



Equity Advisory Group

Power Outage Preparedness

June 22nd & 24th, 2022

Introductions & Agenda

| Topic | Topic Owner |
|---|--------------|
| Welcome & Introductions | Amber |
| Overview of the Meeting: rules and intent | Amber |
| EAG Member Spotlight | Amber |
| Power Outage Preparedness | Ana Matthews |
| Your Support Team and Next Meeting | Amber |

Guest Introductions

- Name
 - Pronouns
- Organization
- Interest in attending



Today's Meeting

Equity Lens Session June 2022



Learn about Avista's customer experience and preparedness regarding power outages specifically for our more vulnerable customers



Provide insights regarding awareness and perception of options and resources available during power outages.

| INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| INFORM | CONSULT | INVOLVE | COLLABORATE | EMPOWER |
| Public Participation Goal: | Public Participation Goal: | Public Participation Goal: | Public Participation Goal: | Public Participation Goal: |
| To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions. | To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions. | To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. | To place final decision-making in the hands of the public. |

Rules for Engagement



- Encouraged to actively participate in discussions
- Each member will be provided time to speak
- Healthy and civil debate is encouraged
- Members should be open to new ideas and concepts
- Respectful of differing opinions
- Collectively the group should strive to align varying options (e.g., identify shared goals for different perspectives)

KJ January (she/hers)

Member Spotlight

Where do you work and what is your title?

Director of Advocacy at Spectrum Center Spokane

Where do you live?

East Side (Perry District) of Spokane

In your own words, how do you define equity?

Equity is identifying and acknowledging the weak spots in our society and finding ways to fix or adapt the often-avoidable barriers and/or adversities placed on many members of our community.



KJ January (she/hers)

Member Spotlight

Tell us why equity is important to you.

Equity is important because it is how we learn, grow, and strengthen our community. We can only move forward when we can address the root cause of why there are so many disparities within our country

If you had to walk into a room with one song that was consistently playing, what would that song be?

Sade "Smooth Operator"





Power Outage Preparedness Survey

Vulnerable Customer Outage Survey

Objectives

- (1) Evaluate power outage experience and preparedness among Avista's more vulnerable customers
- (2) Measure awareness and perception of options and resources available during power outages
- (3) Identify groups of customers with lower awareness and preparedness levels
- (4) Evaluate awareness of and satisfaction with Avista's outreach strategy
- (5) Evaluate differences between customers in differing demographic groups

Survey Group

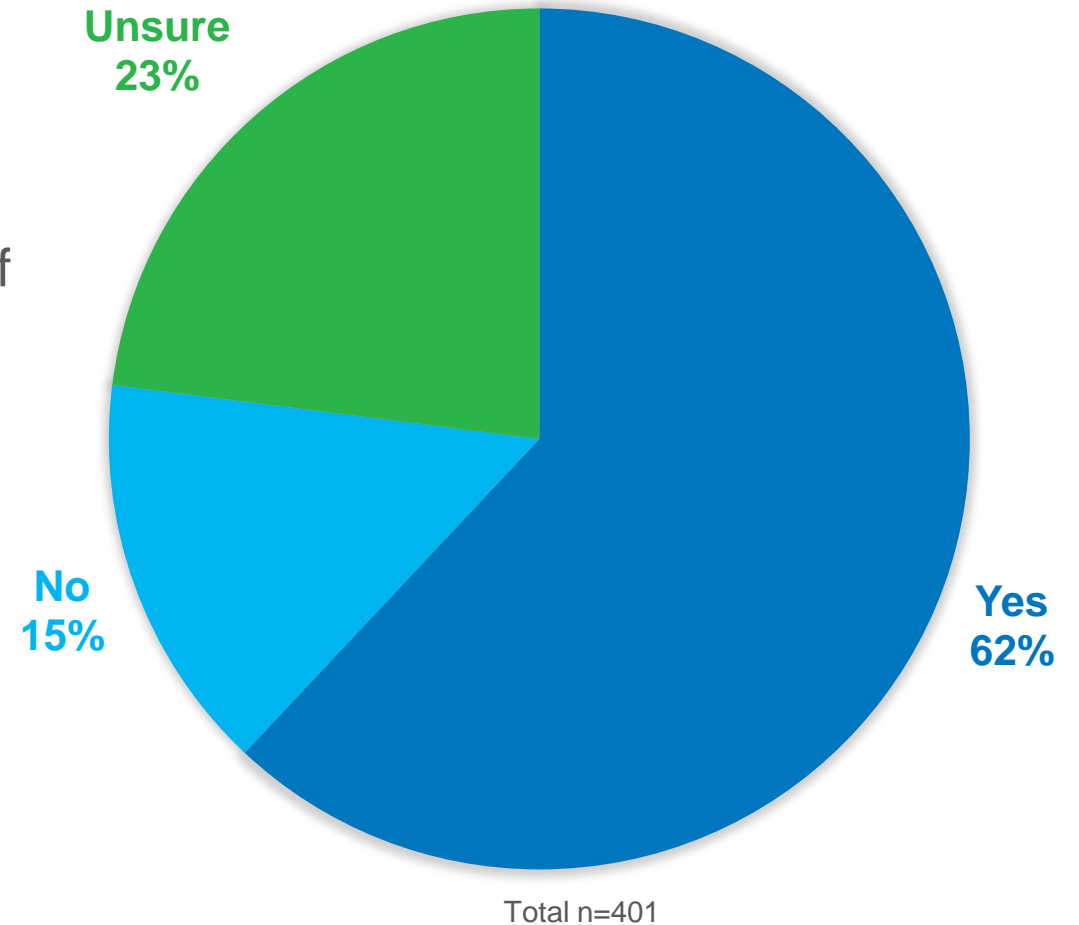
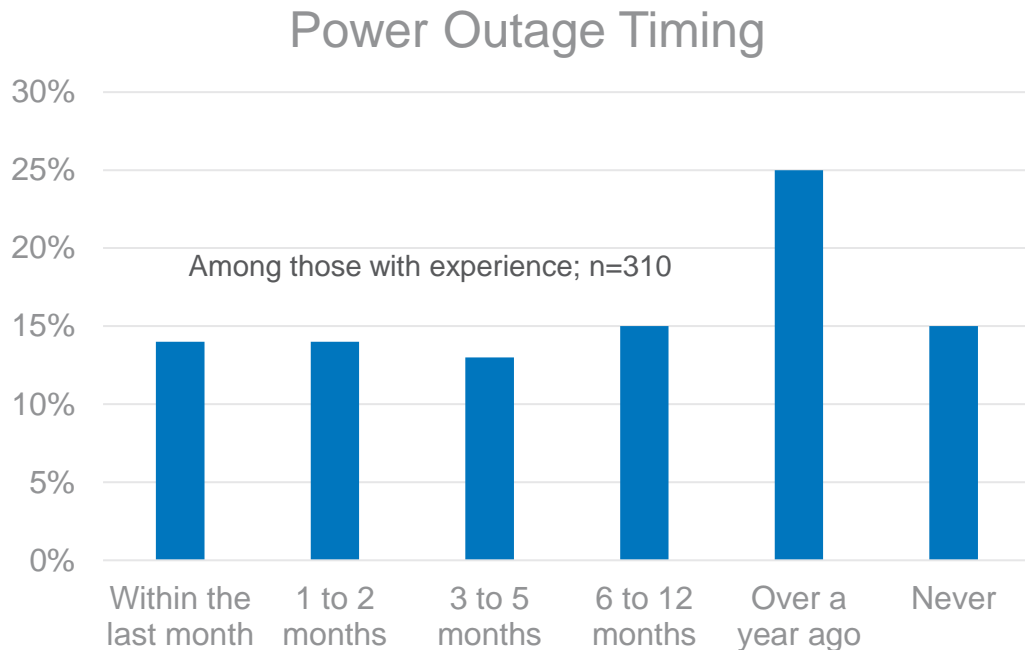
- CARES caseload
- WA Senior/Disabled Rate Discount participants and Outreach Grant recipients
- Bill Assistance recipients
- Emergency Medical Certificate and Life support customers
- Clean Energy Transformation Act Named Communities (Highly Impacted and Vulnerable)
- Non-English speakers

Other Qualification Guidelines

- 18 years or older
- Responsible for/sharing responsibility for household finances or budget
- Not employed in sensitive industry (e.g., utility company, market research firm, etc.)

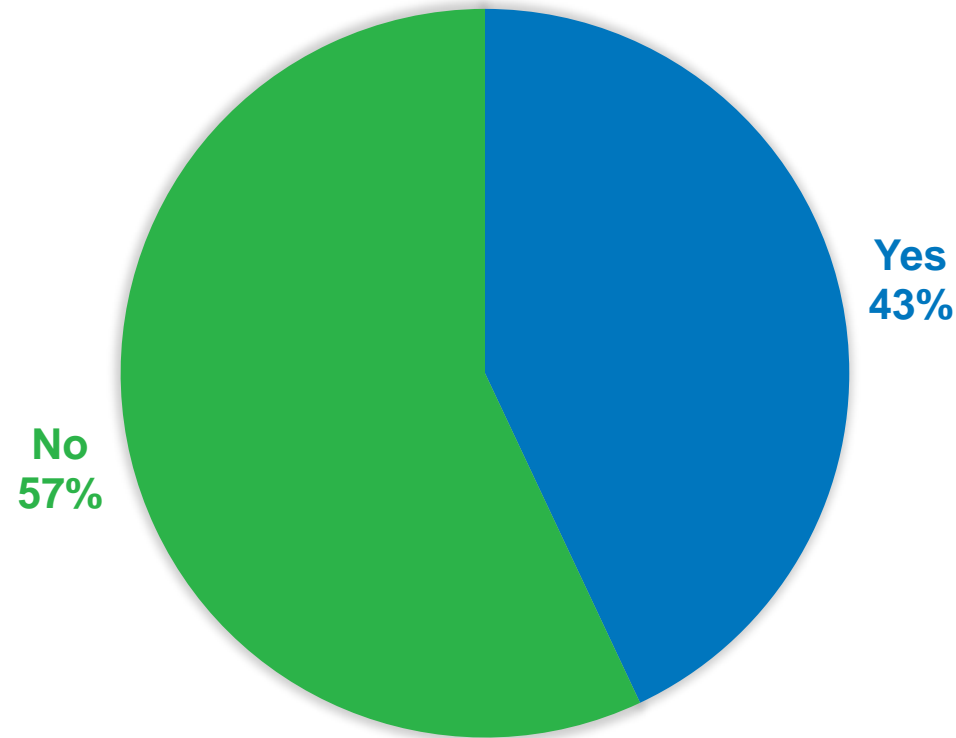
Power Outage Experience

- Overall, six in 10 recall experiencing an outage
- Another 15% say they've never experienced one
- Among those experiencing an outage, roughly half report it was in the last six months



Power Outage Information

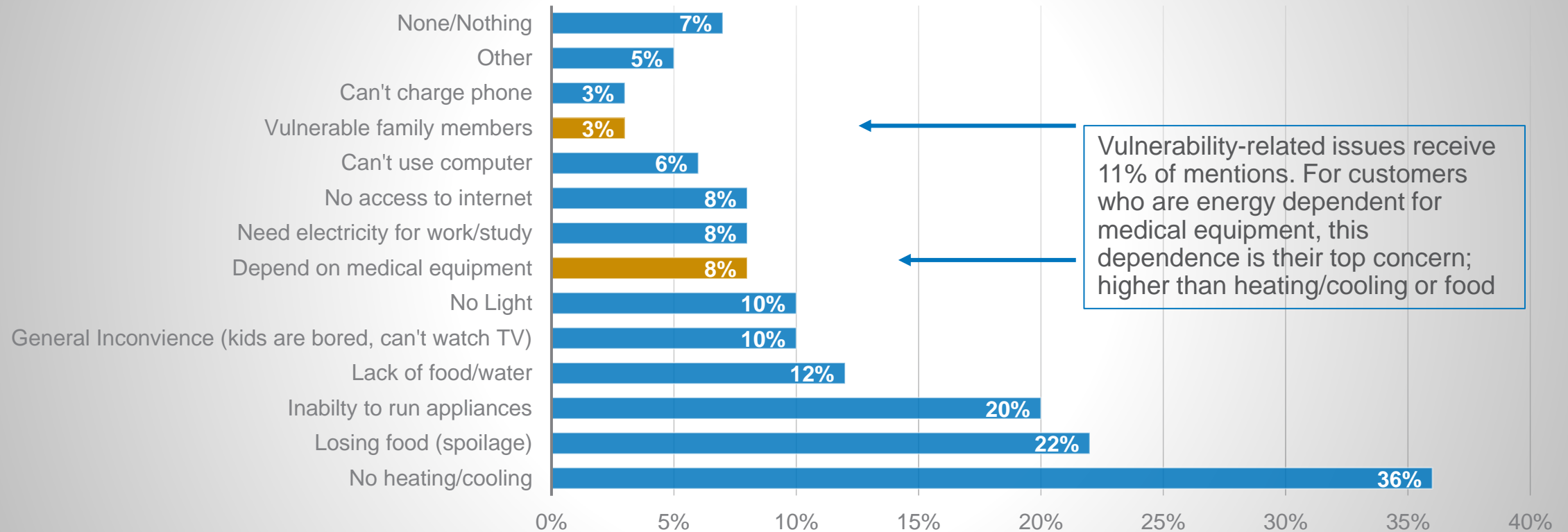
Received Outage Prep Information
From Avista
Total n = 401



Those with internet access are significantly more likely than those without to have received outage prep information from Avista (45% vs. 28%)

Outage Issues

Among those Experiencing an Outage; n=250

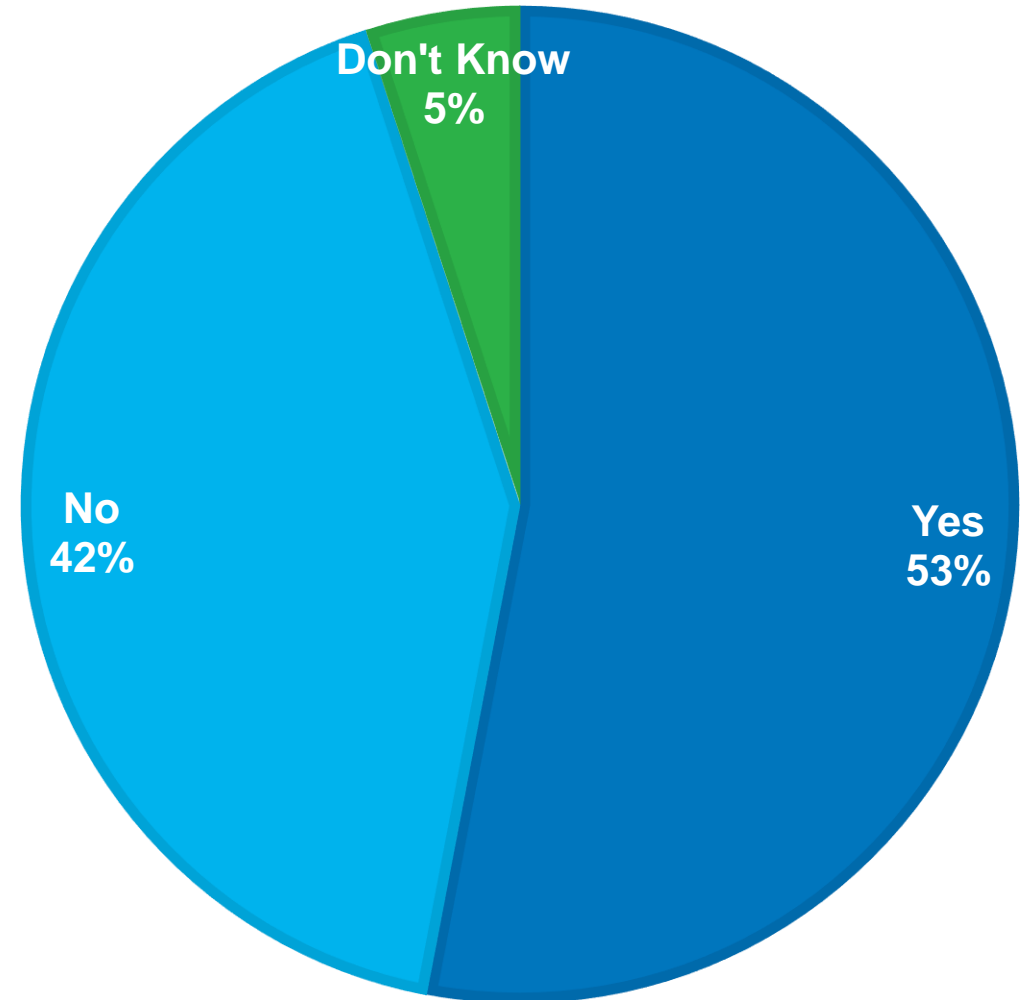


Power Outage Preparedness

Did you feel prepared at the time of the outage?

Over half of those experiencing an outage said they felt prepared at the time

| Those significantly more likely to say they felt prepared include: | |
|--|--|
| Those who live in rural areas | 71% (vs. 54% urban, 40% suburban) |
| Those aged 65+ | 69% (vs. 48% of those in younger age categories) |
| Customers who have received information from Avista | 63% (vs. 44% among those who did not receive information) |

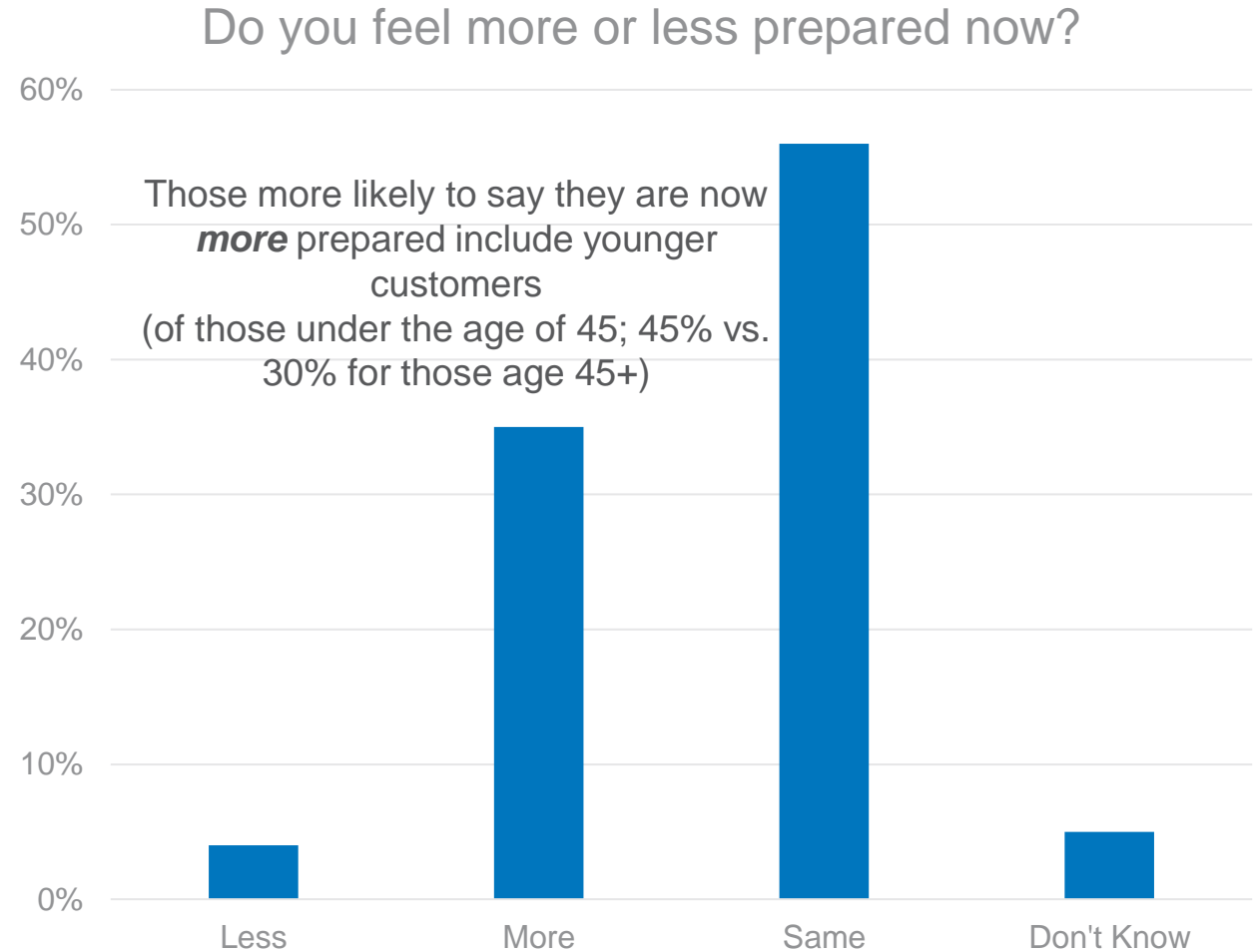


Among Those Experiencing an Outage; n=250

Change in Preparedness

Over half of those who experienced an outage say they feel the same level of preparedness now

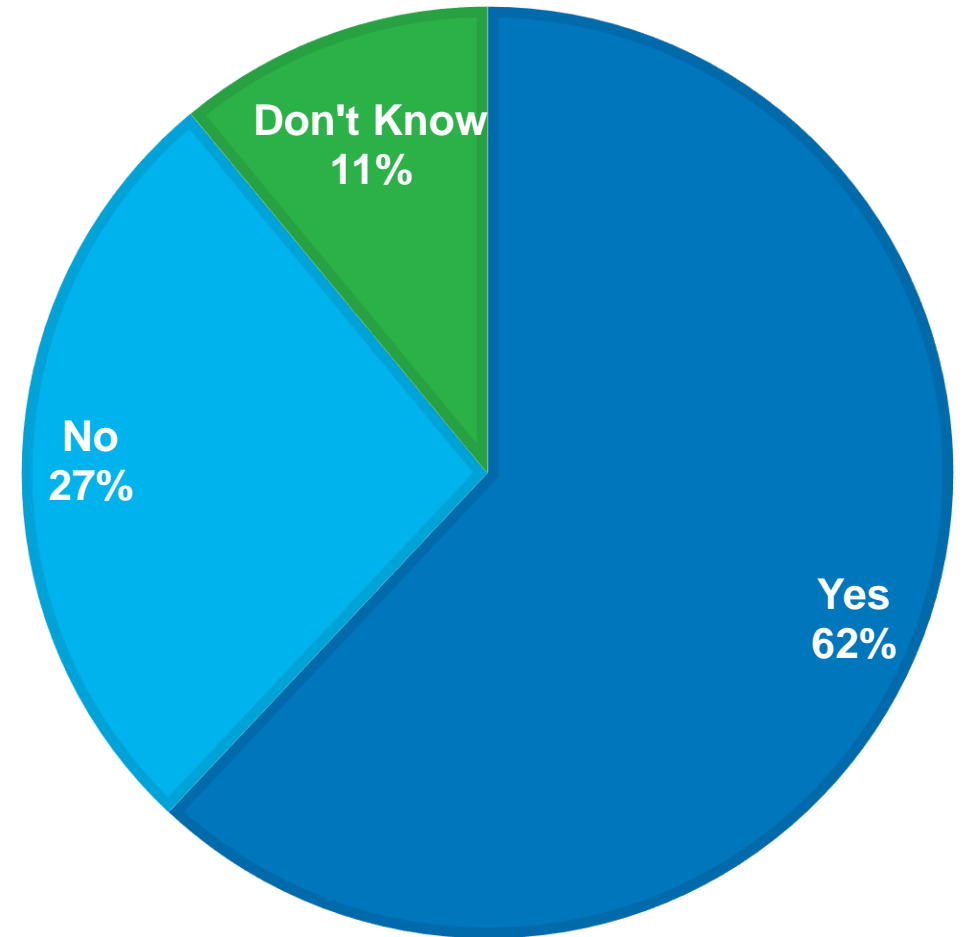
| Reasons for Feeling Less Prepared (among those feeling less prepared, n=10) | |
|---|-----|
| Lack of supplies/access to supplies | 30% |
| Health Issues | 10% |
| Lack of money | 10% |



Power Outage Preparedness

Do you feel you are prepared?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't Know



Among those not recall or Not Experiencing an outage; n=151

Those significantly more likely to say they feel prepared include

| | |
|---|--|
| Those who live in rural areas | 78% (vs. 56% urban) |
| Customers who have received information from Avista | 77% (vs. 53% among those who did not receive information) |
| Homeowners | 73% (vs. 57% among renters) |

Power Outage Preparedness

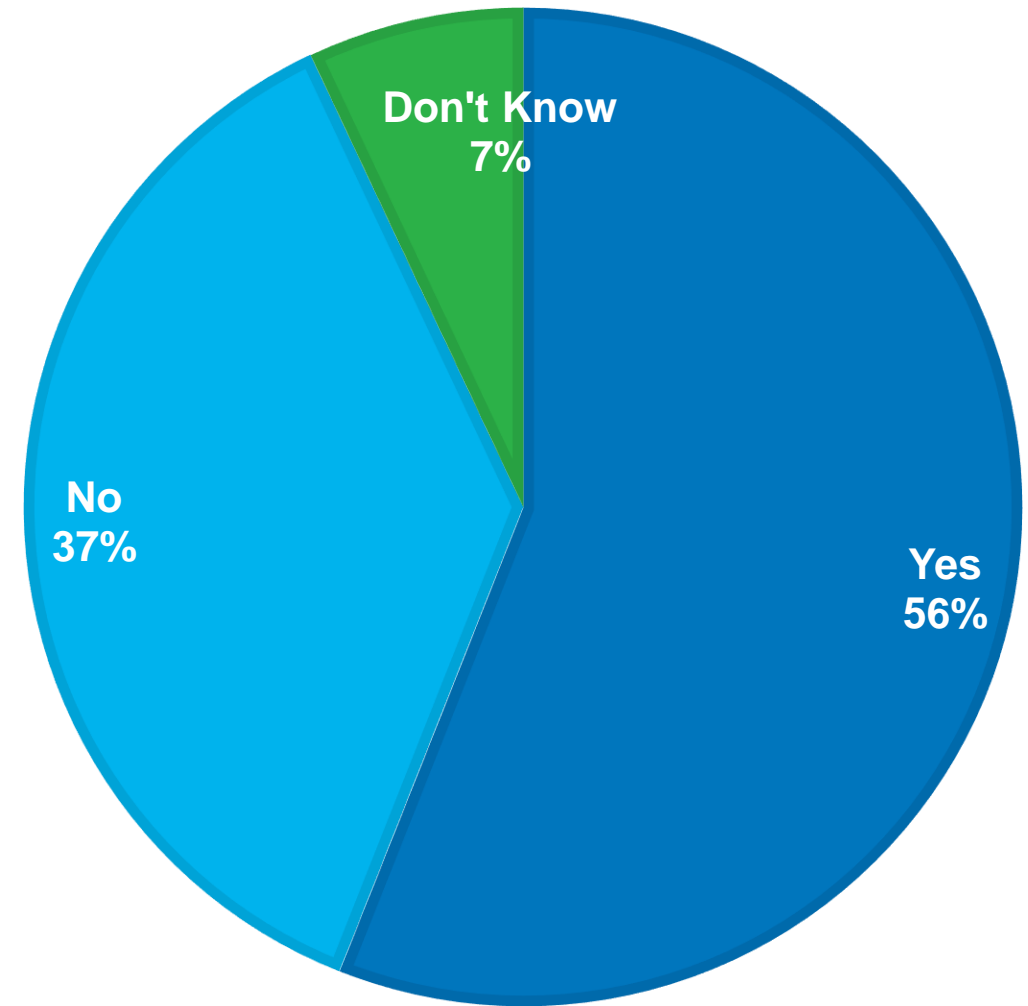
Top Reasons for Not Feeling Prepared (Among those saying they don't or didn't feel prepared, n=175)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Do not know how to prepare | 21% |
| Lack of supplies/access to supplies | 20% |
| Lack of money | 10% |
| Not that worried about it | 7% |
| It's random/unpredictable | 6% |
| Health issues/medical needs | 6% |

"I don't have a generator and wouldn't know how to hook one up to my house. I have some food, but not a lot for me and my wife"

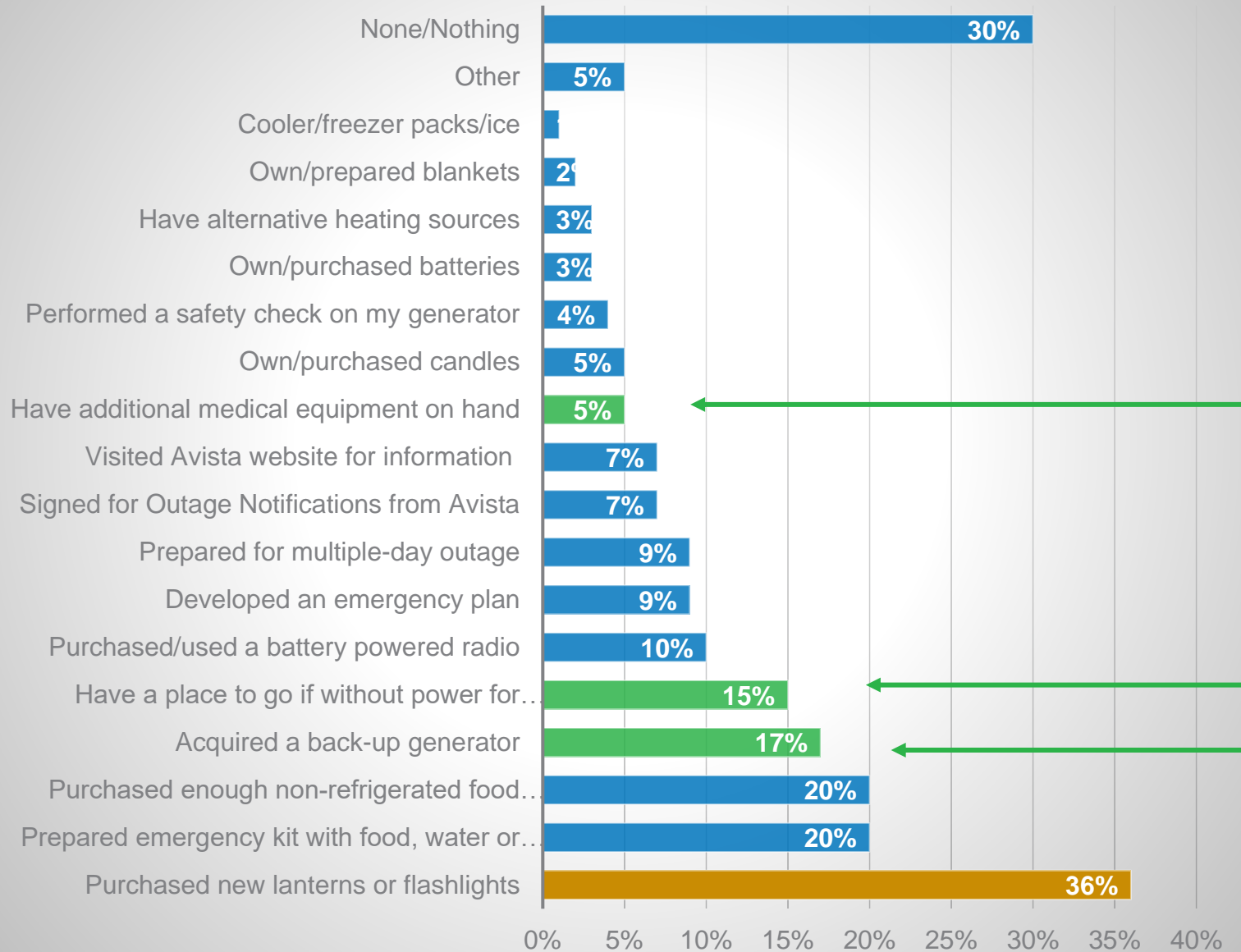
~Washington customer, age 18 to 35

Did you/do you feel prepared?



Total Sample; n=401

Power Outage Preparations; Total n=401



30% report having made no preparations, highest among:

- Those who have not received information from Avista (39%)
- Those under the age of 45 (34%) or age 65+ (34%)

Those with medical needs are significantly more likely than those without to have acquired a back-up generator and arranged a place to stay

- Generator: 26% vs. 13%
- Place to stay: 24% vs. 12%

Additionally, they are more likely to have extra medical equipment on hand (13% vs. 3%)

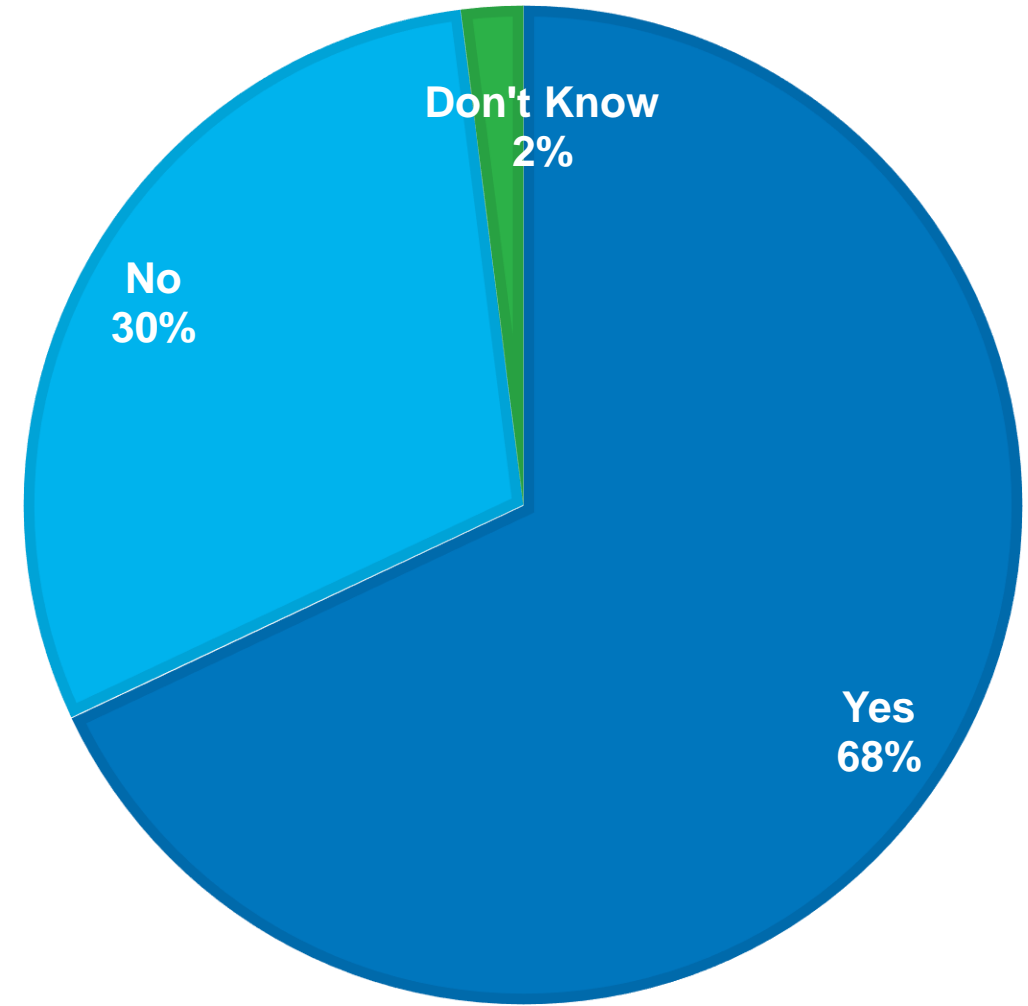
Purchasing new lanterns or flashlights is the most common way customers prepare for an outage

Back-up Plans

Did you/do have a back-up plan or a place to stay?

| Customers significantly more likely to say they have a back-up plan include: | |
|--|--|
| Those who have received information from Avista | 77% (vs. 61% among those who haven't) |
| Those who do not rely on public transportation | 70% (vs. 53% among those who do) |
| Those with internet access | 70% (vs. 51% among those without) |

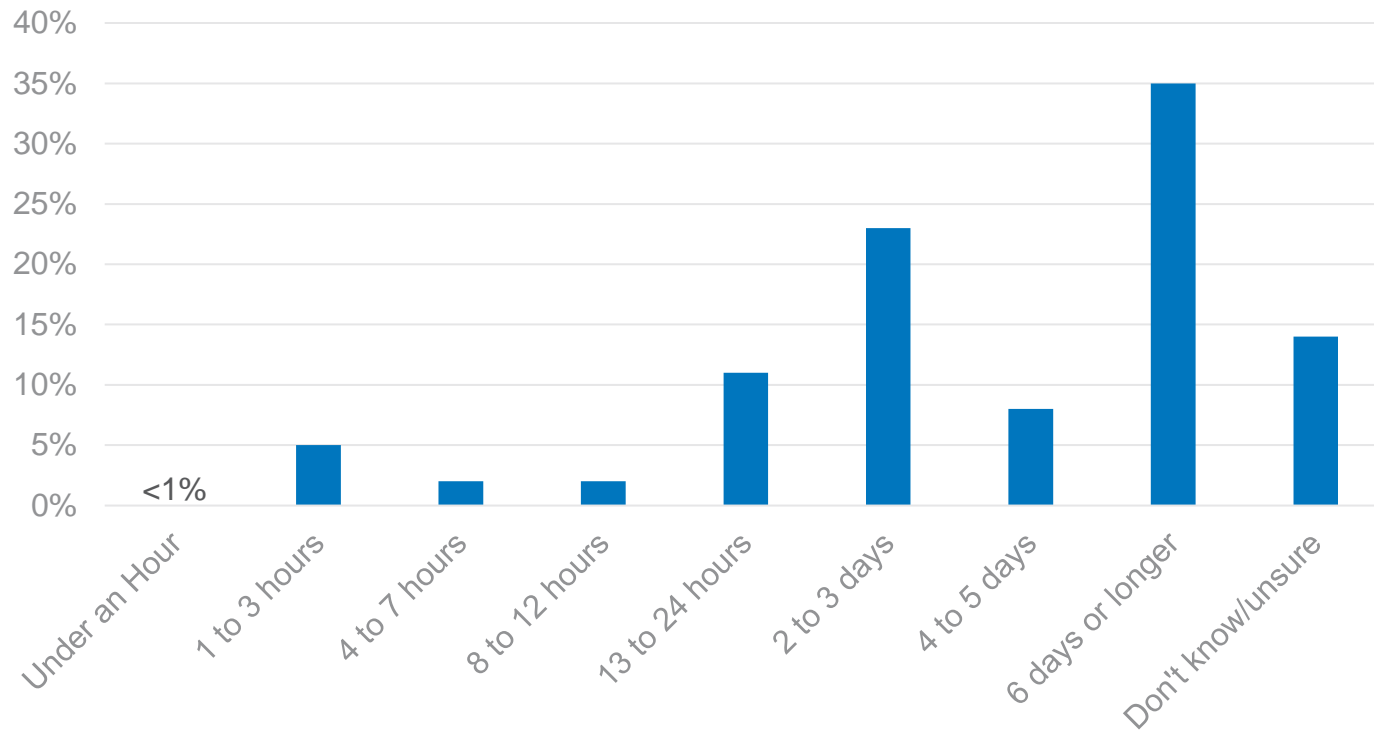
| Among those with a plan (n=272), top options include: | |
|---|-----|
| Family | 68% |
| Friends | 28% |
| Community Center | 5% |
| Church | 4% |



Total Sample; n=401

Managing a Power Outage

How long can you manage on your own if the power goes out?

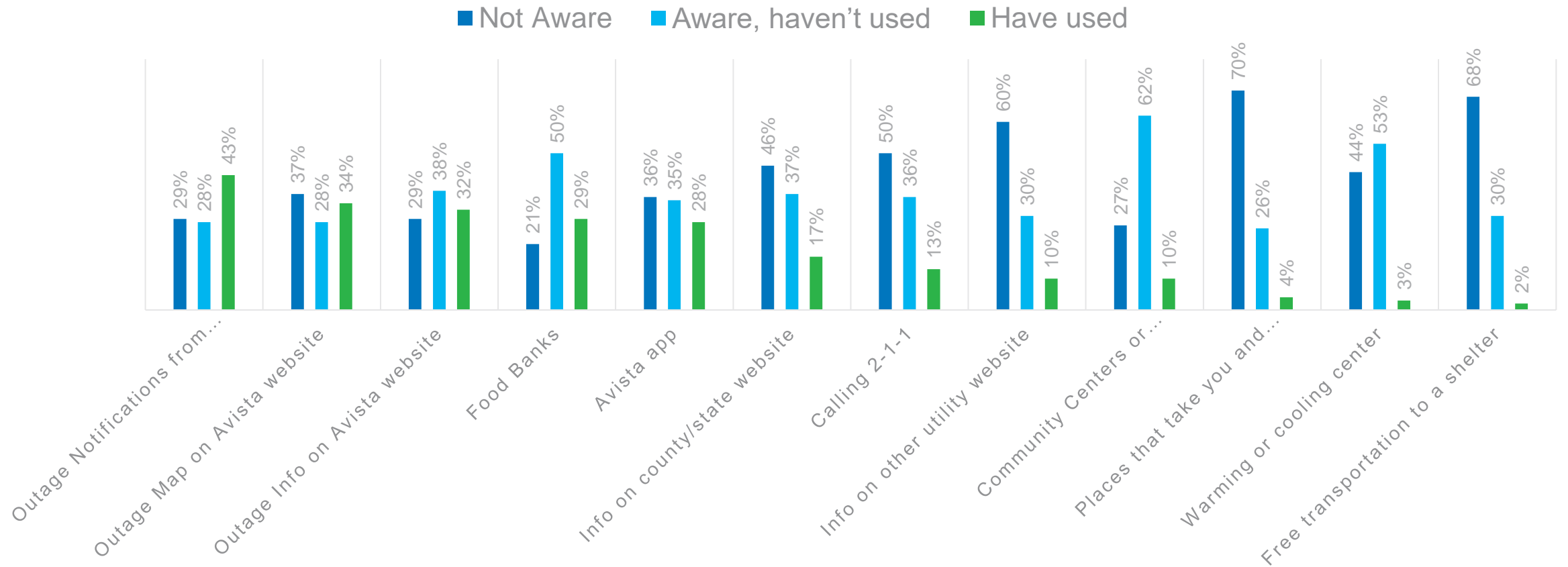


Customers significantly more likely to say they can manage for 6+ days include

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Those in rural areas | 47% (vs. 33% suburban; 32% urban) |
| Homeowners | 43% (vs. 27% among those who rent) |
| Men | 41% (vs. 29% among women) |
| Those without kids in the home | 38% (vs. 26% among parents) |

Resource Awareness and Use

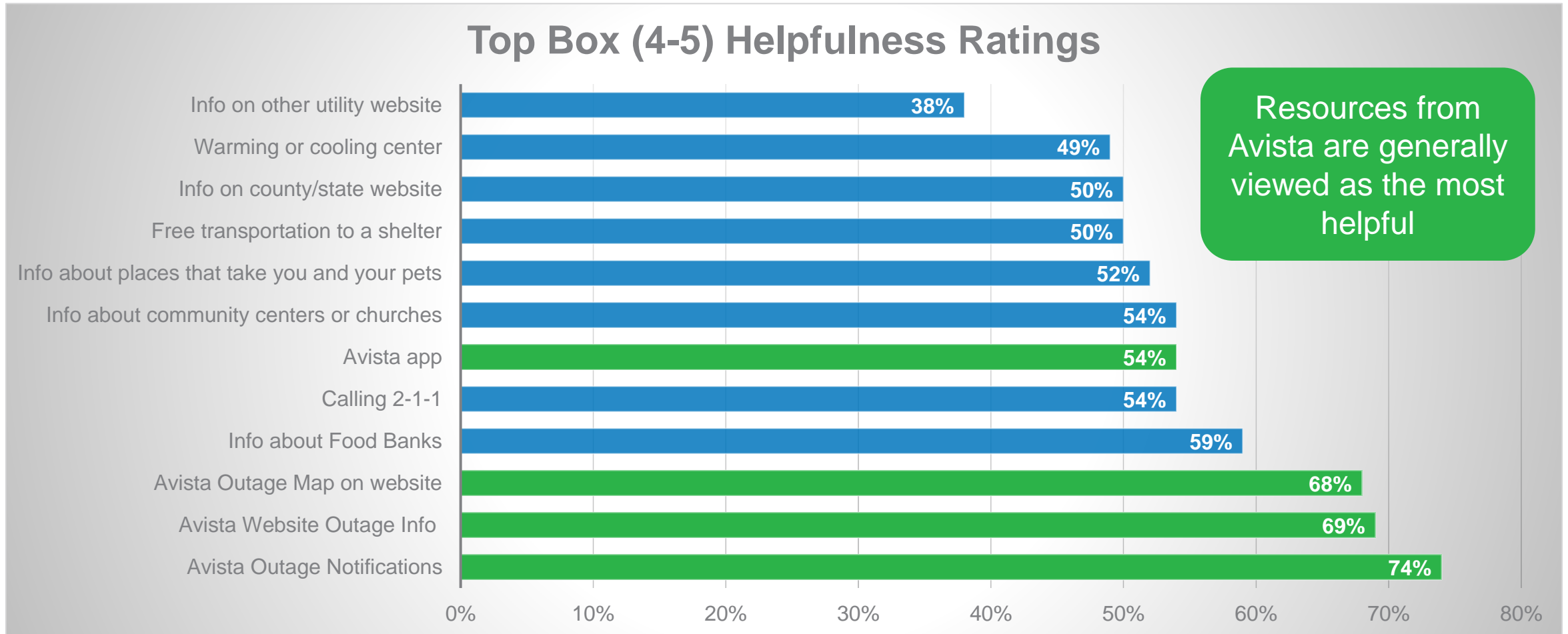
Which of these resources are you aware of or have ever used?



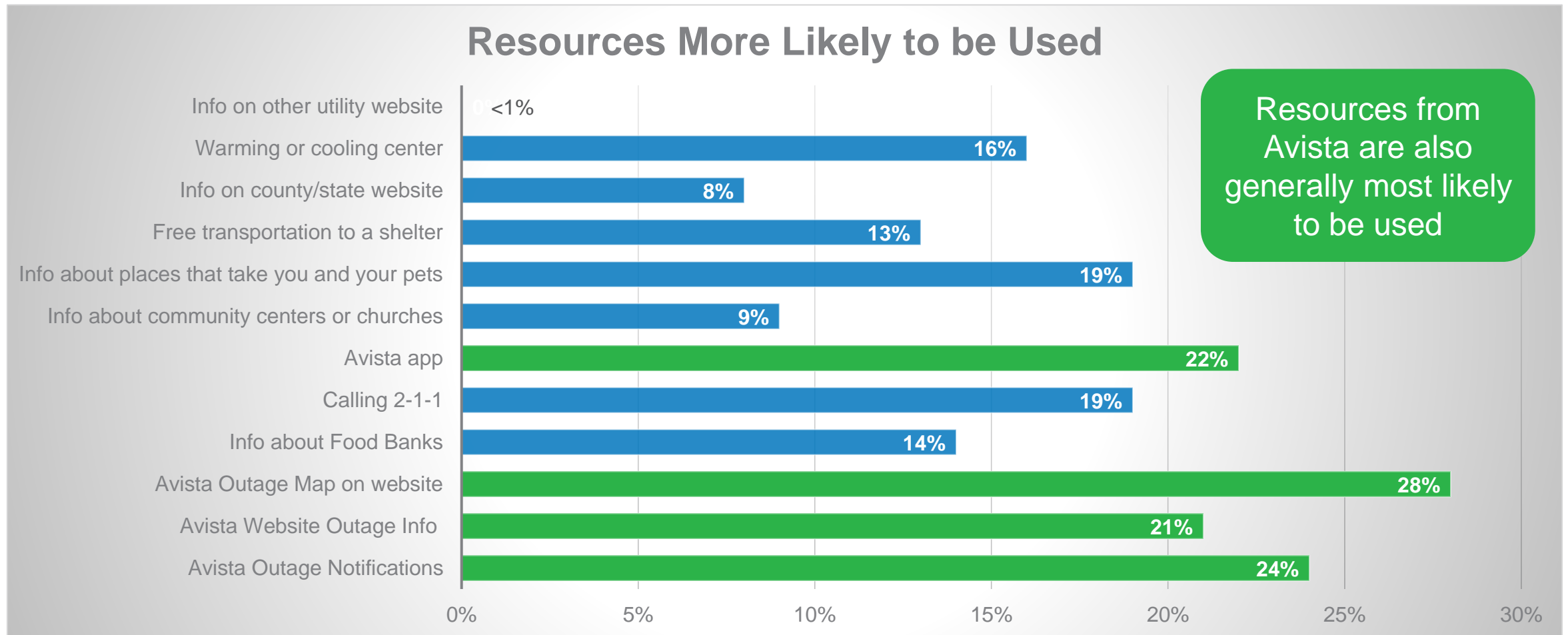
Resource Awareness and Use by Those with Medical Needs

| | Have Medical Needs (n=84) | | | Do Not Have Medical Needs (n=304) | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| | Not Aware | Aware, Haven't Used | Have Used | Not Aware | Aware, Haven't Used | Have Used |
| Outage Notifications from Avista | 17% | 24% | 60% | 32% | 30% | 38% |
| Outage map on Avista website | 39% | 24% | 37% | 36% | 26% | 35% |
| Outage info on Avista website | 27% | 38% | 35% | 30% | 38% | 33% |
| Food banks | 11% | 44% | 45% | 23% | 53% | 24% |
| Avista app | 31% | 37% | 32% | 38% | 34% | 28% |
| Info on county/state website | 49% | 30% | 21% | 44% | 39% | 17% |
| Calling 2-1-1 | 36% | 42% | 23% | 53% | 37% | 11% |
| Info on other utility website | 55% | 32% | 13% | 61% | 29% | 10% |
| Community centers or churches | 27% | 57% | 15% | 28% | 64% | 9% |
| Place that take you and your pets | 69% | 29% | 2% | 69% | 26% | 5% |
| Warming or cooling center | 43% | 55% | 2% | 43% | 54% | 3% |
| Free transportation to a shelter | 67% | 31% | 2% | 69% | 29% | 3% |

Helpfulness of Resources



Future Use of Resources



Resources Most Likely to Be Used By Those with Medical Needs

| | Have Medical Needs (n=84) | Do Not Have Medical Needs (n=304) |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Outage map on Avista website | 25% | 30% |
| Outage notifications from Avista | 24% | 24% |
| Avista app | 17% | 24% |
| Outage info on Avista website | 23% | 21% |
| Calling 2-1-1 | 27% | 16% |
| Info about places that take you and your pets | 20% | 19% |
| Warming or cooling center | 14% | 16% |
| Information about food banks | 19% | 13% |
| Free transportation to a shelter | 18% | 12% |
| Information about community centers or churches | 11% | 9% |
| Info on county/state website | 8% | 8% |
| Info on other utility website | 0% | 1% |

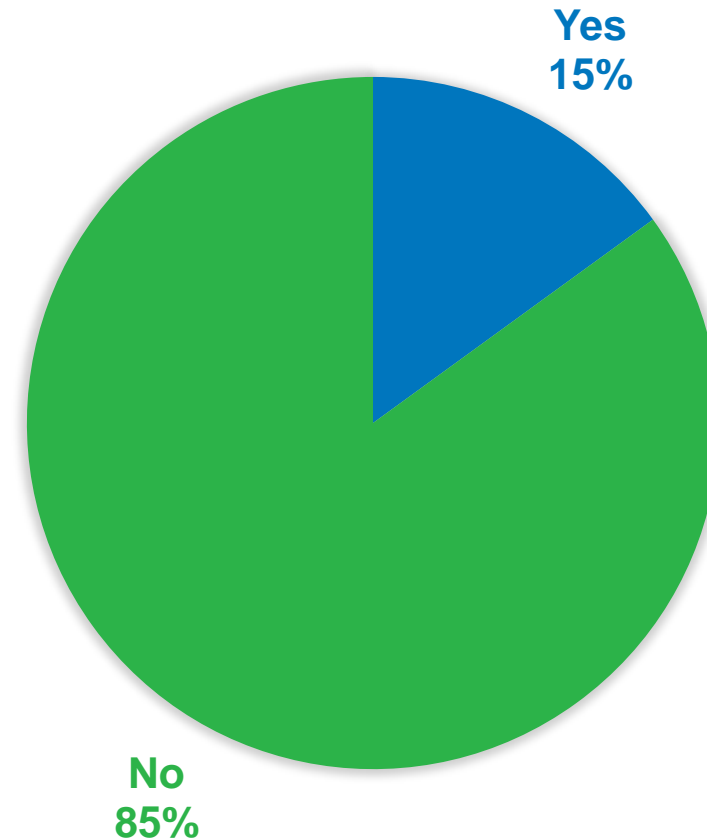
Household Languages

The majority state that English is their primary language; Spanish and Russian are common secondary languages spoken in the household

| Other Languages Spoken in Household (Total Sample; n = 401) | |
|--|-----|
| English (in addition to another language) | 27% |
| Spanish | 9% |
| Russian | 2% |
| Other | 6% |
| None; only English spoken | 60% |

Other languages include Russian, Arabic, French, Chinese, Albanian, German, Italian, Korean, and Tribal languages

Is your primary language, a language other than English?



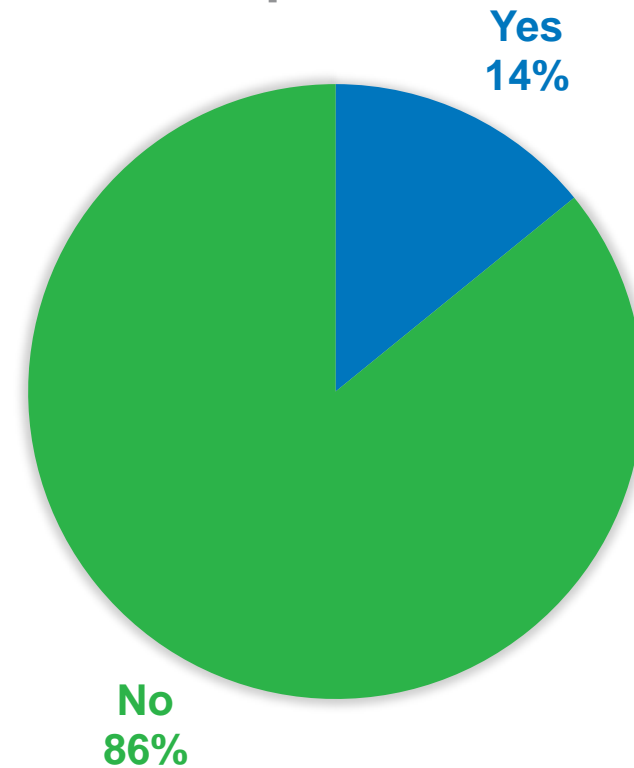
96% of customers say English is their preferred language for communications; other preferences include Spanish (3%), Russian (<1%), and Chinese (<1%)

Public Transportation Use

Most of those surveyed do not currently use public transportation. While preferring to drive is the most common reason why, there are some respondents who cite availability, access, and convenience as the key factors preventing them.

| Top Reasons for Not Using (Among those who Say they don't use; n = 340) | |
|--|-----|
| Prefer driving own car | 77% |
| Public transit is not available | 12% |
| Not convenient location/access | 6% |
| Takes too long | 4% |
| Schedule is not convenient | 4% |
| Prefer to walk or bike | 4% |
| Mobility issues | 3% |

Do you use public transportation?



Demographics

| Type of Area | Total, n=401 |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Urban | 37% |
| Suburban | 24% |
| Rural | 23% |
| Other | 3% |
| Unsure | 12% |
| Type of Dwelling | |
| Single family dwelling | 58% |
| Duplex or triplex | 10% |
| Building with 4 or more units | 29% |
| Home Ownership | |
| Own | 45% |
| Rent | 52% |

| Parent/Guardian (of kids under 18 in HH) | |
|--|-----|
| Yes | 30% |
| No | 67% |
| Age | |
| <35 | 32% |
| 35-44 | 18% |
| 45-54 | 9% |
| 55-64 | 14% |
| 65+ | 18% |
| Rely on Electricity for Medical | |
| Yes | 21% |
| No | 76% |
| Prefer not to say | 3% |

Demographics

| Internet Access | Total, n=401 |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Yes, at home | 80% |
| Yes, through smartphone | 72% |
| No | 10% |
| Smartphone Ownership | |
| Yes | 86% |
| No | 11% |
| Education Level | |
| Some high school | 5% |
| High school grad | 28% |
| Trade or Tech school | 4% |
| Some college | 24% |
| College grad | 23% |
| Grad School | 11% |
| Prefer not to say | 5% |

| Household Income | |
|------------------------|-------|
| <\$25,000 | 26% |
| \$25,001 to \$25,000 | 16% |
| \$35,001 to \$50,000 | 13% |
| \$50,001 to \$75,000 | 12% |
| \$75,001 to \$100,000 | 4% |
| \$100,001 to \$150,000 | 5% |
| \$150,000+ | 2% |
| Prefer not to say | 23% |
| Median HH Income | \$33K |

In-Depth Testimonials



- Community Organization
 - Rural Resources
 - Colville Volunteer Food & Resource Center

- Customers
 - Power wheelchair user
 - Energy assistance recipient

Rural Communities

Overarching theme: self reliance

- Assistance programs are viewed as unnecessary or tied to lack of self-reliance
 - Reliance on self and neighbors
 - Not organizations or government
- Community members “*do not like being told what to do*” – and even the most basic advice or outreach can be misconstrued
- Moved to the area to “homestead” or “go off the grid” – contrasted to the concept of seeking out or accepting help

Rural Communities, continued

■ Findings

- Do not “*take kindly to trespassers*”, even if intending to help
- Most live so far apart that providing transportation is not feasible
 - Even if feasible, most do not want to leave their home
- Recluse personality (chose to live remotely or those with psychological challenges – agoraphobic or PTSD)
 - May be averse to cooling or warming centers, even medical help with threats to life or death
- Do not like leaving home at all
 - Care of animals, agriculture and other responsibilities
- Communications are always a challenge
 - May not have regular access to cell or landline: some still “*go into town to make a call*”
 - Remote areas do not have reliable internet

Rural Communities, continued

■ Findings

- COVID has changed who needs help – working calls individuals are “falling through the cracks”
 - May not believe they qualify for assistance (and sometimes don’t)
 - May not know where/how to seek help
 - May be hindered by pride or that others are more deserving
- Language barriers with Russian and Ukrainian communities
- New to area and not familiar with realities of living in rural area
 - May underestimated the cold during winter months
 - May be living in an RV
 - Unprepared for power outage
 - Not up to speed on technology (solar generators) or best practices (how long food is safe for when power goes out)

Rural Communities, continued

■ Recommendations

- Messaging should be “*what to do to be self-reliant*” in the event of an outage is practical
 - Educate on what to do during an outage is more useful than offering options to leave home for somewhere safer
- Offer multiple options, with positioning to extend self-reliance, and not evoke a sense of needing help
 - Seen as positive when positioned as not needing reliance on government, utilities, or community
- Sharing information as an easier “first engagement” (outage information being a good example), especially for people less prone to ask for help
- If sending anything, should be tools or tips
- Word of Mouth

Power Dependent Customer

- Power wheelchair is an important part of their identity
 - Live alone in ADA apartment
 - Values self-reliance, while remaining active and socially connected in the community
-
- Biggest concerns during outage: refrigeration and mobility
 - Medicine needs to remain refrigerated
 - Well stocked refrigerator/freezer means losing food – that has both financial and mobility implications
 - Outage means they are probably not leaving the home
 - Wheelchair charging
 - Elevators non-functioning
 - Would be a dire situation (and major decision) to leave their apartment
 - News-oriented, stays informed and proactive – relies on news, social media, Avista email, etc. to stay up to speed
 - Proactively makes contingency plans when there is news of potential “brown or blackouts”

People experiencing mobility challenges or other disabilities often have specific issues that may be not addressed by an emergency shelter – bed height and tilt, bathroom facilities, etc. What may be uncomfortable or inconvenient for some may just not be feasible for some individuals.

“When I think about being, like being a disabled person, it’s all interconnected. Because some of my medicine that I need to live my life, I need to take with food.

And so, I think it goes back to your question about like how long could I be in a place without power. It's just like the, the reality is I could hunker down for maybe like a day. Okay.

And then it's like, I can't go, I can't go much longer than that, at least without people coming in and giving me additional assistance, like coolers or, um, like power chargers or generators or things like that.”

Financially Burdened Customer

- Received utility assistance in the past
- Anxiety around making ends meet
- Pragmatic view of outages: annoying or frustrating but not typically “life or death”
- Primary concerns are food going bad and lack of communication if devices die
 - Doesn’t have a solution to protect food
 - Rents and cannot use a generator
 - Would leave to charge devices for an hour if it helped stay connected
- Information would be most useful
- Calling Avista is “first come, first serve” and doesn’t want to be in line in front of someone with more critical need for help or questions



Outage Survey: Key Findings

- **Outage Experience Among Survey Participants**

- Over six in ten customers recall a specific outage experience
- 15% report never experiencing an outage

- **Outages have impact**

- Lack of heating or cooling is the most common issue faced when power goes out, followed by food loss and inability to run appliances
- 7% of those experiencing an outage say they don't face any issues

- **Room to increase preparedness**

- Half of those experiencing an outage say they felt prepared
- There is evidence that a past outage may drive future preparation—35% of those who experienced an outage say they are better prepared now (4% say they are less prepared)
- “*Not knowing what to do*” is the top reason customers give for not feeling prepared

- **There is evidence that Avista communications may help customers prepare**

- Roughly 70% have made some kind of preparation effort (purchasing flashlights being most common)
- Among the 30% who have made no preparations, there is a significantly higher proportion of those who do NOT recall receiving outage prep information from Avista
- Conversely, a significantly higher proportion of those recalling Avista outreach say they felt prepared for their last outage (63% vs. 44%)
- Just under seven in ten say they have a backup plan or a place to stay if an outage were to occur; this proportion is again significantly higher among customers who recall receiving outage prep information from Avista (77% vs. 61%)
- Avista outage notifications are generally the most commonly used resource and have higher awareness than other options and are generally viewed as helpful

Outage Survey: Key Findings

- **Those with medical needs that rely on electricity tend to self-prepare**
 - They are significantly more likely than those with no dependency to recall an outage (perhaps, because an outage is a “bigger” event for them)
 - Their dependence on medical equipment supersedes heating/cooling and food as an outage issue; however,
 - they are more likely to have a plan in place: they are significantly more likely to have acquired a back up generator (26% vs. 13%) or
 - have pre-arranged a place to stay (24% vs. 12%)
 - Additionally, they are more likely to have extra medical equipment on-hand (13% vs. 3%).
 - They are significantly LESS likely to say they don’t know how to prepare (8% vs. 24%).
 - They are more likely to have used outage notifications from Avista in the past (60% vs. 38%)
 - used food banks (45% vs. 24%) and
 - have called 2-1-1 (23% vs. 11%)

- **Opportunity to educate customers on other resources, such as places that will take them and their pets, warming or cooling centers, and free transportation to shelters.**
 - These resources have low awareness and use
 - Despite their overall preparedness and awareness, those dependent on electricity for medical needs are equally unaware of these resources as those not dependent
 - While only a small proportion state they would use these resources (or information about the resource) moving forward, this proportion is significantly higher among certain audiences, such as public transit users, women, parents, and renters

Customers



- Suggestions
 - Information
 - About the outage length, size, cause may be helpful in determining if other actions are needed, such as getting a cooler for food, or storing things outside if it is cool
 - Outage Preparation
 - What to do during an outage

Thank you

Next Meeting | Support Team

Evening:
Wednesday, July
20th @ 4:30 to 6:00
pm

Wed. 20th July

Fri. 22nd July

Morning: Friday, July
22nd @ 7:30 to 9:00
am

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