

NORTH AMERICA LGBT GLOBAL MOBILITY PULSE SURVEY

OCTOBER 2014

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Executive Summary

In today's global economy, employers understand that Talent is a company's most precious resource and "Talent management" has become one of the hottest topics in HR.

As the world recovers from the deepest recession in generations, organizations are looking to new and emerging markets to drive growth. However, skills shortages in various parts of the world threaten to stifle economic recovery. The mobilization of talent and Diversity and Inclusion strategies are seen as a key way of plugging skills gaps and achieving business goals.

At the same time, a willingness to work abroad has become the new normal and employees may find better career opportunities await abroad.

However, while most organizations understand and advocate the importance of having a diverse workforce and inclusive workplace culture and more and more organizations value international experience and promote working overseas, achieving a diverse and globally mobile workforce can be extremely difficult and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) employees in particular face specific challenges not experienced by other groups.

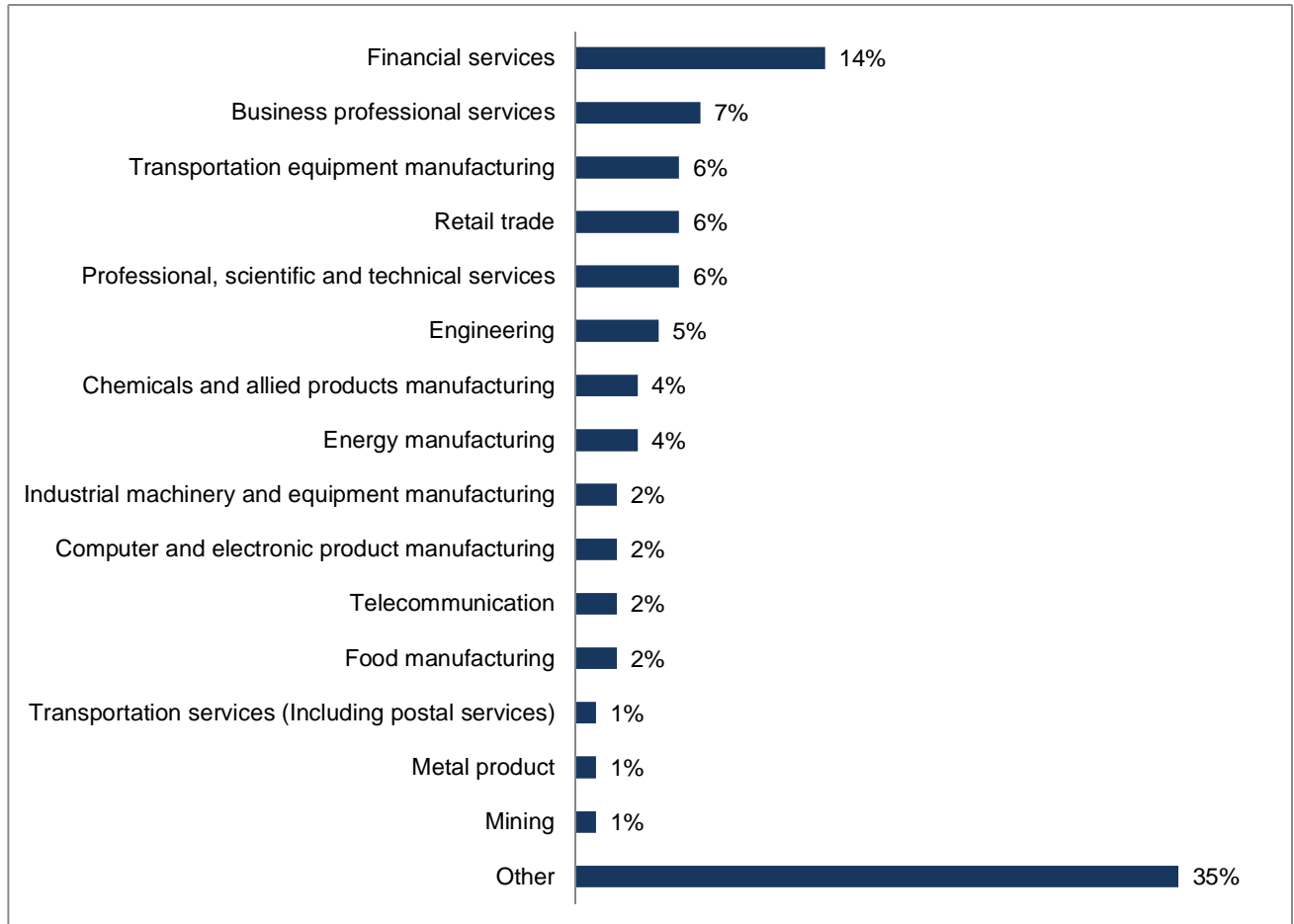
Over the past several weeks (September and October 2014), Mercer has been examining the challenges and considerations of LGBT Global Mobility and conducted a pulse survey on organizations' approaches. **83 companies** participated in the North America LGBT Global Mobility Pulse Survey and below is a summary of the findings as well as the survey results.

- Fewer than half of organizations (48%) have a global Diversity & Inclusion policy that makes specific reference to LGBT employees
- The vast majority of organizations (93%) do not track their employees' sexual orientation and only 52% track their employees' gender
- 54% of respondents have LGBT employees working internationally for their organizations
- 56% of organizations cited compliance (legal, immigration, tax etc.) issues as the main barrier to LGBT mobility
 - 28% believed family/dual career issues were the main barrier, 23% cited safety/security and 23% thought there were 'no barriers' to LGBT Mobility.
- Just 9% of respondents are flexible with the assignment type and only 7% would offer an assignment to an alternative (LGBT friendly) location
- 61% of organizations are not aware of the local cultural and legal conditions for LGBT employees in all the locations in which they operate
- 42% of respondents offer cultural training and a legal briefing to mitigate the risks to their LGBT employees
- However, 73% of the cultural training/security briefings offered to internationally mobile employees do not include information regarding LGBT issues/considerations
- 91% of respondents do not prevent their LGBT employees from travelling to LGBT 'unfriendly' locations
- 64% of organizations do not offer training to managers on LGBT issues

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Survey Results

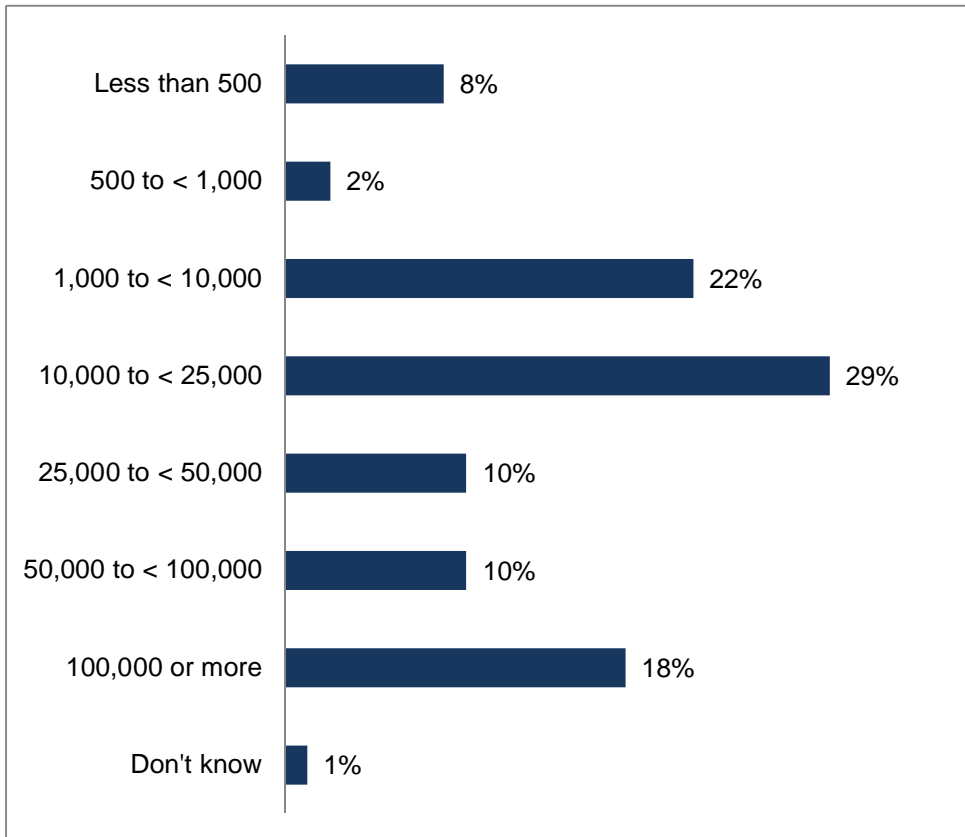
1. What is your organization’s primary type of business?



N=83

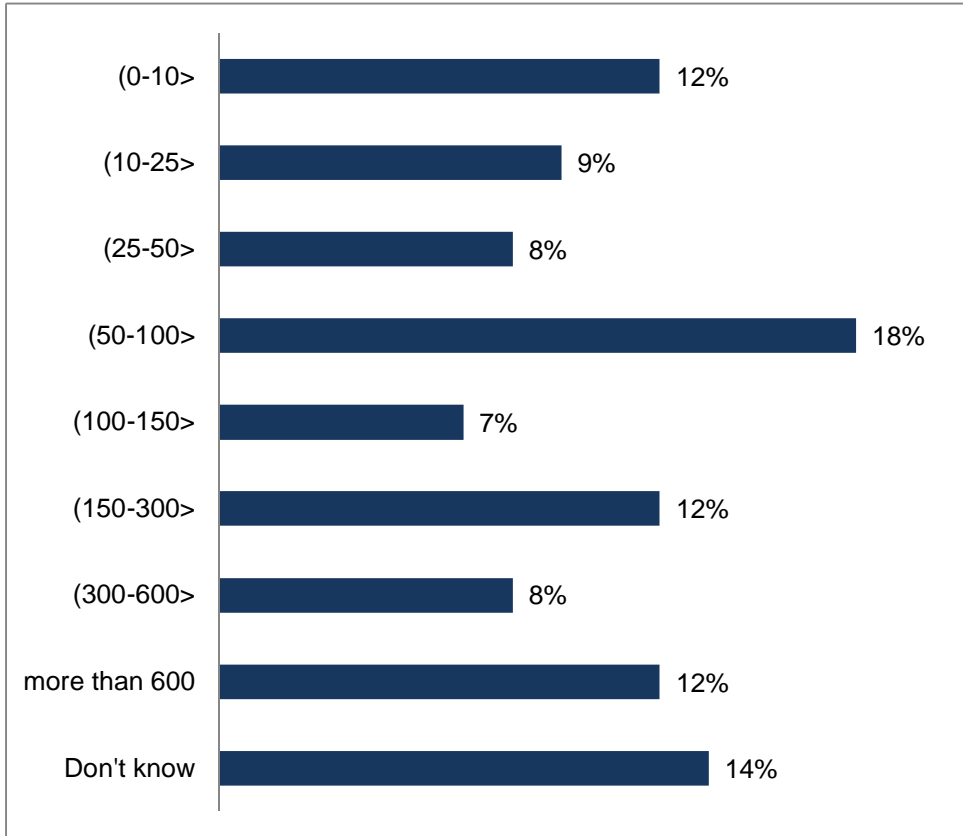
Among the answers from the “Other” category, participant organizations came from the Consumer Goods, Non Profit and Pharmaceutical sectors.

2. How many full-time employees does your organization have worldwide?



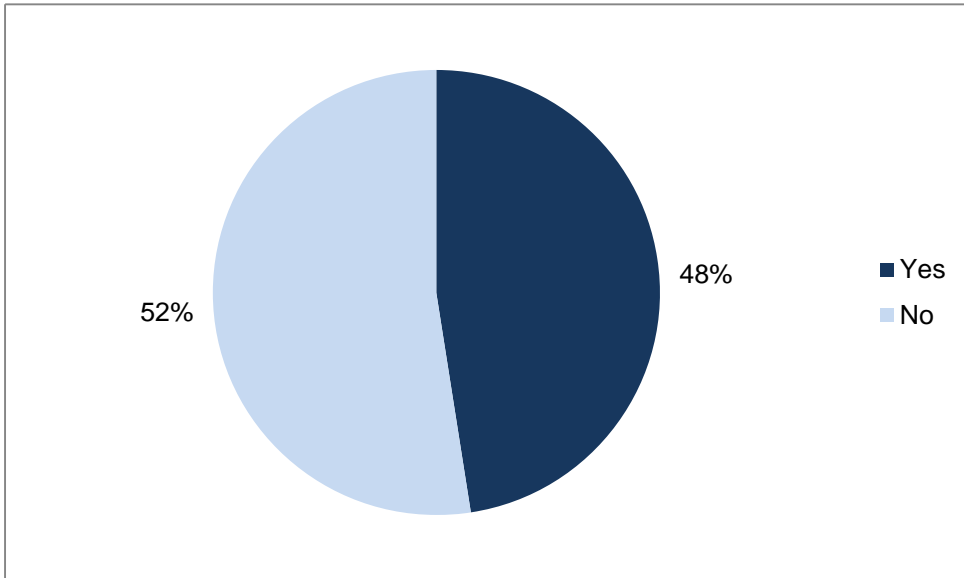
N=83

3. How many internationally mobile employees does your organization have worldwide (e.g. Short & Long-Term International Assignments, Commuters, working on projects etc.)?



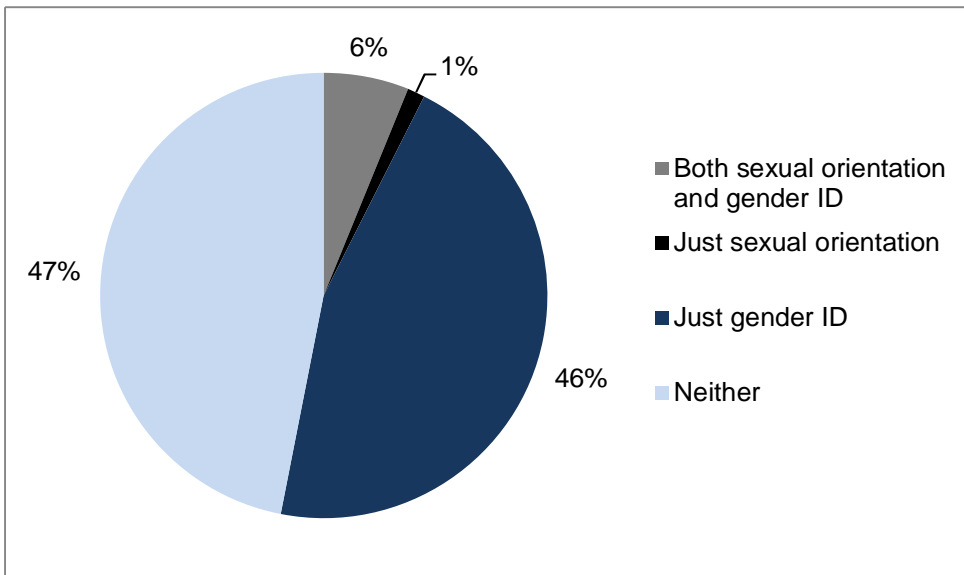
N=74

4. Does your organization have a global Diversity & Inclusion policy that makes specific reference to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) employees?



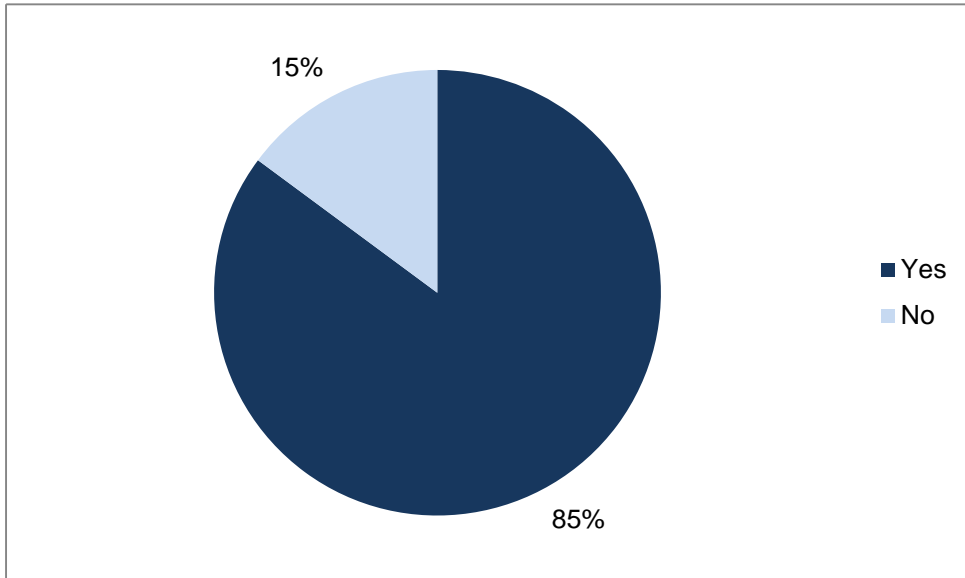
N=82

5. As part of your organization's workforce demographics tracking, do you ask employees to indicate their sexual orientation and gender ID (where possible and no legislative restrictions or sanctions exist)?



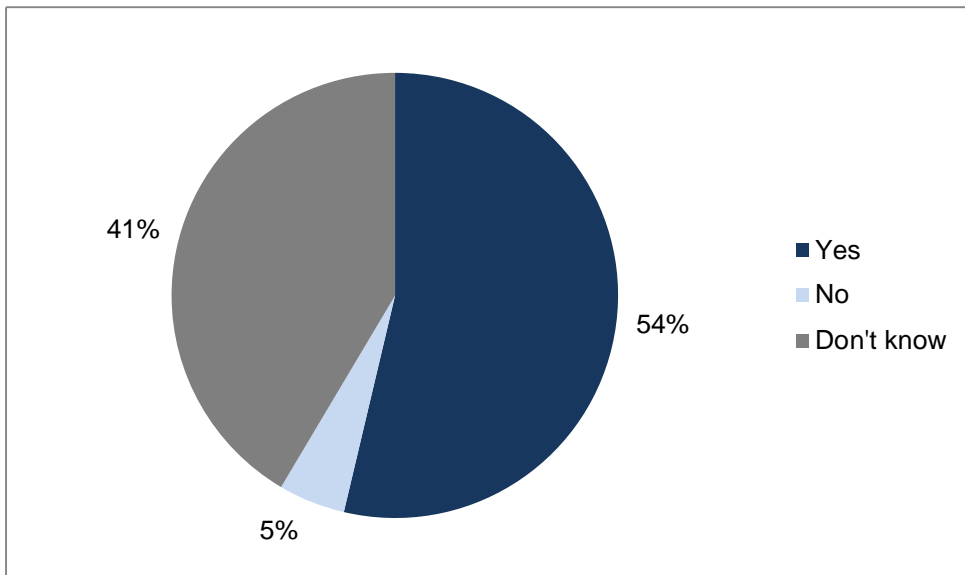
N=81

6. If not, are you aware of any LGBT employees working for your organization, including anecdotally?



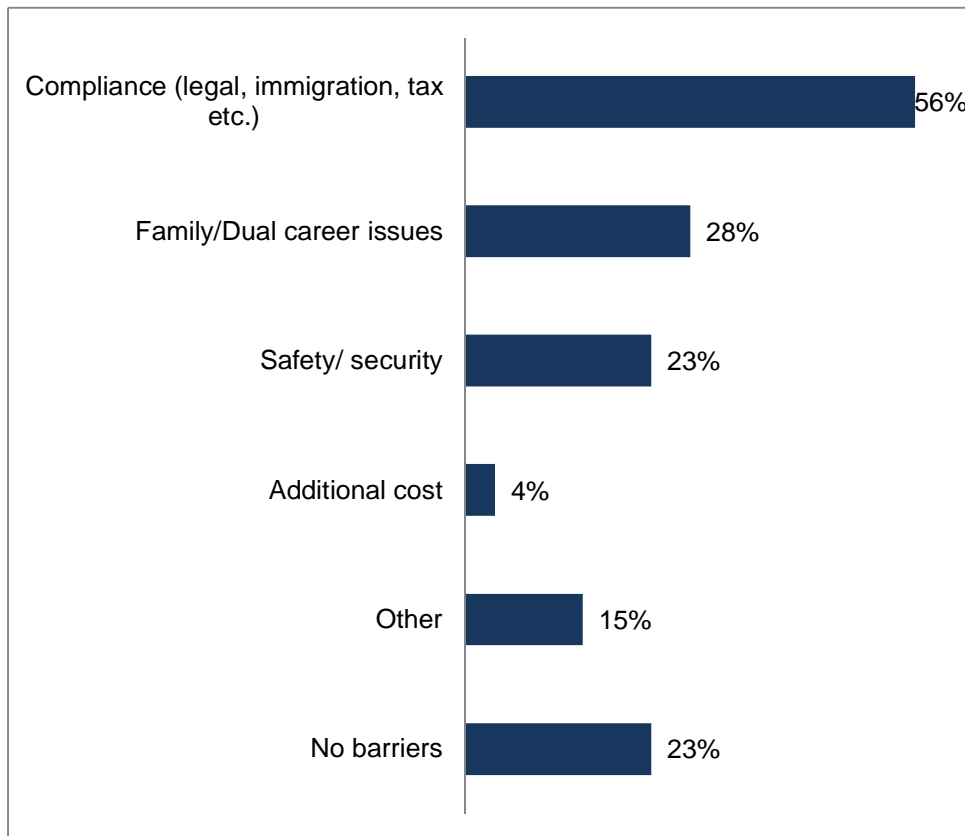
N=74

7. Are there LGBT employees working internationally for your organization (e.g. Short & Long-Term International Assignments, Commuters, working on projects etc.)?



N=82

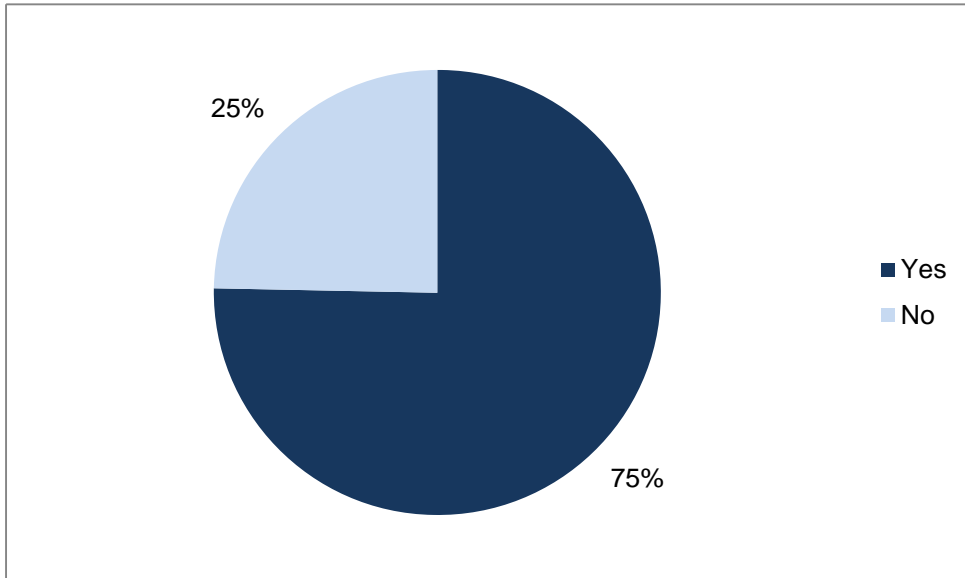
8. What are the main barriers to LGBT mobility for your organization?



N=82

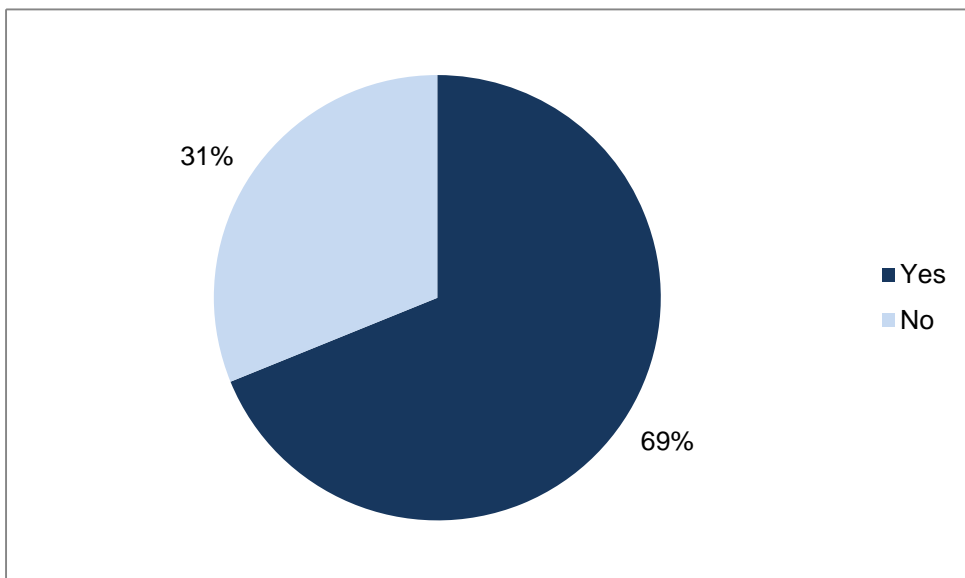
Participants that responded “Other” cited benefits cover for employees’ spouses in the host country, lack of awareness of LGBT employees and religious covenant of understanding as barriers to LGBT Global Mobility.

9. Do you have a leadership development/high potential talent program for high potential employees?



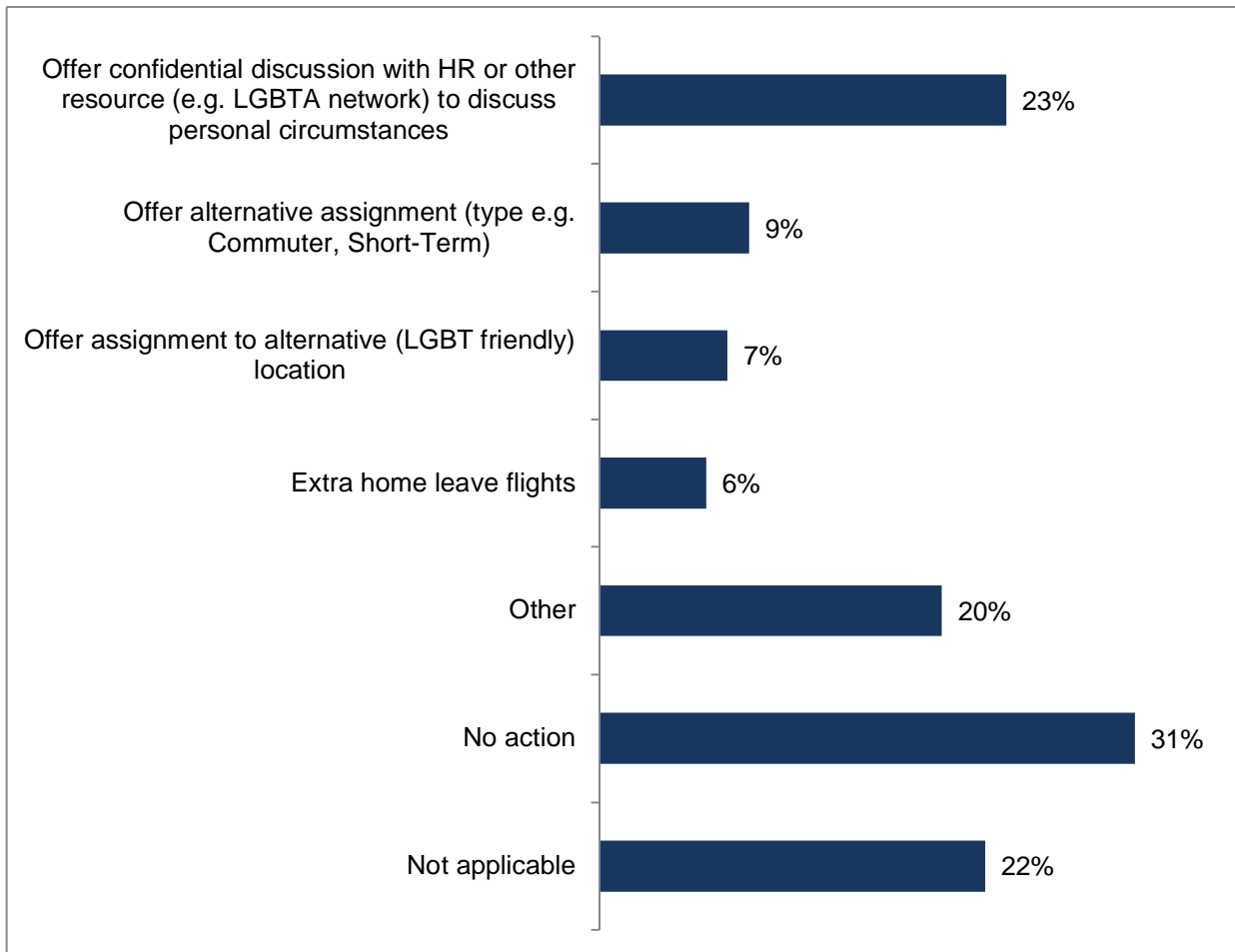
N=81

10. Does this program involve any form of global mobility?



N=61

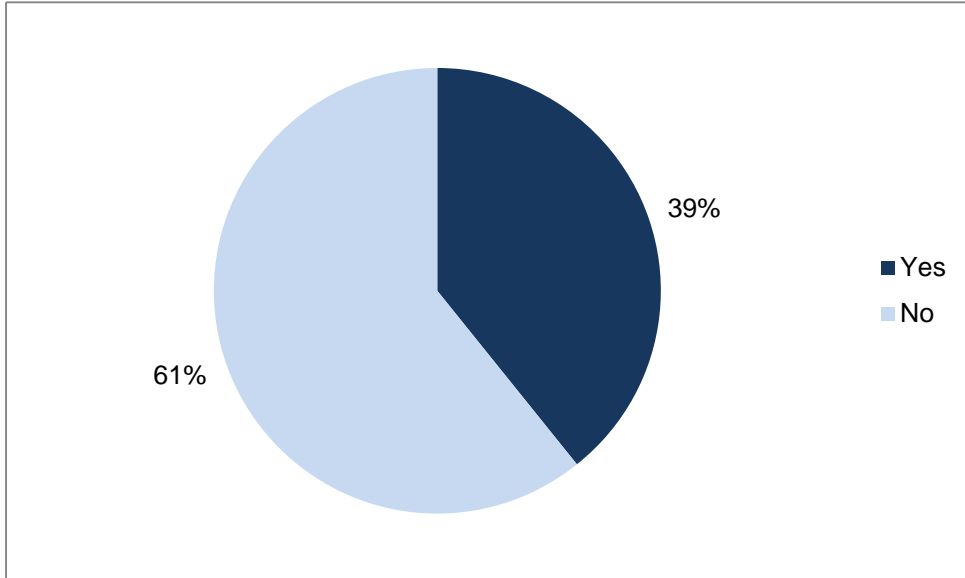
11. How does your organization ensure LGBT employees receive the same career opportunities, vis-a-vis global mobility, as all other employees?



N=81

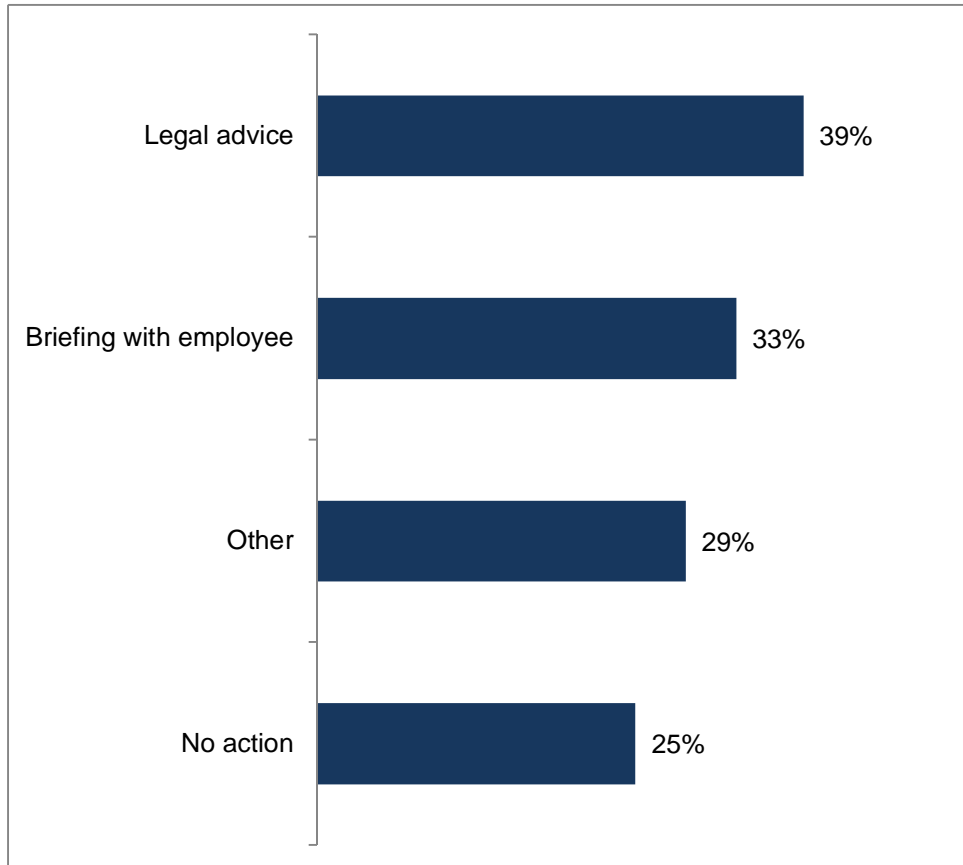
Among responses in the “Other” category, many survey participants advised that they had not come across this issue but that their organization offered equal opportunities to all employees and this would be handled on a case by case basis and relevant accommodations made.

12. Is your organization aware of the local cultural and legal conditions for LGBT employees in all locations in which your organization has employees?



N=79

13. How do you mitigate the risks to the *organization* from globally mobile LGBT employees? For example, compliance with local laws and customs in locations where there are requirements to report LGBT people to local authorities.



N=78

Some of the responses in the “Other” category were “Don’t know”, “suggest assignment to alternative country” and “consult with immigration vendor”.

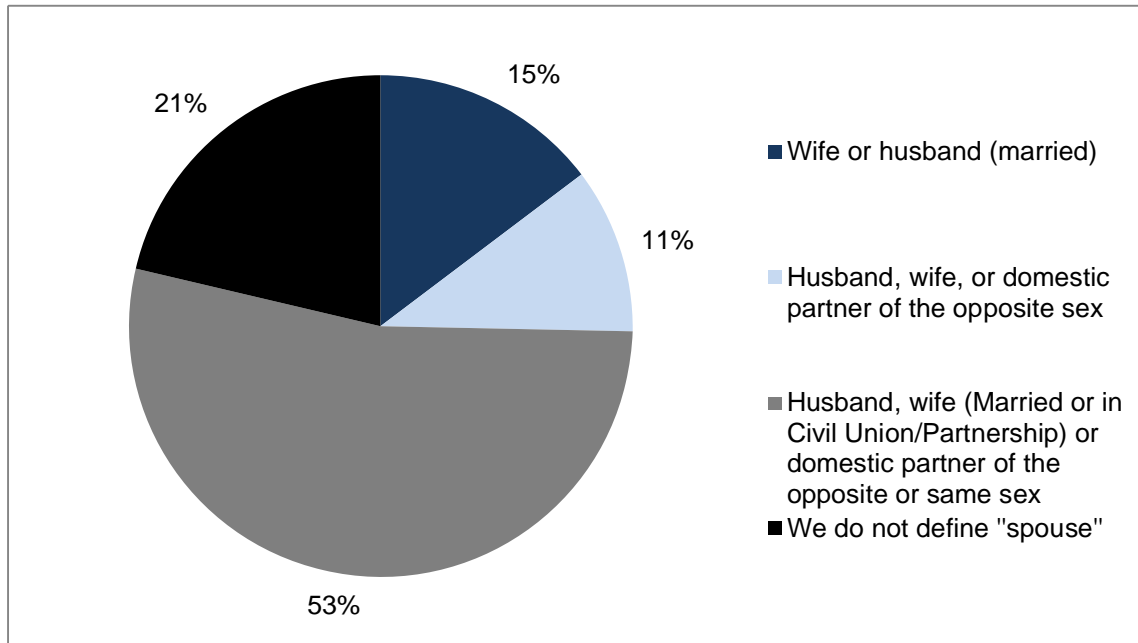
14. How does your organization mitigate risks to LGBT employees undertaking cross-border assignments or relocation?



N=76

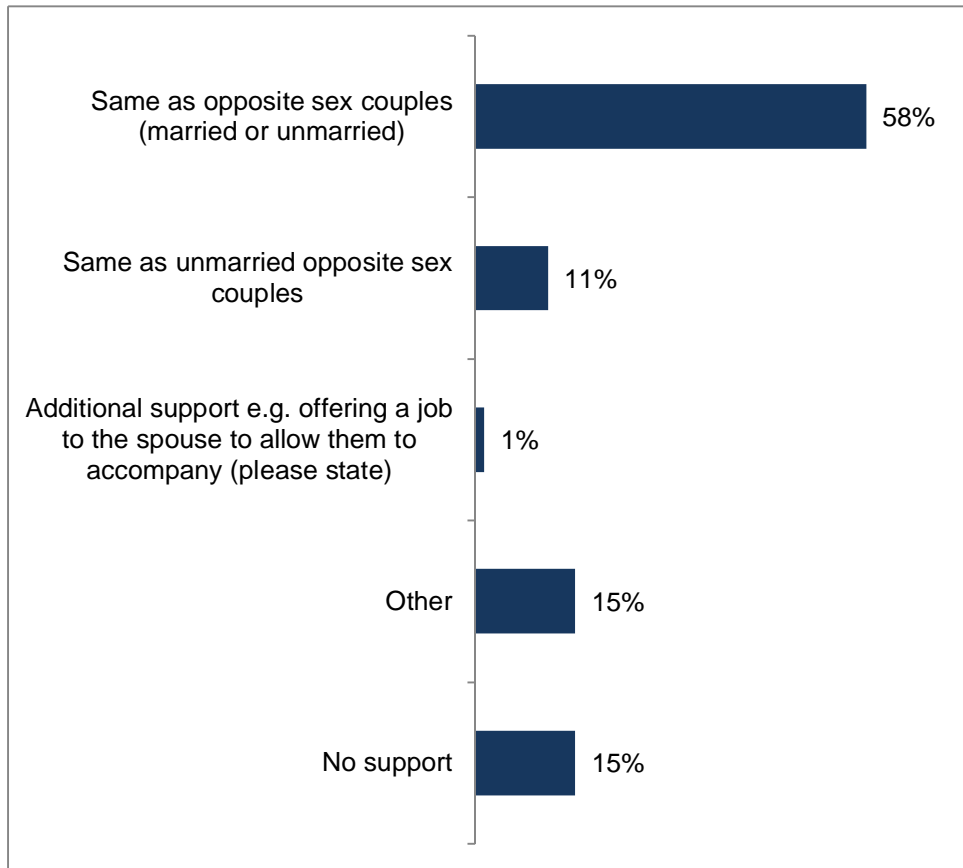
Among responses in the “Other” category, many survey participants advised that they had not come across this before, some said they would rely on local HR to provide support and others said LGBT employees received the same support as their heterosexual counterparts i.e. no additional support.

15. How does your organization define "spouse"?



N=75

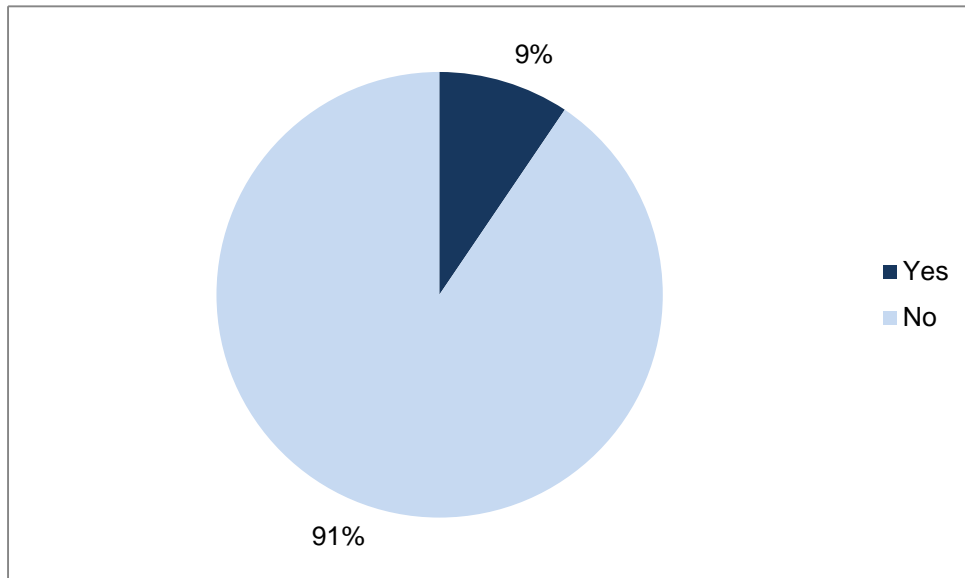
16. How does your organization support internationally mobile LGBT employees' spouses/families?



N=74

Among the responses in the “Other” category, many survey participants advised that LGBT employees’ spouses would receive the same support or heterosexual employees’ spouses but in many cases immigration/legal restrictions do not allow this to happen. A number of other respondents advised that this is handled on a case by case basis.

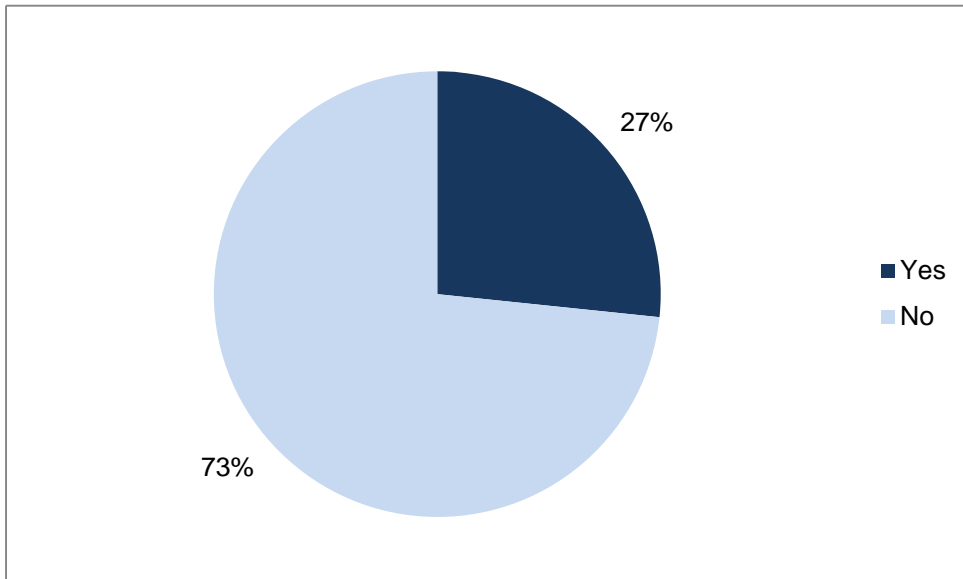
17. Are there any countries in which your organization operates to which you do not allow 'out' LGBT employees to travel/relocate?



N=74

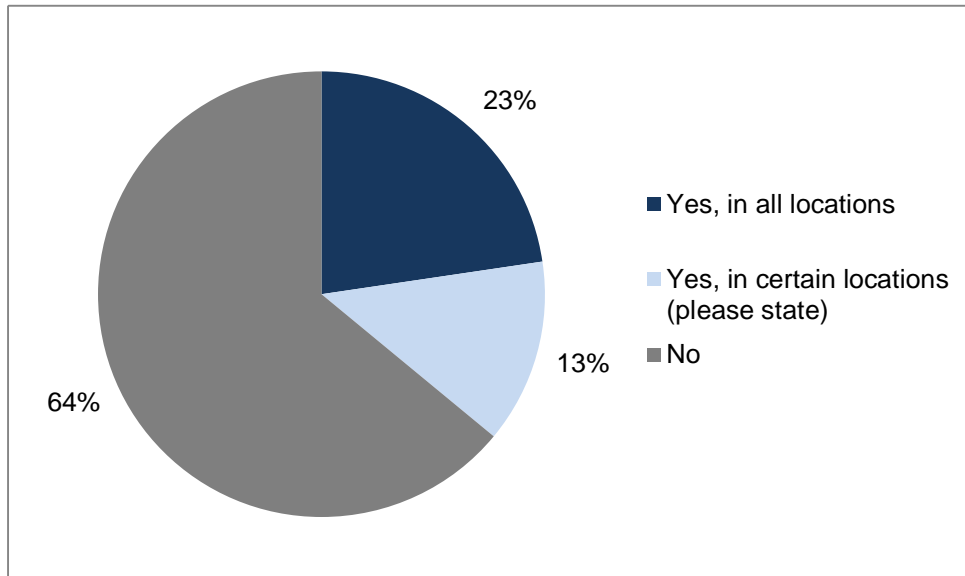
Countries listed were Hong Kong, India, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, “anywhere the government would not allow” and “we would not advise the employee to travel to a Muslim country if we knew they were gay”.

18. One of the issues faced by many organizations is not knowing whether an employee is LGBT. Therefore, are LGBT issues/considerations covered as part of the cultural training / security briefing offered to all internationally mobile employees to ensure the message reaches everyone (including LGBT employees who aren't open about their sexuality)?



N=75

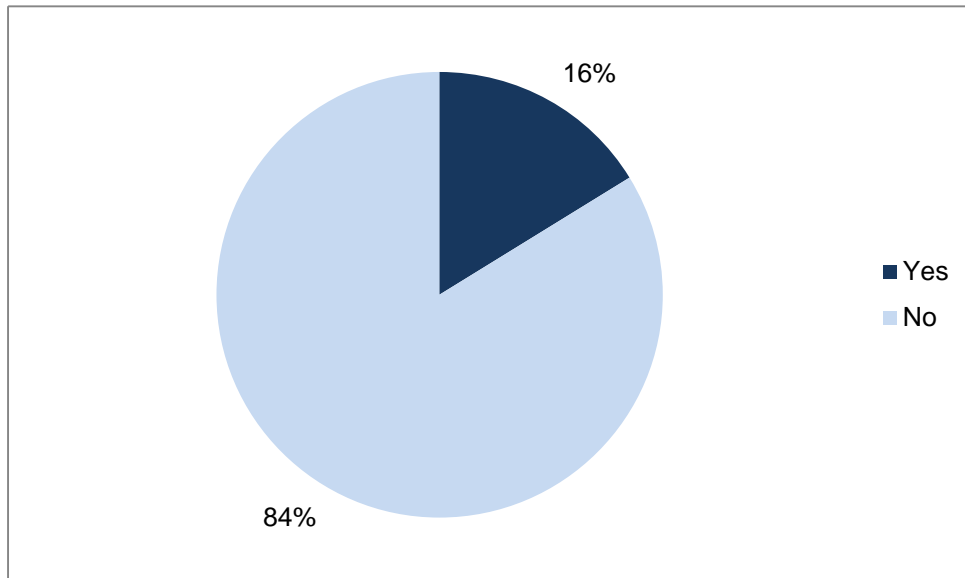
19. Does your organization offer training to managers on LGBT issues?



N=75

Some survey participants advised the LGBT issues are covered under wider diversity & inclusion training, one organization advised that LGBT specific training is being delivered to their HR Management Team as a pilot. Other respondents advised that this training takes place either in the USA only or just USA, Sweden and the UK.

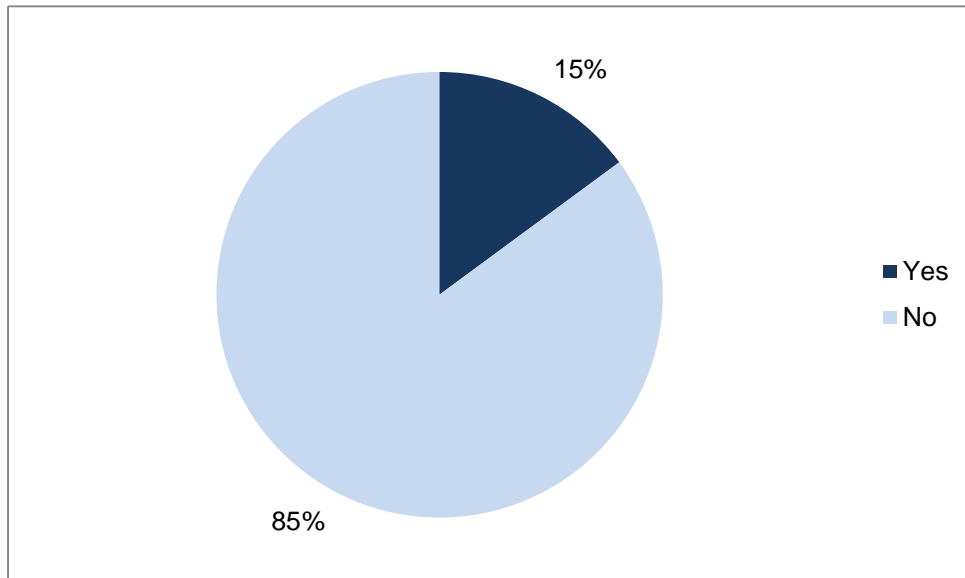
20. Does your organization take any steps to address inherent assumptions about LGBT employees' global mobility (unconscious bias)?



N=74

Some organizations advised that they leverage their organizations' LGBT Employee Resource Group, encourage organic/open lines of communication between employer and employee, and ensure LGBT employees are aware of potential opportunities for mobility with the final decision resting with the employee. Additionally, some respondents advised that this topic was covered in wider unconscious bias training.

21. Are there any formal or informal procedures in place to ensure LGBT employees are not negatively impacted by turning down an international assignment?



N=74

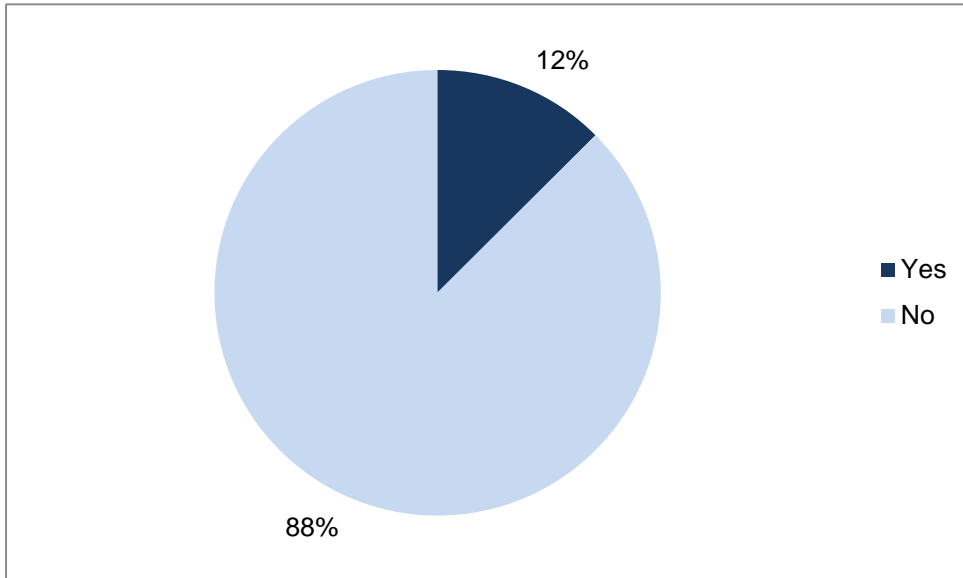
Additional comments included:

“Participants can turn down an international assignment without giving an explanation”

“Informal only; employees, LGBT or not, are not punished or negatively impacted for declining an assignment opportunity, regardless of assignment location”

“The employees would need to be forthright in their advising the first their reasons for declining the assignment”

22. Has your organization had to address any issues around the competing rights of different groups of employees?



N=72

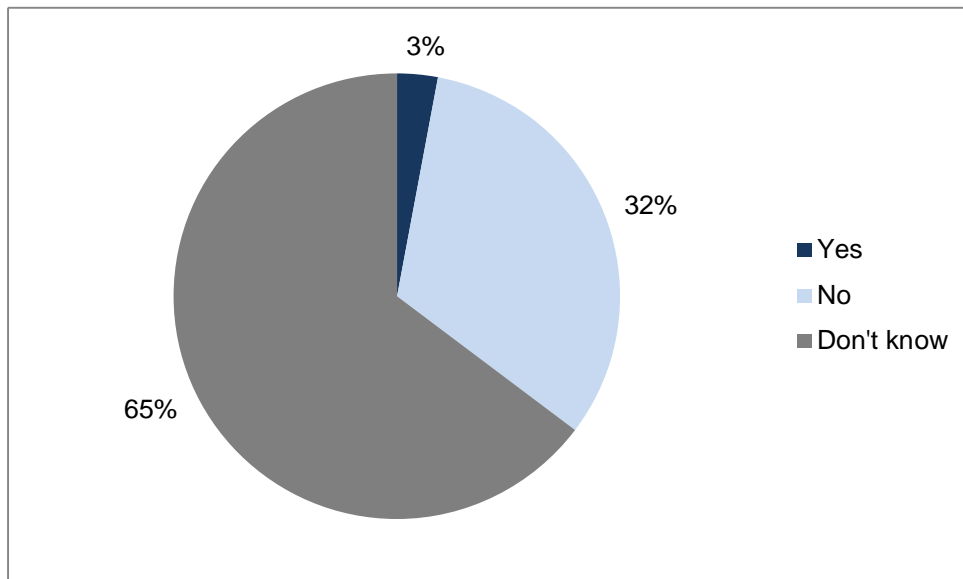
Among the comments to this question, survey respondents advised that a senior leader’s rhetoric needed to be eliminated to ensure a hospitable working environment, the code of conduct, employee handbooks... firmly address the organization’s philosophy, expectations and practice around a respectful work environment.

23. Additional information about your organization’s practices with regards to LGBT Global Mobility.

Advance planning has been helpful, making sure we know the immigration regulations and cultural norms during candidate selection
We have a LGBT employee resource group that would be a resource and work together with International HR
I am not aware that my organization has taken LGBT rights and issues into our global mobility program
Our LGBT mobile employees are currently silent and these issues should be addressed.

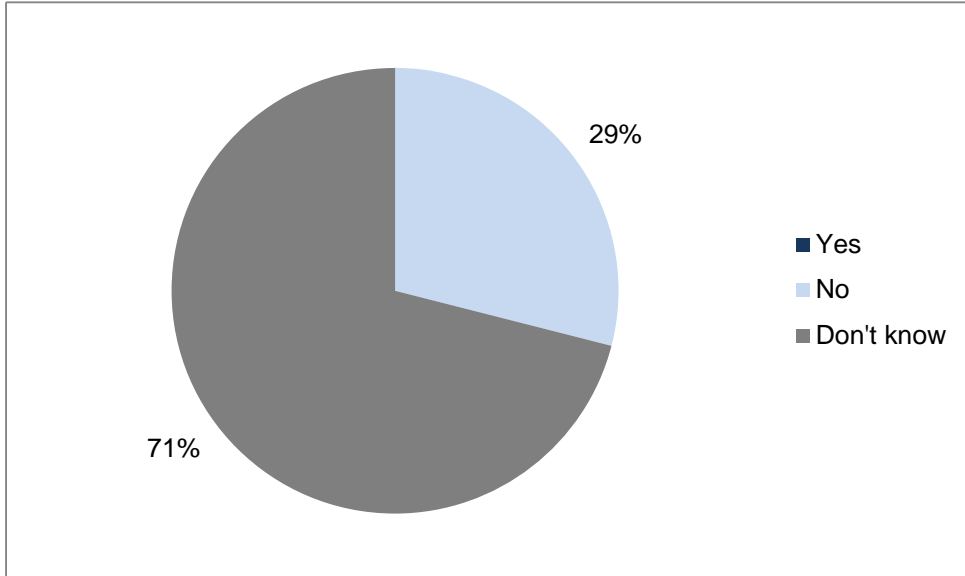
Survey Results – Additional US Domestic Relocation Questions

24. Has your organization received domestic transfer requests from LGBT employees to states with greater LGBT freedoms?



N=68

25. Has your organization experienced difficulty in recruiting LGBT talent to states with less LGBT friendly legislation?



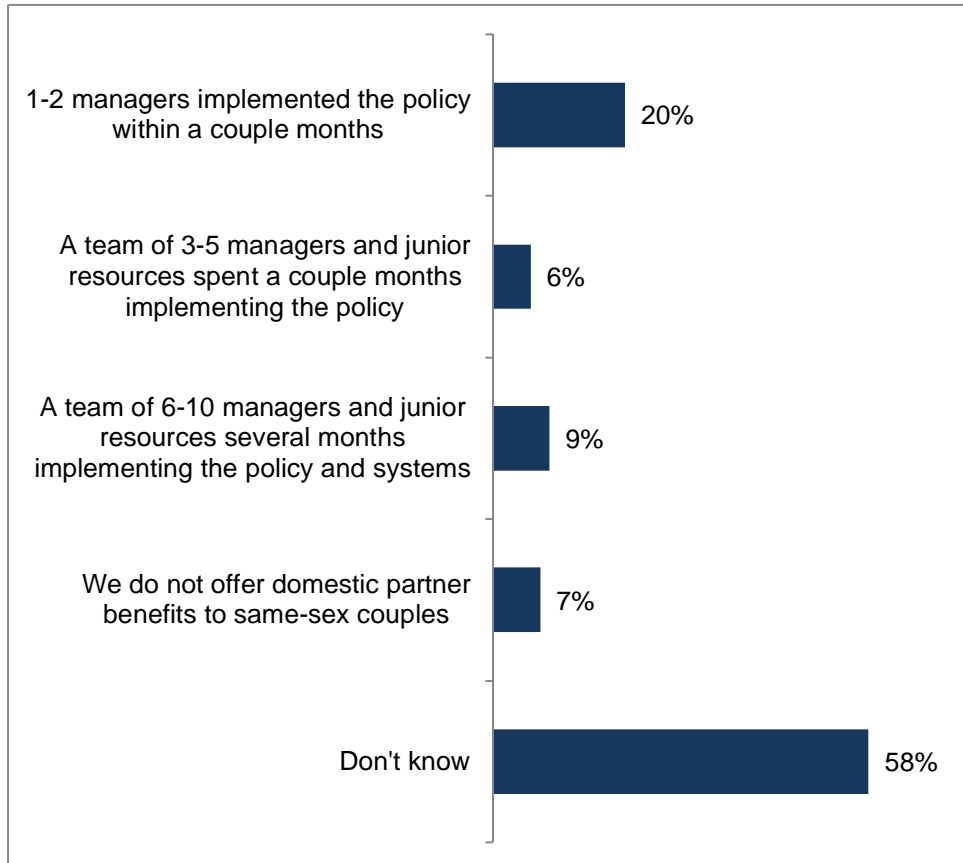
N=69

26. If your organization offers domestic partner benefits to same-sex couples, which of the following best reflects the resources dedicated to designing and implementing the policy to offer domestic partner benefits to same-sex couples?



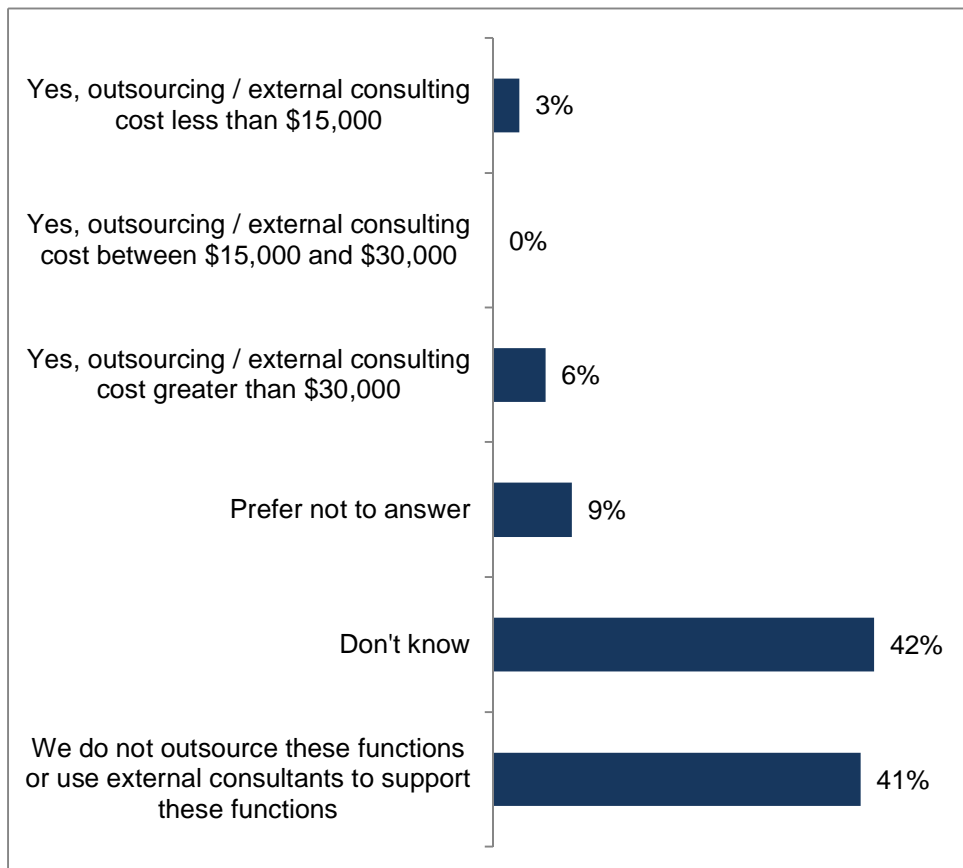
N=69

27. If your organization offers domestic partner benefits to same-sex couples, which of the following best reflects the resources dedicated to maintaining your systems and tracking policy changes related to domestic partner benefits administration?



N=69

28. Does your organization outsource or use external consultants to support the functions of your organization deal with the complexities of inconsistent same-sex marriage laws across the US and / or to administer domestic partner benefits to same-sex couples?



N=69

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About Mercer

Mercer is a global consulting leader in talent, health, retirement, and investments. Mercer helps clients around the world advance the health, wealth, and performance of their most vital asset – their people. Mercer's more than 20,500 employees are based in more than 40 countries, and we operate in more than 130 countries.

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