

ANNUAL GRANTS MANAGEMENT SURVEY RESULTS

From *Compliance* to *Capability*:
Preparing for the Next Era
of Grants Management



Trachtenberg School
of Public Policy
& Public Administration
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



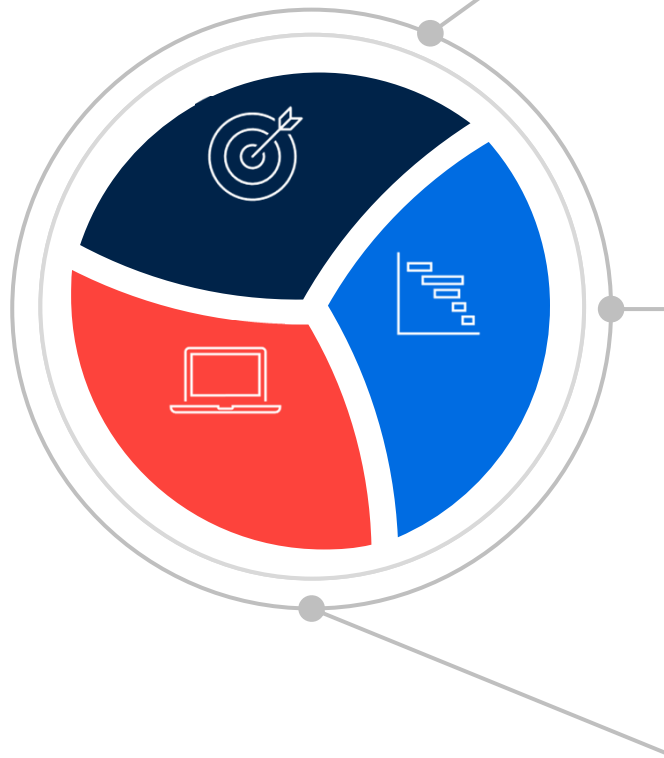
Presented by:

Heather Morgan & Jeff Myers

Agenda

- Introduction
- About the Survey
- Key Take Aways
- Panel: Current State of Grants Management
- Closing Remarks

Annual Grants Management Survey



Purpose

To provide the grants community with insight into emerging themes and shared challenges, strengthen collective understanding of what is working, and equip leaders and practitioners with information to advance effective grants management practices.

Survey Design

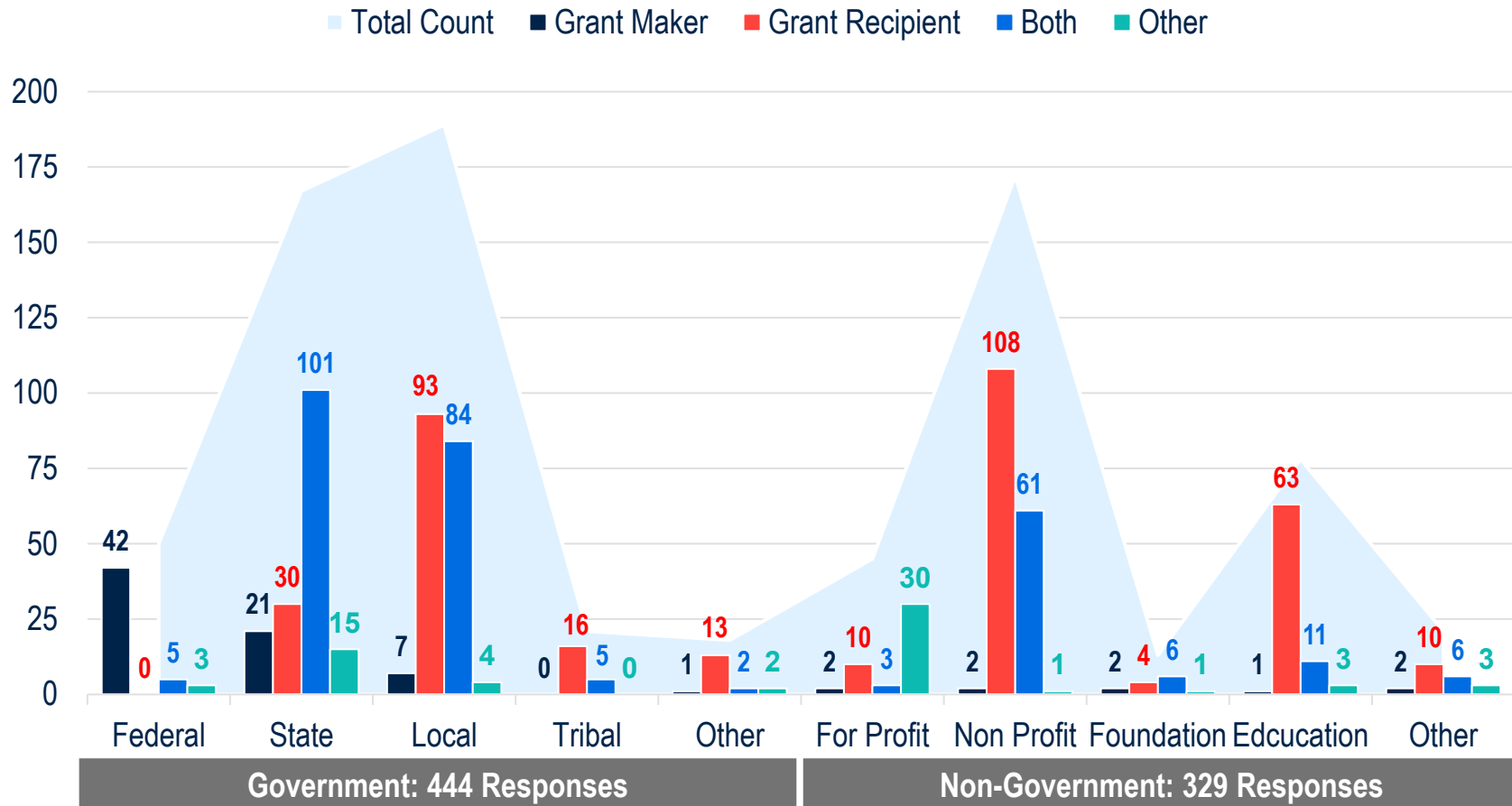
The survey gathers quantitative and qualitative input to surface prevailing trends, operational practices, and systemic challenges across the grants ecosystem. Each year, the survey is refined to reflect shifts in policy, technology, and practice, while maintaining continuity to track changes and trends over time.

Survey Administration

More than 15,000 grants management professionals and stakeholders across federal, state, local, and non-government sectors were invited to participate in the online survey.

Diverse Pool of Survey Respondents Across Government and Non-Government Organizations

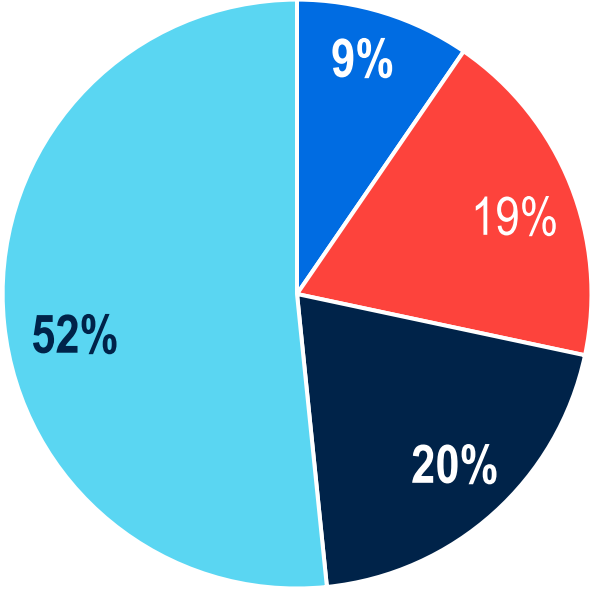
773 Total Responses



Over Half of Respondents Bring 10+ Years of Grants Management Experience

Years of Experience

■ 0-2 Years ■ 3-5 Years ■ 6-10 Years ■ More than 10 Years



Key Takeaways from Our Analysis

1 Funding uncertainty and susceptibility to politics overwhelmingly cited as the most dominant challenge.

2 Despite decades of policy emphasis on performance management, nearly half of organizations struggle to measure impact.

3 Federal policy frameworks are broadly accepted. Implementation and capacity is the larger issue.

4 Workforce development and retention are critical for effective grants management.

5 Technology modernization including AI is important, but it is not a silver bullet.

6 The future of grants management is expected to be more digital, data-driven, and adaptive.

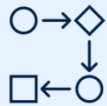
Top Organizational Priorities for Grants Management Over Next 3 Years

6.4 What are your top 5 priorities over the next 3 years that you have planned for your organization's grants management systems, resources, staff or processes?



Workforce Development & Capacity

- Structured onboarding, ongoing training, clearer guidance / procedures
- Expanding staffing or reallocating responsibilities
- Addressing workload pressures in grants management



Process Standardization

- Formalizing policies and workflows
- Improving monitoring and internal coordination



Technology Modernization

- Upgrading or replacing legacy systems
- Expanding automation and data management capabilities








Strengthening Compliance & Oversight

- Improving financial and performance monitoring
- Enhancing reporting and tracking tools

Key Forces Expected to Shape the Future of Grants Management

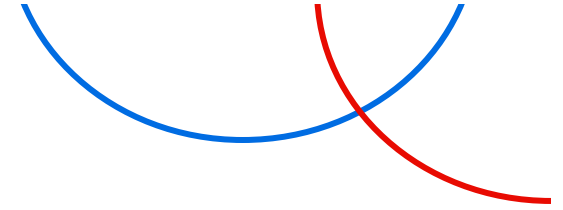
6.5 Looking ahead, what changes or innovations do you believe will have the greatest impact on the future of grants management?

	Federal Funding Environment	→ Uncertainty in funding levels and policy priorities	→ Concerns about sustainability of grants programs
	Technology & Automation	→ Expanded use of digital tools in grant admin	→ Interest in automation & AI to reduce manual workload
	Data & Reporting Expectations	→ Growing reporting requirements	→ Increased emphasis on data-driven decision making
	Regulatory & Policy Evolution	→ Ongoing changes in federal guidance and compliance expectations	
	Operational Transformation	→ Day-to-day changes driven by tech and policy shifts	→ Increasing complexity in grants administration

Panel Discussion



Meet the Panel



US Office of Management & Budget

Margaret Pearson, Deputy Controller,
Office of Federal Financial Management



HHS Grants Quality Service Management Office (QSMO)

Chad Clifford, Executive Director



Department of Interior (DOI)

Andrea Brandon, Deputy Assistant
Secretary (DAS) for Budget,
Finance, Grants and Acquisition



National Grants Management Association (NGMA)

Scott Sheffler, Board Member
and Immediate Past President



US Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Chelsea Cole, Federal Financial
Assistance Department Policy Lead



Kansas State Department of Education

Natalie Clark,
Assistant Director



Facilitator – REI Systems

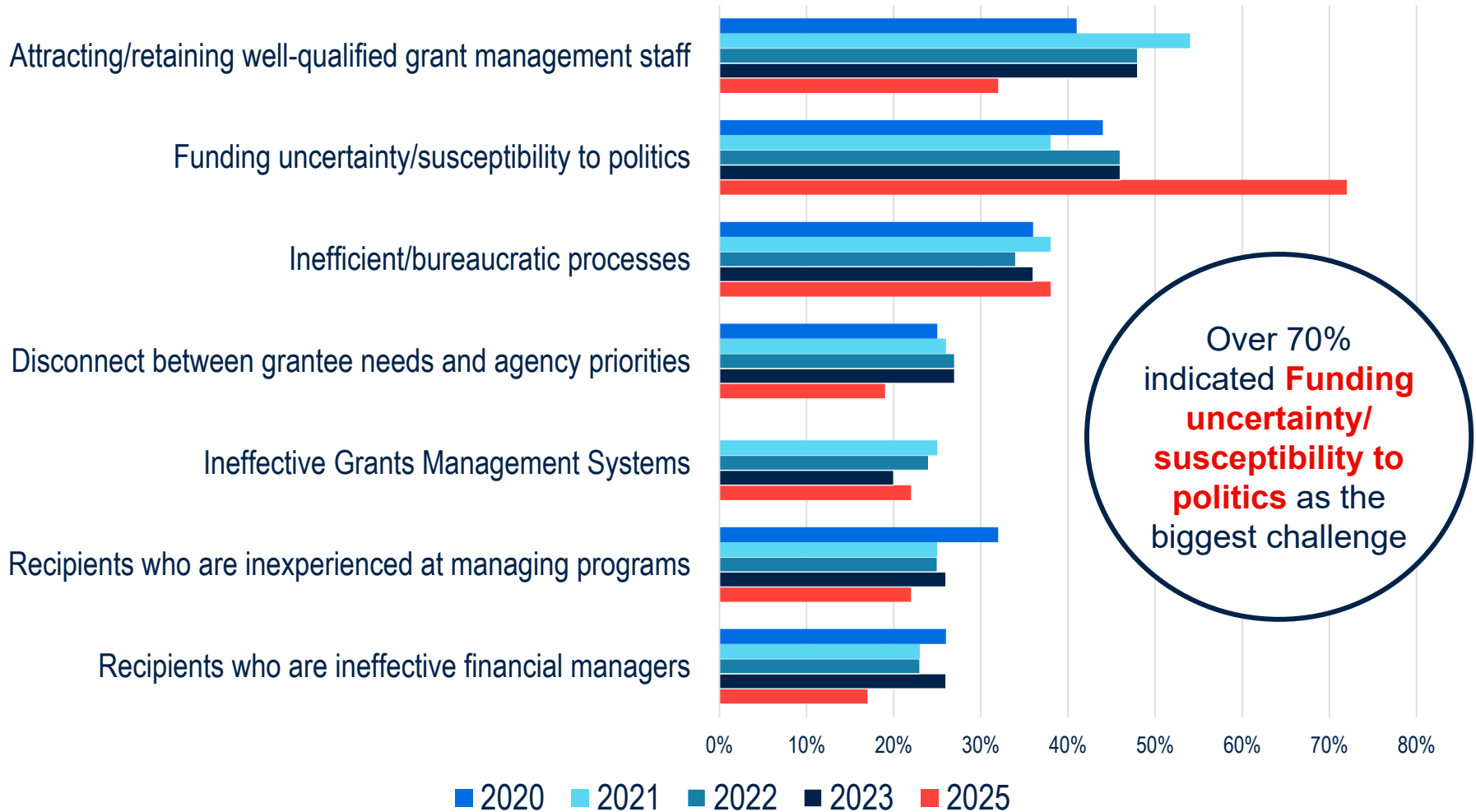
Jeff Myers, Sr. Director

Topic 1: Impact of Funding Uncertainty

- **Strategic Planning:** With funding uncertainty ranked as the most dominant challenge, how can agencies and recipients plan multi-year strategies when appropriations and policy priorities may shift year to year?
- **Impact on Outcomes:** How does funding instability affect long-term outcome measurement and program effectiveness?
- **Workforce Implications:** What does funding volatility mean for workforce retention and recruitment? Are we losing talent because grants management roles feel fiscally unstable?
- **State/Local Impacts:** How are recent federal funding and policy shifts reshaping the landscape for state and local grant programs?

Challenges

6.2. What do you think are the **most significant challenges** facing grants management?

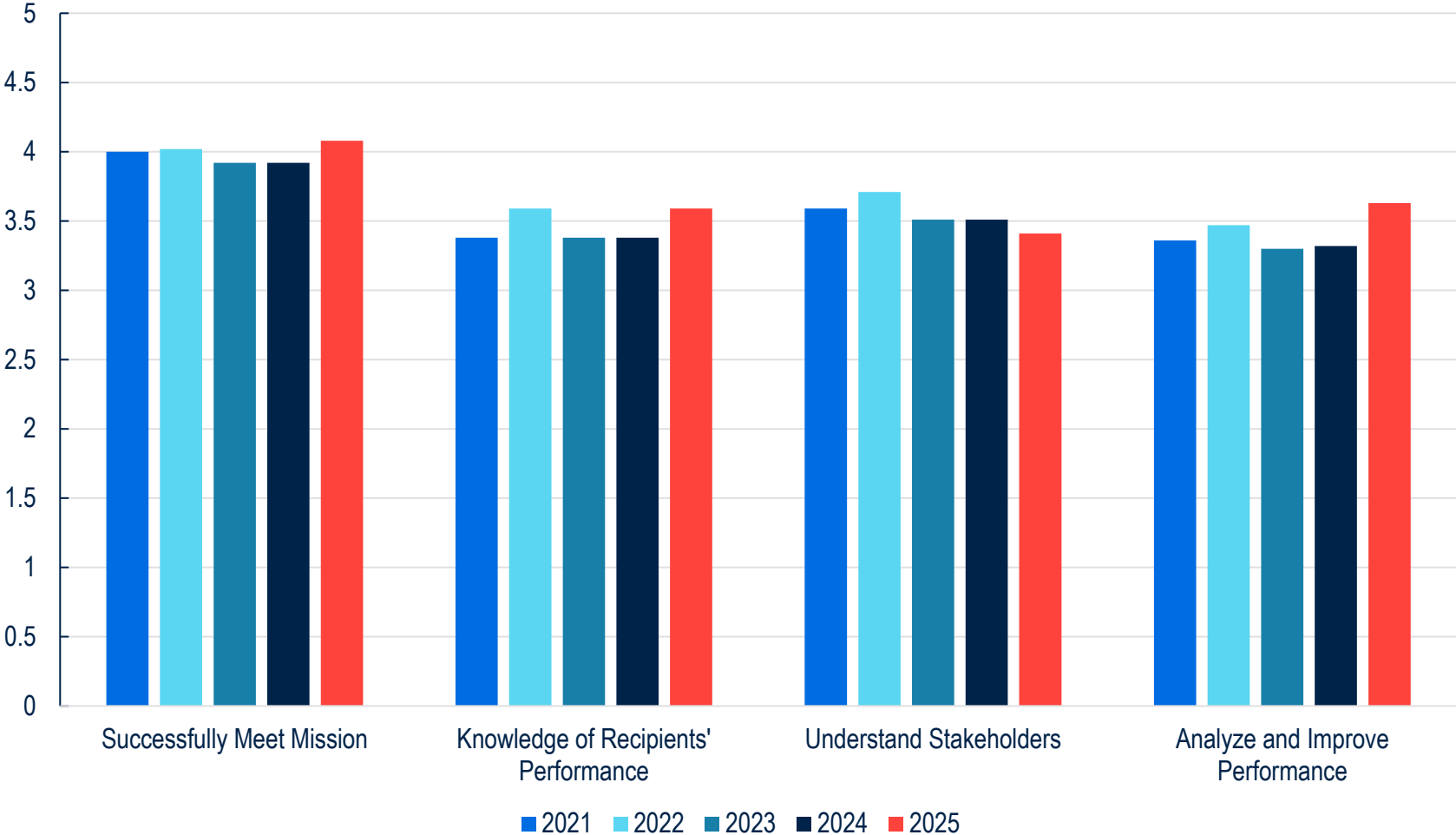


Topic 2: Measuring Impact

- **Barriers:** What are the systemic barriers to effectively measure performance outcomes in grants management?
- **Technology:** Has technology improved your program/agency's efficiency? Are you currently using, or do you have plans to use AI (can include pilots)?
- **Communications:** What should the grants community do to better communicate the value/impact provided by their program/agency?
- **Compliance vs Support:** Can you share your experiences with building strong relationships with Grantees to help drive improved performance?

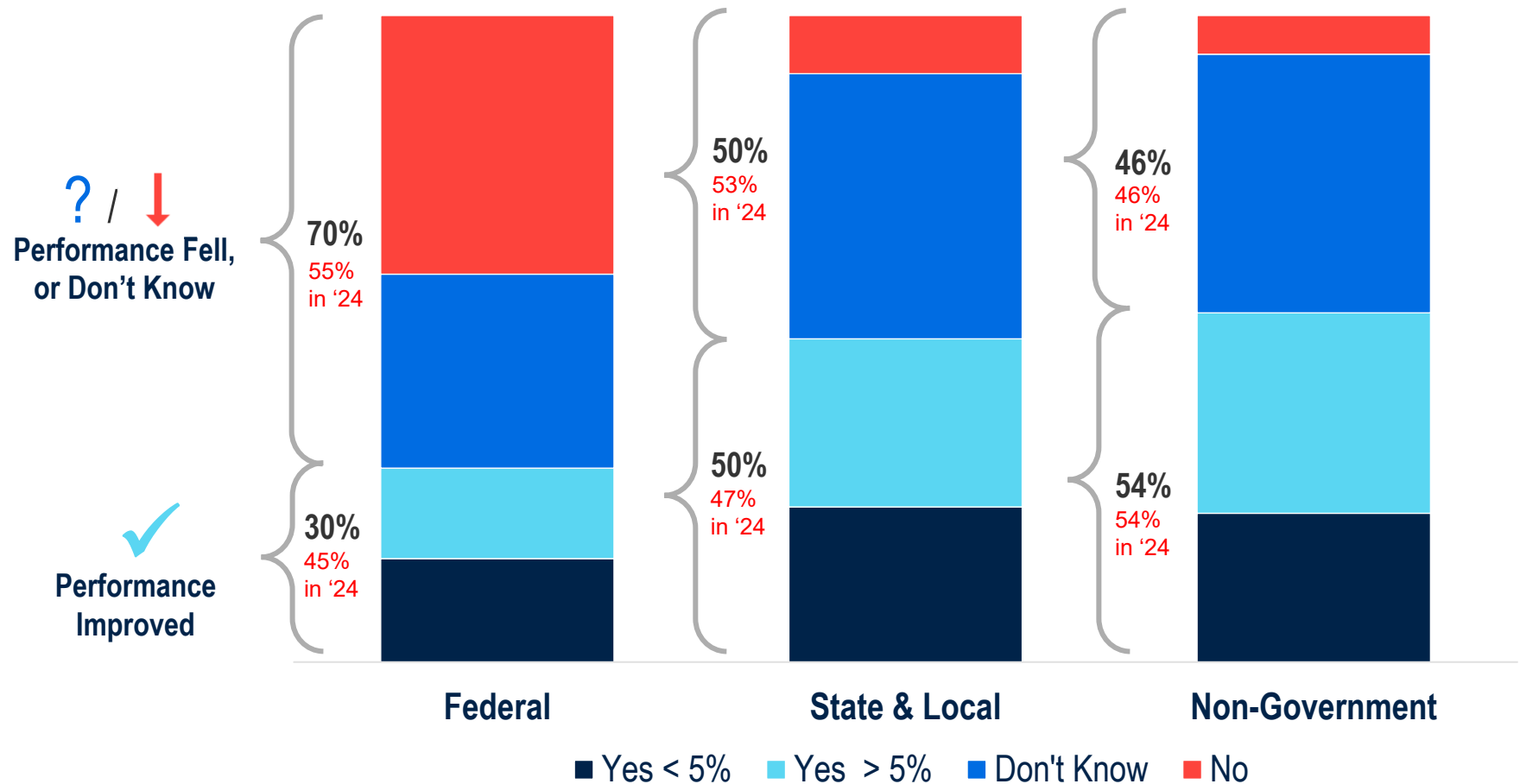
Organizations Report Being Well Equipped to Meet Grant Missions

2.1 What is your assessment of how **well equipped** your organization and its operational environment is?



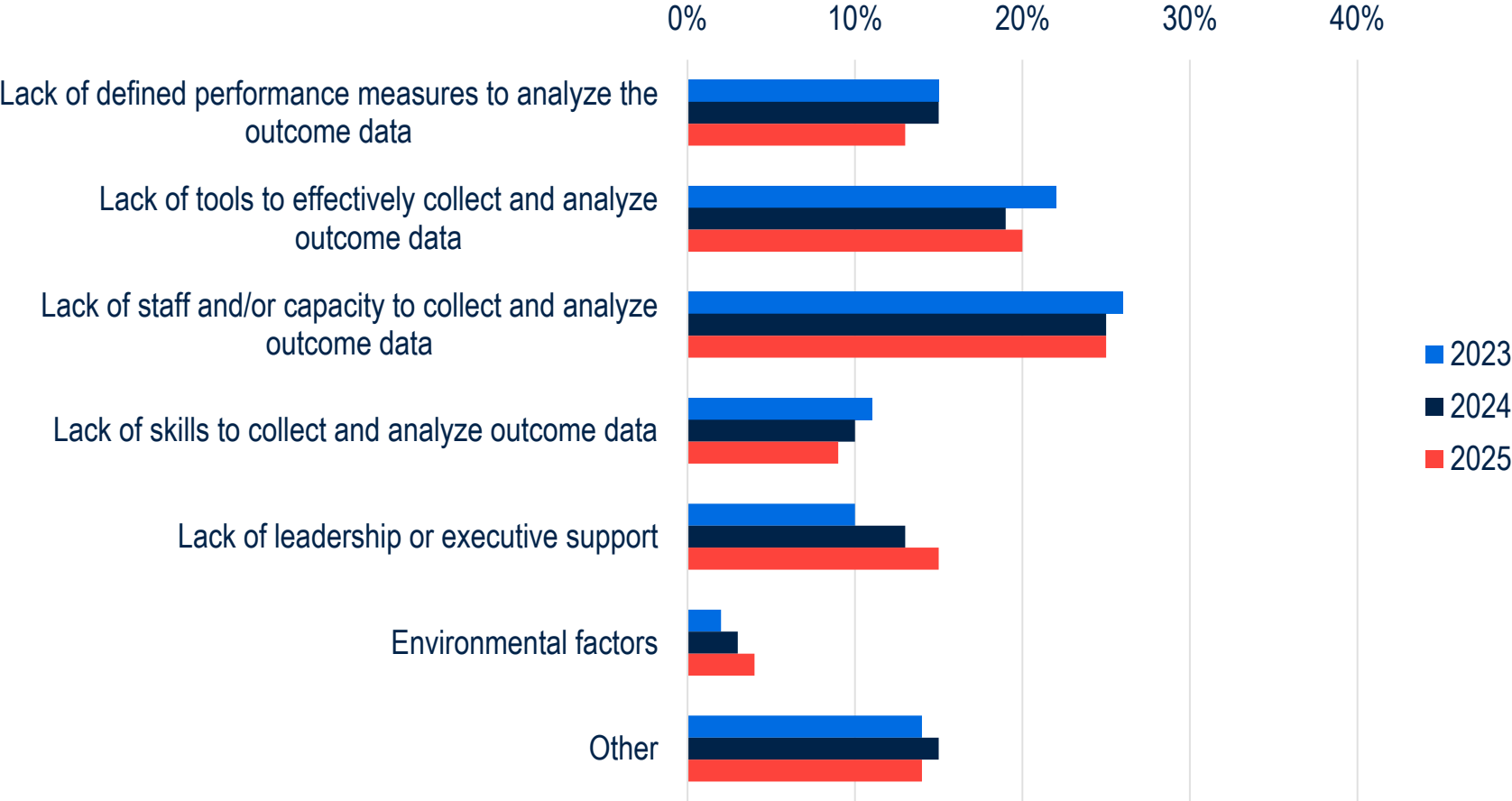
Measuring Performance Outcomes Remains a Challenge

2.4. Have your organization's/your recipients' outcomes **improved** over the past 12 months?



Capacity and Tools Remain Key Barriers to Effectively Measure Outcomes

2.4b What **contributed** to the lack of improved outcomes or lack of ability to measure outcomes?

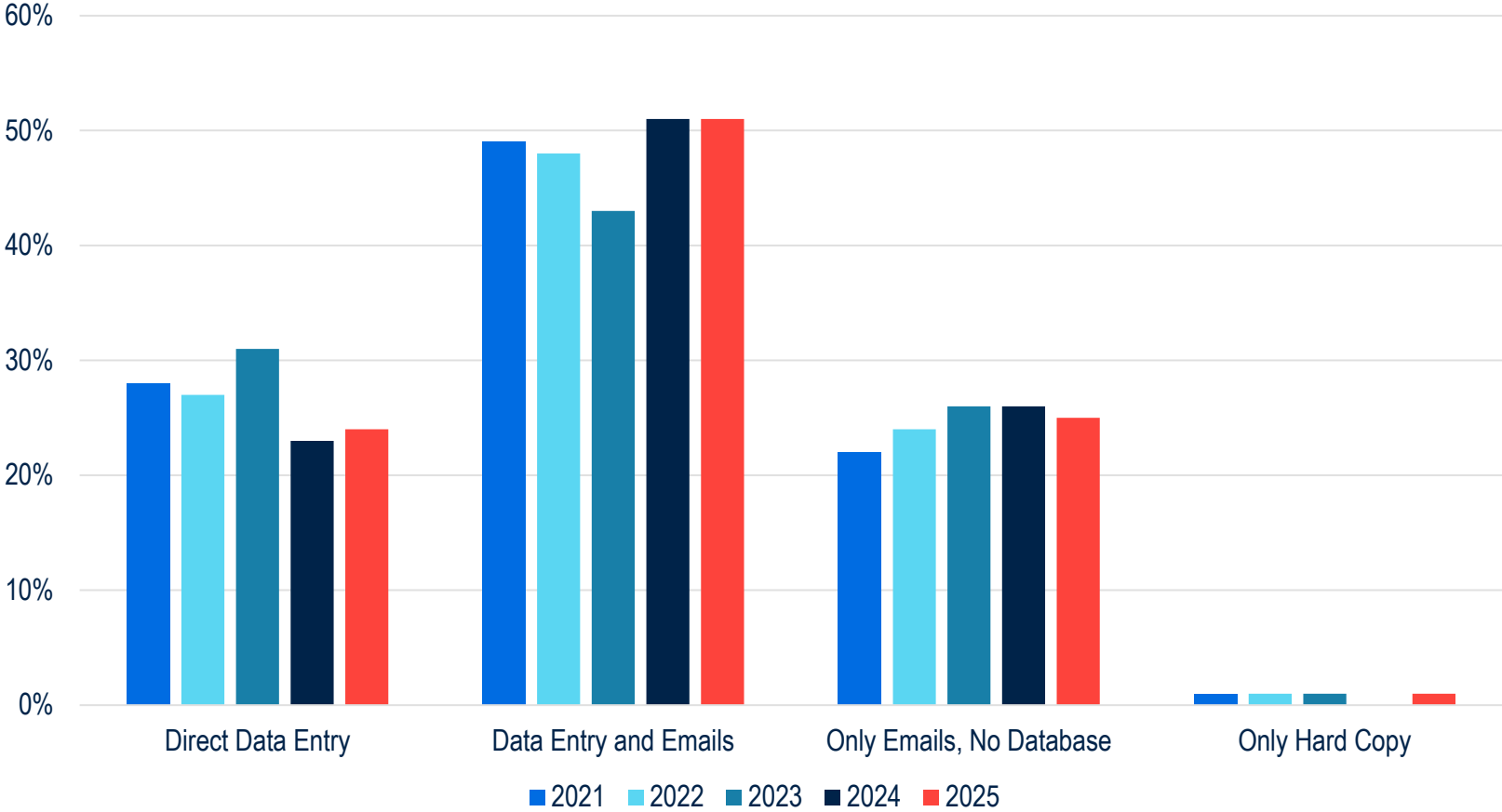


Topic 3: Technology & Innovation

- **System Fragmentation:** Is system fragmentation having a significant impact on data standardization and cross-agency collaboration?
- **AI as an Enabler:** Where can AI effectively reduce administrative burden and enhance decision-making, and where should human oversight remain central?
- **Evolving Roles:** How will AI change the role of the grants professional?
- **Technical Capacity:** As we move toward more digital and automated processes, how do we ensure smaller or under-resourced recipients are not disadvantaged by system complexity or technical requirements?

Reporting Automation Remains a Work in Progress

3.2 How would you describe the **method** used by your grantees to submit reporting?

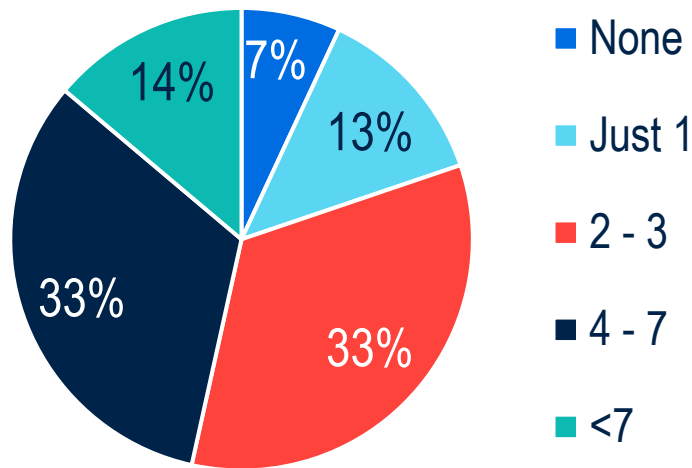


Small Teams Navigating Multiple Grant Systems

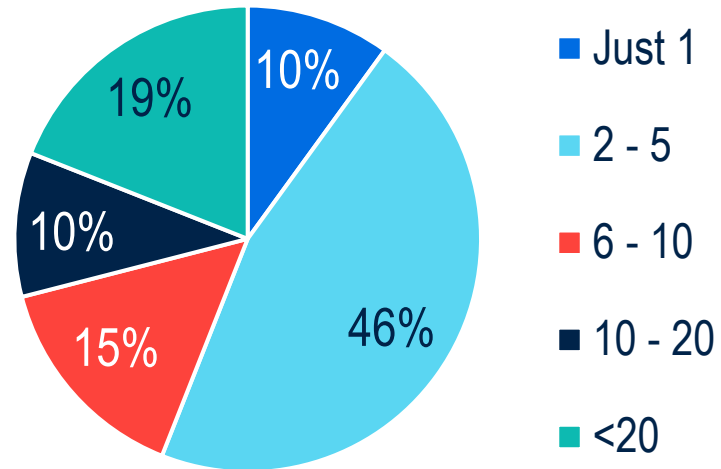
3.3 How many **unique** grant systems are you required to interact with?

3.4 How many staff members are **required** to interact with those grant systems?

Count of Unique Grant Systems

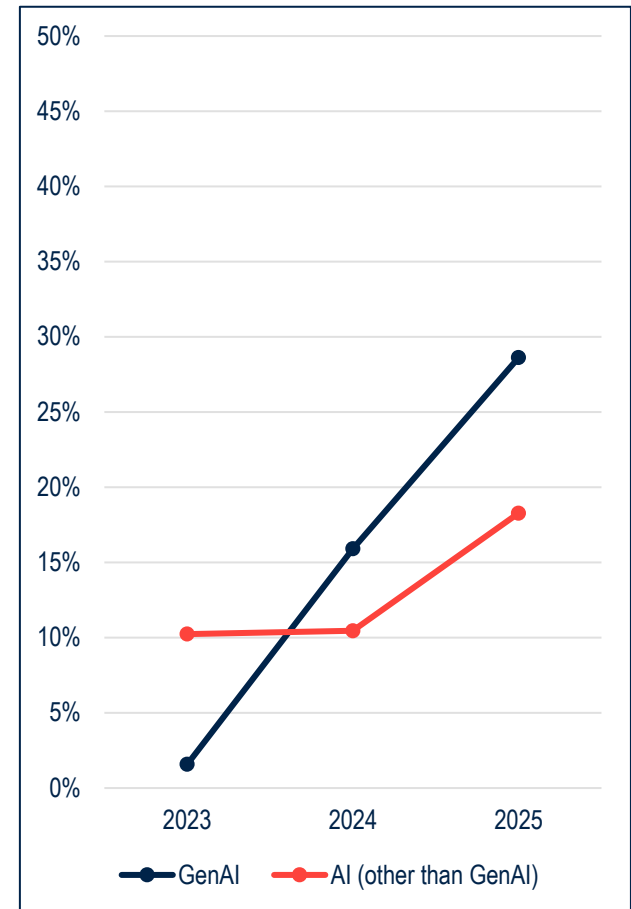
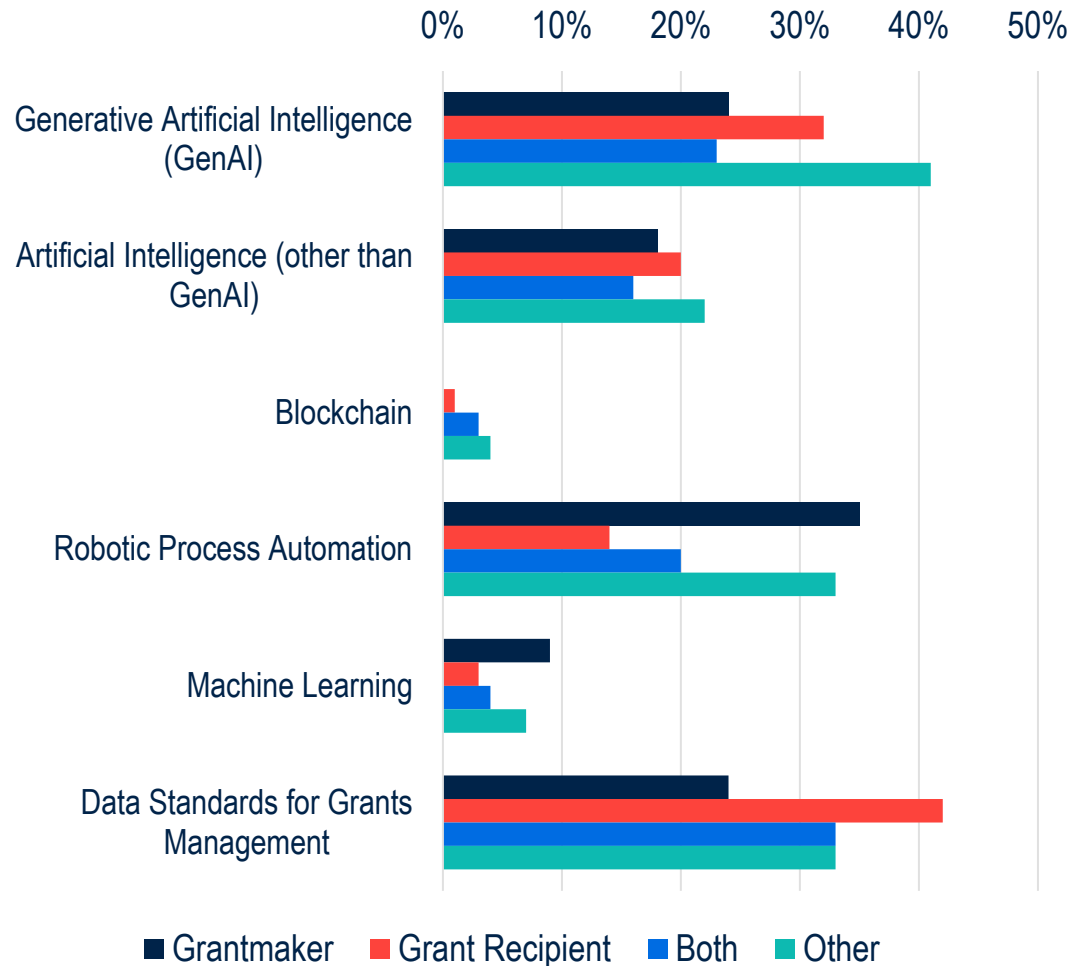


Count of Staff Members Using Grant Systems



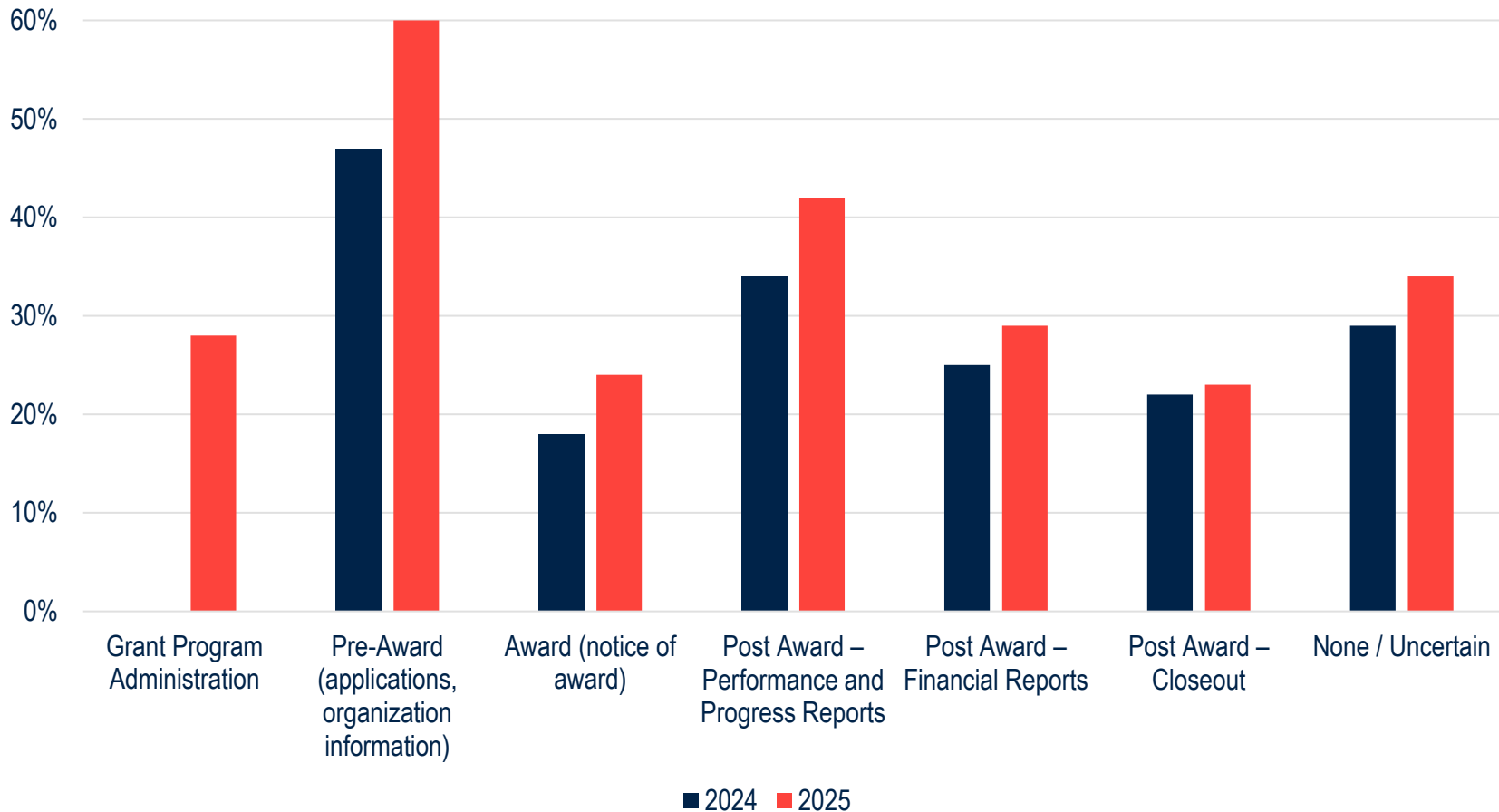
Artificial Intelligence Gaining Traction in Grants Management

3.6 Do you currently **leverage** any of the following in your Grants Management Systems?



AI Shows Strong Potential Across the Grants Lifecycle

3.7 Which part(s) of the grants management lifecycle do you feel would provide (or has provided) the most **promise** for use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

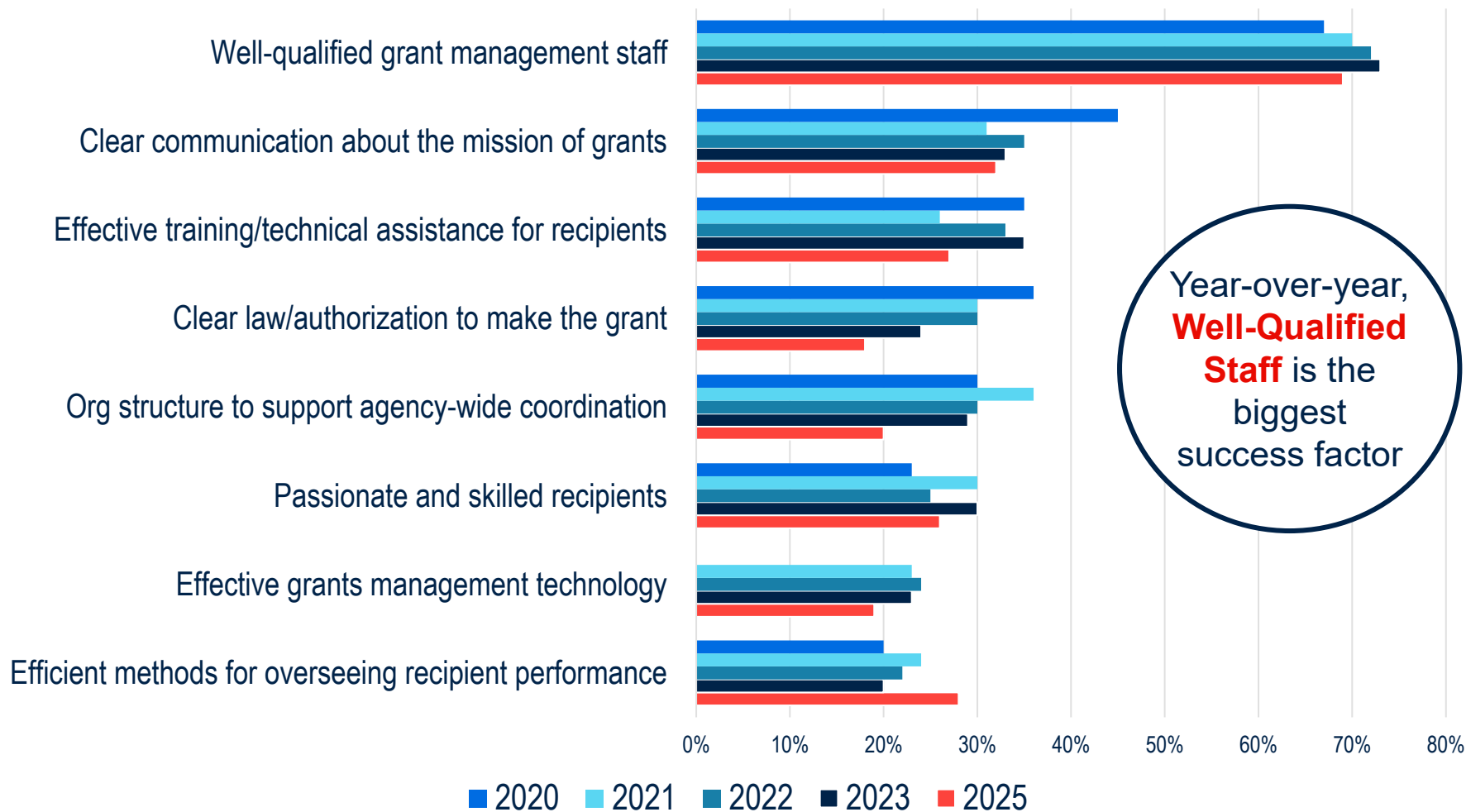


Topic 4: Talent Development & Retention

- **Professional Standards:** Should grants management roles have standardized certification or continuing education requirements, similar to other professional fields?
- **Future Skills:** What competencies will define the “next generation” grants professional?
- **Experience and Next-Gen Talent:** How can organizations retain highly experienced grants professionals while also creating space for innovation and next-generation talent?
- **Workforce Strategies:** What strategies are being used to manage staffing reductions while continuing to meet grants management responsibilities?

Successes

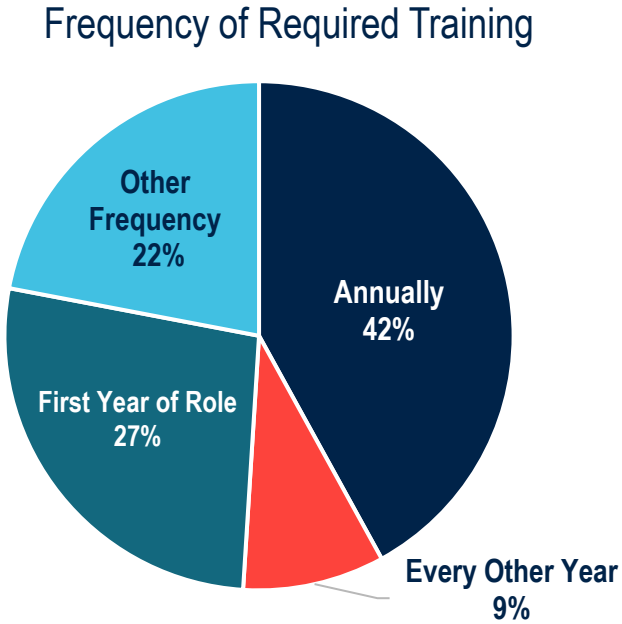
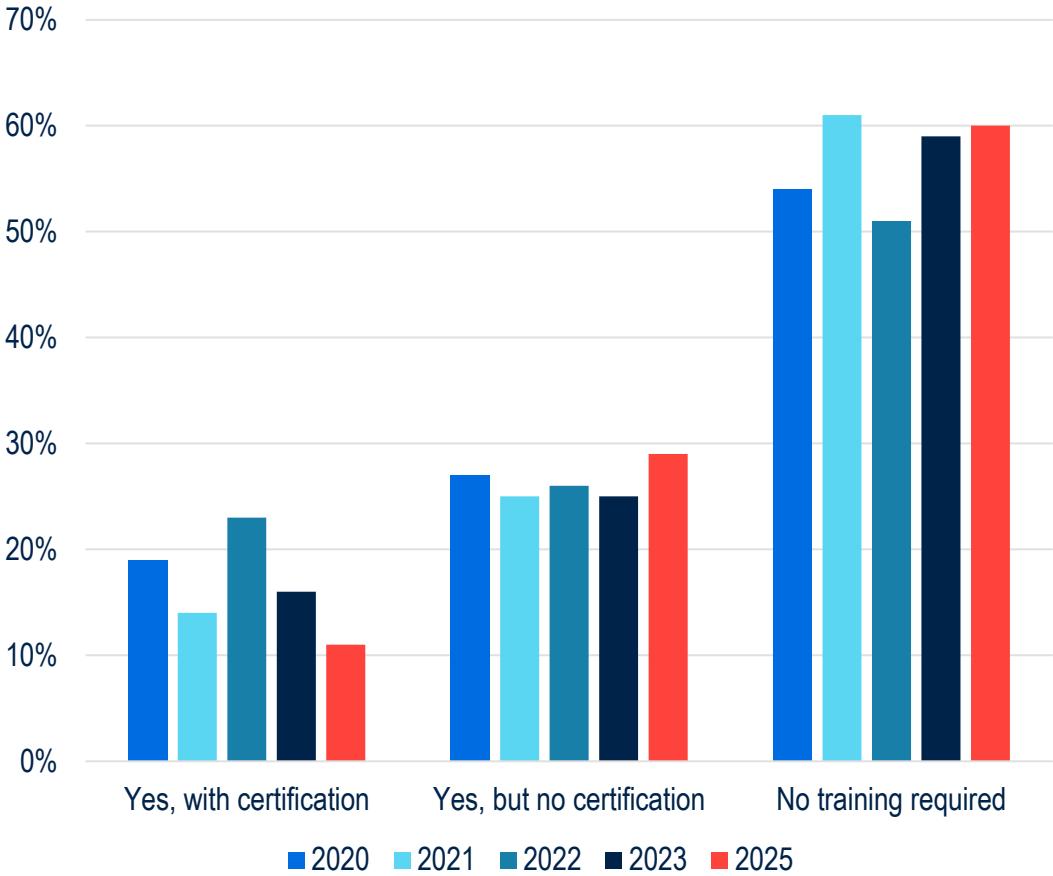
6.1. What are the **most significant factors in the success(es)** your organization has had in grants management in recent years?



Less than 50% of Organizations Require Staff Receive Grants Management Training

4.1 Does your organization require **formal grant training** of your staff?

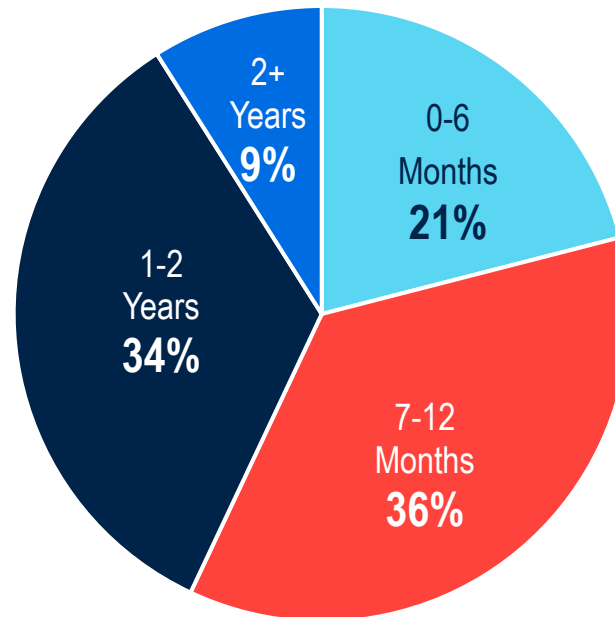
4.1a If you answered yes, how often does your organization require formal grant training?



Ramp-Up Time for New Grants Staff Can Take a Year or More

4.7 In your estimation, how long does it typically take to **fully train** or ramp up a new resource to independently execute grants management actions?

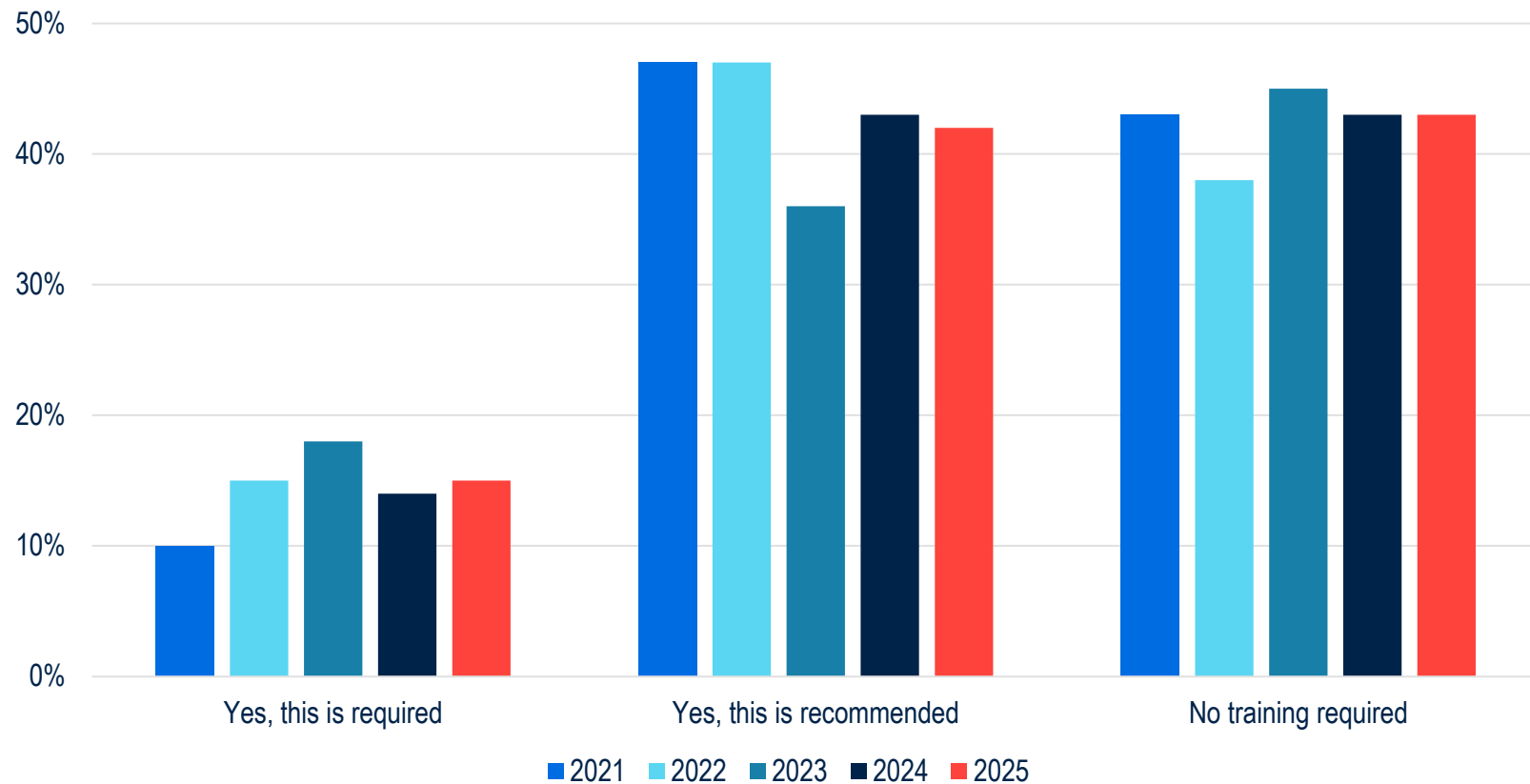
Duration Required to Fully Train



Opportunities Remain to Strengthen Recipient Training

43% of respondents report not providing training to recipients or subrecipients

4.3 Does your organization provide **grant training** to grant recipients or sub-recipients?



Top 5 Areas Where Additional Training Needed

Top training needs reflect growing complexity across the grants lifecycle

4.2 In which specific areas could your grants staff **benefit** from receiving additional training?

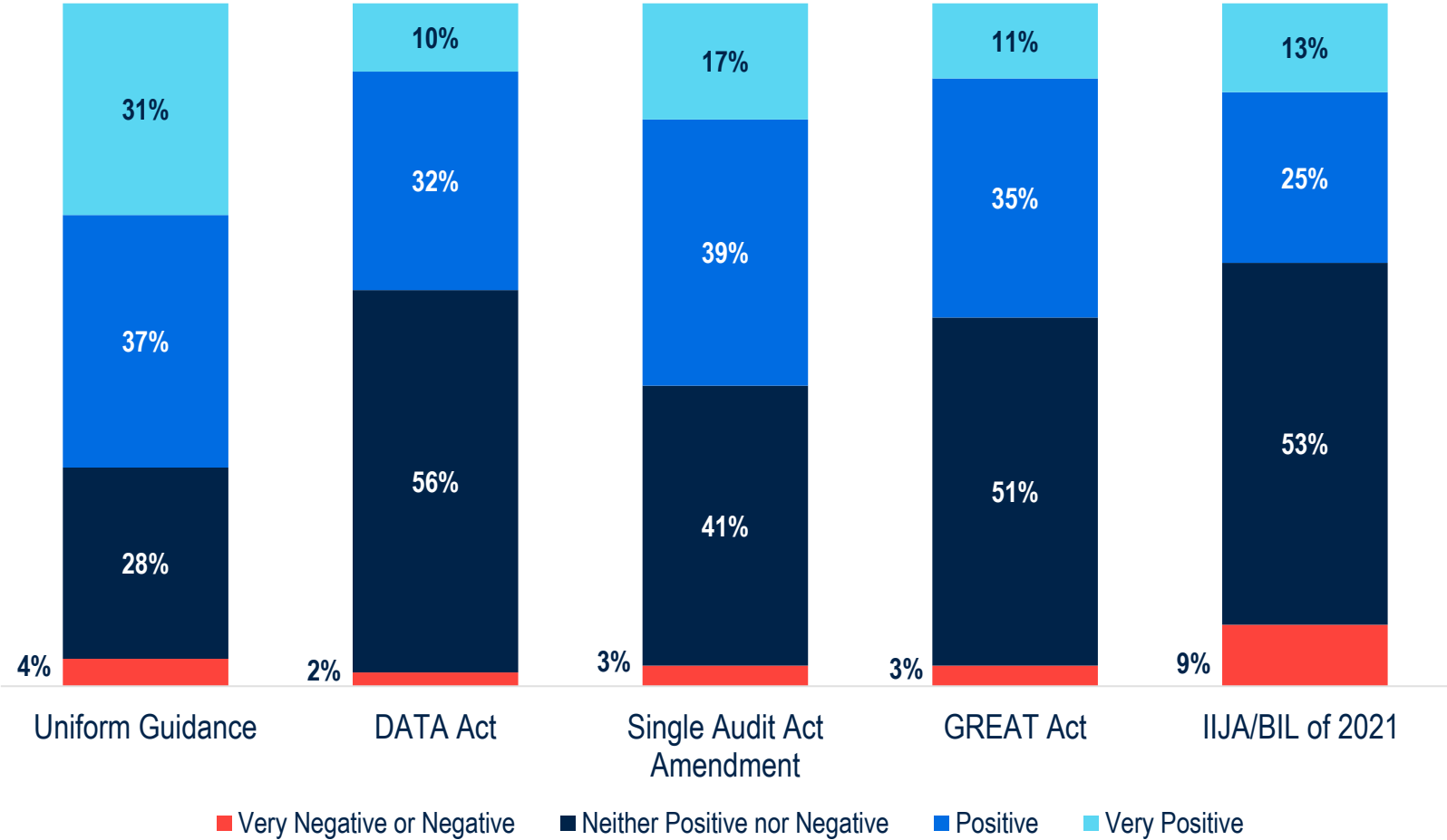
- 1 Uniform Guidance and Compliance
- 2 Subrecipient Monitoring and Oversight
- 3 Grants Financial Management
- 4 Data Analysis and Performance Measurement
- 5 Full Lifecycle Grants Management

Topic 5: Policy & Compliance

- **Implementation Challenges:** If legislative and regulatory frameworks are broadly accepted, why do implementation challenges persist?
- **Support Needs:** What do you want from the Federal government at this stage (NGMA & KS)?
- **Oversight Readiness:** Are organizations prepared for evolving oversight directives emphasizing transparency, fiscal accountability and alignment with administration priorities?
- **Funding Models:** Can you talk to the impacts of increased use of Fixed Amount Awards?
- **Policy Outlook:** Can OMB provide insights into policy priorities that exist now or are coming soon?

Moderate Impact of Federal Legislation and Executive Directives on Grants Management

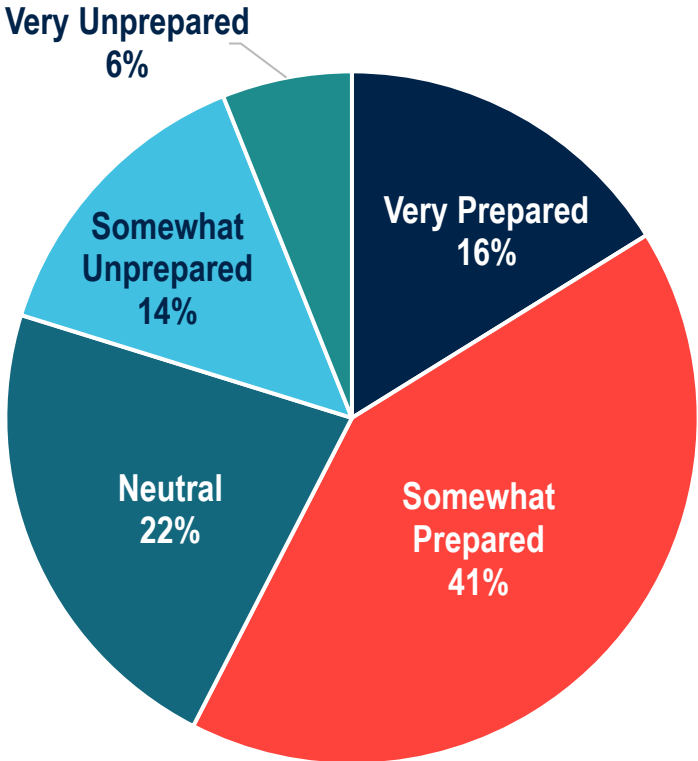
5.1 Please rate the impact of each of the following federal legislative and/or executive branch directives on your **day-to-day grants management**.



Preparedness for New Federal Oversight Varies

Mixed levels of readiness to comply with enhanced federal accountability and reporting expectations.

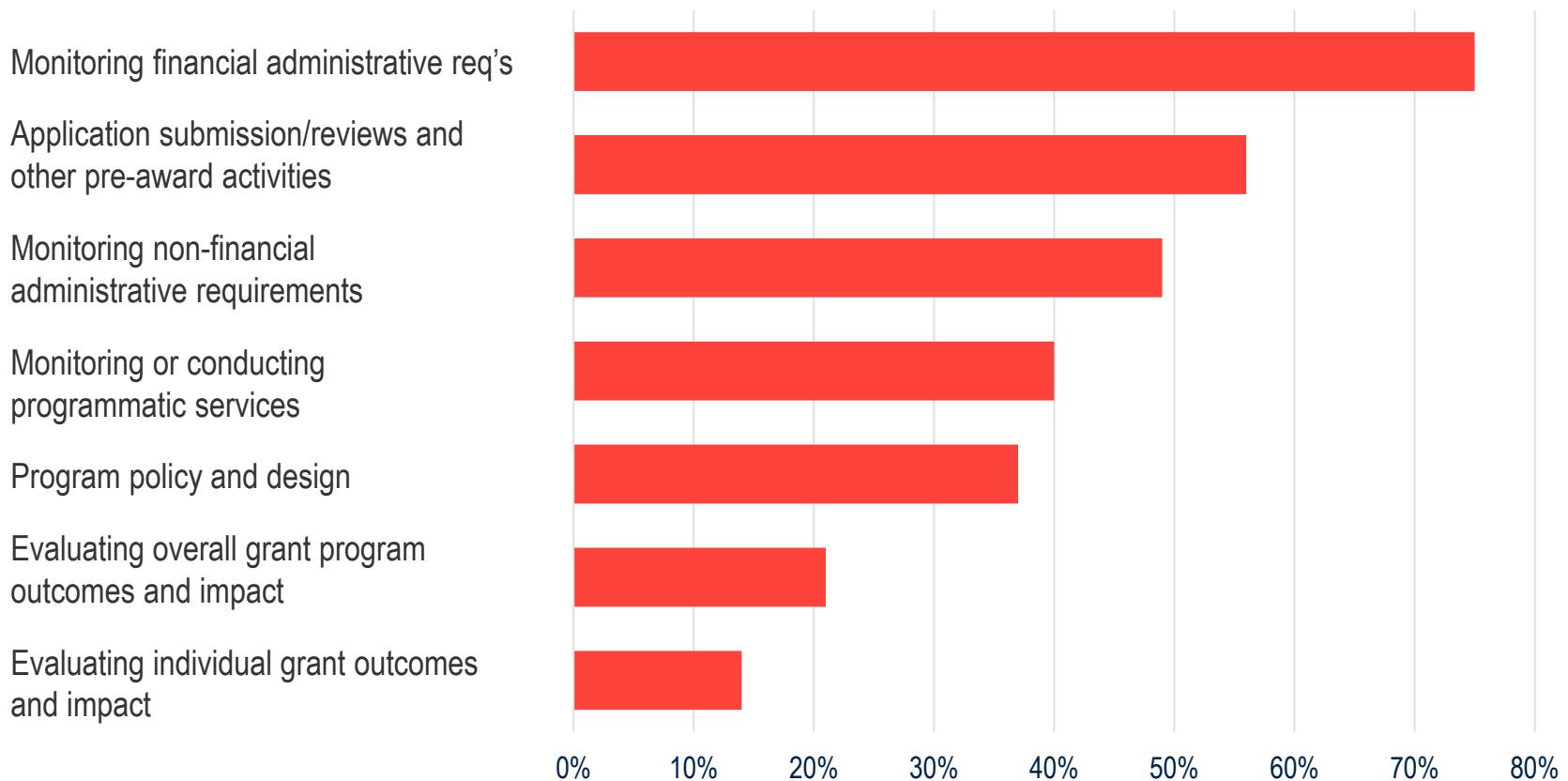
5.3 How prepared is your organization to **comply with new federal oversight directives** under Executive Order 14332, including enhanced fiscal accountability, performance reporting, and alignment of grants with administration priorities?



Top Time-Consuming Grants Management Activities (Respondents' Top 3 Rankings)

Compliance Monitoring Activities Still Consume Majority of Time with 75% of respondents ranking financial monitoring among their top three

2.2. Please rank grants management activities in order of the amount of **time spent**



Closing Remarks

Thank you!



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