

# ERC Sustainability & Social Responsibility Practices Survey

**October 2010**

**Conducted by ERC**

6700 Beta Drive, Suite 300, Mayfield Village, OH 44143  
440/684-9700 | 440/684-9760 (fax)  
[www.ercnet.org](http://www.ercnet.org)



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## **Overview**

In September of 2010, ERC conducted a survey of organizations in Northeast Ohio to explore green and environmentally–friendly as well as community service policies and practices among Northeast Ohio employers. The results show several key trends among Northeast Ohio employers in terms of their sustainability and social responsibility practices.

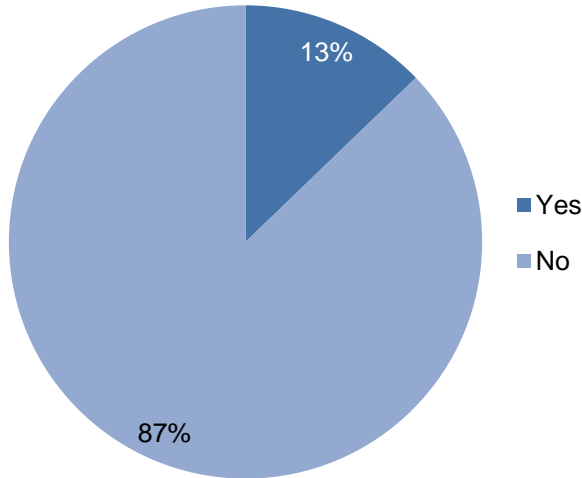
## **Key findings in the survey**

- In general, most employers do not have formal policies for energy or environmental responsibility and community involvement.
- Despite not having formal policies, organizations are employing a variety of sustainability efforts including recycling, reusing materials, and modifying systems (lighting, paperless, etc.).
- Most organizations indicate that they do not build, operate, or remodel their buildings in accordance with sustainability standards such as LEED.
- While HR is commonly responsible for social responsibility practices, typically no designated individual or top management and the CEO is responsible for sustainability practices.
- Many employers indicated their involvement in a variety of community efforts, most predominantly – monetary donations and charitable giving. Active leadership participation in efforts is also fairly common.
- Nearly 40% of respondents recognize or reward their employees for their involvement in community service, usually via the company newsletter.

## Sustainability

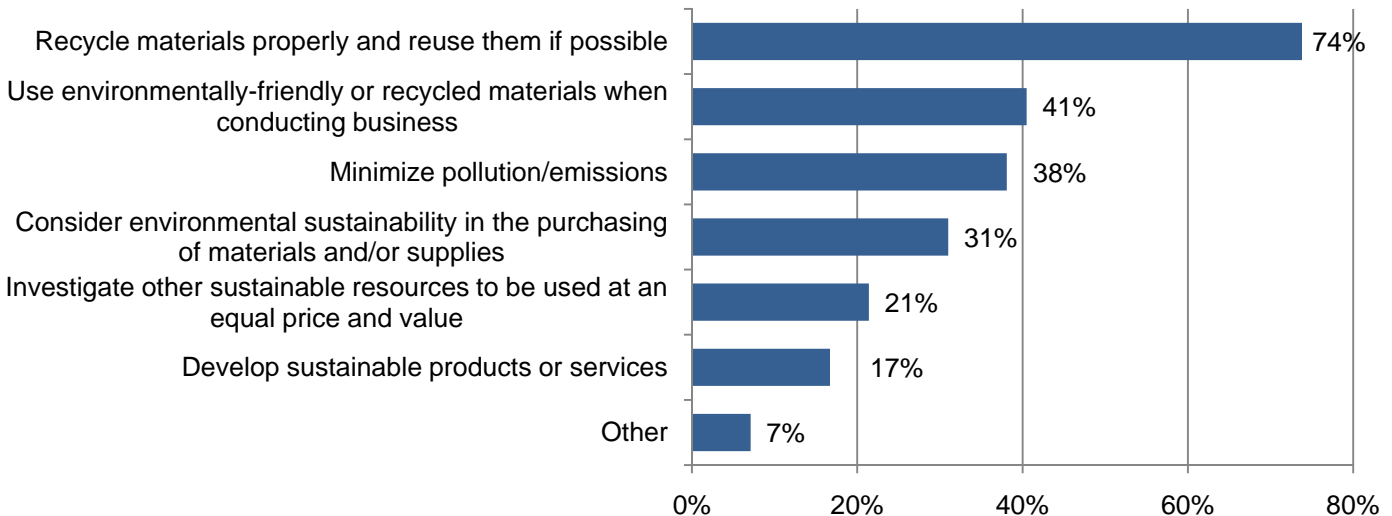
According to the survey, energy or environmental responsibility policies are rare among local employers. The majority of respondents (87%) indicate that they do not have an energy or environmental responsibility policy in place at their organizations.

**Figure 1 | Does your organization have an energy or environmental responsibility policy?**



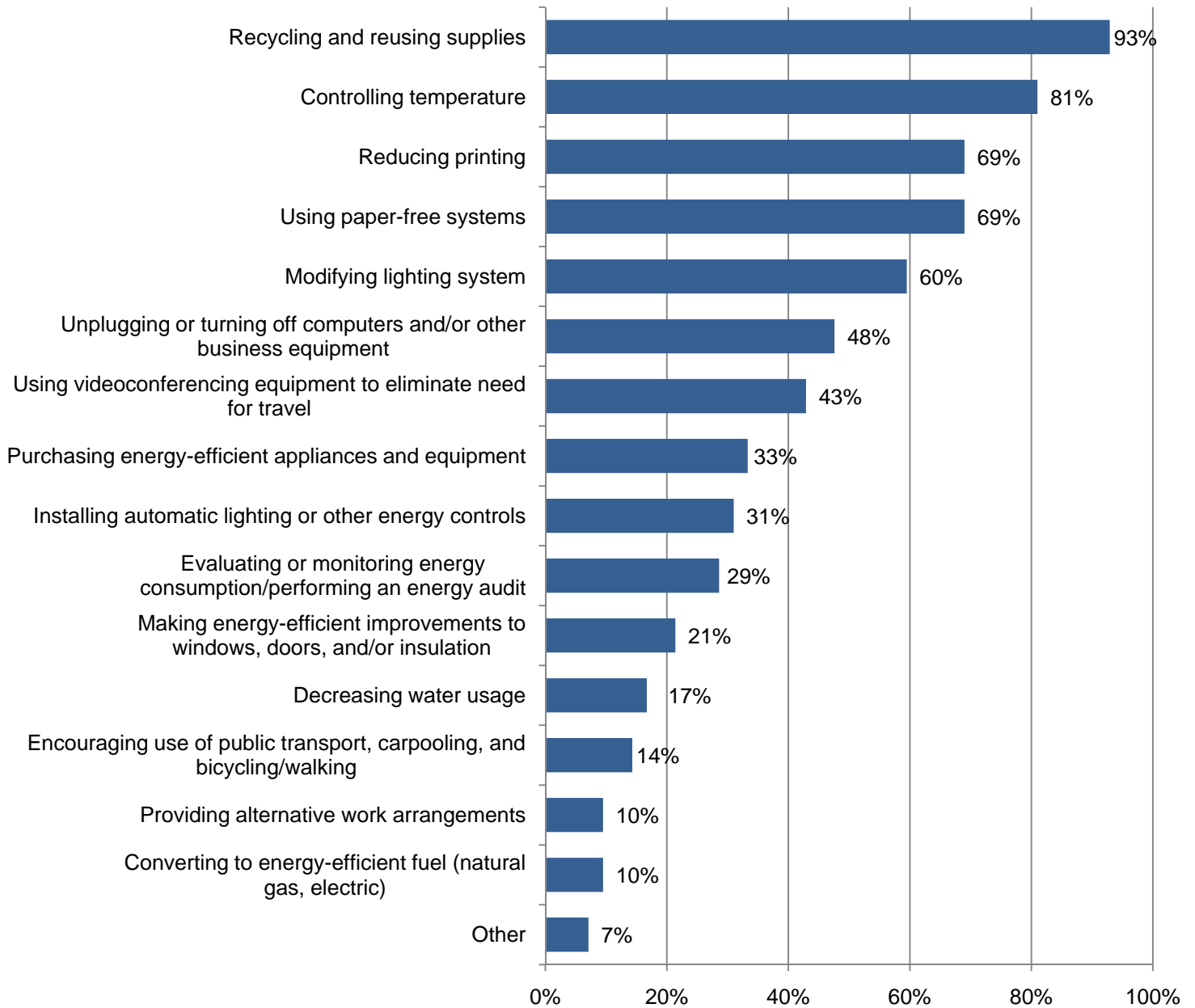
In terms of their business operations, many organizations (74%) recycle materials properly and reuse them if possible. Several organizations also use environmentally-friendly or recycled materials when conducting business and minimize pollution/emissions.

**Figure 2 | In terms of its business operations, does your organization do any of the following?**



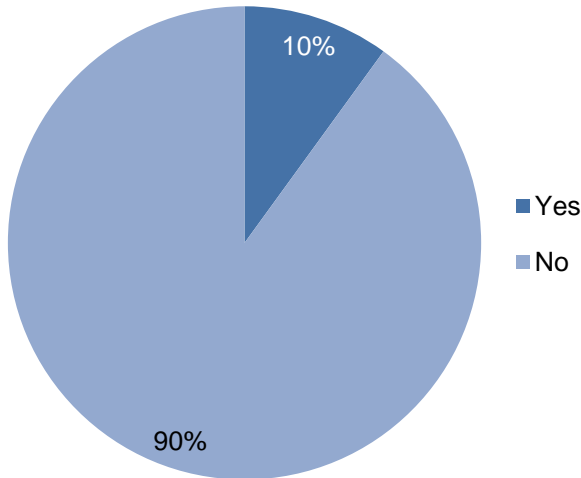
To conserve energy in the workplace, organizations primarily report activities such as recycling and reusing supplies, controlling temperature, reducing printing, using paper-free systems, and modifying lighting systems. Less common ways of conserving energy in the workplace include decreasing water usage; encouraging/incentivizing use of public transport, carpooling, and bicycling/walking; providing alternative work arrangements; and converting to energy-efficient fuel.

**Figure 3 | To conserve energy in your workplace, does your organization do any of the following?**



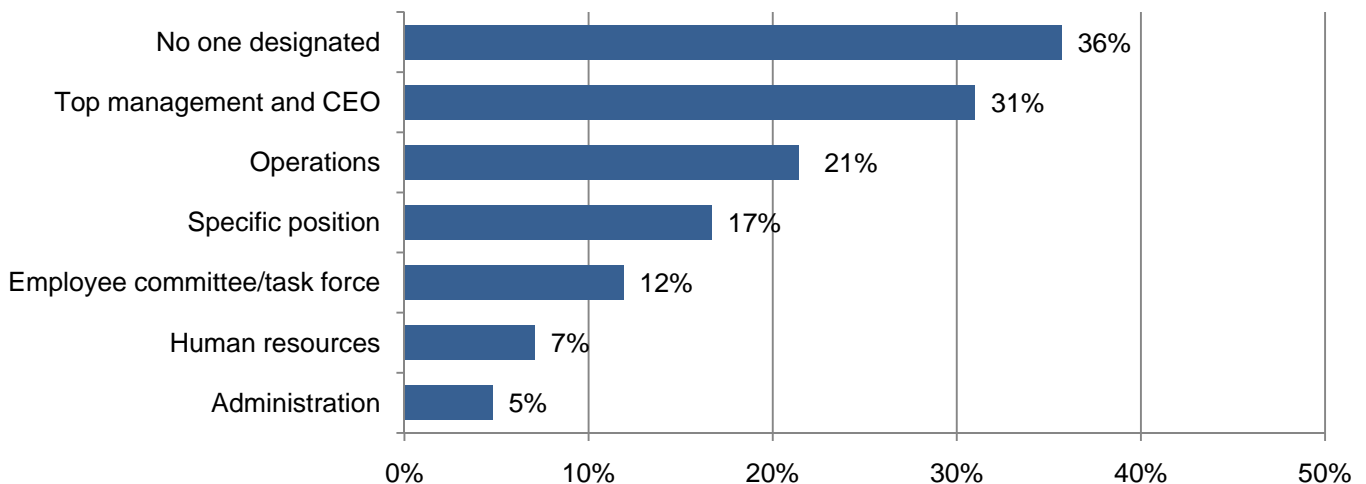
Ten percent of employers report that they build, operate, and remodel their buildings in accordance with sustainability standards such as Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED). Most employers (90%), however, indicate that they do not.

**Figure 4 | Does your organization build, operate, and remodel its buildings in accordance with sustainability standards such as Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) from the U.S. Green Building Council?**



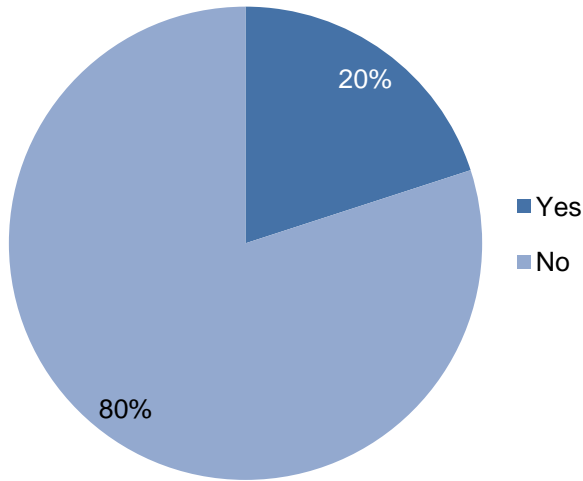
Most employers (36%) indicate that no one is designated to manage, initiate, or administer their organization's sustainability efforts, although several organizations (31%) say that their top management and CEO manage these activities.

**Figure 5 | Who manages, initiates, or administers your organization's sustainability efforts?**



Twenty percent of employers surveyed provide education and training to employees regarding sustainable business practices. The majority (80%) do not provide such education and training.

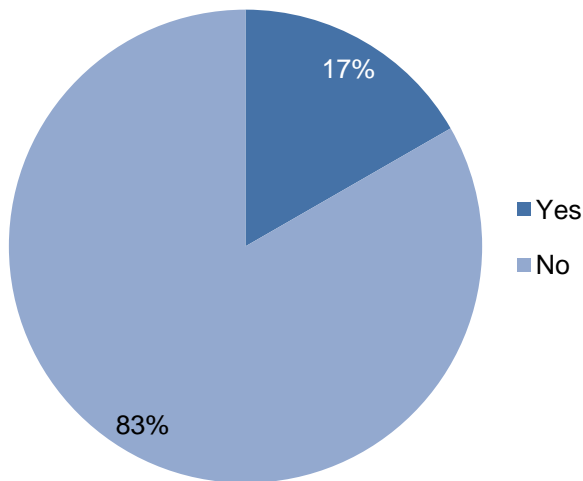
**Figure 6 | Does your organization provide education and training to employees regarding sustainable business practices?**



## Social Responsibility

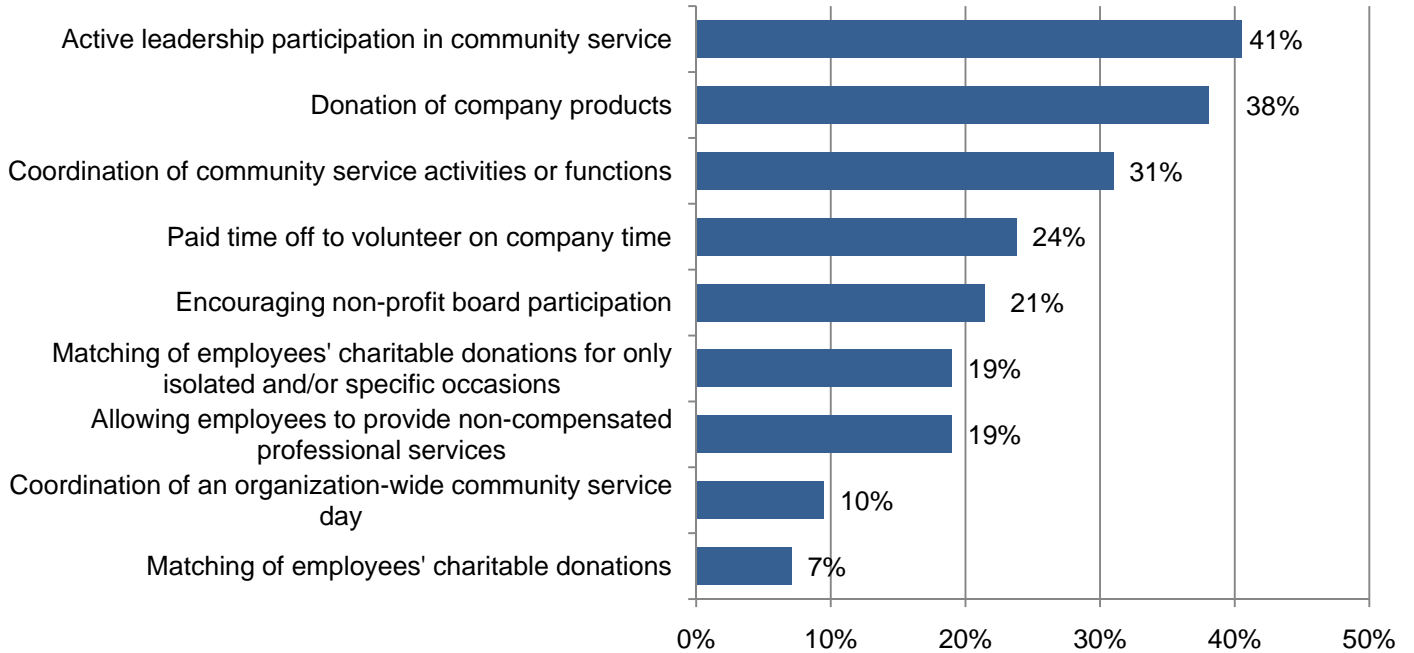
Similar to sustainability policies, few organizations surveyed (17%) have community service or social responsibility policies. This suggests that many organizations have not formalized their social responsibility efforts.

**Figure 7 | Does your organization have a community service or social responsibility policy?**



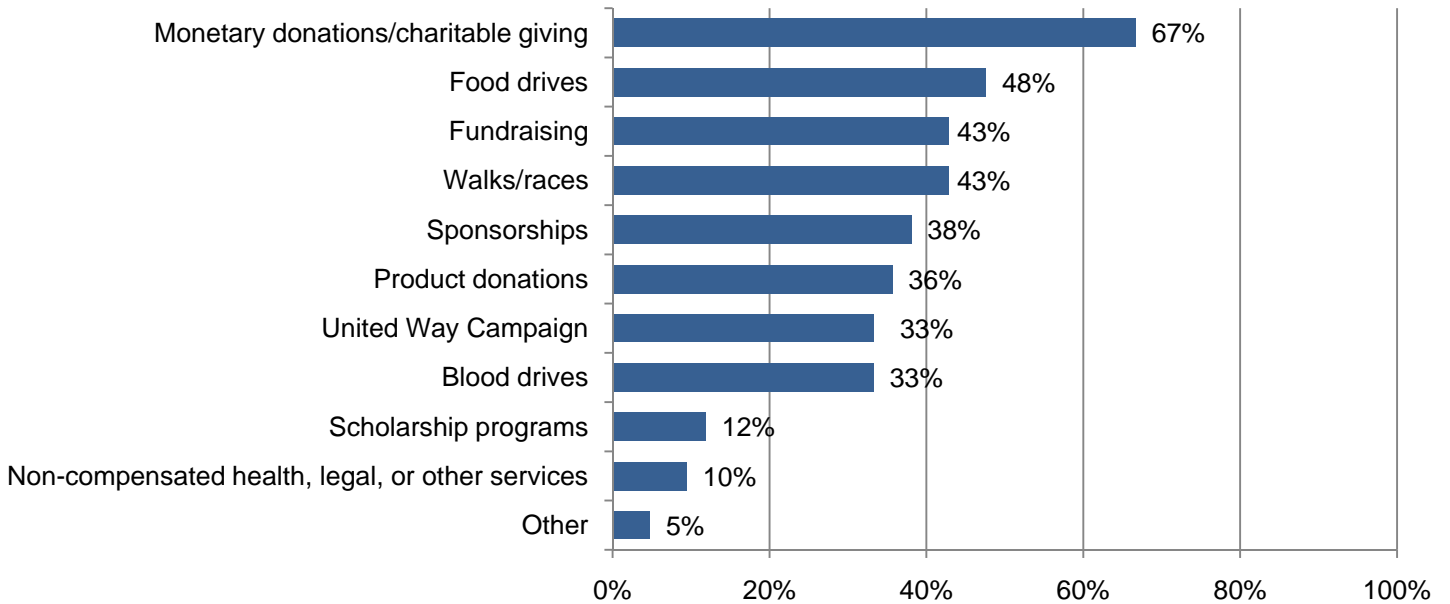
Several employers (41%) report having active leadership participation in community service. In addition, donation of company products and coordination of community service activities or functions are also commonly offered by organizations. Matching of charitable donations by employees and coordinating organization-wide community service days are less commonly offered by respondents.

**Figure 8 | Does your organization offer any of the following in terms of community service?**



Organizations most commonly participate in community involvement efforts such as monetary donations/charitable giving, food drives, fundraising, and walks/races. Participation in non-compensated services and scholarship programs was less common.

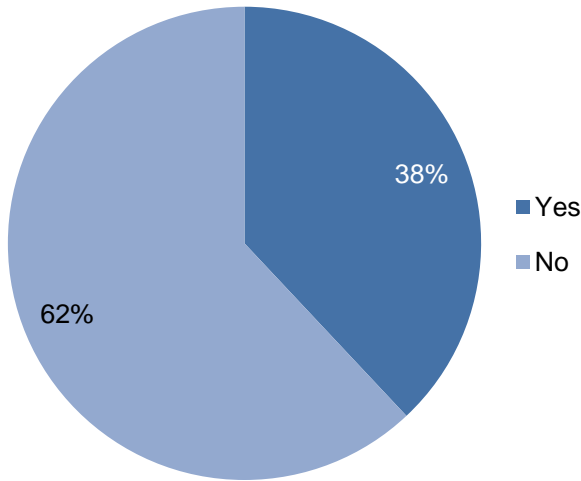
**Figure 9 | In what community involvement efforts does your organization participate?**



In regards to charitable giving and matching activities, organizations typically evaluate employee requests on a case-by case basis or pick one or a few charities available for employees to donate and then the company matches this amount. Some employers also have charitable giving committees or teams that evaluate needs and donate accordingly. Most employers that have a matching program, match 100% of employees' donations with no limit.

Recognizing employees for their community service involvement is not a widespread practice among organizations. Thirty-eight percent of respondents recognize or reward employees for their involvement in community service efforts. Among those respondents that recognize or reward employees for their involvement, the most common method cited is recognition in the company newsletter or on the intranet.

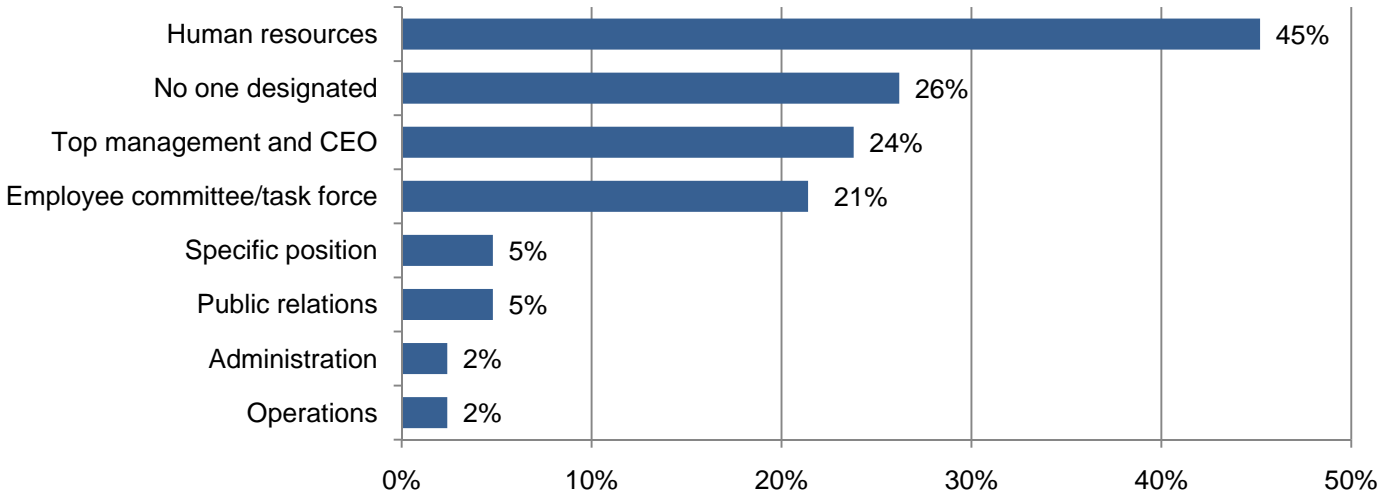
**Figure 10 | Are employees recognized or rewarded for their involvement in community service?**



Respondents cited a few other unique ways of recognizing employees for their involvement in community service. At one organization, the CEO sends thank you letters annually to participating employees. Gift cards, logo items, and plaques are also awarded by some companies. Some organizations also report having annual community awards in which they recognize employees at an annual organization celebration or on an organization-wide community day. Individuals are also commonly mentioned at company meetings and events.

Forty-five percent of respondents report that human resources manages, initiates, or administers their organizations' community service efforts, though several indicate that no one is designated. Top management and the CEO as well as employee committee/task forces also commonly manage, initiate, or administer such activities.

**Figure 11 | Who manages, initiates, or administers your organization's community service efforts?**



## Respondent Demographics

Forty-two (42) organizations in Northeast Ohio participated in the survey; a breakdown of the industries they represent and organizational size is provided below. Breakouts by industry and size are not provided in this report due to small sample sizes.

**Figure 12 | Respondent demographics by industry and organizational size**

	Percent
<b>Industry</b>	
Manufacturing	55%
Non-Manufacturing	36%
Non-Profit	9%
<b>Organizational Size</b>	
1-50	19%
51-200	53%
201-500	21%
Over 500	7%

## About ERC

ERC is Northeast Ohio's largest organization dedicated to HR and workplace programs, practices, training and consulting. ERC membership provides employers access to an incredible amount of information, expertise, and cost savings that supports the attraction, retention, and development of great employees. We also host the nationally recognized NorthCoast 99 program and sponsor the ERC Health insurance program. For more information about ERC, please visit [www.ercnet.org](http://www.ercnet.org).



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