

Prospects for Mission on Catalina Island

Community Needs Assessment
Monte Sahlin
Center for Creative Ministry
September 2009

Who is Monte Sahlin?

An ordained Seventh-day Adventist minister for 40 years who has done assessments of more than 1,000 local churches. He is currently employed by the Ohio Conference after two decades at the General Conference and union conference level directing research and development. He teaches in the Doctor of Ministry program at Andrews University and the urban studies program at Eastern Baptist University. He is the author of 20 books, 50 research monographs and many articles.

What is the Center for Creative Ministry?

One of the research and information centers affiliated with the North American Division, the center provides information, resource materials, training and consultants to help local churches develop new approaches to outreach, evangelism and church growth. It provides the *Sharing Scripture* small group Bible study guides, *Friend2Friend* training videos and other materials.

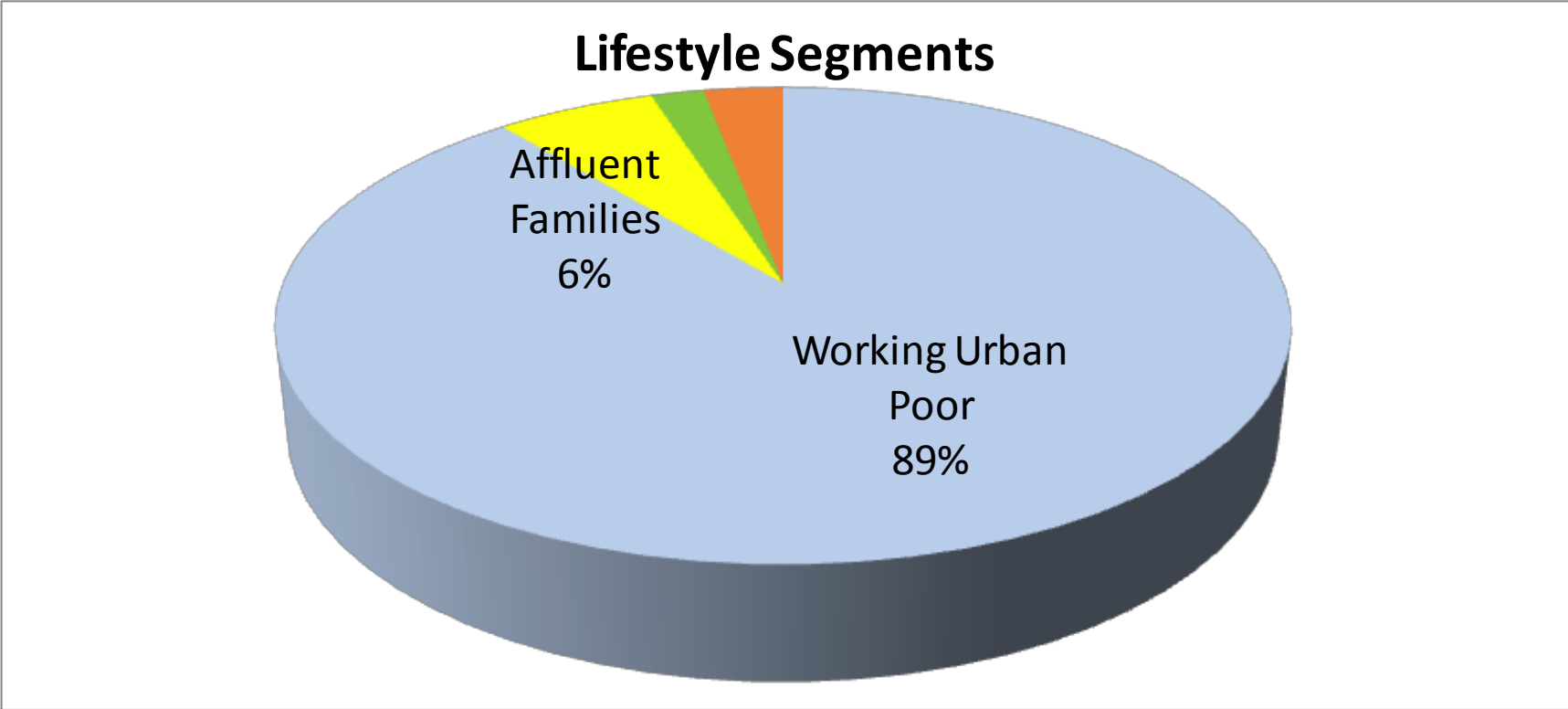
Goals of this Study

- ❑ Understand the community on Catalina Island as a mission field
 - ❑ Profile the dynamics and culture of Catalina Island
 - ❑ Find effective ways to reach the community
 - ❑ Provide a base of information for future planning for mission
-

Catalina as a Mission Field

- ❑ Catalina Island sits 24 miles off the coast of Southern California and is part of Los Angeles County
 - ❑ About 4,000 residents in 1,300 households, almost all in Avalon, the only town
 - ❑ Zero Adventists—unentered territory
 - USA: 1 Adventist to 305
 - New Guinea: 1 to 25
 - Jamaica: 1 to 14
 - Belize: 1 to 10
-

Who are the people living in this community?



Green area = 2%, Rural Families
Red area = eight other segments with very small numbers.

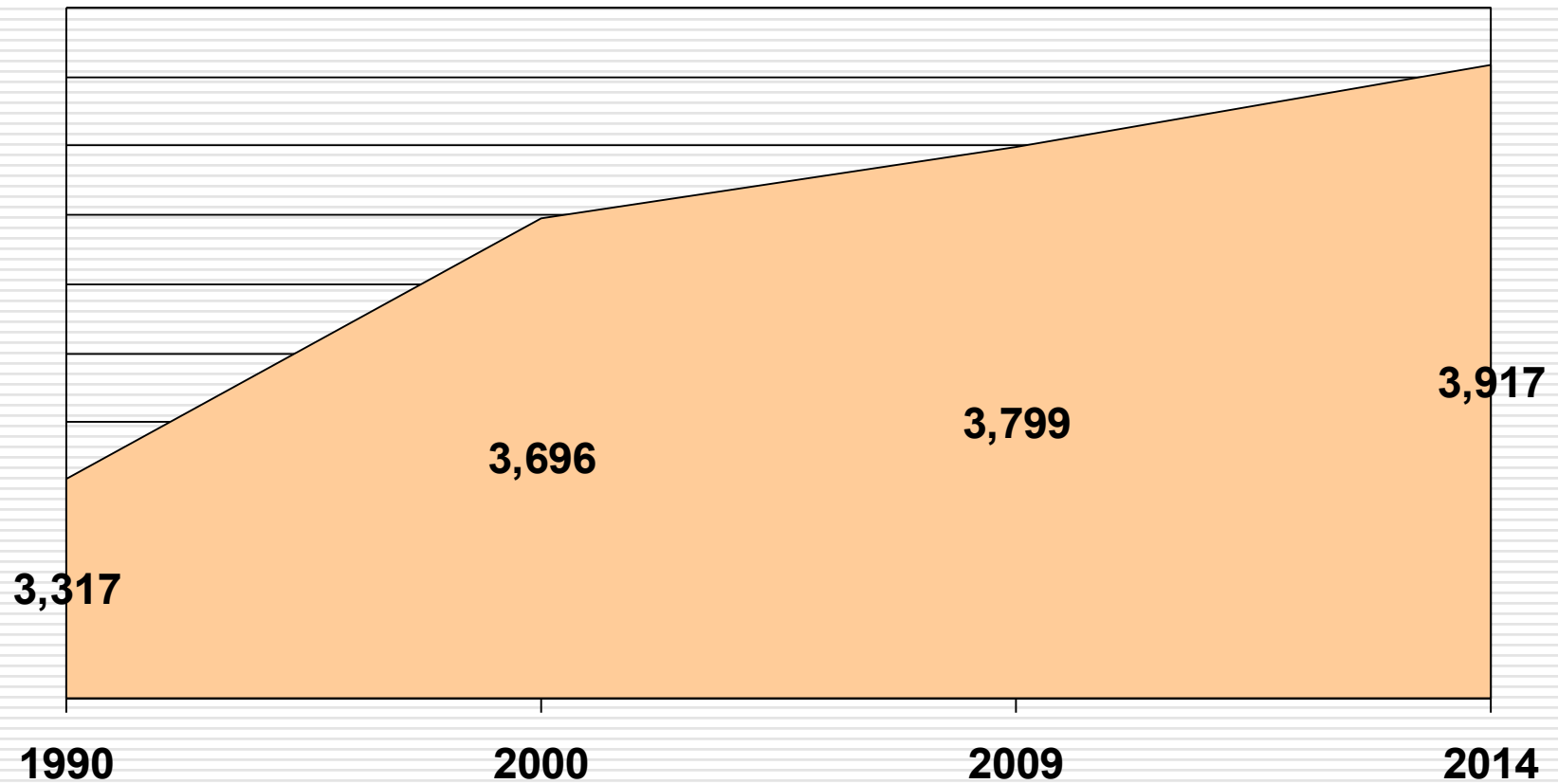
“Working Urban Poor”

- ❑ These are the working poor; A third of the adults are high school dropouts and the majority have only a high school diploma—no further education
 - ❑ Most do not have a car—they walk to work or use public transit
 - ❑ Major needs include affordable housing, neighborhood security, employment opportunities, help for abusive relationships
 - ❑ Belief in God and involvement in religion are far below the national average—many are unchurched
 - ❑ Above average percentages have a preference for the Catholic Church, Judaism, Unitarians, Eastern religions and New Age beliefs
 - ❑ Church program preferences include 12-step groups, divorce recovery, care for the aged and terminally ill
-

“Affluent Families”

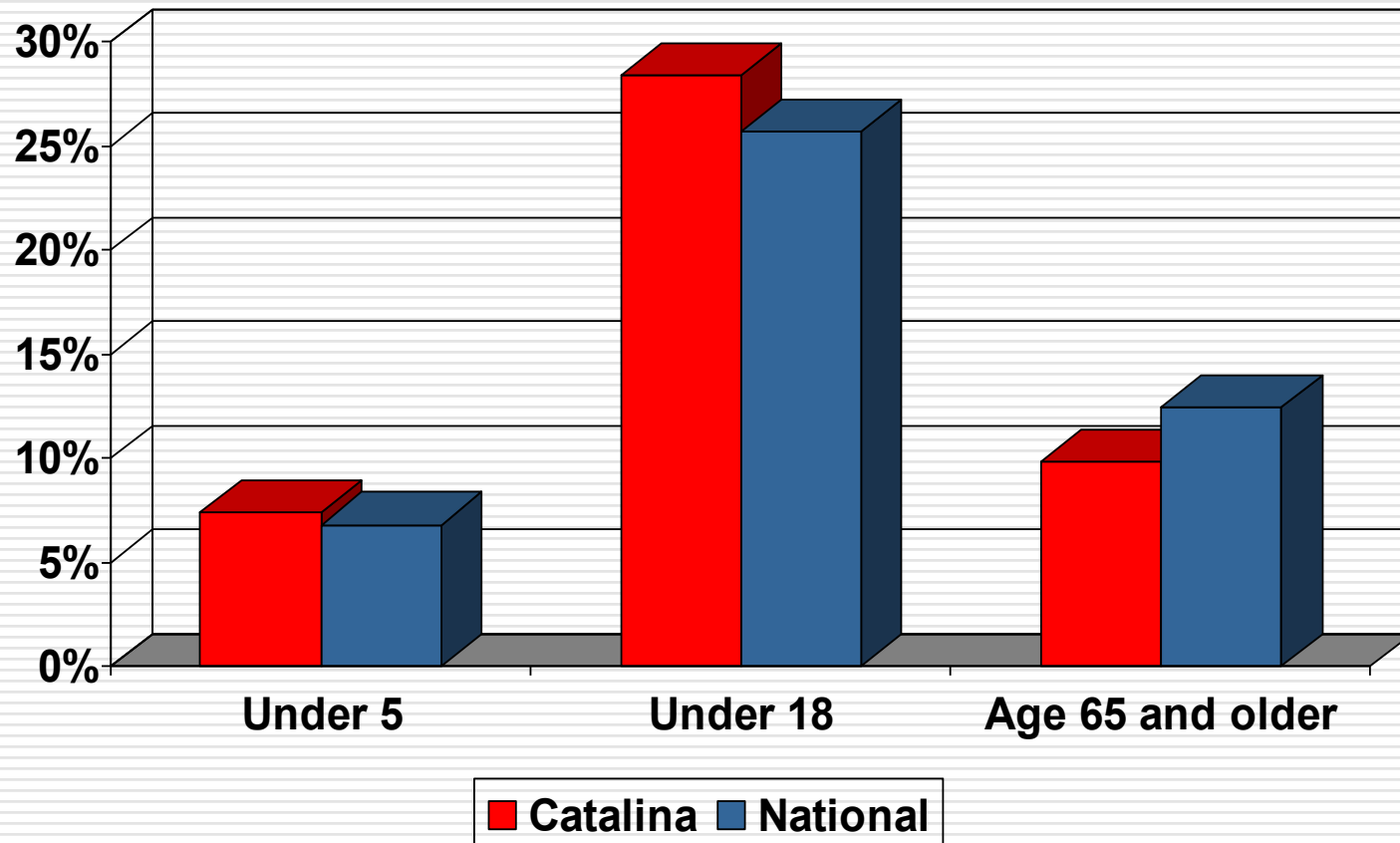
- ❑ Above average home values, annual household incomes, education—some retired, but mostly professional and managerial occupations
 - ❑ Major concerns in this group are friendships, alcohol and drug abuse, finding direction in life, retirement opportunities and social justice
 - ❑ Belief in God and involvement in religion are well below the national average; high percentages have become less involved in their faith in the last ten years
 - ❑ Above average percentages prefer Episcopal and Presbyterian churches, Judaism and New Age beliefs
 - ❑ Church program preferences include marriage enrichment, divorce recovery, traditional music, retirement activities, cultural programs and spiritual retreats
-

Population Growth

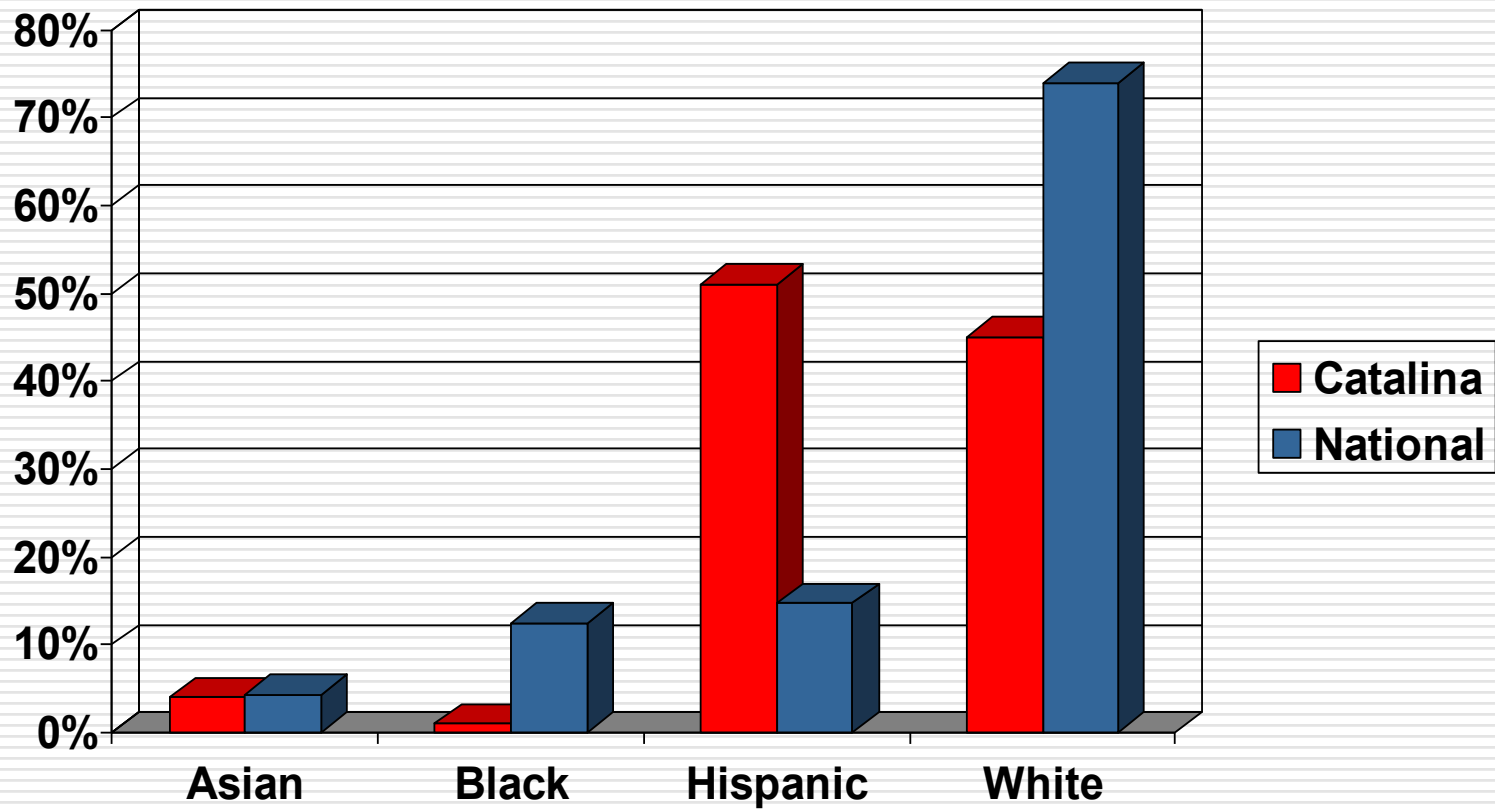


2014 is an estimate

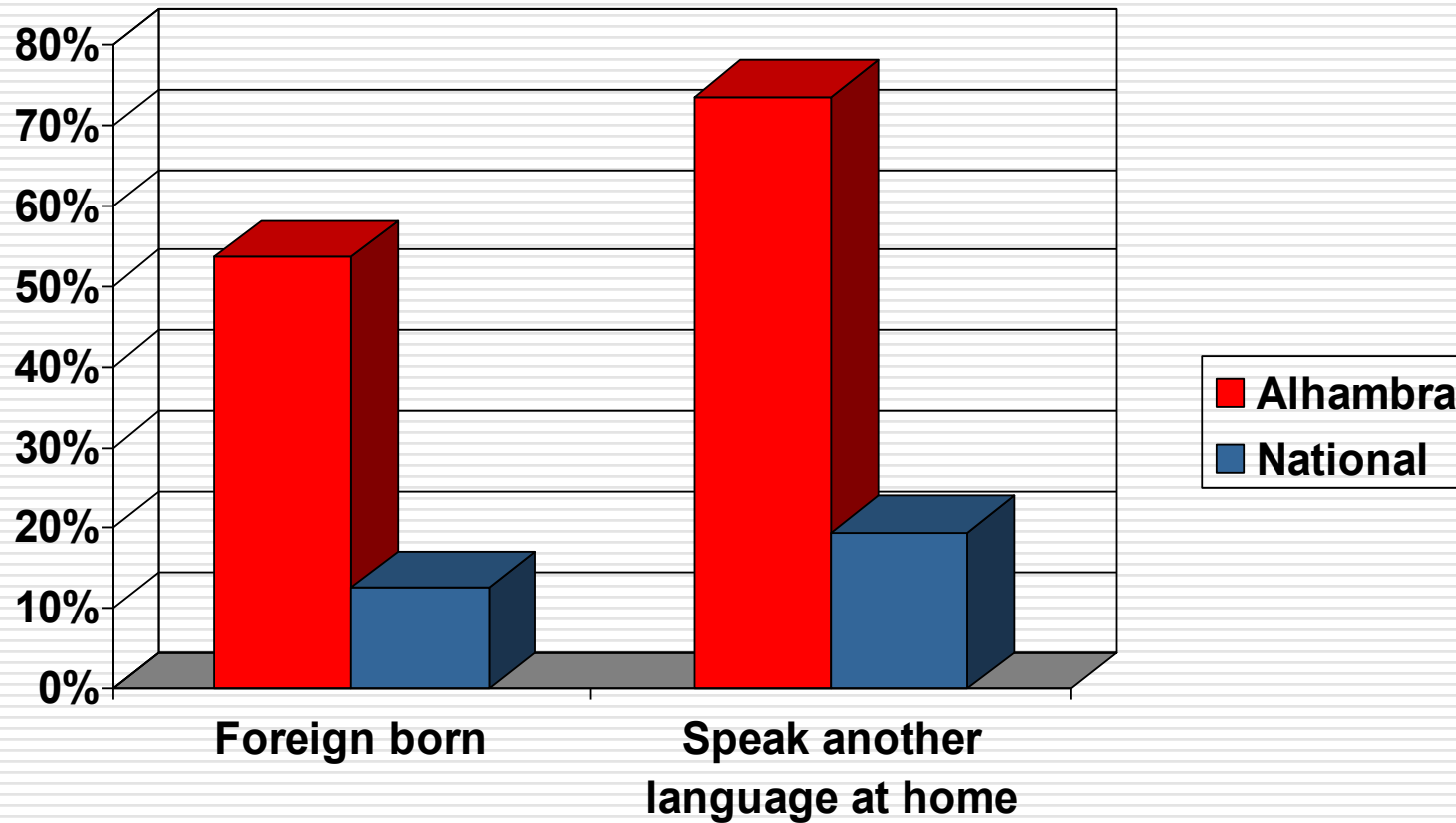
Age Groups



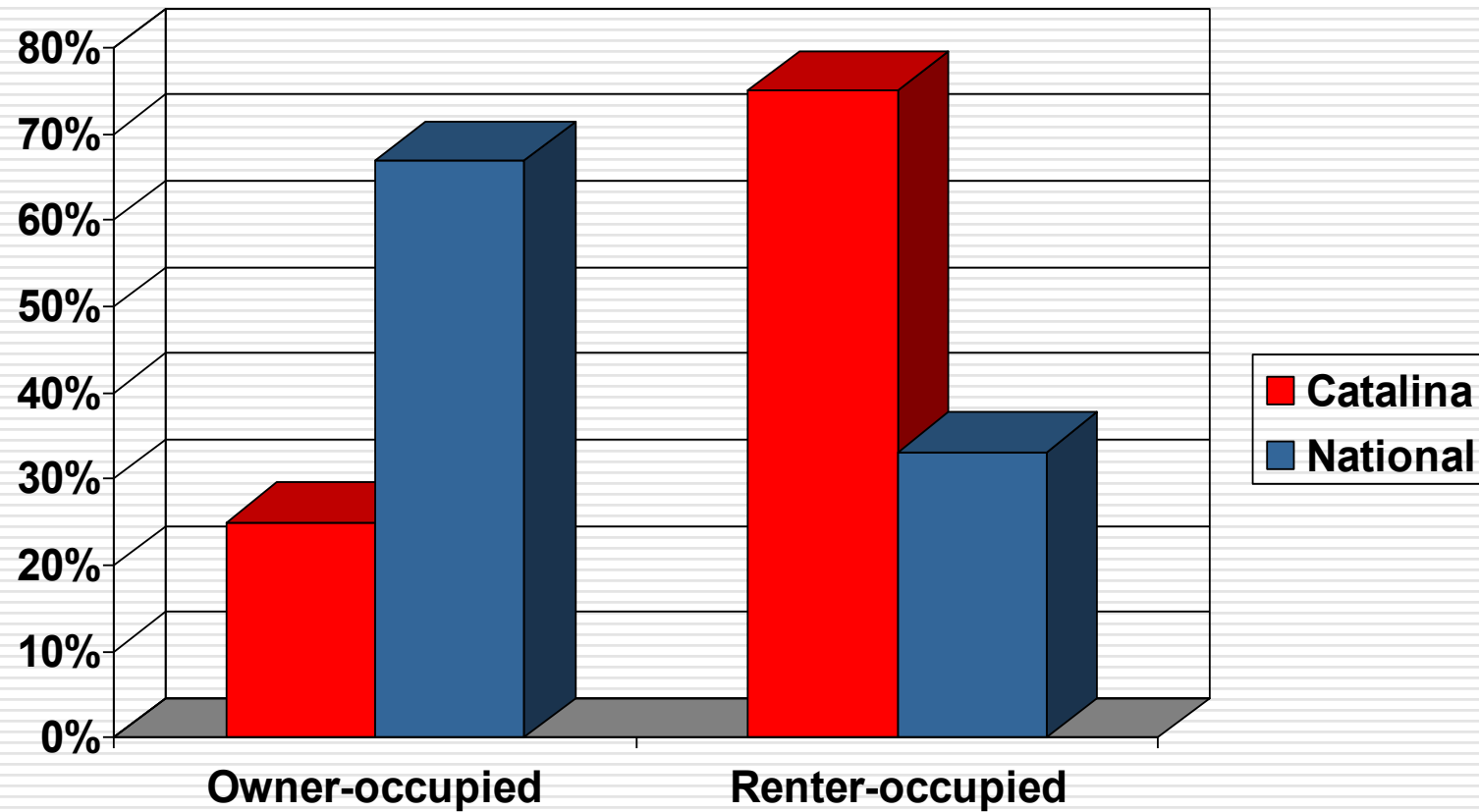
Ethnic Profile



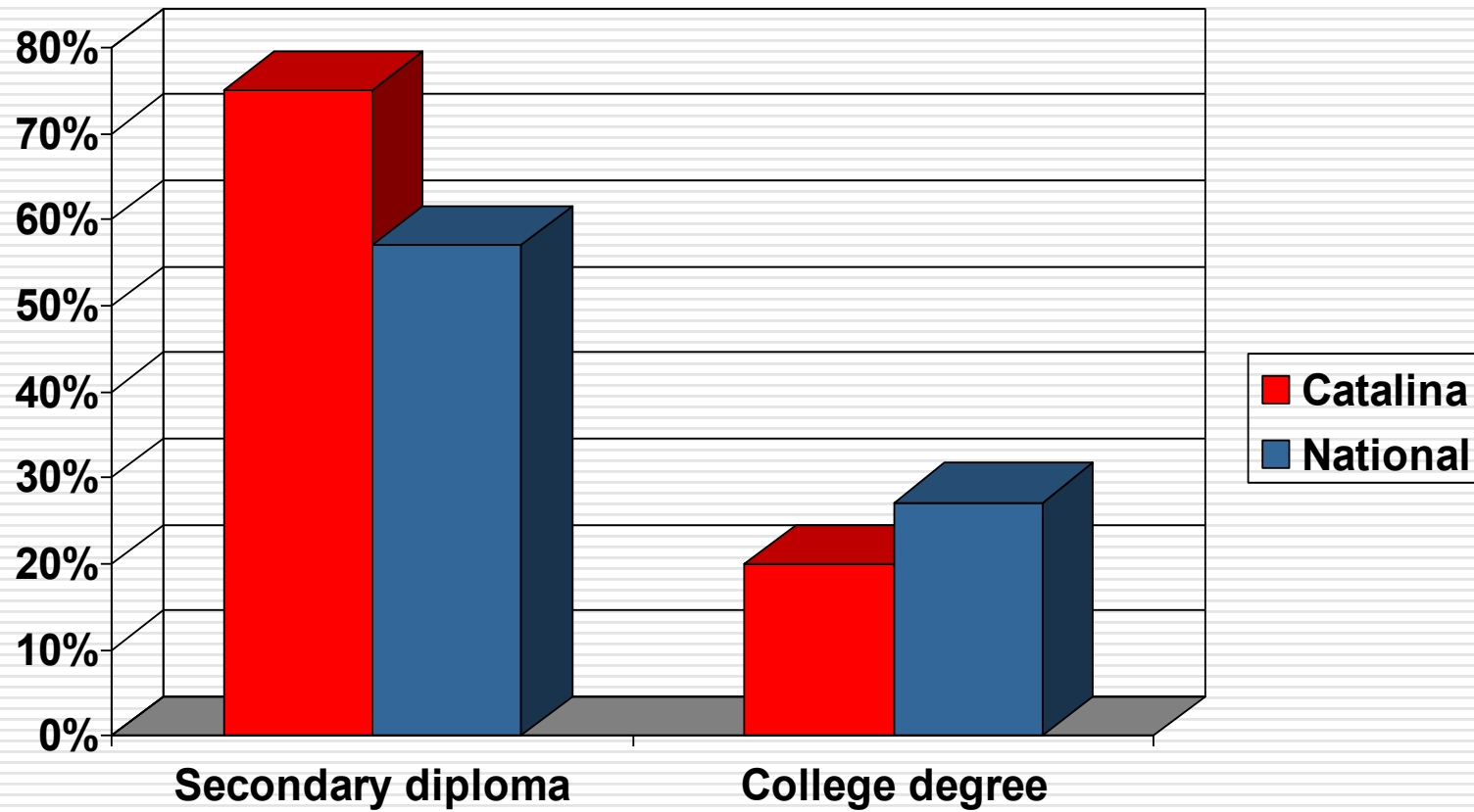
Immigrants



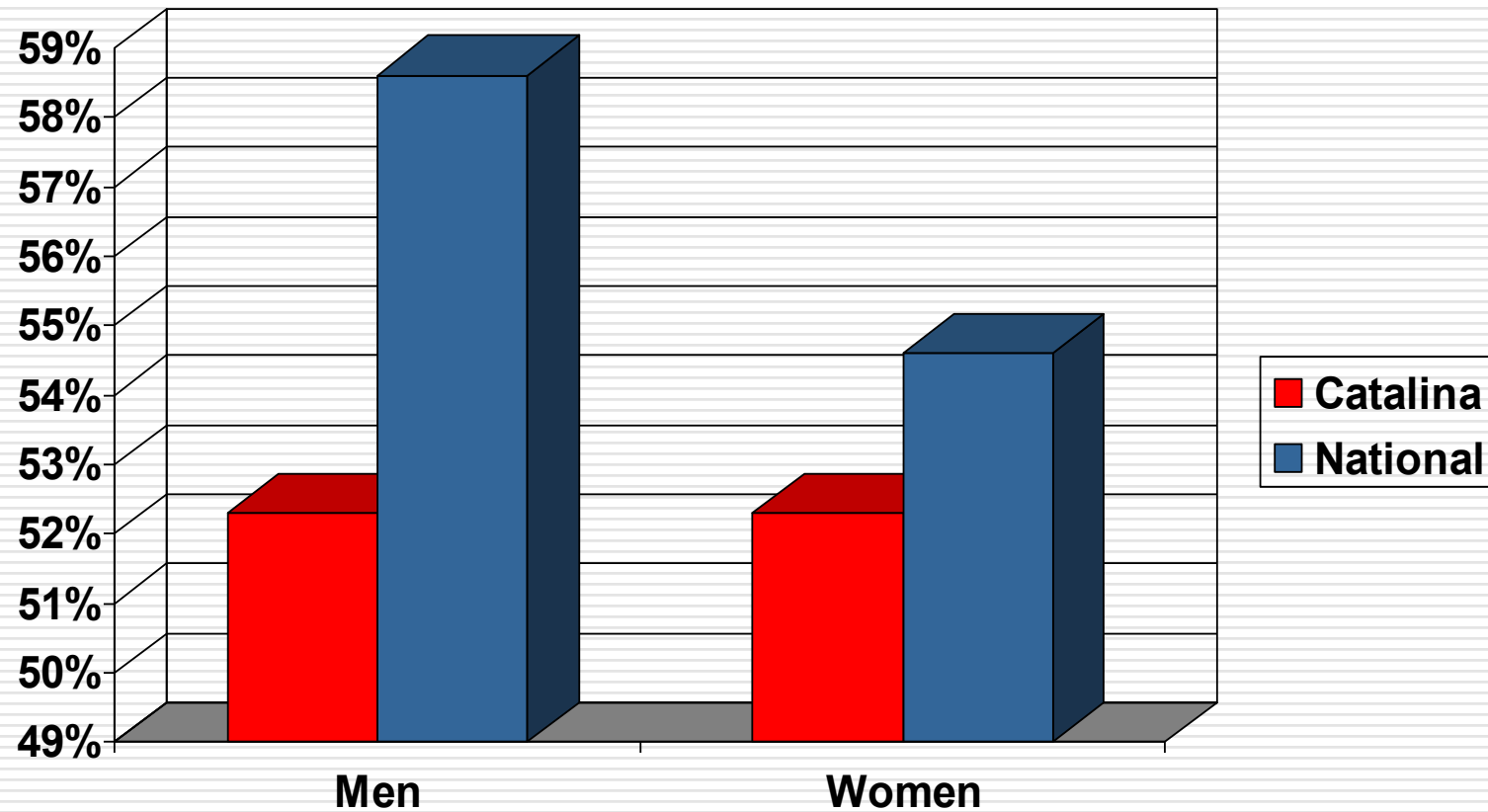
Housing



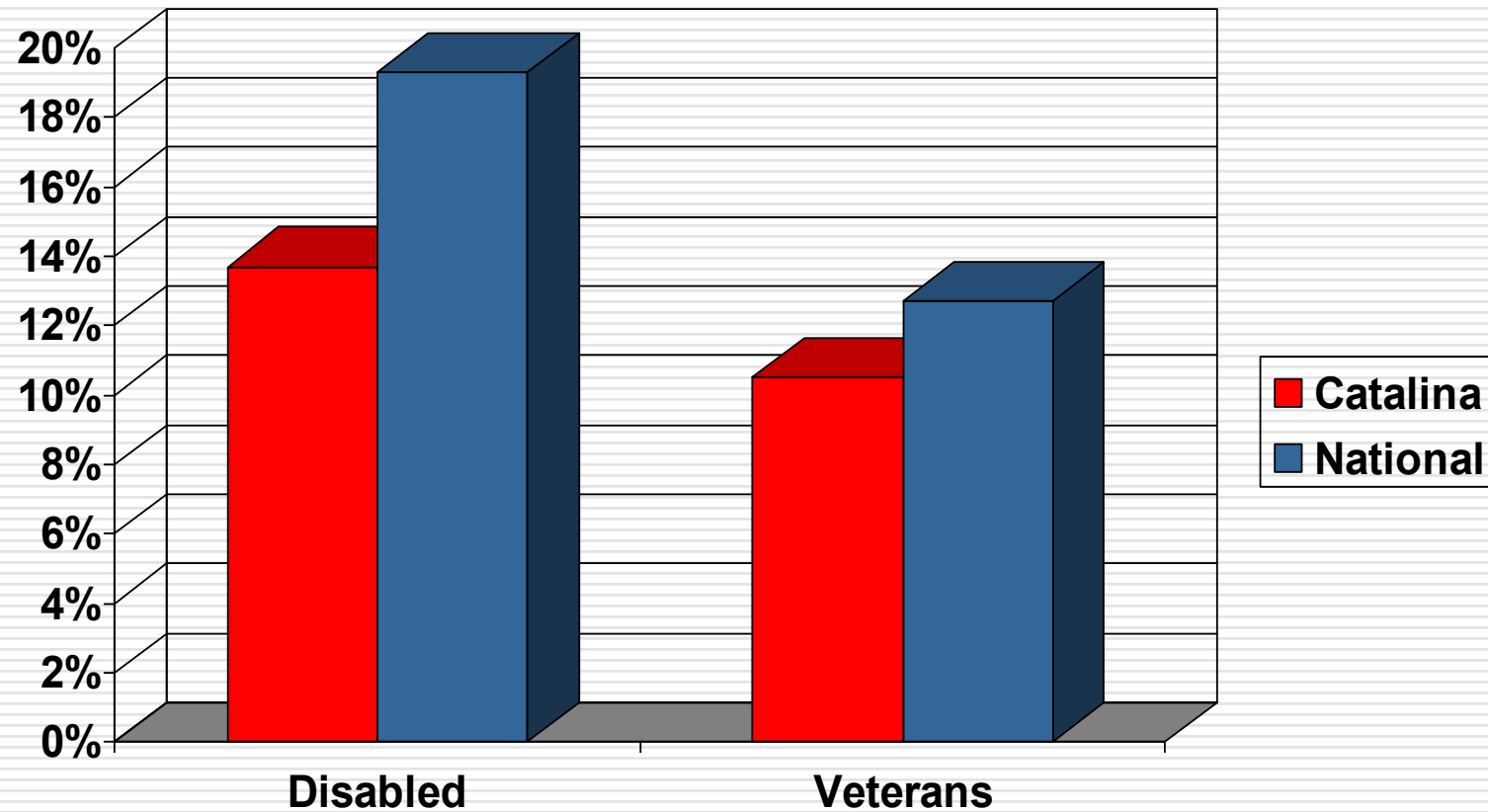
Education



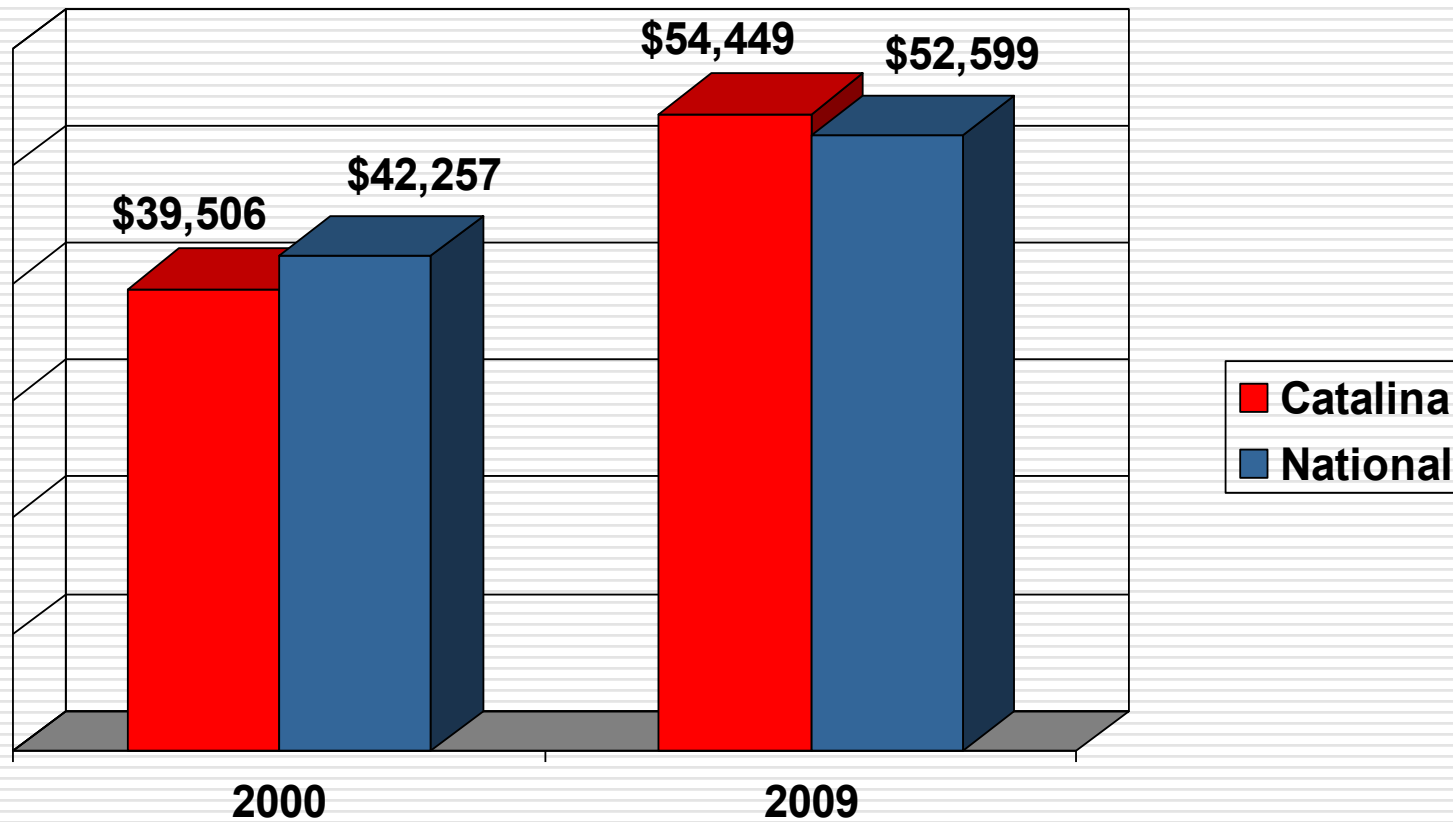
Married



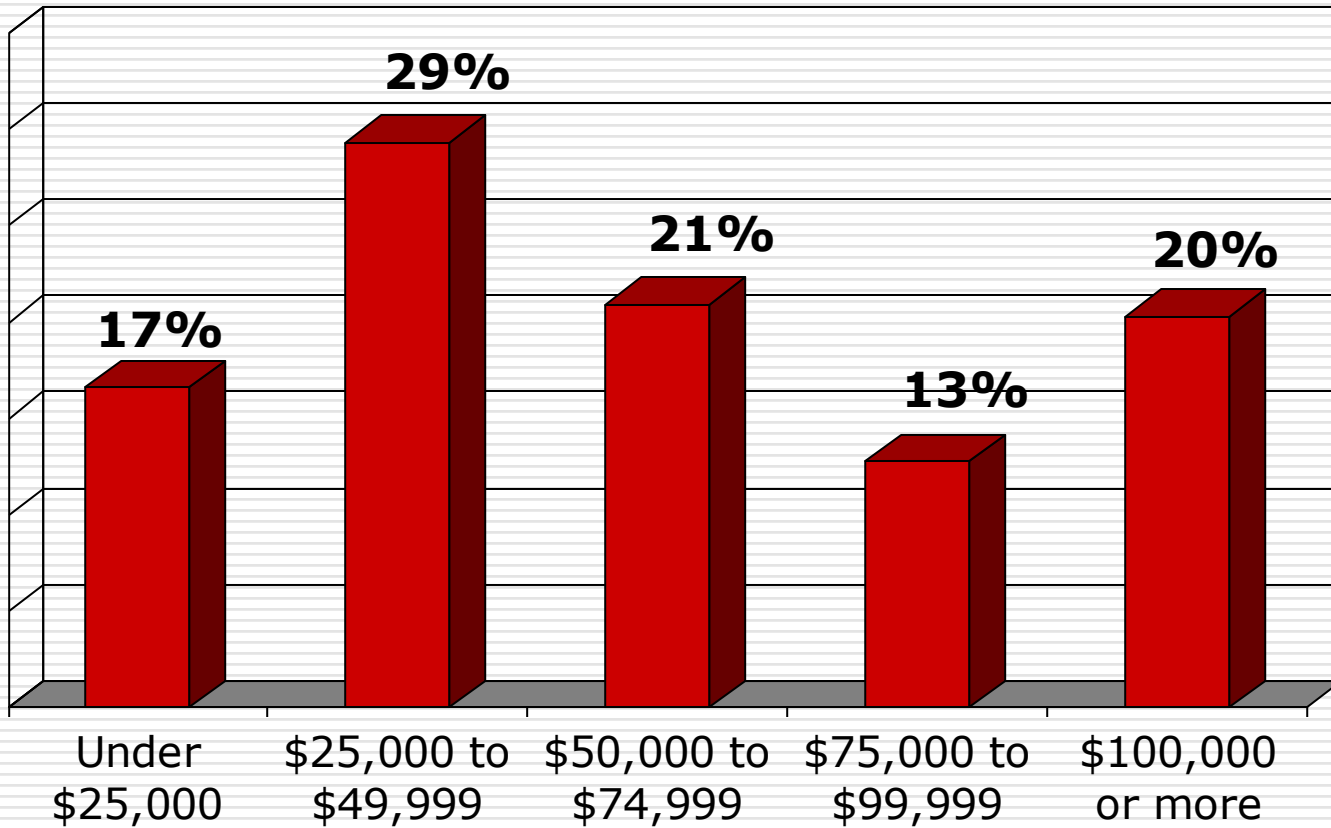
Special Needs



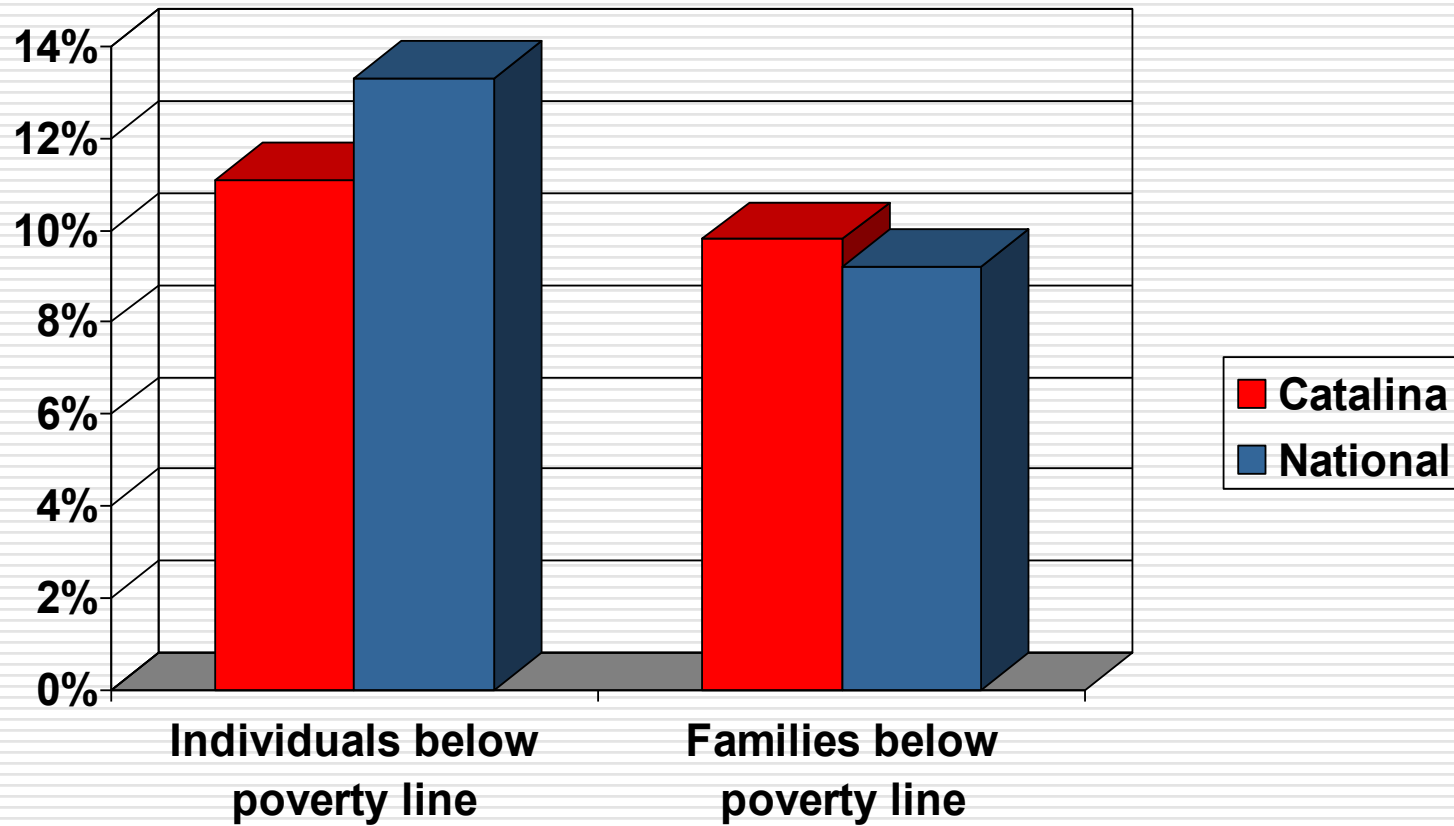
Median Household Income



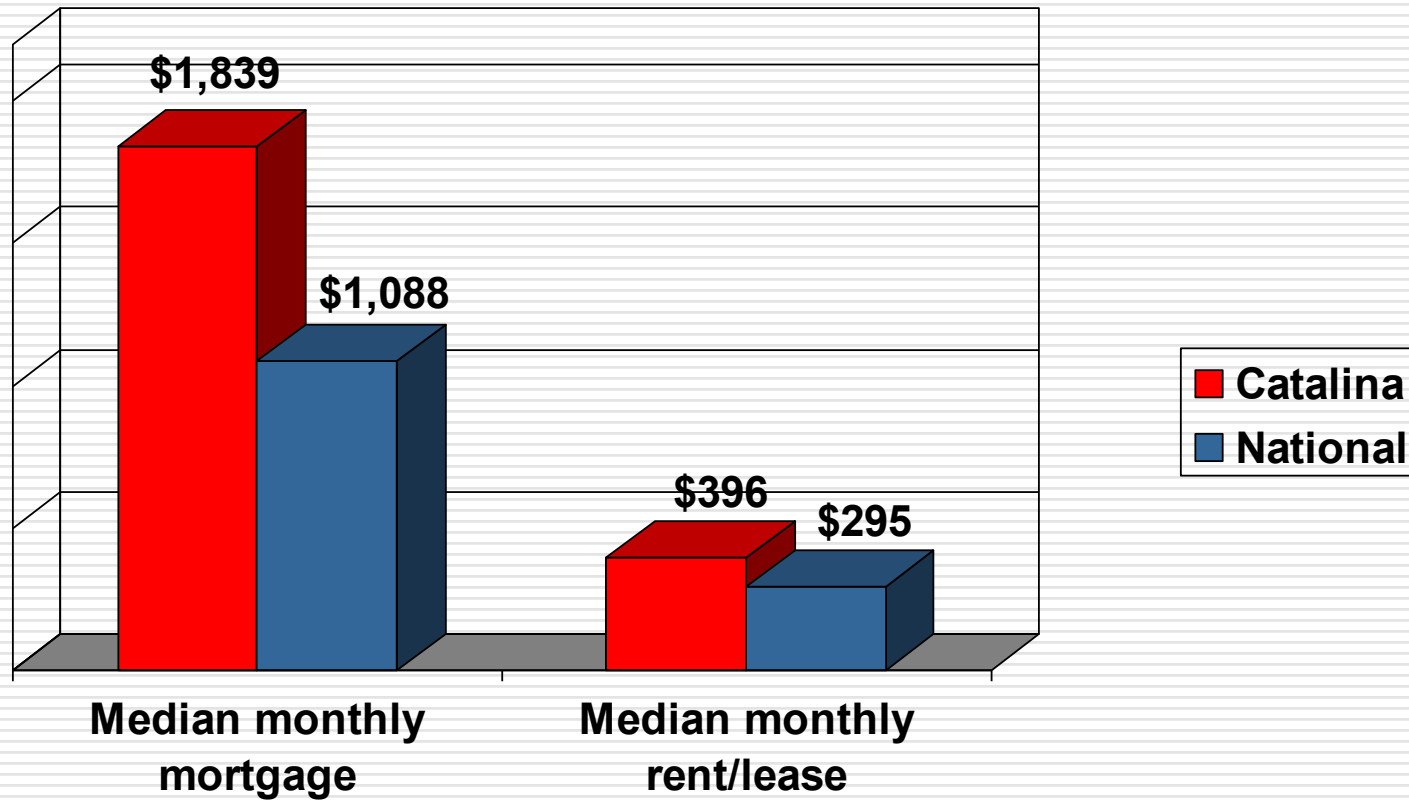
Annual Household Income



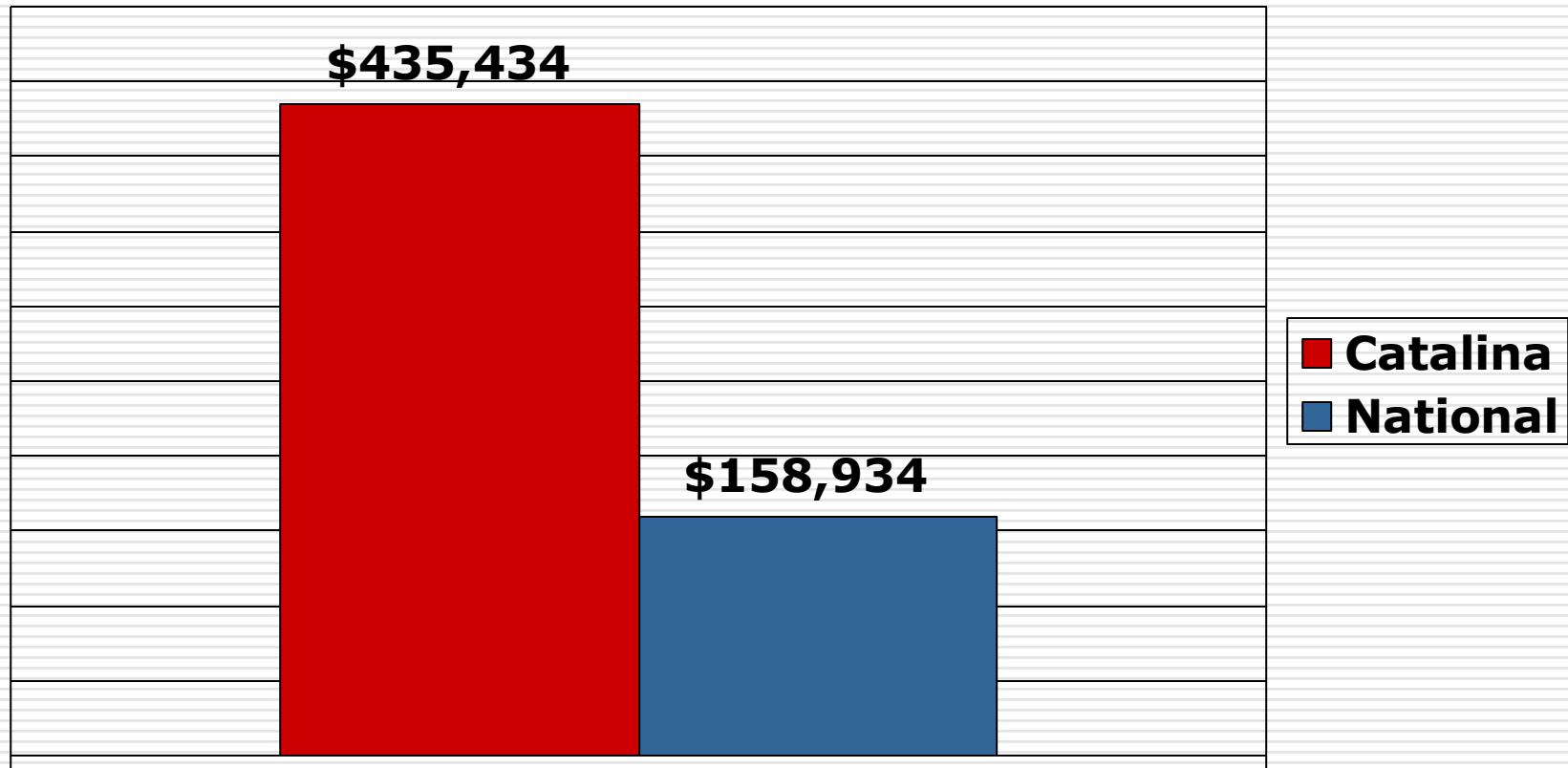
Poverty



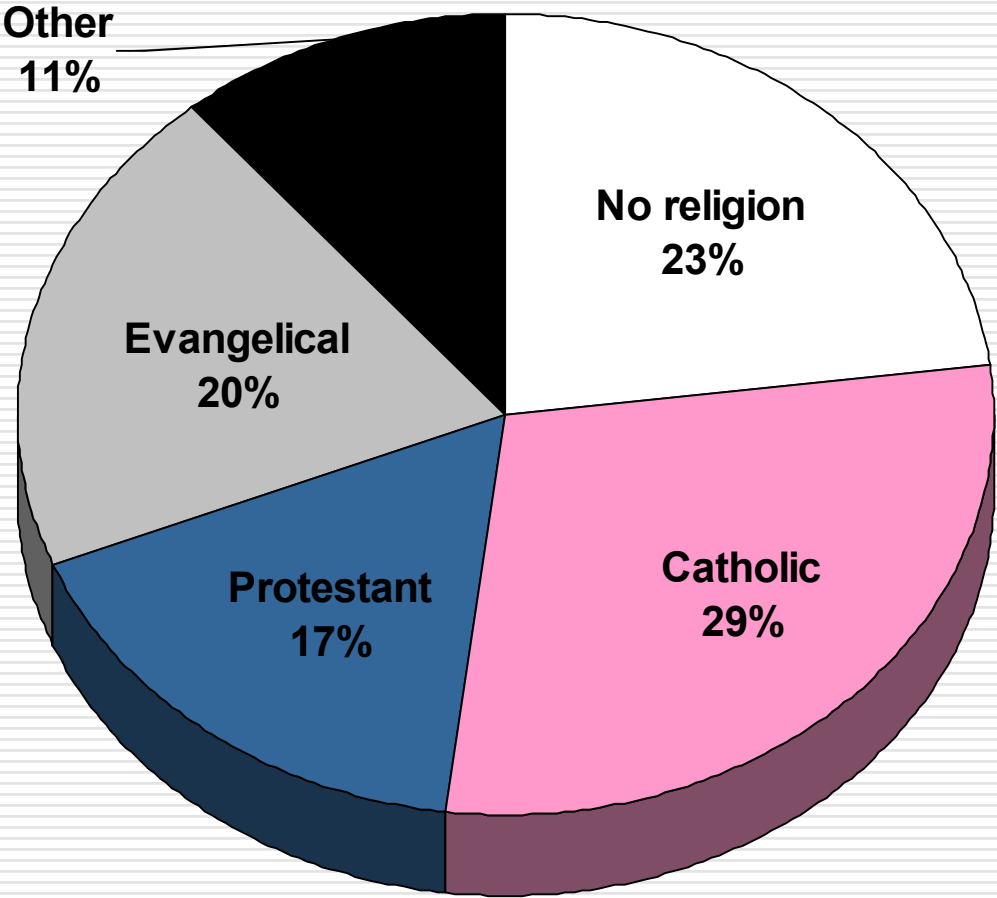
Cost of Housing



Median Home Value



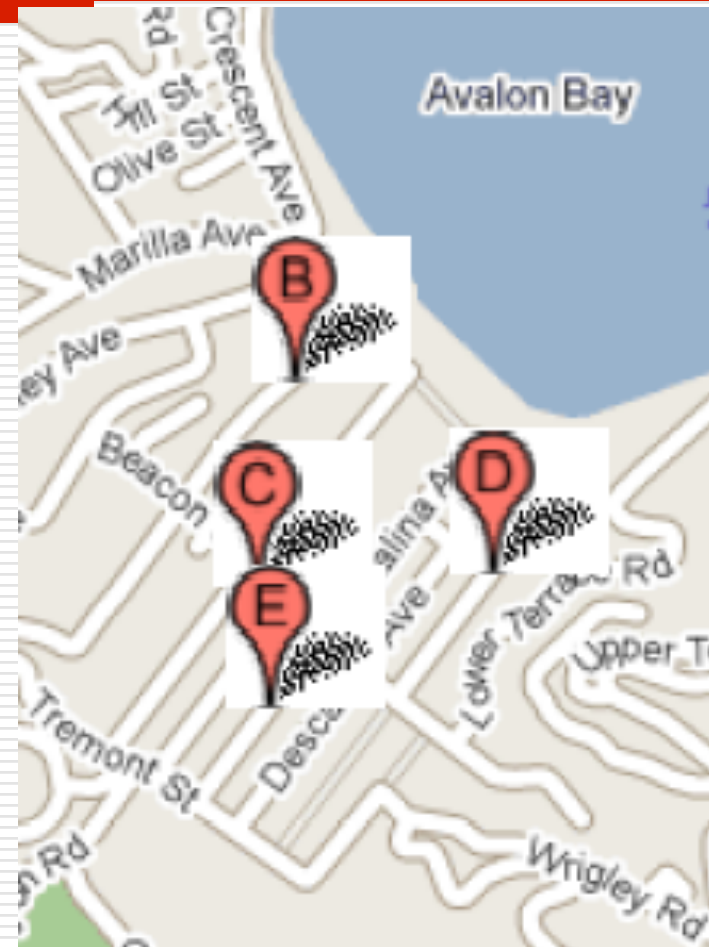
Religious Preferences of Catalina Residents



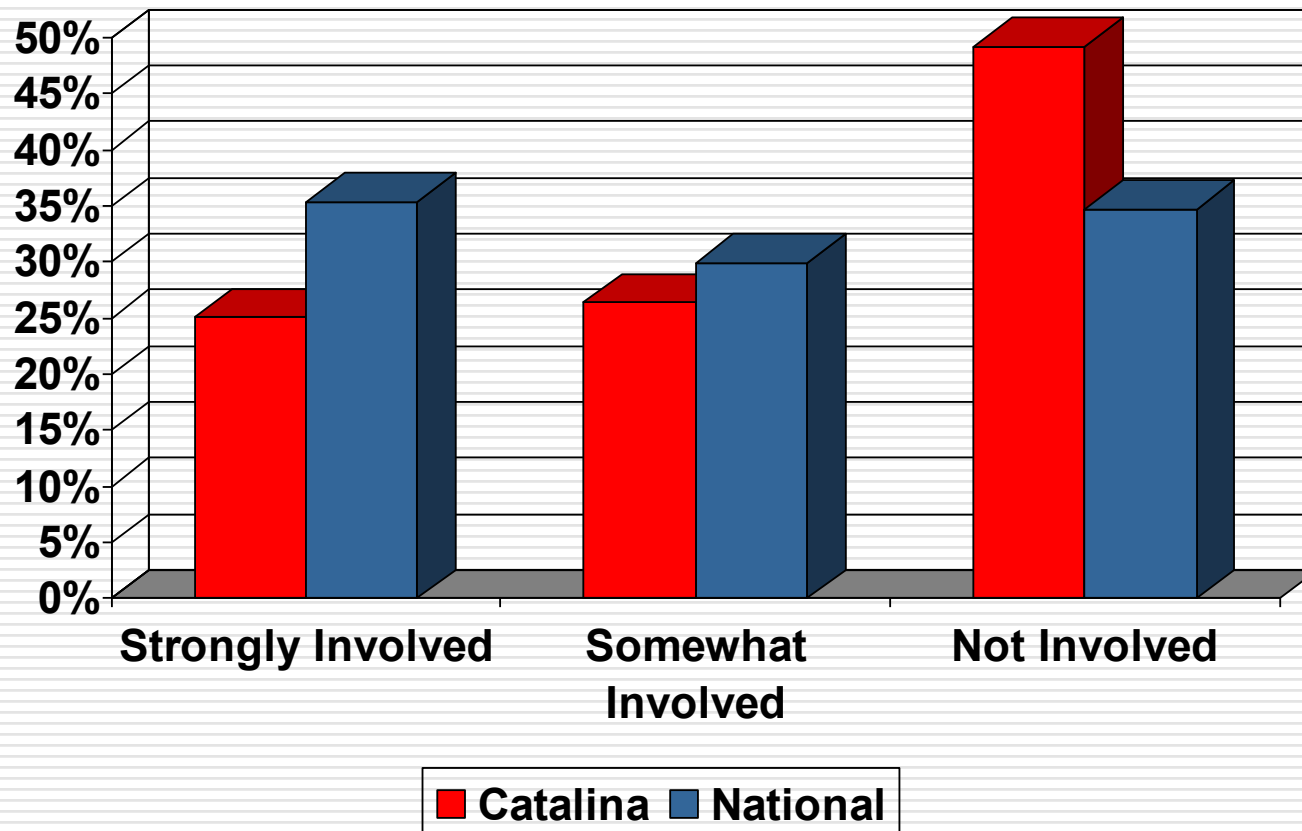
Source: Percept Group, Inc.

Churches on the Island

- ❑ Avalon Community Church (B)
- ❑ St. Catherine of Alexandria Roman Catholic Church (C)
- ❑ Jehovah's Witnesses (D)
- ❑ Avalon Christian School (E)

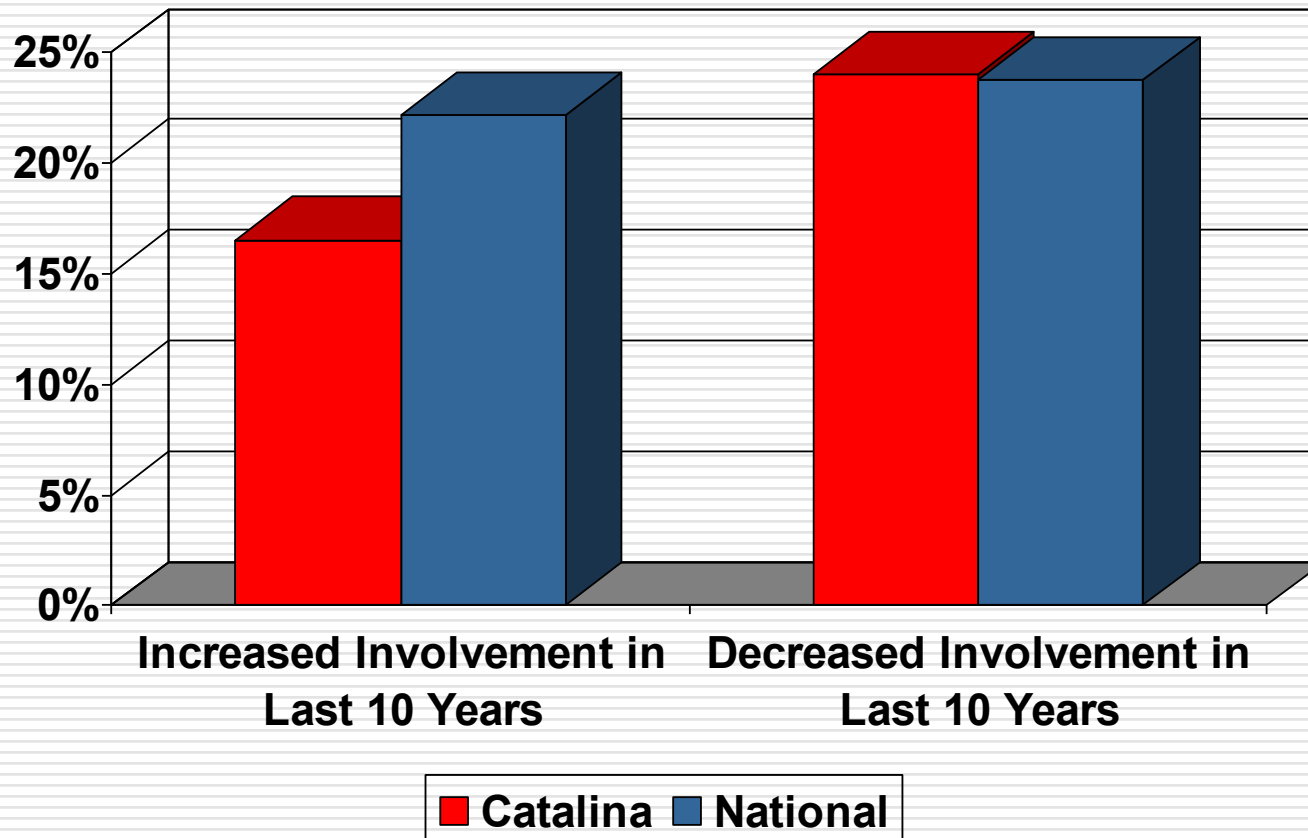


Religious Involvement of Catalina Residents



Source: Percept Group, Inc.

Religious Involvement of Catalina Residents



Source: Percept Group, Inc.

Top Needs in the Community

- ❑ 46% Achieving financial security
 - ❑ 44% Maintaining personal health
 - ❑ 41% Neighborhood crime & safety
 - ❑ 41% Day-to-day financial worries
 - ❑ 32% Dealing with stress
 - ❑ 27% Obtaining better quality health care
 - ❑ 26% Getting health insurance
 - ❑ 25% Finding affordable housing
 - ❑ 22% Finding time for recreation & leisure
 - ❑ 22% Finding good schools
-

Needs in the Community

- ❑ 18% Finding friends
- ❑ 18% Dealing with teen/child problems
- ❑ 16% Finding a satisfying job/career
- ❑ 14% Alcohol/drug addiction
- ❑ 17% Finding any job
- ❑ 15% Planning retirement opportunities
- ❑ 15% Dealing with racial/ethnic prejudice
- ❑ 15% Achieving a fulfilling marriage
- ❑ 14% Caring for aging parents

Needs in the Community

- ❑ 12% Obtaining adequate food
- ❑ 12% Abusive relationships
- ❑ 12% Dealing with neighborhood gangs
- ❑ 12% Dealing with social injustice
- ❑ 10% Developing parenting skills
- ❑ 10% Finding direction in my life
- ❑ 10% Problems with school

Low-priority Needs in the Community

- ❑ 8% Finding a good church
- ❑ 8% Finding spiritual teaching
- ❑ 8% Affordable child care
- ❑ 7% Getting an education
- ❑ 4% Dealing with divorce

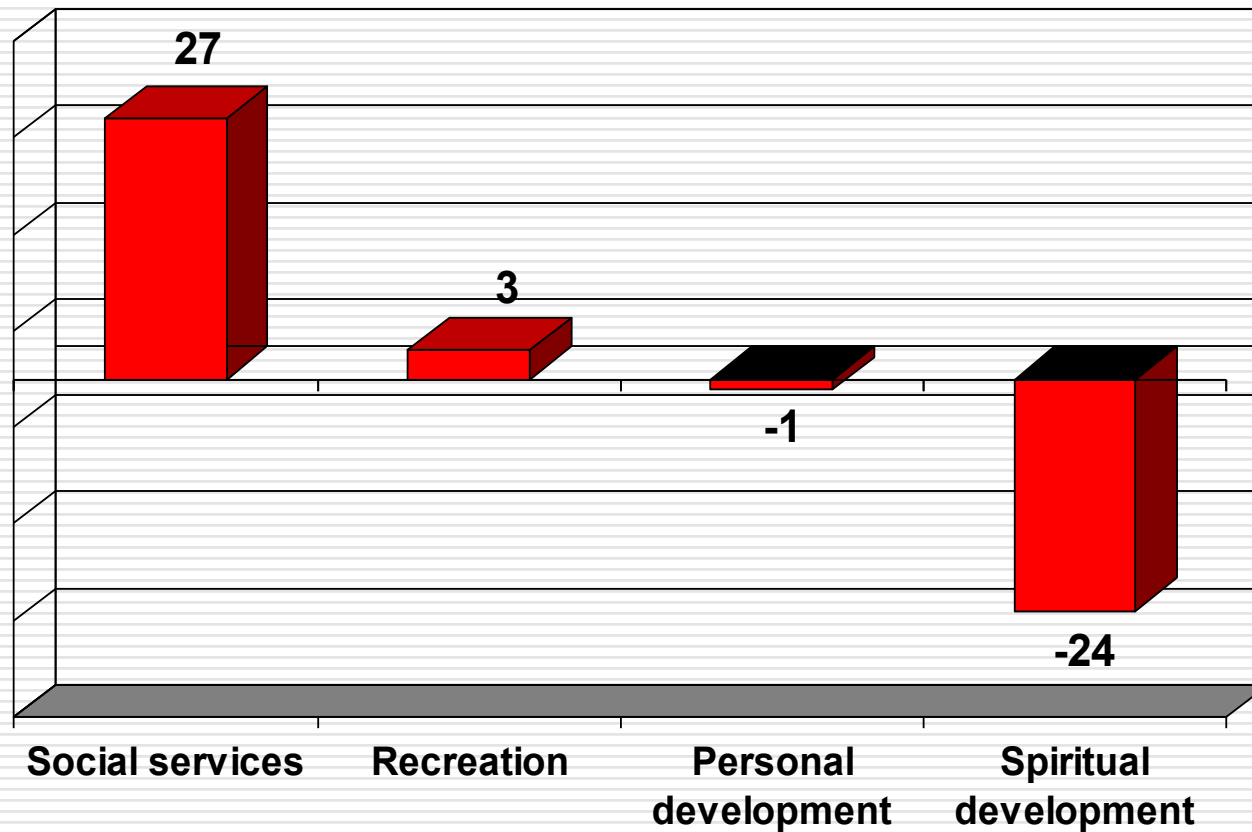
Church Programs People Want

- ❑ 31% Family activities & outings
- ❑ 30% Active retirement program
- ❑ 27% Bible study & prayer group
- ❑ 27% Youth activities
- ❑ 26% Family & personal counseling
- ❑ 22% Music/art/drama programs
- ❑ 21% Care for the terminally ill
- ❑ 17% Doctrinal study group

Church Programs People Want

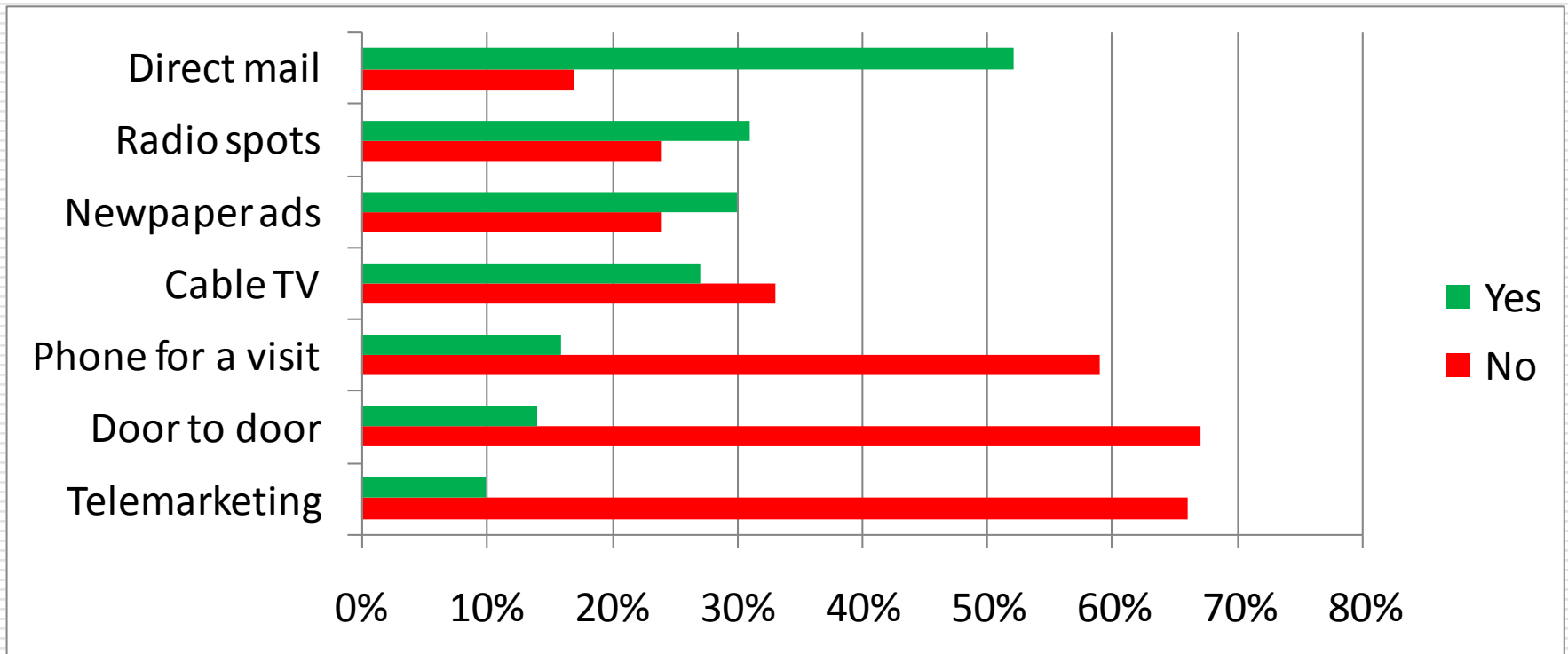
- 13% Clothing & food for the needy
- 12% Marriage enrichment seminar
- 12% Spiritual retreats
- 11% Day care
- 9% Parent training class
- 7% Sports or camping
- 5% Church school (day school)
- 5% 12-step group for addictions
- 3% Divorce Recovery program

Church Program Preferences Index



Source: Percept Group, Inc.

How I prefer for churches to contact me ...



Source: Percept Group, Inc.

Recommendations

- Must first establish a plausible auspices that has a role in the permanent island population
 - Could be a worshipping Christian fellowship using rented space
 - Could be a community service organization in a rented storefront
 - One of the first community service activities should be a stress seminar
-

Recommendations

- Start “Avalon Free Clinic”
 - Volunteer doctors provide primary care every second week
 - Volunteer dentists provide primary care every second week
 - Screening clinics once a quarter
 - Offer a different health education class each quarter
 - Consider offering basic social services
-

Recommendations

- ❑ Use direct mail to advertise activities on the island. This is the most acceptable means of communication and the most cost effective. Because of the low population on the island, it is possible to use the least expensive postal rate—"Occupant" mass mailings.
 - ❑ Is it also possible to use posters?
-

Possible Schedule for Volunteers

Sabbaths

- 1 pm, Family picnic
- 2 pm, Children's activities
- 3 pm, Bible study group
- 4 pm, Free clinic opens for patients
- 6 pm, Volunteers can go back to the mainland

Sundays

- 9 am, Staff meeting over breakfast
 - 10 am, Brunch and health seminar or screening event
 - 1 pm, Volunteers can go back to the mainland
-

Key Issue

- Sabbath afternoons and Sunday morning would be good time to bring Adventist volunteers from the mainland
 - Will it work for the island residents?
 - Is the weekend a prime work time for local residents because that is when the tourists come?
-

Additional Research is Needed

- Are empty storefronts available for rental? What is the cost?
 - Interviews need to be completed with key civic leaders
 - What community services already exist on the island?
 - What is the attendance at the existing churches? What kinds of people attend?
-

Community Leaders



Mayor Bob Kennedy



Mayor Pro Tem Sue Rikalo

Recommended Next Steps

- A small assessment team of volunteers to conduct research
 - A survey of interested members across the conference (and in Loma Linda):
 - Who goes to Catalina regularly?
 - Who leases a condo or owns property there?
 - Who knows something about life on the island?
 - Who might be willing to help staff a volunteer ministry there?
 - What are their professional skills, etc.?
-

□ Contact Information:

- Monte Sahlin
 - msahlin@creativeministry.org
 - (800) 272-4664
-