Native Women's Association of Canada

L'Association des femmes autochtones du Canada

WATER CARRIERS FACING WATER INSECURITY

NATIONAL SURVEY REPORT

Report
March 20, 2025

ENVIRONICS RESEARCH

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RESEARCH DEFINITIONS

For clarity and consistency, please note that some of the terms used throughout have the following definition:

- **WG2SGD+ Peoples:** Women, girls, Two Spirit, and Gender Diverse + Peoples.

- **Water Insecurity:** In the context of this survey, water insecurity is the lack of consistent access to safe, clean, and reliable potable water and healthy water bodies necessary for drinking, sanitation, cultural practices, and overall well-being. It includes the contamination, scarcity, or disruption of water sources, as well as the social, political, and systemic barriers that prevent communities from exercising control over their water.

- **Water Governance:** Water governance refers to how decisions about water are made and who is involved in making them. From an Indigenous perspective, it means respecting water as a living being and upholding responsibilities to care for it. This includes leadership from Indigenous communities, especially WG2SGD+ people, based on traditional laws, knowledge, and relationships with water.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The Water Carriers Project, led by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) and funded by Indigenous Services Canada, seeks to amplify the voices of Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples in water governance, recognizing their inherent connection to water, and their traditional roles of protecting it. Grounded in Indigenous worldviews and gender-based analysis, this survey explores the impacts of water insecurity and the leadership of Water Carriers in addressing it.

Key areas of focus include:

- Access to and Use of Potable Water
- Household Adaptation to Water Shortages
- Information Sharing and Community Awareness
- Capacity to Manage Water Quality and Reliability Risks
- Gender-Based Leadership and Solutions

The results will guide NWAC's ongoing advocacy for Indigenous WG2SGD+ peoples and inform the development of community resources that support those experiencing water insecurity. This research is part of Phase 3 of the Water Carriers Project which is led by the Native Women's Association of Canada.

RESEARCH METHODS

This report is based on an online survey completed by 239 Indigenous women, girls, two-spirit and gender-diverse (WG2SGD+) people.

The questionnaire was designed by NWAC, with input and advice from Environics Research. Environics programmed the questionnaire on its survey platform, and NWAC distributed an open survey link via social media and email.

This sample is a convenience sample, meaning that it was drawn from a conveniently available group of individuals. Because it is not a probability sample (respondents were not randomly selected, nor did all individuals in the desired communities have an equal chance of being selected into the sample) and the final data were not weighted so **the sample cannot be considered representative of all Indigenous women, girls, two-spirit and gender-diverse people**. Therefore, the data should be interpreted within the limits of the survey design.

About this report: Unless otherwise noted, results for all questions are based on the total sample of 239 participants. Sometimes results do not add up to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses. Labels for values less than 4% are not shown.

The following page presents a demographic profile of survey participants.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Survey respondents are most likely to identify as First Nations women between the ages 40-59, living in Ontario or the West, on a First Nation Reserve or a city. Most respondents report that someone in their household has a chronic illness or requires special care that affects their water usage

AGE

7%	38%	49%	6%
18-24	25-39	40-59	60+

GENDER IDENTITY

83%	15%	<1%	1%	<1%
Women	Two-Spirit	Non-binary	Genderqueer	Genderfluid

REGION

34%	41%	4%	15%	6%
West	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic	Territories

INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

78%	16%	5%	2%
First Nations	Métis	Inuk	Other

MEDICAL CONDITION – SPECIAL CARE IN HOME

55%	45%
Yes	NO

COMMUNITY TYPE

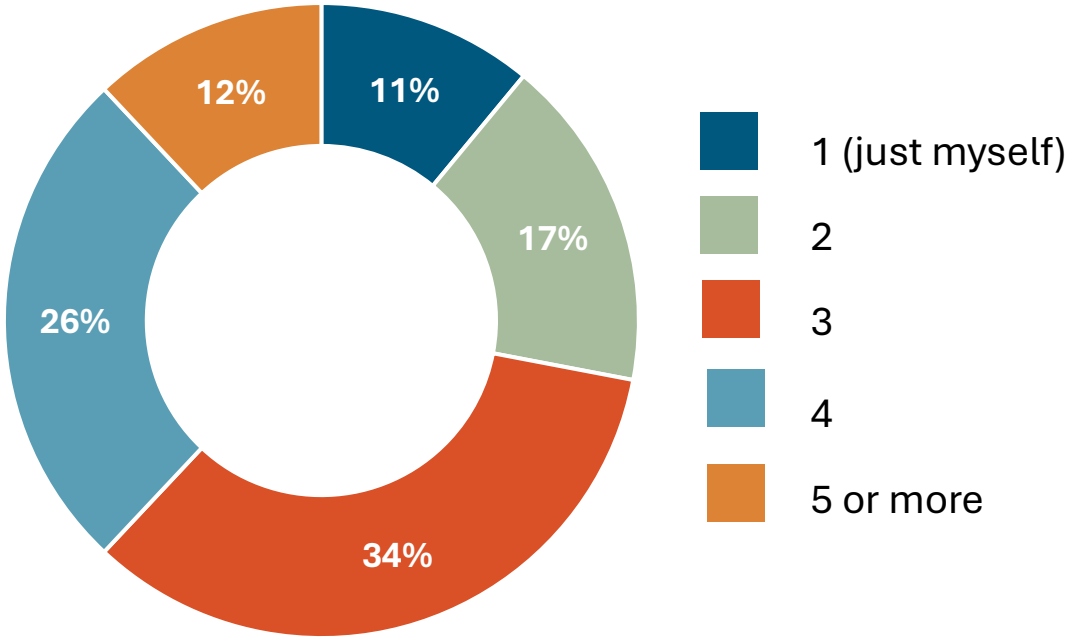
26%	33%	6%	12%	21%
City	First Nation Reserve	Inuit Community	Métis Settlement	Small Town, Rural or On-the-Land

RESPONDENT PROFILE – HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

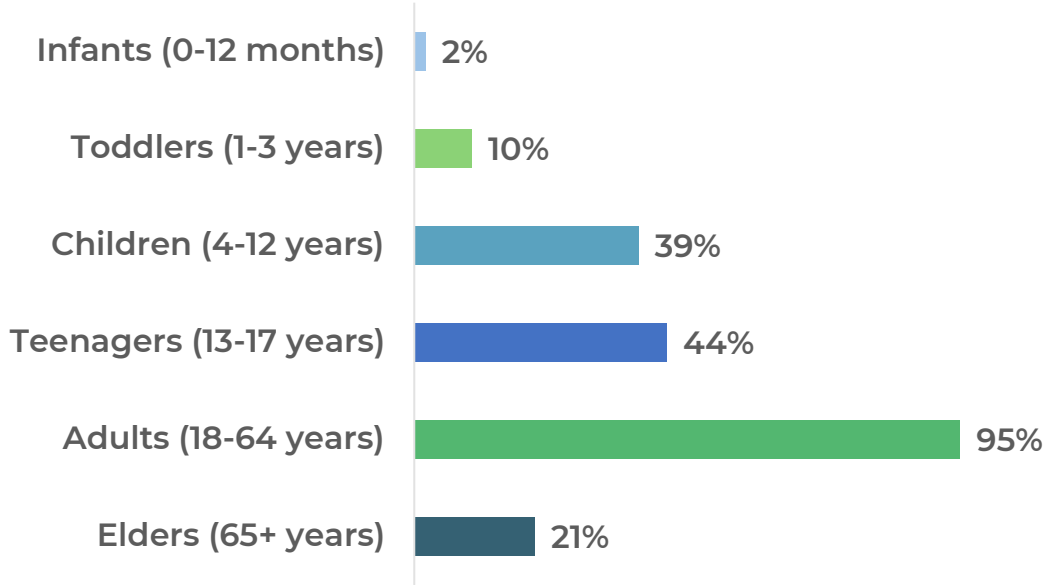
One-third of respondents live in a household of three people, and one-quarter live in a household of four. A majority of 8 in 10 report living with children or teenagers, and two in ten report having an elder (65+ years) in the home.

Q. 7 *How many individuals, including yourself, currently live in your household?*
Q. 8 *What age groups are represented in your household?*

Number of Individuals in Household



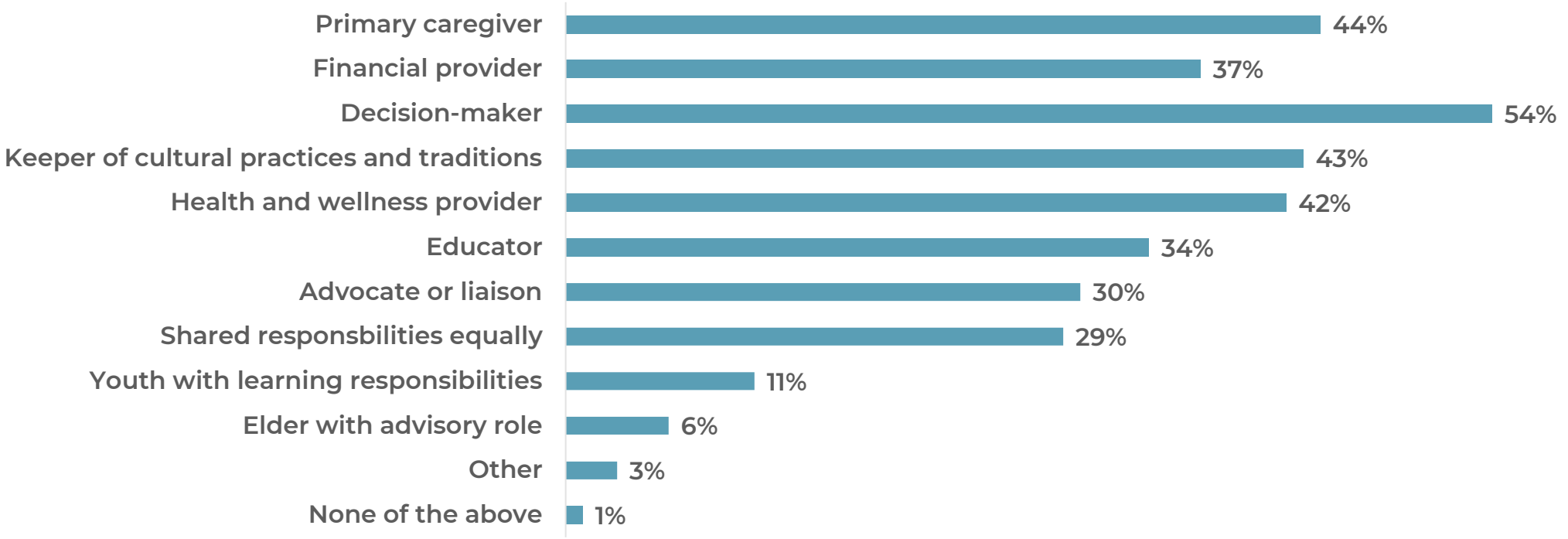
Age Groups in Household



RESPONDENT PROFILE – ROLE IN HOUSEHOLD

Over half of respondents describe their role in the household as a 'decision-maker,' while a similar proportion report being primary caregivers, keepers of cultural practices and traditions, and/or health and wellness providers. This is important as it highlights the significant responsibility Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples already carry within their homes and communities. The weight of water insecurity adds another layer of pressure to their already immense roles, further compounding their challenges.

Q. 9 *Which of the following best describes your role in the household?*



KEY FINDINGS

WATER INSECURITY AMONG INDIGENOUS WG2SGD+ PEOPLES

Household Access to Potable Water. Most respondents rely on municipal water for daily activities such as drinking, cooking, and dishwashing. Those using desalinated* or bottled water rate their water quality the highest, while those relying on sources like lakes, rivers, and wells receive lower ratings. However, while those relying on desalinated or bottled water report higher satisfaction, it comes at a significant cost, as they are required to purchase their own water. Access to clean water is inconsistent—only half (49%) of respondents have reliable access seven days a week, while 27% receive clean water between one to three days per week. This means that for a significant portion of this population, access to a basic necessity is sporadic, forcing individuals and households to adapt their lifestyles and routines accordingly.

This inconsistency in water access is a heavy burden, particularly for Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples, who already face intersectional challenges. The causes of these water advisories—often linked to infrastructure failures—are beyond the control of individual households. As such, people are left with little power to resolve the issue on their own, compounding the difficulty of managing these disruptions. For Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples, who already bear the weight of upholding various household responsibilities, these challenges are even more profound. The added stress of navigating water insecurity, especially when the root causes lie outside their control, creates additional pressure on individuals and families who are already shouldering many critical roles within their communities.

Water advisories are a widespread issue, with 43% of respondents currently under a boil water advisory, 28% under a do-not-consume advisory, and 15% under do-not-use restrictions. Many advisories last for months, and over half (53%) of respondents have experienced multiple short-term advisories. Disruptions to clean water access are most often linked to water line breaks, equipment failure, or poor filtration, with 35% of households categorized as medium risk for water insecurity. With the most reported reasons for disruption being fixable issues, this underscores the need for proper attention and sustainable solutions through infrastructure investment, on-site training and regular testing.

Note: These key findings are drawn from detailed data analyses presented throughout the remainder of the report.

** Desalinated water is* the process of removing dissolved salts and minerals from water, typically seawater, to make it usable for drinking, irrigation, or other purposes.

KEY FINDINGS

THE STRAIN OF WATER RATIONING AND SHORTAGES FOR INDIGENOUS WG2SGD+ PEOPLES

Household Adaptation to Water Shortages. Water rationing presents a significant challenge for Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples, with 21% of respondents experiencing mandates three to four days per week. Among those affected, the strain is felt daily, as many as 62% report that these restrictions typically last less than 12 hours, but nearly 40% endure longer periods. This disruption to everyday life, which is often beyond their control, forces individuals to find ways to adapt.

The experience of water rationing is further compounded by the reality that many respondents (30%) feel the restrictions have increased, while 44% believe they have remained unchanged over time. This trend highlights an ongoing pattern of water insecurity, with climate change, more frequent droughts, and reduced rainfall frequently cited as the causes for these increased rationing demands. The impact becomes especially evident when considering that some water advisories last months and prolonged droughts can extend through entire seasons.

Although six in ten (59%) respondents have emergency water supplies they consider safe, likely to be bottled water or storage tanks, this safety net is insufficient for long-term needs. A third of respondents (35%) estimate their emergency supply would last only 3 to 4 days. Given that many advisories can stretch on for months, and that the impacts of climate change may result in longer dry spells/droughts, it becomes clear that these emergency supplies are not enough to ensure the sustainability of their water needs. When water is unavailable or unsafe, the question becomes: where do Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples turn for a solution?

Securing safe drinking water comes at a steep cost for many households—28% of respondents report spending between $501 and $1,000 annually to access clean water, which is a significant burden given the context of unemployment and poverty levels within many Indigenous communities. This financial strain, coupled with the reliance on short-term emergency supplies, paints a stark picture of the sacrifices this population must make to obtain clean, reliable water.

Note: These key findings are drawn from detailed data analyses presented throughout the remainder of the report.

KEY FINDINGS

CHALLENGES IN ACCESSING INFORMATION & RESPONDING TO RISKS

Adaptation Information & Awareness. Access to clear and timely water-related information is a challenge for many – 32% of respondents find the information they receive unclear, confusing, or not shared on time. As a result, only 19% feel very confident in their ability to respond effectively to a water emergency, while one-quarter (24%) do not feel confident at all. This lack of reliable information can have severe consequences, as individuals may unknowingly use unsafe water, potentially leading to health risks and further exacerbating the challenges faced by communities already dealing with water insecurity.

Building Additional Capacity to Respond to Water Quality & Reliability Risks. Water governance responsibilities vary—half (51%) of respondents say their municipal government manages water supply, while 27-30% attribute responsibility to their provincial or Indigenous government. Aging infrastructure and inconsistent maintenance are key concerns, with around 4/10 respondents identifying these as major challenges as well as delays in addressing water outages and infrastructure repairs. Half of respondents highlight poor coordination between government authorities and unclear emergency response plans as challenges. Insufficient funding for repairs and upgrades is considered a significant barrier to maintaining water infrastructure. Respondents cite high costs as an issue impacting both water distribution and household billing with insufficient support low-income households.

Only 14% of respondents are very satisfied with water governance in their community, and general satisfaction is lower regarding the inclusion of Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples in decision-making. Despite these issues, there is broad support for proposed solutions, particularly training and certification programs for Indigenous water system operators. These solutions are seen as concrete steps to address the gaps in water governance and build long-term capacity, especially if coupled with more funding for infrastructure repairs and more inclusive decision-making processes.

Note: These key findings are drawn from detailed data analyses presented throughout the remainder of the report.

KEY FINDINGS

THE EXCLUSION OF INDIGENOUS WG2SGD+ WOMEN IN WATER GOVERNANCE

Gender-Based Decisions & Solutions. Half of respondents (52%) feel their community is committed to including WG2SGD+ Peoples in water-related decision-making, though a significant one-third (31%) disagree, highlighting a major gap in participation. This is a concerning barrier, particularly considering the central role that Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples, especially Indigenous women, traditionally hold in water governance. Historically, Indigenous women have been the matriarchal leaders in water decision-making, given their deep, inherent connection to water. The ongoing exclusion of Indigenous women from these spaces represents not just a cultural disruption but a colonial legacy that continues to marginalize their essential contributions.

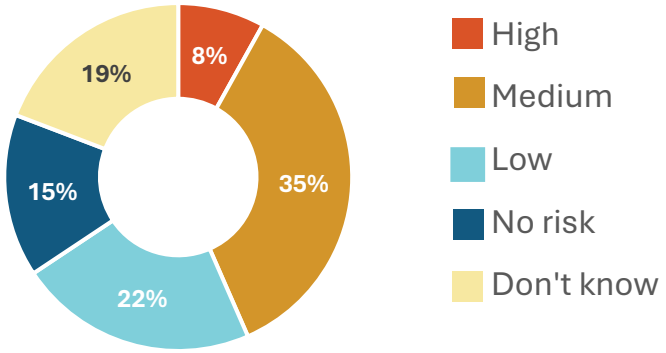
Cultural and systemic biases in decision-making are cited by half (51%) of respondents as key barriers to their involvement. These biases, along with the lack of training and opportunities for Indigenous women to serve on boards or fill governance roles, prevent them from taking up leadership positions where their insights would be most impactful. This exclusion is a critical issue, as it limits the richness and depth of decision-making processes concerning water governance. Gender-based exclusion in this context is not just unfair, but unacceptable—especially when the people who hold valuable insights into water feel silenced. This is at the heart of initiatives like the Water Carrier Project, which seeks to restore and recognize the role of Indigenous women in water management and governance.

Note: These key findings are drawn from detailed data analyses presented throughout the remainder of the report.

WATER INSECURITY RISK PROFILE – INDIGENOUS WG2SGD+ PEOPLES

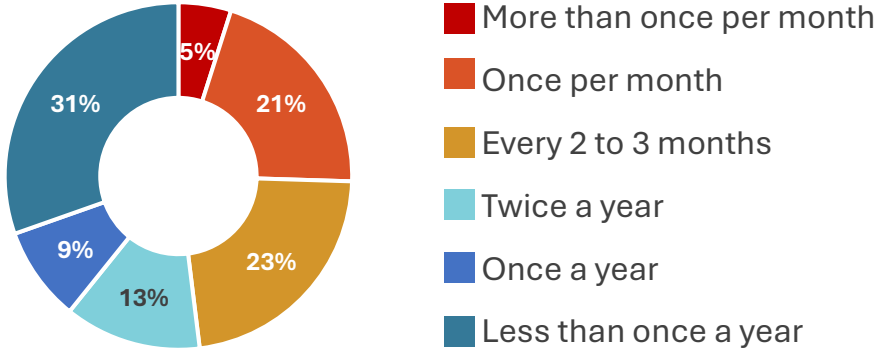
Categorized Risk Level

Q19 - What risk-level have Environmental public health officers or other technical experts categorized your household water as?



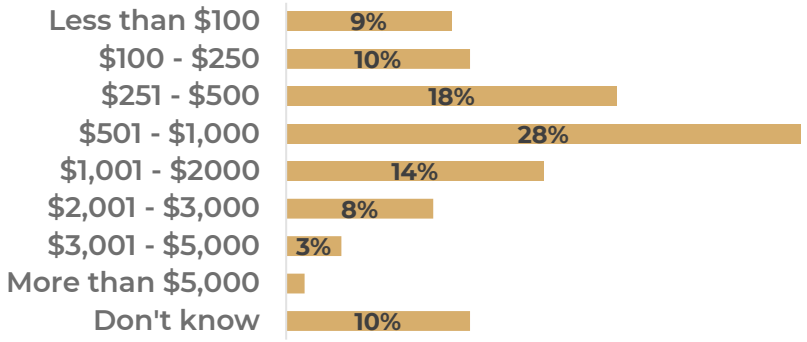
Frequency with Water Advisories

Q17 - On average, how often do you experience water advisories?



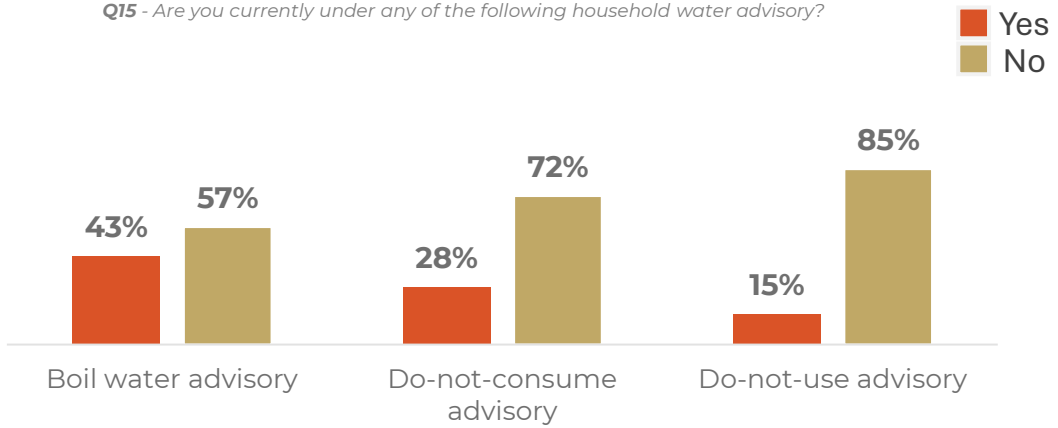
Money Spent on Safe Drinking Water

Q7 - On average, how much money does your household spend per year to ensure access to safe and clean drinking water?



Frequency with Water Advisories

Q15 - Are you currently under any of the following household water advisory?



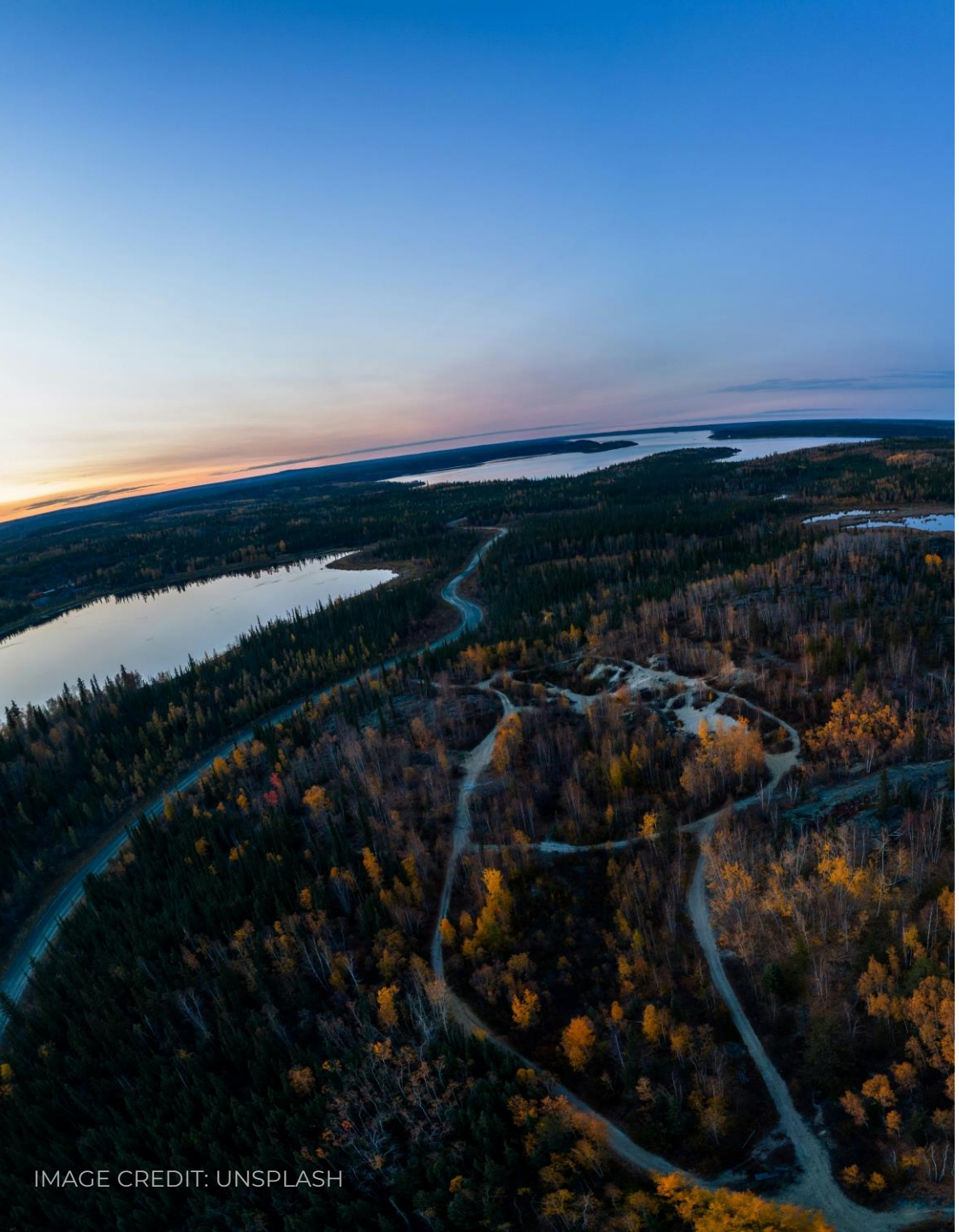


IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH

DISPARITIES WITHIN COMMUNITIES
ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER

Access to clean water is more reliable in cities than in FN reserves and other communities.

- **City residents** are significantly more likely to report **daily access to clean water (84%)**, compared to those living in First Nations reserves (35%), Inuit communities (47%) and Métis settlements (57%).

- City residents are also more likely to have access to clean water for **more than 12 hours per day** (81%), compared to 56% of FN reserve residents and 65% of small town/rural residents.

Smaller Indigenous communities face ongoing and repeated water safety warnings at higher rates than cities.

- Those living in FN Reserves (55%), Inuit communities (87%) and Métis settlements (89%) are far more likely than city residents (13%) to be under any advisory, especially **boil water advisories**.

- Residents of FN Reserves (67%), Inuit communities (93%) and Métis settlements (86%) are more likely than city residents (33%) to have experienced **multiple short-term advisories** over the last 5 years.

IMAGE CREDIT: ENVIRONICS RESEARCH

DISPARITIES WITHIN COMMUNITIES
SATISFACTION WITH WATER GOVERNANCE

Residents of FN reserves, Inuit communities and small towns are more likely to cite that water information is not in their preferred language

- While 41% of city residents report having no issues with water-related information, residents of FN reserves, Inuit communities and small towns are more likely to cite that **water information is not in their preferred language.**

City residents are more likely to be very satisfied with response speed to water issues compared to those in FN reserves.

- Those living in **cities are more likely to be very satisfied** (33%) with response speed to water issues, compared to those living in FN reserves (14%).
- Within FN reserves, community members identify **'inconsistent delivery'** as a most common issue. In small towns and rural areas, community members cite **'insufficient water supply'** as the most common issue.
- City residents are more likely to cite **high cost of water services** as a key challenge (65%) when asked about billing and charges.

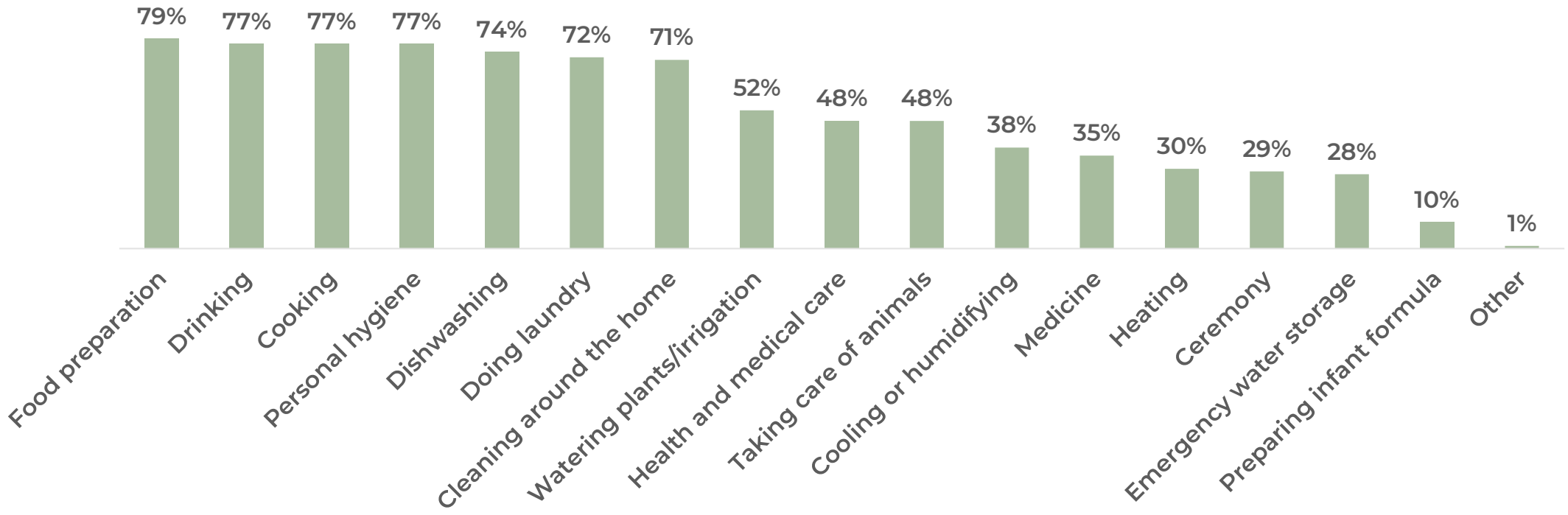
SECTION 1
HOUSEHOLD ACCESS & USES OF POTABLE WATER

This section examines access to reliable sources of potable water for household use, specifically for drinking, cooking, and domestic activities, as well as for ceremonial and medicinal purposes.

Household Access & Uses | **Primary Uses of Water in Home**

Most Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples point to food preparation, drinking, cooking, personal hygiene, dishwashing, doing laundry and cleaning around the home as their primary uses of water.

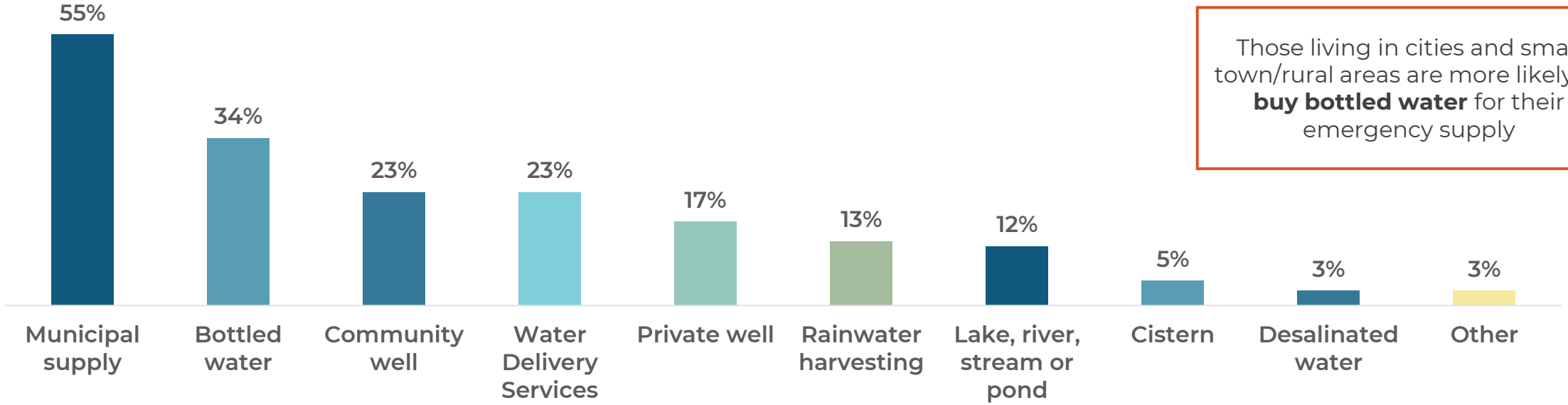
Q. 11 *Which of the following are the primary uses of water in your home? Select all that apply.*



Household Access & Uses | **Primary Sources of Water**

Over half of respondents say they use municipal supply as their source of water for activities. One-third report using bottled water, indicating that Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples need to purchase water because regular water services are unreliable.

Q. 12 *What sources of water are used for those selected activities in your home, such as drinking, cooking, and dishwashing?*



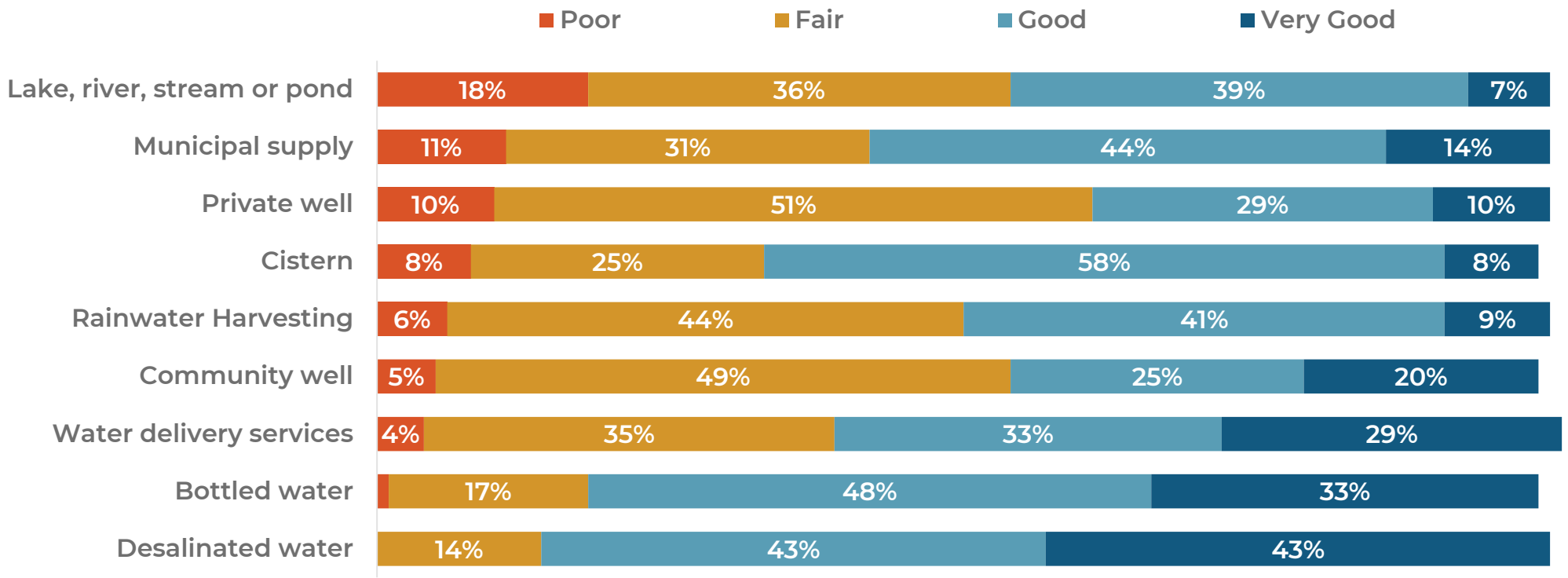
Those living in cities and small town/rural areas are more likely to **buy bottled water** for their emergency supply

Community well: *A shared water source that supplies groundwater to multiple households or properties within a defined area.*
Private well: *A water source owned and maintained by an individual property owner, typically located on private land – drawing groundwater to supply a single household or property and not monitored by municipal or provincial water authorities.*
Cistern: *A sealed, enclosed container or tank used to store water, most delivered potable water (drinking water) in rural or remote areas where there is no access to piped water systems.*
Desalinated water: The process of removing dissolved salts and minerals from water, typically seawater, to make it usable for drinking, irrigation, or other purposes.

Household Access & Uses | **Quality of Water Sources**

Those using a lake, river, stream, pond, municipal supply, private well, or cistern are more likely to rate their water quality poorly. Notably, none of the water sources received over 50% “very good” ratings, indicating that most residents, regardless of their source, are not fully satisfied with their water—a fundamental need. It’s worth noting that many of those who report being satisfied with their water appear to have taken matters into their own hands—most commonly by relying on bottled or desalinated water.

Q. 12b *Of the water sources you selected previously, how would you rate their quality for household use?*

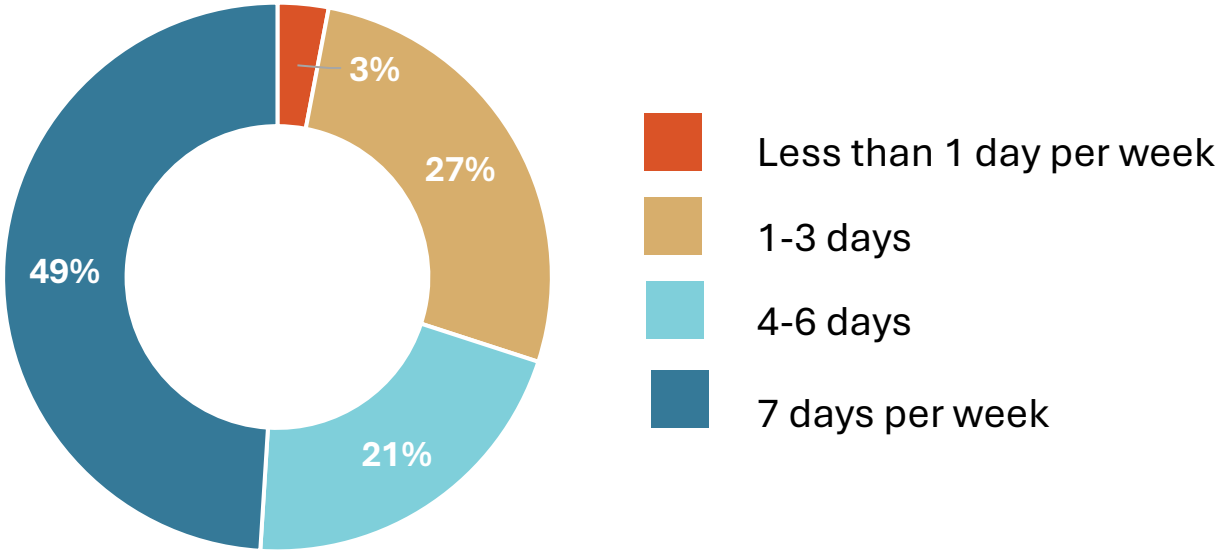


Household Access & Uses | **Reliable Access to Clean Water**

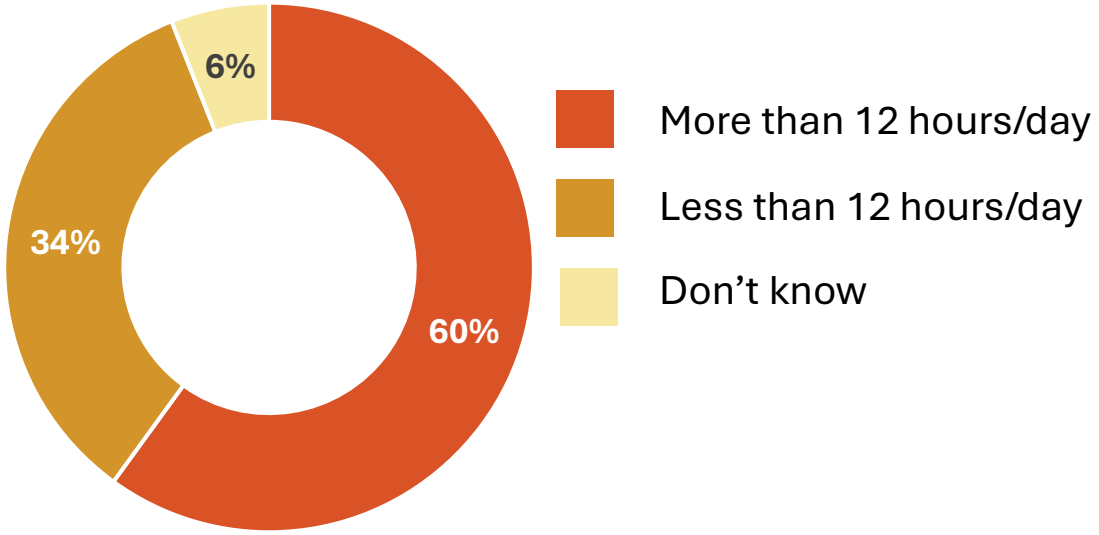
Over one-quarter of respondents report access only 1–3 days per week, and 3% have access less than one day per week. One-third have access for fewer than 12 hours a day. While half of WG2SGD+ Peoples enjoy reliable access throughout the week, the other half continue to face significant barriers to this basic need.

Q. 13 *On average, how often do you have reliable access to clean water for your household uses?*
Q. 14 *Within each day, could you please indicate how long you have reliable access to clean water for your household uses?*

Days per Week



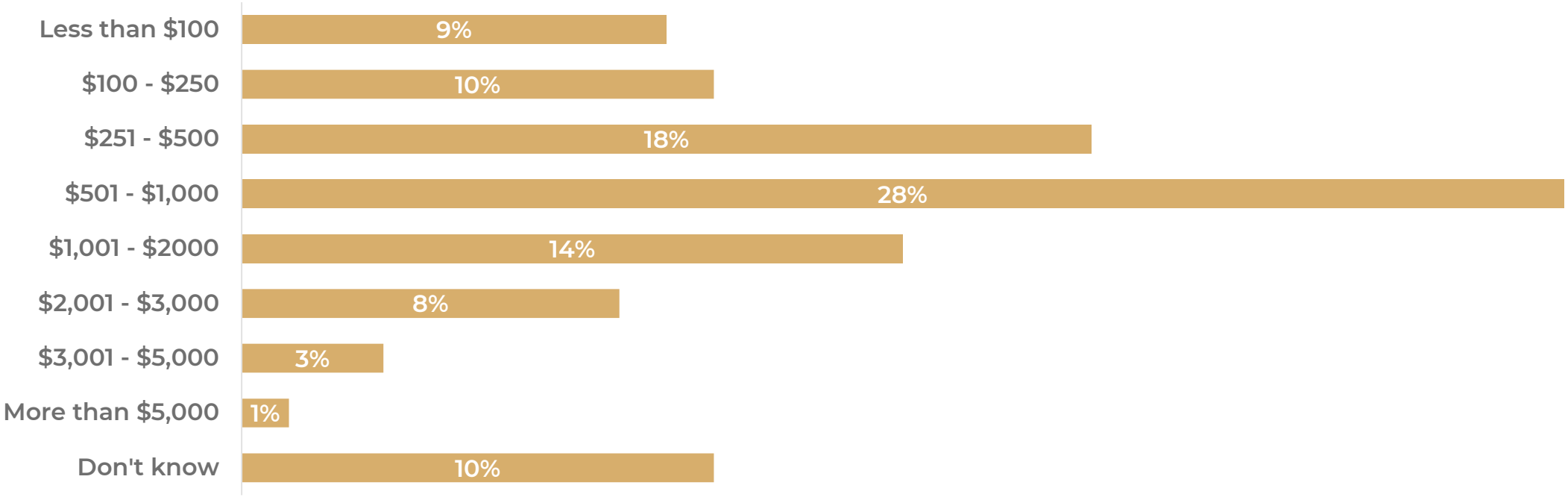
Hours per Day



Household Adaptation | **Money Spent on Safe Drinking Water**

Three in ten respondents spend between $501-$1,000 annually to ensure access to safe and clean drinking water. This is a significant burden given the context of unemployment and poverty levels within many Indigenous communities.

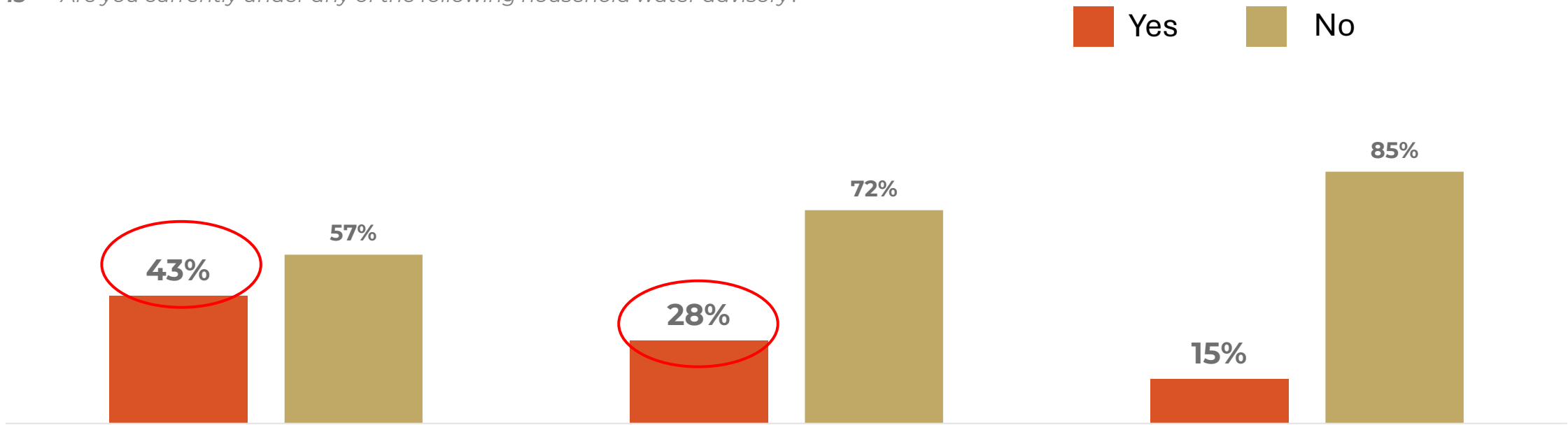
Q. 33 *On average, how much money does your household spend per year to ensure access to safe and clean drinking water (including costs for filtration systems, bottled water, and other water treatment methods)?*



Household Access & Uses | **Household Water Advisories**

Far too many Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples are living under water advisories, including boil water, do-not-consume, and do-not-use. Close to half of respondents are currently under a boil water advisory and 28% under a do-not-consume advisory.

Q. 15 *Are you currently under any of the following household water advisory?*



Boil water advisory

A public health notice advising people to boil tap water for at least one minute before drinking, cooking, or brushing teeth, due to possible contamination.

Do-not-consume advisory

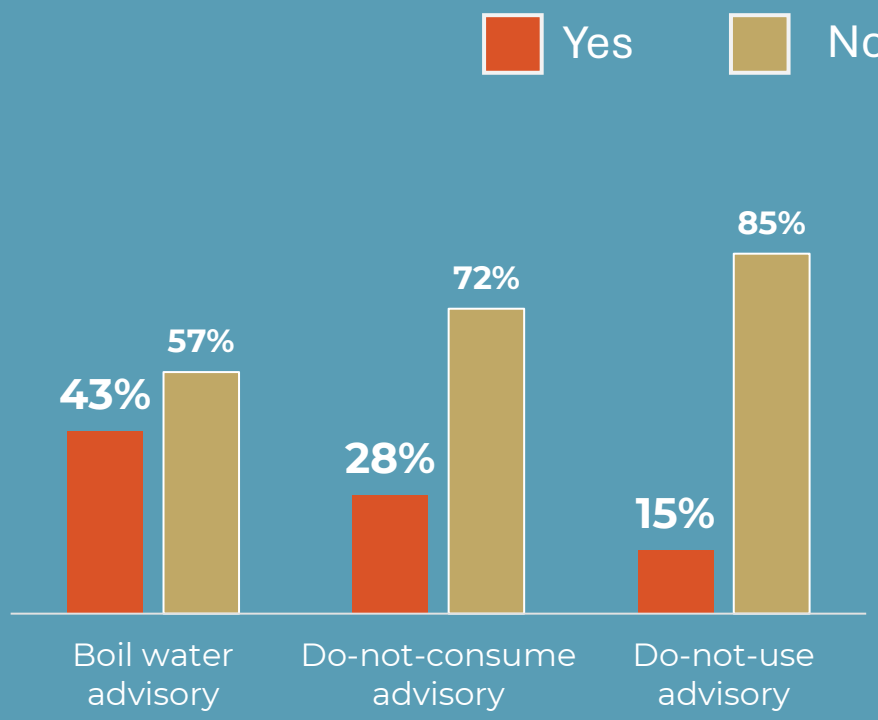
A warning that tap water should not be consumed at all—even if boiled—because it may contain harmful substances not removed by boiling.

Do-not-use advisory

The most serious advisory, indicating that tap water should not be used for any purpose—including drinking, cooking, bathing, or cleaning—because it poses serious health risks.

Household Water Advisories

Q. 15 *Are you currently under any of the following household water advisory?*



These advisories create significant daily challenges.

For instance, when under a boil water advisory, individuals must boil water before drinking or cooking, **a time-consuming process that often requires preparing large batches in advance.**

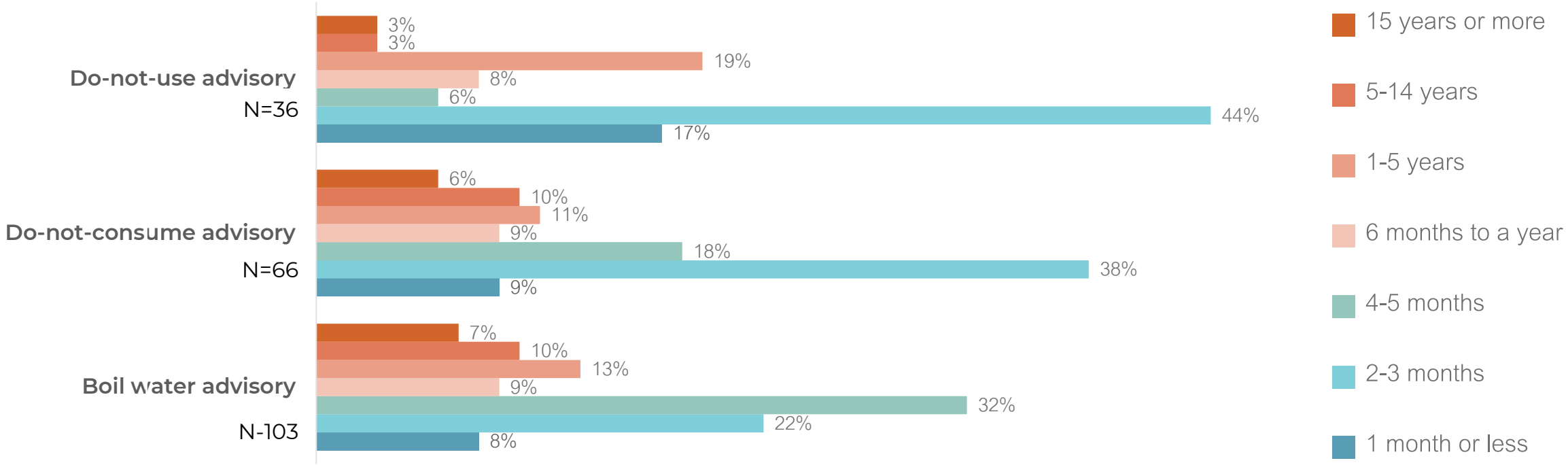
For those under a do-not-consume advisory, **the financial burden of purchasing bottled water becomes overwhelming**, especially in remote areas where local stores may not carry sufficient supplies, or when transportation is unavailable.

In extreme cases, some Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples are **forced to drive long distances,** sometimes up to two hours, **to access basic hygiene, like bathing their children in towns or facilities with safe water**. These living conditions paint a harsh picture of water insecurity that not only affects daily life but also places physical, emotional, and financial strain on already marginalized communities.

Household Access & Uses | **Length of Time Under Advisory**

Around four in ten respondents under a do-not-use or do-not consume advisory indicate it lasting between 2-3 months. Those under a boil water advisory are most likely to say it has lasted 4-5 months.

Q. 15 *Are you currently under any of the following household water advisory?*
Q. 16 *How long have you been under this current [SELECTION FROM Q15]?*

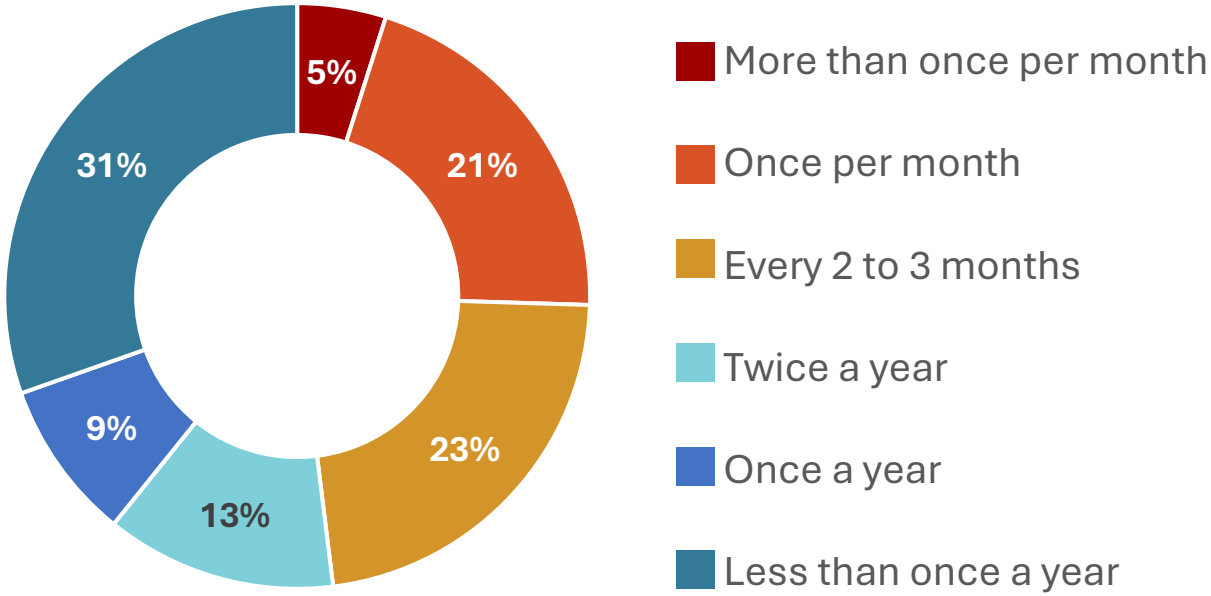


Household Access & Uses | **Experience with Household Water Advisories**

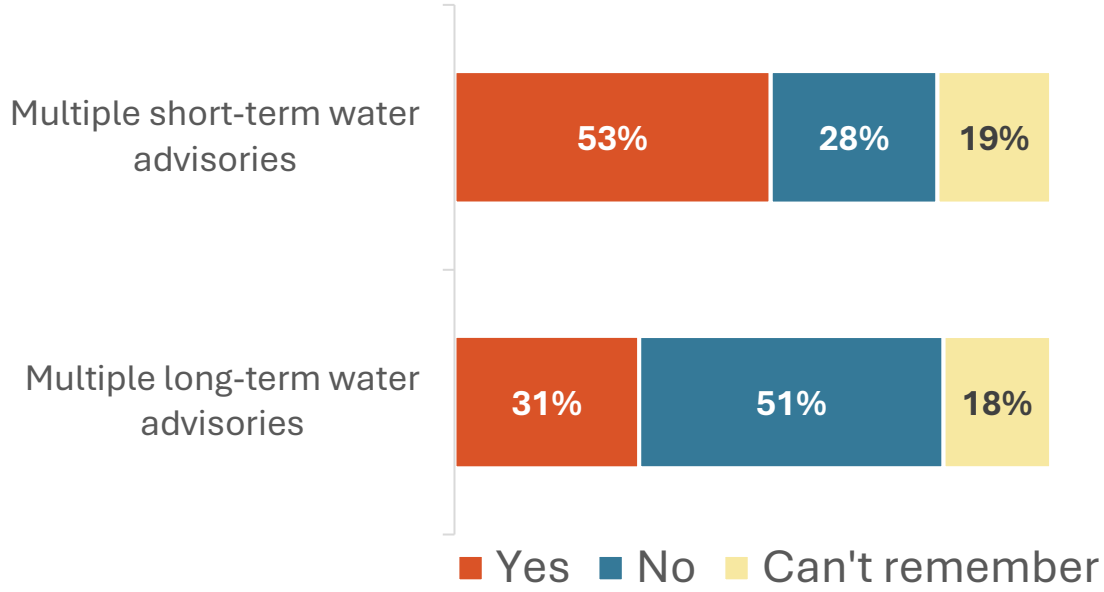
Two in ten respondents experience water advisories once per month or every 2 to 3 months. Over half have experienced multiple short-term water advisories, reflecting ongoing band-aid solutions that do not fully address water insecurity.

Q. 17 *On average, how often do you experience water advisories?*
Q. 18 *Within the past 5 years, have you ever experienced the following?*

Frequency with Water Advisories

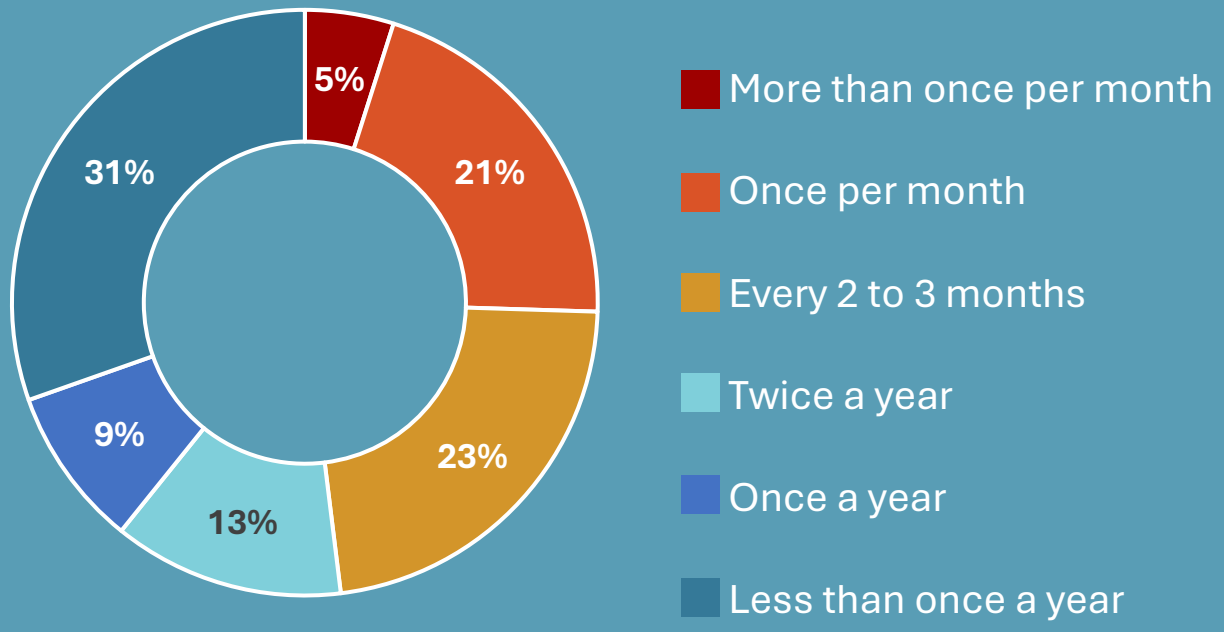


Experience with Water Advisories



Frequency with Water Advisories

Q. 17 ***On average, how often do you experience water advisories?***



Nearly half of respondents experience water advisories on a regular basis — 5% report facing them more than once per month, 21% say once per month, and 23% every two to three months. This level of frequency points to a systemic issue with water reliability and infrastructure that forces Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples to constantly adapt their lives around the uncertainty of water safety.

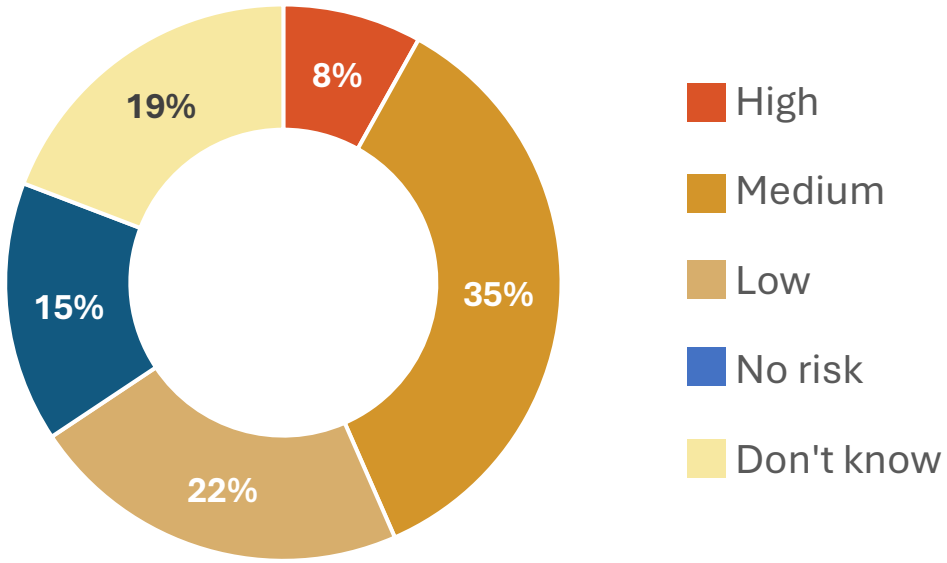
This is not an occasional disruption—it's a recurring reality that adds pressure to already burdened households. Whether it is planning for boil-water advisories, sourcing bottled water, or finding safe alternatives, frequent advisories interrupt basic routines and place additional strain on Indigenous communities.

Household Access & Uses | **Risk Levels & Causes for Disruption**

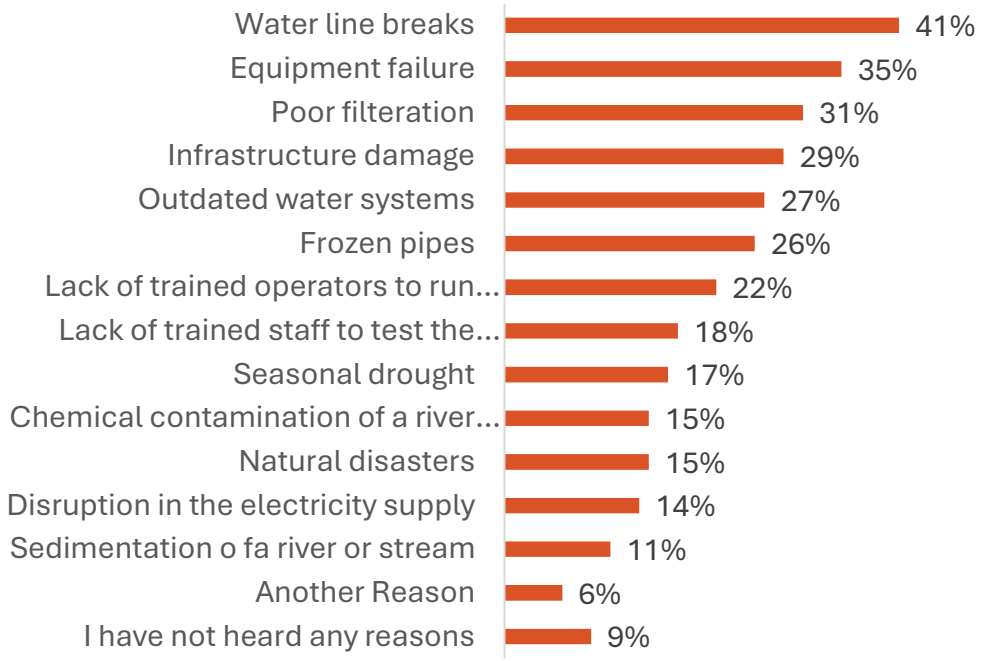
Over one-third of respondents' households are categorized as medium risk-level. Reasons provided for disruptions to clean water access often point to water line breaks, equipment failure or poor filtration – underscoring the need for sustainable solutions through infrastructure investment, on-site training and regular testing.

Q. 19 *What risk-level have Environmental public health officers or other technical experts categorized your household water as?*
Q. 20 *What reasons have you heard for disruptions in your access to clean, potable water?*

Categorized Risk-Level



Reasons for Disruption



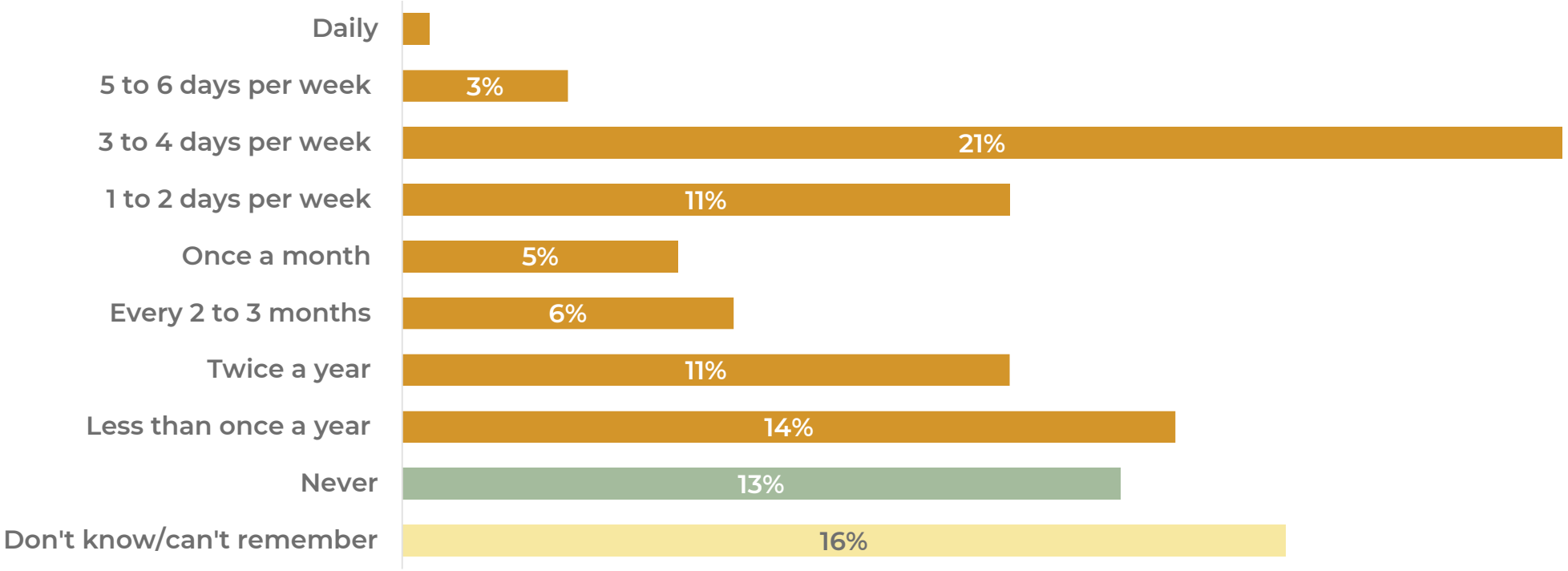
SECTION 2
HOUSEHOLD ADAPTATION PRACTICES TO WATER SHORTAGE

This section explores actions taken by Indigenous households, particularly by Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples, in response to disruptions in the quality and reliability of their water supply for drinking and domestic use.

Household Adaptation Practices | **Experience With Water Rationing**

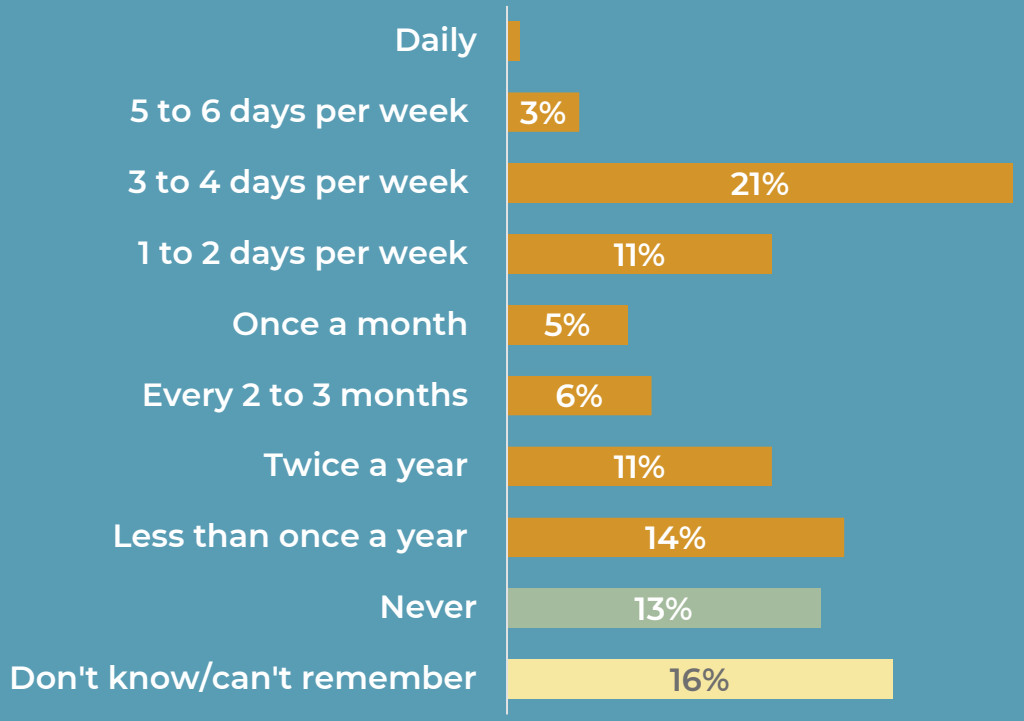
Two in ten WG2SGD+ respondents report experiencing water rationing three to four days per week — meaning nearly half the week requires alternative water sources and adjustments to meet a basic need.

Q. 21 *Since living in your current community, how often have you experienced water rationing mandates?*



Frequency of Water Rationing

Q. 21 Since living in your current community, how often have you experienced water rationing mandates?



Two in ten WG2SGD+ respondents report experiencing water rationing three to four days per week — meaning nearly half the week requires alternative water sources and adjustments to meet a basic need.

Imagine having to adjust your entire week around the uncertainty of when you'll have access to water.

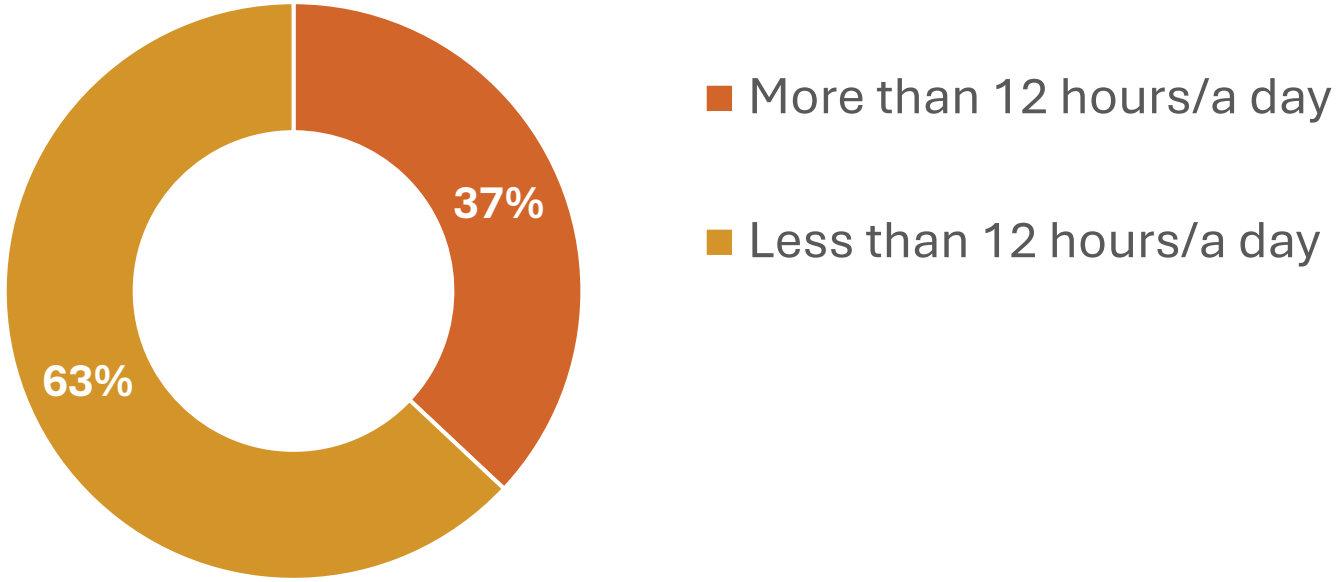
For two in ten Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples, this is a reality: three to four days per week without reliable water means planning every meal, every drink, every bath, and every household task around limited access.

Families are forced to buy bottled water, rely on alternative sources like desalinated water (which requires both energy and time to produce) or even travel long distances to secure enough for basic needs.

Household Adaptation Practices | **Water Rationing – Hours per Day**

Among WG2SGD+ respondents who have experienced water rationing mandates, six in ten say it typically lasts less than 12 hours a day. Alarmingly, four in ten report rationing periods that extend beyond 12 hours — meaning they go without reliable water for more than half the day.

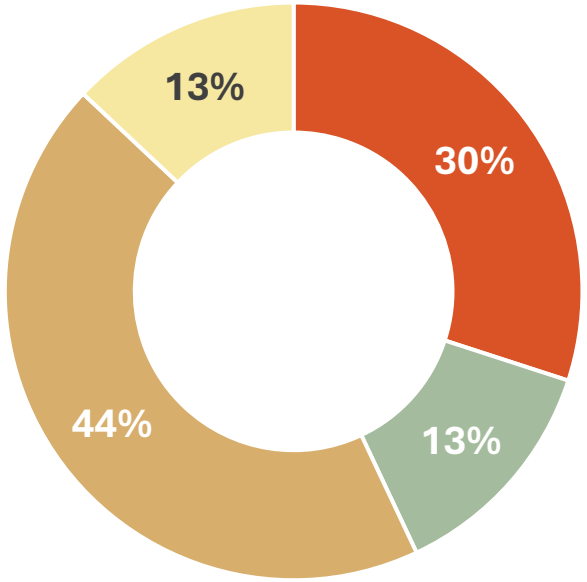
Q. 23 *During these mandates, how many hours per day do you experience water rationing? (Subsample: Those who have experienced water rationing mandates (n=207))*



Household Adaptation Practices | **Water Rationing – Change Over Time**

Water rationing is not improving among those who experience mandates — three in ten say it has increased, and four in ten say it remains the same, pointing to infrastructure and training issues that will persist unless properly addressed.

Q. 24 *Over the last 5 years, has there been a noticeable change in the frequency of water rationing mandates? (Subsample: Those who have experienced water rationing mandates (n=207))*



- Yes - There are noticeably more water rationing mandates than before.
- Yes - There are noticeably less water rationing mandates than before.
- No - It has stayed about the same.
- Can't remember

Household Adaptation Practices | **Water Rationing – Change Over Time**

Respondents who have noticed more frequent water rationing were asked why they believe this is happening. Those who provided an answer most often cited climate change, more frequent droughts, and reduced rainfall.

Q. 25 *What do you think might be the reason for more-frequent water rationing? Please focus your answer on natural or human causes. (Subsample: Those who say that there has been more water rationing mandates than before and provided their thoughts (n=60))*

Climate Change	Droughts & Less Rainfall	Mismanagement and Lack of Trained Staff	Overpopulation	Advances in Climate Change Mitigation	Natural Disasters
13 mentions	*13 mentions*	*8 mentions*	*7 mentions*	*4 mentions*	*3 mentions*
"Climate change causing less snow melt or precipitation" *"Dryer weather, particularly in the summer"*	*"Because we are getting less rain"* *"I feel it is due to prolonged periods of low rain, which reduces water availability in reservoir and river."*	*"Not enough capacity in community to fix the issues so it takes them longer to fix."*	*"More water is being used to accommodate a growing population even though the amount of water in this area cannot handle it."*	*"Government assistance in irrigation upgrades."* *"More global initiatives in water conservation."*	*"Increases in natural disasters, causing water line breaks in my neighborhood."*

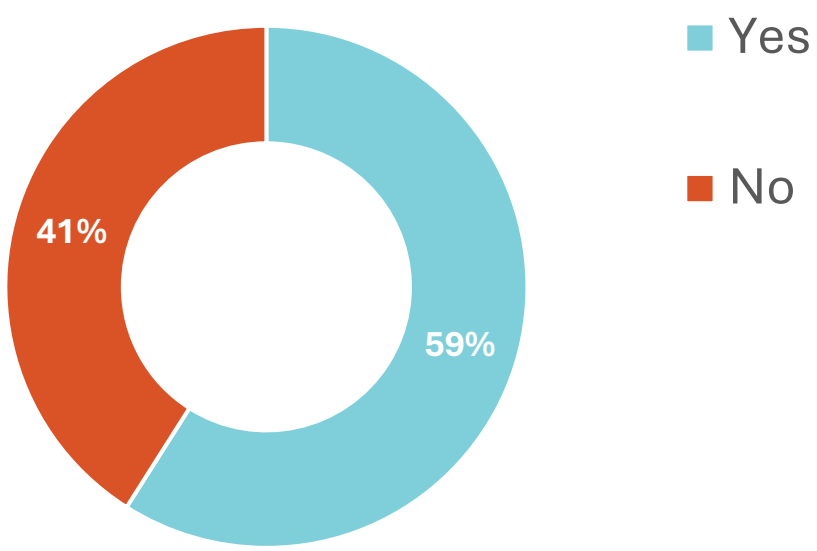
Household Adaptation | **Emergency Water Supply Sources**

Four in ten respondents do not have access to a safe emergency water supply in the event of a water shortage or advisory. Among the six in ten who do, more than half rely on bottled water, and three in ten use a storage tank.

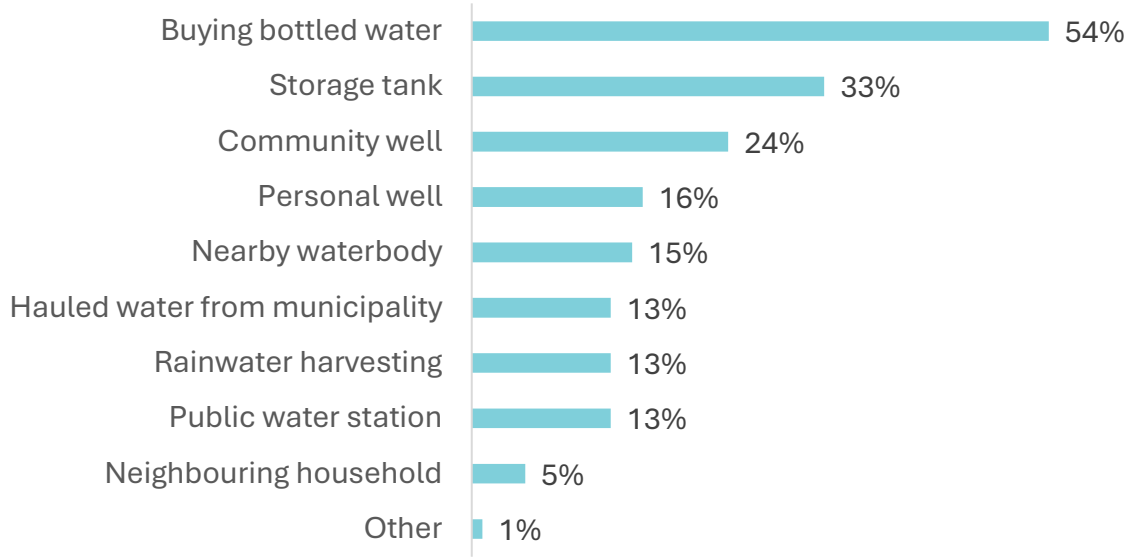
Q. 27 *In the event of a water shortage or advisory, does your household have a safe emergency water supply for essential needs such as drinking, cooking, food preparation, and hygiene/sanitation?*

Q. 28 *Which of the following the sources of your emergency water supply? (Subsample: Those with emergency water supply (n=141))*

Presence of Emergency Water Supply

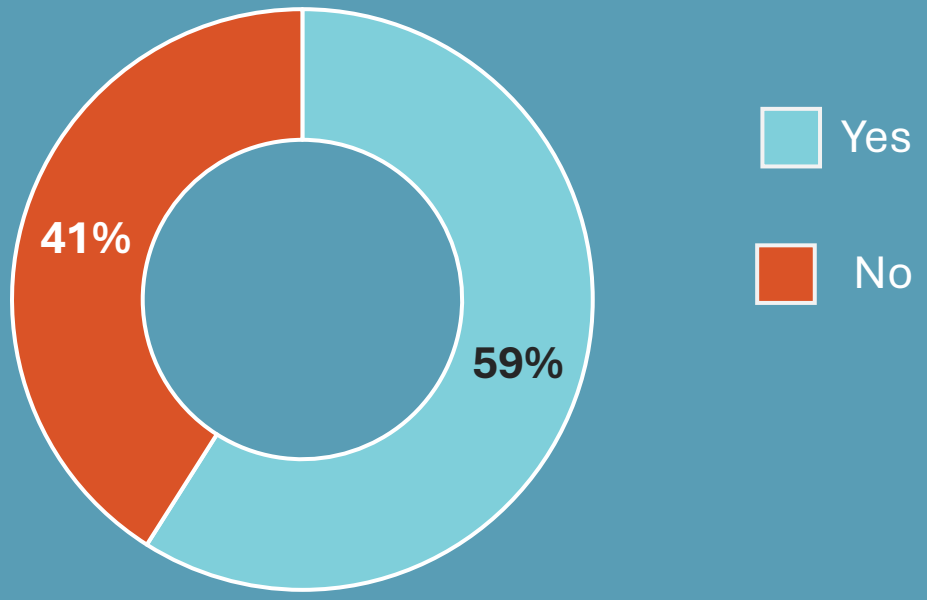


Source of Emergency Water Supply



Presence of Emergency Water Supply

Q27 *In the event of a water shortage or advisory, does your household have a safe emergency water supply for essential needs such as drinking, cooking, food preparation, and hygiene/sanitation?*



In the event of a water shortage or advisory, a notable proportion of over 4 in 10 respondents do not have a safe emergency water supply for essential needs.

For Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples, water advisories and shortages aren't rare emergencies — they're part of lived reality.

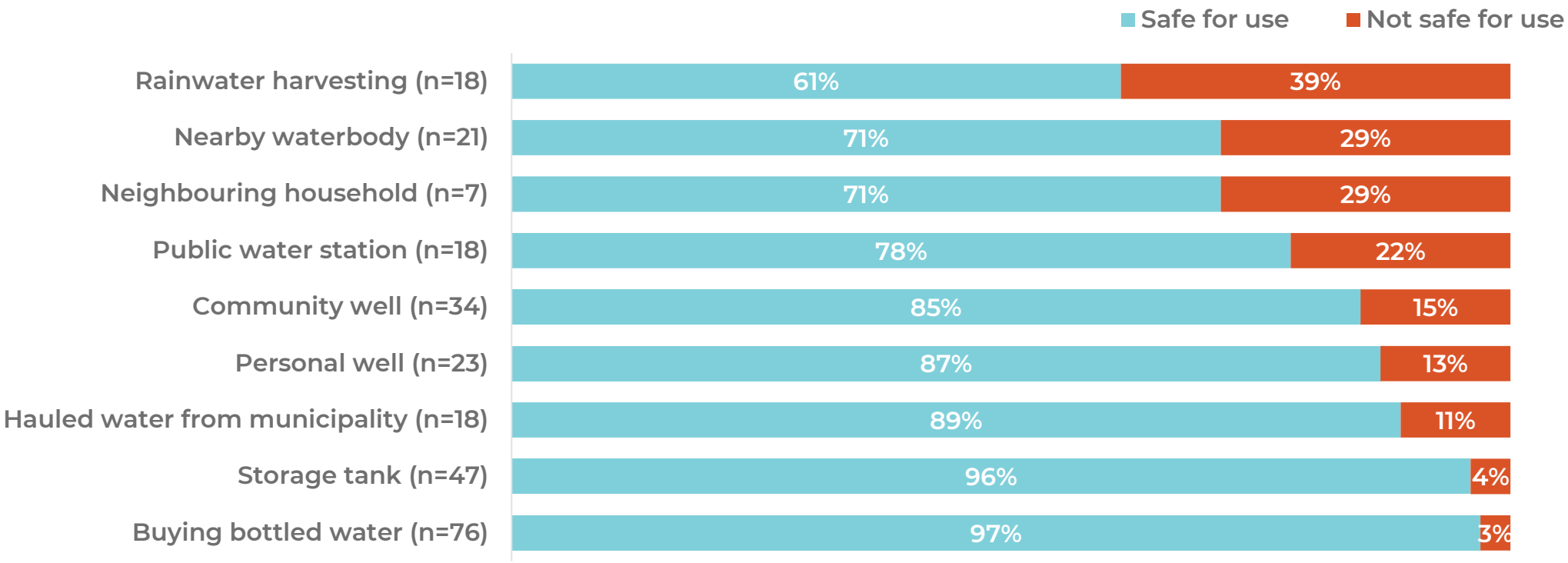
And yet, despite water advisories and shortages being a common occurrence for this population, there is a significant proportion who are left unprepared if a water shortage or advisory were to last longer than expected. The burden of this gap is not just logistical; it is deeply personal and intersectional.

Many have taken it upon themselves to stockpile bottled water, an act of resilience that frequently comes at a financial cost. In communities where financial resources are already stretched thin, this means sacrificing other essentials to secure a basic human right.

Household Adaptation Practices | **Emergency Water Supply Safety**

Most of those who rely on storage tanks or bottled water for emergencies consider these sources safe for use. Among the minority who rely on rainwater harvesting for emergency supply, four in ten consider it unsafe for use.

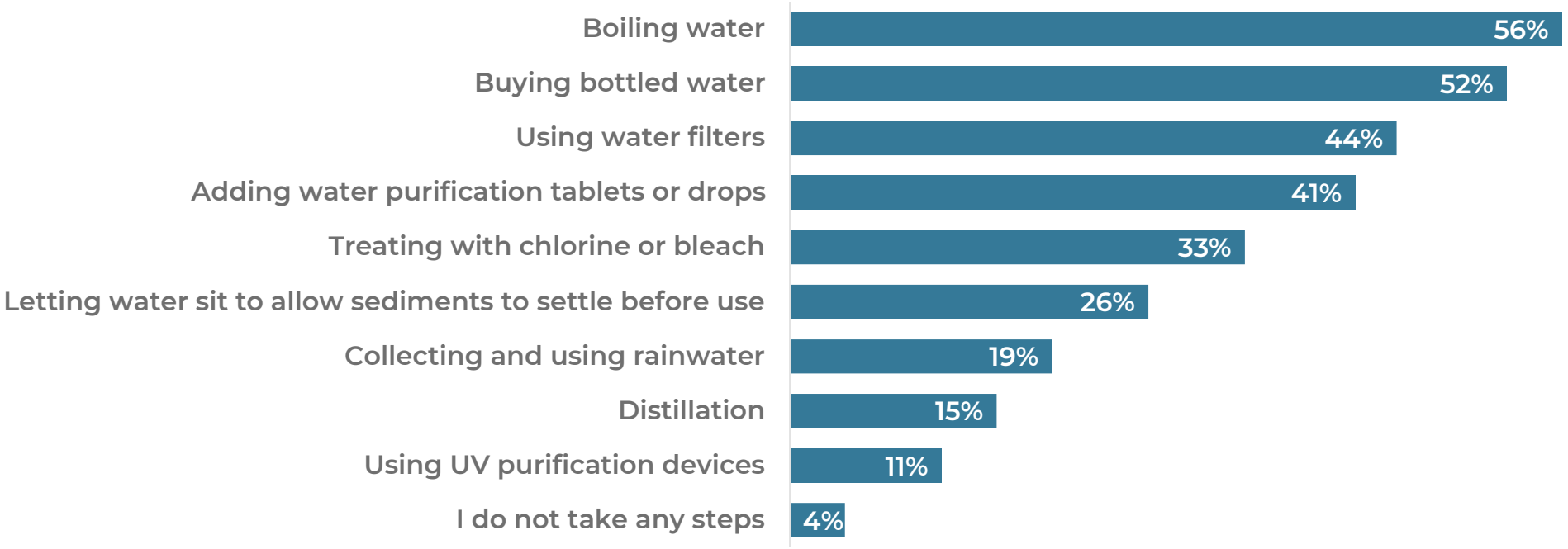
Q. 29 *Are your emergency water supply sources currently safe for use? (Subsample: Those with emergency water supply (n=141))*



Household Adaptation Practices | **Ensuring Emergency Supply Safety**

Among the small minority who rely on unsafe emergency water sources, more than half report boiling water or purchasing bottled water to ensure their household's safety.

Q. 30 *Since you indicated 'no' regarding the safety of one or more of your emergency water supply sources, what steps do you take to ensure their safety? (Subsample: Those who indicated their emergency supply is not currently safe for use (n=27))*

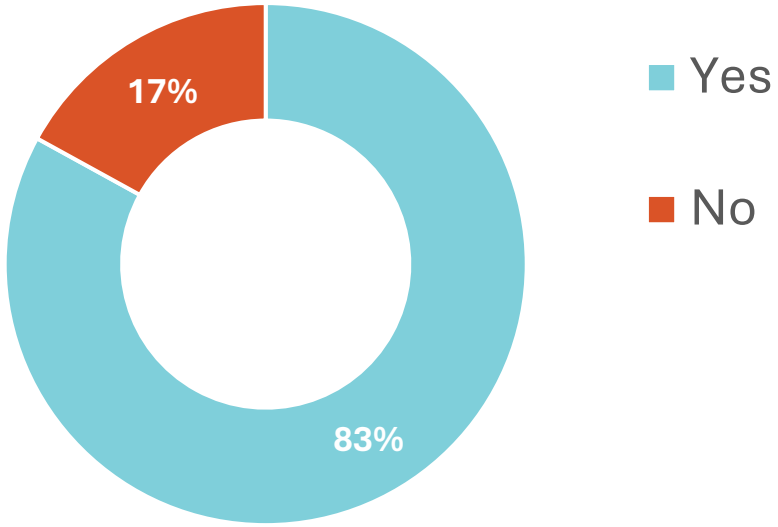


Household Adaptation | **Emergency Water Supply for Household**

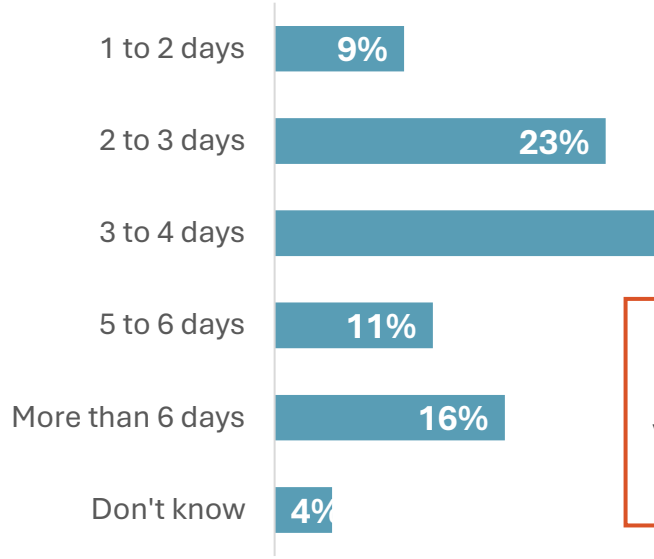
While eight in ten respondents say their emergency water supply would meet the needs of their entire household, 17% say it would not. Only 16% of those with an emergency supply say it would last more than six days—meaning that many households facing water insecurity could be left without safe water in just a few days. Given that water advisories can last for months, this highlights that emergency water supplies are not a sufficient solution to long-term water insecurity.

Q. 31 *Is your emergency supply enough to meet the needs of your entire household? (Subsample: Those with emergency water supply (n=141))*
Q. 32 *In a crisis, how long do you think your emergency water supply would last? Subsample: Those with emergency water supply (n=141))*

Emergency Supply Enough for Entire Household?



How long would your emergency supply last?



City residents (42%) are more likely to say that their emergency water supply would last **more than 6 days**, compared to other communities.

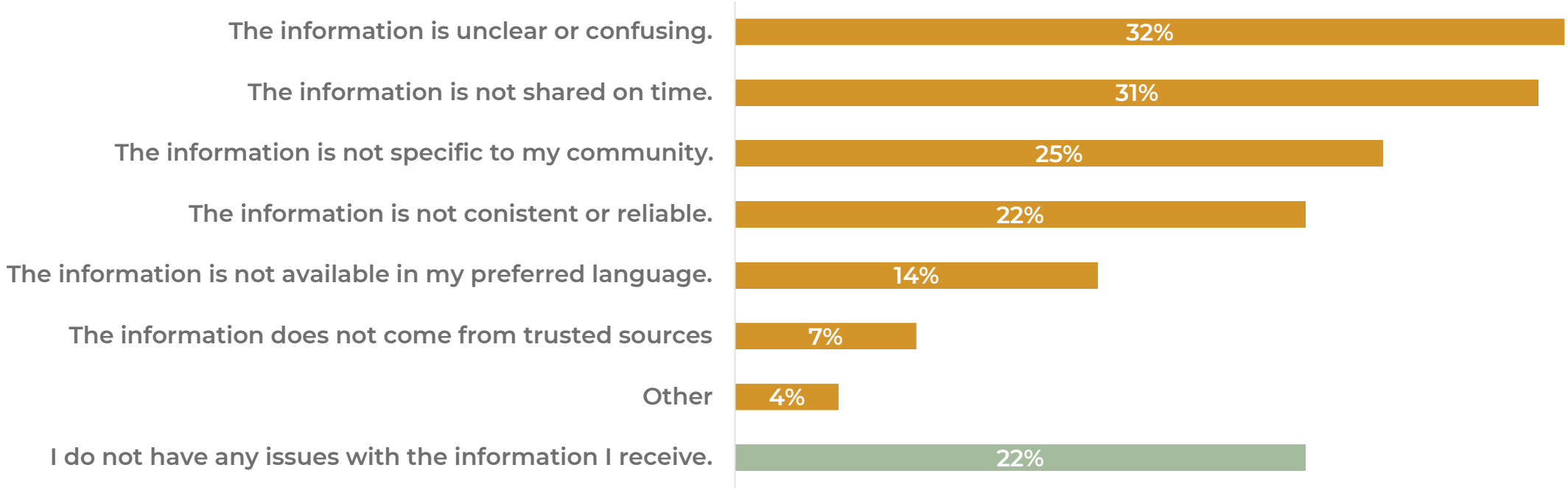
SECTION 3
ADAPTATION INFORMATION & AWARENESS

This section examines the availability and usefulness of information for Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples in ensuring safe water.

Adaptation Information & Awareness | **Issues with Information Received**

In a previous wave of research, we asked respondents where they typically receive information, including updates about water advisories. When it comes to accessing information regarding water in their community, three in ten respondents feel the information they receive is unclear, confusing, or not shared on time.

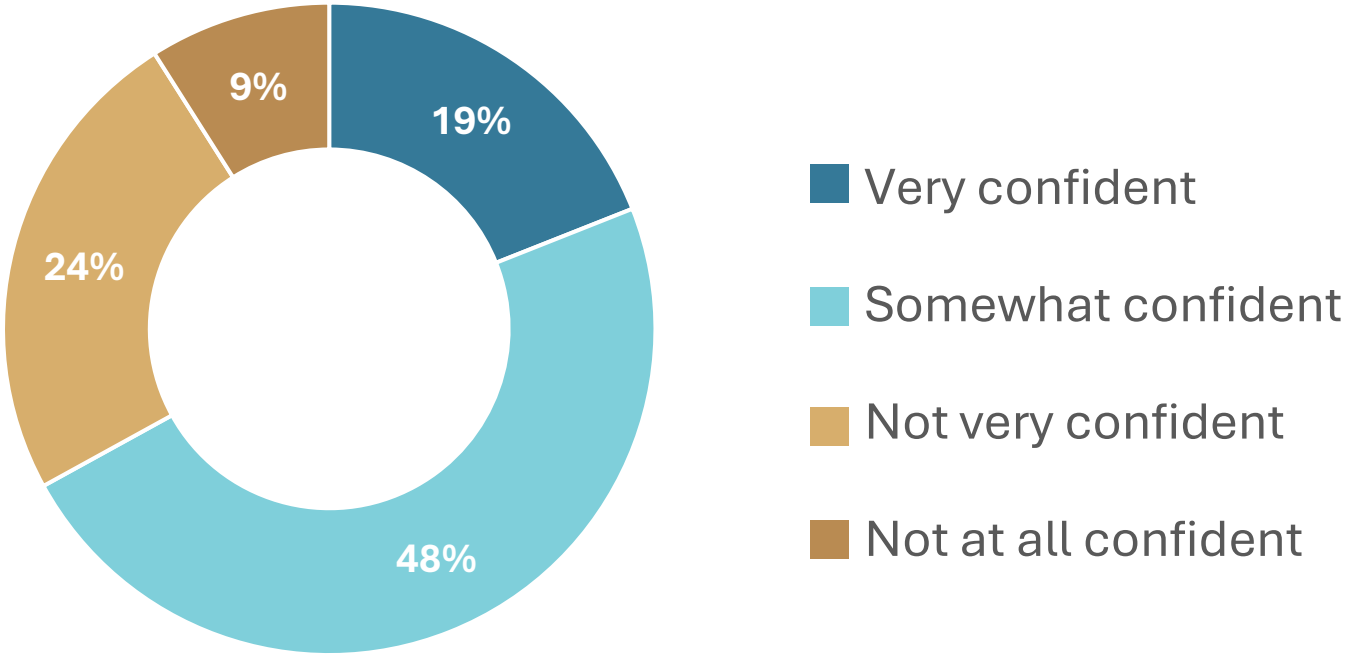
Q. 34 *What issues do you have with the information you receive or access regarding water in your community?*



Adaptation Information | **Confidence Responding to an Emergency**

Based on the information they receive, only two in ten respondents feel very confident in their ability to respond effectively to a water emergency. While half feel at least somewhat confident, one-third do not feel confident. This is especially concerning given the frequency of water insecurity and advisories—as well as the half of respondents who say they typically do not have access to safe water throughout an entire week.

Q. 35 *Based on the information you receive; how confident do you feel in your ability to respond effectively to a water emergency?*



*A **water emergency** refers to a situation in which the regular supply of safe, clean drinking water is disrupted, compromised, or rendered unsafe for consumption due to contamination, infrastructure failure, natural disaster, or other unforeseen circumstances.*

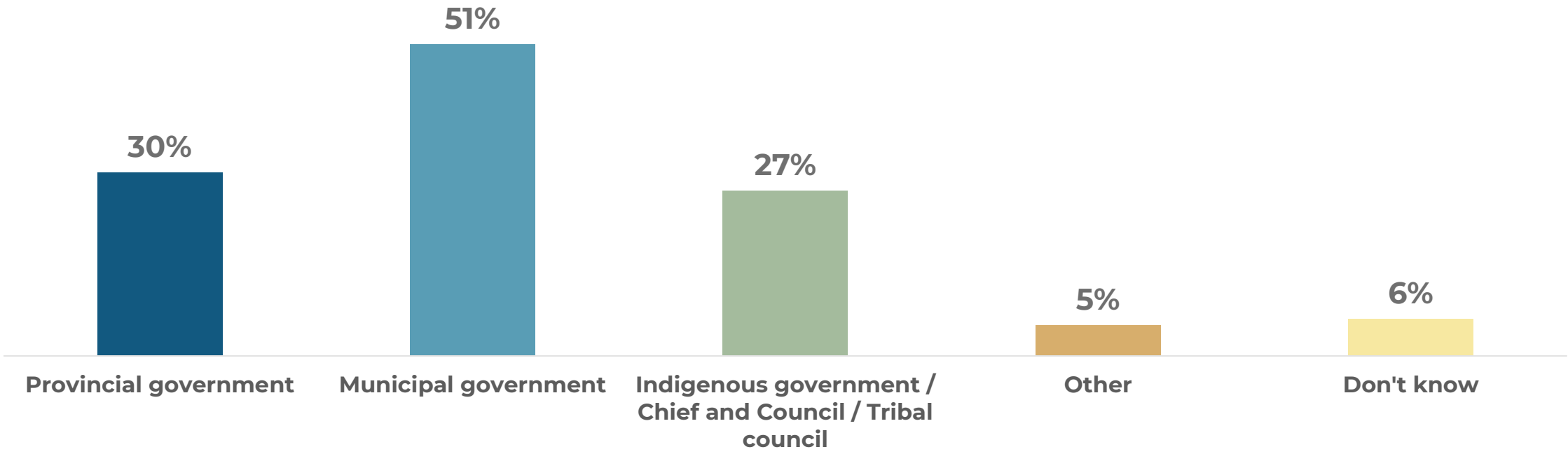
SECTION 4
BUILDING ADDITIONAL CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO WATER QUALITY AND RELIABILITY RISKS

This section explores satisfaction with water governance and infrastructure in communities, including perceptions of responsibility for water management and support for proposed solutions.

Building Additional Capacity | **Community Water Supply - Management**

One half of respondents say their municipal government is currently responsible for managing their community's water supply. Around three in ten say it is their provincial government or indigenous government who is responsible.

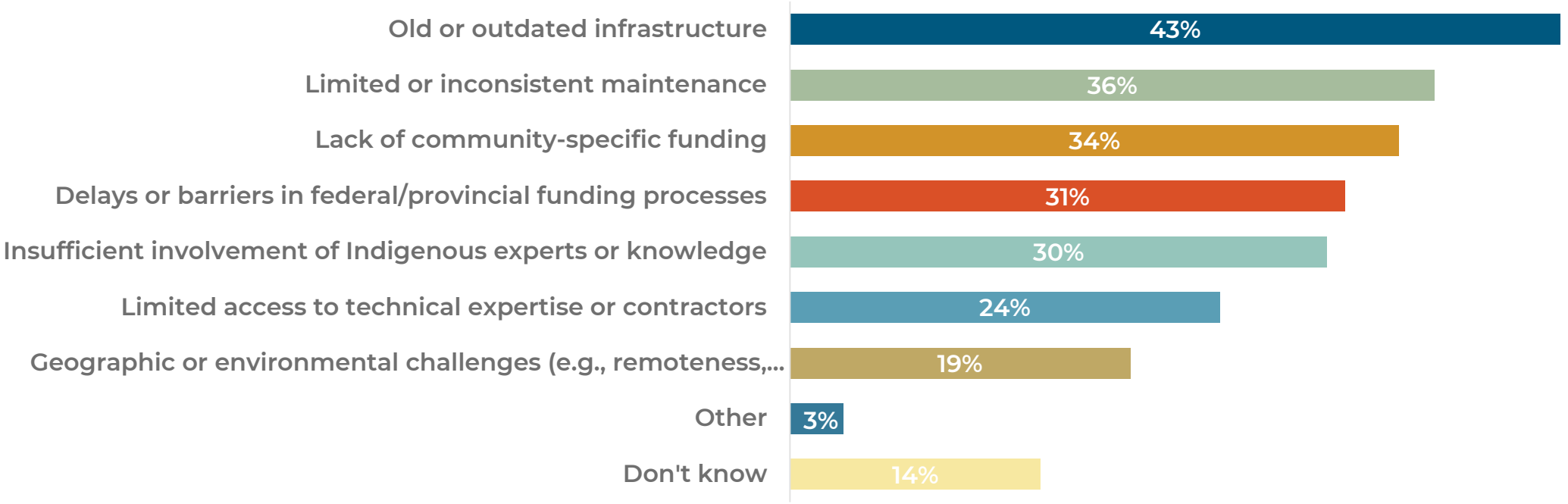
Q. 37 *Which of the following is currently responsible for managing your community's water supply?*



Water Infrastructure in Community | **Challenges in Installation**

When it comes to the installation of water infrastructure in their community, four in ten respondents identify old or outdated infrastructure and limited or inconsistent maintenance as the biggest challenges. Notably, the most frequently cited issues are those that fall under the responsibility of those in charge of water governance—highlighting the urgent need for systemic, institutional solutions rather than placing the burden on individual households or communities.

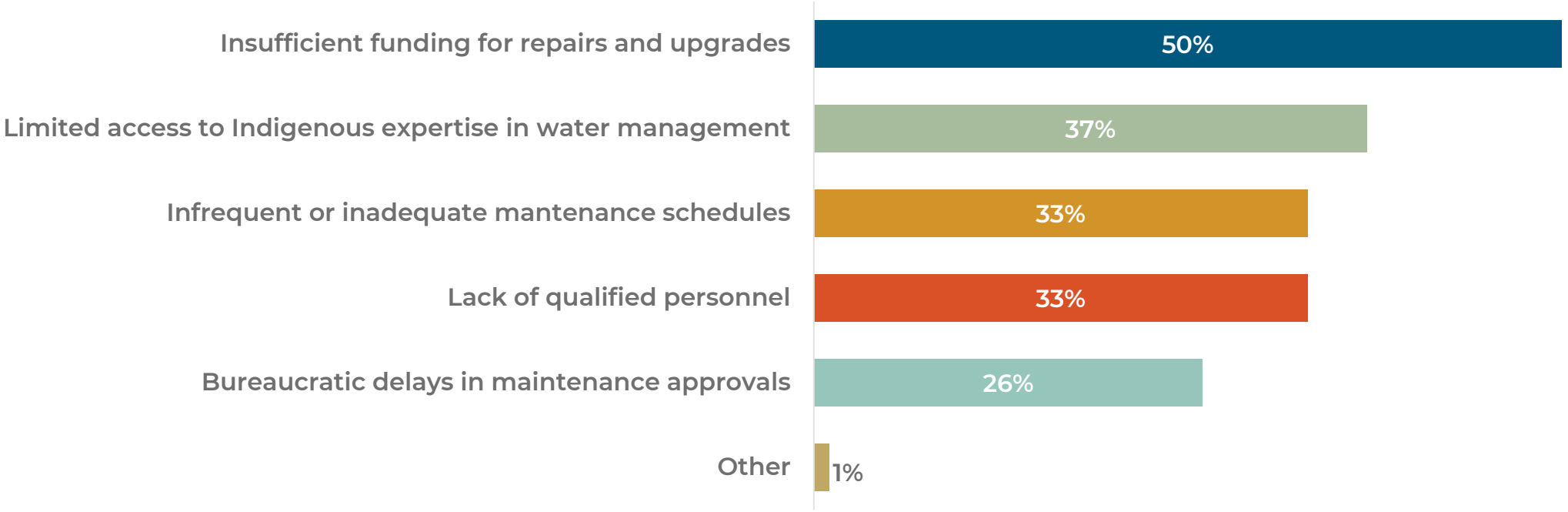
Q. 39 *Which of the following do you consider to be a challenge in the installation of water infrastructure in your community?*



Water Infrastructure in Community | **Challenges in Maintenance**

Half of respondents see insufficient funding for repairs and upgrades as a challenge in maintaining their community's water infrastructure.

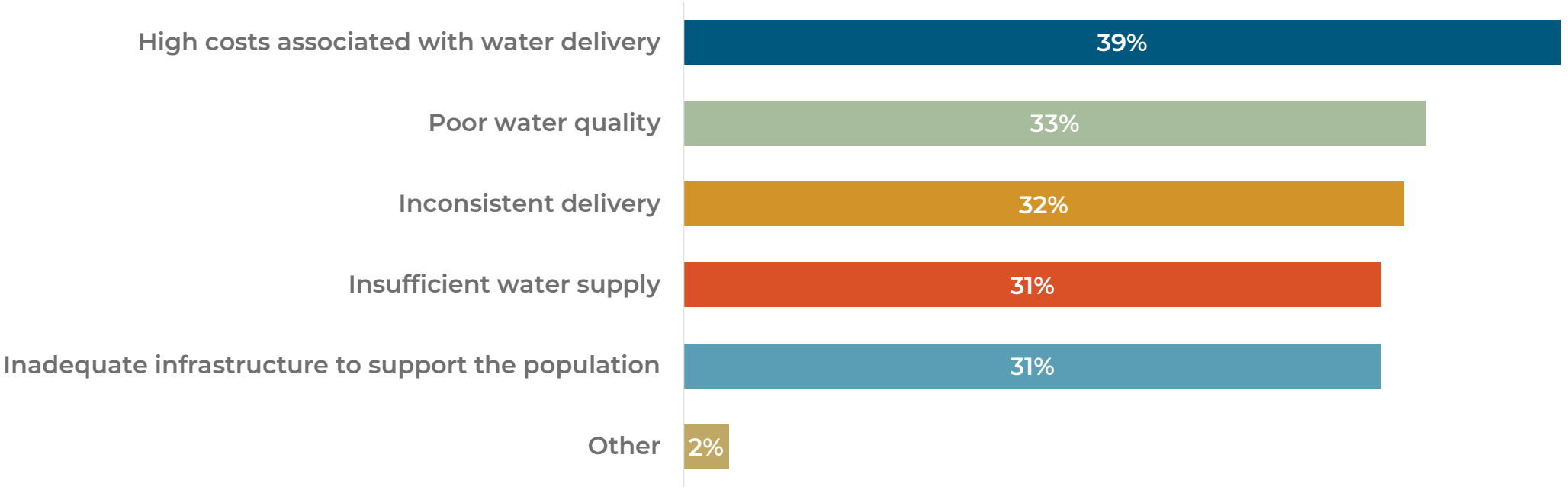
Q. 40 *Which of the following do you consider to be a challenge in the maintenance of water infrastructure in your community?*



Water Infrastructure in Community | **Challenges in Distribution**

Four in ten respondents cite the high costs associated with water delivery as a significant challenge in providing clean water to homes, public facilities, and businesses in their communities. With one-third of respondents living on a First Nations Reserve and two in ten in small, rural, or on-the-land communities, it's crucial to recognize that some of these areas rely on fly-in access or often unpredictable ice roads, further compounding the issue of reliable water distribution.

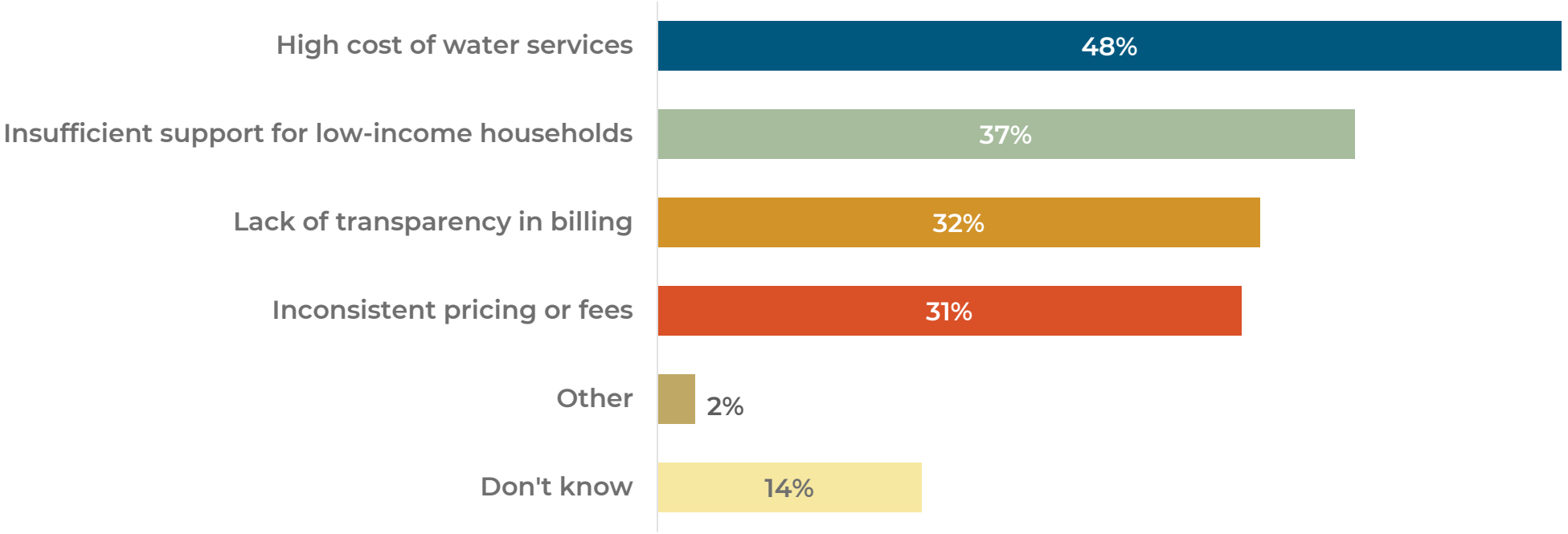
Q. 42 *Which of the following do you consider to be a challenge in the distribution of clean water to homes, public facilities, and businesses in your community? Select all that apply.*



Water Infrastructure in Community | **Challenges in Billing & Charges**

When asked about challenges in billing and charges for domestic water use in their community, half of respondents cite the high cost of water services as a concern. Four in ten mention insufficient support for low-income households, a critical issue given the financial constraints faced by many Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples, where poverty and high unemployment rates make these costs particularly burdensome.

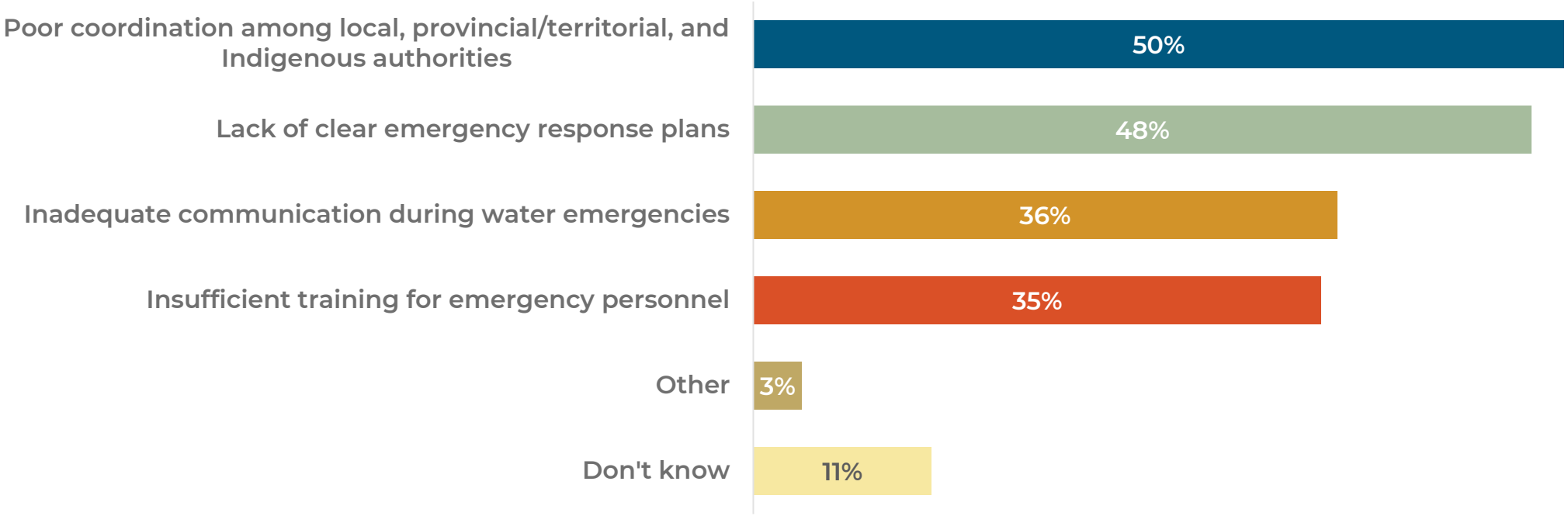
Q. 43 *Which of the following do you consider to be a challenge in the billing and charges for the use of domestic water in your community?*



Water Infrastructure in Community | **Challenges in Emergency Response**

Half of the respondents identify poor coordination among local, provincial/territorial, and Indigenous authorities as a challenge in emergency response and water safety. A similar proportion report lack of clear emergency response plans.

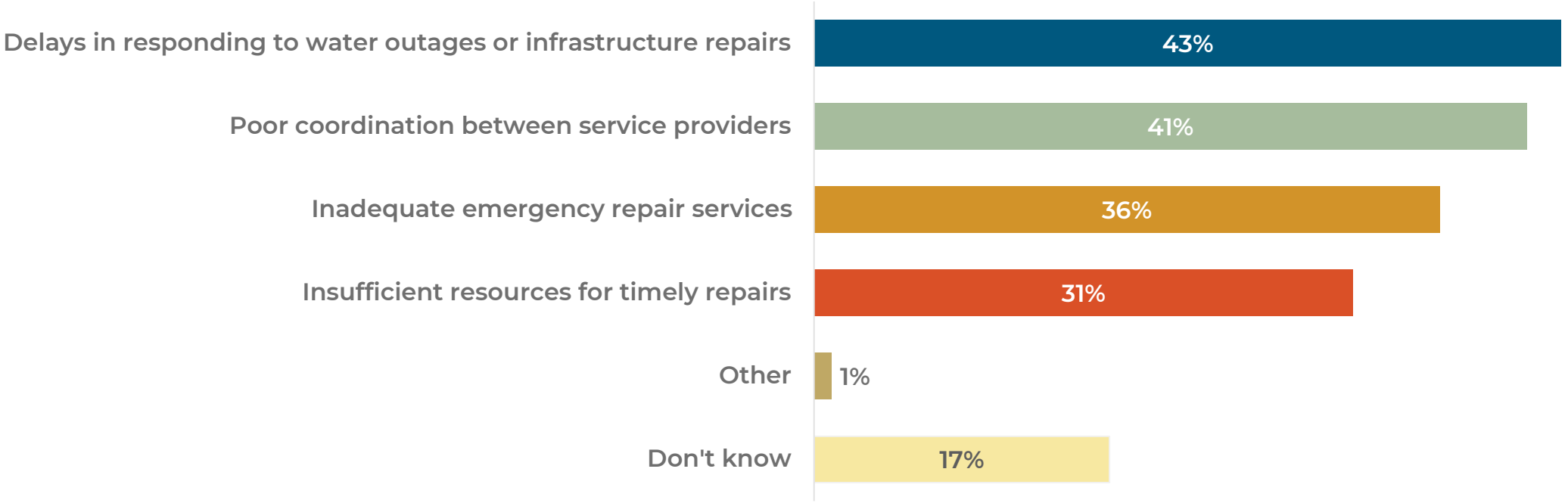
Q. 44 *Which of the following do you consider to be a challenge in the emergency response and water safety planning in your community?*



Water Infrastructure in Community | **Challenges in Timeliness of Service**

Four in ten respondents cite delays in responses to water outages or infrastructure repairs, along with poor coordination between service providers, as the top challenges affecting timeliness of service. Given these challenges, it necessary to urgently advocate for better resources, clearer response protocols and stronger inter-governmental collaboration.

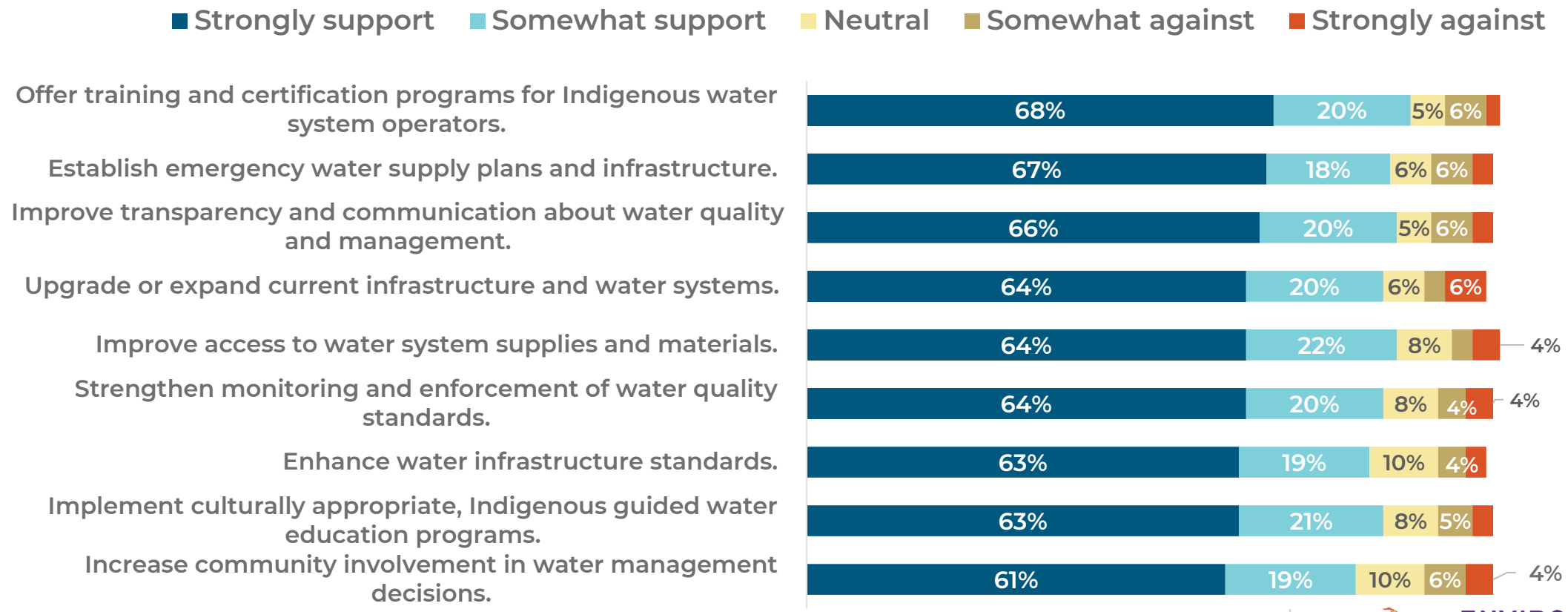
Q. 46 *Which of the following do you consider to be a challenge in the timeliness of service (e.g., responding to outages or repairs)?*



Building Additional Capacity | **Proposed Solutions to Address Challenges**

Majorities of respondents support the proposed solutions to address water supply and management challenges, especially offering training and certification programs for Indigenous water system operators. These are concrete steps that, if meaningfully adopted by water governing bodies with the necessary resources and support, can significantly improve water insecurity.

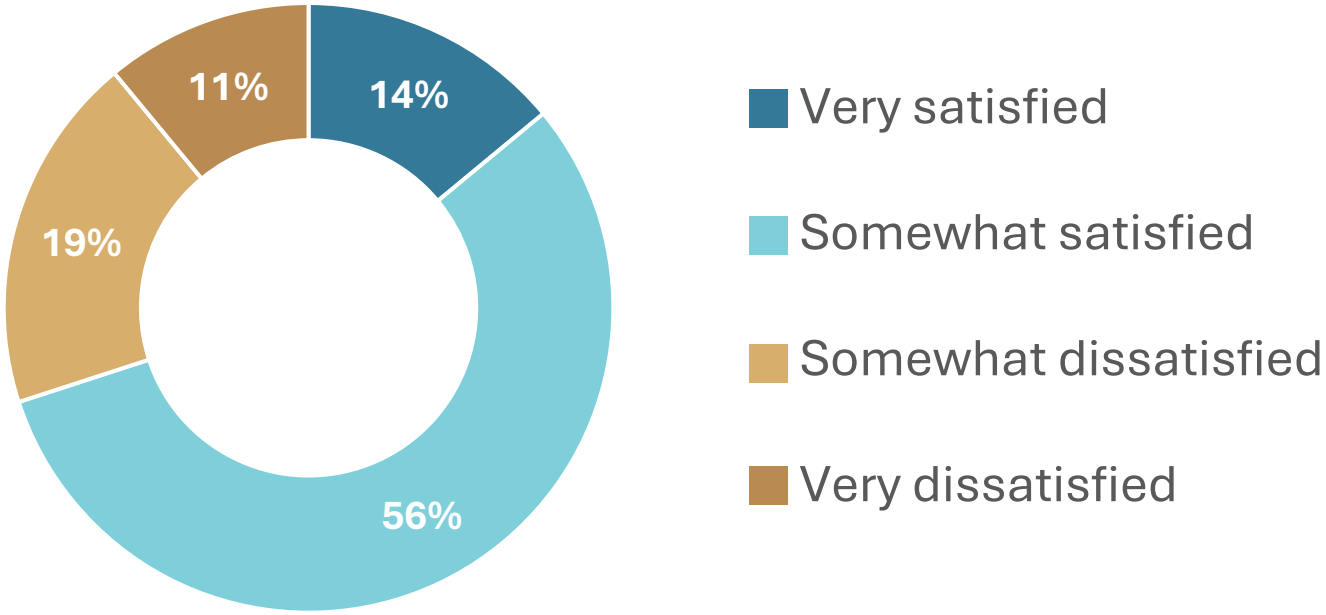
Q. 47 *On a scale from 'Strongly support' to 'strongly against,' please indicate your level of support for each of the proposed solutions to address challenges with water supply and management in your community.*



Building Additional Capacity | **Satisfaction with Water Governance**

Only one in ten respondents are very satisfied with water governance in their community.

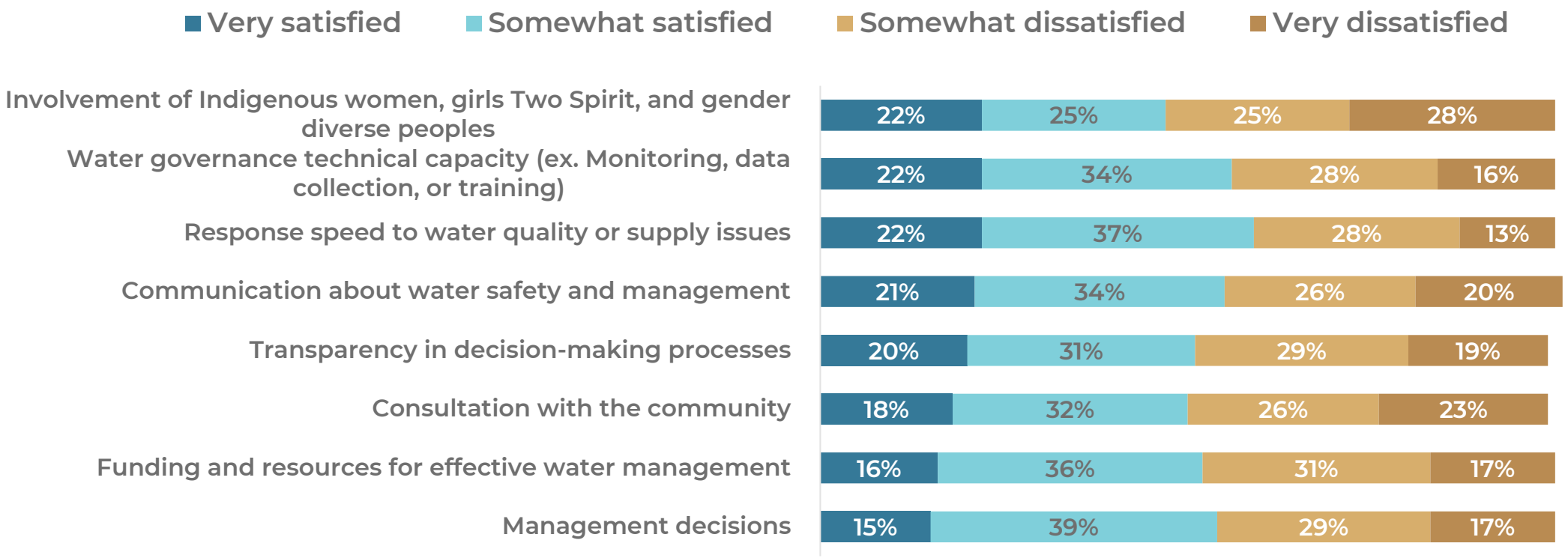
Q. 48 *Overall, how satisfied are you with the work of water governance in your community?*



Building Additional Capacity | **Satisfaction with Water Governance**

Respondents are divided in their satisfaction with various aspects of water governance in their community. Satisfaction is notably lower regarding the limited involvement of Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples as well as consultation with the community.

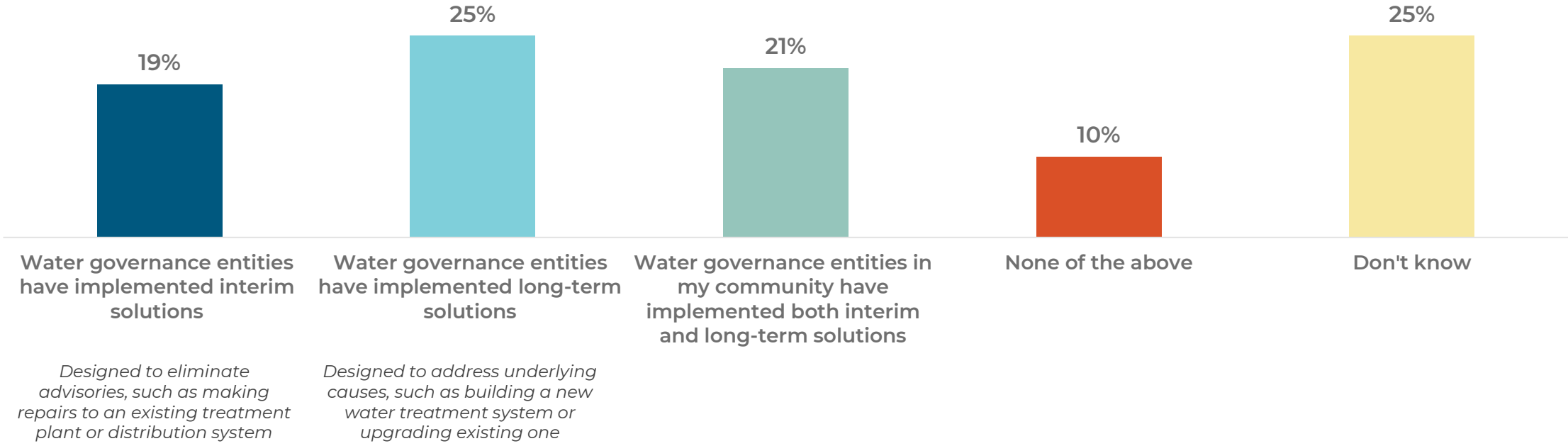
Q. 49 *Please rate your satisfaction levels with the following aspects of water governance in your community*



Building Additional Capacity | **Measures Taken in Community**

When asked about measures taken in their community to address water insecurity, only one-quarter say that water governance entities have implemented long-term solutions. This is concerning because it indicates that communities experiencing water insecurity are not receiving sustainable, long-term support to resolve ongoing water issues.

Q. 50 *Which of the following statements would better describe measures taken in your community to address water insecurity?*



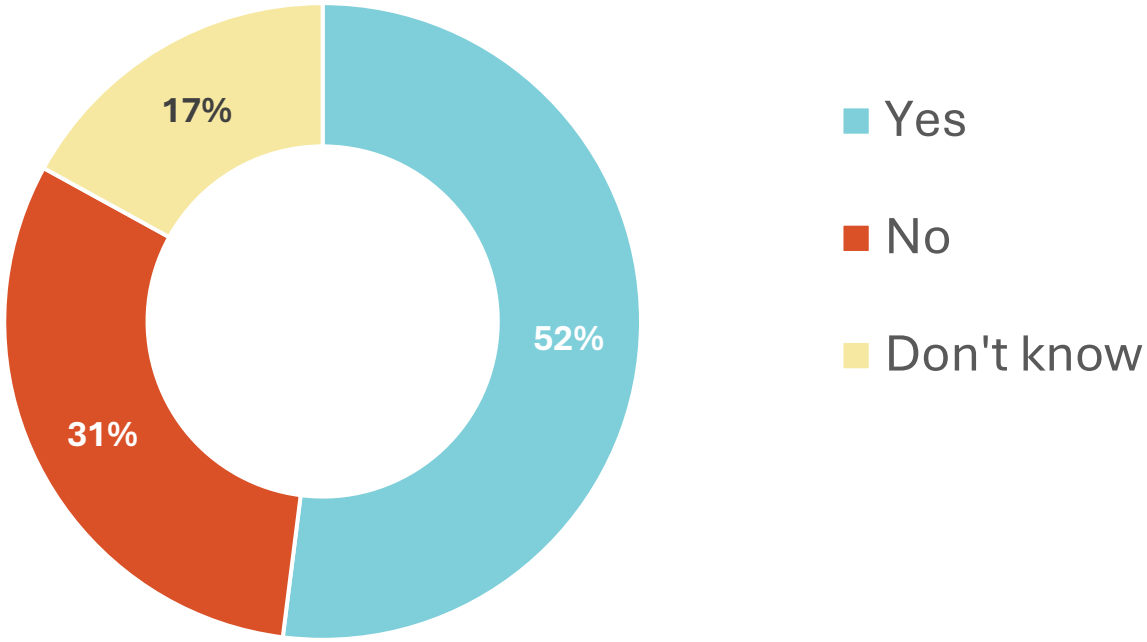
SECTION 5
GENDER-BASED DECISIONS & SOLUTIONS

This section explores capacity limitation specific to Women, Girls, Two-Spirit and Gender-Diverse Peoples.

Gender-Based Decisions & Solutions | **Commitment**

Only one-half of respondents feel their community/nation is committed to building capacity and including WG2SGD+ Peoples in solutions related to drinking water issues. This could include efforts such as appointing members to water management boards, creating senior and mid-level water management positions, forming co-management agreements with water authorities, and conducting consultations with community leaders, Indigenous as well as provincial/federal/municipal Water Authorities.

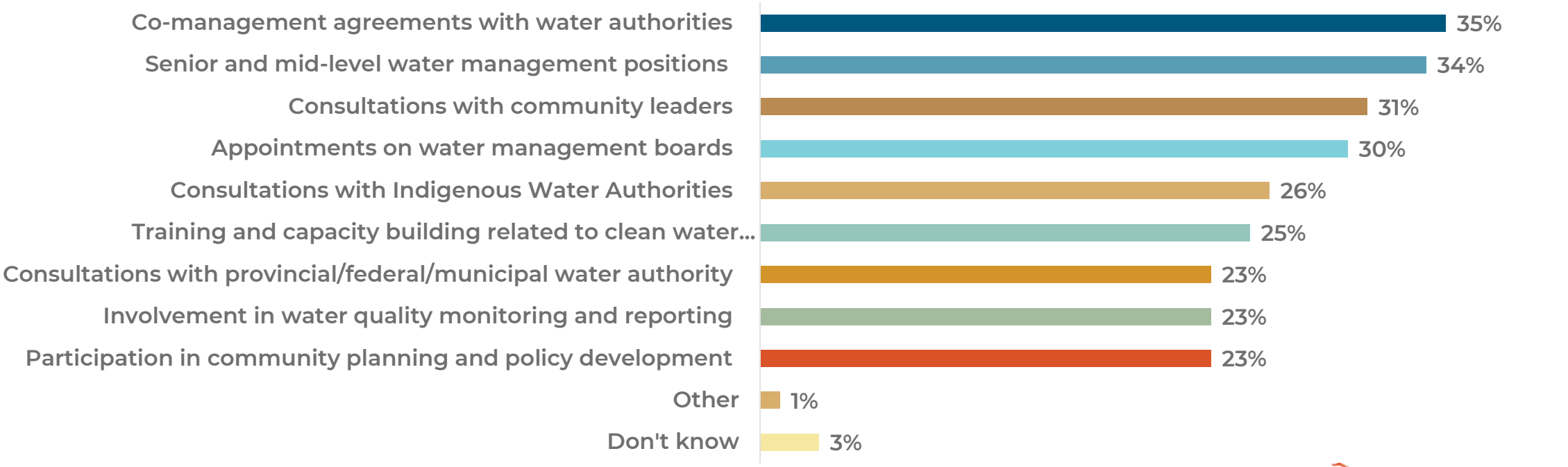
Q. 51 *Do you feel your community/nation is committed to building capacity and including Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, and Gender-Diverse Peoples in solutions related to clean drinking water issues?*



Gender-Based Decisions & Solutions | **Demonstrating Commitment**

Among those who believe their community is committed to including Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples in decision-making related to clean water management, one-third report that there are co-management agreements with water authorities. This highlights the positive action Indigenous communities are taking to address water insecurity and signals growing Indigenous-led, self-determined water governance.

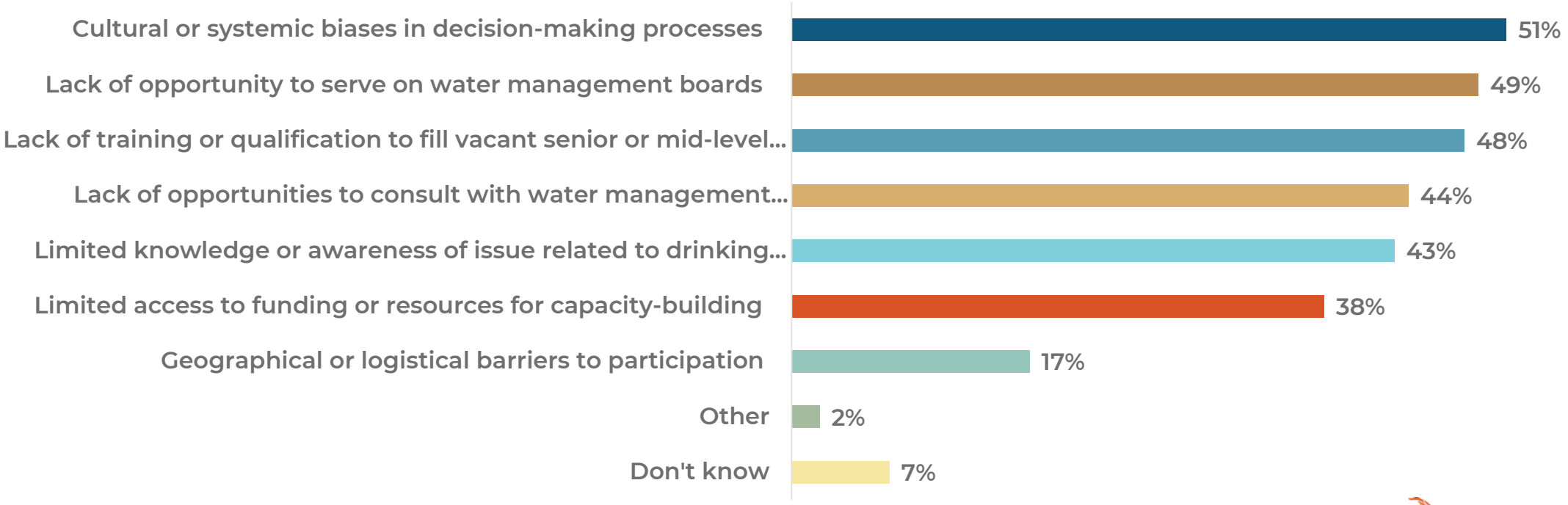
Q. 52 *In what ways does your community demonstrate its commitment to including Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse peoples in decision-making related to clean water management? (Subsample: Those who feel their community/nation is committed to building capacity and including WG2SGD+ Peoples related to clean drinking water issues (n=124))*



Gender-Based Decisions & Solutions | **Barriers Preventing Inclusion**

Cultural or systemic biases in decision-making processes are reported by half as a barrier preventing Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples from participating in decision-making. A similar proportion mention a lack of opportunities or training to serve on boards or fill key positions. These are actionable barriers, and the notable proportions indicate that the government must take immediate steps to address and mitigate these obstacles.

Q. 53 *What do you believe are barriers preventing the inclusion of Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse peoples in decision-making related to clean water management?*



Thank you.

ENVIRONICS
RESEARCH