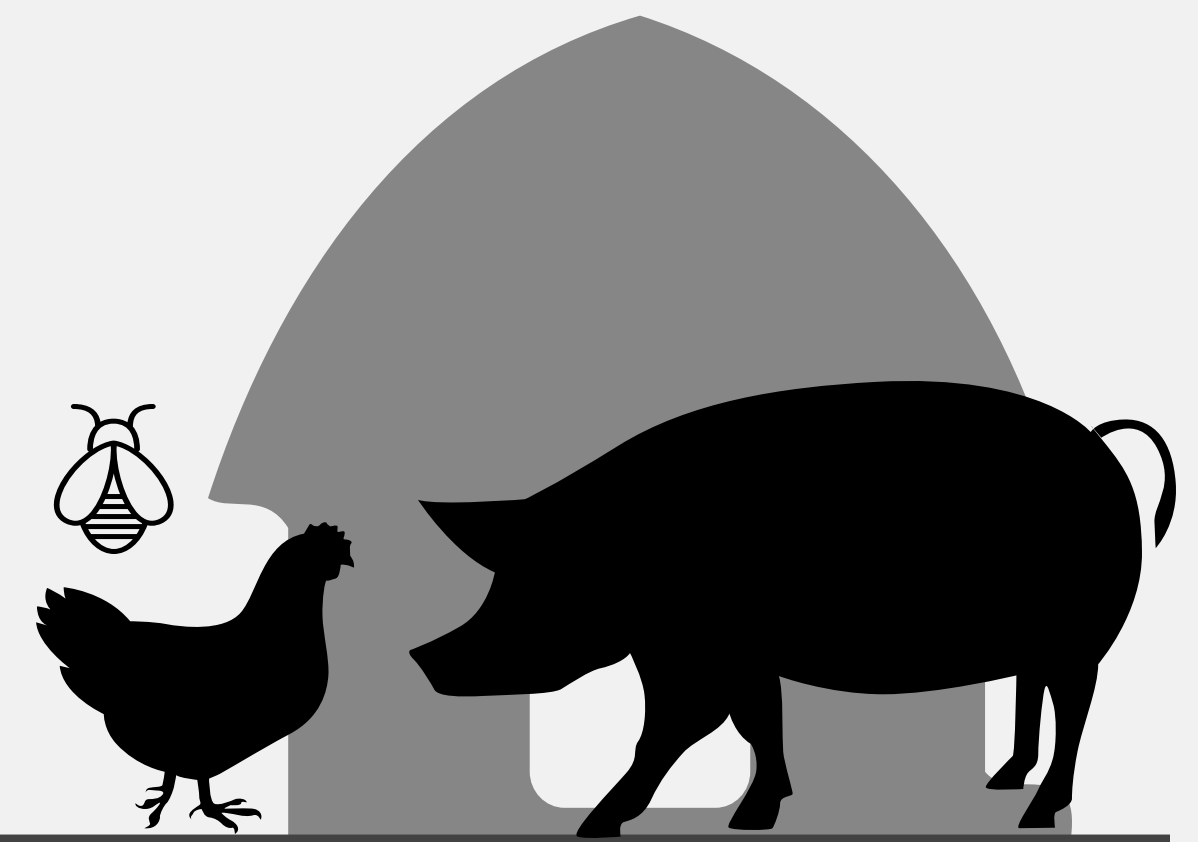


October 24, 2017

A Survey of UP Local Governments on Community Food Systems Policies



Introduction & Background

In spring 2017, the Upper Peninsula Food Exchange (UPFE) Policy Committee conducted a survey of local government appointed and elected officials on the topic of community food systems. The survey targeted municipal managers, supervisors, staff (planners and zoning administrators), and planning commission chairpersons with the goals to:

- 1 Better understand perceptions among local leaders on the appropriateness and role of community food system policies in local government plans and ordinances;**
- 2 Gauge the extent to which local government master plans, zoning ordinances, and other policies and ordinances address community food system components either favorably, or in a manner to hamper food system development; and**
- 3 Develop resources and approaches for assisting municipalities with development of policies that support community food systems.**

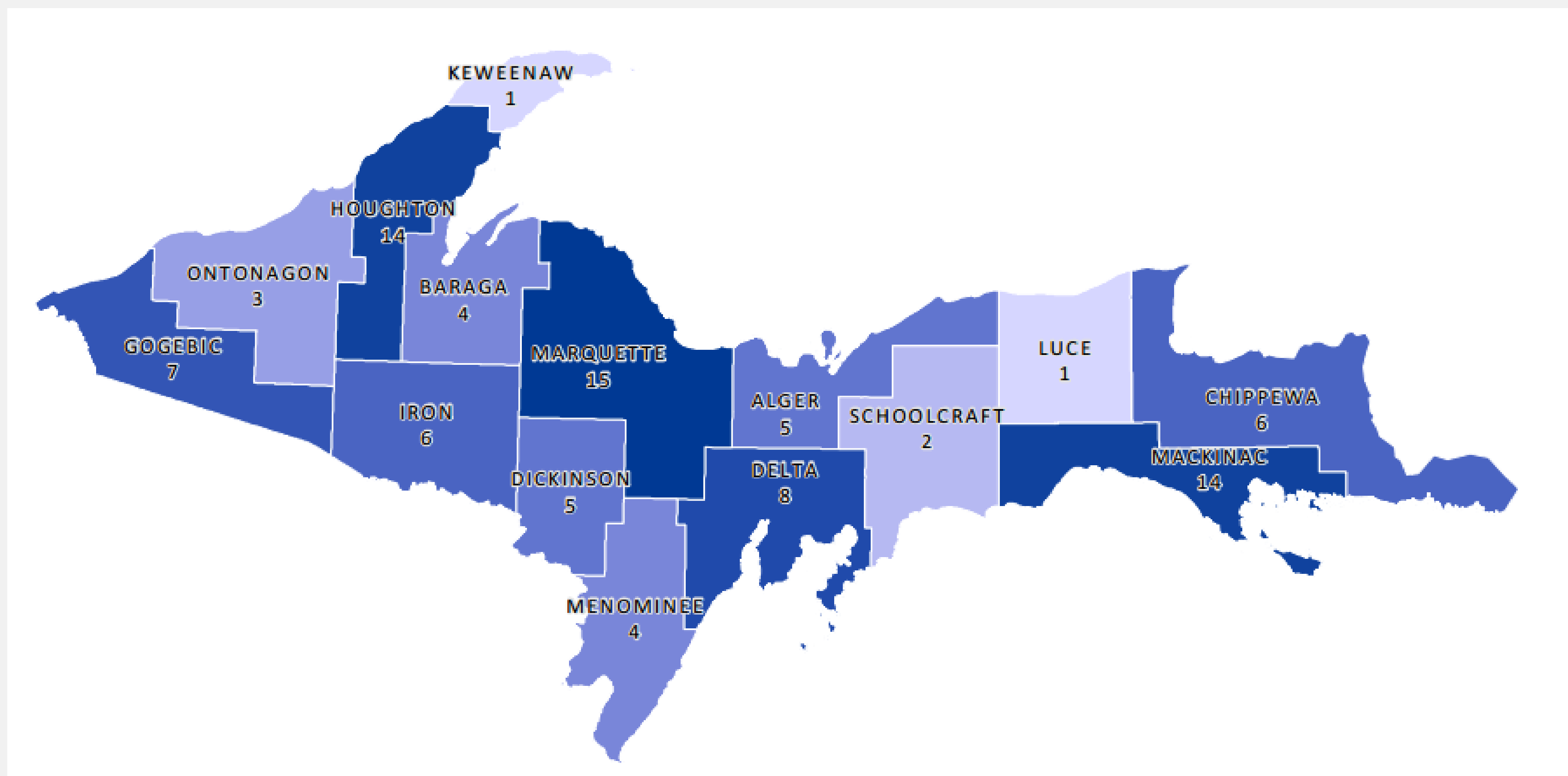
Executive Summary

By in large, UP local governments do not currently address components of the community food system in their master plans, yet most feel their plans should address the community food system or are unsure whether there is community support for adding such policies. UP local governments are in need of assistance learning more about the types of policies and regulations that support community food systems. They are looking for technical assistance to develop related policies and regulations and model or example zoning language pertaining to season extension structures, poultry, and bees, in particular. Local government officials recognize the need for policies and regulations to be reflective of the Michigan Right to Farm Act and acknowledge they need more education on the topic. Finally, local government officials see food access and distribution in remote, rural areas as important issues in their community.

UPFE is a Food Hub led by MSU Extension and the Marquette Food Co-op, in conjunction with the Western UP Health Department, that coordinates and supports local food activities in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. UPFE serves as a resource portal for farmers, businesses, and individuals looking to connect with and actively participate in their local food system.

For more information please contact UPFE at info@upfoodexchange.com 906-225-0671, ext. 723

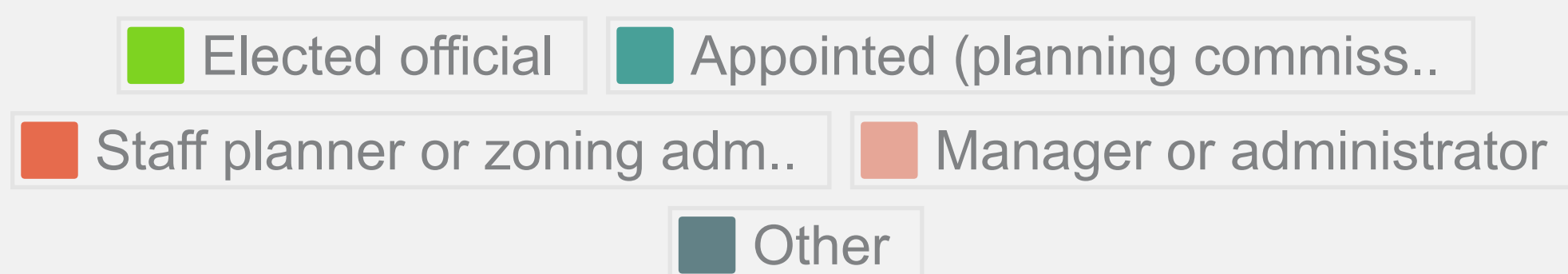
Survey Results



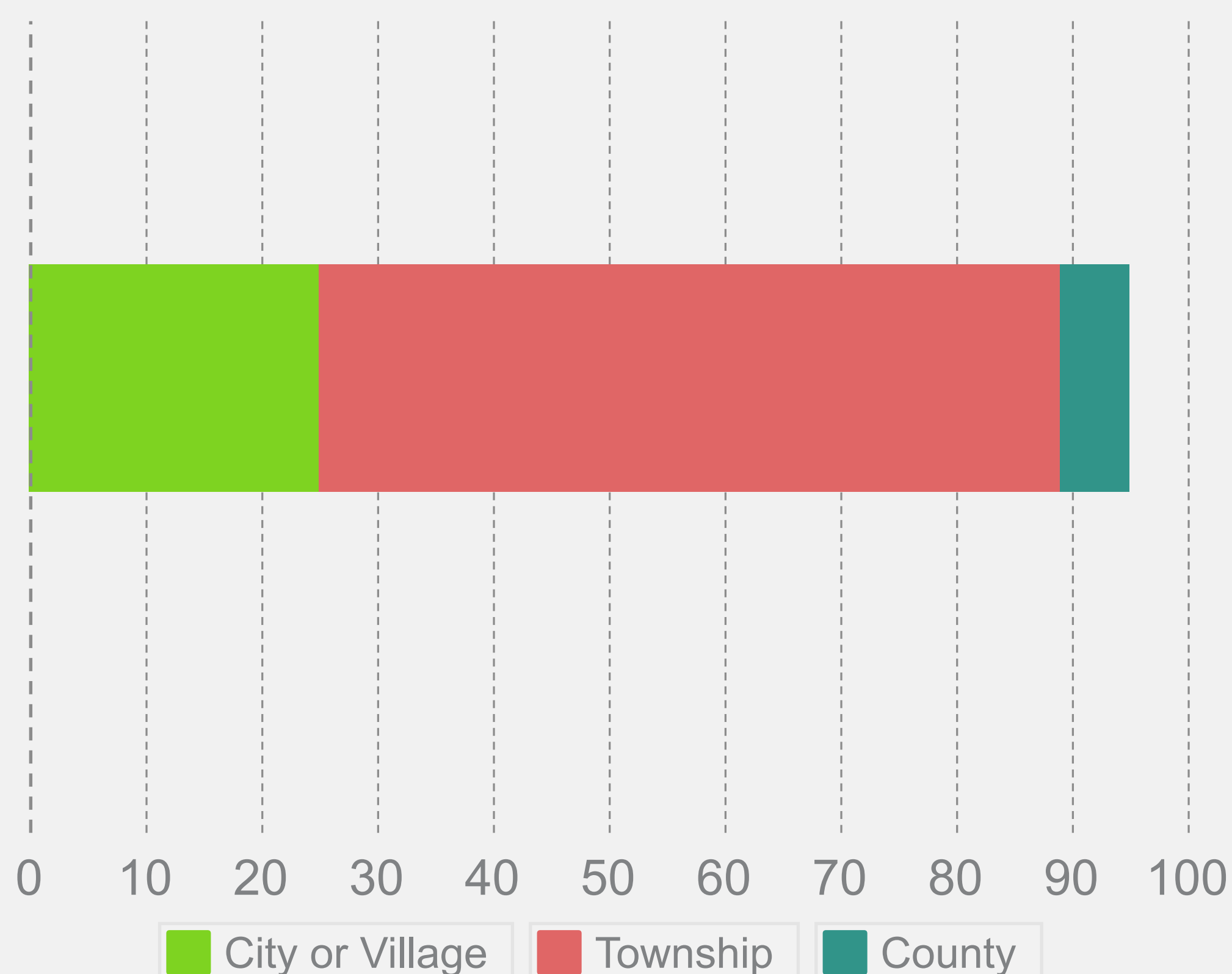
The electronic survey was distributed via email to nearly 400 individuals across all 15 Upper Peninsula (UP) counties.

Nearly 100 survey responses were received (25% response rate) with at least one response from each UP county.

Survey Responses



Responses by Type of Unit of Government

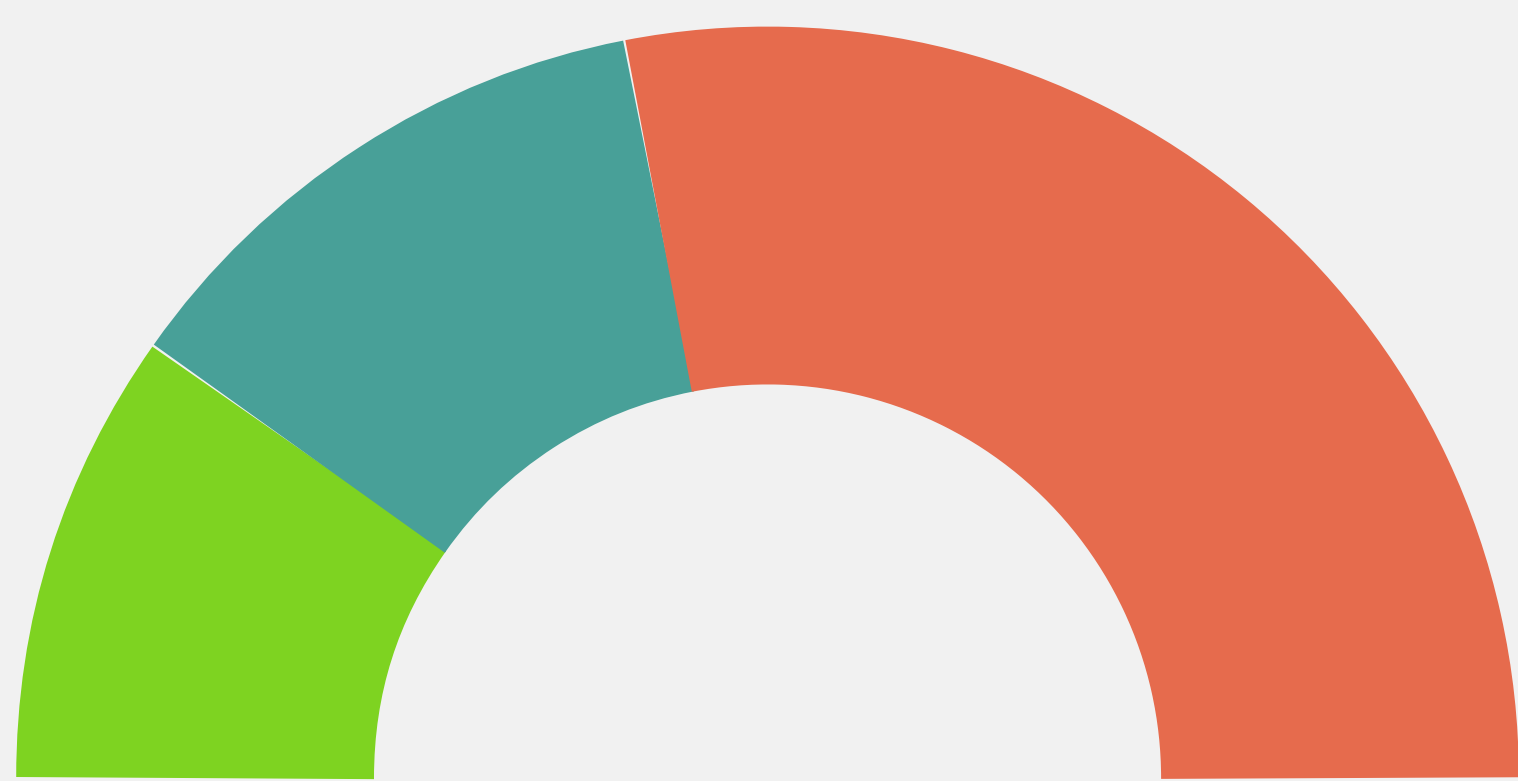


Survey respondents were provided the adjacent graphic showing the components of a community food system and asked,

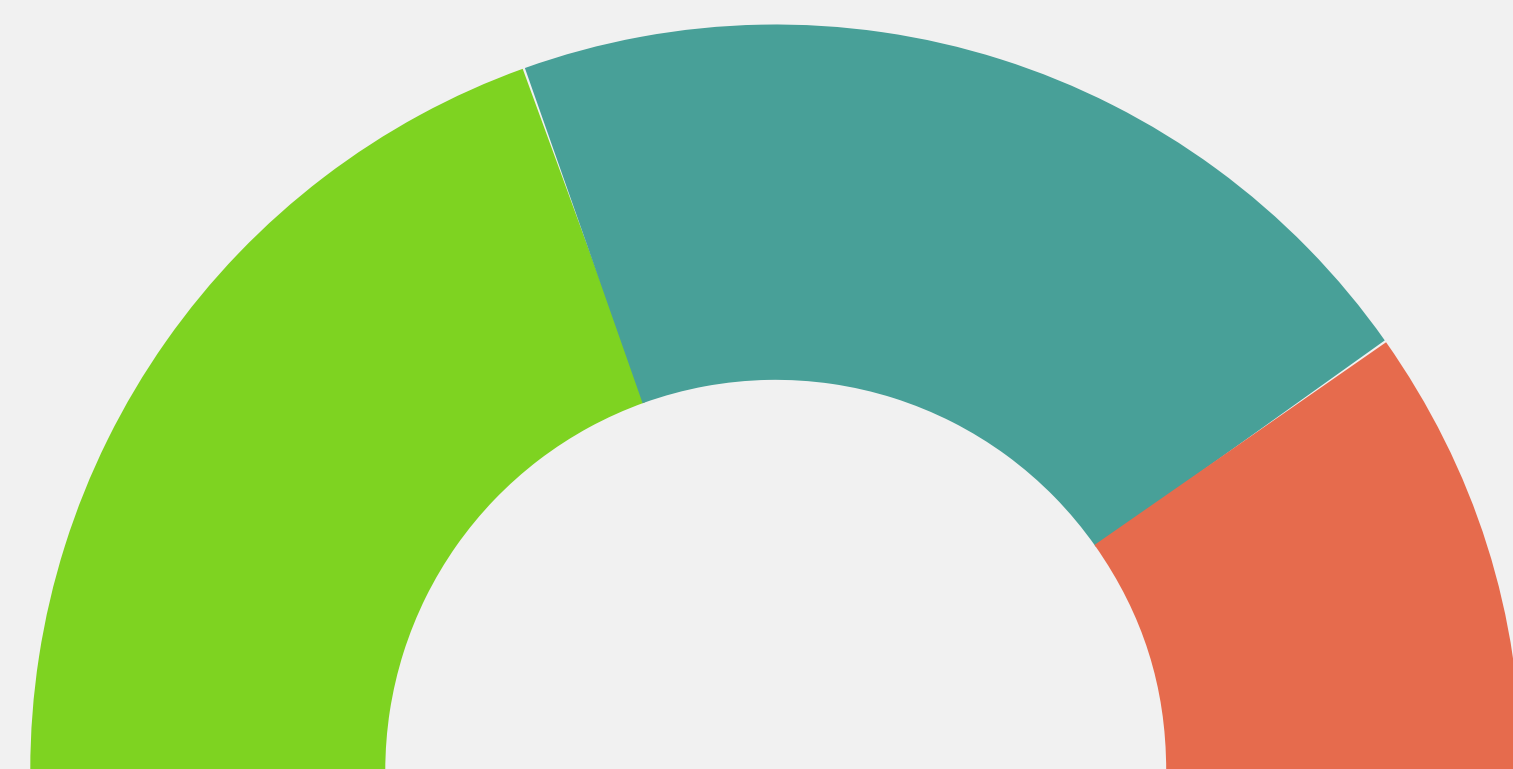


"Is the community food system, or components therein, addressed in your master plan?"

"Does your community have interest in adding policies to your master plan that support community food systems?"

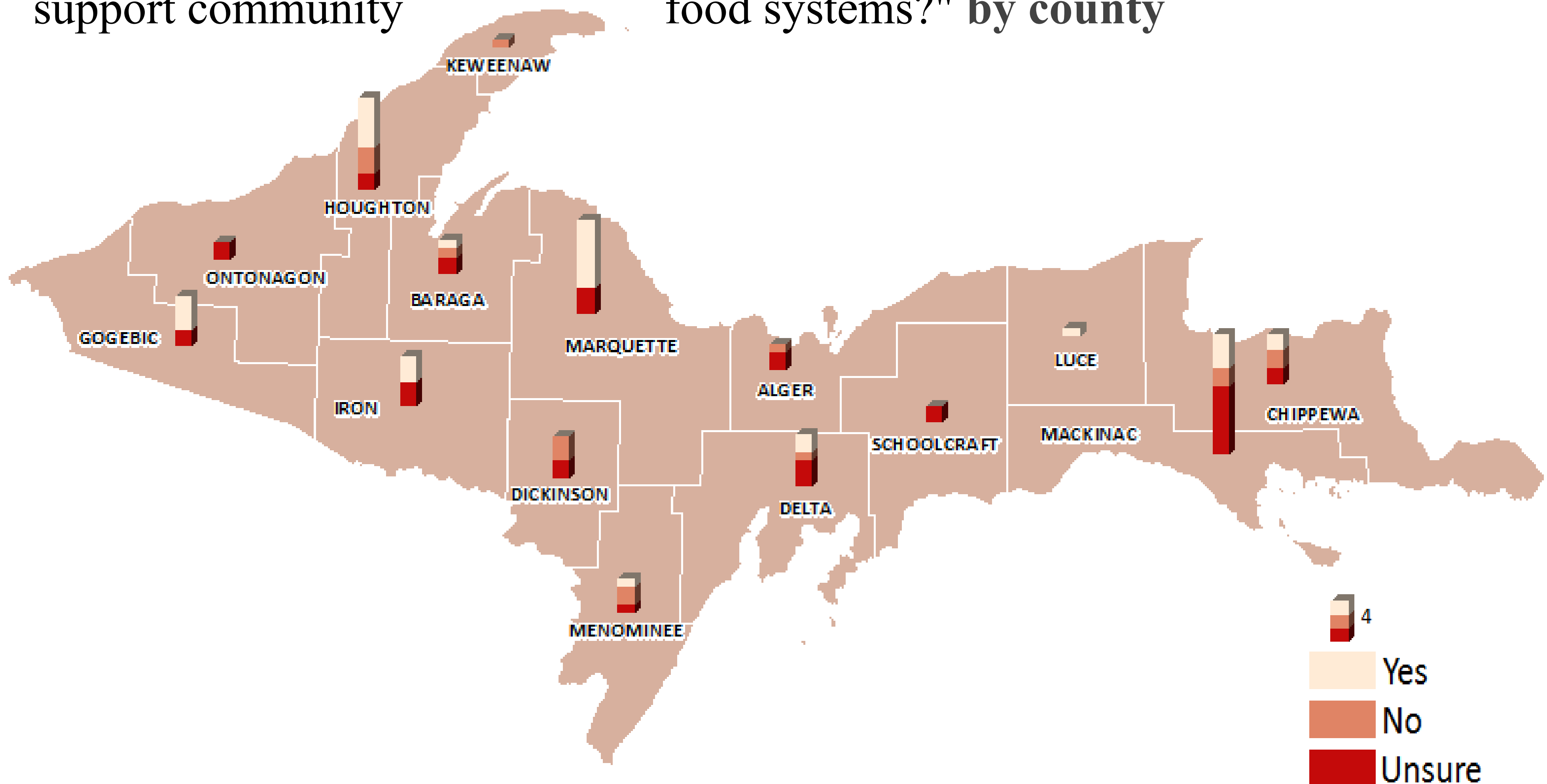


Yes (19.51%) Unsure (24.39%) No (56.10%)



Yes (39.02%) Unsure (41.46%) No (19.51%)

"Does your community have interest in adding policies to your master plan that support community food systems?" by county

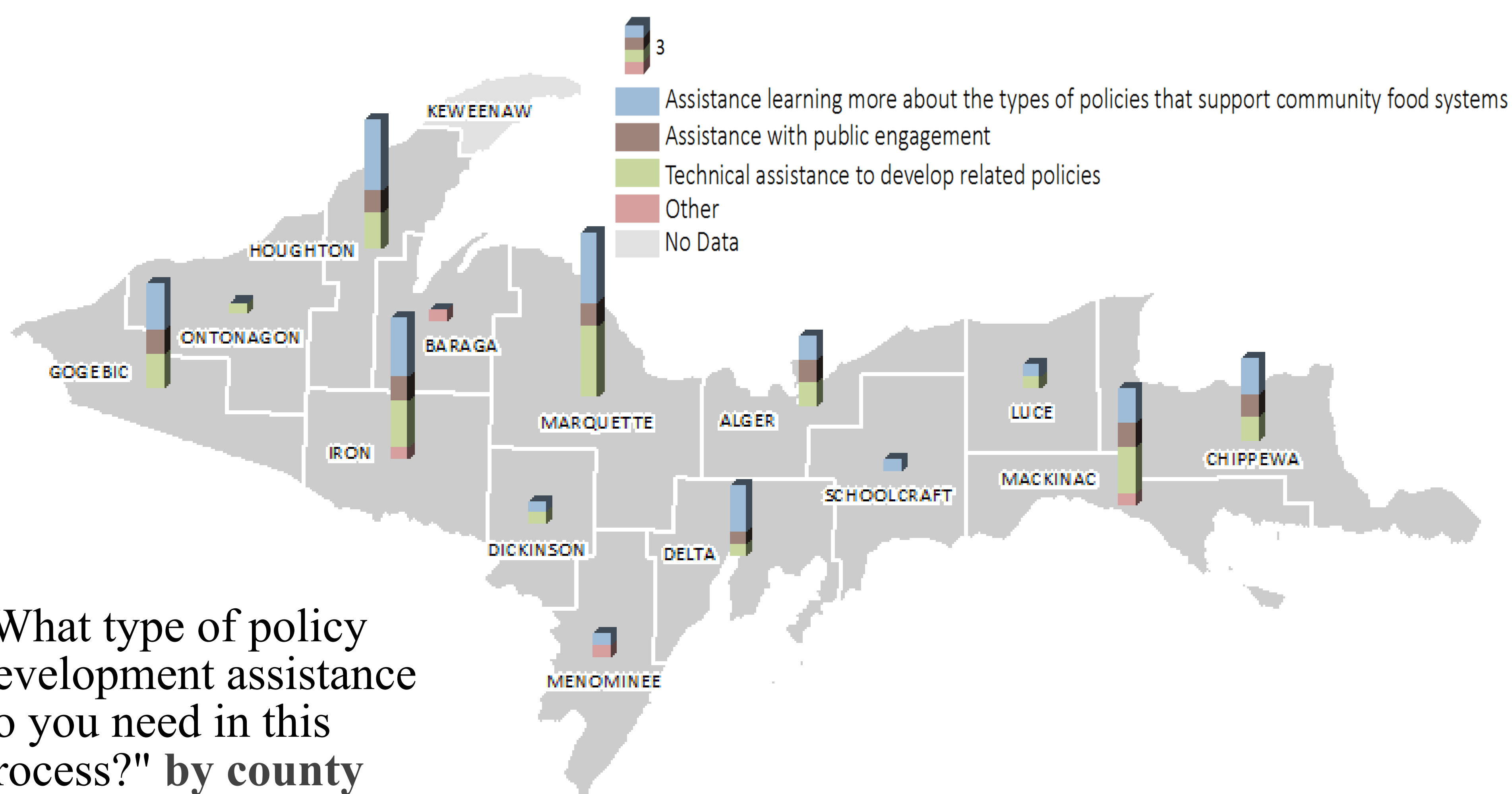
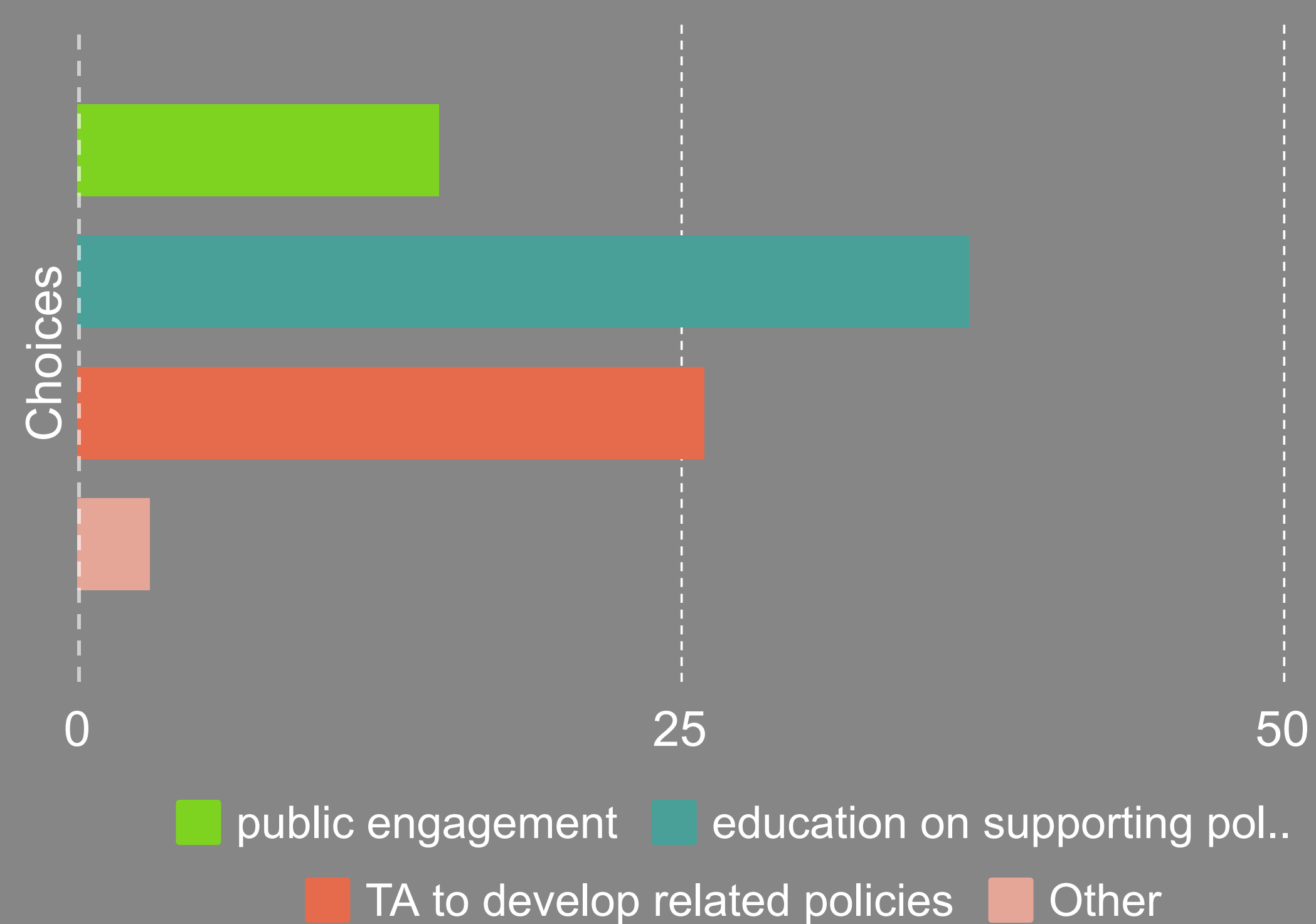


“When do you plan to add such policies, or what barriers are you experiencing preventing your community from doing so?”

generalized summary responses included:

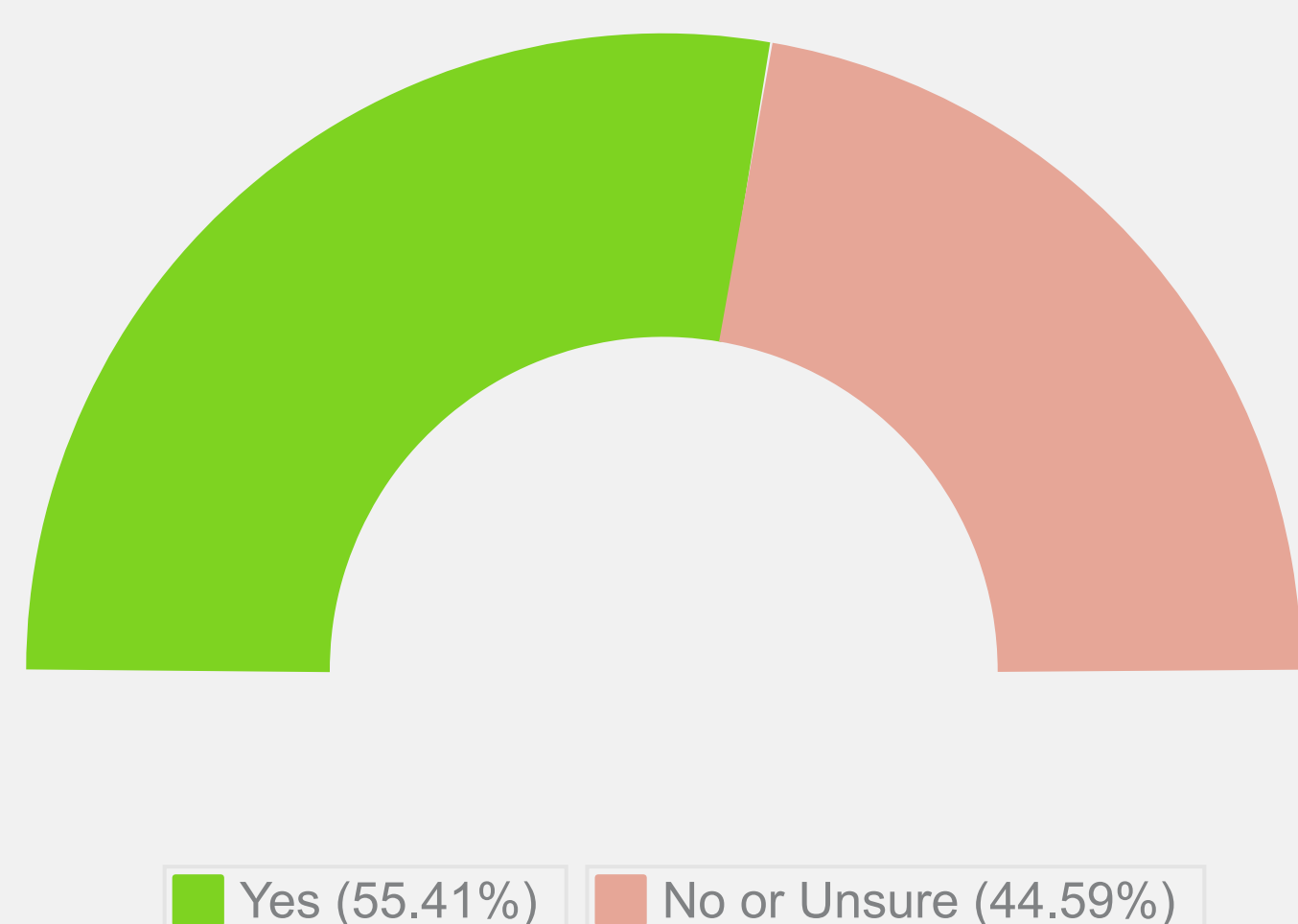
- During the next master plan [annual or five year] review
- Lack of understanding, cooperation
- Lack of funding
- We do not have a plan
- Perception that vacant land is needed for food system planning
- Unsure of community interest/support
- No plans/unsure

“What type of policy development assistance do you need in this process?”



"What type of policy development assistance do you need in this process?" **by county**

"Is your community satisfied with how the keeping of livestock (including but not limited to poultry, swine, sheep, goats, cows) is regulated in your municipality?"



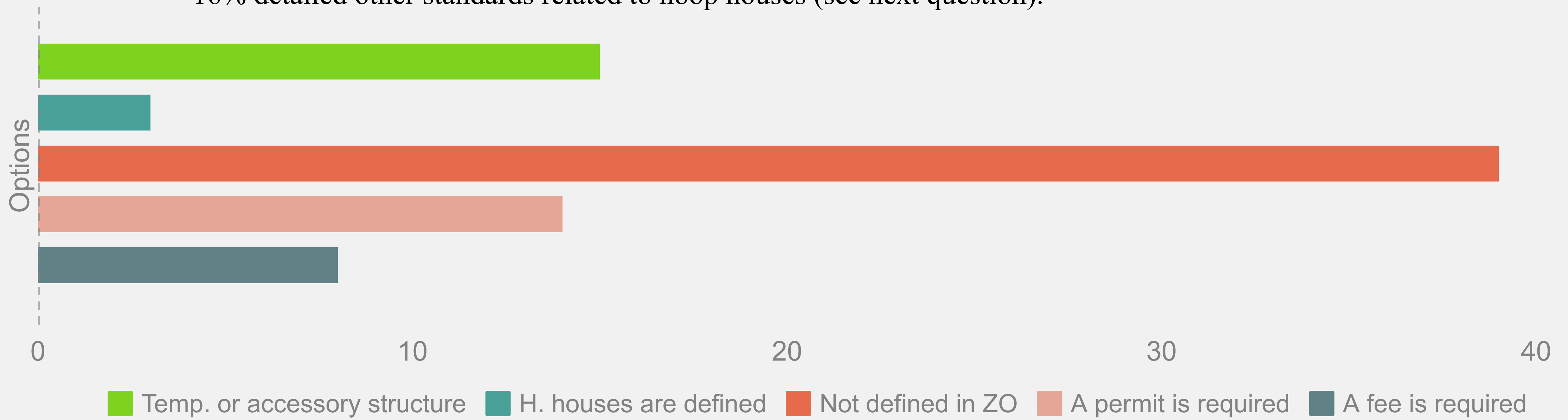
"What needs to change with your ordinance(s)?"

generalized summary responses included:

- Unsure what to change
- Provisions for poultry, small livestock, and bees
- Allowances for hoop/greenhouses
- Nothing related to the topic in ordinance(s) to begin with
- Nothing, no ag currently in community

"How are season extension structures, such as hoop houses and/or low tunnels addressed in your ordinance? Are they defined? Is a permit required? Is there a fee to put up such a structure?"

- 16% of respondents indicated their ordinance considers season extension structures as an accessory or temporary structure,
- 3% indicated that hoop houses are specifically defined in their ordinance,
- 15% stated a permit is required for such structures,
- 9% responded a fee is required,
- 42% said they are not defined in the ordinance, and
- 16% detailed other standards related to hoop houses (see next question).



"Describe other standards related to hoop houses in your ordinance?"

generalized summary responses included:

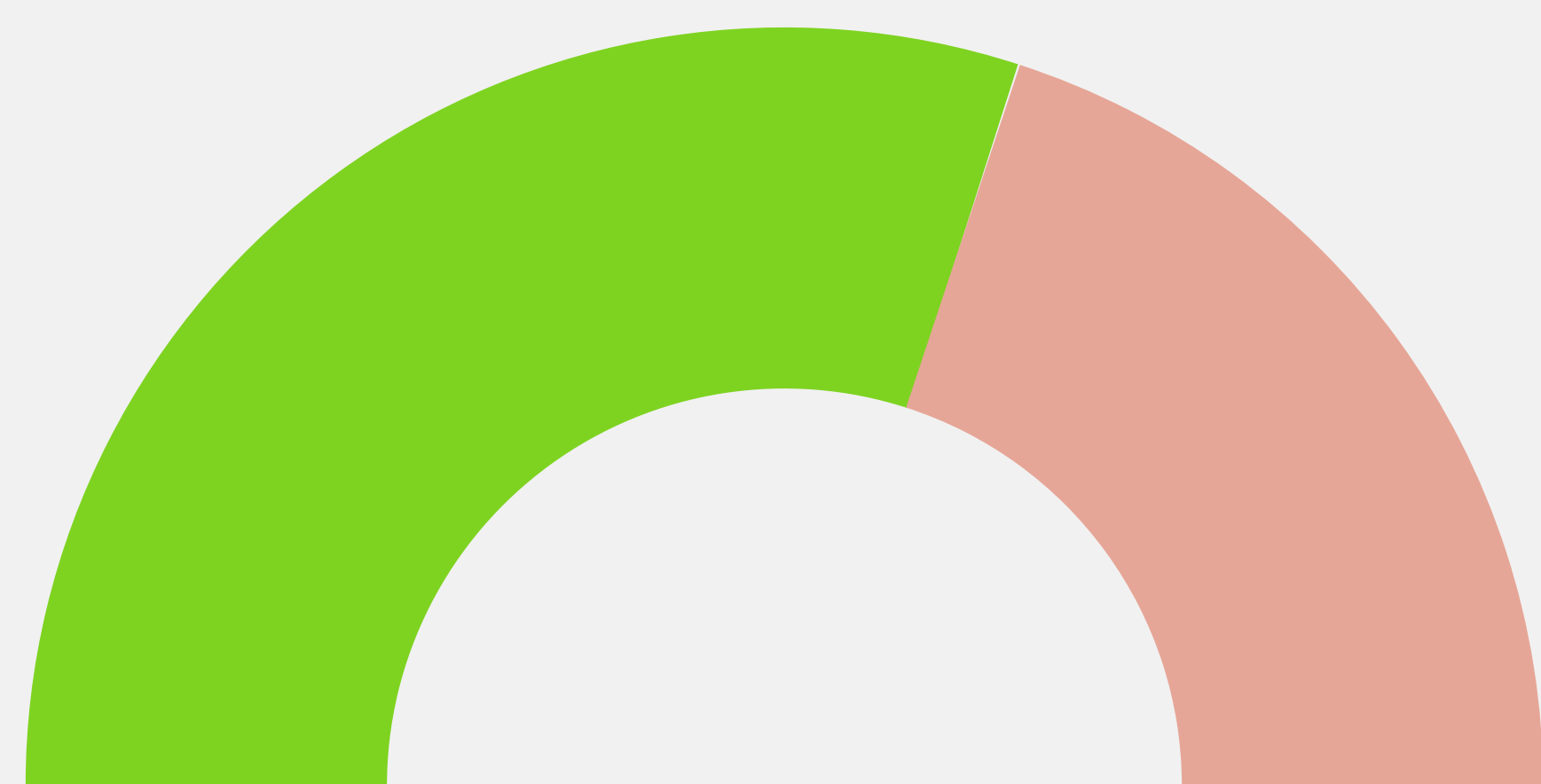
- Unsure
- No permits allowed because of 'agriculture' use or under the 200 sq. ft. that requires a permit
- No ordinance or related standards
- Treated like other structures
- Only allowed in certain district

"When do you plan to amend regulations, or what barriers are you experiencing preventing your community from doing so?"

generalized summary responses included:

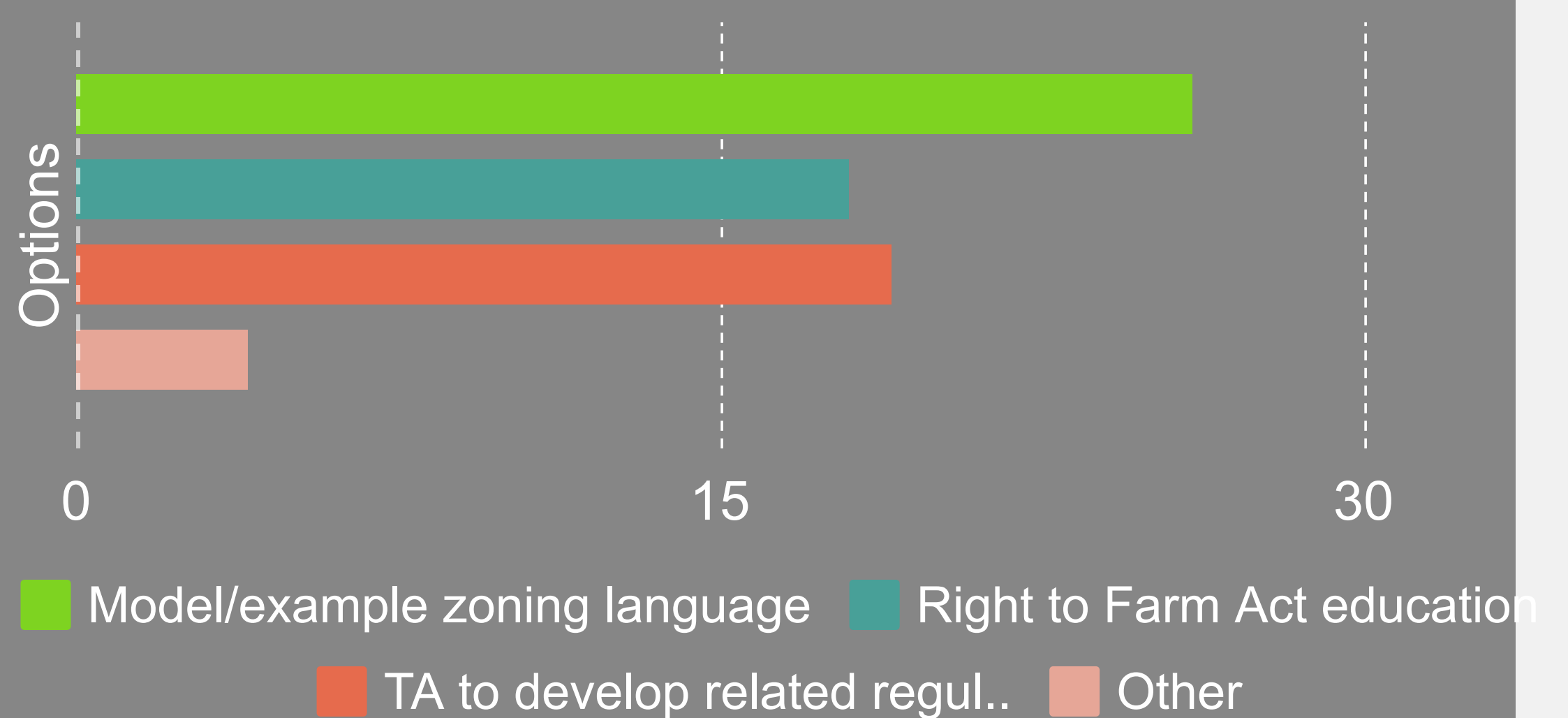
- Unsure
- Following the master plan update
- Need to further study
- No interest has been expressed
- Within the next 1-2 years
- Barriers of lack of funding, uncertainty where to start, lack of participation of the people

"Does your community want to amend your zoning ordinance or other regulations to address small-scale agriculture or other food system-related uses? (Examples include regulations allowing chickens or bees in residential areas, season extension structures, food retail in agricultural districts, or light processing in commercial districts)"

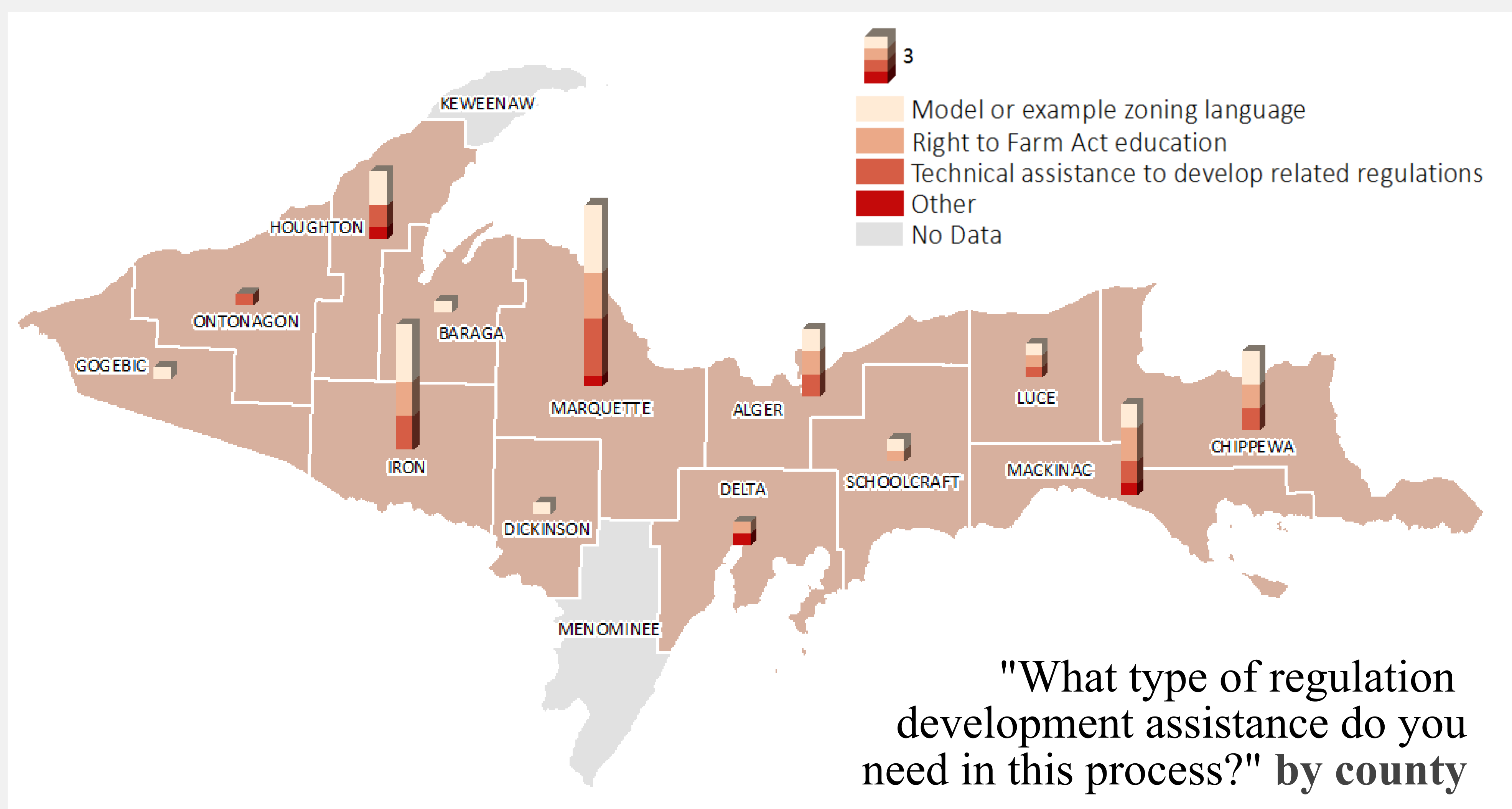


Yes or Unsure (60%) No (40%)

"What type of regulation development assistance do you need in this process?"



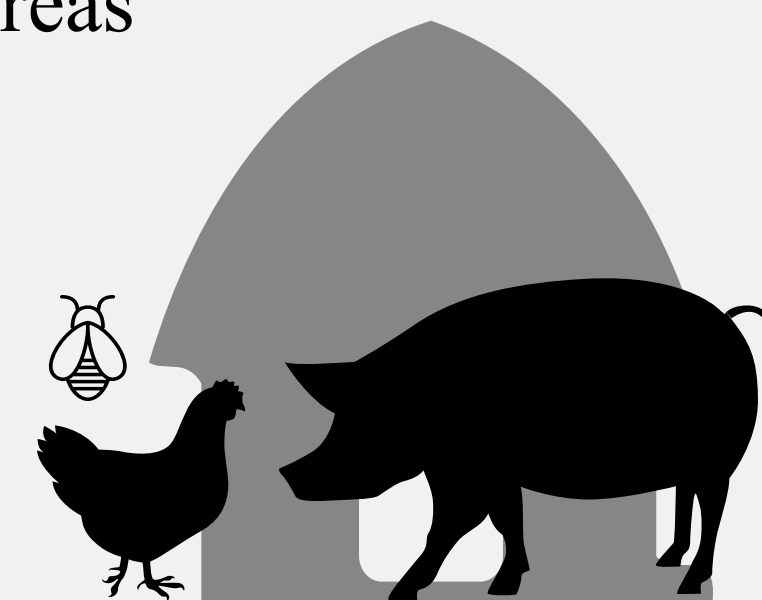
- 39% of respondents mentioned needing model or example zoning language,
- 27% mentioned Right to Farm Act education,
- 28% detailed needing technical assistance to develop related regulations, and
- 6% detailed other types of assistance needs (see next question)



"Please describe any food system policy related issues your community needs assistance with," *generalized summary responses included:*

- None, unsure
- Improved food access, including grocery, co-op, farmers markets in very rural isolated areas
- Need to study issue, support of community

Conclusions



There is a desire among local government officials in the UP to more proactively plan for their community food system through engagement with residents and inclusion of policies that support food systems in master plans. However, local officials acknowledge needing more information about the types of policies and regulations that support community food systems. They are looking for technical assistance to develop related policies and regulations for their plans and ordinances. In particular, local officials are interested in sample zoning language pertaining to season extension structures, poultry, and bees.

Local government officials are also looking for ways and information to engage community residents on the topic of community food systems and could benefit from sample survey questions or example public meeting formats, tools, and information to share.

Additionally, local government officials recognize the preemptive nature of the Michigan Right to Farm Act and express a need for more education on the topic in order to appropriately address community food systems through regulation.

The UPFE Policy Committee is positioned to address these needs in part. UPFE certainly can expand the sharing of educational information on community food systems and could even play a role in reviewing draft policies and plans. However, the Policy Committee has limited ability to offer the technical assistance that communities need to amend their plans and ordinances. An opportunity exists to partner with the three planning and development regions in the UP, which are uniquely positioned to provide technical assistance as they are contracted to work on municipal plan updates and zoning ordinance amendments. Working together, UPFE and the regions could move the needle' to significantly improve the extent to which local government policies and regulations support and encourage plentiful community food systems throughout the UP.

UPFE is a Food Hub led by MSU Extension and the Marquette Food Co-op, in conjunction with the Western UP Health Department, that coordinates and supports local food activities in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. UPFE serves as a resource portal for farmers, businesses, and individuals looking to connect with and actively participate in their local food system.

For more information please contact UPFE at info@upfoodexchange.com 906-225-0671, ext. 723