2021 ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL SURVEY RESULTS

SURVEY

28 ★ 32
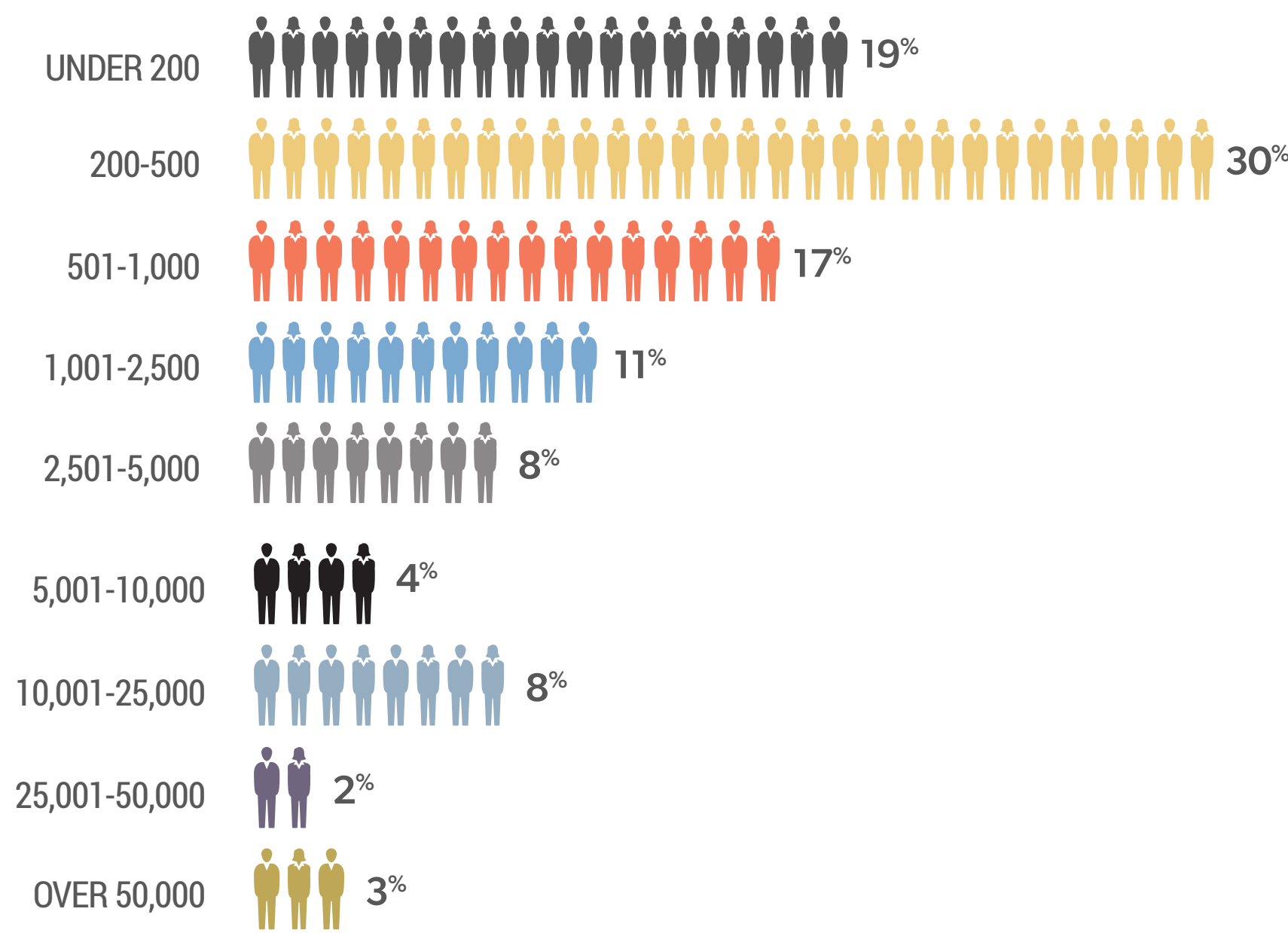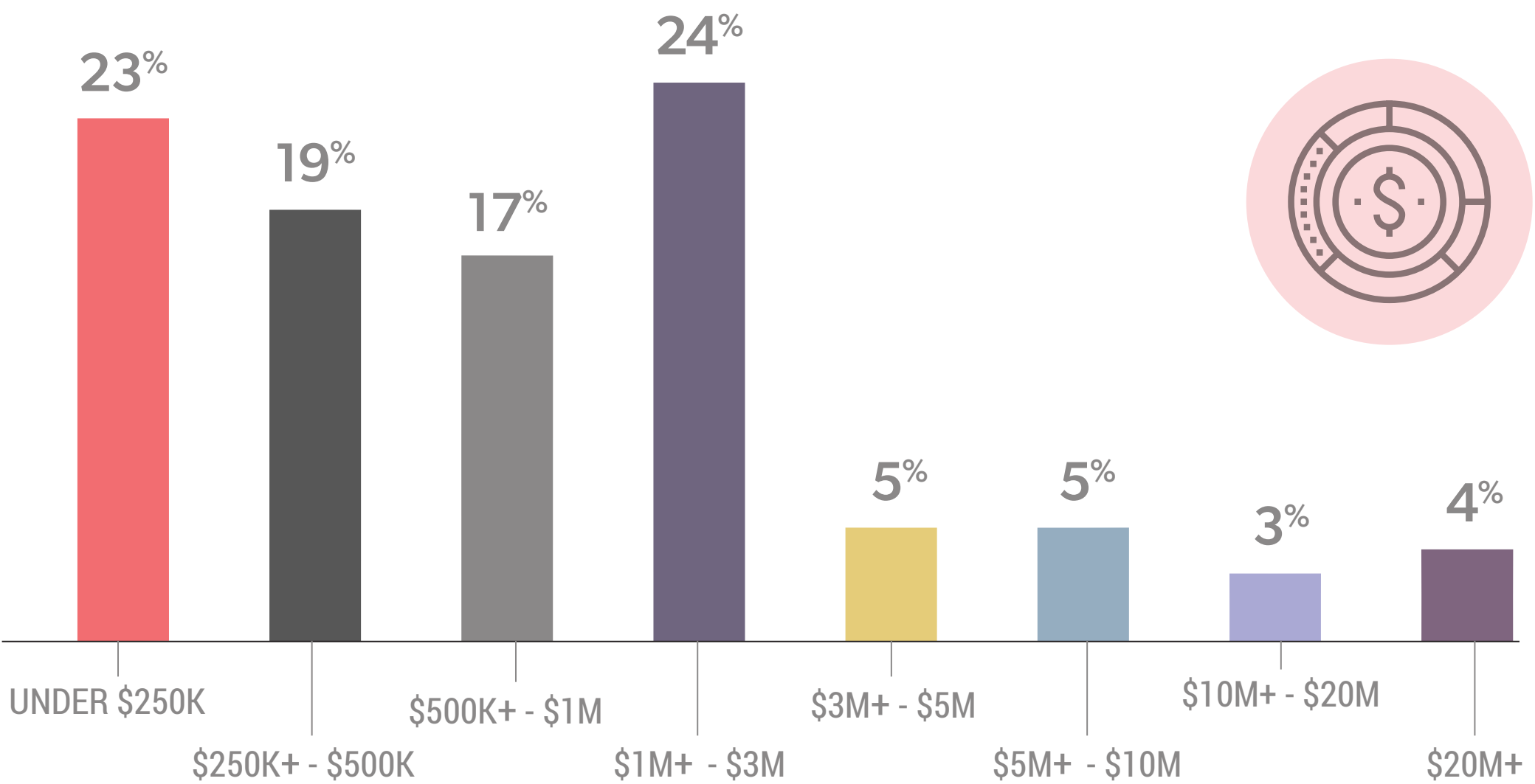
2021 ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL SURVEY RESULTS

GrowthZone surveyed over 600 association professionals across the U.S. and Canada. Topics included everything from non dues revenue sources and COVID relief funding, to remote working arrangements and diversity practices. The results showed a number of interesting trends impacting today's associations.

ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

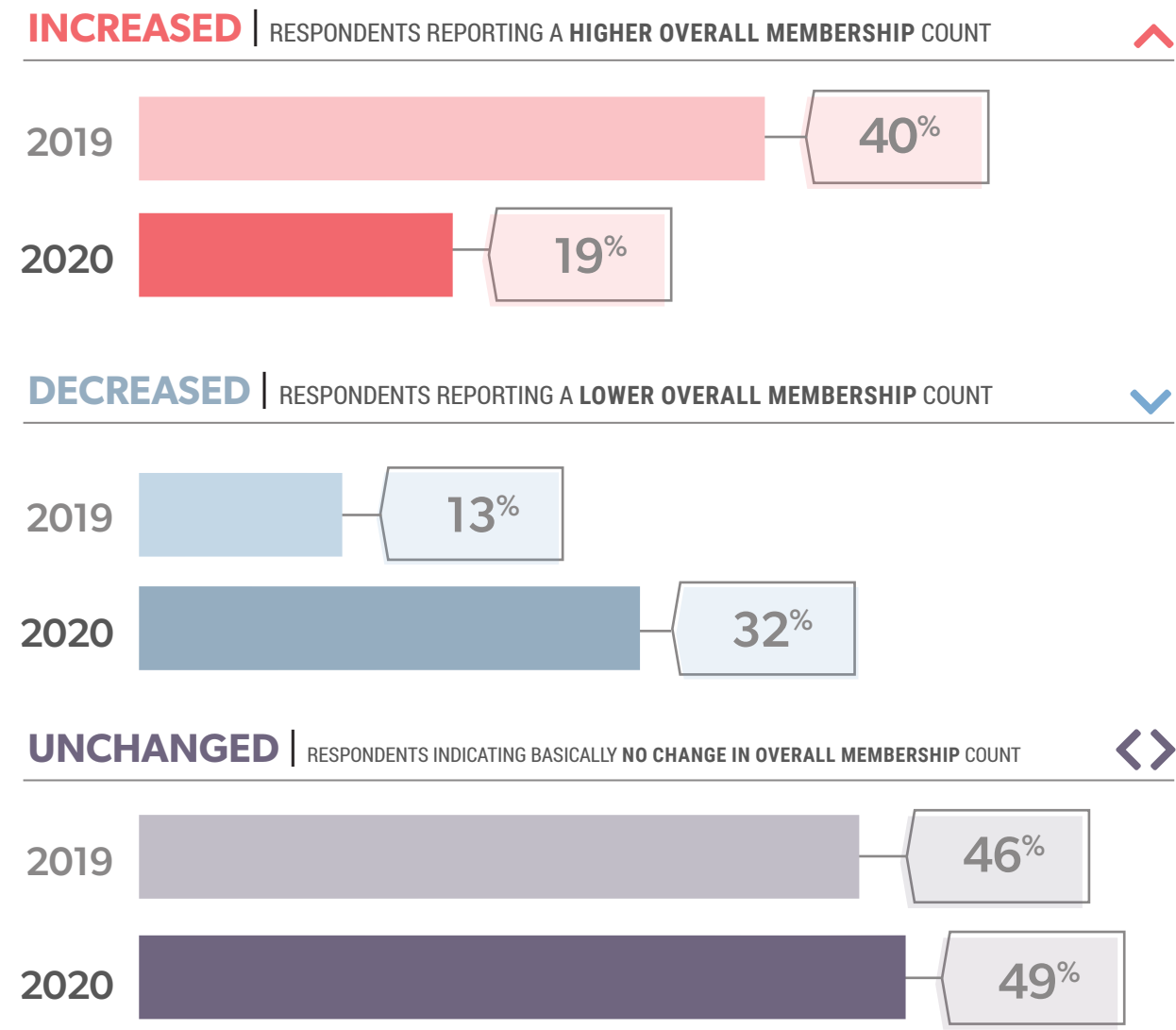## NUMBER OF MEMBERS | PREDICTED MEMBER COUNT ON 1/1/2021

UNDER 200	19%
200-500	30%
501-1,000	17%
1,001-2,500	11%
2,501-5,000	8%
5,001-10,000	4%
10,001-25,000	8%
25,001-50,000	2%
OVER 50,000	3%

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET | APPROXIMATE

UNDER $250K	$250K+ - $500K	$500K+ - $1M	$1M+ - $3M	$3M+ - $5M	$5M+ - $10M	$10M+ - $20M	$20M+
23%	19%	17%	24%	5%	5%	3%	4%

*Due to rounding and checkbox questions, percentages may exceed or not appear to add up to 100%

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MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

ANNUAL OVERALL NET MEMBERSHIP | YEAR-OVER-YEAR CHANGE

INCREASED | RESPONDENTS REPORTING A **HIGHER OVERALL MEMBERSHIP** COUNT

- 2019 — 40%
- 2020 — 19%

DECREASED | RESPONDENTS REPORTING A **LOWER OVERALL MEMBERSHIP** COUNT

- 2019 — 13%
- 2020 — 32%

UNCHANGED | RESPONDENTS INDICATING BASICALLY **NO CHANGE IN OVERALL MEMBERSHIP** COUNT

- 2019 — 46%
- 2020 — 49%

ANNUAL OVERALL NEW MEMBERSHIP | YEAR-OVER-YEAR CHANGE

INCREASED | RESPONDENTS REPORTING A **HIGHER NEW MEMBERSHIP** COUNT

- 2019 — 45%
- 2020 — 28%

DECREASED | RESPONDENTS REPORTING A **LOWER NEW MEMBERSHIP** COUNT

- 2019 — 13%
- 2020 — 33%

UNCHANGED | RESPONDENTS INDICATING BASICALLY **NO CHANGE IN NEW MEMBERSHIP** COUNT

- 2019 — 40%
- 2020 — 39%
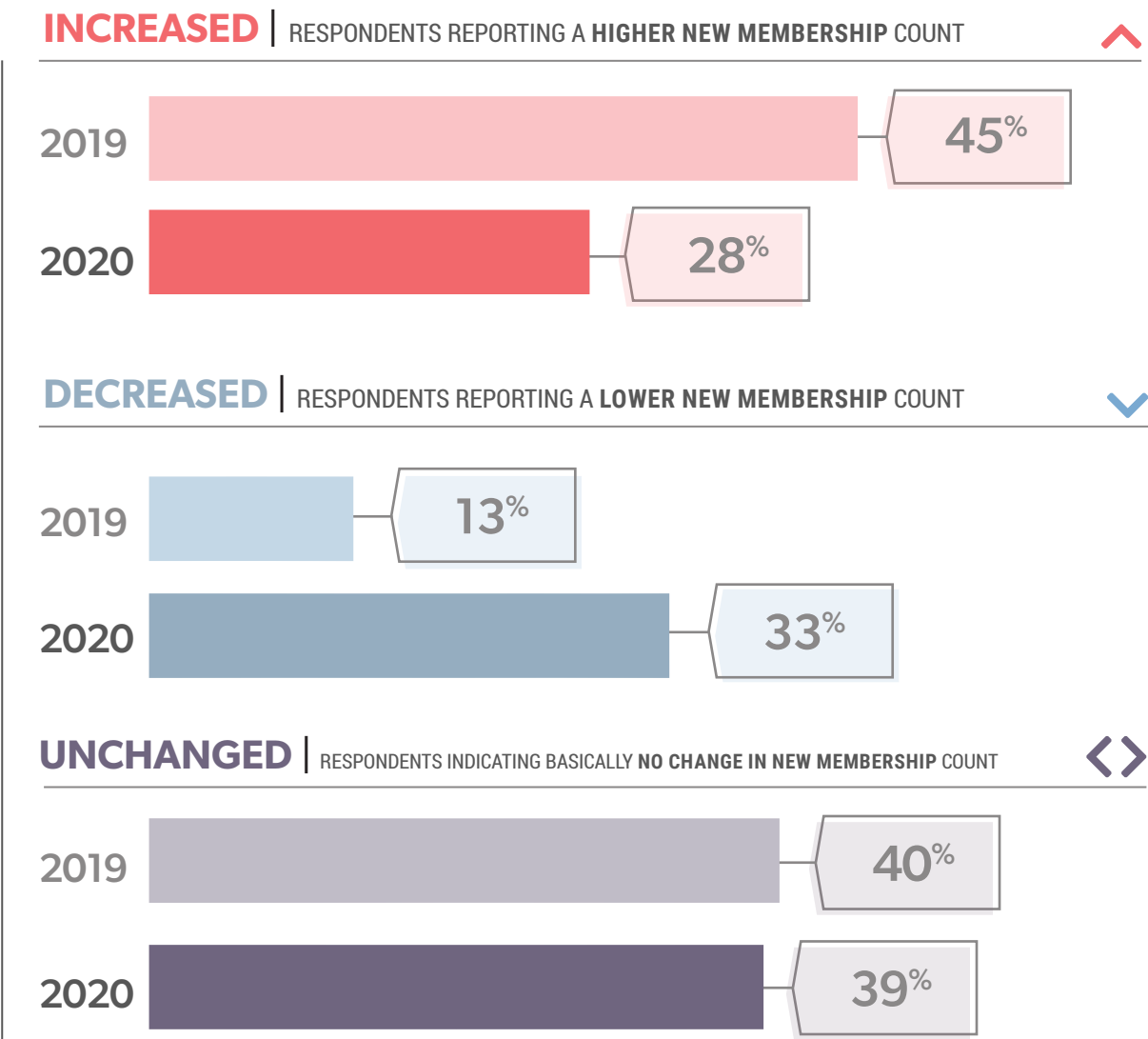
ANNUAL OVERALL RENEWAL RATE | YEAR-OVER-YEAR CHANGE

INCREASED | RESPONDENTS INDICATING A **HIGHER OVERALL MEMBER RENEWAL** RATE

- 2019 — 20%
- 2020 — 9%

DECREASED | RESPONDENTS INDICATING A **LOWER OVERALL MEMBERSHIP** COUNT

- 2019 — 12%
- 2020 — 31%

UNCHANGED | RESPONDENTS INDICATING **NO CHANGE IN OVERALL RENEWAL** RATE

- 2019 — 68%
- 2020 — 60%
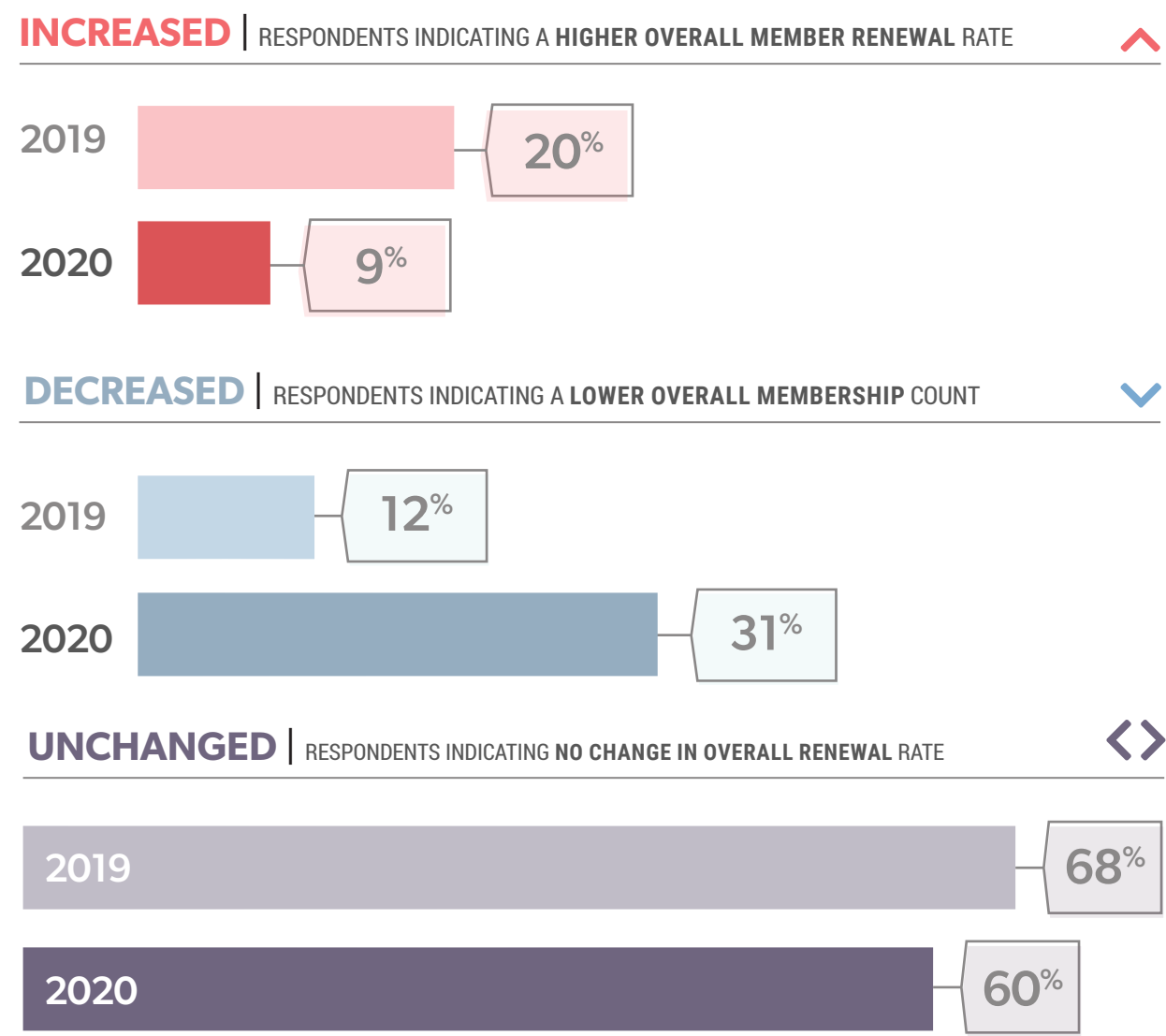
ANNUAL NEW-MEMBER RENEWAL RATE | YEAR-OVER-YEAR CHANGE

INCREASED | RESPONDENTS INDICATING A **HIGHER NEW-MEMBER RENEWAL** RATE

- 2019 — 11%
- 2020 — 7%

DECREASED | RESPONDENTS INDICATING A **LOWER NEW-MEMBER RENEWAL** RATE

- 2019 — 26%
- 2020 — 30%

UNCHANGED | RESPONDENTS INDICATING **NO CHANGE IN NEW-MEMBER RENEWAL** RATE
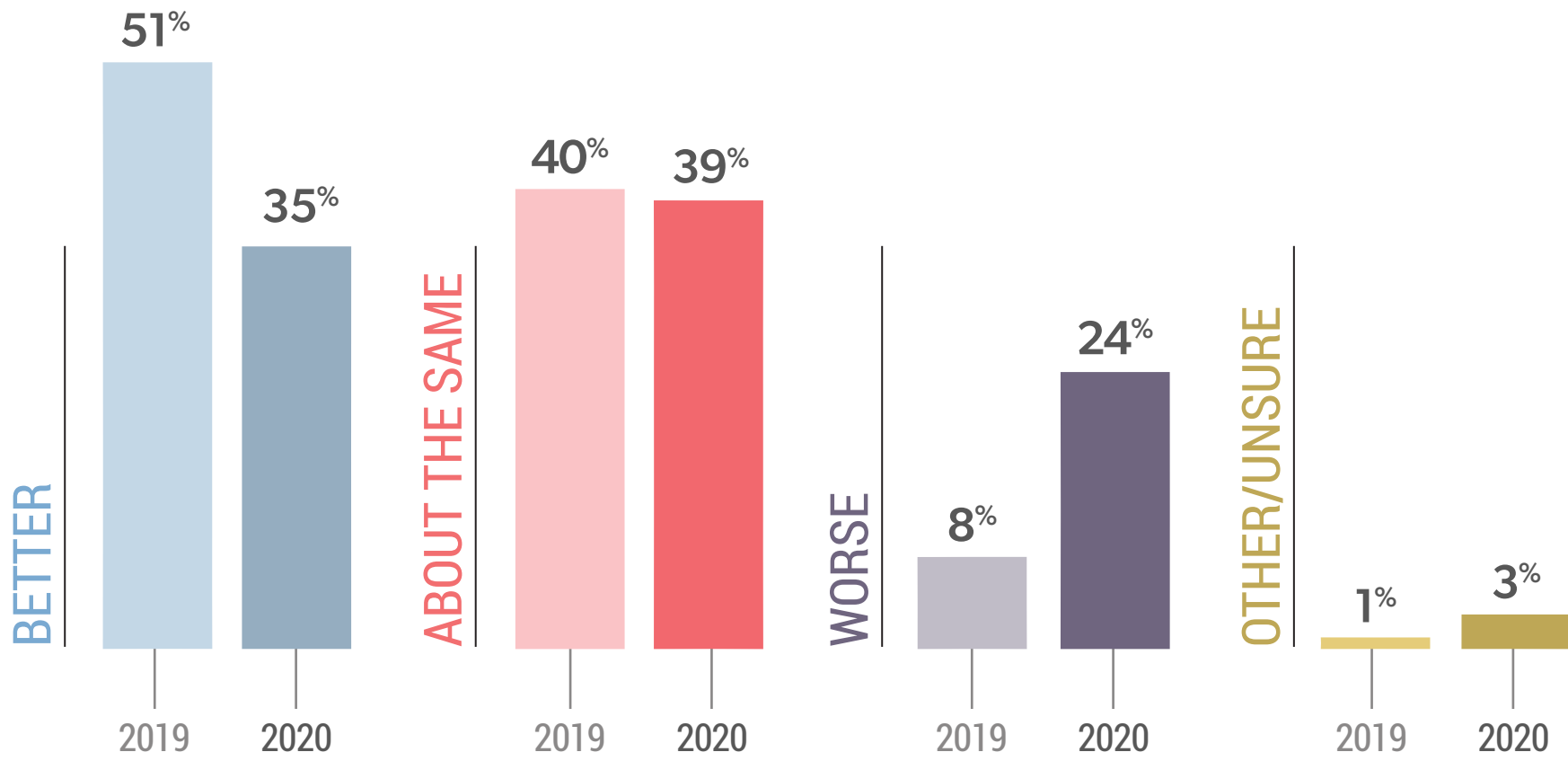
- 2019 — 61%
- 2020 — 63%
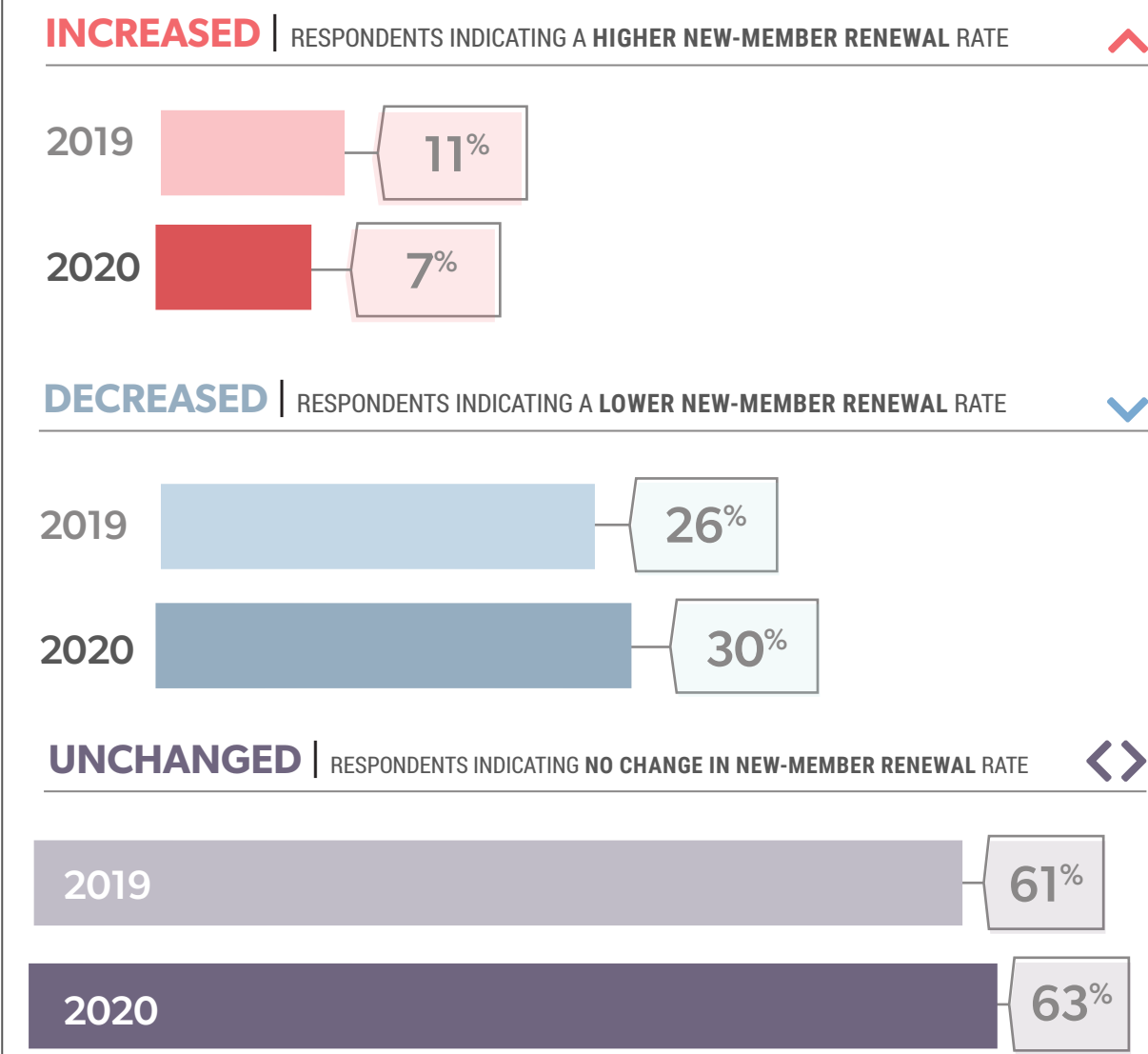
Learn how to effectively onboard new members with the New-Member Onboarding Checklist and Schedule.

Get it Here

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

OVERALL MEMBER ENGAGEMENT | YEAR-OVER-YEAR CHANGE

BETTER
- 51% 2019
- 35% 2020

ABOUT THE SAME
- 40% 2019
- 39% 2020

WORSE
- 8% 2019
- 24% 2020

OTHER/UNSURE
- 1% 2019
- 3% 2020

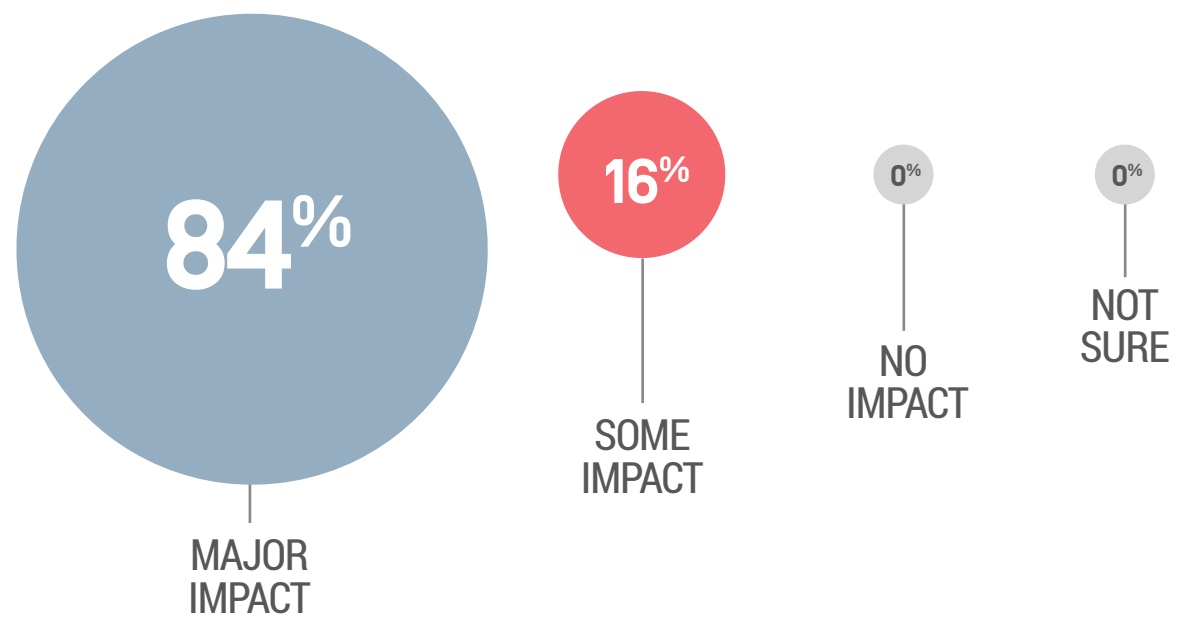Improved engagement was most common among organizations with at least one of the following:

- ✔ An operating budget of $1m-$3m
- ✔ 201-500 members
- ✔ An increase in overall growth
- ✔ Updated D&I practices

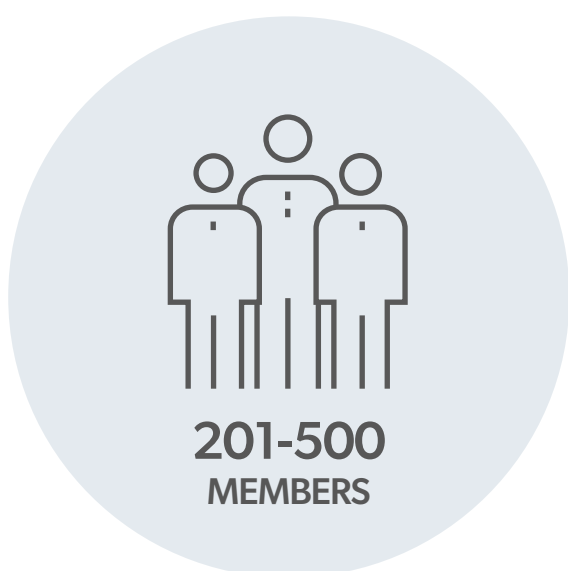## MEMBER ENGAGEMENT CHANGES | HOW MUCH HAS COVID CONTRIBUTED TO THIS CHANGE IN THE ENGAGEMENT RATE?

RESPONDENTS INDICATING **INCREASED** ENGAGEMENT SAID COVID HAS HAD:

- 48% MAJOR IMPACT
- 44% SOME IMPACT
- 5% NO IMPACT
- 2% NOT SURE
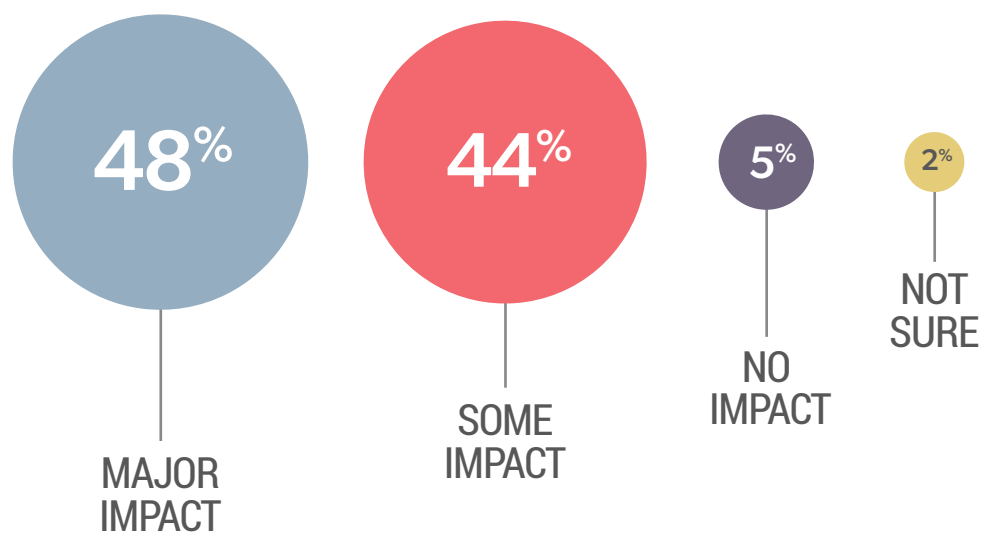
RESPONDENTS INDICATING **DECREASED** ENGAGEMENT SAID COVID HAS HAD:

- 84% MAJOR IMPACT
- 16% SOME IMPACT
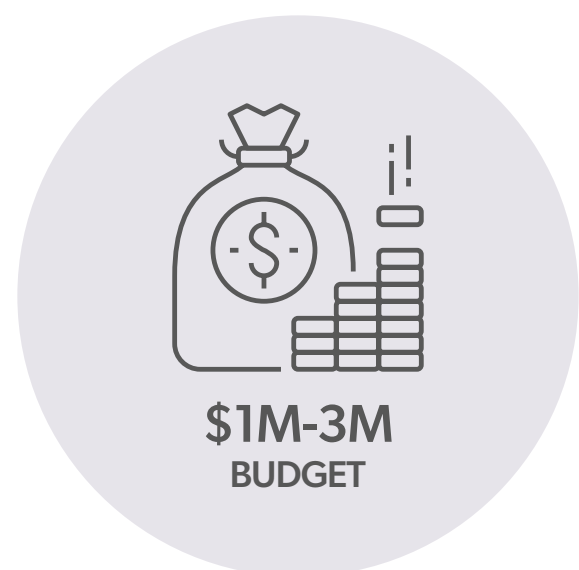- 0% NO IMPACT
- 0% NOT SURE

VALUE PROPOSITION

201-500 MEMBERS

Organizations with 201-500 members were most likely to report their members "definitely" recognize their value proposition.

$1M-3M BUDGET

Those with an operating budget from $1m-$3m were most likely to report their members did not recognize their value proposition.
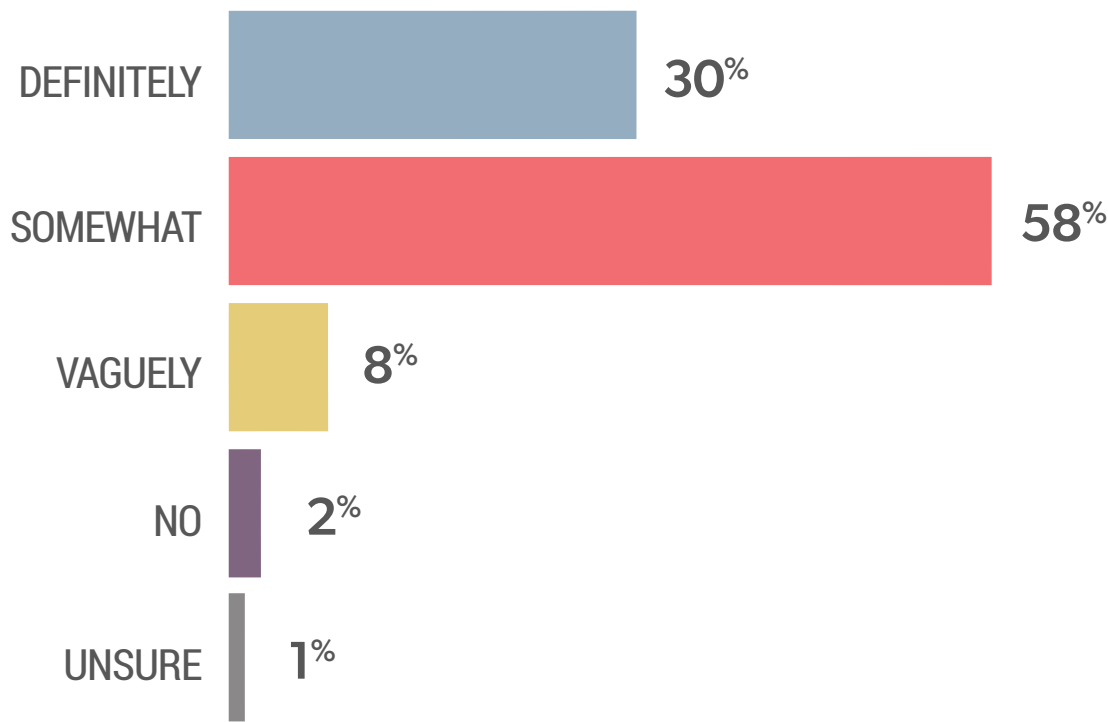
VALUE PROPOSITION

Of organizations indicating **improved engagement,** 4 out of 5 reported **COVID had a positive impact** on their value proposition.
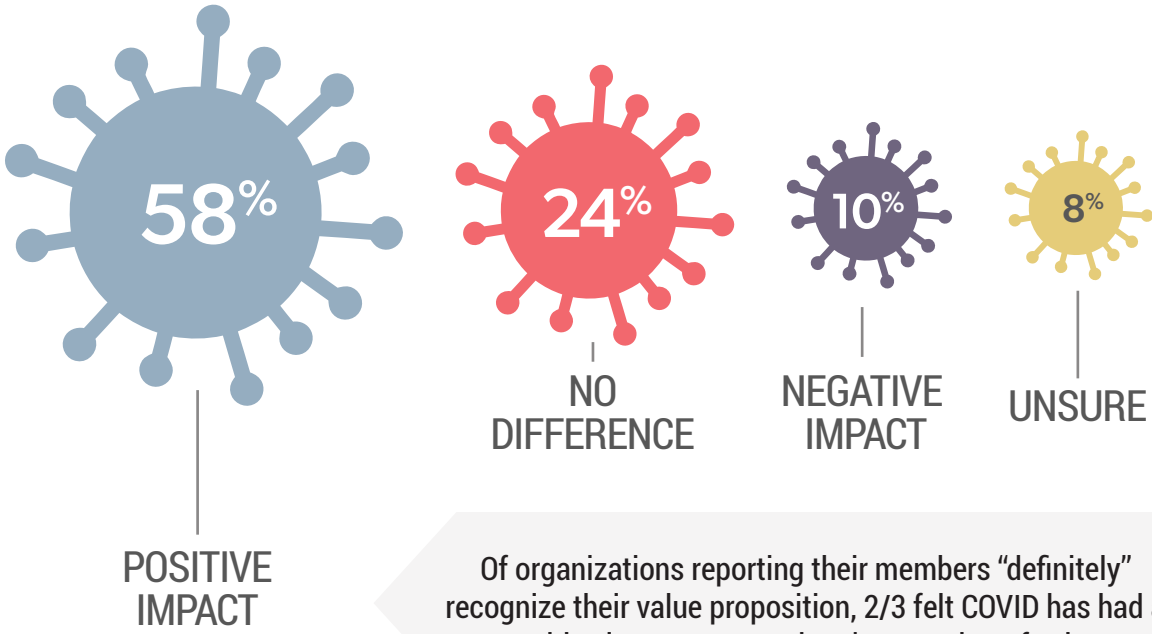
MEMBER RECOGNITION

Do you think members recognize your association's value proposition?

- DEFINITELY — 30%
- SOMEWHAT — 58%
- VAGUELY — 8%
- NO — 2%
- UNSURE — 1%

COVID IMPACT

In general, how would you say COVID has affected members' opinions of your organization's value proposition?

- 58% POSITIVE IMPACT
- 24% NO DIFFERENCE
- 10% NEGATIVE IMPACT
- 8% UNSURE

Of organizations reporting their members "definitely" recognize their value proposition, 2/3 felt COVID has had a positive impact on members' perception of value.

Of organizations indicating reduced operations, 54% have fewer than 500 members and 36% have an operating budget of less than a $250k.

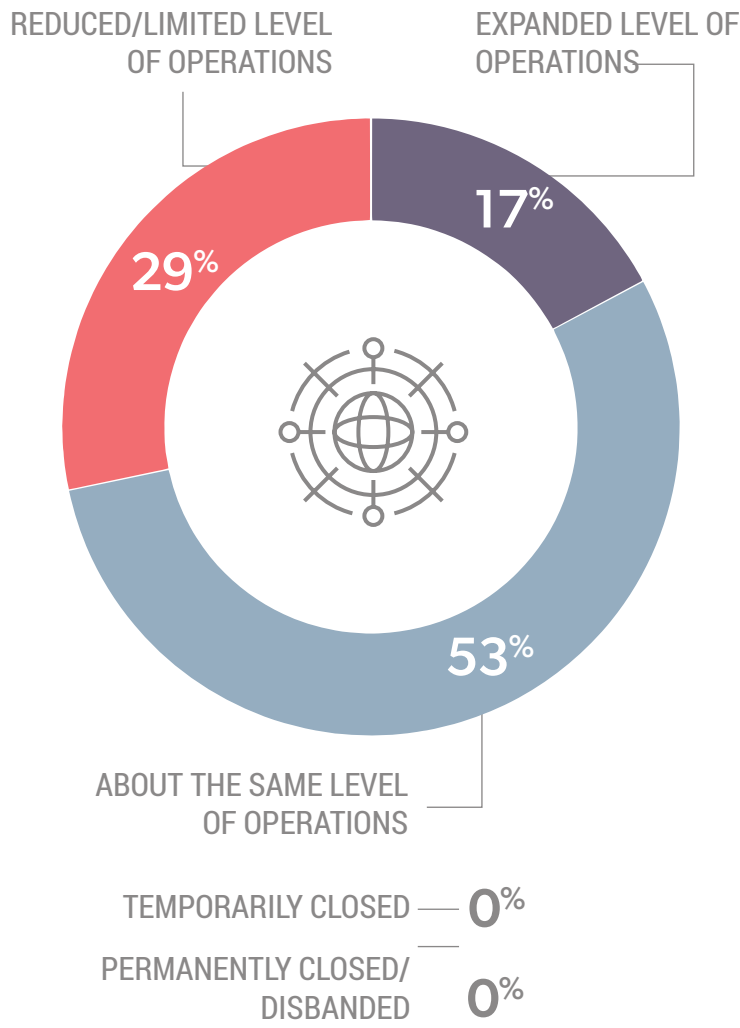Organizations indicating an expanded level of operations reported the most new memberships and highest renewal rates.

OPERATIONS

Visit How to Thrive During and After a Pandemic for recovery tips in a COVID-19 world.
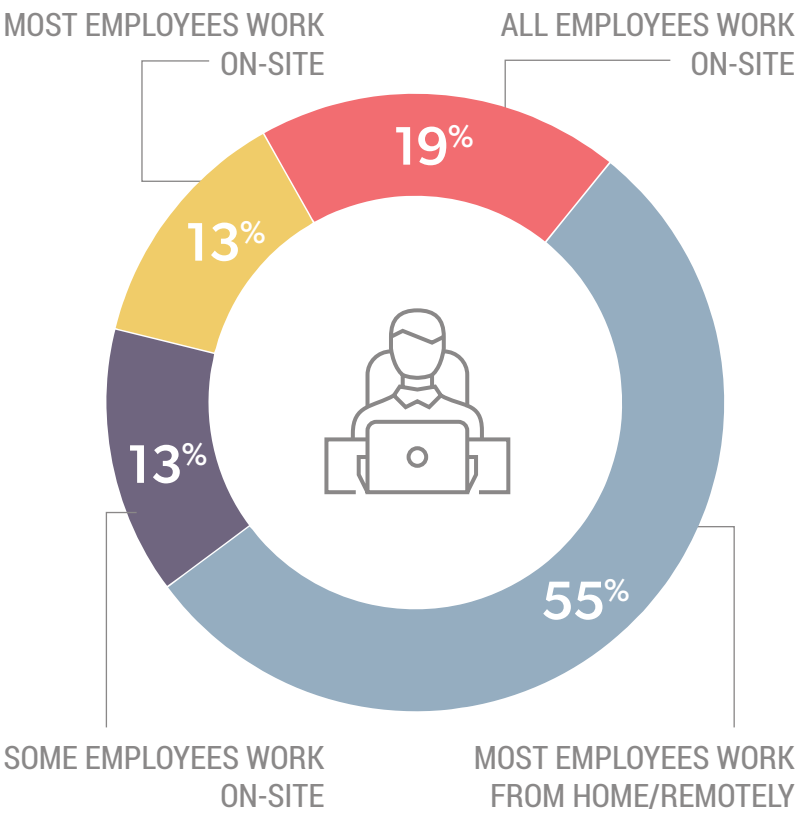
Get it Here

OPERATIONS STATUS

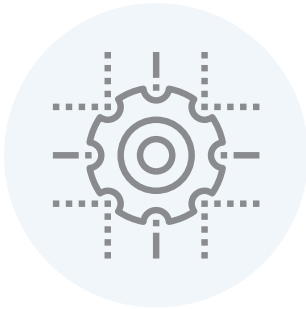What is the current operational status of your organization?

- REDUCED/LIMITED LEVEL OF OPERATIONS — 29%
- EXPANDED LEVEL OF OPERATIONS — 17%
- ABOUT THE SAME LEVEL OF OPERATIONS — 53%
- TEMPORARILY CLOSED — 0%
- PERMANENTLY CLOSED/ DISBANDED — 0%

Which of the following best describes your organization's current remote/work-from-home arrangements?

- MOST EMPLOYEES WORK ON-SITE — 13%
- ALL EMPLOYEES WORK ON-SITE — 19%
- SOME EMPLOYEES WORK ON-SITE — 13%
- MOST EMPLOYEES WORK FROM HOME/REMOTELY — 55%

The referenced work arrangements:

- WERE ALREADY STANDARD PRIOR TO COVID — 63%
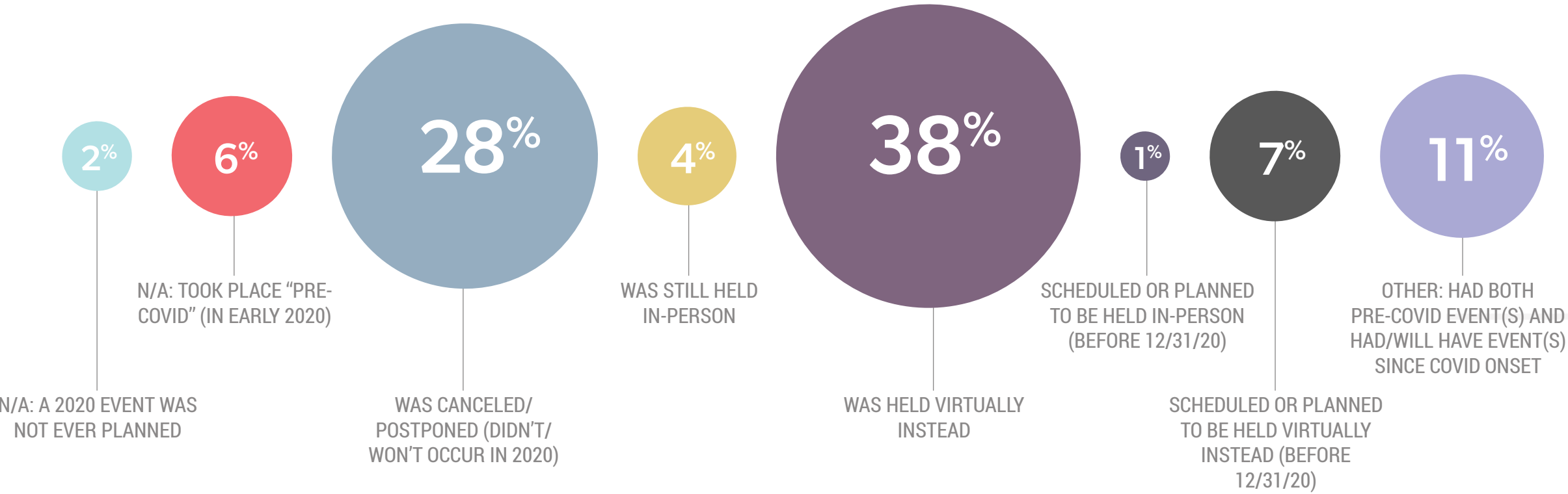- WERE ESTABLISHED IN RESPONSE TO COVID — 37%
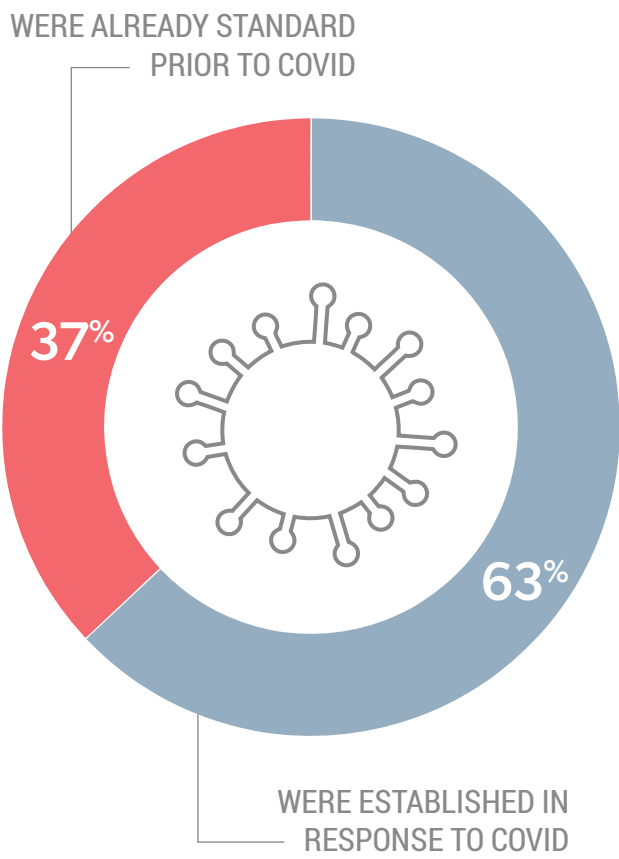
OPERATIONS | CONTINUED

EVENTS

Since the onset of COVID in mid-March, how did/will your organization handle its 2020 MAJOR, in-person event(s)? (e.g., annual meeting/banquet, conference, trade show, etc.)

2%

6%

28%

4%

38%

1%

7%

11%

N/A: A 2020 EVENT WAS NOT EVER PLANNED

N/A: TOOK PLACE "PRE-COVID" (IN EARLY 2020)

WAS CANCELED/ POSTPONED (DIDN'T/ WON'T OCCUR IN 2020)

WAS STILL HELD IN-PERSON

WAS HELD VIRTUALLY INSTEAD

SCHEDULED OR PLANNED TO BE HELD IN-PERSON (BEFORE 12/31/20)

SCHEDULED OR PLANNED TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY INSTEAD (BEFORE 12/31/20)

OTHER: HAD BOTH PRE-COVID EVENT(S) AND HAD/WILL HAVE EVENT(S) SINCE COVID ONSET
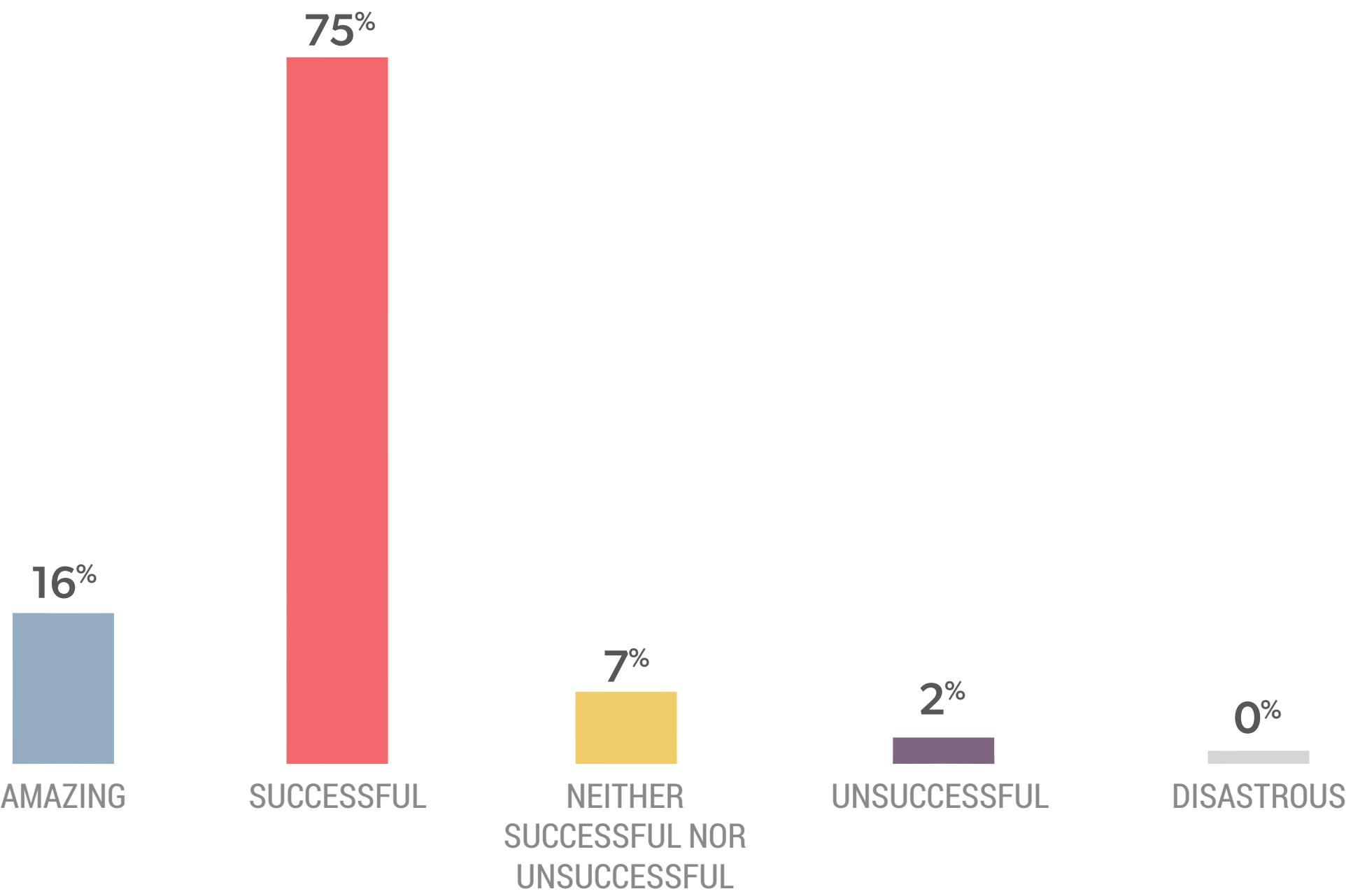
Of organizations that canceled their major event(s), 33% reported declining engagement. Those that replaced the live event with a virtual event reported only a 17% decline in engagement.

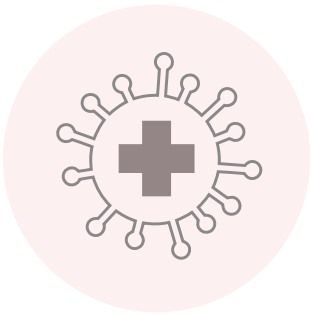## EVENT RESULTS | THOSE WHO HELD VIRTUAL EVENTS

Overall, under current circumstances, how would you rate the success of the virtual event(s)? (Not in comparison to past years or in-person events.)

75%

16%

7%

2%

0%

AMAZING

SUCCESSFUL

NEITHER SUCCESSFUL NOR UNSUCCESSFUL
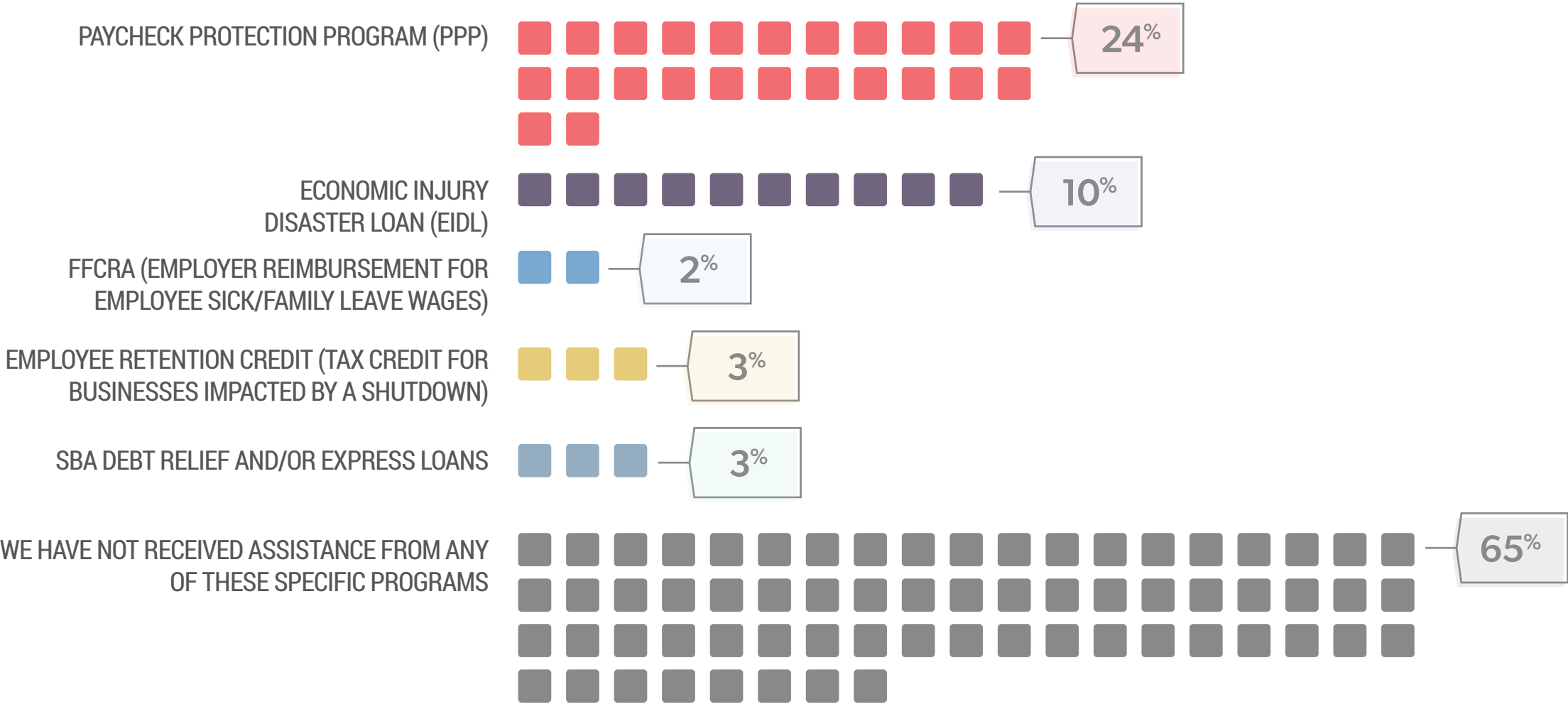
UNSUCCESSFUL

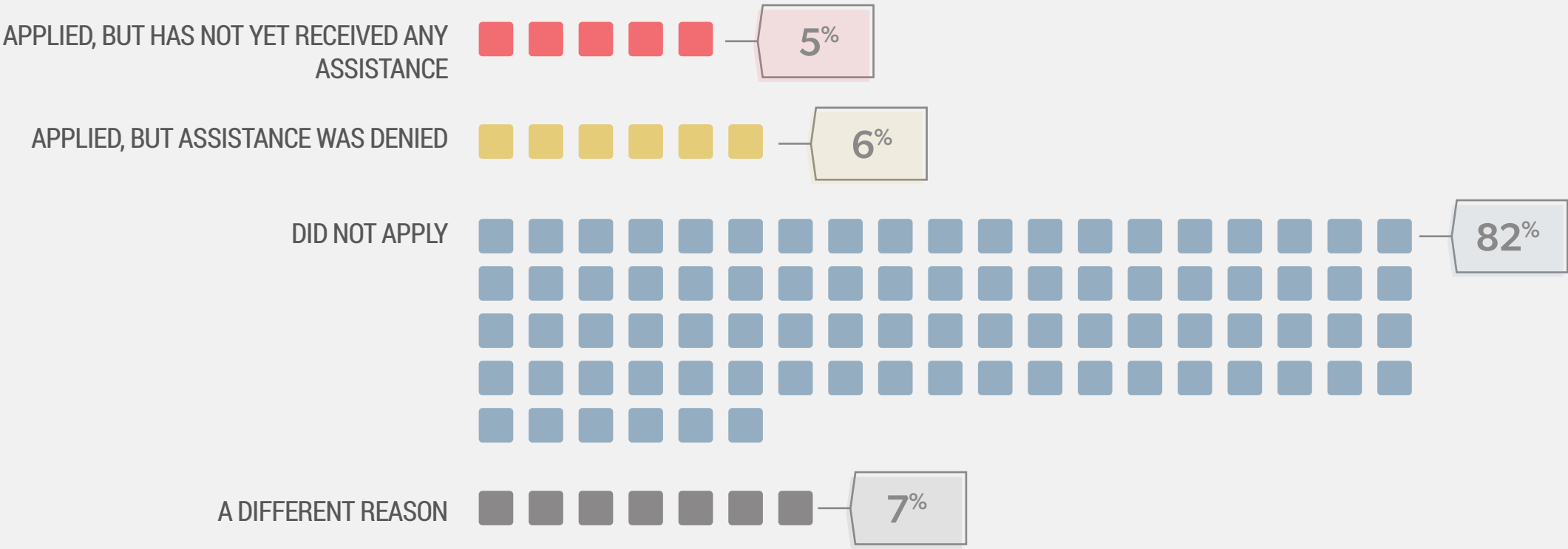DISASTROUS
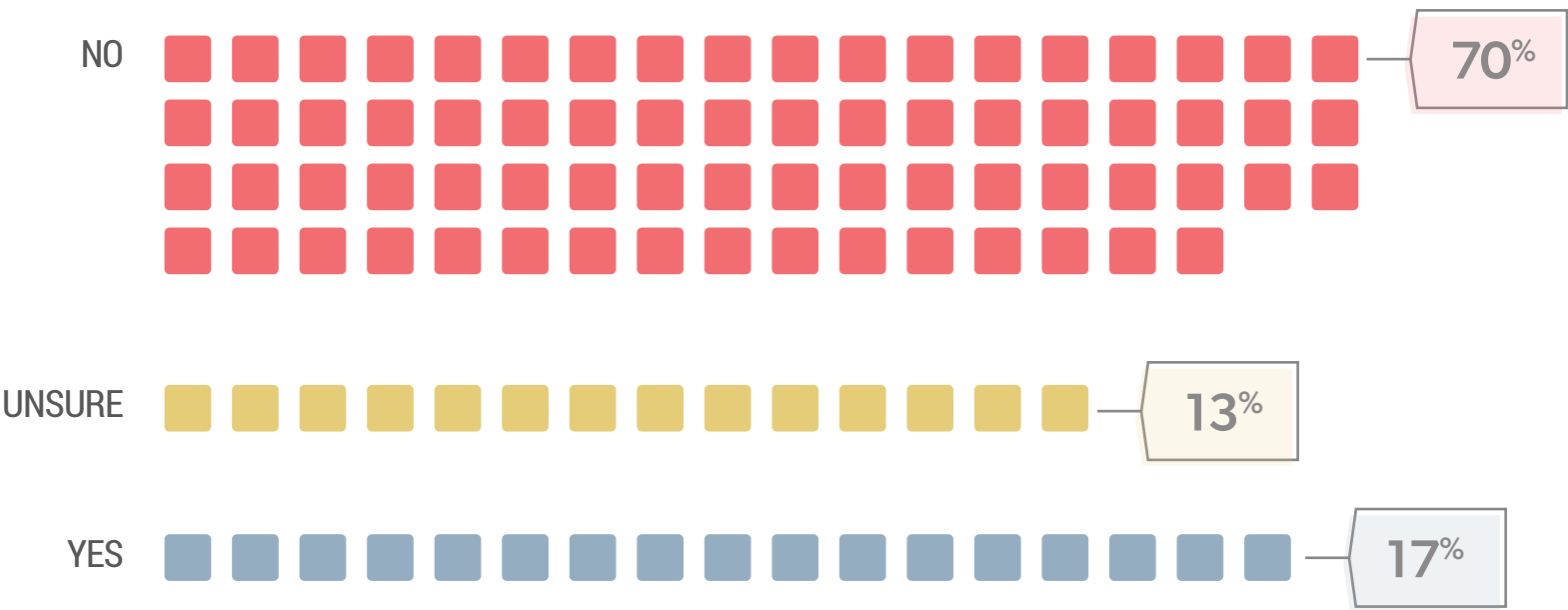
OPERATIONS | CONTINUED

COVID RELIEF | GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Please indicate if, since the emergence of COVID, your organization has received assistance from any of these SPECIFIC relief programs:

PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM (PPP) — **24%**

ECONOMIC INJURY DISASTER LOAN (EIDL) — **10%**

FFCRA (EMPLOYER REIMBURSEMENT FOR EMPLOYEE SICK/FAMILY LEAVE WAGES) — **2%**

EMPLOYEE RETENTION CREDIT (TAX CREDIT FOR BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY A SHUTDOWN) — **3%**

SBA DEBT RELIEF AND/OR EXPRESS LOANS — **3%**

WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED ASSISTANCE FROM ANY OF THESE SPECIFIC PROGRAMS — **65%**

Respondents **not receiving** assistance from the programs listed above indicated their organization:

APPLIED, BUT HAS NOT YET RECEIVED ANY ASSISTANCE — **5%**

APPLIED, BUT ASSISTANCE WAS DENIED — **6%**

DID NOT APPLY — **82%**

A DIFFERENT REASON — **7%**

Since the onset of COVID, has your organization received any grants, loans, relief funding, assistance, etc. **from any sources OTHER than those listed above**?

NO — **70%**

UNSURE — **13%**

YES — **17%**

OPERATIONS | CONTINUED

Of those reporting golf tournaments as their top source of non-dues revenue, the majority specified the event was a summertime, "no-touch" golf tournament.

NON-DUES REVENUE | TOP 10 SOURCES

We asked: Since the onset of COVID, what has been your organization's most successful source of non-dues revenue?
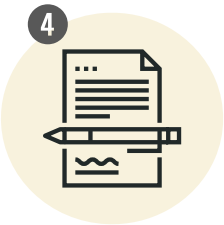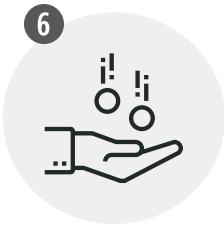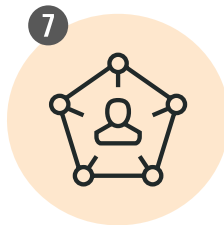
1. SPONSORSHIPS
2. VIRTUAL EVENTS
3. EDUCATION
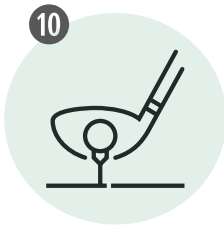4. CONTRACT INCOME
5. PROGRAMMING
6. GRANTS
7. AFFINITY PROGRAMS
8. ADVERTISING
9. WEBINARS
10. GOLF TOURNAMENTS
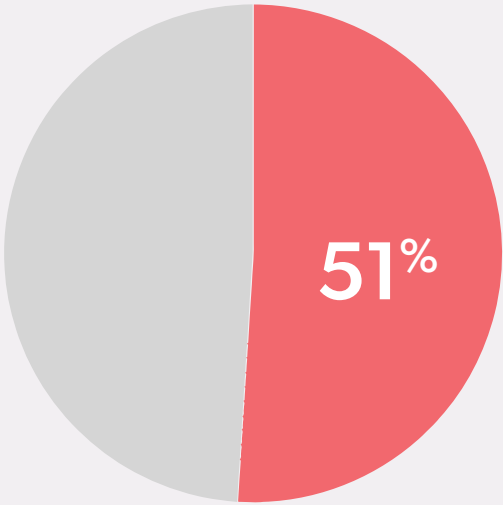
Download **Tips for Teeing Up a Low-Touch Golf Event** to get ideas for:
- Marketing the Event
- Online Registration
- The Check-In Process
- On the Course
- Meals/Banquet
- Awards & Prizes

Get it Here

NON-DUES REVENUE | PRE- VS. POST-COVID PROJECTIONS

We asked: **In an average year**, approximately how much of your total revenue comes from non-dues sources?

51%

Average of all responses

We asked: **This time next year**, how much of your total revenue will come from non-dues sources?

48%
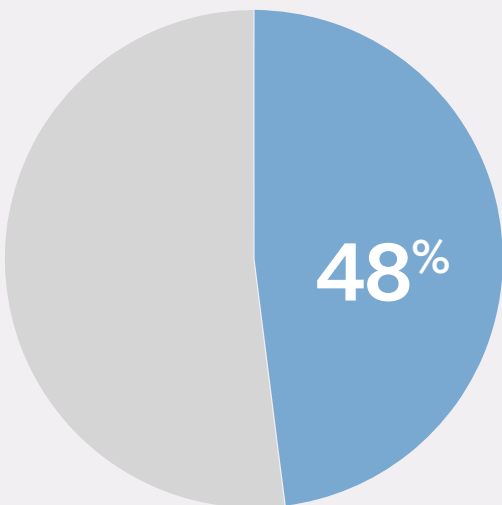
Respondents predicted

THOSE **REPORTING OVER ½ OF THEIR INCOME** COMES FROM NON-DUES REVENUE SAID:

Since the onset of COVID, their most successful non-dues revenue sources are:
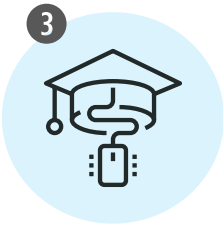
1. SPONSORSHIPS
2. VIRTUAL EVENTS
3. EDUCATION
4. CONTRACT INCOME
5. PROGRAMMING
6. GRANTS
7. WEBINARS

Predicted next year's most successful non-dues revenue sources will be:

1. SPONSORSHIPS
2. VIRTUAL EVENTS
3. EDUCATION
4. GRANTS
5. CONTRACT INCOME
6. PROGRAMMING
7. FUNDRAISERS

DIVERSITY

Of organizations indicating changes to D&I policies/practices: 29% reported increased membership engagement vs. only 15% of those who did not make changes.

In the past 12 months, has your organization made changes to its Diversity & Inclusion policies/practices in an effort to improve equity and support for employees and/or members?

33% YES

54% NO
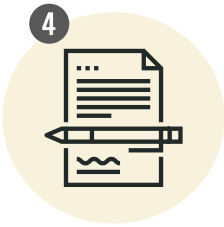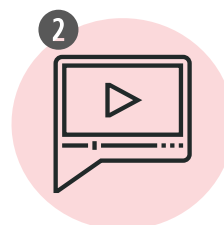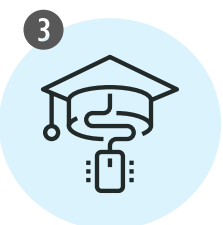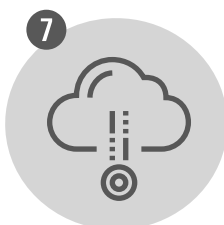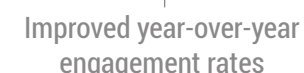
13% UNSURE

Updated D&I practices were most common among organizations falling into at least one of the following categories:

201-500 members

An operating budget of $1m-$3m

Improved year-over-year engagement rates

COMMENTS FROM SURVEY RESPONDENTS | WORDS OF WISDOM

✓ = What respondents said

- ✓ We are already diversified.

- ✓ Formed a Board of Directors committee.

- ✓ Created a D&I working group.

- ✓ Created D&I goals, looking to add more women to our Board.

- ✓ They are ensuring that we have programs in 2021 to address this.

- ✓ It's something we plan on doing through new Board member recruitment.

- ✓ No changes yet, but we are investigating and will make changes once that is complete.

- ✓ We previously adopted a formal policy.

- ✓ It is not an issue for our organization.

- ✓ The program was already in place.

- ✓ Created a D&I committee and re-upped efforts to engage minorities in our industry.

- ✓ We already had a robust D&I program but added more outreach and support.

- ✓ Our Board formed a D&I Task Force.

- ✓ Unfortunately, we've been stagnant in this area. We've created a core values statement for our bylaws but haven't moved much toward being proactive with the membership. There seems to be a lack of appetite for this, and the reasons are unclear to me.

- ✓ Planning to take a look at the Employee Handbook in the next year to evaluate it in the current era.

- ✓ We did not have a "policy" but did make a statement on it this year.

- ✓ We focus on diversity and inclusion for our boards.

- ✓ Have been conducting bias training with our Board of Governors & Committee Chairs.

- ✓ We're working on that right now.

- ✓ We started a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, which developed Core DEI Principles and helped implement changes to make our organization more welcoming and inclusive.

- ✓ We have those programs in place, specifically women, and have a diverse Board of Directors and membership base.

- ✓ We reviewed our existing policies to consider changes and found them to be comprehensive.

- ✓ We started a brand-new DEI program called "Community Conversations" in partnership with our local HR association and county government.

- ✓ We started an anti-racism task force and are actively implementing suggestions.

- ✓ Established a formal DEI committee.

- ✓ Work in progress.

- ✓ We have created a Diversity Committee and are in the process of appointing members.

Interestingly, organizations that **did not** make a change to D&I policies/practices reported a higher or steady renewal rate than those that did.

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ENCOURAGEMENT

We asked: Any words of wisdom you'd like to share with your colleagues or peers?

COMMENTS FROM SURVEY RESPONDENTS | WORDS OF WISDOM

✓ = What respondents said

- Be honest with your board.

- Be loyal to your mission and stay the course!

- Be patient. Slow and steady wins the race. Sometimes it's difficult in an instant-gratification world. But compassion and understanding go a long way.

- Block time in your calendar to plan.

- Budget conservatively, and don't count on revenue gained from new programs as budgeted revenue for the new year—too many unknowns in the current climate.

- Celebrate your accomplishments.

- Continue to be nimble and creative in the ways you support members.

- Despite all of the chaos and unfortunate results of COVID, there are also many opportunities if we're willing to pivot, innovate, and work creatively.

- Don't get overwhelmed by everything that is going on around you. Take it one day at a time.

- Don't let perfection get in the way of good enough.

- Don't let perfection slow down the needs of your members.

- Drinking wine helps.

- Embrace new technology and find low cost, high-quality vendors who can support tech-related communications efforts.

- Ensure that the board can hold the CEO accountable and that there is accountability within the organization.

- Establish good relationships, don't assume everything is okay; get everything in writing and policies.

- Find ways to be generous to your members - discounted fees, payment plans, etc. Just the offer is meaningful, and it communicates that you understand the reality everyone is facing.

- Flexibility and patience. These were pillars for our work before, but COVID has furthered it.

- Planning consumes even more of our time, but the polished effort for our virtual trainings has helped demonstrate our value.

- Get lean, mean, and focused. This, too, shall pass.

- Have a plan A, B, C, D, etc. Things are constantly changing and having multiple plans of attack already in place ensures you aren't left flailing when things change.

- I celebrated 20 years in June 2020, and you must love what you do to be an Executive Director.

- I still appreciate this quote when things get hard: "You are not working from home; you are at your home during a crisis trying to work."

- If 2020 has taught us anything, it's that we CAN and we WILL.

- If your creativity is appreciated, stay where you are.

- It's more important than ever to listen to your members. Find out what they need, then start from scratch, giving your value proposition and membership model a fresh look.

- It's not brain surgery. If it isn't done today, and it isn't done perfectly, will it really matter in 10 years?

- Join ASAE.

- Keep learning. There are so many new skills we have had to obtain.

- Keep showing up and staying in touch...even if it has to be virtual!

- Keep trying & be willing to make changes, even sometimes on the fly :)

- Chisel away at each task one project at a time.

- Focus on what your members need most to navigate these uncertain times and connect to those resources.

- Keep your head up - it will get better.

- Learn to pivot continually.

- Make decisions based on facts, not fear.

- Move past all the resistance and make the new normal work.

- Manage expectations.

- Member communications should always be written from the perspective of the association's interest in helping achieve success.

- Mix up your virtual events. Make them different.

- Nonprofits must keep adopting new technologies to remain efficient and best serve members.

- Offer hybrid meetings - virtual and in person.

- Pivot pivot pivot. Learn learn learn. Flex flex flex. :)

- Put on your big boy (or girl) pants and get back to work and help your members get back to a productive, economic workforce.

- Respect the positions of others, don't try to convince them of yours.

- Rest.

- Set your priorities and delegate things you do not HAVE to do yourself.

- Stay calm and carry on, and do it with a smile. Appreciate that things are forever changed in the meeting industry. Embrace it and find a way to make it work for you and your organization in the long term.

- Stick to the core mission. Be creative.

- Take good care of your staff. Listen and do what's necessary to help them to feel safe and valued.

- The best wisdom I can give is to focus on the work and not the personalities. That has helped me in my 15 years as Executive Director.

- The top priority should always be a strong succession plan and Standard Operating Procedures in place for when volunteer leaders underperform.

- We will keep our momentum going forward and only look back for reference, not what we have lost.

- We're all in the same boat. Reach out to other association professionals to compare war stories. It helps!

CHALLENGES

What would you say is the #1 impediment to doing your job?

COMMON CHALLENGES

⚑ Time
⚑ Money
⚑ Technology
⚑ Staff
⚑ Events
⚑ Face-to-face interaction

⚑ Processes/Operations
⚑ Board of directors
⚑ Member engagement
⚑ Remote workforce
⚑ Other/Miscellaneous
⚑ Government

⚑ Leadership
⚑ Uncertainty
⚑ Volunteers

Time, Money, and Technology were the top 3 impediments regardless of organization size or operating budget.

COMMENTS FROM SURVEY RESPONDENTS | CHALLENGES

💬 = What respondents said

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

💬 The Board has an unrealistic vision of what they can or will actually achieve. They make decisions, but then they don't carry out their responsibilities.

💬 The politics of some Board members; some serve their own agendas with a total disregard for the association's strategic plan and budget.

💬 Board overstepping their bounds.

💬 The high turnover rate of the Board of Directors.

💬 Board members are not stepping up to the plate.

💬 Poor communication from the Board of Directors; slow responses or indecision.

💬 Board members have too many other obligations and concerns, especially during the pandemic, to be available for the organization's needs.

GOVERNMENT

💬 Economics/bad government policies.

💬 We need broader support from elected officials. Our community is progressing forward without any formal strategy or vision and thus is grasping at straws in hopes of being successful.

💬 The struggle due to governmental agencies not returning to work/office hours. Our state continues to be largely locked down with lots of restrictions on all industries.

💬 The inability to meet with elected officials in-person.

EVENTS

💬 It has been very stressful to find ways to engage members without in-person events.

💬 In-person events help keep existing memberships and foster new relationships to gain new members.

💬 The impact of social distancing on our large, in-person gatherings.

💬 Inability to hold in-person events.

FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTION

💬 Not being able to hold meetings or events in person.

💬 The lack of opportunity for members to engage.

💬 Inability to make site visits.

💬 Lack of in-person meetings with staff.

💬 Membership sales and retention are relationship-based, and it has been more difficult to connect directly with members and prospects.

💬 Inability to interact with members in-person.

LEADERSHIP

💬 Lack of organizational structure and management.

💬 Lack of focus among senior leadership. As an organization, we try to do too much instead of focusing on fewer initiatives but doing them exceptionally well.

💬 Lack of foresight and innovation from leadership.

💬 Not enough resources nor a supportive leader. No real teamwork.

💬 Management tying my hands.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

💬 Lack of engagement among members makes it hard to secure non-dues revenue sources.

💬 Maintaining member relationships with the lack of in-person opportunities.

💬 COVID-related member disinterest because they're too busy or don't care and don't see the value.

💬 Members not seeing the value of membership.

FINANCIAL

💬 The continued COVID economic lockdown negatively impacts the financial health of our organization.

💬 We are a 501c6 and were unable to utilize the PPP. Frustrating because many of the 501c3s in our area used it but didn't need it!

💬 Lack of sufficient funds to develop and upgrade training programs. Revenue has been sufficient to pay our bills and have a little surplus, but not enough to do new-development initiatives this year.

💬 Lack of resources.

💬 Staff shortage due to funding.

💬 Lack of resources (primarily financial and human).

💬 Funding for appropriate technology for virtual professional development.

💬 Tight funding due to 2020 event cancellation has resulted in the Board being more cautious than usual. They're reluctant to try new things, even to expand our development pie or member engagement. I feel like we need to be bolder now more than ever, but it's a battle.

VOLUNTEERS

💬 Limited availability of volunteer leaders.

💬 Inconsistent volunteer leadership creates a lack of understanding of the role and value of staff.

💬 Volunteers getting "in the weeds."

💬 Lack of volunteer time.

COMMENTS FROM SURVEY RESPONDENTS | CHALLENGES

= What respondents said

MISCELLANEOUS

- Training older coworkers and trying to get our membership to use the new features.
- Difficulty managing the revolving door of the nonprofit industry. It's hard to sustain accurate contacts and connections in the database for engagement, billing, etc.
- Limited membership expansion due to other community organizations competing for the same dollar.
- Difficult knowing that our members are suffering, and we can only do so much to help them.
- Members with different points of view about COVID safety aspects. Basically mask vs. no mask.
- Different priorities among fractioned membership.
- Getting our team "on the field" at the same time.
- The extra steps needed to ensure that COVID health and safety protocols are in place and enforced.
- Internal politics.

TECHNOLOGY

- Multiple databases/info sources that don't talk to each other.
- Software that doesn't work correctly.
- Working remotely on old equipment.
- Inability to parse member data in meaningful ways.
- Lack of unlimited funds! There are great tech tools out there, but when you start assembling a robust tech stack, it gets quite expensive.
- Low-quality data and access.
- Technology deficit.
- We need a software system that covers all of our needs.
- Not fully understanding how to use technology and software programs to maximize efficiency.
- Our technology needs a major update.
- No money to upgrade technology.
- Member handholding - their need to speak to a staff member to take care of a business need that a better AMS could handle electronically.

PROCESSES AND OPERATIONS

- Old infrastructure and a need to improve processes and tools.
- Administrative strangulation... employee manuals, office templates, timely marketing content for social media.
- Multiple priorities.
- Day-to-day needs preventing more big picture strategic planning work. Being bogged down with grant reporting, financial needs, personnel requirements, etc., prevents advancing our strategic goals.
- Too many interruptions.
- Siloed operations within staff.
- Having the right tools. Members' immediate needs are taking precedence over general operating/status quo. Due to the ever-changing landscape, much of our day has become reactionary. It's difficult to get caught up and get back on track with strategic initiatives.
- Lack of organizational structure.

REMOTE WORKFORCE

- Reduced communication. Things like walking down the hall or picking up the phone to ask someone something are no longer possible. Communication has to be planned.
- Juggling my work with homeschooling my child.
- Work product and productivity on a day-over-day basis are slipping considerably. Unfortunately, the remote work concept is dysfunctional and/or limiting work product productivity.
- Lack of office collaboration - no "water cooler" opportunities.

STAFFING

- Lack of staff - volunteerism is not at previous levels, and it has gotten tougher with COVID.
- Number of staff, we are a small staff that wears many hats.
- I'm the only person doing the work of many.
- Insufficient staffing for our strategic plan.
- Small staff, so positions become blurred.
- Too much to do and lack of skilled staff to delegate tasks.
- Due to cutbacks/financial constraints, there is not enough staff to execute members' service needs.
- Too many projects are needed to help small businesses; not enough staff to implement them properly.

TIME

- I'm busier now than ever before, and my time off is not respected - but that time off is so vital to my mental health and wellbeing.
- Too much on my plate. I can't fully commit to any one thing.
- Not enough time to keep up with member engagement.
- Not enough hours in the day.
- Too many competing "must do" jobs.
- Time wasters; institutional exercises that add no value.
- Not enough hours in the day to meet everyone's needs.
- Always caught up in logistics and details, which doesn't leave enough time for planning and implementation.

UNCERTAINTY

- The unpredictability of COVID.
- Inability to predict what circumstances will be for next year's planning.
- The uncertainty of the future of scholarly publishing.
- Not being able to plan accordingly for 2021.
- Constantly changing information.

IMPROVEMENTS

We asked: In the past 12 months, what (if any) change(s) has your organization made that improved your job efficiency, productivity, satisfaction, etc.?

COMMON IMPROVEMENTS

- Working remotely
- Technology
- Videoconferencing
- Processes/Operations
- Miscellaneous
- Time management
- Staffing changes
- Increased autonomy/flexibility

COMMENTS FROM SURVEY RESPONDENTS | WORK IMPROVEMENTS

💬 = What respondents said

AUTONOMY/FLEXIBILITY

- 💬 More flexibility due to COVID - working from home seems to work well.
- 💬 I make all the decisions in my department.
- 💬 More flexibility in job duties.
- 💬 Remote meetings and flexible work schedules/locations.
- 💬 More autonomy and control over booking speakers and courses. Running them entirely online with little expense allows us to be more flexible and offer more.
- 💬 Remote work has increased some autonomy and improved communication (mostly).

TECHNOLOGY

- 💬 Increased documentation in our AMS.
- 💬 Adding a second computer monitor.
- 💬 Purchased an online education platform.
- 💬 The use of our AMS to track membership, communications, etc.
- 💬 Extended use of virtual communication tools. Added frequency of communication with support, tools, and promotion.
- 💬 Implemented new AMS and new billing options/policies.
- 💬 Better use of technology - I believe we are all working smarter, not harder.
- 💬 New website, new AMS, and implemented QuickBooks Online.
- 💬 We automated marketing and billing.
- 💬 Updating technology and software provided additional ways to connect remotely and, in the office, improved our efficiency.
- 💬 Increased investment in laptops, video conferencing resources.
- 💬 Always adopting new technologies and best practices.
- 💬 Moving to a new AMS.
- 💬 Automated our program offerings, significantly improving efficiency as we eliminated the need to email program participants manually.
- 💬 Board has been supportive of purchasing access to new digital platforms.
- 💬 Updating technology and software has improved efficiency and provided additional ways to connect online and in the office.

MISCELLANEOUS

- 💬 We have cut our office hours, so it has been nice getting to see my kids more.
- 💬 Safety and health awareness and safety measures put in place to keep workplace COVID-free.
- 💬 More time for mental health - meditation/yoga.
- 💬 We have cut the fat from some areas and eliminated some programs.
- 💬 Reopened to the public.
- 💬 Support and training.
- 💬 The new Board President has brought new enthusiasm to the Association.
- 💬 We changed AMS providers, which allowed us to review a number of processes and procedures and make changes to improve productivity and member service.

TIME

- 💬 Using "COVID-time" to push big initiatives forward. Very exciting.
- 💬 Working remotely has allowed us time to hyper-focus on back-burner initiatives. Lack of in-person events and the resources dedicated to them has freed up the time to tackle projects and have brainstorming sessions regarding new ideas/etc. to carry us through the next 18 months.
- 💬 An intentional review of all initiatives to enable thoughtful planning of what was doable and on what timeline.
- 💬 We are traveling less due to COVID, and this has given us time to tackle projects that were previously pushed down on our lists.
- 💬 Rethinking the idea of events to move them online this year and hybrid next year.
- 💬 More direct interaction with members; a willingness to be creative, try new things, and examine programs and services to determine what we can eliminate.
- 💬 Because of COVID, I have had to work from home the majority of the time. We did not host several big events this year, which gave me time to do things (plan) usually on the back burner.
- 💬 No travel time for meetings.

STAFFING

- 💬 We made staffing changes.
- 💬 Increased staff numbers.
- 💬 Agreed to bring on an assistant director; having a skilled backup person on staff is amazing.
- 💬 Staff turnover (for the better).
- 💬 Added an assistant.

Download:

How to Get Your Board On Board

for tips to justify new technology.

Regardless of organization size, respondents indicated the #1 most helpful change has been the shift to remote work arrangements.

COMMENTS FROM SURVEY RESPONDENTS | WORK IMPROVEMENTS

💬 = What respondents said

PROCESSES/OPERATIONS

💬 Continuous improvement mentality! We are always looking for ways to improve our systems/productivity.

💬 Introspection and a willingness to change our internal processes to improve our output and value.

💬 Upgraded some of our internal systems to help improve workflow.

💬 Just a few procedural changes in reporting made month-end closeout way faster!

💬 We are working harder to focus on the task at hand, and ONLY the task at hand.

💬 We're taking a closer look at our data management, social media management, and better use and understanding of SEO.

💬 Getting everyone's (employees and chapter leaders) input makes the entire organization run more efficiently.

💬 We've focused on what we can realistically get done, given current issues and resources related to COVID-19, and prioritized around that, focusing, of course, on those items that can sustain and improve member value.

💬 We've cut out offerings that don't make sense right now and focused on priorities that align with member needs. We've also been open to new technologies that better fit what we need. Flexibility is key.

ONLINE INTERACTION

💬 Using videoconferencing has saved a lot of travel time.

💬 Virtual meetings! I may never do another "in-person" board meeting.

💬 Wider adoption of MS Teams has facilitated quick, informal communication, particularly when we can't stop by our colleagues' offices.

💬 Moving to video meetings allows me to have more meetings than in the past.

💬 More committee calls are making volunteers more engaged.

💬 Continuing to allow staff to work from home has been great. As someone who is high-risk, it has been way less stressful than having to go into the office every day. We have Monday morning virtual staff meetings and take some time to do a roundtable check in about non-work topics each time. It resembles the "water-cooler chat" or "tea time" that we have missed out on when we would all be together in the office.

💬 Having multiple staff meetings per week on Zoom has helped with information sharing among the staff.

💬 Doing events online reduces a great deal of travel time and expense.

💬 Virtual board meetings and no travel.

💬 Approval of VPN capability for staff to work remotely and increased use of online meeting software.

💬 Upgraded computers and advanced knowledge of platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

💬 Transitioned on-site workshops to the Zoom platform, which increased attendance significantly.

WORKING REMOTELY

💬 Without the distractions of an office, I can get more work done and more efficiently.

💬 Naturally working more and longer in a remote setting.

💬 In my opinion, working remotely, our staff has worked equally as well, if not better, as we did when working in the same office.

💬 We've learned that working from home works and that productivity has not decreased. It also helps with work/life balance.

💬 I LOVE working from home and feel much more productive.

💬 Work from home has helped me get more done throughout the day.

💬 We worked from home for several months during the onset of the pandemic, and it increased my efficiency a million-fold.

💬 Working from home helps keep away the disruptions!

💬 Working from home for six months out of the past year helped me better focus and eliminated time-wasting traveling, getting ready for work, etc.

💬 When able to work from home, I found myself more productive. However, I realized how dependent I am on paper. Creating a 'work from home' kit has been instrumental!

💬 Allowed to work from home and the ability to balance work and home life.

💬 Working from home has made me much more productive, more so than I thought.

GrowthZone
smarter association software

ABOUT GROWTHZONE

The GrowthZone mission is to empower organizations with the tools they need to grow membership, keep members engaged, keep members longer, and do more in less time.

GrowthZone is a full Membership Management System with **built-in payment processing, e-commerce, fundraising, marketing automation, member prospecting,** and more. GrowthZone is ideal for chambers of commerce, business, trade, and professional associations.

Schedule a quick, no-pressure demo to see GrowthZone in action.

SCHEDULE DEMO

GrowthZone features a comprehensive suite of productivity modules for membership organizations, including:

- Website Content Management
- Email Marketing Automation
- Fundraising
- Billing
- Event Registration
- Event Exhibitor/Session Management
- Membership Prospecting

- Payment Processing
- Certification Tracking
- Chapter Management
- Mobile Staff App
- Website Hosting
- Advertising/Sponsorship
- Online Store
- Project Management

- Form Builder
- Job Boards
- Contacts
- Communication
- Lists/Committees
- Fundraising