Diversity among Volunteers at a Large San Diego Non-Profit Organization

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INTRODUCTION

- Many public nonprofits rely on volunteers
- Diverse volunteer workforce important in making clients feel welcome and providing different perspectives
- Evaluation requested by large San Diego non-profit whose volunteer program lacks diversity to understand if problem with recruitment, retention, or both

OBJECTIVES

- Evaluate applicant and active volunteer diversity
- Assess opinions on diversity within the program among volunteers from underrepresented groups
- Identify successful strategies used by similar nonprofits for recruitment and retention of diverse volunteers

METHODS

- Data from program's volunteer database (n=4688) used to compare sociodemographic characteristics of applicants and current volunteers with SD county population
- Mapped residence by area deprivation index (ADI)
- Interviewed 12 active volunteers & four volunteer coordinators at similar nonprofits
- Interviews transcribed, themes identified, and text coded

RESULTS

Quantitative findings
- Applicants more likely to be female, older, and have higher education than SD county population
- Socioeconomically disadvantaged areas underrepresented
- Those who become active volunteers even less representative of the population

Recommendations from qualitative interviews:
- Engage in outreach to minority communities & increase advertisement of the program
- Partner with community leaders/organizations & implement paid internships for students from underrepresented communities

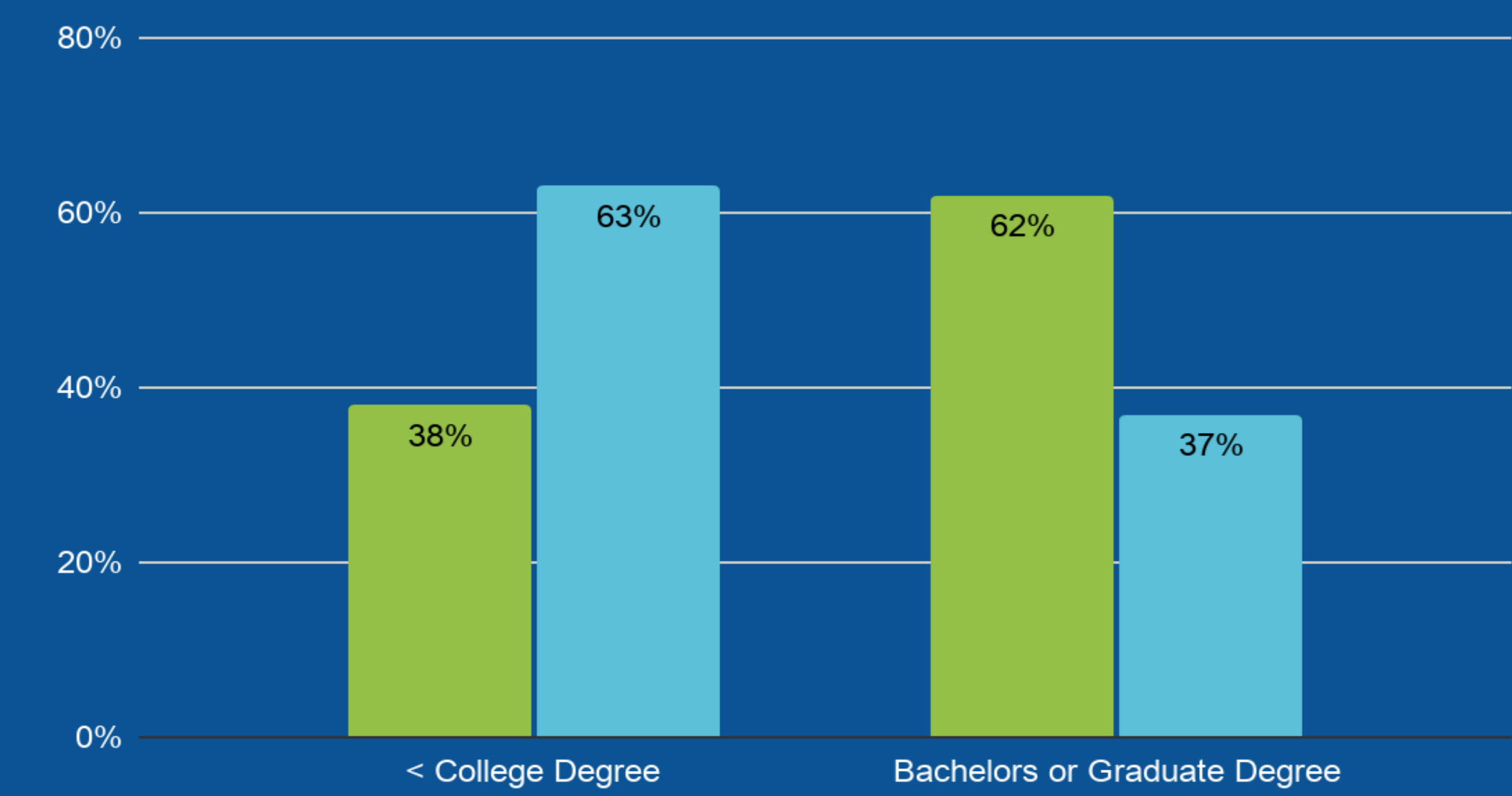## CONCLUSIONS/POLICY IMPLICATIONS
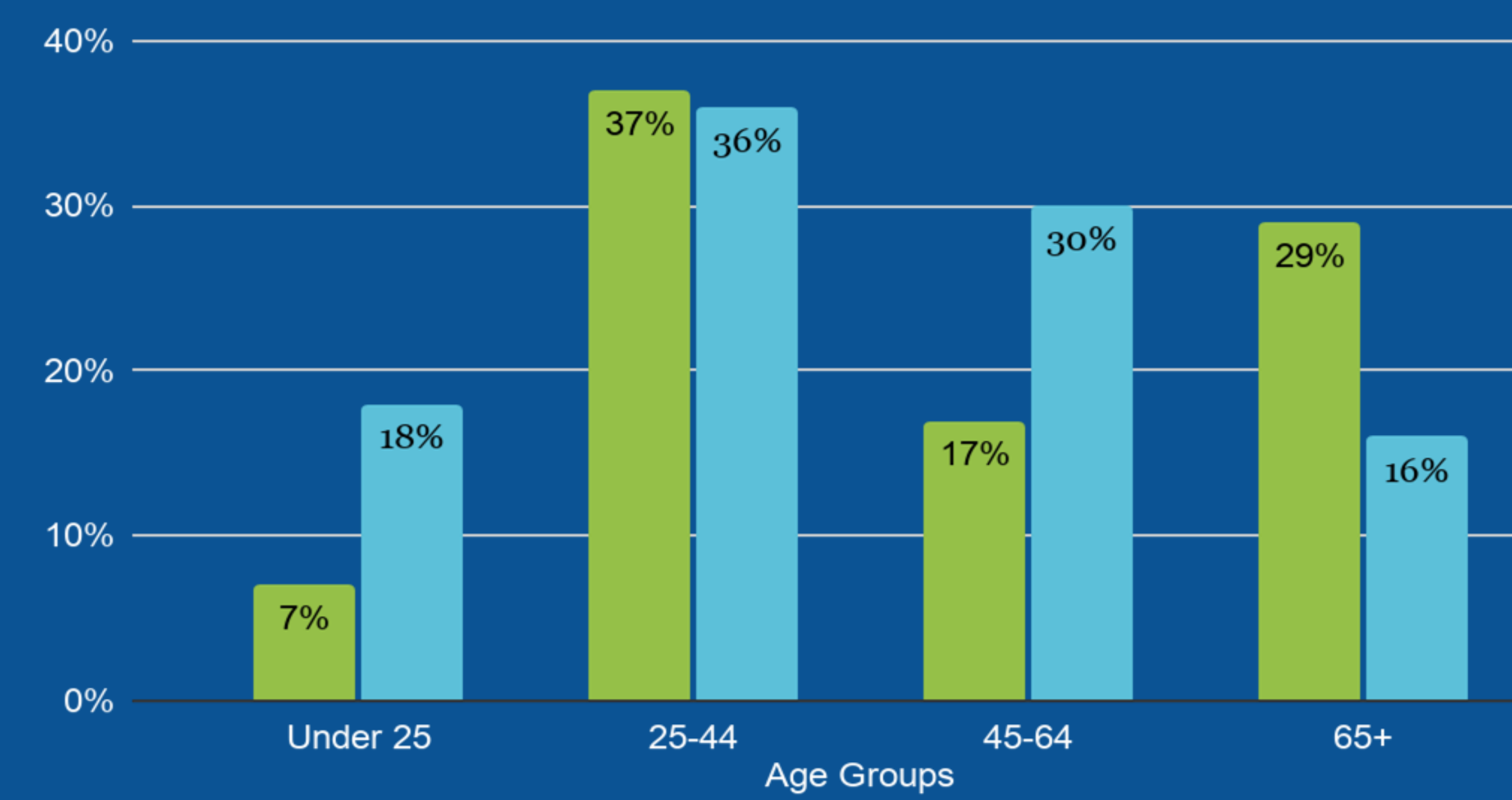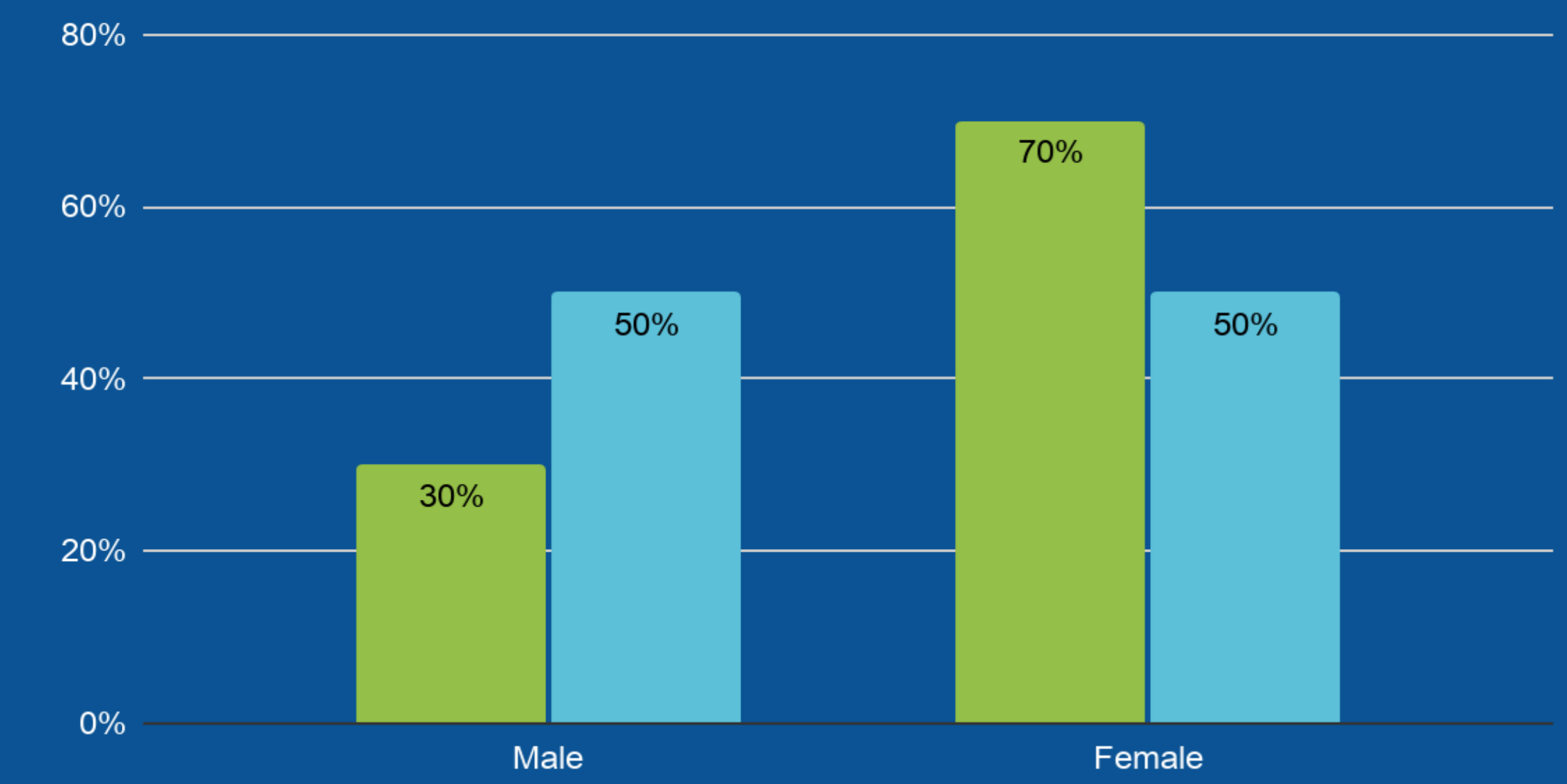
- Diversity throughout entire program is limited
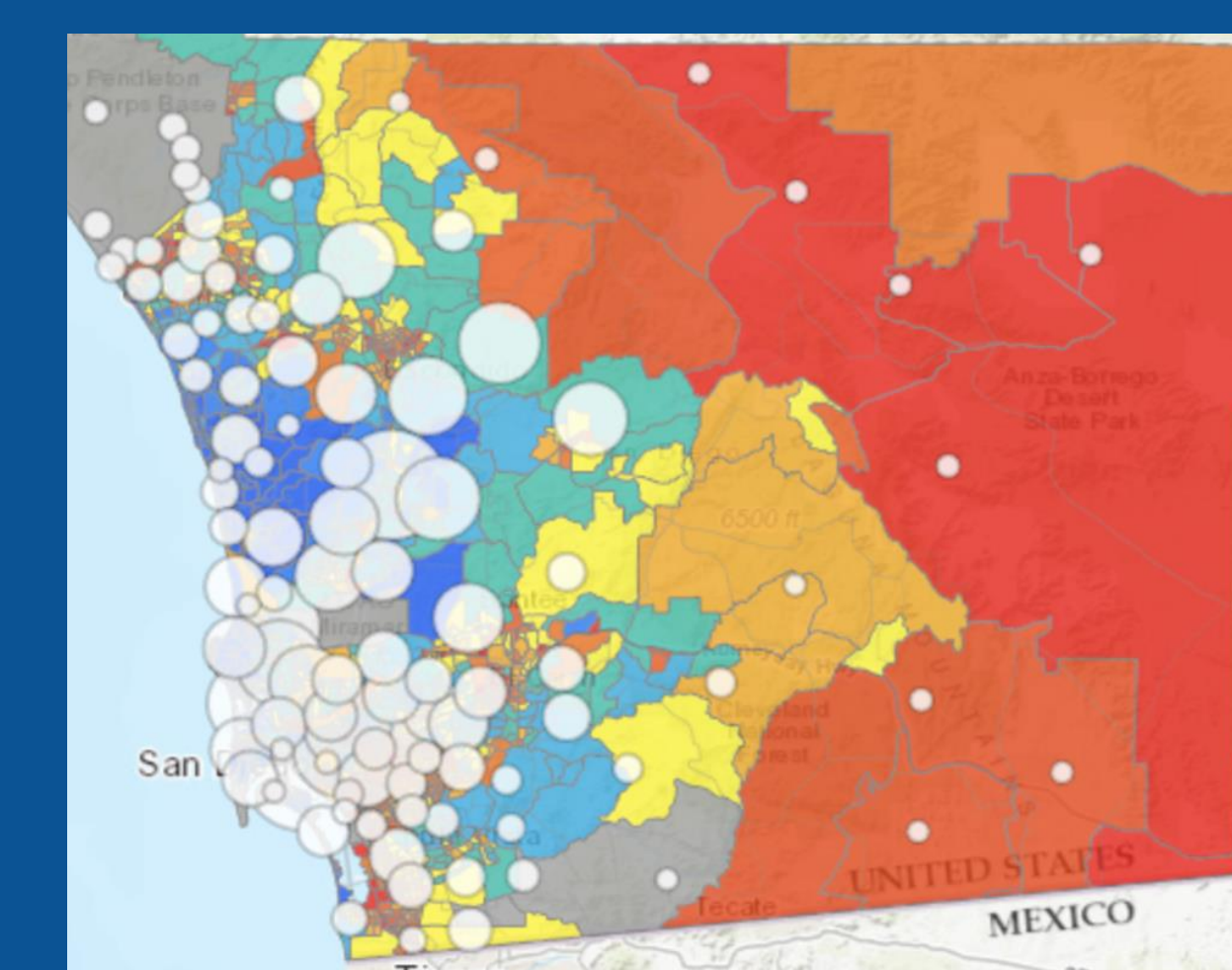- Increasing community outreach and decreasing strict volunteer requirements may improve diversity

Applicants and volunteers are female, older, and highly educated

Active volunteers are even less diverse than applicants

Improved community connections and outreach needed to recruit more diverse workforce

Figures

Poster

FIGURES & FINDINGS

Applicants v San Diego County

Applicants (n=4668)   San Diego County (n=2674812)

Male: 30% / 50%
Female: 70% / 50%

Under 25: 7% / 18%
25-44: 37% / 36%
45-64: 17% / 30%
65+: 29% / 16%
Age Groups

< College Degree: 38% / 63%
Bachelors or Graduate Degree: 62% / 37%

Distribution of San Diego County Applicants by ADI

Distribution of San Diego County Residents by ADI