



## Credits

AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture 2021 Survey Report published by American Institute of Architects Kansas City.

AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture 2021 Survey Report data contribution & participation by AIA Kansas City member firm leadership.

AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture 2021 Survey Report prepared by AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture Committee.

AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture Committee Co-Chairs:

Linda Alouane, Assoc. AIA  
Sally Wurtzler, AIA

Special thanks to the following individuals for exceptional contribution to the AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture 2021 Survey Report:

John Brown, AIA  
Daniel Siroky, AIA  
Greyson Rubin, AIA  
Kim Weiss

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In 2015, AIA National created the Equity in Architecture Commission, a panel of leading architects, educators, and diversity experts, to investigate diversity and inclusion in the profession. AIA Kansas City is engaging in this call to action through its own AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture committee.

The AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture mission is to provide resources for members and the community to improve awareness and success on issues around diversity, inclusion, and equitable practice. Topics of interest include the recruitment and retention of talent, advancement in the profession, and furthering the value of design in society through diversity-inclusive actions. AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture has outlined its “A.C.E.” goals to Advocate. Connect. and Educate.

The AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture 2021 Survey Report is an effort to understand our membership’s perception and goals with regards to diversity, inclusion, and what enables workplace success for all. Through the participation of our members, we are continuing the effort of the 2017 survey to analyze the numbers and gain insight on a baseline for future strategy and goal setting.

Along with the American Institute of Architects, there are numerous organizations that have published national reports on the subjects of diversity, inclusion, and equity. Many of these studies indicate growing diversity in the workforce pipeline as well as a need to foster workplace cultures and policies that are inclusive and measurably equitable. Hot topics of conversation include

gaps in salary compensation, unconscious bias, lack of flexibility for family obligations, entreaty for improved empathy, lack of representation, impact of Covid-19, social and racial justice events of 2020, and more.

Through these findings, there is a visible opportunity to improve how we connect with one another. It is important for our community to assist one another in destigmatizing unconscious bias to encourage progress and self-education. As designers, there is a strong business case that diverse representation assists with business development and fostering connection to the diverse communities we serve, in addition to improving our capabilities to design and develop thoughtful, inclusive-minded projects.

Our goal in this endeavor is to amplify the successful measures our community is taking toward a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable profession as well as to highlight growth opportunities for continued progress toward that outcome. We hope this report inspires conversation in our chapter, in our community, and in our profession.

Sincerely,

Sally Wurtzler, AIA (co-chair 2020-2021)  
Linda Alouane, Assoc. AIA (co-chair 2021-2022)  
John Brown, AIA (co-chair 2022-2023)

AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture  
Committee Co-Chairs

## Forward



Linda Alouane, Assoc. AIA



Sally Wurtzler, AIA

## Why

To advance our connections. How we connect to one another, our clients, our leaders, our colleagues, and our community contributes much to our personal development, professional career trajectory and how we approach design. Through self-awareness, our chapter can establish a baseline for measurable progress toward a more inclusive, more diverse, and more equitable profession.

## Goals

To spark more questions. The AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture 2021 Survey Report findings are the first step in the conversation. We hope this report inspires its audience to dig deeper into the discussion, advocate for continued progress, and share the information to help educate others.

## Definitions

- *Diversity* is the presence of individuals representing more than one gender, ethnicity, national origin, age, socioeconomic stratum, sexual orientation, physical ability, as well as other inherited factors contributing to a distinct personal perspective or experience.
- *Inclusion* is the active engagement of diversity in discussion groups and decision-making roles.
- *Equity* is the unbiased, impartial, equal and fair treatment of individuals.

## Methods

The 2021 Survey Report was an unbiased, inclusive effort driven by a diverse group of practitioners. The AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture Committee generated the survey questionnaire within a format of four key sections (Workplace Culture, Recruitment and Retention, Perception, and Demographics). Online access to the survey was distributed to chapter member firm leadership, inviting participation over a period of thirteen (13) weeks from July 19, 2021 through October 21, 2021. AIA Kansas City staff provided the participants' data in an anonymous format to the committee for analysis and summary.

Prior to the AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture 2021 Survey, several steps were completed by the committee to prepare the final questionnaire, including three (3) one-hour inclusive discussions with focus groups of AIA Kansas City members to review the questions from the 2017 survey in order to edit and/or add some questions to better understand current challenges and successes regarding diversity, inclusion, and equity within our local community.

Through investigations over the course of three (3) months, the AIA Kansas City, Equity in Architecture committee identified key findings revealed through the survey responses. The process of investigation involved several phases, including cleansing the raw responses into usable data, performing spreadsheet comparisons, data modeling analysis, and finalizing the graphic representation of the findings.

## Background



## Key Findings

The AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture Firm Survey revealed strong findings\* in the following areas:

### *What Workplace Provisions Lead to Success?*

Most of AIA Kansas City firms reported they provide financial support for their employees' career development, such as paying for ARE tests. They also value mentorship within the firms but don't require it. This executive summary highlights which workplace provisions may contribute to professional achievement. The frequency of performance reviews as well as the level of communication between leadership and employees have an impact on the firm success. Sharing achievement is a way to point out how well the company is doing on a certain domain and inspires peers to keep on the good work as it contributes to the firms' success. This section also highlights the resources in place to promote inclusion in the workspace. It can be through social events, trainings, open forums, or company committees.

### *What Workplace Provisions Support Work-Life Balance?*

The majority of AIA Kansas City firms that responded to the survey were showing support for their employees to manage an appropriate work-life balance. The support comes from the compilation of a variety of incentives such as the amount of vacation days and sick days, work flexibility, and compensation. This executive summary shows which workplace provisions may support individuals in our industry managing harmony among personal and professional demands.

### *How Does AIA Kansas City Engage Diversity?*

In the 2017 survey the majority of AIA Kansas City responses reported an active or supportive level of engagement in diversity. In the 2021 firm survey (mainly completed by the leadership), 60% of the firm responded that they don't have a Diversity & Inclusion Policy. This executive summary highlights the various ways those 40% firms advocate for diversity and inclusion especially after the 2020 events (pandemic and social injustice). This section also discloses the level of salary-scale transparency which has an influence on income equity.

### *AIA Kansas City Diversity & Inclusion By the Numbers*

By the numbers, this executive summary highlights top achievements of the Kansas City chapter and top growth areas for consideration based on survey responses from the 2019 and 2021 surveys.

## Conclusion

Thank you to all of the AIA Kansas City members that participated, advocated, and engaged in the efforts of the AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture committee! The findings of this exercise would not be possible without membership involvement. It is the intent of this executive summary to provide insight into the current state of diversity, inclusion and equity in the AIA Kansas City chapter and to inspire invested conversation and dialogue within our community and with one another.

\*This disclaimer informs readers that this report is a summary of statements that belong solely to the survey participants, not verified fact-based data, and does not necessarily reflect the American Institute of Architects organization, chapter, committee or other group or any single individual.

## Background



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### Representation

### Key Findings

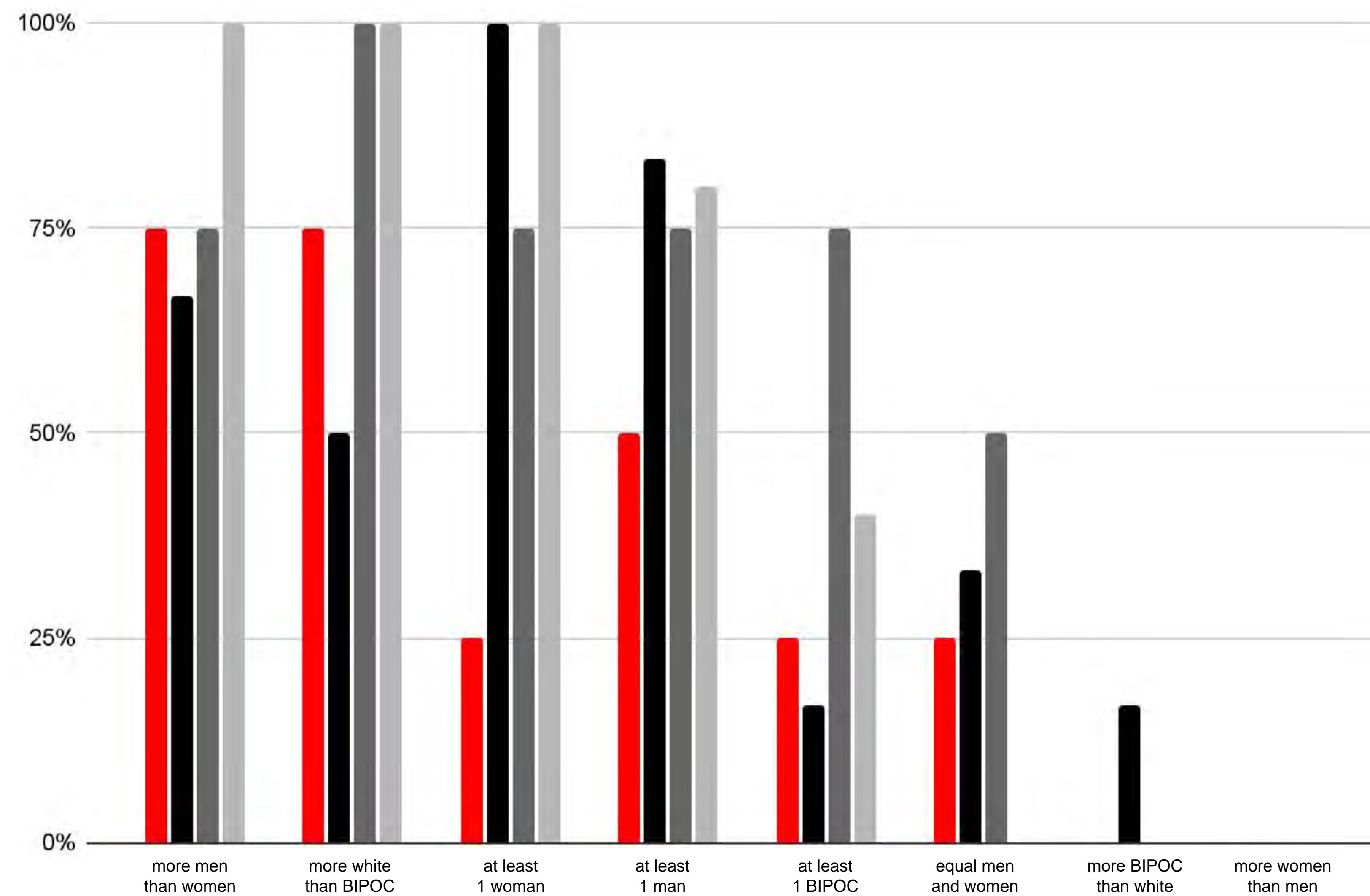
1| What Workplace Provisions Lead to Success?

2| What Workplace Provisions Support Work/Life Balance?

3| How Do Firms Engage Equity & Diversity?

### AIA Kansas City By the Numbers

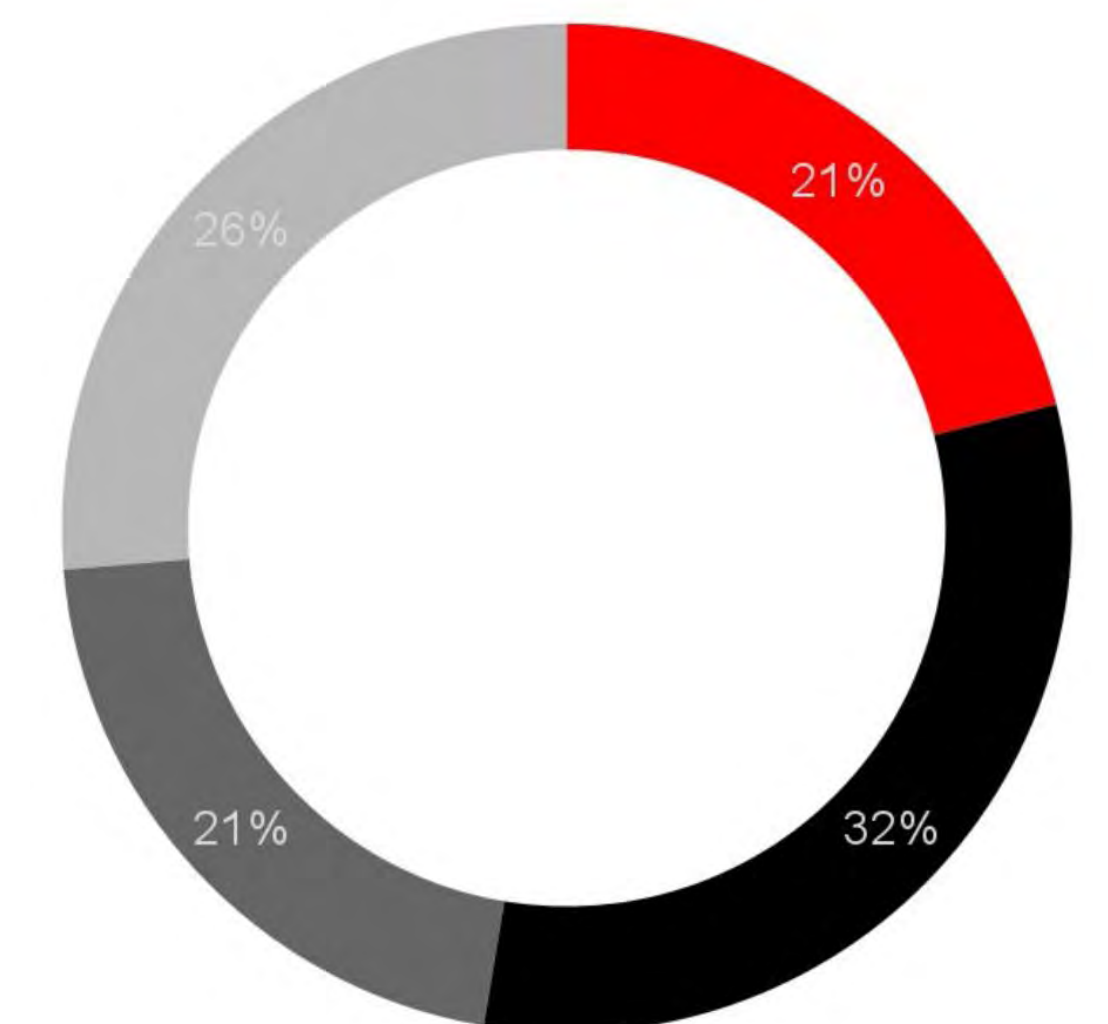
**Leadership Demographics**  
by Firm Size



**Representation**

A total of 19 AIA Kansas City firm leaders participated in the 2021 survey. The survey was sent out to 73 firm leaders in our chapter. The results shown in this survey reflects 26% of the firms in Kansas City chapter.

- Firm Size Under 10      4
- Firm Size 11 - 20      6
- Firm Size 21 - 90      4
- Firm Size Over 90      5



**Total Survey Response**

**79%**

4 firms out of 5 responded they have more men than women or than BIPOC in their leadership.

**26%**

a quarter of the firms responded they have as many men as women in their leadership.

**1**

1 firm responded they have more BIPOC than white persons in their leadership.



## 1| What Workplace Provisions Lead to Success?

Resources are vital to the success of individuals thus to the success of the organization.

There were a lot of comments about resources throughout the survey. Licensure support is a key component of resources in Architecture firms. Study material, financial support, on the job experience requirements, days off for testing, and long-term financial reward for licensure.

Mentorship is another resource to help the individual have a sounding board to understand the profession, as well as leadership principals within the culture of the firm and possibilities outside the firm.

As the survey reveals, the integration of the concepts and ideas of career support, mentorship and performance reviews are important resources for a successful culture in every office.

This survey broke down the resources provided by the firm as follows

**Career Support**

**Mentorship**

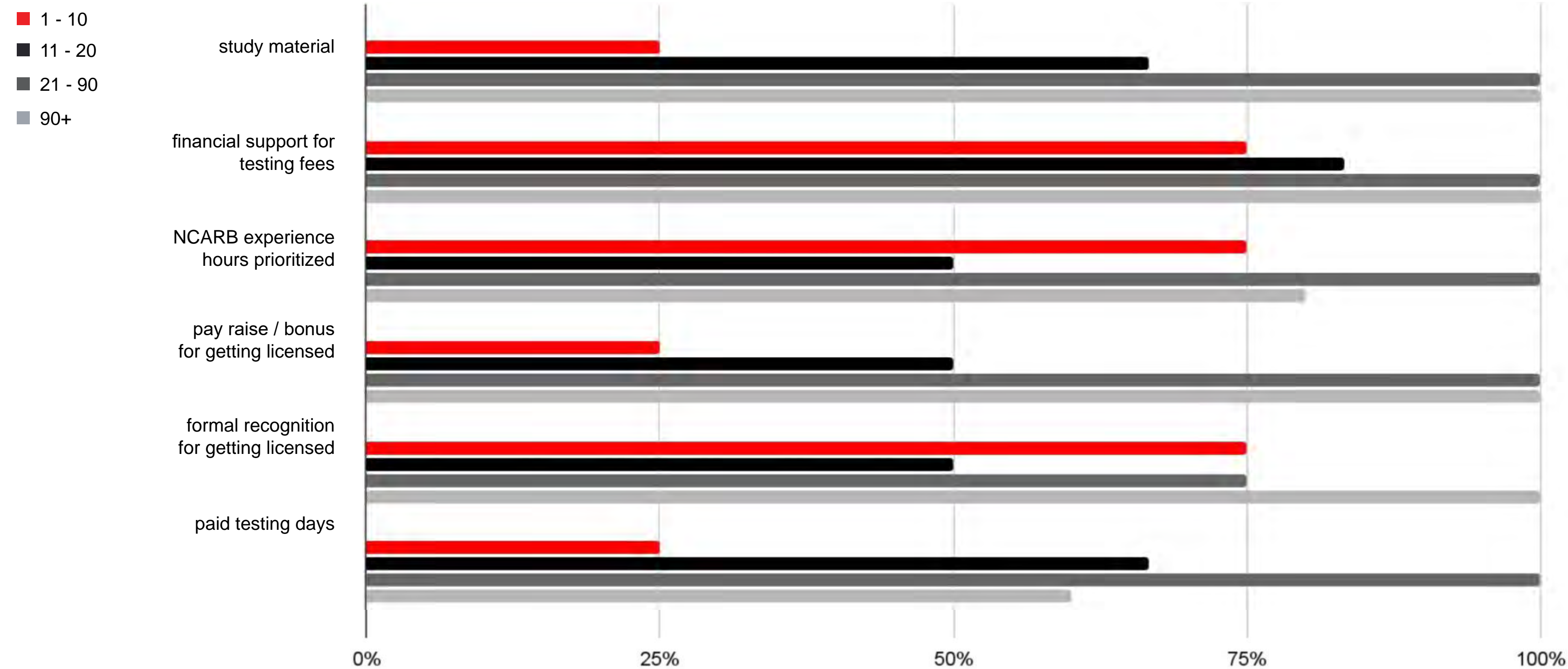
**Performance Reviews**

**Communication**

**Inclusions**

### Licensure Resources Provided

by Firm Size



## 1| What Workplace Provisions Lead to Success?

### Career Support

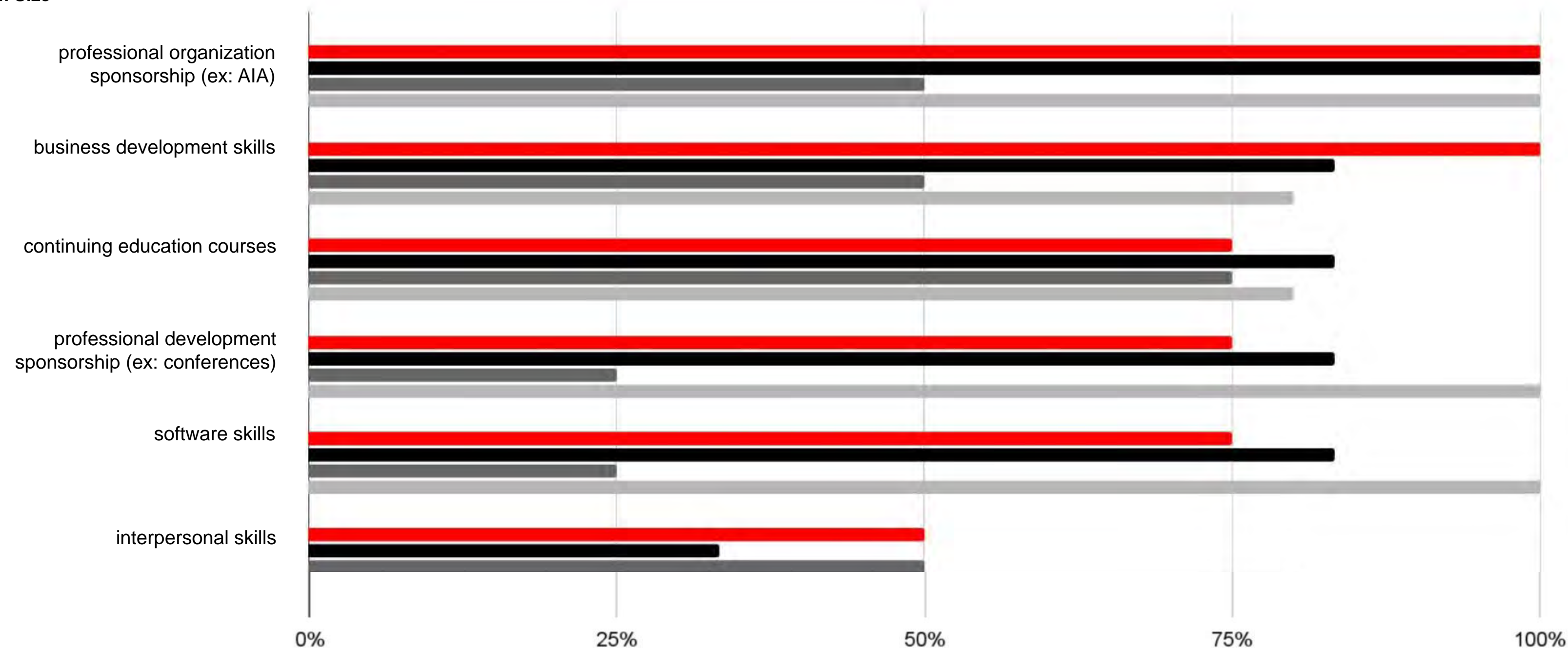
The 2017 survey revealed correlations between having the support of a mentor/advocate, job satisfaction and job responsibility all contributed to workplace success.

As we moved into 2020 and 2021, our current survey revealed the following: all the firms that participated provided licensure resources as well as training resources for their staff. As firms in the KC area continue to help staff grow, there is also a strong push to work on business development skills and interpersonal skills to help employees be better advocates for clients as we work with them on the built environment.

Career support involves many facets of the employment culture. Across the gamut of firms large and small, creating and assisting in the success of our staff is essential to the success of the firms and the clients they serve.

### Training Resources Provided

by Firm Size



### Total Survey Response

**89%** a high majority of firms responded they provide financial support for testing fees.

**63%** nearly 2 out of 3 firms provide paid testing days.

**79%** 3 out of 4 firms provide continuing education courses.

### Training affected by pandemic?

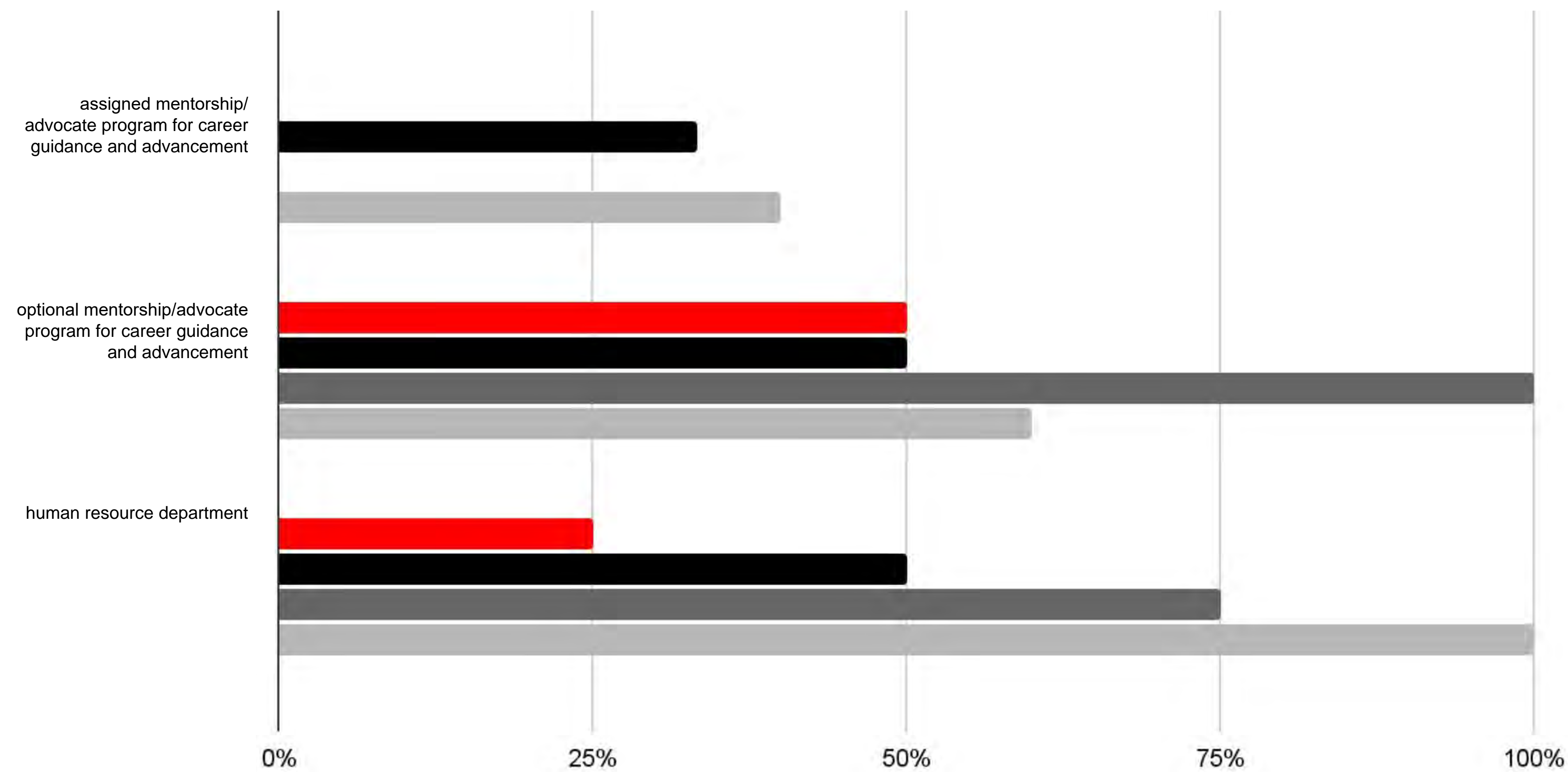
Not surprisingly, the majority response was that training has moved to an online format, with less direct training and onboarding. Some noted that time in person has become much more precious and accountability for training has become more important.



**Resources Provided for Career Development**

by Firm Size

- 1 - 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 90
- 90+



**1| What Workplace Provisions Lead to Success?**

**Mentorship**

The correlation between having the support of a mentor/advocate, job satisfaction and job responsibility all contributed to workplace success.

In the KC area, firms strongly believe that mentorship is important. Whether it is in a formal or informal setting, having an opportunity for someone to have the guidance of a mentor is important. In 2020 and 2021 the pandemic did not change that importance. Firms just had to start looking at alternate ways to keep the conversation going.

Work from home has affected the quality of the time between the mentor and mentee. The lack of in-person meetings does not allow for a genuine connection and camaraderie.

**Mentorship affected by Pandemic?**

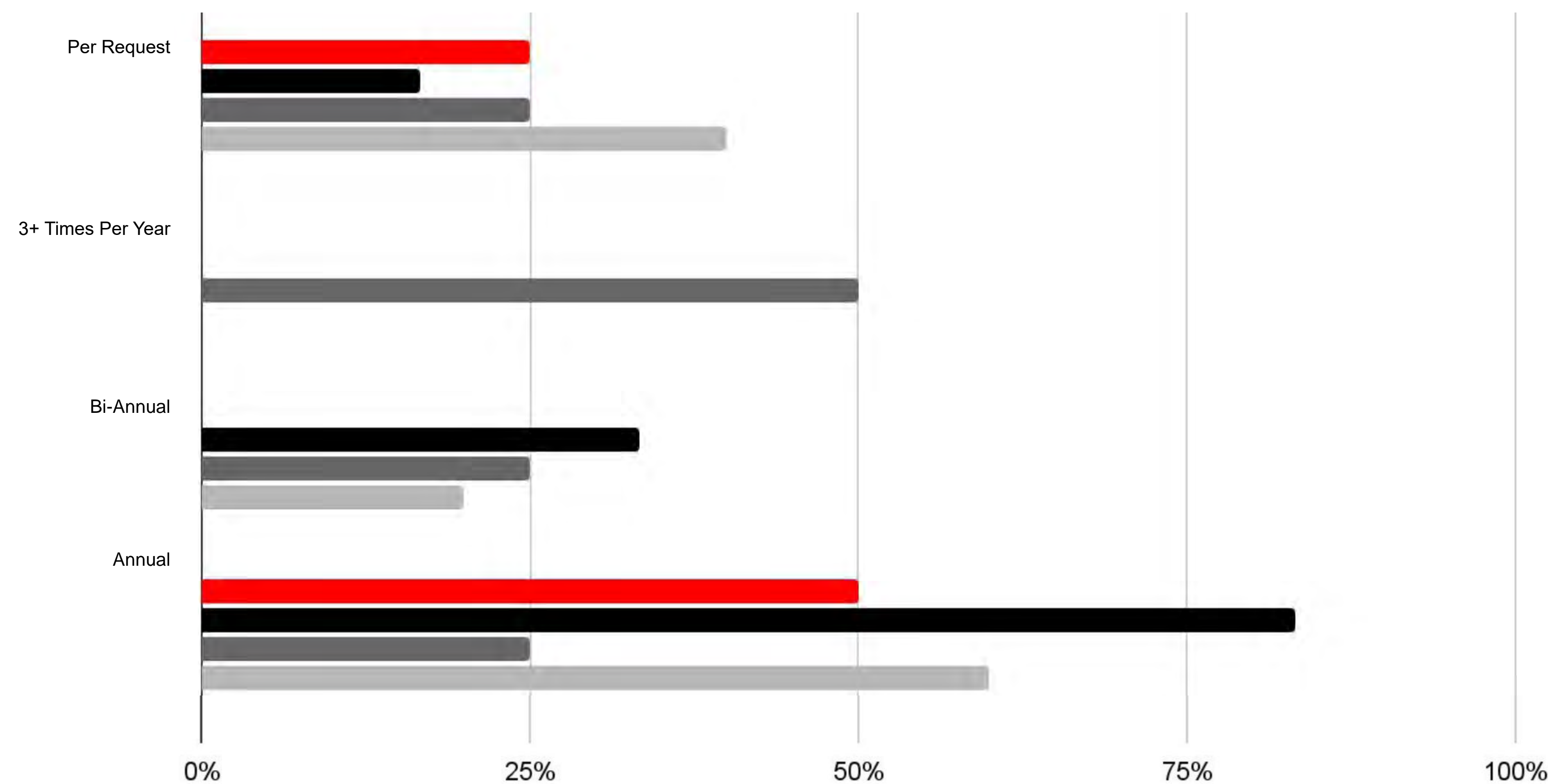
The majority of the response was that mentorship had not changed significantly due to the pandemic. Some stated it was more difficult to spend time together in person but continued mentoring via Zoom, Teams, etc.

While some found that working from home was detrimental to informal mentoring which takes place in the office, some felt it had improved because less travel was occurring. More focus has been put on individual career development plus functional role development for mentoring as well.

**Frequency of Performance Reviews**

by Firm Size

- 1 - 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 90
- 90+



**1| What Workplace Provisions Lead to Success?**

**Performance Reviews**

Performance reviews are an essential means to provide critical feedback to the team members of a firm. 95% of the firms responding have performance reviews in some capacity. 79% of the firms have reviews 1 to 2 times a year and another 11% of the firms have them quarterly. 90% of the responding firms have reviews on a regular scheduled basis to help communicate progress and job satisfaction from both the employer and employee.

Although we are continuing to work through the worldwide pandemic, about 77% of the responding firms did not see a disruption in the review process.

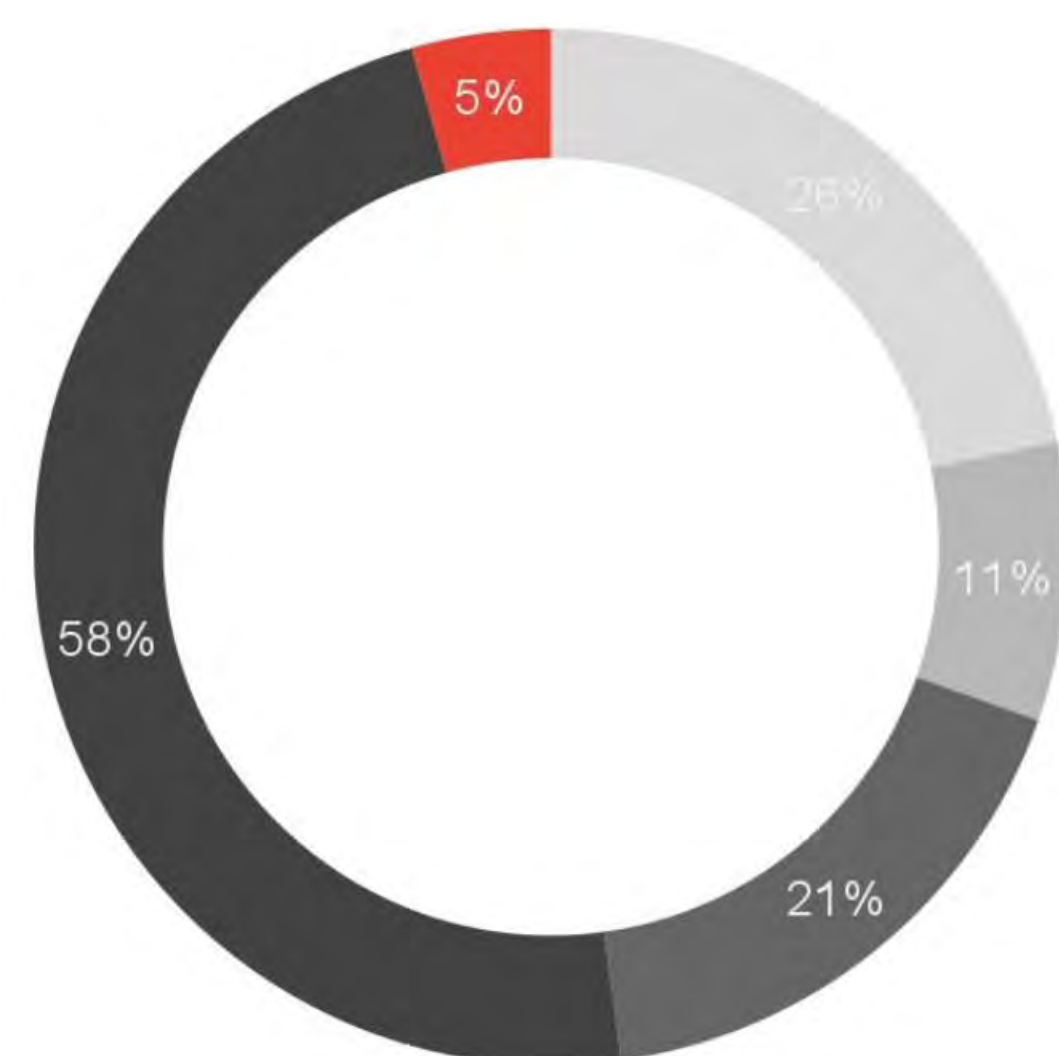
The disruption was seen as some firms skipped 2020 reviews and others used the virtual platform for execution of the process. As the high percentage demonstrates the value of open and continual dialogue between leadership and staff about performance is a key to employee and firm success.

**Mentorship affected by pandemic?**

26% responded the pandemic had an effect on the performance reviews process. Of those who responded, the majority of the performance reviews were delayed to be in person, but immediately went back to a normal schedule when employees were back in the office. Many of the performance reviews were moved to a virtual platform rather than doing them in person.

**Total Survey Response**

- Per Request
- 3+ Times Per Year
- Bi-Annual
- Annual
- None of the above



# 1| What Workplace Provisions Lead to Success?

## Announcements

In this survey we asked “How are important decisions and announcements communicated to your staff”.

The majority of responses were that important decisions and announcements were communicated to staff via weekly and/or monthly meetings that were in person or via a virtual platform. There were also a few responses indicating email communication is an important component as well.

## Achievement

In this survey we asked “How do you recognize achievement in your firm”.

The majority of firms responded they recognize achievement by acknowledging the individual at group meetings, town halls, and parties. Next on the list was a financial reward, increased responsibility, or a promotion.

## Communication

Communication is the thread that neatly ties all the components of success in our organizations. Without communication, there is failure at all levels of the organization. Important decisions, announcements, achievement recognition, career development, reviews, mentorship, and proper and adequate training all factor in to how a firm communicates with the team members of the firm.

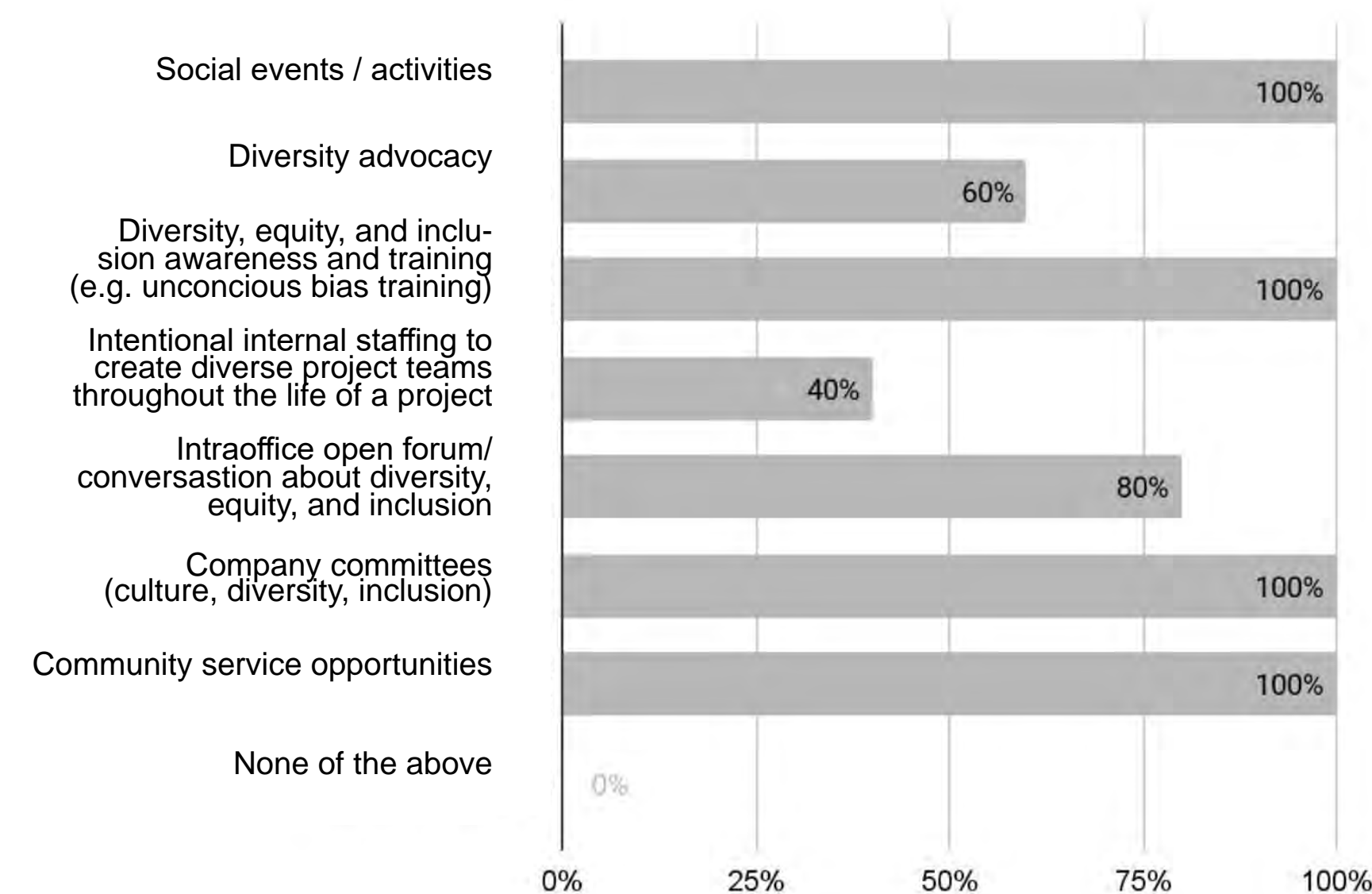
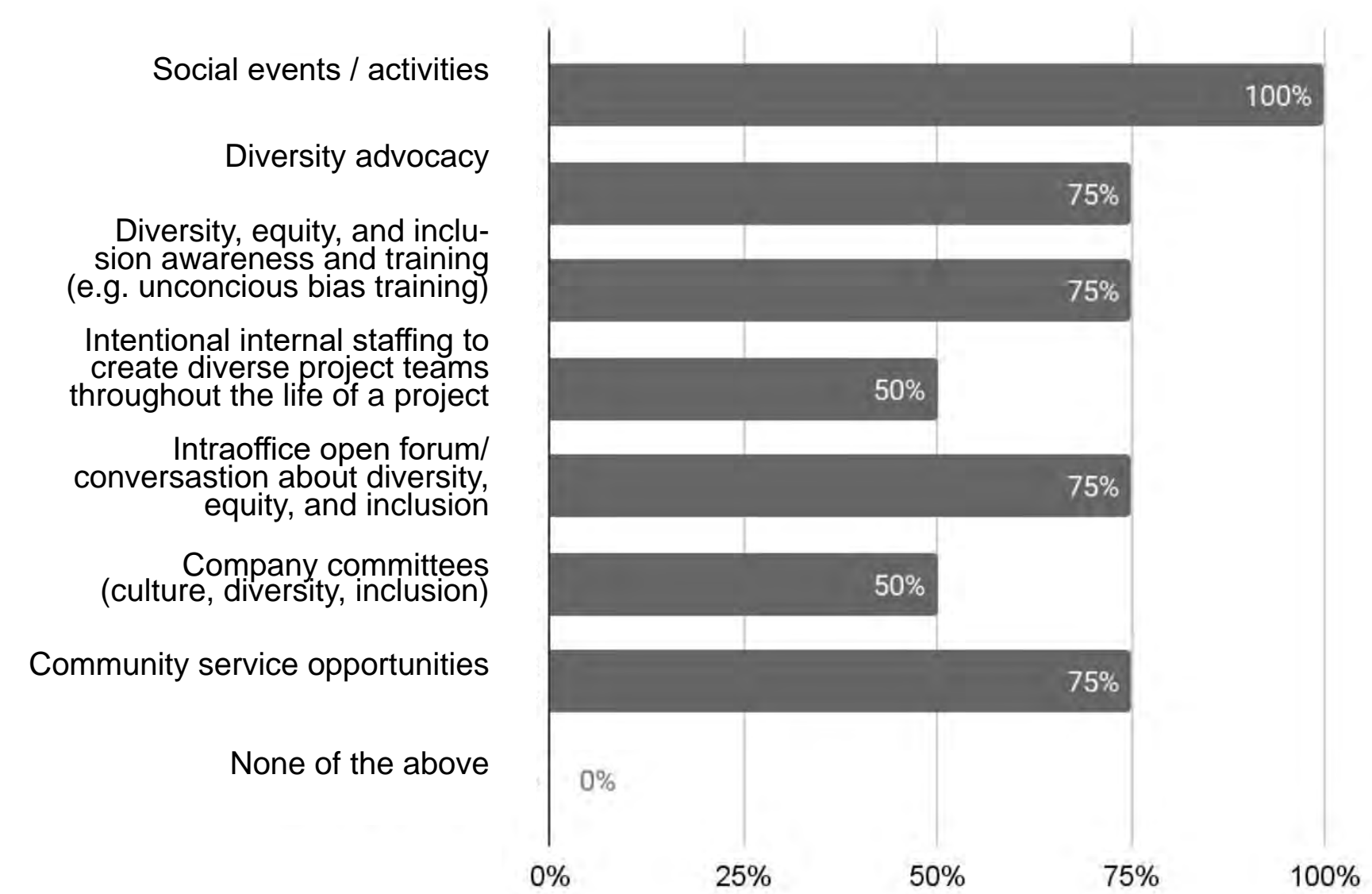
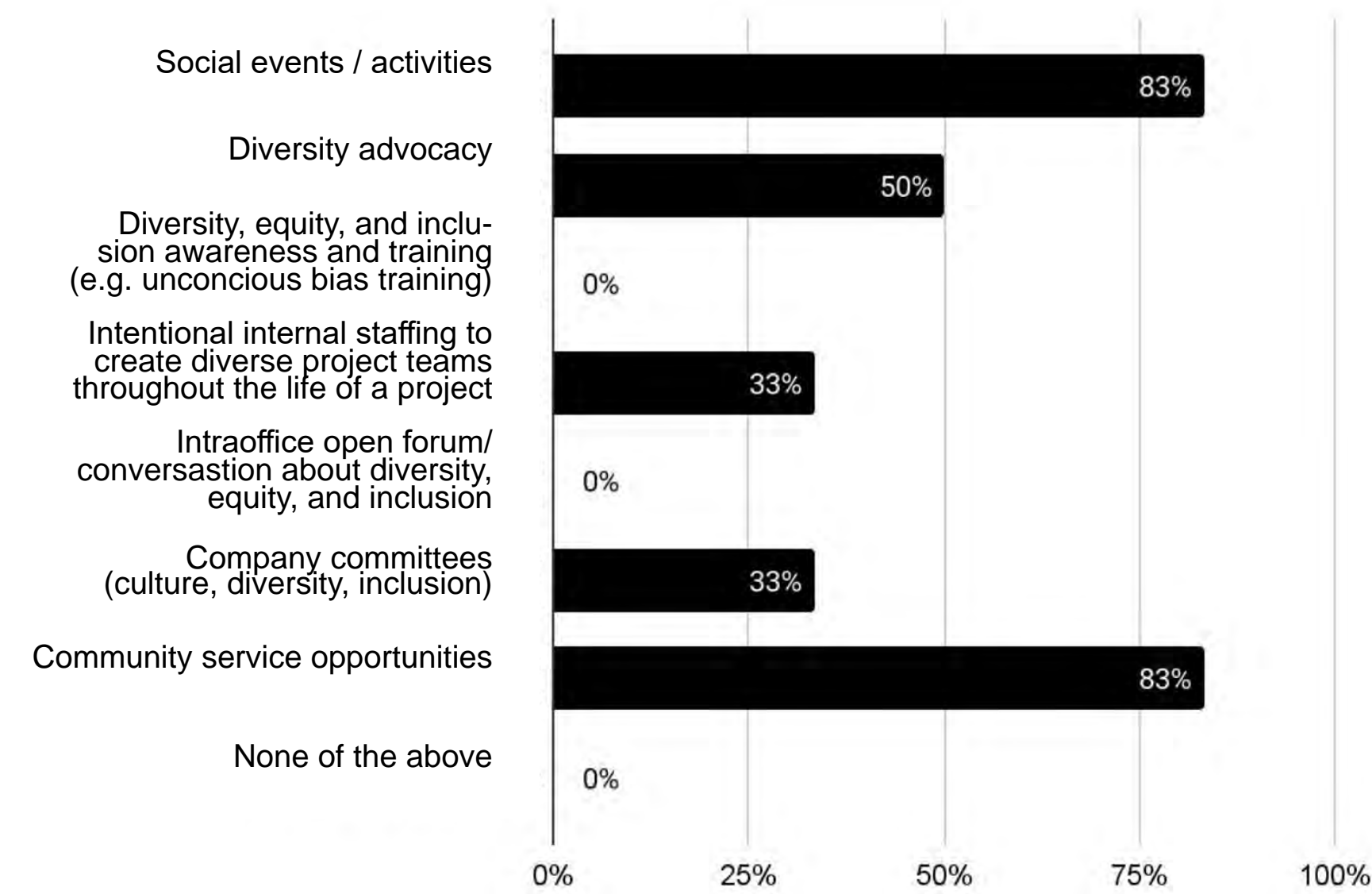
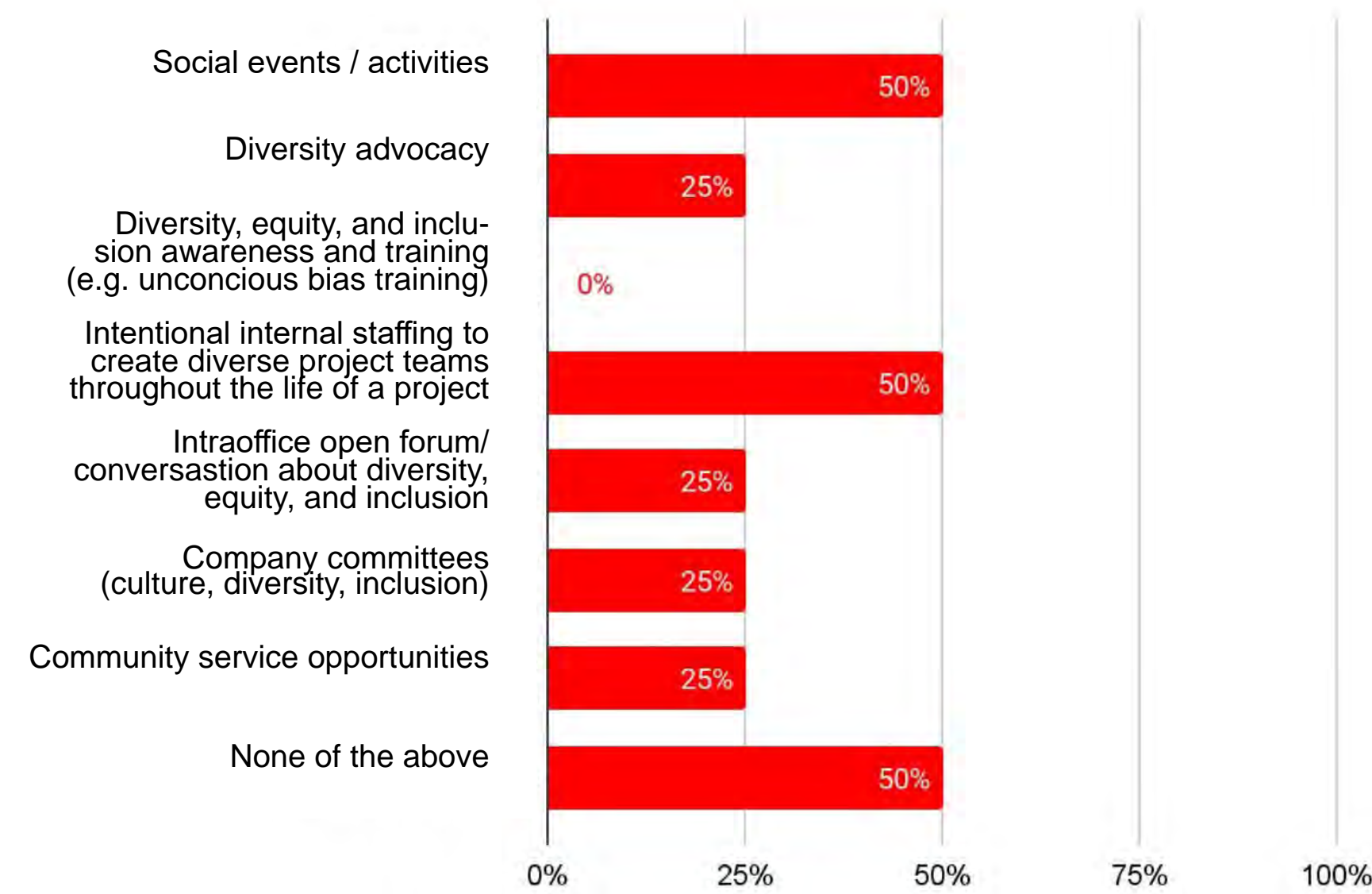
It appears that each firm has a way to communicate to the team members that form the culture of the firm. From firm-wide yearly events to bi-weekly events, each firm discussed the importance of these communication events throughout the entire survey in how specific questions were answered and the comments added as well for the questions.



### Resources Provided by the Firm regarding Inclusion

By Firm Size

- 1 - 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 90
- 90+



## 1| What Workplace Provisions Lead to Success?

### Inclusion

Providing opportunities to all employees is critical to the success of an organization. Again, inclusion comes in so many forms within an organization. As we look at the surveyed firms from the 2021 survey, we see consistency in the 4 firm size breakdowns.

From the charts on this page we see social events, community service, and training are key offerings that firms feel are important to bring awareness and to create an inclusive environment.

We must continue to keep an open line of communication on this topic at every level of the organization and both from the top down and the bottom up in the hierarchy of the firm.

### Total Survey Response

**84%**

4 firms out of 5 responded they provide social events and activities regarding inclusion.

**42%**

Nearly half of the firms responded they provide resources related to diversity advocacy & E.D.I awareness.

**2**

2 firms responded they don't provide any of the resources listed.



## 2| What Workplace Provisions Support Work/Life Balance?

This executive summary explores patterns in the data to share which workplace provisions may support individuals in our industry managing harmony among personal and professional demands.

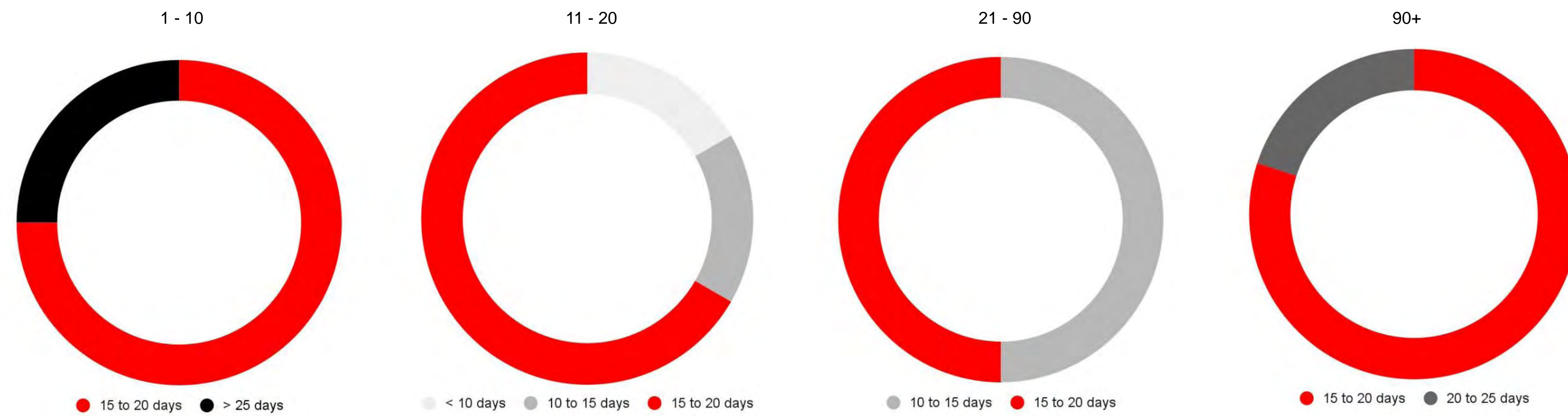
Resources related to work flexibility, vacation time, sick time, parental leave, bonus and salary adjustments contribute to a successful culture in every office.

**Financial & Family Support**

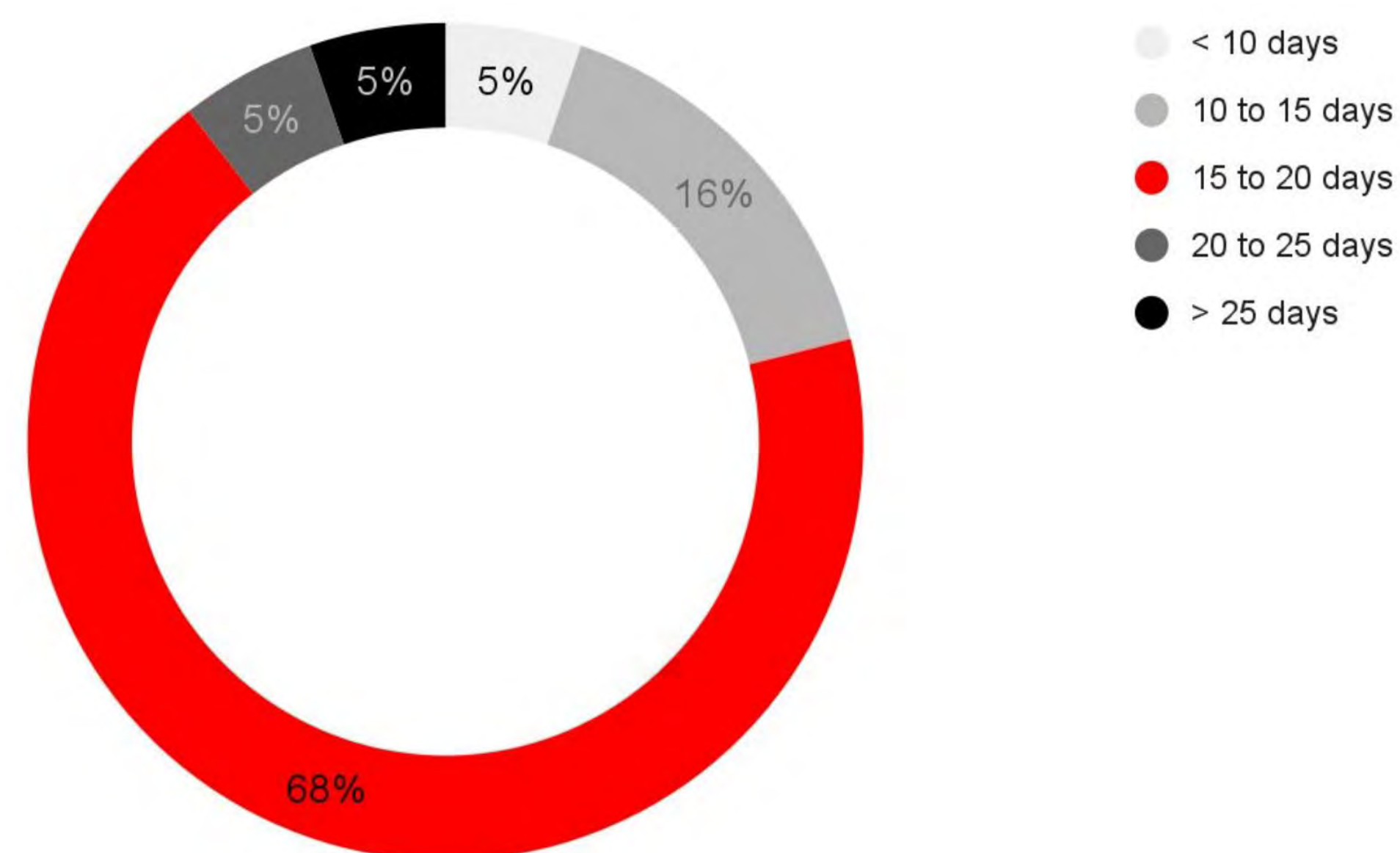
**Work Flexibility**

**Overtime**

**Minimum Number of PTO + Sick days**  
by Firm Size



**Total Response for minimum PTO + Sick days**



**2| What Workplace Provisions Support Work/Life Balance?**

**Financial & Family Support**

Balance is essential, and the firms in the KC area see that as vital. 78% of the firms surveyed provide over 3 weeks of combined minimum (PTO) Paid Time Off/sick days.

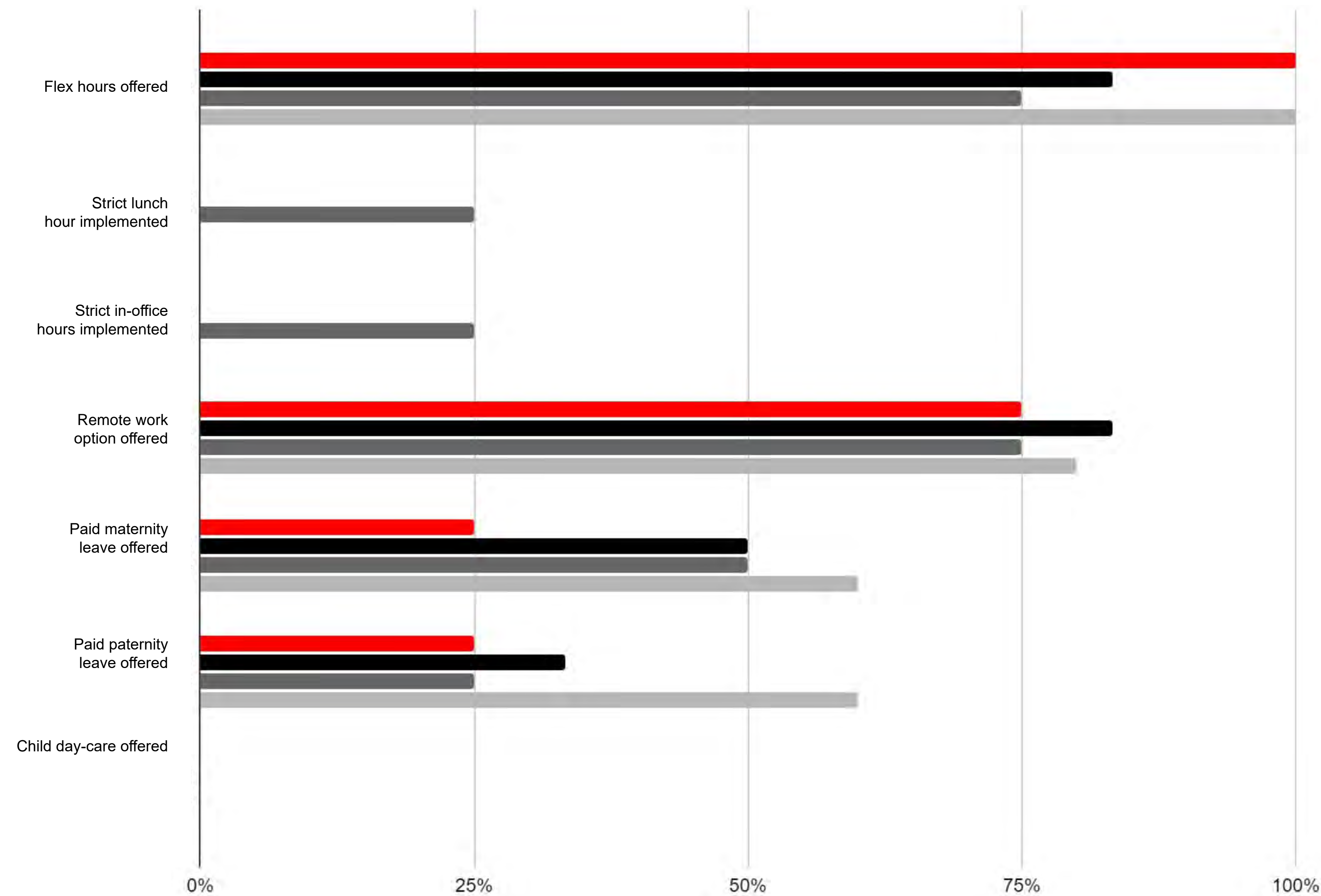
**Total Survey Response**

- 10%** 10% of the firms provide 4 weeks or greater.
- 0** None of the firms participating in the survey are helping employees pay off student debt.

**Work Flexibility**

(by Firm Size, after 2020 pandemic)

- 1 - 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 90
- 90+



## 2| What Workplace Provisions Support Work/Life Balance?

### Work Flexibility

Flexible work hours and remote working seem to be implemented by the majority of the firms and is another sign of encouragement and value of family. Only 2 firms reported that they did not provide flex-hours.

### Work Flexibility Pre-COVID

The overwhelming majority stated that options had increased as well as flexibility on hours spent in the office vs. at home or other place. Expectations have eased, and there is more conversation about what works for each individual. Overall it has become easier to work from home.

### Parental Leave Policy

The majority stated the firm complies with the FMLA, and employee can use PTO and short term disability compensation. While others have paid maternity leave (from 2-6 weeks) and paid paternity leave (up to two weeks).

### Total Survey Response

**79%**

4 out of 5 firms has work remote options.

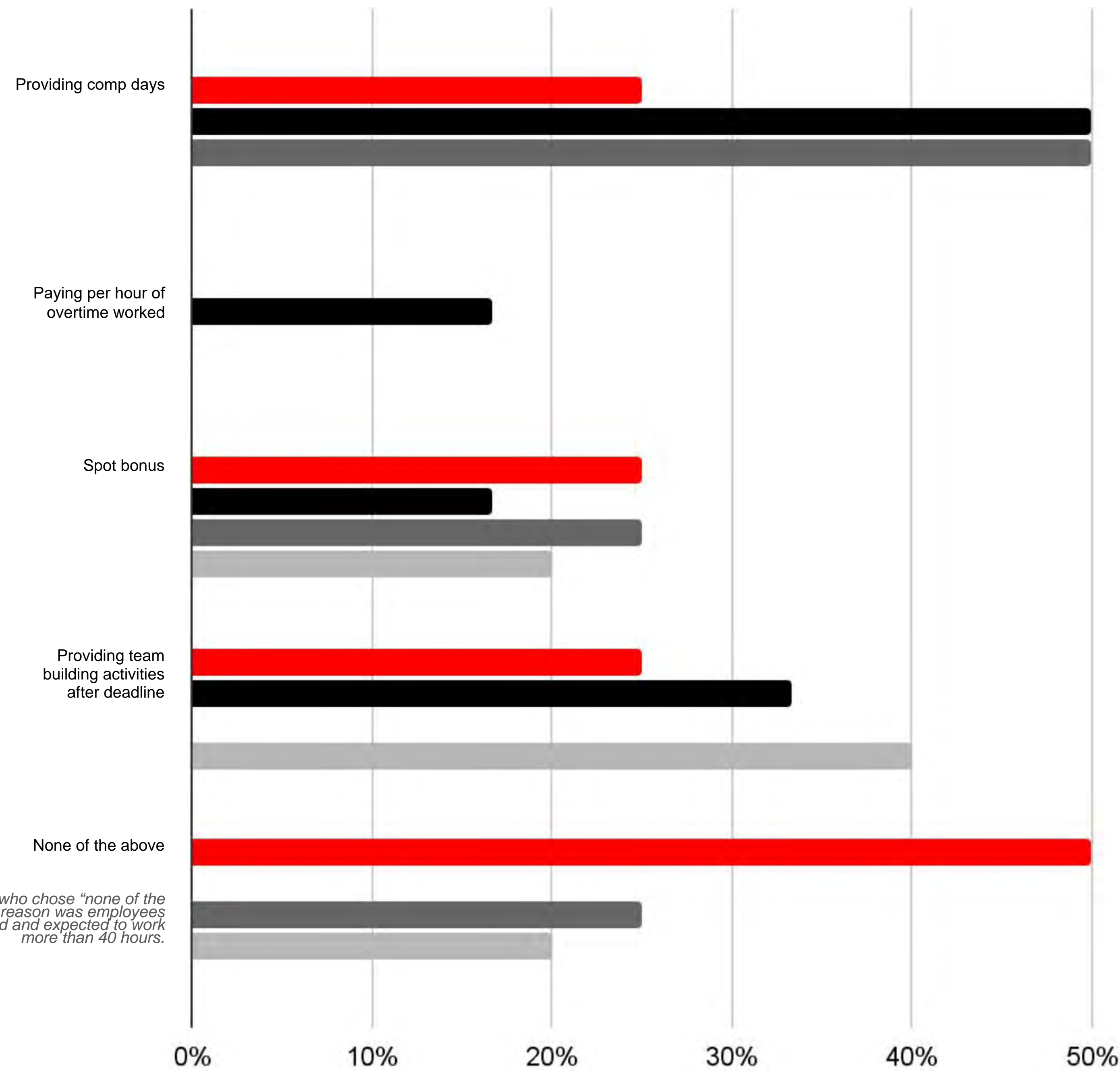
**37%**

1 out of 3 firms offers paid paternity leave whereas 47% offers paid maternity leave.

**Compensation for Overtime**

by Firm Size

- 1 - 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 90
- 90+



**2| What Workplace Provisions Support Work/Life Balance?**

**Overtime & Compensation**

Financial integrity is also strong here in KC with over 70% of surveyed firms providing some form of compensation for overtime worked.

**Burnout (during the 2020 pandemic)**

Most firms responded they combatted employee burnout by allowing flexible work schedules and more autonomy to make choices in the workday. They also focused on encouraging self-care, and check-ins from leadership to monitor physical, emotional, and mental health. Some were more focused with solutions on a person-by-person basis as well as limiting working hours to a strict 40.

Rewards for extra effort include bonuses, team lunches, happy hours, and all office acknowledgement as well as team morale gifts e.g., snack baskets, etc.

**Total Survey Response**

**21%**

1 firm out of 5 provides spot bonus.

**1**

Only 1 firm pays per hour of overtime worked.





## 3| How Do Firms Engage Equity & Diversity?

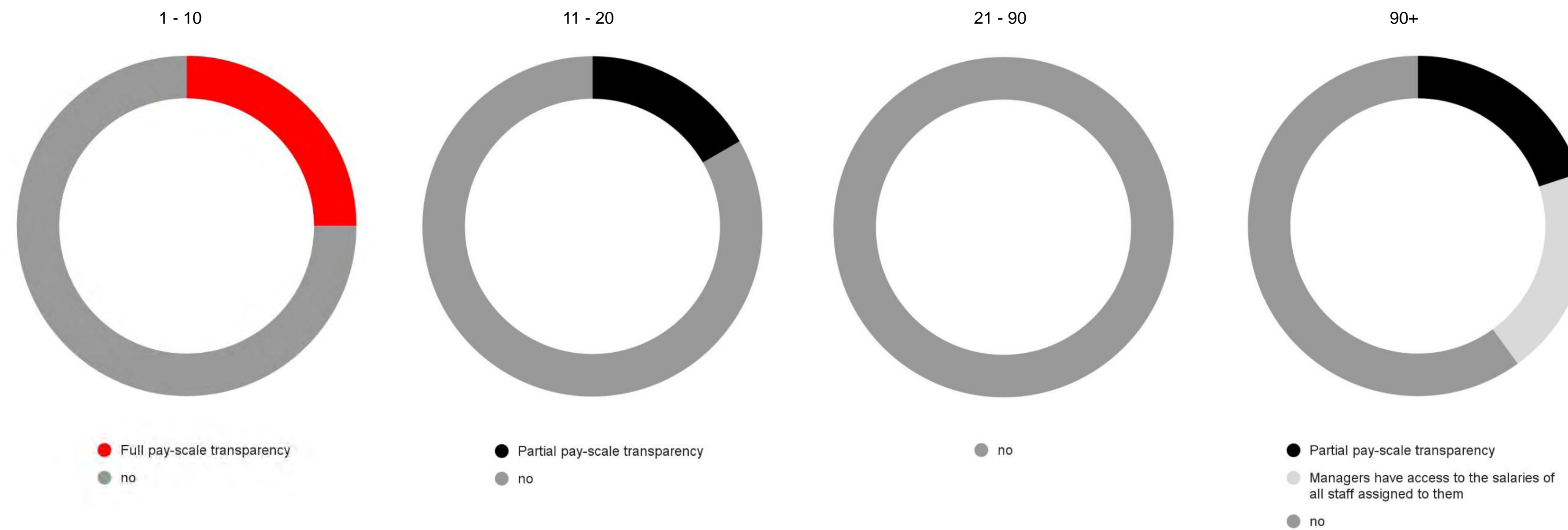
This executive summary explores the extent of what firms implement to make the architecture field more fair in terms of diversity & equity (salary, gender, race etc.).

**Salary Transparency**

**Policies**

**2020 Events**

**Salary Scale Transparency**  
by Firm Size



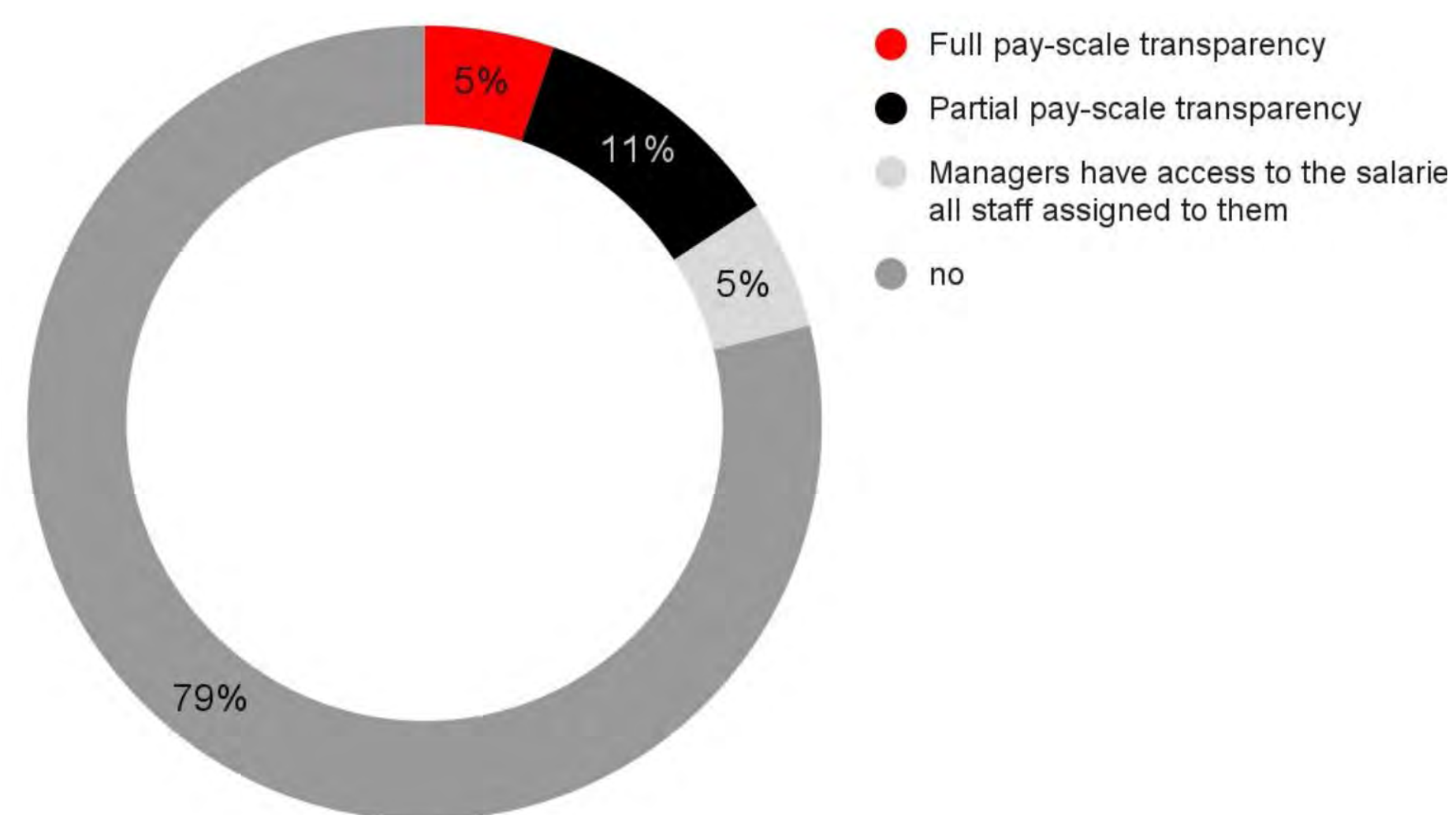
**3| How Do Firms Engage Equity & Diversity?**

**Salary transparency**

Salary Transparency is still not an item that firms have been able to work through and provide an internal view of compensation firm wide. Only about 20% of firms surveyed say they have full pay-scale transparency. Within this 20%, only one firm provides 100%, the other firms that make up the 20% provide partial transparency.

There was only one response where HR provides comparative salary data for each member based on role and years of experience.

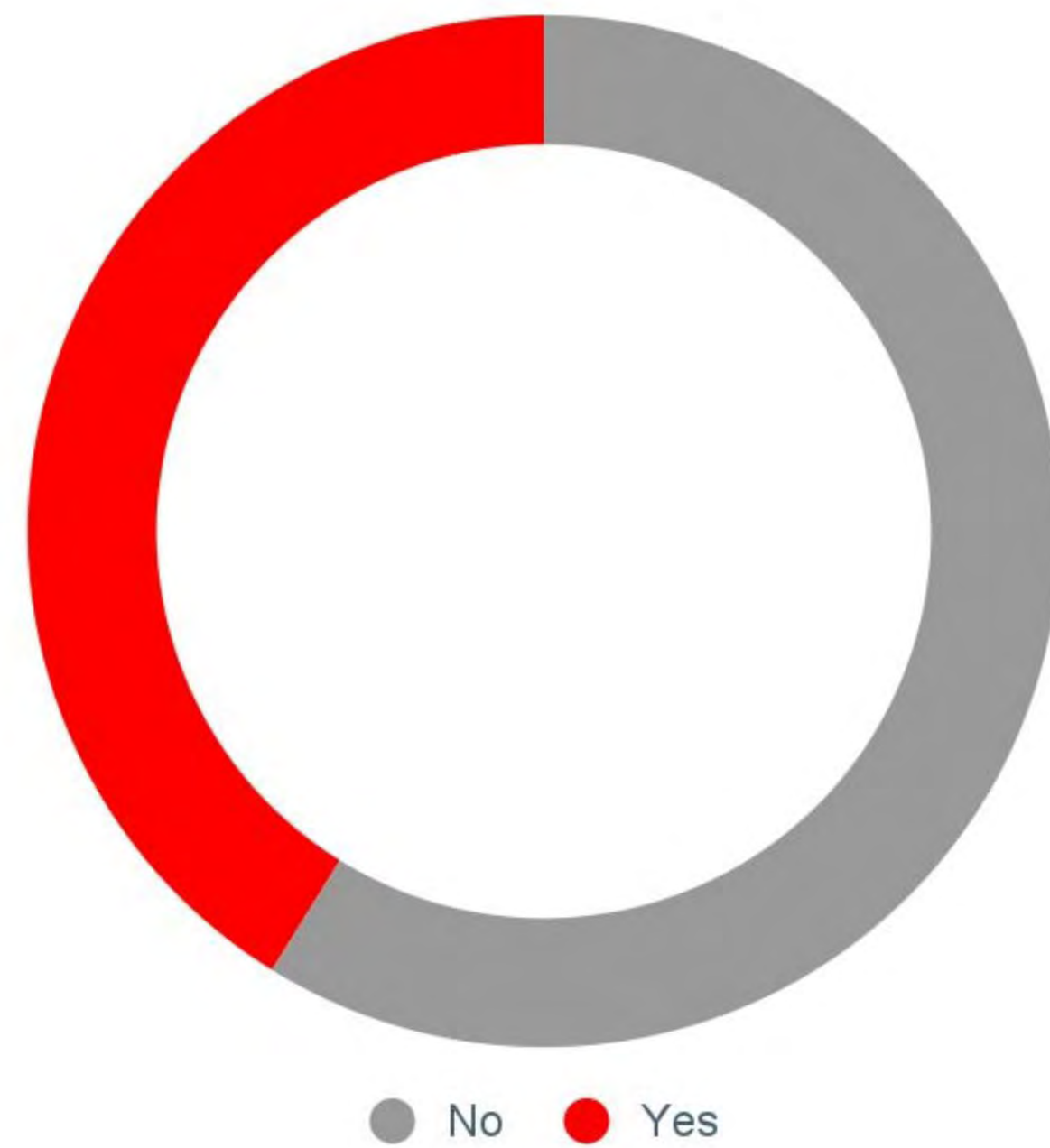
**Total Survey Response**



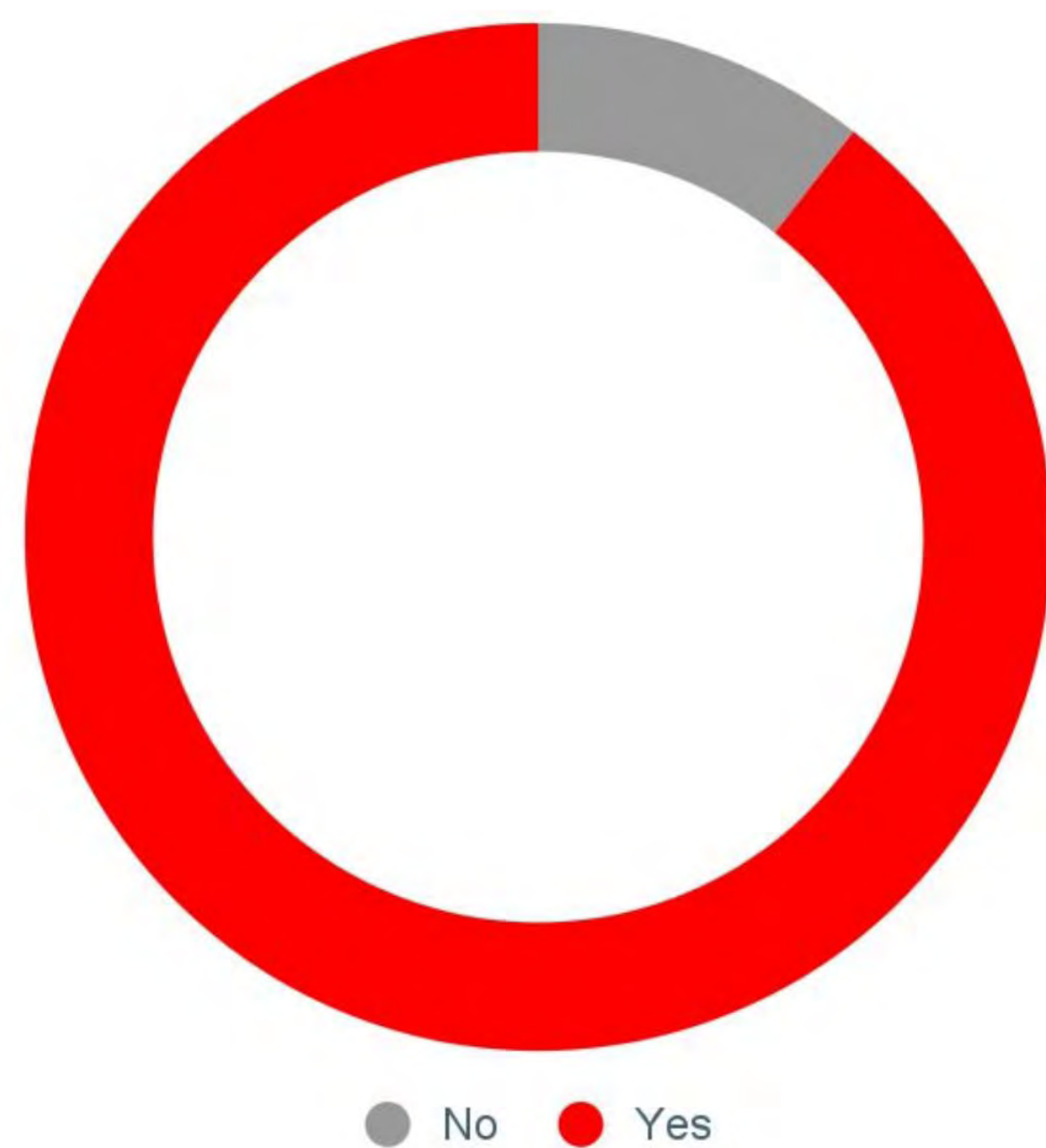
**Total Survey Response**

- 1** Only 1 firm responded the managers have access to the salaries of all staff assigned to them.
- 1** Only 1 firm provides full pay-scale transparency.

**Total Survey Response to the question:  
“Does your firm have a Diversity & Inclusion (or similar) Policy?”**



**Total Survey Response to the question:  
“Does your firm have an Anti-Harassment Policy?”**



## 3| How Do Firms Engage Equity & Diversity?

### Policies

Policies for equity and diversity are mixed from the survey respondents. We looked at diversity and inclusion and anti-harassment policies.

40% of the Firms have a Diversity and Inclusion Policy  
8% of the Firms failed to respond.

### Total Survey Response

**60%** 3 firms out of 5 don't have a Diversity & Inclusion policy.

**2** 2 firms responded they did not have an anti-harassment policy.

## Impact of 2020 Events

**In this survey we asked if specific changes were made in the course of the national conversation occurring in 2020. The respondents were also asked if there were things they have not yet implement but intended to.**

Among the companies that made a change some referred to “hybrid work schedule “ and “mental health awareness”.

Many firms have implemented programs to promote inclusion. One firm recognized “there has been progress with gender diversity, but no specific targets citing each individual is unique and considered on the merits of potential professionally and personally”.

One of the firm created an “advisory council” to focus on equity and belongingness centered around BIPOC associates which will create policies, practices and procedures.

There is increased financial commitment for local NOMA and National LFRT partnerships with HBCU.

A few cited racial equity training, unconscious bias training, E.D.I. training and goals with local initiative and involvement, Diversity x Design scholarship, conversations related to events with enhanced platforms to share personal experiences and even the implementation of Juneteenth as a paid holiday.



## 3| How Do Firms Engage Equity & Diversity?

### 2020 Events Impact

The events of 2020 had a tremendous impact on firms in our survey: mentoring, training, reviews, social activities, workplace culture, hybrid work environment and social justice issues were influencers for the surveyed firms.

Most of the items listed above evolved, and positive impact was felt among the firms. Not an easy and smooth transition, but nevertheless firms have come through with a broader and more open outlook on how we do business and work as organizations and how important our people are to each organization. One of the common themes is the importance of human interaction in a profession of collaboration, through “face to face” will continue to be critical for success. Technology is great and has allowed more freedom for the work environment, but let’s not forget that we are built and we grow through personal interaction.

## By the Numbers

By the numbers, this executive summary highlights top achievements of the Kansas City Chapter firms and top growth areas for consideration based off survey responses comparing the non-published results from the 2019 firm survey with the responses from the 2021 firm survey.

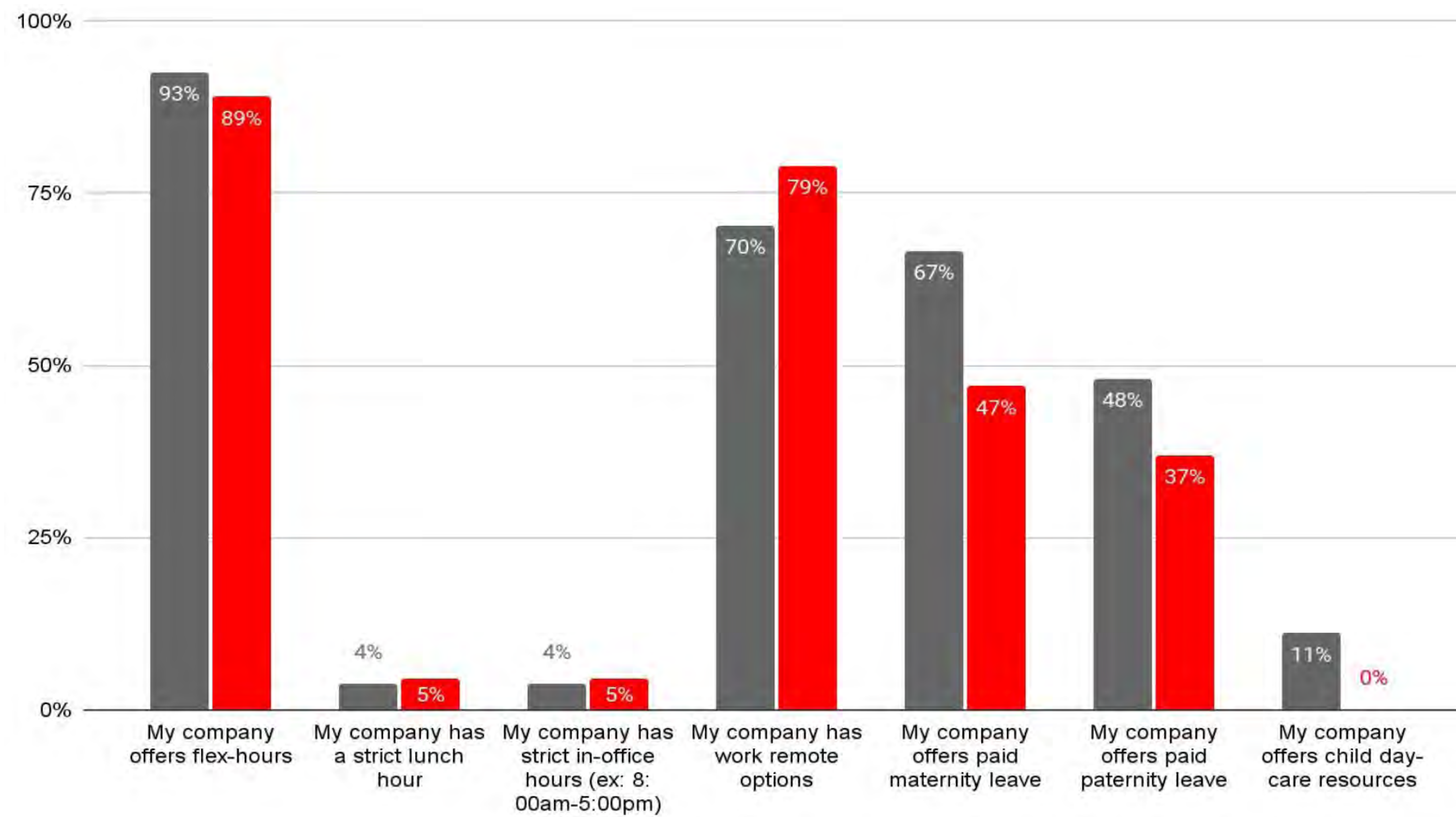
### Achievements

Room for Growth in Career Development

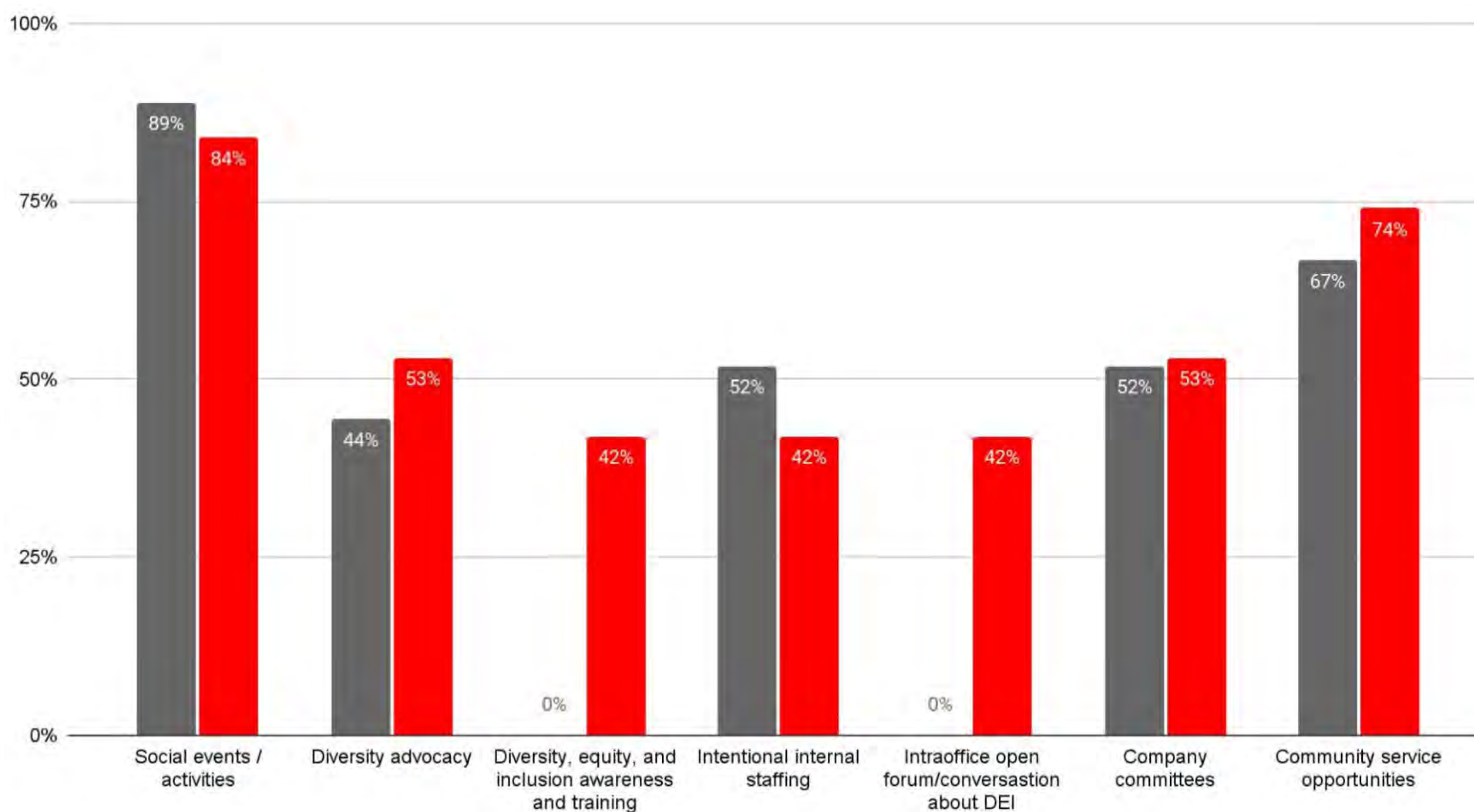
Room for Growth in Compensation & Representation

■ 2021  
■ 2019

### Achievements in Work Flexibility



### Achievements in Inclusion Resources



## Achievements

### Work Flexibility & Inclusion Resources

A strong majority of respondents offer flex-hours and remote work options and do not have strict hours (either in-office hours or lunch). Between 2019 and 2021, there was a decrease in the percentage of firms offering paternal leave policies or child-care resources.

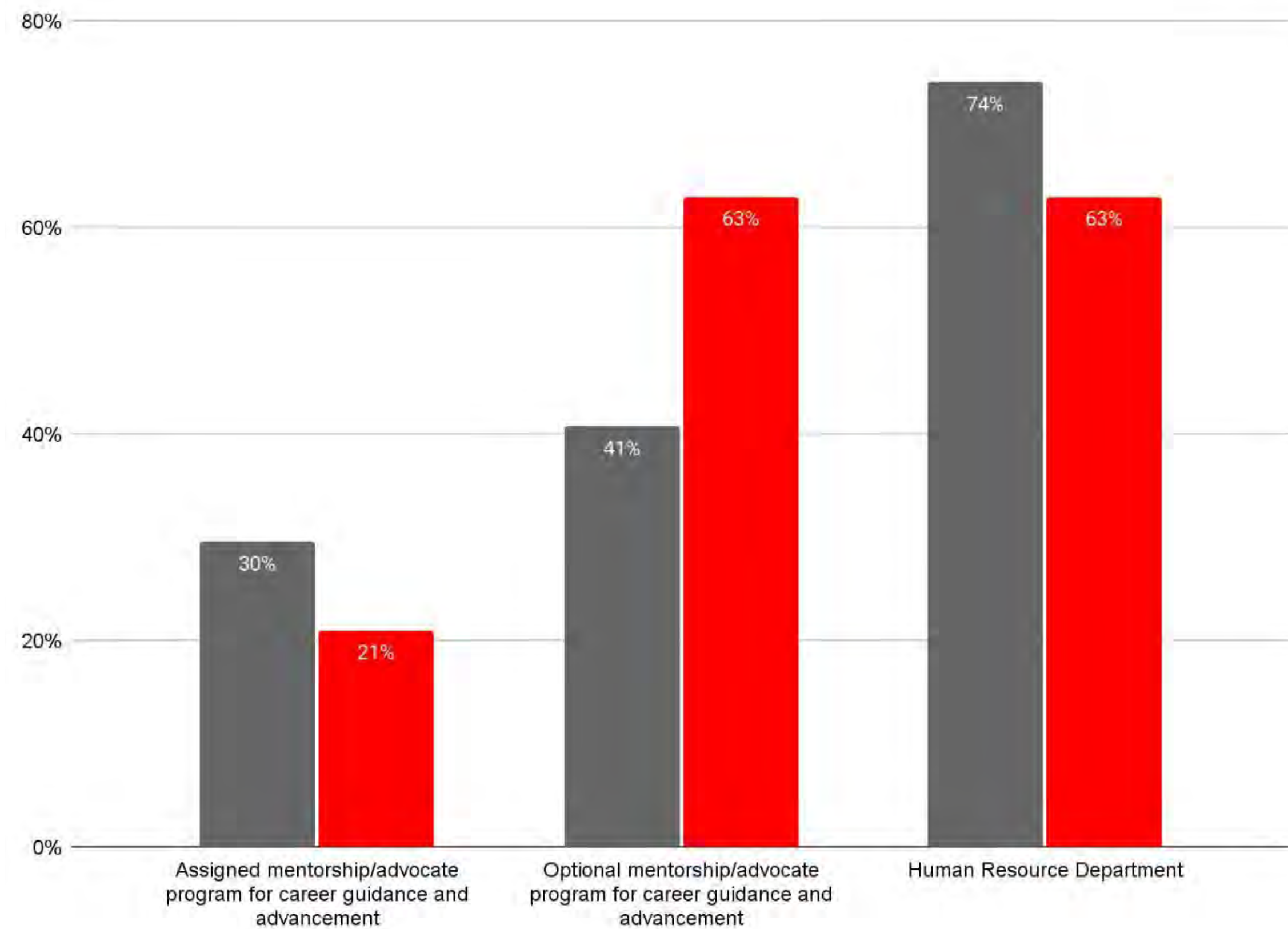
In terms of inclusion resources, there was an increase among firms for most of the possible resources in the survey, including increases from 0% to around 40% for equity, diversity, and inclusion (E.D.I.) trainings and intraoffice open forums regarding E.D.I.

### Total Survey Response

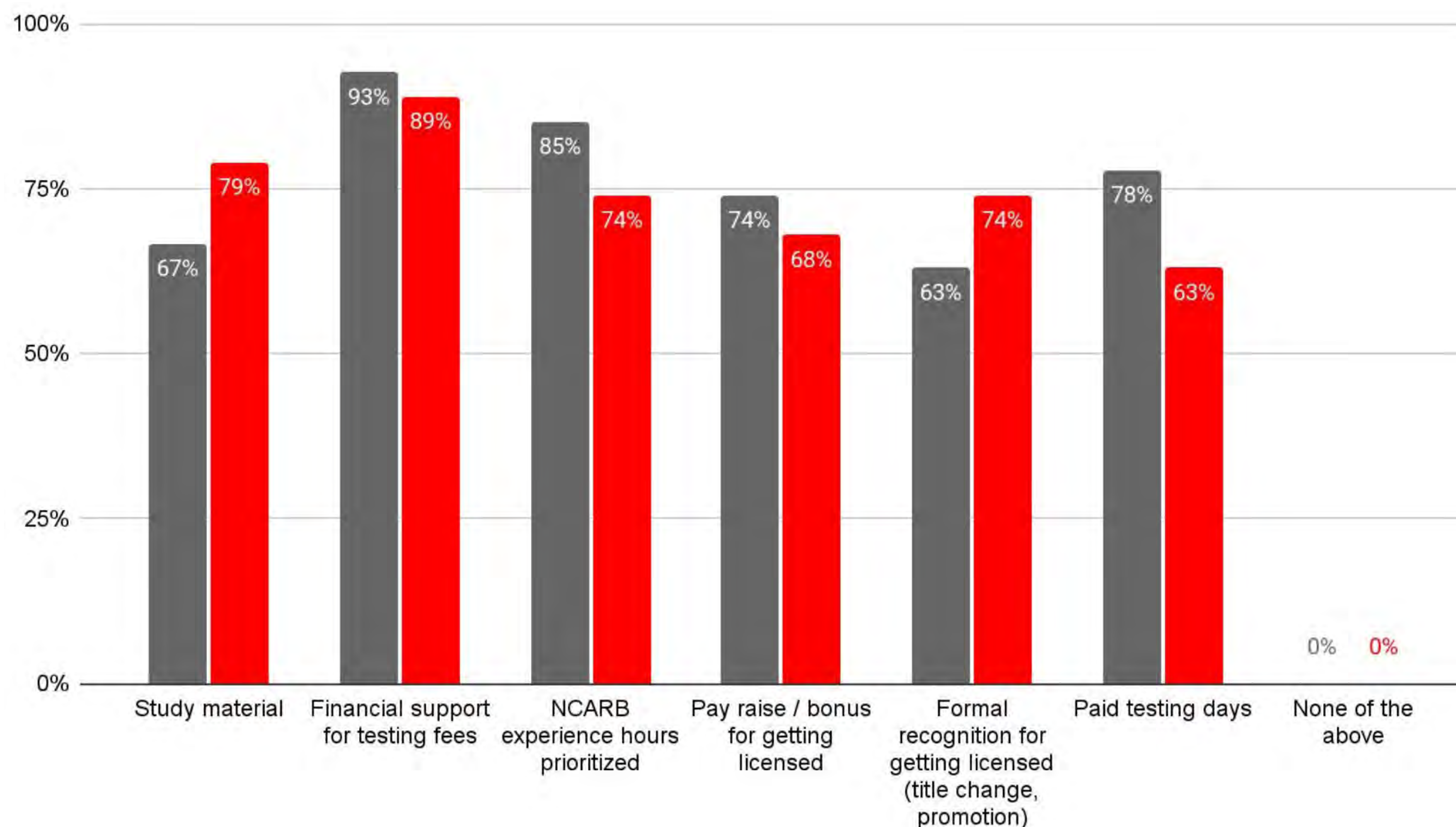
- +9%** +9% increase of firms offering remote work options.
- +9%** +9% increase of firms providing resources related to diversity advocacy.

■ 2021  
■ 2019

**Room for Growth in Career Development**



**Room for Growth in Licensure**



**Room for Growth**

**Career Development & Licensure**

While there was a decrease in the percentage of firms with an assigned mentorship/advocate program, this was offset by an increase in the percentage of firms with an optional mentorship/advocate program. According to firm open-ended responses, this was often done due to the pandemic.

For licensure resources between 2019 and 2021, most benefits were offered at roughly the same level, with increases seen in study material being provided and formal recognition for licensure, but a decrease in some, most significantly in NCARB experience hours being prioritized and paid testing days.

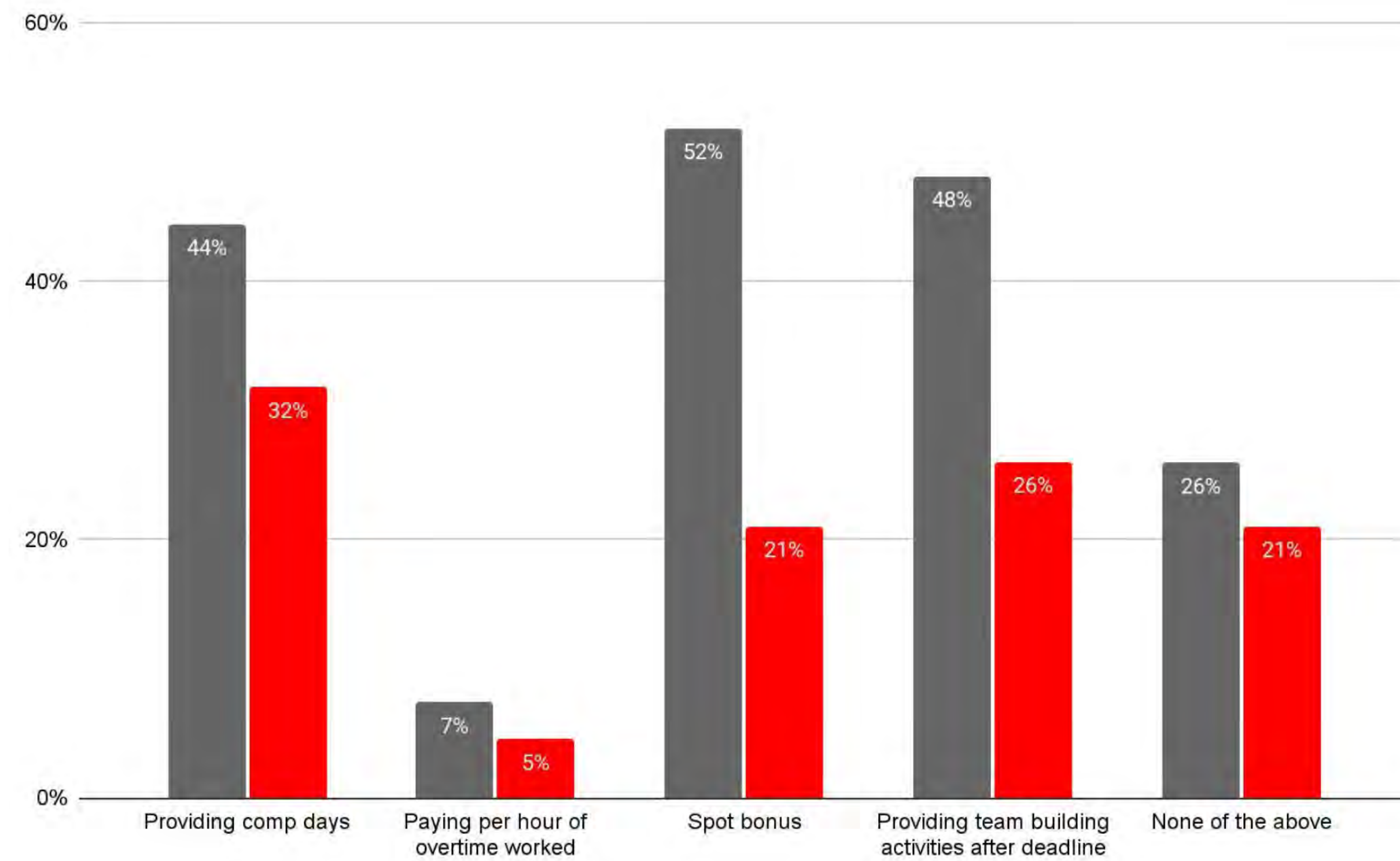
**Total Survey Response**

**84%** 84% of firms have a mentorship/advocate program, either assigned or optional.

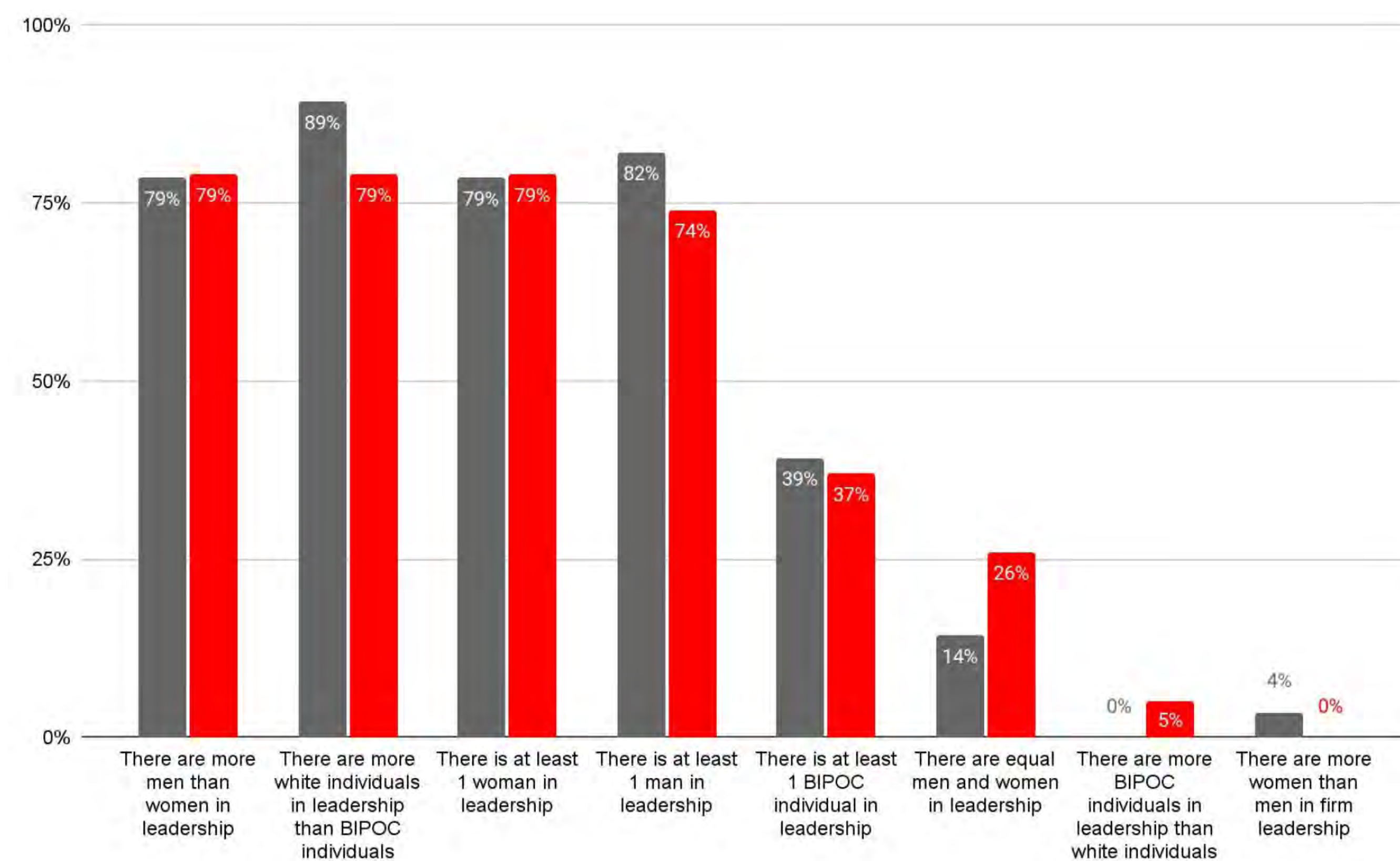
**-15%** -15% decrease of firms offering paid testing days.

■ 2021  
■ 2019

### Achievements in Compensation



### Room for Growth in Leadership Demographic



## Room for Growth

### Compensation & Leadership Demographic

Across all response options, there was a decrease between 2019 and 2021 in the percentage of firms that offer comp days, paying overtime, spot bonuses, or providing team building activities after deadlines for overtime work by staff. There was also an increase in the number of firms that do not do any of these.

Between 2019 and 2021, leadership demographics shifted slightly but there were some positive improvements when it comes to diversity. While still very low, there was an increase to 5% of firms having majority Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) leadership from 0%. Additionally, there was a 12% increase in the percentage of firms with equal men and women in leadership. While there are improvements, the absolute numbers are still very low, with only 26% of firms with gender equality in leadership and 0% as of 2021 with more women than men in leadership.

### Total Survey Response

**79%**

79% of firms have at least 1 woman in leadership. This number is the same as the 2019 survey.

**37%**

37% of firms have at least 1 BIPOC individual in leadership.



## Thank you

The AIA Kansas City Equity in Architecture Committee would like to thank the following firms for responding to the 2019 & 2021 firm surveys.

Thanks to you we can track improvements as well as areas where we can grow to make our profession more equitable and inclusive in our region.

We look forward to see the impact in the long term.

Bell/Knott & Associates  
BRR Architecture  
Convergence Design  
DLR Group  
DRAW Architecture + Urban Design  
FINKLE + WILLIAMS Architecture  
GastingerWalker&  
Generator Studio  
Gould Evans  
Hermanos Design  
HOK Kansas City  
Hollis + Miller Architects  
HTK Architects  
International Architects Atelier  
Perspective Architecture + Design  
Populous  
RDM Architecture  
SFS Architecture  
Stark Wilson Duncan Architects