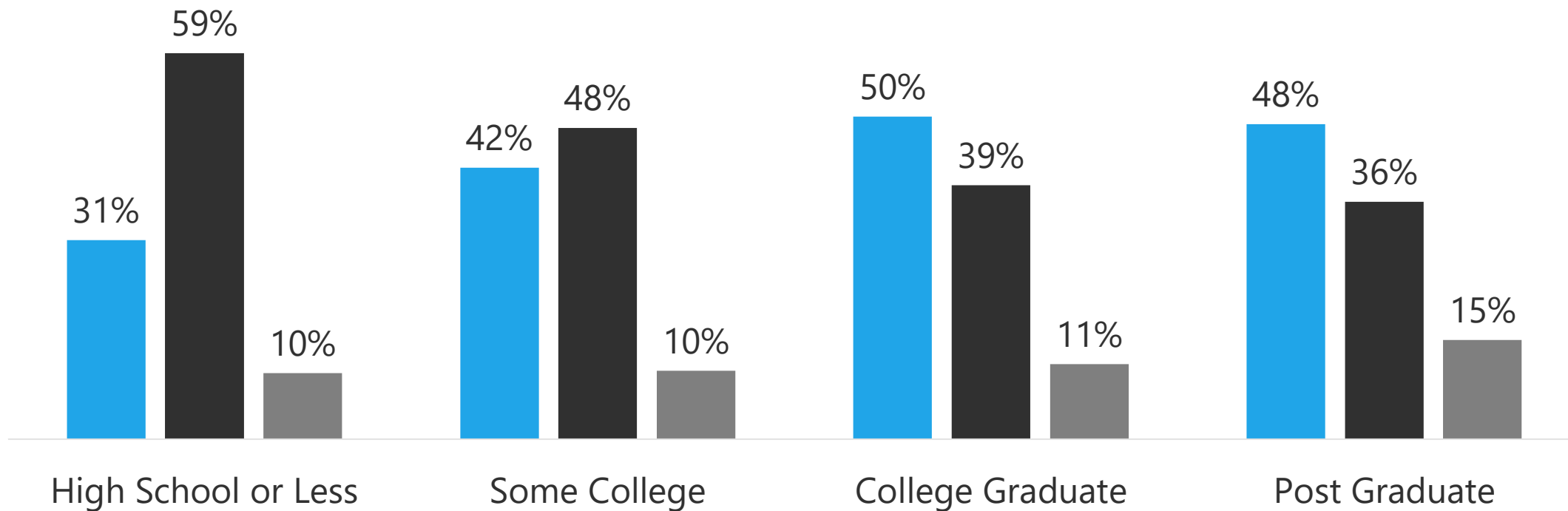


Average Age	
Amazon Gift Code	54
Cash Mailed	59
No Incentive	63

Participants with less education were most likely to want a cash incentive mailed to them and least likely to want an Amazon gift code. More highly educated participants were slightly more likely than others to forgo the incentive.

### Incentive Choice by Education

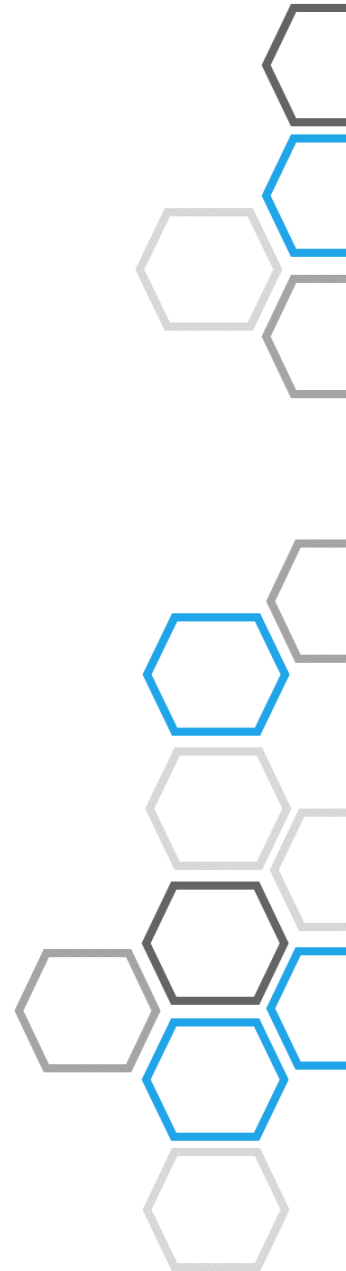
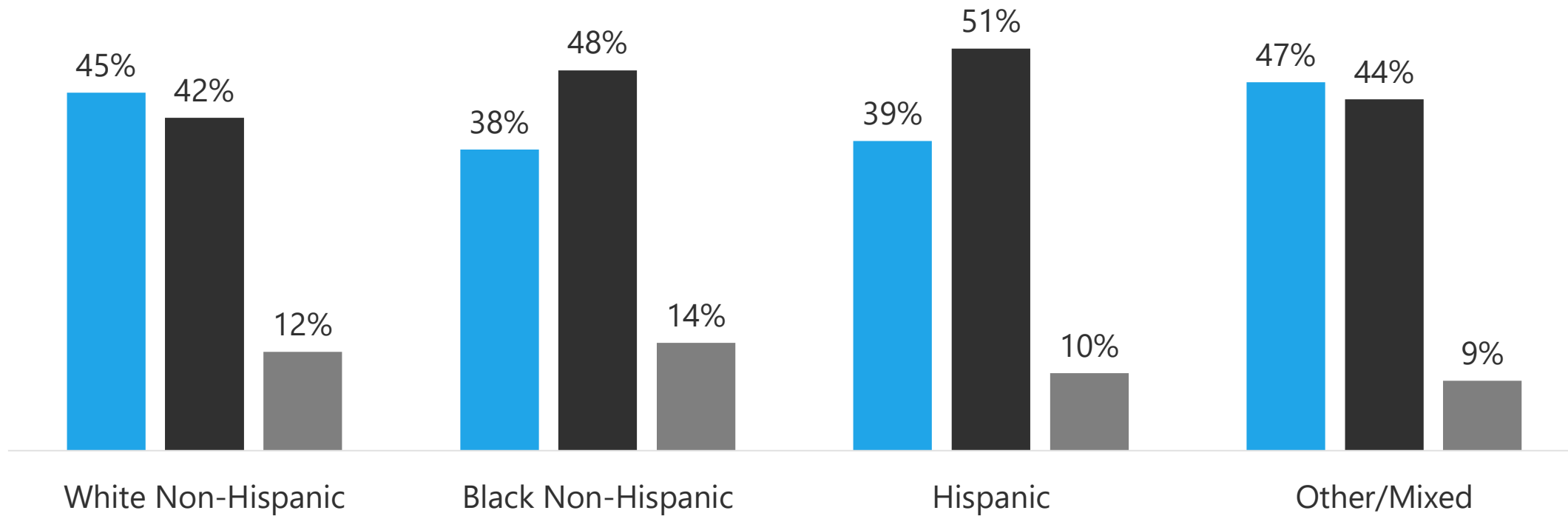
■ Amazon Gift Code ■ Cash Mailed ■ No Incentive



Black and Hispanic participants selected mailed cash more often than did whites.

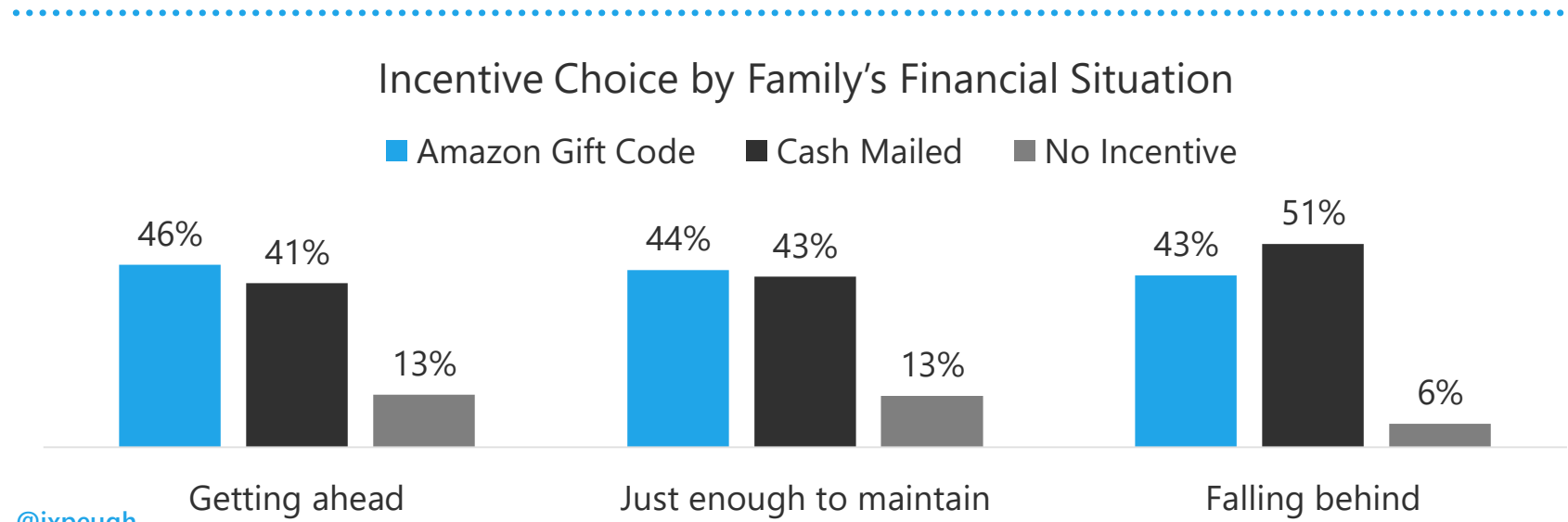
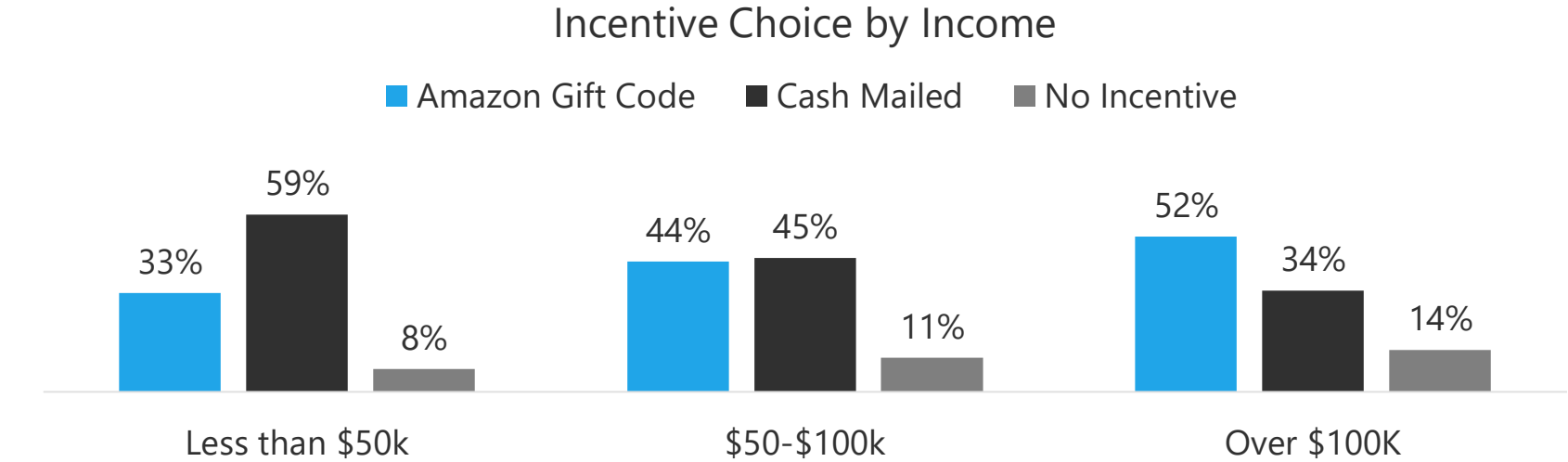
### Incentive Choice by Race/Ethnicity

■ Amazon Gift Code ■ Cash Mailed ■ No Incentive





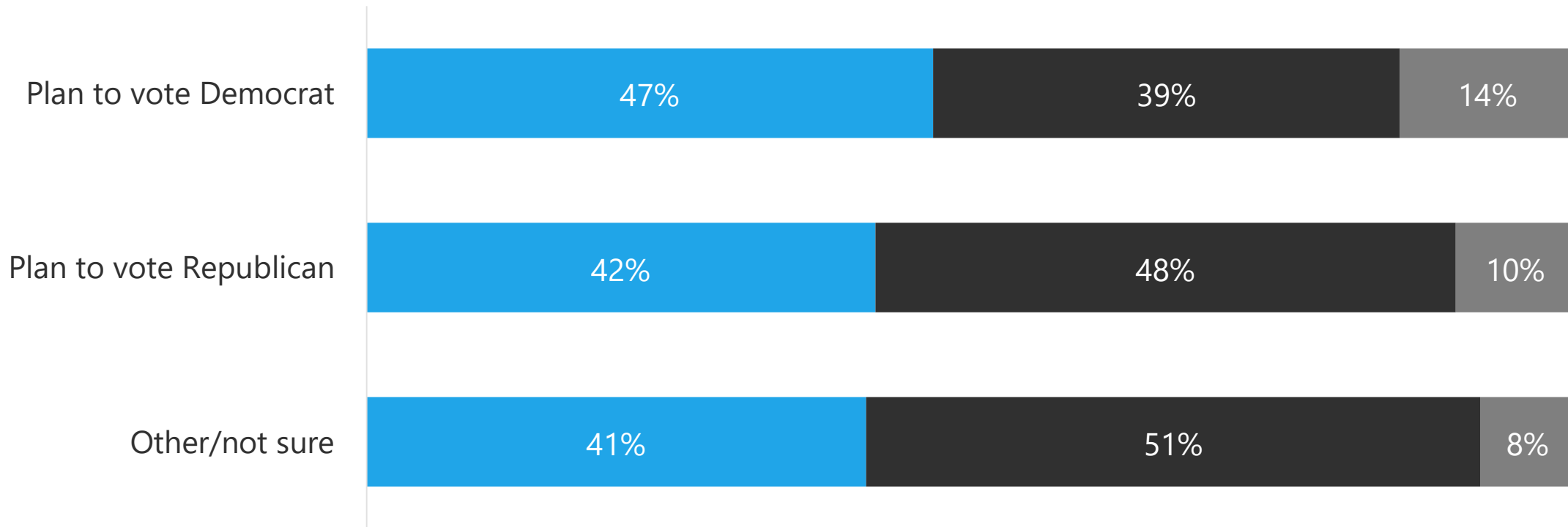
Participants who face greater financial pressures were more likely than others to want cash mailed to them.



Those who planned to vote Democratic were more likely than others to forgo the incentive. Those who were unsure of their vote choice were most likely to want cash mailed to them.

### Incentive Choice by Planned Vote Choice

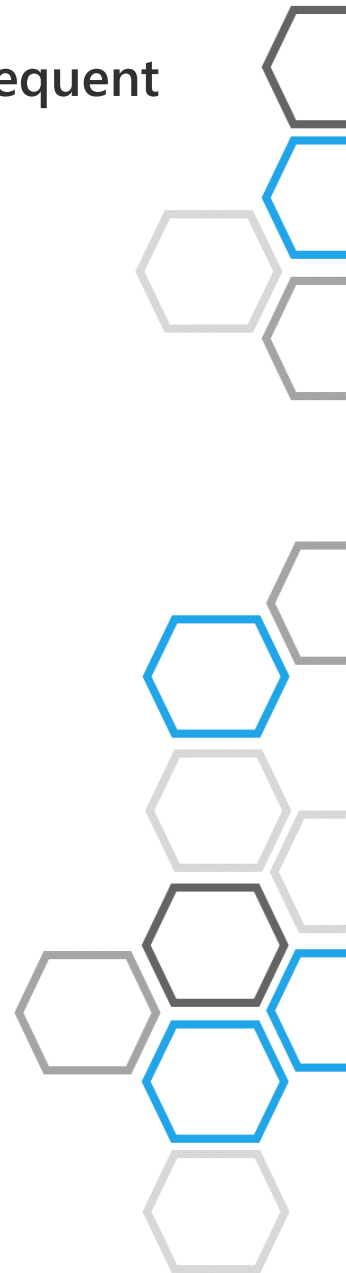
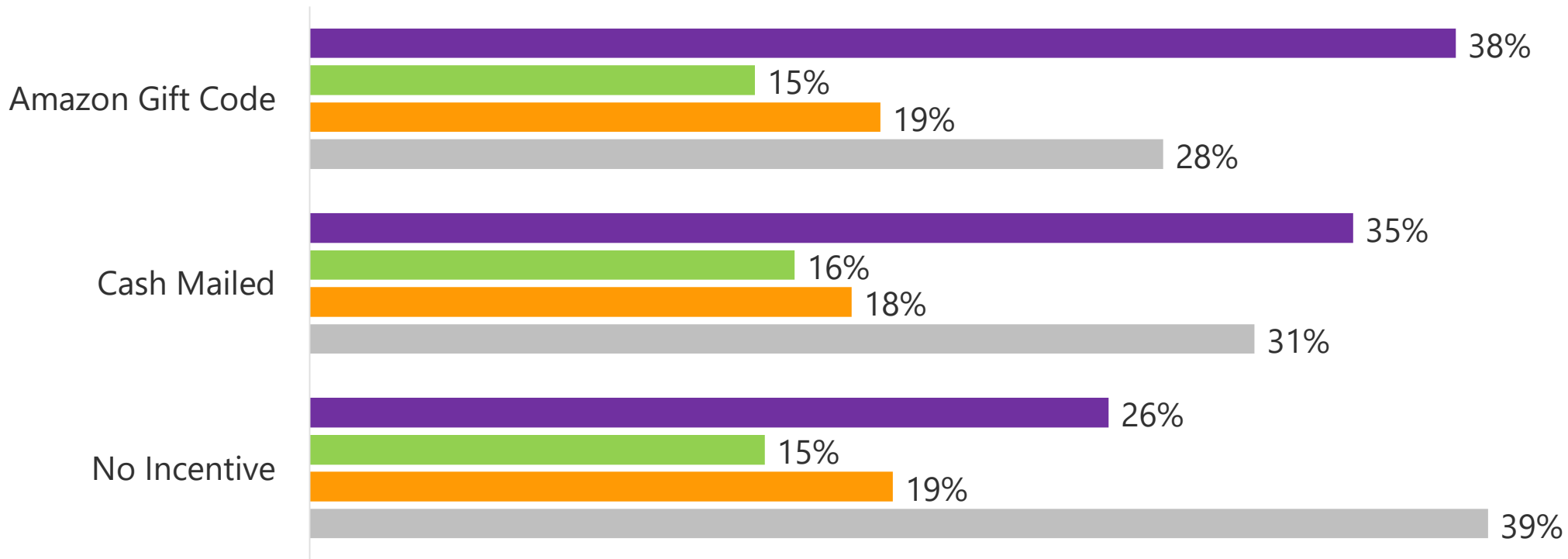
■ Amazon Gift Code ■ Cash Mailed ■ No Incentive



Those who selected the Amazon gift code were the most likely to participate in all 3 subsequent surveys. Those who selected no incentive were the least likely to participate further.

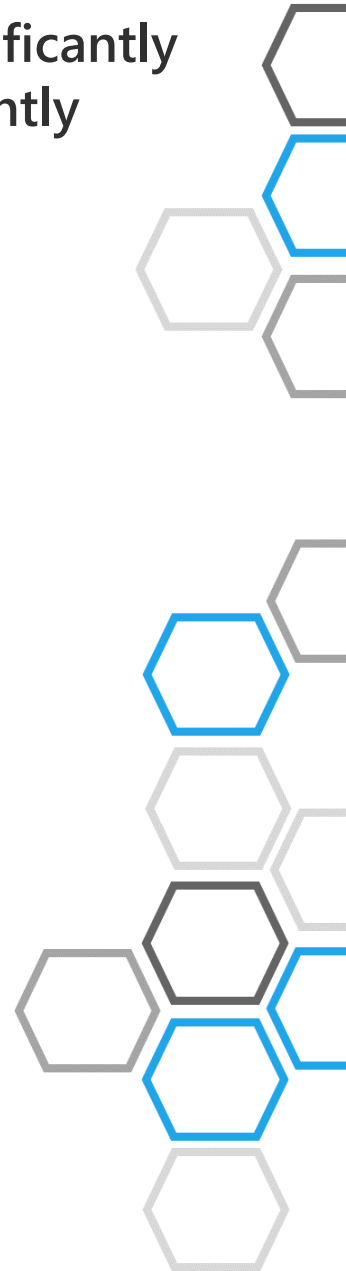
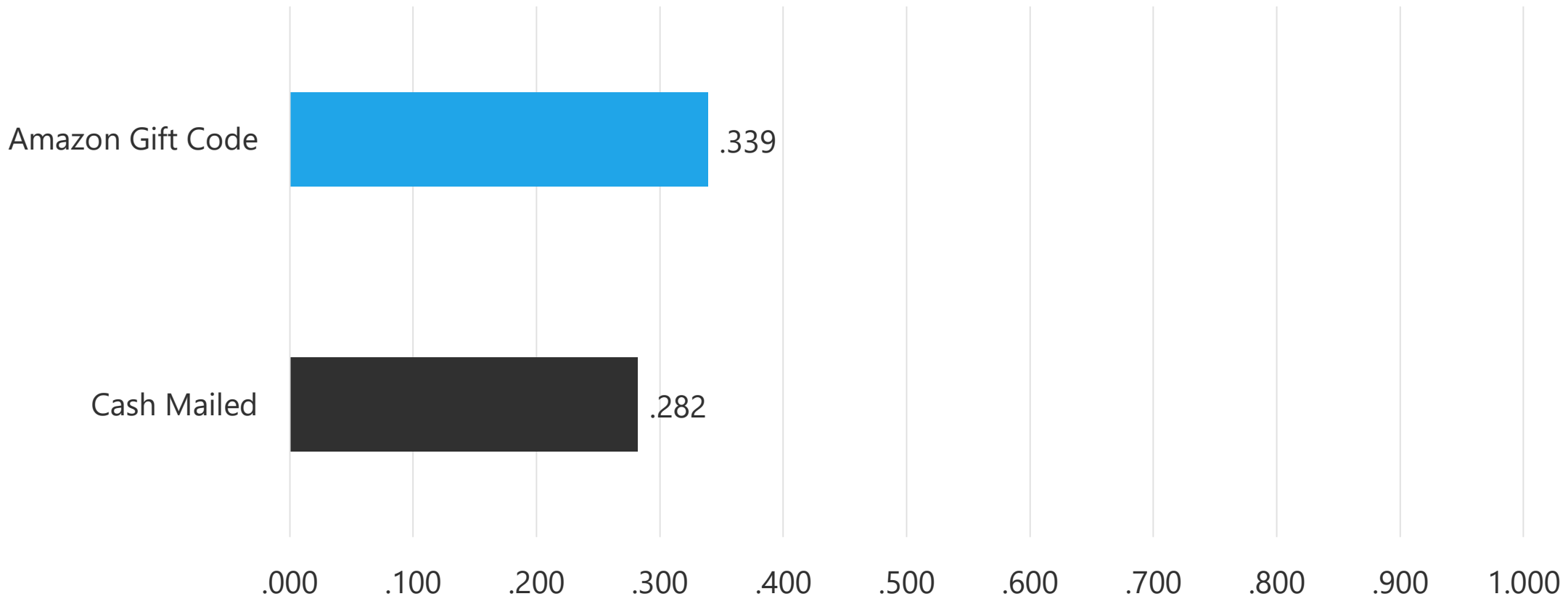
### Survey Participation by Incentive Choice

■ Completed all 3 surveys ■ 2 additional surveys ■ 1 additional survey ■ No additional surveys



After controlling for demographics, choosing no incentive remained likely to lead to significantly less survey participation. However, the choice between Amazon or Cash did not significantly impact future participation.

Impact on Survey Participation Compared with No Incentive



# Discussion

- Different types of incentive delivery is appealing to different types of people, including having the option of no incentive.
- While it is the most costly and time consuming option for the researcher, offering a mailed cash incentive is most appealing lower education, racial/ethnic minorities, and lower income participants, groups that are generally harder to reach in survey research.
- While having multiple incentive delivery types is operationally more complex, the potential for increased respondent satisfaction may make it worthwhile.
- Letting respondents choose no incentive might ultimately be associated with lower future survey response, as the social bond created by receiving an incentive is not present. Might reconsider offering this as an option in the future.



# Limitations

- All participants were offered the same incentive choice and they self selected. So we are not able to identify how people might have acted differently if not provided with this choice.
- This study was of a very specific type of person – voters in battleground congressional districts. Data might not be applicable to other populations.
- Other unidentified factors might be correlated with both the incentive choice and respondent participation.





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