



2023 State of Local Government Leadership Pipeline

The Future of Local Government

In collaboration with:



Your Host



Dr. Maria Church, CEO and best-selling author of "Love-Based Leadership: The Model for Leading with Strength, Grace, and Authenticity" and "A Course in Leadership: 21 Spiritual Lessons on Power, Love, and Influence," has started a movement to revolutionize the workplace with a shift from fear to love. Dr. Church has over 25 years of working with Fortune 500, local governments, non-profits, and academia. Maria holds a Doctorate of Management Degree in Organizational Leadership and teaches at several universities. She has been featured in Forbes, numerous radio shows, podcasts, television interviews, and magazines.



Why We Did This Research

1

Our pioneering research examines the unexplored area of the leadership development pipeline in local government. As the level of government closest to residents, the local government's impact on people's daily lives and quality of life make strong leadership imperative.

2

Local government is responsible for managing the allocation of over \$2 trillion in taxpayer dollars each year. Thus, the stewardship success depends heavily on the ability to spend and invest these funds wisely, underscoring the importance of a strong and competent leadership pipeline.

3

Strong leadership is essential for local government to thrive and positively impact the lives of all US residents. Our research addresses a critical gap in understanding and highlights the importance of investing in leadership development to navigate the crossroads ahead.



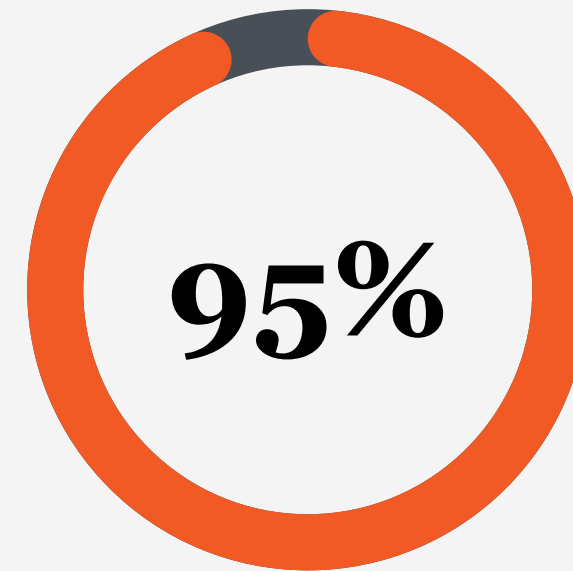
Survey Characteristics

The survey was conducted from September 1 to November 16, 2022, and received a total of 232 respondents.



All respondents were positional leaders in local government.

Confidence In The Results



Confidence Level

95% of the time, repeating the study would generate results within 6.3 percentage points of the results reported here.

This is a high level of confidence.

Attitudinal Segmentation

Our research has yielded a significant finding indicating that respondents can be grouped into distinct segments based on their attitudes.

This process, commonly known as attitudinal segmentation, has identified four distinct groups that demonstrate a strong correlation with their respective attitudes toward a particular subject.

Segmentation was based exclusively on ratings of attitudinal statements.



Neither the number of segments nor their defining attitudes were predetermined.



Each segment represents a group of respondents for whom a particular set of attitudes are strongly connected.



Segments

The analysis identified four distinct attitudinal segments among respondents:



1. Change Seekers



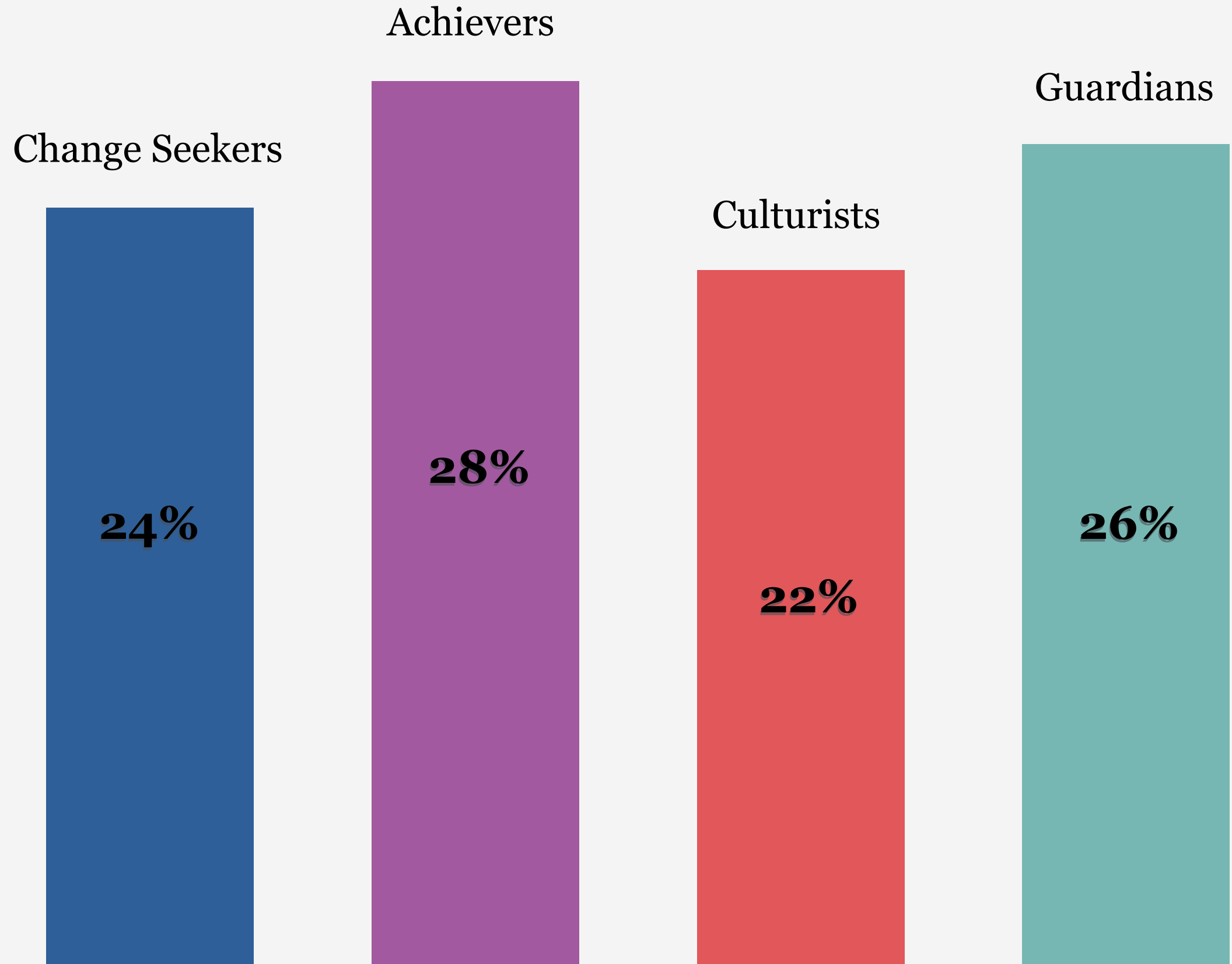
2. Achievers



3. Culturists

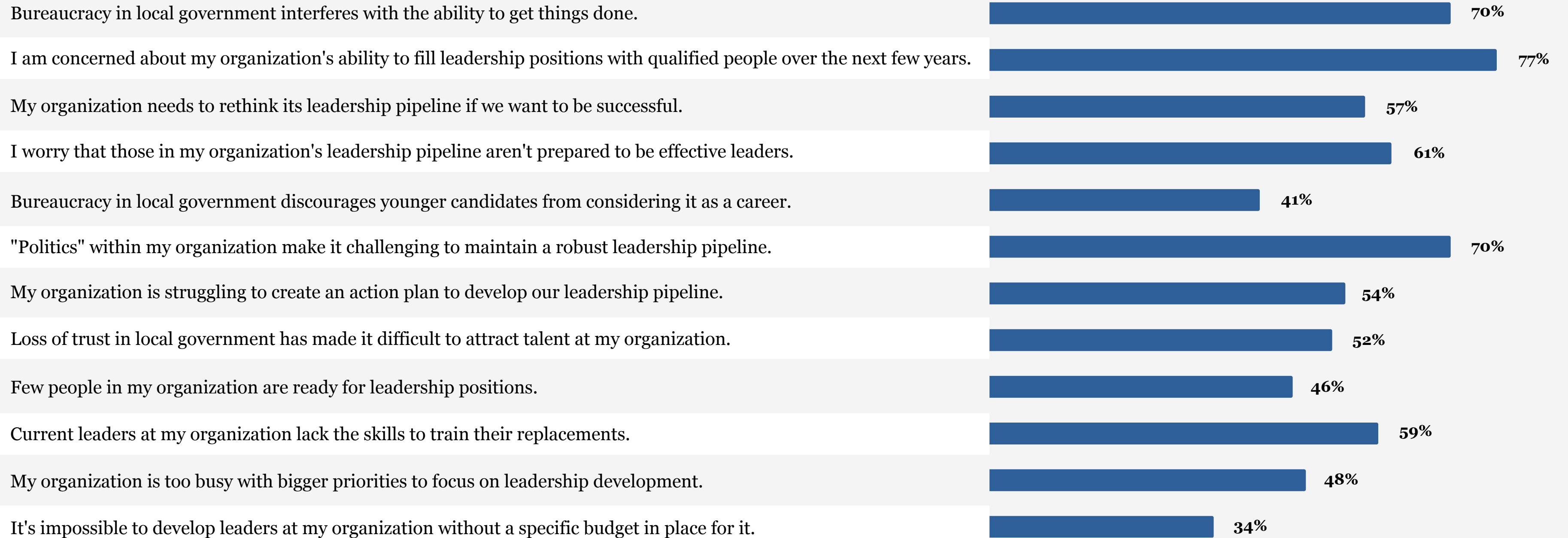


4. Guardians



Segment 1: Change Seekers (24%)

Change Seekers strongly feel their organization lacks strong leaders, doesn't prioritize leadership development, and struggles with bureaucracy.



How do you feel about the following statements?

% Strongly Agreeing



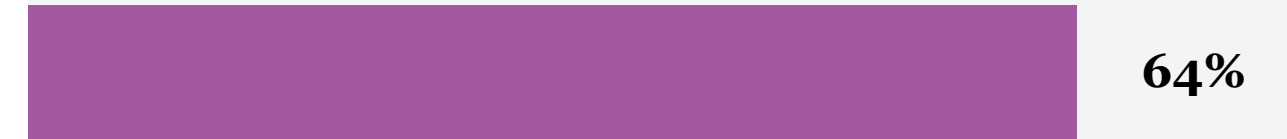
Segment 2: Achievers (28%)

Achievers strongly believe their organization has excellent leadership expertise to identify future leaders, and proven methods for developing them.

Most of those in leadership roles are skilled leaders.



My organization has a clear sense of what leadership qualities future leaders need to have.



My organization is very good at identifying "rising stars" to invest in for further leadership development.



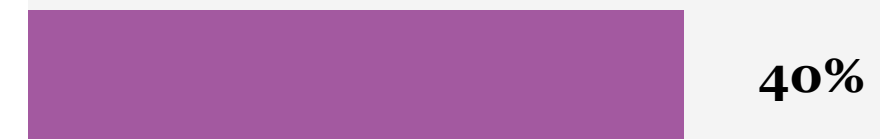
My organization does a great job of developing future leaders.



My organization has a proven system or method for measuring the effectiveness of its leaders' performance.



Americans have a better understanding of the potential impact of local government leadership than ever before.



How do you feel about the following statements?

% Strongly Agreeing



Segment 3: Culturists (22%)

Culturists believe a strong culture is necessary for a robust leadership development pipeline, and that leadership qualities can be developed over time with formal training.

Local government organizations need a strong culture to maintain a robust leadership pipeline. **98%**

Leadership qualities can be developed over time. **96%**

It's vital for future local government leaders to effectively navigate public perception of local government. **86%**

The increased push for transparency in local government increases the need for effective leaders. **92%**

Strong local government leadership is the key to getting communities back on track. **94%**

Formal training is necessary to develop the leadership pipeline at my organization. **84%**

Younger employees have the skills to transform local government. **59%**

How do you feel about the following statements?

% Strongly Agreeing



Segment 4: Guardians (26%)

Guardians strongly feel that younger people are disinterested in local government careers and less engaged in local government issues.

Witnessing government leaders at the national level discourages younger people from considering local government career opportunities.



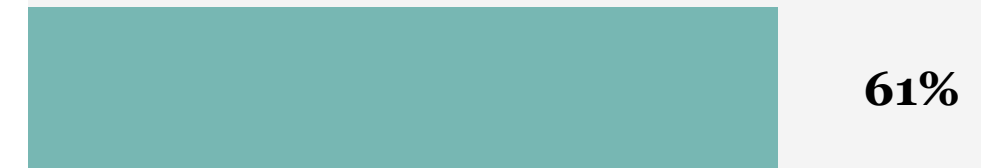
Younger people feel very different about the responsibilities of local government leadership positions.



There are not enough young people in local government leadership positions.



Young people are much less engaged in local government issues than people who are over 40.



Local government leadership positions don't appeal to younger generations.

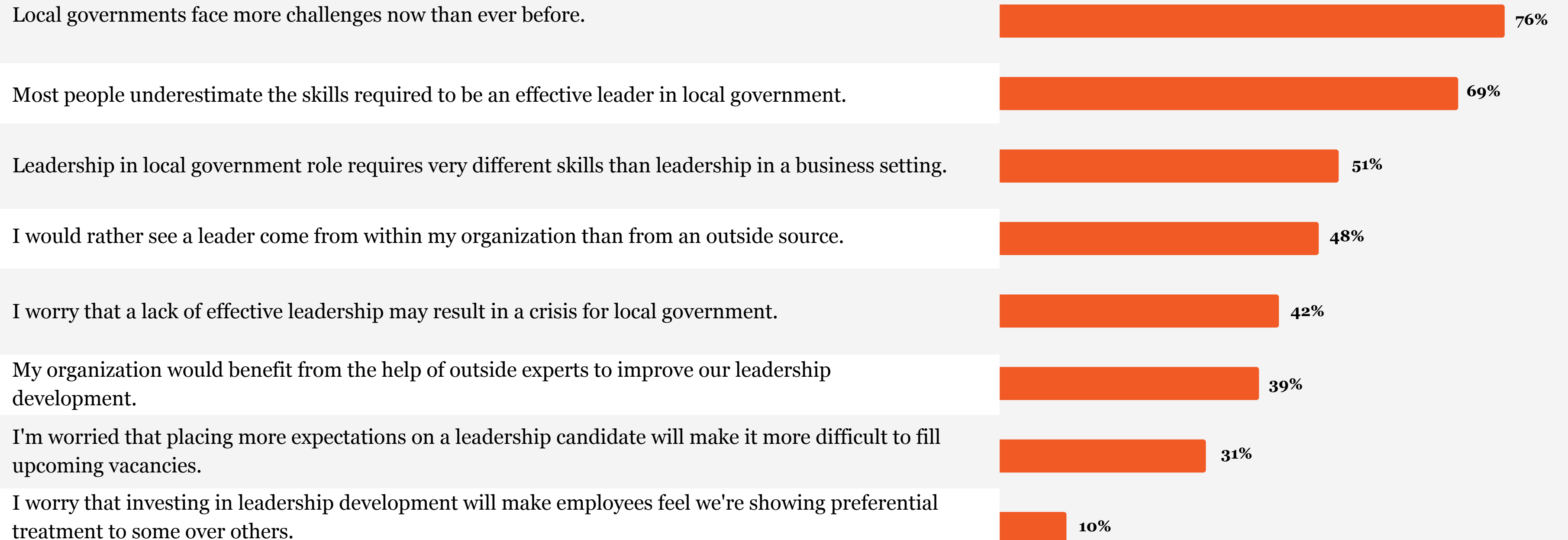


How do you feel about the following statements?

% Strongly Agreeing

Non-Defying Attitudes

Respondents strongly agree that local governments face more challenges than ever, and that most people underestimate the skills required to be a local government leader.



How do you feel about the following statements?

% Strongly Agreeing

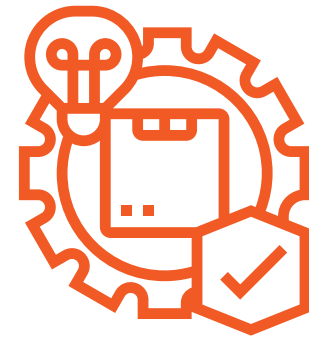
Key Takeaways



These four clear-cut segments emerged without any preconceived notions or predetermined groupings.



These distinct segments transcend the types of local governments and are heavily influenced by the organizational culture.



Culturists and Guardians are more likely to be in executive roles, and their focus is on the industry, leadership, and state of the country (macro).



In contrast, Change Seekers and Achievers are more focused on their organization (micro).



If Change Seekers do not find the change - they will likely leave the organization...or become jaded and pessimistic. In a stronger organizational culture, they may become Achievers.



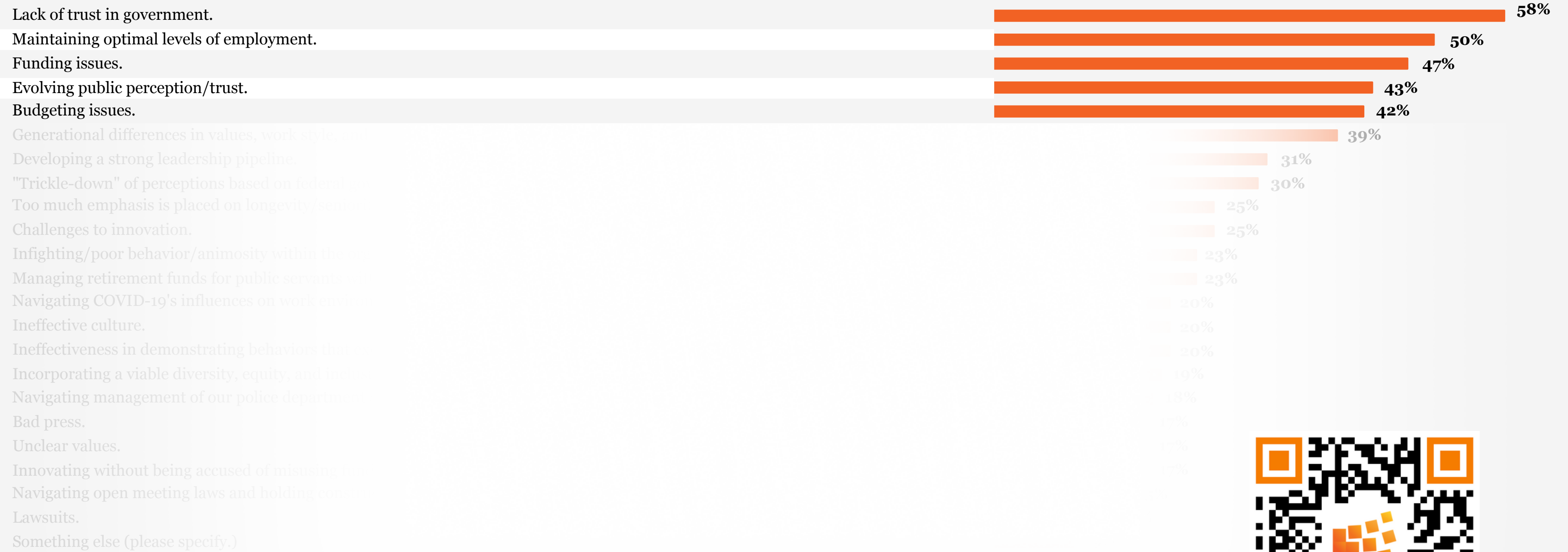
Impacts of these attitudinal segments, along with where you are working and the experiences you've had, affect organizational culture, job productivity, and ultimately attraction/retention.

Challenges for Local Governments



Challenges Facing Local Government Leaders

Respondents most often cite a lack of trust in local government, maintaining employment levels, funding issues, and evolving public perception as key challenges.

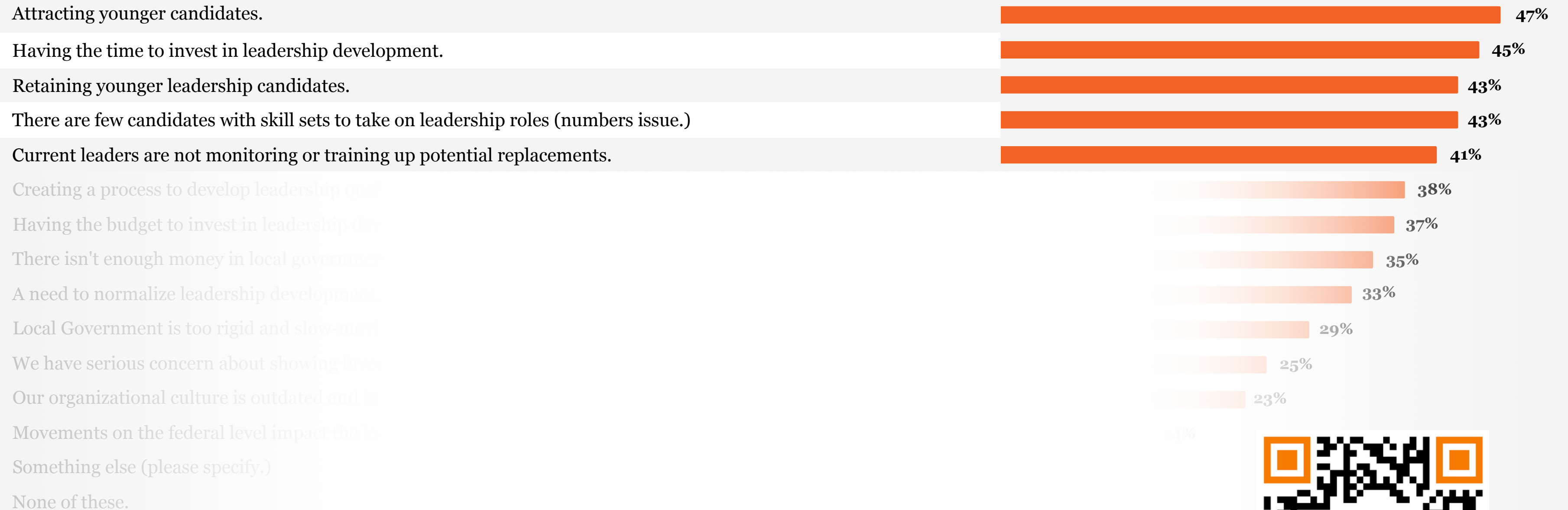


Q36. What do you believe are the biggest challenges local government leaders are facing right now? Choose all that apply.



Challenges in Developing a Leadership Pipeline

Overall, respondents cite attracting and retaining younger candidates and having the time for leadership development as key challenges in developing a leadership pipeline.

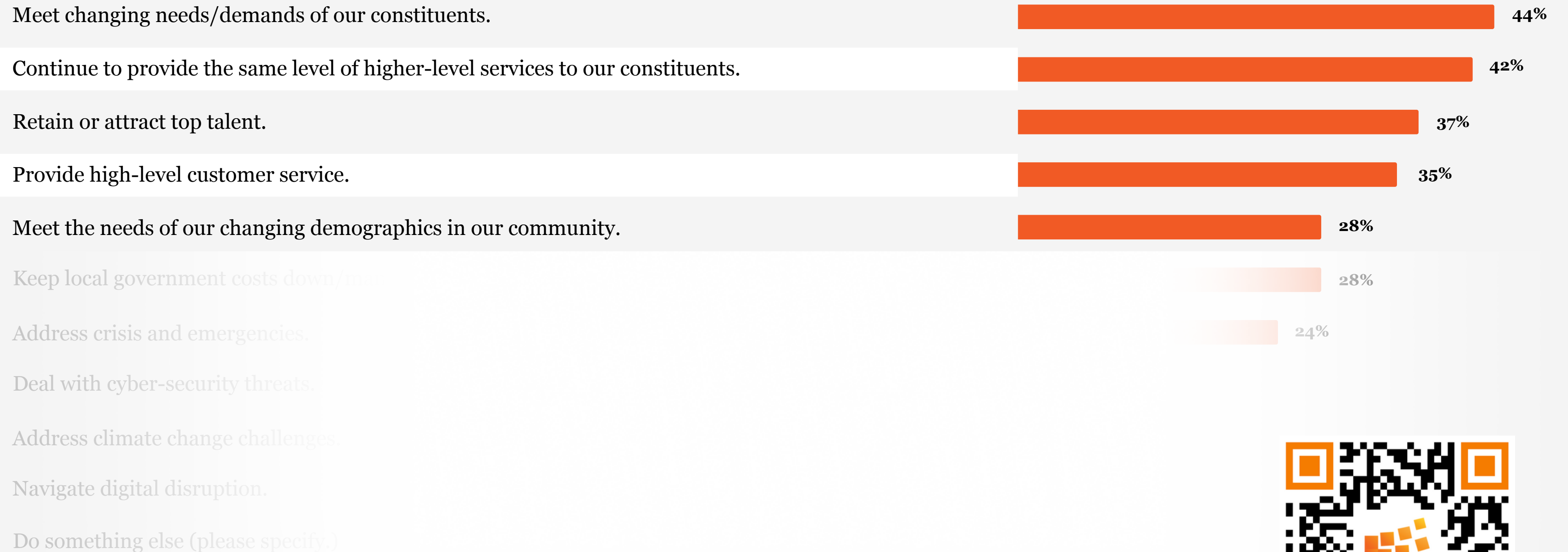


Q41. What do you believe are the biggest challenges facing your organization when it comes to developing a leadership pipeline? Choose all that apply.



Impact of Lack of Leaders

Respondents cite a range of impacts if their organization lacks a pipeline of well-developed, ready-now leadership candidates.

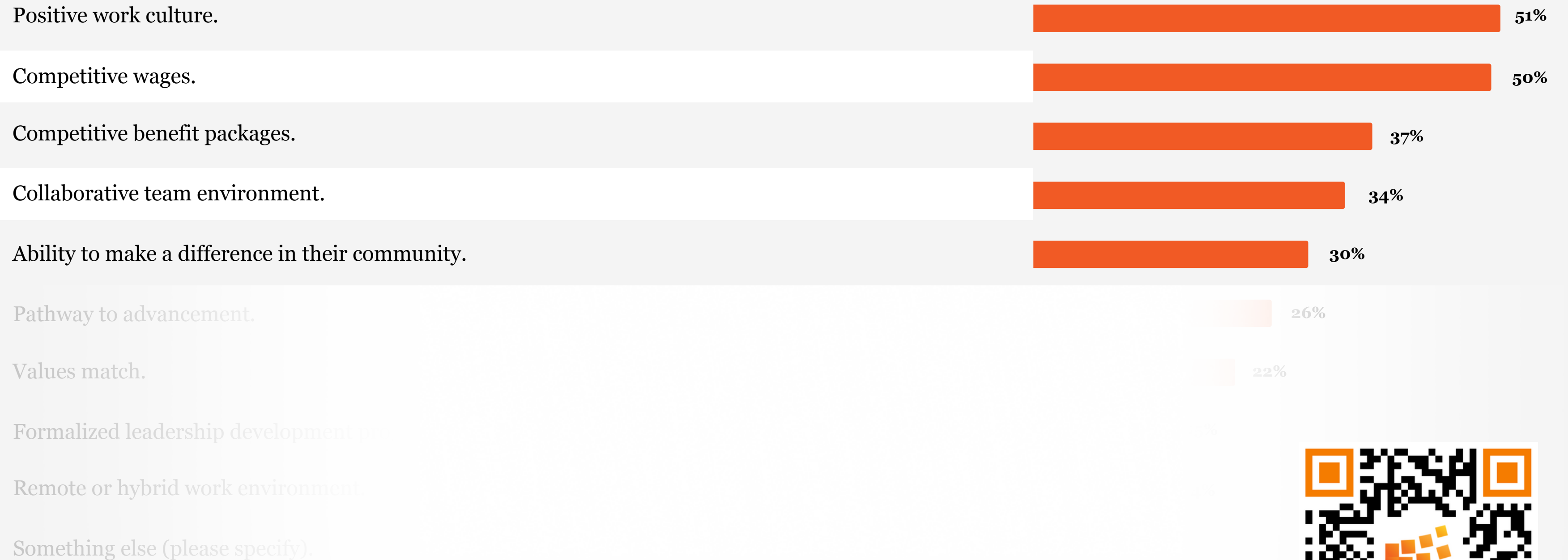


Q44. Which of the following best complete this sentence? "A lack of well-developed, ready leaders would most impact my organization's ability to..." (Choose your top 3.)



Top Priorities of Best Candidates

A majority of respondents believe a positive work culture and competitive wages are the top priorities of the best candidates.

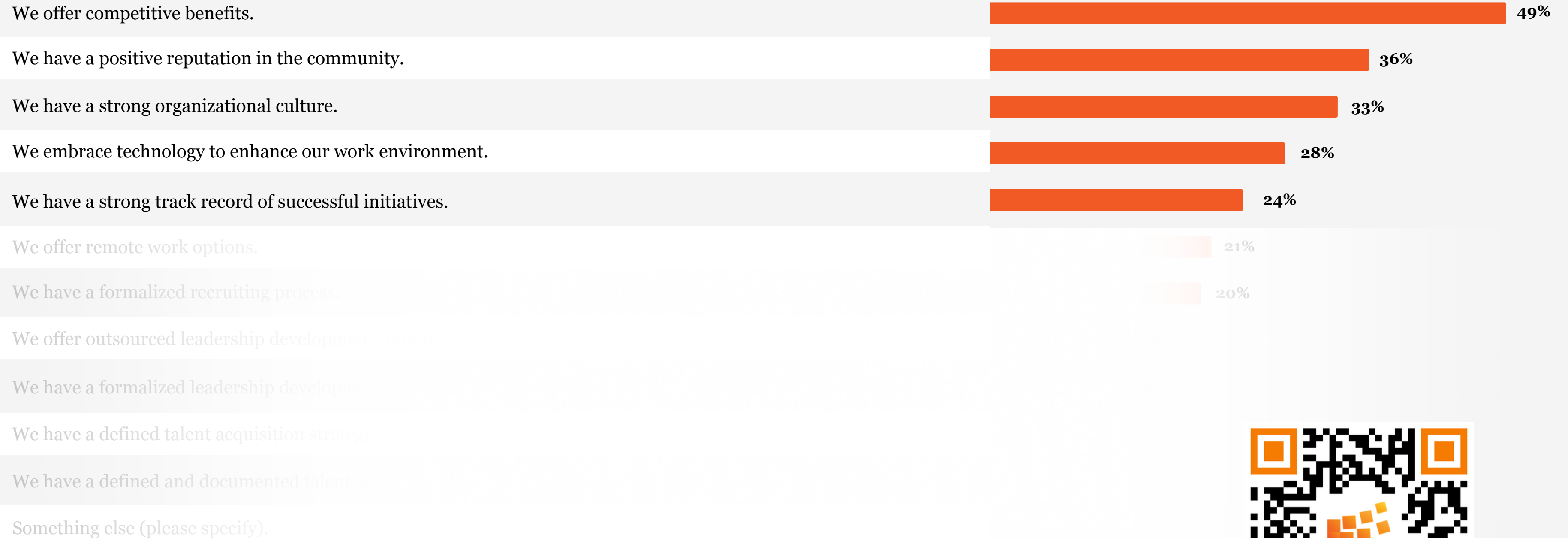


Q37. What do you believe are the top priorities of the best candidates when they're evaluating whether to pursue a leadership role in your organization? Choose your top three.



How to Attract Candidates

While 49% say their organization offers competitive benefits, only about a third say their organization has a positive reputation in the community or a strong organizational culture.



Q38. What does your organization do to attract leadership candidates? Choose all that apply.



Key Takeaways



Lack of Trust is a greater threat than Funding.



Maintaining Optimal Staffing Levels is an attraction and retention issue.



Organizational Culture is ranked a top priority for attracting candidates, yet only 1/3 reported a strong workplace culture.



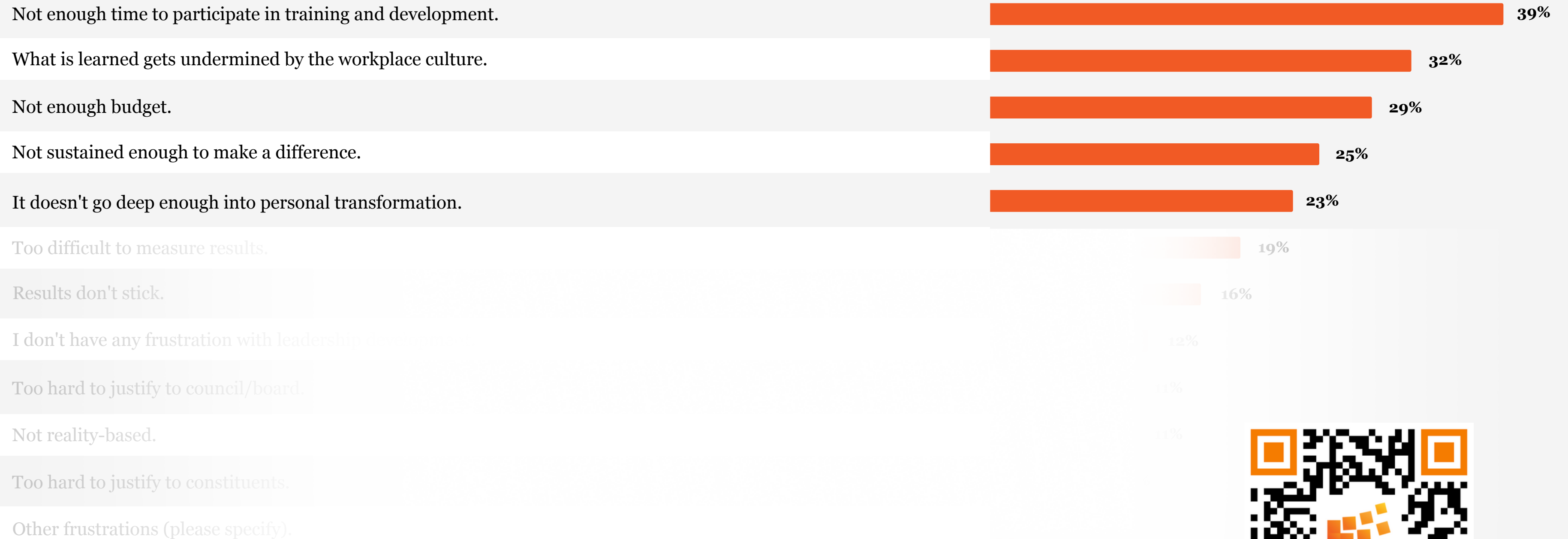
The impact is affecting, or will affect, services you are providing.

Leadership Development & Pipeline



Biggest Frustration with Leadership Development

Respondents' most common frustrations with leadership development are needing more time to participate in training and that what is learned is undermined by their workplace culture.

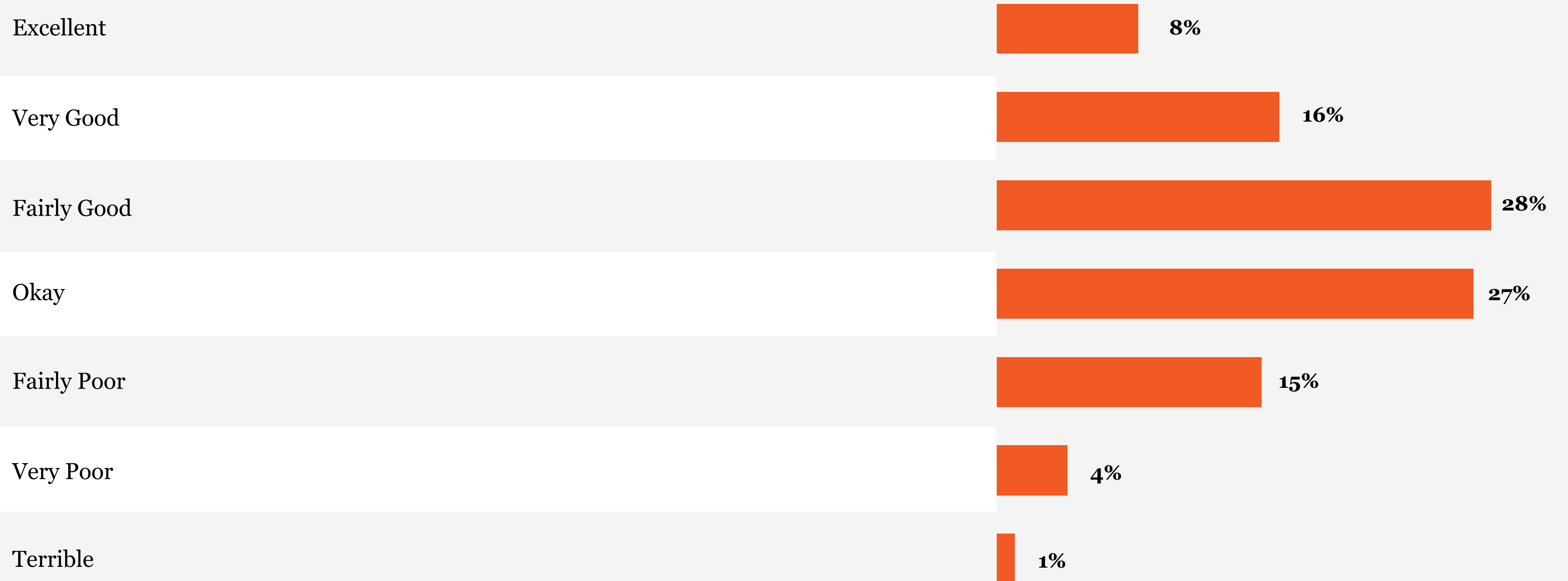


Q48. What are your biggest frustrations when it comes to leadership development? Choose all that apply.



Rate Leadership Pipeline

Overall, only 24% say their organization's pipeline of leadership candidates is Very Good or Excellent.



Q29. How would you rate the pipeline of quality leadership candidates in your organization?

Organizational Priority on Pipeline

Nearly half (48%) say their organization sees improving its leadership pipeline as Extremely or Very Important.



Q31. How does your organization rank the importance of improving its leadership pipeline?

Organizational Priority on Pipeline

Only 29% of respondents say their organization has a defined budget for leadership development.



Q52. Does your organization have a defined budget for leadership development?

Key Takeaways



Only 1/4 of respondents reported their leadership pipeline as Good or Excellent, yet only 29% have a budget to develop their leaders.



Not addressing the pipeline is a problem for providing services resulting in delays in meeting the needs of the public.



Without an effective culture, your investment in leadership development will be undermined and you are not going to attract or retain the leaders you need.

Your Next Strategic Steps



Discussions

- Share this research with your leadership team and elected officials.
- How strong is your leadership pipeline? How big does it need to be?
- What skills are needed?
- How do you evaluate your pipeline effectively?

Discovery

- What are your leadership pipeline needs?
- What is the current state of your leadership pipeline?
- What is the current state of leadership readiness - what are the attitudes of those in your leadership pipeline?
- What is the current state of your culture?

Decisions

- Where will you invest your resources?
- How will you make those improvements?
 - Recruitment
 - Training, Development, Coaching

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The Future of Local Government Executive Summary





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