



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Ontario

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Ontario

CRISIS RESPONSE TEAMS IN ONTARIO

Environmental Scan: A Webinar



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Audience Reminders

Welcome. Here are a few notes while we wait for others to join.

- 01** Feel free to introduce yourselves in the chat box: who you are and where you're from.

- 02** Questions will be entertained at the live Q&A after the presentation.

- 03** This webinar will be recorded and posted on both the CMHA Ontario and HSJCC website and YouTube channels.

Webinar Outline

What we'll cover this afternoon:

01

Background

02

Survey Logistics

03

Findings

04

A Summary

05

Question Period



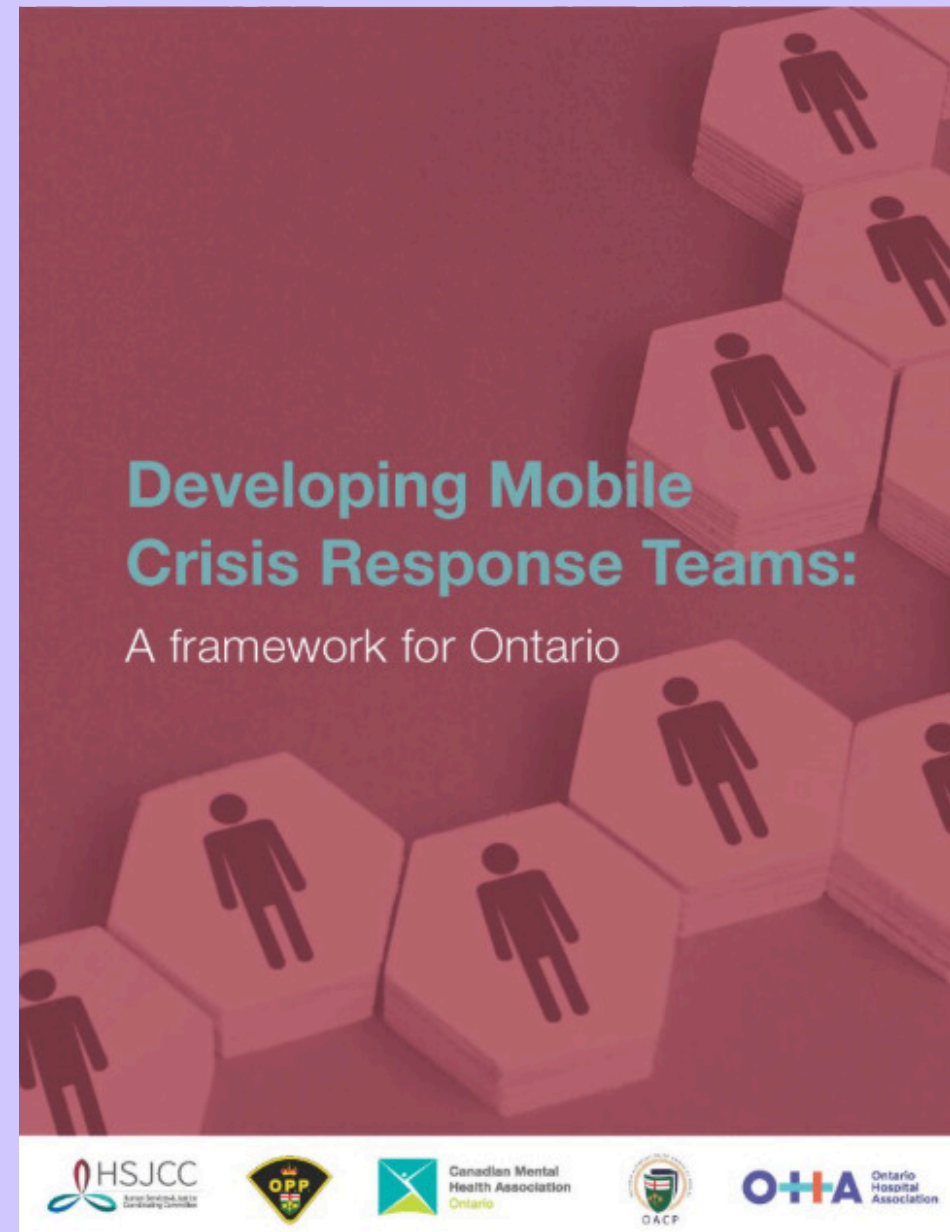
Crisis response teams play a vital role in providing timely, compassionate care to individuals in need, ensuring they receive appropriate support during moments of distress.

This webinar will explore key findings from a province-wide survey, highlighting the structures, challenges, and successes of these teams across Ontario.

We'll delve into the long-term sustainability of their funding, while also examining critical gaps and barriers, including variability in access to services across urban, rural, and remote areas, challenges with sustainable funding and staffing, and limited integration with broader health and social systems.

01 February 2023

Release of “Mobile Crisis Response Teams: A Framework for Ontario and Tools for Developing Mobile Crisis Teams in Ontario”



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02 May 2023

Stakeholder engagements begin across the community mental health, community justice and policing sectors.

01 **February 2023**

Release of “Mobile Crisis Response Teams: A Framework for Ontario and Tools for Developing Mobile Crisis Teams in Ontario”

02 **May 2023**

During stakeholder engagements following the framework launch, feedback indicated that many crisis response teams launched or expanded since the original 2020 scan. An updated version would be valuable.

Stakeholder engagements begin across the community mental health, community justice and policing sectors.

01 **February 2023**

Release of “Mobile Crisis Response Teams: A Framework for Ontario and Tools for Developing Mobile Crisis Teams in Ontario”

02 **May 2023**

The environmental scan in the 2023 Framework includes police-partnered teams only.

Stakeholder engagements begin across the community mental health, community justice and policing sectors.

01 **February 2023**

Release of “Mobile Crisis Response Teams: A Framework for Ontario and Tools for Developing Mobile Crisis Teams in Ontario”

02 **May 2023**

There is discussion of community crisis response, resources, and some case studies provided.

Stakeholder engagements begin across the community mental health, community justice and policing sectors.



Let's get on the
same page

key
definitions

Crisis Response Teams



ONTARIO INVESTING IN MOBILE CRISIS RESPONSE TEAMS - CMHA SIMCOE COUNTY (CMHASTARTTALKING.CA)

Teams who respond to a mental health, addiction, neurodevelopmental and/or other crisis situation in the community.

These teams help to de-escalate crisis situations at the scene, divert individuals from emergency departments where appropriate, and support clients by connecting them to local services in the community.

This includes both police and community-based crisis response teams. These teams can include a variety of partnership types.

Police- Partnered Crisis Teams

Teams involving police officers and crisis workers who respond to a mental health, addiction, neurodevelopmental and/or other crisis situation in the community.

These teams help to de-escalate crisis situations at the scene, divert individuals from emergency departments where appropriate and support clients by connecting them to local services in the community.



(MENTAL HEALTH NURSE D. FORSYTH (FRONT) WITH (FRON LEFT TO RIGHT) CONSTABLE J. RYE; CONSTABLE J. MORRIS; MENTAL HEALTH WORKER M.FAUGHT (CMHA); MENTAL HEALTH WORKER A. SWIFT (CMHA); CONSTABLE S. LEAVITT) AT THE PETERBOROUGH POLICE STATION. PHOTO COURTESY OF PETERBOROUGH POLICE SERVICE.

Non-Police Partnered Crisis Teams

Teams composed of crisis workers who may have different areas of expertise. These teams respond to a mental health, addiction, neurodevelopmental and/or other crisis situation in the community.

Teams responding to immediate crises de-escalate these situations, offer medical assistance and provide therapeutic interventions. Teams that do not respond to urgent crisis situations may provide follow-up visits or wellness checks in the community.





Let's dive into how it
was conducted.

the survey

The survey was shared with

- **Canadian Mental Health Association branches**
- **Provincial Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee and its 14 regional and 39 local committees**
- **Ontario Provincial Police**
- **Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police**
- **Mental Health Community of Practice for Law Enforcement (MCOP)**
- **Mental Health Partners**
- **Association of Municipalities of Ontario**
- **Ministry partners from the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Health**

Some survey limitations

- Point-in-time survey: does not capture all developments in the sector such as new teams.
- Responses are self-reported and are prone to interpretation.
- The level of detail in responses rely on the information that is available to survey respondents.
- The findings from this project are dependent on the final response rate and the level of completion of survey responses.
- Distribution of the survey: reach in healthcare sectors varies. This resulted in a lower number of responses from some healthcare partners, such as hospitals.



Let's review the
findings.

the results

Number of teams

This environmental scan identified 109 crisis response teams in Ontario that respond to acute mental health, substance use and/or neurodevelopmental-related crises, including:

94 police-partnered crisis response teams

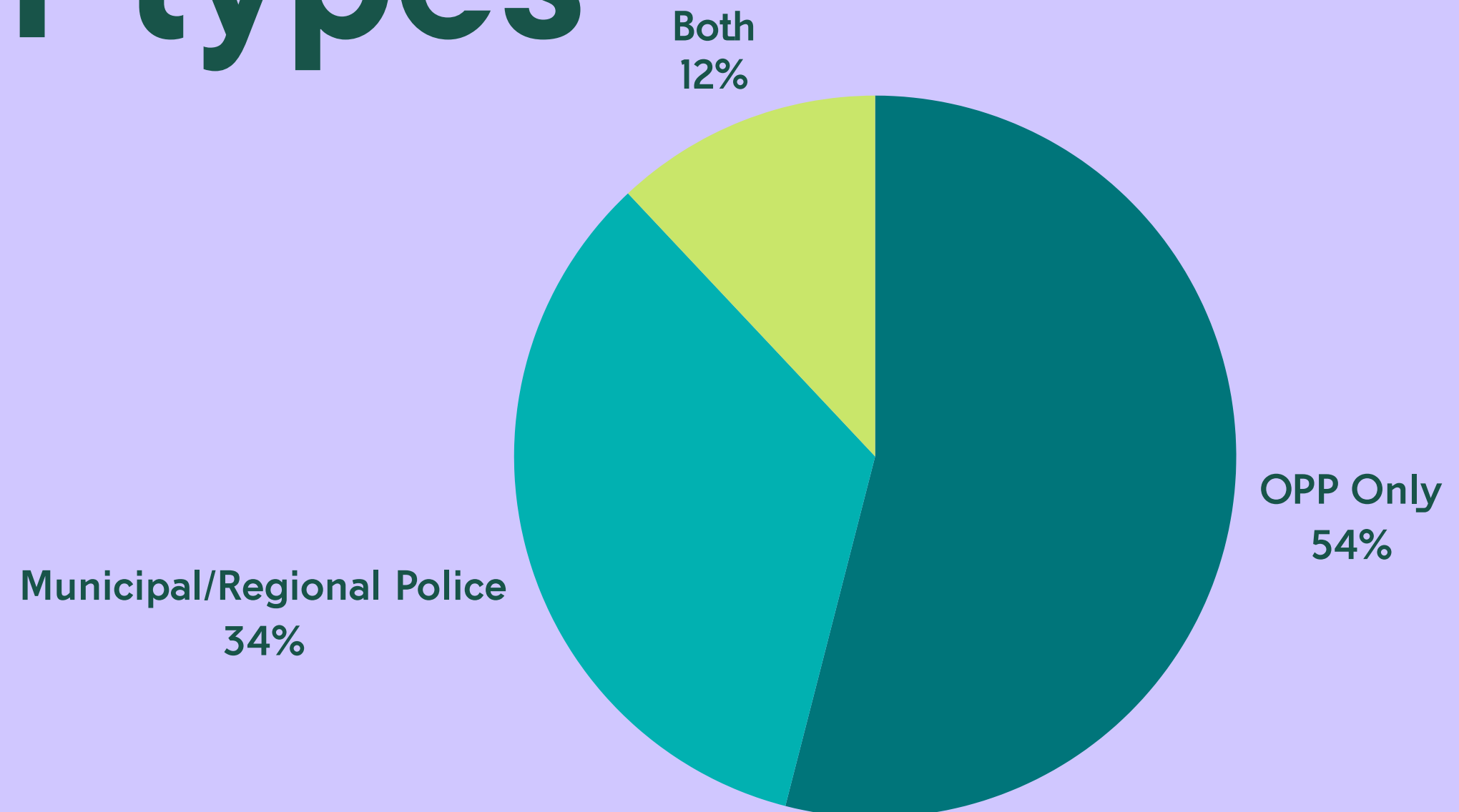
- 91 teams delivered in partnership with community-based social service providers, hospitals, and/or other healthcare providers (i.e. paramedics)
- 2 teams delivered by police detachments that have hired crisis workers
- 1 team did not indicate the partner type

15 non-police-partnered crisis response teams

Police-partnered teams: Police partner types

Most police partnered teams are delivered with the OPP (51 teams).

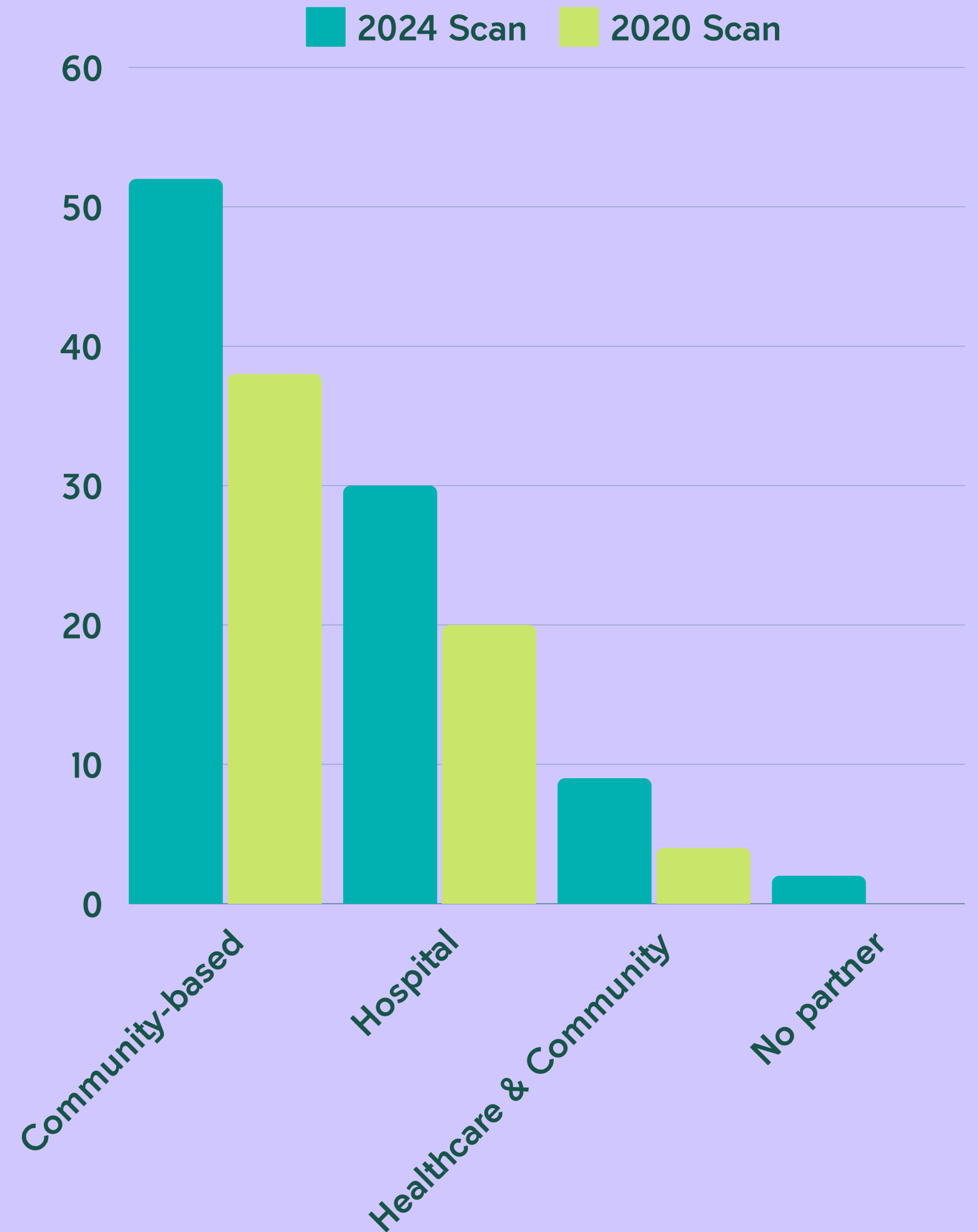
- About a third (32 teams) are delivered in partnership with municipal/regional police, and 11 are delivered in partnership with both the OPP and municipal/regional police.



Comparing service delivery partners in police-partnered teams

Two police services reported hiring an internal crisis worker to deliver mobile crisis services with officers.

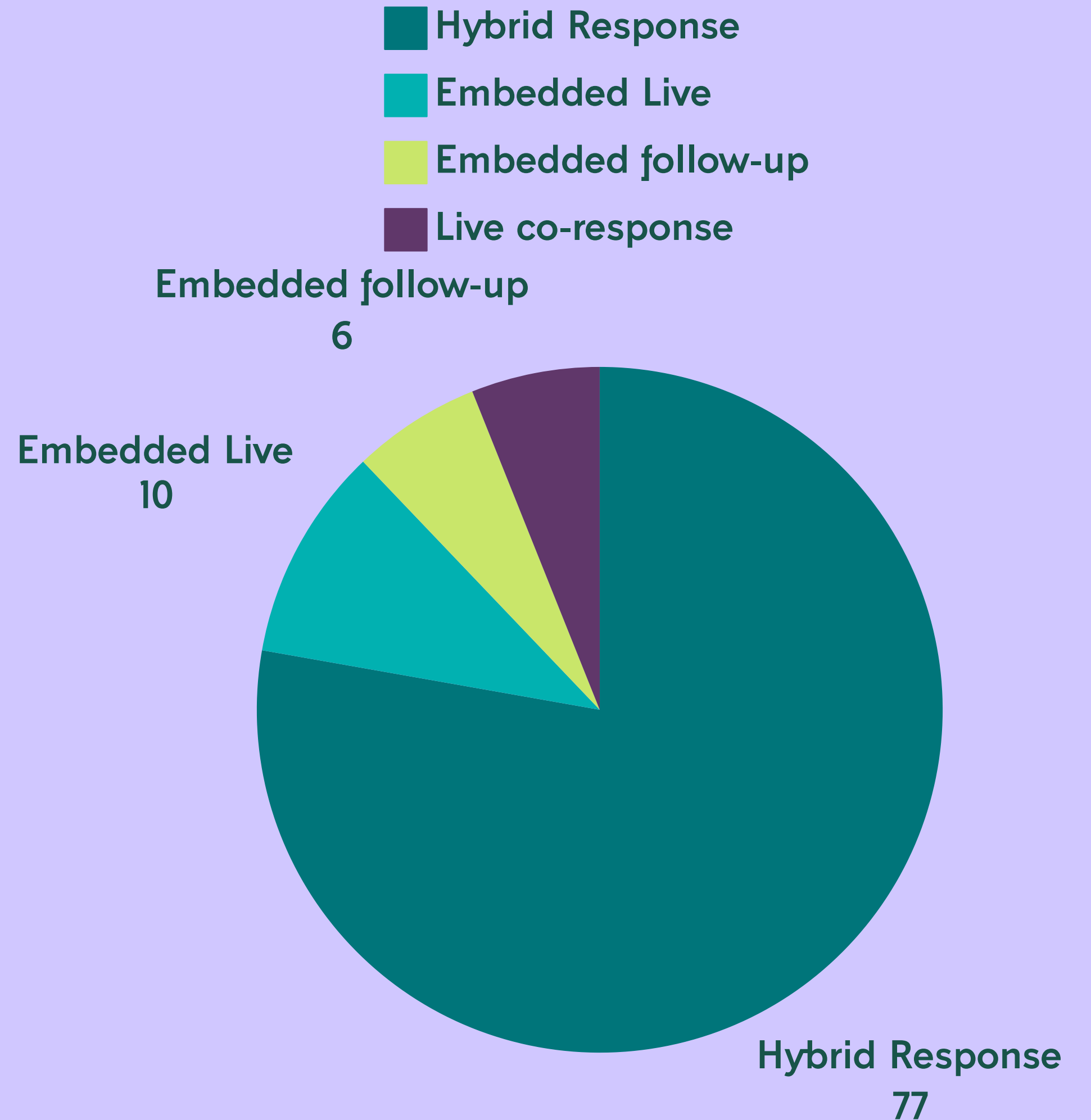
One team did not indicate the partner type.



Police-Partnered Service Models: Then & Now

In both 2020 and 2024 hybrid response models were most common. However, a higher percentage of teams reported using a hybrid response model in 2024 (77%) than in 2020 (62%).

2024 Scan (n = 94)



Non-Police-Partnered Teams

In total, 15 non-police-partnered crisis response teams delivered by 11 organizations were identified. Two organizations deliver more than one non-police-partnered crisis response team.

Of the 15 non-police-partnered crisis response teams identified in the survey:

2 teams are delivered by hospitals

2 teams are delivered by Community Health Centres

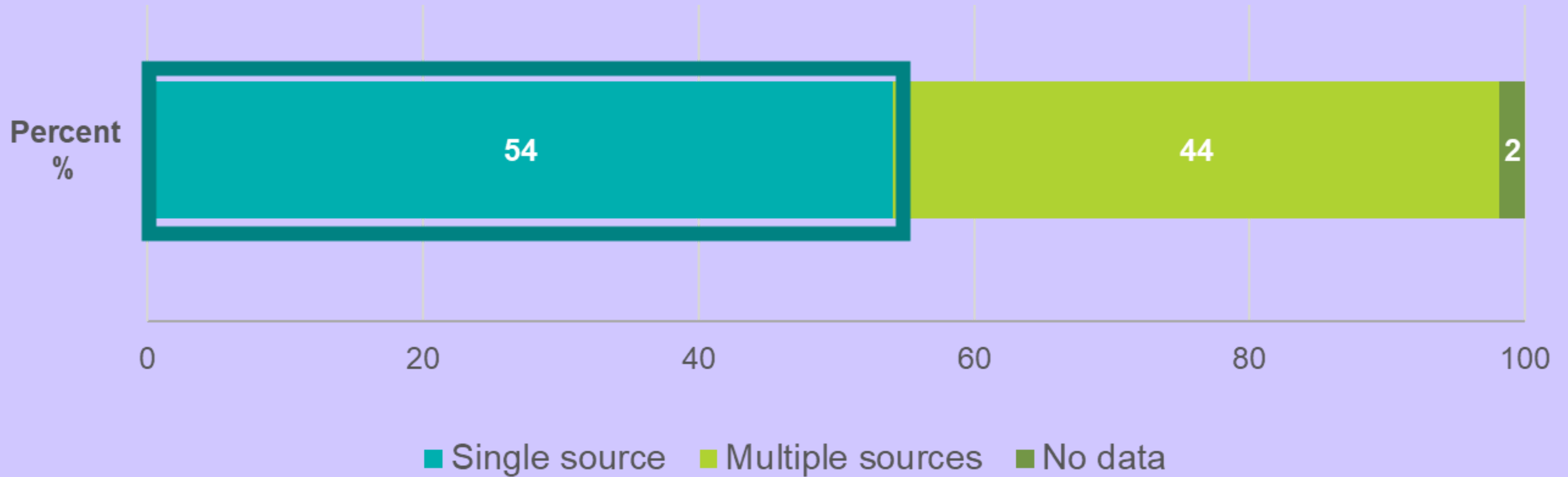
**11 teams are delivered by community health organizations, which includes:
1 team delivered with paramedic services**

In addition, there are two teams that specifically provide culturally-appropriate care in their communities.



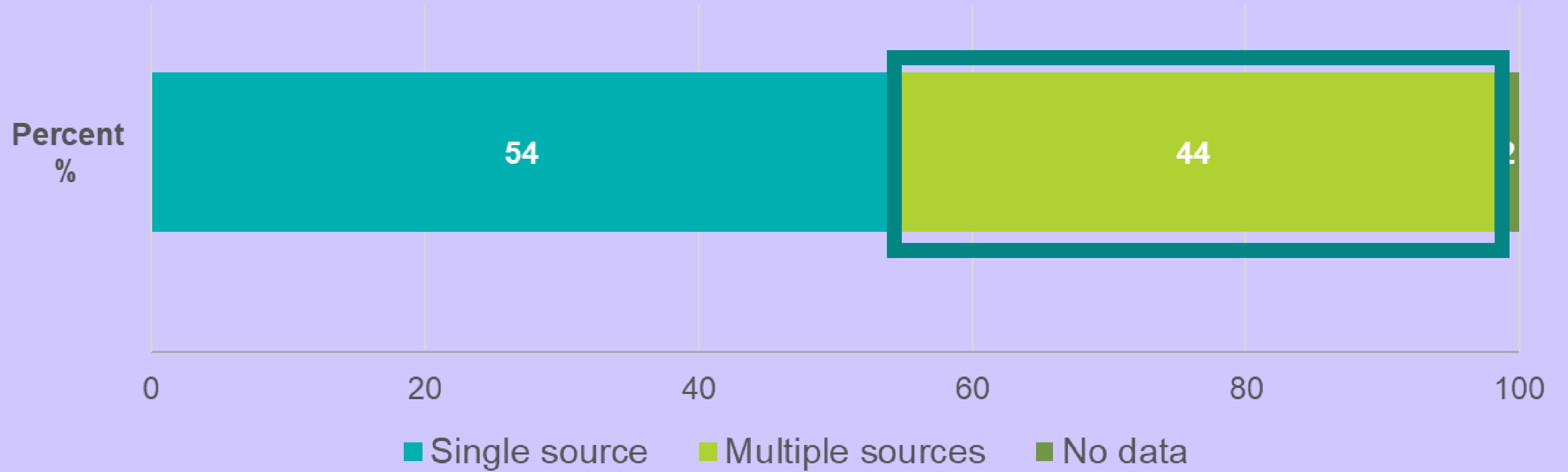
Let's talk money.

the funding



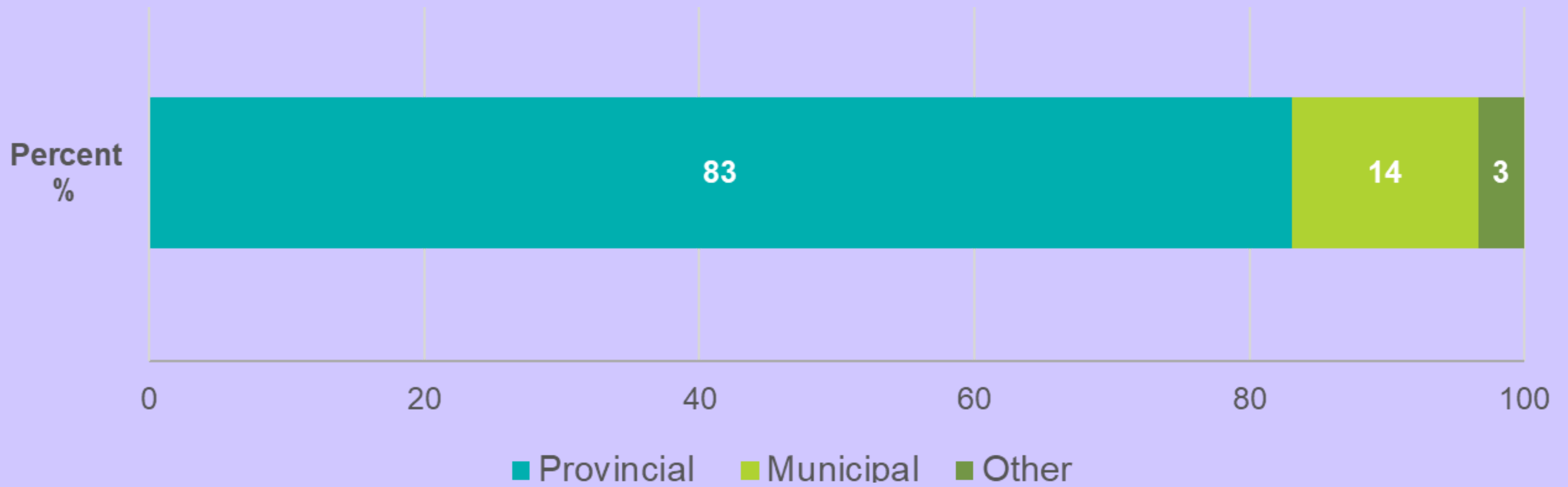
Crisis Response Team Funding Models

Slightly over half of teams (59 teams) reported receiving funding from a single source. All non-police teams (15 teams) indicated relying on a single source of funding. Less than half of police-partnered teams (44 teams) rely on a single source of funding.



Crisis Response Team Funding: Number of Funding Sources

Over a third of teams (48 teams) reported relying on multiple sources of funding - this puts these teams at greater risk if a source of funding ends.

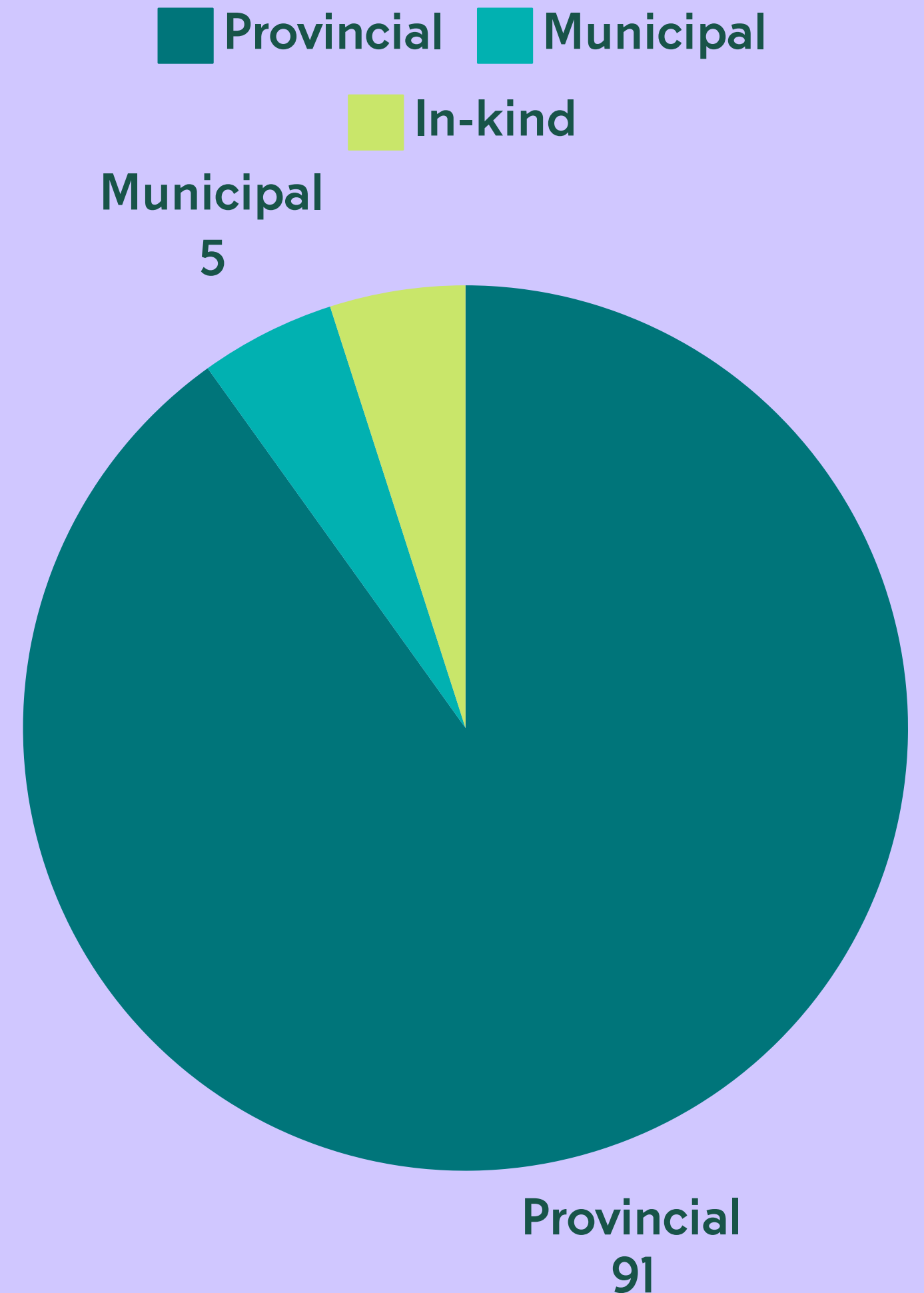


Funding Sources: Teams with a single source of funding

Overall, most teams (49 teams) with a single funding source reported receiving provincial funding. A much smaller number (8 teams) reported their teams were municipally funded, and two teams reported they were funded in-kind.

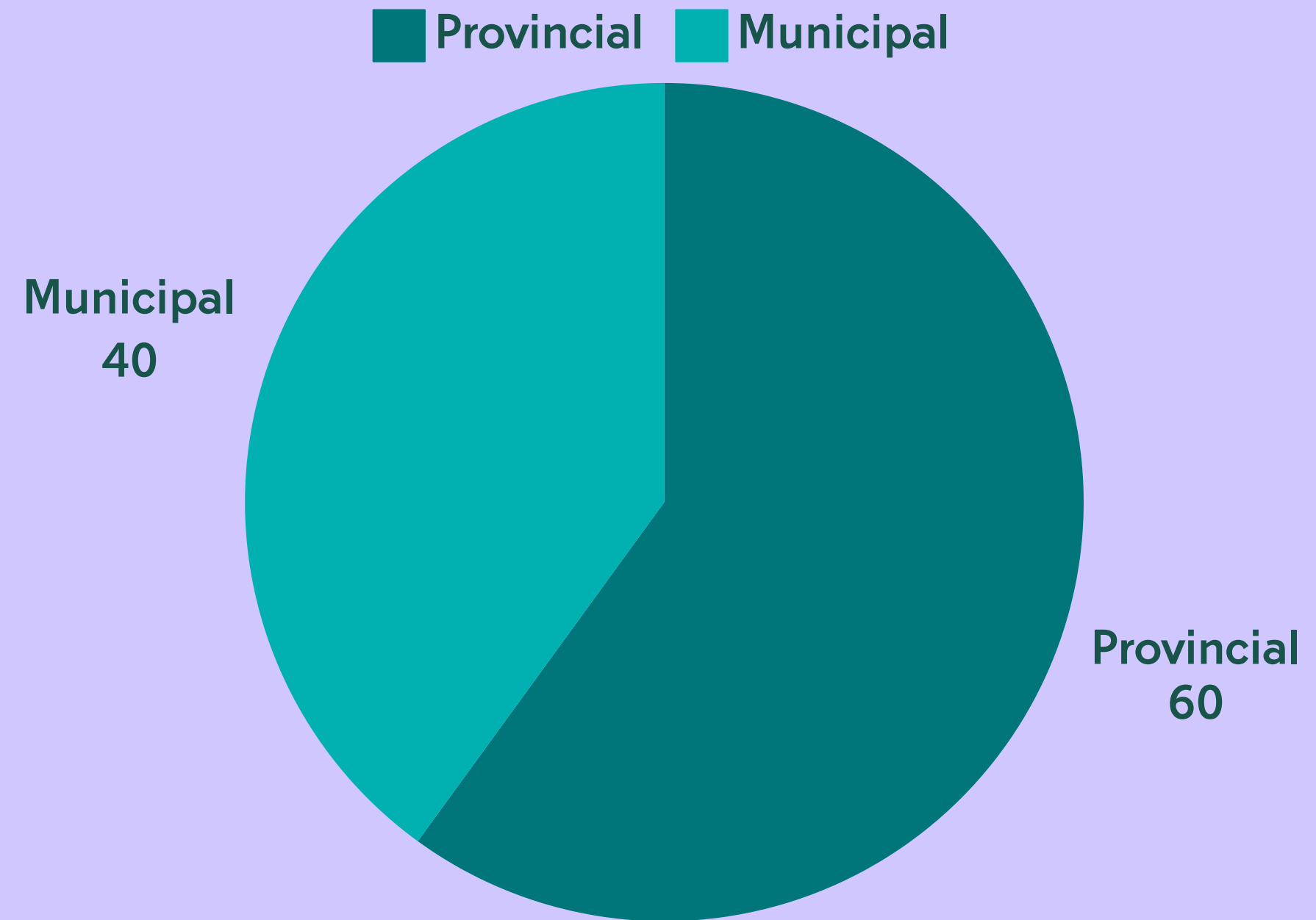
Funding Sources: Police-partnered teams with a single source of funding

Most police-partnered teams with a single source of funding (40 teams) receive provincial funding. A small number receive municipal (2 teams) or in-kind funding (2 teams).



Funding Sources: Non-police- partnered teams with a single source of funding

Most non-police-partnered teams (9 teams) are provincially funded by the ministry of health. the remaining teams (6 teams) are municipally funded.



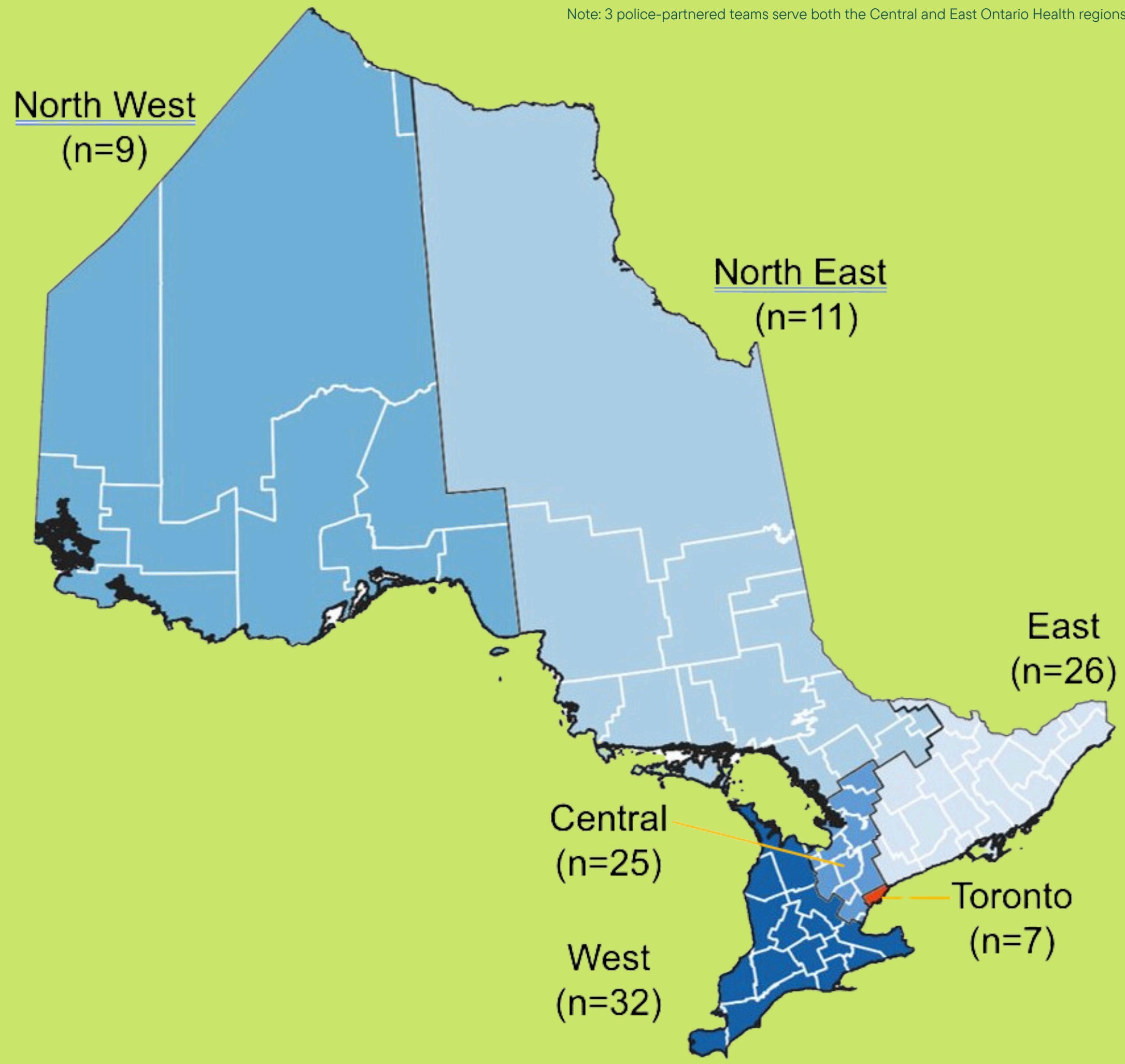


Let's talk service
availability.

**regional
and hours**

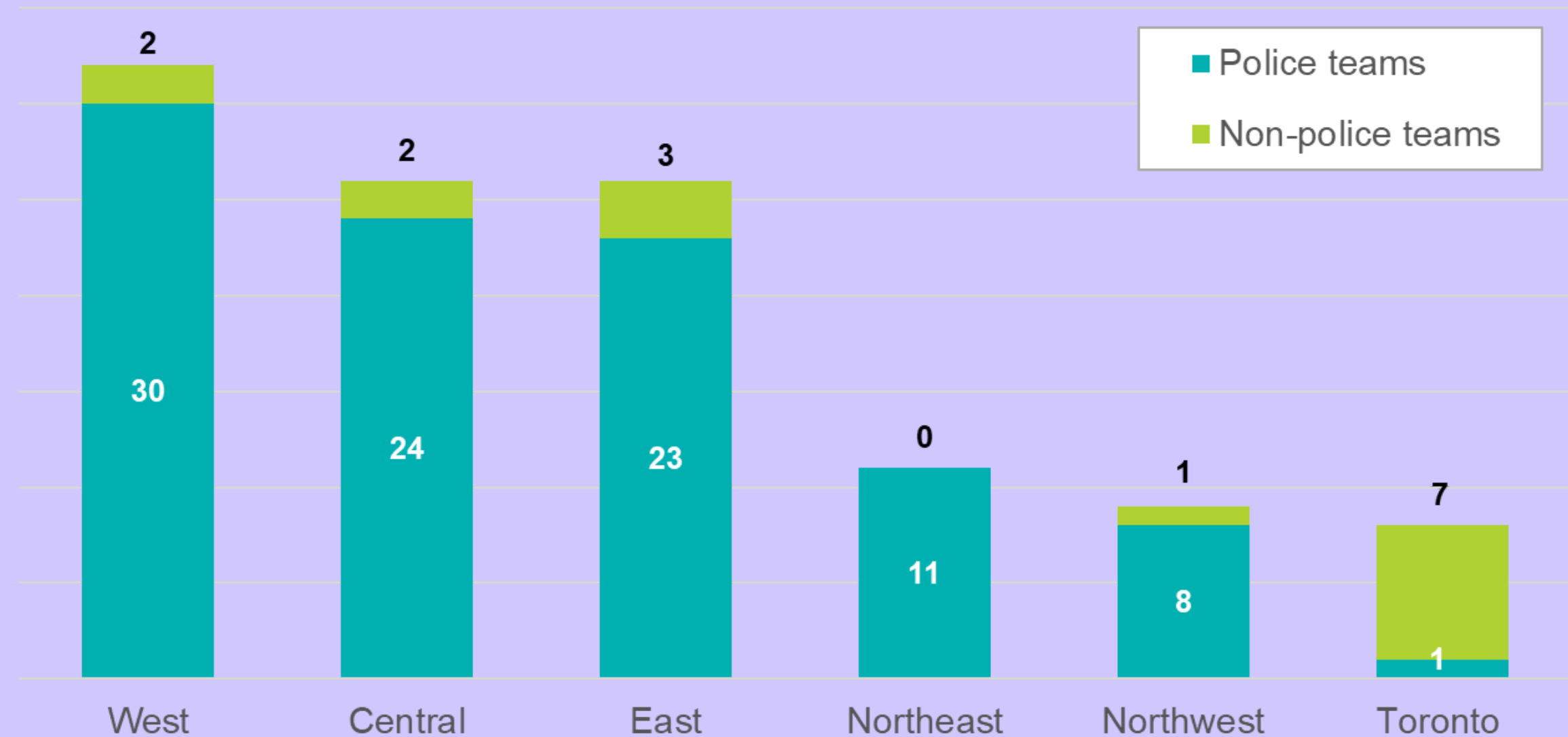
Total coverage across Ontario

Note: 3 police-partnered teams serve both the Central and East Ontario Health regions



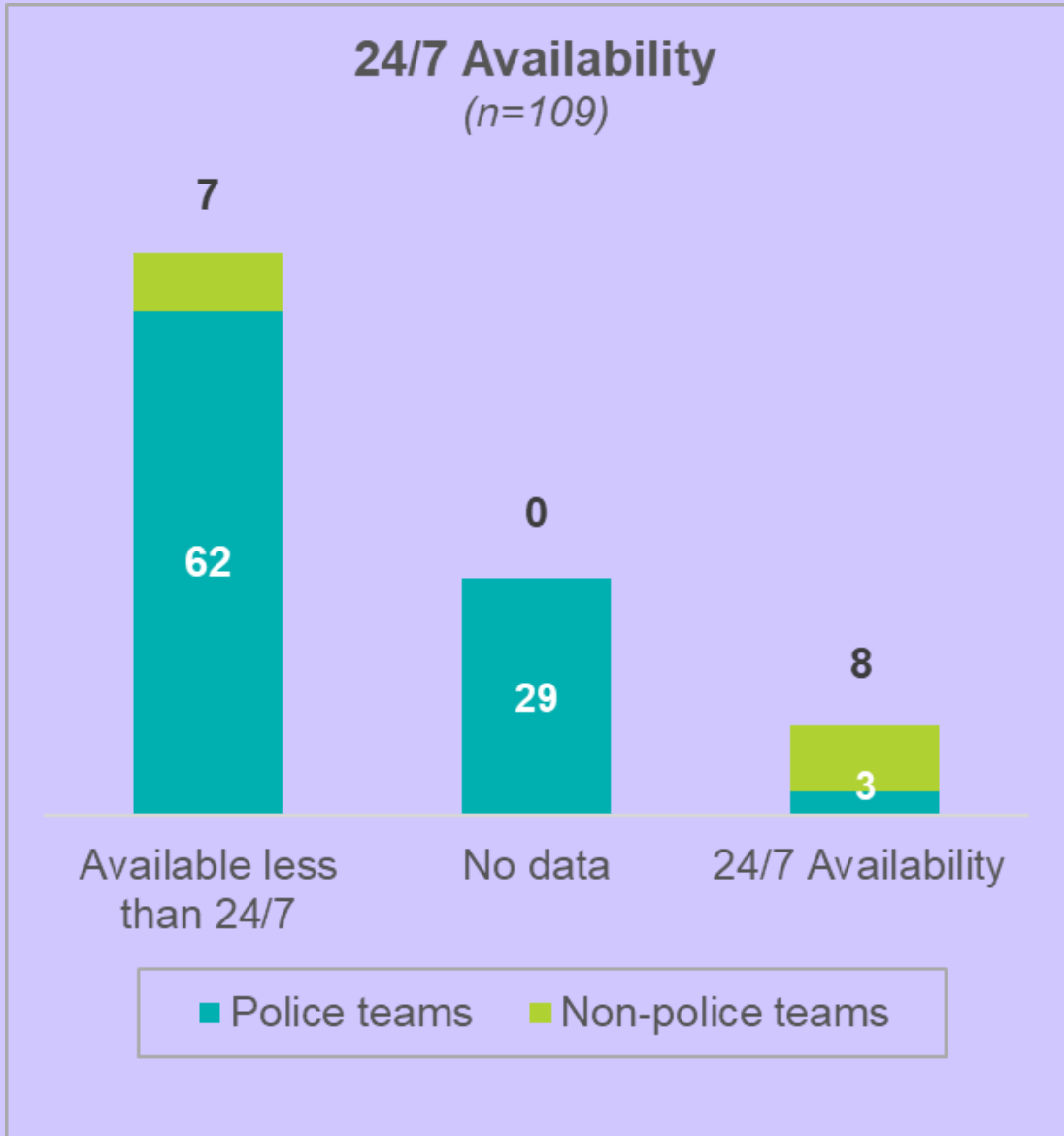
Distribution of teams by Ontario Health (OH) Region

Note: 3 police-partnered teams serve both the central and east Ontario health regions



Service availability

Overall, 11 teams, or only 10% of teams across the province are available 24/7. eight of these teams are non-police-partnered teams, and 3 are police-partnered teams.



Availability of teams not operating 24/7

69 teams indicated operating less than 24/7.
Data was missing from 29 teams.

Monday - Friday availability	Police-partnered	Non-police	Total (n=69)
12+ hours/day	27	3	30
<12 hours/day	22	1	23
Unable to code	13	3	16

Saturday-Sunday Availability	Police-partnered	Non-police	Total (n=69)
12+ hours/day	16	3	19
<12 hours/day	10	0	10
None	20	1	21
Unable to code	16	3	19

Analysis of teams not operating 24/7

A total of 69 teams reported operating with less than 24/7 availability. Additionally, data from 29 teams was unavailable, which has been noted as missing.

This analysis reflects significant disparities between police-partnered and non-police teams regarding availability across the week, emphasizing that non-police teams tend to have more limited operational hours.

Monday to Friday Availability:

- Out of the 69 teams, 30 operate for 12 or more hours per day.
- Among these, 27 are police-partnered teams, while only 3 are non-police teams.
- Meanwhile, 23 teams have availability of fewer than 12 hours per day, with 22 of these being police-partnered and 1 being a non-police team.
- There are also 16 teams where the data could not be clearly categorized (“unable to code”), comprising 13 police-partnered teams and 3 non-police teams.

Saturday and Sunday Availability:

- 19 teams are available for 12 or more hours per day.
- Of these, 16 are police-partnered teams and 3 are non-police teams.
- Ten teams operate for fewer than 12 hours per day on weekends, all of which are police-partnered teams.
- Notably, 21 teams indicated no availability during weekends, with 20 of these being police-partnered and 1 being a non-police team.
- The category for “unable to code” includes 19 teams, with 16 being police-partnered and 3 being non-police teams.



Let's take a look at
what we've learned.

the summary

Gaps & barriers

The common gaps and barriers to providing crisis response services that were identified were:

-
- 01** Staffing: Under-resourcing in the community mental health sector

 - 02** Follow-up services require clients to abstain from substance use and/or availability of detox beds

 - 03** Ability to communicate with clients (e.g. clients who do not have a phone and/or internet access).

key findings

01

The number of crisis response teams in Ontario has increased significantly in the last four years.

02

The Ontario Provincial Police are the most common police-partner among police-partnered teams across the province.

03

Among police-partnered teams, community organizations remain the primary mental health partner.

04

Among police-partnered teams, the hybrid service model remains the most common. Teams are able to adjust their model to meet the needs of their communities.

key findings

05

There has also been an increase in the development of non-police partnered teams in the last four years.

06

54% of teams receive funding from a single source. 83% of these teams report that their funding is provided by MOH.

07

All of the teams relying on multiple funding sources (44%) are police-partnered.

key findings

09

Increasing the number of funding sources does not make these teams more sustainable. It puts their service at risk.

10

Only 10% of crisis response teams cross the province are available 24/7.

11

Most of these teams are non-police-partnered teams. 6 of these teams are in Toronto.



discussion

Is there anything in the results that is surprising to you?

What areas would you be most interested in hearing about further?

Are there other questions that you think we should explore further?

Questions to explore further.

-
- 01** What is the appropriate mix of police-partnered and community-led crisis response teams?

 - 02** At a regional level, are there remaining gaps in service?

 - 03** What model type is most appropriate in urban areas? rural areas? why?

 - 04** What does success look like for crisis response teams at a provincial level?



Questions?

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Thank you