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CCS Fundraising  
Philanthropy  
Pulse

MARCH 2022

22

Religion Spotlight

CCS  
FUNDRAISING

75  
YEARS

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# A Window into Fundraising for Religious Institutions Today

Since our founding, CCS Fundraising has worked shoulder to shoulder with mission-based organizations aiming to bring communities together in faith. As part of our commitment to helping religious organizations maximize their development efforts, we are pleased to present our latest resource for Religion fundraisers and leaders, the *CCS Philanthropy Pulse: Religion Spotlight*.

In late 2021, CCS undertook a cross-sector survey of 877 nonprofits. This report summarizes results from the 73 Religion respondents across faiths on topics including:

- Today's fundraising challenges and tomorrow's opportunities
- Expectations for 2022 fundraising results
- Incorporation of diversity, equity, and inclusion into development

It is our hope that this report provides a window into how religious institutions fundraise today and helps your institution develop data-informed fundraising strategies for the remainder of 2022 and beyond.

If you have any questions about this report or about CCS Fundraising, please contact [marketing@ccsfundraising.com](mailto:marketing@ccsfundraising.com).



To read the main CCS Philanthropy Pulse survey report and explore more CCS research, visit our [Insights Library](#).

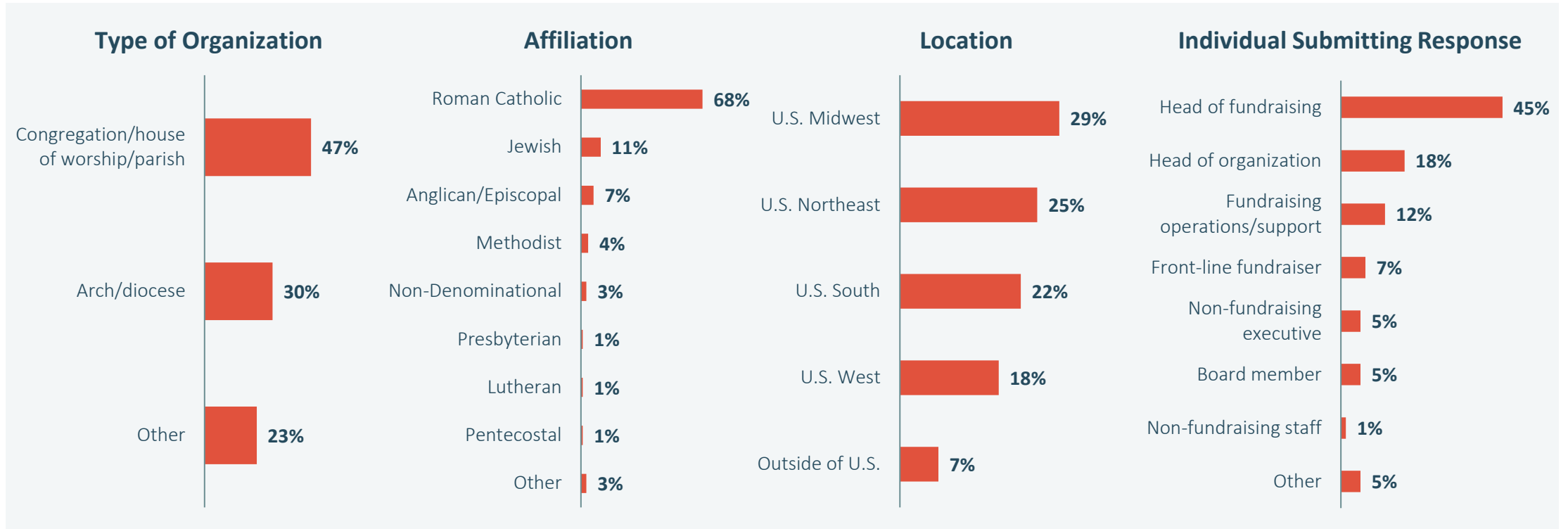


# Executive Summary

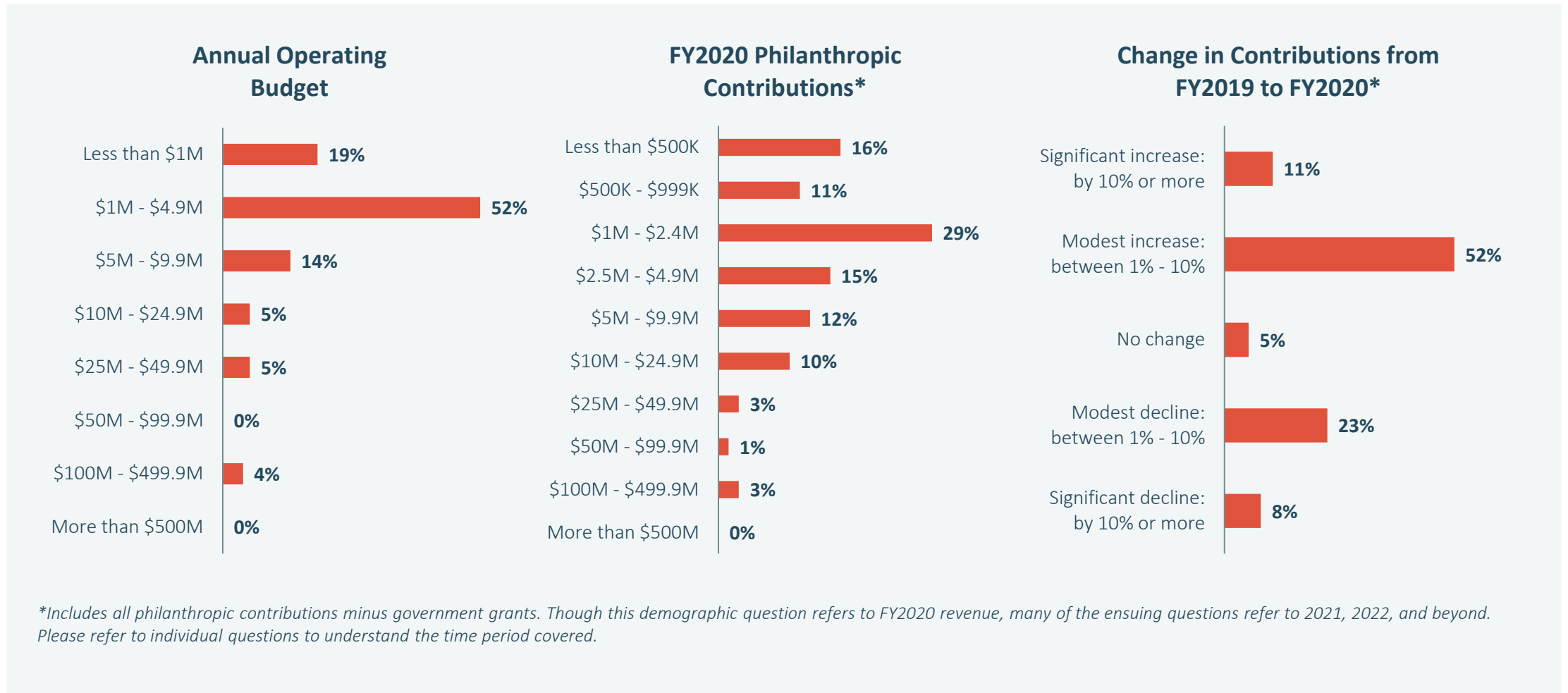
1. The two most commonly-cited fundraising challenges by Religion sector respondents were donor retention and stewardship (45%) and donor acquisition (34%).  
→ Read more on page [8](#)
2. Most respondents reported receiving gifts or pledges from bequests (86%), appreciated assets (74%), donor-advised funds (73%), and retirement plans (70%).  
→ Read more on page [9](#)
3. Looking ahead to expectations for 2022 fundraising results, respondents expressed the most confidence in major gifts, with 57% expecting an increase in 2022.  
→ Read more on page [10](#)
4. Just over half (51%) of surveyed institutions intend to undertake campaign activity this year, whether that is planning, launching, continuing, or restarting a major campaign.  
→ Read more on page [12](#)
5. 3 out of 4 respondents had at least partially returned to in-person donor meetings and events as of November 2021.  
→ Read more on page [13](#)
6. Sixty-four percent of respondents plan to keep their adjustments to digital giving beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.  
→ Read more on page [14](#)
8. Approximately three-quarters (76%) of respondents discuss the concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion with donors at least occasionally.  
→ Read more on page [16](#)
9. In order to incorporate DEI concepts into donor relations, about one-fifth of respondents modified the messaging they use with donors (22%) and made donor cultivation and solicitation approaches more culturally competent (21%).  
→ Read more on page [17](#)
10. Respondents were most likely to rate their organization's staff as highly skilled in event planning (34% rated as completely knowledgeable) and least likely to report expertise in gift planning/planned giving (8% rated as completely knowledgeable).  
→ Read more on page [19](#)
11. Many participants supplement staff capacity with external vendors and consultants. Graphic design was the most frequently-cited outsourced service (44%), followed by strategic planning (26%) and database or systems analysis (26%).  
→ Read more on page [20](#)
12. Nearly half (49%) of respondents reported being satisfied with their institution's donor database or customer relationship management (CRM) system use. Among satisfied organizations, 67% reported that comfort in using data made the difference for their database satisfaction.  
→ Read more on page [21](#)

# Responding Organizations Spanned Multiple Regions Across the United States and the World

This report was generated based on data collected via an online questionnaire administered by CCS Fundraising between the dates of October 19 and November 17, 2021. All responses analyzed in this report were submitted voluntarily by 73 Religion organizations, as described on the following two pages. These 73 responses are a subset of the 877 responses from across sectors, analyzed in CCS's [main survey report](#). Though the makeup of our survey participants does not directly map to the demographics of the Religion landscape overall, this sample provides a window into a wide array of organization types, locations, and sizes.



# Respondents Also Demonstrated Diverse Financial Situations





# Operational Overview



# Donor Retention and Stewardship Is the Most Frequently Cited Fundraising Challenge

When asked to select the top three fundraising challenges their organization is facing today, 45% of Religion respondents selected donor retention and stewardship. About one-third of respondents identified donor acquisition (34%) and increasing deferred (planned) gifts (33%) as one of their top three challenges.





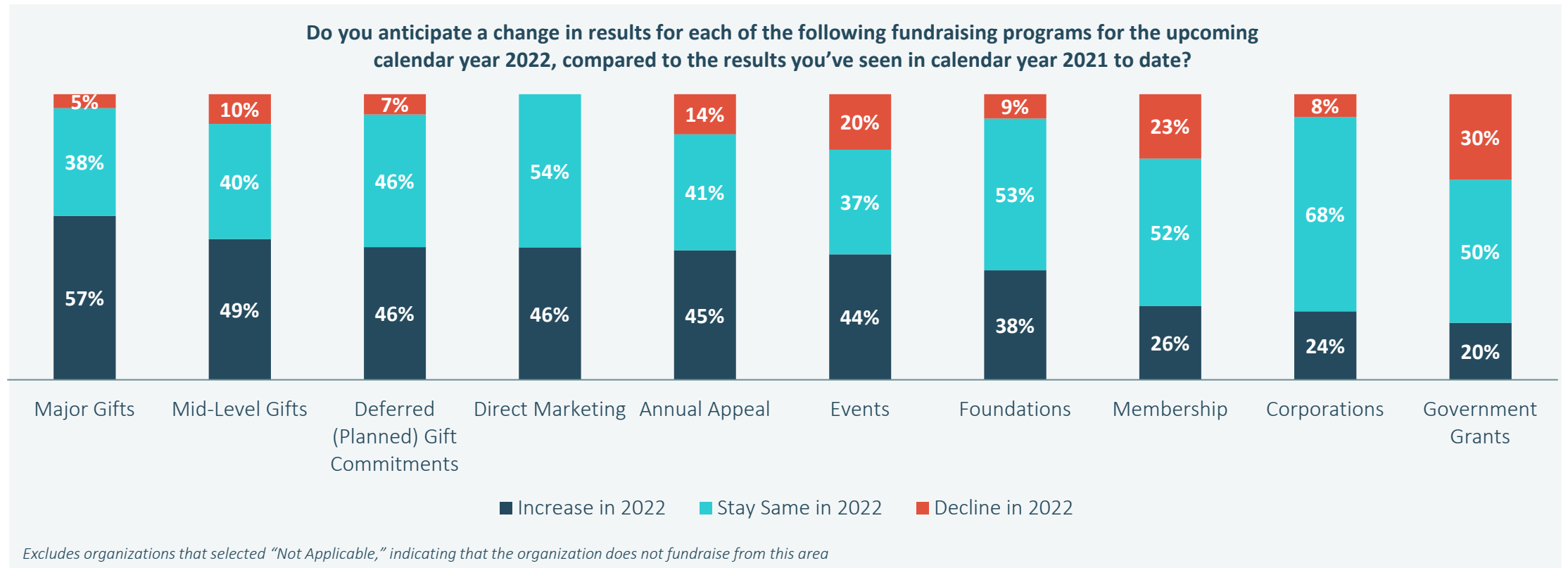
# Organizations Receive Funding from a Variety of Gift Types

Most Religion respondents reported that their institution had received gifts and/or pledges from bequests (86%), appreciated assets (74%), donor-advised funds (73%), retirement plans (70%), and family foundations (68%) in the past two years.



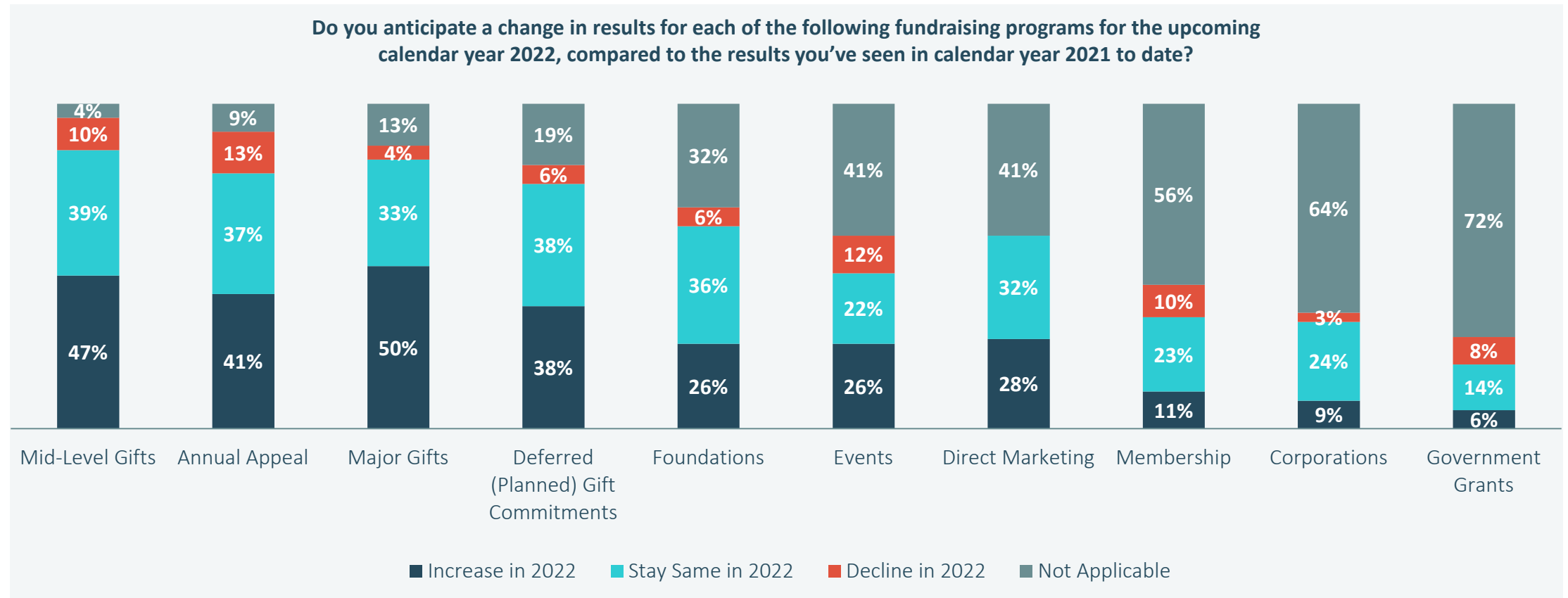
# Respondents Are Most Likely to Expect Fundraising Increases from Major Gifts in 2022

More than half (57%) of respondents that fundraise from major gifts said they expect to see an increase from this category in 2022 compared to 2021. Organizations that receive funding from government grants were most likely to predict a decline, with 30% expecting decreased results in 2022.



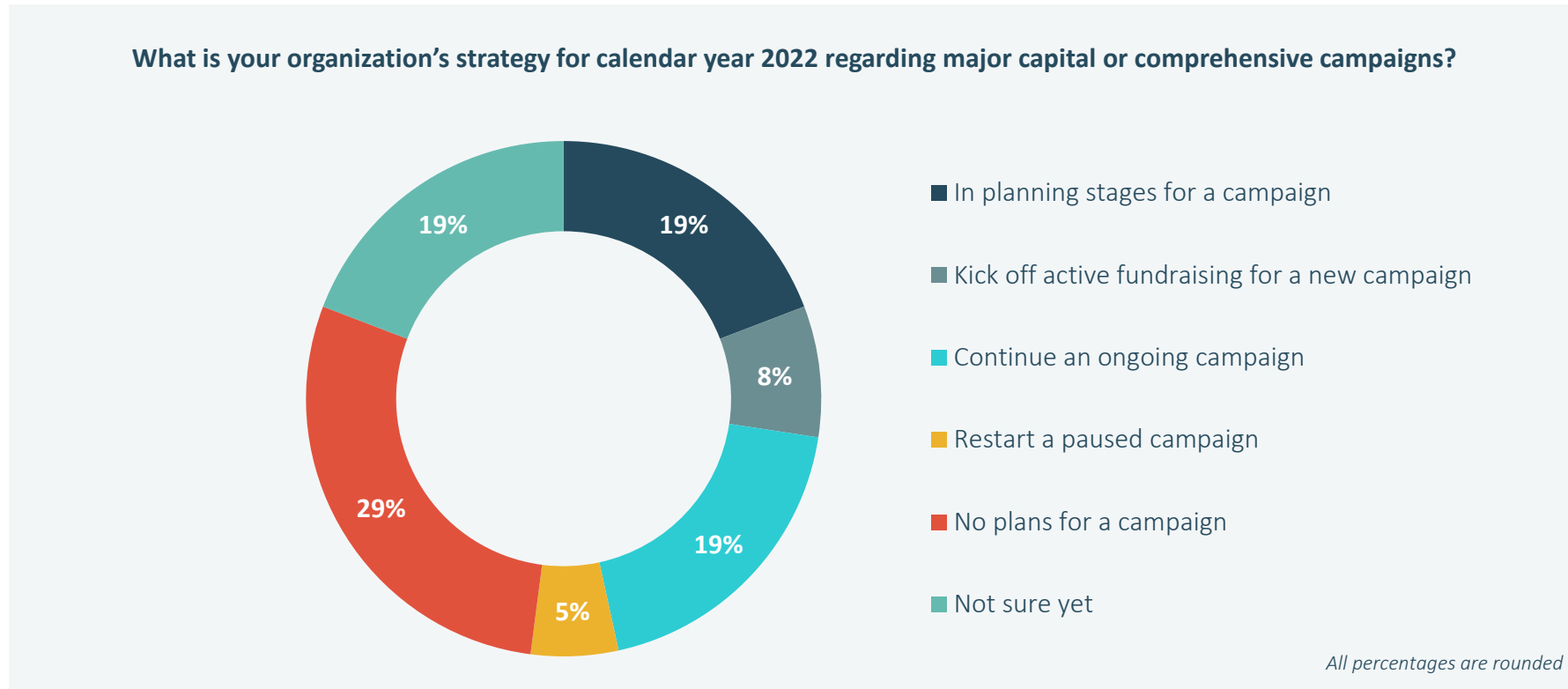
# Most Respondents Receive Major Gifts, Mid-Level Gifts, and Annual Appeal Income

A different view of the data in which “not applicable” responses are included suggests that 96% of respondents receive mid-level gifts, 91% operate an annual appeal, and 87% receive major gifts. Few participants indicated that they receive funding from government grants (28%) and corporate donors (36%).



# About Half of Religion Respondents Intend to Undertake Some Level of Campaign Activity This Year

A combined 51% of Religion organizations in CCS's survey intend to undertake some sort of campaign activity in 2022, whether that activity is planning, launching, continuing, or restarting a campaign. Twenty-nine percent of institutions in the sample have no plans for a campaign, and 19% were not yet sure of their organization's plans.



# 3 in 4 Institutions at Least Partially Returned to In-Person Donor Engagement since the Start of the COVID-19 Pandemic

As of November 2021, a combined 75% of responding organizations had at least partially resumed in-person donor meetings and/or events. About one-third (34%) of organizations had completely resumed in-person donor engagement, while 41% had partially resumed these activities.

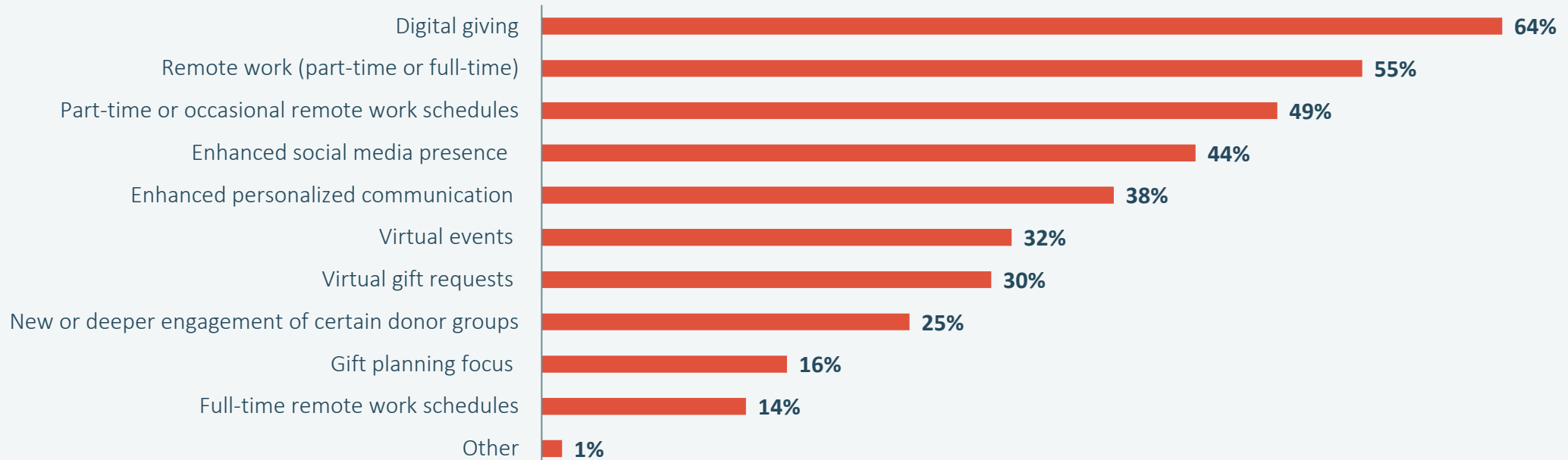




# Many Respondents Feel Digital Giving Is Here to Stay

When asked what pandemic adjustments their organization plans to continue, 64% selected digital giving. Moreover, more than half (55%) of organizations indicated that they intend to continue remote work beyond the pandemic, though only 14% said they intend to use remote work on a full-time basis.

## What practices has your organization adjusted during the COVID-19 pandemic that you plan to continue?



*Respondents could select all answers that apply*



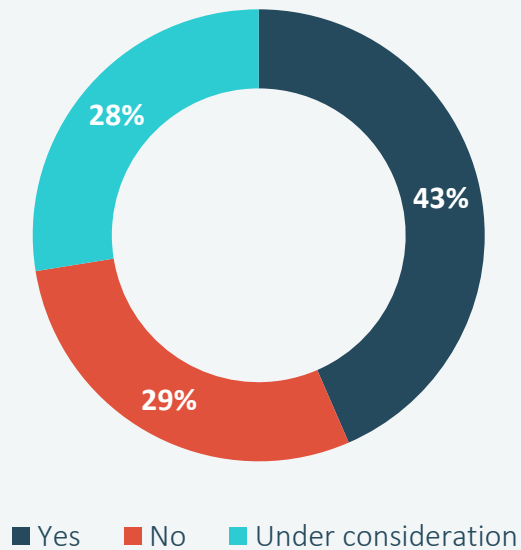
# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Donor Relations

# 43% of Organizations Include DEI in Strategic Plans and About Three-Quarters Discuss DEI with Donors at Least Occasionally

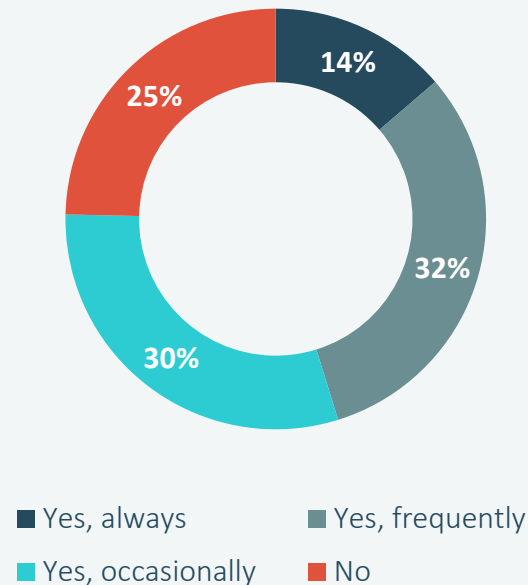
Less than half (43%) of Religion respondents reported that diversity, equity, and/or inclusion (DEI) were part of their organization’s strategic plans for future fundraising activity. Approximately 76% of respondents indicated that they discuss DEI-related concepts with donors either always, frequently, or occasionally.

*When answering questions in this section, respondents were asked to consider an expansive definition of “diversity, equity, and inclusion” to address a broad set of identities, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin, ability, and other visible and invisible traits.*

Are diversity, equity, and/or inclusion part of your strategic plans for future fundraising priorities?



Does your organization discuss the concepts of diversity, equity, and/or inclusion in your conversations with donors?



A Selection of Additional Comments Shared

- “We’ve been committed to DEI before it had a name.”
- “Half of my parish cares about this, the other half is hostile if they hear such a phrase. We are walking a tight rope when it comes to fundraising and programming.”

# Messaging Changes Were the Most Frequently Cited Tactic to Incorporate DEI Into Donor Relations

When asked what tactics their organization has employed over the past two years to make their fundraising activities more diverse, equitable, and/or inclusive, just over one-fifth of respondents reported modifying the messaging they used with donors (22%) and making donor approaches more culturally competent (21%). The most popular answer, however, was that organizations pursued none of the tactics listed (32%).





# Staffing, Resourcing, and CRM Technology



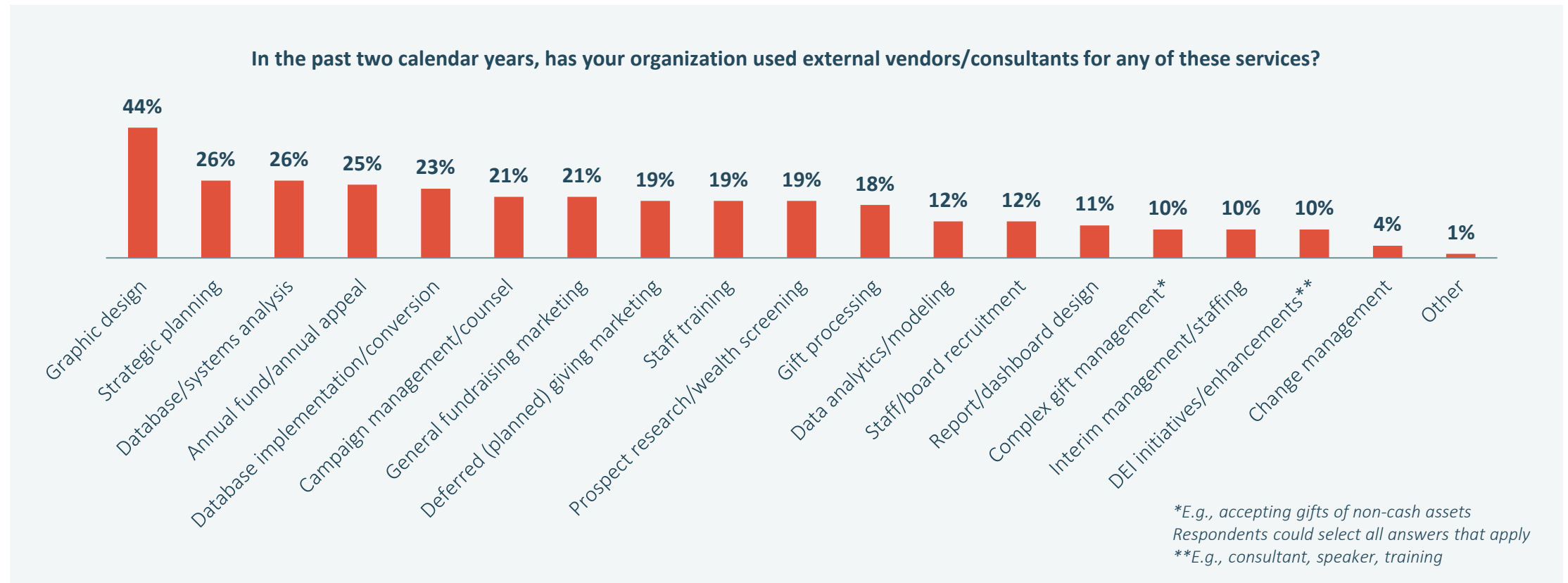
# Event Planning Was the Area in Which Organizations Reported the Highest Level of Staff Expertise

When asked to rate the knowledge of their staff in a variety of areas, Religion respondents were most likely to report expertise in event planning, with 34% rating their staff as completely knowledgeable in this area. Gift planning was the category with the lowest percentage reporting their staff as completely knowledgeable (8%).



# Respondents Commonly Seek External Assistance on Graphic Design and Strategic Planning

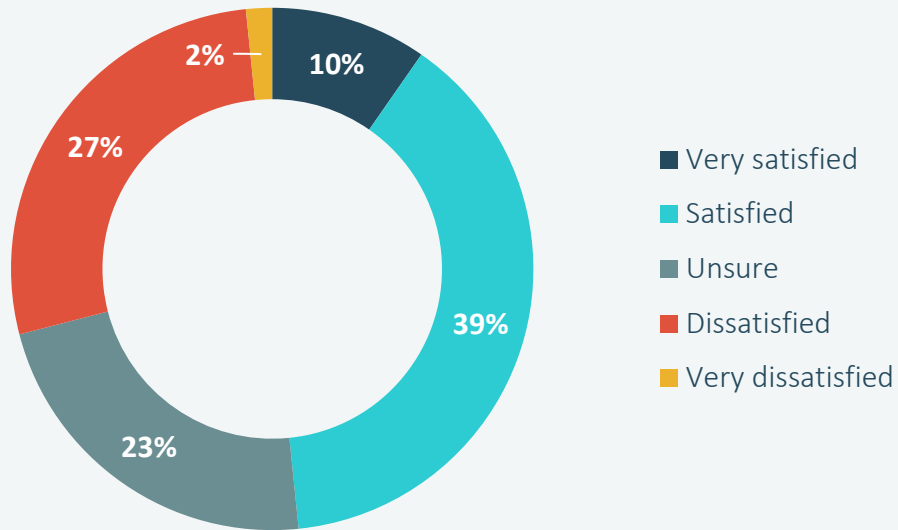
Just under half (44%) of Religion respondents reported using external graphic design assistance in the past two years. About one-fourth reported using external vendors or consultants for strategic planning (26%), database or systems analysis (26%), and annual appeal services (25%).



# 49% of Organizations Reported Being Satisfied with Their CRM

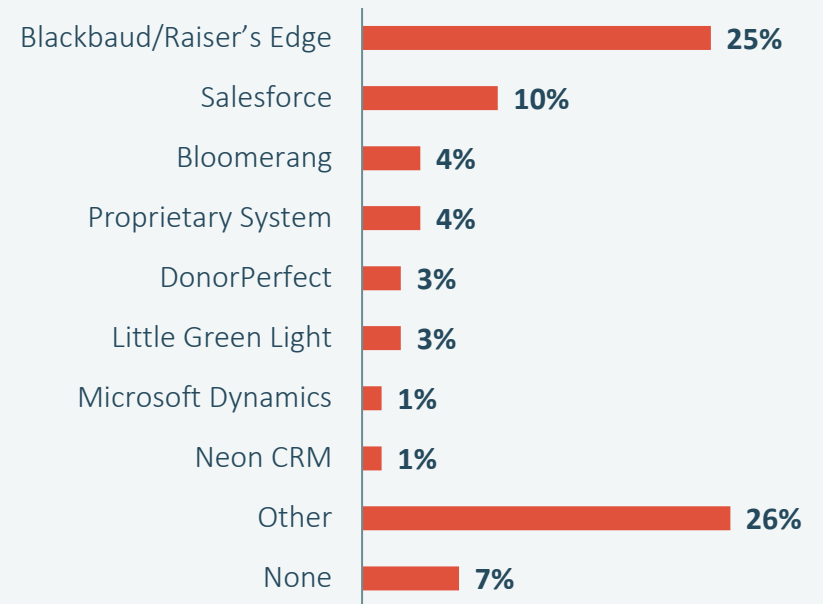
Just under half (49%) of Religion respondents reported that they were either satisfied (39%) or very satisfied (10%) with their organization’s donor database use—inclusive of both the software itself and the processes around using the system. About 29% of organizations reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, and 23% said they were unsure. Approximately 7% of survey participants indicated that they do not use a donor database or customer relationship management (CRM) system.

**How would you rate your organization’s satisfaction with its donor database use, considering not only the software itself, but also the processes your organization uses to enter, maintain, and use the information in the system?**



All percentages are rounded

**What donor database/CRM (customer relationship management) software does your organization currently use?**



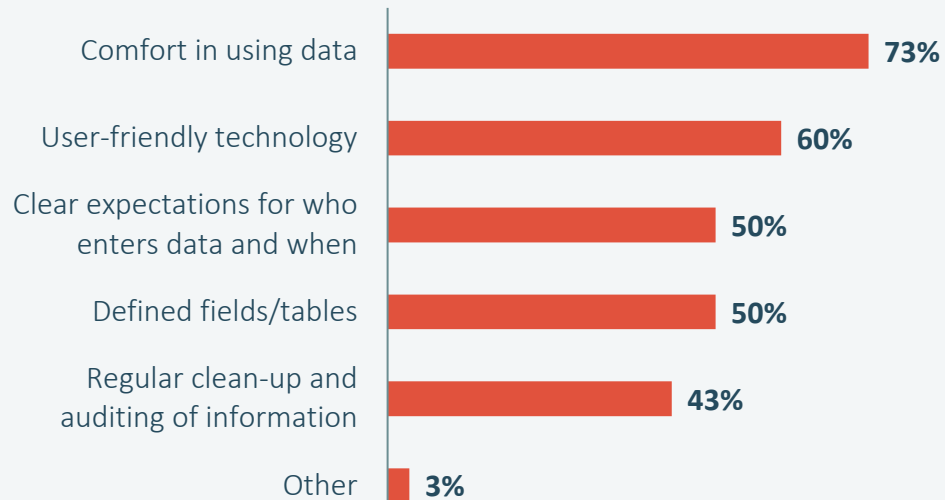
Respondents could select all answers that apply

# Comfort in Using Data Makes a Difference in CRM Satisfaction

Among the Religion organizations who reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their database use, 73% said that comfort in using data made a difference in their satisfaction. Among those that were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, the most frequently cited database challenge was inconsistent, inaccurate, or incomplete data.

Among the **49%** of respondents that are **satisfied** with their database use...

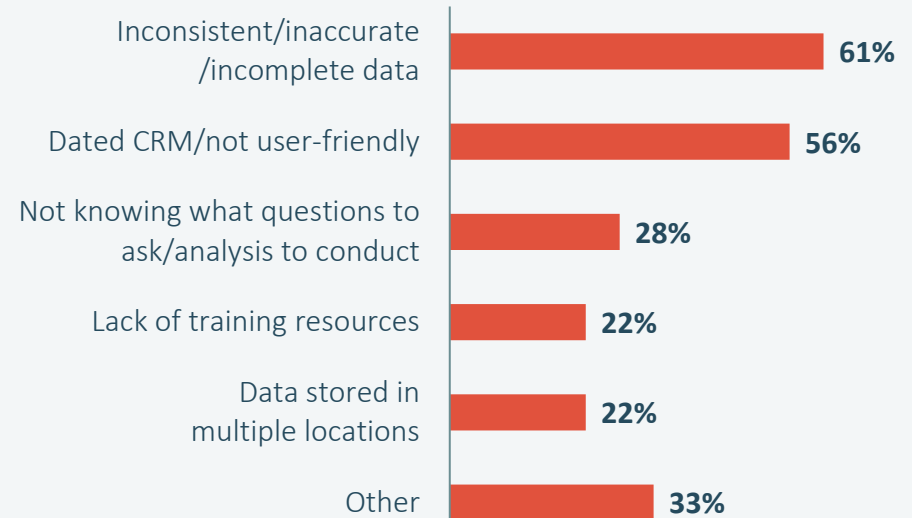
**What has made the difference for your organization in terms of satisfaction with its donor database use?**



*Respondents could select all answers that apply*

Among the **29%** of respondents that are **dissatisfied** with their database use...

**What are your main challenges related to the donor database?**



*Respondents could select all answers that apply*

# About CCS Fundraising

For 75 years, CCS Fundraising has empowered many of the world's greatest organizations to advance some of the most important causes in history. As leading consulting experts in development and campaign strategy, we plan and implement fundraising initiatives to help nonprofit organizations make a bigger impact—locally, nationally, and globally.

Our services include:

- Campaign Planning & Management
- Data Analytics
- Systems Projects
- Interim Development Management
- Development Audits & Assessments
- Gift Planning Assessments
- Strategic Planning
- Specialized Development Projects

To learn more about CCS Fundraising and our work, visit [ccsfundraising.com](https://ccsfundraising.com).

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### FEATURED INSIGHT:

*Snapshot of Today's Philanthropic Landscape*  
Tenth Edition | July 2021

Featuring essential philanthropic research from all major sources in the industry, this exclusive report examines key themes in American philanthropy and data on giving by U.S. individuals, foundations, and corporations.

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