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AG THE Authors Guild

The Authors Guild
U.S. Published Book Author
5-Year Income Study
2023 Edition

Black Authors
Summary

December 7, 2023

codex
GROUP

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U.S. Published Author Income Study – Participating Organization Results Summary – 2023 Edition

I. Study Background

II. Participant Background

- ▲ age, gender
- ▲ author status, publishing method
- ▲ years first book published, # of books published
- ▲ primary book categories published in

III. All Published Author Median Income in 2022

- ▲ Book related income
- ▲ Non-book author related income
- ▲ Total combined author related income
- ▲ Full-time vs. part-time book related income

IV. Established Author Median Income Trend: 2018 vs. 2022

- ▲ Established author book related income trend
- ▲ Established full-time traditionally published v. self-published book related income

V. Author Marketing in 2022

- ▲ Top 25 most used book marketing programs
- ▲ Top 25 most effective book marketing programs

Study Background

Objective

Provide the definitive published book author income study for U.S. resident authors (trade, education, academic and other) measuring their most recent annual author related income (2022) and, the 5-year income trend (v. 2018) for established authors (first published 2018 and prior).

Participating Organizations

Over 36 author, publishing and retail organizations collaborated on the survey, more than double the 2018 Edition, including – Penguin Random House, Hachette Book Group, Ingram Spark, B&N Press, PEN America, African American Literature Book Club, AAMBC, Crime Writers of Color, Blue Stoop, NBCC, and many others.

Fielding

Online survey fielded February 13 to April 2, 2023

Incentive – all participants had the option of entering a drawing for 100 \$50 Visa Gift Cards (same as 2018)

Participation

Overall, the survey had 5,699 published author participants vs. 5,067 in the 2018 Edition, making it yet again the largest known author income survey ever done in the U.S, and by far the most representative.

Majority (73%) of participants were established authors first published 2018 or prior vs. 1,517 (27%) first published between 2019 to 2022.

Total sample of authors self-identifying as Black/African American: 479 vs. 5,220 Non-Black authors and 4,596 White authors.

Representation

Race: 1,100 (21%) authors did not identify as “White”: 8% Black (479), 4% Hispanic (217), 2% AAPI (136) and 2% Native American (103)

LGBTQIA+: 700 (12%) authors identified as LGBTQIA+

Disabled: 626 (11%) identified as meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act’s definition

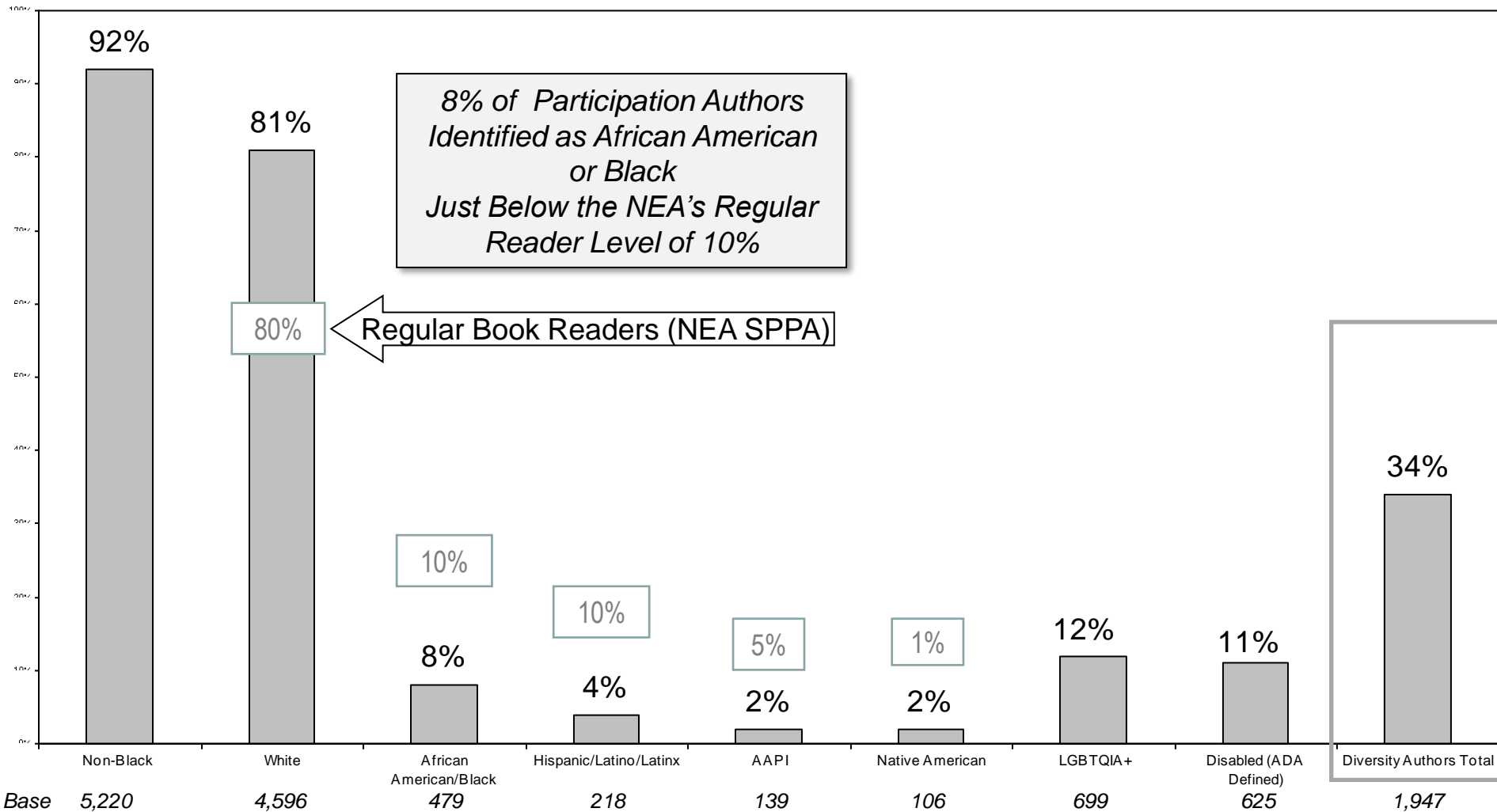
Gender Identity: 322 (6%) authors did not identify as either female or male.

Analysis

Median 2022 annual pre-tax income measured for all published authors with \$1+ income in period

Author Related Median Income trend from 2018 to 2022 calculated for established authors first published 2018 and prior, with \$1+ income in 2018.

2022 Published Author Participant Demographics & Diversity – Race, Ethnicity, LGBTQIA+, Disability



8% of Participation Authors Identified as African American or Black Just Below the NEA's Regular Reader Level of 10%

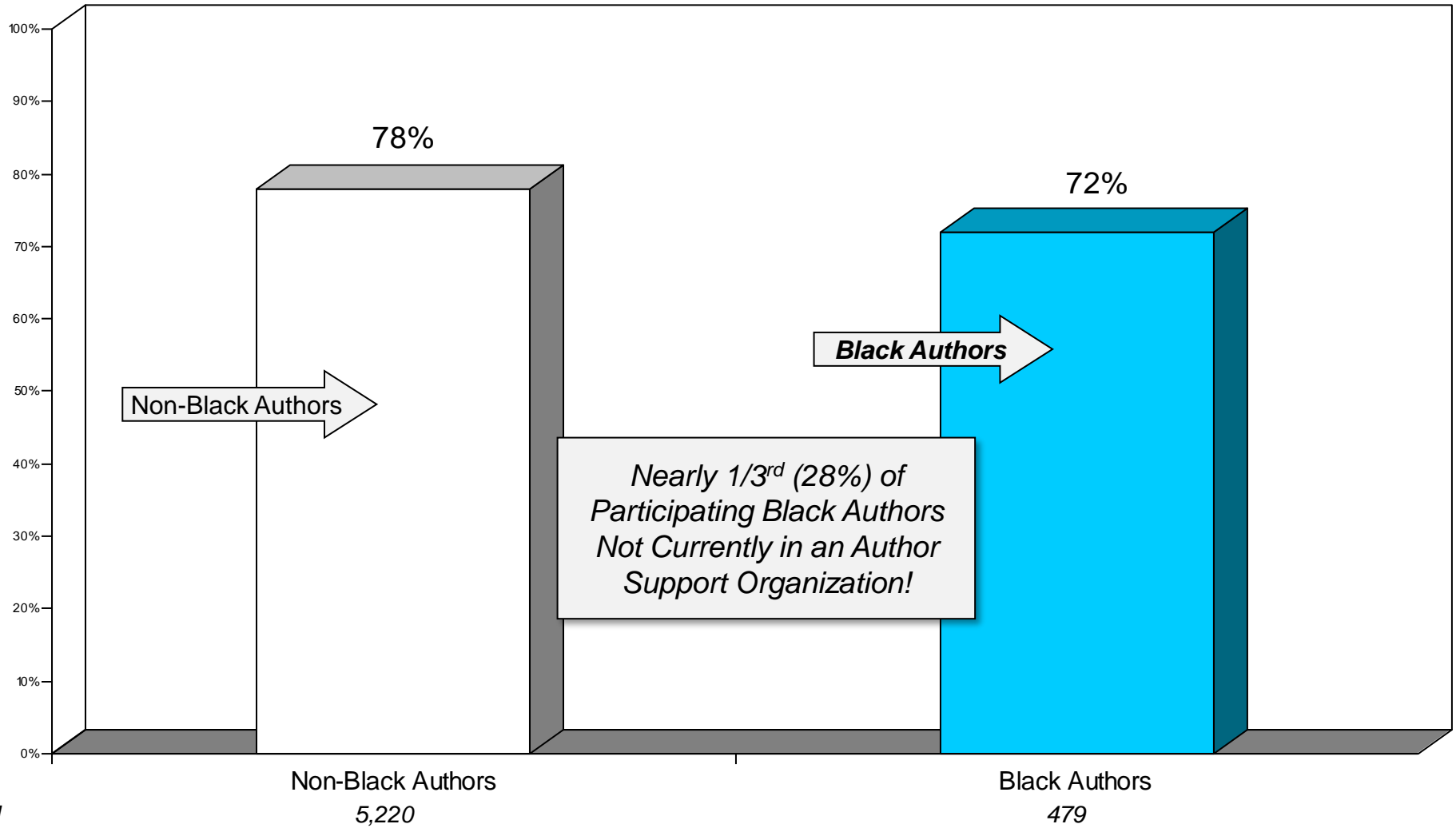
80% ← Regular Book Readers (NEA SPPA)

12% of participating authors identified as LGBTQIA+ and 11% and Disabled (ADA definition)

**Do you have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of your major life activities, have history or record of such an impairment, or are a person perceived by others as having such an impairment -- as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act? **"Non-White" Net Total = Black, AAPI, Native American, Latinx*

Author Support Organization Current Membership Penetration: % Black vs. Non-Black Authors

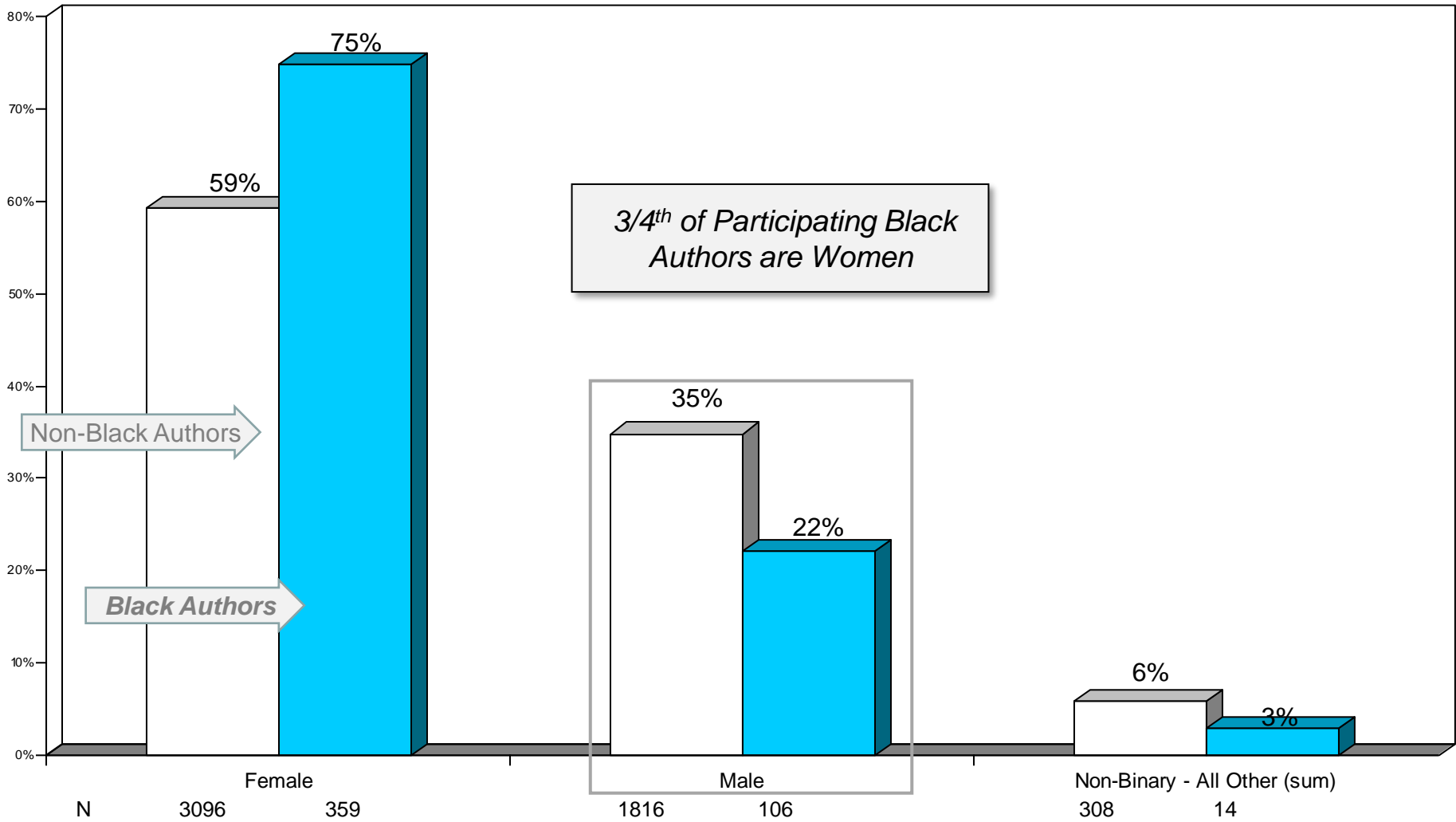
Which of the following author organizations are you a current member of, if any? (all that apply)



N

*Survey
Participant
Background*

Published Author Participant Demographics – Gender and Age by Race – Black Authors

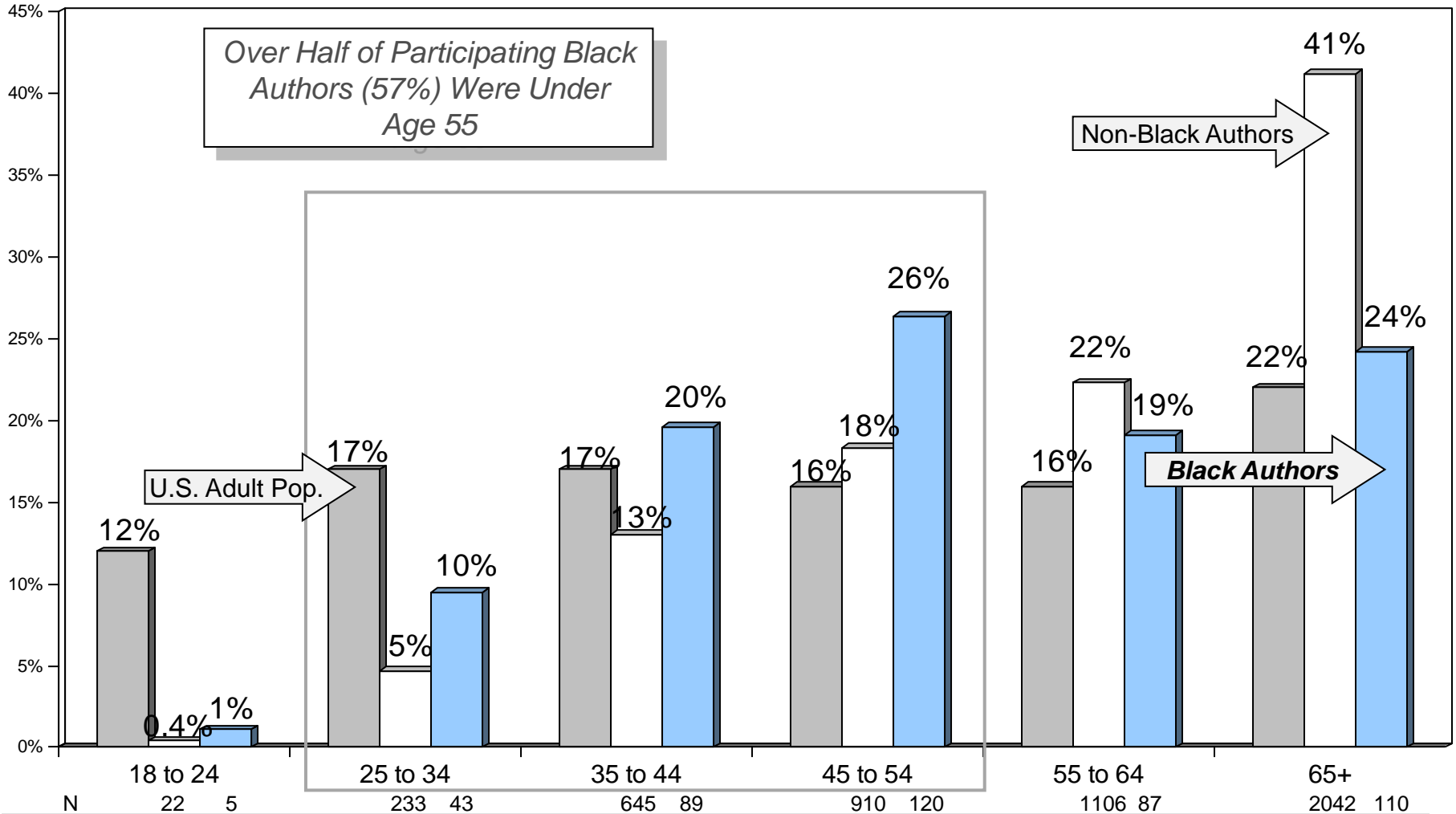


3/4th of Participating Black Authors are Women

Only 1-in-5 Black authors are men vs. over 1-in-3 among non-Black authors.

2022 % Published Book Author Survey Completers v. 2022 U.S. Census Adult Population by Age: Black Authors

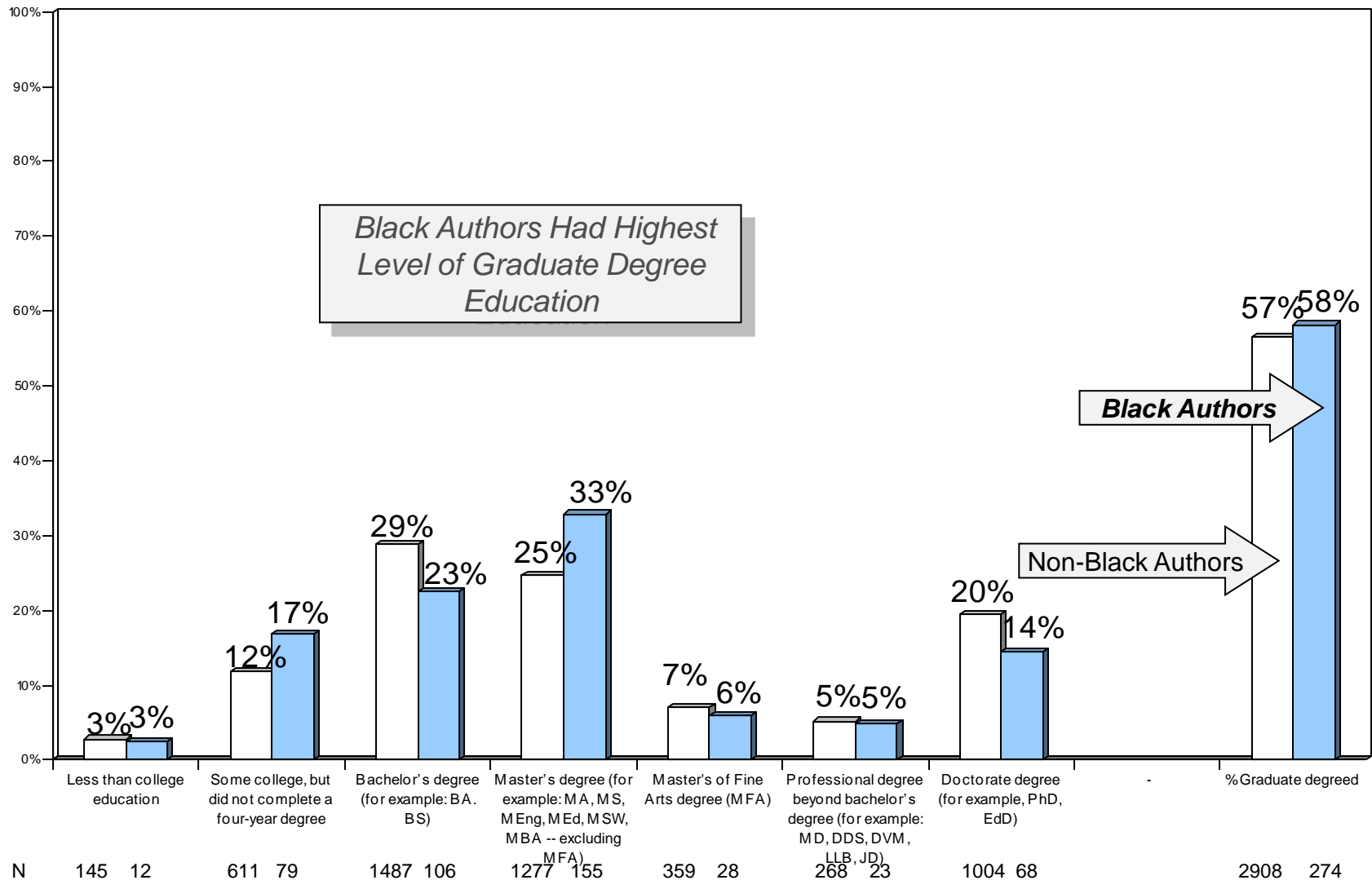
What is your age?



Black authors more representative of overall U.S. population by age with by far higher participation at all age groups between 18 to 54 vs. non-Black authors!

2022 Published Book Author Survey Completers – Education Attainment – Black Authors

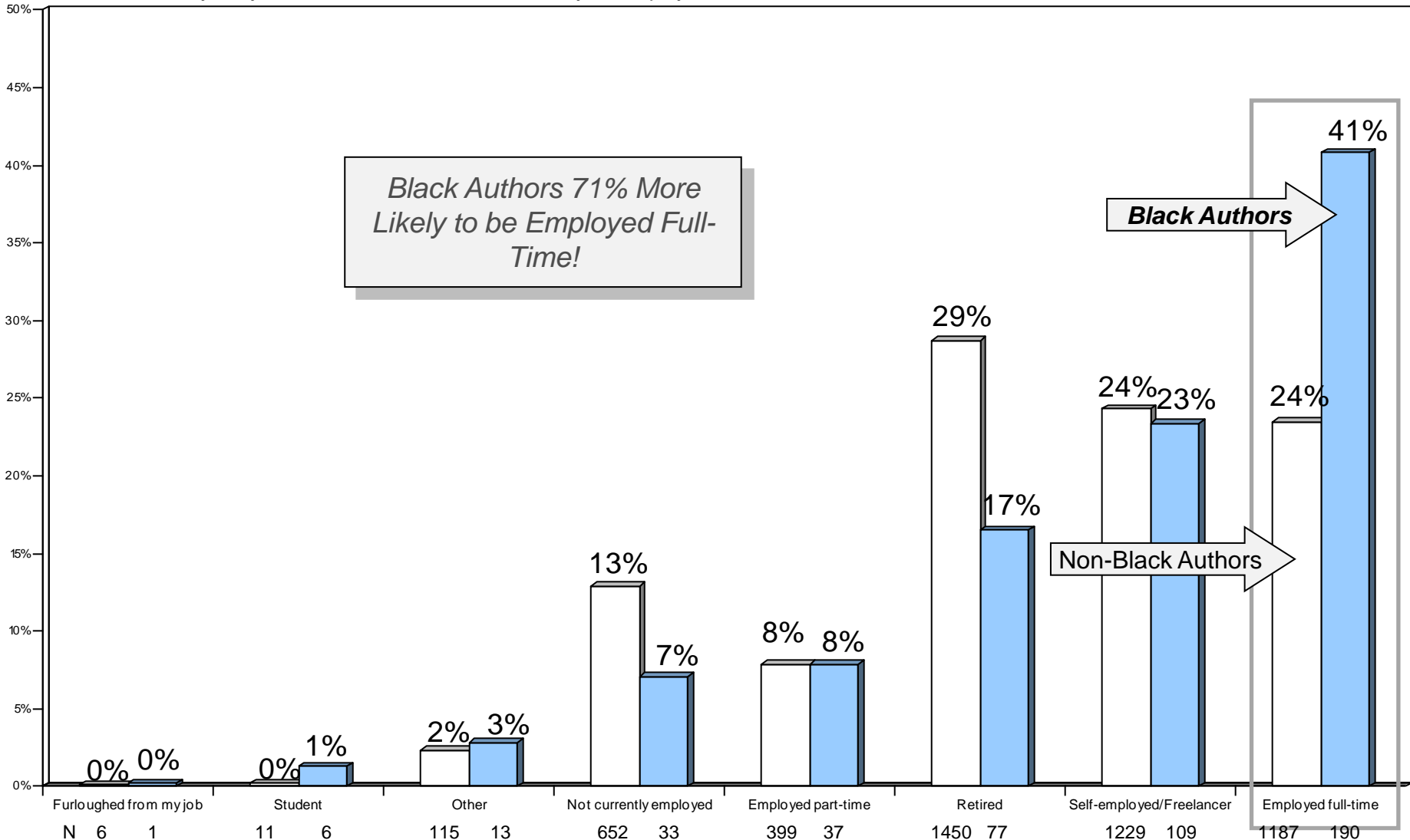
What is your highest level of education attained?



Black authors over 30% more likely to have Master's Degree than non-Black authors

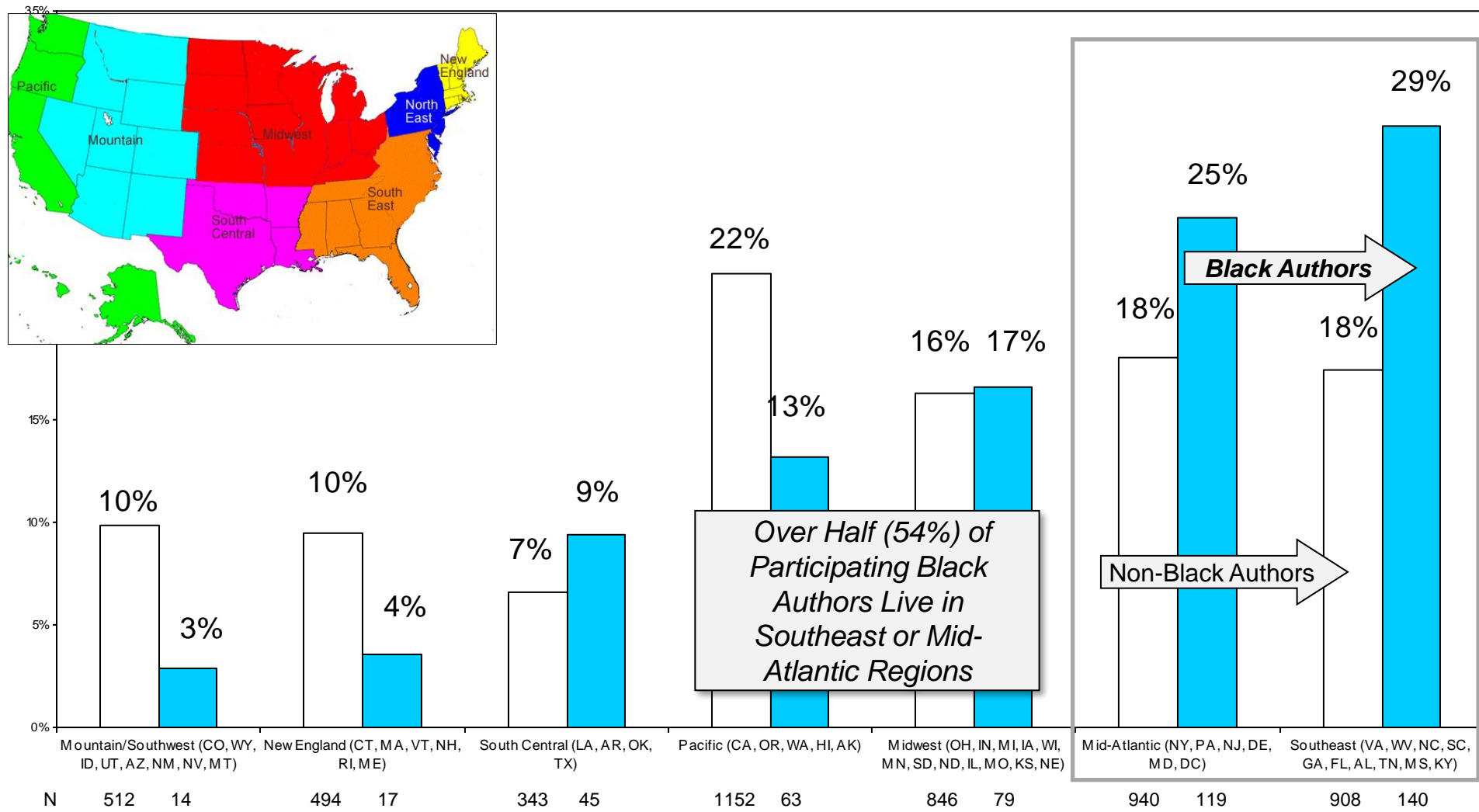
2022 Published Book Author Survey Completers – Work Status Outside of Authorship – Black Authors

Beyond your work as a book author, what is your employment status?



Single largest segment (29%) of non-Black authors were retired, and twice as likely to not be employed.

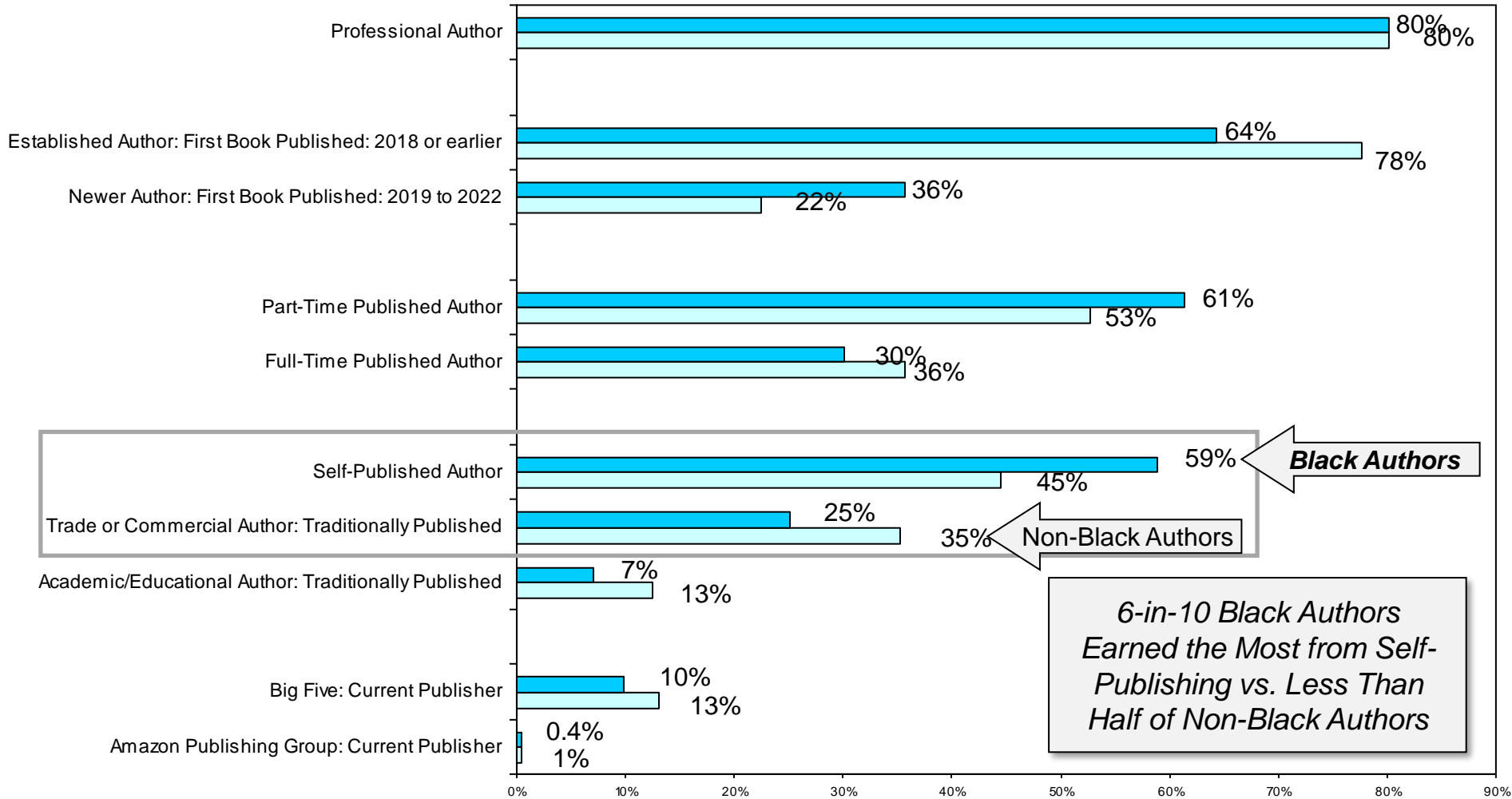
Published Author Participant Region by Race: White vs. Black



Only 36% of Non-Black authors live in Southeast and Mid-Atlantic, with Pacific region leading at 22%.

2022 Published Author Participants – Author Status – Black Authors

Q: As a published book author, which one of the following specific publishing modes did you earn the most income from in 2022? (pick one)

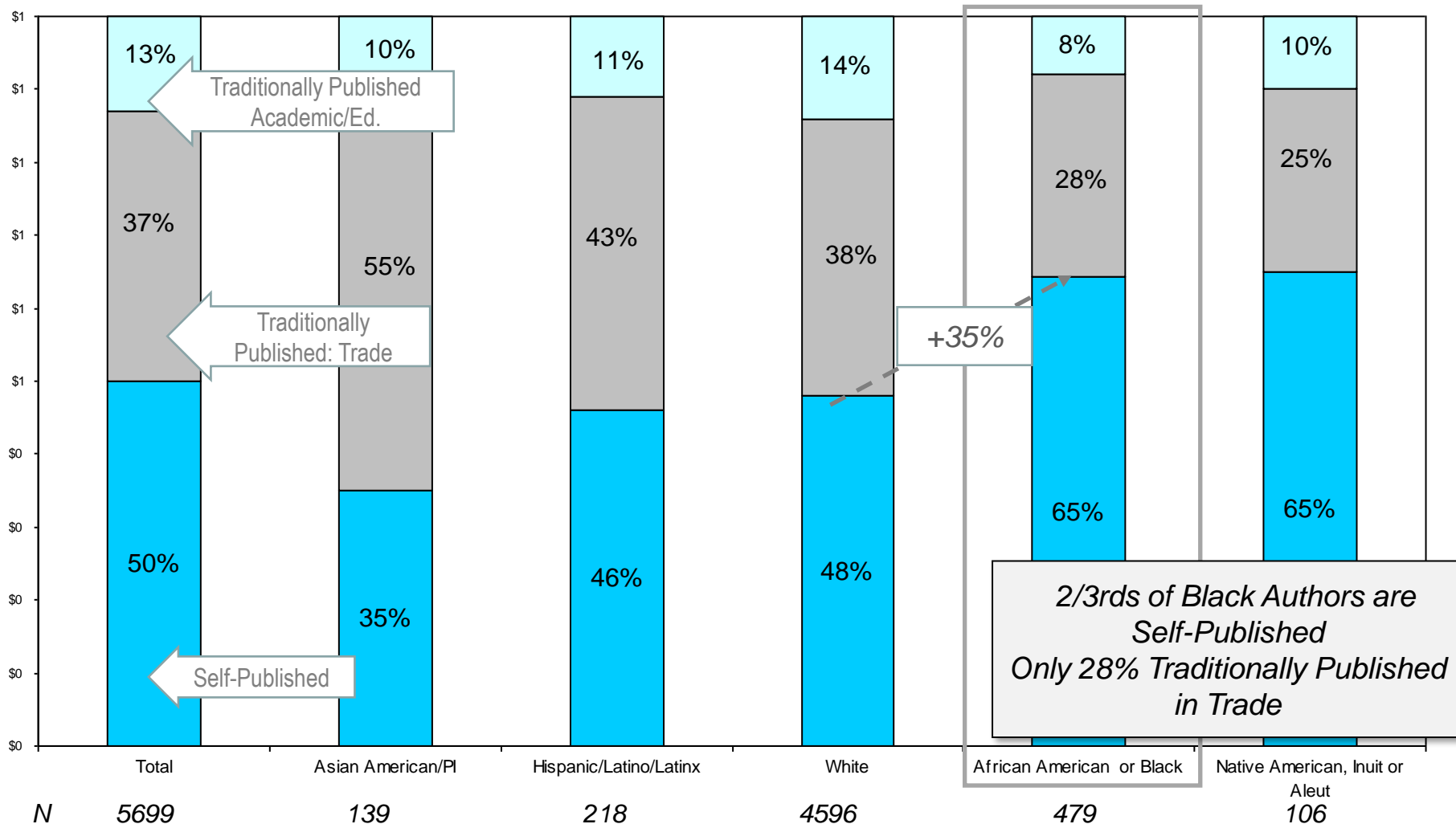


6-in-10 Black Authors Earned the Most from Self-Publishing vs. Less Than Half of Non-Black Authors

Only 30% of Black authors judged themselves to be Full-Time authors, Black authors also 64% more likely to be “newer” authors first published since 2018 (36% vs. 22%) than non-Black authors.

Primary Income Publishing Mode – % Traditional Trade v. Traditional Academic/Ed vs. Self-Published by Race

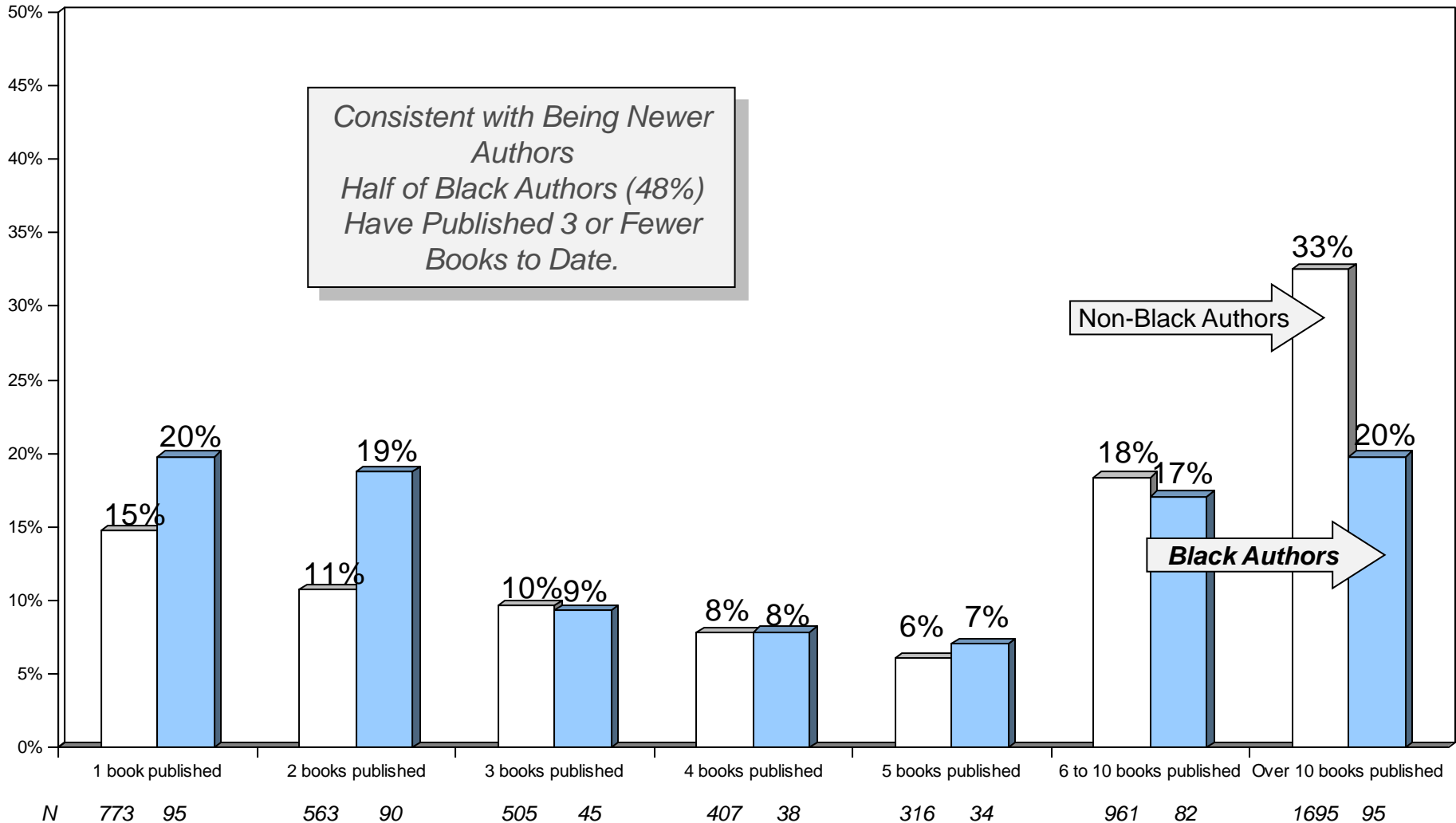
As a published book author, which one of the following specific publishing modes did you earn the most income from in 2022? (pick one)



Participating Asian American and Latinx authors had lowest self-publishing primary income publishing mode. Traditional Academic/Educational publishing highest among White authors (14%), lowest among Black authors.

2022 Published Book Author Survey Completers – Books Published to Date – Black Authors

How many books have you published to date under your name, including new academic editions of same title?



*Consistent with Being Newer Authors
Half of Black Authors (48%)
Have Published 3 or Fewer
Books to Date.*

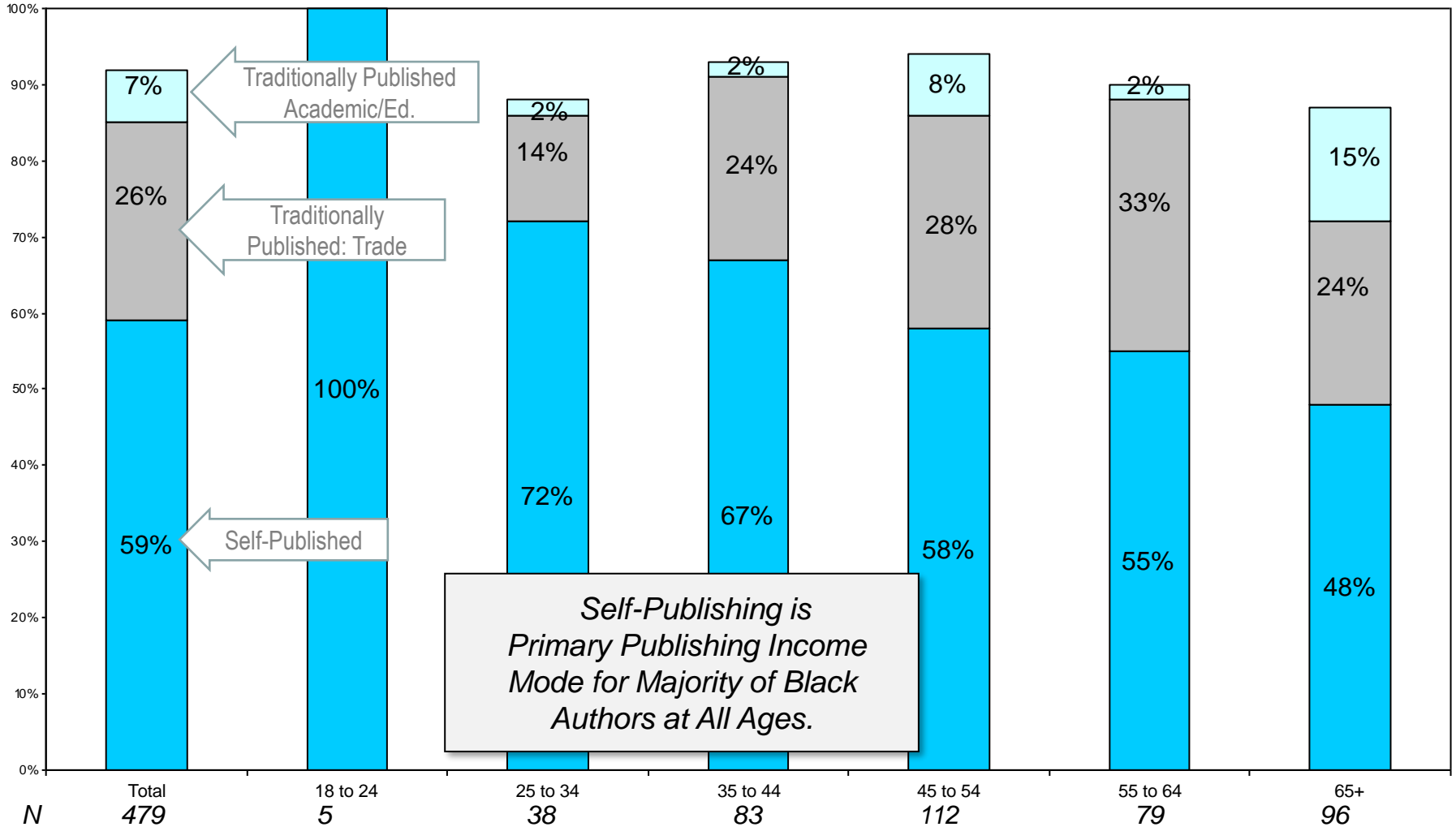
Non-Black Authors

Black Authors

Over half of non-Black authors have published 6 or more books to date.

2022 Primary Income Publishing Mode: % Traditional Trade v. Traditional Academic/Ed v. Self-Published by Age Black Authors

As a published book author, which one of the following specific publishing modes did you earn the most income from in 2022? (pick one)

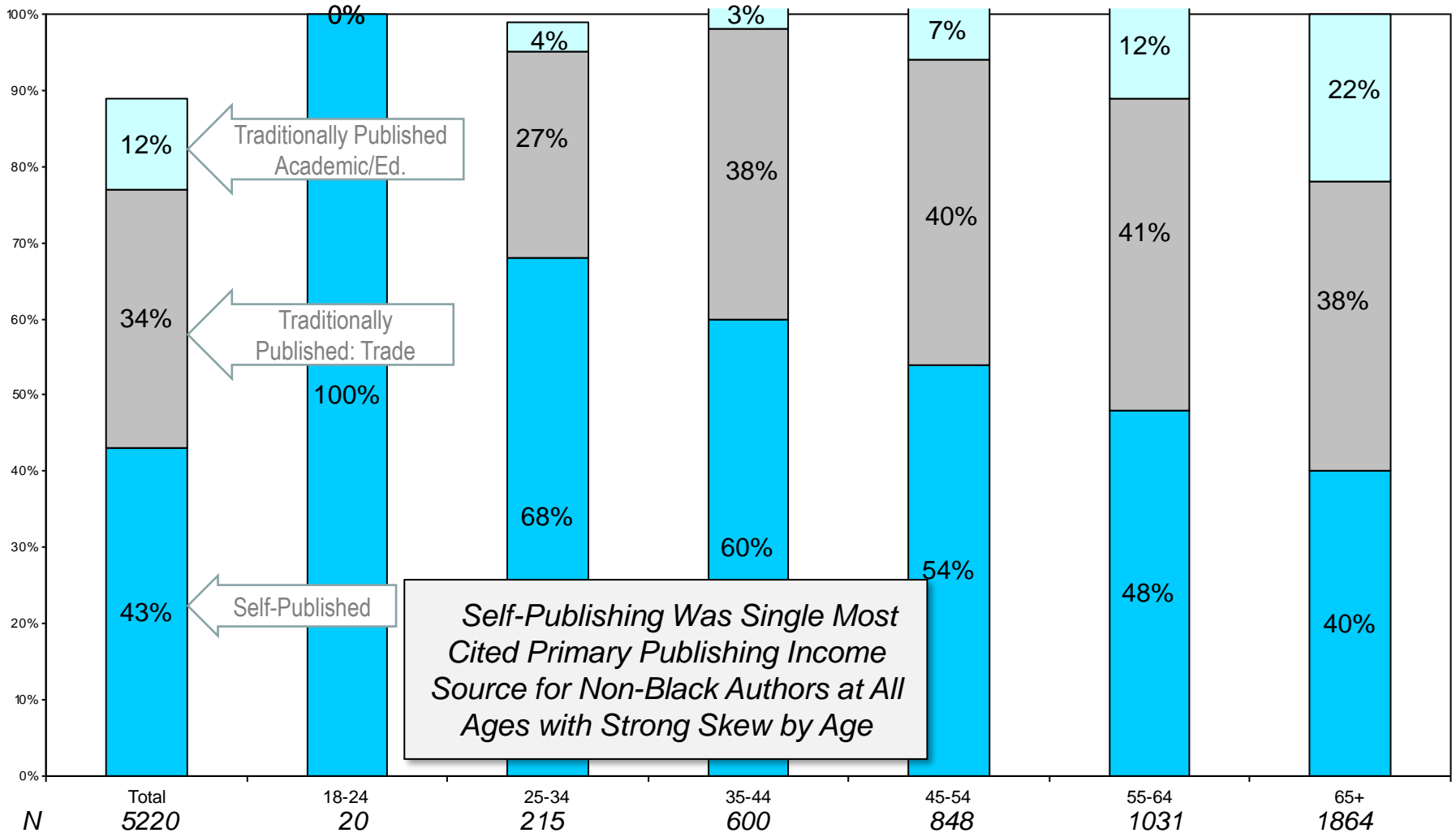


Self-Publishing is Primary Publishing Income Mode for Majority of Black Authors at All Ages.

Traditional publishing had highest participation for Black authors 45 to 64 with just under 1-in-3 authors.

2022 Primary Income Publishing Mode: % Traditional Trade v. Traditional Academic/Ed v. Self-Published by Age Non-Black Authors

As a published book author, which one of the following specific publishing modes did you earn the most income from in 2022? (pick one)

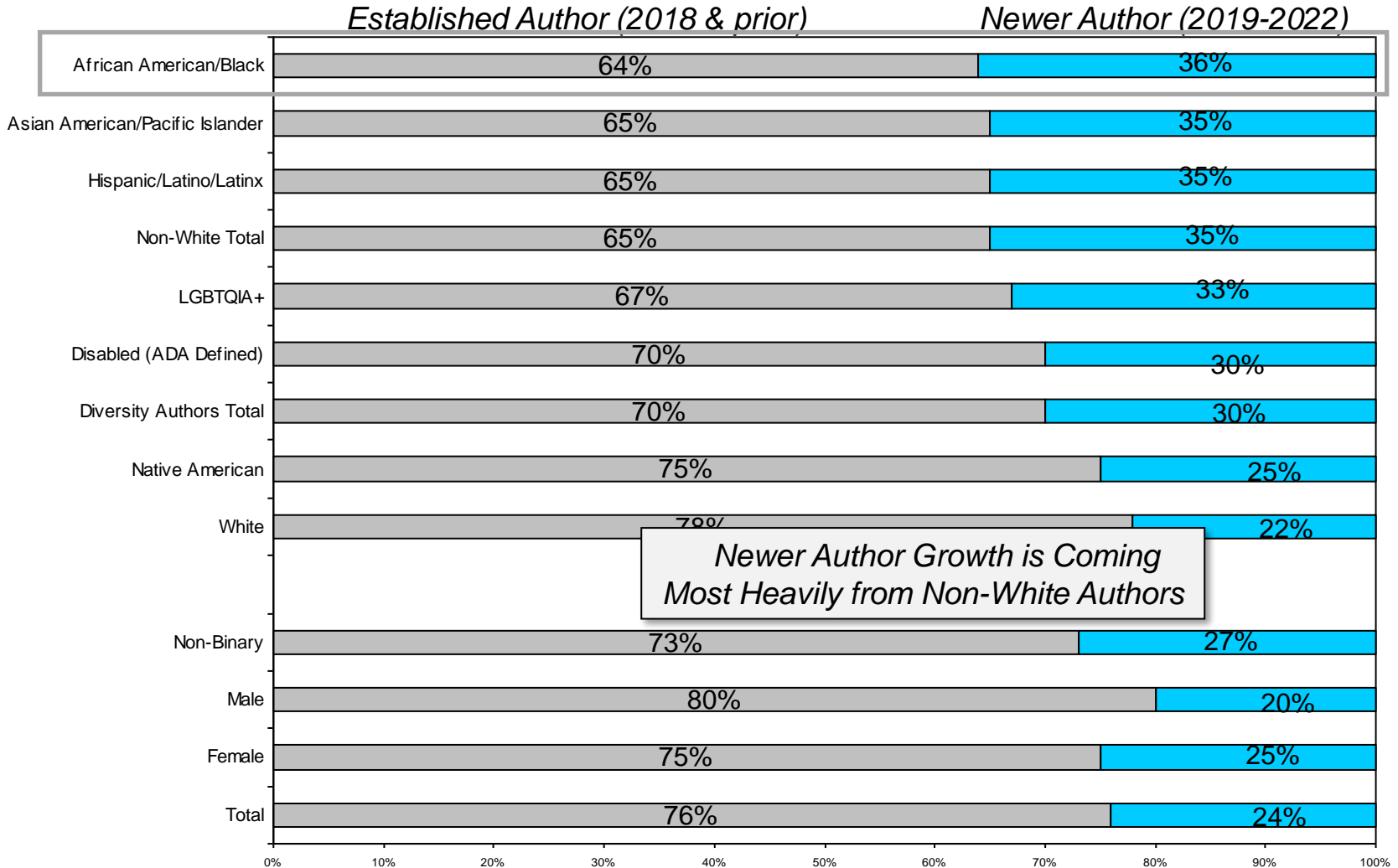


Self-Publishing Was Single Most Cited Primary Publishing Income Source for Non-Black Authors at All Ages with Strong Skew by Age

Traditional publishing had highest participation from age 35 on for roughly 2-in-5 non-Black authors.

2022 Newer Published Author % (First Book Published from 2019-2022) by Gender, Race, Diversity

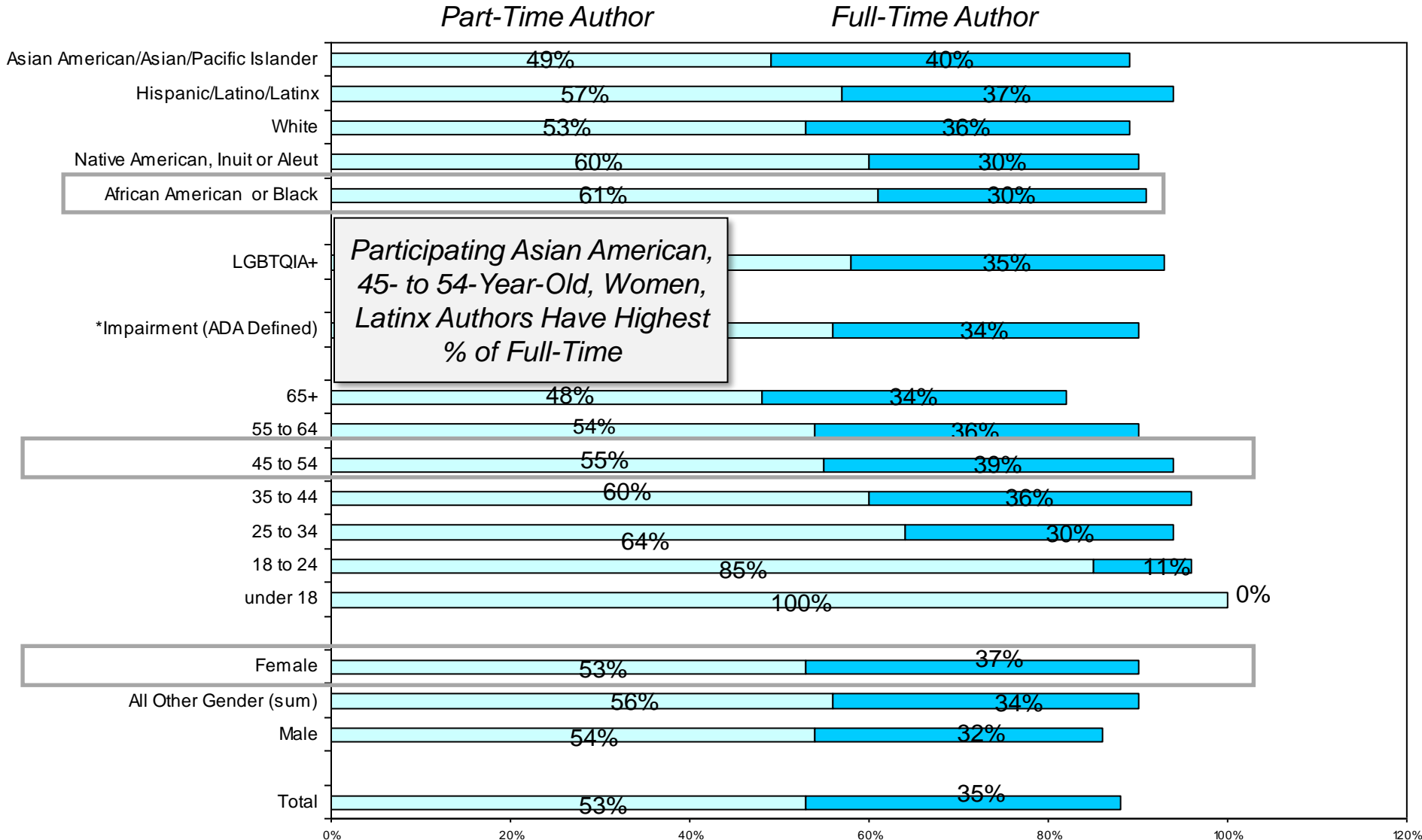
As a published book author, which one of the following specific publishing modes did you earn the most income from in 2022? (pick one)



Men and White authors are the most established authors based on publishing tenure.

2022 Published Author Participants – % Full-Time vs. Part-Time Authors by Demographic

Q: Which one of these best describes your author status at present? (pick one)

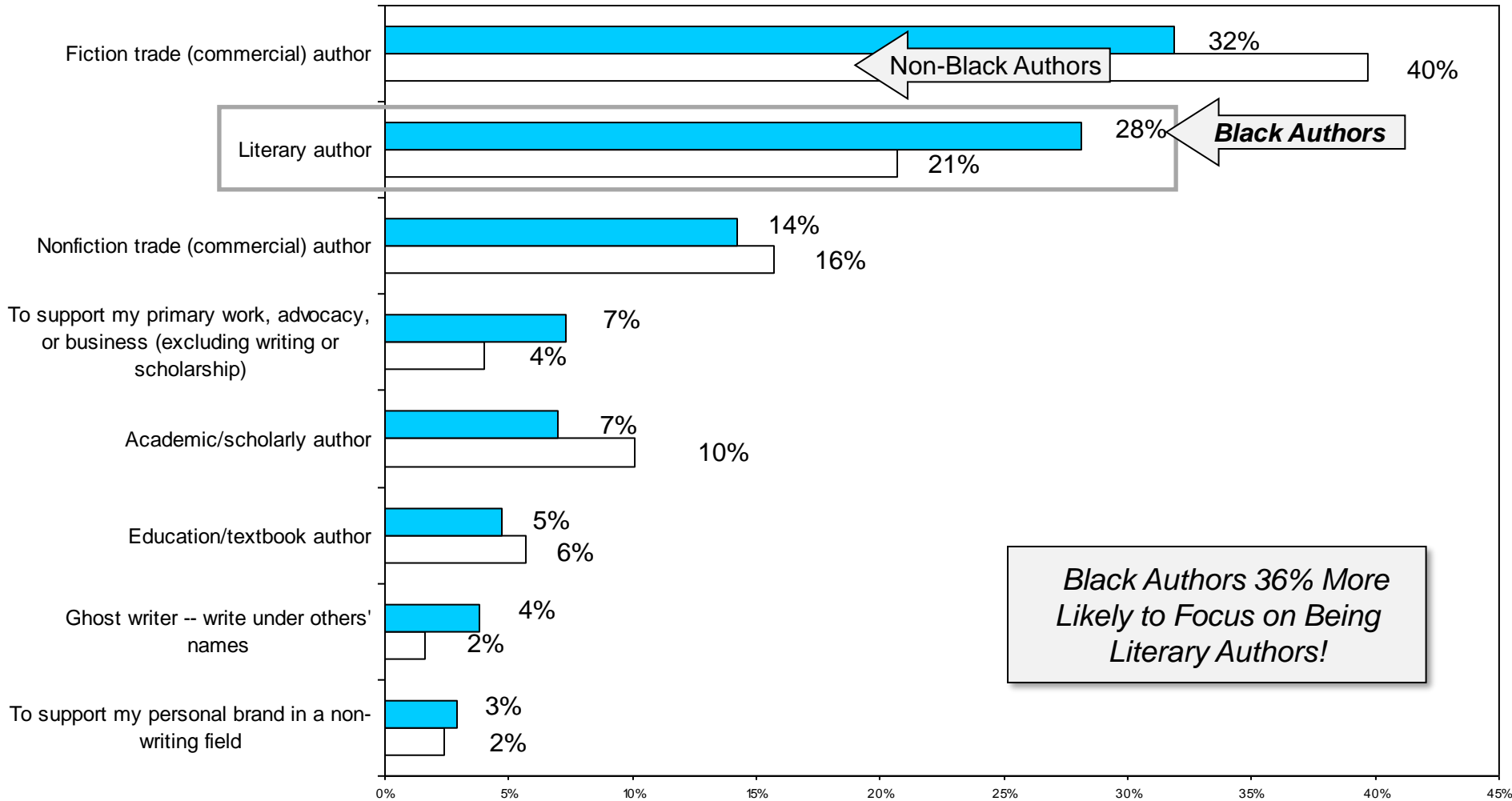


Participating Asian American, 45- to 54-Year-Old, Women, Latinx Authors Have Highest % of Full-Time

Younger authors (under 35), Black, Native American, and Male authors have lowest Full-Time author %.

2022 Published Author Participants – Publishing Focus Overall – Black Authors

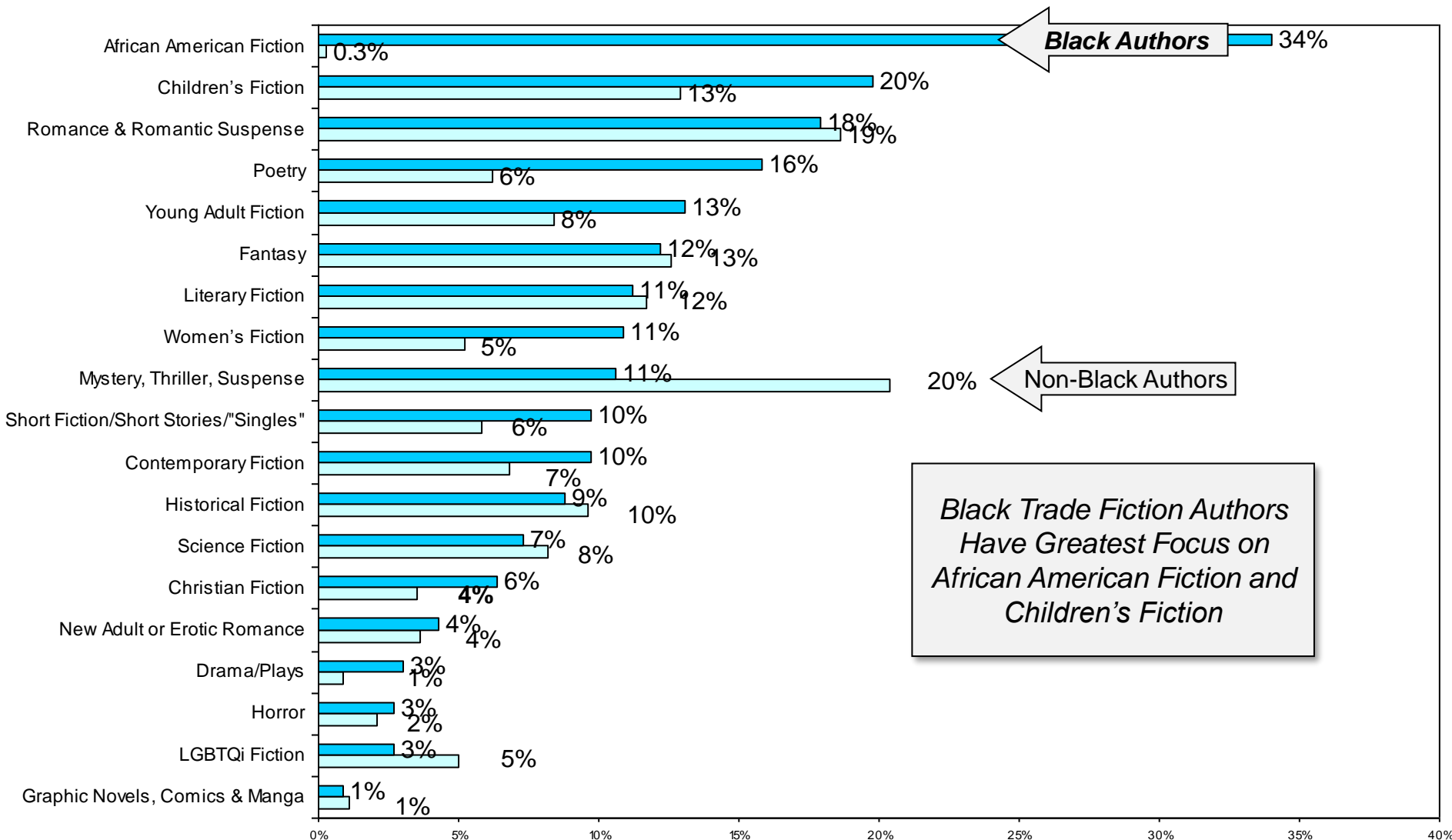
Q: How would you best characterize your current publishing focus as a book author? (all that apply)



Greatest publishing focus for both Black and Non-Black authors is Trade Fiction.

2022 Published Author Participants: Trade Fiction – Black Authors – Fiction Primary Focus

Q: Most Published Book Category(ies) Which of these fiction book categories are you published in? (at least one) – Author Focus Trade Fiction

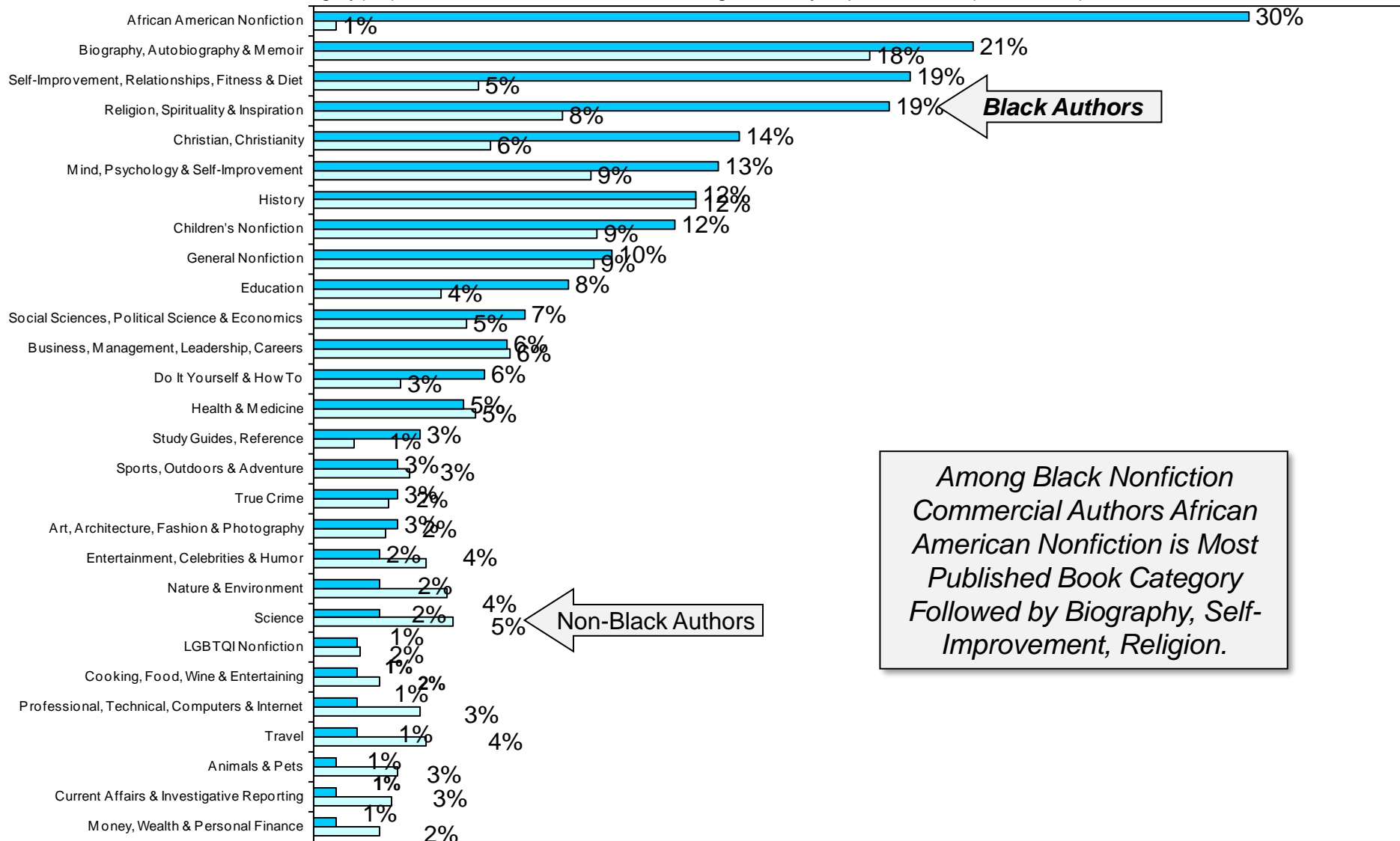


Black Trade Fiction Authors Have Greatest Focus on African American Fiction and Children's Fiction

Biggest Black author publishing gap (2X) -- Mystery, Thriller, Suspense – widely read by Black book buyers.

2022 Published Author Participants: Nonfiction Trade (Commercial) Black Authors

Q: Most Published Book Category(ies) Which of these nonfiction book categories are you published in? (at least one) Author Focus: Trade Nonfiction



Black Authors

Non-Black Authors

Among Black Nonfiction Commercial Authors African American Nonfiction is Most Published Book Category Followed by Biography, Self-Improvement, Religion.

Overall Black nonfiction authors more actively published across virtually all major trade nonfiction categories.

*Published Author
Median Income*

Author Related Income Sources Measured

Author Income Classification

The study focuses on two primary author income related categories –

1. “Book Related Income” – Estimated Gross Pre-Tax Book Related Income: Advances, Royalties, Fees, Licensing, Subsidiary Rights, etc.
2. “Non-Book Author Related Income” – Estimated Gross Pre-Tax Other Non-Book Author Related Income: Journalism, Events, Editing, Ghostwriting, Teaching, etc.

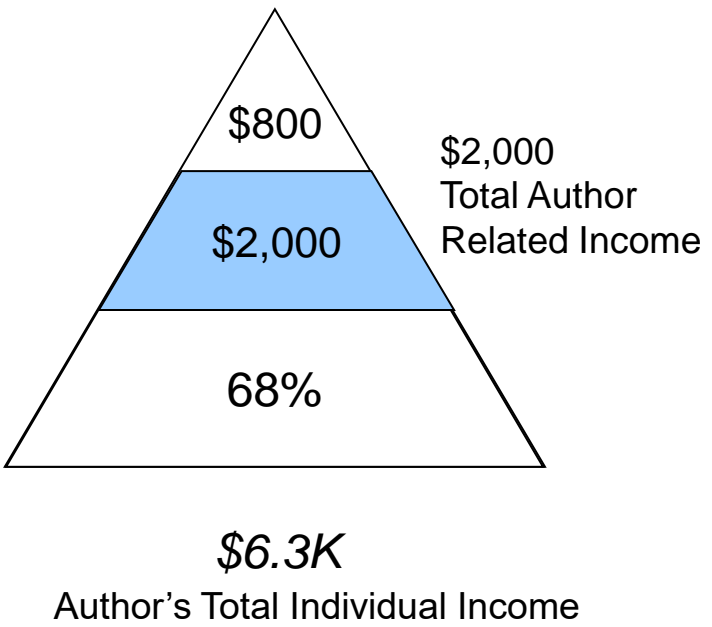
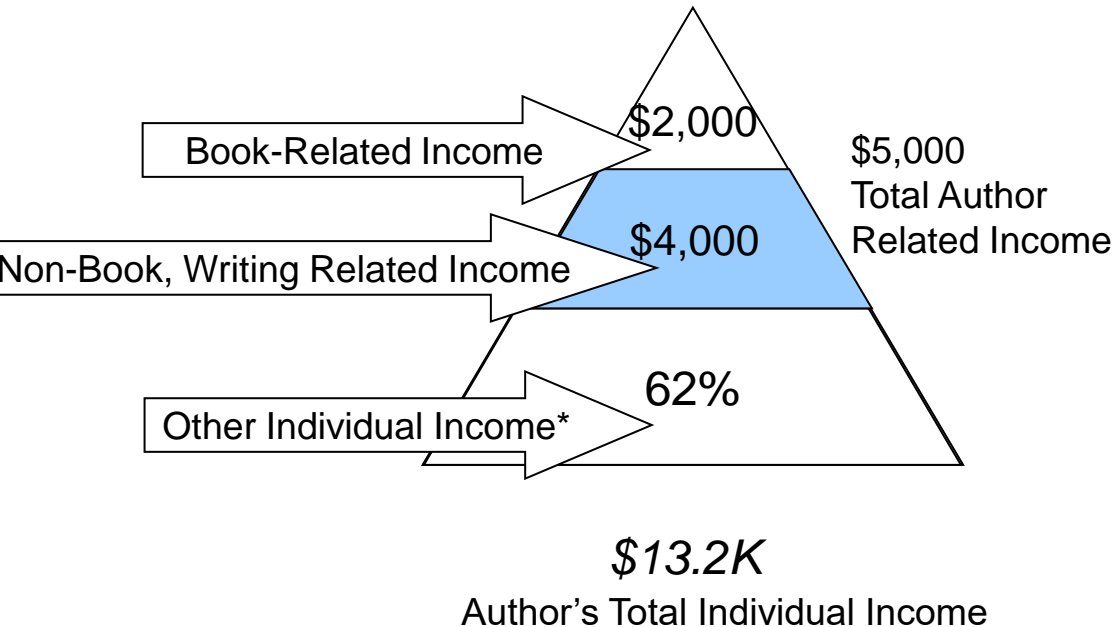
Author Median Income Portrait: Participating Black v. Non-Black Authors in 2022 (with Author Related Income**)

*All Participating
Published Authors
Author Related Income
38% of Individual Income*

*All Participating
Published Black Authors
Author Related Income
32% of Individual Income*

Non-Black Authors

Black Authors



Group base**

4,561

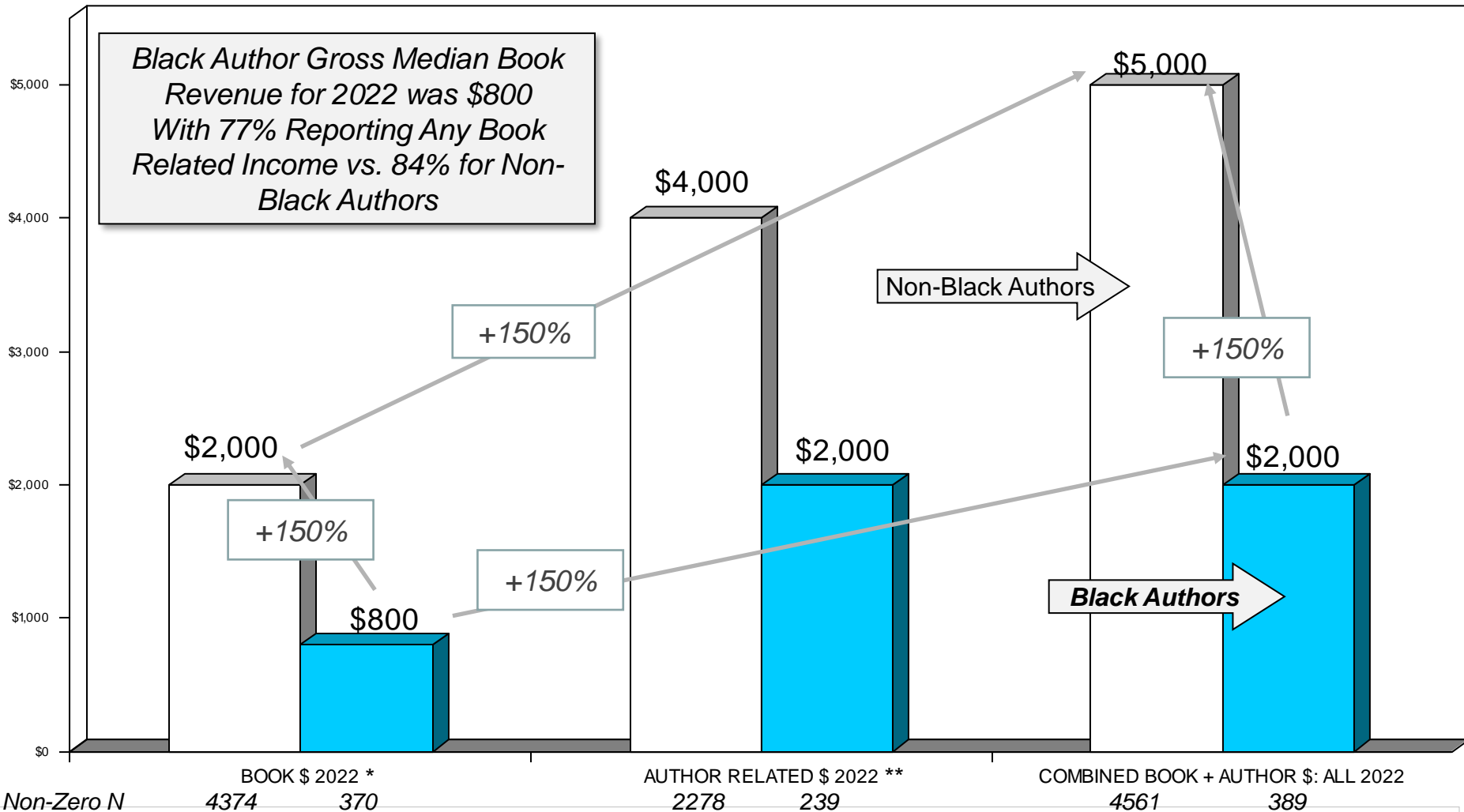
389

Black authors relied on less income from books (32% vs. 38%) but had less than half the estimated median annual individual income of Non-Black authors.

*Please provide your best estimate of the amount Total Author Related Income as % of Your Total Individual Pre-Tax Income

**earned \$1+ in author related income in 2022

Median Income 2022: Gross Book + Non-Book Author Related Income* -- Black v. Non-Black Authors



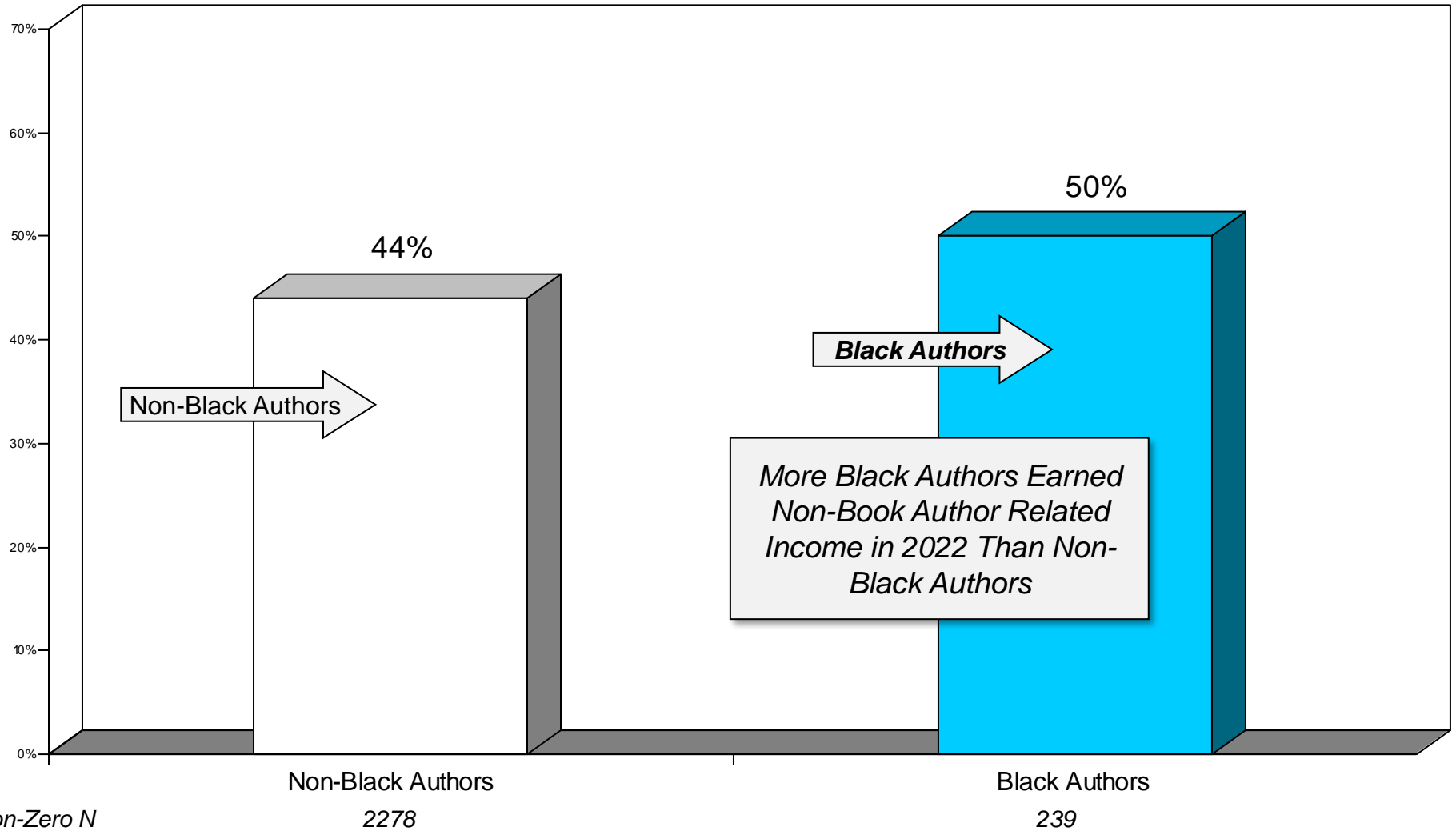
In 2022 Non-Black authors earned 2 ½ times more book related and combined book and non-book income vs. Black authors.

Excludes zero earning authors * Estimated Pre-Tax Book Related Income: Advances, Royalties, Fees, Licensing, Subsidiary Rights, etc.

**Estimated Other Non-Book Author Related Pre-Tax Gross Income: Journalism, Events, Editing, Ghostwriting, Teaching, etc.

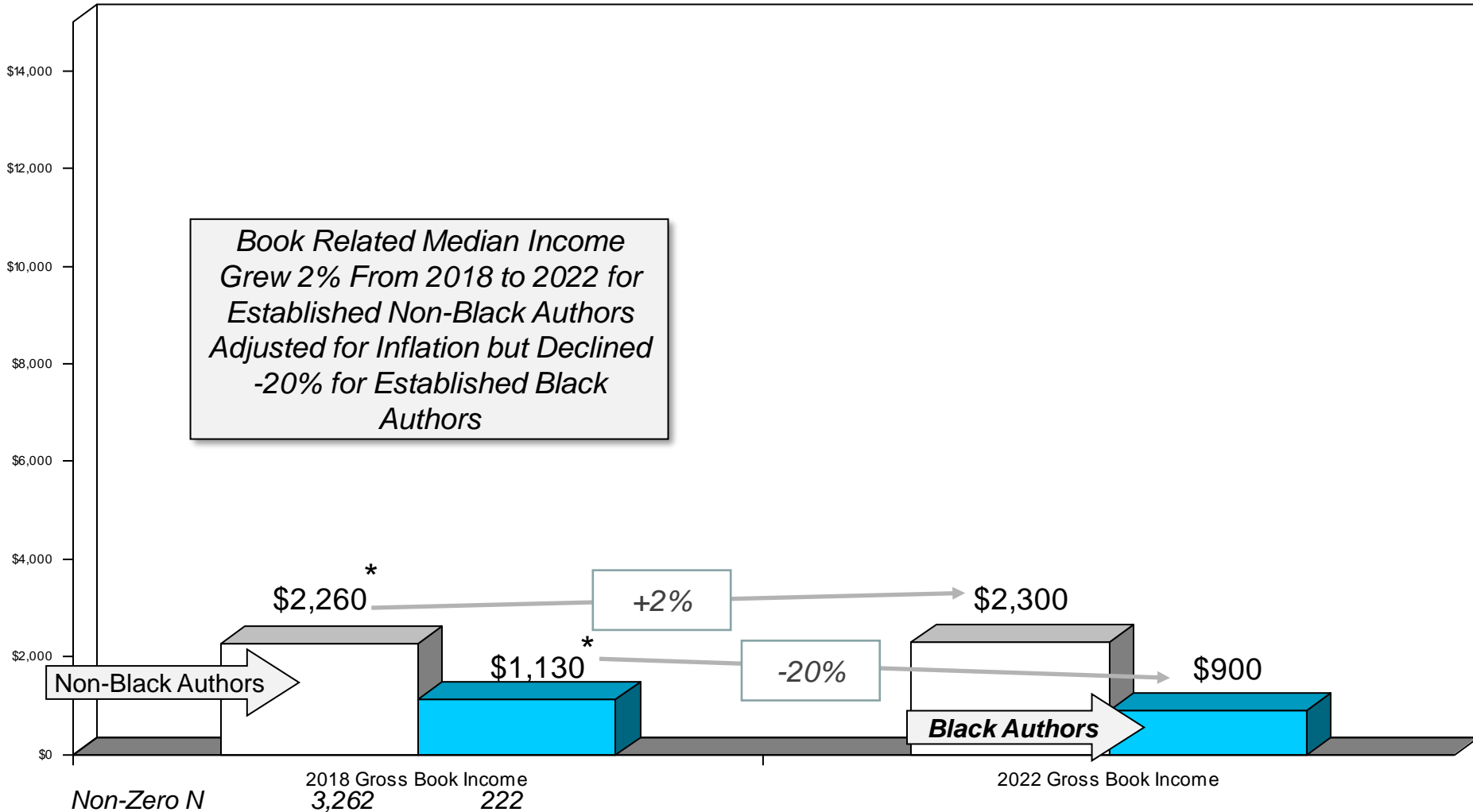
Median Income 2022: Gross Non-Book Author Related Income % Who Earned* -- Black v. Non-Black Authors

Non-Book Author Related Gross Income: Journalism, Events, Editing, Ghostwriting, Teaching, etc.



* Excludes non-zero earning authors

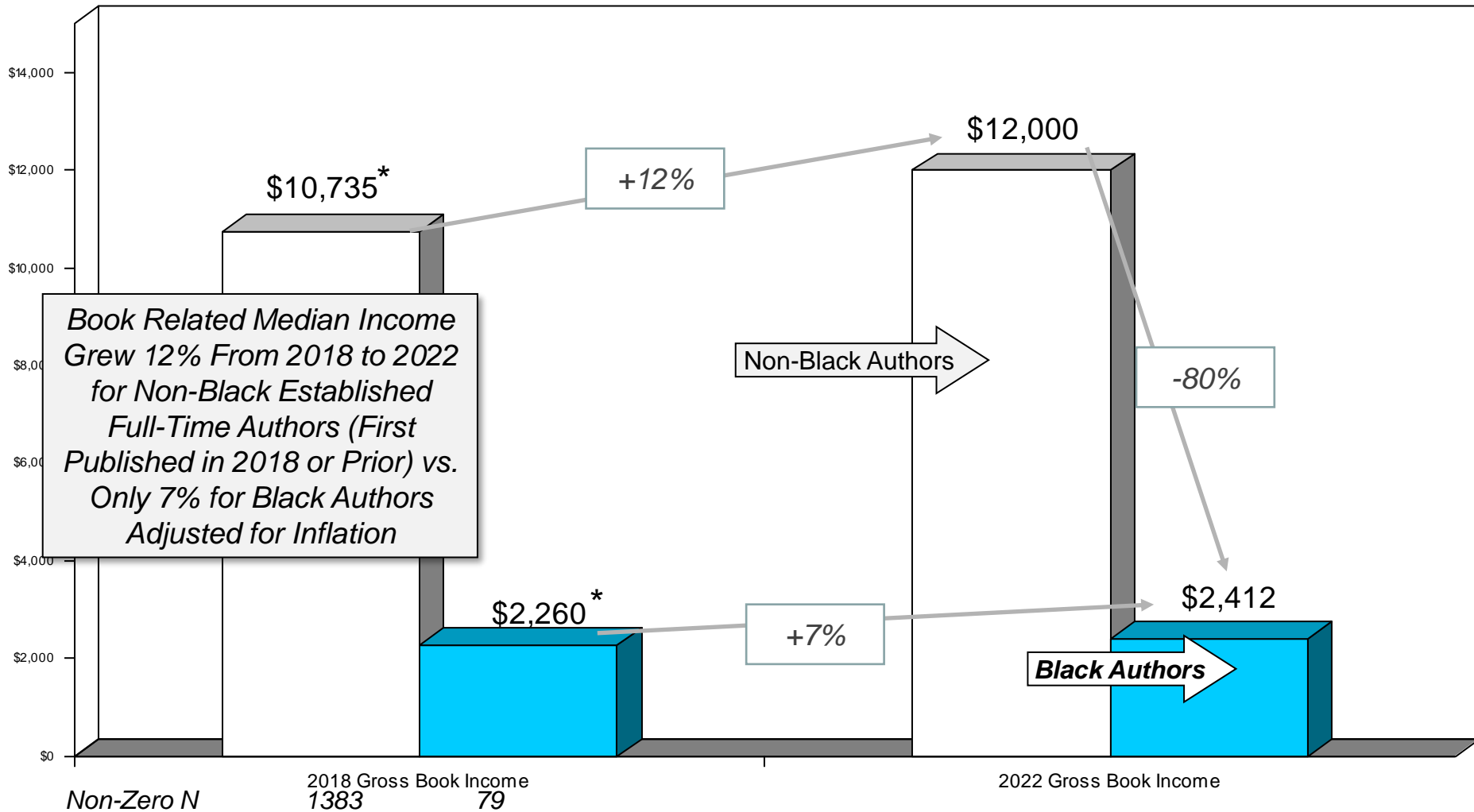
Median Income Trend: Black vs. Non-Black Established Authors** 2022 vs. 2018 Book Related Income*



*2018 results inflation adjusted to 2022 baseline value using Bureau of Labor Statistics 13% CPI growth factor

** "Established Authors" first book published in 2018 or prior years, with non-zero author related or book income in 2018.

Median Income Trend: Black v. Non-Black Established Full-Time Authors** 2022 v. 2018 Book Related Income*

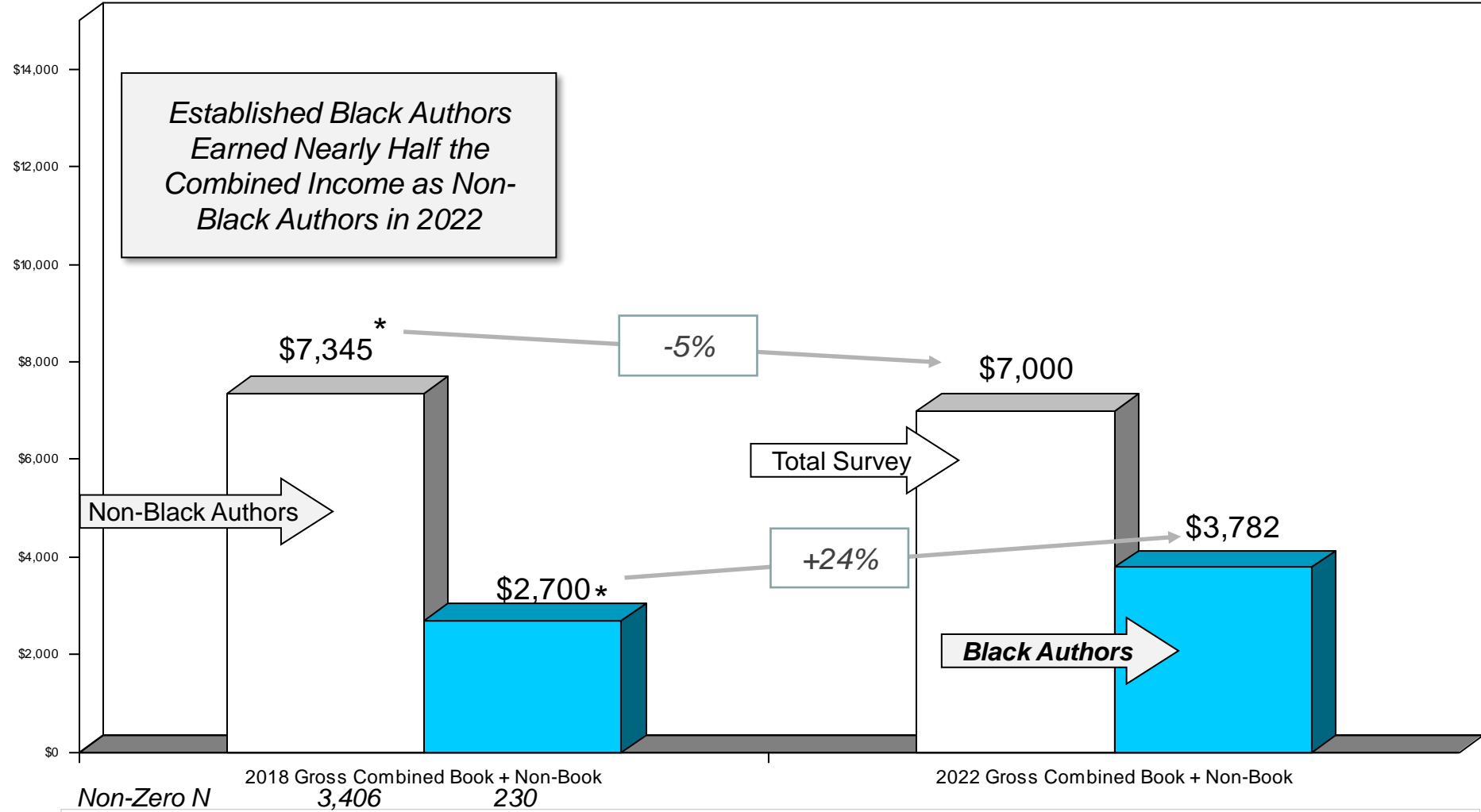


Established full-time authors are far more productive in book related income, but 80% less so for Black authors!

*2018 results inflation adjusted to 2022 baseline value using Bureau of Labor Statistics 13% CPI growth factor

** "Established Authors" first book published in 2018 or prior years, with non-zero author related or book income in 2018.

Median Income Trend: Black v. Non-Black Established Authors** 2022 v. 2018 Combined Author Related Income*

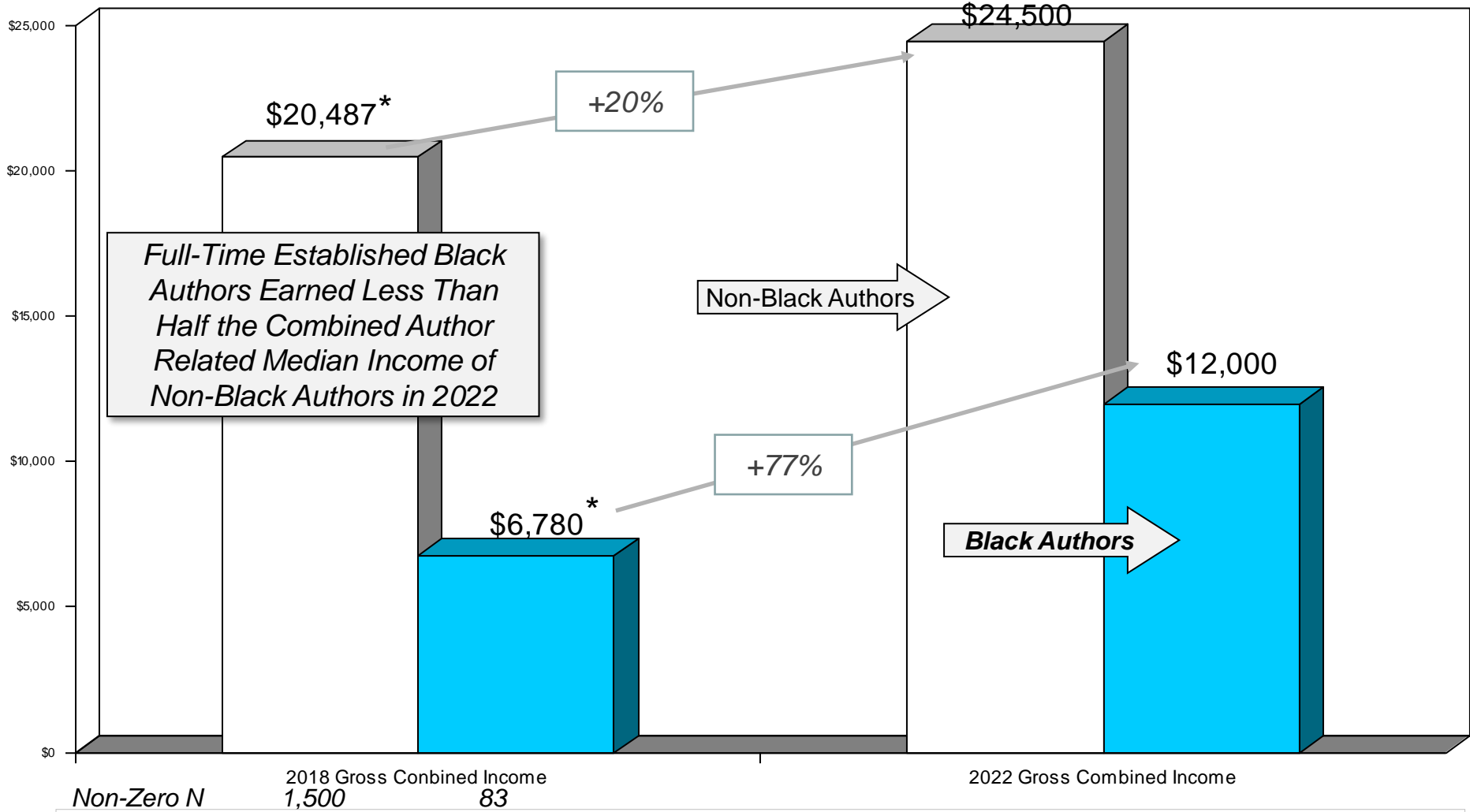


Established Black Authors Earned Nearly Half the Combined Income as Non-Black Authors in 2022

However, established Black authors had the greatest combined income growth vs. 2018 of +24%.

*2018 results inflation adjusted to 2022 baseline value using Bureau of Labor Statistics 13% CPI growth factor
 ** "Established Authors" first book published in 2018 or prior years, with non-zero author related or book income in 2018.

Median Income Trend: Black v. Non-Black Established Full-Time Authors** 2022 v. 2018 Combined Author Related Income*



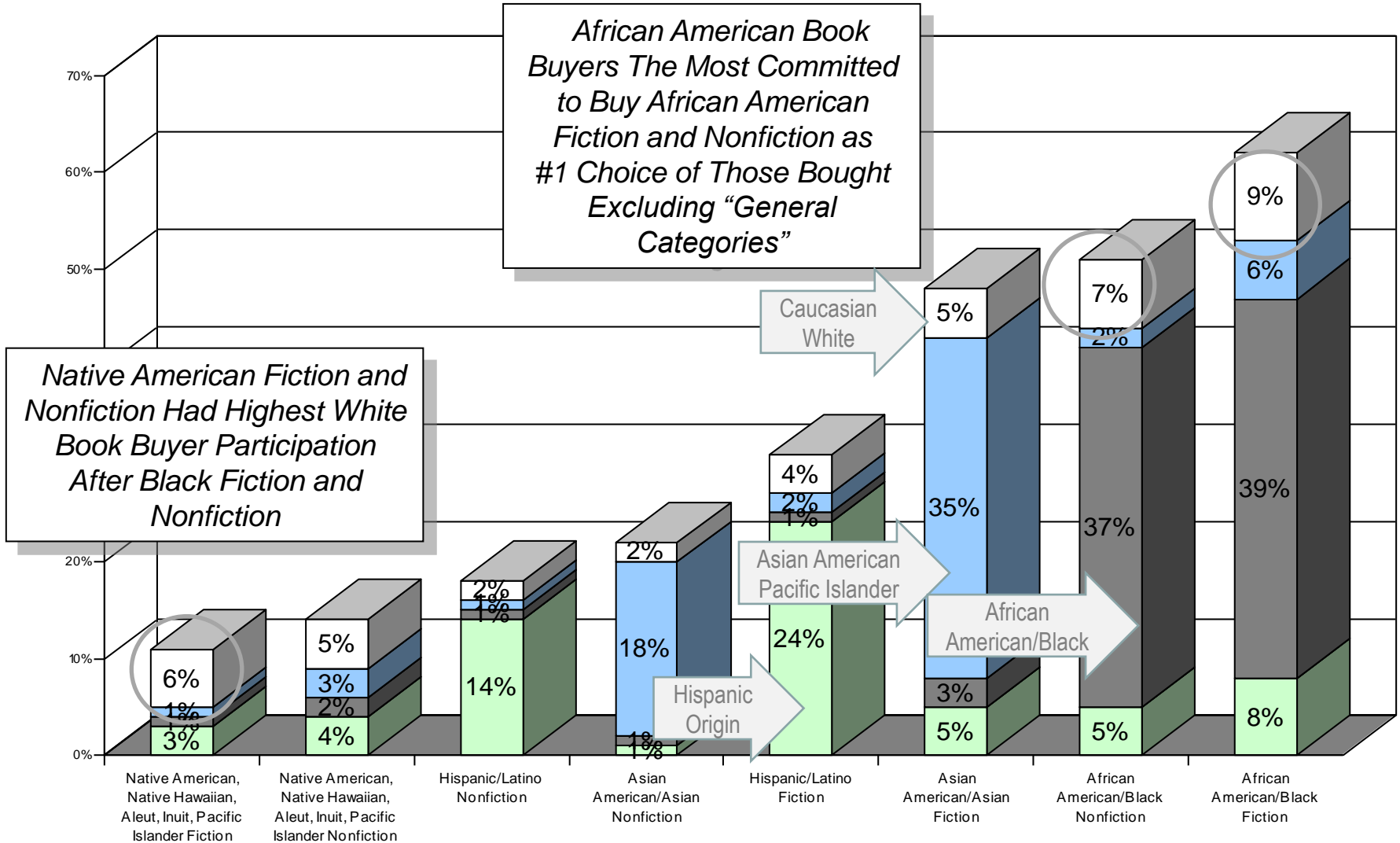
However, full-time, established Black authors had the greatest combined income growth vs. 2018 of 77%.

*2018 results inflation adjusted to 2022 baseline value using Bureau of Labor Statistics 13% CPI growth factor
 ** "Established Authors" first book published in 2018 or prior years, with non-zero author related or book income in 2018.

2022
*Published Author
Marketing*

All Book Users by Race: Book Categories of Color #1 Most Bought – % of All Book Buyers by Race

Out of the following overall book categories, which one do you buy most for your own personal reading? [BUY FOR PERSONAL READING OCCASIONALLY OR MORE]



Asian American book buyers 2X more committed to Asian American Fiction than Nonfiction, Hispanic similar. White book buyers who occasionally read BIPOC overall categories or more most buy Af. Am. Fiction and Nonfiction as #1 choice, followed by Native American Fiction.

Author/Book Marketing – 48 Programs Evaluated

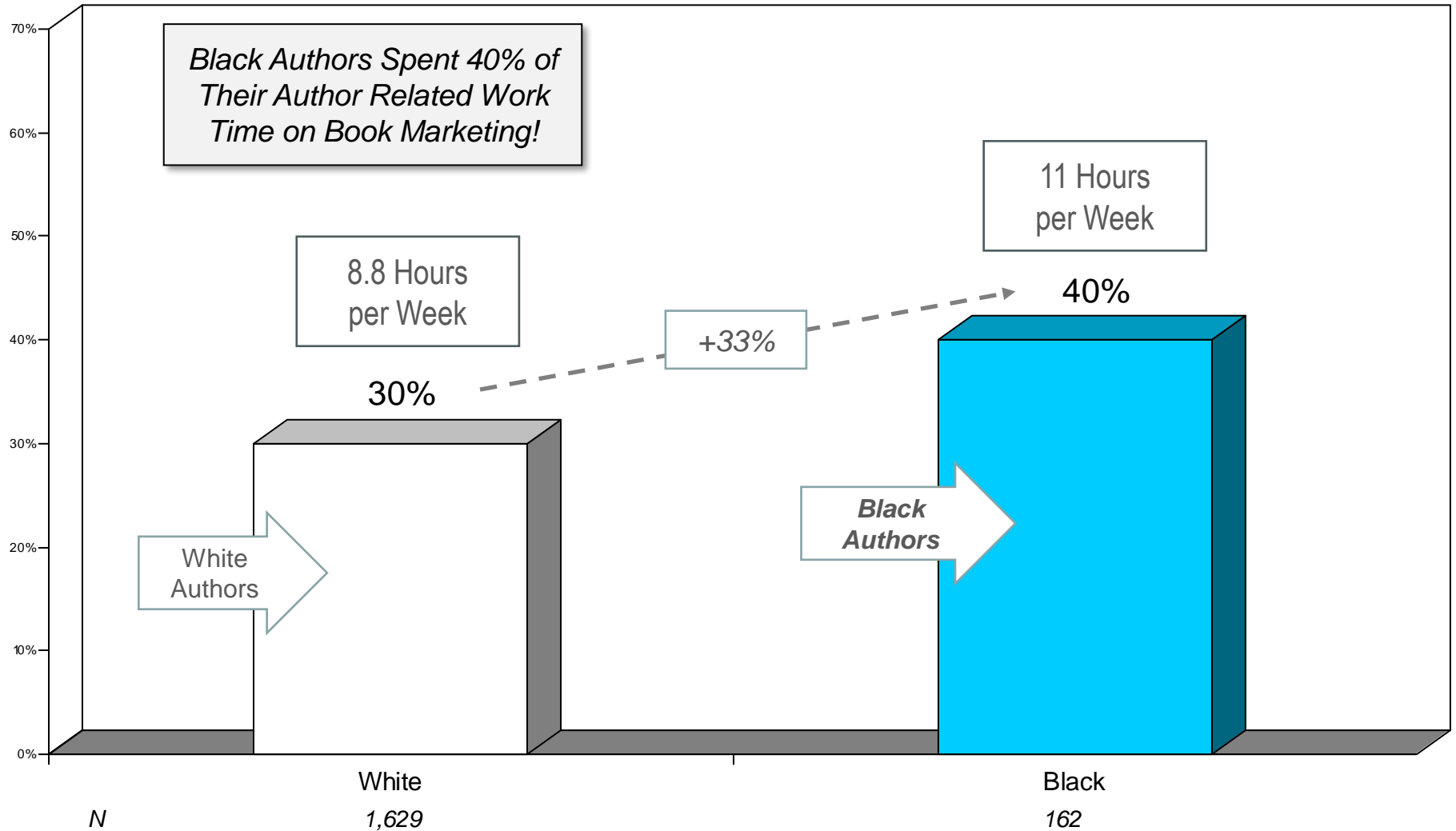
Author/Book Marketing Programs

Academic conferences
 Advertising in newspapers or magazines (print and online)
 Advertising on TV or radio
 Advertising online (excluding Facebook, other social media, booksellers)
 Author appearances, book tours, book events (excluding book stores)
 Author blog
 Book or fan conventions/events (National Book Festival, BookCon, etc.)
 Book store events or signings
 Bookstagrammer Book Tour
 Blogger Book Tour
 eBook discount promotions from online sellers (Kindle Daily Deal, etc.)
 eBook discount promotions in discovery programs (BookBub, Goodreads, etc.)
 Email newsletter
 Facebook messaging
 Facebook author page
 Facebook Live events
 Free eBook promotions on online booksellers (Kindle, Nook, etc.)
 Goodreads promotions and giveaways
 Industry conferences
 Instagram and/or Snapchat messaging or advertising
 Internet seller merchandising, advertising promotions (Amazon, BN.com, etc.)
 Library events or readings
 LinkedIn
 Medium.com
 Mobile App content or marketing
 Online Video/Audio talks, conferences, excluding book clubs (Zoom, etc.)
 Paid search advertising on Google, Bing, etc.

Personally negotiated merchandising, displays in local retail or book stores
 Pinterest
 Podcasting creator
 Podcasting guest
 Producing/presenting YouTube videos
 Promoting to book bloggers
 Publicity agency, publicist
 Publishing eBook on Kindle Unlimited or other subscription program
 Reading group or book club appearances in person (not online or by phone)
 Reading groups or book clubs remote appearances online or by phone
 School or college events, lectures or readings
 Advertising on Facebook
 Traditional publicity (campaign, press releases, etc.)
 Twitter
 Updated book categorization, description, reviews, etc. (metadata) on online sellers
 Video book trailer/author video online (excluding YouTube)
 Your author website
 TikTok / BookTok
 Substack
 Created & tested improved book positioning/message/ad copy to increase sell-through rate
 other (please list)

Author Marketing – 2022 % of Total Author Time Spent on Marketing Activities – Black vs. White Authors

How much of your overall author related work time do you estimate you spent on marketing your books or your name as an author in 2022?

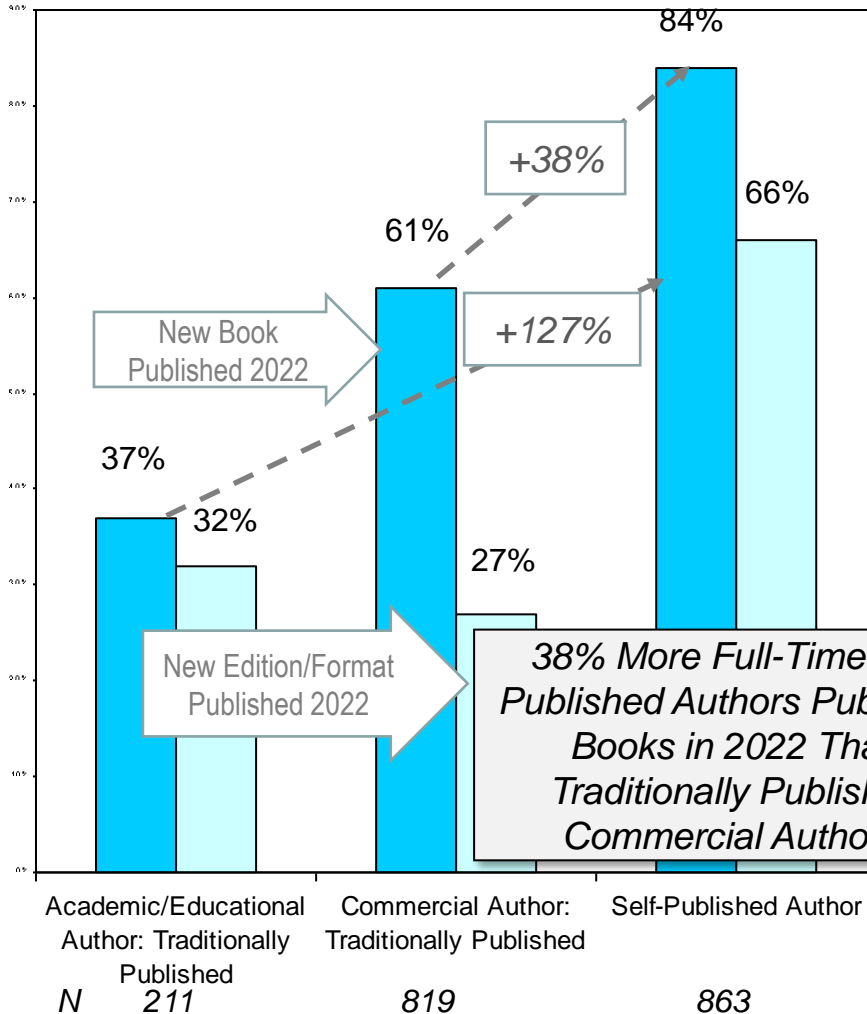


Black authors are approaching spending half their author time as marketers, on average 11 hours a week.

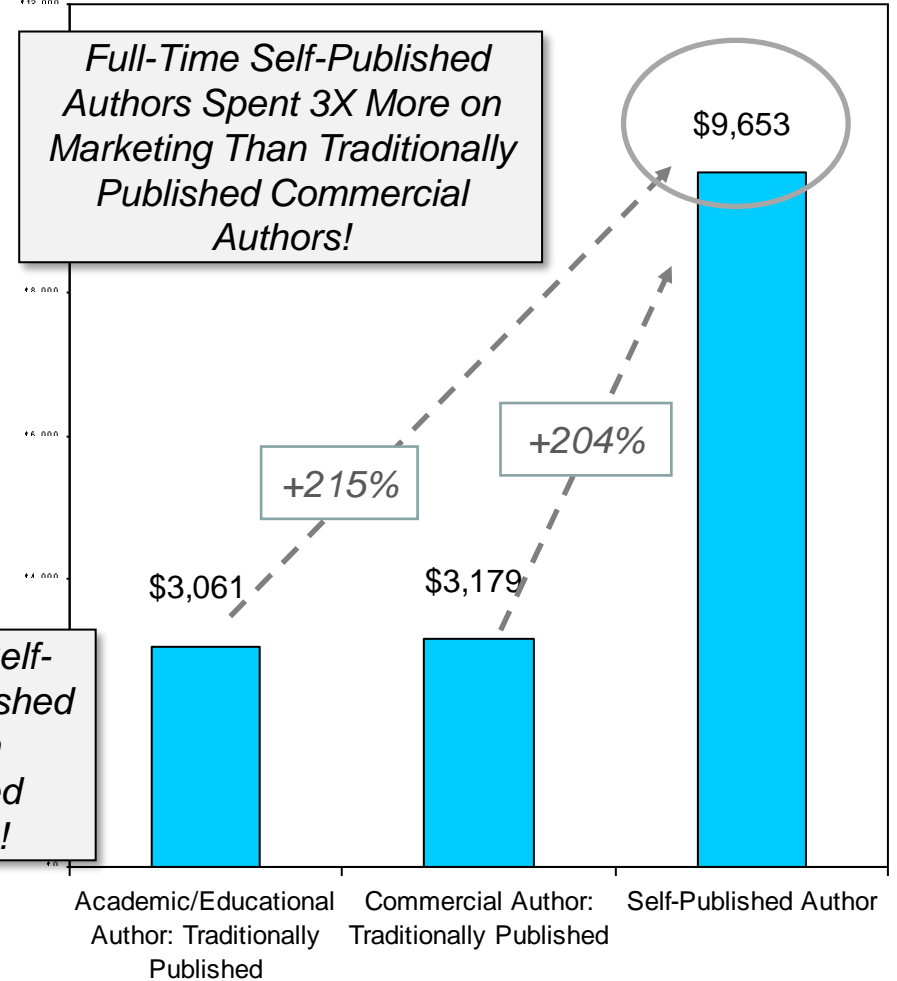
* Excludes non-zero earning authors

2022 New Books Published vs. Own Marketing \$ Spent – Full-Time Traditionally Published Commercial vs. Traditionally Published Academic/Educational vs. Self-Published Authors

What type of book editions did you publish in 2022?
(all that apply)



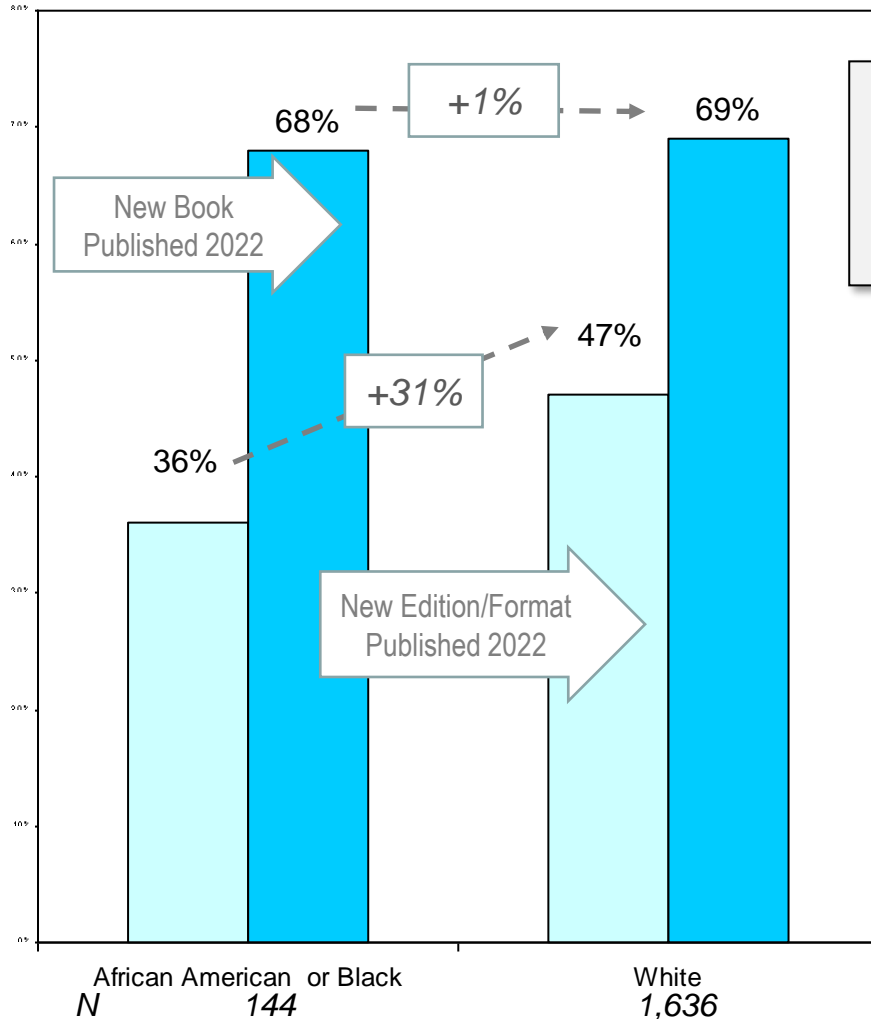
Total Book Marketing \$'s You Spent in 2022 (excluding agencies and staff)
[excludes authors spending \$100K or higher]



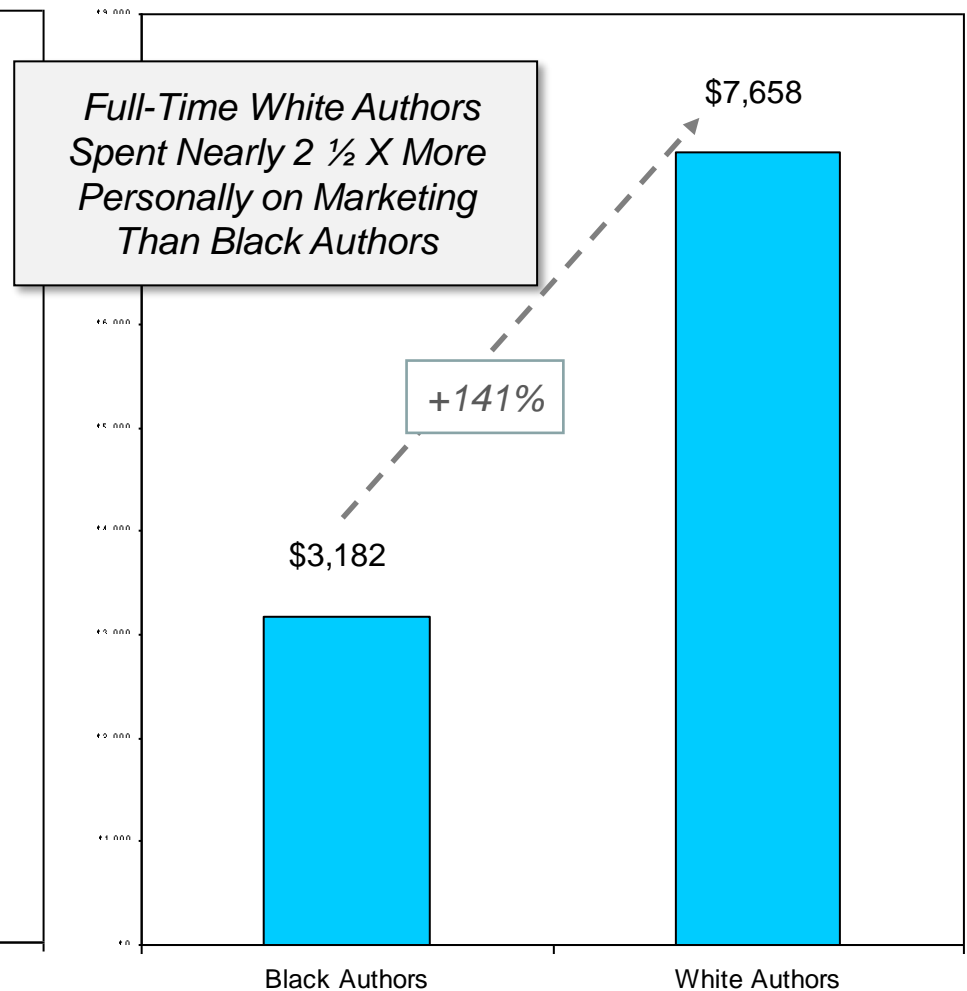
Full-time Self-published authors significantly out-publishing and out-spending Traditionally published commercial authors!

2022 New Books Published vs. Personal Marketing \$ Spent – Full-Time Black vs. White Authors

What type of book editions did you publish in 2022?
(all that apply)



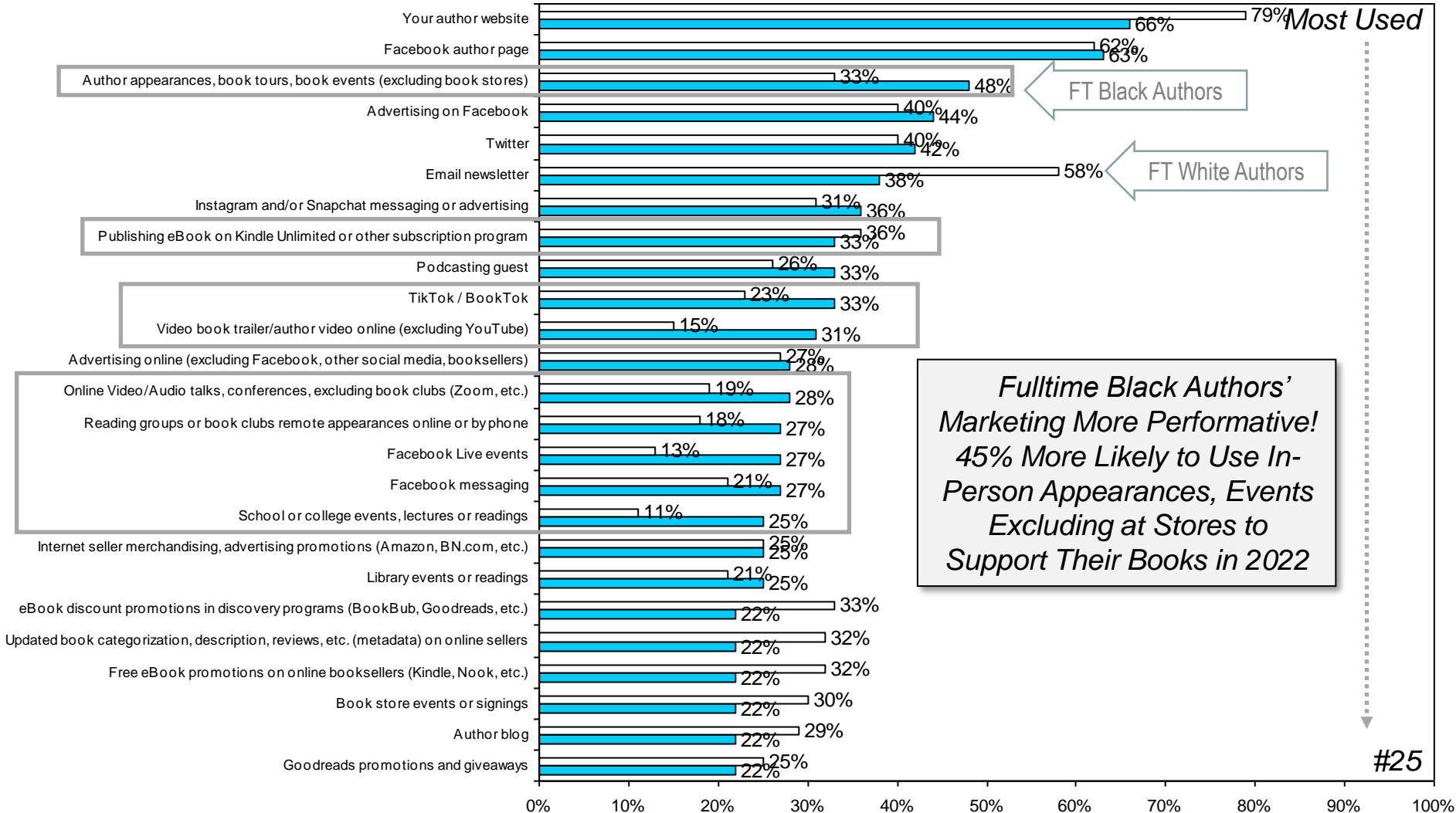
Total Book Marketing \$'s You Spent in 2022 (excluding agencies and staff)
[excludes authors spending \$100K or higher]



Nearly 70% of both full-time White and Black authors in the marketing section released a new book in 2022.

Book Marketing Programs – % Participating Authors Used in 2022 – Top 25 – Fulltime Black v. White Authors

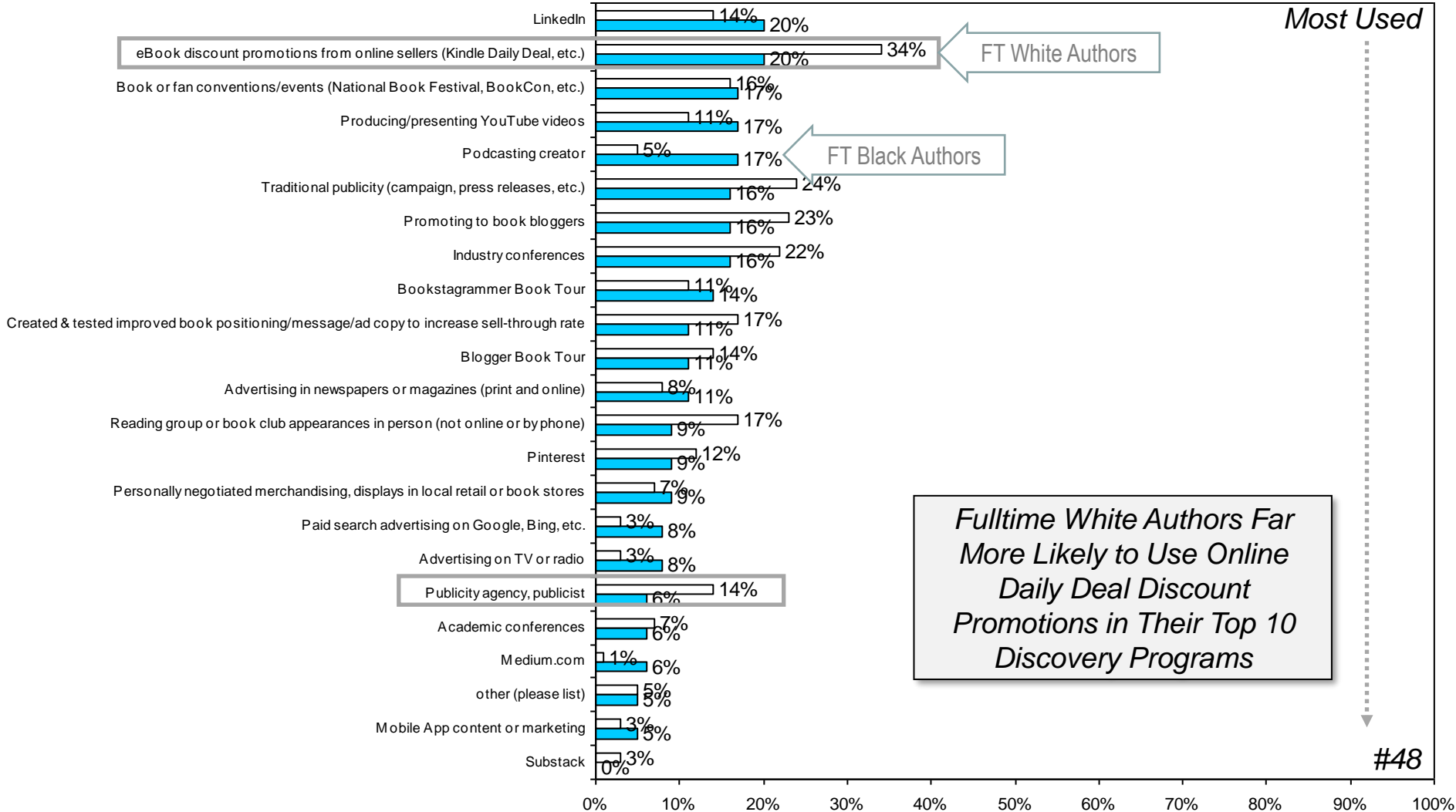
Only click on those programs used in 2022. Roughly how much of your – and/or your publisher's – total marketing resources (time + spending) promoting your book(s) or name as an author in 2022, were spent on the following programs?



Fulltime White authors 53% more likely to use email newsletters, with 8-in-10 using author websites.

Book Marketing Programs – % Participating Authors Used in 2022 – Bottom 23: Fulltime Black v. White Authors

Only click on those programs used in 2022. Roughly how much of your – and/or your publisher’s – total marketing resources (time + spending) promoting your book(s) or name as an author in 2022, were spent on the following programs?

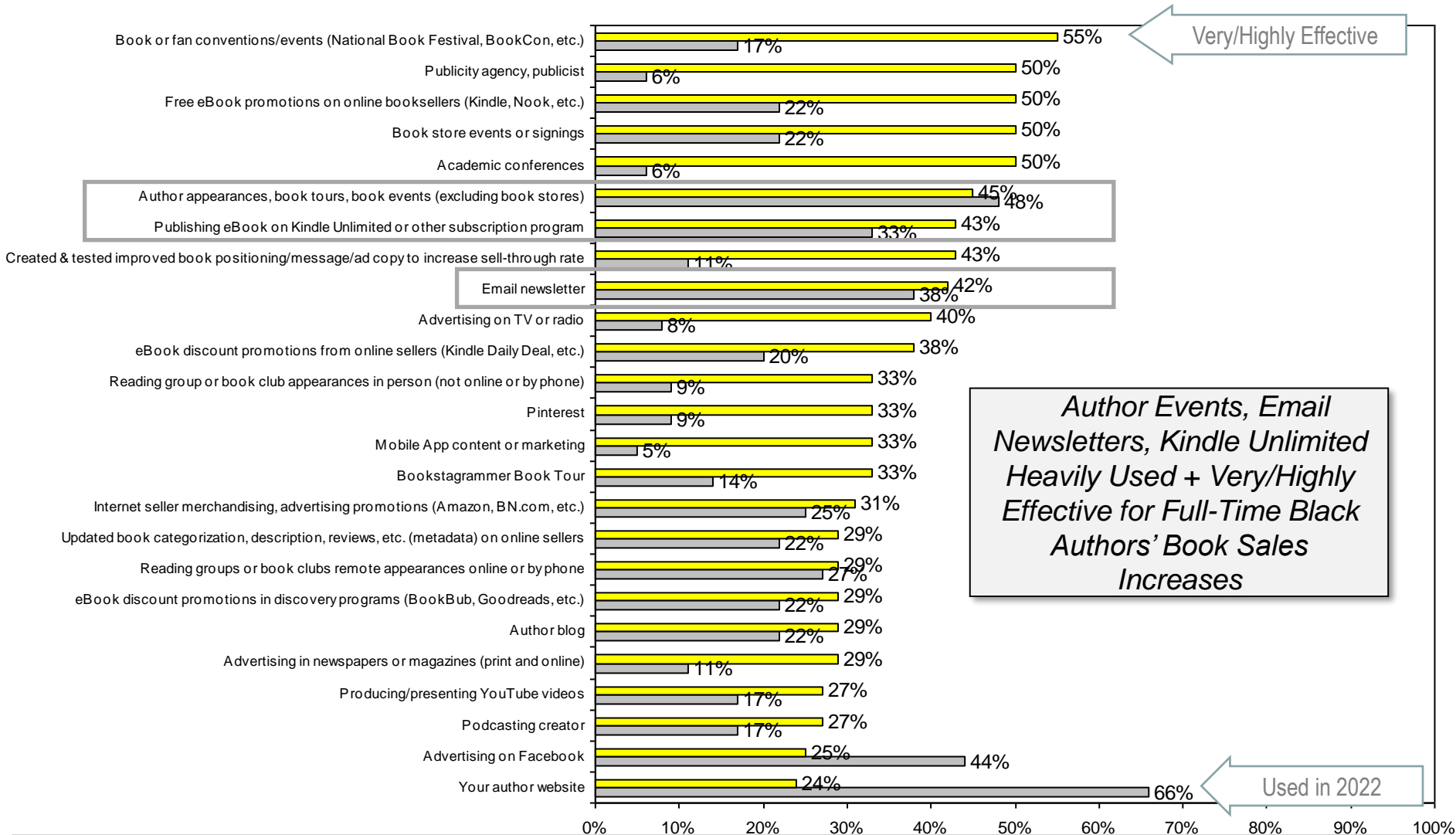


Fulltime White Authors Far More Likely to Use Online Daily Deal Discount Promotions in Their Top 10 Discovery Programs

Fulltime Black authors highly unlike to use publicity agencies or publicists.

Book Marketing Programs Used 2022 – % Users Rating Very/Highly Effective – Top 25 – Fulltime Black Authors

How effective do you think the author and/or book marketing programs used in 2022 were at increasing your book sales?

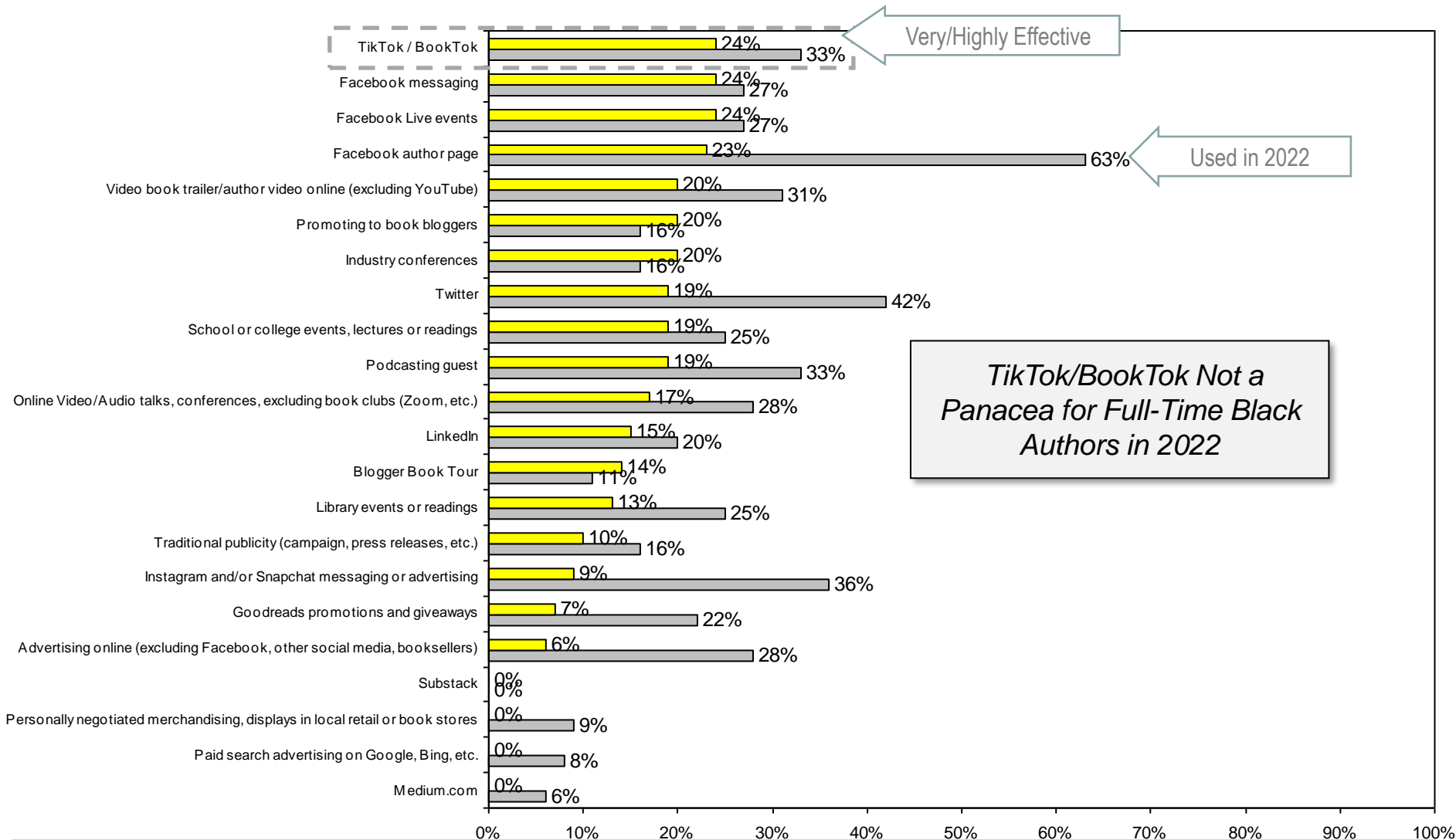


Author Events, Email Newsletters, Kindle Unlimited Heavily Used + Very/Highly Effective for Full-Time Black Authors' Book Sales Increases

Fulltime Black Authors used author website the most, but mixed on its impact on book sales.

Book Marketing Programs Used 2022 – % Users Rating Very/Highly Effective – Bottom 23: Fulltime Black Authors

How effective do you think the author and/or book marketing programs used in 2022 were at increasing your book sales?

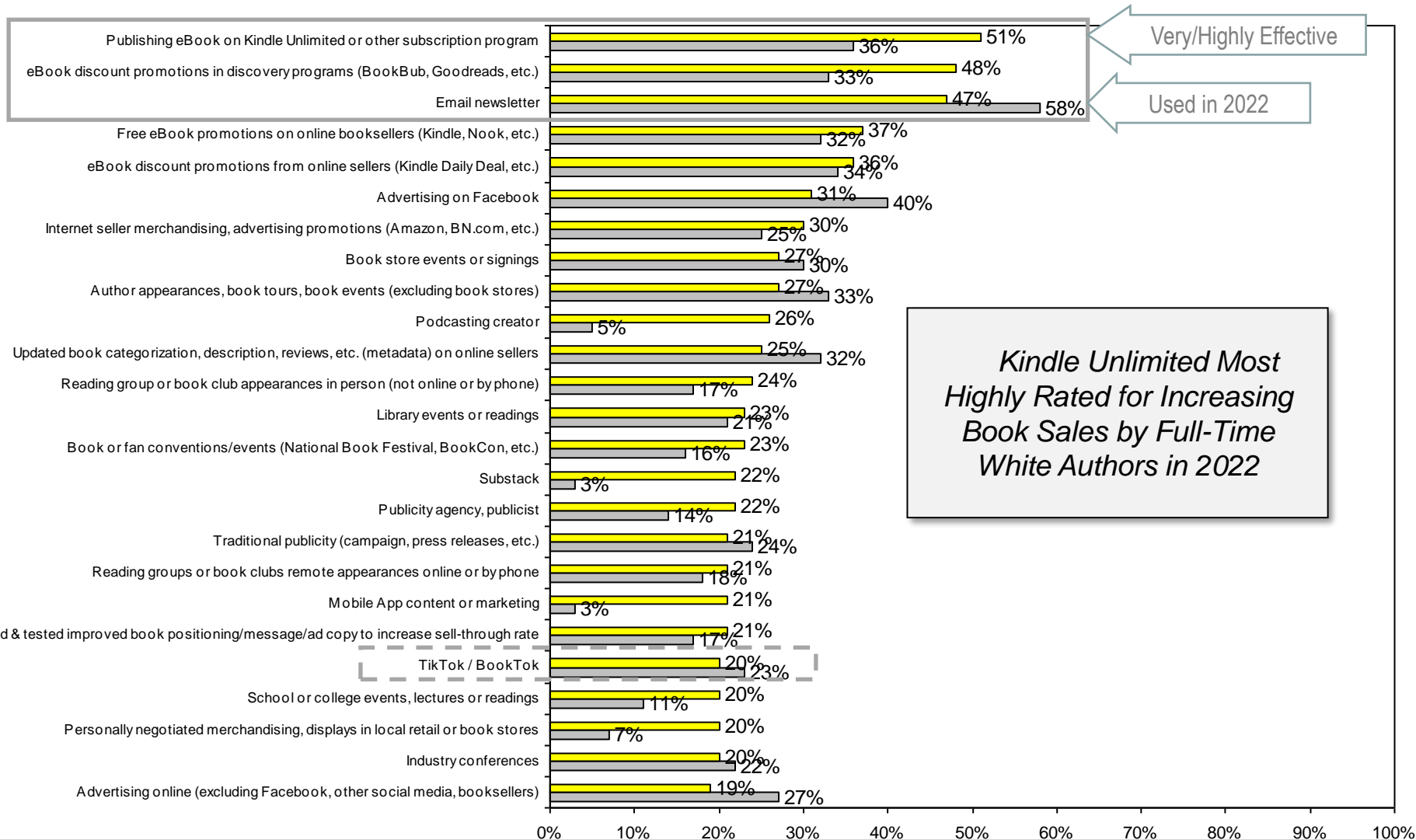


TikTok/BookTok Not a Panacea for Full-Time Black Authors in 2022

Major social media platforms widely used (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat) -- mixed effectiveness

Book Marketing Programs Used 2022 – % Users Rating Very/Highly Effective – Top 25 – Fulltime White Authors

How effective do you think the author and/or book marketing programs used in 2022 were at increasing your book sales?

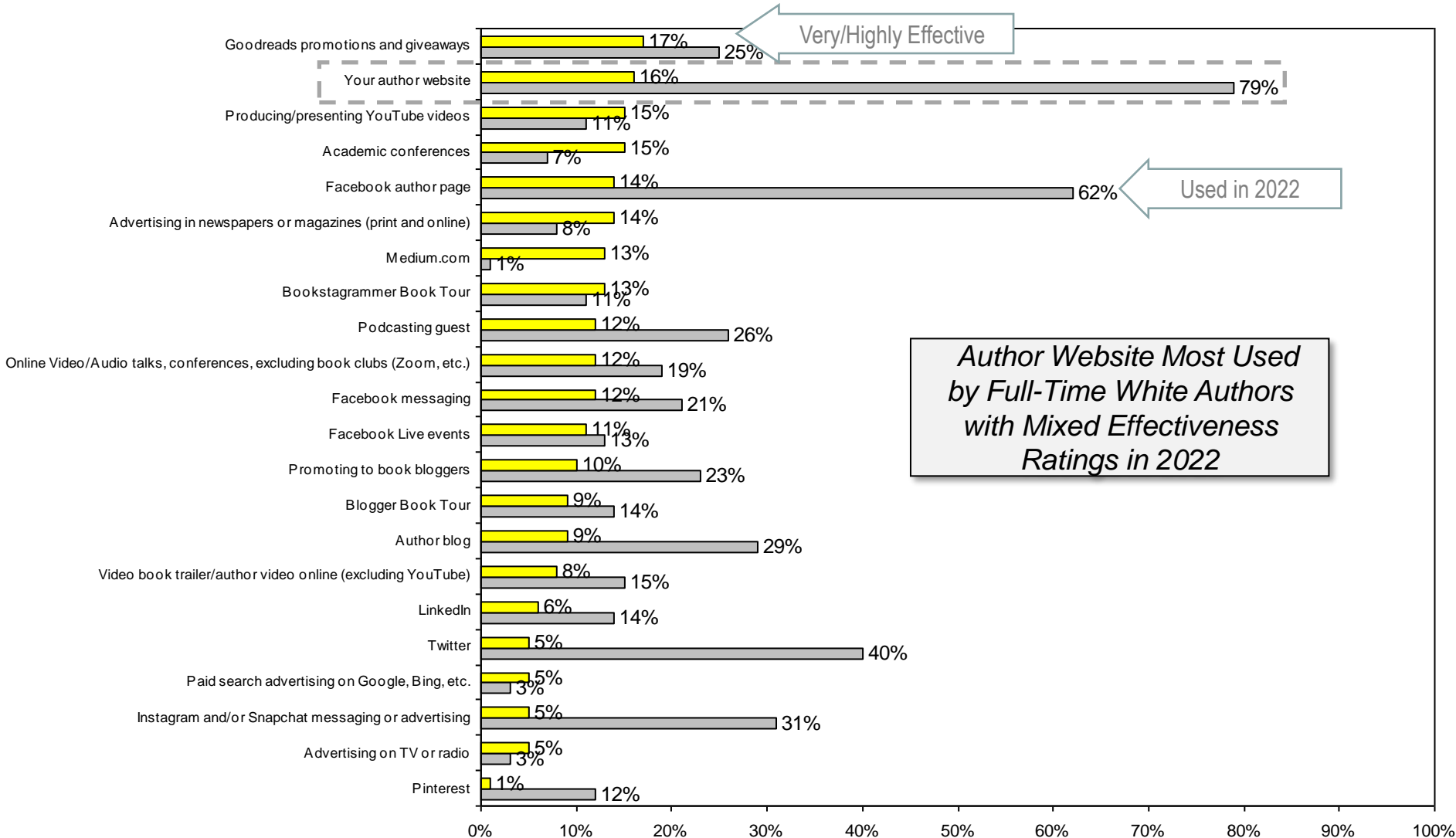


Kindle Unlimited Most Highly Rated for Increasing Book Sales by Full-Time White Authors in 2022

eBook discount promotions (BookBub etc.) and Email newsletters in top 3 for effectiveness. TikTok rates better on limited genre categories like Romance, Romantic Suspense, New Adult.

Book Marketing Programs Used 2022 – % Users Rating Very/Highly Effective – Bottom 23: Fulltime White Authors

How effective do you think the author and/or book marketing programs used in 2022 were at increasing your book sales?



Author Website Most Used by Full-Time White Authors with Mixed Effectiveness Ratings in 2022

Social media platforms Facebook, Twitter also widely used with limited effectiveness ratings.

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