



Catholic Volunteer Network
www.catholicvolunteernetowk.org



PULSE-TAKING REPORT 2023

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THE SURVEY

This survey was administered electronically prior to the late October annual CVN gathering, Revolutionizing Community. Thirty (30) organizations responded to the survey.



We are the programs on mission.

When asked where they predominantly serve, responses include:

- 73% responded domestic
- 13% international
- 14% offered both domestic and international programs.

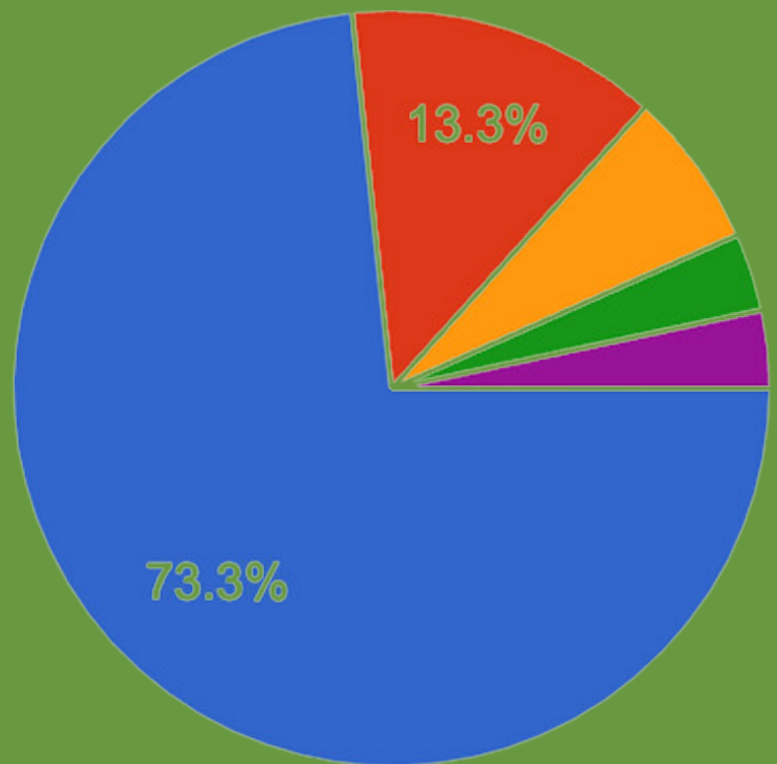


Table 1: Types of programs

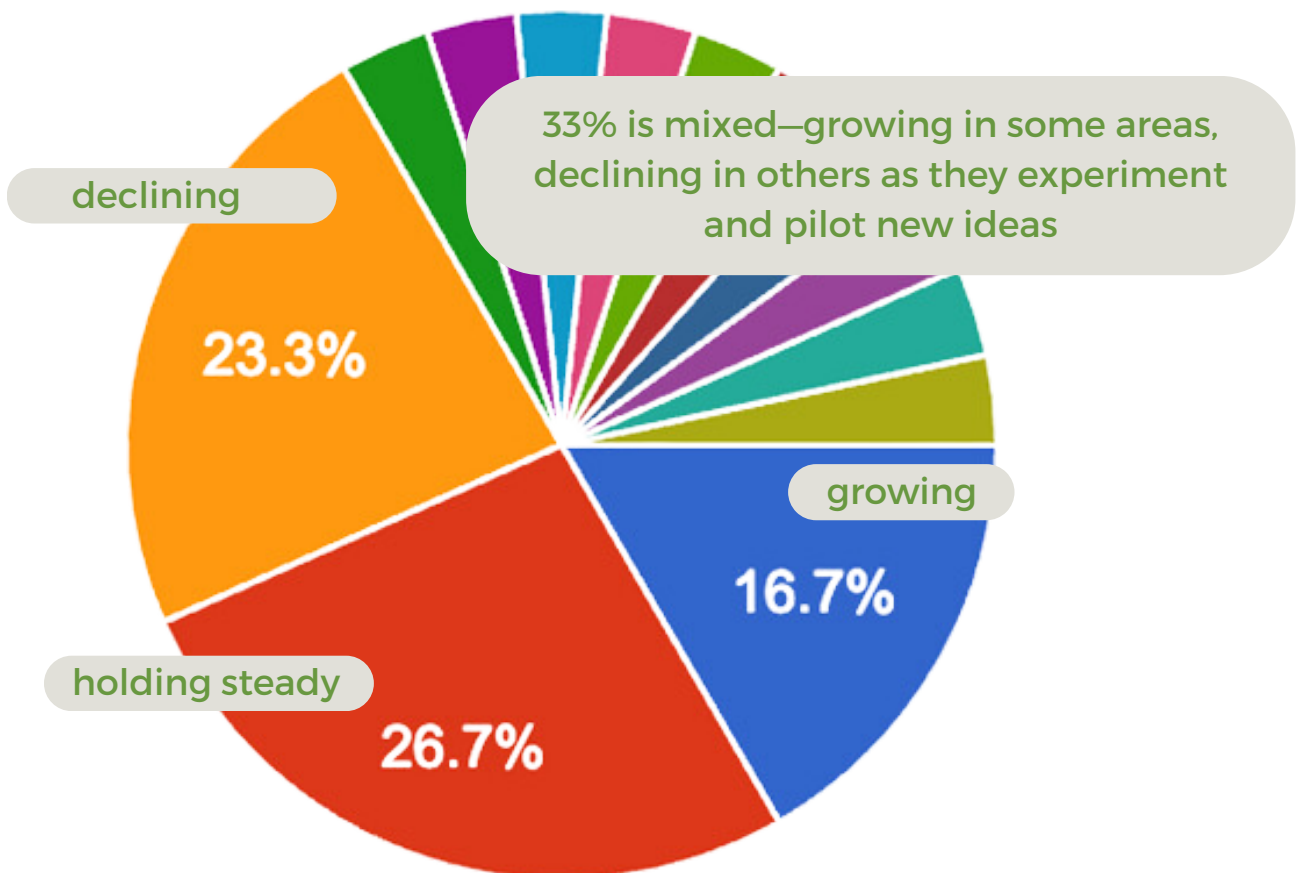


IMPORTANT FINDING

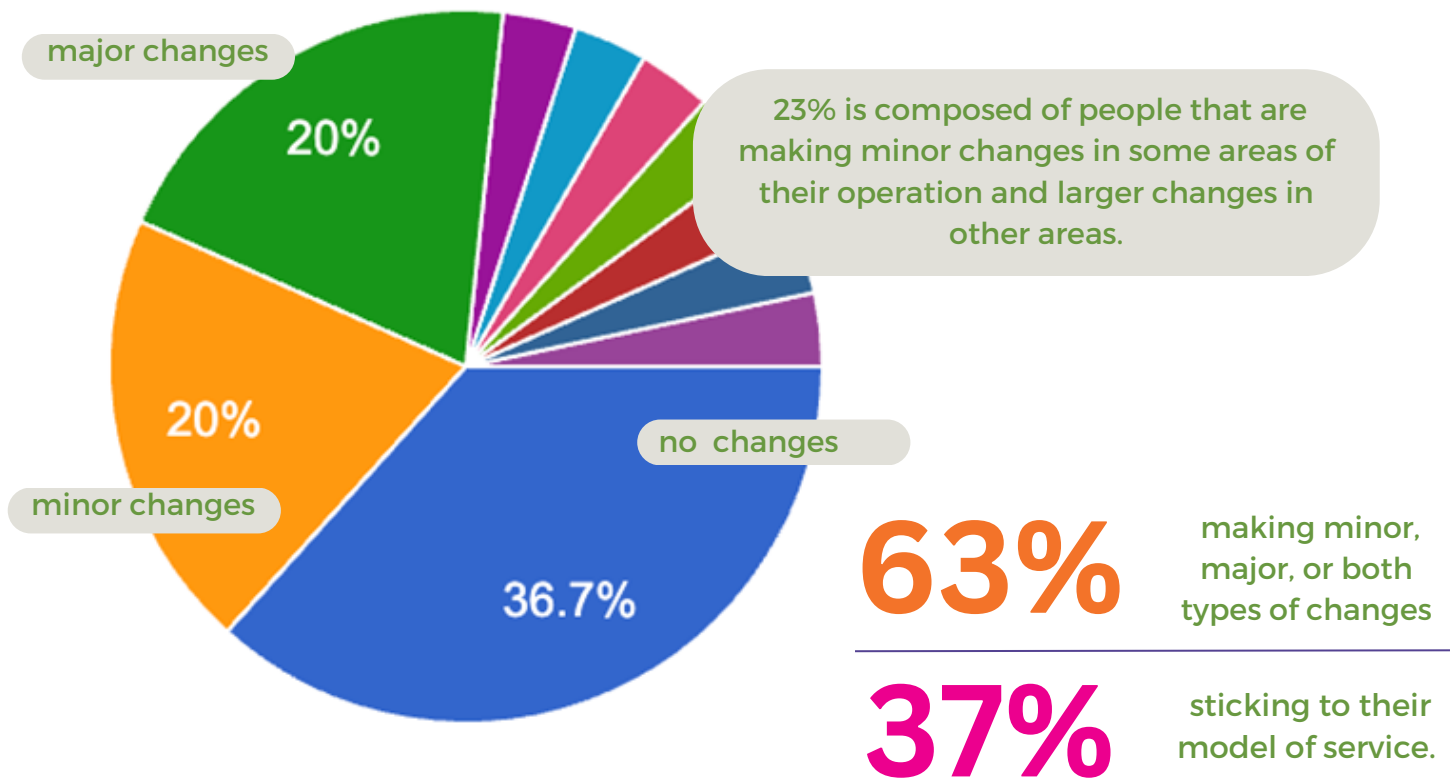
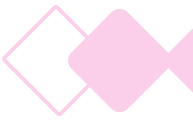
Of the 30 respondents, seven (7) welcome people of all ages. Six (6) of those seven (7) programs saw NO DECREASE (whether their answer reflected the number of staff or the number of volunteers, in both cases they held steady). Of the other 19 organizations that responded to this question that cater to traditional, post-college volunteers only 4 saw NO DECREASE, while 15 DECREASED SIGNIFICANTLY.

It appears therefore that welcoming people of all ages has a protective effect and should be strongly considered by programs that are interested in sustainability.

Is your program in a period of growth, decline, holding steady?



CHANGES TO THE CURRENT MODEL OF SERVICE



ASSUMPTIONS

The most traditional Model of Service includes four components: shared housing, full-time volunteer placement in a local direct service non-profit organization for 10-12 month segments, an exploration of values in a home and neighborhood/city environment, and a robust supportive network through program alumni and other support people. Over time, this model has attracted recent college grads that can afford a “year off” from beginning their career. We have also come to understand that most volunteers come to know our service programs through a recent volunteer. Many volunteers would share their experiences with their previous mentors who, in turn, would share with the current group of students interested in choosing this way of life. To make this process easier, service program recruiters most often would support those mentors and offer availability to promote their program to those most likely to be candidates.



MODELS OF SERVICE: TYPES OF EXPERIMENTS

The articulated changes programs are making point to re-considering and expanding the forms of the previously mentioned components. Below is a brief summary of experiments in each category:



RE-CONSIDERING HOUSING

Does valuing intentional community required providing shared housing?

- Not requiring mandatory housing/living in intentional community
- Collaborative housing option—a mix of volunteers and others (working, students) but all with commitment to justice



RE-CONSIDERING TIMING

Are we just about full-time service or are we about something else? Re-engaging the pipeline to lifelong service.

- Adding summer programming
- Doing hybrid orientation to make it more accessible (pre-orientation happens virtually, then move into in-person orientation)



RE-CONSIDERING WHO

Who is benefitting from service? What does their transformation mean for how with re-assess how we companion?

- Centering community-identified needs and working with local graduate student interns to meet those needs
- More inclusive recruitment, new types of partnerships, overhaul of organizational culture
- Revamping recruiting (presumably to make it more inclusive of ages beyond post-college)



RE-CONSIDERING INCENTIVES & BENEFITS

Why service? Why not service? Re-assessing and quantifying all the benefits and re-considering how they can be leveraged differently.

- Increased financial support/stipend/student loan support