

Mentoring in a Time of Social Distancing: Mentoring Organization Survey Results



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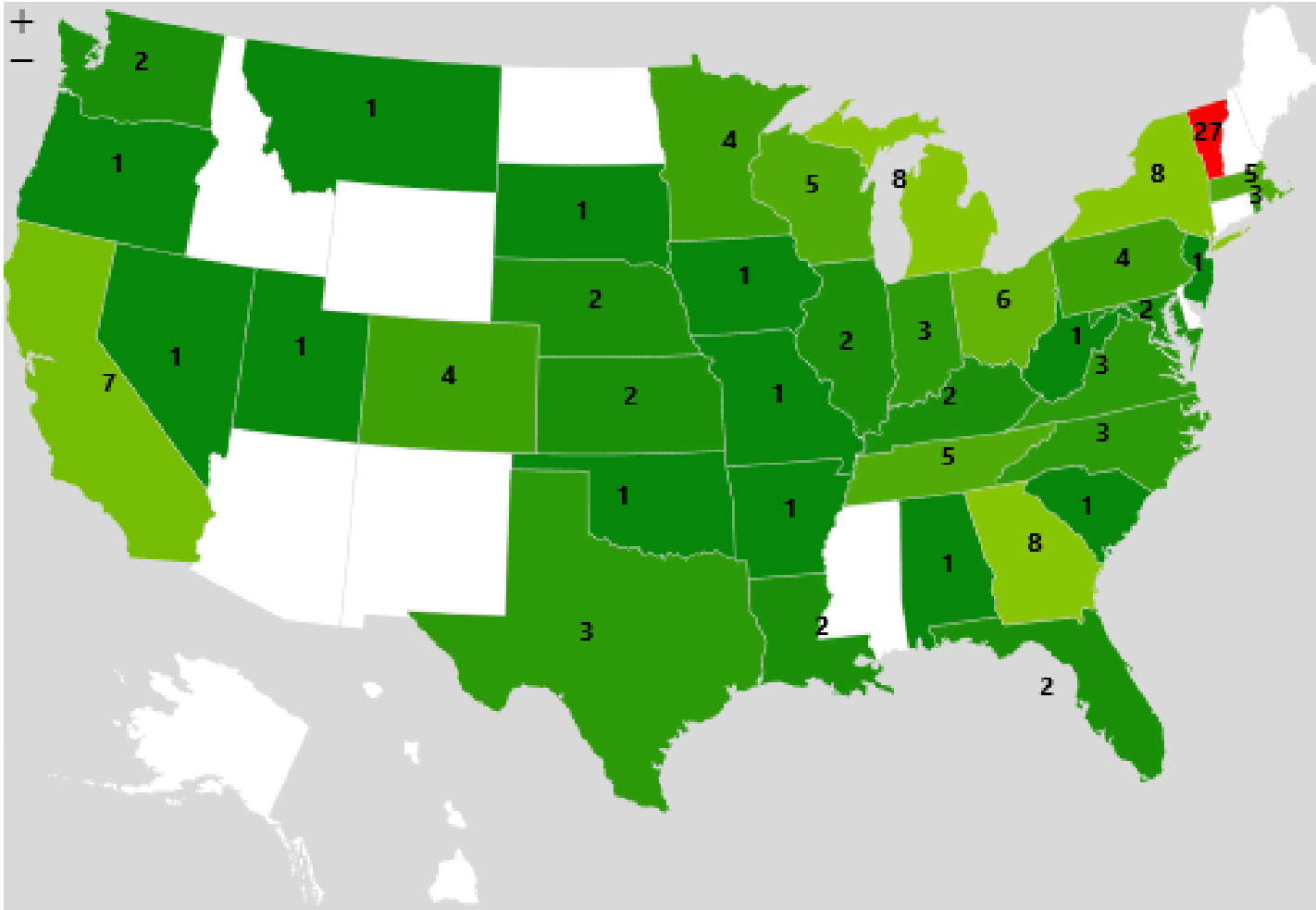
Background

- MENTOR conducted two surveys of nation-wide mentoring organizations around the impact of COVID-19 and social distancing on mentoring
- The surveys gauged the major challenges that programs are facing, ways in which they are addressing these challenges, and the resources that would be most helpful to them during this time
- These results have helped inform the launch of the [Virtual Mentoring Portals](#) as well as the curation of [resources and tips](#)

Survey #1 Respondents

- **345 mentoring organizations** from **43 states** responded
- **Program Model (most programs have multiple models):**
 - 95% offer one-to-one mentoring
 - 27% offer group mentoring
 - 48% have some school-based component
 - 24% have some community-based component

Survey #2 Respondents



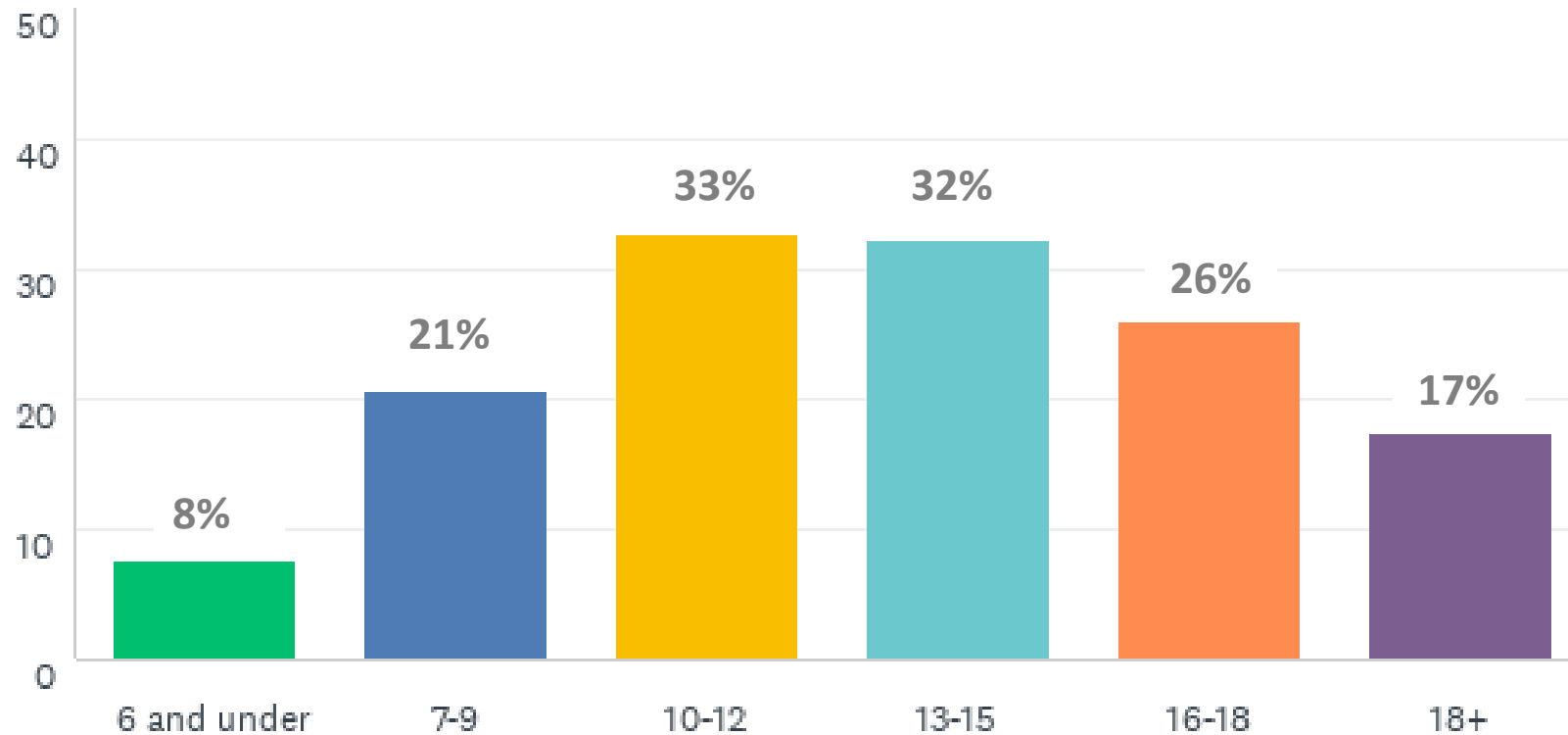
137 mentoring organizations from
38 states responded to this survey

Program Model

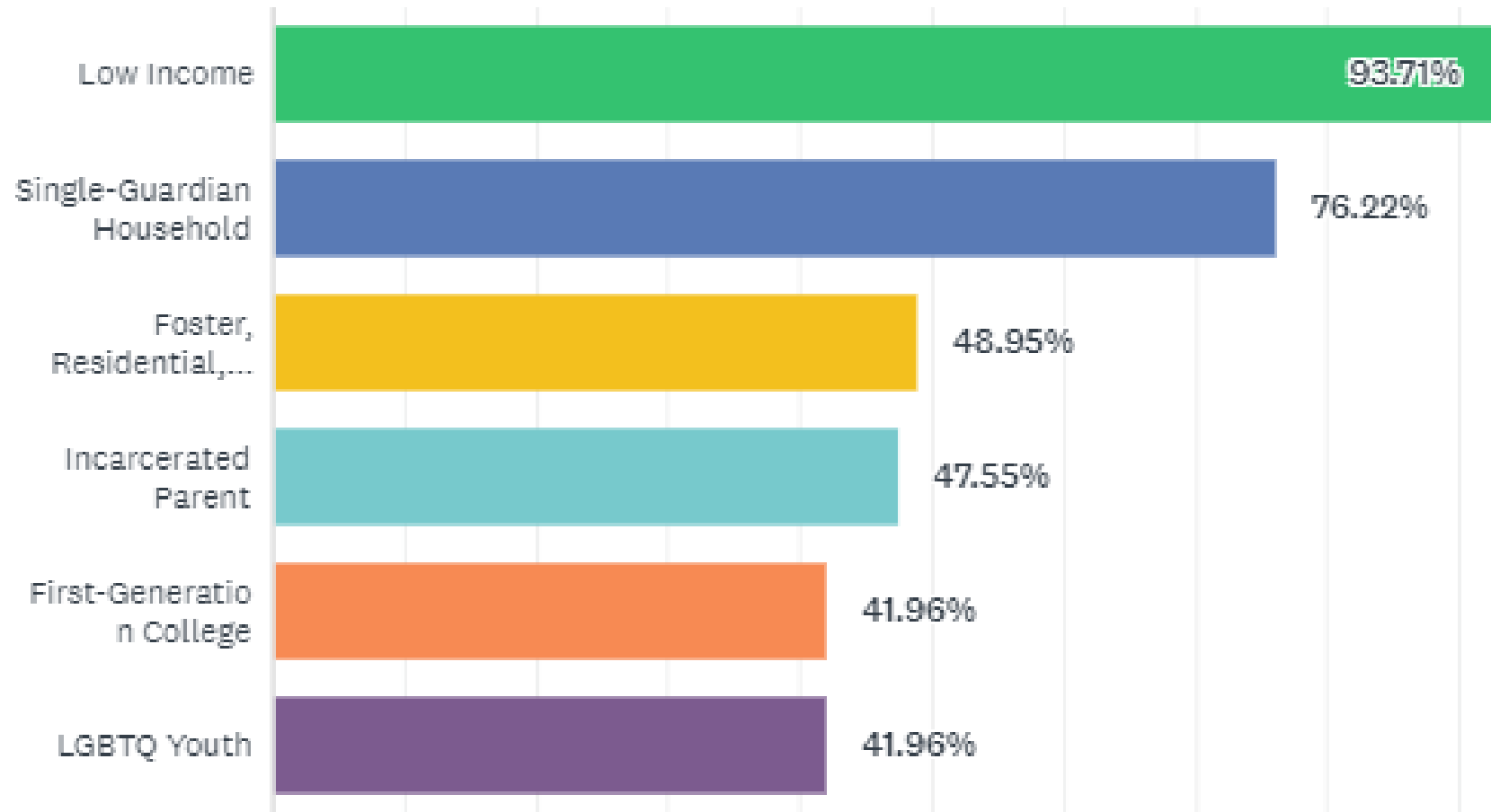
- The majority of organizations have some one-to-one mentoring component and most offer multiple program models:
 - 71% offer one-to-one mentoring
 - 35% offer group mentoring
 - 13% offer peer mentoring
 - 58% have some site-based component
 - 49% have some community-based component

Age of Youth Served (average response)

What is the estimated % breakdown by age of the youth you are serving?



Population of Youth Served (top responses)



Challenges Faced



Common Challenges: Organizations

- Fundraising & Operations (cancellation of events, adjusting to virtual work environment)
- Suspension of mentoring program
- Mentor recruitment
- Supporting matches
- Connecting and communicating with mentees
- Young people & families facing many challenges (food, housing, job security, etc.)
- Privacy laws and/or program policies do not allow for communication with mentees outside of program
- Engaging volunteers who want to help

Common Challenges: Youth, Families, Volunteers

- Lack of access to technology (for school, work, etc.)
- Adjusting to virtual learning
- Financial hardship
- Food & housing insecurities
- Feelings of anxiety, stress, isolation, boredom

Feedback from Respondents:

What are the major challenges you are facing?

- "Our community is underserved and low-income based so the biggest challenge is how families can keep food on the table and keep their children engaged during this time of social isolation."
- "Biggest challenges: many of the youth and families we serve do not have access to technology at home: laptops, Chromebooks, routers, internet which will be needed once their schools begin online learning. 1 in 5 of our families is also struggling with job/income loss. Several of our families are undocumented and are fearful of asking for government assistance."
- "Mentors are not sure if they are doing enough to help their mentee, how best to ask questions to ensure they have the resources in time of need. From the students end, its a very stressful and overwhelming time with having to deal with distance learning and find time to meet with their mentors."
- "The biggest challenges our organization is facing internally as a result of COVID-19 is keeping the momentum. Everyone is scared, stressed and concerned. Our organization is volunteer- based, so volunteers are adjusting to work- life changes and you can feel the stress of our volunteers."
- "The mentors not able to meet with their mentees. Staff is not operating at full number of hours because of not enough work available. No outside mentor/mentee events. Not able to go out to do fundraising or promote the program through visiting businesses, churches, etc. and hanging up posters. No appointments."
- "Mentors are worried about their students not getting the supports they need at home related to e-learning as well as emotional and basic needs. Families are having issues with student motivation and connectivity/ability to learn with a lack of device and connectivity (the community is working on a response to mitigate those barriers to e-learning). Finances are a big challenge as many parents work in the food/beverage/service industry."

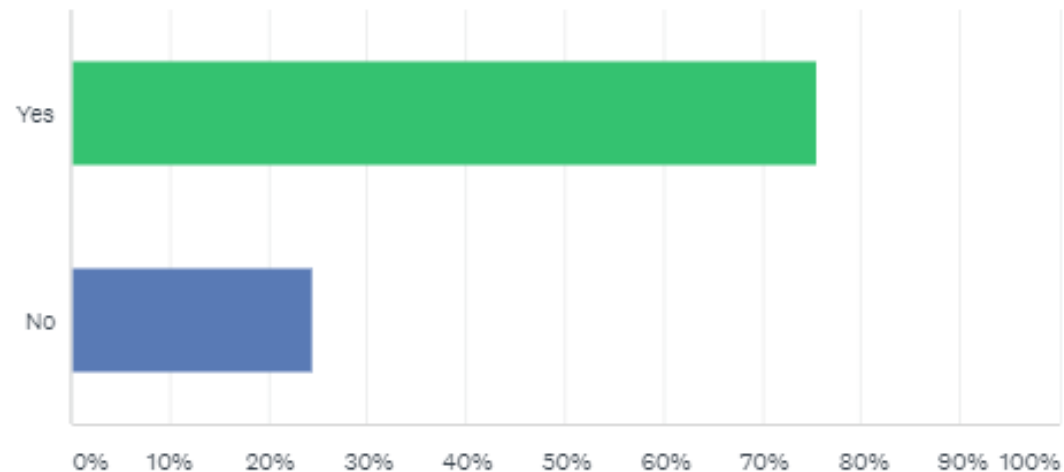
Virtual Mentoring Trends & Interest



76% of respondents have already transitioned to virtual/ remote mentoring approaches

If you have had to suspend your mentoring programming, have you transitioned to virtual/remote approaches that enable youth to connect with mentors via phone, email or other virtual platform?

Answered: 340 Skipped: 0



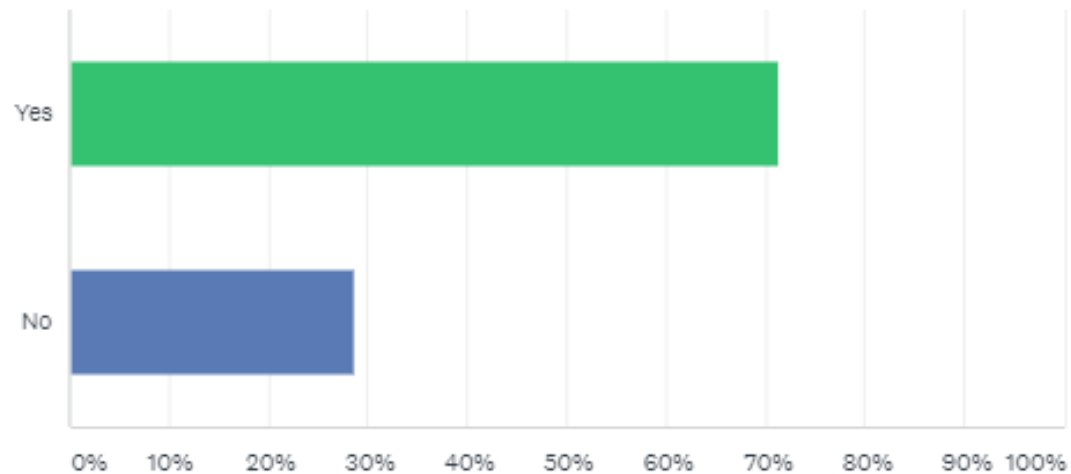
Feedback from Programs who have already transitioned to virtual/remote mentoring

- Google products, Zoom, FaceTime, Skype, text messaging, Calendly, and Canvas have all been used successfully, depending on program specifications
- Method of contact is left up to each match to decide what works for them, with parental feedback if applicable
- In general, avoiding social media connections due to lack of security
- MENTOR tips have been very useful

71% of programs who have not yet transitioned to virtual/remote mentoring, plan to make this transition

If your program has not transitioned to connecting youth and mentors virtually, do you plan to make this transition?

Answered: 84 Skipped: 296



87% of programs who have not yet transitioned state that there are specific barriers keeping them from transitioning

- Barriers mentioned include:
 - Liability: appropriate permissions given to program to start a new medium
 - Availability of technology: safety and security of a platform
 - Unequal access to technology: access to internet, technical knowledge, cell phone vs. computer-based technology
 - Funding for technology

Interest in E-Mentoring Platform

- Programs were highly interested in an **established e-mentoring platform** that would be **available at no cost**:
 - 90% of mentoring programs that have not yet transitioned to virtual/remote mentoring said they would be open to this option
 - 95% of mentoring programs that have already transitioned to virtual/remote mentoring would also be open to this option

Tech Solution Preferences

- 95% of programs are interested in tech solutions that provide safe and monitored one-on-one **content/activities**
- 87% of programs would also be interested in tech solutions that simply provide safe and monitored one-on-one **communication (i.e. email)**

Resources for Virtual Mentoring

- Programs shared additional virtual mentoring resources or solutions that would be helpful to them:
 - Ideas for activities that can keep matches engaged and that can be done virtually for all ages, i.e. scavenger hunts, online games and puzzles, virtual tours of museums/parks, book club
 - Ways to keep mentees doing educational activities to supplement school learning
 - Platform that ensures privacy for mentor/mentee, i.e. lack of parental involvement if applicable
 - Platform that is user friendly and easy to learn for all ages (ranging from elementary school aged to volunteers over the age of 60)

Programmatic Trends



The Digital Divide

- 57% of matches are currently in touch with each other regularly
- 69% of matches are estimated to have access to Wi-Fi and a device to communicate with their mentor, engage in school work, etc.
- Effective approaches that address the digital divide:
 - Providing free devices and hot spot access through schools or other locations
 - Encouraging creative ways to connect without technology including letter writing, care packages, drive by parade
 - Communicating regularly via text message and phone calls

Resources Offered Outside of Mentoring

- 78% of organizations are also providing additional resources outside of mentoring
- Most common additional resources:
 - Food Access & Information: 57%
 - Academic Support: 52%
 - Direct Financial or Goods Support for Families: 32%
 - Mental Health/Counseling: 32%
 - Internet Access: 26%
 - Navigating Unemployment: 19%
 - Providing COVID-19 information in other languages: 19%

Mentor Recruitment & Matching

- 64% of programs are continuing to recruit new mentors
- 38% of programs are able to launch new matches virtually

“How are programs doing match closure in this this time?”

- Some programs are suspending formal match closures temporarily or postponing them
- If match closures cannot be moved, programs are facilitating them virtually
- Virtual match closures are done over Zoom, phone call, or letters

Feedback from Respondents:

What support do you or your staff need to continue to be in the best position to serve others?

- “Support trouble shooting and finding creative solutions to support matches despite the digital divide and social distancing. Training on virtual platforms.”
- “Tips and resources for our families and mentors to stay in communication. Especially for younger youth that might not like talking on the phone or have to rely on their parents to provide that technology for communication.”
- “Funding to continue our gift card/food distribution into the summer months as we transition our model to virtual summer camps. The school system will stop the food delivery sites at the end of Spring semester, so we need more financial support to continue providing families with bi-weekly funds and/or grocery bags.”
- “I have a career mentoring program for high school mentees. I need more college, trade and career resources to offer mentors and mentees”
- “Ideas/support to pass on to mentors who are out of work, depressed, and not able to focus on mentoring.”
- “Our mentees need access to technology in remote areas. Being able to send activities to the mentees would be a benefit, but postage is a cost that was not planned for. Also, ideas for virtual activities for youth of all ages would be helpful.”

Feedback from Respondents:

What training(s) do you feel your mentors need at this moment or would need looking forward?

- “Closure - the importance of proper closure. Current and new matches would benefit from training on the impact the pandemic has had on youth.”
- “How they can continue to be supportive during this crisis and connect remotely. Building quality connections remotely. Self-care for mentors.”
- “Online meeting training and mental health checks for isolation issues.”
- “Trauma Informed Practices, Creating/Maintaining Virtual Mentoring Relationships, Supporting Youth During a Crisis, Self-Care best practices”
- “Current mentors are doing just fine. New mentors are having a problem establishing relationships for the first time with a new mentee.”
- “They will definitely need some training/guidance on how to go about in-person visits while also social distancing once we are back up and running.”
- “Dealing with primary and secondary trauma, both their own, and their mentee's”

Feedback from Respondents:

What else has worked to keep mentors and mentees engaged during this time?

- “Zoom mentoring sessions, weekly virtual activity ideas and resources, creative contests/challenges, follow up frequently to ensure youth are being supported and stepping in as necessary when a mentor can not.”
- “Increased our social media presence & engagement. Phone calls are essential as well - email or other communications haven't been as effective.”
- “We did a Big’s night Inn where current mentors could talk to one another about ideas and support one another at this time. We are also sending out ideas of crafts or other things that matches can do virtually”
- “We are offering Netflix watch parties, a yoga studio is doing Zoom classes, we did a Facebook Live cooking class, we are sharing other community Zoom and web-based classes. We are encouraging Facetime, texting, and mailing notes. Mentors can pick up school packets and food to drop off, with appropriate distancing, to their mentees.”

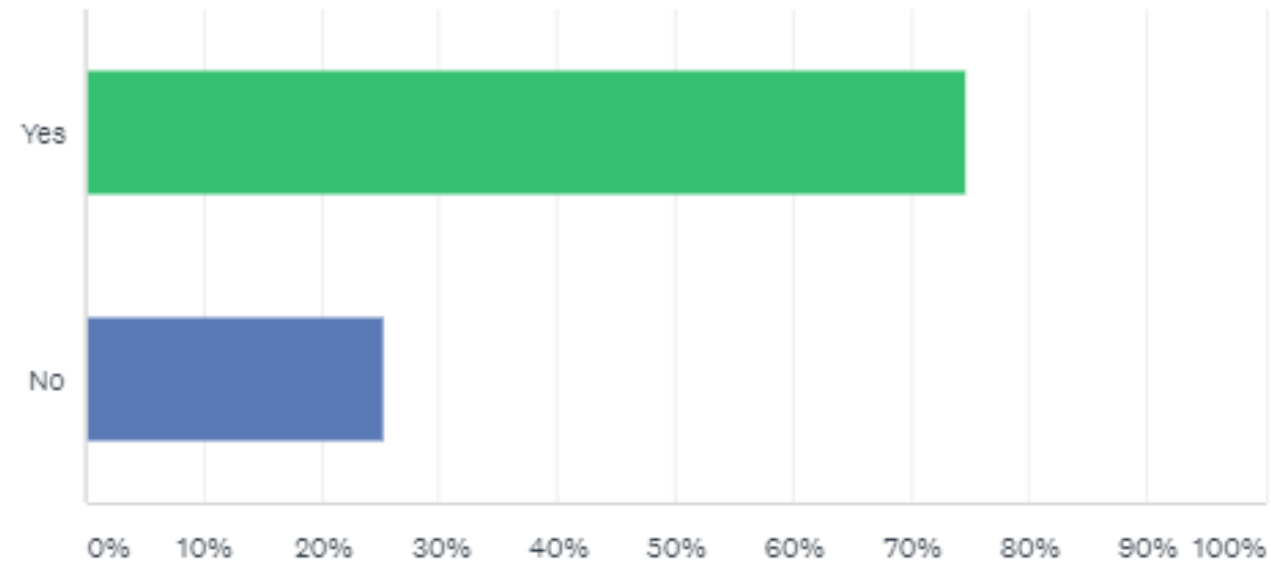
Communications & Partnerships



75% of programs have been in coordination with their school/district

Have you been in coordination with your school/district?

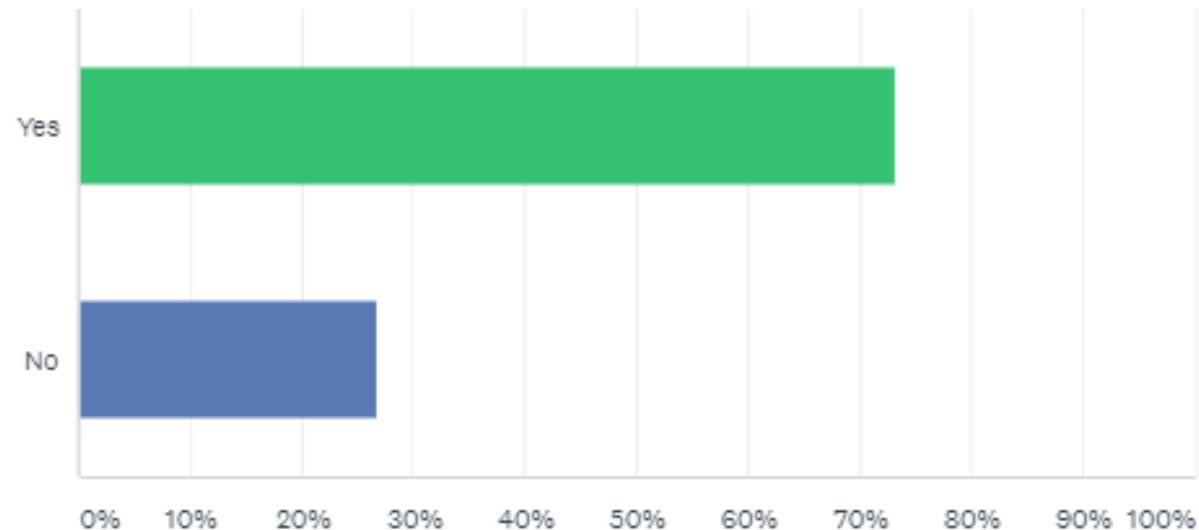
Answered: 122 Skipped: 33



73% of programs have started to create plans for physical distancing into the summer

Have you or your staff started to create plans for if physical distancing continues into the summer?

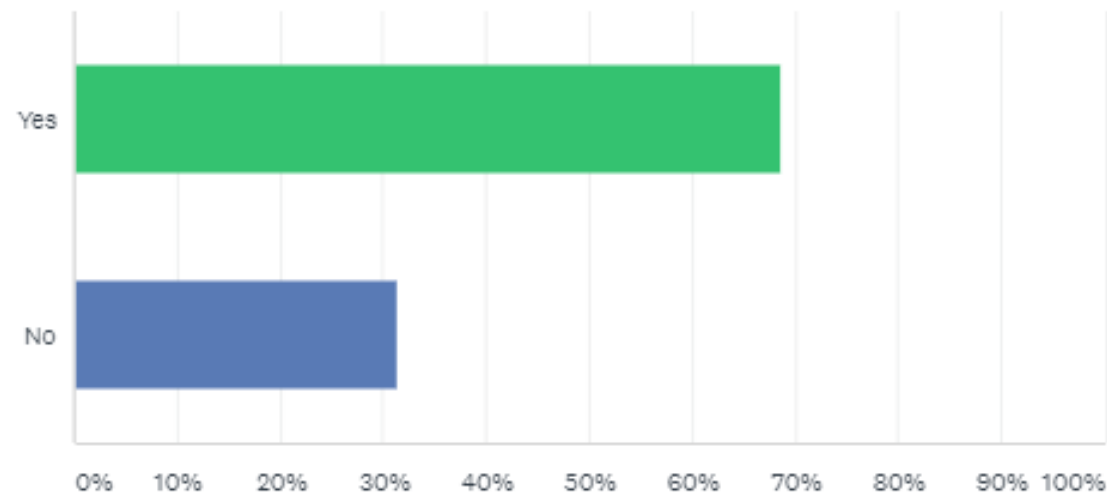
Answered: 123 Skipped: 32



69% of programs expressed interest in working with partners on a one-time virtual mentoring session

Would you be interested in working with partners on a one-time virtual mentoring session for young people in your program? (For example corporate volunteers or MENTOR leading a one-time career mentoring event.)

Answered: 118 Skipped: 37



Feedback from Respondents:

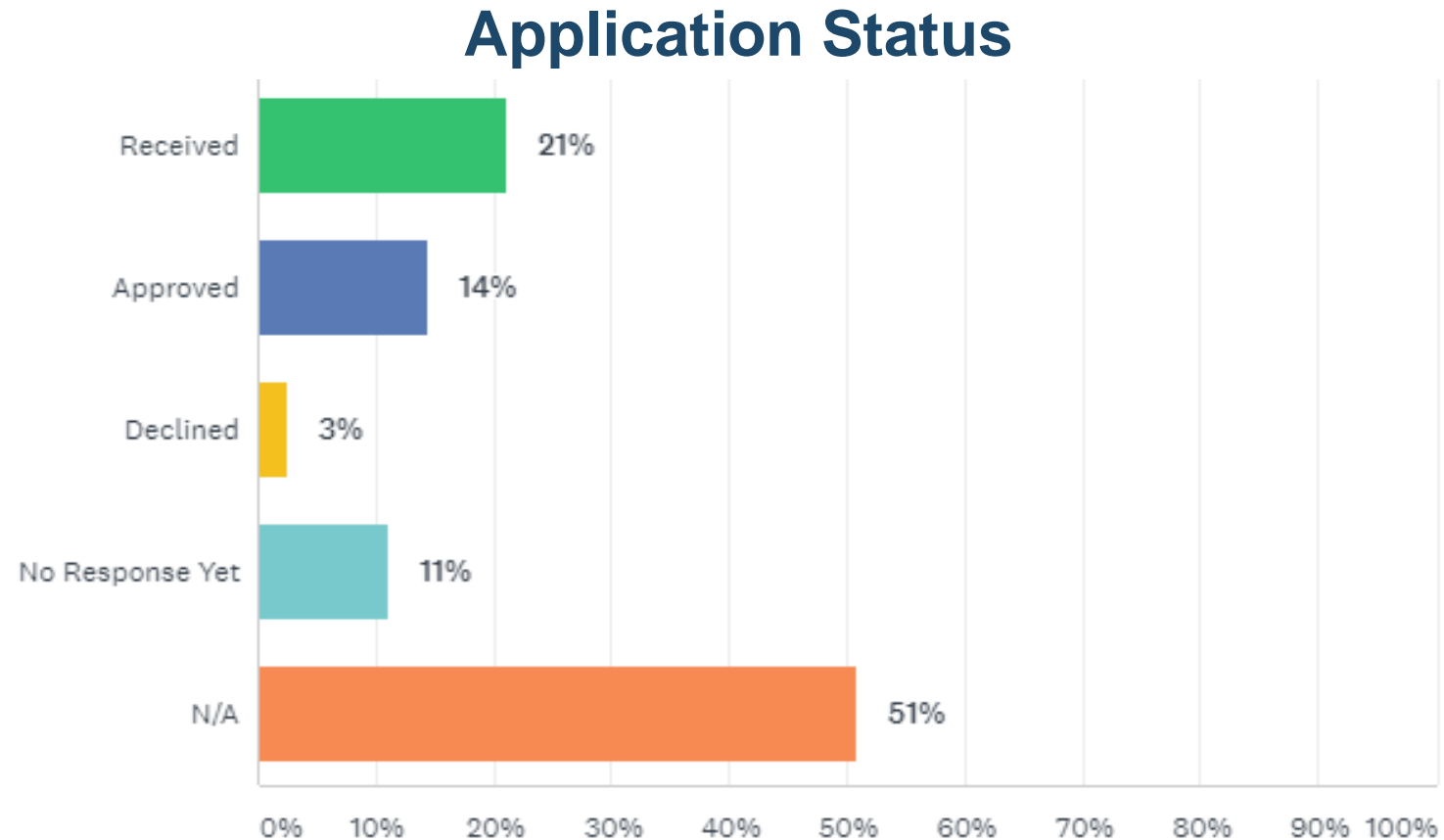
How are mentoring relationships helping the young people you serve deal with COVID-19?

“A very dedicated mentor in our program still makes the time to ride bikes or hike with his mentee, even though they have to stay apart six feet. The mentor is a retired introvert, who cares for his ailing mother. The mentee is one of four siblings, has anger, emotional and social issues. His father works nights and his mother is caring, but overwhelmed. These two help each other, challenge each other and compliment each other. The mentor is finding fun and educational things to do by thinking outside the box and the mentee is excited to find out what's next. The mentees mother is ecstatic about the emotional growth and genuine interest in nature, math and the outdoors.”

Advocacy

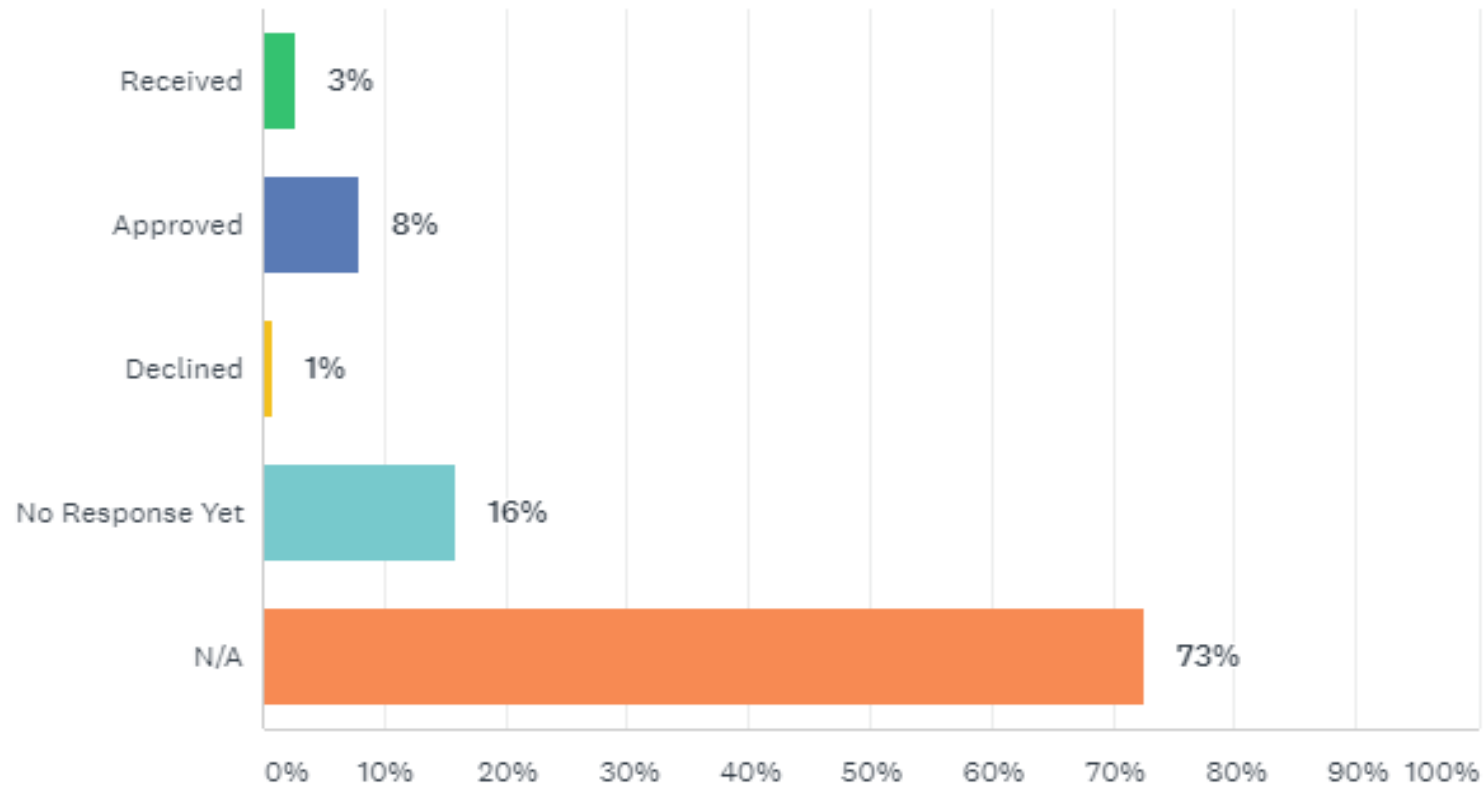


51% of programs have applied to receive **federal** loans or grants in response to COVID-19



26% of programs have applied to receive **state or local government** loans or grants in response to COVID-19

Application Status



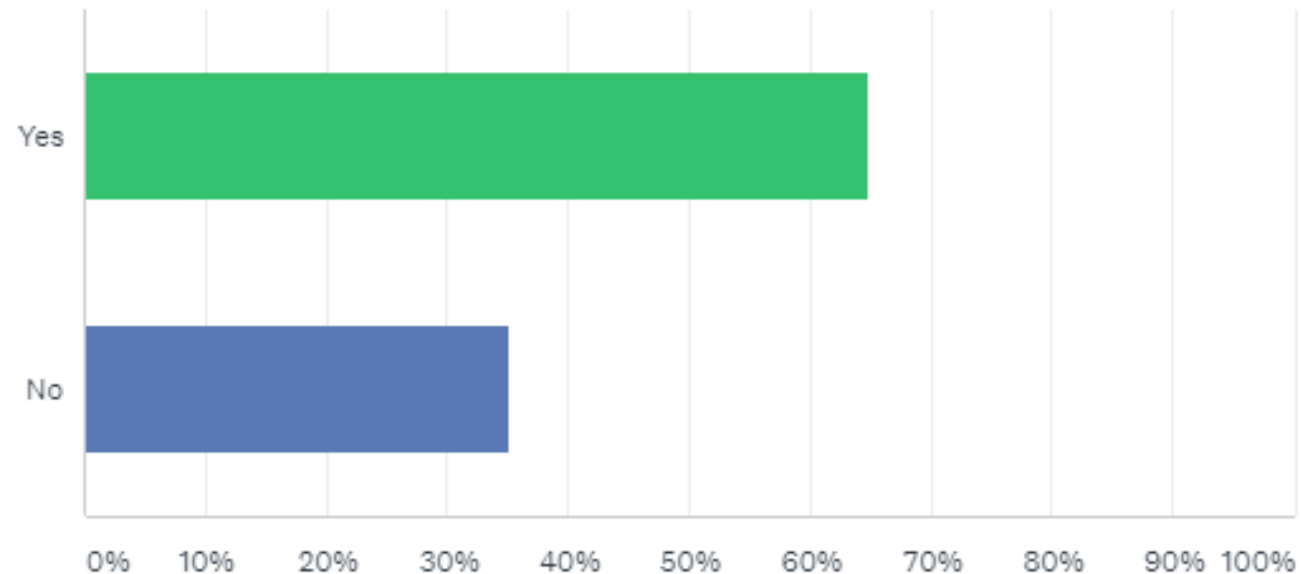
Finance & Operations



65% of programs have had fundraising events cancelled due to COVID-19

Have you had fundraising events cancelled due to COVID-19?

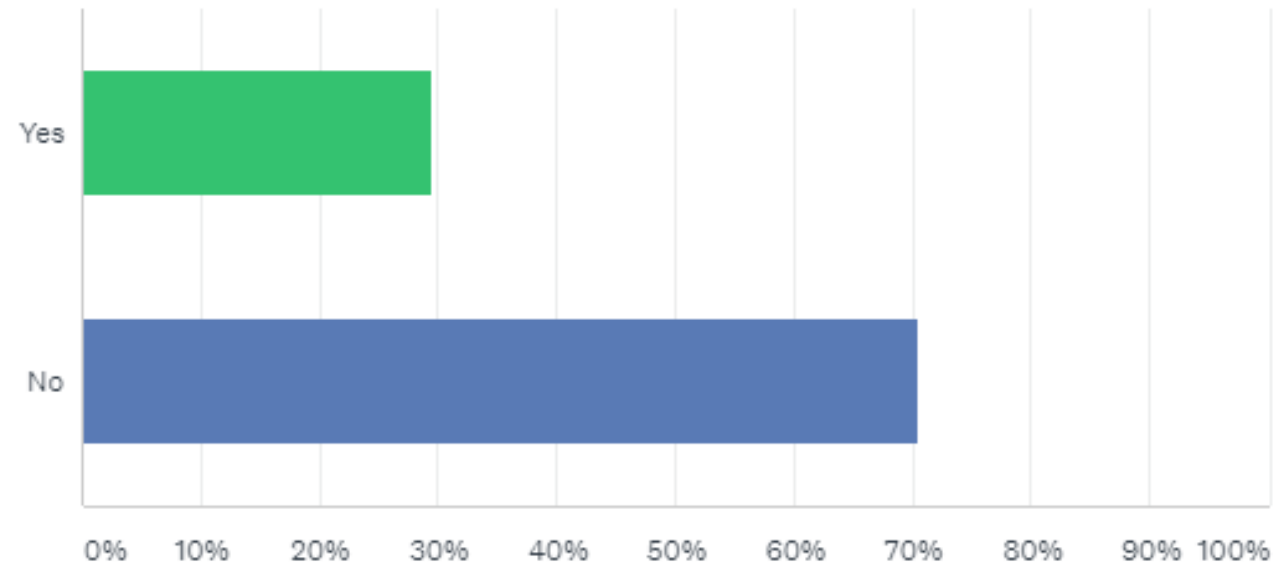
Answered: 108 Skipped: 47



30% of programs have had previous financial commitments rescinded due to COVID-19

Have you had previous financial commitments rescinded due to COVID-19?

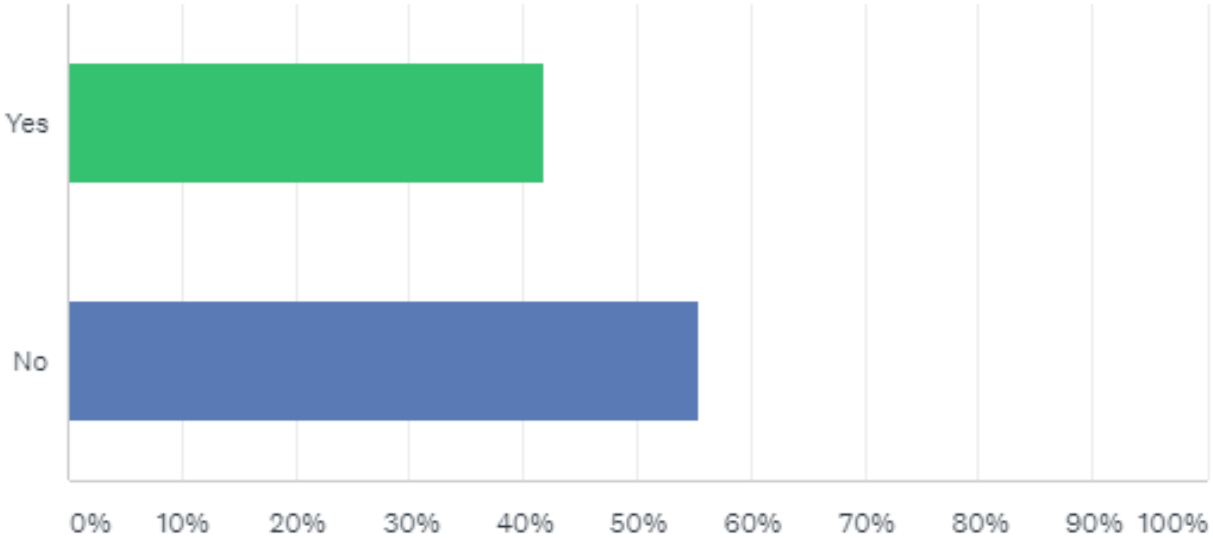
Answered: 105 Skipped: 50



42% of programs have had funders loosen restrictions or offer new/additional funding to support COVID-19 response efforts

Have you had funders loosen restrictions or offer new/additional funding to support your efforts in response to the COVID-19 crisis?

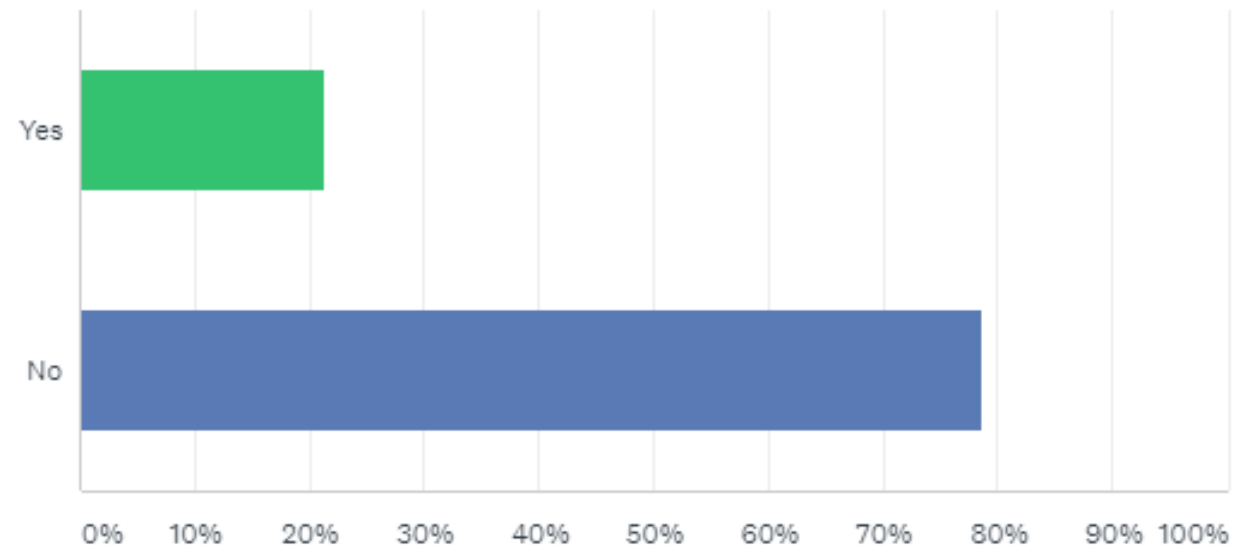
Answered: 103 Skipped: 52



21% of programs said funders indicated they will be decreasing their level of support

Have any funders indicated they will be decreasing their level of support in the next year?

Answered: 98 Skipped: 57



Staffing Levels

Majority of respondents said that **staffing levels will likely stay the same:**

- **increase temporarily: 4%**
- **increase permanently: 5%**
- **stay the same: 62%**
- **temporarily decrease: 23%**
- **permanently decrease: 6%**

Additional Resources & Insights



Programs shared additional resources and solutions that would be helpful to them

■ Financial guidance and funding support:

- “Our annual fundraiser is in September. We have not cancelled but decided to change the format to a virtual event. We were also chosen to be the title beneficiary for a golf tournament in October. So far the event has not been cancelled but we do not know what it will be like in October. Another significant contract we receive is with a school district. Their budget is being impacted and we may not know how much support they can give until the fall. These numbers will impact our ability to intake new mentors and youth this fall.”
- “ We have laid off 2 staff (one position permanently), the remaining staff hours have been reduced to part-time - PPP funding will enable us to keep current part-time level staffing through June. Without a successful online fundraising campaign we will run out of unrestricted funding by July. We have some restricted funding that will continue through the remainder of 2020 but will not cover all expenses. We are facing a \$60,000.00 deficit by year end.”

■ Resources & Ideas for Future Planning:

- “The most critical thing needed is to have resources I can send mentors and mentees to continue post-secondary education and career exploration. I also need creative ideas for continuing the program or planning for the future possibility of a second wave of this situation which will further interrupt services and taking on new matches next year.”
- Perhaps the biggest challenge is figuring out what our guidance and policy should be about reengaging one-on-one and in group, once the restrictions are loosened. Regardless of government policy, individuals will have their own tolerance levels and anxieties. Understanding the right way to do this is hard (e.g., is it "on your own time, reengage" or do we play more of an encouraging role somehow to get back out once it is deemed safe by health experts).

Thank You!

For questions or comments, please contact [Saakshi Suri](#)

