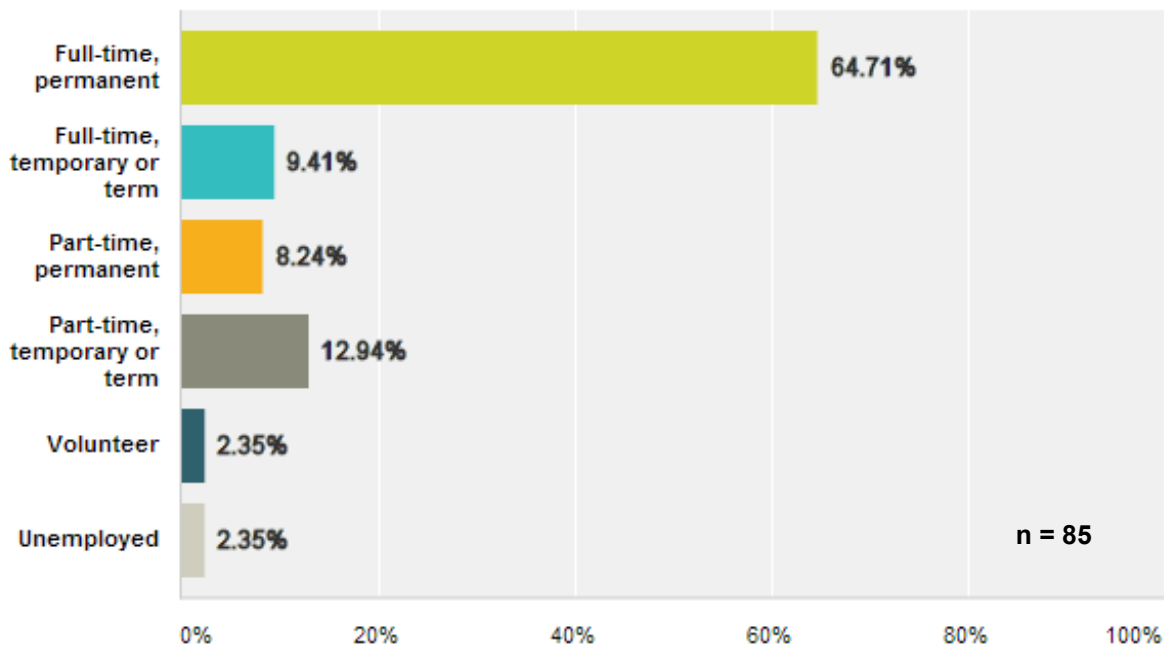# PLASC Member Survey
January 2013

This member survey was conducted on behalf of the Public Library Archives/Special Collections Roundtable to help the Steering Committee better serve its nearly 960 members and list participants. The survey was created by Adrienne Pruitt and open from January 31 to February 28, 2013. Question responses were compiled by Stephanie Bennett. No direct quotations from the free text responses will be made publicly available. Summaries only have been provided where appropriate.
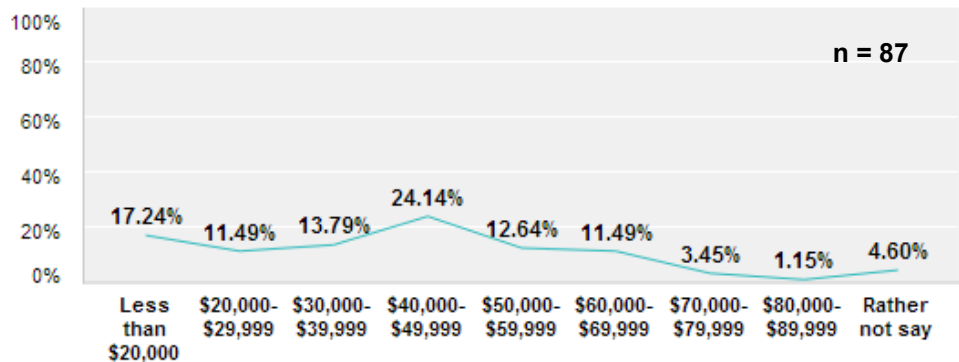
Job Demographics

What is your current employment status?

The majority of respondents, fifty-five people, were in full-time, permanent positions. Nineteen respondents had a temporary or term position, either full- or part-time. No respondents indicated they were interns or retirees.
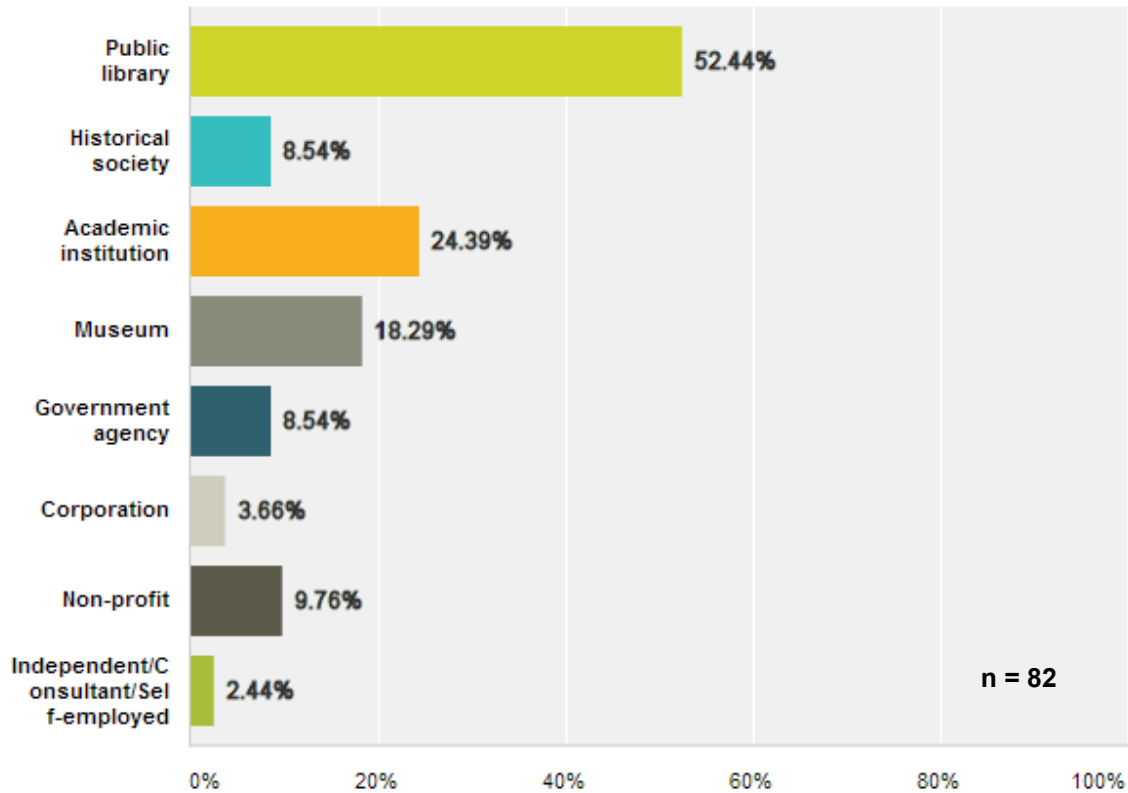

What is your total annual salary?

Most respondents earned $40,000 to $49,999, nearly 25%; around seventeen percent earned less than $20,000. Less than five percent reported earning more than $70,000.

Job Demographics *continued*

In which kind of repository do you work? Choose all that apply.

A majority of respondents indicated that they work at a public library. Academic institutions were home to nearly a quarter of the respondents. Museum employees were nearly twenty percent of respondents, and non-profit employees accounted for almost ten percent.
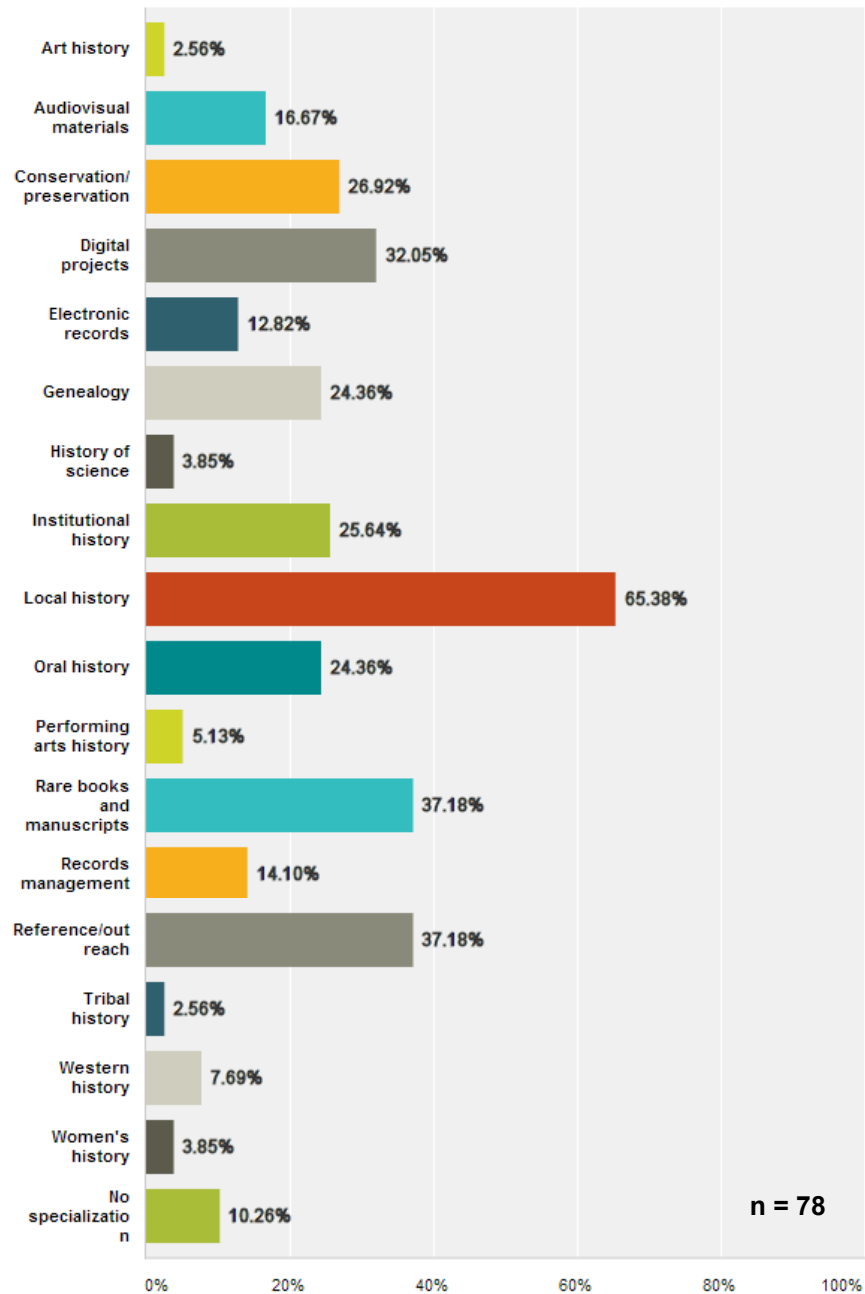

What is your job title?

While we cannot provide exact titles, the following represent the most common words in the seventy-six respondents' titles. More than one of the words below may be present in a single title, and some respondents provided multiple titles.

Title Word	Respondent Titles	Title Word	Respondent Titles
Archive, Archives or Archivist	40	Curator	5
Library or Librarian	31	Manager	5
Assistant or Associate (as a noun)	7	Processing or Processor	5
Collections	6	Volunteer	4
Reference	6		

Job Demographics *continued*

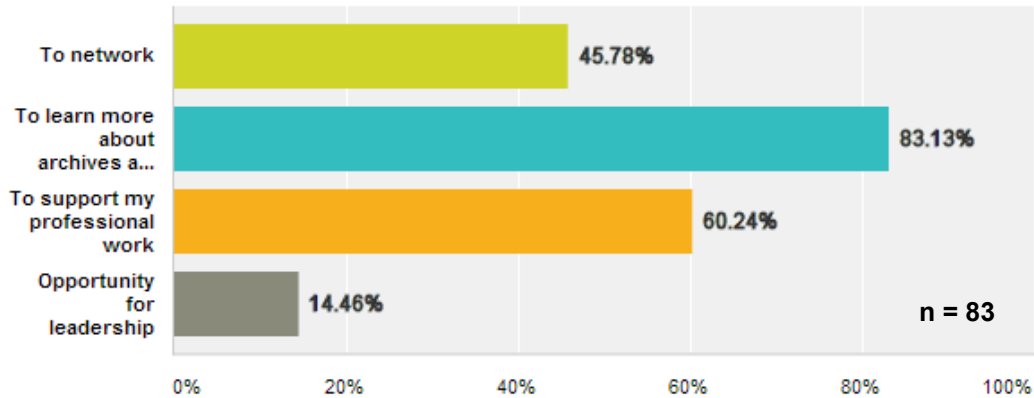**Does your work specialize in a particular area? Choose all that apply.**

As seen in the table below, by far the most frequently chosen specialization, selected by 51 of 78 respondents, was local history. Rare books and manuscripts and reference/outreach were the next most popular, possibly reflecting common academic archives structure. In addition to the provided responses, twenty comments provided more details about individual roles. Commenting respondents indicated programming and instruction roles; governmental or military focus; or art, architecture, or artifacts/objects work.

Specialization	Percentage
Art history	2.56%
Audiovisual materials	16.67%
Conservation/preservation	26.92%
Digital projects	32.05%
Electronic records	12.82%
Genealogy	24.36%
History of science	3.85%
Institutional history	25.64%
Local history	65.38%
Oral history	24.36%
Performing arts history	5.13%
Rare books and manuscripts	37.18%
Records management	14.10%
Reference/outreach	37.18%
Tribal history	2.56%
Western history	7.69%
Women's history	3.85%
No specialization	10.26%

n = 78

PLASC Membership

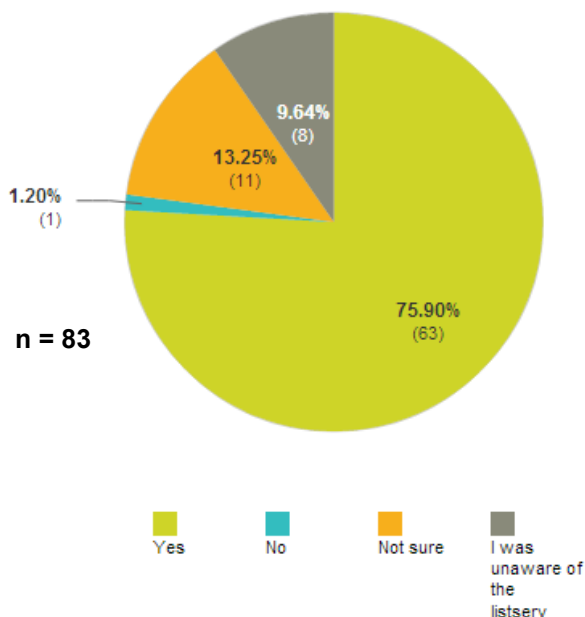## Why did you join PLASC? Choose all that apply.

Eighty-three percent of respondents belong to PLASC to learn more about archives and special collections in public libraries; professional work support and networking were both important to respondents. Only a few, twelve people, joined for leadership opportunities.

A small number of comments from respondents included past work in public library archives and recognition that public library challenges were frequently shared by other types of small repositories.
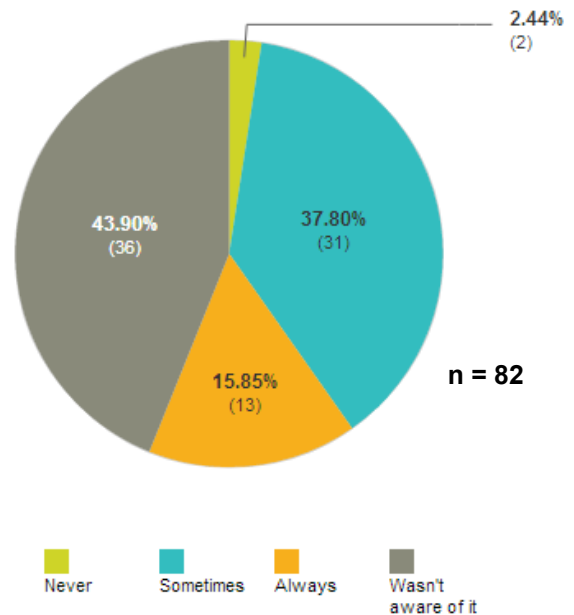
Are you subscribed to the PLASC listserv?

While a majority of respondents were on the listserv, nearly twenty-five percent were not sure or did not know about the listserv.
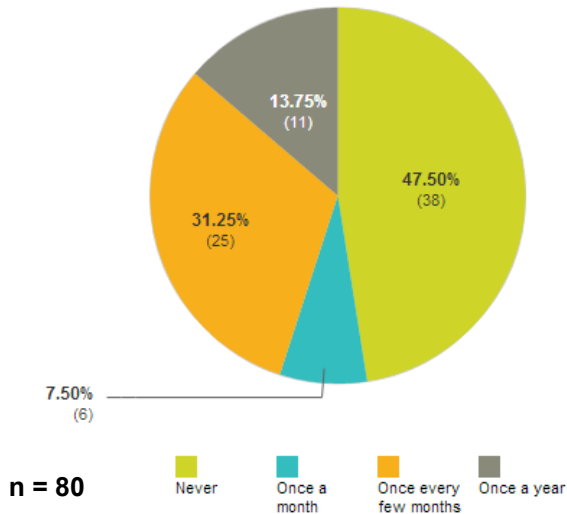

Do you read the PLASC newsletter?

Approximately half of the respondents read the newsletter occasionally or regularly.

PLASC Membership *continued*

How often do you visit the roundtable web page?

A little more than fifty percent of respondents visited the web page but most rarely do.

13.75% (11)
47.50% (38)
31.25% (25)
7.50% (6)

n = 80

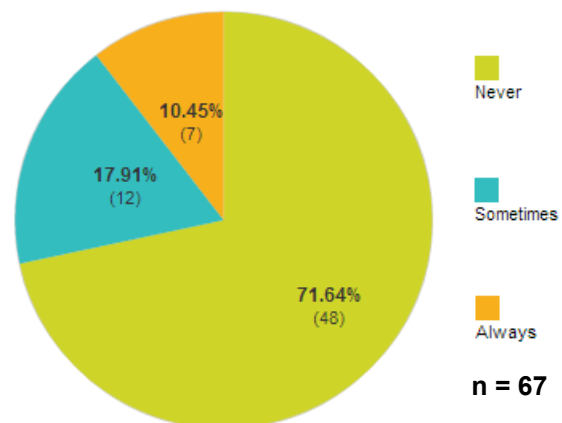Never | Once a month | Once every few months | Once a year

When you visit the roundtable web page, what information are you seeking? Choose all that apply.

Respondents who did go to the roundtable web page were most often looking for newsletters. Other sought-after information included job postings and general information.

Answer Choices	Responses
Annual reports	25% (10)
By-laws	2.5% (1)
Contact information	30% (12)
Election information	25% (10)
Newsletters	72.5% (29)
	n = 40

What else might you like to see on the web page? Choose all that apply.

Respondents were interested in all provided options. Comments indicated interest in career and development resources, as well as new developments in archives overall.

Answer Choices	Responses
A guide to online resources	79% (49)
FAQs	53.2% (33)
Member news	59.7% (37)
PLASC-related presentations from annual SAA meetings	79% (49)
	n = 62

Do you attend the PLASC business meeting during the annual SAA conference?

A considerable majority of respondents, nearly two-thirds, had not attended PLASC's business meeting at the annual SAA conference.

10.45% (7)
17.91% (12)
71.64% (48)

Never
Sometimes
Always

n = 67

Comments indicated most respondents were not able to afford SAA annual meeting attendance regularly or at all; others had roles in other roundtables that required attendance at other meetings.

PLASC Membership *continued*

Are there program topics you would like to see presented at future business meetings?

Respondents provided the following suggestions:

How to start an archives or special collections library (2)	Central index or access points to local collections
Advocacy for small institutions	Ideas on user inputs of national name authorities for local history and genealogy
Programming ideas for small institutions	Role of volunteers in public library archives
Resources for small or public institutions	Security in public library collections
Funding challenges and possible solutions	Networking with similar repositories
How archives and libraries can assist teachers in their classrooms	Members sharing what they're working on

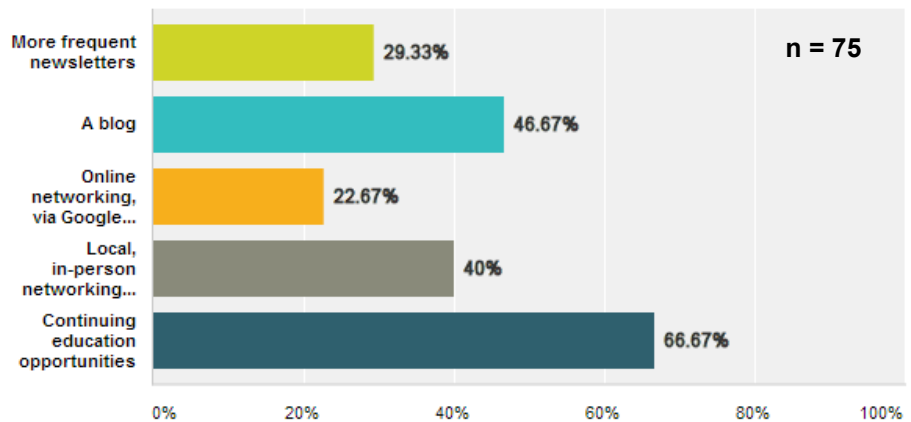**What do you most value about the PLASC roundtable?**

Respondents' comments, twenty-seven in all, indicated that those members valued the roundtable for three reasons:

1. Networking opportunities (11 responses)
2. Learning and information-sharing opportunities (10 responses)
3. Support and identification from like-minded librarians and institutions (12 responses)

In some responses, more than one reason was indicated; for example, several responses appreciated the opportunity to network with others and exchange ideas.

What would you be interested in seeing PLASC offer? Choose all that apply.

The most popular response was continuing education opportunities. Other popular responses included local, in-person networking events and online networking, via Google Hangouts or Skype.
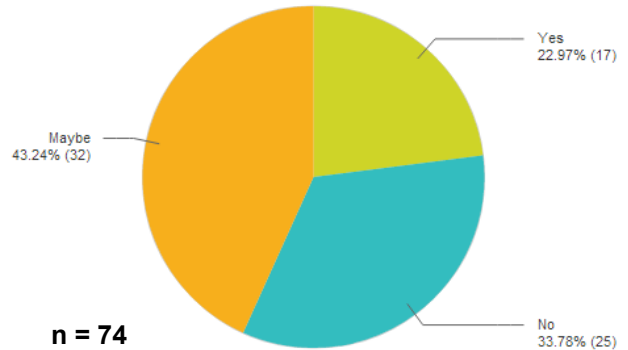

n = 75

More frequent newsletters	29.33%
A blog	46.67%
Online networking, via Google…	22.67%
Local, in-person networking…	40%
Continuing education opportunities	66.67%

PLASC Membership *continued*

Would you be interested in participating in SAA's mentoring program and mentoring someone interested in Public Library Archives/Special Collections work?

Nearly a quarter of the respondents reported an interest in participating in SAA's mentoring program. Nearly half of respondents were possibly interested in participating in the program, and thirty-four percent were not interested.

Comments indicated that some respondents have mentored through the program before. Other respondents were early in their career or SAA memberships and did not feel comfortable guiding others. A small number did not qualify due to lack of SAA membership.
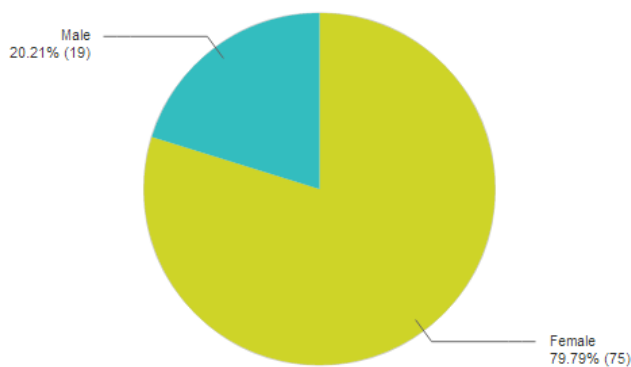
Yes
22.97% (17)

Maybe
43.24% (32)

No
33.78% (25)

n = 74

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

A handful of respondents had more feedback, including a request for more discussion on the listserv, starting with topic prompts; a stated desire to learn more from interactions with people working in the field; and two thank yous.
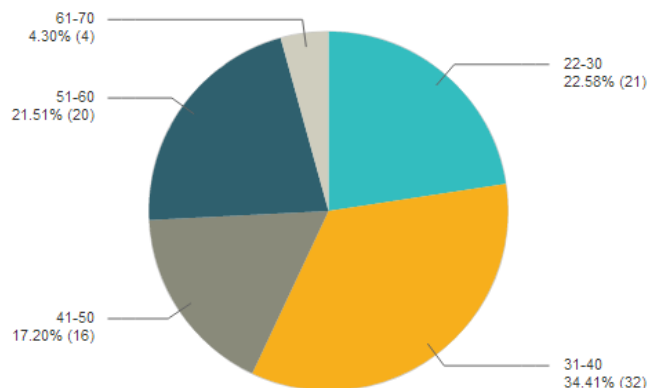
General Demographics

What is your gender?

Seventy-five of the ninety-four respondents were women.

Male
20.21% (19)

Female
79.79% (75)

n = 94

What is your age?

Fifty-three respondents were between the ages of 22 and 40. Thirty-six were between 41 and 70. No one was under 22 or over 70.

61-70
4.30% (4)

51-60
21.51% (20)

41-50
17.20% (16)

22-30
22.58% (21)

31-40
34.41% (32)

n = 93

General Demographics *continued*

In what part of the country do you live?

The Mid-Atlantic had the largest number of respondents, nearly 29%. The Mountain, New England, and South Atlantic regions were home to approximately 15% of respondents. Every region had at least three respondents. One respondent called Europe home.

Answer Choices	Responses
Pacific (Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington)	7.69% (7)
Mountain (Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Wyoming, Utah)	13.19% (12)
West South Central (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas)	7.69% (7)
East South Central (Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee)	3.30% (3)
South Atlantic (Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia)	13.19% (12)
West North Central (Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota)	3.30% (3)
East North Central (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin)	6.59% (6)
Mid-Atlantic (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York)	28.57% (26)
New England (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)	16.48% (15)
	n = 91