



## 2015 Volunteer Survey

---

## Summary of Results

---

### Response Rate

Due to an ongoing need of more volunteers with the skills necessary for specific projects, 81 new members were added to the Service Corps in 2015. Additional volunteers were recruited for the Plan IT! program and Volunteer Impact Partnership Volunteer Manager Corps program. Several participants from both programs became service corps members after their projects were completed.

The 2015 survey was open earlier this year, from August 6 to September 10. In past years, the survey had been sent in early September or October. This year, 476 service corps members were invited to provide feedback on their experience volunteering with 501 Commons. We received 117 responses for a response rate similar to previous years, 25%.

### Service Corps Participation

The number of 501 Commons volunteers has continued to grow significantly. Among those who responded, 39% have been volunteering at 501 Commons for one year or less while only 6% of respondents have been volunteering with us for over 10 years. This is the first increase in volunteers that have been engaging with us for over ten years since 2012 and the highest percentage since 2008.

The rate of service corps members who are currently assigned to a project has increased from 20% in 2014 to 33% in 2015. This could be due to the high demand for management consulting projects this past year in addition to a larger Catalyst cohort that operates during the summer months. The percentage of those available but not assigned has dropped from 45% to 25%. There was also a decrease in the number of volunteers who were currently available for projects which is likely due to the survey being sent during vacation season.

When asked about the number of hours Service Corps members were willing to contribute in the next 6 months, 58% reported they can contribute 5 or more hours per month. This includes those who are already engaged on a project. Among those surveyed, 22% were able to contribute up to 5 hours on a project per month. This provides an opportunity to identify potential high-contributors who can take on multiple projects or engage with more complex projects.

When asked whether or not volunteers had been invited to join a client or internal project with 501 Commons in the past year, only 57% said yes despite having many opportunities for

involvement in cohort programs and internal 501 projects shared through The Leader. In 2016, new Service Corps members will receive a hardcopy of the most recent newsletter during the intake. This can encourage readership and awareness of available opportunities.

For the fifth year in a row, volunteers were satisfied with information provided during the volunteer intake process. Eighty-eight percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the volunteer intake process provided them with enough information. Those who did not agree felt unhappy with the follow up after the initial welcome. They wanted to be contacted for an assignment soon after the orientation. However, we tell new volunteers that it may take up to 4 months before they are invited on a project.

### **Volunteer Experiences with Clients**

An increasing share of volunteers have done more than 4 projects with 501 Commons. This demonstrates not only their satisfaction with their experience but also allows us to get to know the volunteer. When asked about the number of projects completed, 48% reported having worked on 1 to 3 projects, 40% reported having done 4 or more projects. The remaining 12% had not yet participated on a project. This is a 5% decrease from the previous year in the number who had not yet been placed on a project. The decrease may be due to the greater availability of opportunities for newer members in general consulting or cohort programs during the spring and summer months, which were uncharacteristically busy this year.

Service Corps members continue to be satisfied with the match between their skills and the needs of client projects. The percentage of those who said their skills were either a “good match” or an “extremely strong match” was 83%. Only 16% said it was an “adequate match,” and 1% stating it was a “poor match.” The large increase in consulting projects this year may have caused some of the less than ideal matches such as pairing two new 501 Commons volunteers together on their first project. We need to continue growing our pool of service corps members with skills that are in high demand such as board development, marketing, and fundraising in order to meet project needs with appropriately-skilled volunteers.

We asked Service Corps members if they have ever been involved with their client after the project has ended. Since asking this question in 2013, we have received the first increase from 18% saying “yes” in 2013 and 2014 to 21% saying “yes” in 2015. When asked what type of ongoing relationship they had with their client, many replied accepting a board membership position or continuing volunteer engagements with the organization outside of the 501 Commons structure.

In 2014 the majority (nearly 80%) of respondents rated their overall experience with clients as “good” or “extremely positive,” this trend continued in 2015 with 83%. Of the remaining 18%, 15% rated their experience as “fair”, 3% “poor”.

As has been true in the six previous surveys, a large majority, 92% of respondents, felt “strongly” or “very strongly” that their work with 501 Commons makes a positive difference in the ability of community organizations to accomplish their missions.

When asked if they felt that the nonprofit appreciated their work, 96% of service corps members consistently felt appreciated. However, 4% of respondents felt somewhat unappreciated.

### **Volunteers’ Experience with 501 Commons**

Volunteers’ overall experience with 501 Commons continues to be overwhelmingly positive with 93%. For the first time since 2009, no one reported having completely negative experiences. However, 7% had mixed feelings. In absolute numbers, this represents 8 out of the 108 people who responded to the question. A couple volunteers mentioned they would have liked more communication and relationship building with 501 Commons staff. As was the case in the last four surveys, most volunteers, 94%, feel appreciated by 501 Commons.

This year we added a new question to the survey to ask if respondents contributed a tax-deductible donation to 501 Commons. 17% answered “yes.” When asked, what motivated the gift, several mentioned respect and appreciation for the services 501 Commons brings to the community. Our volunteers want to support 501 Commons’ mission. Among the 83% who have not contributed, many commented they already donate to other organizations. 54% explained they contribute their time and therefore are not inclined to make a financial donation. 33% of respondents said they were not asked or didn’t know 501 Commons needed or accepted donations. All volunteers were solicited through our year end campaign and Give Big in May.

### **Recommendations from Service Corps members**

*More opportunities for networking and professional development.* Many volunteers agree that they would like to have more opportunities to meet other consultants. A couple recommended that these sometimes take place outside of King County. Others mentioned that they prefer events outside of business hours or those that avoid high traffic times. A few volunteers requested specialized meetings where consultants who had participated in similar projects such as consulting or coaching assignments could come together and reflect on the experience.

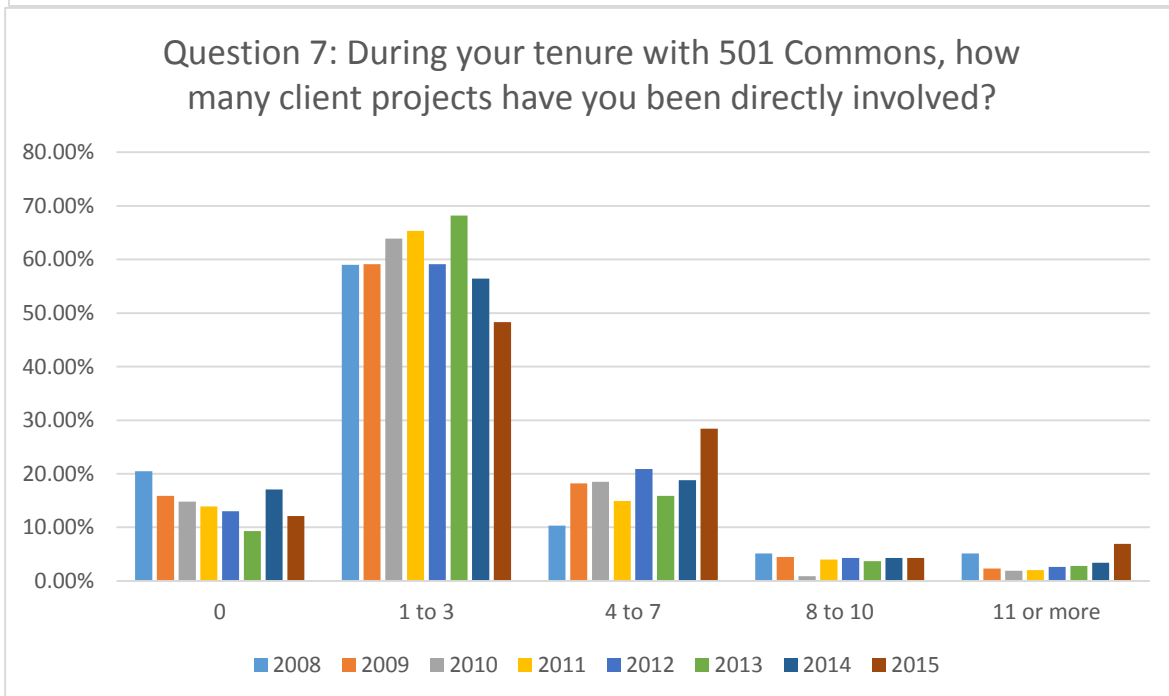
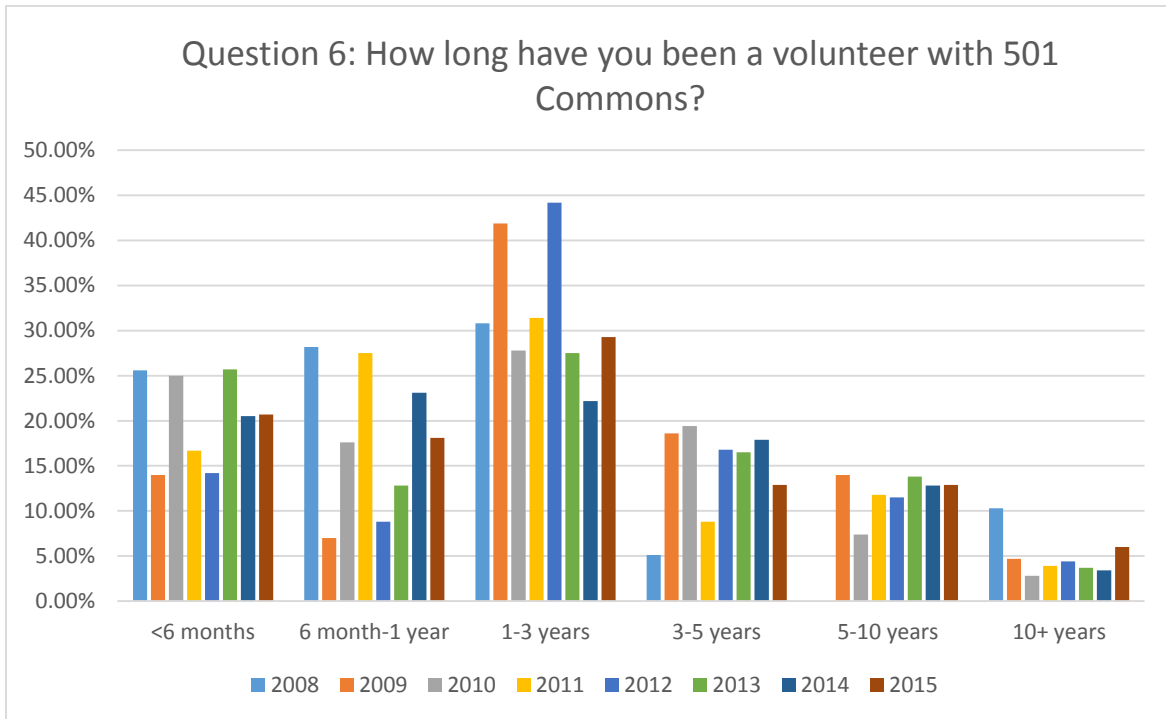
*Better cultivate relationships with consultants in between projects.* A few volunteers mentioned being disappointed with the amount of time it took for them to receive an assignment. Others

suggested that they would benefit from deeper relationships with 501 Commons staff and recommended periodically checking in with volunteers to see how things are going versus only calling when we want them to take on assignments.

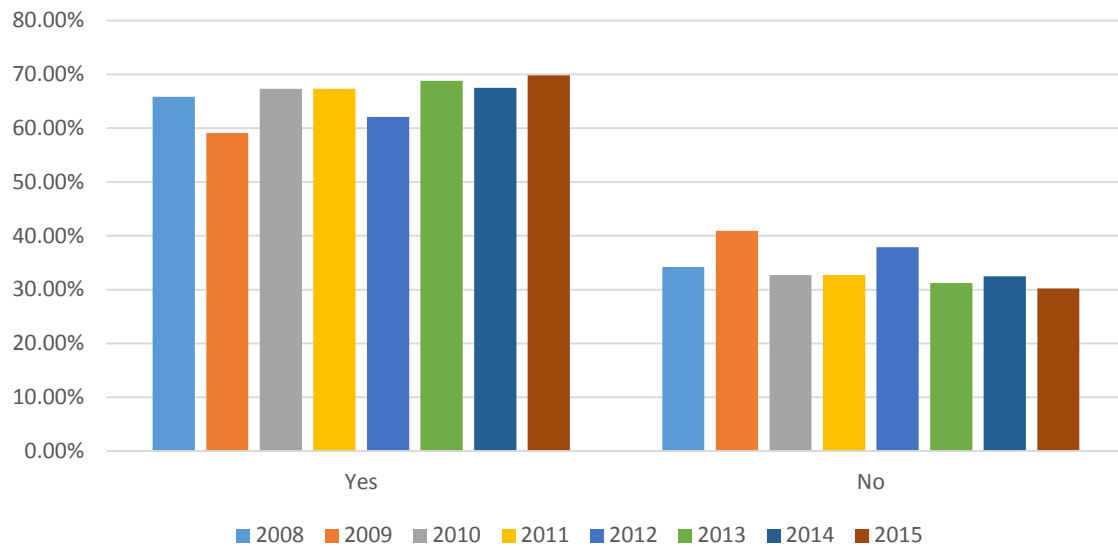
*Assess and appropriately support consultant readiness at the start of the project.* A few volunteers suggested ensuring that consultants understood the tools available to them at the start of the project as well as offering some guidance regarding how to structure planning meetings and facilitate conversations with the client. Several other volunteers commented that a lot of time was spent discussing the process elements of cohort programs, but that they would have benefited from spending more time discussing a consulting approach. Another volunteer suggested that there be an onboarding and planning session with the Project Manger prior to meeting with the client.

*Share client updates with volunteers after project completion:* Similar to the 2013 and 2014 survey, Service Corps members continue to request feedback on the impact their projects have made after their consulting engagement. They want to know if their recommendations or plans have been implemented by the client.

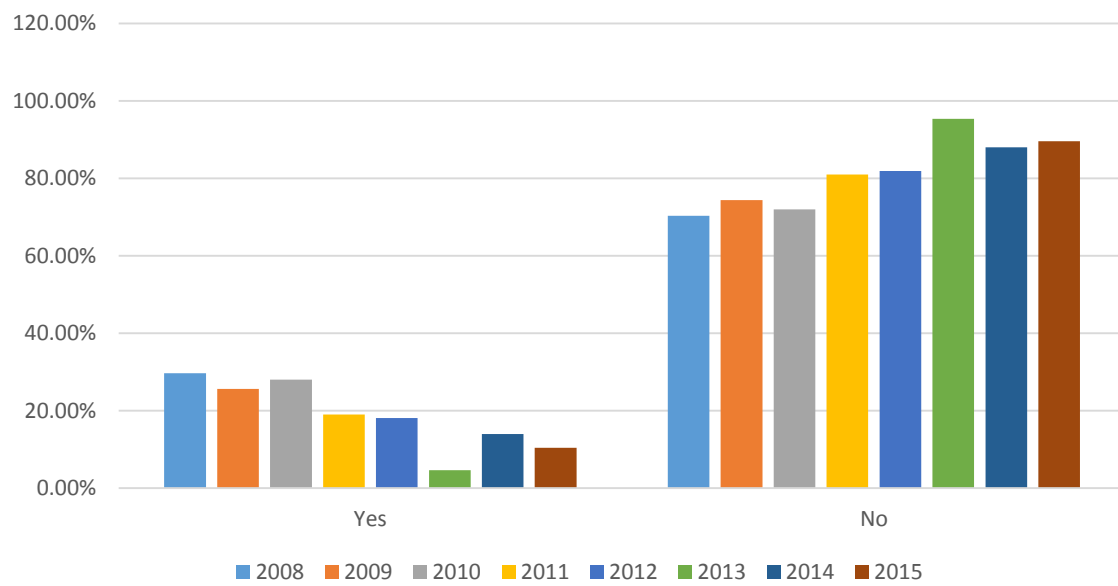
## 501 Commons Charts and Comments



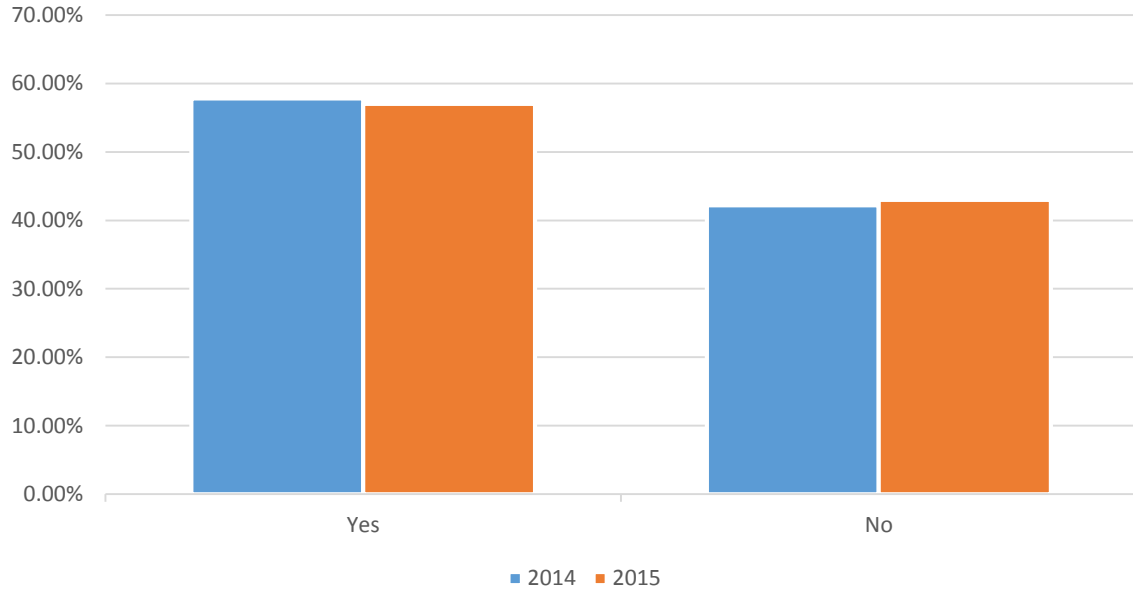
Question 8: In the past 12 months were you (or are you currently) engaged on a client project?



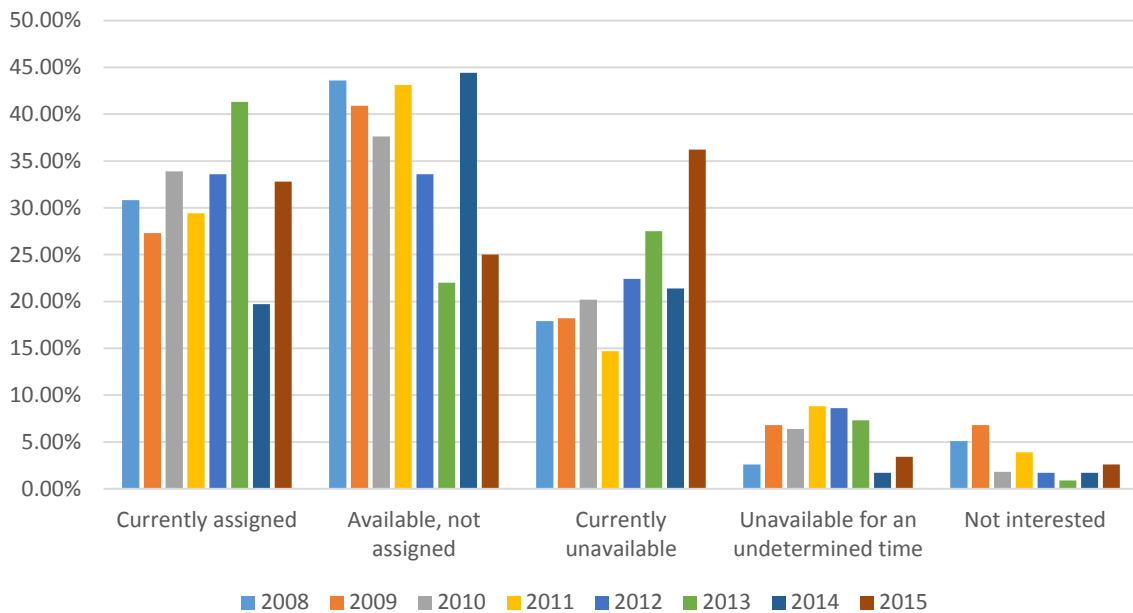
Question 9: In the past 12 months, have you been involved in internal volunteer projects for 501 Commons?



Question 10: In the last 12 months, were you offered the opportunity to join a client project or take on a project internal to 501 Commons?

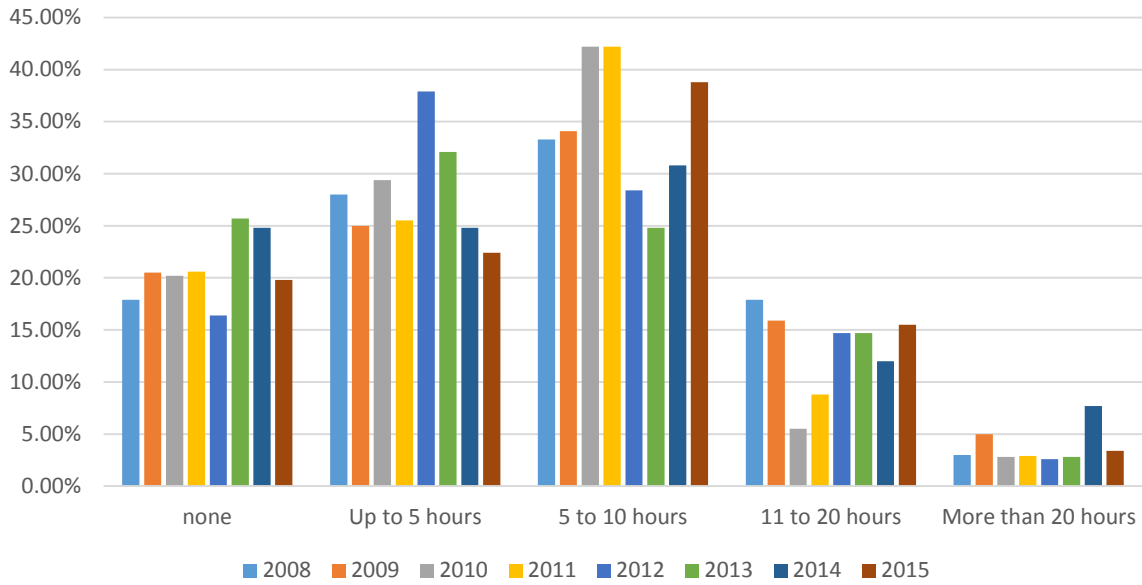


Question 11: Which best describes your current status with 501 Commons?

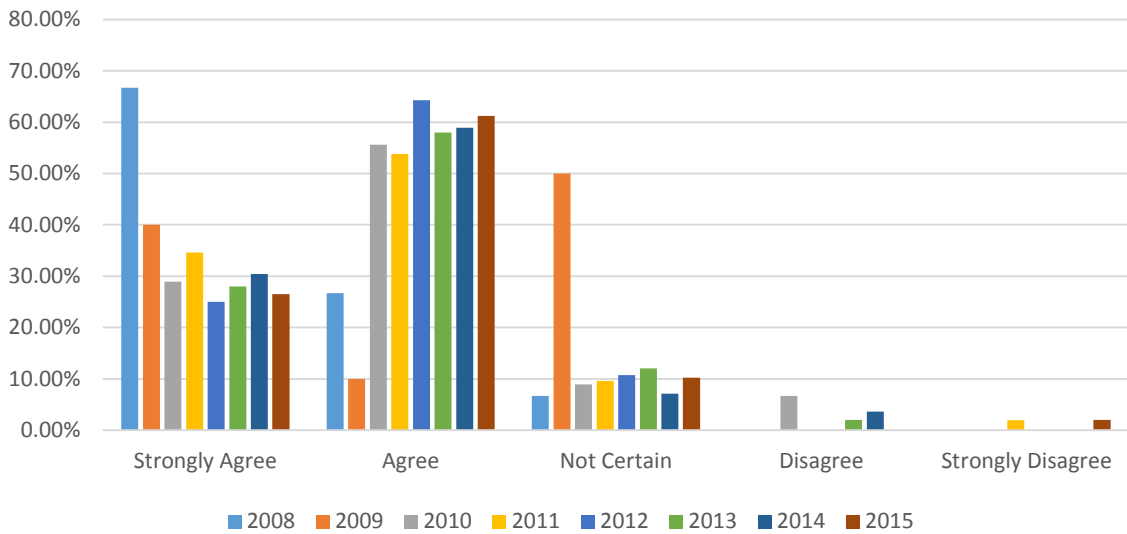




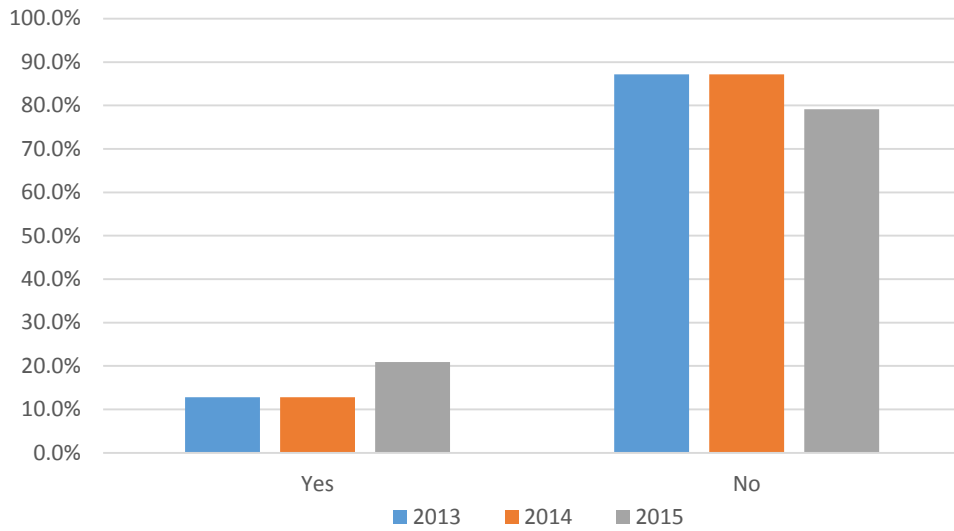
Question 12: In the next 6 months, how much time per month are you willing to contribute to consulting or coaching with clients or doing volunteer work for 501 Commons?



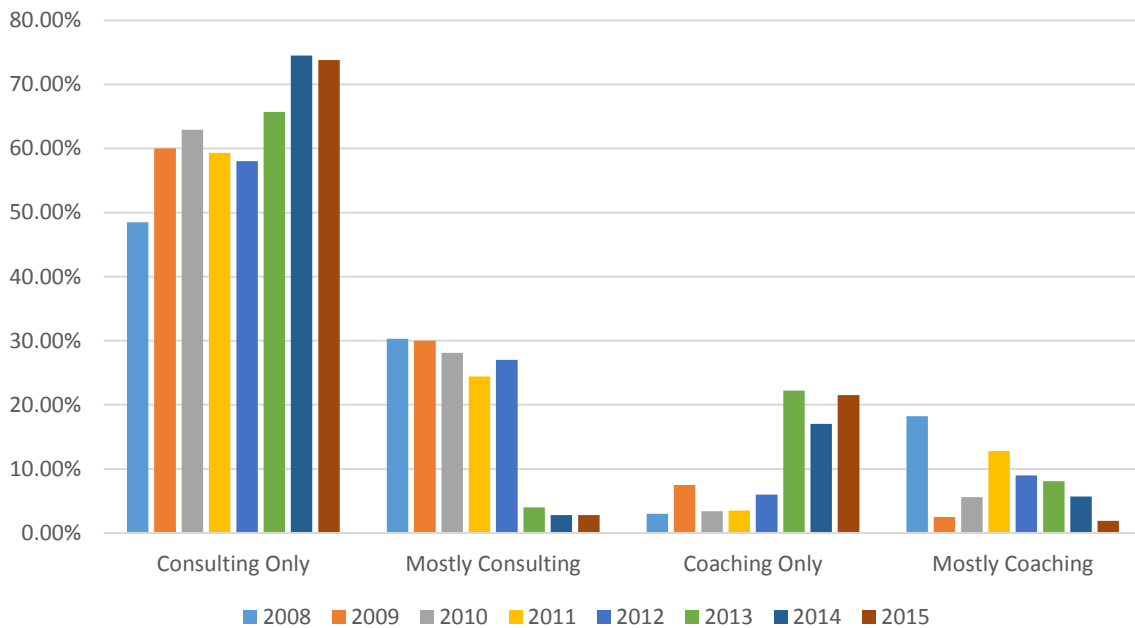
Question 13: If you joined 501 Commons in or after the fall of 2013, please rate the following statement. "The 501 commons volunteer orientation process provided me with the information I needed"



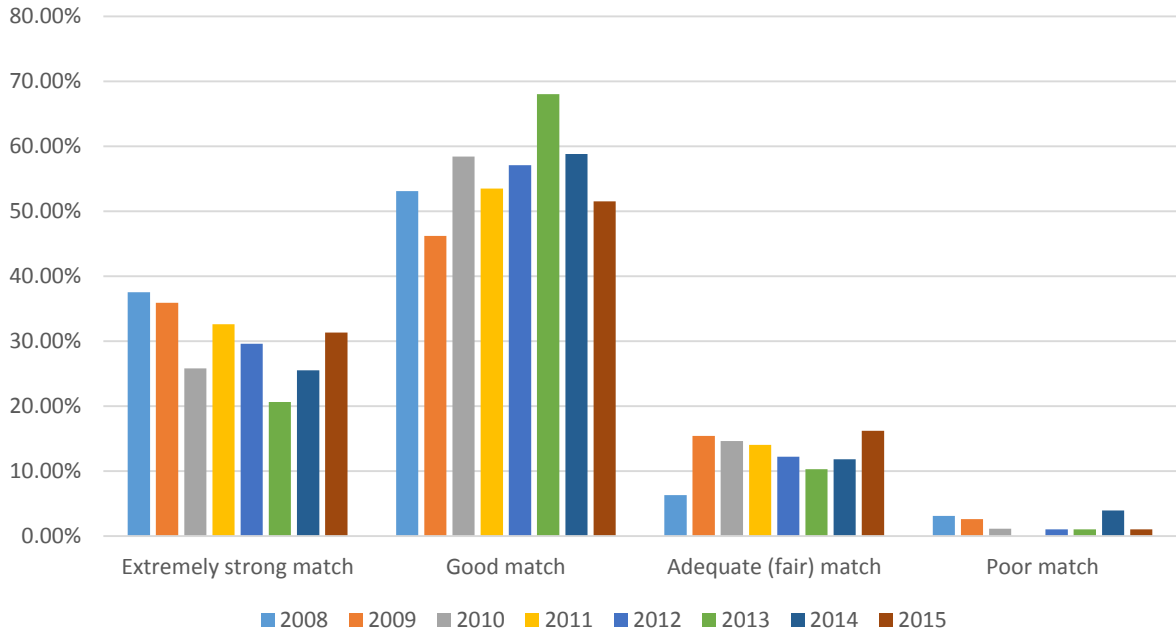
Question 14: Have you ever had an on-going relationship with a client you met through working with 501 Commons? (volunteering, board membership, outside consulting, etc)



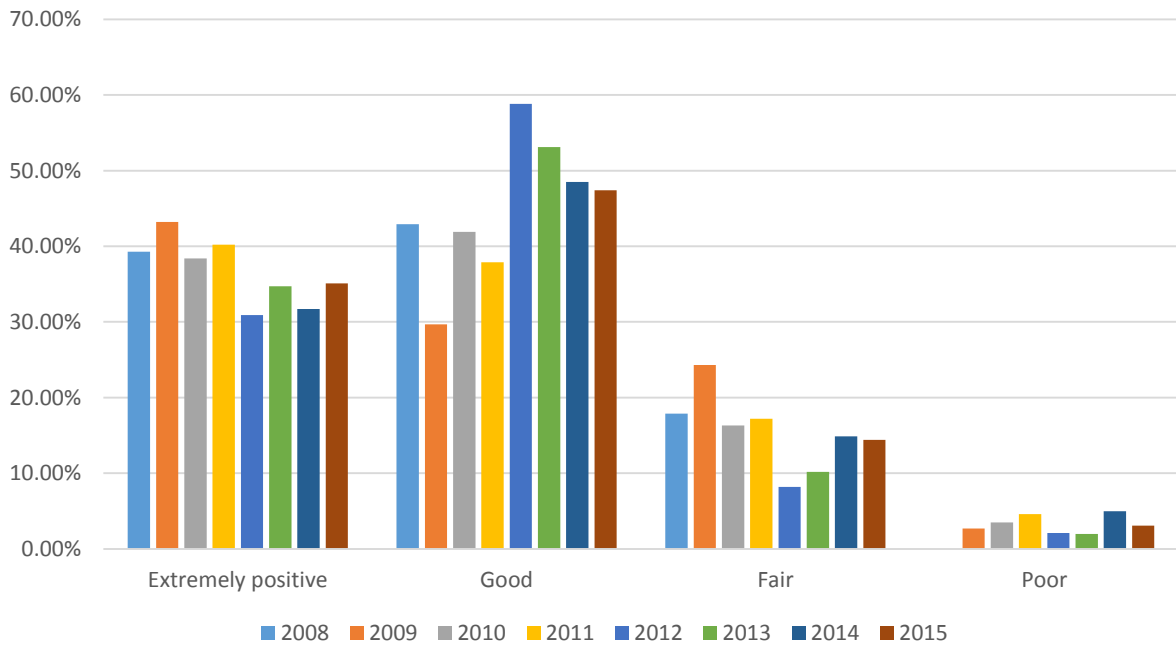
Question 15: Please describe the type of work you do with 501 Commons clients



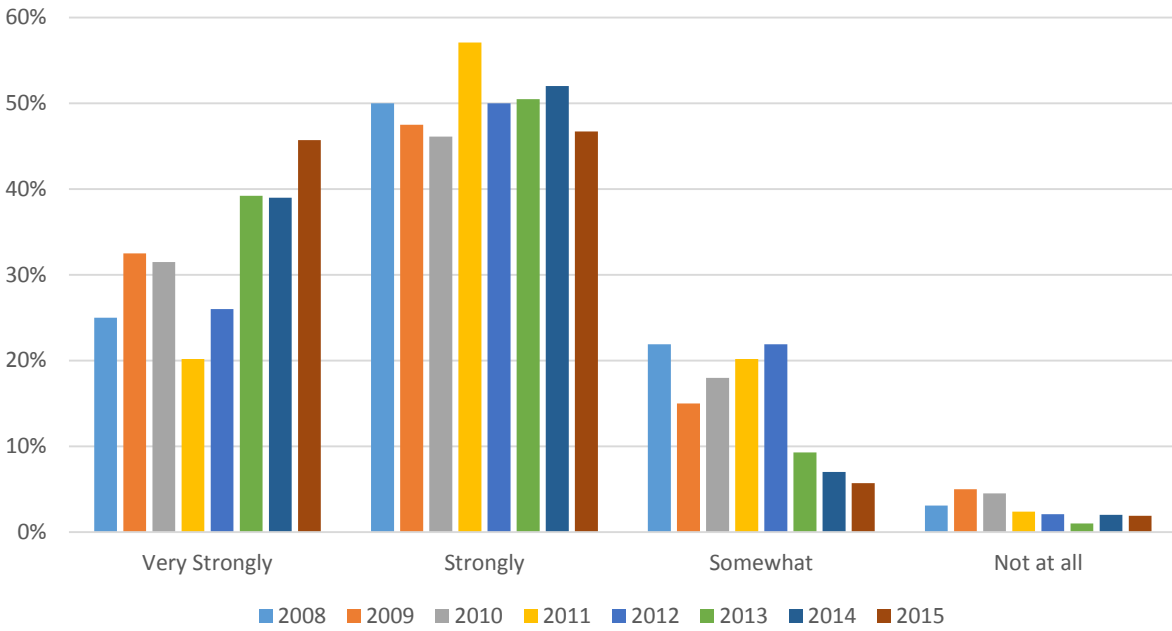
Question 16: Describe the match between your skills, knowledge and expertise and the needs of the client



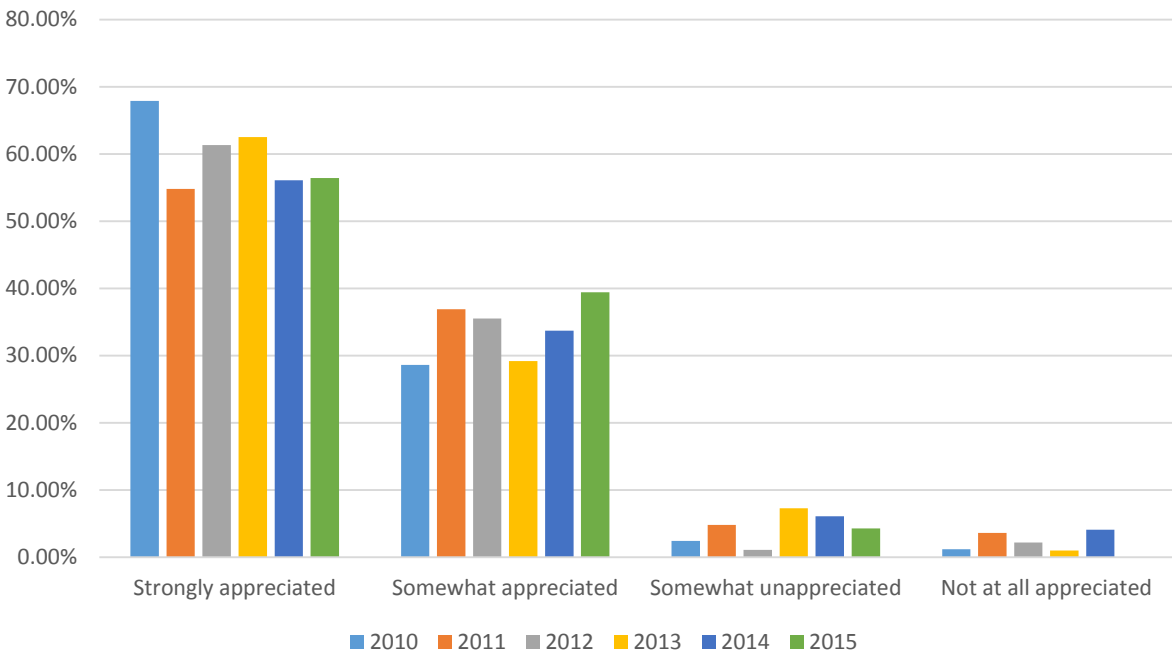
Question 17: How would you rate your overall experience in your most recently completed 501 Commons project?



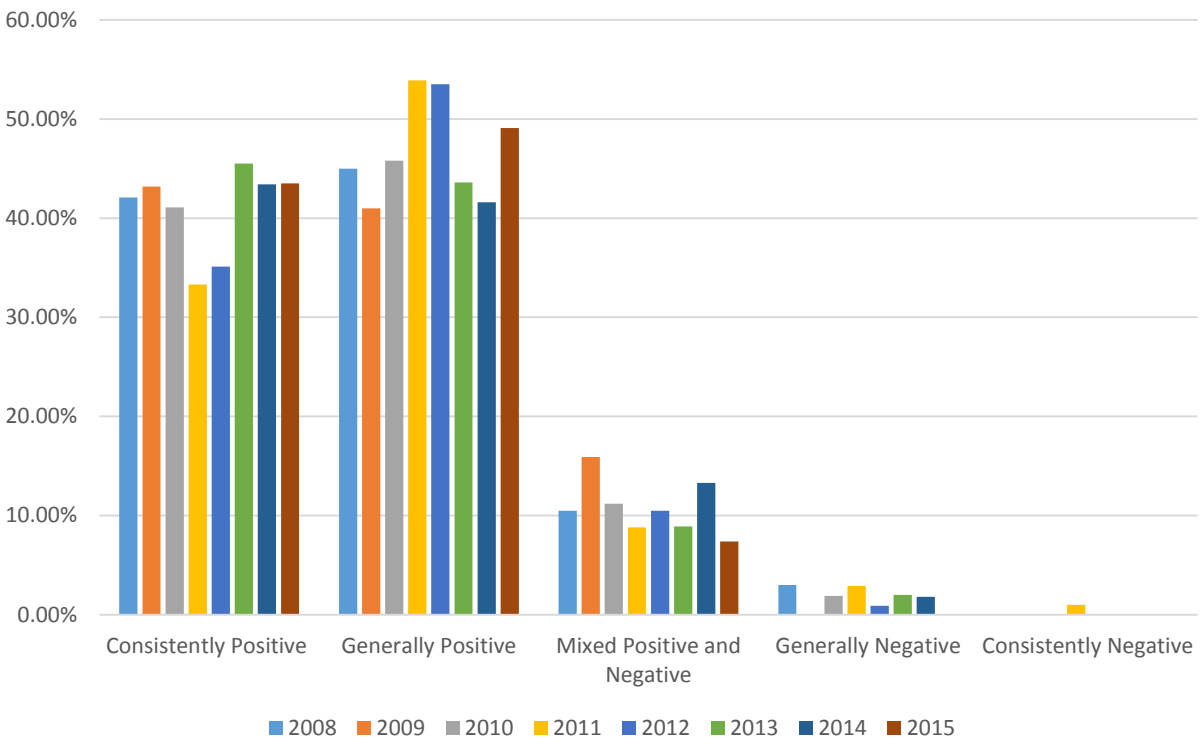
Question 18: How strongly do you feel that your work with 501 Commons makes a positive difference in the ability of community organizations to accomplish their missions



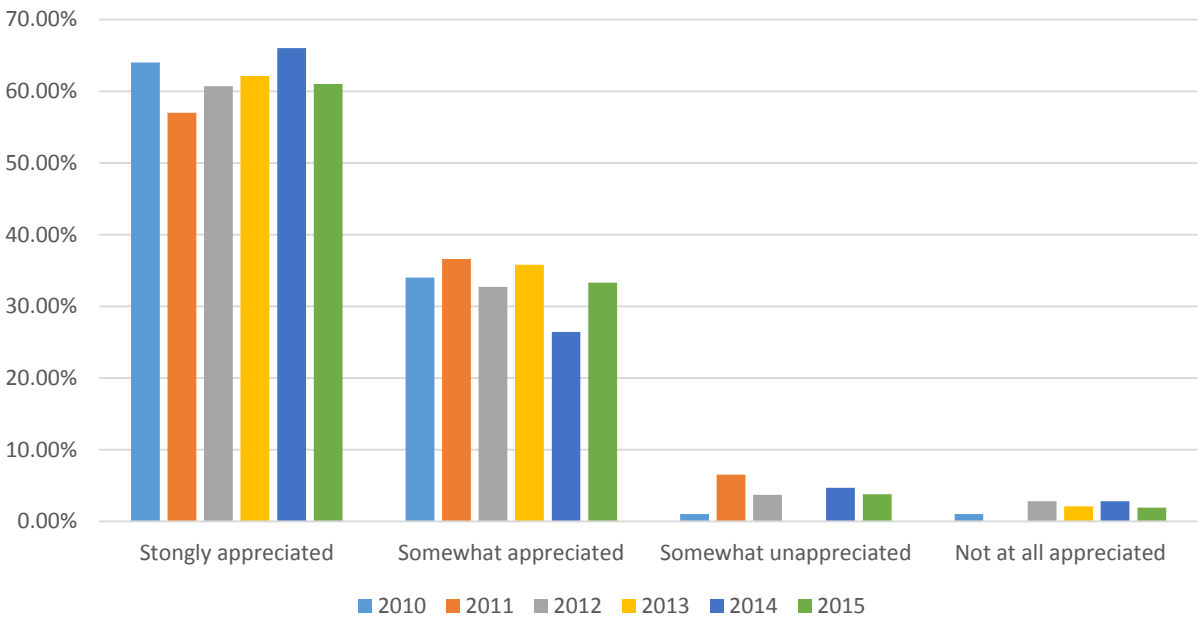
Question 19: In your most recent project, did you feel that the client appreciated your service?



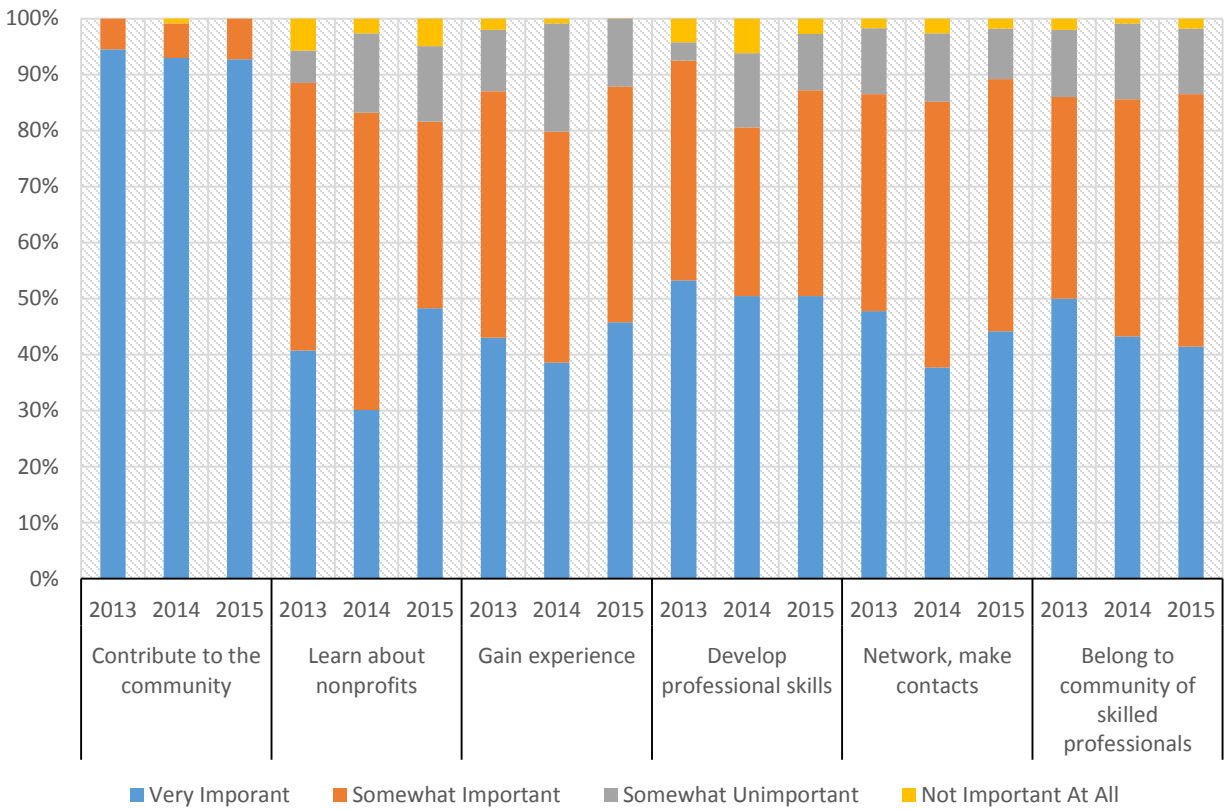
### Question 21: Rate your overall experience with 501 Commons



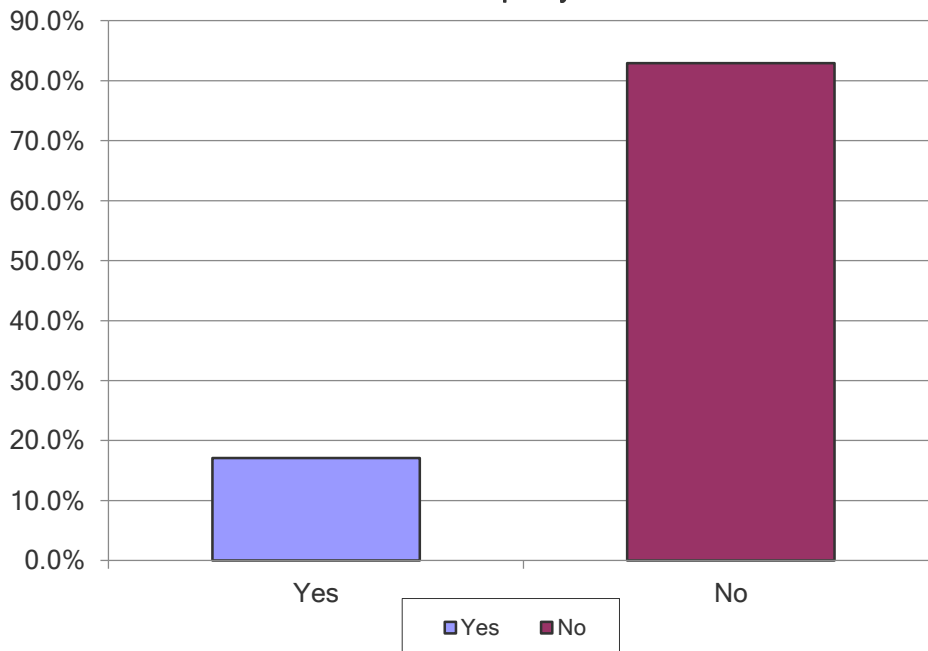
### Question 22: How well do you feel 501 Commons appreciates your service?



Question 23: How important are the following considerations for you in being affiliated with 501 Commons?



Question 26: Have you contributed a tax-deductible donation to 501 commons in the past year?



If you answered no to the question above, then we would really appreciate learning the primary reason for the choice:

