



LEGAL NEEDS OF VETERANS IN NORTHWEST INDIANA SURVEY ANALYSIS

Prepared for Valparaiso University Law School

December 2015



In the following report, Hanover Research presents the results of a survey focused on the legal needs of veterans in northwest Indiana to help inform Valparaiso Law School regarding the establishment of a new student-run veterans' affairs legal clinic.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

In this report, Hanover Research presents the results and analysis of a legal clinic survey administered to veterans who currently reside in the state of Indiana, primarily in the northwest counties. The purpose of the survey is to understand veterans' needs, and preferences for, legal services. The results will assist Valparaiso University Law School with its strategic planning for establishing a new legal clinic and providing desired services to the veteran population in northwest Indiana.

Survey results analyzed in this report include 50 completions and one partial completion. Respondents' characteristics might not be representative of the broader population, as the sample skews *male*, and *white*, and most *have not served on active duty during the last 12 months*.

The body of the report identifies respondents' legal needs related to veterans' treatment courts, veteran affairs (VA) disability appeals, and discharge upgrades. This section also analyzes respondents' potential demand for additional assistance in the initial filing of a VA claim when veteran service organizations are able to perform this task and evaluates respondents' levels of interest in different types of legal services. The appendix contains demographic information for the sample.

In addition to this report, Hanover provides a data supplement that contains the raw survey results for each question. This accompanying Excel spreadsheet also contains respondent contact information, including names, email addresses, phone numbers, and mailing addresses of those individual who opted to receive information about the proposed clinic in the future.

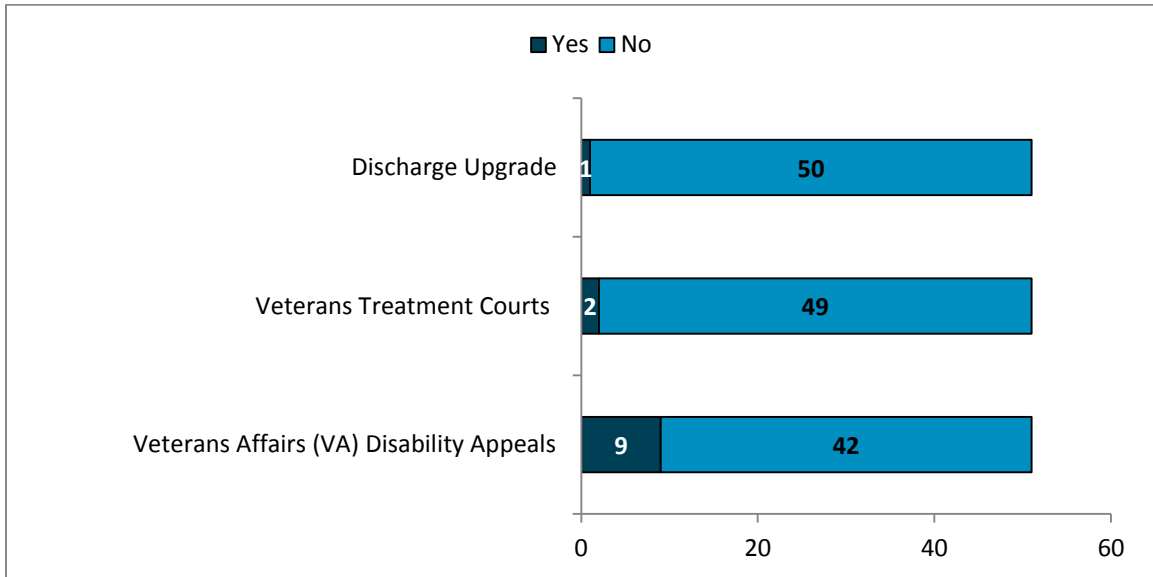
KEY FINDINGS

- **Preparation of simple wills and establishing power of attorney are highly preferred legal services among veteran respondents.** A majority of respondents indicate they are either moderately or very interested in assistance with the preparation of simple wills (79%) and how to acquire power of attorney (69%).
- **Advice on probate is the most desired civil law service.** Seventy-four percent of all respondents report that they are at least moderately interested in obtaining legal advice on probate. Services related to guardianship, landlord-tenant law, and family law are less desired by respondents.
- **Veteran respondents are not likely to seek assistance related to discharge upgrades at a legal clinic.** No respondents indicated that they would use a clinic solely focusing on discharge upgrades, and 86 percent of all respondents are uninterested in obtaining advice on this topic in the future.

- **Veterans in northwest Indiana are moderately interested in getting assistance in either treatment courts or veteran affairs disability.** Forty-two percent and 45 percent of respondents express interest in assistance with these two legal affairs, respectively.
- **Compared to respondents who have never filed an initial VA claim, respondents who have filed are more likely to seek assistance from a veterans' legal clinic, such as the one proposed at Valparaiso University Law School.** This may be due to non-filers being unaware of the challenges and difficulties associated with the process, as respondents who have filed claims appear to recognize the value of such services. Therefore, the University should inform veterans about the potential challenges associated with VA claim filing and provide assistance accordingly.
- **Overall, more than half of the respondents are interested in the proposed veterans legal clinic at Valparaiso University Law School.** Sixty percent of respondents express strong interest in learning about the services provided by the proposed clinic in the future.

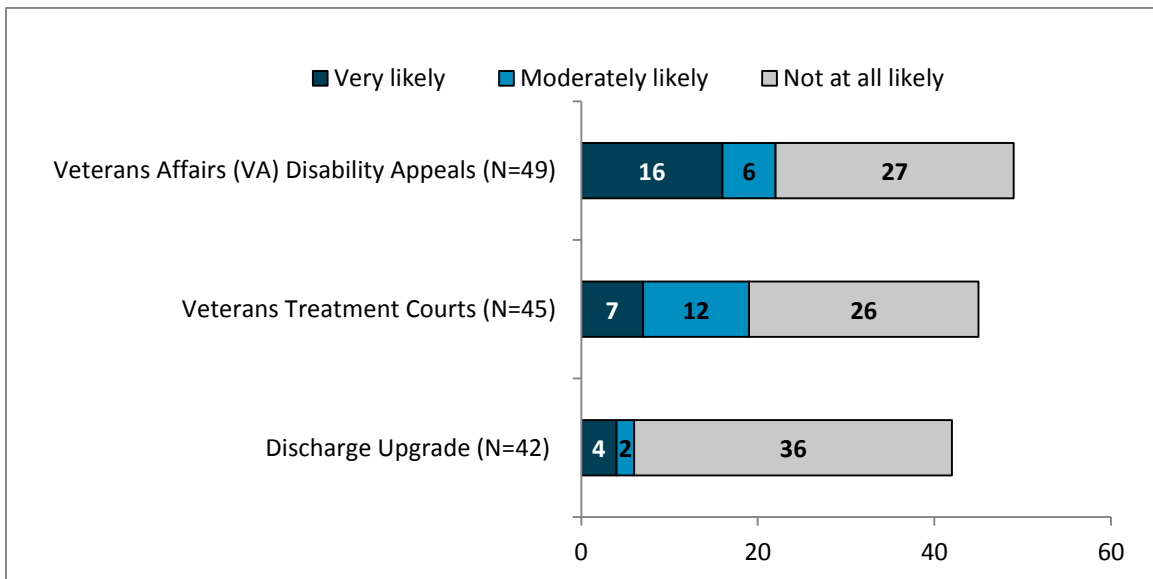
RESULTS: INTEREST LEVELS AND PREFERENCES

Figure 1: Have you ever personally participated in any of the following in the past?



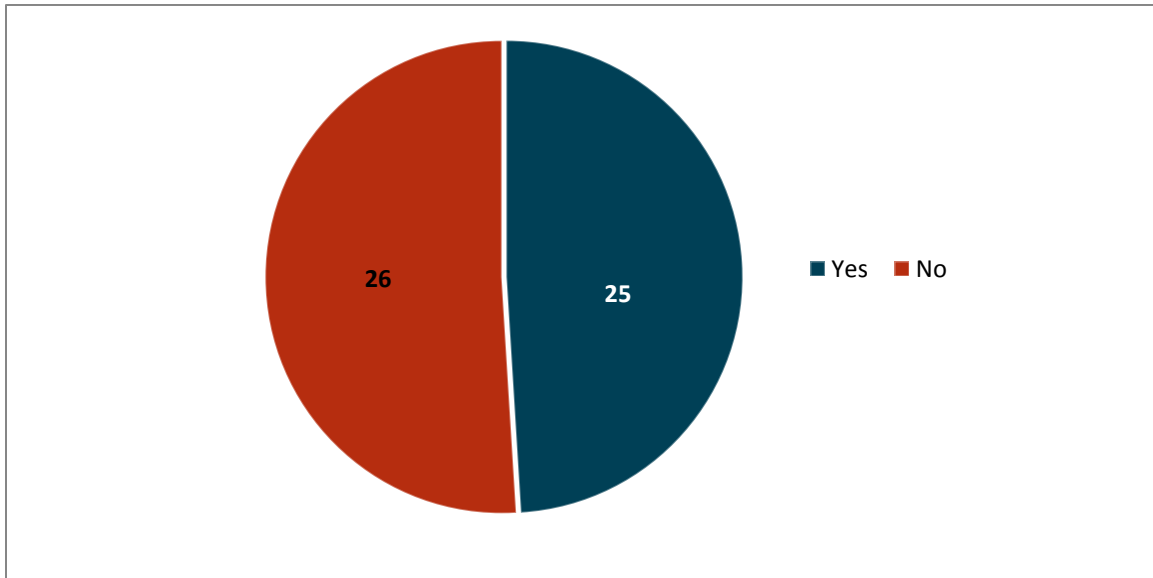
N=51

Figure 1: How likely are you to seek assistance in navigating the following in the future?*



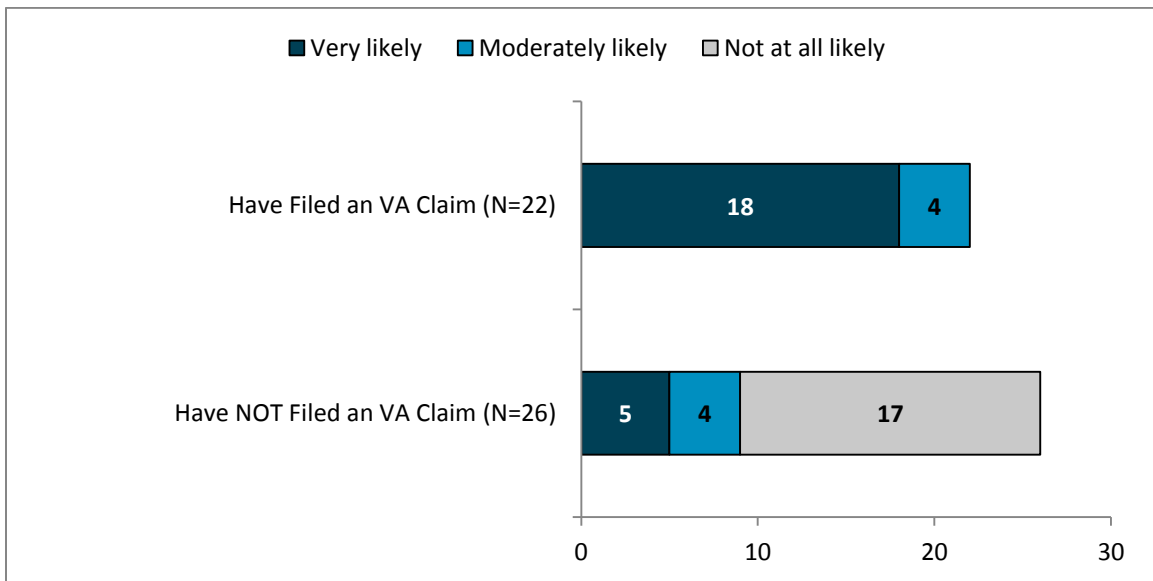
*Respondents who selected "Not Applicable" have been excluded from analysis.

Figure 2: Have you ever filed an initial Veterans Affairs (VA) Claim?



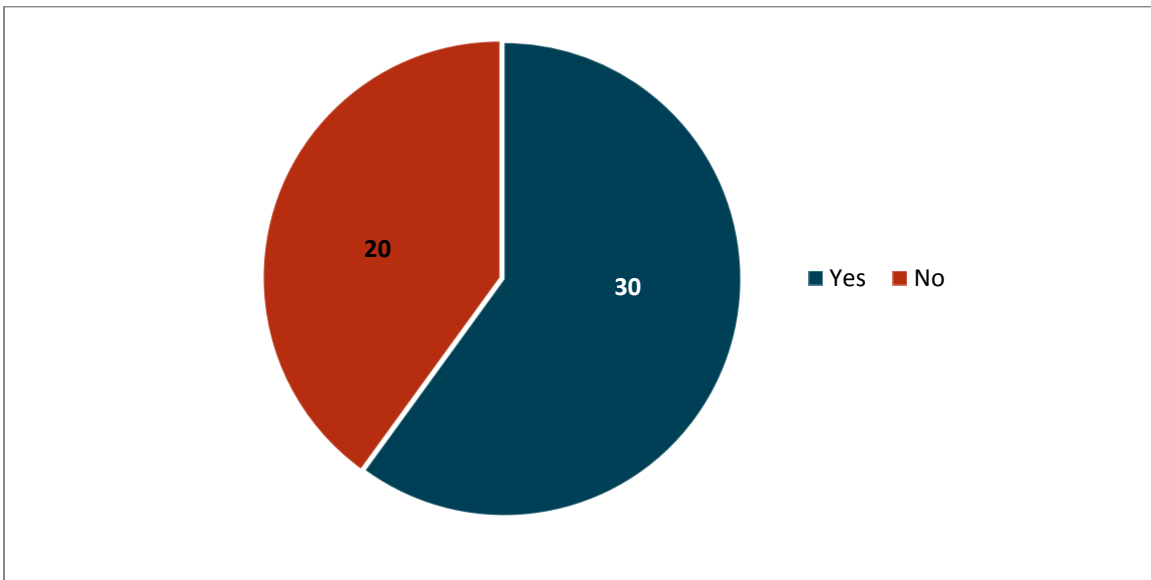
N=51

Figure 3: How likely are you/would you have been to seek assistance from a veterans legal clinic, such as the one being considered at Valparaiso Law School, if it were available when you filed your disability appeal/upgrade? *



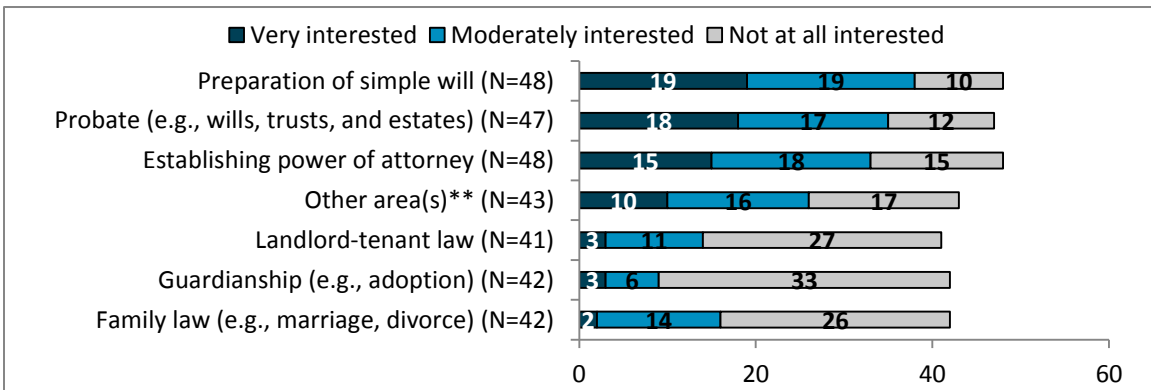
*Respondents who selected "Not Applicable" have been excluded from analysis.

Figure 4: Are you interested in learning more about the services that will be offered at the Valparaiso Law School Veterans Legal Clinic?



N=50

Figure 6: Please rate your level of interest in obtaining legal advice (without legal representation) on the following*



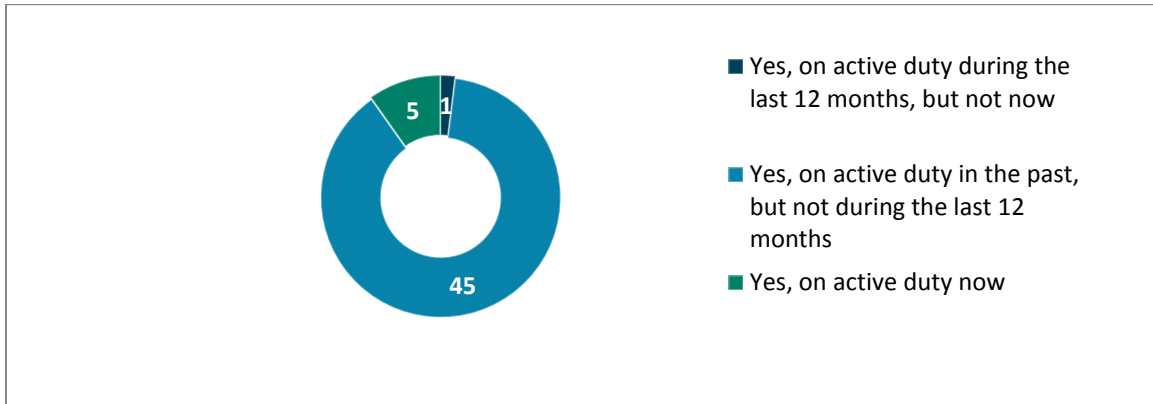
*Respondents who selected "Not Applicable" have been excluded from analysis.

**Of 43 respondent selecting "Other area(s)," 19 provided specific answers.¹

¹ "Other area(s)" responses included: estates (4), disability appeals (3), veterans affairs (VA) claim/negligence (3), elder law (2), wills (2), trusts (2), "none" (2), crime victim compensation act (1), administrated law (1), DD Form 214 (1), and "not sure at this time"(1)

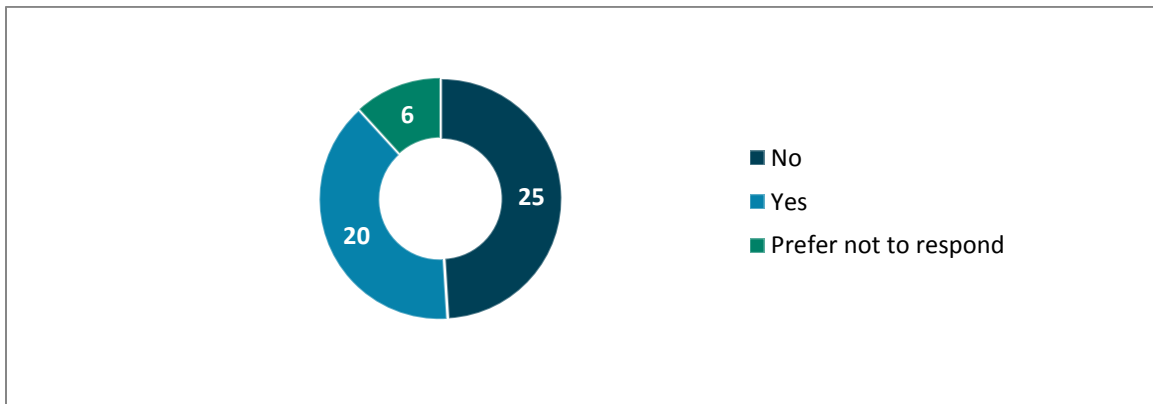
APPENDIX

Figure A.1: Have you ever served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, military Reserves, or National Guard?



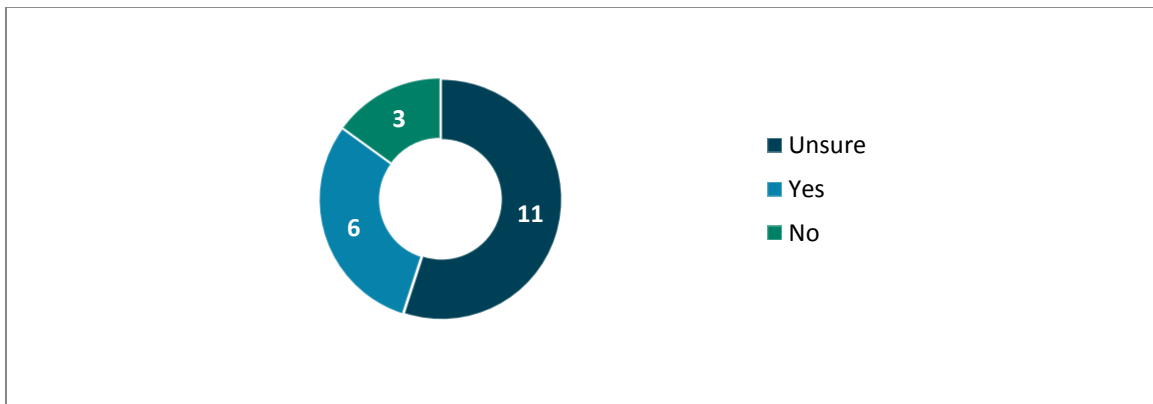
N=51

Figure A.2: Do you identify as a person with a disability?



N=51

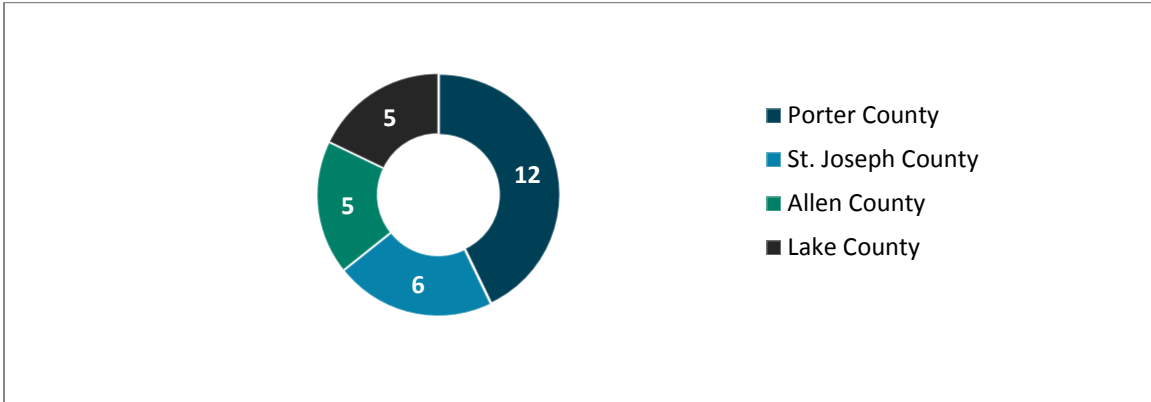
Figure A.3: Is your disability recognized under the Americans with Disabilities Act?*



N=20

*This question was only asked to respondents who identified themselves as a person with a disability.

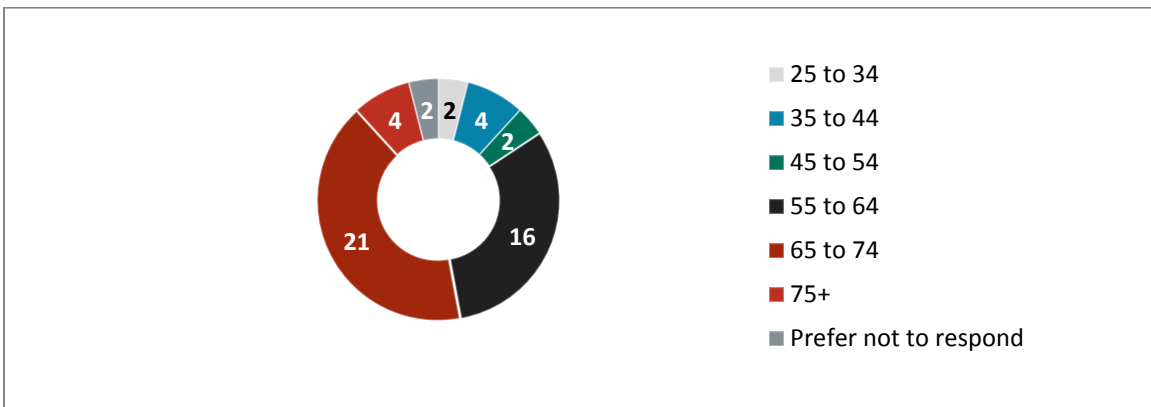
Figure A.4: In what Indiana county do you currently reside?*



N=28

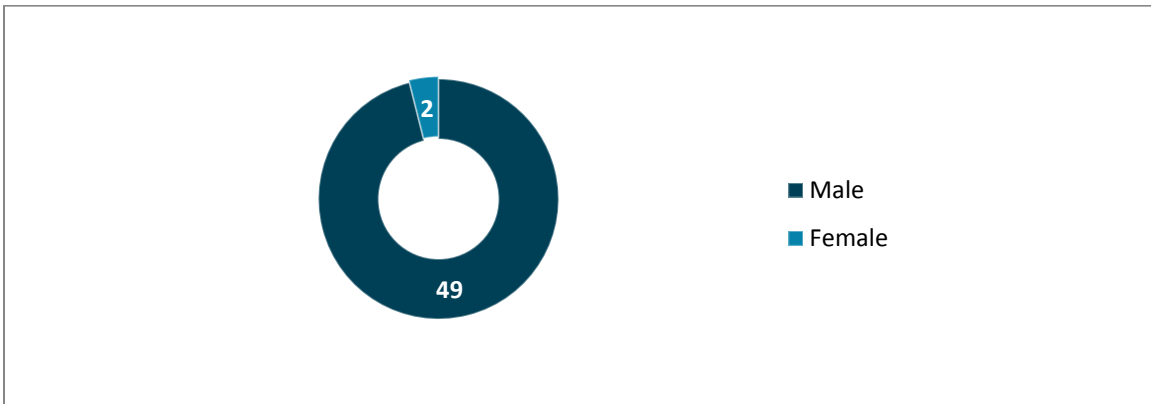
*This chart only shows top four counties; full list of responses available in the appendix

Figure A.5: What is your age?



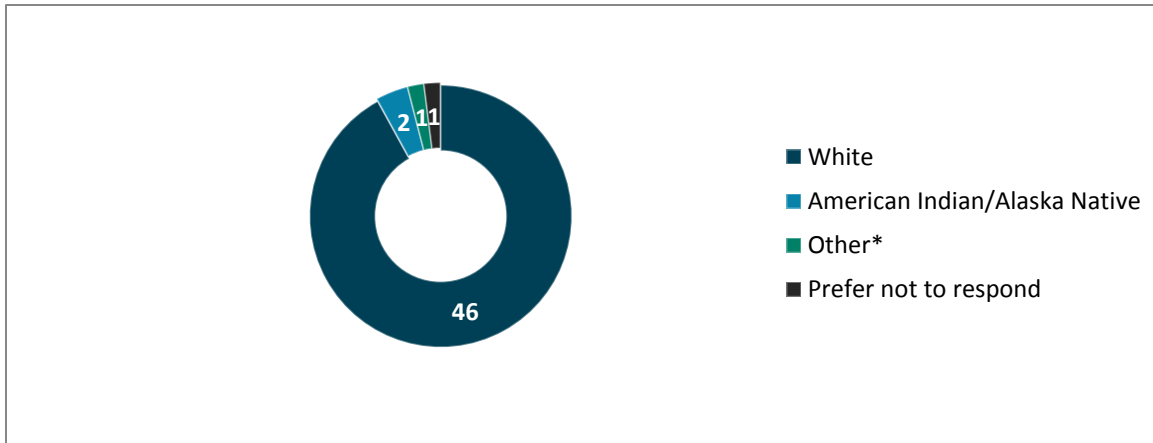
N=51

Figure A.6: What is your sex?



N=51

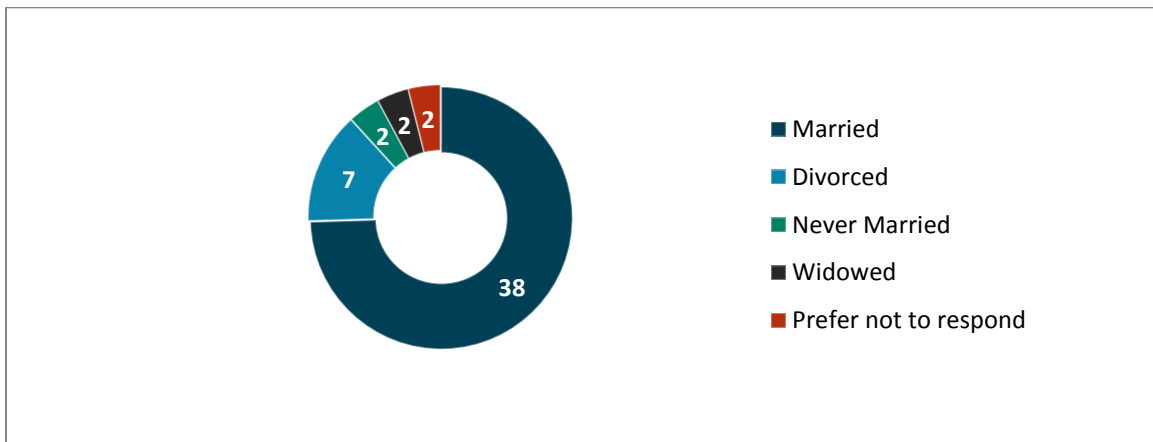
Figure A.7: Which of the following best describes your race?



N=50

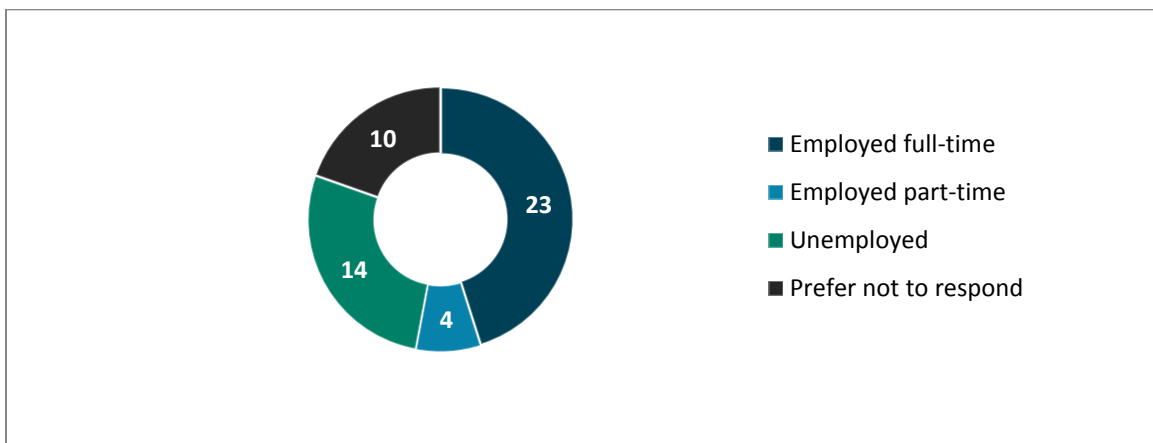
*One respondent selected "Other" option, and responded "White American"

Figure A.8: What is your marital status?



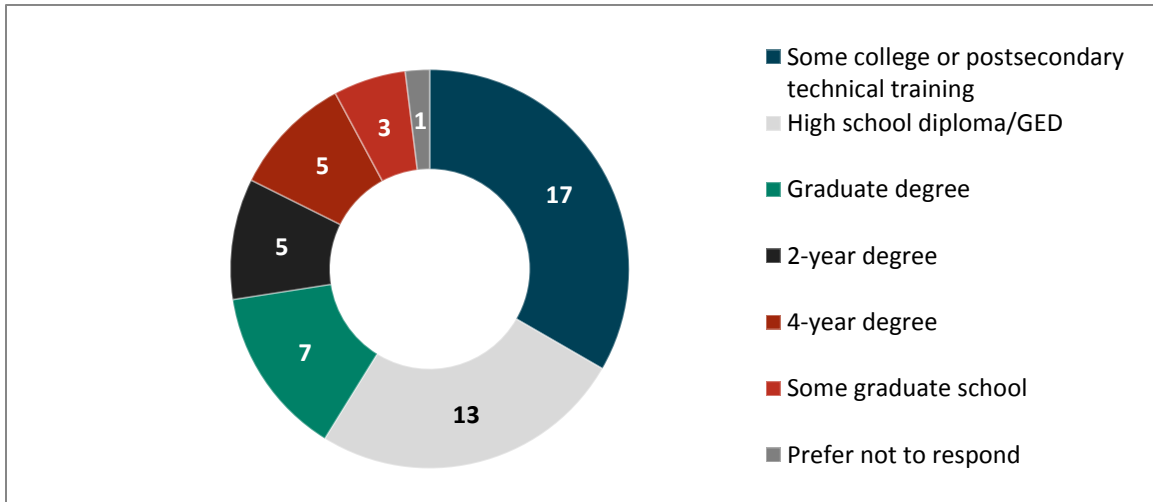
N=51

Figure A.9: What is your current employment status?



N=51

Figure A.10: What is the highest level of education you have completed?



N=51

Figure A.11 County of Residency, Complete List

IN WHAT INDIANA COUNTY DO YOU CURRENTLY RESIDE?*	N=	PERCENT
Porter County	12	24%
St. Joseph County	6	12%
Allen County	5	10%
Lake County	5	10%
Elkhart County	3	6%
Kosciusko County	3	6%
La Porte County	3	6%
Other (please specify) ²	3	6%
Howard County	2	4%
Starke County	2	4%
Adams County	1	2%
De Kalb County	1	2%
Huntington County	1	2%
Jasper County	1	2%
Marshall County	1	2%
Miami County	1	2%
Whitley County	1	2%

N=51

*This question was only asked to respondents who selected "Yes" in the question "Do you currently reside in Indiana?"

² "Other (please specify)" responses include Carroll County (2) and Benton (1)

PROJECT EVALUATION FORM

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