



Axon 911



The Pulse of 911 2026

The State of 911 in America

INTRODUCTION

A letter from our CEO



Michael Chime
CEO, Axon 911

Before anything else, I want to acknowledge the incredible work of our nation's telecommunicators and leaders. As you will see in this year's findings, change is everywhere in our industry, and still, this community keeps showing up to answer the call. The world depends on you, and you deliver every single day.

That is what makes this year's Pulse of 911 report so meaningful. It arrives at an inflection point for the industry.

There is a lot in this data to be encouraged by. Adoption of new technology is accelerating, and tools that felt experimental a few years ago are making a real difference on the floor.

But the report is just as clear that the hard problems are still with us. Infrastructure is aging. Cyber risk is growing. Outages remain something nearly every center is dealing with. And as call volume rises, staffing gets stretched thinner and the people doing this work feel it. Technology is helping in meaningful ways, but it will not solve all of this on its own. Real progress will take continued push and real resolution.

■ A LETTER FROM OUR CEO – CONTINUED

Here are the three takeaways I would draw from the data.

1. AI is being adopted quickly, and centers are being thoughtful about it.

It is encouraging to see adoption ramp up, with transcription and translation surging over the past year. As you would expect, that growth comes with real questions about trust. Centers across the country are wrestling with the fact that this is an extraordinarily powerful tool, and because it is so powerful, they are being deliberate about where it belongs. As more positive use cases emerge, centers are weighing carefully how best to deploy them. That is a healthy sign. Centers want tools that help, and they are clear about what must stay in human hands. The potential is tremendous when AI is an assistive force, and the standard the report sets is the right one: technology should extend the skills of 911 professionals, never replace them.

2. The tools that work are making a difference, and now they need to work together.

Real-time location and Text-to-911 rank among the top priorities, and it is easy to see why. Both are having a tangible impact in communities every day. Yet roughly half of centers report friction from managing multiple systems and inconsistent workflows. Strong tools sitting on a fragmented foundation can only do so much. The next step is consolidating systems and building more thoughtful workflows around the people who use them.

3. Resilience has to be built, technically and humanly.

Four out of five centers experienced an outage this year, level with last year. Beneath that flat number are two rising trends: growing concern about cybersecurity, and a climb in CAD outages, which is unsurprising given that CAD is among the oldest and most fragile systems in the industry. We can keep patching it, or we can design so that critical information always reaches responders in the field, even when CAD is down. The strain is human as well. Burnout, mental health, and staffing shortages persist, yet only a fraction of centers use technology aimed at reducing the cognitive load on call takers. That is a meaningful opportunity to make this work more sustainable for the people who do it.

This is why I call this an inflection point. Most of the industry's problems trace back to decades of technology that patched gaps and chased the needs of communities through poorly integrated pieces. For the first time, we can choose differently, and those choices can change what this job looks like for the people doing it.

So read this report and sit with what the numbers say. Take in the hard parts. If what you live every day feels like your center's story alone, the data shows it is a national one. Then use these numbers to move the industry forward.



Michael Chime
CEO, Axon 911

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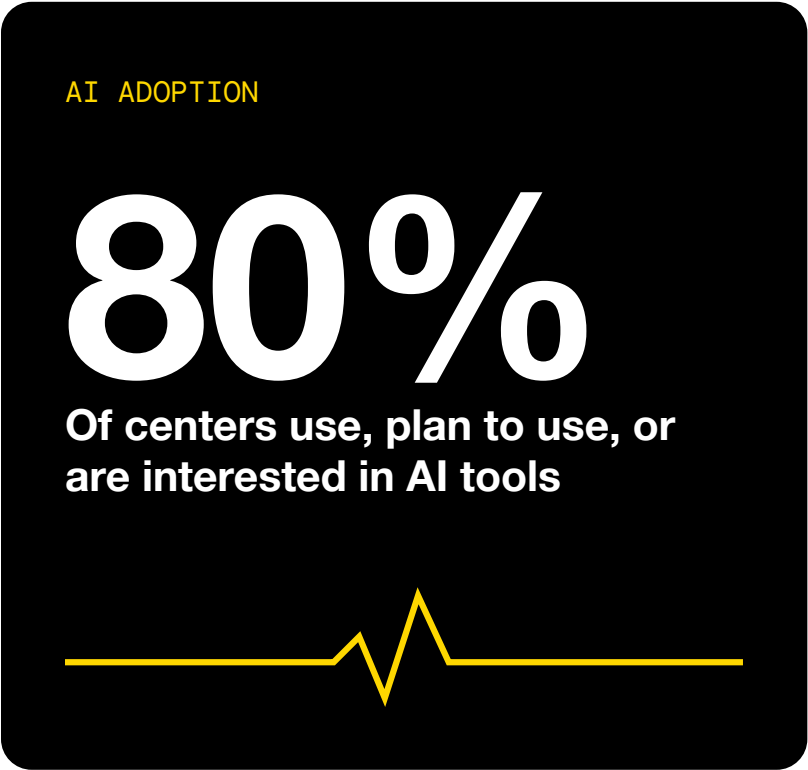
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■ KEY INSIGHT 01 / 04

AI: Adoption Continues, Trust Lags Behind

Four in five centers use, plan to use, or are interested in AI tools, and call-taking comfort is highest among those already using it.



COMFORT IS HIGHER AMONG CURRENT USERS

Centers already using AI are more than **2.5x as comfortable** (31% top-two box) compared to non-user centers (12%).



SURGING CATEGORY ADOPTION

Use or planned use of AI grew across nearly every tool category, led by language translation (19% to 32%, ~68% growth).



FRONT-LINE CALL-TAKING FRICTION

On a 1–5 scale, 55% of respondents rate their comfort level as low (1 or 2) when AI directly assists in live 911 call-taking.

■ KEY INSIGHT 01 / 04

AI & Technology: A Closer Look

AI is gaining ground while location and text-to-911 are now the baseline



TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION & CAPABILITIES

- **Caller Location Confirmed as Top Innovation:** Real-time caller location led both an open-ended and a forced-choice question (41%) (Q15, Q16).
- **Capabilities Mixed:** Accurate-location capability fell to 70% (from 77% in 2025), while school-safety integration (37%, up from 30%) and video capture (31%, up from 28%) grew (Q21).
- **AI Translation Growing, Still Niche:** AI voice translation has grown 4x in three years (3% to 12%), though human interpreters remain the default (85%) (Q22).



VENDOR AND SYSTEM FRAGMENTATION

- **Most Centers Use Multiple Vendors:** Nearly eight in ten (78%) rely on two or more technology vendors, and 23% rely on more than five (Q35).
- **Multi-Vendor Friction:** Among centers with more than one vendor, cross-platform training is the top challenge (51% rated it a 4 or 5), followed by data flow issues (46%) and integration costs (44%) (Q36).
- **Compatibility a Growing Concern:** Four in ten (41%) point to the difficulty of keeping every system updated and compatible with the others.



AI TOOLS, AUTOMATION & FUTURE TECHNOLOGY

- **Adoption Accelerating:** Uncommitted centers dropped 18 points as interest converted into active plans for translation (+13 pts) and QA analytics (+11 pts) (Q26).
- **Measurable Outcomes Emerging:** Among centers using AI, language barrier reduction (40%) and reduced call processing time (36%) are the most cited gains, alongside fewer abandoned calls (21%), shorter training cycles (18%), and lower overtime hours (11%).
- **Comfort Still Low:** 35% remain completely uncomfortable with AI assisting call-taking (Q28).
- **Budget & Trust the Barriers:** 44% cite budget constraints, and 36% doubt AI's accuracy for life-safety decisions (Q29).

■ KEY INSIGHT 02 / 04

Staffing: Progress Has Stalled

Four in five centers are understaffed or underfunded, and this year's vacancy progress stalled sharply compared to last year, with training pipeline friction adding further strain.

TOTAL DEFICIT

80%

Understaffed or underfunded.
Only 19% report being fully
staffed with adequate authorized
headcount



PERSISTENT BASELINE STRAIN

42% struggle to keep authorized positions filled, 17% have too little authorized headcount, and 21% have both. Burnout is the top-rated operational issue (60%), as it was in 2025.



VACANCY PROGRESS STALLS

More centers still report vacancy gains than losses, but the margin has narrowed sharply: 34% report fewer open positions than a year ago, down from 54% in 2025, while 46% report no change.



TRAINING PIPELINE SQUEEZE

Trainee-success initiatives dropped sharply from 69% in 2025 to 35%, while centers without any formal onboarding program more than doubled to 11%.

■ KEY INSIGHT 02 / 04

Staffing & Workforce Planning: A Closer Look

Four in five centers are understaffed, and turnover and vacancies, not call volume, drive overtime



TECHNOLOGY'S IMPACT ON STAFFING & WORKLOAD

- **Confidence in Tech Remains High:** 73% believe technology can help ease staffing shortages, down slightly from 76% in 2025 (Q55).
- **Trust Is the Barrier:** Among the 27% who doubt technology can help, 81% cite distrust that it can replace human judgment and empathy (Q56).
- **Cognitive-Load Tools Rare:** Only 25% of centers implemented technology aimed at reducing call-taker cognitive load in the past 12 months (Q57).



OVERTIME & WORK ARRANGEMENTS

- **Staffing Gaps, Not Call Volume, Drive Overtime:** Among centers where overtime has increased, turnover and onboarding demands (66%) and unfilled vacancies (60%) far outweigh call volume (26%) as drivers (Q45).
- **Overtime Appears to Ease:** Weekly-or-more voluntary overtime eased from 74% in 2025 to 68% in 2026 on the one directly comparable measure (Q42).
- **Remote Still Rare:** 87% of centers don't allow remote call-taking in any form (Q51), and most aren't pursuing it (Q53).



STAFFING GAPS AND LEADERSHIP PLANNING

- **Shortages Widespread:** Four in five centers (80%) are understaffed or underfunded (Q37).
- **Vacancy Progress Stalled:** Just 34% report fewer open positions than a year ago, down sharply from 54% in 2025 (Q39).
- **Hard to Fill:** Limited local candidate pools (48%), burnout and turnover (43%), and non-competitive pay (41%) top the reasons centers struggle to fill positions (Q40).
- **Burnout Tops the List:** Staff burnout is the top-rated operational issue (60% rated it a 4 or 5), as it was in 2025 (Q5).
- **Succession Planning Is the Exception:** Only 33% of centers have a formal leadership succession plan (Q49).

Outages: Mixed Signals

Four in five centers had at least one outage again this year, but cyber-related outages edged up to 11%, and CAD-related outages are back up to the height of two years ago.

OVERALL OUTAGES

80%

Reported at least one outage in 2026, level with 2025 (80%) and up slightly from 78% in 2024



OVERALL OUTAGES HOLD STEADY

80% of centers reported at least one outage this year, holding level with 2025 (80%) and up slightly from 78% in 2024.



TARGETED CYBER THREAT ESCALATION

Telephony Denial of Service (TDoS) and other targeted cyberattacks kept climbing, standing out as the single most concerning outage vector.



CAD OUTAGES UNDO TWO YEARS OF PROGRESS

CAD outages dipped to 52% in 2025, but climbed back to 56% this year, right where they were in 2024.

■ KEY INSIGHT 03 / 04

Outages, Budgets & Cloud Readiness: A Closer Look

Four in five centers had an outage, yet few have a cloud backup or a tested TDoS response



TECHNOLOGY BUDGET & FUTURE INVESTMENT

- **No Typical Budget:** Budgets vary enormously, from under \$50K to over \$5M, with no dominant range (Q85).
- **Growth Favored Over Cuts:** Among centers expecting a change, growth is far more likely than cuts (34% vs. 14%) (Q86).
- **AI & NG911 Lead Investment:** AI/automation and NG911/ESInet are each among the top three planned investments for 38% of centers, followed by cloud migration (25%) and cybersecurity/resilience (22%) (Q87).



CLOUD READINESS & BACKUP

- **Cloud Adoption Is Fragmented:** 38.5% are transitioning or planning a move and 9.5% are fully cloud-native, while 21% are on-premises with no plans and 31% don't know their center's status (Q31).
- **Cloud Backup Is Uncommon:** Only 22% have a cloud-based backup for use during a primary outage; 42% don't and 37% aren't sure (Q34).



OUTAGES AND CYBERSECURITY

- **Outages Persist:** 80% of centers had at least one outage in 2026, level with 2025 and up from 78% in 2024 (Q8).
- **Phone and CAD Outages Lead:** Each was reported by 56% of centers, with CAD back at its 2024 level after dipping to 52% in 2025 (Q8).
- **Power Outages Steady:** 28% of centers, unchanged from 2025 (Q8).
- **Cyber Outages Edge Up:** TDoS/cyber-related outages rose to 11%, from 9% in 2025 (Q8).
- **Cyber Preparedness Is Thin:** Only 11% are very prepared for a sustained cyberattack or TDoS attack, and 28% are unsure (Q32).
- **Cyber Testing Still Rare:** Only 14% have run a TDoS simulation in the past year, and 41% don't know whether they have (Q33).

KEY INSIGHT 04 / 04

Wellness: Symptoms Improve While Support Shrinks

Two in three feel stressed about coming to work, and 58% say the job has affected their relationships or home life. Stress symptoms have eased since 2024, but employer support has contracted and fewer people use it.

DAILY STRESS LEVEL

66%

Report feeling stressed daily or sometimes, comparable to 2025 findings





RESILIENT WORK SATISFACTION

Work enjoyment held steady (86% rate it 6+ out of 10), indicating that frontline staff remain deeply dedicated despite experiencing chronic operational strain.



SERVICE USAGE SHIFT

The share using employer-provided mental health services fell from 53% in 2025 to 29% in 2026. A new "employer doesn't provide" option (8%) changed the answer set, but a real decline is likely.



SYMPTOMS EASING, FATIGUE STILL LEADS

Every stress symptom tracked declined or held flat since 2024. Fatigue remains the most common complaint by far (62%), but even it eased from 67%, and 18% now report none of these symptoms at all, up from 15%.

■ KEY INSIGHT 04 / 04

Wellness & Training: A Closer Look

Two in three feel stressed, employer support is contracting, and fewer centers have formal training programs



STRESS & WELLNESS

- **Stress Remains Common:** Roughly two-thirds of telecommunicators report daily or periodic work stress (Q61).
- **Agency Management Is the Top Stressor:** 51% named agency management among the most stressful parts of their job, ahead of staff shortages (44%) and co-workers or colleagues (36%) (Q62).
- **The Job Spills Into Home Life:** 58% say working in an ECC has negatively affected their personal relationships or home life (Q60).
- **Support Services Contracting:** Access to nearly all employer-sponsored stress management services declined slightly in 2026 (Q70).
- **Technology Hasn't Helped Yet:** 73% say their center hasn't deployed any technology in the past 12 months that has meaningfully reduced stress or workload, while 19% say it has (Q75).
- **New Initiatives Slowing:** The share of centers introducing new mental health programs fell from 40% in 2025 to 36% in 2026 (Q71).



TRAINING, ONBOARDING & NEW HIRE READINESS

- **Training Availability Declining:** Formal onboarding programs dropped 8 points since 2024 as centers without any program more than doubled (Q76).
- **Training Takes Months:** More than half (54%) say it takes four to nine months to train new employees, consistent with last year's comparable band, and 23% say one to three months (Q79).
- **Failure Rates Improving:** 50%+ failure rates fell from 22% in 2025 to 13% in 2026 (Q80).
- **Early Resignation Now the Top Reason:** The top reason trainees don't finish jumped from 37% to 58% year over year (Q81).

SECTION 01

Respondent Demographics



Job title representation has remained consistent

Dispatchers (31%) and shift supervisors (17%) account for nearly half of the sample. More than one in ten indicated director (12%) or manager (11%).

Q2. Which of the following most closely matches your job title?

Job Title / Role	2024	2025	2026
Dispatcher	31%	27%	31%
Shift Supervisor	17%	17%	17%
Director	11%	12%	12%
Manager	12%	14%	11%
Call Taker	4%	3%	5%
Deputy Director	3%	4%	4%
Training Manager	5%	4%	4%
Coordinator	2%	4%	3%
Trainee	2%	1%	1%
Other	13%	16%	12%

California Leads a Broadening Geographic Footprint

California remains the top state at 13% of 2026 respondents, up from 11% in 2025. Texas, New York, Florida, Ohio, and Illinois round out this year's top six, all among the states with the largest U.S. 911 workforces.

Q3. In what state or U.S. territory do you currently work?

Top Ten States

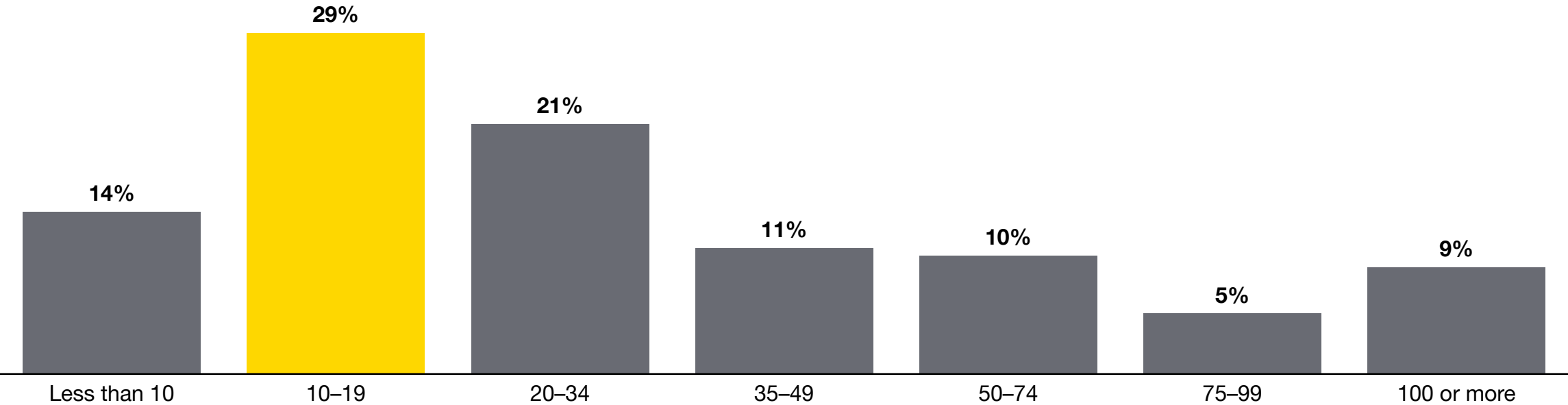
State	2025	2026	Share of U.S. ECCs ¹
California	11%	13%	8%
New York	1%	6%	3%
Texas	4%	6%	10%
Virginia	4%	5%	2%
Ohio	3%	4%	5%
Pennsylvania	1%	4%	1%
Florida	6%	4%	4%
Washington	4%	3%	2%
Illinois	5%	3%	4%
Indiana	3%	3%	2%

¹ National ECC counts: FCC Seventeenth Annual Report to Congress on 911/E911 Fees (CY2024 data, published Feb. 2026), Table 1.

Most centers run lean, with less than 35 staff members

Center size varies widely; the 10–19 (29%) and 20–34 (21%) employee bands together make up half of all respondents.

Q4. How many people work in your Emergency Communications Center?



CHANGED SINCE 2025 2025 used 5 size bands; 2026 uses 7 finer bands. Combined 50+ share: 24% (2025) vs 25% (2026), essentially unchanged.

SECTION 02

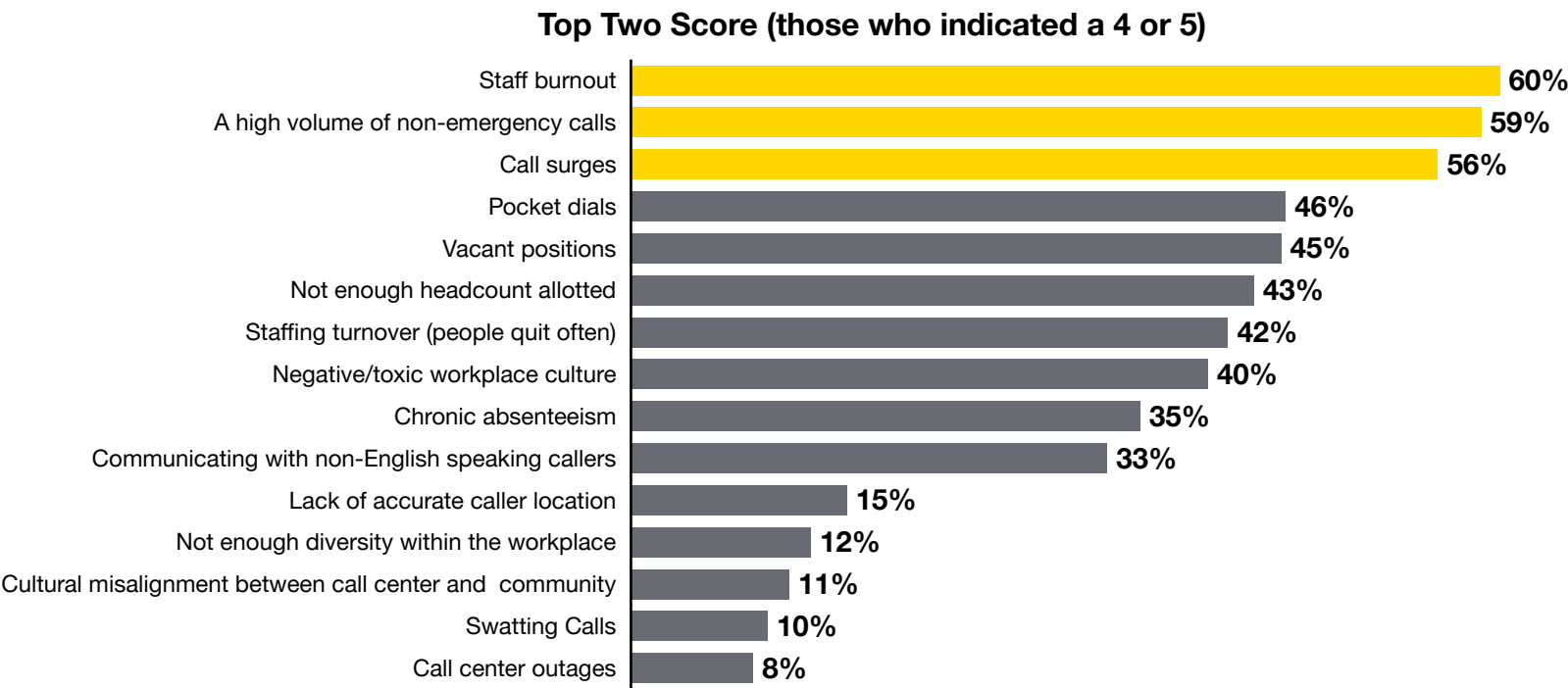
Operational Challenges & Call Volume



Burnout, non-emergency calls, and call surges top the list of challenges

Roughly 6 in 10 centers rate staff burnout (60%), high volumes of non-emergency calls (59%), and call surges (56%) as prevalent issues, well ahead of every other issue.

Q5. How would you rate the prevalence of each of these issues within your organization? (Please use a 5-point scale where 1 = Not at all Prevalent and 5 = Very Prevalent)



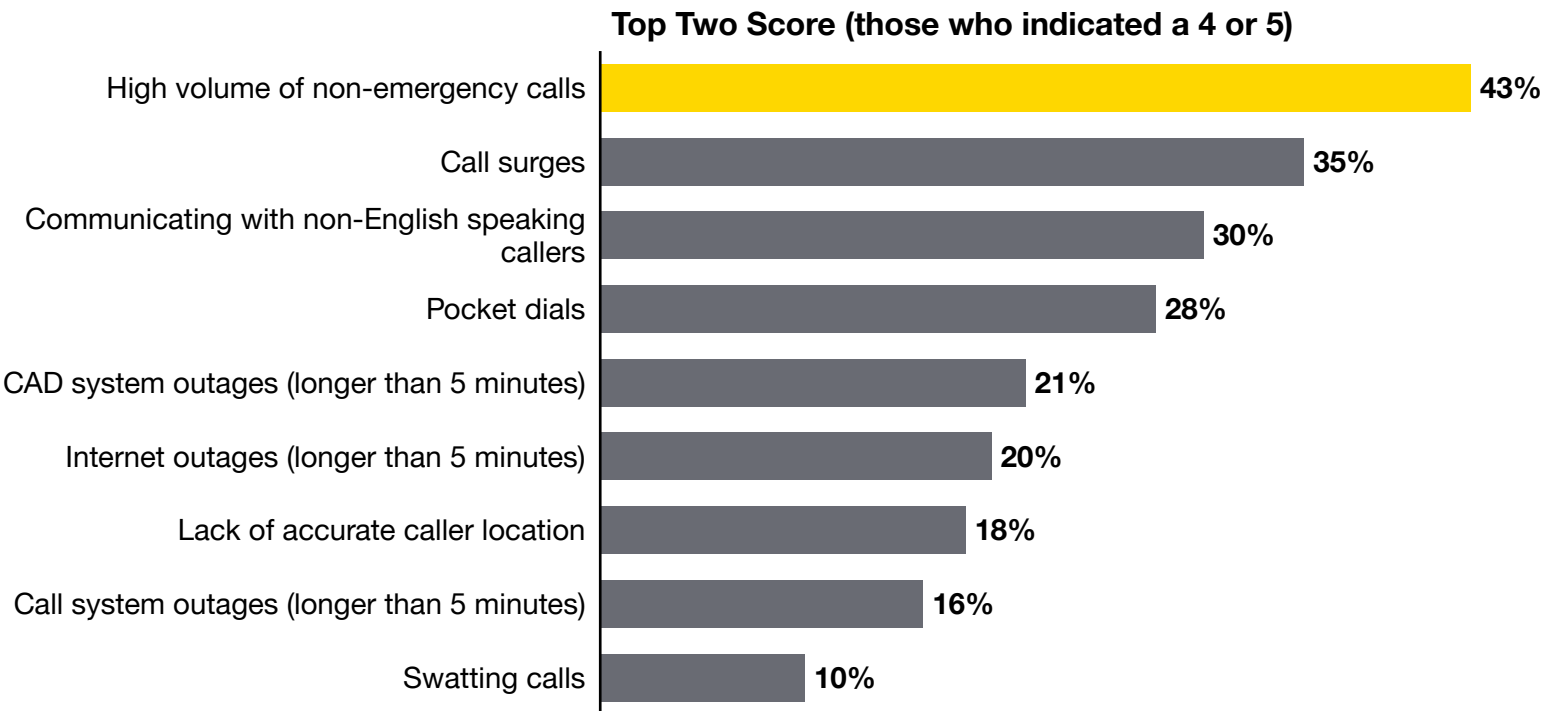
CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 asked respondents to rank issues 1-15; 2026 rates each on a 1-5 prevalence scale, so scores aren't directly comparable, but staff burnout was the top-ranked issue in both years.

Non-emergency call volume is the top technology strain

With a top two rating of 43%, non-emergency call volume was the most significant challenge, followed closely by call surges (35%) and language barriers (30%).

Q6. How significant are the following technology and telephony challenges for your center? (please use a 5-point scale where 1 = Not at all challenging and 5 = Very challenging)



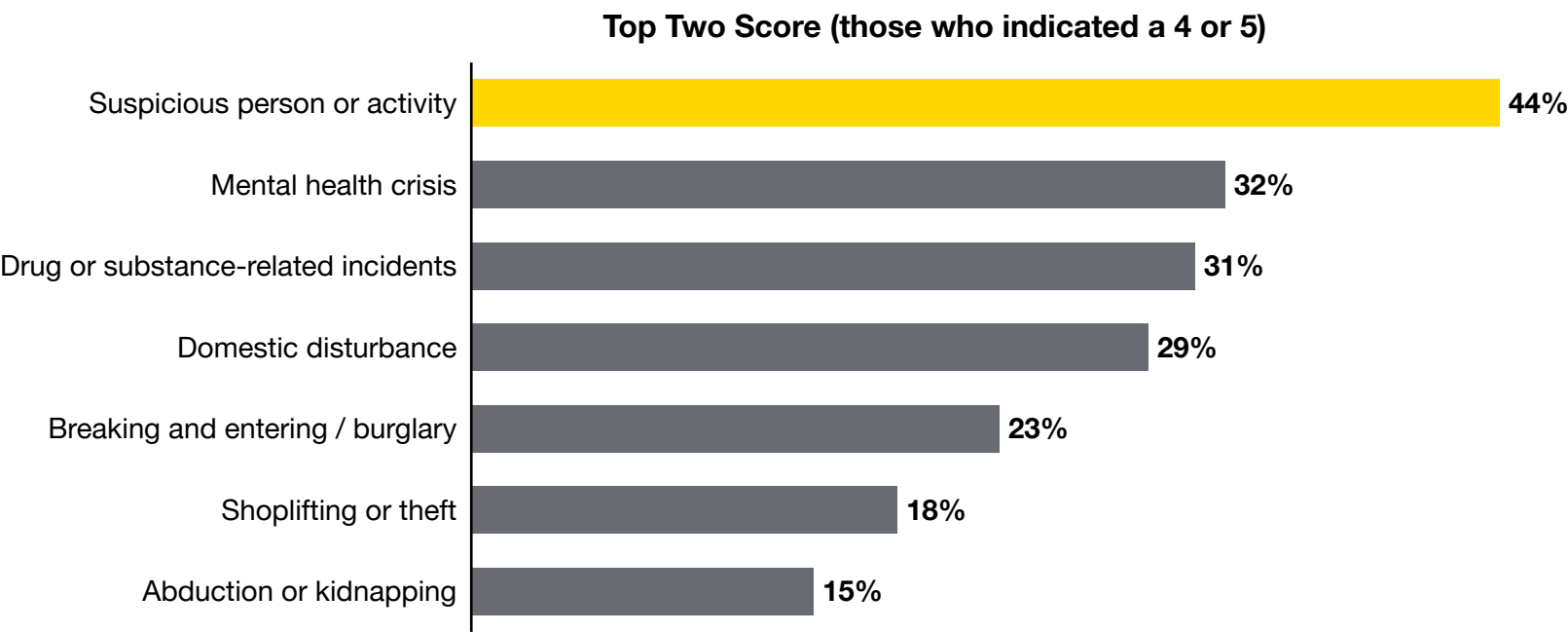
CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 asked respondents to rank technology/telephony challenges; 2026 rates each 1-5. High call volume and non-English communication remain among the top concerns in both years.

Suspicious person calls are misreported most often

Nearly half of respondents (44%) point to suspicious person or activity incidents as being most frequently misreported. Another three in ten indicated mental health crises (32%) and drug or substance-related incidents (31%).

Q7. In your experience, how frequently are the following incident types misreported by callers? (please use a 5-point scale where 1 = Rarely or Never misreported, and 5 = Very frequently misreported)



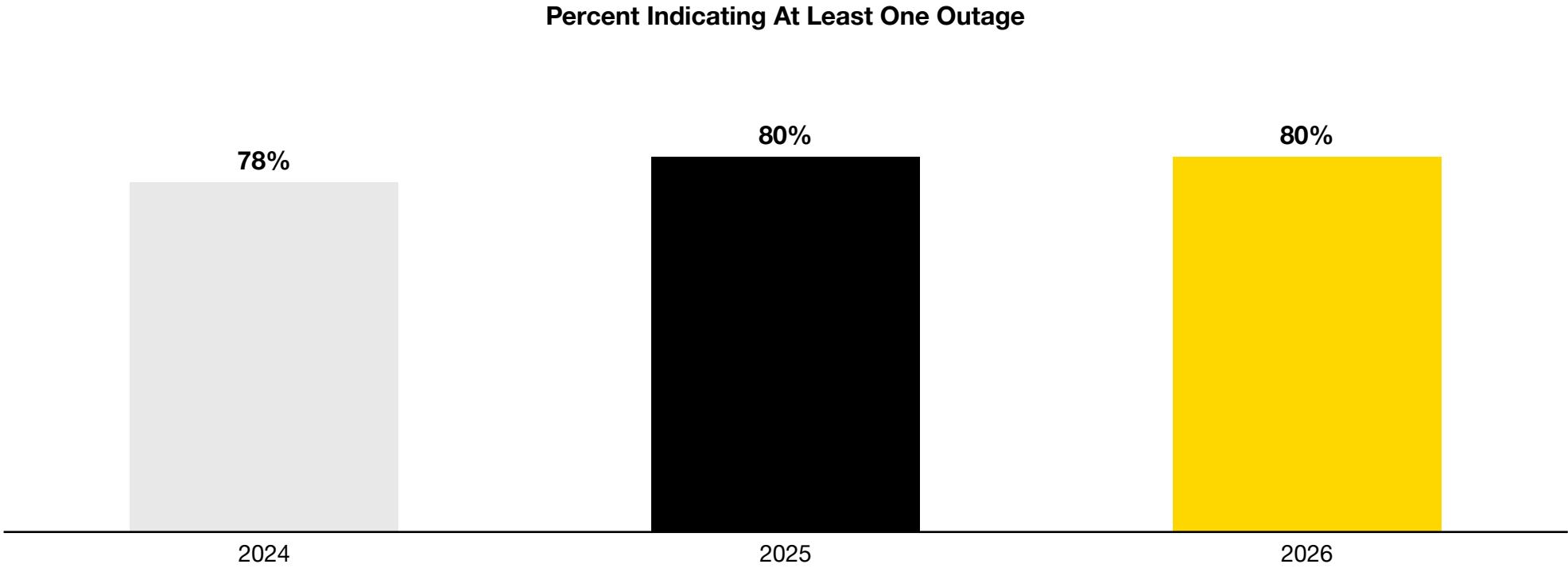
CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 asked respondents to rank the incidents from most frequently misreported to least; 2026 rates each 1-5. Suspicious person or activity and mental health crisis were the top misreported incidents in both years.

Outages continue to remain common

Eight in ten (80%) reported at least one outage in 2026, level with 2025 and up from 78% in 2024.

Q8. Has your ECC experienced any of the following outages within the last 12 months? (select all that apply)

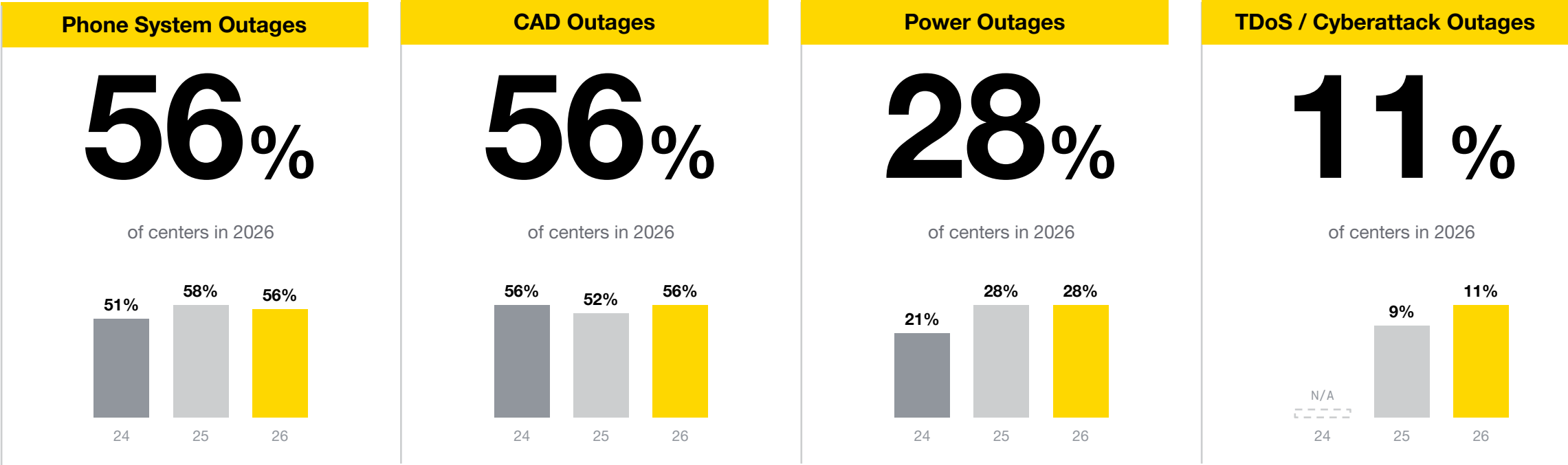


Phone and CAD system outages are the most common type

Phone system and CAD outages were each reported by 56% of centers, consistent with prior years. Power outages held at 28%, and cyber-related outages, added as an answer option in 2025, edged up to 11%

Q8. Has your ECC experienced any of the following outages within the last 12 months? (select all that apply)

2024 2025 2026

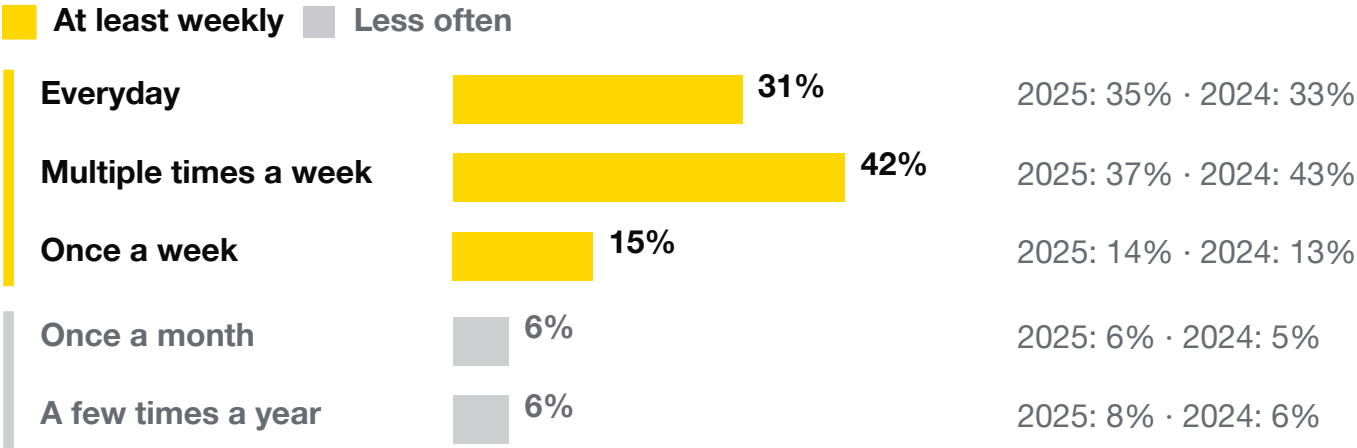
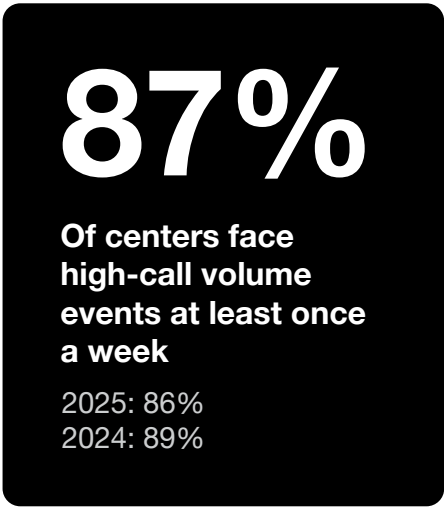


NEW ANSWER OPTION IN 2025 Telephony Denial of Service (TDoS) or other cyber attack causing outage was added to the survey in 2025.

Nearly nine in ten centers face high-call volume at least weekly

Three in ten (31%) face high-call volume every day. Another four in ten (42%) indicated multiple times a week and 15% indicated once a week.

Q9. How frequently does your center experience high-call volume events (e.g., shootings, structure fire, alleged crime in process, multi-car accidents, etc.)?



CHANGED SINCE 2025

Everyday frequency dropped by 4 percentage points in 2026, while multiple times a week frequency increased by 5 percentage points, returning close to 2024 levels.

Nearly every center takes both 911 and non-emergency calls

Universal responsibilities mean telecommunicators must triage emergency calls alongside administrative traffic.

Q10. Does your center take both 911 and non-emergency calls?

98%

Handle Dual Call Volumes in 2026

Yes (Takes both call types) 99% in 2025 99% in 2024	98%
No (Specialized handling) 1% in 2025 1% in 2024	2%

3-YEAR TREND Dual call handling remains practically universal, shifting slightly from 99% in previous years to 98% in 2026.

Non-emergency calls make up the bulk of call volume

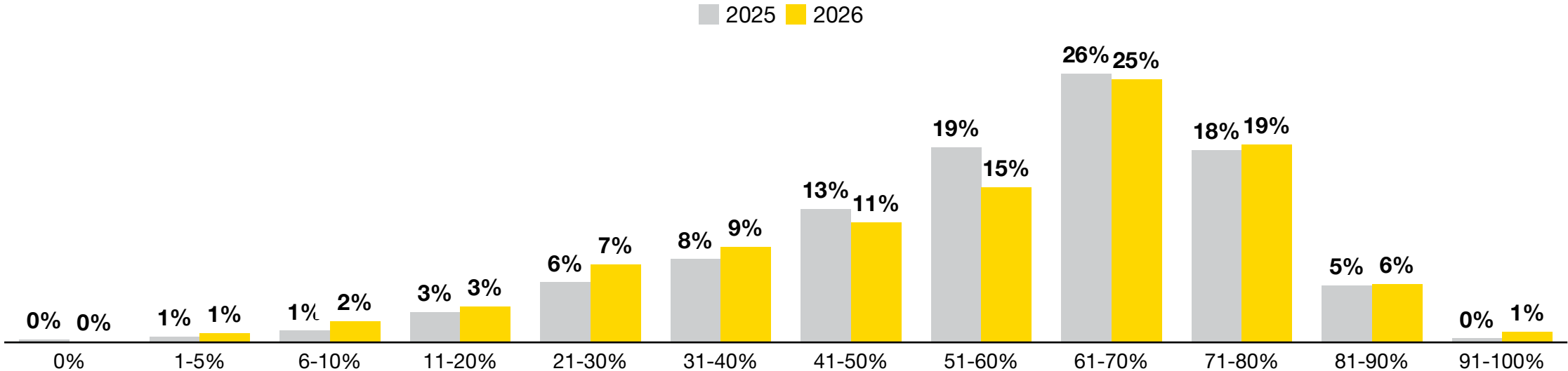
The largest share of centers (25%) report that 61–70% of their total volume is non-emergency.

66%

of centers say more than half their calls are non-emergency

2025: 68%

Q11. What percentage of your call volume is non-emergency calls?



KEY TAKEAWAY

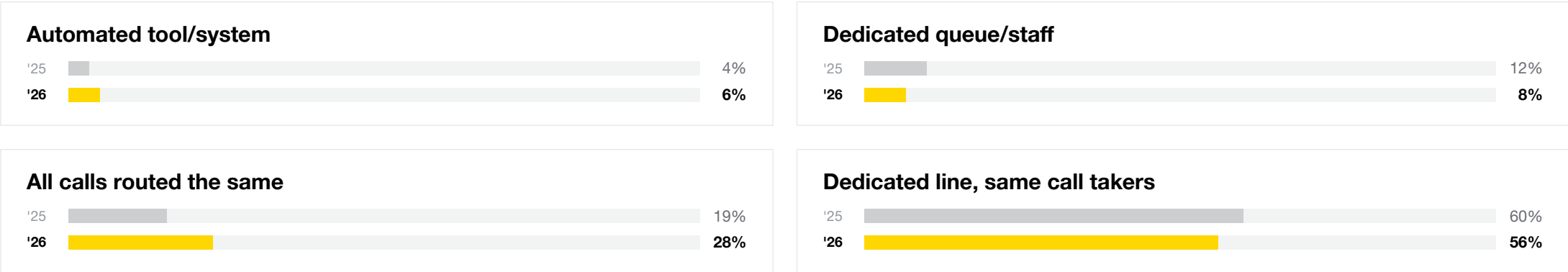
Two-thirds of all centers handle majority non-emergency traffic, consuming critical telecommunicator bandwidth.

Centers are dropping the separate line for non-emergency calls

The share of centers routing every call the same way, with no dedicated non-emergency line, jumped 9 points in a year (19% to 28%). Combined with centers that already send non-emergency calls to the same call takers on a dedicated line (56%), 84% of centers now put non-emergency traffic in front of the same staff who handle emergencies, up from 79% in 2025. As fewer centers keep a separate lane, non-emergency calls increasingly compete with true 911 emergencies for the same call takers, raising the stakes for staffing and call-routing technology alike.

Q12. How does your center handle non-emergency calls?

2025 2026

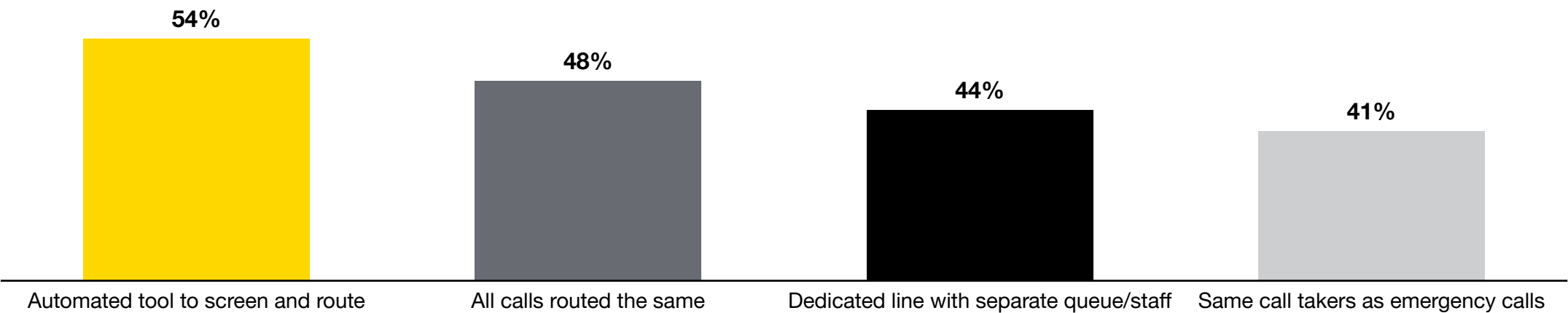


Satisfaction is highest when automated tools screen and route non-emergency calls

More than half (54%) of centers using an automated tool to screen and route non-emergency calls rate their approach a 4 or 5, the highest of any approach and significantly above the 41% indicated by those using the same call takers for both.

Q13. How satisfied are you with your center's current approach to handling non-emergency calls? (please use a 5-pt scale where 1 = Not at all satisfied and 5 = Very satisfied)

Top Two Satisfaction by How Center Handles Non-Emergency Calls



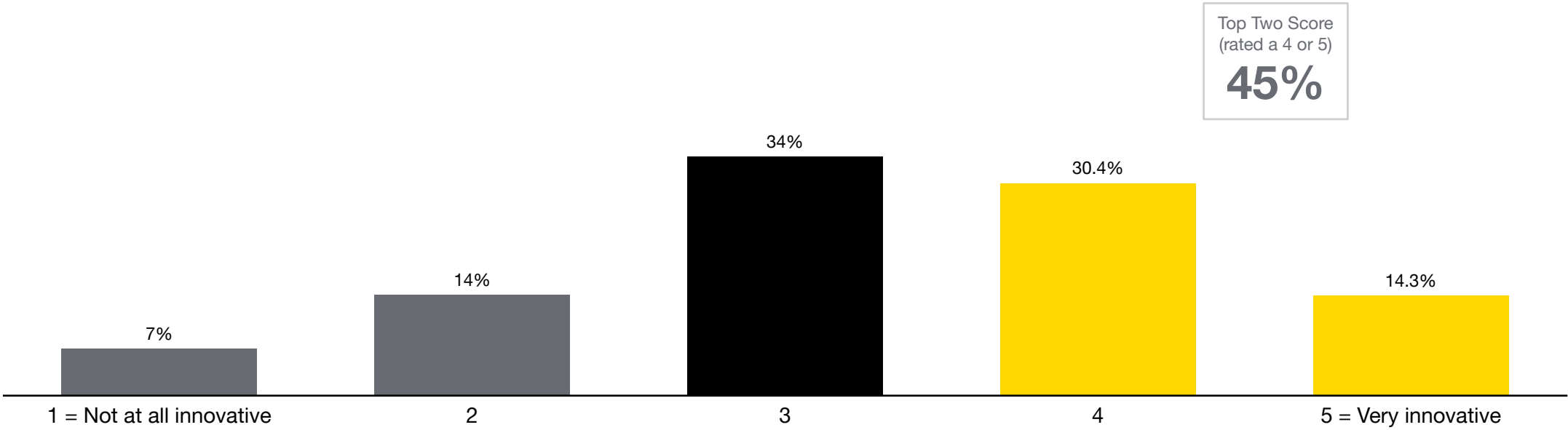
KEY TAKEAWAY

Automated screening and routing tools show the highest satisfaction of any approach (54%), a significant improvement over centers using the same call takers for emergency and non-emergency calls (41%), suggesting a real opportunity for technology to improve how non-emergency calls are handled.

Fewer than half rate their center highly innovative

Less than half (45%) give their center a 4 or 5 of 5 for technological innovation.

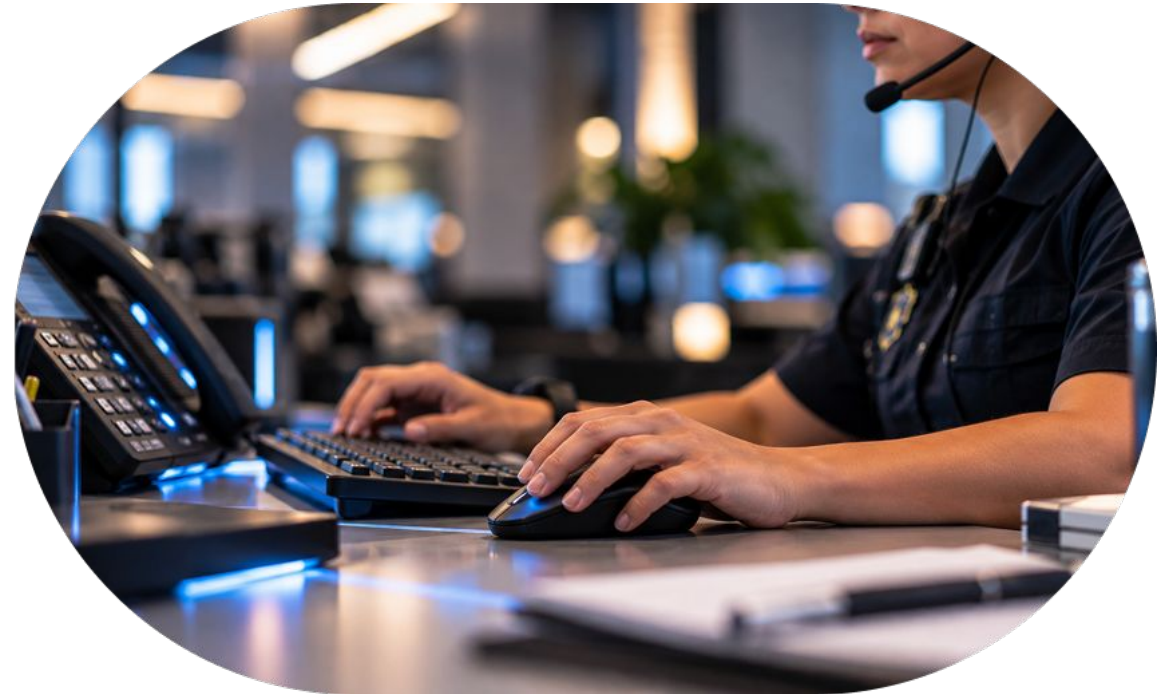
Q14. In your opinion, how technologically innovative is your center? (please use a 5-pt scale where 1 = Not at all innovative and 5 = Very innovative)



CHANGED SINCE 2025 2025 asked Yes/No (73% Yes); 2026 uses a 1-5 scale (45% rate 4-5). Not directly comparable.

SECTION 03

Technology, Innovation & Capabilities



What respondents say is driving 911 forward

Real-time location technology and AI-powered tools are the most frequently cited innovations, followed by advances in text-to-911, CAD integration, and cloud infrastructure.

Q15. In your experience, what do you believe has been the single biggest innovation in 911 emergency communications over the past three years?

Real-time caller location and third party data

Precise device location mapping and supplemental data integration drastically reduce search times and improve dispatch speed.

"Real-Time Location Technology – Enhanced mobile location accuracy for faster emergency response."

"Enhanced mobile location technology gives us exact spatial accuracy for much faster emergency response."

"Integration of third party data sources that allow us to pinpoint callers instantly when voice location data is imprecise."

Text-to-911 and real-time language translation

Expanded SMS capabilities and automated translation software bridge communication barriers with non-English speaking callers.

"Automated language translation software allows us to text and communicate with callers in different languages seamlessly."

"Text-to-911 services allow citizens to contact emergency services silently when speaking is unsafe or impossible."

"Real-time translation tools eliminate delays when non-English speakers reach our dispatch floor."

AI-assisted call handling and transcription

Live speech-to-text transcription and AI narrative generation help lower dispatcher cognitive load and boost comprehension.

"Live call transcription increases operational speed and comprehension, helping telecommunicators hear and read communication simultaneously."

"AI-assisted tools reduce dispatcher workload by helping with call prioritization, CAD notes, and quality assurance."

"AI transcription allows us to focus on caller interaction while the software captures accurate event summaries."

Caller-initiated live video and media feeds

Direct streaming video and photo sharing provide immediate visual situational awareness before field units arrive.

"The ability to view live video and photos directly from the reporting party phone gives invaluable visual context."

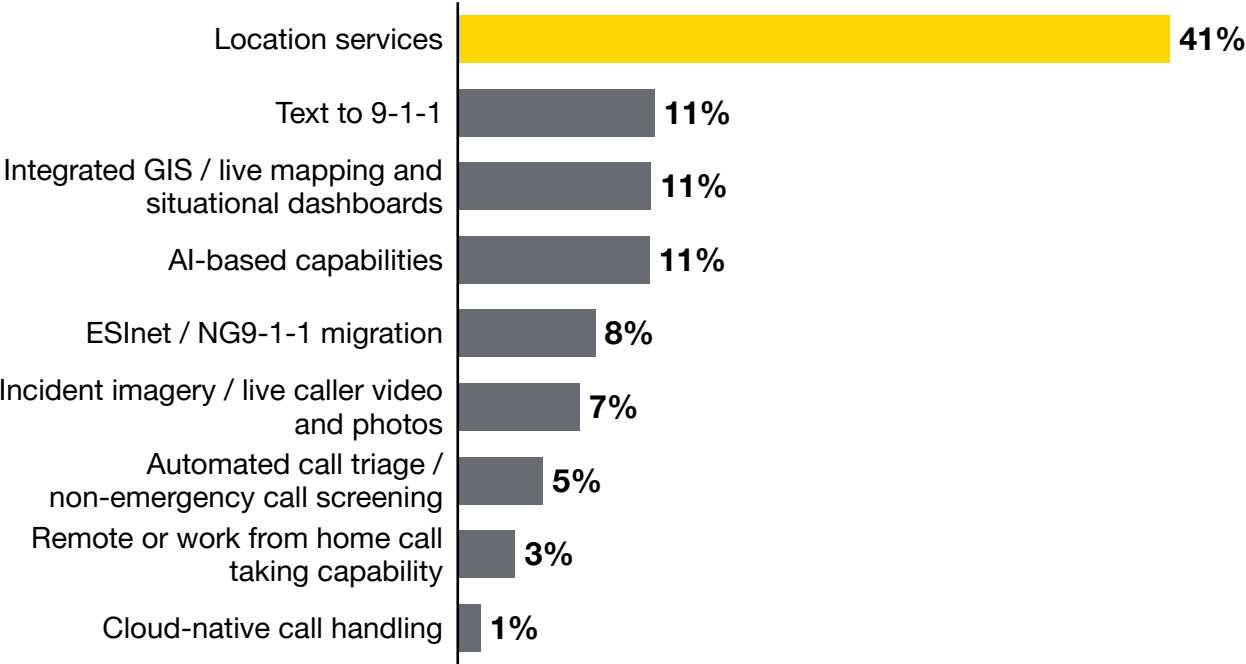
"Receiving pictures and video in real time helps dispatchers better prepare responding personnel for high-stakes scenes."

"Live caller video feeds provide immediate visual situational awareness that traditional voice calls cannot match."

Location services lead as the defining innovation

Four in ten (41%) selected location services as the single most significant recent innovation, far ahead of any other option.

Q16. Which one of the following do you consider the most significant innovation in 911 emergency communications over the past three years? (select only one)



WORTH NOTING

Already the Default, Not the Newest Thing

Location services' dominance here may reflect how established the capability is, rather than how novel it is. Elsewhere in this survey (Q5), only 15% of centers rated "lack of accurate caller location" a prevalent operational issue, near the bottom of the list, consistent with location services having become a baseline, largely solved capability.

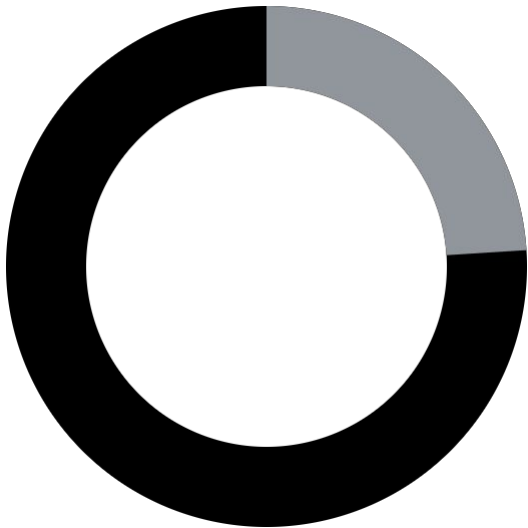
CONSISTENT WITH THE OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE

Location services also led the unprompted, open-ended version of this question (Q15), cited in roughly a third of write-in responses. When forced to pick just one, even more respondents (41%) converge on it. AI shows the opposite pattern: mentioned in about one in five open-ended responses, but selected as the single top innovation by just 11%, suggesting it's seen as broadly valuable but rarely anyone's single defining pick.

Incident Imagery adoption is holding steady

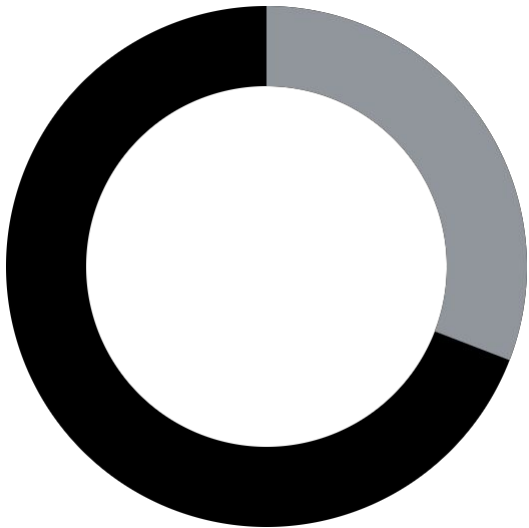
Three in ten (30%) of centers now use Incident Imagery in call handling, similar to those reported in 2025.

Q17. Is your center using Incident Imagery in your call handling?



2024

Yes 24% No 76%



2025

Yes 31% No 69%



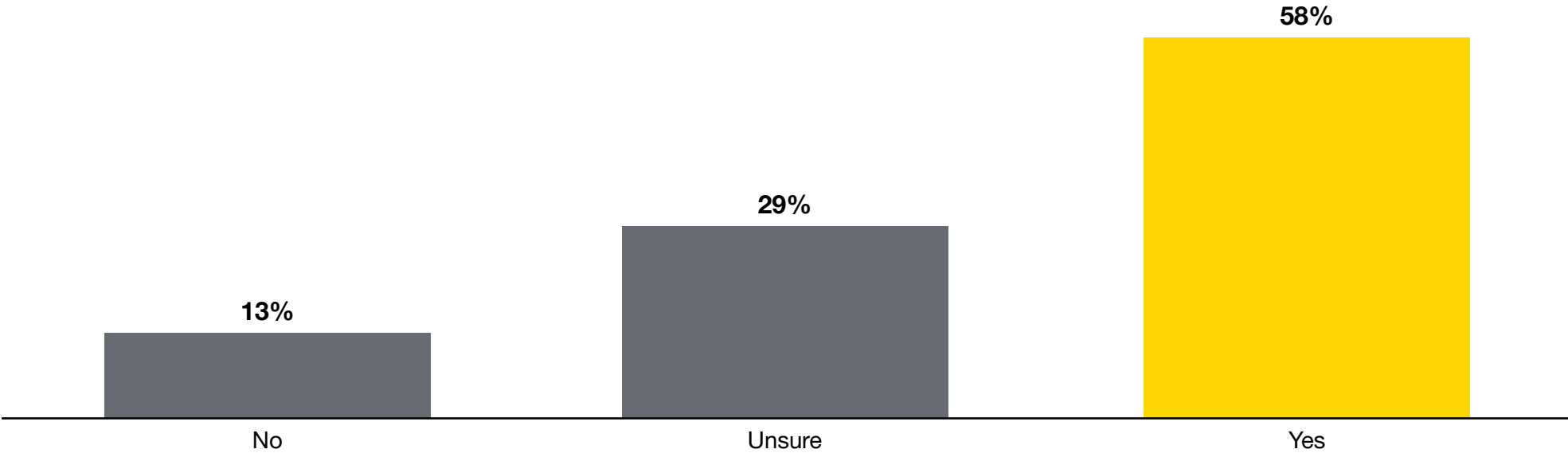
2026

Yes 30% No 70%

Most who use Incident Imagery say it helps

Among those who use incident imagery, six in ten (58%) believe it improves call outcomes, though nearly a third remain unsure.

Q18. If yes, do you believe Incident Imagery improves call outcomes?



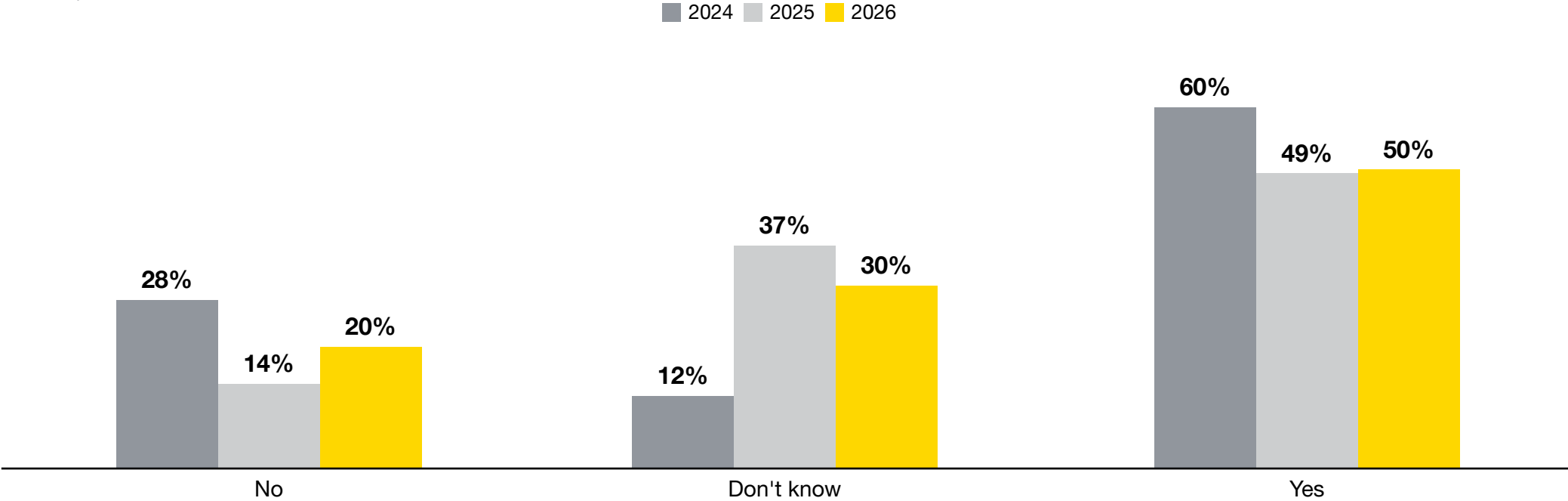
CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 asked several related questions about imagery's impact (76% said it provides faster/more accurate info). 2026 consolidates into one question.

Half of centers are connected to an ESInet

Consistent with the 2025 results, half of respondents (50%) report an active connection, while 30% still don't know their own status.

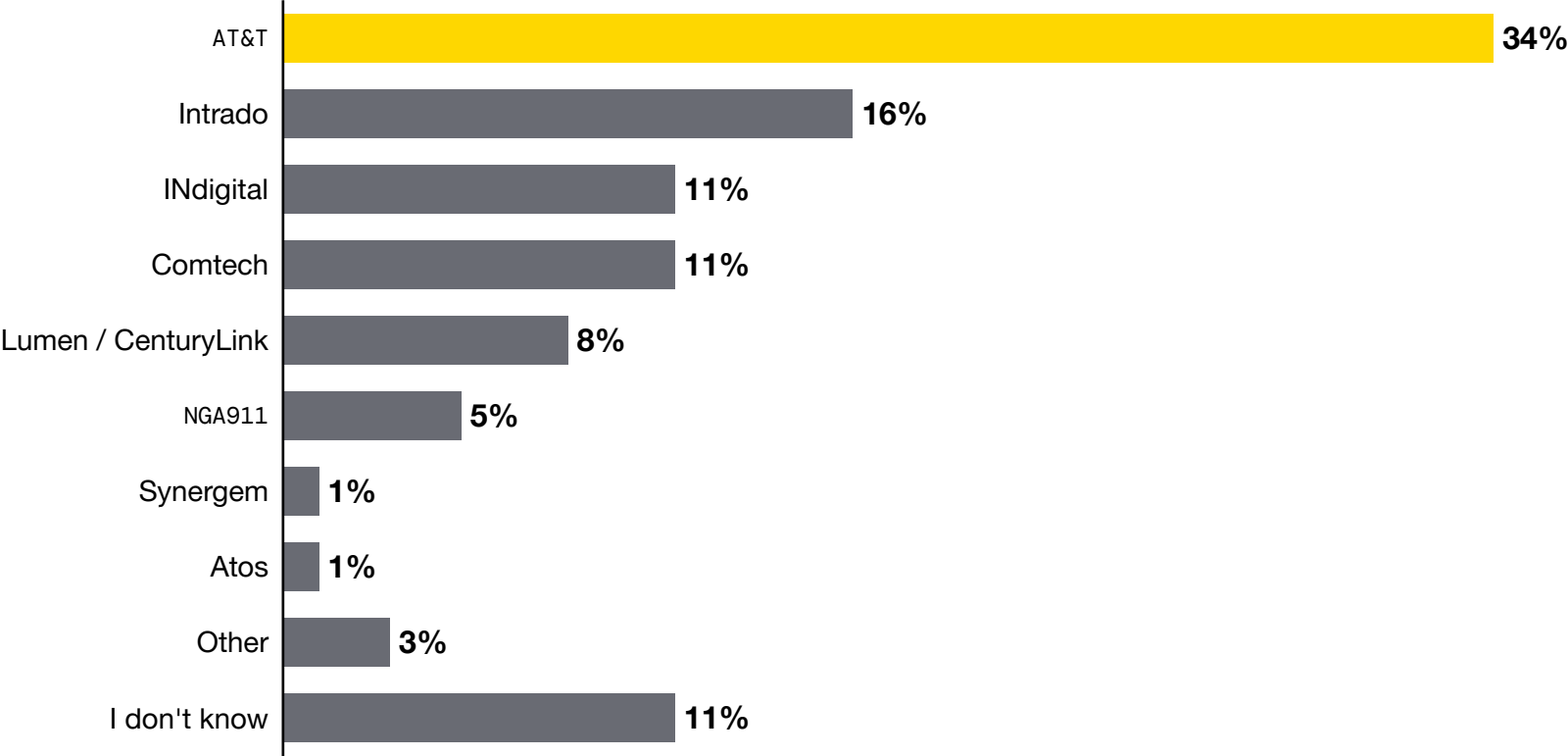
Q19. Is your ECC connected to an ESInet? (An ESInet is an Internet-Protocol-based network that is designed and managed specifically for 911 emergency response communications.)



AT&T is the leader in the ESInet market

One in three centers (34%) use AT&T as their ESInet provider. Intrado (16%) was the second most common. One in ten (11% each) use Indigital or Comtech.

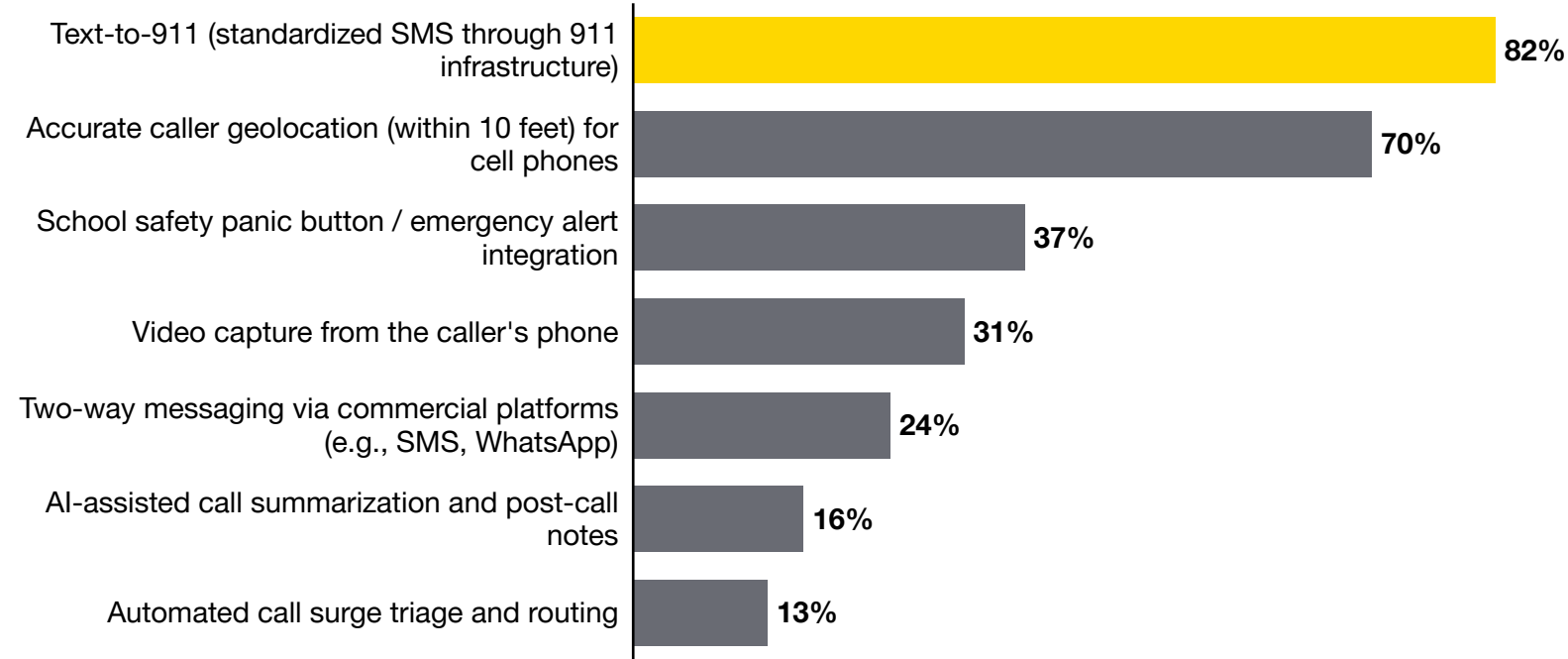
Q20. If yes, which ESInet provider does your center use?



Text-to-911 and geolocation are now the baseline

More than eight in ten (82%) centers offer text-to-911 and 70% offer accurate caller geolocation.

Q21. Does your center have any of the following capabilities: (select all that apply)



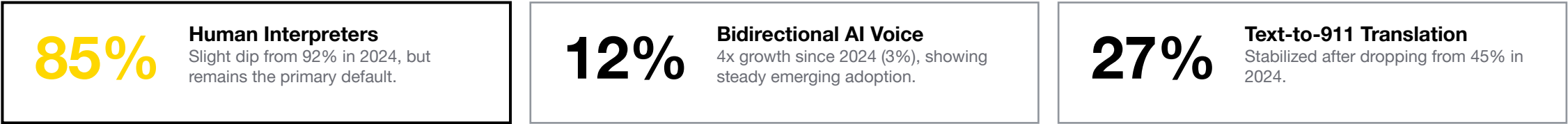
CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 asked a different, shorter capability list. Comparable items: Accurate location 77% (2025) vs 70% (2026); School safety 30% (2025) vs 37% (2026); Video capture 28% (2025) vs 31% (2026).

Human interpreters remain the default for language access

Most centers (85%) rely on a human interpreter service; AI-based translation is still a minority approach.

Q22. Which of the following language translation or interpretation services does your center currently use for non-English speaking callers? (select all that apply)



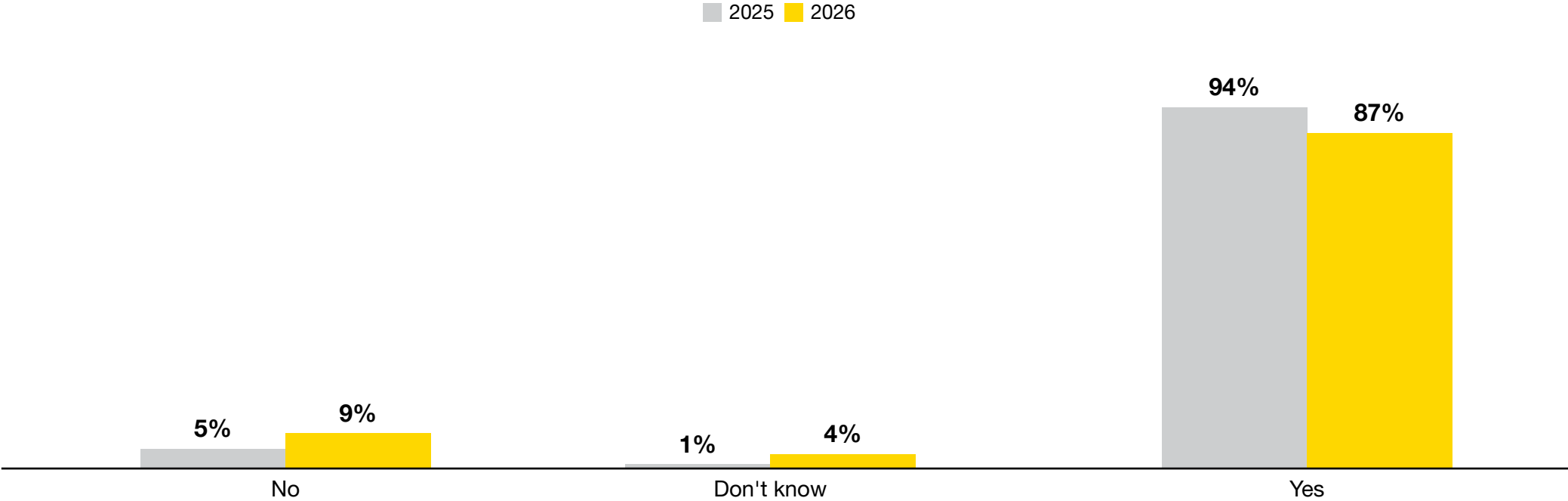
Service	2024	2025	2026
Human interpreter services (e.g., Language Line, CyraCom, or similar)	92%	90%	85%
Text-to-911 with translation support	45%	24%	27%
AI-based voice transcription with translation	9%	12%	13%
AI-based real-time voice translation (bidirectional - caller hears response in their language)	3%	5%	12%
None of the above	3%	5%	6%
Other	3%	2%	3%

3-YEAR TREND While human interpretation remains dominant, bidirectional AI voice translation has grown 4x (3% to 12%) over the past 3 years.

Supplemental location data usage remains the norm

Nine in ten (87%) centers use a supplemental location service like RapidSOS to sharpen caller location accuracy, a slight drop from 94% in 2025.

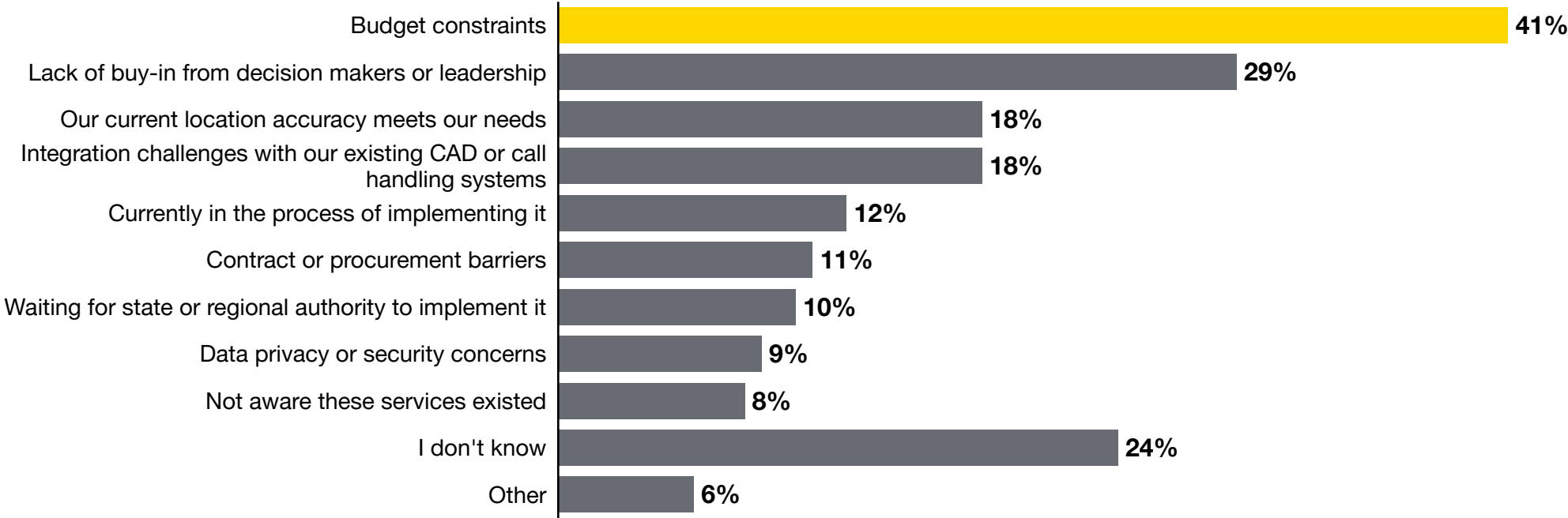
Q23. Do you currently use any supplemental location data services to enhance caller location accuracy? (e.g., RapidSOS, Prepared Live, Esri, or similar)



Budget is the biggest barrier to location data adoption

Among centers without supplemental location data, budget constraints (41%) is the most commonly cited reason. Three in ten (29%) indicated a lack of buy-in from decision makers or leadership.

Q24. Why doesn't your center currently use supplemental location data services? (select all that apply)



CHANGED SINCE 2025 2025 offered fewer reasons. 2026 significantly expands the option list; budget constraints remain the top-cited barrier in both years.

SECTION 04

AI Tools, Automation & Future Technology



What comes to mind when respondents think about AI

Most respondents point to efficiency gains and specific tools like transcription and QA already in use, but concerns about reliability, job security, and the loss of human judgment come up just as often.

Q25. What comes to mind first when you think about AI tools being used in an ECC?

Efficiency & workload relief

AI seen primarily as a way to lighten dispatcher workload and speed up call handling.

“Another tool to use to free up dispatcher and supervisor resources.”

“Can help triage calls and make call takers more efficient.”

“Increasing efficiency, acting as a fail stop to catch when we miss something like mention of a weapon, or even just a quick summary of the call and maybe we forgot to enter the caller’s name or color of a vehicle but we asked and it’s there in the transcript”

Specific tools: transcription, translation, QA, triage

Concrete AI applications already in use or anticipated, from call transcription to automated quality assurance.

“AI call routing and transcription.”

“AI tools in QA/QI and translation services.”

“Initial call-taker triage”

Accuracy & reliability concerns

Doubts about whether AI tools are accurate and dependable enough for high-stakes calls.

“AI can be inaccurate and unreliable.”

“Concerned and reserved; moving too fast with expectations vs actual, proven reliability.”

“Still skeptical of its reliability and accuracy.”

Job security & replacing dispatchers

Worry that AI could eventually replace dispatchers rather than simply assist them.

“As long as it is used to assist, not replace the worker.” “I think it could be beneficial but will never truly replace a dispatcher.”

“Support tool for call-takers and dispatchers rather than a replacement for them.” “We will probably be replaced.”

Losing the human element

Concern that AI cannot replicate the empathy and emotional read a human call-taker provides.

“Efficiency but loss of human element.” “AI failing the needs of callers due to having no emotions.” “Better assistance in doing our jobs, but it still needs a human touch.”

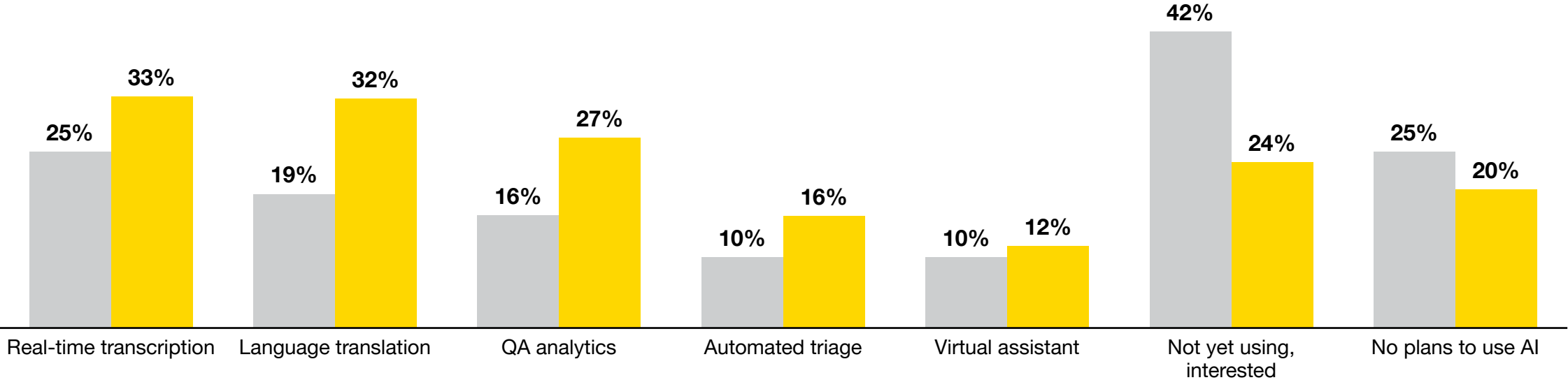
“We should never allow technology to become a substitute for accountability, critical thinking, or human judgment in emergency response. The true value of AI is not in making decisions for us. It’s in helping us process information more efficiently, identify opportunities for improvement, reduce administrative burden, and allow highly trained professionals to focus on the work that only humans can do. At the end of the day, compassion, empathy, experience, and judgment cannot be automated. The future of AI in 911 should be about supporting telecommunicators, not replacing them.”

AI adoption accelerates sharply in 2026

One-third of centers now use or plan to use language translation and real-time transcription, with translation posting the single largest year-over-year gain (+13 percentage points). Slightly less (27%) indicated QA analytics (+11 percentage points).

Q26. Which of these AI tools is your center currently or planning to use? (select all that apply)

2025 2026



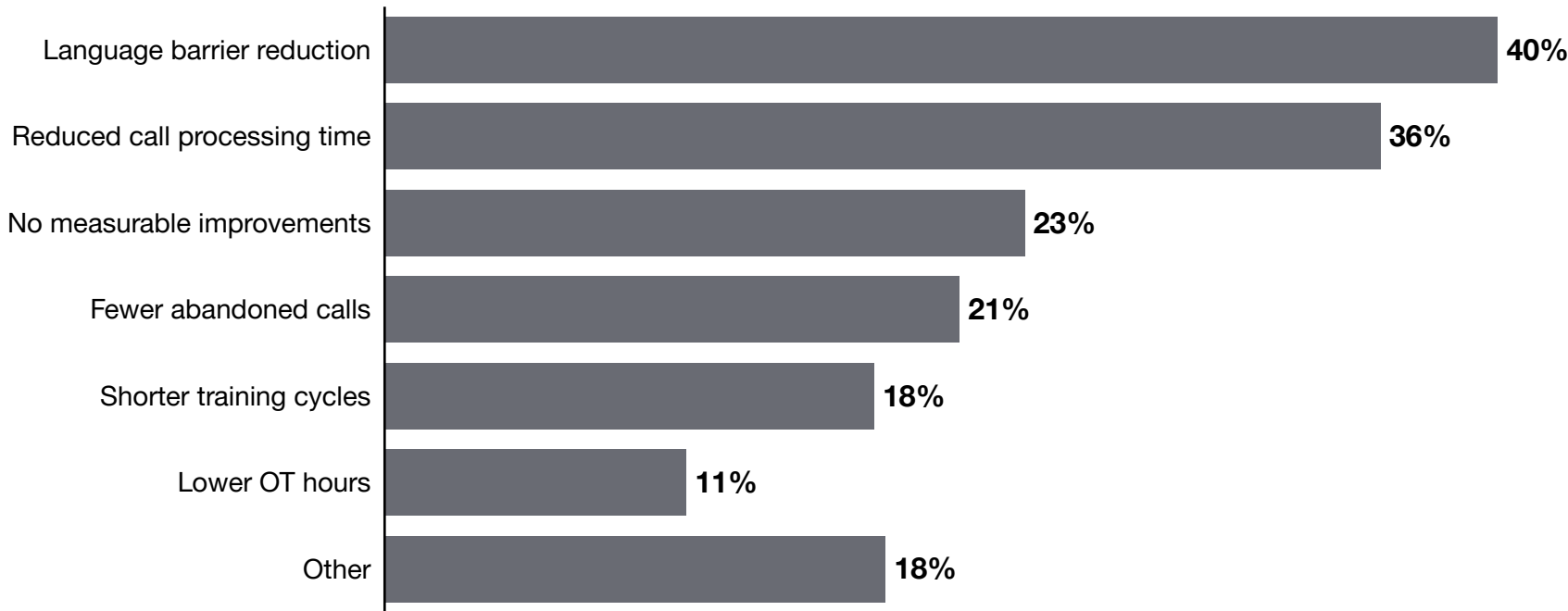
YEAR-OVER-YEAR MOMENTUM

Uncommitted centers ('Not yet using, interested') dropped 18 percentage points, converting directly into active plans for translation (+13 pts) and QA analytics (+11 pts).

Language barrier reduction is AI's clearest payoff so far

Among centers using AI, language barrier reduction (40%) was the most commonly cited measurable outcome. Slightly less (36%) indicated reduced call processing time. One in four (23%) did report no measurable improvements which could signal the AI deployment just launched and it is too early to tell.

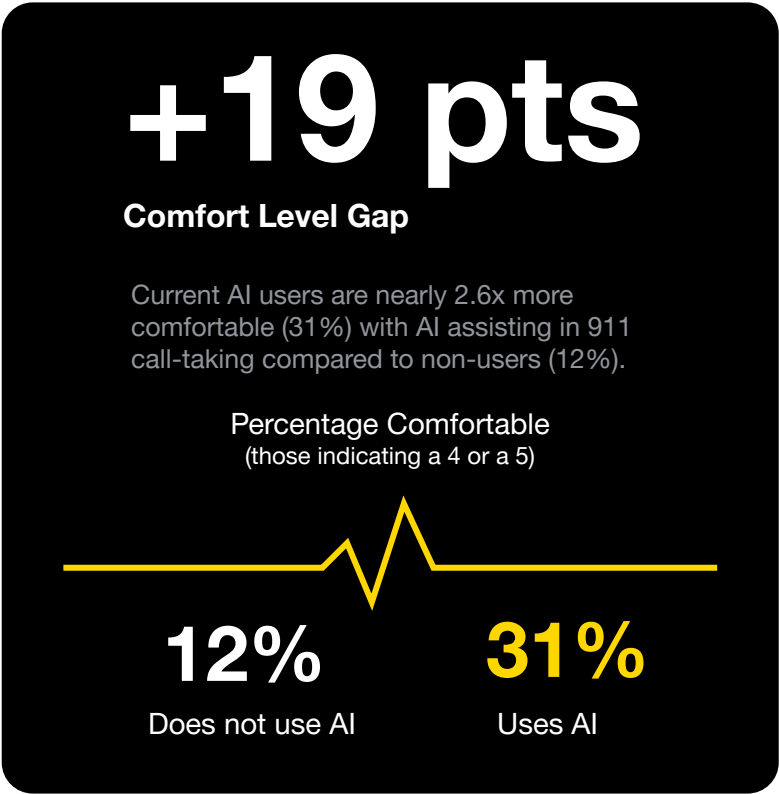
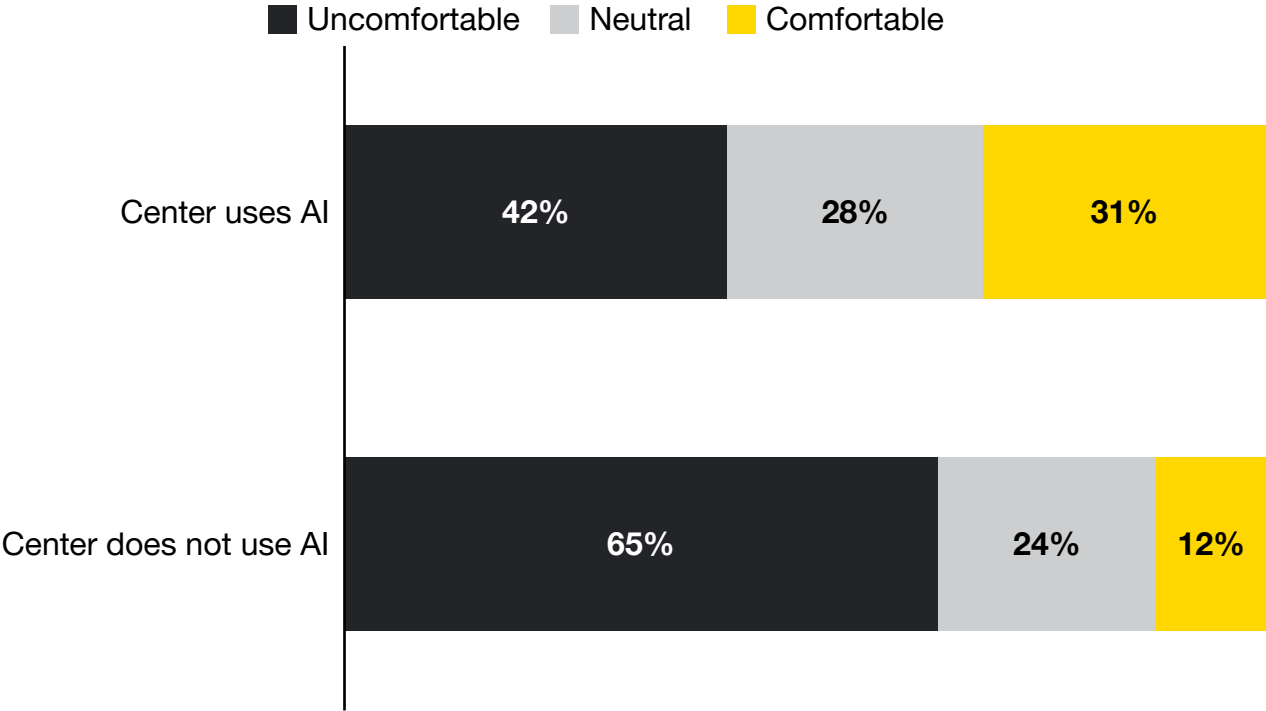
Q27. If your center has deployed AI tools, what measurable outcomes have you observed? (select all that apply)



Hands on experience dramatically bridges the AI comfort gap

Overall discomfort is still the majority view, but it is concentrated among centers not yet using AI. More than four in ten (44%) of non-users are uncomfortable, versus 21% of active users. Conversely, three in ten users (31%) are comfortable with AI assisting 911 call taking, compared to just 12% among centers not using AI.

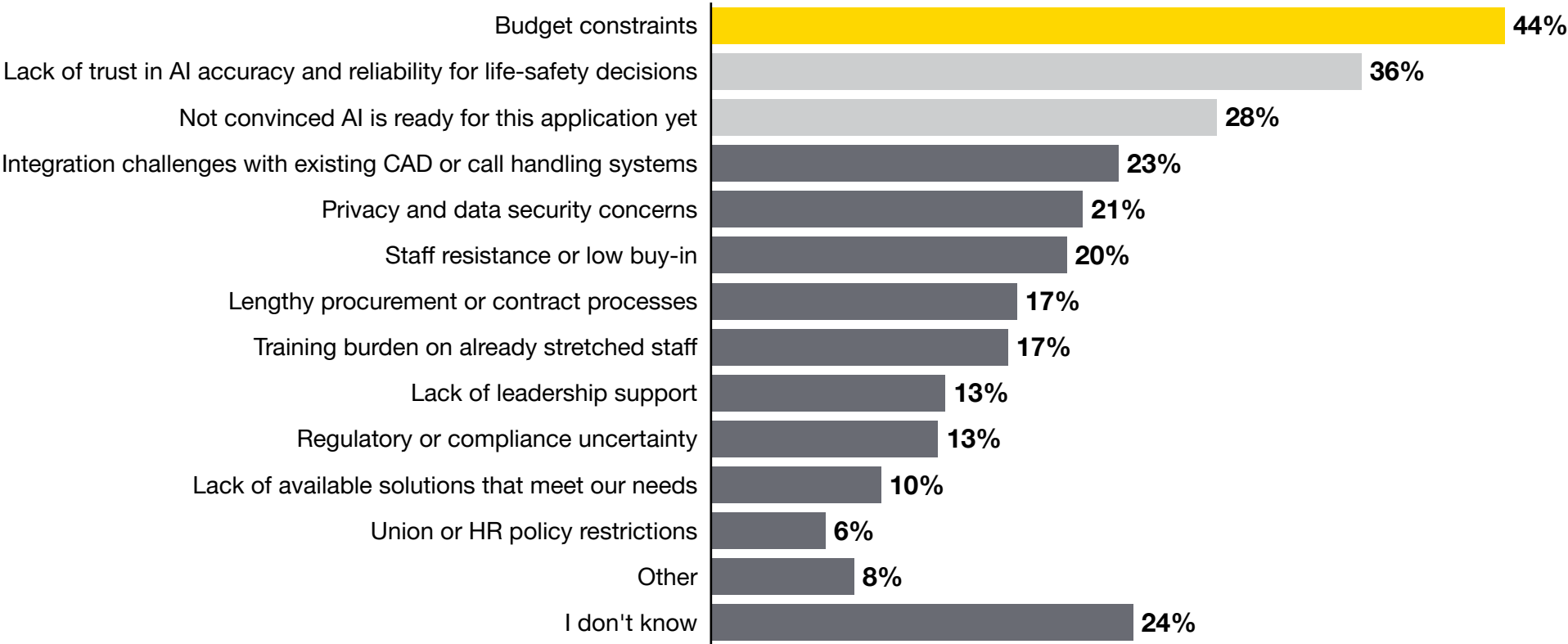
Q28. How comfortable are you with AI assisting in 911 call taking? (please use a 5-pt scale where 1 = Not at all comfortable and 5 = Very comfortable)



Budget and accuracy doubts lead barriers to AI call handling

More than four in ten (44%) cite budget constraints, and slightly less (36%) doubt AI's accuracy for life-safety decisions.

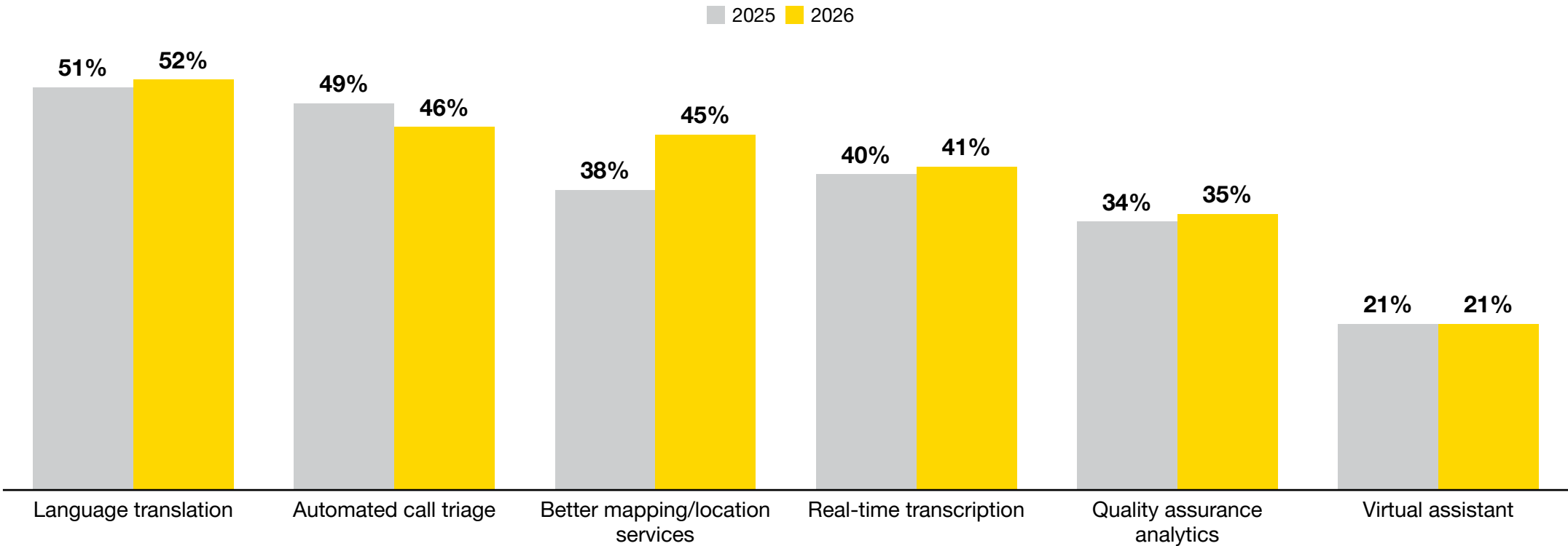
Q29. If you are not already using it, what are the primary barriers preventing your center from deploying AI-assisted call handling? (select all that apply)



Language translation and call triage remain top AI priorities

More than half of the respondents (52%) suggested AI language translation would most alleviate their centers workload. Slightly less (46%) indicated automated call triage.

Q30. Which of these capabilities do you think would most alleviate your center's workload? (select all that apply)



YEAR-OVER-YEAR TREND Better mapping/location services saw the largest gain (+7 pts to 45%), overtaking real-time transcription to become the #3 desired AI workload capability.

SECTION 05

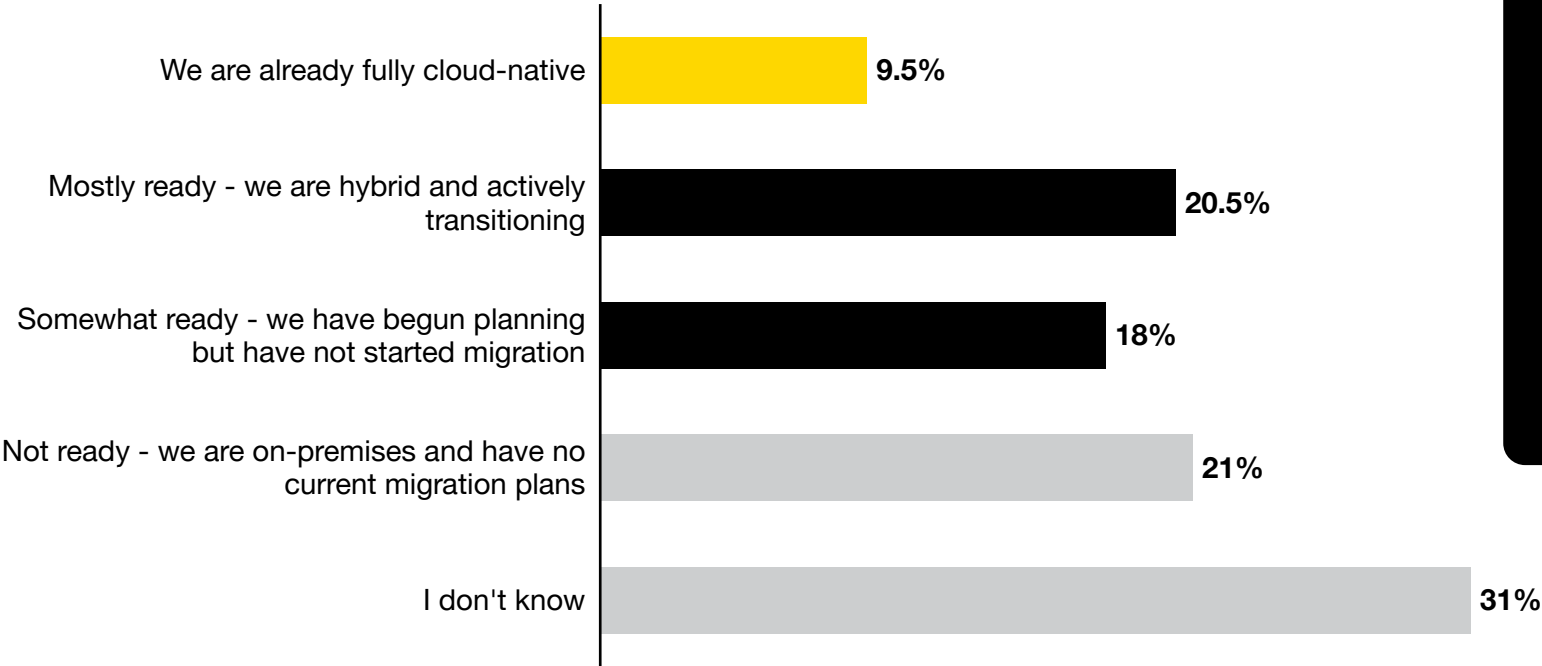
Cybersecurity, Cloud Readiness & System Resilience



Cloud adoption remains fragmented

Only 9.5% of centers are fully cloud-native, while four in ten (38.5%) are actively transitioning or planning.

Q31. How would you describe your center's readiness to move to cloud-based infrastructure?



TRANSITIONING/ PLANNING

38.5%

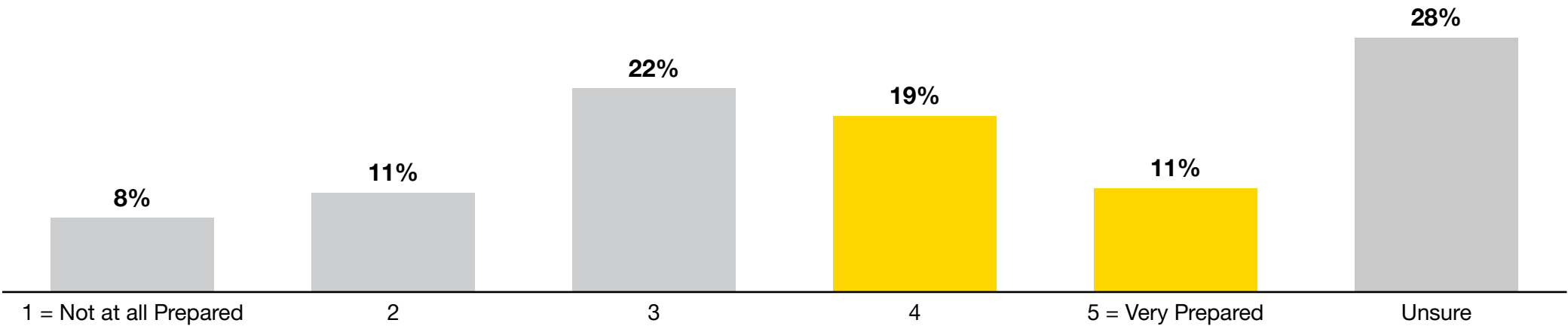
Hybrid & transitioning (20.5%) + Planning (18%)

TAKEAWAY Nearly 4 in 10 centers (38.5%) are making strides toward cloud infrastructure, but the high proportion of 'I don't know' (31%) highlights a major operational awareness gap.

Cyber attack preparedness is a coin flip

Only one in ten (11%) are very prepared for a sustained cybersecurity or TDoS attack. Three in ten (28%) are unsure of their center’s preparedness.

Q32. How prepared is your center for a sustained cybersecurity or TDoS attack? (please use a 5-point scale where 1 = 'Not at all Prepared' and 5 = 'Very Prepared')

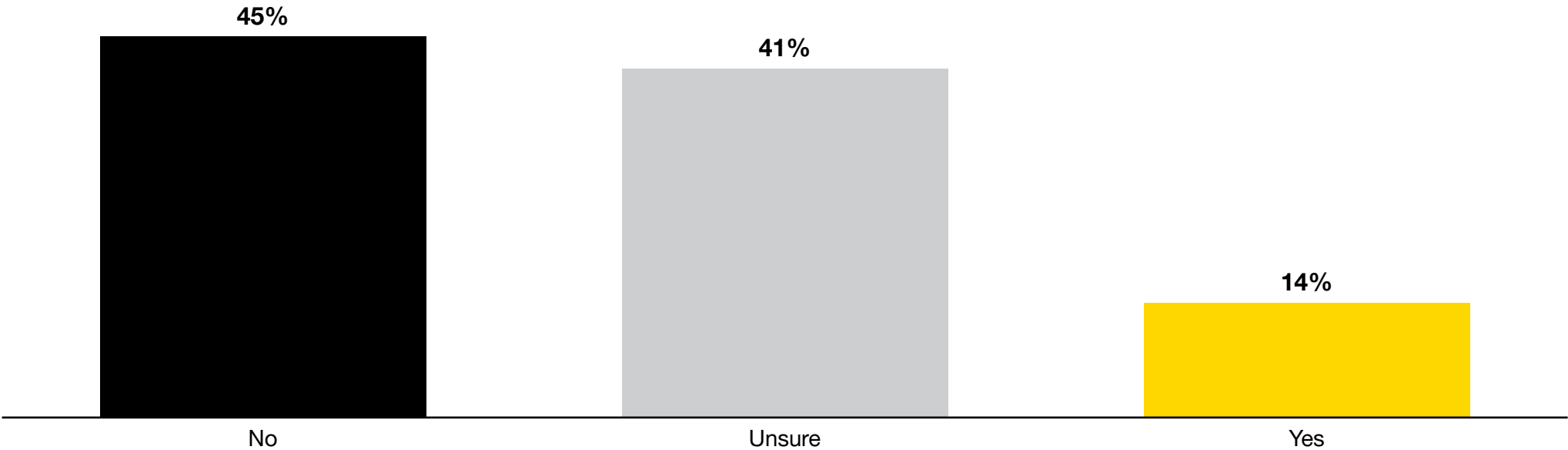


TAKEAWAY Only 30% of centers express confidence in handling sustained cyber attacks or TDoS events. Unpreparedness (those who selected 1 or 2) at 19% and uncertainty (28%) combine for a major vulnerability gap across nearly half of respondents.

Few centers have actually tested for a TDoS attack

Just 14% have run a TDoS simulation in the past year, despite rising outage risk.

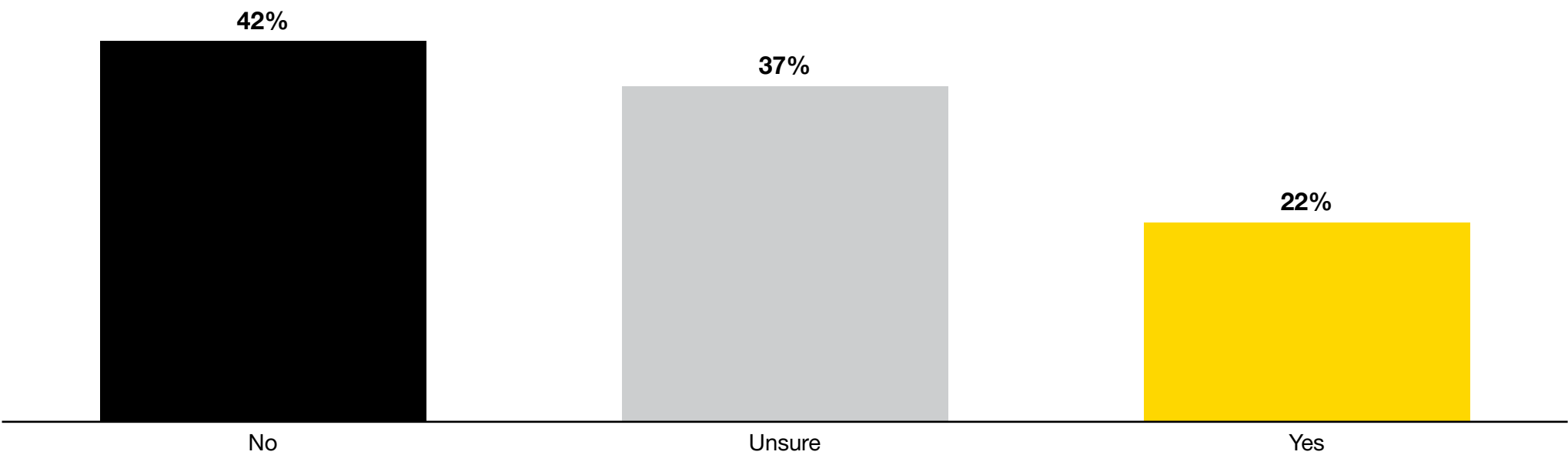
Q33. Has your center conducted a TDoS simulation in the past 12 months?



Cloud backup systems remain uncommon

Only 22% of centers have a cloud-based backup for use during a primary outage.

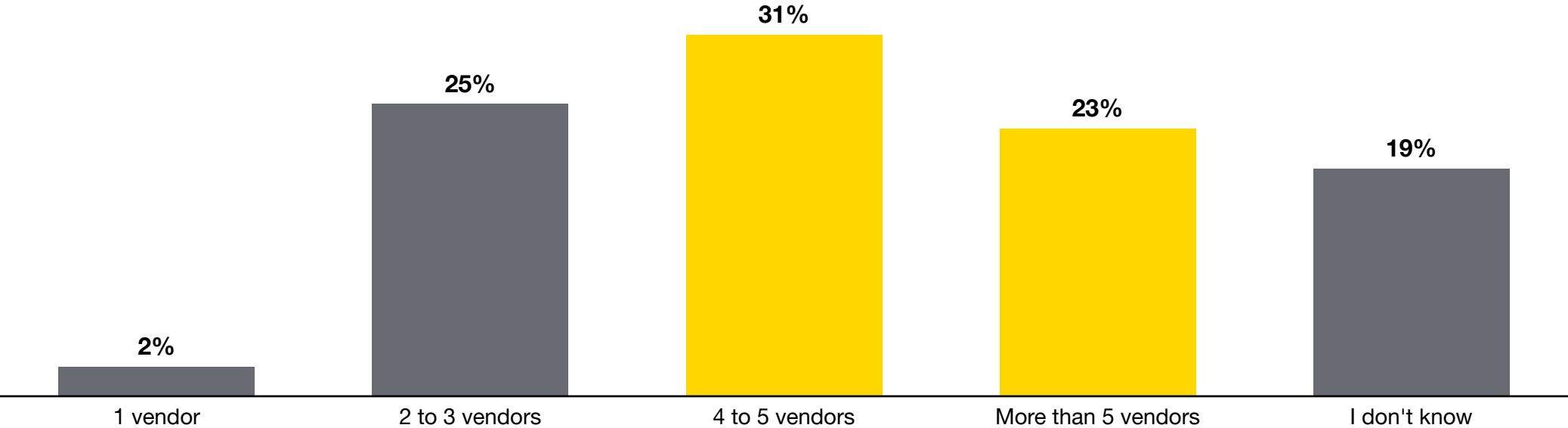
Q34. Does your center have a cloud-based backup call-handling system that activates during a primary outage?



Most centers juggle several technology vendors

The majority (54%) manage core operations across 4 or more separate vendors.

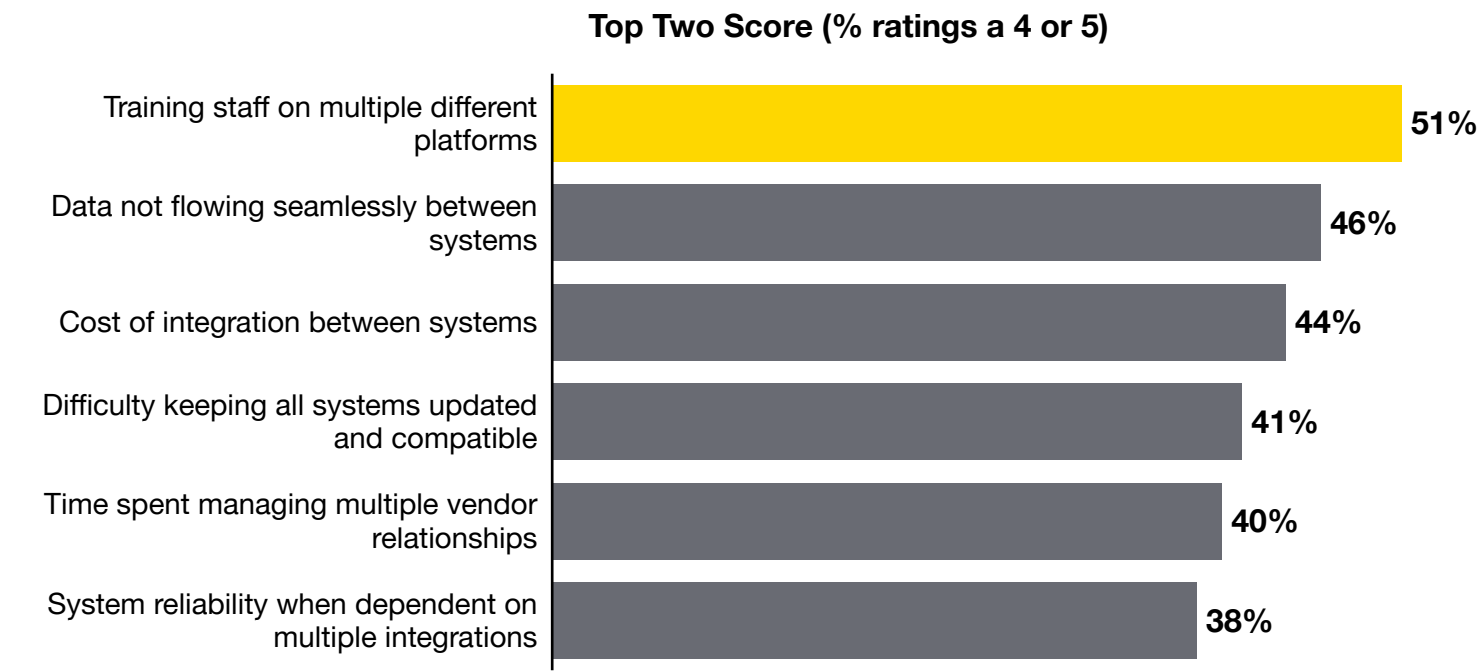
Q35. How many separate technology vendors does your center currently rely on to manage its core operations? (CAD, call handling, location services, logging, QA, language translation, AI tools, etc.)



Training staff across platforms is the top vendor headache

Managing multiple systems creates real friction, led by cross-platform training demands (51%). Data flow issues (46%) and the cost of integration between systems (44%) are also critical challenges.

Q36. If you work with more than one vendor, how would you rate the following aspects of managing multiple technology vendors at your center? (please use a 5-point scale where 1 = Not a challenge, and 5 = Critical challenge)



MAJORITY IMPACT

51%

Cite Staff Training

Over half of multi-vendor centers flag training across fragmented interfaces as a severe operational strain, outranking integration costs and system reliability.

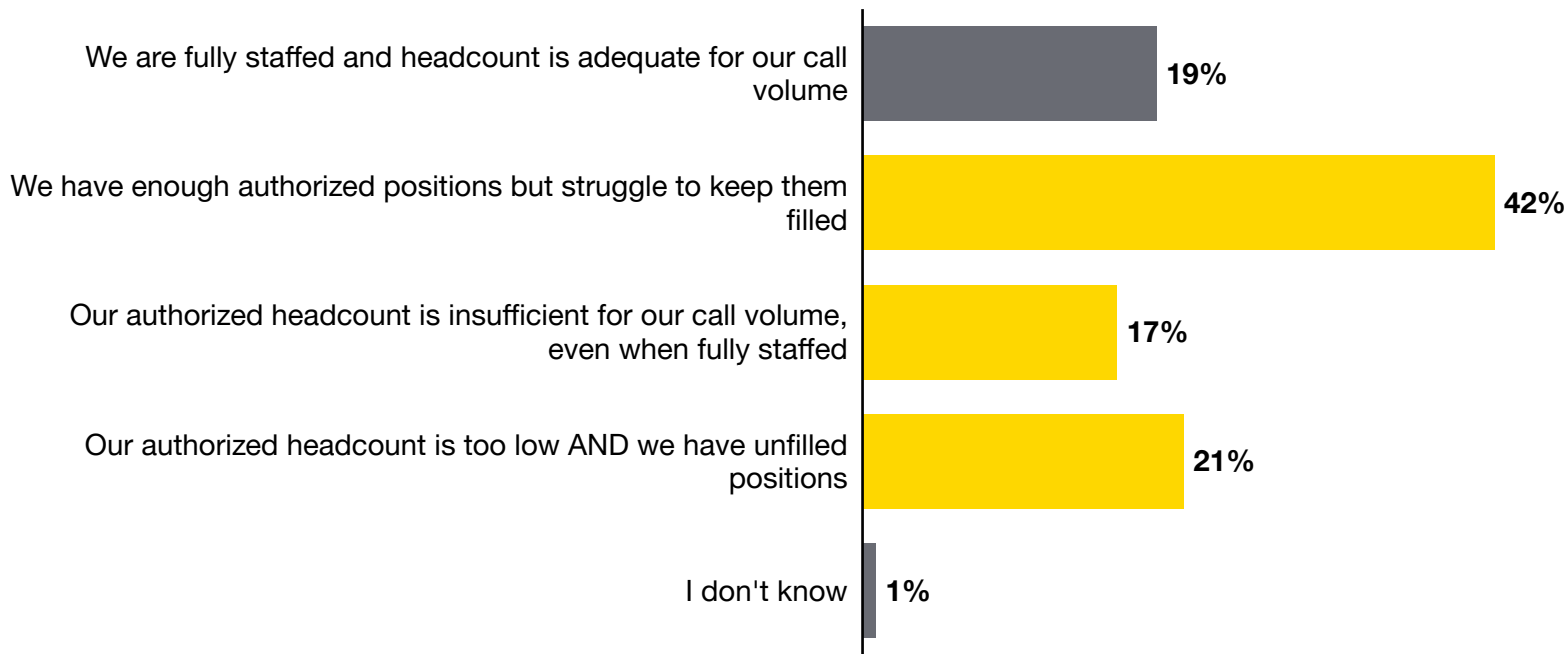
SECTION 06

Organizational Structure, Leadership & Workforce Planning

Four in five emergency centers operate under severe staffing shortages or capacity deficits

While 42% struggle with vacancy retention, an additional 38% face underlying budget or allocation limits where official headcount is too low for call volume.

Q37. How would you describe your center's current staffing situation?



TOTAL DEFICIT

80%

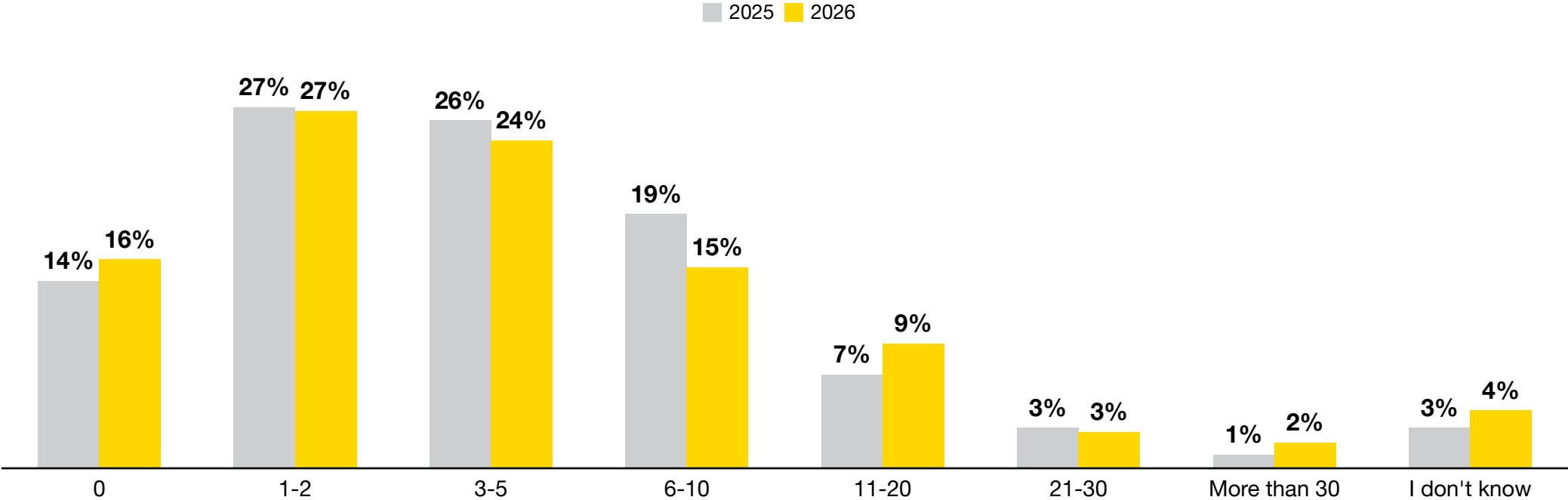
Understaffed or Underfunded

Only 19% of centers report being fully staffed with adequate authorized headcount. The remaining 80% struggle with hiring vacancies, inadequate headcount budgets, or both.

Over half of centers carry between 1 and 5 vacant positions

Three in ten (27%) report 1–2 vacancies and 25% report 3–5, reflecting stable year-over-year staffing levels compared to 2025.

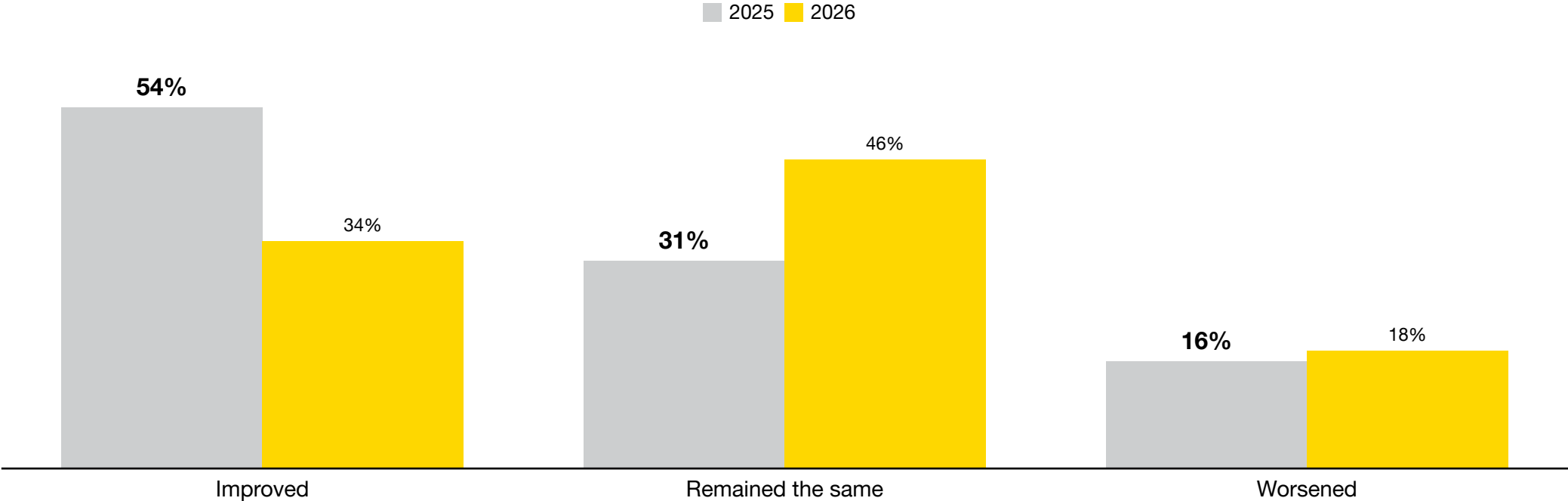
Q38. How many vacant positions does your center currently have?



Vacancy progress stalled compared to last year

Just one in three centers (34%) report fewer open positions than a year ago, down sharply from 54% in 2025. Nearly half (46%) report no change.

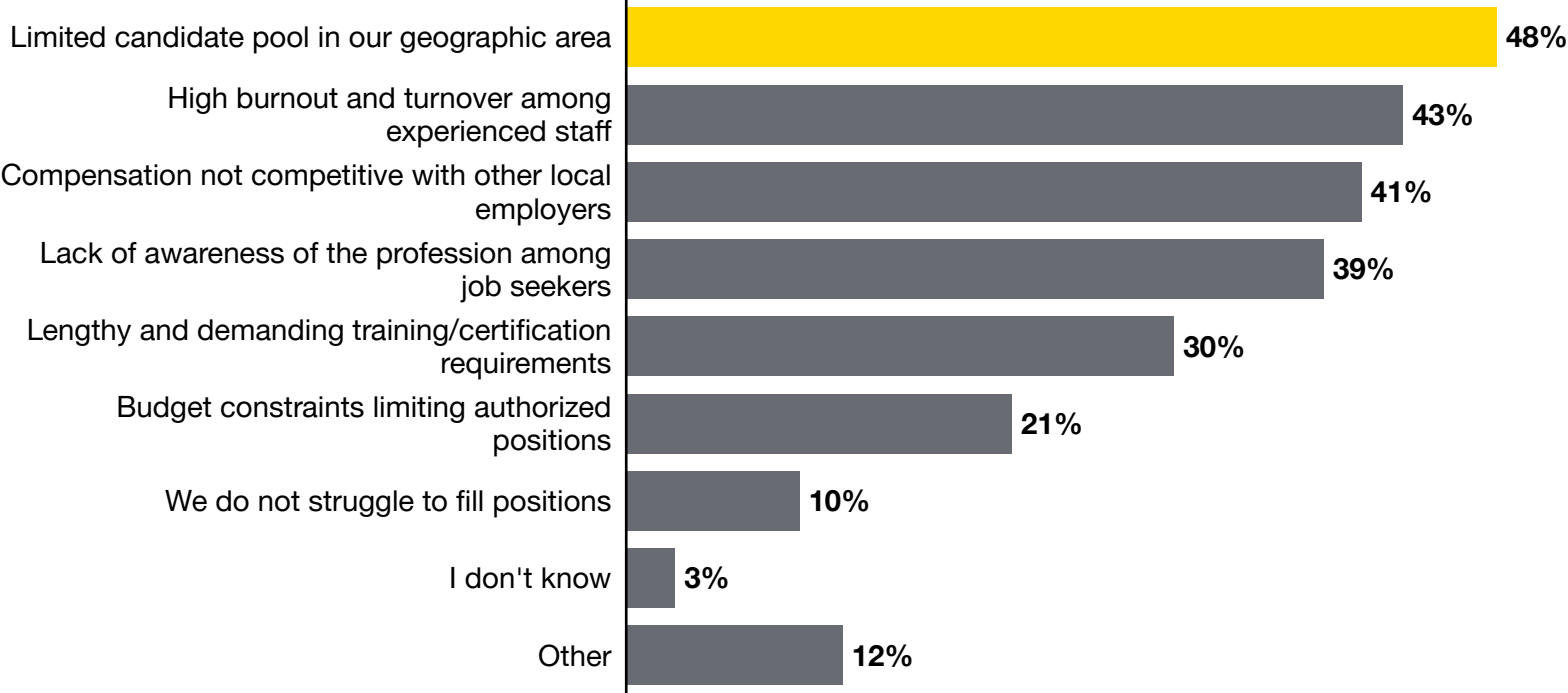
Q39. Compared to this time last year, has your center's vacancy situation:



Limited local applicant pools represent the single largest hiring barrier for emergency centers

Nearly half of centers (48%) point to a sparse geographic talent pool, closely followed by burnout/turnover (43%) and non-competitive compensation (41%).

Q40. What are the primary reasons your center struggles to fill positions? (select all that apply)

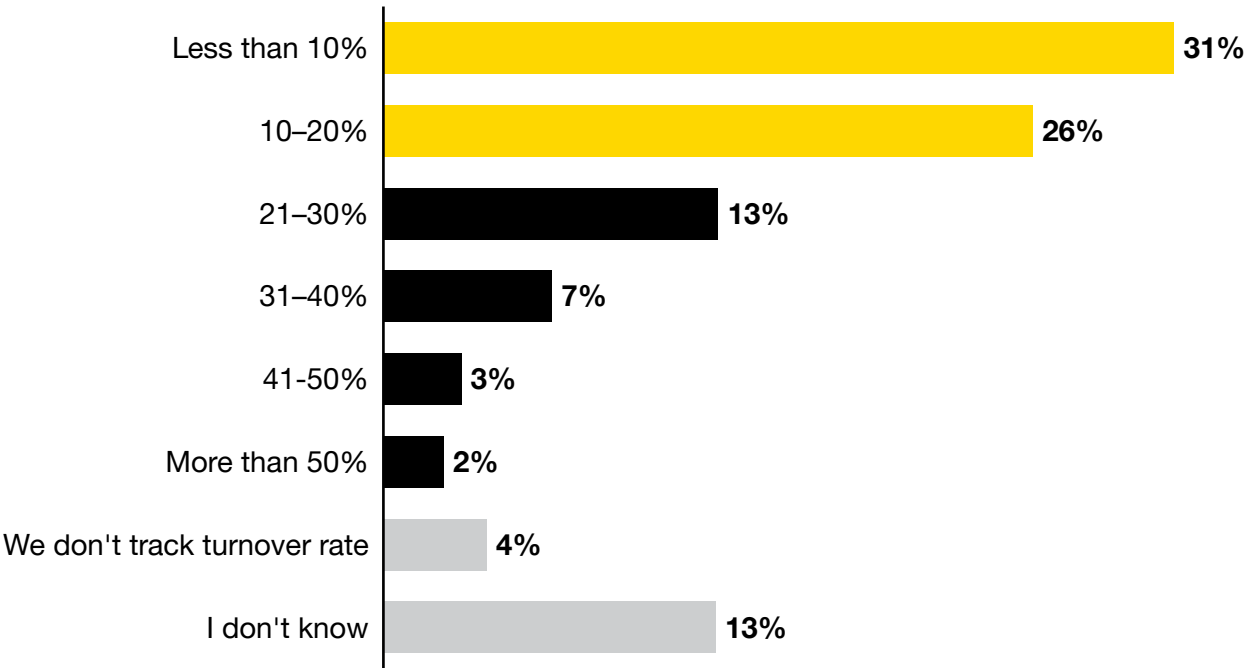


CHANGED SINCE 2025 2025 asked respondents to rank staffing challenges rather than select all reasons; not directly comparable.

Nearly six in ten centers report voluntary turnover rates under 20% for telecommunicators

While 31% of centers keep turnover under 10%, a quarter (25%) experience elevated turnover exceeding 20% annually.

Q41. What is your center's approximate annual voluntary turnover rate (resignations and retirements, not terminations or layoffs) for telecommunicators?



CUMULATIVE METRIC

57%

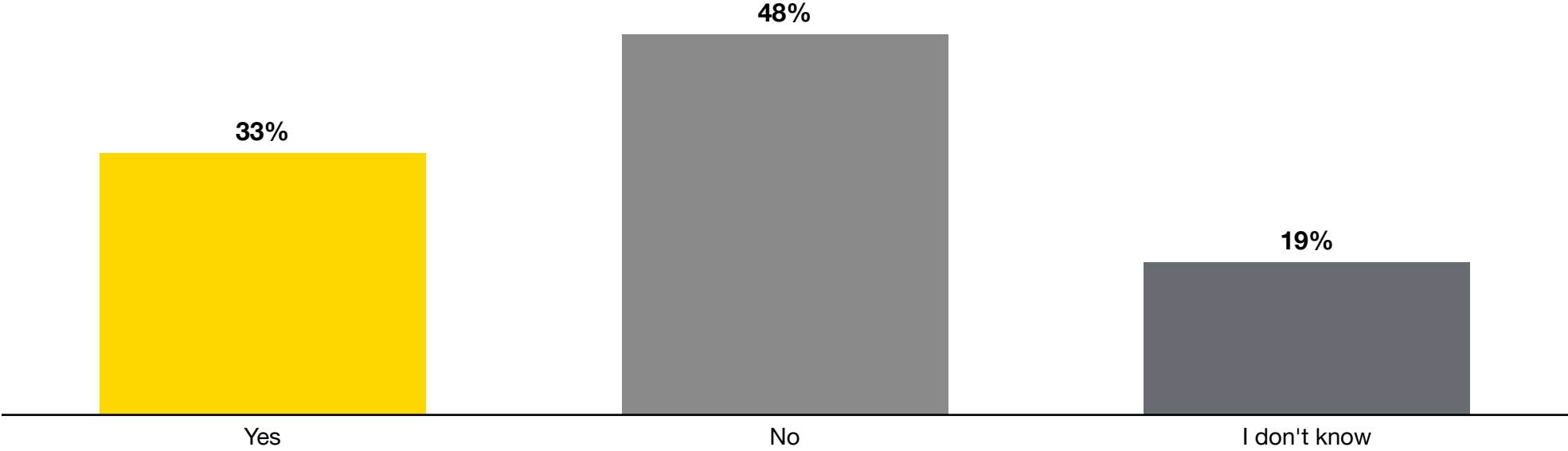
Maintain Turnover Under 20%

A majority of responding centers keep voluntary resignations and retirements capped below 20%, though 25% still struggle with turnover exceeding 20% annually.

Succession planning is the exception, not the rule

Just 33% of centers have a formal plan in place for director or leadership turnover.

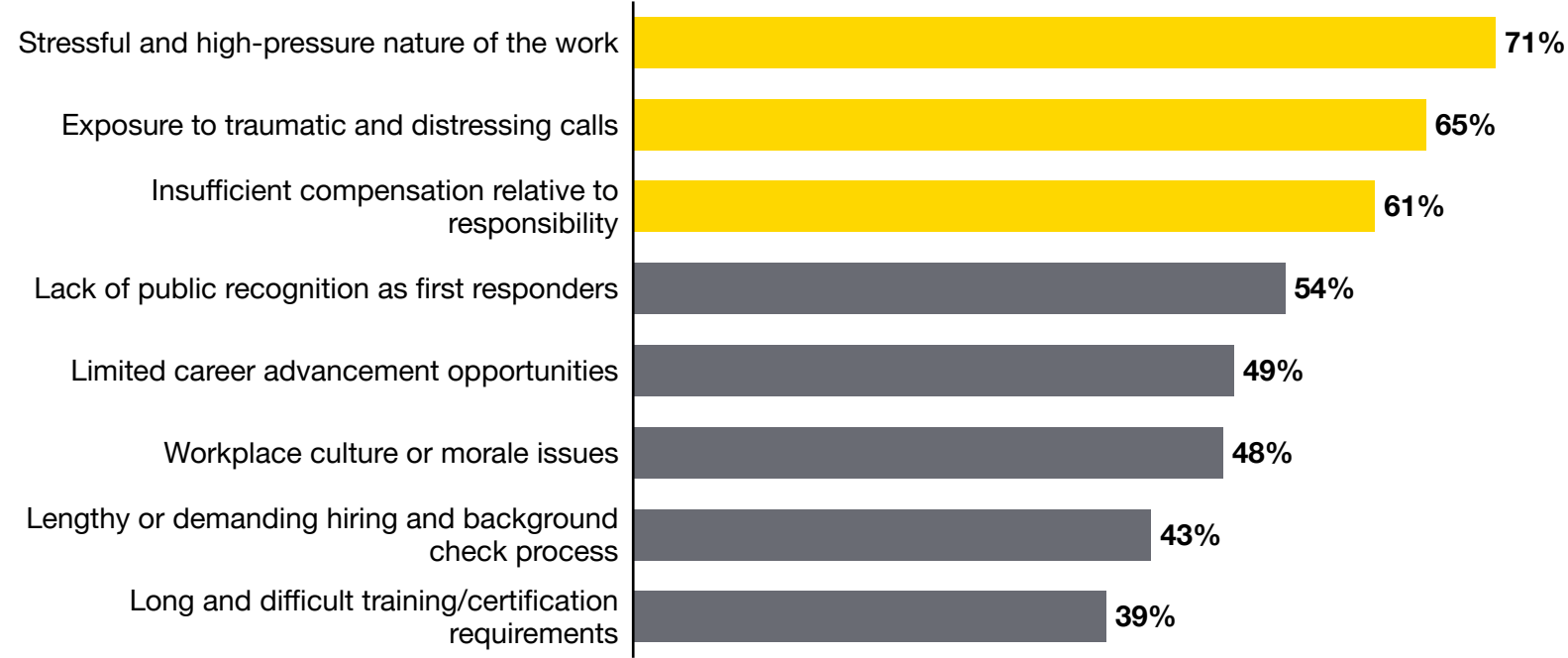
Q49. Does your center have a formal succession plan for director/leadership roles?



Job stress and trauma exposure are the primary deterrents to prospective applicants

Over seven in ten respondents (71%) cite stress as a major factor discouraging recruitment, followed closely by trauma exposure (65%) and insufficient compensation (61%).

Q50. In your opinion, how significant are the following factors in discouraging people from pursuing careers in emergency communications? (select one for each factor)



SECTION 07

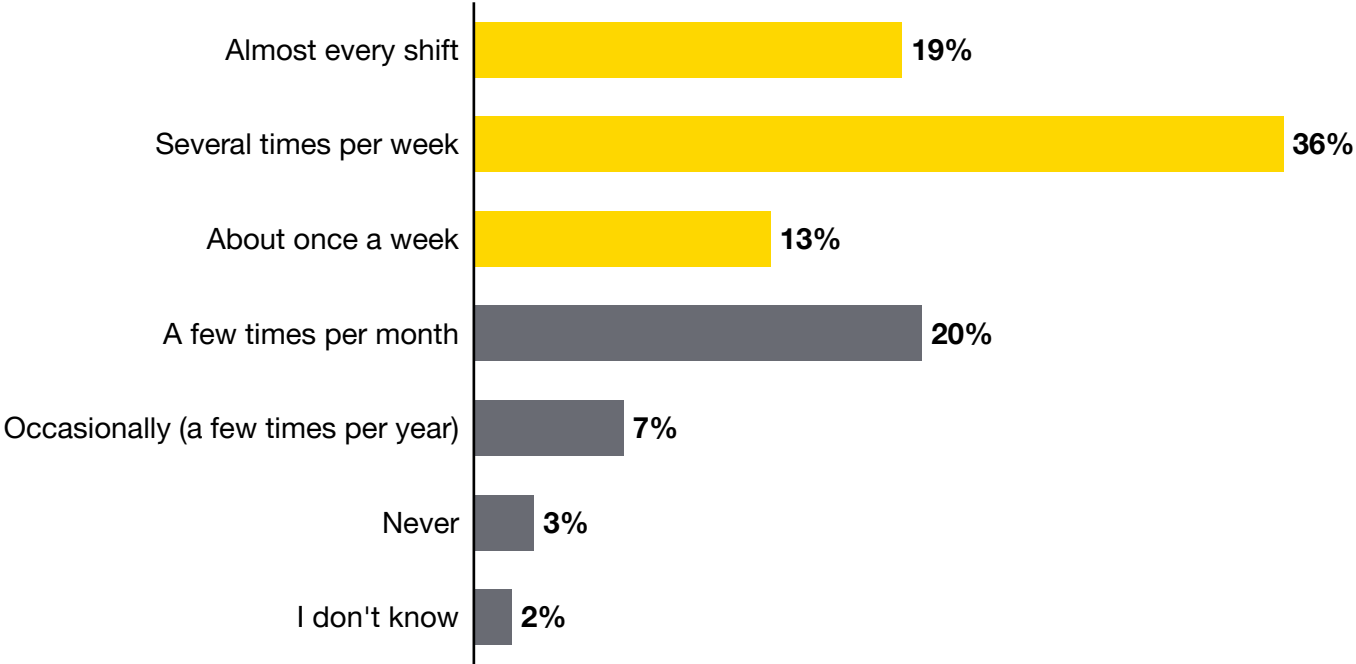
Workforce Challenges & Work Arrangements



Over two-thirds of telecommunicators work voluntary overtime at least weekly

Two in ten respondents (19%) work voluntary overtime almost every shift. More than one in three (36%) do several times per week and another one in ten (13%) indicated about once a week.

Q42. How often do telecommunicators work voluntary overtime in your center?



CUMULATIVE WEEKLY

68%

Work Overtime Weekly+

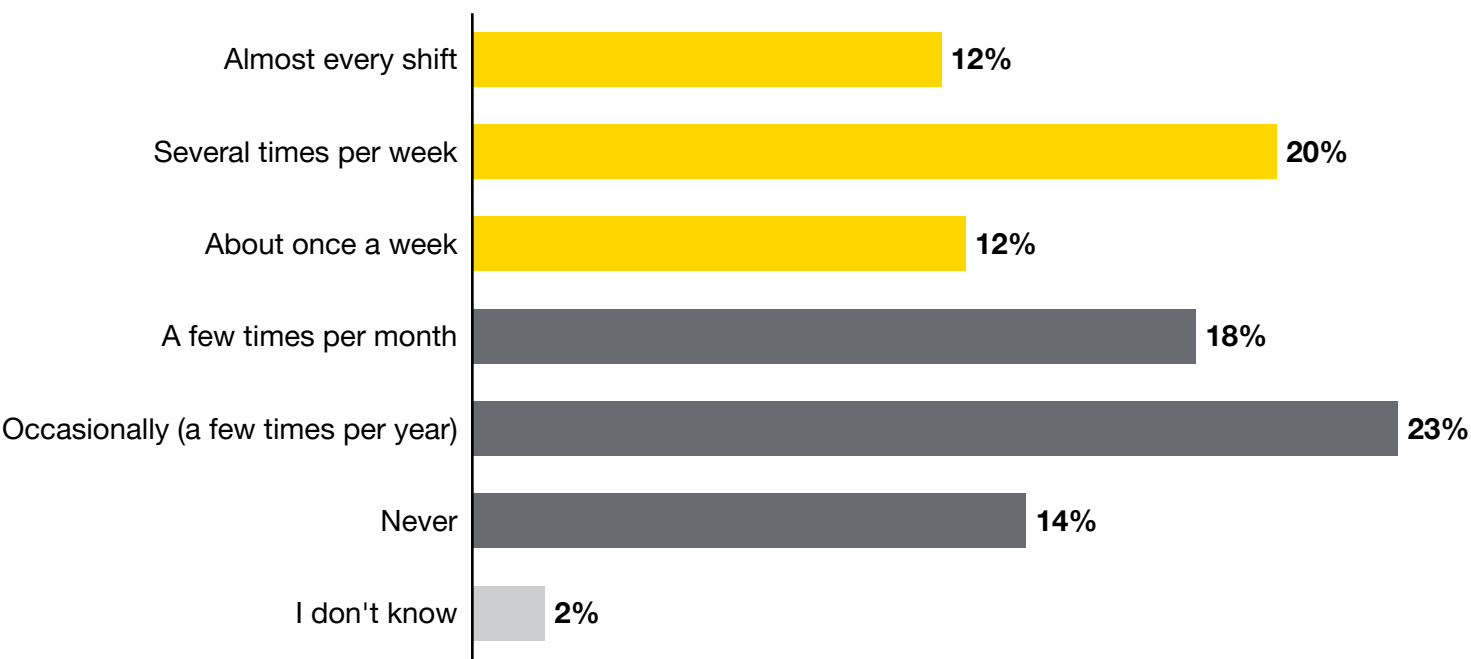
Combining shift-level (19%), multiple weekly (36%), and weekly (13%) responses shows that voluntary overtime remains a baseline operational reality for most centers.

CHANGED SINCE 2025 2025 used 5 frequency bands; 2026 uses 7 finer bands. On the one cut that's directly comparable 'weekly or more often', the rate eased from 74% in 2025 to 68% in 2026

Nearly half of centers rely on mandatory overtime at least on a weekly basis

While extreme frequencies ('almost every shift') continue to ease year-over-year, 44% of centers still mandate extra shifts on a weekly basis or more often.

Q43. How often do telecommunicators work mandatory overtime in your center?



MANDATED WEEKLY

44%

Are Forced to Work Extra

Compared to the 68% who volunteer, 44% of centers are actively mandating overtime on a weekly basis to maintain operational minimums.

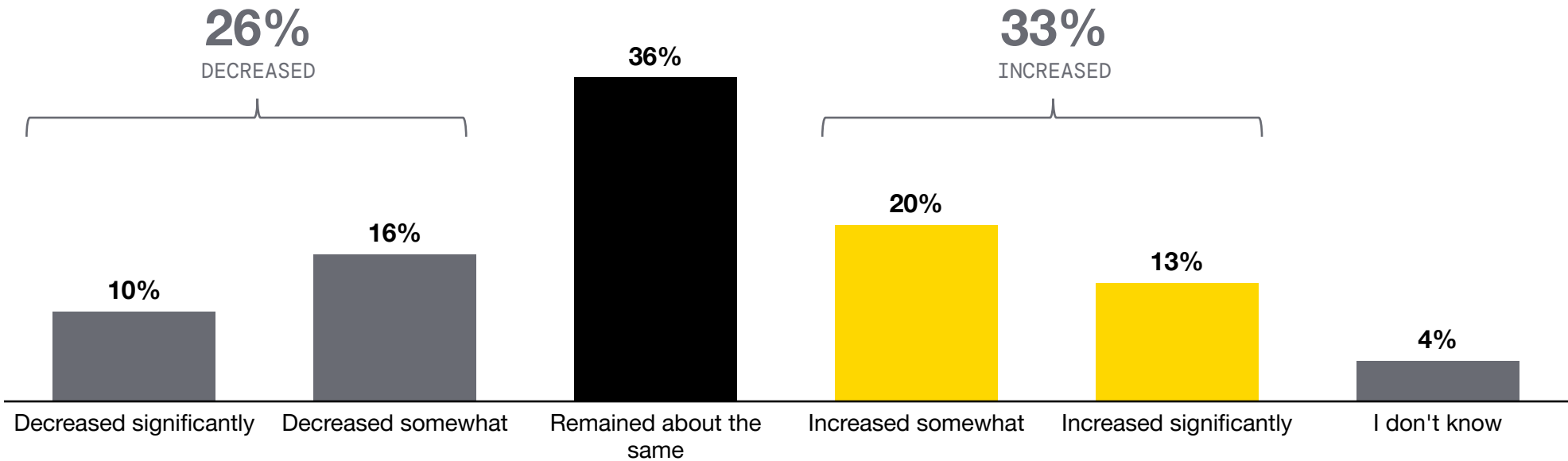
CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 used 5 frequency bands; 2026 uses 7. The most extreme band ('Daily/Almost every shift') dropped from 17% in 2025 to 12% in 2026, indicating some easing at the highest severity levels.

Overtime hours are trending up more than down

More centers report an increase (33%) than a decrease (26%). However, more than one in three (36%) say hours held steady.

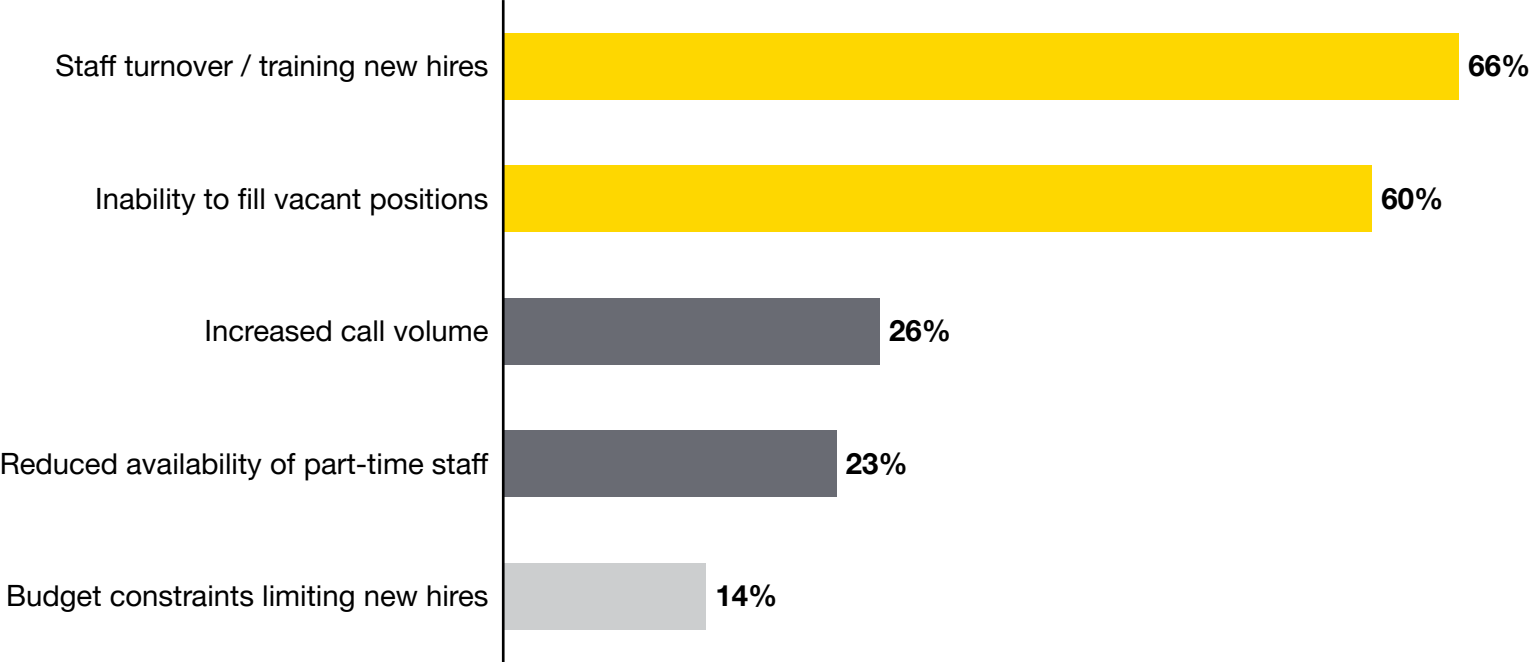
Q44. Compared to this time last year, how have overtime hours at your center changed?



Staffing shortages and turnover drive overtime increases

Two-thirds (66%) cite turnover and onboarding demands as the top cause, closely followed by open vacancies (60%). Increased call volume (26%) is not a primary driver.

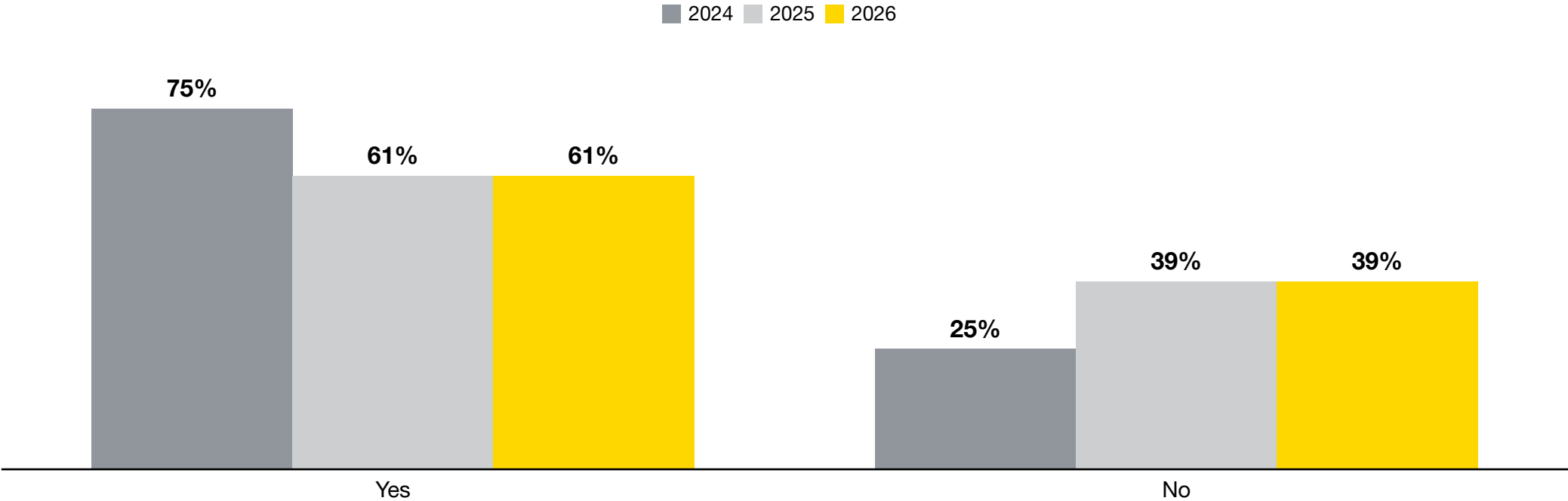
Q45. If overtime hours have increased, what is the primary driver? (select all that apply)



Short-staffing remains widespread

Six in ten centers (61%) cite insufficient authorized headcount, on par with 2025.

Q46. Does your center face short staffing (not enough headcount allotted)?

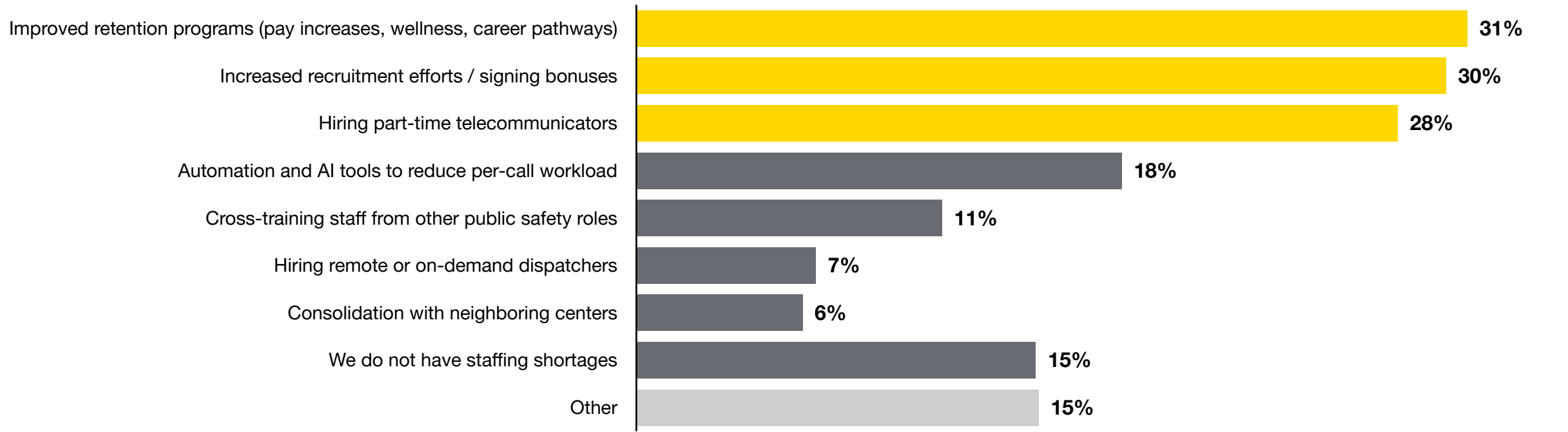


TAKEAWAY Short-staffing levels have stabilized at 61% over the past two years after dropping 14 points from 75% in 2024.

Centers rely on retention, recruitment, and part-time hiring to address staffing shortages

Improved retention (31%), aggressive recruitment (30%), and part-time staff (28%) form a tight top tier of strategies to combat shortages. Automation and AI tools (18%) were mentioned by nearly two in ten. However, a large concentration of respondents wrote-in that their center is taking no action to address staffing shortages.

Q47. Which of the following is your center considering or actively pursuing to address staffing shortages? (select all that apply)



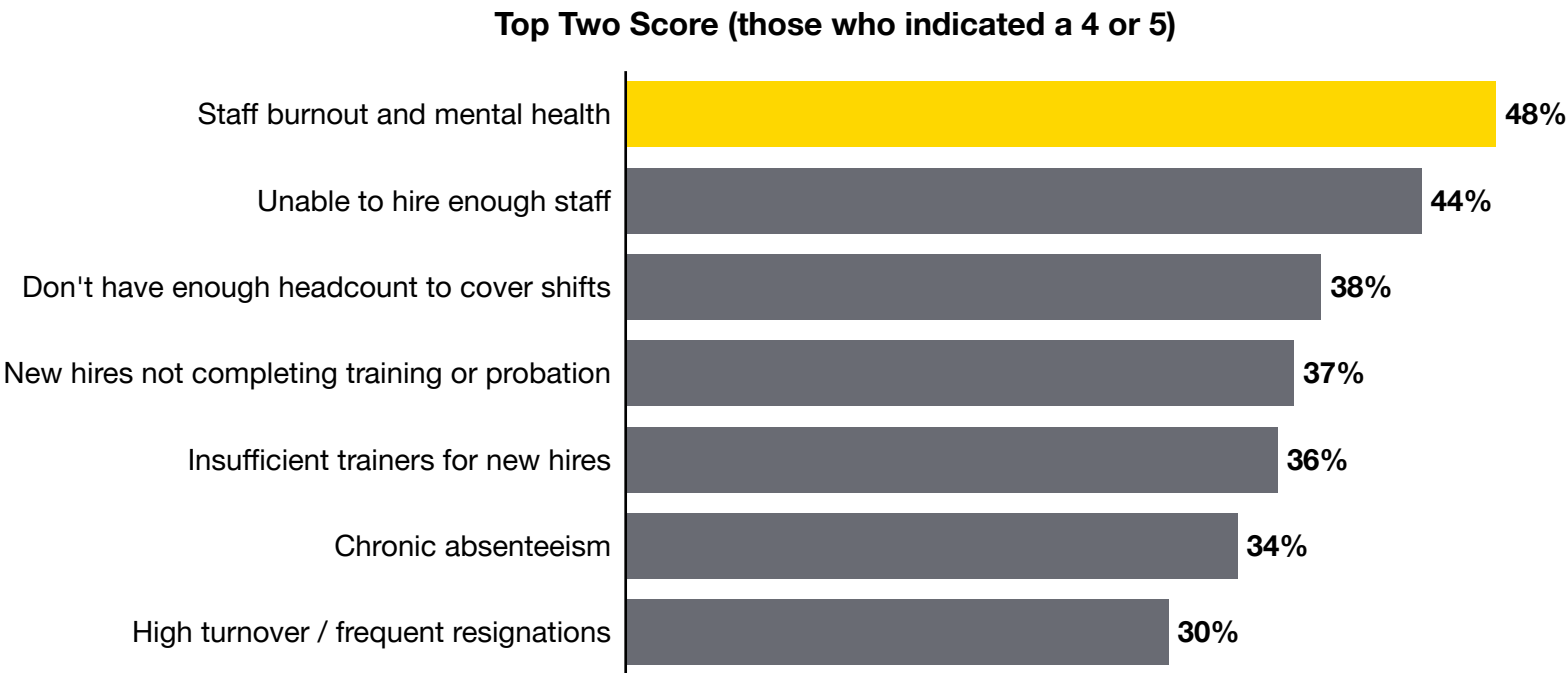
CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 asked this as a single-select question with fewer options, so respondents could name only one strategy; 2026 allows multiple selections. Percentages aren't directly comparable across years as a result. For reference, automation/AI was selected by 11% in 2025 (as a single top pick) and 18% in 2026 (as one of possibly several strategies)

Burnout tops the list of staffing challenges

Centers rate staff burnout and mental health (48%) as their most significant staffing concern. The inability to hire enough staff (44%) was rated as challenging as well.

Q48. Please rate the following staffing challenges that your call center faces. (please use a 5-point scale where 1 = not a challenge and 5 = critical challenge)



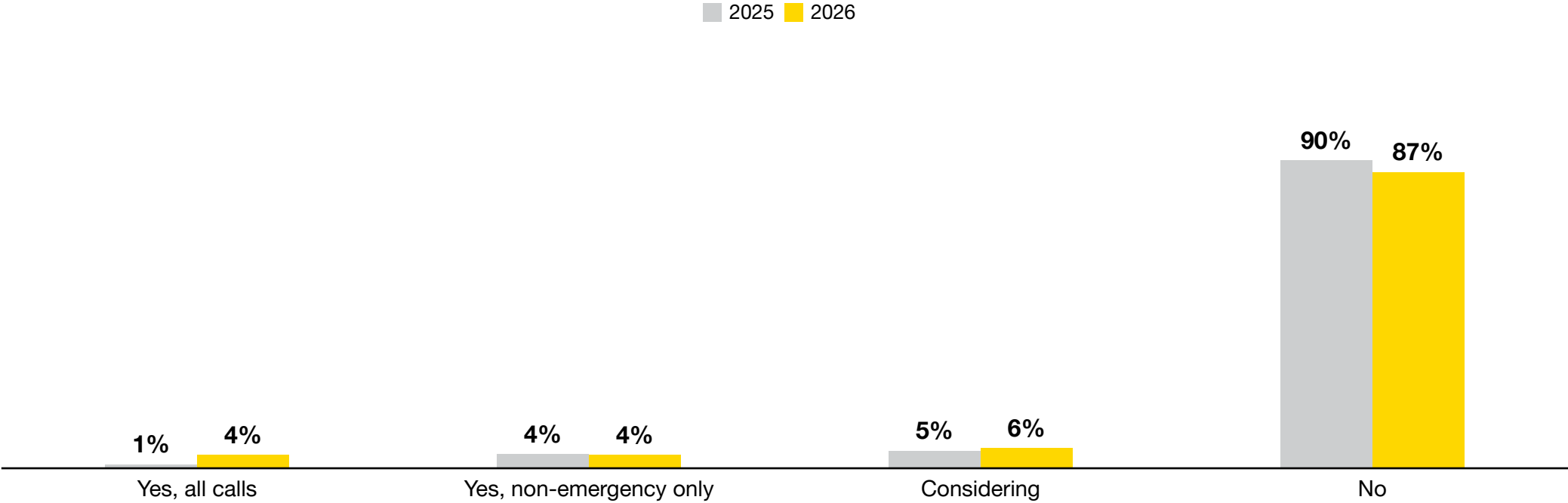
CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 asked respondents to rank challenges; 2026 rates each 1-5. Staff burnout and inability to hire remain the top two concerns in both years.

Remote call-taking is still nearly nonexistent

Nine in ten centers (87%) do not allow remote work in any form.

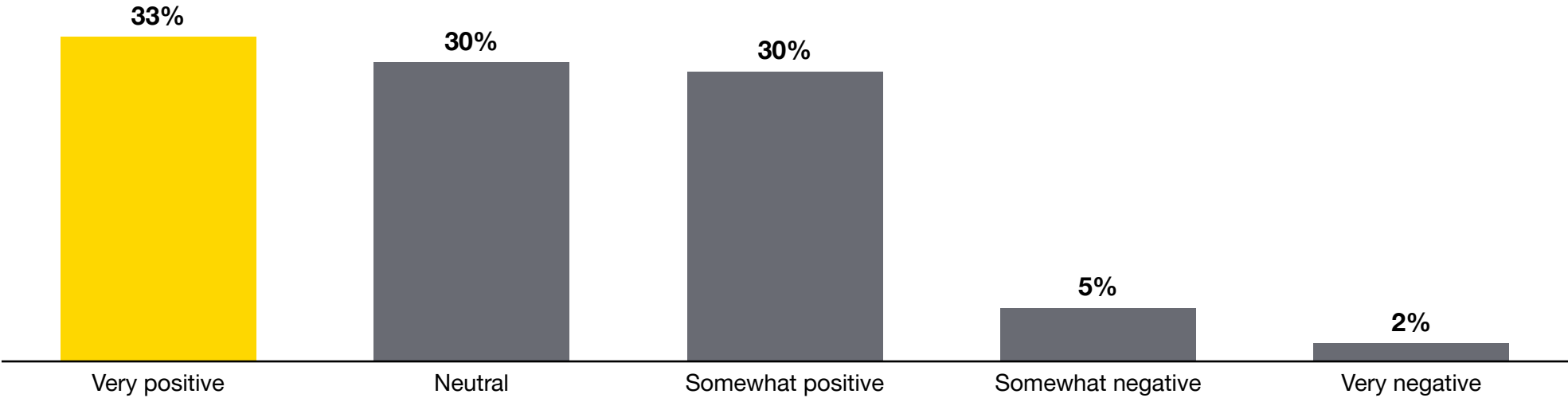
Q51. Does your center allow people to work from home?



Where remote call-taking exists, it's working

Centers that allow it report a mostly positive experience.

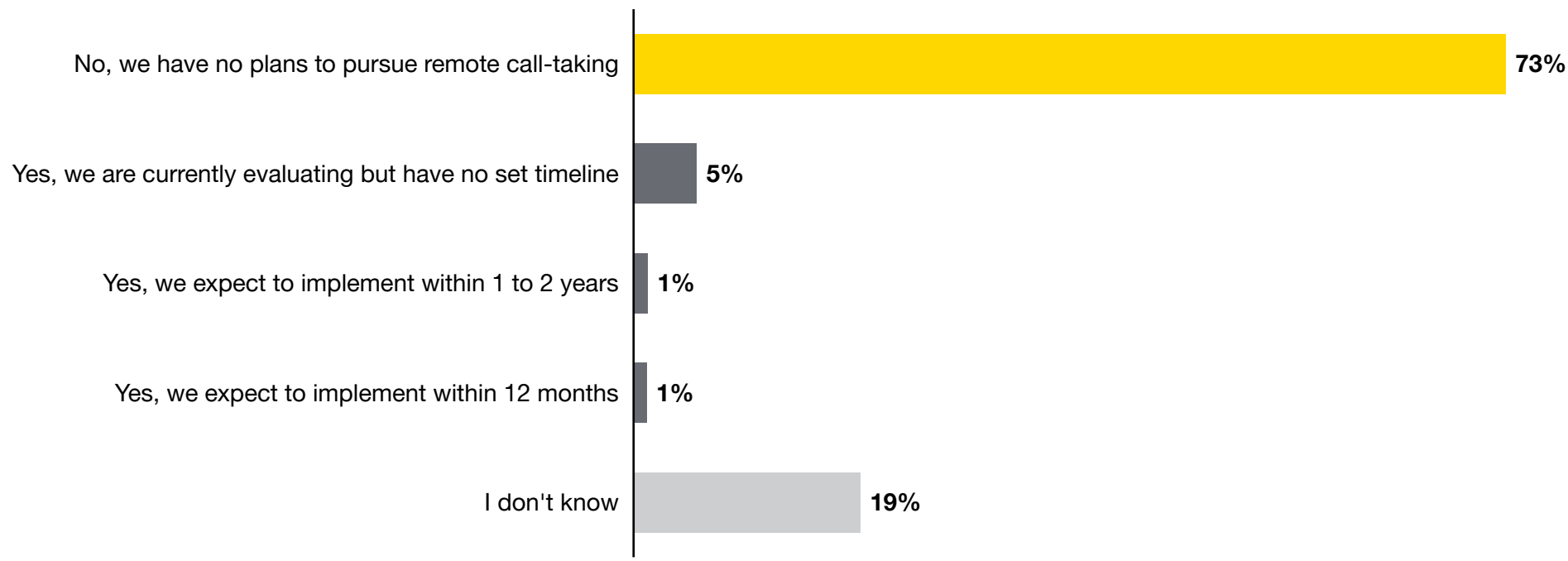
Q52. If your center currently allows remote call-taking, how would you rate the experience?



Most centers have no plans to go remote

Nearly three in four centers (73%) without a remote option today say they are not pursuing one. Two in ten (19%) are unaware of their center’s remote call-taking plans.

Q53. Is your center actively exploring remote call-taking for the future?



CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 asked only of centers with no remote work; 2026 asks all respondents, so 'No plans' base differs (88% in 2025 vs 73% in 2026).

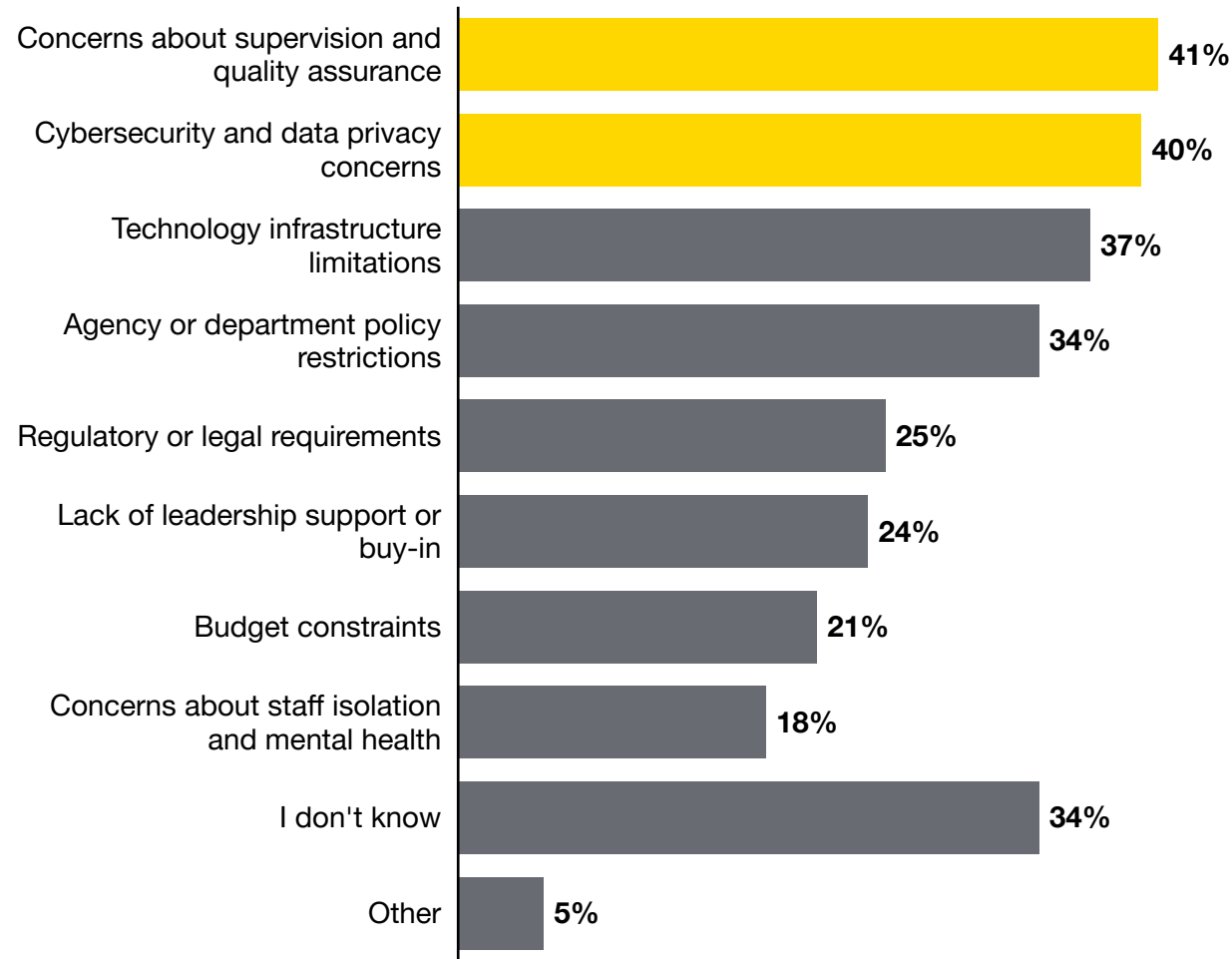
Supervision and cybersecurity are the top remote-work barriers

Four in ten cited concerns about supervision and quality assurance (41%) or cybersecurity and data privacy (40%) as factors preventing remote call-taking. Slightly less indicated technology infrastructure limitations (37%) or agency/department policy restrictions.

CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 included a shorter list of answer choices and is not directly comparable.

Q54. What factors have prevented or discouraged your center from implementing remote call-taking? (select all that apply)



SECTION 08

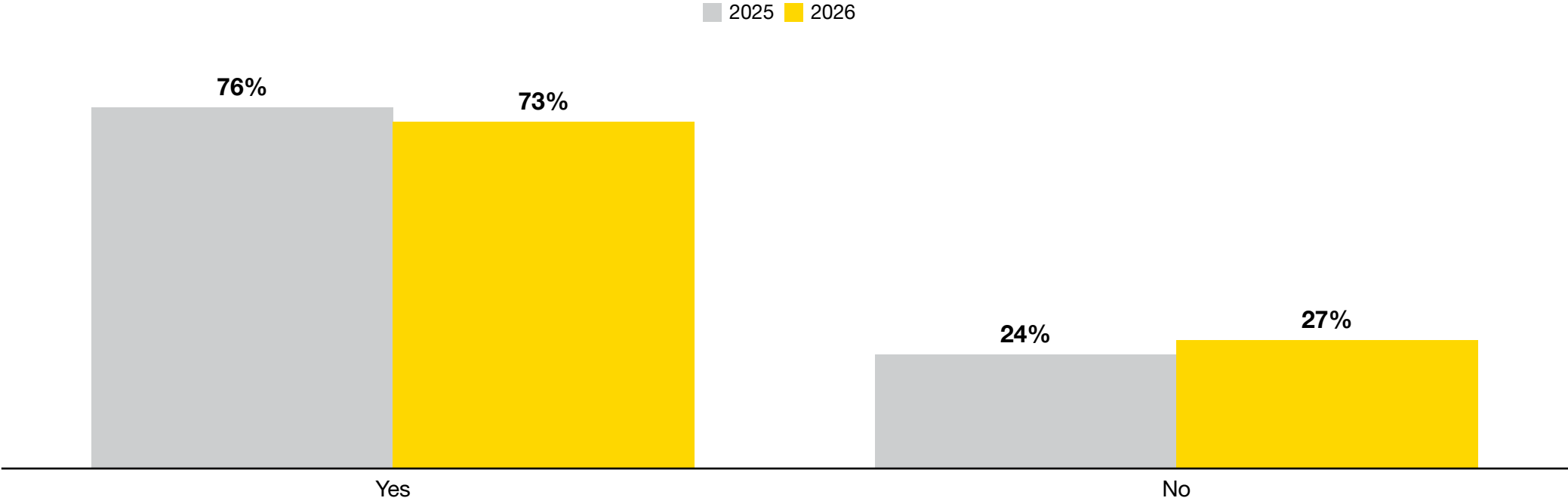
Technology's Impact on Staffing & Workload



Confidence that tech eases staffing remains high

More than seven in ten (73%) believe technology can help manage staffing shortages, down slightly from 76% in 2025

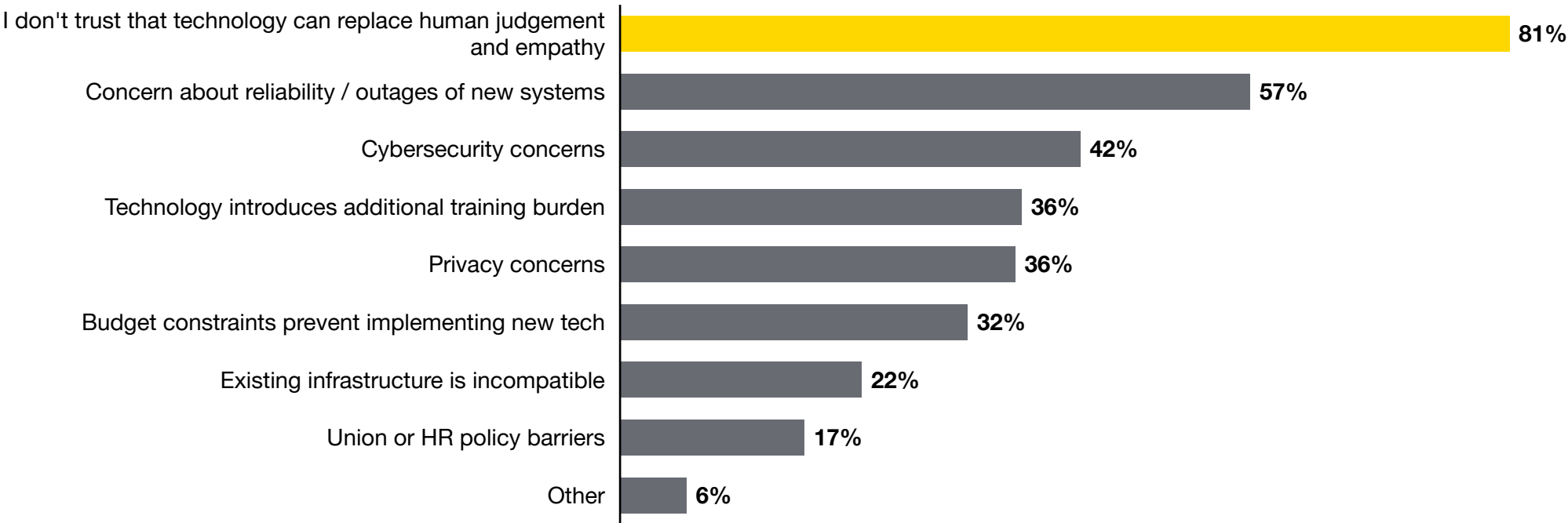
Q55. Do you believe technology can make it easier for an Emergency Communications Center to manage staffing shortages?



Distrust of AI judgment is the core objection

Respondents who doubt technology's value most often cite concerns about the inability of technology to replace human judgment (81%). Nearly six in ten (57%) are concerned about reliability or outages.

Q56. If you answered no, why don't you believe technology can make it easier for an Emergency Communications Center to manage staffing shortages? (select all that apply)



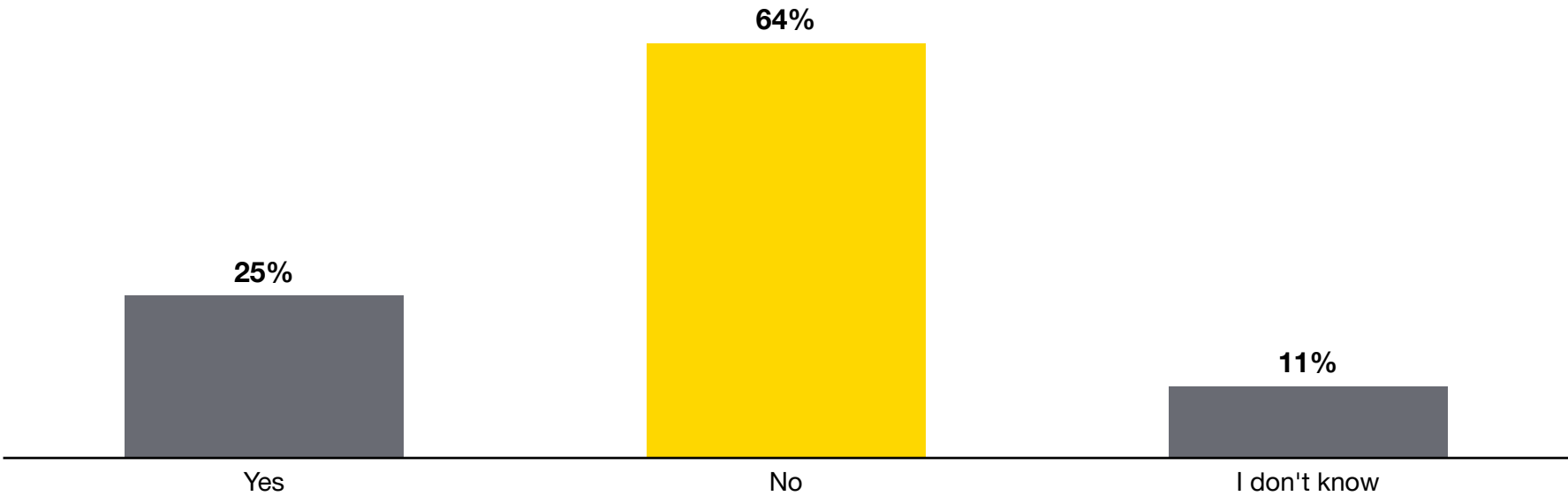
CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 asked respondents to rank these reasons; 2026 uses select-all. Distrust of AI replacing human judgment is the top reason in both 2025 and 2026.

Cognitive-load technology is barely deployed

Only 25% of centers have implemented technology aimed specifically at reducing the cognitive load on call takers.

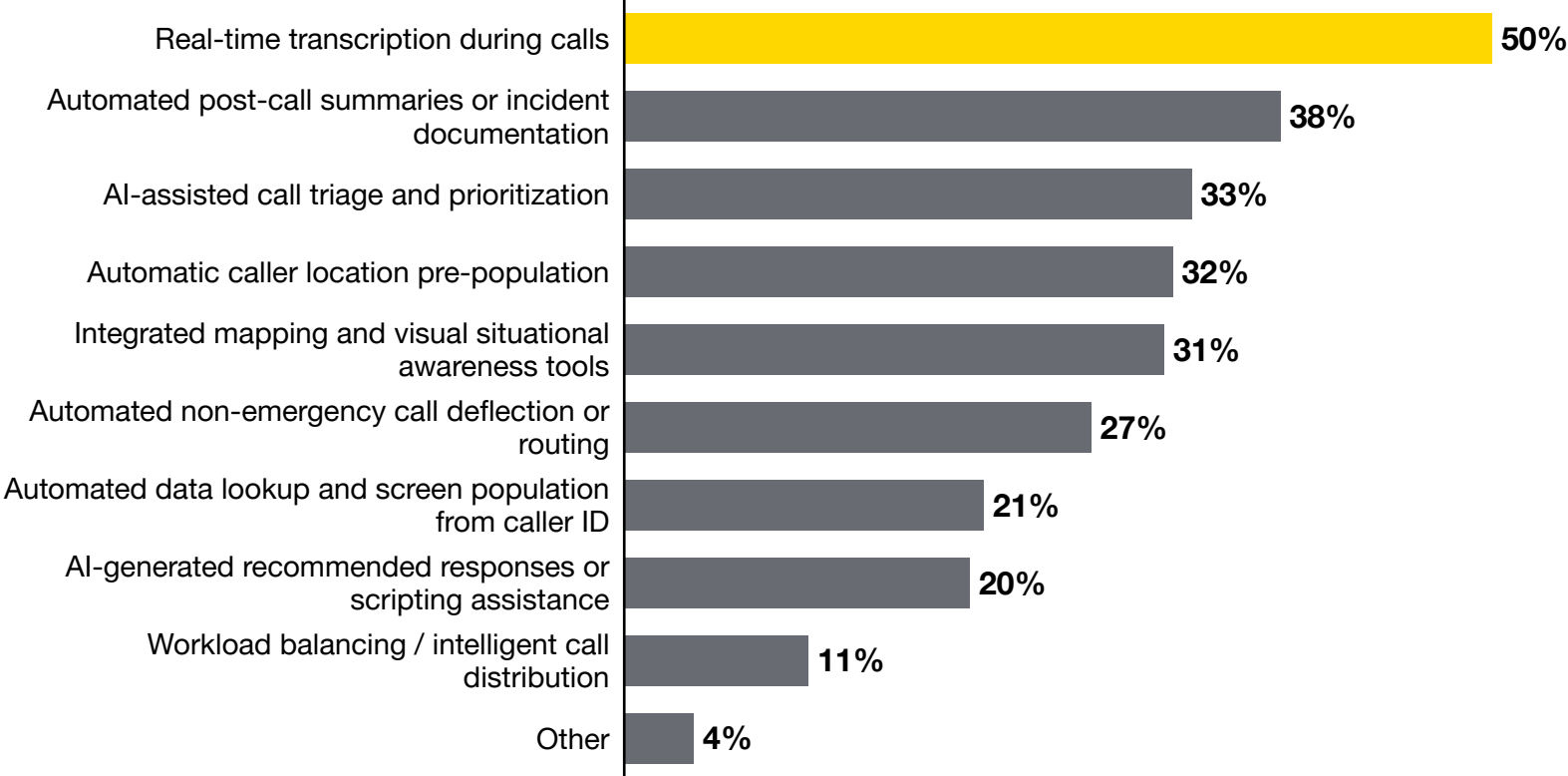
Q57. Has your center implemented any technology specifically aimed at reducing cognitive load on call takers in the past 12 months?



Real-time transcription is the most commonly deployed tech

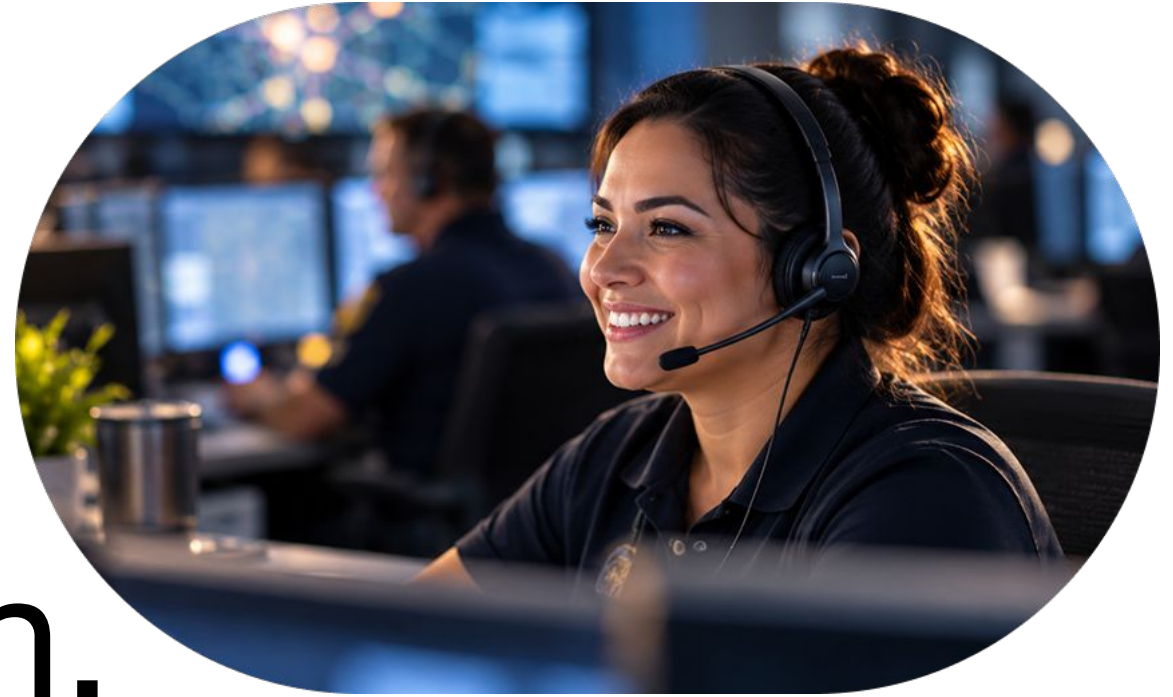
Among centers that have deployed cognitive-load reduction technology, real-time transcription during calls is used by half (50%). To a lesser degree (38%) automated post-call summaries or incident documentation is common as well.

Q58. If yes, which cognitive load reduction technologies has your center implemented? (select all that apply)



SECTION 09

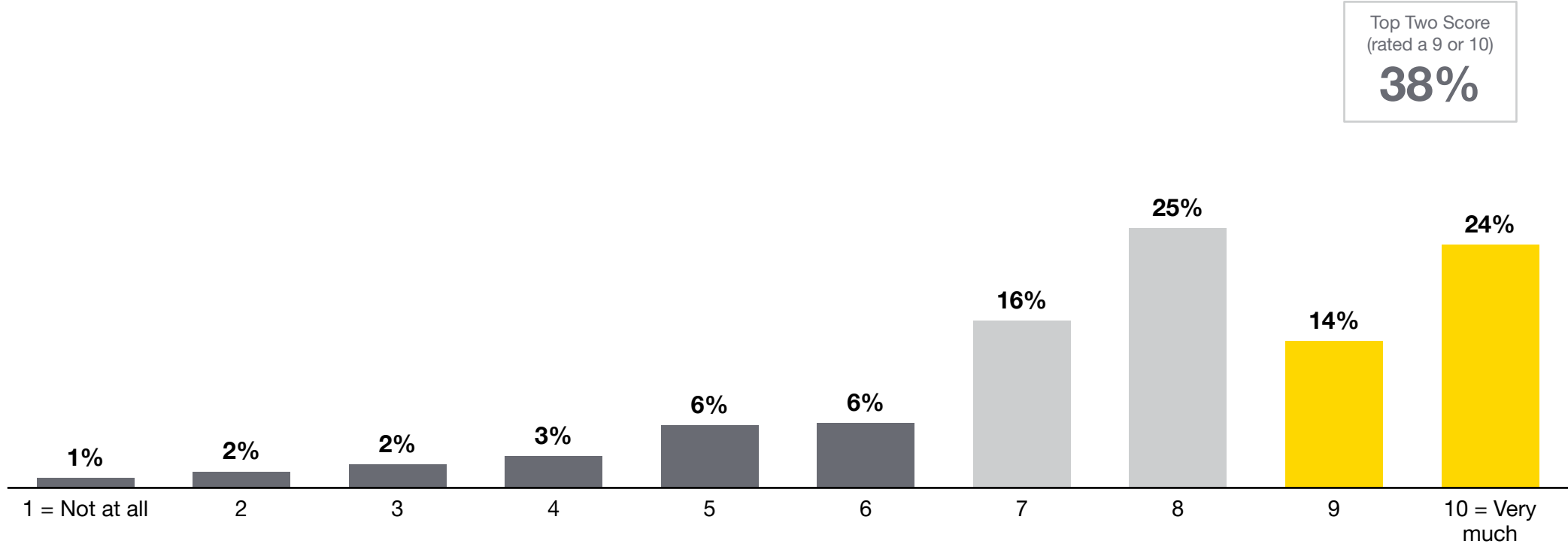
Job Satisfaction, Stress & Wellness



Most telecommunicators enjoy the work

Four in ten (38%) rate their enjoyment a 9 or 10 of 10. Only two in ten (20%) indicated a 6 or lower.

Q59. How much do you enjoy your work? (please use a 10-pt scale where 1 = Not at all and 10 = Very much)



The job is spilling into life outside work

Six in ten (58%) say working in an ECC has negatively affected their personal relationships and/or their home life.

Q60. Has working in an ECC negatively impacted your personal relationships or home life?



58%

REPORT NEGATIVE IMPACT ON HOME LIFE & RELATIONSHIPS

- 36% Reported no negative impact
- 6% Preferred not to say

CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 asked specifically about marital status impact (26% Yes). 2026 broadens to personal relationships/home life generally (58.2% Yes), not a direct comparison.

Stress is a real concern for telecommunicators

Nearly one-third (30%) feel stressed every day coming to work, while another 36% experience stress periodically.

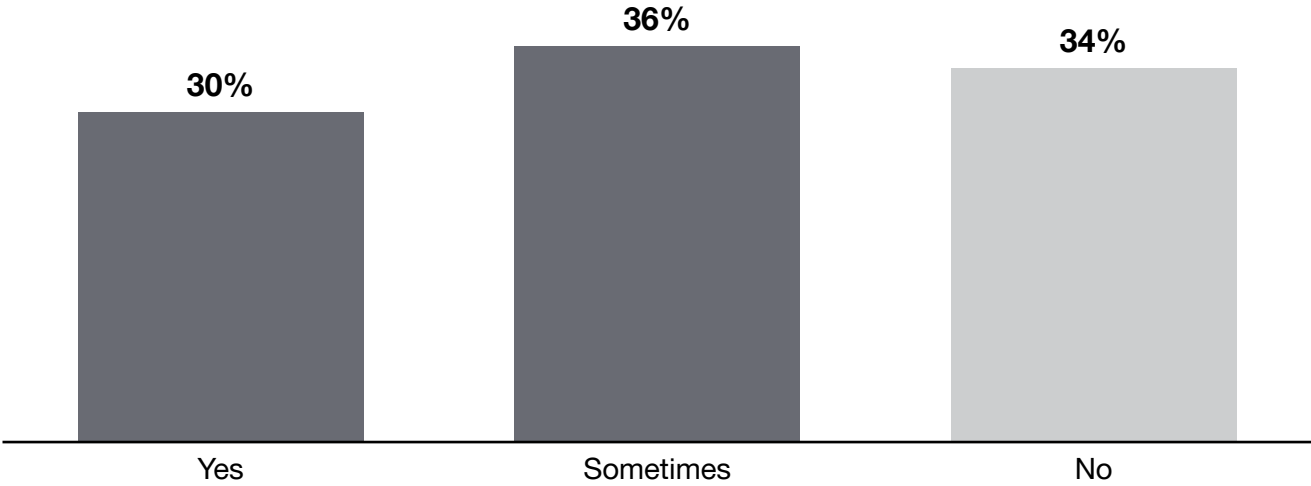
Q61. Do you feel stressed about coming to work every day?

TOTAL STRESS IMPACT

66%

Experience Work Stress

Combined total who experience work stress either daily (30%) or sometimes (36%).



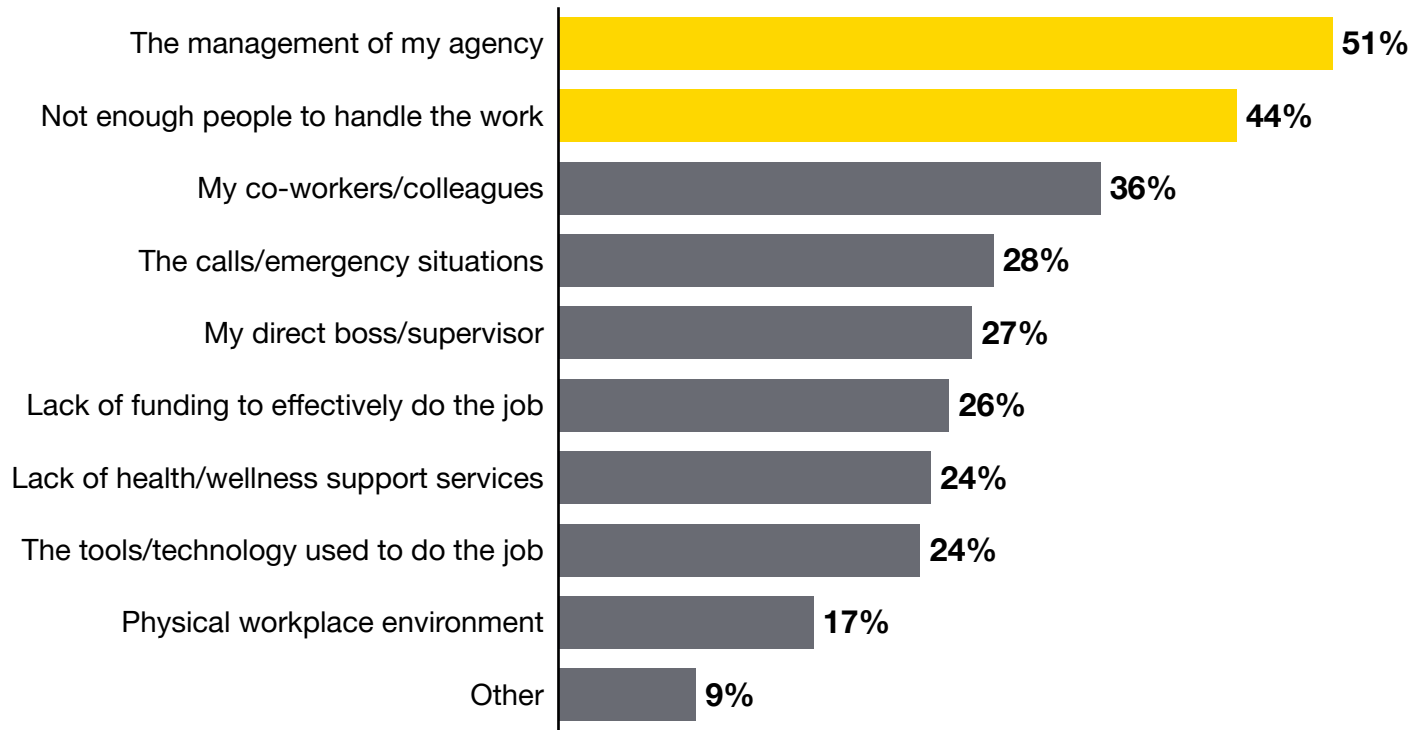
CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 was Yes/No only (68% Yes). 2026 adds a 'Sometimes' middle option, which splits the base, so the two years aren't directly comparable.

Agency management, not the calls, is the top stressor

More than half (51%) rated agency management as the most stressful part of their job. Slightly less (44%) indicated staff shortage followed by co-workers/colleagues (36%)

Q62. Which of these are the most stressful parts of your job? (select all that apply)



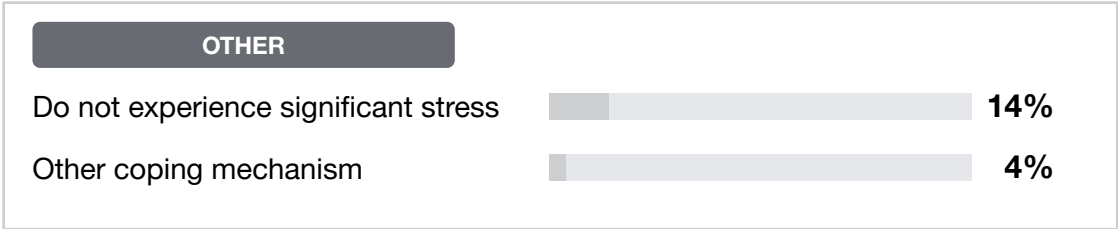
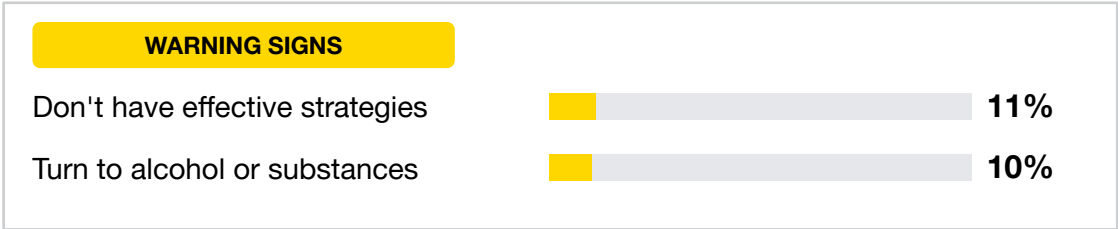
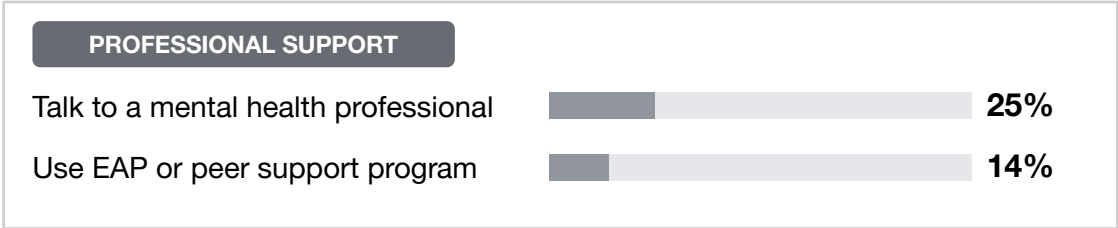
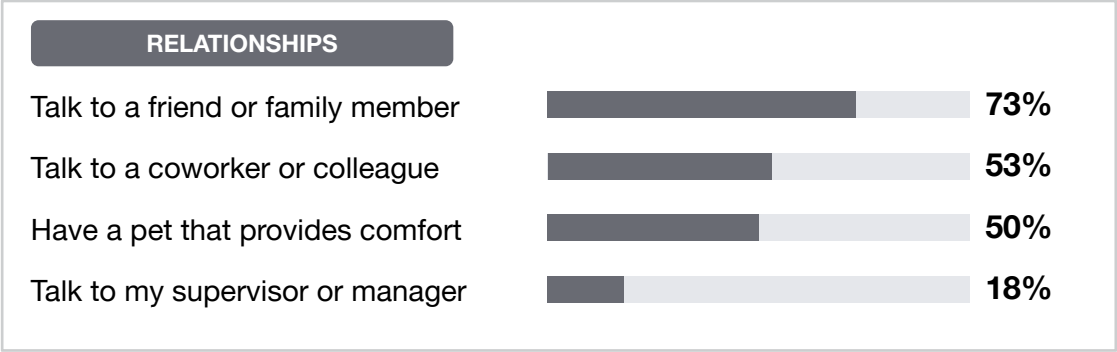
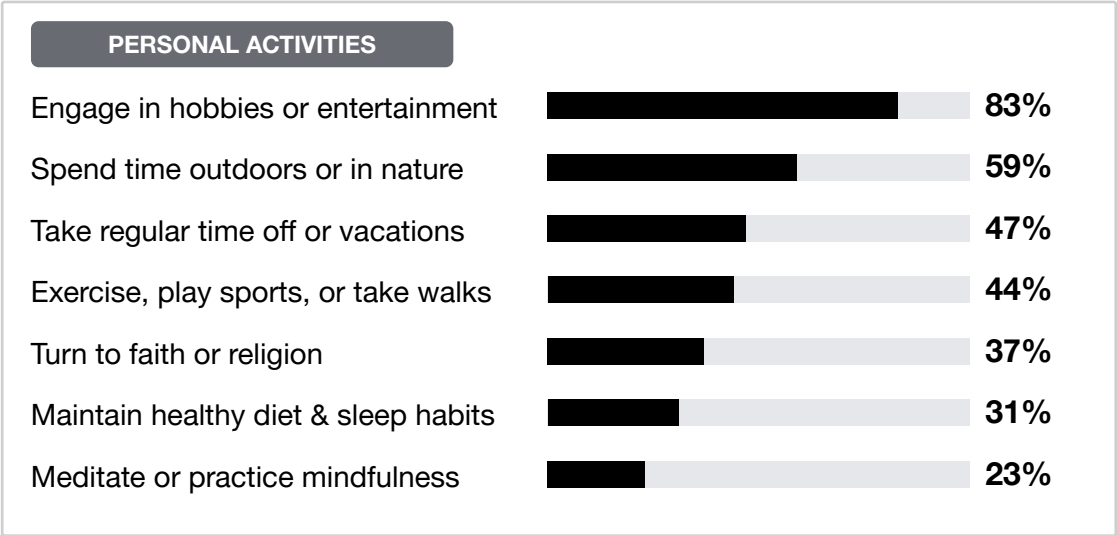
“Being run by those at the top who have never done the job and do not understand the challenges we face in the dispatch center. Wrong assumptions are often made which do not help the overall productivity or environment.”

CHANGED SINCE 2025 2025 asked respondents to pick their top 2 stressors; 2026 uses select-all. Management/agency leadership was a top stressor in both years.

Hobbies, entertainment and relationships are key coping tools

Respondents lean on personal activities and relationships more than formal support services. Hobbies or entertainment (83%) is most common followed by talking to a friend or family member (73%).

Q63. How do you manage work-related stress? (Select all that apply. Answers are organized by category to make it easier to review.)



Employer-provided stress management services contracted slightly in 2026

While EAP (81%) and CISM debriefing sessions (67%) remain the most widely offered resources, access to nearly all employer-sponsored stress management services declined slightly in 2026.

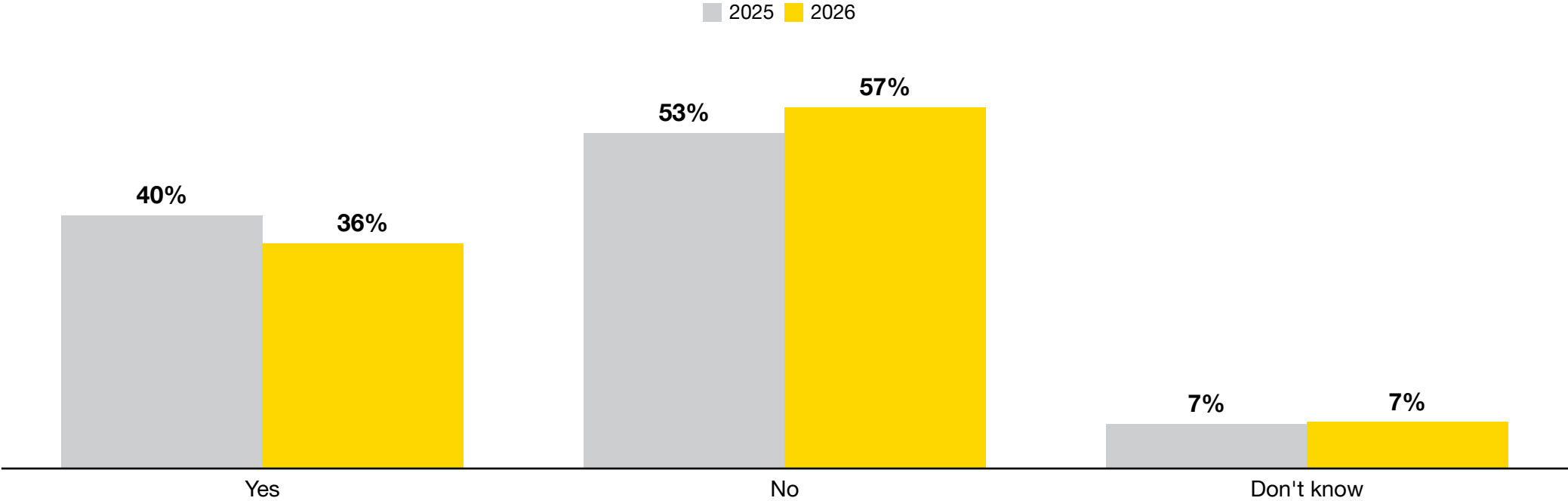
Q70. Which of the following stress management services does your employer provide? (select all that apply)

		'24	'25	'26
81%	Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	85%	86%	81%
67%	CISM debriefing	62%	71%	67%
65%	Peer support	67%	71%	65%
20%	Support / therapy animal	22%	21%	20%
16%	Stress management app	16%	23%	16%
11%	On-site mental health clinician	10%	12%	11%

New wellness initiatives slowed in 2026

Mirroring the contraction in existing services, the share of centers introducing new mental health programs fell from 40% in 2025 to 36% in 2026.

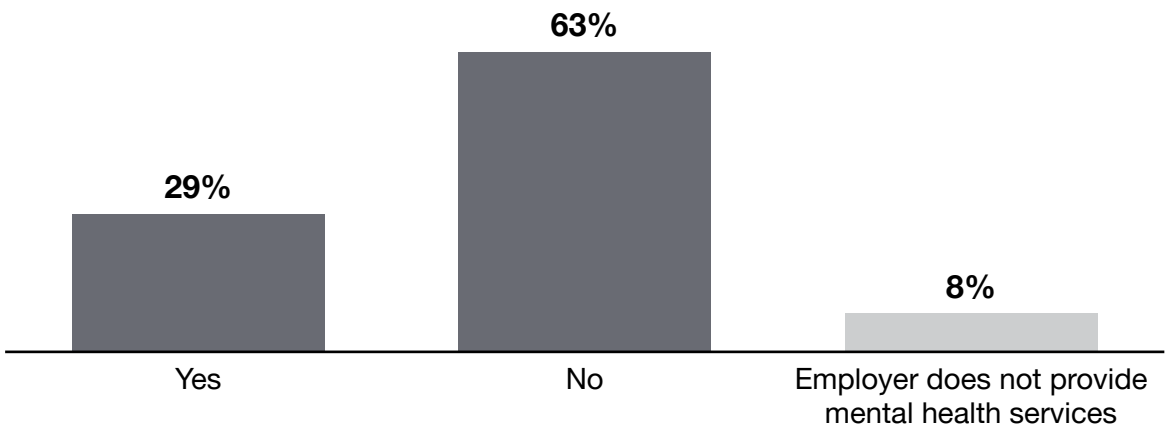
Q71. Did your center introduce any new wellness or mental health initiatives in the past year (i.e., anonymous counseling, peer support group, more days off, etc.)?



Fewer than 1 in 3 utilize employer-provided mental health support

While most agencies offer programs like EAPs or peer support, nearly two-thirds of respondents (63%) do not use them.

Q72. Do you use the mental health services your employer provides?

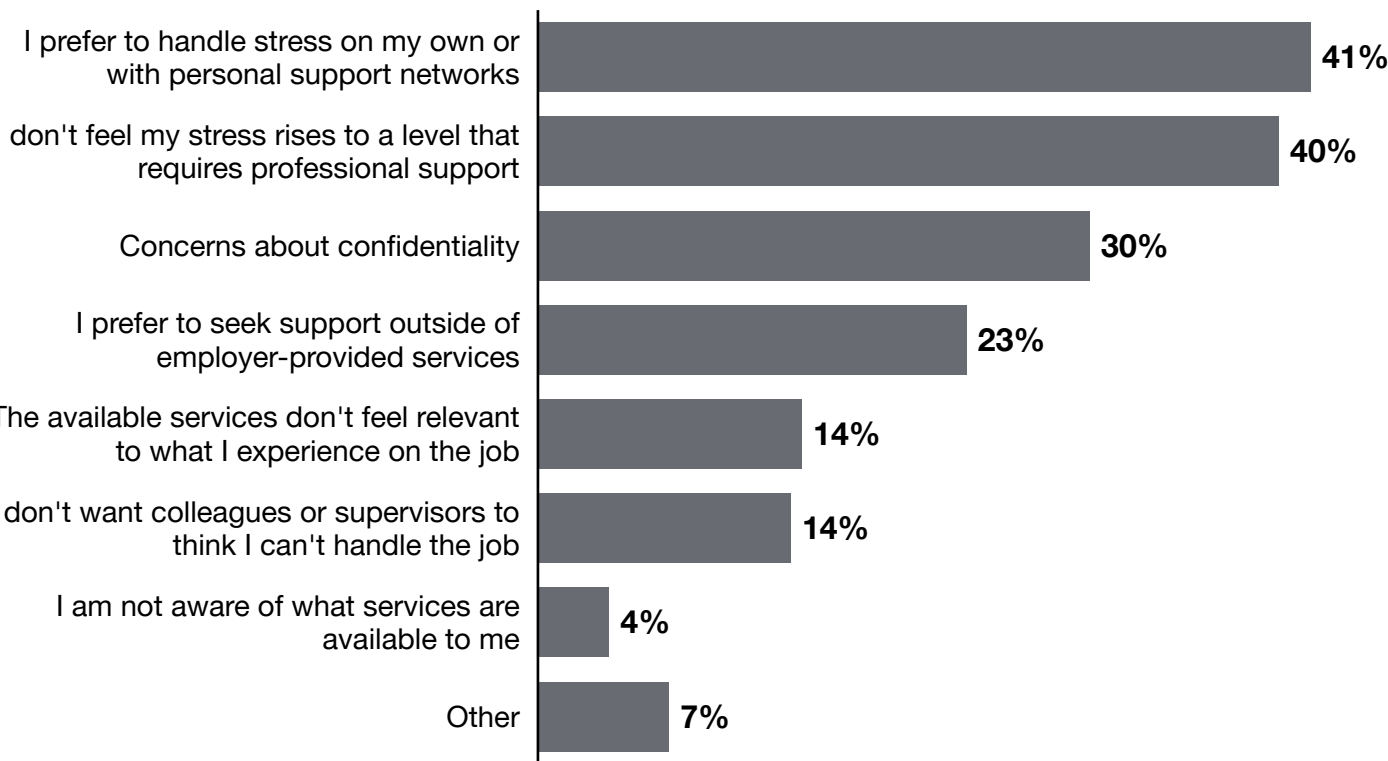


CHANGED SINCE 2025 2025 was Yes/No only (53% Yes). 2026 adds an 'employer doesn't provide' option, changing the base, though a real decline is still likely.

Self-reliance and low perceived need account for most non-use

Beyond a preference for independent coping (41%), 40% of staff feel their stress levels aren't severe enough to seek employer services. Three in ten (30%) have concerns about confidentiality.

Q73. If no, why do you not use the mental health services your employer provides? (select all that apply)



"After two free online consultations it would cost \$300/month."

"I feel like there are too many options to choose from and that the process is overwhelming to try and get help so I just don't seek help at all"

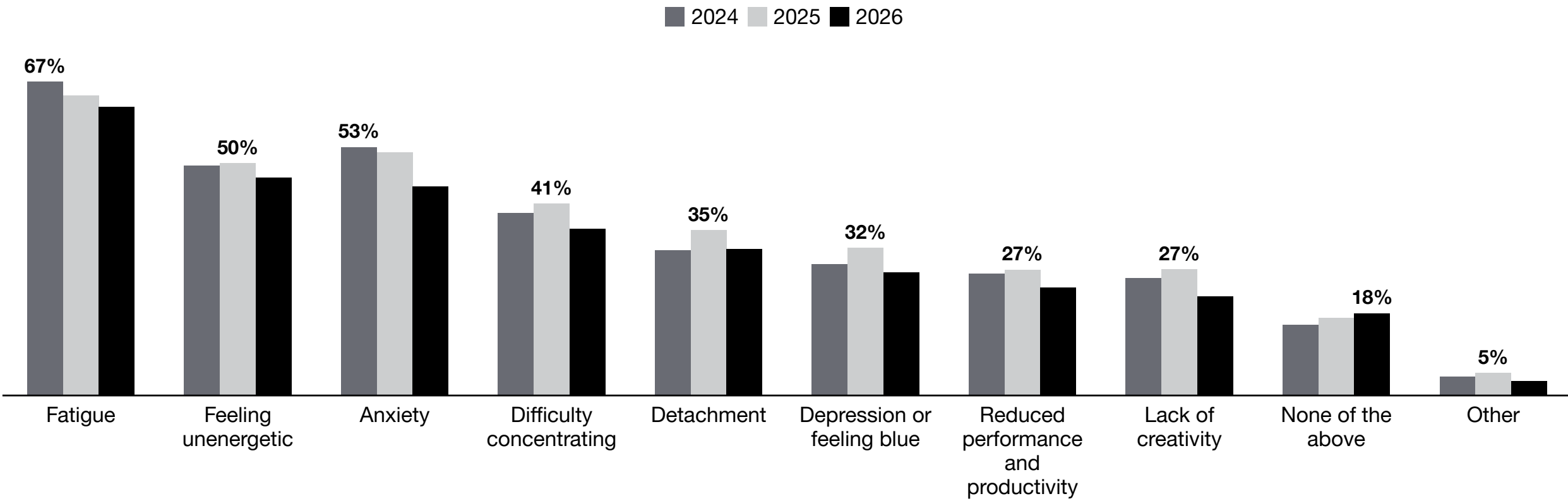
"Our EAP only covers 3 sessions and our insurance isn't great. I am not comfortable with the select therapists who are in-network."

CHANGED SINCE 2025 2026 significantly expands the option list and as such is not comparable.

Reported stress symptoms eased slightly this year

Fatigue remains the most common symptom at 62%, but it's down from 67% in 2024, and every symptom tracked declined or held flat over the same period. 18% now report none of these symptoms at all, up from 15% in 2024.

Q74. Regarding work, which of the following has applied to you within the past six months? (select all that apply)

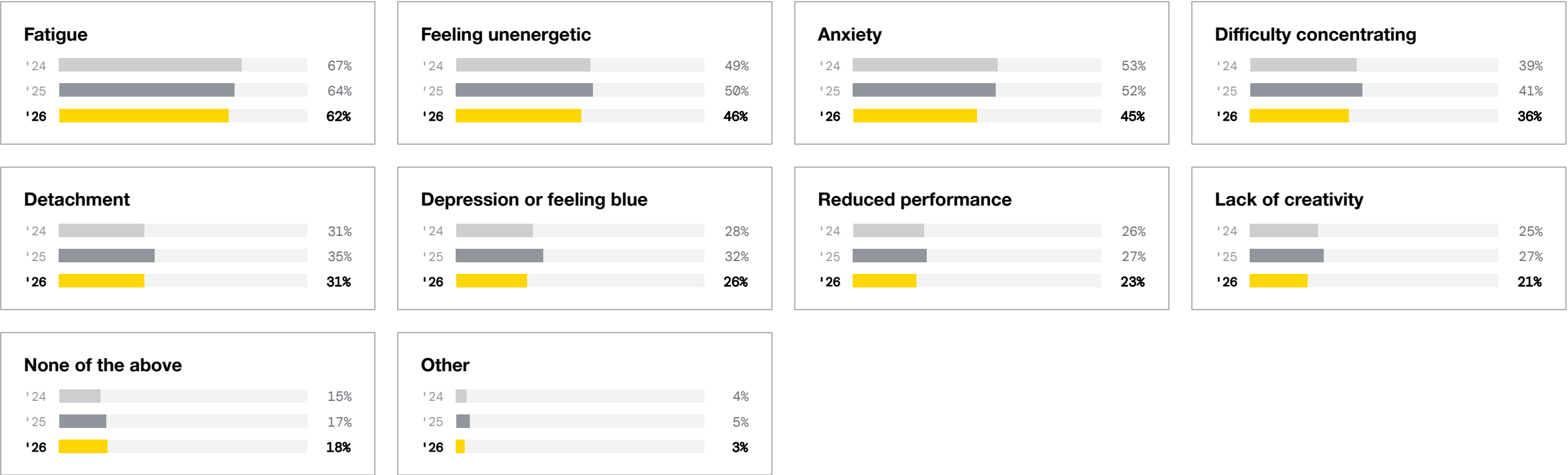


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Q74. Regarding work, which of the following has applied to you within the past six months? (select all that apply)

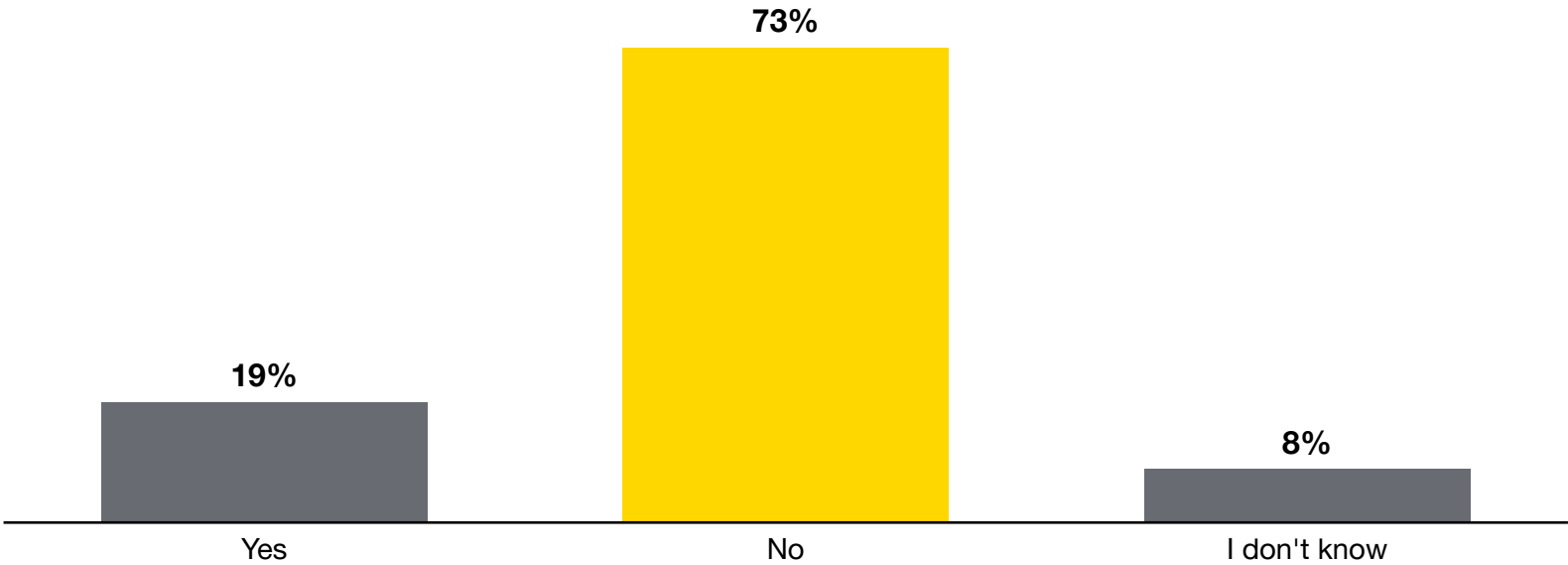
2024 2025 2026



Most centers have not deployed effective stress-reducing technology

Nearly three in four (73%) say their center hasn't deployed any technology that's meaningfully reduced stress or workload this year, while 19% say it has.

Q75. Has your center deployed any technology in the past 12 months that has meaningfully reduced stress or workload for call takers?



SECTION 10

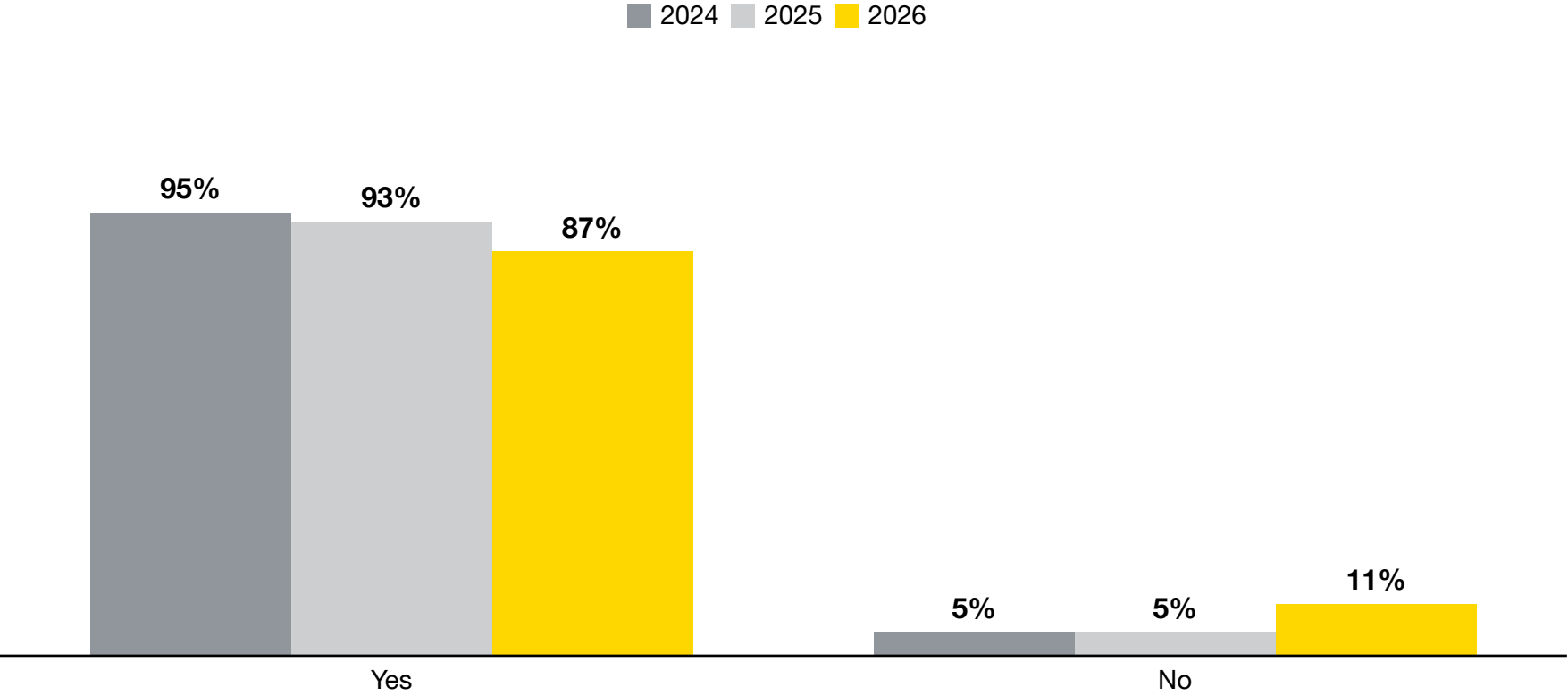
Training, Onboarding & New Hire Readiness



New-hire training program availability continues to decline

While 87% of centers maintain formal onboarding programs, availability has dropped 8 percentage points since 2024 as centers without programs more than doubled (to 11%).

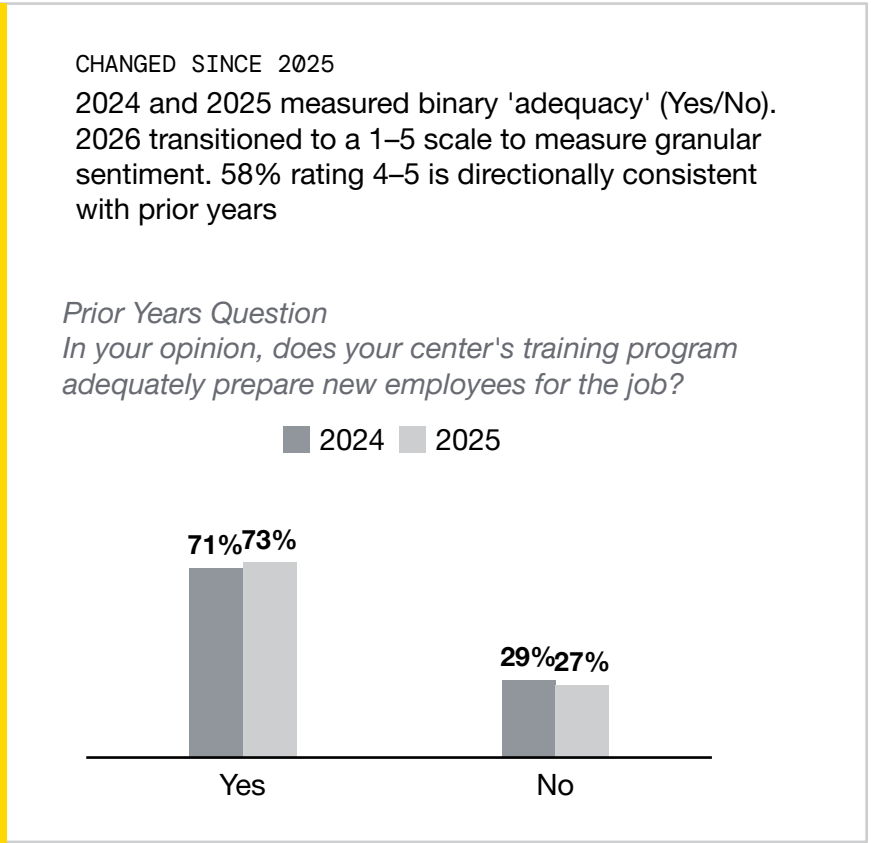
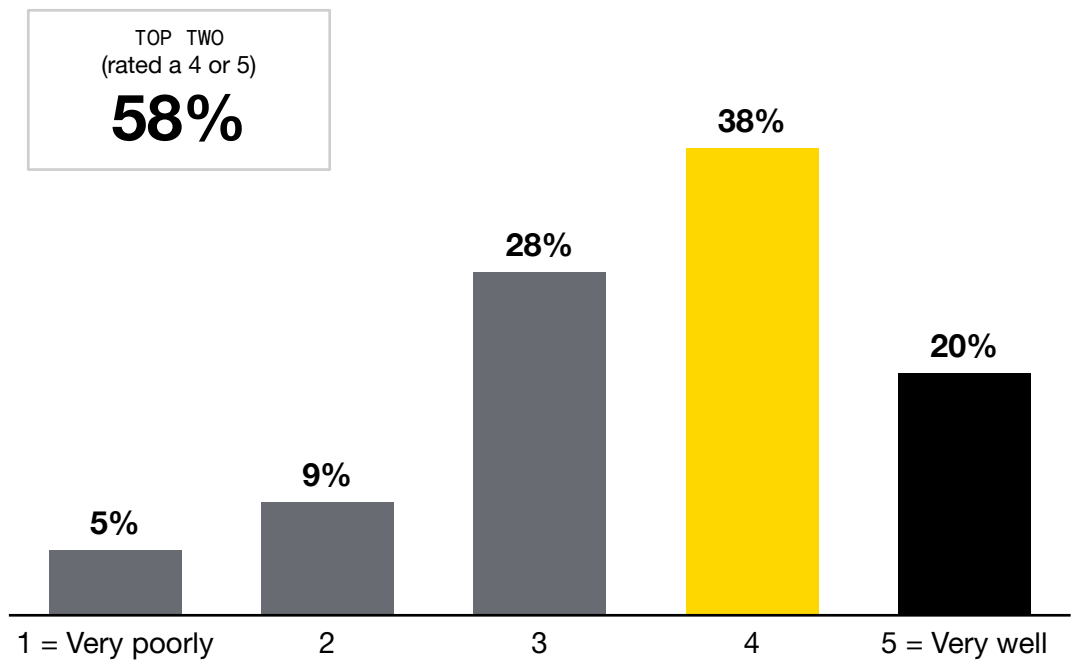
Q76. Do you have a new hire training program?



Most rate new-hire training favorably, though room for improvement remains

Six in ten (58%) of respondents rate their center's training program a 4 or 5 out of 5, while 28% view effectiveness as moderate.

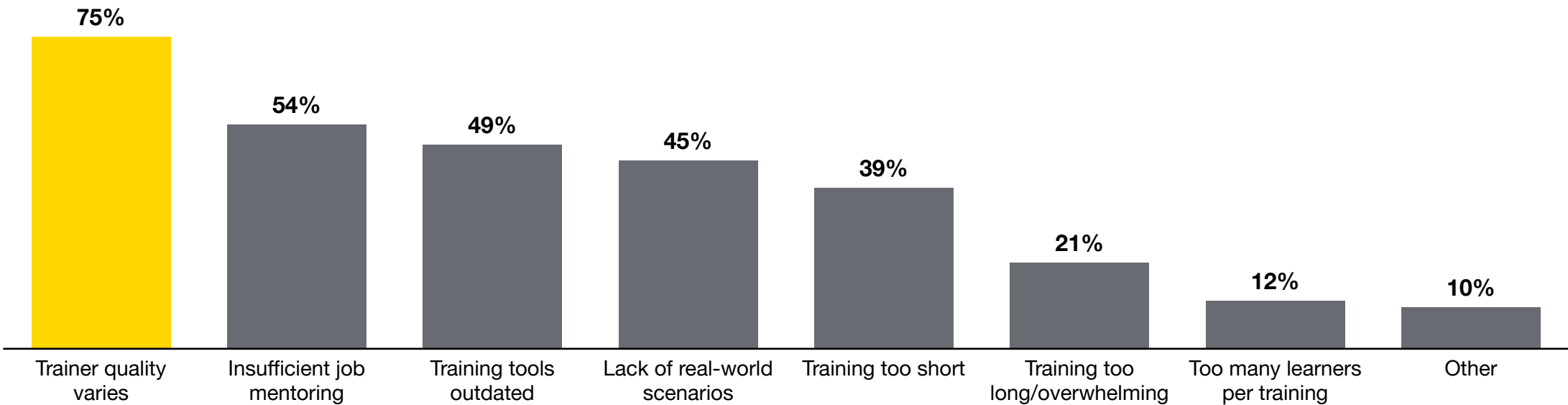
Q77. How well does your center's training program prepare new telecommunicators for the job? (please use a 5-point scale where 1 = Very poorly and 5 = Very well)



Inconsistent trainers are the top complaint

Where training falls short, varying trainer quality (75%) is the most-cited reason. More than half (54%) indicated insufficient job mentoring, followed by outdated training tools (49%)

Q78. If you indicated very poorly or poorly above, please elaborate on why. (select all that apply)



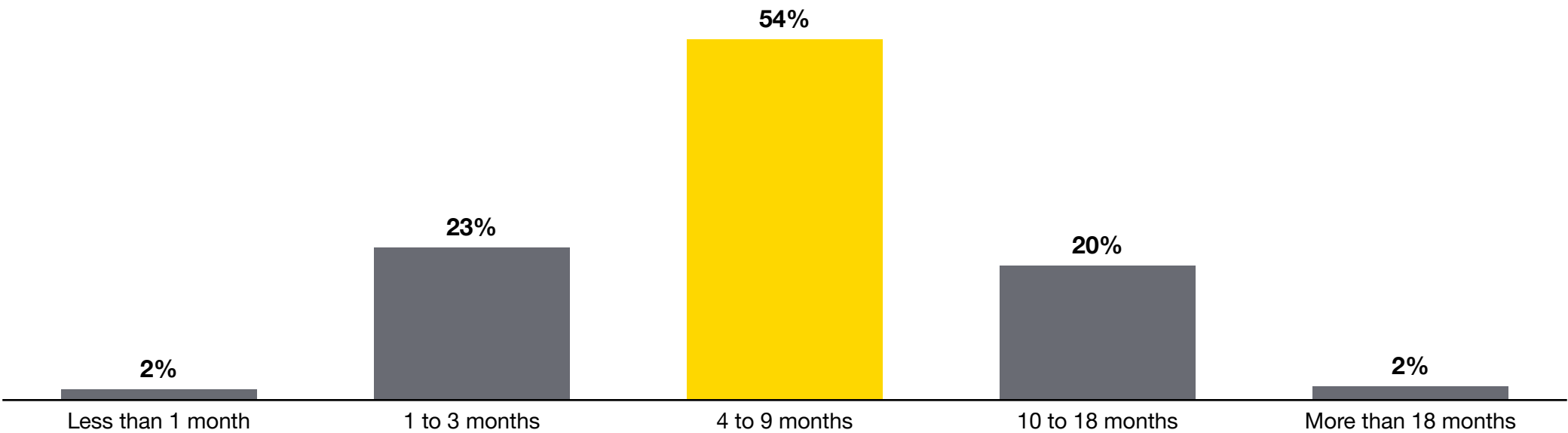
CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 asked respondents to rank these reasons; 2026 uses select-all percentages. While the survey methodology shifted from ranking in 2025 to select-all in 2026, trainer quality and mentoring remained the top two concerns across both years.

Most new hires take four to nine months to train

More than half (54%) indicated four to nine months, consistent with last year's comparable band. One in four (23%) indicated one to three months.

Q79. How long does it take to train new employees?



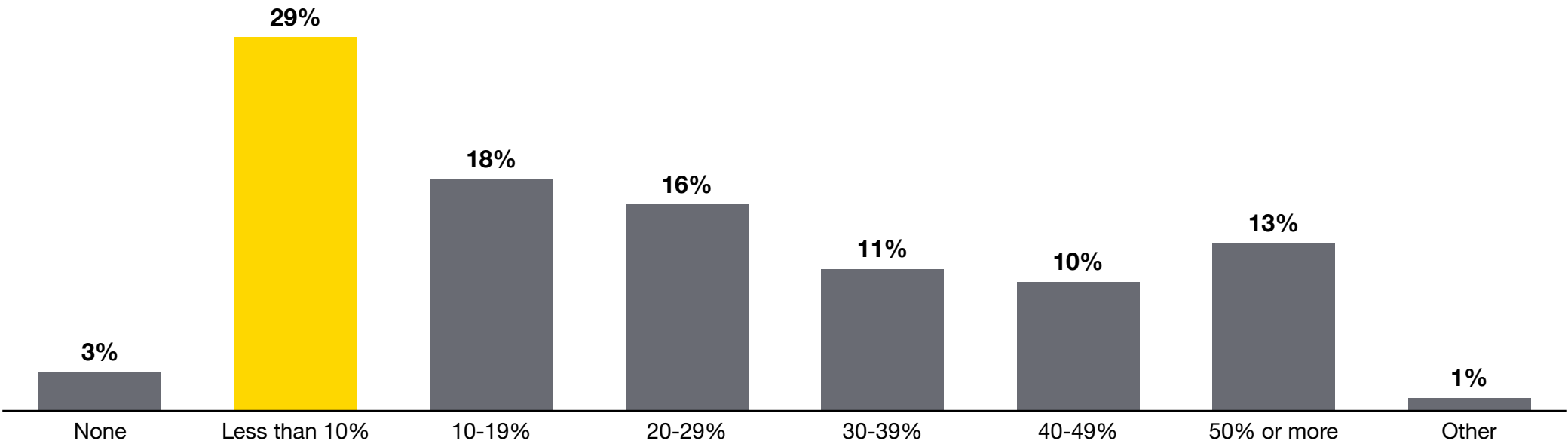
CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 and 2026 used slightly different time bands. Both years show the 4-12 month range as most common (53% in 2025's '5-12 months', 54% in 2026's '4-9 months').

New-hire failure rates improved meaningfully

Centers reporting failure rates of 50% or higher fell from 22% in 2025 to 13% this year, while nearly a third now report failure rates under 10%.

Q80. What percentage of new employees fail your center's training program?

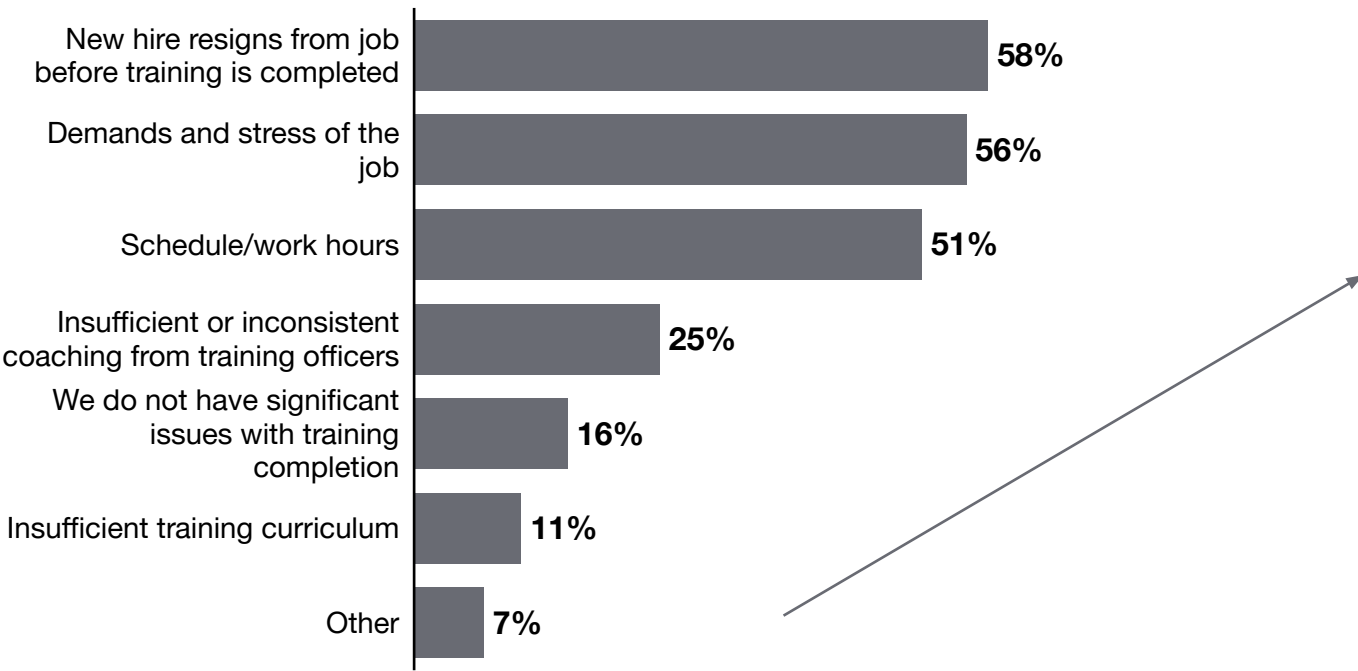


CHANGED SINCE 2025 2025 used five broad bands (e.g., "10% to 20%," "21% to 49%"); 2026 splits the middle range into four narrower bands and adds a distinct "None" option. For direct year-over-year comparison: '<10%' failure rose from 24% in 2025 to 32% in 2026 (including 3% 'None'). '50%+' failure dropped from 22% in 2025 to 13% in 2026.

Early resignation is now the top reason training doesn't finish

New hires resigning before completing training jumped from 37% to 58% year over year, now the most-cited reason, ahead of job demands and stress (56%, down from 74% in 2025).

Q81. Why do new hires at your center not complete training? (select all that apply)



WHAT "OTHER" RESPONSES REVEAL

Over a third of write-in responses (38 of 102) cited the same root cause: new hires struggling to multitask under call volume, not captured in any structured option. Smaller recurring themes included hiring/candidate quality and toxic training-floor culture

"Honestly, the job - the way we perform it at our center- requires such a degree of multitasking such that most people - as a general population statistic - cannot manage to do the job at the level we say is required."

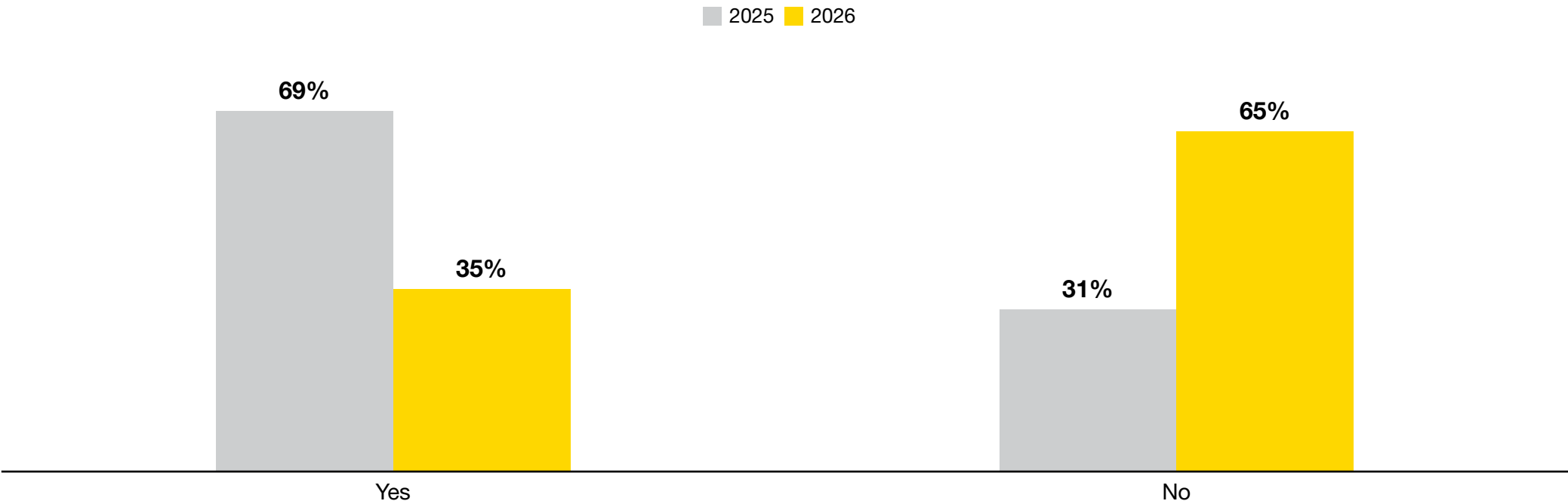
CHANGED SINCE 2025

2026 renames "Career change" to "New hire resigns before training is completed" and merges 2025's two coaching options into one, which is nearly flat once combined (26% in 2025 vs. 25% in 2026). This may have made this option easier to select accurately. Some of the 21-point increase could reflect better measurement rather than a change in actual resignation behavior.

Investment in trainee-success strategies dropped sharply

Just one in three (35%) of centers tried something new this year, down from 69% in 2025.

Q82. Have you implemented any new strategies in the past year to improve trainee success?



What centers changed to help trainees succeed

Most centers that made changes rewrote their training program outright or introduced AI-driven simulated call practice. Others added more frequent feedback, dedicated mentors, or new training staff.

Q83. If yes, please elaborate on what was implemented.

Curriculum & program overhaul

Centers rewriting or restructuring their training program's content, phases, or timeline.

- “Complete revamp of the training program is ongoing, trying to improve what works and place what doesn't.”
- “Completely revamped training program and extended academy to 10 weeks.”

AI & simulated-call practice tools

AI-driven platforms and simulated call scenarios used to practice before taking live calls.

- “A new AI training platform that simulates calls.”
- “Added classroom time, simulated calls with AI, etc.”
- “Implement simulated call practices.”

More frequent feedback, evaluations & check-ins

Added structure around evaluating trainees and giving them regular, documented feedback.

- “More frequent performance evaluations and feedback sessions.”
- “Constructive feedback done weekly to know where strength lies.”

Mentorship & dedicated CTO pairing

Pairing trainees with a consistent mentor or coach throughout onboarding.

- “Introduced a mentoring program that pairs each trainee with an experienced dispatcher.”
- “Added more peer mentoring during the first few months.”
- “Implementation of structured coaching and mentorship programs.”

New training staff or dedicated roles

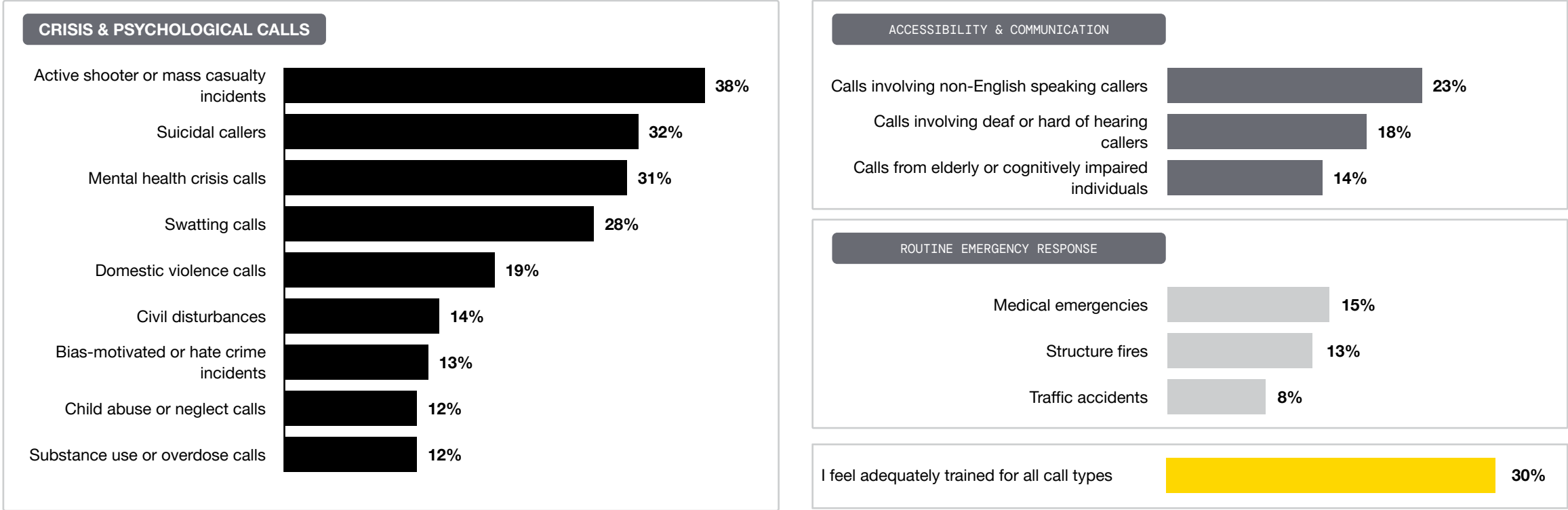
Adding or designating staff specifically responsible for training and trainee support.

- “A new training committee has been appointed and we are re-writing the training program.”
- “Dedicated training assistant position to improve oversight, continuity, and communication.”
- “New trainers, more communications, put someone in charge of trainers.”

Training gaps concentrate in crisis and psychological calls

Four in ten (38%) feel undertrained for active shooter/mass casualty incidents, with suicidal callers (32%) and mental health crises calls (31%) close behind. However, 30% report they are adequately trained for all calls.

Q84. For which of the following call types do you feel your training has been inadequate? (select all that apply)



CHANGED SINCE 2025

2026 expands the list from 12 to 15 call types and reworks several labels, so most items aren't directly comparable. But the same four call types - active shooter, suicidal callers, mental health crises, and swatting, topped the list in both years.



SECTION 11

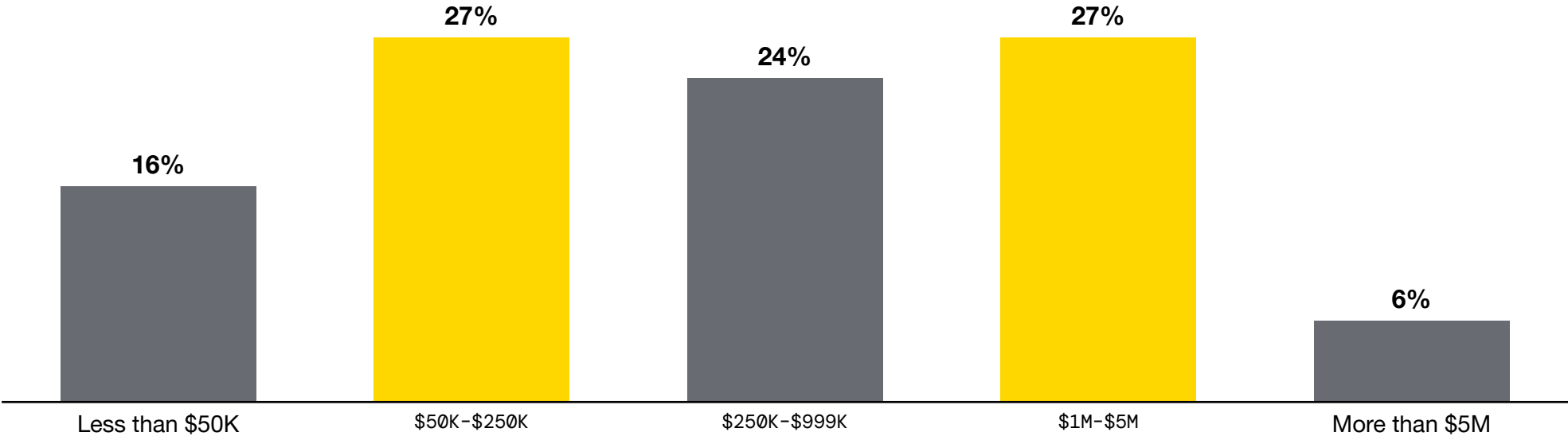
Technology Budget & Future Investment



Technology budgets vary widely, with no typical amount across centers

Budgets span two orders of magnitude, from under \$50K to more than \$5M. Three brackets each capture roughly a quarter of centers: \$50K to \$250K (27%), \$250K to \$999K (24%), and \$1M to \$5M (27%), while only small shares fall at the extremes.

Q85. What is your ECC's approximate annual technology budget?

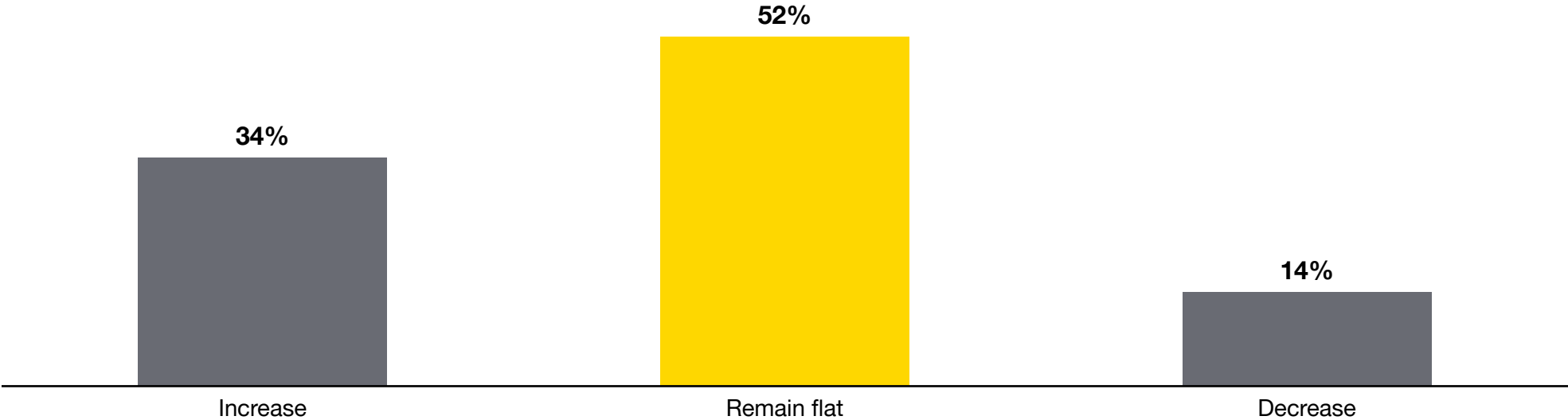


WHO ANSWERED THIS QUESTION These results are based only on respondents who were familiar with their ECC's technology budget.

Most centers expect no change in their technology budget, but growth is more likely than cuts

Half (52%) expect their technology budget to remain flat next year. Among those who anticipate a shift, growth is far more likely than cuts: 34% expect an increase versus just 14% expecting a decrease.

Q86. Do you expect your technology budget to increase, decrease, or remain flat next fiscal year?

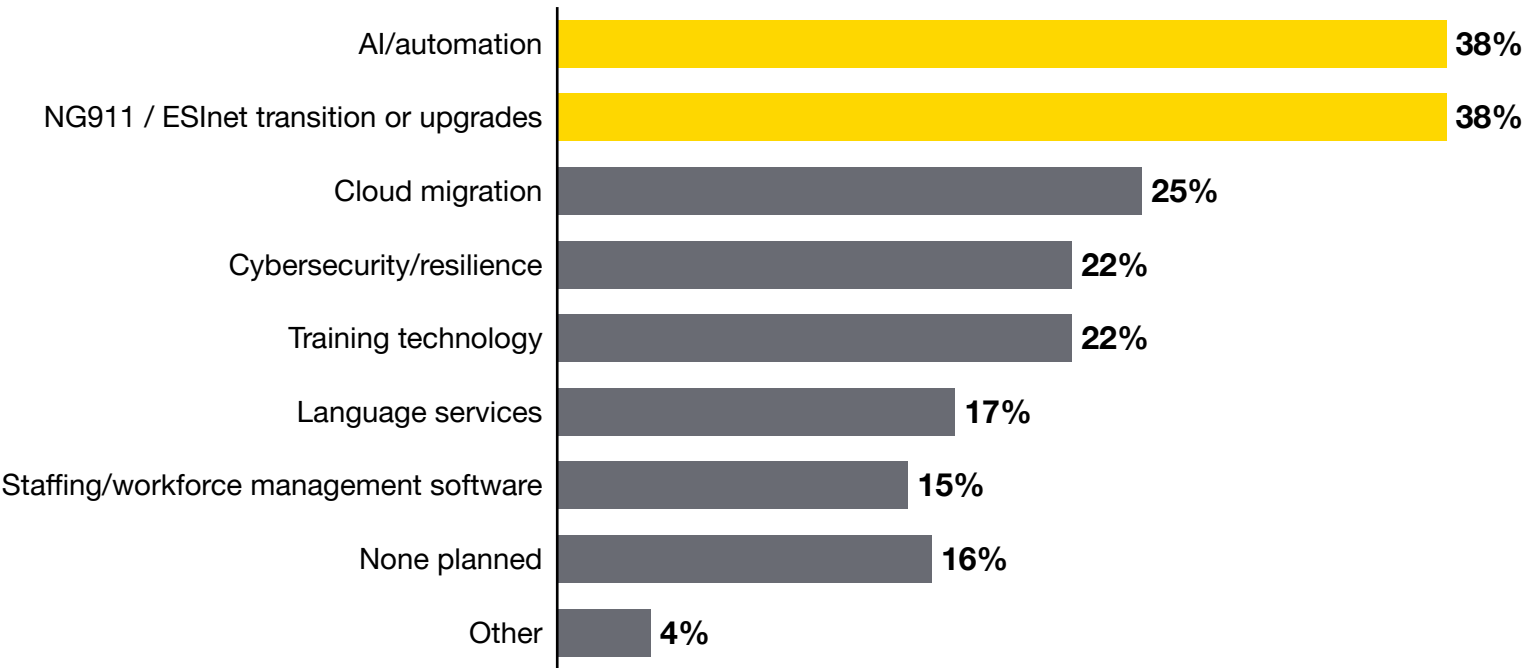


WHO ANSWERED THIS QUESTION These results are based only on respondents who were familiar with their ECC’s technology budget.

AI and NG911 lead planned investment

Four in ten (38% each) cite AI/automation and NG911/ESInet transition or upgrades as top priorities for the next round of spending. One in four (25%) indicated cloud migration.

Q87. Which technology categories is your center most likely to invest in over the next 18 months? (select up to three options)



WHO ANSWERED THIS QUESTION These results are based only on respondents who were familiar with their ECC’s technology budget.

SECTION 12

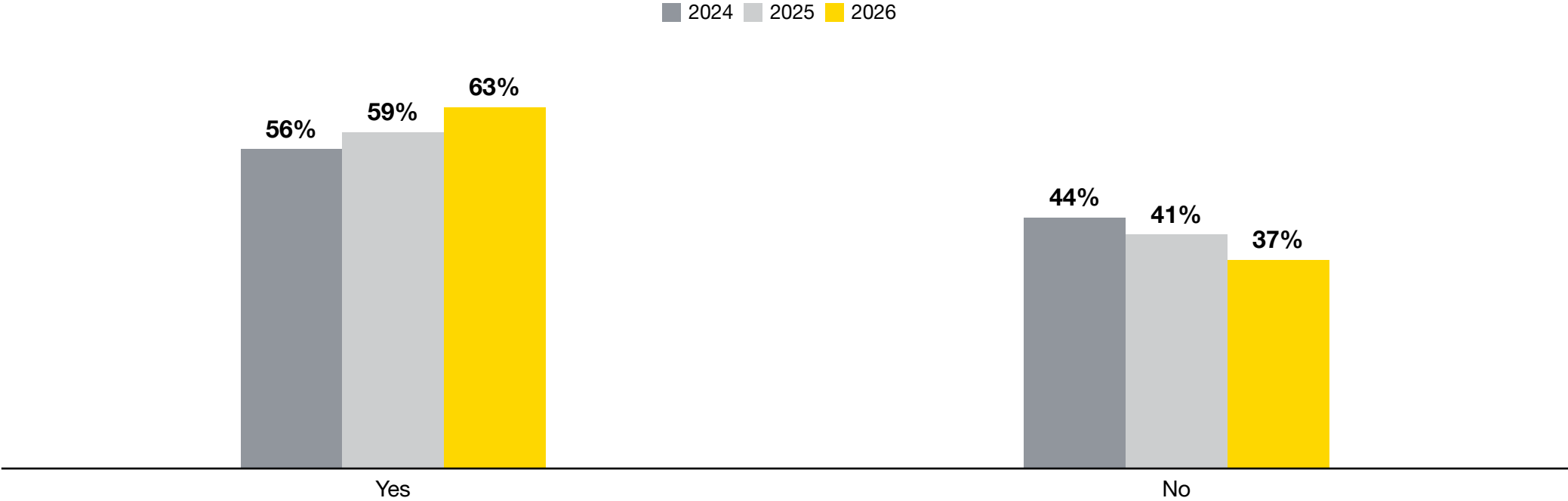
Workforce Demographics & Diversity



Most respondents live where they work

Six in ten (63%) reside in the jurisdiction they serve, up from 59% in 2025 and 56% in 2024, a steady three-year climb

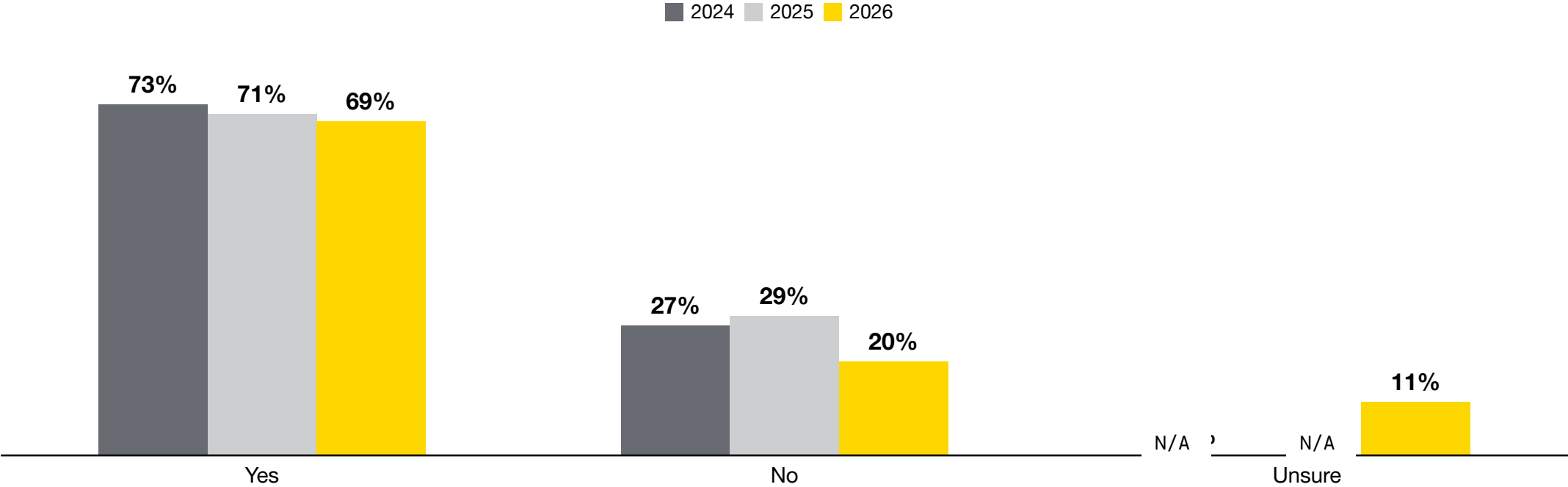
Q88. Do you live in the jurisdiction you work for?



Most centers say they reflect their community

Seven in ten (69%) believe their center's demographics mirror the community it serves.

Q89. Do the demographics of your center mirror those of the community your center serves?



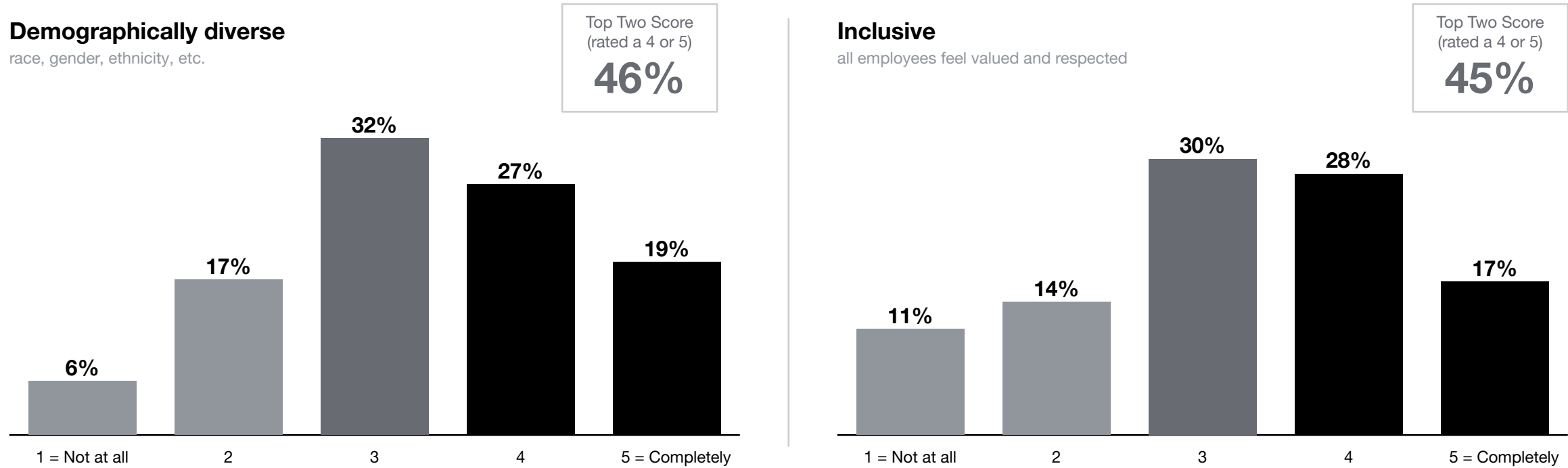
CHANGED SINCE 2025

2026 adds an 'Unsure' option. Most of the shift came from 'No,' which fell from 29% to 20%, while 'Yes' held closer to flat (71% to 69%), suggesting some previously forced 'No' answers were actually uncertainty.

Diversity and inclusion ratings land in the middle

Less than half rate their workplace diverse (46%) or inclusive (45%).

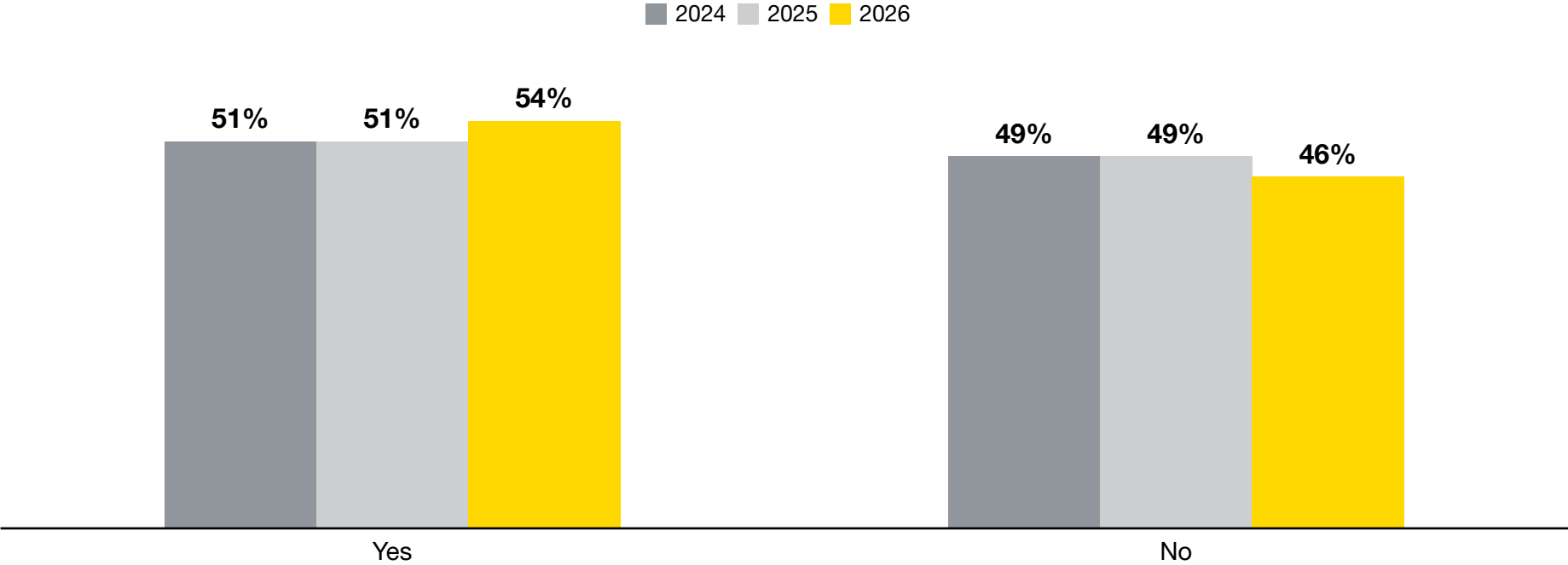
Q90. How would you rate your workplace on each of the following dimensions? (please use a 5-point scale where 1 = Not at all, and 5 = Completely)



Executive teams are seen as modestly more diverse

More than half (54%) consider their leadership diverse, up slightly from 51% last year.

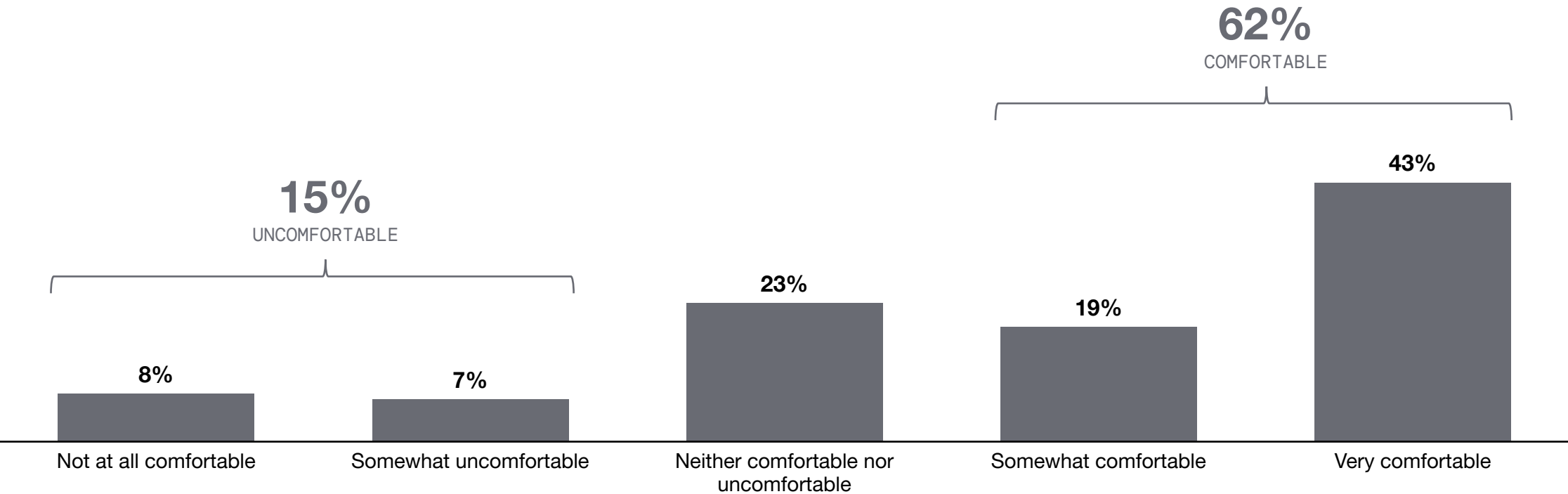
Q91. Do you consider your executive team (supervisors, managers, directors) diverse?



The majority are comfortable sharing identity at work

Six in ten (62%) are at least somewhat comfortable sharing their identity at work, well ahead of the 15% who report discomfort in some form.

Q92. How comfortable are you sharing your identity, culture, and background in the workplace?

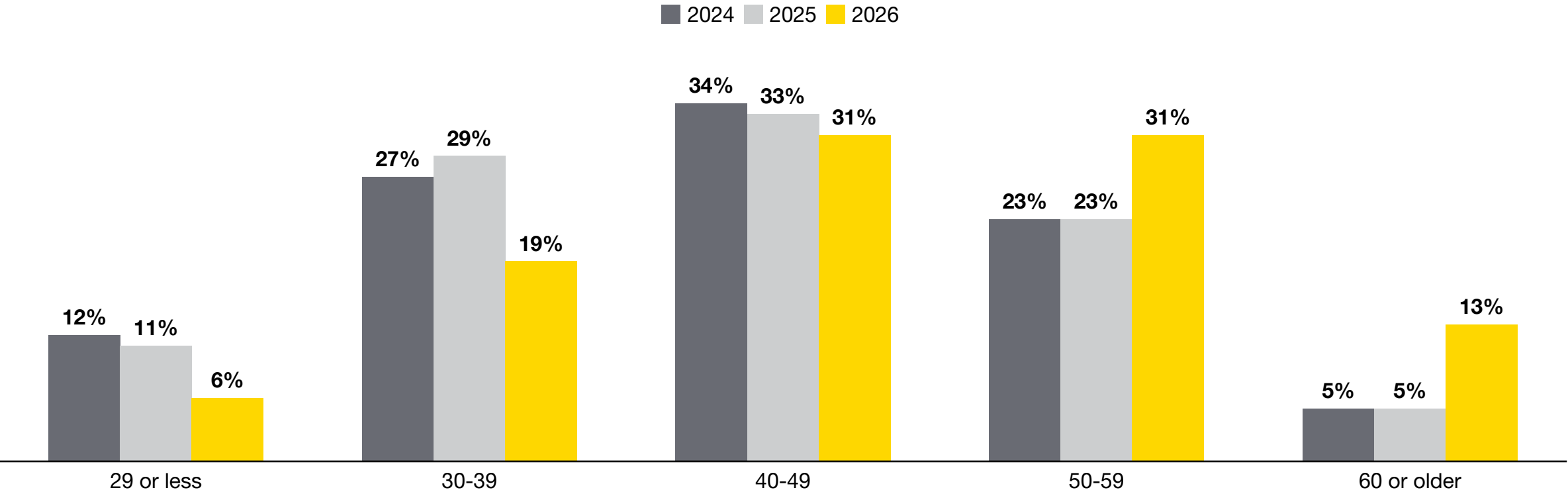


CHANGED SINCE 2025 2025 used different category labels. 'Very comfortable' is roughly comparable: 41% (2025) vs 43% (2026).

The workforce skews toward mid-career and older

There was a marked increase in those who were 60 or older (+8 percentage points to 13%). Similarly, those in the 50-59 age range increased by 8 percentage points to 31%

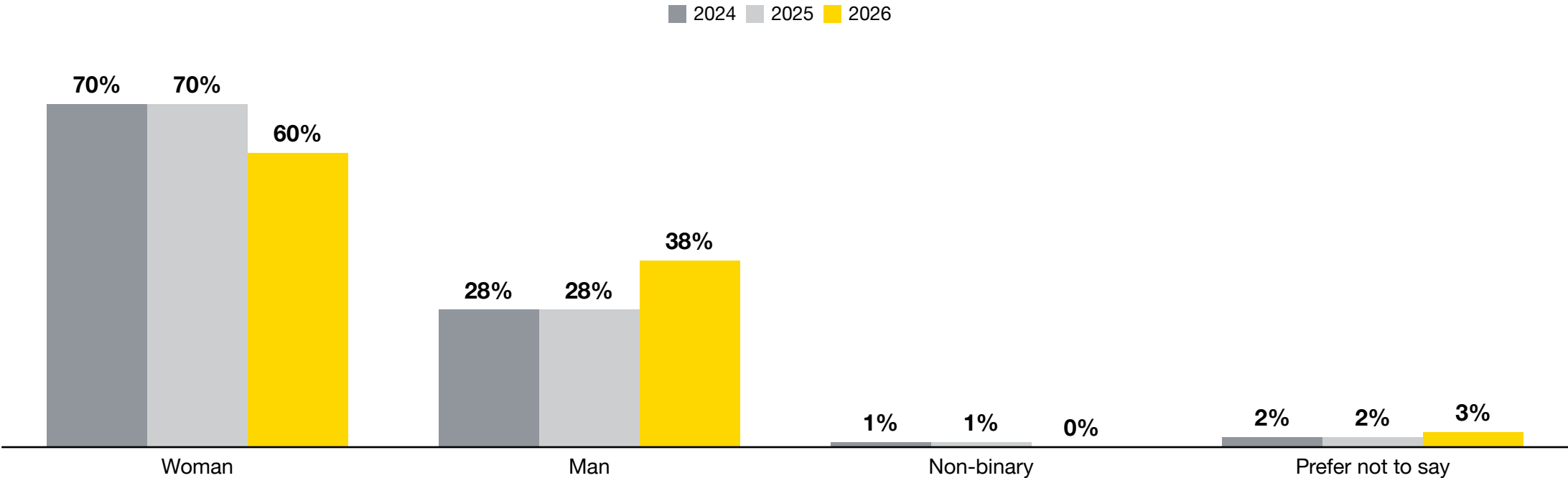
Q93. Which of the following ranges include your age?



The gender balance is shifting

Six in ten (60%) respondents identify as women, down from 70% in 2025, while the share identifying as men rose from 28% to 38%.

Q94. What is your gender identity?

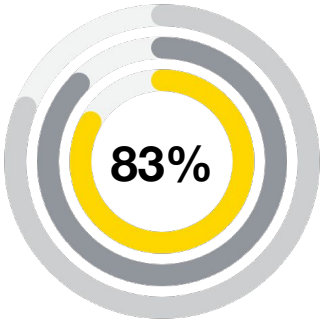


The Majority of respondents identify as white

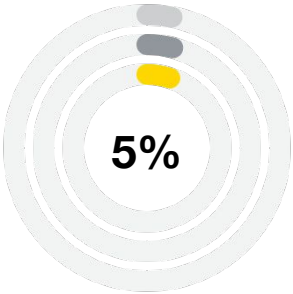
White respondents account for 83% of the sample, well ahead of Black (5%) and Hispanic/Latino (4%) respondents.

Q96. Which race/ethnicity best describes you?

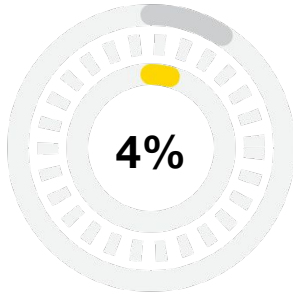
2024 2025 2026



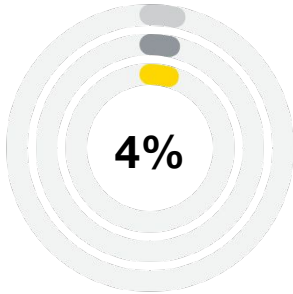
White
81 · 87 · 83



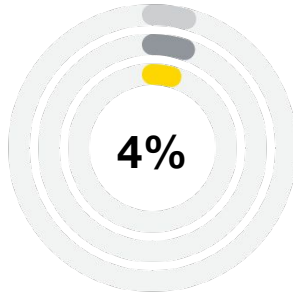
Black or African American
3 · 4 · 5



Hispanic or Latino
9 · N/A · 4



Prefer not to say
3 · 3 · 4



Other
4 · 5 · 4

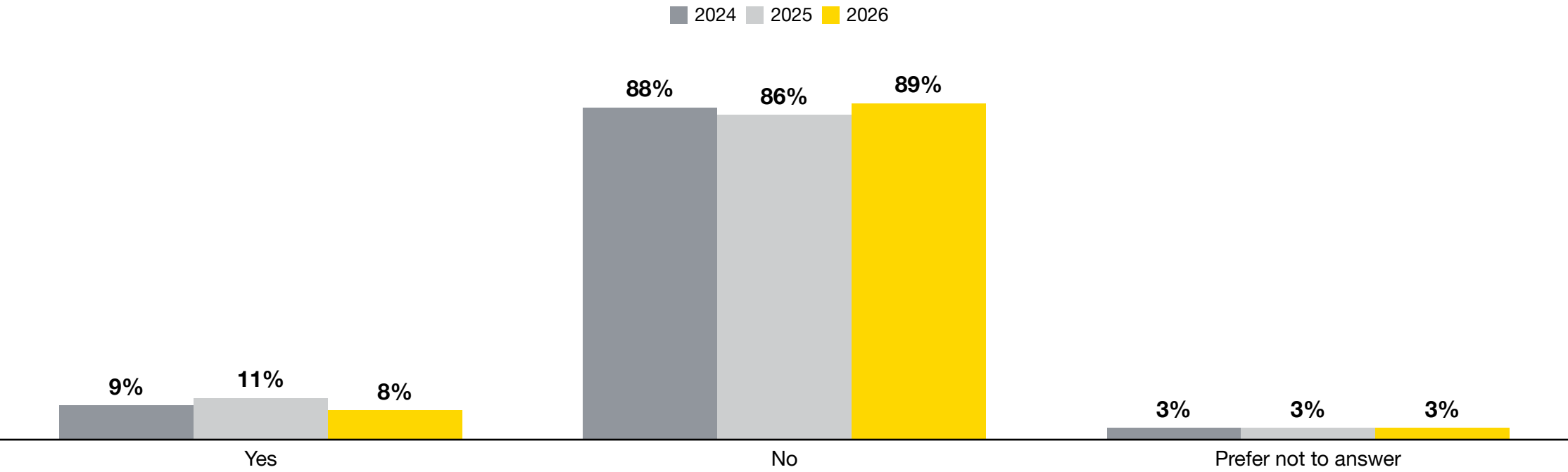
CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 didn't offer "Hispanic or Latino" as an answer option on this question, which is why that year shows N/A rather than 0%. Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino were still present that year (11% on a separate origin question), likely selecting another category here instead, which may partly explain why "White" was highest in 2025 (87%) relative to 2024 and 2026.

Hispanic and Latino representation held steady

Approximately one in ten (8%) of respondents identify as Hispanic or Latino this year, roughly in line with the three-year average, though down from 11% in 2025.

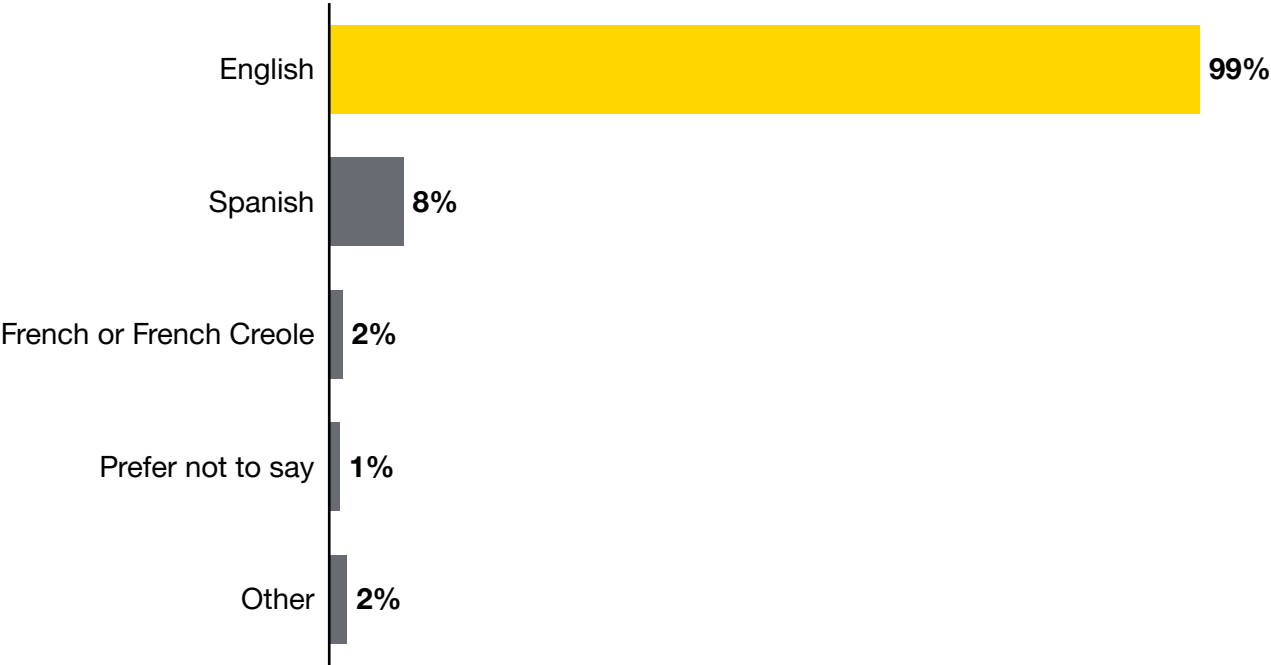
Q95. Are you of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin?



English dominates, Spanish a distant second

Virtually all respondents (99%) speak English, compared to just 8% for Spanish. Every other language, including French/French Creole and other write-ins, is cited by 2% or fewer.

Q97. What language(s) do you speak? (select all that apply)



CHANGED SINCE 2025

2025 asked this as a single-pick question; 2026 allows select-all, which naturally raises the English share. Spanish is roughly stable (7% vs 8%).

What else respondents wanted us to know

Leadership and management concerns were the most common closing thought, closely followed by genuine passion for the work and the toll of chronic stress. Many also called for better pay and recognition as first responders.

Q98. Is there anything else you’d like to share about your experience working in emergency communications?

Leadership & management concerns

Frustration with inconsistent, out-of-touch, or untrustworthy leadership within their center.

“Management plays a key role in morale.”

“Only that you need your leadership on board in order to succeed and have a happy workplace.”

Passion for the work despite the challenges

A recurring sense that the job is deeply rewarding, even when it's difficult.

“I love my job and it's been the most rewarding career I've ever had. It's also been the most physically, mentally, and emotionally demanding, and our industry as a whole does not compensate us adequately in salary or benefits for the job we perform.”

Burnout, stress & emotional toll

The emotional and physical weight of the job, and its long-term toll on wellbeing.

“It can be both exhausting and rewarding and I enjoy helping others.”

“I think the public often underestimates how emotionally demanding emergency communications can be.”

Lack of recognition, pay & first responder status

A desire for better pay, respect, and formal recognition as first responders.

“Rewarding, however the workload, low pay, and lack of recognition make it a challenging career.”

“Overworked and underpaid.” “We need to be classified as first responders.”

Generational & workforce culture differences

Perceived differences in work ethic and expectations between newer and more tenured staff.

“Generational and work ethic differences. People have become more self focused and have forgotten the why we do what we do.”

About AXON

Axon is the global leader in public safety technology. Founded in 1993, the company has grown from its original mission of reimagining conflict in law enforcement into a full ecosystem serving first responders, government agencies, and communities worldwide. Axon's connected network includes TASER energy devices, body-worn and fixed cameras, drones, digital evidence and records management, real-time operations software, and AI-driven insights, all designed to work together to give public safety professionals greater speed, clarity, and accountability in the moments that matter most.

About Axon 911

Axon 911 is the complete 911 platform built for the AI era, covering the entire emergency communications center from cloud-native call-handling infrastructure to assistive AI, from the moment a call comes in to the moment a case closes. Deployed across more than 1,300 public-safety answering points in all 50 states, Axon 911 is built natively inside the broader Axon public safety ecosystem, connecting 911 intelligence to Axon Fusus, Drone as First Responder programs, Evidence.com, Axon Records, and the full Axon sensor network, so the intelligence generated on every call reaches every responder and every outcome that follows. Axon 911 was formed through Axon's acquisitions of Carbyne and Prepared, two of the most widely deployed and trusted companies in emergency communications technology. Together as Axon 911, they form the only complete platform for the modern 911 center.



Methodology

In May of 2026, AXON and Carbyne surveyed a random sample of 1,507 Emergency Communications Center personnel across North America, including the United States and Canada. The respondents included dispatchers and telecommunicators, managers and shift supervisors, Assistant Directors and Directors, and Deputy and Sheriff titles.



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