



PAM SALARY SURVEY REPORT

Sean Payne, Ph.D.
May 2025



**RESEARCH
SERVICES**

Overview

PC(USA) Research Services and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians (PAM) conducted an online survey of church musicians from November 2024 through March 2025. Survey respondents were recruited through email, newsletters, and social media. The survey had 467 responses.

This report presents the results of that survey. The survey focuses on compensation and responsibilities of church employed musicians. We asked about compensation, including annual salary, benefits, weekly hours, and leave time. We asked about job responsibilities such as the number of ensembles directed, weekly church services, and pastoral care and employment outside of church to get a sense of the fuller work-life of church musicians.

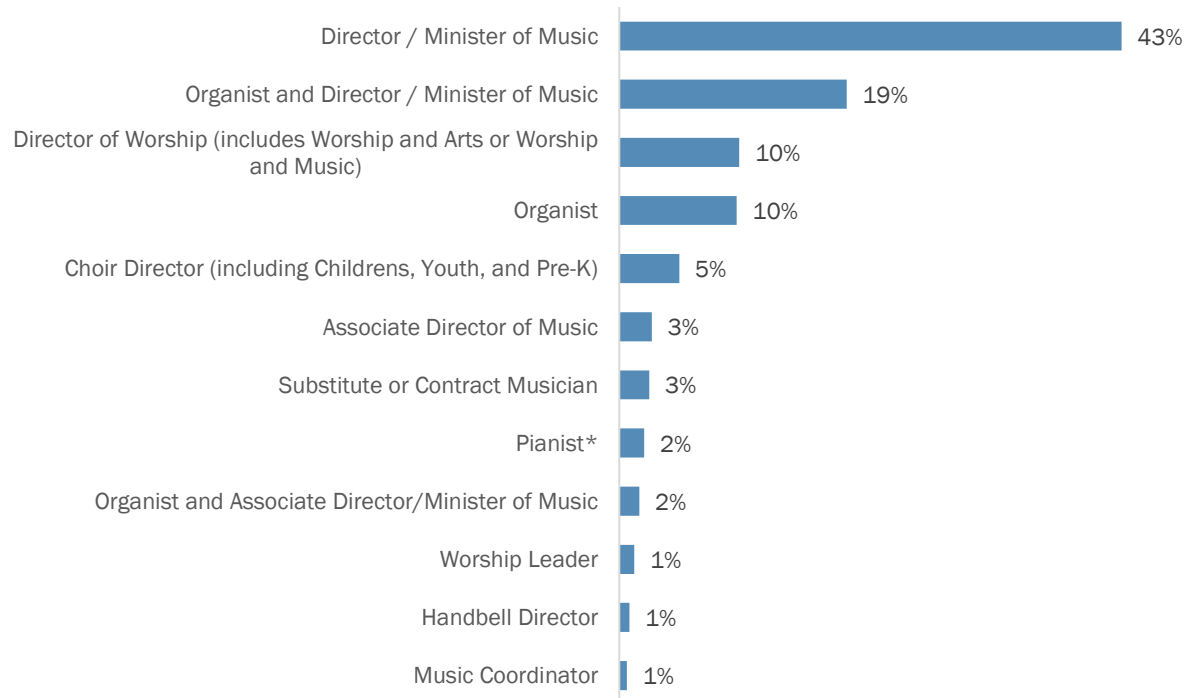
At a glance

- 467 responses
- 28% full-time, 72% part-time
- Most respondents were either “Director/Minister of Music” or “Organist and Director/Minister of Music”
- Most common annual salary range is \$55,000-\$70,000 for full-time positions and Less than \$15,000 for part-time positions
- 1-2 ensembles conducted on average
- 1.4 weekly services on average
- 35% provide pastoral care
- 61% have additional employment
- 66% have a master’s degree or higher

PAM Salary Survey

Most respondents are directors or ministers of music and part-time

What is your role in church?

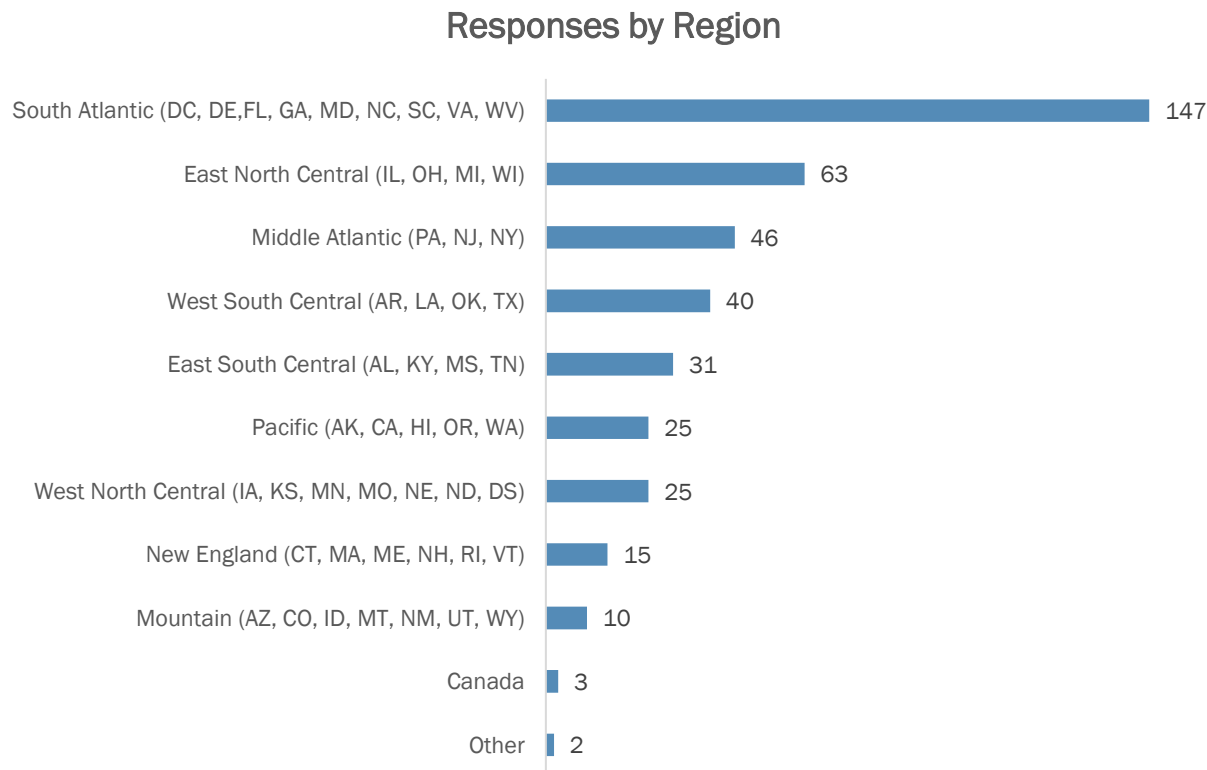


Sixty-two percent of respondents selected either “Director/Minister of Music” (43%) or “Organist and Director/Minister of Music” (19%) as their primary role. The next most common roles were “Director of Worship” and “Organist,” each with 10% of responses. The remaining roles each had 5% or less of the responses.

N= 467 *This category was “Instrumentalist:” with a write -in option in the survey. All respondents who selected Instrumentalist wrote in some variation of Pianist as their role.

PAM Salary Survey

The largest group of respondents are from the South Atlantic region of the U.S.



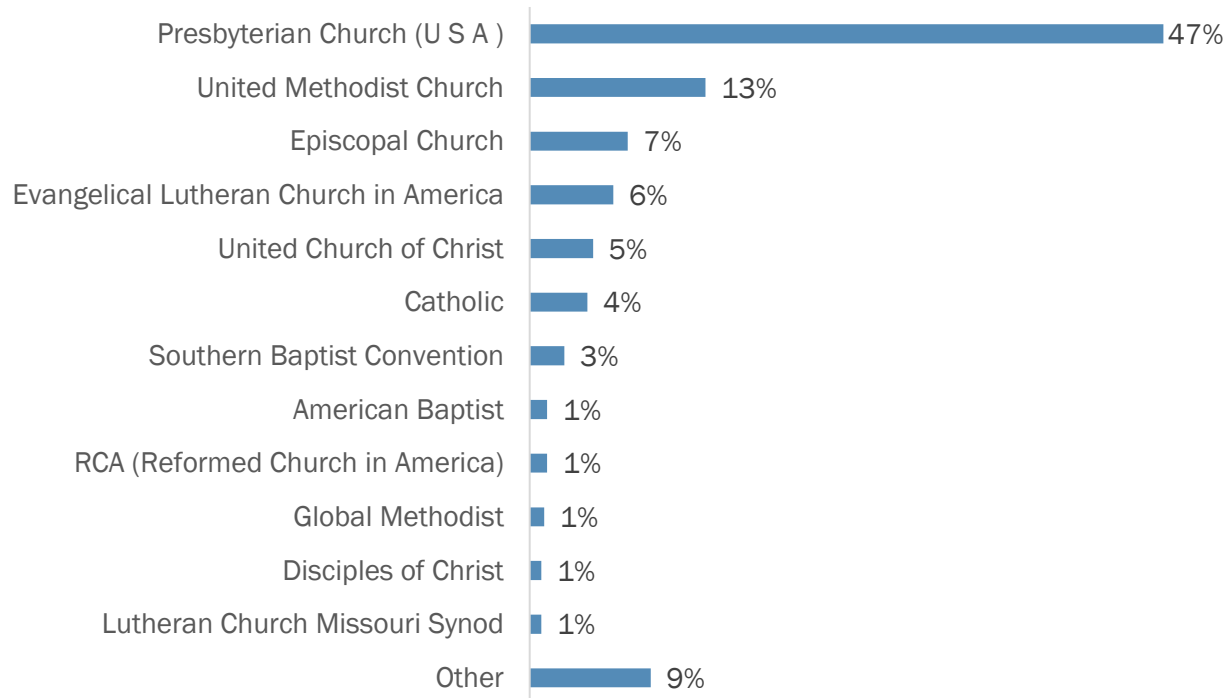
Thirty-six percent (36%) of respondents are from the South Atlantic Region with over twice as many respondents as the next largest regional group, East North Central which had 15% of responses. Eleven percent (11%) are from the Middle Atlantic, 10% from West South Central, and 8% from East South Central. Pacific and West North Central each make up 6% of responses while New England is 4% and Mountain 2%. There were 3 responses from Canada and 2 from other countries.

N = 407. Regions are based on US Census classifications.

PAM Salary Survey

The largest group of respondents serve in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) denomination

What is the denomination of the church you serve?



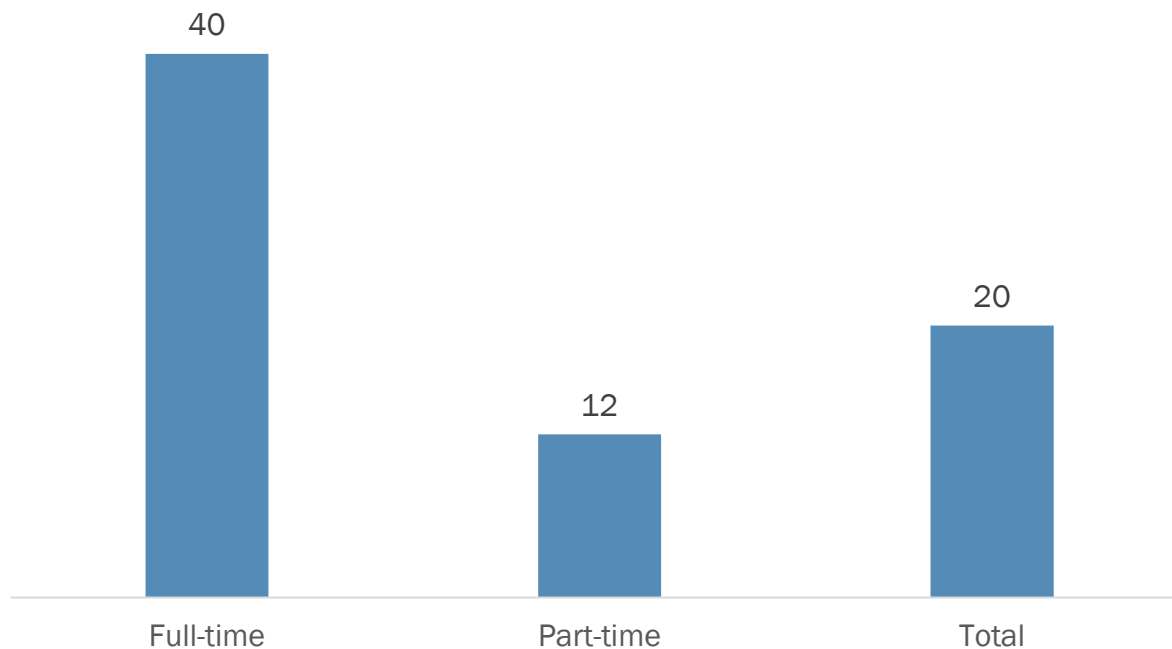
Most of the respondents, 83%, serve churches affiliated with mainline protestant denominations. Forty-seven percent (47%) said they served a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affiliated church. The next largest denominations were the United Methodist Church (13%), the Episcopal Church (7%), the ELCA (6%), and the United Church of Christ (5%). The “Other” category includes all denominations with three or fewer responses.

N = 467.

PAM Salary Survey

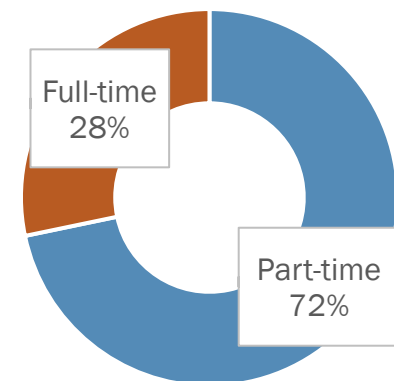
Most respondents are part-time. On average, those with full-time roles work 40 hours per week, while those with part-time roles work 12

How many hours per week do you work at your church position? (Median)



N = 420

Is your church position full-time or part-time?

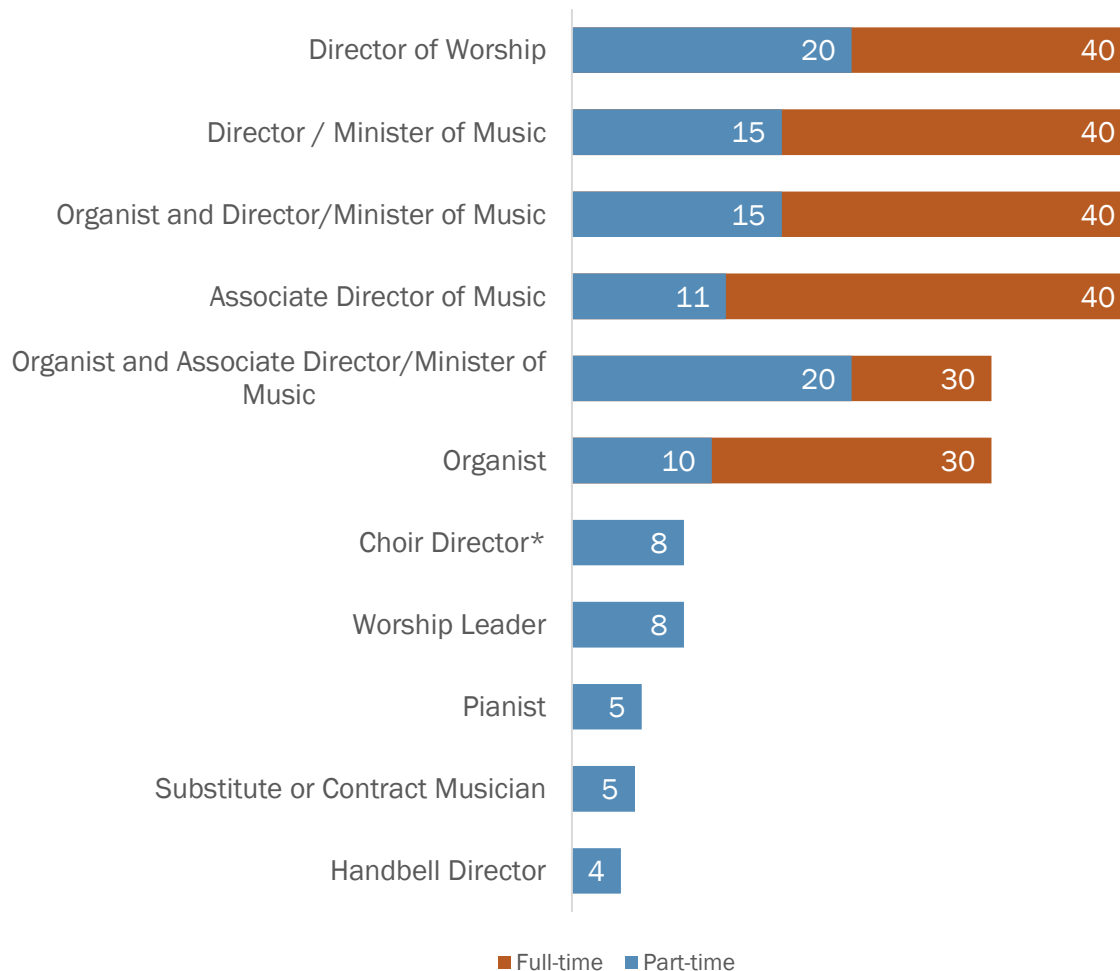


N = 467

PAM Salary Survey

Those with full-time roles typically work 40 hours per week, while part-time roles vary significantly

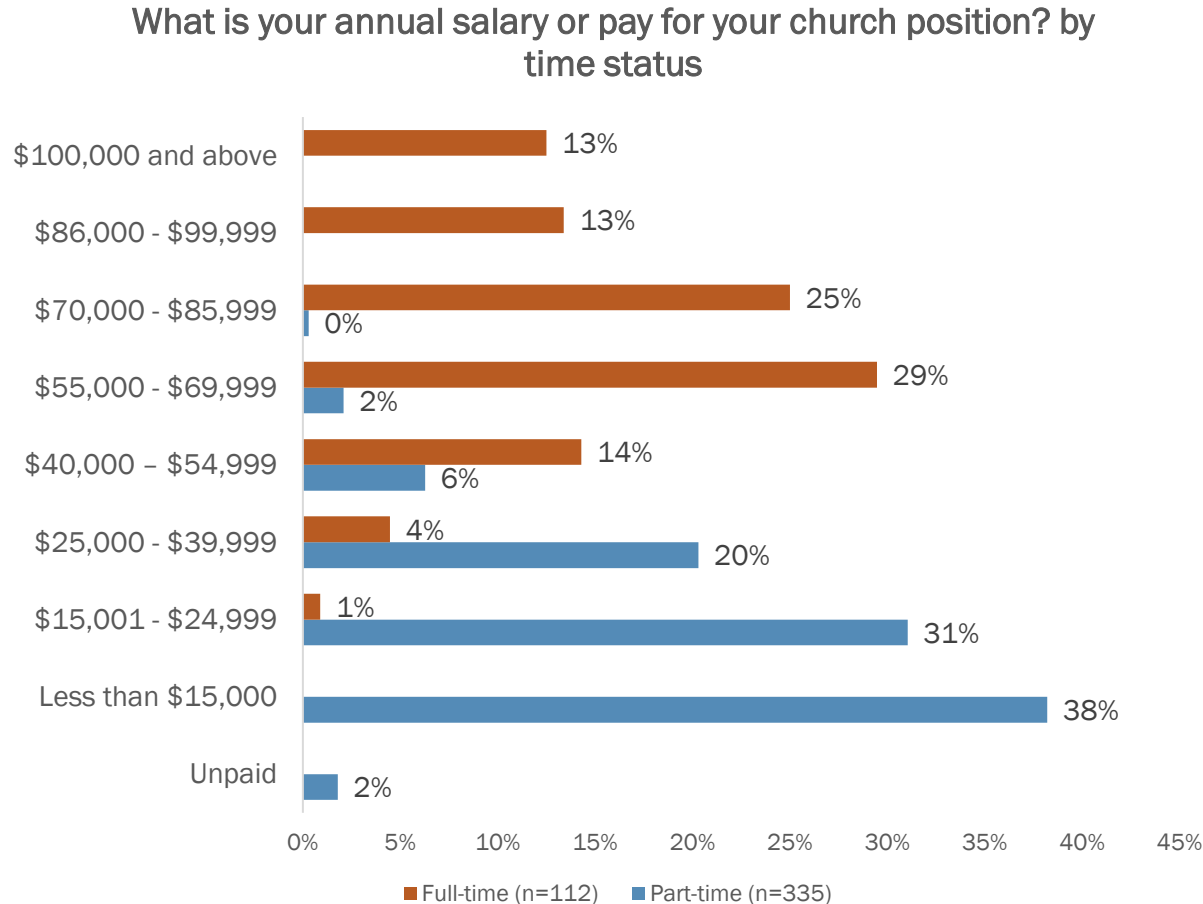
Median weekly hours by role and time-status*



The median weekly hours worked for a full-time director/minister or a full-time associate director/minister was 40 hours per week. The median for full-time organists was 30 hours per week. There is much more variation by role for part-time positions. Part-time director or minister positions worked on average 15 or 20 hours per week, depending on the role. Non-director organists work 10 hours per week, while the rest of the part-time roles work fewer hours.

PAM Salary Survey

Most full-time respondents earned between \$55 and \$86 thousand, while most part-time respondents earn under \$25,000



For full-time respondents, the most common salary range was \$55-\$70 thousand (29%), followed closely by those earning \$70-\$85 thousand (25%). About a quarter of full-time respondents earn more than \$86,000 a year, and about one-fifth earn less than \$55,000.

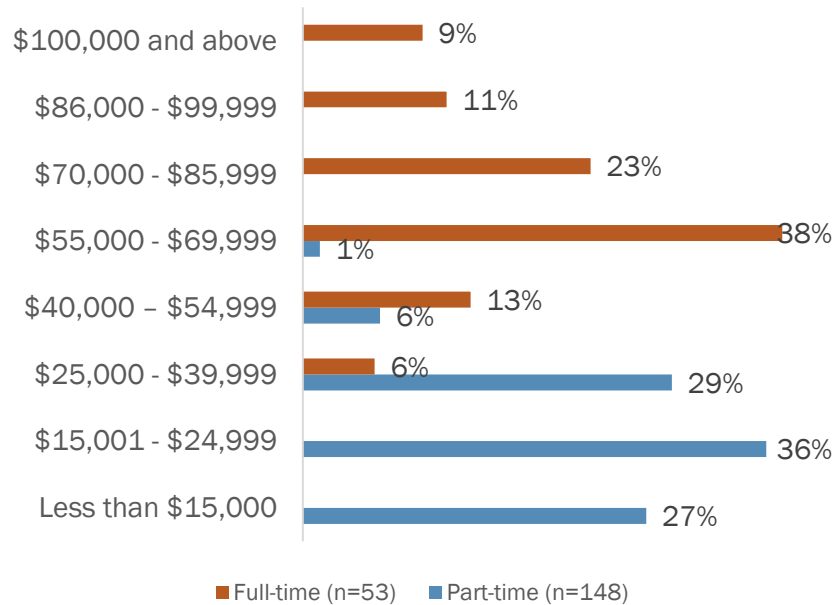
Part-time respondents most commonly made less than \$15,000 (38%), with the next largest group earning \$15-\$25 thousand (31%). About one-fifth earn \$25-\$40 thousand and about 8% more than \$40,000. A very small number are unpaid (2%).

PAM Salary Survey

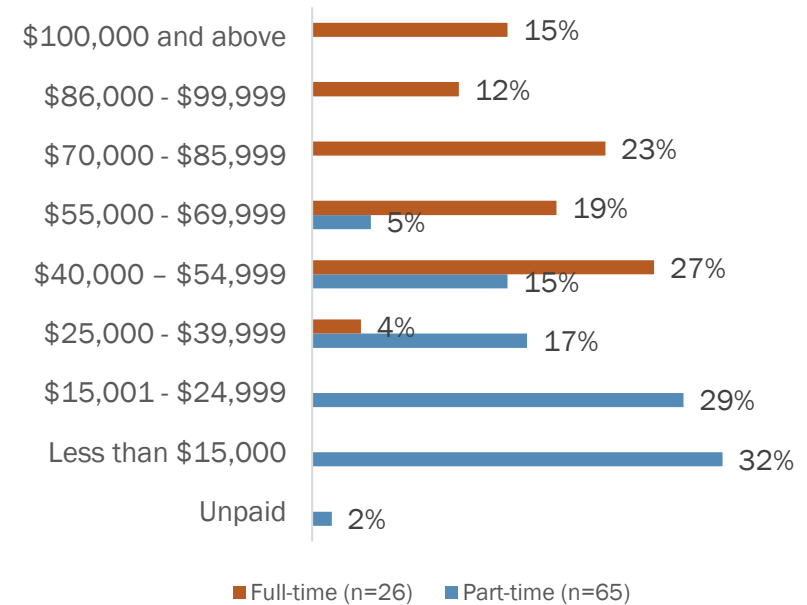
Salary Ranges, full- and part-time roles (1 of 2)

This page and the next show respondents' salary ranges by role and whether they are full-time or part-time. Roles with fewer than five responses are excluded from these figures (Excluded roles: Full-time Instrumentalists, Choir directors, Worship leaders, Organist and Associate Directors/Ministers of Music, and all Handbell Directors and Music Coordinators.)

Salary Ranges - Director/Minister of Music



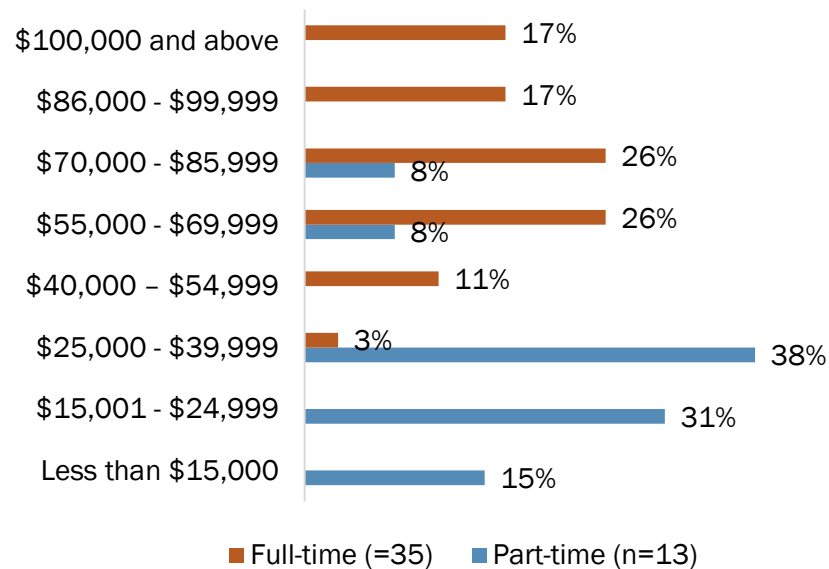
Salary Ranges - Organist and Director/Minister of Music



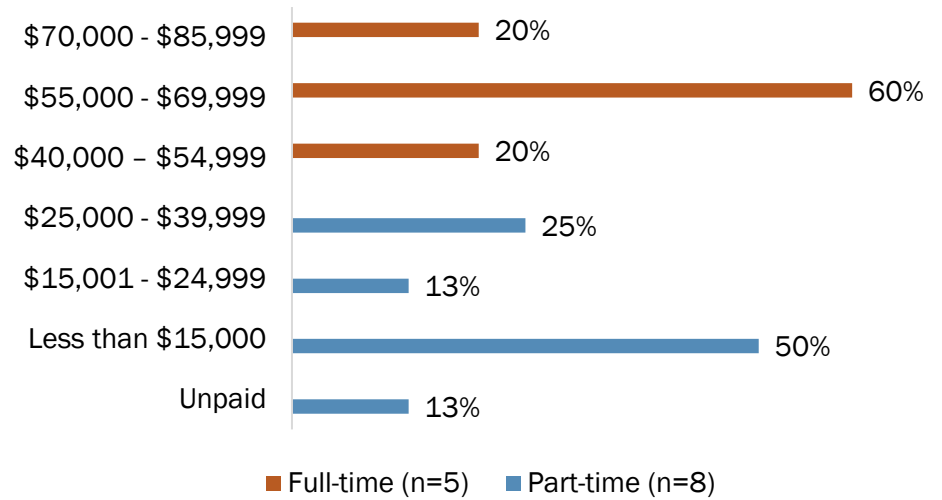
PAM Salary Survey

Salary Ranges, full- and part-time roles (2 of 2)

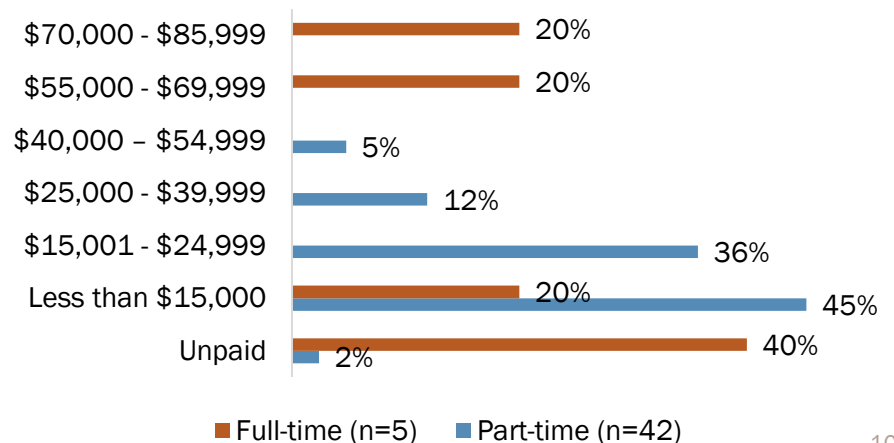
Salary Ranges - Director of Worship (includes Worship and Arts or Worship and Music)



Salary Ranges - Associate Director of Music

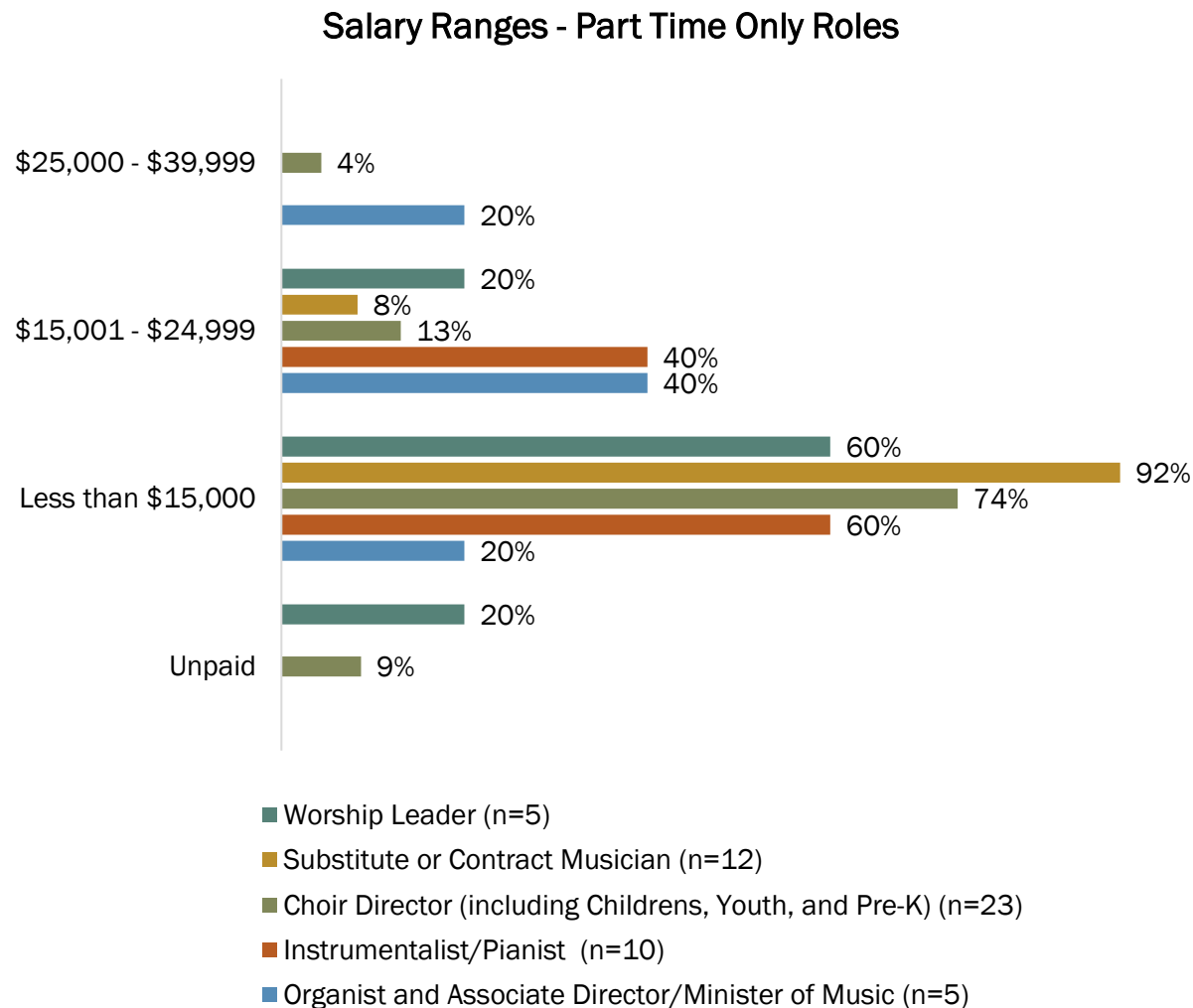


Salary Ranges - Organist



PAM Salary Survey

Salary Ranges Part-time only roles



This graph shows the salary ranges for reportable part-time only roles. For all roles except Organist and Associate Director, the most common salary was less than \$15,000, with a few earning above that range. Organists and Associate Directors' most common salary range was \$15 - \$25 thousand, but there were only five respondents in this category.

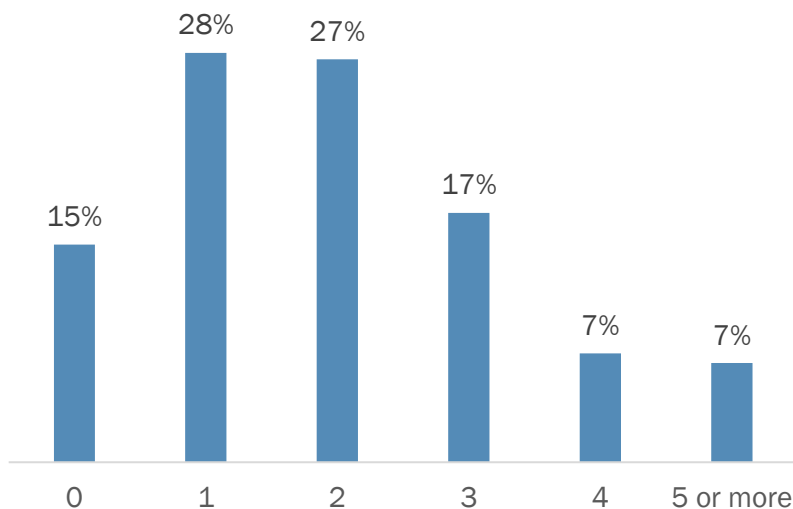
PAM Salary Survey

Respondents conduct two choirs or ensembles on average

Most respondents said they conduct one or two choirs/ensembles, with the average being two. Seventeen percent (17%) said they conducted three choirs/ensembles, seven percent (7%) said four, and seven percent (7%) said five or more. Fifteen percent (15%) conducted no ensembles.

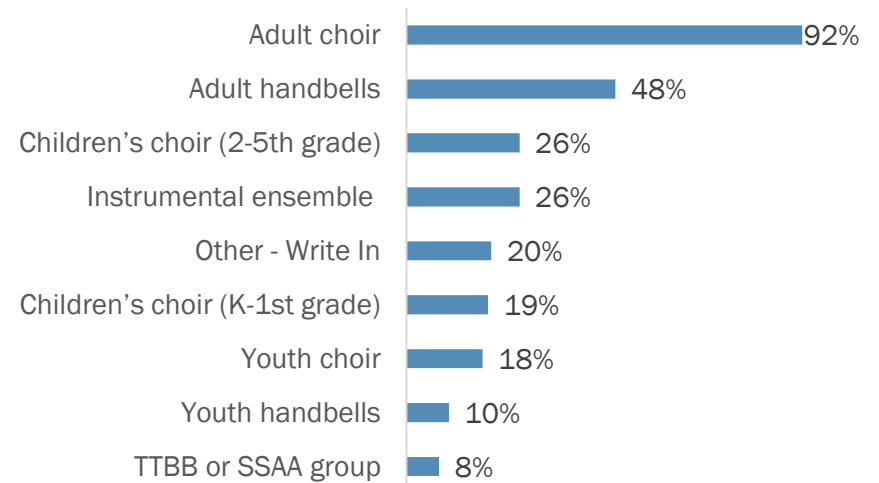
The most common choir/ensemble conducted was an adult choir. We asked the 397 respondents who said they conducted one or more choirs/ensembles which ones they supervised, and 92% selected Adult choir. Adult handbells were the second most common at 48%. Children's choir (2nd-5th grade) and Instrumental ensemble were selected by 26% each, Children's choir (k-1st) 19%, Youth choir 18%, Youth handbells 10%, and TTBB or SSAA group 8%. "Other" was selected by one-fifth of respondents with a wide range of write-in responses. Some common write-in ensembles included Praise or Worship Band (18 responses) and various types of adult choirs (19 responses).

How many choirs and/or ensembles do you conduct?



N=463

Which choirs or ensembles do you conduct/supervise?

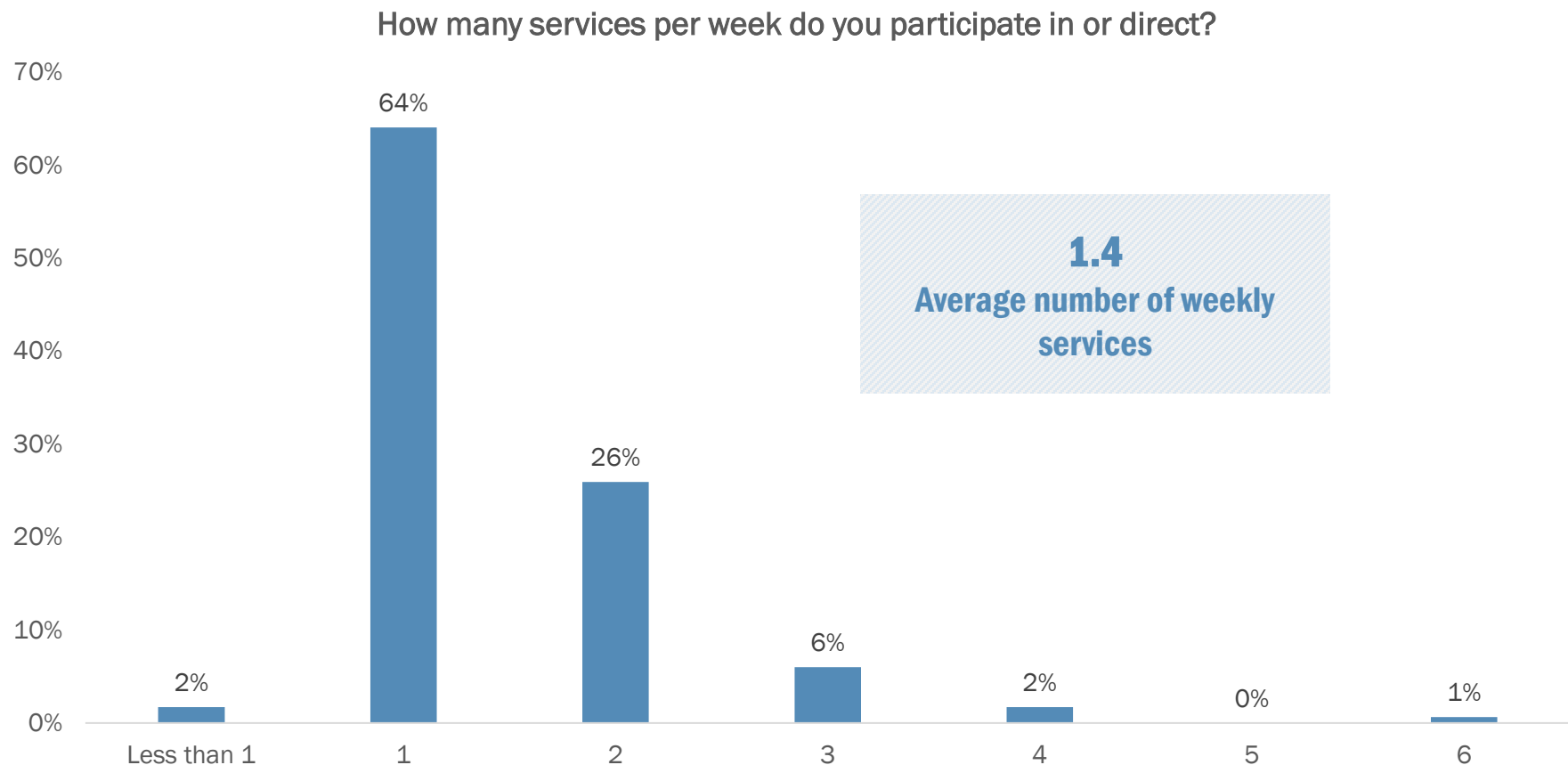


N=397

PAM Salary Survey

Respondents participate in or direct 1.4 worship services per week on average

Most respondents, 64%, only participate in a single worship service per week. A quarter (26%) direct or participate in two services. Only 9% participate in 3 or more services and 2% said less than one.

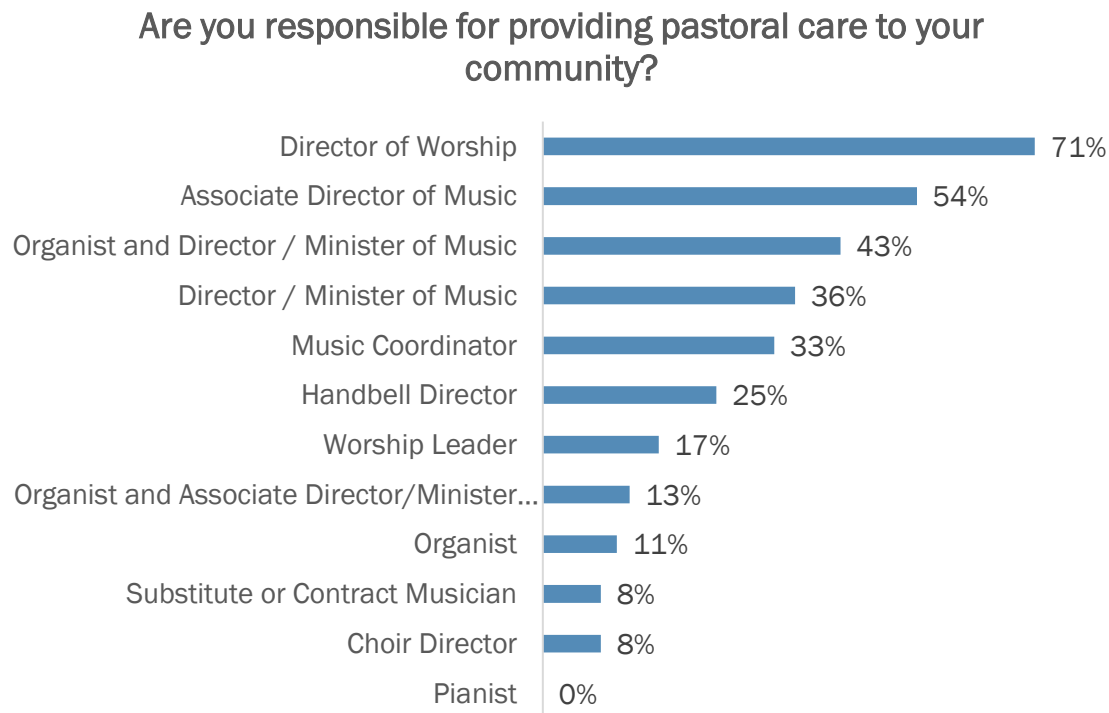


N = 467

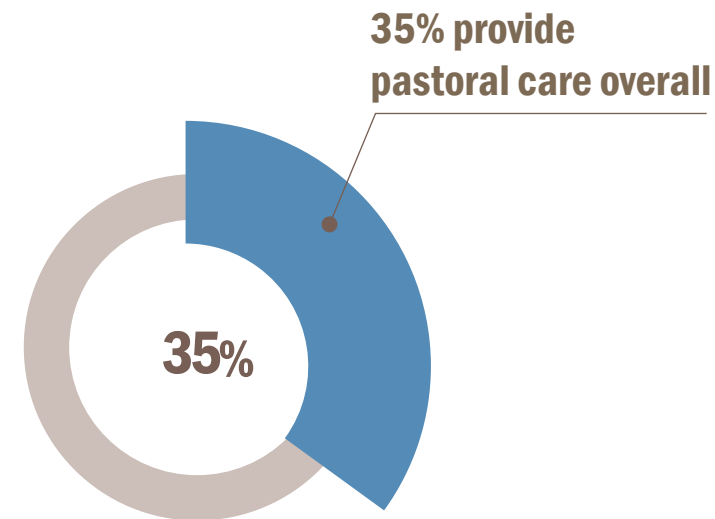
PAM Salary Survey

Overall, 35% of respondents provide pastoral care, but responses varied greatly by role

Respondents with director roles more commonly said they had responsibility for pastoral care than those in other types of positions.



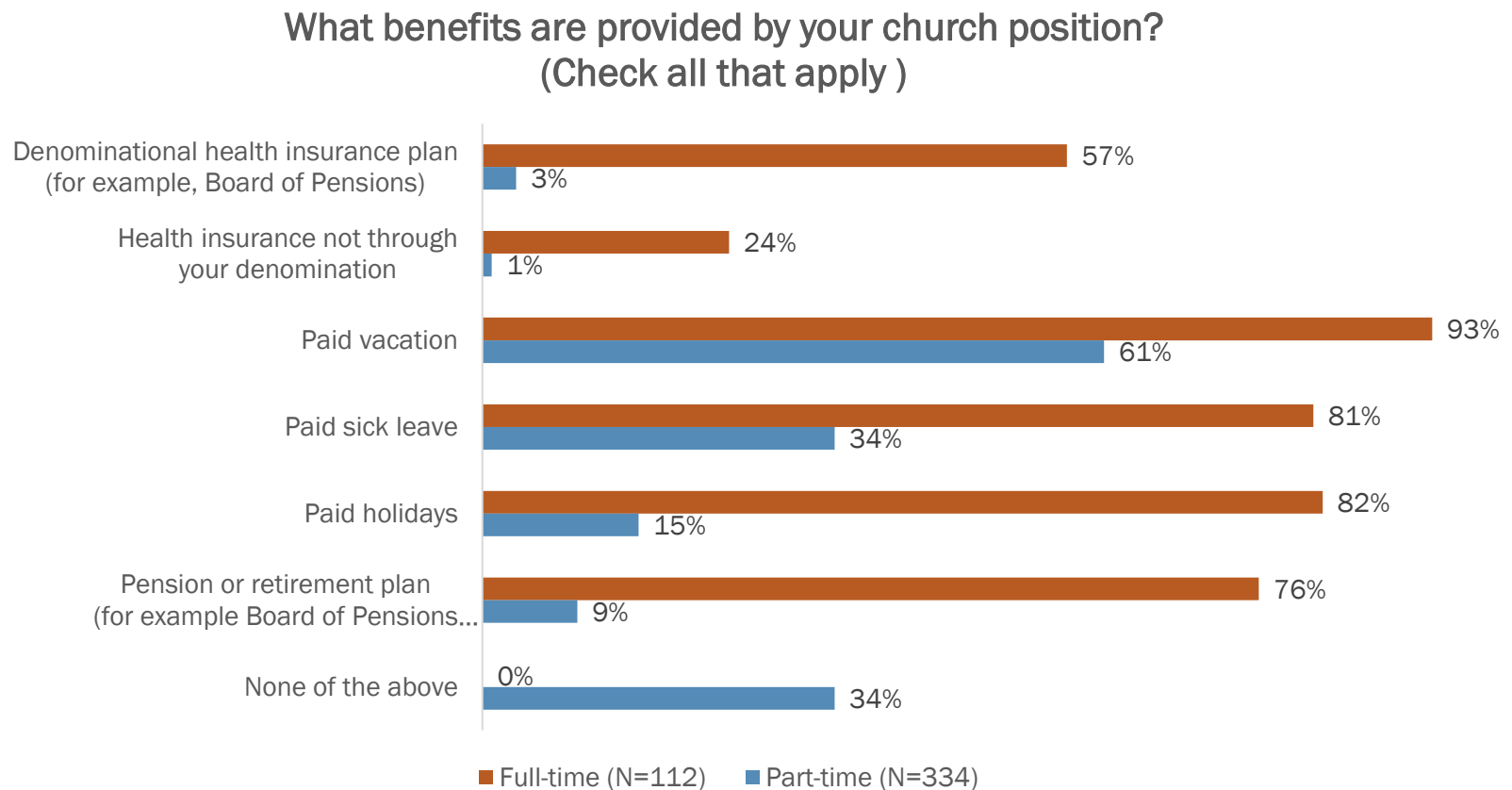
N = 467



N = 467

Benefits overview

The most common benefits respondents reported were paid leave, with paid vacation being the most common, followed by paid sick leave and paid holidays. The majority of respondents in full-time roles have some form of health insurance provided and a pension or retirement benefit, while very few part-time roles have either. A third of part-time respondents said they have no benefits.

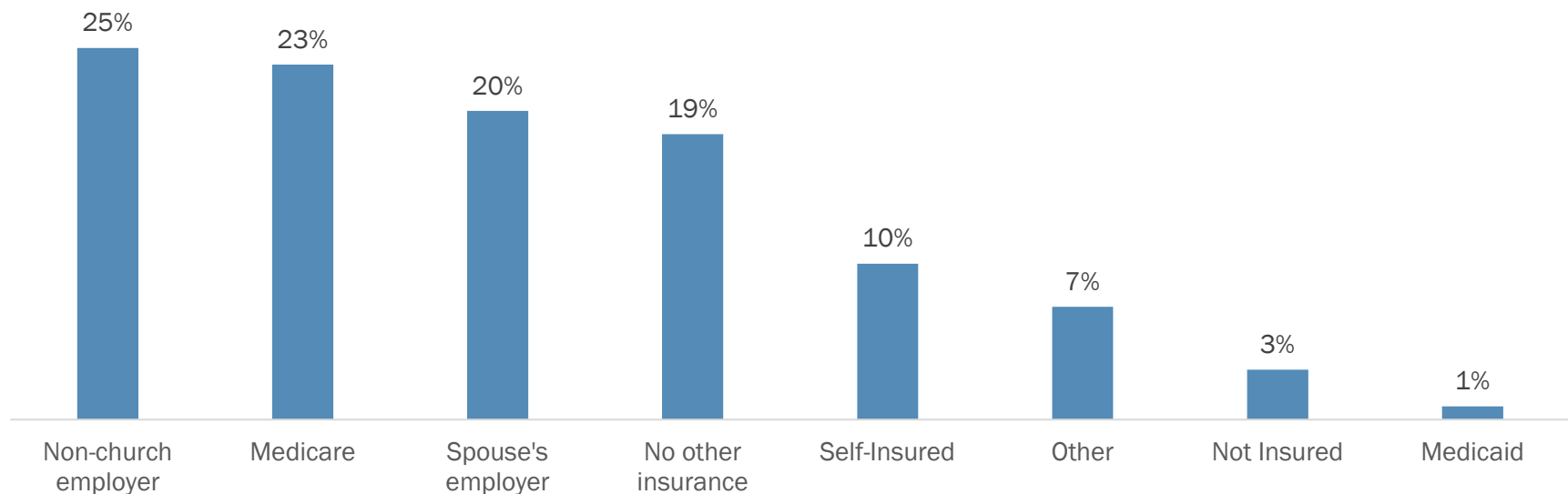


PAM Salary Survey

Overall, 97% of respondents had some form of medical insurance.

The most common source of medical insurance outside of the church employer was some other employer. Twenty-five percent (25%) reported getting insurance through their non-church employer and 17% through their spouse's employer. The next most common responses were Medicare at 23% and self-insured at 10%. Seven percent (7%) said some other source, such as Tri-Care or a retirement benefit. Only 3% said they were not insured.

Do you have health insurance through any source other than your church position?

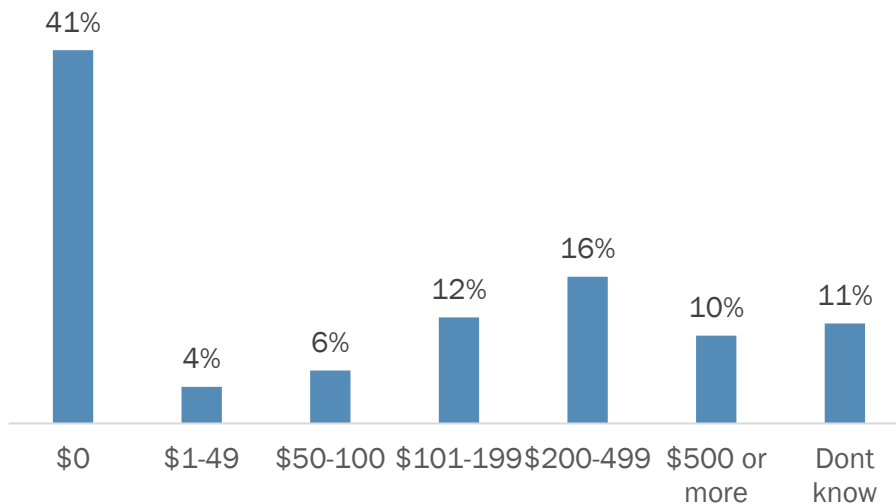


PAM Salary Survey

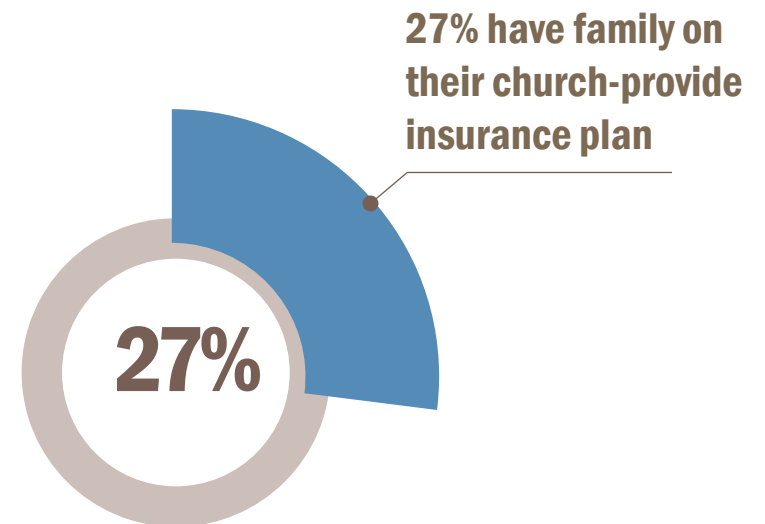
Insurance premiums vary widely and only a quarter with church provided insurance have their family on their plan

Of respondents with health insurance, the largest group said they paid \$0 per month for their insurance premiums. When we looked at insurance premiums by insurance type (e.g., church-provided, other employer, etc.), it was a little more common for respondents with health insurance from another employer or Medicare to report paying no premiums.

About how much per month do you pay or have deducted for health insurance premiums?



N=443



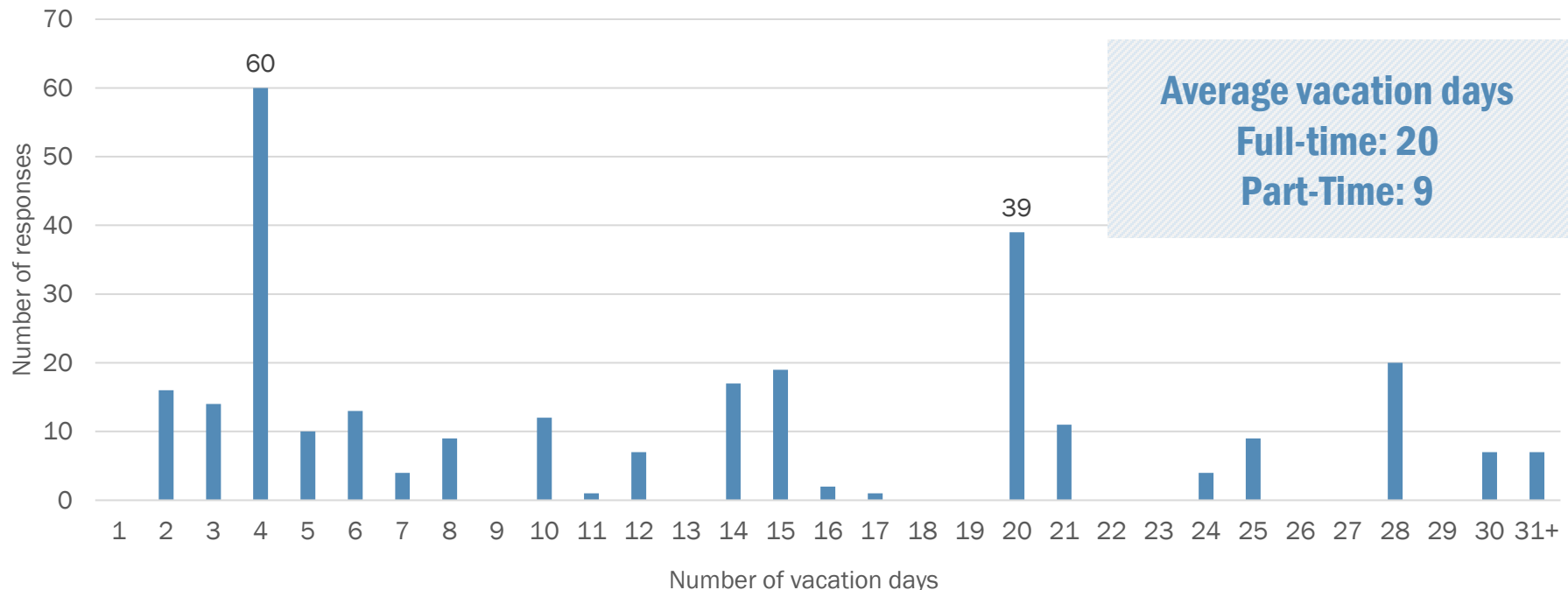
N=113

PAM Salary Survey

Full-time roles average 20 vacation days per year, part-time 9 days

There is a wide range of vacation days per year received, even within full-time/part-time status. The distribution of vacation days is split between high and low values, with the most common low value response being 4 days and the most common high value response being 20 days. These numbers are close to the mean values for part-time and full-time positions, which are 9 and 20 respectively.

How many paid vacation days do you have per year?

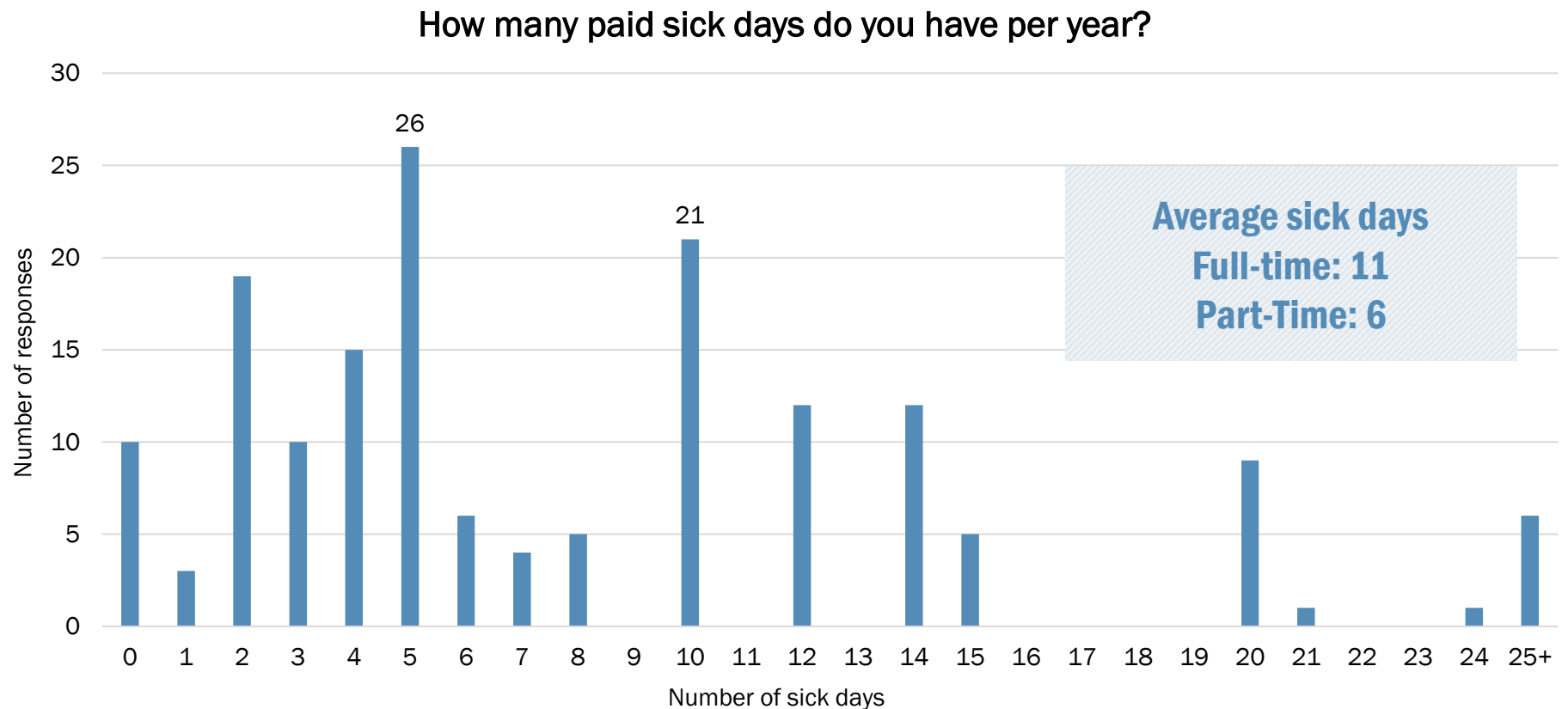


N = 282

PAM Salary Survey

Full-time roles average 11 paid sick days per year, part-time roles 6 days

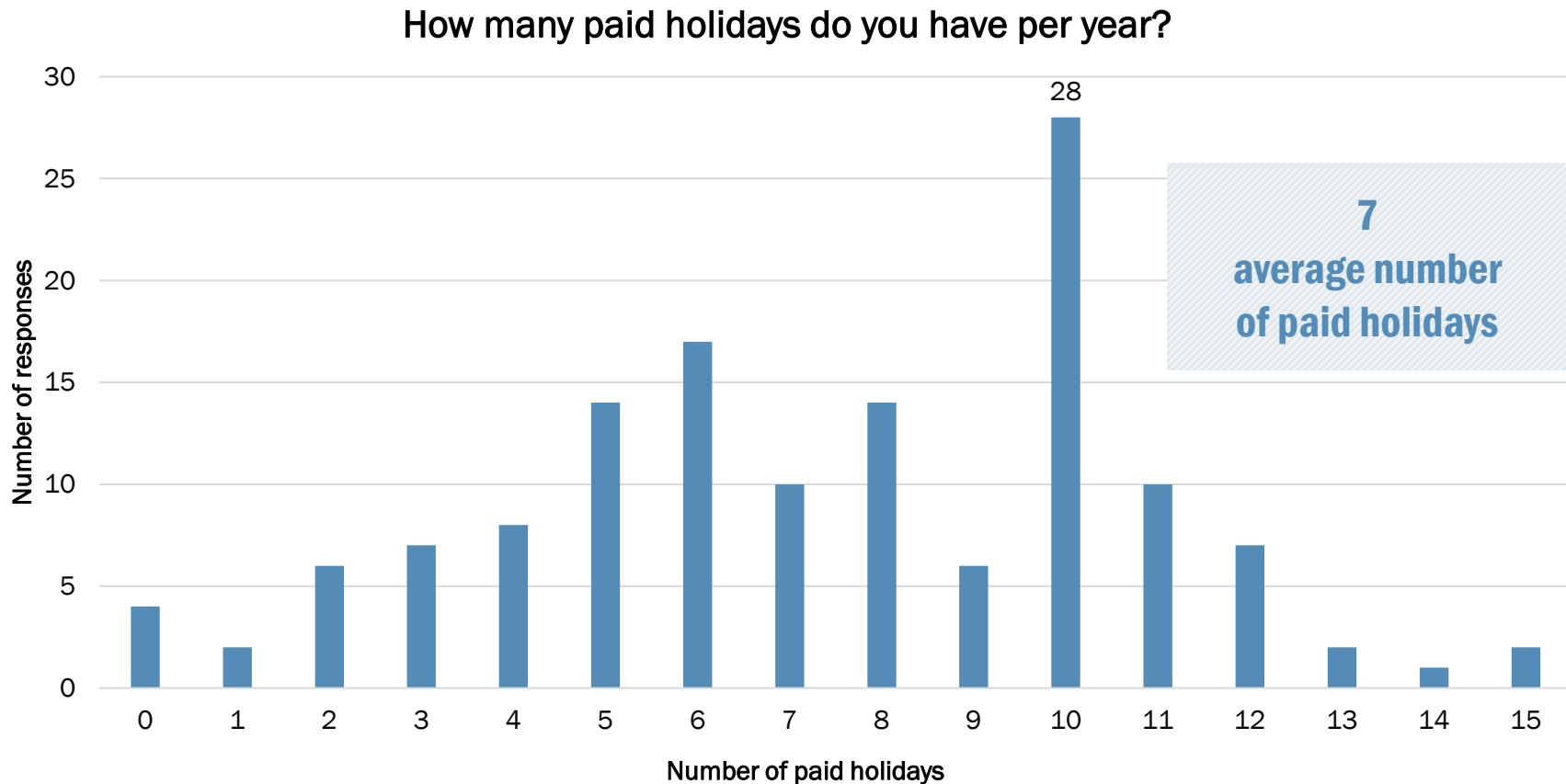
Like vacation days, paid sick leave responses were split between high and low. On the high side, 10 paid sick days was the most common answer. On the low side, five paid sick days were most common. The mean number of sick days for full-time roles was 11, and for part-time roles was six.



PAM Salary Survey

On average, respondents get seven paid holidays per year

Respondents who receive paid holidays get, on average, seven per year. The most common answer for the number of days was ten.



N = 138

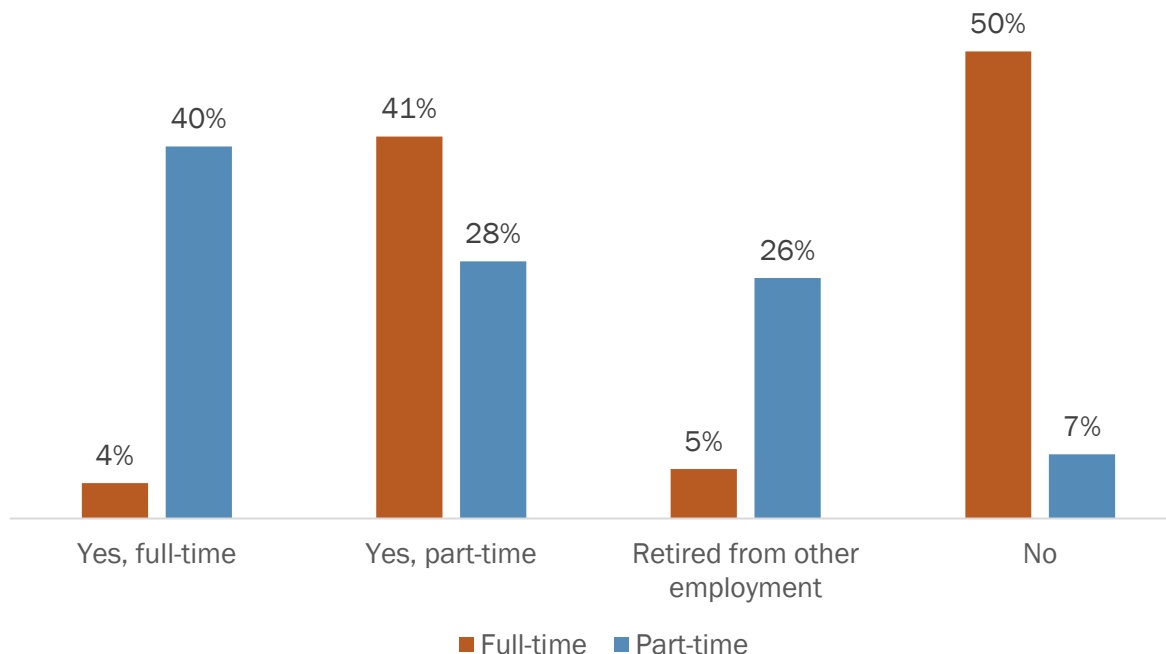
PAM Salary Survey

Most respondents, 61%, have additional employment

Sixty-eight (68%) percent of respondents with part-time roles have other employment, either full-time (40%) or part-time (28%). Additionally, 26% said they were retired. Only 7% said they had no other employment. Half of respondents with full-time roles said they had no other employment, while 41% had additional part-time work. A small number, 5%, of full-time roles said they were retired from other work, and 4% said they had additional full-time employment.

On average, respondents worked 28 hours a week in outside employment. For respondents in part-time church roles, the average is 33 hours in external employment. For full-time church roles, the average is 13 hours.

Are you employed outside of your church position?



	Average hours worked in outside employment
Full-time	13
Part-time	33
Total (N=275)	28

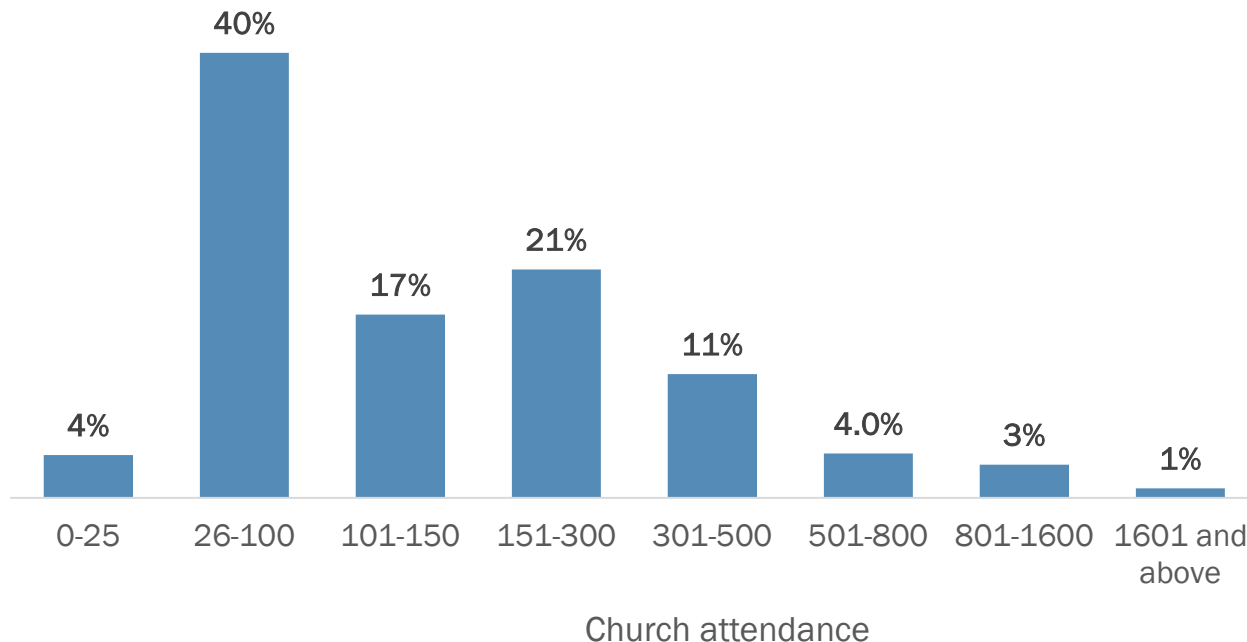
PAM Salary Survey

Most respondents are employed by small or medium suburban churches

The most common church has 26-100 attendees (40%). The next most common churches had 151-300 attendees (21%), 101-150 attendees (17%), and 301-500 attendees (11%). Seven percent (7%) of respondents work in large churches with over 500 attendees, and only 4% work in very small churches with 25 or fewer attendees.

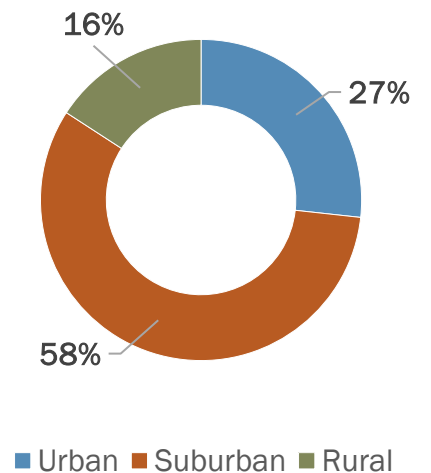
Respondents most commonly described their churches as being in suburban areas (58%), while urban and rural areas were 27% and 16% of responses.

What is the average weekly attendance of services at your church?



N = 465

How would you describe the area in which your church is located?



N = 467

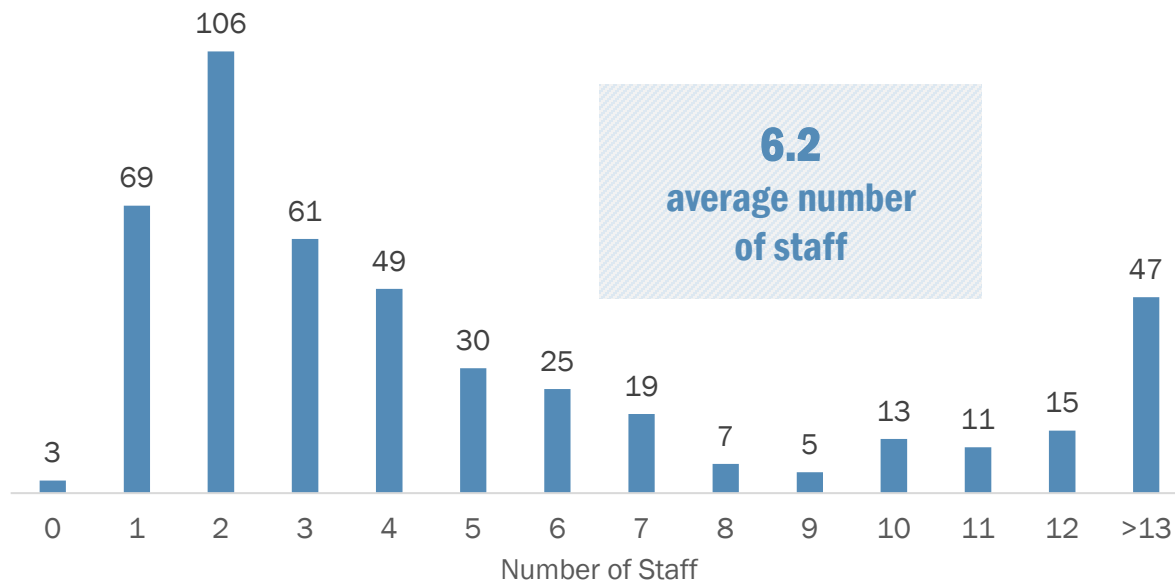
PAM Salary Survey

On average, respondents' churches have 6 staff. Children's attendance is most commonly less than 10.

While the average number of music staff was 6.2, the median number of staff was three and the most common number of staff was 2.

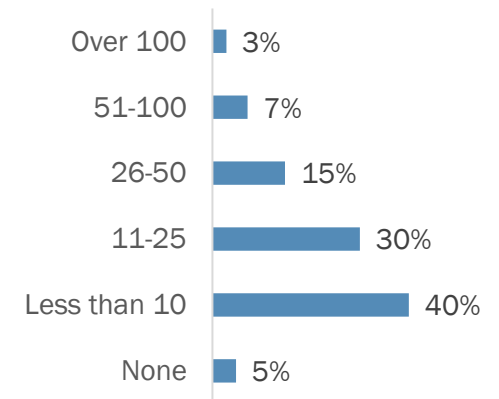
Most commonly, respondents said they had fewer than 10 children in attendance (40%). Next most common were 11-25 children (30%), 26-50 (15%), and 51-100 (7%). Few said they had no children (5%) or over 100 (3%).

How many people, including you, serve on the staff of your church's music ministry? (Include paid and volunteer staff)



N = 454

On average, how many children attend weekly worship including nursery, children's church, or similar offering?



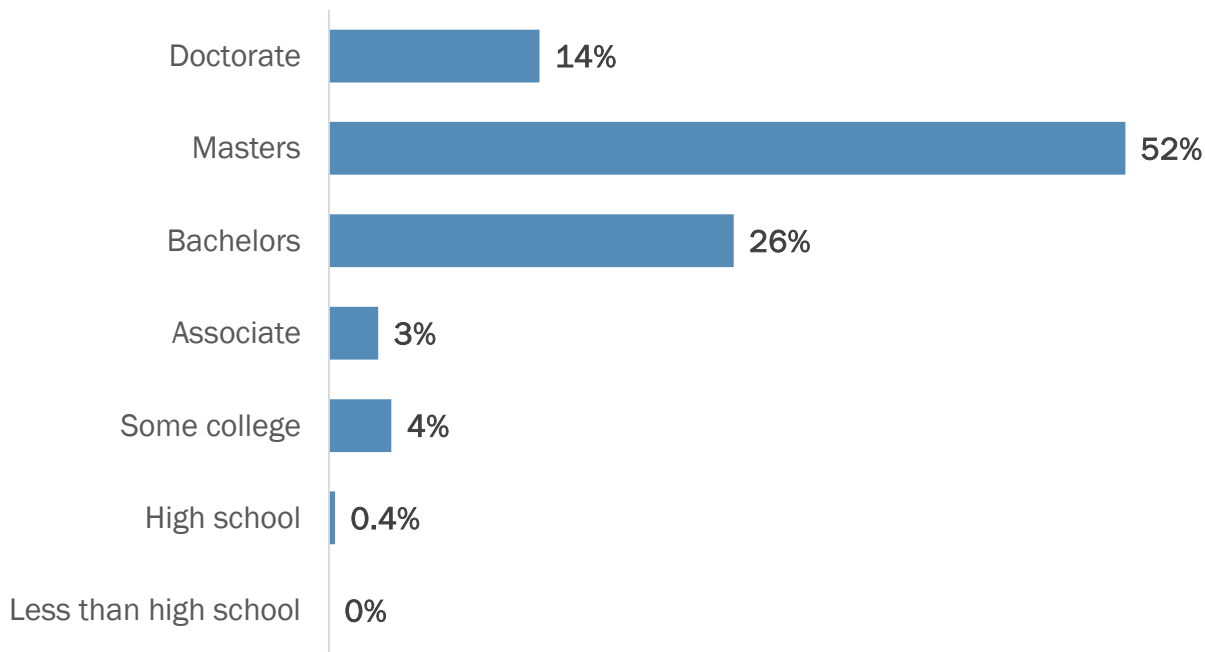
N = 458

PAM Salary Survey

Most respondents have a master's degree and are not in their first call

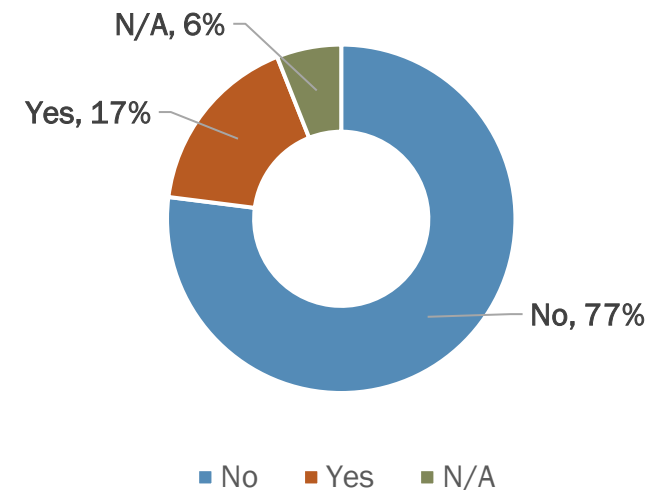
Over 92% of respondents have a bachelor's degree or higher. 52% have master's degrees, 14% doctorates, and 28% bachelor's degrees. Associate's degrees, 'Some college,' and high school are much less common. No respondents had a 'less than high school' education. Only 17% are in their first call, while 77% are not.

What is the highest level of education you have achieved?



N = 465

Is this your first call?

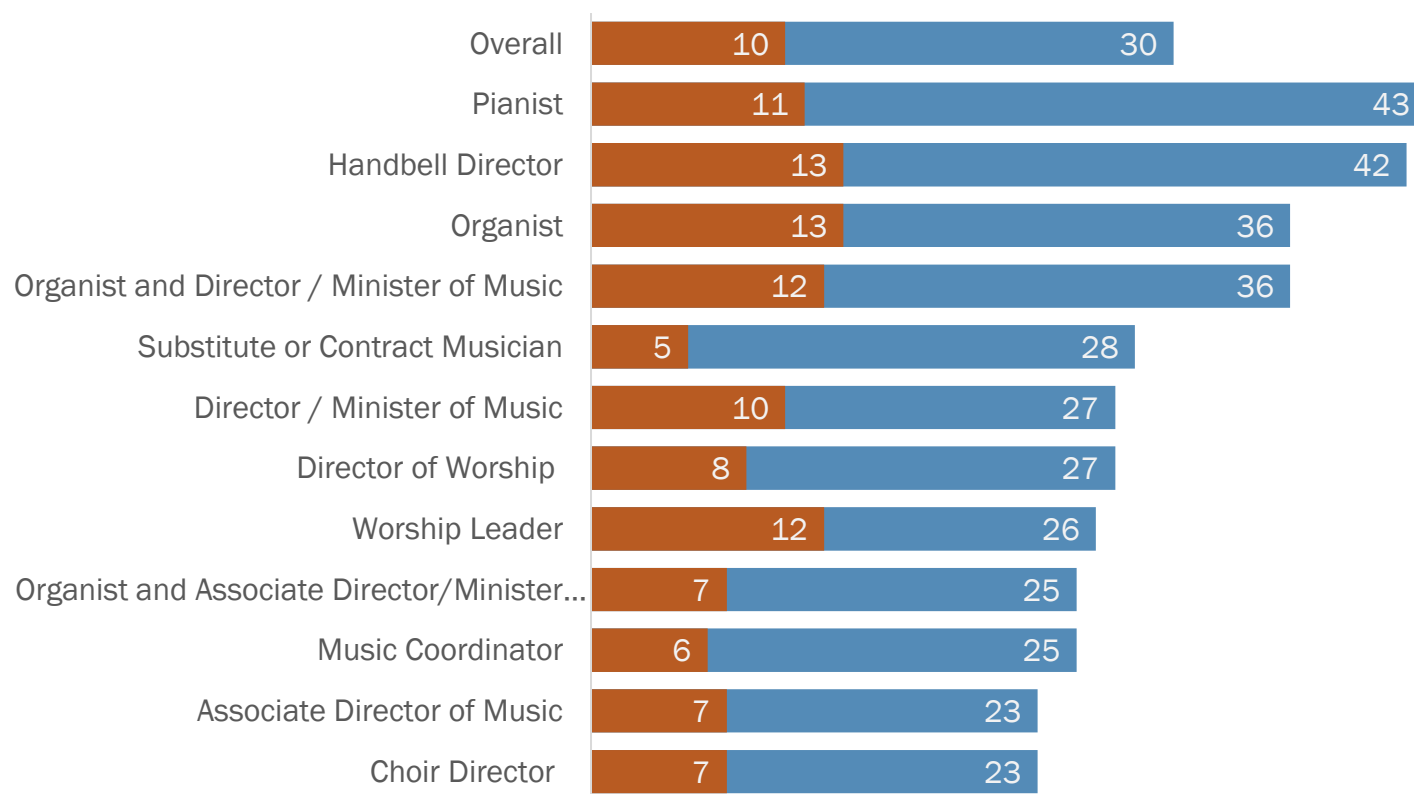


N = 466

PAM Salary Survey

Respondents have had their current position for over 10 years and have 30 years of experience, on average

Average years in current position and years of experience



■ Years Experience

■ Years in Current Position

10
average years in
current position

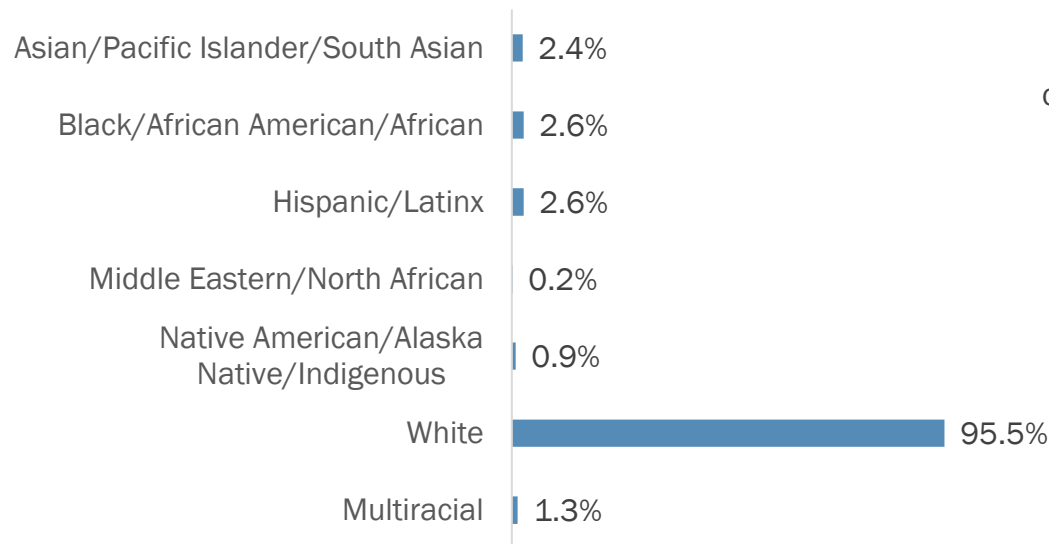
30
average years of
experience

PAM Salary Survey

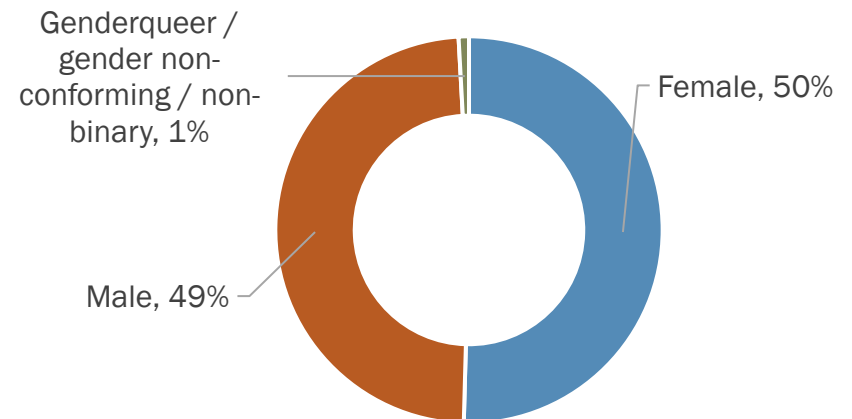
Respondents were mostly white and evenly split between female and male

Gender was evenly split, with 50% of respondents reporting female, 49% male, and 1% reporting gender queer/gender non-conforming/non-binary. The largest racial or ethnic group was white at 95.5%. Two-point six percent (2.6%) identified as Black, 2.6% as Hispanic, 2.4% as Asian, and 1.3% as multiracial. Less than 1% identified as either Middle Eastern or Indigenous.

What is your race or ethnicity?
(Select all that apply)



What is your gender?

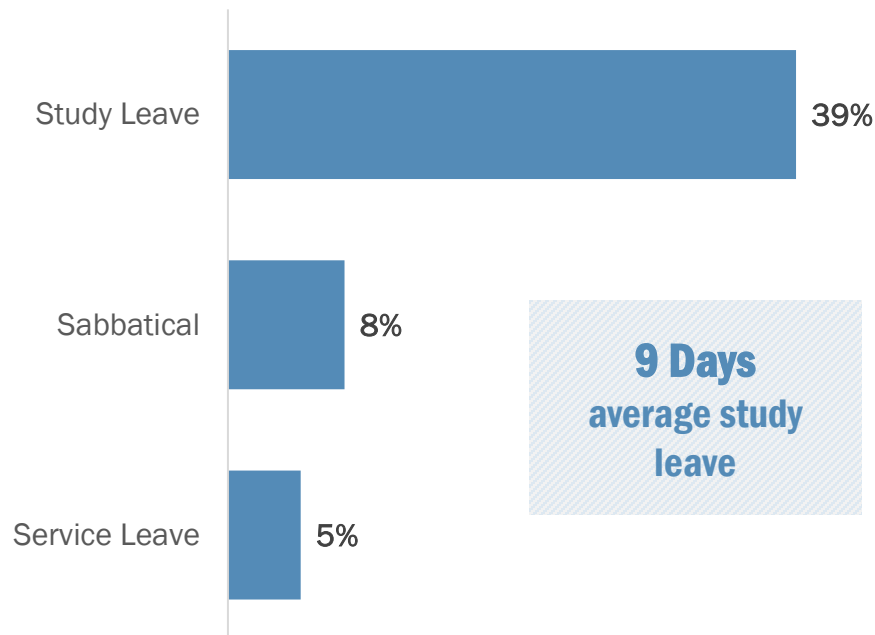


PAM Salary Survey

Study leave is common, but Sabbaticals and service leave are rare

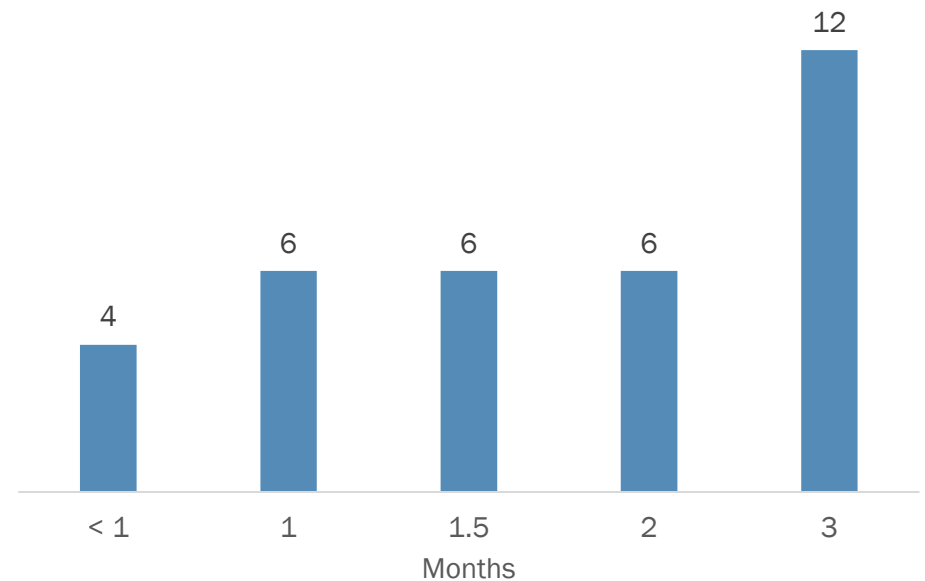
Study leave is relatively common, with 39% of respondents saying they receive it. The average length of study leave was 9 days per year (median of 7 days) with an average of \$1,500 in funding. Sabbatical and service leave are relatively rare, with 8% having a sabbatical and 5% having service leave. The most common sabbatical duration was 3 months, and 80% receive their full salary. There were not enough responses on service leave to find an average timespan or funding amount.

Percent receiving other leave



N = 462

Sabbatical Duration



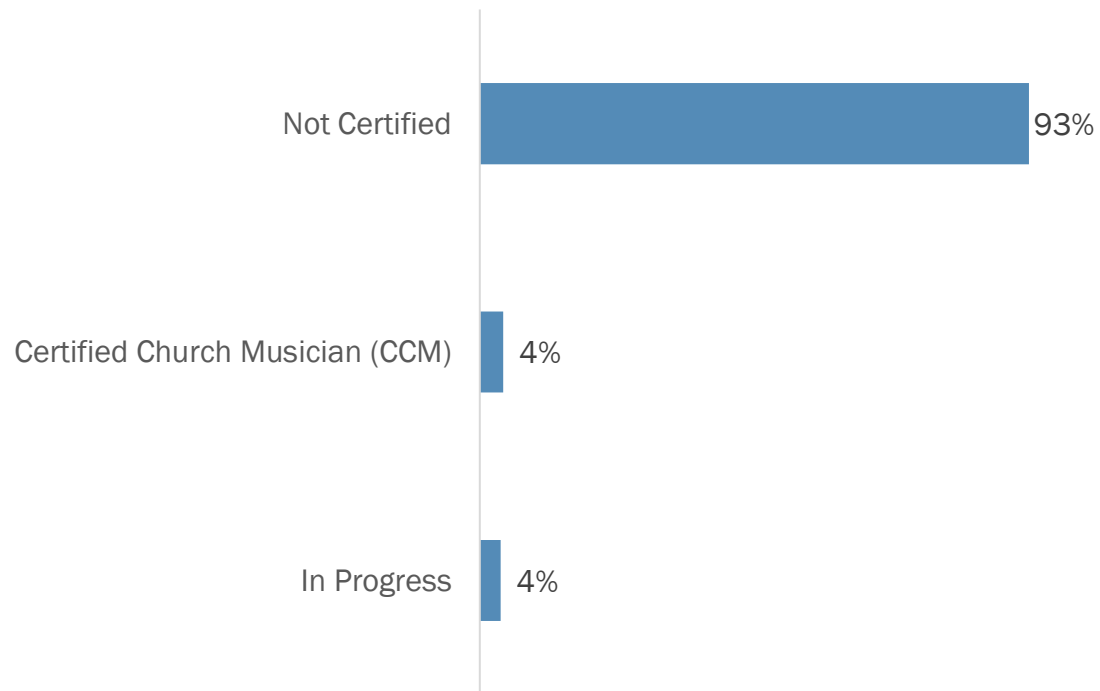
N = 34

PAM Salary Survey

Most respondents are not PAM certified

Less than 10% of respondents have a PAM certification (4%) or are in progress to receive one (4%), while most said that they are not certified (93%).

What PAM certification do you have?



Research Services helps the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) make data-informed decisions using surveys, focus groups and interviews, demographic analysis, and program evaluations.

We are social scientists with backgrounds in sociology, public policy, and economics. We serve congregations, presbyteries and synods, PC(USA) national agencies, and other PC(USA)-related organizations. Research Services is a ministry of the Administrative Services Group.

If you have any questions or would like a copy of this report, contact us at 502-569-5139 or research@pcusa.org.



**RESEARCH
SERVICES**