



ADVOCACY

A Report on the Activities of Chambers of Commerce in the U.S.



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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SURVEY INTRODUCTION

Thank you to those chambers who participated in our U.S. Chamber 2015 Advocacy Survey. Much like in any industry, it is crucial for successful chambers of commerce to benchmark themselves against their peers. The U.S. Chamber conducted the Advocacy Survey in an effort to gain knowledge on the best practices used by chambers of commerce throughout the country including areas such as public policy and political action. The U.S. Chamber Regional Offices take pride in our role working with the leading chambers of commerce in the country and we appreciate your active and continued partnership. We hope you find the following information useful as you continue to advance your advocacy efforts. Please let us know if we can be a resource to you at any time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The help of many individuals and organizations was required to effectively produce this survey. Dowell Management designed the Advocacy Survey and compiled the survey data. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce regional offices provided leadership and design input, and were responsible for the distribution to local chambers throughout the country.

METHODOLOGY

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce utilized its database of 5,659 chambers of commerce. The survey instrument, developed by Dowell Management, utilized SurveyGizmo survey software and the survey link and instructions were sent to all 5,659 chambers of commerce within the U.S. Chamber database.

The U.S. Chamber received 477 completed surveys, a response rate of 8.4%. This is a strong response rate given the size and scope of this survey, and therefore is an acceptable representation of the industry. Individual surveys were reviewed, and in some cases data was omitted due to glaring errors and/or duplicate responses within an individual chamber of commerce. Percentages throughout this report are based on total number of respondents who do, or do not, have a public policy or government affairs program (i.e. 361 of respondents do have a program, 116 do not).



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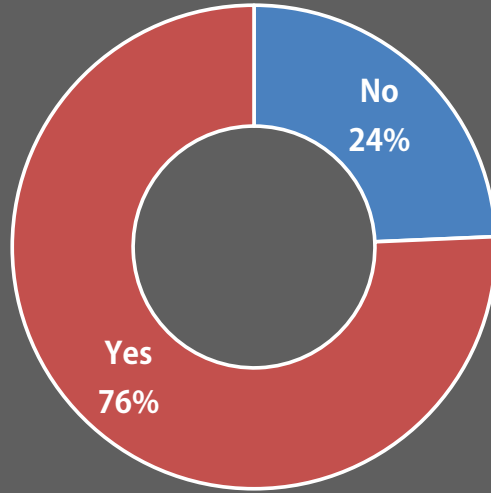
TOPLINE SUMMARY

- Nearly 3/4 of all respondents have some type of public policy/government affairs program. The nature of such a program however, and level of service sophistication, varies greatly.
- Not surprisingly, the larger the chamber of commerce the more likely it will have a public policy/government affairs program, as well as a political action program.
- Of those chambers who have a public policy program, 40% have a full-time staff devoted to policy, with those larger organizations of over \$1 million in revenues reporting 80% with full-time staff.
- With some surprise, slightly more chambers reported advocating on the state level than they do on the local level. Following state and local, federal advocacy still had nearly 70% of local chambers somehow participating.
- Transportation, education, and workforce development were the issues most likely to be advocated for.
- Email was the most frequently utilized communication tool, but similar to other research work on general chamber programming, Facebook was the most used social media tool.
- 68% of all chambers reporting have less than 25% of their membership in their grassroots network.
- When asked about the challenges or obstacles chambers face to grow their public policy/government affairs program, (for those that had one) or what prevented them from having one, the following are the top reasons in each category.
 - Those with a public policy/government affairs program:
 - Lack of resources
 - Fear of losing members
 - Divided membership
 - Those without a public policy/government affairs program:
 - Lack of resources
 - Not our mission
 - Board does not understand value
- For those chambers with a political action program of some type, the most and least frequently used tools are:
 - Most:
 - Debates
 - Ballot issues
 - Meet and greets
 - Candidate questionnaires
 - Least:
 - Candidate fundraising
 - Annual voters guides
 - Endorsements
 - Independent expenditures
- PAC involvement is greater with state level candidates than local level candidates.
- Chambers are less likely to have programs if they have a city county contract of some type, and if they have public officials on their board.

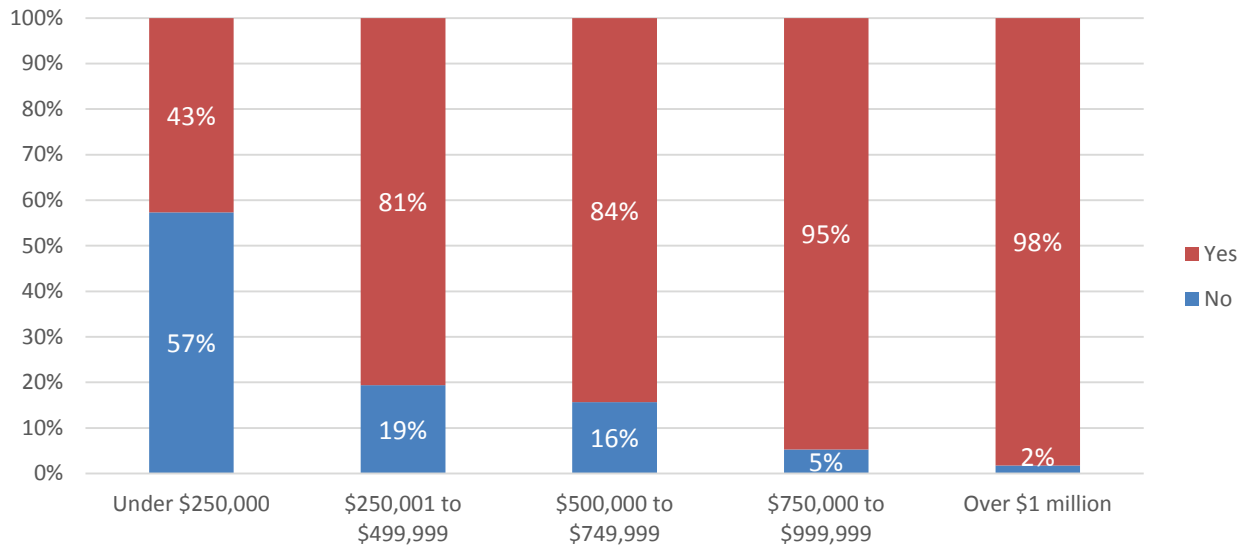


SECTION I: DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

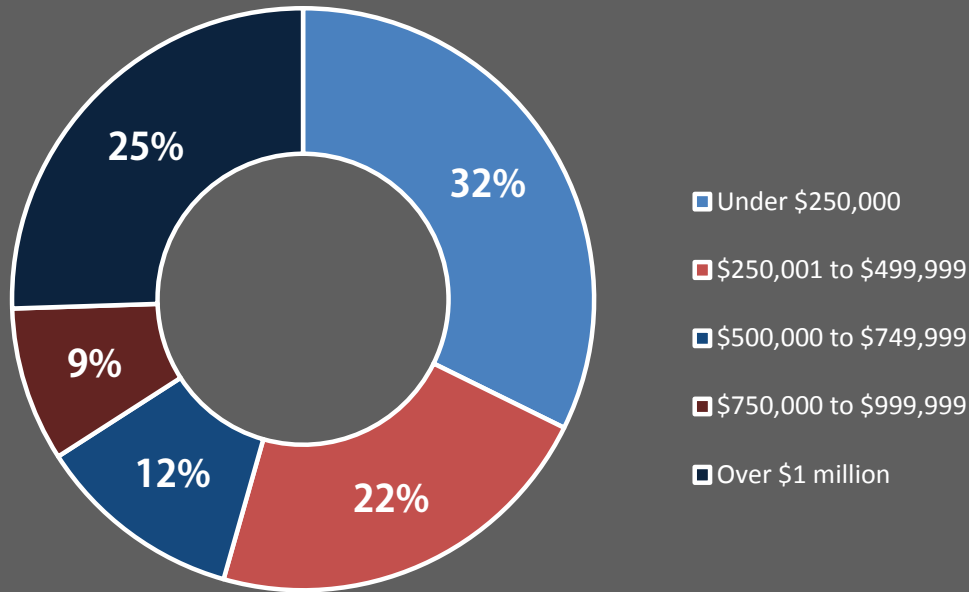
DOES YOUR CHAMBER HAVE A PUBLIC POLICY OR GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS PROGRAM?



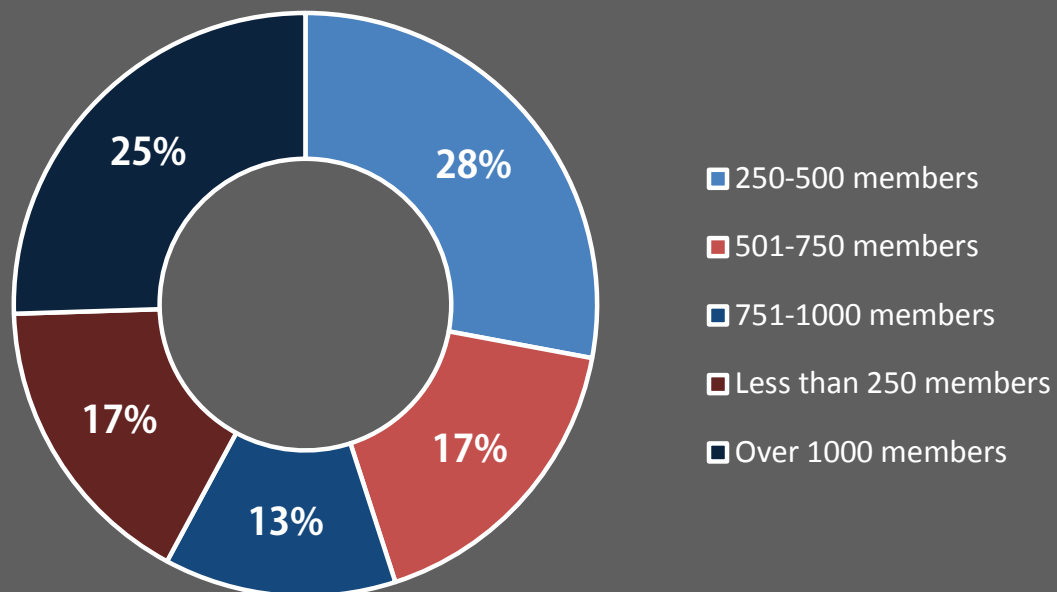
PERCENTAGES BY CHAMBER INCOME LEVEL



WHAT IS YOUR CHAMBER'S TOTAL ANNUAL INCOME?

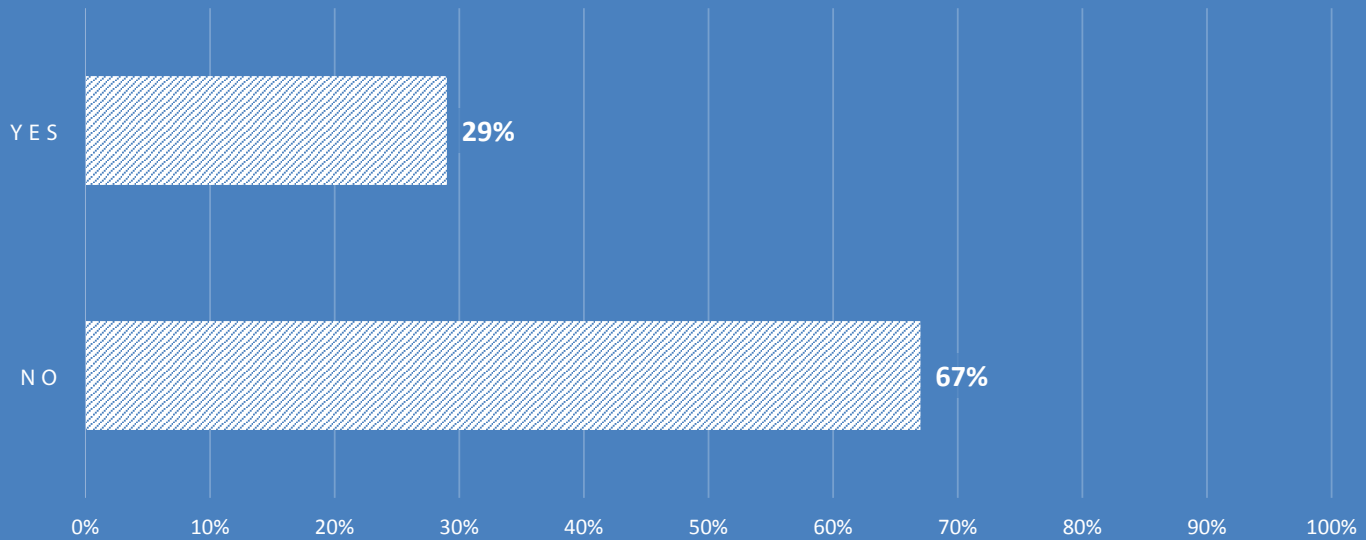


HOW MANY MEMBERS DOES YOUR CHAMBER HAVE?

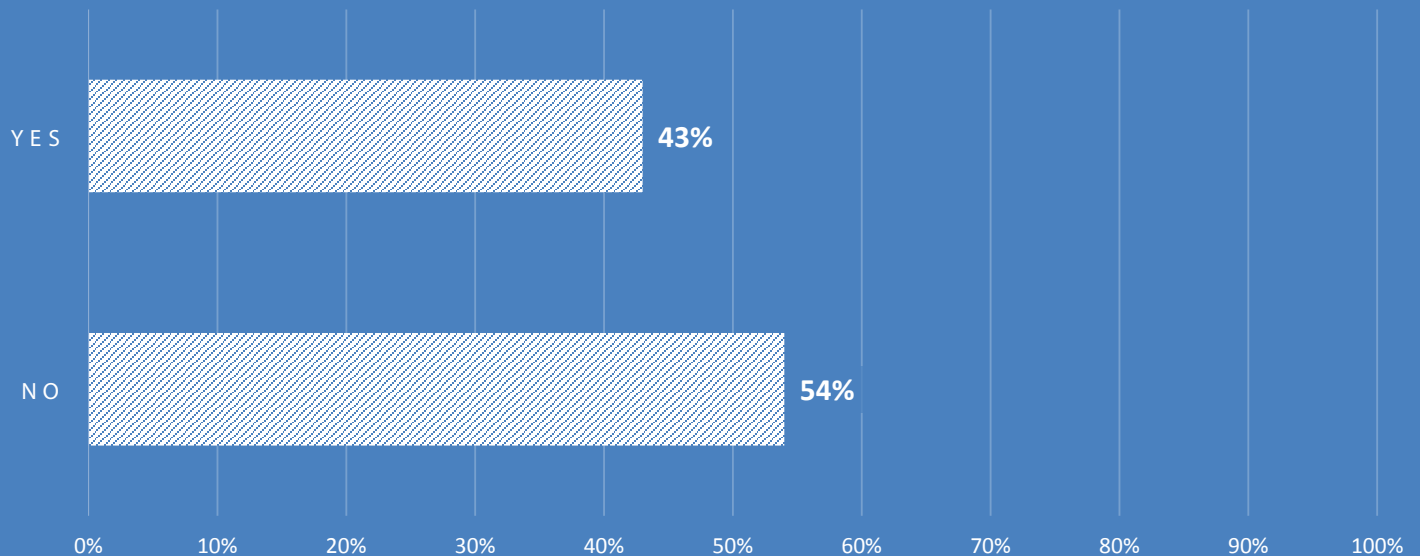


DOES YOUR CHAMBER HAVE A CONTRACT FOR SERVICES WITH YOUR CITY AND/OR COUNTY GOVERNMENT?

CHAMBERS WITH PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAMS ONLY

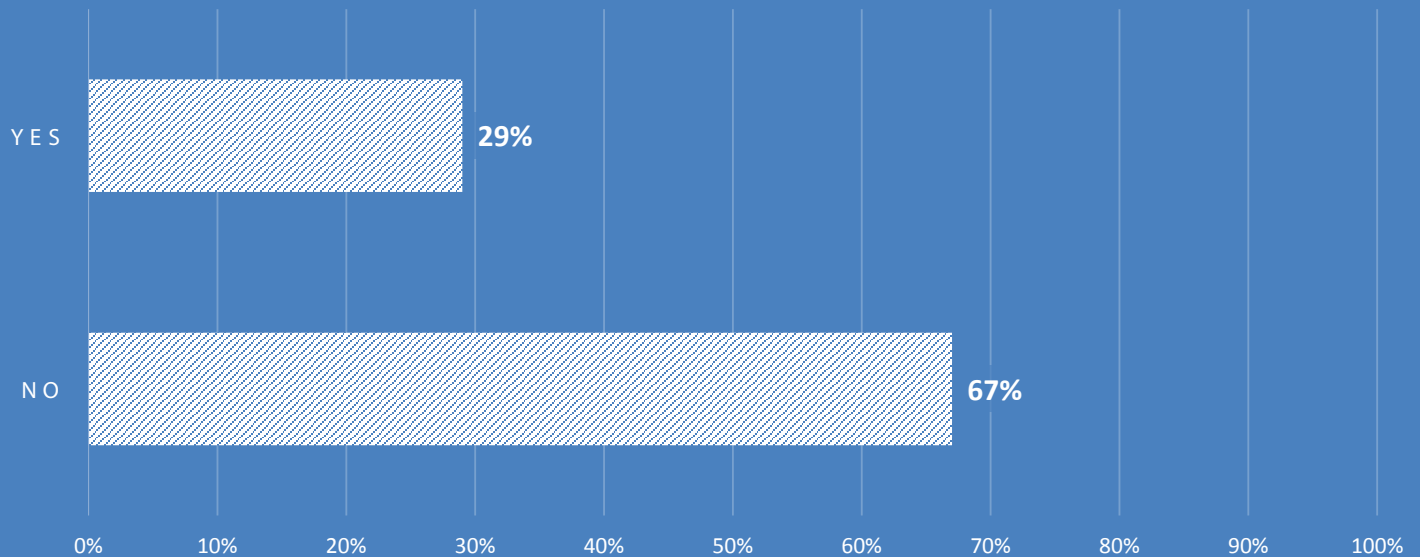


CHAMBERS WITHOUT PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAMS ONLY

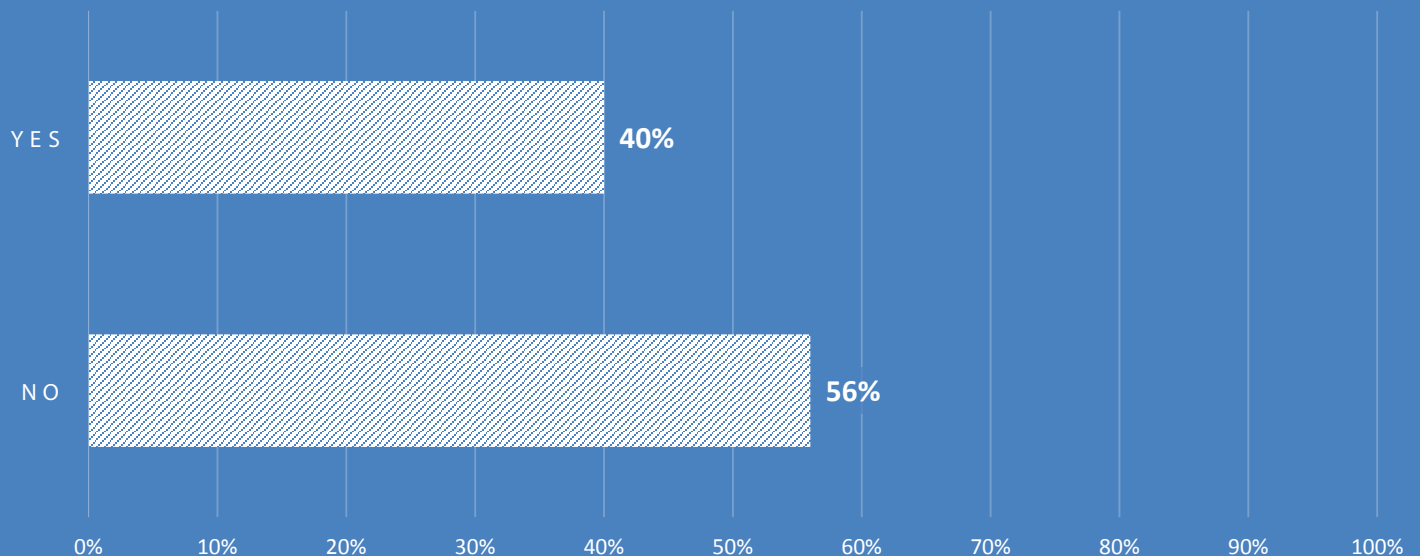


DO YOU HAVE ELECTED OR APPOINTED GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON YOUR BOARD OR POLICY COMMITTEES?

CHAMBERS WITH PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAMS ONLY



CHAMBERS WITHOUT PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAMS ONLY



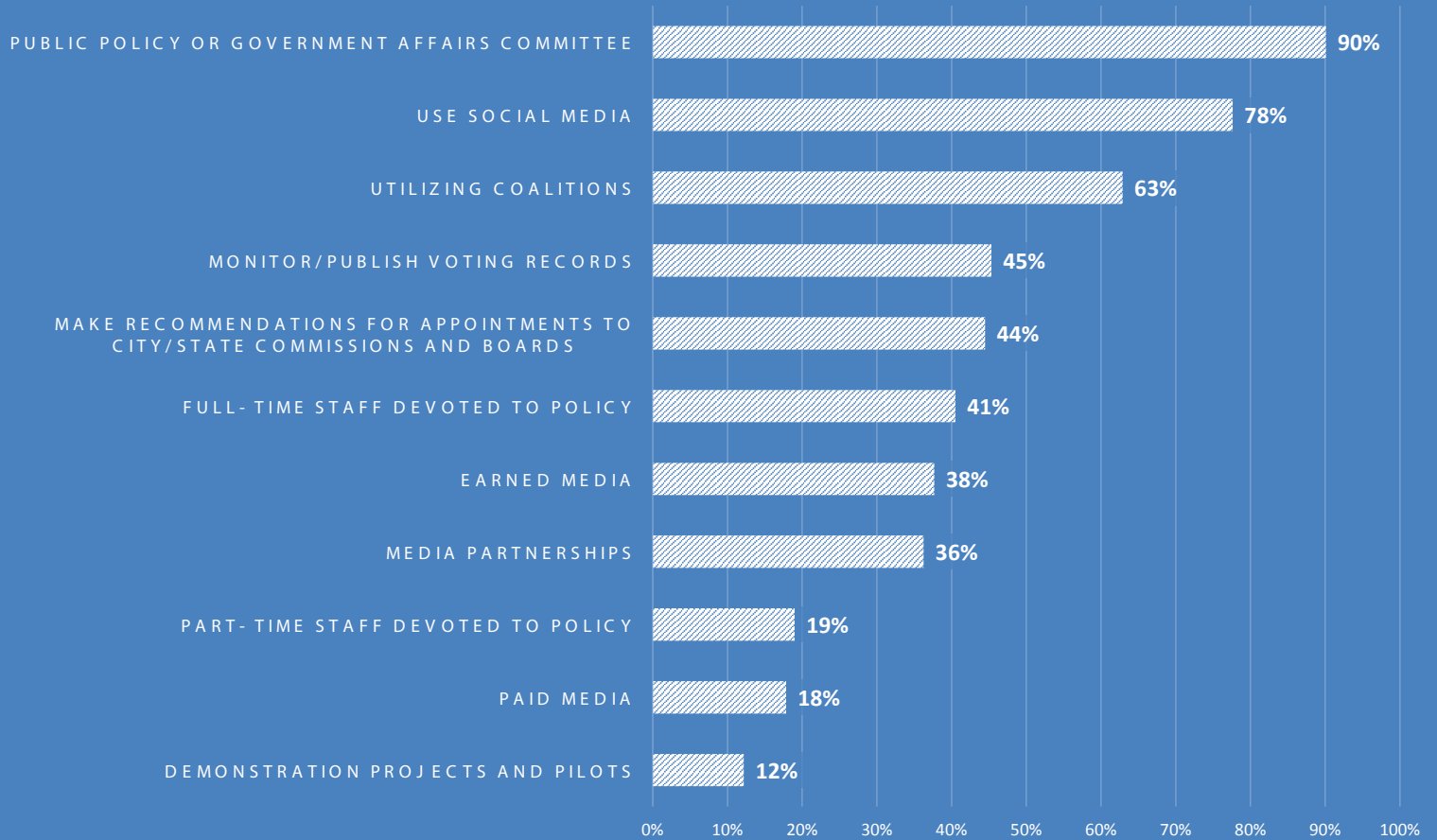


SECTION II:

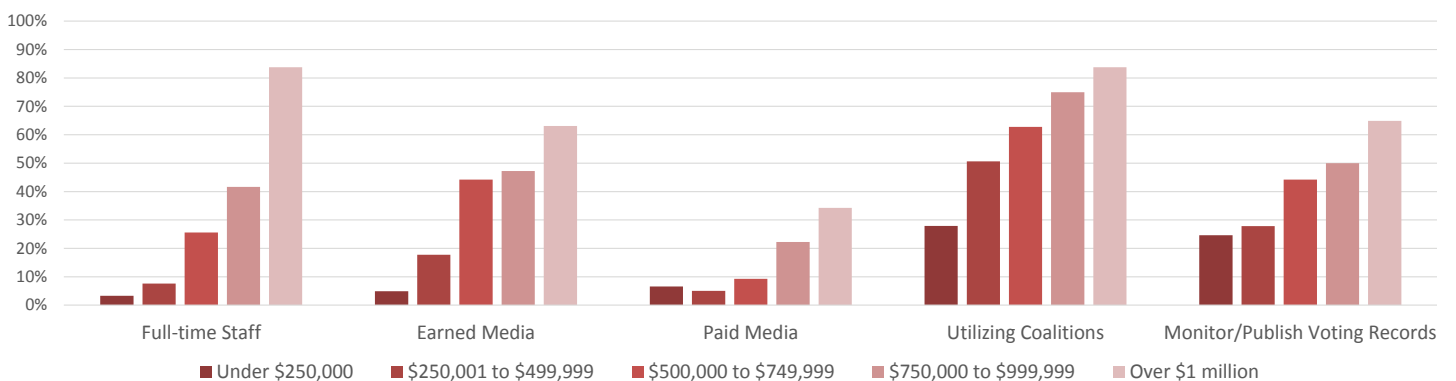
PUBLIC POLICY & GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

FOR CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE
WITH A PROGRAM

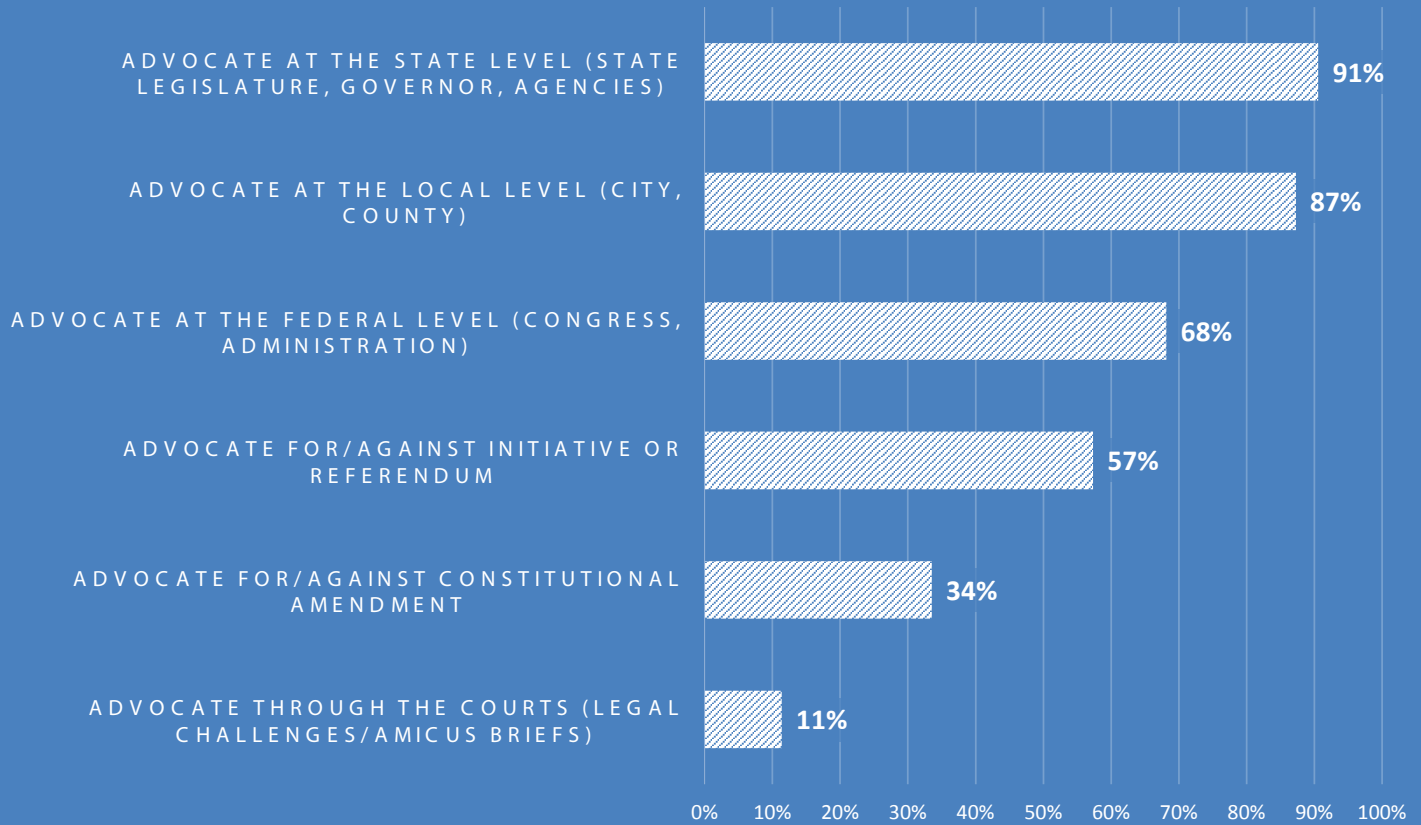
CHECK ALL OF THE FOLLOWING YOUR CHAMBER DOES TO ADVANCE YOUR ADVOCACY AND POLICY AGENDA



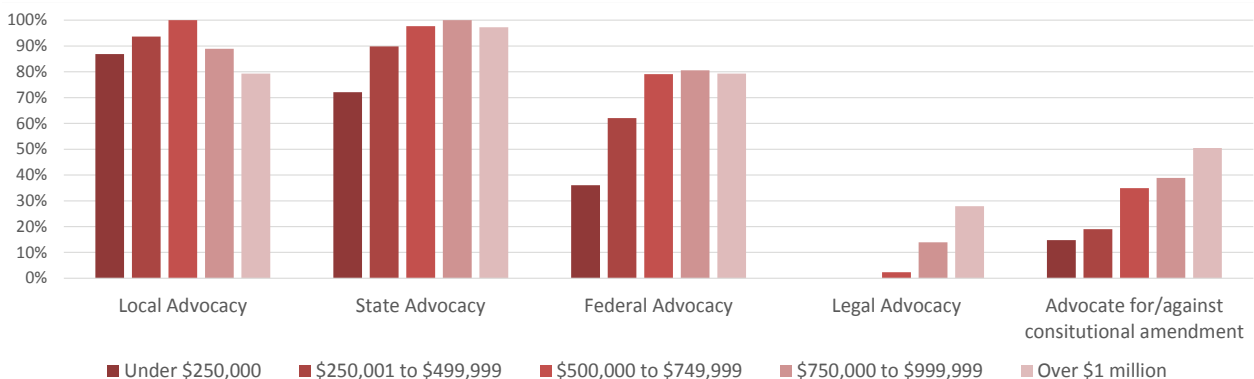
PERCENTAGES BY CHAMBER INCOME LEVEL OF KEY CATEGORIES



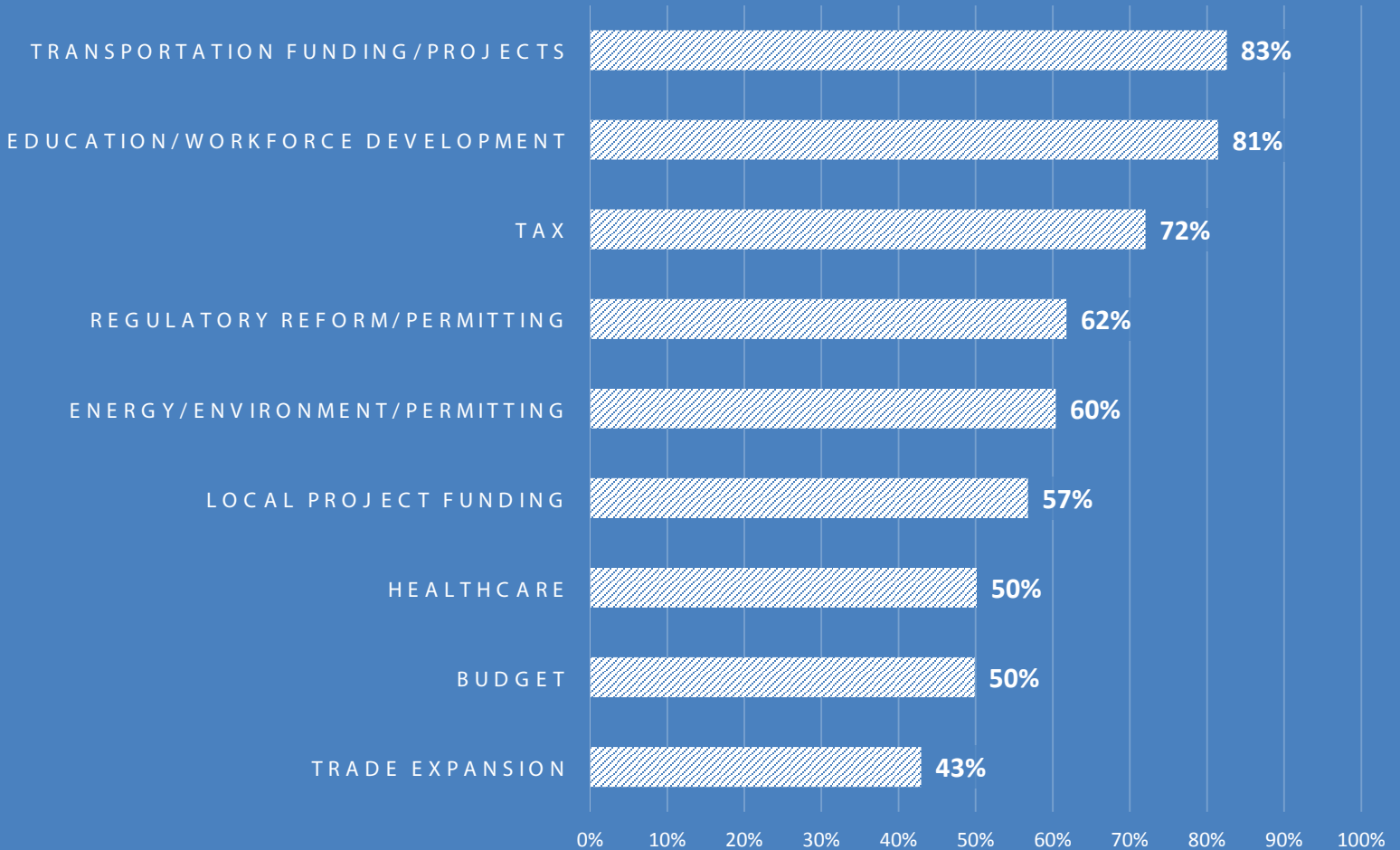
CHECK ALL THE FOLLOWING THAT DESCRIBES YOUR CHAMBER'S ADVOCACY/LOBBYING EFFORTS



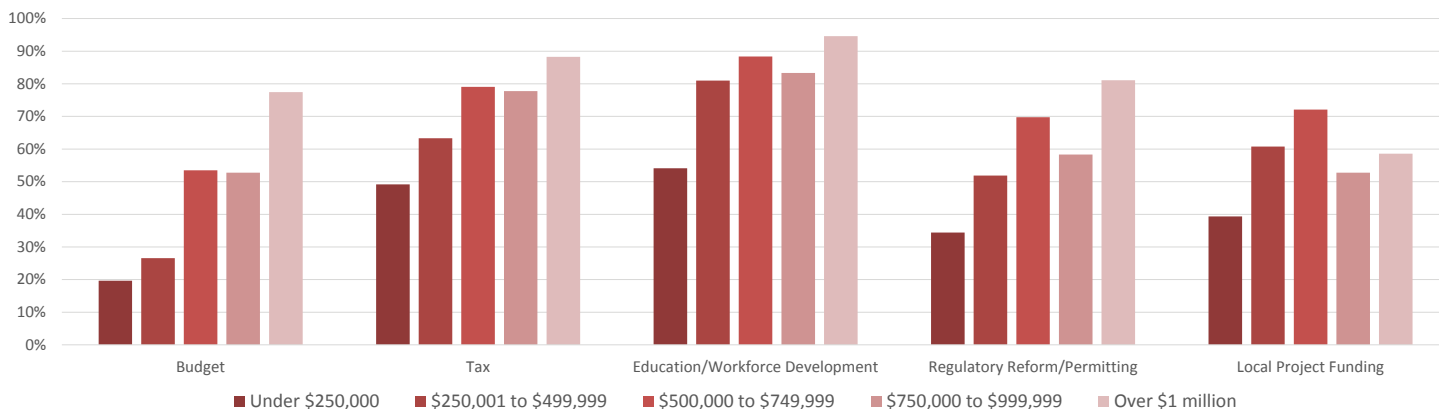
PERCENTAGES BY CHAMBER INCOME LEVEL OF KEY CATEGORIES



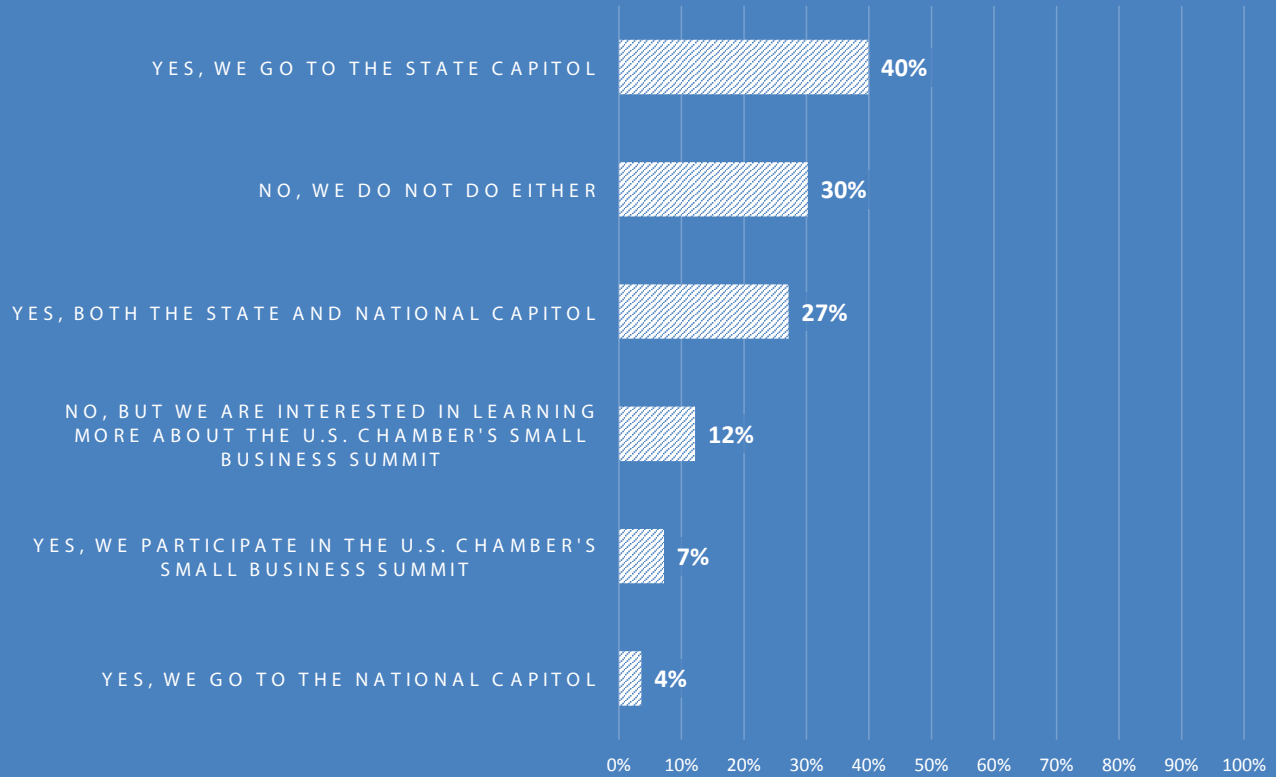
CHECK ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ISSUES THAT YOUR CHAMBER HAS ADVOCATED ON IN THE PAST YEAR



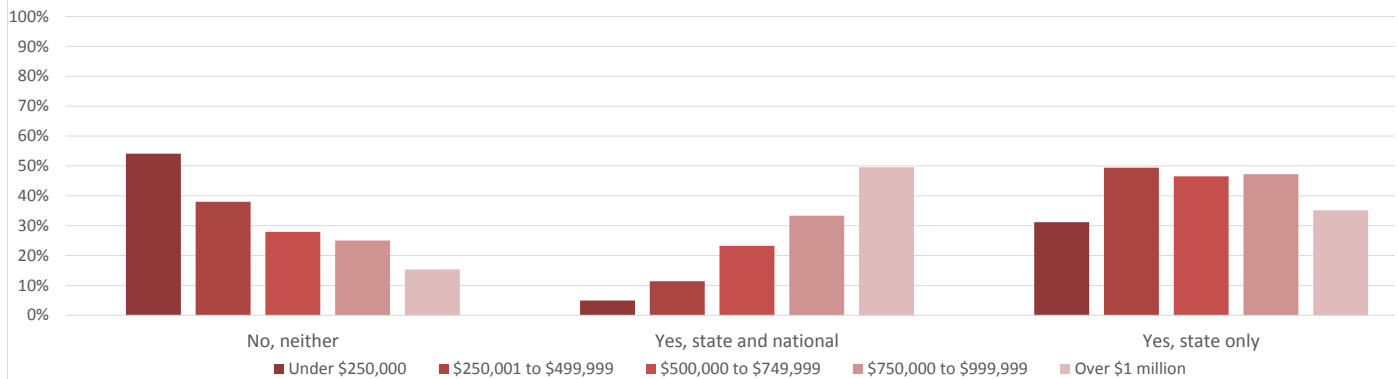
PERCENTAGES BY CHAMBER INCOME LEVEL OF KEY CATEGORIES



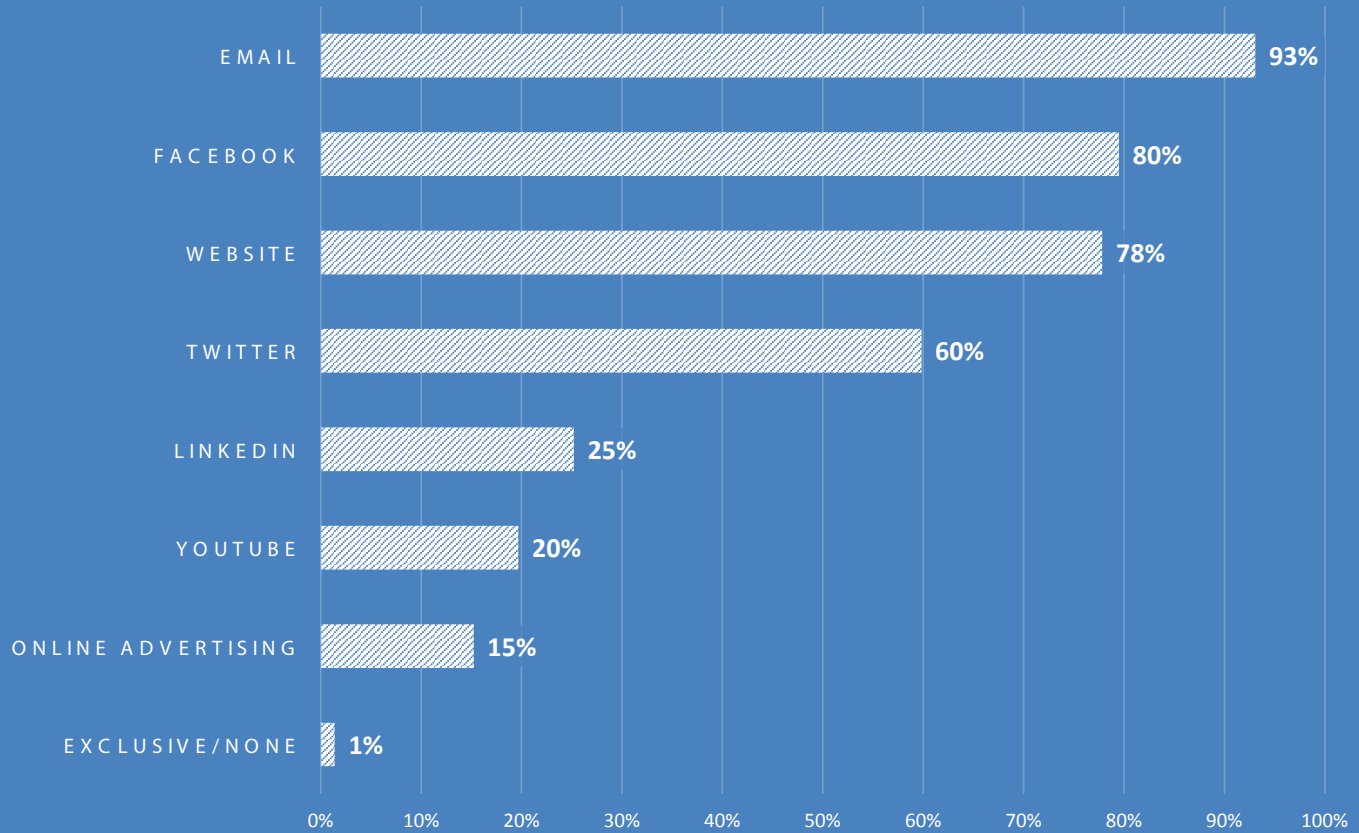
DOES YOUR CHAMBER ORGANIZE A FLY-IN OR DRIVE-IN TO EITHER YOUR STATE CAPITOL OR NATION'S CAPITOL? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.



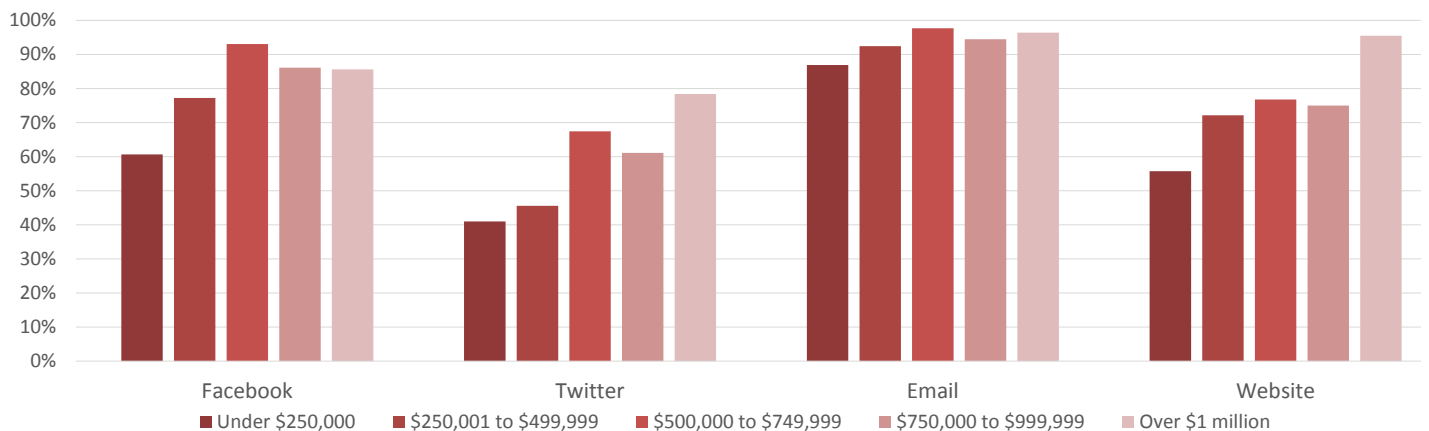
PERCENTAGES BY CHAMBER INCOME LEVEL OF KEY CATEGORIES



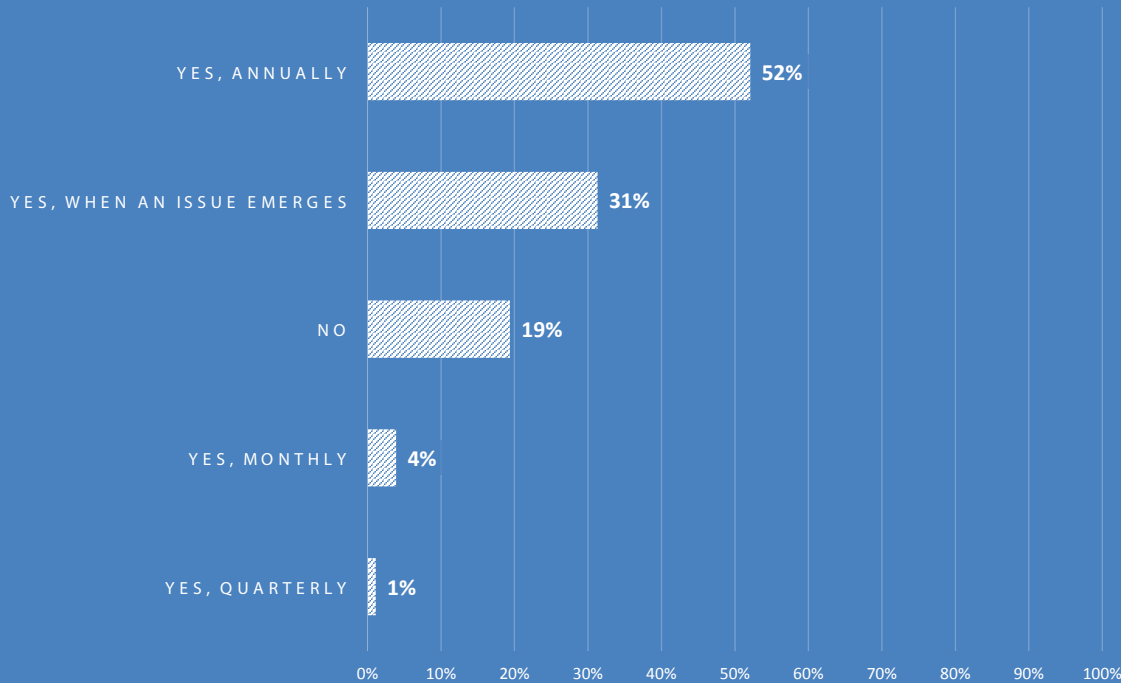
CHECK ALL OF THE FOLLOWING DIGITAL TOOLS YOUR CHAMBER USES FOR POLICY, ADVOCACY OR RELATED EFFORTS



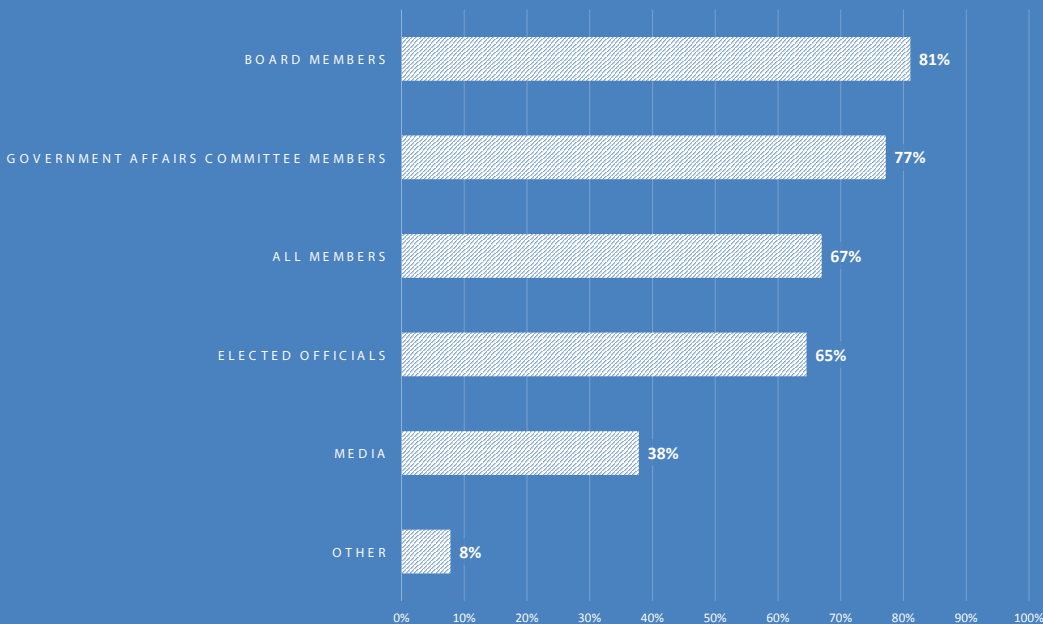
PERCENTAGES BY CHAMBER INCOME LEVEL OF KEY CATEGORIES



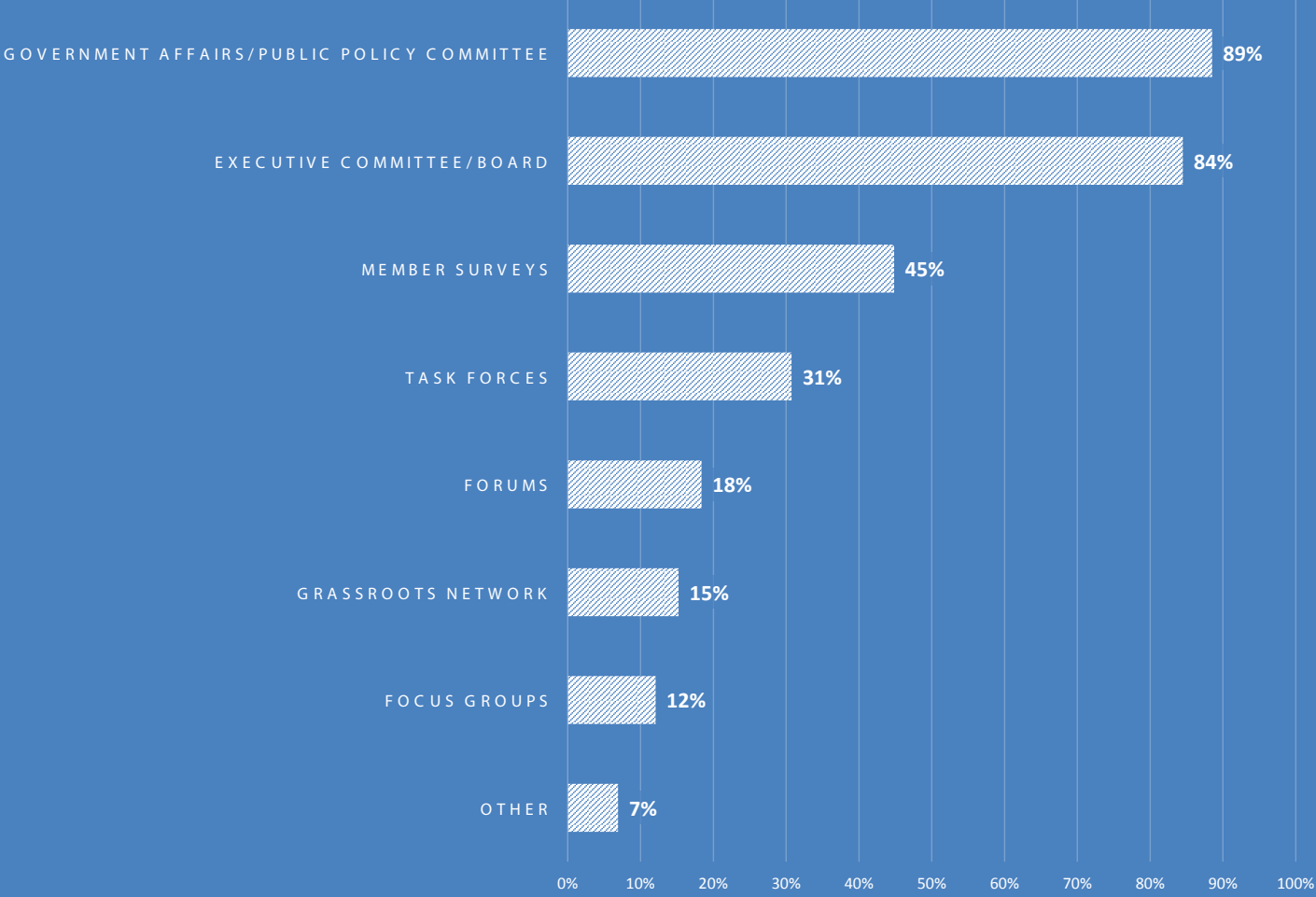
DO YOU PUBLISH YOUR CHAMBER LEGISLATIVE OR PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES AGENDA? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.



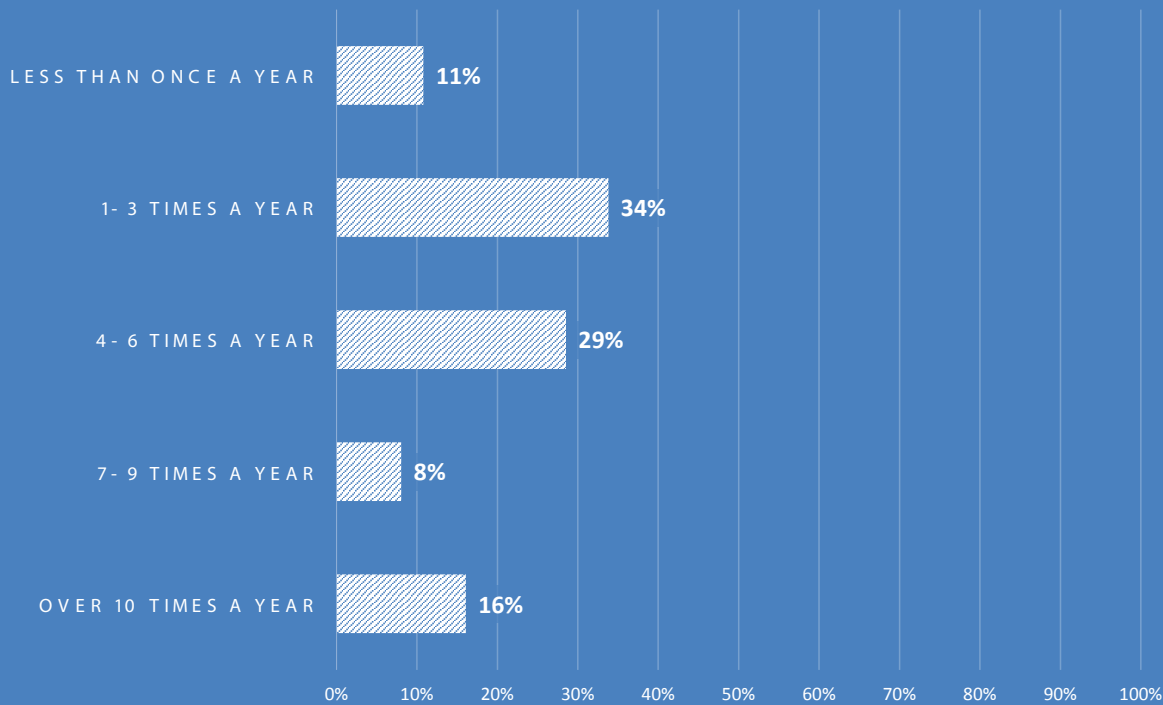
WHO RECEIVES YOUR CHAMBER'S LEGISLATIVE OR PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES AGENDA? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.



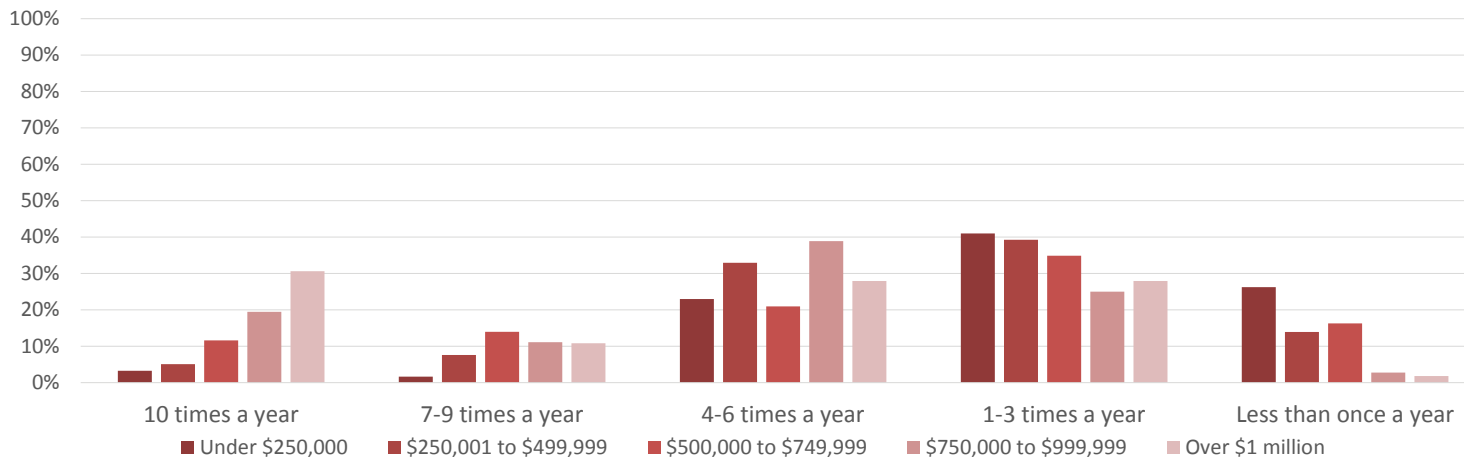
WHO HELPS THE CHAMBER DETERMINE A LEGISLATIVE OR PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES AGENDA? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.



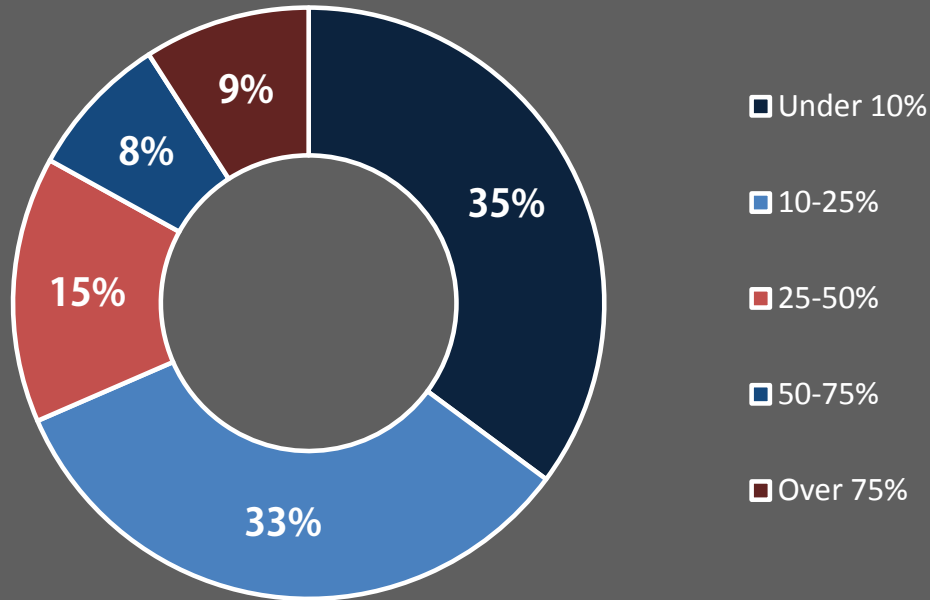
HOW OFTEN DOES YOUR CHAMBER SEND CALLS TO ACTION ON LOCAL INITIATIVES OR LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.



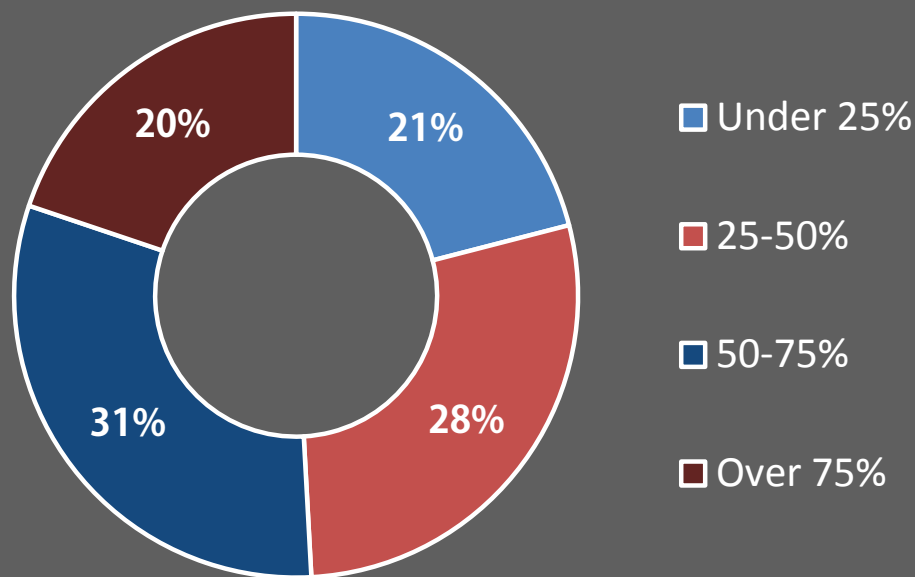
PERCENTAGES BY CHAMBER INCOME LEVEL OF KEY CATEGORIES



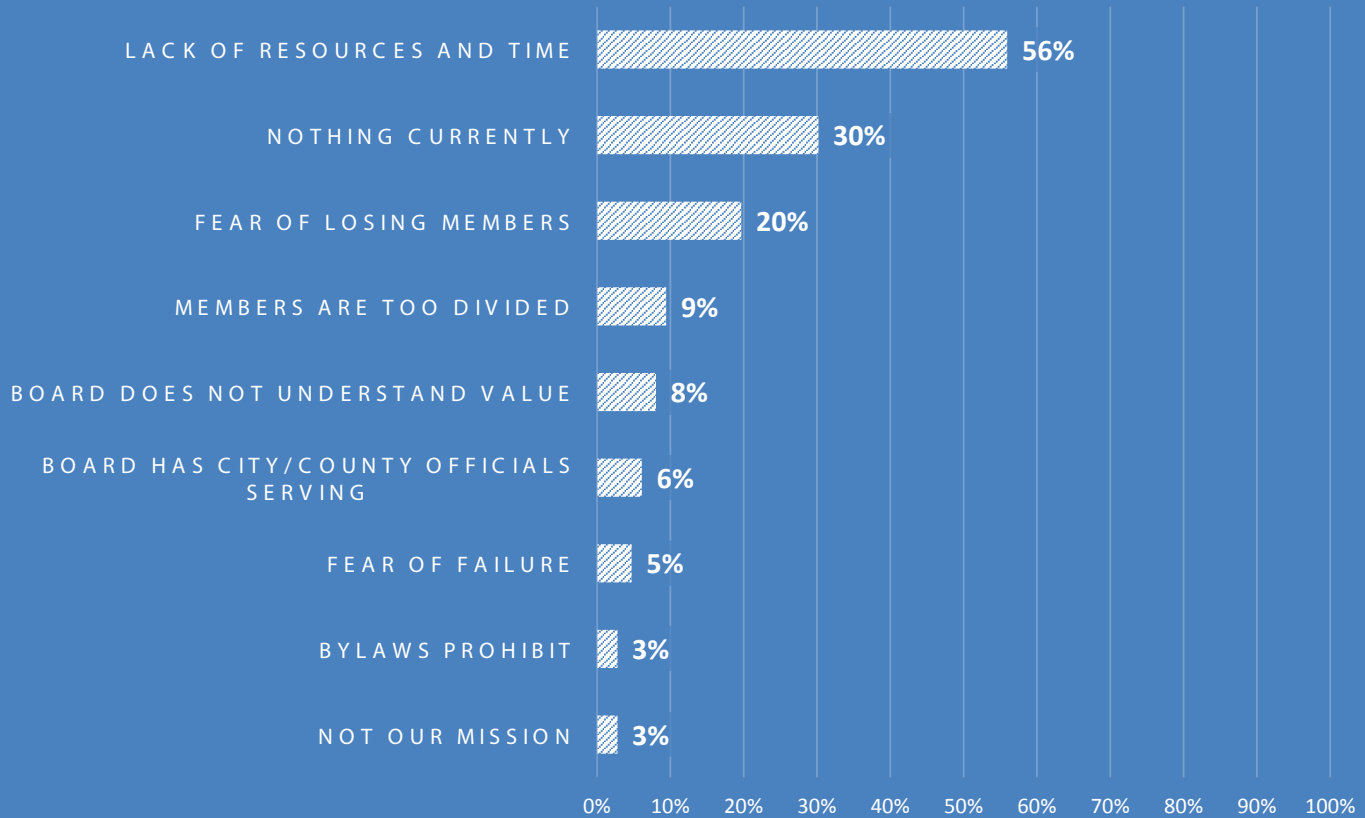
ABOUT WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS PART OF YOUR GRASSROOTS NETWORK?



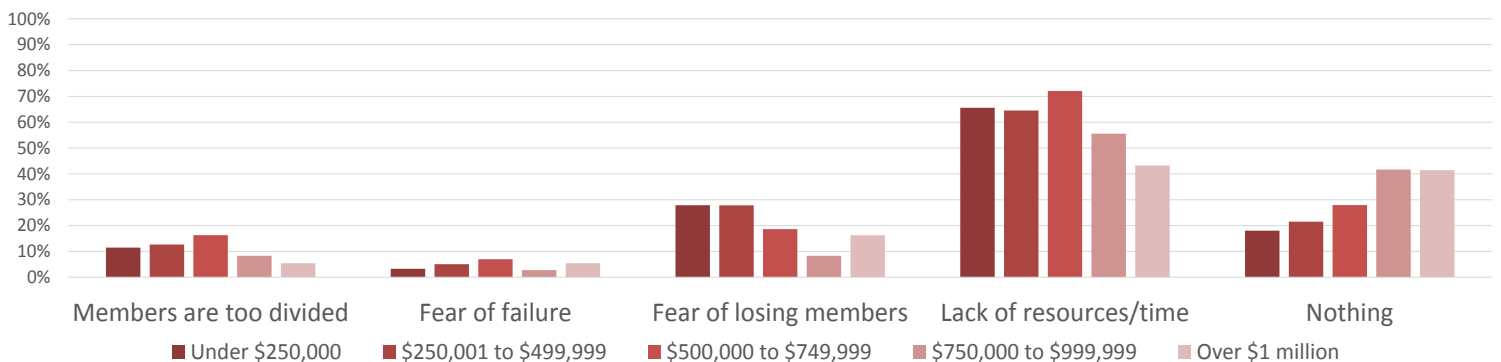
WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP DO YOU BELIEVE VALUES ADVOCACY WORK?



WHAT, IF ANYTHING, CURRENTLY PREVENTS YOUR CHAMBER FROM GROWING ITS ADVOCACY PROGRAM? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.



PERCENTAGES BY CHAMBER INCOME LEVEL OF KEY CATEGORIES



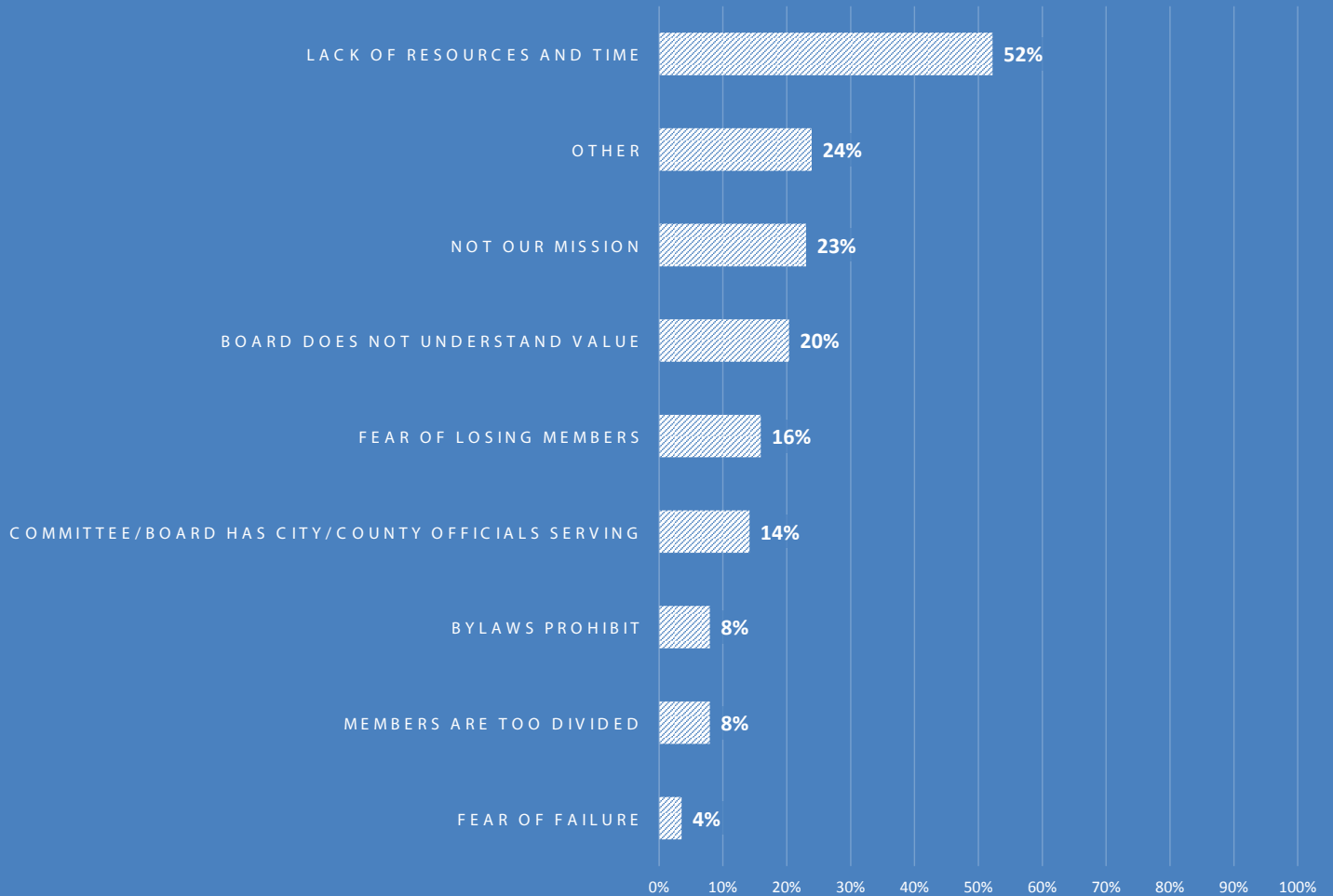


SECTION III:

PUBLIC POLICY & GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

FOR CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE WITHOUT A PROGRAM

WHAT CURRENTLY PREVENTS YOUR CHAMBER FROM HAVING AN ADVOCACY PROGRAM? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

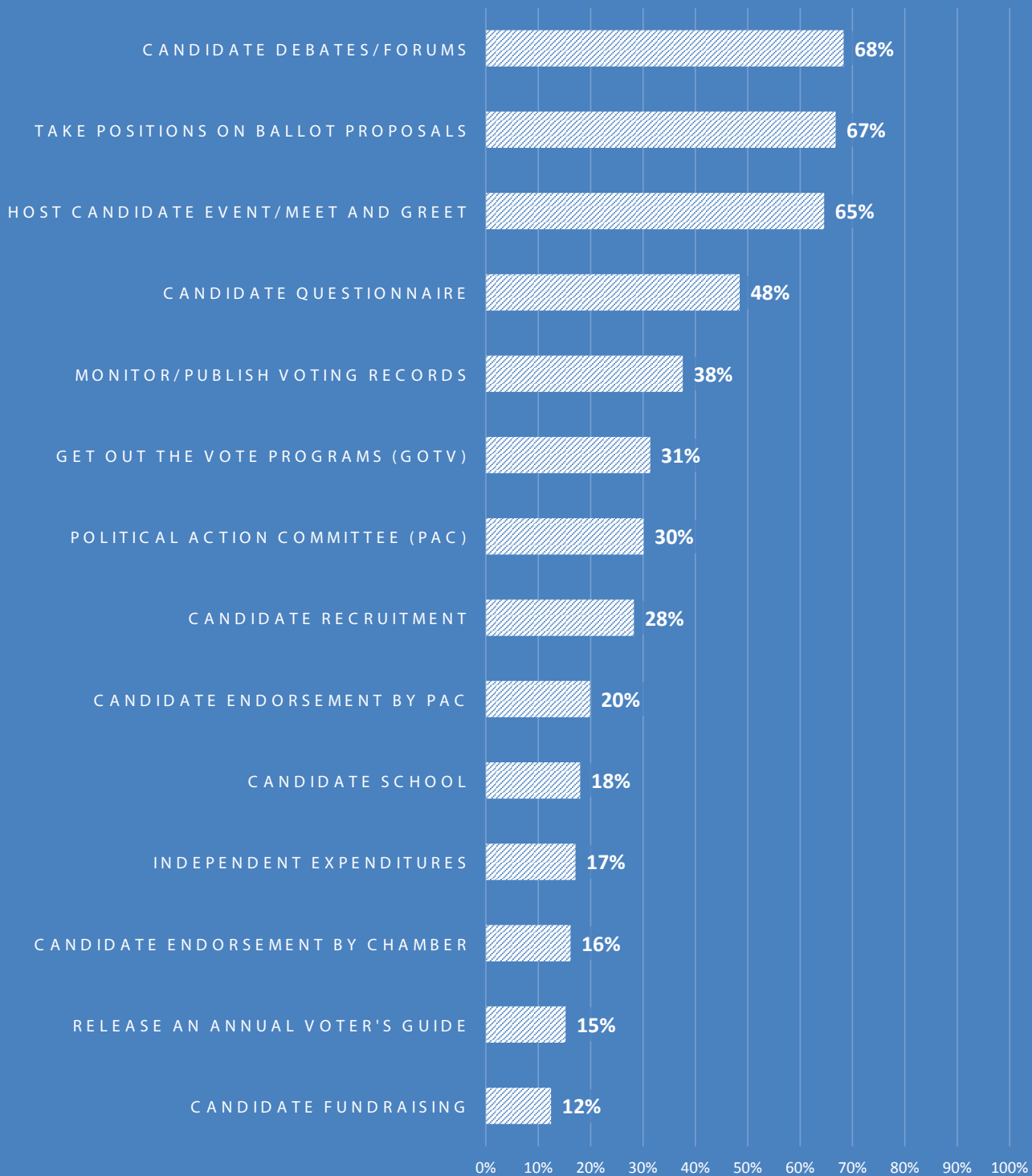




SECTION IV: POLITICAL ACTION

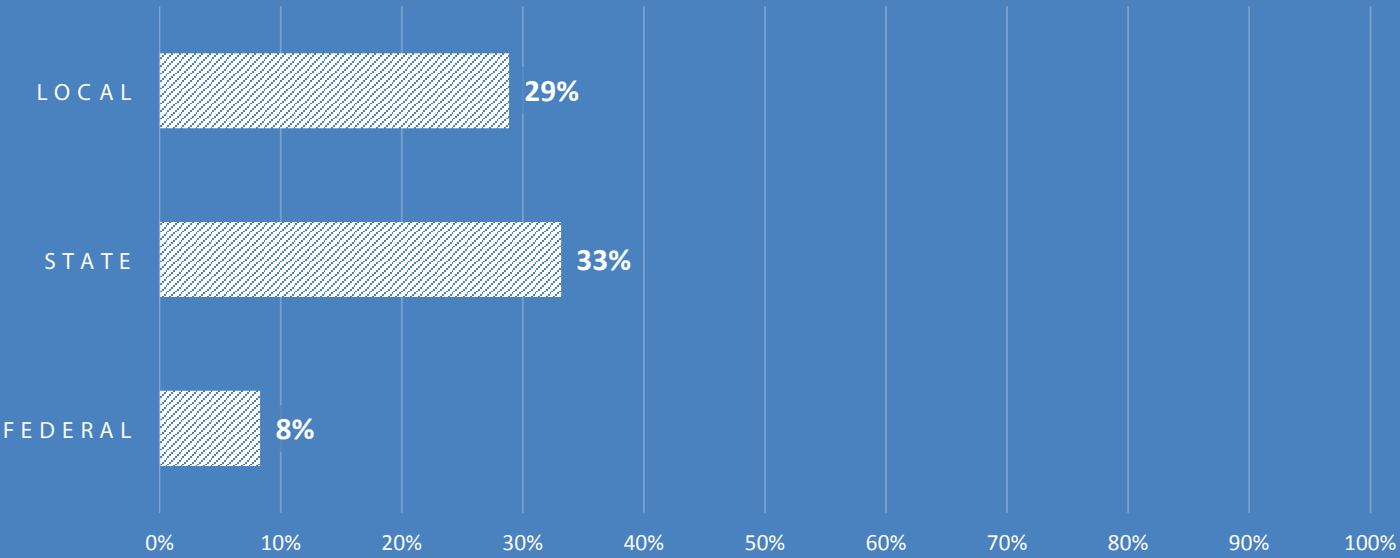
CHECK ALL OF THE FOLLOWING YOUR CHAMBER DOES INVOLVING CANDIDATES OR OTHER CAMPAIGNS

CHAMBERS WITH PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAMS



AT WHAT LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT IS YOUR CHAMBER PAC INVOLVED? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

CHAMBERS WITH PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAMS ONLY



REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACT LIST

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MONIQUE THIERRY, Executive Director

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