

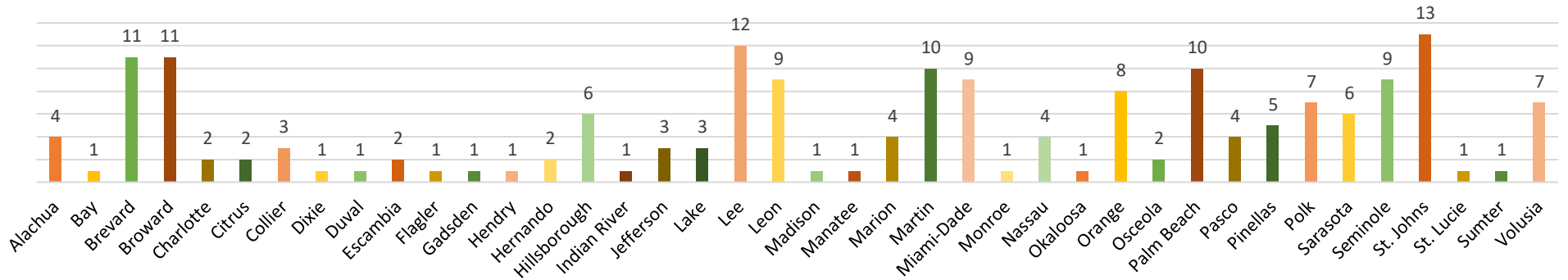
Survey: Citizen Participation in Public Hearings

On July 7, 2020, 1000 Friends of Florida conducted an online survey of our members to gather information about how the COVID-19 pandemic affected their county and municipality's public hearing process. Normally Florida's planning process allows citizens concerned about growth and development proposals in their communities to voice their opinions face-to-face with decision makers in public hearings. Since the COVID-19 pandemic's disruption, many local governments have adjusted their citizen participation procedures ranging from limiting the number of those in physical attendance, to transitioning to completely virtual hearings.

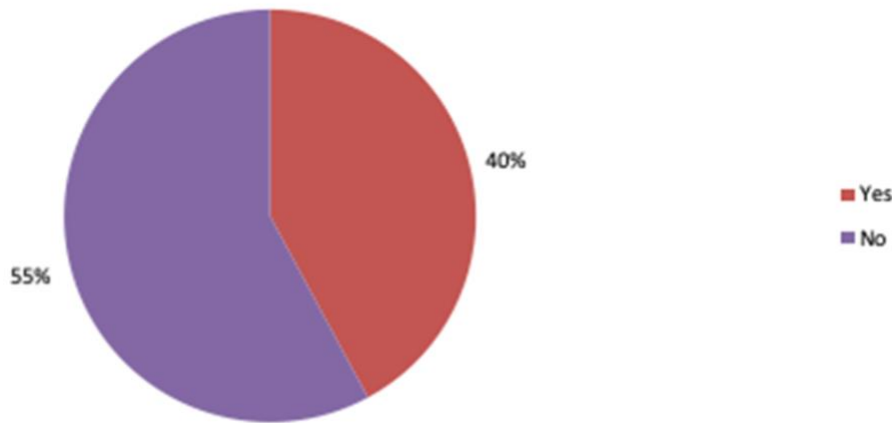
- We received **184 responses** from individuals in **40 counties** and **64 municipalities**.
- Respondents reported being aware of their local governments' public hearing procedures with **approximately two-thirds** attending at least one public hearing over the last year.
- **Few** respondents reported **participating more** in either the county or municipal public hearings **since the pandemic**, with many reporting participating **about the same frequency**.
- **Over half** of respondents reported their county and municipal governments proceeding with comprehensive plan amendment decisions.
- **Many** local governments allow participation in public hearings through **in-person comment**, appearing **live via video and audio conferencing technologies**, submitting **live written comment**, and providing comment through **pre-written submissions**. **Few** respondents report **pre-recorded video or audio submissions** as options for comment.
- The **majority** of respondents think their local governments are doing a good job providing their citizens the opportunity to provide comment during public hearings (**62% county, 61% municipal**).

The following charts show survey responses in quantitative format. Some of the following questions included an option for respondents to elaborate upon an answer in short response form. The charts below do not include the short answer responses.

Responses by County



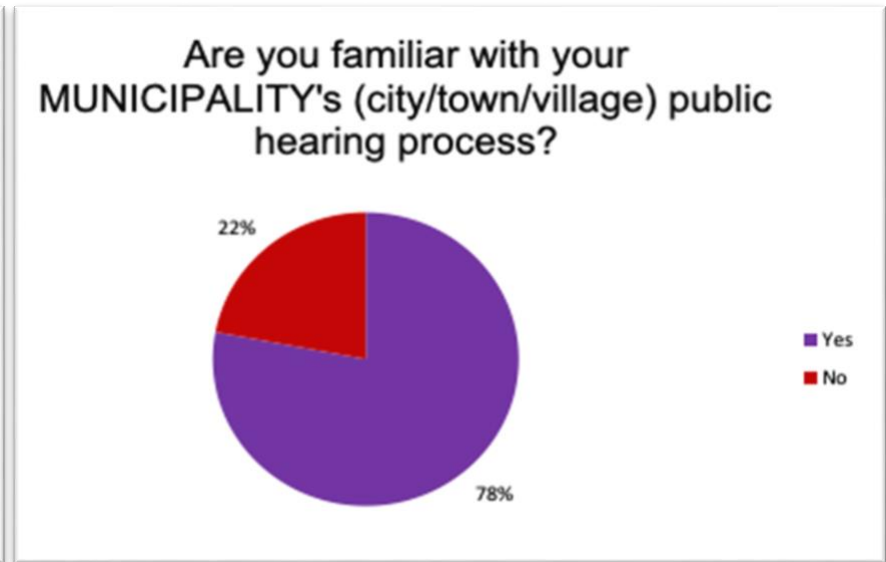
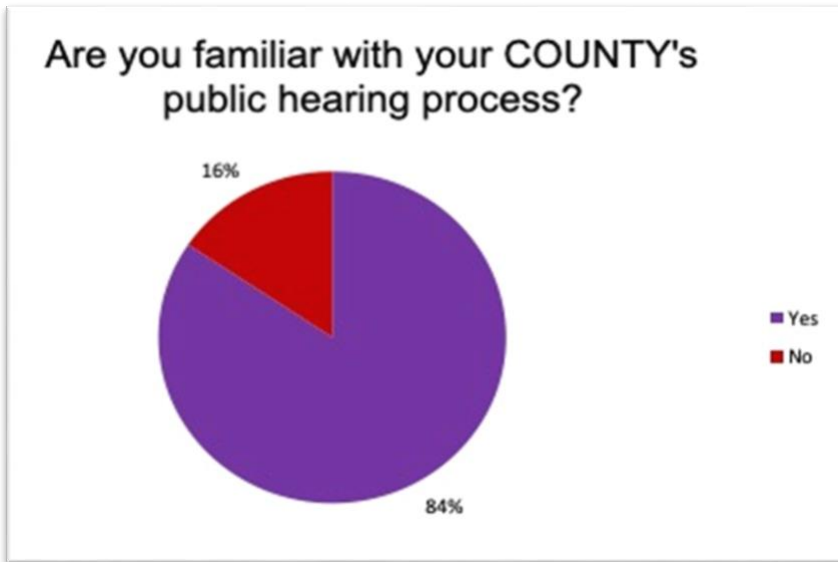
Have virtual public comment opportunities increased your ability and desire to participate in public hearings? (COUNTY and/or MUNICIPAL hearings)



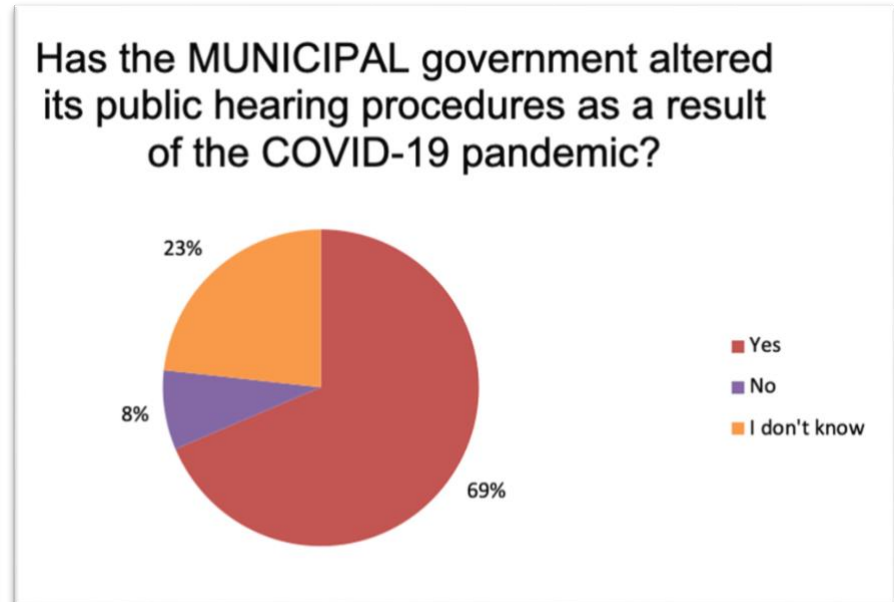
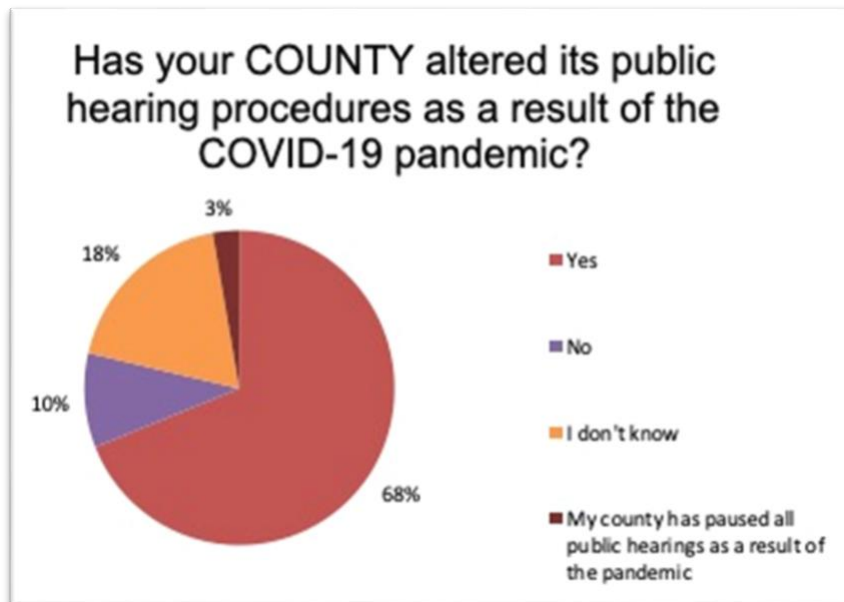
The **majority** of respondents do not feel that virtual public comment opportunities have increased their ability and desire to participate in public hearings.

- **40%** respondents feel that virtual public comment opportunities have **increased** their ability and desire to participate.

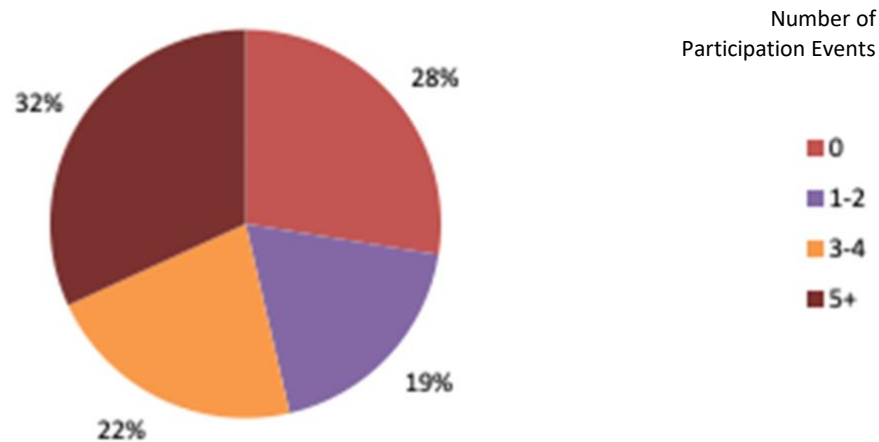
At both the county and municipal level, the majority of respondents **are familiar with their local government's public hearing process**.



Over 2/3 of respondents reported their local governments altered the public hearing process as a result of the pandemic. Nearly a **quarter** of respondents **don't know** if their local governments have changed or updated public hearing processes.



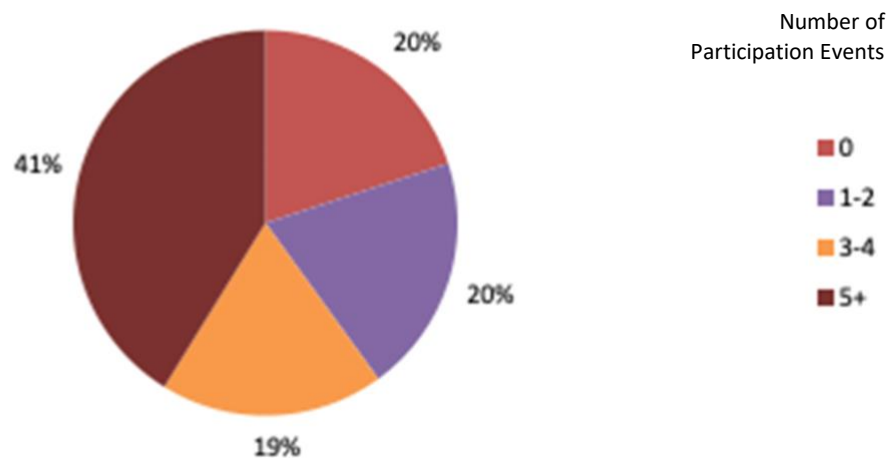
Over the last year, how often did you attend and/or participate in COUNTY public hearings



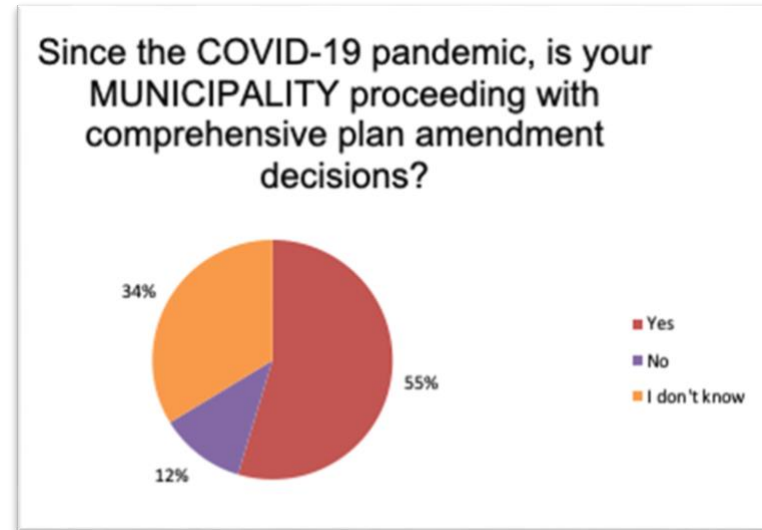
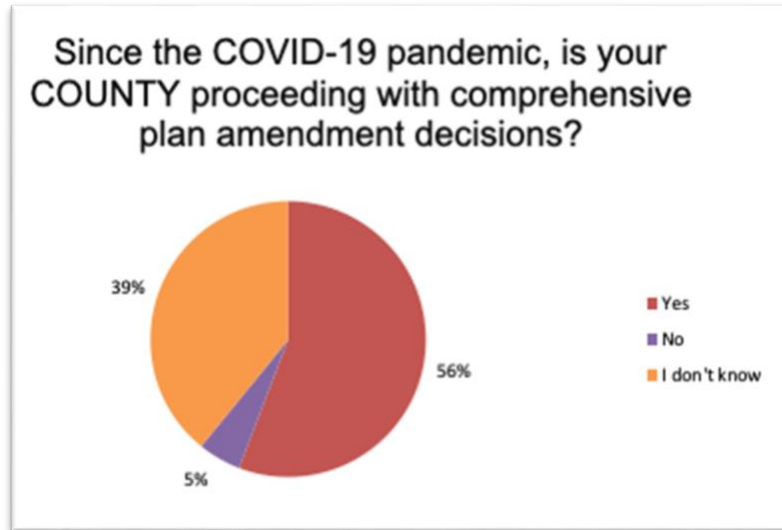
The **majority** of respondents attended and/or participated in local public hearings, with slightly **more** at the **municipal** level.

- **28%** did **not** attend/participate in **county** public hearings
- **20%** did **not** attend/participate in **municipal** public hearings.

Over the last year, how often did you attend and/or participate in MUNICIPAL public hearings?

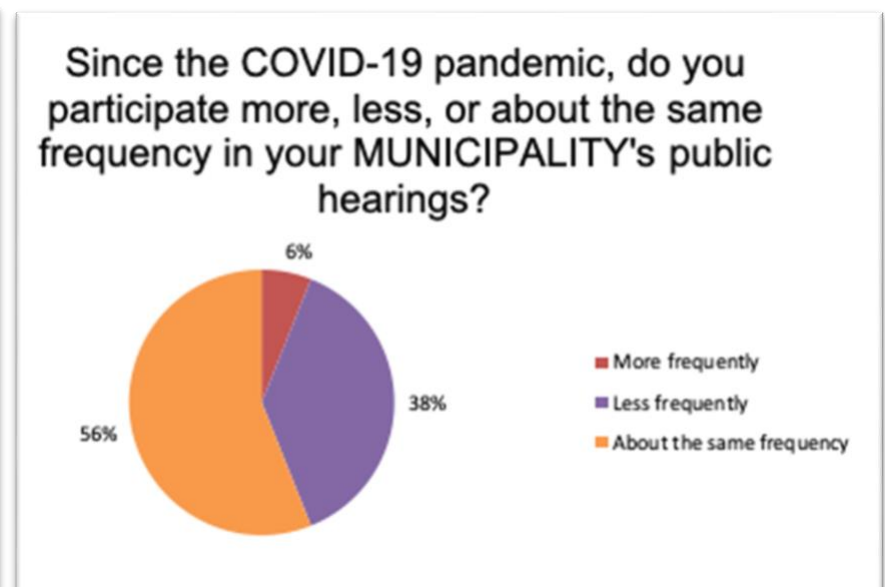
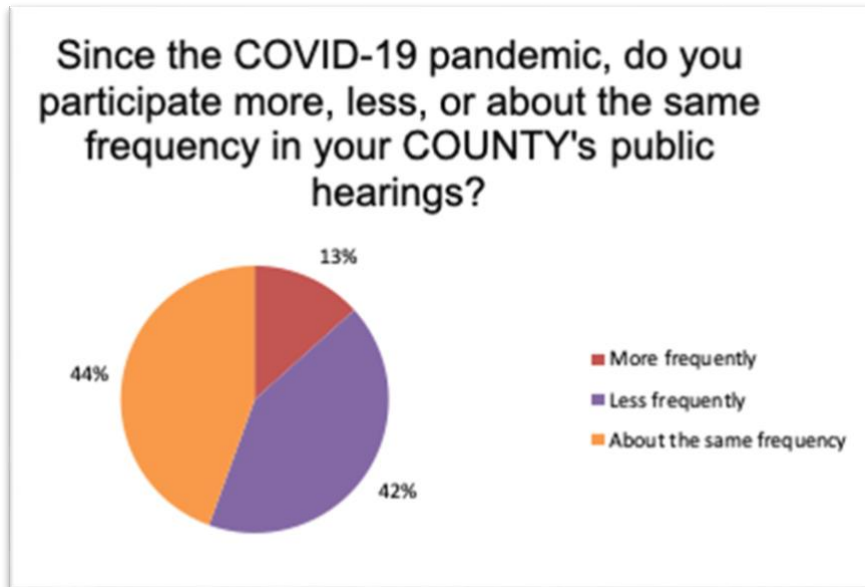


Over half of respondents reported both the **county and municipal** government proceeding with comprehensive plan amendment decisions.



Few respondents reported participating **more** in either the **county or municipal** public hearings since the pandemic.

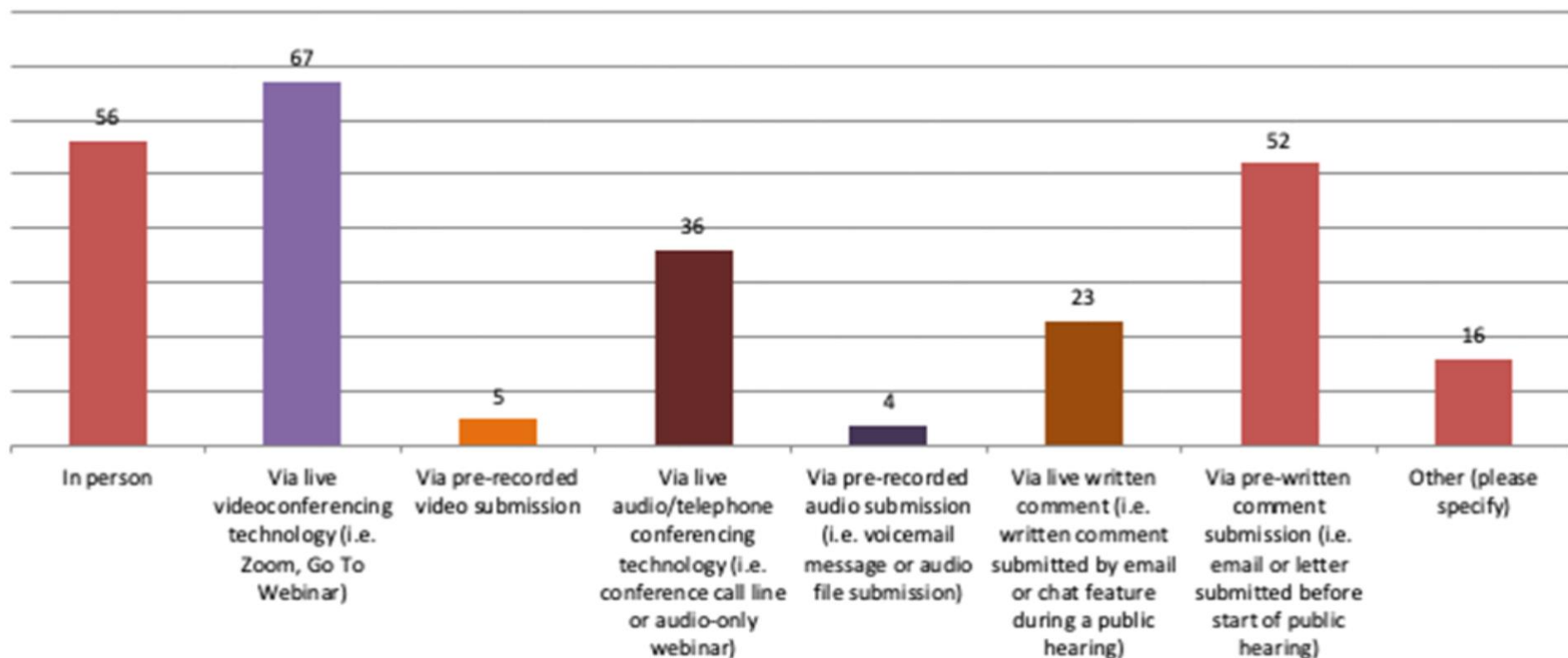
- **44%** participating in county hearings **about the same frequency**
- **56%** participating in municipal hearings **about the same frequency**



Many county governments allow participation in public hearings through **in-person comment**, appearing **live via video and audio conferencing technologies**, submitting **live written comment**, and providing comment through **pre-written submissions**.

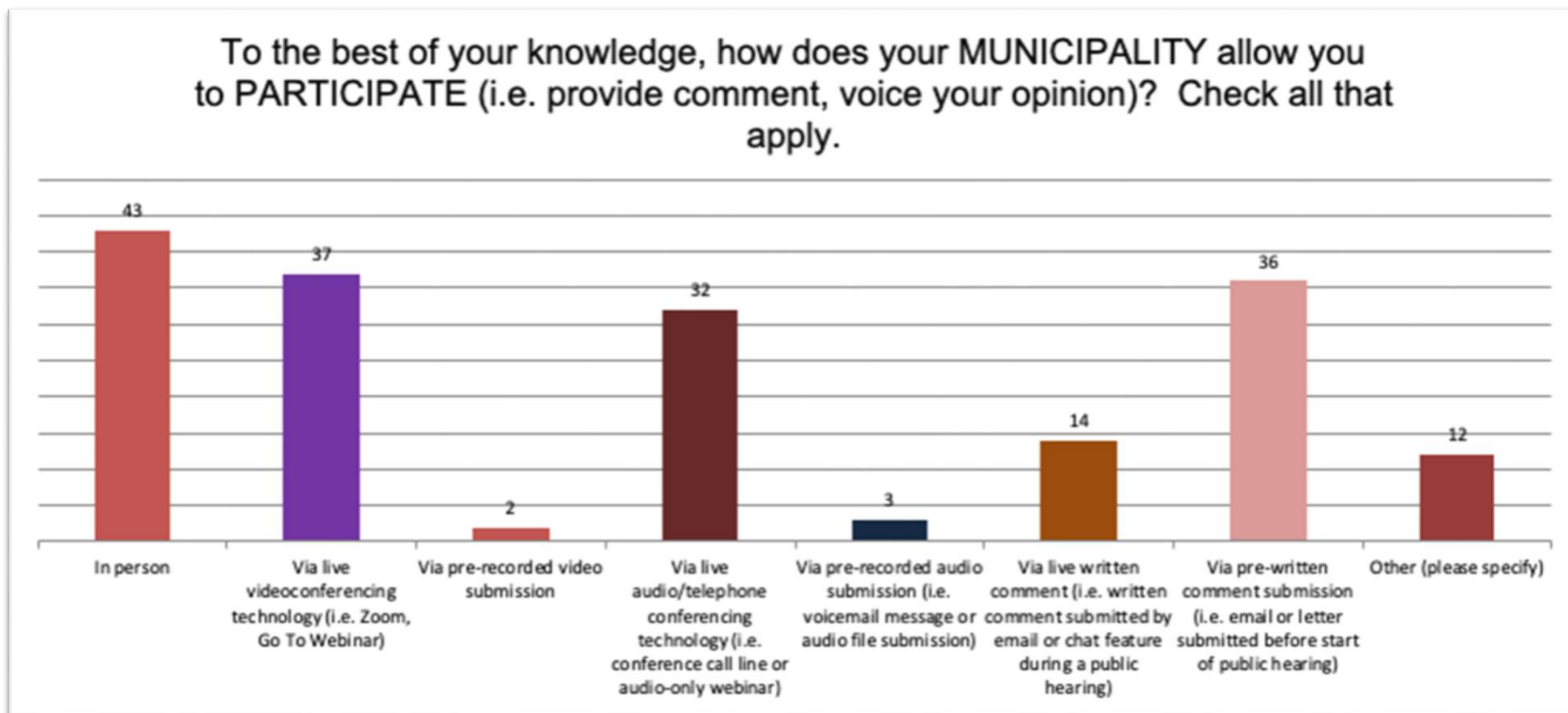
- Few respondents report **pre-recorded video or audio submissions** as options for comment.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, to the best of your knowledge, how does your COUNTY allow you to PARTICIPATE (i.e. provide comment, voice your opinion)? Check all that apply.



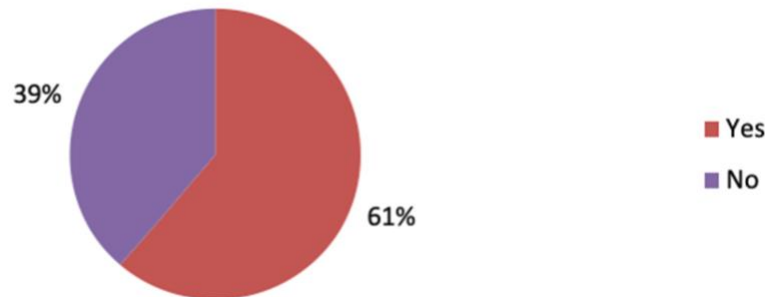
Many municipal governments allow participation in public hearings through **in-person comment**, appearing **live via video and audio conferencing technologies**, submitting **live written comment**, and providing comment through **pre-written submissions**.

- Few respondents report **pre-recorded video or audio submissions** as options for comment.



The **majority** of respondents think their local governments are doing a good job providing their citizens the opportunity to provide comment during public hearings.

Do you think your
MUNICIPAL government is doing a
good job providing citizens the
opportunity to provide public
comment during hearings?



Do you think your COUNTY government
is doing a good job providing citizens the
opportunity to provide public comment
during hearings?

