



2025 City of Columbia Utilities Survey Findings Report

Presented to the City of
Columbia, MO

April 2025



ETC
INSTITUTE

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Executive Summary

2025 City of Columbia Utilities Survey

Executive Summary



Purpose

Between February and April 2025, ETC Institute administered a utilities survey on behalf of the City of Columbia. The survey was conducted to help understand the community's experience with utility services and identify areas where improvements may be needed.

Methodology

The five-page survey, cover letter, and postage-paid return envelope were mailed to a random sample of households in the City of Columbia. The cover letter explained the purpose of the survey and encouraged residents to either return their survey by mail or complete the survey online. At the end of the online survey, residents were asked to enter their home address; this was done to ensure that only responses from residents who were part of the random sample were included in the final survey database. Approximately ten days after the surveys were mailed, residents who received the survey were contacted by follow-up message to encourage participation.

The goal was to receive 800 completed surveys. This goal was met, with 804 households completing the survey. The results for 804 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-3.4%. There were no statistically significant differences in the results of the survey based on the method of administration (mail vs. online).

This report contains:

- a summary of major survey findings
- charts and graphs showing the results of each question on the survey (Section 1)
- tables that show results of the random sample for each question on the survey (Section 2)
- a copy of the survey instrument (Section 3)

Major Survey Findings

Opinions and Concerns About Drinking Water. Seventy-one percent (71%) of the respondents surveyed believe Columbia provides the community with safe and quality drinking water; 26% do not believe this, and 3% did not provide a response.

Of the 26% who do not believe the City provides safe and quality drinking water, the top concerns were: non-regulated water contaminants (58%), taste (56%), and water pressure (28%). *Multiple selections could be made for this question.*

Ratings of Drinking Water Service. More than half (58%) of the respondents surveyed rated the Drinking Water service provided by City of Columbia Utilities as "excellent" (20%) or "good" (38%); 25% rated the service as "average," 7% rated it as "below average," and 4% rated it as "poor." The remaining 6% indicated they do not have this service.

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Willingness to Help Conserve Water. Eighty-four percent (84%) of the respondents surveyed are “very willing” (54%) or “somewhat willing” (30%) to change their lawn watering schedule and/or practices to help conserve water. Other actions that respondents are “very willing” or “somewhat willing” to do include: replace sprinkler heads (73%), install rain sensors on irrigation system (71%), and replace shower heads or faucet fixtures (69%).

Ratings of Electric Service. Nearly three-fourths (72%) of the respondents surveyed rated the Electric service provided by City of Columbia Utilities as “excellent” (32%) or “good” (40%); 12% rated the service as “average,” 2% rated it as “below average,” and 1% rated it as “poor.” The remaining 13% indicated they do not have this service.

Ratings of Sanitary Sewer Service. Seventy-three percent (73%) of the respondents surveyed rated the Sanitary Sewer service provided by City of Columbia Utilities as “excellent” (29%) or “good” (44%); 19% rated the service as “average,” 2% rated it as “below average,” and 1% rated it as “poor.” The remaining 5% indicated they do not have this service.

Ratings of Solid Waste Service. Sixty percent (60%) of the respondents surveyed rated the Solid Waste (trash and recycling) service provided by City of Columbia Utilities as “excellent” (21%) or “good” (39%); 24% rated the service as “average,” 6% rated it as “below average,” and 4% rated it as “poor.” The remaining 6% indicated they do not have this service.

The most utilized Solid Waste services are Recycling Drop-Off Centers (75%) and Yard Waste Drop-Off Centers (47%). *Multiple selections could be made for this question.*

Ratings of Residential Roll Cart System. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the respondents surveyed rated the residential roll cart system that was implemented by the Solid Waste Division in March 2024 as “excellent” (34%) or “good” (35%); 14% rated the service as “average,” 3% rated it as “below average,” and 3% rated it as “poor.” The remaining 10% did not have an opinion.

Ratings of Stormwater Service. More than half (52%) of the respondents surveyed rated the Stormwater service provided by City of Columbia Utilities as “excellent” (15%) or “good” (37%); 26% rated the service as “average,” 3% rated it as “below average,” and 2% rated it as “poor.” The remaining 17% indicated they do not have this service.

Ratings of Billing Process. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the respondents surveyed rated the billing process by City of Columbia Utilities as “excellent” (26%) or “good” (43%); 23% rated the service as “average,” 3% rated it as “below average,” and 3% rated it as “poor.” The remaining 2% did not have an opinion.

Eighty-five percent (85%) of the respondents surveyed indicated the information on their utility bill is clear and understandable.

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Executive Summary



Other Findings

- Respondents were asked to indicate their primary source(s) of drinking water. The top responses were: unfiltered water straight from the tap (40%), tap water that is filtered in the home through the refrigerator (38%), and bottled water (25%). *Multiple selections could be made for this question.*
- More than three-fourths (77%) of the respondents surveyed are “very likely” (56%) or “somewhat likely” (21%) to update their billing information to receive service notifications; 8% are “not at all likely,” and 13% indicated they are already receiving notifications. The remaining 2% did not provide a response.
- Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the respondents surveyed indicated they would sign up for community solar if it was available; 30% indicated they would “possibly” sign up, 12% were “not likely” to sign up, and 16% indicated they would not sign up for community solar. The remaining 15% did not have an opinion.

More than half (55%) of the respondents surveyed support more private and public community solar development within the community.

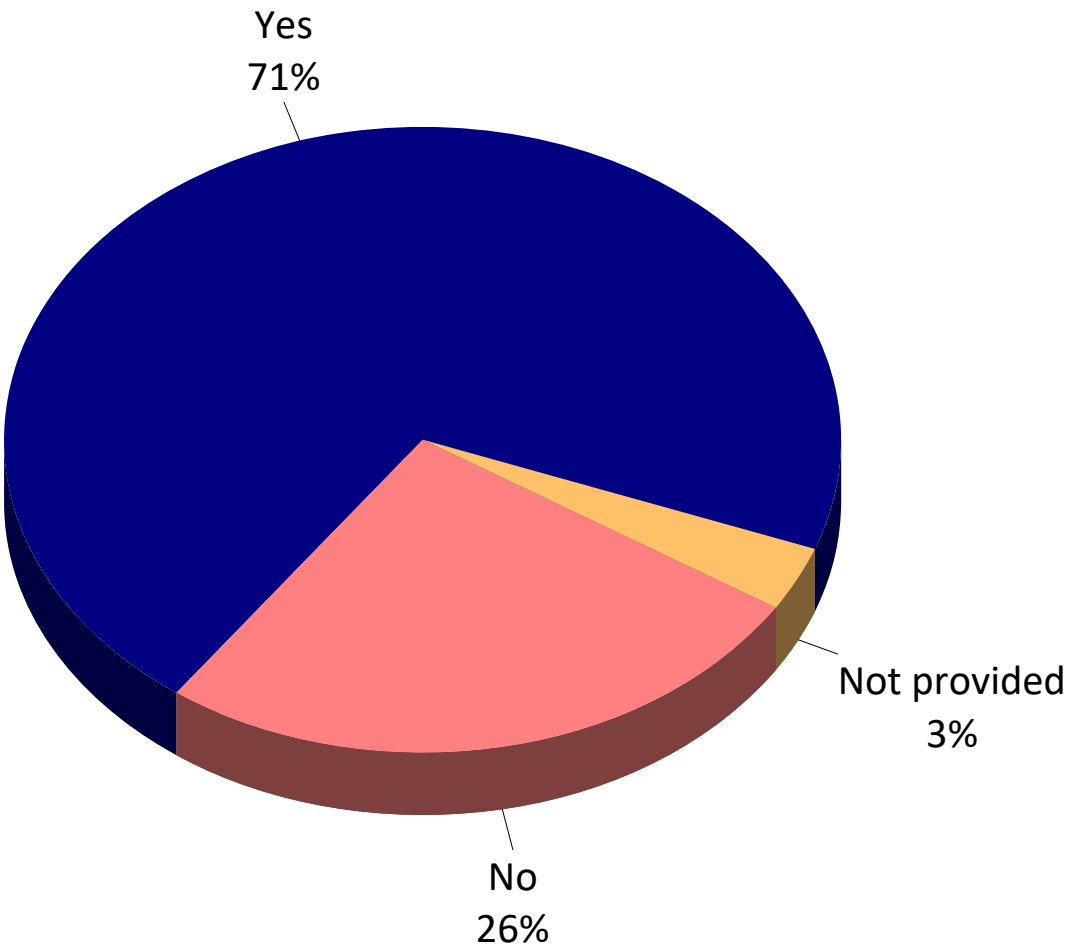
- Twenty-one percent (21%) of the respondents surveyed indicated they reported a water, electric, solid waste, sewer or stormwater problem or complaint in the last year. Of those, 64% rated the employee that handled the problem or complaint as “excellent” (32%) or “good” (32%); 18% rated the employee as “average,” 5% “below average,” and 5% rated the employee that handles the problem or complaint as “poor.” The remaining 8% did not have an opinion.
- Respondents were asked to indicate which methods were the most effective ways for City of Columbia Utilities to communicate general information to their customers. The responses were: email (36%), newsletter in the bill (28%), text message (17%), mail (12%), phone call (2%), social media (1%), and other methods (1%). The remaining 3% did not provide a response.
- Based on the sum of their top two choices, the values related to City of Columbia Utilities that are most important are: 1) reliability and 2) affordability.



Charts and Graphs

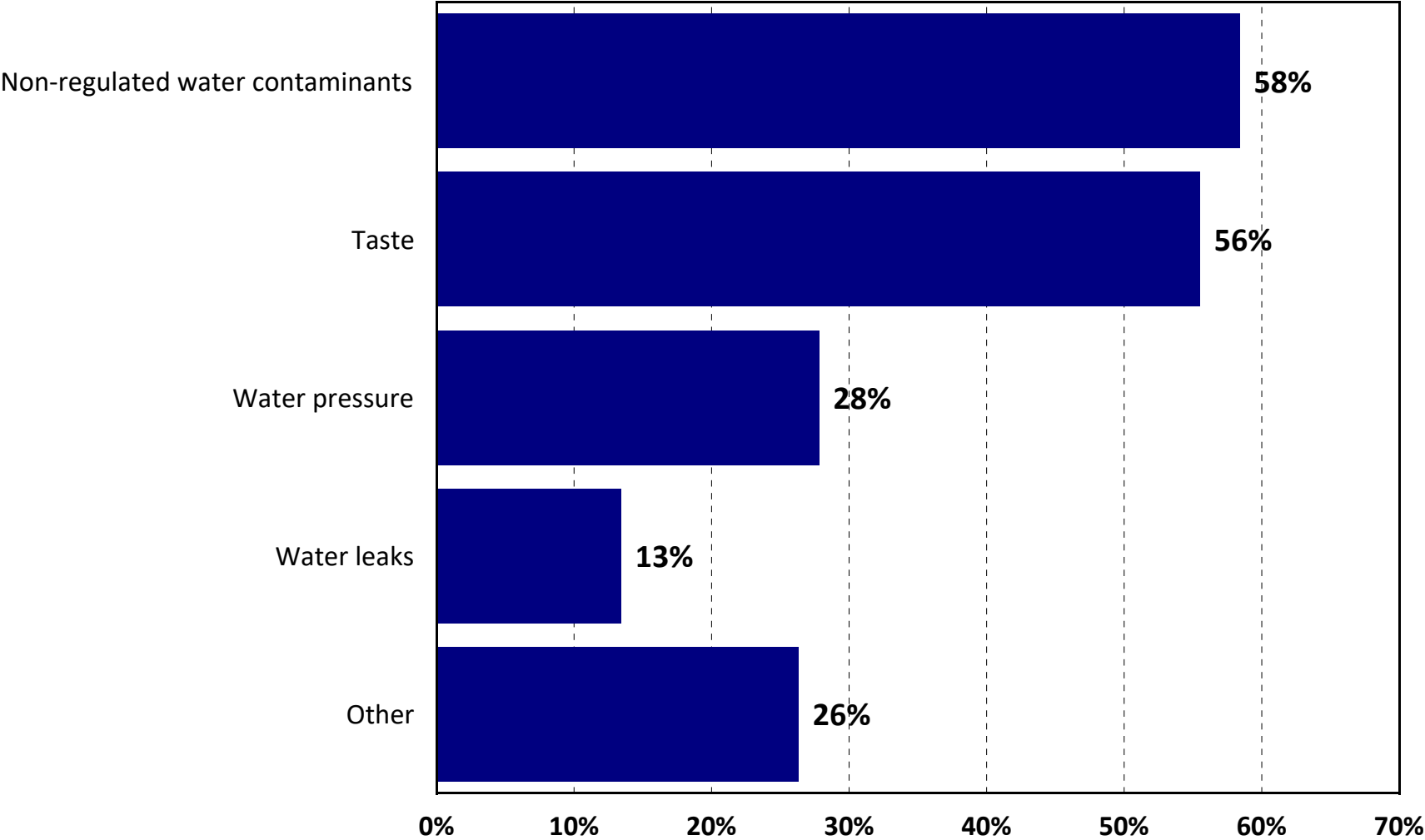
Q1. Do you believe Columbia provides the community with safe and quality drinking water?

by percentage of respondents



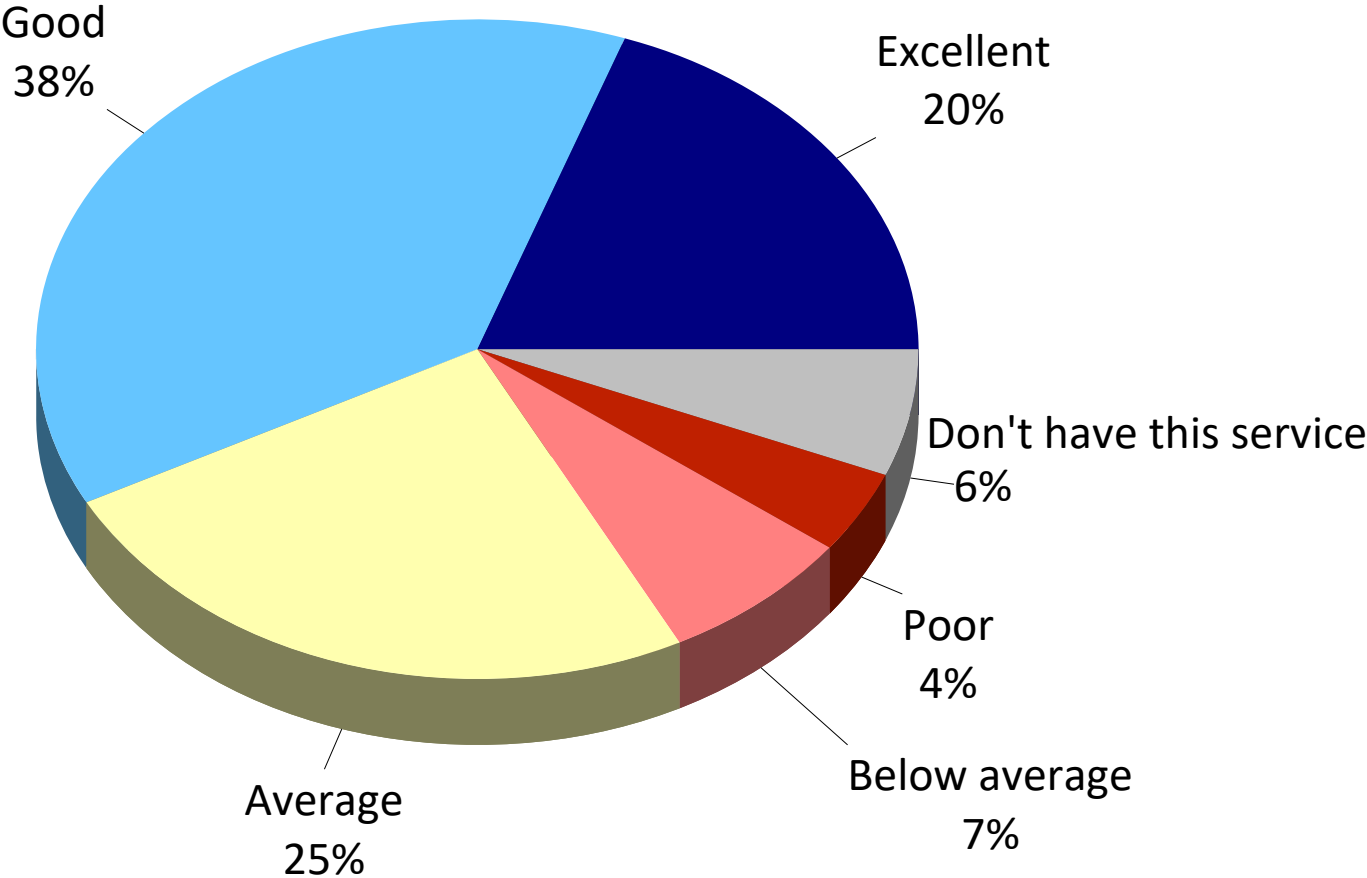
Q1a. What are your concerns with the City of Columbia providing safe and quality drinking water?

by percentage of respondents who answered “no” on Question 1 (multiple selections could be made)



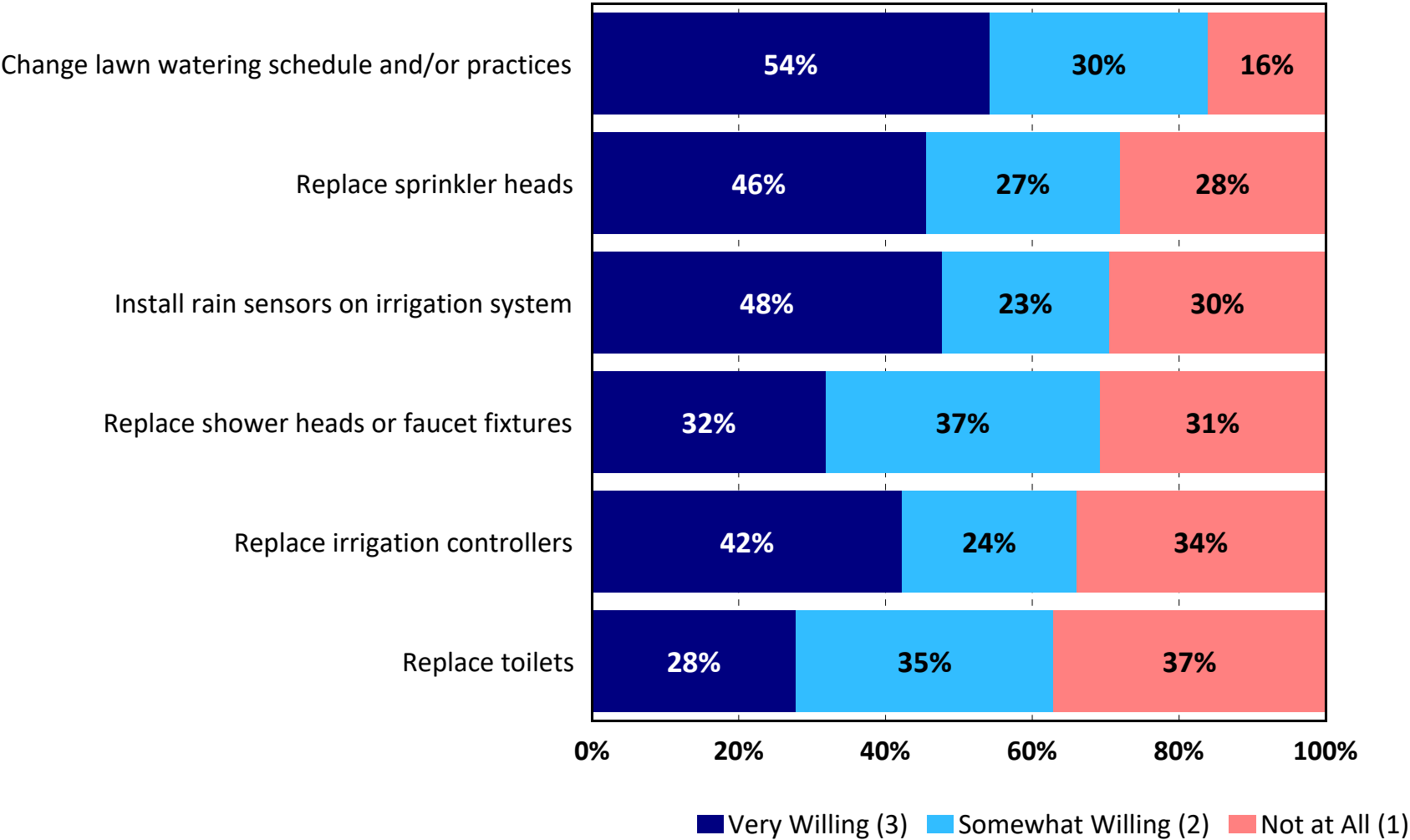
Q2. Overall, how do you rate the Drinking Water service provided by City of Columbia Utilities?

by percentage of respondents



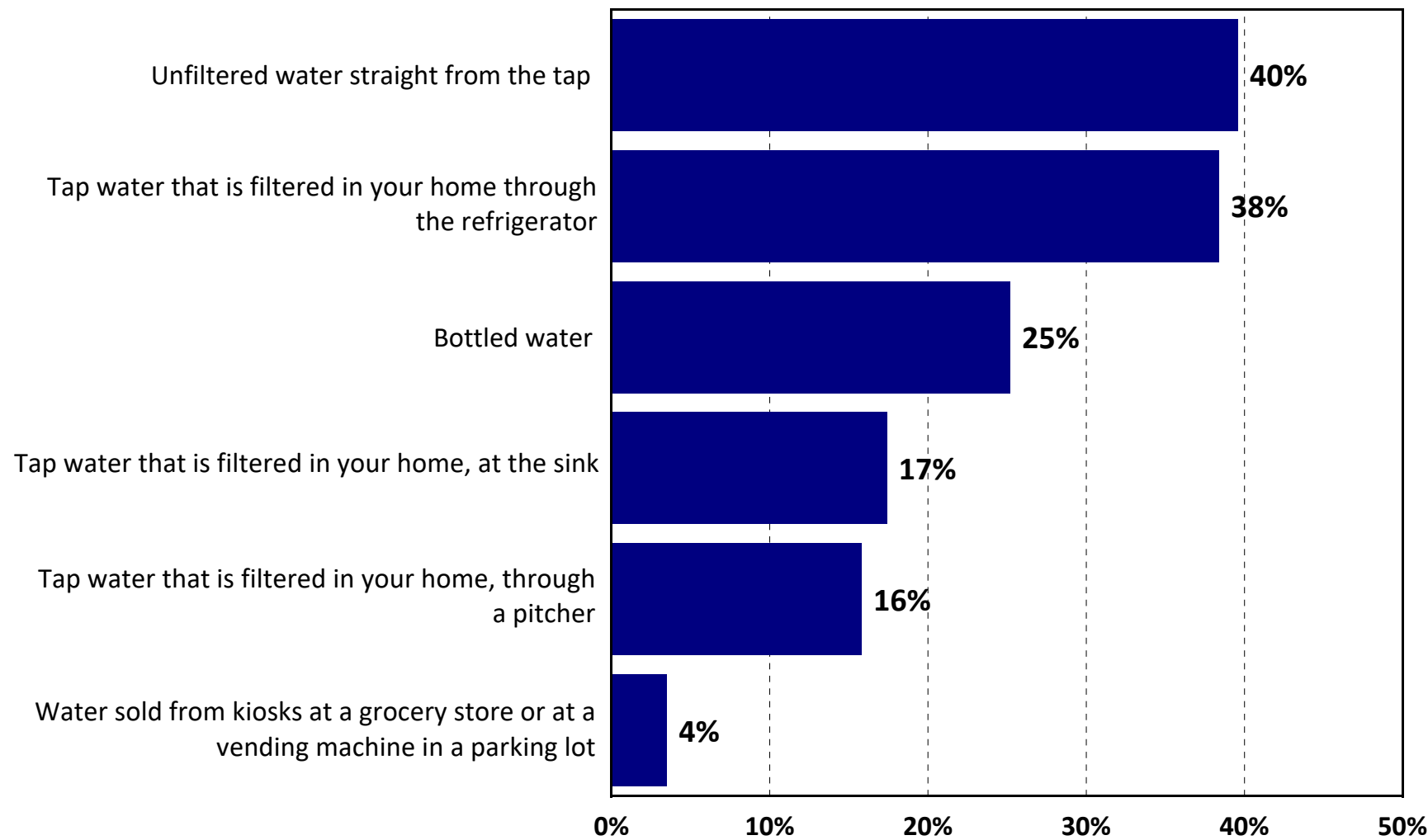
Q3. Willingness to Do the Following to Help Conserve Water

by percentage of respondents (excluding “don't know”)



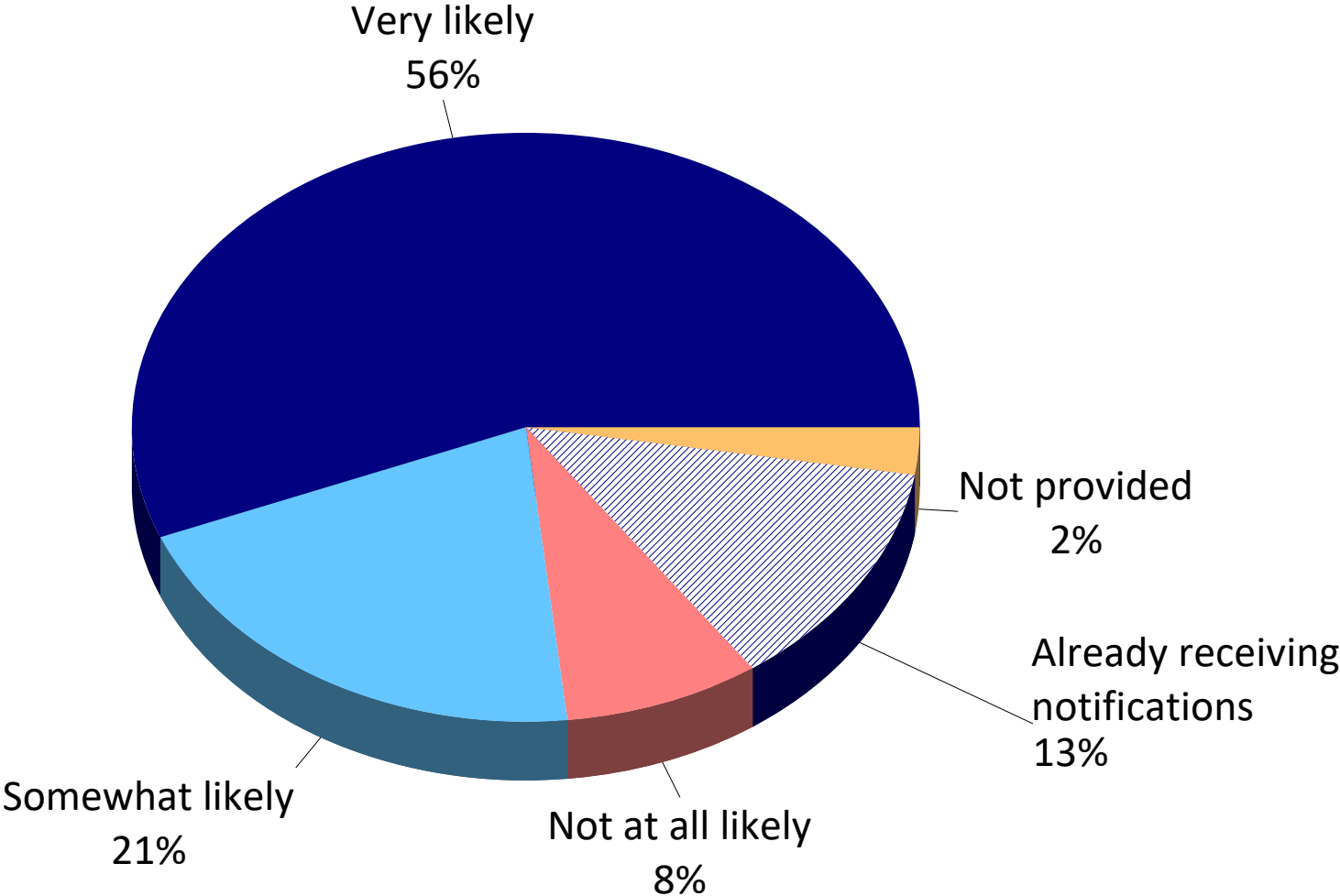
Q4. Please indicate your primary source(s) of drinking water

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



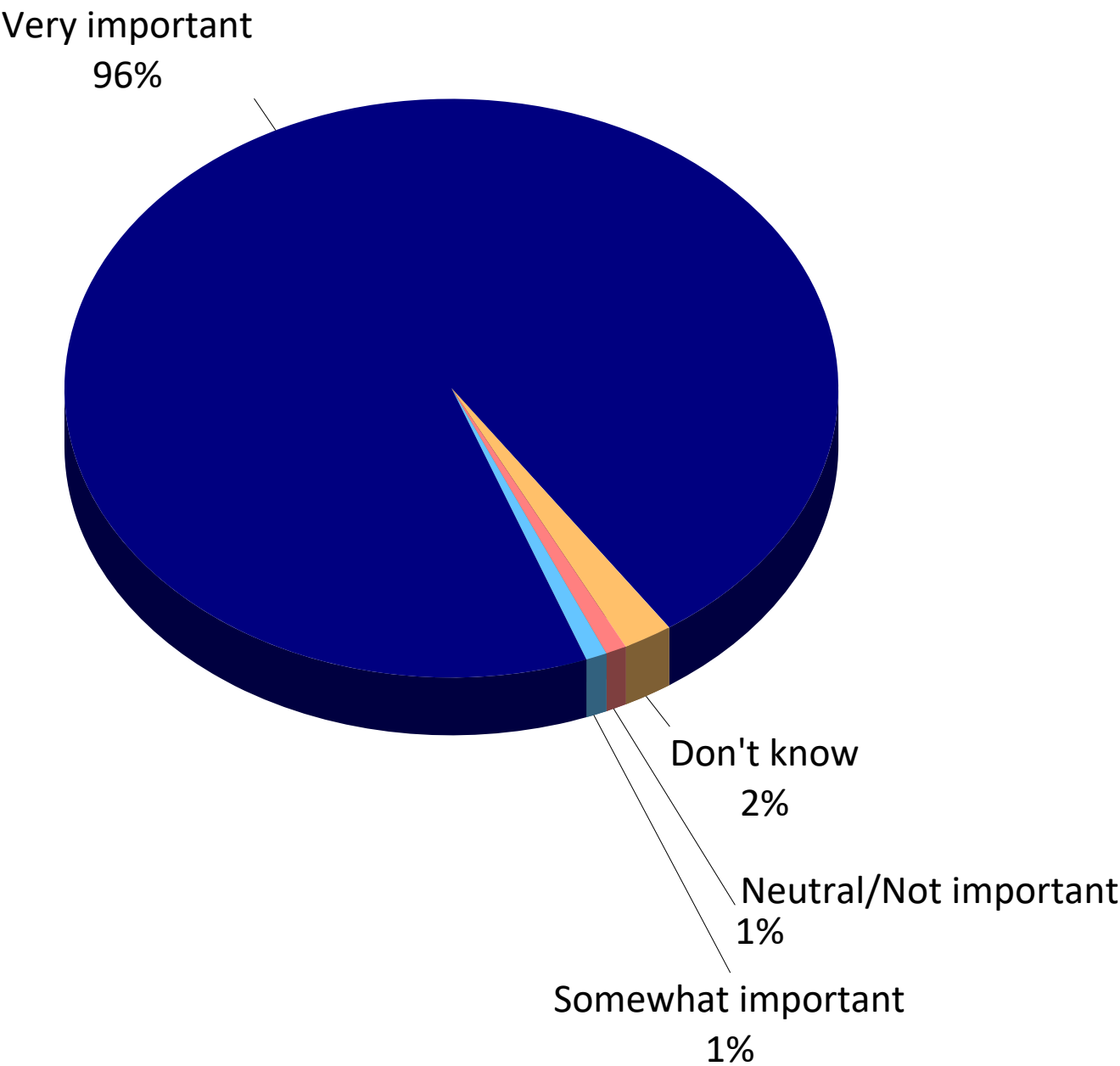
Q5. How likely are you to update your billing information to receive service notifications?

by percentage of respondents



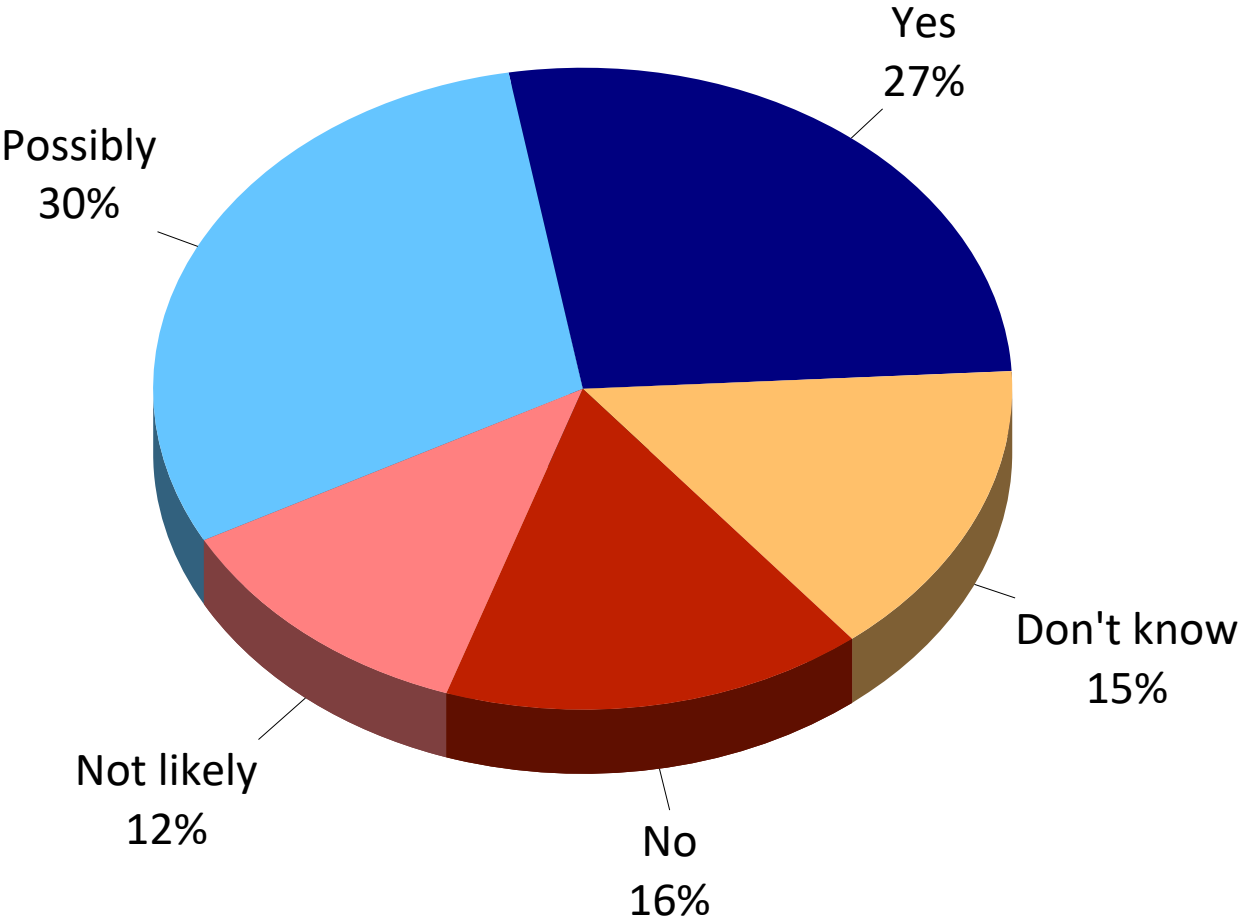
Q6. How important is reliable electric service to you?

by percentage of respondents



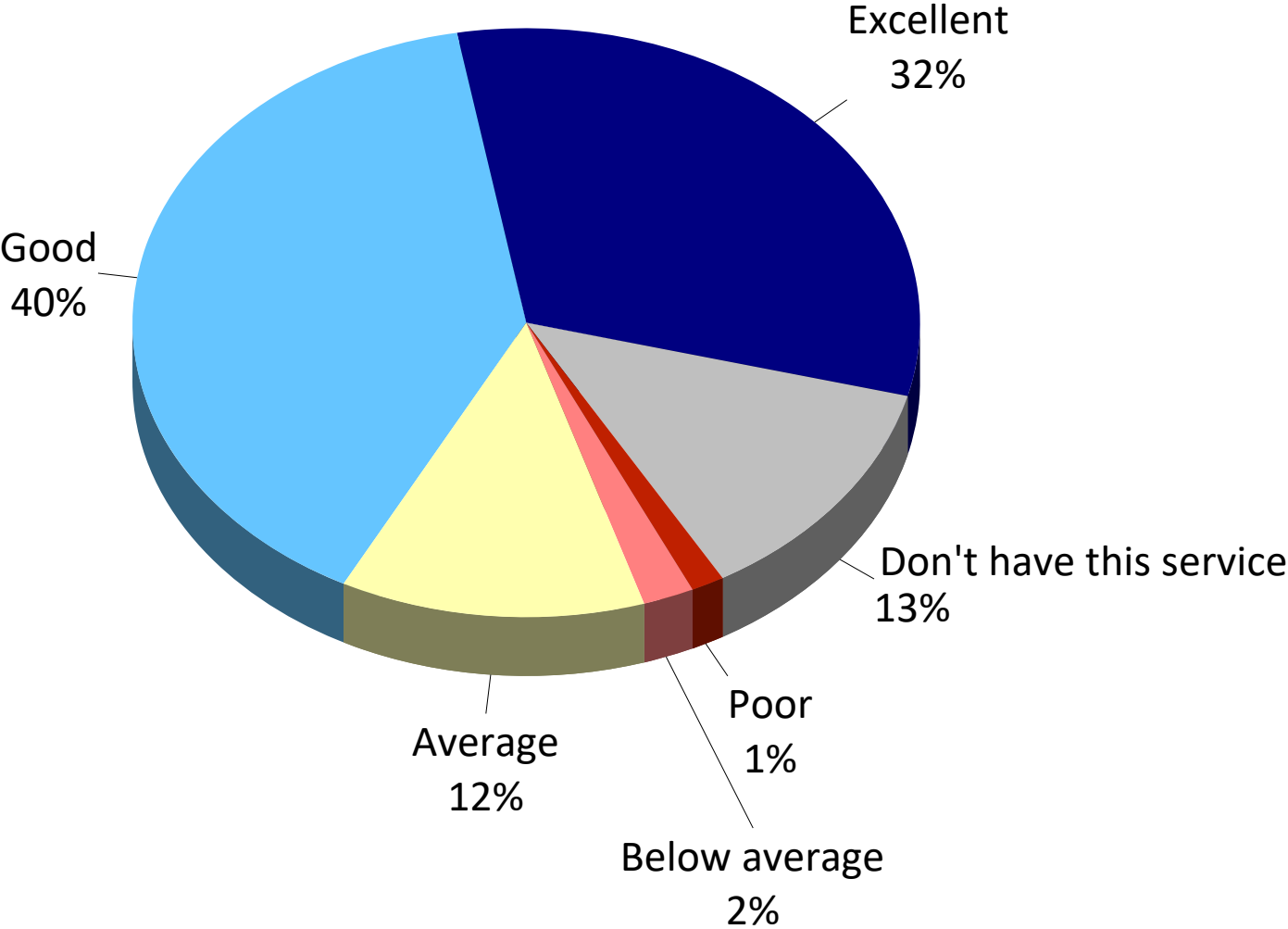
Q7. If available, would you sign up for community solar?

by percentage of respondents



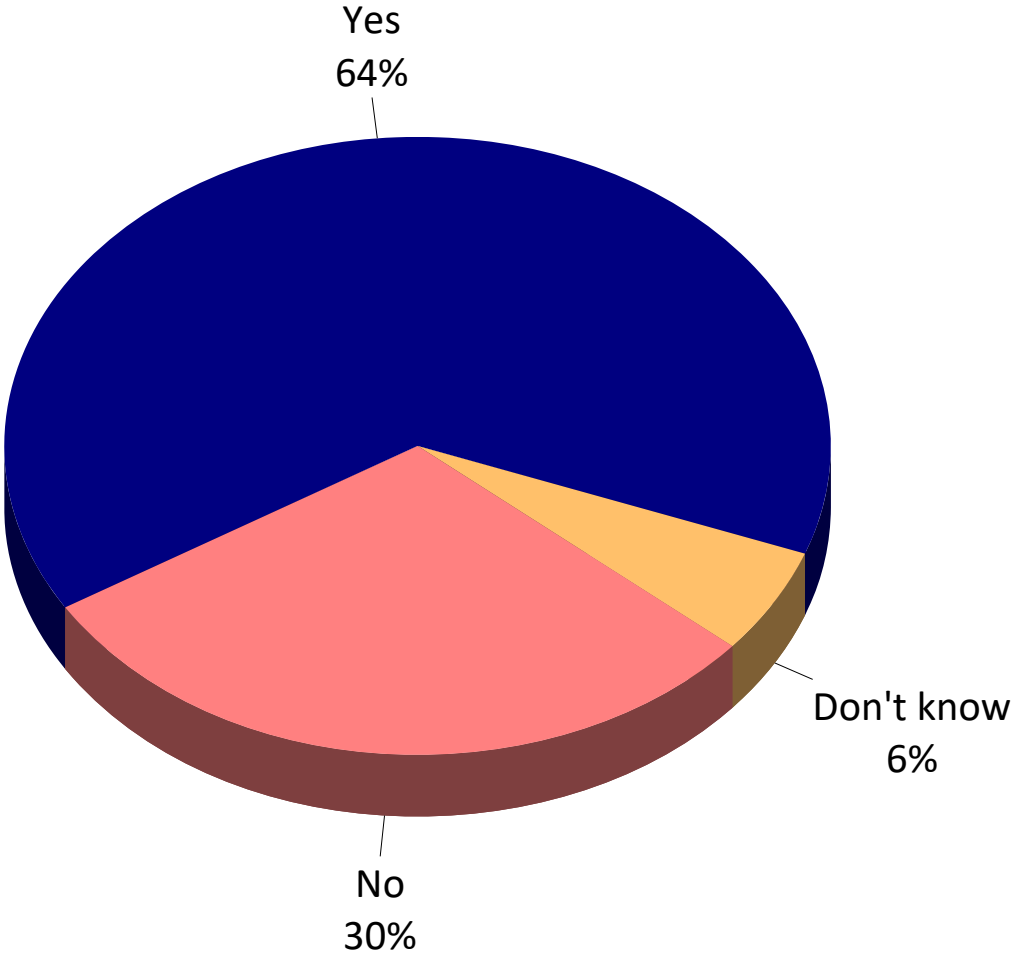
Q8. Overall, how do you rate the Electric service provided by City of Columbia Utilities?

by percentage of respondents



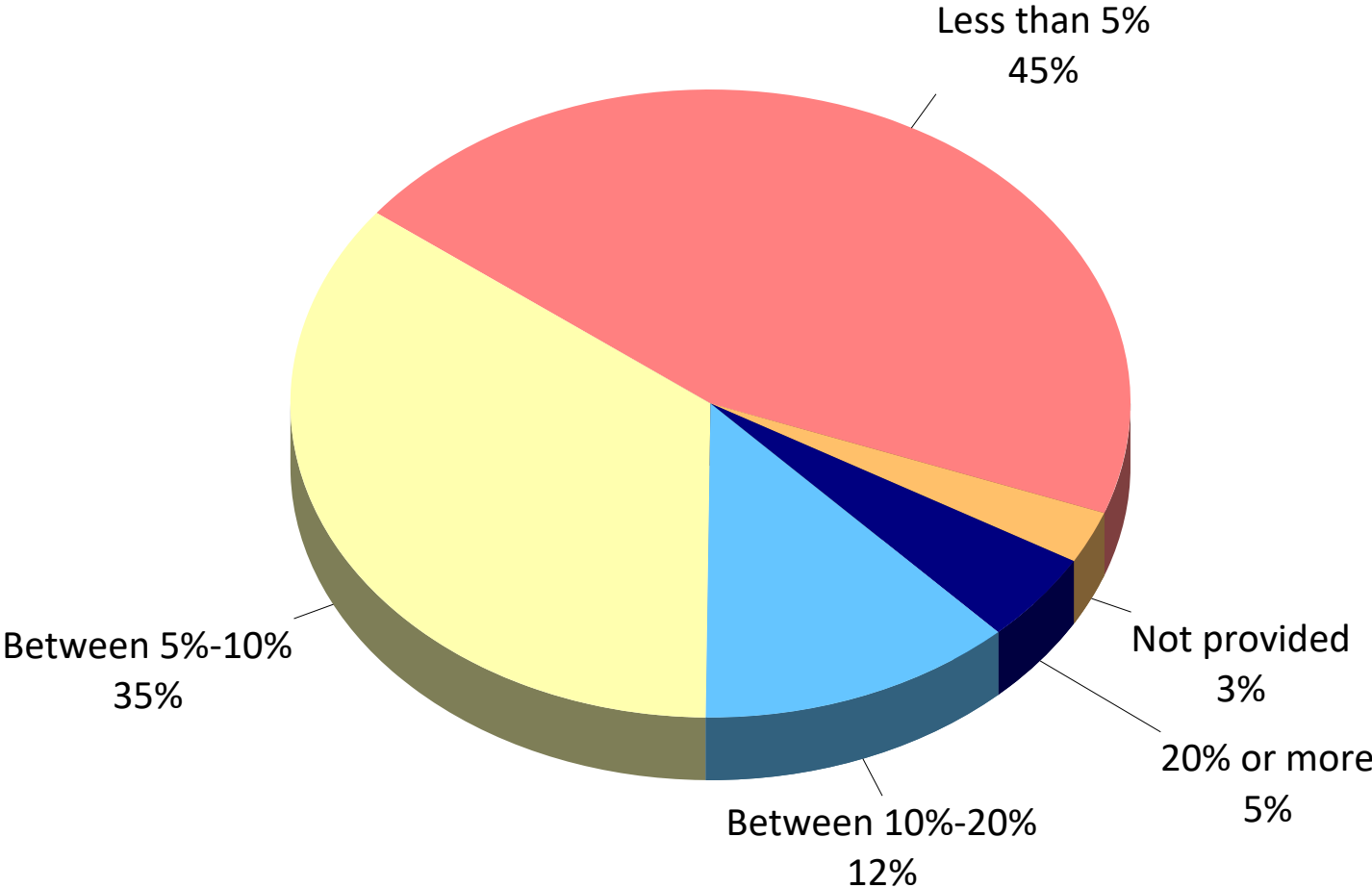
Q9. Currently, the City of Columbia has 21.84% of its energy supply from renewable sources. Do you support moving toward 100% renewable energy sources?

by percentage of respondents



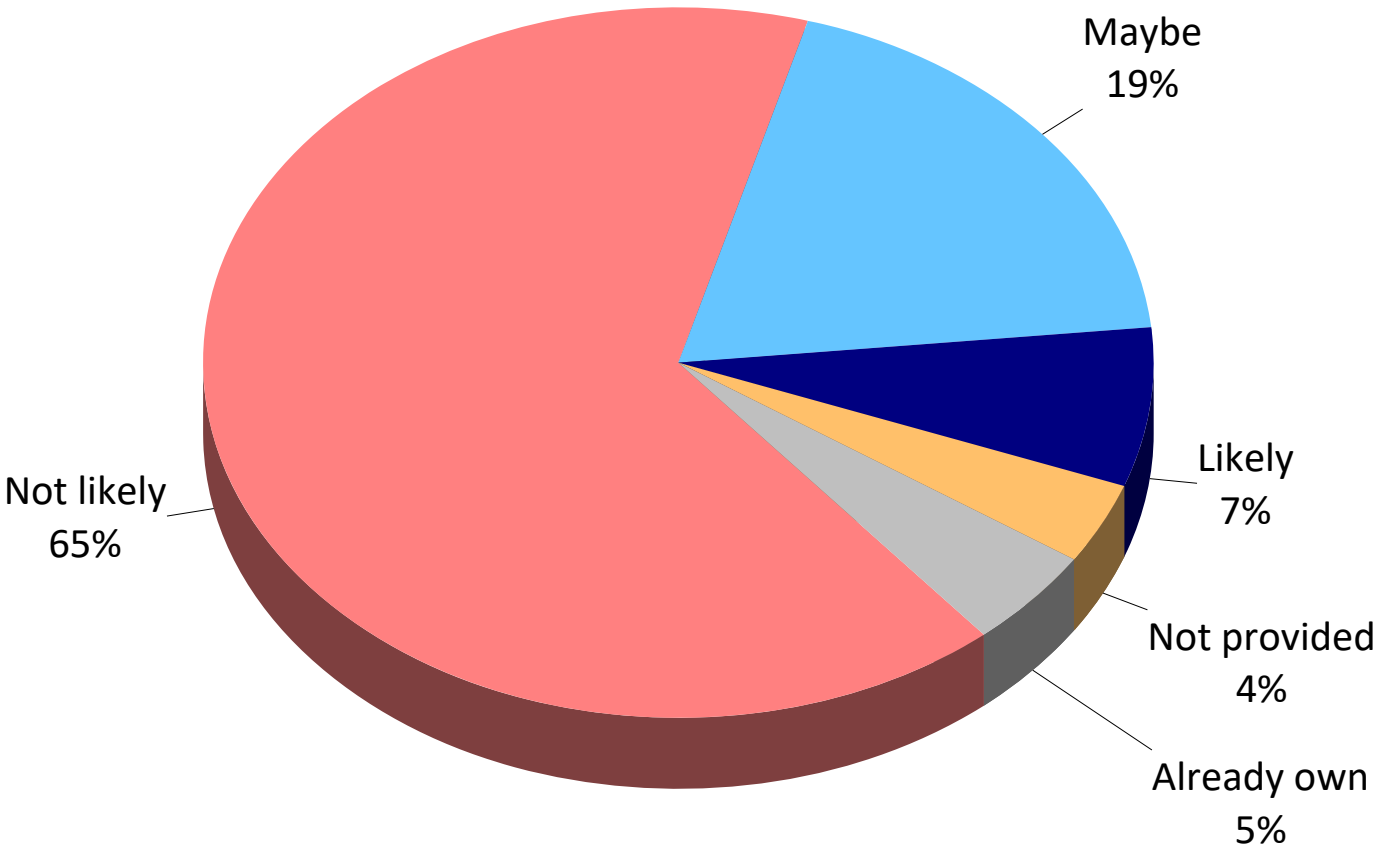
**Q10. In order to reach 100% renewable energy sources,
how much more are you willing to pay for electricity?**

by percentage of respondents



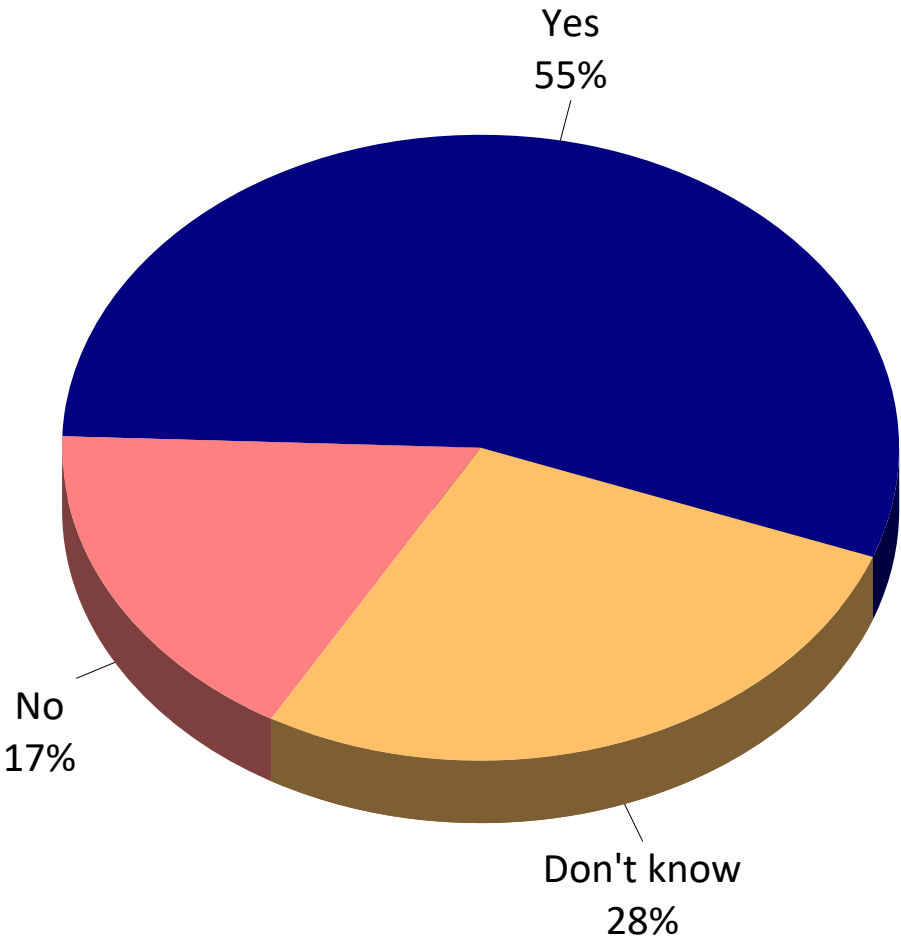
Q11. Within the next five years, how likely are you to purchase/lease an electric vehicle or plug-in hybrid?

by percentage of respondents



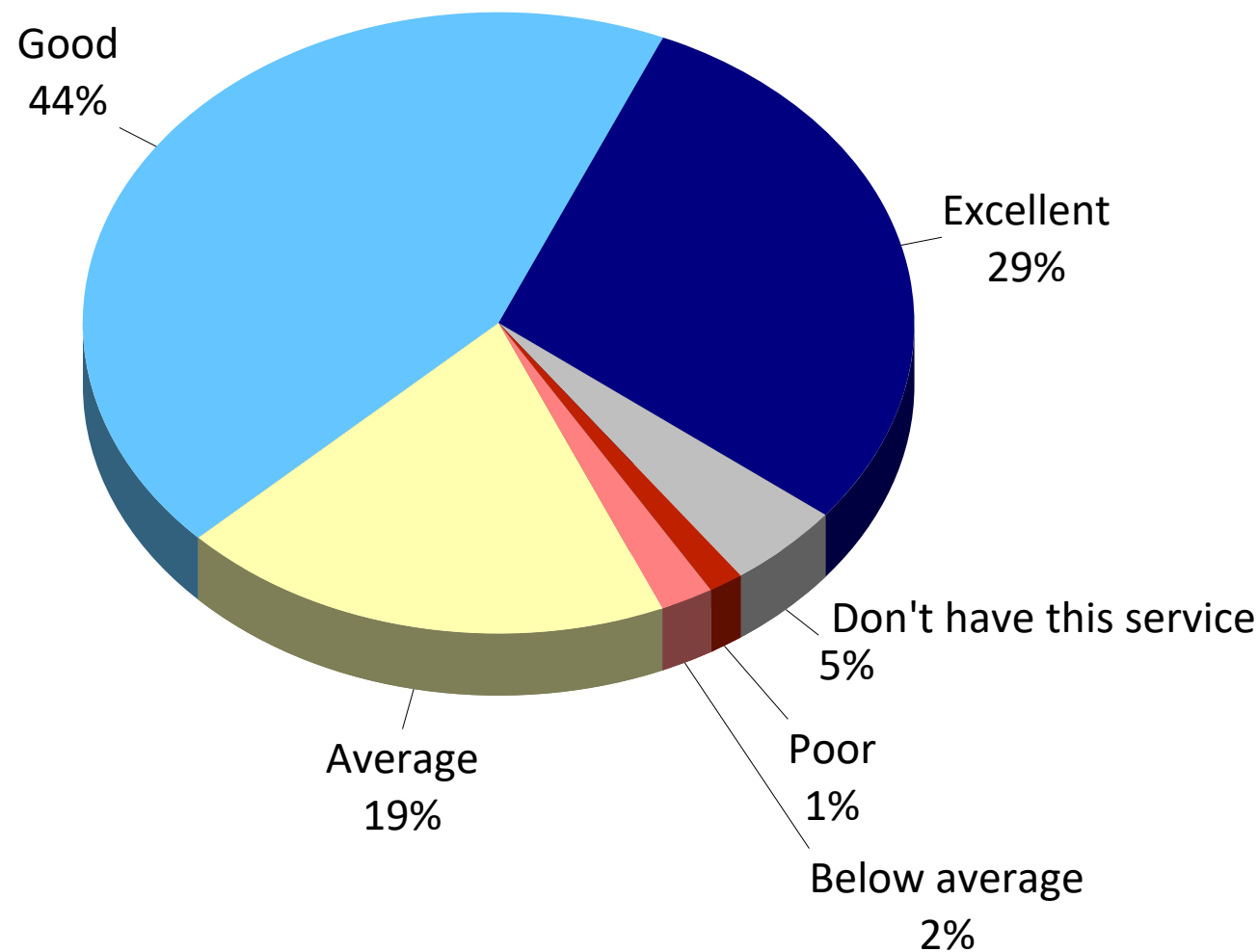
Q12. Do you support more private and public community solar development within the community?

by percentage of respondents

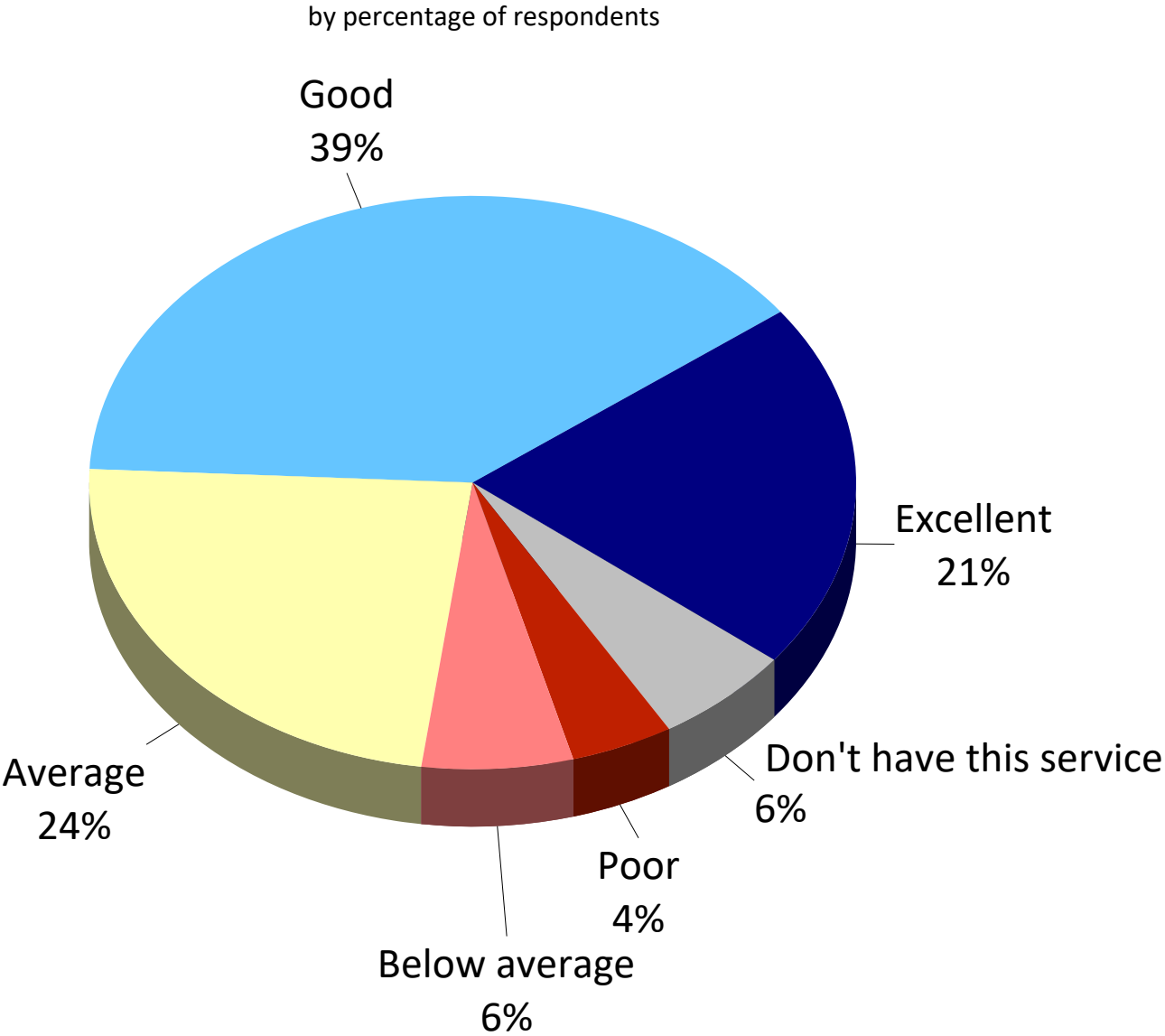


Q13. Overall, how do you rate the Sanitary Sewer service provided by City of Columbia Utilities?

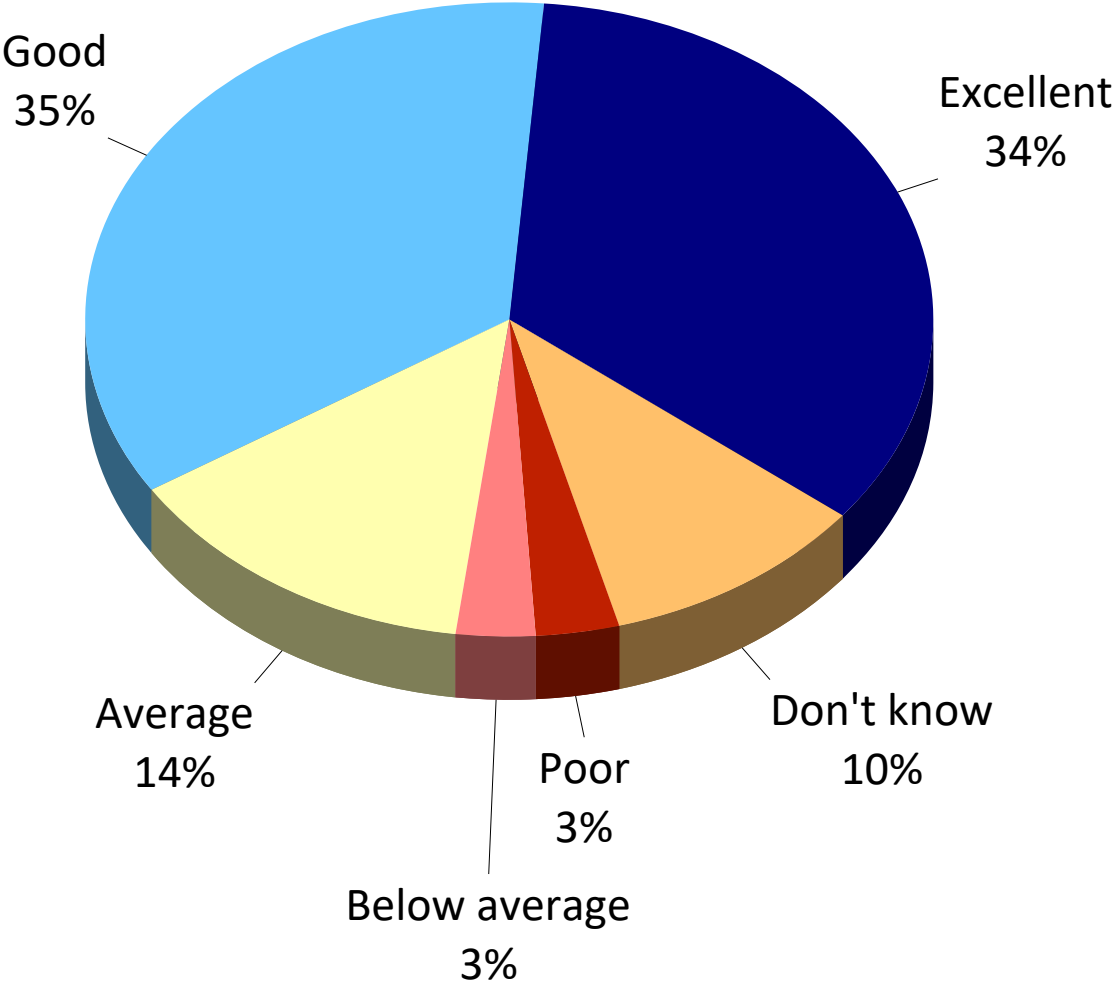
by percentage of respondents



Q14. Overall, how do you rate the Solid Waste (trash and recycling) service provided by City of Columbia Utilities?

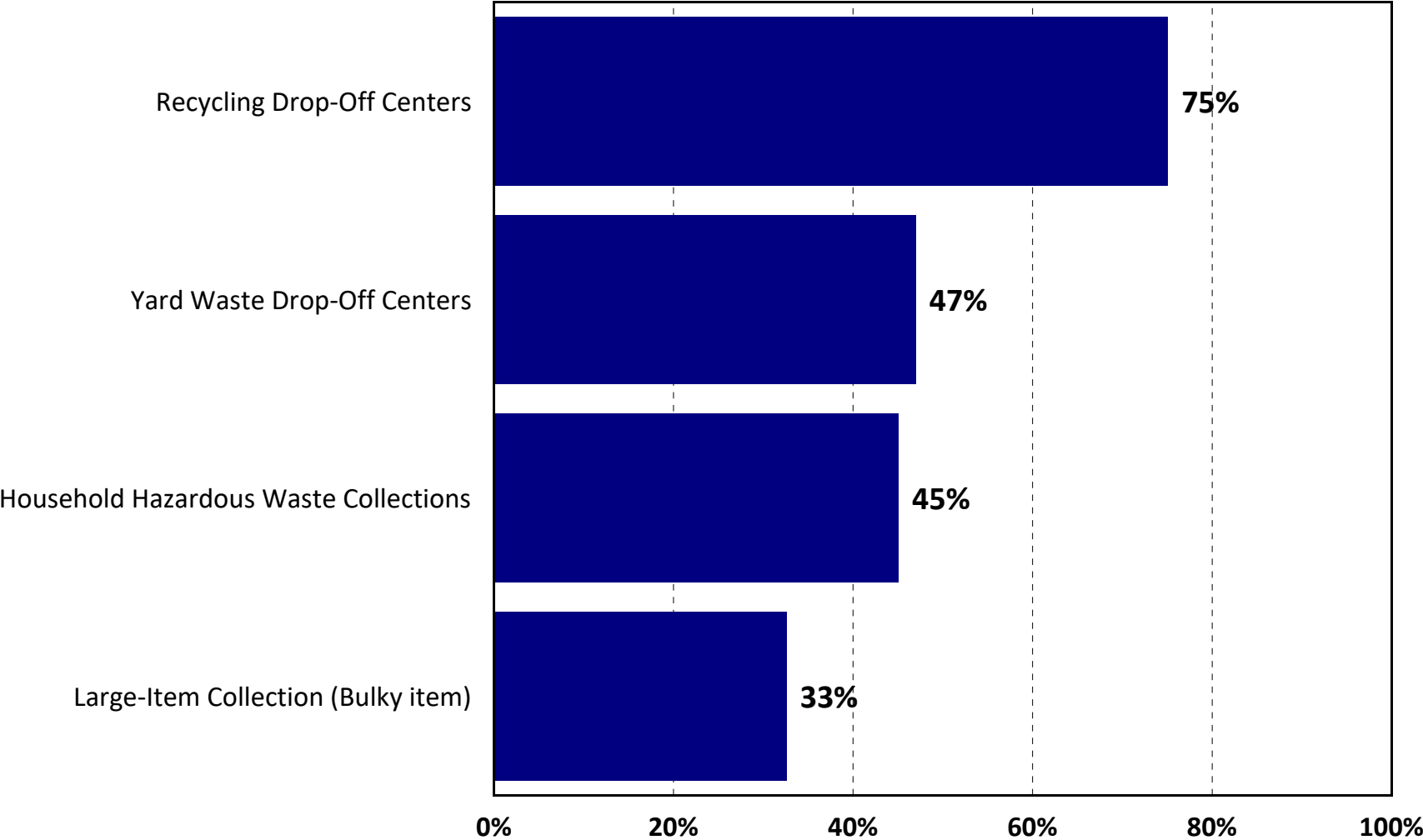


Q15. Overall, how do you rate the residential roll cart system that was implemented by the Solid Waste Division in March 2024?
by percentage of respondents



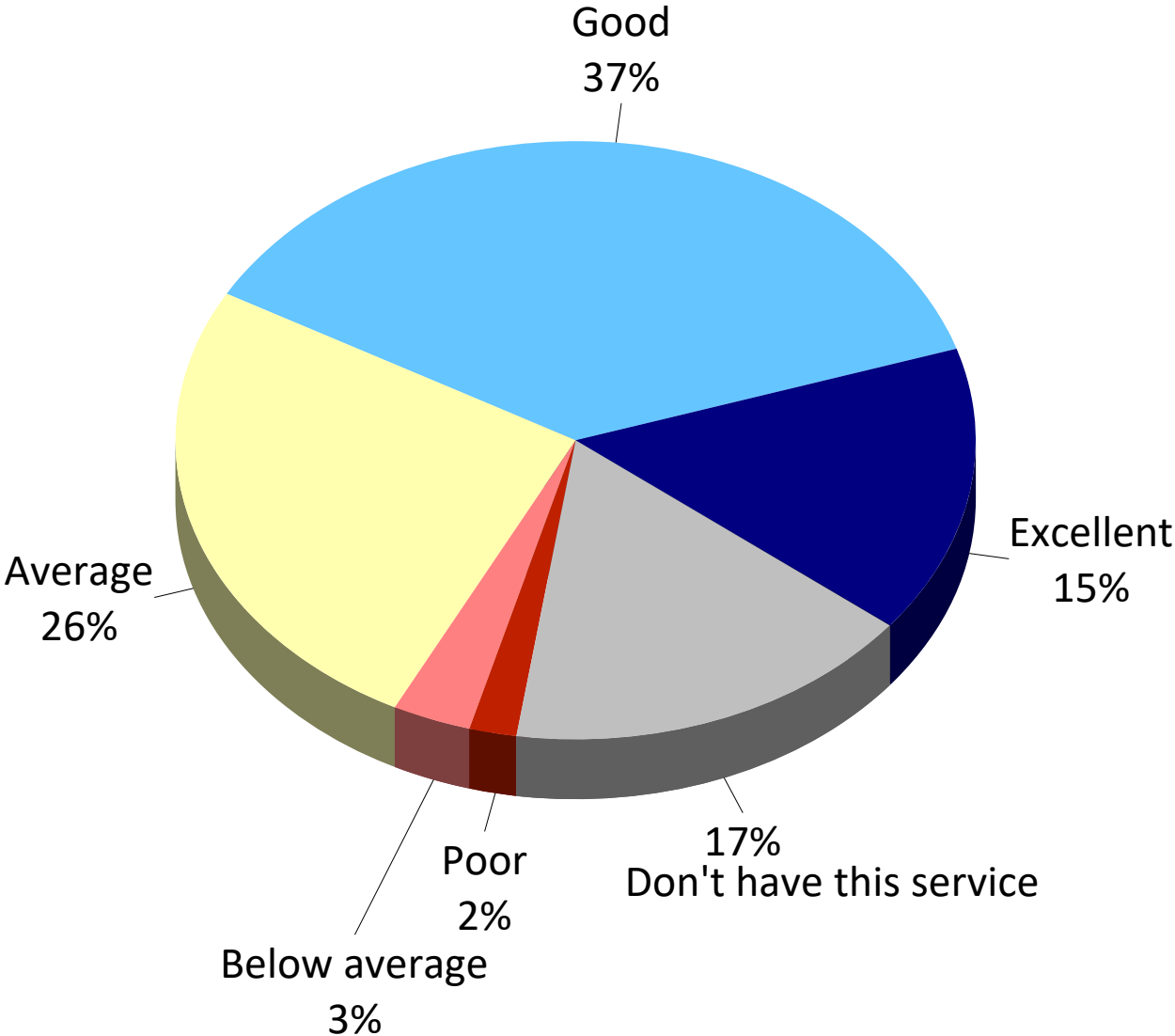
Q16. Which of the following Solid Waste services does your household utilize?

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



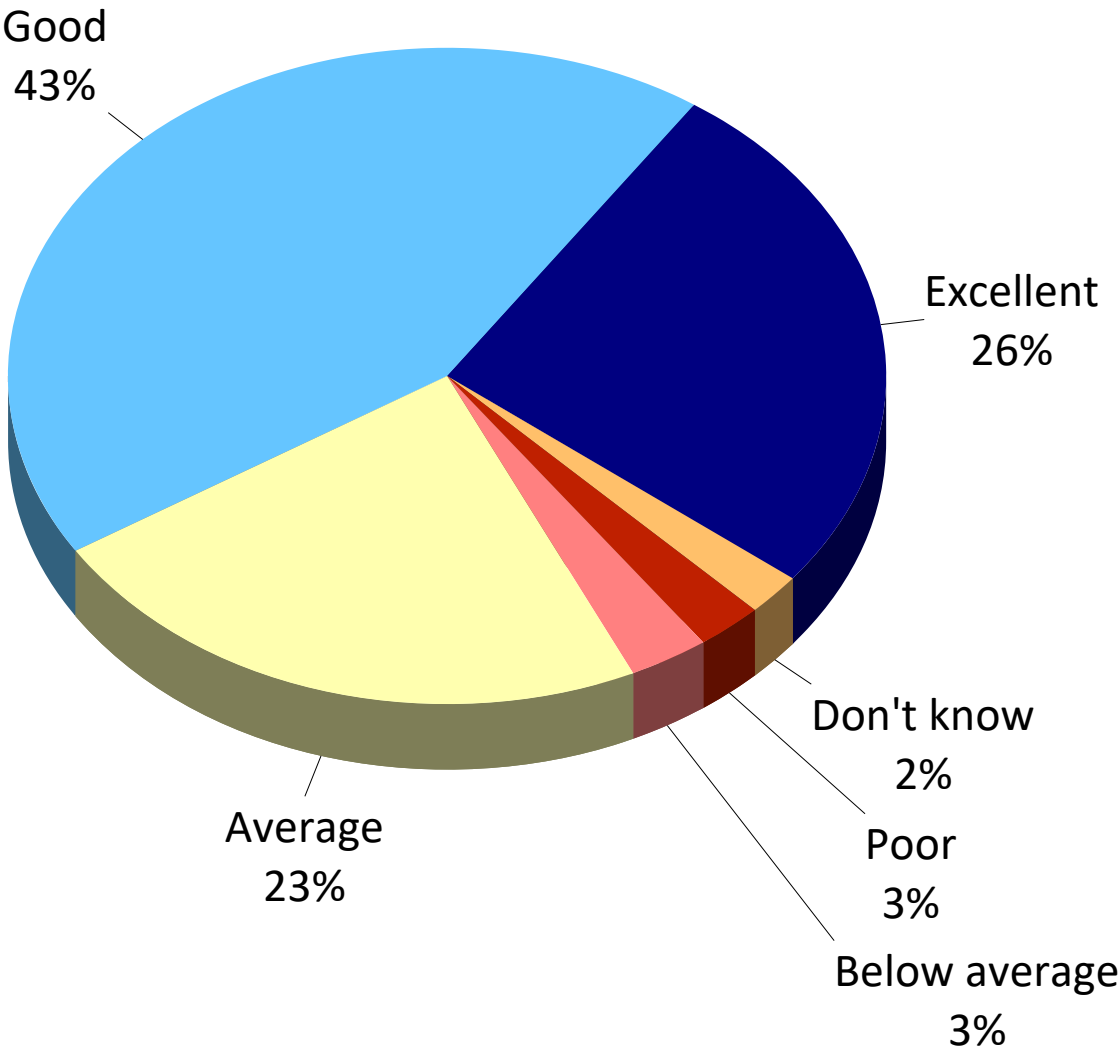
Q17. Overall, how do you rate the Stormwater service provided by City of Columbia Utilities?

by percentage of respondents



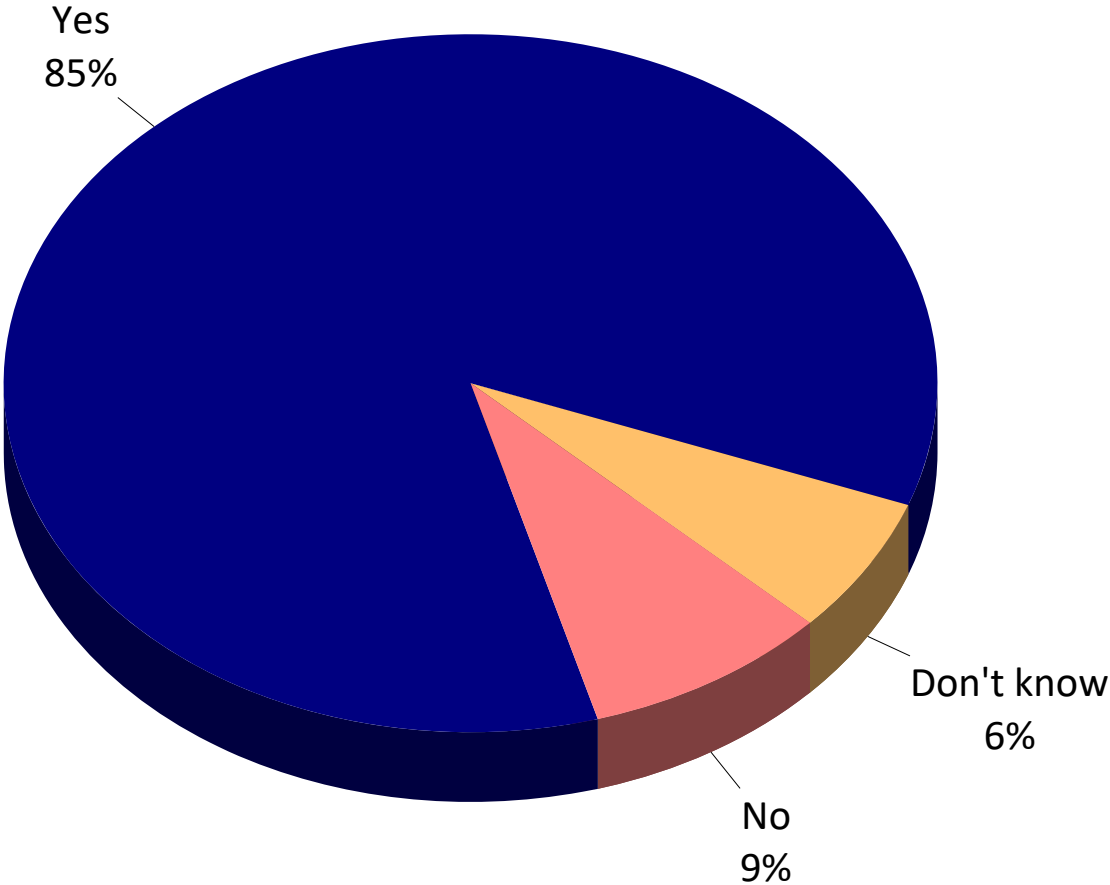
Q18. Overall, how do you rate the City of Columbia Utilities billing process?

by percentage of respondents



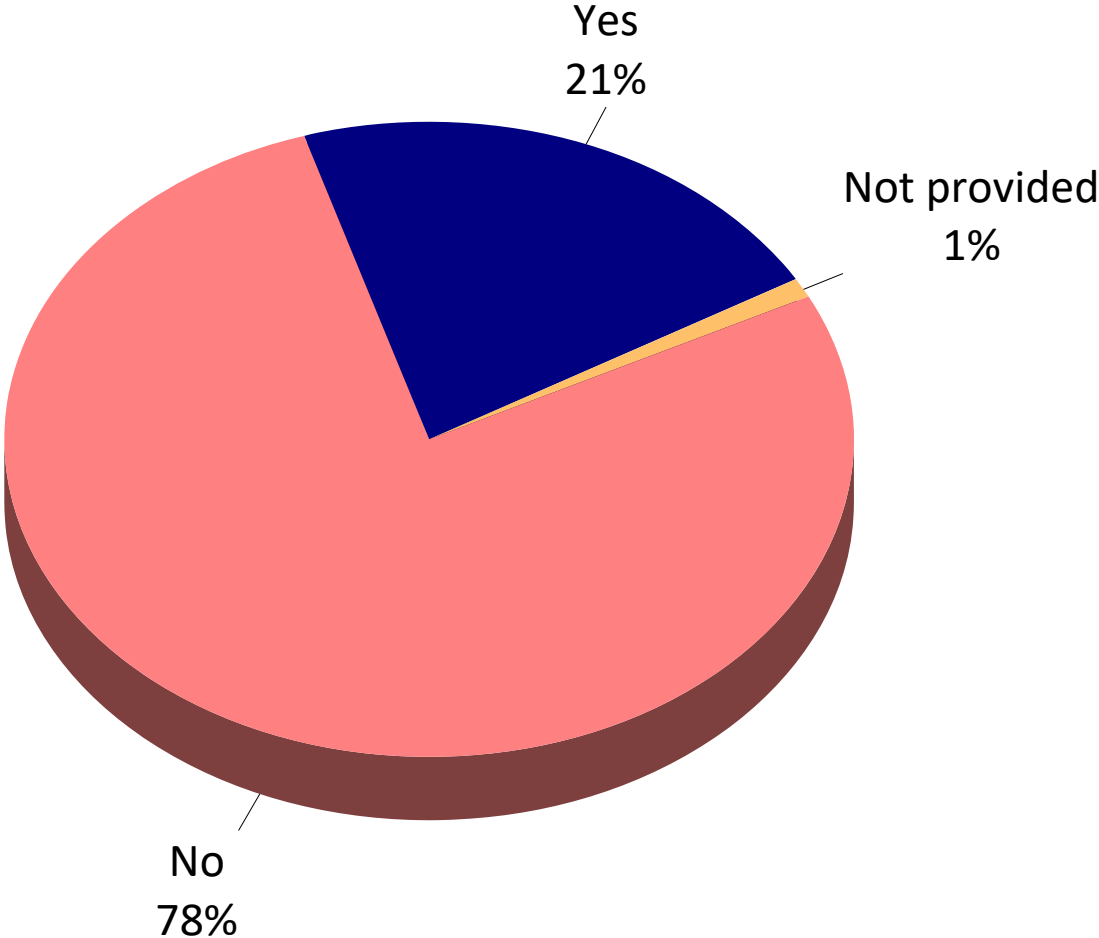
Q19. Is the information on your utility bill clear and understandable?

by percentage of respondents



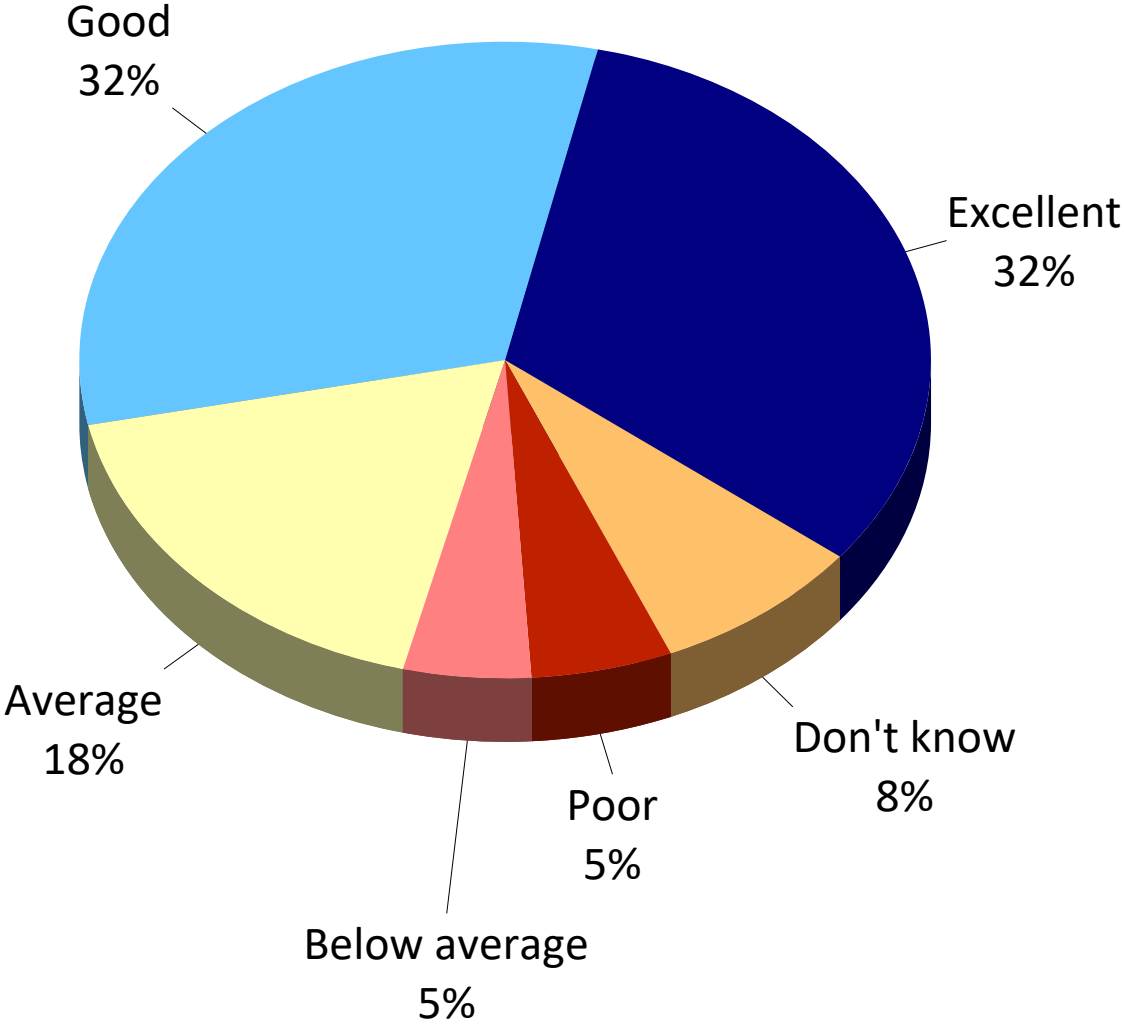
Q20. This last year, did you report a water, electric, solid waste, sewer or stormwater problem or complaint?

by percentage of respondents



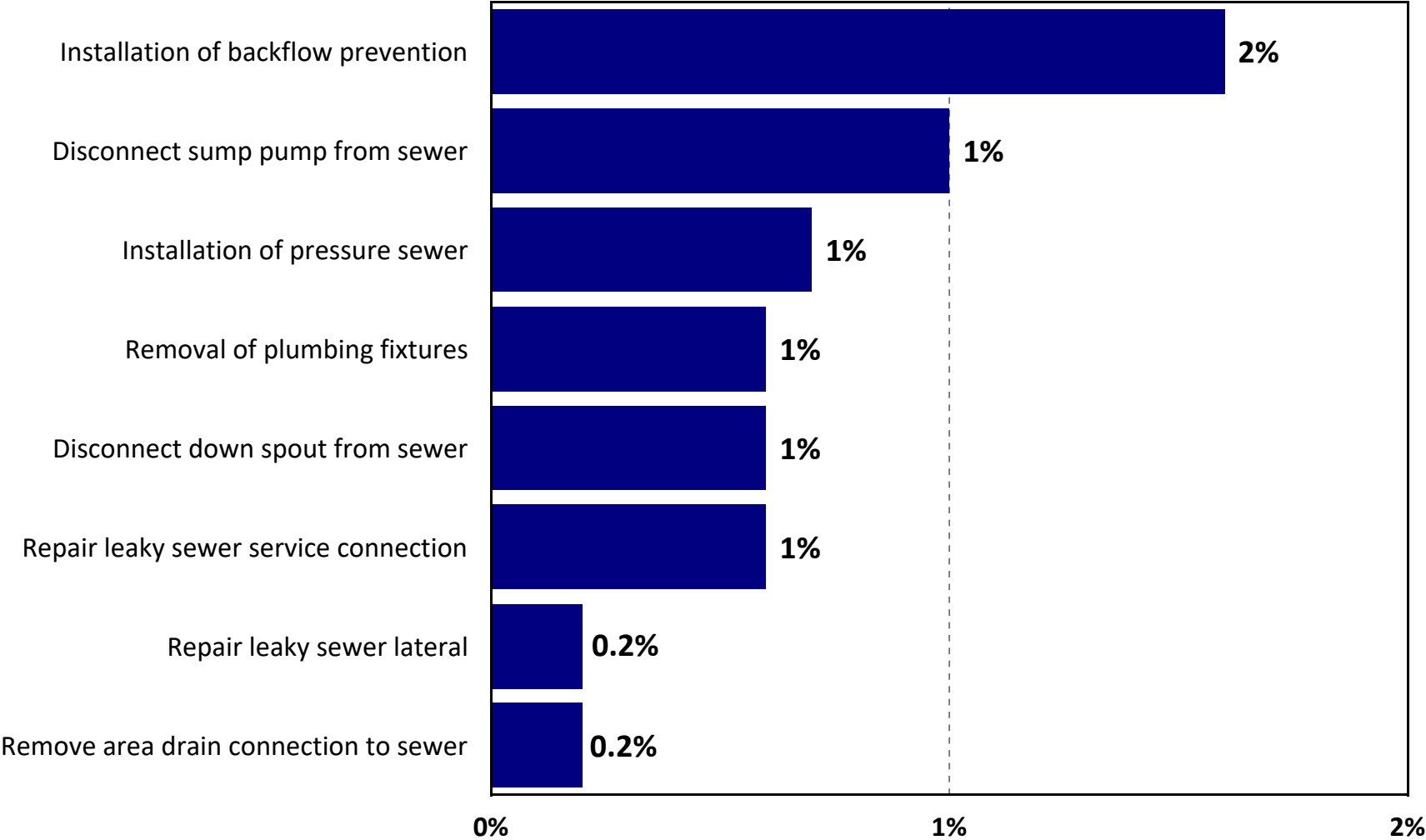
Q21. Overall, how do you rate the employee that handled the problem or complaint?

by percentage of respondents



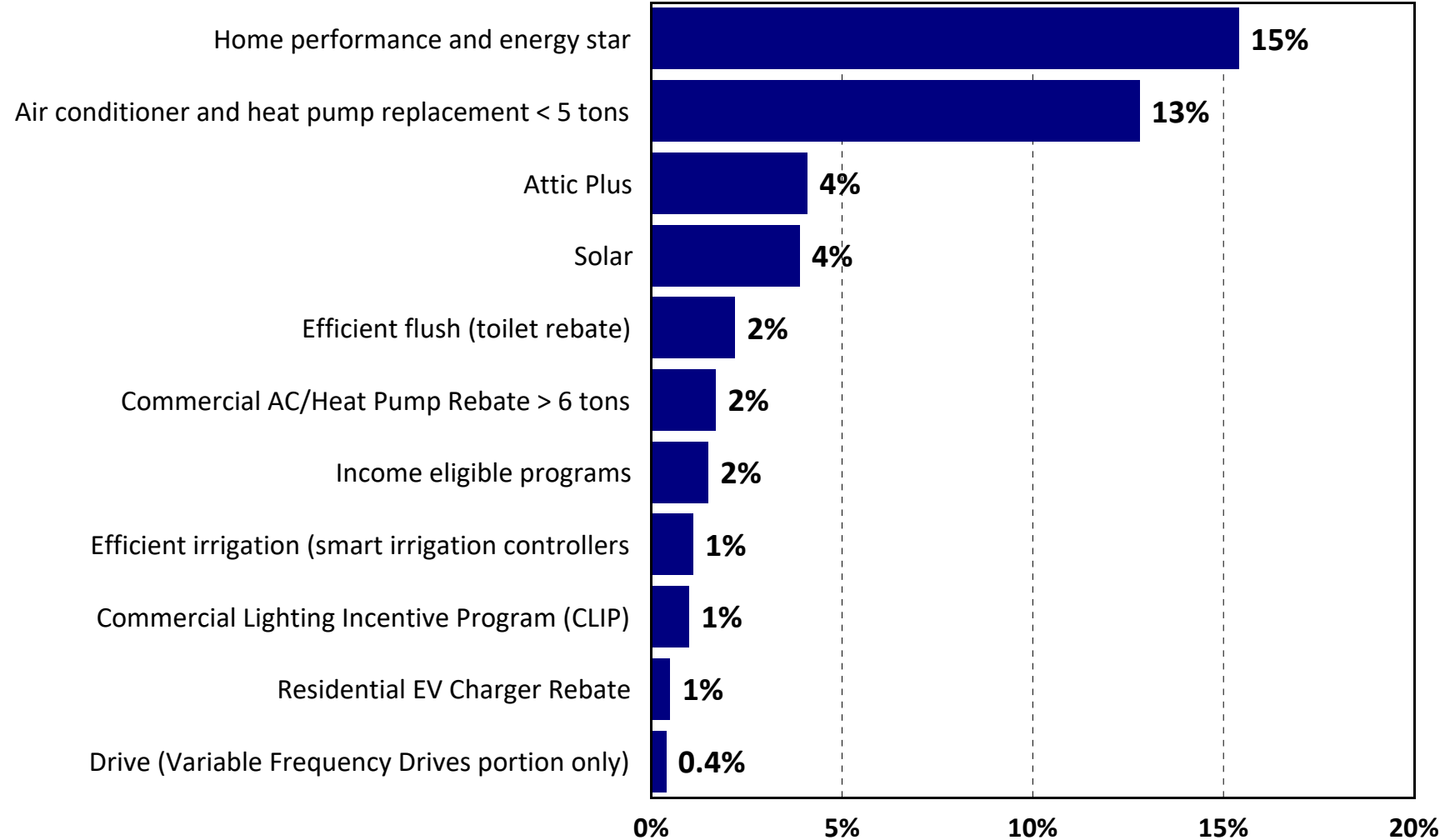
Q22. Have you utilized any of the City of Columbia Utilities Sewer cost reimbursement programs?

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



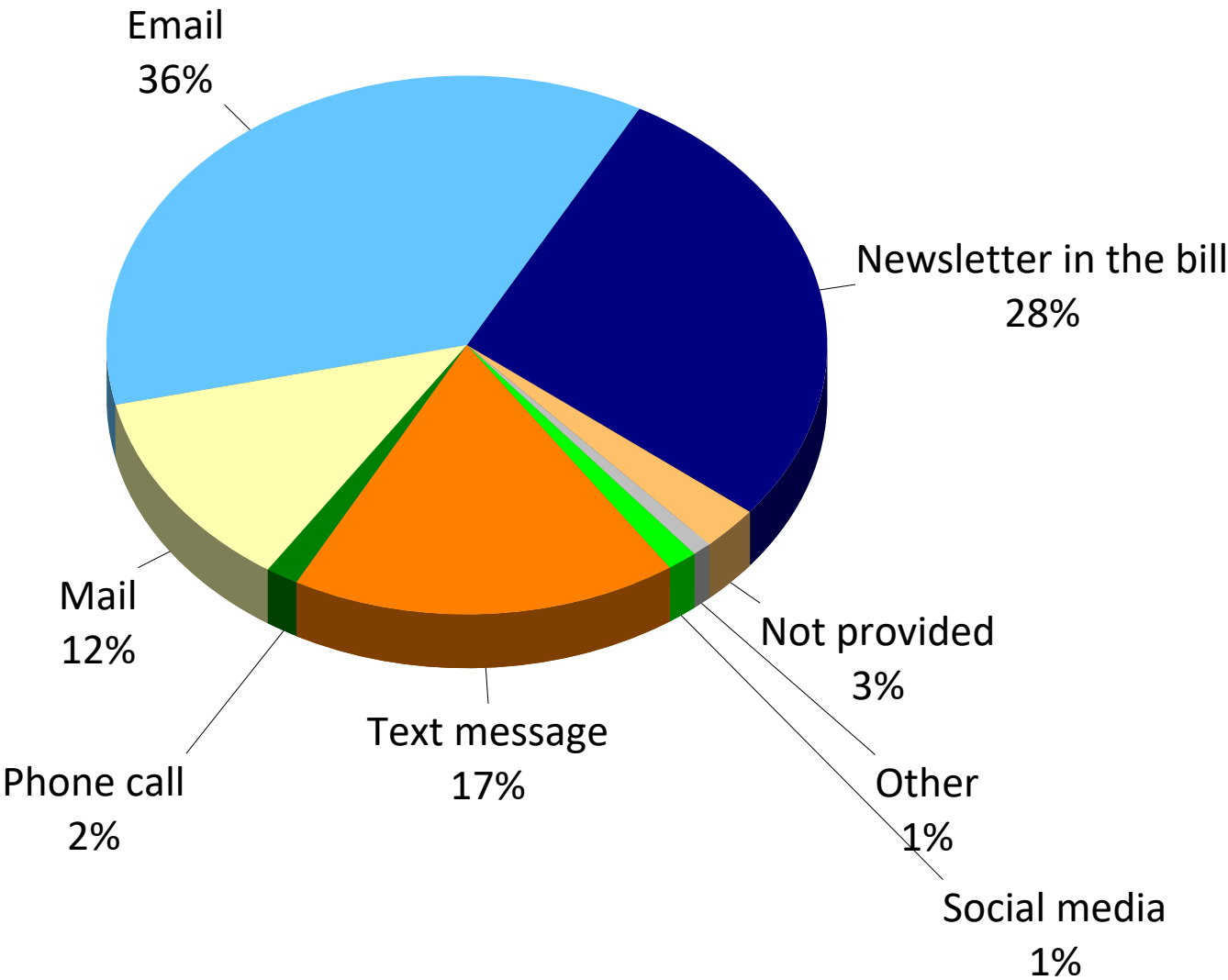
Q23. Have you utilized any of the City of Columbia Utilities energy efficiency (demand side management) or water conservation programs?

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



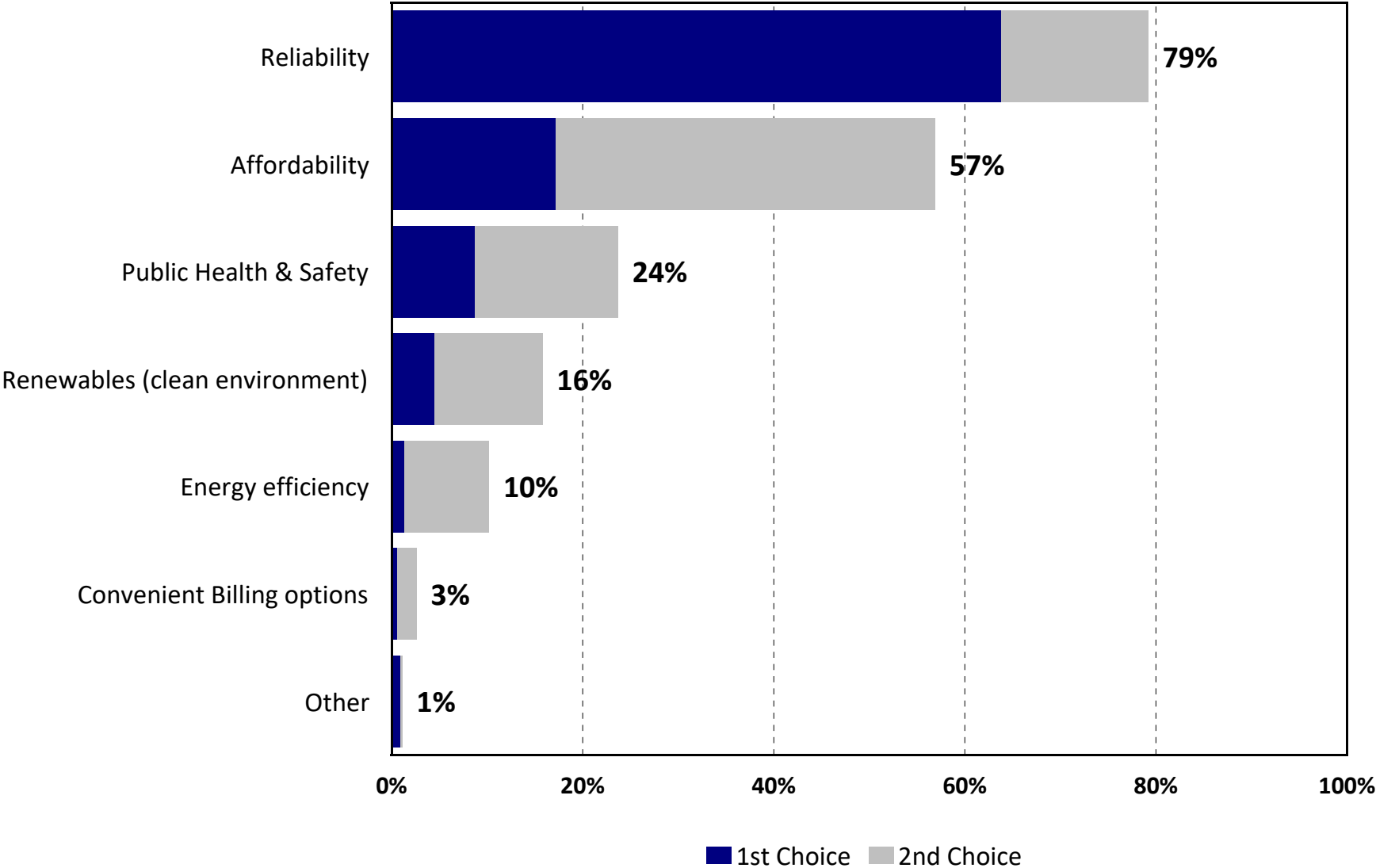
Q25. When the City of Columbia Utilities needs to communicate general information to customers, which of the following would you say is the most effective way to communicate?

by percentage of respondents



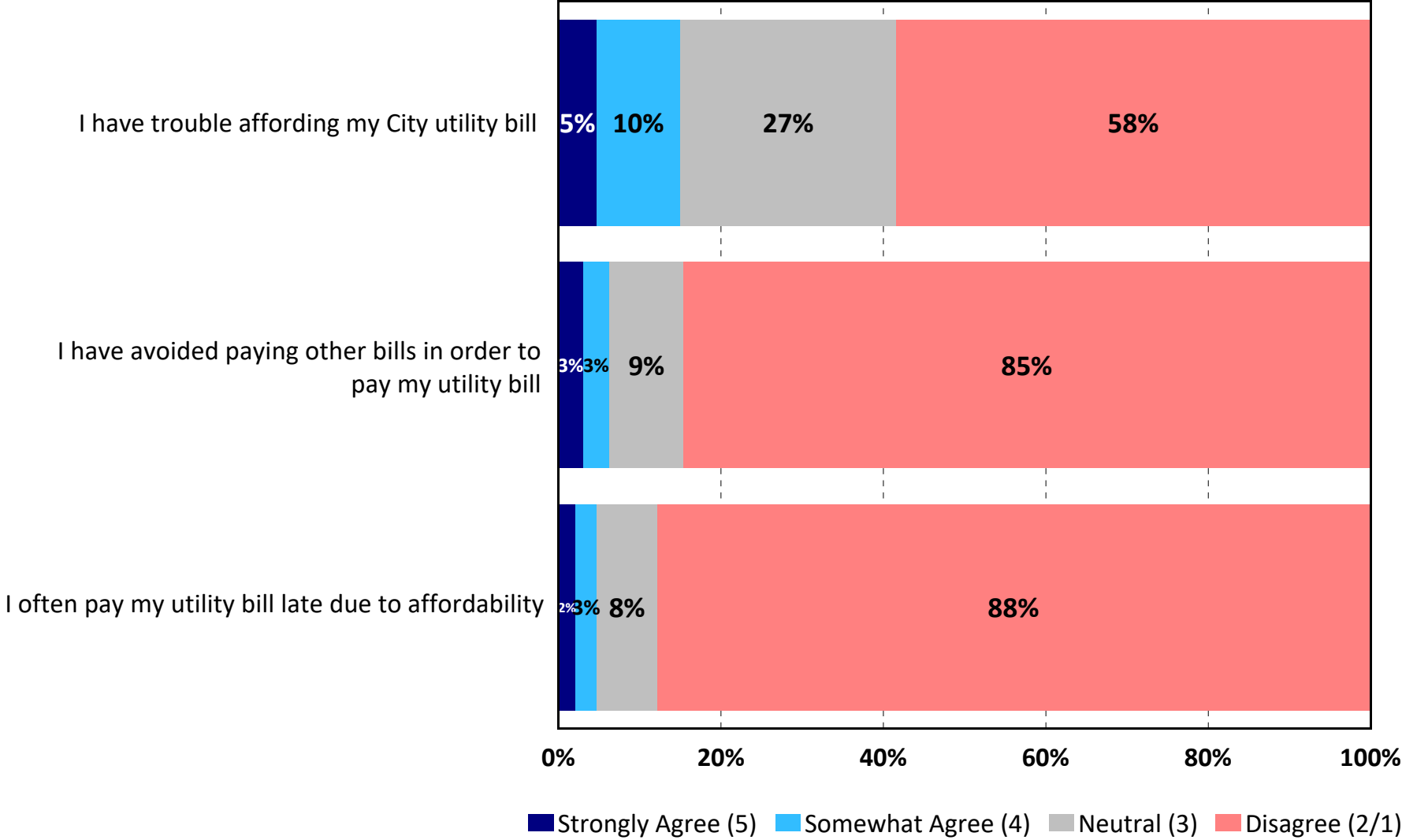
Q26. What values related to City of Columbia Utilities are most important to you?

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top two choices



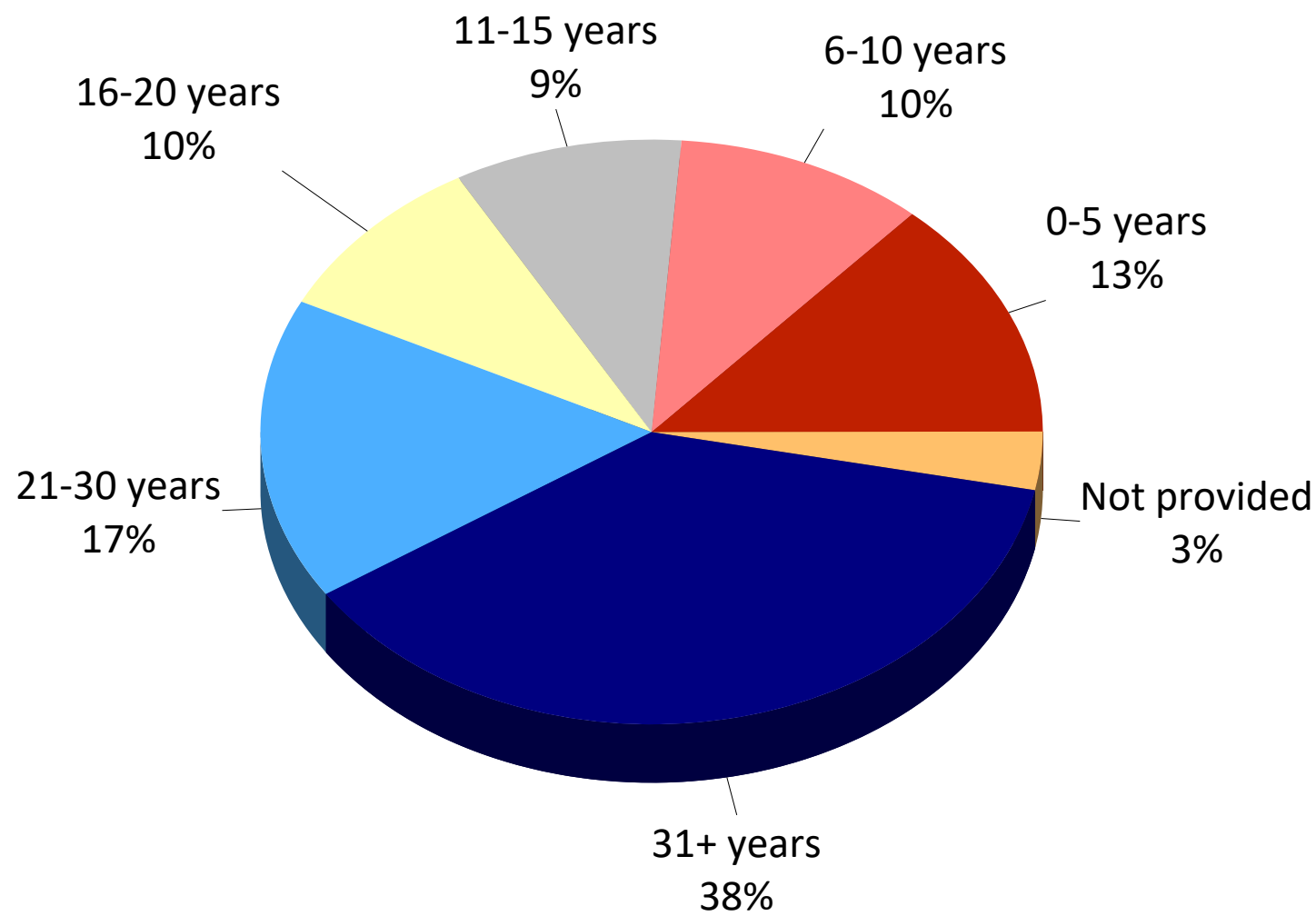
Q27. Agreement with the Following Statements Related to Utility Affordability

by percentage of respondents (excluding “not provided”)



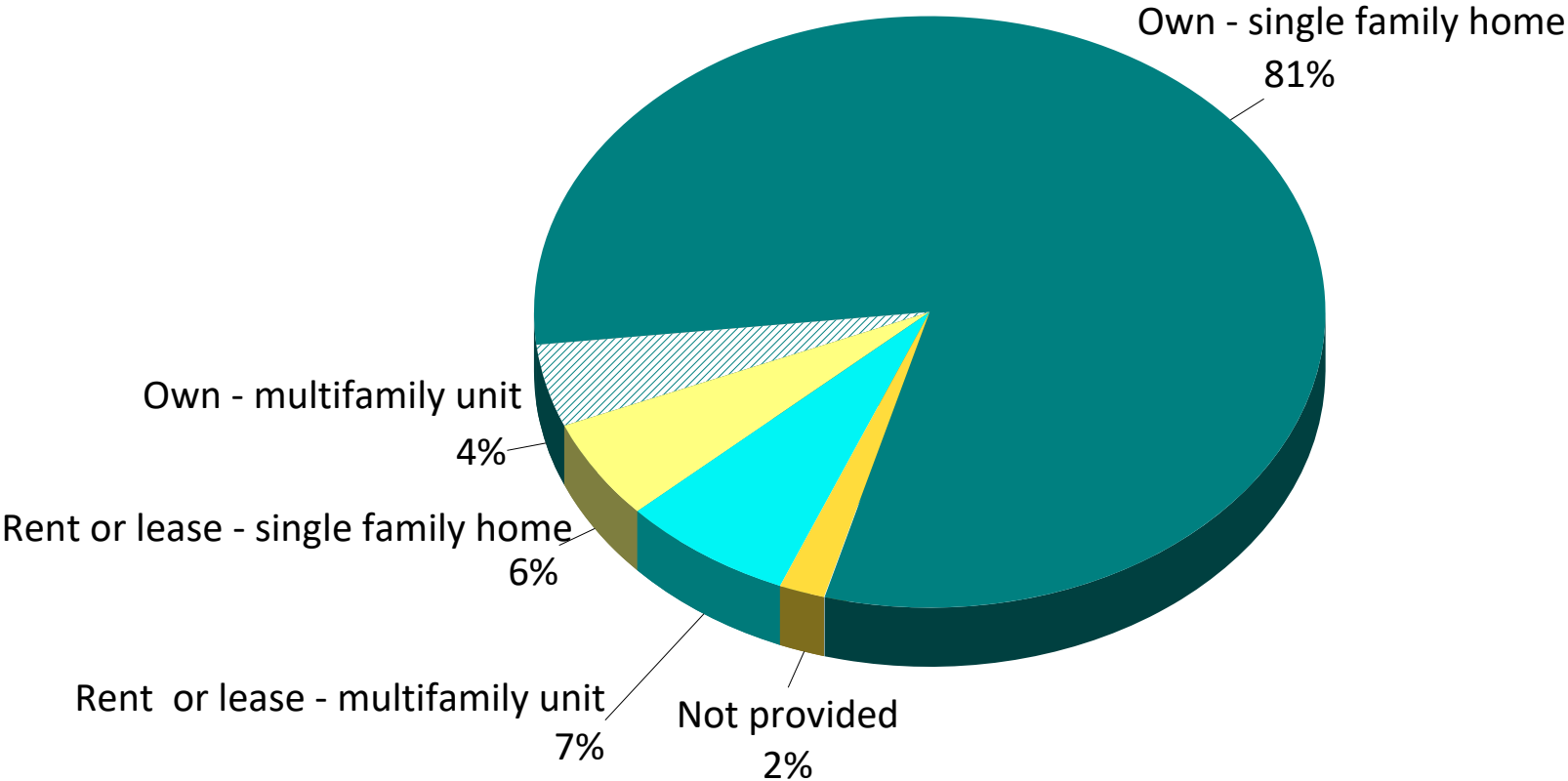
Q28. Demographics: How long have you been a resident of Columbia?

by percentage of respondents



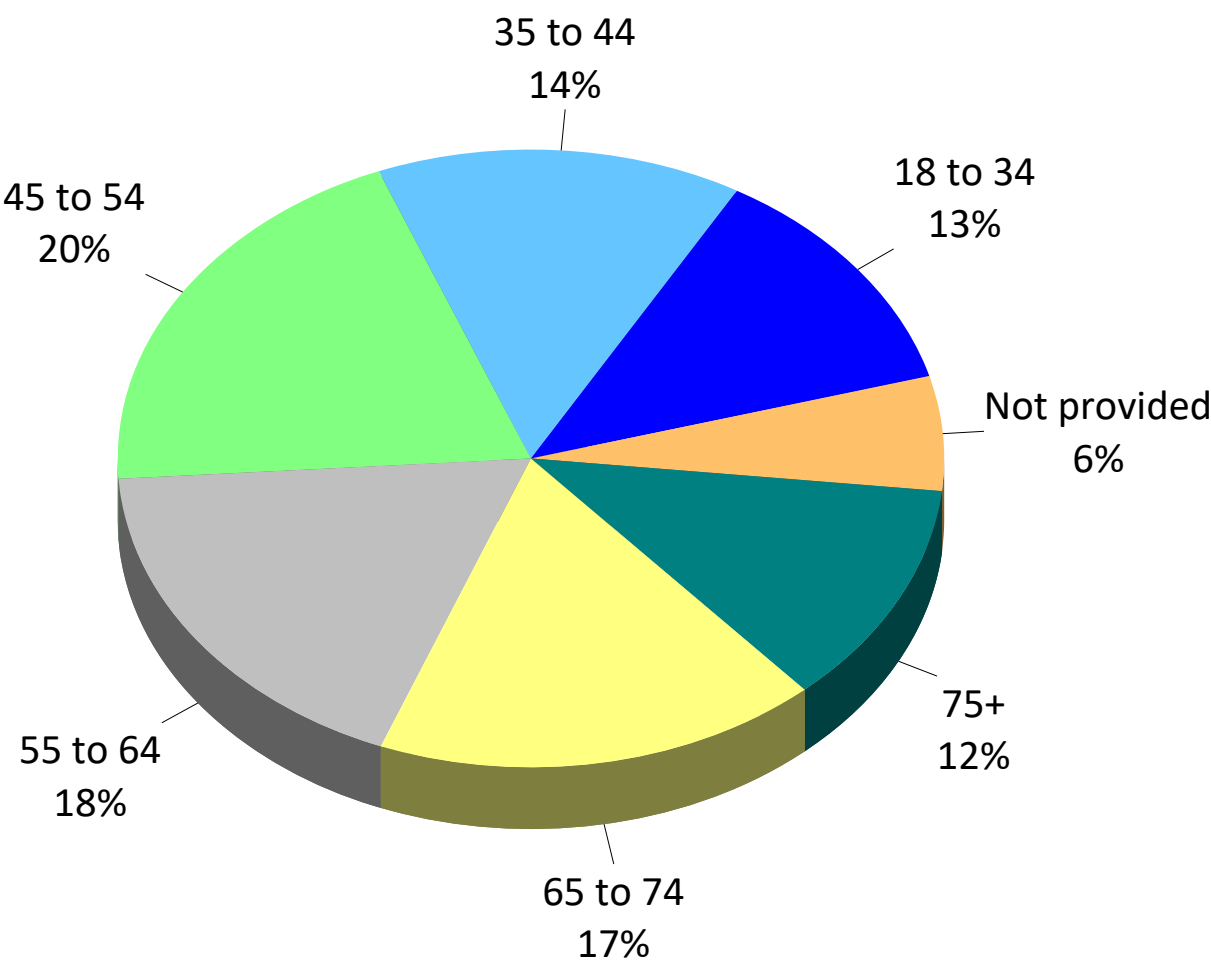
Q29. Demographics: Which of the following best describes your household?

by percentage of respondents



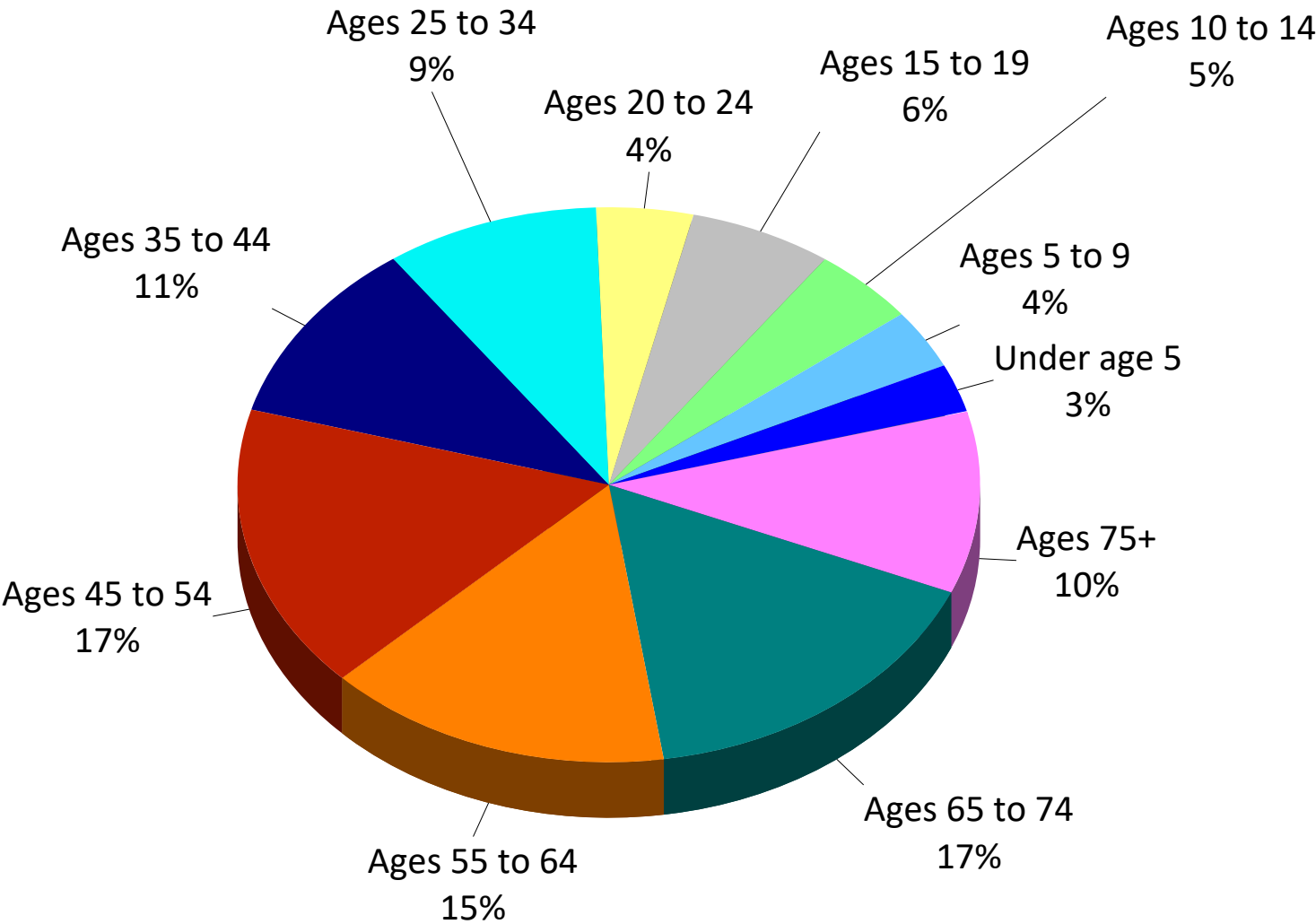
Q30. Demographics: Age of Respondent

by percentage of respondents



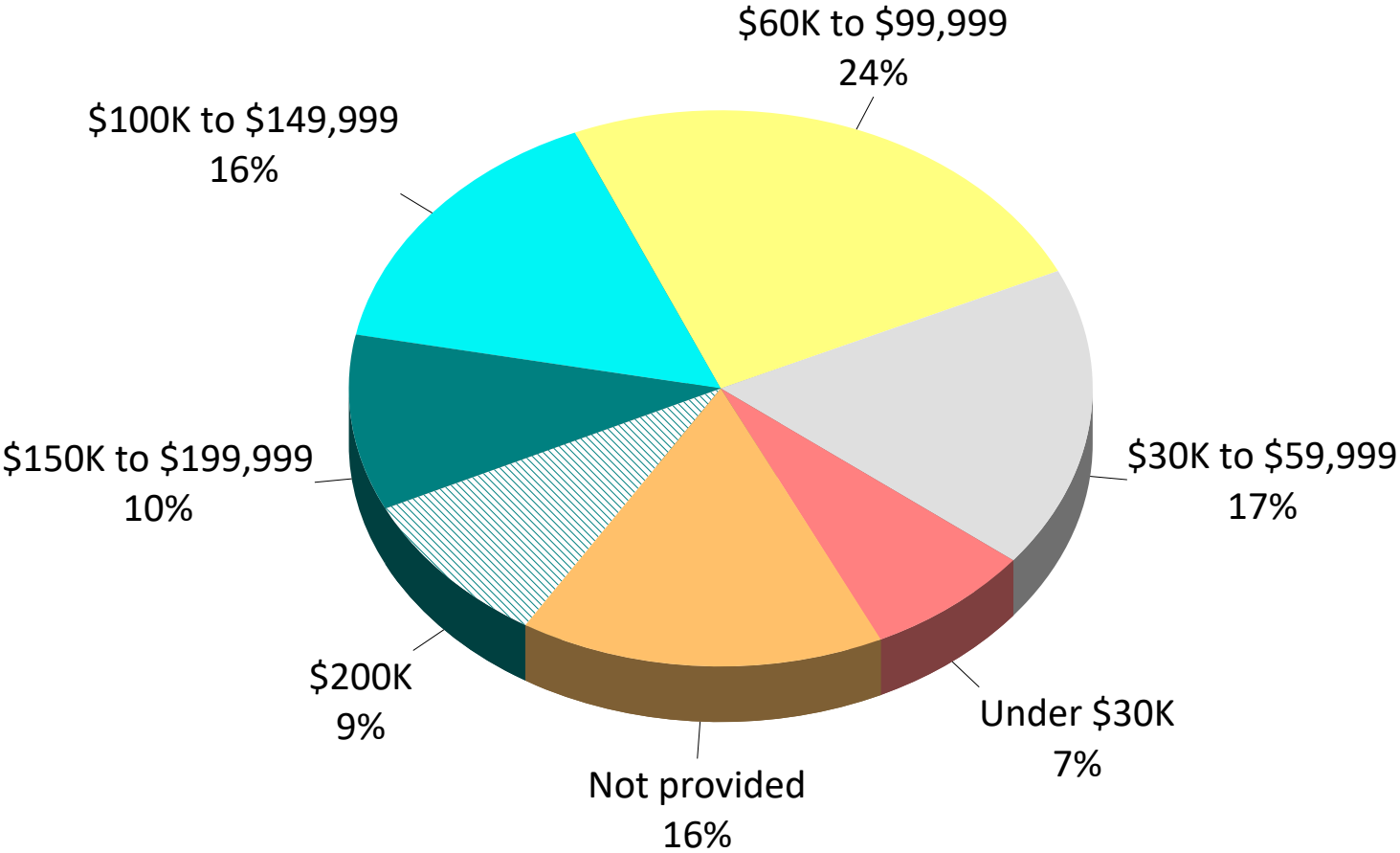
Q31. Demographics: Ages of Household Members

by percentage of persons in household



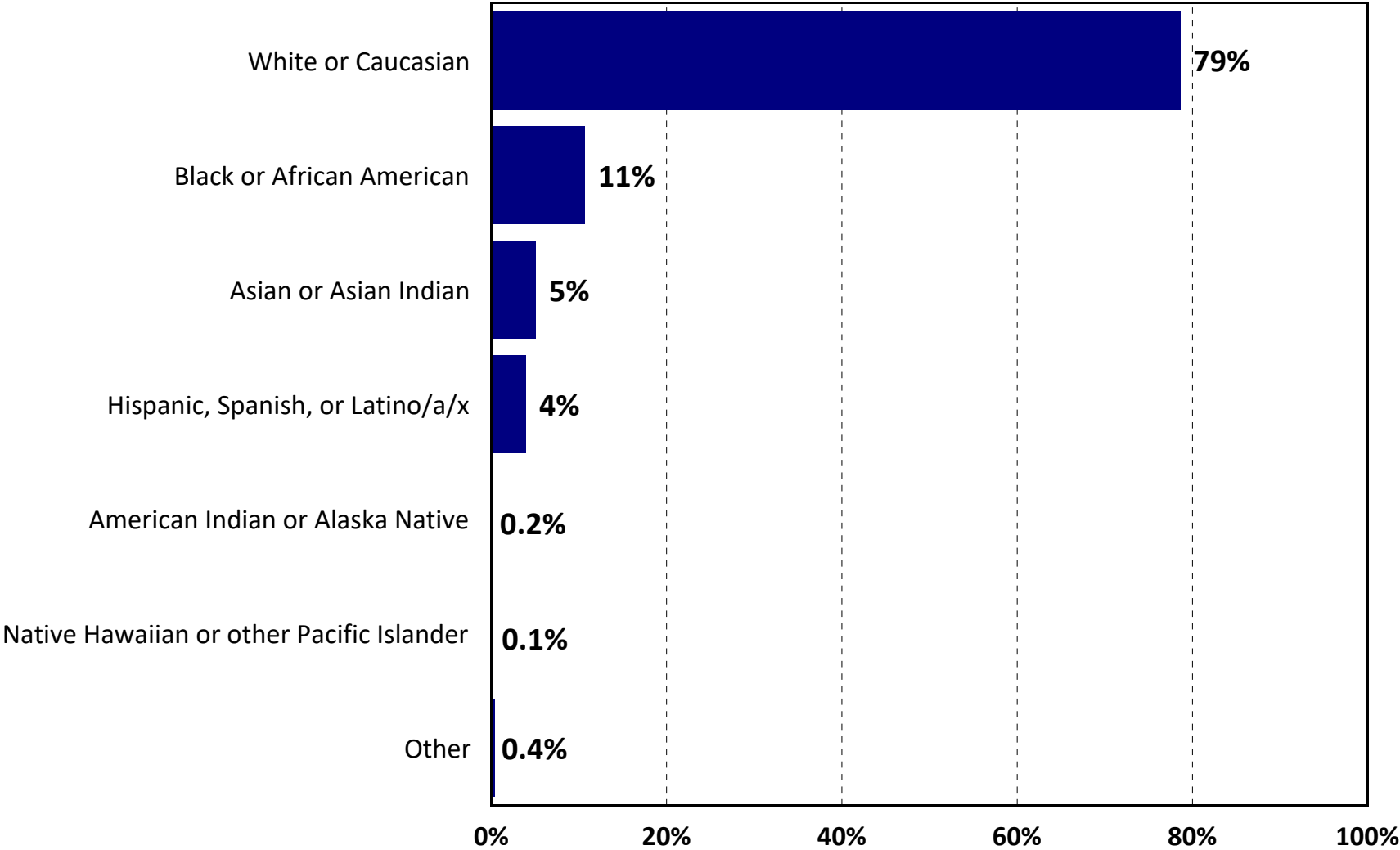
Q32. Demographics: Annual Household Income

by percentage of respondents



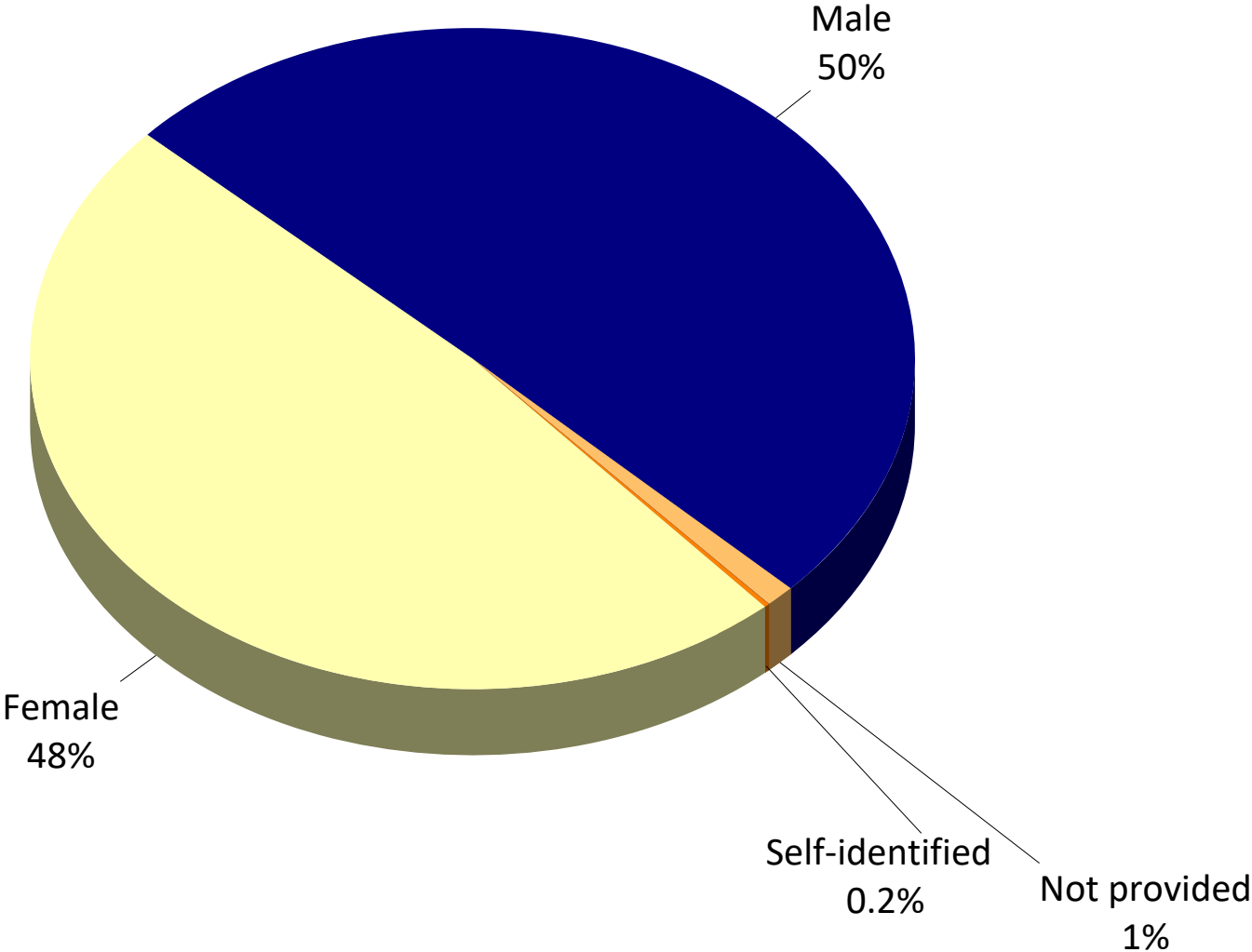
Q33. Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



Q34. Demographics: Gender

by percentage of respondents



2

Tabular Data

Q1. The City's water system meets or exceeds all federal and state water quality requirements. Do you believe Columbia provides the community with safe and quality drinking water?

Q1. Do you believe Columbia provides the community with safe & quality drinking water	Number	Percent
Yes	568	70.6 %
No	209	26.0 %
Not provided	27	3.4 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q1. The City's water system meets or exceeds all federal and state water quality requirements. Do you believe Columbia provides the community with safe and quality drinking water? (without "not provided")

Q1. Do you believe Columbia provides the community with safe & quality drinking water	Number	Percent
Yes	568	73.1 %
No	209	26.9 %
Total	777	100.0 %

Q1a. What are your concerns with the City of Columbia providing safe and quality drinking water?

Q1a. Your concerns with City providing safe & quality drinking water	Number	Percent
Water pressure	58	27.8 %
Taste	116	55.5 %
Water leaks	28	13.4 %
Non-regulated water contaminants	122	58.4 %
Other	55	26.3 %
Total	379	

Q2. Overall, how do you rate the Drinking Water service provided by City of Columbia Utilities?

Q2. How do you rate drinking water service provided by

City of Columbia Utilities	Number	Percent
Excellent	158	19.7 %
Good	305	37.9 %
Average	200	24.9 %
Below average	59	7.3 %
Poor	33	4.1 %
Don't have this service	49	6.1 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "DON'T HAVE THIS SERVICE"**Q2. Overall, how do you rate the Drinking Water service provided by City of Columbia Utilities? (without "don't have this service")**

Q2. How do you rate drinking water service provided by

City of Columbia Utilities	Number	Percent
Excellent	158	20.9 %
Good	305	40.4 %
Average	200	26.5 %
Below average	59	7.8 %
Poor	33	4.4 %
Total	755	100.0 %

Q3. How willing would you be to do any of the following to help conserve water?

(N=804)

	Very willing	Somewhat willing	Not at all	Don't know
Q3-1. Change lawn watering schedule and/or practices	39.6%	21.8%	11.7%	27.0%
Q3-2. Replace irrigation controllers	21.5%	12.1%	17.3%	49.1%
Q3-3. Install rain sensors on irrigation system	25.5%	12.2%	15.8%	46.5%
Q3-4. Replace sprinkler heads	24.8%	14.4%	15.2%	45.6%
Q3-5. Replace toilets	22.4%	28.2%	29.9%	19.5%
Q3-6. Replace shower heads or faucet fixtures	26.4%	30.8%	25.5%	17.3%

WITHOUT "DON'T KNOW"**Q3. How willing would you be to do any of the following to help conserve water? (without "don't know")**

(N=804)

	Very willing	Somewhat willing	Not at all
Q3-1. Change lawn watering schedule and/or practices	54.2%	29.8%	16.0%
Q3-2. Replace irrigation controllers	42.3%	23.7%	34.0%
Q3-3. Install rain sensors on irrigation system	47.7%	22.8%	29.5%
Q3-4. Replace sprinkler heads	45.5%	26.5%	27.9%
Q3-5. Replace toilets	27.8%	35.1%	37.1%
Q3-6. Replace shower heads or faucet fixtures	31.9%	37.3%	30.8%

Q4. Please indicate your primary source(s) of drinking water.

Q4. Your primary sources of drinking water	Number	Percent
Unfiltered water straight from the tap	318	39.6 %
Tap water that is filtered in your home, at the sink	140	17.4 %
Tap water that is filtered in your home through the refrigerator	309	38.4 %
Tap water that is filtered in your home, through a pitcher	127	15.8 %
Bottled water	203	25.2 %
Water sold from kiosks at a grocery store or at a vending machine in a parking lot	28	3.5 %
Total	1125	

Q5. The City of Columbia Utilities uses email addresses and phone numbers provided by its customers to alert them of water service interruptions. How likely are you to update your billing information to receive service notifications?

Q5. How likely are you to update your billing information to receive service notifications	Number	Percent
Very likely	450	56.0 %
Somewhat likely	166	20.6 %
Not at all likely	65	8.1 %
Already receiving notifications	103	12.8 %
Not provided	20	2.5 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q5. The City of Columbia Utilities uses email addresses and phone numbers provided by its customers to alert them of water service interruptions. How likely are you to update your billing information to receive service notifications? (without "not provided")**

Q5. How likely are you to update your billing information to receive service notifications	Number	Percent
Very likely	450	57.4 %
Somewhat likely	166	21.2 %
Not at all likely	65	8.3 %
Already receiving notifications	103	13.1 %
Total	784	100.0 %

Q6. How important is reliable electric service to you?

<u>Q6. How important is reliable electric service to you</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Very important	773	96.1 %
Somewhat important	7	0.9 %
Neutral	3	0.4 %
Not important	4	0.5 %
Don't know	17	2.1 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "DON'T KNOW"**Q6. How important is reliable electric service to you? (without "don't know")**

<u>Q6. How important is reliable electric service to you</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Very important	773	98.2 %
Somewhat important	7	0.9 %
Neutral	3	0.4 %
Not important	4	0.5 %
Total	787	100.0 %

Q7. If available, would you sign up for community solar?

<u>Q7. Would you sign up for community solar</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	215	26.7 %
Possibly	240	29.9 %
Not likely	98	12.2 %
No	126	15.7 %
Don't know	125	15.5 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "DON'T KNOW"**Q7. If available, would you sign up for community solar? (without "don't know")**

<u>Q7. Would you sign up for community solar</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	215	31.7 %
Possibly	240	35.3 %
Not likely	98	14.4 %
No	126	18.6 %
Total	679	100.0 %

Q8. Overall, how do you rate the Electric service provided by City of Columbia Utilities?

Q8. How do you rate electric service provided by City of Columbia Utilities	Number	Percent
Excellent	254	31.6 %
Good	319	39.7 %
Average	99	12.3 %
Below average	17	2.1 %
Poor	11	1.4 %
Don't have this service	104	12.9 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "DON'T HAVE THIS SERVICE"**Q8. Overall, how do you rate the Electric service provided by City of Columbia Utilities? (without "don't have this service")**

Q8. How do you rate electric service provided by City of Columbia Utilities	Number	Percent
Excellent	254	36.3 %
Good	319	45.6 %
Average	99	14.1 %
Below average	17	2.4 %
Poor	11	1.6 %
Total	700	100.0 %

Q9. Currently, the City of Columbia Utilities has 21.84% of its energy supply from renewable sources. Do you support moving toward 100% renewable energy sources?

Q9. Do you support moving toward 100% renewable energy sources	Number	Percent
Yes	514	63.9 %
No	245	30.5 %
Don't know	45	5.6 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "DON'T KNOW"**Q9. Currently, the City of Columbia Utilities has 21.84% of its energy supply from renewable sources. Do you support moving toward 100% renewable energy sources? (without "don't know")**

Q9. Do you support moving toward 100% renewable energy sources	Number	Percent
Yes	514	67.7 %
No	245	32.3 %
Total	759	100.0 %

Q10. In order to reach 100% renewable energy sources, how much more are you willing to pay for electricity?

Q10. How much more are you willing to pay for electricity

	Number	Percent
Less than 5%	234	45.5 %
Between 5%-10%	180	35.0 %
Between 10%-20%	62	12.1 %
20% or more	24	4.7 %
Not provided	14	2.7 %
Total	514	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q10. In order to reach 100% renewable energy sources, how much more are you willing to pay for electricity? (without "not provided")

Q10. How much more are you willing to pay for electricity

	Number	Percent
Less than 5%	234	46.8 %
Between 5%-10%	180	36.0 %
Between 10%-20%	62	12.4 %
20% or more	24	4.8 %
Total	500	100.0 %

Q11. Within the next five years, how likely are you to purchase/lease an electric vehicle or plug-in hybrid?

Q11. How likely are you to purchase/lease an electric vehicle or plug-in hybrid

	Number	Percent
Likely	60	7.5 %
Maybe	157	19.5 %
Not likely	520	64.7 %
Already own	37	4.6 %
Not provided	30	3.7 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q11. Within the next five years, how likely are you to purchase/lease an electric vehicle or plug-in hybrid? (without "not provided")

Q11. How likely are you to purchase/lease an electric vehicle or plug-in hybrid

	Number	Percent
Likely	60	7.8 %
Maybe	157	20.3 %
Not likely	520	67.2 %
Already own	37	4.8 %
Total	774	100.0 %

Q12. Do you support more private and public community solar development within the community?

Q12. Do you support more private & public community solar development within the community	Number	Percent
Yes	442	55.0 %
No	139	17.3 %
Don't know	223	27.7 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "DON'T KNOW"**Q12. Do you support more private and public community solar development within the community? (without "don't know")**

Q12. Do you support more private & public community solar development within the community	Number	Percent
Yes	442	76.1 %
No	139	23.9 %
Total	581	100.0 %

Q13. Overall, how do you rate the Sanitary Sewer service provided by City of Columbia Utilities?

Q13. How do you rate sanitary sewer service provided by City of Columbia Utilities	Number	Percent
Excellent	235	29.2 %
Good	350	43.5 %
Average	154	19.2 %
Below average	17	2.1 %
Poor	11	1.4 %
Don't have this service	37	4.6 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "DON'T HAVE THIS SERVICE"**Q13. Overall, how do you rate the Sanitary Sewer service provided by City of Columbia Utilities? (without "don't have this service")**

Q13. How do you rate sanitary sewer service provided by City of Columbia Utilities	Number	Percent
Excellent	235	30.6 %
Good	350	45.6 %
Average	154	20.1 %
Below average	17	2.2 %
Poor	11	1.4 %
Total	767	100.0 %

Q14. Overall, how do you rate the Solid Waste (trash and recycling) service provided by City of Columbia Utilities?

Q14. How do you rate solid waste service provided by
City of Columbia Utilities

	Number	Percent
Excellent	167	20.8 %
Good	317	39.4 %
Average	191	23.8 %
Below average	50	6.2 %
Poor	35	4.4 %
Don't have this service	44	5.5 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "DON'T HAVE THIS SERVICE"

Q14. Overall, how do you rate the Solid Waste (trash and recycling) service provided by City of Columbia Utilities? (without "don't have this service")

Q14. How do you rate solid waste service provided by
City of Columbia Utilities

	Number	Percent
Excellent	167	22.0 %
Good	317	41.7 %
Average	191	25.1 %
Below average	50	6.6 %
Poor	35	4.6 %
Total	760	100.0 %

Q15. Overall, how do you rate the residential roll cart system that was implemented by the Solid Waste Division in March 2024?

Q15. How do you rate residential roll cart system that was implemented by Solid Waste Division in March

2024	Number	Percent
Excellent	276	34.3 %
Good	283	35.2 %
Average	113	14.1 %
Below average	23	2.9 %
Poor	25	3.1 %
Don't know	84	10.4 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "DON'T KNOW"

Q15. Overall, how do you rate the residential roll cart system that was implemented by the Solid Waste Division in March 2024? (without "don't know")

Q15. How do you rate residential roll cart system that was implemented by Solid Waste Division in March

2024	Number	Percent
Excellent	276	38.3 %
Good	283	39.3 %
Average	113	15.7 %
Below average	23	3.2 %
Poor	25	3.5 %
Total	720	100.0 %

Q16. Which of the following Solid Waste services does your household utilize?

Q16. Which solid waste services does your household utilize

	Number	Percent
Recycling Drop-off Centers	604	75.1 %
Household Hazardous Waste Collections	363	45.1 %
Yard Waste Drop-off Centers	378	47.0 %
Large-Item Collection (Bulky item)	262	32.6 %
Total	1607	

Q17. Overall, how do you rate the Stormwater service provided by City of Columbia Utilities?

Q17. How do you rate stormwater service provided by
City of Columbia Utilities

	Number	Percent
Excellent	124	15.4 %
Good	298	37.1 %
Average	207	25.7 %
Below average	26	3.2 %
Poor	15	1.9 %
Don't have this service	134	16.7 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "DON'T HAVE THIS SERVICE"**Q17. Overall, how do you rate the Stormwater service provided by City of Columbia Utilities? (without "don't have this service")**

Q17. How do you rate stormwater service provided by
City of Columbia Utilities

	Number	Percent
Excellent	124	18.5 %
Good	298	44.5 %
Average	207	30.9 %
Below average	26	3.9 %
Poor	15	2.2 %
Total	670	100.0 %

Q18. Overall, how do you rate the City of Columbia Utilities billing process?

Q18. How do you rate City of Columbia Utilities billing process	Number	Percent
Excellent	210	26.1 %
Good	348	43.3 %
Average	185	23.0 %
Below average	24	3.0 %
Poor	20	2.5 %
Don't know	17	2.1 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "DON'T KNOW"**Q18. Overall, how do you rate the City of Columbia Utilities billing process? (without "don't know")**

Q18. How do you rate City of Columbia Utilities billing process	Number	Percent
Excellent	210	26.7 %
Good	348	44.2 %
Average	185	23.5 %
Below average	24	3.0 %
Poor	20	2.5 %
Total	787	100.0 %

Q19. Is the information on your utility bill clear and understandable?

Q19. Is information on your utility bill clear & understandable	Number	Percent
Yes	682	84.8 %
No	70	8.7 %
Don't know	52	6.5 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "DON'T KNOW"**Q19. Is the information on your utility bill clear and understandable? (without "don't know")**

Q19. Is information on your utility bill clear & understandable	Number	Percent
Yes	682	90.7 %
No	70	9.3 %
Total	752	100.0 %

Q20. This last year, did you report a water, electric, solid waste, sewer or stormwater problem or complaint?

Q20. Did you report a water, electric, solid waste, sewer or stormwater problem or complaint this last year	Number	Percent
Yes	171	21.3 %
No	625	77.7 %
Not provided	8	1.0 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q20. This last year, did you report a water, electric, solid waste, sewer or stormwater problem or complaint? (without "not provided")

Q20. Did you report a water, electric, solid waste, sewer or stormwater problem or complaint this last year	Number	Percent
Yes	171	21.5 %
No	625	78.5 %
Total	796	100.0 %

Q21. Overall, how do you rate the employee that handled the problem or complaint?

Q21. How do you rate employee that handled the problem or complaint	Number	Percent
Excellent	55	32.2 %
Good	54	31.6 %
Average	31	18.1 %
Below average	8	4.7 %
Poor	9	5.3 %
Don't know	14	8.2 %
Total	171	100.0 %

WITHOUT "DON'T KNOW"

Q21. Overall, how do you rate the employee that handled the problem or complaint? (without "don't know")

Q21. How do you rate employee that handled the problem or complaint	Number	Percent
Excellent	55	35.0 %
Good	54	34.4 %
Average	31	19.7 %
Below average	8	5.1 %
Poor	9	5.7 %
Total	157	100.0 %

Q22. Have you utilized the City of Columbia Utilities Sewer cost reimbursement programs?

Q22. Have you utilized City of Columbia Utilities Sewer cost reimbursement programs	Number	Percent
Installation of pressure sewer	6	0.7 %
Installation of backflow prevention	13	1.6 %
Removal of plumbing fixtures	5	0.6 %
Disconnect sump pump from sewer	8	1.0 %
Disconnect down spout from sewer	5	0.6 %
Repair leaky sewer lateral	2	0.2 %
Repair leaky sewer service connection	5	0.6 %
Remove area drain connection to sewer	2	0.2 %
Total	46	

Q23. Have you utilized any of the City of Columbia Utilities energy efficiency (demand side management) or water conservation programs?

Q23. Have you utilized any City of Columbia Utilities energy efficiency or water conservation programs	Number	Percent
Home performance & energy star	124	15.4 %
Air conditioner & heat pump replacement<5 tons	103	12.8 %
Attic Plus	33	4.1 %
Commercial Lighting Incentive Program (CLIP)	8	1.0 %
Commercial AC/Heat Pump Rebate>6 tons	14	1.7 %
Solar	31	3.9 %
Drive (Variable Frequency Drives portion only)	3	0.4 %
Residential EV Charger Rebate	4	0.5 %
Income eligible programs	12	1.5 %
Efficient flush (toilet rebate)	18	2.2 %
Efficient irrigation (smart irrigation controllers, rain sensors or high efficiency sprinkler heads)	9	1.1 %
Total	359	

Q25. When the City of Columbia Utilities needs to communicate general information to customers, which of the following would you say is the most effective way to communicate?

Q25. Most effective way for City of Columbia Utilities to communicate general information to customers	Number	Percent
Newsletter in the bill	223	27.7 %
Email	292	36.3 %
Mail	99	12.3 %
Phone call	12	1.5 %
Text message	138	17.2 %
Social media	11	1.4 %
Other	7	0.9 %
Not provided	22	2.7 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q25. When the City of Columbia Utilities needs to communicate general information to customers, which of the following would you say is the most effective way to communicate? (without "not provided")

Q25. Most effective way for City of Columbia Utilities to communicate general information to customers	Number	Percent
Newsletter in the bill	223	28.5 %
Email	292	37.3 %
Mail	99	12.7 %
Phone call	12	1.5 %
Text message	138	17.6 %
Social media	11	1.4 %
Other	7	0.9 %
Total	782	100.0 %

Q25-7. Other:

Q25-7. Other	Number	Percent
Solid waste app	1	14.3 %
Hang tags/personal visit	1	14.3 %
DOOR HANGER	1	14.3 %
COMO APP	1	14.3 %
TV	1	14.3 %
TV news	1	14.3 %
APP	1	14.3 %
Total	7	100.0 %

Q26. What values related to the City of Columbia Utility are the most important to you?

Q26. Top choice	Number	Percent
Reliability	513	63.8 %
Renewables (clean environment)	36	4.5 %
Convenient Billing options	5	0.6 %
Public Health & Safety	70	8.7 %
Affordability	138	17.2 %
Energy efficiency	11	1.4 %
Other	7	0.9 %
None chosen	24	3.0 %
Total	804	100.0 %

Q26. What values related to the City of Columbia Utility are the most important to you?

Q26. 2nd choice	Number	Percent
Reliability	124	15.4 %
Renewables (clean environment)	91	11.3 %
Convenient Billing options	16	2.0 %
Public Health & Safety	121	15.0 %
Affordability	319	39.7 %
Energy efficiency	71	8.8 %
Other	2	0.2 %
None chosen	60	7.5 %
Total	804	100.0 %

SUM OF TOP 2 CHOICES**Q26. What values related to the City of Columbia Utility are the most important to you? (top 2)**

Q26. Sum of top 2 choices	Number	Percent
Reliability	637	79.2 %
Renewables (clean environment)	127	15.8 %
Convenient Billing options	21	2.6 %
Public Health & Safety	191	23.8 %
Affordability	457	56.8 %
Energy efficiency	82	10.2 %
Other	9	1.1 %
None chosen	24	3.0 %
Total	1548	

Q26-7. Other:

Q26-7. Other	Number	Percent
Reliable, affordable	1	11.1 %
Reliability	1	11.1 %
Safe drinking water	1	11.1 %
Price	1	11.1 %
Clean and effective	1	11.1 %
All of these	1	11.1 %
Capacity increase	1	11.1 %
Energy efficiency	1	11.1 %
Handicap garage pickup	1	11.1 %
Total	9	100.0 %

Q27. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements related to utility affordability.

(N=804)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Not provided
Q27-1. I have trouble affording my City utility bill	4.5%	9.8%	25.5%	12.1%	43.9%	4.2%
Q27-2. I often pay my utility bill late due to affordability	2.0%	2.5%	7.1%	7.1%	75.7%	5.6%
Q27-3. I have avoided paying other bills in order to pay my utility bill	2.9%	3.1%	8.6%	5.6%	74.4%	5.5%

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q27. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements related to utility affordability. (without "not provided")**

(N=804)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Q27-1. I have trouble affording my City utility bill	4.7%	10.3%	26.6%	12.6%	45.8%
Q27-2. I often pay my utility bill late due to affordability	2.1%	2.6%	7.5%	7.5%	80.2%
Q27-3. I have avoided paying other bills in order to pay my utility bill	3.0%	3.3%	9.1%	5.9%	78.7%

Q28. How long have you been a resident of Columbia?

Q28. How long have you been a resident of Columbia	Number	Percent
0-5	108	13.4 %
6-10	84	10.4 %
11-15	75	9.3 %
16-20	77	9.6 %
21-30	133	16.5 %
31+	302	37.6 %
Not provided	25	3.1 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q28. How long have you been a resident of Columbia? (without "not provided")**

Q28. How long have you been a resident of Columbia	Number	Percent
0-5	108	13.9 %
6-10	84	10.8 %
11-15	75	9.6 %
16-20	77	9.9 %
21-30	133	17.1 %
31+	302	38.8 %
Total	779	100.0 %

Q29. Which of the following best describes your household?

Q29. Which following best describes your household	Number	Percent
Own–Single Family Home	651	81.0 %
Own–Multifamily Unit (Condo, Apartment, Duplex)	36	4.5 %
Rent or Lease–Single Family Home	44	5.5 %
Rent–Multifamily Unit (Condo, Apartment, Duplex)	58	7.2 %
Not provided	15	1.9 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q29. Which of the following best describes your household? (without "not provided")**

Q29. Which following best describes your household	Number	Percent
Own–Single Family Home	651	82.5 %
Own–Multifamily Unit (Condo, Apartment, Duplex)	36	4.6 %
Rent or Lease–Single Family Home	44	5.6 %
Rent–Multifamily Unit (Condo, Apartment, Duplex)	58	7.4 %
Total	789	100.0 %

Q30. What is your age?

Q30. Your age	Number	Percent
18-34	101	12.6 %
35-44	113	14.1 %
45-54	162	20.1 %
55-64	146	18.2 %
65-74	139	17.3 %
75+	96	11.9 %
Not provided	47	5.8 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q30. What is your age? (without "not provided")**

Q30. Your age	Number	Percent
18-34	101	13.3 %
35-44	113	14.9 %
45-54	162	21.4 %
55-64	146	19.3 %
65-74	139	18.4 %
75+	96	12.7 %
Total	757	100.0 %

Q31. Including yourself, how many people in your household are...

	Mean	Sum
number	2.1	1563
Under age 5	0.1	44
Ages 5-9	0.1	55
Ages 10-14	0.1	73
Ages 15-19	0.1	98
Ages 20-24	0.1	64
Ages 25-34	0.2	145
Ages 35-44	0.2	171
Ages 45-54	0.3	258
Ages 55-64	0.3	235
Ages 65-74	0.3	258
Ages 75+	0.2	162

Q32. Would you say your total annual household income is:

Q32. Your total annual household income	Number	Percent
Under \$30K	60	7.5 %
\$30K to \$59,999	140	17.4 %
\$60K to \$99,999	197	24.5 %
\$100K to \$149,999	126	15.7 %
\$150K to \$199,999	80	10.0 %
\$200K+	75	9.3 %
Not provided	126	15.7 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q32. Would you say your total annual household income is: (without "not provided")**

Q32. Your total annual household income	Number	Percent
Under \$30K	60	8.8 %
\$30K to \$59,999	140	20.6 %
\$60K to \$99,999	197	29.1 %
\$100K to \$149,999	126	18.6 %
\$150K to \$199,999	80	11.8 %
\$200K+	75	11.1 %
Total	678	100.0 %

Q33. Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?

Q33. Your race/ethnicity	Number	Percent
Asian or Asian Indian	41	5.1 %
Black or African American	86	10.7 %
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	0.2 %
White or Caucasian	632	78.6 %
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1	0.1 %
Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino/a/x	32	4.0 %
Other	3	0.4 %
Total	797	

Q33-7. Self-describe your race/ethnicity:

Q33-7. Self-describe your race/ethnicity	Number	Percent
Multiracial	1	33.3 %
Mixed	1	33.3 %
German and Cherokee	1	33.3 %
Total	3	100.0 %

Q34. Your gender:

<u>Q34. Your gender</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Male	405	50.4 %
Female	388	48.3 %
Self-identified	2	0.2 %
Not provided	9	1.1 %
Total	804	100.0 %

WITHOUT “NOT PROVIDED”**Q34. Your gender: (without "not provided")**

<u>Q34. Your gender</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Male	405	50.9 %
Female	388	48.8 %
Self-identified	2	0.3 %
Total	795	100.0 %

Q34-3. Self-describe your gender:

<u>Q34-3. Self-describe your gender</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
NON BINARY	1	50.0 %
Transman	1	50.0 %
Total	2	100.0 %



Survey Instrument



February 2025

Dear Community Member,

We hope this message finds you well. The City of Columbia is committed to improving its services and ensuring that it meets the needs of its community. To assist us in this effort, we have partnered with the ETC Institute to conduct a satisfaction survey of our utility customers.

Your feedback is essential in helping us understand your experience with our services and identify areas where improvements may be needed. The survey is designed to be quick and easy, and your responses will remain confidential. Your input will directly influence the decisions made to enhance the quality of services we offer.

We kindly ask you to take a few minutes to share your thoughts and opinions with us. Your participation will not only help us improve, but it will also ensure that we are meeting your expectations and continuing to serve you in the best possible way.

Please return your completed survey in the next 10 days in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. If you prefer, you may complete the survey online at ColumbiaUtilitySurvey.org

We deeply appreciate your time and contribution. Should you have any questions about the survey or need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Talbert at 573.874.7273.

Thank you for your continued support and valuable feedback. Together, we can make Columbia the best place for everyone to live, work, learn and play.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barbara Buffaloe".

Barbara Buffaloe
Mayor

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Sorrell".

David Sorrell
Director of Utilities

COLT/Transload • Sewer Utility • Solid Waste Utility • Stormwater Utility • Water & Light

573.874.CITY (2489)
573.874.7380

701 E. Broadway, P.O. Box 6015
Columbia, Missouri 65205

CoMo.gov
ColumbiaPowerPartners.com

Our vision: Columbia is the best place for everyone to live, work, learn and play.



2025 City of Columbia Utilities Survey

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Your input is an important part of the City's on-going effort to identify and respond to resident concerns. If you have questions, please call Sarah Talbert in the Utilities Department at 573.874.7273. If you prefer, you may complete the survey online at columbiautilitysurvey.org.

Drinking Water Service

1. **The City's water system meets or exceeds all federal and state water quality requirements. Do you believe Columbia provides the community with safe and quality drinking water?**

____(1) Yes [Skip to Q2.] ____ (2) No [Answer Q1a.]

- 1a. **What are your concerns with the City of Columbia providing safe and quality drinking water? [Check all that apply.]**

____(1) Water pressure

____(4) Non-regulated water contaminants

____(2) Taste

____(5) Other: _____

____(3) Water leaks

2. **Overall, how do you rate the Drinking Water service provided by City of Columbia Utilities?**

____(5) Excellent

____(3) Average

____(1) Poor

____(4) Good

____(2) Below average

____(9) Don't have this service

3. **How willing would you be to do any of the following to help conserve water?**

How willing would you be to...	Very Willing	Somewhat Willing	Not at All	Don't Know
1. Change lawn watering schedule and/or practices	3	2	1	9
2. Replace irrigation controllers	3	2	1	9
3. Install rain sensors on irrigation system	3	2	1	9
4. Replace sprinkler heads	3	2	1	9
5. Replace toilets	3	2	1	9
6. Replace shower heads or faucet fixtures	3	2	1	9

4. **Please indicate your primary source(s) of drinking water. [Check all that apply.]**

____(1) Unfiltered water straight from the tap

____(2) Tap water that is filtered in your home, at the sink

____(3) Tap water that is filtered in your home through the refrigerator

____(4) Tap water that is filtered in your home, through a pitcher

____(5) Bottled water

____(6) Water sold from kiosks at a grocery store or at a vending machine in a parking lot

5. **The City of Columbia Utilities uses email addresses and phone numbers provided by its customers to alert them of water service interruptions. How likely are you to update your billing information to receive service notifications?**

____(4) Very likely

____(3) Somewhat likely

____(2) Not at all likely

____(1) Already receiving notifications

Electric Service

6. How important is reliable electric service to you?

____(4) Very important ____ (3) Somewhat important ____ (2) Neutral ____ (1) Not important ____ (9) Don't know

7. If available, would you sign up for community solar?

____ (1) Yes ____ (2) Possibly ____ (3) Not likely ____ (4) No ____ (9) Don't know

8. Overall, how do you rate the Electric service provided by City of Columbia Utilities?

____ (5) Excellent ____ (3) Average ____ (1) Poor
____ (4) Good ____ (2) Below average ____ (9) Don't have this service

9. Currently, the City of Columbia Utilities has 21.84% of its energy supply from renewable sources. Do you support moving toward 100% renewable energy sources?

____ (1) Yes [Answer Q10.] ____ (2) No [Skip to Q11.] ____ (9) Don't know

10. In order to reach 100% renewable energy sources, how much more are you willing to pay for electricity?

____ (1) Less than 5% ____ (2) Between 5%-10% ____ (3) Between 10%-20% ____ (4) 20% or more

11. Within the next five years, how likely are you to purchase/lease an electric vehicle or plug-in hybrid?

____ (1) Likely ____ (2) Maybe ____ (3) Not likely ____ (4) Already own

12. Do you support more private and public community solar development within the community?

____ (1) Yes ____ (2) No ____ (9) Don't know

Sanitary Sewer

13. Overall, how do you rate the Sanitary Sewer service provided by City of Columbia Utilities?

____ (5) Excellent ____ (3) Average ____ (1) Poor
____ (4) Good ____ (2) Below average ____ (9) Don't have this service

Solid Waste

14. Overall, how do you rate the Solid Waste (trash and recycling) service provided by City of Columbia Utilities?

____ (5) Excellent ____ (3) Average ____ (1) Poor
____ (4) Good ____ (2) Below average ____ (9) Don't have this service

15. Overall, how do you rate the residential roll cart system that was implemented by the Solid Waste Division in March 2024?

____ (5) Excellent ____ (3) Average ____ (1) Poor
____ (4) Good ____ (2) Below average ____ (9) Don't know

16. Which of the following Solid Waste services does your household utilize? [Check all that apply.]

____ (1) Recycling Drop-off Centers ____ (3) Yard Waste Drop-off Centers
____ (2) Household Hazardous Waste Collections ____ (4) Large-Item Collection (Bulky item)

Stormwater

17. Overall, how do you rate the Stormwater service provided by City of Columbia Utilities?

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (5) Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) Average | <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Poor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (4) Good | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Below average | <input type="checkbox"/> (9) Don't have this service |

Overall

18. Overall, how do you rate the City of Columbia Utilities billing process?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (5) Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) Average | <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Poor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (4) Good | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Below average | <input type="checkbox"/> (9) Don't know |

19. Is the information on your utility bill clear and understandable?

- ☐ (1) Yes ☐ (2) No ☐ (9) Don't know

20. This last year, did you report a water, electric, solid waste, sewer or stormwater problem or complaint?

- ☐ (1) Yes [Answer Q21.] ☐ (2) No [Skip to Q22.]

21. Overall, how do you rate the employee that handled the problem or complaint?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (5) Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) Average | <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Poor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (4) Good | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Below average | <input type="checkbox"/> (9) Don't know |

22. Have you utilized the City of Columbia Utilities Sewer cost reimbursement programs? [Check all that apply.]

To reduce sewer backups

- ☐ (1) Installation of pressure sewer
☐ (2) Installation of backflow prevention
☐ (3) Removal of plumbing fixtures

To reduce inflow and infiltration

- ☐ (4) Disconnect sump pump from sewer
☐ (5) Disconnect down spout from sewer
☐ (6) Repair leaky sewer lateral
☐ (7) Repair leaky sewer service connection
☐ (8) Remove area drain connection to sewer

23. Have you utilized any of the City of Columbia Utilities energy efficiency (demand side management) or water conservation programs? [Check all that apply.]

- ☐ (01) Home performance and energy star
☐ (02) Air conditioner and heat pump replacement < 5 tons
☐ (03) Attic Plus
☐ (04) Commercial Lighting Incentive Program (CLIP)
☐ (05) Commercial AC/Heat Pump Rebate > 6 tons
☐ (06) Solar
☐ (07) Drive (Variable Frequency Drives portion only)
☐ (08) Residential EV Charger Rebate
☐ (09) Income eligible programs
☐ (10) Efficient flush (toilet rebate)
☐ (11) Efficient irrigation (smart irrigation controllers, rain sensors or high efficiency sprinkler heads)

24. If you have any additional suggestions for energy efficiency or water conservation incentives, please list:

25. When the City of Columbia Utilities needs to communicate general information to customers, which of the following would you say is the most effective way to communicate? *[Select only one.]*

- ☐ (1) Newsletter in the bill
 ☐ (5) Text message
☐ (2) Email
 ☐ (6) Social media
☐ (3) Mail
 ☐ (7) Other: _____
☐ (4) Phone call

26. What values related to the City of Columbia Utility are the most important to you? *[Write in your answers below using the numbers from the list.]*

- (1) Reliability
 (5) Affordability
 (2) Renewables (clean environment)
 (6) Energy efficiency
 (3) Convenient Billing options
 (7) Other: _____
 (4) Public Health and Safety

1st ____ 2nd ____

27. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements related to utility affordability.

Level of agreement with the following statements...	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I have trouble affording my city utility bill	5	4	3	2	1
2. I often pay my utility bill late due to affordability	5	4	3	2	1
3. I have avoided paying other bills in order to pay my utility bill	5	4	3	2	1

Demographics

28. How long have you been a resident of Columbia? ____ years

29. Which of the following best describes your household?

- ☐ (1) Own – Single Family Home
 ☐ (3) Rent or Lease – Single Family Home
☐ (2) Own – Multifamily Unit (Condo, Apartment, Duplex)
 ☐ (4) Rent – Multifamily Unit (Condo, Apartment, Duplex)

30. What is your age? ____ years

31. Including yourself, how many people in your household are...

Under age 5: ____ Ages 15-19: ____ Ages 35-44: ____ Ages 65-74: ____
 Ages 5-9: ____ Ages 20-24: ____ Ages 45-54: ____ Ages 75+: ____
 Ages 10-14: ____ Ages 25-34: ____ Ages 55-64: ____

32. Would you say your total annual household income is:

- ☐ (1) Under \$30,000
 ☐ (3) \$60,000 to \$99,999
 ☐ (5) \$150,000 to \$199,999
☐ (2) \$30,000 to \$59,999
 ☐ (4) \$100,000 to \$149,999
 ☐ (6) \$200,000 or more

33. Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?

- ☐ (01) Asian or Asian Indian
 ☐ (05) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
☐ (02) Black or African American
 ☐ (06) Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino/a/x
☐ (03) American Indian or Alaska Native
 ☐ (99) Other: _____
☐ (04) White or Caucasian

34. Your gender: ☐ (1) Male ☐ (2) Female ☐ (3) Self-Identified: _____

35. Do you have any other comments or suggestions you would like to share with the City of Columbia about our utility services?

36. Would you be willing to participate in future surveys sponsored by the City of Columbia?

____(1) Yes *[Answer Q36a.]* ____ (2) No

36a. Please provide your contact information.

Mobile phone number: _____

Email address: _____

This concludes the survey. Thank you for your time!

Please return your completed survey in the enclosed return-reply envelope addressed to:
ETC Institute, 725 W. Frontier Circle, Olathe, KS 66061

Your responses will remain completely confidential. The information printed on the right will ONLY be used to help identify which areas of the City are having concerns with City services. If your address is not correct, please provide the correct information. Thank you.