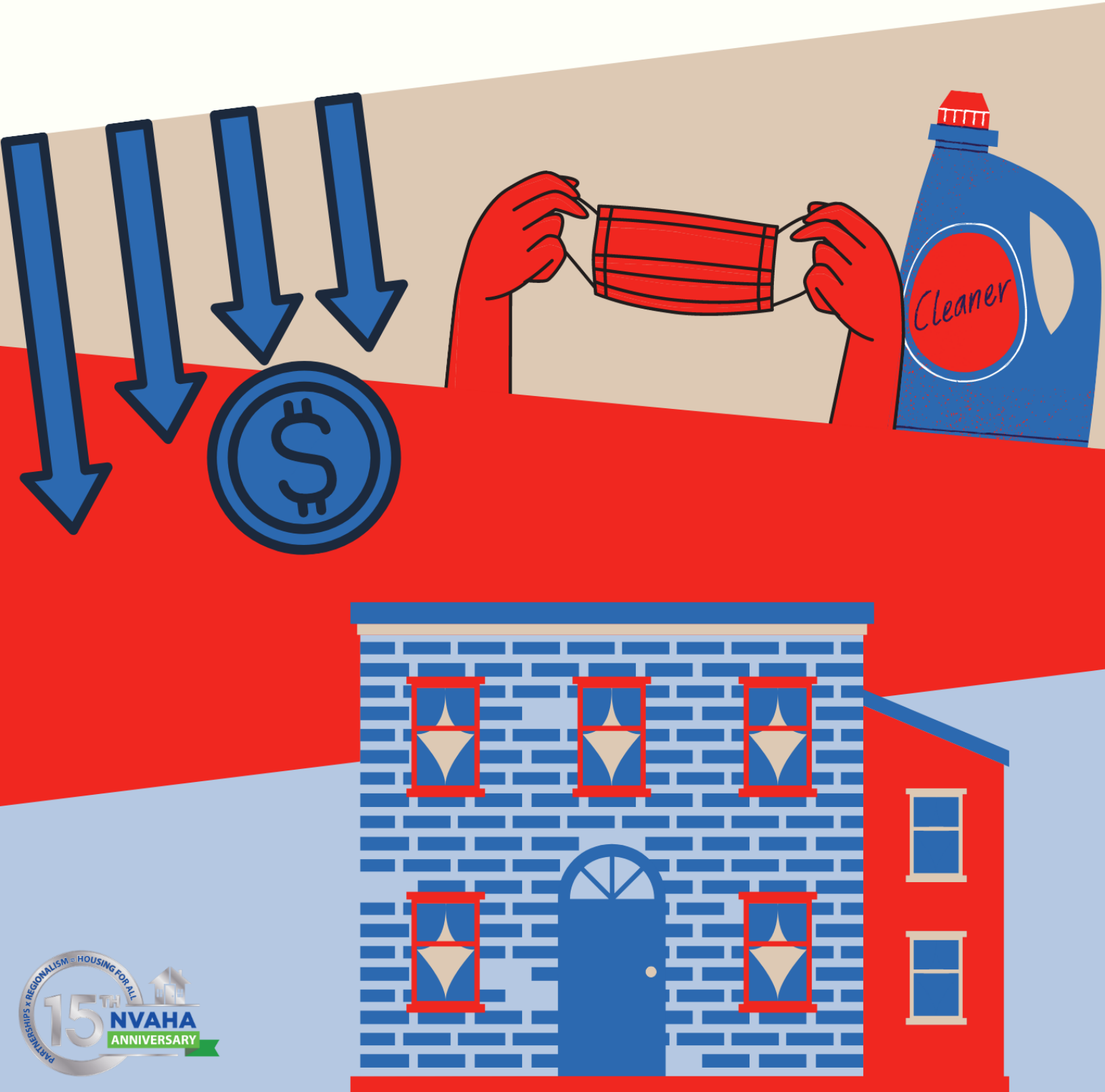


Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance COVID-19 Impact Survey: Phase II Results



Executive Summary

In May 2020, the Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance (NVAHA) conducted a brief survey assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the operations, staff and clients of affordable housing and homeless service providers in the Northern Virginia region (view the results from this survey [here](#)). Based on these findings, NVAHA developed a second, more in-depth questionnaire administered in July 2020. This report summarizes the results of the second survey. A third and final survey will be sent in October 2020.

Organization Characteristics On July 13, the survey was sent to 35 organizations operating across the City of Alexandria, and Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William Counties. Thirteen organizations completed the survey before it closed on August 19 – a 37.14% response rate. More than half (53.85%) of respondents represented non-profit affordable housing developers, 23.08% represented homeless service providers, 15.38% represented other human service organizations, and one state housing agency (7.69%) completed the survey. Respondents owned or managed a total of 12,813 affordable units across Virginia and in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Financial Impact All participating organizations reported changes in revenue and expenditures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were asked to identify sources of revenue loss for the months of May and June. The most frequently reported source of lost revenue was cancellation of a spring sponsorship event, followed by lost rental income and loss of individual donations. The most frequently reported change in expenditures was increased spending to comply with COVID-19 safety guidelines, followed by increased cleaning-related expenses. One organization did report a decrease in expenditures due to facility closures. A majority (61.54%) of participating organizations did not have a contingency plan in place to guide their continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Financial Aid Slightly less than half (46.15%) of participating organizations agreed or strongly agreed that the aid their organization received was sufficient to mitigate the *short-term* financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. All of the respondents who reported what government sources of COVID-19-related financial aid their organizations received (N = 12) were recipients of the Paycheck Protection Program. Half also received CARES Act funding. Twelve organizations (92.31%) received COVID-19-related aid from the philanthropic sector. However, 91.67% of respondents who reported what percentage of their organization's COVID-19-related funding came from government versus philanthropic sources (N = 12) received a majority of funding from government sources.

Staff Impact The majority of participating organizations (92.31%) reported increased stress and anxiety among staff members due to the pandemic. More than half (53.85%) redeployed staff due to changes in service delivery, 30.77% hired new staff or increased the hours of current staff due to increased demand for services, and 30.77% instituted hazard pay for frontline staff. One organization (7.69%) reduced staff hours and three organizations (23.08%) laid off staff due to revenue loss. Only one organization (7.69%) reported a loss of staff due to illness or family obligations, down from 50% of respondents in the Phase I survey.

Resident/Client Impact Respondents whose organizations delivered direct services to residents/clients, and had conducted a survey to determine how COVID-19 has affected the needs of the individuals they serve (N = 4, representing approximately 11,408 units) were asked to rank how often residents/clients reported various needs on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being most often and 10 being least often. Respondents identified rent/utilities assistance as the greatest need, followed by help with employment/aid applications, and food delivery/access. Access to mental and physical health-related services, and access to alternate transportation to avoid public transit were the lowest ranked resident needs. Other resident/client concerns identified by individual respondents via write-in responses included the need for information/education about COVID-19,

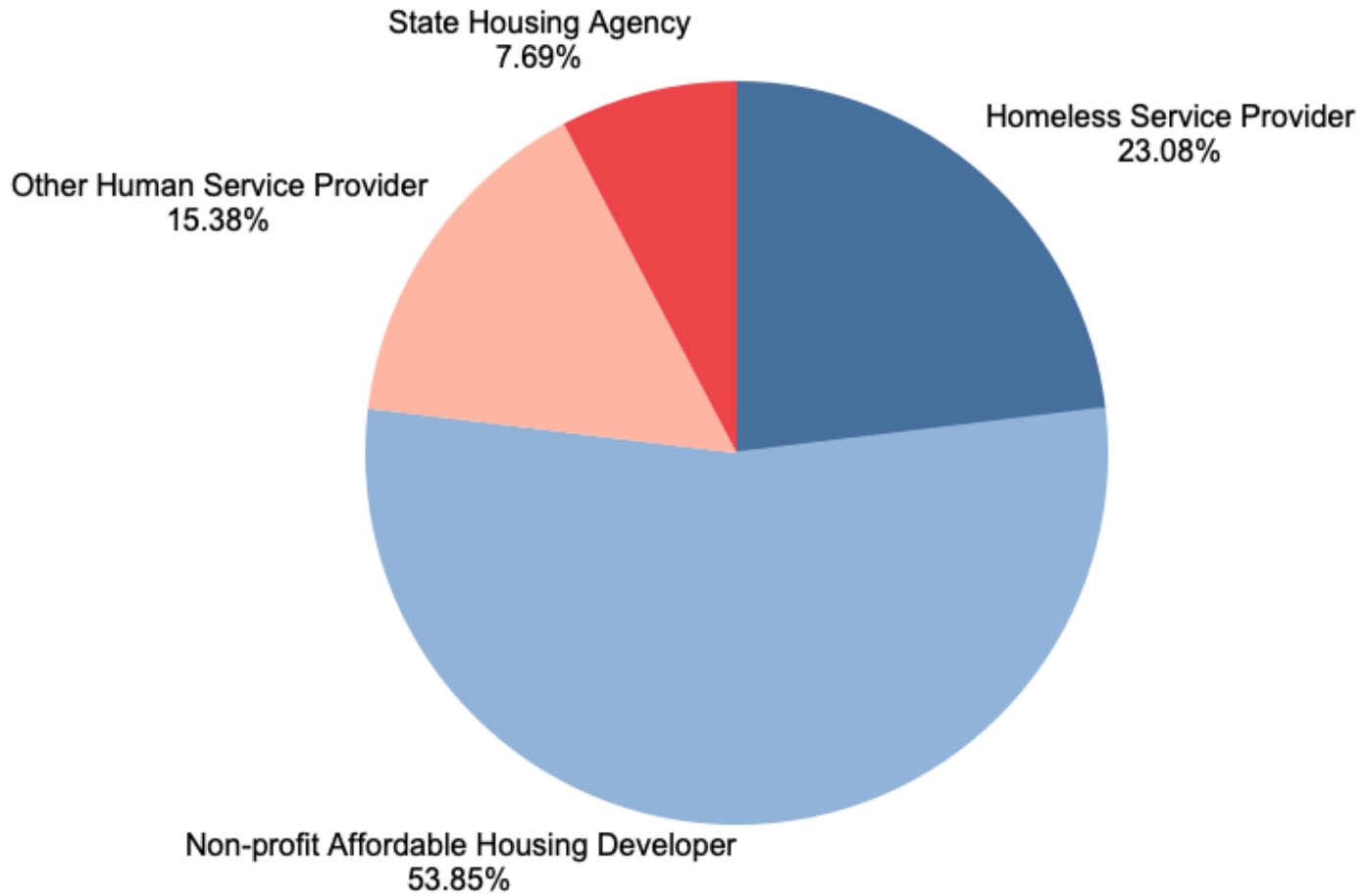
fear of moving out of shelters due to job and housing instability, and an inability to obtain housing due to stigma among landlords who believe very low-income households are more likely to have COVID-19.

Rent Payments & Rental Assistance Among organizations who reported the percentage of residents able to pay rent in May and/or June (N = 8), the average payment rate was 87%. The most common form of rental assistance participating organizations offered residents was waived late fees, and only one organization reported waiving rent entirely. Among organizations who reported the percentage of residents who accessed outside rental assistance, an average of 17.29% of residents received government rental assistance, an average of 9.17% received philanthropic rental assistance, and an average of 9.83% were unable to access assistance. Barriers to accessing rental assistance reported by individual respondents via write-in responses included overly complex/bureaucratic application processes, insufficient staff accepting assistance requests via phone, caps on the amount of assistance available per household, language barriers, barriers for households with financial needs pre-dating the COVID-19 pandemic, and fear of requesting public assistance among undocumented residents.

The results from this survey will inform the development of the third and final survey, and will be shared on the NVAHA blog and COVID-19 resource page. Together, the results from all three surveys will be used to develop a series of recommendations that will be shared with local government officials to inform budget and policy considerations in 2021.

Section I: Organization Characteristics

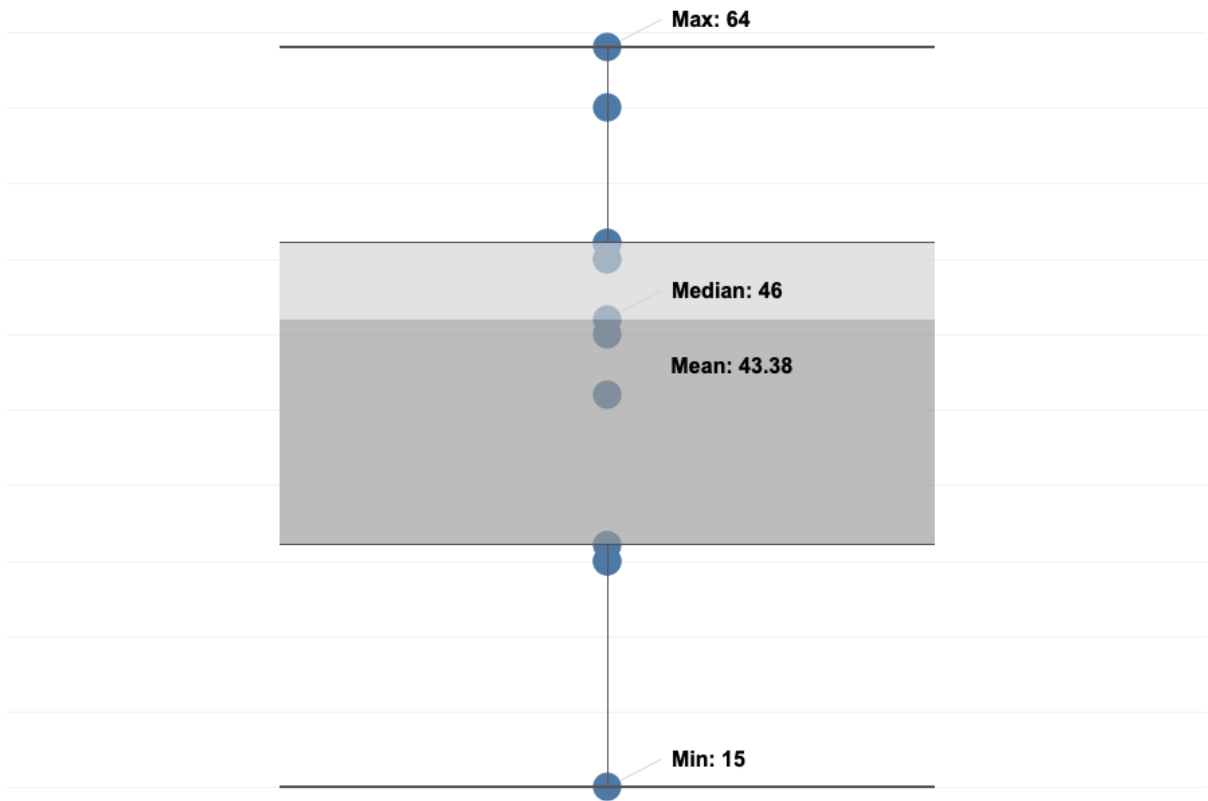
Primary Organization Function



N = 13, Missing = 0

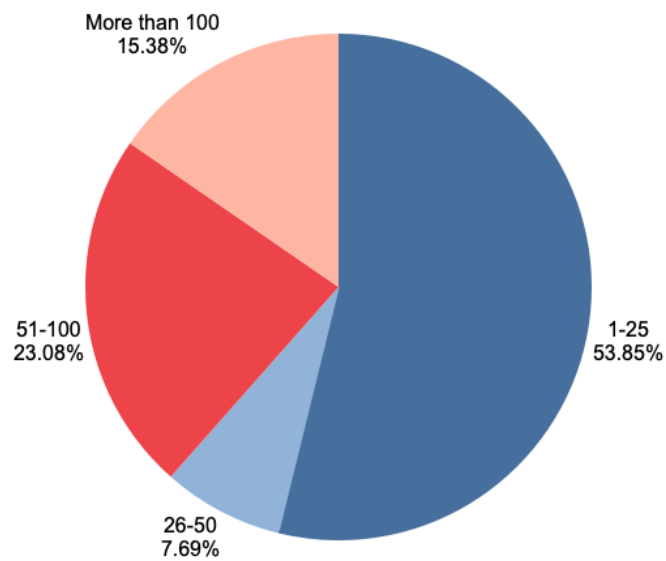
The majority of respondents (53.85%) represented non-profit affordable housing developers, followed by homeless service providers (23.08%), and other human service organizations (15.83%). This is roughly consistent with the proportion of respondents representing each of these organization types in the Phase I survey. One respondent (7.69%) identified as representing a state housing agency. No respondents represented a for-profit affordable housing developer or a public housing authority.

Organization Age



N = 13, Missing = 0

Number of Employees

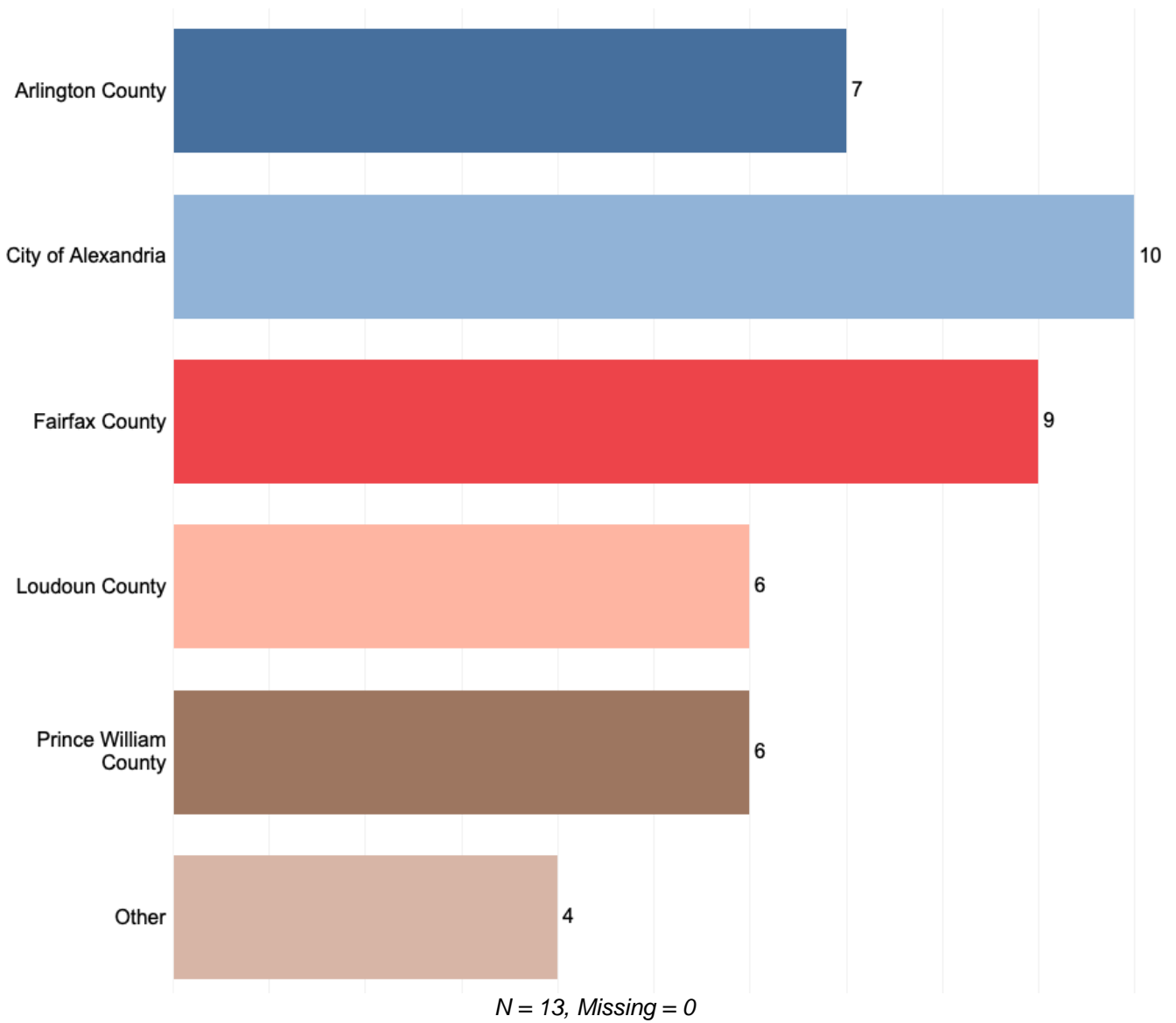


N = 13,

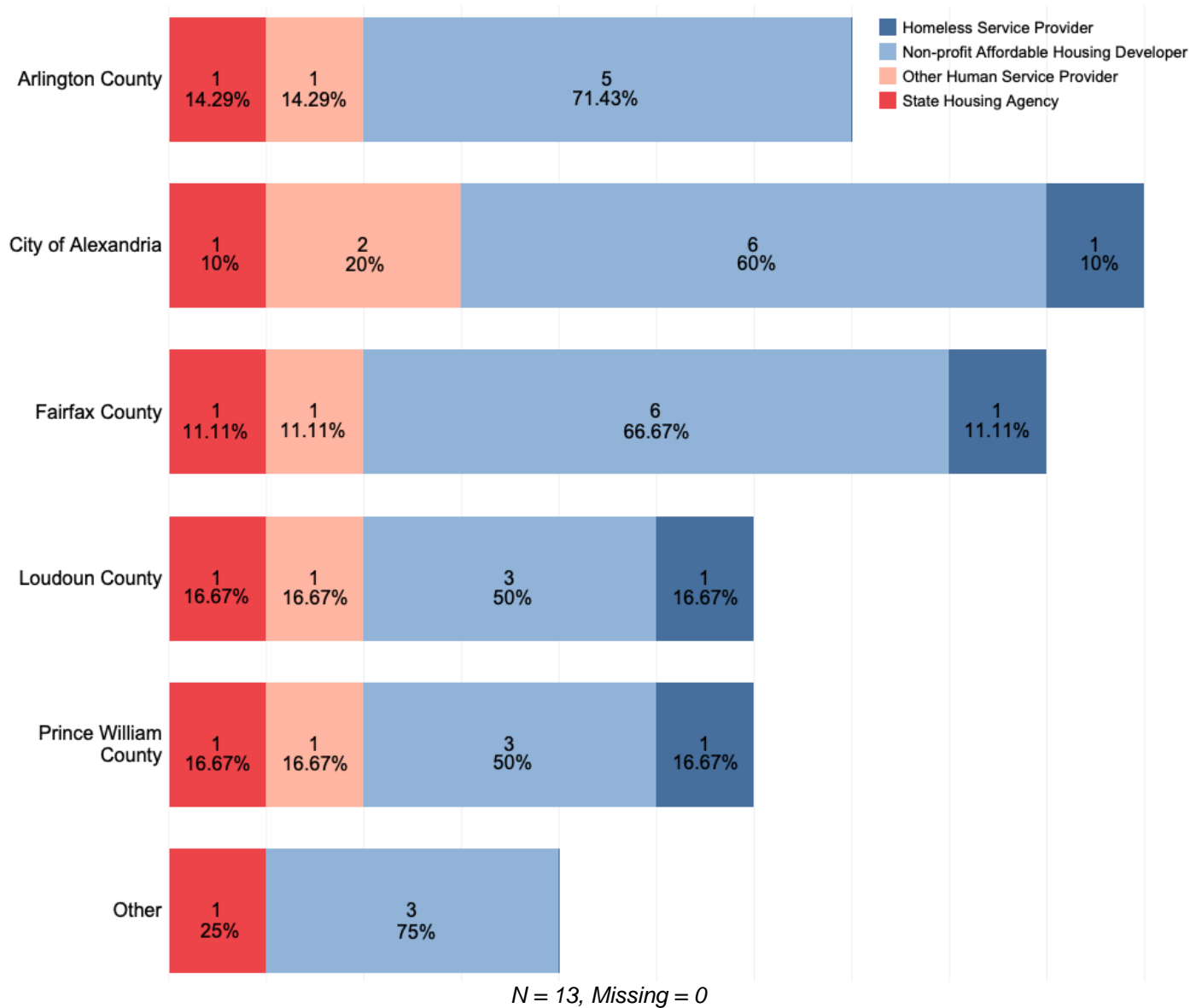
Missing = 0

Participating organizations ranged in age from 15 – 64 years with a mean age of 43.38 (the mean age of participating organizations in Phase I of the survey was 38.83). Most organizations (53.85%) had 25 or fewer employees (compared with 44.44% in Phase I), 23.08% had 51-100 employees, 15.38% had more than 100 employees, and one organization (7.69%) had 26-50 employees.

Jurisdictions Where Participating Organizations are Active



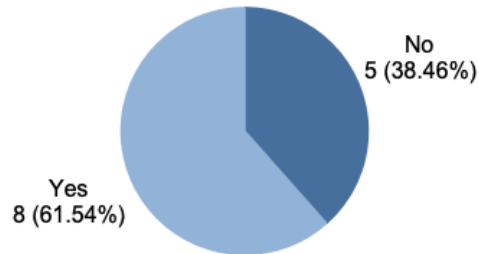
Organizations in Each Jurisdiction by Primary Function



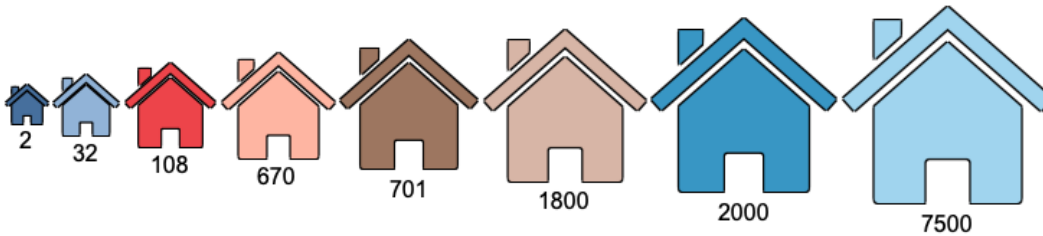
The majority of participating organizations (69.23%) were active in multiple jurisdictions (this is consistent with the results from the Phase I survey). Three organizations (23.08%) were active in all five jurisdictions, three organizations (23.08%) were active in Alexandria only, and one organization (7.69%) was active in Prince William County only. Non-profit affordable housing developers represented the largest share of organizations active in each jurisdiction. This is consistent with both the Phase I results, and the distribution of organizations by primary function, as non-profit affordable housing developers represented the largest share of participating organizations (53.85%).

Property Management

Do you own or manage affordable properties or units?



How many affordable units do you own or manage?



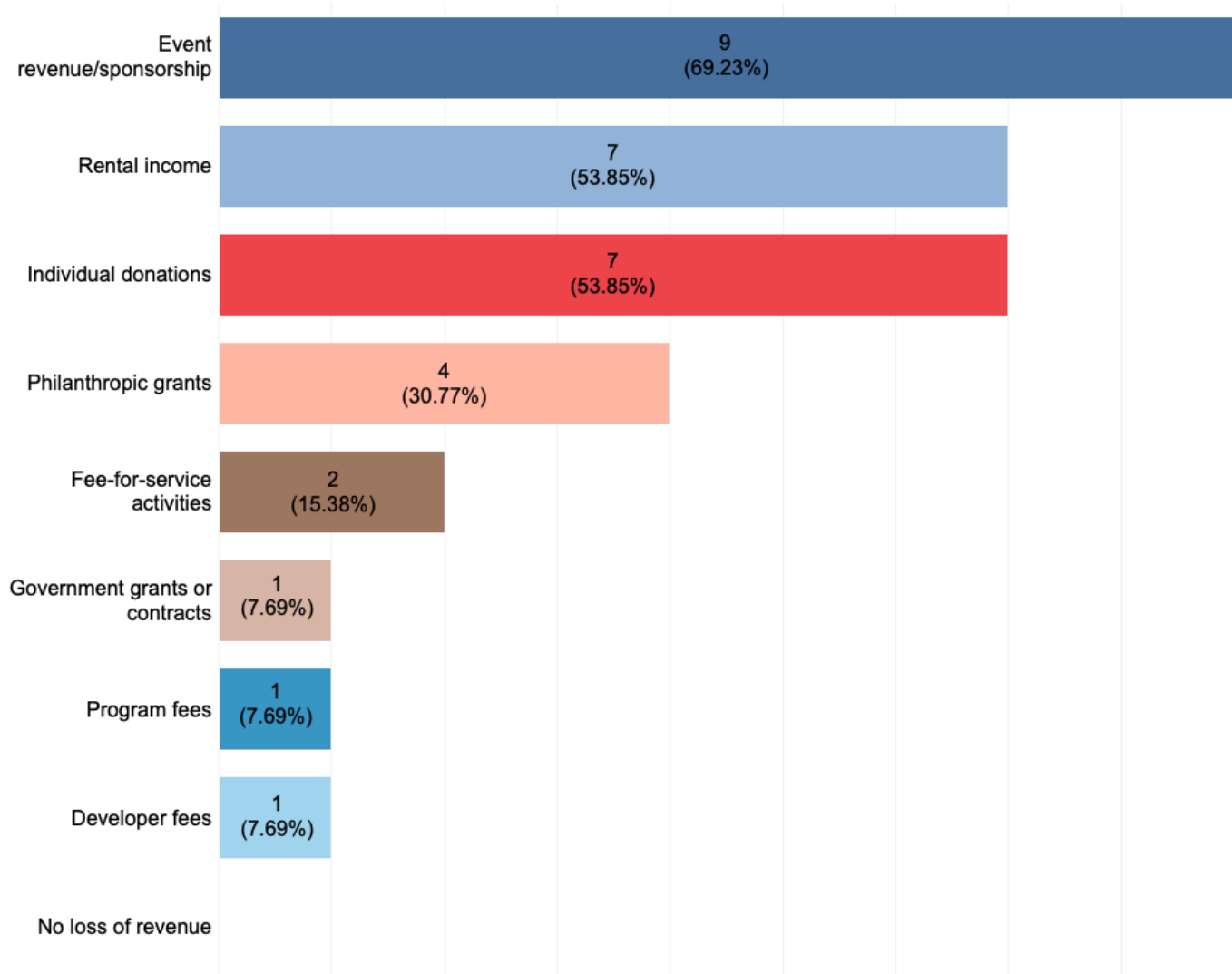
Total affordable units represented: 12,813

N = 13, Missing = 0

More than half (61.54%) of participating organizations reported owning/managing affordable housing units. The number of units owned/managed ranged from 2 to 7,500 with a total of 12,813 units. By comparison, 64.71% of respondents in the Phase I survey owned/managed a total of 13,895 affordable housing units.

Section II: Financial Impact

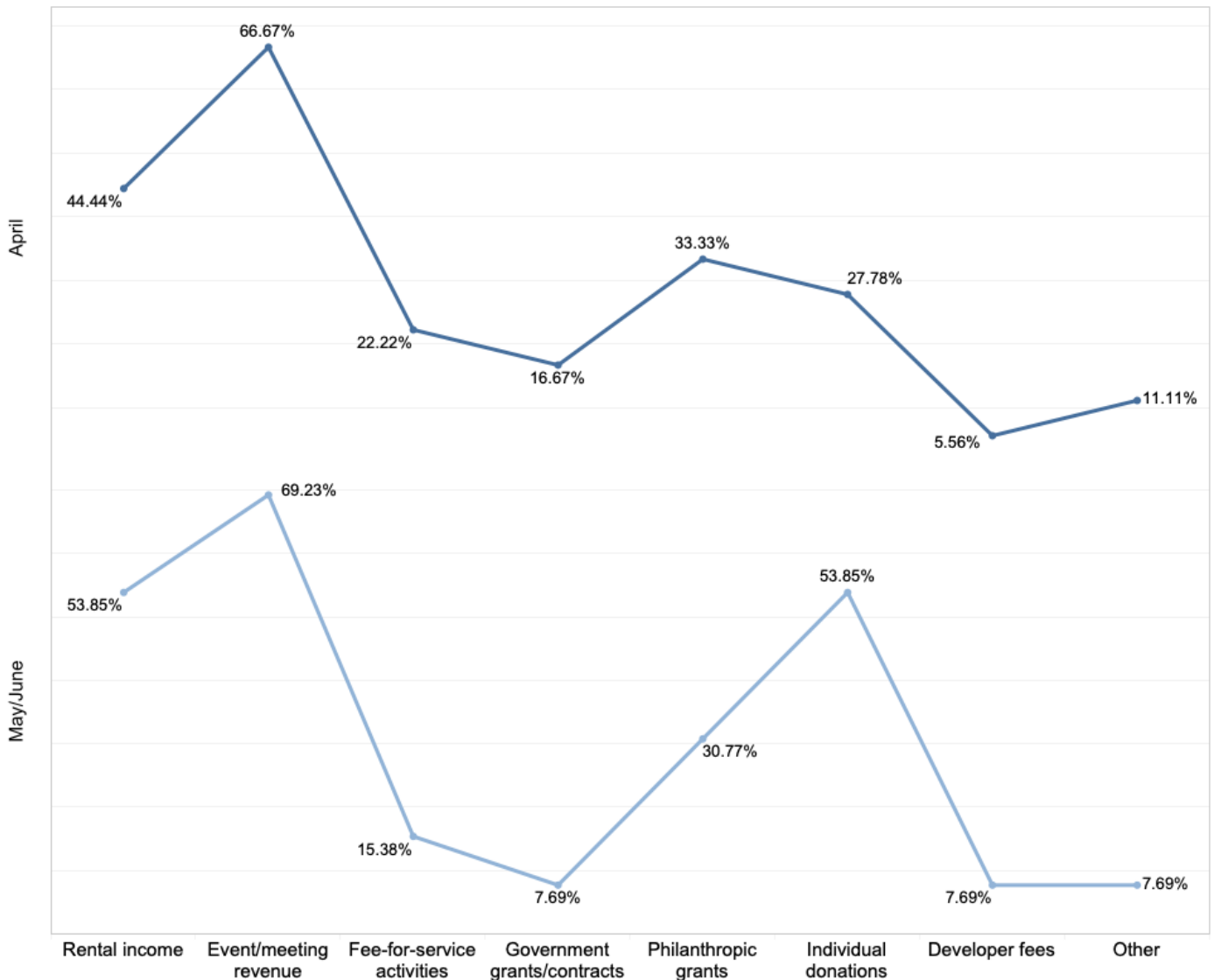
Loss of Revenue Due to COVID-19 in May/June



N = 13, Missing = 0

All participating organizations reported some form of revenue loss for the months of May and June. Cancellation of a spring meeting or other revenue-generating event was the most frequently cited source of lost revenue (69.23%), followed by lost rental income (53.85%), loss of individual donations (53.85%), and loss of philanthropic grant funding (30.77%). It should be noted that, although six organizations reported no loss of rental income, only one of these organizations owned/managed affordable units and collected rent. Out of the eight organizations that reported owning/managing affordable units and collecting rent, seven (87.50%) reported a loss of rental income in the months of May/June.

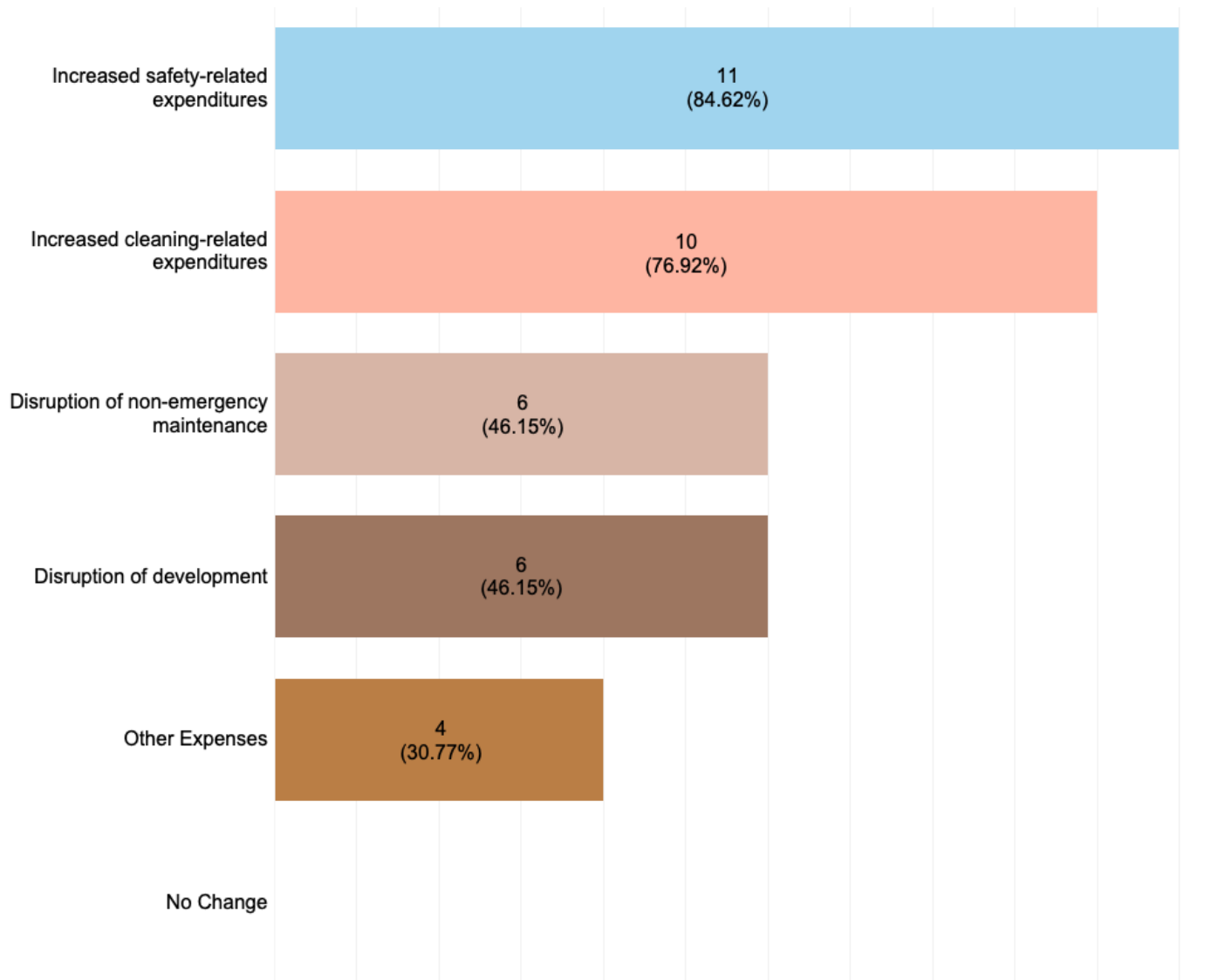
Loss of Revenue Due to COVID-19 in April versus May/June



April: N = 18, Missing = 1
 May/June: N = 13, Missing = 0

Reports of COVID-19-related impact on revenue streams were fairly consistent in the Phase I (April) and Phase II (May/June) surveys, with the exception of individual donations. A greater percentage of respondents reported a loss of revenue from individual donations in May/June compared with April. This may indicate that revenue from individual donations is decreasing more over time. However, the difference may also be due to underlying differences in the organizations that responded to Phase I versus Phase II of the survey. Impact on revenue streams is an outcome we will continue to track in the Phase III survey.

Change in Expenditures

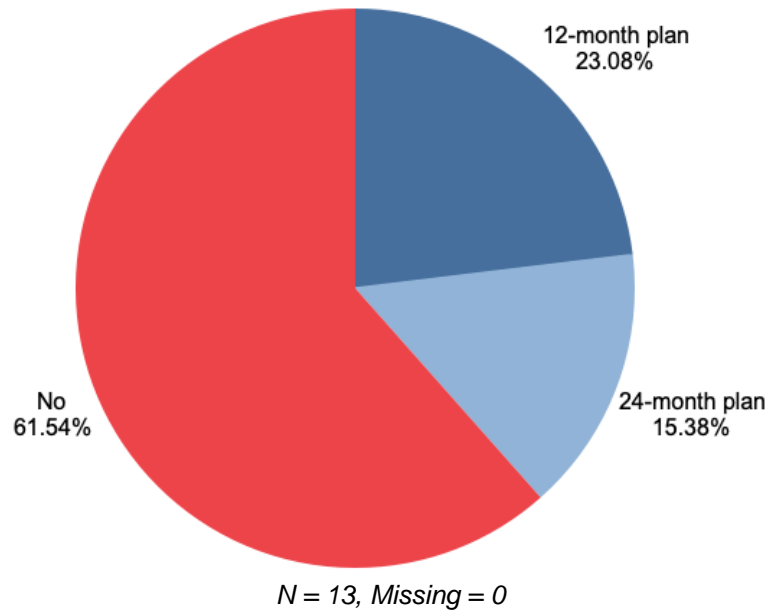


N = 13, Missing = 0

All participating organizations reported a change in expenditures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The most frequently reported change in expenditures was increased spending to comply with COVID-19 safety guidelines, followed by increased cleaning-related expenses. This is consistent with the results from Phase I of the survey, when 88.89% of respondents identified “free or discounted cleaning supplies/personal protective equipment” as one of their organization’s COVID-19-related needs.

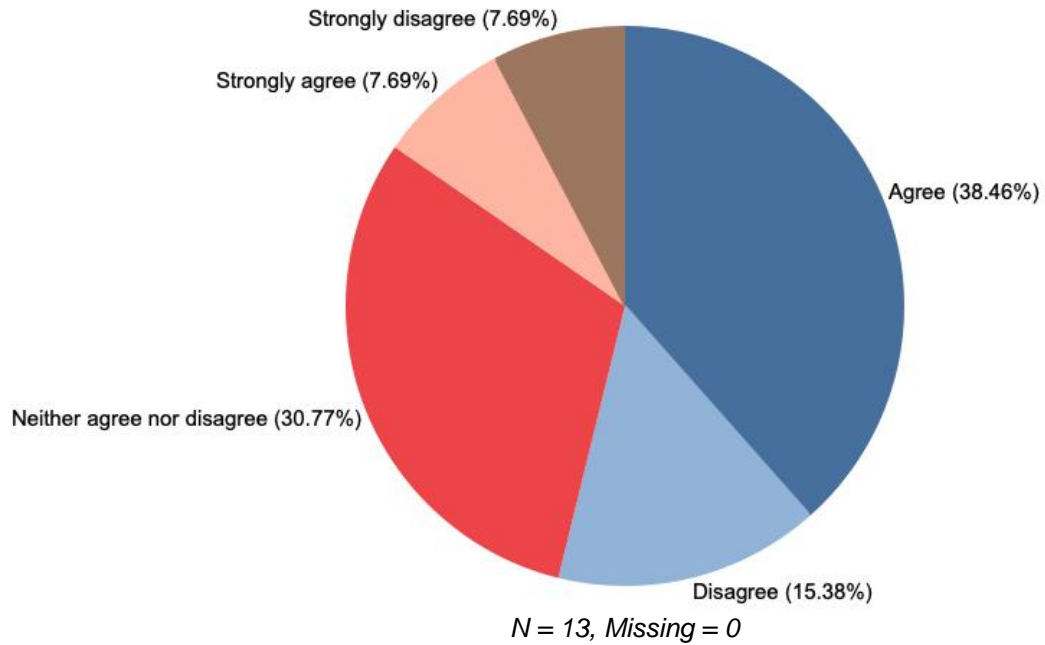
Disruption of non-emergency maintenance and disruption of new development also affected the expenditures of nearly 50% of participating organizations. Other changes in expenditures reported by individual respondents via write-in responses included increased spending to hire new staff and support staff working from home, adding a new shelter location to comply with social distancing guidelines, and providing emergency assistance to help residents purchase essential items such as food and medicine. One organization also reported a reduction in expenditures due to facility closures.

Contingency Planning



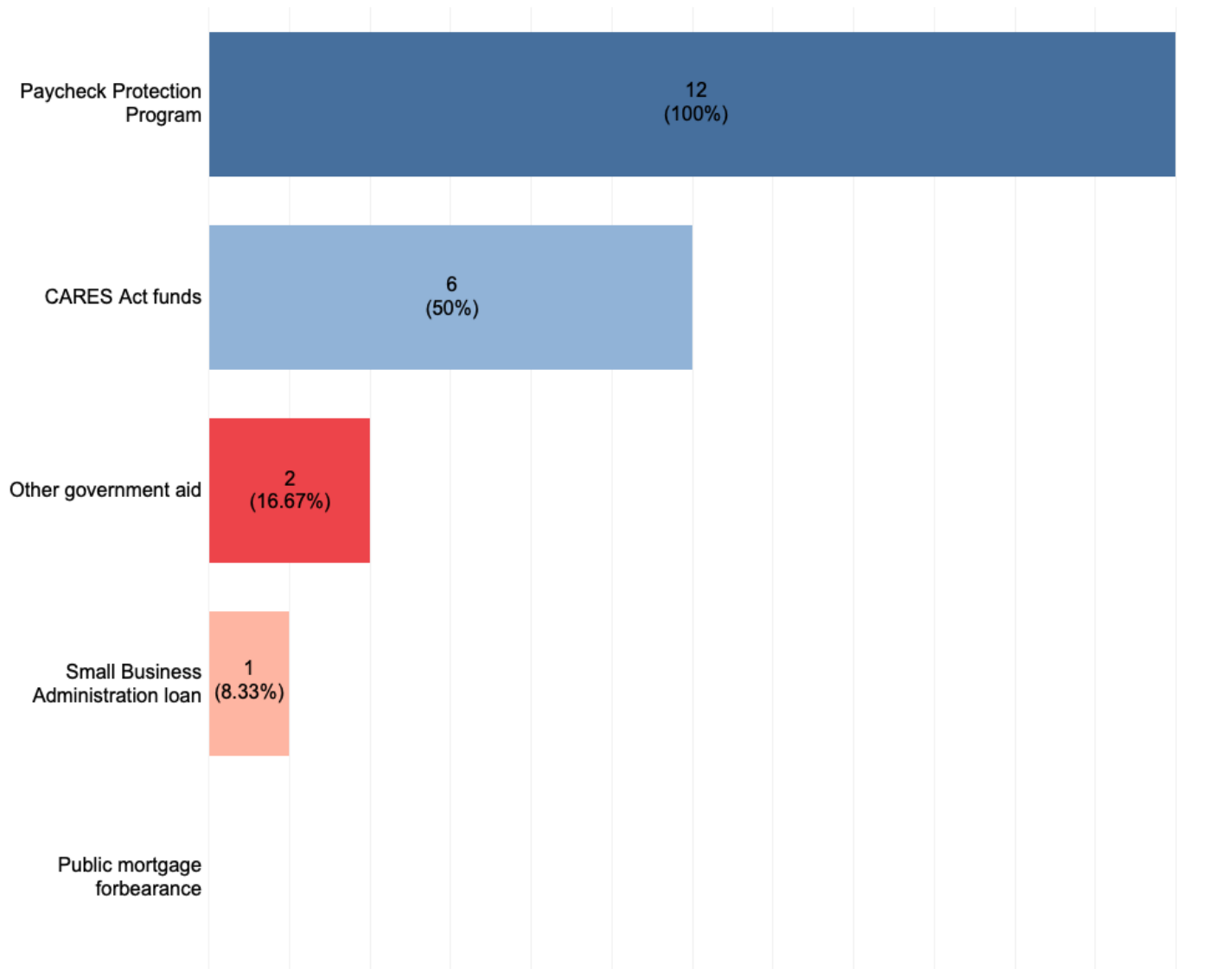
A majority (61.54%) of participating organizations did not have a contingency plan in place to guide their continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the 38.46% of organizations that did have a contingency plan in place most (23.08%) had a 12-month plan versus a 24-month plan (15.38%).

Section III: Financial Aid Adequacy of Financial Aid



Nearly half (46.15%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the aid their organizations received was sufficient to mitigate the *short-term* financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. About a third (30.77%) of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that the aid their organizations received was sufficient, and about one fourth (23.07%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the aid their organizations received was sufficient. In the Phase III survey, participants will be asked to consider whether their organizations received sufficient aid to mitigate the *long-term* financial effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

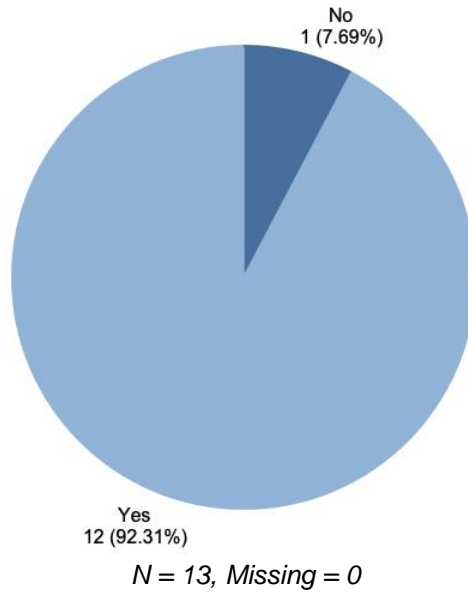
Government Aid



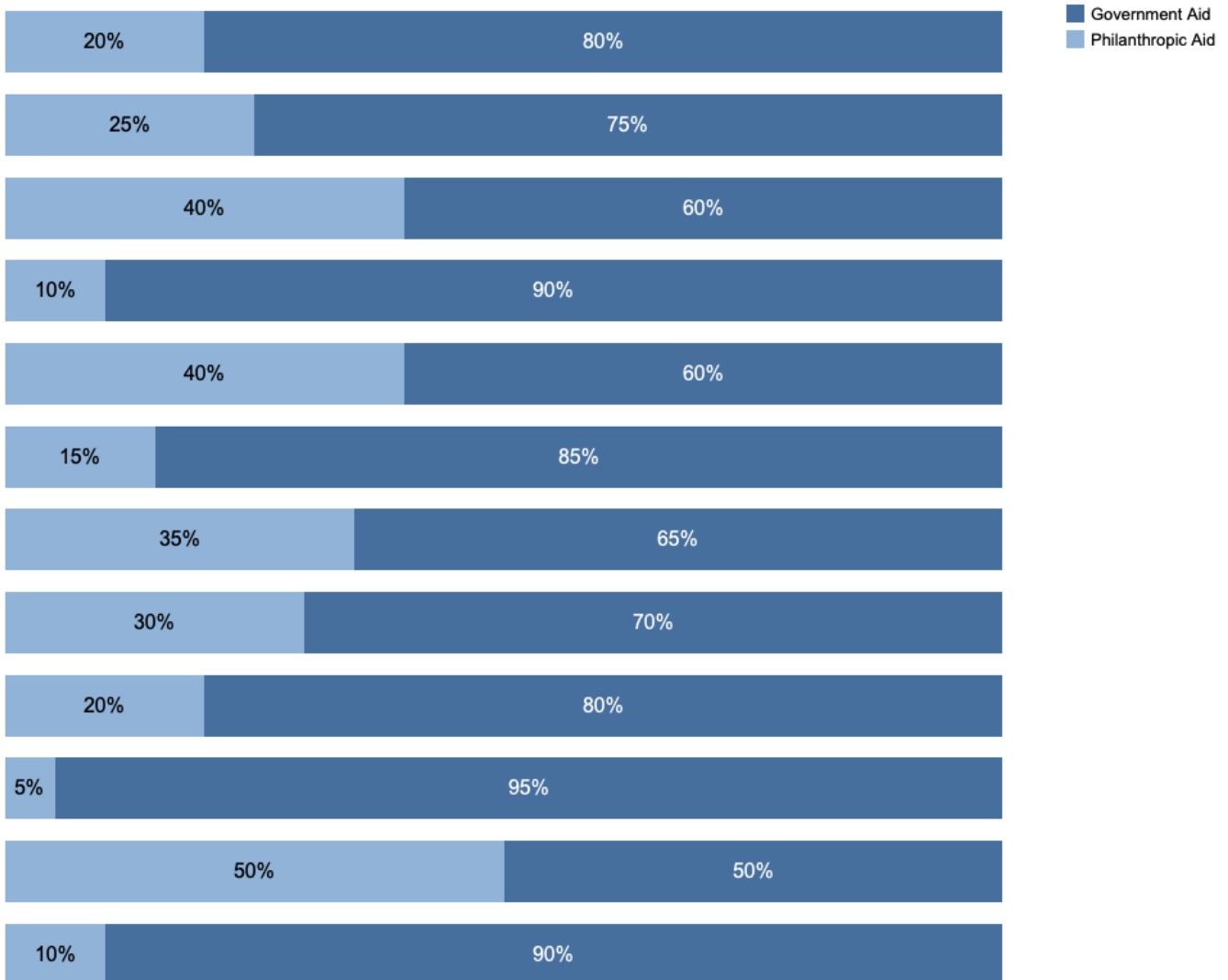
N = 12, Missing = 1, % is based on the total number of respondents (N)

All of the respondents who reported what government sources of COVID-19-related financial aid their organizations received (N = 12) were recipients of the Paycheck Protection Program. Half (50%) also received CARES Act funding, and one organization (8.33%) received a Small Business Administration loan. None of the respondents reported receiving public mortgage forbearance. Other sources of government assistance (16.67%) identified via write-in responses included forbearance on a loan from the Arlington Housing Investment Fund (AHIF), and receipt of CARES Act funding via a third-party grantee.

Philanthropic Aid



Percentage of Aid from Philanthropic vs Government Sources



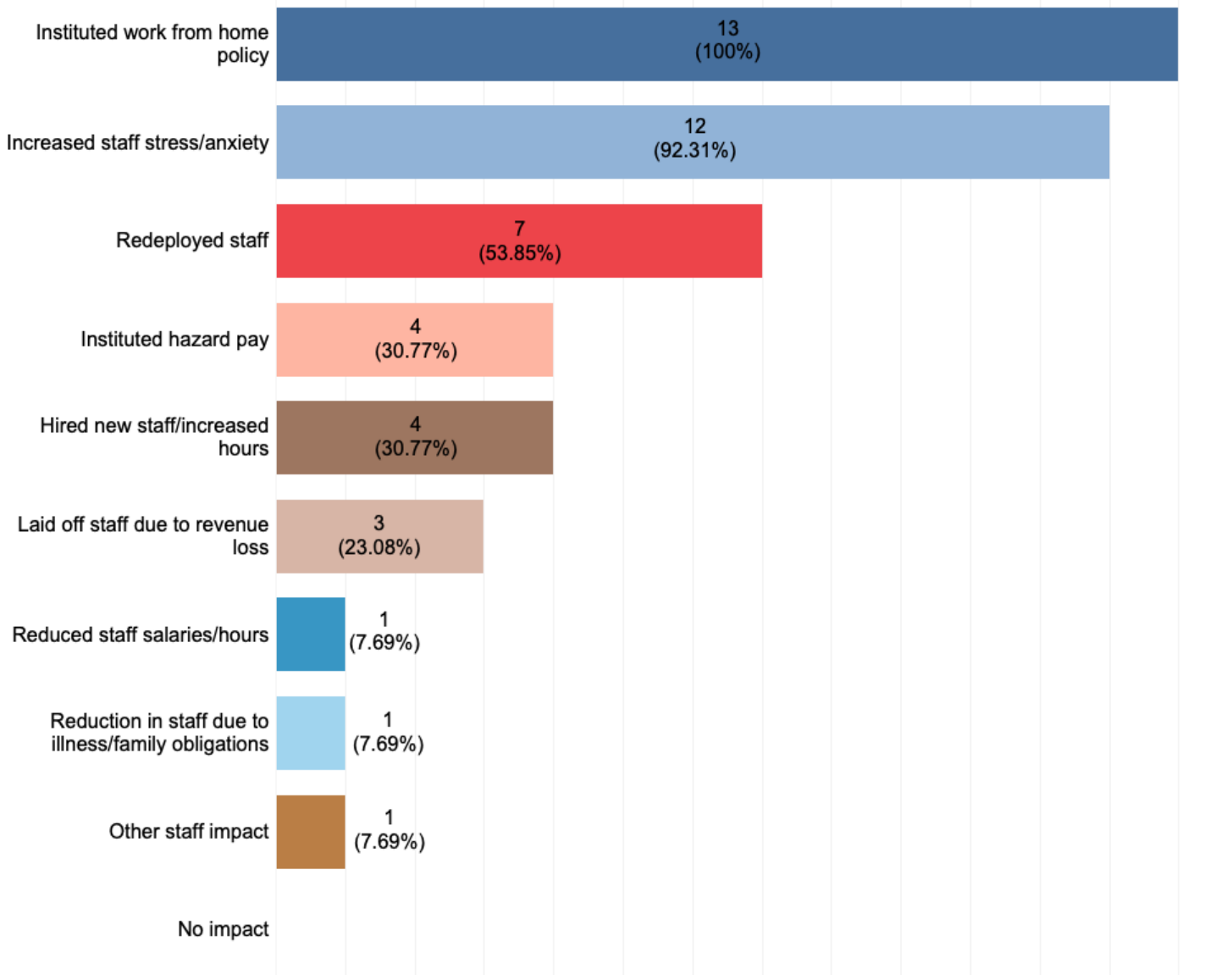
N = 12, Missing = 1

Percentage of Aid from Philanthropic vs Government Sources (Cont'd)

Twelve organizations (92.31%) received COVID-19-related aid from the philanthropic sector. Despite the high percentage of participating organizations that received aid from the philanthropic sector, 91.67% of respondents who reported what percentage of their organization's COVID-19-related funding came from government versus philanthropic sources (N = 12) received a majority of funding from government sources. The remaining respondent (8.33%) received an equal distribution of government and philanthropic funding. The distribution of government versus philanthropic aid may shift in the Phase III survey, as many federal programs have now expired or run out of funding.

Section IV: Staff Impact

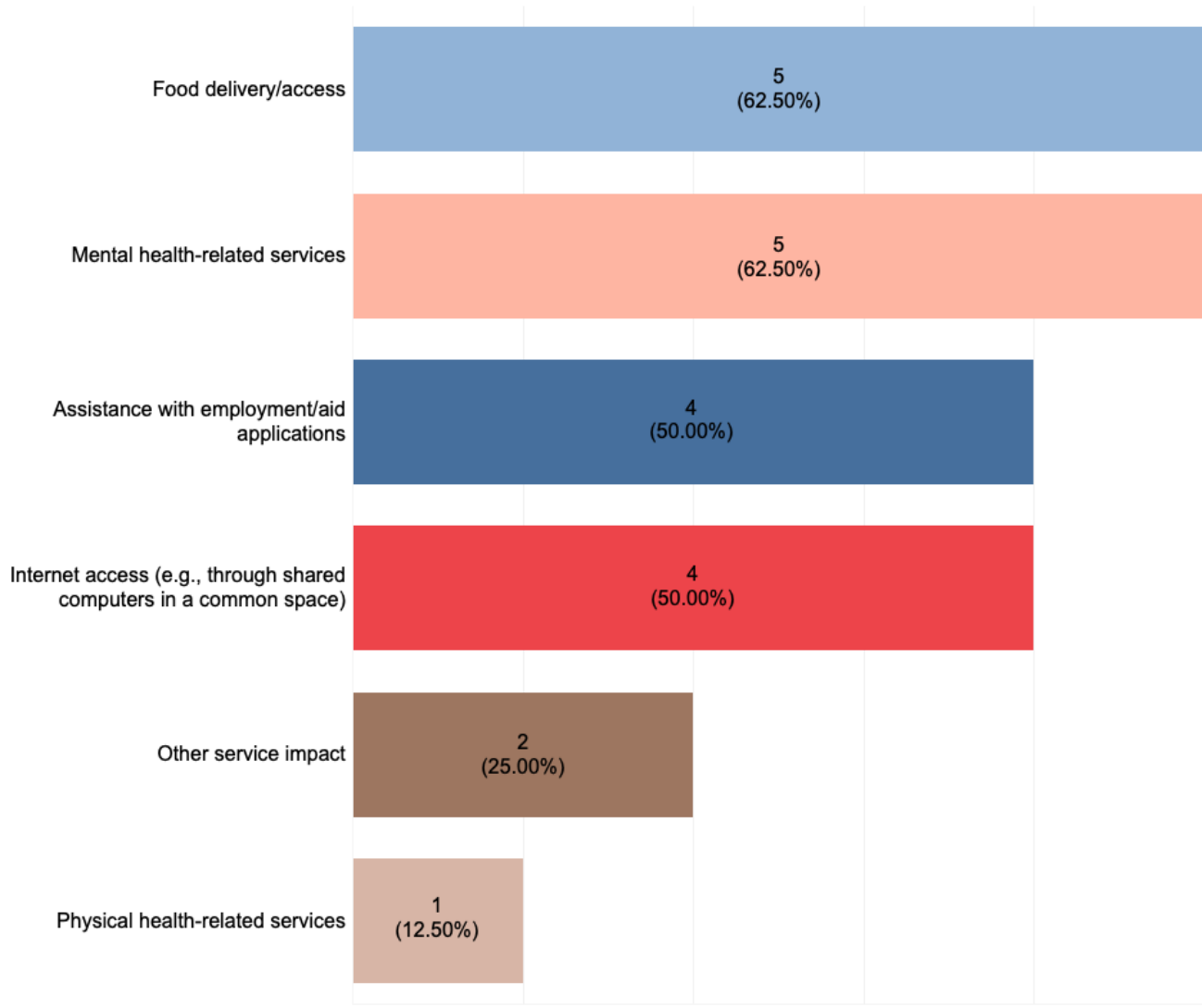
Staff Impact



N = 13, Missing = 0

Compared with the Phase I survey, the Phase II survey contained a more robust assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the staff of participating organizations. All participating organizations instituted a work from home policy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, 53.85% redeployed staff due to changes in service delivery, 30.77% hired new staff or increased the hours of current staff due to increased demand for services, and 30.77% instituted hazard pay for frontline staff. One organization (7.69%) reduced staff hours and three organizations (23.08%) laid off staff due to revenue loss. The majority of participating organizations (92.31%) reported increased stress and anxiety among staff members due to the pandemic. Only one organization (7.69%) reported a loss of staff due to illness or family obligations, down from 50% of respondents in the Phase I survey.

Section V: Impact on Residents/Clients
Impact on Service Delivery



*N = 8 (representing approx. 12,110 units), Missing = 5
 % is based on the total number of respondents (N)*

In the Phase I survey, 83.33% of participating organizations reported that the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted delivery of services for residents/clients, and 77.78% of participating organizations reported that the pandemic created an increased demand for services. We delved deeper into the impact on service delivery in the Phase II survey. Nine respondents (69.23%) indicated that their organizations provided direct services to affordable housing residents, individuals experiencing homelessness and other client populations. These respondents were asked how the pandemic affected their organizations’ ability to deliver different types of services; eight (88.89%, representing approximately 12,110 units) responded. Food delivery and mental health services were the most frequently identified areas of service disruption, followed by assistance with employment/aid applications, and provision of internet access via shared computers in a common space.

Average Ranking of Resident Needs (1 = Greatest Need, 10 = Least Need)



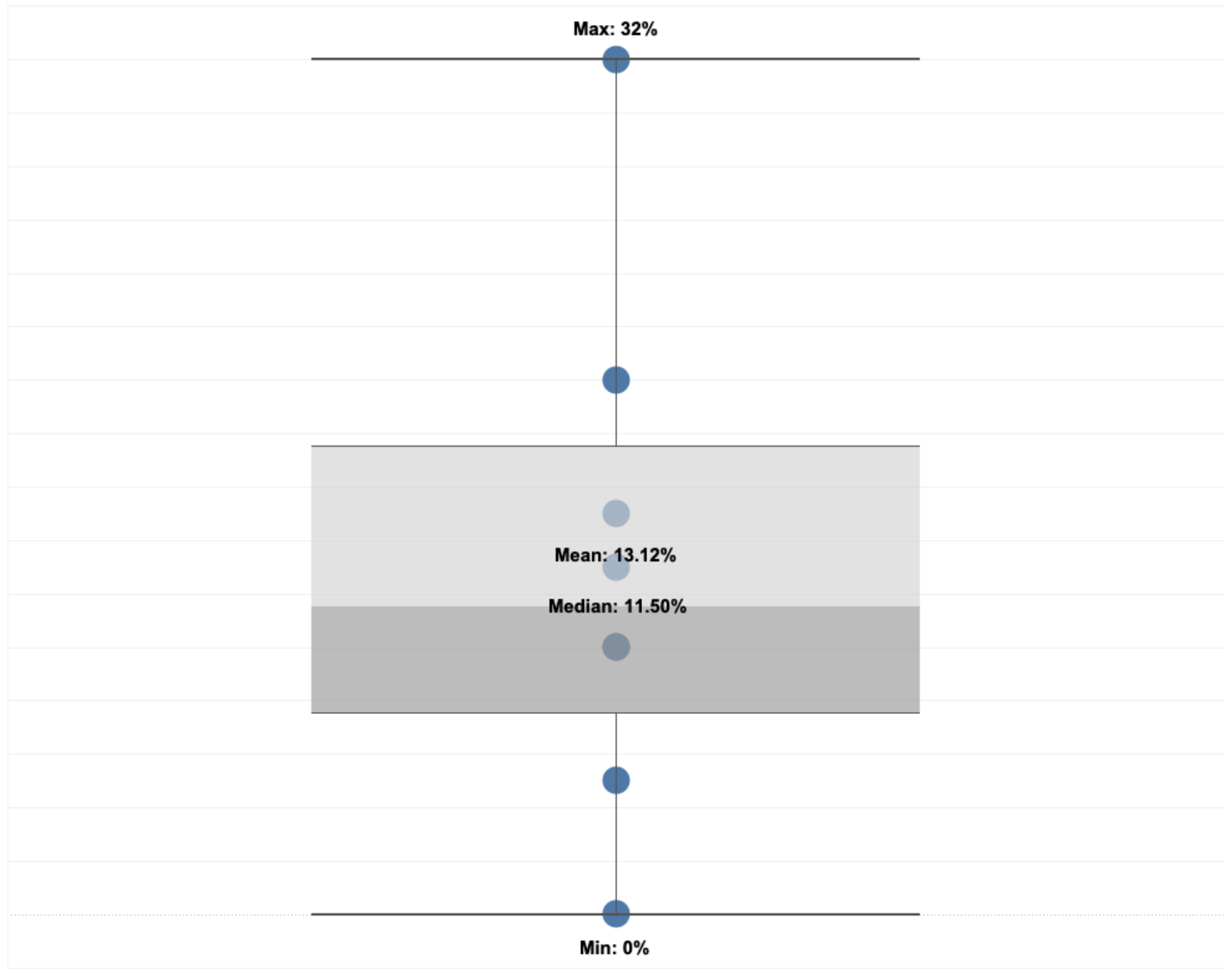
*N = 4 (representing approx. 11,408 units), Missing = 9; *10 missing, N = 3 (representing approx. 3,908 units); **11 missing, N = 2 (representing approx. 2,108 units); N/A were treated as missing when calculating averages*

Four out of the nine respondents whose organizations provided direct services to residents/clients (44.44%) had surveyed residents/clients about their COVID-19-related needs. These respondents were asked to rank how often residents/clients reported various needs on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being most often and 10 being least often. Rent/utilities assistance, help with employment/aid applications, and food delivery/access were the top-ranked needs. These were also the top-ranked resident/client *concerns* in the Phase I survey, although employment/job loss was identified as the greatest concern by Phase I participants. Access to mental and physical health-related services, and access to alternate transportation to avoid public transit were the lowest ranked needs. Other needs/concerns identified by individual respondents via write-in responses included the need for information/education about COVID-19, fear of moving out of shelters due to job and housing instability, and an inability to obtain housing due to stigma among landlords who believe very low-income households are more likely to have COVID-19.

Average Ranking of Resident Needs (Cont'd)

One respondent noted via write-in response that ranking resident/client needs was difficult because many residents/clients have multiple needs of equal urgency. The fact that mental health-related services received one of the lowest average rankings – despite reports from 62.50% of respondents (representing approximately 10,078 units) that delivery of mental health-related services was disrupted as a result of the pandemic – also suggests asking respondents to rank how often residents/clients report various needs may not produce an accurate picture of the scope or urgency of resident/client concerns. For example, residents/clients may not report the need for mental health-related services due to stigma, or because they deem other needs (such as rental assistance and food access) to be more urgent. A lower average ranking, does not necessarily mean the need for mental health-related services is not prevalent. To address this limitation, resident/client needs will be evaluated using alternate measures in Phase III of the survey.

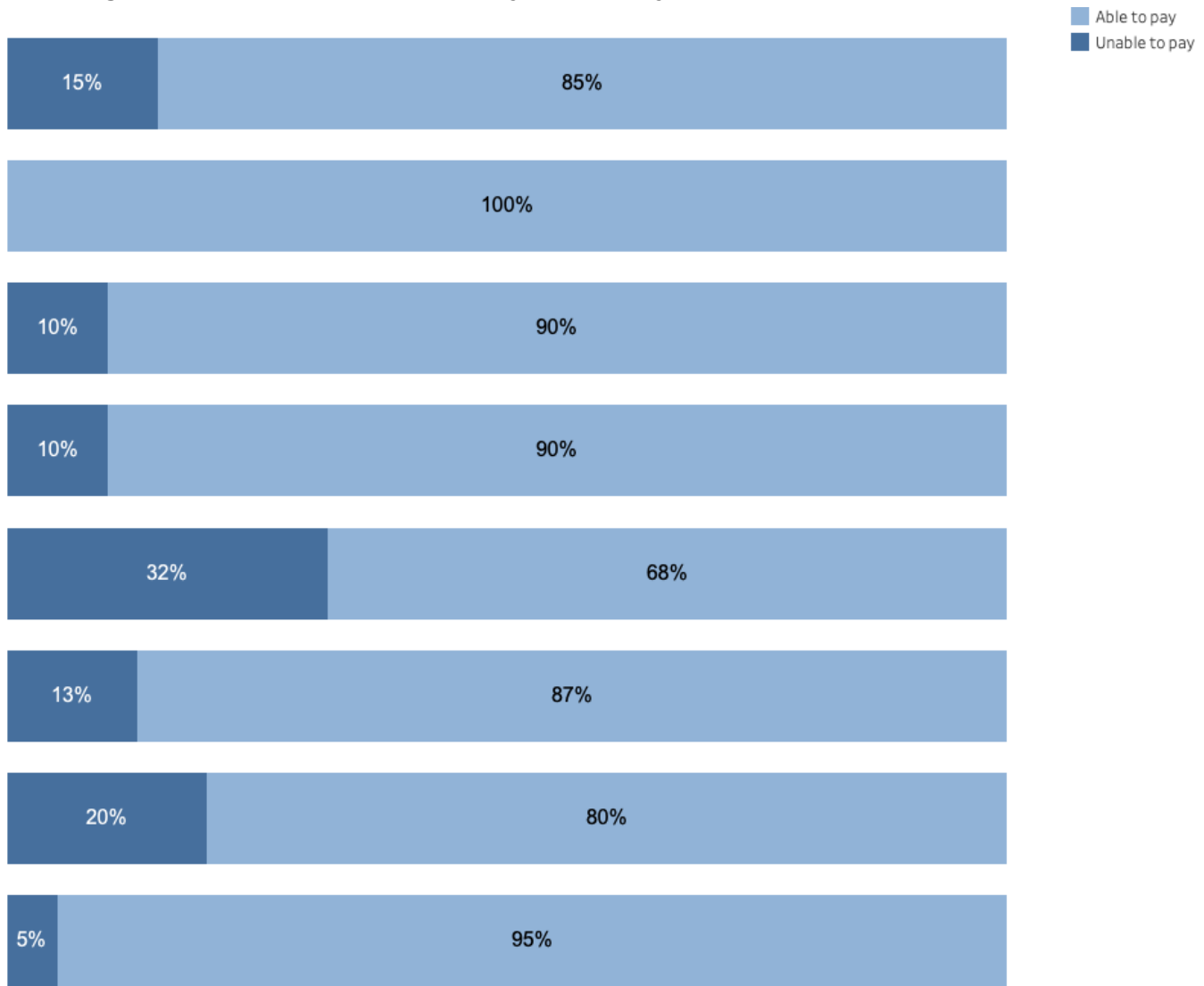
Section VI: Rent Payment & Rental Assistance
Percentage of residents unable to pay rent in May/June*



N = 8 (representing approx. 12,813 units), Missing = 5

* Percentage of residents unable to pay rent in the months of May/June was calculated by subtracting the percentage of residents respondents reported were able to pay rent for these months from 100%.

Percentage of residents able/unable to pay rent in May/June (Cont'd)*

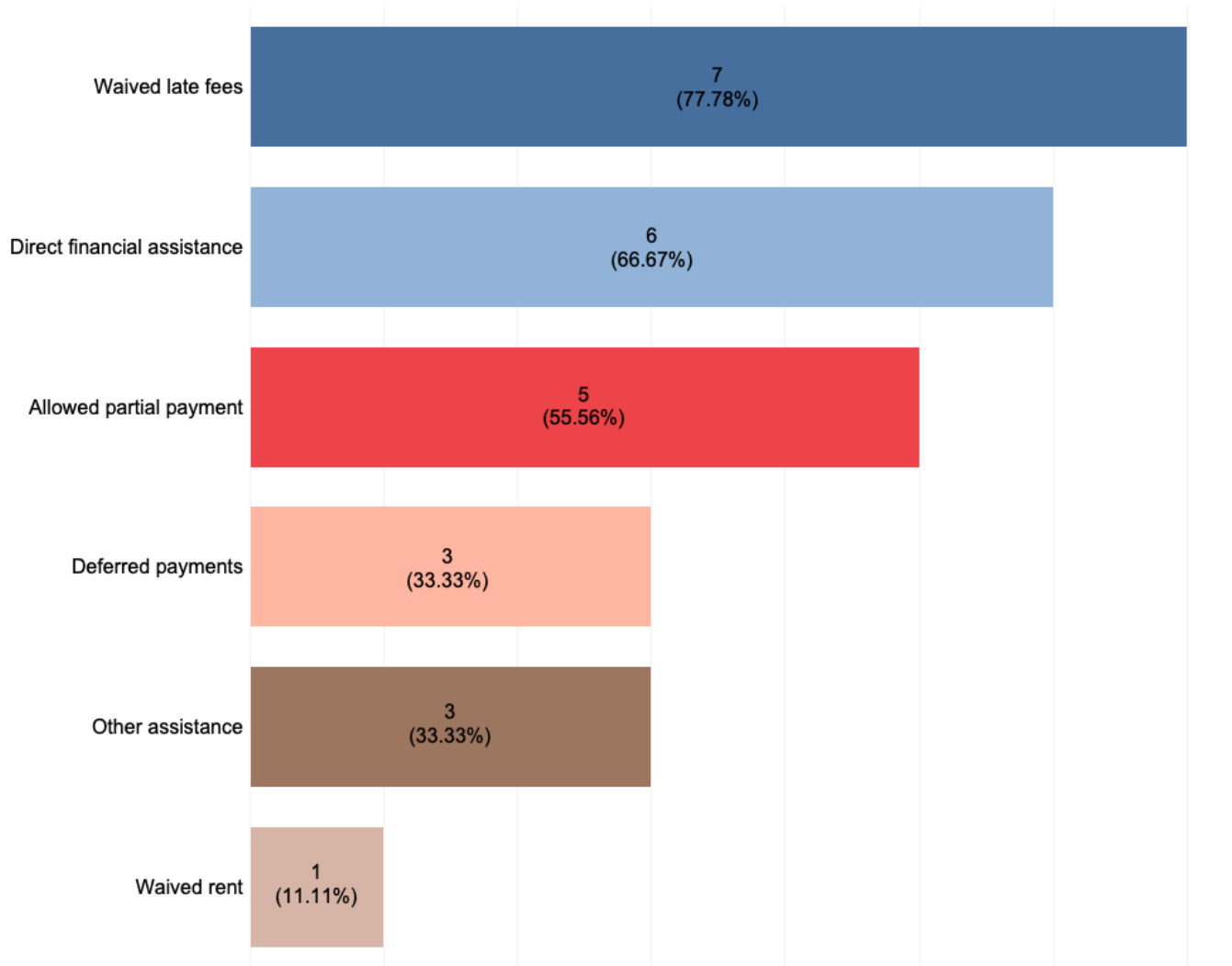


N = 8 (representing approx. 12,813 units), Missing = 5

Eight participating organizations (61.54%, representing approximately 12,813 units) reported collecting rent. One of these eight organizations (12.50%) reported that all residents were able to pay their rent in May and June. The average delinquency rate among participating organizations was 13.12%.^{*} Significantly, the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance provision of the federal CARES Act expired on July 31. As a result, the average delinquency rate is likely to be much higher in Phase III of the survey.

^{*} Percentage of residents unable to pay rent and average delinquency rate in the months of May/June were calculated based on the percentage of residents respondents reported were able to pay rent for these months.

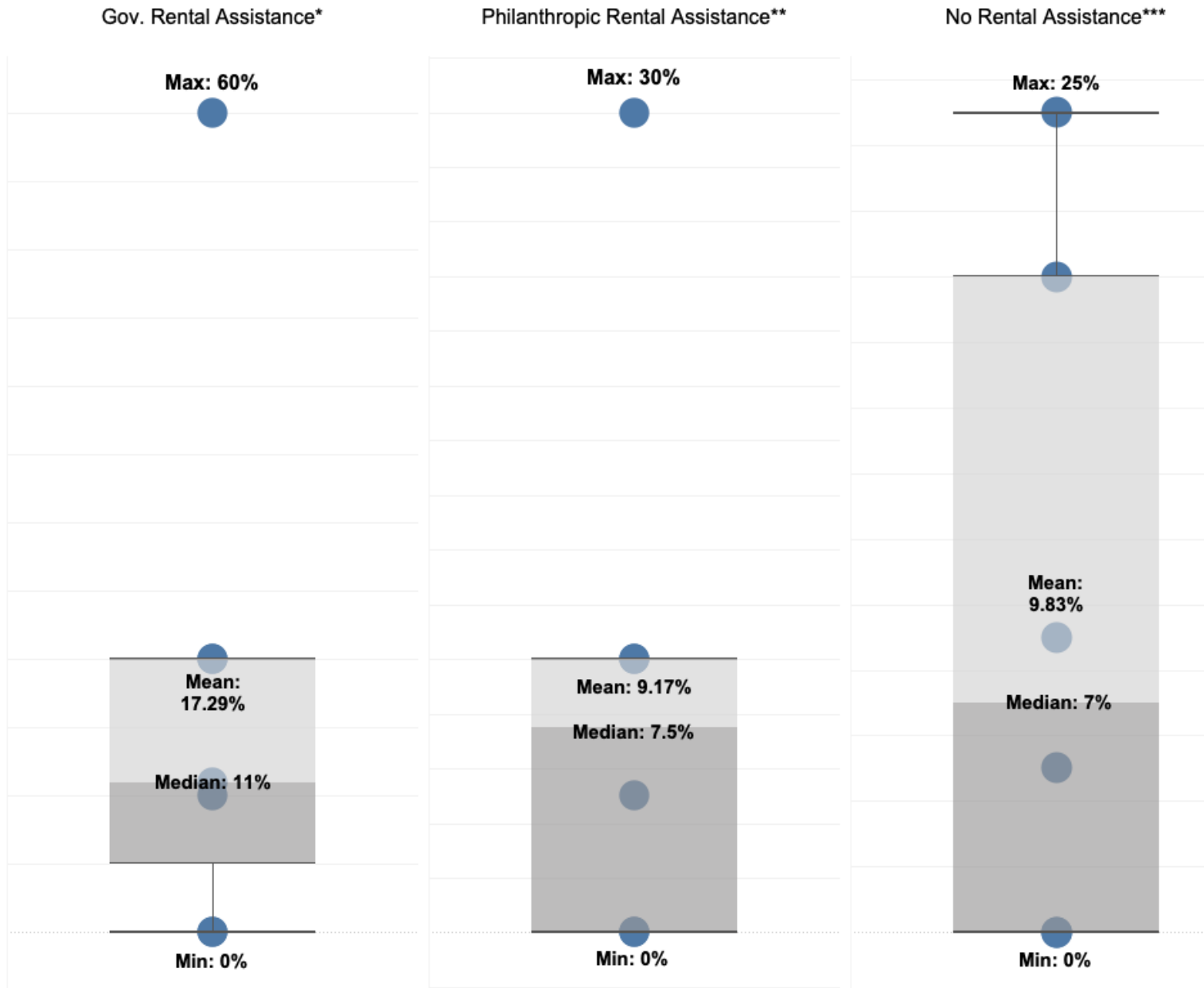
Rental Assistance Options Offered to Residents



*N = 9 (representing approx. 12,813 units), Missing = 4
% is based on the total number of respondents (N)*

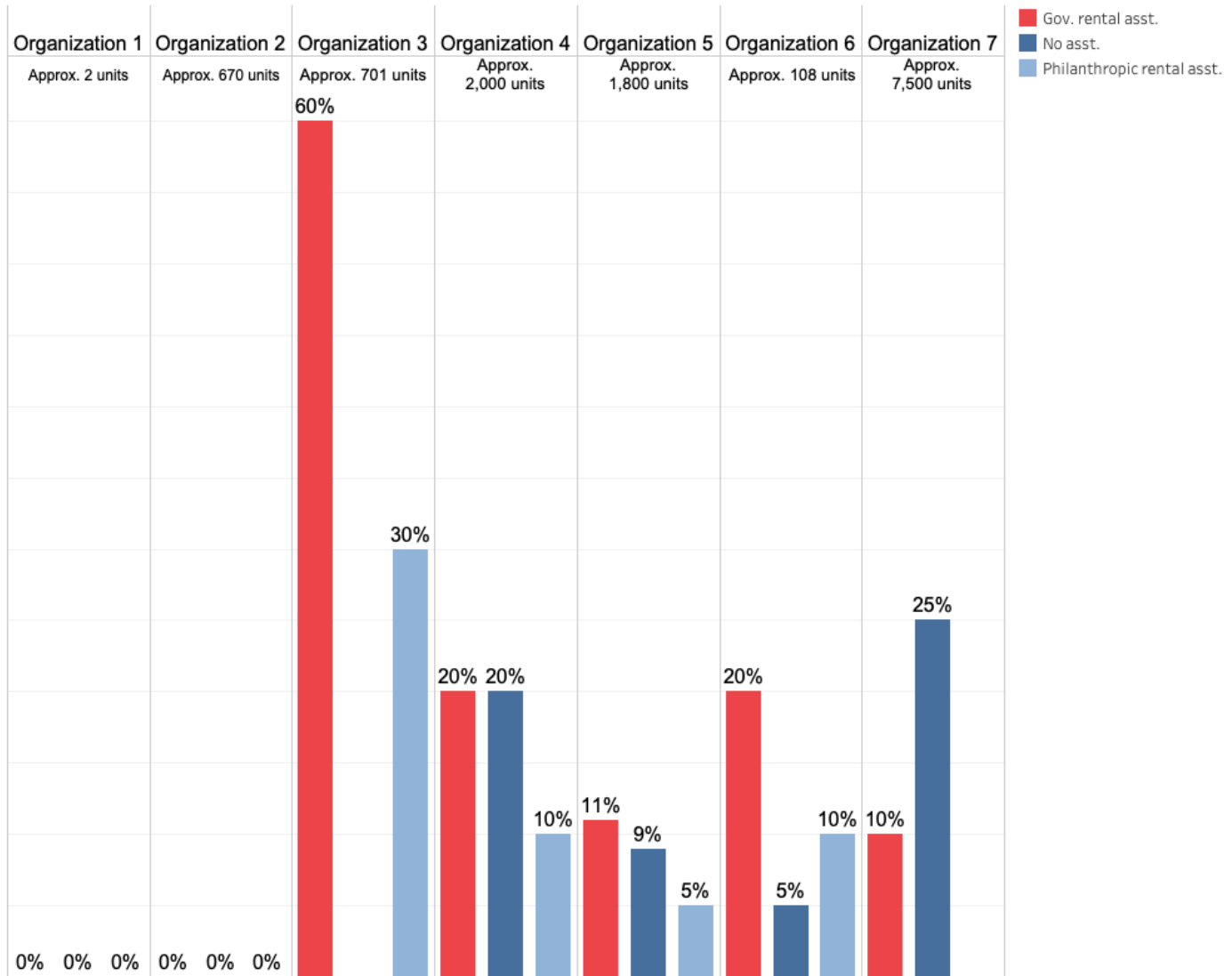
Nine organizations (69.23%, representing approximately 12,813 units) reported offering some form of rental assistance to residents, including one organization that did not own/manage units or collect rent directly. The most common form of assistance offered was waived late fees (77.78%), followed by direct financial support (66.67%). Only one organization (11.11%) reporting waiving rent entirely. We will continue to track what forms of rental assistance participating organizations offer to residents in Phase III of the survey.

Percentage of Residents Receiving Government*, Philanthropic and No Rental Assistance*****



*N = 7, Missing = 6 (representing approx. 12,781 units)
 **N = 6, Missing = 7 (representing approx. 5,281 units)
 ***N = 6, Missing = 7 (representing approx. 12,080 units)

Percentage of Residents Receiving Government*, Philanthropic** and No Rental Assistance** by Organization

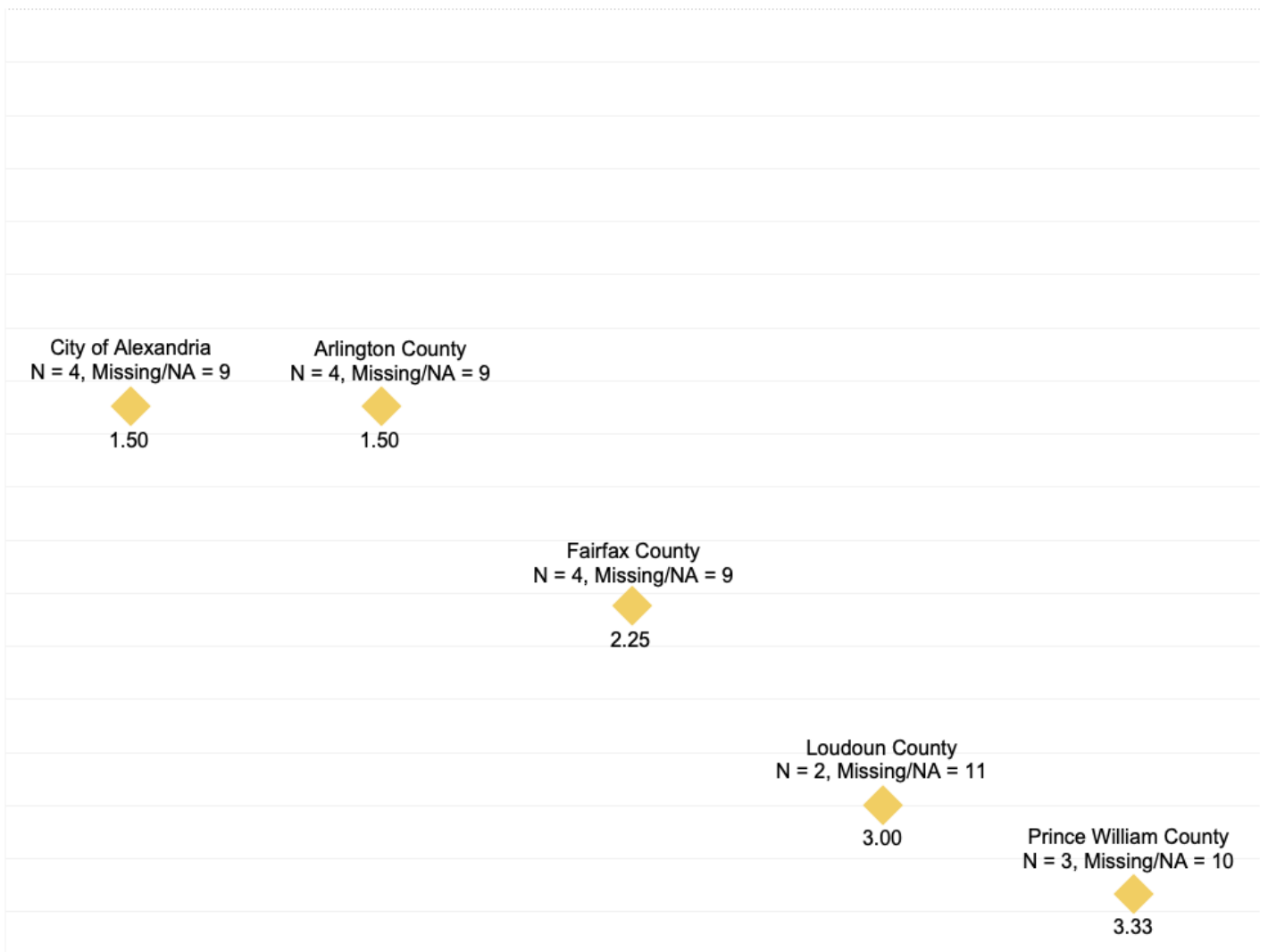


*N = 7, Missing = 6, **N = 6, Missing = 7

Of the eight organizations that reported owning/managing affordable units and collecting rent, seven (87.50%) reported what percentage of the residents they serve received government rental assistance, six (75%) reported what percentage of the residents they serve received philanthropic rental assistance, and six (75%) reported what percentage of the residents they serve were unable to access rental assistance. An average of 9.83% of residents across approximately 12,080 units were unable to access assistance. An average of 17.29% of residents across approximately 12,781 units received government rental assistance. An average of 9.17% of residents across approximately 5,281 units received philanthropic rental assistance. This survey did not specify whether philanthropic rental assistance came in the form of direct financial aid from a non-governmental institution, or waived rent and late fees by non-profit housing providers. This measure will be assessed with greater specificity in Phase III of the survey.

Difficulty Accessing Public Rental Assistance by Jurisdiction

Average ranking of difficulty accessing rental assistance (1= easiest, 5 = most difficult)



N/A were treated as missing when calculating averages

Participating organizations were asked to rank the ease or difficulty of accessing rental assistance in the City of Alexandria and Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William Counties on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being easiest and 5 being the most difficult. The City of Alexandria and Arlington County had the lowest average ranking, indicating that respondents found it easiest to access rental assistance in these jurisdictions. Prince William County had the highest ranking, indicating that respondents found it more difficult to access rental assistance in this jurisdiction.

Reported barriers to accessing rental assistance included overly complex/bureaucratic application processes, insufficient staff accepting assistance requests via phone, caps on the amount of assistance available per household, language barriers, barriers for households with financial need pre-dating the COVID-19 pandemic, and fear of requesting public assistance among undocumented residents. We plan to explore these barriers in greater depth in Phase III of the survey, as local jurisdictions are working to address many of these issues.