



Community Food Program COVID-19 Survey Results



Food First^{NL}

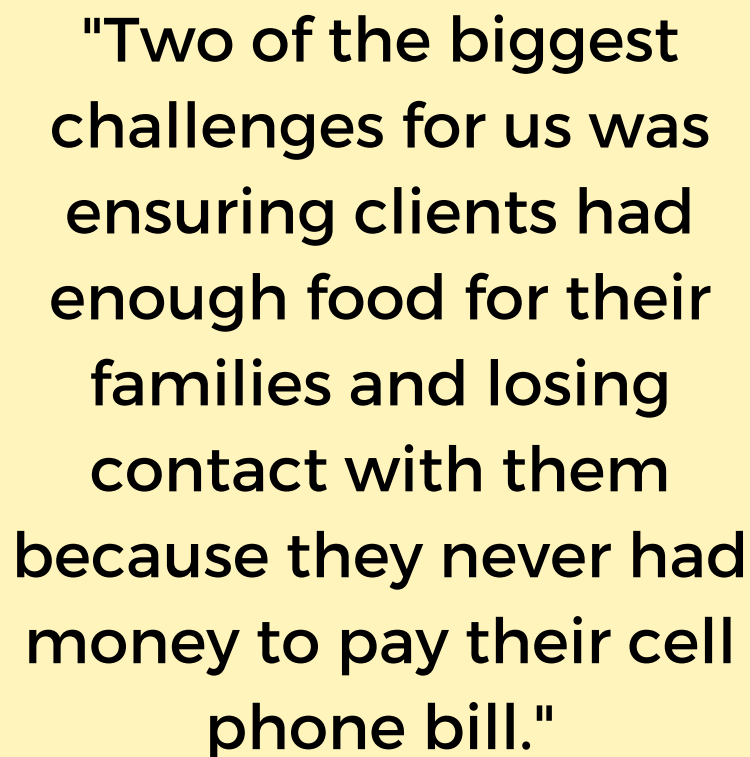


Since the onset of COVID-19,

there has been an increase in demand for acute food supports within communities, while at the same time, groups that meet those demands have had their operations drastically impacted by public health measures.

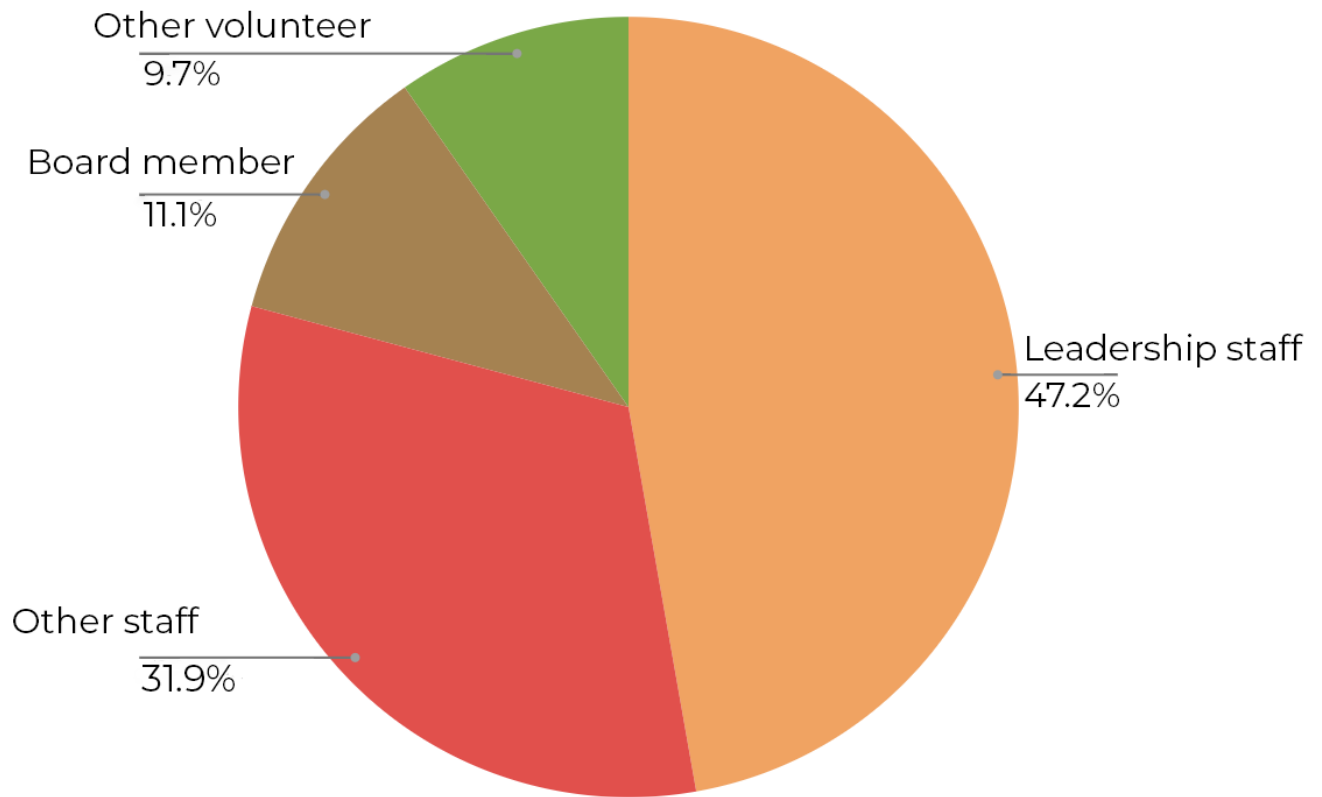
In July, we created the COVID-19 Community Food Program Survey with the aim of collecting data on how community food programs have had to adapt and respond during the public health emergency and to learn what resources these community groups need going forward.

This report contains a series of graphs that show our findings, as well as some quotes from respondents that outline supports needed to best serve folks in our communities. The total number of respondent groups was 74.



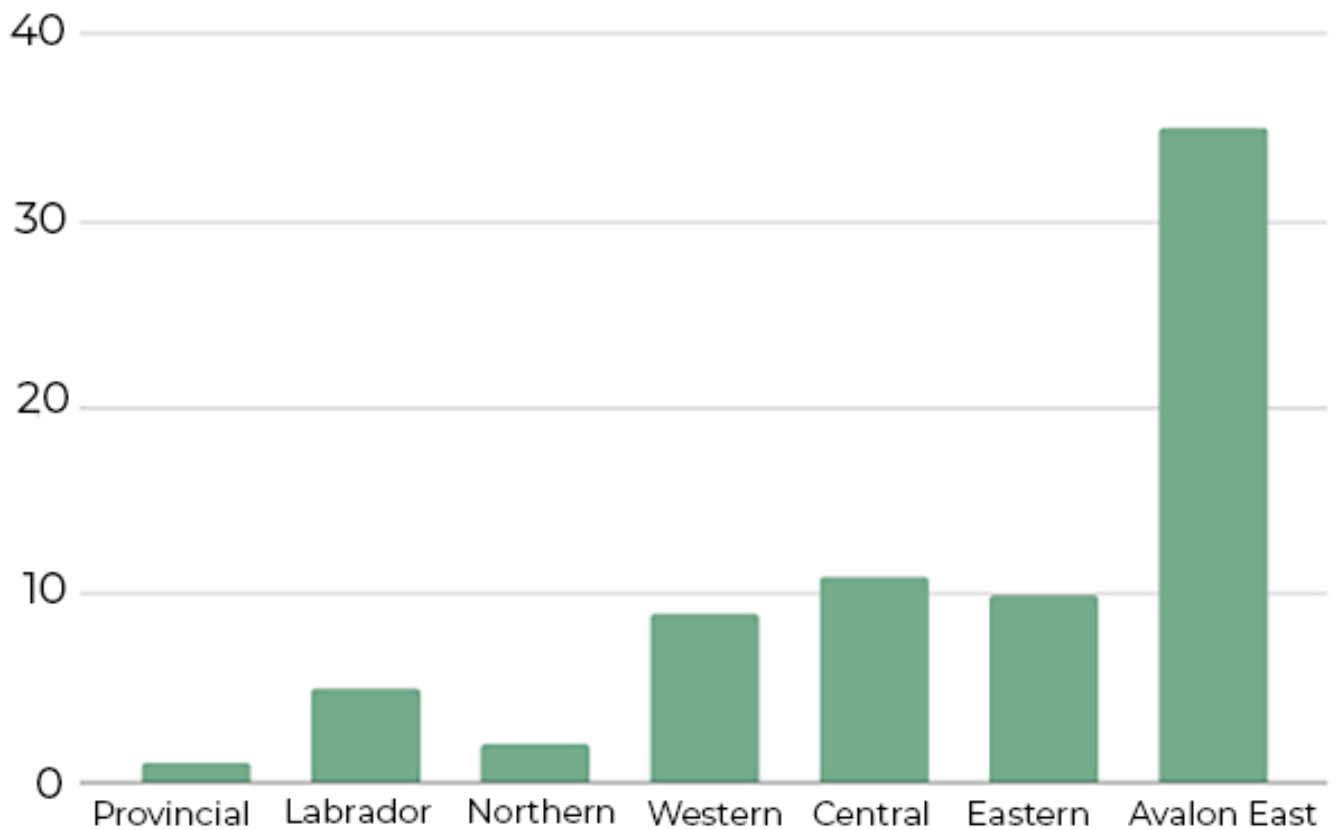
"Two of the biggest challenges for us was ensuring clients had enough food for their families and losing contact with them because they never had money to pay their cell phone bill."

Roles of the individuals who responded to the survey



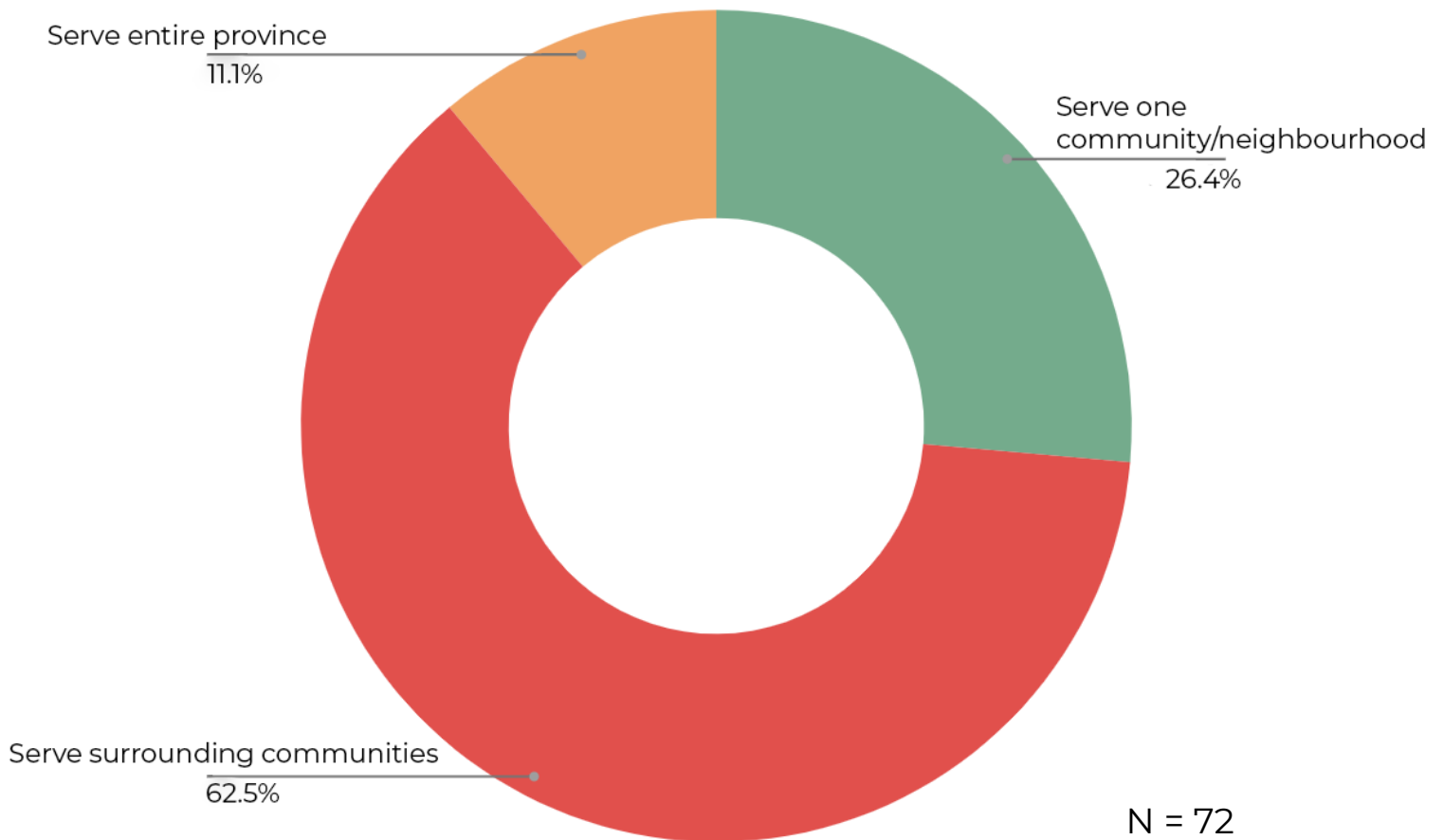
N = 72

Regions of respondents



N = 72

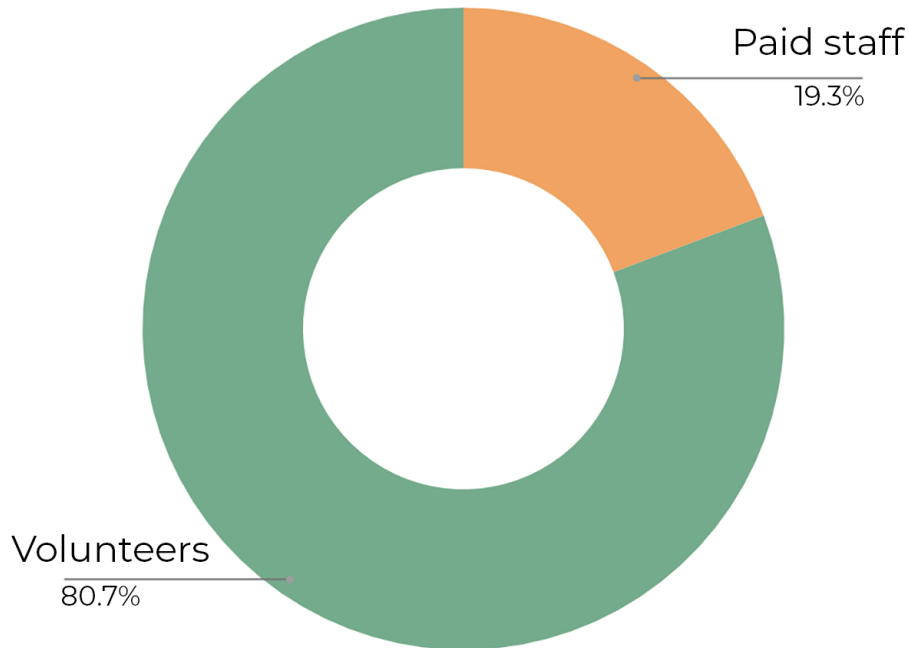
Areas served by groups that responded



"The people we serve depend on programs like ours they can trust, without judgement, to deliver essential food, resources and connection to them and their families."

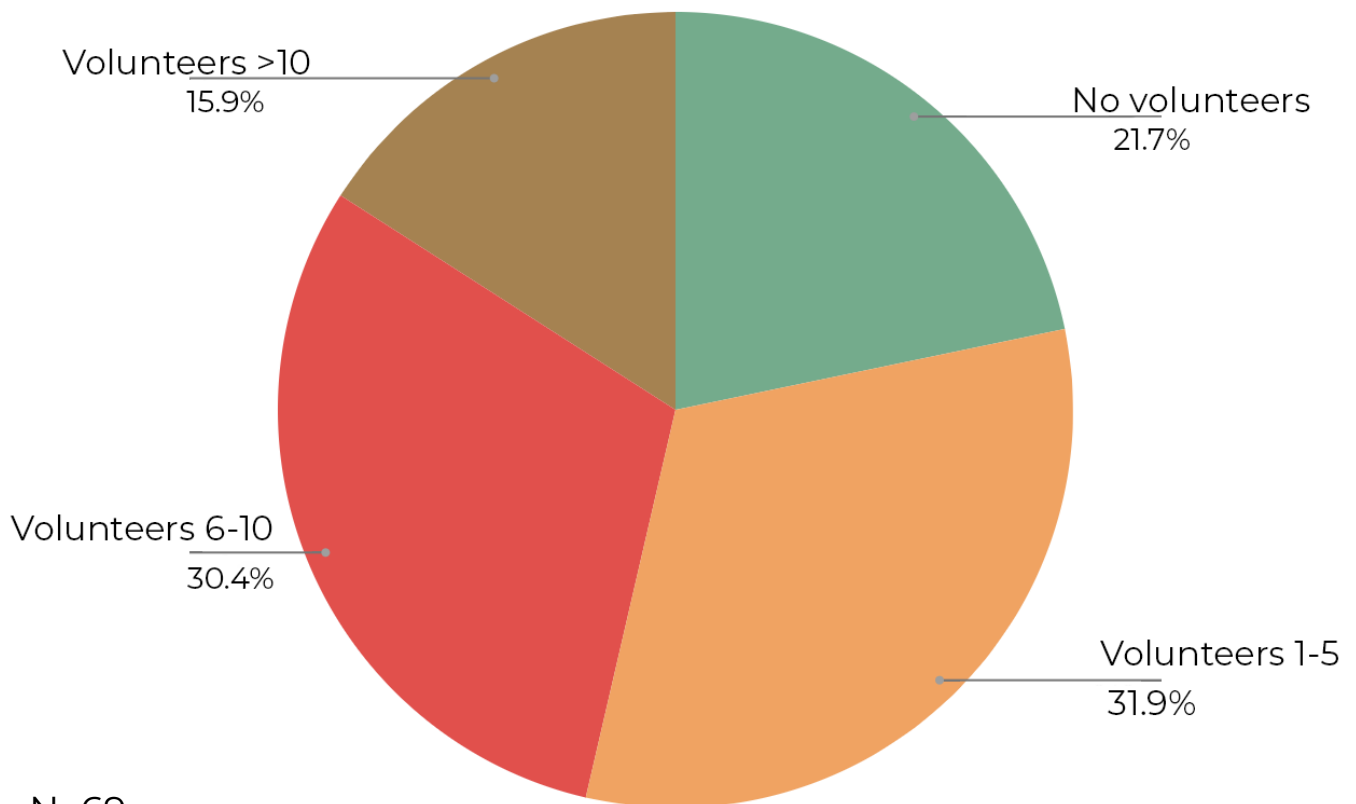
The Workforce

Most of the groups that responded were made up of mostly volunteers, with more than a third having no paid staff. Note that two groups had more than 500 volunteers, and were omitted from the following three charts.



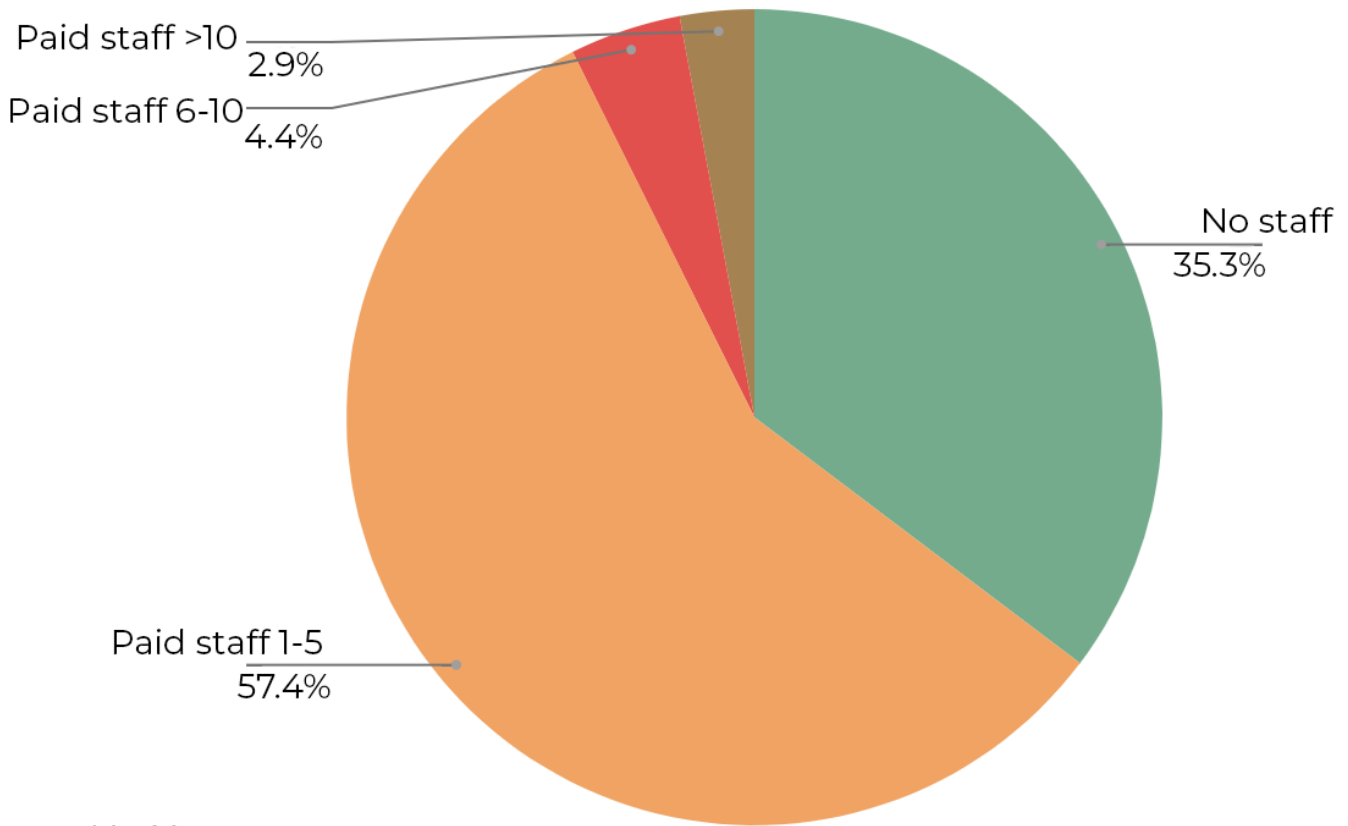
N=69

Number of volunteers



N=69

Number of paid staff



N=69

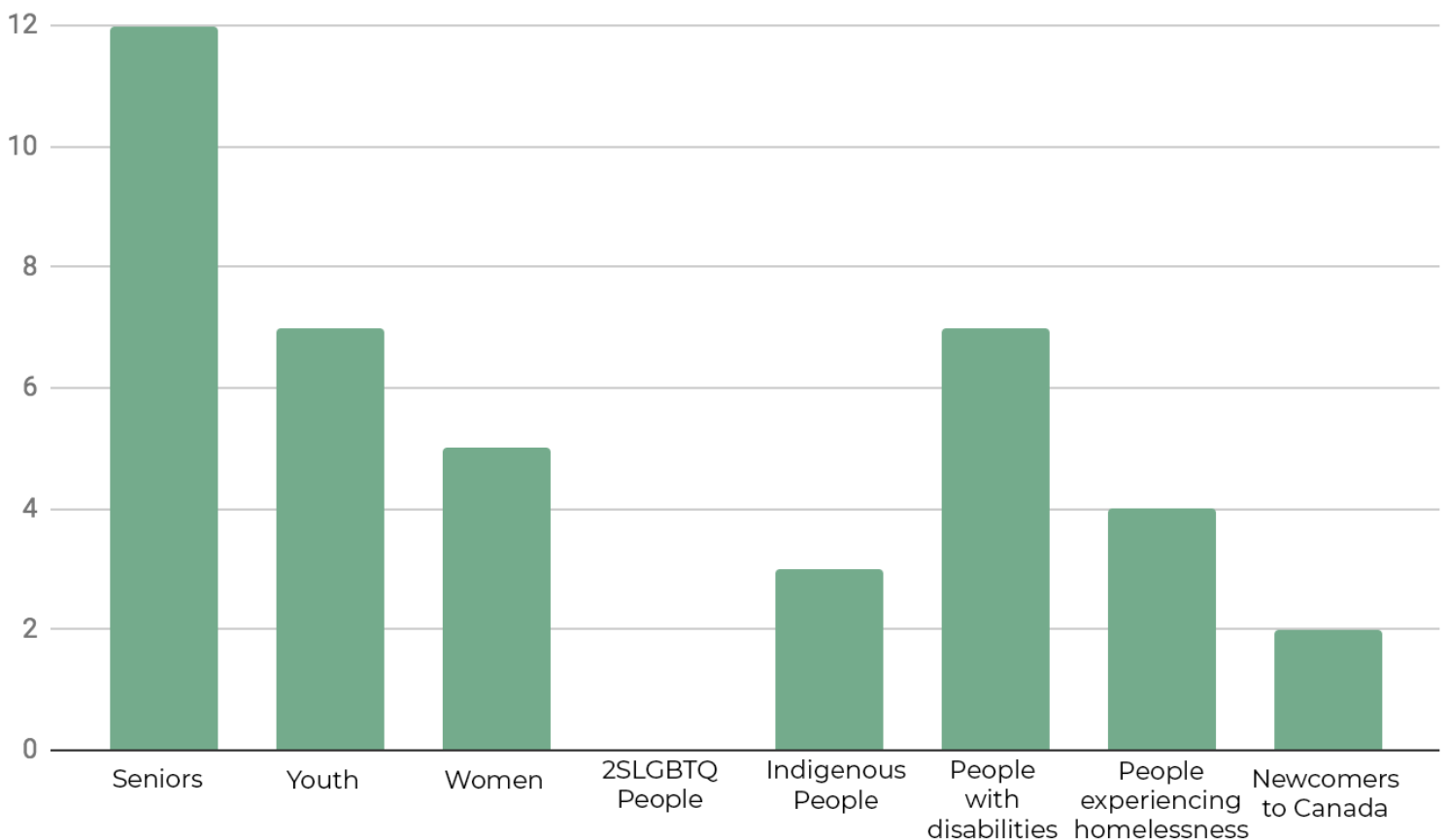
"Everything is shut down because of the pandemic. We want to keep our volunteers and clients safe which inhibits the ability to serve the seniors and the community."

Populations served

55.3% of the programs that responded do not serve a specific population. There were no respondents in the survey whose services focused on 2SLGBTQ people.

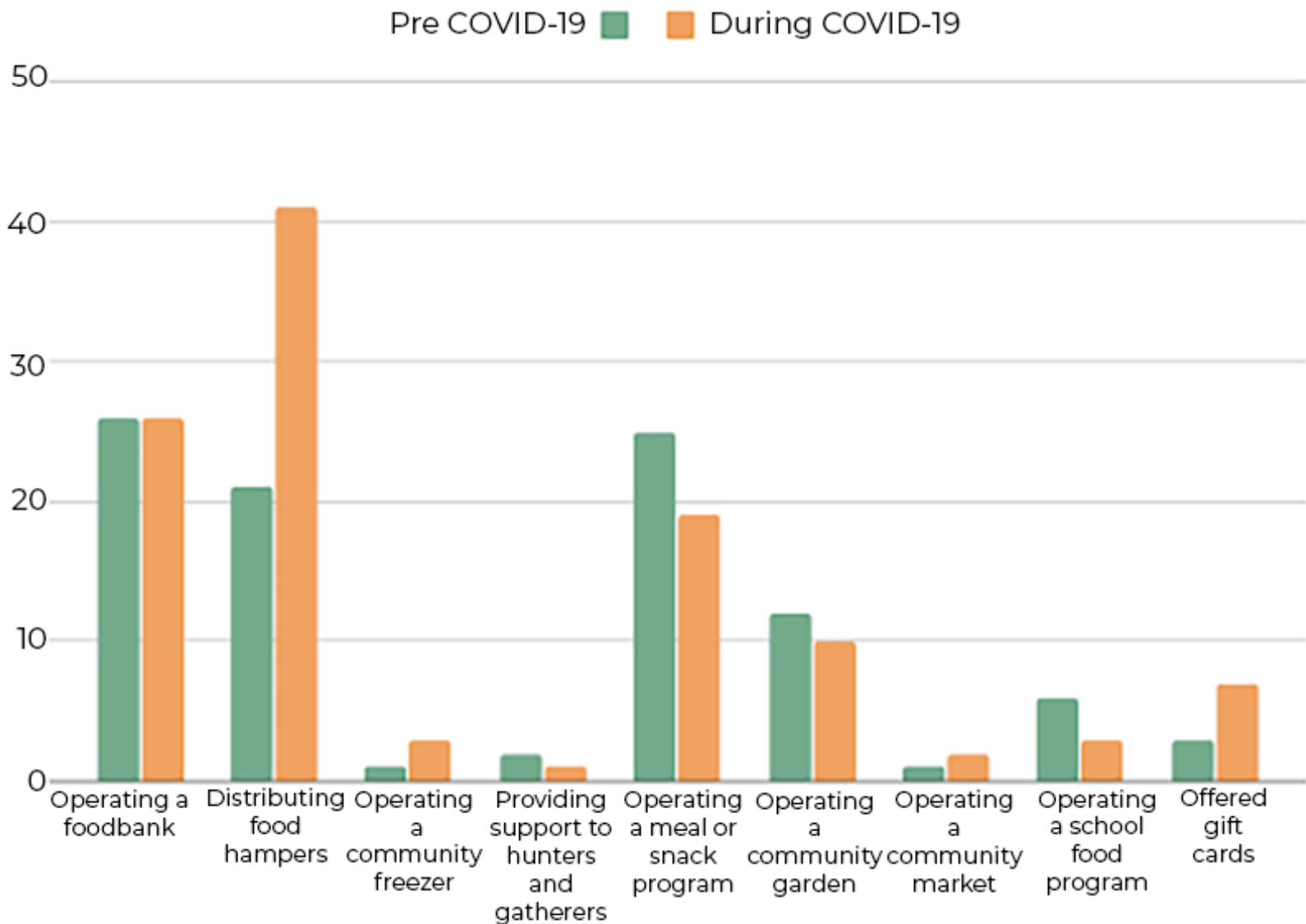
NOTE: Most respondents chose every option (including no specific population) or chose 4 or more options - which was assumed to be no specific population.

Populations programs serve



N = 72

Services offered

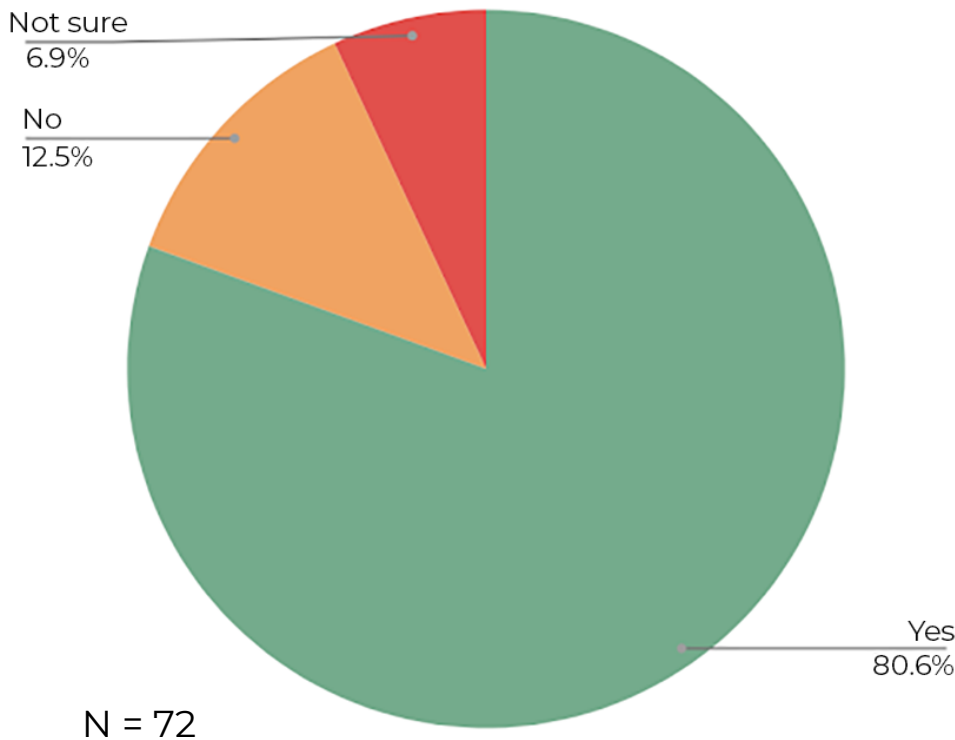


Pre COVID: N=74 (10 respondents said "none")

During COVID: N=67

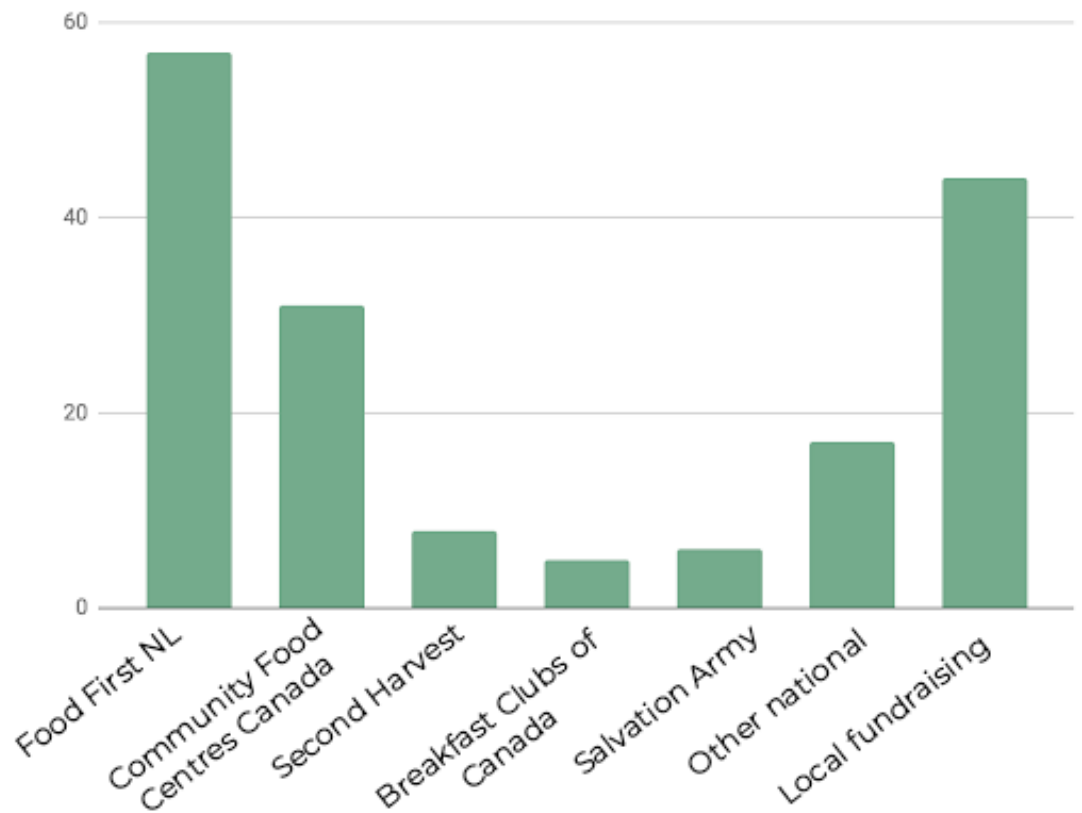
"[To be more equipped for future crisis we should] advocate and adequately fund frontline programs that prioritize outreach services to marginalized and oppressed communities."

Sources of funding



80.6% of respondents applied for and received funding from the Community Food Program Support Fund administered by Food First NL.

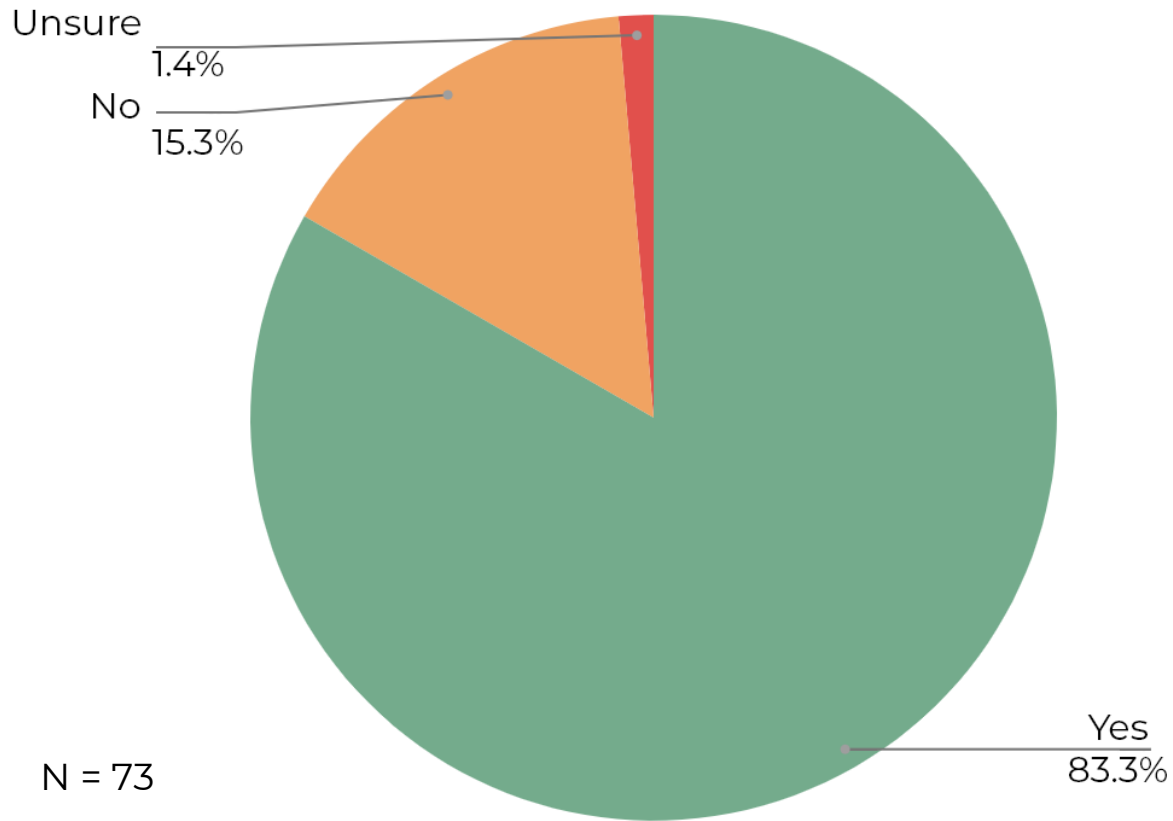
We also asked groups to identify which other funding sources they had been able to access.



N = 71
(Groups chose all that applied)

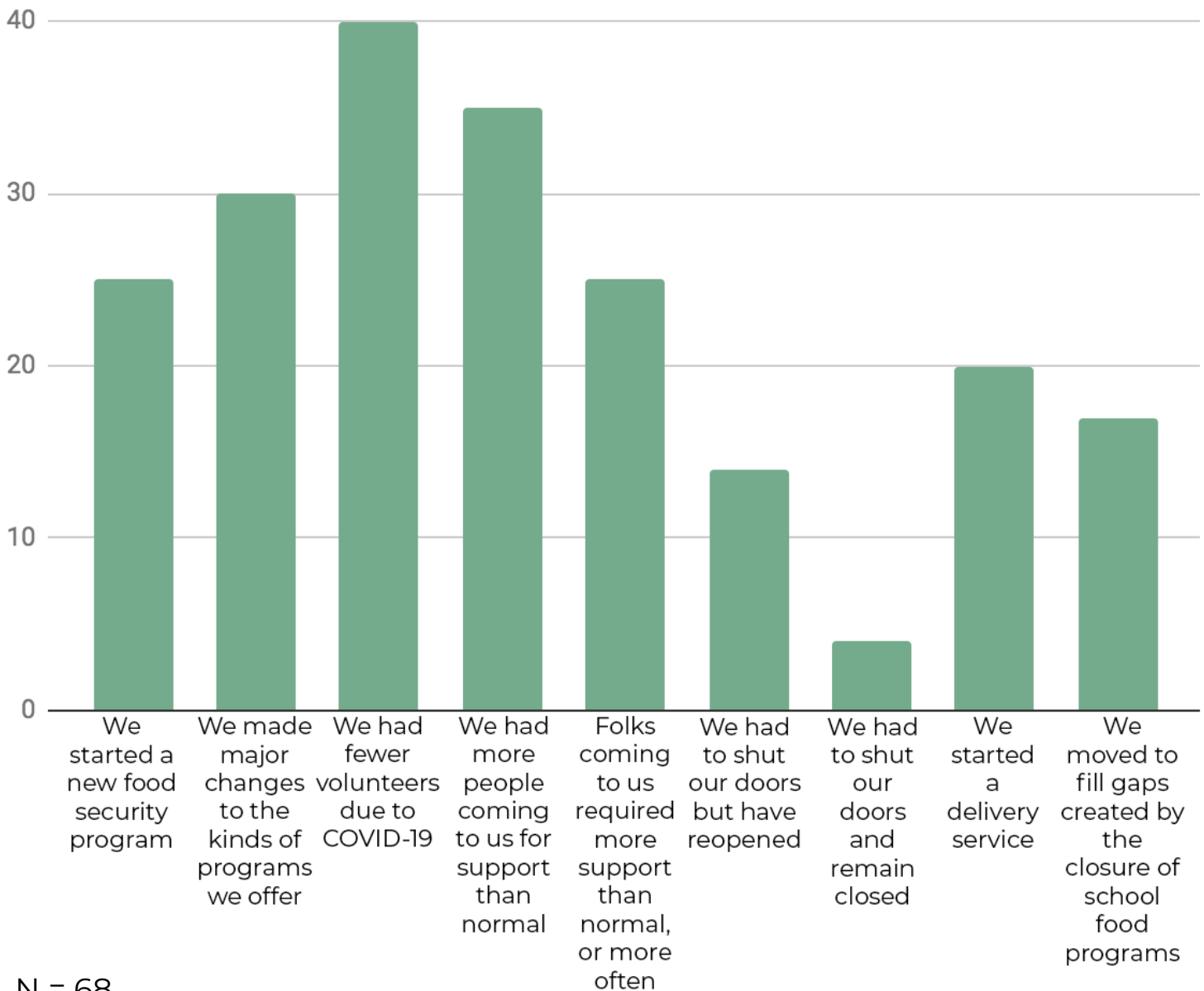
How the pandemic affected programming

Before the pandemic, 15.3% of respondents did not operate food programming.



"The increased cost of food for people with disabilities on a fixed income, makes it impossible to afford healthy food."

The pandemic affected organizations differently, but there were some common adaptations that had to be made.



Change from 2019

Collectively, the groups that responded experienced a **52% increase** in the number of clients served, a **6.4% decrease** in the number of visits, and a **204% increase** in the amount of food distributed, as compared to 2019.

Biggest Impacts of COVID-19

Question 20 of the survey asked, "In your view, what have been the pandemic's biggest impacts on food security for the people/communities you serve?" Here were the most common results.

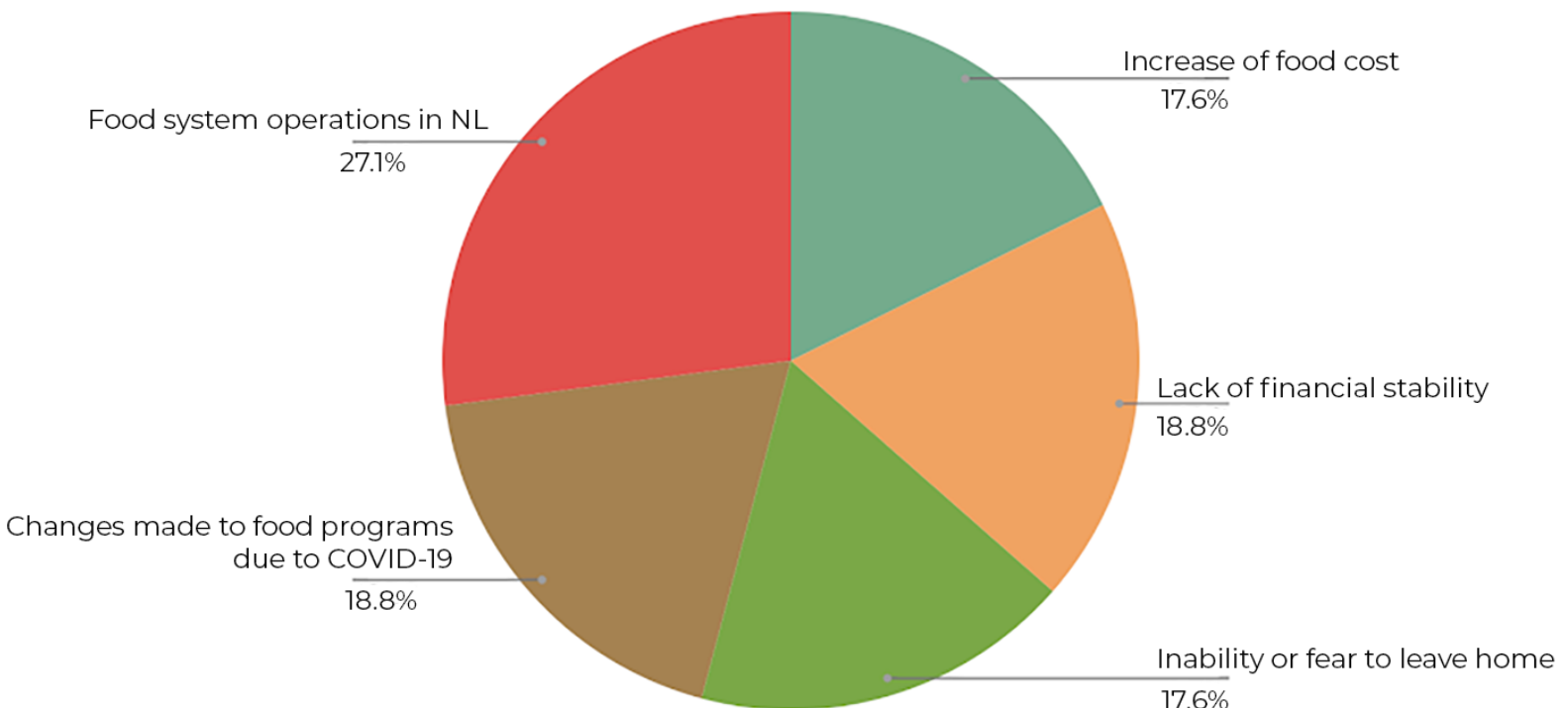
Food system operations in NL, specifically the lack of transportation/distribution of food and supplies to the rural parts of the province which impact their choice of food.

Changes made to the food program due to COVID-19 describes the regulations in place that limit the number of people in one space, social distancing, increase in delivery efforts or having to close their services.

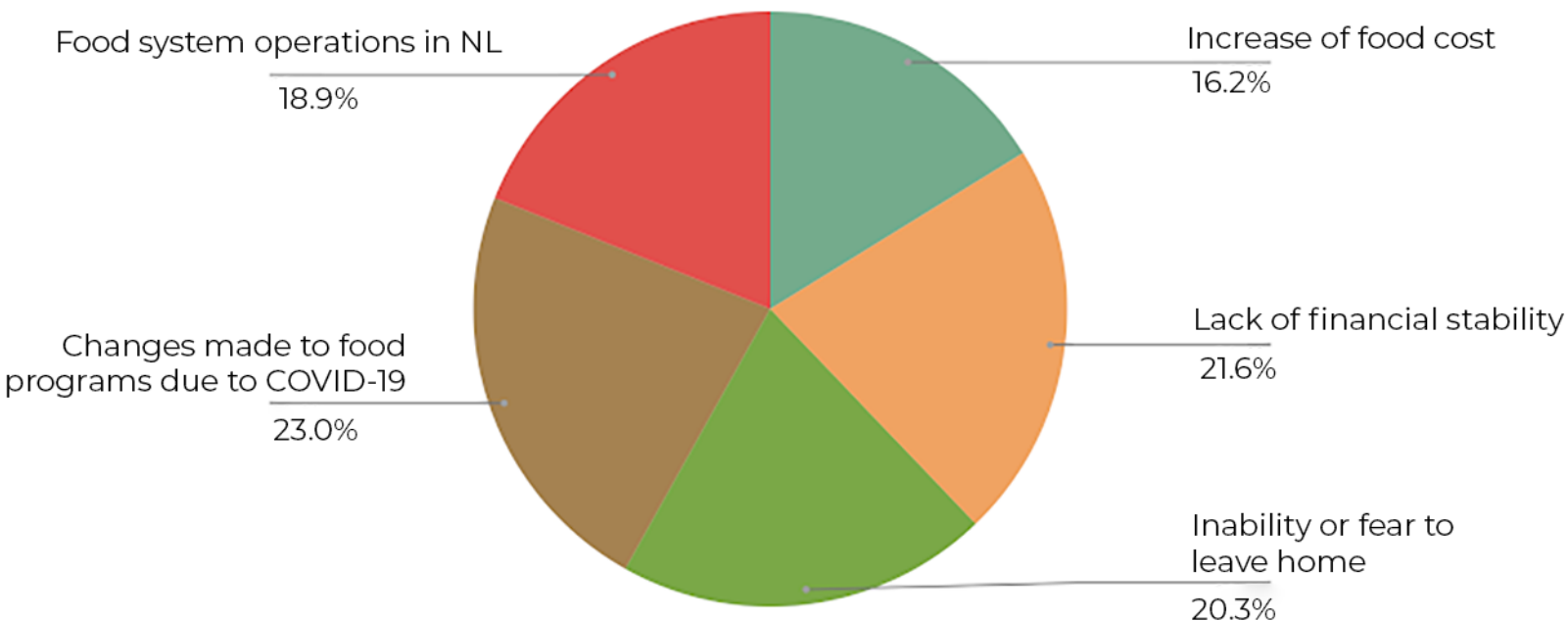
Increase in food prices in grocery stores.

Lack of financial stability for individuals impacted by unemployment, individuals collecting disability allowance, but also organizations that are relying on the COVID-19 funds and subsidies.

Inability or fear to leave home to access grocery stores, food banks or other food sources impacted seniors, those with disabilities, single parents, or those who relied on public transportation.



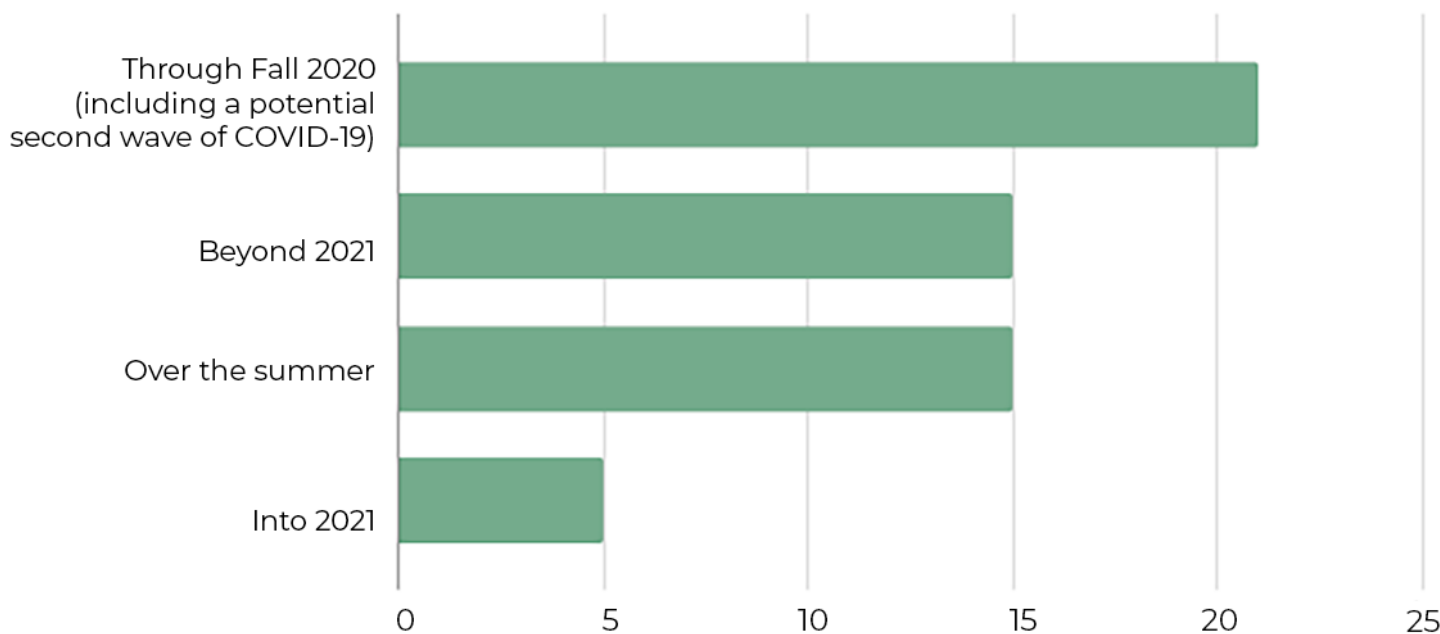
Question 23 asked, "what were the biggest challenges your program faced during COVID-19?" The categories were largely the same (food systems operations, changes made to the program due to COVID-19, lack of financial stability, and inability or fear to leave home) but in this case describe how programs themselves were affected, instead of community impact.



N = 61

To keep up with demand, many organizations had to create new programming.

If you've started a new program or service during COVID-19, how long do you plan to keep operating it (if resources allow)?

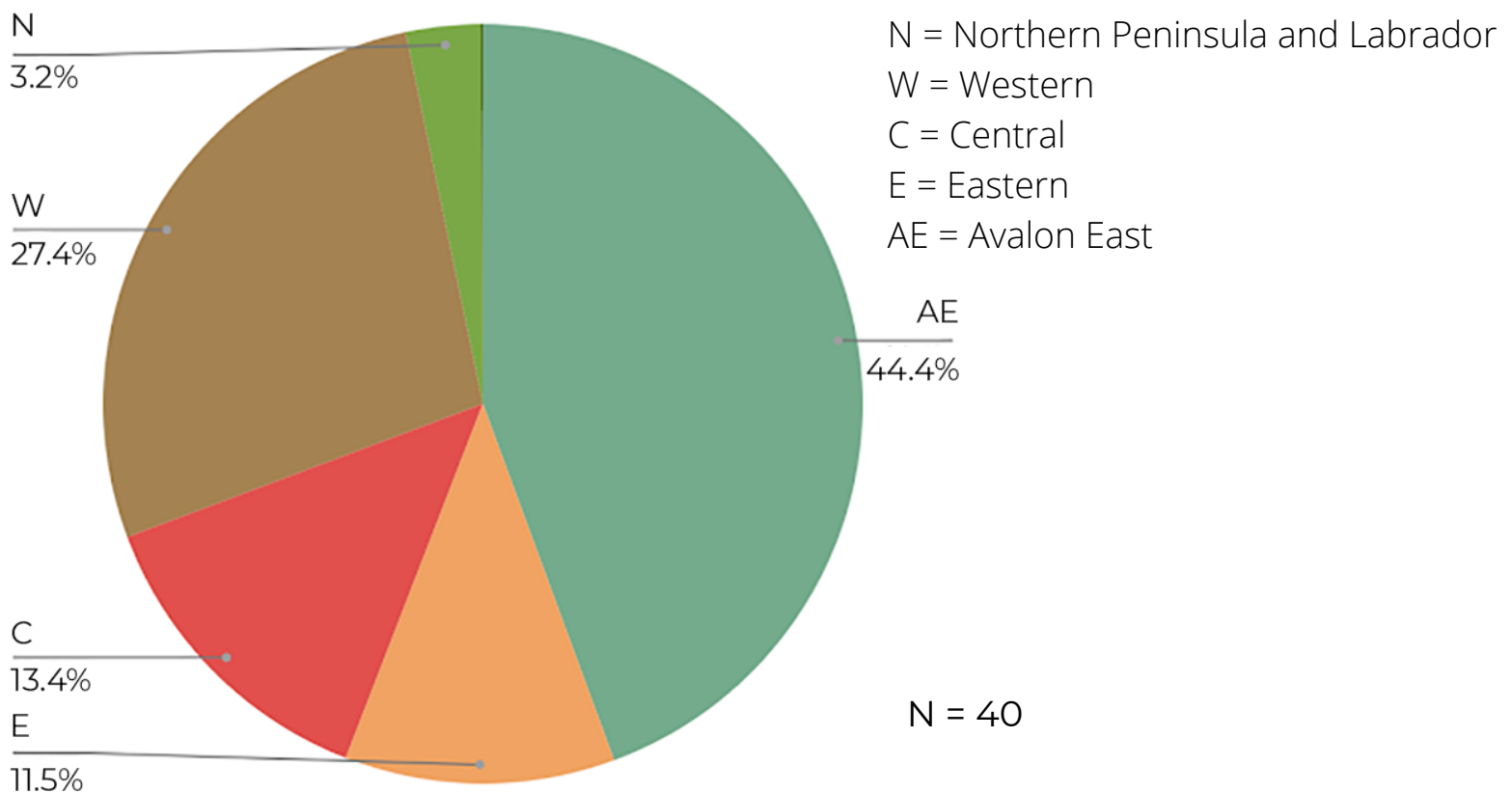


N = 56

Total cost to continue running all programming (per month):

\$284,606

Volunteer support is needed to continue programming. Specifically, 2,465.00 hours are needed per month. The chart below shows how those hours would need to be divided by region.



"Many clients remaining at home require delivery. Thanks to supporters we were able to provide more food products, personal items to our clients."

Training and professional development was also cited as support needed to continue programming. The four main areas of PD noted were:

- Food safety
- Trauma informed policies and mental health training
- COVID-19 specific training
- First aid

Note: The Provincial Government offers free online COVID-19 safety training. You can find it here.

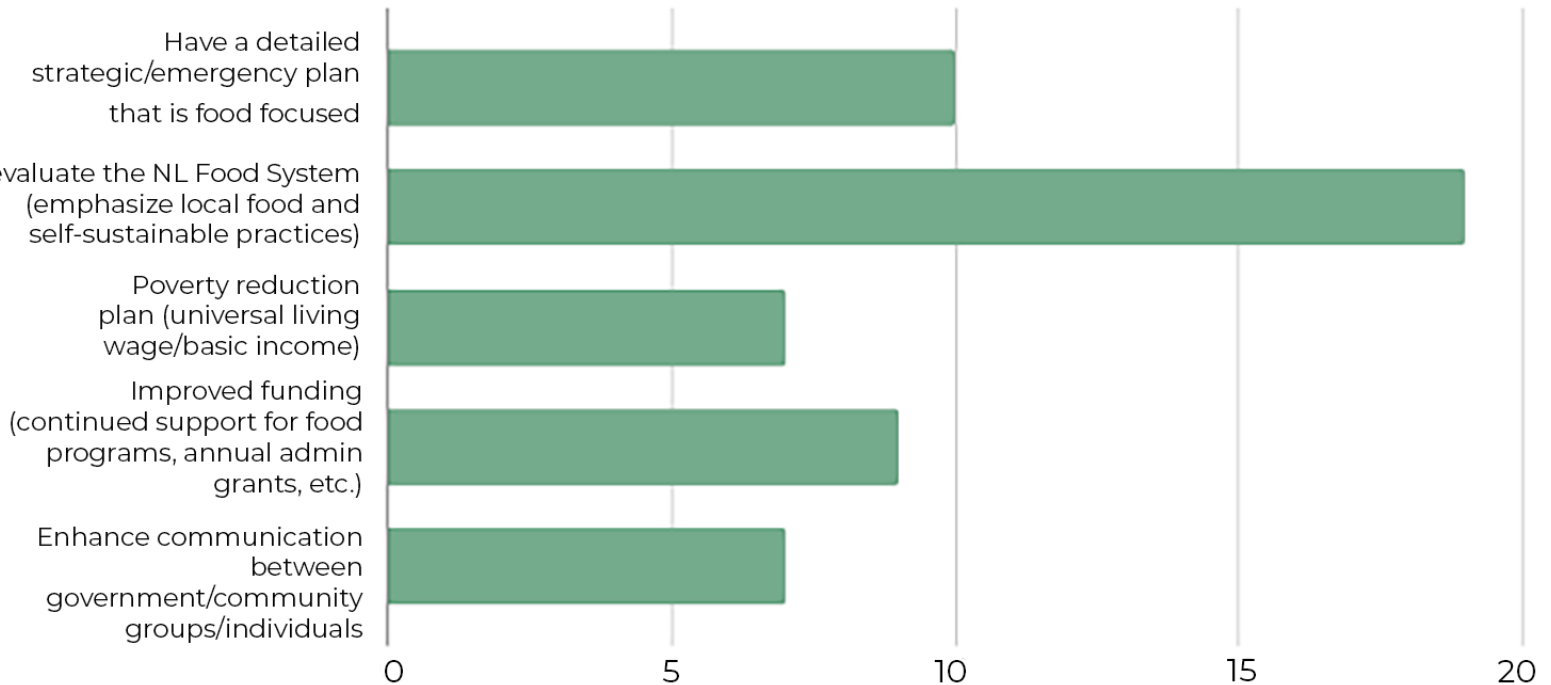
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There were four main themes that respondents noted as areas that required support:

- Improved funding structure (such as annual admin grants, three-year funding for non-profits and more support to food banks)
- Improved food delivery services (transportation of food to vulnerable populations)
- Broaden the definition of essential services for emergency situations (such as food banks and transition house staff to be declared essential workers)
- The primary challenge is the safety regulations/restrictions put in place due to the pandemic

"The government should be more involved to make sure that there is a stock of food for people. Nobody should go hungry. There is a need for meals to be delivered to homes, there should be something offered - even if it was a safety measure of leaving the meal on the doorsteps. Also, the wild game here should be regulated better as well. People should be able to go hunt/catch food and give it to the Foodbank."

Moving Forward

We asked survey respondents to identify what they think needs to change in food systems work going forward. The answers were as follows:



N = 48

"From our perspective, a key is to lift people out of poverty (i.e. living wage, guaranteed basic income, increase literacy skills including financial literacy, [and] accessible & affordable childcare); from a broad perspective, revisit all existing emergency response plans, mechanisms, and resources to ensure they are extensive and effective enough for the various differing emergency types we are experiencing or might anticipate experiencing."



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