



FEMA: Getting Real II

*Promising Practices in Inclusive Emergency
Management For the Whole Community*

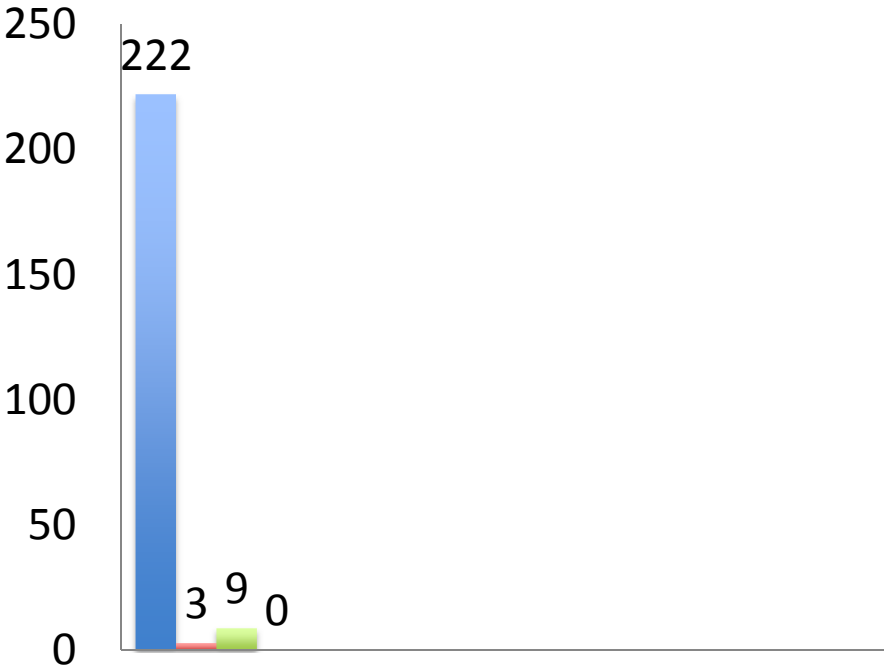
***September 12-14, 2011
Arlington, VA***

Sign Language Interpreter Strike Teams

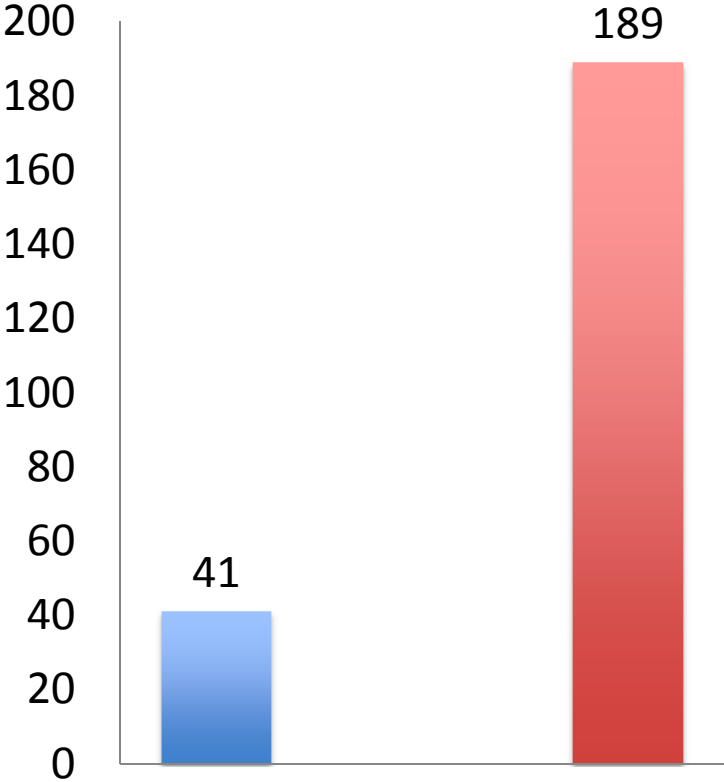
MEMBERSHIP SURVEY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- **November 2010**
- **Via RID website**
- **345 Responses**
- **Not all Total Responses = 345**

OVERVIEW



- HEARING
- DEAF
- HARD OF HEARING
- DEAF-BLIND



- MALE
- FEMALE

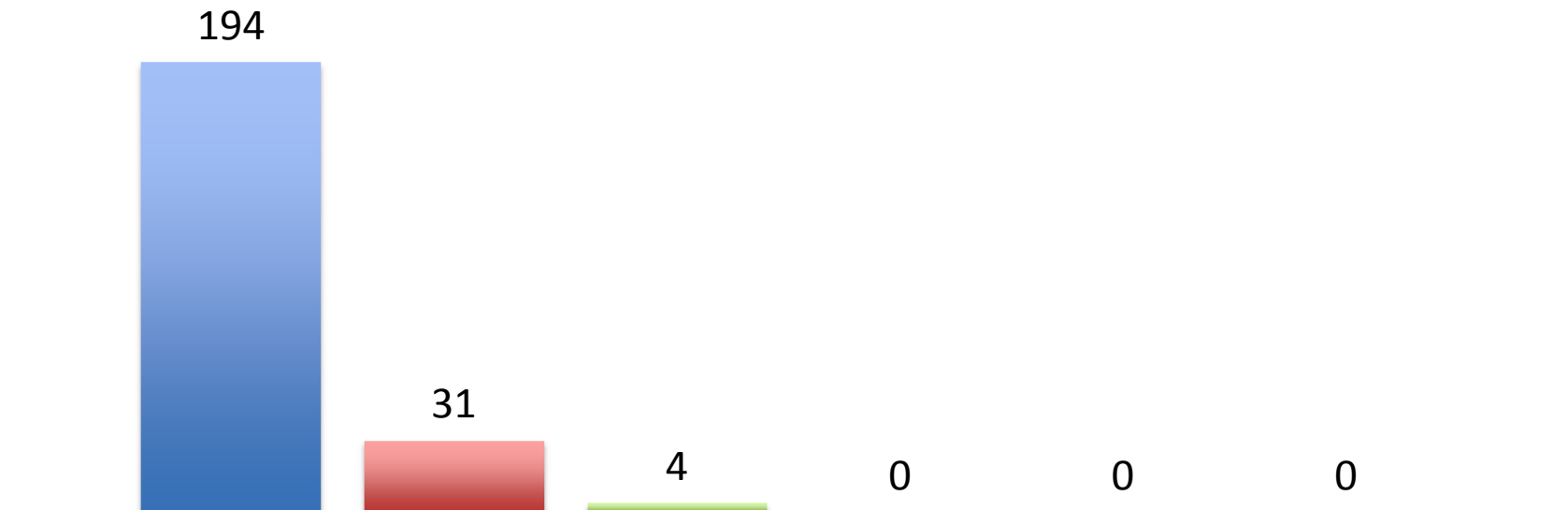
Total Number of Respondents: 230

Total Number of Respondents: 234

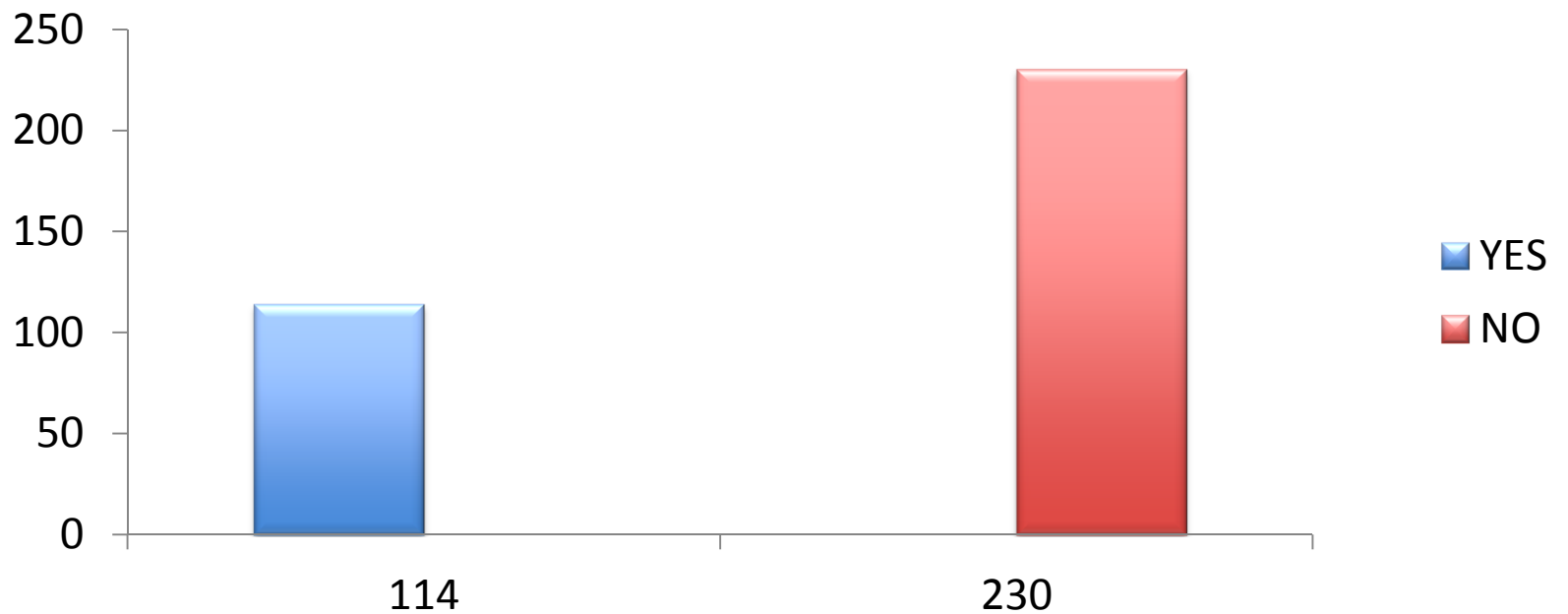
MEMBERSHIP

TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 229

■ CERTIFIED ■ ASSOCIATE ■ STUDENT
■ SUPPORTING ■ ORGANIZATIONAL ■ TRIAL

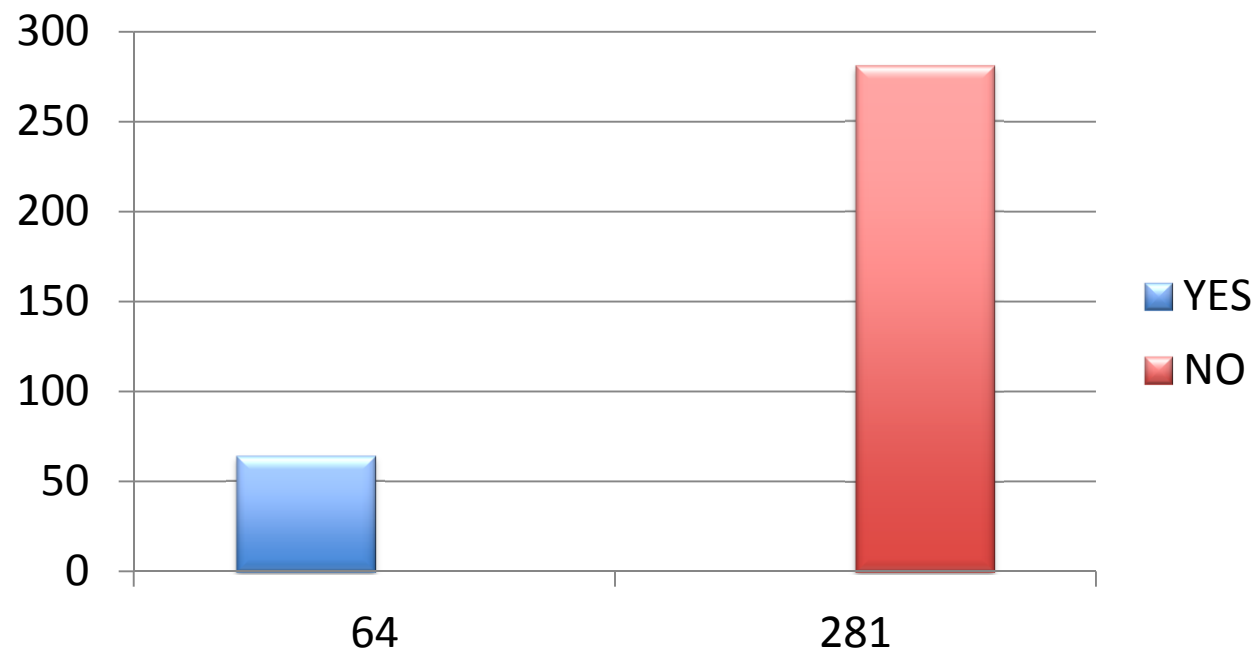


HAVE YOU PERSONALLY BEEN AFFECTED BY A MAJOR DISASTER IN YOUR AREA?



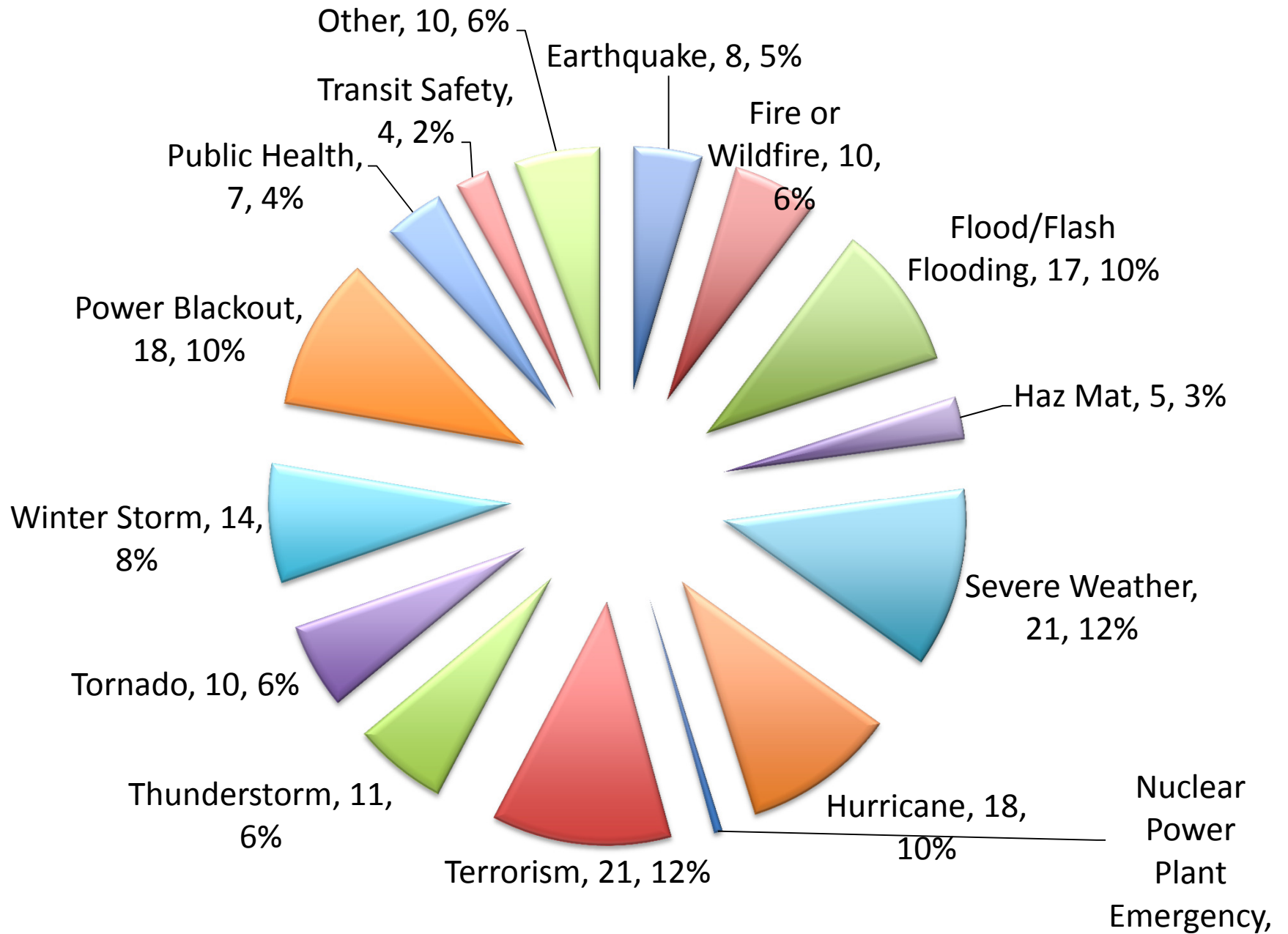
Total Number of Respondents: 344

HAVE YOU EVER INTERPRETED IN A MAJOR DISASTER SITUATION?



Total Number of Respondents:
345

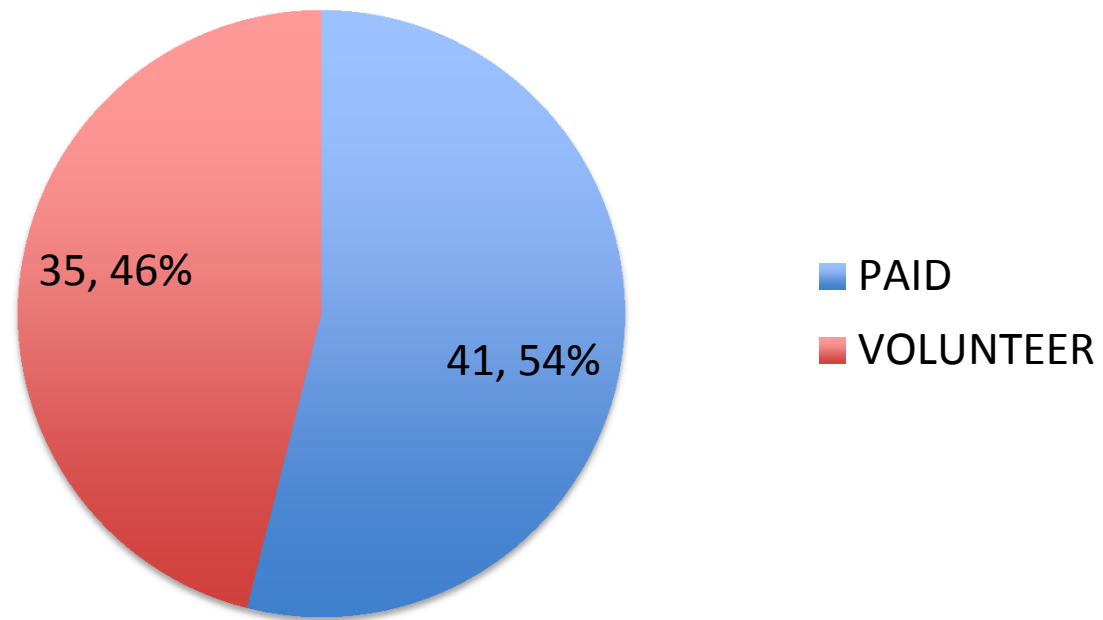
WHAT TYPES OF DISASTERS DID YOU INTERPRET FOR?



TIME FRAME FOR EACH INTERPRETED DISASTER

- **Tornado was for one day, 10 hours.**
- **During Hurricane Ike in Houston, TX 2009 approximately 3 weeks. 1 week before and two after in shelters.**
- **Each incident was as needed - typically 15 minutes to 4 hours per need**
- **suicide by cop... deaf man and the after fact many community members had meetings with the police department at the local deaf club, volunteer interpreters were there 24/7 for over a week.**
- **Just one day, in an educational setting until it was safe to go home**
- **During a major snow blizzard, I interpreted the evening local news everyday for a week. That was one hour a night.**
- **Provided a total of about 24hours/3 days to deaf blind individual during one major hurricane impact.**
- **Earthquake struck while at an assignment - interpreted radio announcements until all were dismissed. One hour max**
- **Off and on for 3 days while the power was out and we had to relocate temporarily. Deaf "family member" was living with us. Another family member shared the interpreting responsibilities.**

WERE YOU PAID TO INTERPRET ?

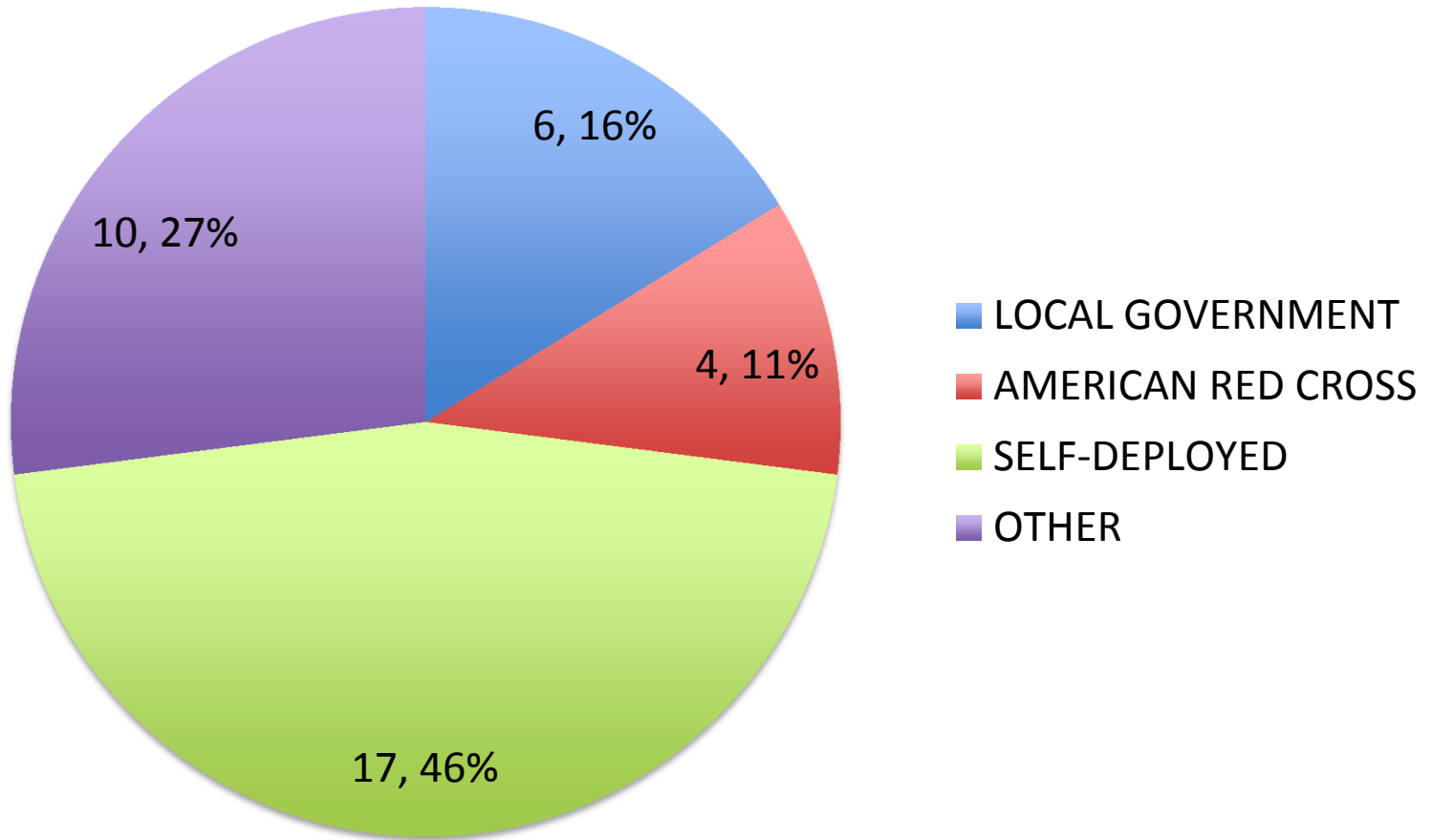


WERE YOU PAID TO INTERPRET

?

- **I was the interpreter at a community college class and being paid to interpret a class on 9/11 at the time the planes struck the WTC.**
- **These happened as a result of my being with deaf at the time things were happening. I was not specifically hired to interpret the event. The schools hired me in the first two incidents and an interpreter agency paid me to interpret in the medical situation.**
- **I was a staff interpreter for the state and this was part of my job duties.**
- **while I am employed by a state commission for the Deaf and hard of hearing, and was sent by them, there is an agreement between the executive branch of the government and the commission that they would provide the interpreters.**
- **News agency**
- **I was contacted by friends and asked to come interpret. There was no formal system.**
- **I was called personally by a member of the Red Cross- as well as other agencies that know me as a certified interpreter in the areas**

VOLUNTEER SERVICE ORGANIZED THROUGH?

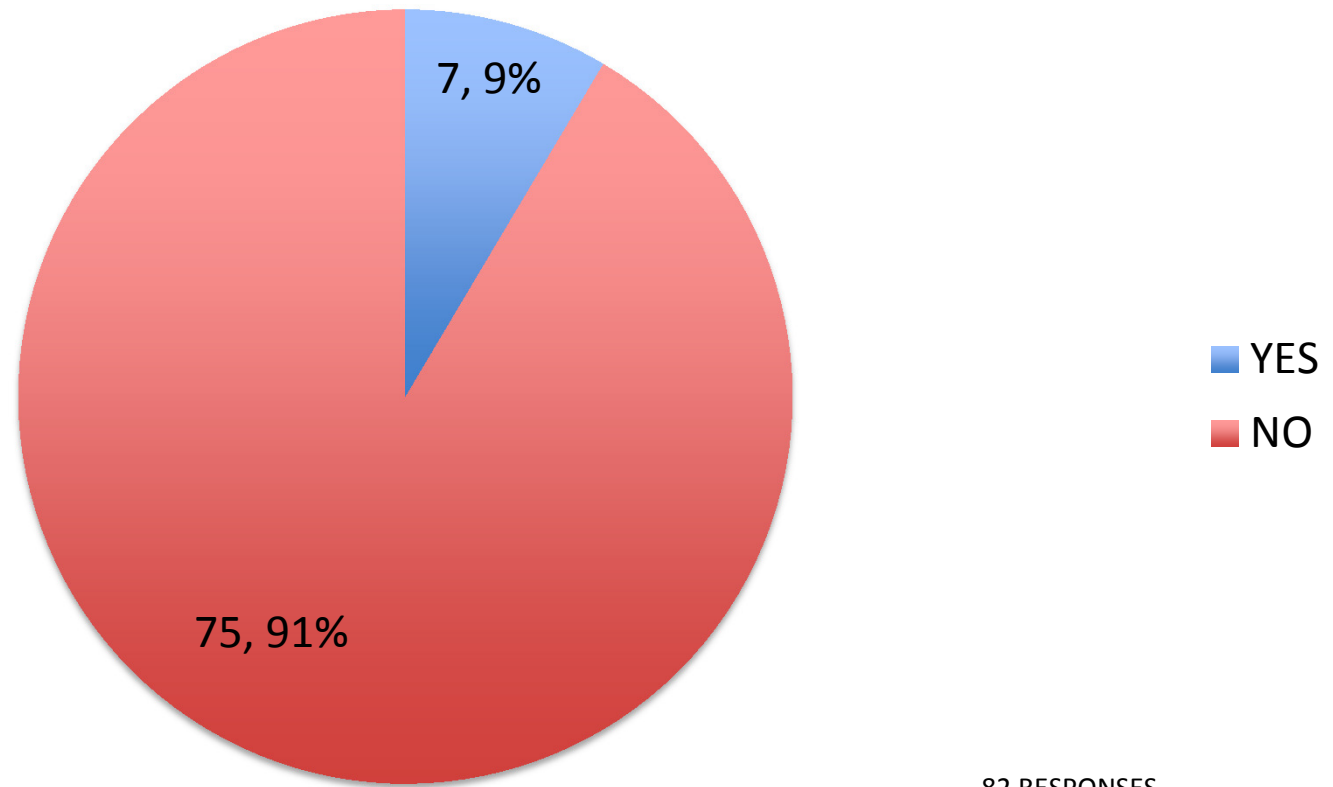


37 RESPONSES

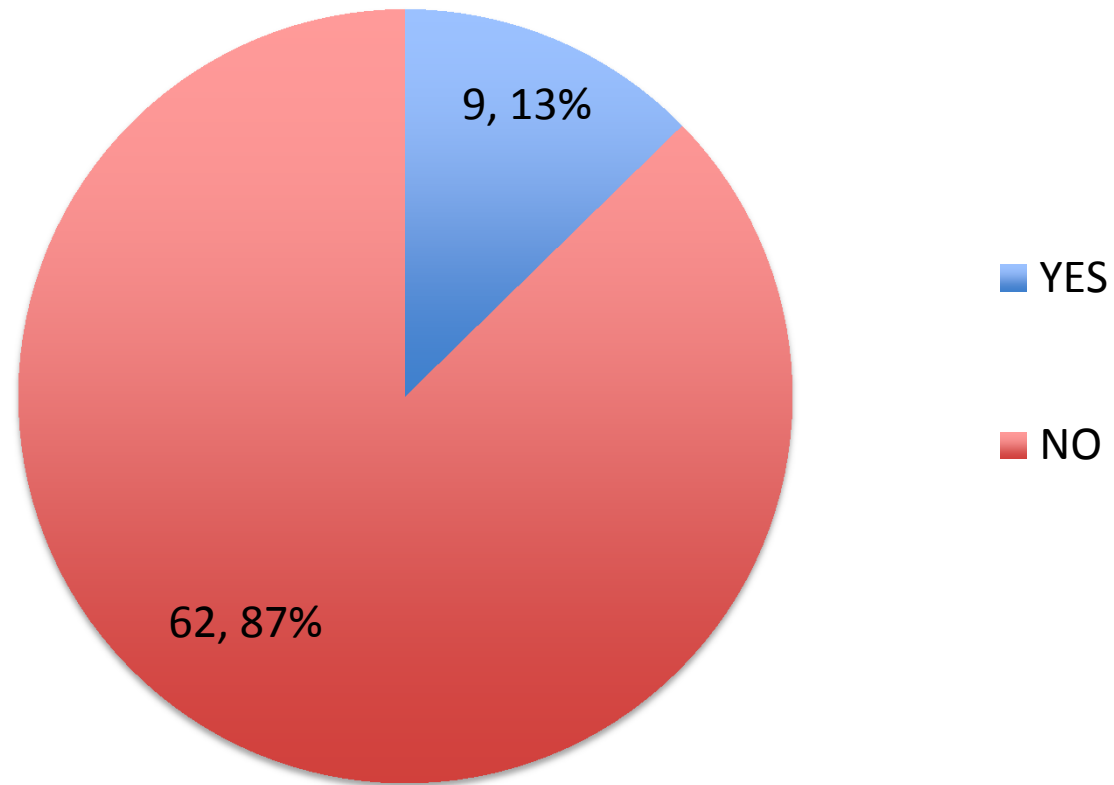
VOLUNTEER SERVICE ORGANIZED THROUGH?

- **I volunteered with local government and self-deployed**
- **local deaf civil rights agency**
- **I was the only person able to interpret for the 4 people at the location of the tornado**
- **Called by the TV station. They helicopter me in and out.**
- **National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) has requested that faculty who have interpreting skills be on hand to assist with communication several times - possible emergency on campus, during severe weather etc.**
- **Deaf community organizers in conjunction with other disaster / community services (I was in a supportive function at a sports arena providing food, shelter, and services)**
- **Local interpreters spoken and sign worked through the City of NYC in the aftermath of 9/11 - but the city didn't advertise our presence too well.**

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AFTER WORKING?



WERE YOU DEBRIEFED?



MENTAL HEALTH DEBRIEF

- **It would have been nice to unload those heavy emotions with a trained counselor after working all of those hours interpreting very descriptive and depressing issues. I honestly cried in my car for 30 minutes before I felt strong enough to drive home that day. No one asked me if I was all right.**
- **Because interpreters are often requested to be neutral and stoic in the face of disseminating information, there is higher probability of vicarious trauma. There MUST be some sort of debriefing for the interpreters. There should also be some education to the deaf community that the interpreter who does show emotion is not necessarily violating any ethical standards but, in many cases, is also dealing with a personal response to the situation.**
- **Red Cross Mental Health workers were ill equipped to deal with the vicarious trauma that interpreters face.**
- **Support came solely via my interpreting team. We all wished there was a chance to debrief on a more professional level.**
- **It's not just disasters. Sometimes we interpret in VRS for situations that hit too close to home - with death, illness, etc - and that we are not prepared for.**
- **The American Red Cross provided mental health support for all people involved, not specific to interpreting.**

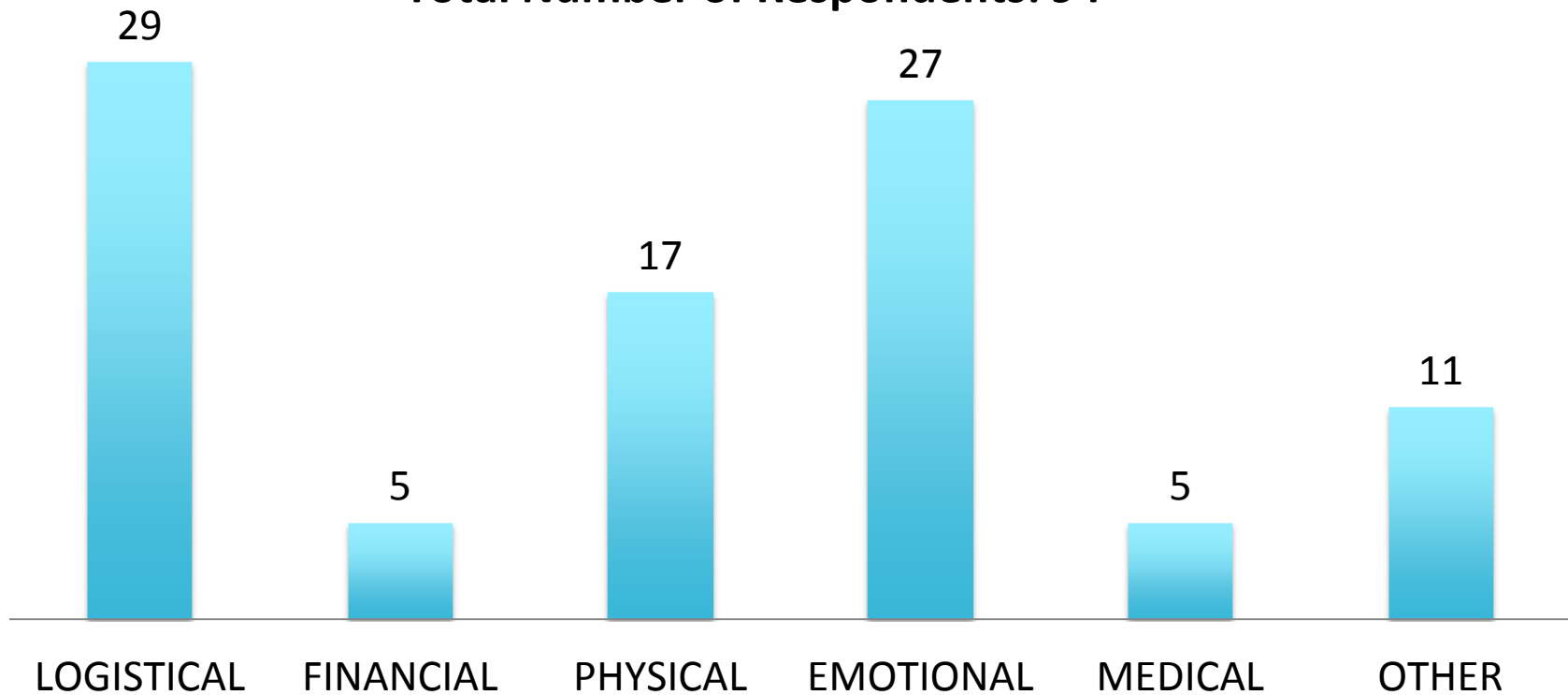
REQUESTED FEEDBACK FOR THE PURPOSE OF IMPROVING PROTOCOLS

- Interpreters were at the FEMA center in 8-hour shifts but the Deaf community was not notified that we were there or when we were there. During the entire two weeks, I interpreted once. I was told by staff that several Deaf individuals had shown up at times when no interpreter was scheduled to be there, i.e. early mornings or late evenings. Therefore, limited service was actually provided.
- I was asked to provide input into the making of a brochure "What to do in a Disaster if you are Disabled"
- Being self deployed, there was no option for this. I did debrief with a colleague.

OBSTACLES FACED WHILE INTERPRETING IN THE DISASTER



Total Number of Respondents: 94

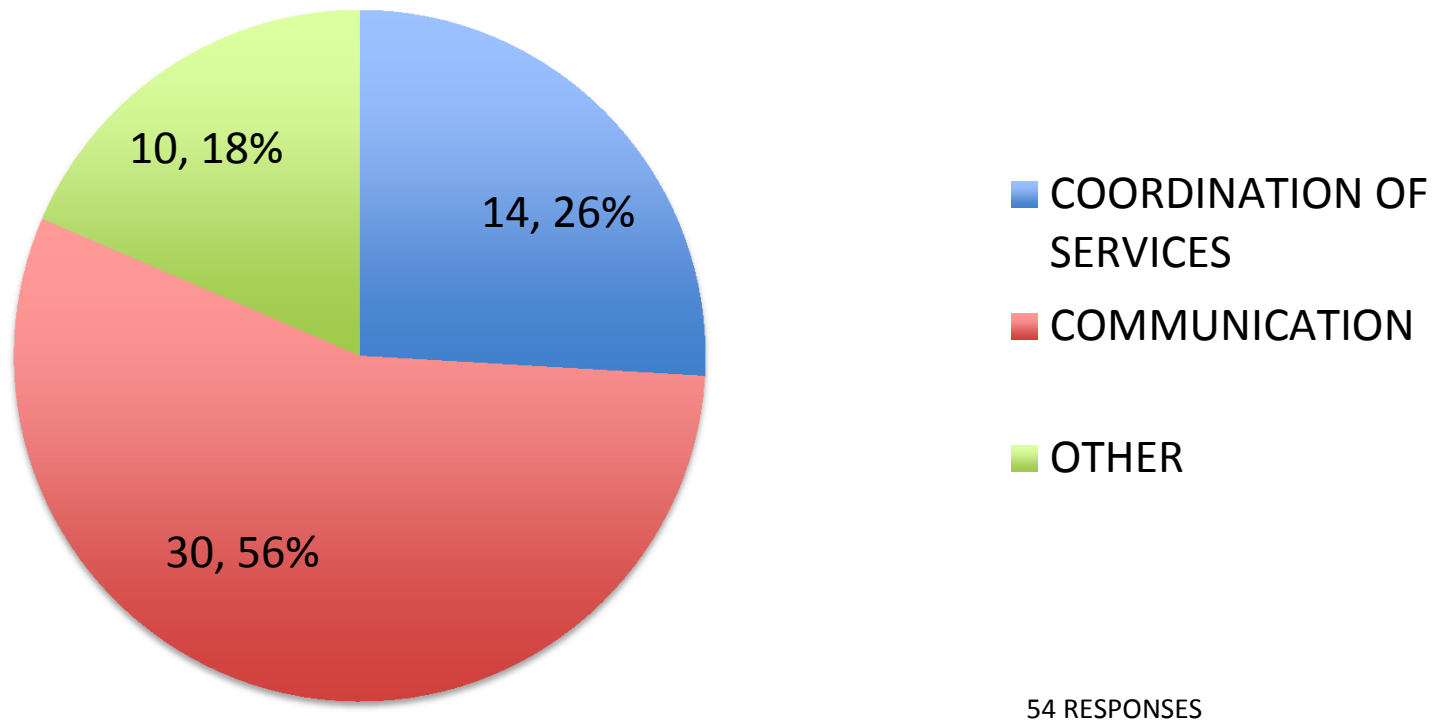


OBSTACLES

- **security (which could fall under logistical)... had to be cleared through Homeland Security and sometimes this process took a while.**
- **I was overwhelmed with deaf folks and their issues that they were almost mad at me for not being everywhere at the same time to assist with communication.**
- **The televisions had no interpreters or captions, it was truly awful.**
- **Attitude - the talking heads didn't think I needed to know what was going to be said before I heard it "live" to interpret**
- **The public airing of the announcements were not aired via the local TV networks, but the statehouse network and was only posted on the state's website. Therefore, no one watching their televisions at home had access to the announcements.**
- **tired.**
- **ethical conflicts - providing services in different (sometimes opposing) circumstances.**
- **I myself did not know what to do. Should I risk going back to my apartment, would other sites be attacked...I was very unprepared.**

WHAT WENT SMOOTHLY?

Total Number of Respondents: 54

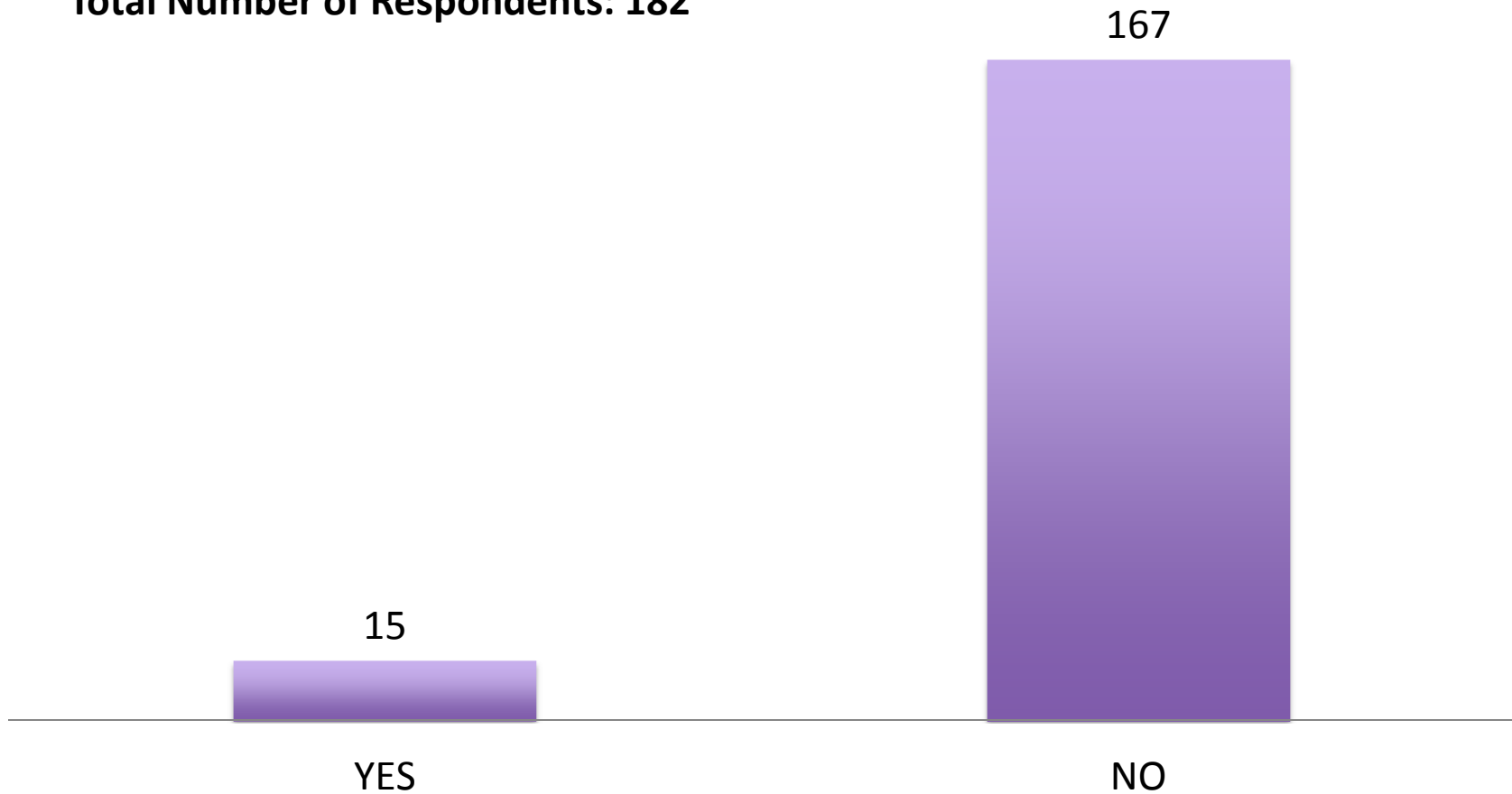


WHAT WENT SMOOTHLY?

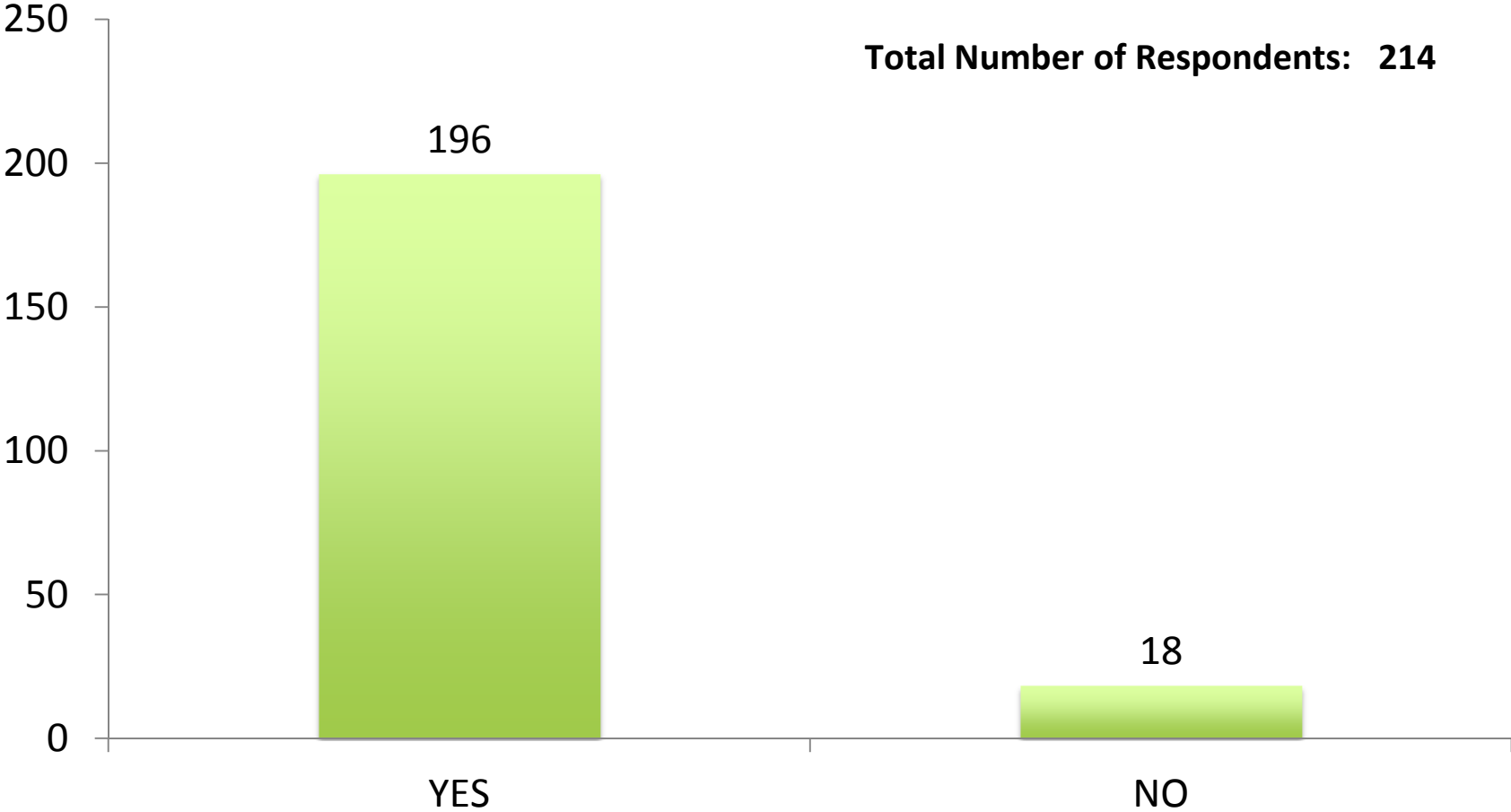
- Was already on site as an interpreter for other reasons when disaster occurred
- Hurricanes were handled by the State's Emergency Office and it went very well.
- We were accepted as part of the team and treated with respect and camaraderie.
- Nothing went smoothly. Mostly because of the nature and scope of the situation. Nothing was going smoothly for anyone.
- it's a disaster... I'm not sure in either case- anyone even knew I was out there... what's to go smoothly?... there were Deaf people who had no access - I gave them as much information as I could... there was nothing else... (and there would not be...) when the infra-structure is down - there is no "smoothly".
- We happened to be in a social work class, so the teacher was able to stay calm and to make good decisions about what the class should do. Since transportation (subways, trains etc) were all cancelled, I brought my deaf-blind client to my apartment which was luckily not far away from the college. We sat and watched the news for the next 12 hours. Thankfully the transmission was not interfered with and there was captioning to keep us well informed. My apartment became a hub for other deaf people who were stuck in the city.
- They camp had a good emergency plan and everyone stayed calm and cooperated.

ARE YOU CURRENTLY A VOLUNTEER WITH THE AMERICAN RED CROSS?

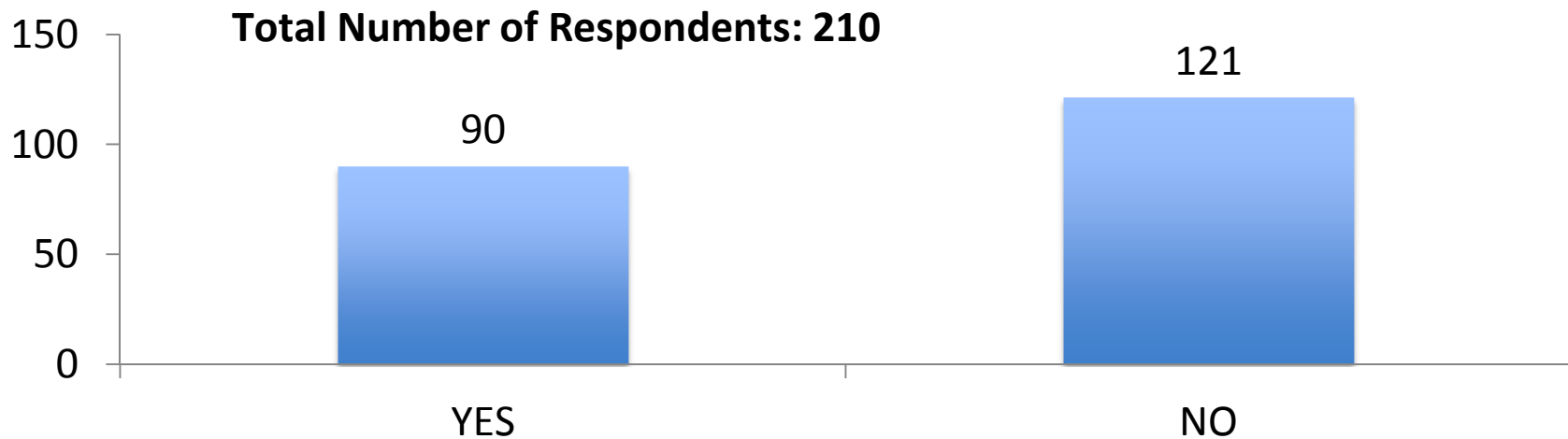
Total Number of Respondents: 182



WOULD YOU ATTEND RID TRAINING ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TOPICS?



DO YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY PLAN, EVACUATION PLAN AND EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT?



- This standard practice paper addresses the field of Emergency Management and the unique challenges and risks sign language interpreters are currently experiencing in this emerging field. After the events of September 11, 2001, the President and Federal Government developed the National Incident Management System (NIMS), a structured framework used nationwide for both governmental and nongovernmental agencies to respond to natural disasters and or terrorist attacks at the local, state, and federal levels of government. NIMS is a comprehensive, nationwide, systemic approach to Incident Management; a set of preparedness concepts and principles for all hazards; essential principles for a common operating picture and interoperability of communications and information management; standardized resource management procedures; scalable, so it may be used for all incidents; and a dynamic system that promotes ongoing management and maintenance

PROPOSED AREAS IN STANDARD PRACTICE PAPER

- Self Preparation
- Training Education and Credentialing
- Pre-Credentialing and Self Deployment
- Public Health emergencies
- Volunteer or Contractor criteria
- Mental Health Issues
- Next Steps

Self Preparation

- Am I physically, mentally and emotionally able to provide effective services during an event or is it “too close to home”? Have I considered the potential short term and long term effects of being involved and exposed to a traumatic event?
- Do I have a disability or a medical condition that could put me or others in jeopardy?
- Am I able and willing to be away from my family?
- Ensure that you have at least a 7-day supply of daily medication or other medical supplies that you may need to sustain yourself.
- Take a 1st Aid/CPR/AED course
- Keep abreast of daily news and always be prepared physically and mentally so as to be able to quickly respond to emergencies.

Training Education and Credentialing

- **IS-100.b - Introduction to Incident Command System (ICS-100) 3 hours** - introduces the Incident Command System (ICS) and provides the foundation for higher level ICS training. This course describes the history, features and principles, and organizational structure of the ICS. It also explains the relationship between ICS and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
- **IS-197.SP Special Needs Planning Considerations for Service and Support Providers (4 hours)**- The purpose of this course is to provide representatives of the special needs service and support system with the basic information and tools to develop their own emergency plans and is designed for people who work with the elderly and people with disabilities, and will teach how to partner with local Emergency Management and better prepare for all phases of an emergency.
- **IS-200.b - ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents 3 hours** -designed to enable personnel to operate efficiently during an incident or event within the ICS.
- **IS-700.a NIMS An Introduction 3 hours** - introduces and overviews NIMS. NIMS provides a consistent nationwide template to enable all government, private-sector, and nongovernmental organizations to work together during domestic incidents.
- **IS-702.a National Incident Management System (NIMS) Public Information Systems 3 hours** - NIMS provides a consistent nationwide template to enable all government, private-sector, and nongovernmental organizations to work together during domestic incidents. This includes public information. The public information systems described in NIMS are designed to effectively manage public information at an incident, regardless of the size and complexity of the situation or the number of entities involved in the response.
- **IS-800.B National Response Framework, An Introduction 3 hours** - The course introduces participants to the concepts and principles of the National Response Framework.

Pre-Credentialing and Self Deployment

- Pre-credentialing involves providing documentation that can quickly authenticate and verify the certification and the identity of designated sign language interpreters for emergency responders and organizations such as the ARC. This system will allow and help ensure that sign language interpreters are authorized and possess a minimum common level of training and experience.
- It is critical that sign language interpreters understand the difficulties local responders and the ARC are faced with when they are responding to a disaster and protecting the public. (GOOD SAMARITANS IN SHEEPS CLOTHING)
- Sign language interpreters should NEVER self deploy. Often those who self deploy often become the disaster after the disaster and often take valuable resources away from those that desperately need it. Individuals who may be affiliated with a disaster volunteer agency will be told to NEVER self deploy, even then you must wait to be activated by the appropriate response agency.

Public Health Emergencies

- Based on intentional and natural disease outbreaks in the United States, such as the 2001 anthrax attacks and the 2003 influenza season, there had been increased focus and attention on the ability of State and local public health authorities to provide affected individuals and communities with rapid, reliable access to prophylactic medications. **In 2004, the United States Department of Homeland Security and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced the Cities Readiness Initiative.** This program was the first step by the federal government to increase and enhance the readiness of cities to make full and effective use of the Strategic National Stockpile. **Cities are required to devise comprehensive mass prophylaxis plans to ensure that civilian populations have timely access to necessary antibiotics and/or vaccines in the event of future outbreaks. In addition, state, county, and local health authorities must develop plans for their personnel.** Usually, personnel who are critical to the continuity of government and continuity of operations and who are providing essential services are provided the antibiotics.
- Prophylaxis is any medical or public health procedure whose purpose is to prevent, rather than treat or cure a disease.

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES cont.

- Willing to put themselves (and their families) at risk in these types of situations. I.E. Hazardous materials event.
- Responders and medical staff wearing HazMat suits or utilizing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), the interpreter should be provided the same PPE? (This is a gap that is lacking in local government planning)
- Will Interpreter be willing to have the immunization. If unwilling, are they putting themselves, their family, the deaf community and the responders at risk?
- What are your local government programs and how is it addressing providing prophylaxis to independent contractors.
- Are sign language interpreters included as part of local government plans if they establish a Dispensing/Vaccination Center (DVC) or a Point of Dispensing (POD)?
- Will they provide additional prophylaxis for the sign language interpreters family members?
- If sign language interpreters are being sent to interpret for a government employee (Disaster Service Worker), are they included as part of staff?

Volunteer or Contractor criteria

- In January 2002, the President of the United States launched Citizen Corps following the events of 9/11. Citizen Corps was created to help coordinate volunteer activities to make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to any emergency situation. In addition, agencies such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, a local Crisis Response Team, etc. are always looking for volunteers to assist during emergencies, yet they require you to take their training and be credentialed.
- If an individual decides to “interpret” pro bono, the sign language interpreter must still adhere to the CPC and as a guiding principle (3.0 Conduct) avoid performing dual or conflicting roles. While “volunteering” to interpret may fulfill a need for an individual personally, it can be harmful and possibly detrimental to the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Mental Health Issues

- If an individual decides to “interpret” pro bono, the sign language interpreter must still adhere to the CPC and as a guiding principle (3.0 Conduct) avoid performing dual or conflicting roles. While “volunteering” to interpret may fulfill a need for an individual personally, it can be harmful and possibly detrimental to the deaf and hard of hearing community.

**SOMETIMES SITUATIONS SEEM
INSURMOUNTABLE !
ANY QUESTIONS?**



Next Steps