

# On-demand and On-the-edge: Ride-hailing and delivery workers in San Francisco

## Summer 2020 Survey of Delivery Workers

**Chris Benner**, *UC Santa Cruz*

with  
**Erin Johansson**, *Jobs with Justice Education Fund*  
**Kung Feng**, *Jobs with Justice San Francisco*  
**Hays Witt**, *Drivers Seat Cooperative*

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# Acknowledgements

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- *Bryan Goebel, SF LAFCo Executive Officer, for his partnership, guidance, and feedback on this study at every step of the way*
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- *Our team of 18 surveyors led by Jobs with Justice San Francisco Field Manager Andrea Prebys-Williams*
- *Our team of 10 pilot phase surveyors and 2 focus group co-facilitators, led by Jobs with Justice San Francisco survey manager Peter Estes*

# BACKGROUND

- Study was commissioned in 2019 by San Francisco Local Agency Formation Commission
- Request was for a representative labor survey of on-demand workers in the emerging mobility services sector (e.g. ride-hailing, delivery), to help the City better understand this workforce and determine whether the labor policies of emerging mobility companies align with the City's labor principle, namely that they "ensure fairness in pay and labor policies and practices"
- Funding for the full study was provided by a range of additional partners, including the San Francisco Foundation, ReWork the Bay (formerly the Bay Area Workforce Collaborative), the Ford Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Chavez Family Foundation
- Team selected for the study is a unique partnership between academic researchers, community organizers, and an innovative platform cooperative:
  - Chris Benner, Professor of Environmental Studies and Sociology, and Director of the Institute for Social Transformation, at UC Santa Cruz
  - Jobs with Justice San Francisco, a diverse coalition of over 30 community, faith-based, student and labor organizations
  - Jobs with Justice Education Fund, who's research department produces original research alone and in partnership with academic partners across the country
  - Driver's Seat Cooperative, an innovative start-up designed to help on-demand workers take ownership of the full spectrum of information they generate while they work.

# METHODOLOGY

- **Key goal: Representative sample of on-demand work being done in the city, not of all on-demand workers.**
- **This is important, as representative samples of all people who do some work for on-demand app companies show many people working for short periods of time, or earning only a small portion of their earnings from this type of work.**
- **But we wanted to develop a representative sample based on the actual work being done in the city, which we believe is a better basis for understanding labor practices and developing labor market policy.**

# METHODOLOGY of SUMMER SURVEY

- Summer 2020 Survey was Designed To Pilot Survey Methodology During COVID
- Key questions
  - Could it be done safely?
  - What kind of response rate would we get?
- For DoorDash and Instacart, survey recruitment was conducted during peak lunch and dinner meal times, spread across 11 different SF neighborhoods
- Data gathering 7/27/20 through 9/6/2020
- Response rates were amazingly high:
  - Doordash: 81% (114 completed)
  - Instacart: 88%. (114 completed)
  - AmazonFresh: 79% (39 completed)

- Downtown
- Marina
- Richmond
- Sunset
- Mission Terrace/Excelsior
- North Beach/Chinatown/Financial district

- Glen Park/ Bernal Heights
- Parkside
- Noe Valley
- Mission
- Castro

- ***Please note: though we present results by individual app, to demonstrate what a fuller survey might reveal, with this pilot data in most cases the differences between apps are not statistically significant and only the combined results for all apps ("total") should be considered meaningful.***

A photograph of a city street, likely in San Francisco, featuring historic brick buildings, trees, and a traffic light. A large blue hexagonal graphic is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "SURVEY FINDINGS" in bold orange letters. The background image shows a street with cars, a pedestrian, and a construction site on the right. A white car is blurred in the foreground, suggesting motion. The overall scene is bathed in warm, golden light, possibly from the setting or rising sun.

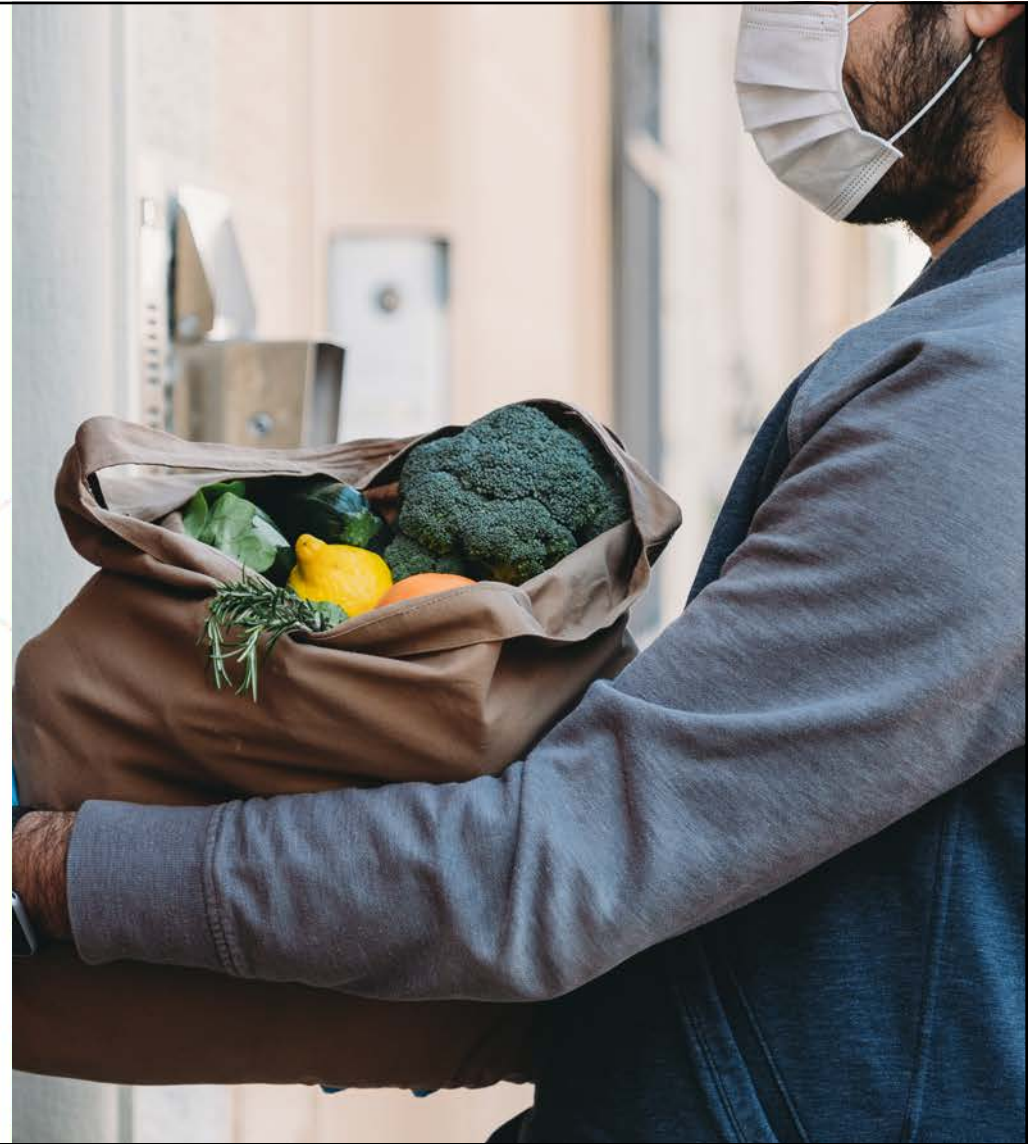
# **SURVEY FINDINGS**

# Diverse Workforce

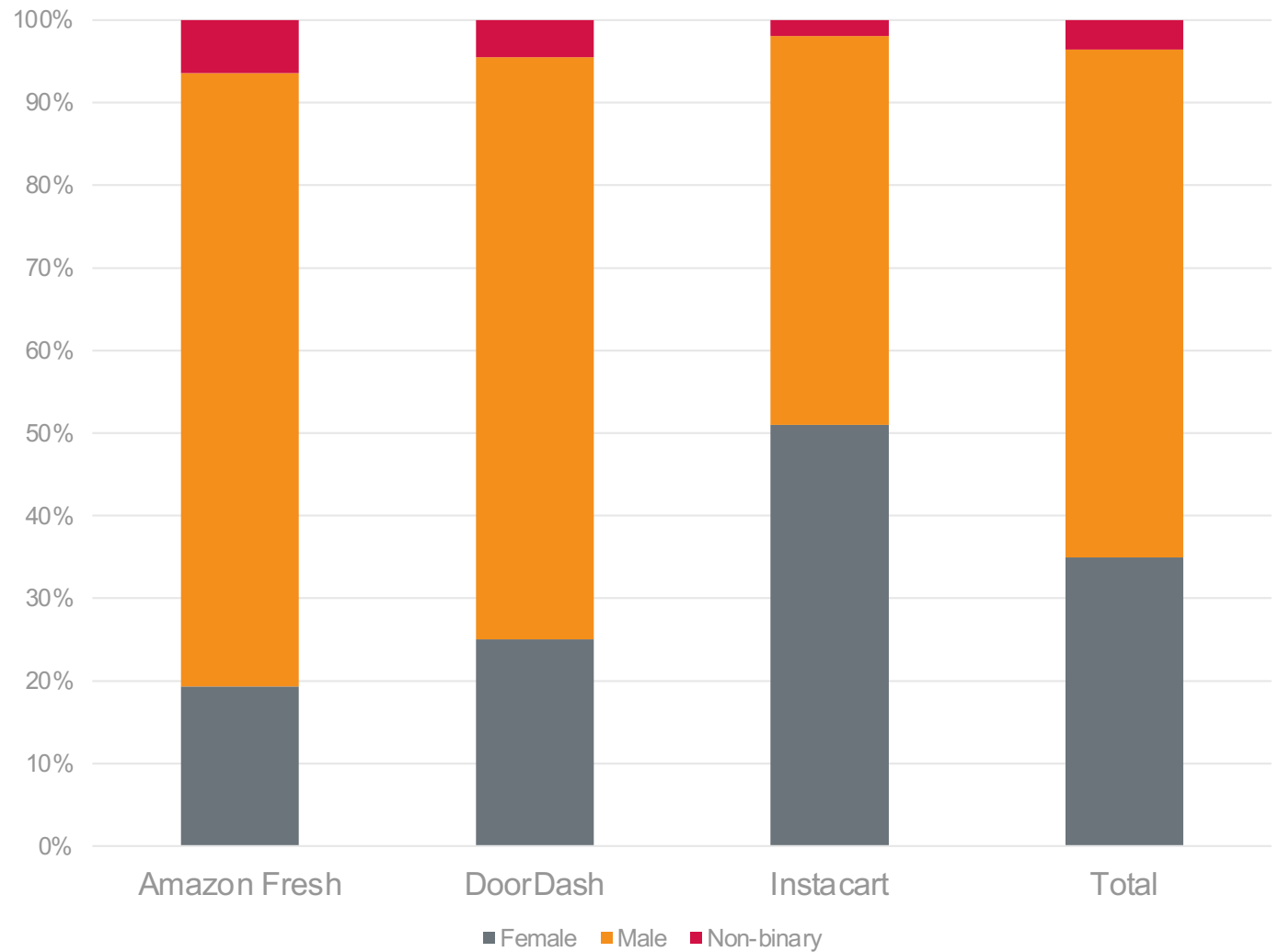
- Predominantly male (60%), though less so than for ride-hailing.
  - Indications that more women are working for Instacart
- Diverse race/ethnicities:
  - 24% Hispanic, 19% Asian/Pacific Islander, 13% Black, 21% multi-racial or other, 24% white
- 36% foreign-born—less than pre-COVID
- Median age is 30
- 77% of delivery workers in survey live in SF—higher than pre-COVID



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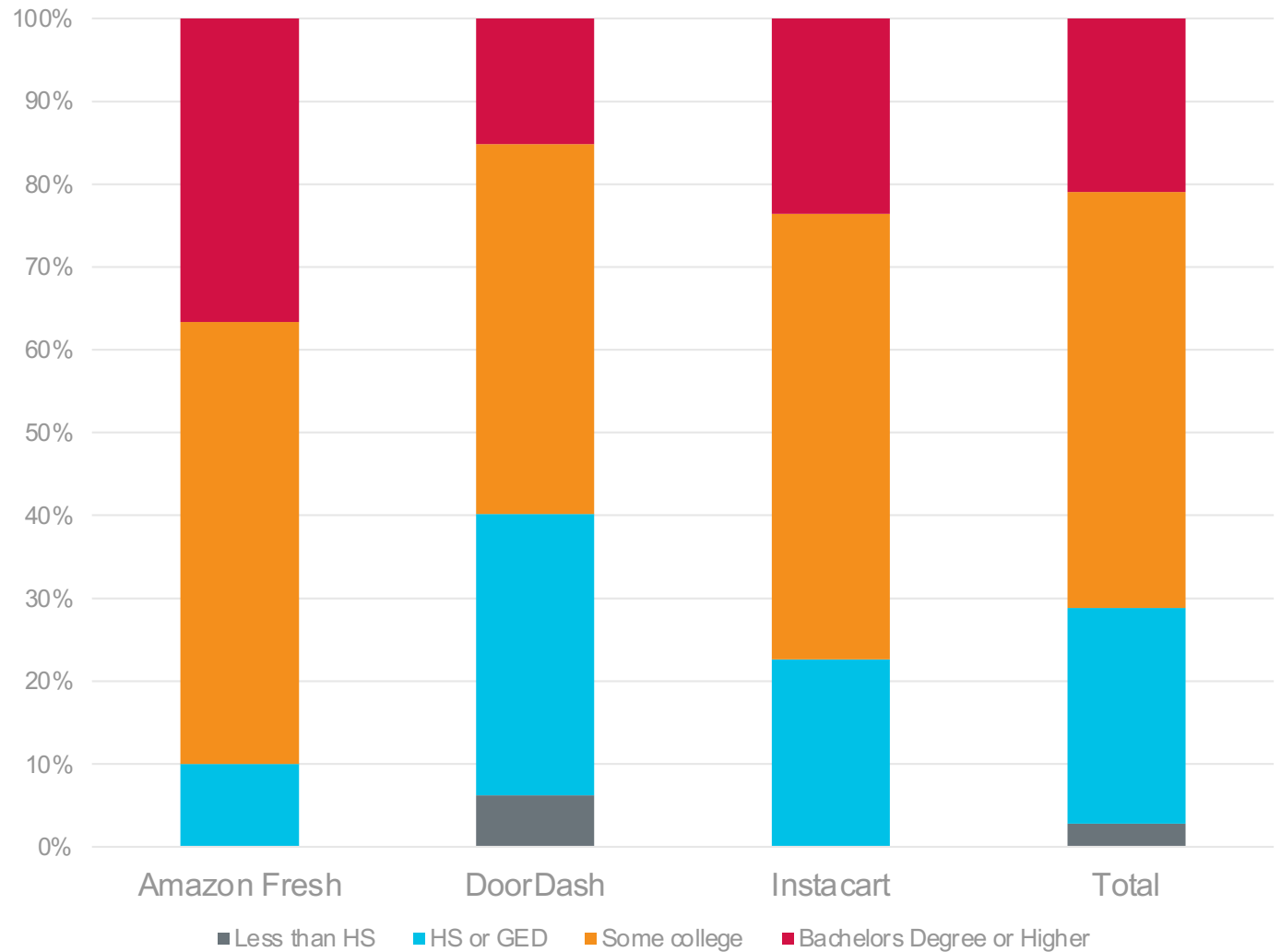


## What is your gender?



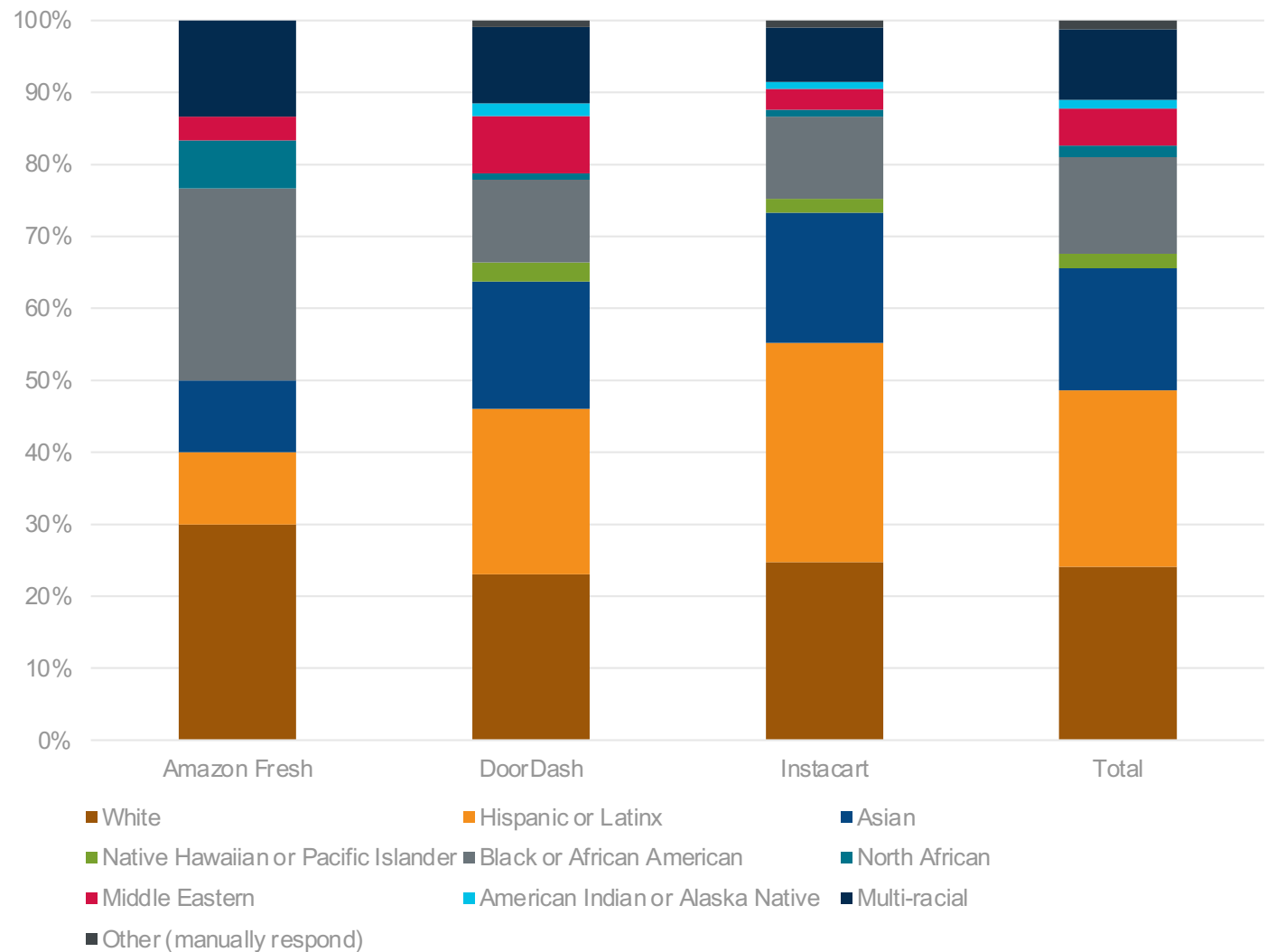
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## What is your highest level of education attainment:



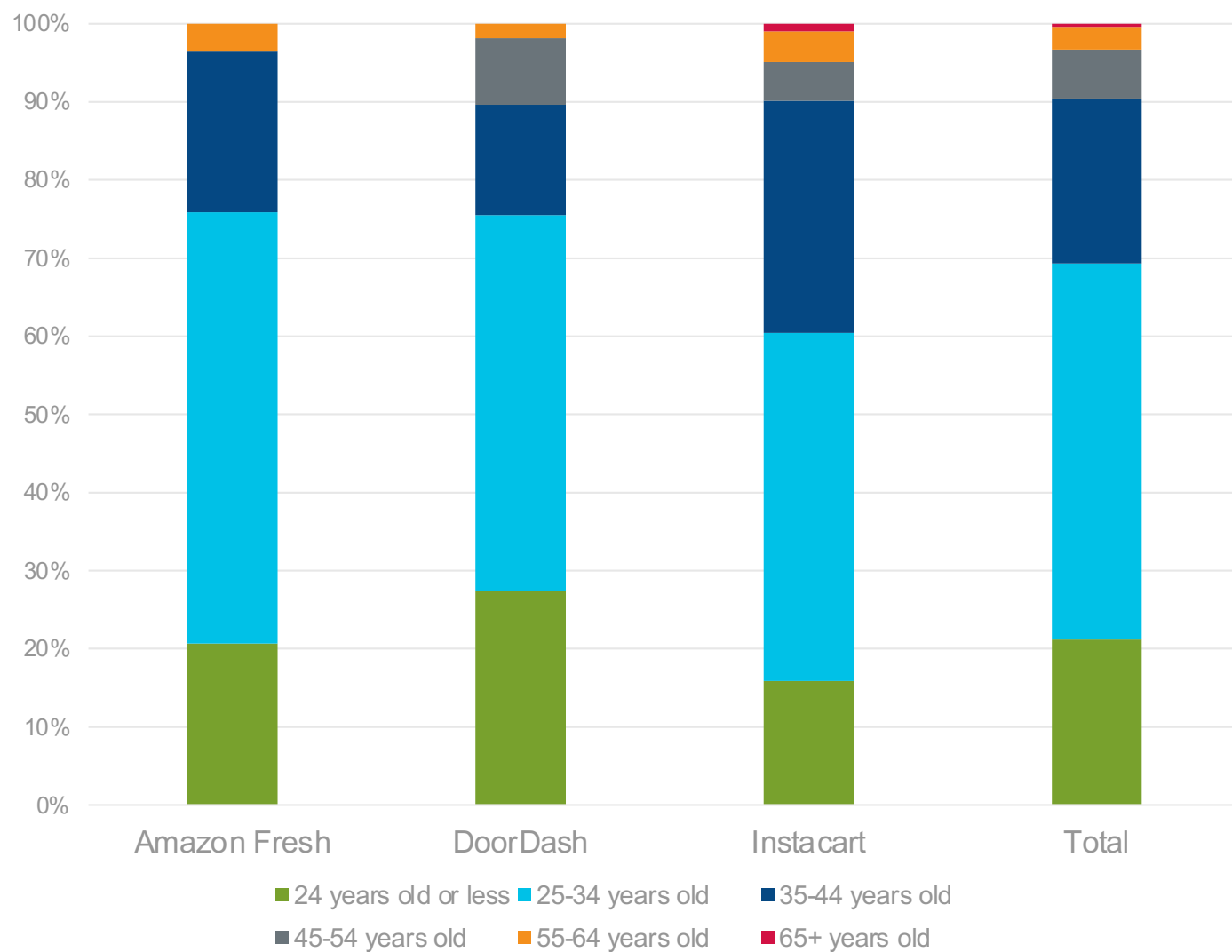
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## Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?



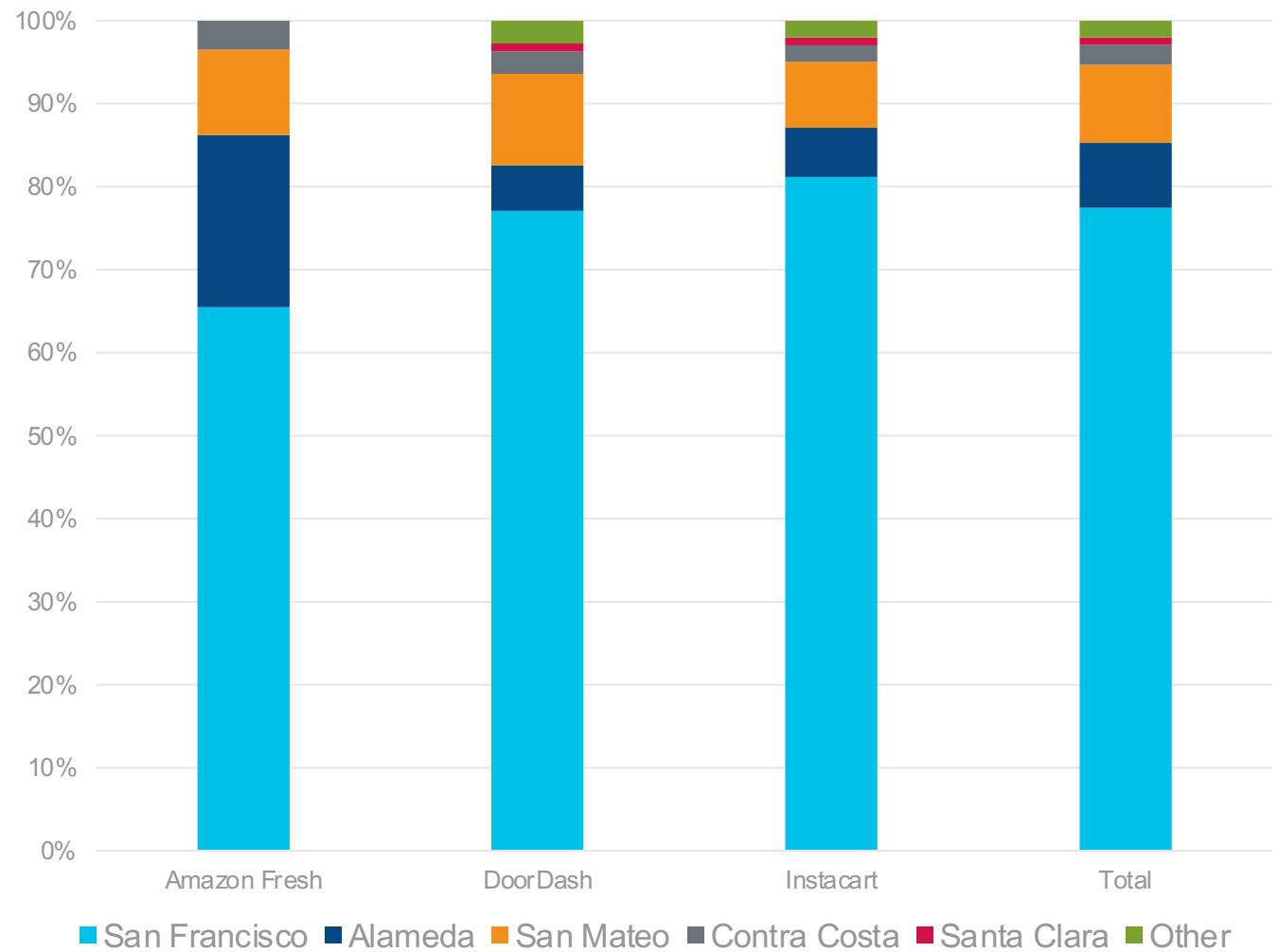
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## Age Category



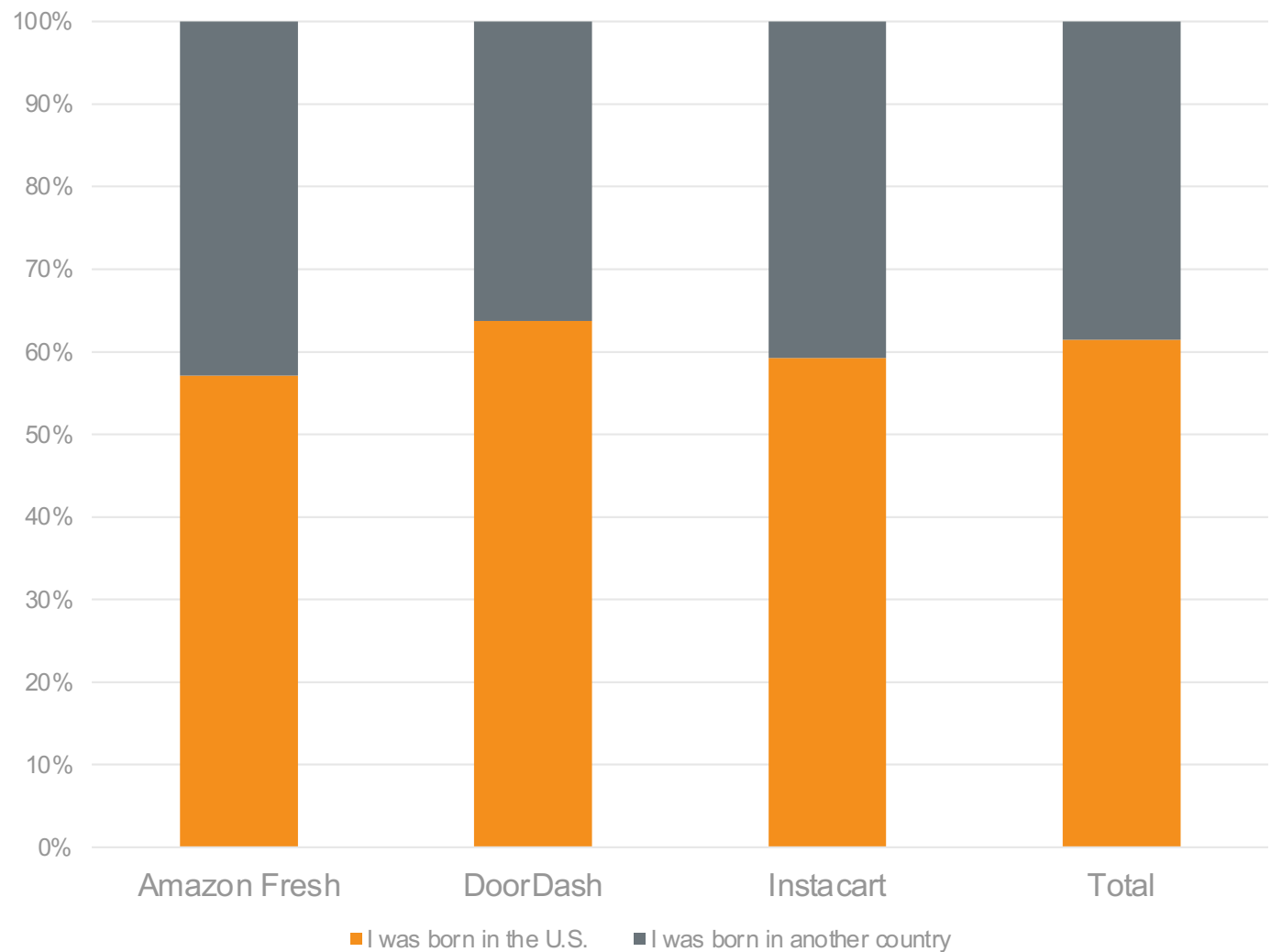
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## County of Residence



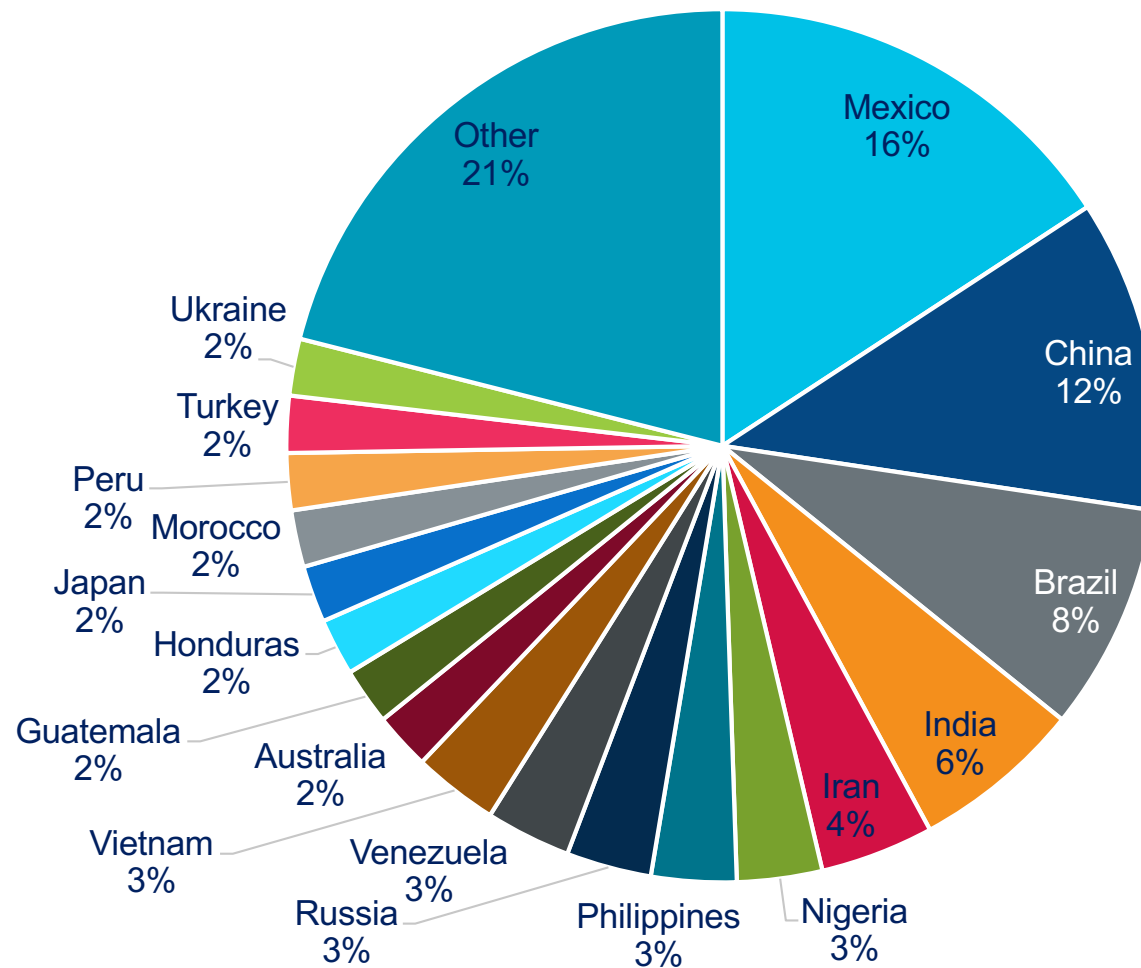
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## Where you born in the U.S. or another country?



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## What is your country of origin (for foreign-born)?



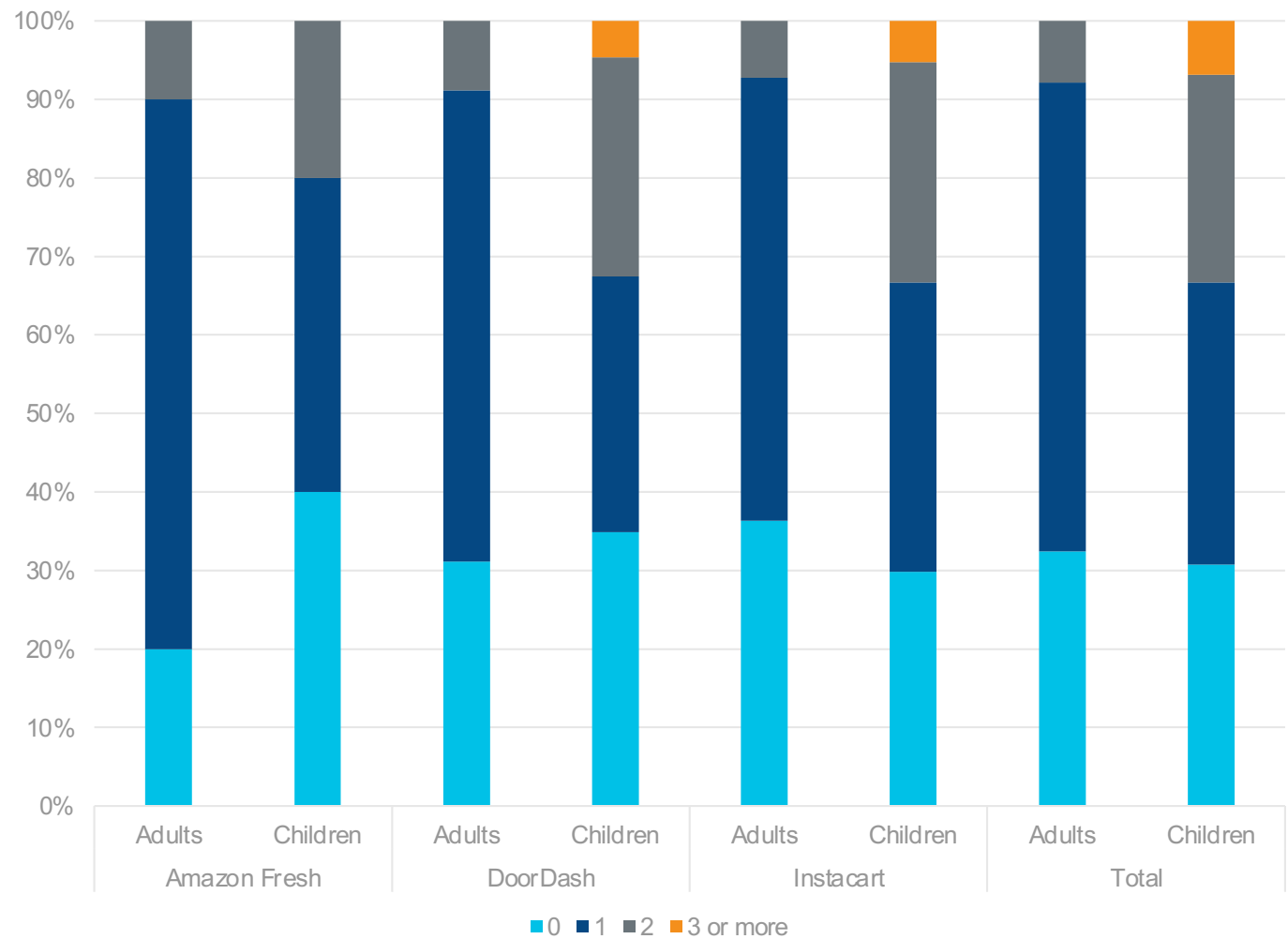
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## Difficult Economic Circumstances

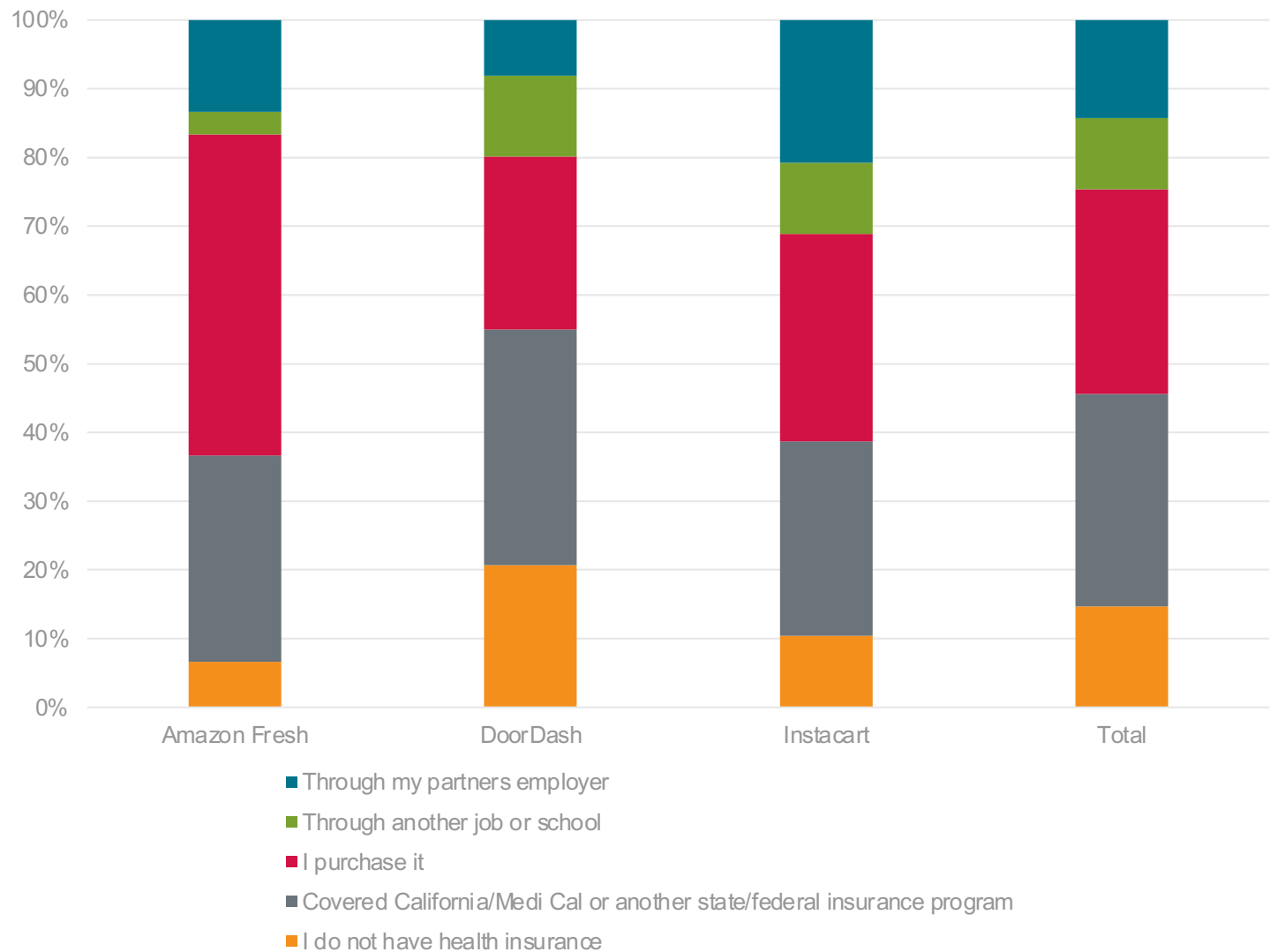
- 67% support others with their earnings, including 69% supporting children
  - This is substantially higher than pre-COVID
- 15% have no health insurance, and another 31% use public or public-access health insurance (e.g. Medi-cal, Covered CA)
- 39% couldn't handle a \$400 emergency payment without borrowing
- 25% receive some form of public support (e.g. food stamps, housing assistance)
  - This is substantially higher than pre-COVID

## How many other people do you help support with your earnings?



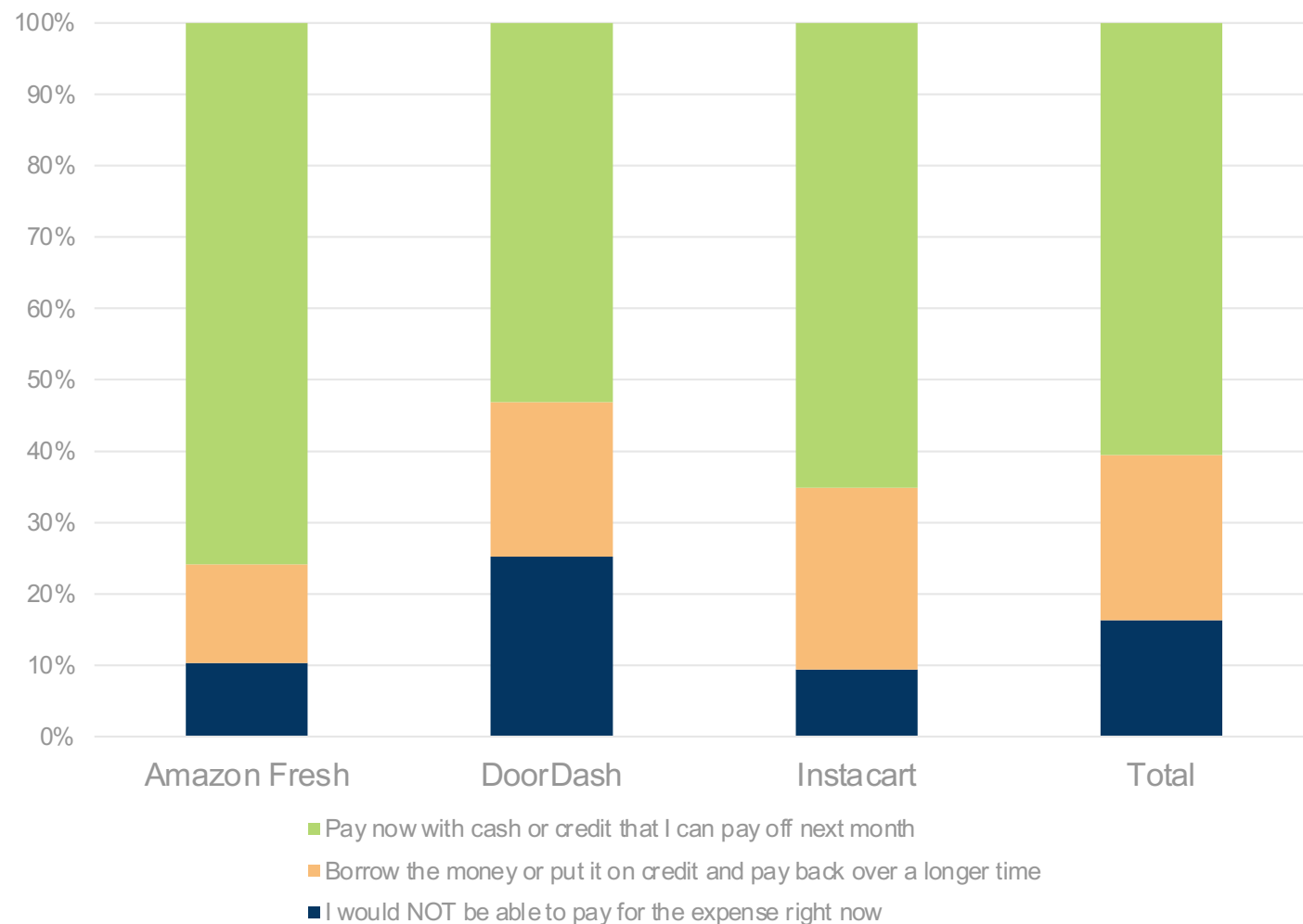
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## How do you access health insurance?



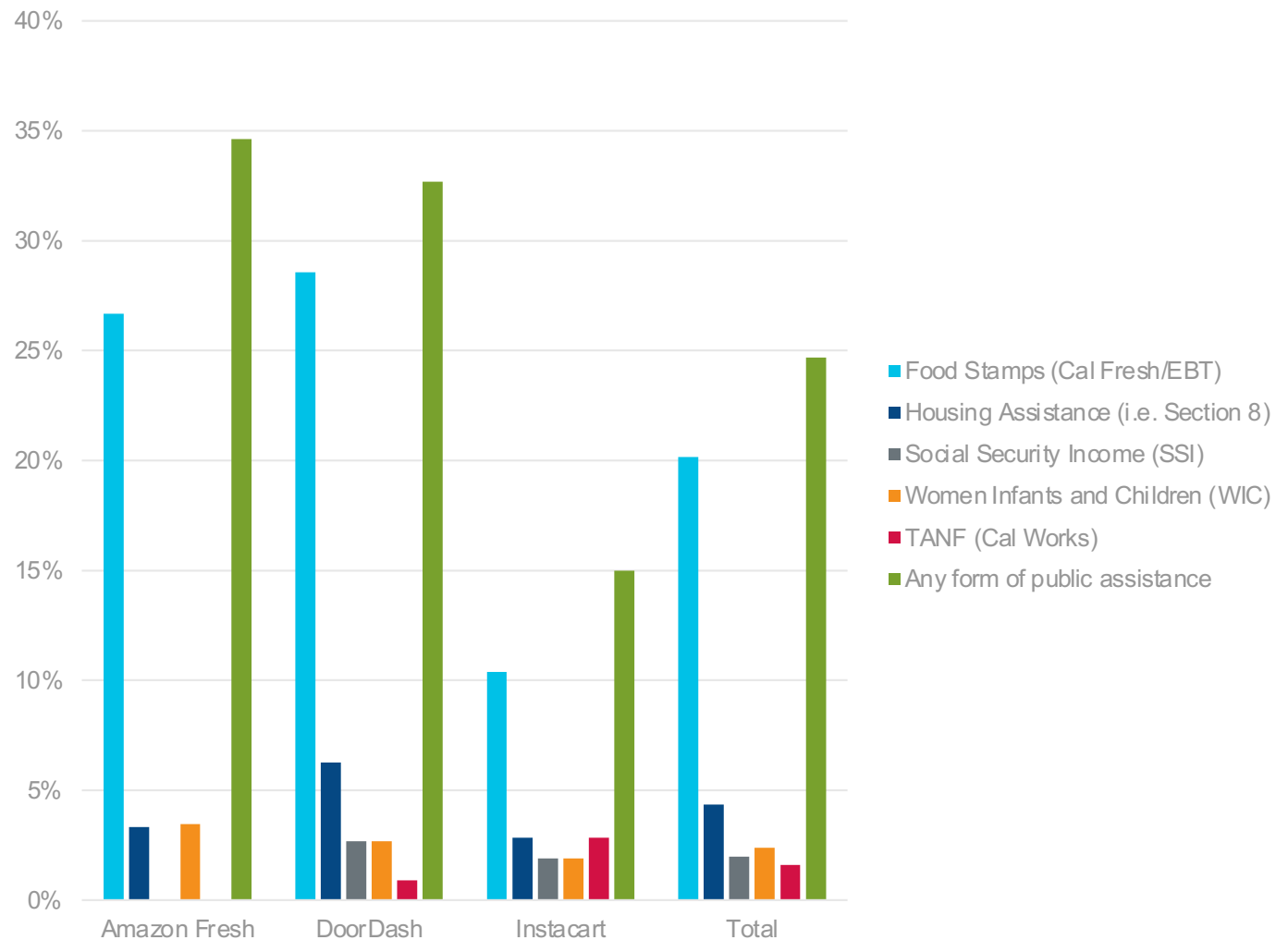
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**Suppose that you have an emergency expense that cost \$400. Based on your current financial situation, how would you pay for this expense?**



Please note: though we present results by individual app, to demonstrate what a fuller survey might reveal, with this pilot data in most cases the differences between apps are not statistically significant and only the combined results for all apps ("total") should be considered meaningful.

## Percentage of survey respondents who receive different types of public assistance



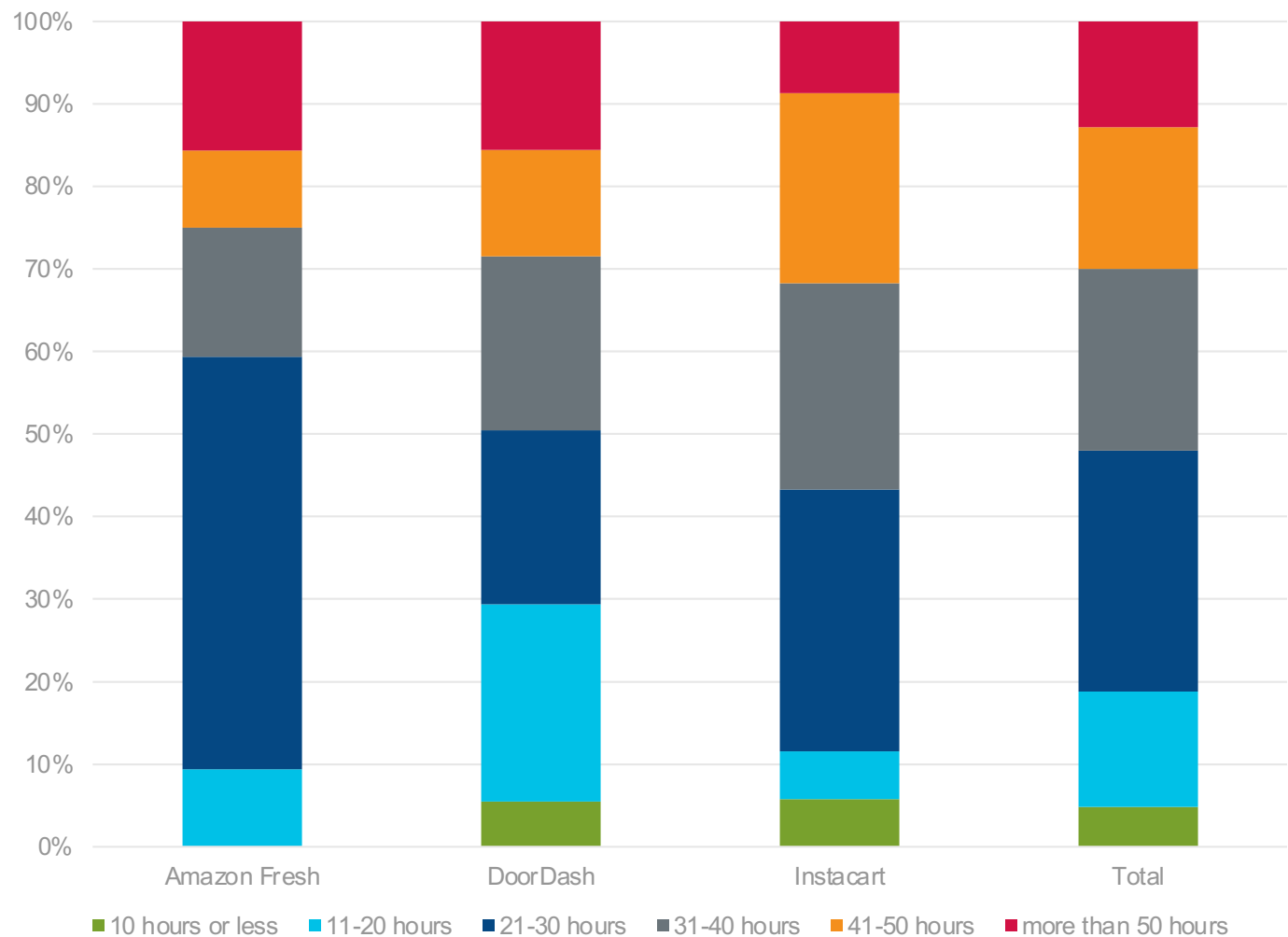
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# Not a gig for most

- The majority of survey respondents work full-time for platform companies
  - 52% work more than 30 hours a week, including 30% who work more than 40 hours, and 13% who work more than 50 hours
  - This is slightly fewer hours than pre-COVID
- The majority of survey respondents depend on platform work as their primary source of income
  - 57% said it was their entire income last month, another 13% said it was 75% or more of their income

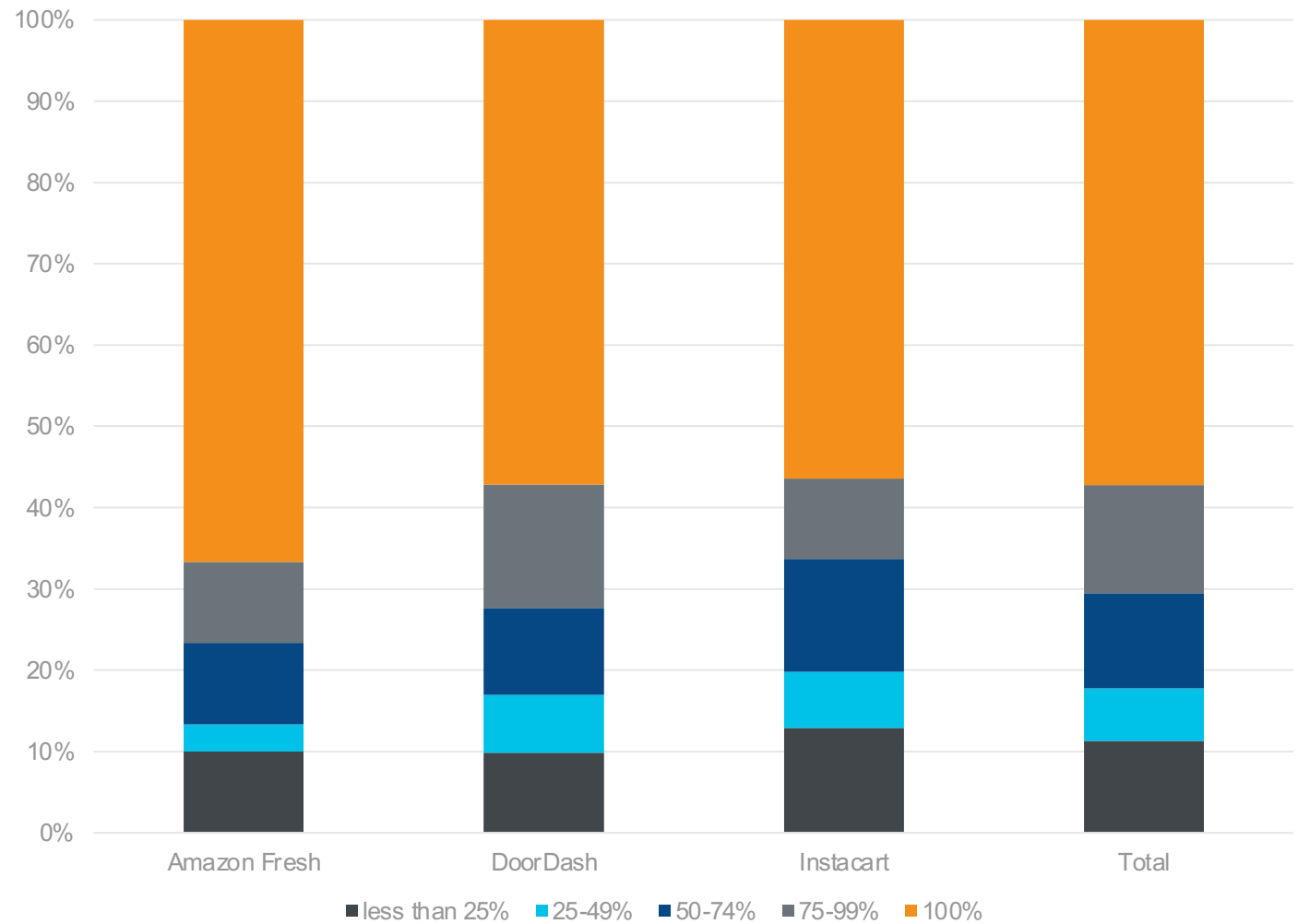


How many  
hours per  
week do you  
work on  
average for  
all of these  
apps?



Please note: though we present results by individual app, to demonstrate what a fuller survey might reveal, with this pilot data in most cases the differences between apps are not statistically significant and only the combined results for all apps ("total") should be considered meaningful.

## What percentage of last month's total income was from platform work?



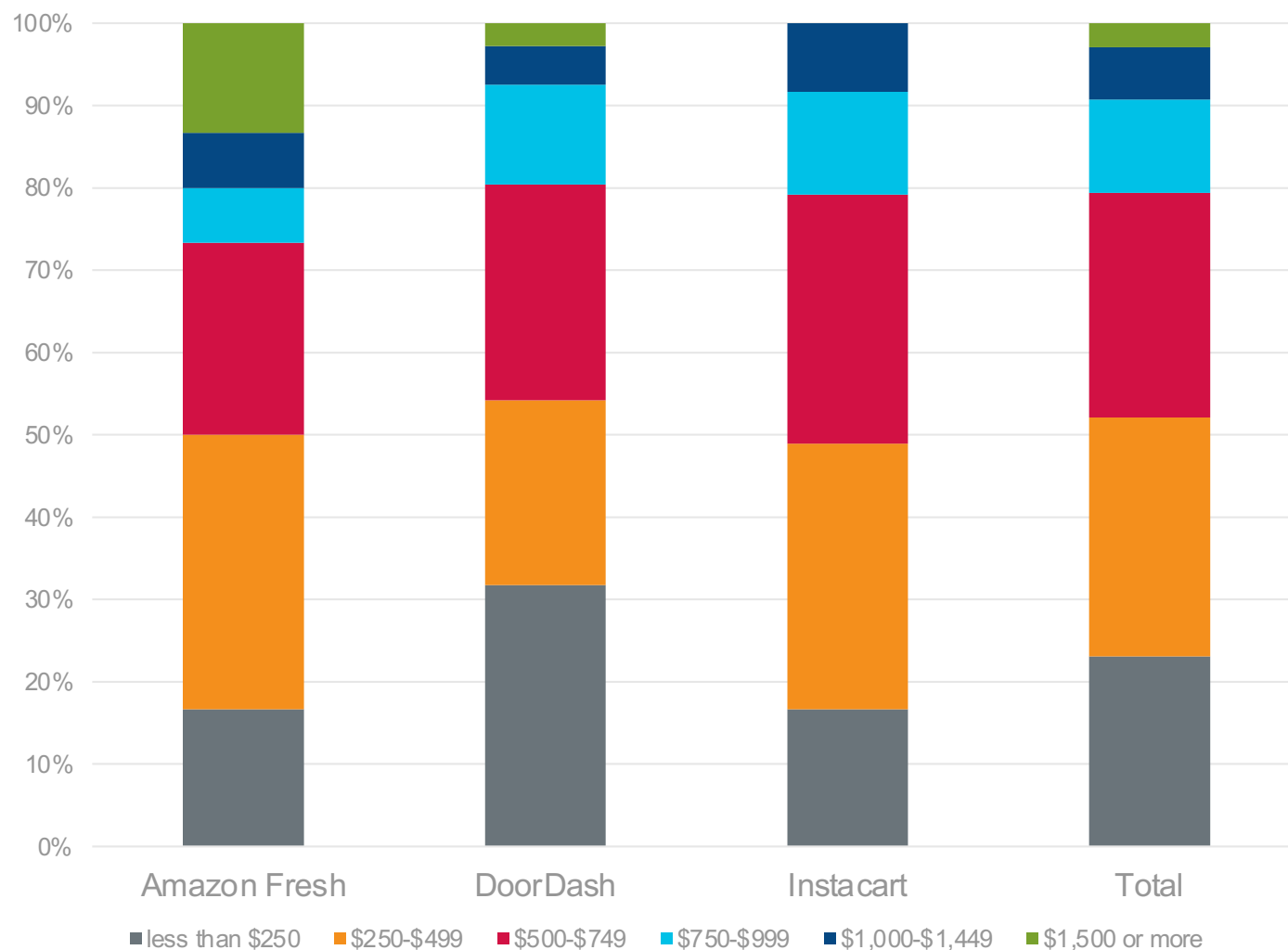
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# Low Earnings

- Before expenses, median earnings is \$450 for delivery workers who responded to the survey
- Depending on how expenses are calculated, this can drop to as low as \$270/week
- We estimate as much as 12% might be earning nothing when all expenses are accounted for
- Delivery workers are particularly dependent on tips, which account for 30% of their estimated earnings
- Workers also have significant amount of unpaid time, waiting for orders or driving to a pick-up location
- Workers also experience unpredictable earnings, often for reasons beyond their control, in part because some portion of their pay is due to incentives or bonuses

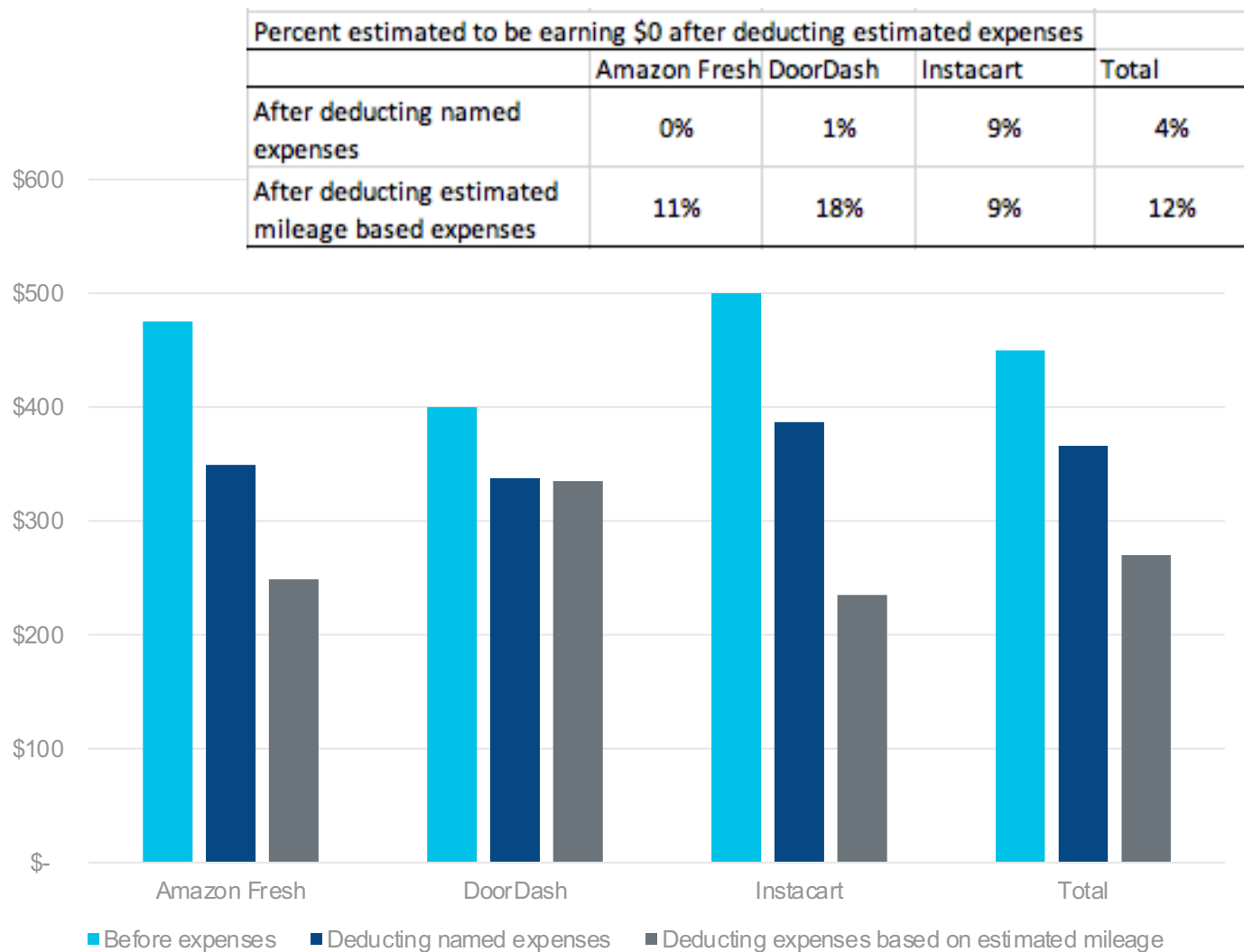


How much  
do you earn  
per week in  
your work  
for your  
current app,  
on average,  
including  
base pay,  
tips,  
bonuses,  
etc.? (before  
expenses)



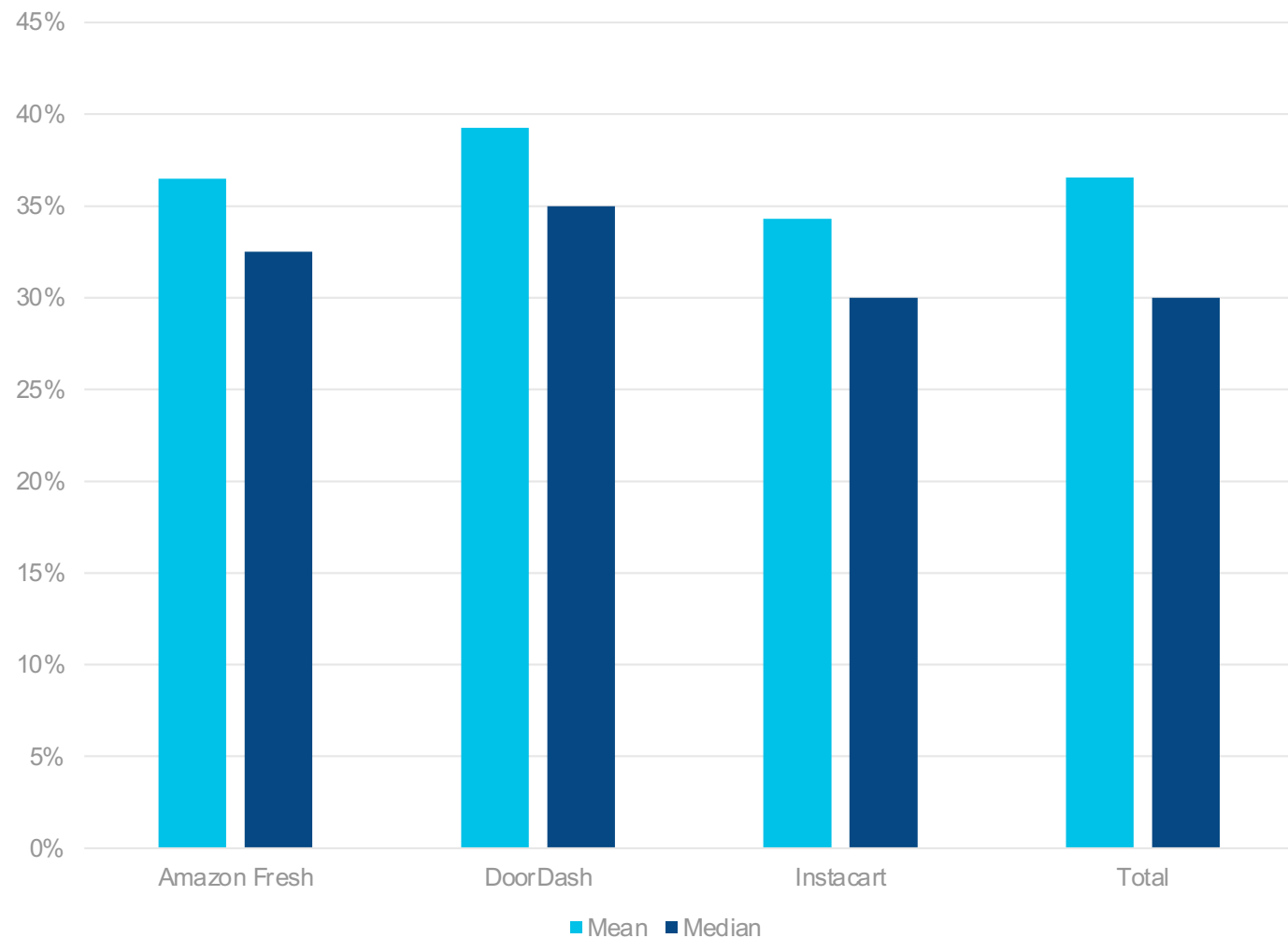
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## Median weekly earnings, before/after expenses (using two different methods for calculating expenses)



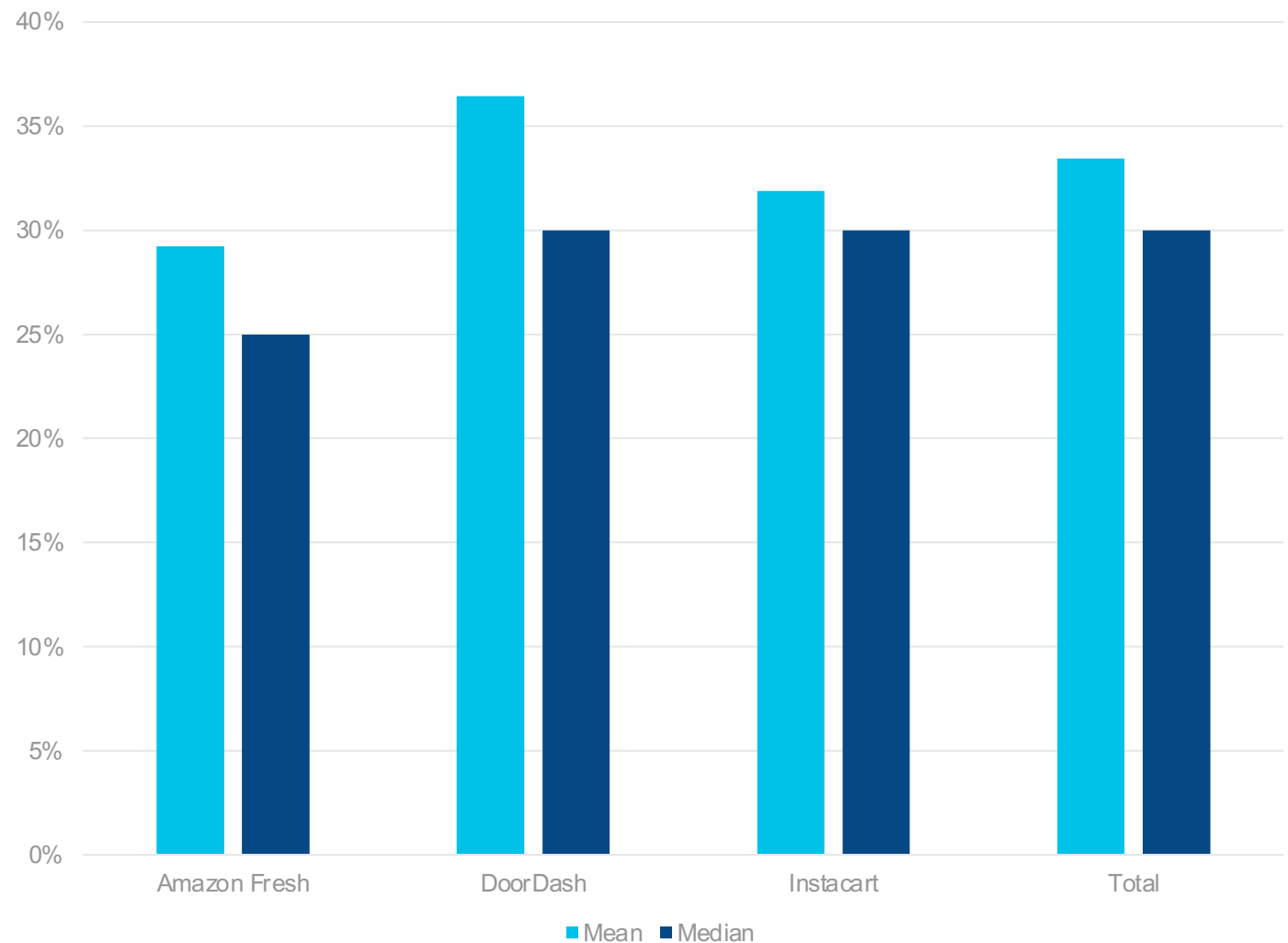
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# What percent of your earnings working for your current app are tips?



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**What percent of your time working is unpaid time (e.g. waiting for orders, driving to pick-up location)?**



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# Apps manage job opportunities

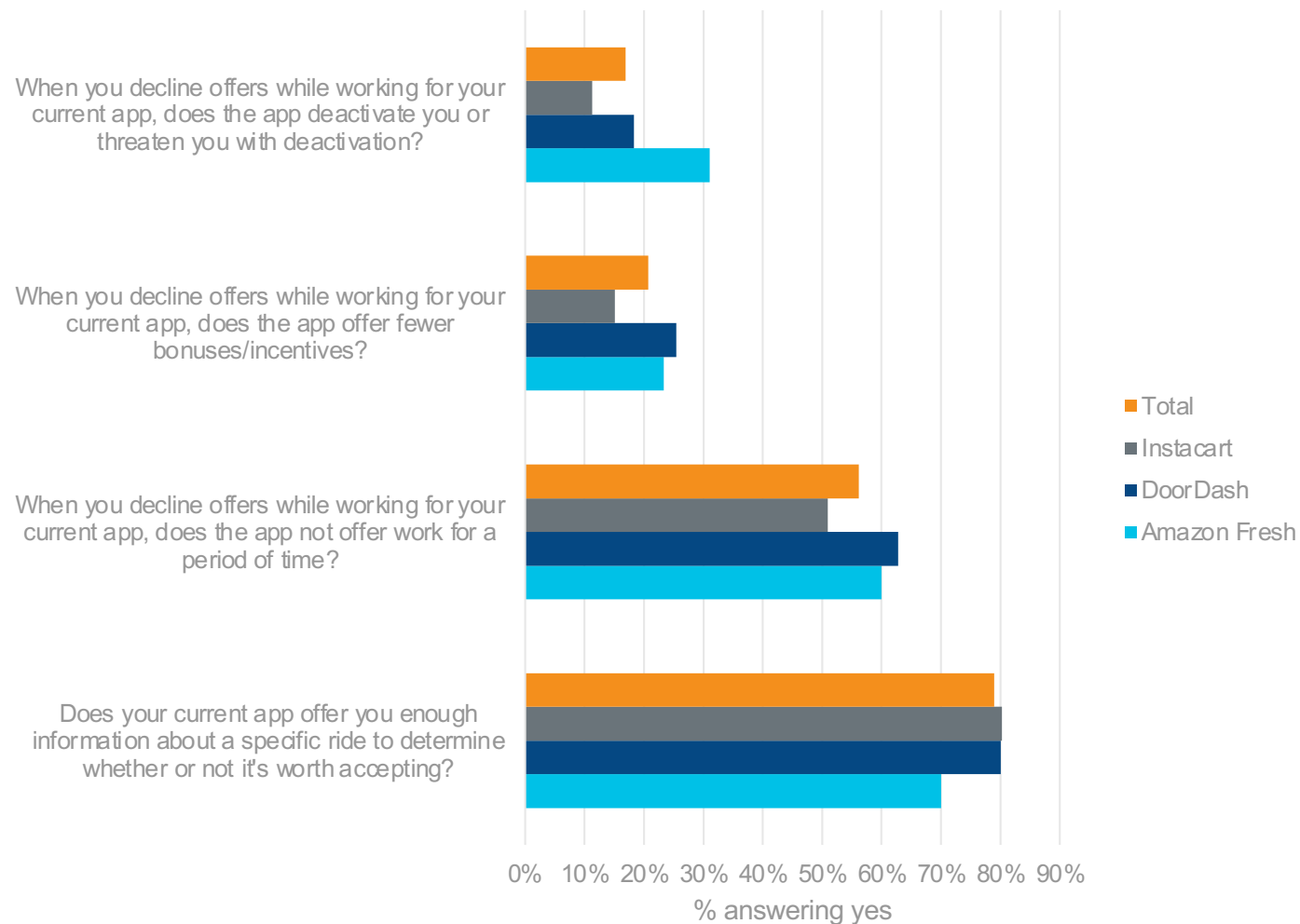
- Many, though not all, respondents felt penalized for declining certain job offers:
  - 56% of survey respondents said they were not offered work for a period of time
  - 21% of all survey respondents thought they were offered fewer bonuses or incentives
  - 17% of survey respondents said they were deactivated or threatened with deactivation. Of those actually deactivated, only 22% thought the app handled it fairly



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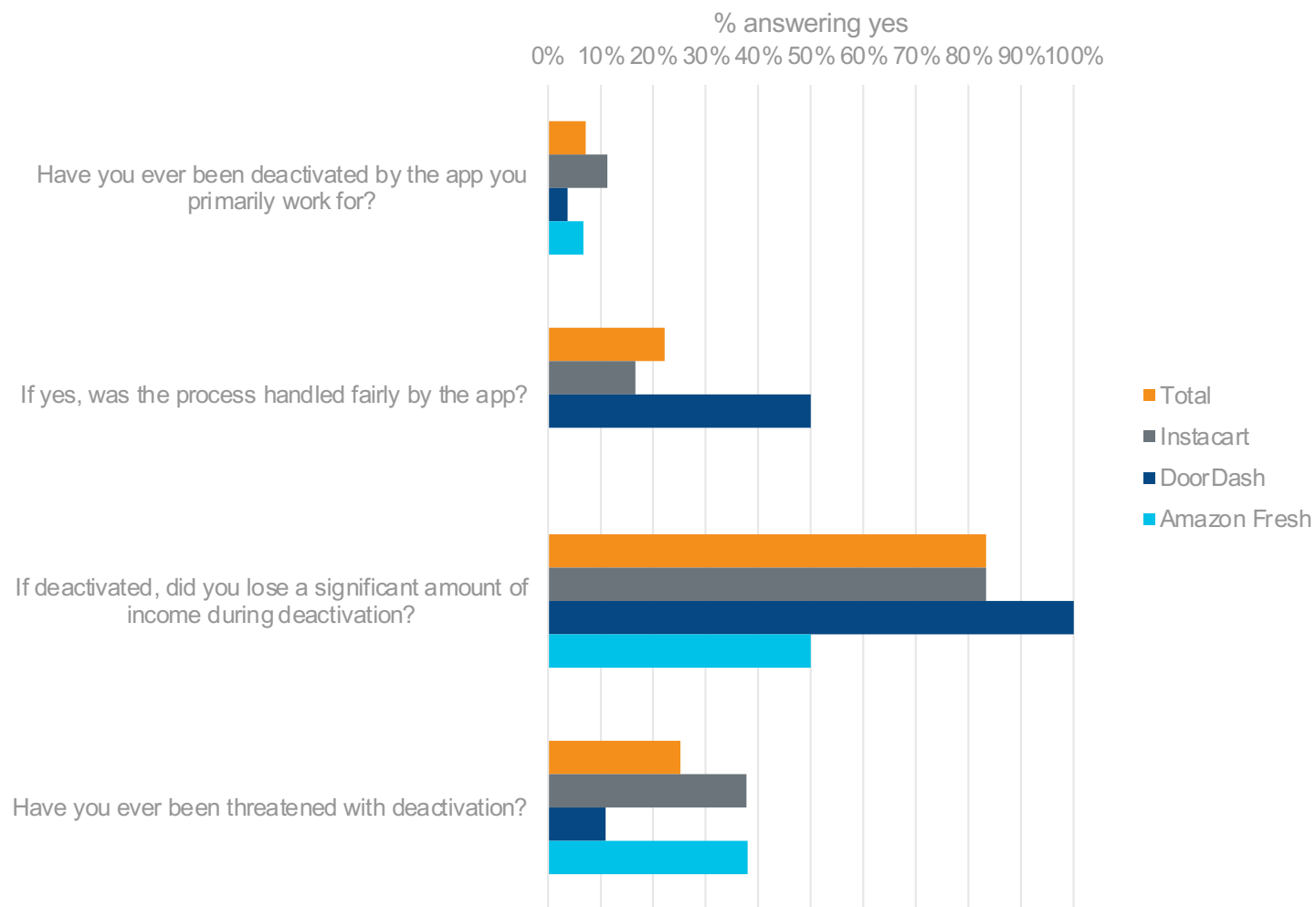


## Questions related to apps job practices



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## Questions related to deactivation



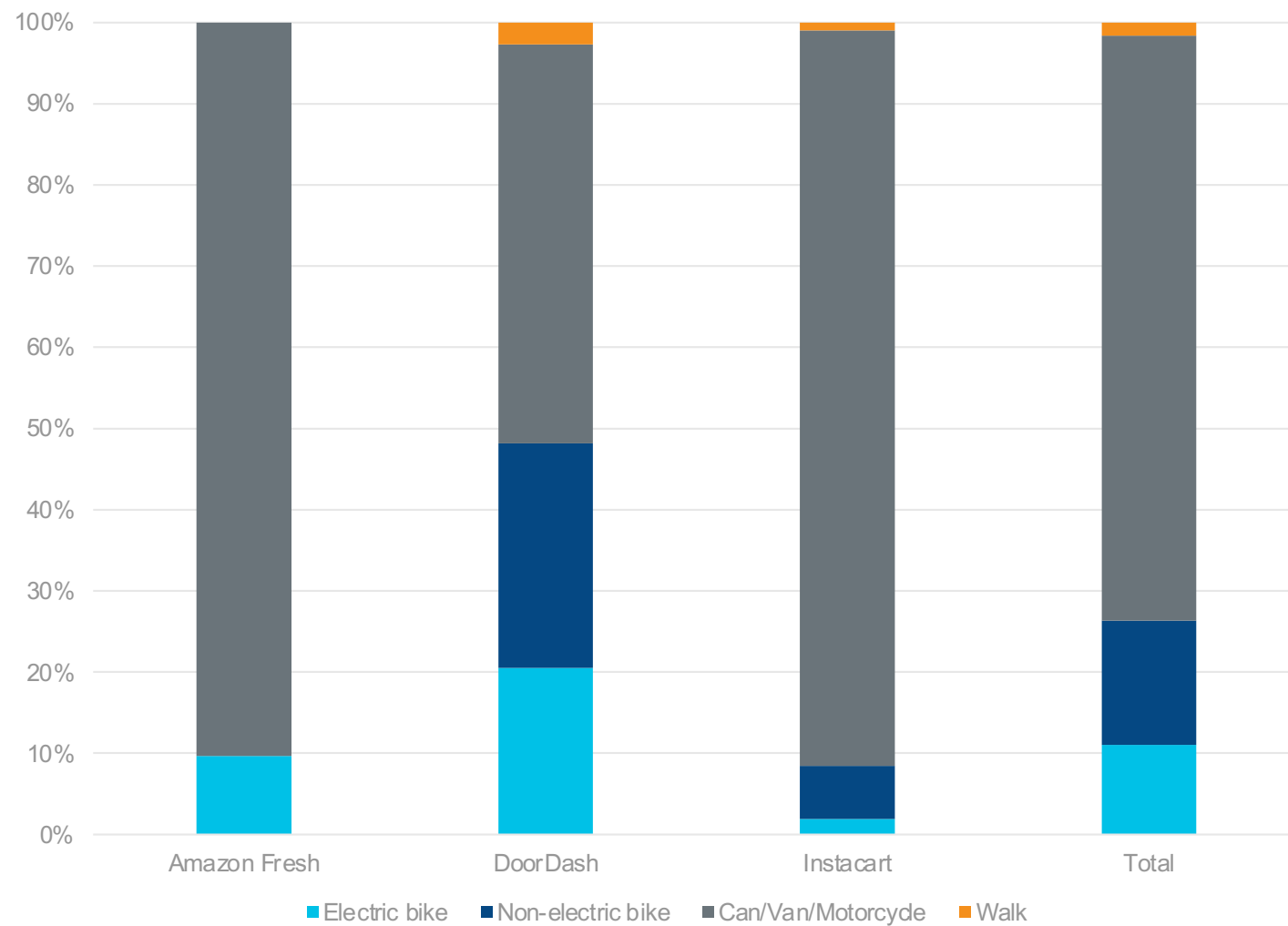
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# Bicyclists account for a quarter of delivery work

- 26% of all delivery workers in the survey said that a bicycle was their primary mode of delivery—11% using an electric bike
  - This is higher than pre-COVID (18%)

## What is your primary mode of transportation for your app-based delivery work



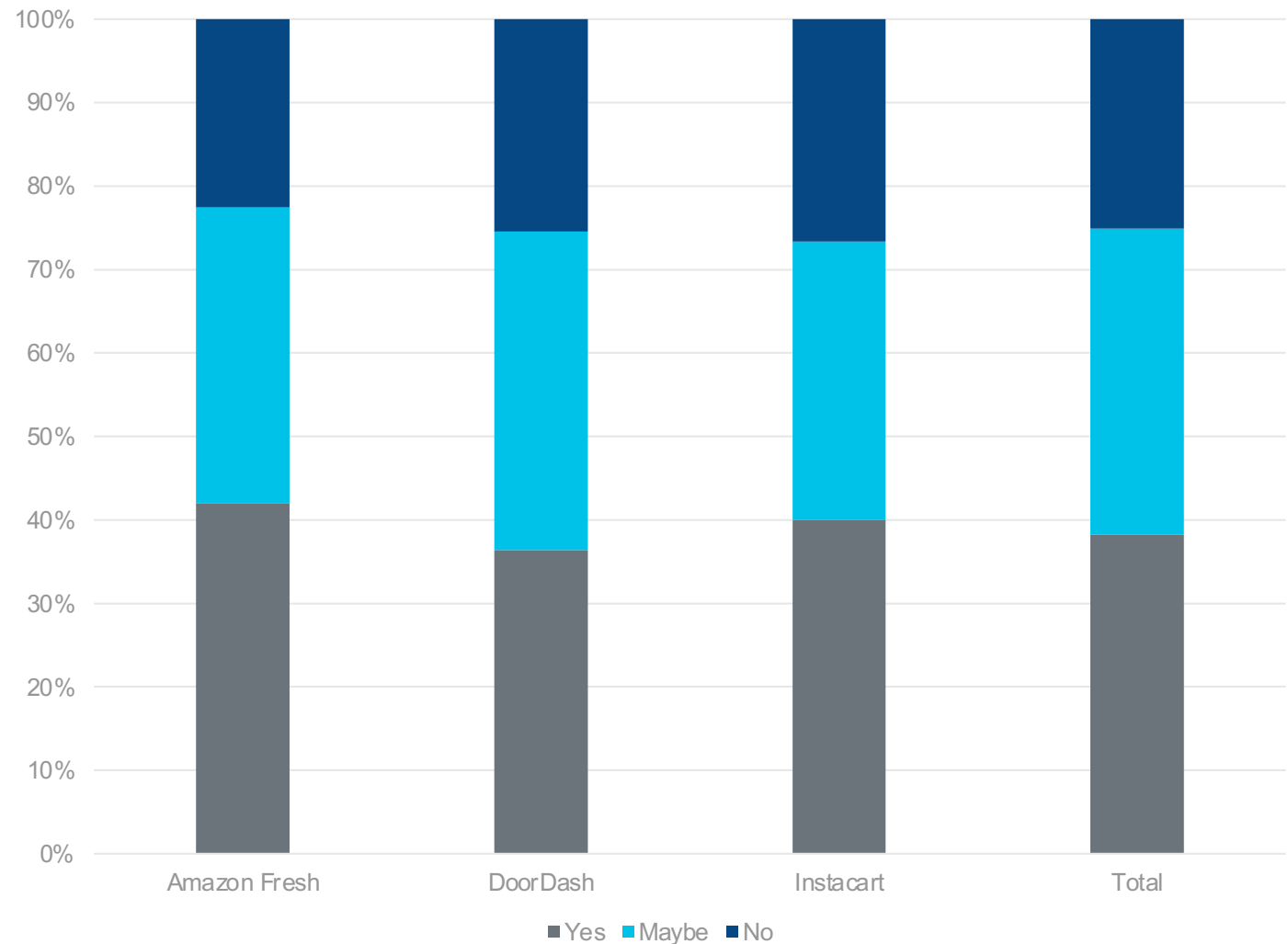
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# Workers want representation

- When asked if they had interest in an organization that would represent them and other app workers to negotiated with app companies over issues like pay rates, bonuses, handling of customer complaints, etc.:
  - 38% answered yes
  - 37% answered maybe

**Do you have an interest in an organization that would represent you and other app workers in order to negotiate with app companies over issues like pay rates, bonuses, handling of customer complaints, etc.?**



Please note: though we present results by individual app, to demonstrate what a fuller survey might reveal, with this pilot data in most cases the differences between apps are not statistically significant and only the combined results for all apps ("total") should be considered meaningful.

# SUMMARY AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- On-demand delivery work in San Francisco is performed predominantly by people for whom it is close to full-time work and their primary source of income
- This is a highly diverse workforce, including nearly 75% People of Color and 36% immigrants from dozens of different countries.
- This workforce struggles to make ends meet, and their circumstances have been made significantly worse by the COVID-19 crisis
- When expenses and both unpaid and paid work time are fully accounted for, a substantial portion of this workforce are estimated to make less than the equivalent of San Francisco's minimum wage (currently \$15.59 hour)
- Many also don't receive other benefits they would be entitled to under San Francisco law if the companies were classifying them as employees
- These findings underscore the importance of policy makers ensuring that existing city and state employment laws are enforced for this workforce, and finding new ways to address the economic, safety and health, and public health concerns facing this critical workforce

# Thank you.

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