



2025 Board Survey Report for Councils



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Introduction

The Fall 2025 Council Board Survey captured perspectives from Council Directors, Board Chairs, and Board Members across 96% of councils, including both independent and affiliate councils. GOTR uses key survey findings to inform board-related resource development, opportunities for connection and support, and training initiatives to strengthen board governance. As a national nonprofit operating under a federated model, we take special care to ensure that every aspect of council leadership – including board- is set up for success. We know that strong, effective boards play a critical role in advancing our mission. When our boards are supported and empowered, our people are better equipped to lead, our councils are more resilient, and our collective ability to deliver on our mission is strengthened.

Board Survey History

The Council Board Survey is inspired by the *Leading with Intent* Survey administered by BoardSource, the recognized leader in nonprofit board leadership research, education, and support.

GOTR first administered this survey to council directors and board chairs in 2017, then again in 2021, and most recently in 2025. In the most recent survey, we expanded our audience to include all board members in order to elevate additional voices and perspectives across our network.

Independent vs. Affiliate Council Boards

This survey included responses from both independent and affiliate councils. While both operate under the Girls on the Run federated model, they have distinct board structures and responsibilities. Independent councils are autonomous 501(c)(3) organizations and are led by governing boards. Affiliate councils operate under a larger nonprofit umbrella (such as a YMCA or hospital system) and are supported by advisory boards focused on growth, fundraising, and community engagement, as governance authority resides with the parent organization's board. As a result, certain governance areas—such as council director compensation and evaluation and bylaw review—were not assessed for affiliate councils because they fall outside the scope of advisory board responsibility.

Board Survey Participation

156 councils—representing 95% of our network- completed the survey with 942 board members and 118 council directors. Board members accounted for 78% of respondents, reflecting strong engagement and a shared commitment to strengthening board leadership.

With an average of seven respondents per council, this level of participation provides a rich, representative snapshot of our collective experience and underscores the deep care and investment our councils have in maintaining healthy, effective boards.

At-a-Glance Summary

What Matters Most & What to Do Next

The Fall 2025 Council Board Survey offers a clear picture of where our boards are thriving—and where focused attention can strengthen board effectiveness, confidence, and impact. Overall, boards across council types demonstrate strong commitment to the mission, solid foundational governance, and a shared desire to grow into more strategic, active partners in advancing Girls on the Run.

Below are the most important takeaways and practical next steps boards may consider in the year ahead.

- **GOTR boards have strong** governance foundations, with variation in how consistently key practices are understood and applied.
- **Boards aspire to be more strategic and action-oriented**, signaling an opportunity to shift time and energy toward higher-level oversight, planning, and decision-making.
- **Clarity and consistency in roles, expectations, and governance practices vary**, with onboarding, training, and shared understanding identified as areas for improvement.
- **Boards are actively fostering connection and engagement**, with opportunities to expand more structured approaches to board development, feedback, and ongoing support.
- **Awareness and use of board resources vary widely across the network**, suggesting an opportunity to strengthen visibility, communication, and intentional use of existing tools and supports.

What Boards Can Do Next

Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, the findings suggest several priority focus areas. Boards may choose one or two to focus on based on their structure, readiness, and needs this year. Explore the [Board Resource Page](#) for helpful tools, or reach out to your [Regional Director](#) for guidance and support.

- **Increase clarity and shared understanding**
Document and communicate core governance practices (roles and expectations, evaluations, fundraising commitments, bylaw review cycles) so all board members know how the board operates and how they contribute.
- **Strengthen recruitment, onboarding, and development**
Ensure recruitment and orientation are shared governance responsibilities, providing clear onboarding, ongoing learning opportunities, and access to resources that support all board members.
- **Shift meetings and committees toward strategy**
Reduce reporting-only time and use agendas, dashboards, and clear goals to support activities, oversight, and decision-making.
- **Expand structured approaches to board engagement, mission connection and inclusive culture.**
Build in intentional practices—mission-focused orientation, reflection, recognition, feedback, and relationship-building—to foster belonging and sustained engagement.
- **Leverage GOTR board resources intentionally**
Explore available HQ tools, webinars, and supports that align with your board's focus areas, and ensure board chairs and members know how to access them.

Governance Strengths and Opportunities

Overall, councils demonstrate strong baseline governance capacity, with widespread adoption of formal bylaws or charters, consistent board meeting schedules, clear term structures, and consistent adherence to term limits. Boards are generally rated effective across key responsibilities, particularly in financial oversight, strategic planning, community engagement, and board recruitment. Meetings are most often viewed as effective. These strengths reflect a solid governance foundation. Opportunities remain to further enhance governance effectiveness and consistency, particularly by increasing the frequency of bylaw and charter review, strengthening board training and HR policy oversight, and shifting meeting content toward more strategic and action-oriented engagement. Additional opportunities include improving documentation of officer roles and expanding the use of board agreements to enhance clarity, accountability, and sustained board engagement.

Detailed Findings

Bylaws/Charters

- 90% of respondents indicated that their board has bylaws or a formal charter.
- 63% of respondents reported reviewing bylaws or charters either annually or every 2–3 years.

Board Size and Term Structure

- Board size ranged from **3 to 27 members**. Affiliate boards were slightly smaller on average.
- Similarly, limits on maximum board size varied substantially, though over half of respondents reported limits of 15 or fewer members.

Most respondents reported formal term limits, most commonly,

- 2-year terms with up to 3 renewals (40%) or
- 3-year terms with up to 2 renewals (29%)
- 4% reported having no term limits
- Among those reporting term limits, 91% indicated that their board adheres to them.

Meetings, Structure, and Roles

- 88% of respondents reported that boards meet at least 5 times annually, most commonly 5-6 times or 11-12 times annually.
- Affiliate board respondents reported meeting less frequently than independent respondents.
- Most respondents (65%) said their boards use a hybrid meeting format.
- Officer roles were nearly universal among independent councils
- Most respondents indicated that officer roles have written descriptions, but affiliate respondents were more likely to report no written descriptions exist.

Board Agreements or Commitment Documents

- Nearly all independent council respondents reported that Board Members receive and sign such documents.
- Only 64% of affiliate council respondents reported the same.

Agendas and Meeting Materials

- Across councils, Board Chairs and Council Directors were most often responsible for creating agendas and leading meetings.
- In affiliate councils, respondents reported that Board Chairs were less likely to be responsible for agenda creation and meeting leadership, while Council Directors were more involved.

Meeting Effectiveness

- Most respondents rated their board meetings as mostly to highly effective.
- When meetings were rated as minimally effective, the dominant themes were:
 - Meetings being more reporting-focused than action- or strategy-focused
 - Low board engagement

Board Responsibilities Effectiveness

Respondents rated boards as generally effective across responsibilities (means range 3.02–4.22, 5-point scale).

Highest-rated responsibilities included:

- Financial oversight
- Strategic planning
- Board engagement
- Community engagement/outreach
- Board recruitment

Lowest-rated responsibilities were:

- Bylaw/Charter review
- HR policies and procedures
- Board training

Board Financial Expectations Strengths and Opportunities

Boards show emerging strengths in supporting contributed income, with many councils—particularly independent ones—engaging in personal giving and sponsorships and setting modest, achievable Give/Get expectations where plans exist. At the same time, significant opportunities remain to improve clarity and consistency, as nearly half of respondents either lack a Give/Get plan or are unsure whether one exists, indicating uneven communication of financial expectations. Strengthening board understanding, formalizing fundraising roles, and expanding engagement are key opportunities to more fully leverage board capacity.

Detailed Findings

Presence and Structure of Give/Get Plans

- Overall, 54% of respondents reported a Give/Get plan; 33% were unsure.
- Board Members were more likely than Council Directors or Board Chairs to report being unsure whether their board has a Give/Get plan. However, uncertainty was reported across all roles, reinforcing the theme that board financial expectations may not be consistently communicated or reinforced.

Among boards with a Give/Get plan:

- 69% reported having an annual give minimum
- 46% reported having a get minimum

Level of Give/Get Expectations

- Give minimums were most commonly between \$1 and \$1,000. Get minimums were most commonly between \$100 and \$2,500. These findings suggest expectations are typically modest when set.

How Boards Support Contributed Income

Independent council respondents reported a **broader range of ways** boards support fundraising. The most commonly cited were:

- Personal gifts (86%)
- Sponsorships (85%)

Among affiliate councils, the most commonly cited were:

- Sponsorships (70%)
- Grants (50%)

Notably, 12% of affiliate council respondents reported that their board does not support raising contributed income at all, compared to 1% of independent council respondents.

Committee Utilization and Goals Strengths and Opportunities

Councils demonstrate a solid foundation in committee utilization, with over half reporting key standing committees such as finance, executive, governance, and development, and many also using committees—most commonly 5K committees—to support mission-related activities. Among councils with committees, most have established chairs and defined goals, objectives, and action plans, indicating purposeful structure and use. However, opportunities remain to further formalize committee leadership and clarify purpose. Expanding non-board participation on committees presents an additional opportunity to strengthen engagement and build future leadership capacity across councils.

Detailed Findings

Standing Committees

- Over half of respondents reported finance, executive, governance, and development committees.
- Committees were less commonly reported by affiliate council respondents.

Other Committees

- Over half of respondents reported having a 5K committee, making it the most common non-standing committee across councils.

Committee Structure and Goals

Among respondents who reported committees:

- 69% said all committees have chairs
- 61% said all committees have clear goals, objectives, and action plans
- A meaningful minority have not fully formalized committee leadership or purpose, representing a potential opportunity for improvement.
- Affiliate respondents were less likely than independent respondents to report having committees with chairs or clear goals, objectives, and action plans, consistent with broader patterns of lower formalization.

Non-Board Participation and Auxiliary Boards

- Half of respondents reported that non-Board Members participate on committees, suggesting that some councils use committees as engagement or capacity-building tools and an opportunity to expand this practice across the network.
- Auxiliary boards (young professional boards, junior boards, etc.) were not widely reported. Only 23% of respondents from independent councils indicated that they have an auxiliary board, and no affiliate council respondents reported having one.

Council Director Compensation Review Strengths and Opportunities

Note: Only independent councils responded to items related to Council Director compensation.

Councils show emerging strengths in executive compensation oversight, with over half of respondents reporting an annual Council Director compensation review process. However, the findings also reveal significant opportunities to strengthen governance rigor and transparency. A large proportion of respondents are unsure whether a review process exists or when compensation was last evaluated, and only one-third reported a review within the past two years. Limited use of available compensation data and benchmarking tools—coupled with low awareness of the National Candid Report—further highlights the need to formalize review practices, improve documentation, and increase board understanding of best practices to ensure fair, consistent, and market-informed compensation decisions.

Detailed Findings

Presence of an Annual Compensation Review Process

- 56% of respondents reported an annual process to review Council Director compensation.
- However, more than one-quarter of respondents reported being unsure whether such a process exists.

Timing of Compensation Review

- Despite 56% of respondents indicating that their board has an annual review process, only 34% reported that Council Director compensation had been reviewed within the past two years.
- Over half of respondents were unsure when compensation was last reviewed.
- Notably, 11% of Council Directors reported that their compensation has never been reviewed, highlighting a potential gap in governance practice.

Use of Compensation Data and Resources

- Only 21% of respondents reported using the National Candid Report available on the Council Portal.
- Approximately 70% of respondents were either unaware of or unsure about this resource.
- Uncertainty was especially high among Board Chairs (54%) and Board Members (79%), though even 28% of Council Directors reported uncertainty.
- In a follow-up open-ended question, 16% of respondents reported using market data (regional and/or industry comparisons) to set Council Director compensation.

Council Director Evaluation Strengths and Opportunities

Note: Only independent councils answered survey items related to Council Director evaluation.

Councils show moderate adoption of performance oversight practices, with most reporting that an annual Council Director performance review is conducted. However, substantial uncertainty remains across roles about whether reviews occur, indicating limited visibility and inconsistent implementation. Board turnover, time constraints, and competing priorities were mentioned as reasons boards did not conduct annual performance reviews. Exit interviews are rarely used and largely undefined, representing a missed opportunity for organizational learning and continuity. Strengthening the consistency, documentation, and communication of performance evaluations—along with formalizing exit interview processes—presents a key opportunity to improve governance effectiveness and leadership oversight.

Detailed Findings

Annual Performance Review of the Council Director

- 60% of respondents reported that their board conducts an annual performance review of the Council Director.
- More than a quarter of respondents were unsure whether such a review occurs.
- A sizable minority of both Council Directors and Board Chairs reported that no annual performance reviews are conducted.

Exit Interview Practices

- Only 24% of respondents reported that their board has an exit interview process in place for the Council Director role.

Board Evaluation Strengths and Opportunities

Boards show some commitment to self-assessment, with a majority reporting that board performance is reviewed regularly or as needed, most often through informal check-ins and surveys. These approaches suggest openness to feedback and reflection. However, one-quarter of boards do not evaluate their performance at all, and more formal methods—such as structured self-assessments or external evaluations—are used infrequently. Exit interviews with departing board members are uncommon, representing a missed opportunity for learning and improvement. Strengthening the consistency, formality, and transparency of board evaluation practices, including the use of exit interviews, is a key opportunity to enhance board effectiveness and accountability.

Detailed Findings

Frequency of Board Performance Evaluation

Overall, respondents reported varied approaches to evaluating board performance:

- 41% reported evaluating board performance annually or biennially
- 33% reported evaluating performance *as needed*
- 25% reported that their board does not review its own performance

Evaluation Methods

- Among respondents that reported board evaluations, the most common methods were informal check-ins (63%) and board surveys (62%). Self-assessments (44%) and external assessments (10%) were used less frequently.

Board Member Exit Interviews

Exit interviews with Board Members were uncommon:

- Approximately one-quarter of independent council respondents reported conducting exit interviews

Strategic Planning and Mission Advancement Markers Strengths and Opportunities

Councils demonstrate strong engagement in strategic planning, with the vast majority reporting having a strategic plan and regular planning cycles, supported by involvement from Council Directors and board leadership. Progress toward strategic goals is commonly monitored through board reporting, and most councils report some level of alignment with GOTR HQ's Strategic Map. At the same time, opportunities remain to strengthen consistency and shared understanding, as uncertainty exists regarding planning frequency, alignment with the national strategy, and use of Mission Advancement Markers. Expanding board engagement in reviewing Mission Advancement Markers, clarifying alignment expectations, and enhancing the use of accessible data visualization tools—such as dashboards and graphs—would further support effective oversight, strategic alignment, and mission impact.

Detailed Findings

Strategic Planning Presence and Frequency

- Overall, 88% of respondents reported that their council has a strategic plan.
- Most respondents reported that their strategic planning is conducted annually or every 2-3 years but a sizable minority was unsure.

Strategic Planning Development

- Nearly all respondents (89%) reported that the Council Director is involved in developing the strategic plan.
- Just over half (55%) reported involvement from the Executive Committee.
- Approximately 32% of respondents reported having a Strategic Planning Committee.

Monitoring and Alignment of Strategic Plans

- Nearly half of respondents reported monitoring progress toward strategic goals through regular progress reports at board meetings (48%).
- Only 4% reported not monitoring or evaluating progress toward the strategic plan. While this is a small percentage, it is notable given the importance of ongoing oversight.

Alignment with GOTR HQ's Strategic Map

- 63% reported their council's strategic plan is closely aligned
- 13% reported it is somewhat aligned
- Nearly one-quarter reported being unsure

Board Use of Mission Advancement Markers

- Just over half of respondents said their board reviews and assesses the GOTR Mission Advancement Markers.
- Twelve percent reported that their board does not review MAMs
- Almost a third (32%) were unsure,

Board Experience Strengths and Opportunities

The findings indicate a strong foundation of board-related experience and confidence among respondents, with most reporting several years of nonprofit board exposure and feeling well-equipped to work with their current board. However, those who felt less prepared identified consistent opportunities for improvement, particularly around clearer articulation of roles and expectations, stronger onboarding and training, and greater access to resources and ongoing support—especially in financial management and fund development. These patterns suggest that perceived preparedness is driven less by experience alone and more by clear structures, shared expectations, and intentional capacity-building efforts, presenting a key opportunity to strengthen overall board effectiveness.

Detailed Findings

Nonprofit Board Experience

- Overall, 62% of respondents reported having at least three years of nonprofit board experience; however, responses may reflect both prior experience and current service on a GOTR council board.

Perceived Preparedness to Work With the Current Board

- Across all respondents, 78% reported feeling mostly to very equipped to work with their current board.

Board Recruitment Process Strengths and Opportunities

Councils demonstrate a strong foundation in board recruitment, with most reporting a structured process that includes selection, interviews, and onboarding. Interviews are nearly universal, and many councils redirect candidates who are not a board fit to other meaningful volunteer or committee roles, supporting broader engagement. However, opportunities remain to strengthen clarity, communication, and governance ownership of recruitment. A clearer understanding is needed that board recruitment is a core governance responsibility, led by the board and carried out as a shared partnership, with the Council Director in a supportive—not primary—role. Strengthening this distinction and the deployment of more proactive, diverse recruitment strategies would enhance board accountability, engagement, and long-term effectiveness.

Detailed Findings

Presence of a Structured Recruitment Process

- Overall, 78% of respondents reported that their board implements a structured recruitment process that includes selection, election, orientation, and onboarding of new Board Members

Responsibility for Board Recruitment

- Over half reported that the Council Director is responsible
- 38% cited the Board Chair
- 31% cited a specific committee

Timing of Recruitment

- A majority of respondents (59%) reported recruiting Board Members on an ongoing or as-needed basis, while 29% recruit annually.

Connecting Candidates to Other Opportunities

- Approximately 63% of respondents reported that their boards help connect interested candidates who are not a good fit for board service to other volunteer opportunities.

Onboarding and Orientation Strengths and Opportunities

Most councils report a structured orientation for new board members, indicating a strong foundation in onboarding practices. However, a key opportunity remains to ensure all board members receive a consistent, effective orientation. This governance best practice supports long-term success and engagement. Additional opportunities include clarifying responsibility for monitoring required training and reinforcing that board orientation is a shared governance responsibility, led in partnership by board officers or committee members and the Council Director.

Detailed Findings

Structured Orientation for New Board Members

- Overall, 77% of respondents reported that their board has a structured orientation for new Board Members.

Monitoring Completion of Required Training

- Less than half of respondents reported that their board monitors completion of HQ-assigned training for new Board Members (*Girls on the Run Staff and Volunteer Orientation*).

Building Relationships and Fostering Belonging Strengths and Opportunities

Boards demonstrate meaningful strengths in fostering belonging through visible, shared practices, including recognizing achievements, sharing mission moments, incorporating team-building activities into meetings, and hosting social events. Opportunities exist to deepen individual connection and long-term engagement by expanding less commonly used practices, such as regular check-ins and mentorship or buddy programs for new board members.

Detailed Findings

Common Relationship-Building Practices

Respondents most often reported that their boards foster belonging by:

- Taking time to acknowledge achievements or commemorate milestones (69%)
- Sharing mission moments at board meetings (63%)
- Incorporating team-building or get-to-know-you activities into board meetings (57%)
- Organizing social events outside of board meetings (57%)

Board Development Strengths and Opportunities

Findings indicate emerging strengths in board development, with some councils offering training and learning opportunities through GOTR HQ resources, networking events, and Summit. Interest from Board Chairs suggests readiness to further invest in board development if appropriate resources and support are available. However, overall access to professional development is limited, with most boards not offering consistent opportunities and high levels of uncertainty about what development exists. These findings point to an opportunity to expand, formalize, and more clearly communicate board development offerings, ensure equitable access across the full board, and broaden learning beyond internal or network-based experiences to strengthen board effectiveness and engagement.

Detailed Findings

Availability of Board Development Opportunities

- Only 27% of respondents reported that their boards provide professional development or training opportunities to enhance board-related skills.

Types of Professional Development Provided

Among respondents who reported professional development, the most common opportunities were:

- Resources and training from GOTR HQ (73%)
- Networking events (49%)
- GOTR HQ Summit (46%)

Board Culture Strengths and Opportunities

Boards demonstrate strong cultural foundations through common practices that recognize contributions and foster inclusion, such as celebrating achievements, expressing appreciation, encouraging open dialogue, promoting active listening, and prioritizing diverse representation. These practices support a positive, mission-aligned board environment. However, opportunities remain to build a more consistent, shared culture of appreciation and inclusion. Some boards report limited or no recognition practices, and responsibility for appreciation is often concentrated with the Council Director rather than shared among board leadership.

Detailed Findings

Board Recognition and Appreciation

The most commonly reported ways boards recognize and show appreciation to Board Members were:

- Recognition or celebration of achievements (60%)
- Personal thank-you notes (55%)
- Public recognition (e.g., newsletters, social media) (43%)
- Notably, 9% of respondents reported that their boards do not recognize or show appreciation to Board Members at all.

Less commonly reported practices included:

- Gifts (30%)
- Awards or certificates for tenure or service completion (18%)
- Gratitude or appreciation events (17%)

Fostering an Inclusive Board Culture

The most commonly reported practices for fostering inclusivity were:

- Fostering open dialogue (78%)
- Promoting active listening (68%)
- Prioritizing diverse board representation (63%)
- Celebrating achievements and milestones (61%)

Less commonly reported practices included:

- Administering feedback surveys (26%)
- Hosting open forums or discussions (26%)
- Creating board buddy or mentorship programs (26%)
- Providing a variety of training or professional development opportunities (16%)

Mission and Core Values Strengths and Opportunities

Boards demonstrate strong alignment with the organization's mission and values through ongoing discussion, decision-making, and experiential engagement, such as participating in events and volunteering. Many describe their current culture as engaged, supportive, and passionate. Opportunities exist to deepen and formalize this alignment by expanding structured, reflective practices—such as mission-focused orientation, written materials, retreats, and self-assessment—and by ensuring equitable access to mission-connecting experiences across all board roles. Differences between current and desired board identity highlight a shared aspiration to move from primarily supportive engagement toward more strategic, active, and intentional governance, with independent and affiliate councils emphasizing distinct but complementary priorities for growth.

Detailed Findings

How Boards Develop Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Respondents were asked to select their top three ways boards develop a sense of mission, vision, and core values among members.

The most commonly selected practices were:

- Incorporating mission and values into decision-making and policy discussions (52%)
- Reviewing and discussing mission and vision statements during board meetings (47%)
- Attending organization-led events or community outreach activities (41%)
- Receiving regular leadership updates on alignment with mission, vision, and values (40%)

Less commonly selected practices included:

- Participation in strategic planning retreats or workshops (33%)
- Receiving written materials highlighting core values in action (30%)
- Mission-focused orientation sessions for new Board Members (29%)
- Mission-focused board self-assessment or evaluation exercises (10%)

Opportunities to Connect to the Mission

When asked about opportunities provided for Board Members to connect to the mission, nearly all respondents selected:

- Volunteering at the 5K (99%)
- Volunteering at events (94%)
- Attending site visits (82%)

Board Identity: Current vs. Desired State

When asked to describe their boards using three adjectives, respondents' descriptions of the current state most often included *engaged*, *supportive*, and *passionate*. Descriptions of the desired state shifted toward more action-oriented and strategic qualities, most commonly *engaged*, *strategic*, and *active*.

Board Diversity Strengths and Opportunities

Boards report moderate satisfaction with racial and ethnic diversity and demonstrate strength in cultivating diversity across multiple dimensions, including professional background, age, and lived experience. Key opportunities to enhance board equity, representation and alignment with organizational values include strengthening recruitment strategies, clarifying shared definitions of diversity, and aligning board composition efforts with diversity-related Mission Advancement Markers

Detailed Findings

Satisfaction With Racial and Ethnic Diversity

- Overall, 57% of respondents reported being satisfied with the racial and ethnic diversity of their board, and 19% reported being dissatisfied.

How Diversity Is Experienced

When asked how diversity shows up on their board, respondents most commonly selected:

- Professional background (96%)
- Age (89%)
- Lived experiences (81%)
- Race and ethnicity (70%)

Board-Specific Resources and Support Strengths and Opportunities

Awareness and use of board-specific resources remain relatively low across councils, with many respondents—particularly Board Members—reporting limited familiarity with available tools and supports. Notably, satisfaction among those who do use these resources is consistently high, indicating that the content is relevant and effective once accessed. This gap presents a significant opportunity to increase impact by improving awareness, visibility, and intentional promotion of existing resources. Many of these tools directly support the key opportunities identified throughout the survey—including strengthening governance clarity, board engagement, strategic planning, fundraising capacity, and role understanding—suggesting that broader and more targeted use could meaningfully advance overall board effectiveness across council types.

Detailed Findings

Overall Use and Awareness of Board Resources

- Across all board resources, reported use ranged from 18% to 51%.
- At the same time, lack of awareness was high; between 29% and 51% of respondents reported being unaware of specific board supports, depending on the resource.

Boardroom Newsletter

- Just over half of respondents reported receiving the Boardroom Newsletter, making it the most widely used board-specific resource. Council Directors were more likely to report receiving the newsletter; more than one-third of Board Members were unaware of it.

Relationship With Regional Directors

- Fewer than half of respondents reported having a current relationship with their Regional Director, and 45% were unaware this was an option.

Board Chair Training and Preparation Kit

Use of the Board Chair Training and Preparation Kit was relatively limited:

- 34% reported using the resource
- 38% were unaware of it

Board Fundamentals Webinar Series

Use of the Board Fundamentals Webinar Series was similarly low:

- 32% reported viewing the series
- 29% were unaware of it

Board Resource Hub

- Use of the Board Resource Hub was low among Board Members.
- Lack of awareness of the Board Resource Hub was high, particularly with Board Chairs 25% and Board Members 40%.

Strategic Planning Toolkit / Webinar

- Use of the Strategic Planning Toolkit/Webinar (24%) was low despite high satisfaction (82%) among users. Although lack of awareness was high (34%), many respondents reported being aware of the resource but not using it (42%).

Affiliate Best Practices Webinar

- Awareness (51% were unaware) and use (18%) of the Affiliate Best Practices Webinar were low, though satisfaction (75%) among users was positive.

Training Interests and Delivery Preferences

Across respondents, the most desired training topics were:

- Fundraising (75%)
- Board engagement (56%)
- Strategic planning (39%)
- Recruitment (38%)
- Roles and responsibilities (36%)
- Financial oversight (31%)

Affiliate council respondents showed different priorities, with more interest in engagement, strategic planning, recruitment, roles and responsibilities, and diversity and inclusion, and less interest in fundraising and finance—consistent with advisory board roles.

Recommended Focus Areas

The following insights point to several areas where boards may choose to focus their attention over the coming year—based on their unique context, structure, and readiness. Each offers an opportunity to strengthen governance while supporting connection, clarity, and shared leadership. Explore the [Board Resource Page](#) for helpful tools, or reach out to your [Regional Director](#) for guidance and support.

#1 Increase clarity and shared understanding

Taking time to clearly outline roles, expectations, evaluations, and financial responsibilities can help reduce uncertainty and build a stronger sense of shared accountability across the board.

#2 Strengthen onboarding, recruitment, and development

Strengthening these board-led governance functions creates intentional pathways for learning, mentorship, and leadership continuity—supporting both current members and those stepping into service.

#3 Shift meetings and committees toward strategy

Boards may benefit from shifting more energy toward strategic thinking by setting clearer goals, designing more action-oriented meetings, and aligning efforts with strategic plans and Mission Advancement Markers.

#4 Expand structured approaches to board engagement, mission connection and inclusive culture

Prioritizing structured reflection, relationship-building practices, and shared responsibility for recognition and belonging can strengthen engagement and help every member feel connected to the mission.

#5 Leverage GOTR board resources intentionally

Ensuring board chairs and members are aware of—and supported in using—available tools, trainings, and resources can help address common governance challenges and reinforce effective, confident leadership.

Together, these focus areas offer an encouraging path forward. By building on the many strengths already present across the network and choosing a few intentional areas to prioritize, boards can continue to grow in confidence, connection, and effectiveness. Even small shifts can create meaningful momentum, supporting more joyful, strategic, and purpose-driven board leadership—and strengthening our collective ability to show up for girls and communities in powerful ways.

Appendix

Survey Participation

Overall Participation by Role and Council Type

	Council Directors	Board Chairs	Board Members	Total
All Councils	118 11%	119 11%	823 78%	1,060 100%
Independent Councils	107 11%	112 11%	772 78%	991 100%
Affiliate Councils	11 16%	7 10%	51 74%	69 100%

Council-Level Participation

- 156 of 163 councils (96%) had at least one respondent.
- Among participating councils, the number of respondents ranged from 1 to 17, with a mean and median of 7 respondents per council.

	Councils Invited	Councils Participated	Participation Rate
All Councils	163	156	96%
Independent Councils	143	140	98%
Affiliate Councils	20	16	80%

Council Representation by Role

	Council Directors Responding	Board Chairs Responding	At least 1 Board Member Responded
All Councils	118 72%	119 73%	148 91%
Independent Councils	107 75%	112 78%	134 94%
Affiliate Councils	11 55%	7 35%	14 70%

Survey Completion Rates

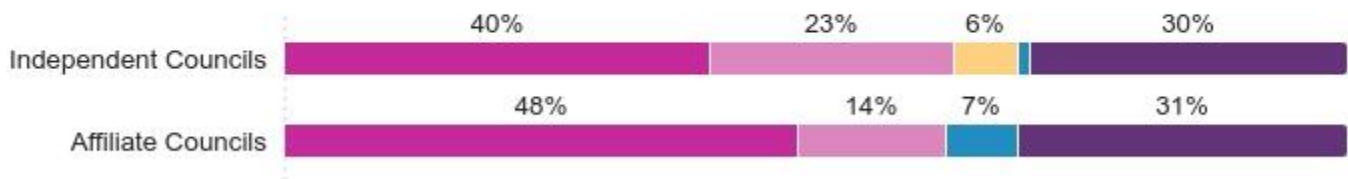
The survey completion rate is the percentage of people who start a survey and complete it. Industry standards generally consider completion rates of 50-64% acceptable, 65-79% very good, and 80%+ excellent. The lower completion rates among affiliate council respondents mean that as the survey progresses, affiliate council perspectives are disproportionately missing from the data.

	Council Directors	Board Chairs	Board Members	Total
All Councils	111 94%	107 90%	661 80%	879 83%
Independent Councils	104 97%	102 91%	623 80%	829 84%
Affiliate Councils	7 64%	5 71%	38 75%	50 72%

Governance

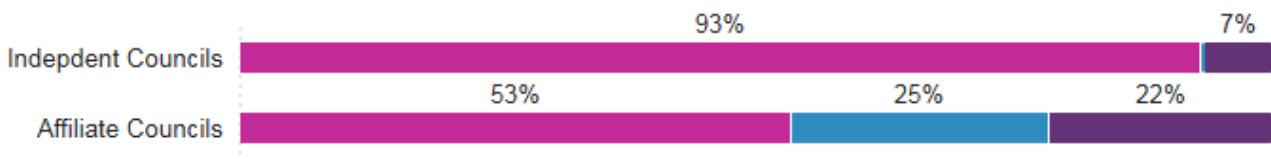
Bylaw/Charter Review Frequency

■ Annually
 ■ Every 2-3 years
 ■ At intervals greater than 3 years
 ■ Never
 ■ Unsure



Does your board have bylaws/a charter?

■ Yes
 ■ No
 ■ Unsure

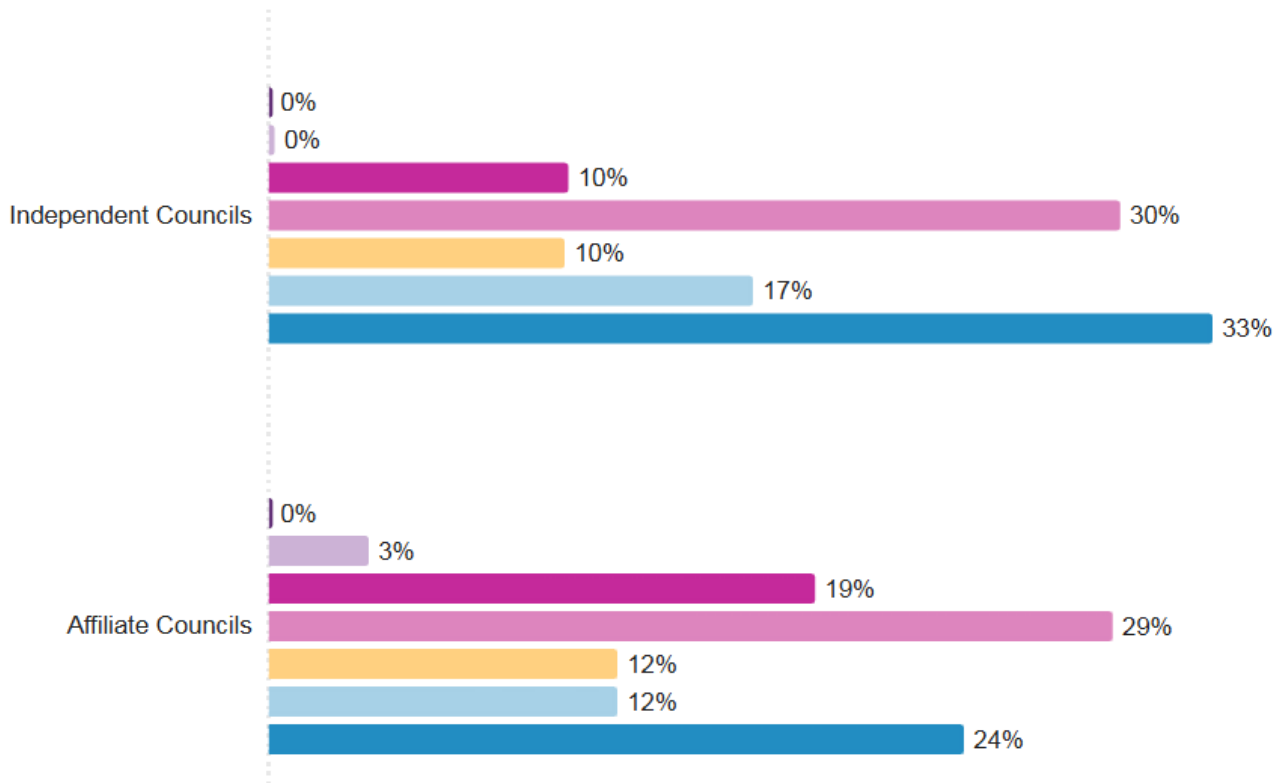


2025 Board Survey Report for Councils



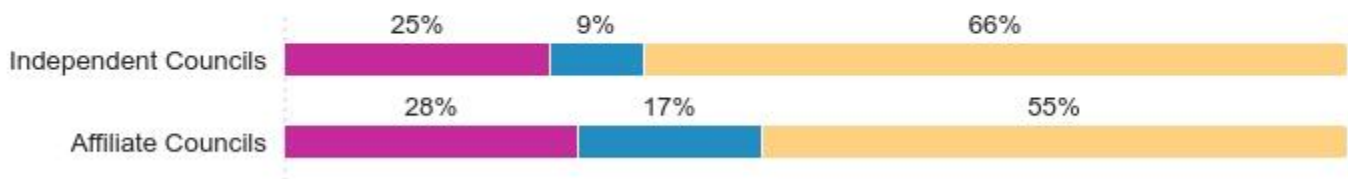
How many board meetings do you typically hold annually?

0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8 9-10 11-12



In what format are your board meetings typically held?

In-person Virtual Combination of both in-person and virtual meetings

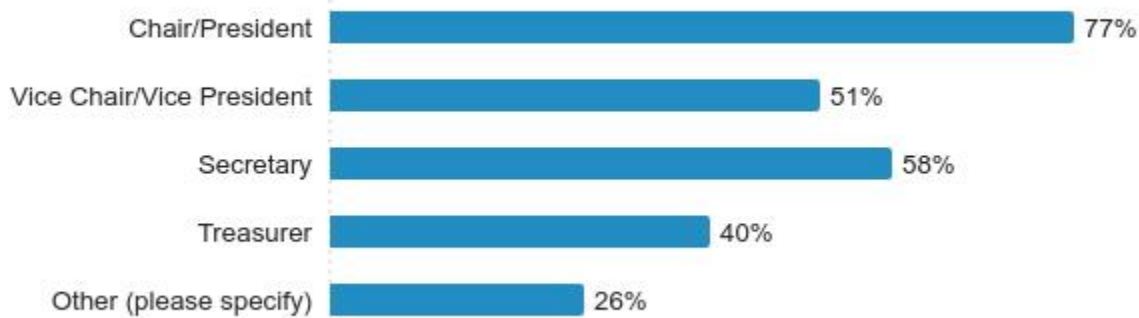


Which of the following officer positions does your board offer? Select all that apply.

Independent Councils

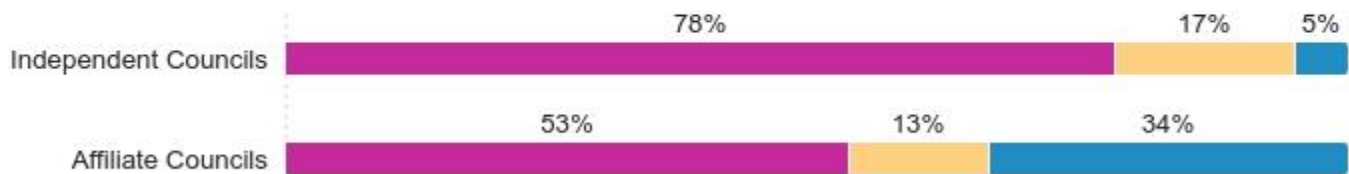


Affiliate Councils



Do board members have written position descriptions for each position?

- Yes, all positions have written descriptions.
- Some but not all positions have written descriptions.
- No, no positions have written descriptions.



Do your board members receive and sign a board agreement or commitment document?

Yes No Unsure



Which of the following describe who creates the board agenda? Select all that apply.

Independent Councils

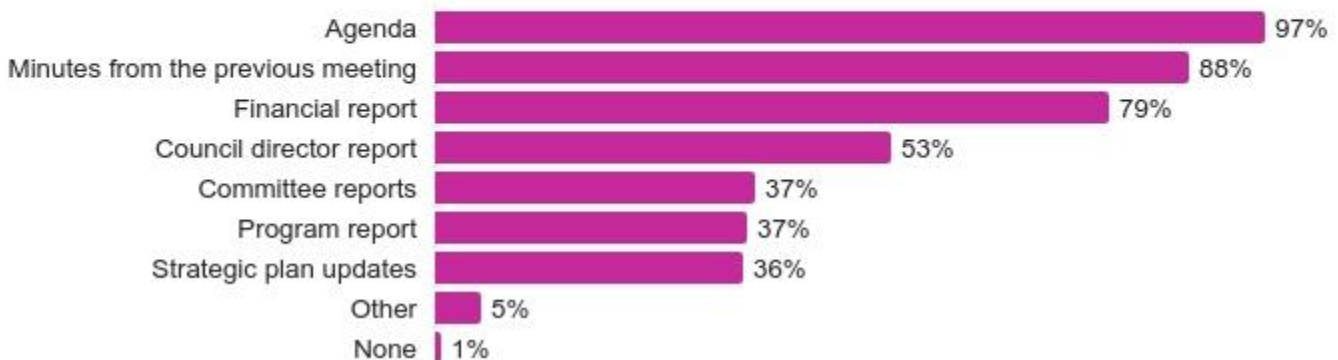


Affiliate Councils

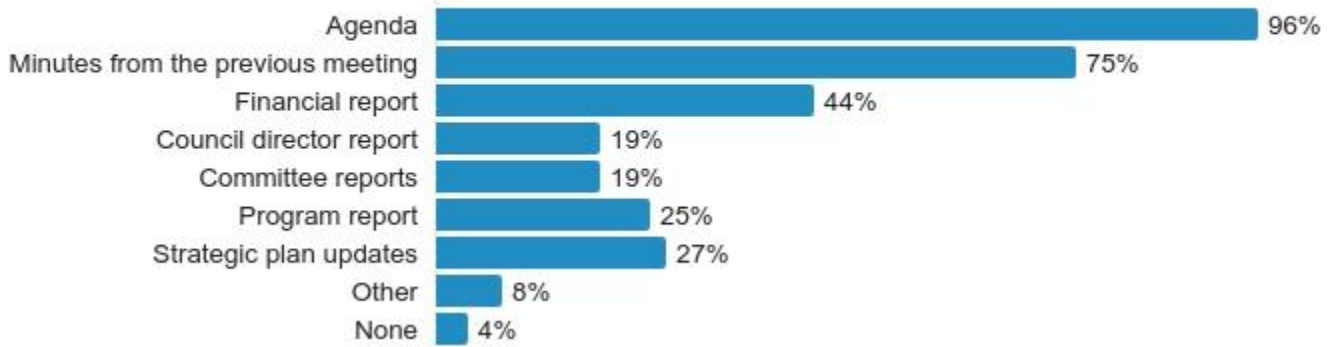


What materials/communications do board members receive in advance of board meetings? Select all that apply.

Independent Councils:

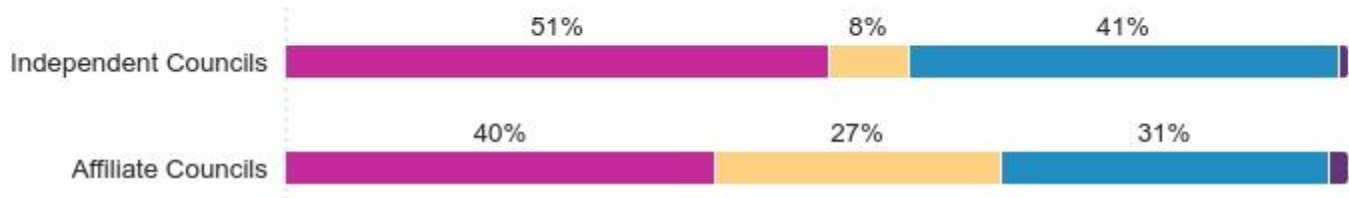


Affiliate Councils



Who leads the board meetings?

■ Board Chair
 ■ Council Director
 ■ Board Chair and Council Director jointly
 ■ Other (please specify)



How would you rate the effectiveness of board meetings?

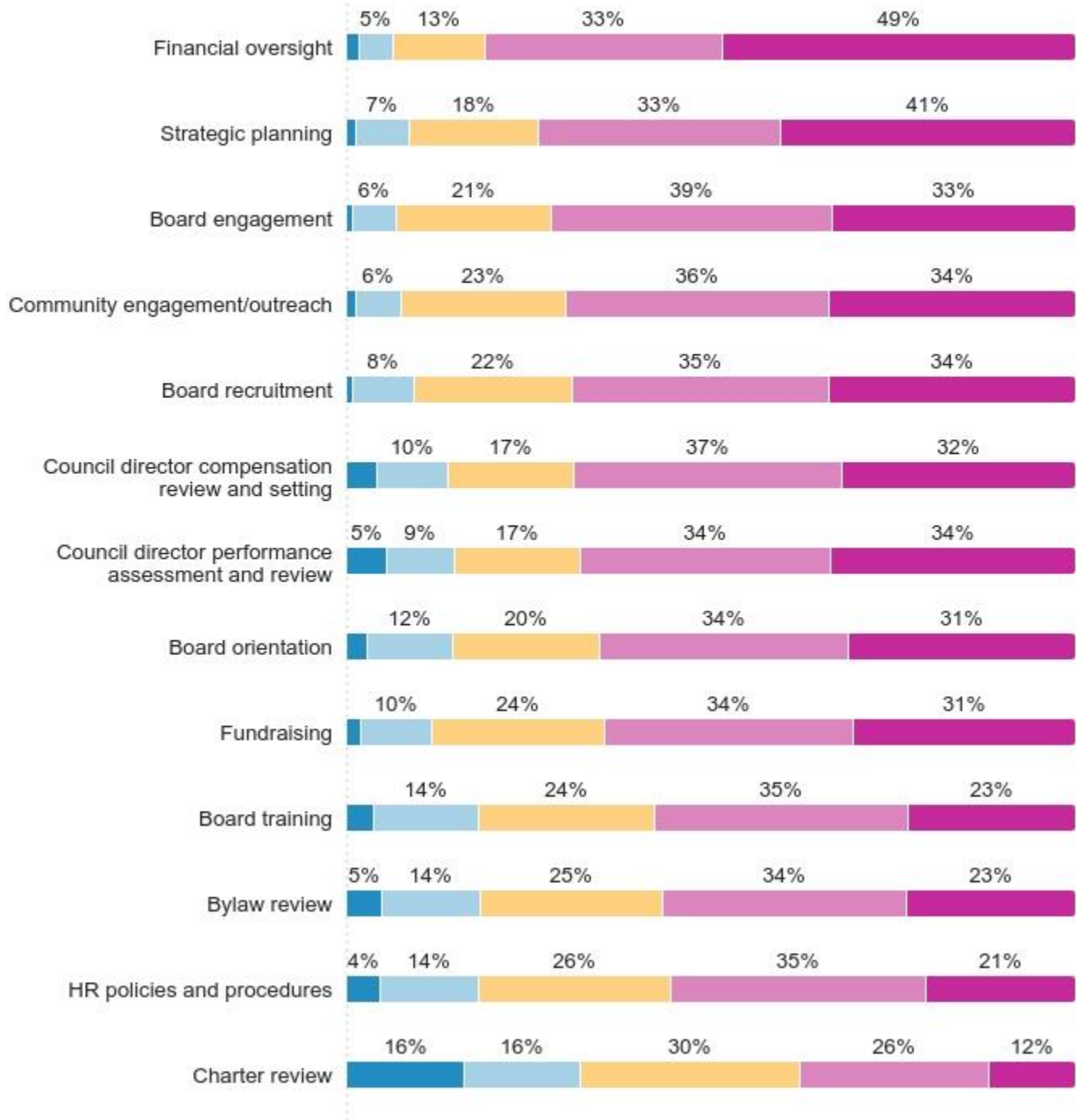
■ Not at all effective
 ■ Minimally effective
 ■ Moderately effective
 ■ Mostly effective
 ■ Highly effective



Rate the effectiveness of your board on the following board responsibilities.

928 Responses

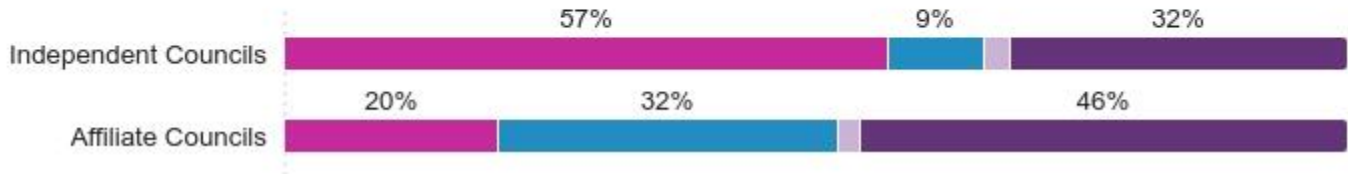
■ Not at all effective
 ■ Minimally effective
 ■ Moderately effective
 ■ Mostly effective
 ■ Highly effective



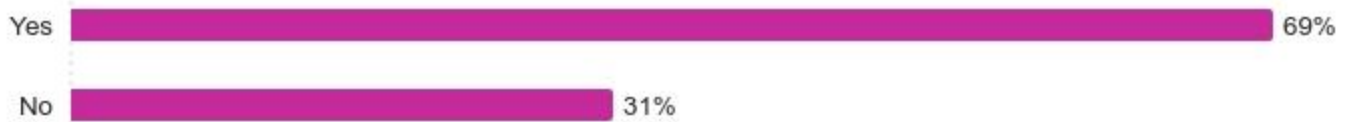
Board Financial Expectations

Does your board have a Give/Get plan?

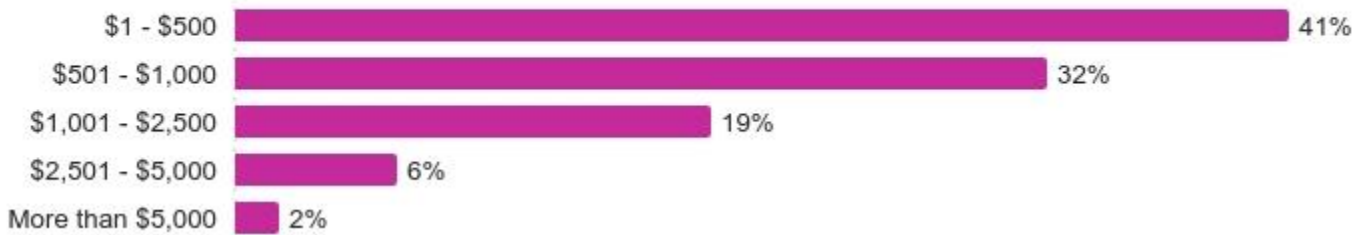
■ Yes
 ■ No
 ■ Other (please specify)
 ■ Unsure



Do you have an annual "give" minimum?



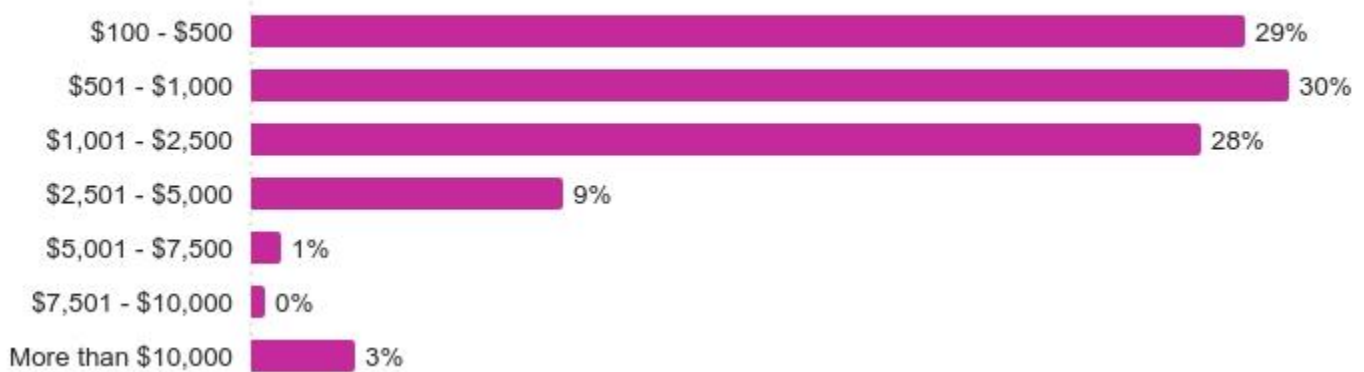
What is the annual "give" minimum?



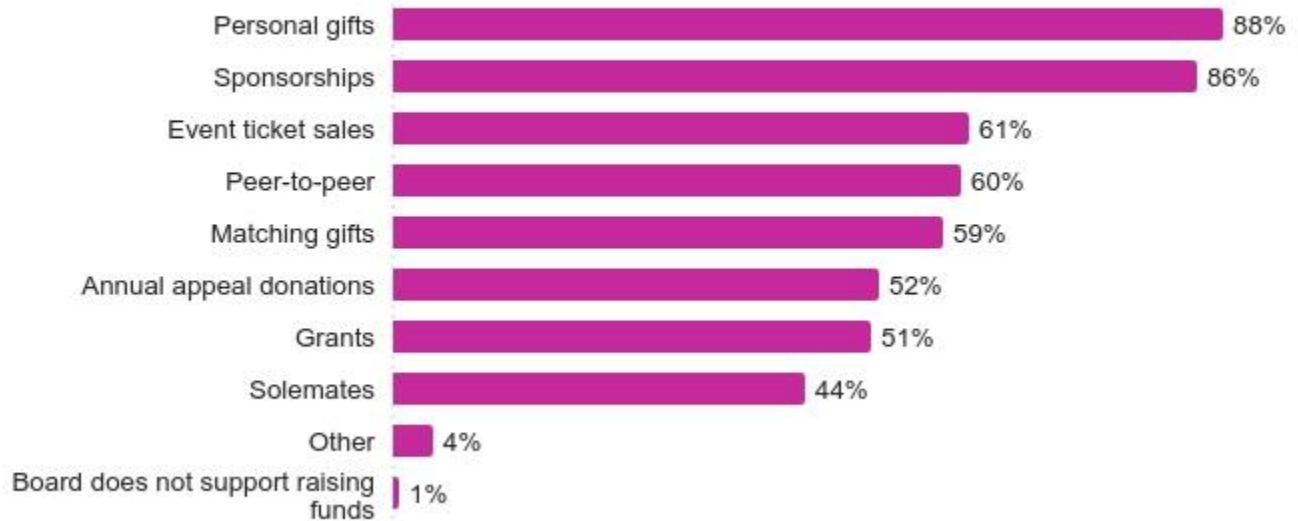
Do you have an annual "get" minimum?



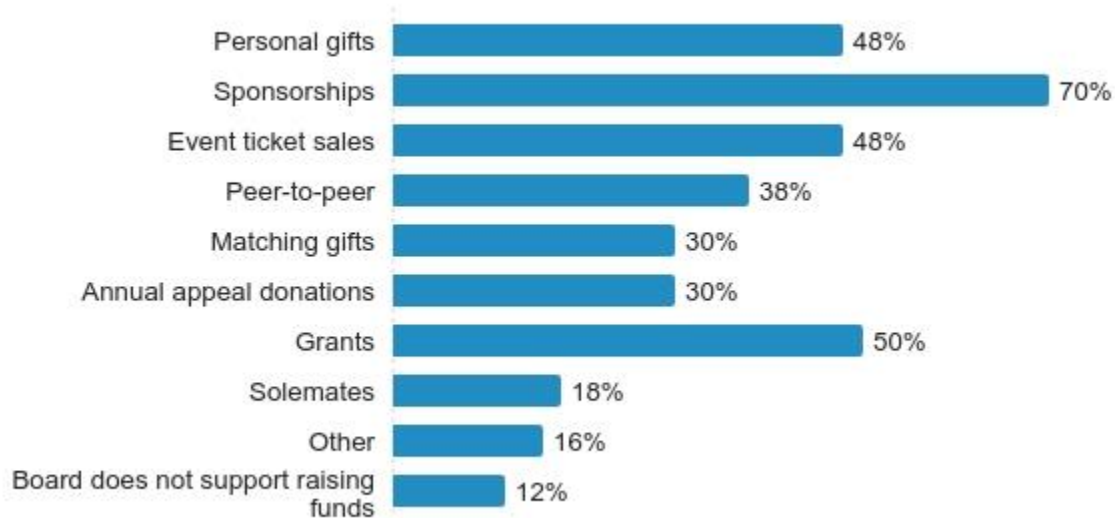
What is the annual "get" minimum?



In what ways do board members support raising contributed income? Select all that apply.
Independent Councils



Affiliate Councils



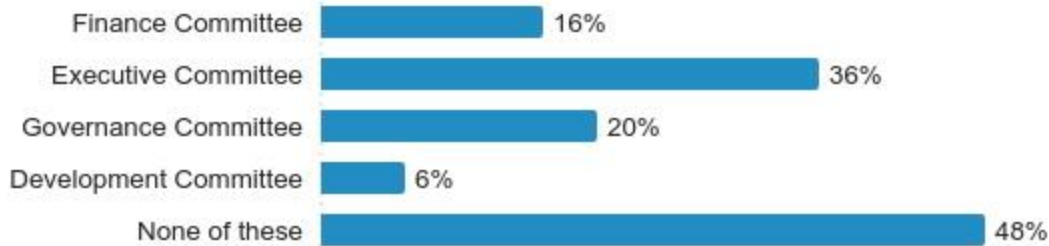
Committee Utilization

Which standard non-profit board committees does your board use? Select all that apply.

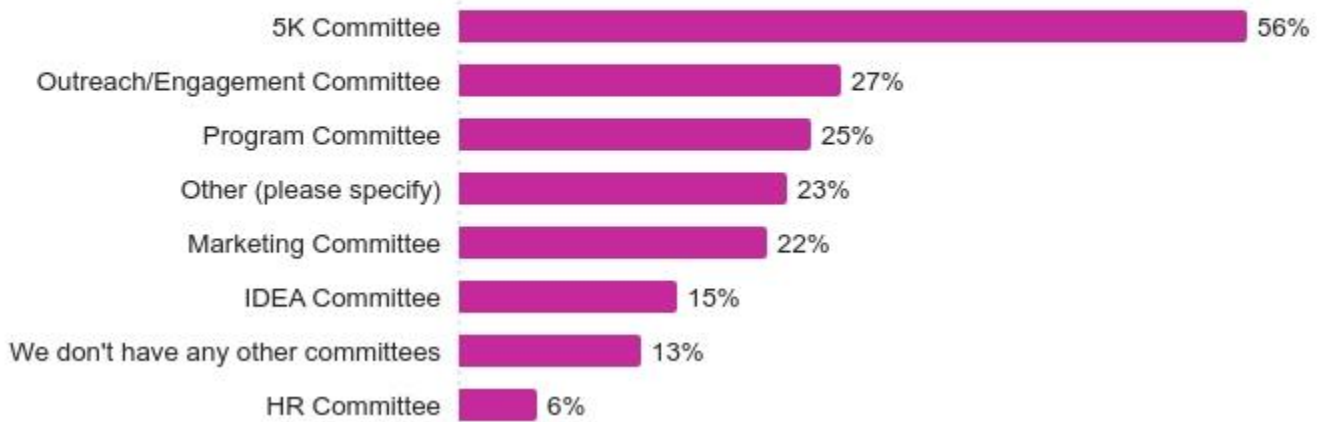
Independent Councils



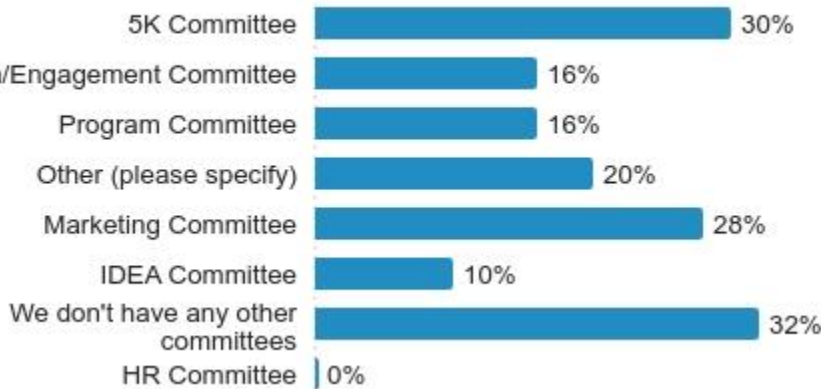
Affiliate Councils



What additional committees does your board have? Select all that apply.
Independent Councils

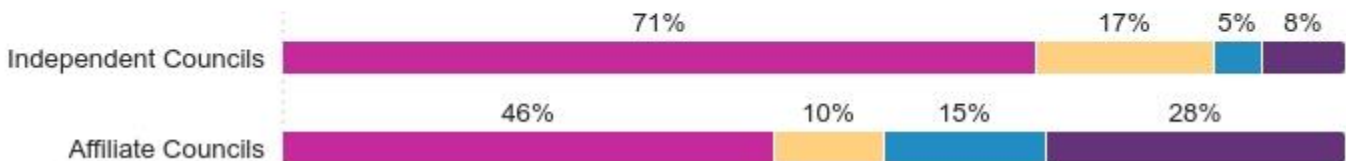


Affiliate Councils



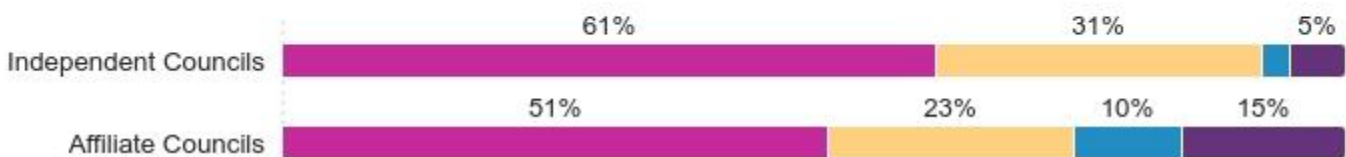
Do your committees have committee chairs?

■ Yes, all our committees
 ■ Some but not all our committees
 ■ No, none of our committees
 ■ Unsure



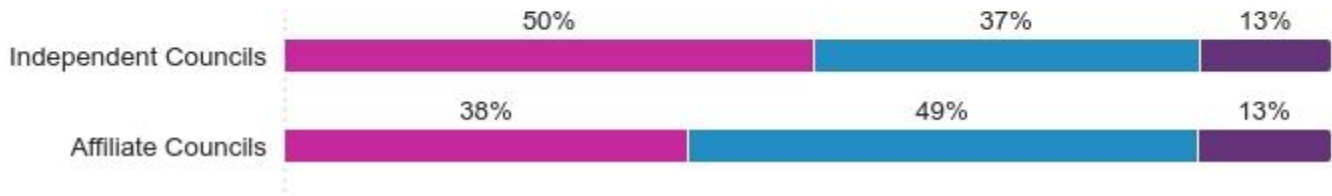
Do your committees have clear goals, objectives, and action plans?

■ Yes, all our committees
 ■ Some but not all committees
 ■ No, none of our committees
 ■ Unsure



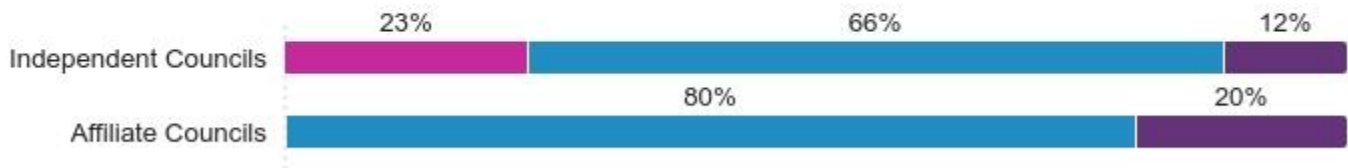
Do non-board members participate on committees?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure



Does your board have an auxiliary board?

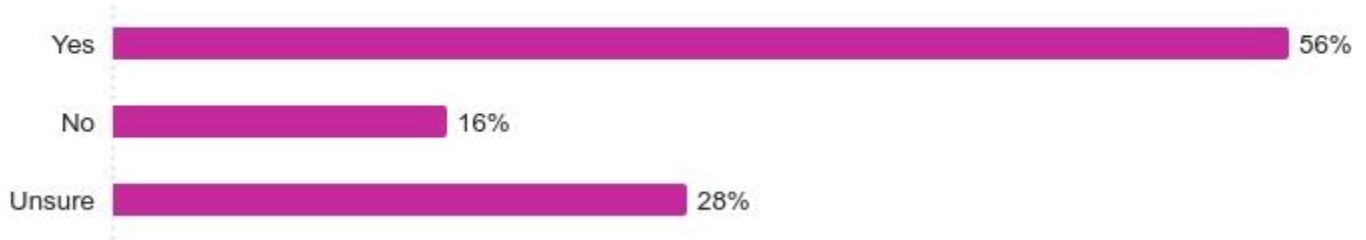
■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure



Council Director Compensation Review

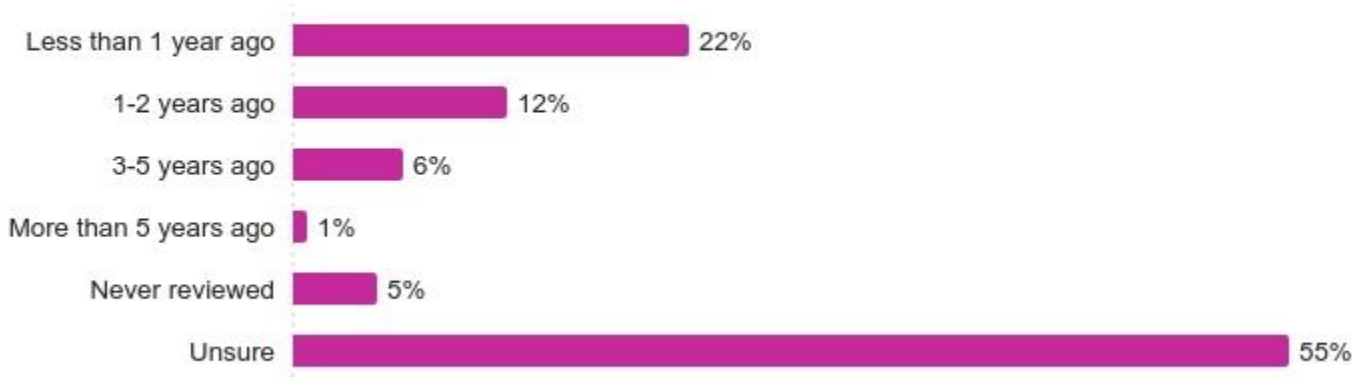
Does your board have an annual process to review Council Director compensation?

842 Responses



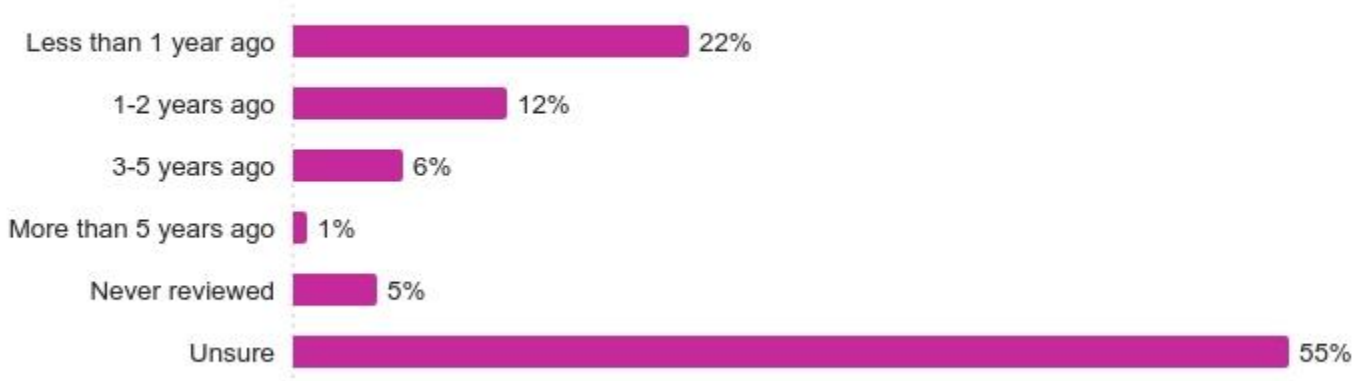
How long has it been since the CD's compensation was last reviewed?

366 Responses



How long has it been since the CD's compensation was last reviewed?

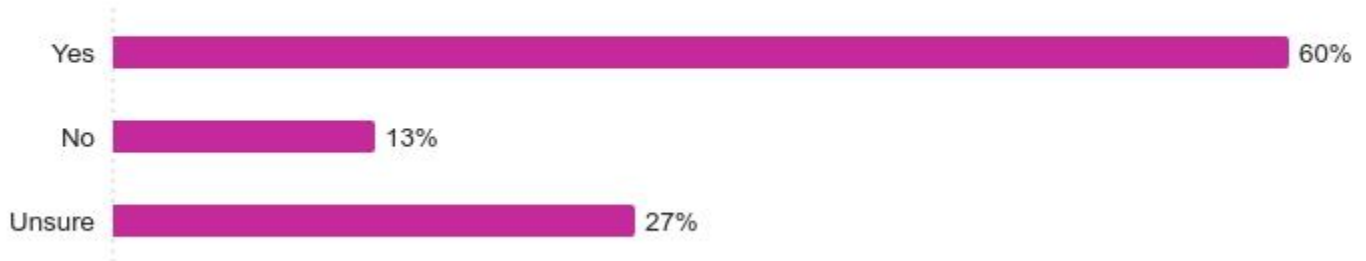
366 Responses



Council Director Evaluation

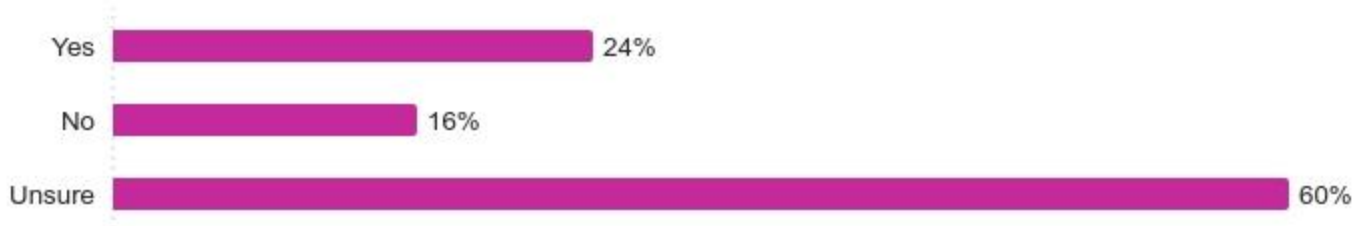
Does your board conduct an annual performance review of the Council Director?

838 Responses



Does the board have an exit interview process in place for the Council Director role?

838 Responses



Board Evaluation

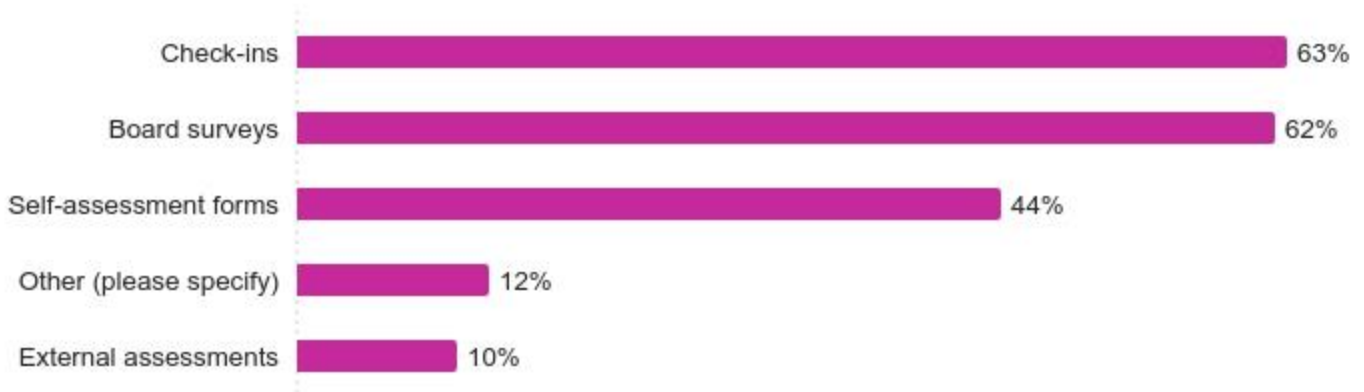
How often does your board review its own performance?

915 Responses



What evaluation tools does your board use when reviewing its performance? Select all that apply.

680 Responses

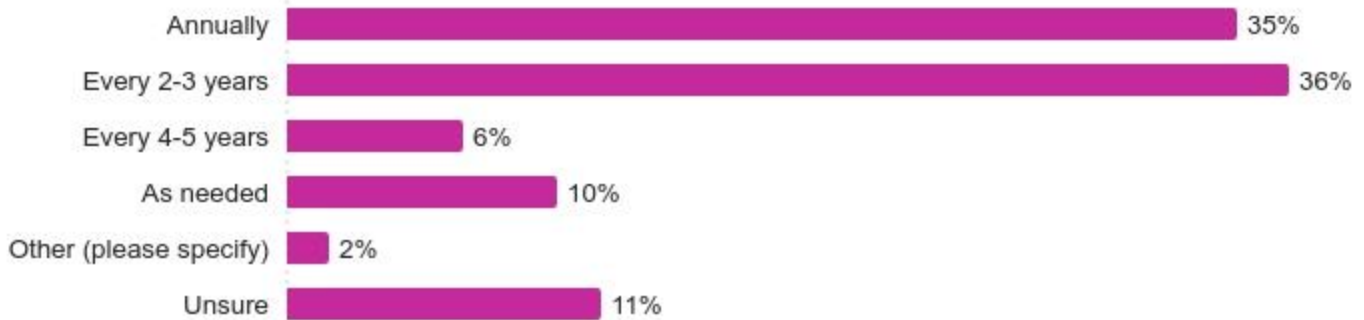


Strategic Planning and Mission Advancement Markers

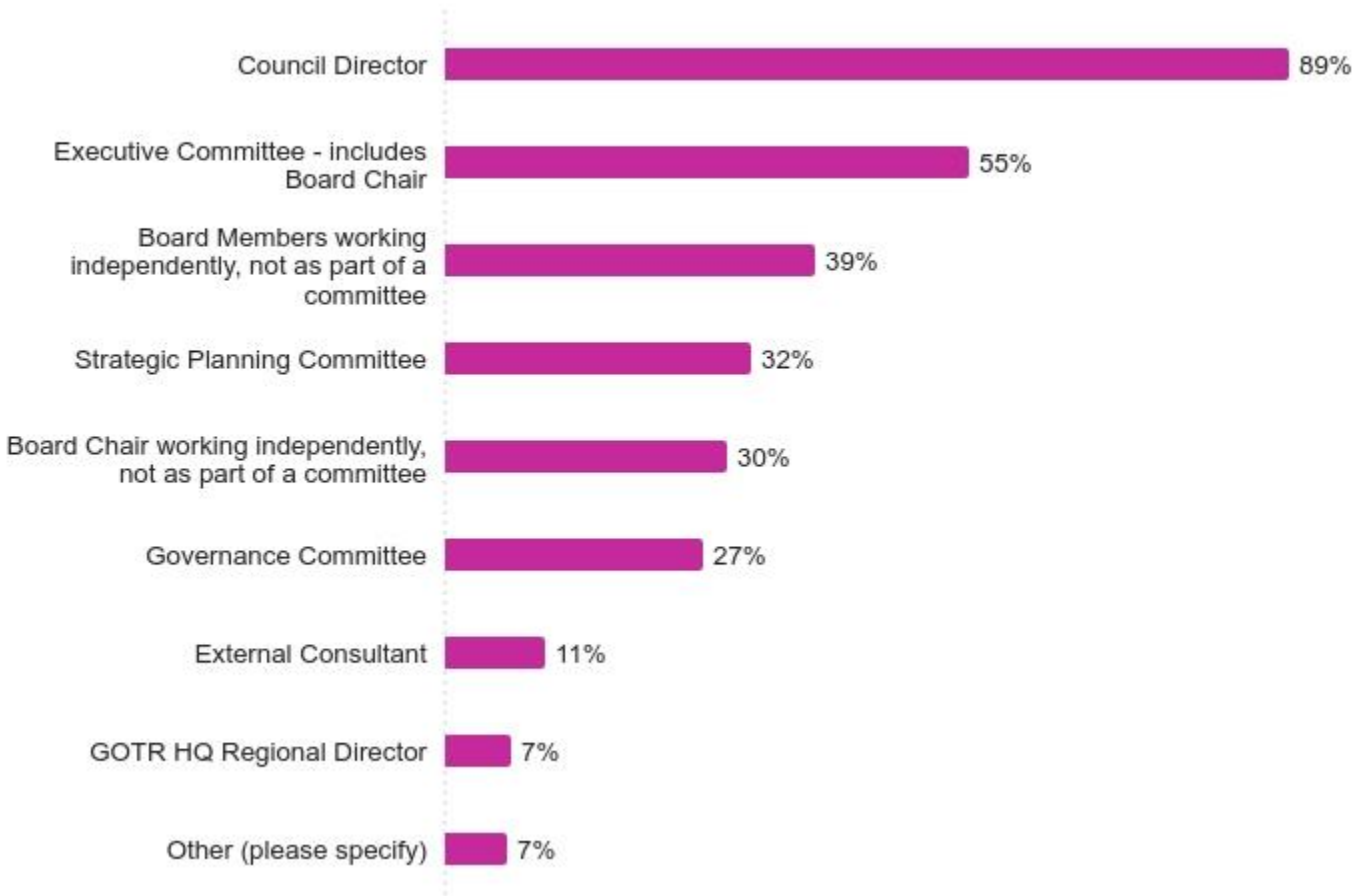
Does your council have a strategic plan?



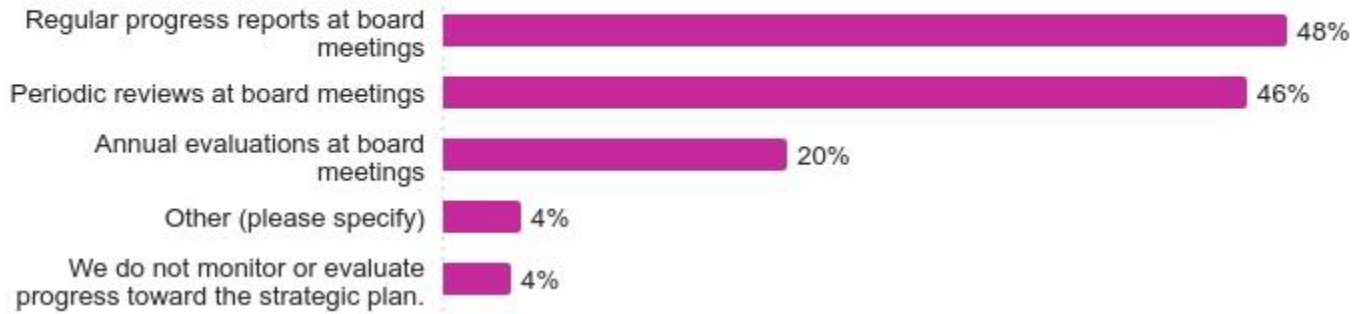
How often does the council conduct a strategic planning process?



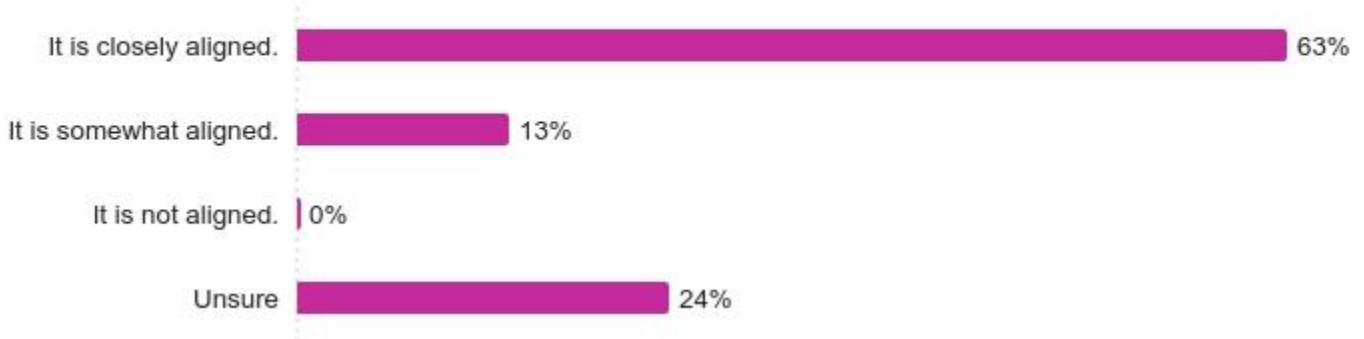
Who is involved in creating the strategic plan? Select all that apply.



How does your board monitor and evaluate progress toward meeting the strategic plan? Select all that apply.



How closely is your council's strategic plan aligned with GOTR HQ's current strategic map?



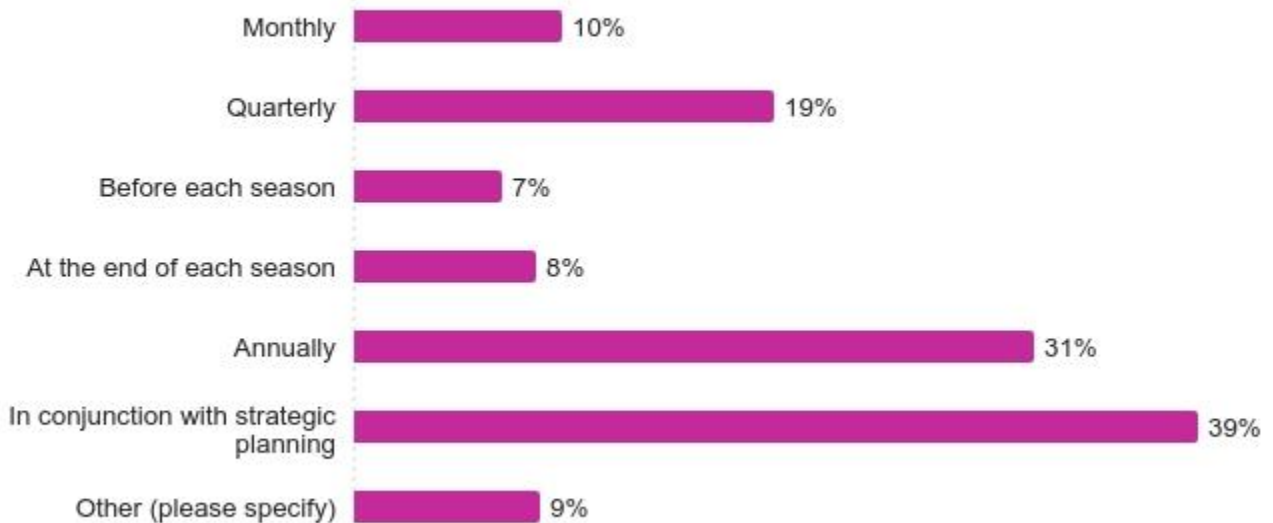
Does your board review and assess the GOTR Mission Advancement Markers?

■ Yes
 ■ No
 ■ Unsure



How frequently does your board review and assess the GOTR Mission Advancement Markers?

Select all that apply.



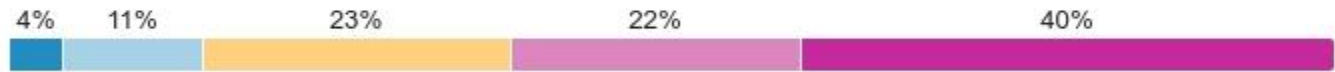
How is local council data (e.g., girls served, number of sites, market share/saturation, etc.) shared at or ahead of board meetings? Select all that apply.



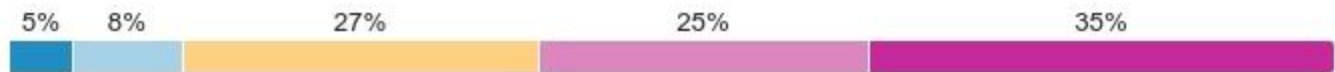
Board Experience

How much experience do you have working with non-profit boards?

None Less than 1 year 1-2 years 3-5 years More than 5 years



How much experience do you have supporting a non-profit executive director? (Board chairs only)



How well-equipped do you feel to work with the current board?

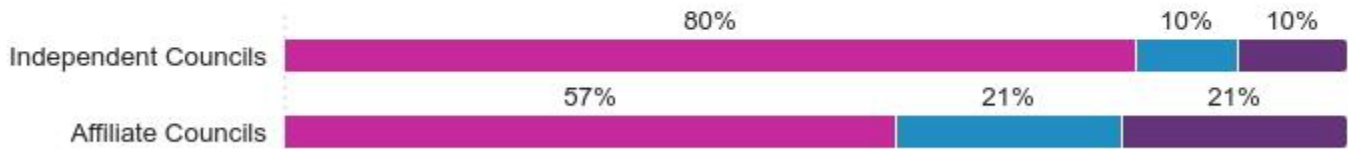
Not at all equipped Slightly equipped Somewhat equipped Mostly equipped Very equipped



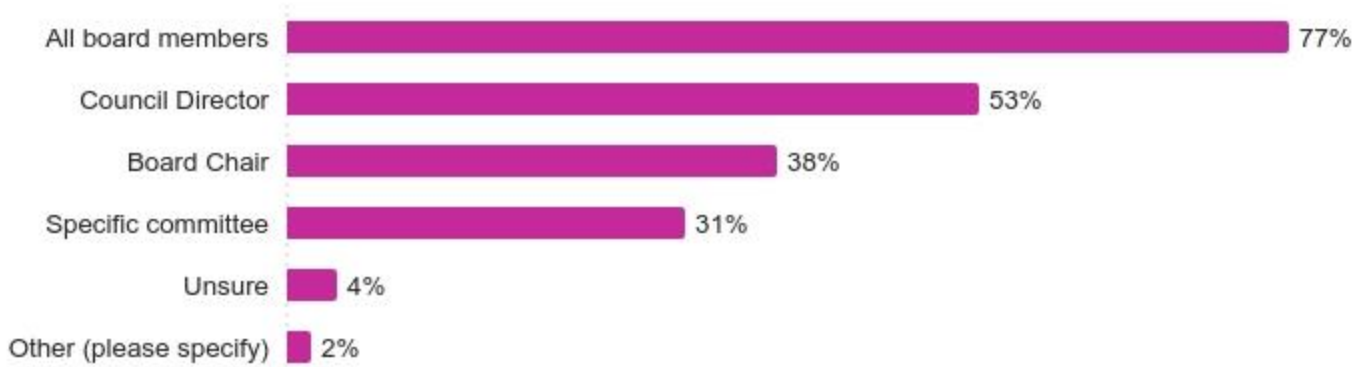
Board Recruitment Process

Does your board implement a structured board recruitment process that addresses the selection, election, orientation, and onboarding of new board members?

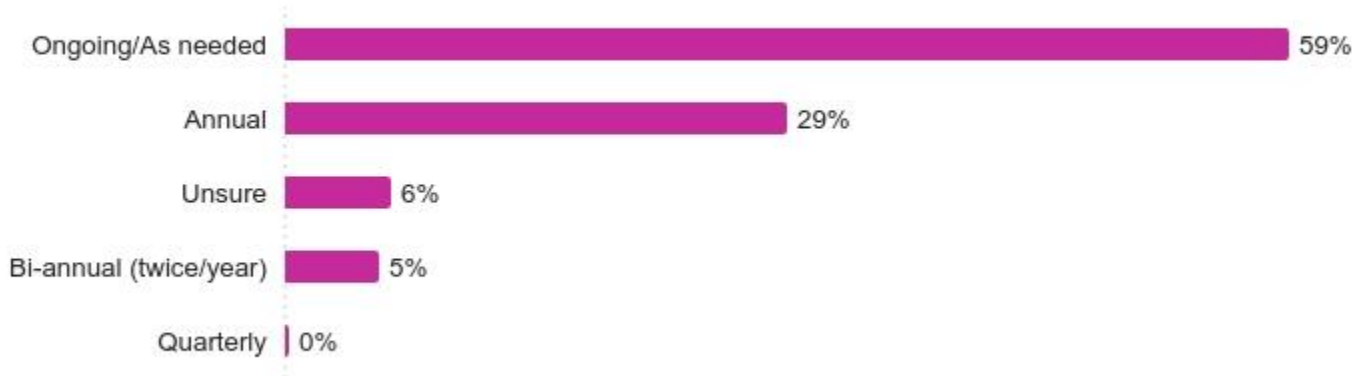
■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure



Who is responsible for recruiting new board members? Select all that apply.

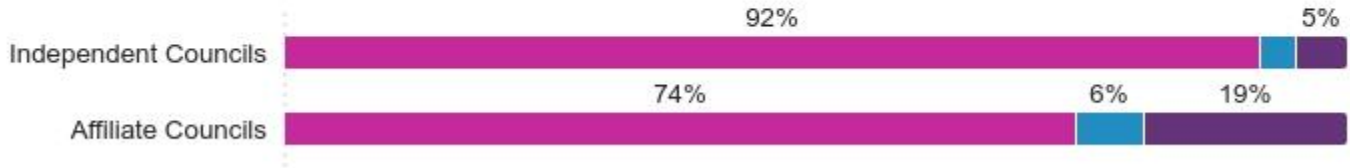


Which of the following best describes your board recruitment cycle?



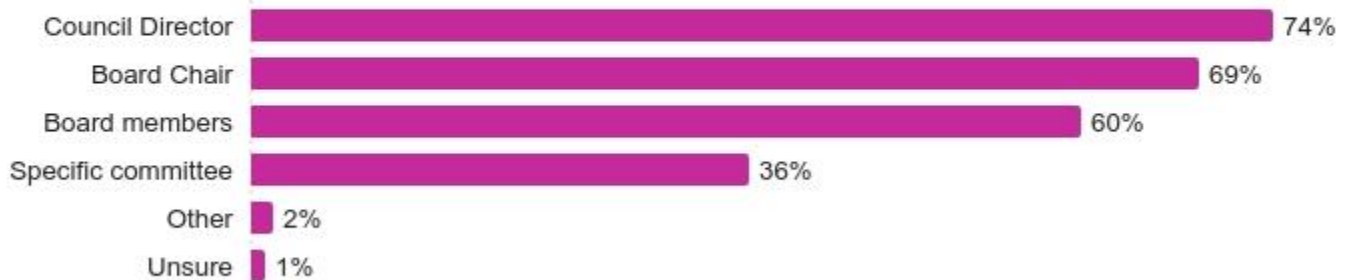
Does your board conduct interviews with prospective board members or facilitate discussions to gather insights about the match?

■ Yes
 ■ No
 ■ Unsure

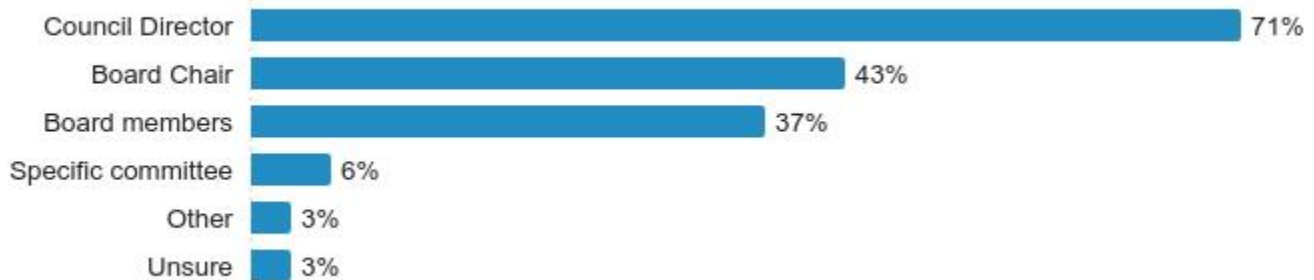


Who participates in these interviews/discussions with prospective board members? Select all that apply.

Independent Councils

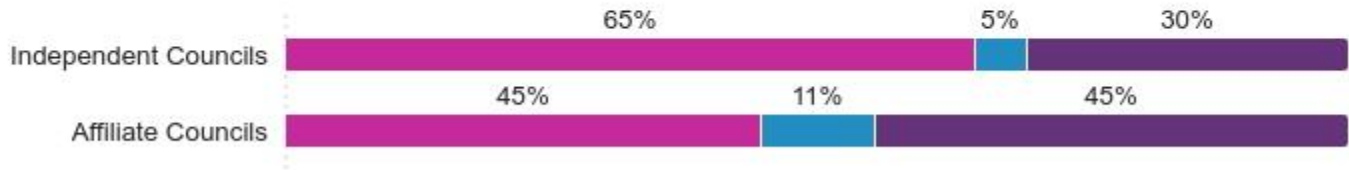


Affiliate Councils



Does the board help connect interested candidates who are not a fit for board service to other volunteer opportunities with the council?

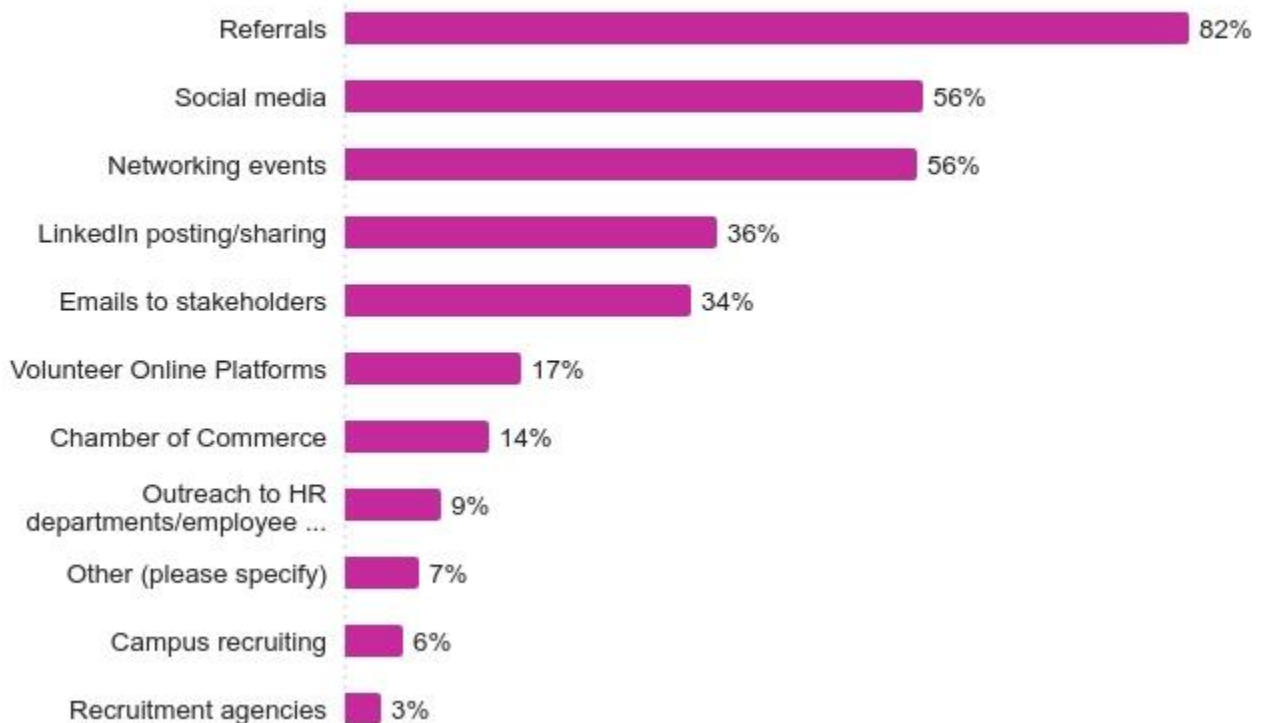
■ Yes
 ■ No
 ■ Unsure



Describe the other volunteer opportunities these interested candidates are directed to. Select all that apply.



Which of the following recruitment methods does your board use to attract candidates? Select all that apply.



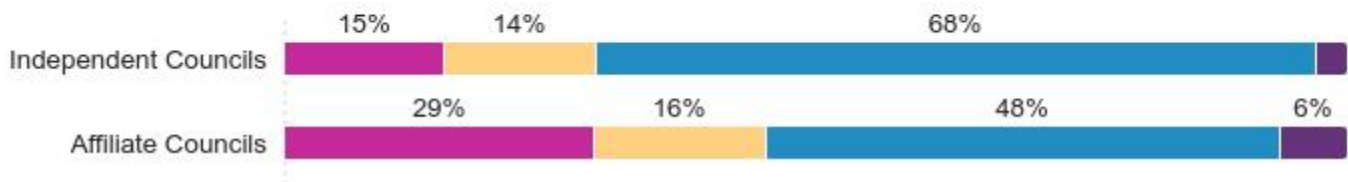
Onboarding and Orientation

Does the board have a structured orientation for new board members?

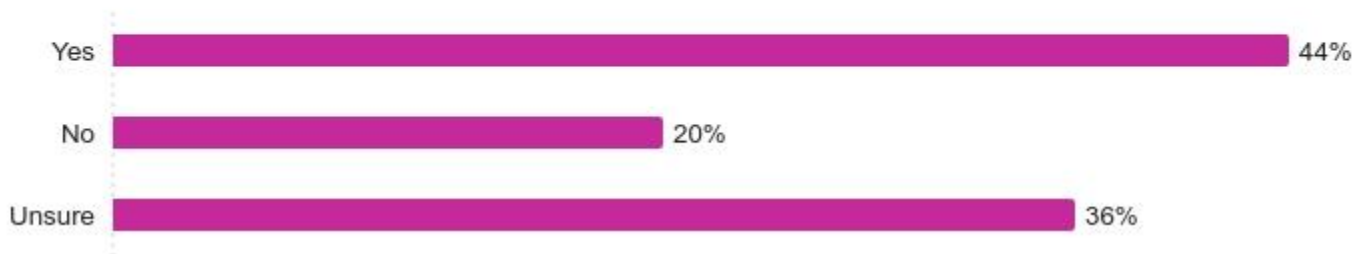


Who facilitates the orientation?

- Council Director only
- Board Chair or Board member only
- Partnership between Council Director and Board
- Other (please specify)



Does the board monitor the completion of new board member HQ-assigned training, Girls on the Run Staff and Volunteer Orientation?



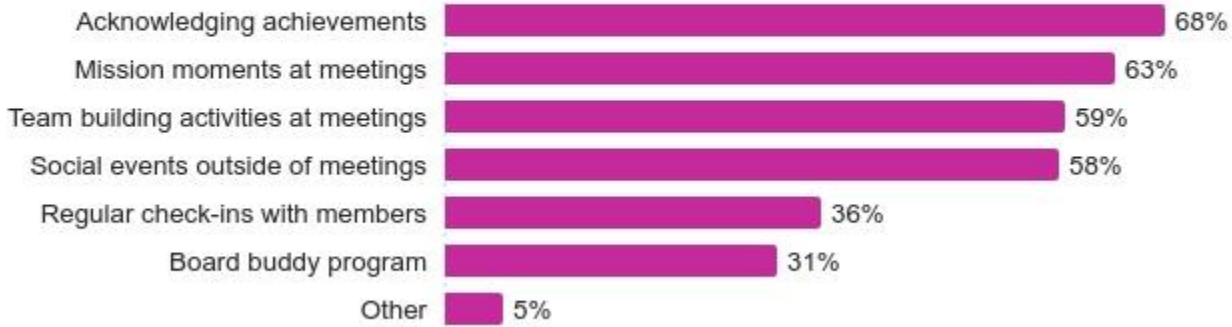
Do your board members connect, learn, or share with other GOTR sister council boards for support, connection, or guidance?



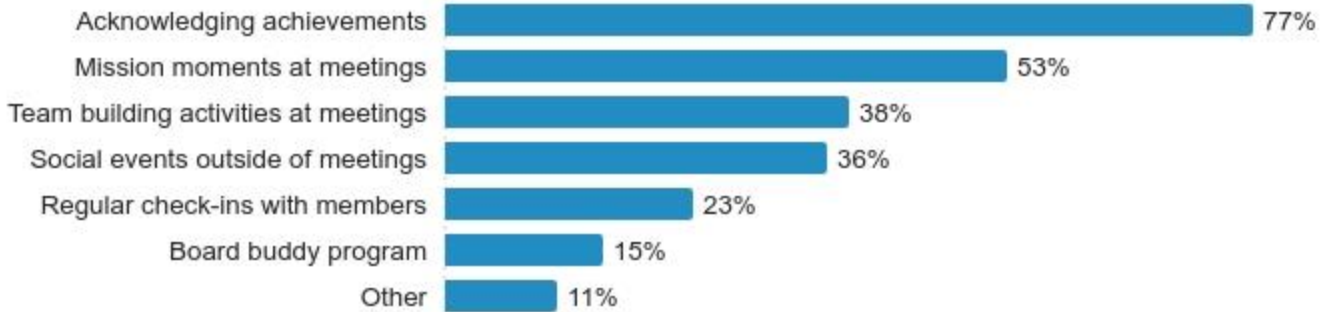
Building Relationships and Fostering Belonging

How does your board work to build relationships and foster a sense of belonging among board members? Select all that apply.

Independent Councils



Affiliate Councils



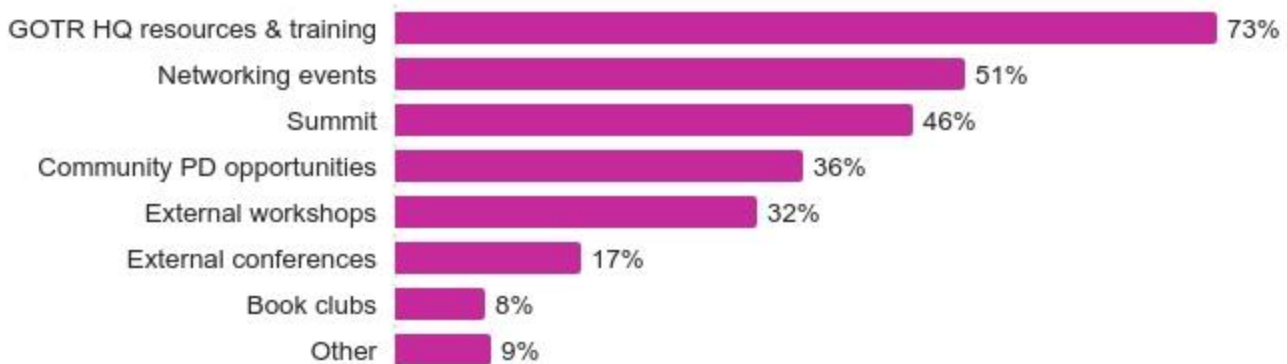
Board Development

Does the board provide professional development or training opportunities to board members to enhance board-related skills training?

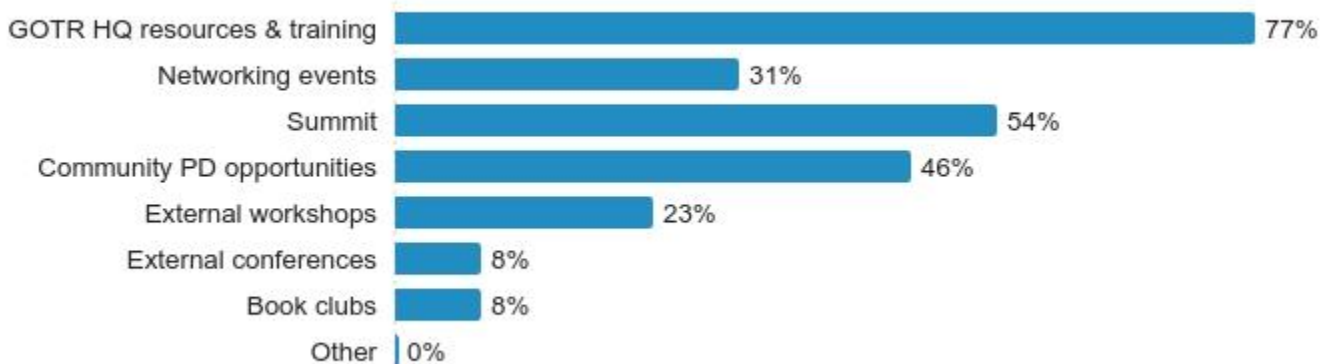


What professional development or training opportunities does the board provide? Select all that apply.

Independent Councils

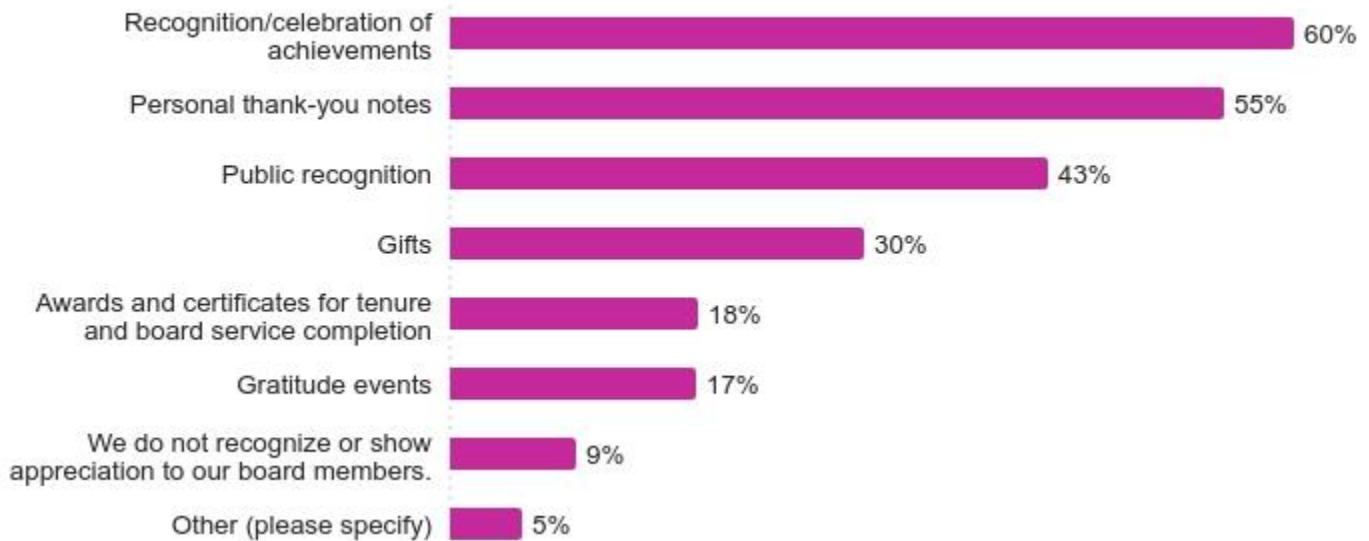


Affiliate Councils

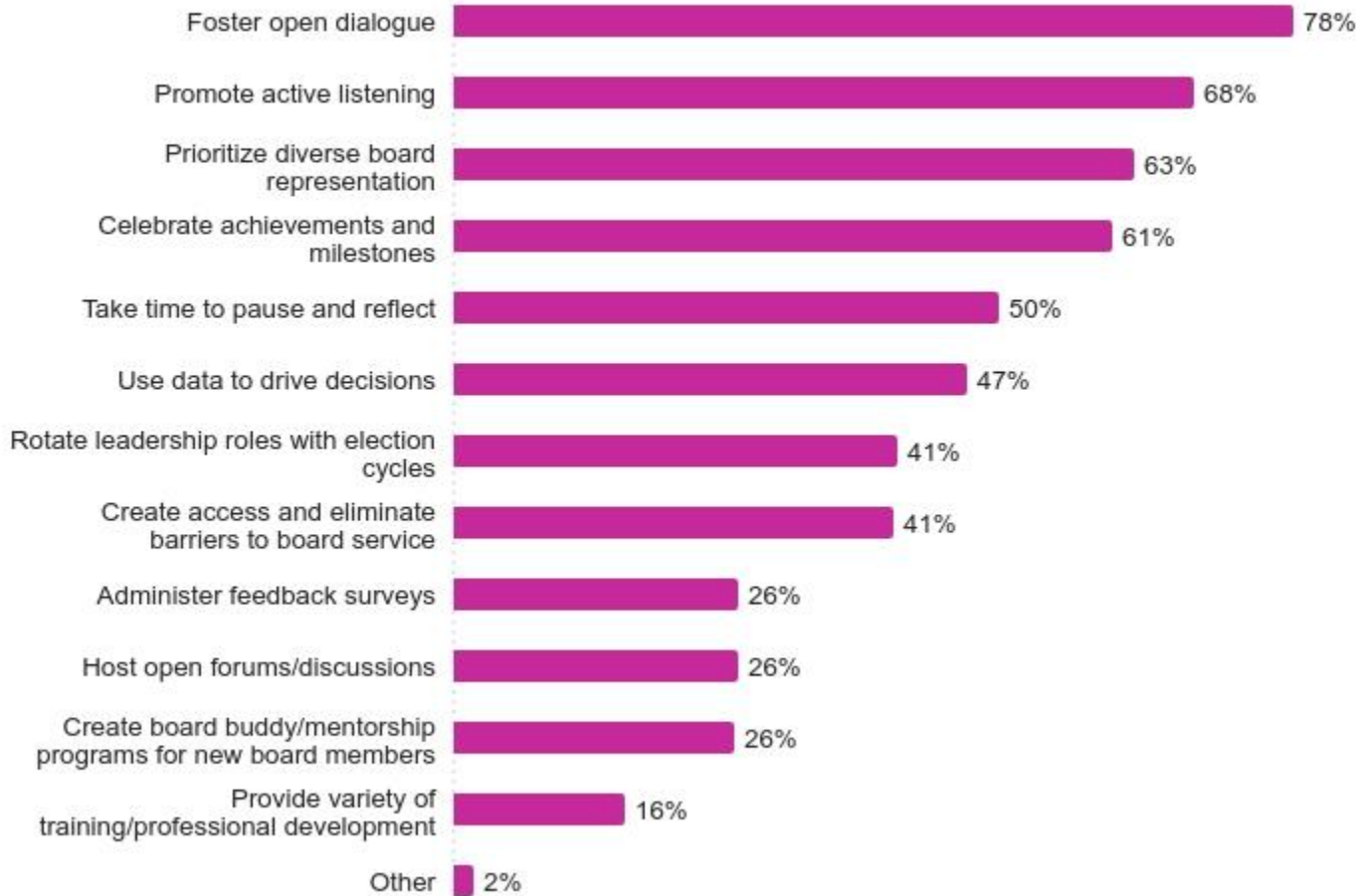


Board Culture

How does your board recognize and show appreciation to board members? Select all that apply.

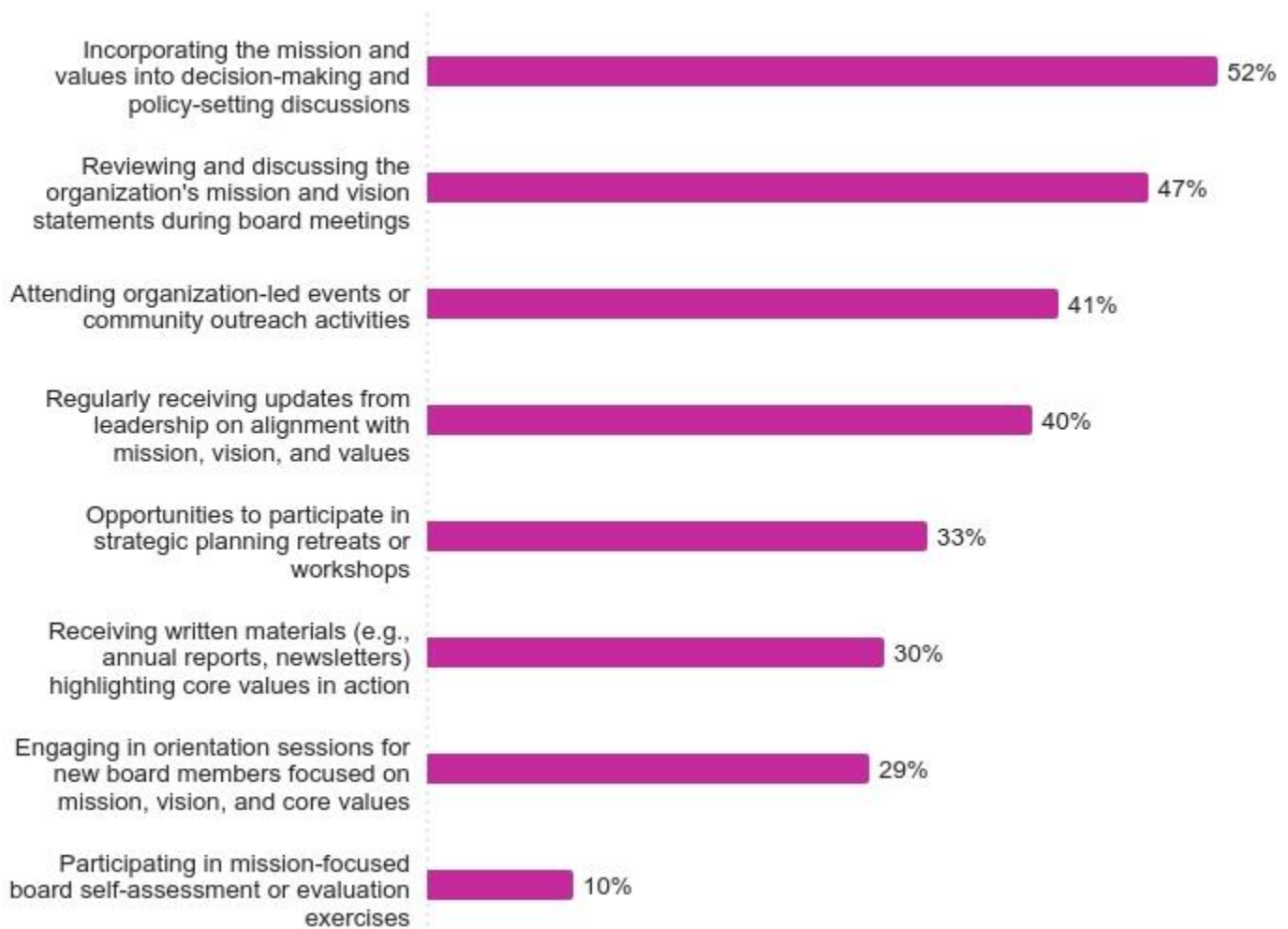


How does your board ensure a culture of inclusivity? Select all that apply.

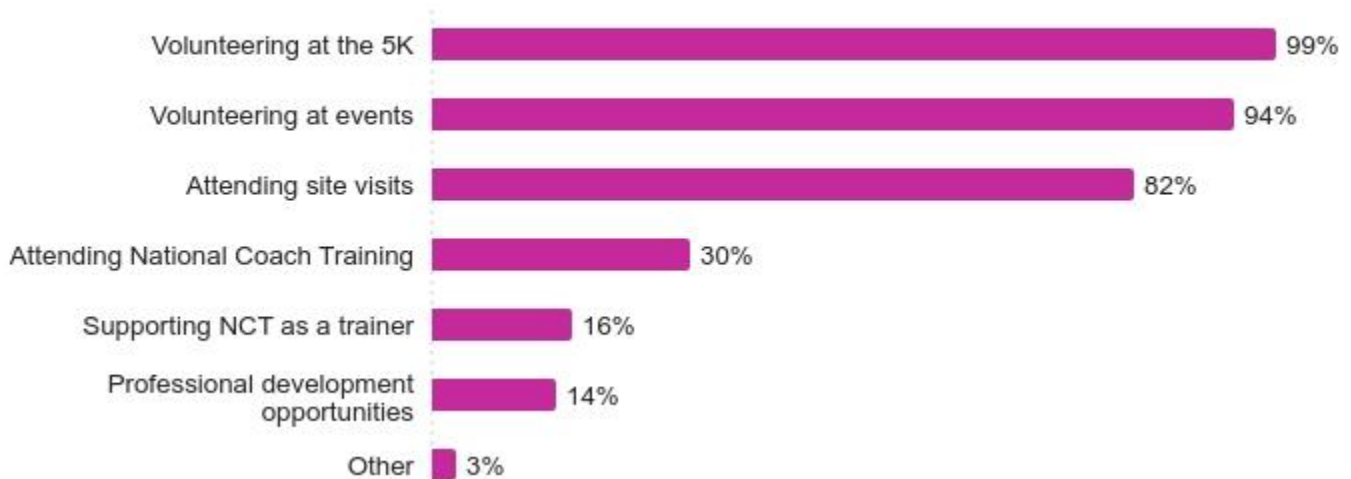


Mission and Core Values

How does the board develop a sense of mission, vision, and core values with its members? Select 3.

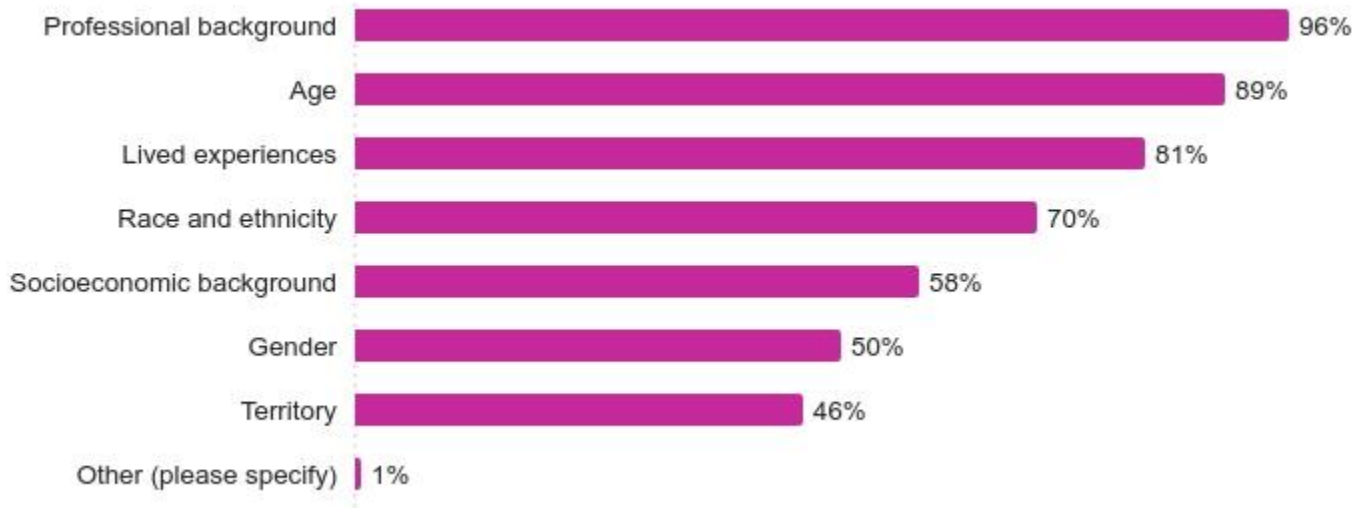


What opportunities are provided for board members to connect to the mission? Select all.



Board Diversity

Please indicate the various ways diversity shows up on your board. Select all that apply.



How satisfied are you with your board's racial and ethnic diversity?

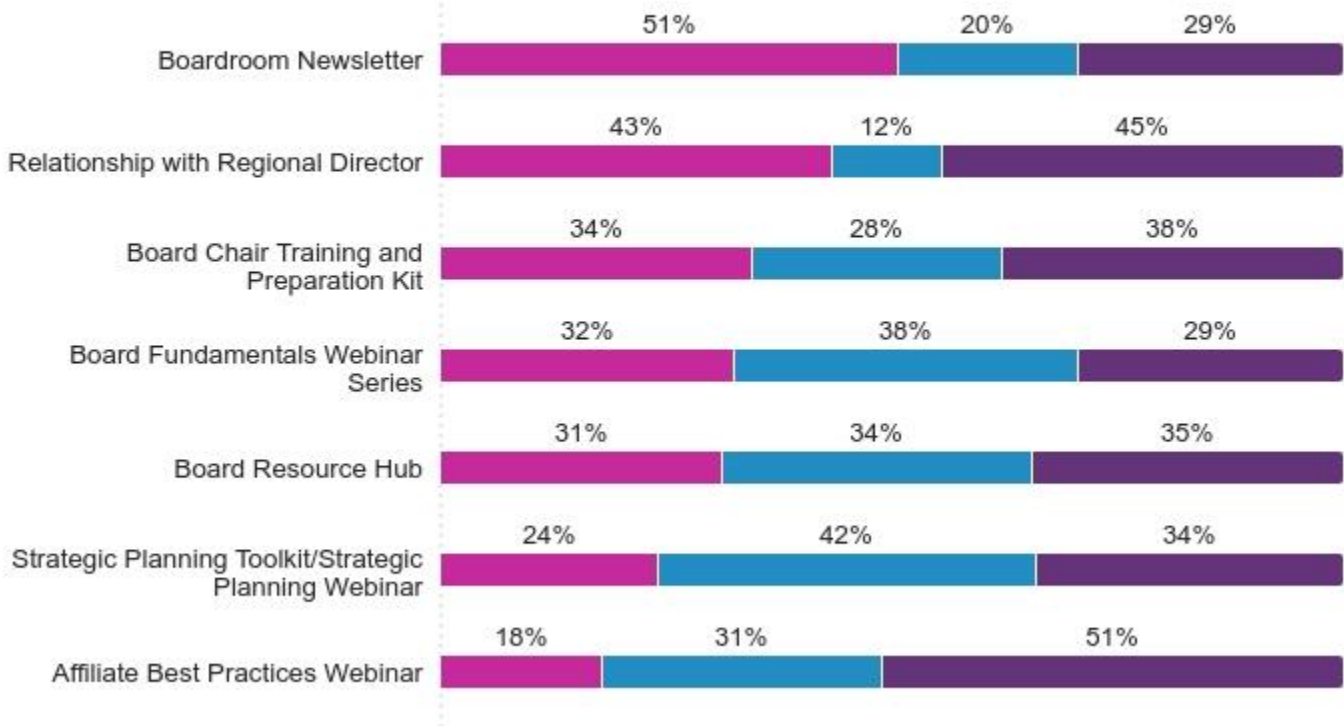
- Very dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Very satisfied



Board-Specific Resources and Support

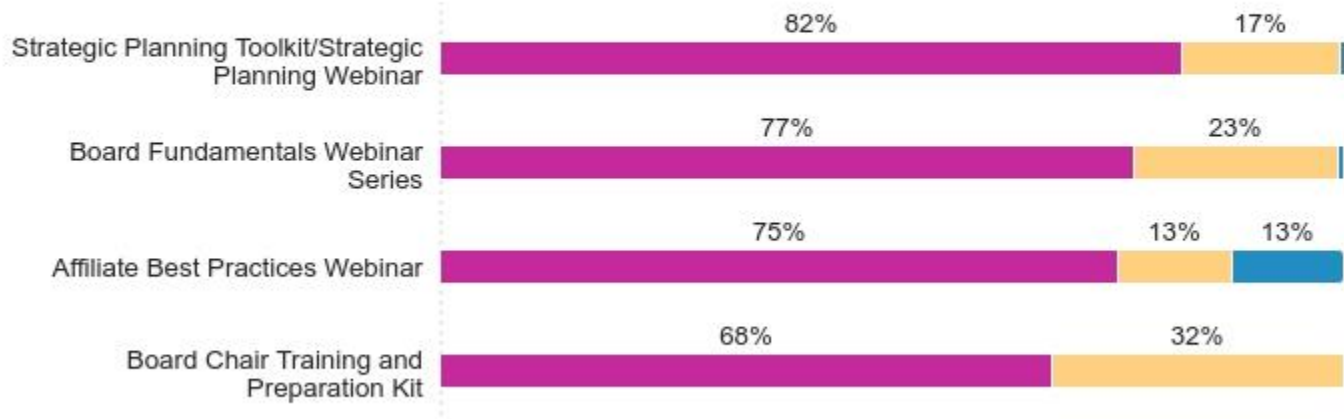
Do you (or your board) utilize the following resources?

■ Yes
 ■ No
 ■ Unaware of resource



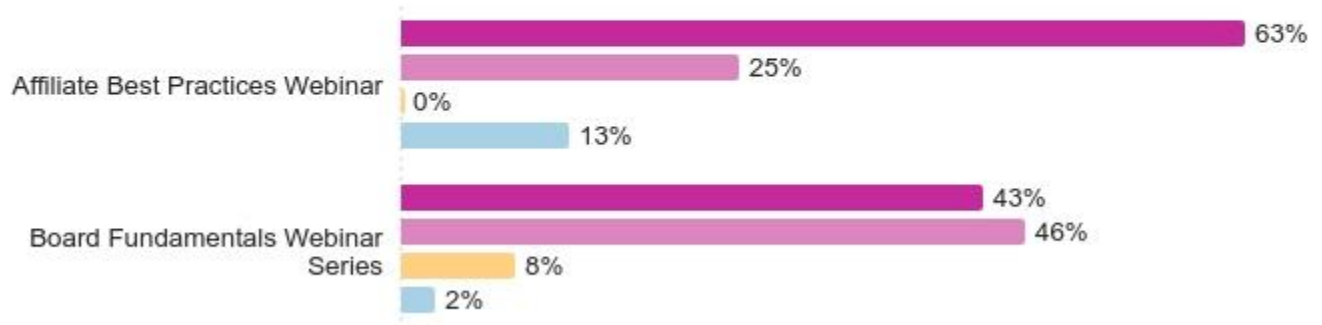
Did the following resources meet your expectations and needs?

■ Yes
 ■ Somewhat
 ■ No

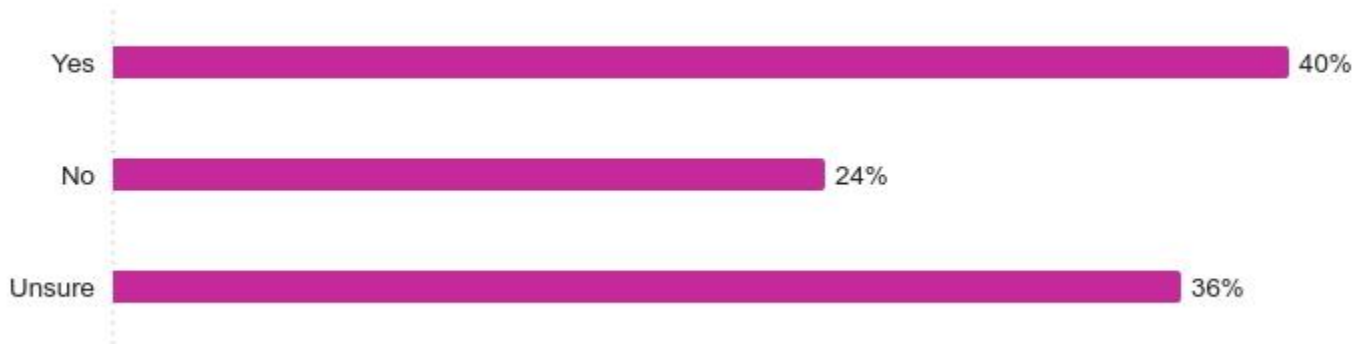


How have you viewed the following webinars?

- Council-assigned training
- Watched independently
- Board-wide professional development
- Other (please specify)



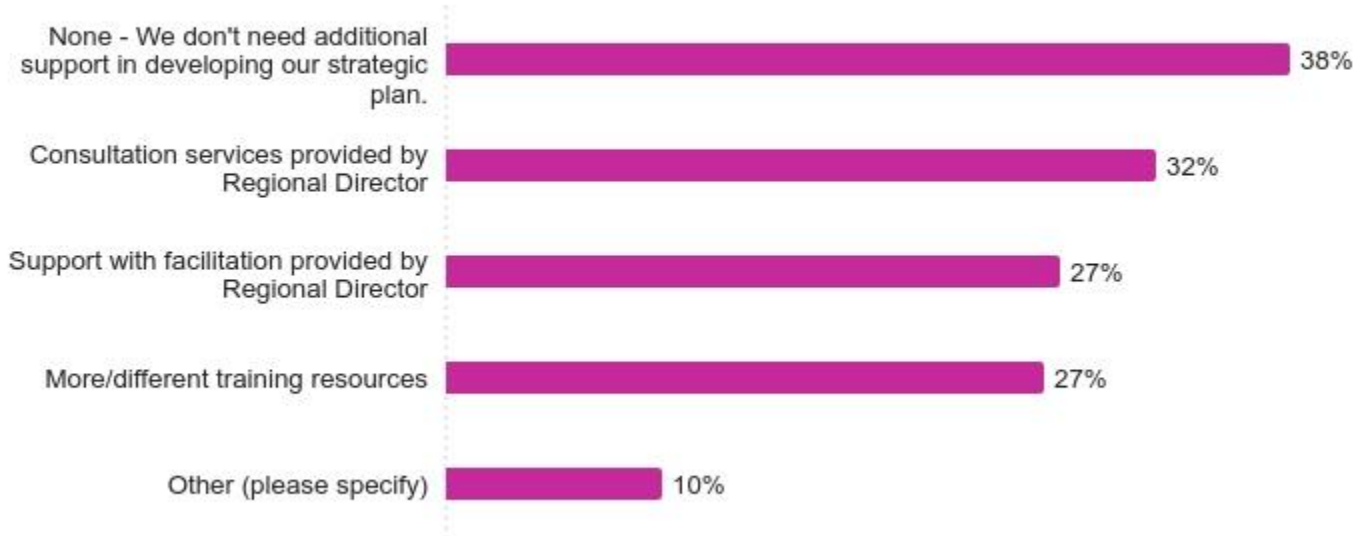
Would you like your board to establish a relationship with your Regional Director?



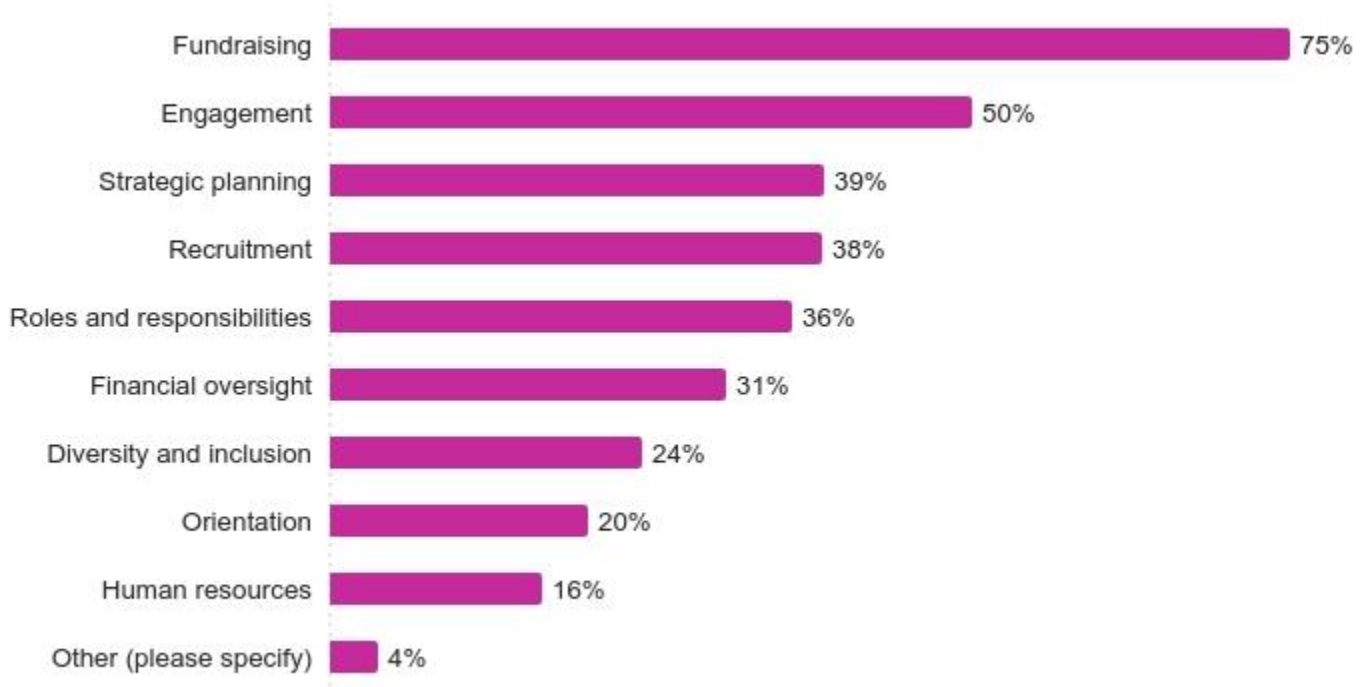
What sections of the Board Resource Hub are most helpful to you? Select the top 3.



What other types of support from GOTR HQ would assist your council in developing a strategic plan? Select all that apply.



What training content would interest your board? Select all that apply.



How would you like the training content delivered? Select all that apply.

