



## About the Surveys

The LEARN project is exploring how people with lived experience (PWLE) are working within the homeless response system, the challenges that they face in their work and how their work impacts efforts to end homelessness. Many [previous studies](#), [guidance documents](#) and [reflective essays](#) suggest that PWLE have important impacts on local projects and programs. [Existing research](#) also provides organizations with tools to employ PWLE workers in a more authentic and meaningful way. While [multiple researchers](#) have conducted smaller [surveys](#) about the [peer behavioral health](#) and social service workforce more broadly – especially at the [state or local level](#), the Alliance’s research team is not aware of national efforts to explore the experiences of direct services workers who have experienced homelessness and how these experiences specifically contribute to improving the homeless response system.

To help address this research gap, the Alliance’s LEARN team designed two national surveys and invited communities across the United States to complete them. The team sent one survey to current and former workers in the homeless response system who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness. As the essays point out, some of these workers are paid and others are in volunteer roles. The team also sent a separate survey to the leaders of organizations and Continuums of Care (CoCs) who hire and partner with PWLE in their work. These leaders may or may not be people who have experienced homelessness.

The team wanted to identify trends in how homeless response systems across the United States engage with PWLE workers and the ways that they contribute to ending homelessness, including through leadership. Because six of the team members have experienced homelessness, they also knew that PWLE face challenges in their work that are unique from the rest of the workforce. In the surveys, they prioritized asking about these challenges. Their goal was to begin identifying opportunities for the response system to create more effective and meaningful work environments for PWLE.

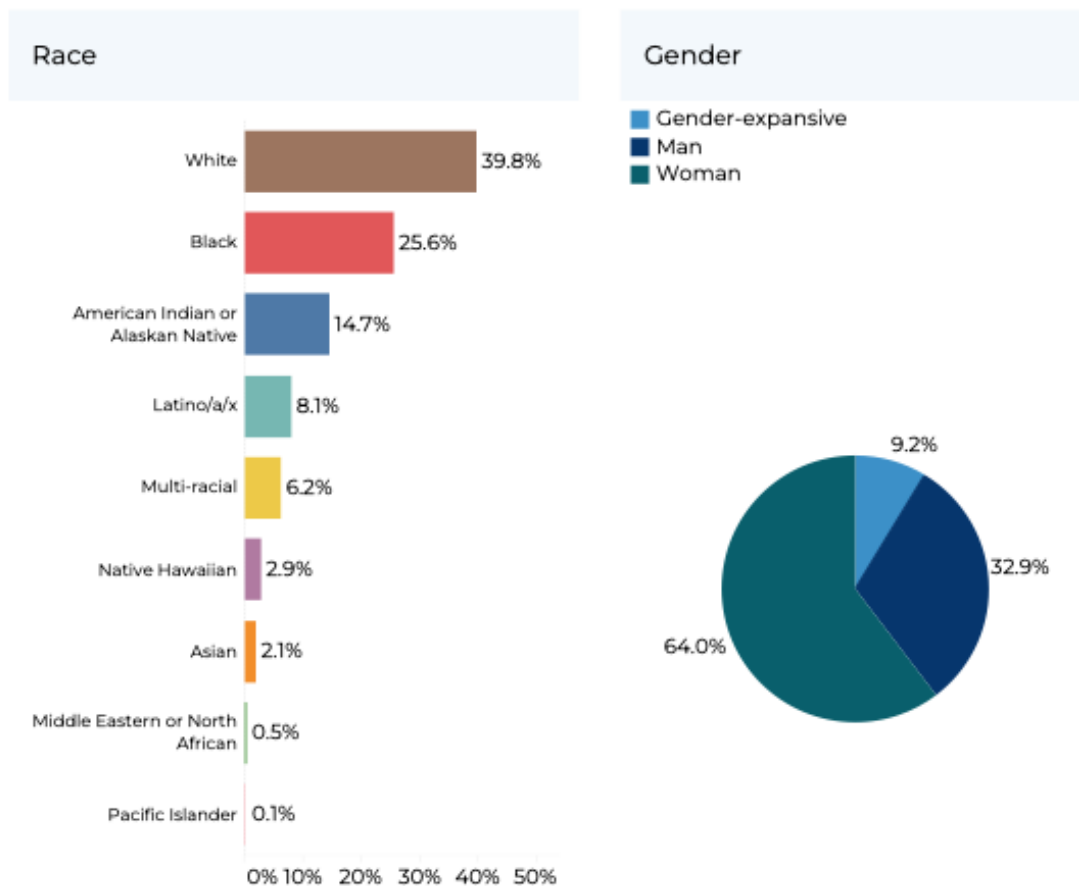
## Who Responded to the Surveys?

Close to 1,000 people with lived experience of homelessness responded to the first survey. After removing incomplete responses, there were **770 responses**.

Respondents were provided with an honorarium for the time they spent completing the survey.

The survey captured a variety of experiences from different communities across the United States: respondents hold different racial and gender identities as well as live and work in a diverse range of geographies and communities.

## **SURVEY RESPONDENTS: WORKERS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS**



**SURVEY RESPONDENTS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS LIVE IN:**

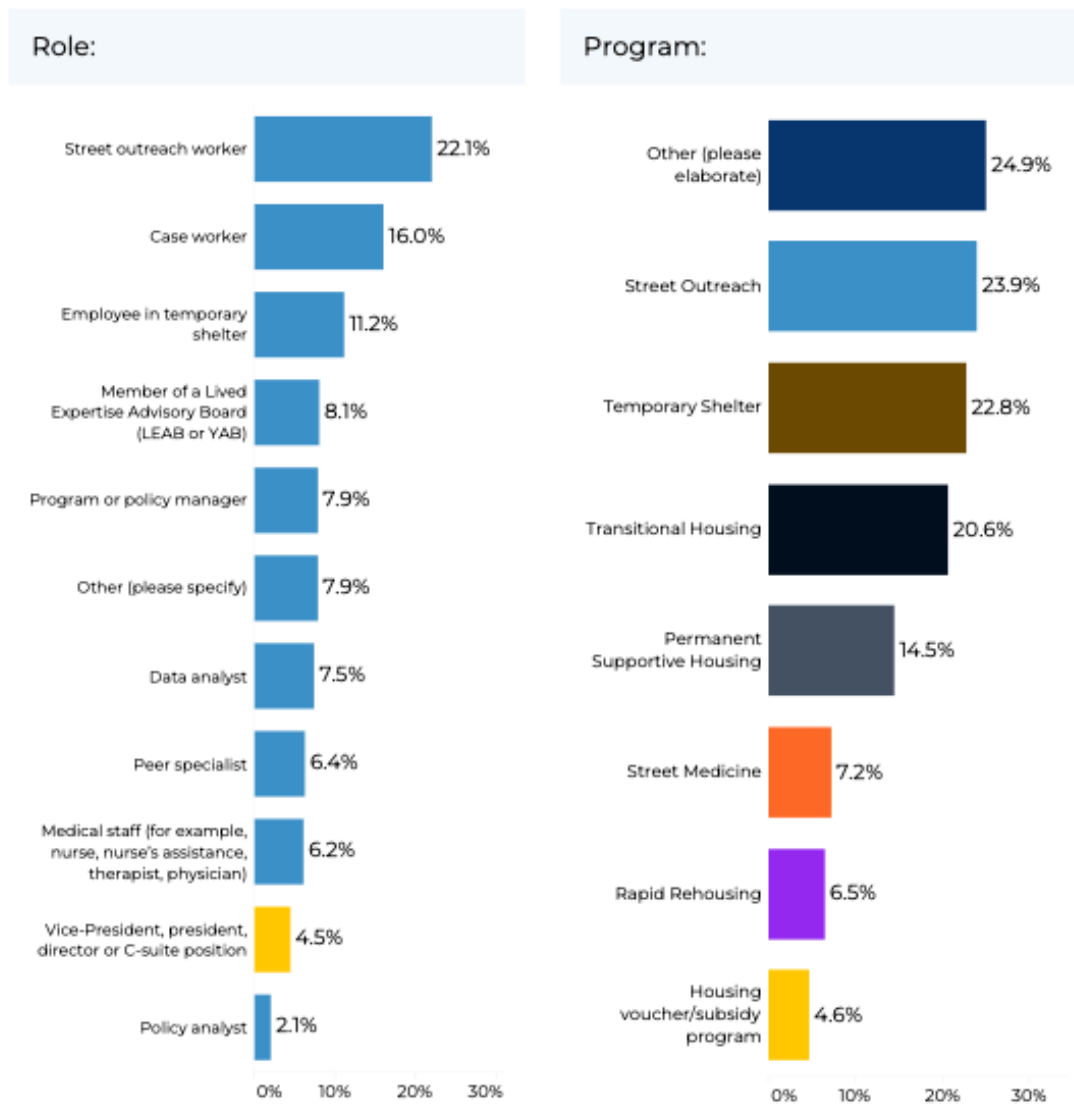


## **SURVEY RESPONDENTS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS LIVE IN:**

Iowa	9	California	113
West Virginia	8	Michigan	45
South Dakota	7	Texas	29
South Carolina	7	Florida	27
Pennsylvania	7	Illinois	26
Nevada	7	New York	24
Nebraska	7	Minnesota	24
Mississippi	7	Washington	22
Indiana	7	Georgia	19
Hawaii	7	Maine	17
Delaware	7	Wisconsin	16
American Samoa	7	Ohio	15
Alaska	7	Arizona	15
Rhode Island	6	North Carolina	14
Louisiana	6	Massachusetts	14
Kentucky	6	Maryland	14
Guam	6	Colorado	14
North Dakota	5	Arkansas	14
Wyoming	4	Oklahoma	13
Tennessee	4	New Jersey	13
New Hampshire	4	Idaho	13
Vermont	3	Oregon	12
Northern Mariana ..	3	New Mexico	11
Montana	3	Virginia	10
U.S. Virgin Islands	2	Missouri	10
Puerto Rico	2	Kansas	10
Alabama	1	Connecticut	10
		Utah	9

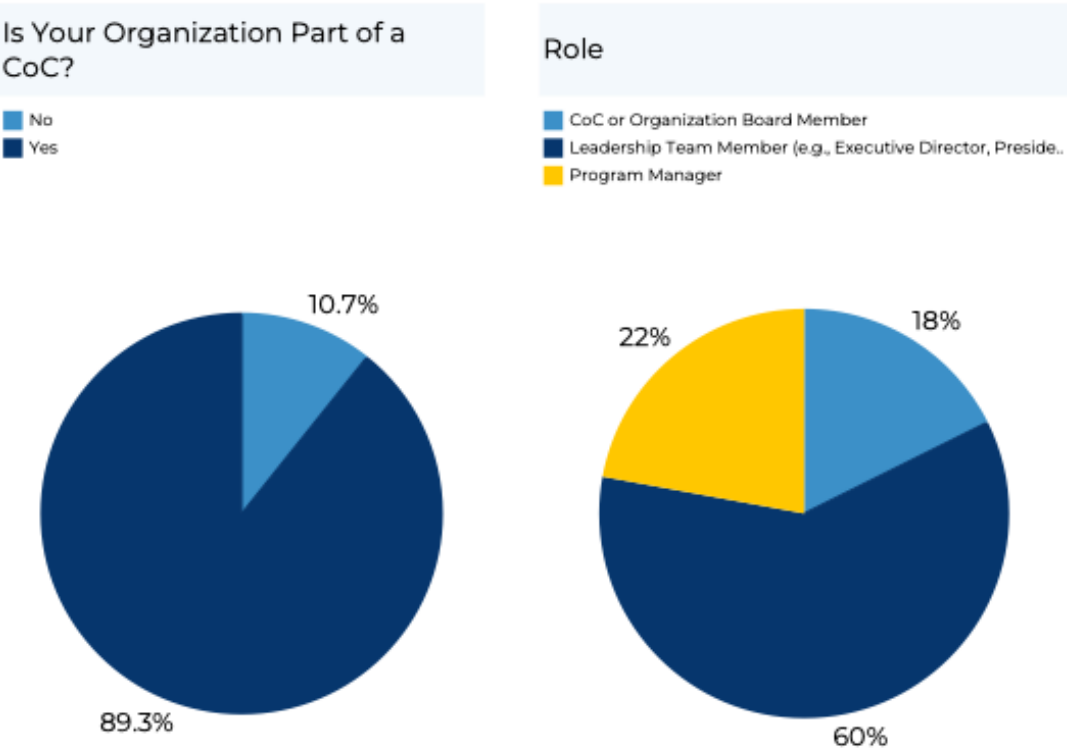
These workers also report contributing to the homeless response system through many different roles ranging from program managers to street outreach workers to advisory board members.

## SURVEY RESPONDENTS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS WORK IN VARIOUS ROLES AND PROGRAMS



The research team also received **512 responses** to a second survey among homeless service organization and/or CoC leaders. The majority of respondents work in their organization's executive office or manage their CoC or organization's programs.

**SURVEY RESPONDENTS: COC AND ORGANIZATION LEADERS**

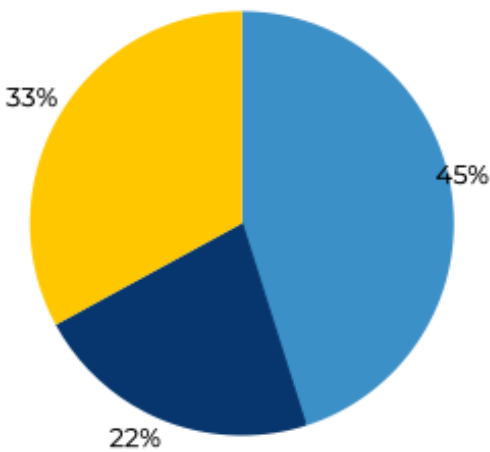


People responded from a range of organizations and community types. Many leaders direct small organizations or agencies with fewer than 20 staff. Roughly half work in either a big or a small city while the rest work in rural/suburban communities.

**SURVEY RESPONDENTS: COC AND ORGANIZATION LEADERS**

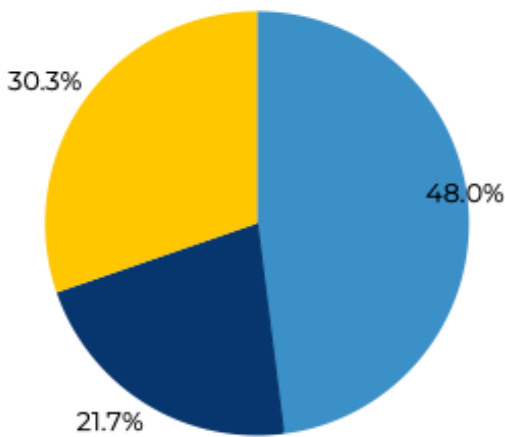
**Size**

- 1 to 20 staff
- 21 to 50 staff
- More than 50 staff



**Geography**

- Rural/Suburban
- Small City
- Big City



The LEARN team appreciates each of the respondents for sharing their experiences and offering an opportunity to reflect and act on this important data.