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ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Chicago
Independent
Media Alliance

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ABOUT CIMA

The Chicago Independent Media Alliance (CIMA) is a project of the Chicago Reader newspaper. CIMA was launched in the summer of 2019, soon after the Reader became newly independent.

As the Reader navigates the final move to nonprofit 501(c)3 status in 2021, CIMA already has 66 members representing 82 media entities.

The Chicago Reader, founded in 1971, is the city's largest free alternative newspaper. It was the first free weekly in the country, and is known for its award-winning cultural and investigative work, and for being a voice for those challenging institutional power and corrupt politicians.

In the summer of 2019, the Chicago Reader sent a survey to 103 independent media outlets in the Chicago area, ranging in size and scope from small all-volunteer nonprofits to large independent newspapers.



We need partnerships and new ideas, collaborations and support, to make sure these voices are not allowed to wither. "

Tracy Baim, Co-Publisher, Chicago Reader

We asked for information about their business model, their coverage areas, what languages they speak, and whether they'd be interested in collaborative projects. Most responded that they would like to collaborate, and we have already begun those partnerships.

We see a path forward where media can work together on both editorial and revenue, including joint projects on news and culture topics, and on fundraising ventures. In fact, due to COVID-19, we did do a major emergency fundraiser in May 2020. It raised \$104,000 from individuals and \$60,000 in matching funds from foundations. Forty-three of our CIMA members participated.

As a group, we are also advocating for more funding from foundations, more equity in the way government agencies spend money in media, and for more corporate advertising through authentic community media.

Community, neighborhood, and ethnic media—whatever you want to call us—reach vital and important parts of this city long ignored by mainstream media. But just as larger media companies are struggling, so are community media. We need partnerships and new ideas, collaborations and support, to make sure these voices are not allowed to wither.

CIMA Partners

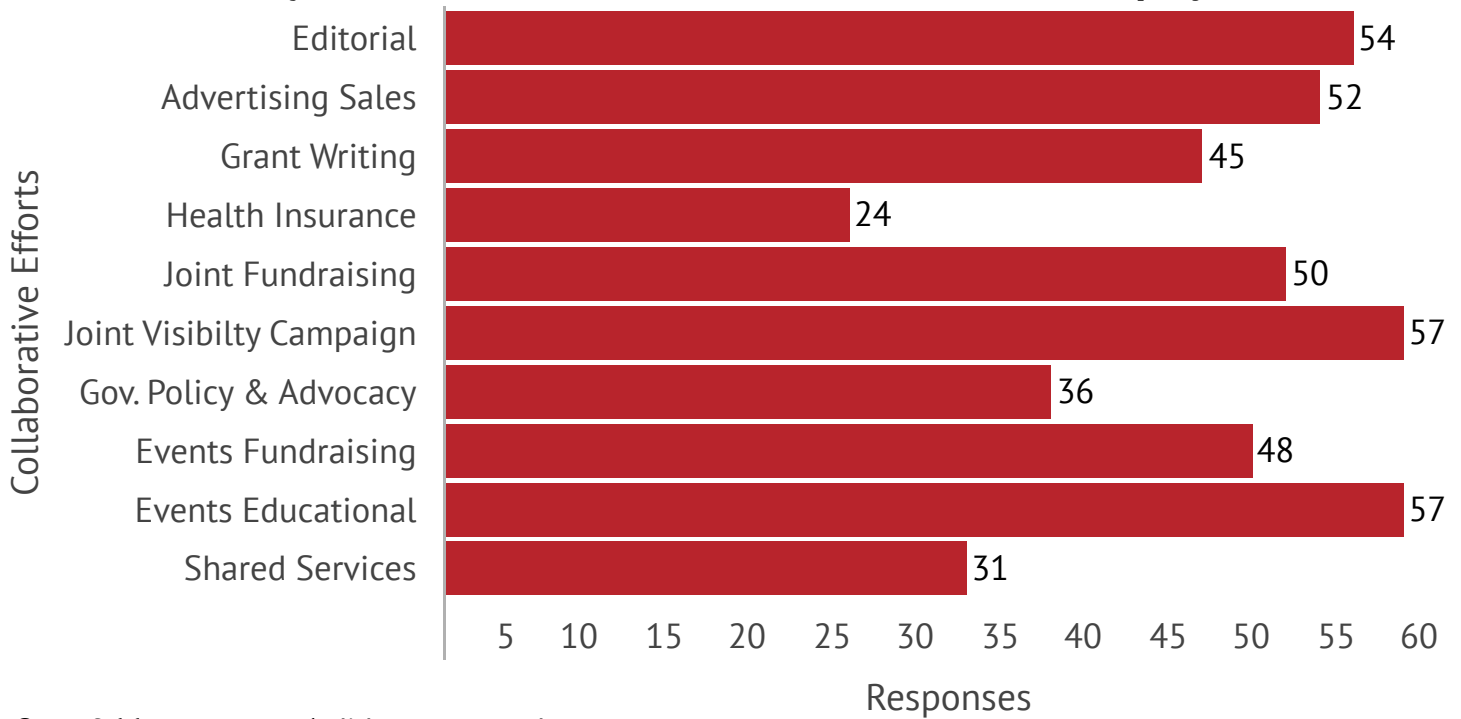
66 outlets reporting 82 media entities

1. AirGo Radio
2. Better Government Association
3. Black Youth Project
4. Block Club Chicago
5. Borderless Magazine
6. Bronzecommm
7. Bronzeville Life
8. Chalkbeat Chicago
9. Chicago Crusader
10. Chicago in Arabic
11. Chicago Monitor
12. Chicago Music Guide
13. Chicago Parent
14. Chicago Public Square
15. Chicago Reader
16. Chicago Sun-Times
17. CHIRP Radio
18. Cicero Independiente
19. Citizen Newspaper Group: Citizen Newspaper, Conversations with the Citizen podcast
20. City Bureau
21. Contratiempo
22. Current Magazine: South Side Current, West of the Ryan Current, The New West Side Current
23. Dziennik Związkowy - Polish Daily News
24. E3 Radio
25. Free Spirit Media
26. Gazette Chicago
27. Gozamos
28. GRAB Magazine
29. Growing Community Media: Austin Weekly News, Forest Park Review, Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Wednesday Community Journal
30. Hi India

31. Hyde Park Herald
32. Injustice Watch
33. Inside Publications: Inside Booster, News-Star, Skyline
34. Invisible Institute
35. Juneteenth Productions
36. Kartemquin Films
37. KEY - This Week in Chicago
38. La Raza
39. Left Out Magazine
40. Loop North News
41. McKinley Park News
42. N'Digo
43. New City
44. North Lawndale Community News
45. OTV | Open Television
46. Public Media Institute: Lumpen Radio, Lumpen Magazine, Quarantine Times
47. Public Narrative
48. Rebellious Magazine for Women
49. Rivet
50. Sixty Inches from Center
51. Soapbox Productions & Organizing
52. South Side Weekly
53. StreetWise
54. Student Xpress Magazine
55. The Arab Daily News
56. The Beverly Review
57. The Chicago Reporter
58. The Daily Line
59. Third Coast Review
60. True Star Foundation & Media
61. Urban Gateways (Mildsauce.org)
62. Via Times Newsmagazine
63. Village Free Press
64. Vocolo Radio
65. Windy City Times
66. Win-TV

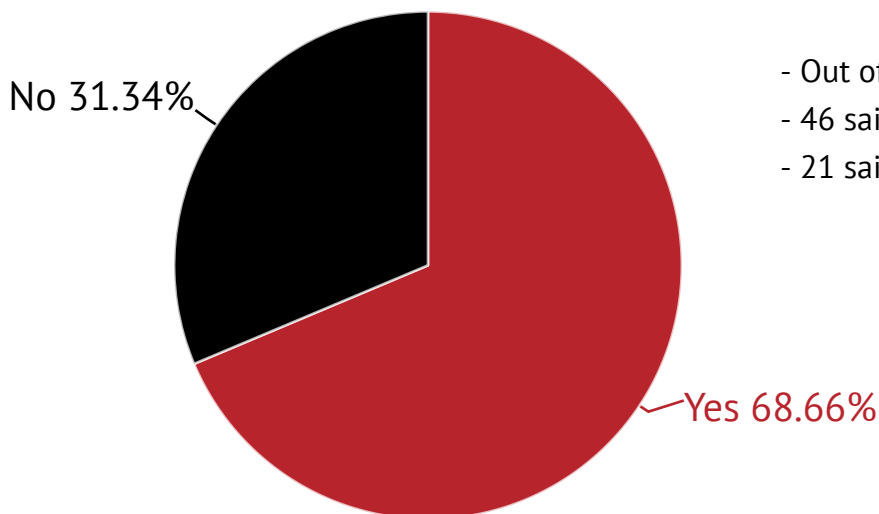
Overview

Would you work with other local media on collaborative projects?



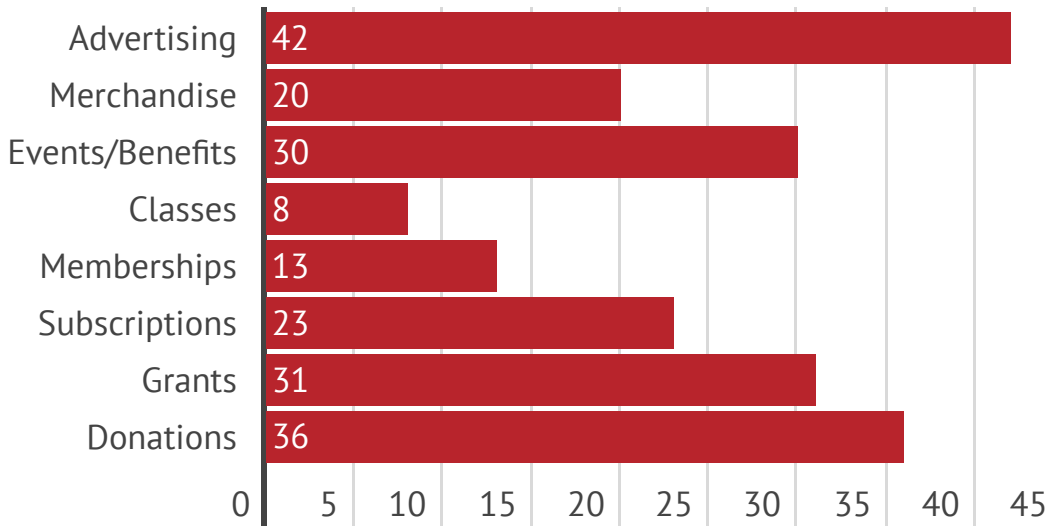
- Out of 66 responses, 1 did not respond
- Outlets were able to choose more than one option.
- Call out numbers represent how many of the 66 outlets individually chose that collaborative effort.
- Shared services include accounting and human resources.

Would you be interested in the creation of a large media center with shared offices, meeting rooms, shared back-end services, incubator space, etc.?



- Out of 66 responses, 1 did not respond
- 46 said yes
- 21 said no

What are your categories of revenue? (Check all that apply)

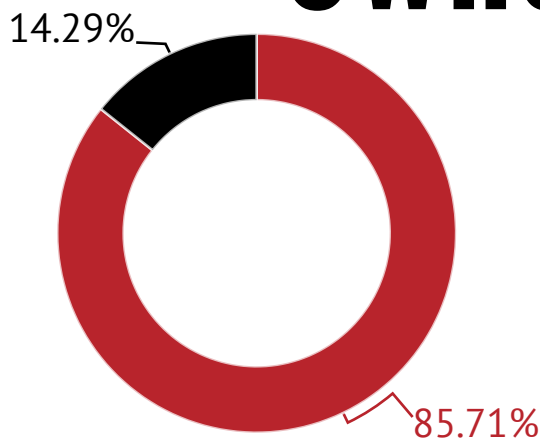


- Outlets were able to check all that applied.

- 42 chose advertising
- 36 chose donations
- 31 chose grants
- 30 chose events/benefits
- 23 chose subscriptions
- 20 chose merchandising
- 13 chose memberships
- 8 chose classes

- Out of 66 responses, 1 did not respond

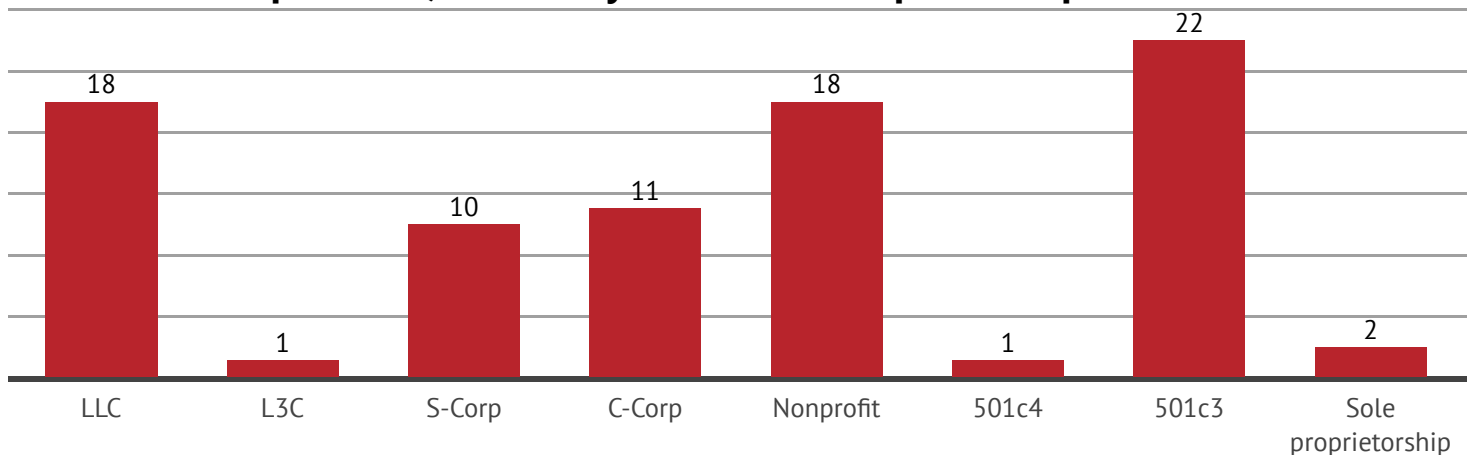
Ownership



Are you incorporated?

- Out of 63 responses, 3 did not respond
- 54 said yes
- 9 said no

If incorporated, what is your ownership or nonprofit structure?



- 10 outlets did not respond

- Outlets were able to choose more than one answer

- Numbers are exact results, not percentages

Do you have multiple media products all owned/operated by the same parent company?



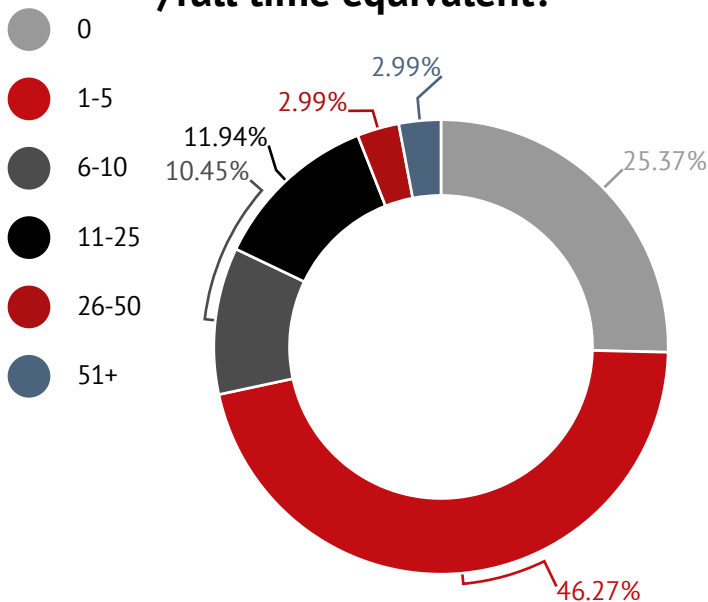
Out of 66 responses, 2 did not respond

- 27 said yes

- 39 said no

Employment

Number of paid full time staff /full time equivalent?



Out of 66 responses, 1 did not respond

- 18 said zero.

- 30 said 1-5

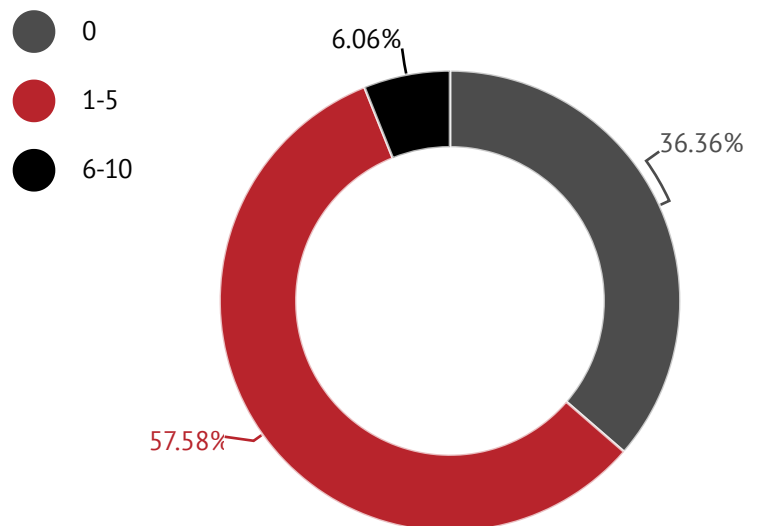
- 7 said 6-10

- 7 said 11-25

- 2 said 26-50

- 1 said 51 +

Number of paid part time staff?



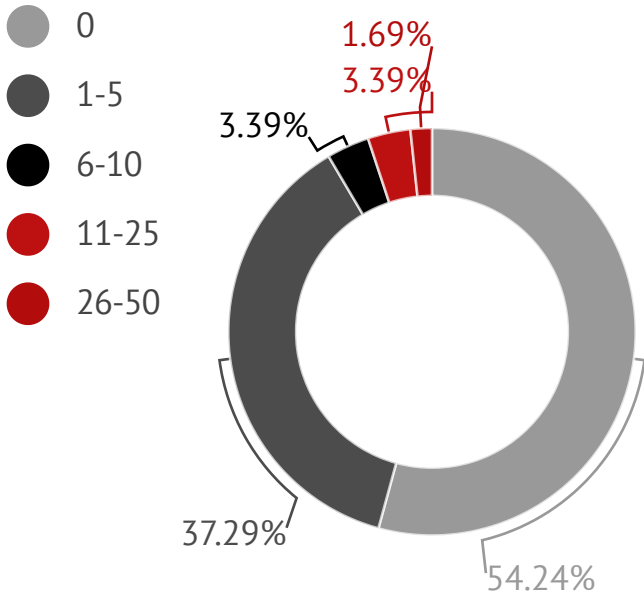
Out of 66 responses, 2 did not respond

- 23 said zero

- 37 said 1-5

- 4 said 6-10

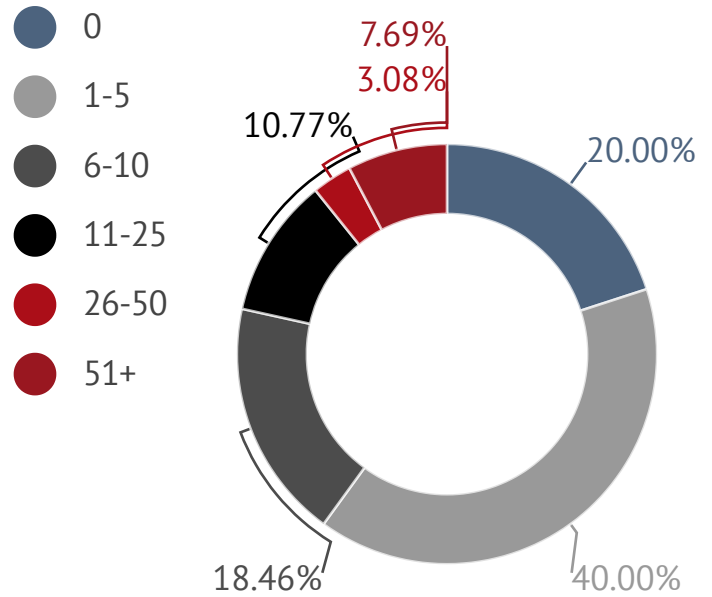
Number of unpaid full time staff /full time equivalent?



Out of 66 responses, 7 did not respond

- 32 said zero
- 22 said 1-5
- 2 said 6-10
- 2 said 11-25
- 1 said 26-50

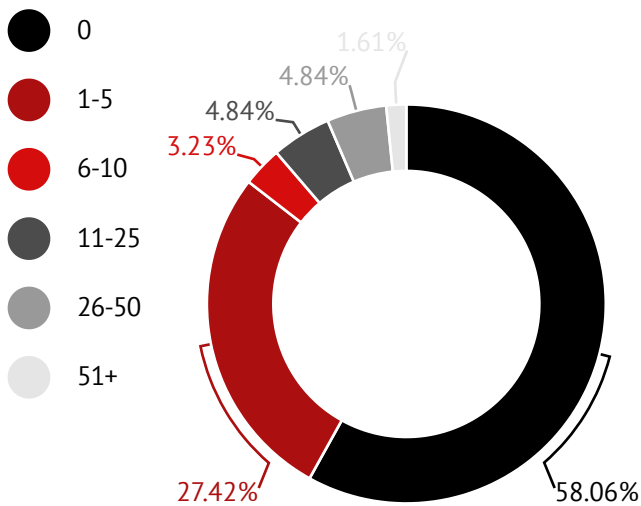
Number of paid freelancers per year?



Out of 66 responses, 1 did not respond

- 13 said zero
- 26 said 1-5
- 11 said 6-10
- 7 said 11-25
- 2 said 26-50
- 5 said 51+

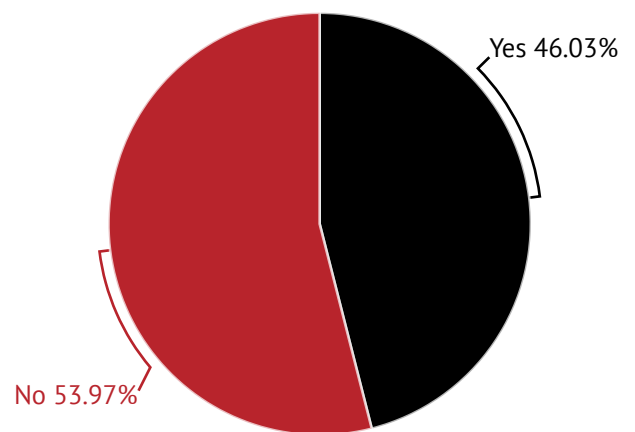
Number of unpaid freelancers per year?



Out of 66 responses, 4 did not respond

- 36 said zero
- 17 said 1-5
- 3 said 11-25
- 3 said 26-50
- 1 said 51+

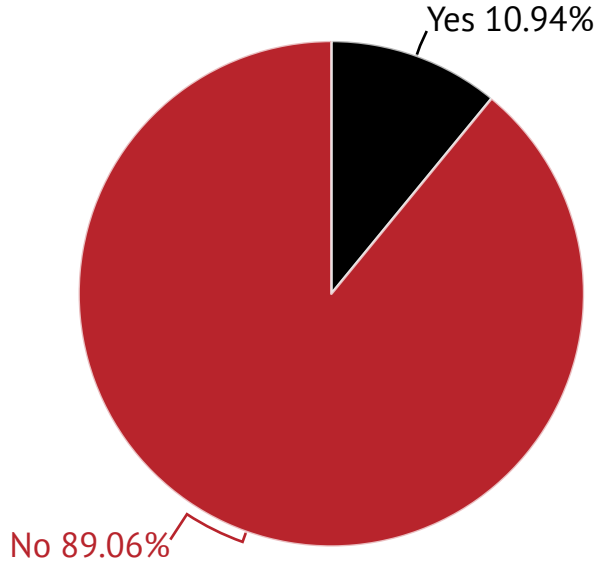
Do you offer health insurance to your full time staff?



Out of 66 responses, 3 did not respond

- 34 said no
- 29 said yes

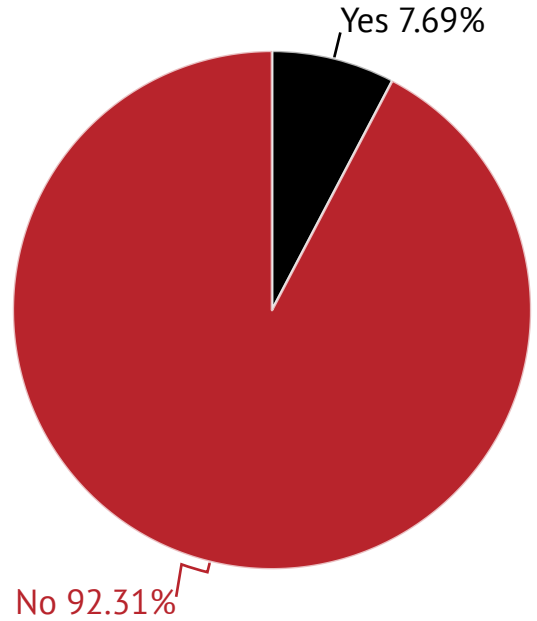
Do you offer health insurance to your part time staff?



Out of 66 responses, 2 did not respond

- 57 said no
- 7 said yes

Does part or all of your staff belong to a union?

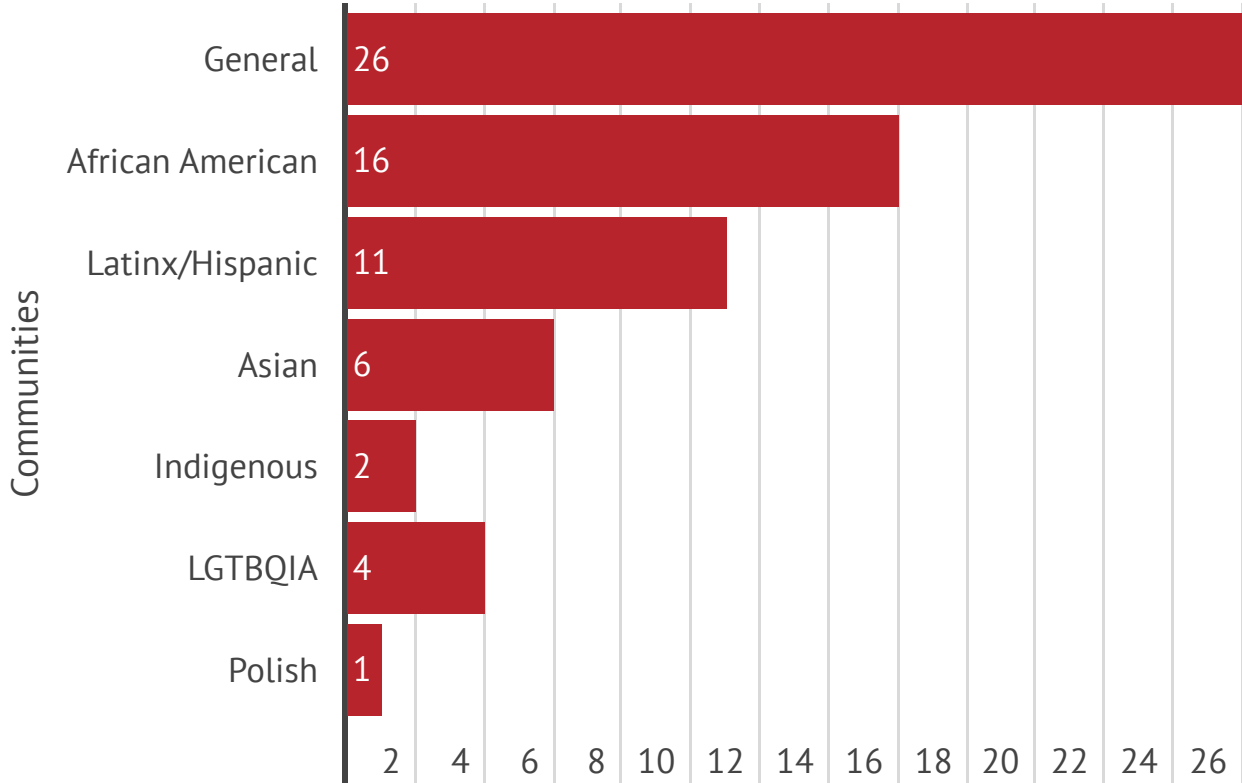


Out of 66 responses, 1 did not respond

- 60 said no
- 5 said yes

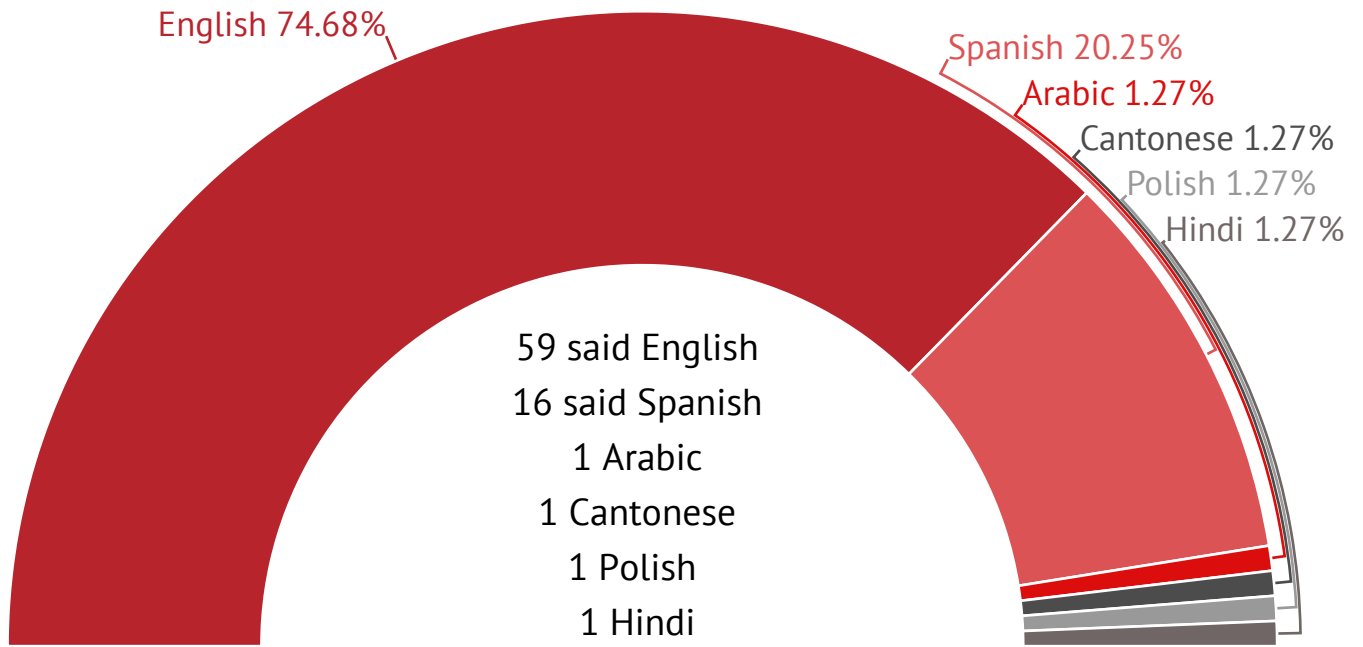
Demographics

Primary ethnic or niche communities reached?



Out of 66 responses

What languages do you produce in?

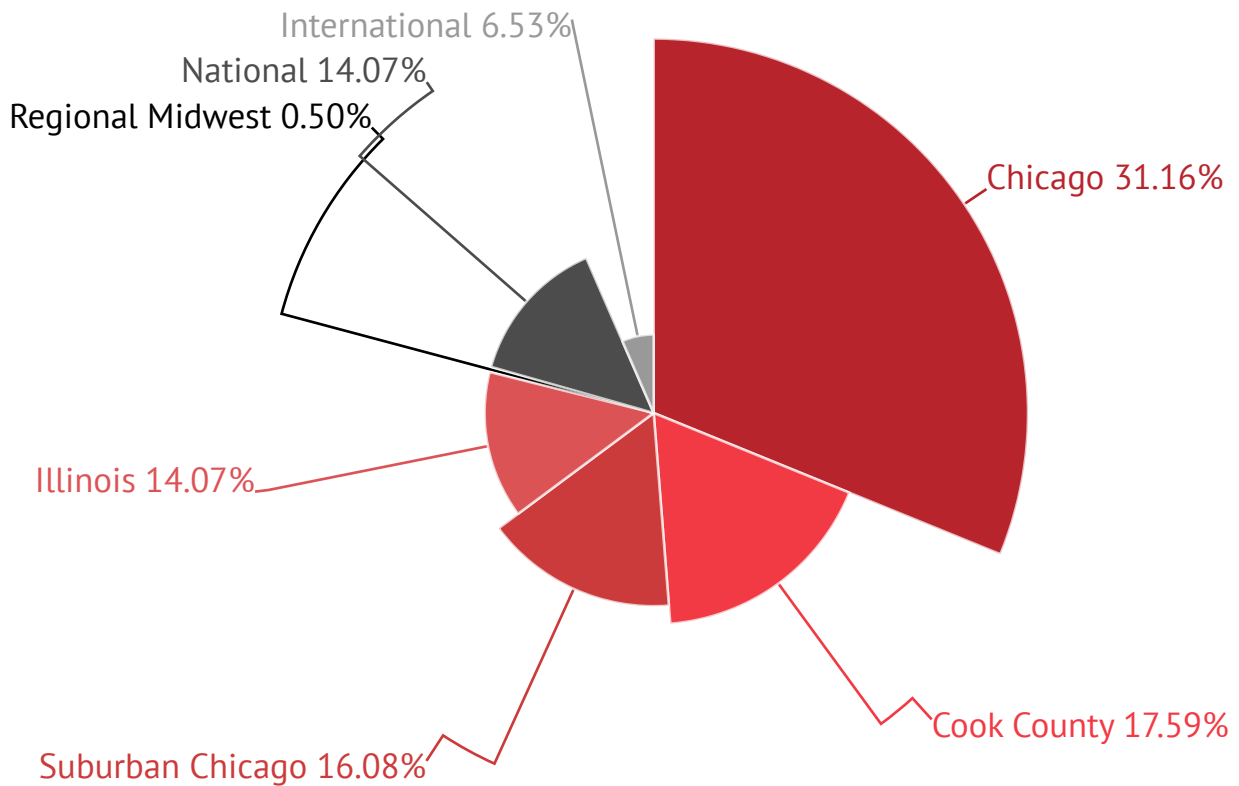


59 said English
16 said Spanish
1 Arabic
1 Cantonese
1 Polish
1 Hindi

-Out of 66 responses

-Outlets were able to choose more than one option

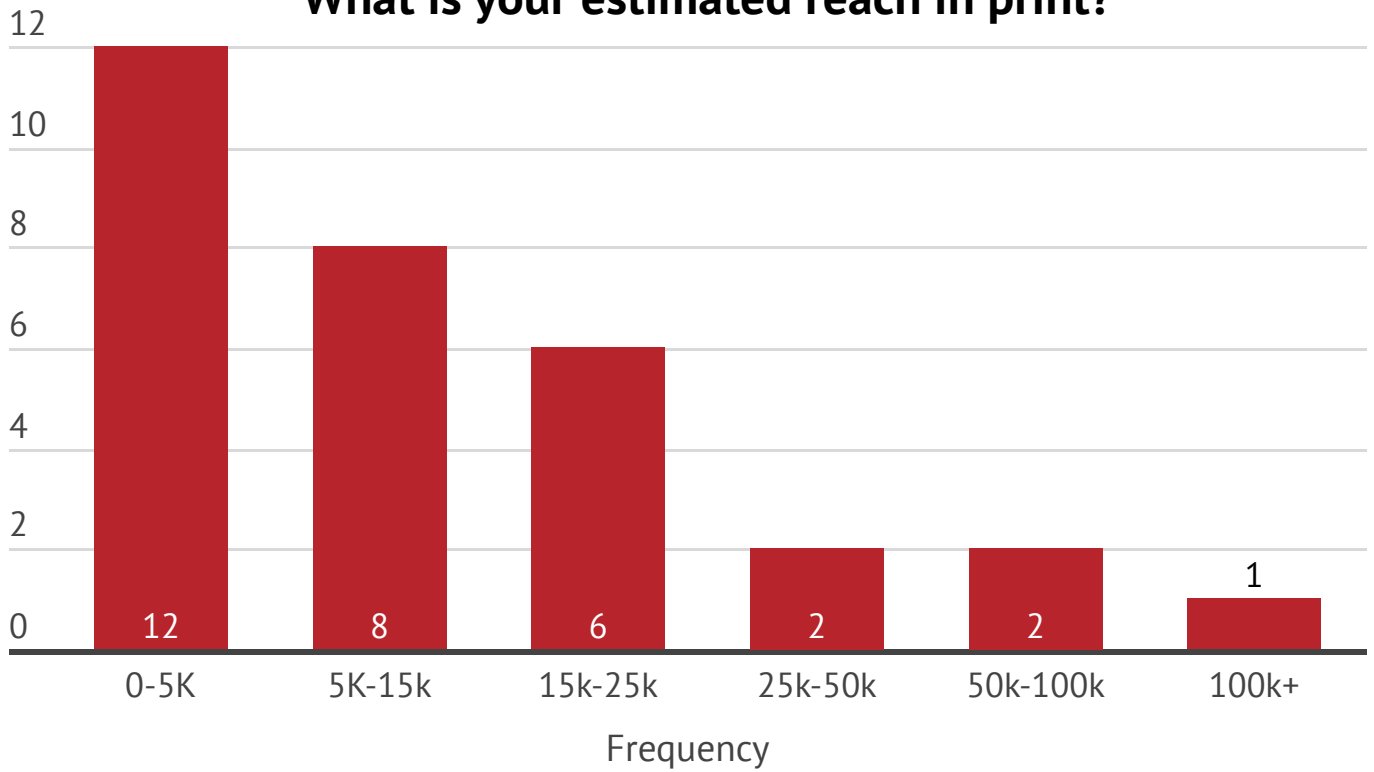
What geographic areas do you cover?



-Out of 66 responses, 3 did not respond

Distribution

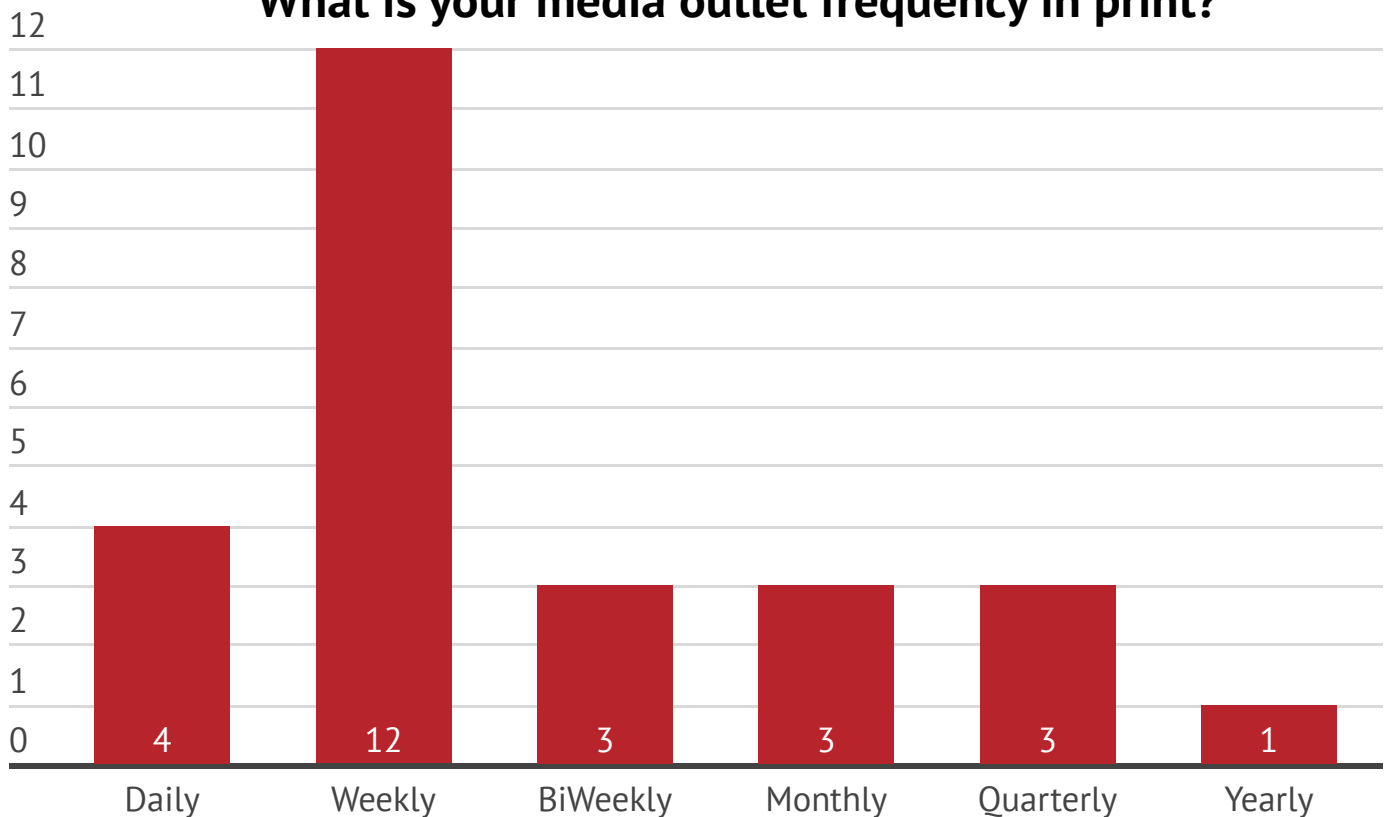
What is your estimated reach in print?



Frequency

35 did not respond

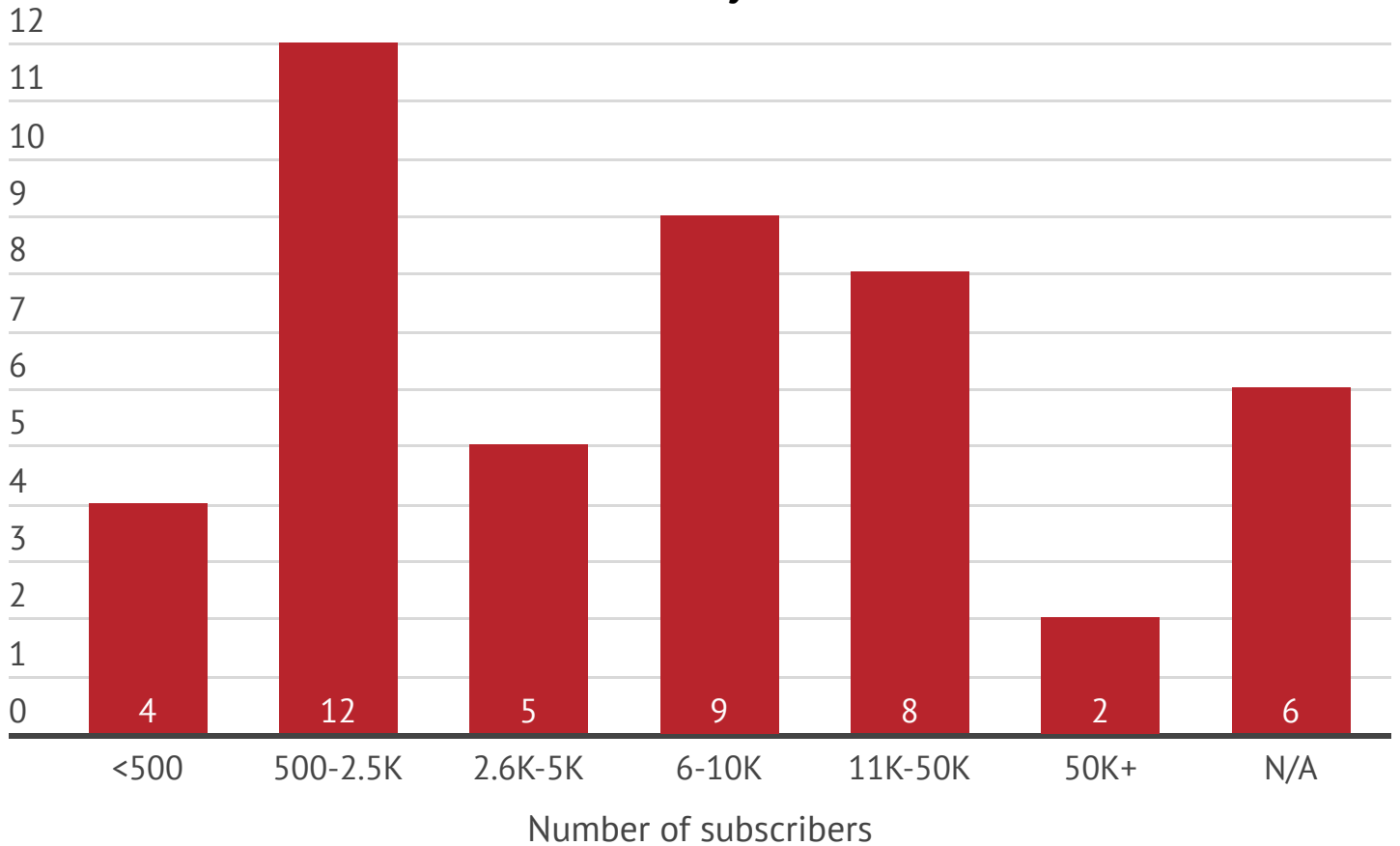
What is your media outlet frequency in print?



Frequency

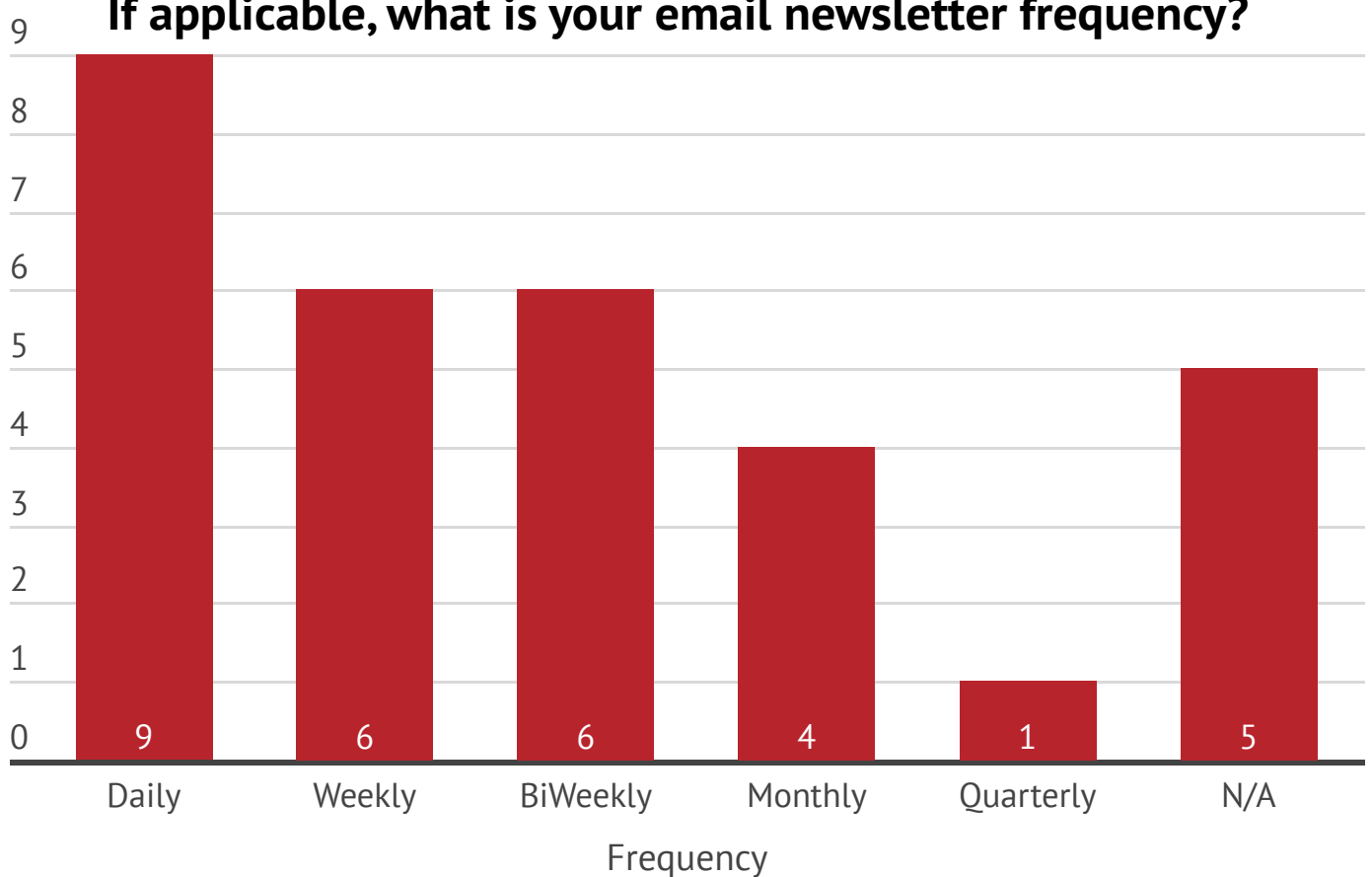
40 did not respond

What is the total list size of your e-mail newsletters?



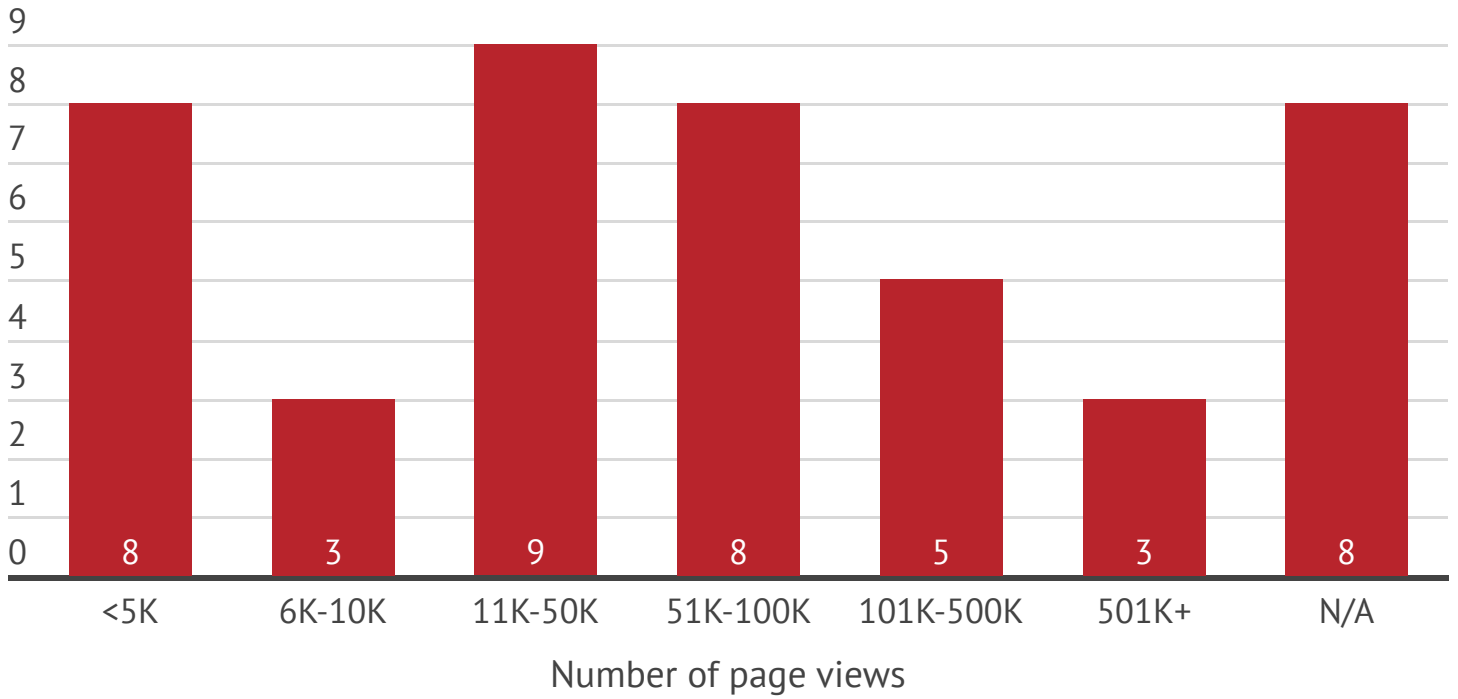
- 20 did not respond

If applicable, what is your email newsletter frequency?



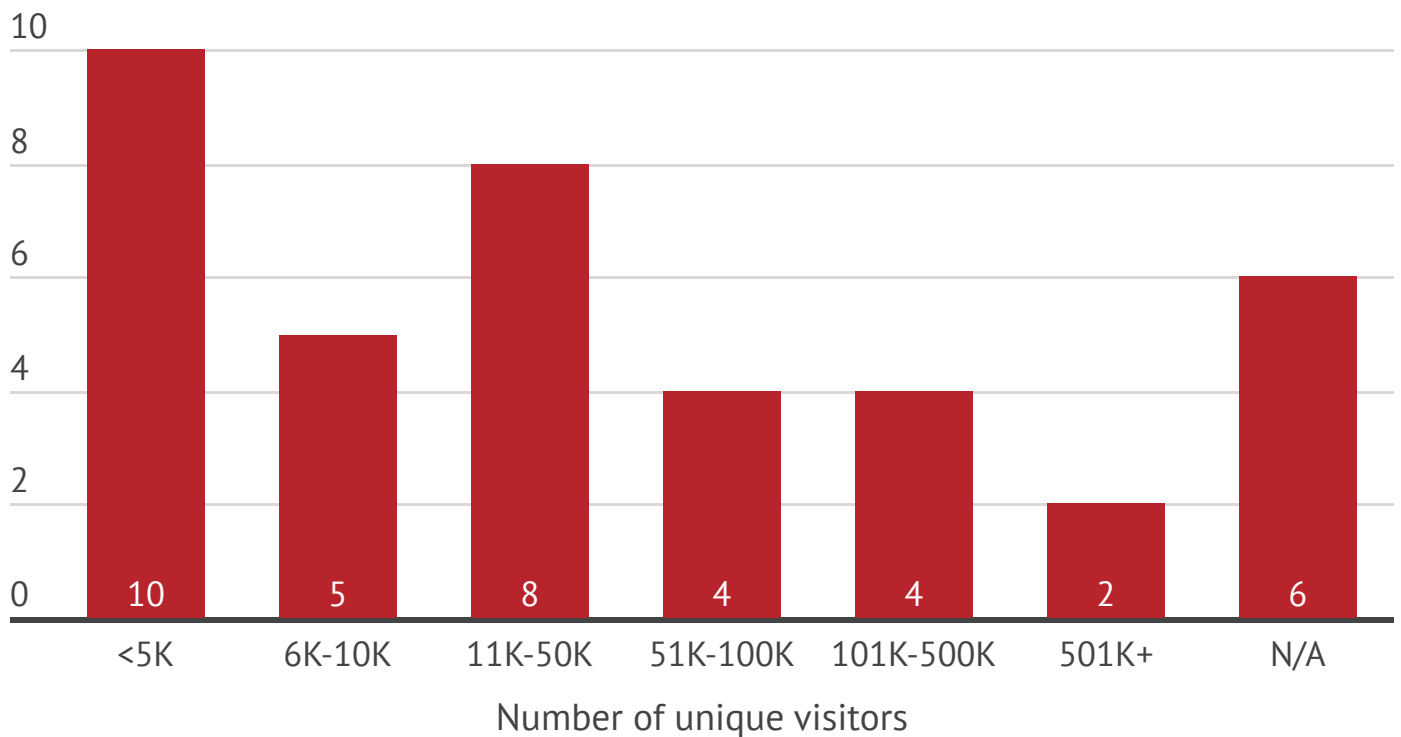
- 35 did not respond

What is your website monthly unique page views?



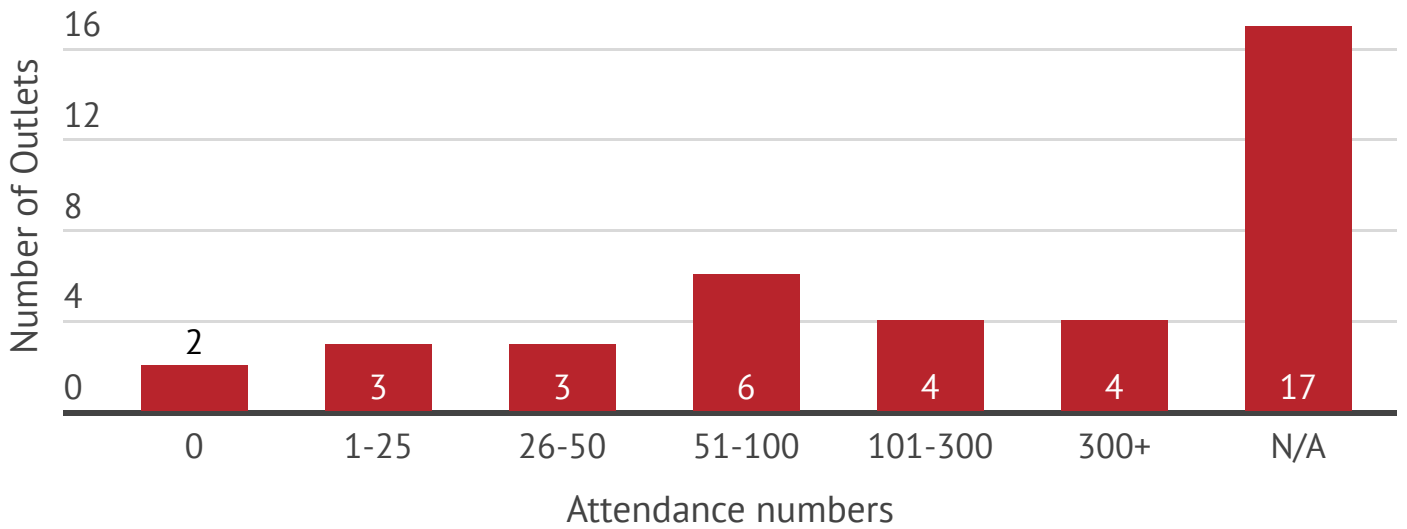
- 22 did not respond

What is your website monthly unique visitors?



- 27 did not respond

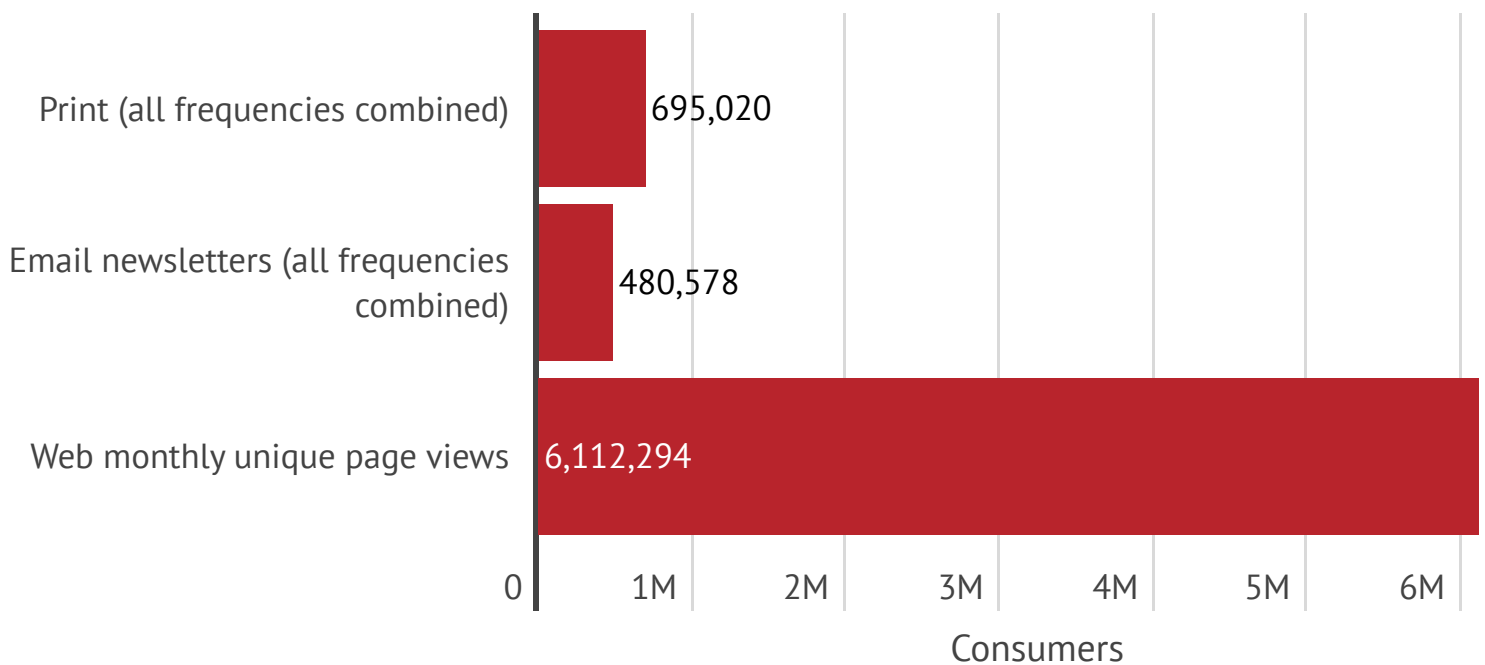
What is your average monthly attendance for events/workshops/classes?



-39 responded, 25 did not respond

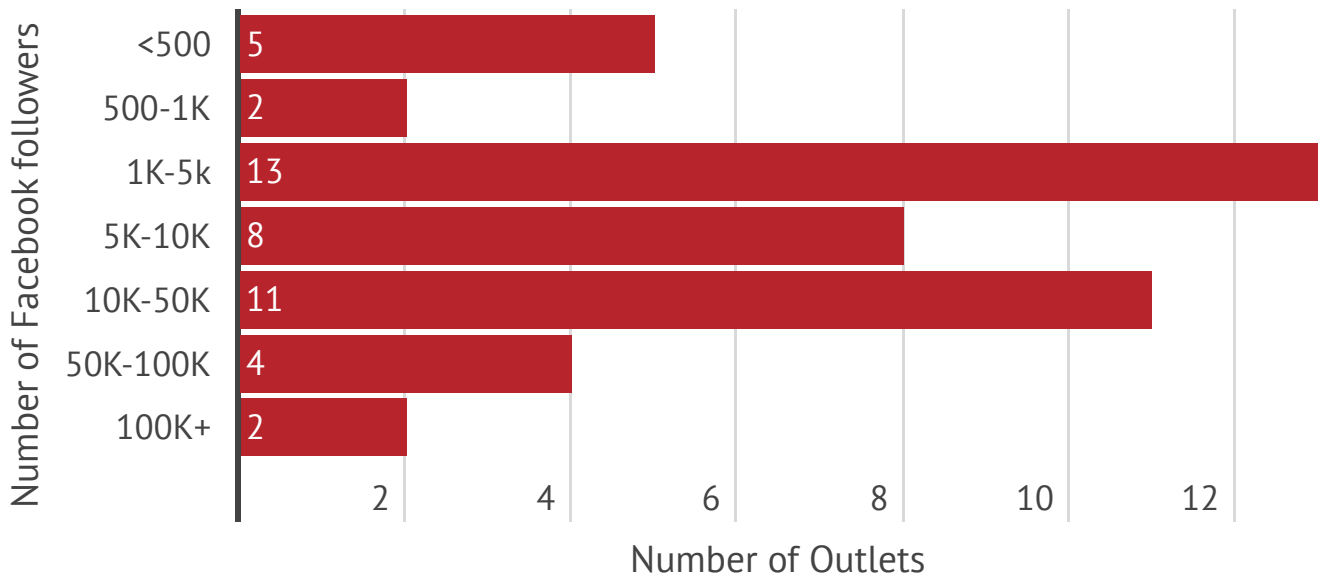
-Attendance numbers collected before COVID-19 pandemic

Combined content consumers (outside of social media)



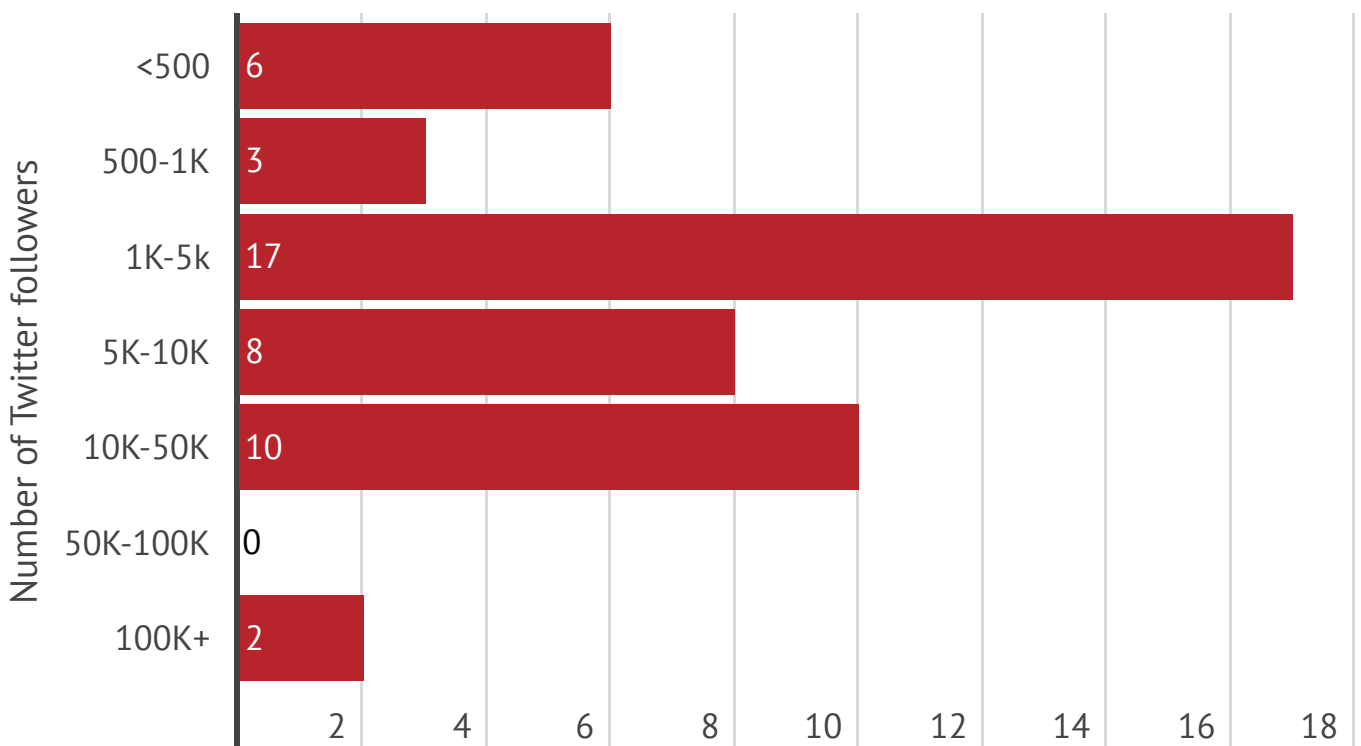
Social Media

What are your total social media followers on Facebook?



Out of 45 responses, 21 did not respond

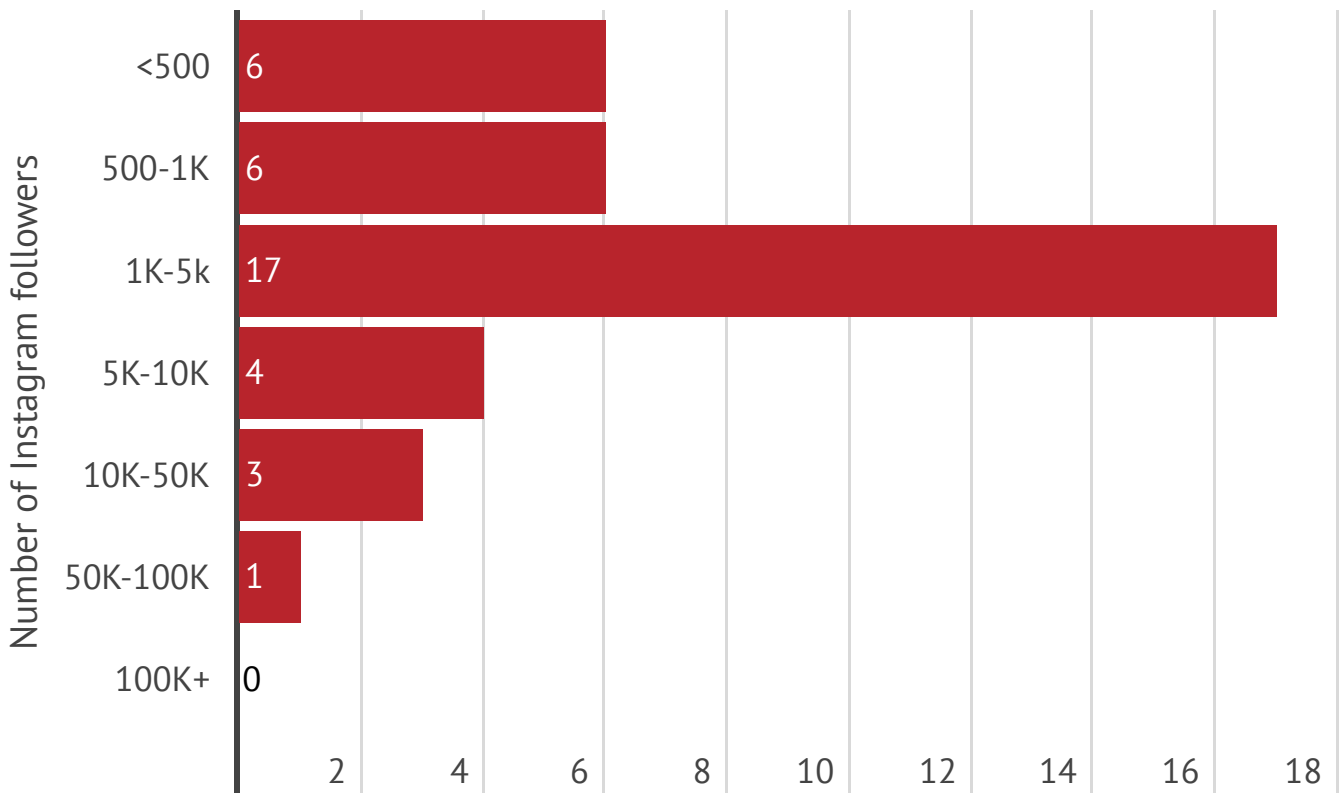
What are your total social media followers on Twitter?



Out of 47 responses, 21 did not respond

Out of 37 responses

What are your total social media followers on Instagram?



Out of 37 responses, 31 did not respond

Combined followers on social media



-Facebook: 1,787,606

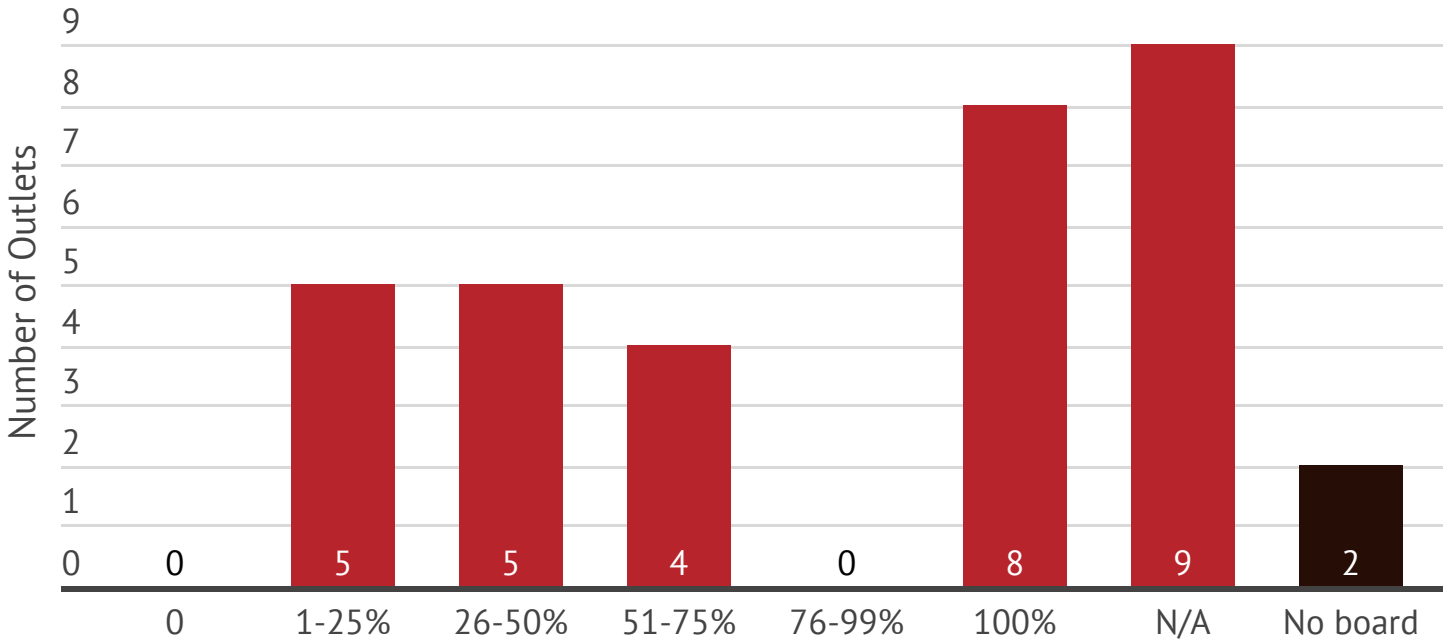
-Twitter: 710,126

- Instagram: 159,768

Combined total is 2,657,500.

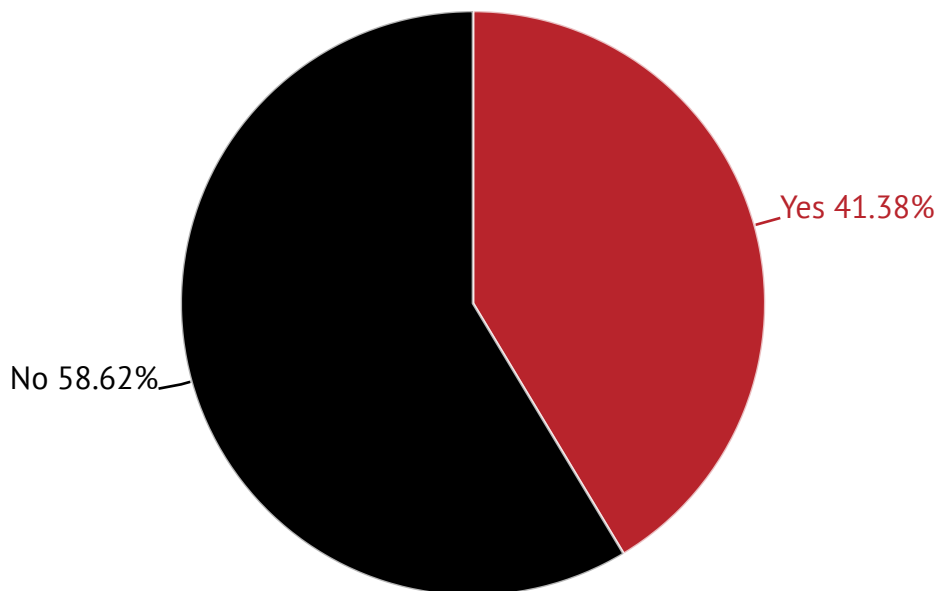
ALAANA

If your organization has a board, what percentage of your board members have ALAANA (African, Latino, Asian, Arab, and Native American) status?



Out of 66 responses, 33 did not respond

For 501c3s: Are you ALAANA qualified?

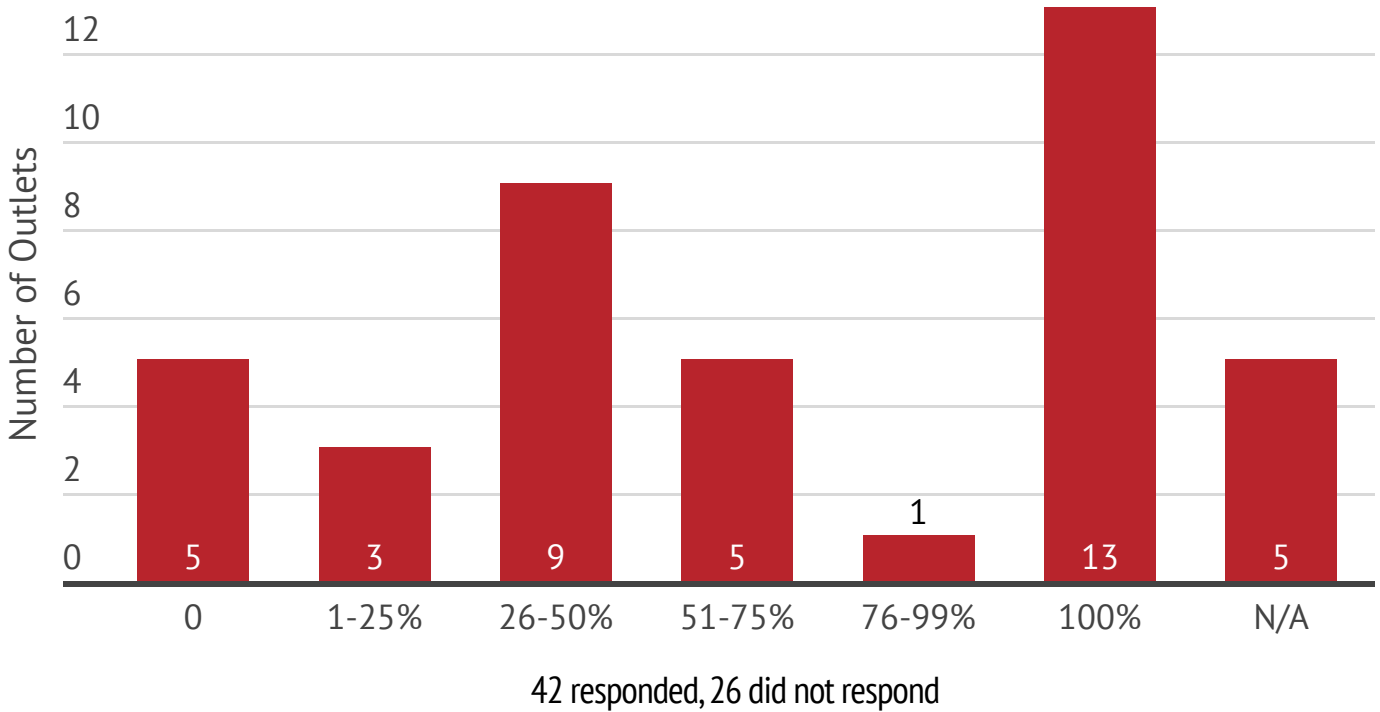


Out of 29 responses, 39 did not respond.

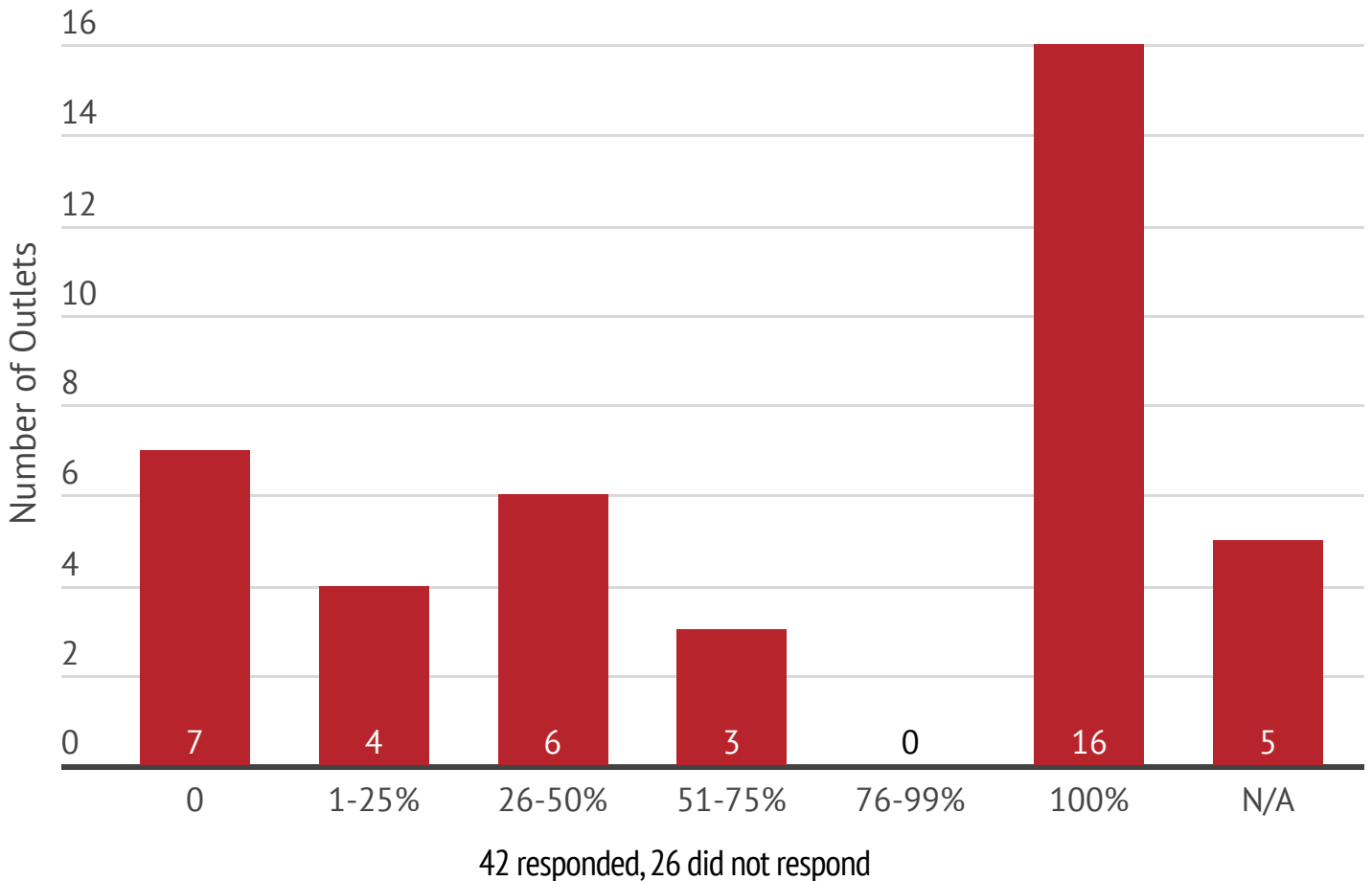
- 12 said yes

- 17 said no

What percentage of your editorial leadership has ALAANA status?



What percentage of your business leadership has ALAANA status?



In Summary

Just as Chicago thrives when its diverse people, neighborhoods, and communities come together, Chicago media will continue to thrive—and survive—when our diverse media outlets join forces across our shared passion for the transformative power of journalism.

Without journalism, including outlets that authentically cover communities, we will lose the watchdogs that keep corruption at bay. It has been shown that corruption increases when local media die. We need journalists to watch the powerful, to speak with and for those not in power, and to amplify the stories—good and bad—that make up the fabric of the city.

The reality, though, is that journalism as an industry cannot continue without help. The old ways that we used to fund ourselves are no longer viable or available, and we need to find a new way forward together. The Reader, and the Chicago Independent Media Alliance, believe in our ability to navigate the path forward with two distinct and important components in our roadmap: nonprofit status and vigorous collaboration.

More than ever before, our colleagues in community media agree with us that cooperation, alongside the editorial competition that has made our journalism landscape thrive, will cement a future for all of us.

On the surface, funding community journalism may not seem to achieve many nonprofits' goals of providing services to at-risk populations, supporting the arts, or championing social justice causes. But dig a little deeper, and you realize that you need journalists to uncover those peoples' stories and what they need, to critique and review the arts, and to hold those in power accountable on issues that make the city a better and more just place.

Whether you fund the arts, homeless issues, criminal justice, education, the environment, social justice or something else, the work you do depends, in no small part, on the work of journalists.

Thank you for all you do for the city. We look forward to continuing this conversation with you and including you on this journey toward strengthening Chicago's community journalism ecosystem, now and for generations to come.

CONTACT:

Yazmin Dominguez, CIMA Coordinator
ydominguez@chicagoreader.com

Tracy Baim, Co-Publisher, Chicago Reader
tbaim@chicagoreader.com
773-387-2394

Karen Hawkins, Co-Publisher, Chicago Reader
khawkins@chicagoreader.com