

# Insight Briefing | 2019

## Results from the Current and Past-Member Surveys

Conducted on behalf of the American Guild of Organists

Presented by Elizabeth Bailey and Nancy Schmidt

November 6, 2019 | New York City

# Our Vision and Mission

**The vision** of the American Guild of Organists is to engage, support and uplift every organist.

**The mission** of the American Guild of Organists is to foster a thriving community of musicians who share their knowledge and inspire passion for the organ.

# AGO's Current Strategic Plan Goals

**MEMBERSHIP:** Increase membership satisfaction by enhancing programs and resources for all AGO members.

**COMMUNITY:** Continue to grow a vibrant, inclusive, and connected community of organists.

**CHAPTERS:** Ensure an excellent member experience across all chapters.

**VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP:** Maximize the effectiveness of the AGO's volunteer leaders.

**LEGACY/ADVOCACY:** Promote the organ and organists in their historical and evolving roles.

**FUNDING & OPERATIONS:** Expand the AGO's capacity to serve Chapters and members through financial growth and revenue diversification.

# Membership Trends

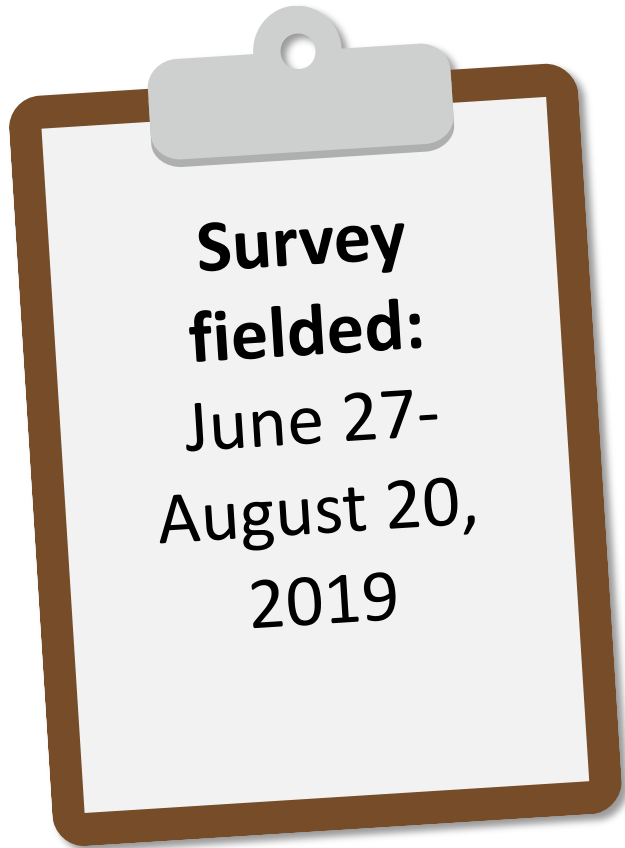
- **5-Year Total Membership: Decrease of 11%**
  - 2015 Membership: 15,836
  - 2019 Membership: 14,150
- **The number of Special Members (65+)** surpassed the number of Regular Members for the first time in 2019.

## Breakdown of Decline by Category

	<i>Current members</i>	<i>5 year change</i>
○ Special members (retired)	6,552	- 7%
○ Regular members	5,845	-24%
○ Young Organist members	1,114	-1%
○ Independent Regular members	297	-33%

- **In 2014, based on membership trends,** it was estimated that total membership would decrease by about 24% in 10 years.

# About the Current Member Survey



## Survey invitations:

- Personal email invitations were sent to all current members in each region, and also distributed via weblink
- Invitations were timed to coincide with Regional Conventions, held throughout the summer
- **Invitations sent: 13,743**  
(bounces and opt-outs removed)
- **Responses received: 5,116**
- **Response Rate: 37.2%**

# Survey Overview: Breakdown by Region

Excellent response across the regions!

REGION	Invitations sent (bounces & opt outs removed)	Responses rec'd (email + weblink)	Response rate
Southeast	<b>2,383</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>37%</b>
MidAtlantic	<b>2,342</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>37%</b>
Northeast	<b>2,343</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>34%</b>
Great Lakes	<b>1,963</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>39%</b>
West	<b>2,104</b>	<b>752</b>	<b>36%</b>
North Central	<b>1,360</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>42%</b>
Southwest	<b>1,248</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>38%</b>

5 YEAR SURVEY COMPARISON: No significant change in any region



Current Member Survey

# Respondent Demographics



# Current Member Respondents: Countries Represented

A total of 26 countries were represented; 98% of respondents live in the US.

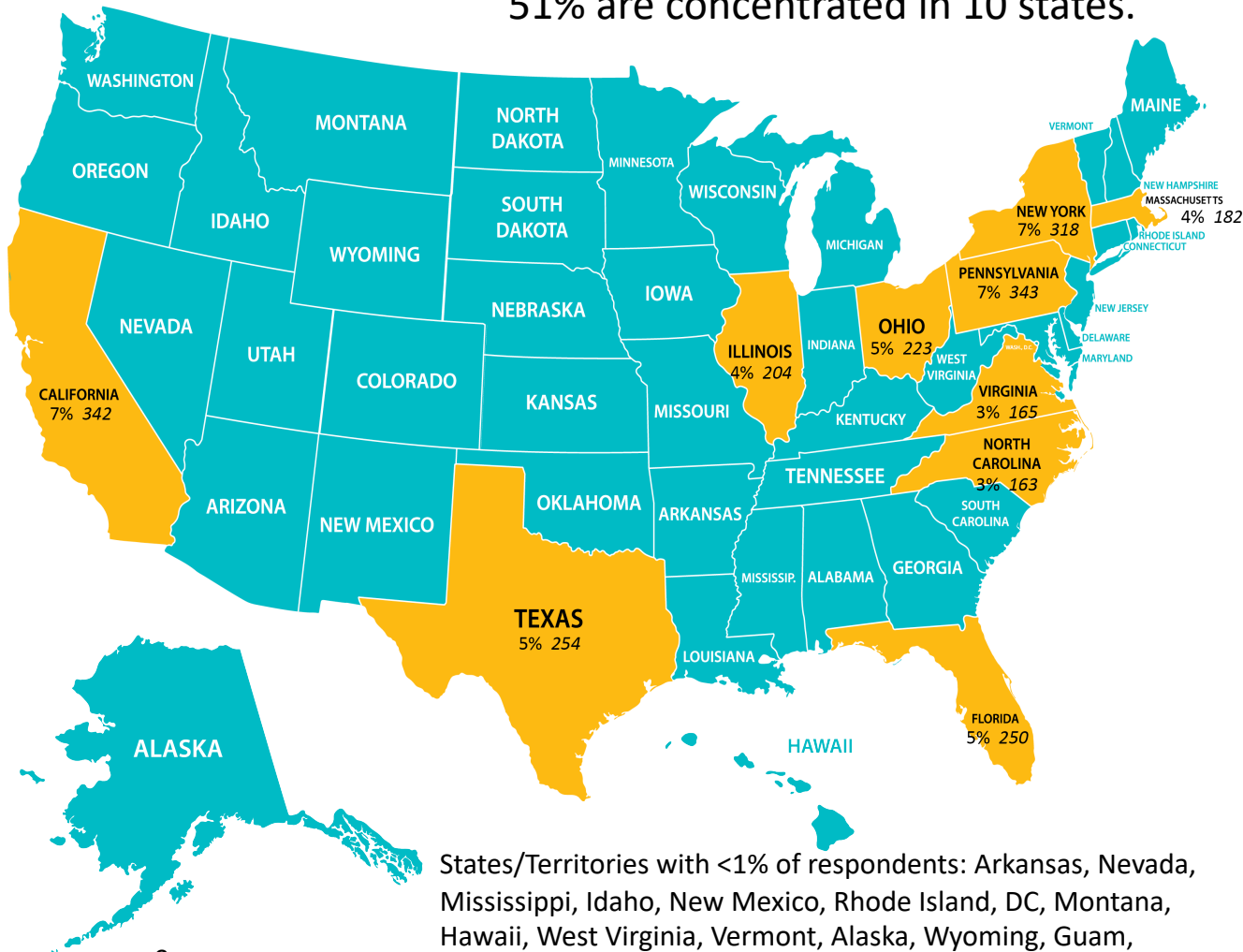
<b>United States</b>	<b>4,947</b>	Bahamas	1
Canada	36	France	1
Singapore	12	Guatemala	1
Australia	11	Israel	1
Hong Kong	8	Japan	1
UK	7	Liechtenstein	1
Germany	6	Mexico	1
Afghanistan	3	Netherlands	1
Finland	2	New Zealand	1
Italy	2	Poland	1
Kenya	2	Republic of Korea	1
South Africa	2	Slovak Republic	1
Taiwan	2	Switzerland	1

n= 5,060



# US States and Regions Represented

All 50 states, plus Guam and Puerto Rico, were represented.  
51% are concentrated in 10 states.



REMAINING STATES		
New Jersey	3%	154
Michigan	3%	144
Georgia	3%	134
Minnesota	3%	134
Maryland	3%	127
Tennessee	3%	126
Missouri	2%	112
Wisconsin	2%	104
Indiana	2%	103
Connecticut	2%	102
Washington	2%	95
South Carolina	2%	94
Colorado	2%	77
Arizona	2%	73
Iowa	1%	70
Alabama	1%	57
Utah	1%	57
Kansas	1%	55
Kentucky	1%	48
Oregon	1%	48
Oklahoma	1%	46
Nebraska	1%	35
New Hampshire	1%	32
Louisiana	1%	30
Maine	1%	25
Delaware	1%	24

States/Territories with <1% of respondents: Arkansas, Nevada, Mississippi, Idaho, New Mexico, Rhode Island, DC, Montana, Hawaii, West Virginia, Vermont, Alaska, Wyoming, Guam, North Dakota, Puerto Rico

## Current Member Respondents:

# RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND ETHNICITY

### RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

<b>Christian/Protestant</b>	<b>71%</b>
Christian/Catholic	21%
No Religion/Secular	5%
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	3%
Jewish	1%
Buddhist	<1%
Muslim	<1%
Hindu	<1%
Other	<1%

n= 4,366

### ETHNICITY

<b>White/Caucasian</b>	<b>91%</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%
Black/African American	1%
Hispanic/Latinx	1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1%
Other	1%
Prefer not to answer	4%

n= 4,370

5 YEAR SURVEY COMPARISON: No significant change in any demographic group

# Current Member Respondents: AGE and GENDER

**58% of respondents were between the ages of 60-79.** Only 12% of respondents were under the age of 40.

## AGE

22 years or younger	2%
23-29 years	4%
30-39 years	6%
40-49 years	7%
50-59 years	14%
60-69 years	33%
70-79 years	25%
80-89 years	8%
90 years or more	1%

n= 5,061

## GENDER

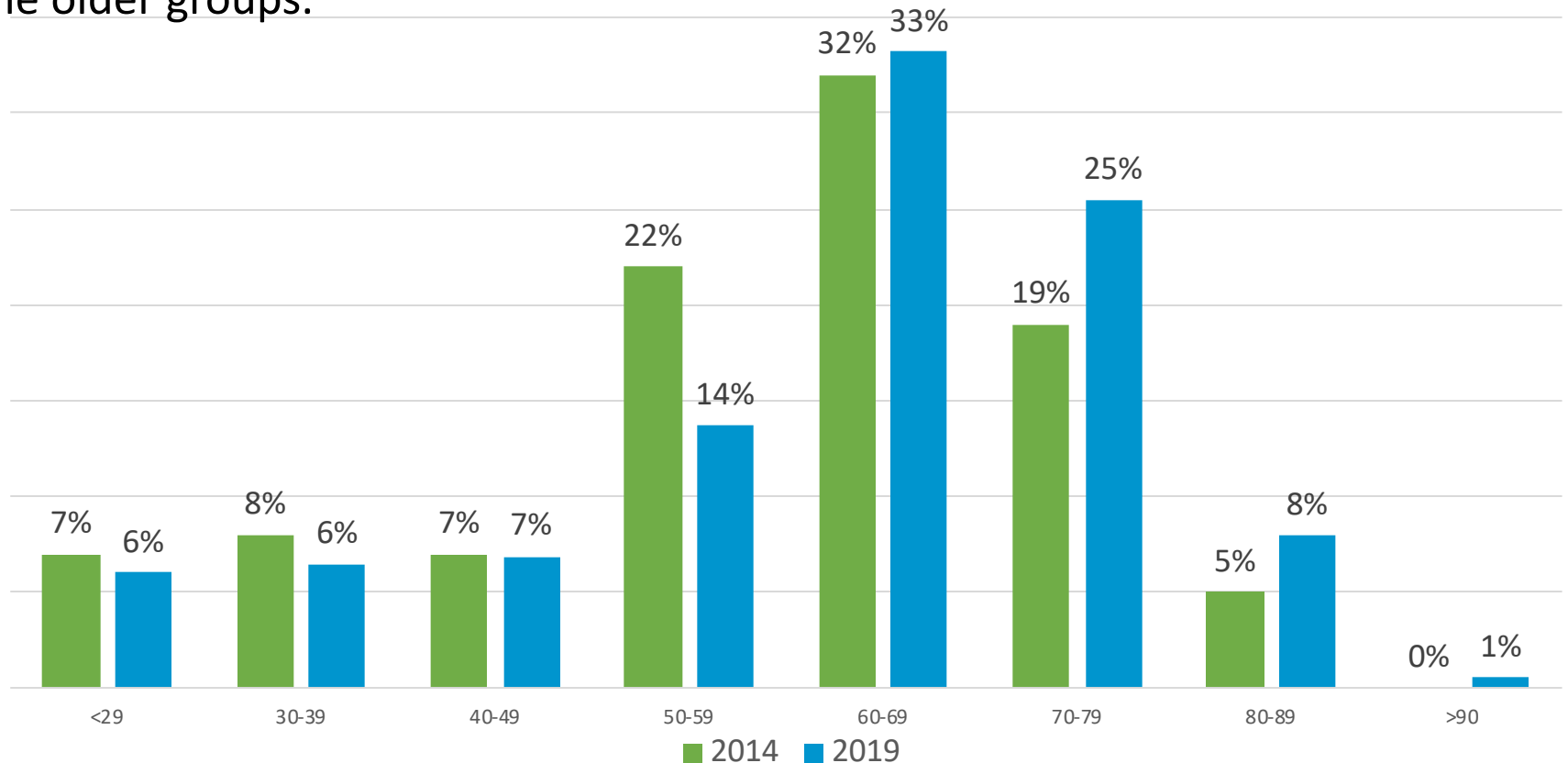
Female	39%
Male	61%
Non-binary	<1 (16 respondents)

n= 4,375

**5 YEAR SURVEY COMPARISON: Some change in age distribution; no change in gender**

# 5 Year Comparison: Oldest Groups are Growing

**Percent of respondents under 50 years old remained about the same; however, a significant decrease in the middle group of 50-59 was paired with increases in all the older groups.**



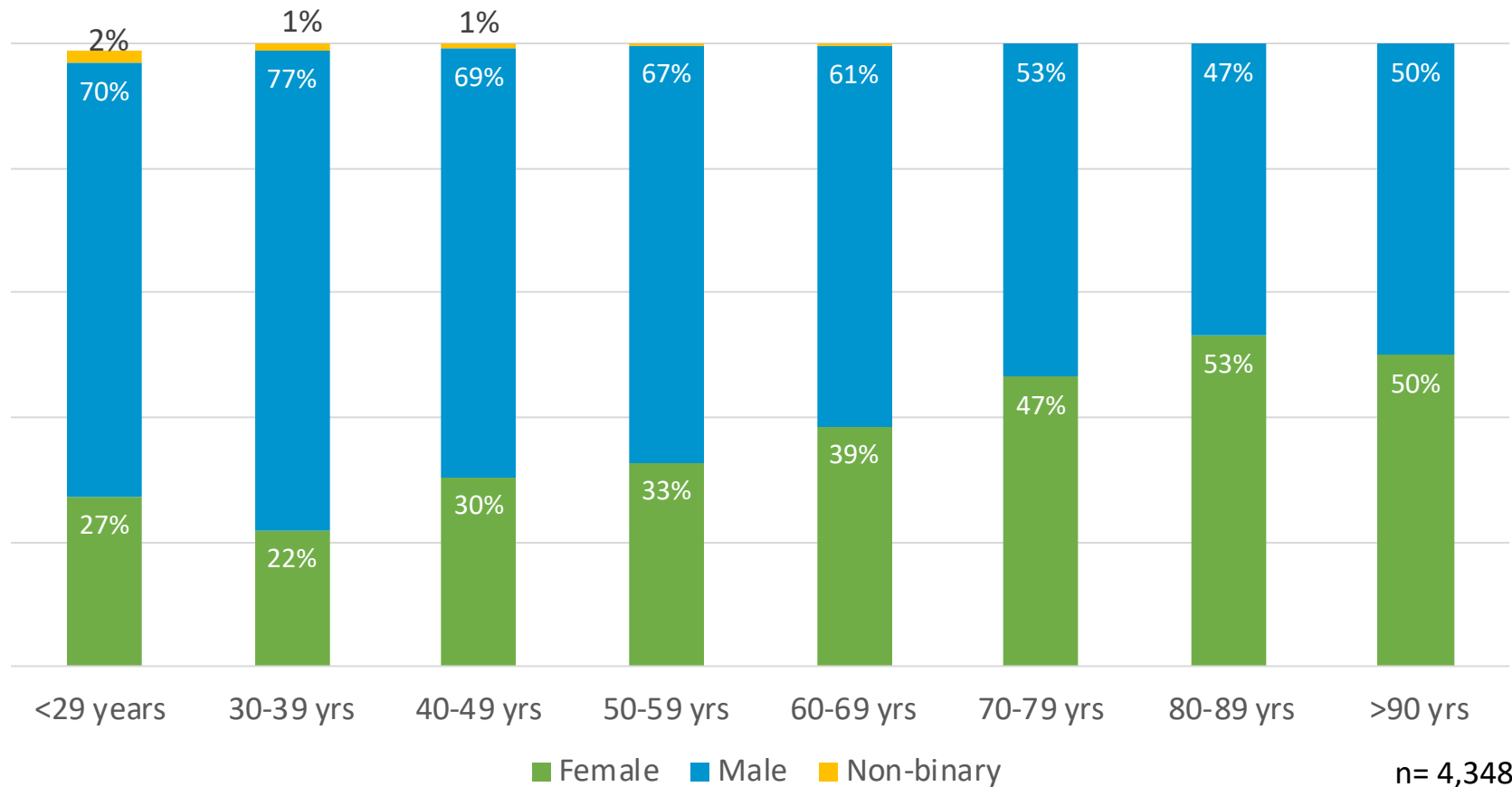
2014 n= 4,760

2019 n= 5,061

# Current Member Respondents

## Age Group Comparison: GENDER BALANCE SHIFTS

In youngest cohorts, men outnumber women by nearly 3:1. The ratio evens out in older groups.



n = 4,348

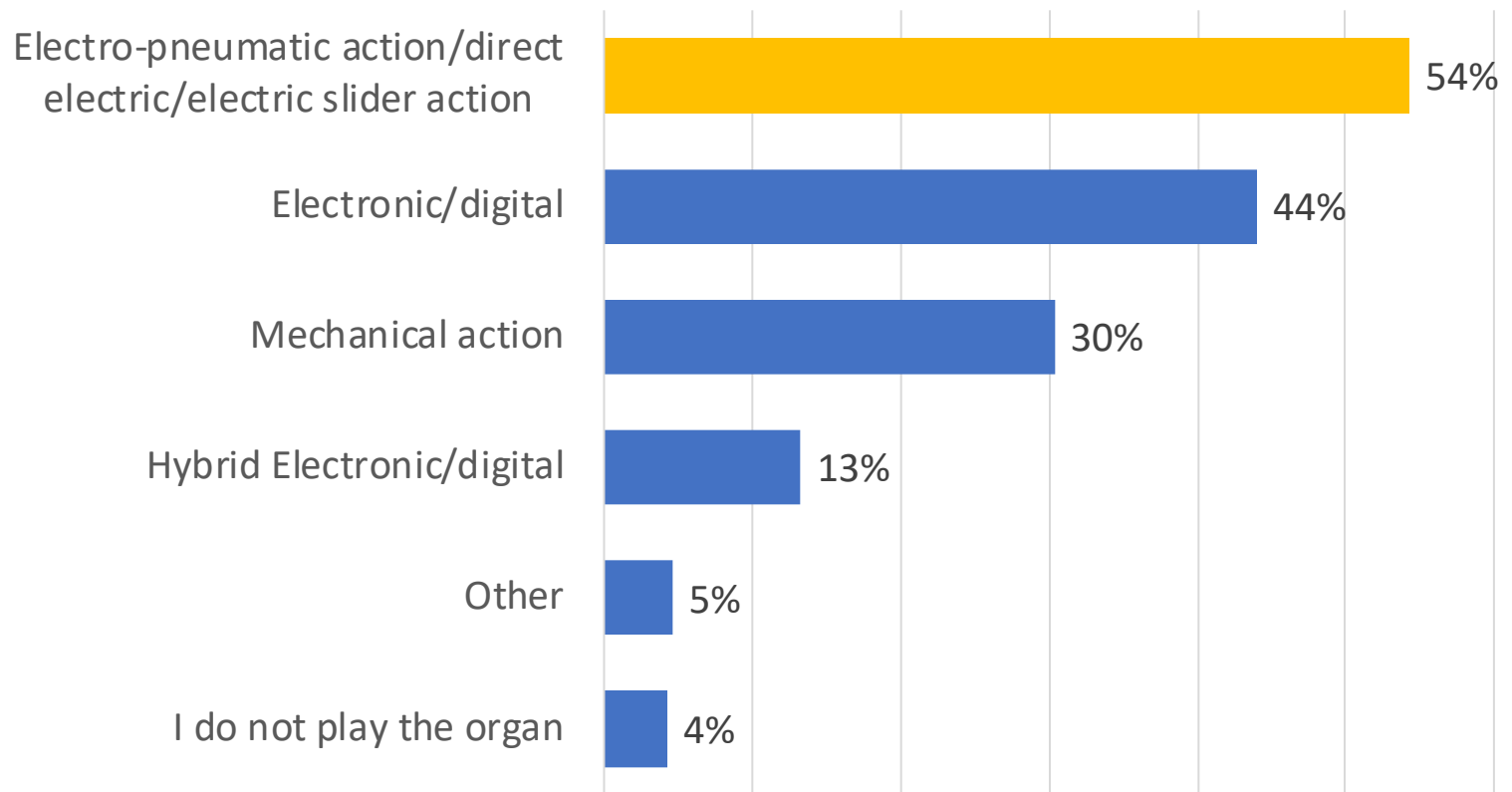


# Current Member Survey Training



# Type of Organ Played

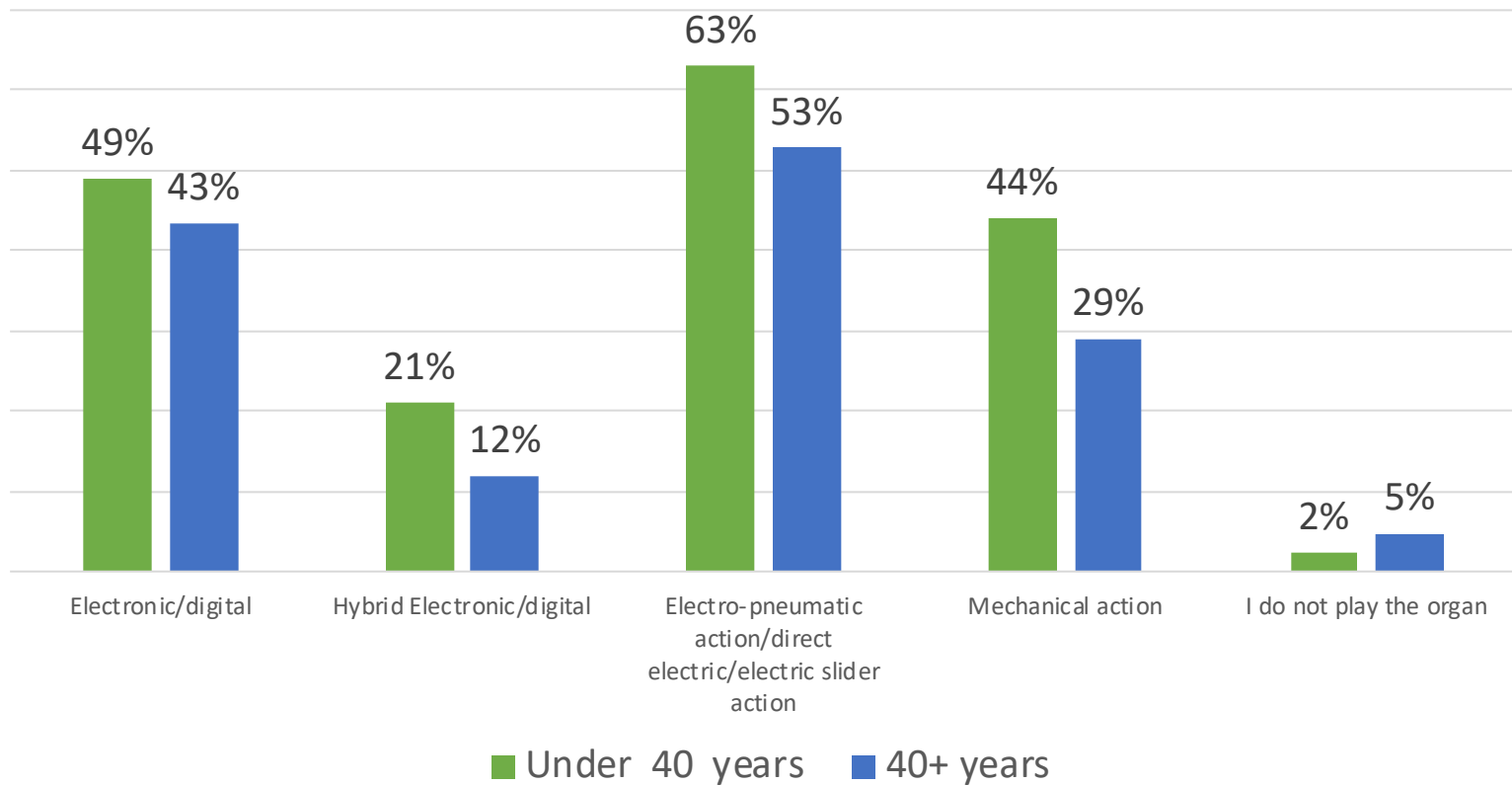
**Over half of respondents** play electro-pneumatic/direct electric/electronic slider action pipe organs.



n= 4,965

# Age Group Comparison: Type of Organ Played

Respondents under the age of 40 are more active players of all types of organs.

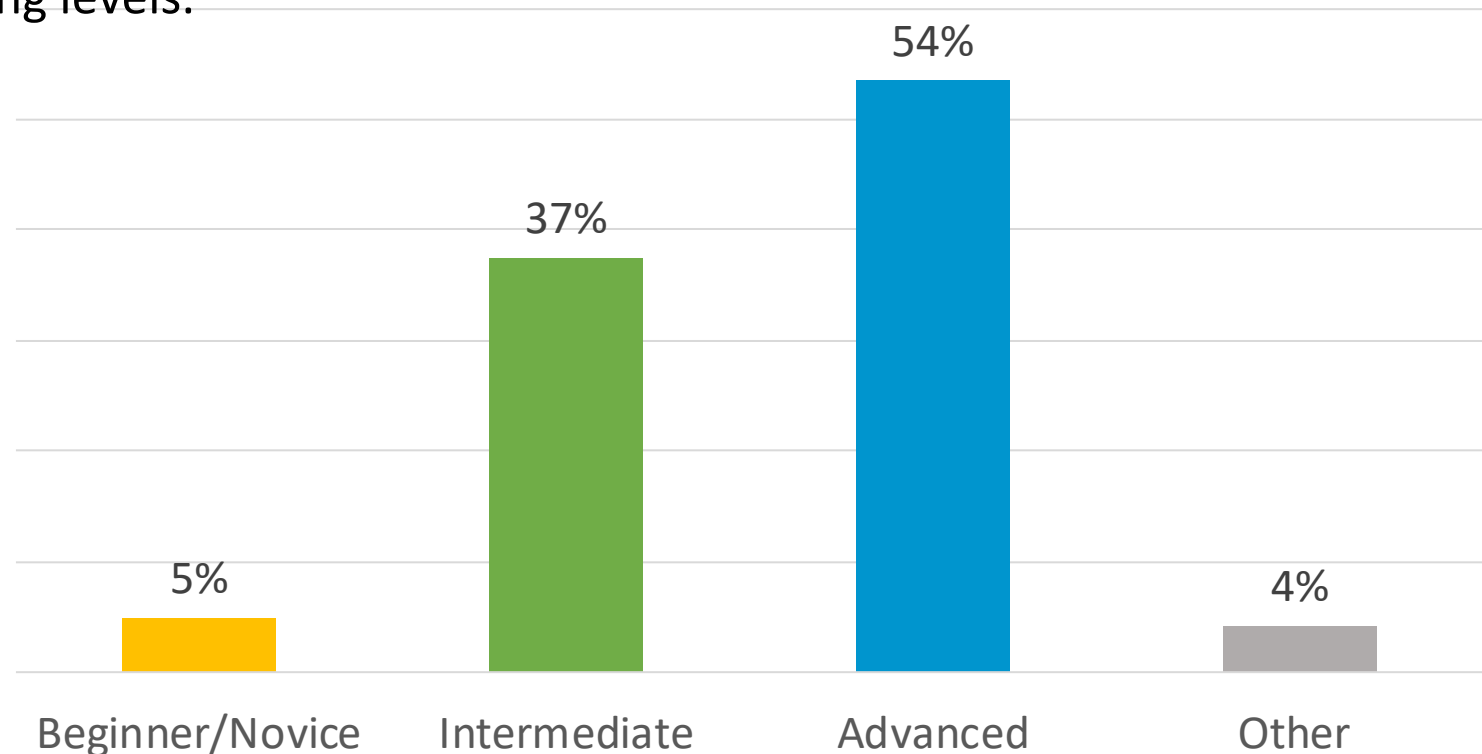


n= 4,924



# Organist Playing Level

**More than half of respondents** consider themselves to be at Advanced playing levels.

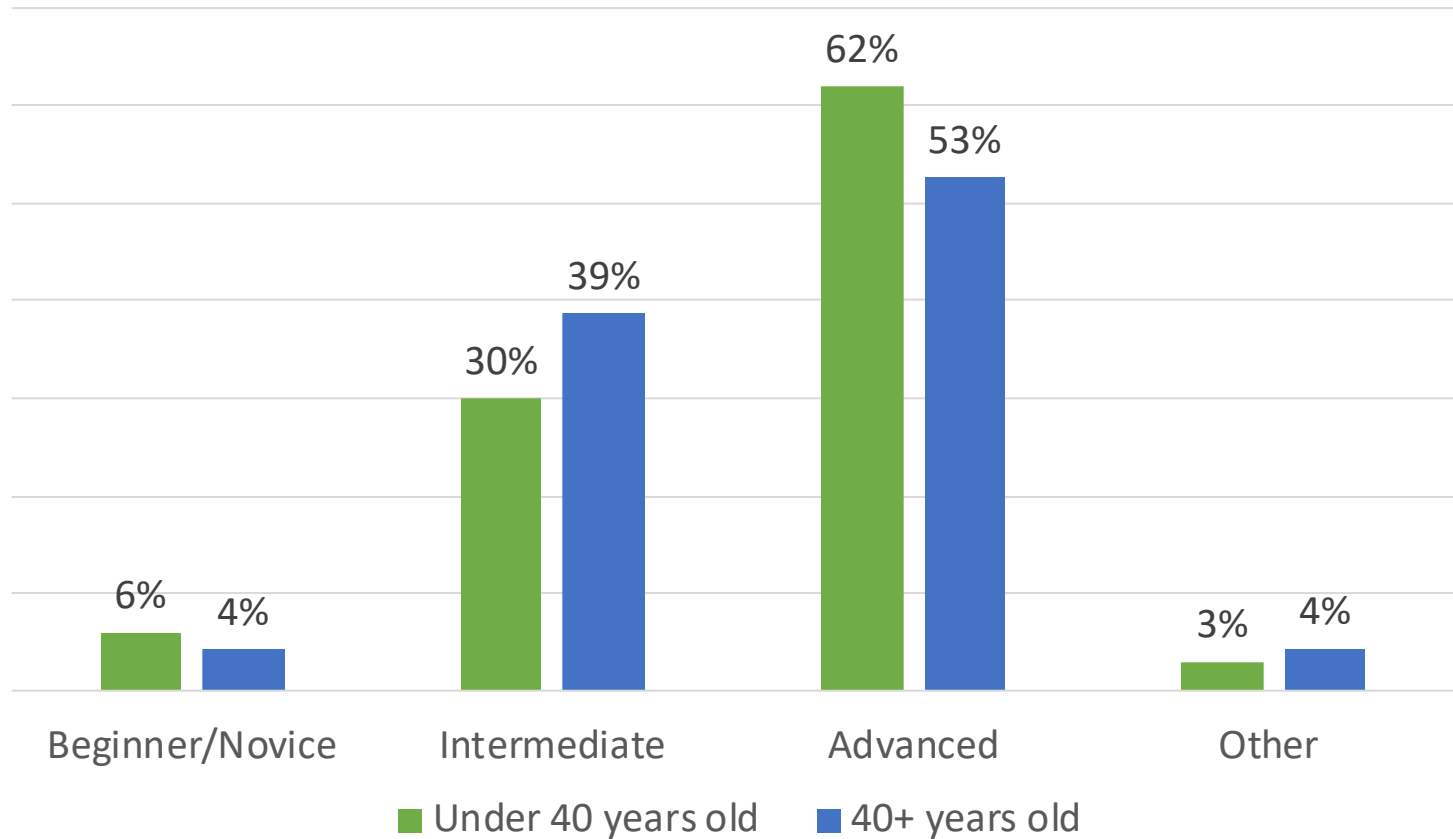


Note: Most common “other” responses were  
a) ‘in between categories’ and b) ‘do not play the organ’

n= 4,968

# Age Group Comparison: Organist Playing Level

**Respondents under the age of 40** are comparatively **more likely** to describe their skill level as “Advanced.”

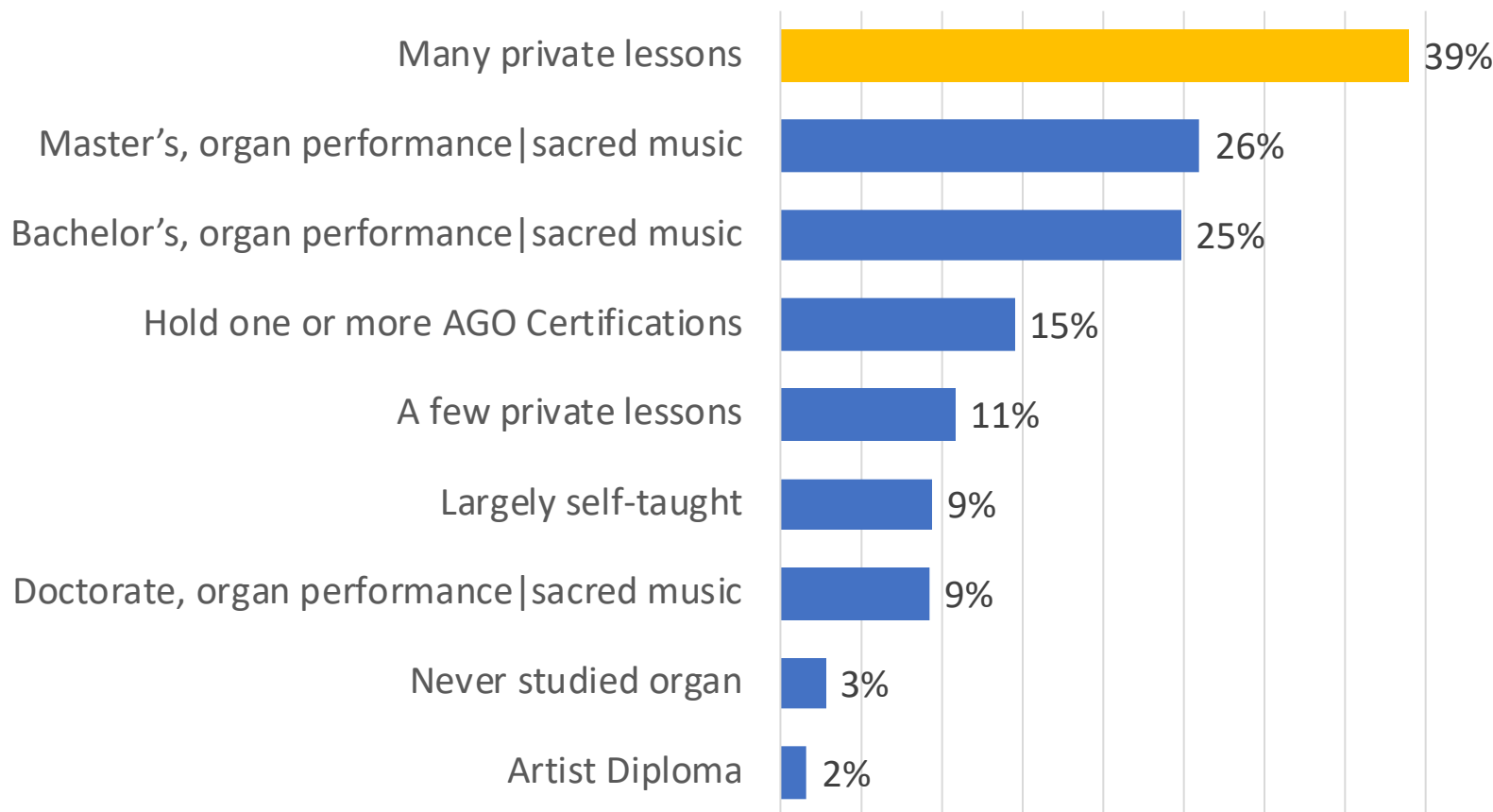


Note: Responses from under 22 years old removed

n= 4,822

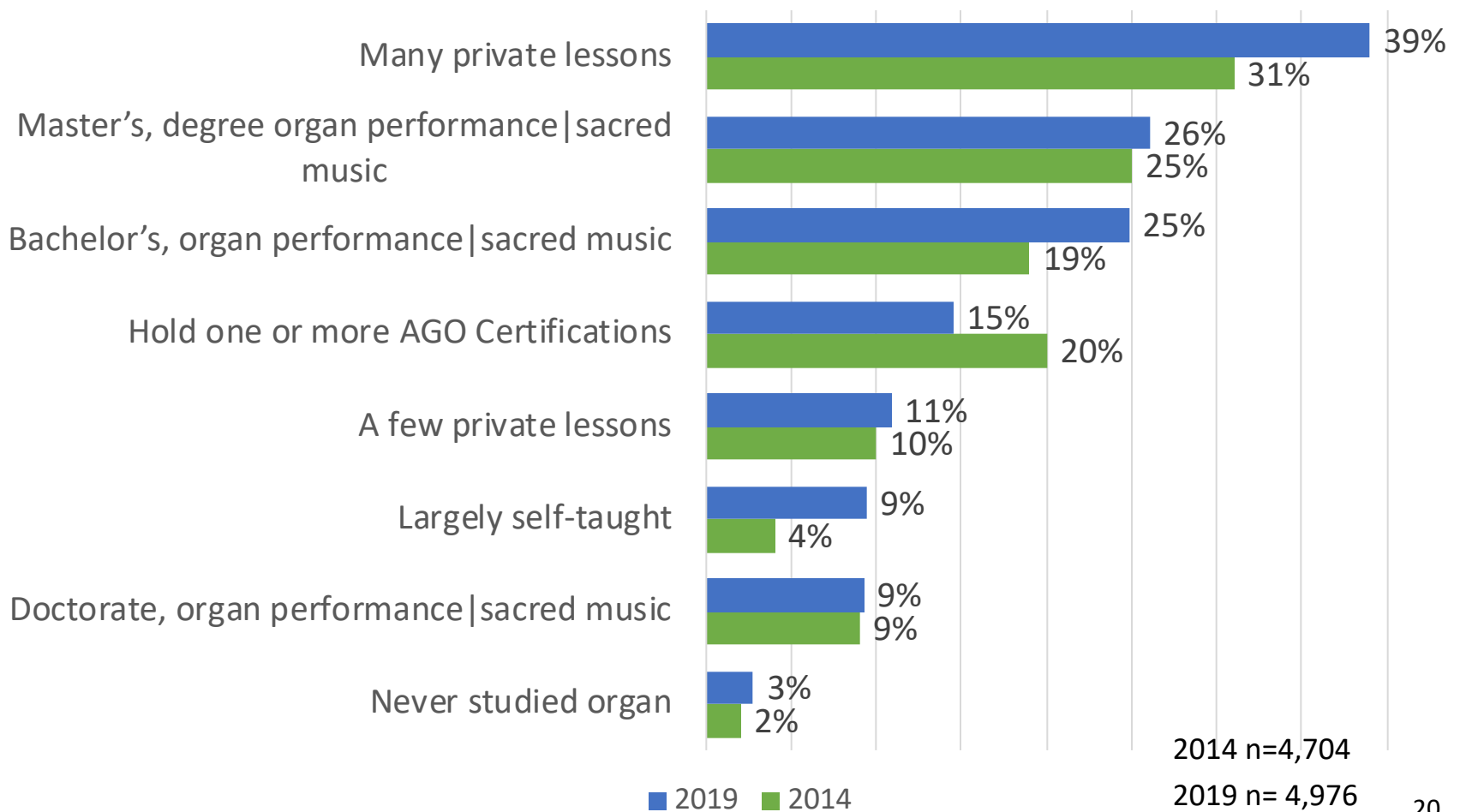
# Organist Training

**39% of respondents** report taking many in-person private lessons.



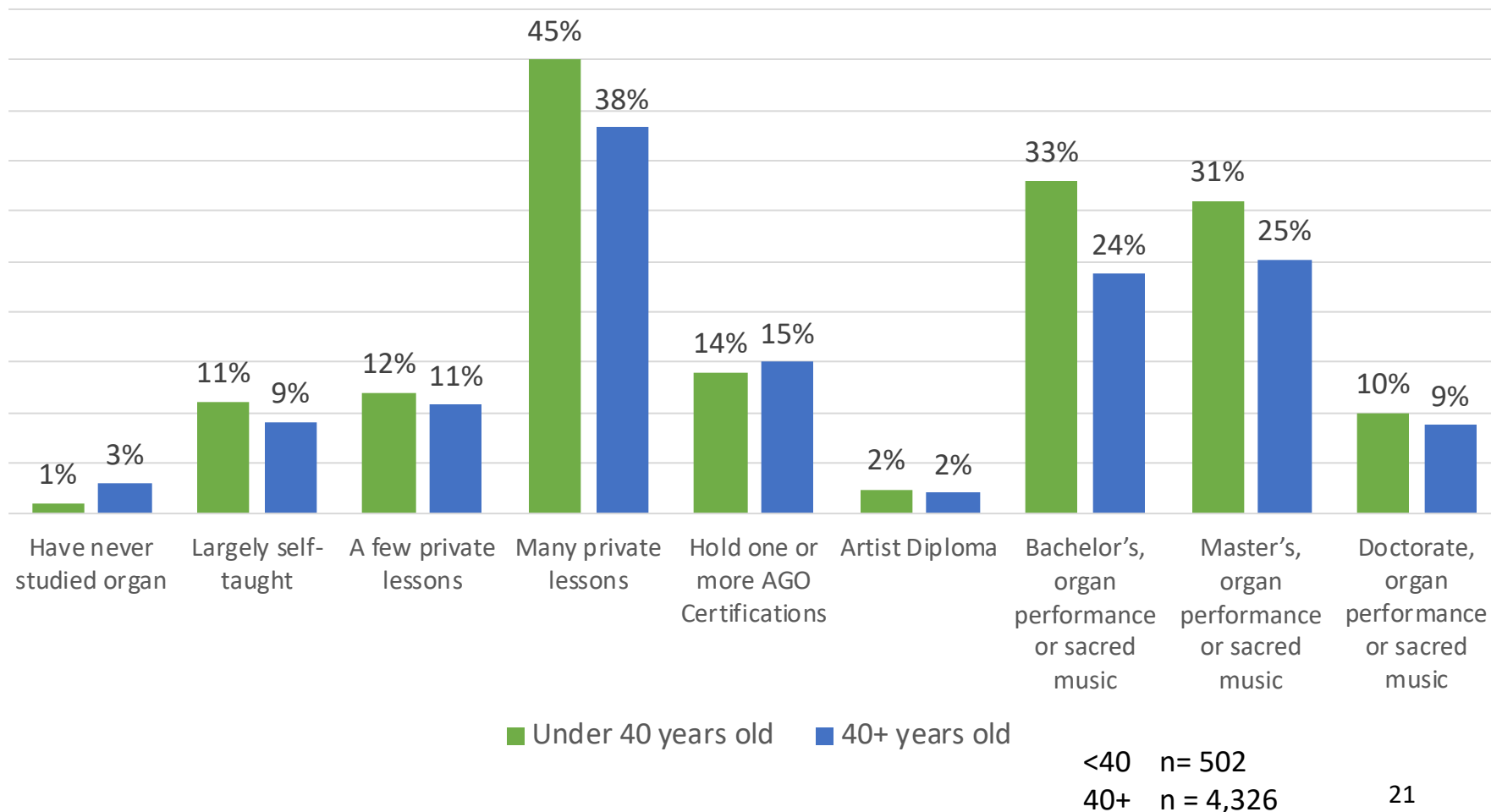
# 5 Year Comparison: Organist Training

**Comparatively more 2019 respondents** are taking private lessons and getting bachelor's degrees; fewer hold AGO certifications.



# Age Group Comparison: Organist Training

**Respondents under 40 years old** are comparatively more likely to have taken many private lessons, and earned bachelors and masters degrees.

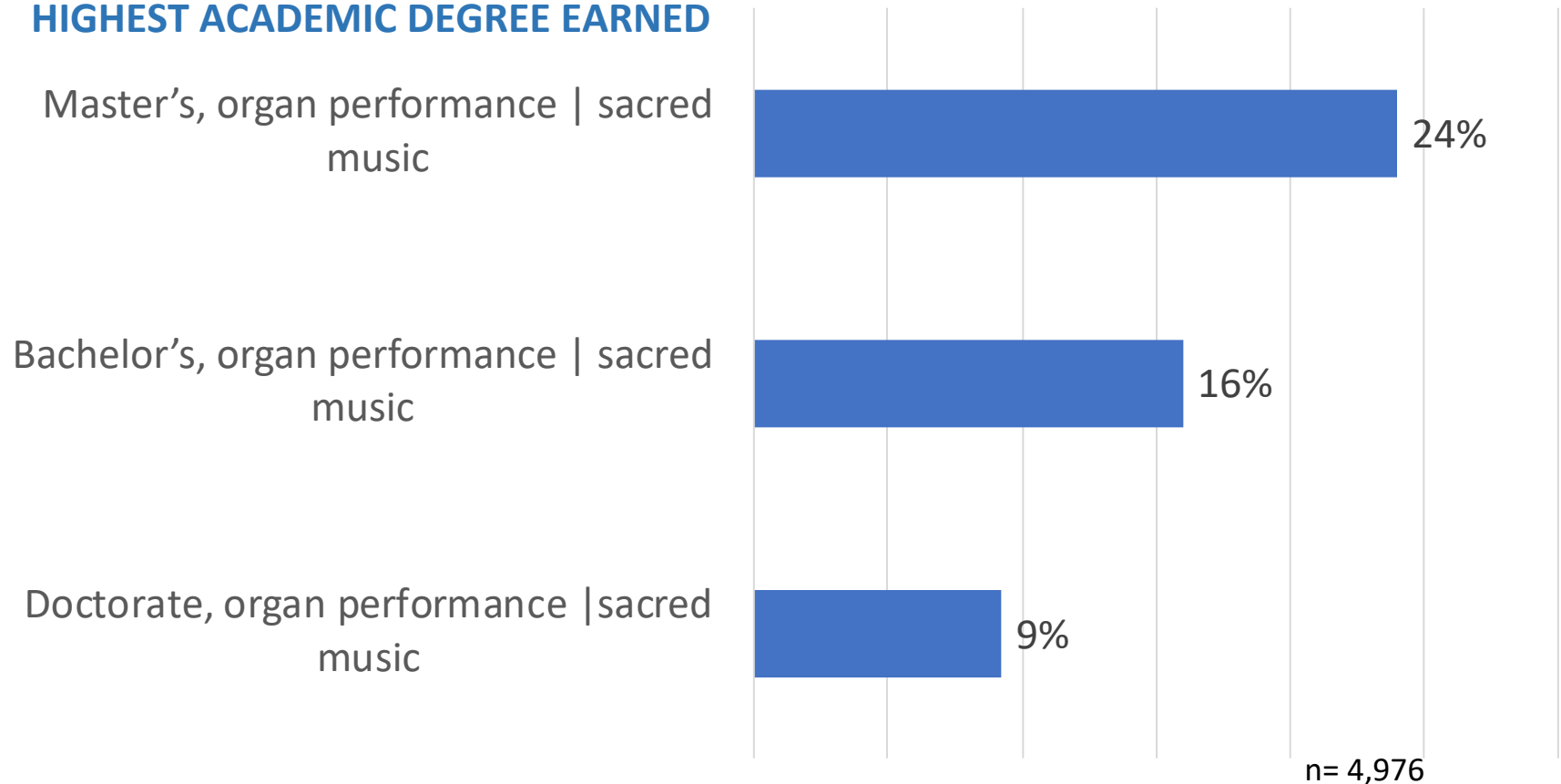


# Organ Performance | Sacred Music

## Highest Academic Degrees

**50% of respondents** hold at least one degree in organ performance. Of those, less than 10% hold a doctorate.

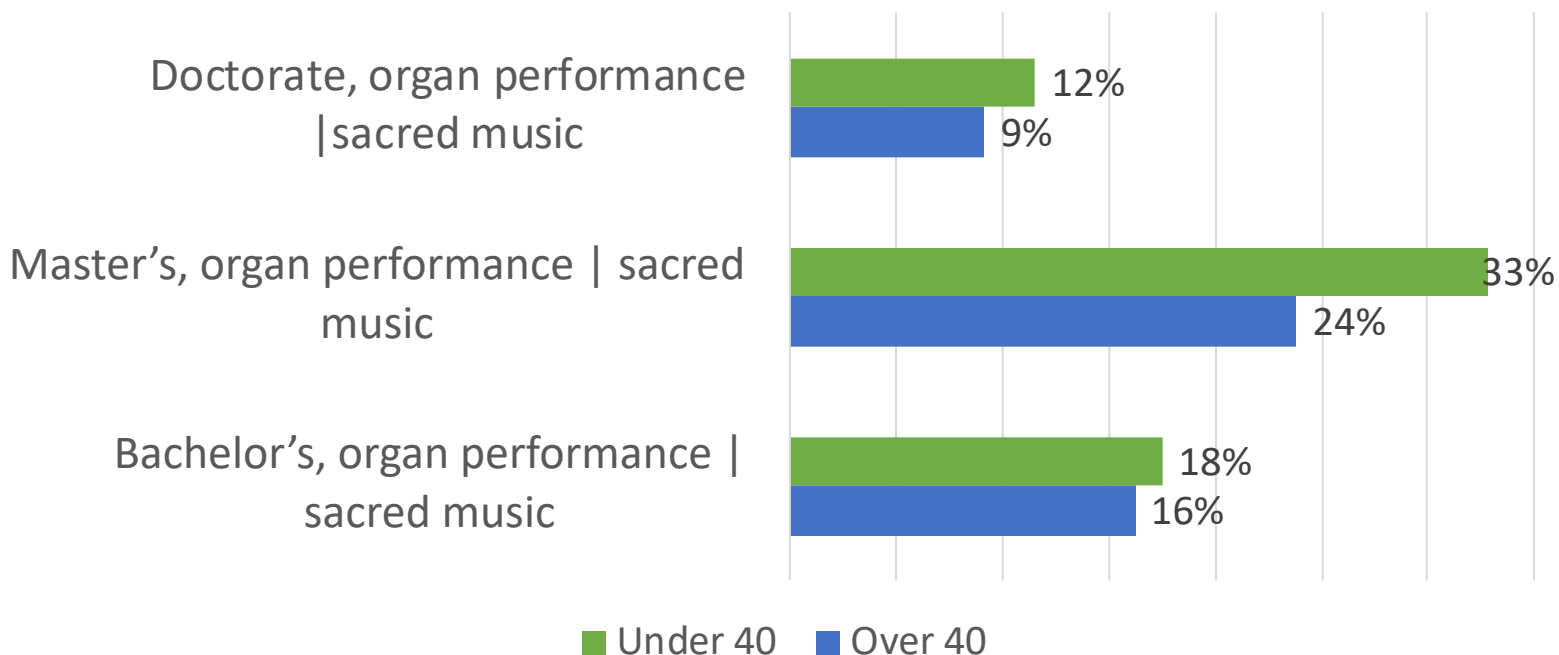
### HIGHEST ACADEMIC DEGREE EARNED



# Age Group Comparison: Academic Degrees

A higher percent of respondents under 40 hold academic degrees, at every level.

## HIGHEST ACADEMIC DEGREE EARNED



Note: Under 22 years old responses removed

<40 n= 503  
40+ n = 4,326



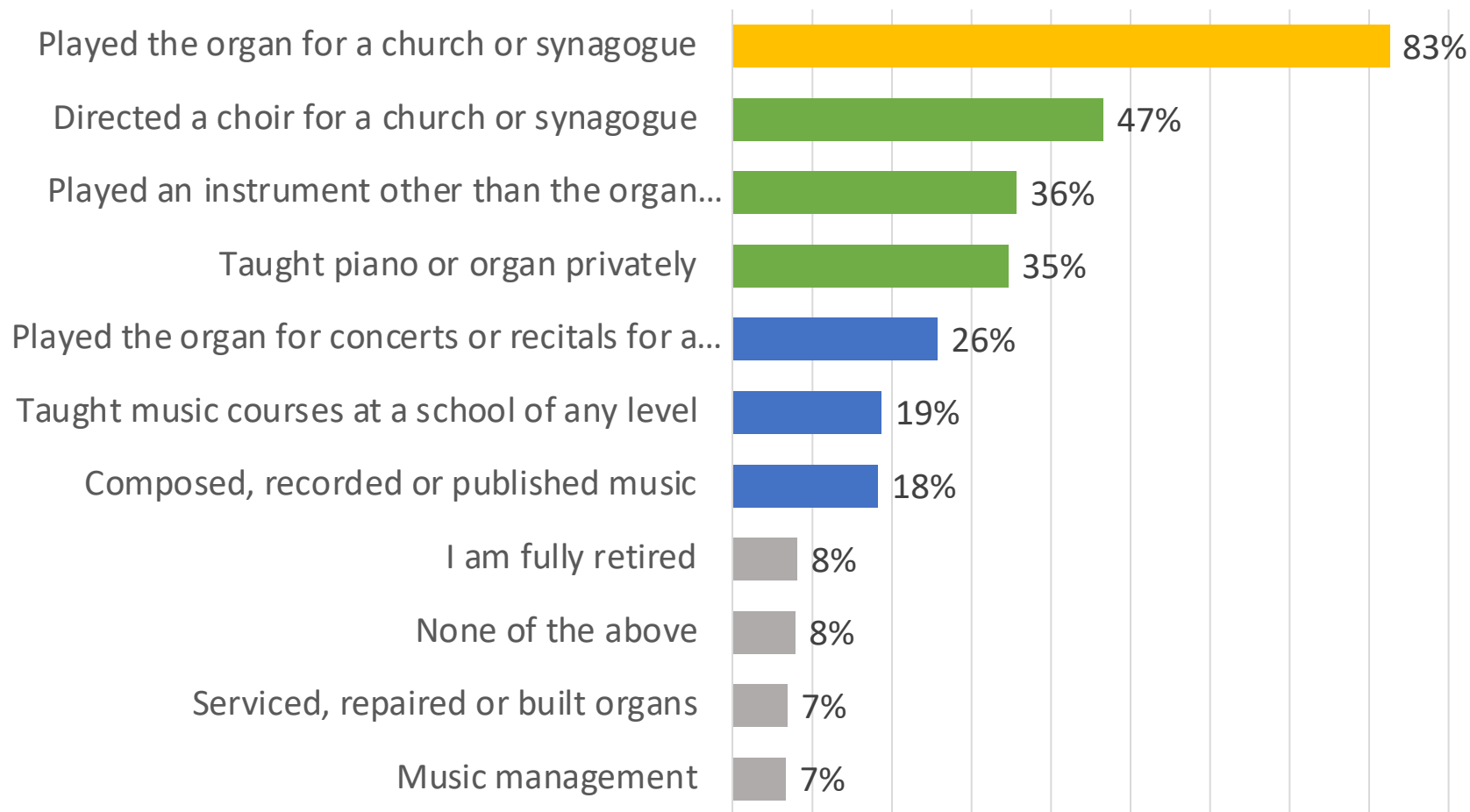
# Current Member Survey

# Professional Life





# Music-Related Income in Past Year

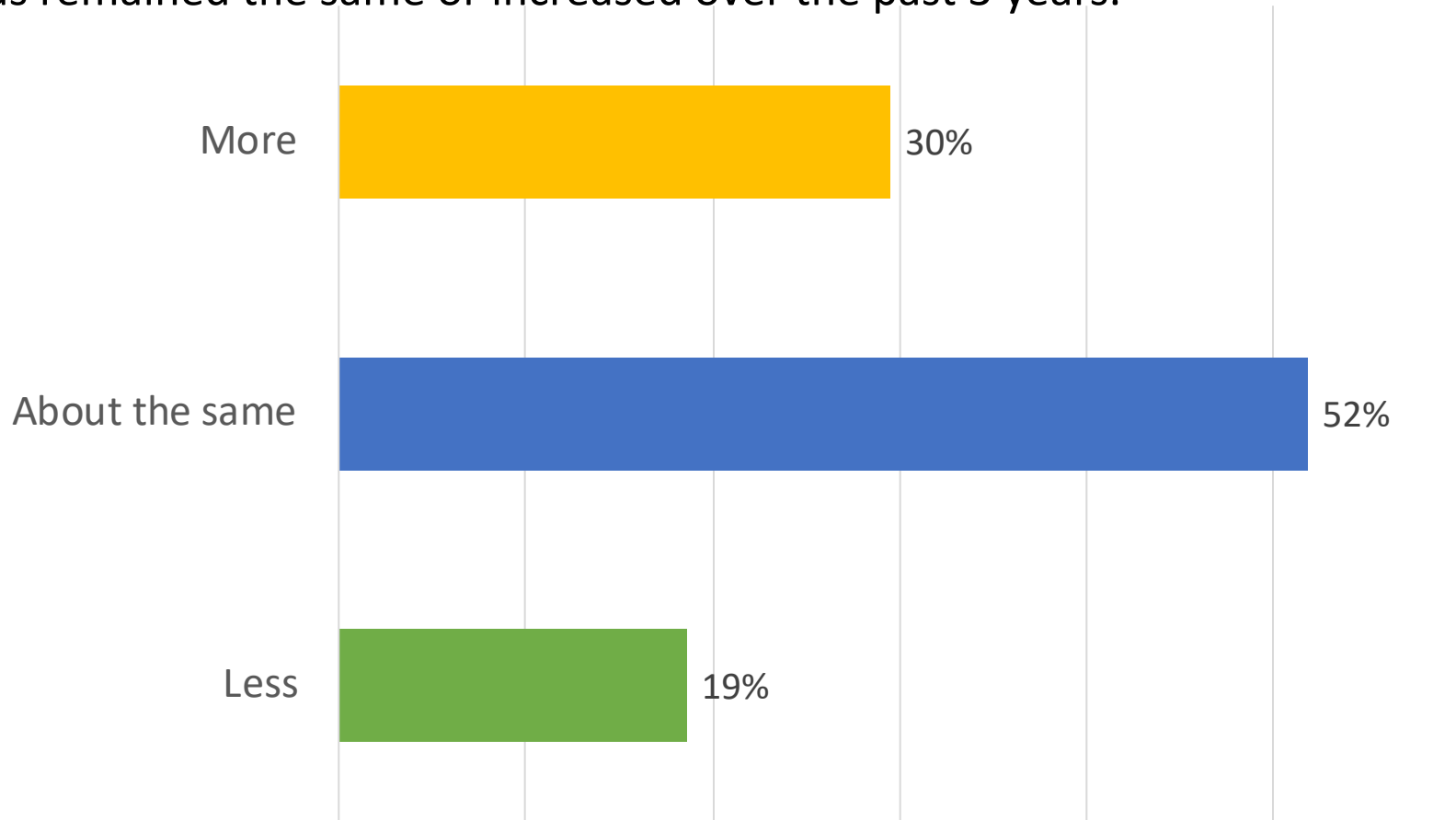


5 YEAR SURVEY COMPARISON: No significant change in any category

n= 4,991

# Change in Annual Income vs. 3 Years Ago

**Over 80% of respondents** earning income from music report that their income has remained the same or increased over the past 3 years.

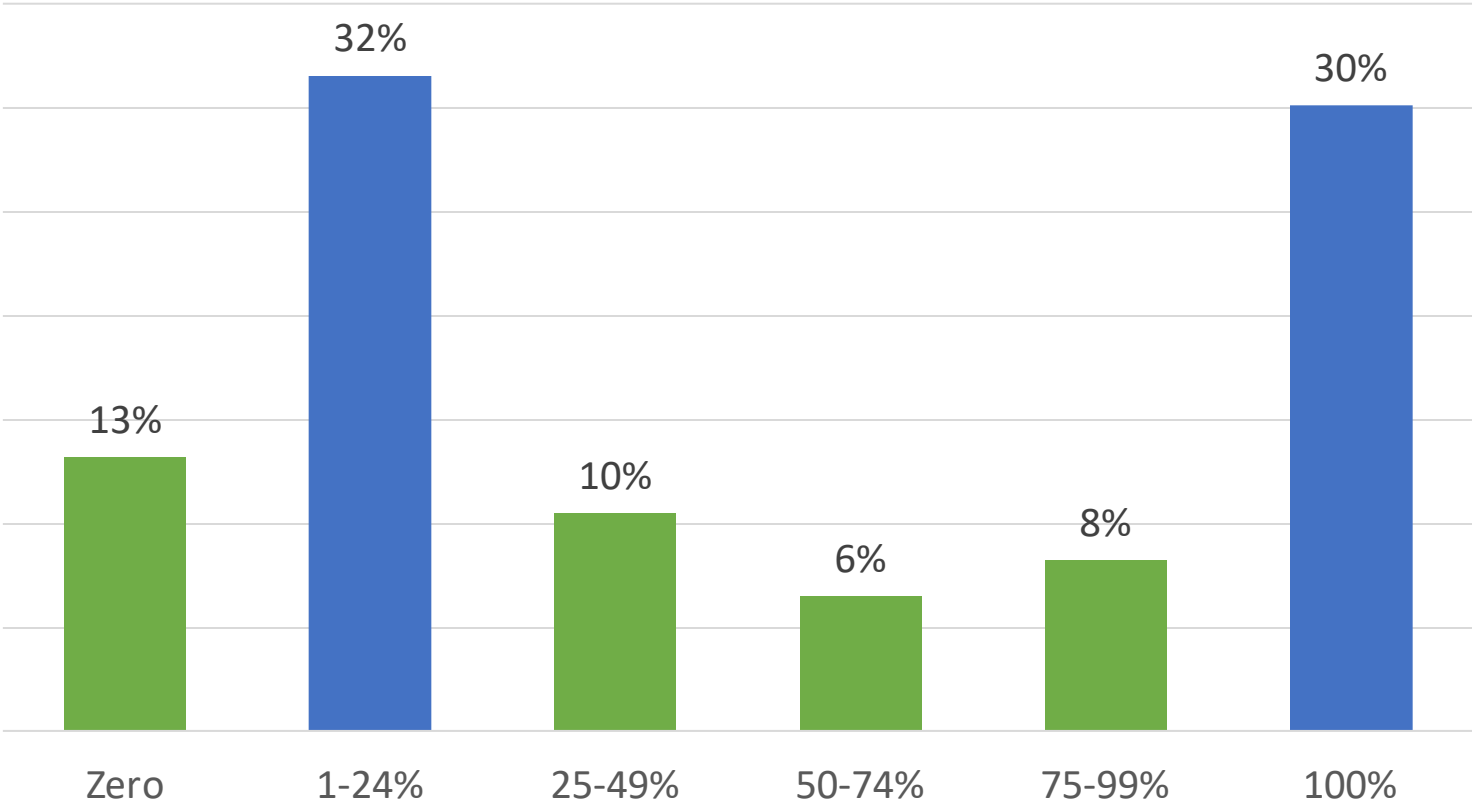


n= 4,444

Note: "No income" responses removed

# Percent of Income from Music-Related Activities

**44% are earning at least half their income** from music-related activities; only 30% are earning all their income this way.

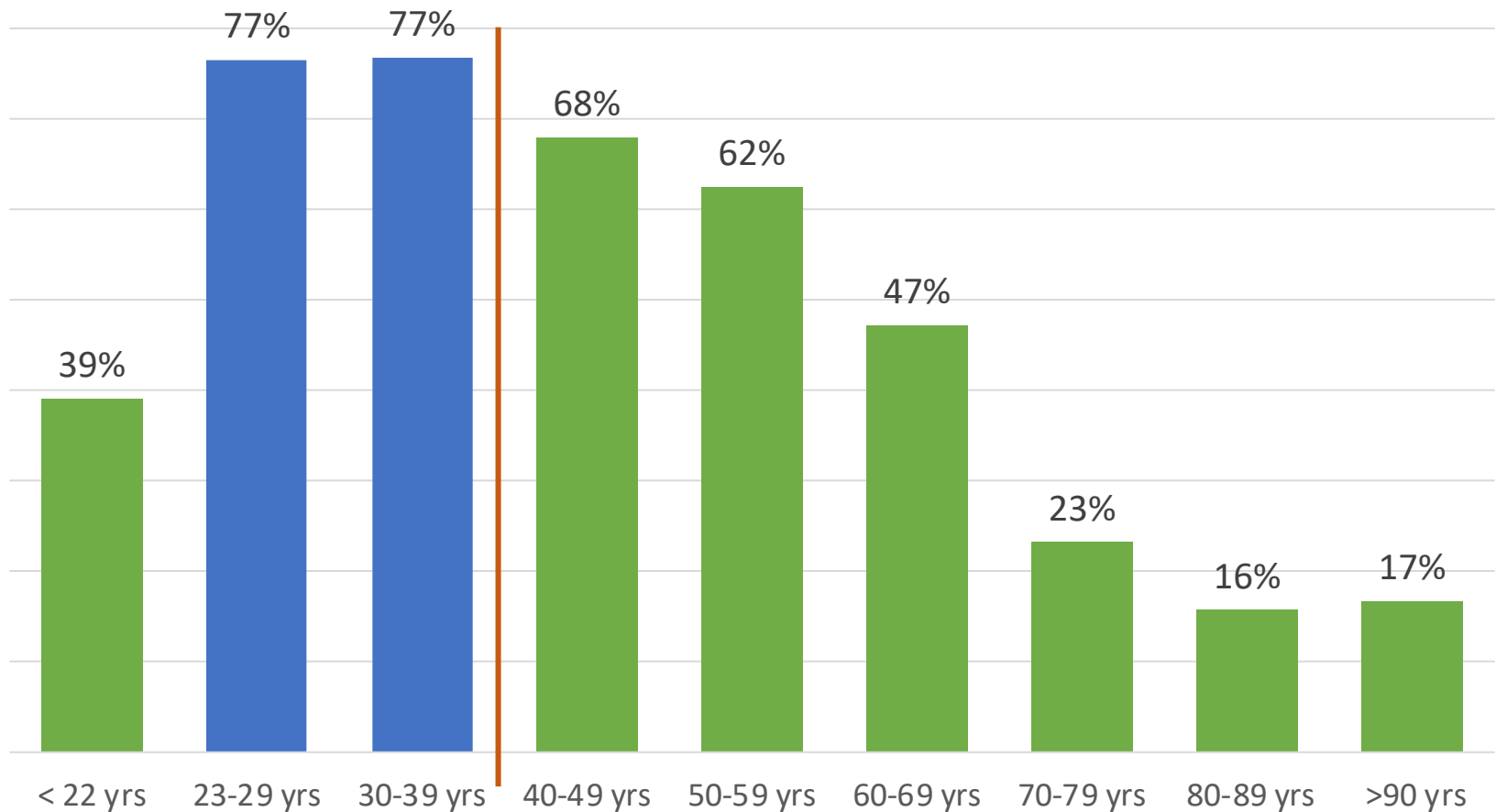


5 YEAR SURVEY COMPARISON: No significant change in any category

n= 4,978

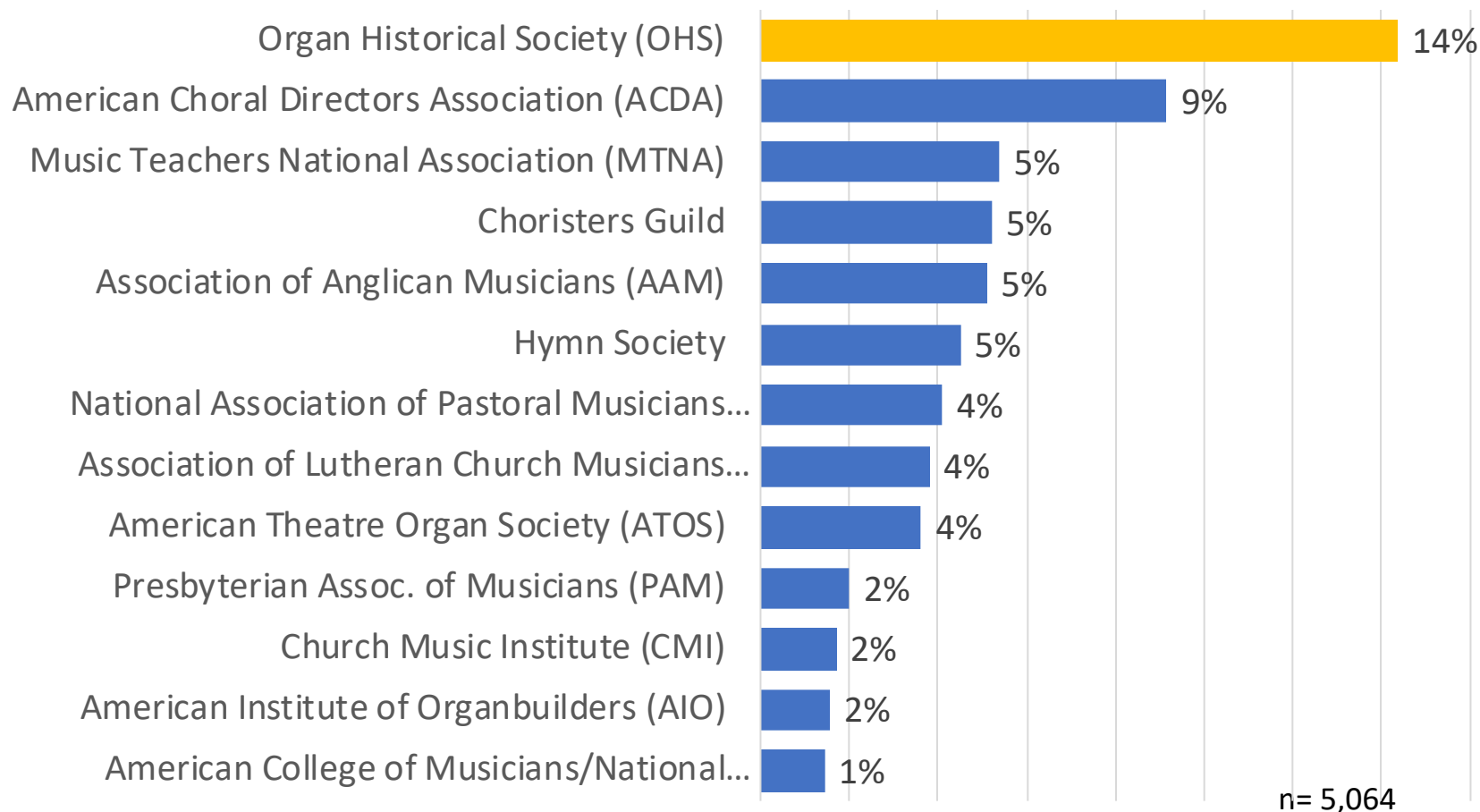
# Age Group Drill Down: Respondents who earn at least half their income from music related activities

**77% of respondents under the age of 40** (excluding those under 22 years old) earn at least half their income from music related activities.



# Membership in Other Music-Related Organizations

**There is very little overlap in membership among other organizations.**  
Largest is only 14%, with the Organ Historical Society.



n= 5,064

# Breakdown: “Other” Music Associations Mentioned

“Other” Associations mentioned most frequently include:

	Mentions
■ Natl Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS)	44
■ Royal Canadian College of Organists (RCC)	44
■ Handbell Ringers (AGEHR)	39
■ Church Music Assn of America (CMAA)	38
■ Nat’l Association for Music Education (NAFME)	38
■ Fellowship of United Methodists	36
■ Nat’l Assn of Church Musicians (NACM)	32
■ Royal College of Organists (RCO)	24
■ United Church of Christ Music Assn (UCCMA)	24

# Professional Skills Training: Relatively low interest in potential AGO-provided training among potential users

Fewer than 25% would be “very likely” to use the offerings tested.

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not Likely	n=
Improvisation	24%	38%	38%	4,002
Organ registration	20%	36%	45%	3,977
Hymn playing	17%	33%	50%	3,932
Standard repertoire	17%	40%	43%	3,964
Choral conducting	16%	32%	52%	3,606
Pedal technique	15%	32%	52%	3,931
Anthem accompaniment	14%	34%	51%	3,887
Keyboard technique	13%	32%	56%	3,875

Note: “Does not apply to me” responses removed

# Musical Genre Training: Relatively low interest in potential AGO-provided training among potential users

**20% or fewer** would be very likely to use the offerings tested.

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not Likely	n=
Protestant worship music	20%	45%	35%	3,992
Catholic worship music	17%	30%	54%	3,327
Chant accompaniment	16%	38%	46%	3,821
Blended worship music	10%	28%	62%	3,747
African American/Gospel music	9%	30%	61%	3,759
Theatre Organ music	9%	24%	68%	3,012

Note: "Does not apply to me" responses removed

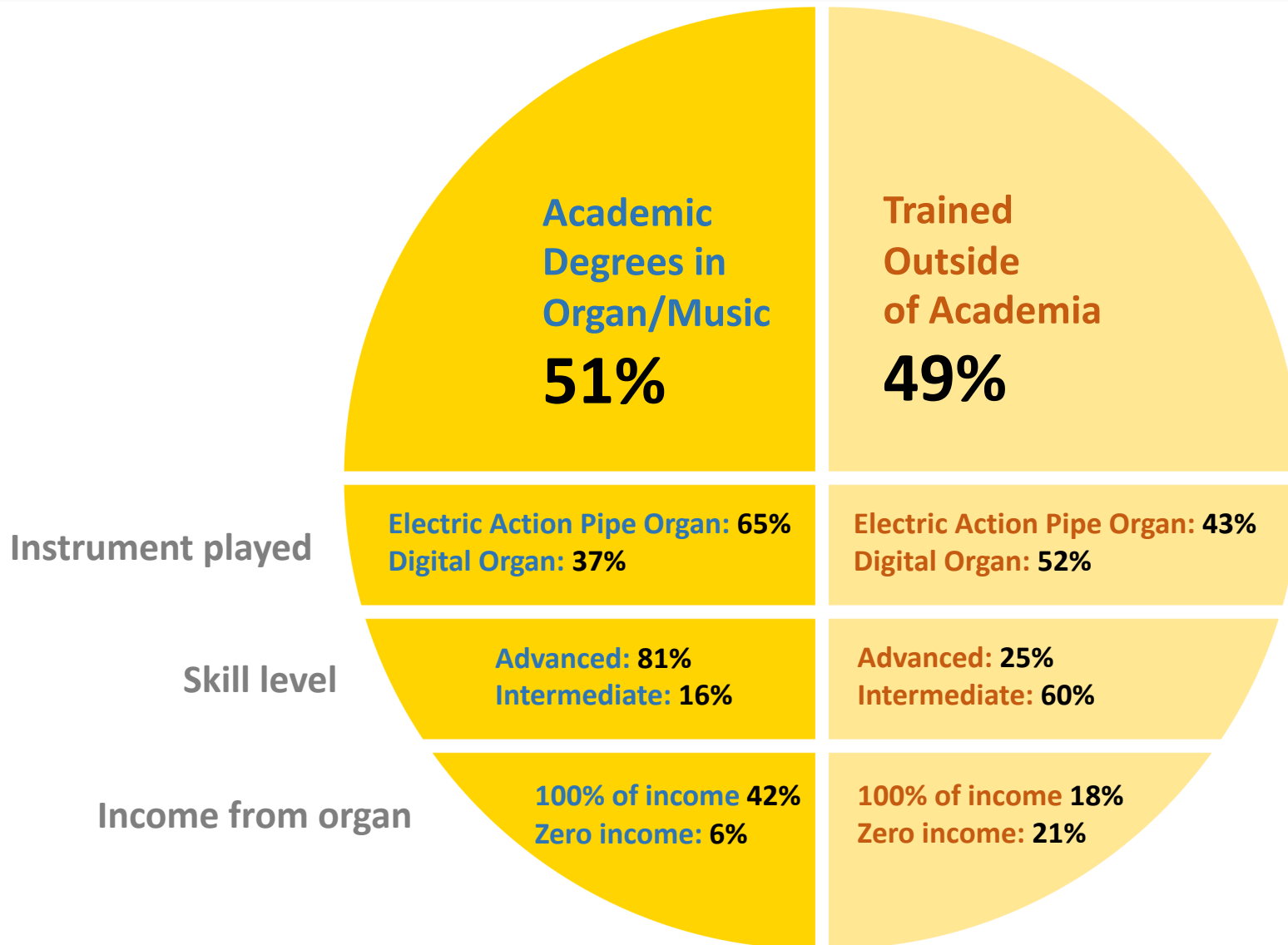


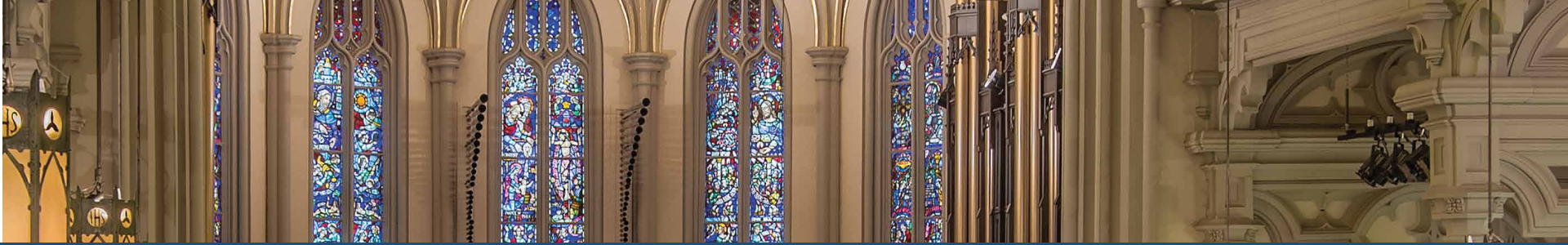
## Musical Genre Training: Relatively low interest in potential AGO-provided training *continued*

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not Likely	n=
Jazz	8%	28%	65%	3,136
Jewish worship music	6%	23%	71%	2,811
Contemporary/praise band music	6%	15%	80%	3,477
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints worship music	6%	11%	84%	2,504
Rock & Roll	3%	11%	86%	2,787

Note: "Does not apply to me" responses removed

# AGO Membership Dichotomy





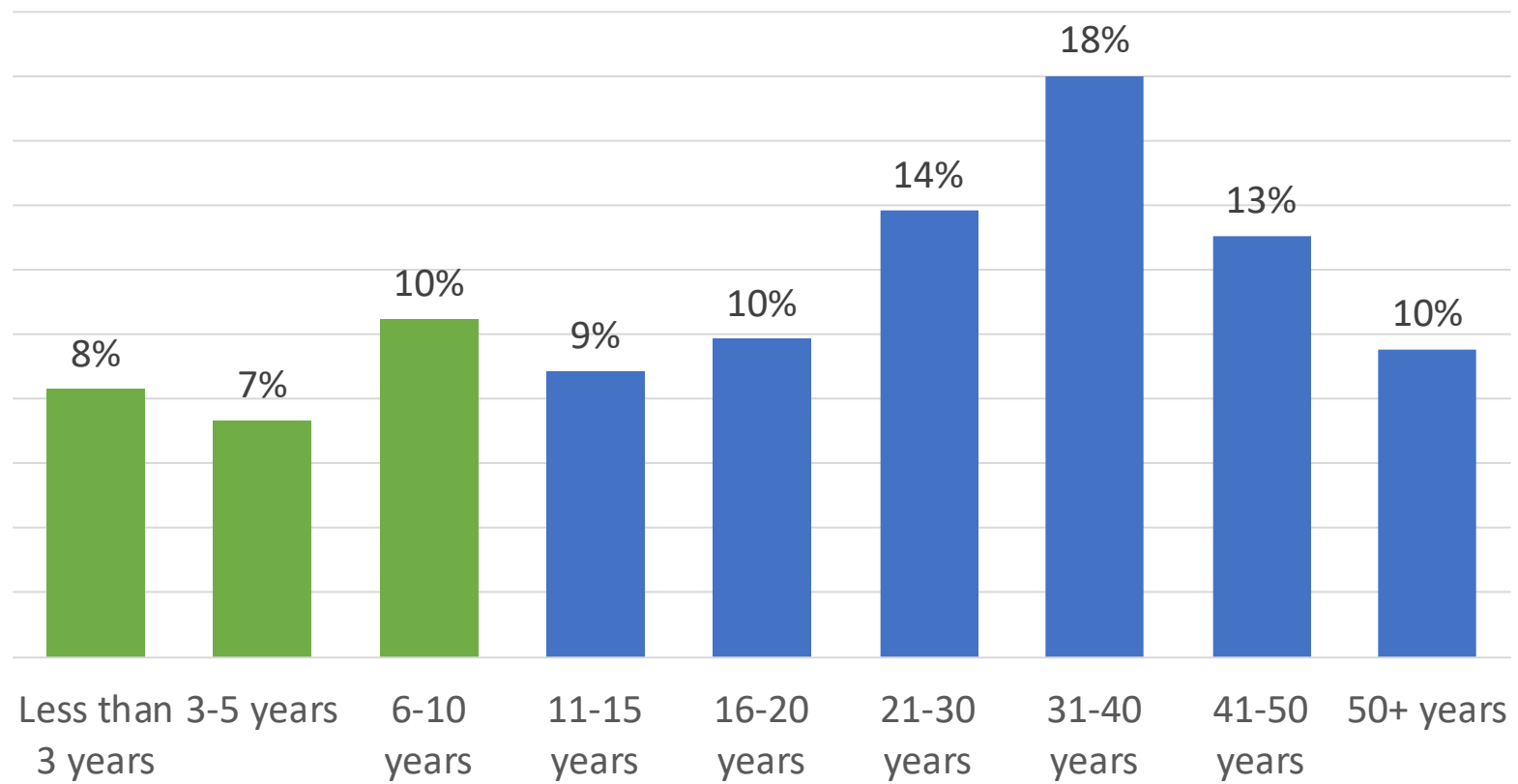
## Current Member Survey

# Experience with the AGO



# Years of Membership in the AGO

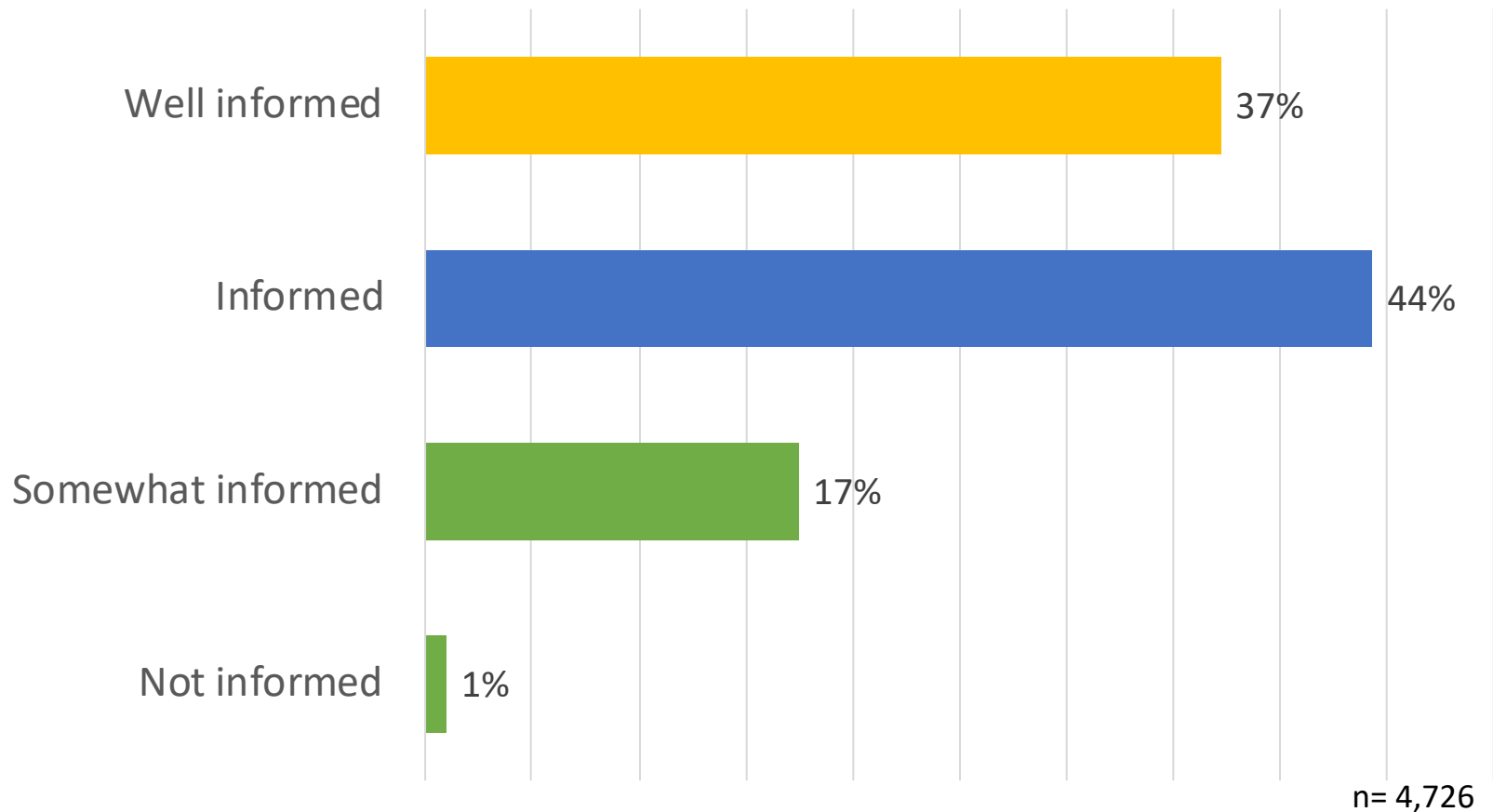
**74% of respondents have been members of the AGO for more than 10 years.**



n= 5,085

# Awareness of AGO Resources and Activities

**81% of respondents feel well-informed or informed** regarding the AGO's offerings.



# Perceptions of AGO Programs & Services – Top 5

TAO rises to the top, receiving the highest ratings and also being used by the largest number of respondents.

	Extremely Useful	Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful	% Don't Use
THE AMERICAN ORGANIST Magazine	<b>40%</b>	39%	19%	3%	3%
Online Job Board	<b>27%</b>	38%	27%	9%	43%
Scholarships	<b>26%</b>	33%	20%	21%	54%
Regional conventions	<b>24%</b>	41%	28%	7%	24%
National conventions	<b>23%</b>	38%	28%	10%	29%

Note: Sorted by “Extremely Useful” ratings; “Don't Use” responses removed from ratings calculations

# Perceptions of AGO Programs & Services *continued*

Perceptions of usefulness and overall usage by respondents are mixed for many of AGO’s offerings.

	Extremely Useful	Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful	% Don't Use
Performance competitions (national and regional)	<b>17%</b>	35%	25%	22%	50%
Certifications	<b>17%</b>	33%	29%	20%	40%
Online educational videos	<b>16%</b>	42%	30%	11%	48%
Guides for auditions and degree programs	<b>16%</b>	41%	31%	12%	53%
Monthly email newsletter from National Headquarters	<b>15%</b>	39%	35%	12%	17%

Note: Sorted by “Extremely Useful” ratings; “Don’t Use” responses removed from ratings calculations

# Perceptions of AGO Programs & Services *continued*

Perceptions of usefulness and overall usage by respondents are mixed for many of AGO's offerings.

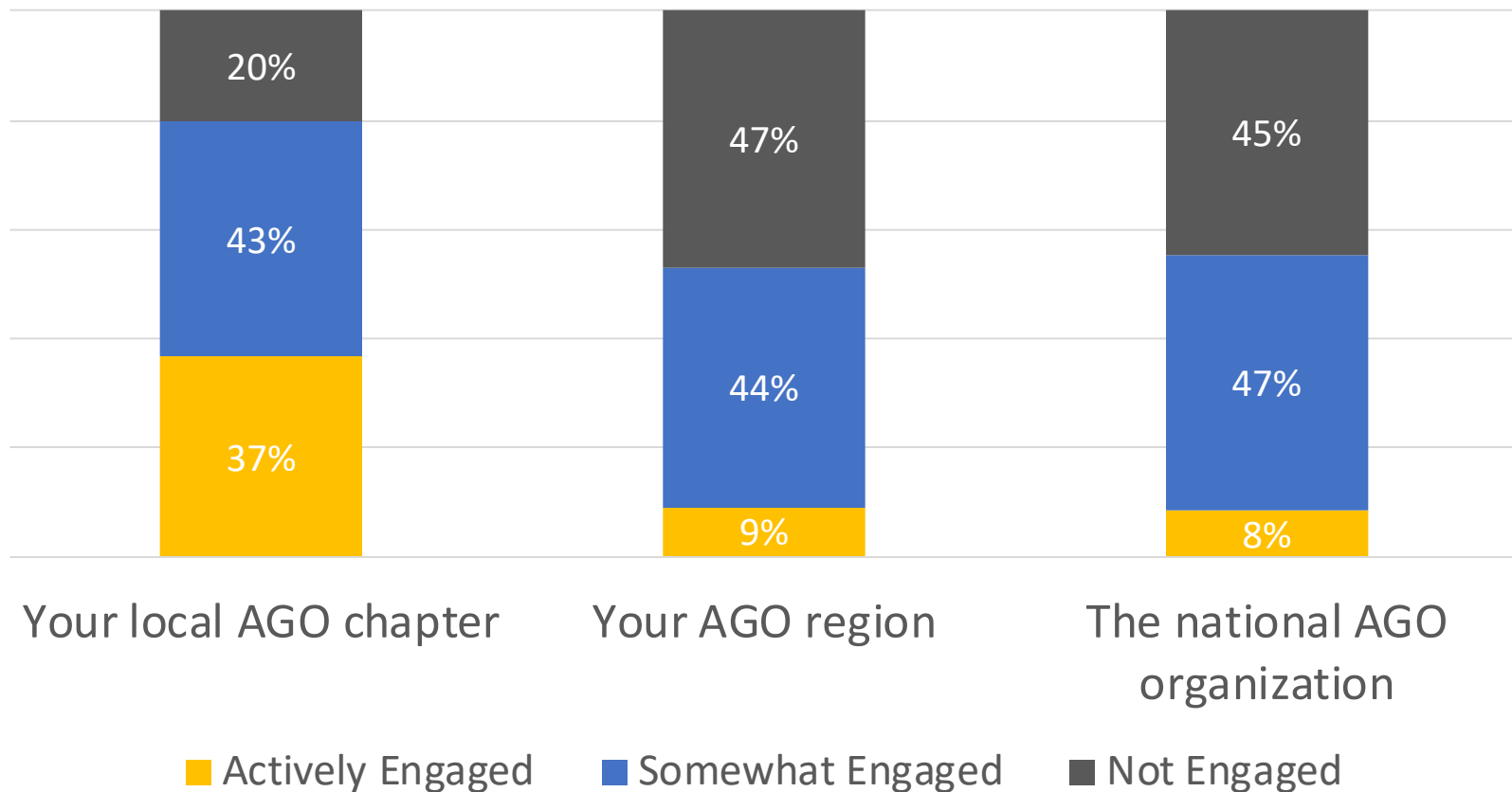
	Extremely Useful	Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful	% Don't Use
Other Career resources ( hotline, code of ethics, professional standards etc.)	<b>14%</b>	40%	33%	13%	34%
Vox Humana	<b>14%</b>	37%	34%	14%	59%
New music commissions/competitions (choral and organ)	<b>13%</b>	36%	37%	13%	35%
The AGO online store	<b>10%</b>	39%	37%	14%	51%

Note: Sorted by "Extremely Useful" ratings; "Don't Use" responses removed from ratings calculations



# Level of Engagement in the AGO

**Active engagement is somewhat low overall.** Not surprisingly, engagement is highest at the chapter level.



n= 4,717

# Perceptions of the AGO Value Proposition – Top 5

A majority view AGO value as access to concerts, and as the premier organization for pipe organ players. Feedback shows the opportunity to go from **good to great**.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The AGO makes it possible to hear concerts and recitals by highly accomplished organists.	53%	42%	4%	1%
The AGO is the premier organization for individuals who play pipe organs.	50%	43%	6%	1%
The AGO makes it possible to see and hear pipe organs in a variety of venues.	49% ←	45%	5%	1%
The AGO has an outstanding journal and other resources that help me stay on top of the latest developments in the organ world.	41% ←	47%	10%	2%
The AGO is a great place to meet and develop friendships with fellow organists.	35% ←	52%	12%	2%

# Perceptions of the AGO Value Proposition *continued*

Feedback shows the opportunity to go from **good to great.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The AGO provides opportunities to gain recognition through competitions and awards.	32% ←	59%	8%	1%
The AGO fosters a thriving community of musicians who share their knowledge and inspire passion for the organ.	32% ←	56%	11%	1%
AGO professional certifications stimulate and recognize professional growth.	30% ←	54%	13%	3%
The AGO is a place to get referrals and find job opportunities.	29% ←	57%	12%	2%
AGO membership enhances the reputation of organists.	28% ←	52%	16%	3%

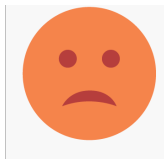
# Perceptions of the AGO Value Proposition *continued*

Feedback shows the opportunity to go from **good to great.**

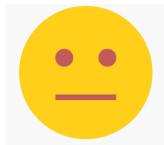
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The AGO is a place where organists share repertoire and professional tips.	28%	← 59%	11%	1%
AGO members are a community that is open, welcoming and willing to share knowledge.	28%	← 51%	18%	4%
The AGO effectively engages, supports and uplifts all organists.	26%	← 56%	16%	2%
The AGO offers excellent skill building activities.	23%	← 55%	20%	2%
The AGO is geared to the interests and needs of both professional and volunteer organists.	21%	← 53%	23%	4%
The AGO is an excellent organization for those who play electronic/digital organs.	20%	← 52%	24%	4%

# AGO's Net Promoter Score: About this metric

- One of the most widely used measures of customer loyalty, has been shown to correlate with organizational success.
- Score is calculated based on responses to the question: “On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend XXX to a friend or colleague?”
- Responses are grouped into categories:



“Detractors” – rated from 0-6



“Passives” – rated 7 or 8

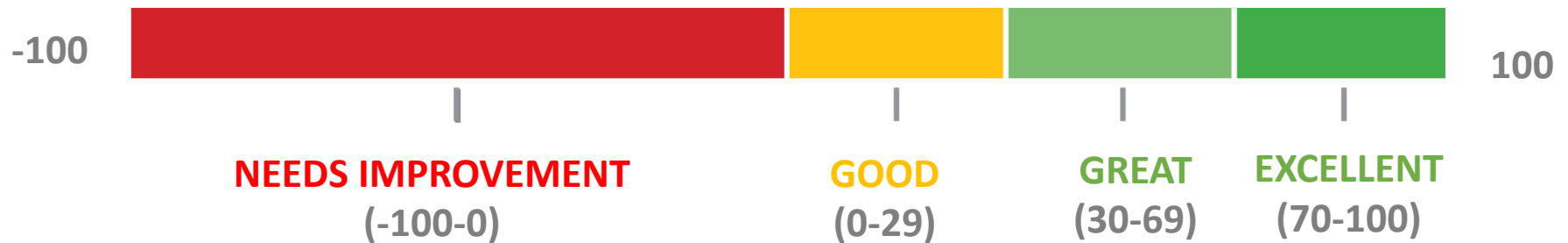


“Promoters” – rated 9 or 10

- “Promoters” are considered to be Brand Advocates for the organization

# AGO's Net Promoter Score: What is a good score?

- **NPS Score = Percent of “Promoters” minus percent of “Detractors”**
- Scores can range from -100 to +100.
- General ranges used for benchmarking are as follows:



# AGO's Net Promoter Score: Overall, "Great" News!

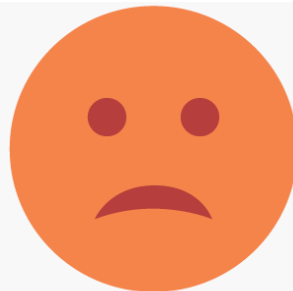
Net Promoter  
Score: **+32**



**Promoters/Brand  
Advocates** (9 or 10)  
**54%** (2,346 individuals)



**Passives** (7-8)  
**24%** (1,061 individuals)

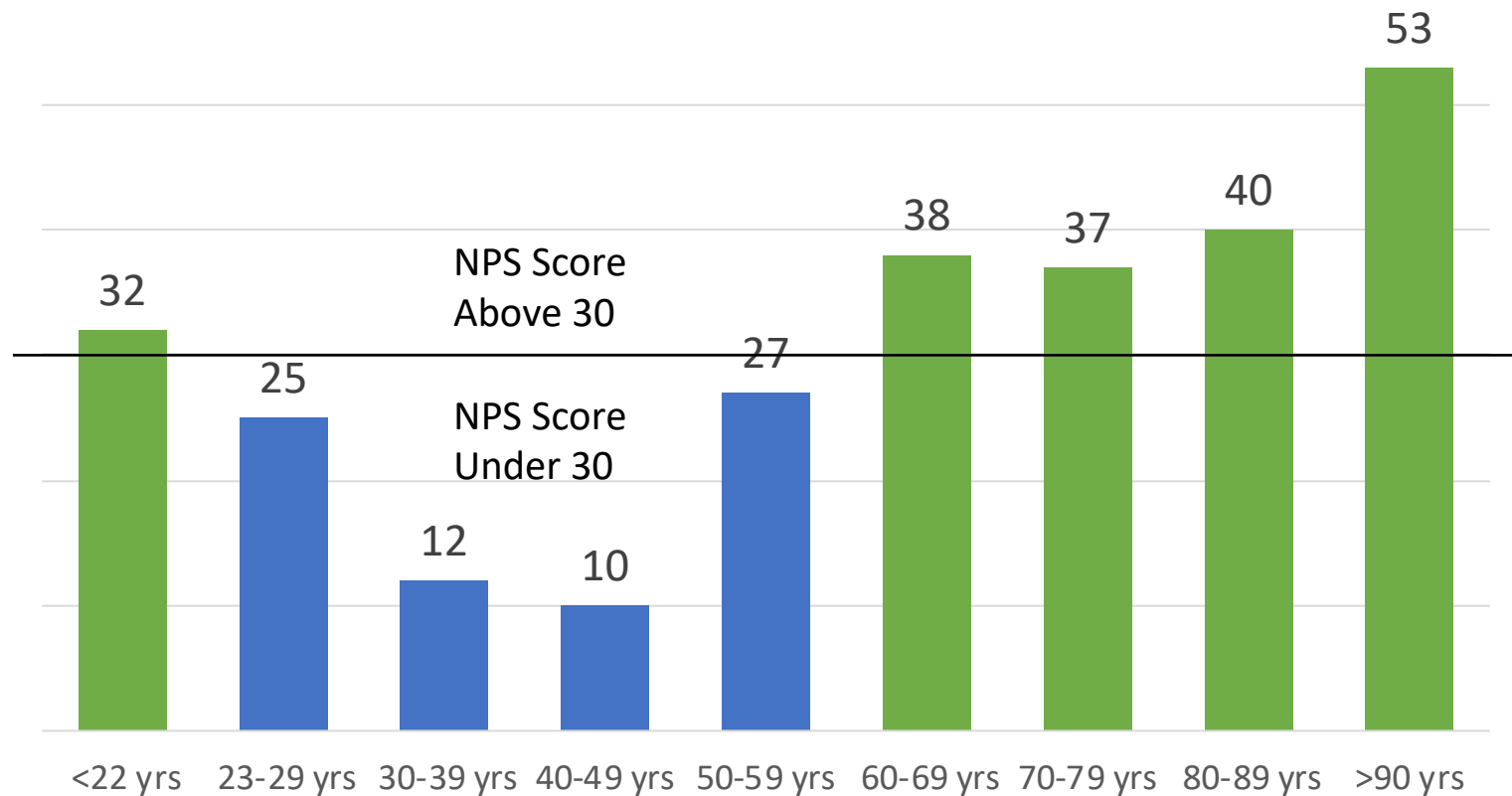


**Detractors** (0-6)  
**22%** (948 individuals)

n= 4,355

# Age Group Drill down: NPS Comparison

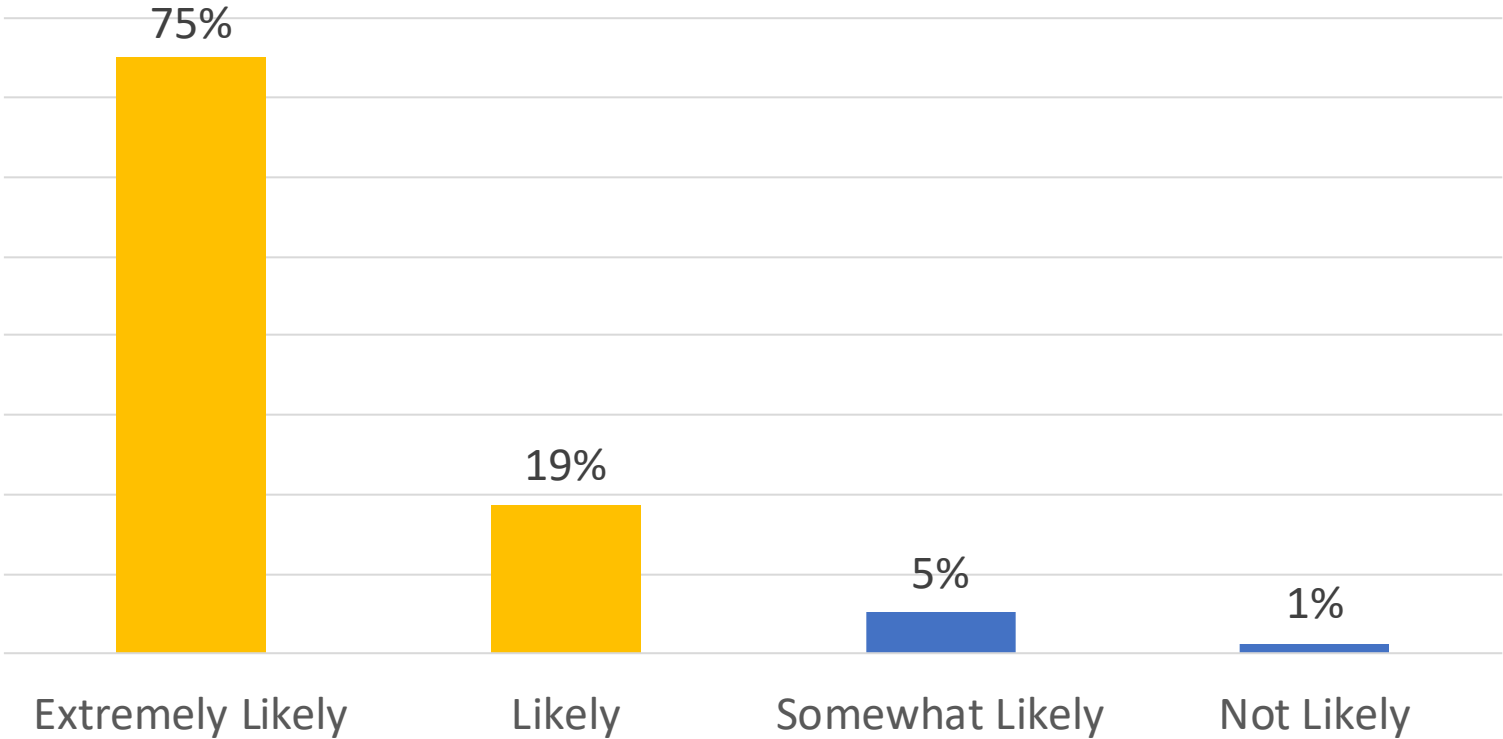
Although the NPS score is positive for all age groups, there is a notable difference for those under 60 years old.





# More Excellent News: Membership Renewal

**94% of respondents are “extremely likely” or “likely” to renew their AGO membership next year.**



n= 4,400

# How are your newest members different?

*(5 years or less vs. those with 6+ years of membership)*

# Newer Member Respondents: Areas of Difference

	Under 5 years	6+ years
<b>AGE</b>		
▪ <b>Much more</b> likely to be 39 or younger	36%	8%
▪ <b>Somewhat more</b> likely to be in their 40s and 50s	24%	19%
▪ <b>Much less</b> likely to be over 60	41%	73%
<b>GENDER</b>		
▪ <b>Somewhat more likely</b> to be female	43%	38%
<b>RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION</b>		
▪ <b>More likely</b> to be Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	10%	1%
▪ <b>Less likely</b> to be Christian/Protestant	58%	68%
▪ <b>More likely</b> to be Christian/Catholic	24%	20%
▪ <b>Somewhat more likely</b> to be secular/no religion	8%	4%

# Newer Member Respondents: Areas of Difference

	Under 5 years	6+ years
<b>ETHNICITY</b>		
▪ <b>Somewhat less</b> White/Caucasian	86%	91%
▪ <b>Slightly more</b> Asian/Pacific Islander	5%	2%
▪ Slightly more Hispanic/Latinx	3%	1%
<b>SOURCES OF COMPENSATION</b>		
▪ <b>Less likely</b> to play organ for church/synagogue	67%	85%
▪ <b>Less likely</b> to direct a choir	35%	49%
▪ <b>Less likely</b> to teach organ/piano privately	29%	36%
▪ <b>Less likely</b> to play organ concerts/recitals	13%	28%
<b>PERCENT OF MUSIC-RELATED INCOME</b>		
▪ <b>More likely</b> to earn no income	26%	11%
▪ <b>Less likely</b> to earn 100% of income	23%	31%

# Newer Member Respondents: Areas of Difference

	Under 5 years	6+ years
<b>TYPE OF ORGAN PLAYED</b>		
▪ <b>More likely</b> to play Electronic/digital organ	57%	40%
▪ <b>Less likely</b> to play electric action pipe organ	42%	57%
<b>ORGAN TRAINING</b>		
▪ <b>More likely</b> to have taken many private lessons	47%	37%
▪ <b>More likely</b> to be largely self taught	20%	7%
▪ <b>Less likely</b> to have a BA in music/performance	15%	27%
▪ <b>Less likely</b> to have an MA in music/performance	10%	29%
▪ <b>Less likely</b> to have a Doctorate in music/performance	2%	11%
▪ <b>Less likely</b> to have an AGO Certification	7%	16%
<b>PLAYING LEVEL</b>		
▪ <b>More likely</b> to describe themselves as Beginner/Novice	17%	3%
▪ <b>More likely</b> to describe themselves as Intermediate	53%	35%
▪ <b>Less likely</b> to describe themselves as Advanced	26%	59%

# Newer Member Respondents: Areas of Difference

Under 5 years 6+ years

## ENGAGEMENT WITH THE AGO

▪ <b>Less likely</b> to feel well-informed about AGO activities and resources	23%	40%
▪ <b>Equally likely</b> to have attended their regional convention	12%	15%
▪ <b>Equally likely</b> to bring a non-member to Chapter meeting	30%	30%
▪ <b>Less likely to be “extremely likely” to renew membership next year</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>78%</b>

## BRAND ADVOCATES (Net Promoter Score)

▪ <b>Fewer Promoters</b>	46%	55%
▪ <b>Somewhat more Passives</b>	28%	24%
▪ <b>Somewhat more Detractors</b>	28%	21%
▪ <b>Much Lower Net Promoter Score</b>	<b>+18</b>	<b>+34</b>



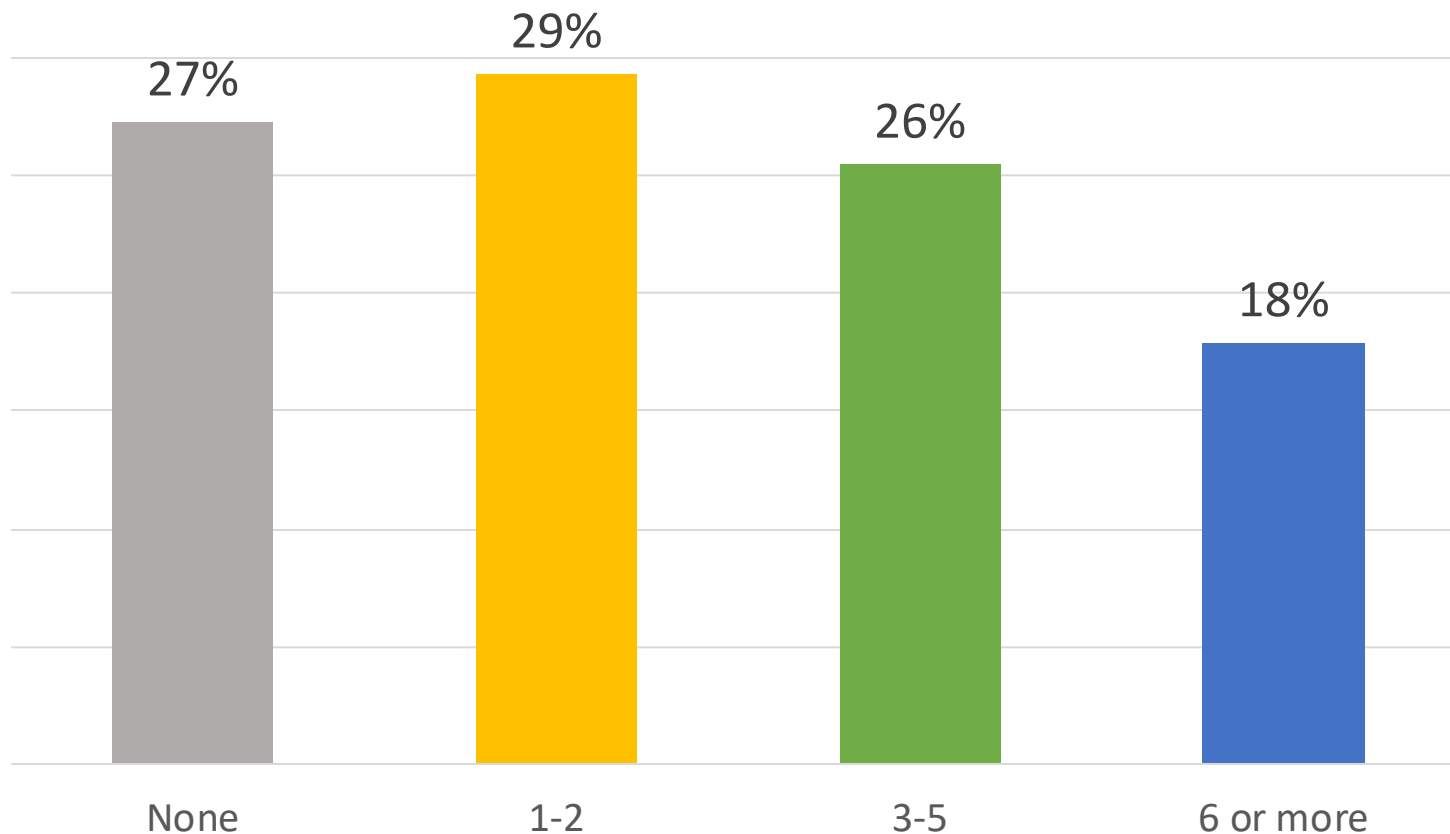
Current Member Survey

# Chapter Engagement



# Number of Chapter Meetings Attended in Past Year

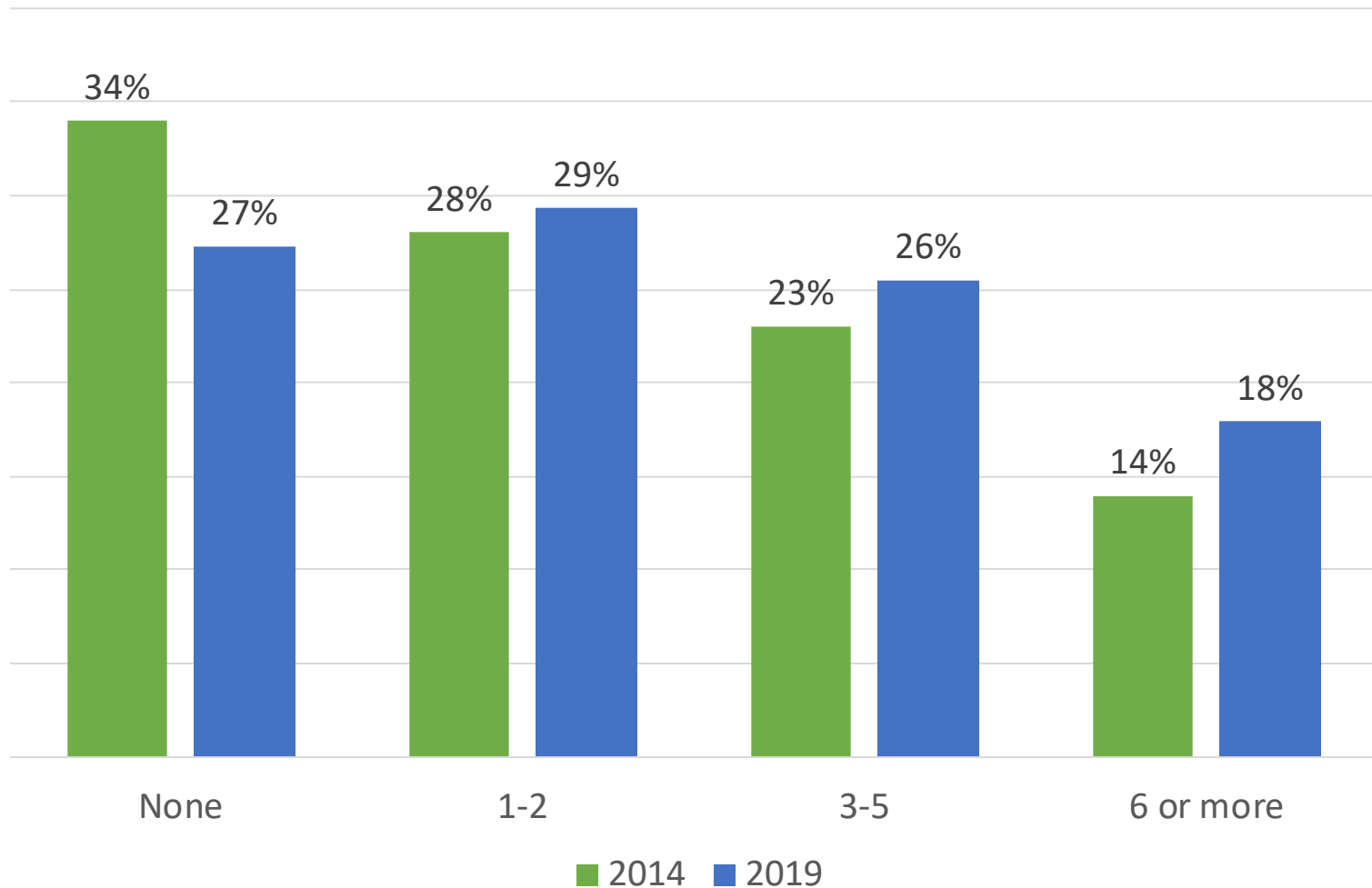
The majority of respondents (73%) attended at least one meeting during the past year.



n= 4,721



# 5 Year Comparison: Overall, more respondents are attending chapter meetings.



2014 n=4,737  
2019 n= 4,721

# Perceptions of the AGO Chapter Experience – Top 5

	Exceeds My Expectations	Meets My Expectations	Does Not Meet My Expectations	n=
Chapter Newsletter	27%	61%	13%	3,113
Pipe Organ Encounters	19%	64%	17%	3,164
Fellowship and inclusiveness at chapter meetings	19%	66%	16%	2,598
Leadership opportunities available	17%	72%	11%	2,812
Member holiday or social events	17%	68%	15%	3,016

“Not applicable” responses removed

# Perceptions of the AGO Chapter Experience *continued*

	Exceeds My Expectations	Meets My Expectations	Does Not Meet My Expectations	n=
Pedals, Pipes & Pizza events	<b>16%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>20%</b>	1,248
Programs and speakers at chapter meetings	<b>14%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>16%</b>	1,691
January Jubilee events	<b>12%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>25%</b>	1,573
Clergy/musician or public events hosted by my chapter	<b>12%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>27%</b>	2,629

“Not applicable” responses removed

# Perceptions of the AGO Chapter Experience *continued*

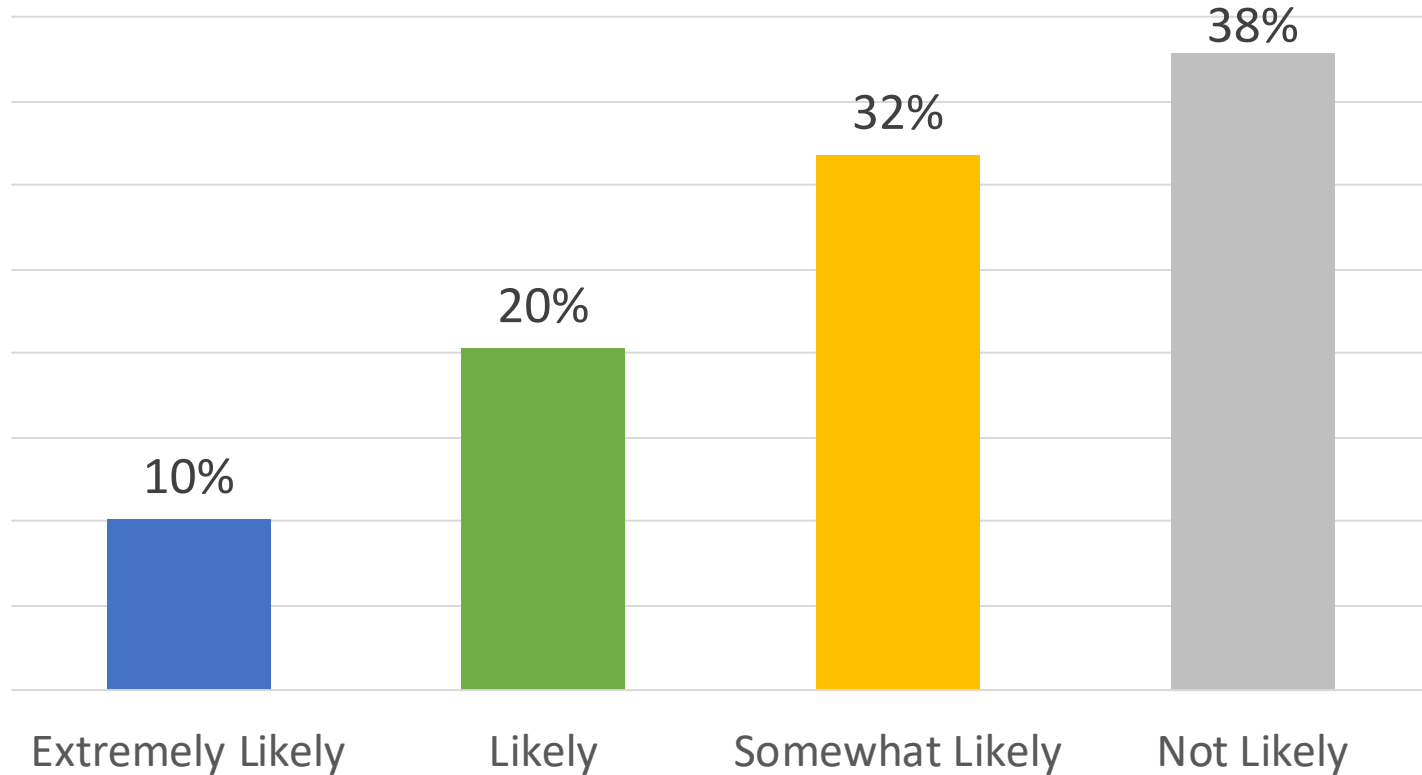
## Another good to great opportunity...

	Exceeds My Expectations	Meets My Expectations	Does Not Meet My Expectations	n=
Organ competitions hosted by my chapter	<b>11%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>27%</b>	947
Instruction or training offered by my chapter	<b>10%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>30%</b>	2,302
AGO Young Organist meetings	<b>8%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>43%</b>	1,521
Mix of pipe and electronic organs	8%	70%	22%	2,387

“Not applicable” responses removed

# Chapter Experience: Potential Member Outreach

Less than one-third of respondents report that they are “extremely likely” or “likely” to bring a qualified non-member or colleague to a local chapter or event.



n= 4,400



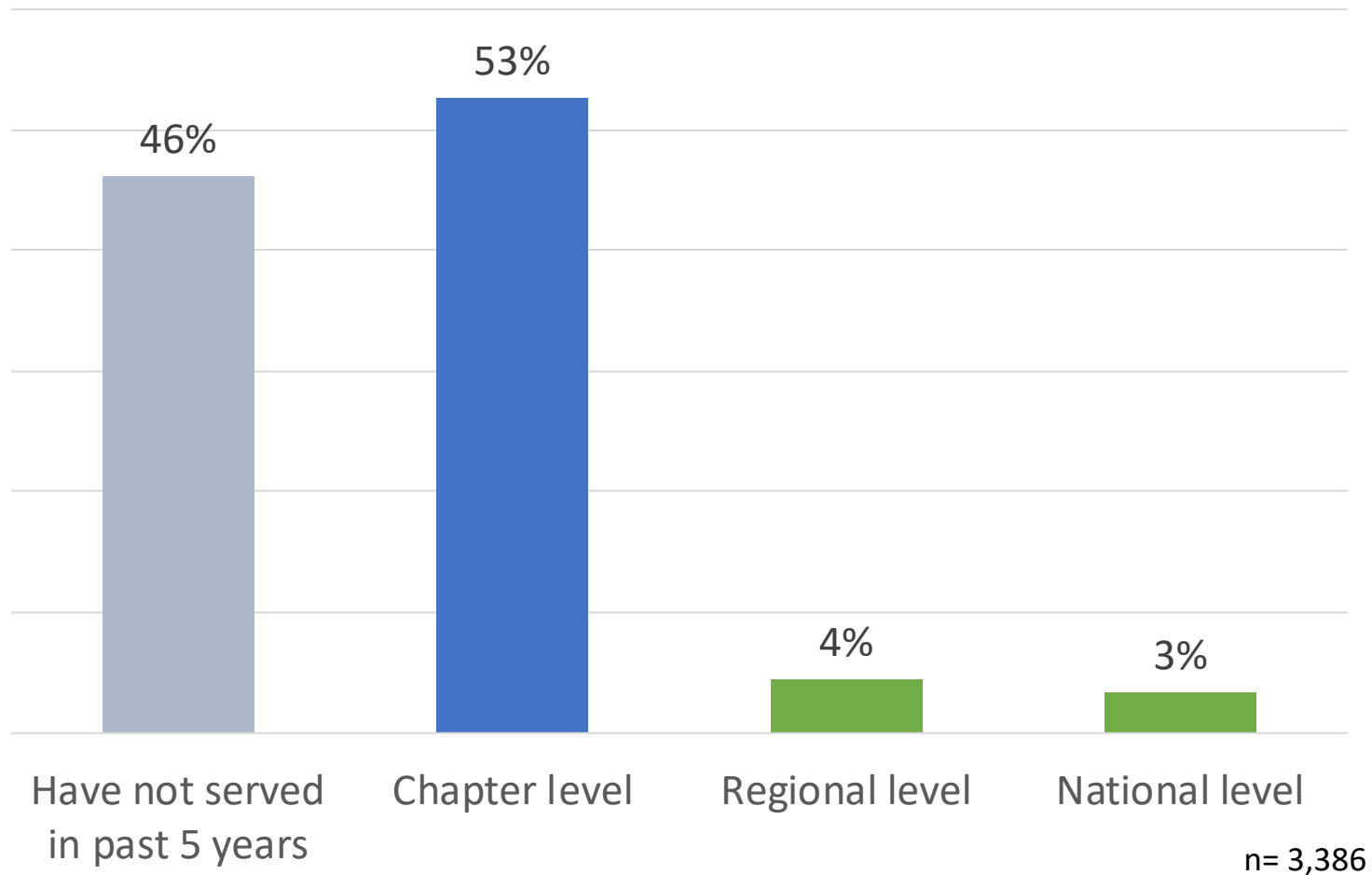
Current Member Survey

# Leadership Experience



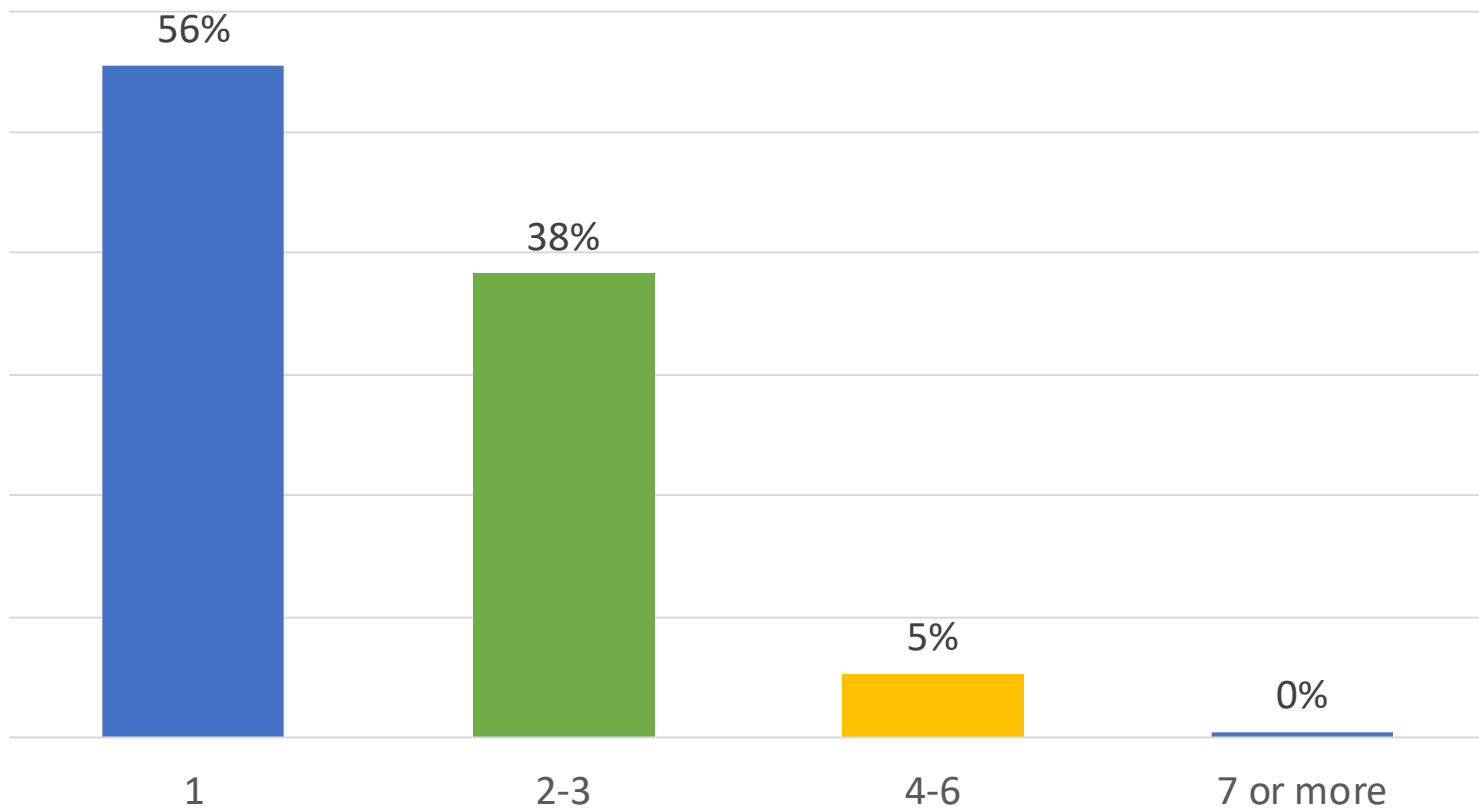
# Leadership Experience in Past Five Years

**Over half of respondents** have served in leadership at the chapter level.



# Number of leadership positions held in past 5 years

**More than half of** those who have served in leadership have held just one position.



n= 2,164



# Perceptions of AGO Leadership Experience – Top 5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	n=
Serving as an AGO leader is a personally rewarding experience.	<b>29%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>7%</b>	2,239
Leadership is diverse in terms of gender.	<b>27%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>6%</b>	2,303
Leaders are engaged and make valuable contributions.	<b>25%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>4%</b>	2,215
The process of achieving a leadership role is fair and transparent.	<b>23%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>7%</b>	2,100
The culture among volunteer leaders is positive and inclusive.	<b>22%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>9%</b>	2,246

# Perceptions of AGO Leadership Experience *continued*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	n=
Volunteers are collaborative and work well together.	<b>21%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>2,284</b>
Leadership is diverse in terms of religious affiliation.	<b>19%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>2,295</b>
Leadership roles and responsibilities are clear.	<b>19%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>2,172</b>
Leadership is diverse in terms of age.	<b>18%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>2,194</b>

“Does not apply to me” responses removed

# Perceptions of AGO Leadership Experience *continued*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	n=
Leadership is diverse in terms of musicians/professions represented.	<b>17%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>10%</b>	2,340
The time commitment required to serve in an AGO leadership position is reasonable.	<b>16%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>5%</b>	2,194
The process for getting work done is organized and efficient.	<b>15%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>11%</b>	2,260
The AGO provides excellent guidance and support to its volunteer leaders.	<b>14%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>12%</b>	2,165

“Does not apply to me” responses removed

# AGO's Leadership Pipeline

- Overall, 35% of respondents are “extremely likely” or “likely” to get involved as a leader in their chapter in the next few years.  
*(1,530 individuals)*
- 7% of respondents are “extremely likely” or “likely” to pursue a leadership position at the regional or national level in the next few years.  
*(328 individuals)*



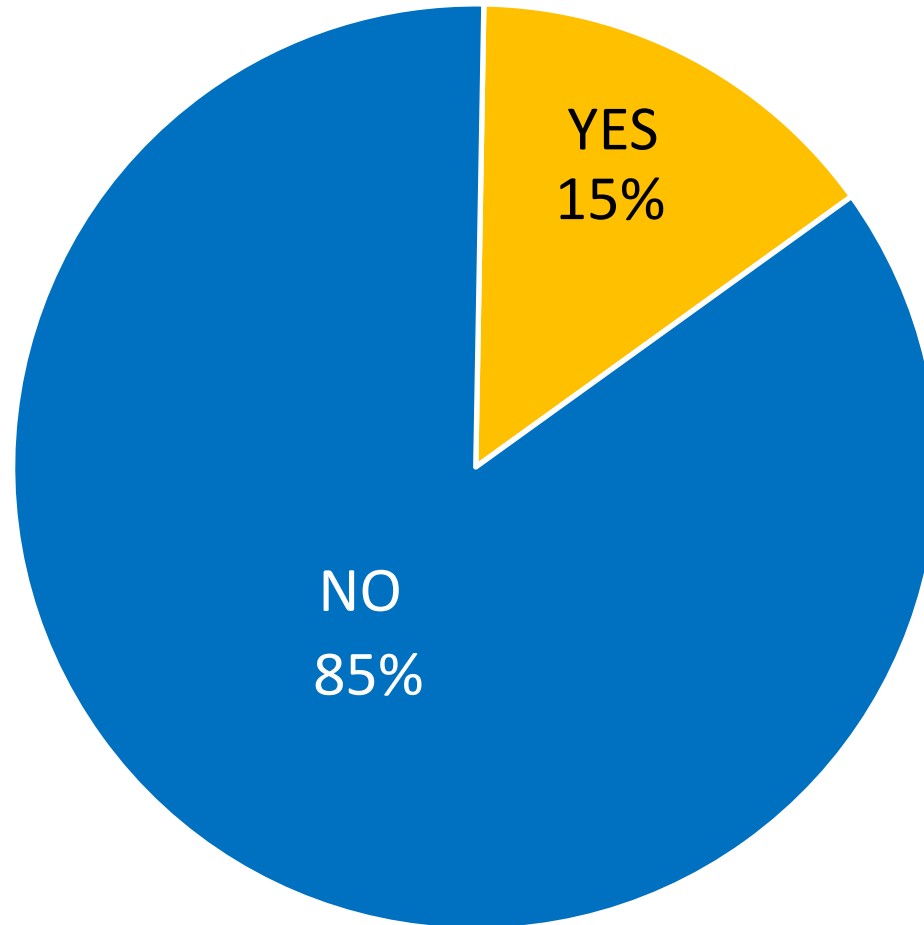
Current Member Survey

# Regional Convention Experience

(All Regions Combined)



# Only 15% of Respondents attended their most recent Regional Convention



n= 4,617

# Convention Attendance: Breakdown by Region

REGION	% of Respondents who attended most recent convention
Southwest	<b>23%</b>
MidAtlantic	<b>18%</b>
North Central	<b>18%</b>
West	<b>16%</b>
Great Lakes	<b>14%</b>
Northeast	<b>11%</b>
Southeast	<b>9%</b>

# Perceptions of AGO Regional Conventions – Top 5

**Overall, the Regional Conventions are delivering for those who attend.**

	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Did Not Meet Expectations	Don't Know
Quality of the performances	<b>71%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>1%</b>
Performance Venues	<b>55%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Overall convention experience	<b>52%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>1%</b>
Quality of the presentations	<b>44%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Ease of registration	<b>43%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>2%</b>

n= 684

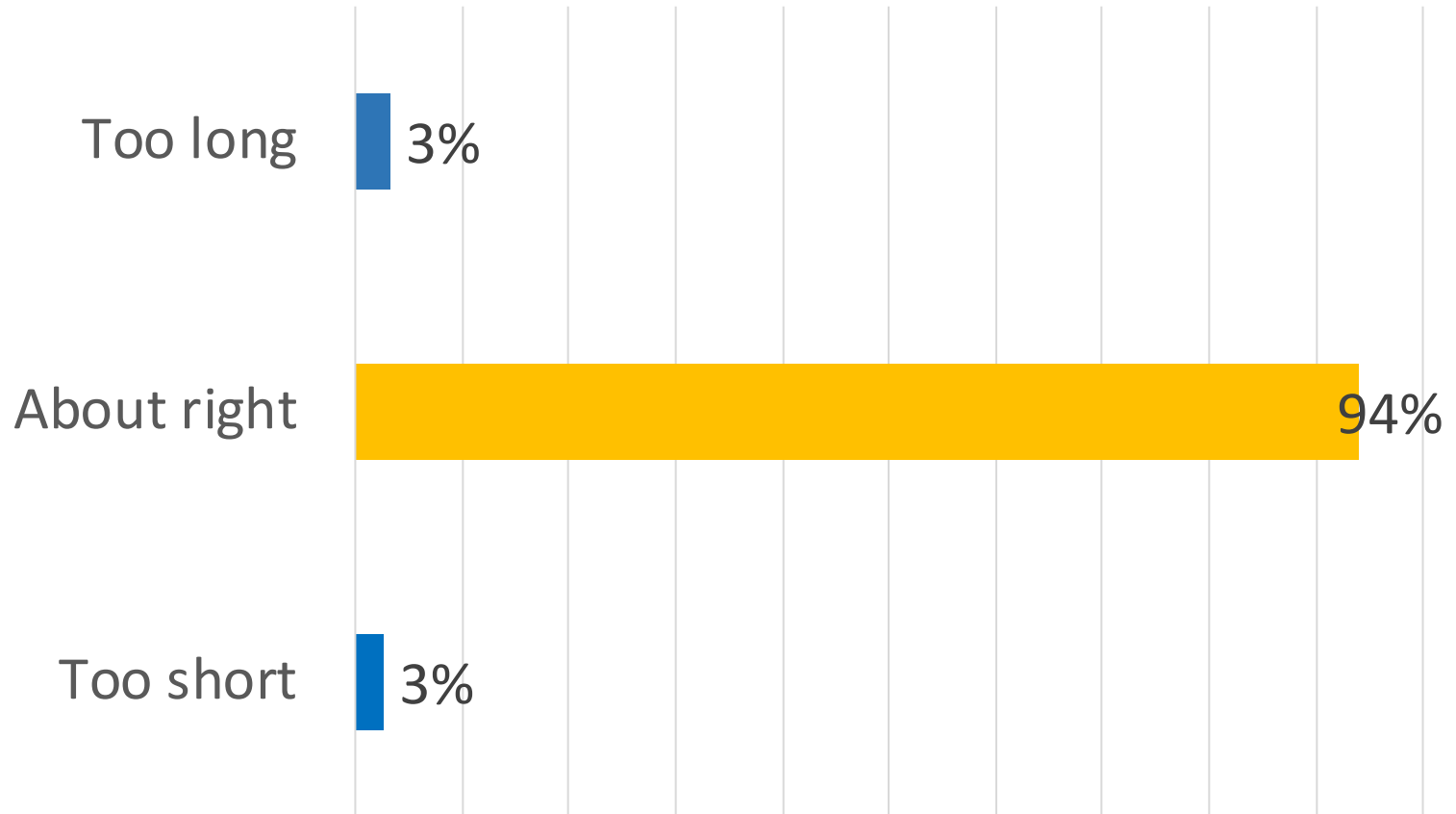


# Perceptions of AGO Regional Conventions *continued*

<b>More good news...</b>	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Did Not Meet Expectations	Don't Know
Musical genres represented in the performances	<b>40%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Convention content/topics covered	<b>30%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>3%</b>
Hotel accommodations	<b>30%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>22%</b>
Opportunities to network	<b>30%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>
Food and beverages	<b>27%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>8%</b>

# Perceptions of AGO Convention Length

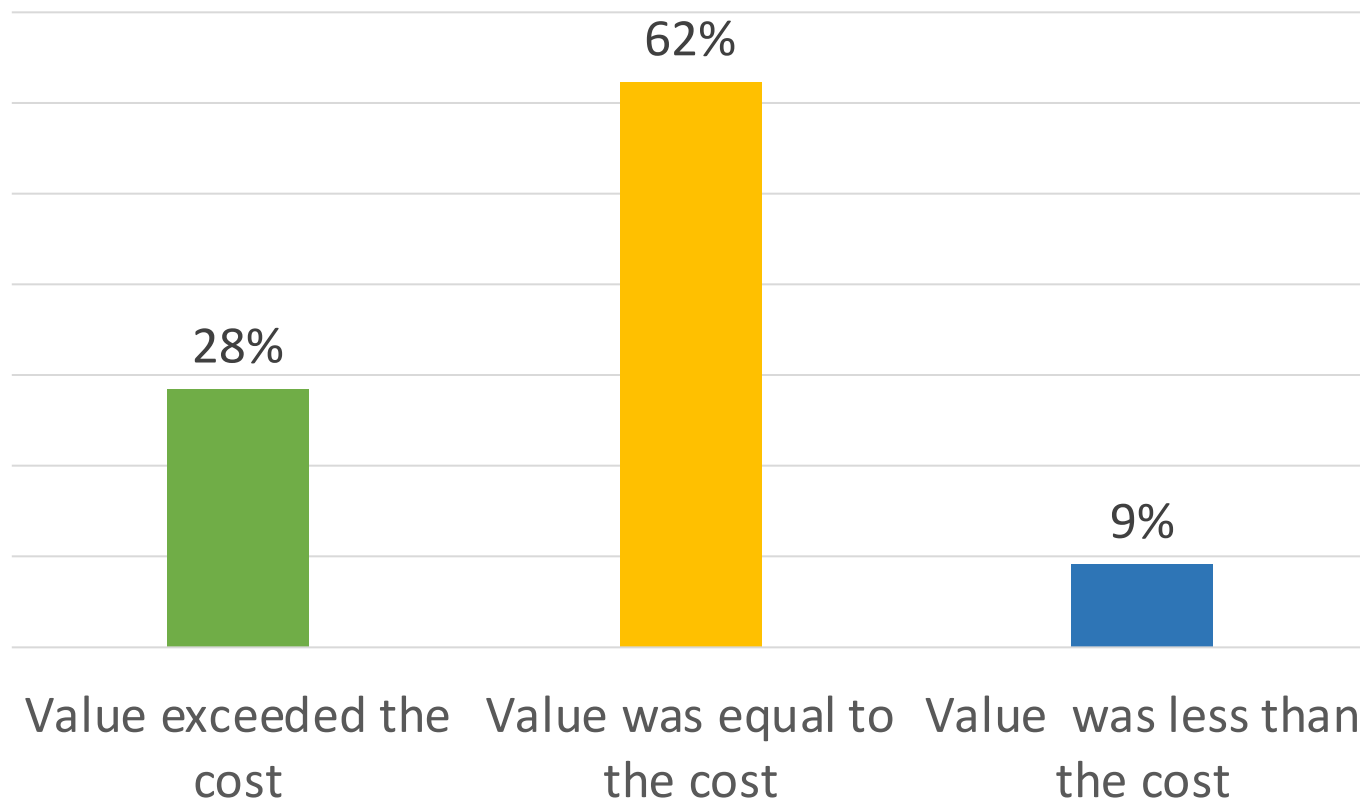
Overwhelmingly, respondents felt the convention length was about right.



n= 671

# Perceptions of AGO Regional Convention Value

**91% of respondents felt the value** they received from their Regional Convention exceeded or was equal to the cost.



n= 667

# Perceptions of AGO: Best part of their Regional Convention

## Major Themes (593 comments)

- Performances and/or church services (429)
- A specific performance or service as a standout (216)
- Appreciated the venues (106)
- Enjoyed social interaction and networking (59)
- Found workshops/classes to be helpful (53)

## What was the best part of the Regional Convention you attended?

*“All of the concerts were in excellent venues. The young professionals performing were not only wonderful musicians, but also engaged with the audience during the concerts.”*

*“ I loved hearing organ music composed by women composers.”*

*“It was my first, so the overall experience was wonderful. I'm an introvert yet the fellowship of this event was incredible. People were open, welcoming. The programs/concerts were top notch.”*

*“The best part was being inspired by the beauty and proficiency of all the performers; gaining practical tips for improvisation and Sunday morning preparation.”*

*“I enjoyed the many younger recitalists, fabulous venues and the blend of music and architecture.”*

*“ The venues (churches) were outstanding, interesting mix of architecture, instruments varied and interesting, Programming was an interesting mix.”*

*“My favorite parts were the excellent recitals/performers, renewing past friendships and making new friendships.”*

# Liked least about Convention *(518 comments)*

## Most frequent themes

- Disliked some aspect of the program *(216)*
- Found some aspect of the facilities frustrating *(115)*
- Had issues with the schedule *(76)*
- Disliked a specific performance or workshop *(54)*
- Found the exhibit hall disappointing *(50)*
- Transportation between events was a problem *(49)*
- Felt workshops were disappointing *(44)*
- Issues with food service *(38)*
- Too many performances *(32)*
- Not enough workshops *(20)*
- Schedule was too tight *(19)*

## What did you like least about the Regional Convention you attended?

*“Nothing was offered for average musician in programs and education. No reading music or new music clinics. No suggestions for use in today's world.”*

*“Too many recitals, not enough workshops.”*

*“Workshops were mostly concurrent – Would have liked to have attended an additional workshop and 1 less recital.”*

*“Small number of vendor exhibits. I would prefer more vendors of music, shoes, and other musical supplies.”*

*“We were only given one chance to actually play an organ, and I thought I was going to learn "stuff" to take back to my church, I didn't.”*

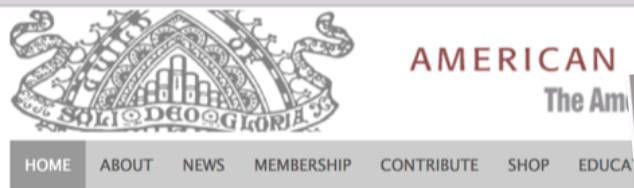
*“The pace was a little frenetic at times, especially for older colleagues.”*

*“Transportation issues getting to venues – not enough provided by convention.”*

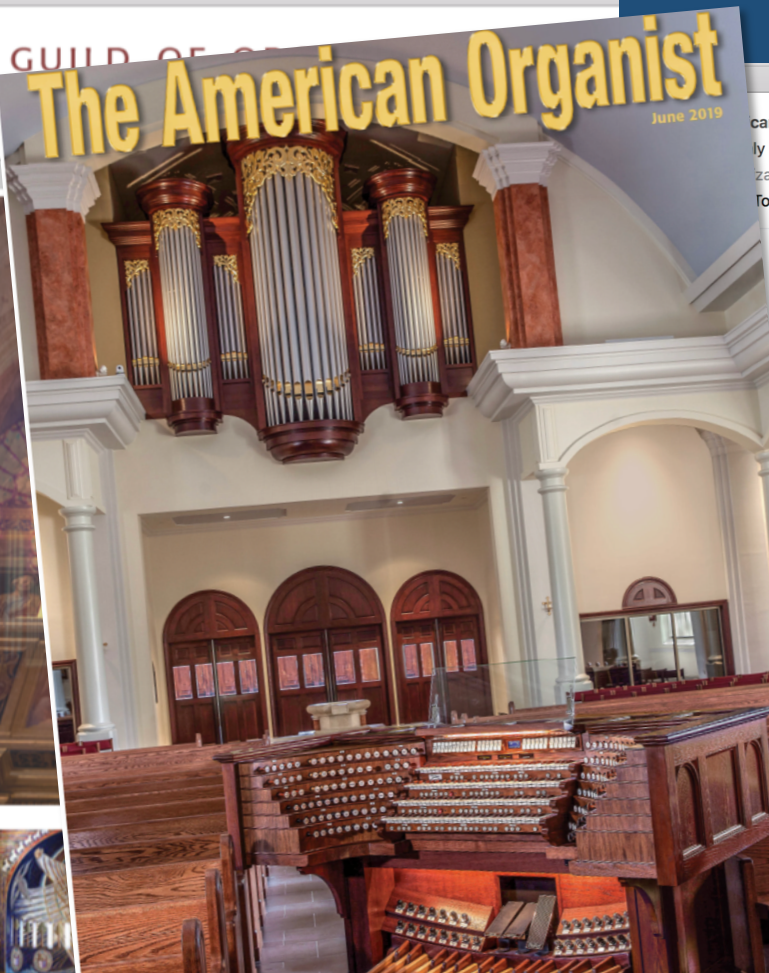
# Current Member Survey

# AGO Communications

ago.org



*New on Vox Humana*  
The great  
**SHELBY LEWIS**  
a priori,  
"saved"  
Acoustics in the Age  
of Frescobaldi and  
Fantini  
-Vincent Dubois



Monthly News from AGO National Headquarters — AGO

American Guild of Organists

ly News from AGO National Headquarters

zabeth Bailey,

To: American Guild of Organists

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NEWS

## American Guild of Organists

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS AND THE AMERICAN ORGANIST MAGAZINE  
475 RIVERSIDE DRIVE • SUITE 1260 • NEW YORK, NY 10115 • 212-870-2310  
FAX 212-870-2163 • E-MAIL [info@agohq.org](mailto:info@agohq.org) • WEB SITE [www.agohq.org](http://www.agohq.org)



## TAO Magazine

The October issue of [The American Organist](#) is now available. This issue features the Patrick J. Murphy organ at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Scranton, Pa. In this issue you will also find the reports from the AGO Regional Conventions, the winners of AGO/Quimby Regional Competitions for Young Organists, and AGO Certification Program results.

[Read More](#)

A RETURN PERFORMANCE OF

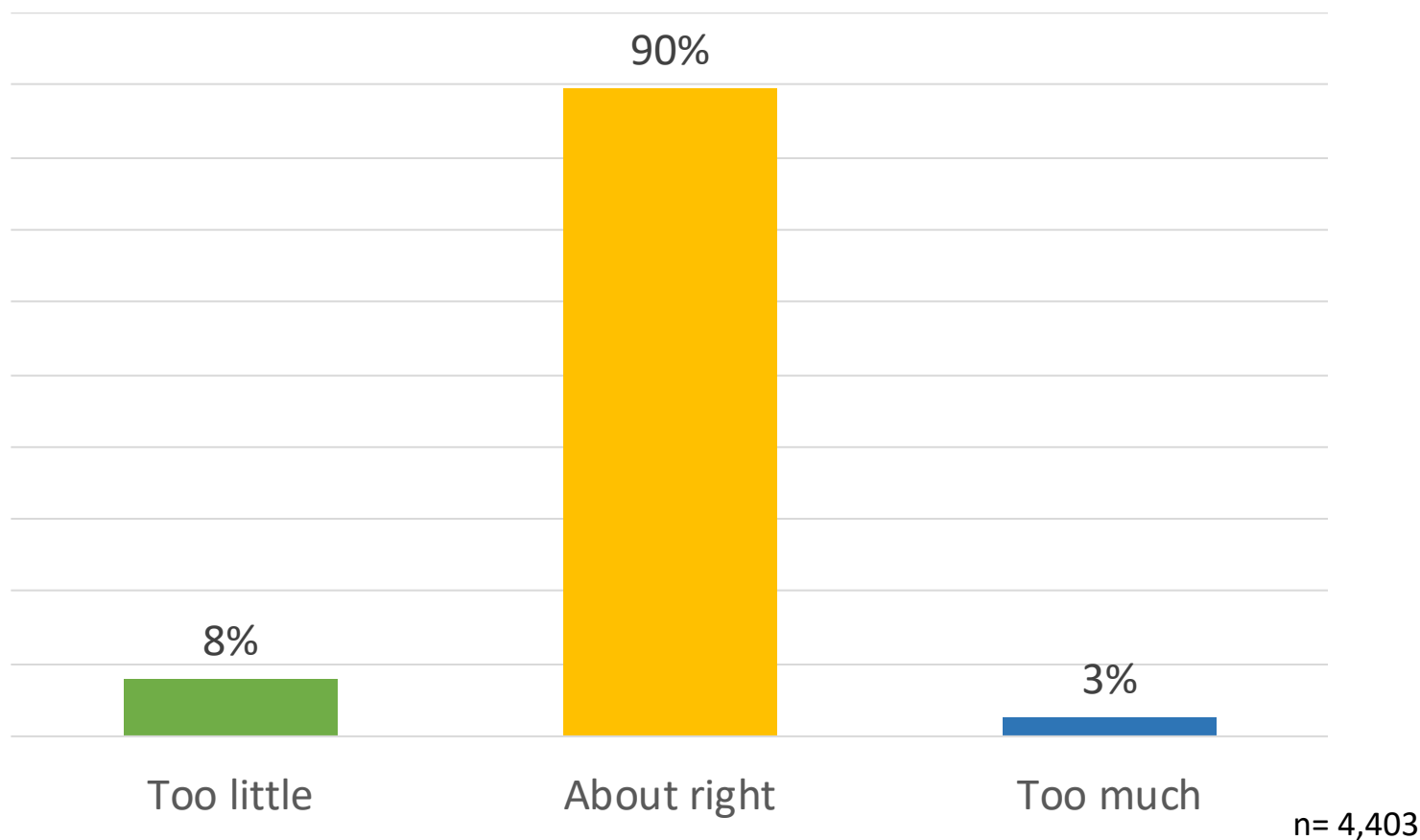
# Daniel Roth

Titular Organist at St. Sulpice in Paris, France



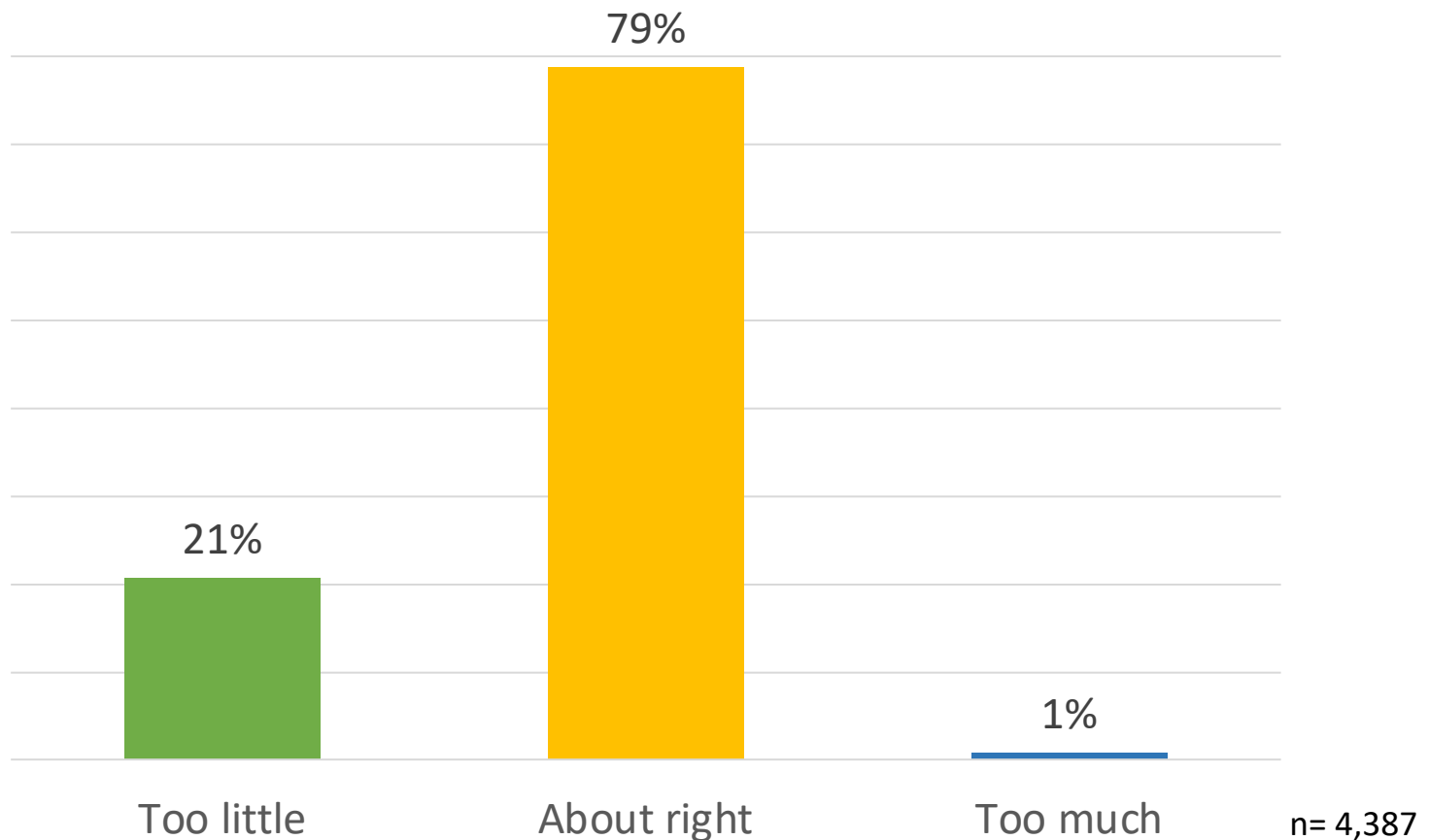
# How would you gauge the amount of information you receive from the **National AGO**?

**Respondents overwhelmingly** feel the amount of communication they receive from the national AGO is about right.



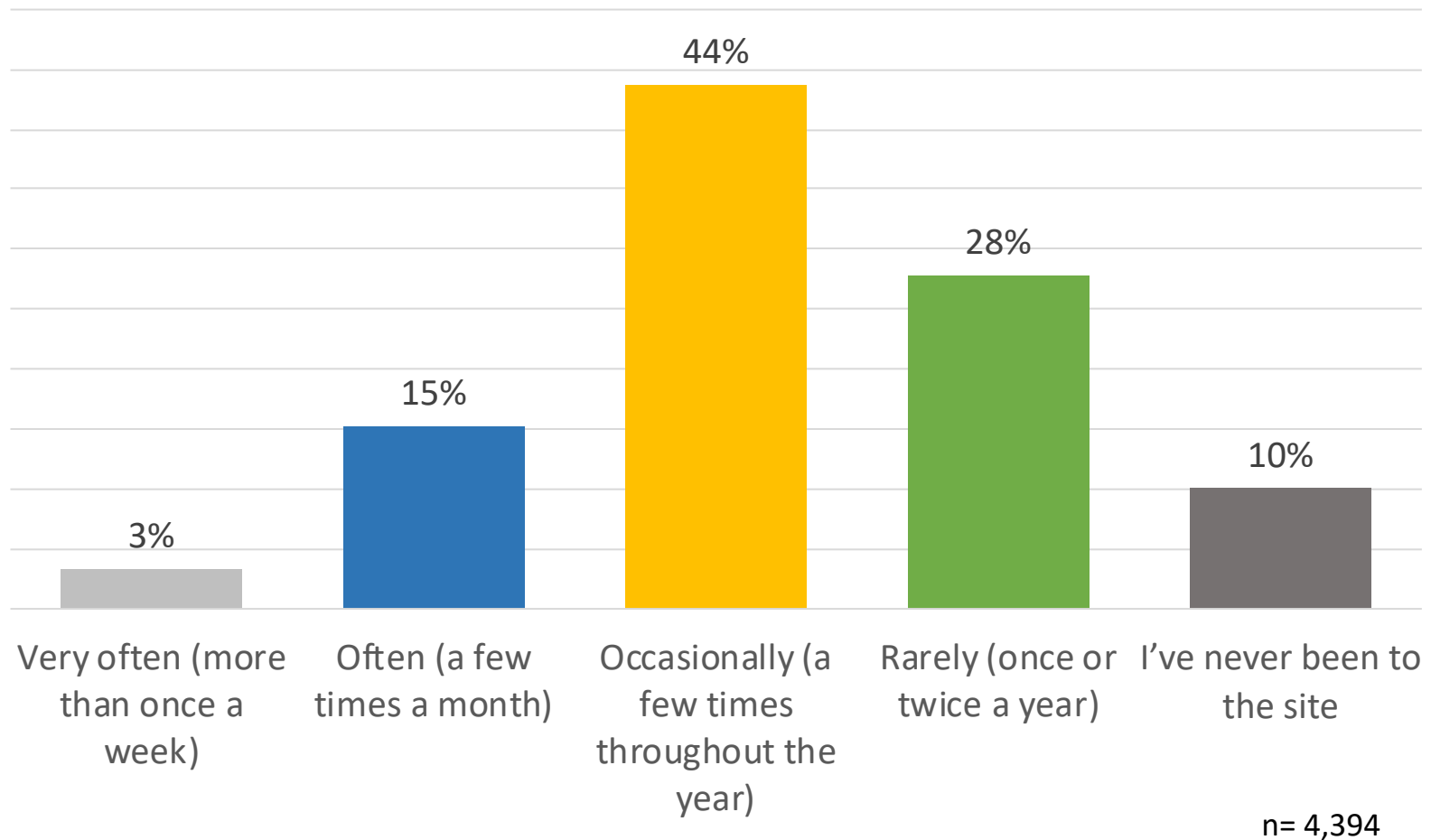
# How would you gauge the amount of information you receive from the **your local AGO chapter?**

**79% of respondents** feel the amount of communication they receive from their local AGO chapter is about right.



# How often do you visit the AGO website?

**Only 18% of respondents visit the site more than a few times a month**



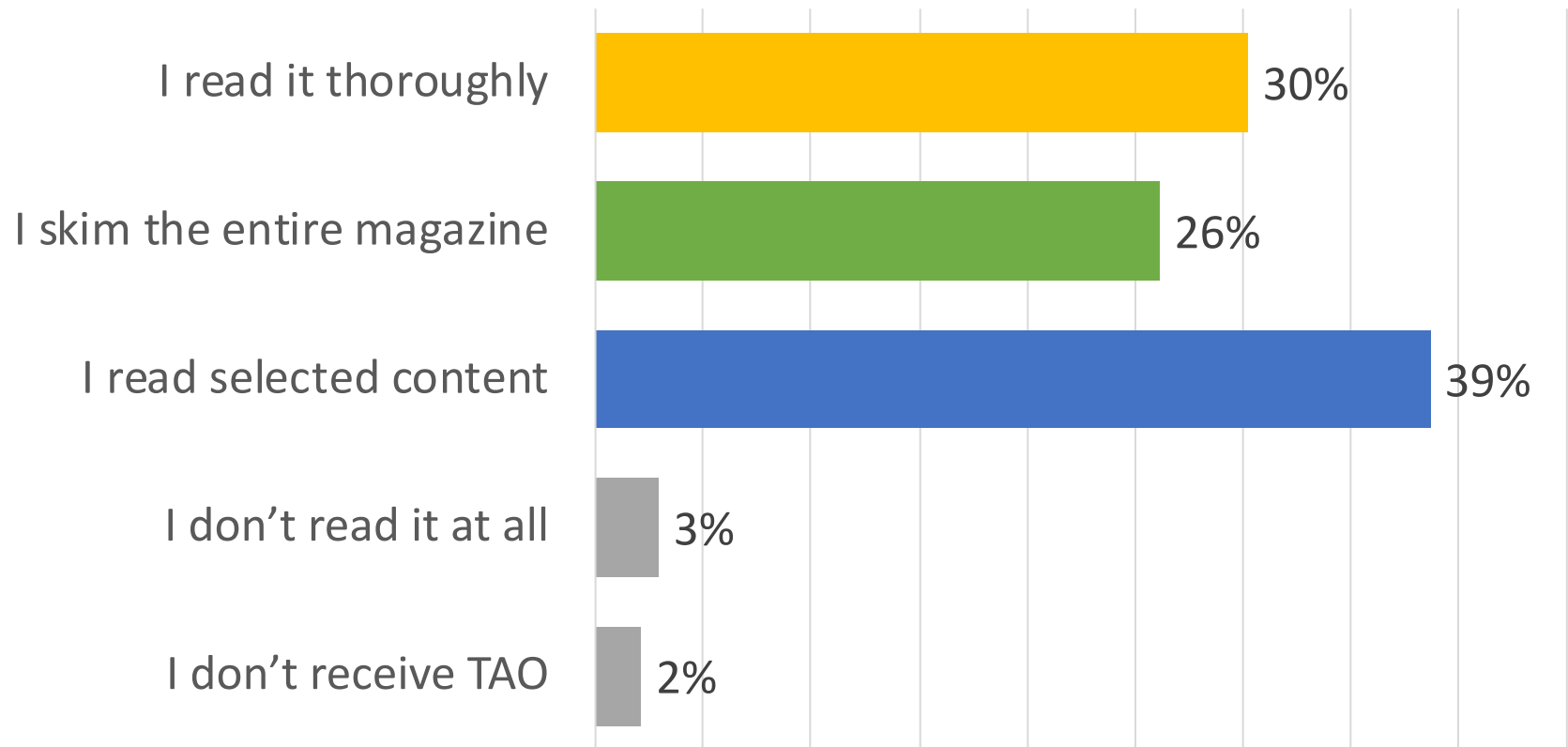
# Perceptions of the AGO website

<b>Those that visit the site give it good reviews.</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>n=</b>
Quality of the information	<b>31%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>3,602</b>
Relevance of the information	<b>28%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>3,613</b>
Presentation of the information	<b>26%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>3,595</b>
Site Organization/Navigation	<b>20%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>3,584</b>
Searchability	<b>18%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>3,547</b>

Note: "I've never been to the website" responses removed

# How thoroughly do you read a typical issue of TAO?

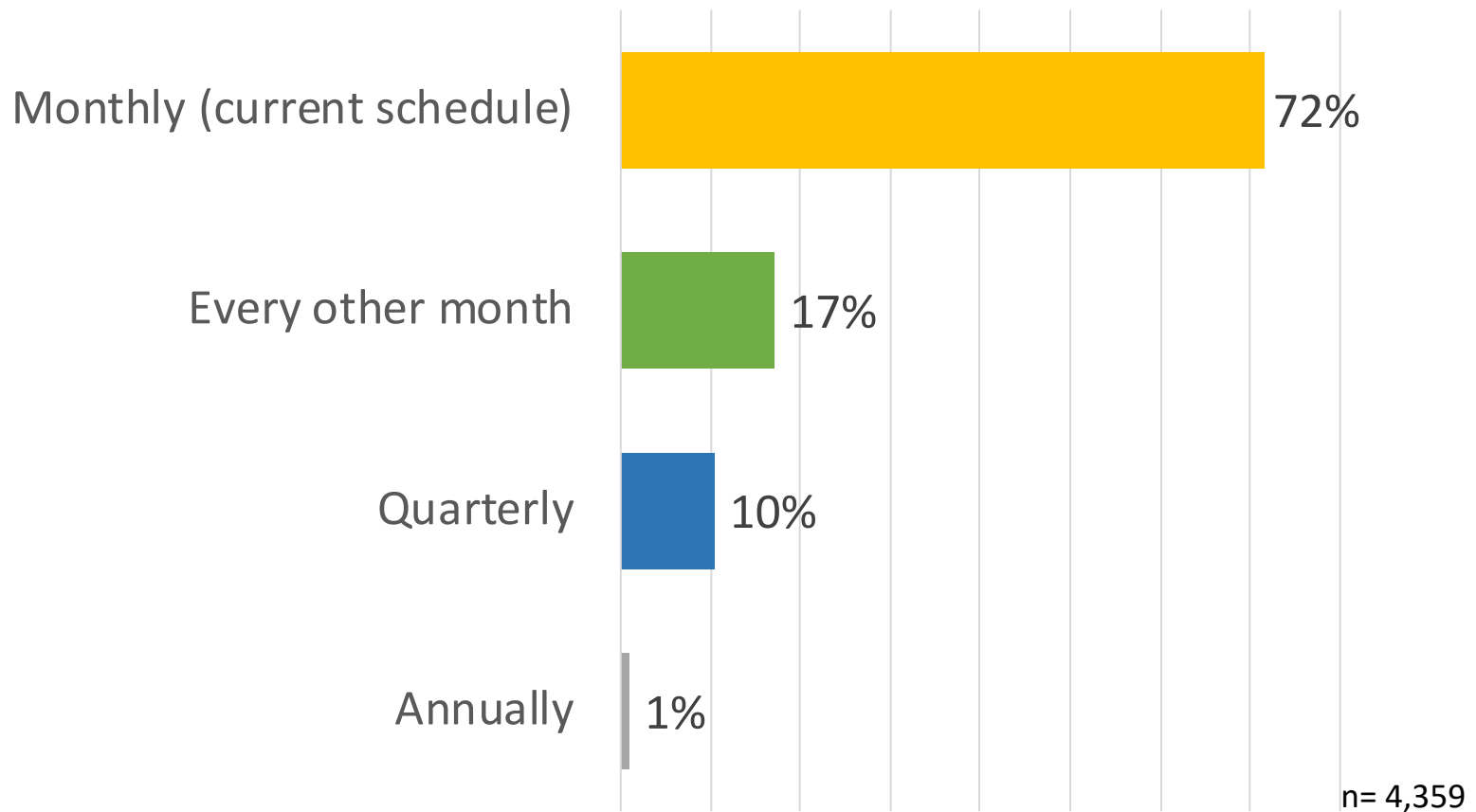
**Most common approach is to read selected content;** however, nearly 1/3 of respondents read the magazine thoroughly.



n= 4,456

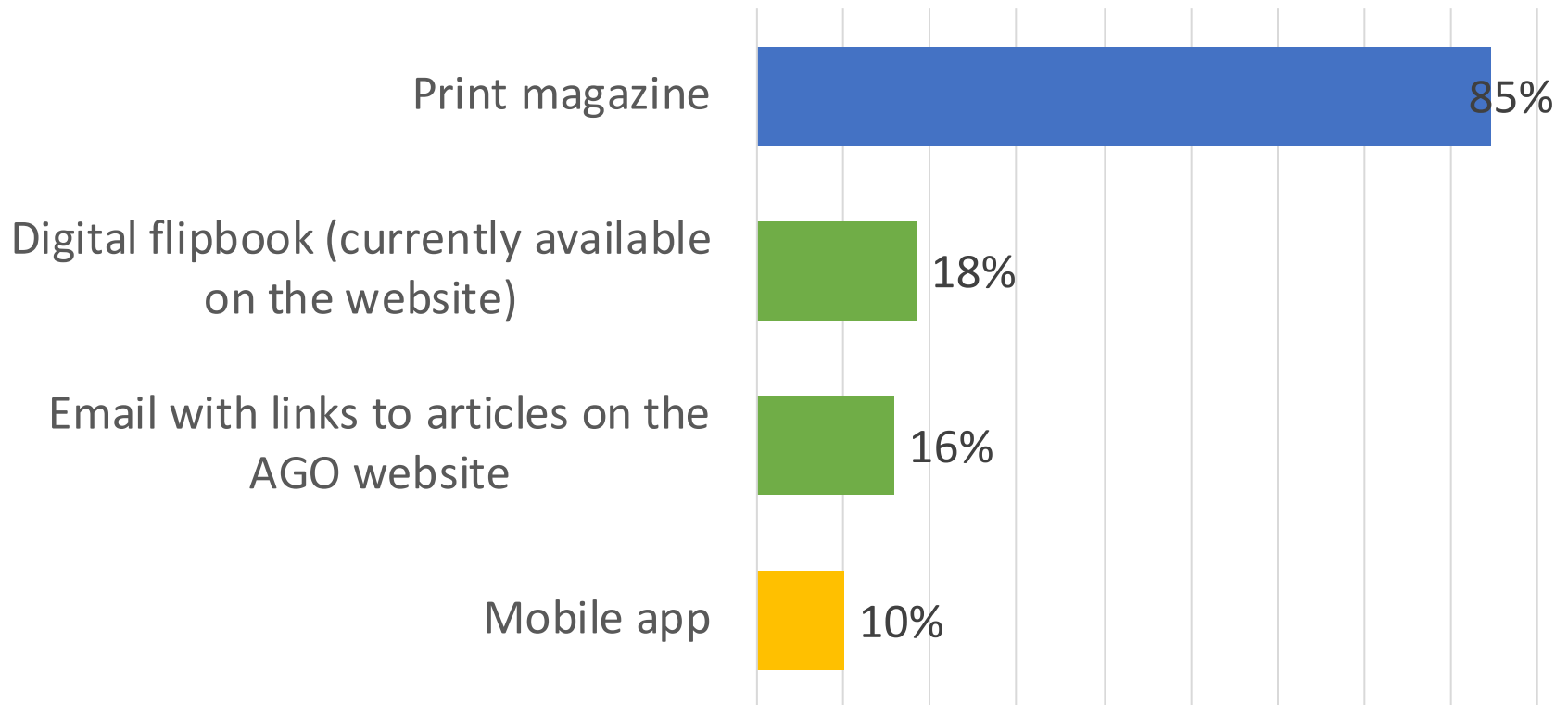
# How often would you prefer to receive TAO?

**The current monthly schedule** is preferred by a strong majority of respondents.

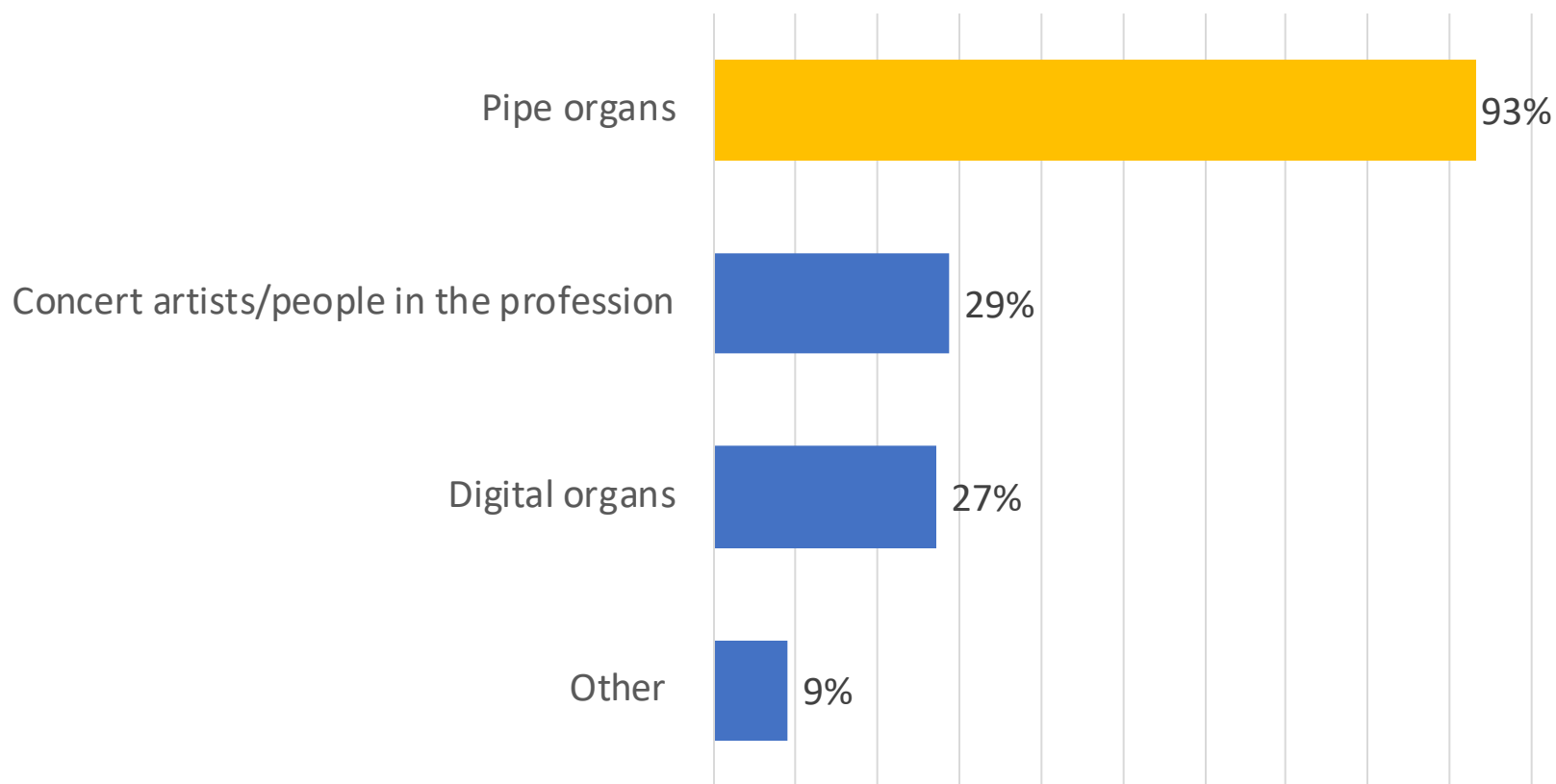


# How would you prefer to read TAO?

**85% of respondents** prefer to receive TAO in print format.



# What would you like to see on the cover of TAO?

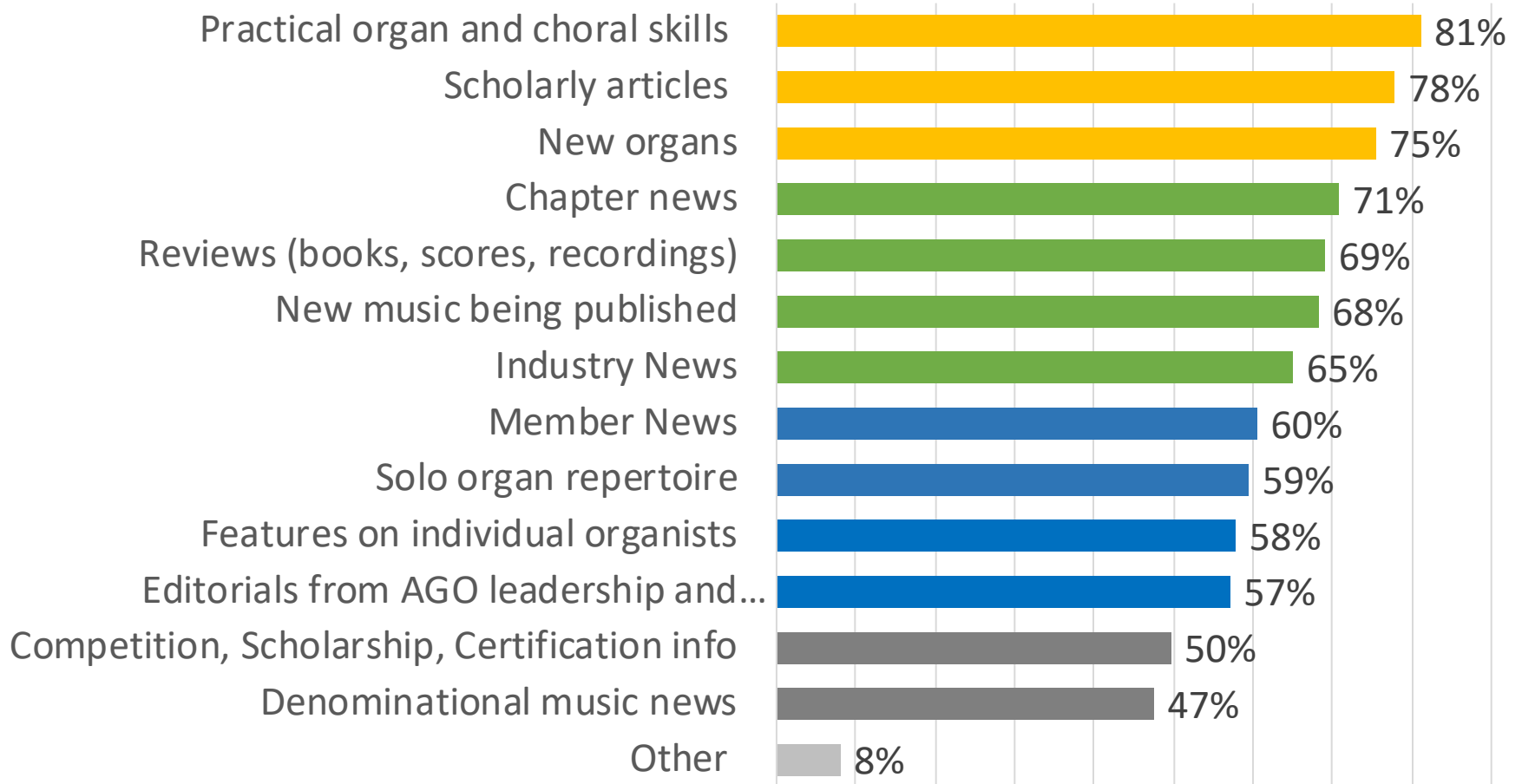


Note: Most “Other” comments expanded on their selected response; most common additional suggestions were 1) show more architecture 2) increase the variety of cover subjects

n= 4,311



# TAO: What topics would you most like to see?



n= 4,346

# Suggestions regarding TAO (*930 comments*)

## Major Themes

- Would like a update of the visual format/look (*176*)
- Want more inclusiveness – especially with regard to “digital appliances,” not just pipe organs (*54*)
- More scholarly/academic/professional articles (*49*)
- More content for the average/church organists vs those with advanced degrees or concert careers (*46*)
- More practical/technique-focused articles (*44*)
- Less chapter news (*34*)
- Expand online content – e.g. searchable archives, links to music, moving chapter news online (*30*)

# What suggestions do you have for improving The American Organist?

*“Would be great to see more educational articles (i.e. tips for the average organist, maybe taking a standard choral anthem and analyzing it and showing how to rehearse it, a series on how to dress up congregational singing, etc.)”*

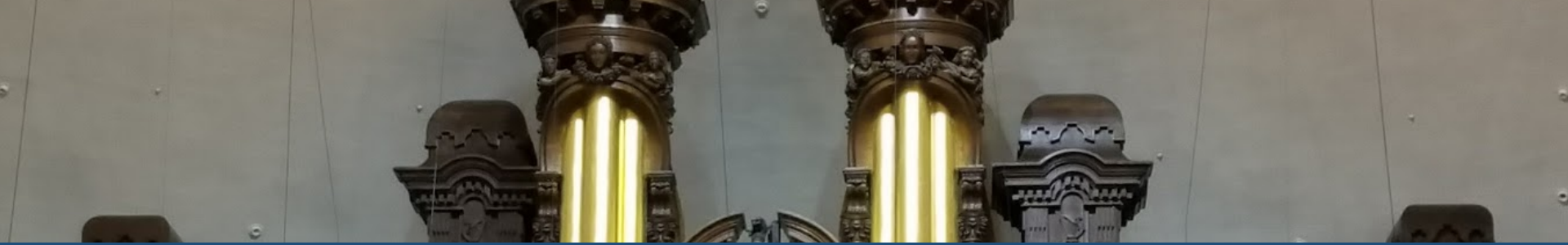
*“I've really been enjoying some of the new columns that teach me something new every time (e.g., Ask an Organ Builder) or give practical tips on performance, practicing, etc., since I don't have a degree in music and perhaps lack some of that knowledge that may be well known for music professionals.”*

*“Show the breadth of your membership (people)... generations, gender, ethnicities, etc. The “O” in TAO sometimes seems like we’re wrapped up in the instrument alone rather than the people.”*

*“Move chapter news and other locality based items to web based content.”*

*“Change the visual layout - needs to be modernized. Change the typeface and vary the cover images.”*

*“Increase the font size.”*



Current Member Survey

# The AGO Current Brand Identity



# Adjectives used to describe the AGO

## A majority see you as:

- ★ Professional 70%
- ★ Educational 63%
- ★ Knowledgeable 51%

AGOYO 2017  
Survey Comparison:  
Same three top adjectives  
were selected

n=810

## You are also:

- Respected 49%
- Traditional 45%
- Collegial 41%
- High-Quality 40%
- Valuable 39%
- Encouraging 37%
- Welcoming 36%
- Friendly 35%
- Relevant 29%
- Inclusive 29%
- Social 29%
- Religious 26%
- Creative 24%
- Cooperative 23%
- Prestigious 22%
- Clique-ish/closed 20%
- Productive 20%
- Influential 19%
- Current 18%
- Caring 18%

- Forward thinking 17%
- Conservative 17%
- Snobbish 17%
- Warm 16%
- Opinionated 16%
- Fun 14%
- Adaptable 14%
- Smart 13%
- Progressive 13%
- Outdated 13%
- Harmonious 12%
- Efficient 12%
- Innovative 12%
- Exclusive 12%
- Leader 11%
- Dynamic 11%
- Bureaucratic 10%
- Tech Savvy 10%

### Less than 10%

- Transparent 9%
- Exciting 8%
- Boring 8%
- Family 6%
- Awesome 5%
- Cool 3%
- Bold 3%

# Perceptions of the name: American Guild of Organists

<b>Overall, the name is perceived as being effective across all criteria.</b>	<b>Extremely effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Somewhat effective</b>	<b>Not effective</b>
<b>Clear</b>	40%	46%	11%	2%
<b>Appropriate</b>	38%	47%	12%	3%
<b>Personally meaningful to me</b>	38%	44%	13%	5%
<b>Current/Relevant</b>	31%	44%	18%	6%

n= 4,443

# AGO Identity: Most Common “Shorthand”

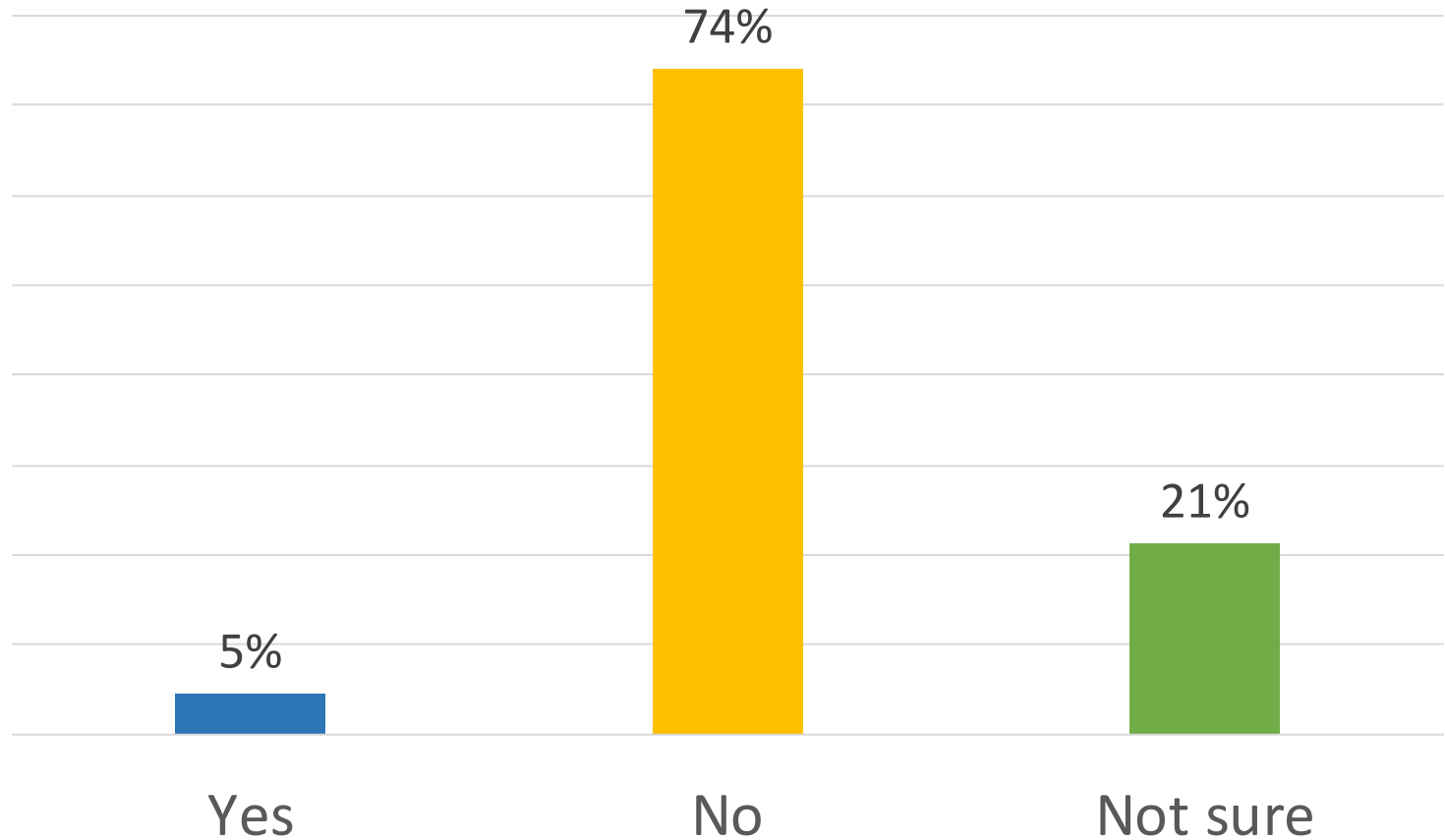
<b>“The AGO”</b>	<b>91%</b>
<b>“The Guild”</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>4%</b>

*Note: Most common “other” responses were:*

- **“The Organist Guild” or “The Organ Guild” (48)**
- **No shorthand, use the full name – “American Guild of Organists” (45)**

n= 4,473

# Should the AGO change its **NAME**?



n= 4,486





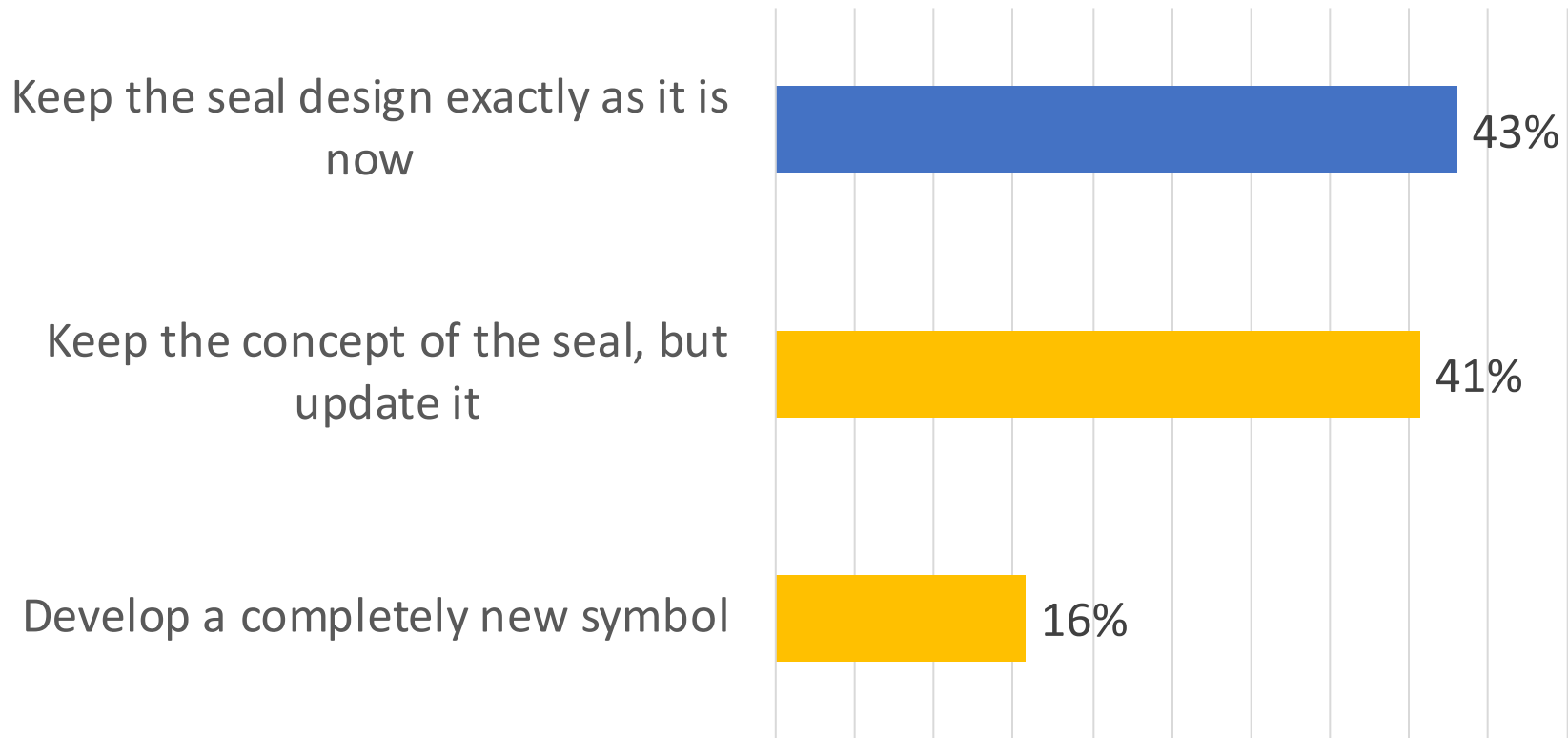
# Perceptions of the AGO **SYMBOL**

Comparatively, the **symbol is seen as being less effective** than the name. Fewer than 2/3 find it visually appealing and current/relevant.

	Extremely effective	Effective	Somewhat effective	Not effective
<b>Distinctive</b>	40%	40%	15%	6%
<b>Appropriate</b>	33%	40%	20%	7%
<b>Visually appealing</b>	31%	32%	22%	15%
<b>Personally meaningful to me</b>	30%	32%	21%	17%
<b>Current/Relevant</b>	25%	34%	24%	17%

# What should the AGO do regarding its **SYMBOL**?

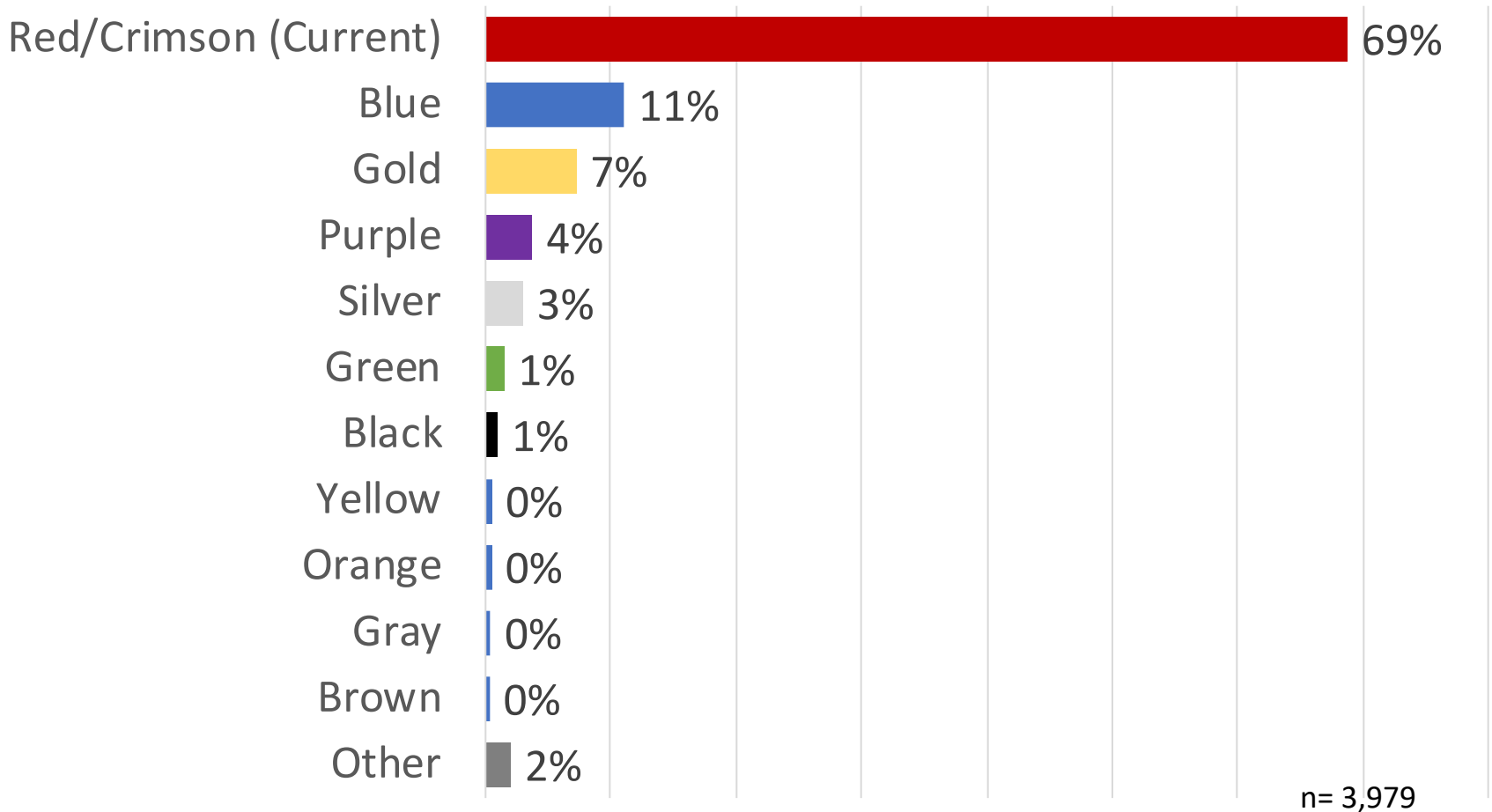
**57% of respondents were in favor of some type of refinement of the current symbol.**



n= 4,323

# What should the AGO's ANCHOR COLOR be?

Over 2/3 of respondents believe that the current color should be retained.

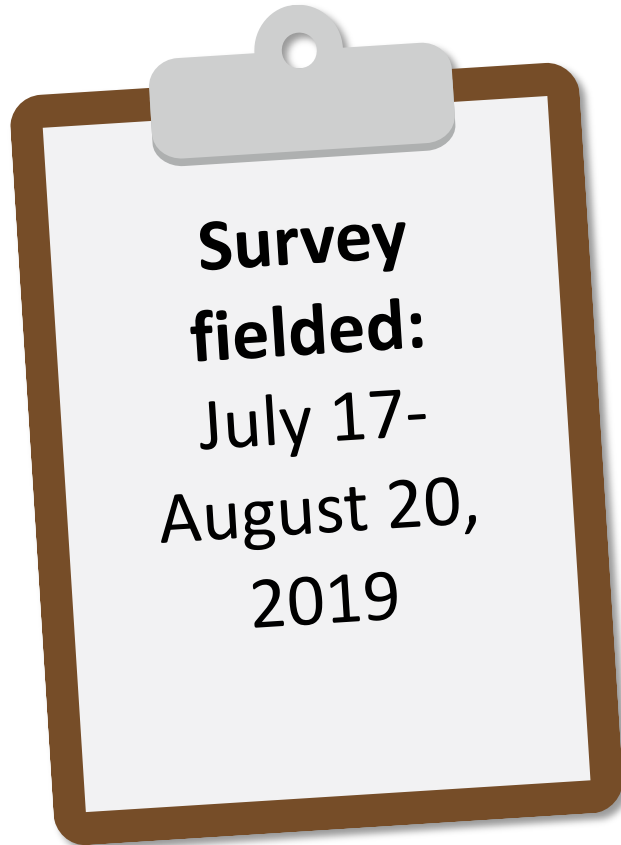




# Past Member Survey



# About the Past-Member Survey



## Survey invitations:

- Personal email invitations were sent to all individuals in the database of lapsed members, and also distributed via weblink
- **Invitations sent: 4,428**  
(bounces and opt-outs removed)
- **Responses received: 830**
- **Response Rate: 18.8%**

**Who are your  
lapsed members?**

# Past Member Respondent Demographics:

## AGE and GENDER

**66% of respondents were between the ages of 50-79.** Only 16% of respondents were under the age of 40.

### AGE

22 years or younger	1%
23-29 years	5%
30-39 years	10%
40-49 years	10%
<b>50-59 years</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>60-69 years</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>70-79 years</b>	<b>20%</b>
80-89 years	8%
90 years or more	1%

n= 577

### GENDER

Female	41%
Male	58%
Non-binary	1%

n= 575



# Past Member Respondent Demographics:

## RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION and ETHNICITY

### RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Christian/Protestant	59%
Christian/Catholic	19%
No Religion/Secular	7%
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	7%
Unitarian Universalist	2%
Jewish	1%
Buddhist	<1%
Other	4%

n= 580

### ETHNICITY

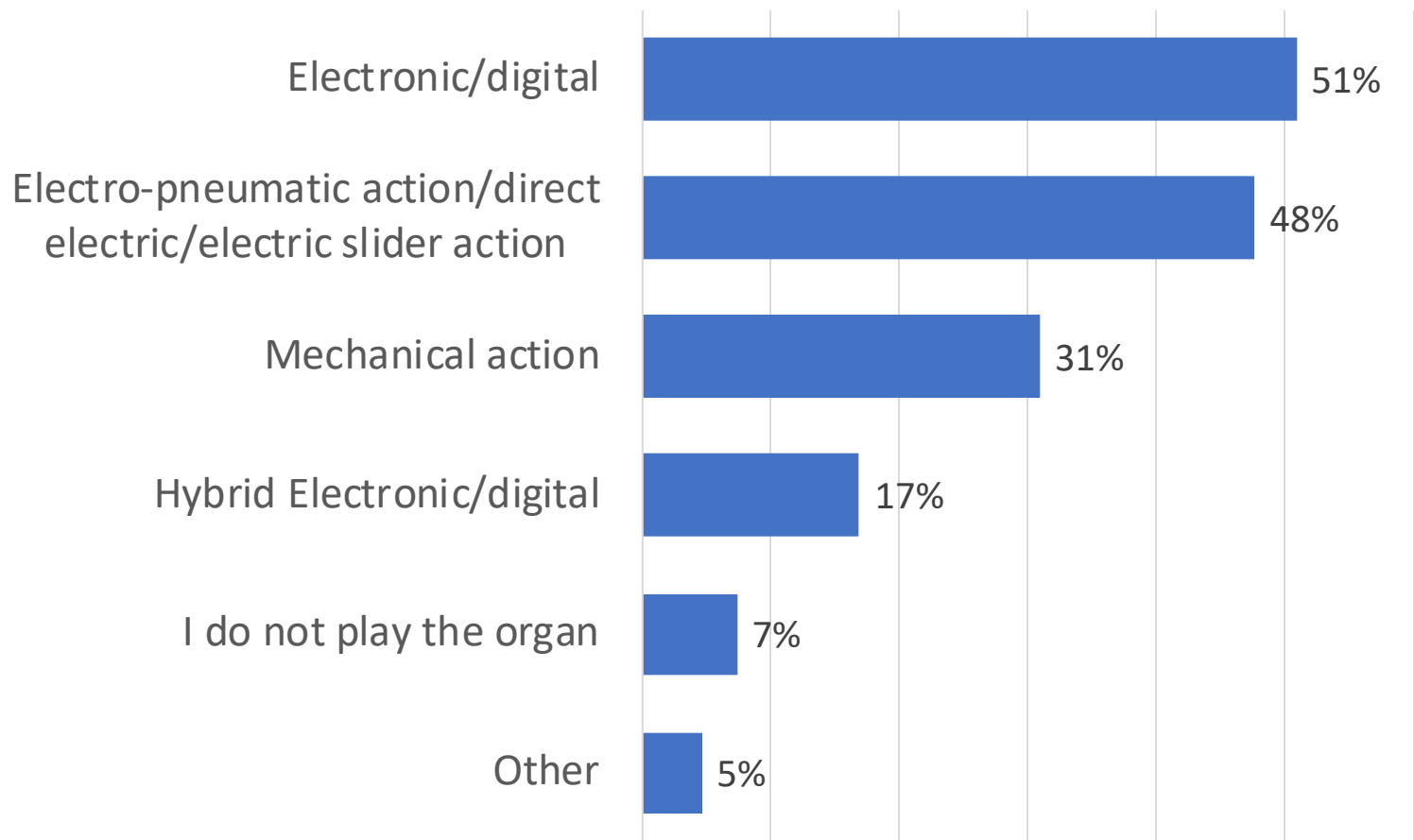
White/Caucasian	89%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%
Black/African American	1%
Hispanic/Latinx	1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1%
Other	<1%
Prefer not to answer	8%

n= 576

# Their Professional Life

# Type of Organ Played

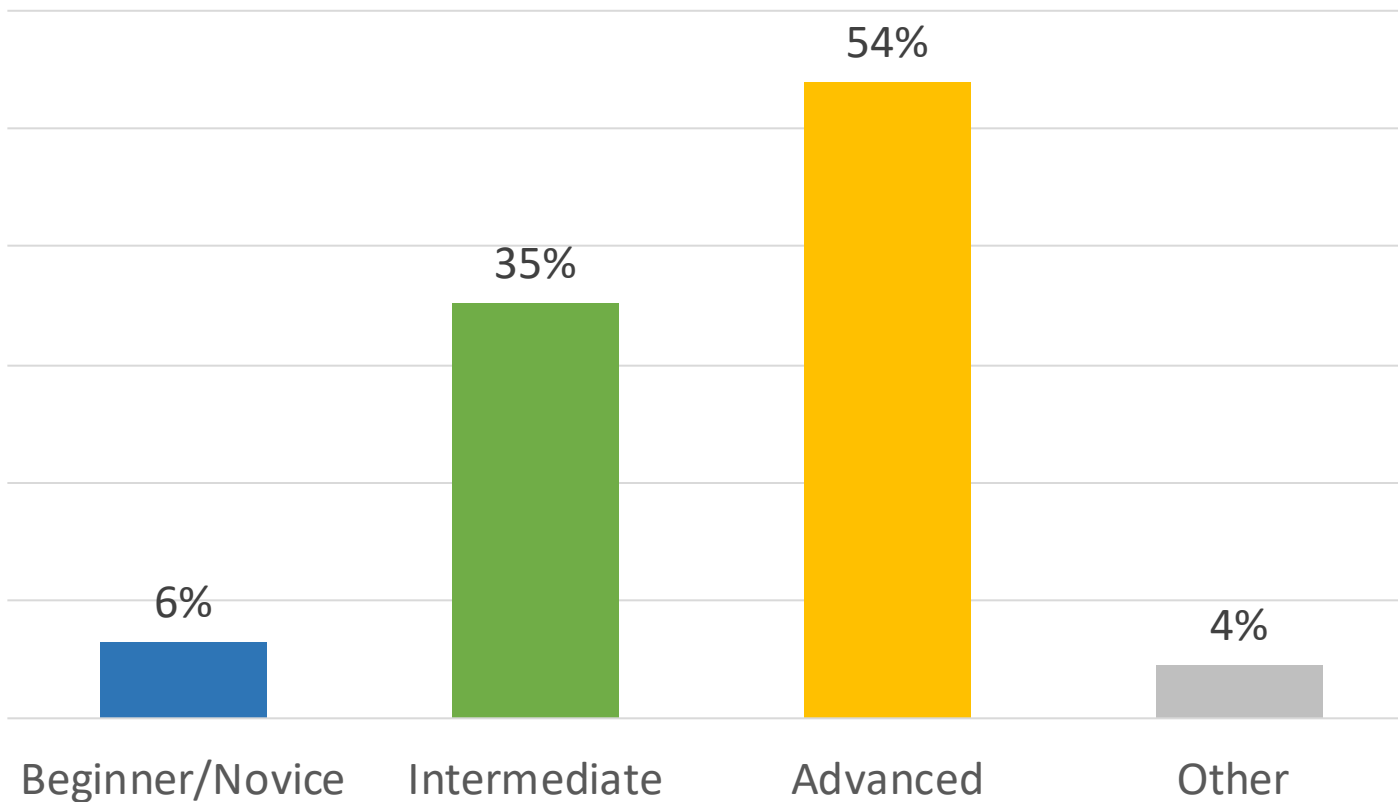
**Equal numbers** play electric action pipe organs and digital organs.



n= 586

# Organist Playing Level

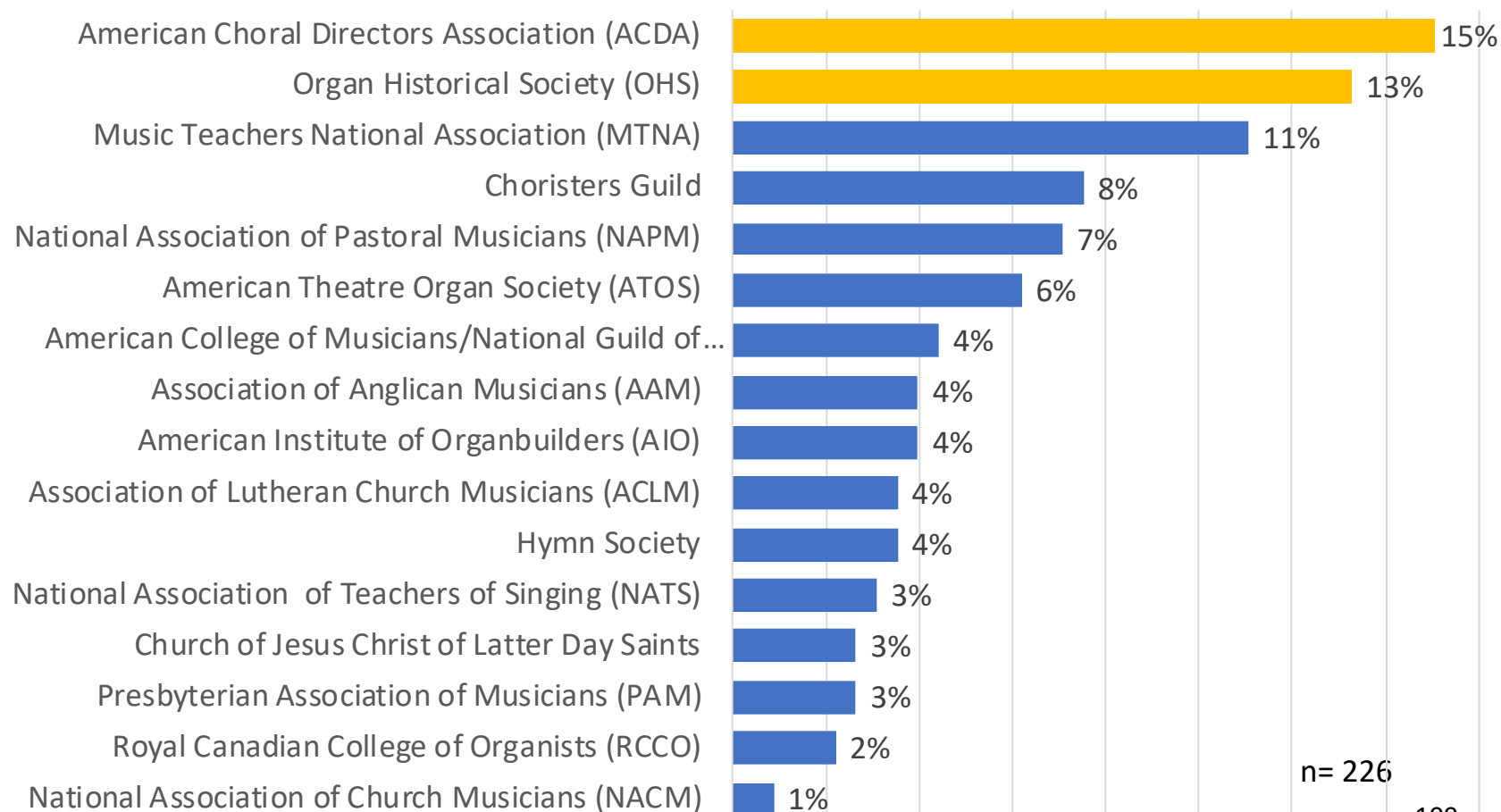
**The majority** describe their playing level as “Advanced.”



n= 560

# Membership in Other Music-Related Associations

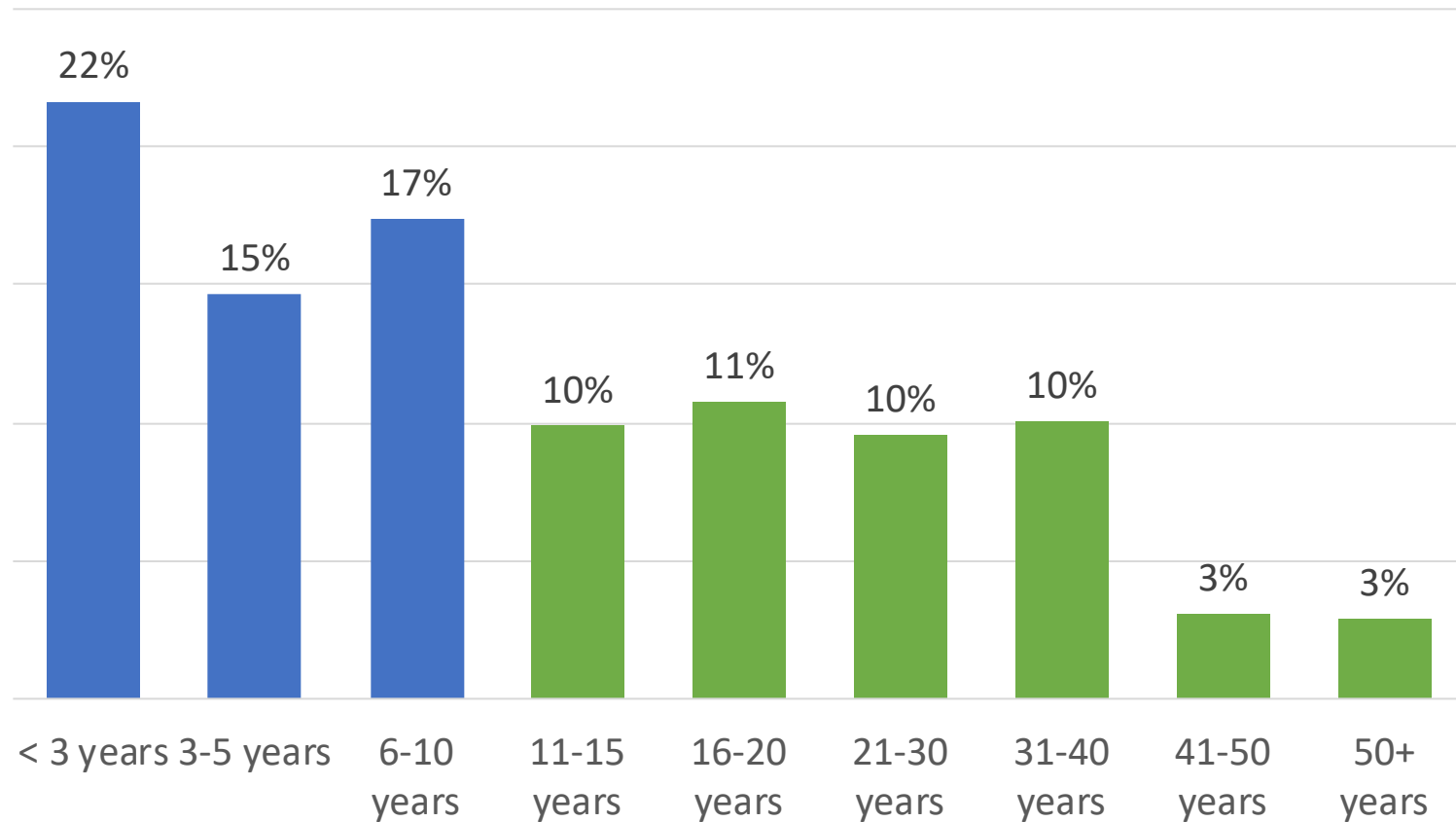
**Largest overlap** in membership is with the American Choral Directors Association and the Organ Historical Society



# **Their Experience with the AGO**

# Years of Membership in the AGO

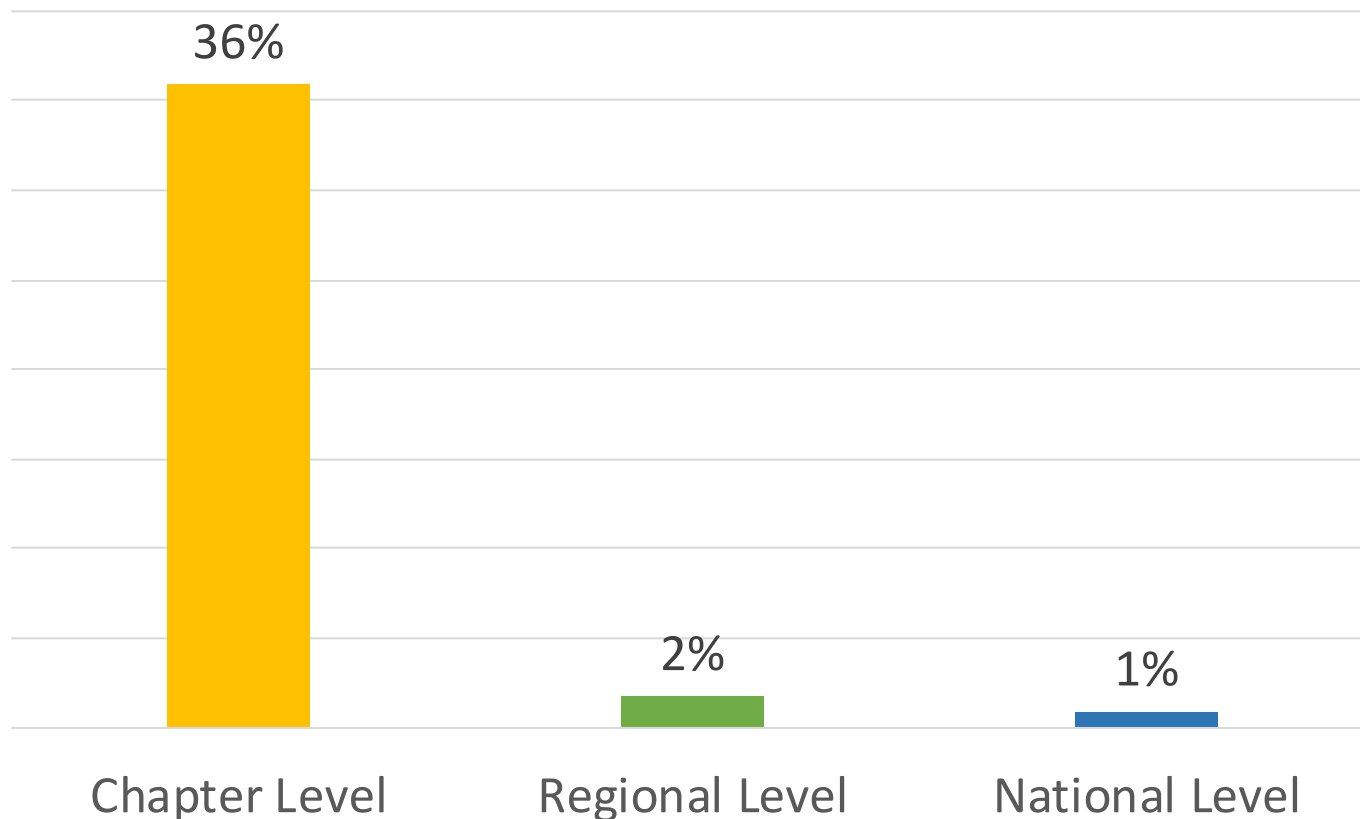
54% of respondents held their membership in the AGO for **10 years or less**.



n= 586

# Leadership Experience

**Over one-third of respondents** had served in a leadership role in their chapter.



n= 585



# Perceptions of AGO Programs & Services – TOP 6

**The American Organist** was the top-rated and most widely used offering.

	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Did Not Meet Expectations	Didn't Use
THE AMERICAN ORGANIST Magazine	17%	55%	19%	9%
National conventions	11%	25%	6%	58%
Regional conventions	10%	25%	7%	58%
Chapter-hosted events	8%	49%	21%	22%
Online Job Board	6%	29%	10%	55%
AGO Young Organists (AGOYO)	5%	15%	6%	74%

# Perceptions of AGO Programs & Services

**Very few** AGO offerings were used by these respondents.

	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Did Not Meet Expectations	Didn't Use
Vox Humana	3%	9%	4%	84%
New music commissions/competitions (choral and organ)	3%	15%	7%	76%
Online Educational Videos	3%	12%	6%	80%
Guides for auditions and degree programs	3%	16%	5%	76%
The AGO online store	1%	15%	4%	80%

n= 574

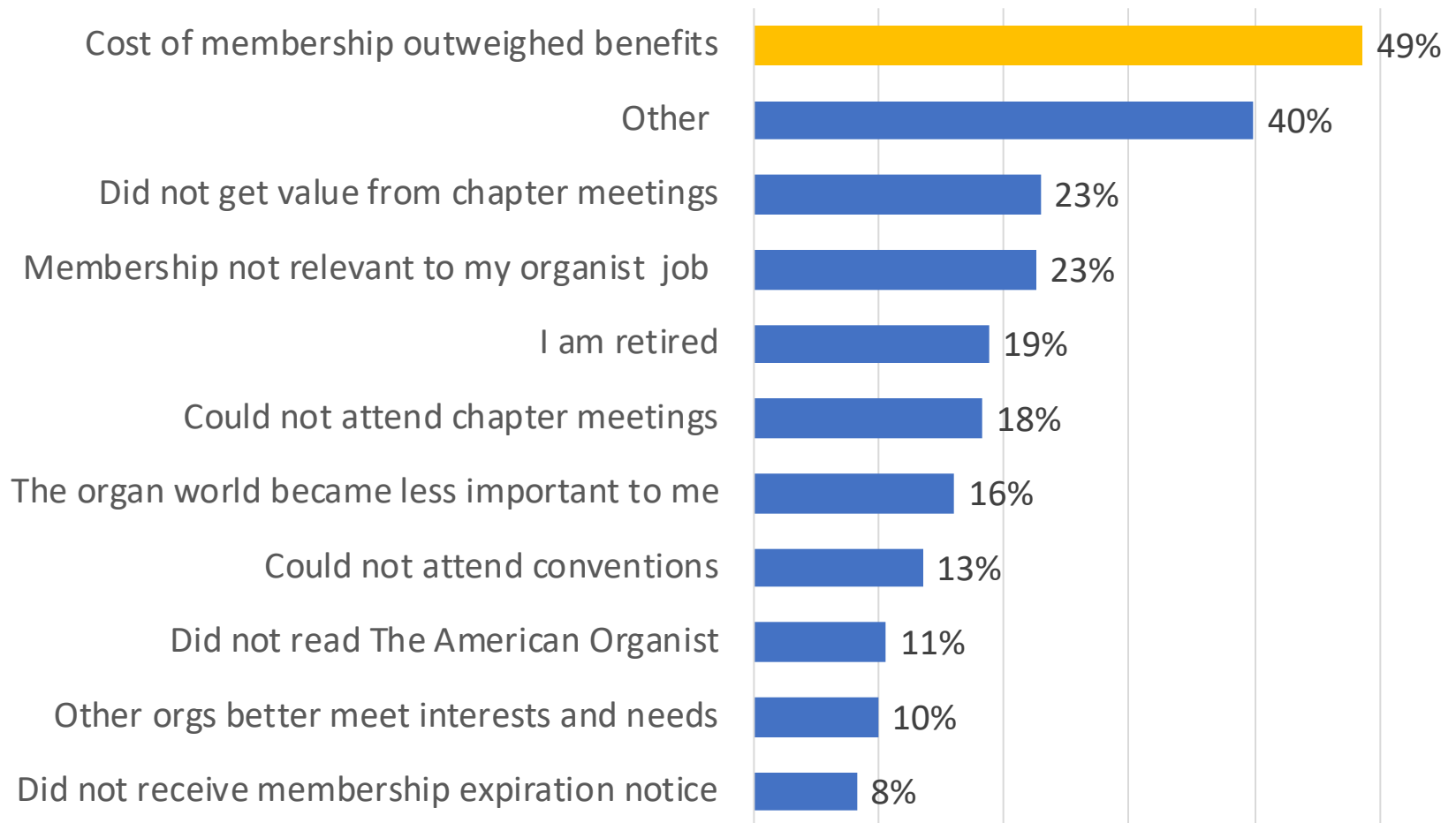
# Past and Current Member Comparison: Rating of AGO Value

**Largest comparative difference** for lapsed members is the perception of AGO engaging, supporting and uplifting all organists

COMBINED “STRONGLY AGREE” + “AGREE” RESPONSES	Current Members	Past Members	Difference
The AGO is the premier organization for individuals who play pipe organs.	93%	83%	-10%
The AGO is a place to get referrals and find job opportunities.	86%	79%	-9%
AGO members are a community that is open, welcoming and willing to share knowledge.	79%	65%	-14%
The AGO is an excellent organization for those who play electronic/digital organs.	72%	62%	-10%
The AGO effectively engages, supports and uplifts all organists.	82%	60%	-22%

# Why they left the AGO

# Principal Reasons for Leaving the AGO



n= 586

5 YEAR SURVEY COMPARISON: Options were modified for 2019; however, there was no difference in the top reason: "Cost outweighed benefits."

# Key Themes in “Other” Comments *(234 responses)*

## **Local Chapter Problems** *(66 comments)*

- Most common theme: local chapter was unwelcoming or snobby
- Local chapter not active or responsive, didn't reach out when they were members
- Local chapter too far away
- Chapter closed *(11)*

## **Changes in Personal Situation** *(56 comments)*

- Too busy
- Moved out of the area
- Couldn't make the meeting times
- No longer engaged with the organ or retired
- Age or poor health

# Key Themes in Comments *(234 responses)*

## **Lack of Membership Value** *(34 comments)*

- Upset with the loss of compensation guidelines, arbitration support
- Membership doesn't provide enough benefits, not meeting their needs
- Organization irrelevant/ineffective
- Doesn't support non full-time organists
- TAO related: stopped receiving issues; disagree with some aspect of content

## **Financial issues** *(26 comments)*

- Dues (chapter + national) have become unaffordable (26); a few cited the lack of lower-priced student or volunteer organist membership rates.

# Key Themes in Comments *(234 responses)*

## **Dissatisfaction with AGO focus or ethos** *(22 comments)*

- Concerns about inclusion of digital organs (split between pro and con)
- Concerns about religious focus (split between pro and con)
- *Note: Only 5 expressed explicit dissatisfaction with the national organization*

## **Membership renewal issues** *(17 comments)*

- Unsuccessful with using online system *(9)*
- Did not receive reminders – forgot or procrastinated *(8)*



*“My local chapter was cliqueish and I didn't enjoy participating in it; I started working full-time in a non-organ job; and the AGO doesn't actually do much to help members.”*

*“AGO still needs development in accepting diversity. It is horrific in its approach to minorities.”*

*“I left since it can no longer provide salary guides or discourage members from working for churches that have mistreated organists.”*

*“Need a sharply reduced dues rate for volunteer-only Organists like me.”*

*“The Student membership has gone and I cannot cover the cost of regular membership.”*

*“I am 83 driving at night in Atlanta is difficult.”*

*“It all changed when local chapters stopped collecting dues. They used to mail me my subscription letter. Don't like renewing on line and preferred the local chapter method.”*

*“Took away student memberships and prices me out of the AGO while finishing my degree.”*

*“The organization does nothing to support and protect organists in the workplace.”*

*"We have lost the ability to personally reach and invite colleagues due to digital registration. The local Chapter is no longer in touch with its members because of digital renewals and registration. If operated choirs in this manner, without a personal touch, the stalls would be EMPTY!!"*

*"I joined and tried to join my local chapter only to be repeatedly told that there weren't meetings, if there were meetings, they were only open to board members, there were limited events that only consisted of concerts. No information was ever provided on the above list. It was incredibly frustrating and disappointing – I joined to be a part of the organ community and there was none."*

*"My Chapter is not warm or even welcoming for former organists or organ supporters who don't have degrees or aren't presently playing at a "prestigious" church with a PIPE organ (only!) of at least 100 ranks."*

*"The loss of salary guidelines and the appearance of an electronic instrument on the cover of the magazine showed me that the ago was no longer really a true guild upholding excellence and supporting its members. The National Organization agenda focused on fundraising and advertising revenue and not the organ, its music or performance. It is no longer a Guild of organists."*

*"When I retired I no longer had the church to subsidize my membership."*

*"With chapter dues, AGO costs more than my Mercedes Benz Club membership."*

# Brand Advocates for the AGO

Net Promoter  
Score: **-23**

As measured by the  
Net Promoter Score  
question:

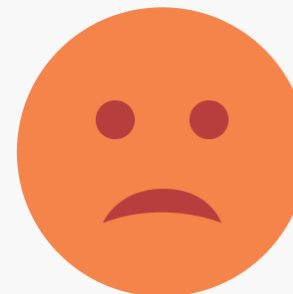
*'On a scale of 0 to 10,  
how likely would you be to  
recommend to a friend  
or colleague that they join  
the AGO?'*



**Promoters** (9 or 10)  
**23%**



**Passives** (7-8)  
**23%**



**Detractors** (0-6)  
**55%**

n= 580



# Thank you!



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