

# What we Heard

2022 Landlord Survey

June 2022



Affordable Housing  
ST. JOHN'S

## Disclaimer

This document provides a summary of what was heard from participants during this engagement process. It is not meant to reflect the specific details of each submission word-for-word, although attempts have been made to do so when possible.

The City produces a What we Heard document for every city-led public engagement project. This collected commentary is shared with the community to ensure we heard you correctly.

The City protects the privacy of those who provide feedback as per Access to Information and Privacy Legislation.

The full scope of commentary is used by city staff and Council to help inform recommendations and decisions.

## Context

The City's [Affordable Housing Strategy](#) and the affordable housing sector rely on private landlords and property managers as community partners.

Over the past several years, there have been many changes to the rental landscape in St. John's, to our local community sector, and the broader economy. As we adjust to these changes, the City of St. John's, in collaboration with the Affordable Housing Working Group (AHWG), is taking the opportunity to engage with landlords to understand the impacts of these changes on the rental property market. In addition, we hope to gauge interest in, barriers to, and build knowledge around, providing affordable housing in our city.

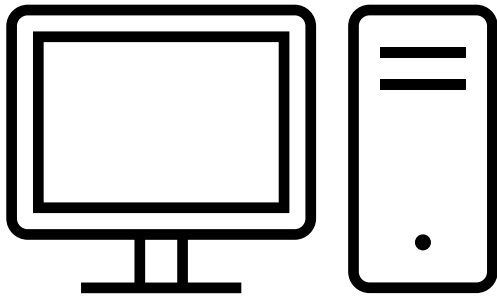
Previous engagement was completed in [2016](#), where 320 landlords and property managers provided input through a survey. This current engagement is informed by the 2016 survey.

# Public Engagement Plan

## Purpose

- To obtain feedback from landlords which will help shape future decisions.
- To provide feedback on how public input influences future decisions.

# Engagement and Communications



- Public Service Announcement issued on May 9
- Survey published through Survey Monkey open from May 9 to June 3
- Landlord Forum on May 25
- Promoted through Social Media Channels: Facebook, Twitter
- Promoted through the Affordable Housing Working Group and End Homelessness St. John's

# Who Engaged



**Survey Responses:** 249

Estimated completion rate: 64%

**Landlord Forum:** 19 attendees

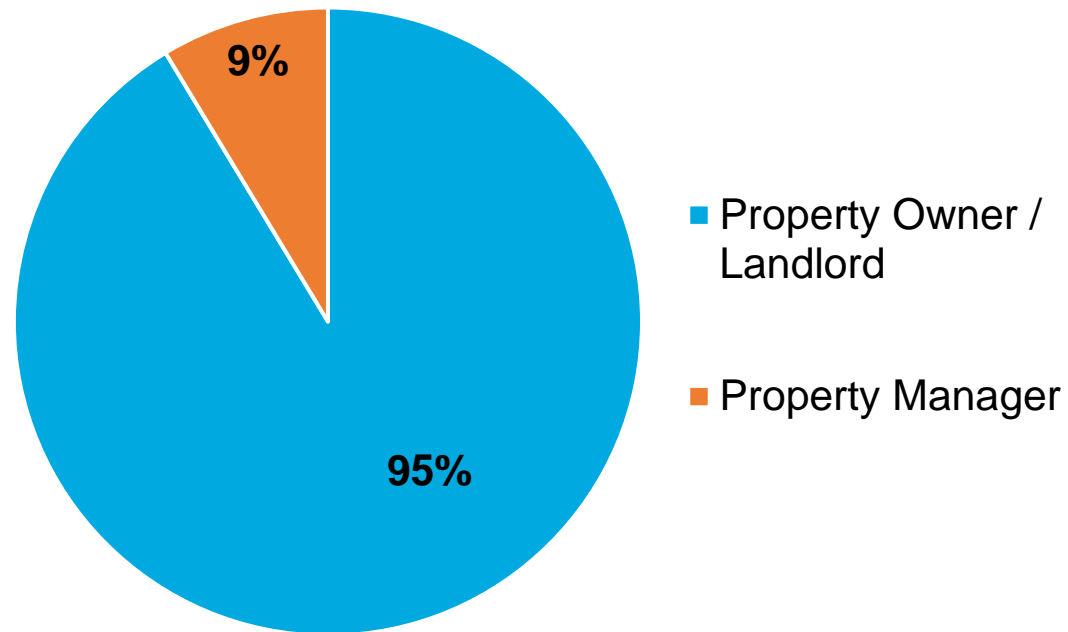
- 15 Landlord/Property Managers
- 4 from the nonprofit sector

**Social Media Activity:**

- 3 posts each on Twitter and Facebook
- May 9, May 17, June 1
- Public comment themes included
  - Cost of living
  - Tenant experiences

# Feedback from the Survey

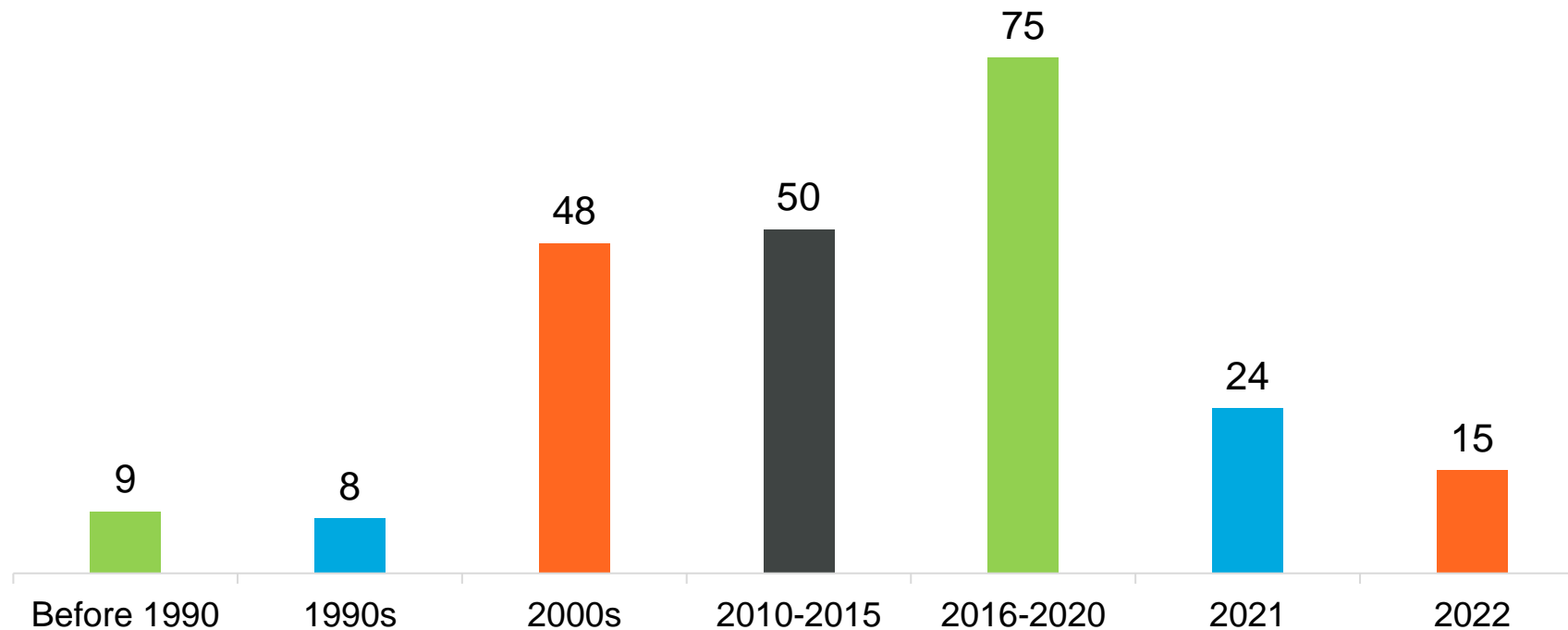
Which best describes you? (check all that apply):



n = 249

# Feedback from the Survey

What year did you become a landlord/property manager?



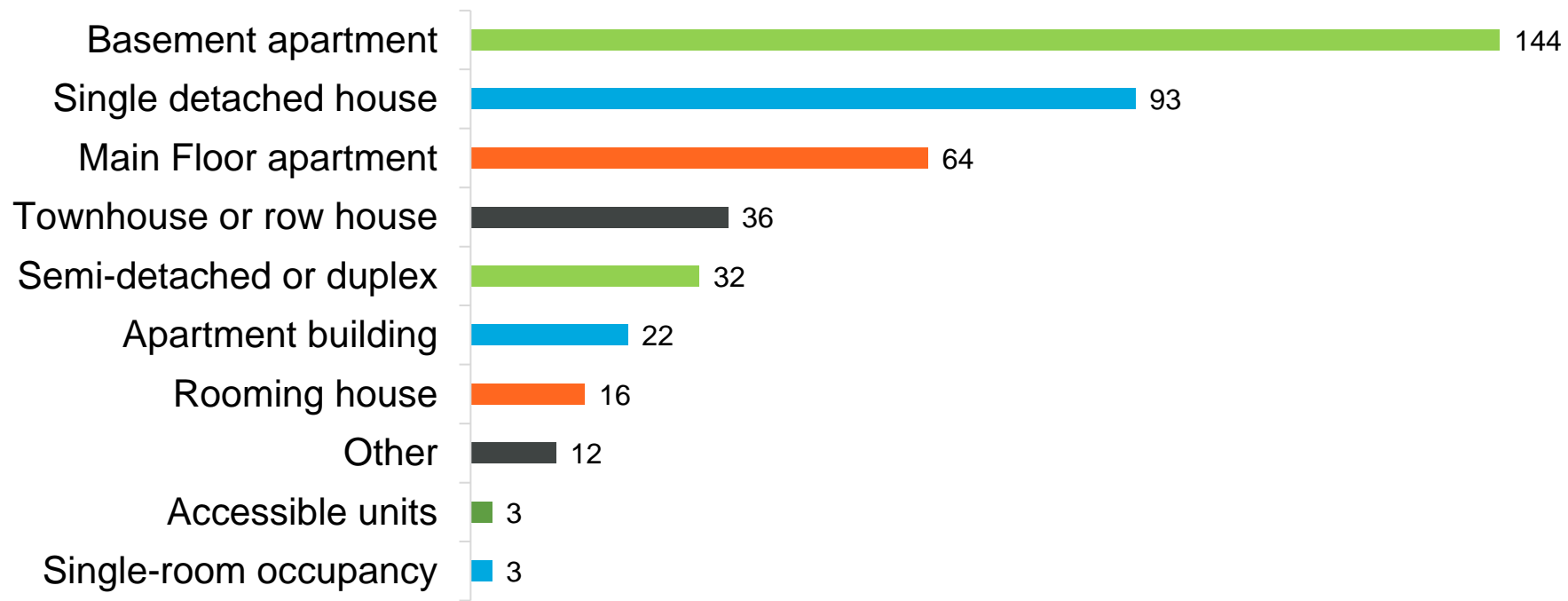
n = 229\*

\*some responses were not included because they were of a general nature



# Feedback from the Survey

What kind of rental properties do you have? (check all that apply):

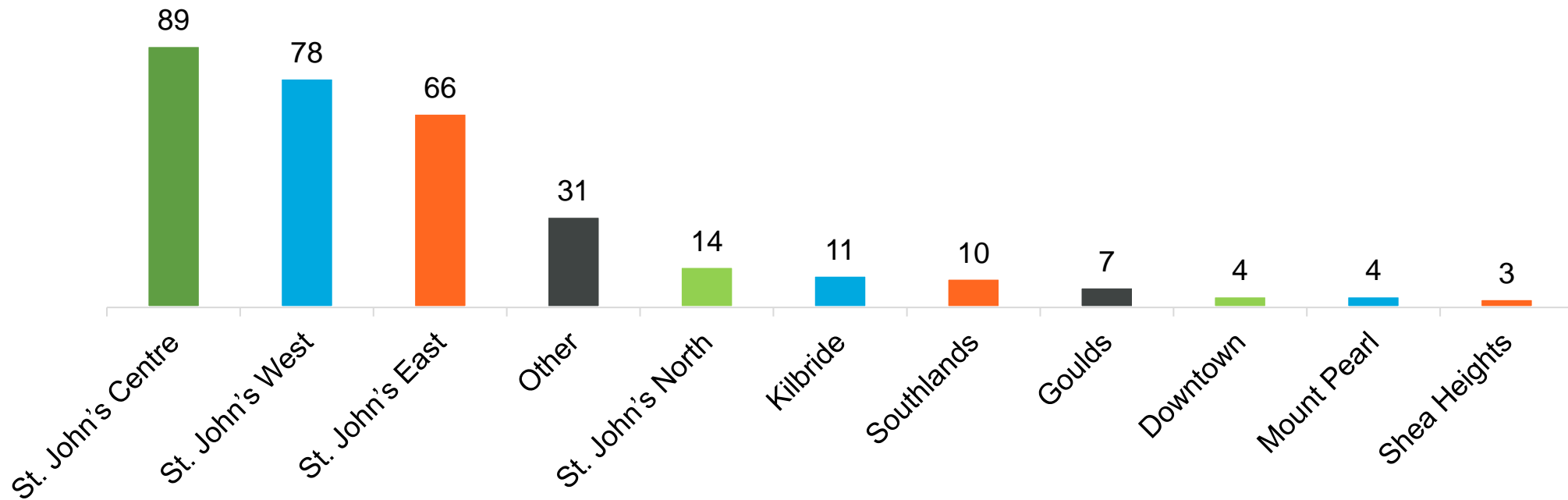


n = 249

“Other”: multiple houses, condos, multiple units, units on other floors, general comments

## Feedback from the Survey

In what area(s) do you currently own or manage rental properties? (check all that apply):

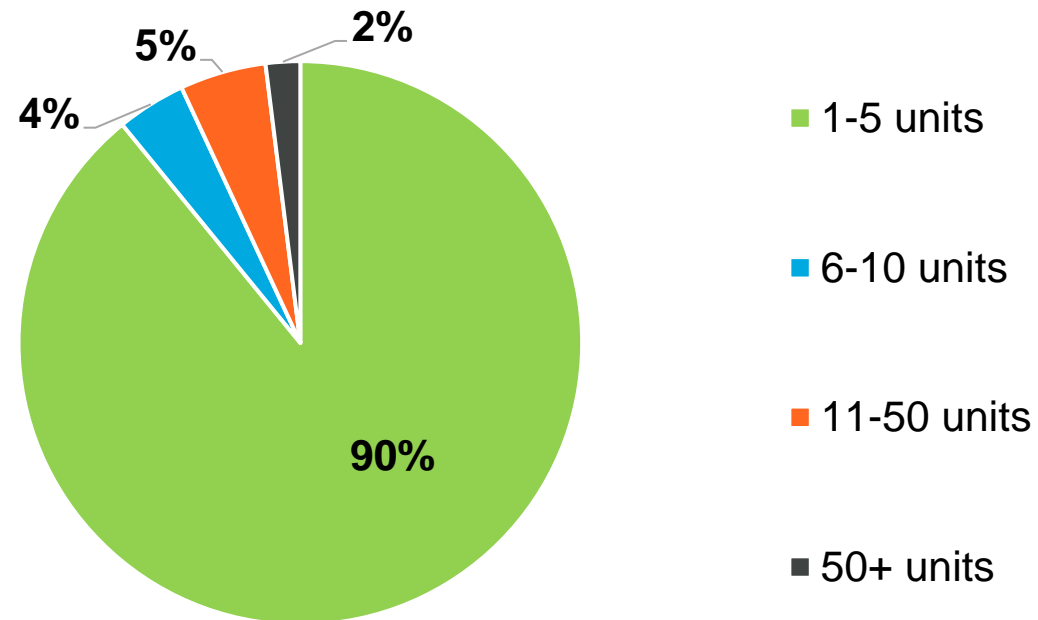


n = 249

"Other": Paradise (6), CBS (3), Corner Brook, Torbay, Bay Roberts

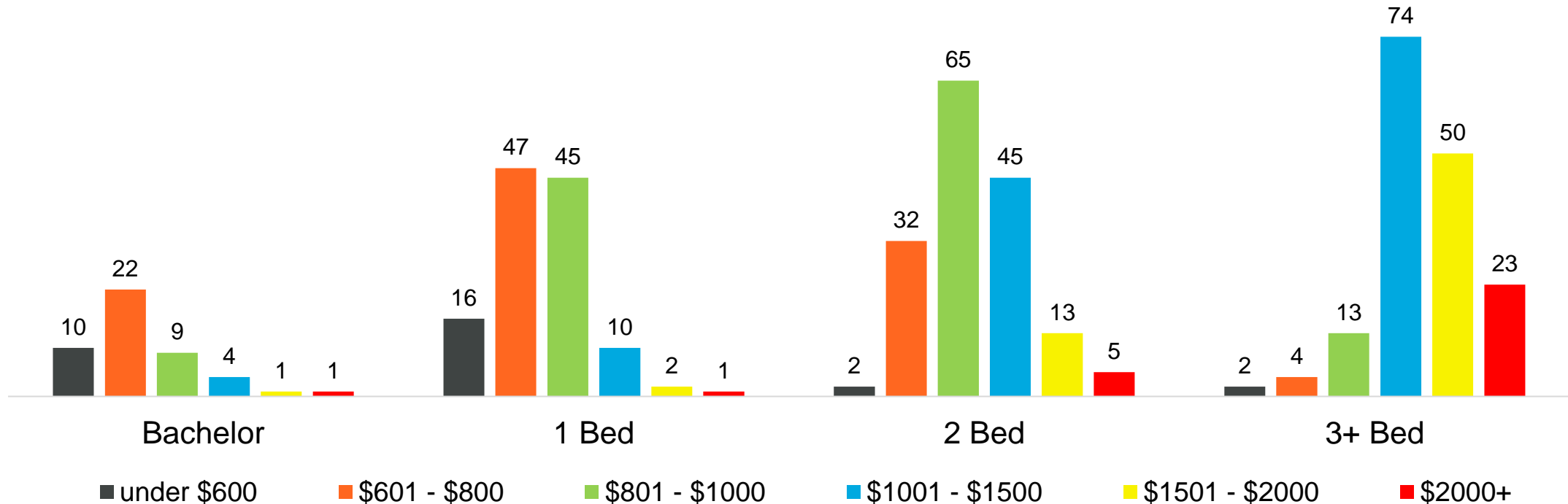
# Feedback from the Survey

Please help us gather some basic facts about your rental properties (check all that apply)  
NOTE: Rental property includes basement apartment and all rooms available for rent.



## Feedback from the Survey

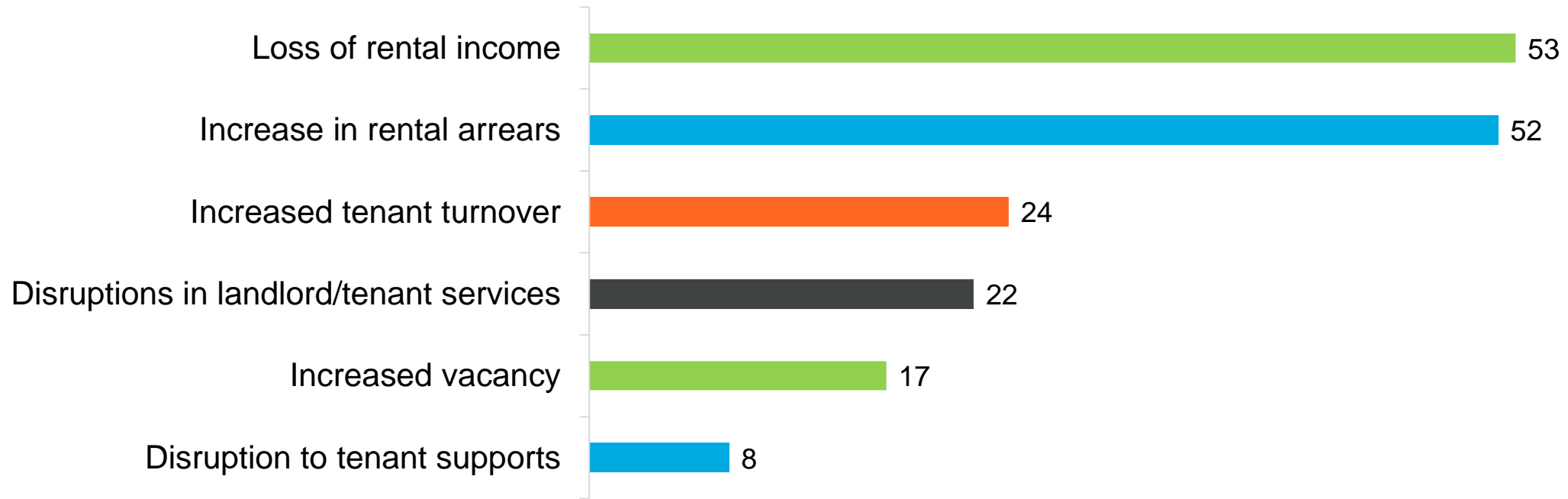
Please describe the average rent WITHOUT utilities (per month):



n = 249

# Feedback from the Survey

How has the Covid-19 pandemic impacted your business as a landlord? (Select all that apply.)



n = 109

## Feedback from the Survey

How has the Covid-19 pandemic impacted your business as a landlord? *Comments*

- Increased maintenance costs: 4
- Decreased amount (or free) rent: 4
- Trouble with tribunal or Residential Tenancies: 3
- Increased living expenses: 2
- Increased volume: 2
- Other: 15 (Tenants moved away, loss of landlord income, more cautious/lockdowns from COVID)

## Feedback from the Survey

Are you cautious when renting to certain tenants (e.g., students, seniors, income support recipients, individuals with pets)? Please list rental arrangements you are cautious about:

- Pets: 95
- Income support: 61
- Students: 41
- All (cautious of everyone): 13
- None: 12
- Young children: 9
- Reference checks: 6
- Unemployed: 6
- Unrelated groups: 5
- Criminal record: 4
- Young people (non-students): 4
- Seniors: 3
- Single adult males: 3
- Smokers: 3
- People from outside the country: 2
- Non-family: 2
- N/A: 2
- Other (e.g., no car, similar lifestyle to my own, drug use, etc.): 8

# Feedback from the Survey

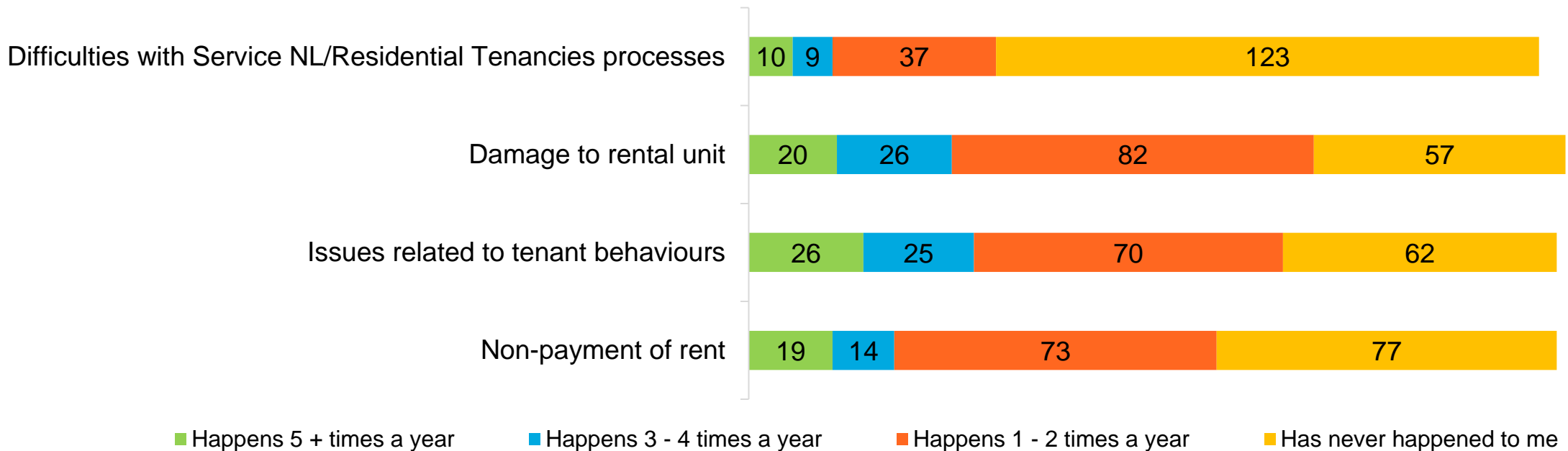
Are there specific reasons you are cautious in the above noted rental arrangements?

- Previous issues with damage (81), pets (31), noise (12), breaching lease terms (7), criminal activity (6), mess (4), threatening behaviour (2)
- Financial difficulties in the past (9)
- Not suitable for pets (6)
- Worry about potential issues in the future (11)
- Concerns over systems to protect landlords (18)



## Feedback from the Survey

We know that landlords can face a variety of issues throughout the course of a tenancy. Please indicate below approximately how often you experience the following issues:



n = 187

## Feedback from the Survey

Landlords provided feedback on the issues they deal with throughout a tenancy. *Comments*

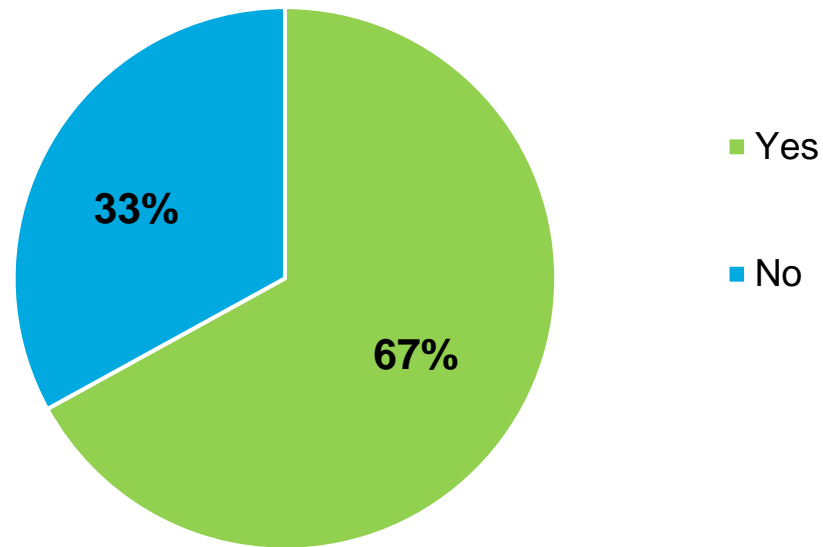
- Damage: 12
- N/A (general comments): 11
- Poor support processes: 10
- Other: 9
- Criminal activity: 6
- Garbage/mess: 5
- Can't collect arrears: 3
- Increased expenses: 3
- Late rent: 3
- Tenant can't pay rent: 2
- Demanding: 2
- No leaving notice: 2
- Noise: 2
- Unauthorized roommates: 2

n = 57 free-text answers

“Other” = items only mentioned once; e.g., won't allow inspection, making unauthorized changes

# Feedback from the Survey

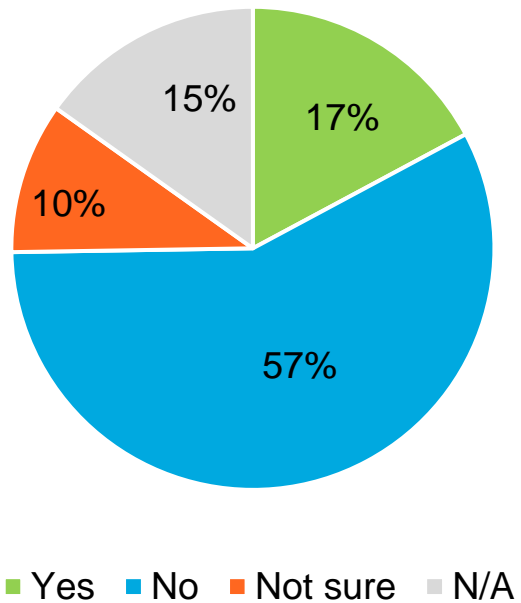
Are you aware of the changes to the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) since 2018?



n = 189

## Feedback from the Survey

Do the recent RTA changes work for you? Would you recommend additional changes be made?



- Not fair to landlords: 21
- Process is too slow: 21
- More enforcement: 14
- Better rules for pets/pet deposits: 5
- Poor wording/unclear: 4
- Add repair process: 2
- More communications: 2
- Other (use 3<sup>rd</sup> party mediator, specify tenants cover cleaning costs, provide mortgage referrals): 3

n = 105 free-text answers

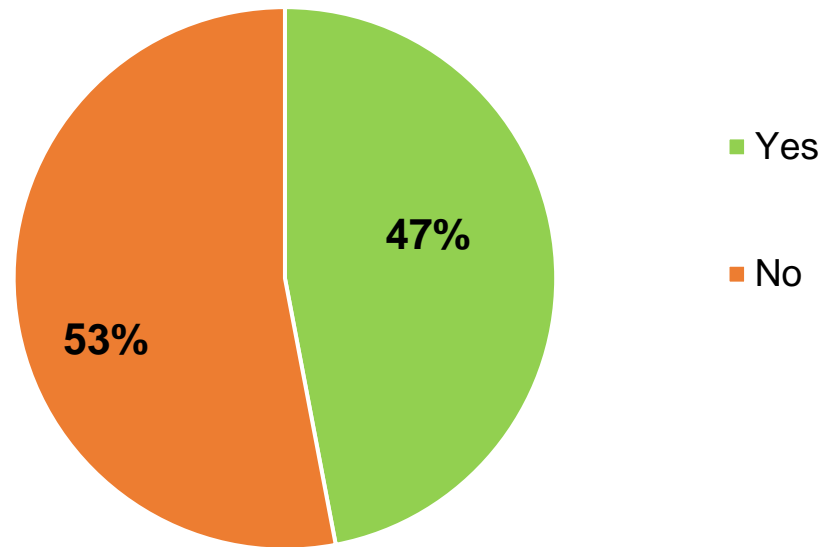
## Feedback from the Survey

What makes a successful tenant/landlord relationship? Feel free to share a success story!

- Respect: 60
- Good communication: 47
- Timeliness: 29
- Knowledge of/following the rules: 19
- Compatibility (e.g., similar lifestyle): 11
- Flexibility: 9
- Honesty: 8
- Cleanliness: 7
- Kindness: 6
- Responsibility: 6
- Screening: 6
- Inspections: 3
- Fairness: 3
- Proximity: 3
- Trust: 3
- Avoid formal issues: 2

# Feedback from the Survey

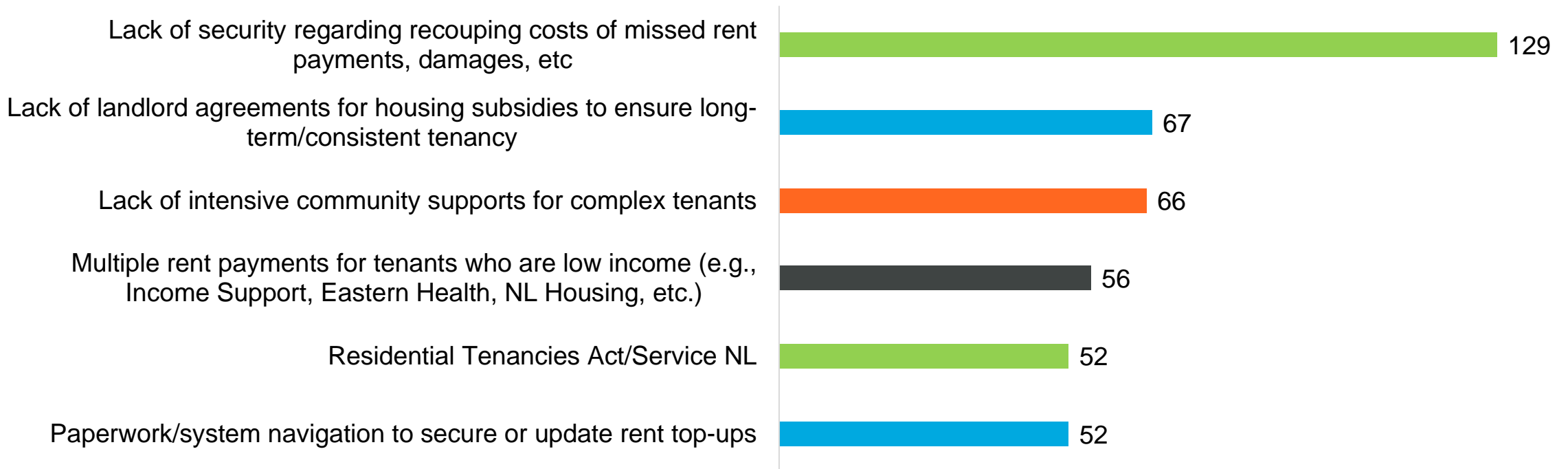
Given the definition of affordable housing provided in the survey introduction, are you interested in/able to provide affordable rentals?



n = 158

# Feedback from the Survey

What do you view as barriers to providing affordable rentals? (Check all that apply.)



n = 147

# Feedback from the Survey

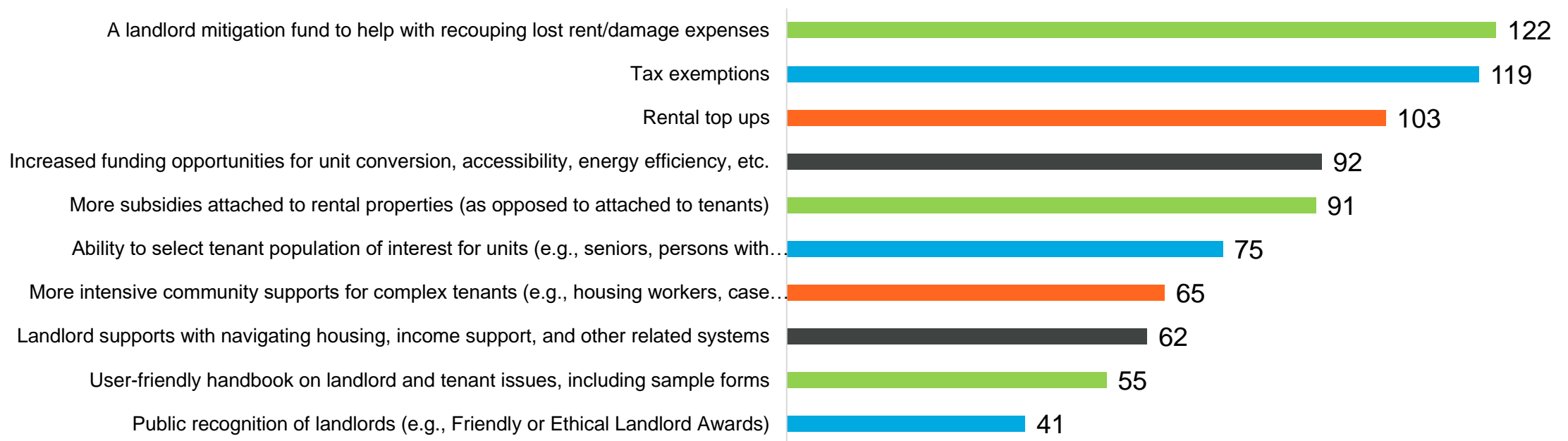
What do you view as barriers to providing affordable rentals? *Comments*

- Cost of living increases: 11
- Issues with the system: 9
- Costs of property/mortgage: 7
- Costs of taxes: 5
- Costs of insurance: 5
- Greed: 3
- Inconvenience: 3
- Definition of “affordable” varies: 2
- Other: 8 (e.g., long-term tenants, tenant knowledge, general comments, etc.)



## Feedback from the Survey

What kinds of incentives would make investing in affordable rentals more appealing for you as a landlord? (Check all that apply.)



n = 156

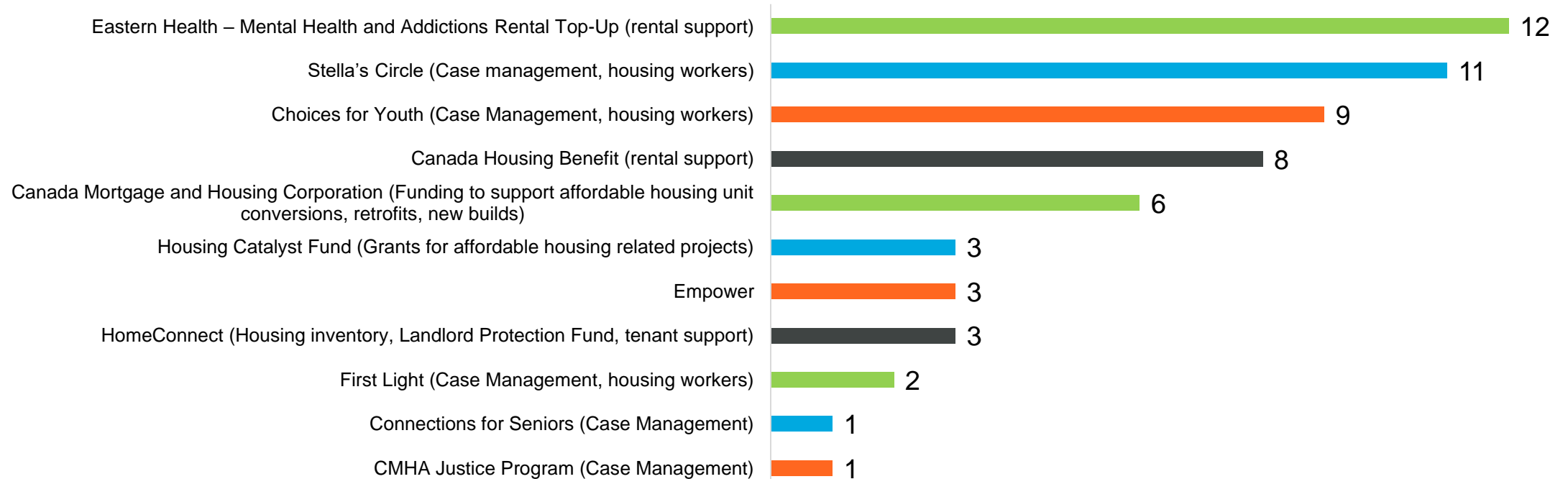
## Feedback from the Survey

What kinds of incentives would make investing in affordable rentals more appealing for you as a landlord? *Comments*

- Added supports: 6
- Enforcement (i.e., if damage occurs): 5
- More help for complex tenants: 2
- Other (e.g., general comments; below list mentioned once each): 15
  - Training
  - Inspections
  - Homelessness programs
  - Cheaper land
  - Accessibility help
  - Smaller home options

## Feedback from the Survey

In order to support landlords and tenants, a number of supports have been established in our community. Please indicate below which supports you have used. (Check all that apply.)



n = 31

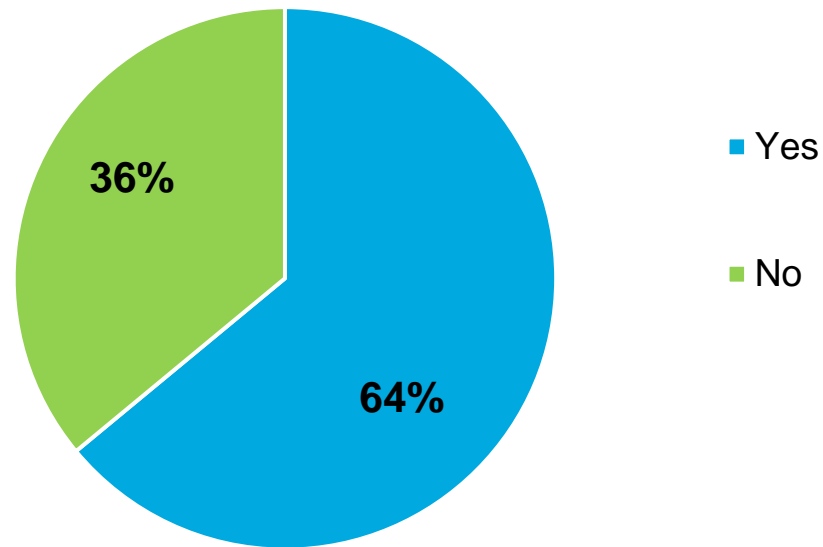
## Feedback from the Survey

Please select subjects below that you would like to learn more about. (You can select more than one.)

- Energy Efficiency Incentive Programs: 62
- Tenant Responsibilities: 47
- Information on Rent Supplements: 44
- Landlord Responsibilities: 41
- Dealing with conflict: 39
- Residential Tenancies Act: 32
- Providing housing to individuals with barriers: 30
- Policy on Human Rights and Rental Housing: 26
- Duty to Accommodate under the Human Rights Code: 25
- Information on Property Standards By-Law: 25
- Information on Income Support: 24
- Making units more accessible: 24
- Information on programs and supports offered to tenants by community groups: 23
- City of St. John's requirements for adding an apartment to your property: 20
- Fire safety: 19
- Tenant Insights (success stories, etc.): 16

# Feedback from the Survey

Would you participate in future information or networking sessions for landlords?



n = 158

# Feedback from the Forum

- The main point of conversation was the limited CMHC options for private landlords/developers trying to provide Affordable Housing
- Additionally, feasibility concerns with the cost of developing, converting, etc. were discussed.
- No City-specific feedback, aside from some landlords indicating they were pleased to hear about some of the incentives

# What we Heard Summary

- Landlords/property owners feel they are not supported by the system if things go poorly with a rental situation
- There is a perception that landlords/property owners are greedy and seeking profits, yet multiple landlords report they are struggling to recoup costs, particularly in an economy where living costs are increasing
- Many landlords/property owners have had bad experiences with damage to their property and non-payment, and this impacts their outlook towards future tenants
- Some landlords/property owners who have not had bad experiences themselves have heard about bad experiences from others, and this impacts their outlook towards future tenants
- Some landlords/property owners are hesitant towards future tenants from different places and/or lifestyles from their own, and would be more comfortable if there was more protection available
- Some tenants (presumably) also responded to share their views. These are reflected as general comments which will also inform the work of the Affordable Housing Working Group.

# Next Steps



Release What We  
Heard



Council to review  
information note



Share findings to  
inform initiatives



## To Stay Informed

The City of St. John's publishes a regular email newsletter called *New Lease*.

If you'd like to join the more than 300 local landlords and housing professionals already subscribed, please [Sign Up](#).

### ST. JOHN'S

Sign up to stay in touch!

Are you a Landlord with an interest in affordable housing rental options? Sign up to receive *New Lease*, the newsletter for Landlords, Property Managers and others with an interest in helping people achieve their dream of affordable housing in the City of St. John's. You may unsubscribe to this newsletter at anytime. For more information, contact us at (709) 570-2096 or [affordablehousing@stjohns.ca](mailto:affordablehousing@stjohns.ca).

\* Email Address

\* First Name

\* Last Name

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