



## 2021 Nonprofit Talent Retention Practices Survey

Now more than ever nonprofits are charged with strengthening their mission and impact. What's also critical in this season of ongoing uncertainty is the need for mission-driven leaders to understand their workforce and have a plan for sustaining their highest performers. But how does this all align with growing evidence that employees are making different decisions about their careers, who they want to work for and where? A growing trend of premature resignations has now been coined as the Great Resignation and it is occurring at a time when 80% of Nonprofit Retention Practices Survey respondents indicate that they don't have formal retention strategies.

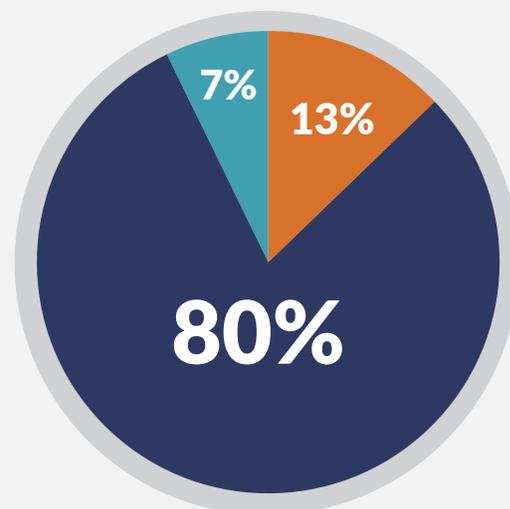
The year 2022 and beyond present a new opportunity for nonprofits to develop and prioritize a talent retention strategy by equipping all their people managers with training and tools to listen to what their employees are saying. Boosting feedback channels, honing in on employee engagement, championing those who live out culture and demonstrate shared values in how they approach their work and collaborate with others are all priorities to strengthen. The survey results included in this infographic reveal these and other areas to focus on as well.

This publication also includes new insights on employee turnover, voluntary and involuntary retention drivers, the impacts of recent events on organizations' ability to retain their talent and more.

### Respondents Represent:

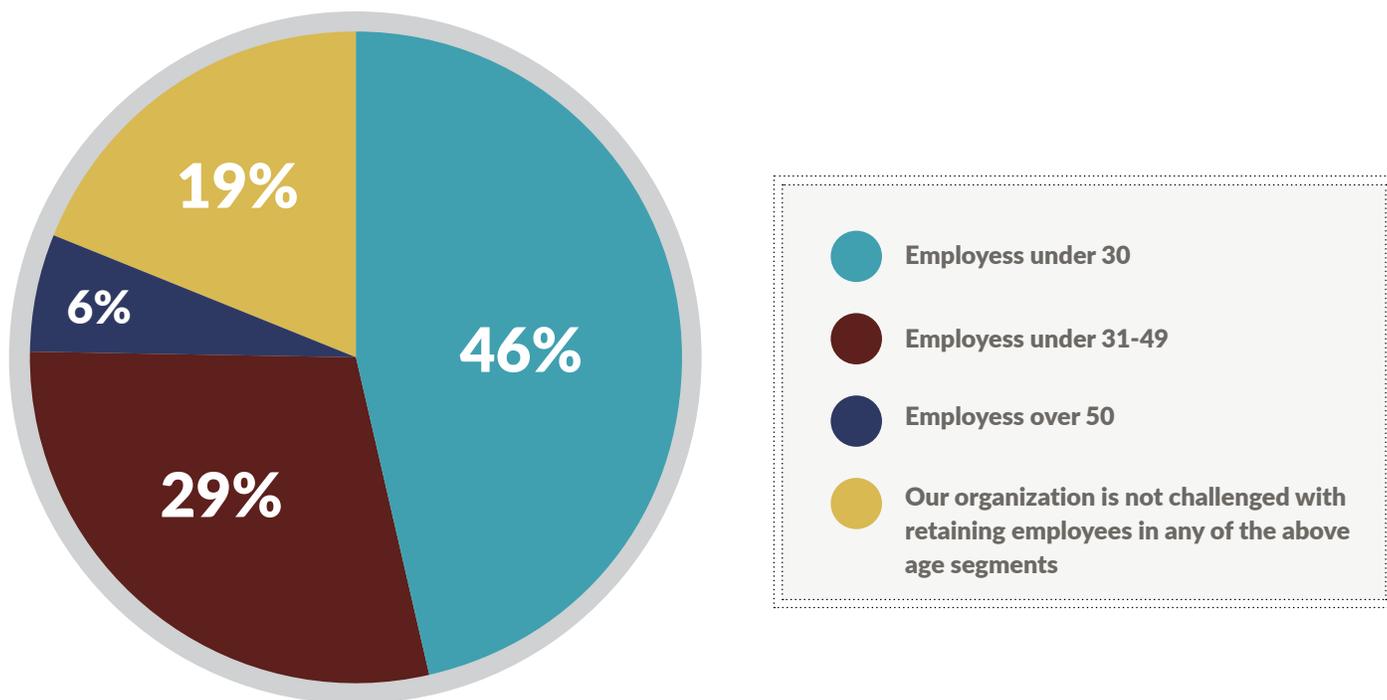
- 500+ Organizations
- 30+ Participating Mission Areas
- Budget Ranges for Survey Respondents < \$5 Million - > \$500 Million
- Organizations from 38 U.S. States and Canada

### Respondent organizations that have a formal retention strategy

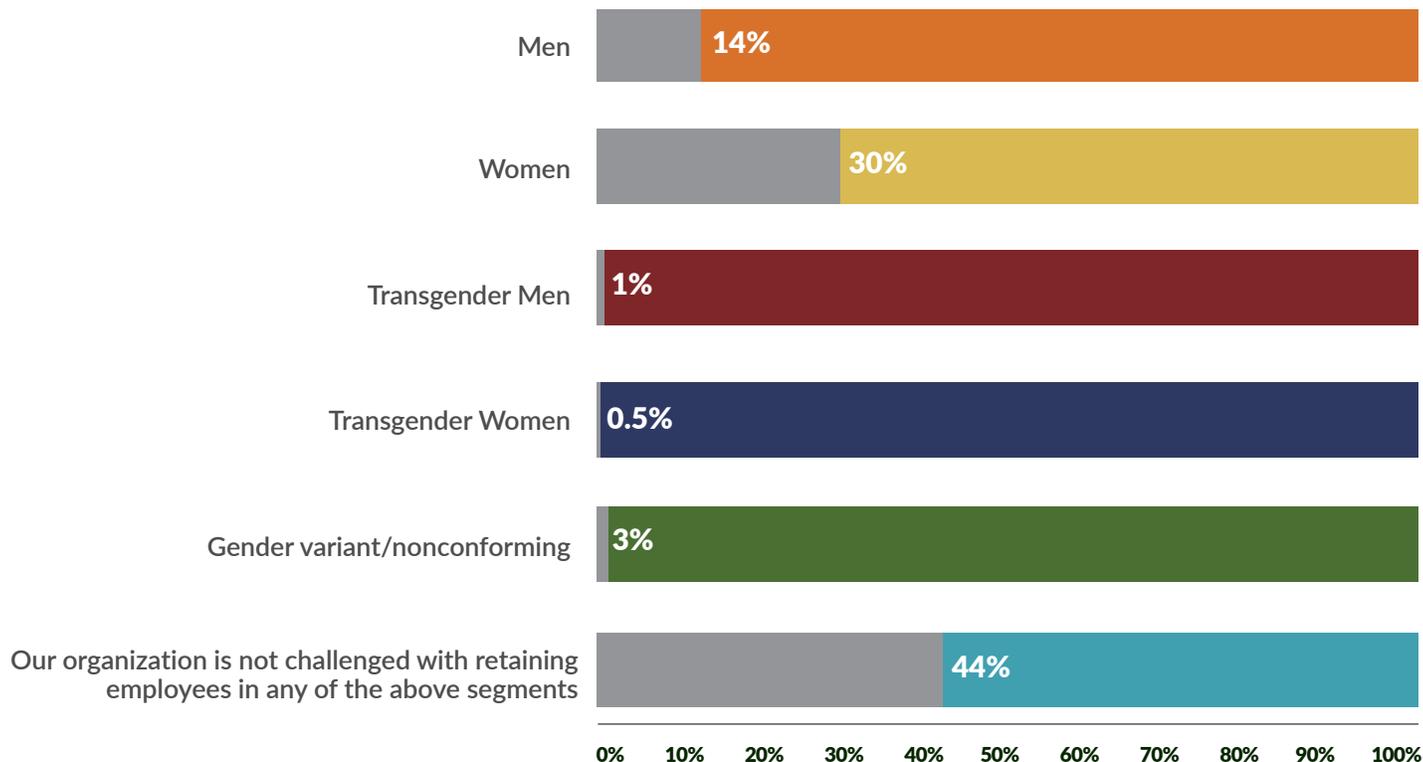


Yes No I don't know

## Staff segments by age that respondent organizations reported most challenge with retaining



## Staff segments by gender that respondent organizations reported most challenge with retaining



***“ The organization’s turnover has increased, and we are trying to understand the causes i.e. Covid-19, wages, etc. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Arts & Culture

Budget: \$10.1 - \$20 million

Employee Count: Less than 25

Geographic Proximity: New York

***“ The organization has recently seen an increase in voluntary turnover, which is likely associated with the increased number of employment opportunities available that offer higher salaries. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Health Education/Advocacy

Budget: \$5.1 - \$10 million

Employee Count: 26 - 75

Geographic Proximity: Washington, D.C.

***“ The organization paid out a COLA to staff as part of the retention strategy and raised the salary of the lowest paid position in the organization. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Women’s Issues

Budget: Less than \$5 million

Employee Count: 26 - 75

Geographic Proximity: California

***“ We just formed a Retention subcommittee which grew out of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion employee workgroup. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

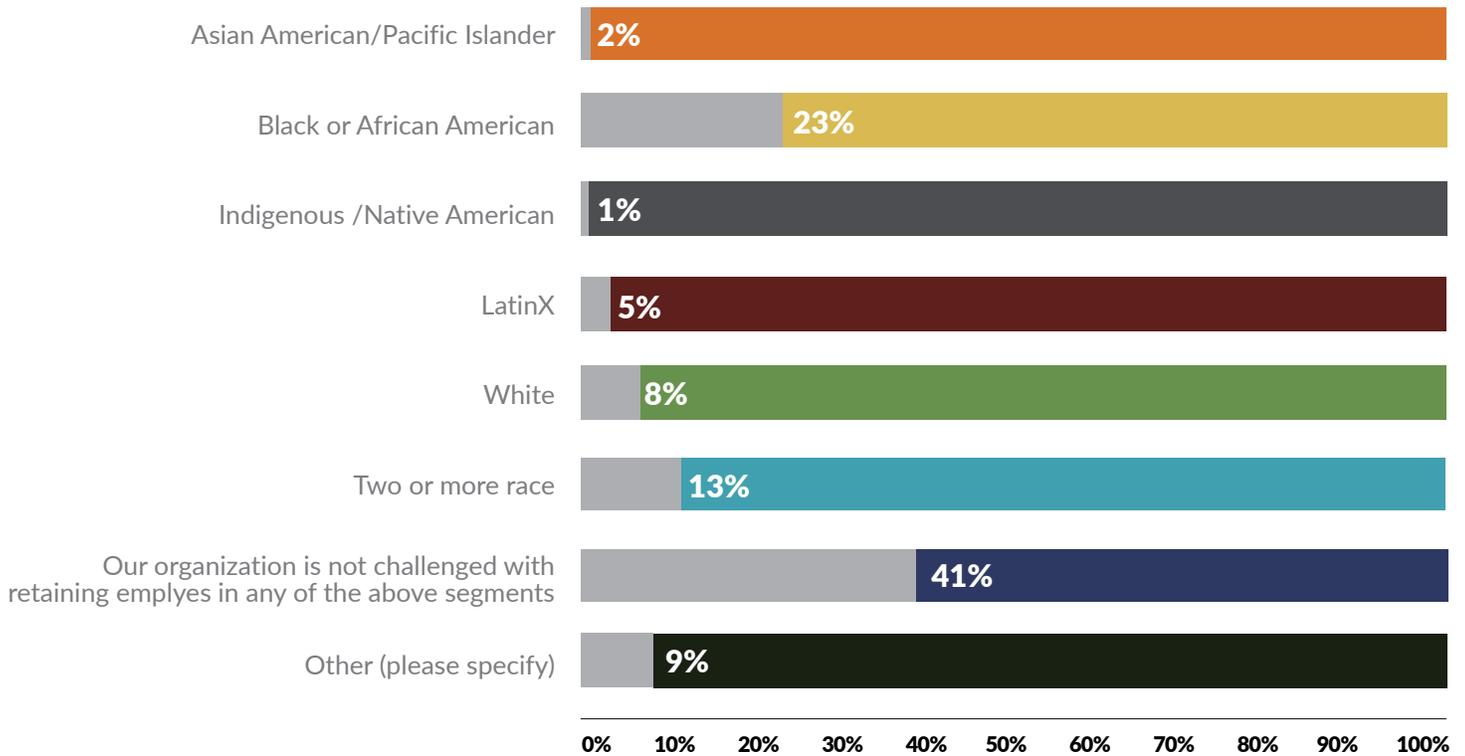
Mission Type: Advocacy/Legal/Policy

Budget: \$10.1 - \$20 million

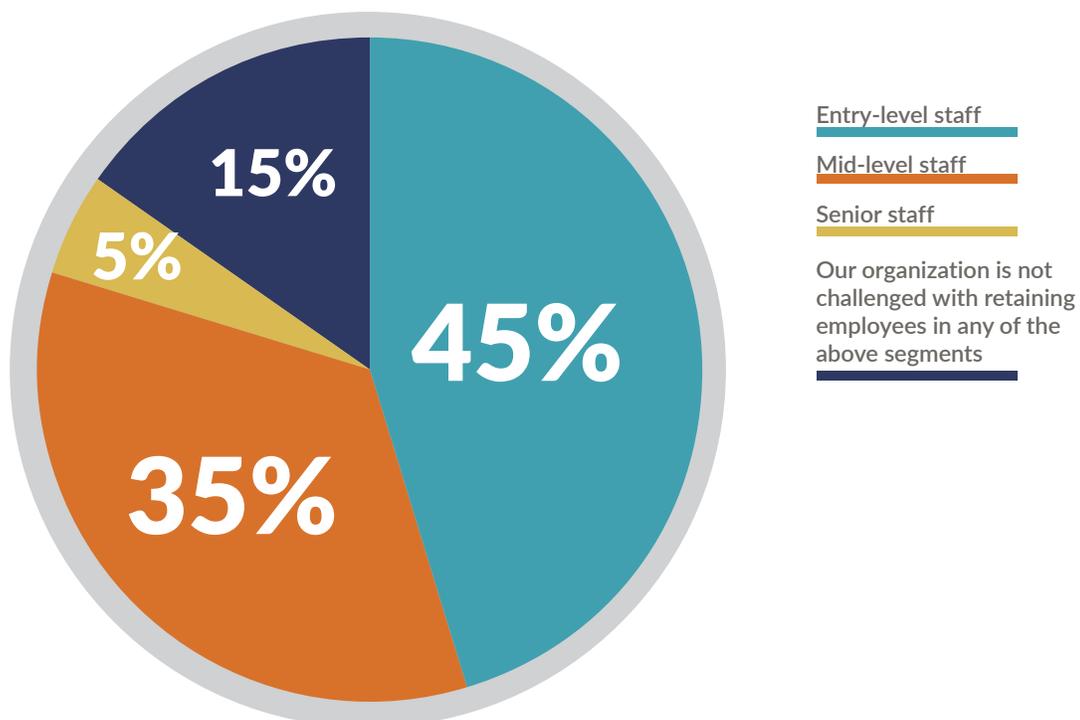
Employee Count: 76 - 150

Geographic Proximity: Wisconsin

## Race and ethnicity staff segments respondent organizations reported most challenge with retaining



## Staff segments by career level that respondent organizations reported most challenge with retaining



***“ We’re seeing a concerning trend where our Black and Latinx staff are leaving. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Social & Racial Justice, Equal Opportunity, Healthcare,

Community - Freedom to Thrive

Budget: \$20.1 - \$50 million

Employee Count: 76 - 150

Geographic Proximity: New York

***“ Upper leadership tends to try to ‘save’ departing employees rather than push to retain them outright. HR is constantly fighting an uphill battle and some staffers communicate their needs but at times feel unheard. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Advocacy for Writers/Free Speech

Budget: \$10.1 - \$20 million

Employee Count: 26 - 75

Geographic Proximity: New York

***“ We reworked our 403(b) to offer matching after 6 months of employment. We also hired consultants for both DEI initiatives and an evaluation of our salary administration plan. Our organization is working to develop more defined career ladder strategies and succession planning. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Housing & Houselessness

Budget: \$20.1 - \$50 million

Employee Count: 151 - 250

Geographic Proximity: California

***“ Retention practices were disruptive due to increased turnover. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

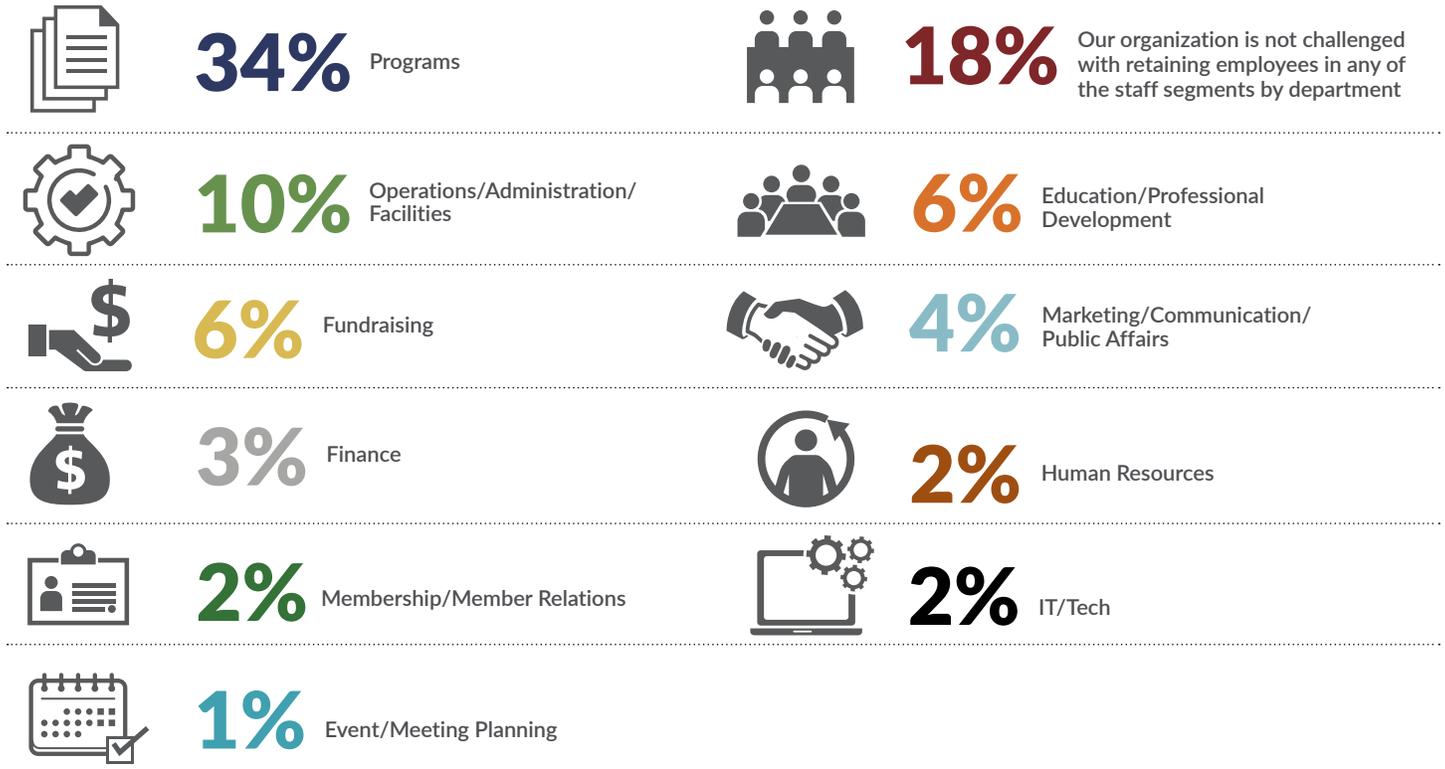
Mission Type: Community Development

Budget: \$10.1 - \$20 million

Employee Count: 76 - 150

Geographic Proximity: New York

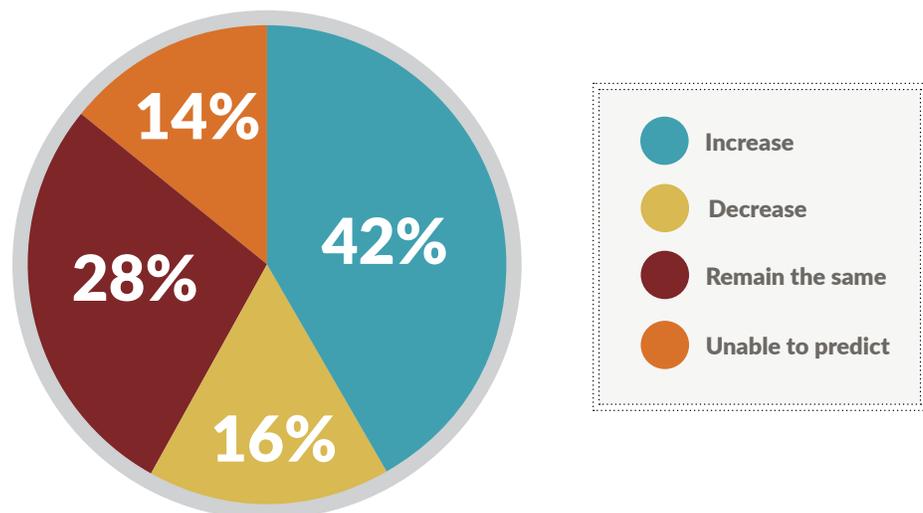
## Staff segments by department that respondent organizations reported most challenge with retaining



## Respondent organizations that track retention metrics



## How respondent organizations expect turnover rate to change from 2020 to 2021



***“ We work hard to provide additional benefits; make sure salaries are higher than the average for our industry, budget size and location; and focus a lot on building an organizational culture where our external values of equity and justice are also practiced internal values. We recently worked with staff to create a set of organizational agreements of how we work together—relationship driven, growth oriented, equity driven, collaborative. We engage staff in helping to shape the organization—internally and externally. We try to be flexible while also being fair and we honestly care about each staff member. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Health Education/Advocacy

Budget: \$5.1 - \$10 million

Employee Count: 26 - 75

Geographic Proximity: Washington, D.C.

***“ We haven’t struggled with retention for over a year. However, right when the pandemic hit, we struggled with retention because of job security. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Social Justice

Budget: Less than \$5 million

Employee Count: Less than 25

Geographic Proximity: California

***“ As we started having office staff work in the building, we found that some had such anxiety that they are quitting. Others evaluated their lives during COVID and are changing directions. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Human Services

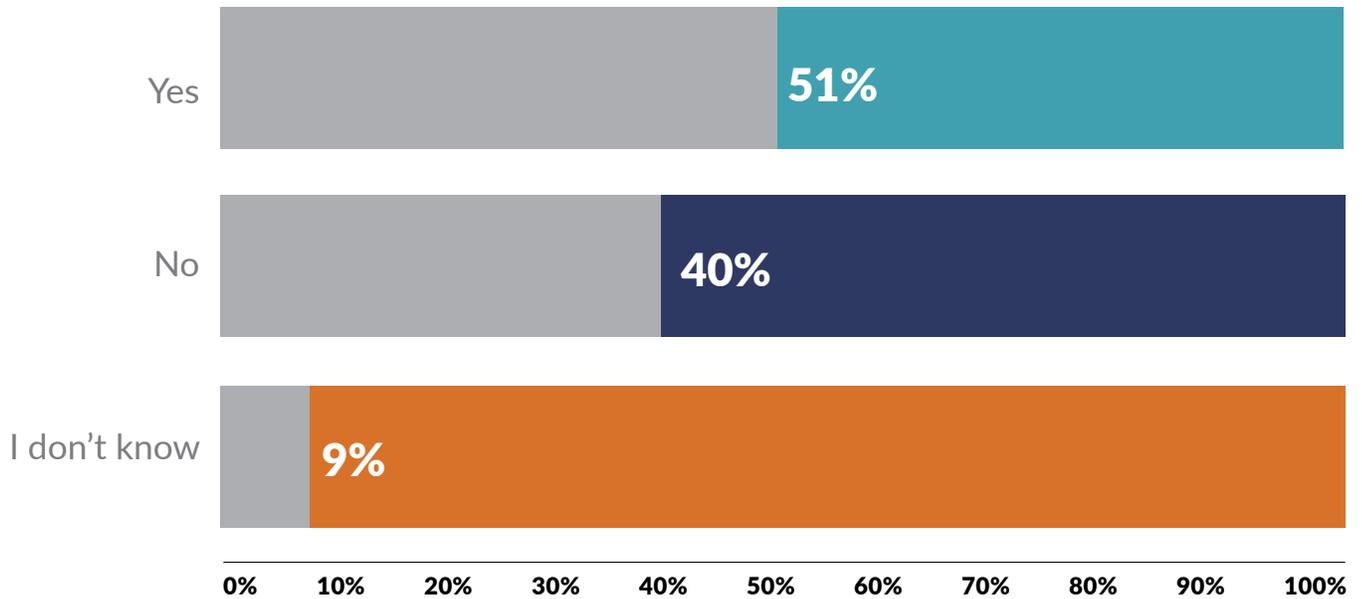
Budget: \$10.1 - \$20 million

Employee Count: 151 - 250

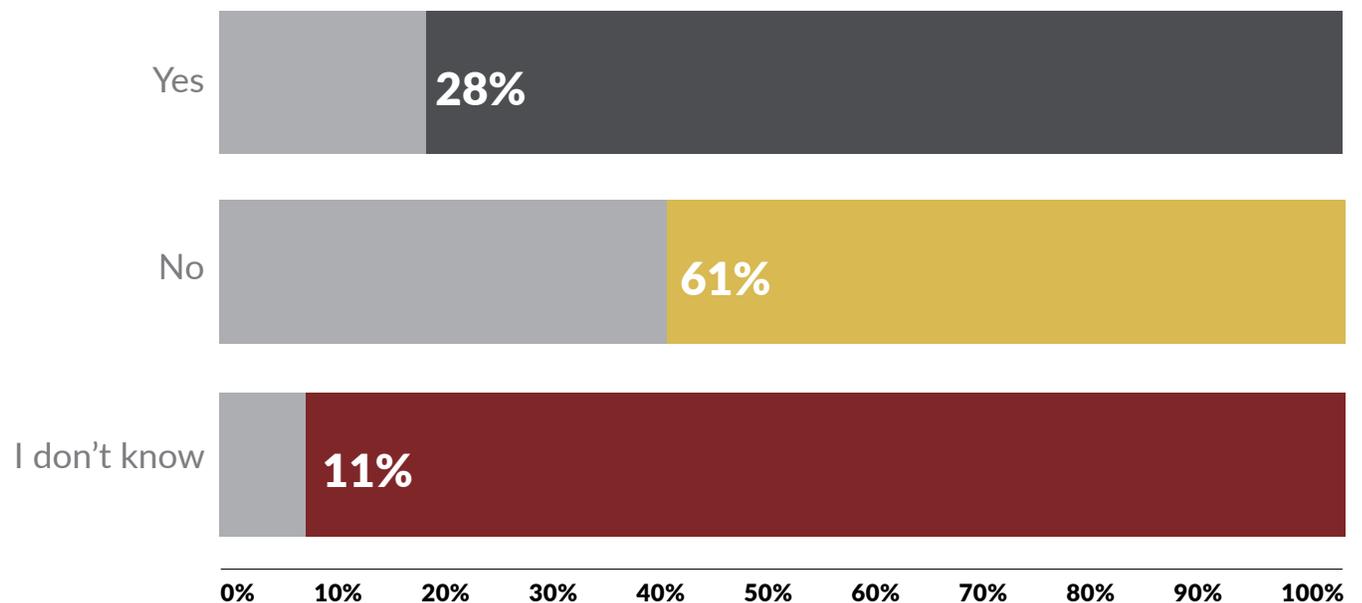
Geographic Proximity: Colorado

Geographic Proximity: Minnesota

## Whether or not the COVID-19 pandemic impacted respondent organizations' retention strategies and tactics



## Whether or not renewed calls for racial justice impacted respondent organizations' retention strategies and practices



***“By focusing on employee retention, our organization will retain talented and motivated employees who truly want to be a part of the company and who are focused on contributing to the organization’s overall success.”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Education

Budget: \$10.1 - \$20 million

Employee Count: 26 - 75

Geographic Proximity: Virginia

***“We have given staff increased recognition, bonuses, and hazard pay. We also increased referral bonuses and started new hire bonuses. It’s had a marginal effect on recruitment but so far seems to have stabilized morale within existing staff.”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Human Services

Budget: Less than \$5 million

Employee Count: 26 - 75

Geographic Proximity: Minnesota

***“We are instituting a practice of stay conversations at mid- and end-of-year reviews (at the least) for employees meeting or exceeding expectations. We are ensuring that those not meeting expectations are more swiftly put on a development plan to get there with manager support. We are also investing heavily in our managers, given they’re the strongest lever in staff satisfaction and retention.”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Social Justice

Budget: \$10.1 - \$20 million

Employee Count: 26 - 75

Geographic Proximity: Washington, D.C.

***“We’ve added benefits and try to have a strategy to keep employees full-time long term verses program specific jobs that end when a grant ends.”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

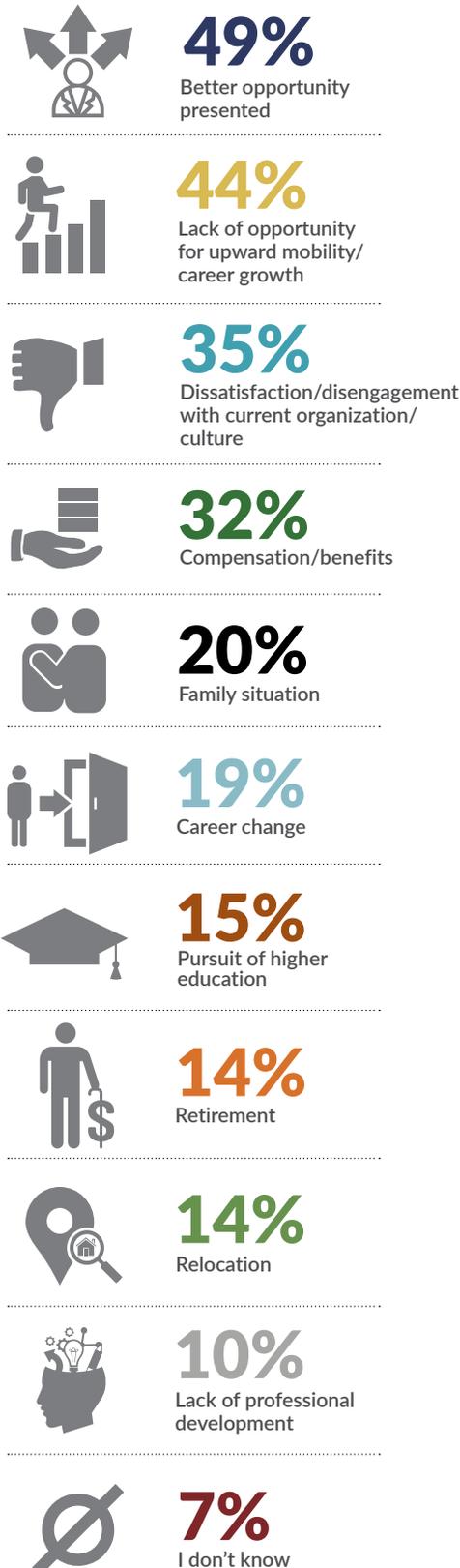
Mission Type: Agriculture/Food Justice

Budget: Less than \$5 million

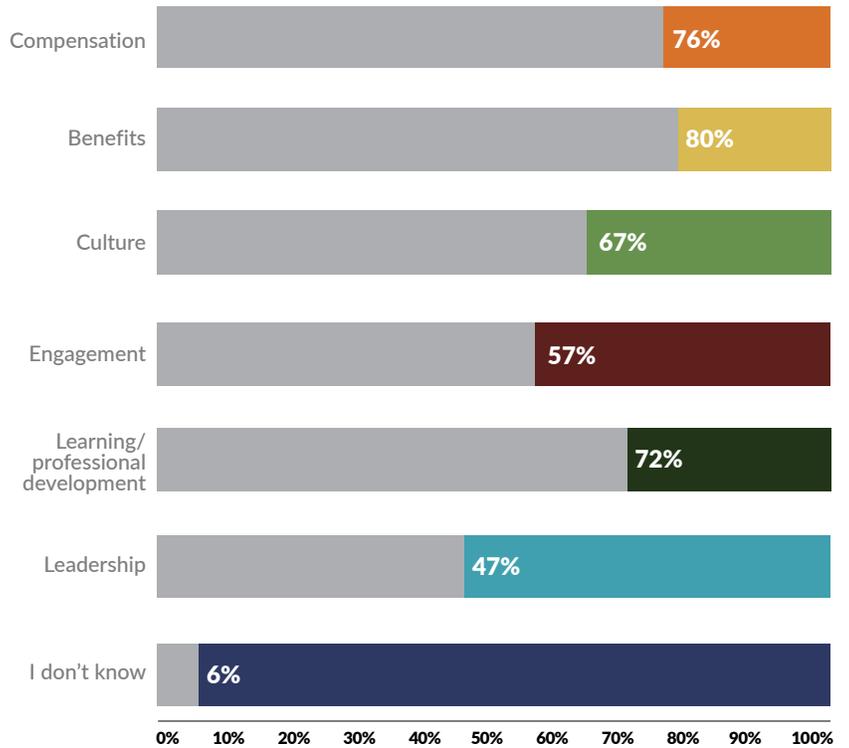
Employee Count: Less than 25

Geographic Proximity: New York

## Primary reasons for voluntary turnover in respondent organizations



## Retention strategies most employed by respondent organizations



## Primary reasons for involuntary turnover at respondent organizations



***“ Yes, some staff have felt dissatisfaction with the organization and desire to see more work around DEI. No one has left for that reason but do mention in their exit interview room for improvement. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:  
Mission Type: Health Education/Advocacy  
Budget: \$100.1 - \$500 million  
Employee Count: 251 - 500  
Geographic Proximity: New York

***“ We already had a commitment to racial justice and so increased attention to equity issues did not impact existing strategies. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:  
Mission Type: Children, Youth & Families  
Budget: \$5.1 - \$10 million  
Employee Count: 76 - 150  
Geographic Proximity: Texas

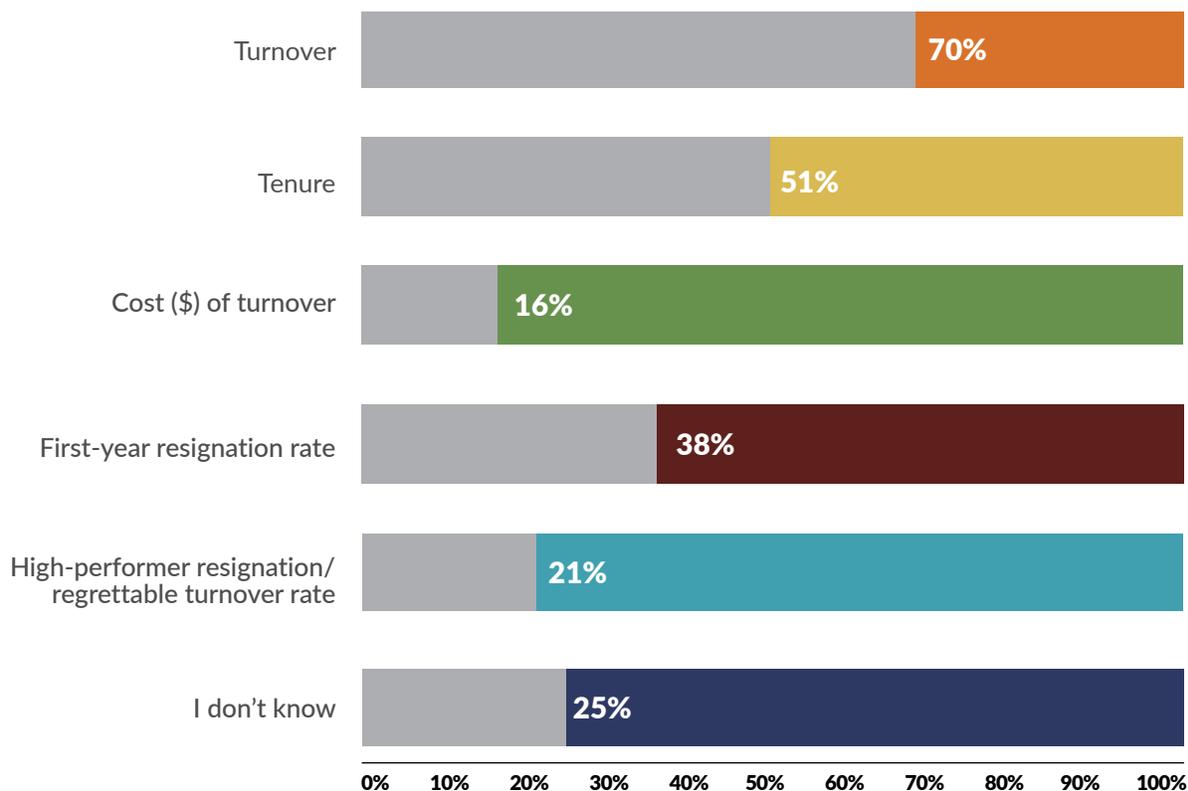
***“ We proactively keep upgrading our benefits to ensure staff physical, mental and financial well-being. These are appreciated by staff who consequently feel valued and hence our turnover rates are way below that of our industry. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:  
Mission Type: Environmental and Community/Economic Development  
Budget: \$20.1 - \$50 million  
Employee Count: 76 - 150  
Geographic Proximity: Massachusetts

***“ Our company used COVID to learn about how to be a better employer. We are undergoing implementation of a Wellness Program that is underway to increase retention. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:  
Mission Type: Human Services  
Budget: \$20.1 - \$50 million  
Employee Count: 251 - 500  
Geographic Proximity: Maryland

## Quantitative retention metrics that respondent organizations tracked in 2020



## Qualitative retention tactics used by respondent organizations



***“Any change in staff would be a hit to our low budget—this organization does not have high wages.”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:  
Mission Type: Children, Youth & Families  
Budget: Less than \$5 million  
Employee Count: Less than 25  
Geographic Proximity: Maryland

***“We are not about to offer high enough wages so we try to compensate with things such as flex schedules (great for parents), more time off, and morale boosters, such as a team appreciation dinner, company picnic & holiday party.”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:  
Mission Type: Human Services  
Budget: \$100.1 - \$500 million  
Employee Count: 26 - 75  
Geographic Proximity: New York

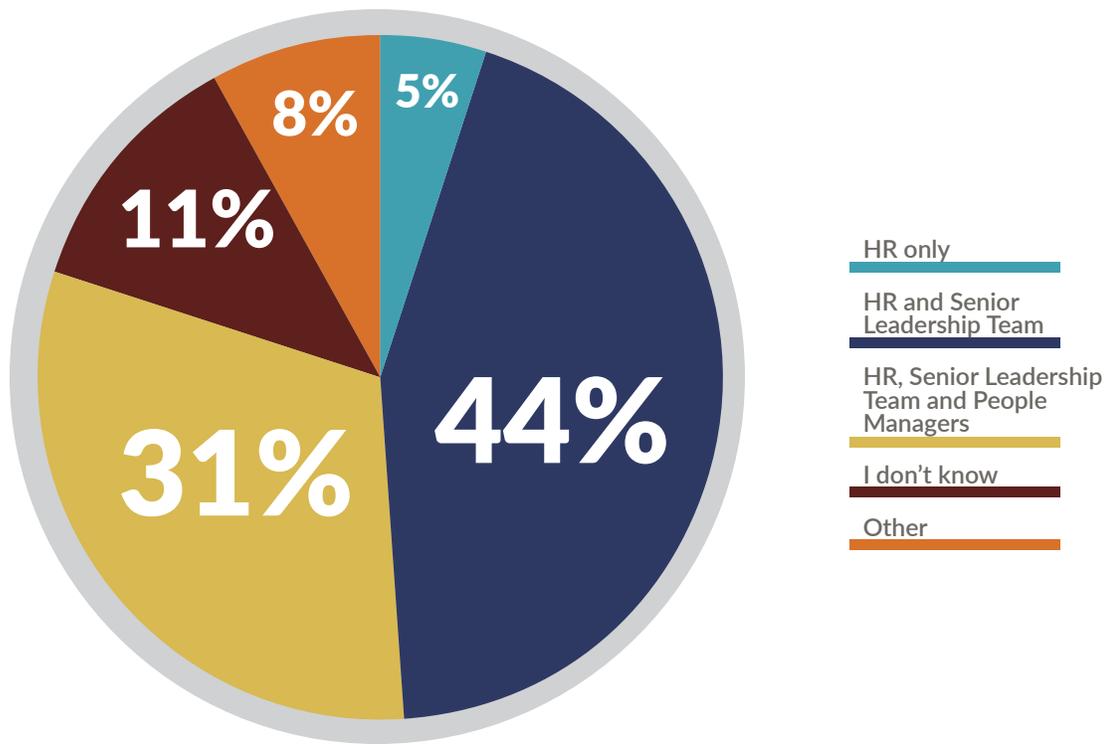
***“We have had to implement retention bonuses in a couple of situations for key positions where individuals have received competitive offers. We have implemented ‘senior’ position titles and promotional increases for staff who have expanded responsibilities due to downsizing.”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:  
Mission Type: Poverty  
Budget: \$20.1 - \$50 million  
Employee Count: 26 - 75  
Geographic Proximity: Ohio

***“We are constrained from responding to market changes by a union contract that wants everything to remain the same. Younger staff are not interested in that.”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:  
Mission Type: Human Services  
Budget: \$20.1 - \$50 million  
Employee Count: 151 - 250  
Geographic Proximity: Connecticut

## Internal stakeholders who receive and review retention metrics as indicated by respondent organizations



## Retention data used by respondent organizations



***“As a growing, relatively young organization, we are working on improving retention practices, performance management, manager and staff trainings, and formalizing DEI as a strategy and commitment and reviewing all policies and benefits. The social justice climate and equity focus has improved our recruiting as folks want to be more conscious of where and how they make impact in the workplace.”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Human Rights

Budget: Less than \$5 million

Employee Count: 26 - 75

Geographic Proximity: California

***“Most of our employees have risen through the ranks. Among our five employees are four former interns/fellows. We believe in home-growing when we can. When people have left they’ve gone on to high-level government positions which we’re very proud of or grad school (also proud of!).”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Education

Budget: Less than \$5 million

Employee Count: Less than 25

Geographic Proximity: Washington, D.C.

***“2021’s terminations are turning out to be for different reasons than 2020.”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Human Services

Budget: \$10.1 - \$20 million

Employee Count: 26 - 75

Geographic Proximity: Washington

***“COVID and the racial reckoning were top of mind for our staff in terms of their work and personal lives. We did our best to air those with some success, but it was a rollercoaster in 2020 for us. Some celebrations, some tough conversations.”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Environment

Budget: \$5.1 - \$10 million

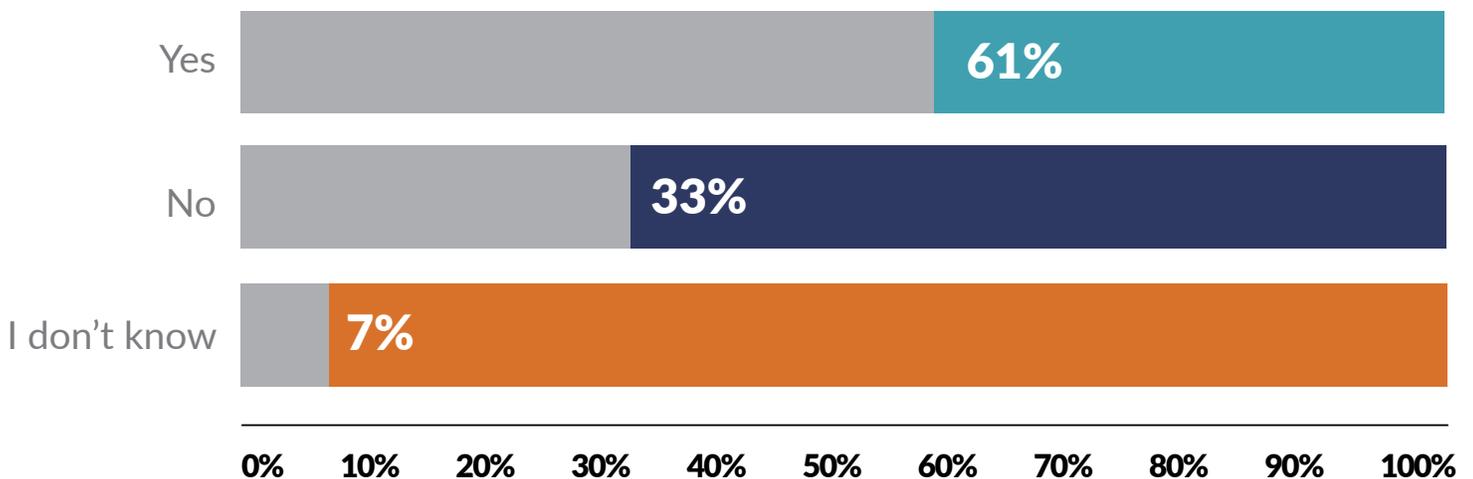
Employee Count: 26 - 75

Geographic Proximity: Washington

## Most significant impact on turnover in respondent organizations



## Respondent organizations that track turnover rate



***“ We try to stay competitive in our pay practices within the non-profit sector, but in order to compete against for profit companies, we focus on non-compensation strategies. We have generous PTO, increased trainings and professional development, flexibility, and compassion. Because of COVID, we’ve been struggling to make these benefits more visible and available.”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Human Services

Budget: \$5.1 - \$10 million

Employee Count: 26 - 75

Geographic Proximity: Washington

***“ Rather than seek to retain, an assumption is made that junior staff will leave after 2-3 years.”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Education

Budget: Less than \$5 million

Employee Count: Less than 25

Geographic Proximity: New York

***“ Retention is not done intentionally. We hope people will stay because of mission alignment but we need to start thinking about pay/compensation, work/life balance, and possibilities for promotion as strategies for retention.”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

Mission Type: Human Services

Budget: Less than \$5 million

Employee Count: Less than 25

Geographic Proximity: California

***“ We are beginning to look at a strategy with the increased number of voluntary turnover as a result of returning to the office.”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:

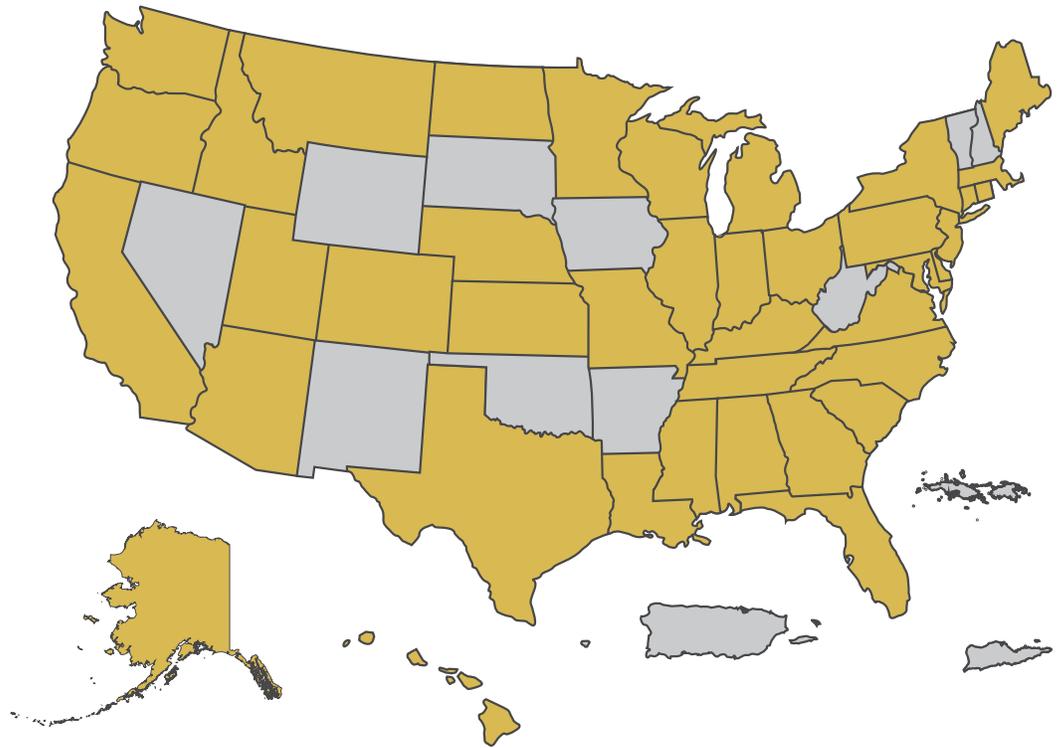
Mission Type: Associations

Budget: \$100.1 - \$500 million

Employee Count: 76 - 150

Geographic Proximity: Washington, D.C.

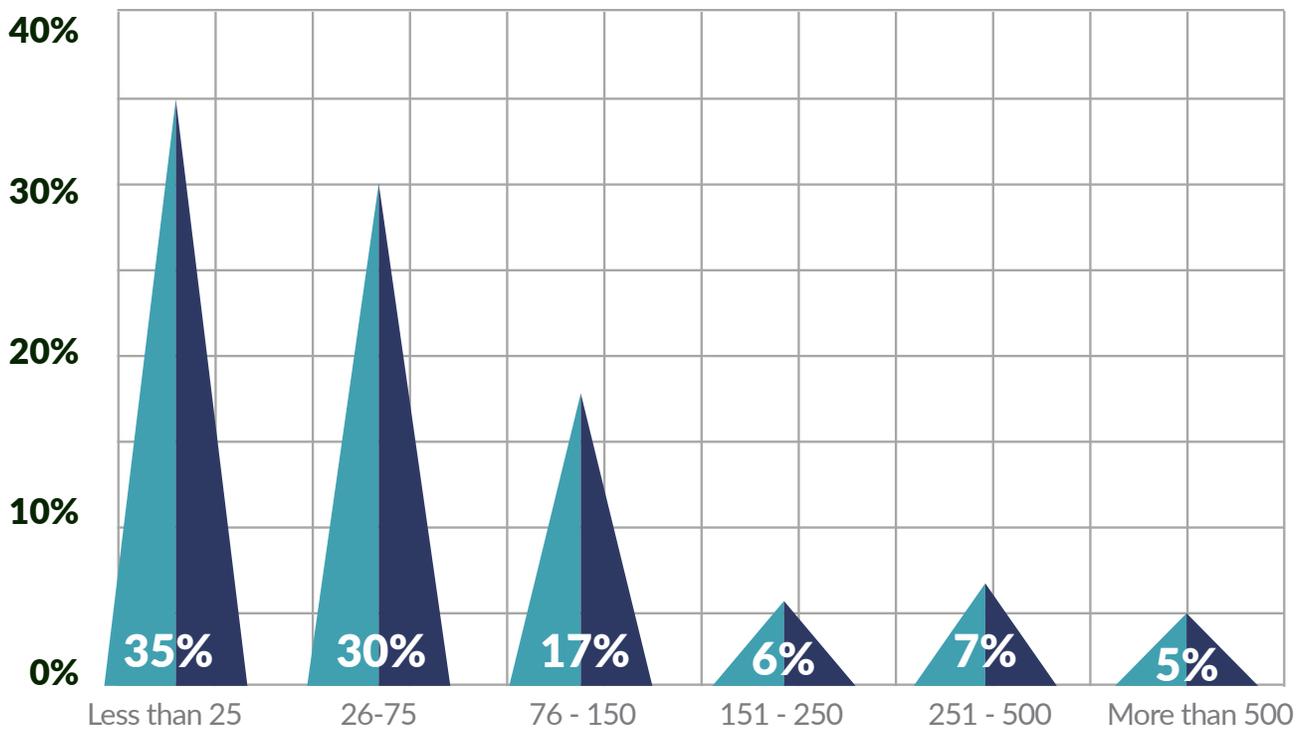
*Organizations with headquarters in American states represented below*



**KEY**

- States with participating organizations
- States without participating organizations

**Respondent organizations' current headcount**



***“ We are growing our retention practices by offering a 401(k) plan with a match and vesting schedule to be introduced next year, we are also investing in career and professional development for our staff. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:  
Mission Type: Children, Youth & Families  
Budget: Less than \$5 million  
Employee Count: Less than 25  
Geographic Proximity: Arizona

***“ We work to create an inclusive environment; address staff needs and provide excellent benefits and competitive. Staff were involved in our DEI journey prior to the murder of George Floyd. Staff were also involved in the creation of the organization’s core value statement. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:  
Mission Type: Children, Youth & Families  
Budget: \$20.1 - \$50 million  
Employee Count: 26 - 75  
Geographic Proximity: Texas

***“ Designing non-monetary retention items is a continual challenge. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:  
Mission Type: Social Justice  
Budget: Less than \$5 million  
Employee Count: Less than 25  
Geographic Proximity: California

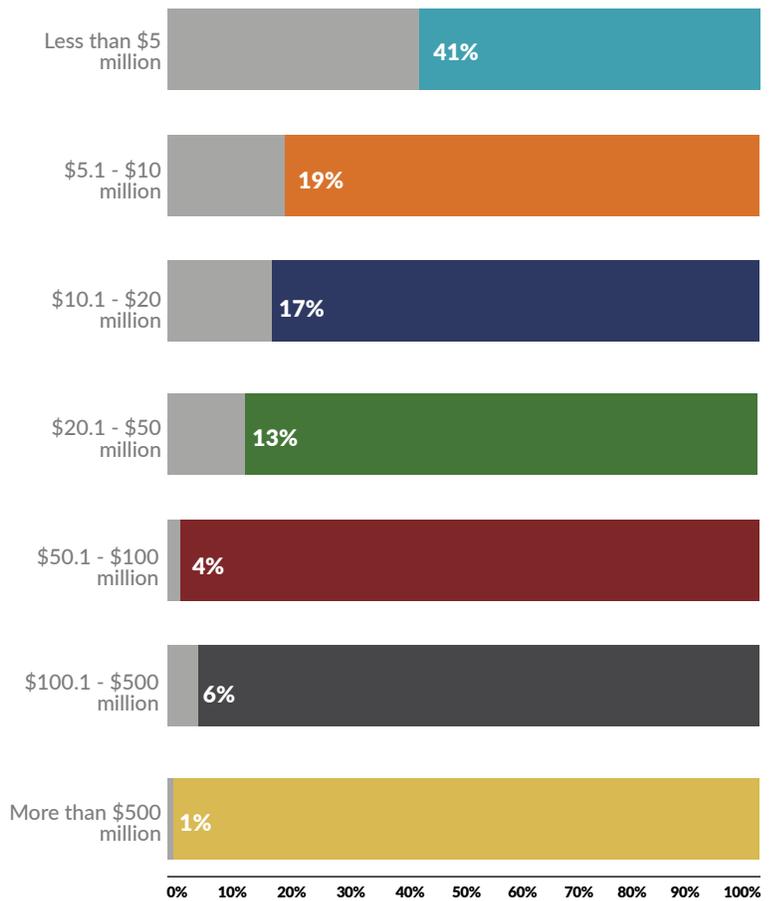
***“ We do not have official retention practices. Turnover seems to be dismissed due to the nonprofit industry, as though it can’t be helped. ”***

Demographic Insight on Organization:  
Mission Type: Women’s Issues  
Budget: \$20.1 - \$50 million  
Employee Count: 76 - 150  
Geographic Proximity: Washington, D.C.

## Primary mission focus of respondent organizations



## Average operating budget of survey respondents



## How respondent organizations classify the stage of their current lifecycle

