SURVEY ON CURRENT AND POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS OF FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT

Commission de développement
des ressources humaines des
Premières Nations du Québec

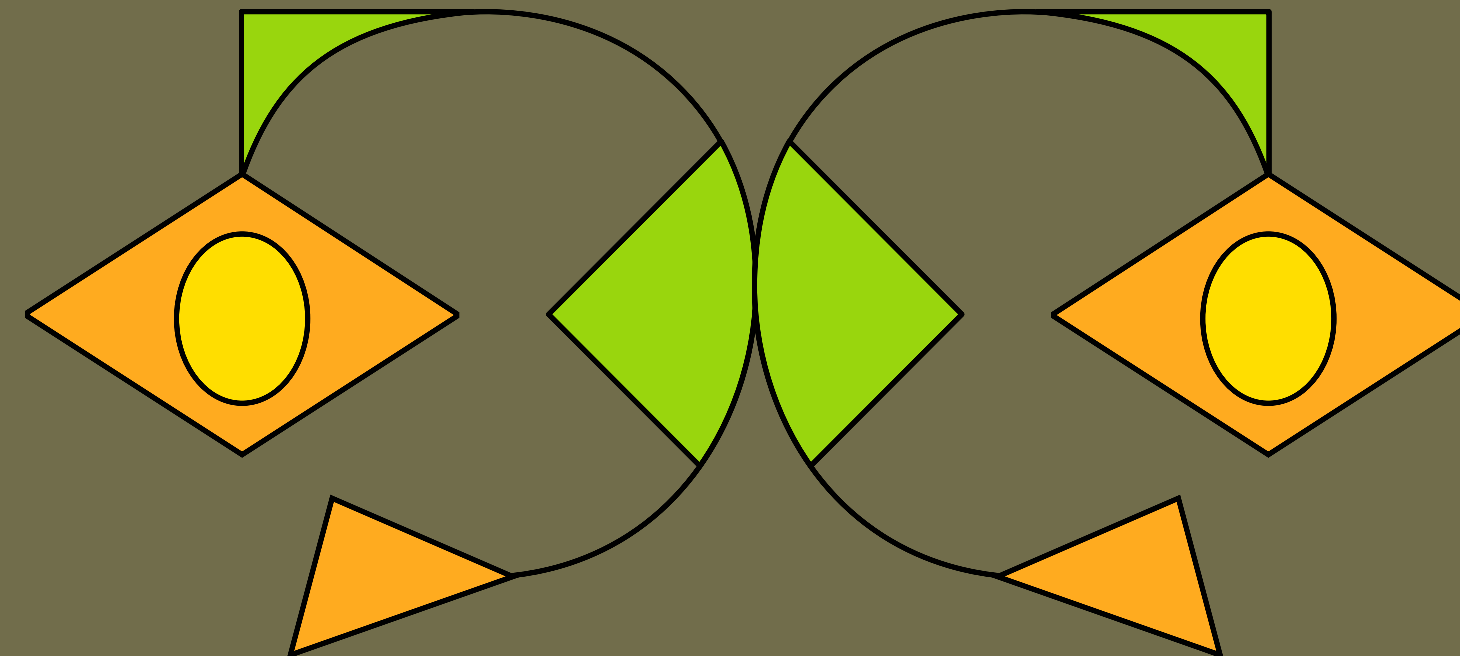
First Nations Human
Resources Development
Commission of Quebec

SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS

497
Businesses and organizations (the "employers") were consulted as part of the survey.

Nearly 58%
Of employers surveyed have their head office in a First Nations community.

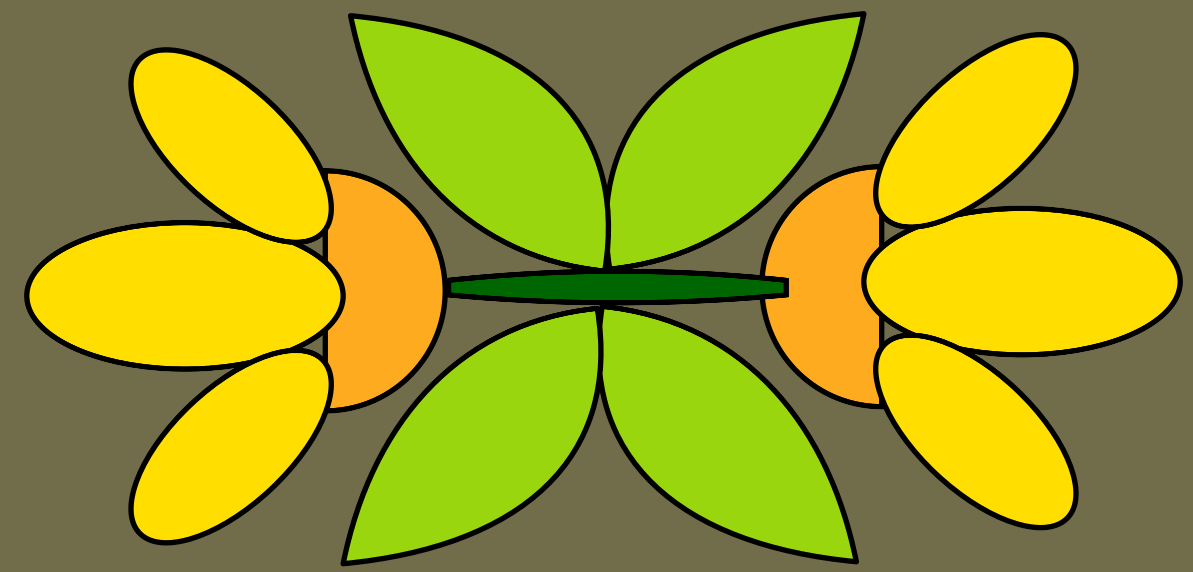


More than 58%
Of employers surveyed are private businesses.

21%
Of employers surveyed arepublic organizations.

21%
Of employers surveyed are non-profit organizations.

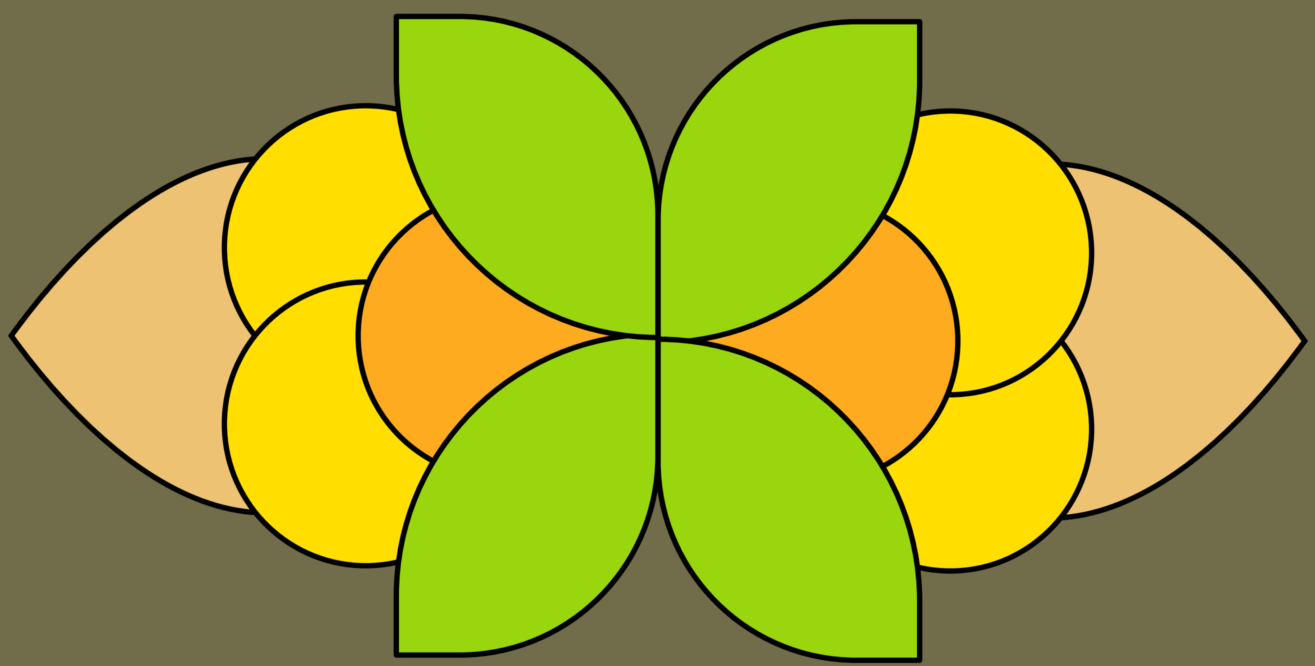
MORE THAN HALF OF PRIVATE BUSINESSES HAVE BETWEEN 1 AND 5 FIRST NATIONS OR INUIT EMPLOYEES.



25%
Of public and non-profit organizations that employ 26 or more Indigenous workers.

The Innu nation is the most represented in private businesses, public and non-profit organizations

APPROXIMATELY 23% OF POSITIONS WITH THESE EMPLOYERS REQUIRE A COMPETENCY CARD.



31%

Of positions with these employers require certification or licensing.

22%

Of positions with these employers fall under a professional order.

MORE THAN HALF OF EMPLOYERS REPORT RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES.

39%
Of employers report that some positions remain vacant.

46%
Of employers report being affected by the labour shortage.

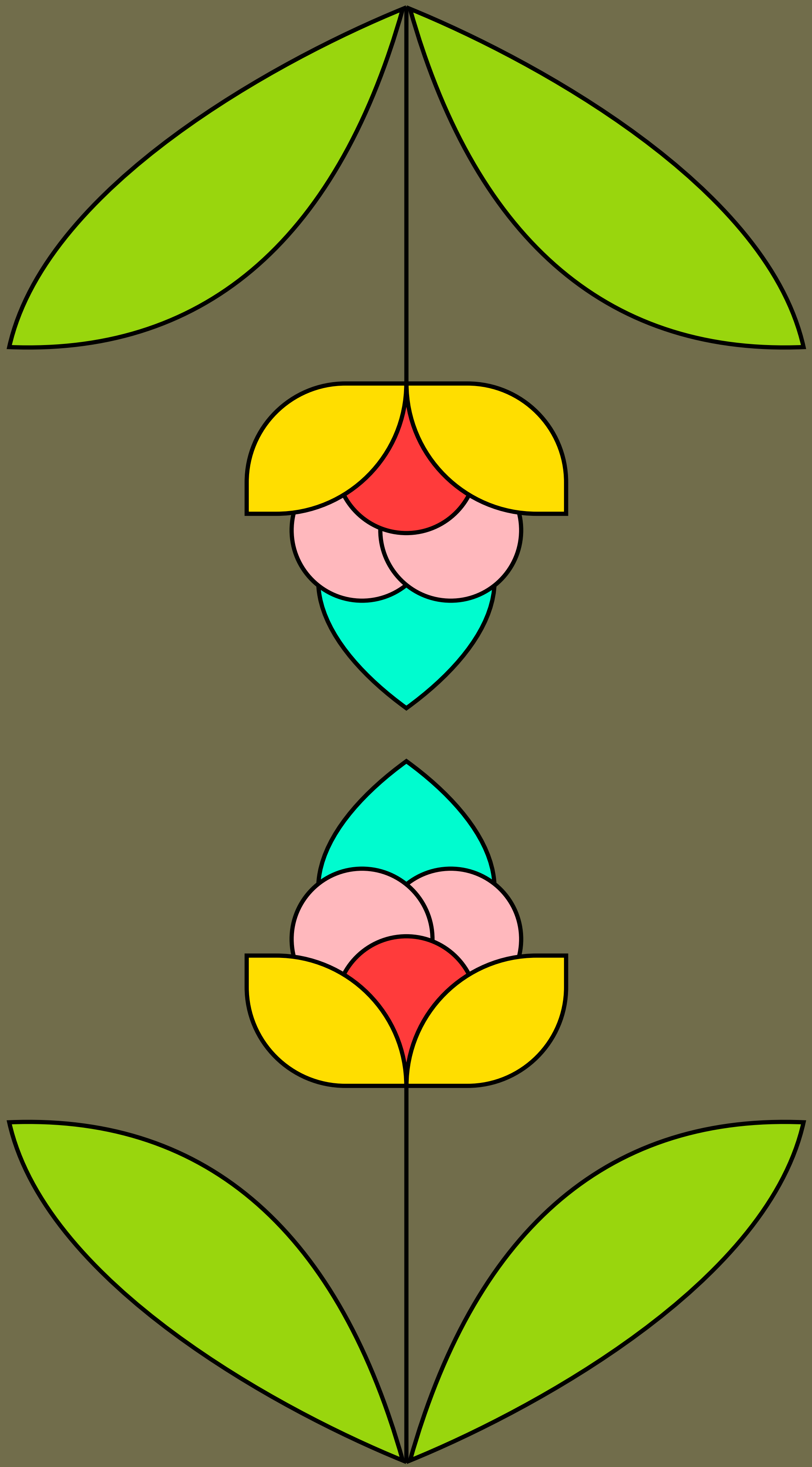
93%
Of employers who have felt the effects of the labour shortage consider its impact to be significant or very significant.

76%

Of employers do not have a long-term plan or strategic planning to address the labour shortage.

More than 59%

Of employers do not offer any professional development specific to the various occupations/ positions nor do they collaborate with educational institutions to develop their employees' skills.



CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The Survey on Current and Potential Employer of First Nations and Inuit (FNI) was conducted as part of the implementation of the action plan of the First Nations and Inuit Labour Market Advisory Committee (FNILMAC). This committee promotes the interests of First Nations and Inuit clients who are distant from the labour market, and makes recommendations and proposals supporting their integration, reintegration, or retention in employment.

In 2007, the *Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale* (MTESS) adopted a ministerial strategy aimed at:

1 | Increasing the participation of FNI members in the labour market.

2 | Facilitating their access to public employment services.

3 | Promoting the contribution of FNI workforce to the labour market.

4 | Collaborating with various regional and local partners to ensure coherent and promising interventions.

This study aims to:

1 | Provide an overview of occupations experiencing labour shortages among current and potential employers of FNI people.

2 | Conduct an assessment and make recommendations to support the recruitment and retention of Indigenous people within FNI organizations.

To carry out this mandate, the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec (FNHRDCQ) was tasked with conducting a survey of businesses and organizations that employ or are likely to recruit First Nations and Inuit personnel.

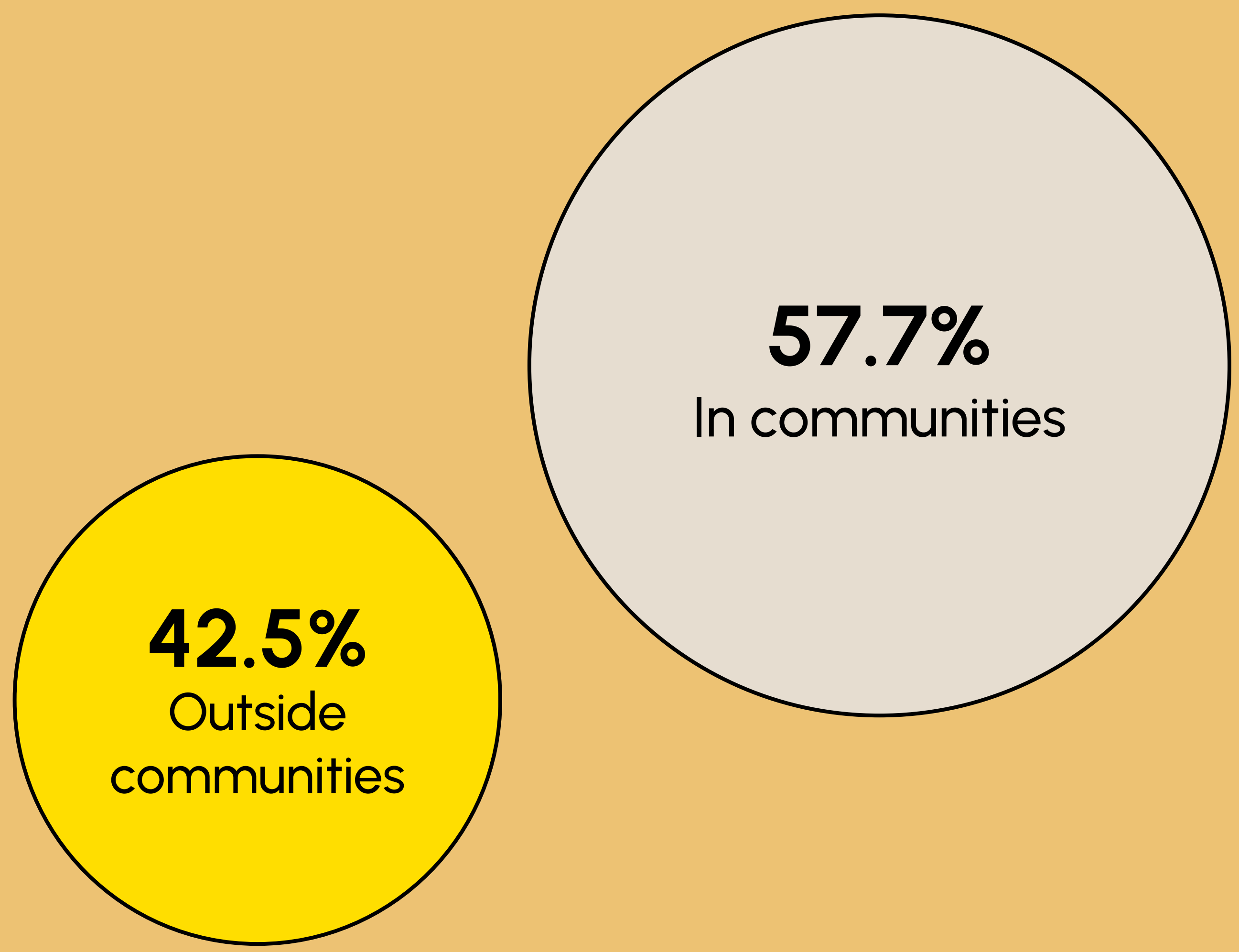
The survey was conducted in all FNHRDCQ member communities. To ensure the most comprehensive picture possible, 497 businesses and organizations were surveyed.

The collected data was then compiled and descriptive statistics were produced.

CCPNIMT
Comité consultatif des Premières Nations et des Inuit relatif au marché du travail

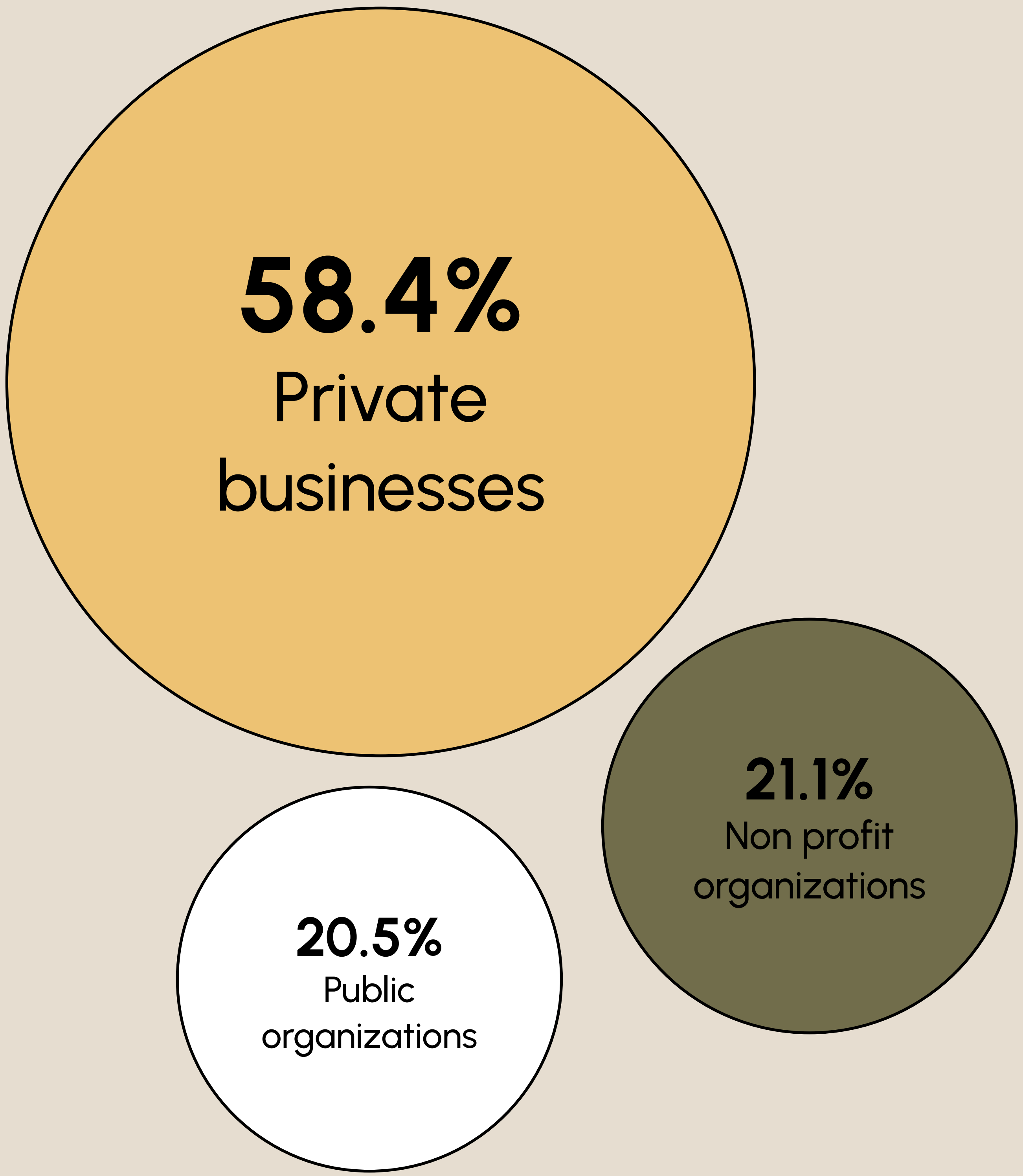
EMPLOYERS

Distribution of businesses and organizations by head office location.
Figure 1



A total of 497 businesses and organizations were surveyed. Of these, 286 (57.5%) have their head offices in First Nations and Inuit communities, while 211 (42.5%) are based outside these communities (Fig. 1).

Distribution of employers by type of organization.
Figure 2



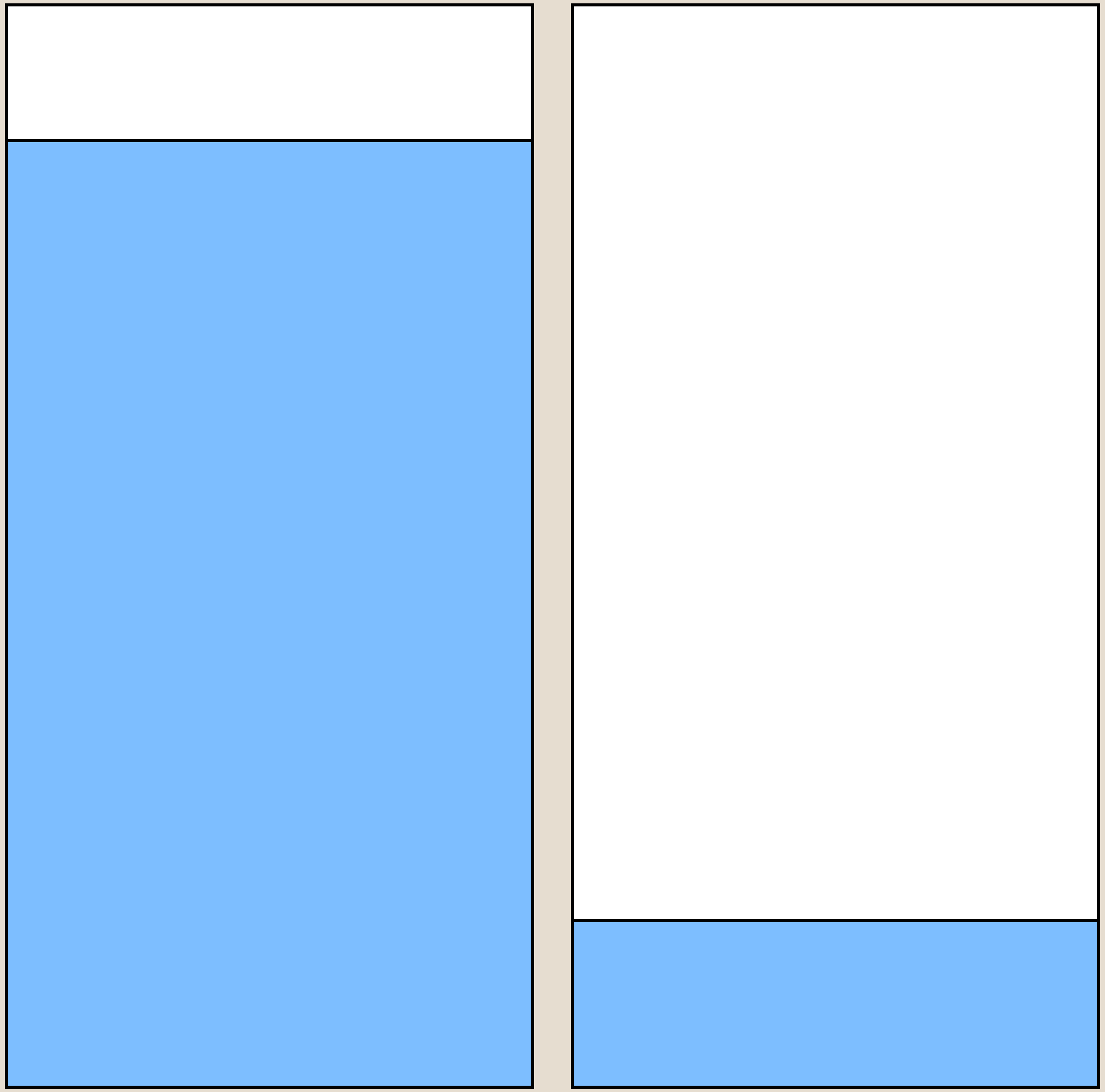
Among the surveyed employers, 290 are private businesses (58%), 102 are public organizations (20.5%), and 105 are non-profit organizations (21.1%).

EMPLOYERS

BUSINESSES

The vast majority (85.5%) of private businesses are registered with the (REQ).

Distribution of businesses by registration status in Quebec.
Figure 3

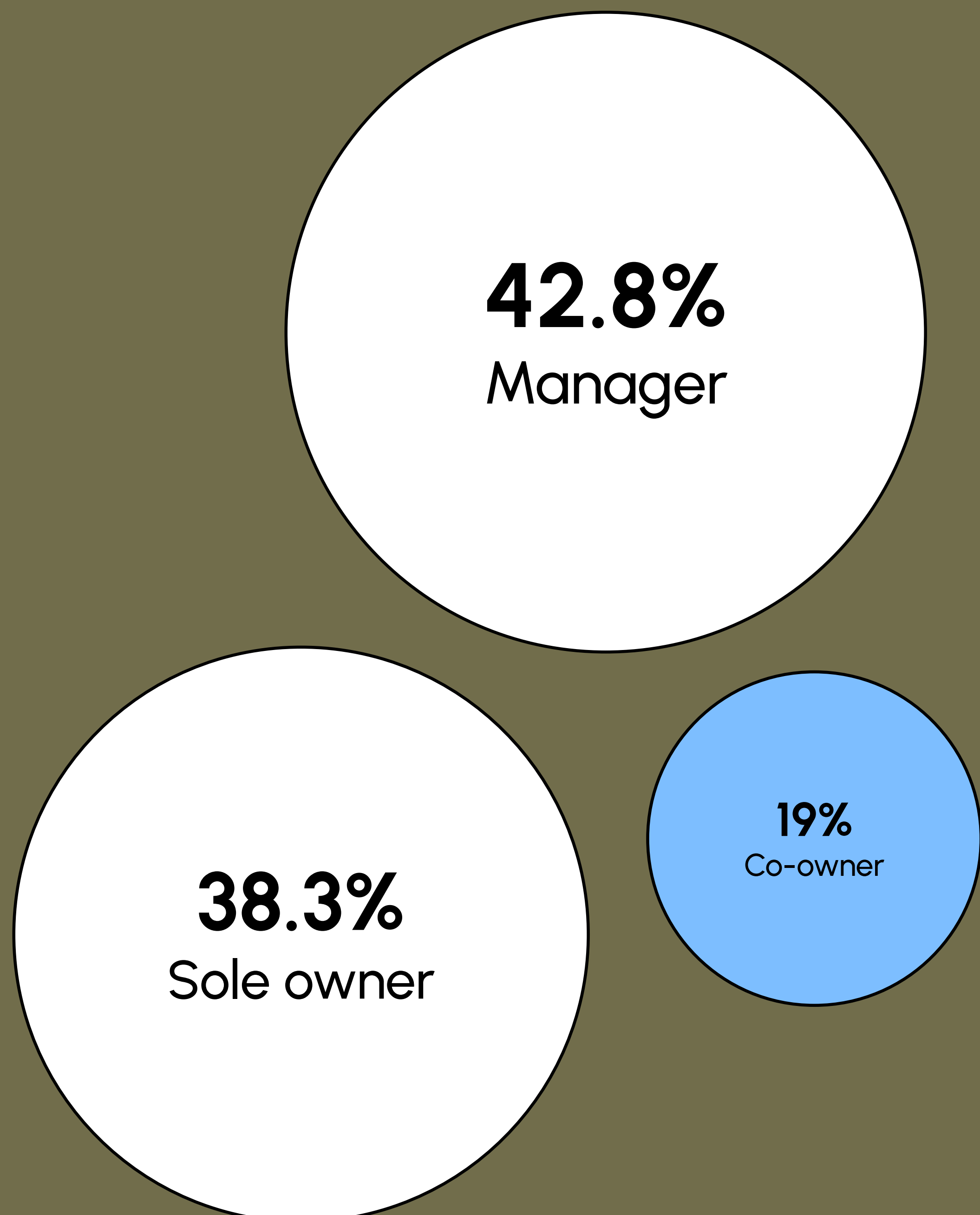


Registered with the REQ
85.5%

Not registered with the REQ
14.5%

Distribution of businesses by ownership structure.

Figure 4

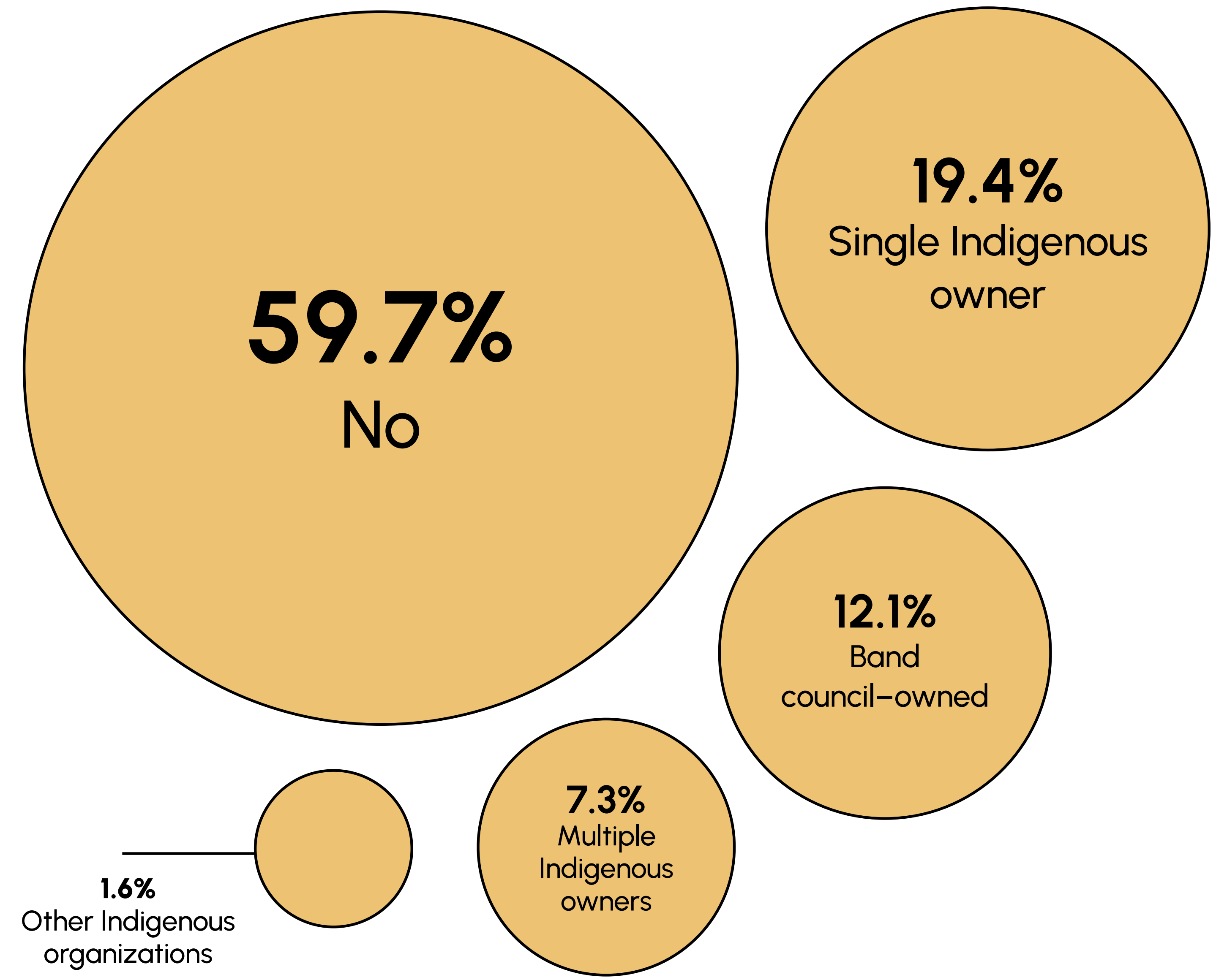


Of the 290 businesses registered with the REQ, 245 (84.5%) have a Quebec Enterprise Number (NEQ).

Three out of four businesses (75%) were established between 1990 and 2025. Of those, more than half (56%) were founded between 2010 and 2025.

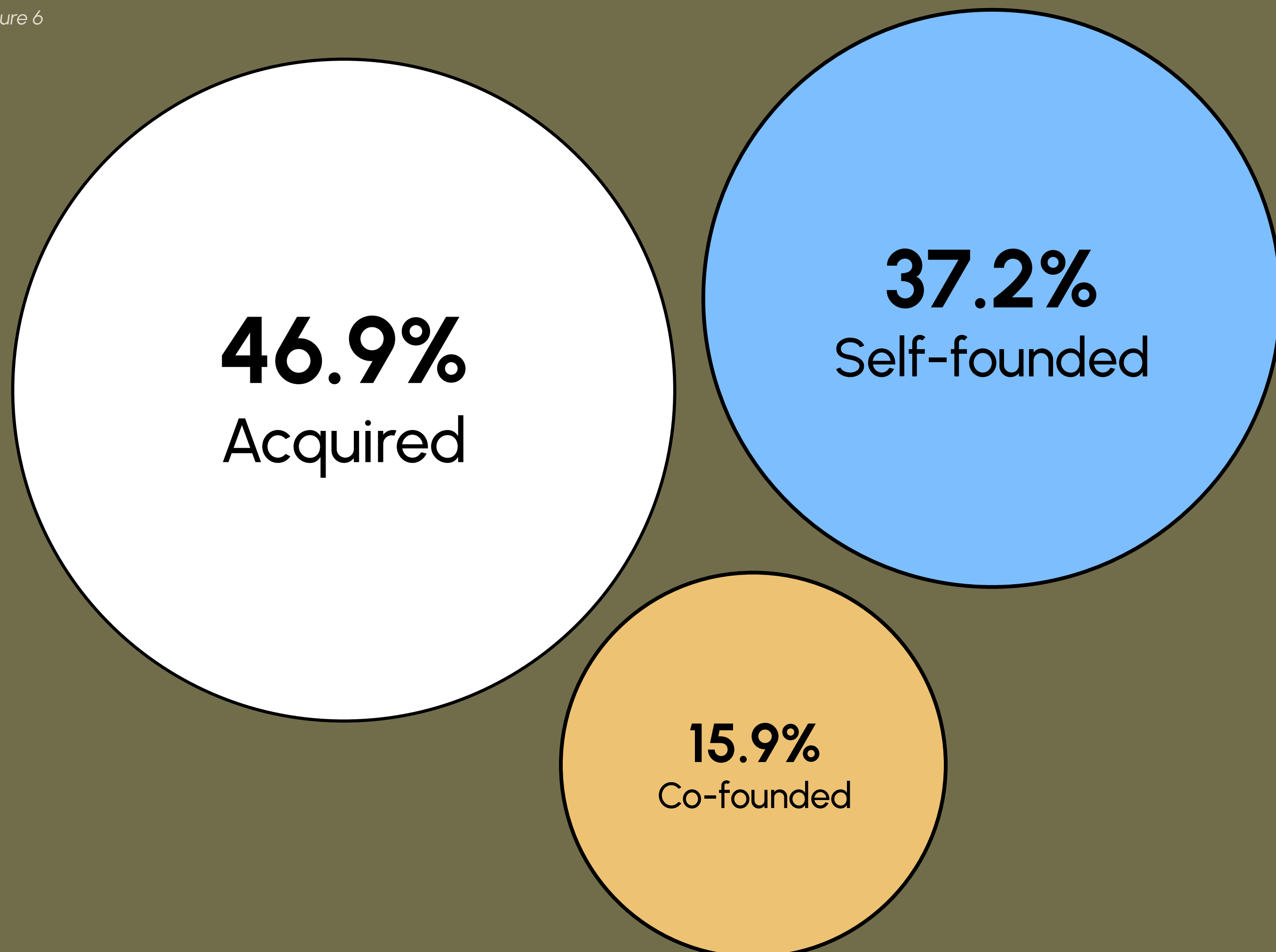
Distribution of manager-led businesses by Indigenous ownership status (51% or more).

Figure 5



More than 166 businesses (57%) are sole proprietorships or co-owned, while 124 (43%) are manager-led. Fifty of these (40%) are 51% or more owned by Indigenous individuals or organizations (Fig. 5).

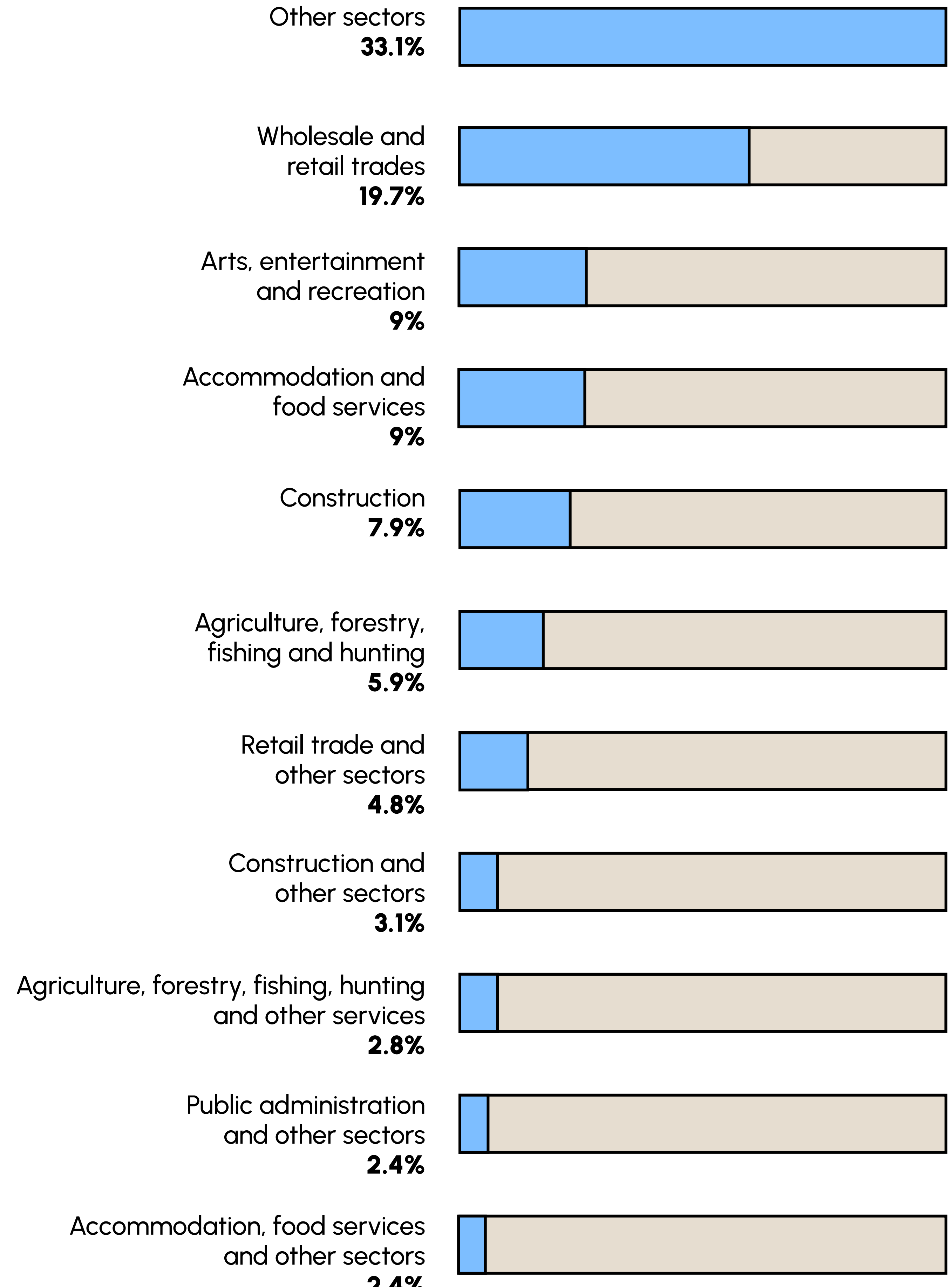
Distribution of businesses by ownership status.
Figure 6



Among co-owned businesses, 68% are owned at 50% or less, 24% are 51% to 75% owned, and 8% are more than 75% owned. Of the 111 sole proprietorships, 63% (70 businesses) have been in business for at least six years. In 53.1% of cases, owner report having founded the business themselves, either alone or with one or more partners (Fig. 6).

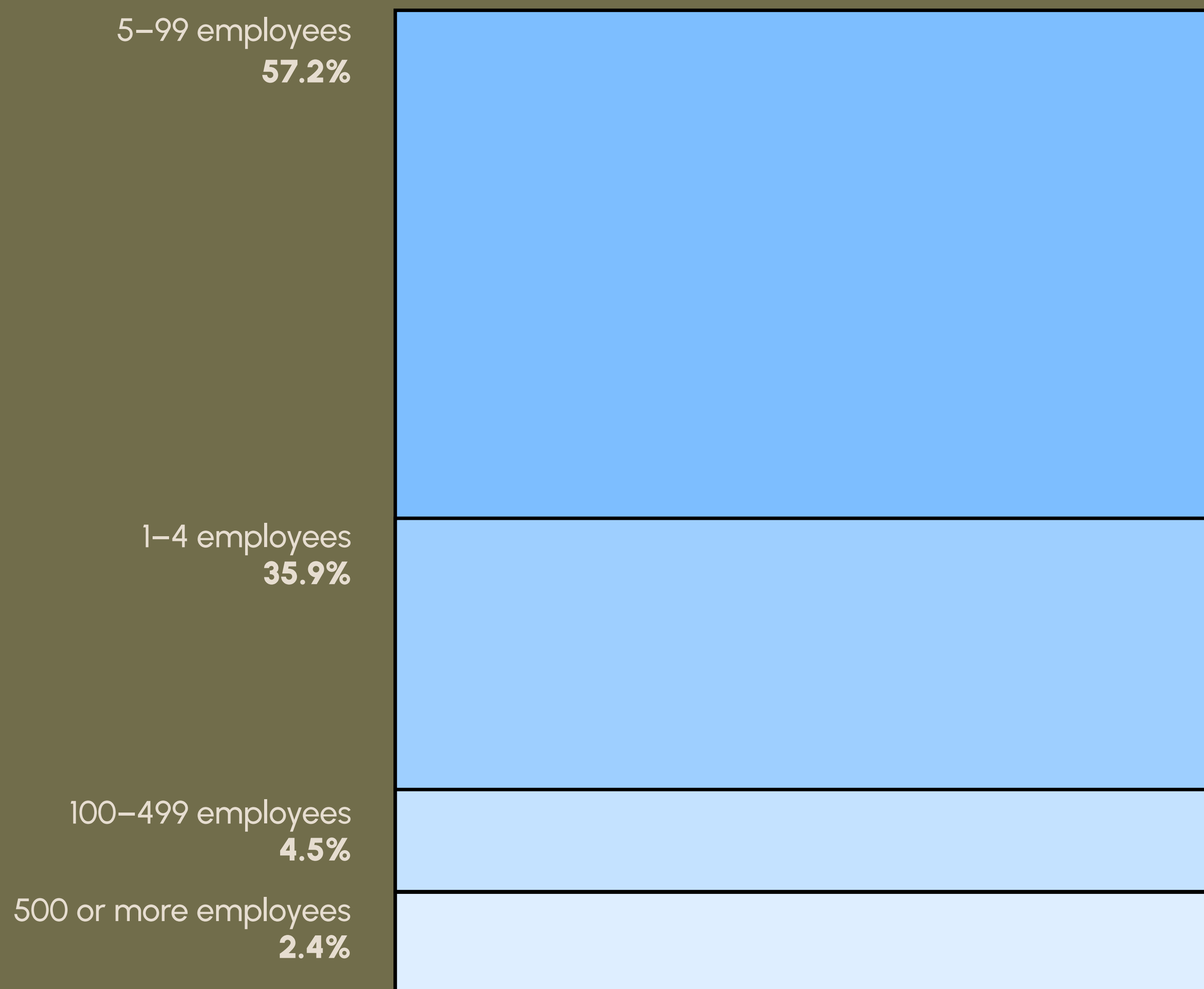
Nearly 20% of the 290 private businesses surveyed operate in wholesale and retail trade, with another 5% combining this sector with others such as accommodation, food services, arts, entertainment, and recreation.

Construction businesses, alone or with other sectors, account for 11% (Fig. 7).



Distribution of businesses by sector.
Figure 7

Distribution of businesses by the number of employees.
Figure 8

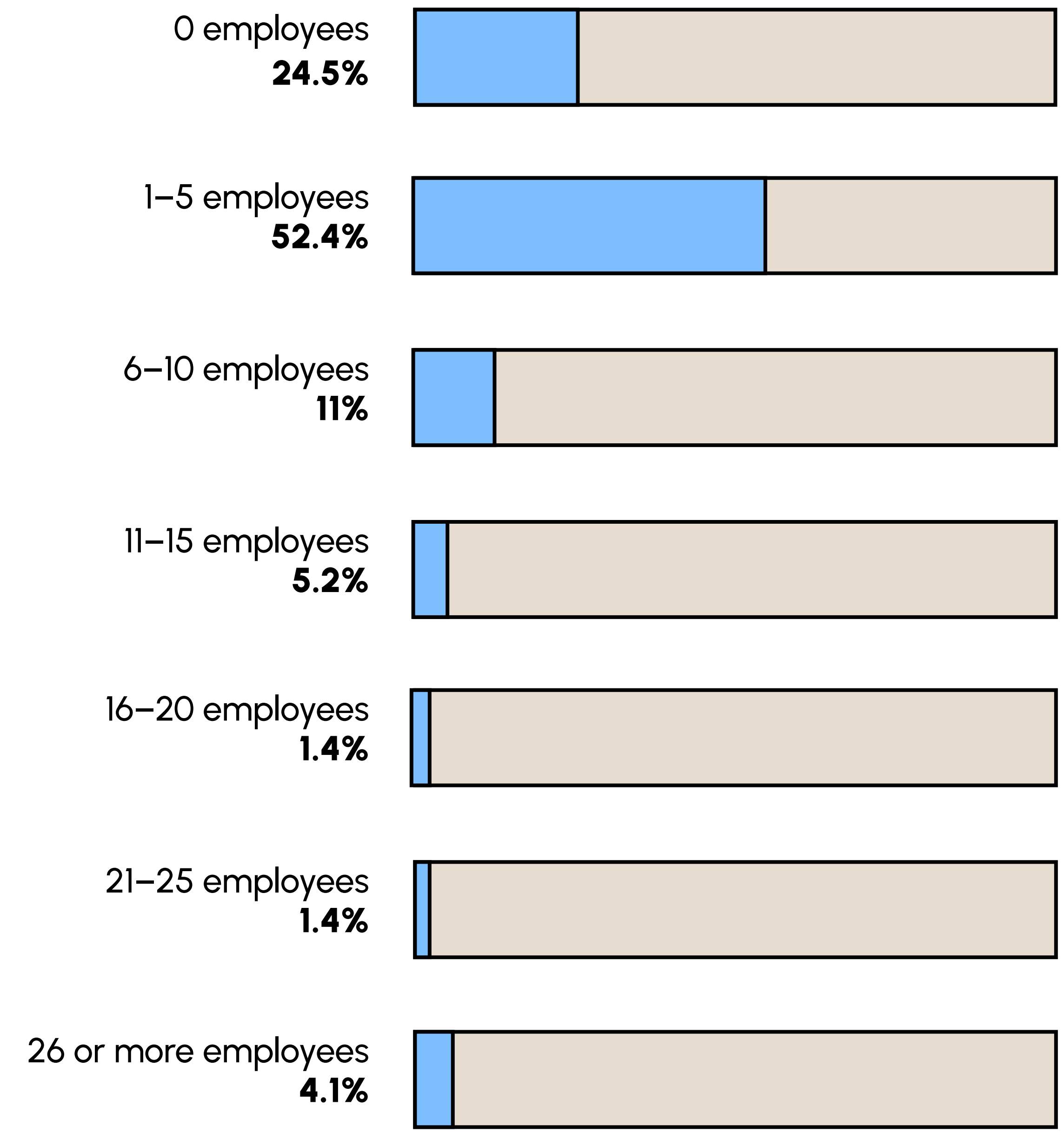


Most private businesses surveyed in this study have fewer than 100 employees. Specifically, 270 businesses (93%) fall within this range.

Among these, over 61% have between 5 and 99 people.

Large businesses with more than 500 employees account for only 2% of all private businesses surveyed (Fig. 8).

Distribution of businesses by the number of Indigenous employees.
Figure 9

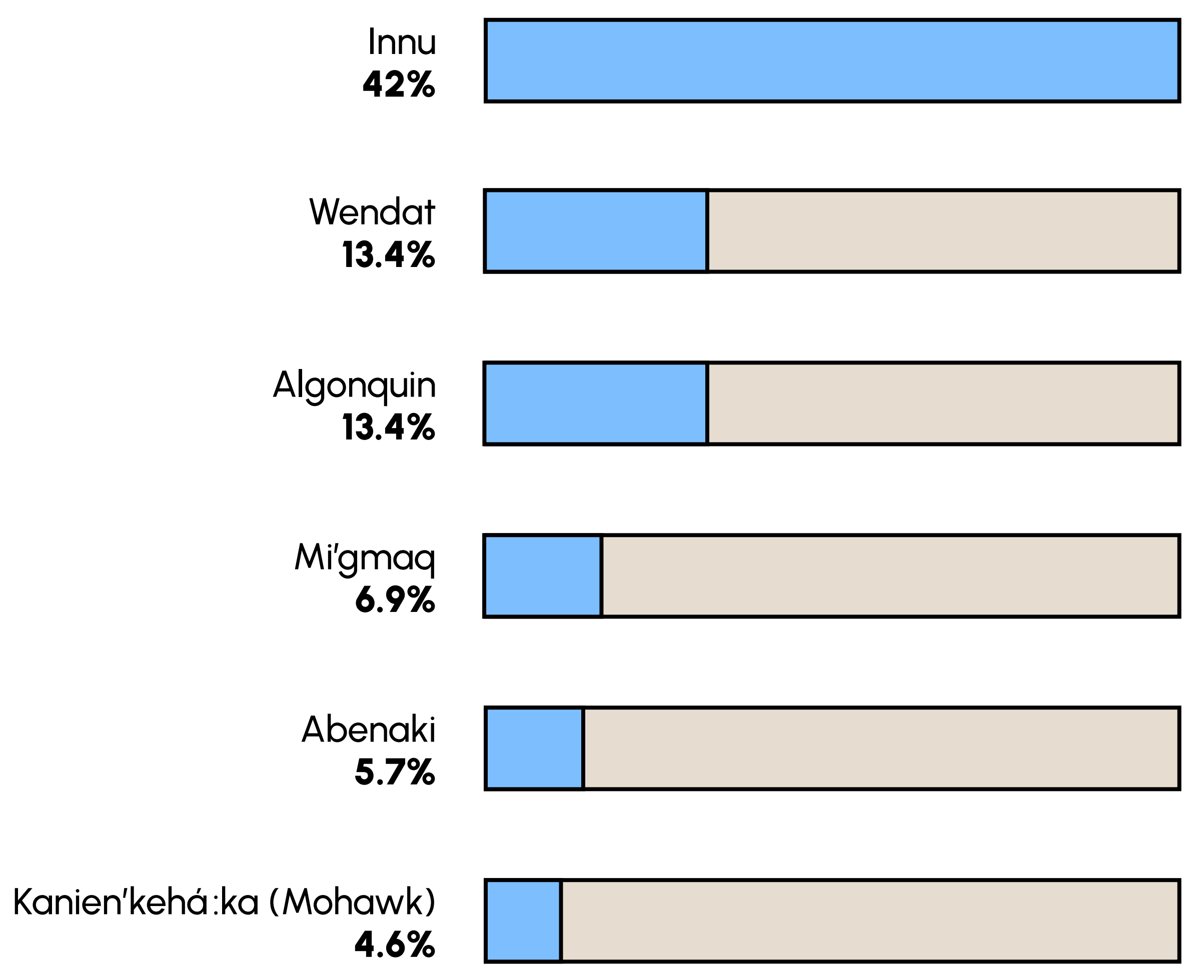


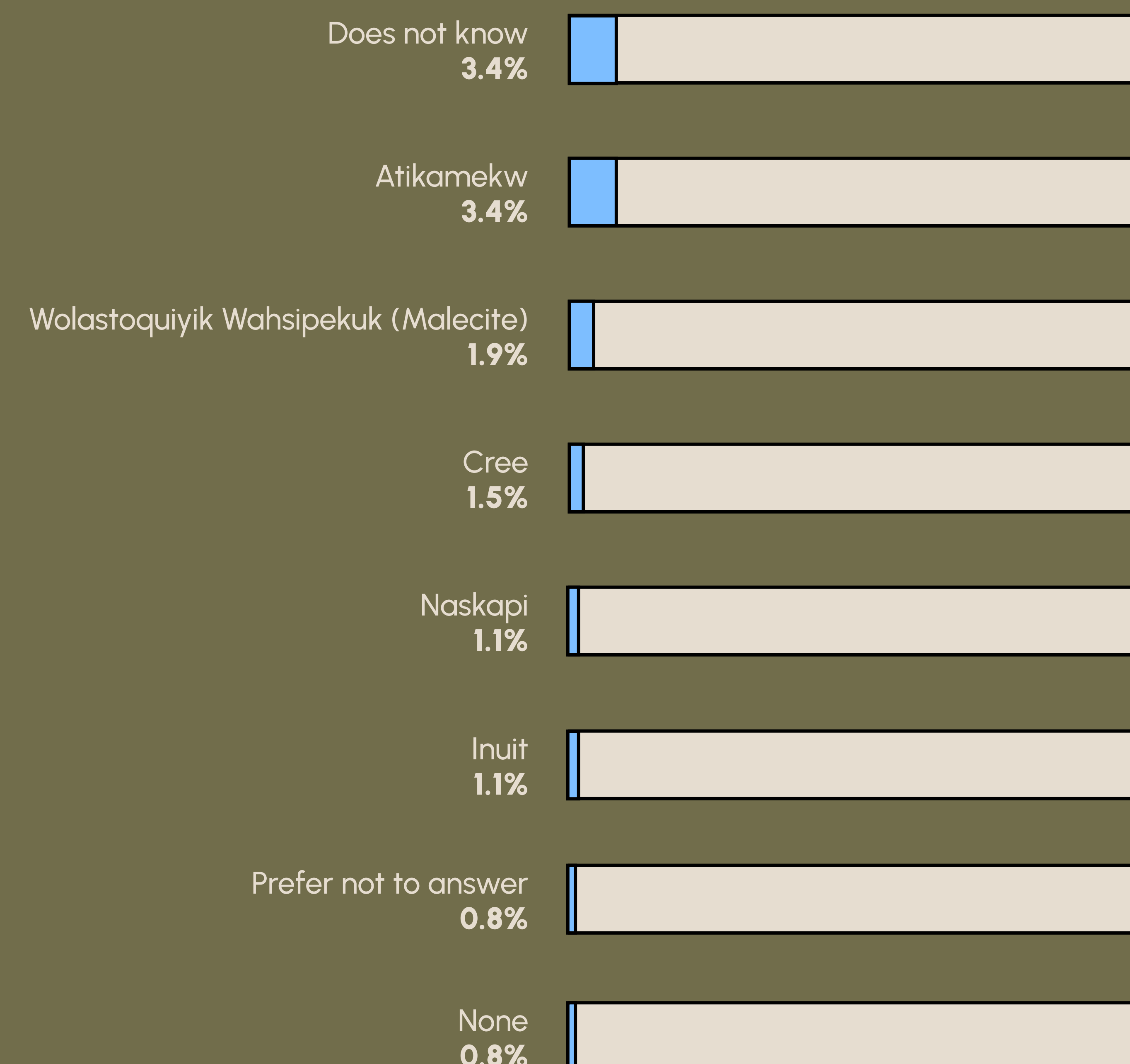
Of the private businesses surveyed, 71 (24%) report having no Indigenous employees.

More than half — 152 of the 290 private businesses (52%) — have between 1 and 5 First Nations and Inuit employees. Businesses with 26 or more Indigenous employees account for just 4% of all private businesses surveyed (Fig. 9).

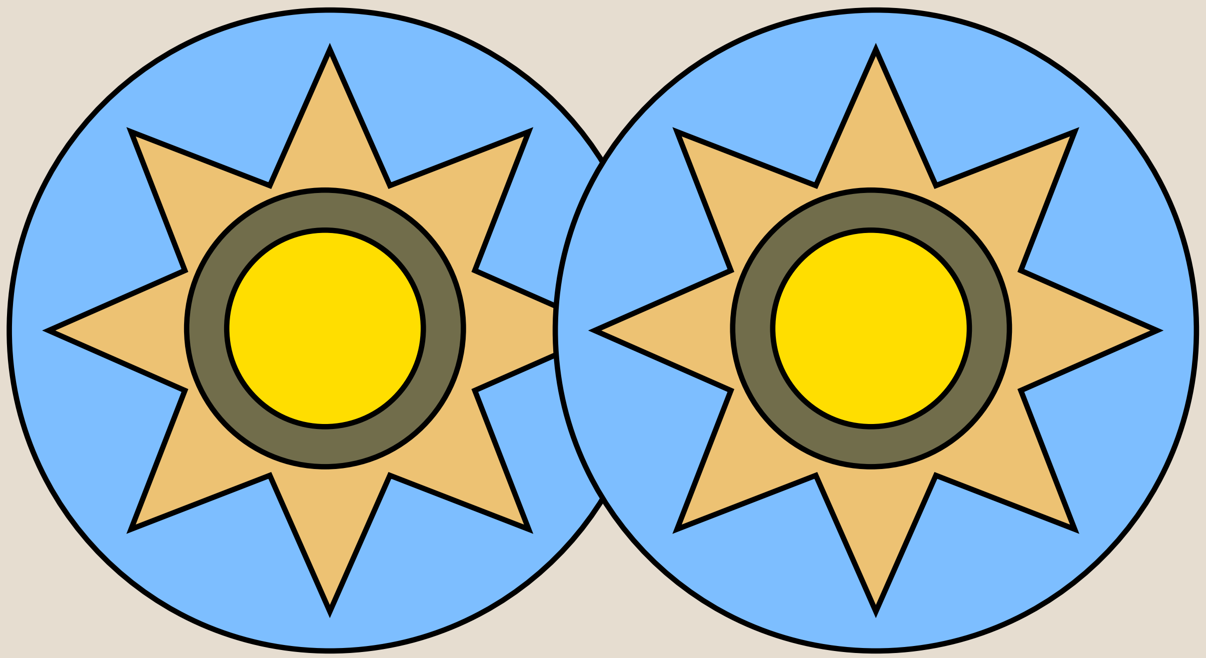
The Innu nation is the most represented group among private businesses that employ Indigenous employees, accounting for 42% of these businesses.
The Wendat and Algonquin nations follow, each representing over 13%. The Naskapi and Inuit are the least represented nations, each accounting for just over 1% (Fig. 10).

Indigenous nations most represented in businesses. [1]
Figure 10





[1] Percentages do not total 100% because responses such as "don't know" and "prefer not to answer" are not shown in the figure.



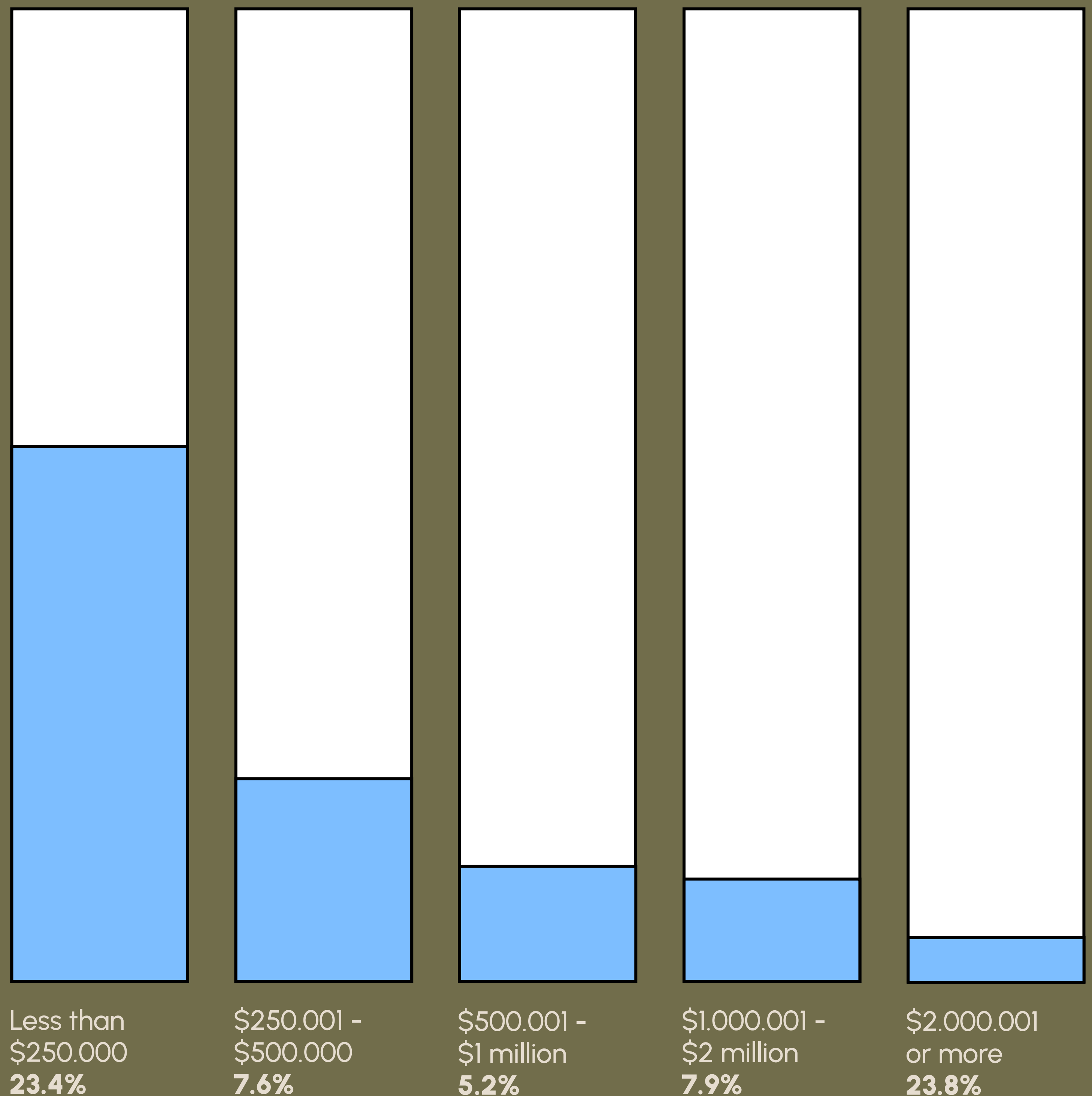
Regarding the private businesses surveyed, 68 (23%) report annual revenues below $250.000. In contrast, slightly more — 69 businesses (24%) — report annual revenues of $2.000.000 or more (Fig. 11).

Of the 290 businesses surveyed, 93 (32%) either do not know or chose not to disclose their annual revenue. The figures would likely have been different if this information were available.

This may also be because 186 businesses (64%) do not work with external partners (firms, band councils, others), particularly for accounting.

Distribution of businesses by annual revenue. [2]

Figure 11



[2] Percentages do not total 100% because responses such as “don’t know” and “prefer not to answer” do not appear in the figure.

EMPLOYERS

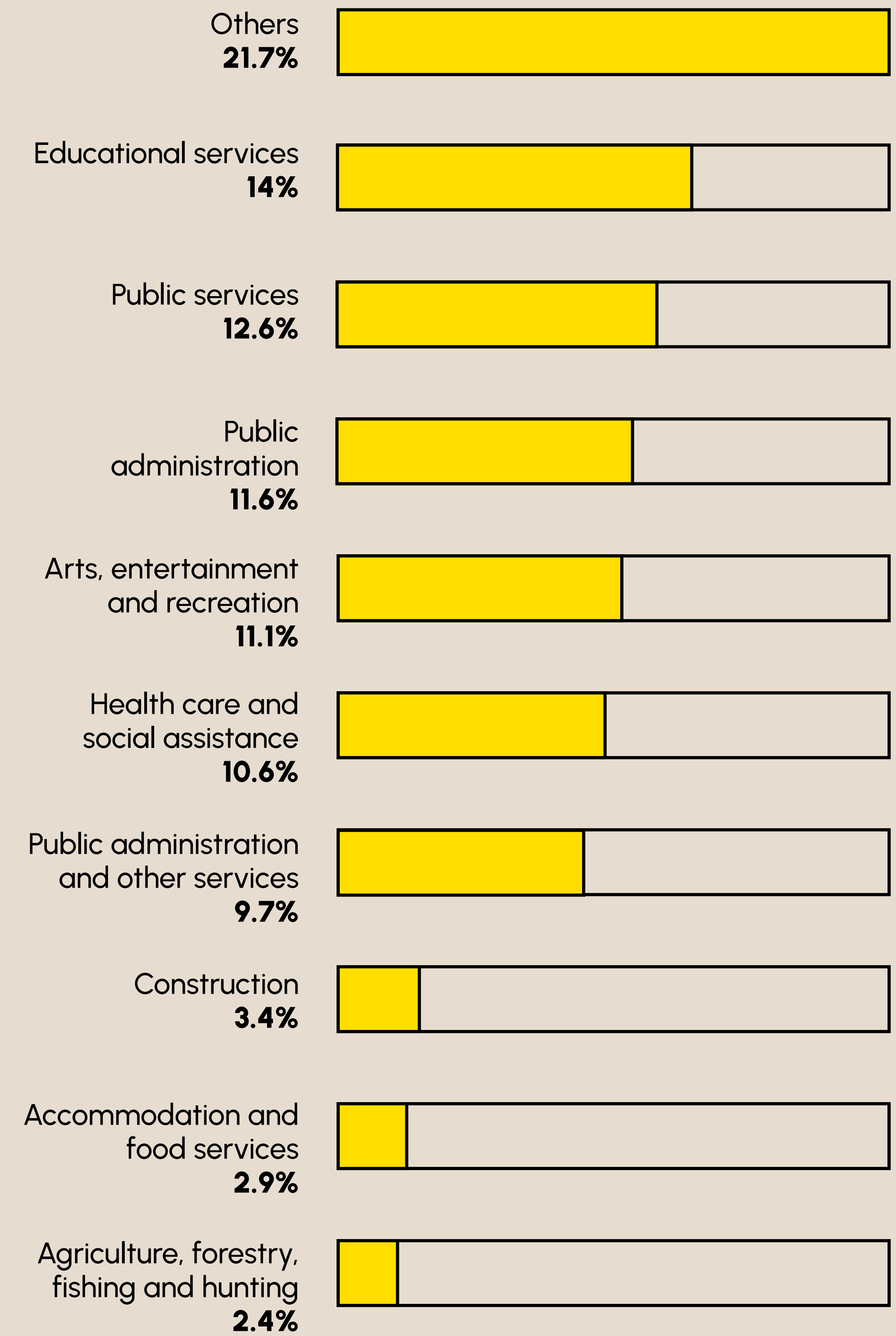
PUBLIC AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

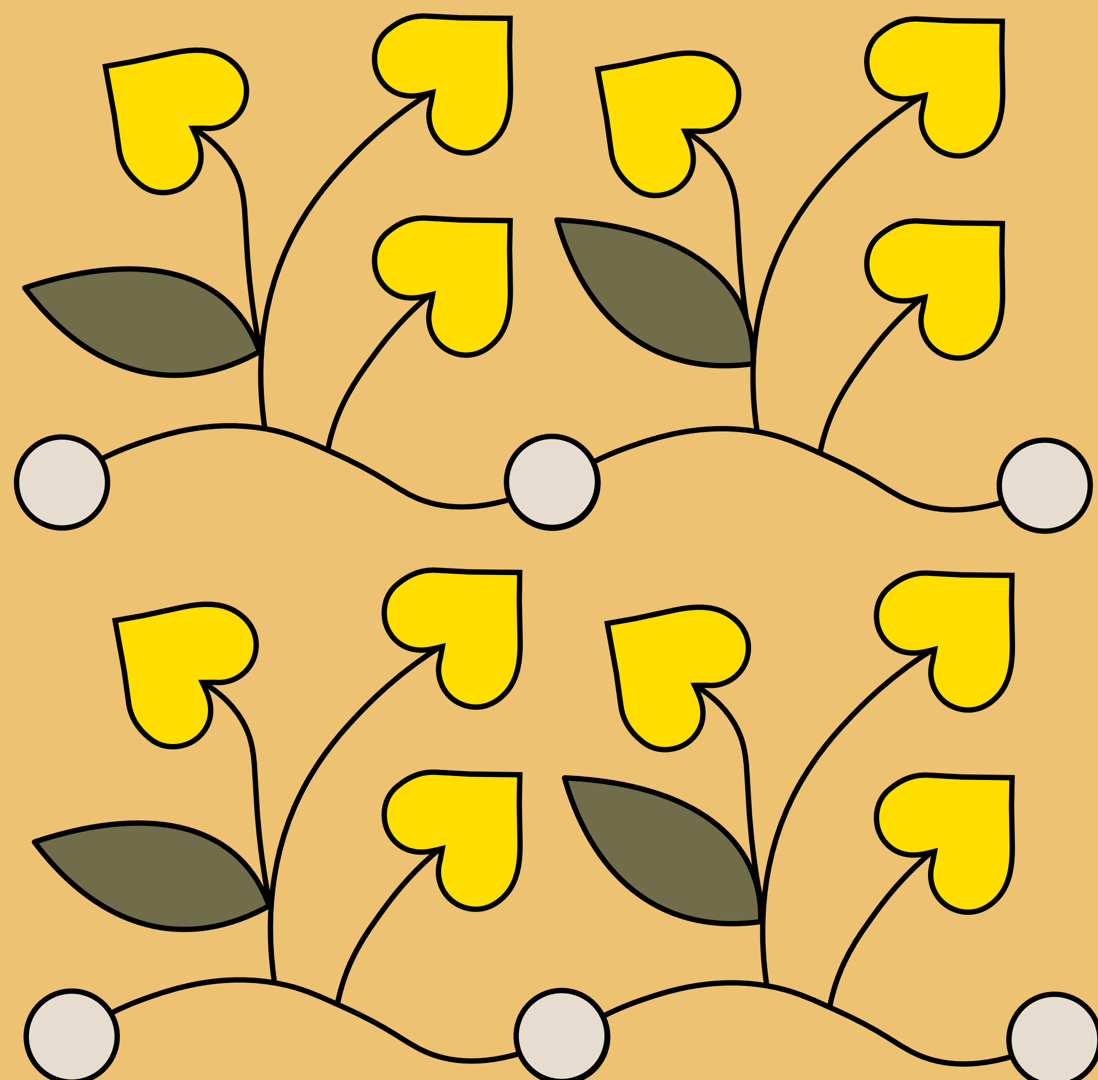
Of the 207 public and non-profit organizations surveyed, 144 (70%) operate in the following five sectors: education, public services, public administration, arts/entertainment/recreation, and health care and social assistance.

As shown in Figure 12, other sectors — such as retail trade, corporate and enterprise management, and agriculture — account for roughly 22% of public and non-profit organizations.

Distribution of public and non-profit organizations by sector.

Figure 12

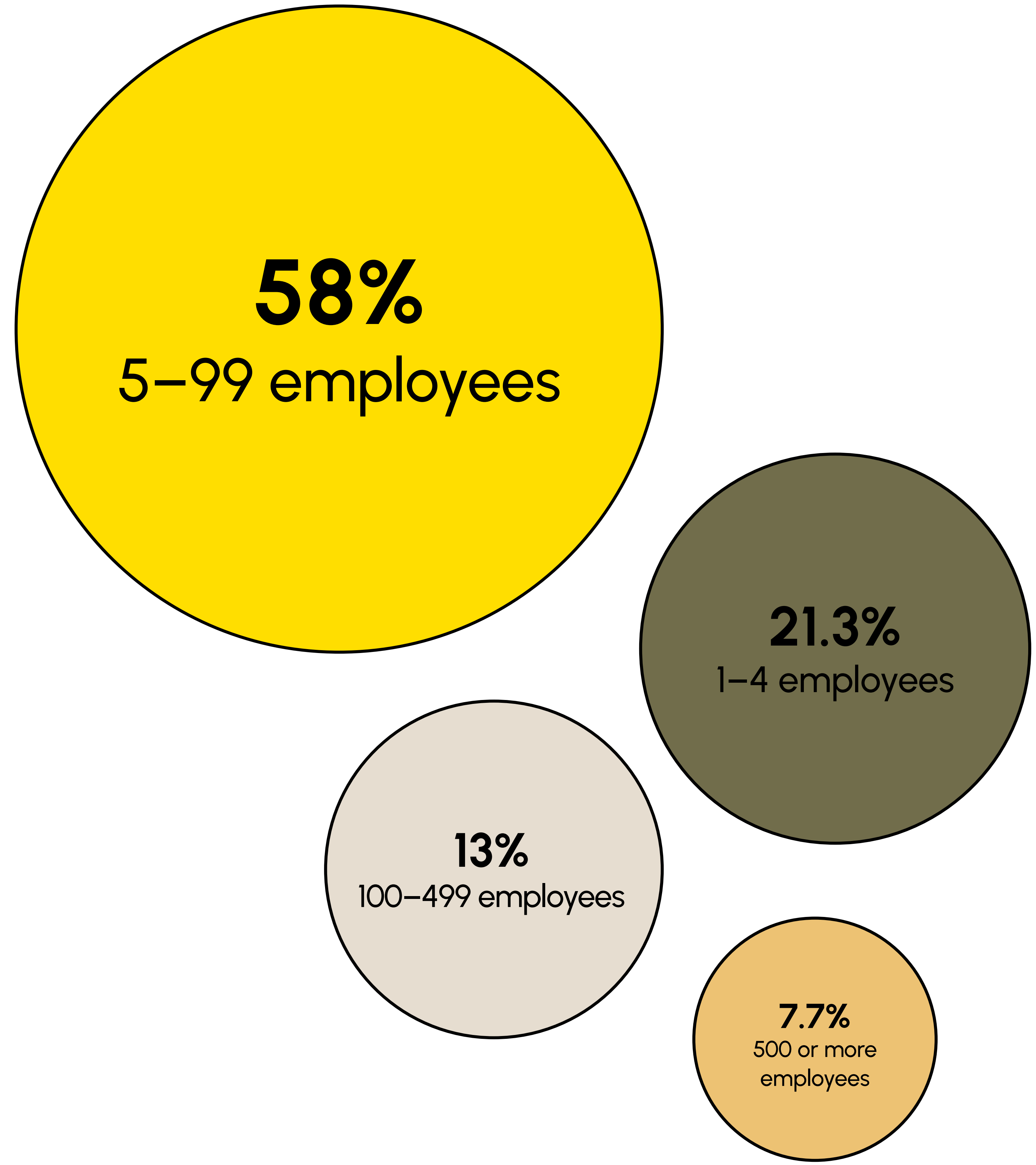




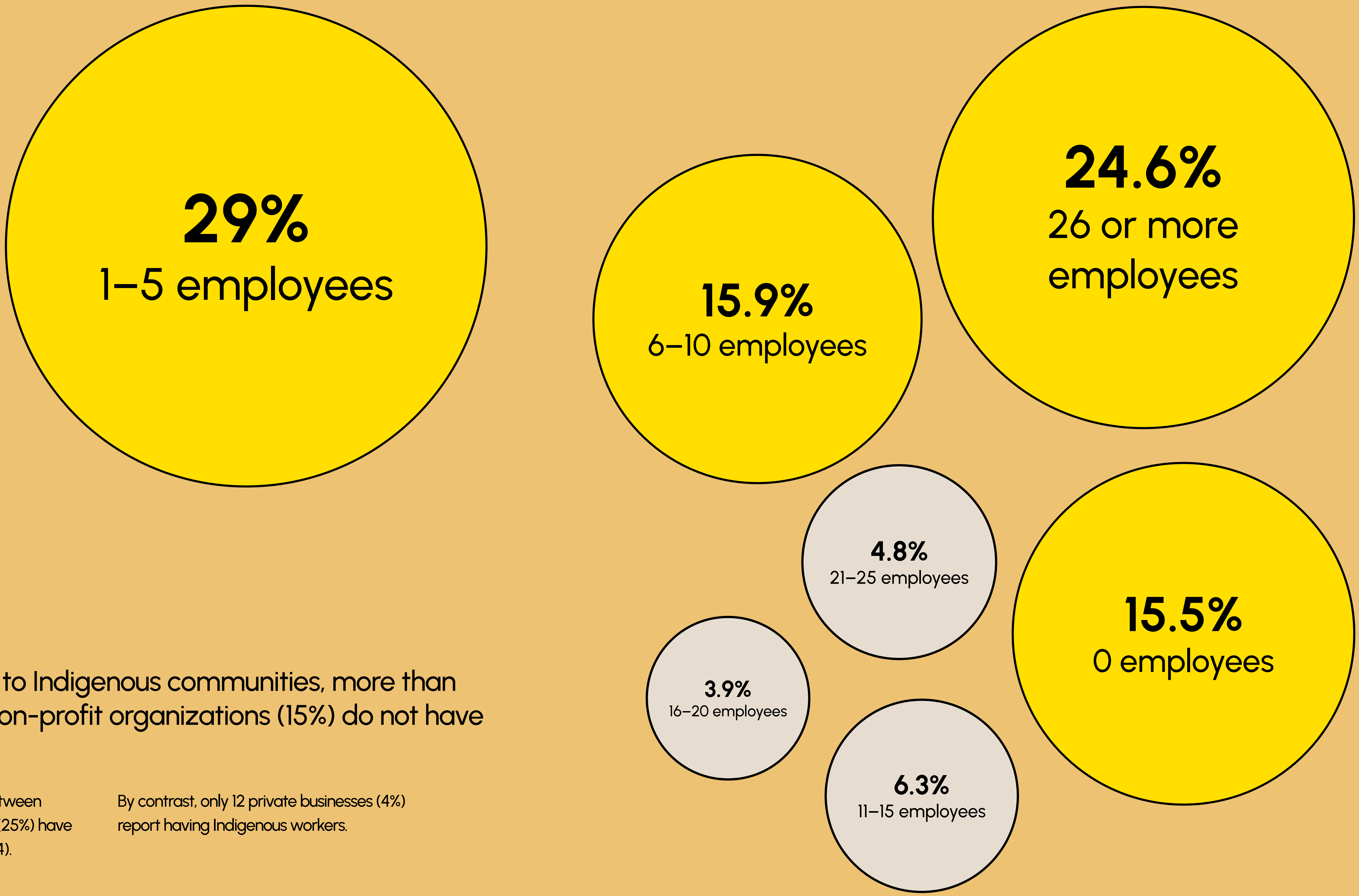
As with private businesses, most public and non-profit organizations have fewer than 100 employees. Nearly 79% have between 1 and 99 workers. By contrast, 16 public and non-profit organizations (8%) have 500 employees or more — a proportion higher than that seen among private businesses.

Distribution of public and other organizations by number of employees.

Figure 13



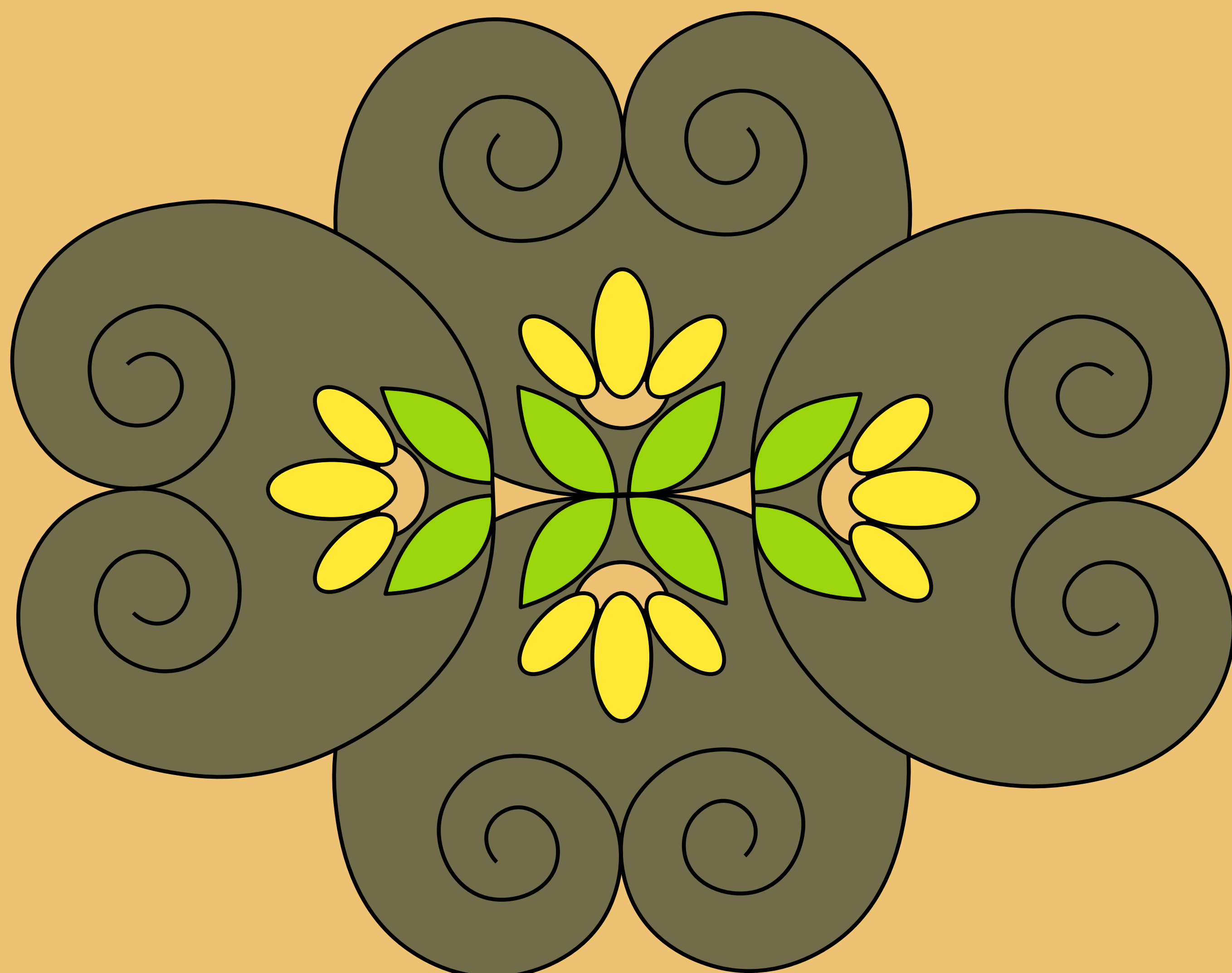
Distribution of public and other organizations by number of Indigenous employees.
Figure 14



Despite their proximity to Indigenous communities, more than 32 organizations and non-profit organizations (15%) do not have Indigenous employees.

Among those that do, 106 (51%) have between 1 and 15 Indigenous employees, while 51 (25%) have 26 or more Indigenous employees (Fig. 14).

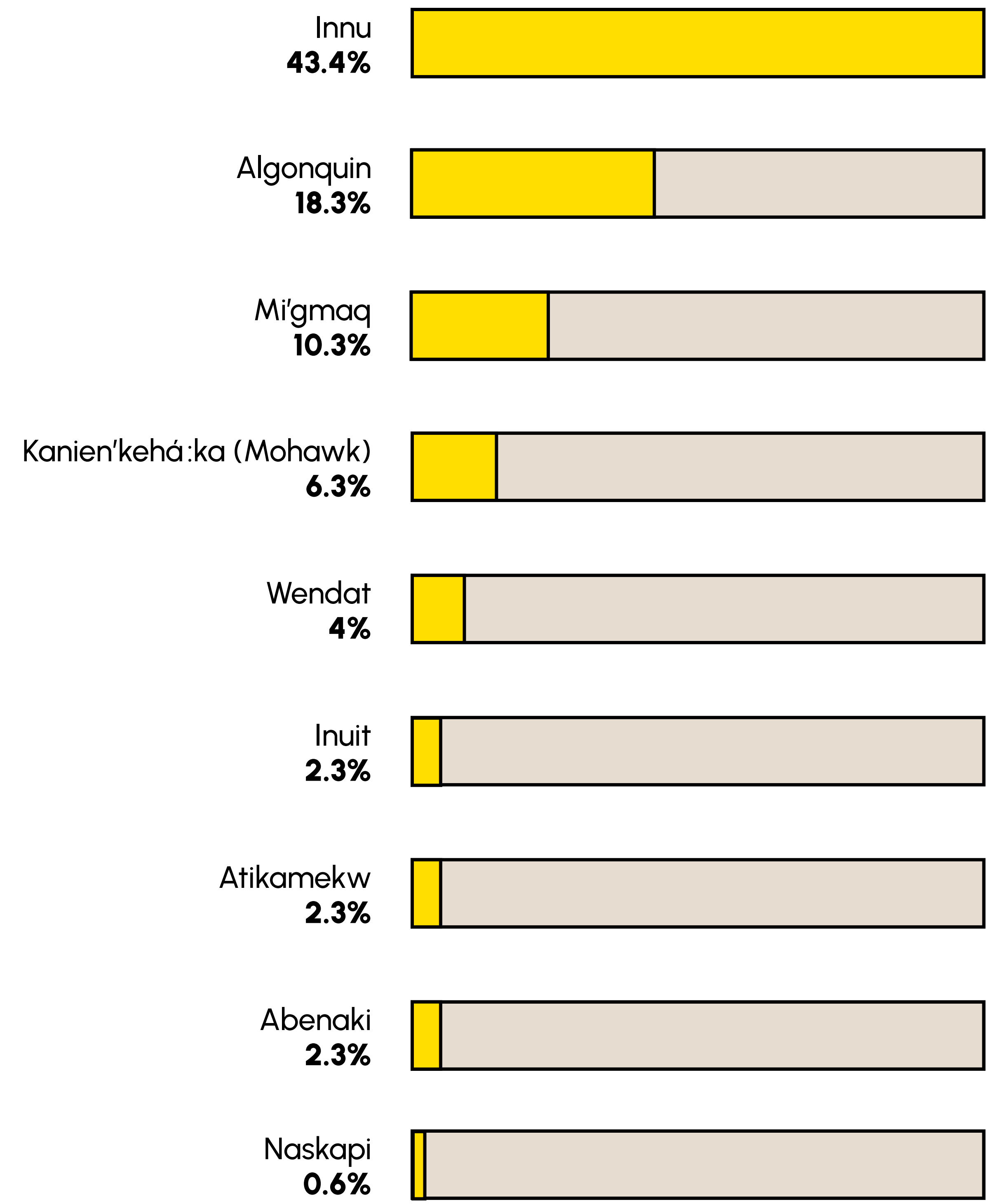
By contrast, only 12 private businesses (4%) report having Indigenous workers.



As in private businesses, Innu employees make up the largest proportion (43%), followed by Algonquin employees (18%). The Naskapi Nation is the least represented, accounting for less than 1% (Fig. 15).

Indigenous nations represented among employees of public and other organizations.[3]

Figure 15



[3] Percentages do not total 100% because responses such as "don't know" and "prefer not to answer" are not shown in the figure.

OVERVIEW OF OCCUPATIONS/POSITIONS

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF OCCUPATIONS/POSITIONS

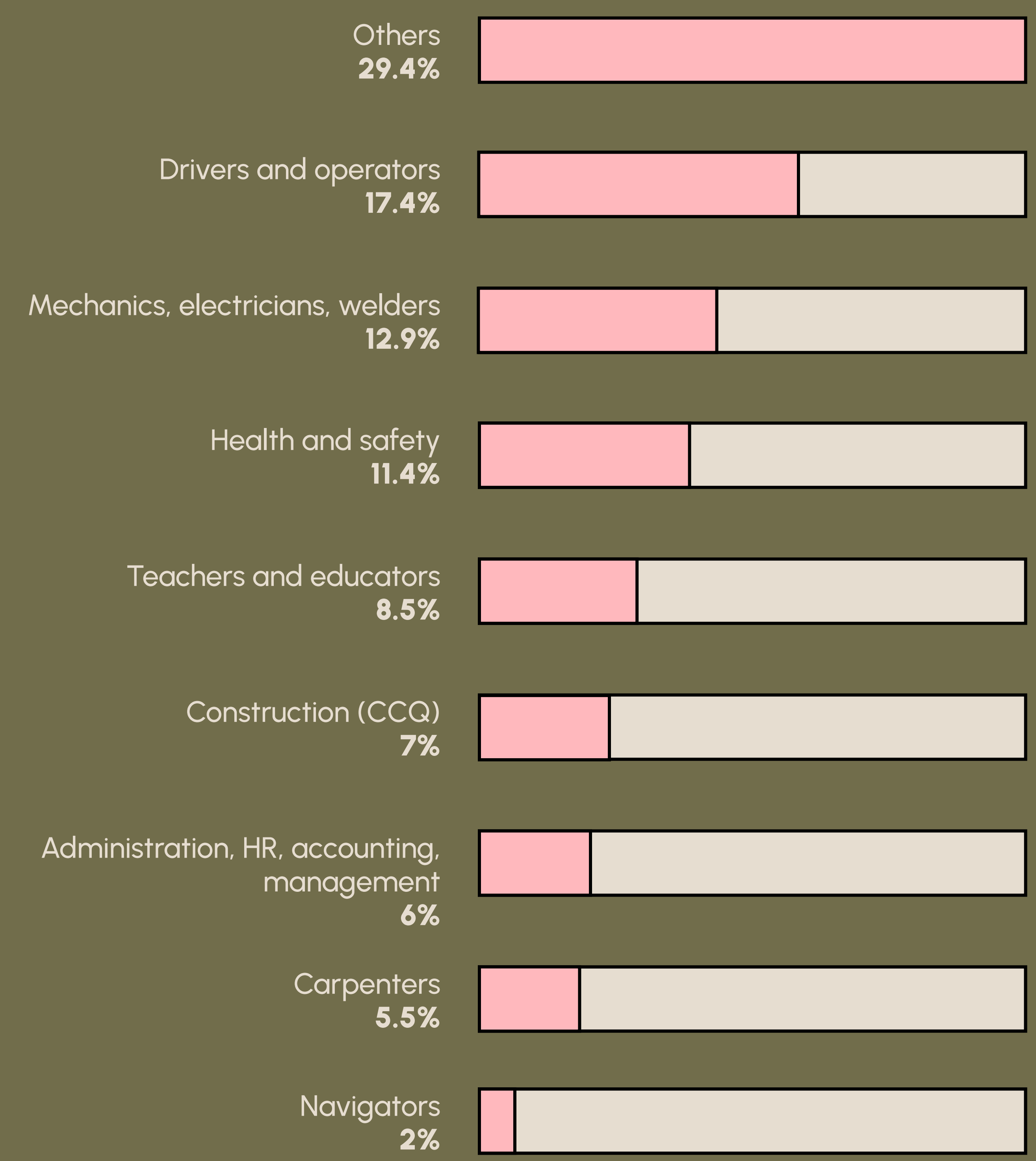
Certain positions in private businesses, as well as in public and non-profit organizations, may require candidates to hold a competency card. Approximately 115 employers (23%) report that some of their positions have this requirement.

Among these roles, driving-related positions, such as drivers or heavy machinery operators, stand out, with 17% of employers having at least one position requiring a competency card.

Many private businesses, public and non-profit organizations active in the health, education or administration sectors also offer jobs that require a competency card (Fig. 16).

Proportion of jobs by category requiring a competency card.

Figure 16



24,8%

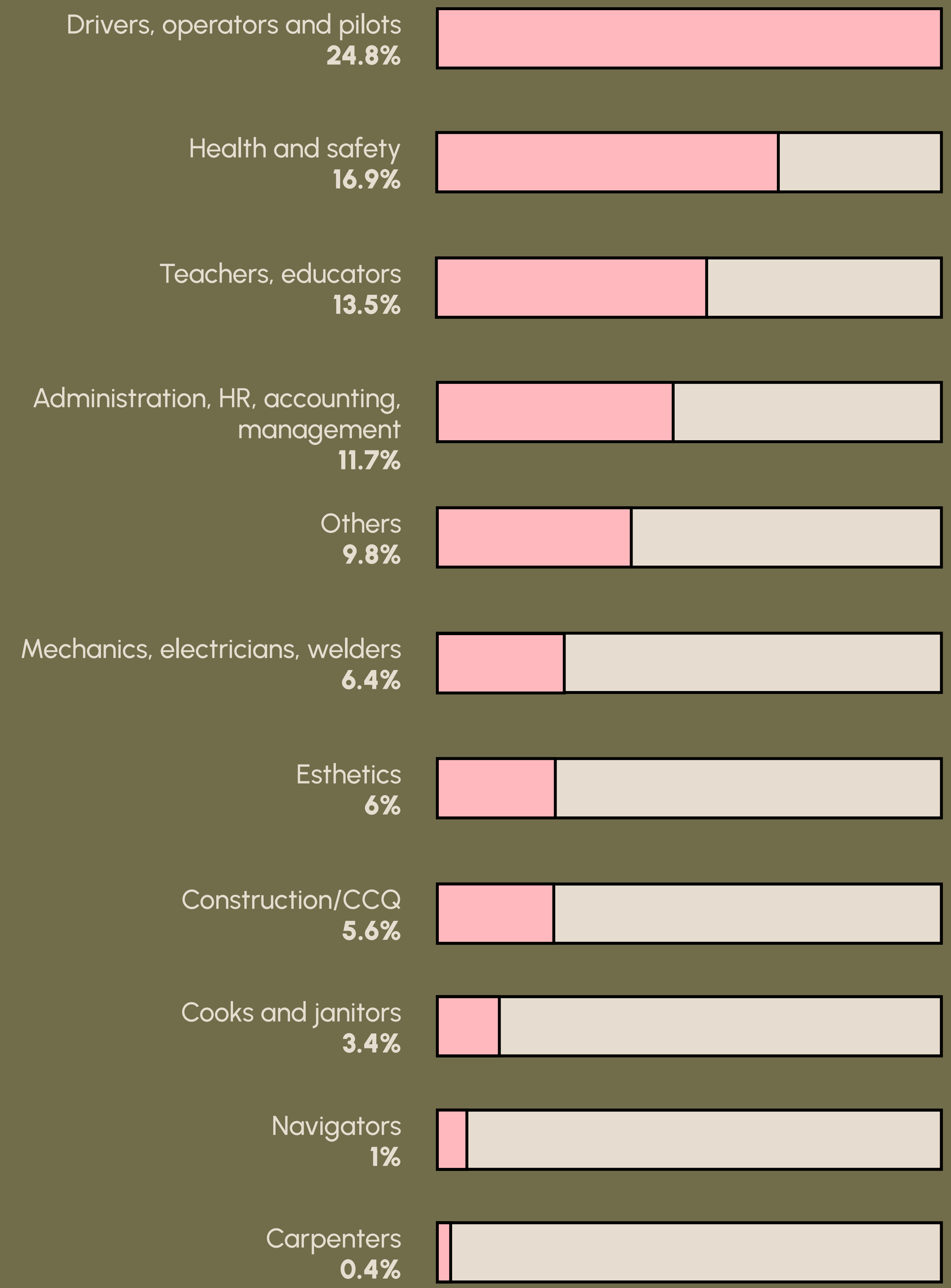
Of jobs related to driver, chauffeur, operator and pilot roles require a specific certification or permit.

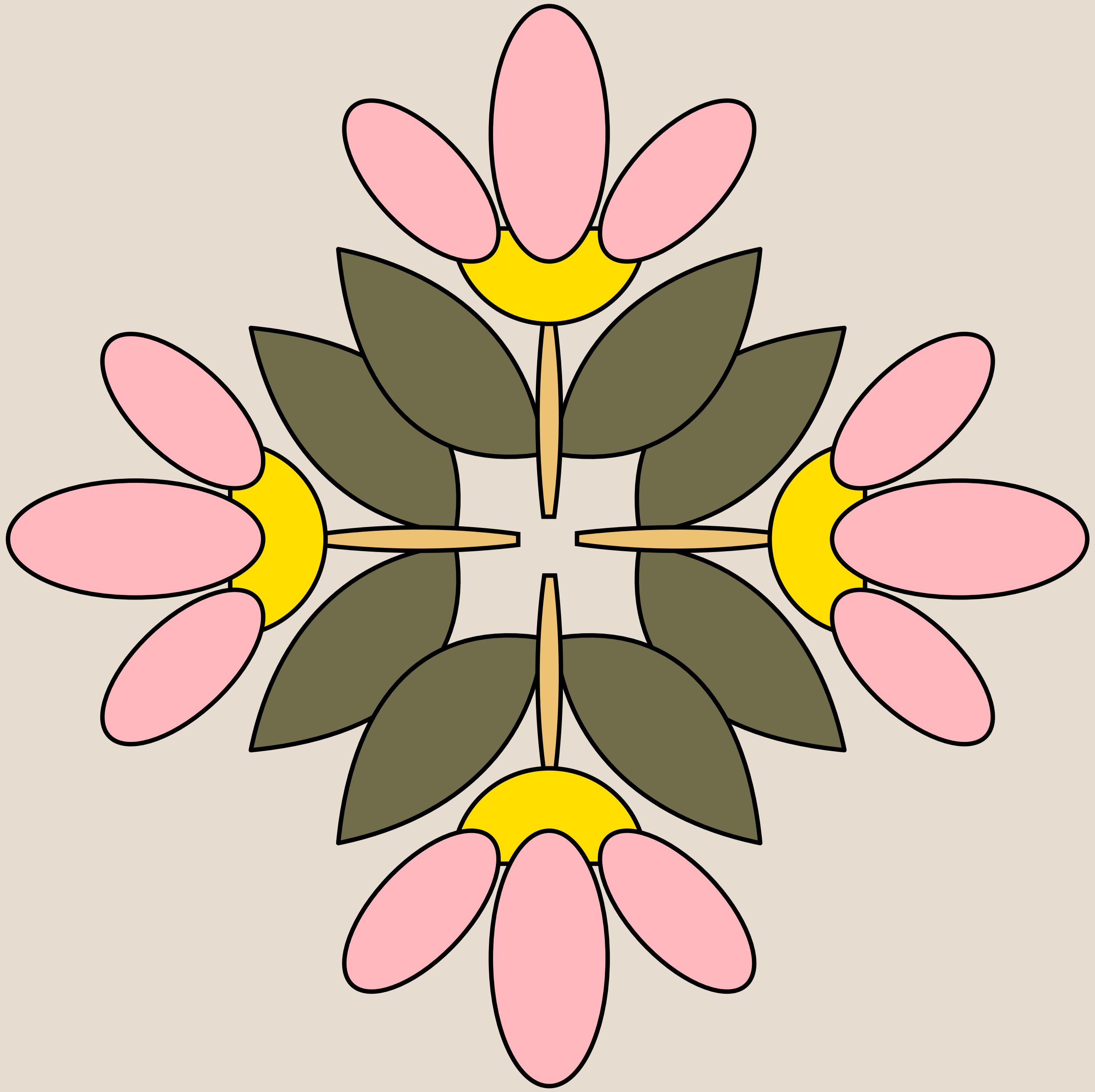
A total of 253 employers (31%) report having positions that require certification or licensing. Among these, nearly one in four (25%) identified driver, chauffeur, or operator roles as subject to this requirement.

Some employers also note that positions in accommodation and food services (3%), as well as in personal care and beauty services (6%) require specific certification or licensing (Figure 17).

Proportion of jobs by category requiring certification or licensing.

Figure 17

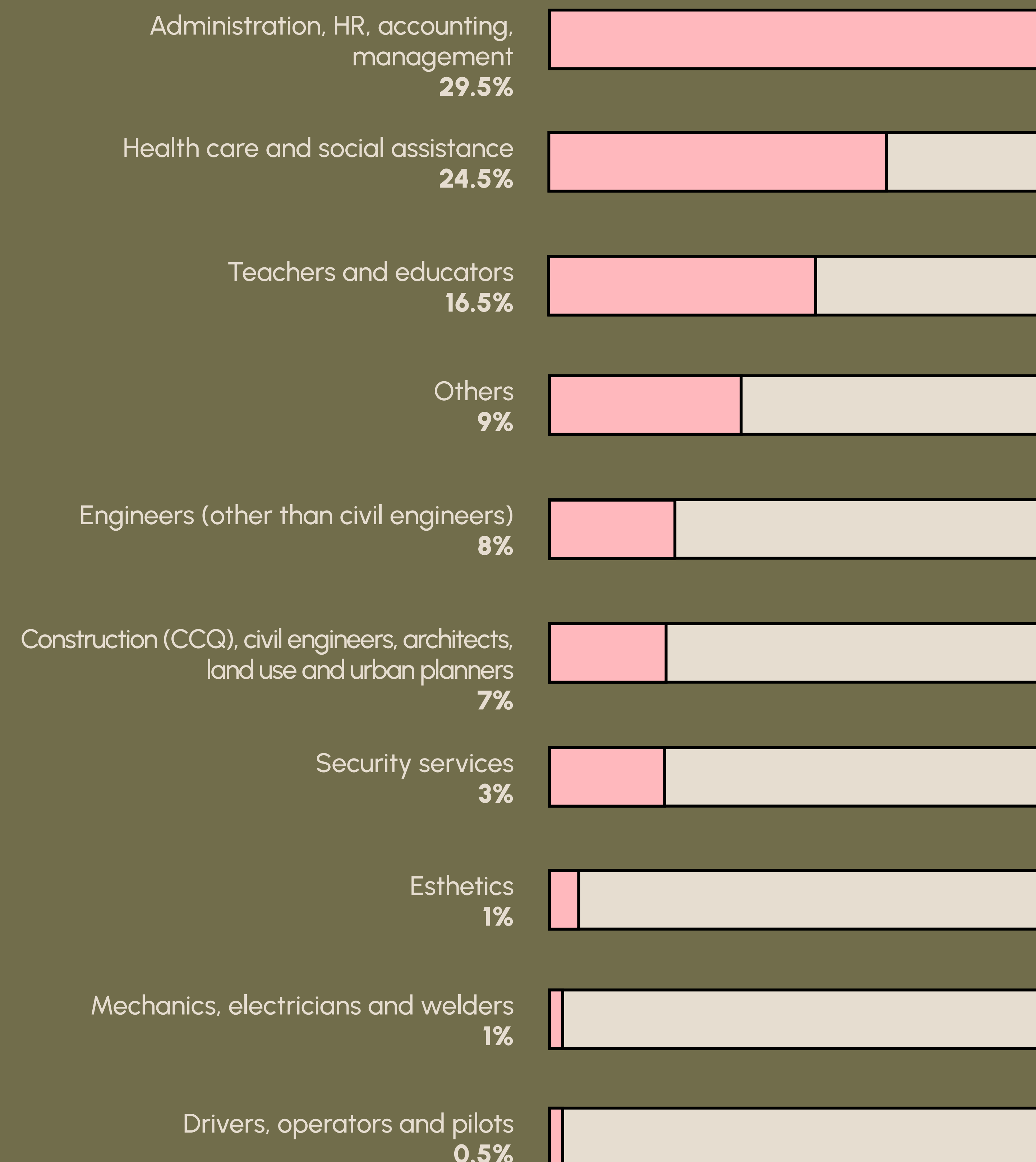


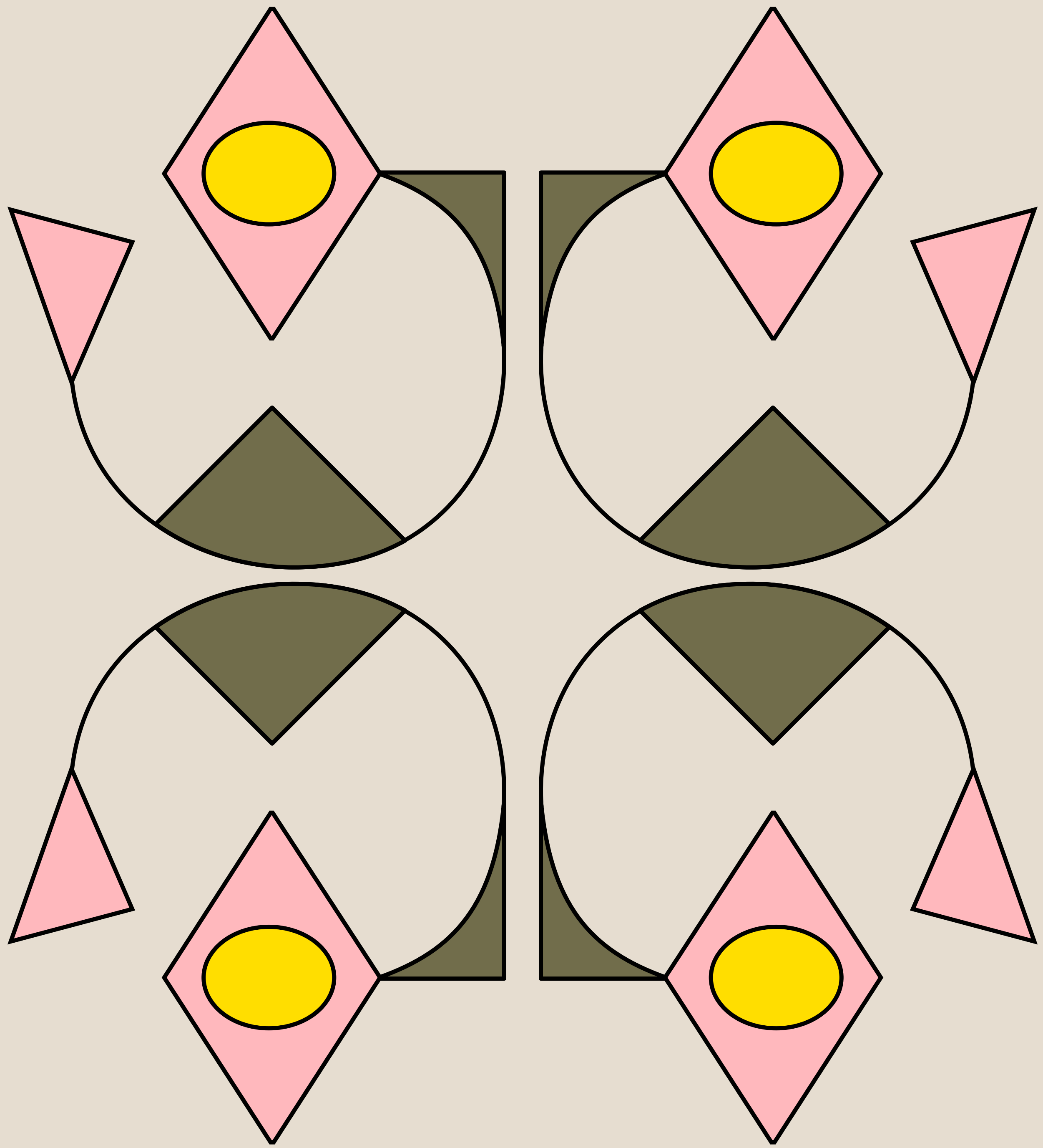


Similarly, 112 employers (22%) — including private businesses, organizations and non-profit organizations — identified several jobs regulated by a professional order. As shown in Figure 18, over 70% of these organizations operate in fields such as human resources, health care, and education.

Proportion of jobs by category in a professional order.

Figure 18



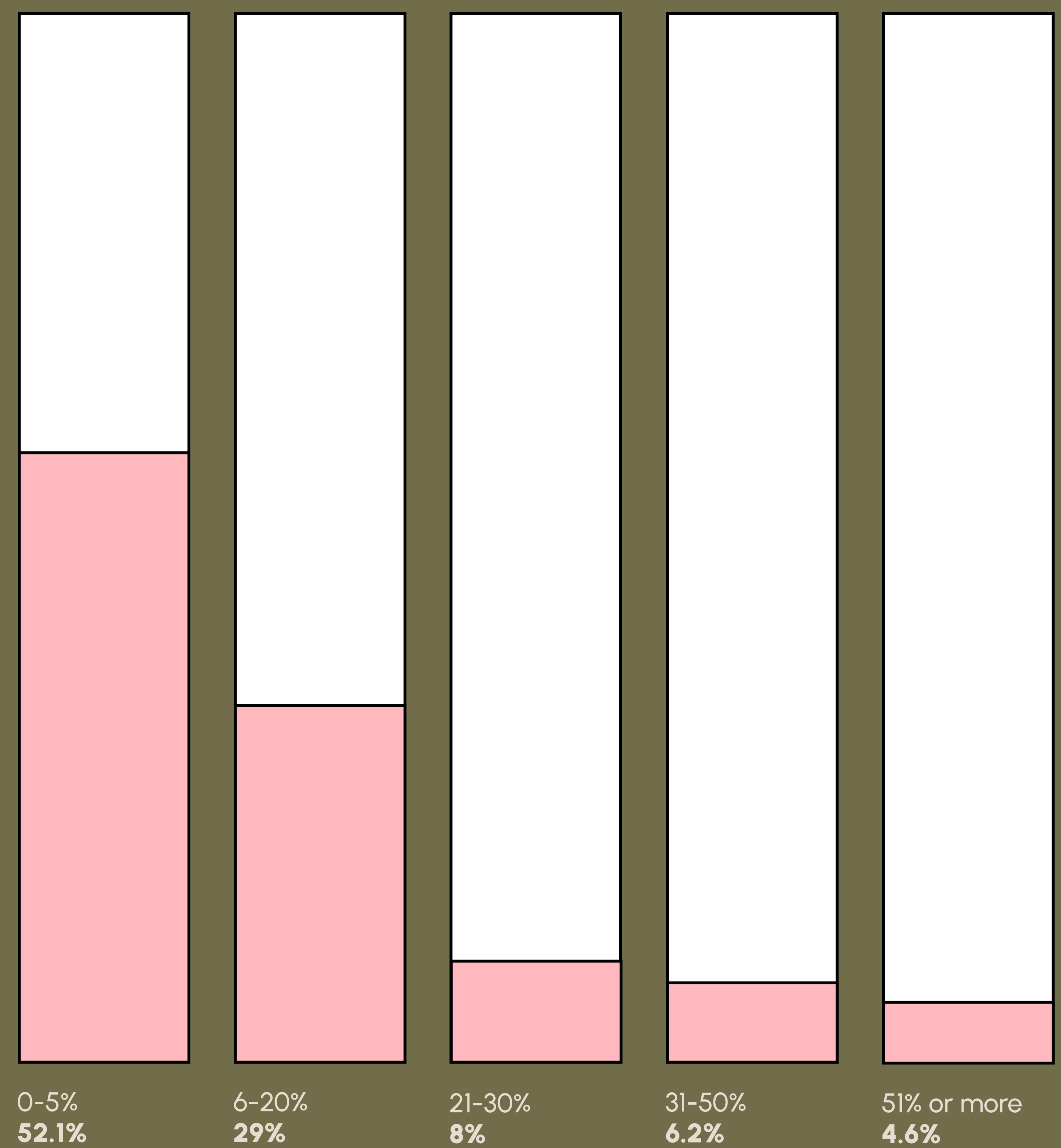


Survey results also show that a substantial proportion of employers (71%) — 354 private businesses, public organizations and non-profit organizations — offer their employees opportunities for career advancement.

This strong tendency among employers to offer advancement opportunities likely contributes to more than half of businesses and organizations (52%) reporting relatively low turnover rates, ranging from 0% to 5% (Fig. 19).

Distribution of employers by annual staff turnover.

Figure 19



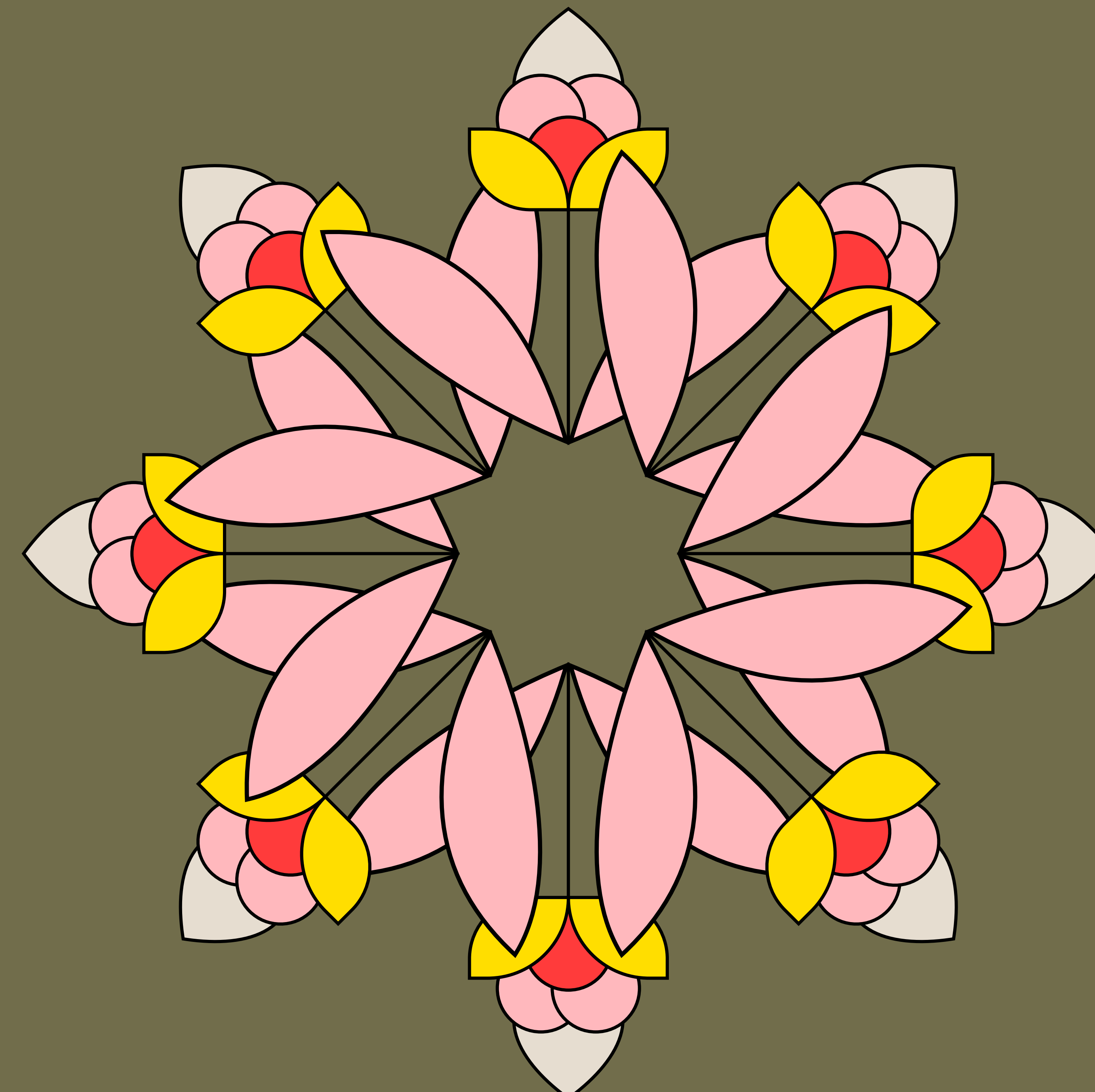
OVERVIEW OF OCCUPATIONS/POSITIONS

OVERVIEW OF OCCUPATIONS/ POSITIONS IN SHORT SUPPLY

An occupation in short supply is defined as "an occupation for which there are many job openings but an insufficient number of qualified or available candidates to fill them." Survey data show that over 39% of businesses and organizations (195 employers) report having vacant positions, while more than 42% (211 employers) indicate they are actively seeking workers.

The positions in demand are highly diverse and include both occupations requiring a competency card, certification, or licensing, and essential support positions necessary for the proper functioning of a business or organization.

For instance, among the occupations in demand, 29% of businesses are looking to fill positions such as receptionist, clerk, salesperson, cook, custodian, and various other positions in services (Fig. 20).



Proportion of occupations/positions by category sought by employers.
Figure 20

Receptionists, clerks, customer service representives, salespersons, labourers, agents
15.7%

Cooks, janitors, housekeepers, dishwashers, and servers
13.3%

Administration, HR, accounting, and management
9.9%

Teachers and educators
9.9%

Assistant directors, directors, managers, supervisors, and coordinators
8.2%

Mechanics, electricians, and welders
5.1%

Health care and social assistance
4.8%

Drivers, operators, pilots
4.8%

Tour guides
3.9%

Construction (CCQ), civil engineers, architects, and land use and urban planners
3.6%

Communication, journalism and related fields
2.7%

Security services
2.2%

Navigators
2.2%

Technicians and similar occupations
1.7%

Counsellors
1.7%

Esthetics and dressmaking
1.7%

Carpenters
1%

Engineers (other than civil engineers)
0.5%

Other occupations
7.2%

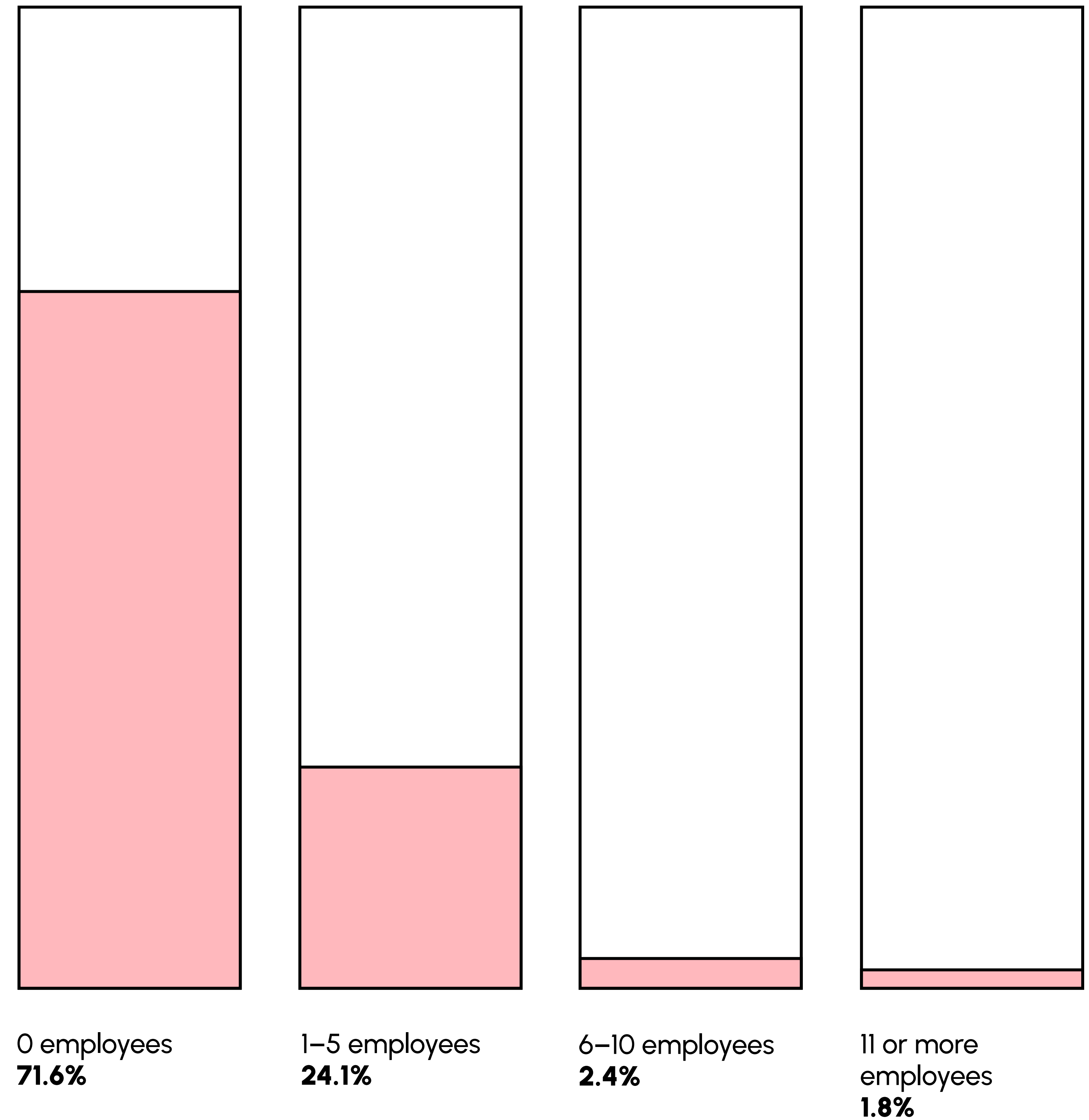
71.6%
Of employers surveyed recorded no retirements over the course of one year.

One factor exacerbating the labour shortage is the growing number of retirements each year — a challenge for businesses and organizations trying to find qualified or available replacements.

Survey data support this reality: more than 28% of employers expect over 11 employee departures within a given year (Fig. 21).

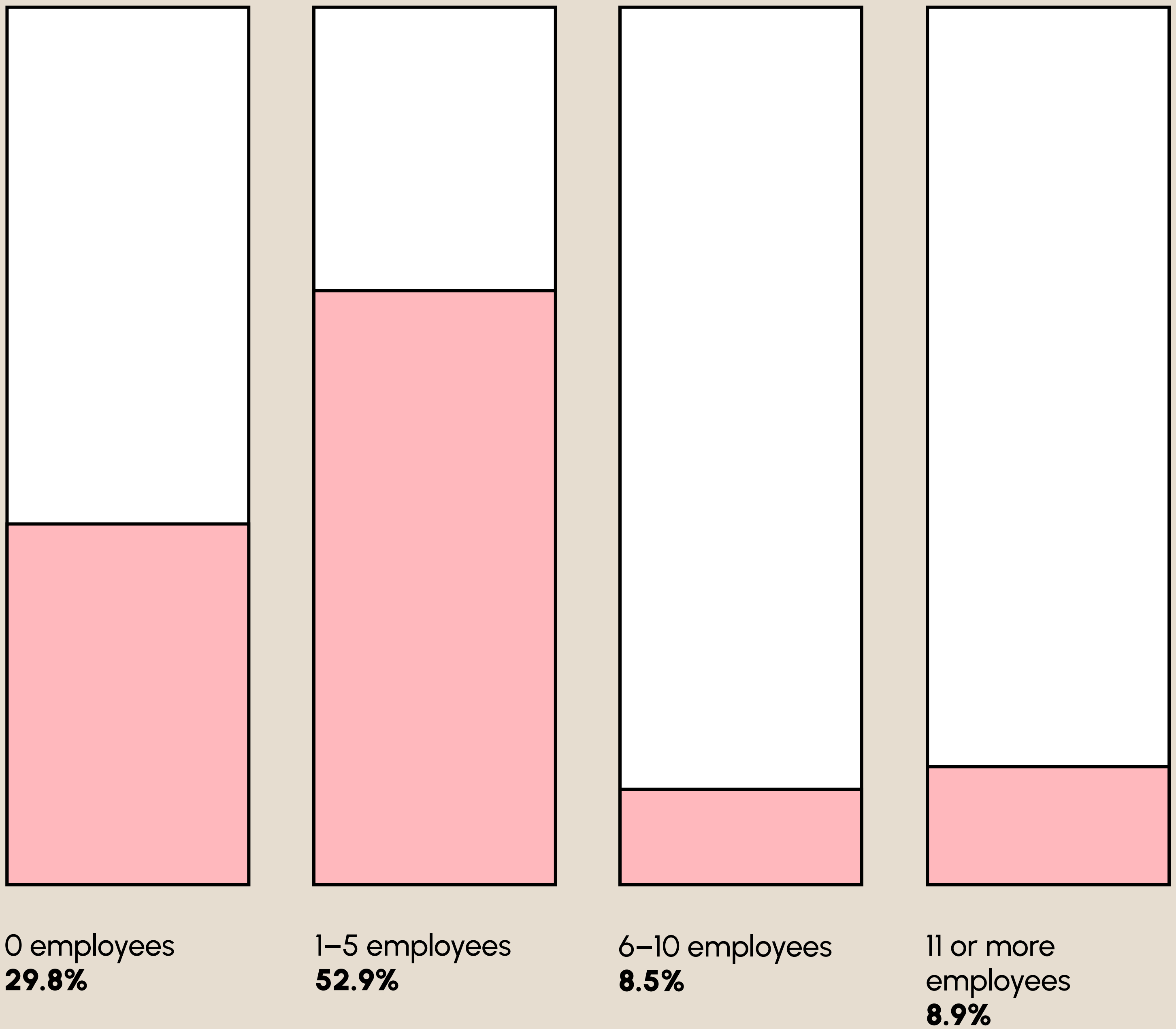
Beyond retirement, employers report several other reasons for staff departures, with voluntary resignations (nearly 41%) and political or organizational changes (over 17%) cited most frequently.

Proportion of employers by number of retirements.
Figure 21



Proportion of employers by annual number of hires.

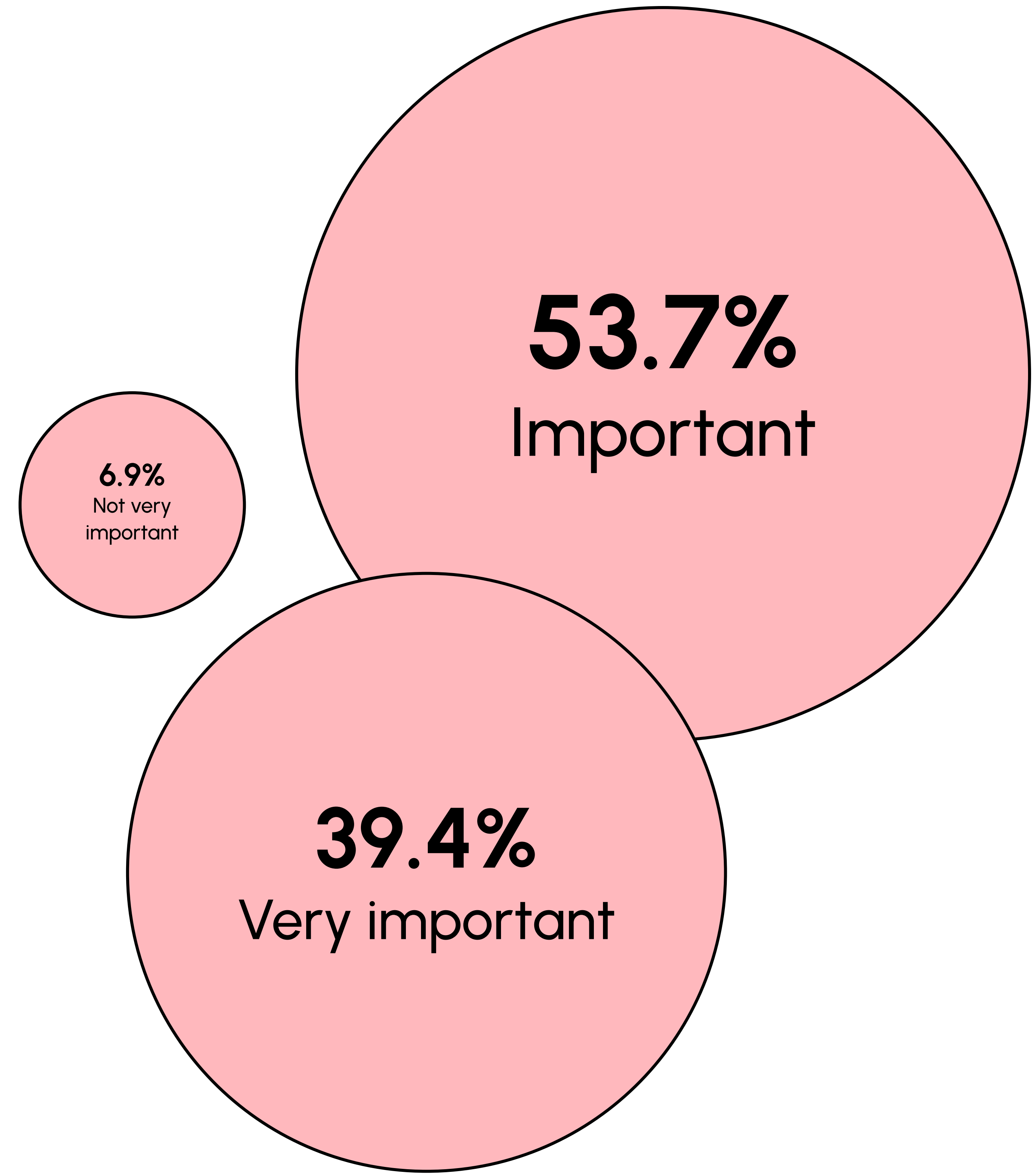
Figure 22



Furthermore, more than half of employers (53%) anticipate needing to hire between one and five new employees within the year. Businesses and organizations expecting to recruit 10 or more employees account for over 17% of all employers surveyed (Fig. 22).

Distribution of employers by labour shortage impact.

Figure 23



More than 46% of employers (231 businesses and organizations) report experiencing the effects of the labour shortage. Among these employers, over 9 in 10 (93%) consider the impact of the shortage to be either important or very important (Fig. 23).

Contributing factors to labour shortage in businesses and organizations.
Figure 24

Employers cite numerous factors contributing to the labour shortage, with demographics, the COVID-19 pandemic, and wages among the most frequently cited (Fig. 24).

Other
15.7%

Demographics and other factors
15.1%

Pandemic and others
12.7%

Salary ranges and other factors
11.1%

Demographics
7,4%

Salary ranges
6.2%

Employee departures to other sectors
4.6%

Pandemic
4.6%

Low literacy and numeracy levels
3.2%

Perceptions of employment and the labour market
2.8%

Mismatch between training and labour market needs, and other factors
2.6%

Employee departures to other sectors and other factors
2.2%

Lack of job diversity in the sector
2.2%

Lack of communication between employers and job seekers, and other factors
1.8%

Lack of job diversity in the sector and other factors
1.6%

Lack of communication between employers and job seekers
1.6%

Low literacy and numeracy levels and other factors
1.4%

Lack of advancement opportunities
1.4%

Perceptions of employment and the labour market and other factors
0.8%

Lack of advancement opportunities and other factors
0.8%

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ISSUES

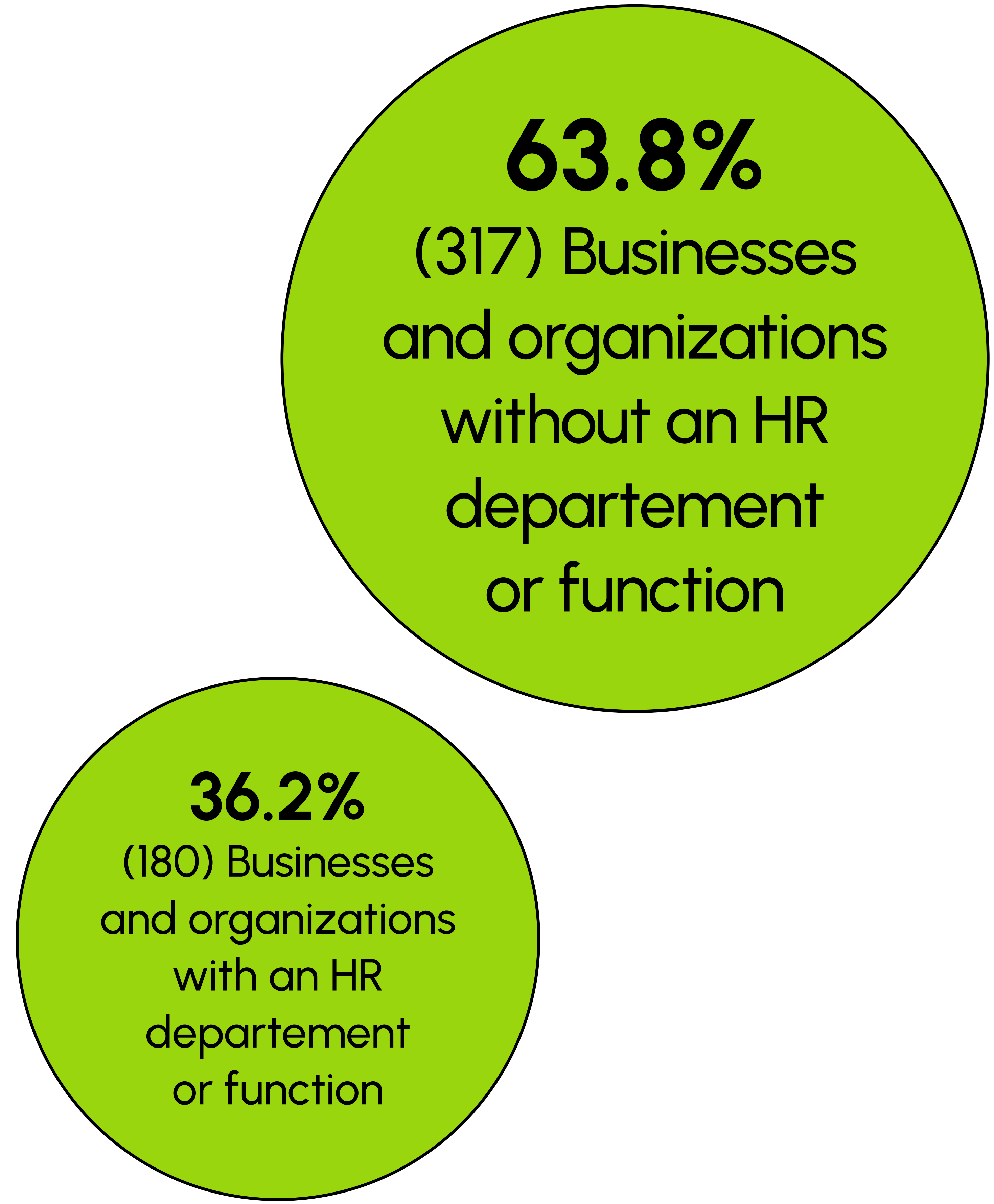
The labour shortage is further exacerbated by employers' ongoing difficulties in filling positions throughout the year. The study indicates that 253 employers (51%) report experiencing recruitment challenges, which intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although these challenges predated the pandemic, they were less pronounced. According to the survey, 223 employers (45%) reported recruitment difficulties prior to the pandemic, representing an increase of 6 percentage points compared to the current situation.

These recruitment challenges, reported by more than half of employers, may be partly attributable to the absence of a human resources (HR) department or dedicated HR function.

Indeed, more than three in five employers (64%) do not have such a structure in place, even though one of its primary roles is to plan and oversee recruitment in alignment with organizational needs (Fig. 25).

Distribution of employers by presence of an HR department or function.

Figure 25



It should be noted, however, that many businesses and organizations without an HR department rely on alternative methods to fill vacant positions.

Main recruitment methods used by employers.
Figure 26

Social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) and other methods
26.8%

Postings in educational institutions and other methods
17.7%

Social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)
8.7%

Traditional media (newspapers, radio) and other methods
7.4%

Personal and professional networks and other methods
6.2%

Several employers report using both traditional and social media, as well as posting job openings at educational institutions or on paid platforms such as Jobboom (Fig. 26).

Services Québec and other online employment websites
5.8%

Personal and professional networks
5.2%

Employee referrals and other methods
4.8%

Postings in educational institutions
4.2%

Employee referrals
3.6%

Local employment centres and other methods
2.2%

Professional associations and other methods
1.6%

Paid generalist job boards (Jobboom, etc.) and other methods
1.2%

Professional associations
1.2%

Traditional media (newspapers, radio)
1.2%

Local employment centres
1%

Services Québec online employment website
0.8%

Paid generalist job boards (Jobboom, etc.)
0.2%

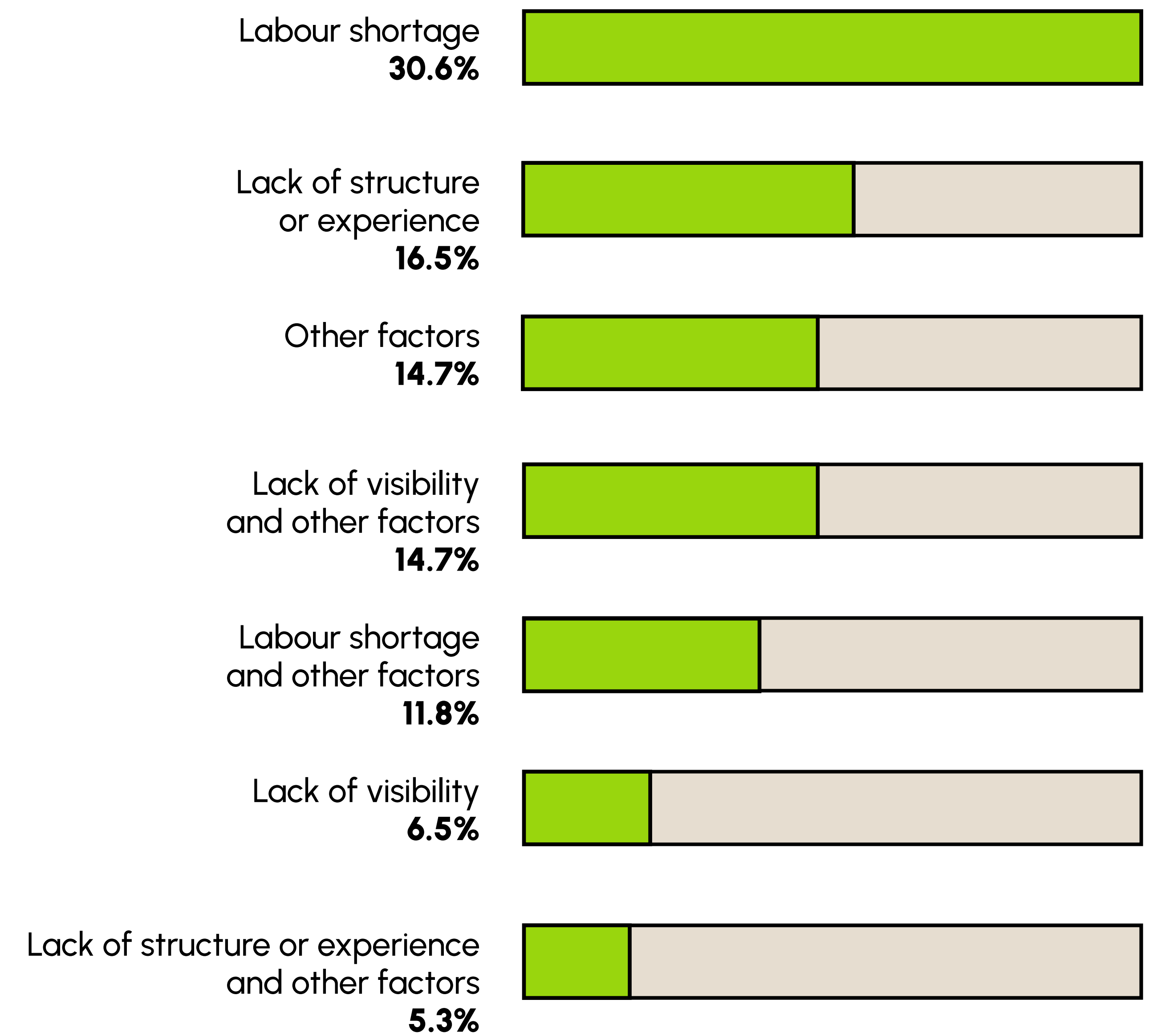
Distribution of employers with or without recruitment challenges.

Figure 27

However, in the context of a labour shortage, these traditional methods may have their limits. This is further highlighted by the fact that nearly one third of employers (34%, or 170) have encountered obstacles in their recruitment efforts (Fig. 27).

Distribution of barriers in recruitment processes reported by employers.

Figure 28



Among the identified obstacles, more than 42% of employers cite a lack of access to available labour.
More than 21% mention a lack of visibility, and another 21% cite a lack of structure and experience (Fig. 28).

Distribution of recruitment barriers reported by employers.
Figure 29

Shortage of qualified workers and other factors
51%

Lack of candidates and other factors
17%

Shortage of qualified workers
6.3%

Lack of applications
5.3%

Inability to offer competitive salaries and other factors
3.9%

In terms of recruitment, 206 employers (41%) report having encountered obstacles in their efforts to fill vacant positions. More than half (57%) primarily attribute these difficulties to a lack of qualified labour (Fig. 29)[4].

[4] Respondents sometimes associate the lack of qualified labour with other obstacles mentioned elsewhere.

Other factors
3.9%

Unsuitable attitude or personality of candidates, among other factors
2.9%

Distance or geographic barriers and other factors
2.9%

Lack of work experience and other factors
1.5%

Limited workforce diversity and other factors
1.5%

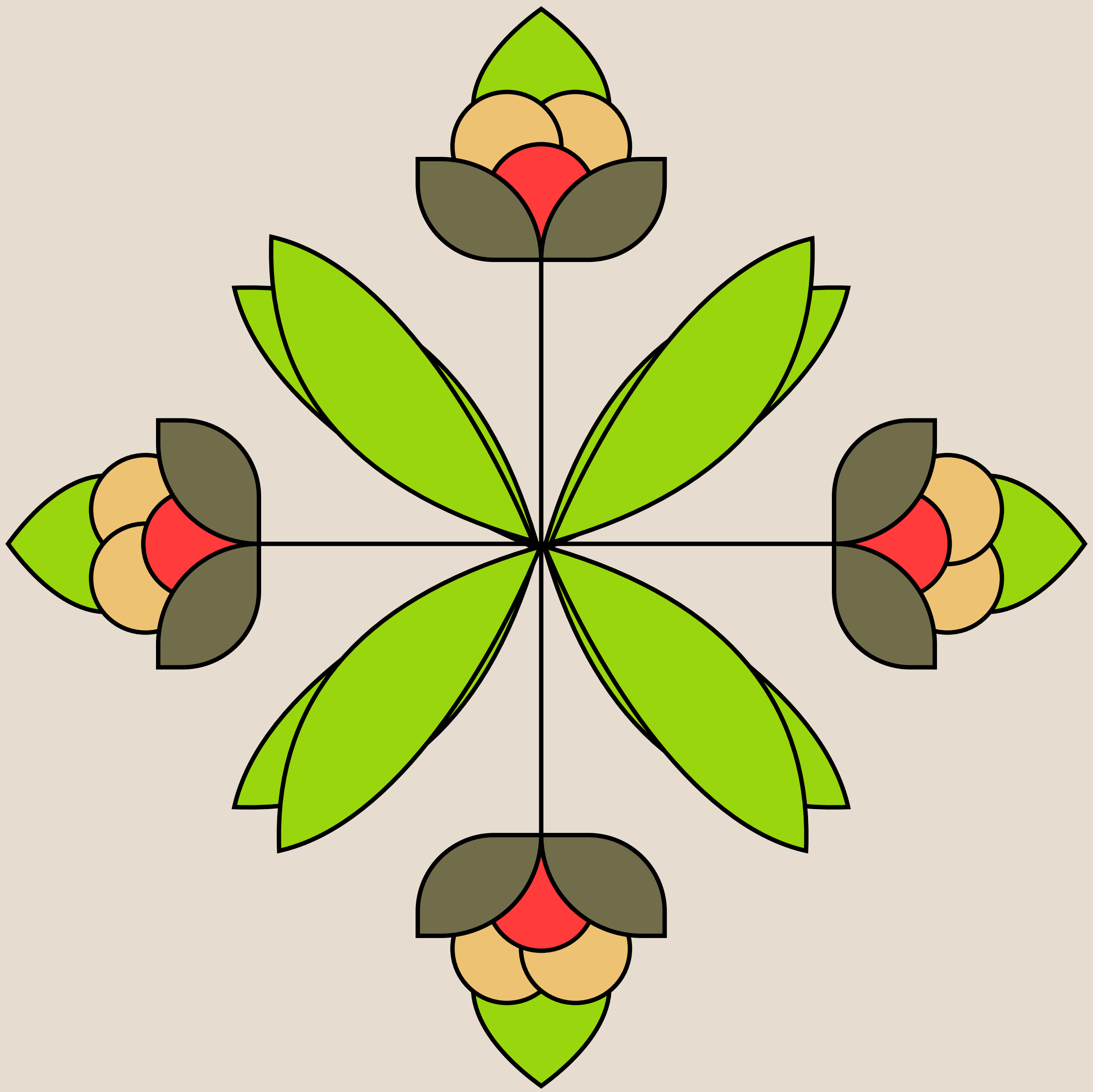
Skills mismatch and other factors
1%

Skills mismatch
1%

Language barriers and other factors
1%

Mental health and other factors
0.5%

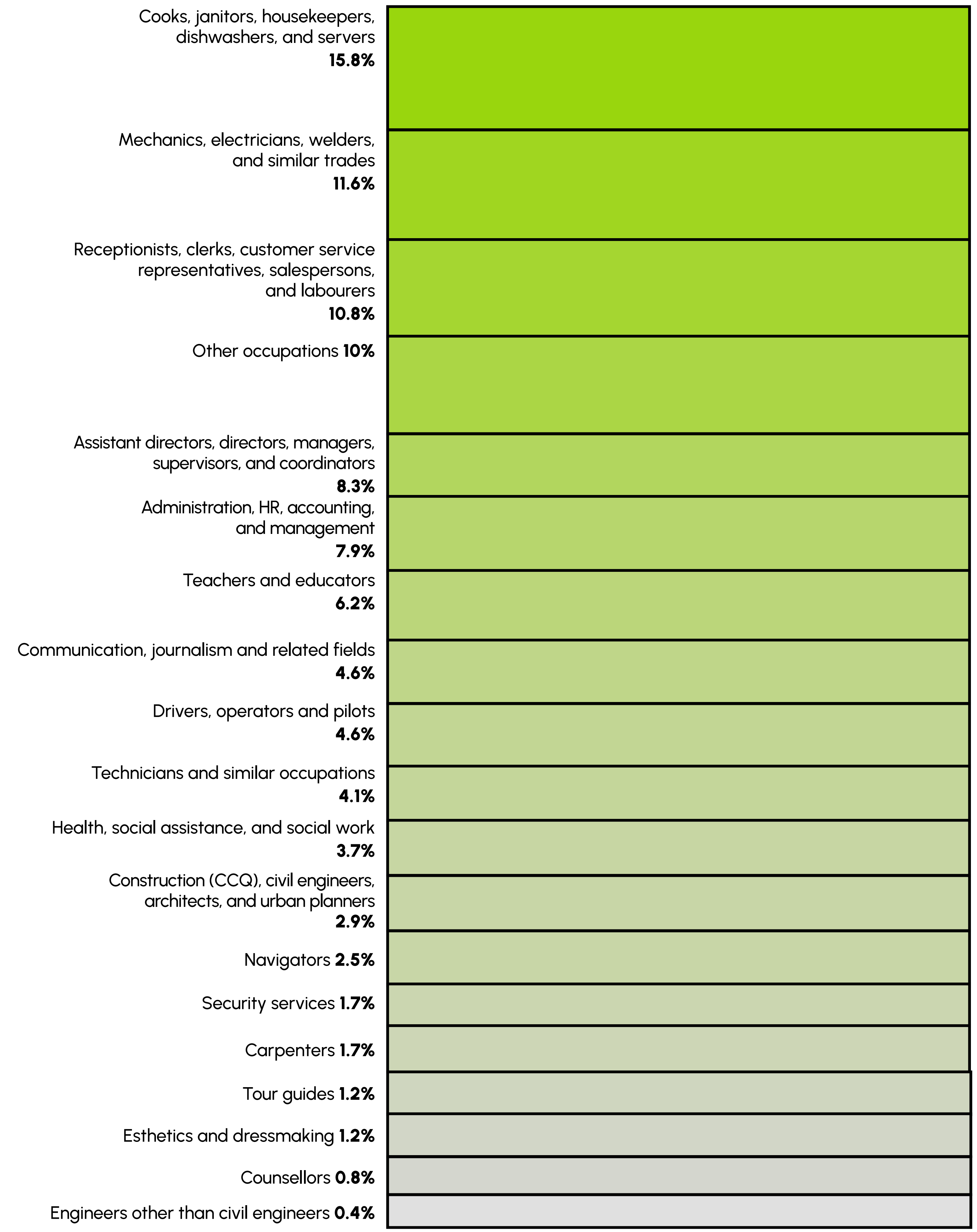
Lack of work experience
0.5%



More specifically, 241 employers (48%) identified occupations or positions for which recruitment is particularly difficult. The list shown in Figure 30 closely resembles the list of occupations in demand (Fig. 20). It is also similar to the list of occupations for which 201 employers (more than 40%) report frequently recruiting.

Distribution of occupations/positions with recruitment difficulties.

Figure 30



The underrepresentation of certain groups in the labour market; particularly people with disabilities; also hinders efforts to address the labour shortage. The study reveals that 317 employers (64%) do not have an internal policy promoting the inclusion of these individuals.

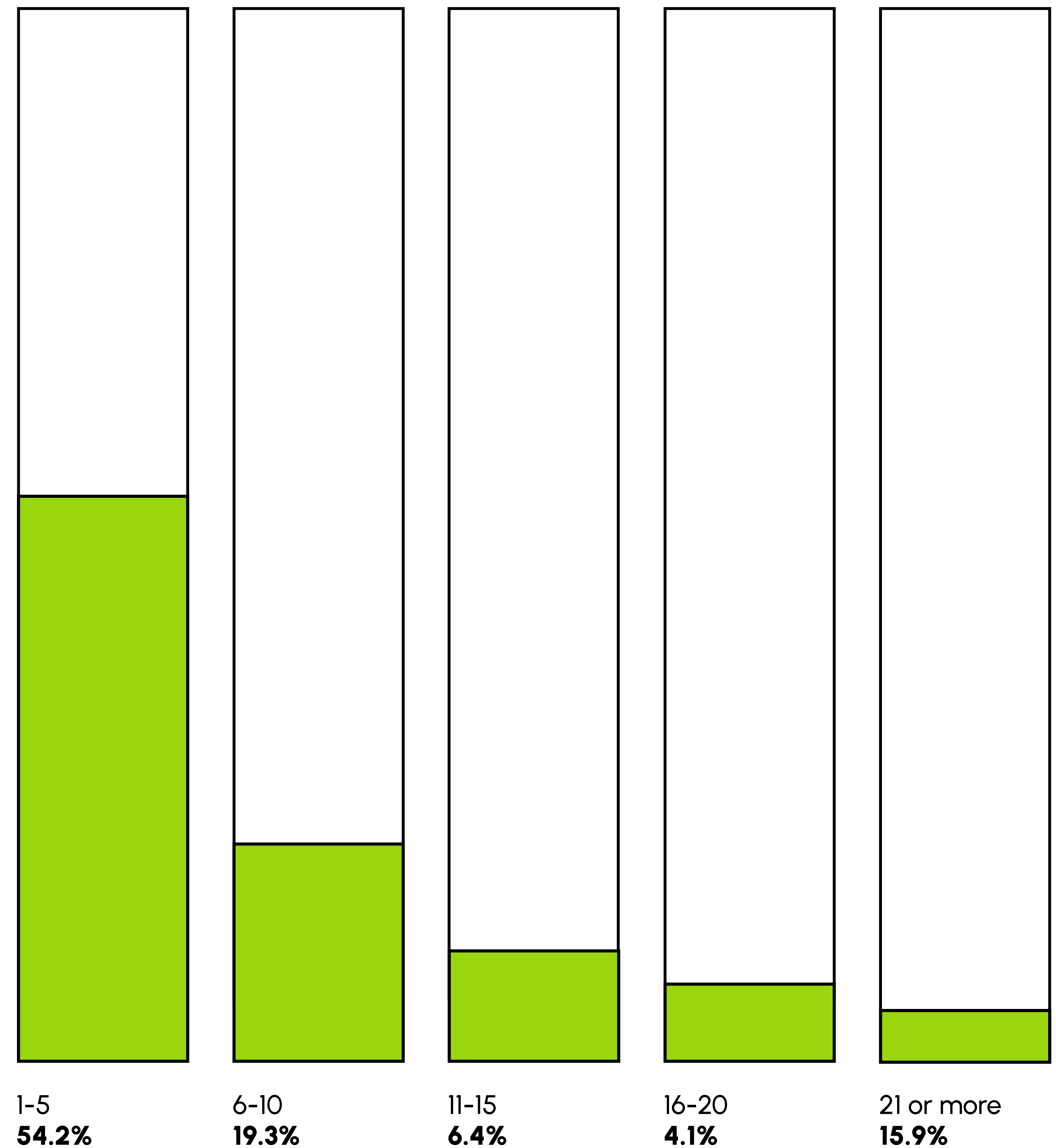
Support for employee integration and retention also constitutes an important lever for mitigating labour shortages. However, approximately 159 employers (32%) report that they do not offer any measures to support the integration or retention of their workforce.

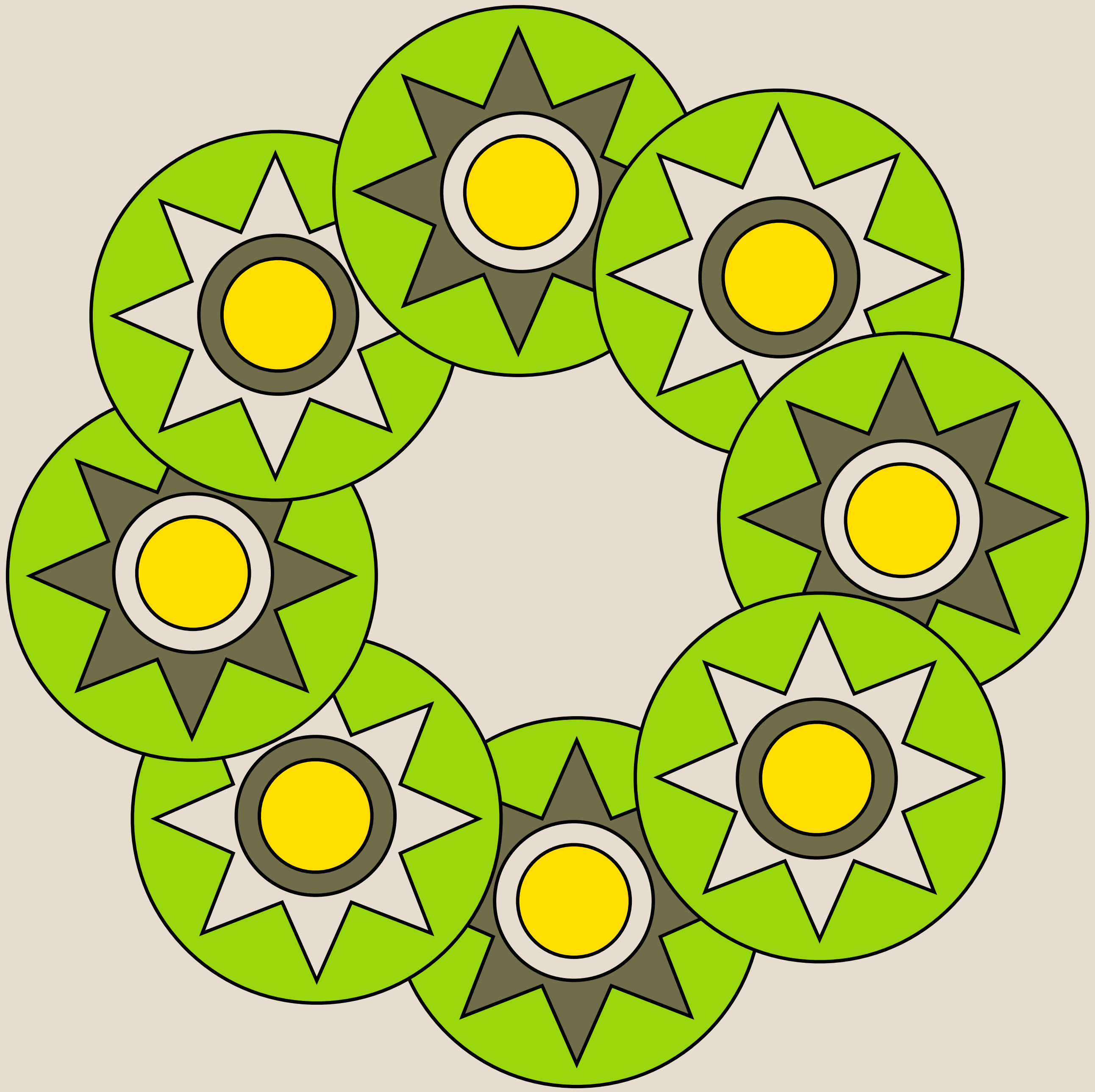
Furthermore, likely due to the absence of an HR department or function, 371 employers (74.6%); nearly three in four; do not have a candidate pool organized by trade.

Yet 389 employers (more than 78%) believe they will need to hire new employees over the next five years. More than half (54%) plans to recruit between one and five employees (Fig. 31). In over 86% of cases, these hires are intended to support business growth or replace departing staff.

Proportion of employers planning new hires by size of workforce.

Figure 31

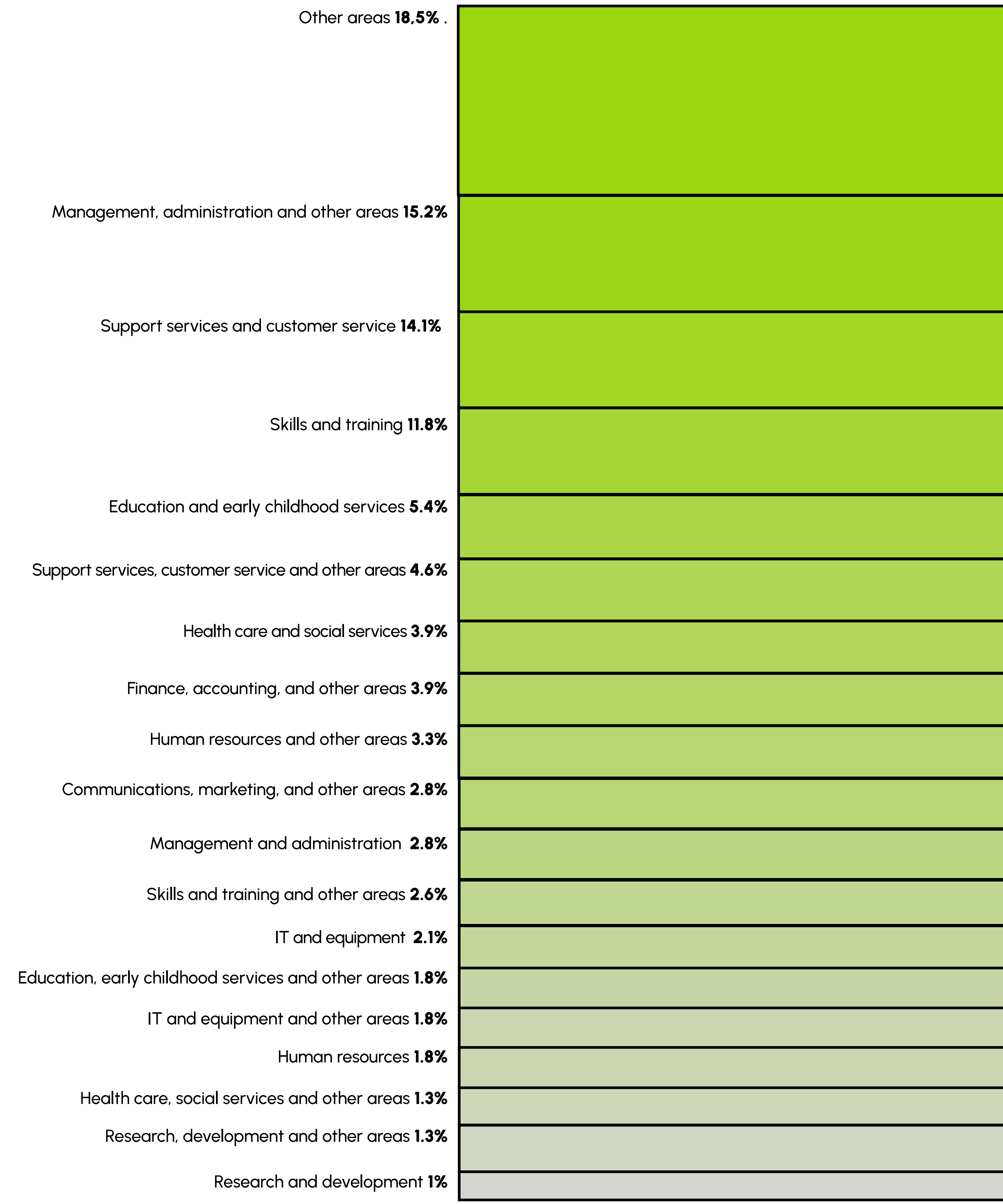




The occupations and positions identified span various sectors of activity, as shown in figure 32.

Trades and positions by sectors.

Figure 32



Distribution of employers by presence of a workforce plan or strategic approach.
Figure 33

Despite this urgent need for new hires, 377 employers (76%) have no workforce plan or strategic approach to address the labour shortage (Fig. 33).

Distribution of employers offering or not offering professional development linked to trades or positions.
Figure 34

A strategic plan to address labour shortages would likely have improved employers' performance in professional development.

As illustrated in (Fig. 34), nearly three in five employers (59.8%) do not offer training activities related to specific trades or positions.

Also, of the 200 employers that provide such activities, 104 (52%) allocate less than 20% of their payroll to them.

Distribution of employers by collaboration with educational or other organizations.

Figure 35

Developing a workforce plan would also have helped improve partnerships between employers and educational or training institutions, enhancing the skills of current and future employees. The survey reveals that more than 59% of the 294 employers do not collaborate with educational or training institutions (Fig. 35)

Distribution of employers by partnership status for recruitment, integration, or retention.

Figure 36

Strategic planning to address the labour shortage could have helped place recruitment, integration, and retention management at the centre of organizational priorities.

Indeed, survey data show that the same proportion of businesses and organizations without a long-term plan (377 employers, or 76%) do not collaborate with other organizations to support recruitment, integration, or retention efforts (Fig. 36).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the various challenges outlined above, addressing the labour shortage affecting current and potential employers of First Nations and Inuit workers in Quebec will require a holistic and innovative approach. The proposed strategy is structured around several complementary components.

Depending on their size, businesses and organizations should first establish a human resources department or, at a minimum, an HR function. Coordinated by the HR lead and aligned with the employer's strategic priorities, a set of actions should be carried out as part of a long-term plan to address the labour shortage:

1| Developing Partnerships with Educational Institutions

Partner with universities, CEGEPs and other training centres to train Indigenous youth in trades or occupations in short supply and build a pool of future talent.

2| Attracting New Talent

Introduce incentives and supportive measures to encourage young Indigenous talent to apply for positions, particularly those that are difficult to fill.

3| Providing Ongoing Training in the Workplace

Expand professional development opportunities to retain qualified workers, as they are becoming increasingly scarce.

4| Expanding Labour Pools

Encourage participation from underrepresented groups, such as people with disabilities, by offering working conditions that are adapted to their needs.

5| Facilitating Return to the Workforce

Implement training and upskilling programs to help individuals who are distant from the labour market secure employment.

6| Facilitating Work-Life Balance

Offer flexible work schedules to help new parents and individuals recovering from illness or injury return to the workforce more quickly.

7| Providing Better Wages and Working Conditions

Increase hourly wages and improve working conditions to enhance the attractiveness of available positions.

8| Innovating Recruitment Practices

Implement more efficient hiring processes by adopting strategies to attract top Indigenous candidates.

9| Valuing and Retaining Employees

Implement recognition mechanisms and improve the work environment to increase employee engagement and retention.

10| Improving Interpersonal Skills

Improve interpersonal communication within teams to foster better collaboration and improve performance.

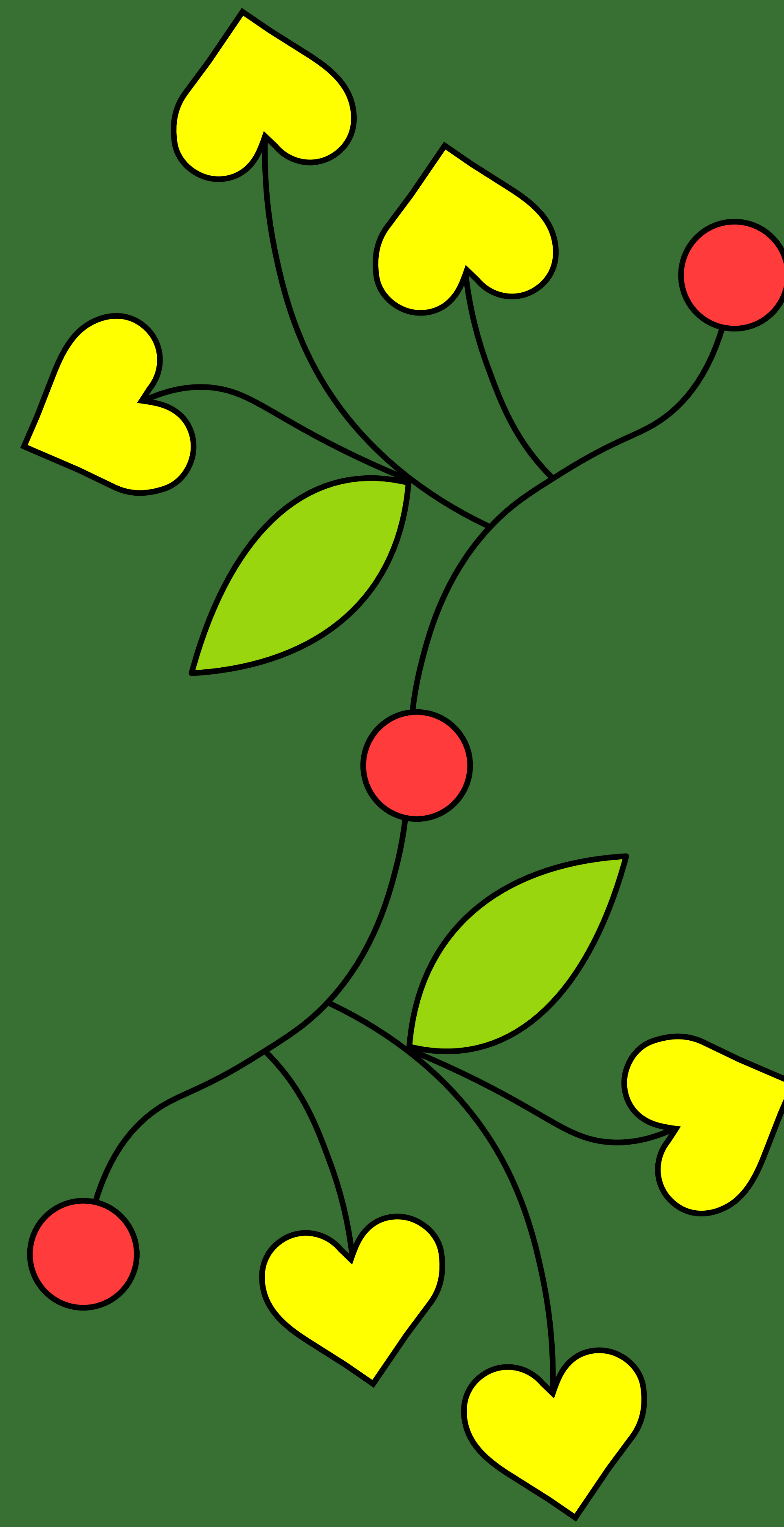
CHRISTINE SIOUI WAWANOLOATH

BIOGRAPHY

Christine Sioui Wawanoloath is an Abenaki and Wendat multidisciplinary artist. Born in Wendake in 1952 and raised in Odanak, she grew up in an environment where art, creativity and cultural transmission played an important role. Her journey has led her to explore many forms of expression, including visual arts, illustration, writing, storytelling and theatre. With a background in arts, photography and history, she has developed an artistic practice deeply connected to memory, nature, traditional stories and Wendat and Abenaki cultures.

Through her work, Christine Sioui Wawanoloath creates evocative, colourful and meaningful worlds. Her artistic and literary contributions help promote First Nations cultures while contributing to the transmission of stories connected to identity, continuity and the relationship with the land.

The FNHRDCQ is proud to highlight the journey of an artist whose work reflects the richness of First Nations knowledge, stories and artistic expression.



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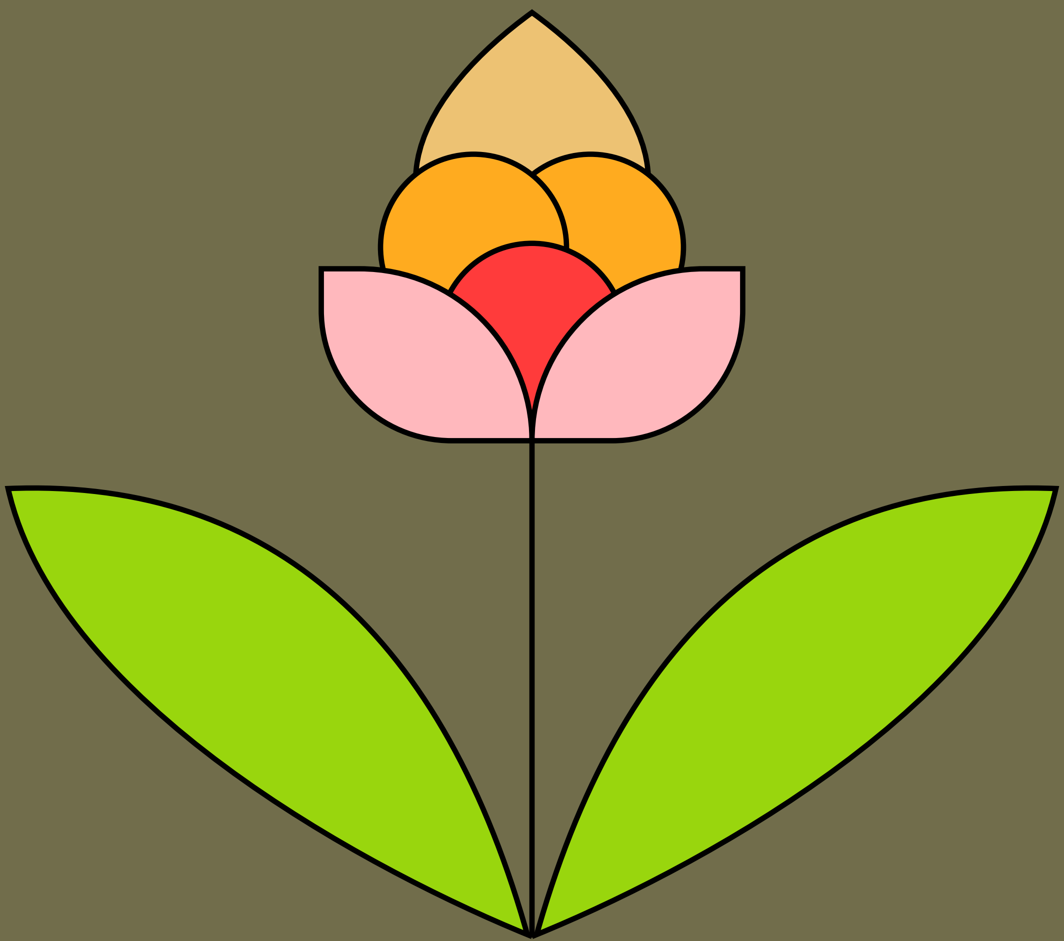

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