Washington Statewide Market Development Platform

Reuse Impact Calculator

2025

hyloh RRS START CONSULTING repair reuse WASHINGTON

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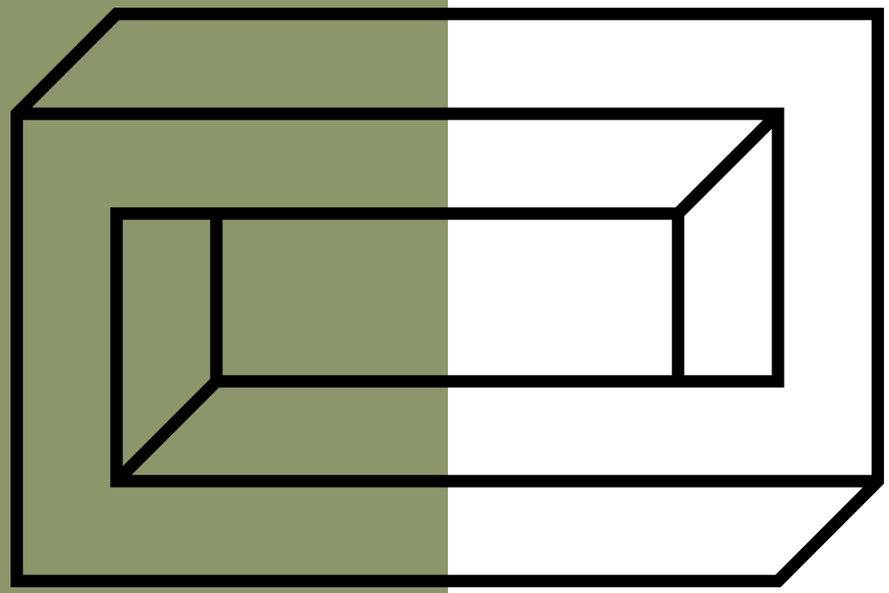

About the RIC Development Project

About the Project

This project was done in collaboration with the following organizations with funding provided by the Washington State Department of Ecology's Recycling Market Development Center.

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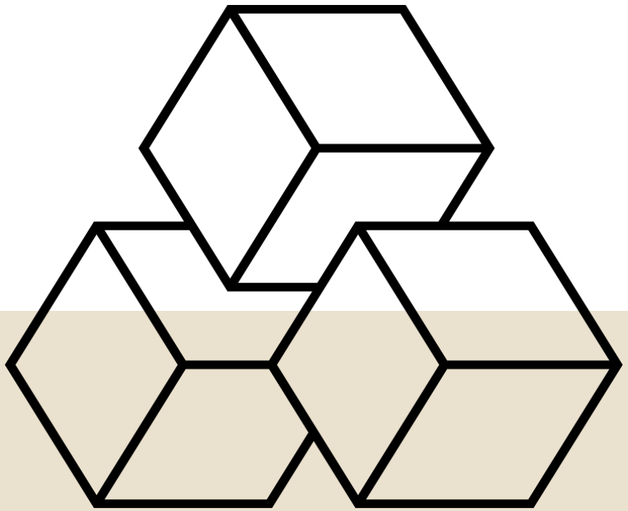
What is the Reuse Impact Calculator?



The Washington State Reuse Impact Calculator (RIC) will integrate extensive data on product categorizations, weights, and material families, alongside environmental emissions factors and key economic and social data points. Users will be able to efficiently assess the environmental, economic, and social impacts associated with reusing, repairing, and sharing a wide range of products. The primary objective of the RIC is to establish a standardized framework that enables consistent measurement, meaningful comparisons, and a deeper evaluation of the benefits of reuse, repair, and sharing over conventional replacement.

This tool is designed to serve a wide range of users—including government agencies, small businesses, community groups, and nonprofit organizations—by equipping them with clear, accessible, and credible impact data. It will support local organizations in improving their internal reporting, grant writing, and storytelling efforts, while also aggregating this information to generate cumulative, statewide data. This will enable a broader understanding and quantification of the full scope and value of reuse, repair, and sharing activities across Washington State.

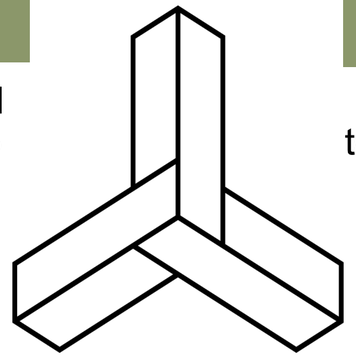
Project Overview

The Washington Statewide Market Development Platform research was intended to lay the foundation for a Washington State Reuse Impact Calculator (RIC)—an accessible, standardized tool to measure and communicate the environmental, social, and economic impacts of reuse, repair, and sharing activities. The RIC aims to support equitable participation in the circular economy, especially among small, hyperlocal organizations.

This phase was an exploratory, fact-finding mission designed to better understand the current landscape of data collection across the reuse sector utilizing qualitative data methods. It focused on engaging with Washington-based reuse, repair, and sharing entities to learn about their existing practices, surface challenges, and identify their evolving data needs. The insights gathered here will help to shape the structure and functionality of the tool moving forward.

Data Practices

What insights could better data unlock?

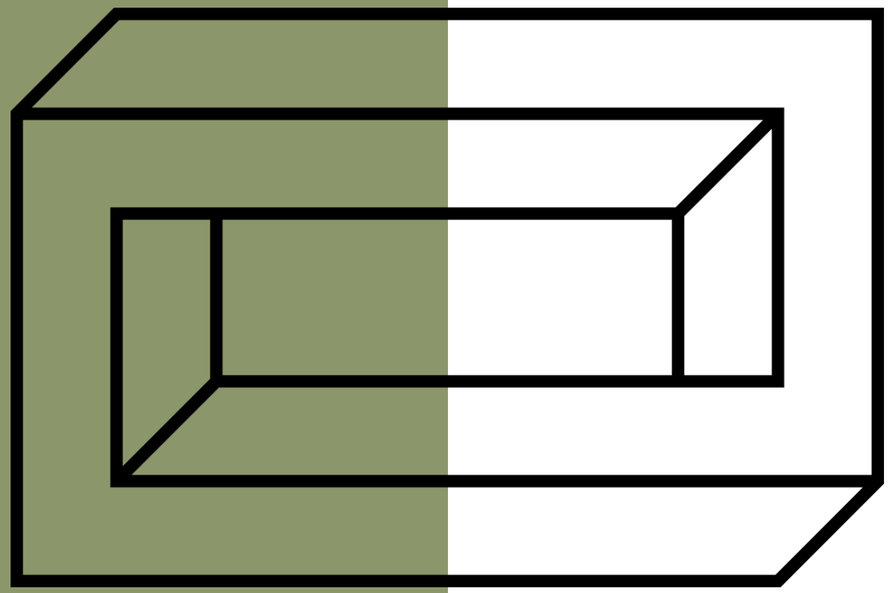


Data Use

How could a data tool support funding, advocacy, or efficiency?

Needs & Vision

How would increased visibility drive greater impact?



Qualitative Data

Qualitative Approach

We approached this research using qualitative methods, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups, to gather in-depth, personal insights into the experiences, challenges, and specific needs of reuse, repair, and sharing organizations across Washington.

1

Focus Groups

We convened five thematic focus groups with 2-4 participants each to allow for more active engagement and a cross-sectional view.

2

Interviews

Based on what we learned during the focus groups, we conducted four individual interviews with organizations we wanted to get more specific insight and operational details from.

3

Survey

Simultaneously, we distributed a 7-min survey to reuse, repair, rental/share/lend entities in Washington State.

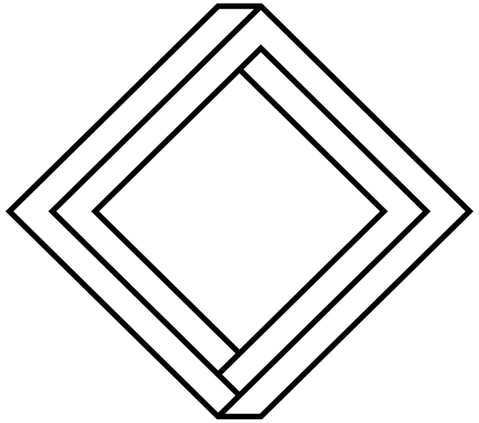
Focus Groups

Reuse

King County Solid Waste Division, Redesign Collective, Around Again

Repair

Terra Heilman, Spokane Zero Waste, Furniture Repair Bank, JeffCo Repair



Rental

South King Tool Library, Seattle REconomy, Curtis Memorial Library

Big Picture

Reuse Minnesota, Reuse Alliance, University of Maine

Creative Reuse

Art Salvage Spokane, Spread Supplies

Interviews

Seattle REconomy

Josh Epstein

Switchback Repair

Kay Sadowitz

Community Gearbox

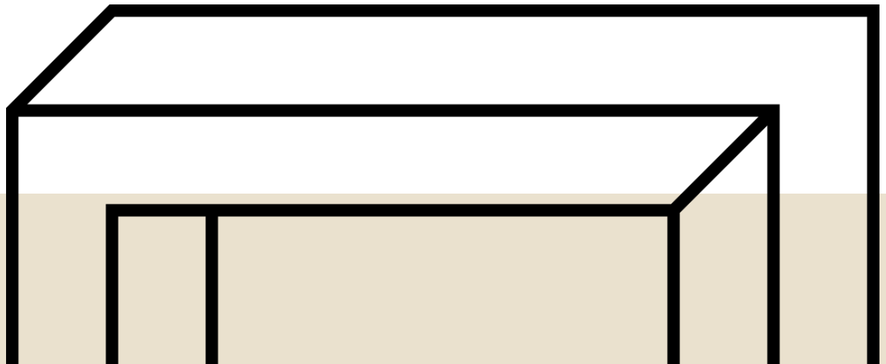
Dante Garcia

rePurpose Whidbey

Joan Green

Survey Outreach

The project team distributed a 7-minute, 40-question survey to a broad network of organizations and individuals involved in reuse, repair, rental, sharing, and lending across Washington State. This network was built over time by Repair x Reuse Washington through ongoing outreach and collaboration.



1 Mass Email

530 recipients, 44% open rate

3+ Shares

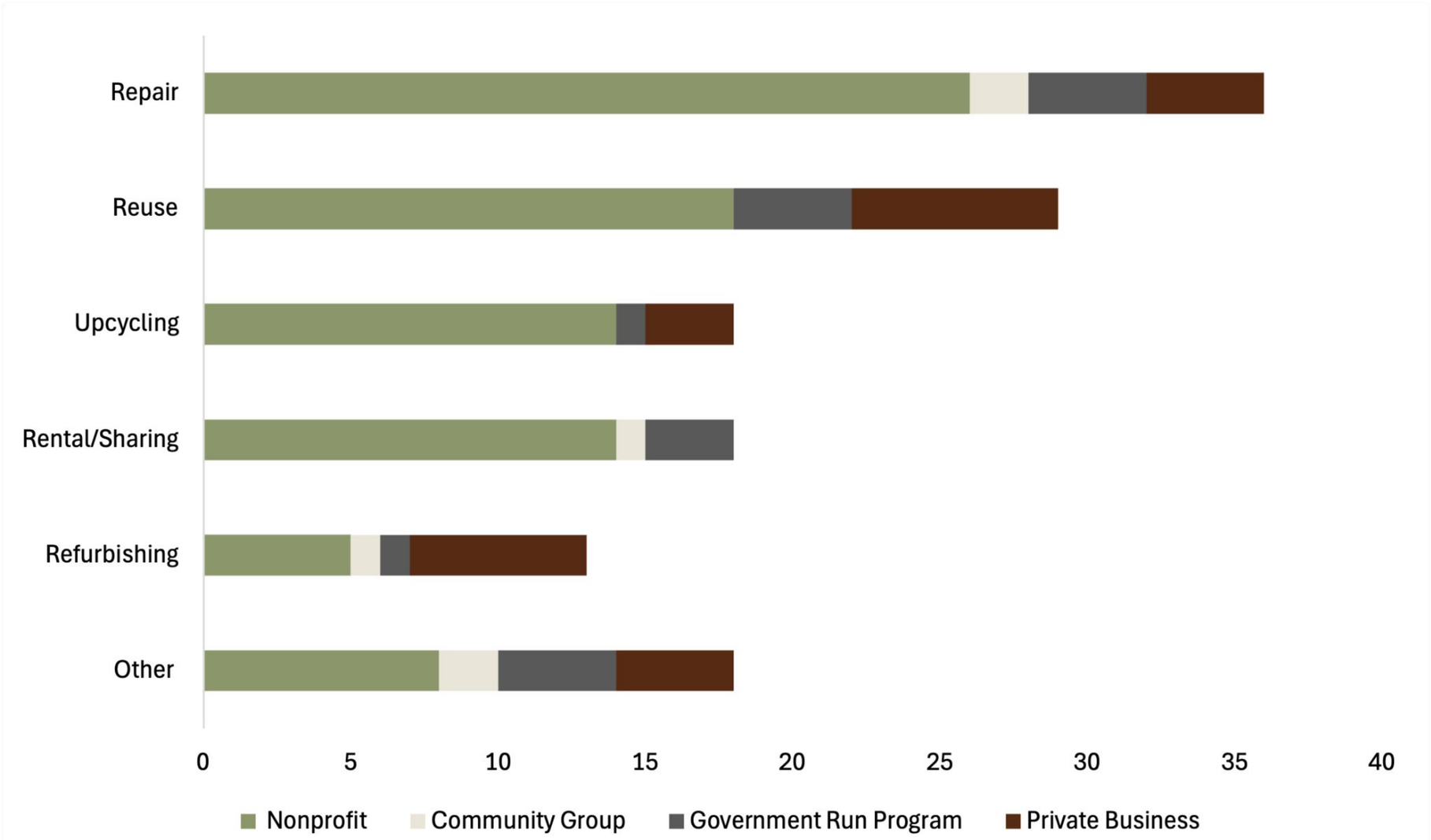
The survey was included in three newsletters and at WA State Recycling Association Conference

86 Survey Responses

67% completion with a 26% drop off rate

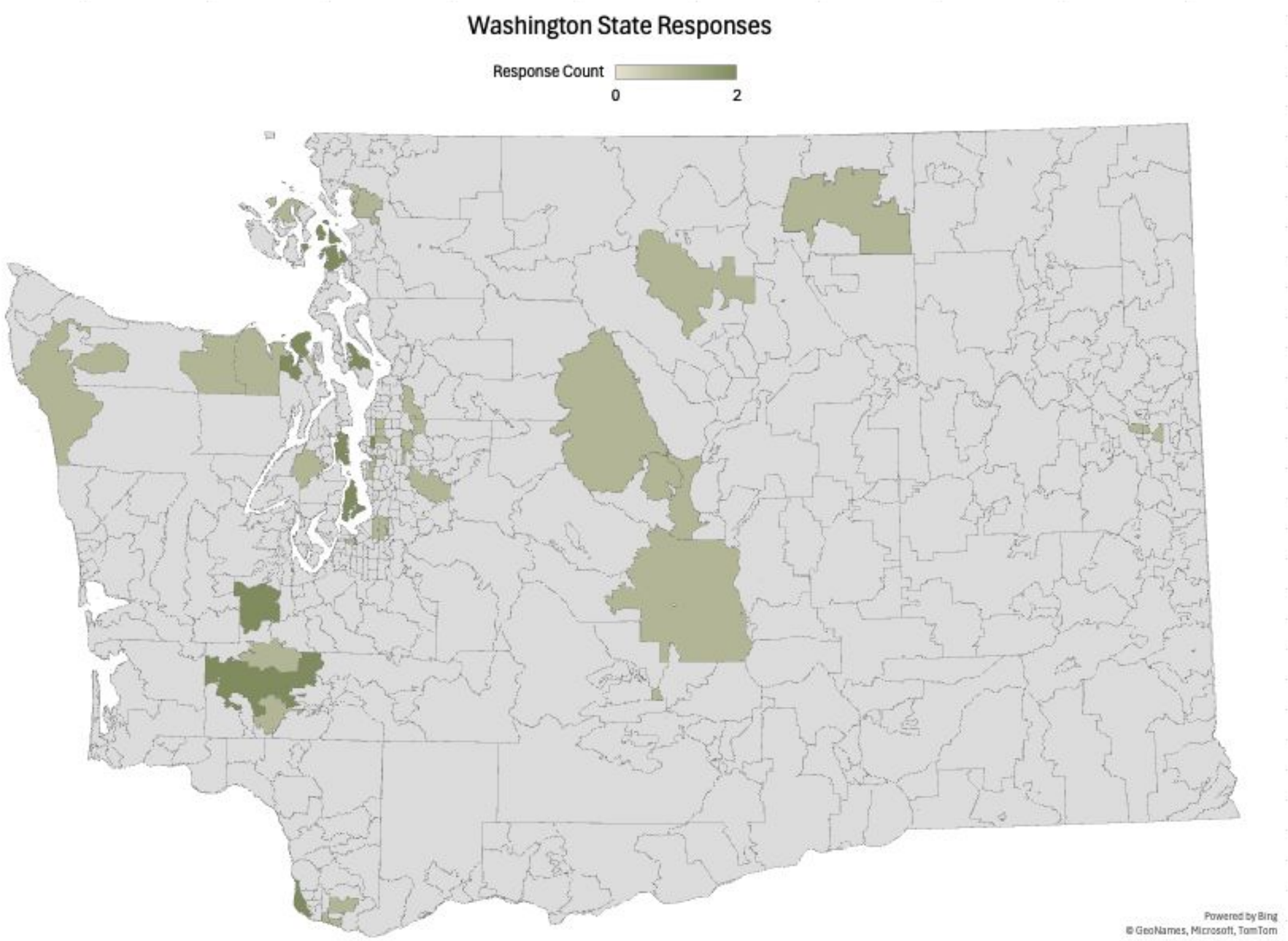
2 Month Collection

Surveys responses were collected between 4/14/25 and 6/1/25



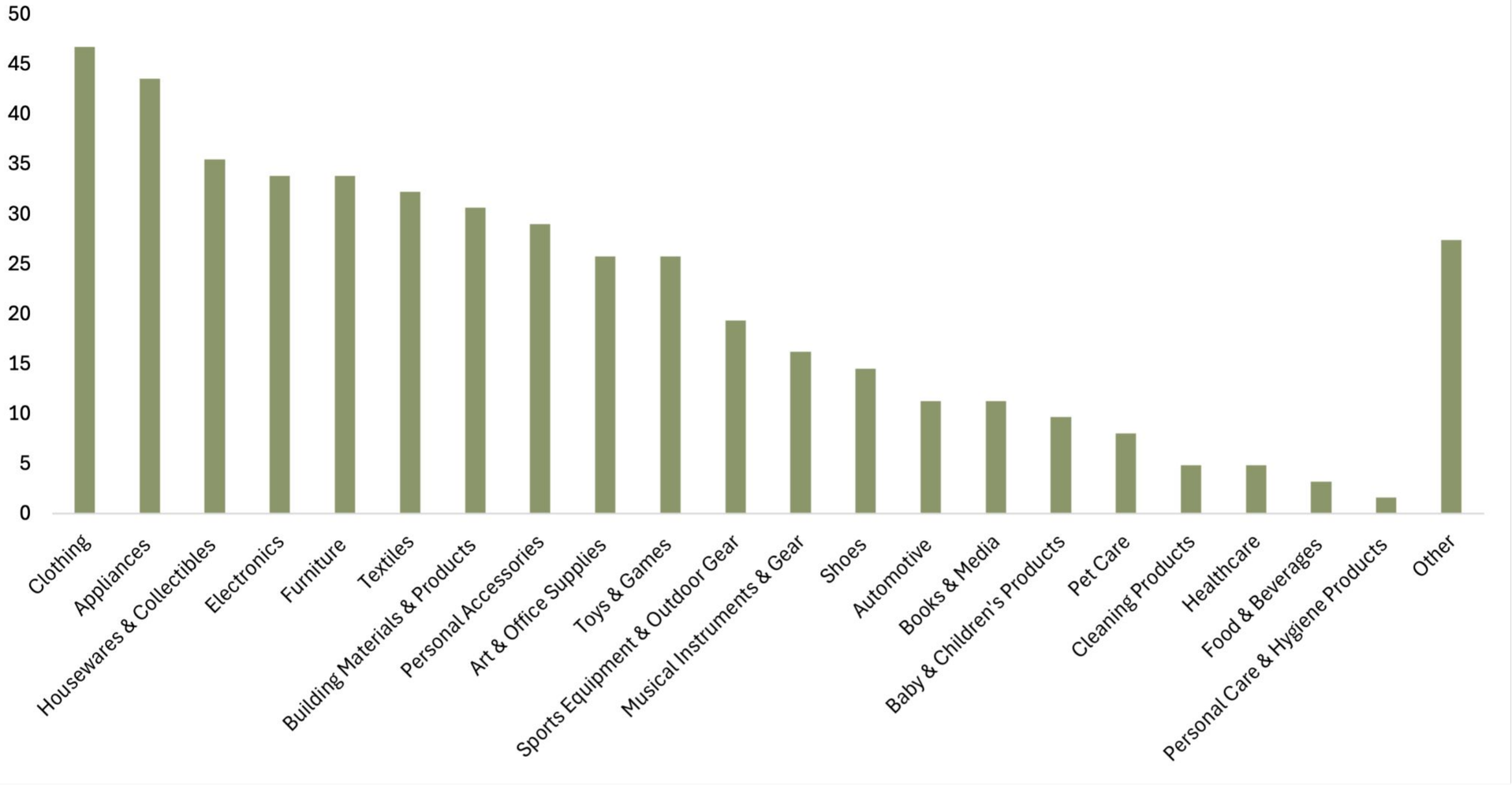
Survey Demographics

Breakdown of the type of organization survey respondents represent and the services they offer.



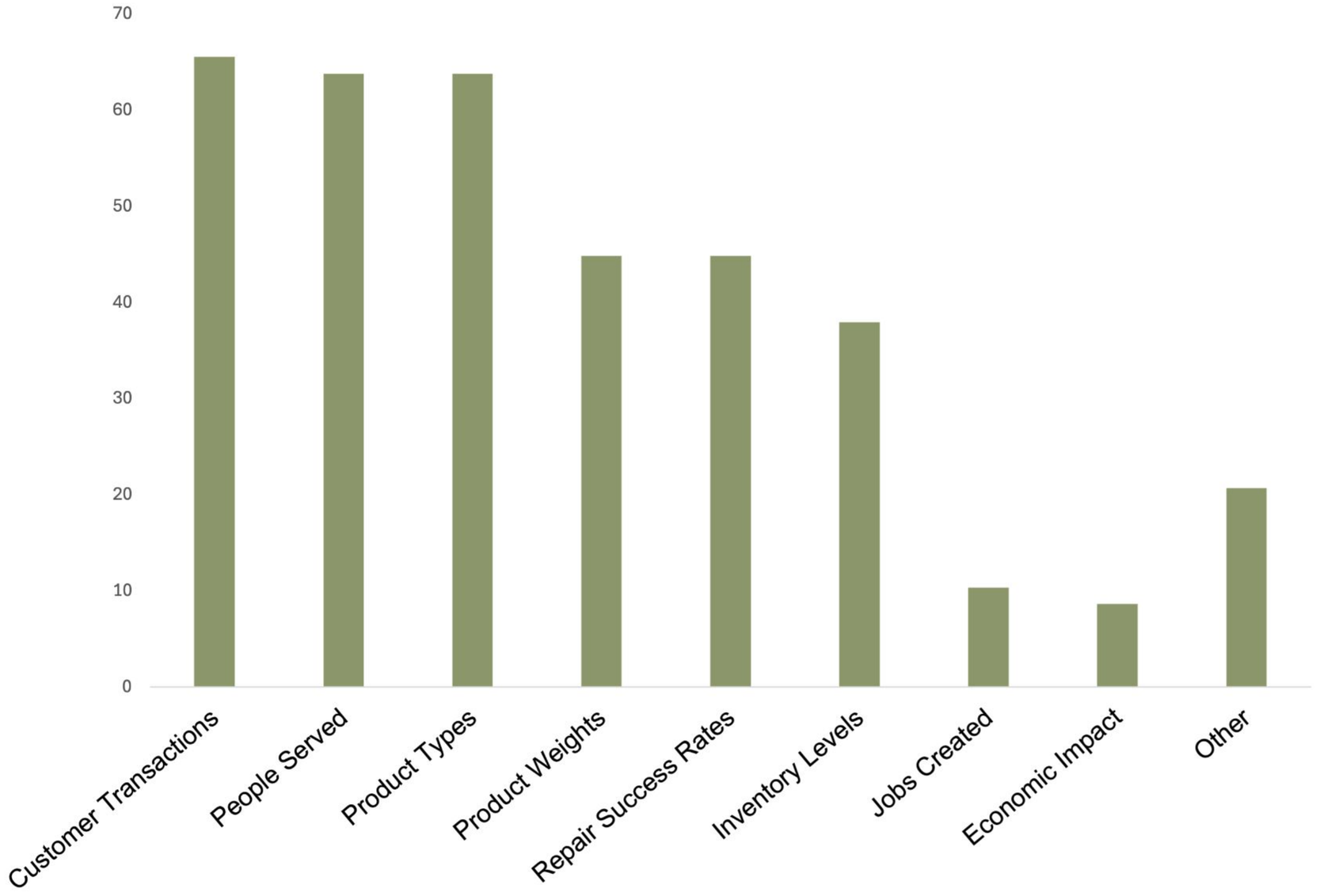
Response Geography

Locations of the 63 survey respondents across Washington State who provided their zip code.



Products Handled

Percentages of total survey respondents who handle each of the product categories provided in the survey.



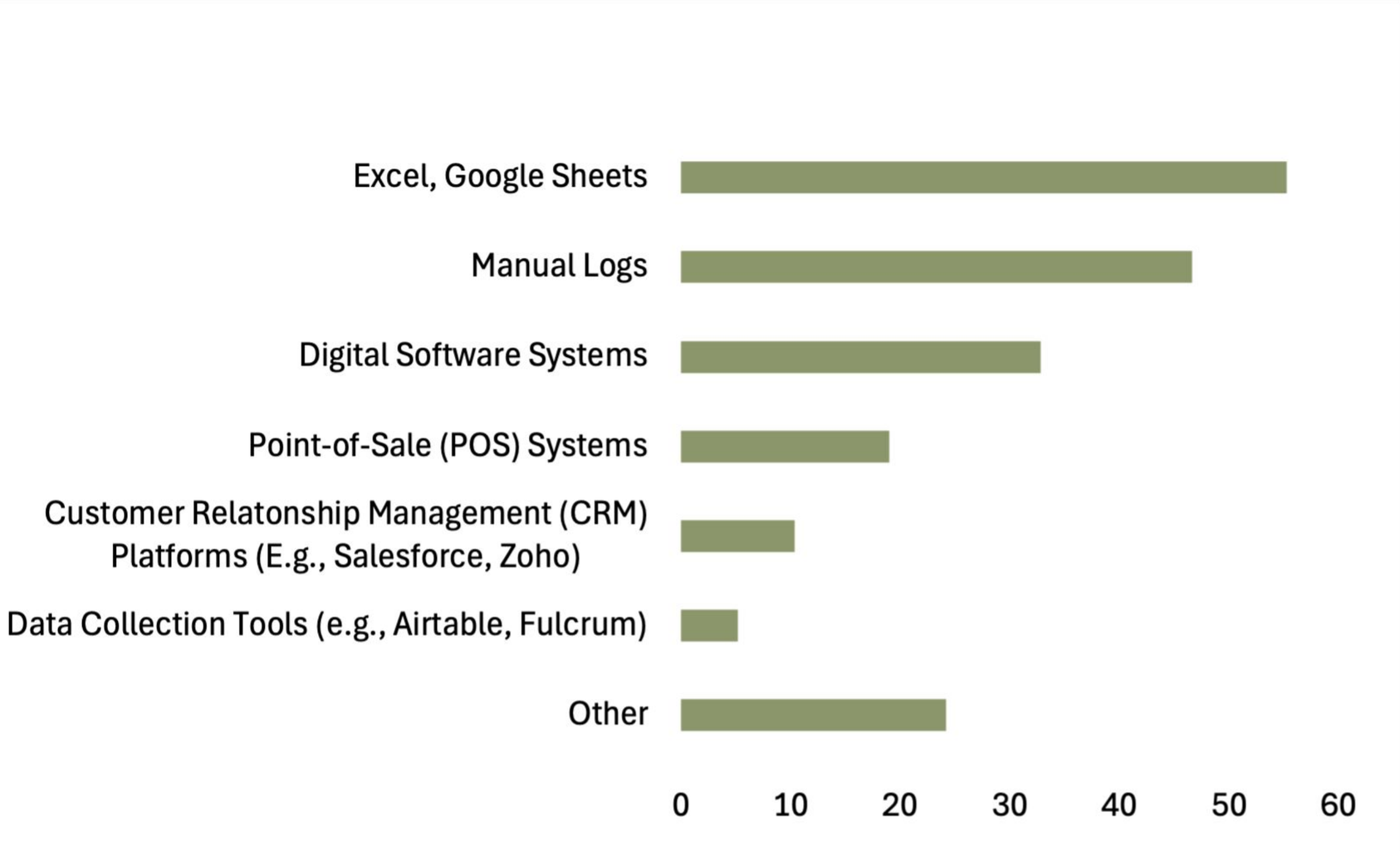
Types of Data Collected

Percentages of survey respondents who collect each type of data on their operations.

Additional Metrics

In addition to the data metric options provided in the survey, organizations also noted that they track the following metrics for their operations:

1. Different types of events, workshops, and educational services
2. Specific grant or funding requirements
3. Membership to tool libraries or other lending services
4. Repair-specific data and success rates
5. General organizational data (e.g., sales, staffing, necessary tools and parts)



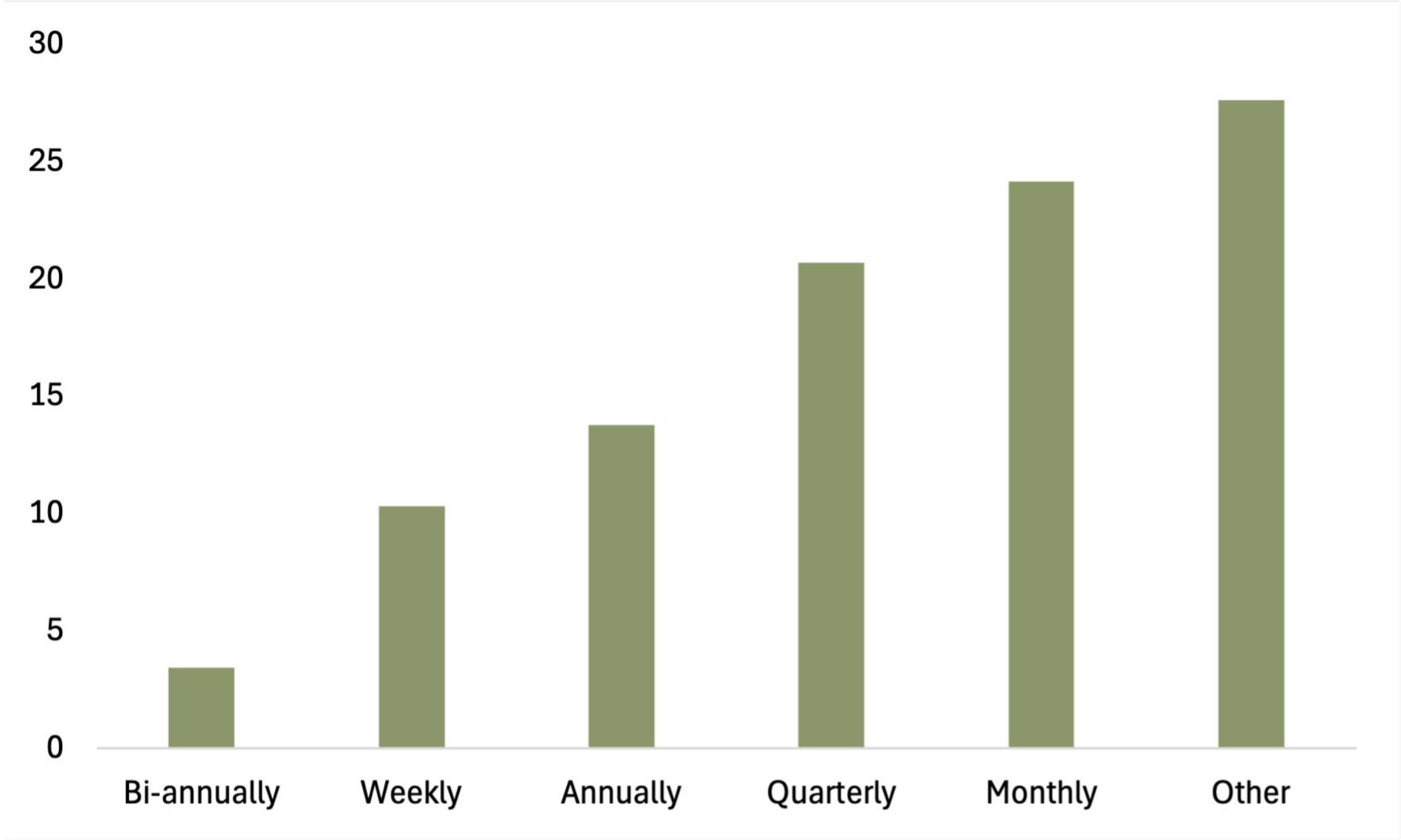
Methods used for Data Collected

Percentages of which methods of data collection survey respondents utilize.

Digital Software Systems

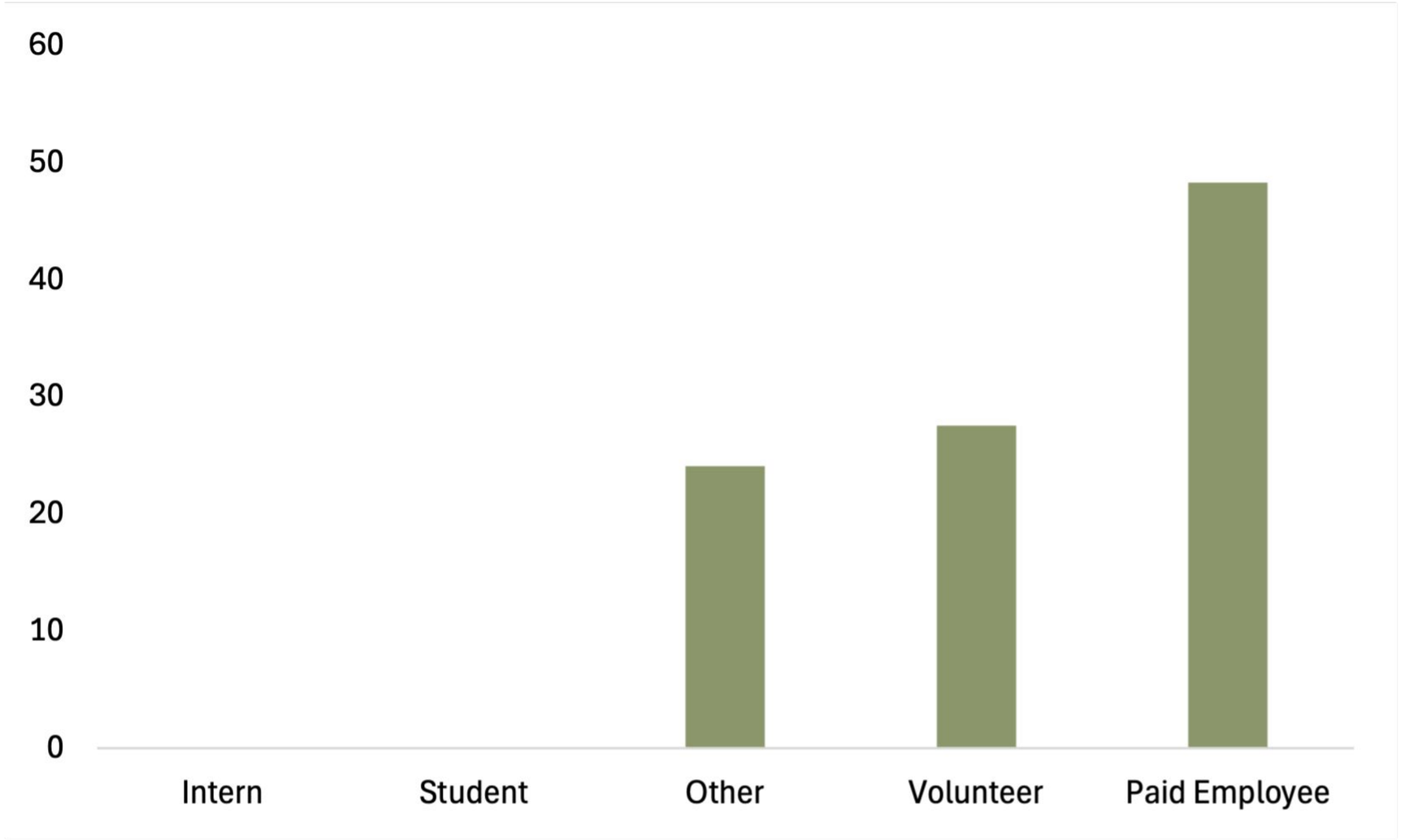
In addition to the options provided, organizations specified that they use the following for digital software systems:

1. **Point-of-Sale:** Square, Shopify, Quickbooks
2. **Volunteer management tools**: Better Impacts, Form Assembly
3. **Ticketing**: Spiceworks
4. **Communications tools**: MailChimp, Little Green Light, Microsoft
5. **Inventory and asset management:** MyTurn, Liberty Consignment
6. **More bespoke** options using FileMaker



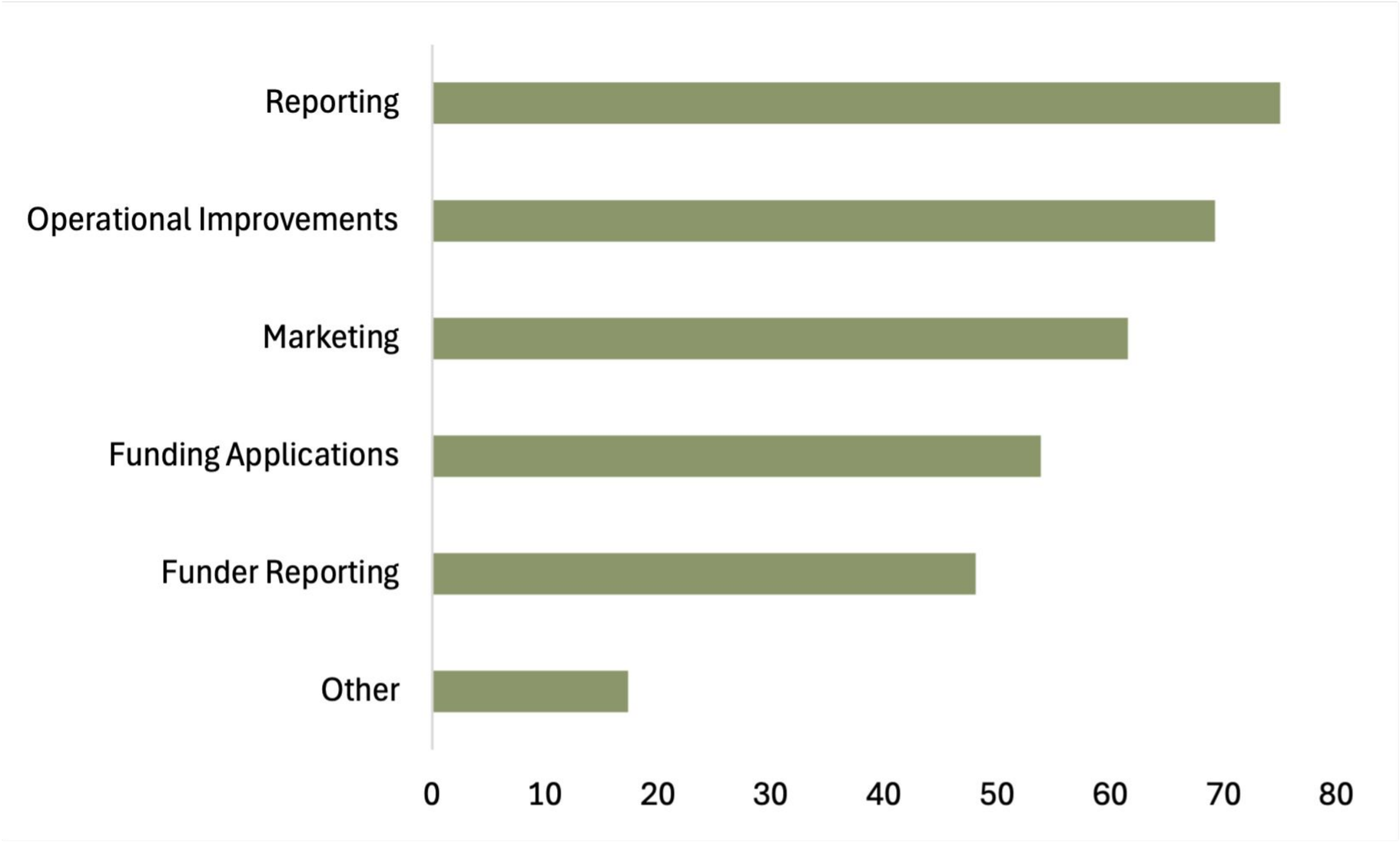
Frequency of Internal Data Analysis

Percentages of how often survey respondents review their data.



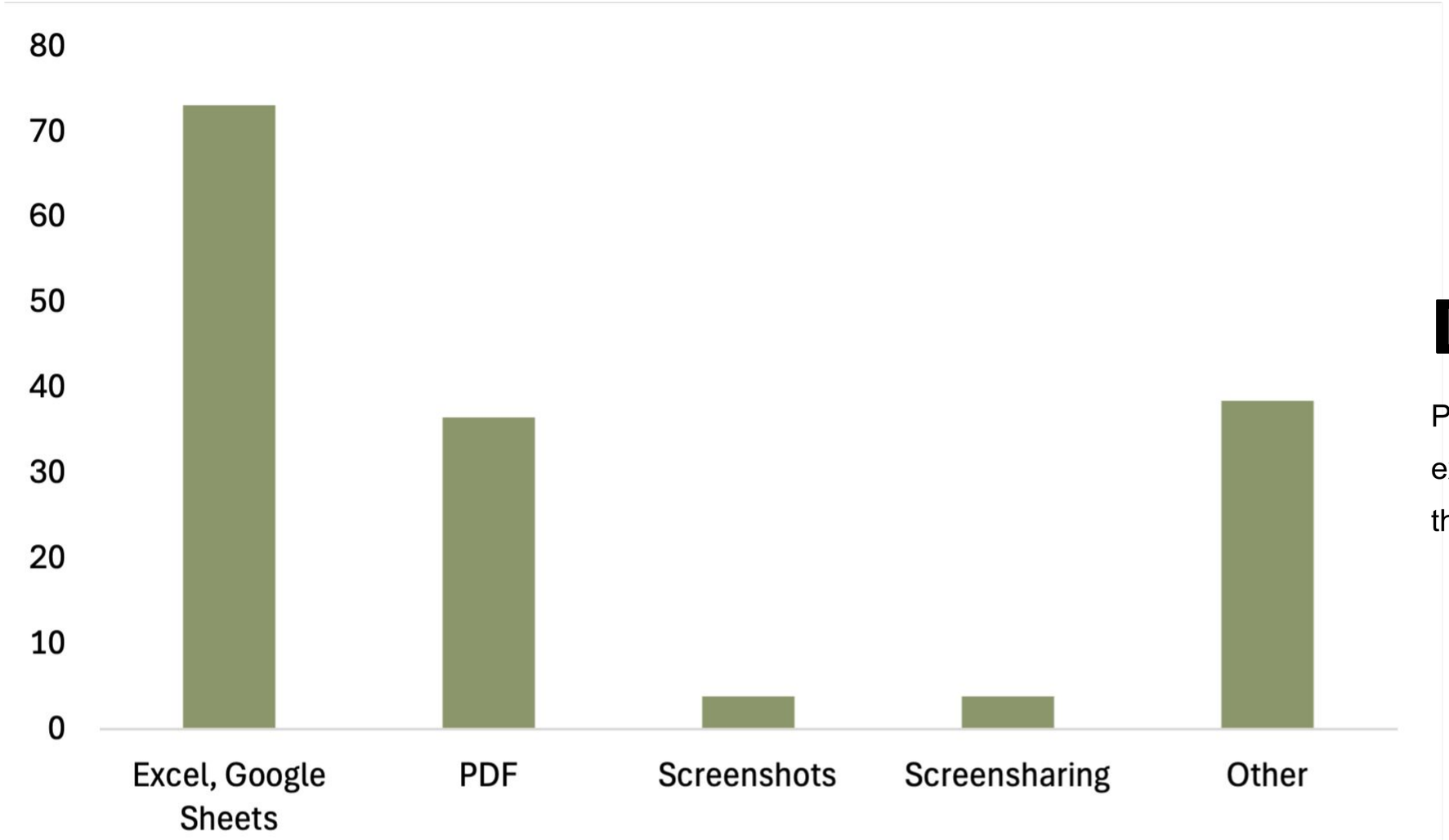
Data Collection Point Person

Percentages of which point person at survey respondents' organizations collects their data.



Metric Usage

Percentages of the ways in which survey respondents utilize the data they collect.



Data Exporting

Percentages of survey respondents that export the data they collect in each of the identified ways.

Data Collection Challenges

Survey respondents noted the specific challenges that they face when collecting or utilizing their data effectively.

1

Data Collection Barriers: Manual, inconsistent, and volunteer-driven data collection leads to gaps, errors, and inefficiencies.

2

Data Organization & Management: Data is fragmented across platforms and formats, making it difficult to manage, integrate, or scale.

3

Limited Data Use: Collected data is rarely analyzed or applied due to limited time, capacity, or clarity on how to use it.

4

Measurement Challenges: It’s difficult to quantify impact, assign value, or standardize metrics for reuse, repair, and diversion.

5

Tool & System Limitations: Existing tools lack automation, accuracy, and fit for purpose, limiting effective tracking and reporting.

6

Engagement & Compliance Issues: Low motivation, unclear expectations, and inconsistent participation hinder complete and reliable data reporting.

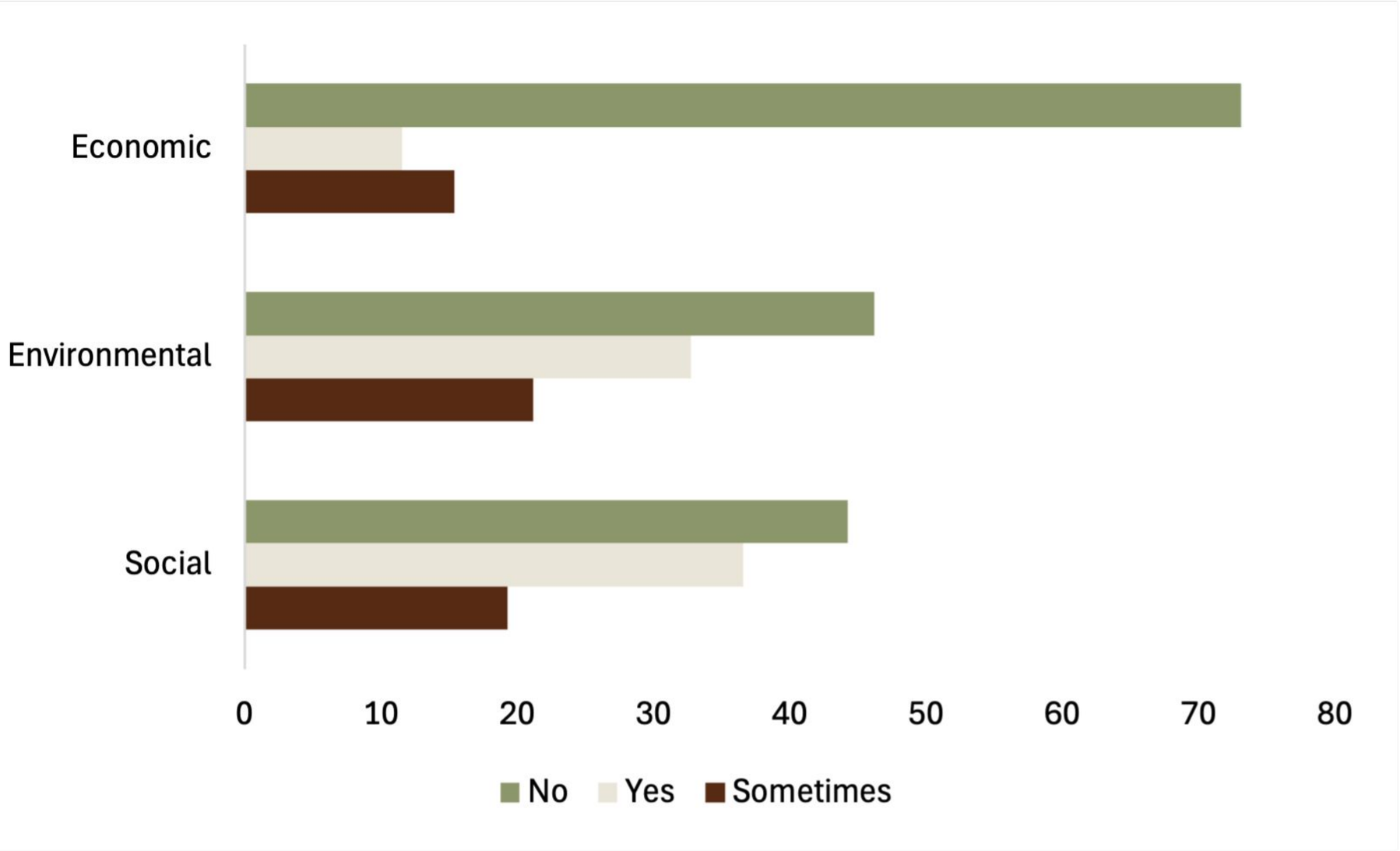
Data Capturing Challenges

Survey respondents provided several interesting comments.

“I collect it for the sake of collecting it. I don't know what to do with the info.”

“*We don't always manage to record at the repair event. Without a clear use for the data, there isn't much compliance. If there was a reason to collect it for this greater survey/data collection, that might help.”*

“We don't really use it effectively at all because we've never found a real way to use it to change operations.”



Impact Calculations

Percentages of survey respondents that currently calculate each type of impact.

Specific Impact Calculations

Survey respondents noted the specific economic, social, and environmental impacts they track.

Economic

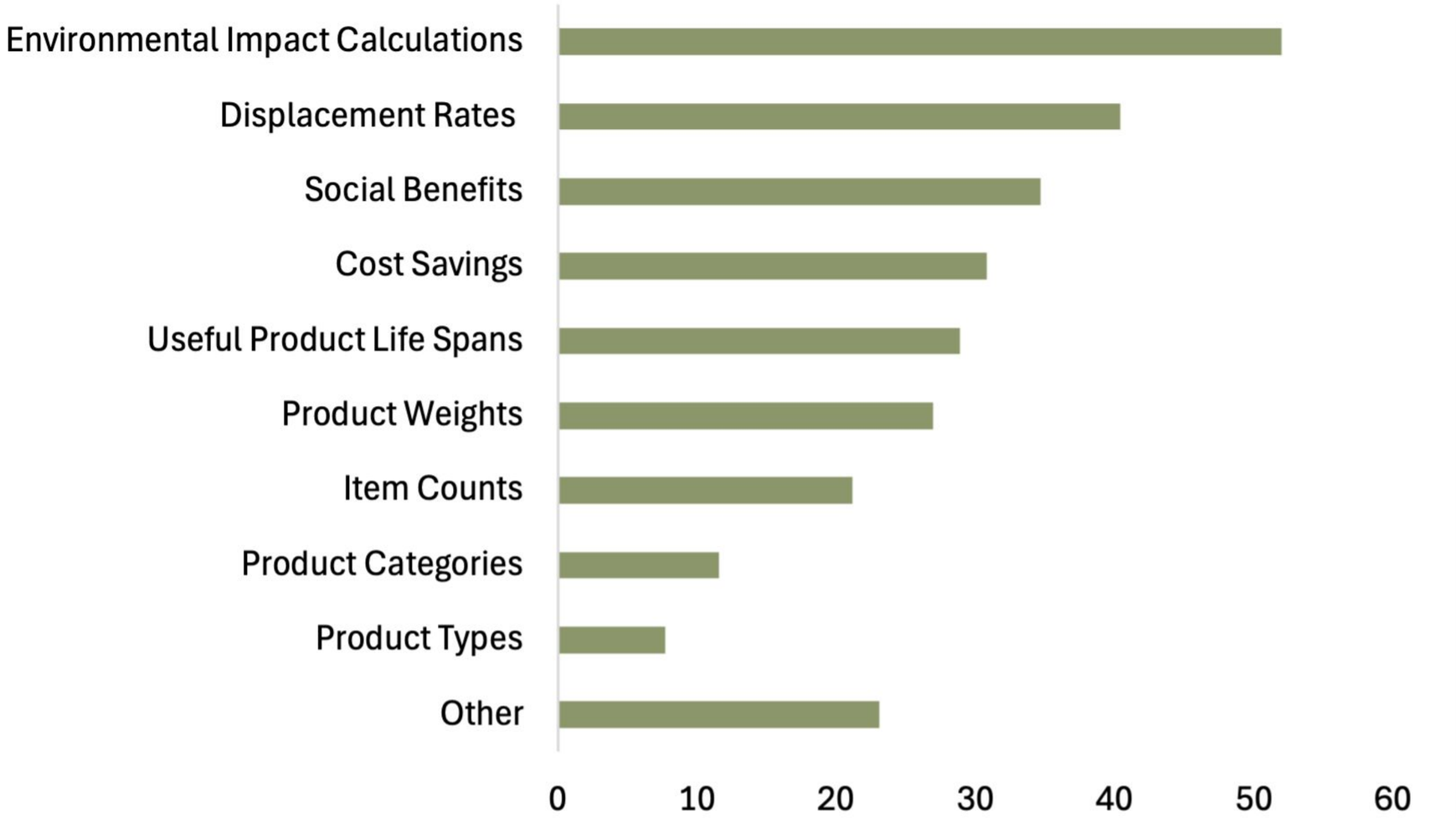
1. Economic impact by assigning or estimating monetary value
2. Usage based, not necessarily monetary
3. Internal, operational basic estimates

Social

1. Counting individual people served by events or programs
2. Jobs created and workforce numbers
3. Volunteer numbers
4. Educational outreach
5. Qualitative

Environmental

1. Weight related data
2. CO2 data from various sources
3. Use qualitative or 3rd party sources for impact reporting



Most Time-Consuming and/or Difficult

Percentages of which data collection processes survey respondents spend the most time on.

Smoother Data Systems

Survey respondents noted the specific ways they could make their organization’s data system run smoother.

1

Unified Systems: Need for a single, integrated platform built for reuse, reducing reliance on multiple tools.

2

Ease of Use: Tool must be simple, accessible, and easy for staff and volunteers to use.

3

Dedicated Staffing: Success requires funded, dedicated roles or trained volunteers for data collection.

4

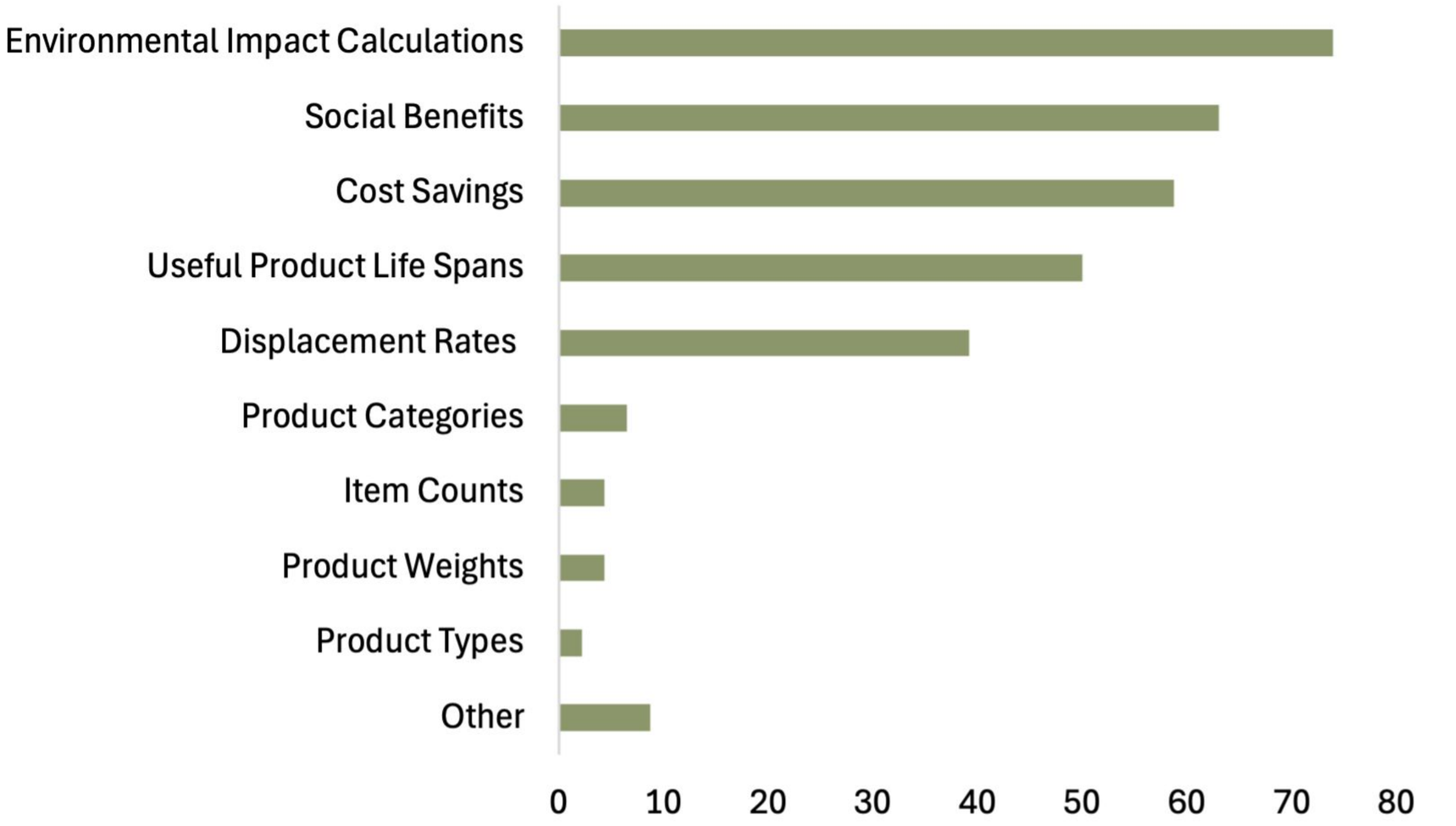
Clear Reporting: Users want built-in metrics and customizable reports that show impact clearly.

5

Flexibility: Tools must be adaptable to evolving and varied data needs.

6

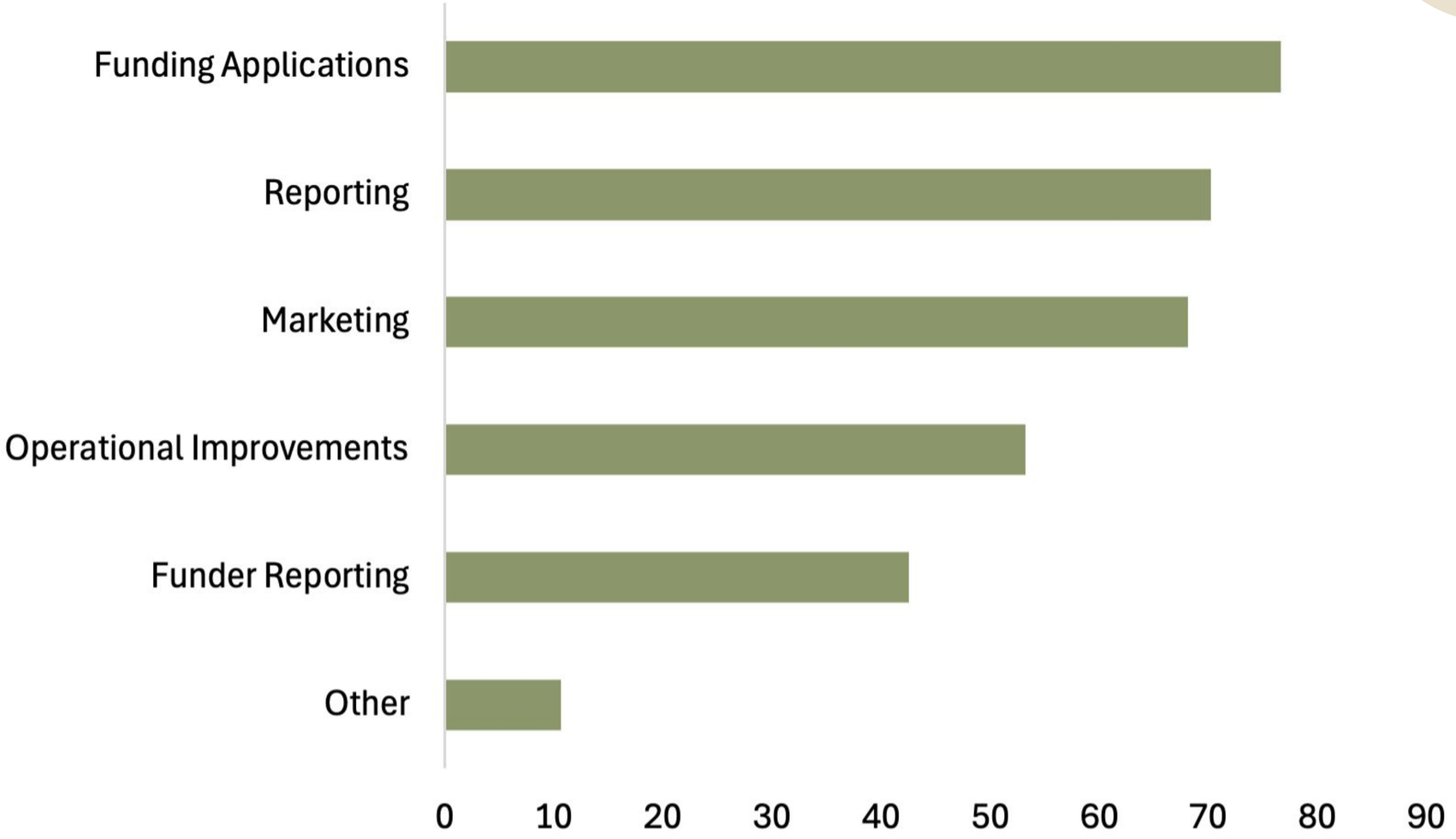
Getting Started: Many need guidance, standards, and easy ways to begin tracking.



Additional Metrics

Percentages of which additional data survey respondents would like to start collecting.

“Well dang, it would make doing what we do that much more worth doing.”



Better Data

Percentages of the ways in which better data collection could benefit survey respondents.

Key Qualitative Takeaways

1

Data is essential but fragmented and hard to manage.
Organizations collect valuable impact data–like item counts and weight, volunteer numbers, etc.– but rely on inconsistent tools, definitions, and often time-consuming manual entries, making tracking inefficient and error-prone with no visible return on investment.

2

Strong data unlocks funding, strategy, and credibility.
Reliable, well-communicated metrics can help organizations secure grants, shape programs, develop partnerships, and prove the real-world value and legitimacy of reuse, repair, and lending activities to funders, policymakers, and communities.

3

There's a clear need for a simple, powerful data tool.
Participants want a user-friendly system that can help automate data entry, supports storytelling, visualizes economic, environmental, and social impacts clearly, and integrates with existing platforms.

4

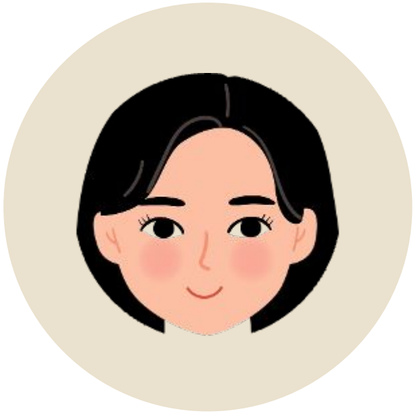
Shared, standardized data can transform the sector.
A unified system with consistent definitions and verified metrics could elevate the reuse movement collectively, support widespread and local policy change, and help reveal further hidden impact.

Noteworthy Quotes

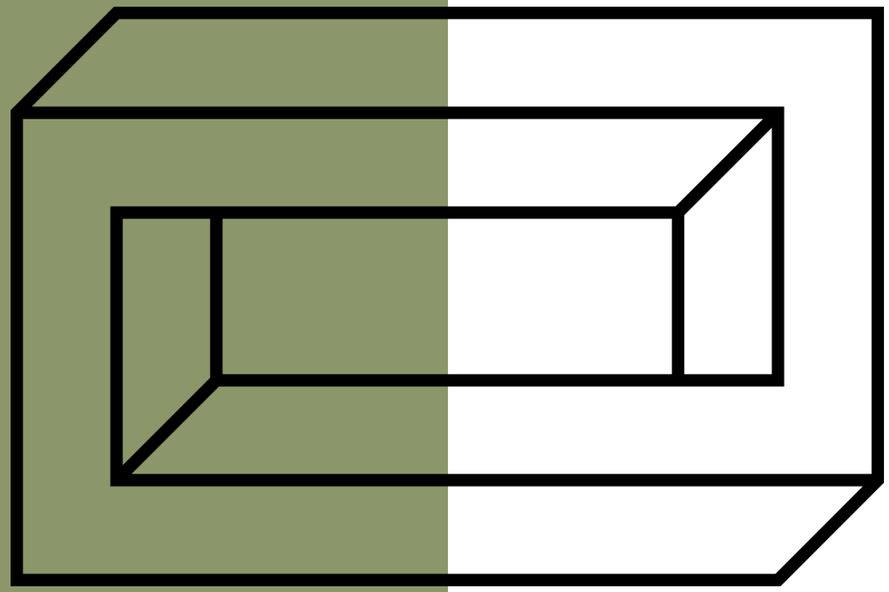
Many survey respondents' comments reinforced key themes, including: individuals in relevant fields not recognizing their role in reuse or the circular economy; organizations struggling to find a tool that fits their needs; and entities underusing their data due to uncertainty about how to apply it. The following three quotes illustrate these points.

"I don't think I'm actually in your target group. I don't really collect or analyze data. I'm a sole proprietor who repairs stringed instruments and I write down the jobs in a book - what I did for whom and what I charged them. That's all."

"I'm excited to have a tool, I'm nervous about how to implement it (we've tried Google forms, etc. but it's too clunky for fixers and difficult to review/edit during the event). I'm curious to hear what data is most valuable (maybe just focus on that), especially if we can combine it with other repair events to generate a state/federal data set and really create a comprehensive picture of this economy while illuminating gaps and paths forward towards further action."



"We don't really use [data] effectively at all because we've never found a real way to use it to change operations."



RIC Development

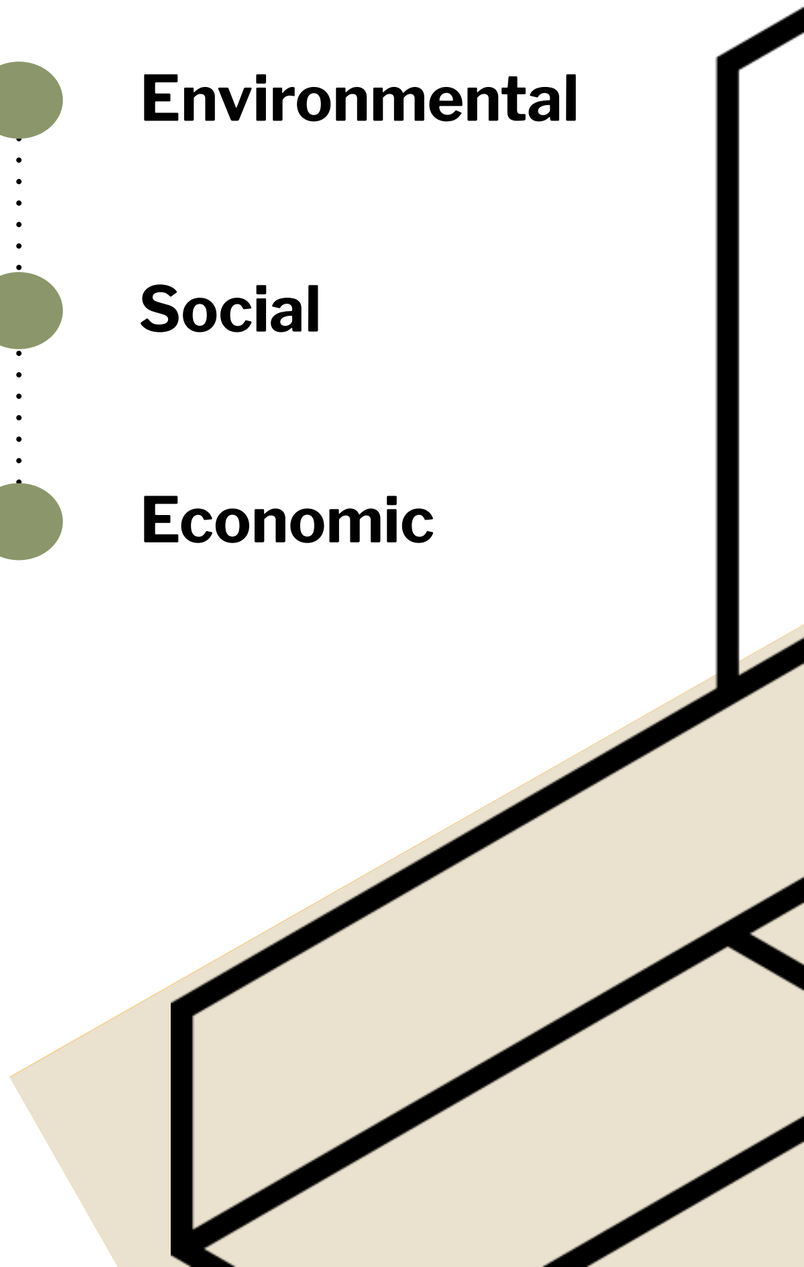
RIC Development

We plan to build the Reuse Impact Calculator (RIC) by centering metrics that reflect the full breadth of the reuse sector—starting with social and economic impacts that have historically been under-captured but are critical for demonstrating value. Environmental metrics will also be included to provide a well-rounded view of impact. The tool will feature a comprehensive, evolving product list and an upload system designed to meet organizations where they are—while allowing for future expansion based on community needs. It will also include filters and data views that support storytelling, enabling users to easily access and communicate the specific impacts most relevant to their mission.

Environmental

Social

Economic



RIC Phase 2

In the next phase of RIC development, we will create a baseline, functional tool that captures key social, economic, and environmental impacts. Given limited resources, we're setting clear parameters to ensure we deliver a usable, scalable tool within budget—while demonstrating its potential for future enhancements based on community needs.

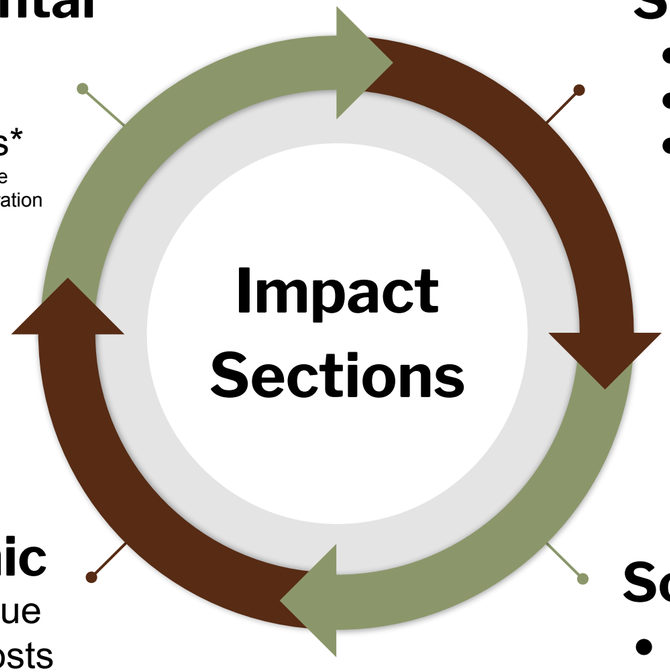
Environmental

- Weight
- Item count
- GHG savings*

*Utilizing basic, easily accessible emissions factors in this first iteration

Social

- Guests/participants
- Borrowers
- Volunteer numbers

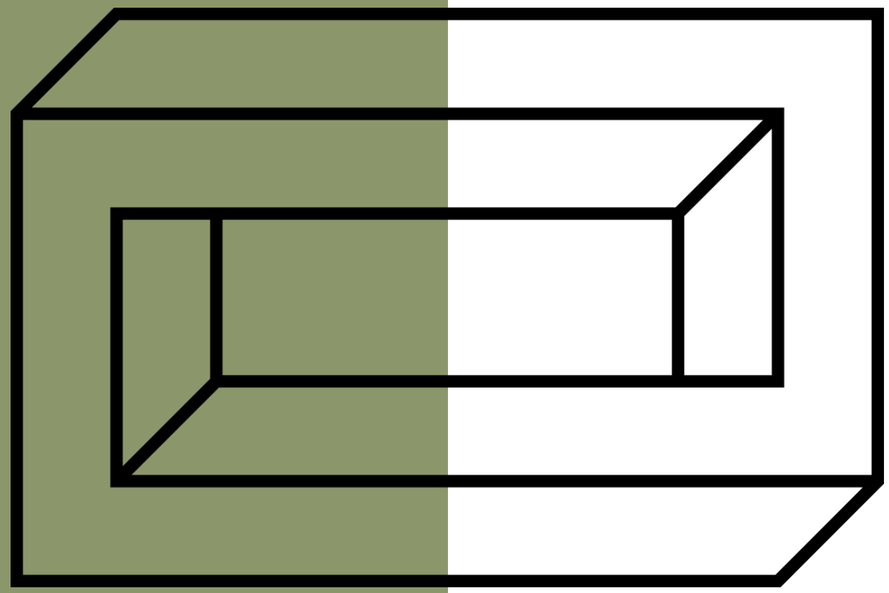


Economic

- Retail value
- Repair costs
- Funding
- Profits
- Membership fees
- Avoided tipping fees

Social/Economic

- Paid positions
- Volunteer stipends
- Volunteer value



Next Steps

Next Steps

1

Build the RIC

Build a functional RIC in phase 2.

2

Priority Areas

Once the RIC is fully functional, we'll be able to identify priority areas for further development, additional data needs, and future enhancements to expand its capabilities.

3

Future Funding

Ongoing development of this tool depends on securing the resources needed to continue and enhance the research.

Priority Areas Roadmap

These estimates and further research targets define the path forward for continuous development of priority areas. They reflect current assumptions about resource needs and outline actions that will strengthen and refine these areas as work progresses. Please note that these are estimates and overviews that are subject to change.

System Design	• Single user sign-in • Stronger emphasis on UX design and user testing • Integration with tools like iWasteNot, MyTurn, and other internal systems • Improved upload systems (e.g., quarterly reports, visual product recognition)	**Hours: 100+** **Cost: $20 - 50,000**
Material-Specific Data	• Conduct research on high-impact materials • Gather deeper, material-specific background data • Strengthen understanding of priority materials' environmental and economic impacts	**Hours: 50+** **Cost: $10 - 20,000**
Environmental Data	• More detailed and specific emissions research • Expanded backend calculations • Inclusion of other extraction/production factors (e.g., water use) • Tracking volume diverted in addition to weight	**Hours: 200+** **Cost: $40 - 75,000**
Additional Impacts	• Expand and refine current social and economic impact metrics • Continuously improve reuse impact quantification • Incorporate customer/client behavior more directly	**Hours: 50+** **Cost: $10 - 30,000**
User Engagement	• Dedicated time specifically for user engagement and outreach • Increase awareness of the tool/platform among target audiences • Support adoption and sustained use through direct engagement and promotion	**Hours: 25+** **Cost: $5 - 30,000**

THANKS!