

226TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY EVALUATION REPORT

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**RESEARCH
SERVICES**



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Overview

The General Assembly consists of commissioners elected by presbyteries and has several specific responsibilities outlined in the Book of Order. The Assembly is responsible for assuring that the expression of our theology remains true to the biblical standards in our historic confessions. The 226th General Assembly of the PC(USA) was held in-person and online, in Salt Lake City, Utah, June 25 – July 4, 2024.

After the close of General Assembly, an evaluative questionnaire was shared with all participants for whom emails were collected (1,692), to evaluate the value, importance, and quality of various aspects of the Assembly. The newly elected Stated Clerk, Rev. Jihyun Oh, promoted the survey at the close of the Assembly and encouraged all to participate. The survey officially launched on July 16th and closed on August 5, 2024.

A total of 529 (31%) participants responded to the questionnaire. Eighty-eight percent completed the survey in its entirety, leaving twelve percent partially responding. The survey consisted of 105 questions, with 14 being open-text or essay format resulting in more than 950 comments. This report represents the opinions and views of the responding participants.



What we are learning
to benefit future
assemblies.

What have we learned?

GRATITUDE

- First and foremost, we learned that the respondents greatly appreciated the in-person assembly, the first in-person assembly since 2018!

MEETING LOGISTICS

- Respondents prefer in-person committee and assembly meetings.
- Going forward, build time between committee meetings and the Assembly so that members can become familiar with all the work that will be brought to them for discussion and a vote during plenaries.
- In addition to PCUSA staff, add more local volunteers to the information/welcome center desk. A local volunteer is better equipped to answer questions about local restaurants, places of interest, and general advice about the area.
- Add a full day to the Assembly and reduce the late evening sessions.
- Avoid scheduling the Assembly over a holiday, especially since the next Assembly is scheduled for 2026, the year of the country's 250th anniversary.

EXHIBIT HALL

- An important element of previous general assemblies was the exhibit hall. Throughout the comments, there was a call for an exhibit hall as it represents the connectional church connecting local pastors, members, and council leaders with PC(USA) agencies and affiliated organizations. In the absence of an exhibit hall, create visuals, videos, or printed descriptions of the offices and affiliated agencies.
- Past Exhibit Halls provided space for socialization, developing connections, and opportunities to discuss the work of the Assembly in a relaxing and welcoming space.

What have we learned?

SPECIAL REQUESTS

- Several spoke to the challenges with their special diets and other food concerns. Individuals are seeking labels ingredients for foods to determine if these were indeed gluten free or safe for them to consume. Others with greater restrictions found it to be both confusing and difficult to find their special diets. A recommendation is for the ingredients to be listed near the food and a separate section for those who have special dietary requirements. The requests and arrangements should be communicated to both the caterer and the attendees.

EQUITY PRIMES

- Equity Primes is a new concept and practice for the Assembly. There were those who saw it as a strength and a wonderful new asset while others thought that it impeded the Assembly's work.

COMMUNICATION

- Additional communication is always requested at every level of the assembly including a daily printed itinerary and map of the local facilities.

TECHNOLOGY

- Technological issues occurred at all levels committee meetings and plenaries.
- The Help Desk staff were able to resolve most individual issues promptly.
- A frequent comment is the technology lags behind what is taking place in the room whether it is in a committee meeting or in plenary. This has been a constant comment in the last three GA evaluations.

TRAINING

- Additional training and vetting is requested and encouraged for those who will serve as committee leaders. Several commented on the inability of community committee leaders to follow Roberts rules and to move the discussions forward.

What have we learned?

TRANSPORTATION

- Respondents did not support the use of public transportation for future assemblies.
- Communication concerning transportation to and from the airport had mixed reviews. Transportation arriving at the assembly was thorough and detailed, but departure communication was confusing and viewed inadequate.

BECOMING INVOLVED

- One of the survey questions asked if the respondent has an interest in becoming more involved in the national church work and service, other volunteer opportunities, or additional training. Several indicated that they do want more involvement and training. Others in their comments asked how they can become more involved. The survey's design did not capture information about their particular interest or to provide a pathway for future discussions, but the information can be obtained via follow-up.

DIFFERENCES ACROSS ROLES

- Statistically, there are no significant differences observed across or when comparing respondents by their Assembly roles: commissioner, YAAD, Ecumenical advisor, and others. But there are differences within the groups, such as comfort with technology.

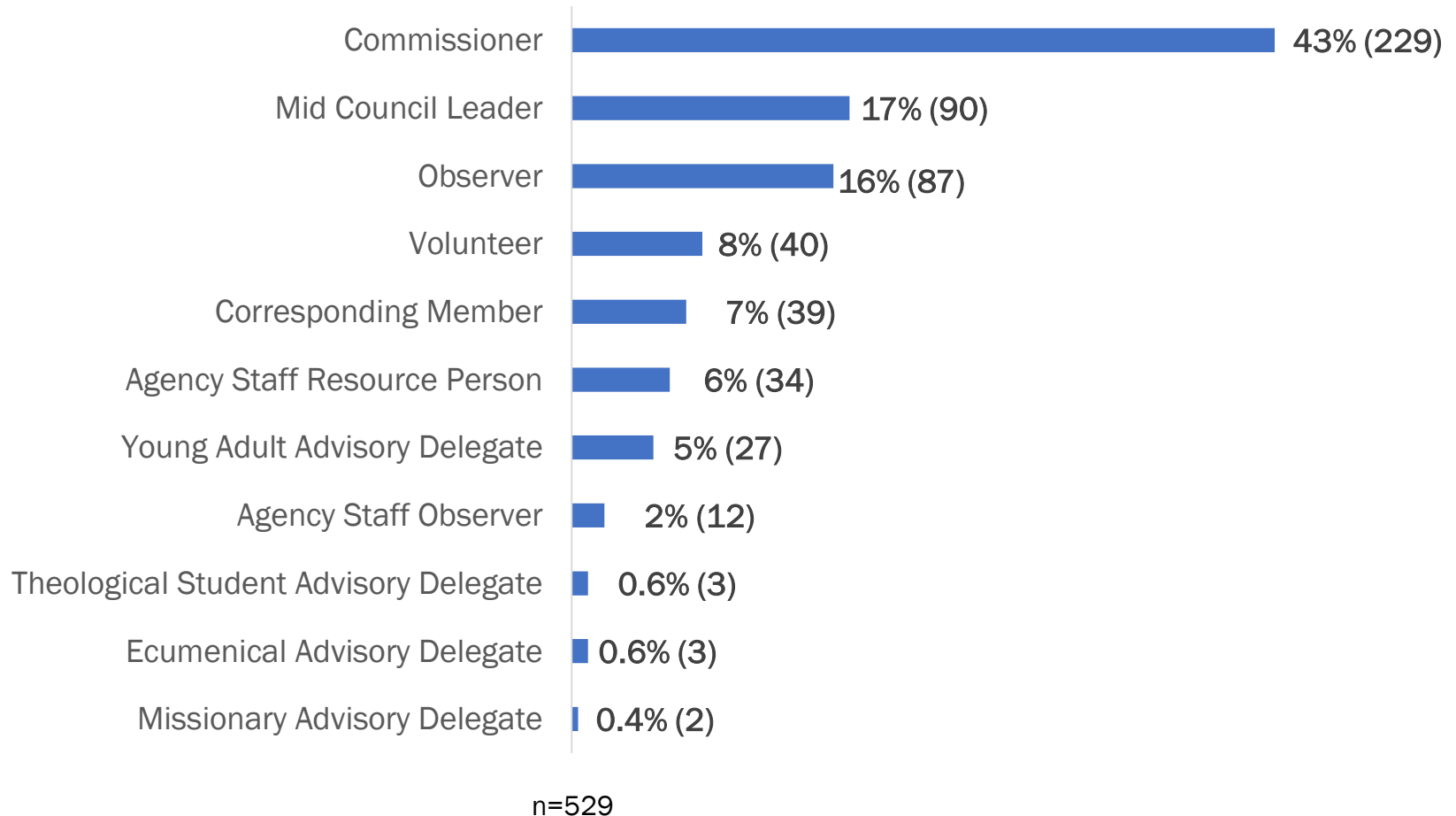
DEMOGRAPHICS

- The assembly was representative of the denomination by gender identity and appropriately overrepresented by non-white members.
- Most respondents are middle aged to traditional retirement age which is a younger demographic than the denomination.

Roles, Committees, & Attendance

Nearly half of respondents are Commissioners

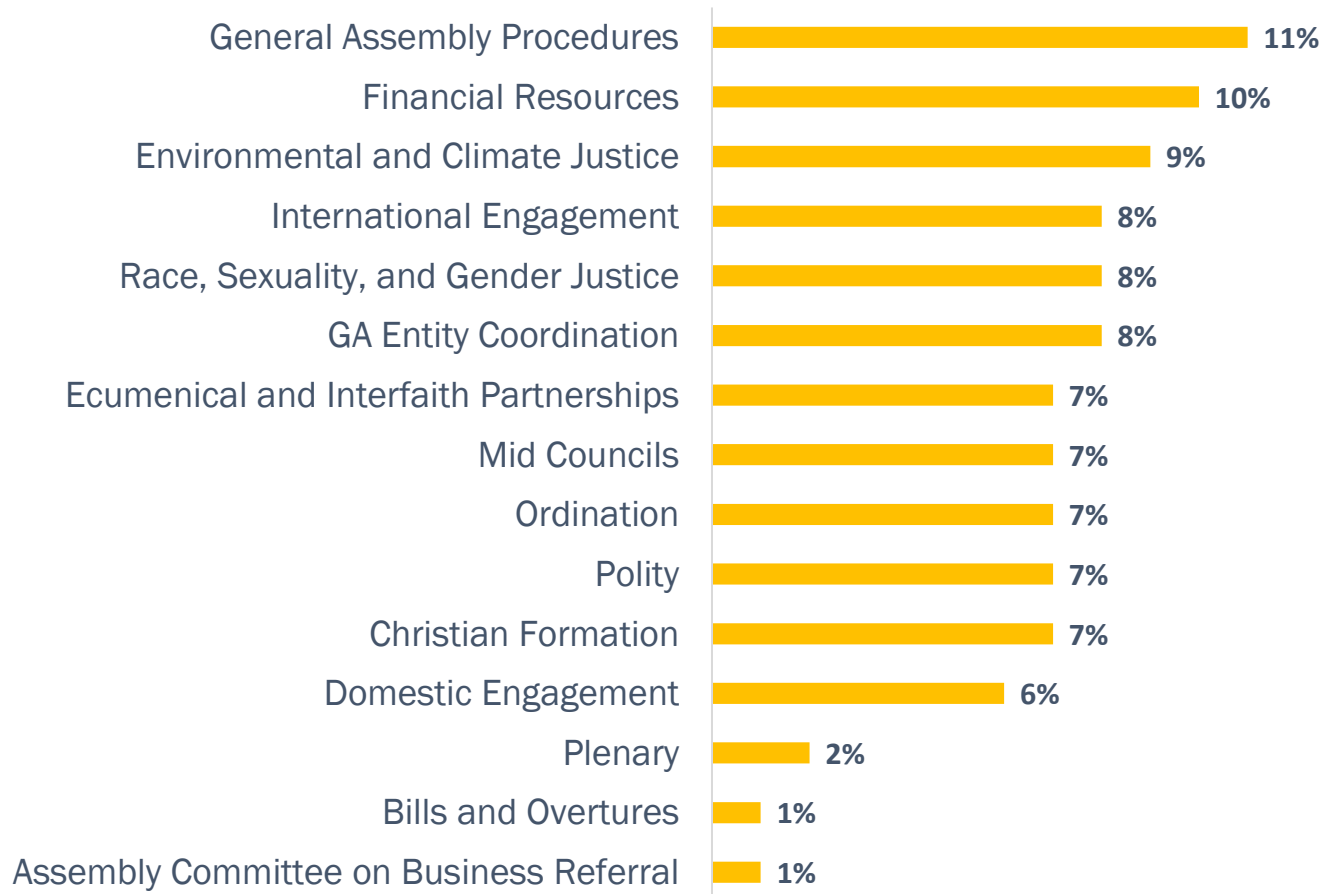
Forty-three percent (n=229) of those that shared their experiences identify themselves as commissioners. Seventeen percent (n=90) are Mid Council leaders and 16% (n=87) are observers.



* Because respondents were allowed to select each role that applied to their experience, roles are not mutually exclusive.

Committees that were served

At least one serving committee member of each committee responded to the questionnaire. We have the most respondents from the General Assembly Procedures committee, with 11% responding.

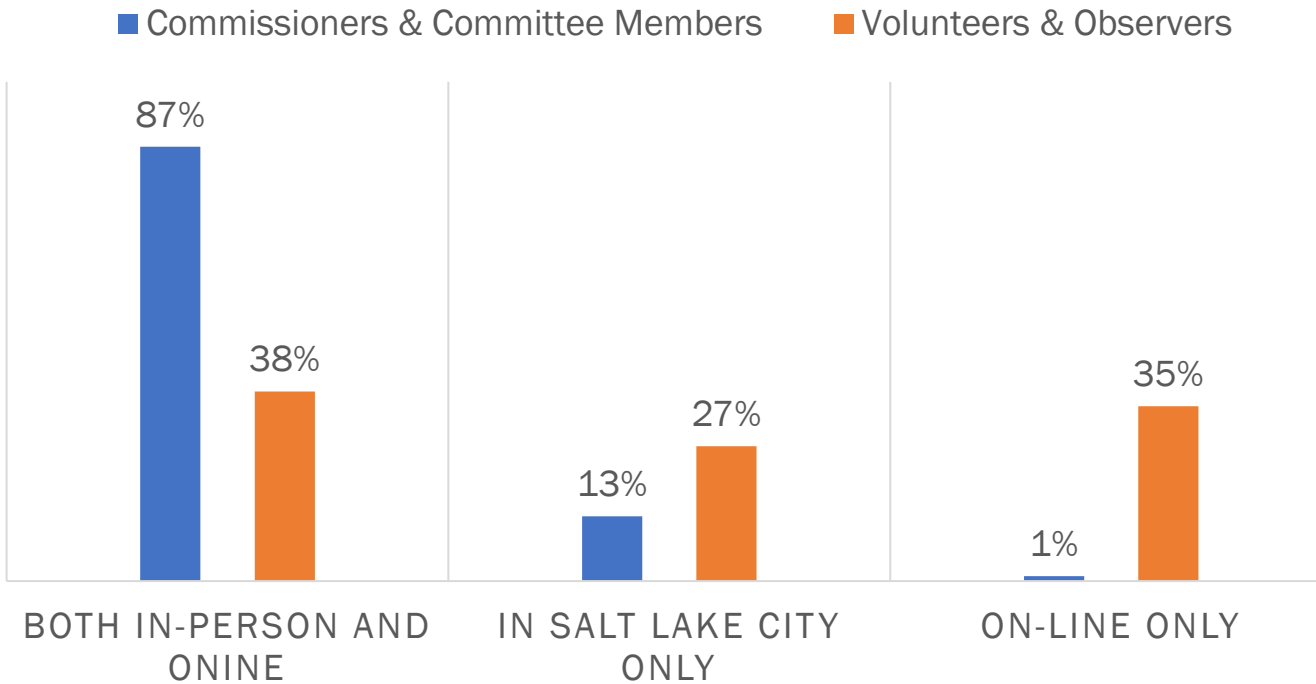


n=303

* Because respondents were allowed to select each committee that applied to their experience, committees are not mutually exclusive.

How did they attend?

The majority of responding Commissioners and Committee members (87%) participated in the 226th General Assembly by attending both the online committee meetings and being present in Salt Lake for the Assembly. Volunteers and observers are more evenly split with their participation by only attending the Assembly in-person (27%), being present on-line (35%), with a little more than one third (38%) being present for both the online committee meetings and attending the Assembly.

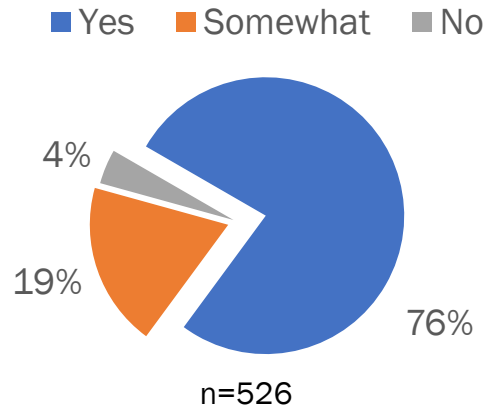


n=529

Registration

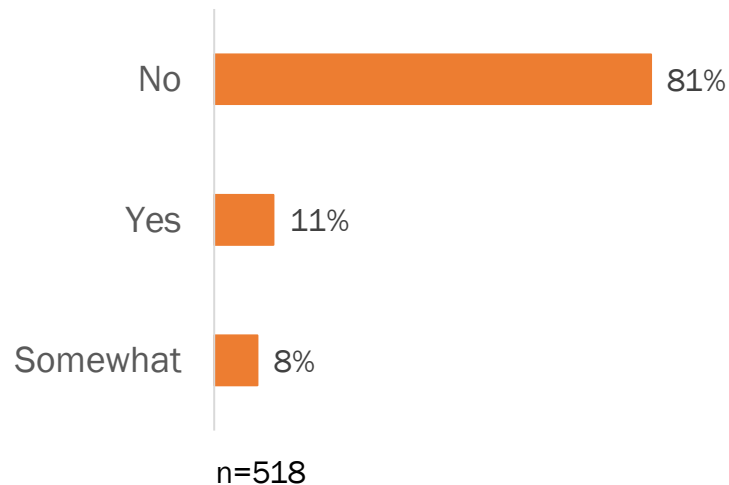
Most found the registration system easy to follow and complete.

Registration was easy...

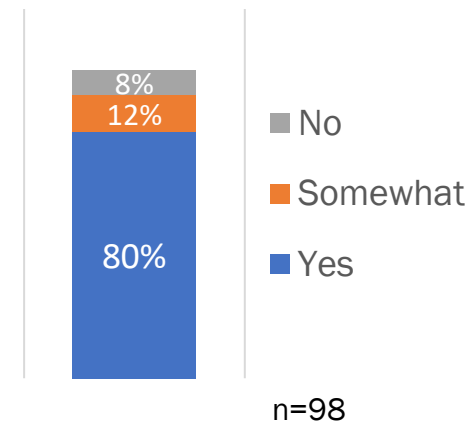


- ❖ A third of respondents (23%) did not find the registration process completely easy to follow and complete.
- ❖ 19% needed assistance with registration.
- ❖ For 20% of those that needed assistance, it was not clear (8%) or only somewhat clear (12%) who to contact for help.

Did you need assistance with registration?



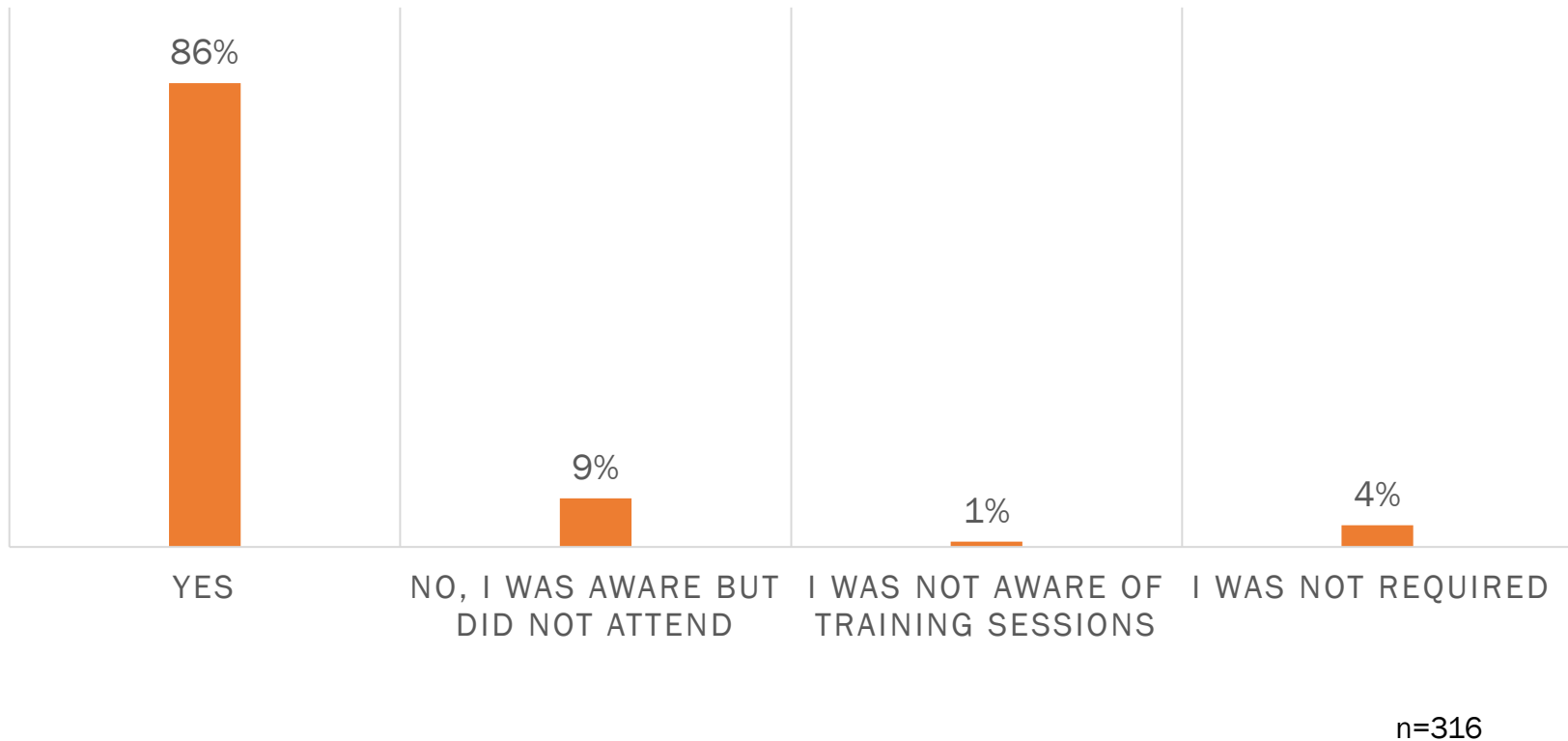
Was it clear who to contact for assistance?



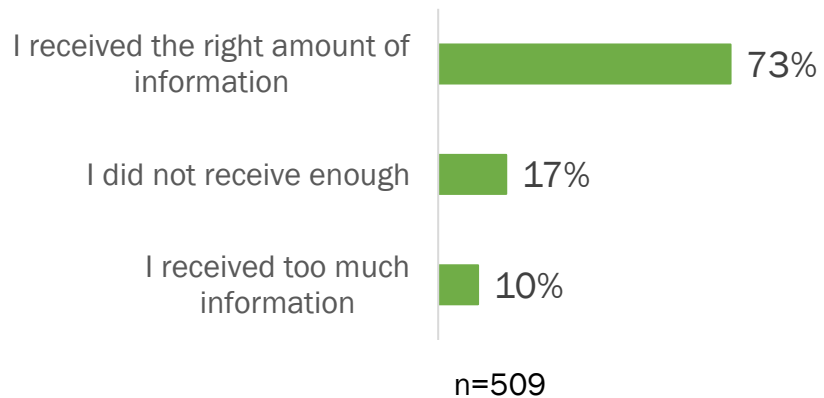
Training
&
Pre-assembly
Communications

Nearly 90% participated in the training sessions

Eighty-six percent (n=272) participated in training sessions prior to General Assembly. Nine percent (n=27) was aware of the sessions but did not attend, while 1% (n=3) were unaware of training being offered.



Most received the right amount of pre-Assembly information.



Seventy-three percent (n=372) state they received the right amount of information received prior to the Assembly.

For 17% (n=88), they did not receive enough. Less than a third of these responses were first time attendees. Therefore, this is not a concern limited to first time attendees but is expressed by experience Assembly attendees.

Few reported receiving too much information.

What pre-Assembly information did you not receive and what you would prefer to have received?

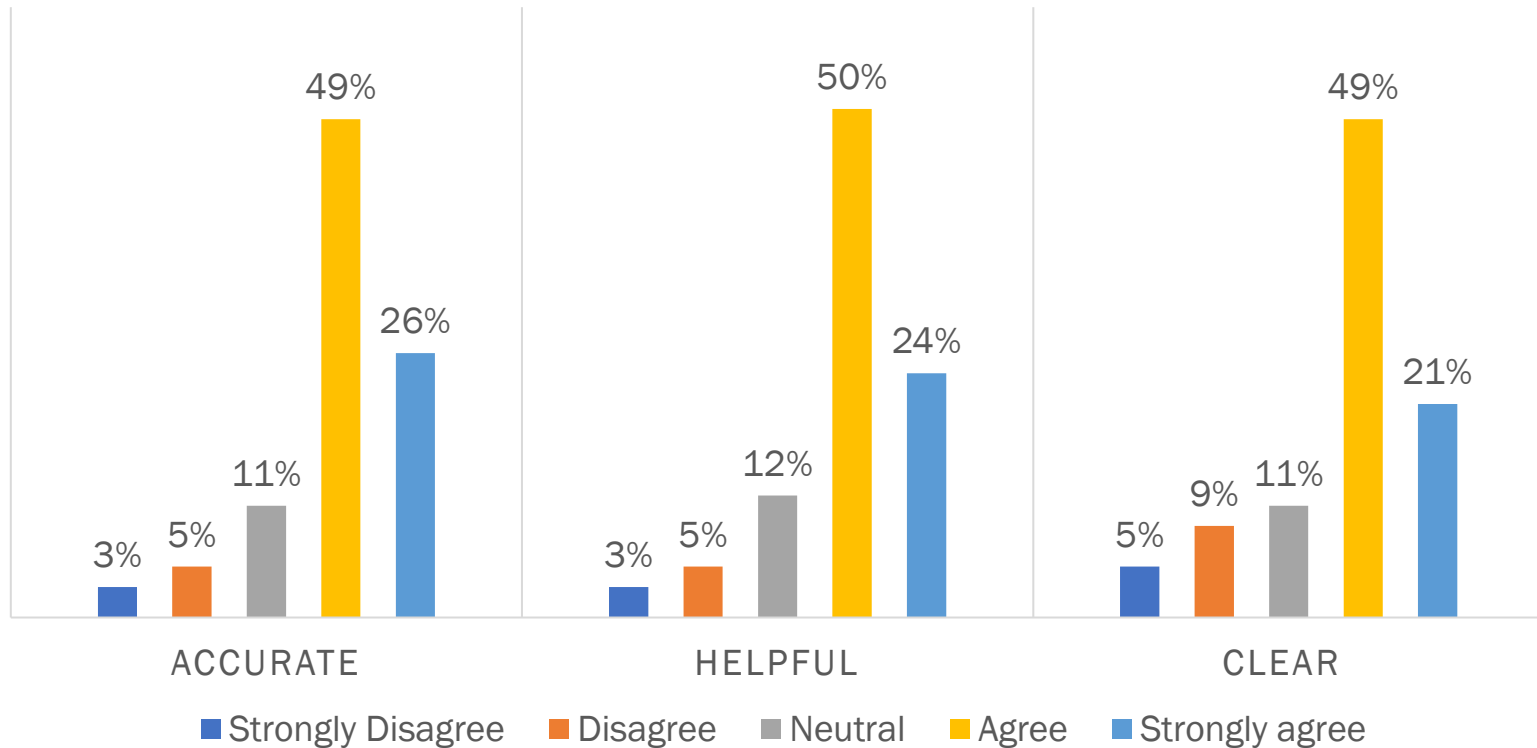
The summarization of respondents' feedback underscores a common need for clear, organized, and timely communication regarding pre-Assembly activities. Participants expressed frustration over not receiving necessary information, confusing or incomplete materials, and encountering obstacles in understanding their roles and preparations for upcoming events. To enhance their readiness and involvement, more transparent and structured communication in terms of event details, role responsibilities, and logistical aspects such as schedules and location details is desired. The verbatims* highlight problem areas in information dissemination, expectations setting, and support strategies for attendees, particularly for those experiencing the Assembly for the first time.

*Verbatims are found in accompany Excel file.

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Information respondents received about their role prior to GA was accurate, helpful, and clear.

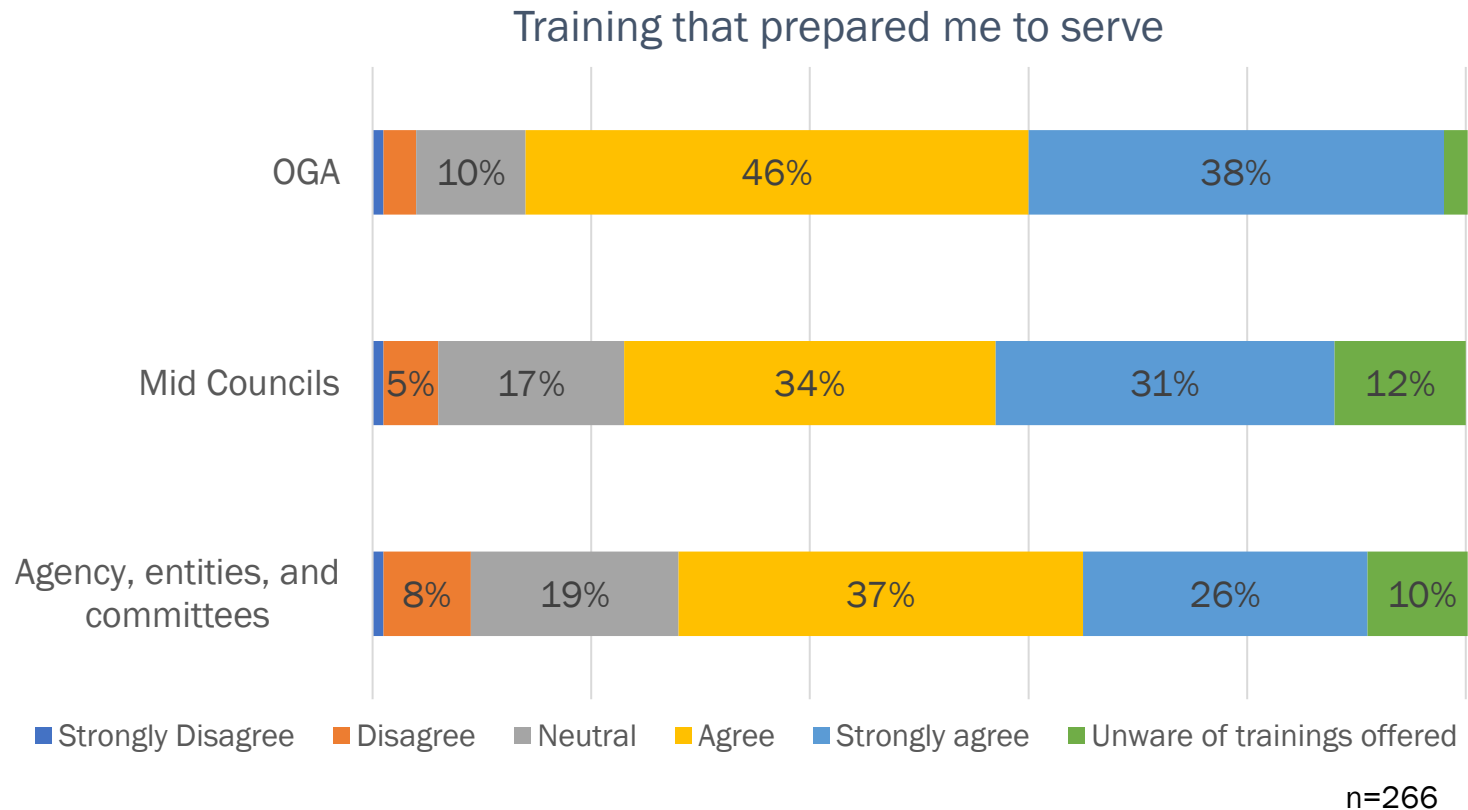
Rough seventy percent found the information they received regarding their role to have been accurate (75%,) helpful (74%,) and clear (70%.)



n=511

Training with Office of General Assembly and other agencies made respondents feel comfortable and prepared to serve.

Eighty-four percent agree (46%) and strongly agree (38%) that the OGA training made them feel comfortable and prepared to serve. This is higher than training offered by Mid Councils (65%) and by agencies and committees (63%.) What is unknown is the sequence of training, that is, did each successive training build upon the previous training and in what order the trainee attended each training session.



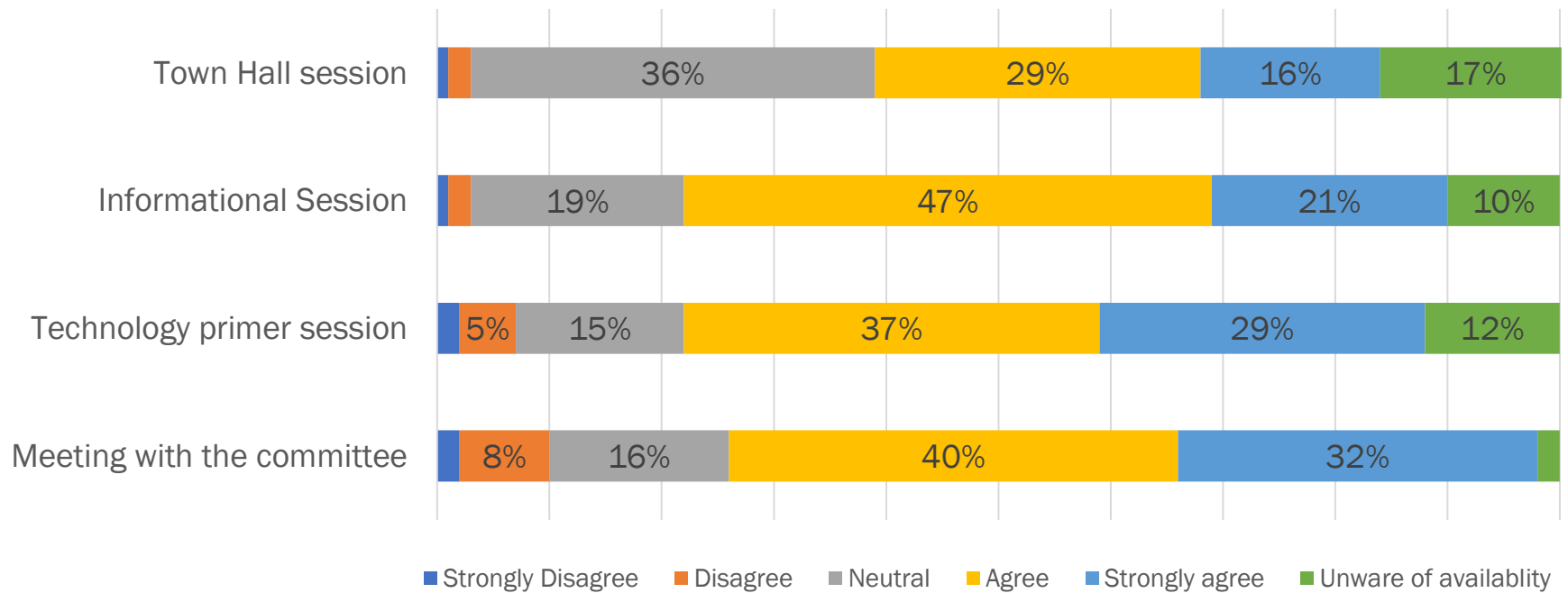
Percentages of 4% or less are not labeled

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Respondents share that meeting with the following groups made them feel comfortable and prepared to serve.

Meeting with their committees (72%) most made respondents comfortable and prepared to serve. Following meeting with their committee, the informational session (68%) and the technology session. They were least likely to say that Town Hall (45%) made them feel comfortable and prepared to serve.

Sessions that prepared me for service



n=264

Percentages of 4% or less are not labeled

Which training materials did you find most effective?

Respondents indicated a positive reception to various training methods, with an emphasis on their effectiveness and helpfulness. Responses frequently mentioned the utility of the MyGA platform, videos, online resources, and interactive sessions such as those led by Tim Cargal. The importance of comprehending parliamentary procedures and embracing equity and inclusion principles were also evident, demonstrating a holistic approach to the training materials offered.

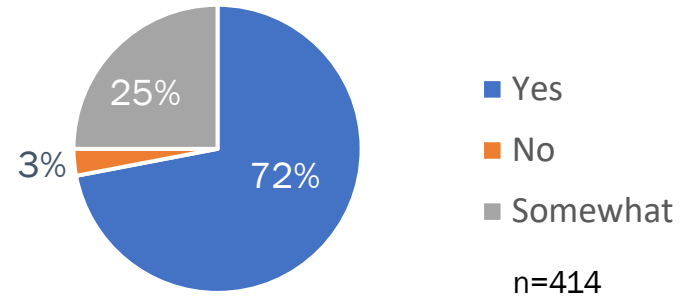
What could you have used more help with?

Respondents reported needing more help with parliamentary procedures and tools, particularly with making and submitting motions during meetings. Training and practice opportunities for these procedures were frequently cited as lacking. Many experienced challenges with the technology for online meetings, noted technical and informational shortcomings, and sought more effective committee dynamics, support, and communication channels.

MyGA
&
Ga-pcusa.org

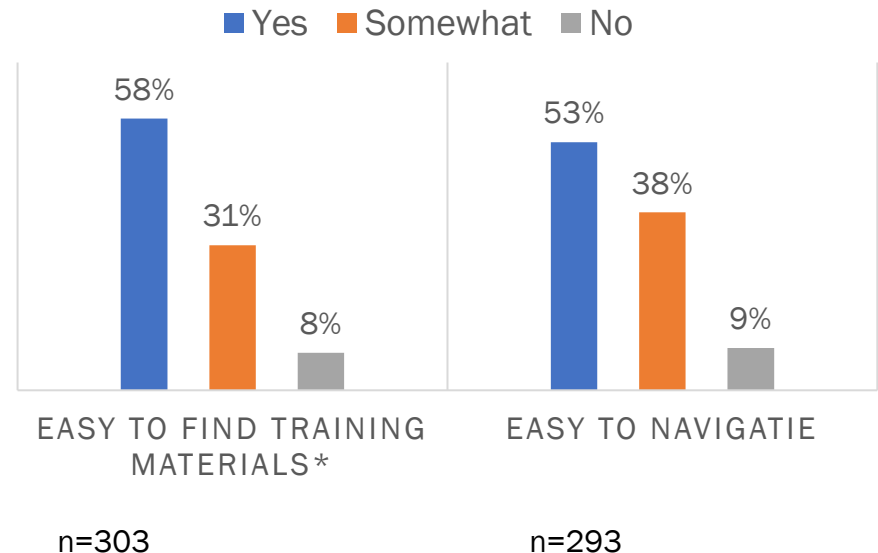
Usefulness of online resources

For most, MyGA was a helpful resource and tool during online committee meetings.



General Assembly website – easy to navigate and find training materials

- ❖ While 53% found the website easy to navigate, 38% only found it somewhat easy.
- ❖ Similarly, although 58% share that the training materials were easy to find, 31% only found it somewhat easy.

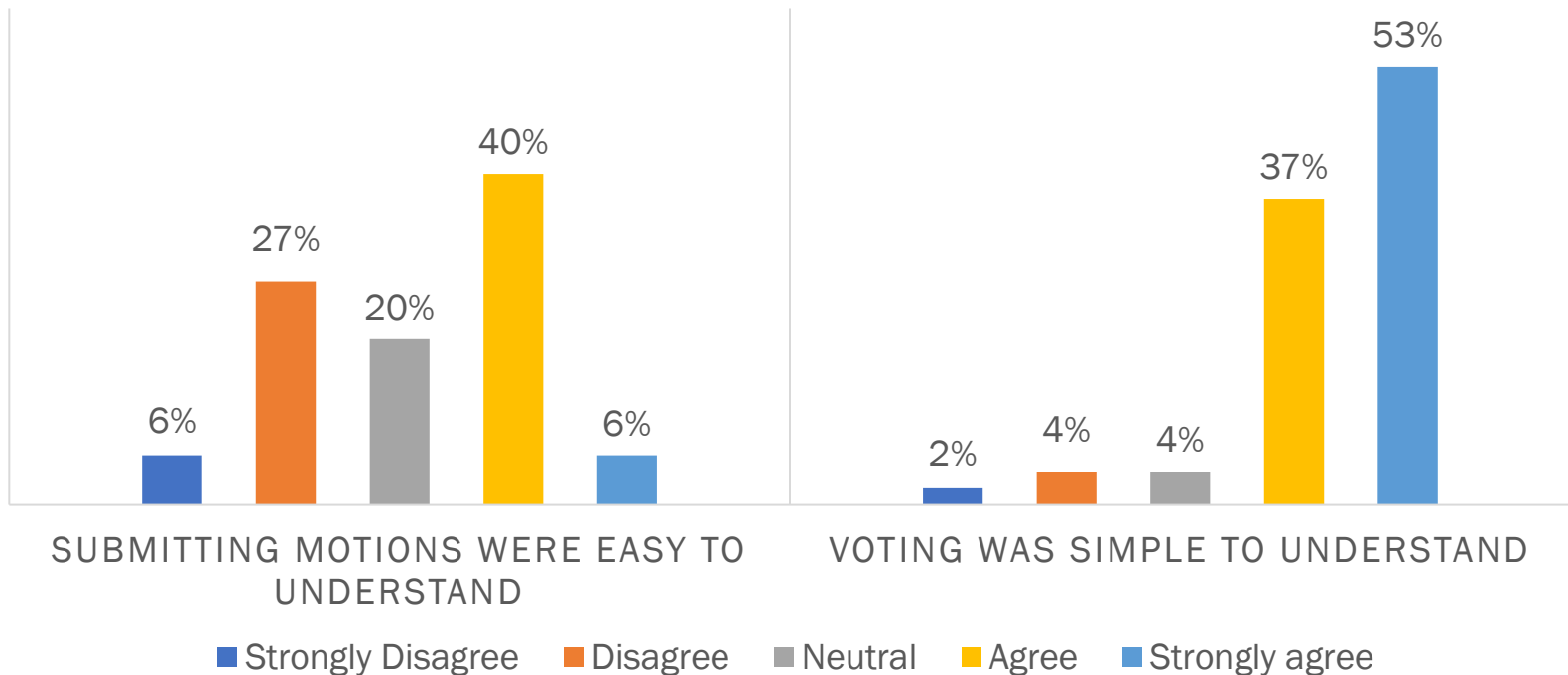


*For the remaining 3%, this question did not apply. .

Voting during committee meetings was simple to understand, however, submitting motions during meetings was not as easy.

Voting during the Assembly appears to have been relatively easy to understand (53%, strongly agree; 37%, agree) However, submitting motions was not as simple. One third did not think the process for submitting motions was easy to understand (6%, strongly disagree; 27%, disagree).

The findings suggest that additional training or rewording of the existing training for how to submit a motion might be warranted.

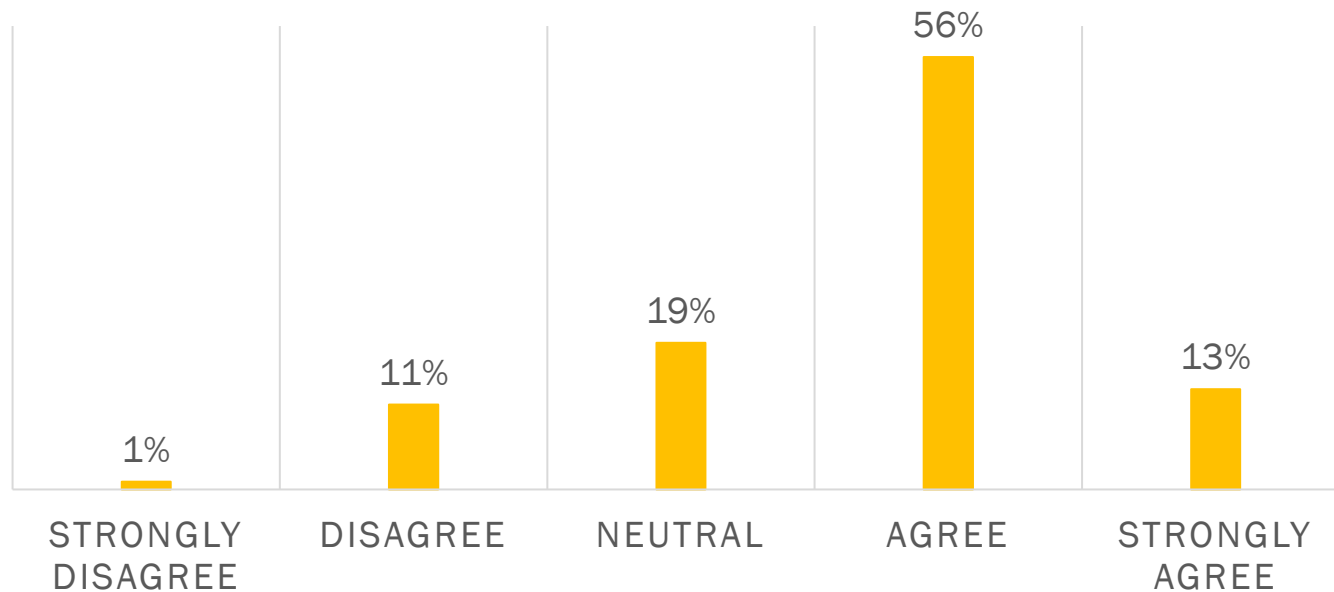


n=228

Over half agree that MyGA made complicated parliamentary processes easy to follow

Sixty-nine percent agree (56%) and strongly agree (13%) that MyGA made following along with the processes easy. Nineteen percent are neutral on whether MyGA made following along easier.

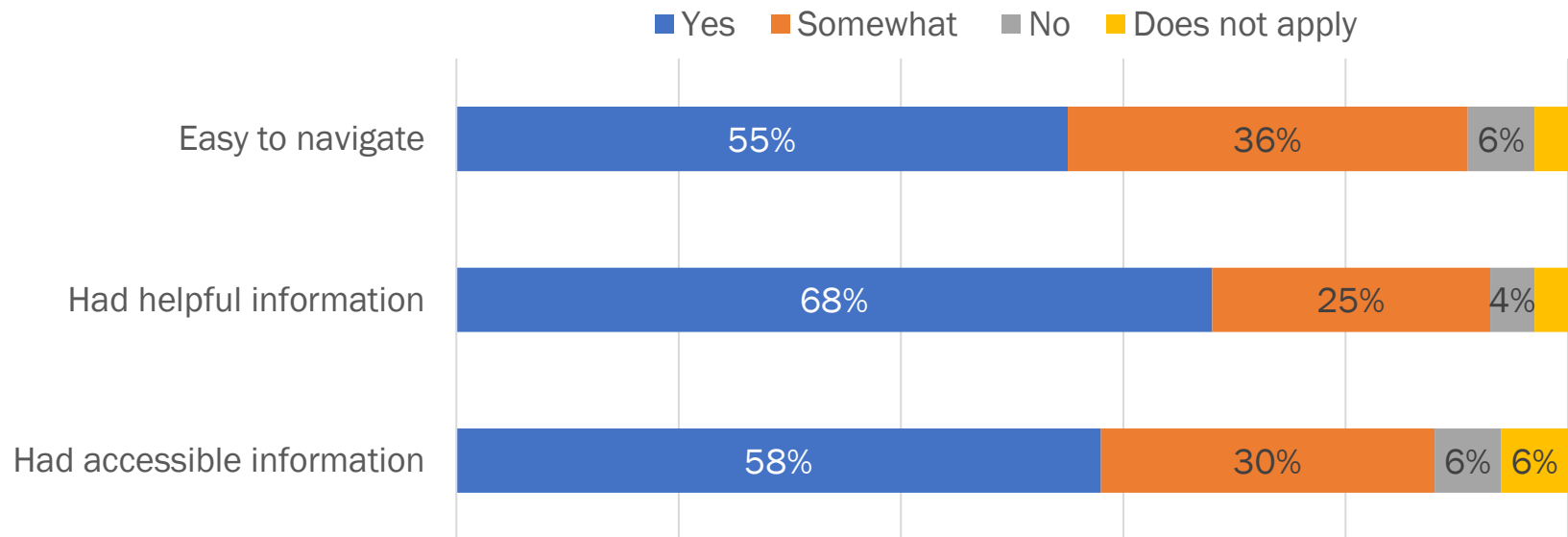
MYGA MADE IT EASY TO FOLLOW ALONG WITH COMPLICATED PARLIAMENTARY PROCESSES



n=259

MyGA was easy to navigate and held helpful and accessible information

For over half of respondents, MyGA was easy to navigate (55%) and had helpful (68%) and accessible (58%) information. While few disagreed, over one-fourth only found the website somewhat easy to navigate (36%), somewhat helpful (25%), and somewhat accessible (30%).

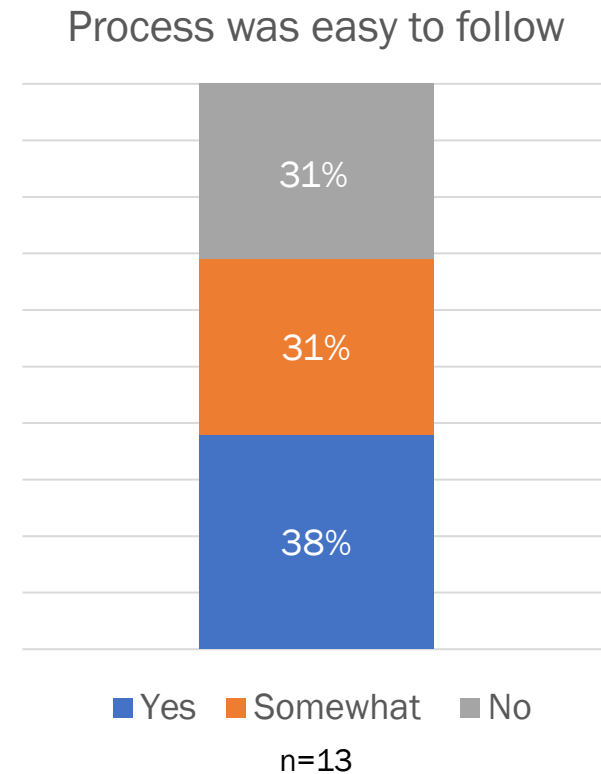
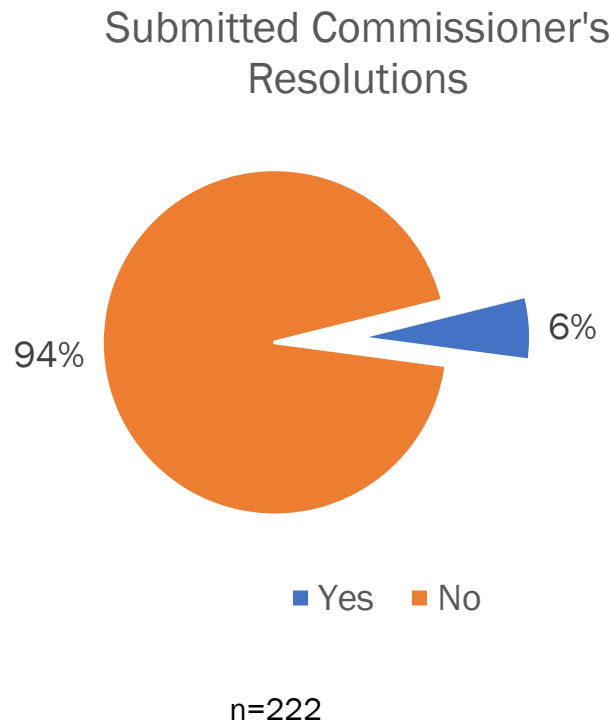


n=521

Percentages of 3% or less are not labeled

For the responding Commissioners, less than half found the Commissioner's Resolution process easy to follow.

Only 6% of responding Commissioners submitted Commissioner's Resolutions. Of the thirteen who submitted a resolution and responded to the ease of the process, they did not find to be difficult 38%/n=5 found the process easy to follow and 31%/n=4 found it somewhat easy).



What online tools would have made it easier to create and submit a commissioner's resolution?

Participants expressed a need for more defined details regarding public hearing timings and notification systems to improve planning and attendance. Issues surrounding the registration and participation process were noted, suggesting that enhancements could facilitate better engagement. Insufficient committee communication and unclear public participation guidelines were flagged as areas needing attention, as they potentially hinder effective involvement. Specific suggestions for improvement include providing earlier notices, explicit instructions for participation, and access to a video explaining the hearings and participation steps.



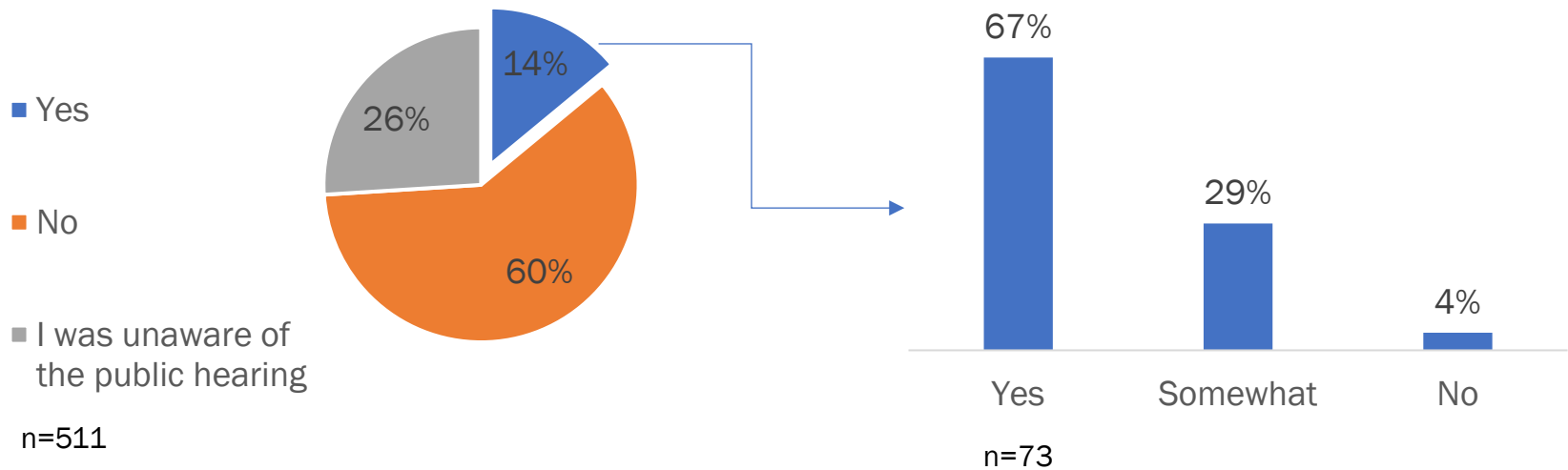
Public Hearing

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Most did not take part in the public hearing process but for those that did, the process was easy to follow.

Only 14% participated in the public hearing. Some (26%) were unaware of the public hearing. The majority, 60%, did not take part in the public hearing process.

Of those that participated, most (67%) found the process easy to follow while a small percentage did not.



What online tools would have made it easier to sign up for public hearings?

Participants expressed a need for more defined details regarding the time of the public hearing and the subsequent notification systems to improve participant's planning and attendance. Issues surrounding the registration and participation process were noted, suggesting that enhancements could facilitate better engagement. Insufficient committee communication and unclear public participation guidelines were flagged as areas needing attention, as they potentially hinder effective involvement. Specific suggestions included earlier notices, explicit instructions for participation, and access to a video explaining the hearings and participation steps.



Plenary & Assembly Business

Many agree that vital issues of the Church were addressed by all.

For each committee and agency, about half agree that vital issues were addressed thanks to the overtures and reports. This is followed by nearly a quarter strongly agreeing.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Overtures brought by Mid Councils	2%	5%	16%	53%	24%
Reports from Special Committees	2%	5%	15%	54%	24%
Reports from Agencies	2%	7%	23%	52%	18%

n=498

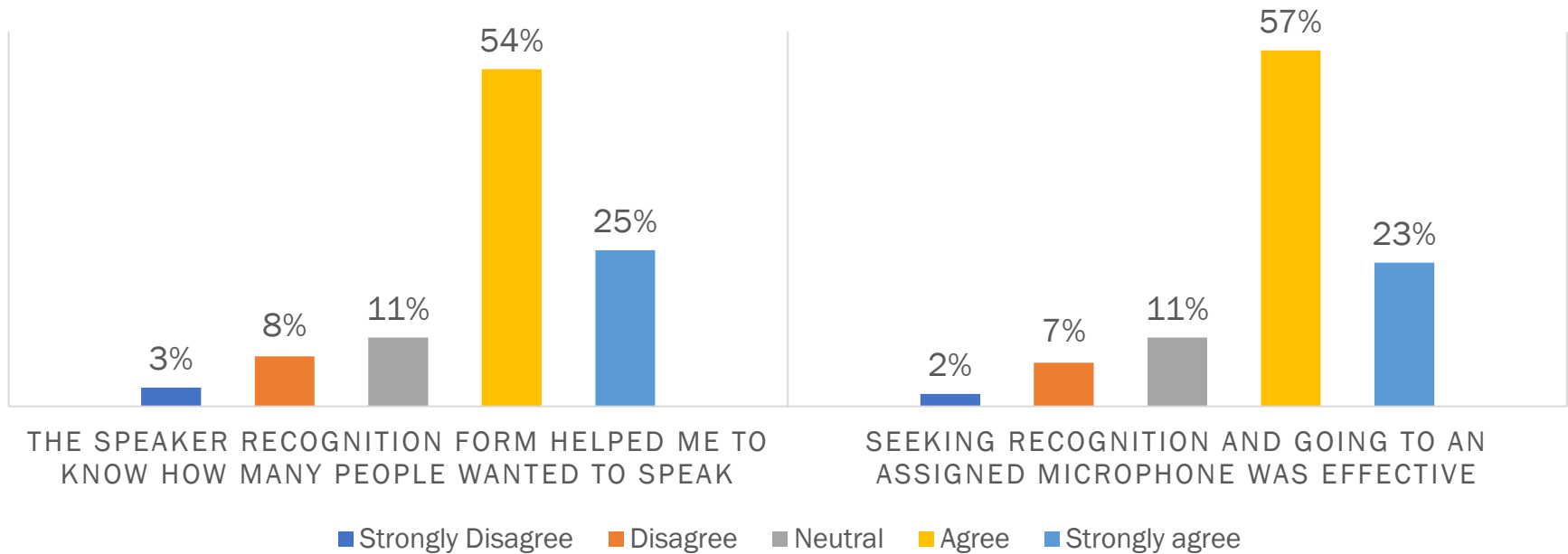
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The speaker recognition form was useful

For 79%, the speaker recognition form helped responders know how many people wanted to speak.

Seeking recognition and going to an assigned microphone was an effective way to engage the assembly

Likewise, a combined 80% of respondents **agree** (57%) and **strongly agree** (23%) seeking recognition and going to the assigned microphone to speak was an effective way to engage the Assembly.



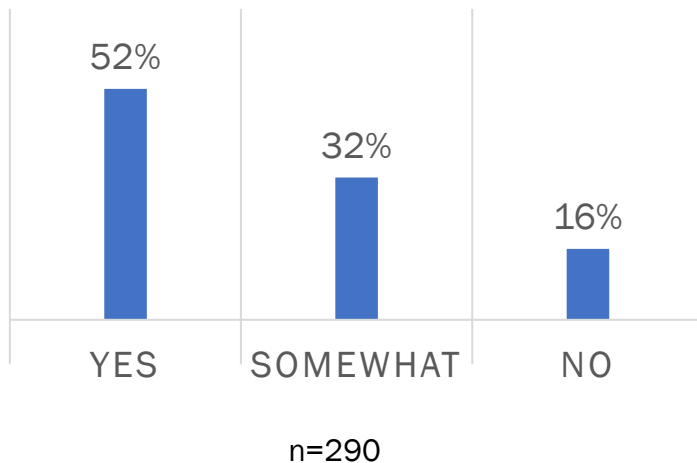
n=258

For some, plenaries were scheduled in a way that balanced the work of the assembly with rest and plenary time is appropriate as is.

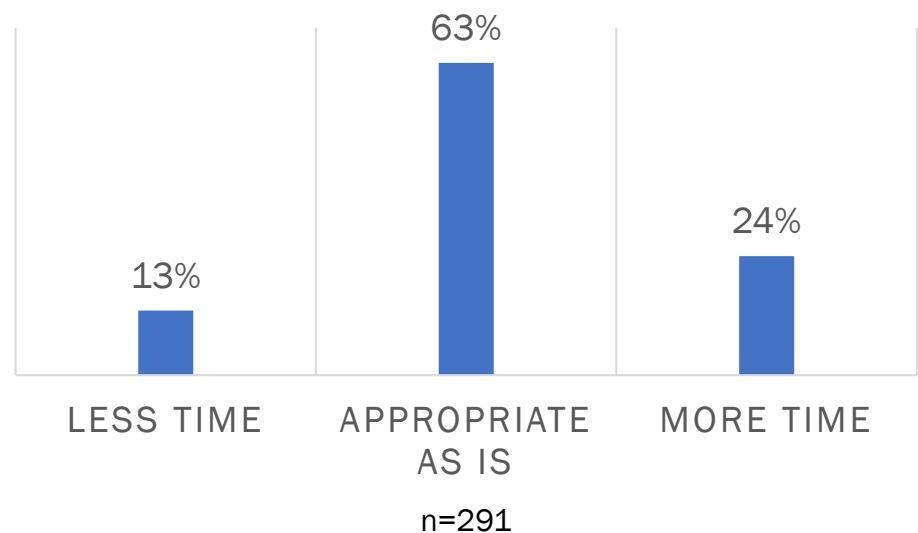
Fifty-two percent (n=152) share that plenaries are scheduled in a way that balances work and rest. Thirty-two percent (n=93) say this is somewhat true.

As for going forward, 63% (n=183) report that current amount of plenary time is appropriate for plenaries going forward. Nearly a quarter (24%) disagree, saying plenaries should be allotted more time.

DOES PLENARY BALANCE WORK AND REST



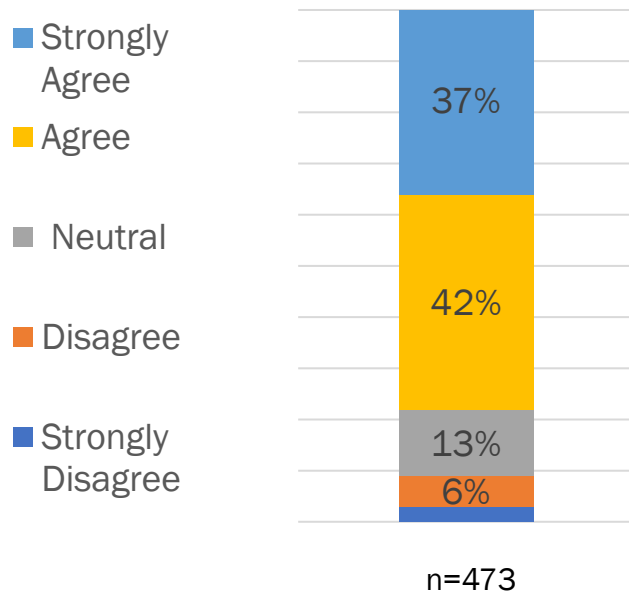
PLENARY TIME GOING FORWARD



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Moderators gave appropriate space for pausing and discernment

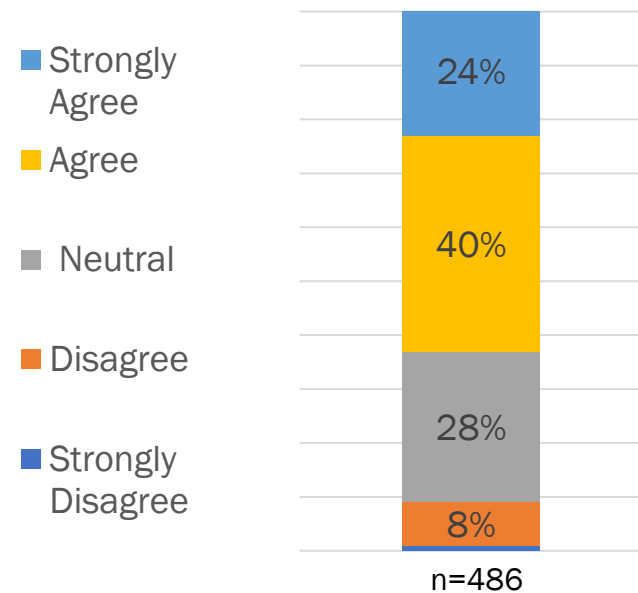
Most agree (42%) and strongly agree (37%) that Moderators gave appropriate space for pausing and discernment. This leaves roughly 20% that are neutral or disagree.



Percentages of 3% or less are not labeled

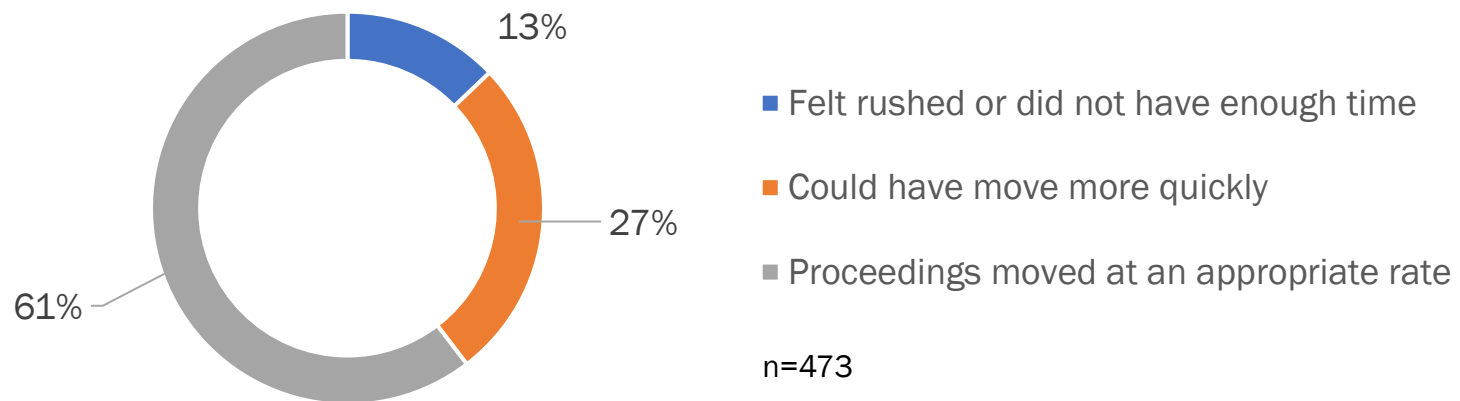
Over half agree that their experience in committee informed my experience in plenary

A combined 64% agree to strongly agree that their time in committee informed their plenary experience. However, this is not true for the one third of the respondents including the 28% who are neutral.



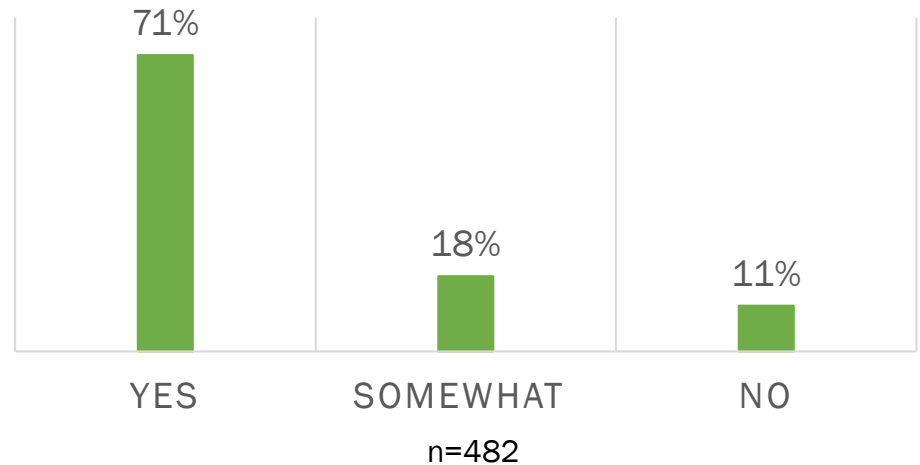
Many say that proceedings moved at an appropriate rate.

More than half (61%) thought the proceedings moved at the appropriate rate. Some (27%) share that proceedings could have moved more quickly. However, 13% (n=61) felt rushed and felt as if they did not have enough time.



Most were fully able to participate during plenaries

Although majority of respondents (71%) were able to participate fully in plenary hall, some were not. Eighteen percent (n=86) could only somewhat participate, and 11% (n=54) shared no, they were not fully able to participate.

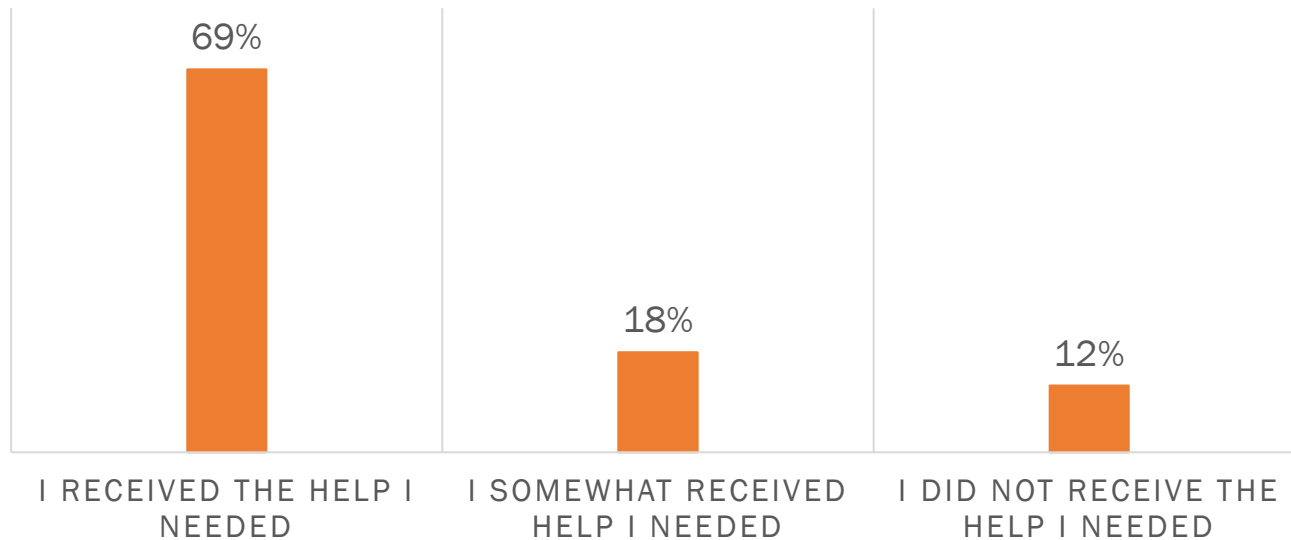


What changes would have helped you to fully participate ?

Participants voiced a range of challenges impacting their ability to fully engage, emphasizing difficulties with recognition by the moderators, unclear questions, role-based restrictions, and technical problems. These concerns collectively suggest a need for clearer communication protocols and more inclusive participation structures to enable equitable engagement.

Parliamentary supports in the plenary hall provided timely needed assistance

Sixty-nine percent (n=129) received the help they needed from parliamentary supports in the plenary hall. Eighteen percent (n=34) somewhat got the help they needed and 12% (n=23) did not get the help they needed in the plenary hall.



n=186

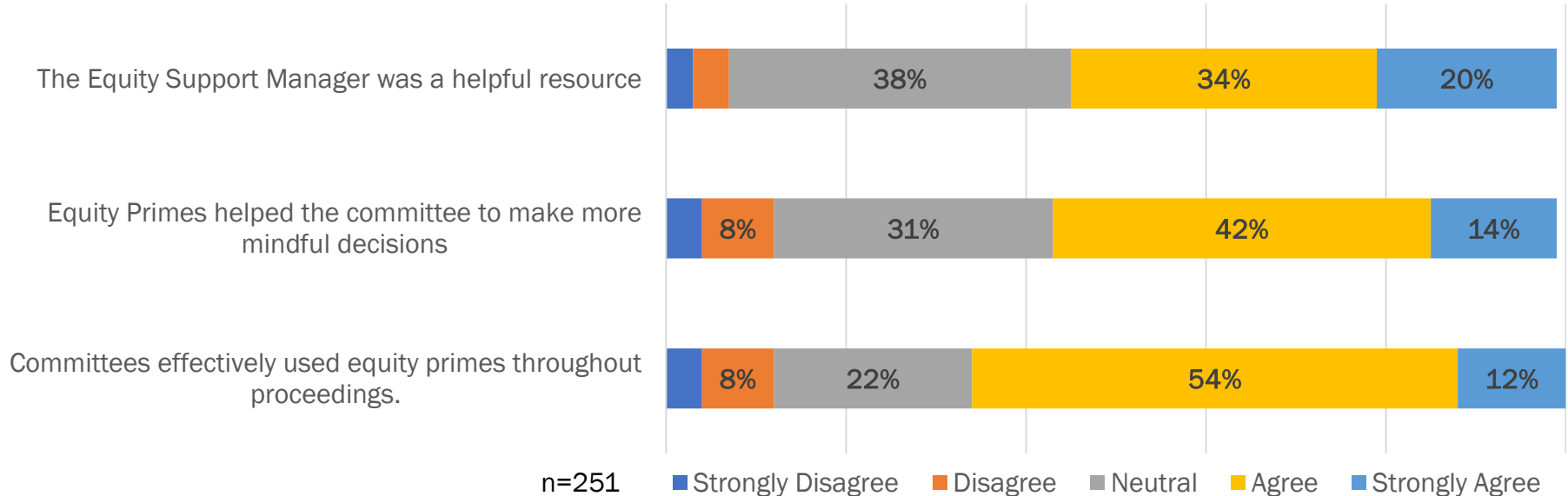
Equity Primes

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Several agree that the Equity Primes Tools and Support Manager were helpful, however about one third are neutral.

They agree that the ...

- Support Manager was helpful.
- Equity Primes tools helped committees make mindful decisions
- Committees effectively used the tools during proceedings



It is important to note that one-third of respondents are neutral. Neutral means undecided as to agree or disagree, no strong opinion, or the best option when the respondent does not want to respond. A valid interpretation is that equity prime tools are not useful to one third of the respondents.

Percentages of 4% or less are not labeled

Travel Accommodations & Facilities

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Overall, according to respondents, travel accommodations and facilities were not an issue.

Respondents agree that travel plans were easy to make (82%), hotels were close enough (97%), events were easy to locate (85%), and locations had accessible accommodations. They also found volunteers to be helpful. They share that public transportation should not be prioritized (72%.) *This could be because hotels were close to the Assembly.*

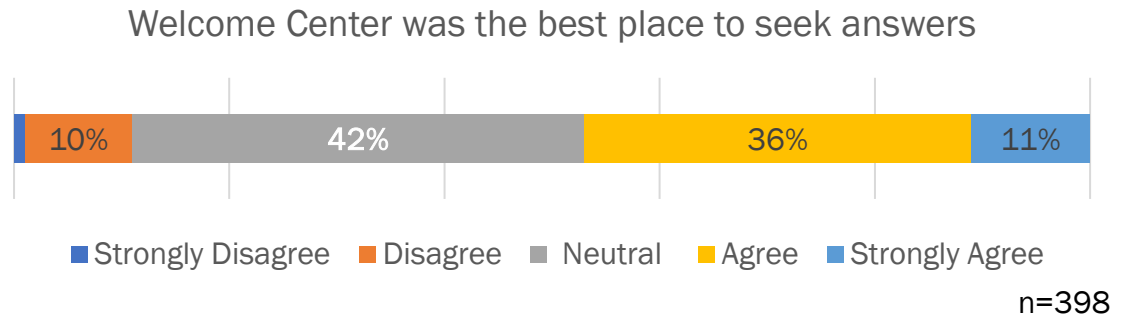
	No	Somewhat	Yes
Were making travel plans easy	4%	13%	82%
Were hotels close enough	1%	2%	97%
Should we prioritize public transportation	72%	22%	6%
Were events easy to locate?	1%	14%	85%
Were volunteers helpful	1%	4%	95%
Were locations accessible with accommodations?	1%	6%	93%

n=425

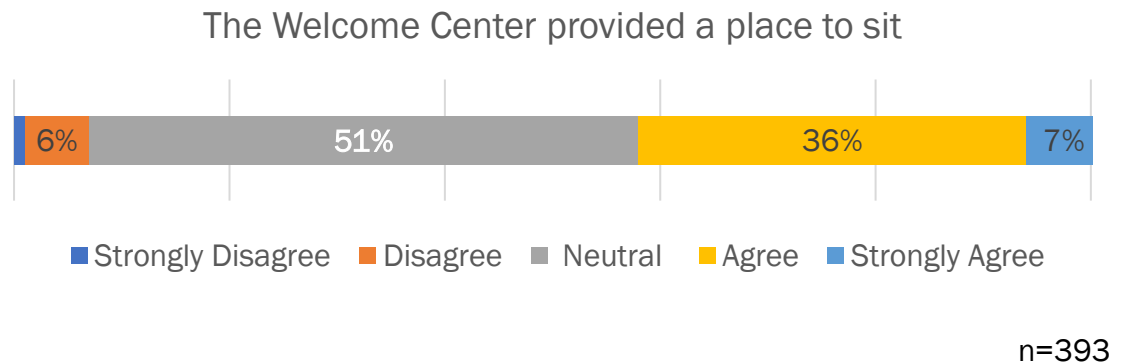
The Welcome Center

The Welcome Center has very fixed reviews with a significant number of neutral responses. From comments made later in the survey, attendees would have liked more local staffing of the Welcome Center. These responses suggest additional thought should go into the planning of the next welcome center. Dually staffed with those who can answer Assembly related questions and those who can speak to the community. Careful attention should be given for additional, comfortable seating.

While 47% agreed that the Welcome Center was the best place to seek answers when they had a question, 42% were neutral.



Forty-three percent agreed that the Welcome Center provided comfortable place to sit, however just over half (51%) remained neutral.



Percentages of 4% or less are not labeled

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In Salt Lake City, respondents easily found safe and comfortable restroom facilities and found food to meet their dietary needs.

While participating in-person, respondents overwhelmingly agree (60%) and strongly agree (36%) that they easily found safe and comfortable restrooms. They also agree (59%) and strongly agree (23%) that they were able to find foods that met their dietary needs. They were less likely to agree (52%) and strongly agree (15%) to easily accessing support for their well-being. In fact, 30% were neutral.

Easy access to support my physical well-being



Easily found safe and comfortable restrooms



Found food to meet dietary needs



■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Percentages of 4% or less are not labeled

Technology

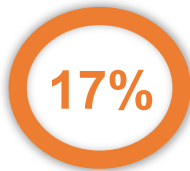
Devices and Zoom

Most attendees had personal or professional computers and other devices to use during the Assembly but not all, 10% (n=48) purchased or borrowed hardware. Mid councils assisted others (17%,n=77) arranging space, internet, and/or hardware.

The Assembly was not immune to Zoom related issues.



Purchased or borrowed hardware participate during online committee sessions



Mid Council assist with arranging space, internet access, and/or hardware during online committees



Encountered issues using Zoom for online meeting participation

n=485

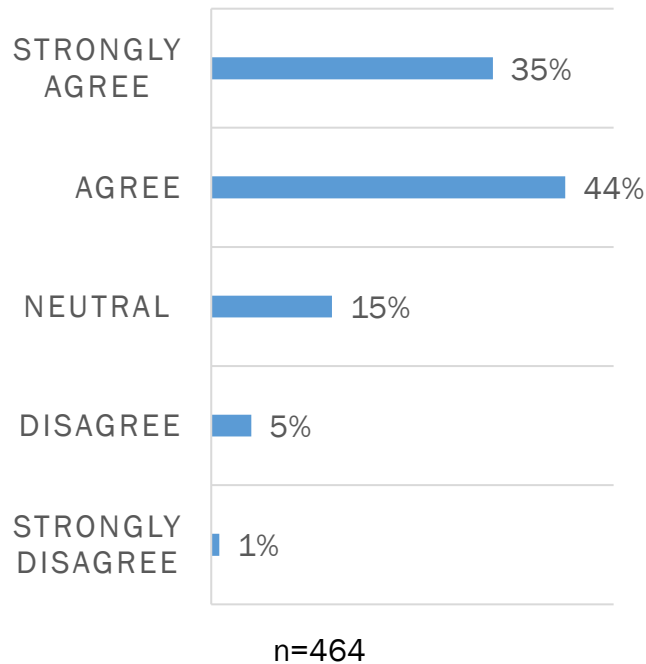


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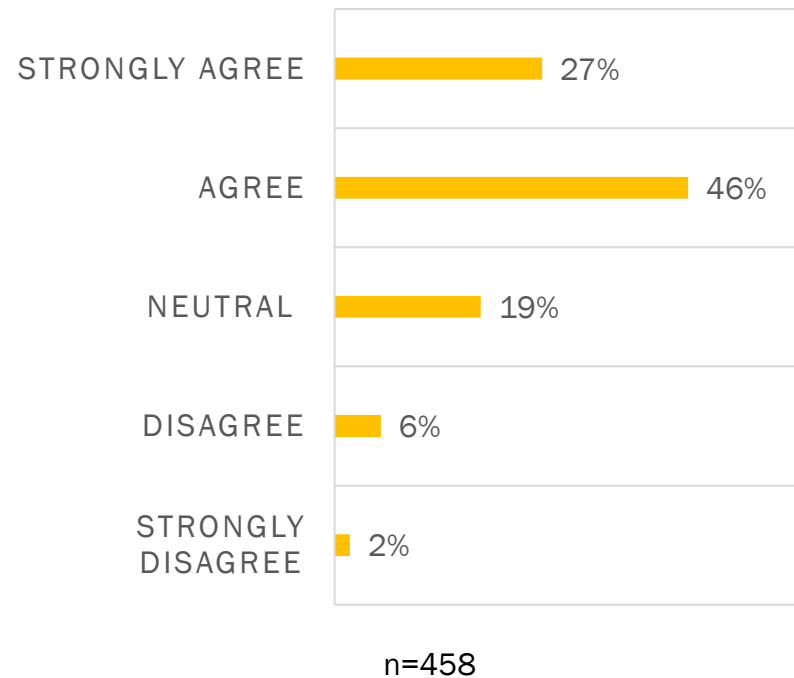
Most felt prepared to use tech for General Assembly and say that plenary tech was easy to use.

With most attendees being familiar their own devices and having participated in training sessions related to Assembly programs, they were both prepared and able to engage the technology.

FELT PREPARED TO USE TECH



PLENARY TECH WAS EASY TO USE

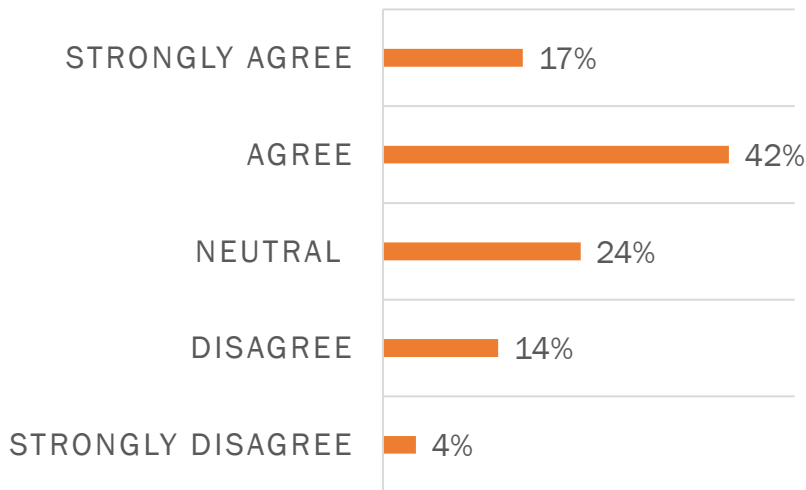


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Over half say the process for engaging committees was clear and that committees were successful in their work. However, nearly a quarter are neutral.

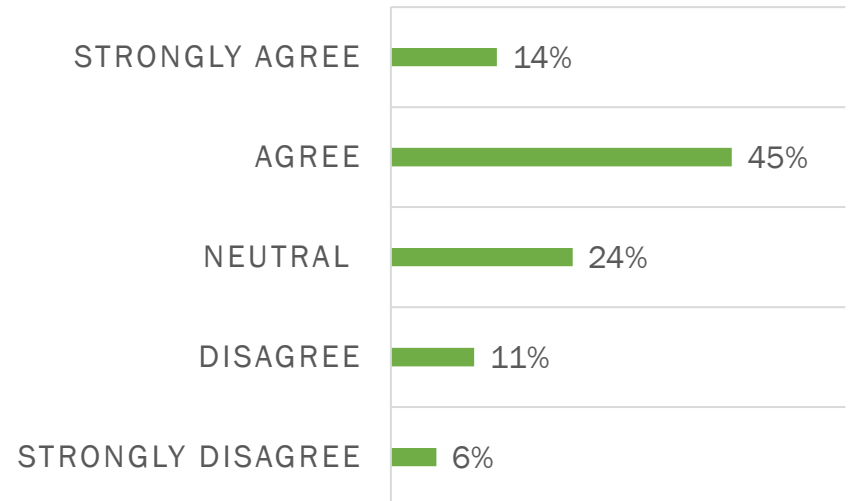
From comments later in the survey, many stated their preference for in-person meetings to promote conversation among the members. Virtual conversations are intentional not leaving much space for conversation and debate. From these responses, it is unclear if the neutral and disagree scores are based in software/training concerns or preference for a different meeting environment. However, a combined 59% of strongly agree/agree are in agreement that the process was clear, and the committees successfully accomplished their work.

PROCESS FOR ENGAGING COMMITTEE WAS CLEAR



n=458

COMMITTEES WERE SUCCESSFUL IN WORK

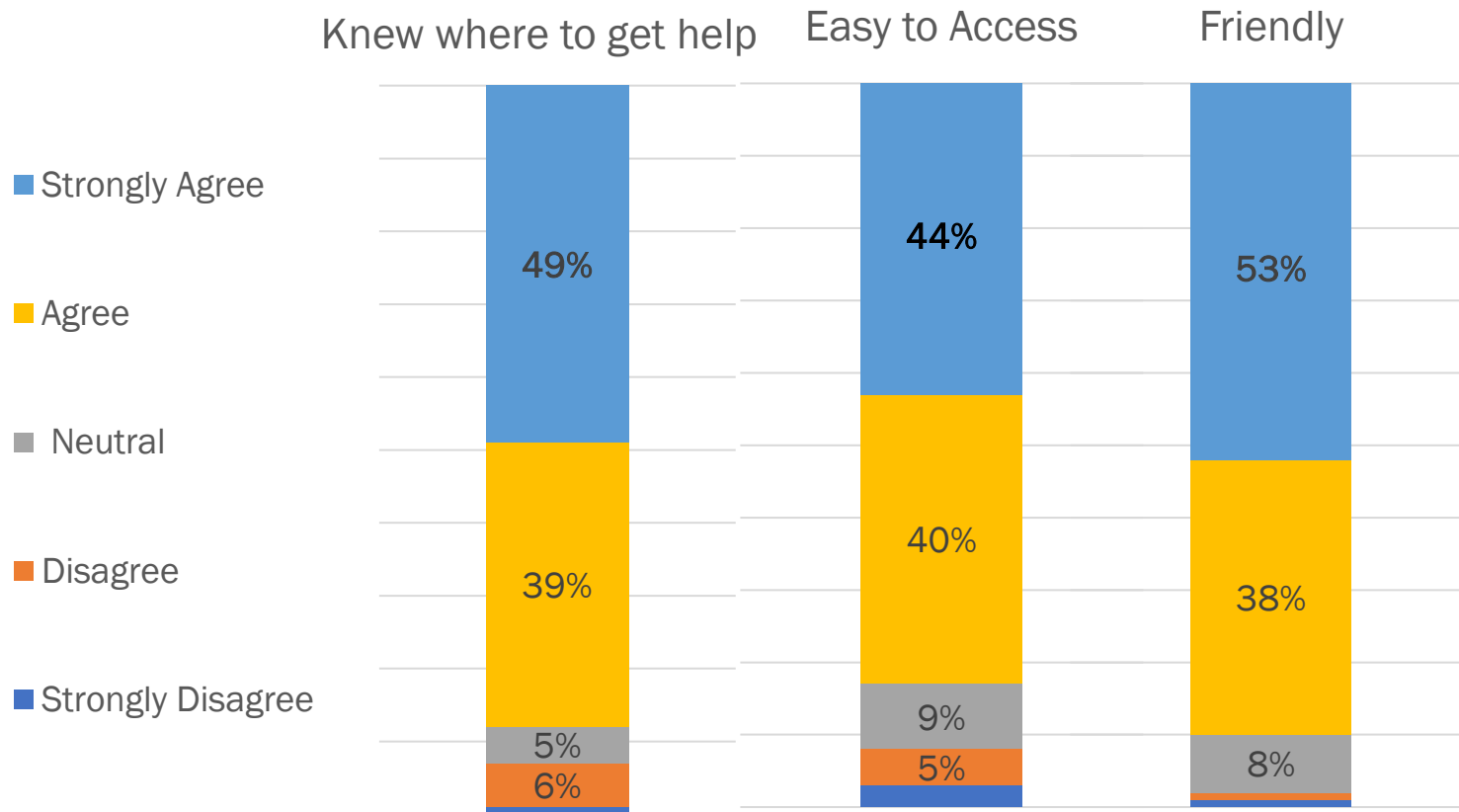


n=456

Help Desk

Nearly 40% used the Help Desk with few issues.

Thirty-seven percent report using the Help Desk. Overall, respondents knew where to find help (88%), found the help was easy to access (84%), and were met with a friendly staff (91%.)



Percentages of 4% or less are not labeled

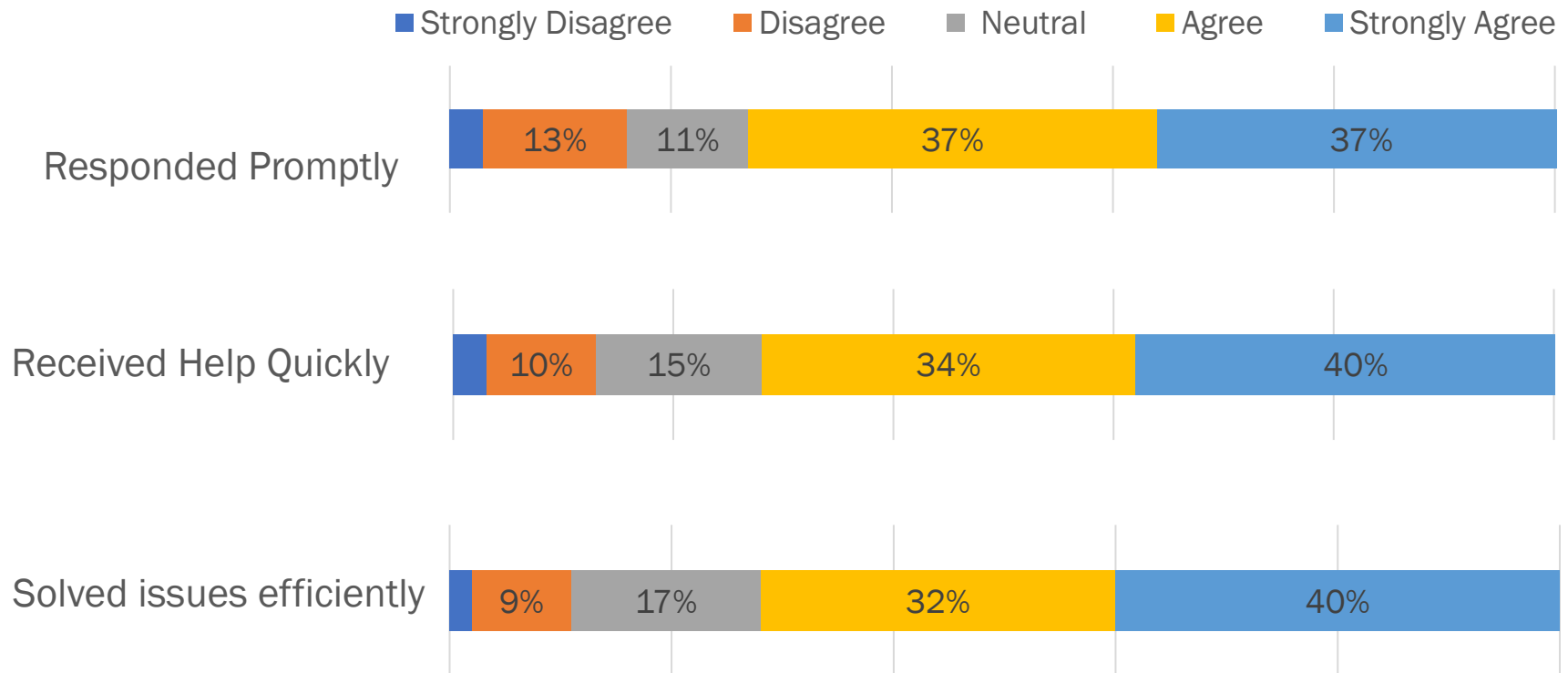
n=178

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The Help Desk was prompt, quick, and efficient.

Seventy-four percent share a level of agreement that the Help Desk responded promptly and helped respondents quickly. Seventy-two percent are in agreement that their issues were solved efficiently.

The Help desk was not so seamless for all. For 16%, the assistance was not prompt. Thirteen percent did not receive help quickly and 11% did not have their issues solved efficiently.



Percentages of 4% or less are not labeled

n=174

Language & Interpretation*

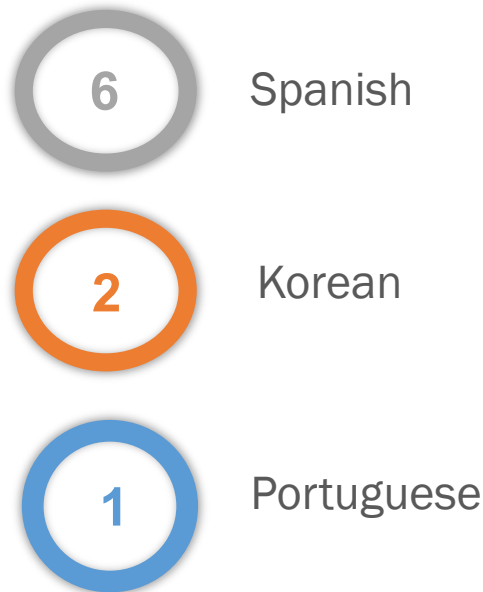
**Due to the small number of respondents, responses are represented by whole numbers instead of percentages.*

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English is the preferred language for majority of respondents.

While most (98%) share their preferred language to be English, nine respondents share their preferred languages and experiences with interpretations and translated materials.

Other preferred languages include: n=9



Services used are: n=8

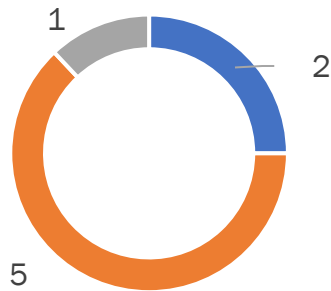
- ❖ Both interpreters and translated materials, used by six respondents
- ❖ Live interpretation in Zoom committee meetings only, used by two respondents

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Respondents share if more or less access to language interpretation and translated materials were needed.

Most had adequate access to interpreters but could more, perhaps easier access to translated materials.

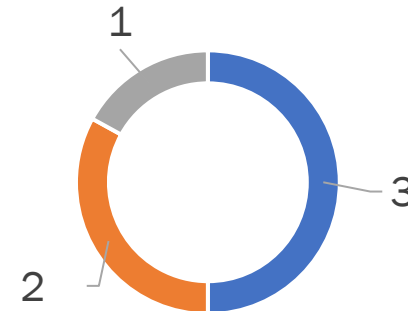
Did you need more or less access to interpretation than you received?



- I needed more access to interpreters/interpretations
- I received exactly the interpretations I needed
- I received more than I needed

n=8

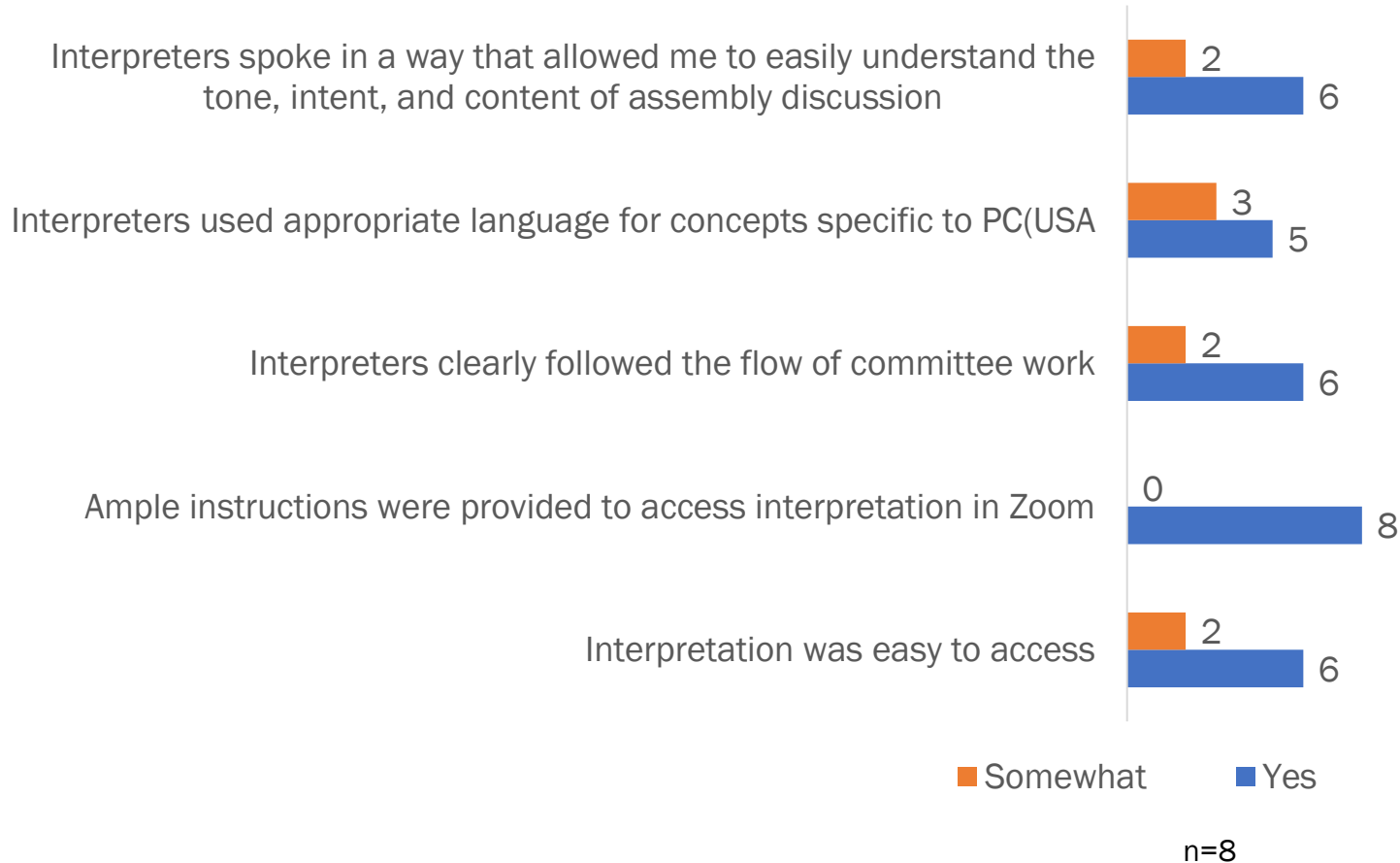
Did you need more or less access to translated materials?



- I needed more access to translated materials
- I received exactly the training materials I needed
- I received more than I needed

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Respondents share their experiences with about interpreters and interpretations and seem satisfied with their experiences.

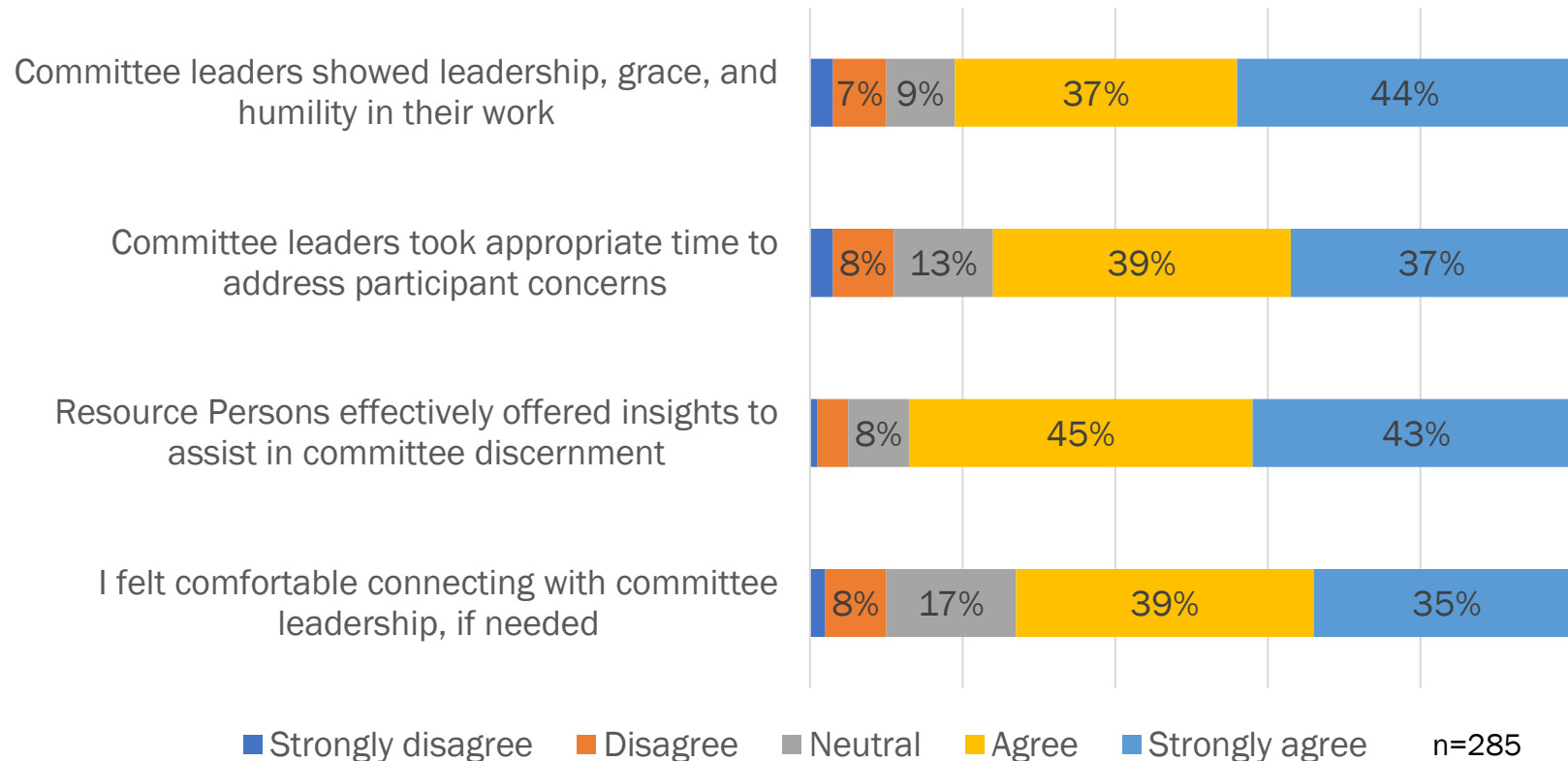


Looking at Committee Leaders

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Committee leaders showed leadership, grace, and humility, and Resource persons effectively offered insights with their assistance.

From comments later in the survey, several voiced concern about the adequacy of committee leaders and suggested leaders be vetted to determine their abilities to lead committee work. They cited the lack of knowledge, application of Roberts Rules and how to move committees forward.



Percentages of 4% or less are not labeled

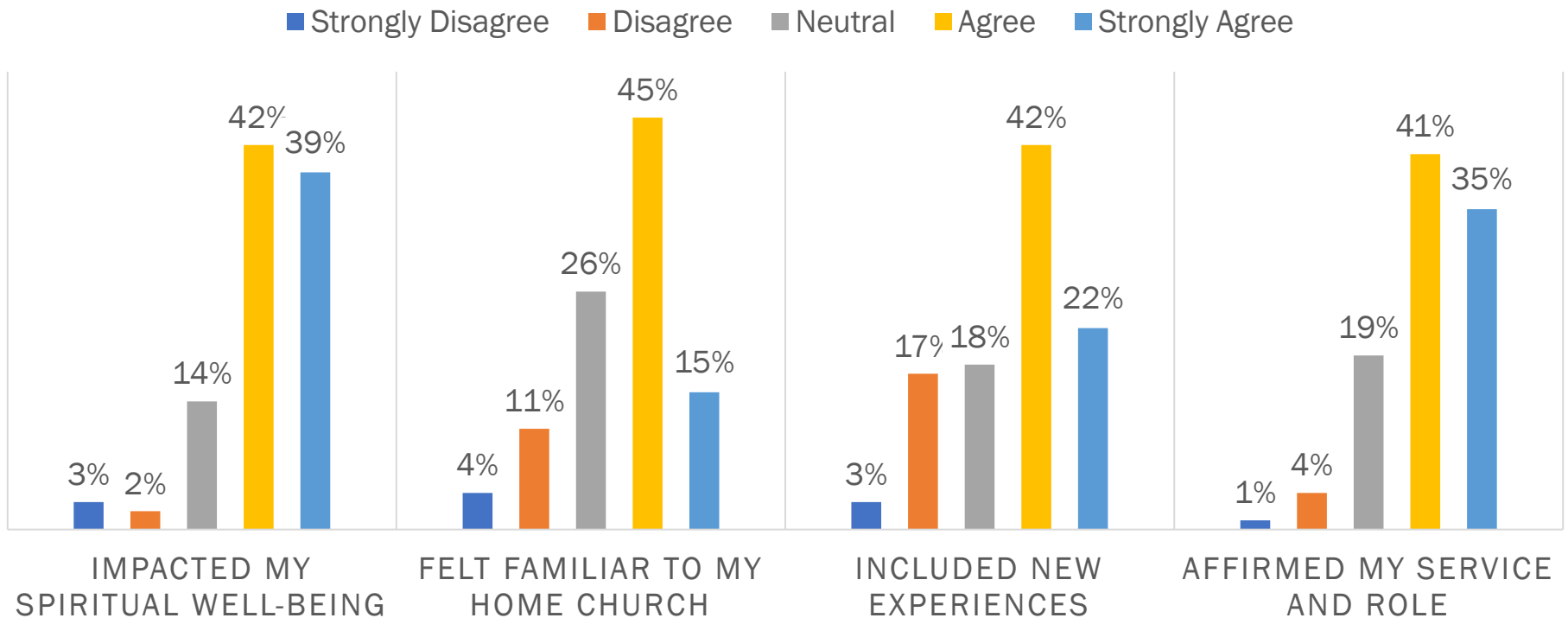
Worship Experience

226th General Assembly Evaluation Report

Worship at the Assembly impacted respondents' well-being, affirmed their service and role, as well as included new experiences.

Eighty-one percent of respondents **agree** (42%) and **strongly agree** (39%) that worship impacted their spiritual well-being. They also **agree** (41%) and **strongly agree** (35%) that worship affirmed their service and role.

From comments later in the survey, worshipers suggest greater diversity in worship leaders.

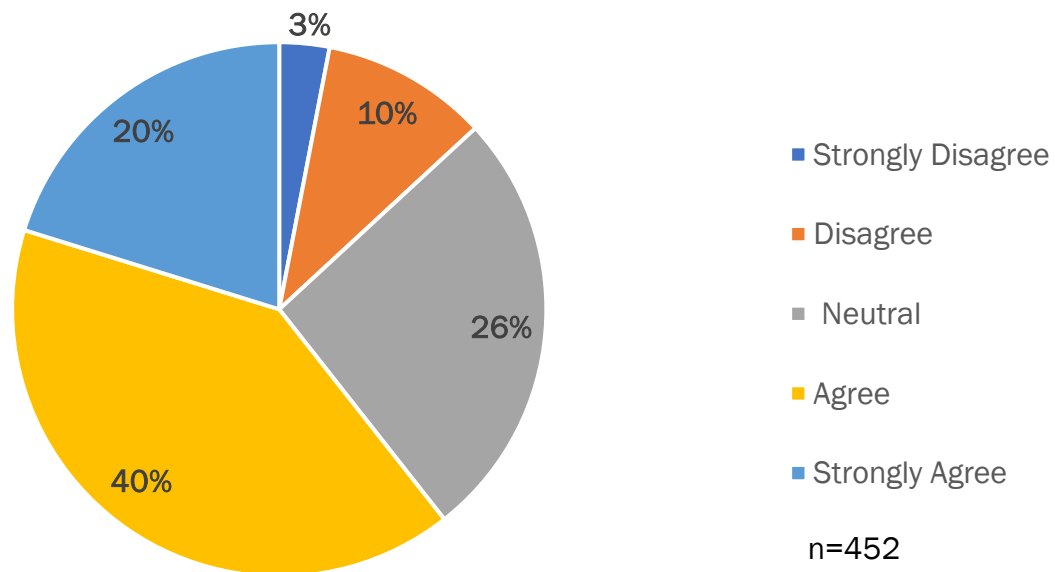


226th General Assembly Evaluation Report

Over half plan to take elements of GA worship back to their worshipping community.

Respondents are slightly less like to have agreement (60%) that the Assembly's worship felt familiar to their home church (see previous page). Despite this, respondents **agree (40%)** and **strongly agree (20%)** to bringing elements of the Assembly's worship back to their churches and worshipping communities.

I will bring elements of GA worship to my worshipping community

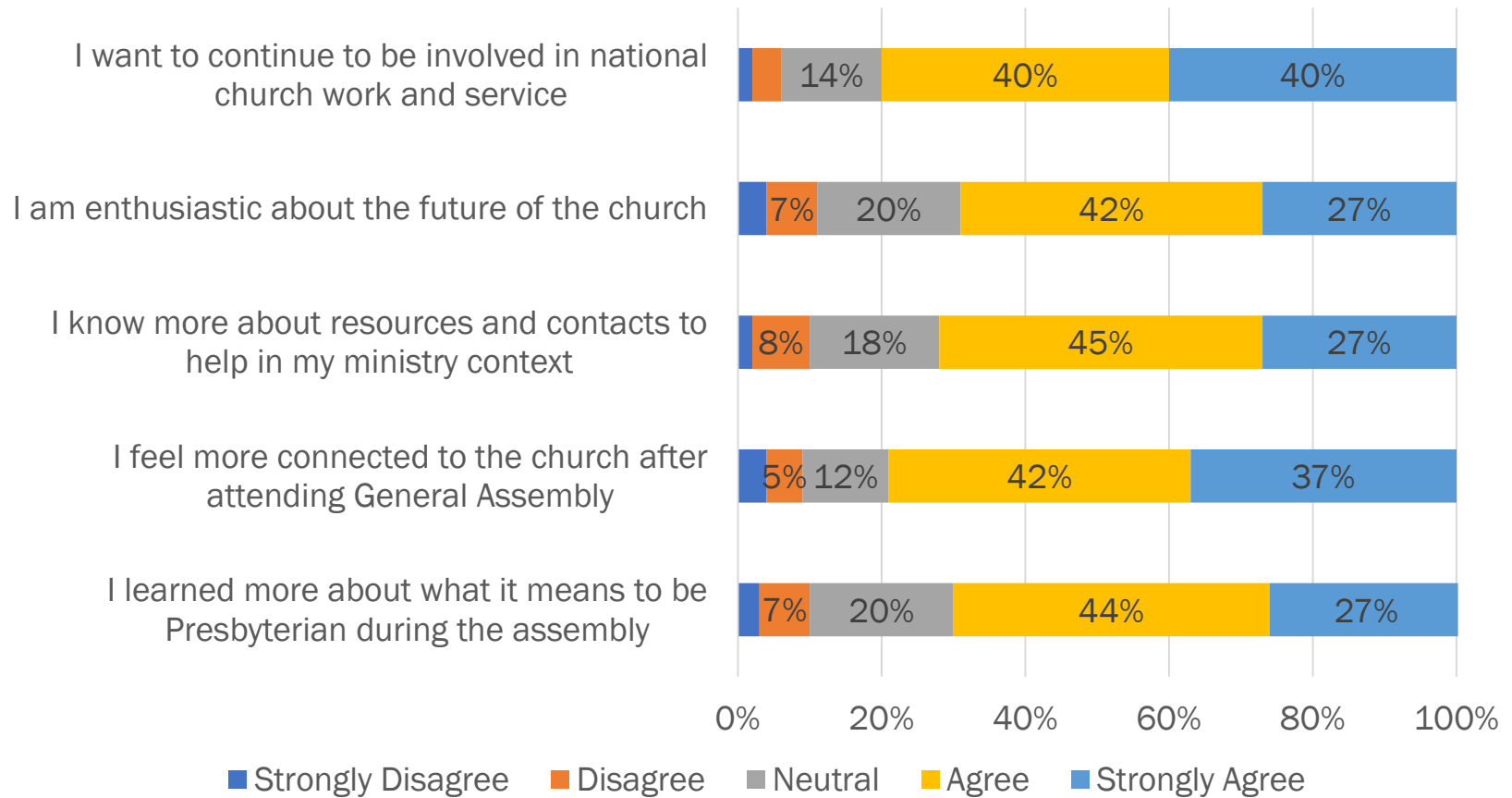


Engagement

A vertical blue line is positioned to the right of the word "Engagement", extending from the top of the letter 't' down to the bottom of the letter 'e'.

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Respondents share their enthusiasm of the future and being involved in the Church.



n=467

Percentages of 4% or less are not labeled

Future Participation

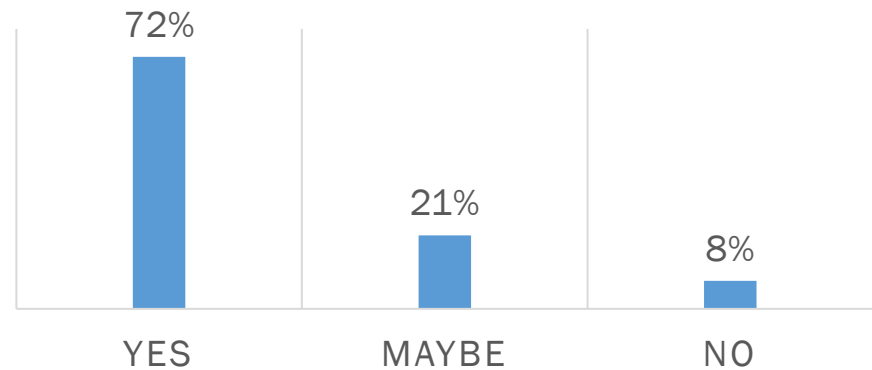
Respondents are more likely to serve as a Commissioner or delegate than a volunteer.

Reflecting upon their General Assembly experiences, 72% would serve as a commissioner or delegate again. Some (21%) are open to the possibility, but not willing to commitment. A few are not willing to commit to future service.

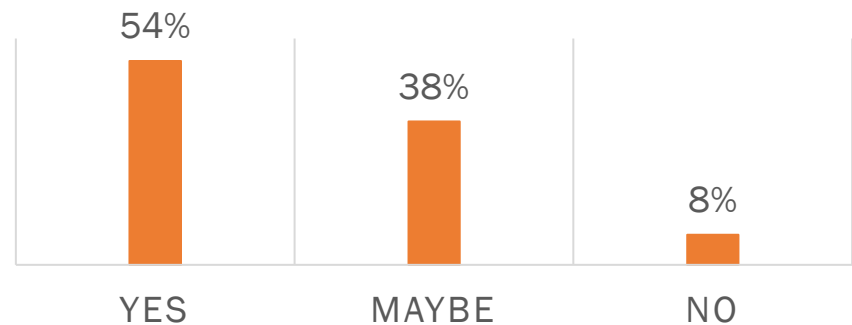
Eight percent (n=29) of respondents say “no,” they would not serve as a commissioner, delegate, or volunteer going forward.

From comments later in the survey, both the time commitment that is required to serve and the stressful nature of the Assembly are reasons why some will not serve again.

SERVE AS COMMISSIONER OR DELEGATE



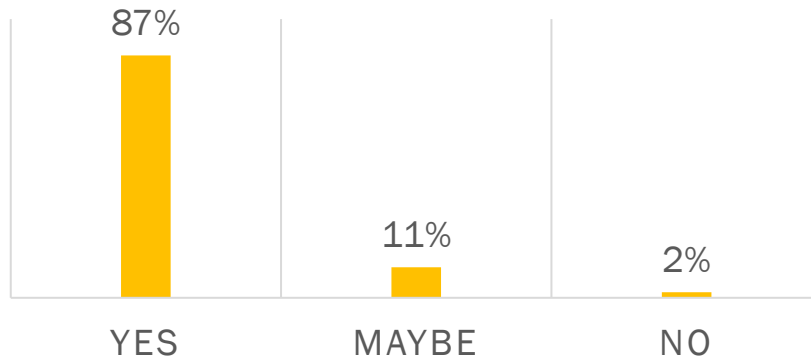
SERVE AS A VOLUNTEER



n=355

Respondents would overwhelmingly recommend serving to others.

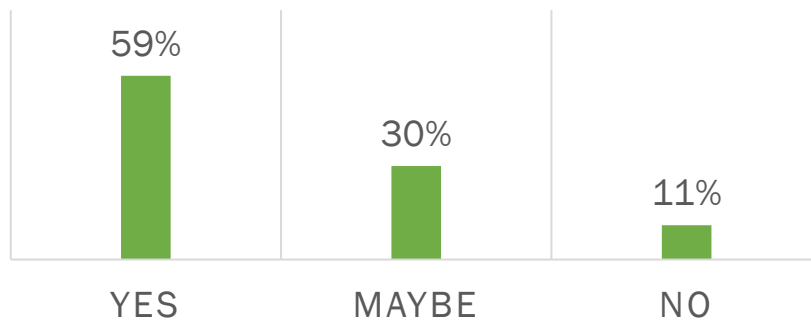
RECOMMEND SERVING TO OTHERS



Nearly 90% (87%, n=310) would recommend serving to others.

Respondents are less likely to be interested in leadership development. Fifty-nine percent (n=207) would be interested. Thirty percent (n=106) would “maybe” be interested and 11% would not.

BE INTERESTED IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



n=355

What tools or resources would help you effectively interpret and communicate the actions of the assembly during the remainder of your term?

Respondents indicated a clear need for detailed yet compressed summaries and documentation to effectively interpret and communicate assembly actions. Summary tools like bullet points of key actions and summaries of decisions are crucial to provide clarity and enhance communication efforts back to respective presbyteries and congregations. Efficient communication methods, including presbytery and congregation-oriented materials, as well as regular updates, are essential for widespread comprehension. Ensuring access to information and understanding the specific requirements of resources are fundamental for respondents. There is also an appreciation for resources that not only distill information but also make it easier to communicate the broader impact of assembly decisions.



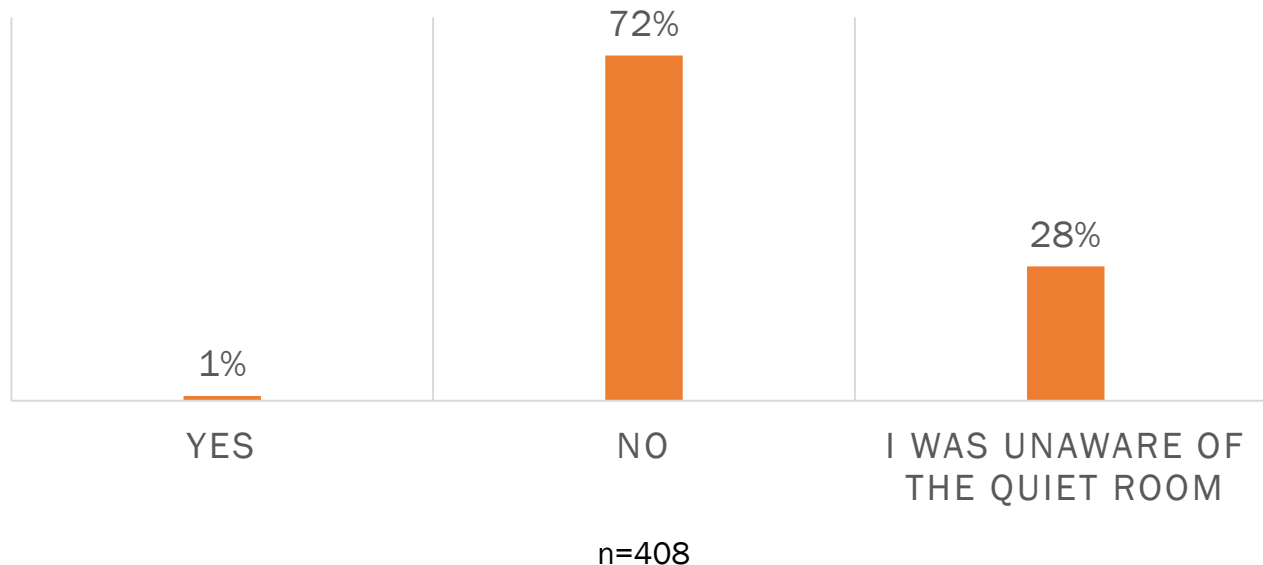
Quiet & Equity Spaces

Most did not participate in the Quiet Room.

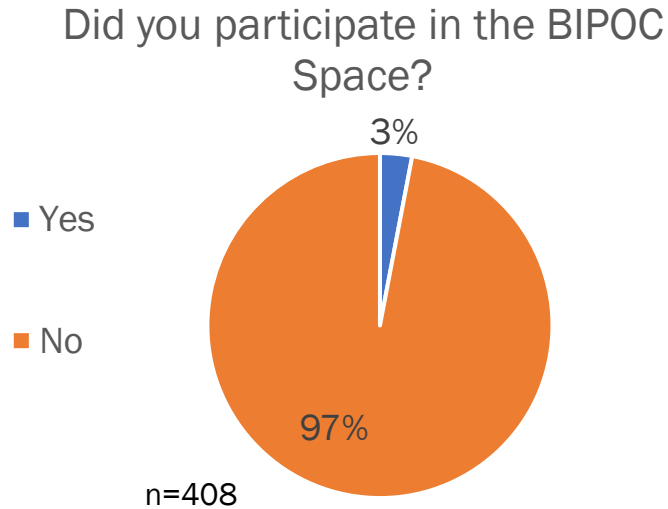
Seventy-two percent (n=292) say “no,” they did not use the Quiet Room. Twenty-eight percent (n=114) were not aware of the Quiet Room.

One percent (or two respondents) do report using the Quiet Room. Those two respondents agree (n=1) and strongly agree (n=1) that the Quiet Room offered a much-needed space for prayer and space away from external stimulations.

From the comments later in the survey, respondents request that potentially sensitive topics be announced to allow those with PTSD to prepare themselves for the discussion or to leave the hall and make use of the Quiet Room.

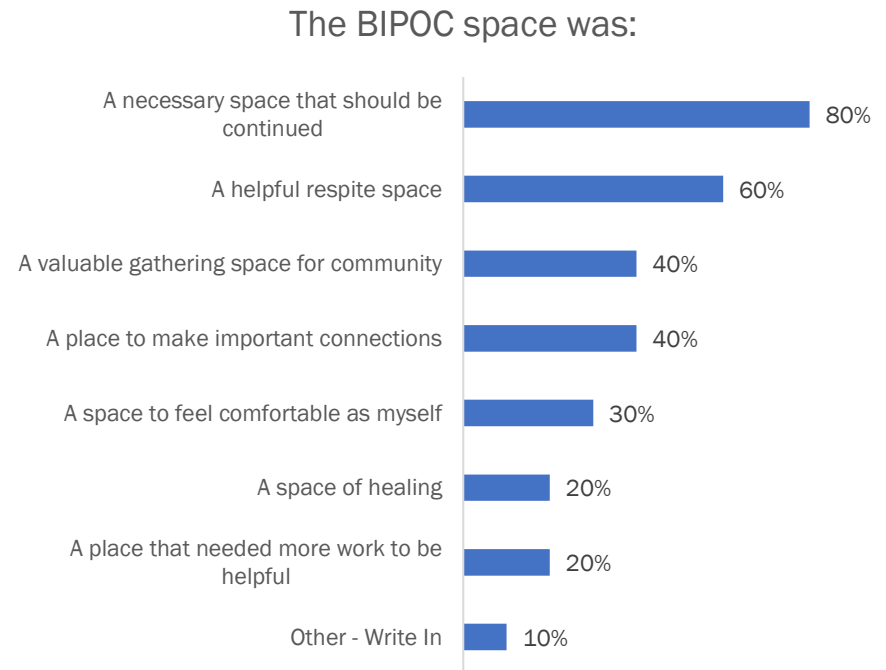


Few participated in the BIPOC space, but those who did found it necessary and a respite.



The majority of participants found the BIPOC space to be “necessary space” (80%) or “a helpful respite” (60%). Twenty percent said the space “needed more work to be helpful.”

Only 3% said they participated in the BIPOC space.



n=10

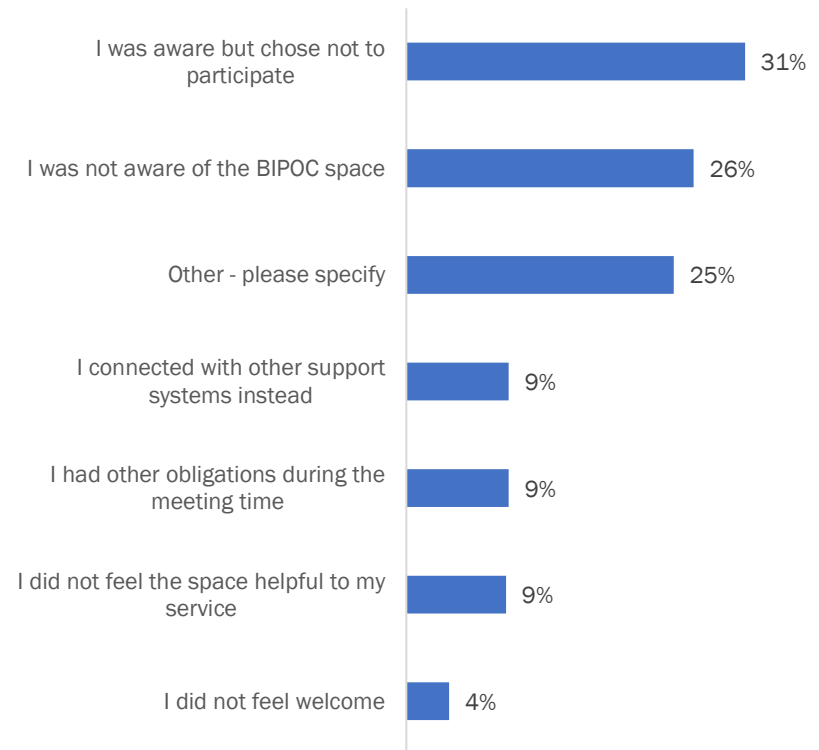
Those who did not participate in the BIPOC space were either unaware of it or felt it was not for them.

Thirty-one percent (31%) said they were aware of the space but chose not to participate, and 26% said they were not aware of the space.

Twenty-five percent (25%) chose to write in answer with most saying they do not identify as BIPOC and implying that the space was for them. Other comments included that they did not know the definition of “BIPOC” or thought the space was reserved only the commissioners.

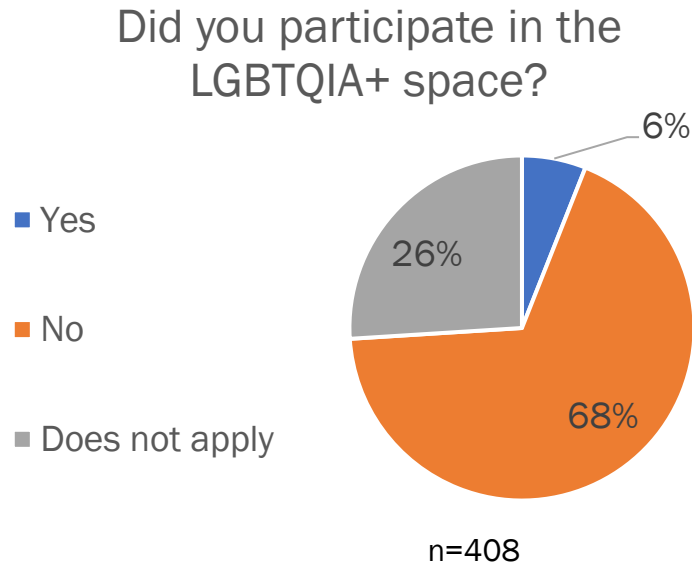
Less common answers included that they connected with other support systems (9%), had other obligations during the meeting time (9%), did not feel the space helpful to their service (9%), or did not feel welcome (4%).

Why you did not participate in the BIPOC Space?



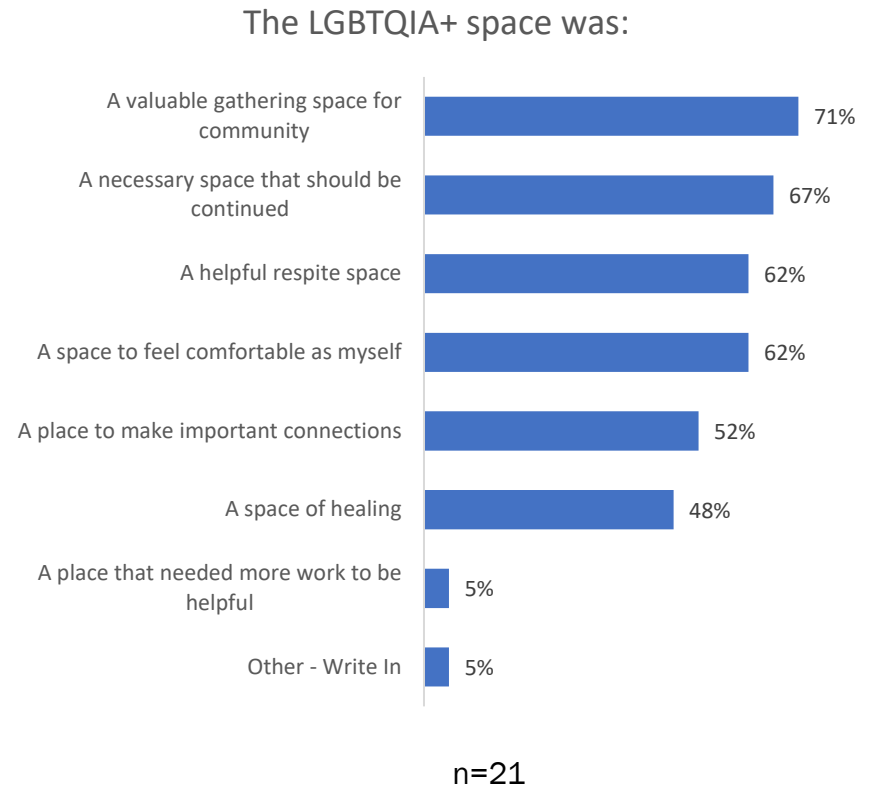
n=382

Few participated in the LGBTQIA+ space, but those who did found it a valuable gathering space.



Of those who participated, 71% said it was a valuable gathering space, 67% said it was a necessary space, 62% said it was a helpful respite, and 62% said a space to feel comfortable as myself.

Six percent (6%) participated in the LGBTQIA+ space. Sixty-eight percent (68%) said they did not and 26% said “Does not apply.”

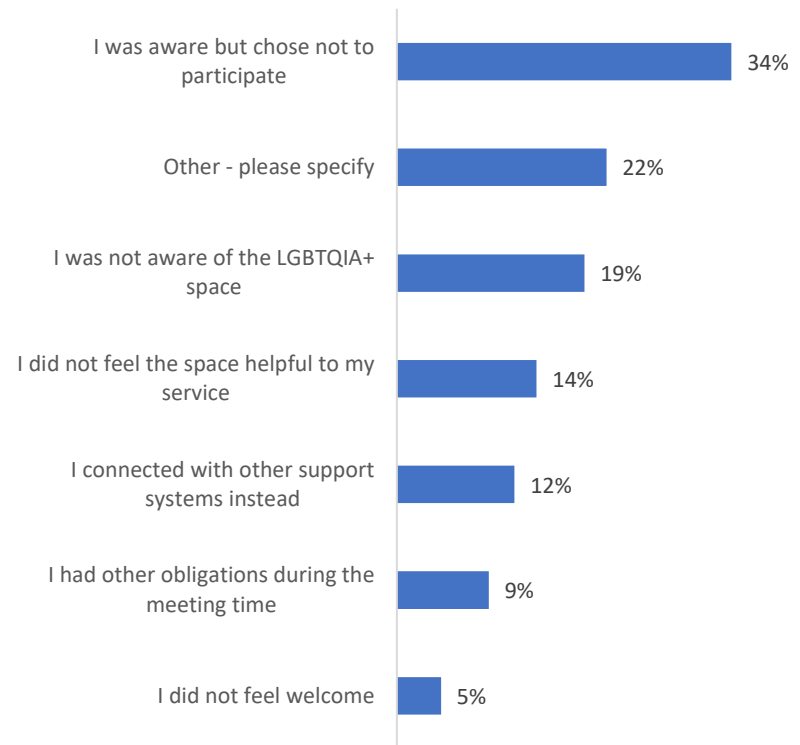


Those who did not participate in the LGBTQIA+ space felt it was not for them

Thirty-four percent (34%) said they were aware of the space but choose not to participate. A lot of respondents revealed in the write-in other option that because they did not identify as LGBTQIA+, the space was not for them. Another common write-in response was that the space was for commissioners only, so they did not feel that they could participate.

Nineteen percent (19%) said that they were not aware of the space, 14% said they felt it was not helpful to their service, 12% connected with other support systems, and 9% said they had other obligations. Few, 5%, said they did not feel welcome.

Please share why you did not participate in the LGBTQIA+ Space



n=265

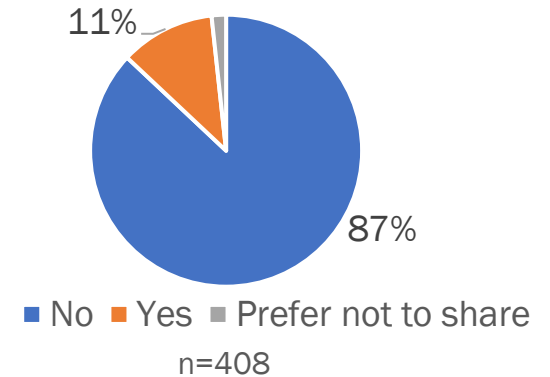
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Most with ability differences did not need accommodations, and many felt empowered to request them.

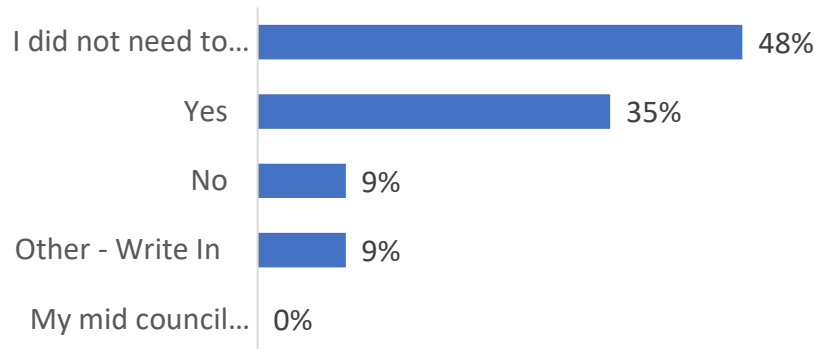
Eleven percent said they were differently abled and 87% said they were not. Most people with ability differences, 48%, said they did not need to request accommodations. Thirty-five percent said they felt empowered to do so, and 9% said they did not. Other responses included accommodations that were requested but not received, specific accommodations granted, and the space. No one said that their Mid Council provided accommodations.

Eighty-seven percent said yes when asked if their accommodation requests were addressed effectively and with care, while 7% said somewhat, and another 7% said no.

Are you differently abled?

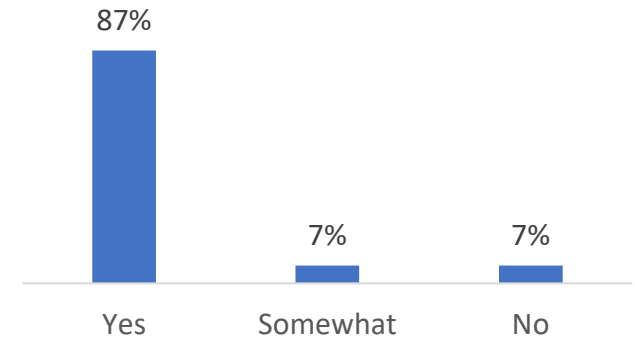


Did you feel empowered to request accommodations from staff of the assembly if you so chose?



n=46

Were requests for accommodation addressed effectively and with care?

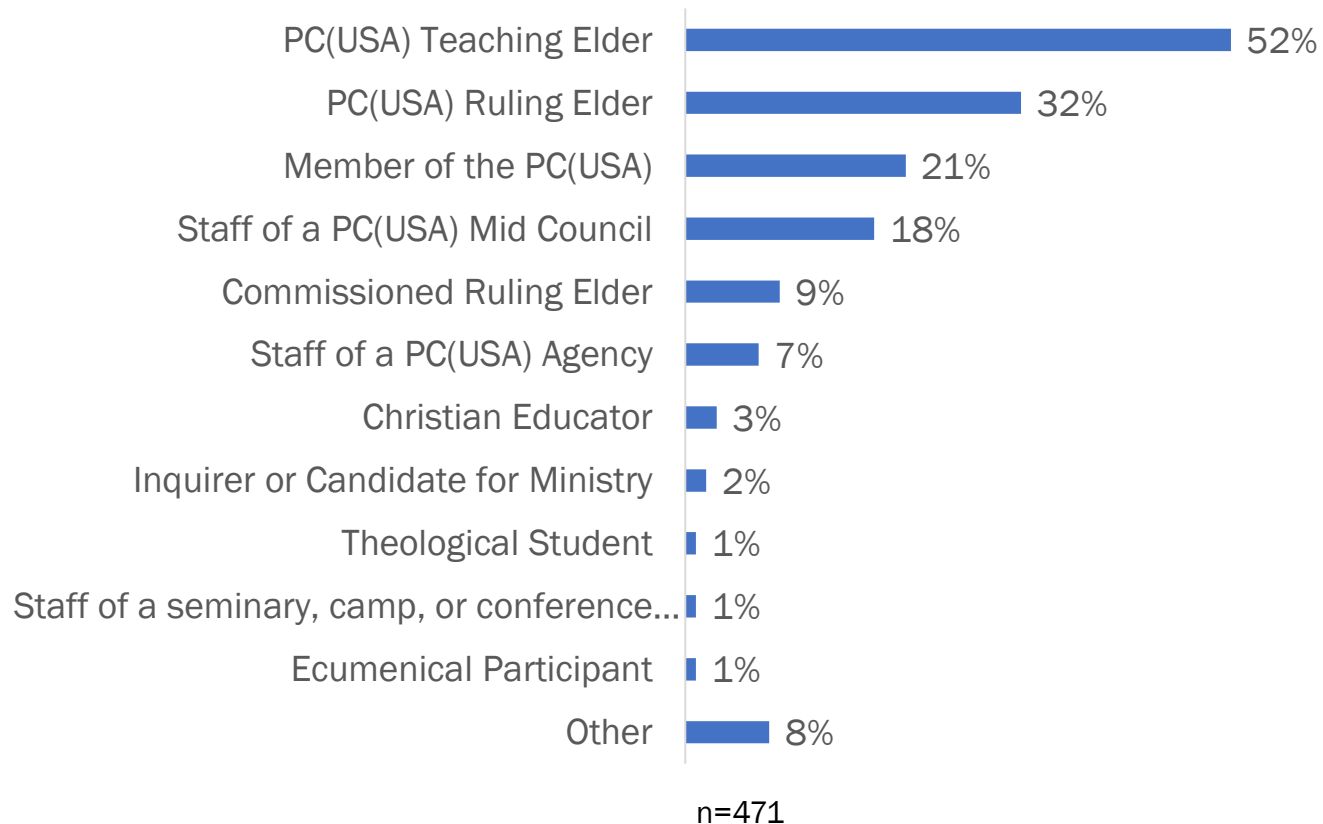


n=15

Demographics

The many roles and occupation of attendees

Respondents were asked to select the role that best describes their role, position, or relationship to PC(USA). Over half of respondents identify as a PC(USA) Teaching Elder.

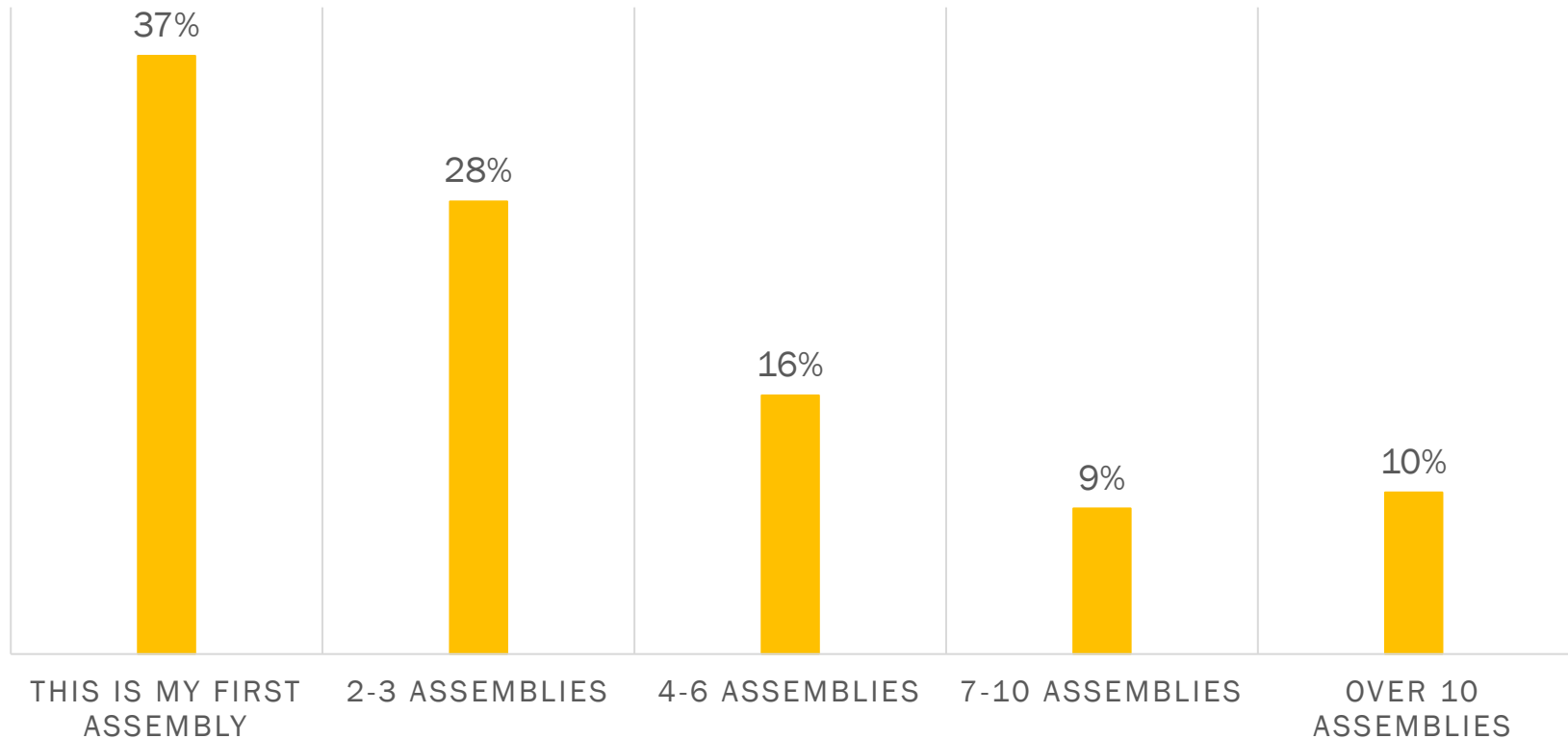


* Because respondents were allowed to select each role that applied, roles are not mutually exclusive.

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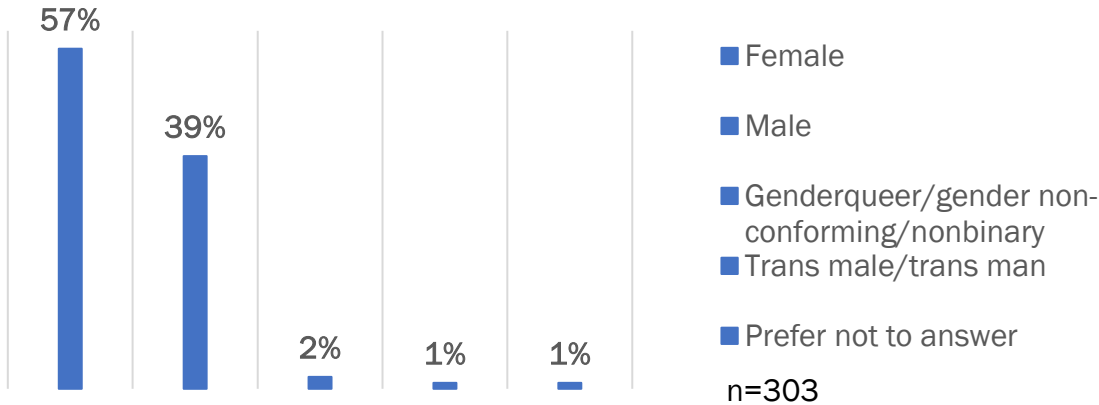
For many, GA 226 was their first General Assembly!

37% (n=176) share that this was their first ever General Assembly. Another 28% (n=130) say that it was their second or third!



n=471

Who are the Commissioners and Committee Members?

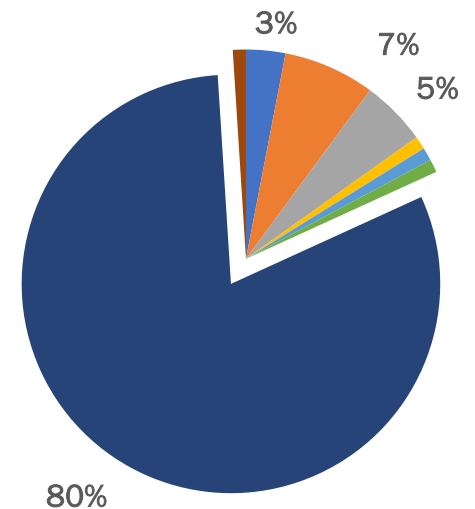


This data accurately reflects PCUSA when compared to the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR) data of 2022.

Majority (80%) of respondents identify as White. The remaining 20% are:

- Black (7%)
- Hispanic (5%)
- Asian (3%)
- Middle Eastern (.3%)
- Native American (1%)
- Multiracial (1%)

- Asian/Pacific Islander/South Asian
- Black/African American/African
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Middle Eastern/North African
- Native American/Alaska Native/Indigenous
- Multiracial
- White
- Prefer not to share

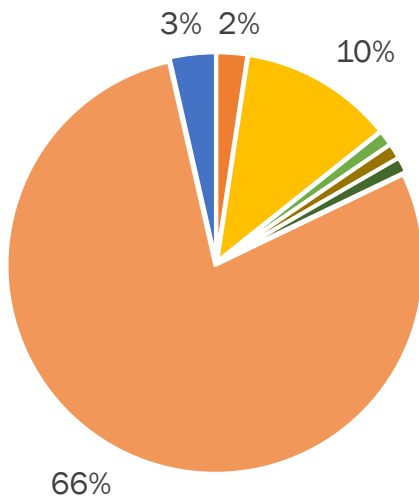
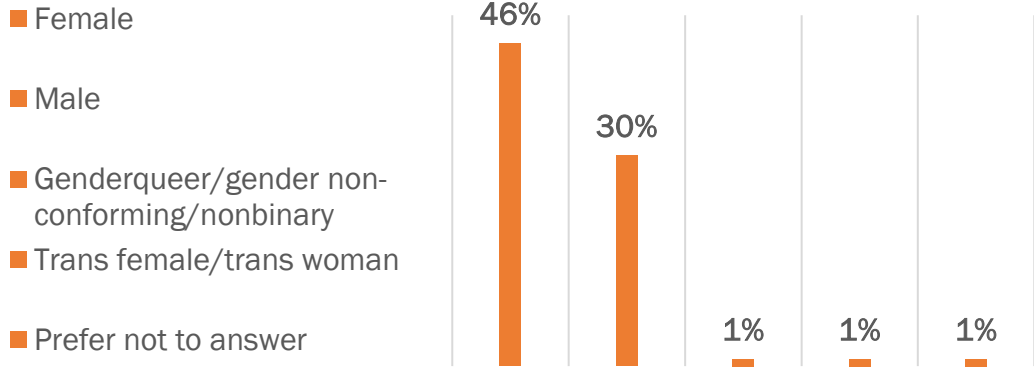


The 2020 SASR reports 89% White, 6.5% Black, 3.5% Asian, 1.4% Hispanics with the others matching this representation. Similar to, but not identical to, the membership roles.

Who are the Volunteers and Observers?

Nearly half (46%) of responding volunteers and observers are female.

n=159



- Asian/Pacific Islander/South Asian
- Black/African American/African
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Middle Eastern/North African
- Native American/Alaska Native/Indigenous
- Multiracial
- White
- Prefer not to share

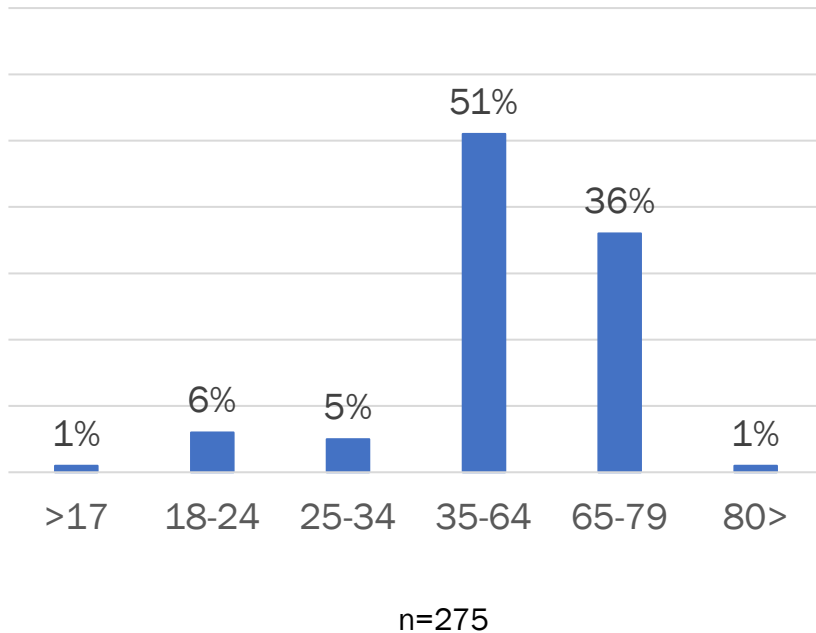
Majority (66%) of volunteers and observers responding identify as White. The remaining 44% are:

- Black (10%)
- Asian (3.)
- Hispanic (1%)
- Middle Eastern (.3%)
- Native American (1%),
- Multiracial (1%).

n=159

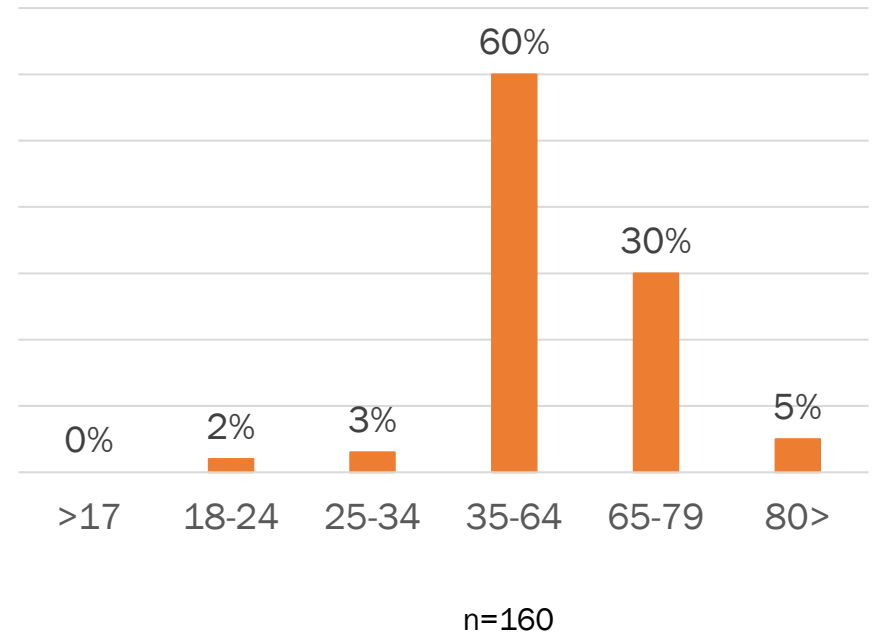
Commissioners and Committee Members

Half of responding Commissioners and Committee Members are between 35-64, and over a third are between 65-79 years of age. The youngest is 18, and the oldest is 83 years old. The average responding is 57 years old.



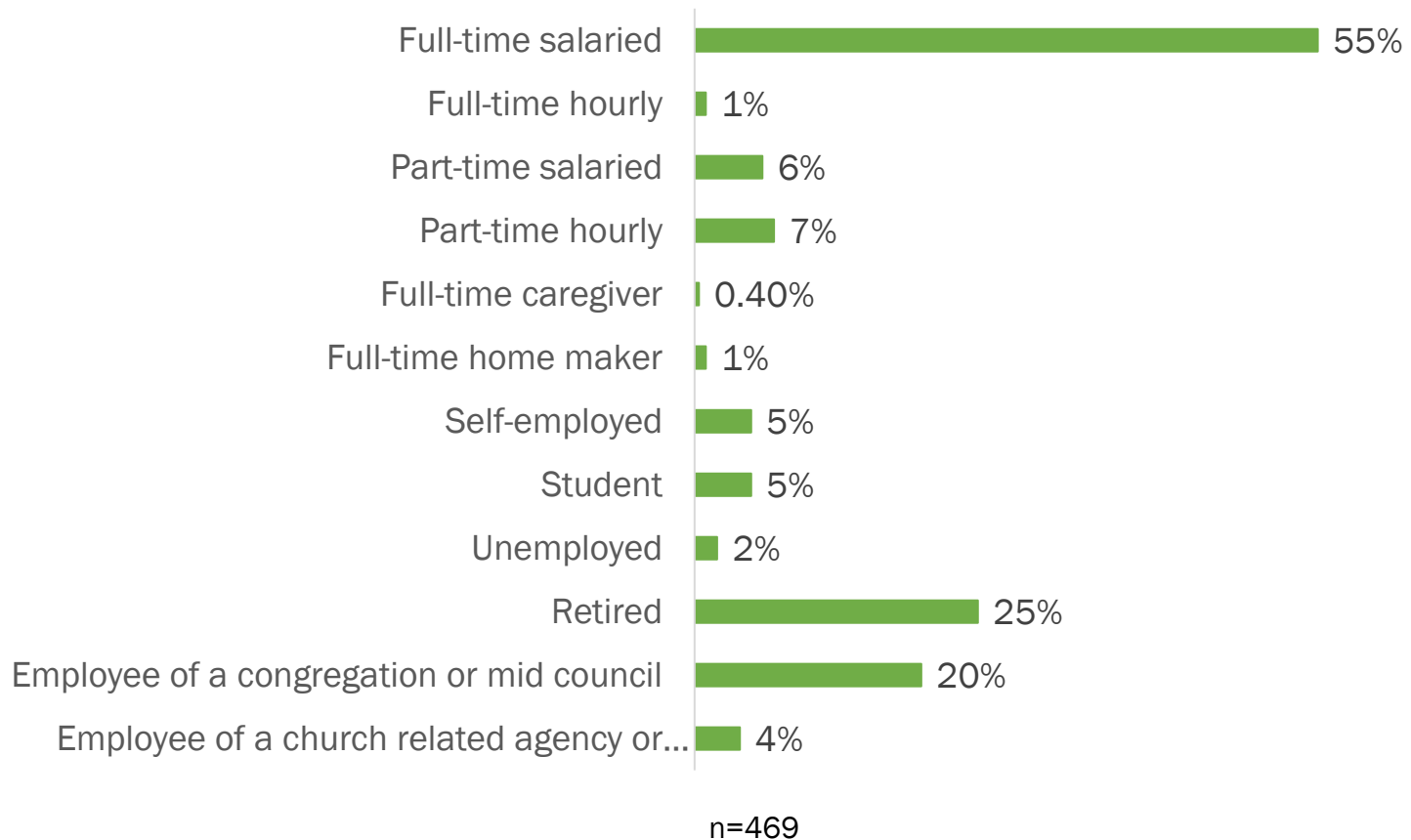
Volunteers and Observers

Majority of volunteers and observers are between the ages of 35-64 years. The youngest is 22, the oldest is 96 years of age. The average responding volunteer and observer is 61 years of age.



Majority of respondents hold full-time salaried positions.

Just over half (55%) of responding participants work full-time salaried jobs. A quarter (25%) are retired. Employees of congregations and mid councils account for 20%.



* Because respondents were allowed to select each position that applied, positions are not mutually exclusive.

Building Community & Discernment

Creating community in future assemblies...Part 1 of 2

We asked respondents how future assemblies can better create more meaningful spaces, both online and in-person, so that assembly attendees can feel more in community with other members. The data show various considerations that are important to respondents; they are described below and in the following pages.

In-Person Engagement: This theme appeared in an overwhelming number of responses to this question. Respondents largely cited the need for in-person spaces to meet and interact with others without the barrier of online platforms.

“In person assemblies, committees, and plenary. If we are a relational church, then we need to relate. In person.”

“It was hard to build community with people online especially when dealing with challenging topics.”

Event Environment: A significant number of respondents mentioned that creating community should include a space conducive to in person interaction. For example, respondents mentioned a desire to restore the Exhibit Hall as a space for community.

“Add an extra day to plenary for organizations, meals, some sort of exhibit hall”

“Re-dreaming what an ‘Exhibit Hall’ could look like...how to bring people in community”

“Bring back the Exhibit hall, so that folks don’t have to make extra effort to seek out constituency groups.”

Creating community in future assemblies...Part 2 of 2

In addition to the previously mentioned themes, respondents also indicate the importance of community building and networking, as well as online participation.

Community Building: Related to the prevalence of comments regarding in-person meetings, respondents had similar ideas about how community building should be structured. Ideas like pre-event introductions and designated topic tables are two examples from respondents.

“Continue to create spaces for underrepresented groups.”

“During group meals, establish designated topic/interest tables [...]”

“Have an exhibit hall where people can gather about the agencies of the church.”

Online Participation: A strong number of respondents also felt that online community building could be improved. For example, data shows that respondents ask for breakout rooms in Zoom, social media engagement, and using digital spaces for increased communication.

“Be intentional about using online community platforms and maybe making a few different platforms. Facebook Groups and a Discord Server or multiple servers. start community building earlier.”

“[...]schedule time for online committees to meet in person[...] or some other social gathering.”

“Provide space for connecting informally during online committee times [...]”

Assemblies supporting discernment...Part 1 of 2

Respondents were also asked to share how assemblies might support the work of discernment. Responses predictably focused on the discernment process, yet they also focused on the logistics of supporting discernment including proper time allocation and committee structure. Finally, respondents also underlined the importance of effective online participation.

Discernment Process: Respondents largely focus on increasing time for prayer, reflection, and training in discernment practices. This focus on discernment, according to respondents, should be focused on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Additionally, some indicate a desire for an “agenda-free” discernment process.

“More prayer time for discernment especially during particularly difficult votes.”

“Allow commissioners to meet up and chat more. I think in building trust, folks can better discern together.”

“Provide worship that is not geared to an agenda so that people can discern what the Holy Spirit is doing in our midst instead of driving people to a certain outcome.”

Time Allocation: There is significant data to suggest that assemblies could better support the work of discernment by allowing more time for plenary sessions that are focused on discernment while incorporating contemplative prayer opportunities.

“Online we should be reminded to do our homework, reading prior.”

“Not rushing through the agenda and reports.”

“More silent, contemplative prayer opportunities during worship and plenary would help.”

Assemblies supporting discernment...Part 2 of 2

In addition to the previously mentioned themes, respondents share the importance of committee structure, as well as online participation.

Committee Structure: Respondents had several ideas on how to streamline the logistical process of discernment. These primarily focused on limiting items per session in favor of deeper discernment, more time for members to review materials prior to meetings, and receiving training on parliamentary procedure and technology before meetings.

“Allow more time to review the work of the committee prior to committee time.”

“More committees with fewer items of business might stretch leadership needs but could also create more space for discernment.”

“Greater access ahead of time to testifying to committees for those who are from outside orgs, activist councils, etc.”

Online Participation: Overwhelming, comments support the notion that respondents prefer an in-person meeting space to foster community and effective discernment. Additionally, online accessibility is important: there is desire from respondents for multi-language versions of reports.

“There was little to no opportunity for folks to formulate amendments together, given restrictions on communication.”

“[...] make a true dialogue or enable ‘chat’ for a period of time for those who cannot get through on motions or discussions.”

“Más documentación traducida.” (More translated documents)

Future Assemblies 1 of 2

The previous two questions we have discussed revolve around the desire to support community building and discernment, key components in a relational church. As such, data overwhelmingly points to providing spaces where people can, in-person or online, develop meaningful relationships via communication and extended interaction.

The traditional approach in previous General Assemblies was to use an Exhibit Hall to facilitate members getting to know each other and other groups. For online participants, the data show that breakout rooms, social media engagements via other platforms, and opportunities for in-person meetings are three key suggestions that a significant number of respondents suggest.

Based on the data, we recommend either a return to the concept of an exhibit hall, or a reasonable approximation of the same. Through their comments, respondents clearly express the desire to have a space to socialize and develop relationships, so providing both a physical and digital space for networking and community building is key for future assemblies.

Future Assemblies 2 of 2

Concerning the support of discernment, respondents call for more structured and inclusive practices and assignments. Prayer is understandably at the core of respondents' desires. Additionally, however, respondents focus on the logistical process of discernment as an area of improvement.

Based on respondent data, we would suggest streamlining the process of assigning roles for effective discernment. Specifically, respondents want to be assigned roles sooner for increased time to plan committees.

Respondents also share that discernment practices ensure all voices are heard, including those at the margins of representation. Thirdly, data also shows a desire for commissioners to have increased preparation through integrated reflective practices and prayer. Lastly, there is a continual desire to maintain transparency and fairness when presenting information and allowing for diverse viewpoints.

Final Thoughts about the Assembly 1 of 2

The final question asked respondents to share their thoughts about the Assembly, specifically, what three things would they want the planners to know. The 371 responses cover many topics yielding more than three things that they see of value to future planning teams.

- **In Person Preference, Community, and Socializing:** Many expressed their gratitude for the in-person Assembly with a strong desire to continue in person meetings, suggesting that participants value face to face interaction. The repeated calls for an "Exhibit Hall" indicate a missed opportunity for networking and engagement. Respondents expressed fervent preferences for in-person event elements, shown by keen attention to plenary sessions and committee discussions. The overall effort invested in attending and interactions with fellow attendees were central to their experiences. Respondents wanted more opportunities for socializing and informal conversations, suggesting that community building is a key aspect of the assembly experience. Despite the critiques, there was also a sense of gratitude expressed for the hard work put into organizing the assembly
- **Technology and Training :** There were comments about the need for better technology and more polished tech solutions, as well as training for participants to navigate the systems effectively. Technology's role in participation was under the spotlight, reflecting a need for stronger and more accessible digital tools. Training adequacy for moderators and clearly defined roles emerged as necessities for a smooth event.
- **Health and Safety :** COVID 19 was a concern, with suggestions for more precautions and better handling of health and safety protocols. Requests also included more time to do the work, rest, and fellowship with other attendees, and more attention to mental health.

Final Thoughts about the Assembly 2 of 2

- **Equity and Diversity:** There were calls for the assembly to embrace diversity in action and to be more inclusive in various aspects, including music and worship styles.
- **Worship and Music :** Several responses highlighted the importance of worship and music, with suggestions for more robust worship music and diverse styles. Worship sessions were fondly noted, with calls for music and dance as forms of congregational health and engagement.
- **Meeting Logistics:** Food, preparation and structural elements like meeting spaces and display opportunities were accentuated. Feedback overall ranged from gratitude for planning to recommendations for enhancements. Feedback included the need for better visual aids for online participants, more space between tables, and more breaks to avoid fatigue.

The following pages detail the specific questions, comments, and requests from the respondents are grouped as:

- Meeting logistics
- Social
- Health
- Committees
- Technology and Training
- Other comments

Final Thoughts about the Assembly – Meeting Logistics

Meeting Logistics

- In-person assemblies are preferred to virtual assemblies.
- Provide a planning guide or agenda for each day with the expected speakers listed.
- Assigned seating is viewed positively.
- Add a full day to the schedule so that discontinue the late-night plenaries.
- Add more breaks with coffee and water easily accessible to the plenary hall.
- Allow resource people to clarify or respond to questions during the plenaries.
- Plan for a time of community engagement, volunteering in the host city.
- Provide an early release of the consent agenda
- Reduce the number of attendees
- Communicate early, often, and repeat. Print a daily guide that includes schedule changes and map of the facility.

Final Thoughts

Final Thoughts about the Assembly – Social & Health

Social

- Restore the Exhibit Hall with agencies and associations to promote opportunities to engage individuals and groups across the denomination.
- Sponsor coffee breaks with coffee and water.
- Provide opportunities to tour the host city and engage in a local community event or program.
- Use the mealtimes to represent the local cultures.

Health

- COVID remains a concern. Encourage those who are ill to refrain from attending in-person meetings.
- Announce sensitive topics before they are discussed in plenary to allow time for those with PTSD to prepare for the topic and its discussion or to have time to leave the plenary hall.
- Provide canine therapy dogs for those who need time to decompress from the day's work.
- Build more time into the schedule for rest between sessions to allow time to decompress.
- Provide more water stations

Final Thoughts about the Assembly – Committees

Committees

- In-person meetings are preferred over virtual meeting.
- Add a committee leadership role whose purpose is to lead and model Equity Primes.
- A frequent comment referenced committee leaders who lacked adequate training and/or ability to lead the committee's work. A repeated request and question asked for vetting of committee leaders. If this not the practice, why not? Examples of leadership concerns included the lack of familiarity with Robert's Rules and not knowing how to move the discussions forward.
- Create space between the committee meetings and the plenaries. One suggestion was to hold the committee meetings weeks in advance of the plenaries. The reasons are two-fold. It allows commissioners the time to review the work of the committees before consideration at the plenaries. Secondly, it allows time for the committee members to rest and recoup ahead of the plenaries.
- Include a summary of the committee's decision-making process on items of business.
- Include a list the known or expected speakers to the committee agenda and to what issue they will address. For example, the name and position of the person who will speak on behalf of a task force; this is more than the current list of resource persons.
- Provide opportunities to build community among committee members.
- If committees meet virtually, provide a space at the Assembly for an in-person meeting.
- Provide a diagram of how the committees link to agencies and programs.
- Report the use Equity Primes in the committee's report.

Final Thoughts about the Assembly – Technology & Training

Technology

- Add an Equity Primes button to PCBIZ to move equity issues to the forefront of conversations. Other new buttons include objection, seeking recognition, and new business.
- Technological issues were experienced by individuals and impeded the work of the Assembly. These technological issues persist from Assembly to Assembly. What can be done to simplify the technology and improve functionality? Updates to committee action lagged behind the work within the committee room.
- Improve the responsive design of MyGA so that it is optimized across more viewing devices.
- Improve visuals to promote readability and clarity.

Training

- Provide more training including how to lead committee meetings, to make motions, and to use the technology.
- Provide more training for committee leaders, in particular, committee chairs. Training should include how to lead with Robert's Rules but to not let the rules impede the work of the committee.

Final Thoughts about the Assembly – Other Comments

Other comments

- Avoid holding the Assembly over a holiday, especially in 2026 as it is the country's 250th anniversary.
- Hold the Assembly in a hub city. This increases the flight opportunities and should reduce transportation costs.
- Have clearly identified stations for those with special dietary needs. Request caterers to list the ingredients for all food.
- Arrival transportation information was very clear; however, departure information was confusing and needed clarification.
- Ask for local volunteers to staff the information desk as they are better prepared to answer questions about local venues and places of interest.
- Develop templates for all resource persons to use to promote clarity, consistency, and completeness of necessary information.

Research Services helps the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) make data-informed decisions using surveys, focus groups and interviews, demographic analysis, and program evaluations.

We are social scientists with backgrounds in sociology, public policy, and economics. We serve congregations, presbyteries and synods, PC(USA) national agencies, and other PC(USA)-related organizations. Research Services is a ministry of the Administrative Services Group.

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