

COVID-19 Emergency Housing Assistance Program Amendments

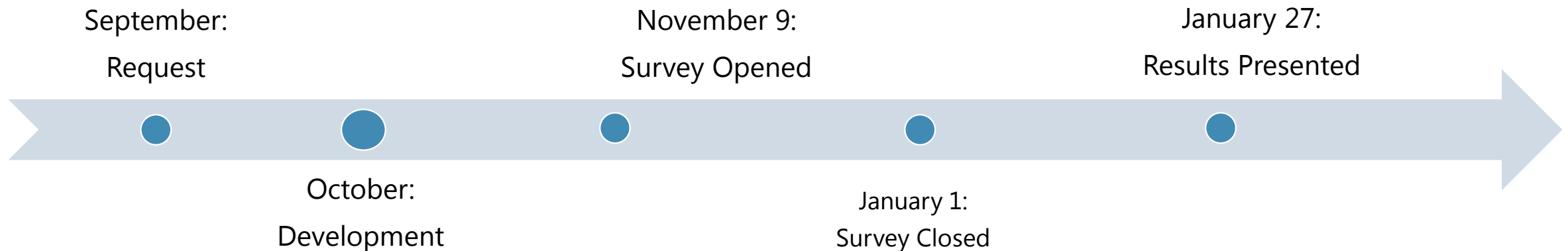
Culture & Neighborhood Services Committee
February 12, 2021

Presented by Verónica R. Soto, FAICP Director



EHAP Survey

- **Goal:** Identify strategies to improve EHAP
- **Co-developed** by staff, the housing Commission Outreach Working Group, and Housing Commission
- CNSC Feedback received on November 2nd



Housing Commission

Jessica O. Guerrero
Chair

Robert Abraham, Commissioner at-large
Pedro Alanis, San Antonio Housing Trust
Jeff Arndt, VIA Metropolitan Transit
Paul Furukawa, Commissioner at -large

Ed Hinojosa, San Antonio Housing Authority
Nikki Johnson, Commissioner at-large
Susan Richardson, Commissioner at-large
Sarah Sanchez, Commissioner at-large

Outreach Working Group

Jeff Arndt, VIA Metropolitan Transit
Teri Castillo, Community member
Paul Furukawa, Commissioner at –large
Anayanse Garza, Community member
Maureen Galindo, Community member
Jessica O. Guerrero, Chair
Susan Richardson, Commissioner at- large

Agenda Working Group

Pedro Alanis, San Antonio Housing Trust
Jessica O. Guerrero, Chair
Nikki Johnson, Commissioner at-large
Sarah Sanchez, Commissioner at-large

About the Data

Applicants, Property
Managers/Owners,
and Implementation
Partners

Every Applicant
Invited

Distributed via
Email, flyers, and
Housing
Commission

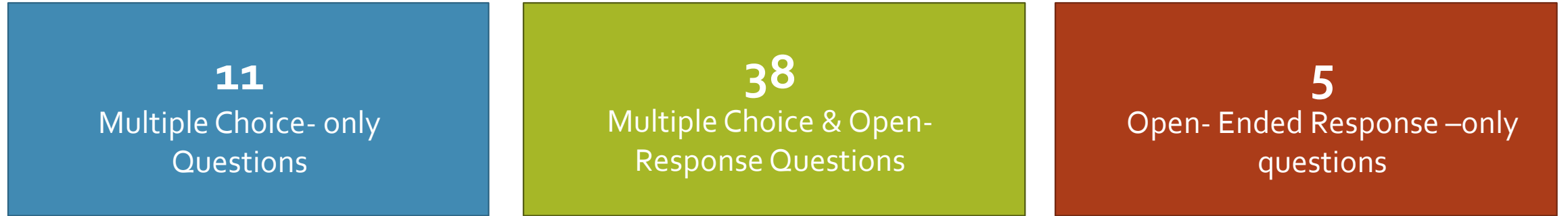
Sample contacted
by phone

High number of
comments



About the Data

44 Total Questions



Respondents were given between 11- 23 questions depending on their relationship to the program



About the Data

Some Limitations

No distinction between someone who applied in April when the program began or in later phases

Survey was only presented in English and Spanish

Limited ability to conduct phone surveys



Total Responses

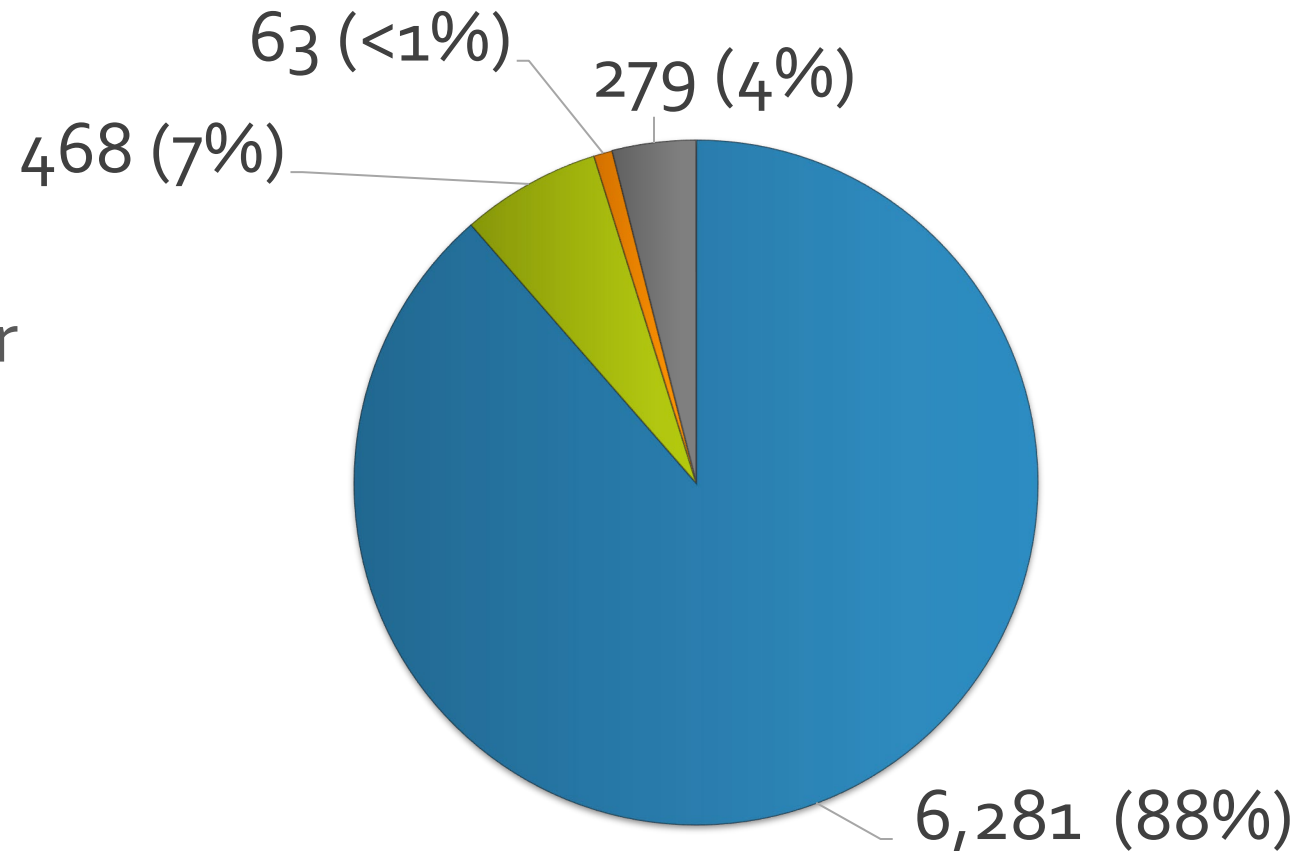
7,091 total responses

■ Applicant

■ Property Manager or Owner

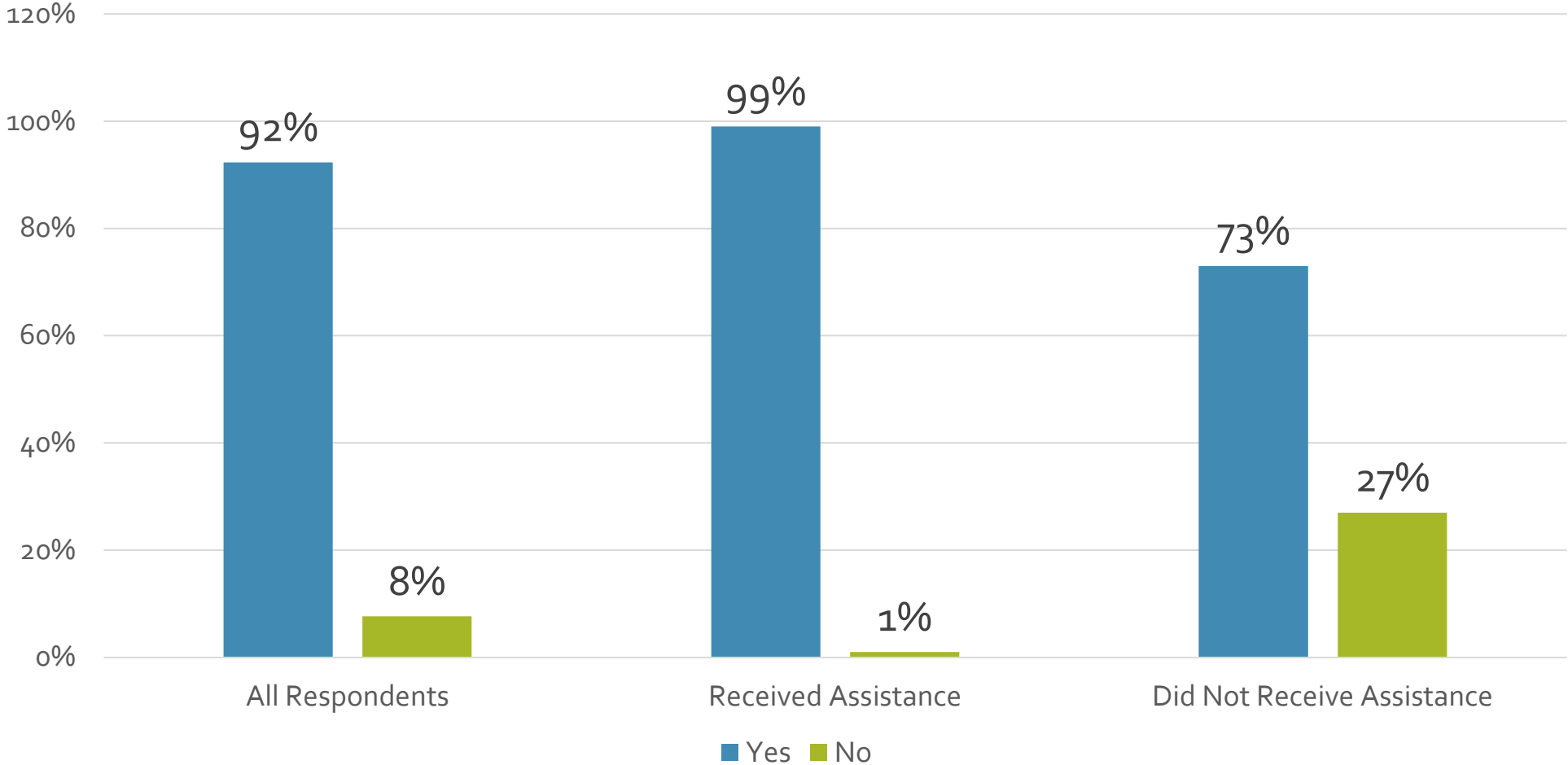
■ Implementation Partner

■ No connection to program



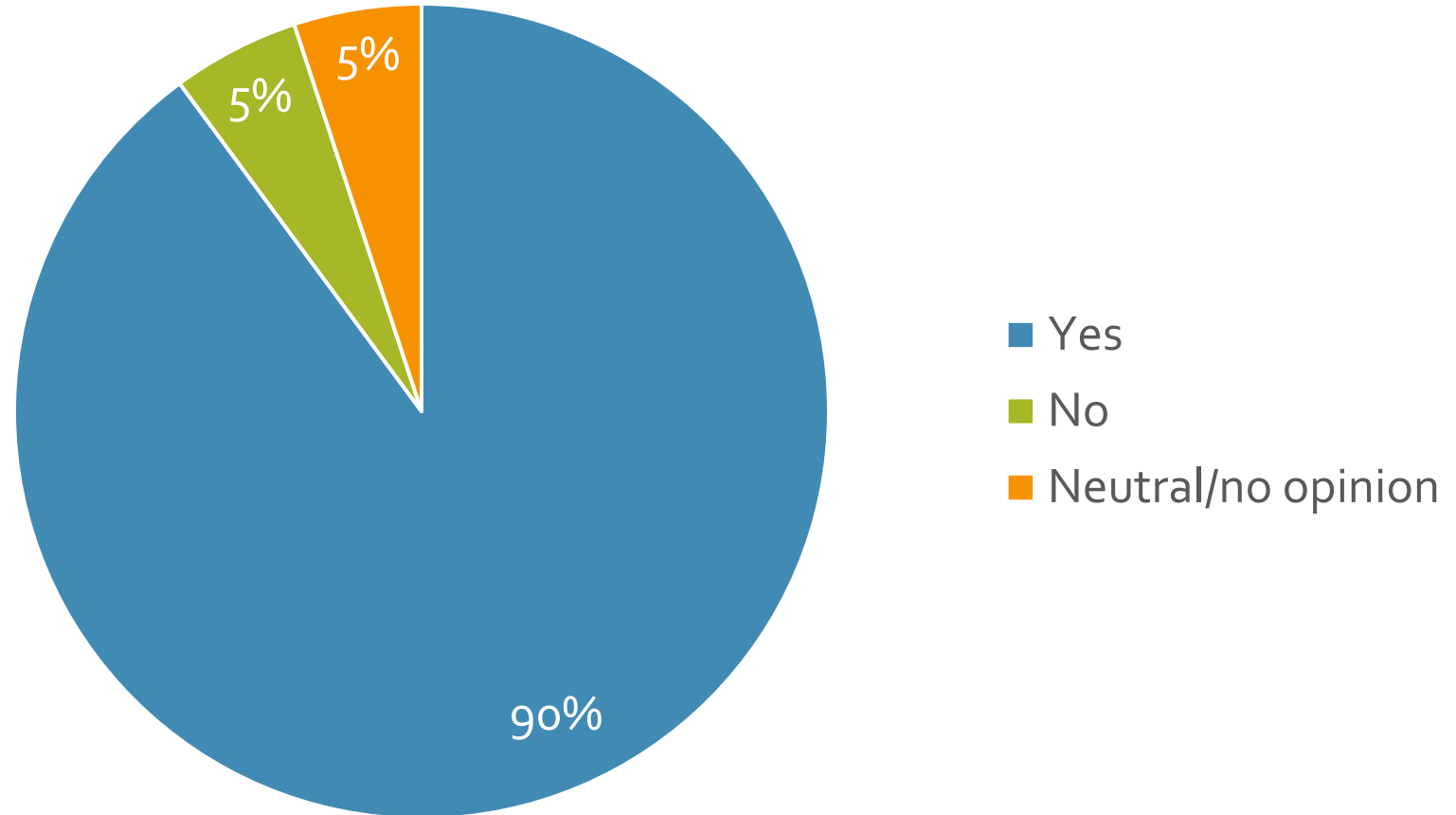
Would you recommend the EHAP?

Applicants



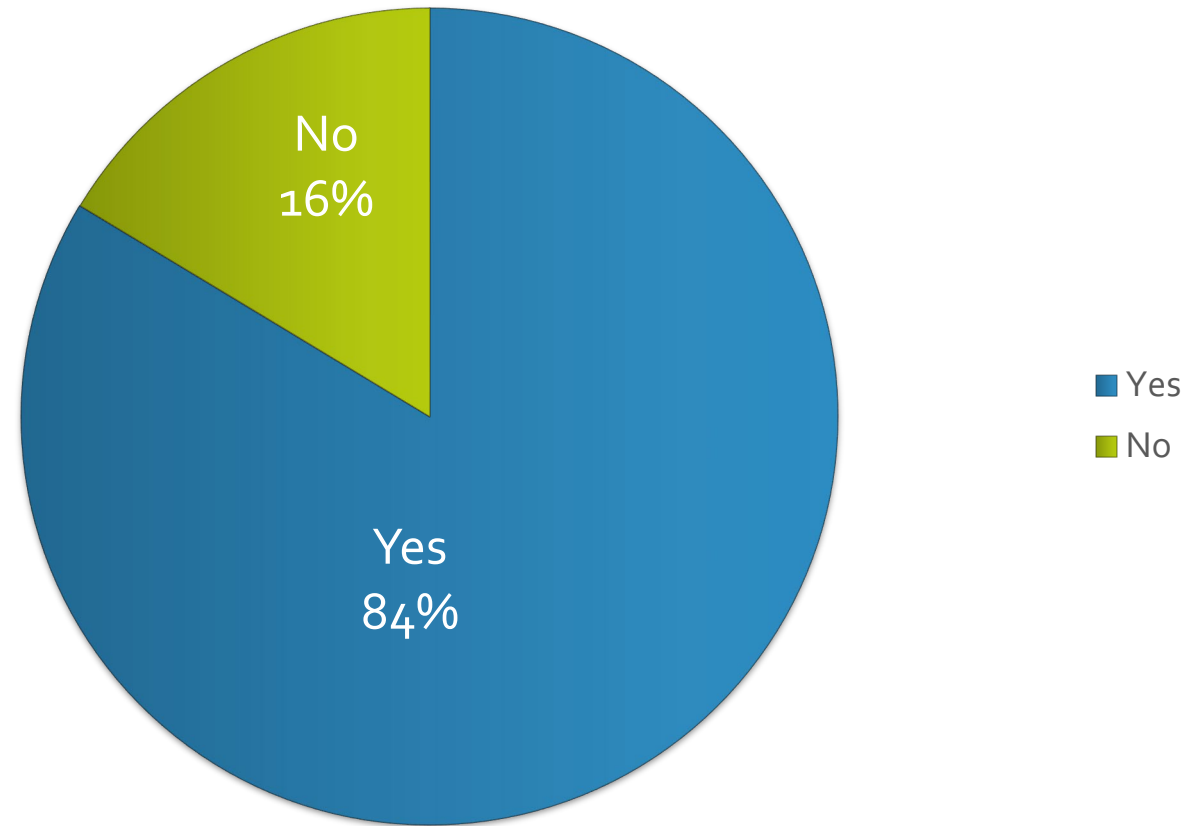
Would you recommend the EHAP?

**Property
Owners &
Managers**



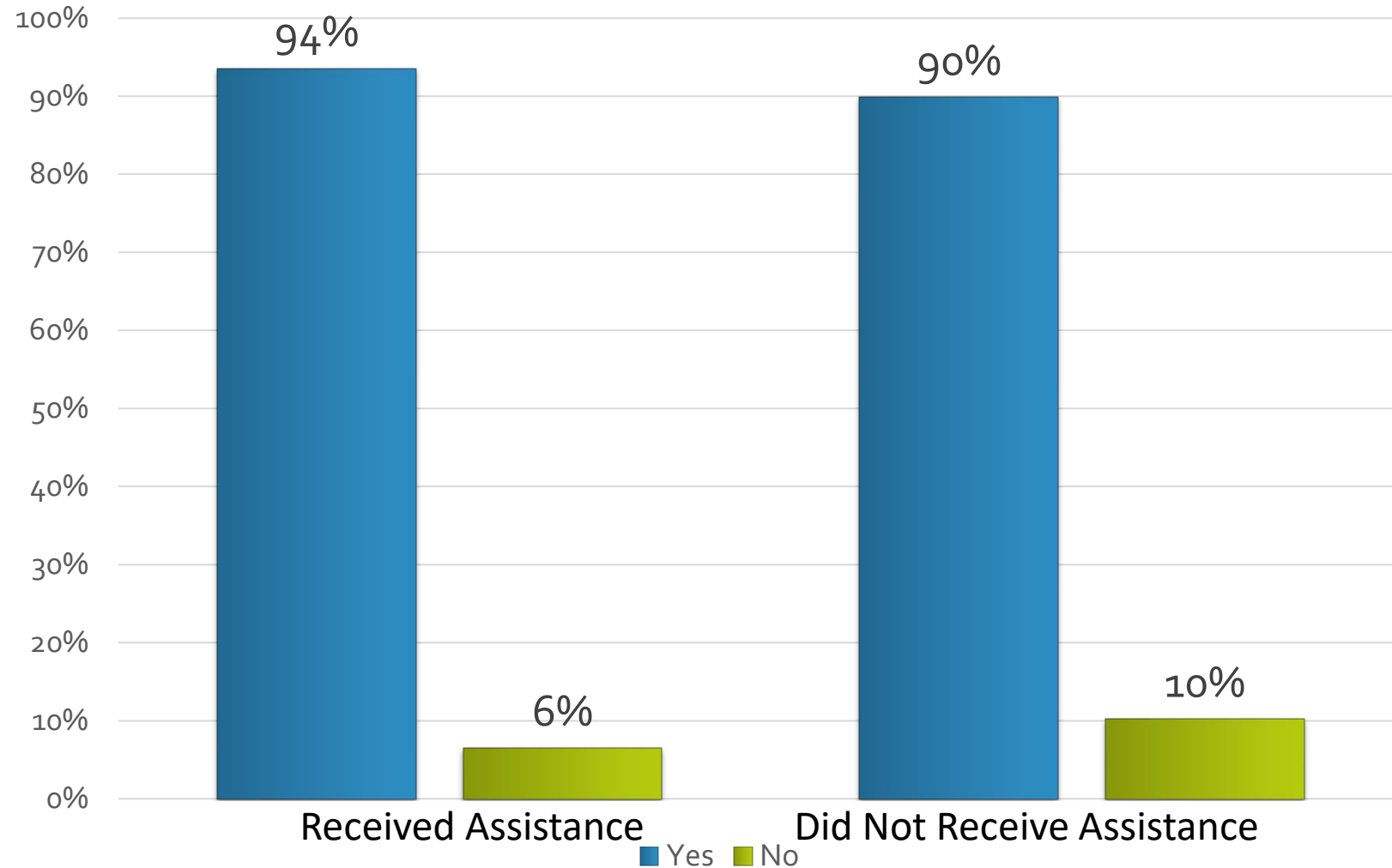
Was the assistance enough to keep you housed?

Applicants



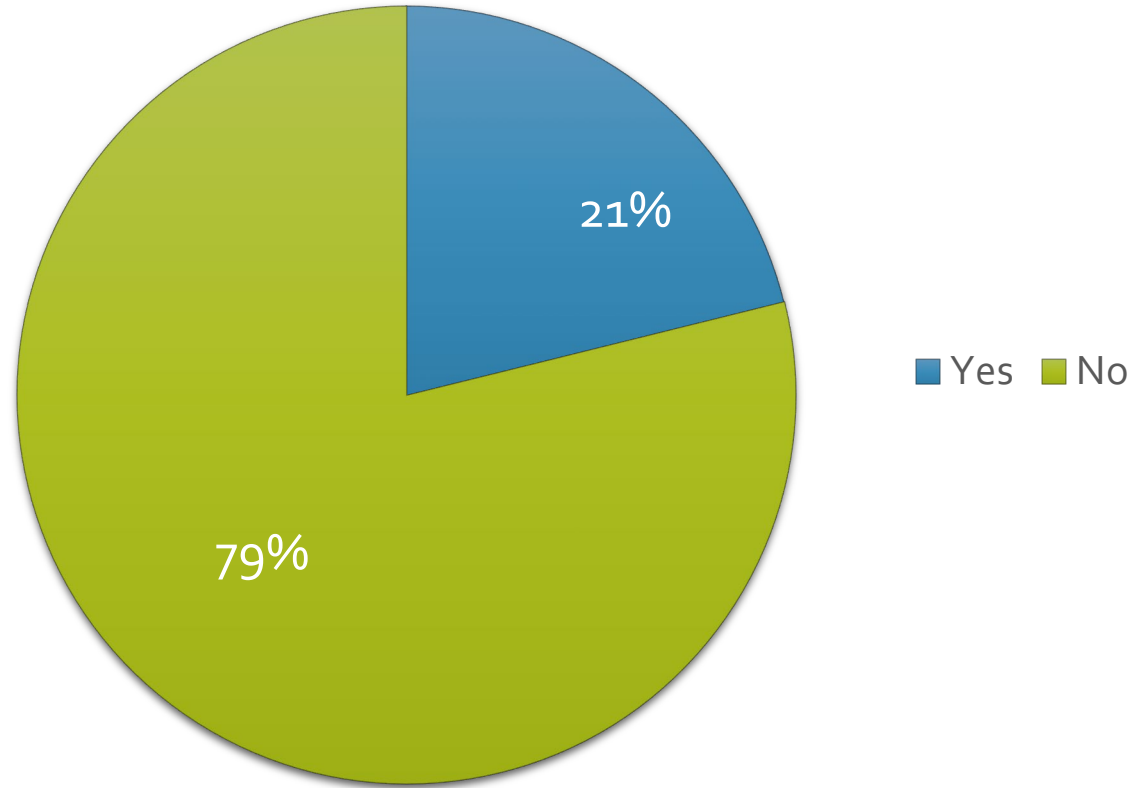
Are you currently at the same residence?

Applicants



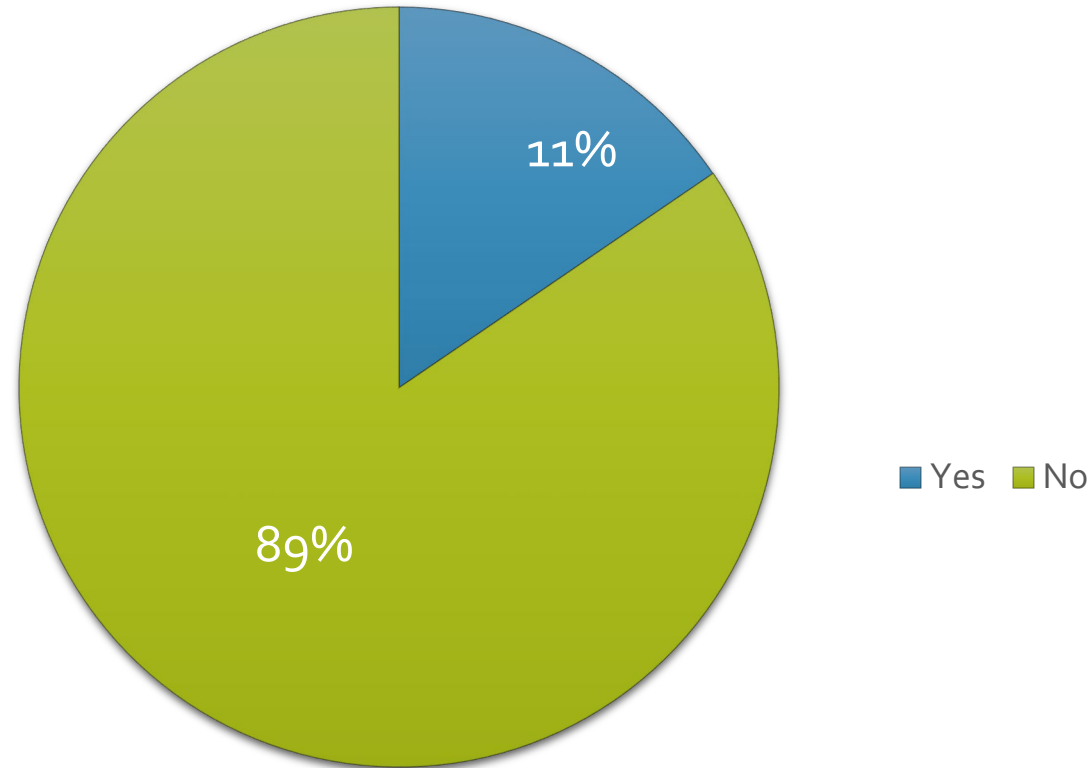
Are you able to afford your household payments today?

Applicants



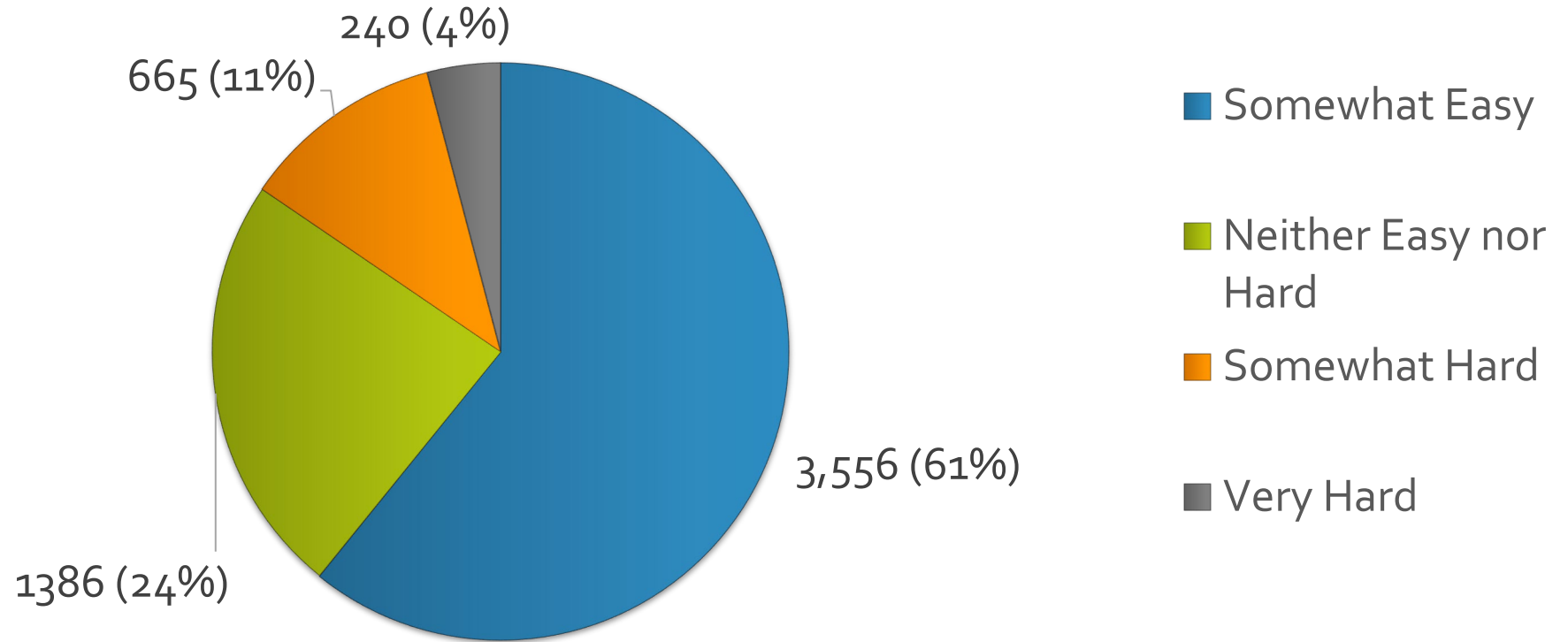
Did you receive a referral to another agency?

Applicants



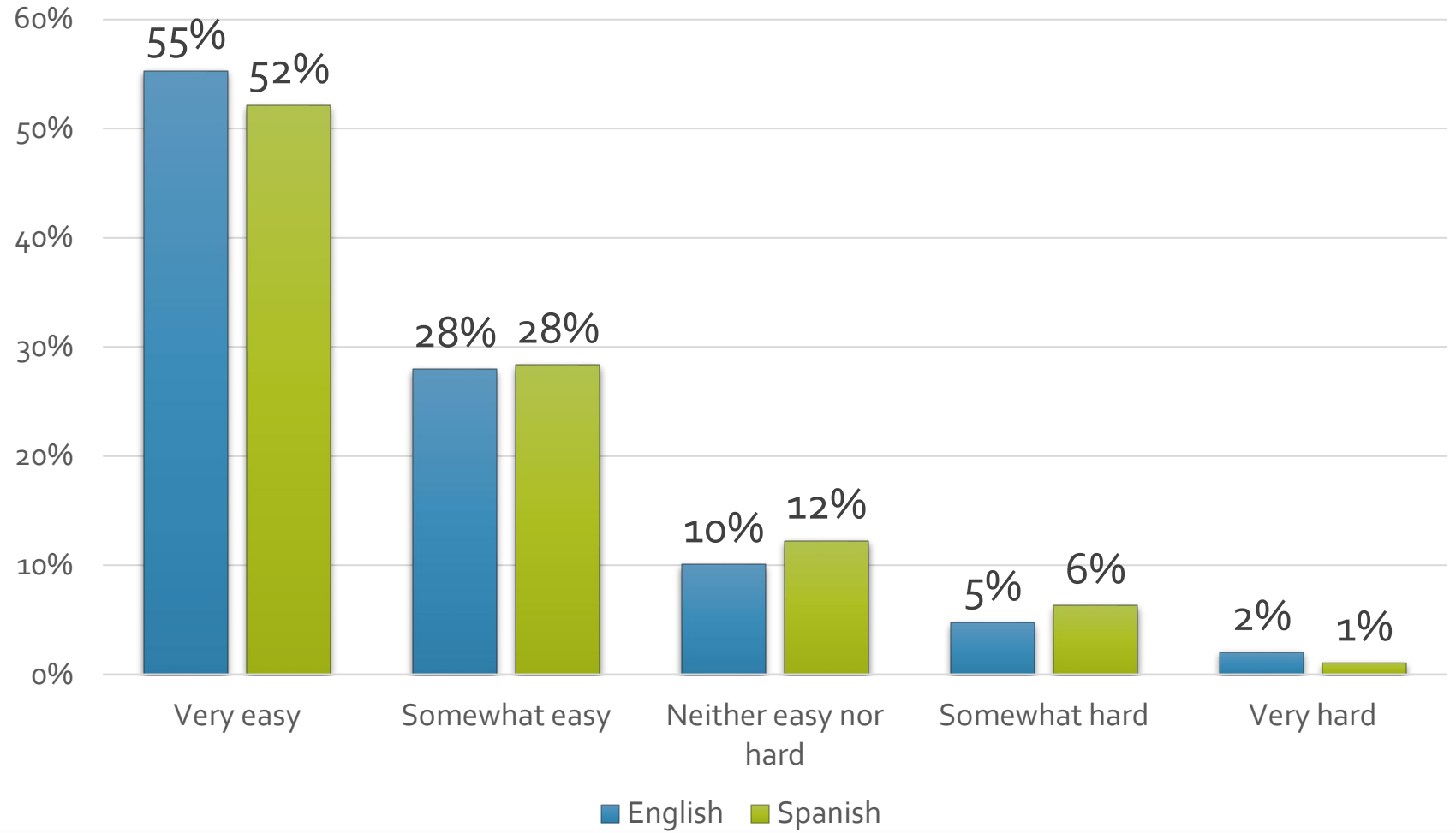
How easy was the application process?

Applicants



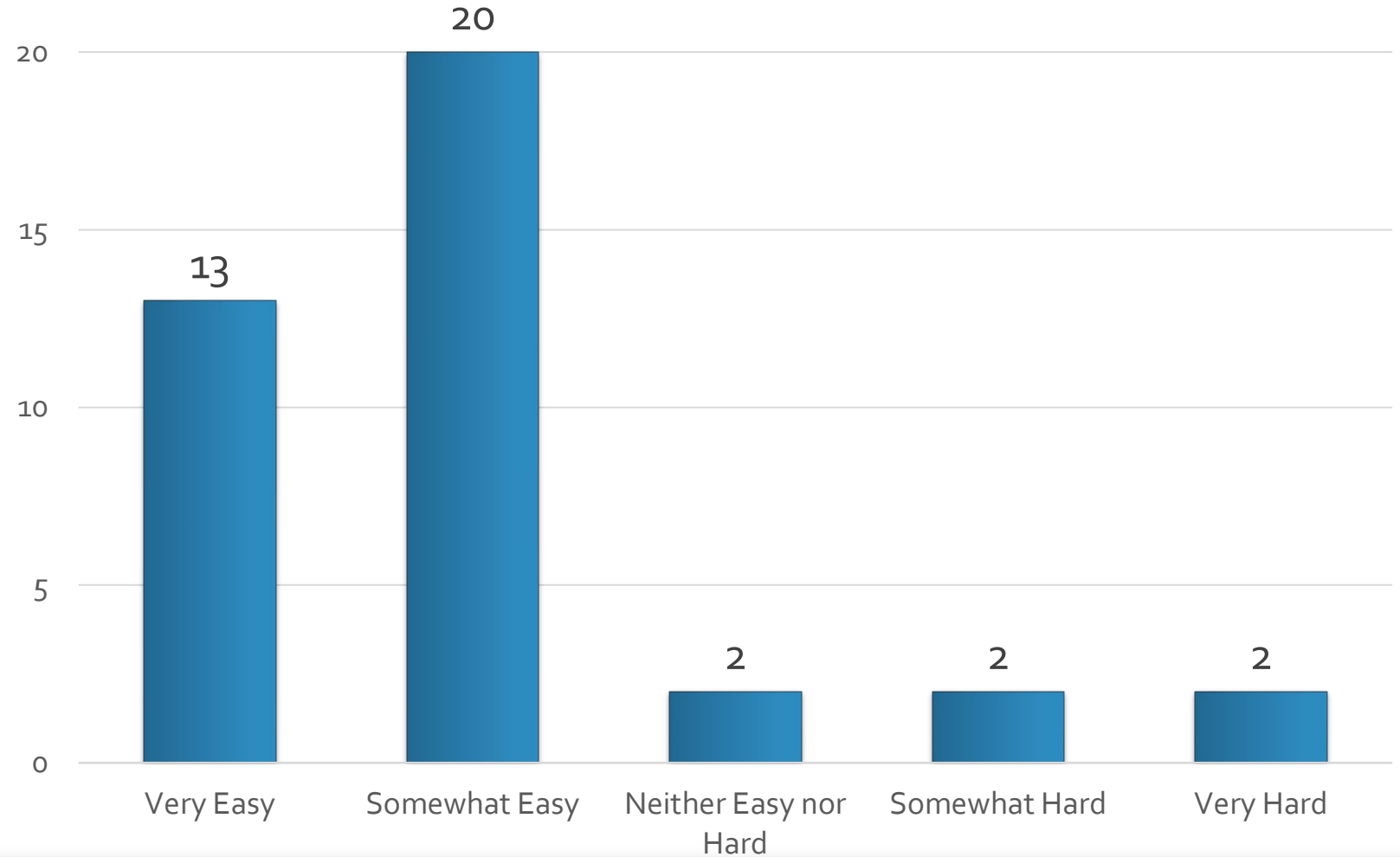
Was the information you received about your application easy to understand?

Applicants



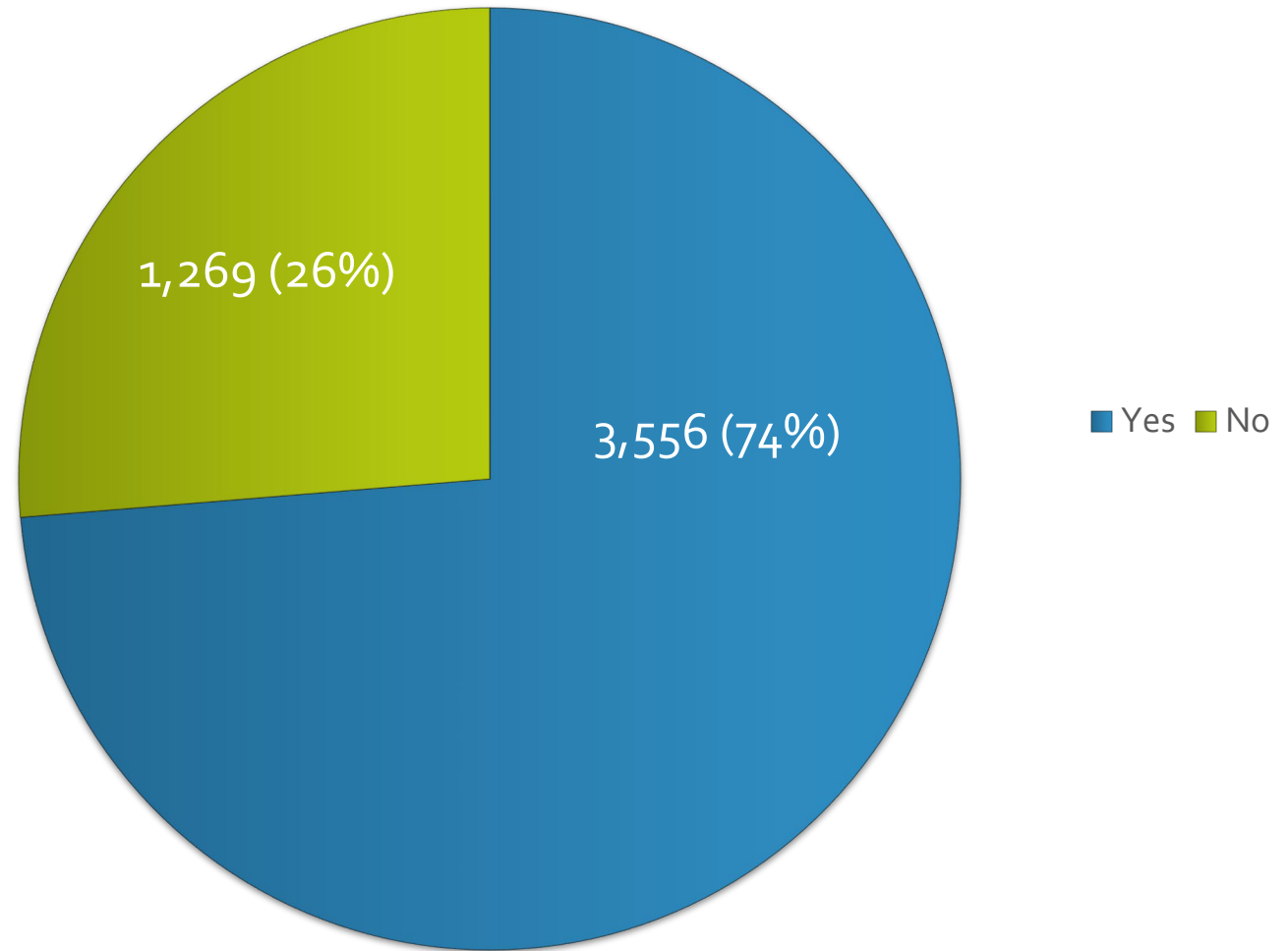
Was it easy to help your clients apply?

Implementation & Outreach Partners



Were you assisted in a timely manner?

Applicants



Responses by Income Level



What would make this program more accessible and helpful?

Applicants	Property Owners & Managers	Implementation & Outreach Partners
Clearer application process	Communication	Scenario list
More human help	More people available to answer	Struggle with documents
Saving the application to come back	Make process faster	Some applicants don't have technology
Housing fair for those without access to computer	Including landlords in communication/figuring system out	Cash assistance portion was difficult to maneuver
More exposure	More marketing	Being able to self-check status
Keep up to date on your case	Older residents lack computer knowledge	Have all documents on hand



Emergency Housing Assistance Program

Created in April 2020

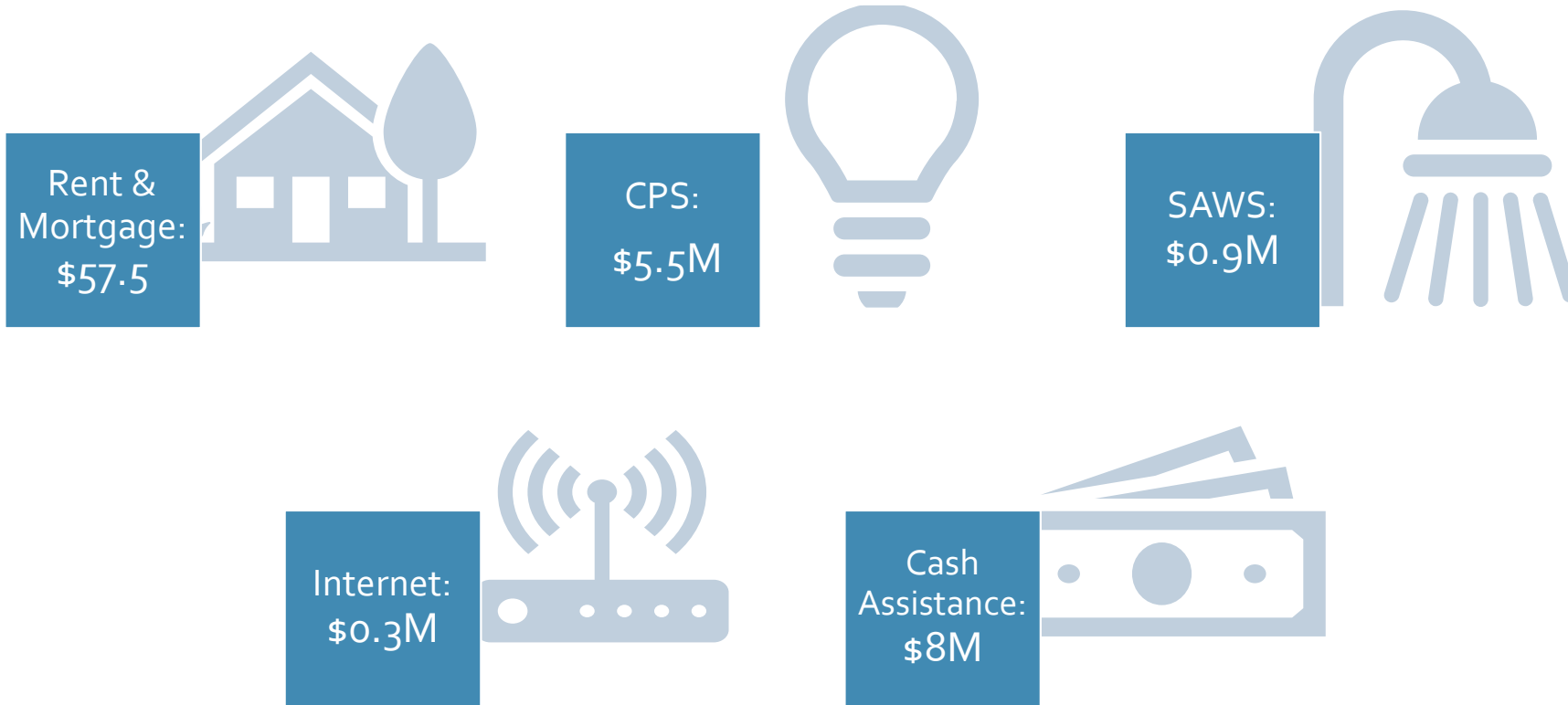
- In response to COVID-19
- Regular updates to City Council, CNSC, Housing Commission

Eligibility

- City of San Antonio and Bexar County Resident
- COVID-19 Hardship
- <80% AMI

Assistance

- Rental
- Mortgage
- Utility
- Cash Grant for groceries, fuel and medicine

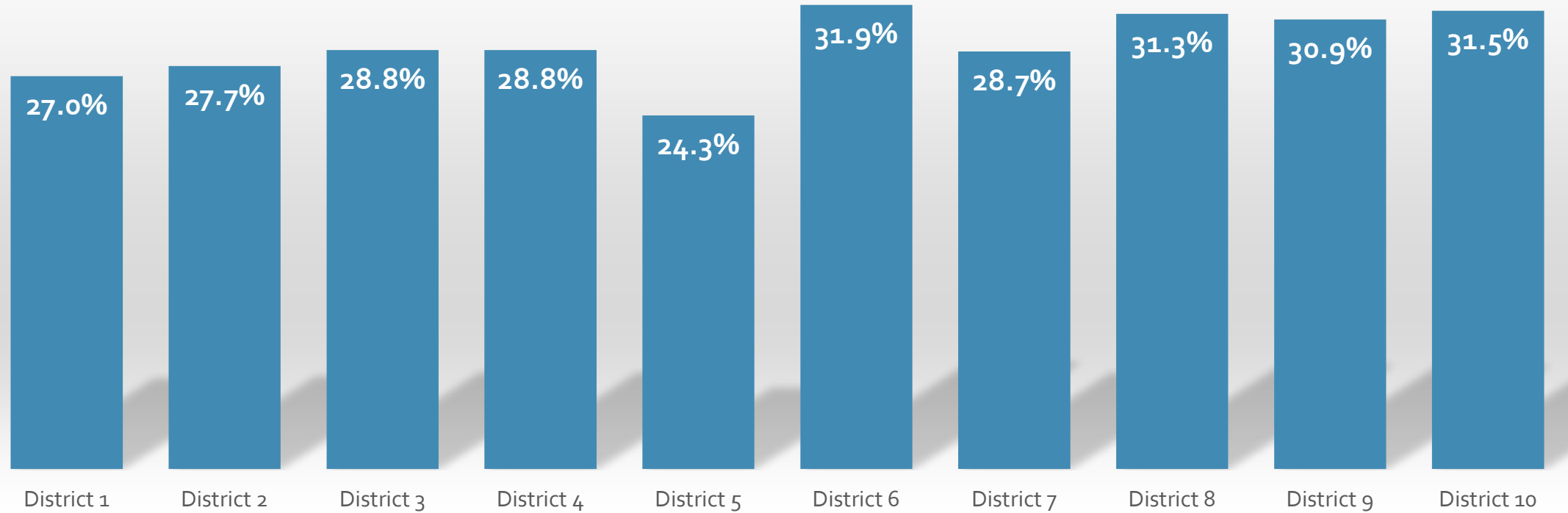


Emergency Housing Assistance Program
Total Assistance Issued: \$72.2 Million

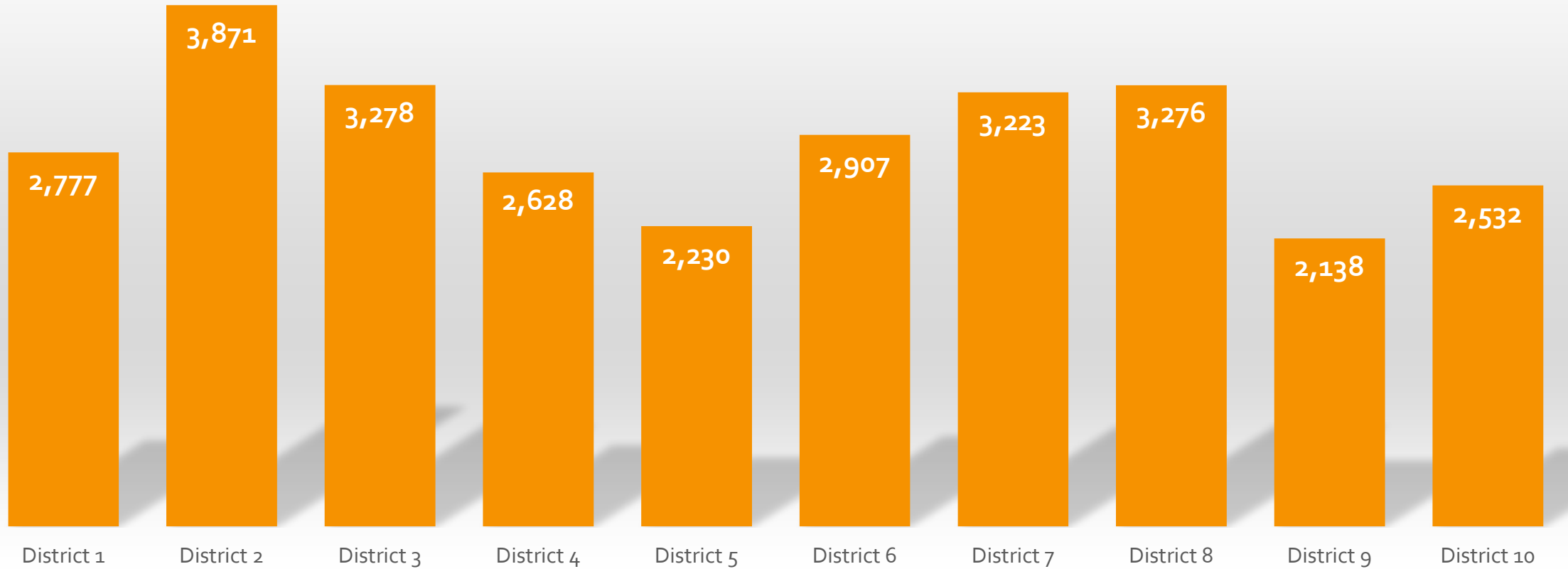
Emergency Housing Assistance Program Demographics

Council District	Average AMI	Approved Households	Average HH Size	Approved Amount
1	27.0	2,777	3	\$6,689,908
2	27.7	3,871	3	\$9,412,867
3	28.8	3,278	3	\$7,901,211
4	28.8	2,628	3	\$6,730,624
5	24.3	2,230	3	\$4,992,548
6	31.9	2,907	3	\$7,514,591
7	28.7	3,223	3	\$7,994,194
8	31.3	3,276	2	\$8,447,465
9	30.9	2,138	2	\$5,709,422
10	31.5	2,532	3	\$6,681,919

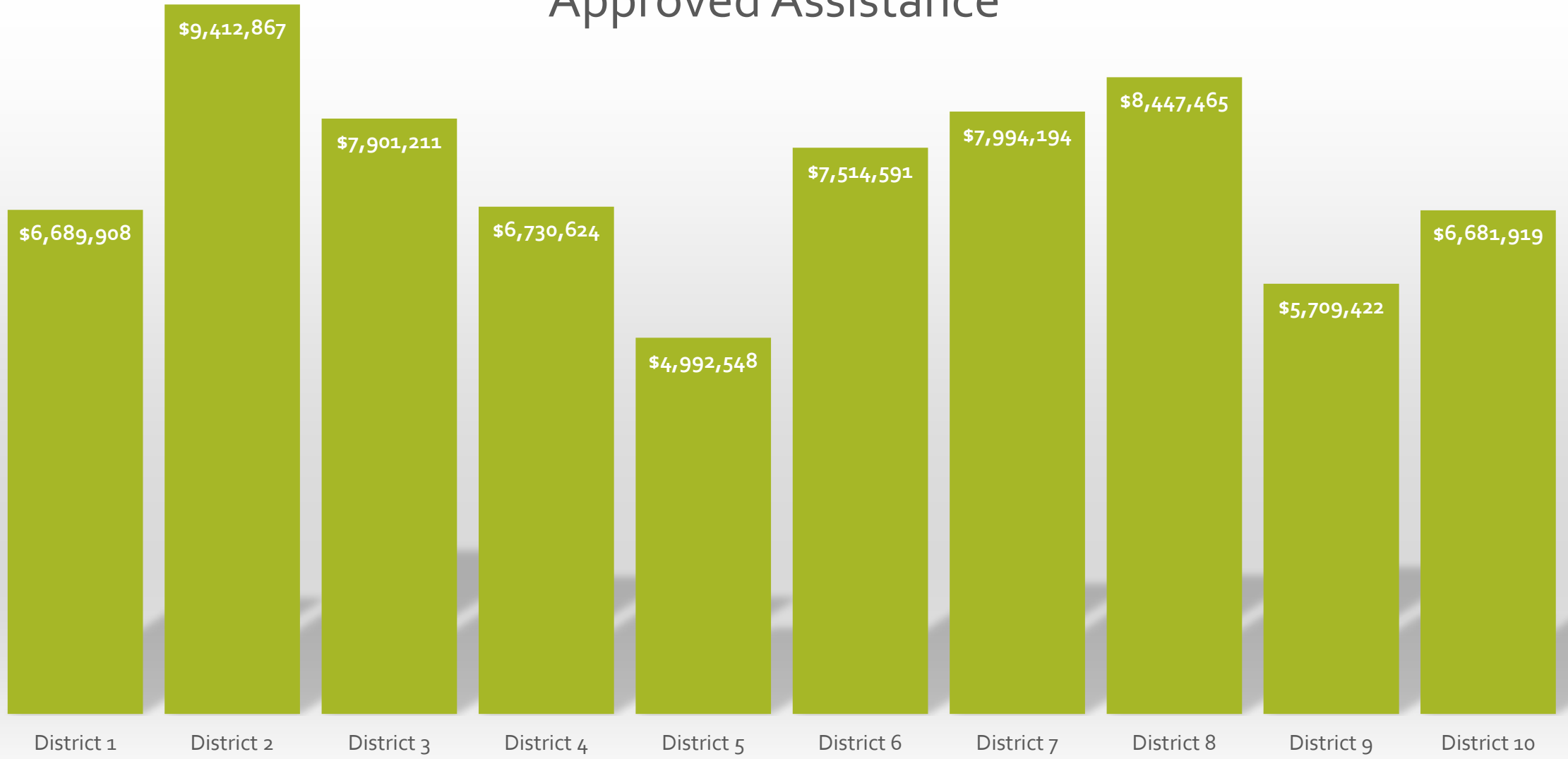
Average AMI of Households Assisted



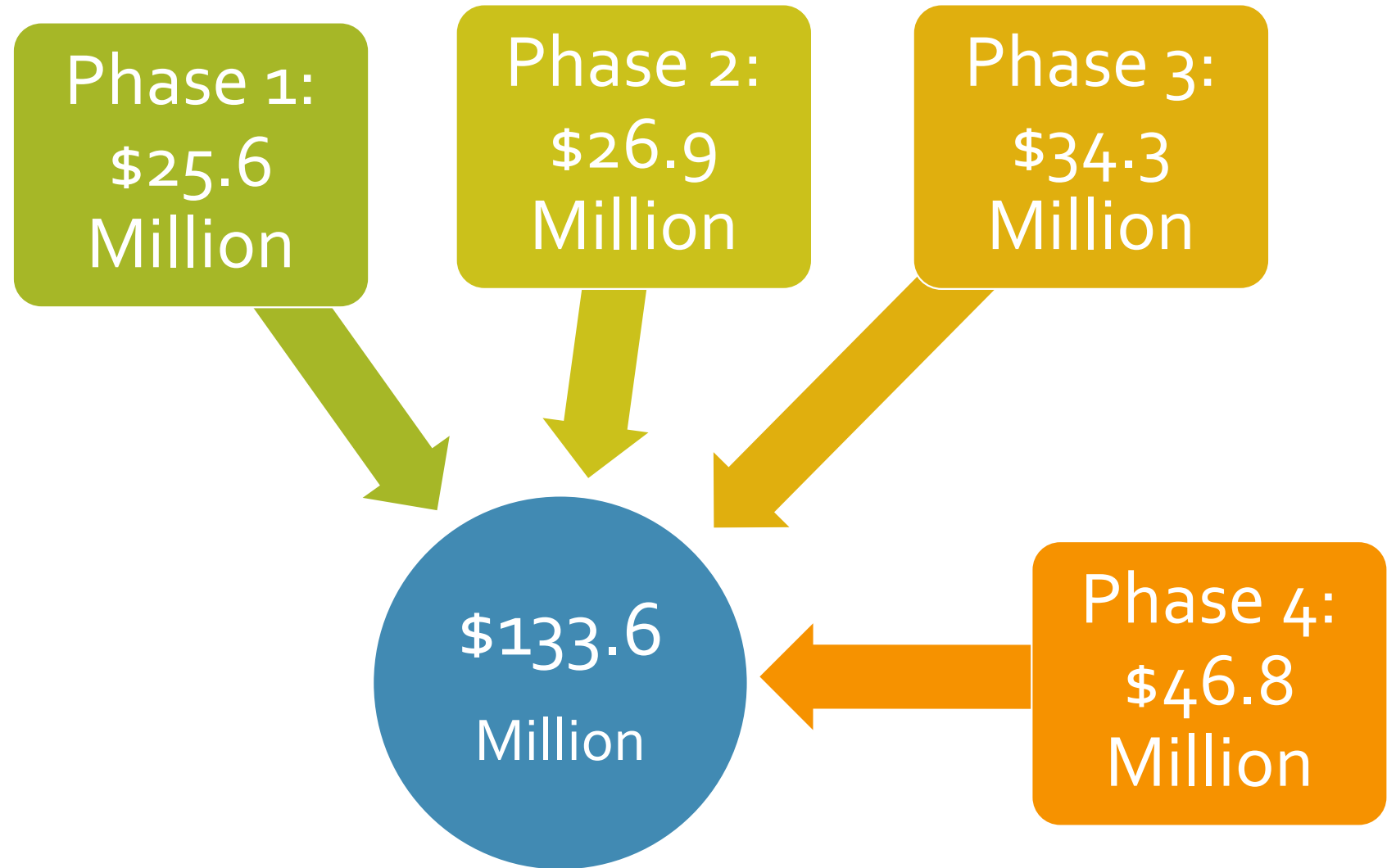
Households Assisted



Approved Assistance



Emergency Housing Assistance Program Funding



On January 19, 2021 - The City was received \$46.8 in funding from the U.S. Treasury

Considerations for EHAP recommendations

US Treasury Funding – Rental and Utility Assistance Only for individuals making less than 80% of AMI ; paid directly to landlords and utility companies; Funds must be spent by September 30, 2021

EHAP Survey - 7,091 responses

Staff feedback from 38 FT temporary staff processing applications for assistance, Call Center Staff and Finance Team

Partners - Domesticas Unidas, COPS Metro, SAGE, TRLA, Catholic Charities, Sacred Heart

Mayor and City Council - Recovery and Resiliency Briefings

Cultural and Neighborhood Service Council Committee - EHAP briefings

Housing Commission - monthly updates since June 2020

February 9th Public Input Session

Emergency Housing Assistance Program Allowances October 1, 2020 - Present

AMI	Months 1 and 2					Month 3
	Rent/Mortgage	SAWS	CPS	Internet	FII Cash Grant	FII Cash Grant
<50%	✓	✓	✓	✓	Up to \$300	\$500
51% - 80%	✓					\$250

* Resident who received assistance in Phase 1 or Phase 2 will be eligible for 1 month of cash assistance in Phase 3

Emergency Housing Assistance Program Allowances (Proposed)

AMI	Up to 6 months combination of arrears, current and 1 future month			
	Rent/Mortgage	SAWS	CPS	Internet
<50%	✓	✓	✓	✓
51% - 80%	✓			

- Residents are eligible for a total of 6 months of assistance, prior assistance will be counted towards 6-month total.
- Cash assistance will be addressed through referral system.

EHAP Administrative Enhancements

Improve Referral System

- Expand Benefits Navigation – Human Services
- Referral services include Food, Childcare, Transportation, SNAP Enrollment, Job Training, Pet Care Support
- More holistic approach and long term

Application Assistance Program

- Assist residents who do not have access to technology
- Contractor Point-of-Contact for gathering documents and application submission

Housing Commission Feedback on Proposed Amendments

Referral system process must be embedded in the online application process and call center and be appropriately staffed.

- An additional 5 Benefit Navigators will be hired to support referrals and will expand if necessary
- Benefit Navigators will perform an assessment for each referral received

Housing Commission Feedback on Proposed Amendments

Cash assistance remains a need for families

- Direct cash assistance is not eligible under the federal guidelines for the recently awarded \$46.8 million in U.S. Treasury funds
- The Family Independence Initiative (FII) is returning to their primary mission to facilitate financial independence through financial counseling and mentorship.

Housing Commission Feedback on Proposed Amendments

Cash assistance remains a need for families

- The proposed referral system will connect individuals to long term benefits that will help with food security, job training, childcare, and other services they may need.
- If cash assistance is determined to be the only tool available to meet a specific need, a gift card can be provided.

Housing Commission Feedback on Proposed Amendments

Additional data analysis needed

- Staff performed an analysis that graphically shows the responses to each of the quantitative questions and includes a sample of the comments to the open-ended questions.
- The analysis was consolidated in a draft report and presented to the Housing Commission.

Texas Rent Relief Program

- Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) announces \$1.3 billion emergency rental and utility assistance Program
- Applications can be accepted beginning February 15, 2021
- Accepting applications from landlords and tenants statewide
 - Past due, current and up to 3 months of expected rent, utility and home energy costs
 - After the initial 3 months of forward assistance, you can apply for 3 additional months of assistance if funds are still available

Timeline and Next Steps



January 27th

- Amendments Presented to Housing Commission

February 9th

- Public Comment Virtual Meeting

February 12st

- Culture and Neighborhood Services Council Committee

February 18th

- City Council Consideration

Action Requested Today

- Extend the term of eligibility from 2 months of assistance to 6 months of assistance.
- Continue to provide rental, mortgage, and utility assistance (CPS, SAWS, and internet), but eliminate the cash grant.
- Approve the implementation and development of an improved referral and application assistance program.

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