

Summary of the 2012 Survey of Stormwater Coordinators

Survey Overview

RI NEMO conducted a Survey of Stormwater Coordinators in August and September 2012, with the intention of identifying stormwater coordinators' needs for future training and technical assistance. The survey was administered online, using Constant Contact. We received 32 responses, representing 29 of the total 45 municipalities and other MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) owners in Rhode Island. Survey demographics are presented below.

Key Findings

The survey reveals that even among different audiences, the general topic of inspection and maintenance of stormwater practices is the most popular issue for which respondents would like support. Specifically, when the data was analyzed using all responses, as well as filtered for stormwater managers or planners, the three topics with the highest rankings are:

- **Training DPW and maintenance staff to inspect and maintain stormwater treatment after construction.**
- **New or refresher training for DPW and maintenance staff in pollution prevention at DPW facilities.**
- **Developing a post-construction stormwater system inspection and maintenance manual to be used as template by any MS4 is a top need for all audiences who responded.**

Other training topics ranked next most useful when all responses were included are:

- **Contractor training in using the RI Model SWPPP.**
- **State and local permit coordination using the RI Stormwater Manual.**
- **Guidance in how to ensure BMPs are maintained through MS4 policies, procedures and ordinances.**

We also mention another topic within the survey discussion that received a very high ranking when the data were analyzed by examining only responses of "5" (the highest ranking the respondent could choose) rather than grouping the data:

- **Coordinating with RIDOT and other MS4s in stormwater system O&M.**

Many other topics received high rankings by 50% or more of all audiences. These results, including differences in training priorities by stormwater coordinators and planners, are described below. For the complete results and the original survey visit: <http://web.uri.edu/riss/about-us/accomplishments/>.

Survey Demographics

Charts 1 and 2 below highlight the respondents' affiliations and job titles, indicating that the majority work for a municipality (85%) and are public works directors/managers (37%) or planners (25%). Chart 3 shows that the majority (66%) of respondents also identify themselves as stormwater coordinators, including six of the eight planners who responded.

Chart 1. Respondents' Affiliation

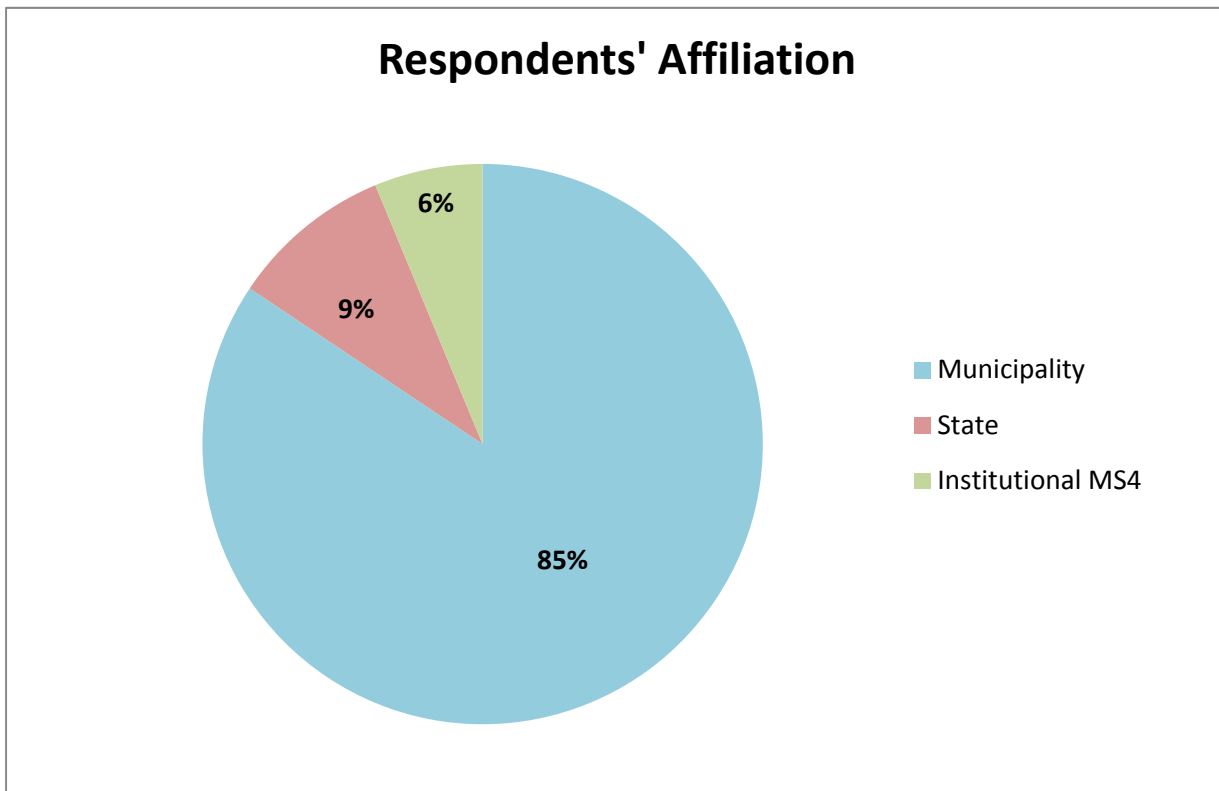


Chart 2. Respondents' Job Title

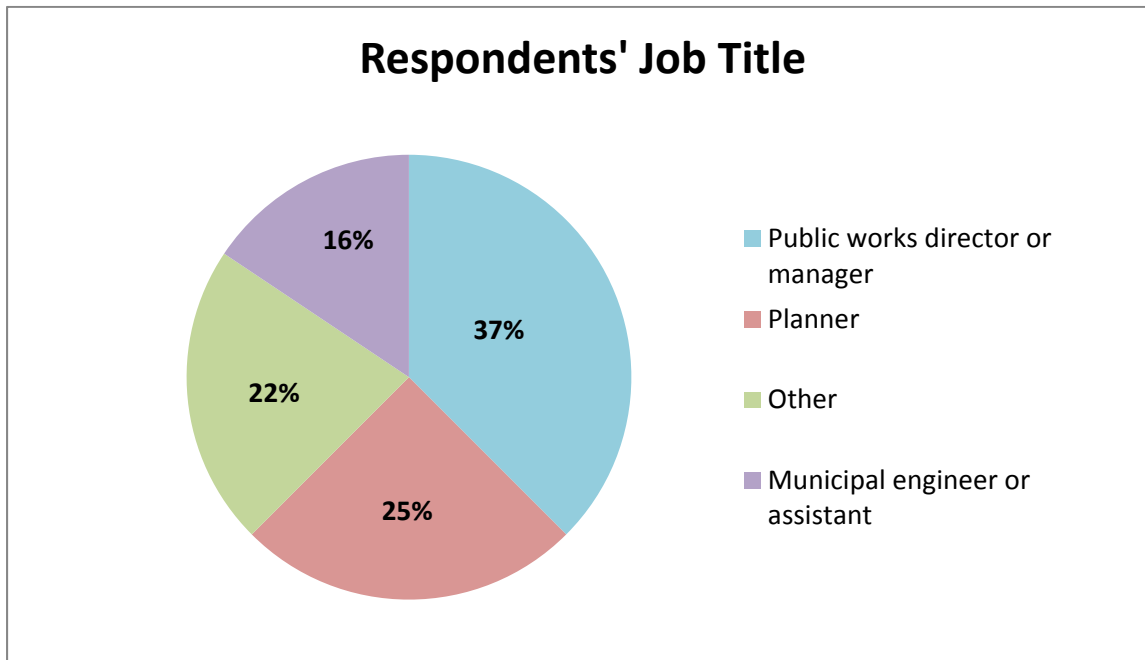
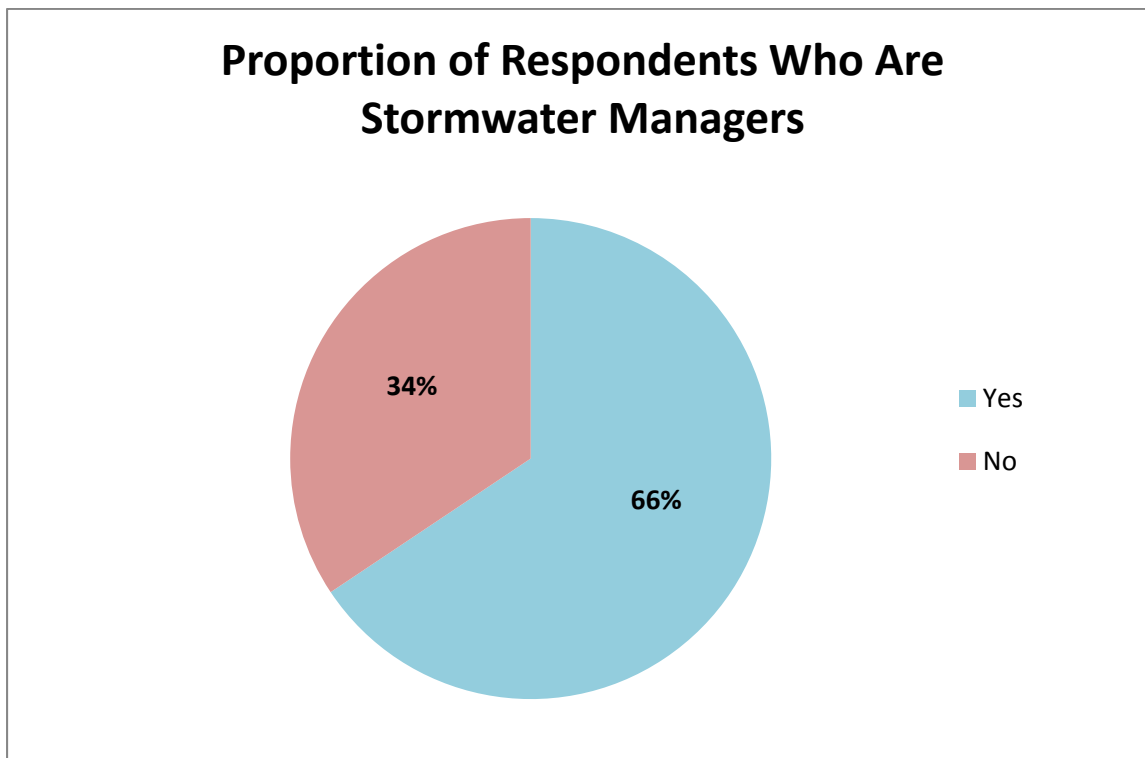


Chart 3. Proportion of Respondents Who Are MS4 Stormwater Coordinators



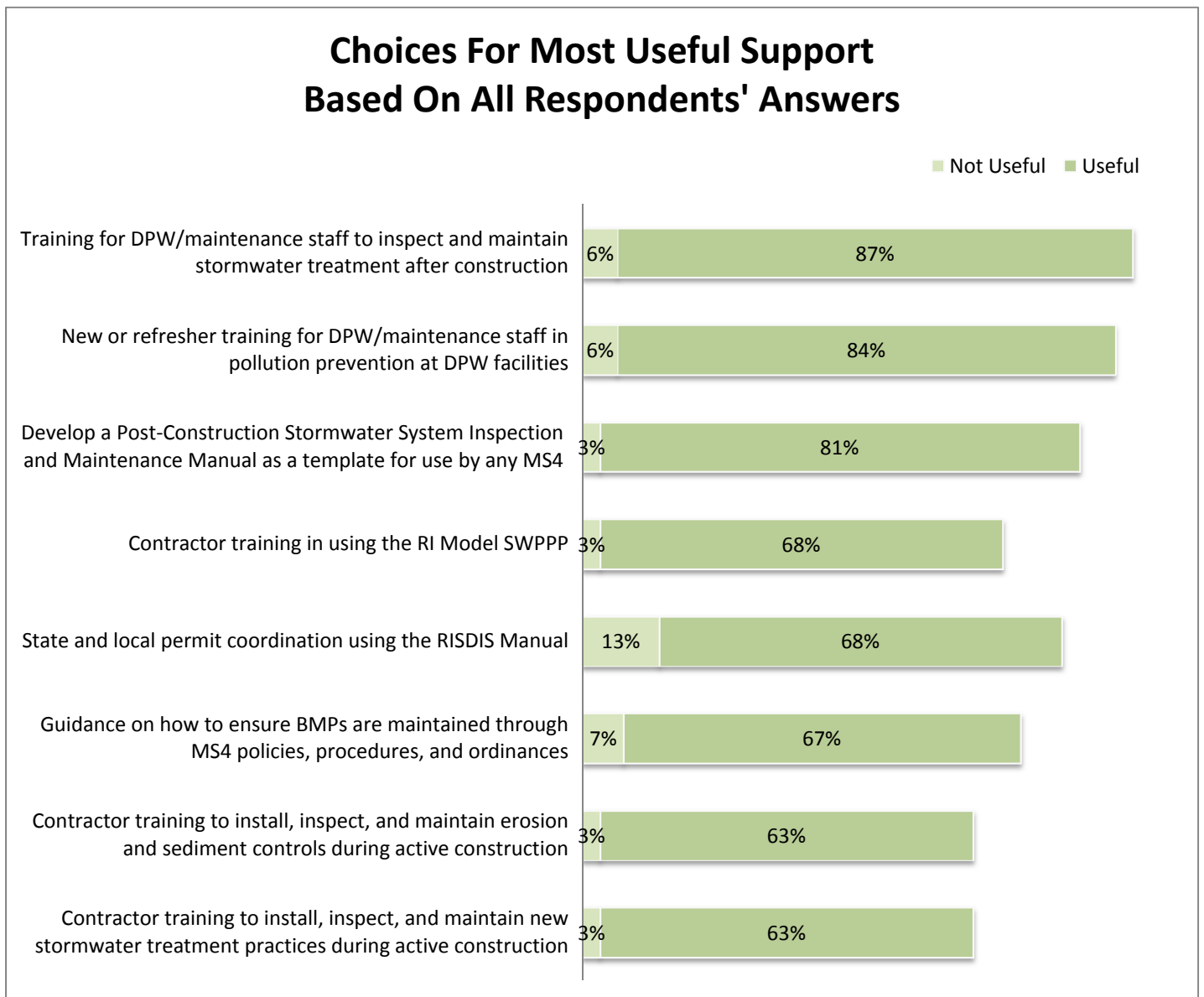
Training and Technical Assistance Usefulness According To All Respondents

The survey asked respondents to rank the usefulness of seven broad categories of training, technical assistance, and support. Each of those broad categories had between three and nine topics, and respondents were asked to use a Likert Scale of 1-5 to indicate their opinions.

Chart 4 below represents the top eight topics, as selected by the entire pool of respondents. Note that for this data analysis, the two highest scores on the Likert Scale (4 and 5) were grouped together, and the two lowest scores (1 and 2) were grouped together to create “useful” and “not useful” categories. This is why totals do not sum to 100%. Chart 4 illustrates both of those groups of data.

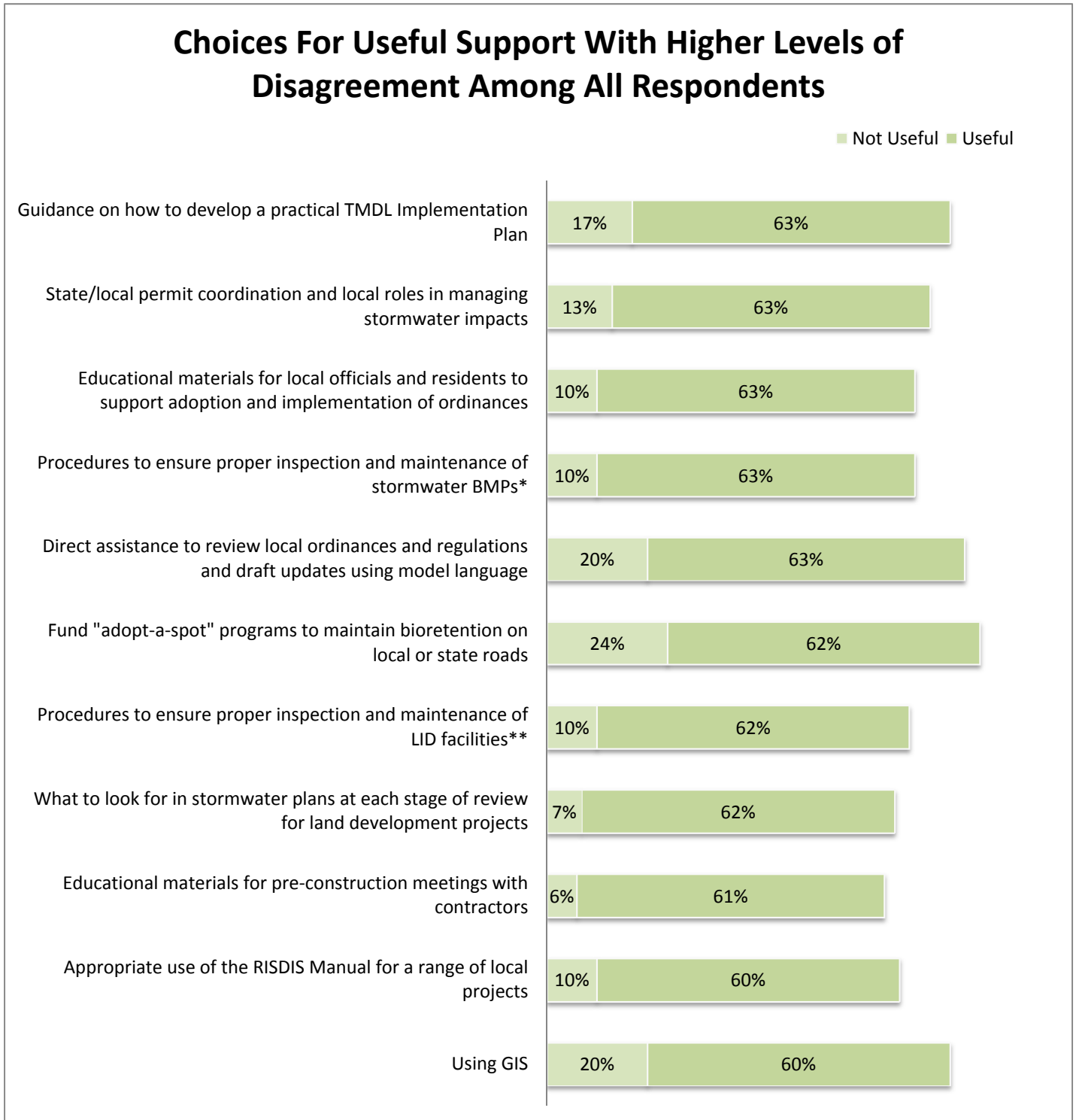
Chart 4. Choices For Most Useful Support Based On All Respondents' Answers

Note that with a sample size of 32, one response represents approximately 3% of the total.



The following 11 topics also received high scores, with 60% or more of all respondents indicating that they considered these topics useful. However, these topics also had a higher percentage of respondents who ranked them as not useful. The topics are highlighted in Chart 5 below.

Chart 5. Choices For Useful Support With Higher Levels of Disagreement Among All Respondents



*Related to technical trainings on the RI Stormwater Manual

**Related to trainings for municipal plan reviewers

It also is worth noting that an additional 11 topics were ranked as useful by between 50% and 59% of all respondents, indicating that even these topics would be considered useful by the majority. Those topics are highlighted in Chart 6 below.

From a data analysis perspective, it is interesting to note that one of the topics that falls within this group also received the second-greatest number of “5”s (the score of “most useful” according to the survey) compared to all topics presented. This topic deserves special mention because if the data had been analyzed by examining only those topics with the highest score, this one would have been one of the top winners. That topic is:

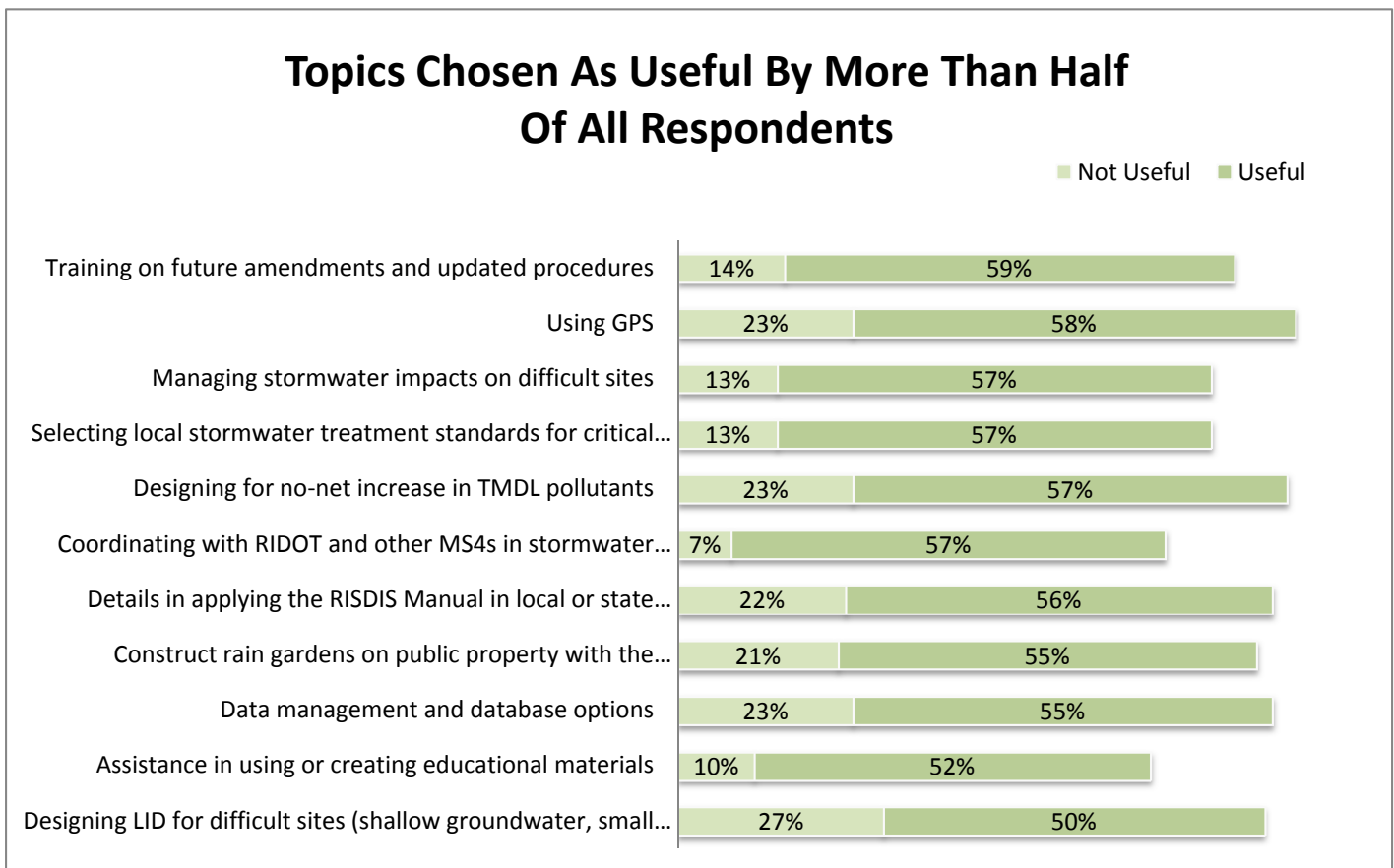
- **Coordinating with RIDOT and other MS4s in stormwater system O&M** (received 13 scores of 5)

The discrepancy between this topic and those that also received a large number of “5”s but were included as choices for most useful support shown in Chart 4, is due to the fact that the topic of coordinating with RIDOT received a disproportionately large number of “3”s (the score of “somewhat useful” according to the survey).

The other topic that received the greatest number of “5”s was included in Chart 4:

- **Develop a Post-Construction Stormwater System Inspection and Maintenance Manual as a template for use by any MS4** (received 19 scores of 5)

Chart 6. Topics Chosen As Useful By More Than Half Of All Respondents



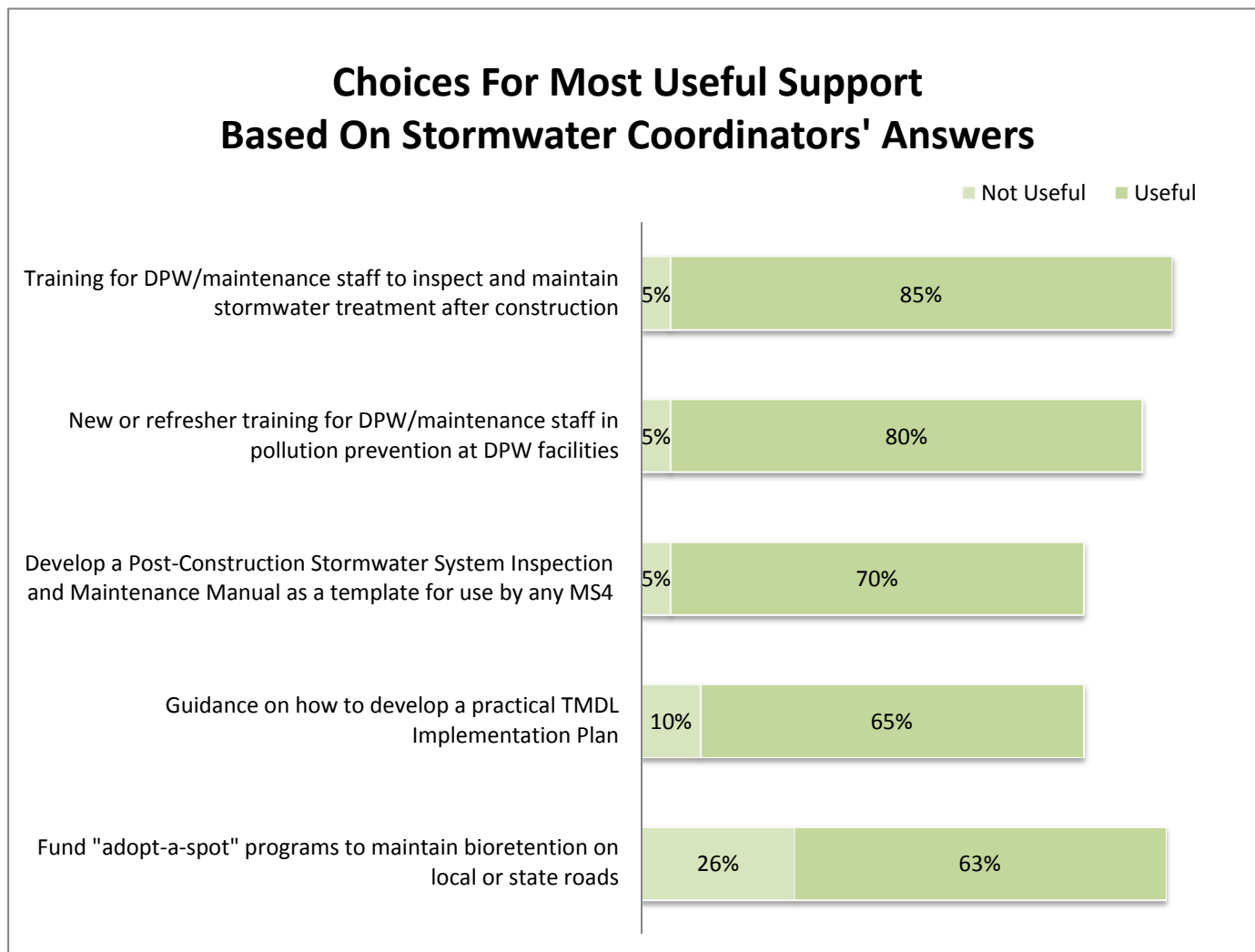
Training and Technical Assistance Usefulness According To MS4 Coordinators

Because this survey was most interested in the opinions of those who identify themselves as stormwater coordinators, we decided to analyze the data, filtering only responses from that particular group. The sample size for this data selection is 20 respondents, so *one response now represents 5% of the total*. Chart 7 below highlights the top five choices that received 60% or more support from this group.

It is highly interesting to note that the top three choices are identical for both the entire group of respondents and MS4 Coordinators:

- **Training for DPW/maintenance staff to inspect and maintain stormwater treatment facilities after construction**
- **New or refresher training for DPW/maintenance staff in pollution prevention at DPW facilities**
- **Develop a Post-Construction Stormwater System Inspection and Maintenance Manual as a template for use by any MS4**

Chart 7. Choices For Most Useful Support Based on Stormwater Coordinators' Answers



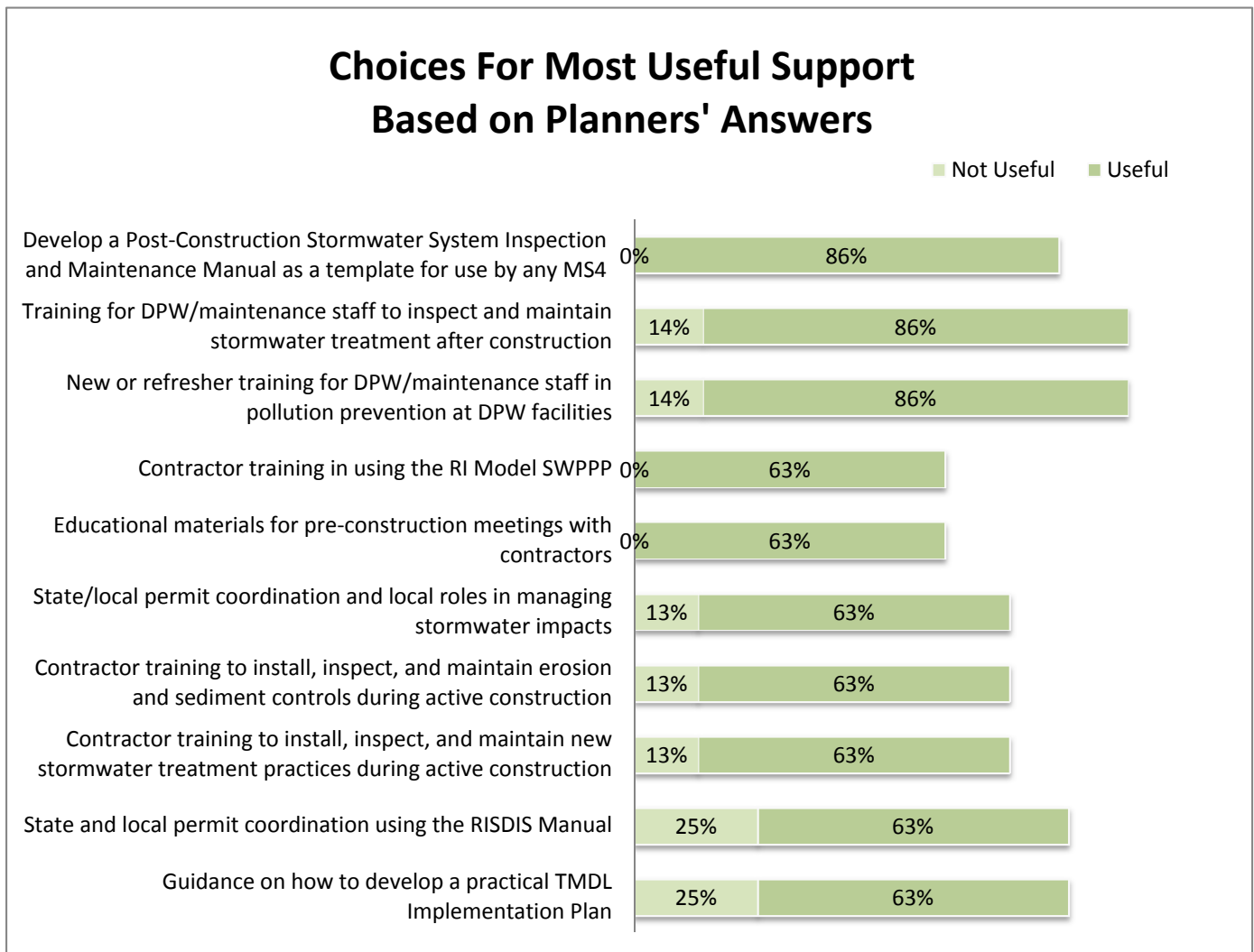
Training and Technical Assistance Usefulness According to Planners

The sample size of respondents who identified themselves as planners is small (only eight respondents), and six of those are also included in the stormwater coordinator category, so their opinions are represented there. However, we thought it would be interesting to see if there were any notable differences in priorities indicated by analyzing the data, filtering only responses from planners.

As Chart 8 below indicates, there is significant overlap between the topics chosen by planners as being most useful and those chosen by stormwater coordinators, and in fact, by all respondents in general. Again, the top three choices mirror those of the broader group, shown in Chart 4:

- **Training for DPW/maintenance staff to inspect and maintain stormwater treatment facilities after construction**
- **New or refresher training for DPW/maintenance staff in pollution prevention at DPW facilities**
- **Develop a Post-Construction Stormwater System Inspection and Maintenance Manual as a template for use by any MS4**

Chart 8. Choices For Most Useful Support Based On Planners' Answers



Discrepancies In Levels of Support for Topics And Respondent Comments

One notable area of discrepancy in terms of respondents' support for assistance occurred between planners and the general pool of respondents with regards to the topic of updating local ordinances and regulations. The pool of all respondents indicated that in general, assistance updating ordinances would be beneficial. However, planners rated those topics much lower. Analyzing written comments sometimes can provide insight, although in this case, the number of responses was too small to find any common themes generally and regarding the topic of ordinances specifically.

Overall, the written responses reflected trends that we have seen from previous stormwater trainings. Namely, that there are two primary groups of attendees, those who find the workshops and materials useful and express their appreciation for the support and assistance, and those who stress that they are under-staffed and under-funded to carry out the required work. Our hope is to use the findings of the survey to assist both groups.