Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities 9-8-8 Statewide Market Research Awareness Survey Report

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Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a survey conducted by Lexicon Strategies in partnership with the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) to assess statewide awareness of the 9-8-8 dialing code and associated services.

The survey, executed over May 19-20, 2023, utilized a representative sample of 488 participants from across Georgia. The sample was designed to capture a diverse range of demographic profiles in terms of age, ethnicity, race, and gender. However, a significant limitation was the survey's sole availability in English, which may have introduced bias and affected results, particularly among non-English-speaking respondents.

A primary finding from the survey is that overall awareness of the 9-8-8 dialing code is relatively low, with only 30.74% of participants indicating awareness. Furthermore, of those aware of the code, only 54% accurately understood its purpose, implying that actual awareness of the service's function is limited to just 16% of respondents.

The survey also examined demographic factors in relation to awareness. **Younger respondents and those from lower-income households showed higher awareness of the dialing code**. In terms of ethnicity, a higher proportion of respondents identifying as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish reported awareness of the service (63.6%), but this may be influenced by language bias as they misidentified the purpose of the service at a higher rate as well (71%), thus still indicating an approximate 18% overall awareness level.

Information sources were another focus of the survey, with social media, television, and family or friends being the most common channels through which respondents learned about the dialing code. However, the source of information varied considerably by demographics, particularly by age.

Finally, the survey examined respondents' confidence in knowing when to use the 9-8-8 service versus 9-1-1. Just over half (51.33%) of those aware of the 9-8-8 service reported high confidence in distinguishing the appropriate use of each. When filtered by those who know 9-8-8 is the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, a significant majority (69.14%) were highly confident in distinguishing the appropriate use of each.

The survey findings point to a clear need for increased efforts in public education and awareness, particularly targeted towards demographics showing lower awareness. Recommendations for future surveys include offering a Spanish version, increasing the overall sample size, and targeting less populous race categories. These improvements would ensure a more representative and comprehensive understanding of statewide awareness of the 9-8-8 dialing code.

This report provides the basis for further investigation and strategic planning, informing the development of effective awareness campaigns to improve the visibility and understanding of the 9-8-8 service across Georgia.

II. Background and Survey Methods

In collaboration with the DBHDD, Lexicon Strategies conducted a survey to assess the statewide awareness of the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline 9-8-8 dialing code and the services accessible through this number.

The research instrument was a 14-question survey, fielded from May 19, 2023, to May 20, 2023. An audience panel recruited from SurveyMonkey, stratified to ensure representativeness across age, race, ethnicity, and gender, formed the participant group. The initial sample size was 520 participants, spread uniformly across the entire state of Georgia.

The selection of participants from various regions within the state was carried out so the surveys matched their demographic profiles, thus yielding relevant data. Upon completion of the surveys, participants received compensation either through charitable donations or gift card credits.

SurveyMonkey, our panel partner in this endeavor, is committed to maintaining stringent data integrity and participant authenticity standards in their online surveys. The company acquires panelists from its pool of survey respondents and collaborates with third-party partners to reach a wide demographic spectrum.

SurveyMonkey institutes robust measures to validate responses and prevent fraud. The use of a single user ID across panels, combined with email or mobile authentication, serves to confirm participant identities. Advanced routing technology prevents the contamination of the data set by avoiding sample blending. Moreover, an AI model aids in detecting suspicious behavior, assigning reputation scores, and suspending panelists of dubious credibility when necessary. Additional measures such as email and phone verification, account limitations, and mandatory login for survey access also enhance security. Trap questions serve as an extra layer of identity verification, and active management of web traffic helps flag low-quality respondents, monitor IP addresses, and block repeated survey attempts from the same address. Any response found to be inaccurate is immediately eliminated and replaced to maintain the integrity of the survey data.

The survey was conducted exclusively in English, and the final sample comprised 488 valid Georgia zip codes. A total of 32 respondents were excluded from the original 520 due to reporting zip codes outside of Georgia. Among the remaining 488 respondents, 150 possessed knowledge of the 9-8-8 emergency dialing code and responded to all questions. Conversely, 338 participants were unfamiliar with the 9-8-8 code and were directed to questions concerning the Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL) and demographic information. All 488 respondents, regardless of their

awareness of the 9-8-8 code, provided responses to demographic queries as well as questions pertaining to GCAL and the GCAL mobile app.

A Note About The Protection of Human Subjects

Market research surveys such as the one conducted by Lexicon Strategies in collaboration with SurveyMonkey typically do not necessitate Institutional Review Board (IRB) certification. Nonetheless, the utmost respect for data privacy and security of our survey respondents remained a key priority throughout our research process.

Lexicon Strategies never had direct access to personally identifiable information (PII). Instead, respondents' confidentiality was secured from the onset with anonymized data collection and a clear disclaimer at the beginning of the survey. It reassured respondents about the non-disclosure of their data, emphasizing that their participation would be woven into the larger fabric of collected responses, with no personal identification attached.

The disclaimer was as follows:
"Thank you for participating in this brief survey. To ensure that we accurately represent all audiences in your community, several demographic questions have been included. Note that this data is confidential and will not be shared. The data will be reported as part of a large group and you will not be identified in any way."

SurveyMonkey's robust data privacy and security measures further strengthened this commitment. The platform minimized the collection of PII and employed industry-leading encryption algorithms, thereby safeguarding sensitive personal details by denying access to unauthorized users.

Moreover, Lexicon Strategies utilized SurveyMonkey's Anonymous Responses feature, enabling respondents to share their insights without revealing their identities. This measure not only bolstered data privacy but also promoted increased response rates and more candid feedback.

All data collected was protected with strong security protocols and two-factor authentication, including secure access and stringent password practices. These precautions prevented unauthorized data access, ensuring compliance with relevant regulations and guidelines.

In sum, Lexicon Strategies' commitment to data privacy and security was demonstrated through minimized collection of sensitive information, advanced encryption methods, provision for anonymous participation, and rigorous data security practices, guaranteeing that the protection of human subjects was never compromised.

III. Survey Sample Demographics

The respondent pool for this voluntary survey was deliberately curated from diverse geographic regions across the state of Georgia. The focus was to secure a balanced representation that reflects the state's rich tapestry of demographic diversity. This included participants from various backgrounds, socioeconomic strata, ages, ethnicities, races, sexual orientations, gender identities, and veteran status. For comparative purposes, the percentage distributions as outlined by the U.S. Census data for Georgia were utilized (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

In this section, a summary of the participant base highlighting their demographic and social characteristics is presented to provide a comprehensive overview of the sample group.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of zip codes of the respondents across the state of Georgia. Zip codes are representative of both rural and urban areas and are evenly distributed across the state.

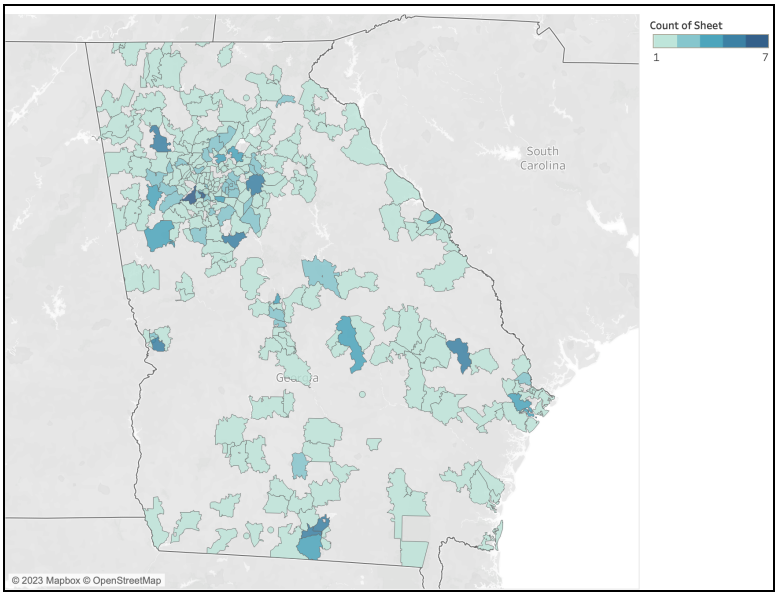

Figure 1: Zip Code State Distribution

Figure 2 shows the percentages of respondents in each age range. Most participants fell between the ages of 45 - 54 (21.72%), followed by those between 35-44 (17.62%).

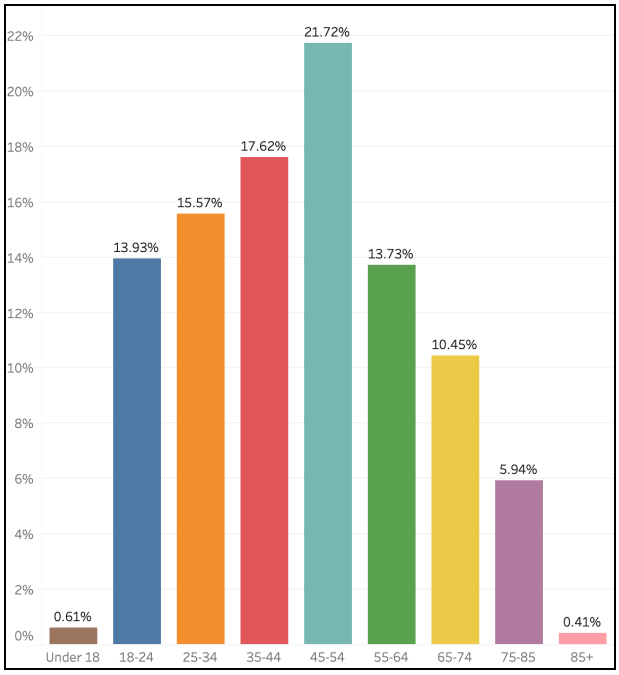

Figure 2: Age Distribution

This distribution can be compared to Figure 3, which shows the age distribution as shown in the 2022 Georgia Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Here, the highest percentage of people is under age 18 (23.36%), however, only those 18 and over were included in the survey.

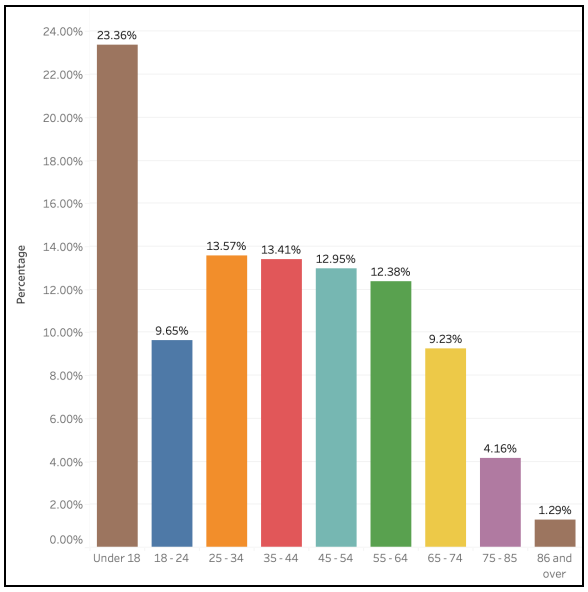

Figure 3: Age Distribution, GA Census 2022

Figure 4 shows the race distribution as reported by the 488 survey respondents. The majority identified as white (58.20%), followed by Black or African American (34.22%). Other responses include Asian/Pacific Islanders (2.66%), Multiple Ethnicities (2.46%), Other (1.23%) and American Indian or Alaska Native (1.23%).

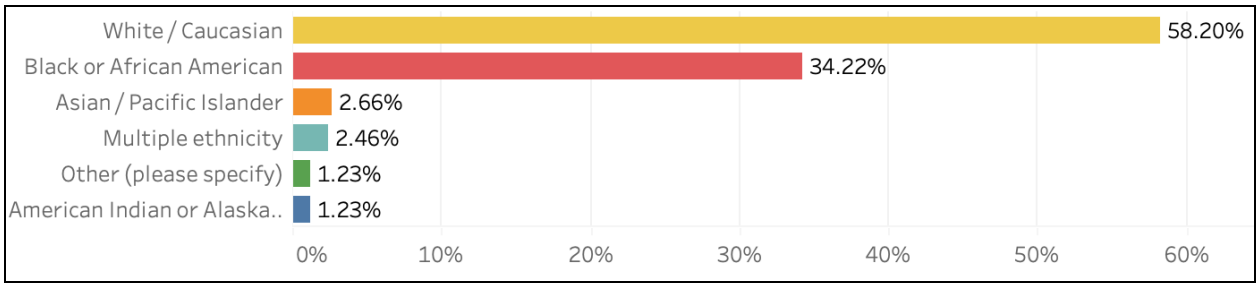

Figure 4: Race Identity

While this race distribution is in line with the GA State Census distribution, (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022), future state surveys will seek to recruit higher percentages of non-white or black respondents since the total number of respondents for these races are particularly small (Figure 5).

American Indian or Alaska..	6
Asian / Pacific Islander	13
Black or African American	167
Multiple ethnicity	12
Other (please specify)	6
White / Caucasian	284

Figure 5: Race of State Survey Participant

Figure 6 shows the percent of respondents who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish (6.76%). While this is close to the 2022 GA State Census percentage (10.5%), (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022), future surveys will seek more respondents in this area as well to better include more of this group.

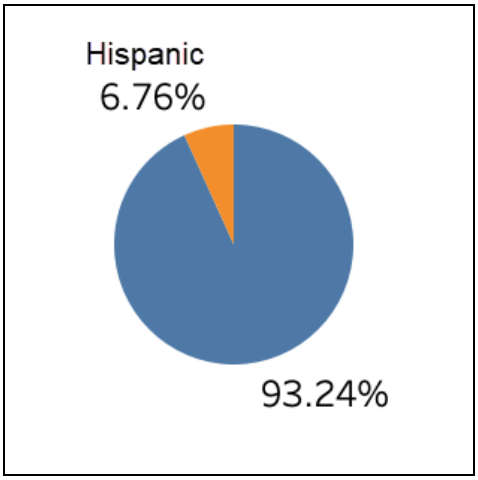

Figure 6: Ethnicity

Figure 7 shows the percentage of respondents who reported their gender identity. Females represented a slight majority of responses (53.48%) vs. males (45.70%); self-description and non-binary responses totaled (0.81%) combined.

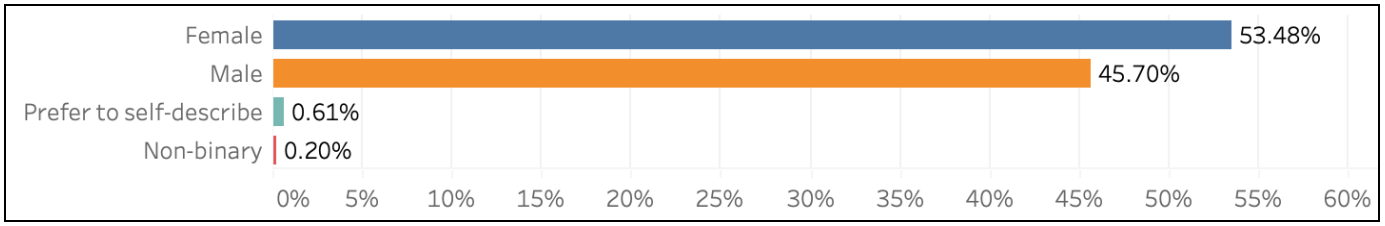

Figure 7: Gender Identity

While this is reflective of gender identity data (Figure 8) collected on the U.S. population in the U.S. Census 2021 Household Pulse Survey, (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021), future state surveys will include the option "transgender" to better engage the target population.

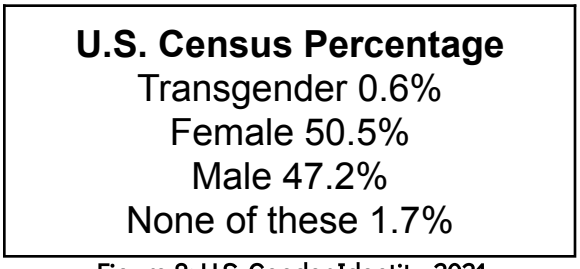

Figure 8: U.S. Gender Identity, 2021

Figure 9 shows the percentage of respondents who reported their sexual orientation. Most participants identify as heterosexual (85.25%), with bisexual second (4.92%), and asexual third (3.69%). Gay and lesbian identity each represent 1.64%, and pansexual, queer and none of the above account for 2.87% of the respondents.

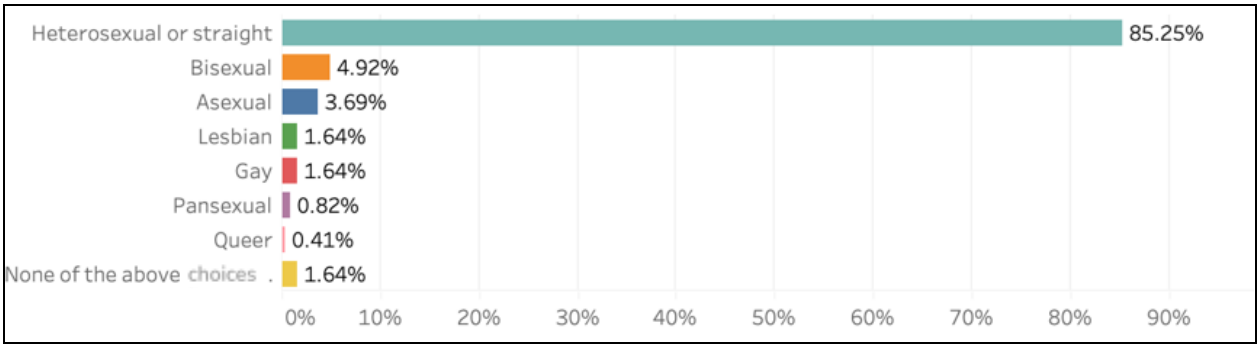

Figure 9: Sexual Orientation

Figure 10 shows that veterans accounted for 14.75% of respondents. This is double the GA State Census percentage (7%).

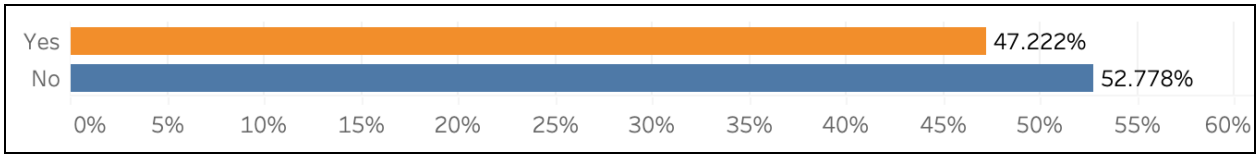

Figure 10: Veteran Status

Figure 11 shows the distribution of household income, with the largest percentage between $25,000 and $49,999 (23.36%) which is lower than the Georgia state median income of $65,030 as reported by the 2021 Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Note that 5.33% chose not to respond to this question.

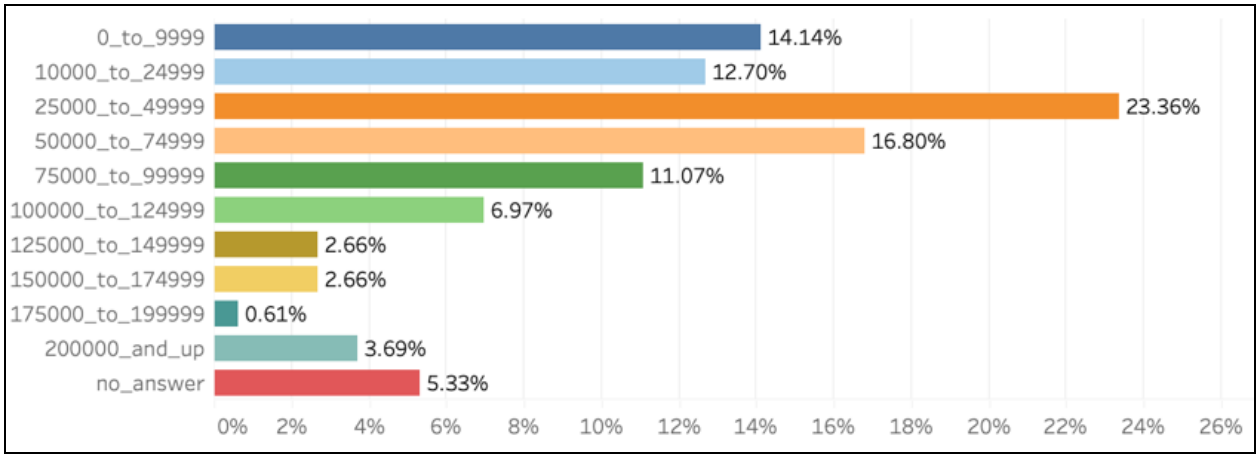

Figure 11: Household Income

IV. 9-8-8 Awareness

The initial question of the survey, "Are you aware of the 9-8-8 dialing code?" functioned as a gateway to the subsequent sections of the questionnaire. Participants acknowledging familiarity with the dialing code were invited to respond to the full set of survey questions. In contrast, respondents who were unfamiliar with the 9-8-8 dialing code were directed to the demographic and Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL) specific queries.

As illustrated in Figure 12, only a minority of respondents statewide, approximately 30.74% (n=150), demonstrated awareness of the 9-8-8 dialing code. This pivotal finding underscores the critical importance of enhancing public awareness about this emergency service code.

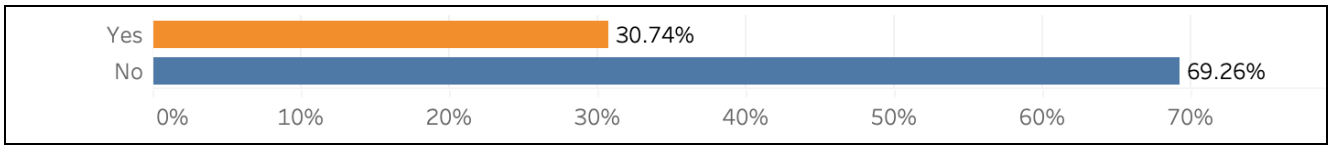

Figure 12: State Awareness of 9-8-8 Dialing Code

Among the 150 respondents who indicated awareness of the 9-8-8 dialing code, a concerning fact emerged when they were asked to identify the specific services accessible through this number. Just over half, specifically 54% (n=81), provided the correct response.

In other words, only 16% of the total respondent pool accurately understood the purpose of the 9-8-8 dialing code. This finding illustrates a critical gap between mere awareness of the code and an accurate understanding of its function.

Figure 13 presents a detailed breakdown of the other responses received, further illuminating the extent of misconceptions or lack of knowledge about the 9-8-8 dialing code among the respondents. This underscores the need for efforts not just to raise awareness of the code, but also to educate the public about its specific purpose.

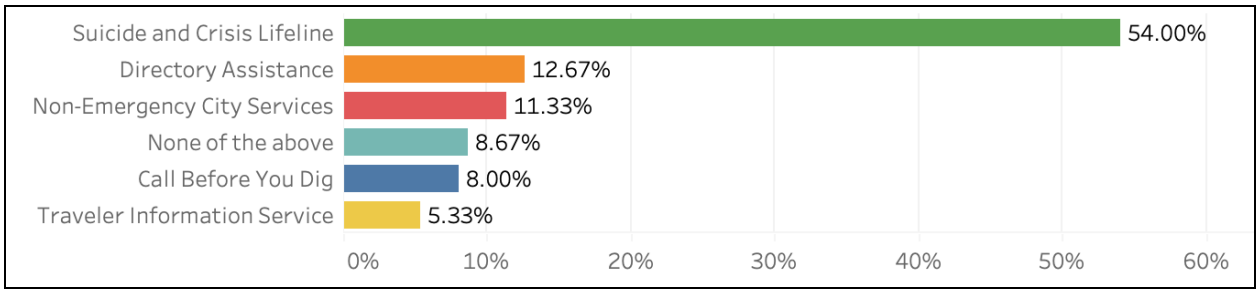

Figure 13: Awareness of 9-8-8 Function

All survey participants, regardless of their familiarity with the 9-8-8 dialing code, were queried about their awareness of the Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL) as well as the myGCAL mobile application.

Among the entire respondent group (n=488), 35% indicated awareness of the GCAL service. The awareness level for the myGCAL mobile application was somewhat lower, with 18.85% of respondents acknowledging familiarity. These statistics are detailed in Figure 14.

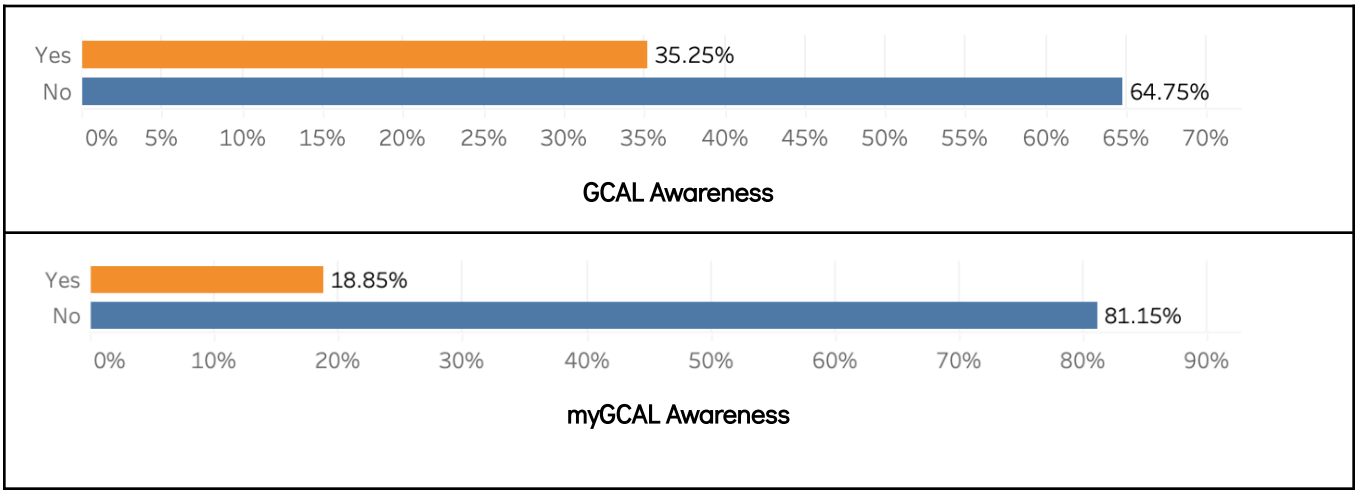

Figure 14: GCAL Awareness

V. 9-8-8 Awareness by Demographics

In this section, the level of awareness of the 9-8-8 dialing code is dissected across various demographic groups. Figure 15 presents this information segmented by age.

Notably, the younger demographic, specifically respondents under 18, exhibited the highest level of awareness, with 66.67% acknowledging familiarity with the code. Similarly, participants aged between 18 and 24 demonstrated a significant awareness level at 50%. This observation aligns with our expectations, given the substantial presence of 9-8-8 marketing efforts on social media platforms frequented primarily by younger audiences.

Figure 15 also highlights a knowledge gap among older adults, with only 26% of respondents over 65 years of age reporting familiarity with the 9-8-8 dialing code. These insights underscore the need for expanded marketing strategies that effectively reach and educate all age demographics.

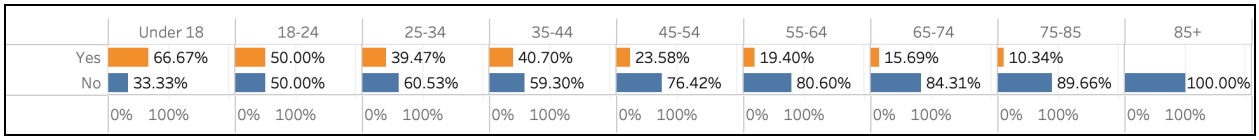

Figure 15: Awareness by Age

Figure 16 shows veteran status awareness. 47% of the 72 identified veterans were aware of 9-8-8.

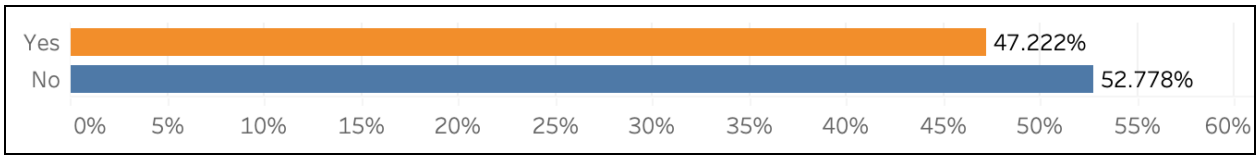

Figure 16: Veteran Awareness

Figure 17 provides an illuminating perspective on the level of 9-8-8 dialing code awareness across various household income brackets. It is noteworthy that the highest level of awareness is concentrated within the lower income bracket, specifically households earning between $0 and $24,999 annually.

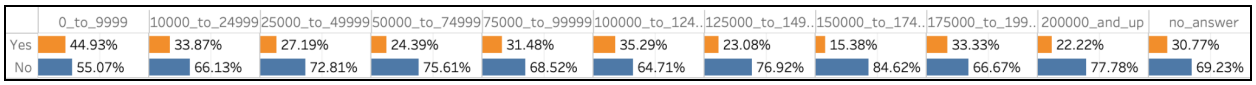

Figure 17: Awareness by Household Income

A plausible explanation for this pattern could be the increased interaction of lower-income households with various social services. These services often serve as an information dissemination platform for the 9-8-8 dialing code, thus leading to greater awareness among these households.

This observation further highlights the potential benefit of diversifying awareness-raising strategies to ensure a broad-based understanding of the 9-8-8 service across all income groups.

As per the data illustrated in Figure 18, the highest levels of awareness of the 9-8-8 dialing code were found among Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian or Alaskan Native respondents, with awareness rates of 53.85% and 66.67% respectively.

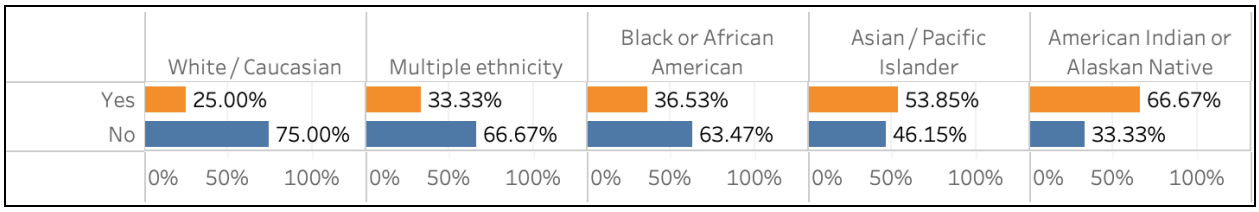

Figure 18: Awareness by Race

American Indian or Alaska..	6
Asian / Pacific Islander	13
Black or African American	167
Multiple ethnicity	12
Other (please specify)	6
White / Caucasian	284

However, it is important to note that these figures are based on relatively small sample sizes – specifically, 13 respondents for the Asian/Pacific Islander group and just 6 for the American Indian or Alaskan Native group.

The smaller respondent pools for these categories can potentially impact the reliability and validity of these percentages.

Therefore, caution should be exercised when interpreting these results, and they should be viewed as indicative rather than definitive.

To obtain a more precise understanding of the awareness levels within these demographic groups, future surveys could aim for larger sample sizes among these populations.

Figure 19 presents an intriguing pattern of 9-8-8 dialing code awareness when viewed through the lens of sexual orientation. The data indicates that the highest levels of awareness are among respondents who identify as asexual, bisexual, and pansexual.

However, as with previous demographic breakdowns, it is essential to acknowledge the limited sample sizes involved in these categories - with 18 asexual, 24 bisexual, and 4 pansexual respondents. Given these relatively small numbers, the validity and reliability of these figures are less certain.

While these figures can offer preliminary insights, they should be approached with caution. Future surveys should strive for a larger representation from these groups to provide more robust and reliable data. This will aid in crafting more effective, tailored awareness campaigns for these communities.

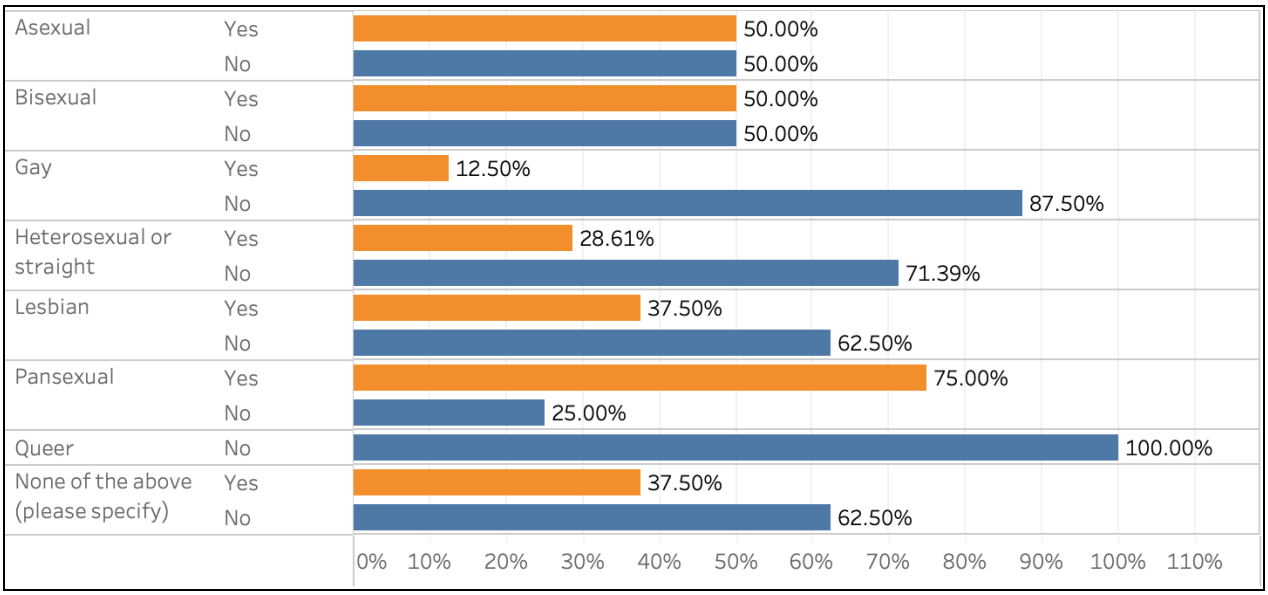

Figure 19: Awareness by Orientation

In Figure 20, we see that the highest percentages of awareness fall in the self-described and non-binary respondents, however once again due to the small number of respondents in these categories, 3 and 1, confidence is low. Males (33%) and females (28%) are similarly balanced in awareness and there appears to be no significant difference by identities. It is noted that transgender identity was not included as a response.

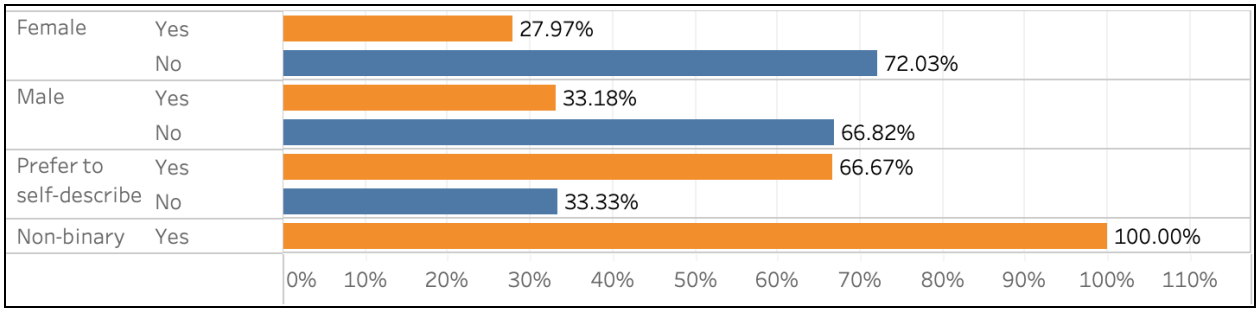

Figure 20: Awareness by Gender Identity

Figure 21 shows awareness by ethnicity. Of the 33 people who identified as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish, 63% reported (n=21) awareness of 9-8-8. Since the survey was only offered in English, we believe that language could be biasing this response.

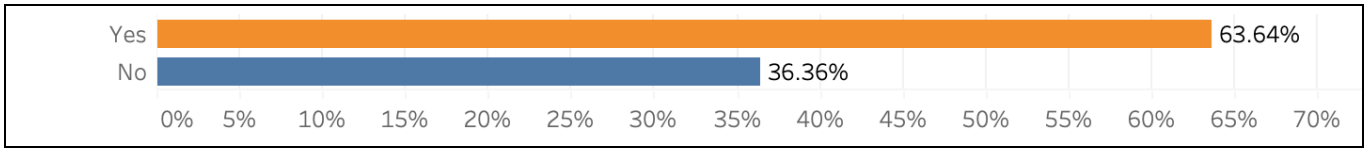

Figure 21: Awareness by Ethnicity

Figure 22 shows that of the 21 participants who were aware of the service, only 29% (9 people) of those participants actually knew the purpose of the dialing code, further indicating possible language bias concerns.

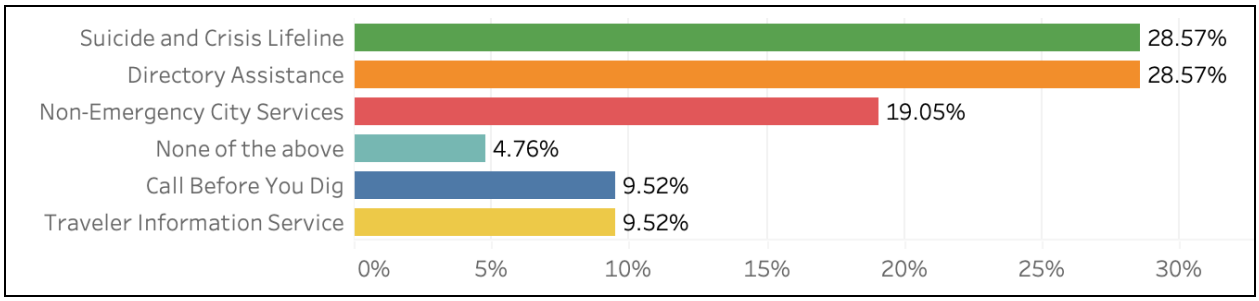

Figure 22 : Access Awareness by Ethnicity

VI. Information Sources

In an effort to understand the pathways of information dissemination, respondents were asked about their sources of knowledge regarding the 9-8-8 dialing code. Figure 23 illustrates that the predominant medium through which respondents became aware of 9-8-8 was social media – about 48% – underscoring the extensive reach of these platforms in today's digital landscape.

Moreover, a significant portion of respondents – about 63% – cited traditional media outlets as their source of information. These included television, radio, and newscasts, demonstrating that these channels continue to hold substantial influence in conveying public service information to Georgia's residents.

This finding suggests that a balanced media strategy, leveraging both digital and traditional media platforms, can be effective in augmenting statewide awareness of the 9-8-8 dialing code.

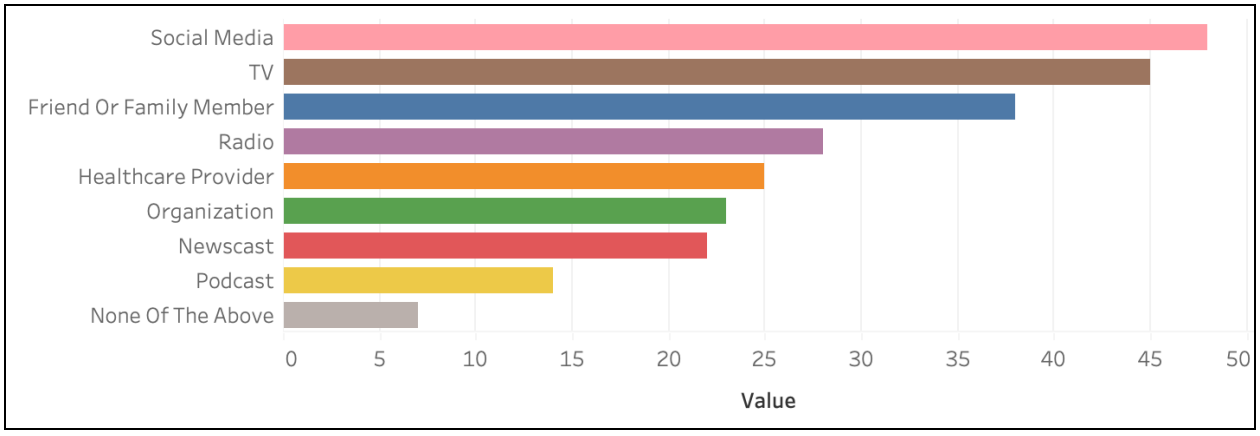

Figure 23: Information Sources

As expected, the source of information differs by demographic, especially age. Figure 24 shows that those aged less than 24 years old found out via social media and friends and family, while those over 65 found out via TV, newscast or their healthcare provider.

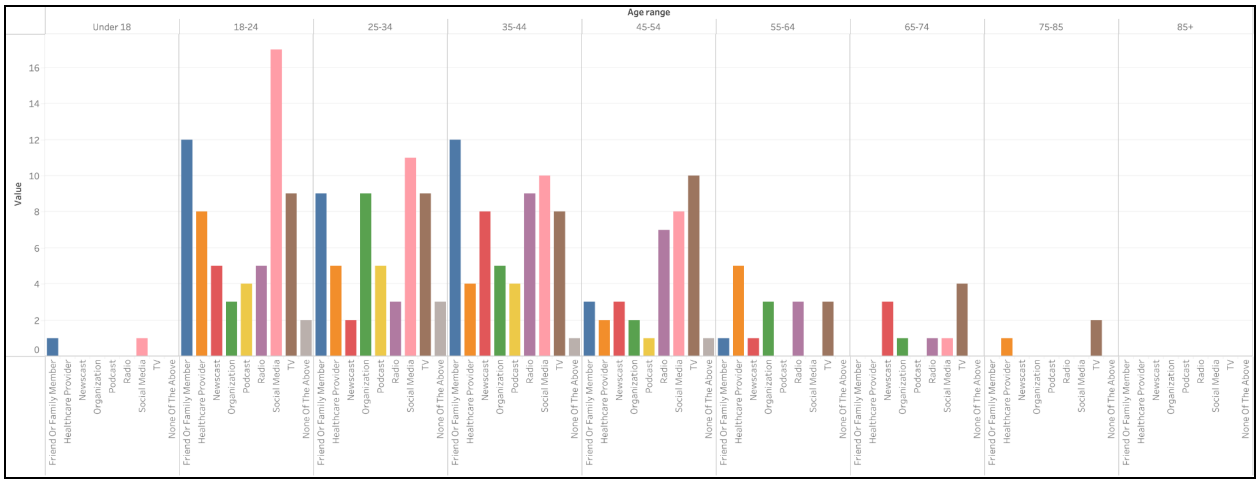

Figure 24: Information Source by Age

Across races, (Figure 25) most people heard about 9-8-8 via social media, TV and friends or family.

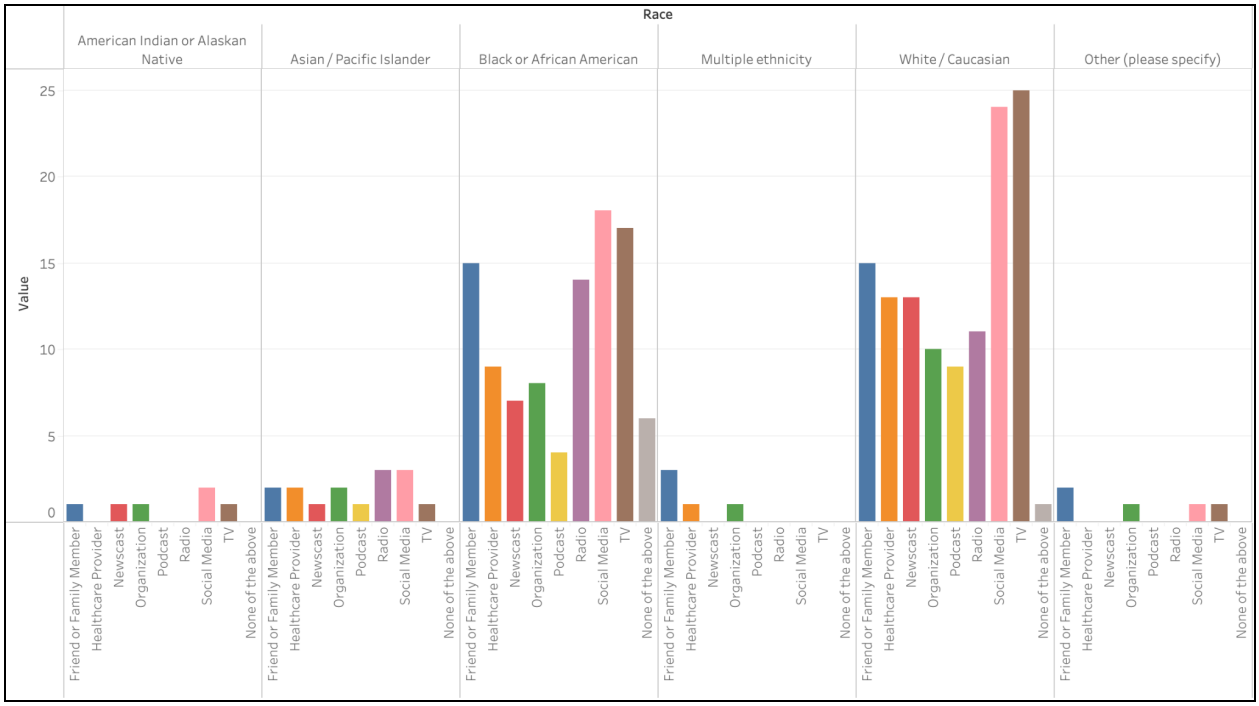

Figure 25: Information Source by Race

Similarly, information sources by sexual orientation (Figure 26) also indicate social media, TV and friends or family across most orientations.

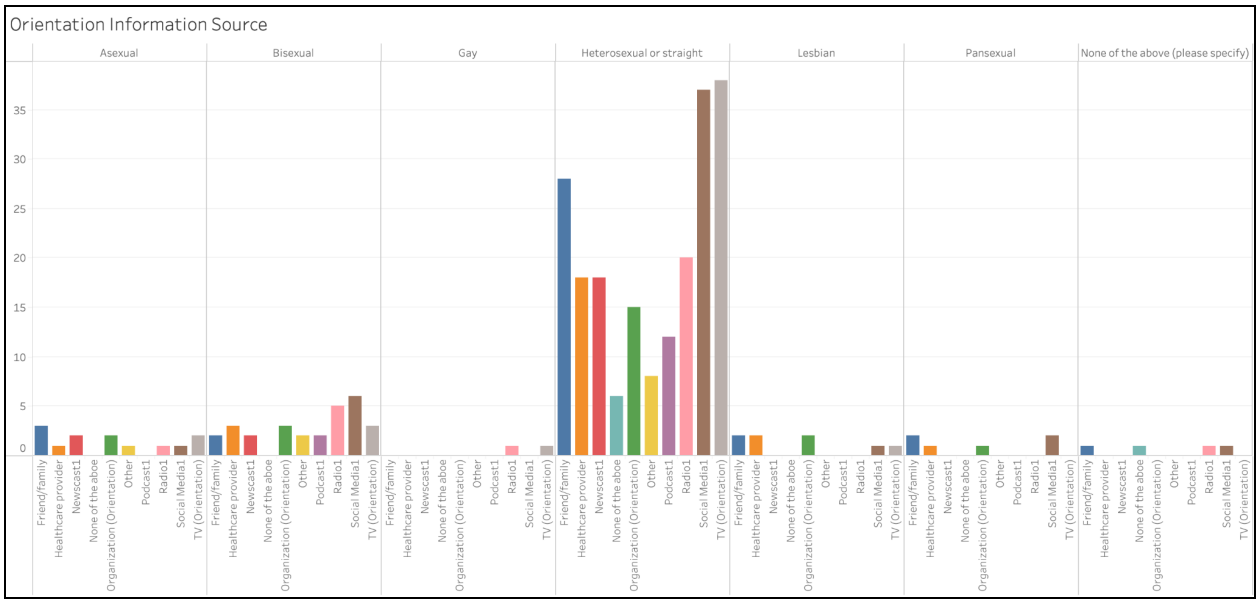

Figure 26: Information Source by Orientation

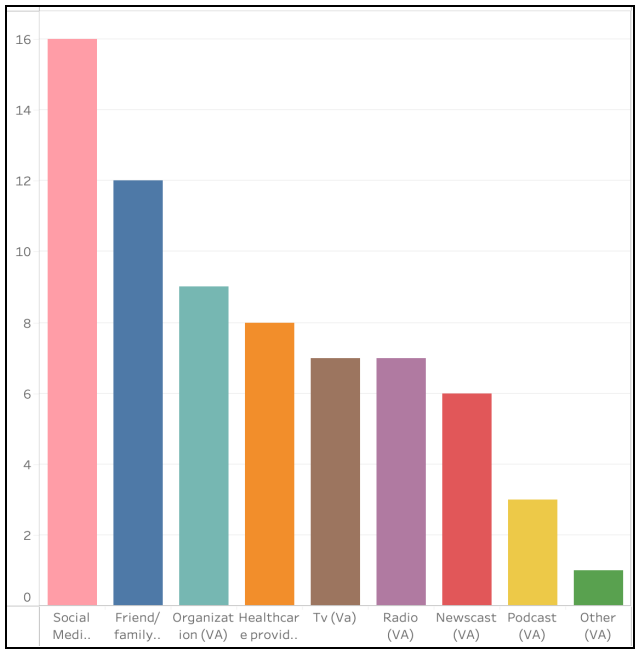

Figure 27 shows information sources by veteran status. In addition to social media and friends and family veterans also learned about 9-8-8 via an organization.

This finding suggests that veterans also learned about the dialing code when receiving services from organizations such as the Veterans Administration or VA Hospitals.

Figure 27: Information Source by Veteran Status

VII. Confidence by Demographics

Respondents were asked how confident they were in knowing when to use 9-8-8 vs. 9-1-1. Overall, 51.33% of respondents who were aware of 9-8-8 (n=150) were highly confident in when to use each (Figure 28).

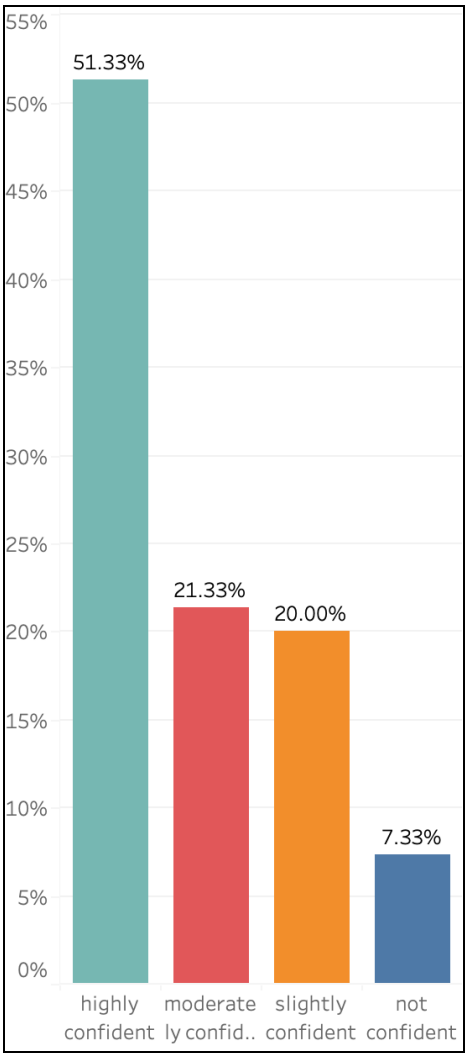

Figure 28: Overall Confidence

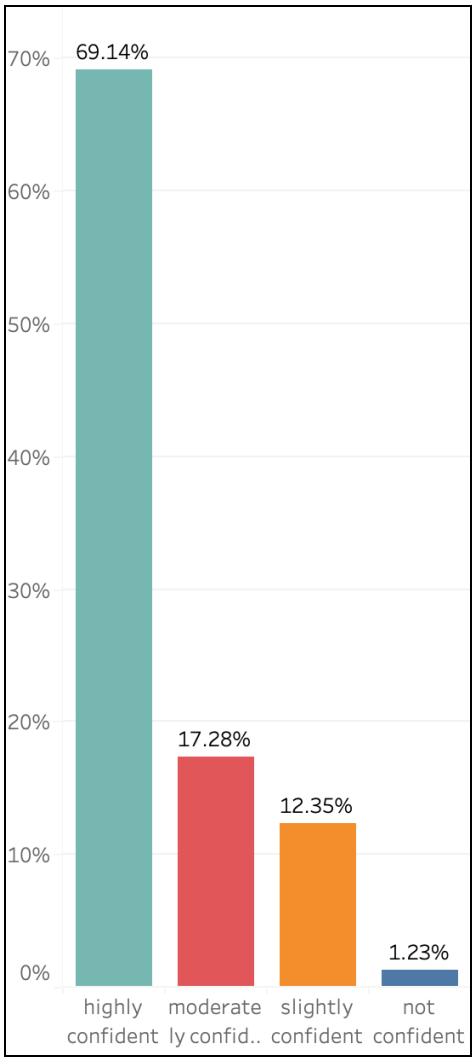

Figure 29: Confidence by Correct Access

Figure 29 shows a further distillation, indicating that those who accurately identified what is accessed by 9-8-8 (n=81) were also highly confident that they know when to use it.

Figures 30, 31, and 32 reveal that across ages, gender identity, and race, most people were highly confident in knowing when to use 9-8-8 vs. 9-1-1.

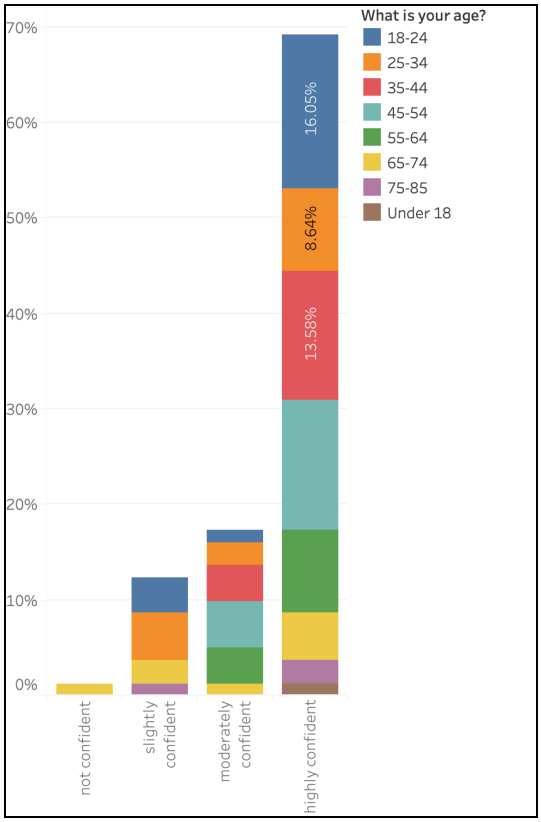

Figure 30: Confidence by Age

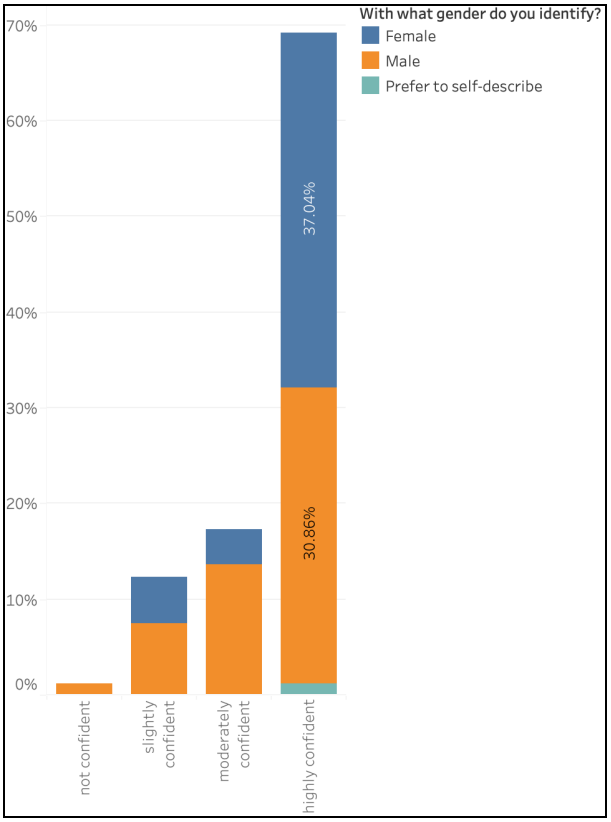

Figure 31: Confidence by Gender Identity

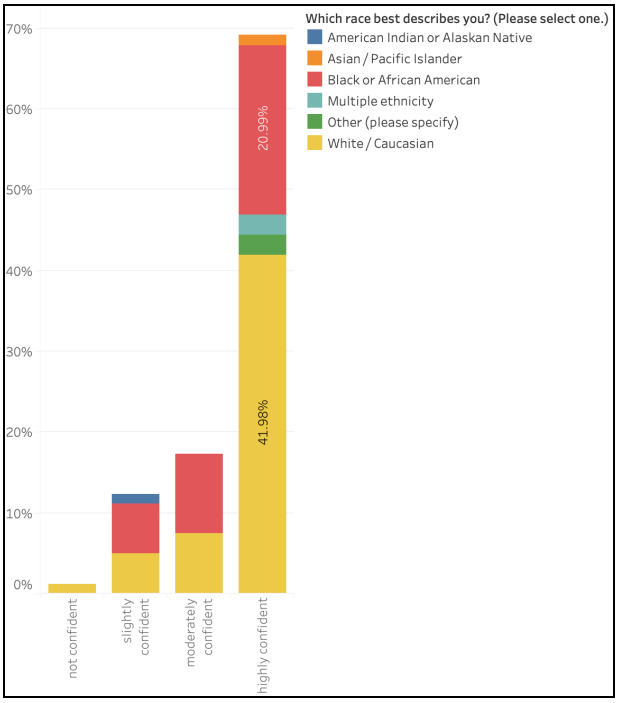

Figure 32: Confidence by Race

VIII. Results and Insights

While we have high confidence in the validity of our overall sample size across the state (n = 488), it is important to note that when analyzing data from smaller subgroups, the confidence level and perceived validity may decrease due to the reduced sample sizes.

An important finding is that the survey revealed that only 30.74% of respondents were familiar with the 9-8-8 dialing code. Even among these, a little over half, or 54%, grasped its actual function, which suggests that only 16% of the total respondents had a clear understanding of the service's purpose.

A further significant observation reveals that 69.14% of those properly informed about the 9-8-8 service, were highly confident in their ability to differentiate it from 9-1-1. This underscores the implication that as individuals acquire knowledge about the service, they also gain a comprehensive understanding of its proper use.

A standout discovery reveals that veterans display substantial familiarity with 9-8-8 at 47%. Notably, a majority of this informed group found out about it through institutions like the Veterans Administration or VA Hospitals.

In the age-based analysis, the data strongly suggests that younger respondents display higher awareness of the 9-8-8 dialing code, while older adults demonstrate substantially lower familiarity. Given the predominance of social media as the medium for 9-8-8 promotional efforts, these findings align with our expectations.

Our examination of income levels indicated higher awareness rates among lower-income households. It is possible that this population segment has greater exposure to services advertising the 9-8-8 code.

When it comes to the ethnic demographics, we advise a cautious interpretation of the findings. Given the survey was administered exclusively in English, potential language barriers could have affected comprehension of the questions, especially among non-English speakers. For instance, the responses from the Hispanic, Latino, and Spanish demographic groups indicating their understanding of the purpose of the 9-8-8 code were unexpectedly higher than the general population responses. This could reflect a discrepancy in comprehension due to the language of the survey.

Future studies should consider offering the survey in multiple languages to better engage with and accurately capture responses from non-English speaking demographic groups.

IX. Learnings for Future Surveys

As part of our ongoing effort to assess the state's awareness of the 9-8-8 dialing code, surveys will continue to be conducted throughout 2023 and 2024. Based on the learnings gleaned from the current study, we propose the following recommendations to enhance the efficacy of future surveys:

Inclusion of a Spanish Survey Version: To overcome potential language barriers and to increase inclusivity, a Spanish version of the survey should be made available. This can improve response rates and data accuracy among Spanish-speaking residents.

Expanding Sample Size: An increased overall sample size will allow for a more robust and reliable analysis, improving the statistical power of the survey and the confidence in the results.

Engaging Less Represented Racial Categories: It would be advantageous to place an emphasis on engaging less populous racial groups in future surveys. This will ensure a more comprehensive and inclusive data set and a better understanding of the awareness levels within these communities.

Filtering Out Zip Codes Outside of Georgia at the Outset: To ensure accurate zip code collection and potentially boost the sample size, the initial survey question could incorporate a filter to exclude zip codes outside of Georgia.

Comparative Study with Another State: To provide additional context to the findings, a similar survey could be conducted in another state. This comparative data would serve to highlight differences and similarities in awareness levels across states and potentially shed light on effective practices in use elsewhere.

By implementing these recommendations, we believe future surveys can yield more accurate, comprehensive, and actionable insights into statewide awareness of the 9-8-8 dialing code.

X. Resources

1. U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). Population Estimates. Retrieved May 1, 2023,from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/GA.
2. U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). Race and Hispanic Origin. Retrieved May 1, 2023, from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/GA/RHI725222#RHI725222.
3. U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey. (2021). Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. Retrieved May 1, 2023, from https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity.html.
4. U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). Median Household Income. Retrieved May 1, 2023, from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/GA/INC110221.

Thank You.

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