

Effective Use of Pyramid Charts

Purpose	This tool provides guidelines and tips on how to effectively use pyramid charts to communicate research findings.
Format	This tool provides guidance on pyramid charts and their purposes, and shows examples of preferred practices and practical tips for pyramid charts.
Audience	This tool is designed primarily for researchers from the Model Systems that are funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). The tool can be adapted by other NIDILRR-funded grantees and the general public.

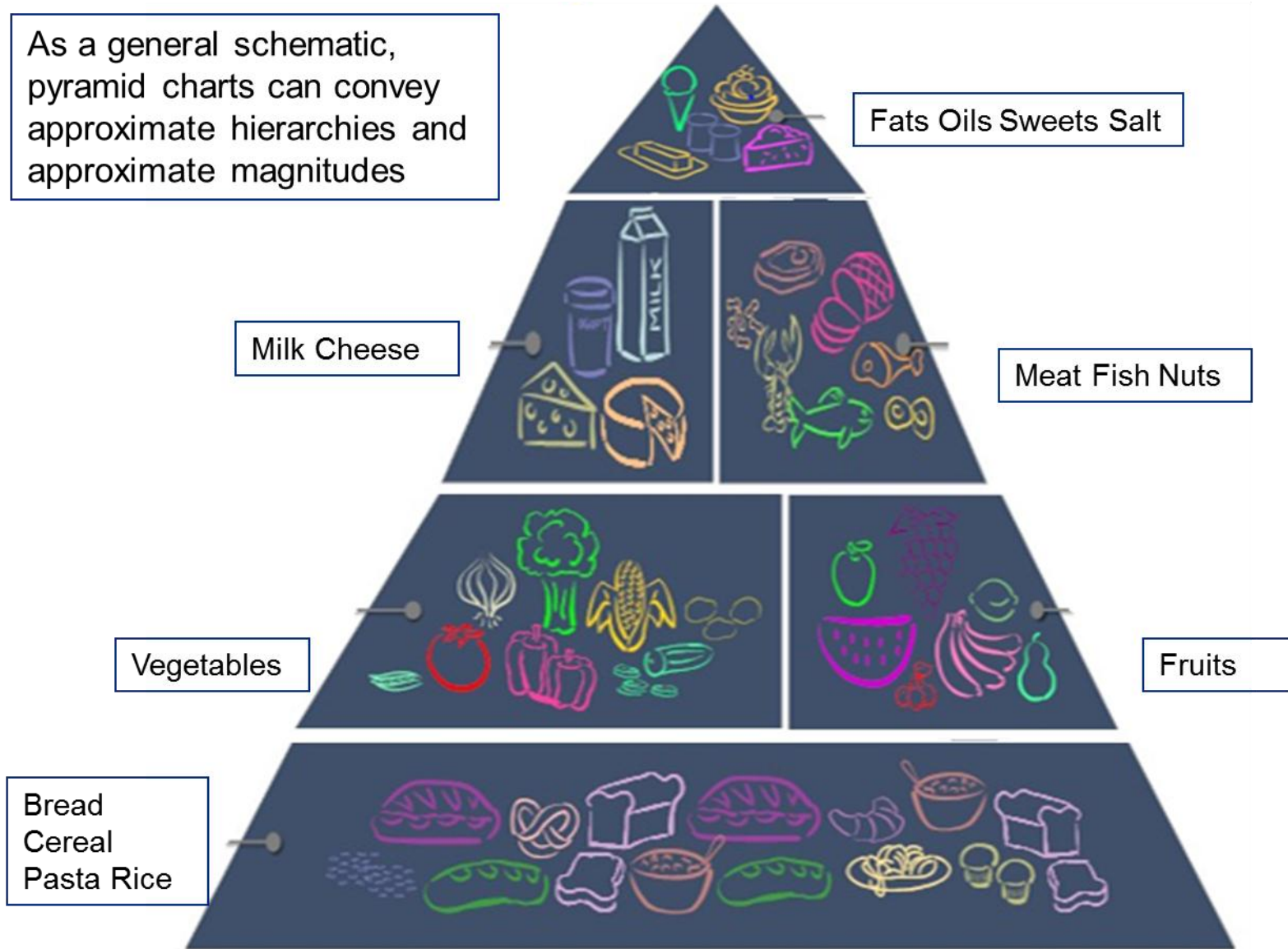
The contents of this tool were developed under a grant from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR grant number 90DP0012-01-00). The contents of this fact sheet do not necessarily represent the policy of Department of Health and Human Services, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Pyramid Charts

- ▶ Pyramid Charts are best used to indicate qualitative hierarchies of items in a schematic picto-graphic non-numeric fashion – such as the old USDA Food Pyramid.
- ▶ Generally, Pyramid Charts should not be used to express quantitative amounts by subgroup - since the narrowing width of the triangles and quadrilateral shapes as you move up the hierarchy results in a distorted impression of the magnitude of each segment.

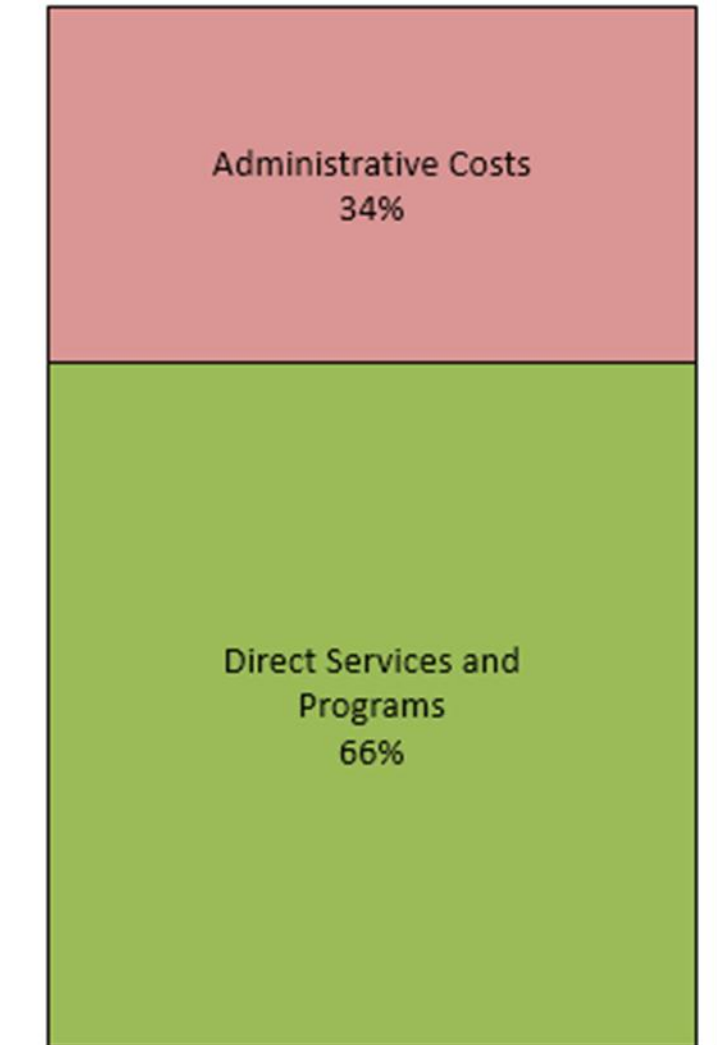
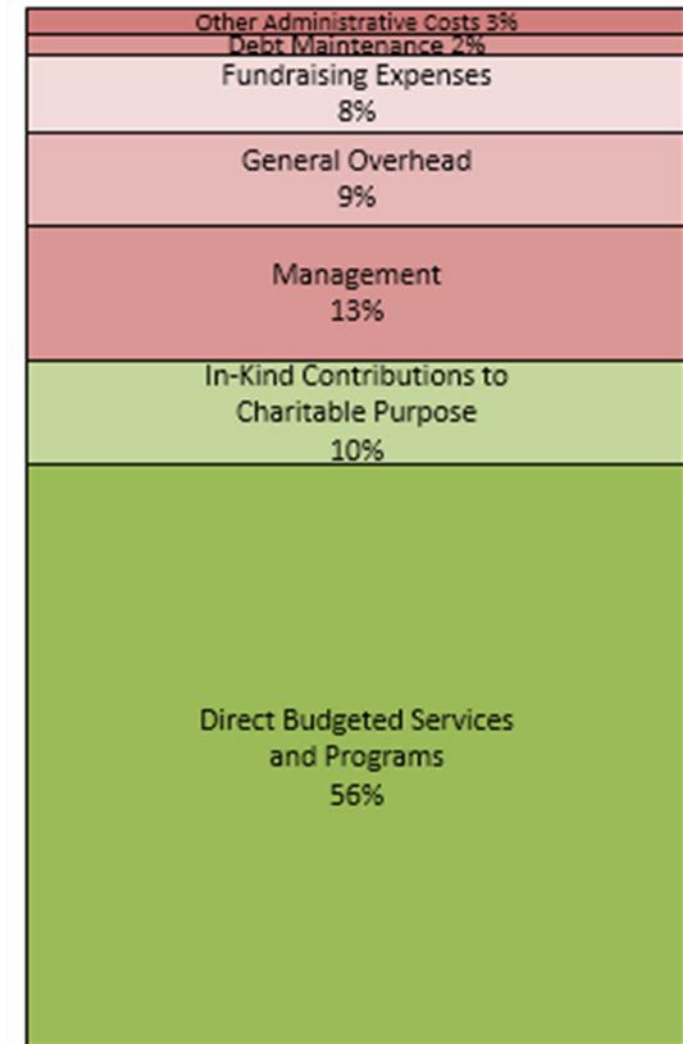
Pyramid Charts

As a general schematic, pyramid charts can convey approximate hierarchies and approximate magnitudes



Stacked Column Chart

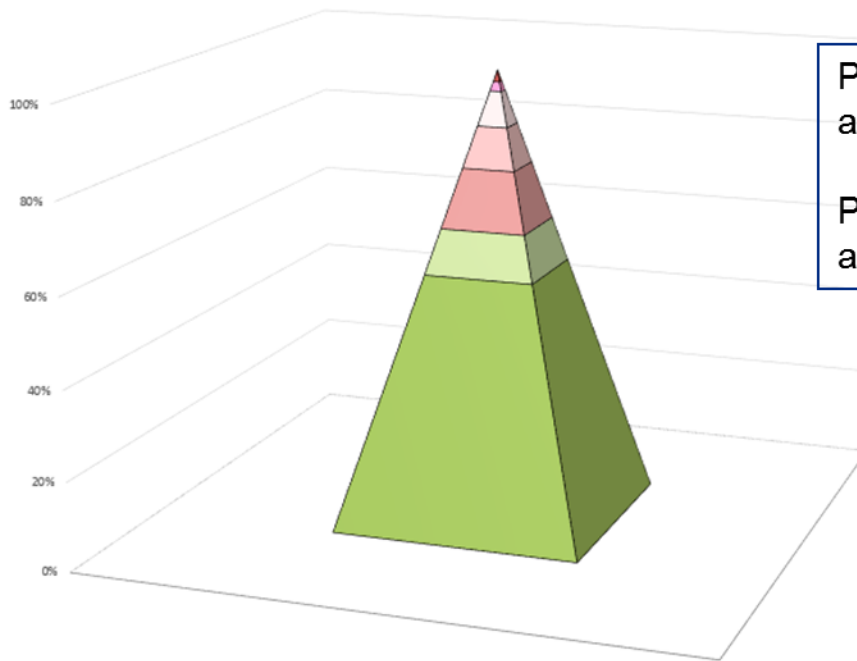
Feed the Homeless Whales Foundation – Administrative Costs – Draft Report - 2014



Admin costs are high.

Pyramid Charts

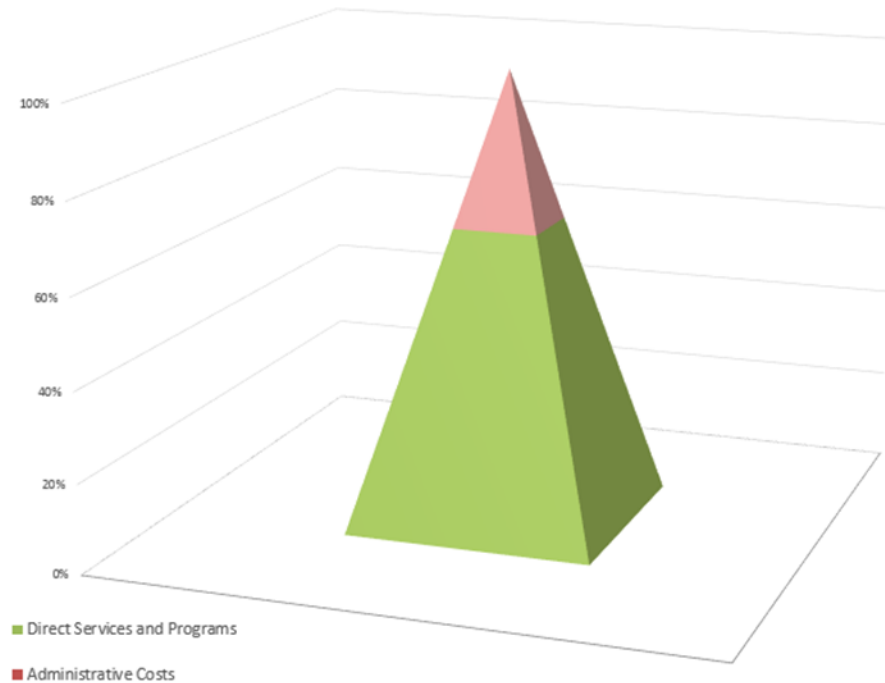
Feed the Homeless Whales Foundation – Administrative Costs – Final Report - 2014



Pyramid charts perceptually enlarge the lower tiers of a hierarchy. And perceptually minimize the higher tiers.

Pyramid charts minimize the apparent size of the administrative costs in this example.

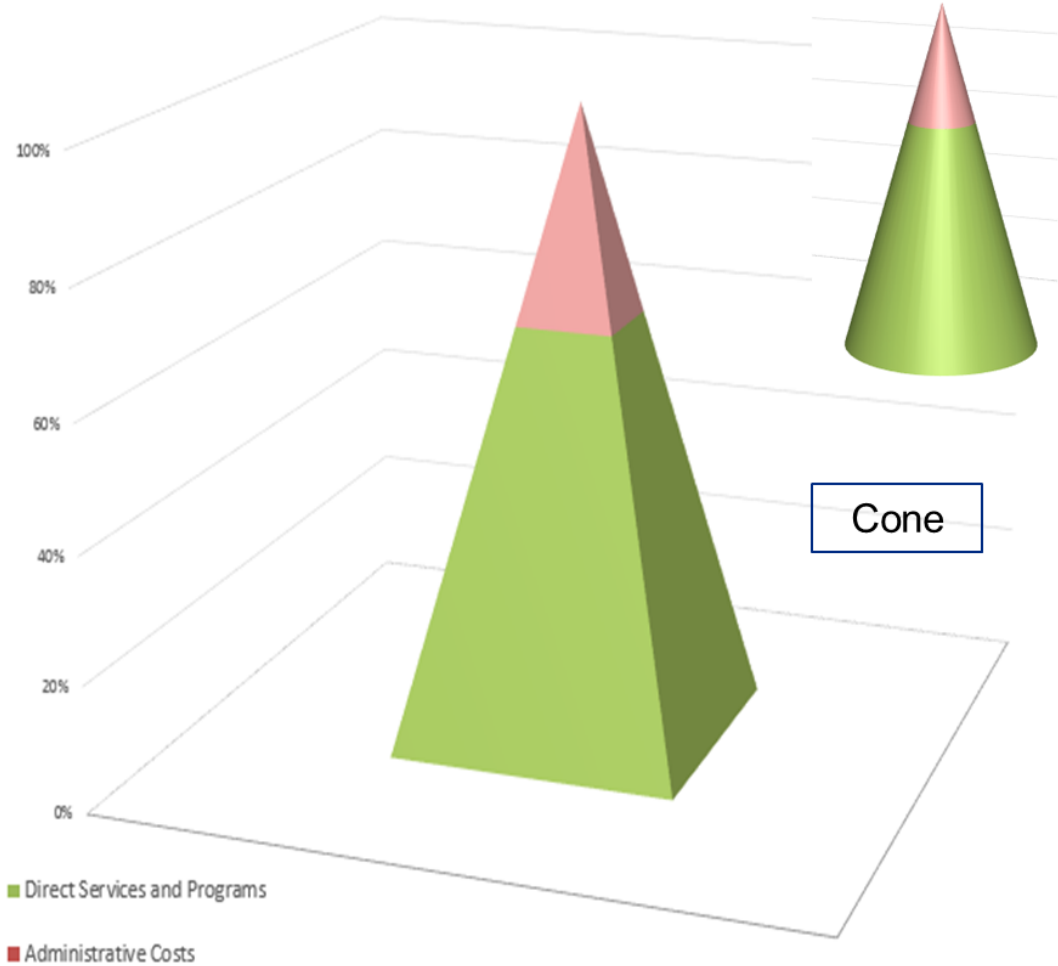
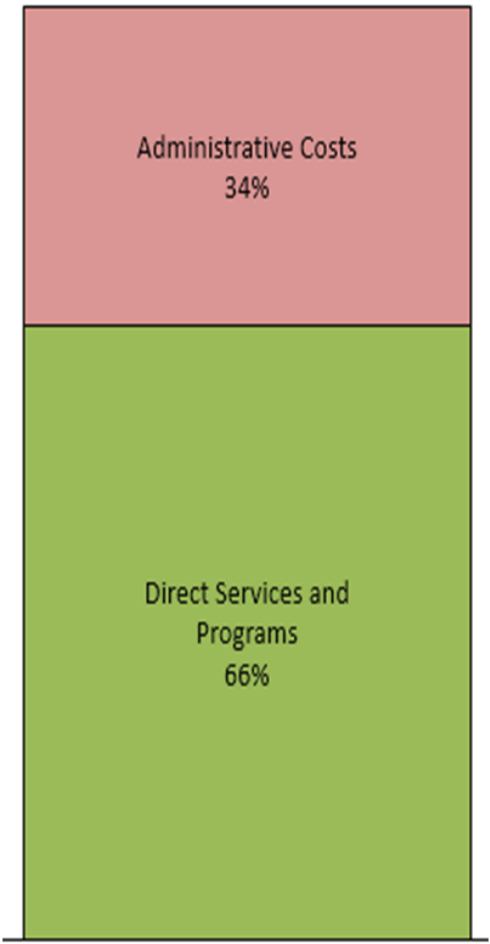
- Other Administrative Costs
- Debt Maintenance
- Fundraising Expenses
- General Overhead
- Management
- In-Kind Contributions to Charitable Purpose
- Direct Budgeted Services and Programs



Our administrative costs are low.

Source: Mock Data

Pyramid Charts



Pyramid charts minimize the apparent size of the administrative costs in this example. Generally do not use pyramid (or cone) charts to represent quantitative relationships.