

# 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.

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## Why We Did This Research



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.



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.

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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.



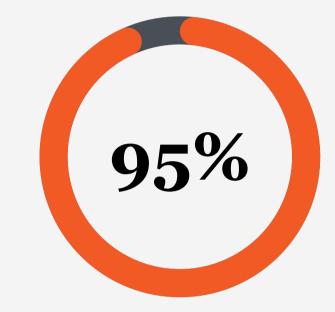
## Survey **Characteristics**

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**



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.

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Confidence Level

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.



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

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### **Attitudinal Segmentation**

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

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### **Segments**

The analysis identified four distinct attitudinal segments among respondents:

1. Change Seekers



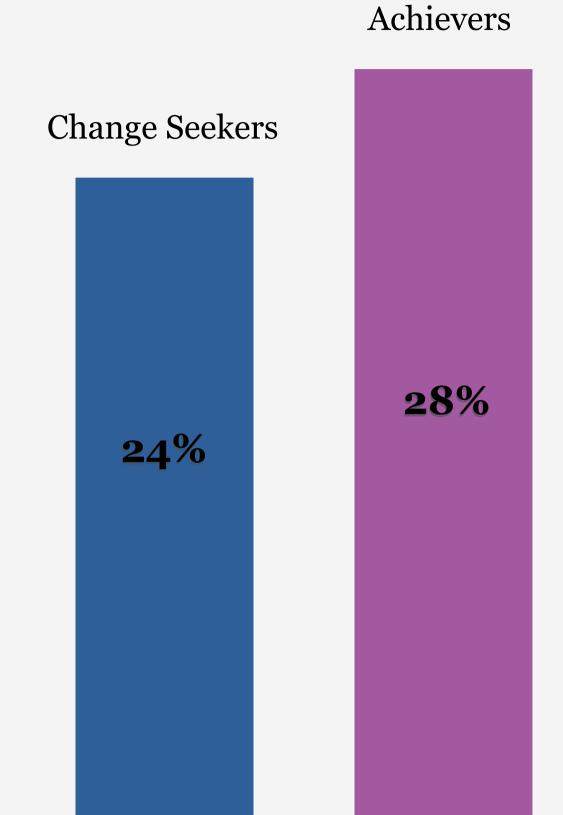
2. Achievers



3. Culturists



4. Guardians





### Guardians



Culturists

22%

## Segment 1: Change Seekers (24%)

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

Bureaucracy in local government interferes with the ability to get things done.

I am concerned about my organization's ability to fill leadership positions with qualified people over the next few years.

My organization needs to rethink its leadership pipeline if we want to be successful.

I worry that those in my organization's leadership pipeline aren't prepared to be effective leaders.

Bureaucracy in local government discourages younger candidates from considering it as a career.

"Politics" within my organization make it challenging to maintain a robust leadership pipeline.

My organization is struggling to create an action plan to develop our leadership pipeline.

Loss of trust in local government has made it difficult to attract talent at my organization.

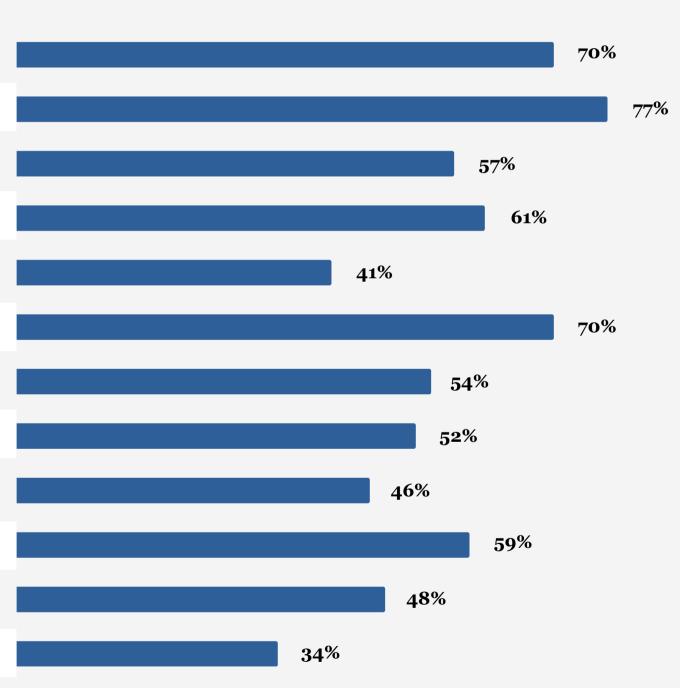
Few people in my organization are ready for leadership positions.

Current leaders at my organization lack the skills to train their replacements.

My organization is too busy with bigger priorities to focus on leadership development.

It's impossible to develop leaders at my organization without a specific budget in place for it. How do you feel about the following statements?





% Strongly Agreeing

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## 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.

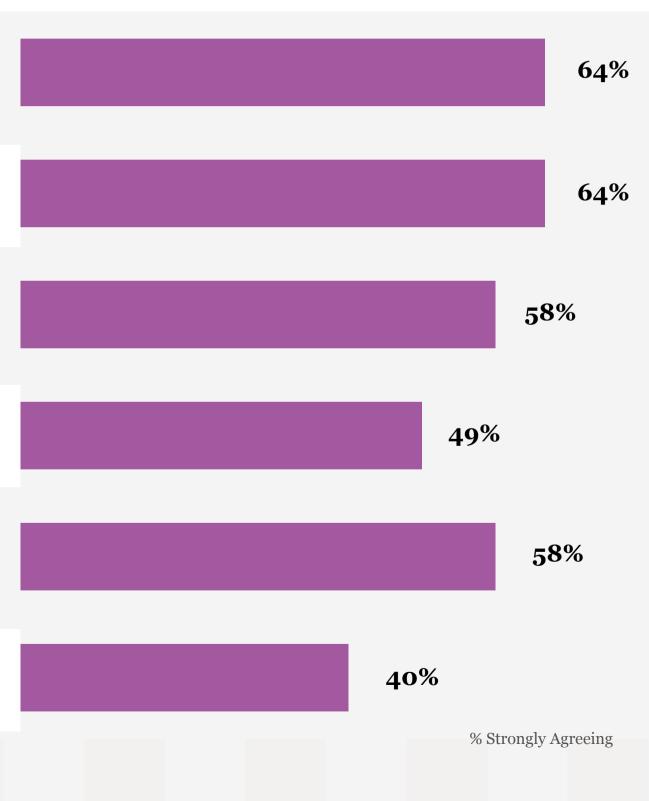
My organization does a great job of developing future leaders.

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?





## 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.

Leadership qualities can be developed over time.

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

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

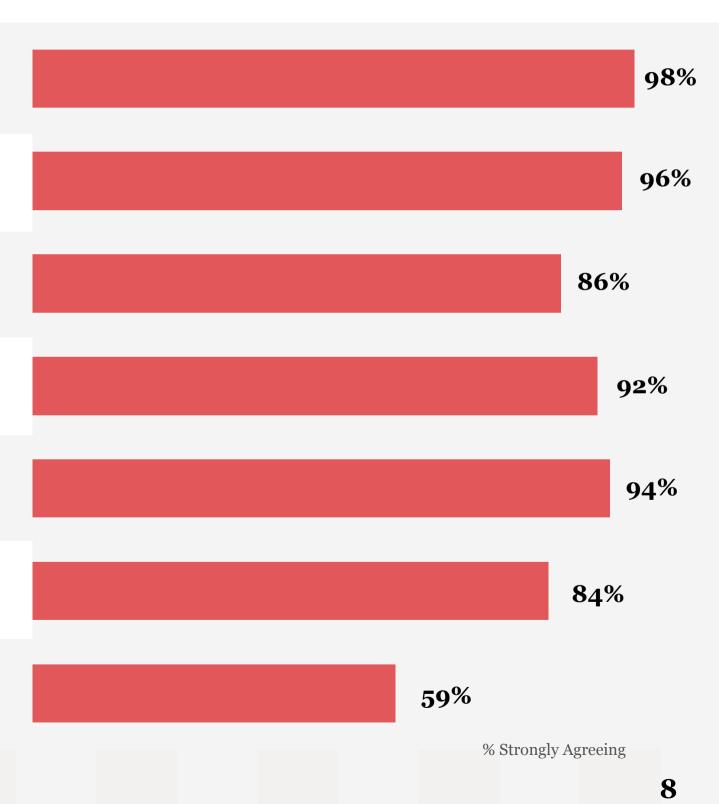
Strong local government leadership is the key to getting communities back on track.

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

Younger employees have the skills to transform local government.

How do you feel about the following statements?





## 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.

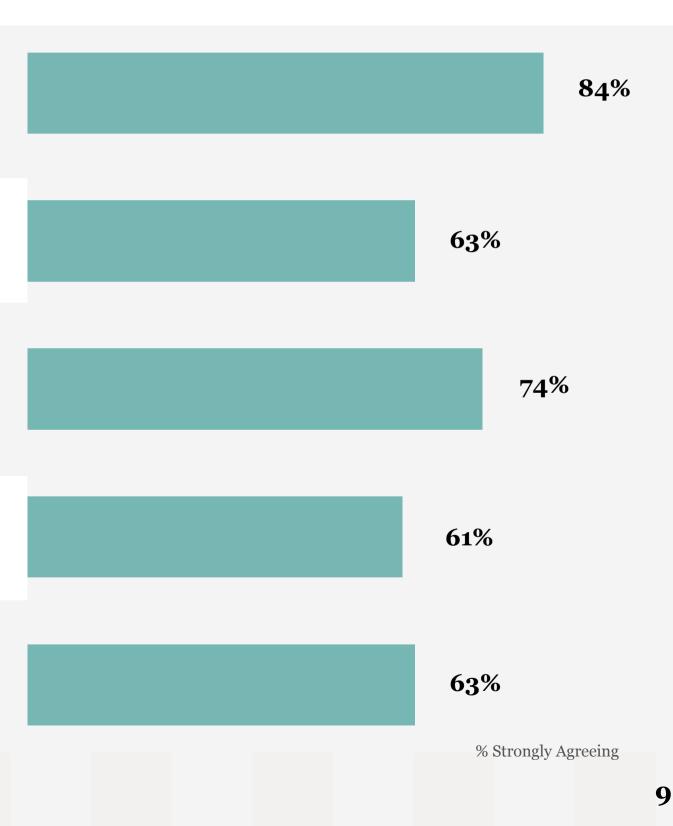
There are not enough young people in local government leadership positions.

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?





## **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.

Local governments face more challenges now than ever before.

Most people underestimate the skills required to be an effective leader in local government.

Leadership in local government role requires very different skills than leadership in a business setting.

I would rather see a leader come from within my organization than from an outside source.

I worry that a lack of effective leadership may result in a crisis for local government.

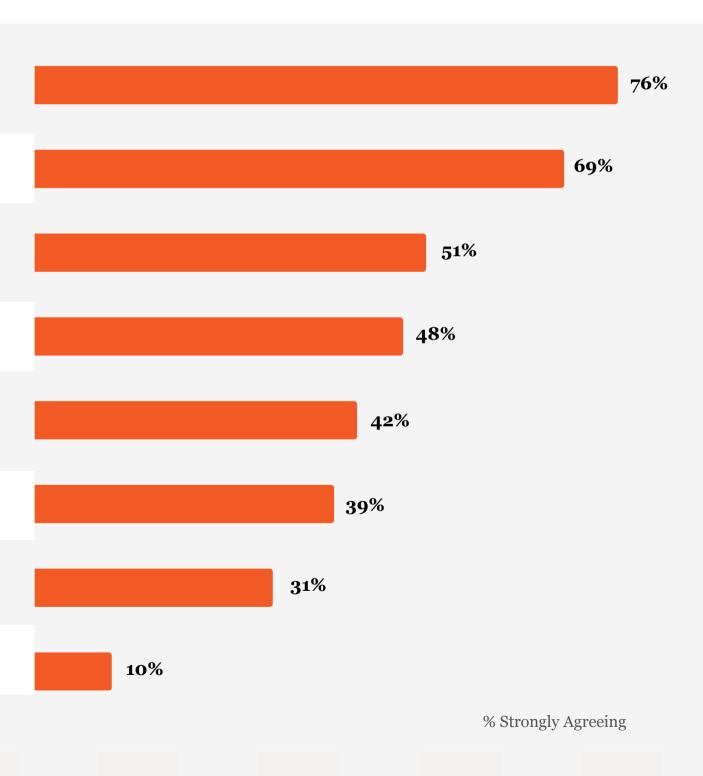
My organization would benefit from the help of outside experts to improve our leadership development.

I'm worried that placing more expectations on a leadership candidate will make it more difficult to fill upcoming vacancies.

I worry that investing in leadership development will make employees feel we're showing preferential treatment to some over others.

How do you feel about the following statements?





### **Key Takeaways**



These four clearcut 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**

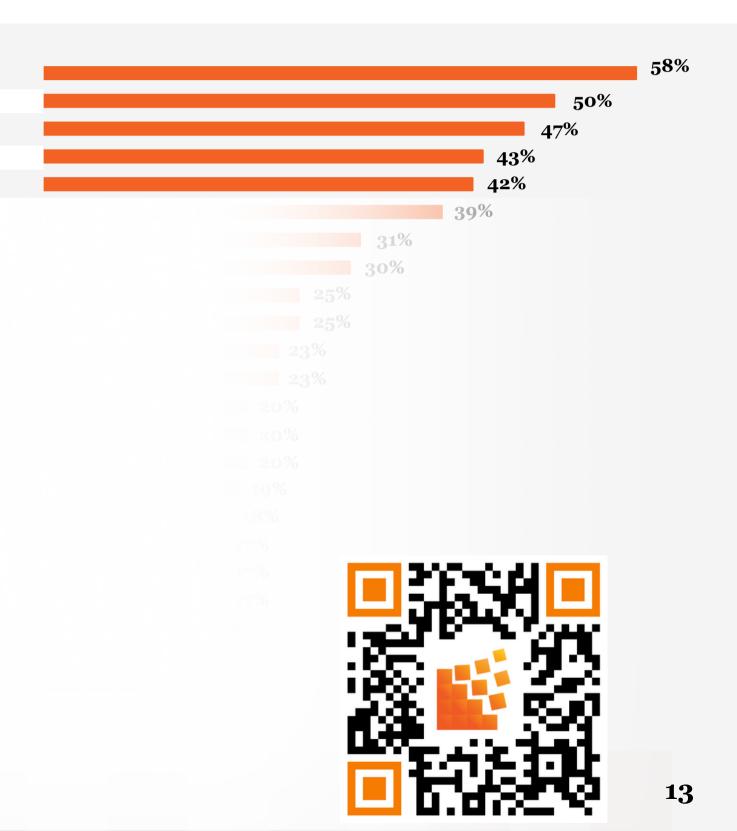
Respondents most often cite a lack of trust in local government, maintaining employment levels, funding issues, and evolving public perception as key challenges.

Lack of trust in government. Maintaining optimal levels of employment. Funding issues. Evolving public perception/trust. Budgeting issues.

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.

Attracting younger candidates.

Having the time to invest in leadership development.

Retaining younger leadership candidates.

There are few candidates with skill sets to take on leadership roles (numbers issue.)

Current leaders are not monitoring or training up potential replacements.

Creating a process to develop leadership

Having the budget to invest in leadership

There isn't enough money in local governme

A need to normalize leadership developme

Local Government is too rigid and slow-m

We have serious concern about showing fa

Our organizational culture is outdated and

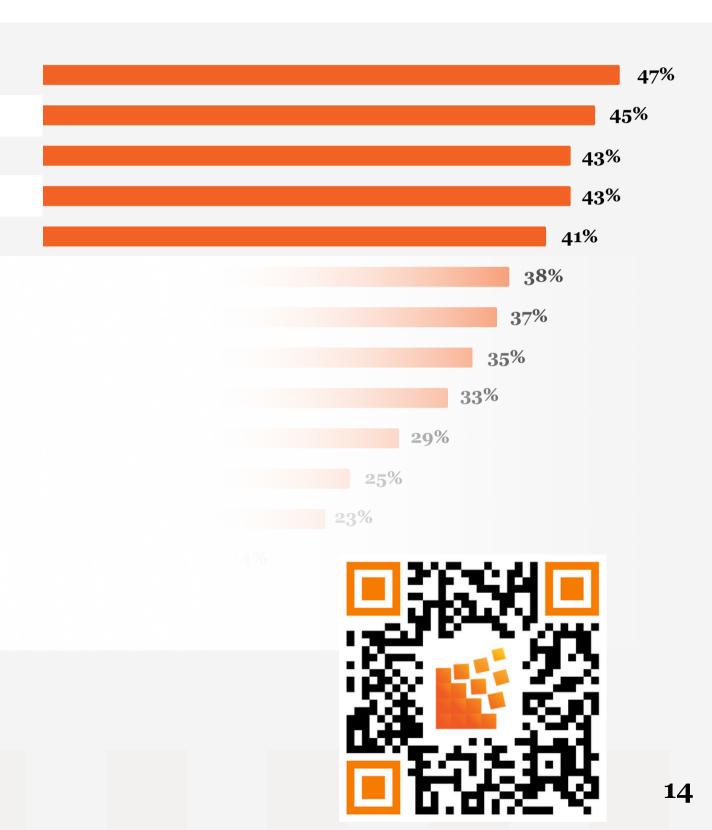
Movements on the federal level impact the

Something else (please specify.)

None of these.

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.

Meet changing needs/demands of our constituents.

Continue to provide the same level of higher-level services to our constituents.

Retain or attract top talent.

Provide high-level customer service.

Meet the needs of our changing demographics in our community.

Keep local government costs down/r

Address crisis and emergencies

**Deal with cyber-security threats** 

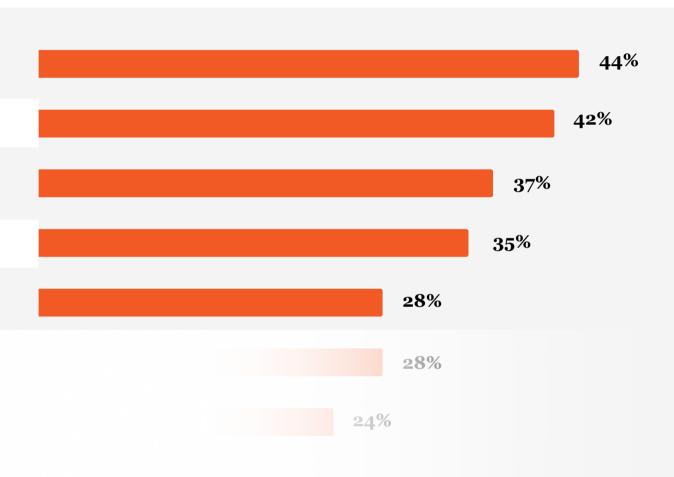
Address climate change challenges

Navigate digital disruption.

Do something else (please specify.

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.

Positive work culture.

Competitive wages.

Competitive benefit packages.

Collaborative team environment.

Ability to make a difference in their community.

Pathway to advancement.

Values match.

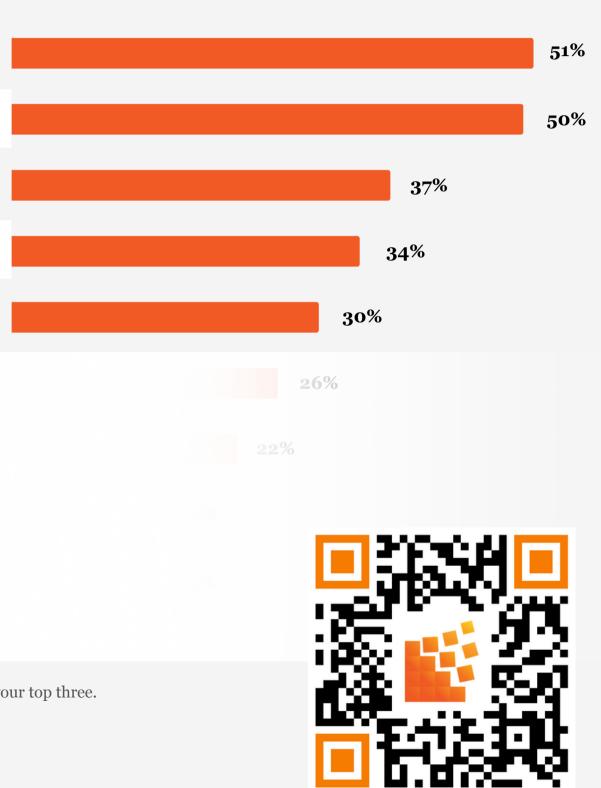
Formalized leadership development

Remote or hybrid work environmen

### Something else (please specify)

037. 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.

We offer competitive benefits.

We have a positive reputation in the community.

We have a strong organizational culture.

We embrace technology to enhance our work environment.

We have a strong track record of successful initiatives.

We offer remote work options.

We have a formalized recruiting proc

We offer outsourced leadership deve

We have a formalized leadership de

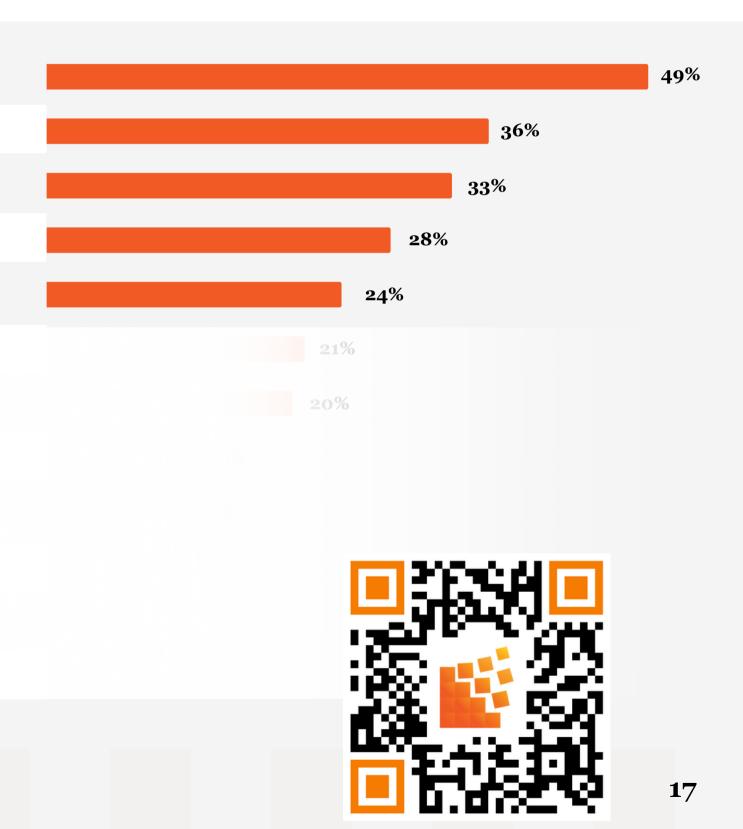
We have a defined talent acquisition stra

We have a defined and documented tale

Something else (please specify).

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





### **Key Takeaways**



Lack of <u>Trust</u> is a greater threat than <u>Funding.</u>



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



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## **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.

Not enough time to participate in training and development.

What is learned gets undermined by the workplace culture.

Not enough budget.

Not sustained enough to make a difference.

It doesn't go deep enough into personal transformation.

Too difficult to measure results

Results don't stick.

I don't have any frustration with le

Too hard to justify to council/board

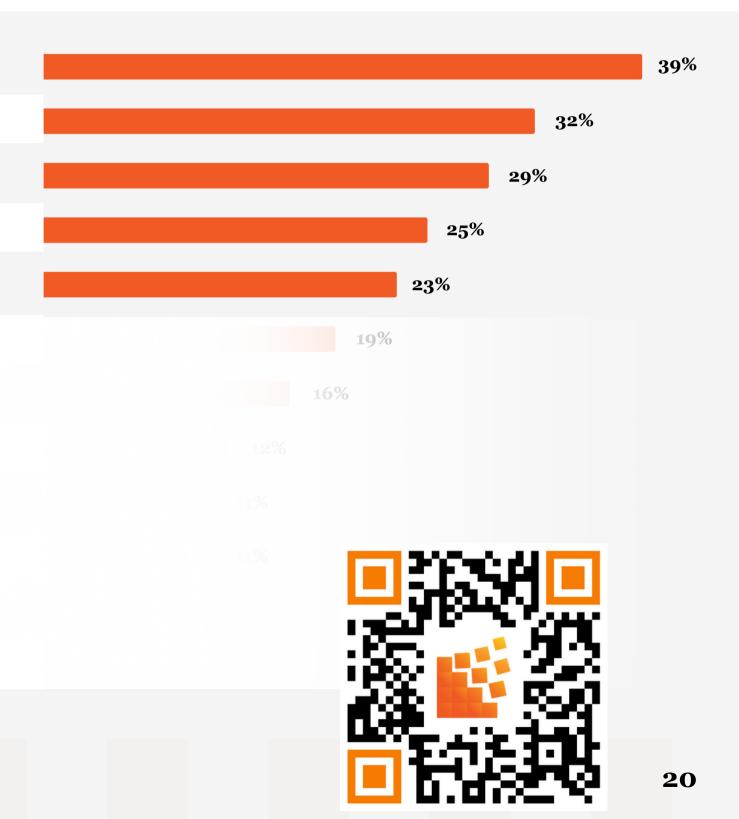
Not reality-based.

Too hard to justify to constituents

Other frustrations (please specify).

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



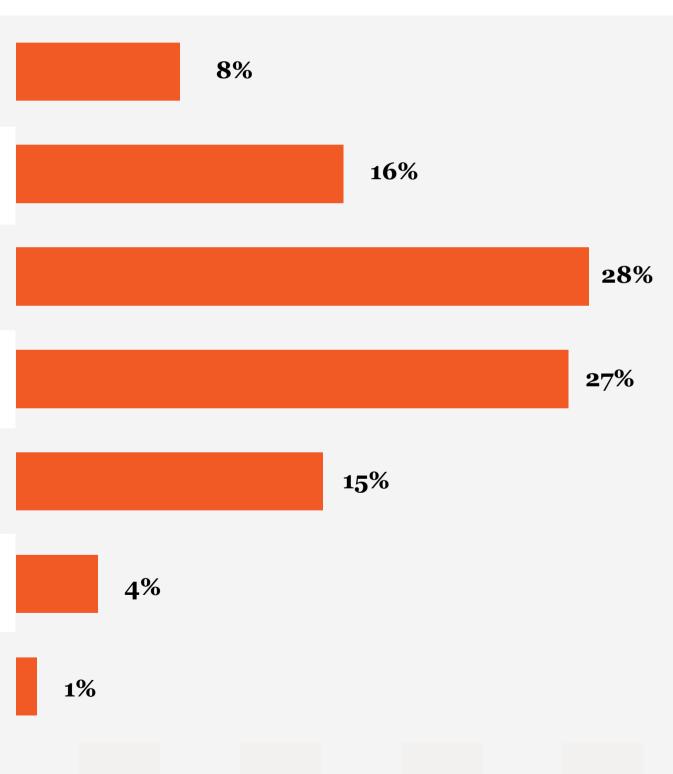


## **Rate Leadership Pipeline**

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

Excellent
Very Good
Fairly Good
Okay
Fairly Poor
Very Poor
Terrible   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.

**Extremely Important** 

Very Important

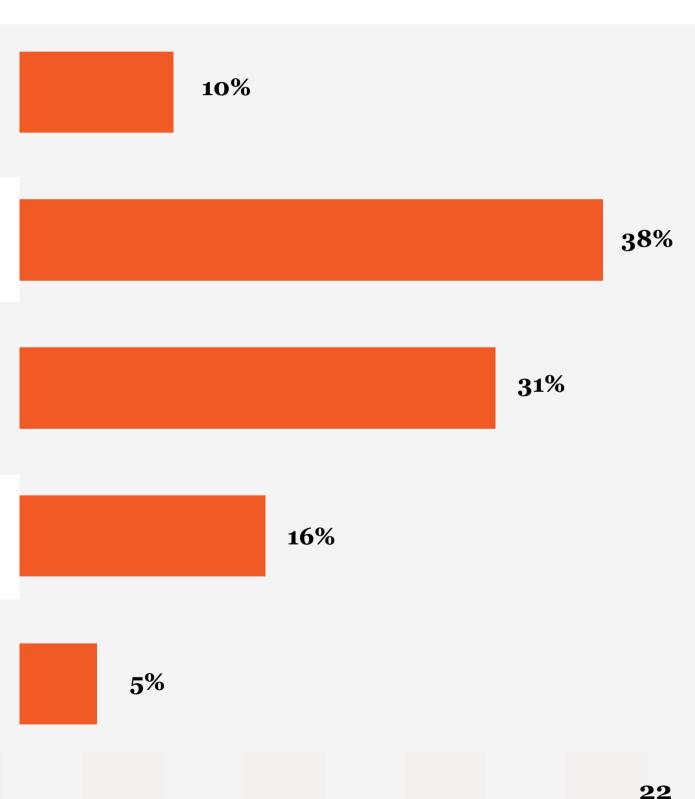
Somewhat Important

Not Very Important

### Not At All 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.

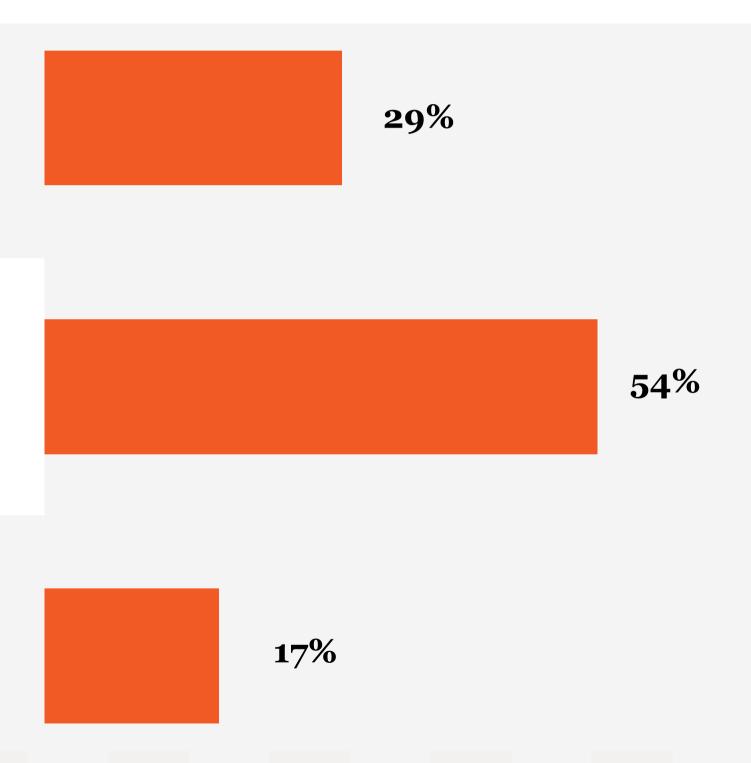
Yes

No

### I'm not sure

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





### **2023 State of Local Government Leadership Pipeline** The Future of Local Government Executive Summary







GOVERNMENT

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