



## **Fall 2014 Camp Enrollment and Staff Recruitment Survey**

Prepared by Troy Bennett  
ACA Research Assistant at the University of Utah

## Table of Contents

Report Overview .....	3
Enrollment .....	7
Capacity .....	10
Race/Ethnicity.....	12
Gender and Age .....	14
Minority Camper Enrollment .....	22
Discounts and Scholarships .....	23
Staff Recruitment .....	26
Opinions and Issues .....	30
Participating Camps .....	34

## Survey and Statistical Analysis Notes

Each fall, the American Camp Association® (ACA) requests enrollment information from camps across the country. The statistics and information allow us to chart industry trends and identify enrollment issues that camps are facing on an annual basis.

In general, the overall enrollment findings can be considered representative of the experience of all camps participating in the survey. When statistically significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) exist between responses based on camp type, camp affiliation, or ACA region, specific comparisons are identified and discussed in the report.

Additional resources can be found on the ACA website under the Research tab.

Articles on enrollment appear each March /April in Camping Magazine.

For more information contact:  
M. Deborah Bialeschki, PHD  
Director of Research  
American Camp Association  
[dbialeschki@acacamps.org](mailto:dbialeschki@acacamps.org)

# Enrollment Highlights

Camper enrollment continued on an upward trend in 2014.

- 79 percent of camps reported that the overall enrollment at their camp was either the same as last year or higher.
- 45 percent of camps reported that 2014 summer enrollment was the highest in the last five years.
- One out of two camps reported enrollment was at 90–100 percent of actual capacity.
- One out of four camps that reported higher overall enrollments were higher by more than 10 percent compared to last year.

# Key Takeaways

- Enrollments are up. It was a good summer for the majority of camps.
- 68 percent of camp directors reported that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: “The economy negatively affected my camp’s enrollment.”
- Day camps are driving an increase in enrollment of minority campers.
- Significant differences existed across camp affiliation categories. For example, in 2014 72% of Agency affiliated camps reported higher enrollment compared to last year, while 32% of religiously affiliated camps reported lower enrollment.

## Age and Gender Highlights

- Enrollment trends by gender were similar for both boys and girls. The percentage of camps with lower enrollment of boys and girls has steadily decreased over the past several years. The number of camps reporting their enrollment was about the same as the previous year has remained relatively stable as the number reported higher enrollment has increased.
- A higher percentage of day camps reported lower enrollment of campers ages 9 and under when compared to overnight camps.
- Enrollment of teenagers appears to be leveling off with an increasing number of camps reporting enrollment was the same as last year and fewer camps reporting higher enrollment.
- Enrollment of boys at for-profit camps increased significantly in 2014.
- Religiously affiliated camps reported the most stable enrollment for boys with 59% of camps having the same enrollment as last year, compared to 46% of all camps in the survey.

# Top Enrollment and Staff Recruitment Issues

Camps were asked to report the top two enrollment and staff recruitment issues that they faced this past summer:

## Top Enrollment Issues

1. School calendars, impacted by weather-related events such as snow days, pushed school further into the summer. This impacted camp schedules, influenced enrollment rates, and brought up financial issues such as “pro-rating” camp fees.
2. Financial and economic issues related to the cost of camp were the second most frequent issue.
3. More options for youth, conflicting family schedules, and competition from other programs affected both recruitment and enrollment.
4. Parents waited to enroll their children later in the year and requested last minute registrations.
5. Marketing and the need to get the word out. Recruiting specific age groups, reaching out to new campers, marketing effectively on a small budget, and keeping up with new marketing methods were mentioned.
6. Long waiting lists, not having the capacity to accommodate the demand for specific age groups, and unbalanced enrollment across programs, throughout the summer were mentioned.

## Top Staff Recruitment Issues

1. Recruiting specialized staff such as waterfront, lifeguards, nurses, food service, horseback, ropes, and sailing.
2. Recruiting male applicants.
3. Competing with college internships and schedules.
4. Commitment by staff is an issue. Staff waited until the last minute to make a decision, changed their minds after being hired, and did not want to commit to work the entire summer.
5. Attracting quality applicants.
6. Paying competitive salary and wage rates that are attractive to applicants.

# Top Resources Requested From ACA

Camp directors were asked to report one enrollment resource and one staff recruitment resource they need from ACA.

## Top Enrollment Resource Requested

1. Marketing assistance was identified by 50% of camp directors
  - the need for a nationwide marketing campaign promoting the benefits of camp
  - need for tips and advice and how to reach target markets economically
  - need to keep telling the camp story and the value of camp
2. Suggestions on how to improve enrollment efforts
3. Assistance with government regulations and coordinating with school schedules

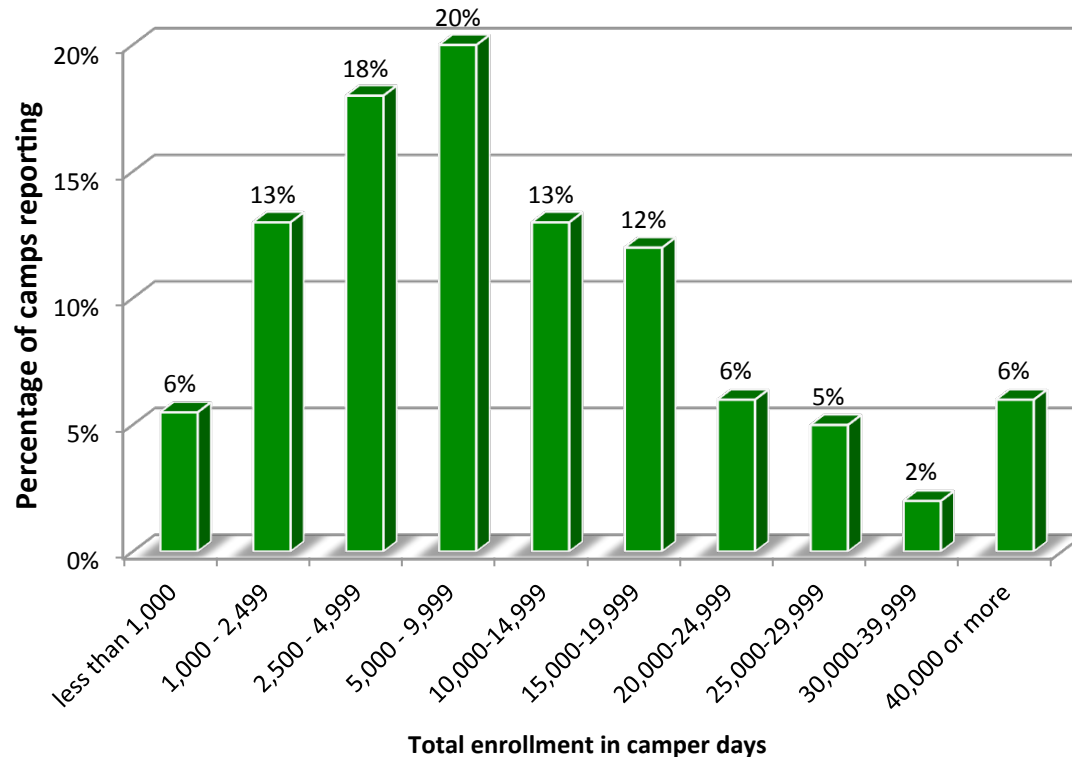
## Top Staff Recruitment Resource Requested

1. Marketing campaign on the importance and benefits of working at camp
2. Coordinating with universities to create internships and job opportunities at camp
3. Online staff recruitment support and job listings
4. Best practices for recruiting and hiring quality staff
  - how to write a good job description
  - how to better promote staff opportunities
  - how to recruit internationally
  - finding staff in strong economic times
  - better interview questions to help identify quality applicants

# Overall Enrollment

## Question 1:

Our total 2014 summer enrollment in camper days was in the range of:



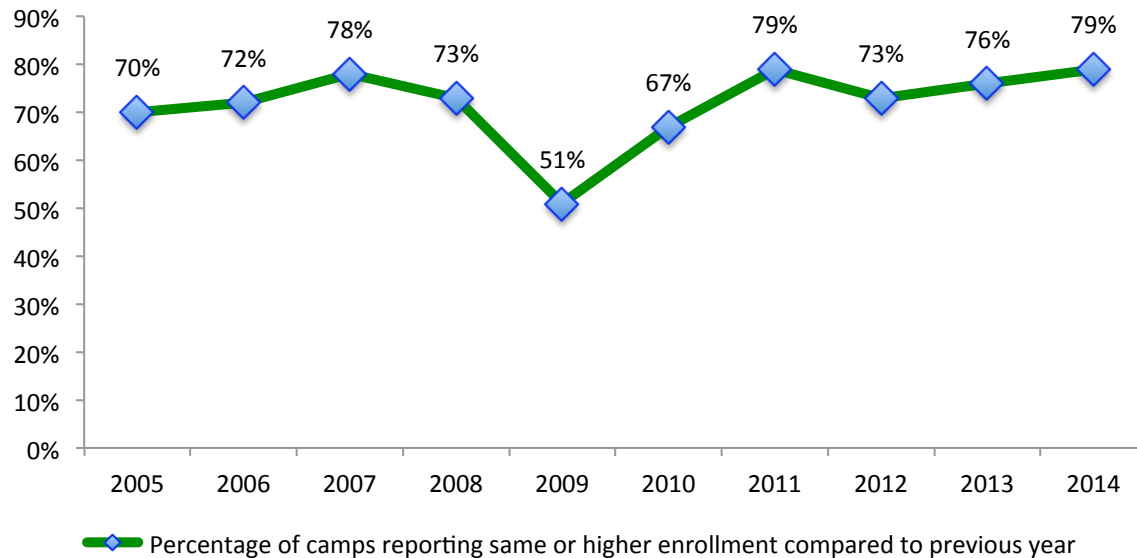
**Question 2:**

**Compared to last year, our camper enrollment for this summer was:**

Lower than last year	20.5%
About the same as last year	22.3%
Higher than last year	57.1%

Significant differences existed across camp affiliation categories. For example, in 2014 72% of Agency affiliated camps reported higher enrollment compared to last year, while 32% of religiously affiliated camps reported lower enrollment.

**10 Year Trend:  
Percentage of camps reporting same or higher enrollment compared to previous year**





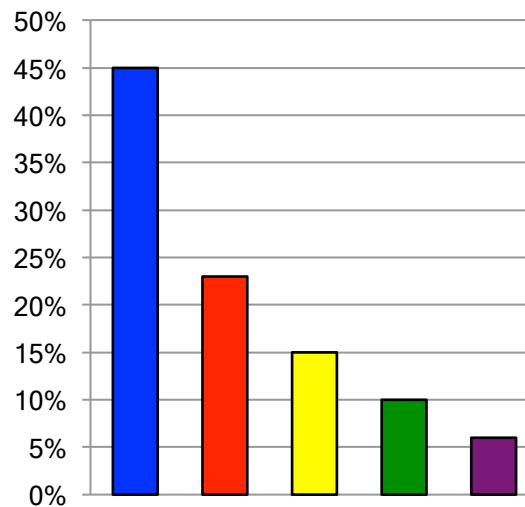
**Question 3:**

**If your summer camper enrollment was higher or lower in the previous question, how much higher or lower was it?**

	1-3%	4-10%	>10%	n/a
Higher by	28%	38%	26%	8%
Lower by	27%	32%	13%	29%

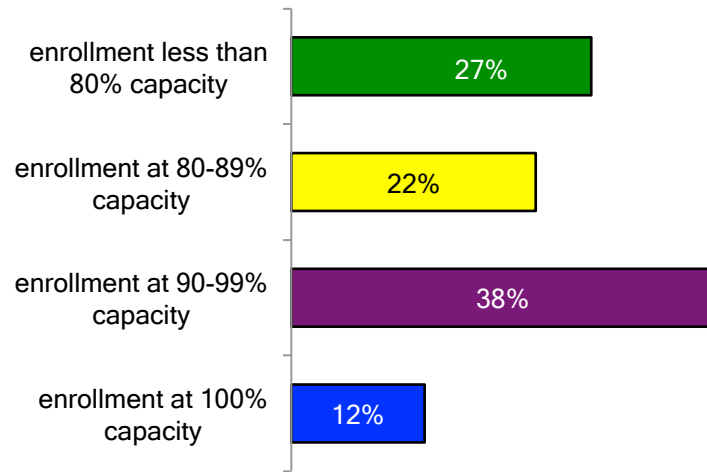
**Question 4:**

**When compared to the last 5 years, the 2014 summer camp enrollment was:**



- the highest of the past 5 summers
- higher than most of the past 5 summers
- about the same as the past 5 summers
- lower than most of the past 5 summers
- the lowest of the past 5 summers

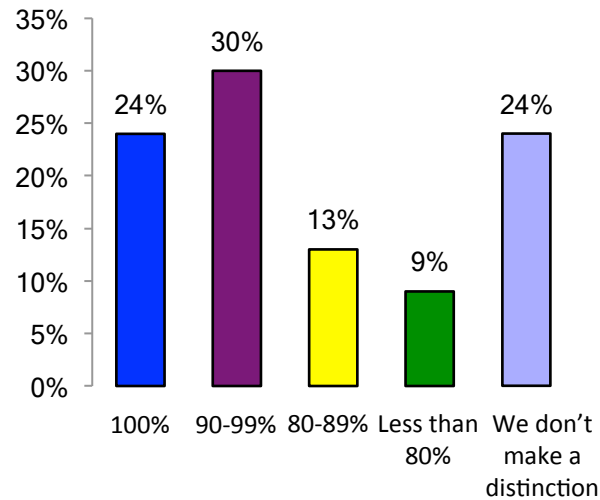
**Question 5:**  
When considering our actual capacity, our overall camp enrollment for the summer of 2014 was at:



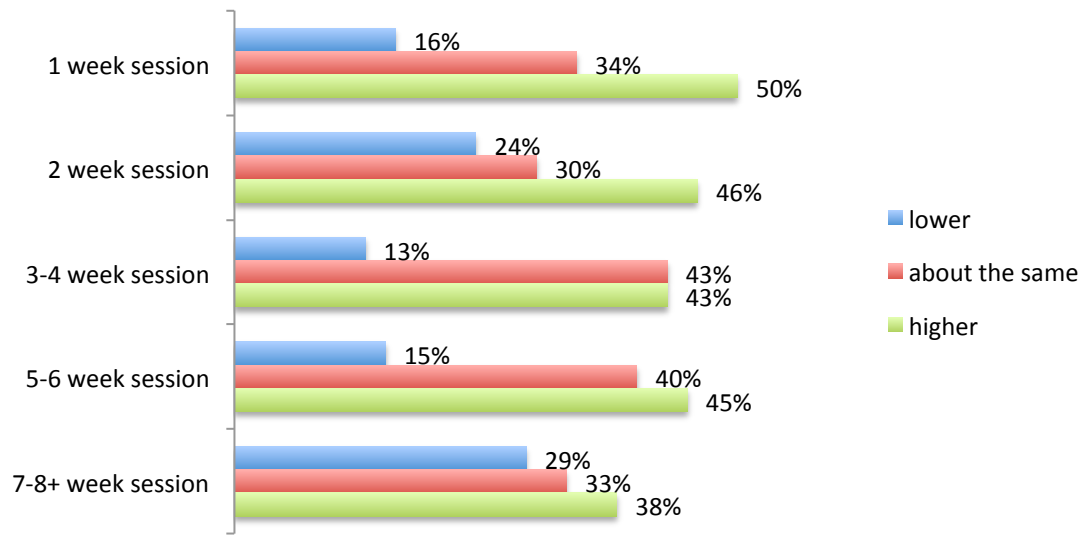
**Question 6:**

**Some camps distinguish between actual and targeted capacity.**

**How close were you to your targeted enrollment for the summer of 2014?**



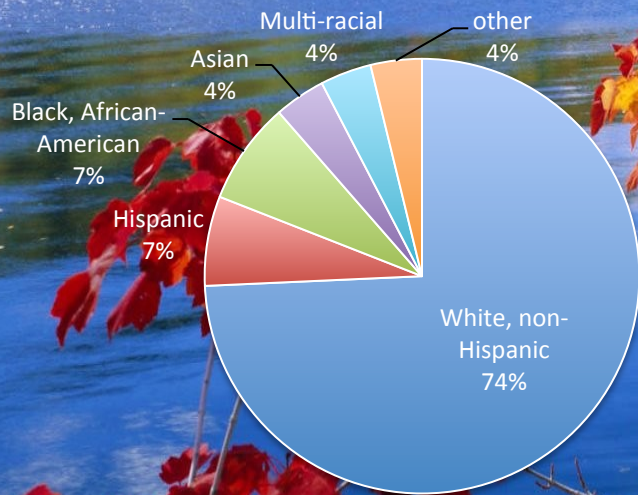
**Question 7:**  
**Compared to last year, enrollments by session length were:**



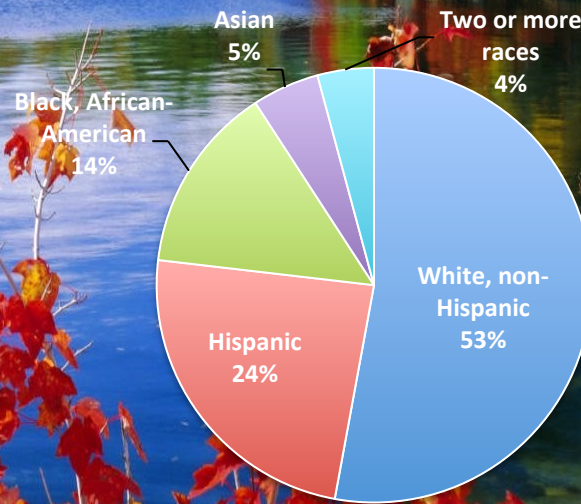
Percentages of camps offering each session length

**Question 8:**  
Indicate the approximate percentage of each race/ethnicity  
for your 2014 summer campers:

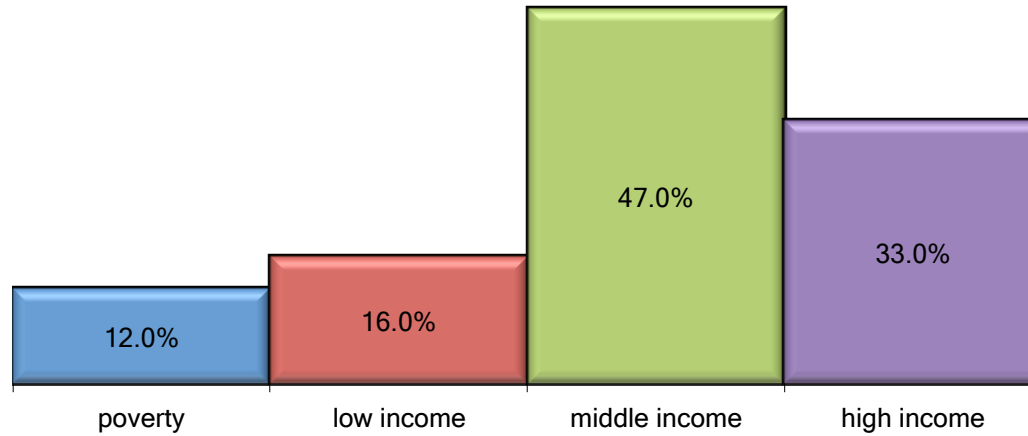
**2014 ACA Enrollment Breakdown**



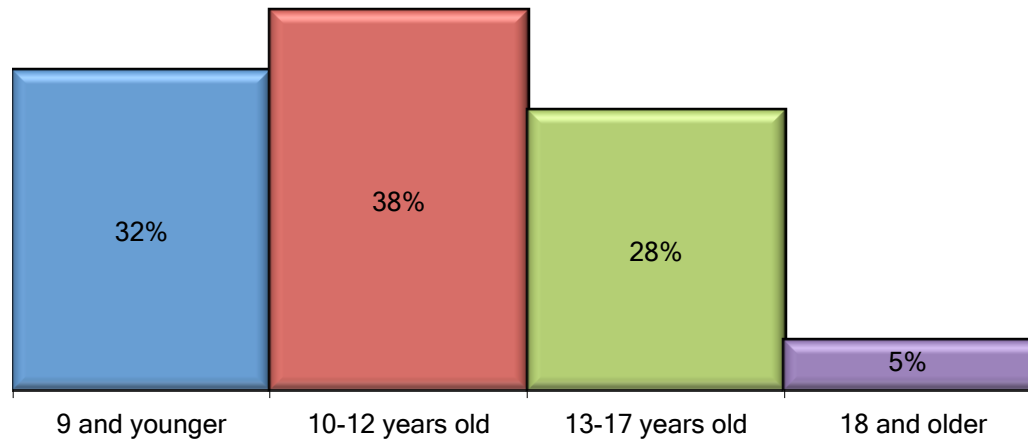
**2015 Projected US Population Ages 5-17**  
from [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)



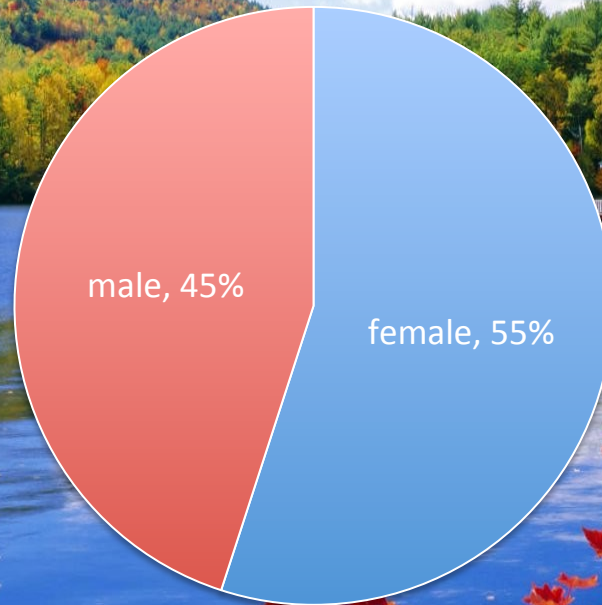
**Question 9:**  
Indicate the approximate percentage for each economic level of the families you serve.



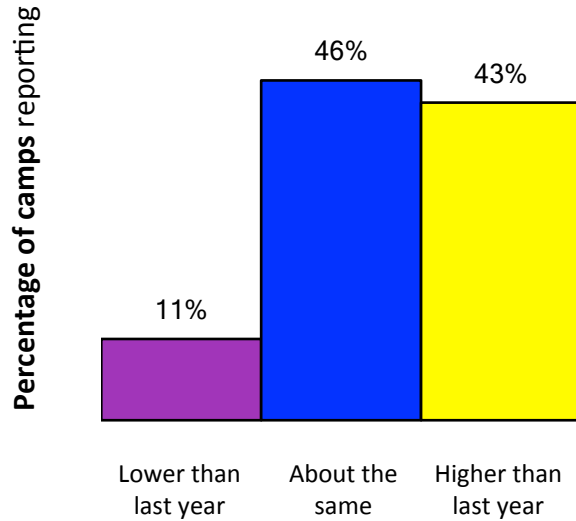
**Question 10:**  
Indicate the approximate percentage for each age group of campers you served this summer.



**Question 11:**  
Indicate the approximate percentage for gender  
of your campers.



**Question 12:**  
**Compared to last year, summer enrollment for boys in camper days was**

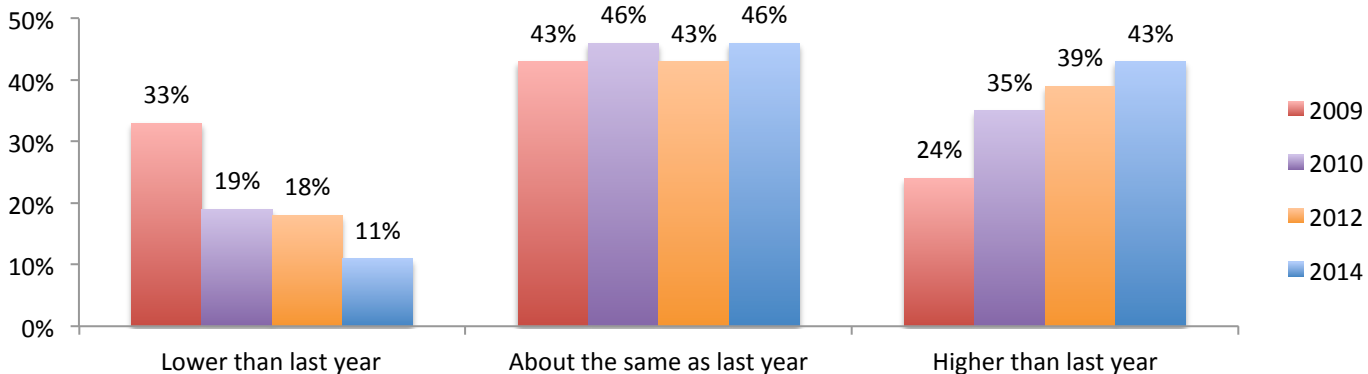


There were some significant differences in enrollment for boys across camp affiliation in 2014. For-Profit camps were unique, with 22% reporting lower enrollment for boys, 30% the same, and 48% reporting higher enrollment. Religiously affiliated camps reported the most stable enrollment for boys with 59% of camps having the same enrollment as last year.

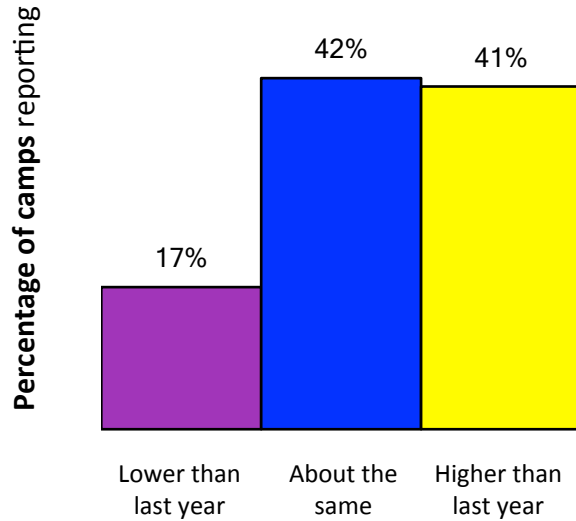
**Question 13:**  
**If your summer enrollment for boys was higher or lower in the previous question, how much higher or lower was it?**

	1-3%	4-10%	>10%	n/a
Higher by	31%	29%	19%	21%
Lower by	13%	24%	6%	57%

**Enrollment Trend for Boys**



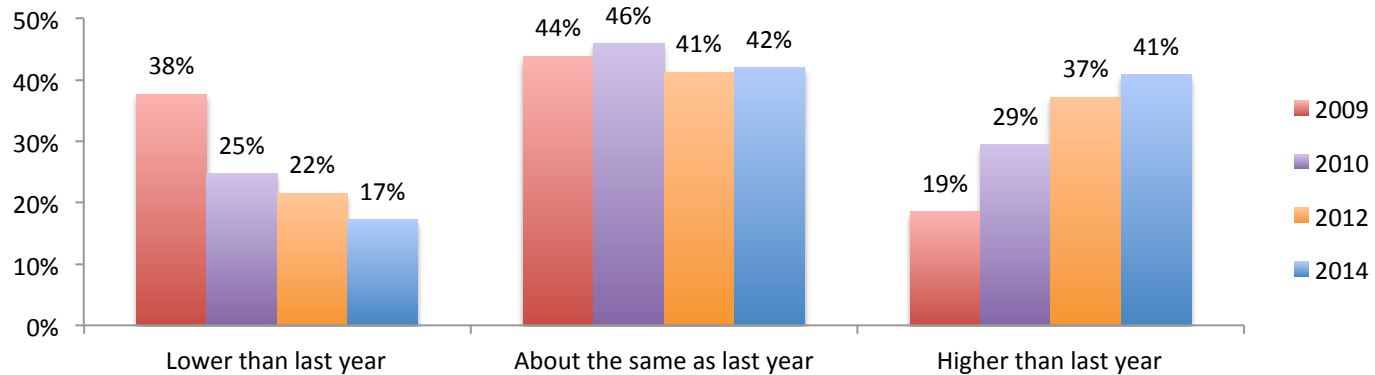
**Question 14:**  
**Compared to last year, summer enrollment for girls in camper days was**



**Question 15:**  
**If your summer enrollment for girls was higher or lower in the previous question, how much higher or lower was it?**

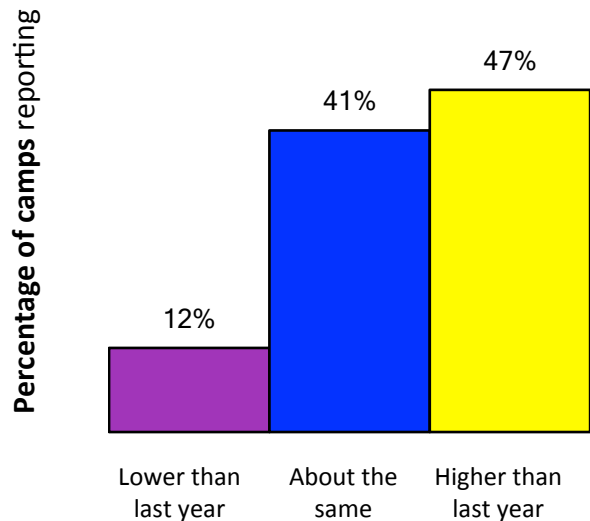
	1-3%	4-10%	>10%	n/a
Higher by	30%	26%	20%	24%
Lower by	32%	24%	7%	36%

**Enrollment Trend for Girls**





**Question 16:**  
**Compared to last year, summer enrollment for 9 year olds and younger in camper days was**

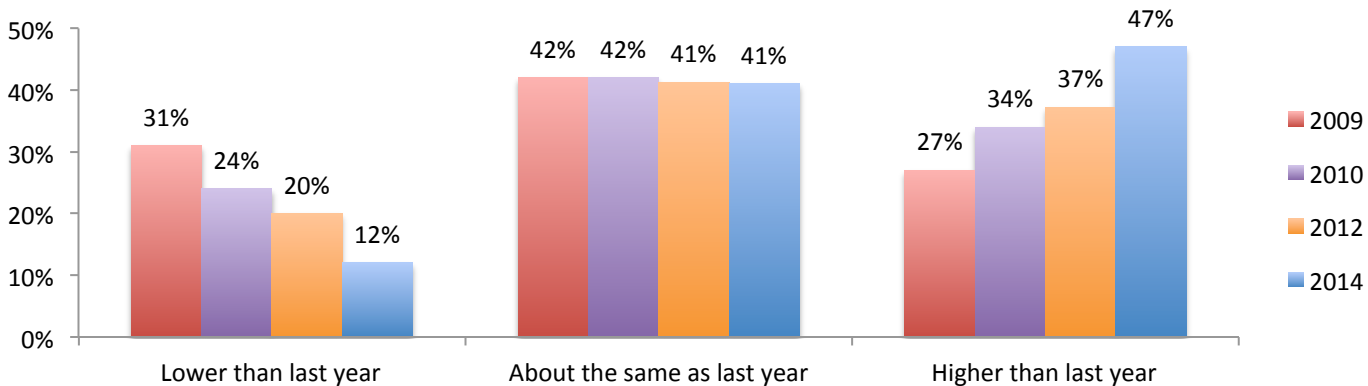


Day camps reported lower on enrollments with this age group compared to overnight camps. While 51% of Day camps reported an increase this year, 23% of Day camps reporting lower enrollment and 26% reporting that they remained the same compared to last year.

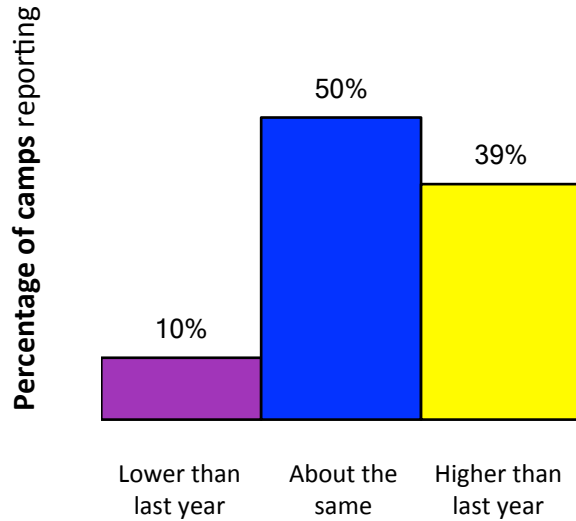
**Question 17:**  
**If your summer enrollment for 9 year olds and younger was higher or lower in the previous question, how much higher or lower was it?**

	1-3%	4-10%	>10%	n/a
Higher by	37%	22%	21%	20%
Lower by	26%	25%	6%	43%

**Enrollment Trend for 9 and younger**



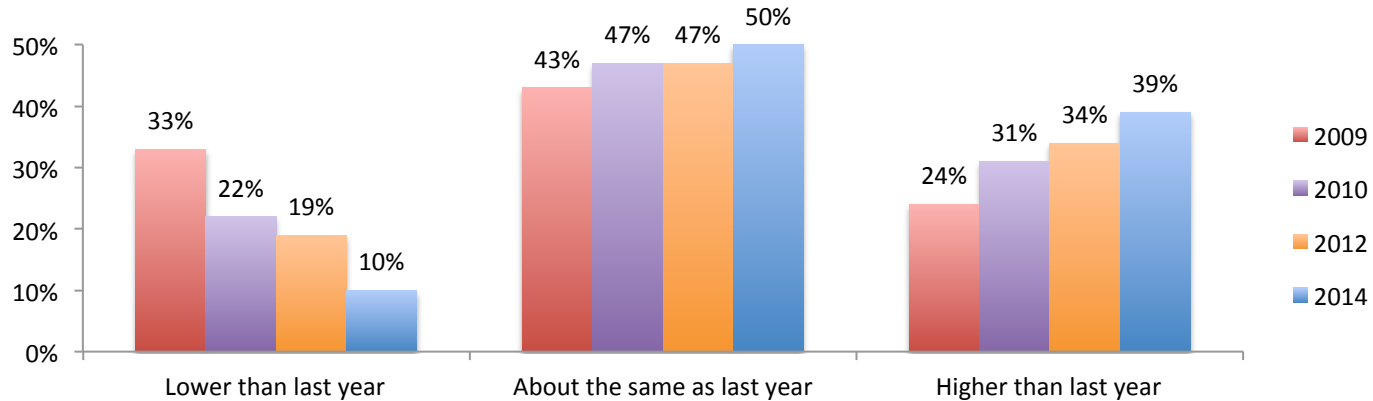
**Question 18:**  
**Compared to last year, summer enrollment for campers 10-12 years old in camper days was**



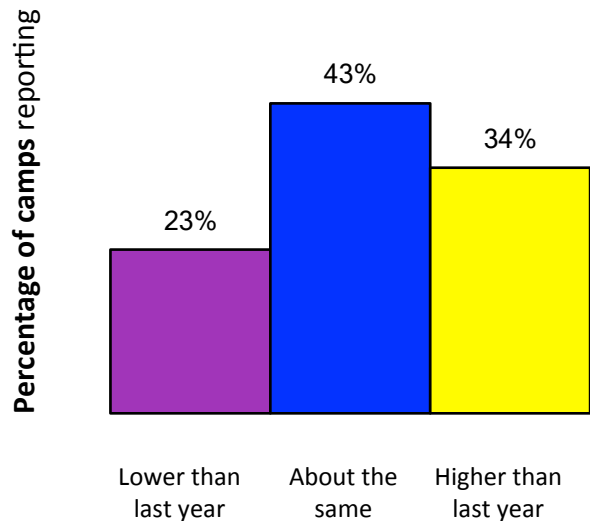
**Question 19:**  
**If your summer enrollment for 10-12 year olds was higher or lower in the previous question, how much higher or lower was it?**

	1-3%	4-10%	>10%	n/a
Higher by	31%	29%	18%	24%
Lower by	30%	20%	8%	43%

**Enrollment Trend for 10-12 yr olds**



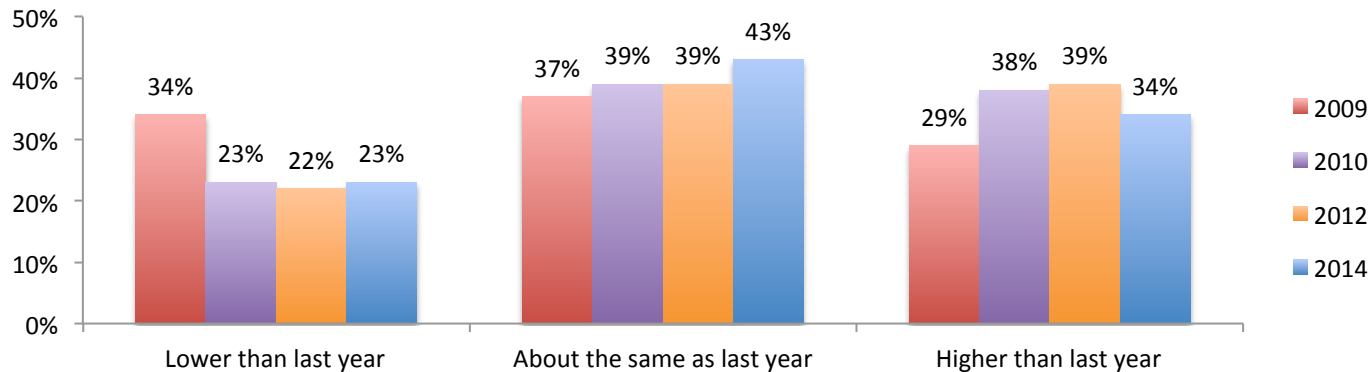
**Question 20:**  
**Compared to last year, summer enrollment for teenagers in camper days was**



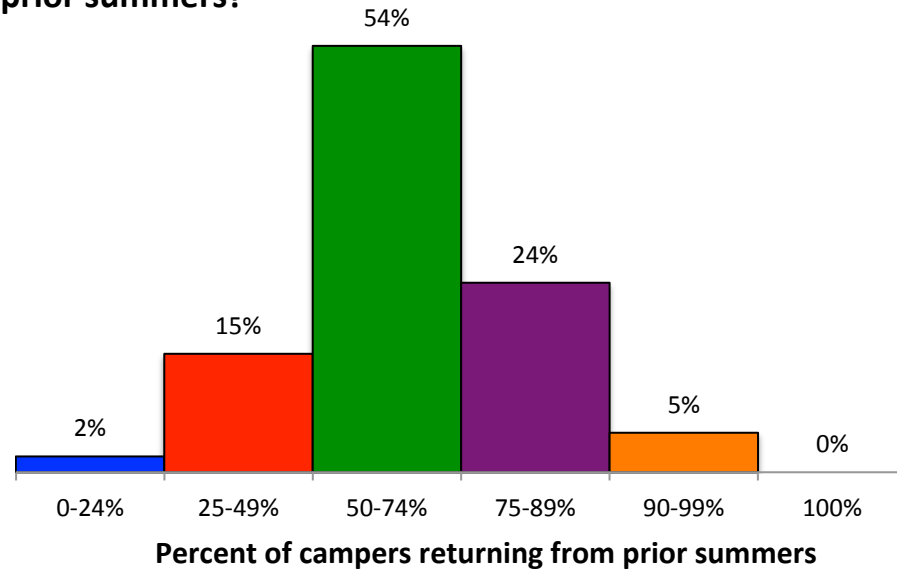
**Question 21:**  
**If your summer enrollment for teenagers was higher or lower in the previous question, how much higher or lower was it?**

	1-3%	4-10%	>10%	n/a
Higher by	45%	29%	22%	5%
Lower by	35%	39%	13%	13%

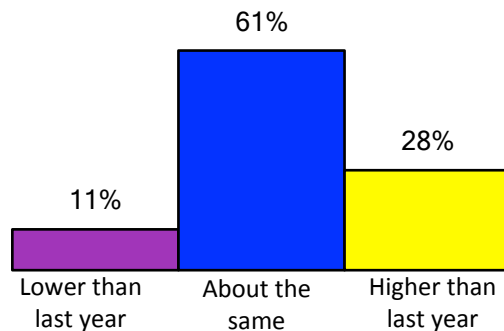
### Enrollment Trend for Teenagers



**Question 22:**  
**What percent of your 2014 campers were returning from prior summers?**



**Question 23:**  
**Compared to last year, summer enrollment for returning campers was**

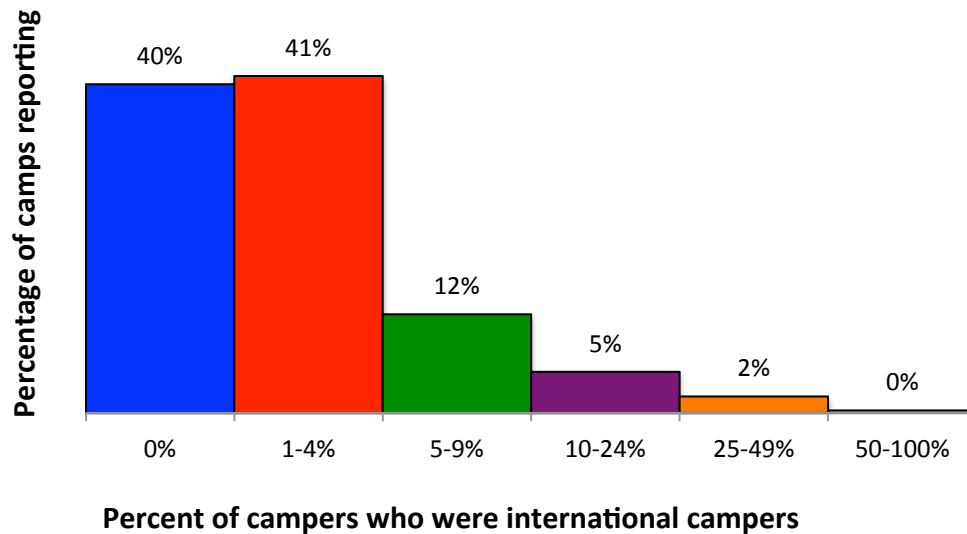


**Question 24:**  
**If your summer enrollment was higher or lower in the previous question, how much higher or lower was it?**

	1-3%	4-10%	>10%	n/a
Higher by	31%	31%	8%	31%
Lower by	19%	26%	9%	47%

**Question 25:**

**What percent of your 2014 campers were international campers?**

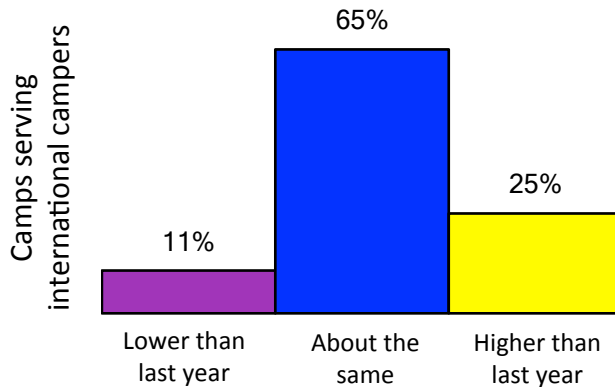


**Please list their home countries:**

Abu Dhabi, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Commonwealth of Dominica, Costa Rica, Croatia, Dominican Republic, Dubai, El Salvador, England, Finland, France, French Polynesia, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Holland, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Istanbul, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Kuwait, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tahiti, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and Venezuela

**Question 26:**

**Compared to last year, summer enrollment for international campers was**

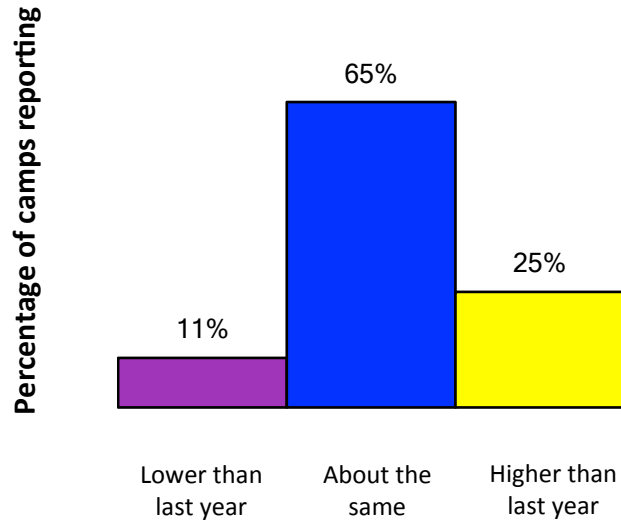


**Question 27:**

**If your summer enrollment for international campers was higher or lower in the previous question, how much higher or lower was it?**

	1-3%	4-10%	>10%	n/a
Higher by	31%	11%	7%	51%
Lower by	17%	6%	11%	66%

**Question 28:**  
 Compared to last year, summer enrollment for minority campers (race/ethnicity) was

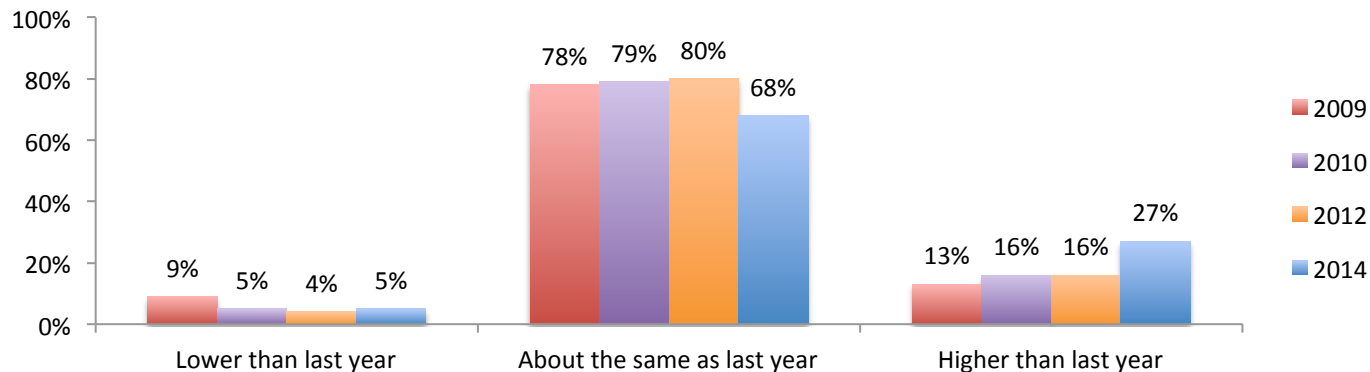


**Question 29:**  
 If your summer enrollment for minority campers (race/ethnicity) was higher or lower in the previous question, how much higher or lower was it?

	1-3%	4-10%	>10%	n/a
Higher by	31%	11%	7%	51%
Lower by	17%	6%	11%	66%

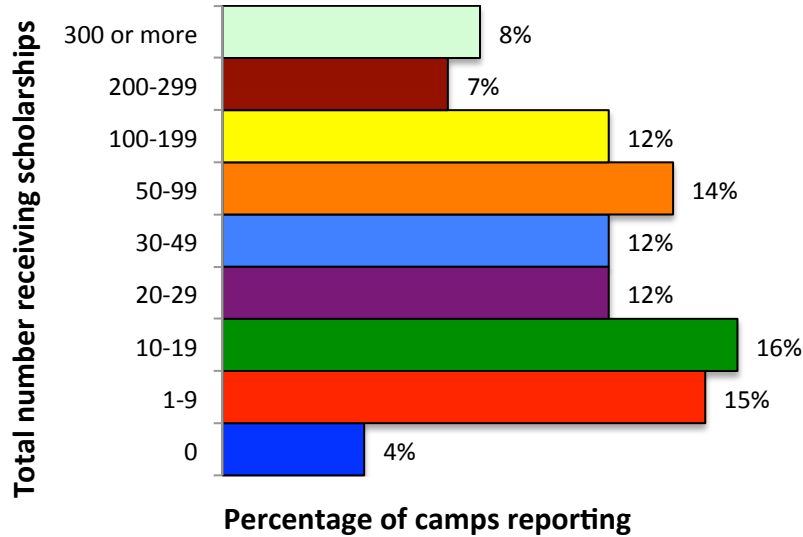
In 2014, 27% of camps reported having higher enrollment of minority campers, compared to 16% in 2013. This increase, along with the corresponding drop in the percent remaining the same, is driven by Day camps. Forty percent of Day camps reported higher enrollment of minority campers in 2014, and 55% reported having about the same enrollment as last year.

### Enrollment Trend for Minority Campers



**Question 30:**

The total number of campers who received financial support (camp scholarships) of at least 50% of the camp fee this summer was in the range of



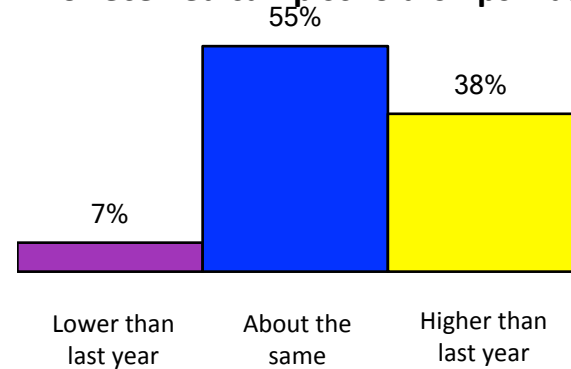
There were significant differences in the number of scholarships provided that covered at least 50% of the camp fee. 15% of Independent Not for Profit provided financial aid of at least 50% of the camp fee for 300 or more campers.

This figure was the highest of any affiliated group followed by 29% of Agency camps who provided financial aid to 100-199 campers, and 20% of Religiously affiliated camps who provided financial aid to 100-99 campers.

Another 20% of Religiously affiliated camps provided aid to 50-99 campers.

**Question 31:**

Compared to last year, summer enrollment of campers who received camp scholarships was



**Question 32:**

If your summer enrollment of campers who received camp scholarships was higher or lower in the previous question, how much higher or lower was it?

	1-3%	4-10%	>10%	n/a
Higher by	34%	25%	17%	25%
Lower by	24%	16%	5%	55%

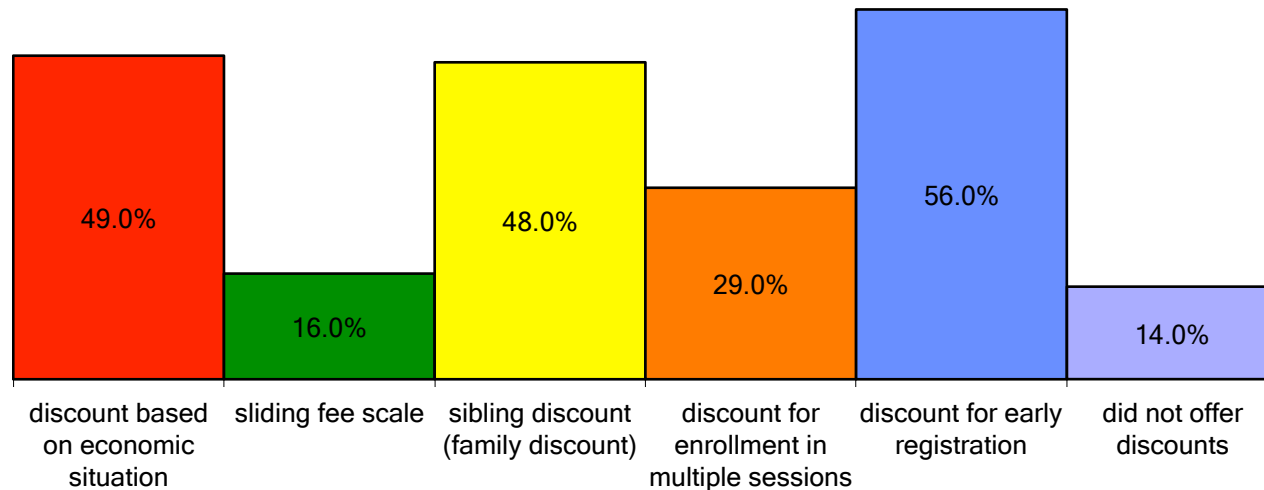
A higher percentage of Overnight camps provided larger numbers of scholarships when compared to Day Camps.

Regionally, 26% of Mid-Atlantic camps provided scholarships to 1-9 campers, 21% of camps in New England provided scholarships for 10-19 campers, and 20% of Mid-America camps provided scholarships for 100-199 campers.

### Question 33:

What type of discount options did you offer during Summer 2014?

Percentage of camps reporting



### Other types of discounts offered include:

Refer a friend

Agency or organization membership discount

Discount for participating in a fundraising activity

First time camper discount

Discounts for parents who are staff, volunteers, alumni, firefighters, police, or active military

Discounts for local community

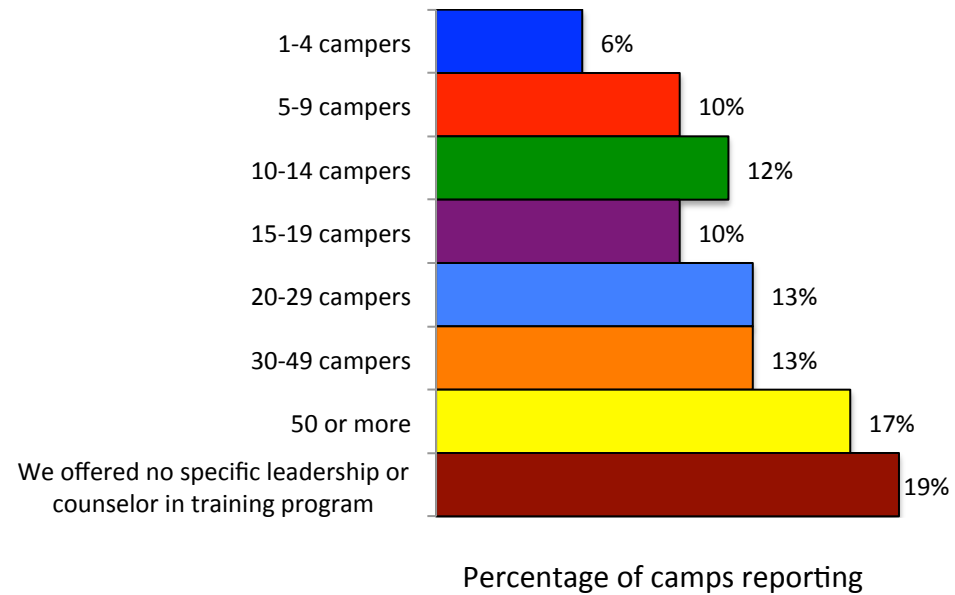
Scholarships and camp fees underwritten by donations and partnering organizations – both full and partial

Last minute “sale” on available spots

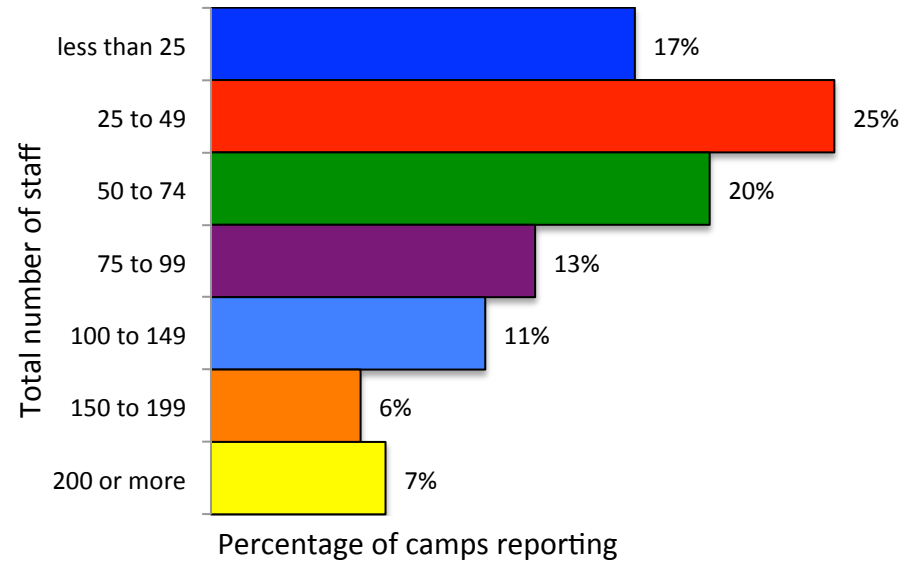


**Question 34:**

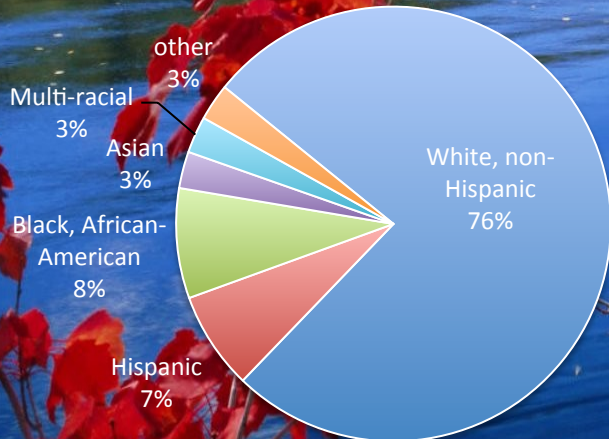
**The total number of campers enrolled in some type of specific leadership or counselor-in-training program was in the range of**



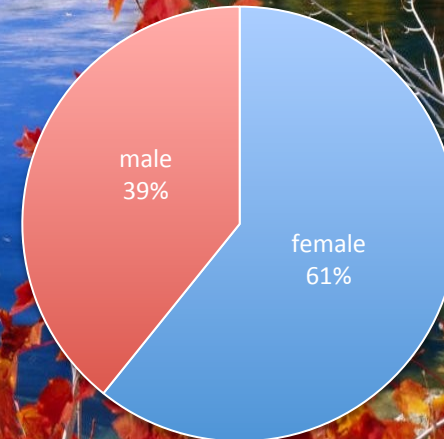
**Question 35:**  
**The total number of summer camp staff was**



**Question 36:**  
**Indicate the approximate percentage of race/ethnicity of your staff (must total 100%)**

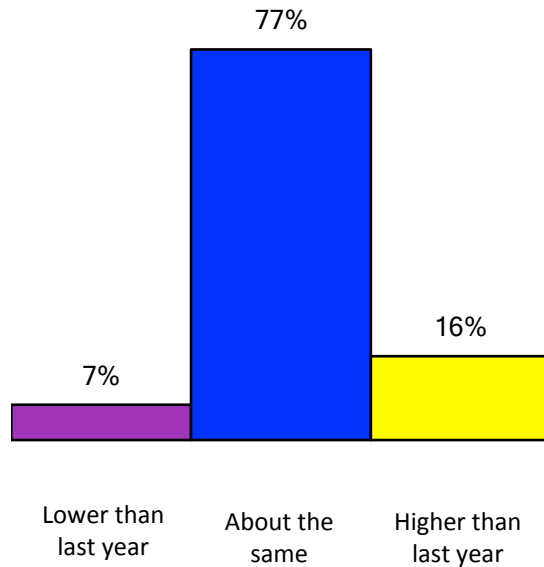


**Question 37:**  
**Indicate the approximate percentage for gender of your camp staff (must total 100%)**



**Question 38:**

Specialized staff are hired specifically as a specialist who needs certification or special skills/training. Compared to last year, the total number of specialized summer staff was



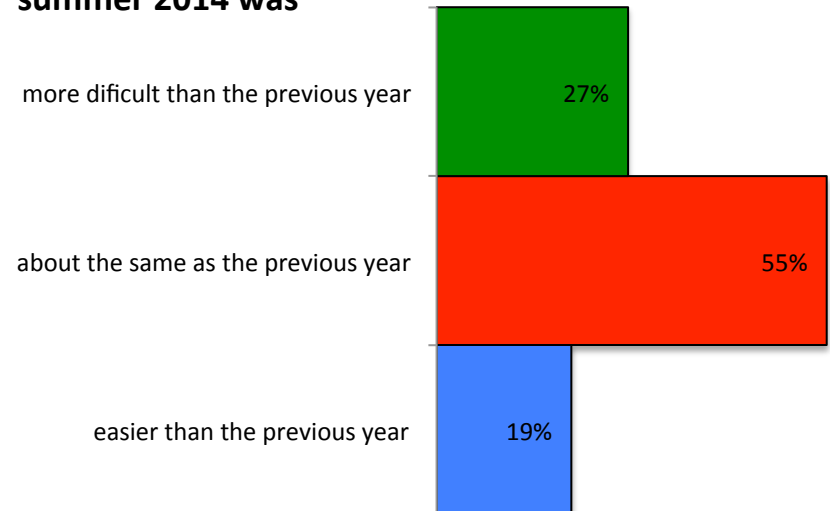
**Question 39:**

If your number of specialized summer staff was higher or lower in the previous question, how much higher or lower was it?

	1-3%	4-10%	>10%	n/a
Higher by	22%	17%	7%	54%
Lower by	31%	10%	7%	52%

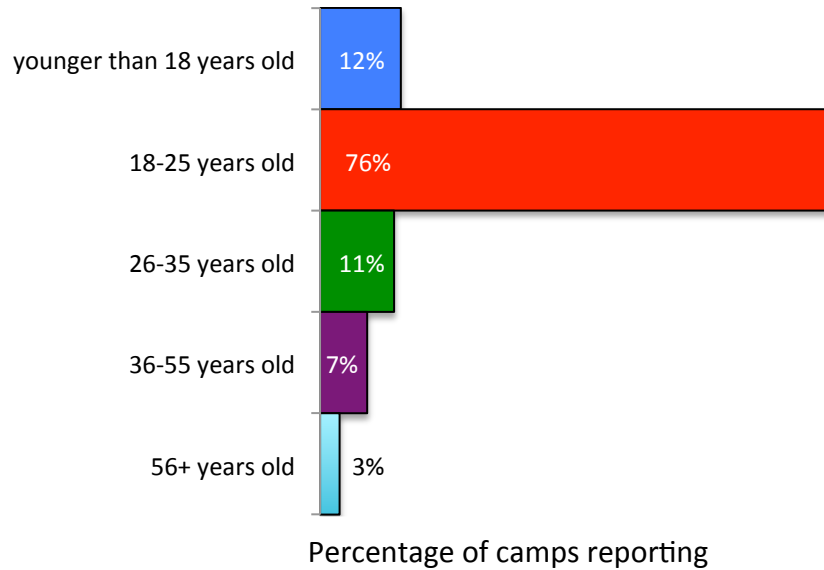
**Question 40:**

Compared to last year, recruiting and hiring staff for summer 2014 was



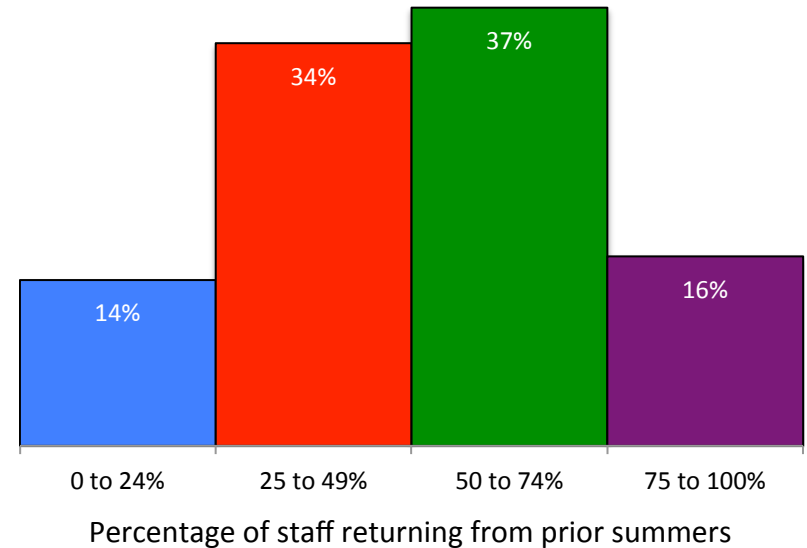
**Question 41:**

**What percent of your staff were in the following age groups (must total 100%)**



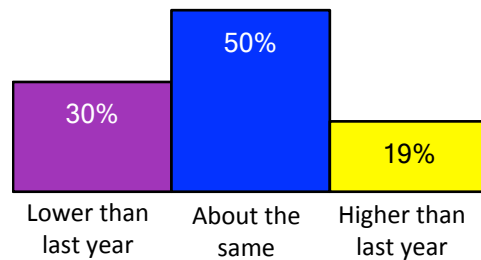
**Question 42:**

**What percent of your 2014 staff were returning from prior summers?**



**Question 43:**

**Compared to last year, the total number of summer staff returning from prior summers was**

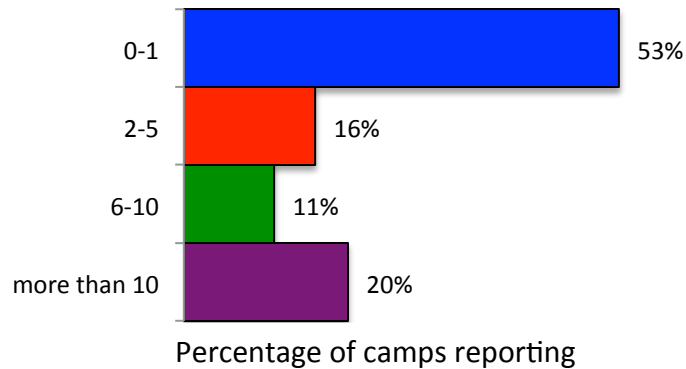


**Question 44:**

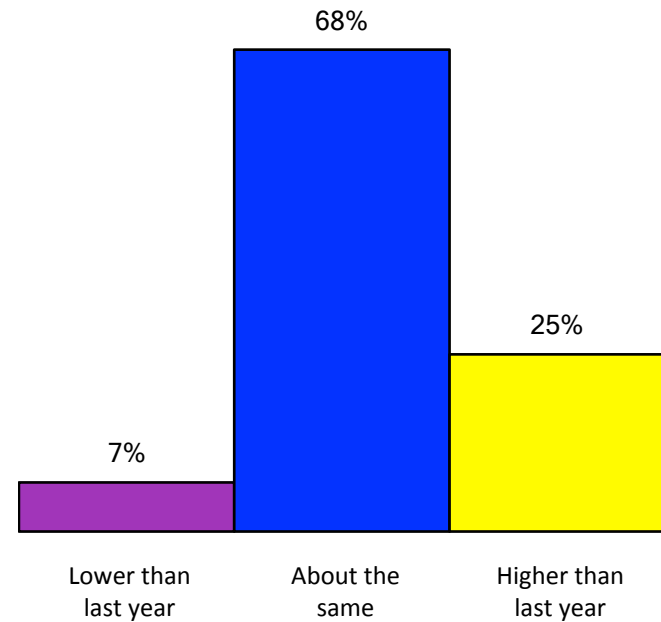
**If the total number of returning staff was higher or lower in the previous question, how much higher or lower was it?**

	1-3%	4-10%	>10%	n/a
Higher by	14%	31%	18%	38%
Lower by	21%	34%	33%	13%

**Question 45:**  
How many international staff worked at your camp during summer 2014?



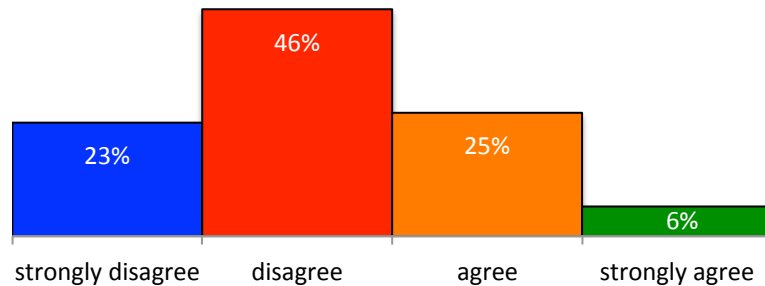
**Question 46:**  
Compared to last year, the total number of specialized summer staff was



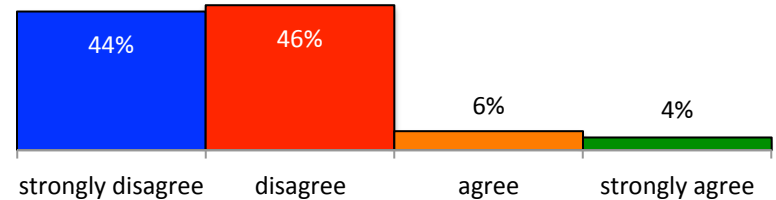
**Question 47:**

The following questions are your opinions regarding your camp for 2014 summer.

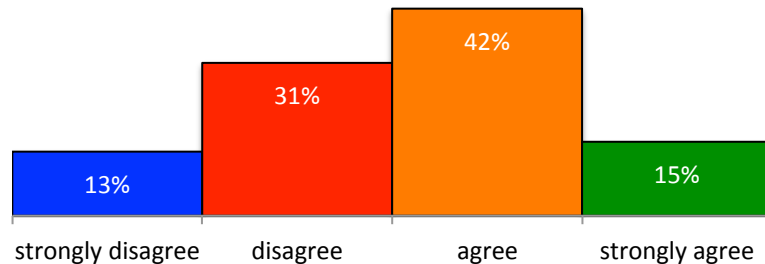
**The economy negatively affected my camp's enrollment**



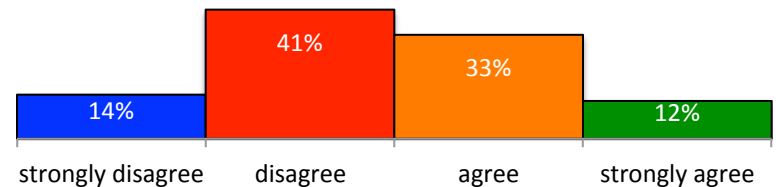
**Weather or natural disasters negatively affected my camp's enrollment**



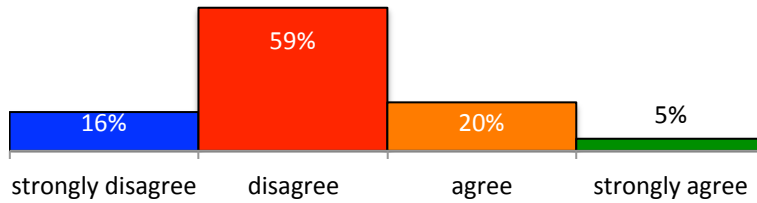
**Changes in the school calendar negatively affected enrollment**



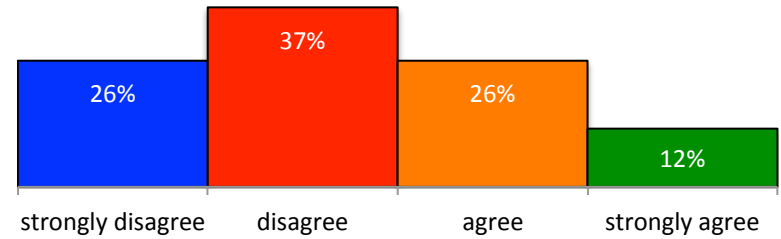
**Parents waited until later than usual to commit to enrolling their children in our programs**



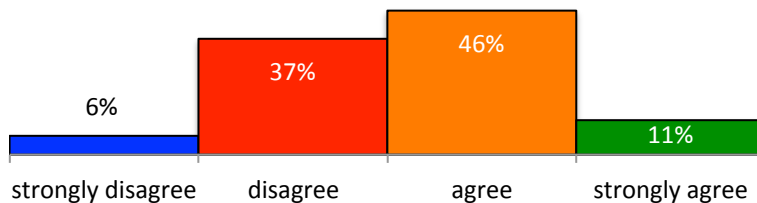
### More parents enrolled their children in shorter sessions than last year



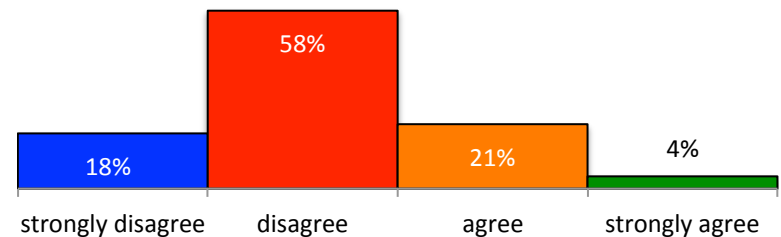
### We had more children who wanted to come to our camp than we could accommodate



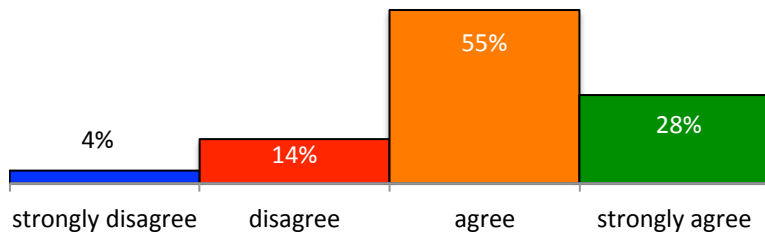
### We had more requests this year for camp scholarships than last year



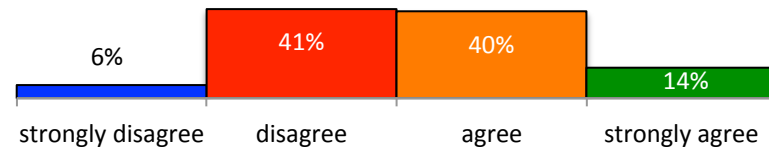
### We had reduced funds for camp scholarships



**We were able to provide camp scholarships to campers that requested them**



**Children in my camp's service area had more summer opportunities that resulted in greater competition with us**





**Question 48:**

**What are the top two enrollment issues you faced this past summer?**

The order of the most frequently mentioned issues in 2014 was very similar to the top issues from 2013:

1. School calendars, impacted by weather-related events such as snow days, pushed school further into the summer. This impacted camp schedules, influenced enrollment rates, and brought up financial issues such as “pro-rating” camp fees.
2. Financial and economic issues related to the cost of camp were the second most frequent issue.
3. More options for youth, conflicting family schedules, and competition from other programs affected both recruitment and enrollment.
4. Parents waited to enroll their children later in the year and requested last minute registrations.
5. Marketing and the need to get the word out. Recruiting specific age groups, reaching out to new campers, marketing effectively on a small budget, and keeping up with new marketing methods were mentioned.
6. Long waiting lists, not having the capacity to accommodate the demand for specific age groups, and unbalanced enrollment across programs, throughout the summer were mentioned.

**Question 49:**

**What are the top two staff recruitment issues you faced this past summer?**

The most frequently mentioned staff recruitment issues were:

1. Recruiting specialized staff such as waterfront, lifeguards, nurses, food service, horseback, ropes, and sailing.
2. Recruiting male applicants.
3. Competing with college internships and schedules.
4. Commitment by staff is an issue. Staff waited until the last minute to make a decision, changed their minds after being hired, and did not want to commit to work the entire summer.
5. Attracting quality applicants.
6. Paying competitive salary and wage rates that are attractive to applicants.

**Question 50:**

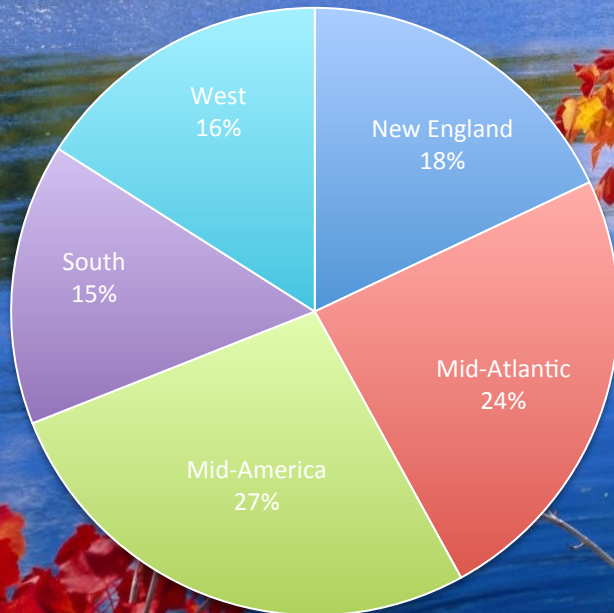
**What one resource would you like from ACA to help you with:**

The most frequently requested Needs from ACA are:

1. Marketing the benefits of attending camp nationwide
2. Telling the story of camp / explaining the benefits of camp participation to parents
3. Promoting the benefits of working at camp
4. Online support for registration and recruiting potential applicants

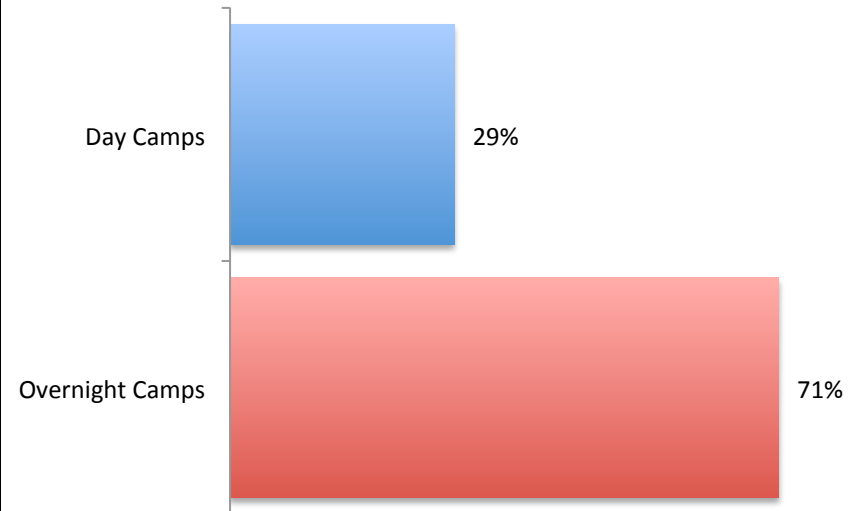
**Question 51:**

**ACA Field/Affiliate Office (by Region):**

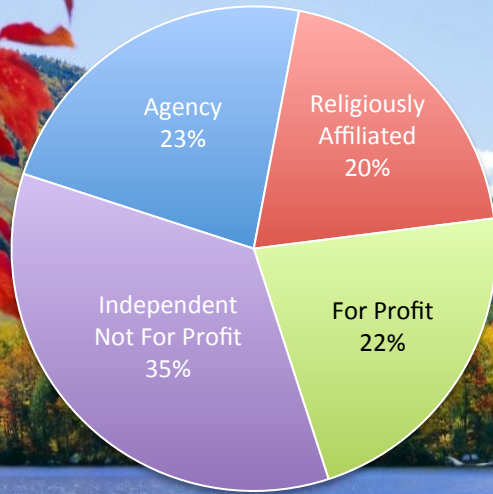


**Question 52:**

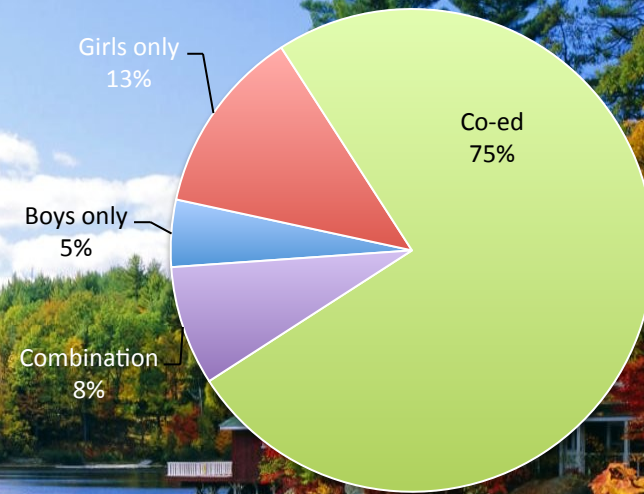
**Type of Program:**



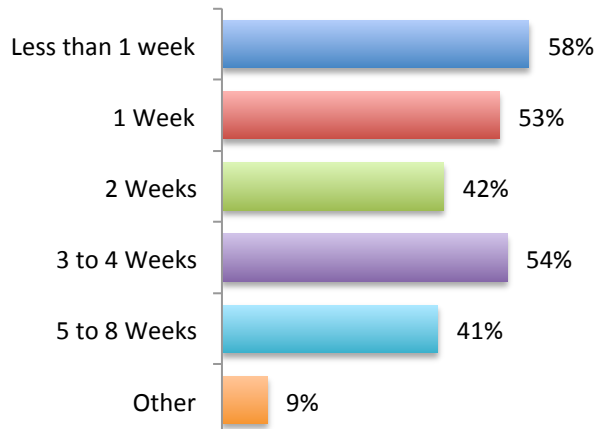
**Question 53:  
Camp Affiliation:**



**Question 54:  
Summer youth camp clientele served:**



**Question 55:  
Session lengths offered at our camp include  
(Check all that apply)**



**Question 56:  
Our most popular session length was**

