

AKIN COLLECTIVE

DEMOGRAPHICS SURVEY REPORT

SUMMER 2018



CONDUCTED + PREPARED BY RANIA EL MUGAMMAR

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Akin Collective and Rania El Mugammar collaborated to conduct a demographics survey and equity survey of our past and present members.

The survey was instigated in order to begin to understand who accesses our spaces and who is excluded from that access as well as the unique needs of the diverse members of our community. It is our desire to foster meaningful engagement, build safer spaces and reflect the diverse arts and cultural communities within the city of Toronto, and to model inclusion, accountability and sustainable change.

The data gathered from this research, and the mistakes we made*, helps to understand how to better do the work of equity, anti-oppression and inclusion and how to centre the most marginalized and chronically excluded folks in our efforts moving forward. This data maps our landscapes and provides us with knowledge that will help shape our future work; to set, measure and evaluate equity goals; to develop policies and processes that meet the unique needs of our communities.

We explored age, race, gender, sexual orientation, income and beyond. We collected data along ten markers and received 98 combined responses. This is an exercise in knowledge production, so that our work going forward is grounded in the quantitative and qualitative experiences of individuals at varying intersections of their identities. It is a means of tapping into our collective wisdom, and of intentionally doing the difficult, complicated and messy work of accountability and practicing anti-oppression. There are often conversations around “improving” and “doing better” when it comes to the work of equity and meaningful inclusion, however, we don’t often have ways to assess our needs, measure our progress and evaluate our outcomes.

Toronto’s arts and cultural landscape is heavily shaped by the labour and often unrecognized contributions of those who are conspicuous by their absence from our spaces, resources and opportunities. We want to do the work responsibly, by learning from our shortfalls, and creating spaces for folks to tell their own stories, no matter how complicated or uncomfortable they may make us feel.

In the course of collecting this data, I (Rania), have engaged with Akin Collective members in person, on the phone and online to receive feedback on the process and to hear some of the experiences that lose their nuance in a survey. Those learnings are also reflected in the upcoming Equity Survey report. The statistical, qualitative and anecdotal findings of both the Demographics and Equity surveys provide a starting point - imperfect and incapable of capturing the complexity of our experiences but remains a site of knowledge production.

Due to the unique nature of Akin Collective and the lack of human rights based and equity based data that is publicly accessible, finding comparable data sets to contrast and position ourselves is difficult. As a result, included is data from the City of Toronto’s Census (2016, Statistics Canada) for comparison and analysis where available.

This report is a step in a commitment to purposely learning, unlearning and building anti-oppressive spaces that centre the most marginalized and chronically excluded members of our community. I am deeply grateful for your trust, your critique and your wisdom throughout this process. Arts and cultural spaces have a unique opportunity and responsibility to challenge, shape our narratives and cultural landscapes to become more critically reflective and actively accountable.

* see attached appendix

KEY FINDINGS

The findings of this report reflected several general trends with regards to the composition of the membership at Akin Collective, contrasted with 2016 census data for the City of Toronto. The trends seen here are a common thread among many arts and cultural spaces- these spaces are reflecting the power dynamics of the world they inhabit. Our spaces have the opportunity to challenge those dynamics with an informed analysis.

Some of the key findings reflect are:

Akin membership was noticeably younger than the City of Toronto, significantly more white identifying and anglophone than the city of Toronto. Our membership also reflected higher levels of formal education.

We reflected a similar percentage of members with disabilities as Toronto and a substantial number of our members lived below the poverty line (LIM- low-income measure). This is reflective not only of how inequity manifests in our lives but is also in part, due to the high rates of temporary, precarious, underpaid and unpaid work in the arts and cultural sector. We also reflected significantly lower levels of home ownership at roughly half the rate of ownership of residential dwellings in the city of Toronto. We also reflected a large gap between the lowest income earners and highest income earners in our collective.

The results yielded a notably larger percentage of our membership identified as LGTBQQIP2SSA , as a well as a large percentage of women identifying members.

APPENDIX

Dear Akin Collective Members,

Thanks so much for taking the time to fill out the Demographics and Equity survey over the past two months. I am so grateful for your energy, your generosity, your suggestions and your wisdom.

I wanted to include this note, which was previously sent by email, regarding the survey, to be accountable for some of the questions/wording and to share some learnings. An Akin member has rightfully indicated some harmful language in my questions surrounding indigenous communities. I am grateful for their labour in doing so, while simultaneously experiencing the harm of eurocentrism and settler colonial centrism.

It's a big part of my practices to speak openly about my mistakes, in order to be accountable for the harm I have caused, to honor the labour of the individual who made my mistakes obvious to me, and make a clear commitment to doing better. My questions around racial identity, gender expression, citizenship and sexuality failed to encompass answers that spoke to Indigenous experiences and cultural contexts. Whether intentional or not, this mistake is contextualized within centuries of erasure and violent colonial discourse around Indigenous identities which often leaves Indigenous communities with survey options that don't provide meaningful representation of their identities. It may seem like a small thing, it's not, particularly because it's reflective of how Indigenous people and communities continue to be violently excluded/assimilated even when we're trying to be inclusive. At the suggestion of the member, I have been reading and reflecting on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

I am a believer and practitioner of transformative justice, and one of it's biggest tenants is personal accountability with community support.

As a result of this, I would like to extend my deepest apologies for the harm I have caused/continue to cause and will be taking the following steps to understand it's extent and do better in the future:

I will include a note about these learnings and mistakes in the summary of the final report, it's not transparent or sincere not to include this as context for the data and to honor the labour of the person who made my understanding possible, often at great personal cost

I will dedicate 25% of the fees paid to me to perform this work to receiving further training, education and consultation from experienced Indigenous educators, artists, consultants and activists

I will be working with a paid Indigenous consultant on every project moving forward to ensure that I can unlearn and be accountable for this harm and to decolonize my research methodologies and centre Indigenous folks/experiences in intentional and meaningful ways

Share back my learnings after my trainings in order to amplify the impact of the knowledge just as the circulation of this survey amplified the impact of the harm

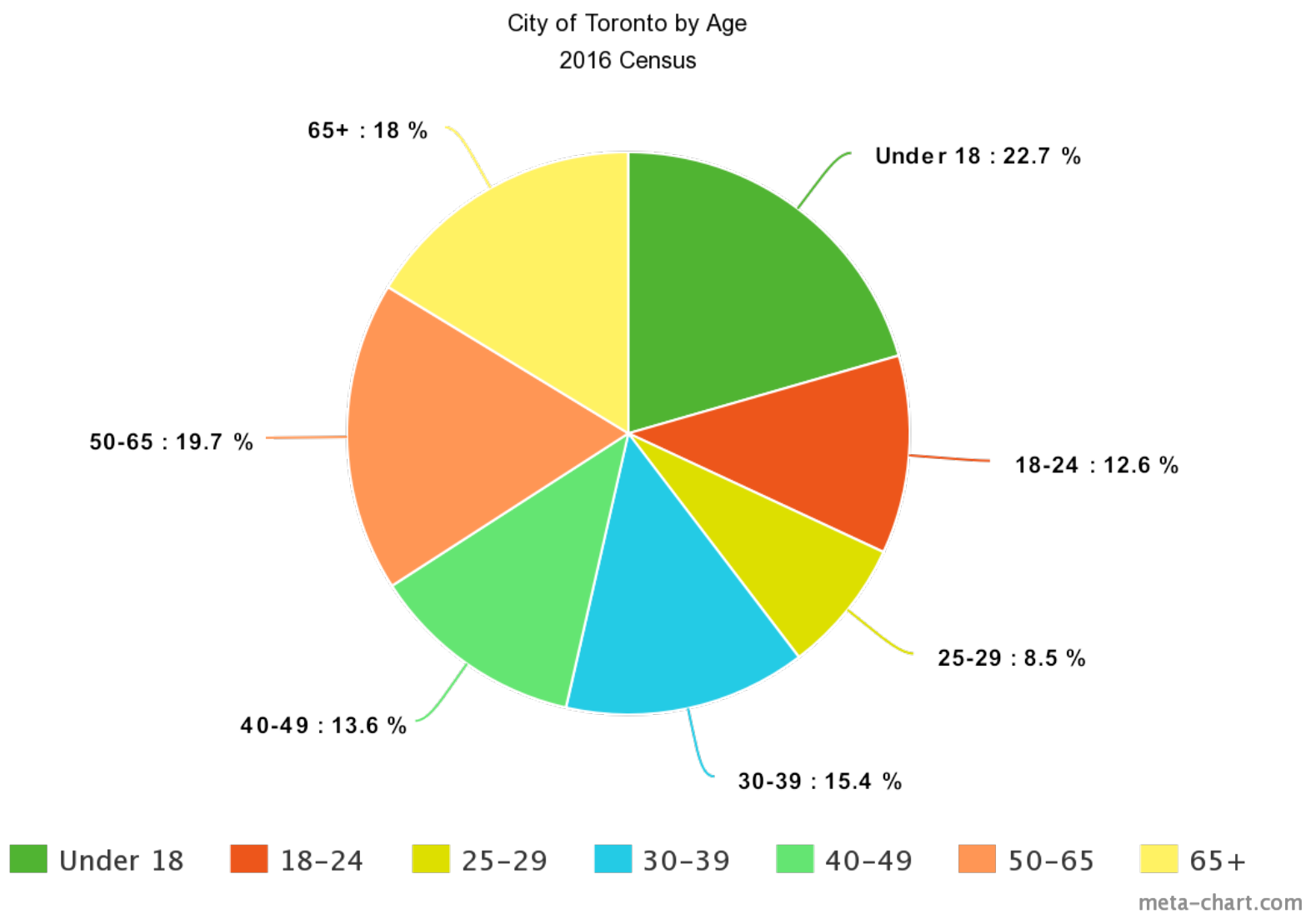
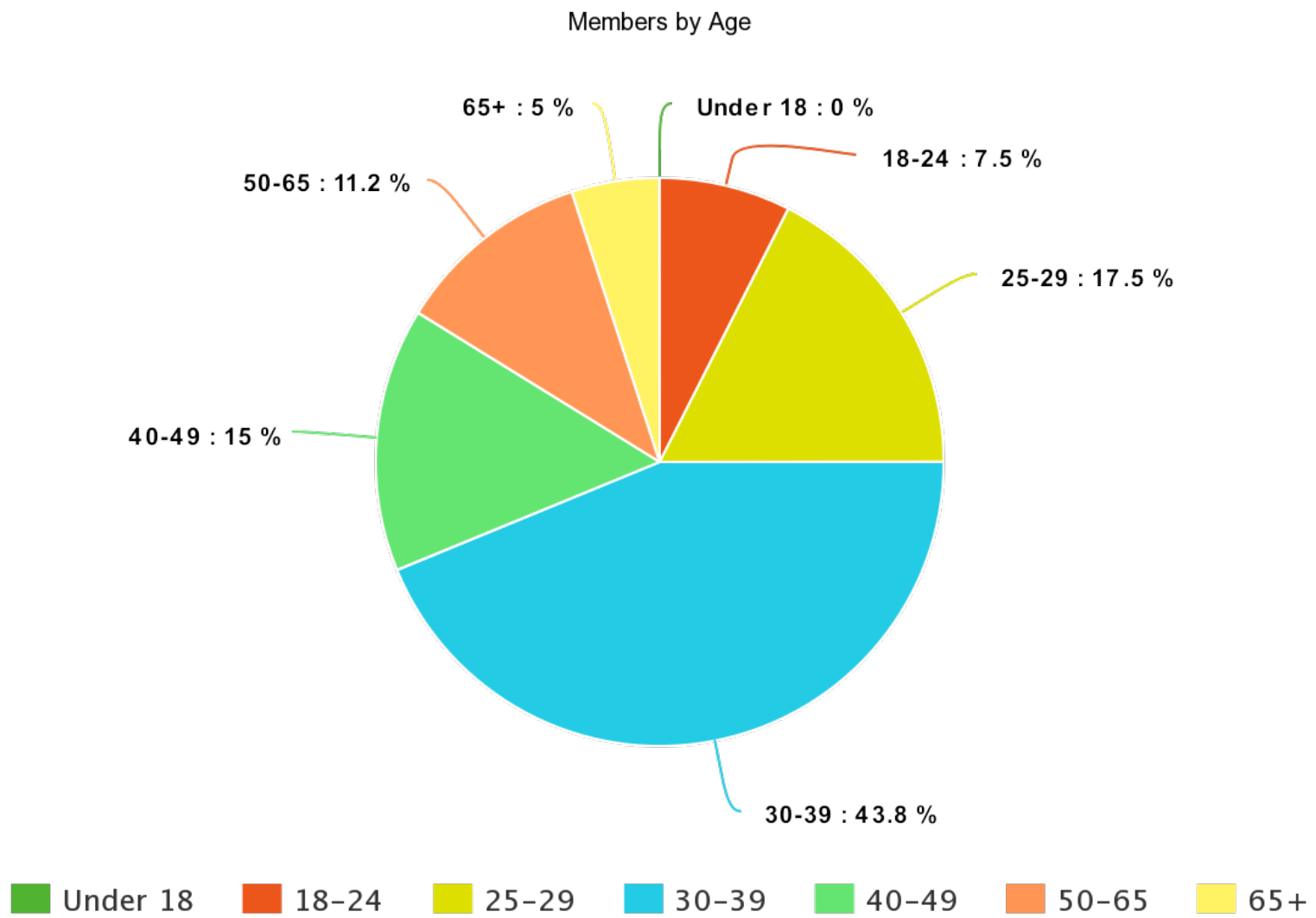
If you would like to talk about any of this, I am happy to answer questions and receive feedback, and if I can support you and help to address the harm I have caused any of you in any way, I would be deeply grateful for that opportunity.

Thank you again for your patience, your responses and your pointed and important observations.

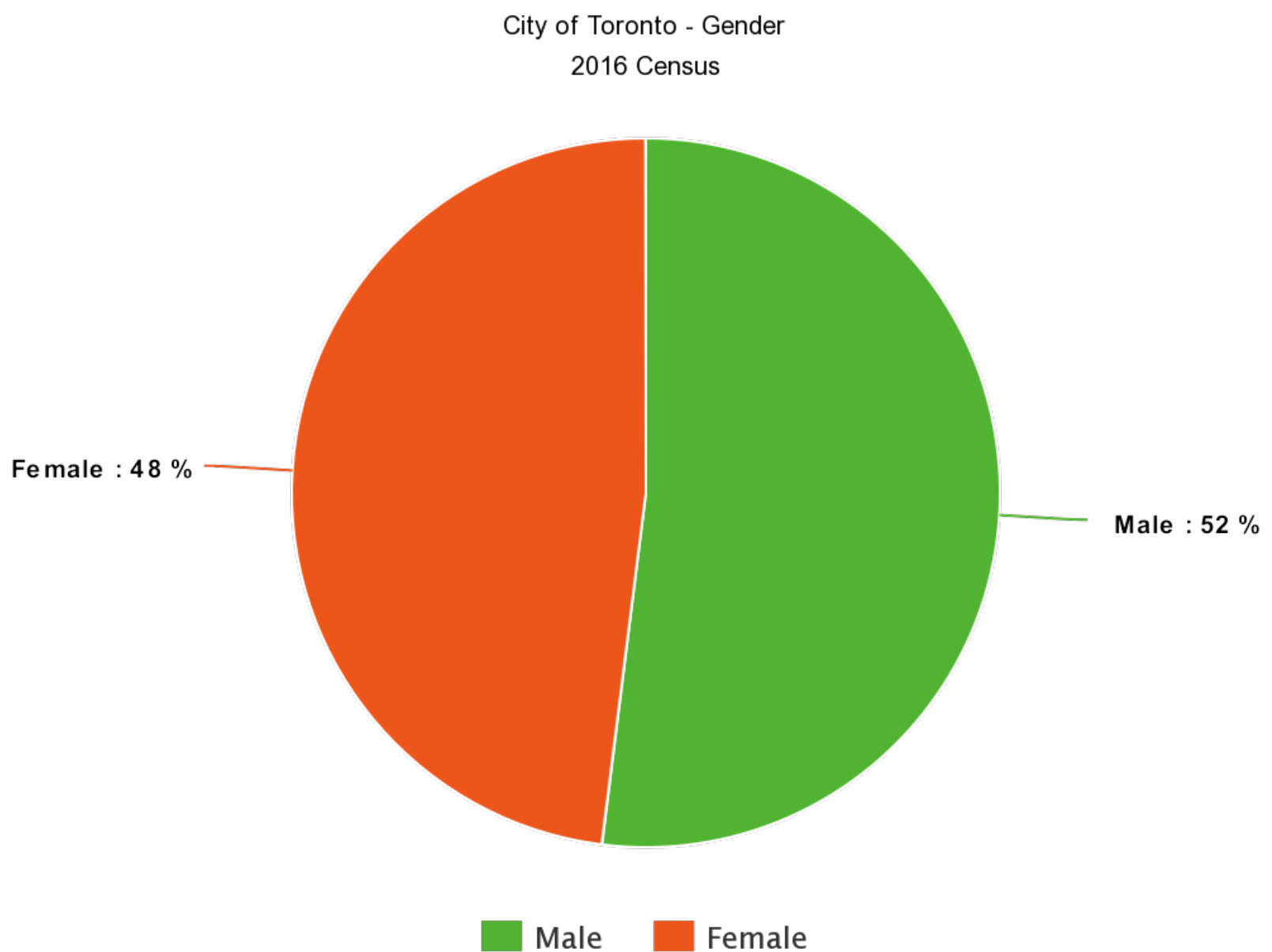
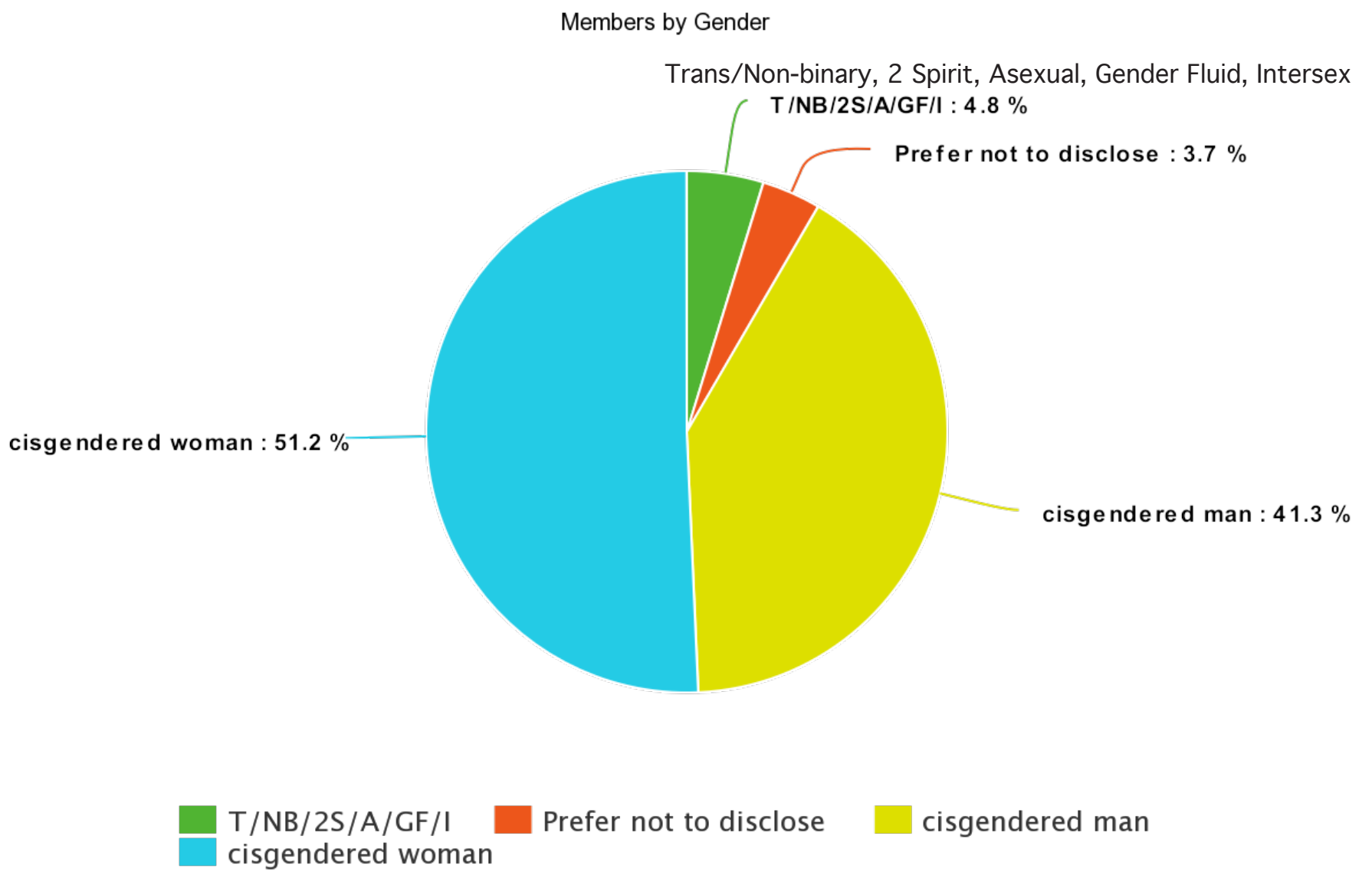
Sincerely,

Rania El Mugammar
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FINDINGS AGE

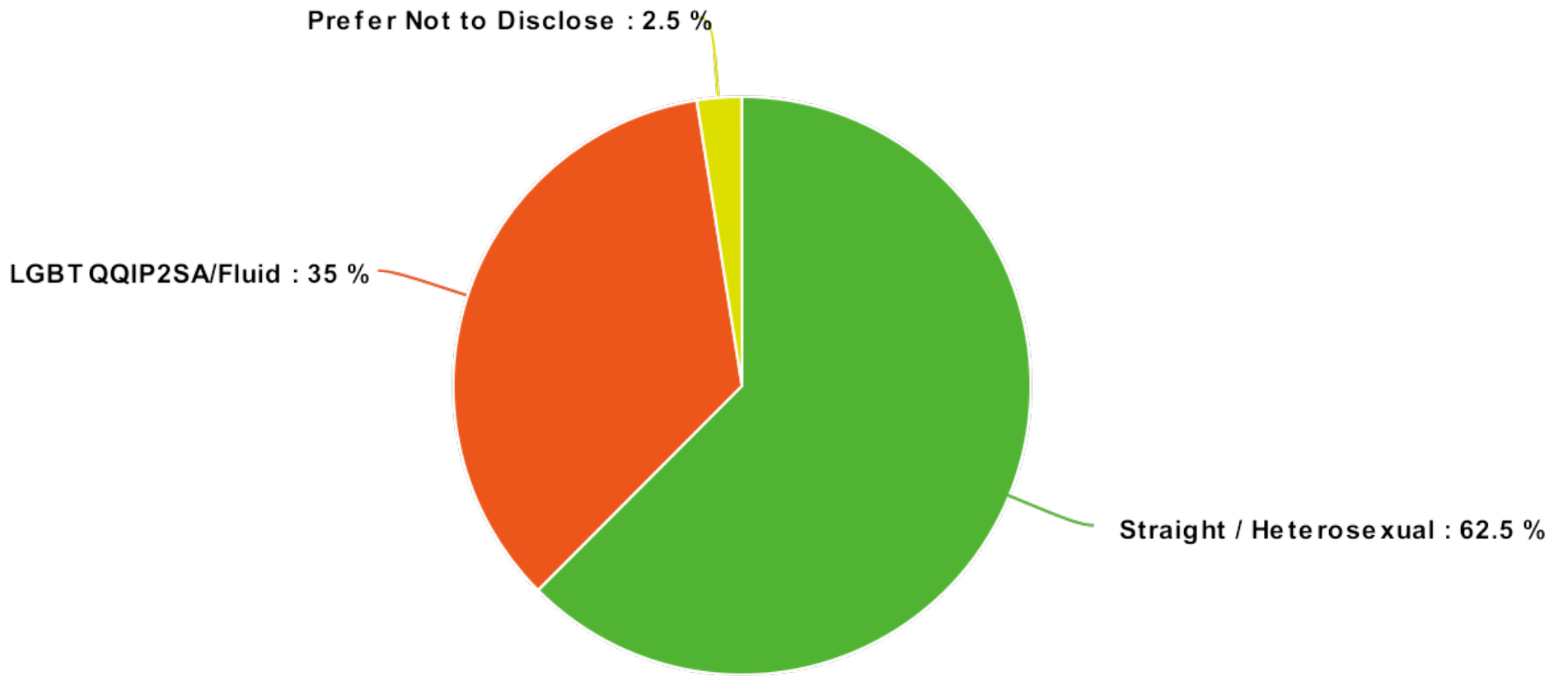


FINDINGS GENDER



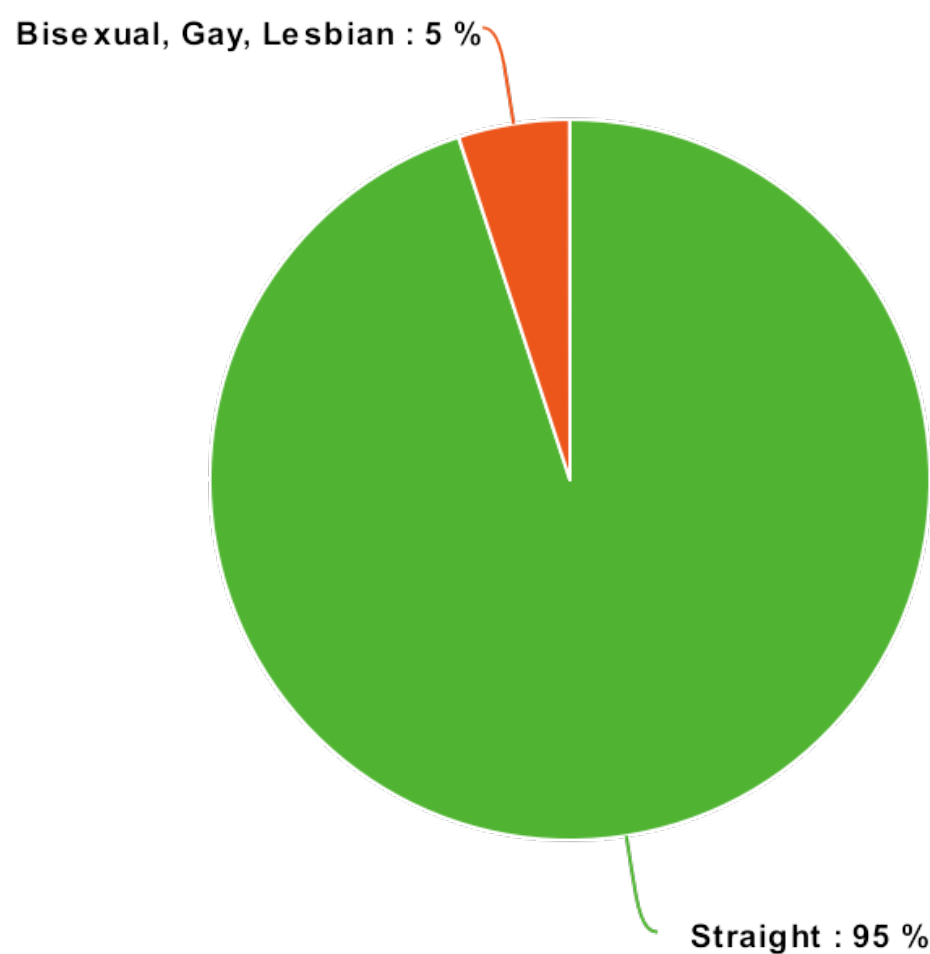
FINDINGS SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sexual Orientation



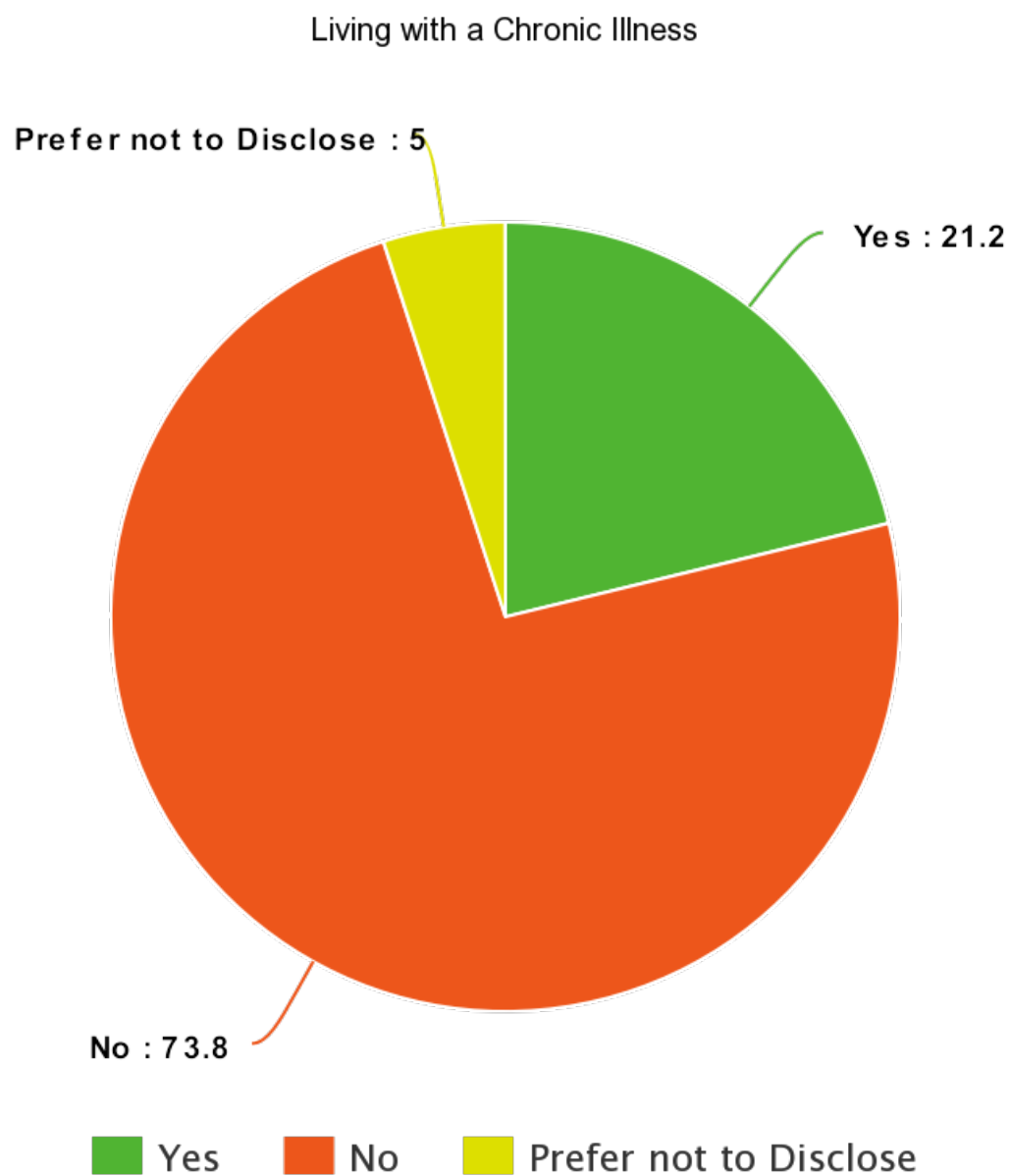
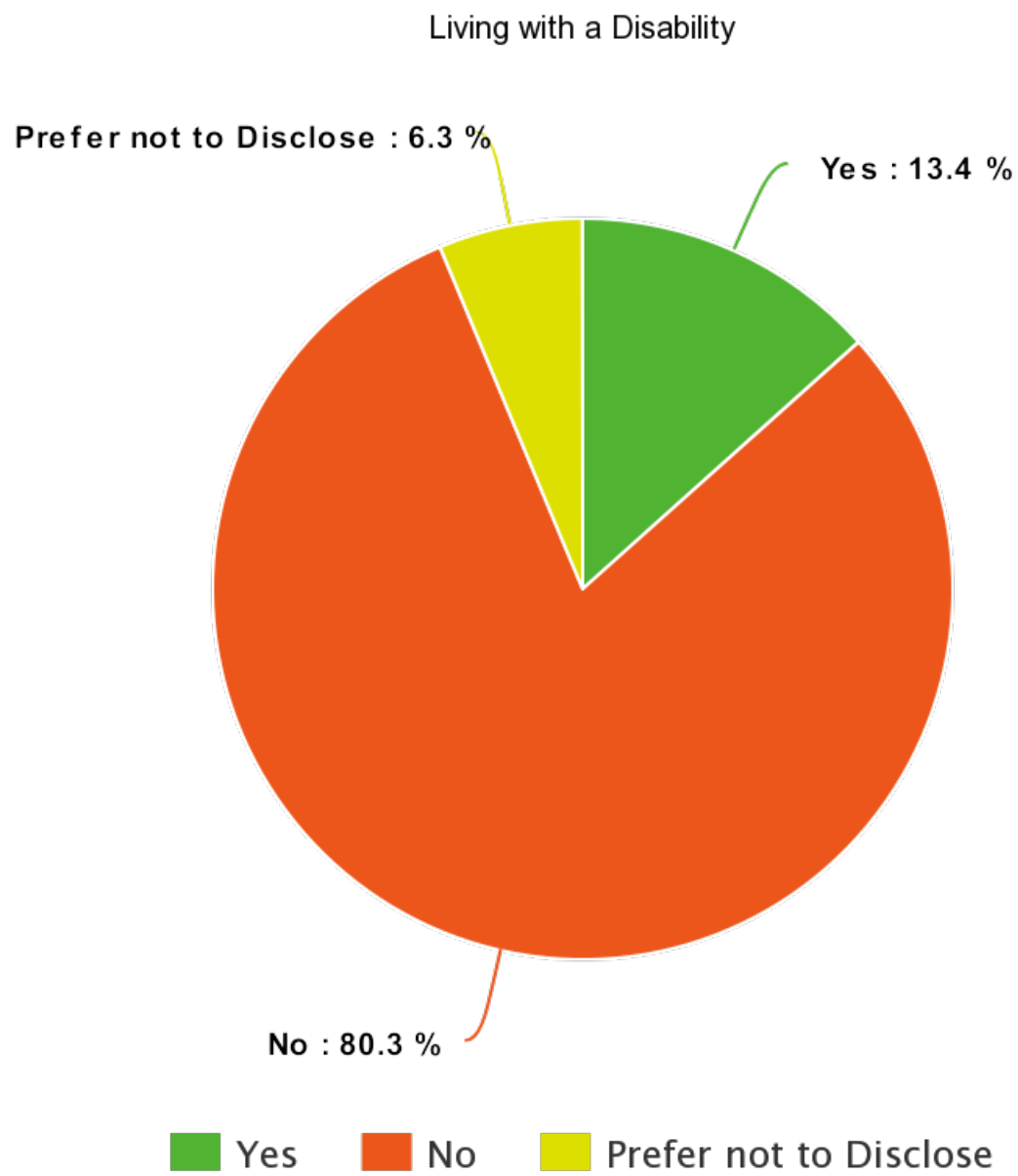
■ Straight / Heterosexual ■ LGBTQIP2SA/Fluid ■ Prefer Not to Disclose

City of Toronto- Sexual Orientation
2016 Census

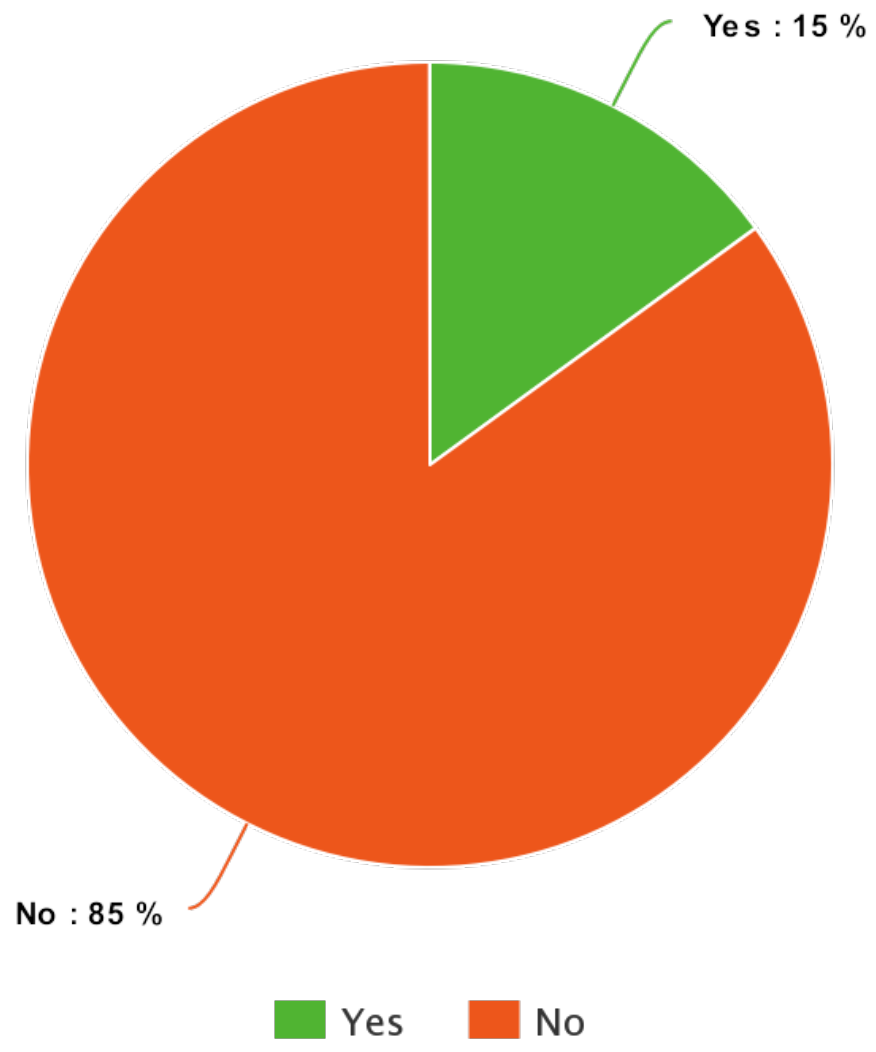


■ Straight ■ Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian

FINDINGS DISABILITY + CHRONIC ILLNESS

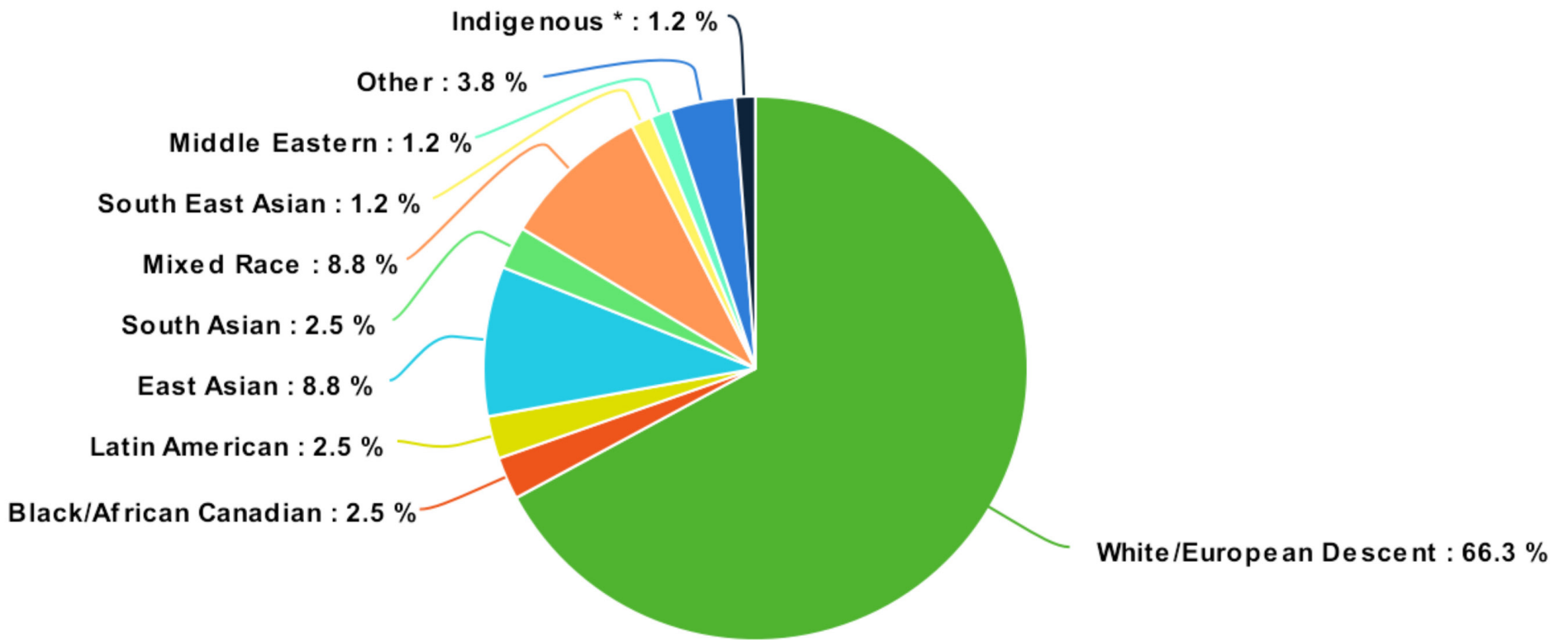


City of Toronto - Living with a Disability
2016 Census



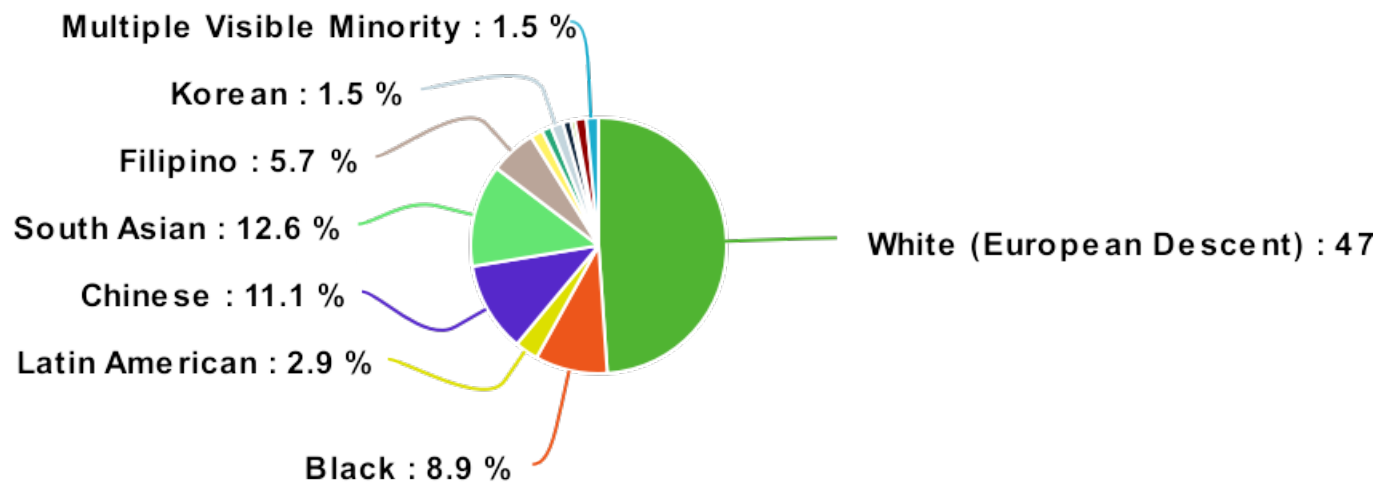
FINDINGS RACIAL IDENTITY

Racial Identity - Akin Members



- White/European Descent
 Black/African Canadian
 Latin American
 East Asian
- South Asian
 Mixed Race
 South East Asian
 Middle Eastern
 Other
- Indigenous * SEE ATTACHED APPENDIX

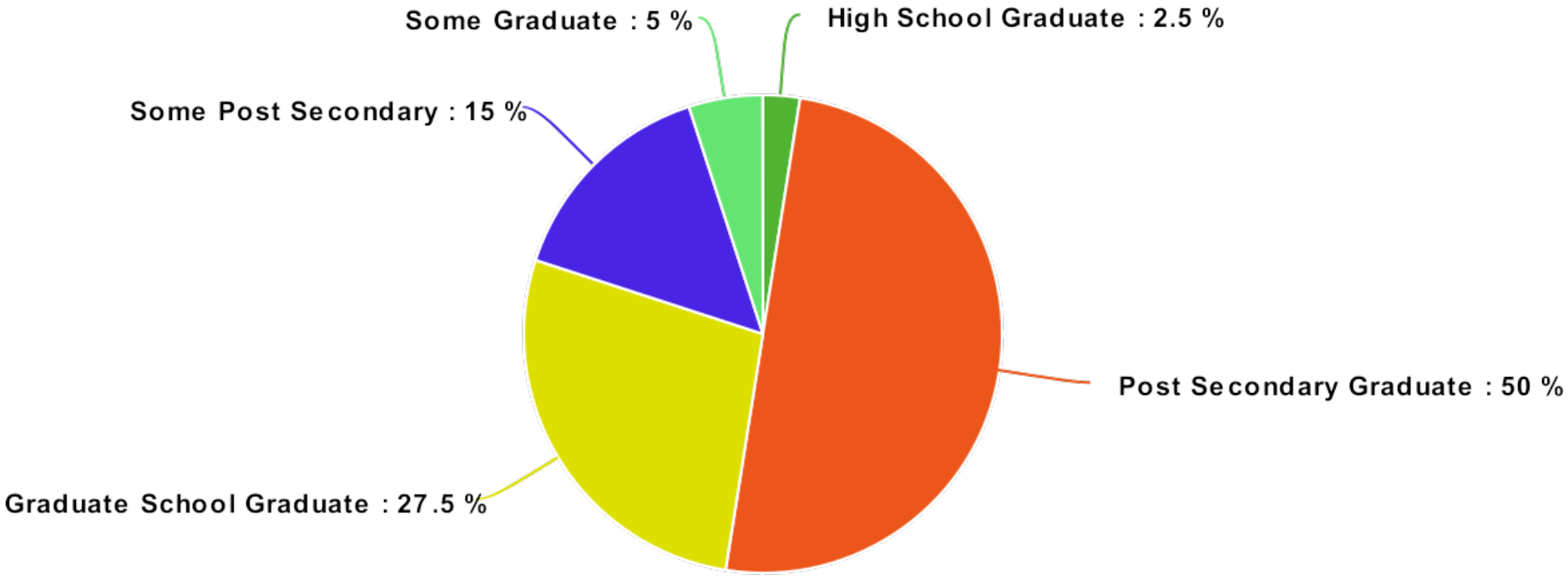
City of Toronto - Race/Racial Identity
2016 Census



- White (European Descent)
 Black
 Latin American
 Chinese
- South Asian
 Filipino
 South East Asian
 Arab
 Korean
- Aboriginal (First Nations, Inuit, Metis, Multiple Identities)
 Japanese
- Visible Minority
 Multiple Visible Minority

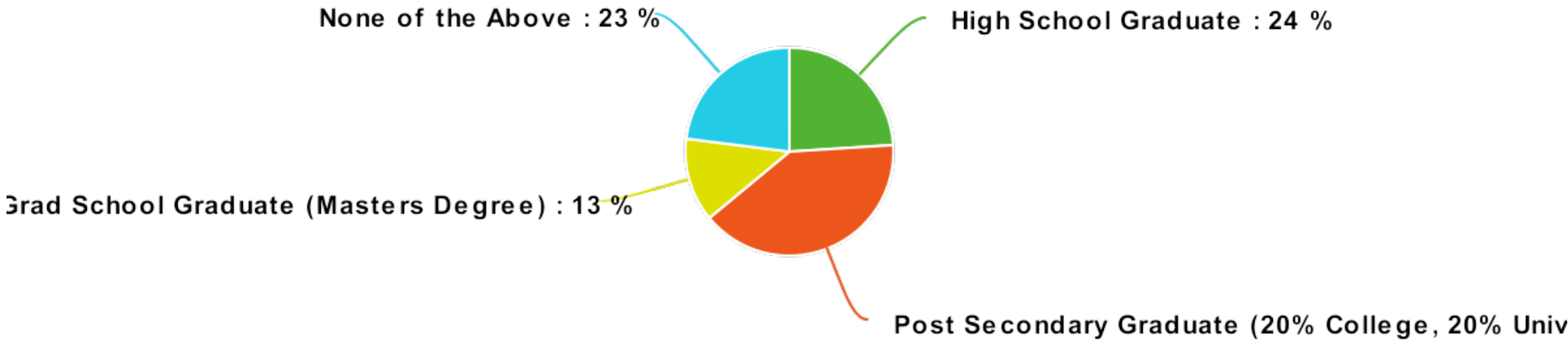
FINDINGS EDUCATION

Level of Education



- High School Graduate
- Post Secondary Graduate
- Graduate School Graduate
- Some Post Secondary
- Some Graduate

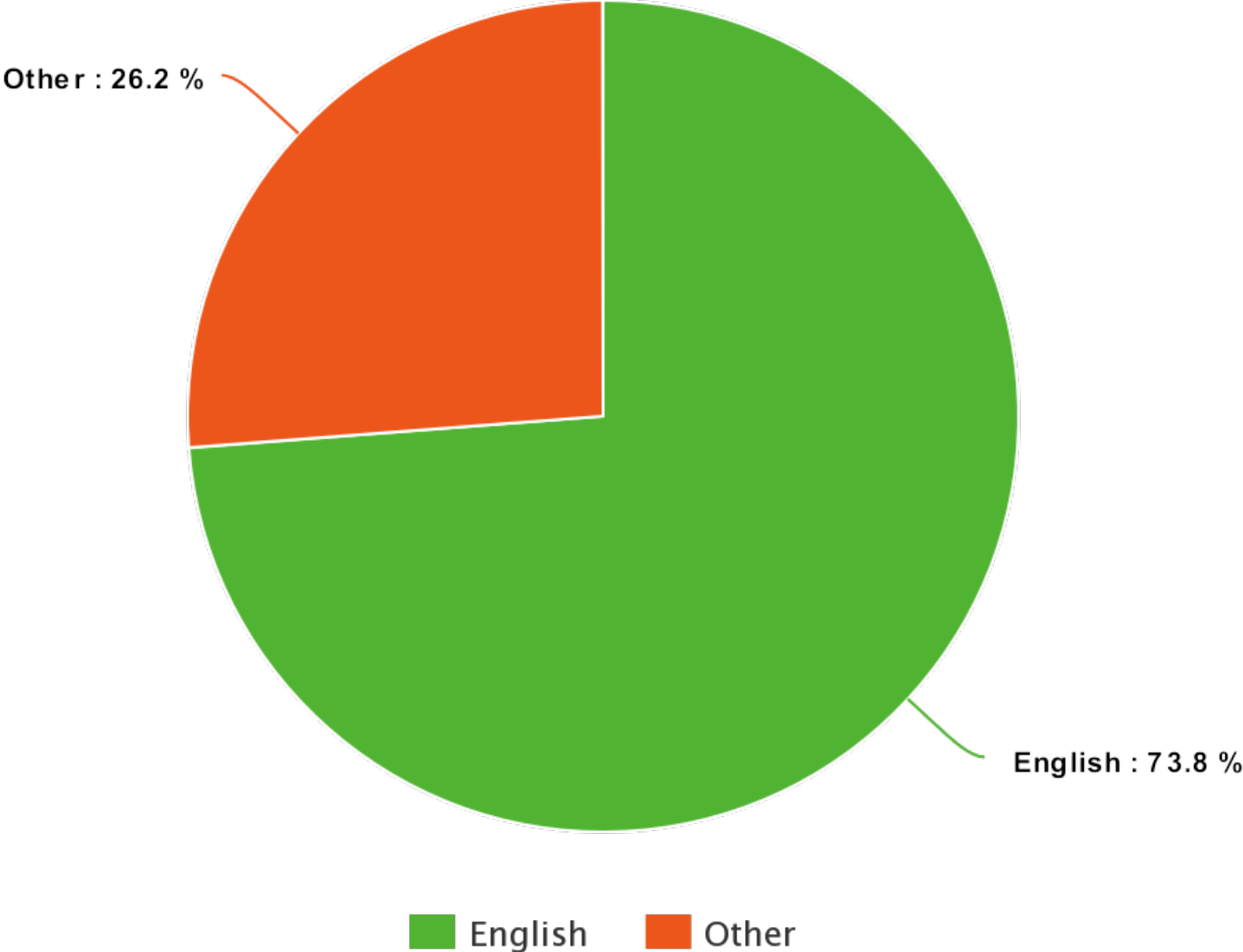
City of Toronto Education
2016 Census



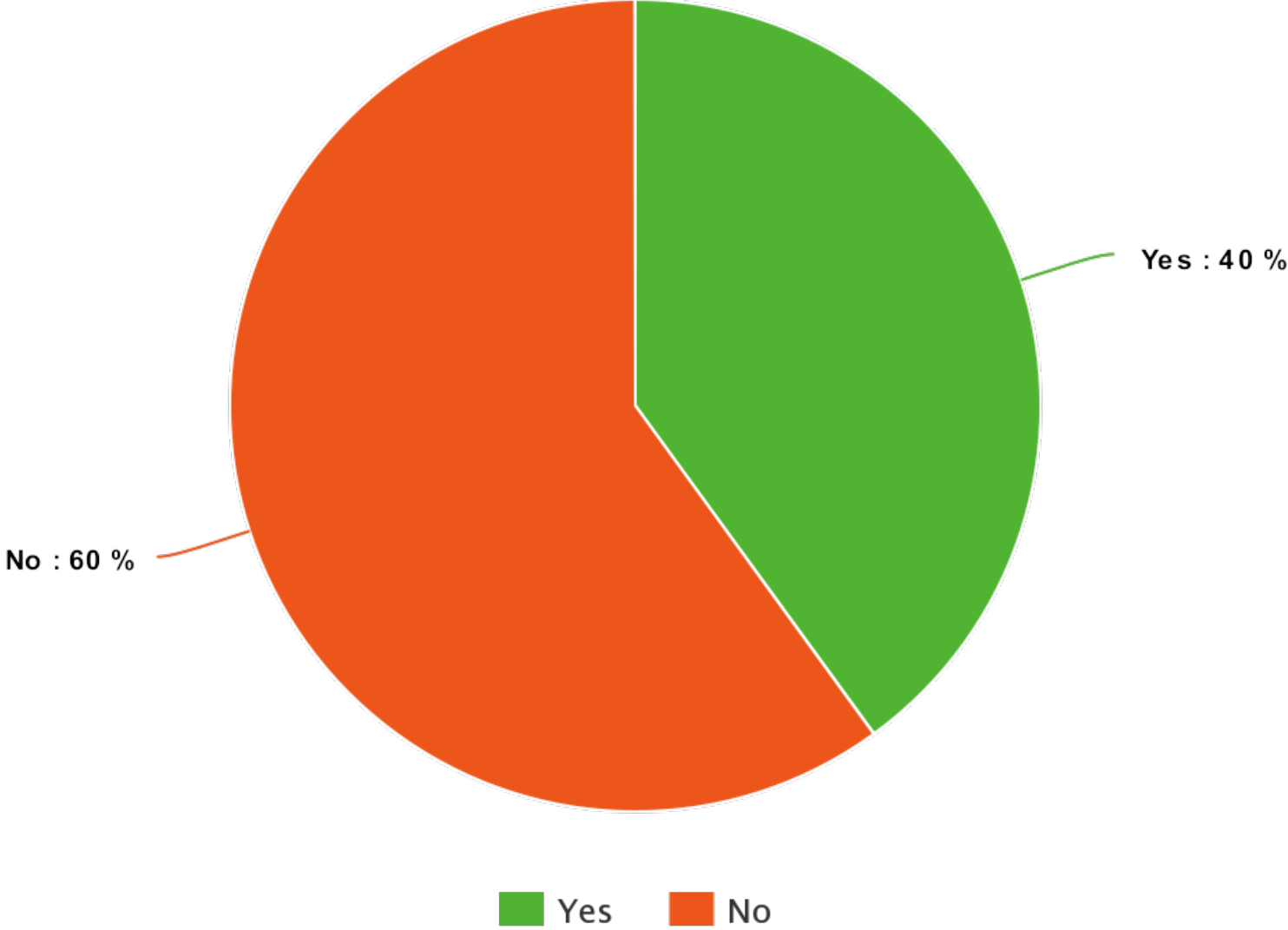
- High School Graduate
- Post Secondary Graduate (20% College, 20% University)
- Grad School Graduate (Masters Degree)
- None of the Above

FINDINGS LANGUAGE

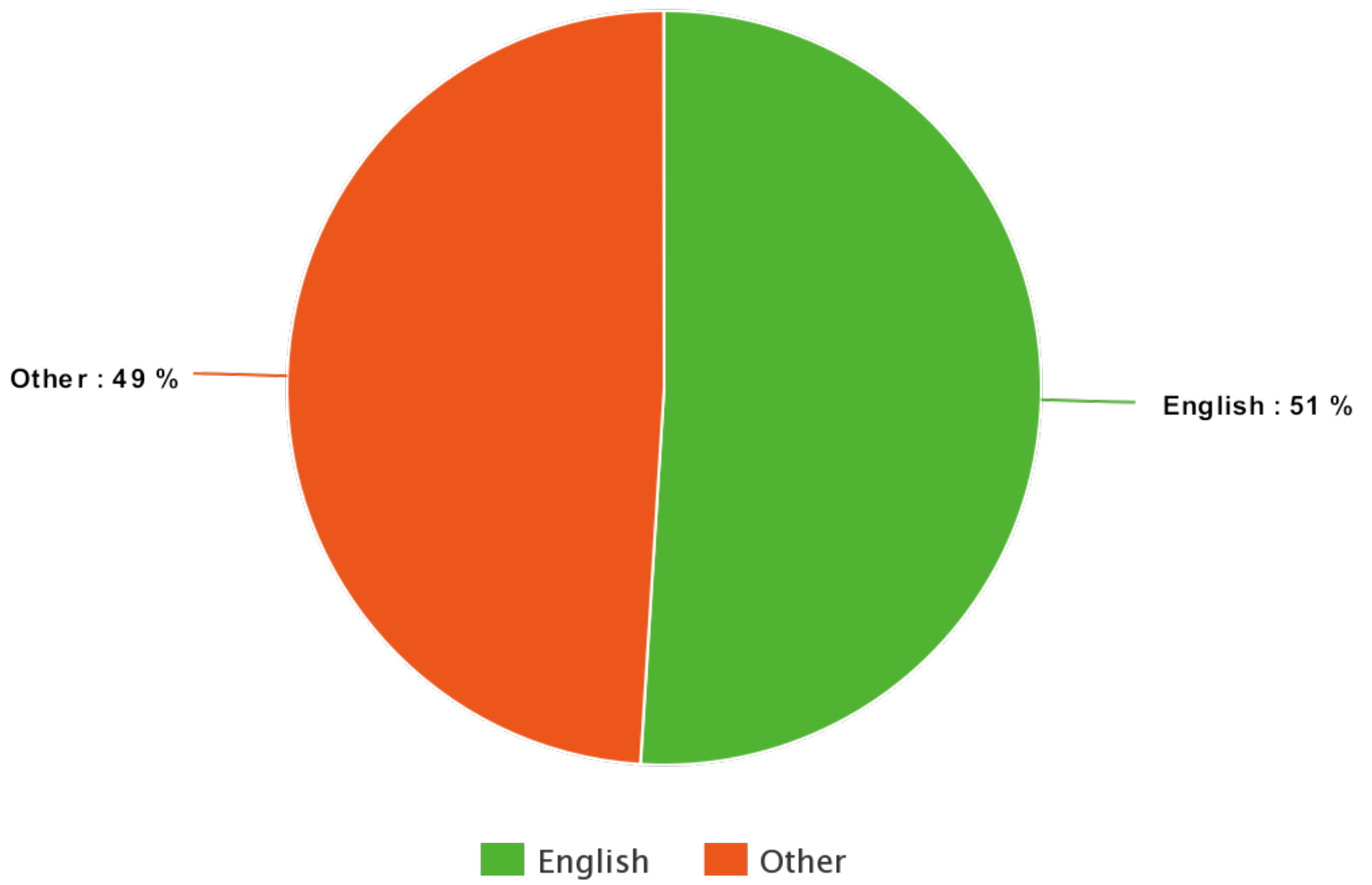
First Language



2 or More Languages

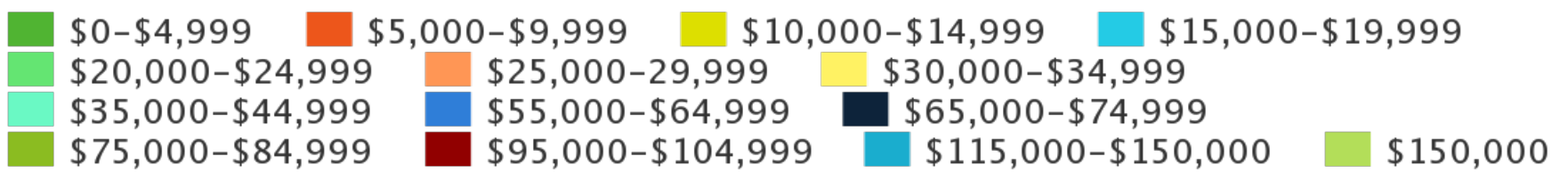
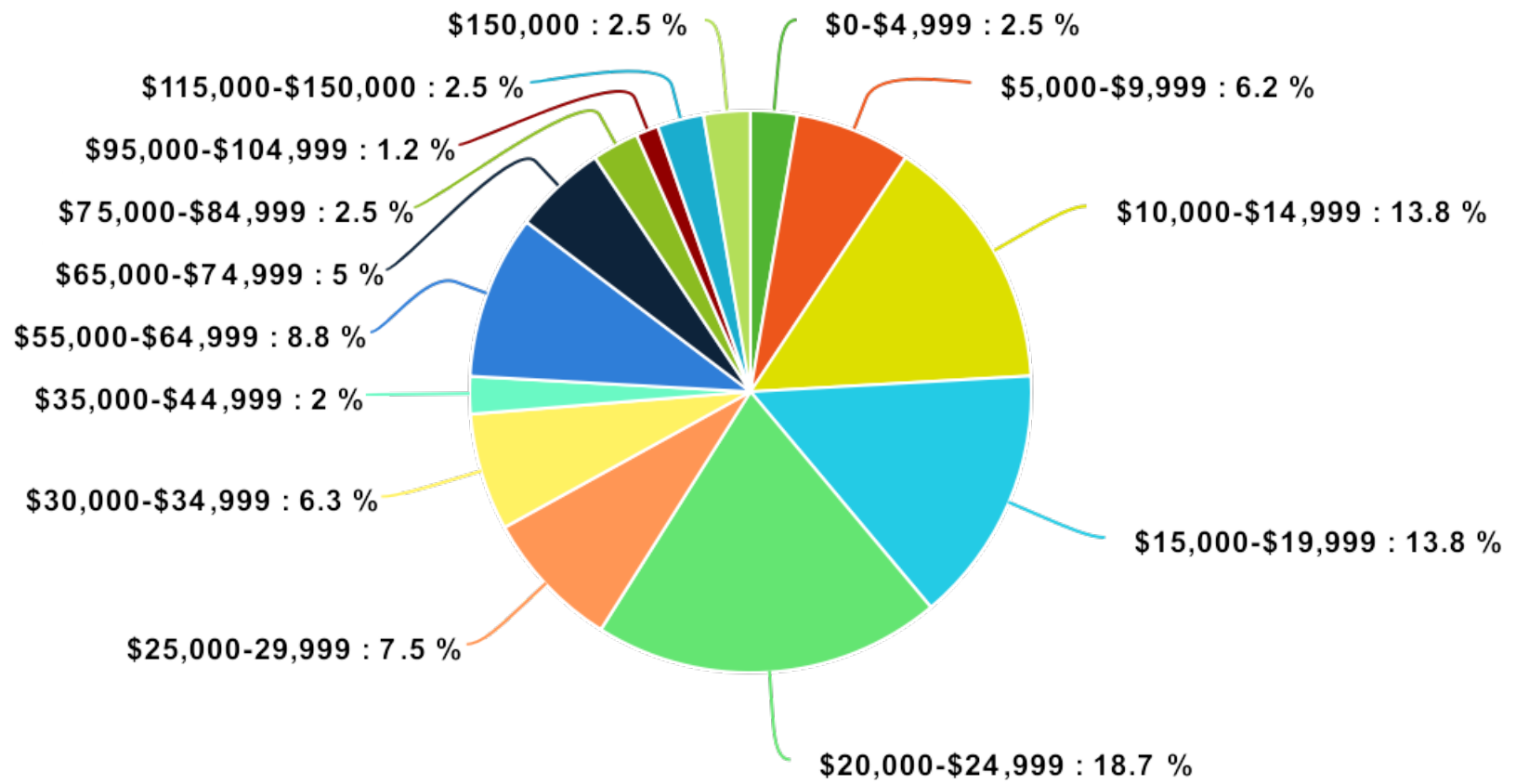


City of Toronto- First Language
2016 Census

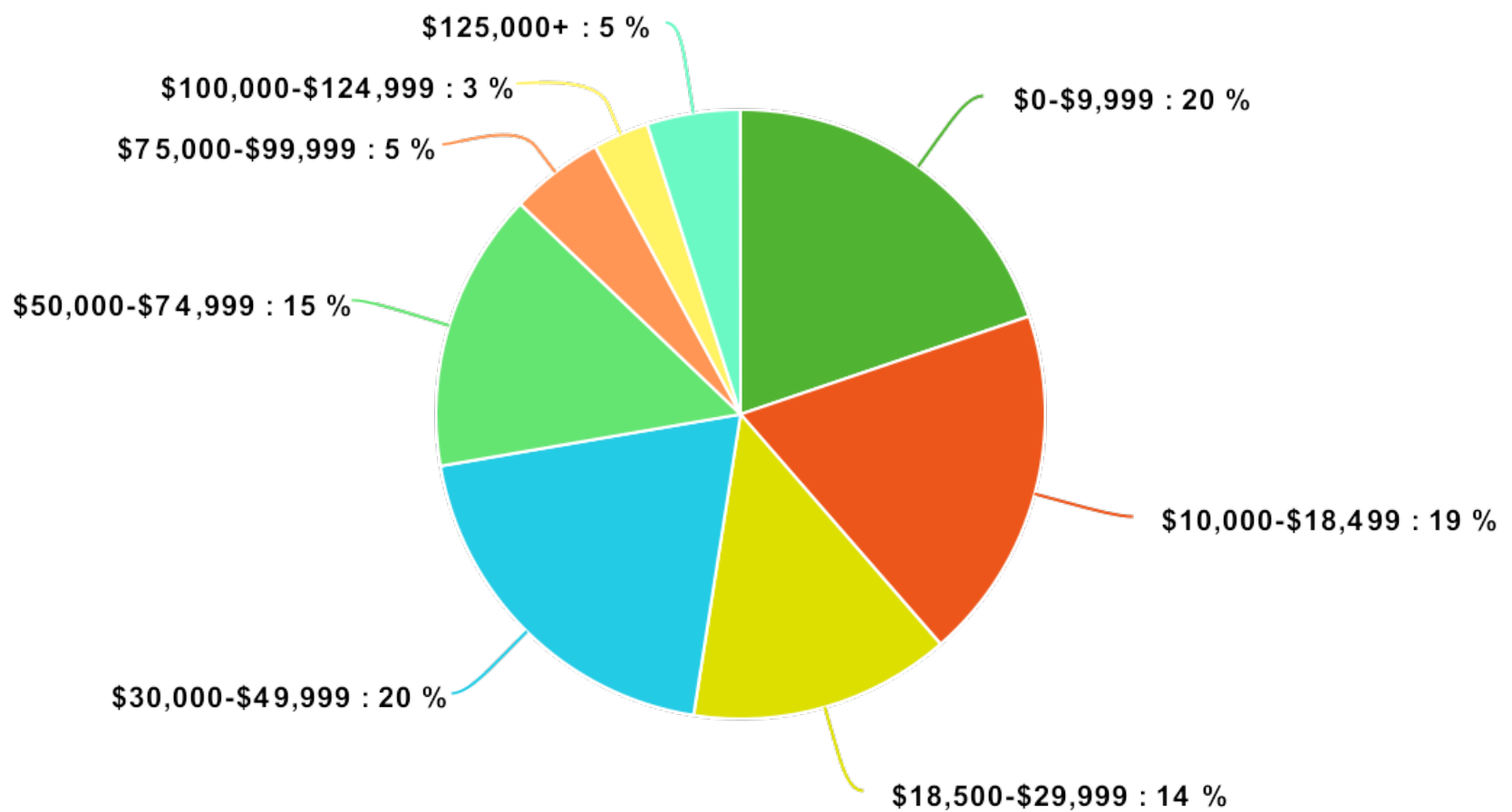


FINDINGS PERSONAL INCOME

Personal Income



City of Toronto - Personal Income
2016 Census



FINDINGS RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY

