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Increasing Citizen Participation: A Toolkit for the City of Boise to Engage Young Adults

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Abstract

The City of Boise is working to increase outreach and engagement among populations that it traditionally does not see showing up to community meetings or engaging through other outreach methods. One population that the City has identified as a missing voice, is people between the ages of 18 and 24, including BSU students. This is problematic because many issues students face - issues including housing, transportation, and food security - all topics of conversations happening at the city level. Staff from the City of Boise and BSU Urban Studies students are working together to create a toolkit composed of seven methods for engaging the ages of 18-24. Methods discussed will include live streaming, education, after hours social programming, surveys, video gaming, digital decision making, and participatory mapping. These methods focus on identifying engagement opportunities that target college students in order to increase participation and input from this population so the City can better understand the unique situations, perspectives, and preferences of this population.

Authors

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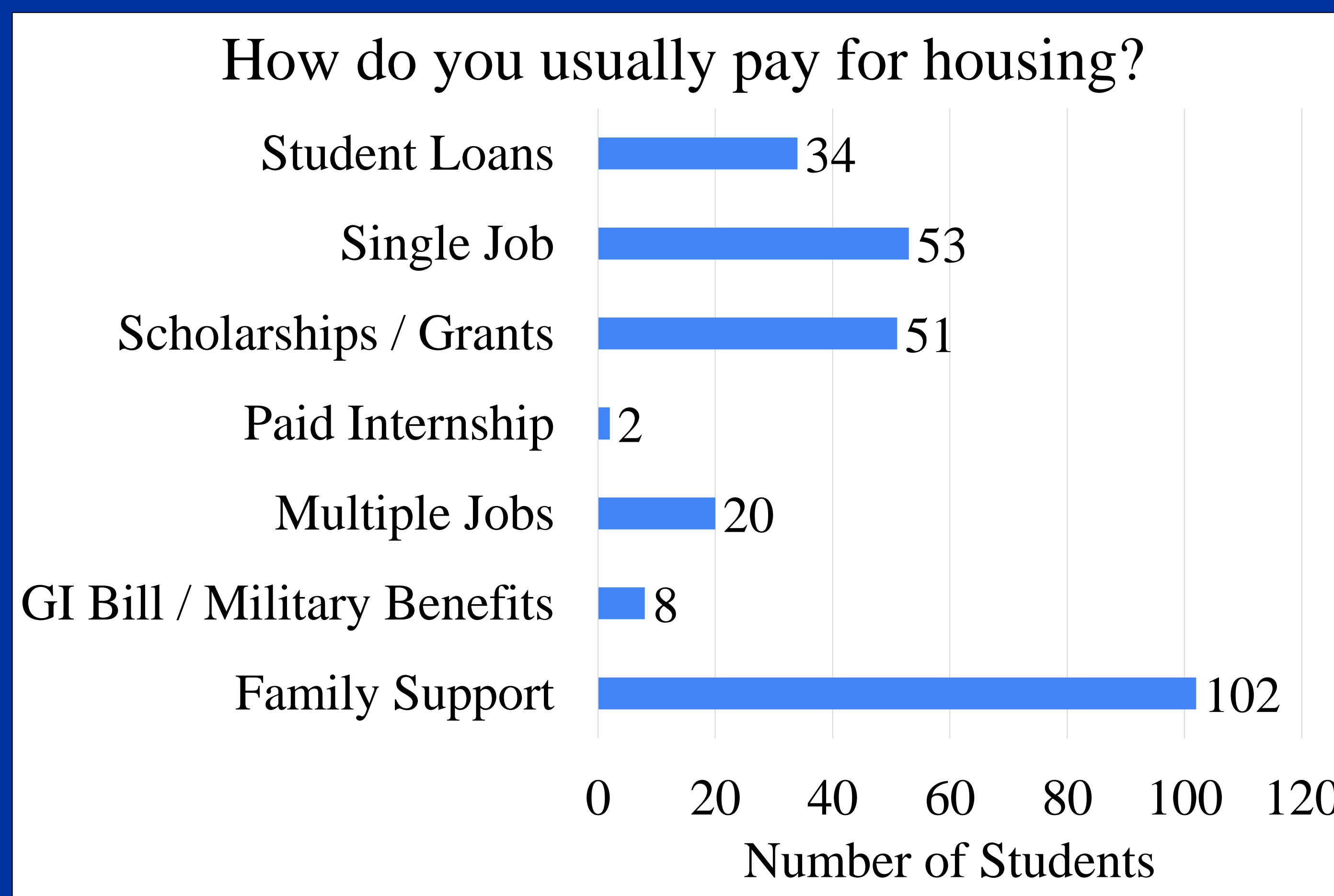
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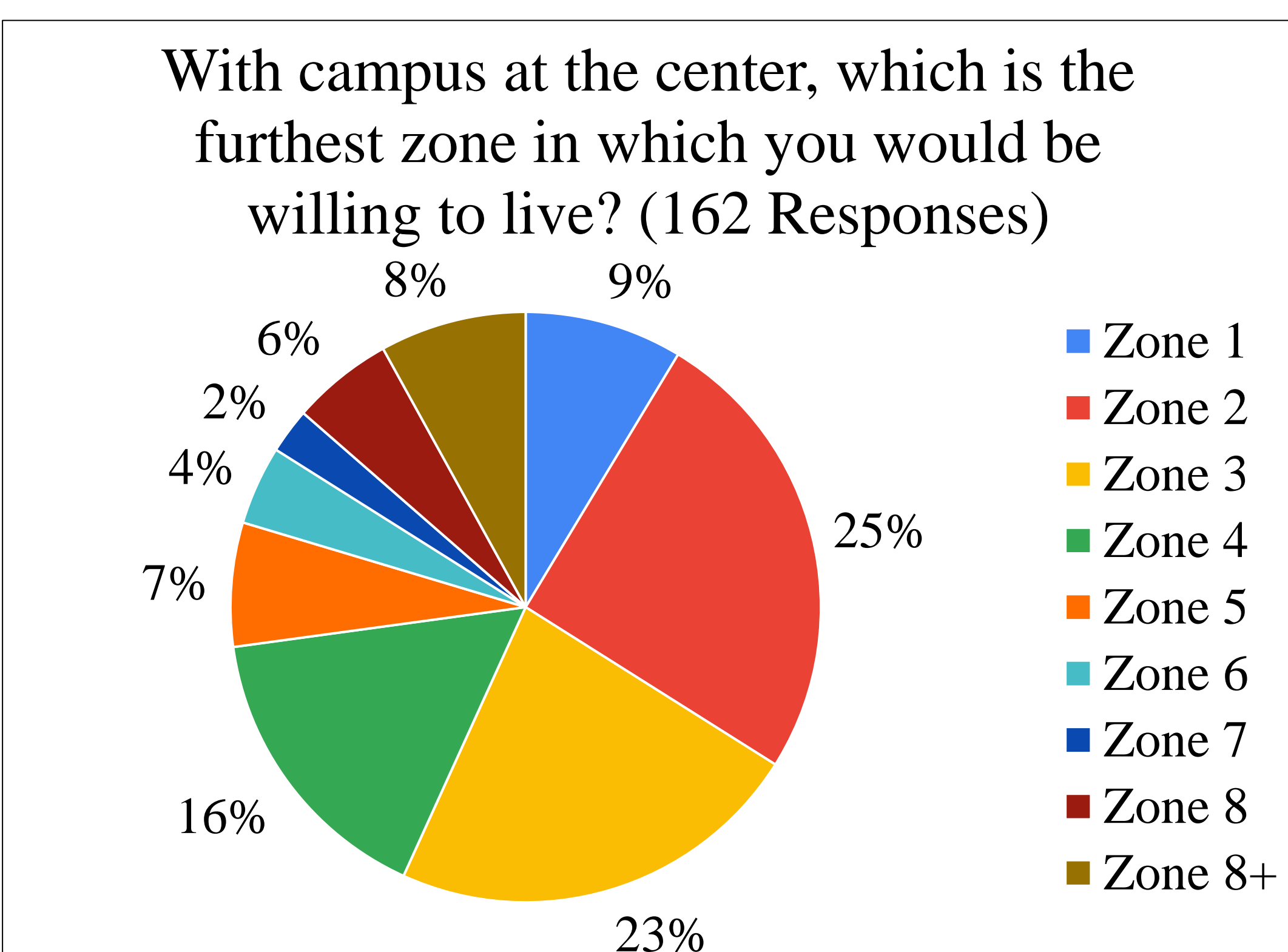
“I was on track to be homeless and unemployed in May, so I was forced to move back home.”

“[I am no longer] able to afford my portion of the rent. It sucks that I'm paying so much to live close to campus, but now there's no point living so close to campus with no physical school.”

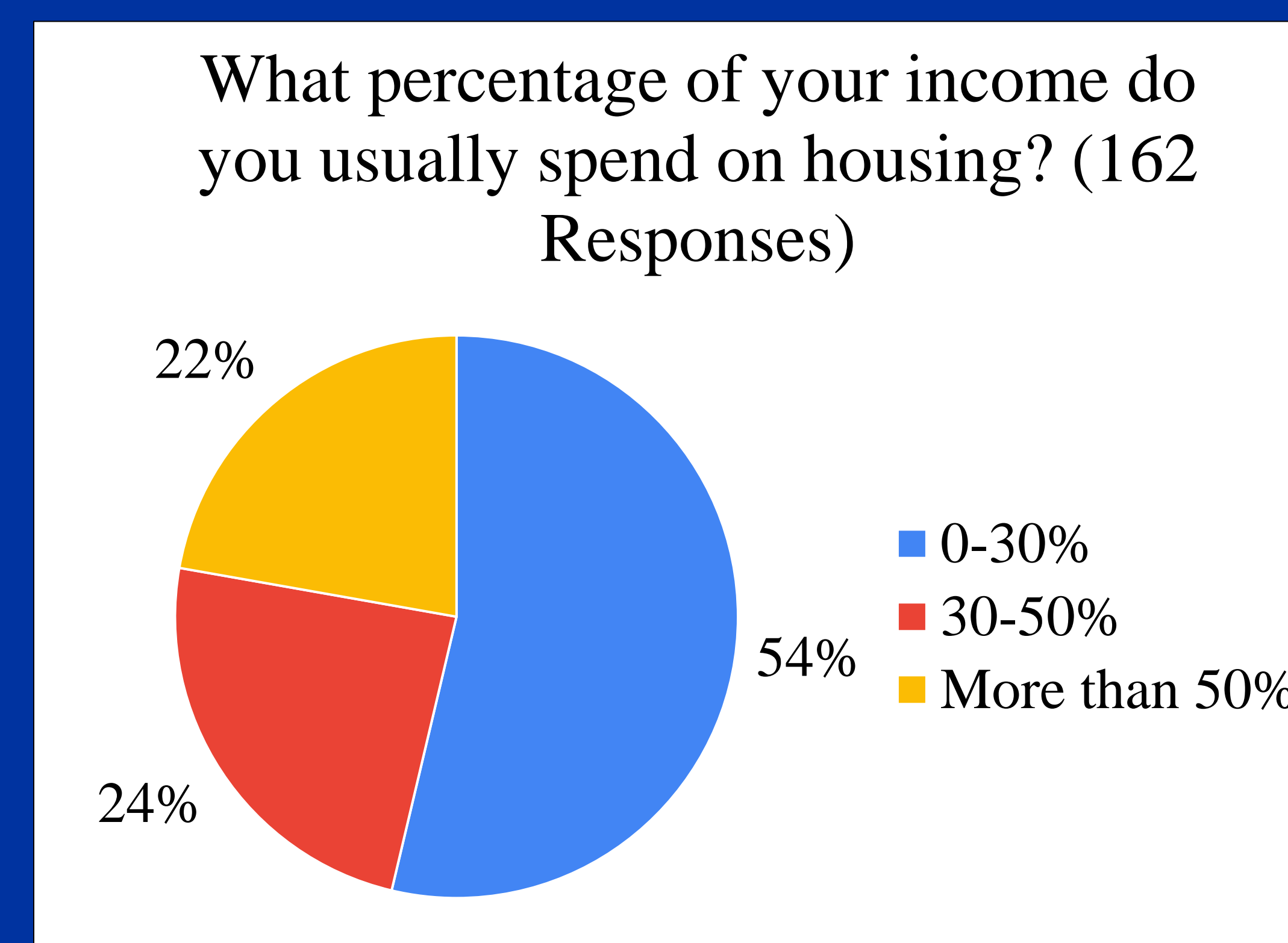
- Survey had 162 responses for students between the ages of 18 to 24.



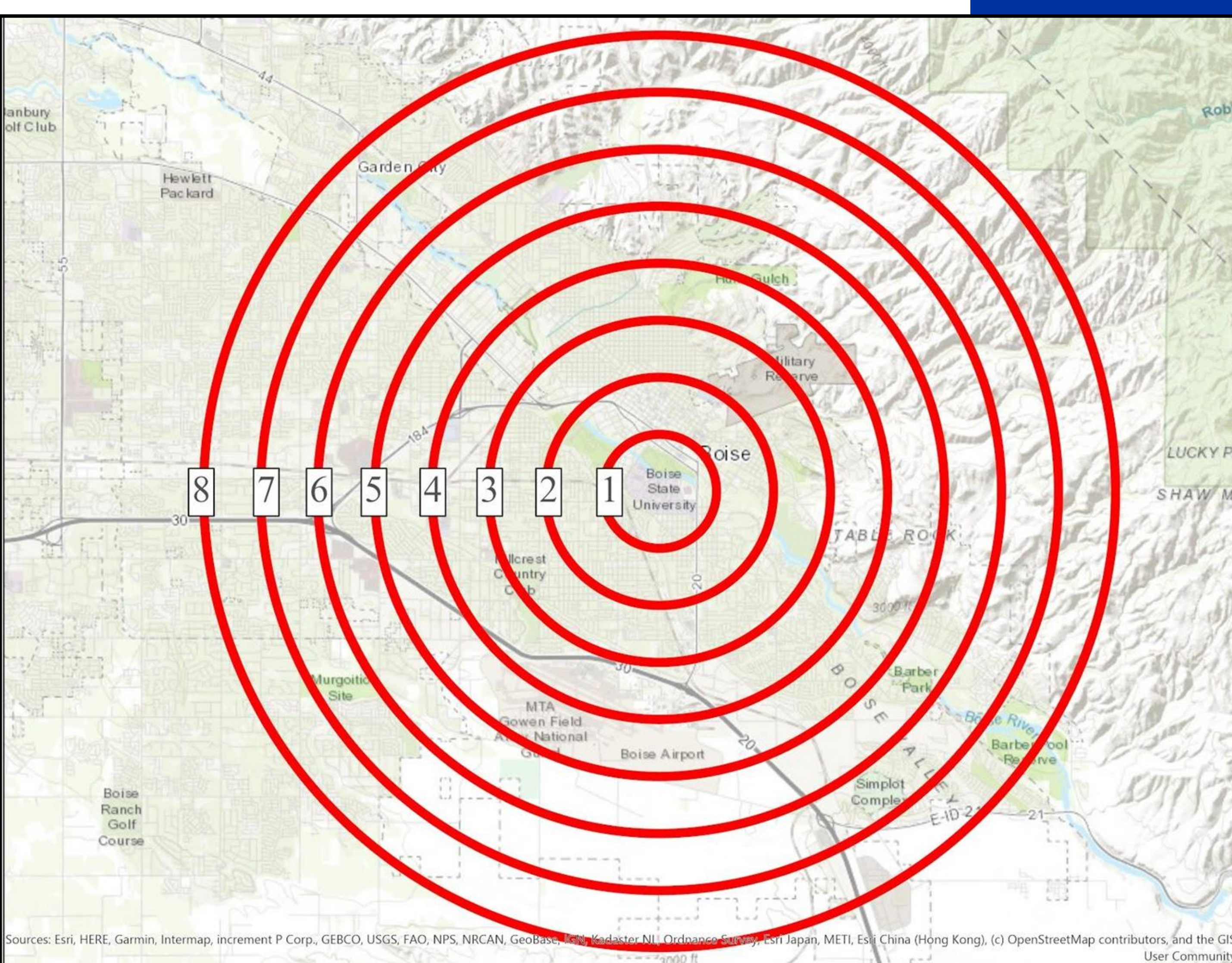
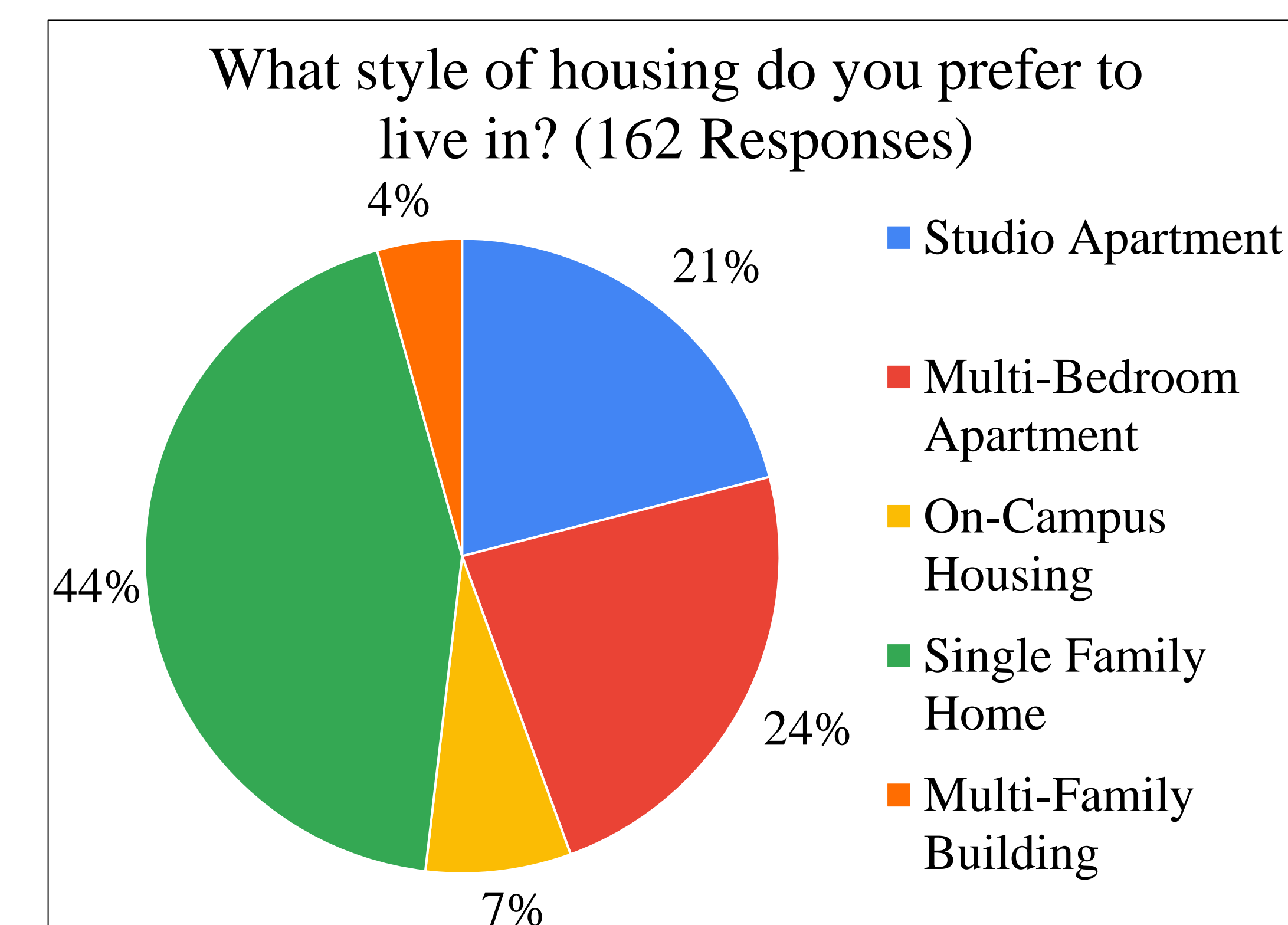
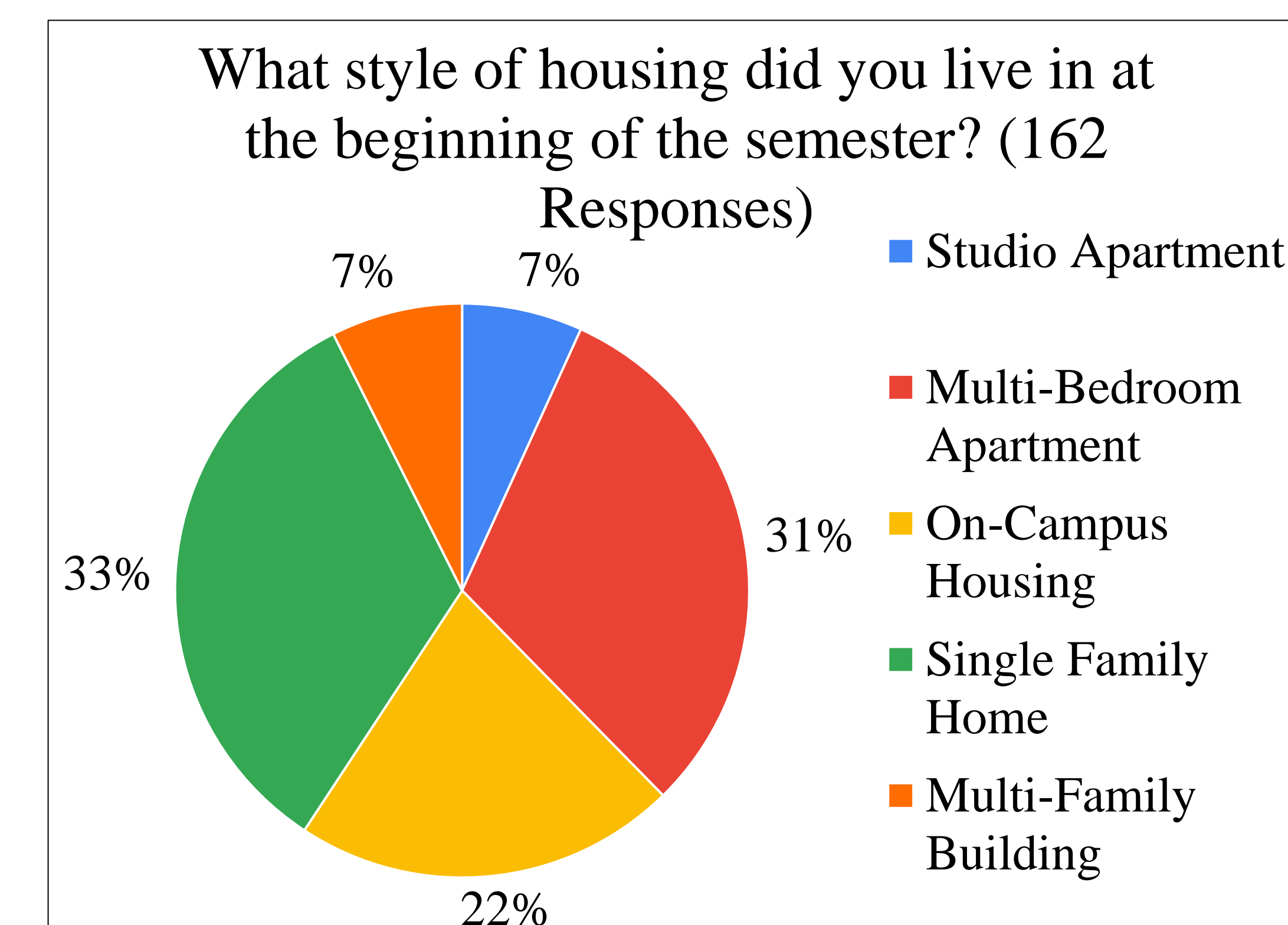
- Family Support is the primary way in which 18- to 24-year old's pay for housing.
- Students also rely on income from jobs, as well as scholarship and grants to help cover the cost of housing.



- 62% of students between the ages of 18 to 24 say that price and affordability is the biggest challenge they face when looking for housing. Location is the second biggest challenge.



- Approximately 54% of students says they spend between 0 to 30% of their income on housing. However, the fact that ~63% of students rely on family support for housing cost may signify that there is a significant population of students that are housing poor.
- According to students surveyed, the preference for single family housing is still the most widely accepted and preferred style of housing.



Map of Boise and surrounding areas. Concentric circles are drawn on the map in one-mile increments from the center of Boise State University. Corresponding results are above.