

# Learning in the present to prepare for the future: a greater understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on collections preservation in the US.

SURVEY FIELDDED AUGUST 2020

*The research was conducted by CCAHA. Data interpretation and report writing by Emma Ziraldo, NEH Preventive Conservation Fellow 2019-2020*



Overall, there are 183 responses from organizations across the US. Numeric results are shown in tables and graphs: line charts or pie graphs. In each graph, results are shown in percentage and in number of answers. All results are presented with the valid percent for the analysis, that is each total 100% is calculated as the percent of the number of responses to that specific question. Where no information was given, no assumptions were made. In other words, the percentages are counted using the number of institutions who answered the survey question as the denominator. The document is divided into two parts: the first 4 tables and relative graphs show the demographic results, and the rest of them cover the actual research questions. A full report with data interpretation is provided in a separate document.

Link to survey page: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1xGvjdnZxm7bDSn-RZYsSXY6kavv\\_Bb2E0V0LObDmefo/closedform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1xGvjdnZxm7bDSn-RZYsSXY6kavv_Bb2E0V0LObDmefo/closedform)

## 1. Demographic Information

- Institution Annual Operating Budget

Annual Operating Budget	Count	Percentage
\$0 – \$49,000	24	13.3%
\$50,000 – \$99,999	15	8.3%
\$100,000 – \$499,999	42	23.3%
\$500,000 – \$999,999	24	13.3%
\$1,000,000 or more	75	41.7%
Total	180	100.0%

Table 1: What is Your Institution's Annual Operating Budget?

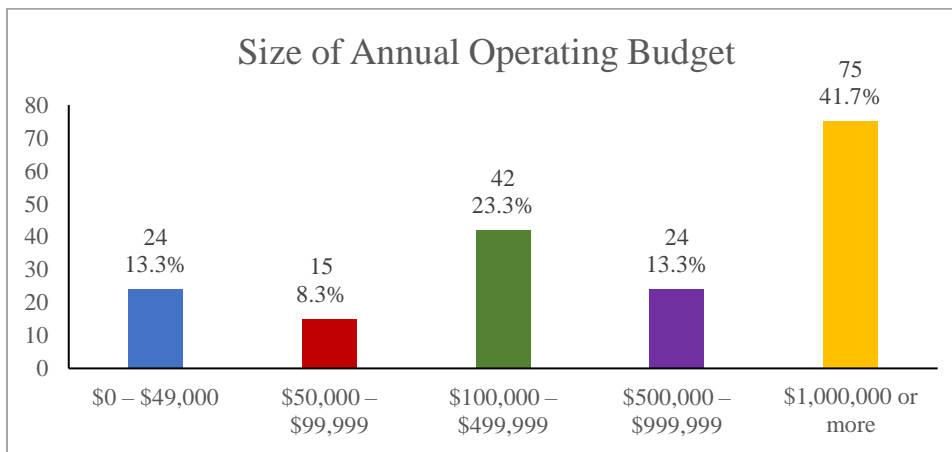


Figure 1. Size of Annual Operating Budget.

- Geographic Location

State	Count	Percentage	County	Count	Percentage
Pennsylvania	46	25.1%	Kentucky	3	1.6%
New York	14	7.7%	Massachusetts	3	1.6%
New Jersey	12	6.6%	Maryland	3	1.6%
New Mexico	12	6.6%	Virginia	3	1.6%
Colorado	8	4.4%	Louisiana	2	1.1%
Illinois	6	3.3%	Minnesota	2	1.1%
California	5	2.7%	Oregon	2	1.1%
Delaware	5	2.7%	West Virginia	2	1.1%

Indiana	5	2.7%	Wyoming	2	1.1%
Missouri	5	2.7%	Alaska	1	.5%
Ohio	5	2.7%	Arkansas	1	.5%
Texas	5	2.7%	Connecticut	1	.5%
Florida	4	2.2%	Iowa	1	.5%
Kansas	4	2.2%	Michigan	1	.5%
Mississippi	4	2.2%	North Carolina	1	.5%
Alabama	3	1.6%	Utah	1	.5%
District of Columbia	3	1.6%	Wisconsin	1	.5%
Georgia	3	1.6%	Total	179	100.0%

Table 2a: *In What State is Your Institution Located?*

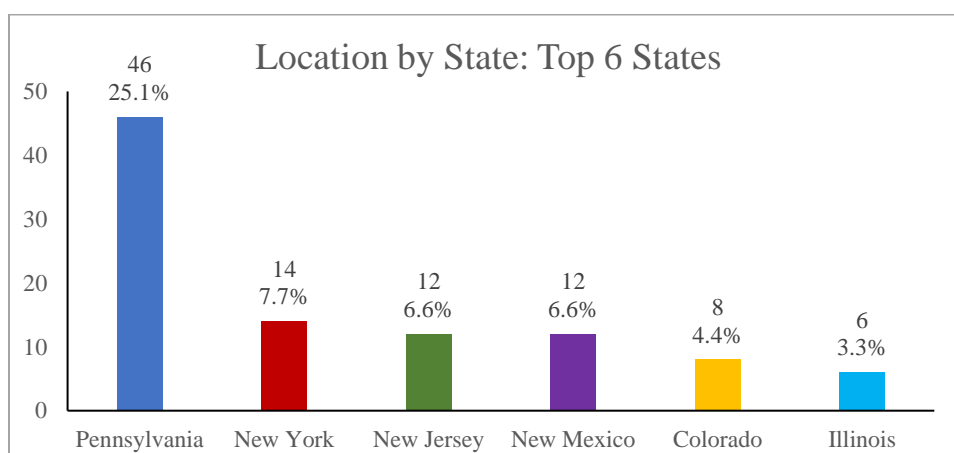


Figure 2a. Number of Respondents from Top 6 States.

States have been also divided into Regions. Because over one quarter of the responses were from Pennsylvania, this state only has been considered as a separate entry; all other regions are divided as follows:

*Northeast:* New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Washington D.C., Maryland, Massachusetts, Connecticut

*Southeast:* Florida, Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, West Virginia

*South Central:* Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas

*Southwest:* New Mexico, Texas

*Great Lakes:* Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin

*Midwest:* Missouri, Kansas, Iowa

*West:* Colorado, California, Oregon, Wyoming, Alaska, Utah

Region	Count	Percentage
Pennsylvania	46	25.7%
Northeast	41	22.9%

Great Lakes	20	11.2%
West	19	10.6%
Southwest	17	9.5%
Southeast	13	7.3%
South Central	13	7.3%
Midwest	10	5.6%
Total	179	100.0%

Table 2b: *Institutions by Region of the U.S.*

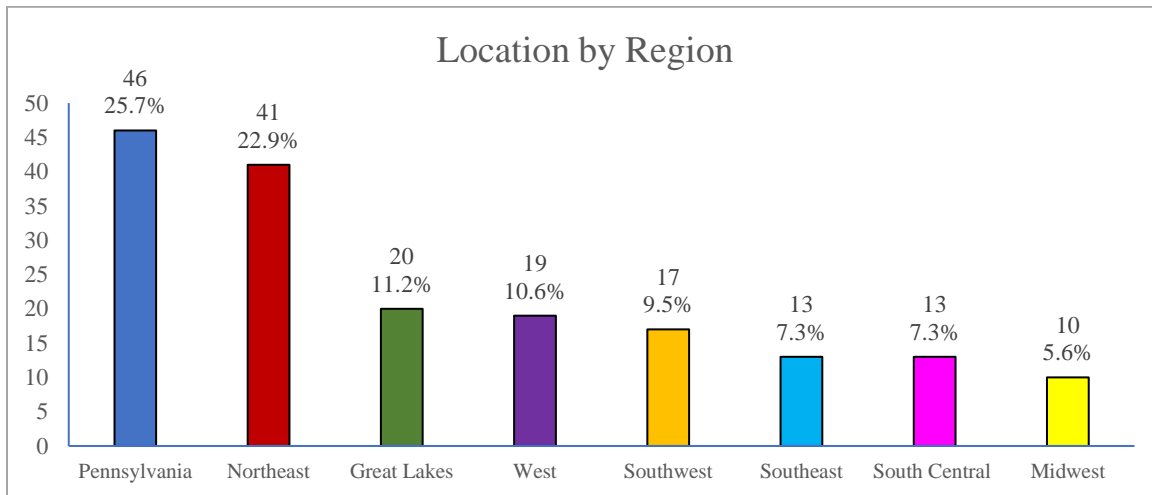


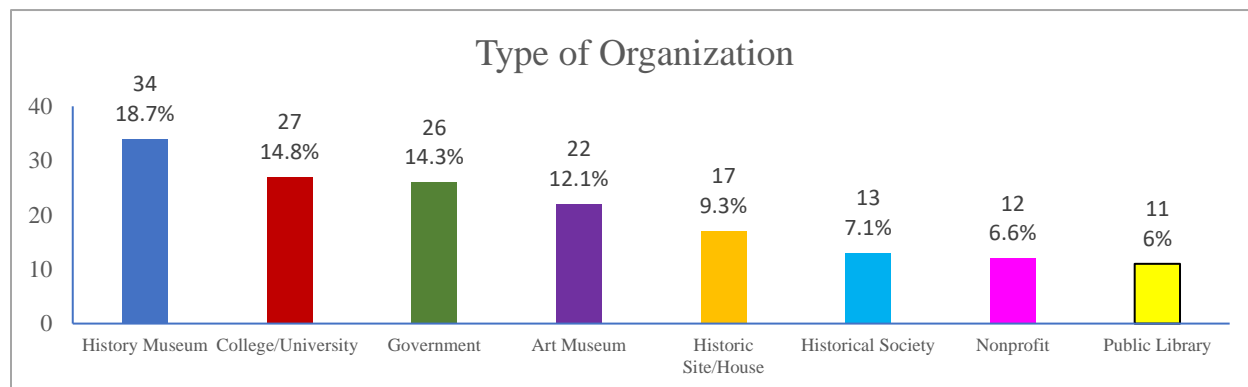
Figure 2b. Location by Region.

- Organization type

Type of Institution	Count	Percentage
History or Natural History Museum	34	18.7%
College/University Museums, Libraries, Archives	27	14.8%
Government	26	14.3%
Art Museum or Gallery	22	12.1%
Historic Site and/or House	17	9.3%
Historical Society	13	7.1%
Nonprofit with Cultural Collections	12	6.6%
Public Library	11	6.0%
Other	20	11.0%
Total	182	100.0%

Table 3: *Type of Institution*

Note that the category *Other* includes: Private Collections, Science Museums, Sports Hall of Fame Museums, Education Centers with Local Collections, Native American Tribal Collections, Cemeteries, and Religious Organizations.

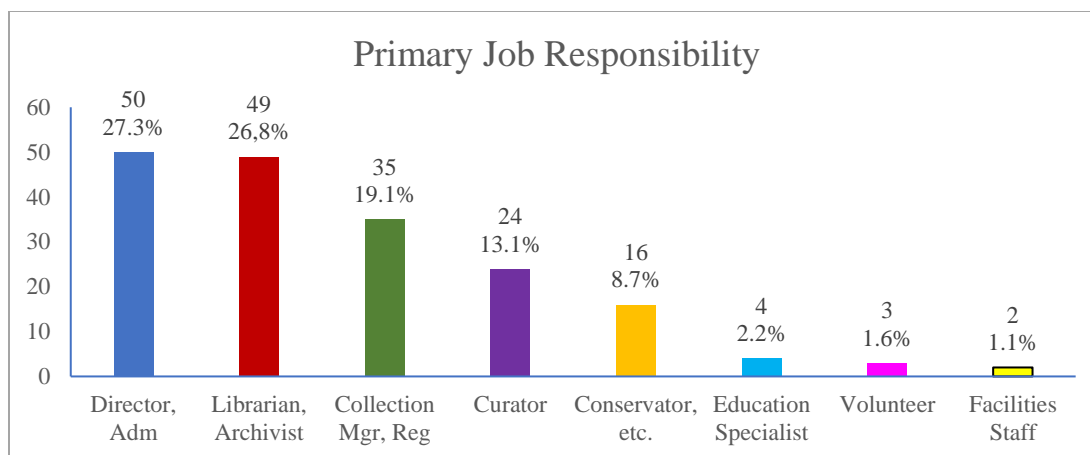


*Figure 3. Type of Organization.* The names above are abbreviated to fit into the chart, but represent the full category from Table 4. For example, History Museum in *Figure 4* refers to History and/or Natural History Museum from Table 4.

- Job responsibility

Type of Institution	Count	Percentage
Director, Administrator, Board Member	50	27.3%
Librarian, Archivist	49	26.8%
Collection Manager, Registrar	35	19.1%
Curator	24	13.1%
Conservator, Prevention Conservator, Conservation Scientist, Preservation Specialist	16	8.7%
Education Specialist	4	2.2%
Volunteer	3	1.6%
Facilities Staff	2	1.1%
Total	183	100.0%

Table 4: *What Best Describes Your Job Responsibility?*



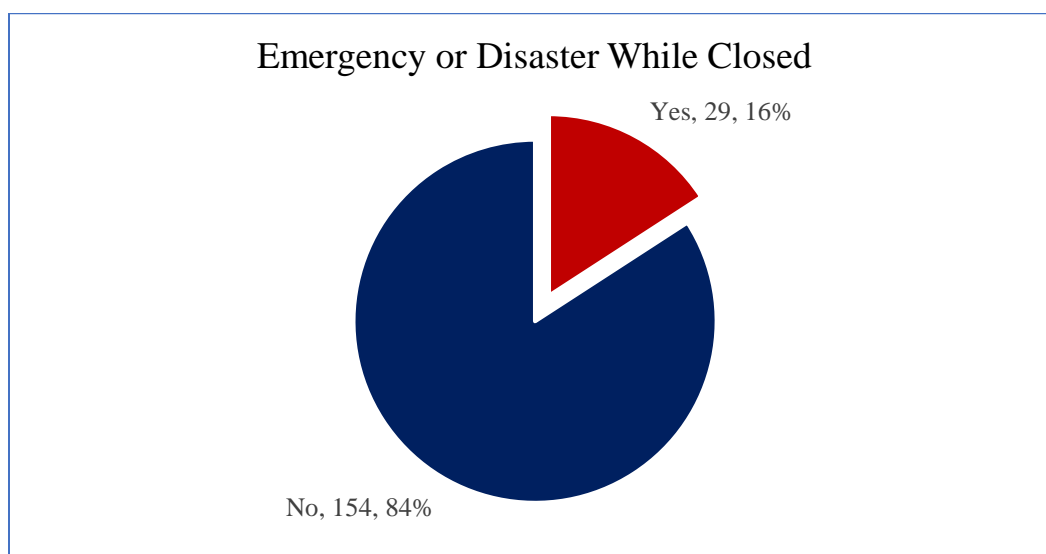
**Figure 4. Job Responsibility.** In order to fit the titles in the chart, the titles of some of the job categories have been shortened but refer to the comparable job responsibility in Table 5. For example, Director, Adm refers to Director, Administrator, Board Member from Table 5.

## 2. Survey Information

- Emergency/Disaster

	Count	Percentage
Yes	29	15.8%
No	154	84.2%
Total	183	100.0%

**Table 5: Did your organization experience any emergency or disaster while closed?**



**Figure 5. Did the organization experience an emergency or disaster while closed?**

- Emergency/Disaster type

Type of Disaster	Count	Percentage
Water-Related Damage: Leaks, Floods, Infiltrations, Raise in RH, Heavy Rains	18	60.0%
Electrical or Mechanical Issues: Power & HVAC Outages	7	23.3%
Pest Infestations or Mold Outbreak	3	10.0%
Theft	1	3.3%
Fire	1	3.3%
Total	30	100.0%

Table 6: *If so, what type of disaster did your organization experience?*

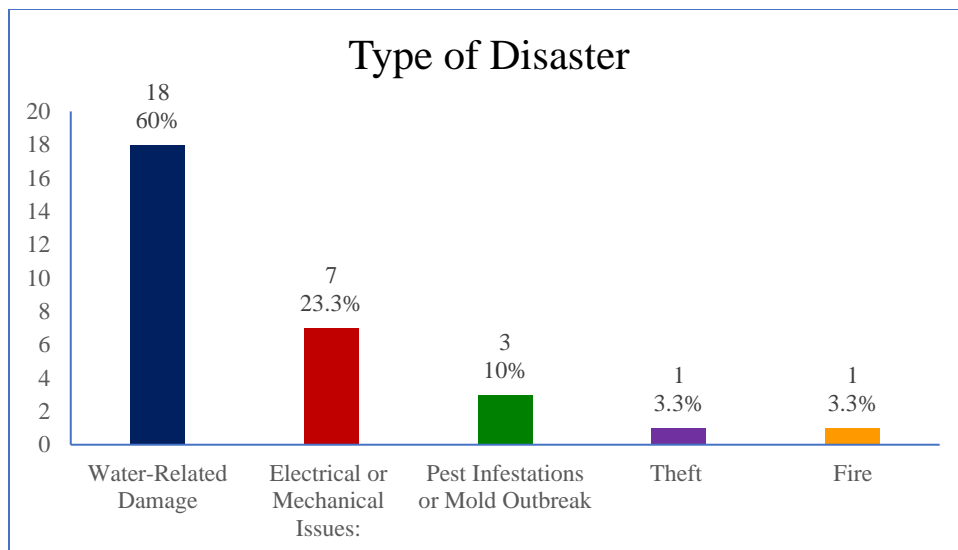


Figure 6. Type of Disaster. 30 organizations suffering emergencies or disasters responded to this question.

Although 29 organizations answered that they had an emergency or disaster while closed, 30 organizations answered the question about the type of disaster. Likely one organization recalled a (likely minor) emergency that arose while answering this question.

- Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan

	Count	Percentage
Yes	117	64.3%

No	65	35.7%
Total	182	100.0%

Table 7: Does your organization have an up-to-date emergency preparedness and response plan in place?

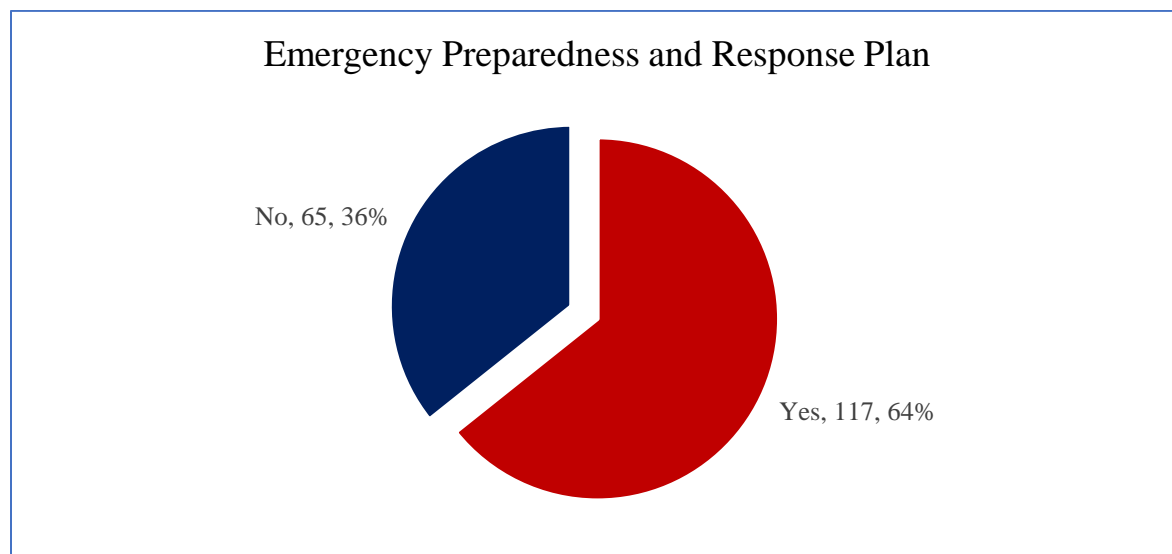


Figure 7. Does the organization have an up-to-date emergency preparedness and response plan?

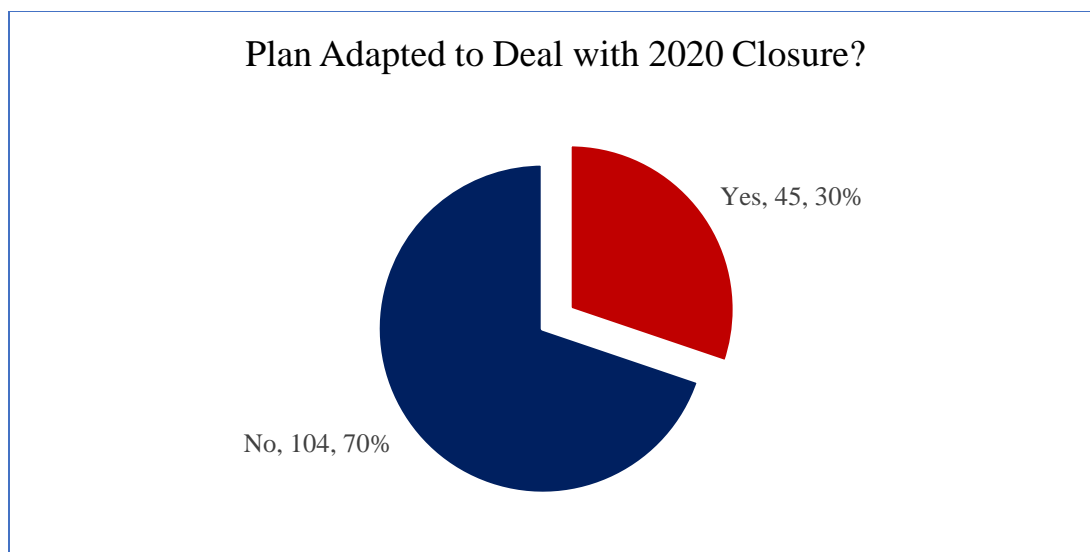
This is a significant number of organizations that do not have an up-to-date emergency plan. Almost 36%.

- Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan during 2020 closure

	Count	Percentage
Yes	45	30.2%
No	104	69.8%
Total	149	100.0%

Table 8: If so, was the plan adapted to deal with the 2020 closure?





*Figure 8. Was the emergency preparedness plan adapted to deal with the 2020 closure?*

Although 64% of the organizations responded that they did have an up-to-date emergency plan, only 45 of the responding organizations were able to adapt their plan to deal with the 2020 closure. Evidently pandemics have not been high on the list of events to plan for – most likely organizations planned for such emergencies as fires, floods, hurricanes, but not illness.

- Building access during 2020 closure

Type of Staff	Count	Percentage
All Staff	41	22.7%
Directors, Administrators, Board Members	40	22.1%
Facility, Security and Custodial	37	20.4%
Conservators, Collection Managers, Registrars, Preparators	21	11.6%
Librarians, Archivists	16	8.8%
Curators	14	7.7%
Volunteer	2	1.1%
None had Access	10	5.5%
Total	181	100.0%

*Table 9: Which staff members were able to access the building(s) on a regular basis during closure?*

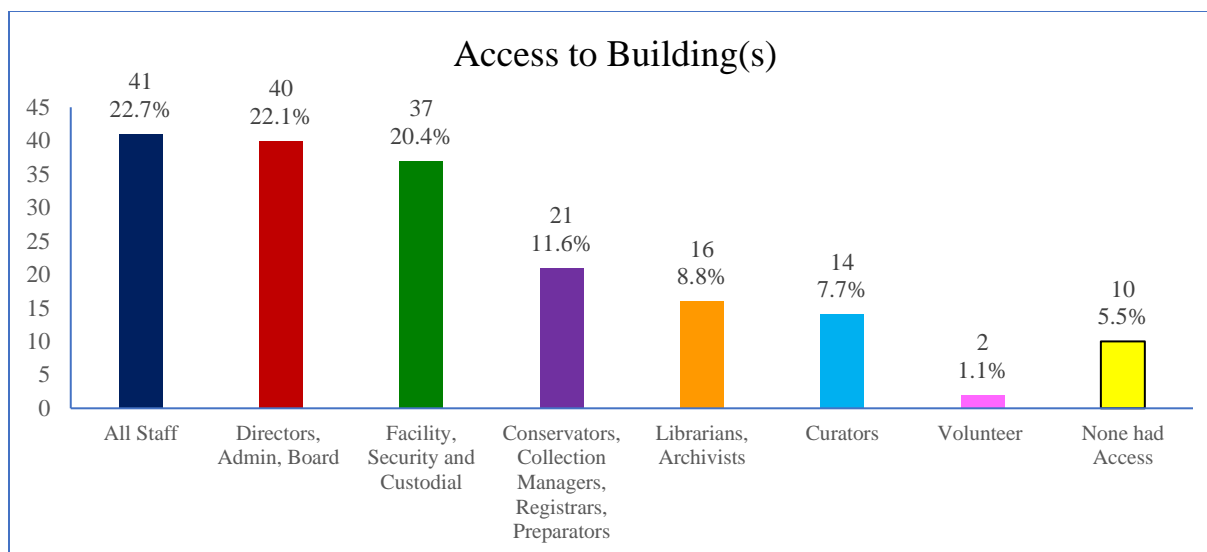


Figure 9. Which staff member had access to the building(s) during the closure?

- Staff meetings

Regular Meetings?	Count	Percentage
No	115	62.8%
Yes – Regular Meetings (email, phone calls, Zoom)	58	31.7%
Other – Casual as Needed Meetings	10	5.5%
Total	183	100.0%

Table 10: *If not you, did you have regular meetings with them?*

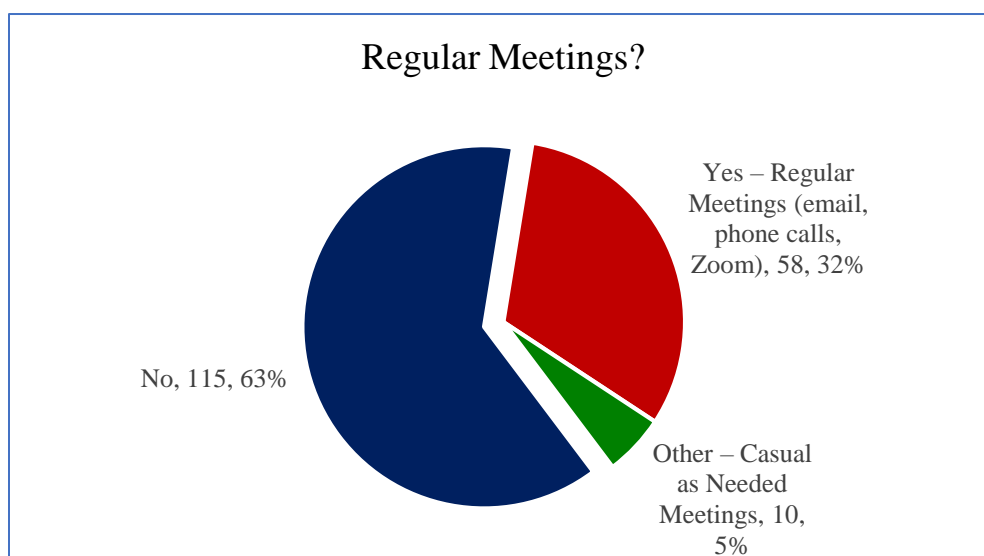


Figure 10. Did the organization hold regular meetings during the closure?

- Collection items during 2020 closure

	Count	Percentage
Yes	47	26.0%
No	134	74.0%
Total	181	100.0%

Table 11: Were any collection items left inadvertently entirely uncovered (i.e. not in enclosures, cases, etc.) during closure?

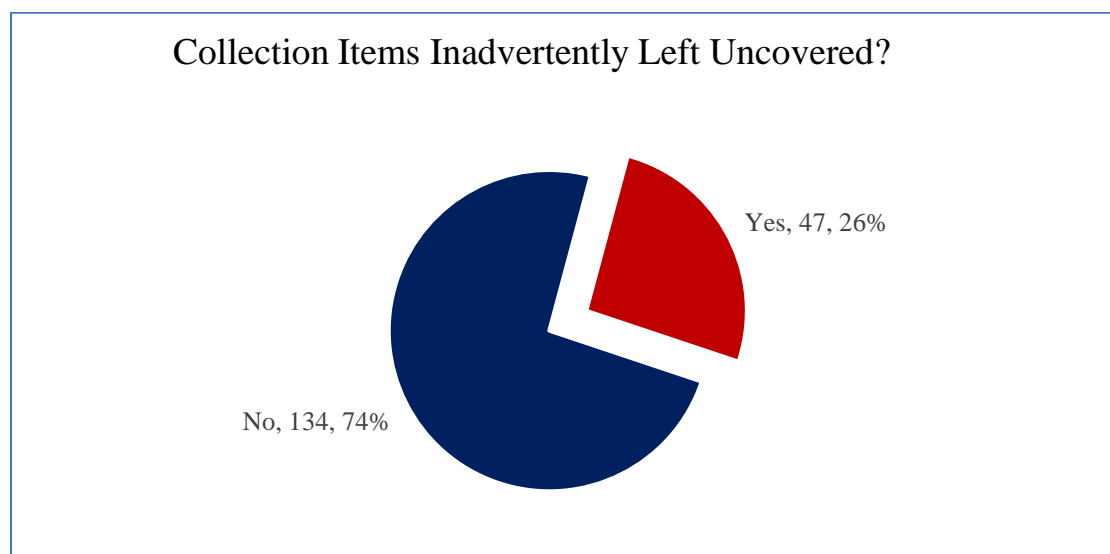


Figure 11. Were any collection items inadvertently left uncovered (i.e. not in enclosures, cases, etc.) during the closure?

- Collection items exposed

Length of Time	Count	Percentage
Less Than 1 Month	3	7.5%
1 – 3 Months	11	27.5%
3 – 6 Months	26	65.0%
Total	40	100.0%

Table 12: If items were left uncovered, for how long?

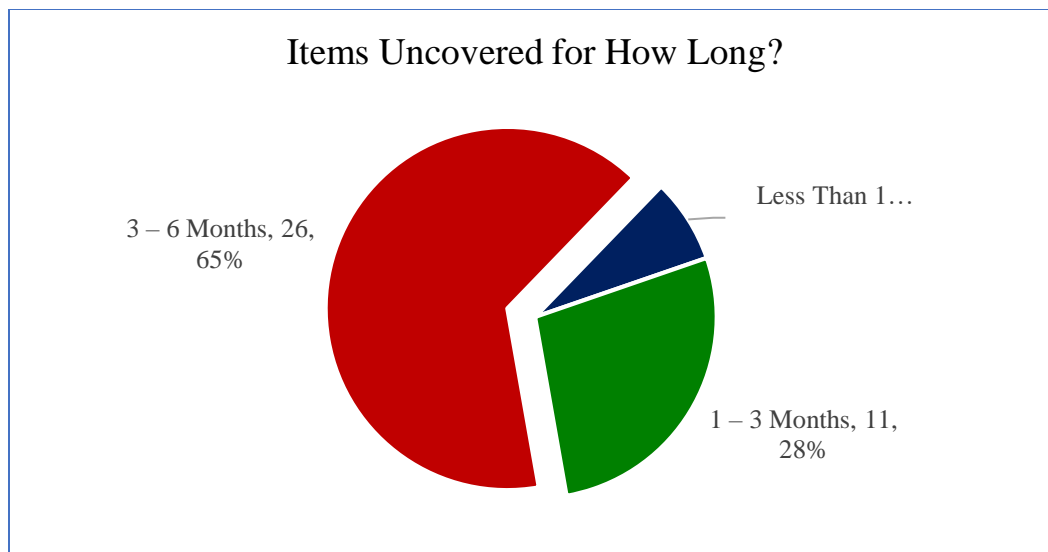
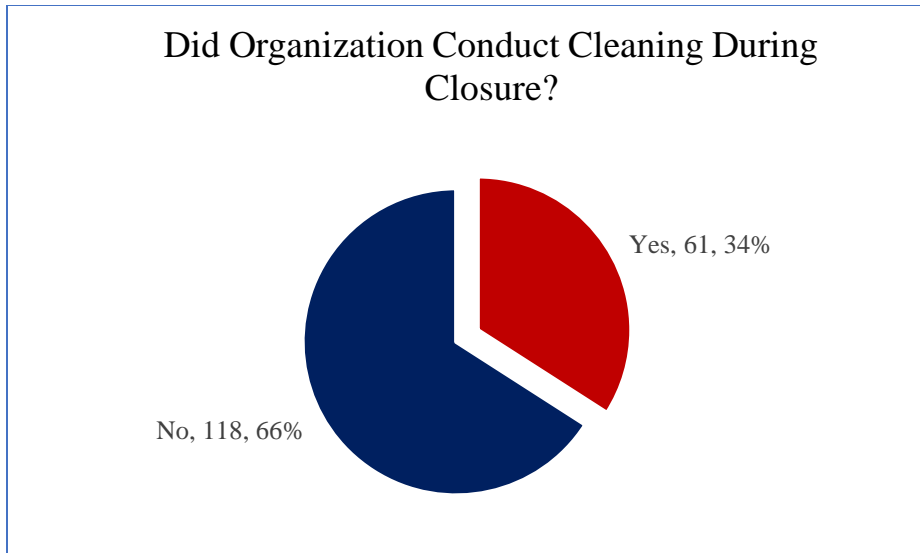


Figure 12. If items were inadvertently left uncovered, how long were they uncovered?

- Cleaning of collection, spaces and building

	Count	Percentage
Yes	61	34.1%
No	118	65.9%
Total	179	100.0%

Table 13: Did your organization use the closure time to conduct thorough cleaning of collection spaces and building (e.g. HVAC duct systems)?



*Figure 13. Did your organization use the closure time to conduct thorough cleaning of collection spaces and building (e.g. HVAC duct systems)?*

- Cleaning details

Type of Cleaning	Count	Percentage
Installed Sanitizing Stations, Disinfected Surfaces, Public Spaces	22	37.3%
Deep Cleaning of Galleries/Collection Spaces (exhibition or storage)	19	32.2%
HVAC maintenance (filters replaced, intake ducts cleaned) or other building renovation/maintenance work	18	30.5%
Total	59	100.0%

*Table 14: If organization used the closure time to conduct thorough cleaning, please describe.*

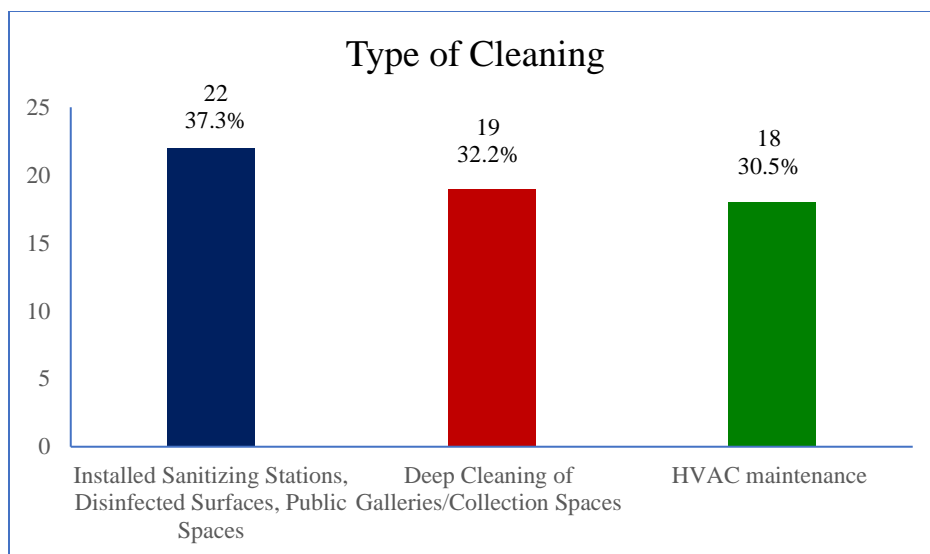


Figure 14. If the organization use the closure time to conduct thorough cleaning of collection spaces and building, describe the type of cleaning.

- Exhibition changes/refurbishes

	Count	Percentage
Yes	70	38.5%
No	112	61.5%
Total	182	100.0%

Table 15: Did your organization use the closure time to change/refurbish exhibitions?

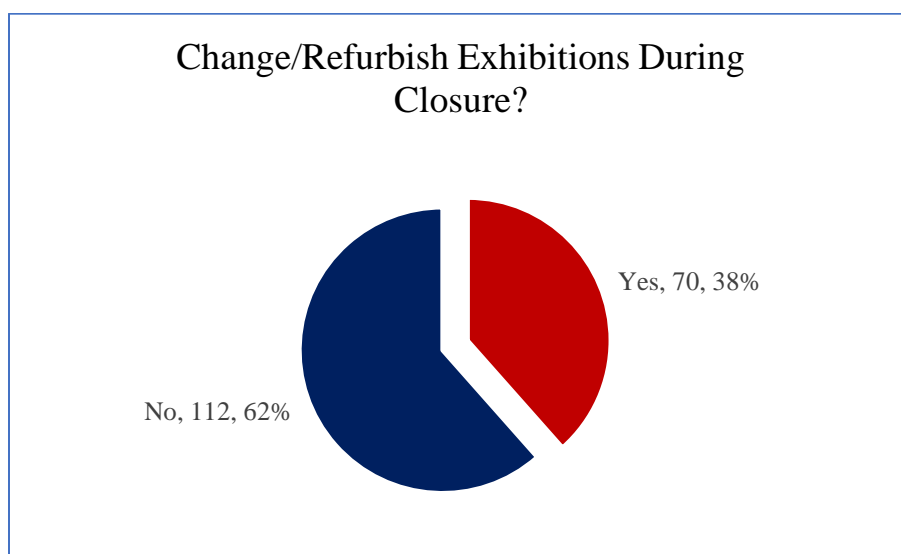


Figure 15. Did the organization use the closure time to change or refurbish exhibitions?

- Exhibition changes/refurbishes details

Type of Cleaning	Count	Percentage
Change Exhibitions (rotations or planning for future ones)	44	65.7%
Refurbish Exhibitions, Repair, Renovate Galleries	19	28.4%
Move Collections to Storage for Safety Reasons	4	6.0%
Total	67	100.0%

Table 16: *If organization used the closure time to change/refurbish exhibitions, please describe.*

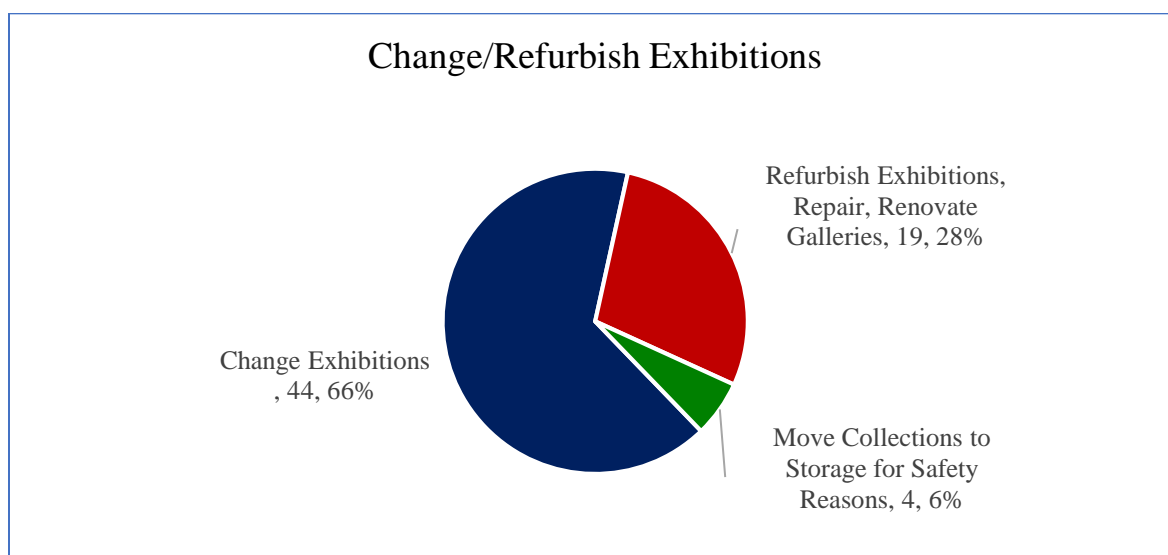


Figure 16. *If organization used the closure time to change/refurbish exhibitions, please describe them.*

- Environmental monitoring

Access Environmental Data Remotely	Count	Percentage
No	98	55.4%
Yes	61	34.5%
Other – not on a constant basis because not remotely accessible, but staff downloaded data when on site regularly	18	10.2%
Total	177	100.0%

Table 17: *Was your organization able to download and access environmental data remotely on a consistent basis?*

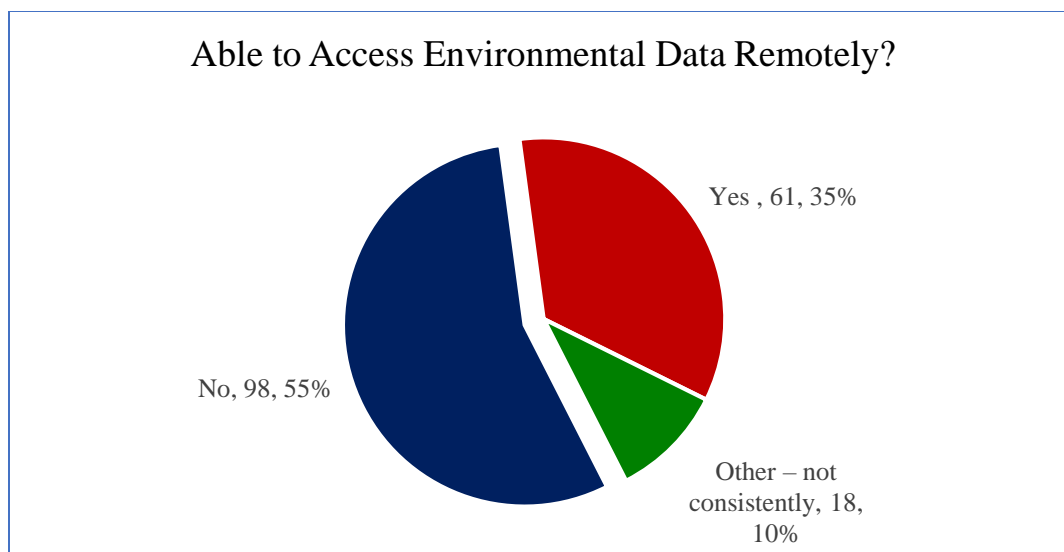


Figure 17. Was your organization able to download and access environmental data remotely on a consistent basis?

- Integrated Pest Management

Able to Collect Pest Traps?	Count	Percentage
No (doesn't have an IPM program at all)	50	31.4%
Yes (have an IPM program & were able to inspect/collect traps regularly or with a delay up to 3 months)	96	60.4%
Other - not able to inspect or collect traps during lockdown	13	8.2%
Total	159	100.0%

Table 18: *The closures began in late winter/early spring, when pests are most active (they emerge to mate and lay eggs). Does your organization collect pest traps? If so, how long was it before you could collect traps?*



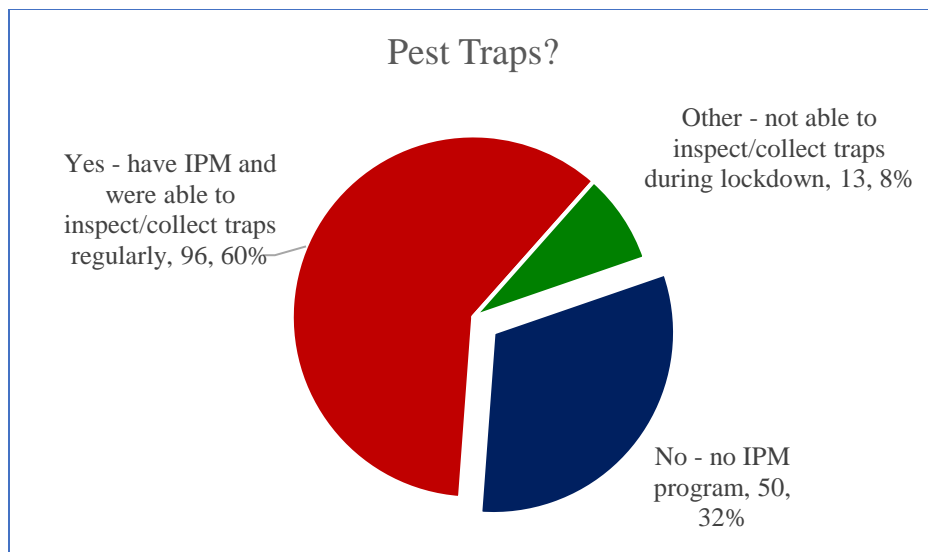


Figure 18. The closures began in late winter/early spring, when pests are most active (they emerge to mate and lay eggs). Does your organization collect pest traps? If so, how long was it before you could collect traps?

- Pest populations

	Count	Percentage
Yes	29	18.8%
No	125	81.2%
Total	154	100.0%

Table 19: Did you find a different pest population than usual when checking on traps (e.g. less mice because less visitors and no catering around; more moths or beetles since place was dark and undisturbed)?

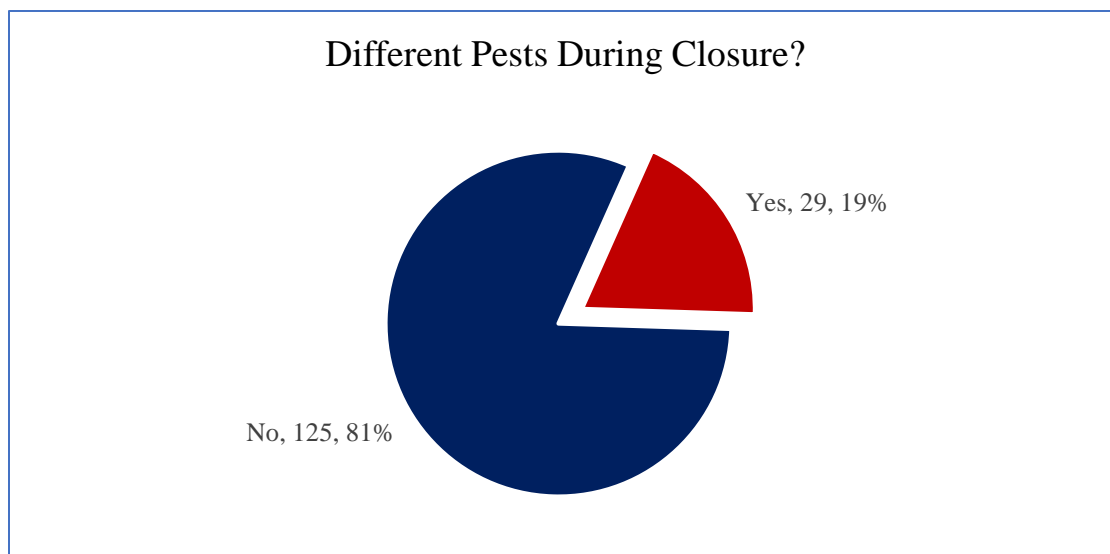


Figure 19. Did you find a different pest population than usual when checking on traps?

- Struggles and challenges

Type of Struggle/Challenge	Count	Percentage
Environmental Monitoring (including HVAC outages, RH, T, light) and Pest Control	55	43.7%
Housekeeping (dusting, emptying dehumidifiers, regularly inspecting)	24	19.0%
Lack of Collection Accessibility (for processing or digitizing)	23	18.3%
Security (custodial neglect, intruders, theft)	14	11.1%
Communication Between Departments	5	4.0%
Loans Logistics	4	3.2%
Working on Large Project that Required More Than One Employee	1	.8%
Total	126	100.0%

Table 20: What was the biggest struggle/challenge your organization faced in managing collections and their environments remotely during lockdown (e.g. controlling dust deposition, monitoring environment, checking on pest traps, security, etc.)?

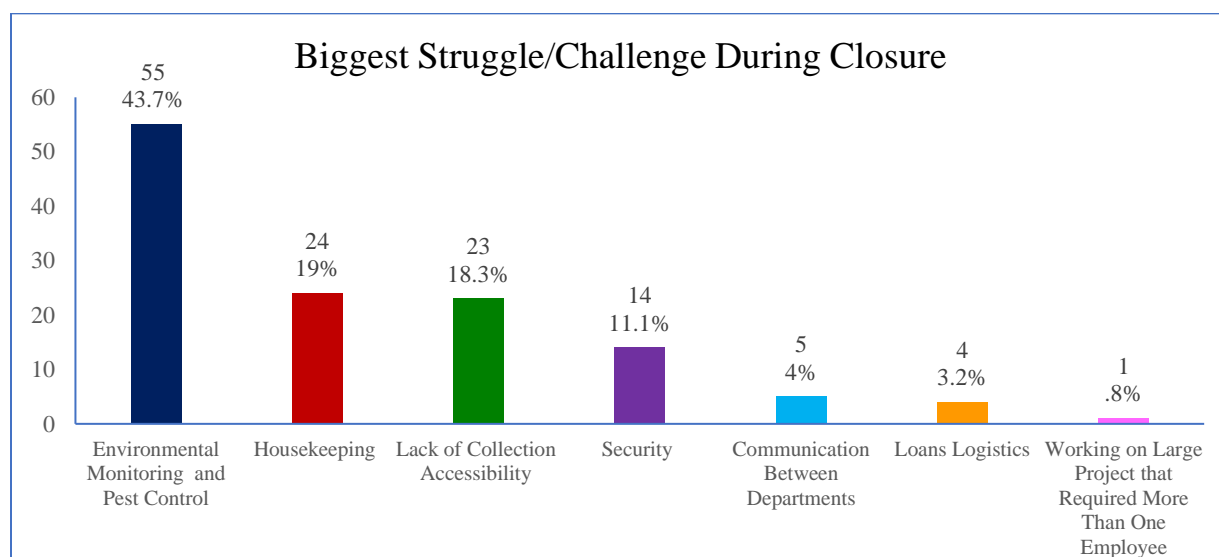


Figure 20. What was the biggest struggle/challenge your organization faced in managing collections and their environments remotely during the lockdown?

- Staff cuts and furloughs

Cuts or Furloughs	Count	Percentage
General Staffing Cuts and/or Furloughs	37	20.2%

Collection Care Staff Cuts and/or Furloughs	4	2.2%
General Staffing and Collection Care Staff Cuts and/or Furloughs	18	9.8%
No Cuts or Furloughs	124	67.8%
Total	183	100.0%

Table 21: *Did your organization experience any staffing cuts or furloughs, especially related to collection care staff?*

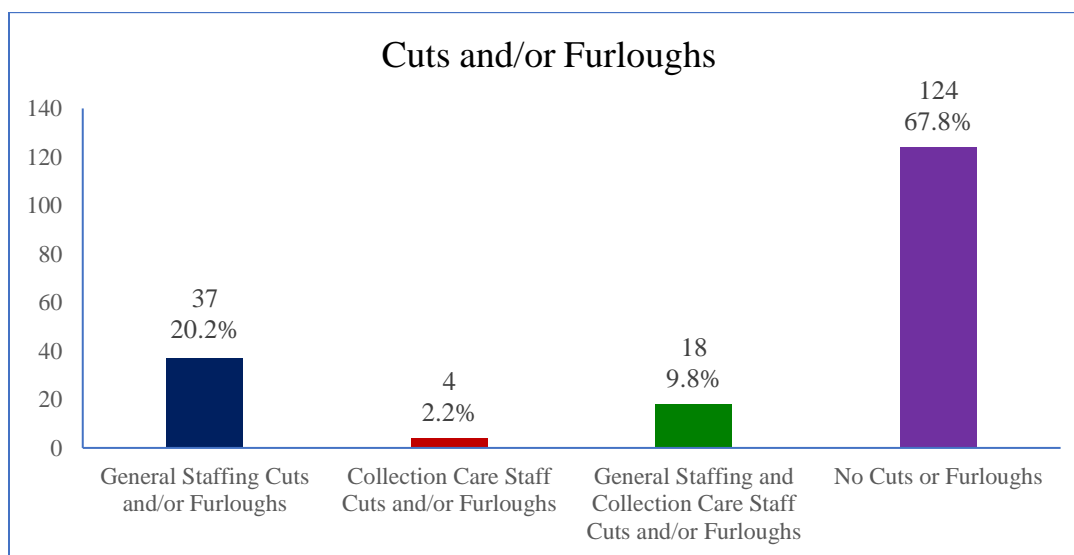


Figure 21. *Did your organization experience any staffing cuts or furloughs, especially related to collection care staff?*