



Adapting in a Time of Change Insights from the Field

2024 AIR National Survey Results

2025 UT Institutional Effectiveness Summit
July 8-10, 2025

*Special Thanks & Credit to Darlena Jones
AIR Senior Director of Analytics, Research & Education*

Christine M Keller

AIR Executive Director & CEO



- May 2017-Current
- Association experience at APLU - VP of Research & Policy Analysis
- IR experience at KU – Asst Director of Special Projects
- ***Avid Runner & Dachshund Mom***

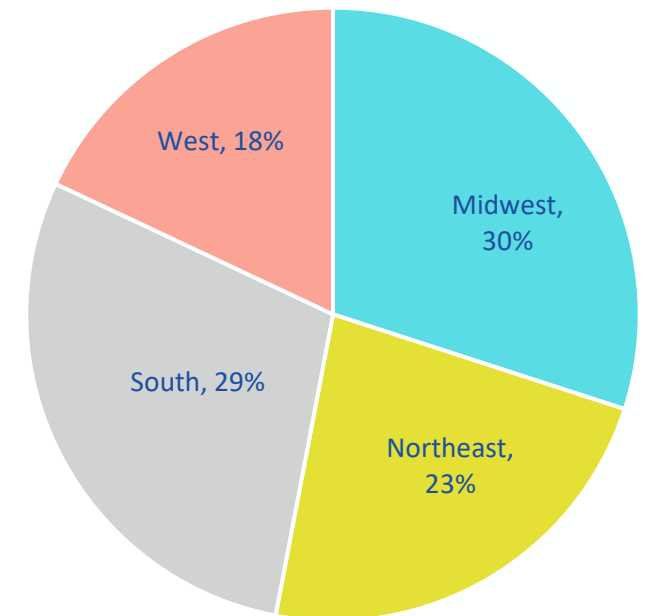
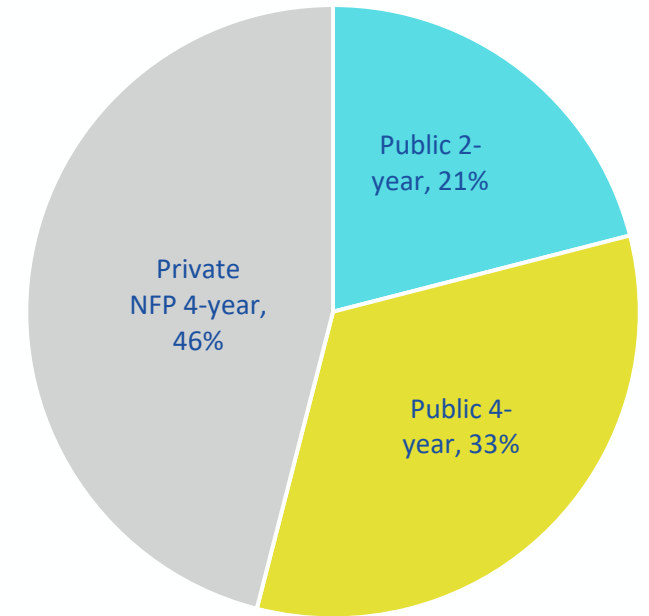


2024 AIR National Survey of IR/IE Offices

- Fourth iteration (2015, 2018, 2021, 2024)
- 633 responded from 1,686 attempted for a 38% response rate

Research dataset

- **Excluded institutions**
 - For-profit institutions
 - Private NFP 2-year institutions
 - Administrative units
 - International respondents
 - Respondents who stopped out early
- **Final research dataset:** 552 U.S. degree-granting not-for-profit institutions



To learn more about the AIR National Survey, please visit, www.airweb.org/NationalSurvey

Reference: "Remarks in Pueblo, Colorado following Approval of the Frying Pan-Arkansas Project (336)," August 17, 1962, *Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy, 1962*.

***“A rising tide lifts
all boats.”***





Ubuntu
“I am because we are.”



***We, as a professional community, can build on
each other's knowledge and expertise to
elevate everyone.***



Comparing Institutions with Chief Data Officers vs. without CDOs



Sandra



Elise



Comparing Outcomes by IR/IE Office Size

Very small offices:

1 FTE or less



Average offices:

2 to 4 FTE



Large offices:

More than 6 staff FTE



Mission

As a global association, AIR empowers higher education professionals to use data, information, and analytics in ways that are effective, ethical, and impactful. AIR supports data-informed decision making that amplifies student and institutional success. These must be done within AIR's available resources and in such a manner that the value to higher education is worth the investment of those resources.



Sandra
*Director of
IR/IE*



Nicole
*Director of
Enrollment Mngt*



Thomas
Provost



Angela
*Director of
Advising*

So, what does that look like?

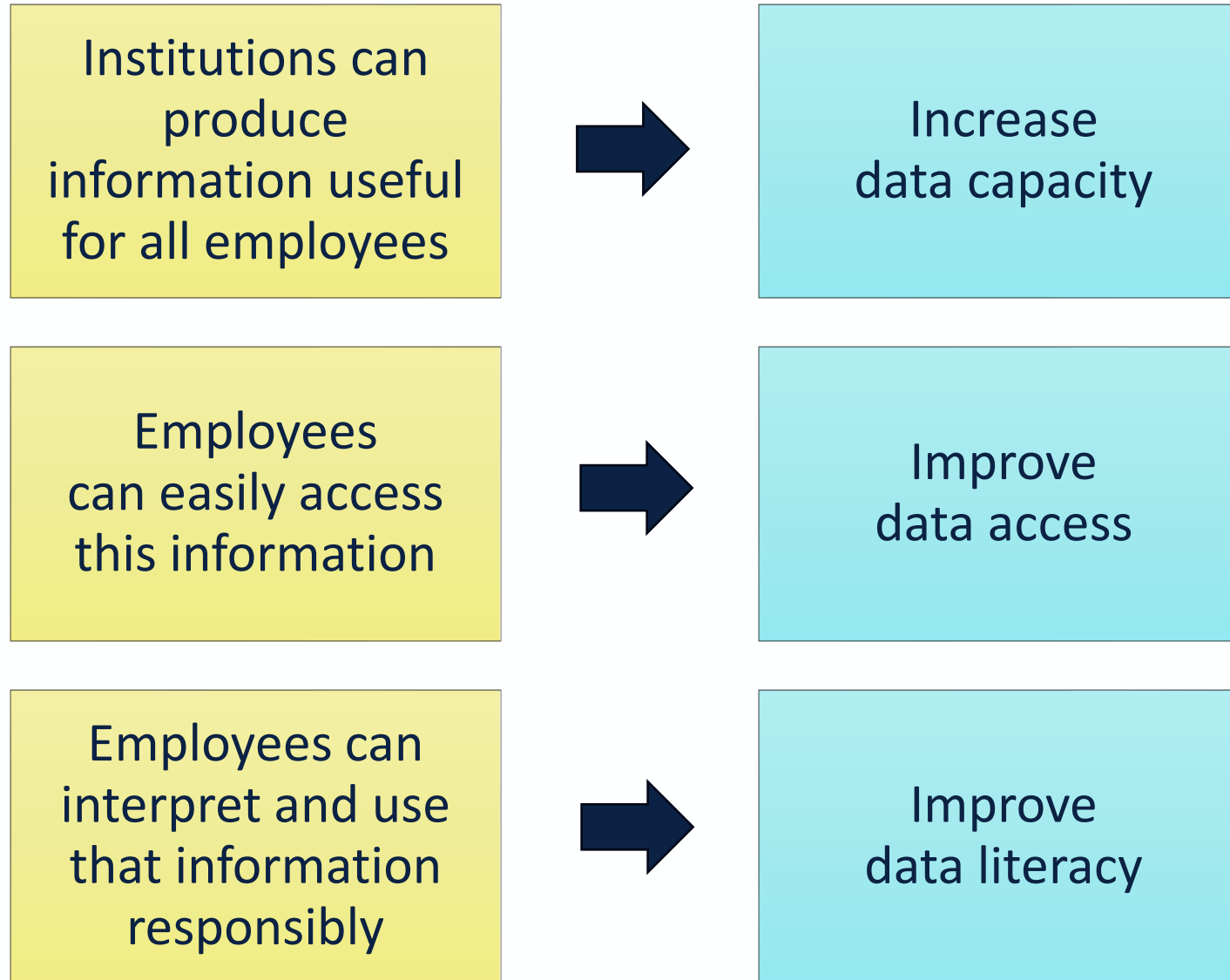
So, what does that look like?

Institutions can
produce
information useful
for all employees

Employees
can easily access
this information

Employees can
interpret and use
that information
responsibly

How do we support this?



Increase
data capacity

Improve
data access

Improve
data literacy

Increase Data Capacity

Data capacity is an institution's ability to effectively collect, store, manage, and analyze data in support of data-informed decision making.



Student
Affairs

**IR/IE
Office**

Academic
Units

Enrollment
Management

Registrar

Finance /
Business

Financial Aid

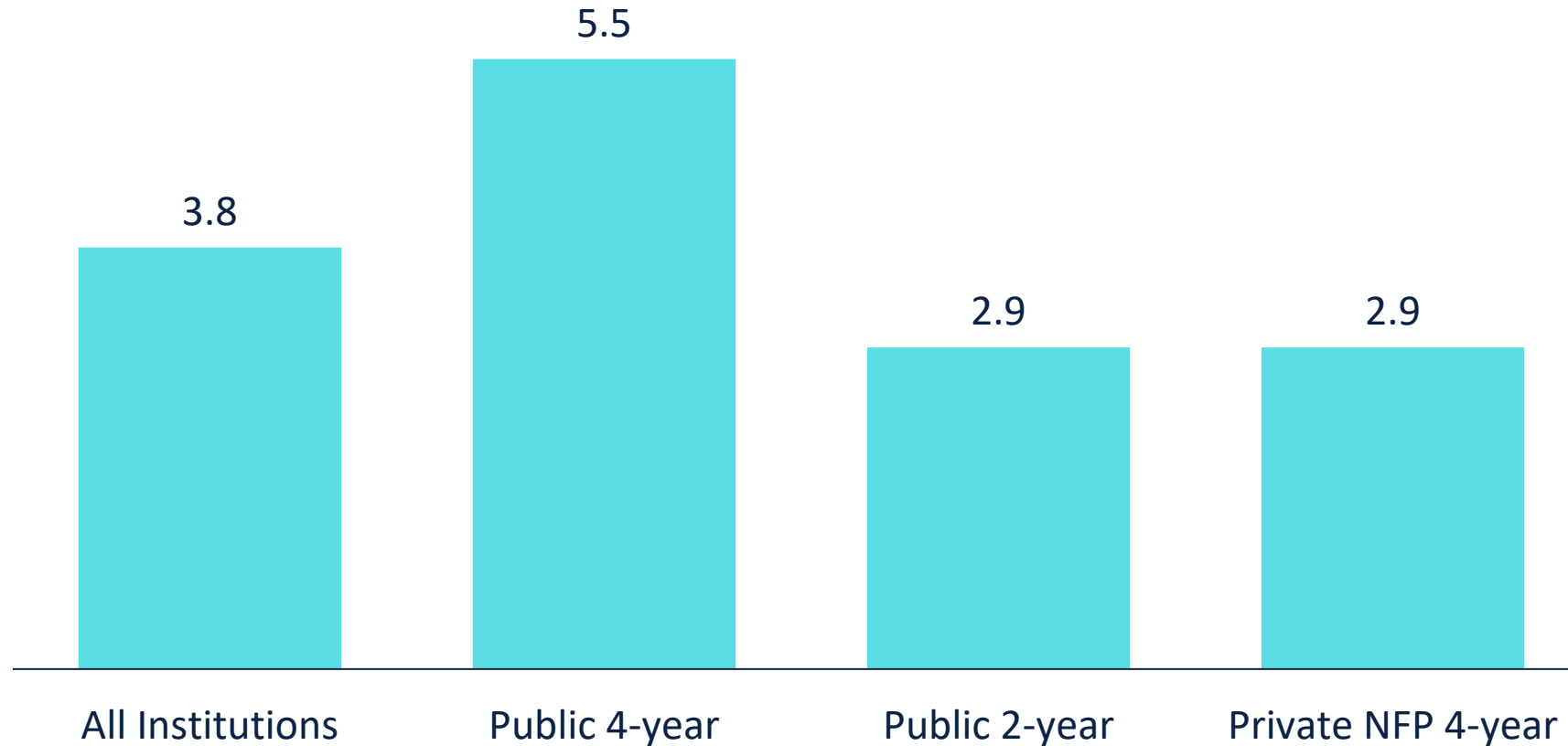
HR

Assertion for Centralized Data Functions

*Larger IR/IE Office staff FTE = More institutional data capacity**

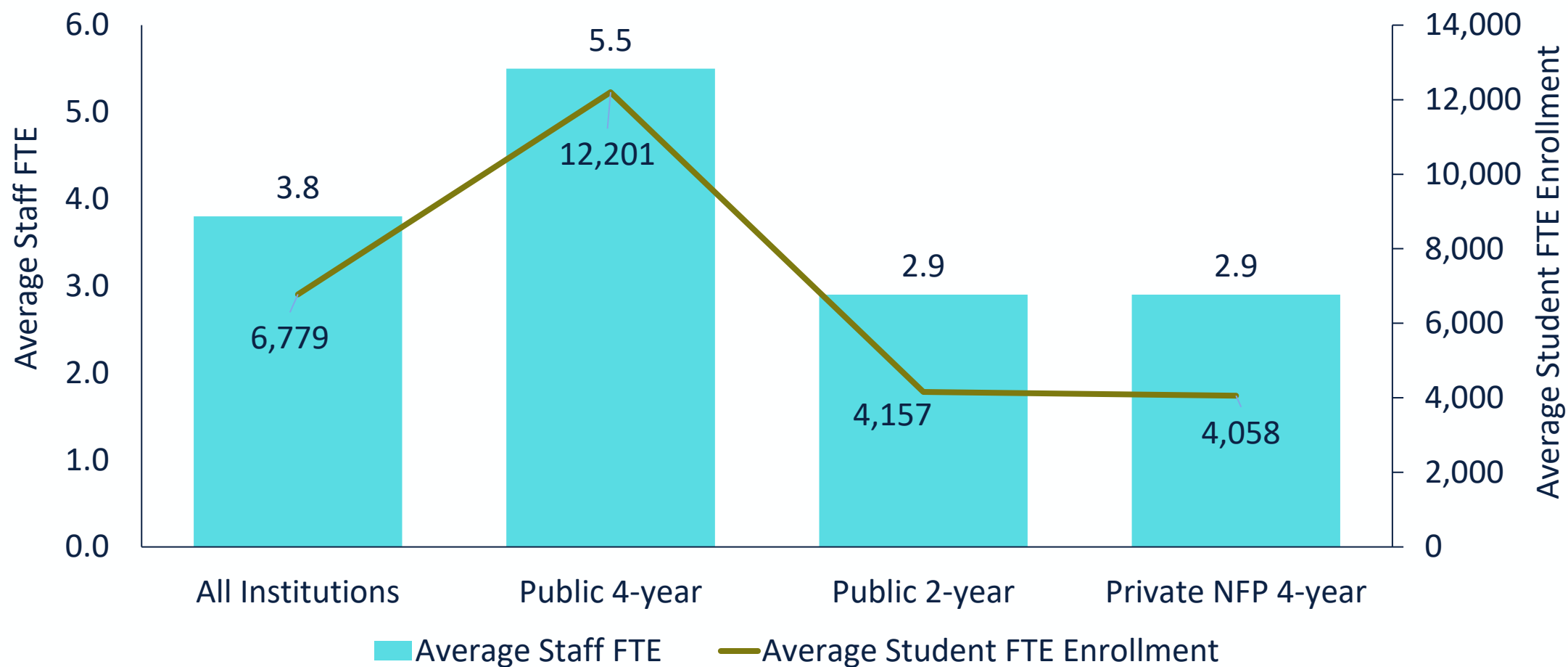
**assuming staff are adequately trained, data/processes are sufficient*

Average IR/IE Office Staff FTE by Sector



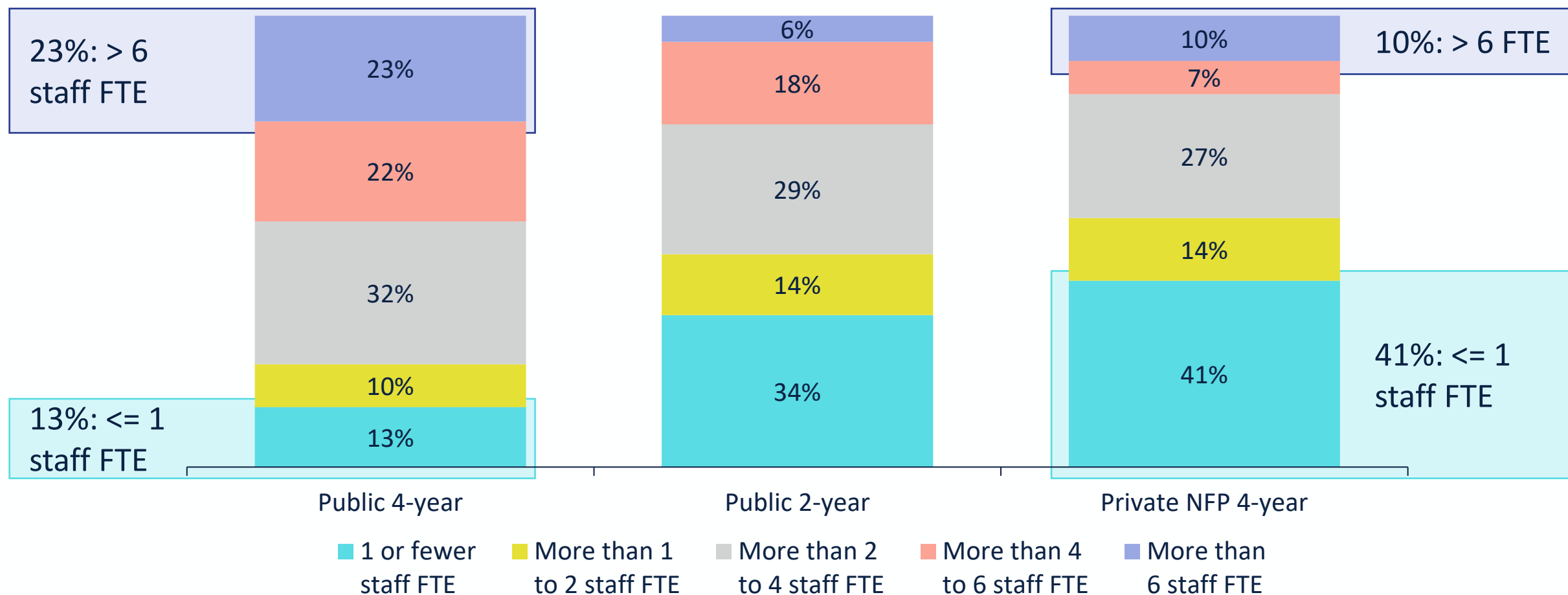
Reference: 2024 AIR National Survey. www.airweb.org/NationalSurvey; mean difference is statistically significant between Public 4-year vs. Public 2-year and Public 4-year vs. Private NFP 4-year, $p < 0.001$

Relationship between Staff FTE and Student FTE Enrollment



Reference: 2024 AIR National Survey. www.airweb.org/NationalSurvey; $r = 0.60$, $p < .001$

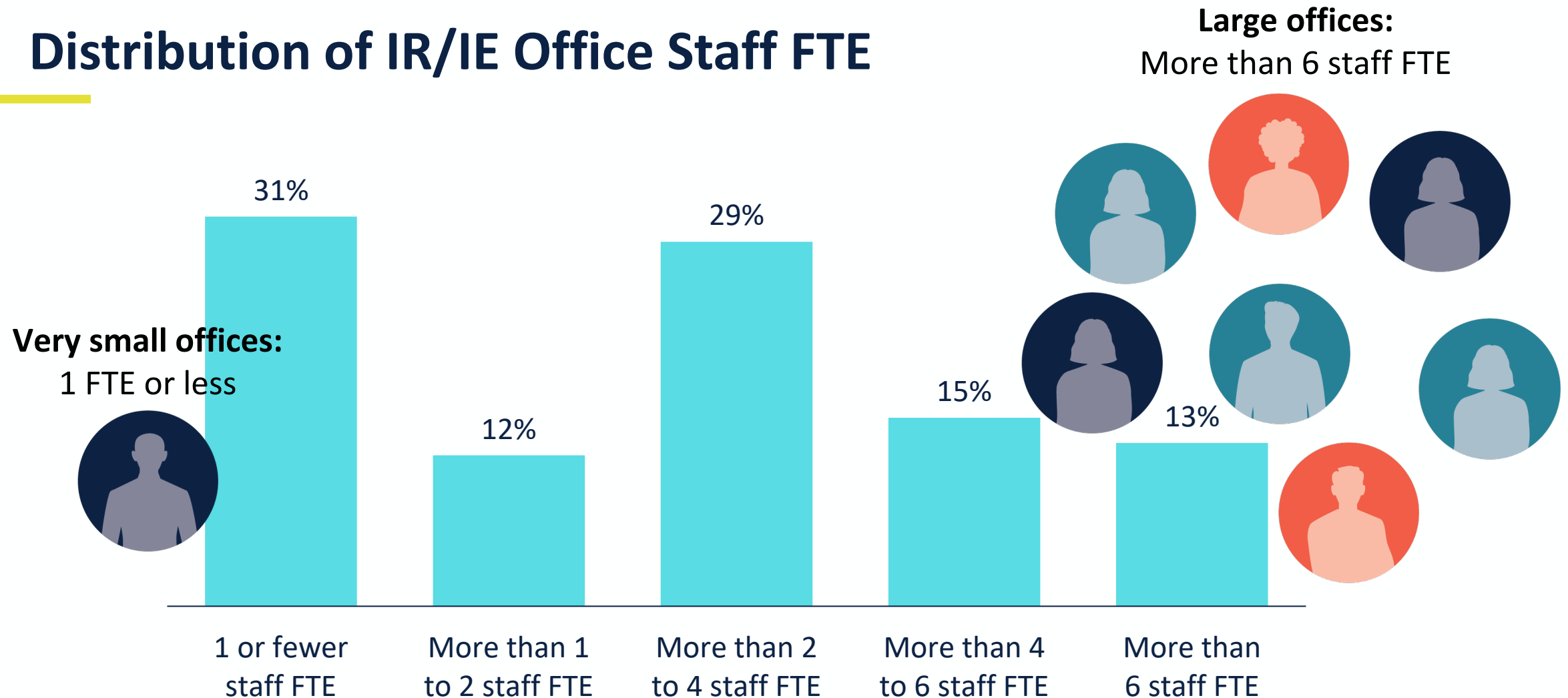
Distribution of Staff FTE by Sector



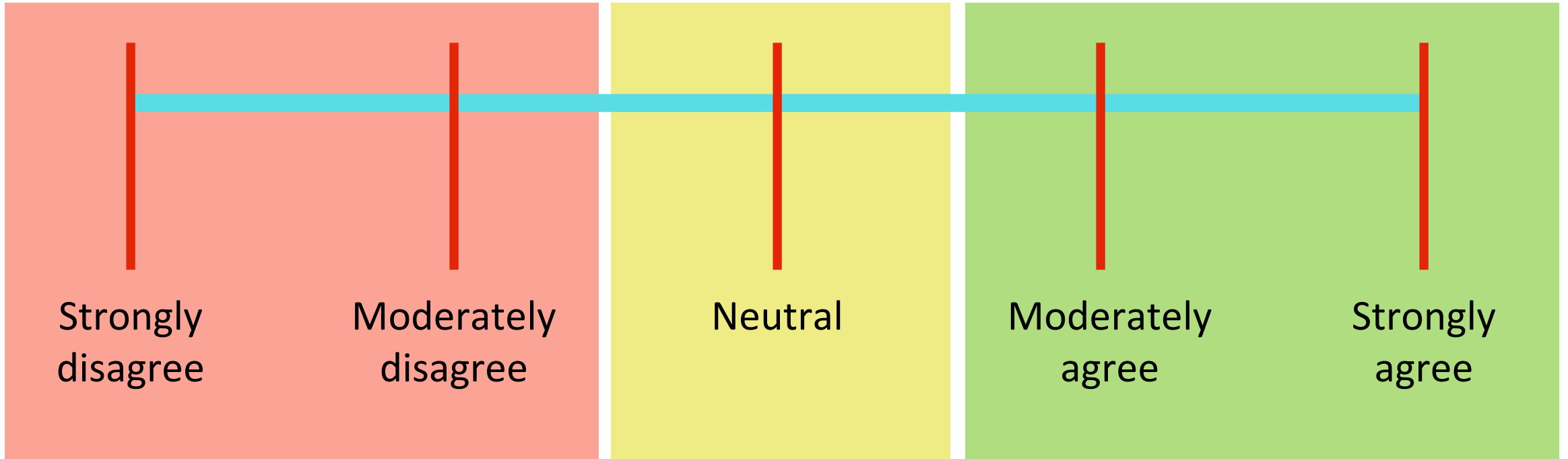


Poll #1

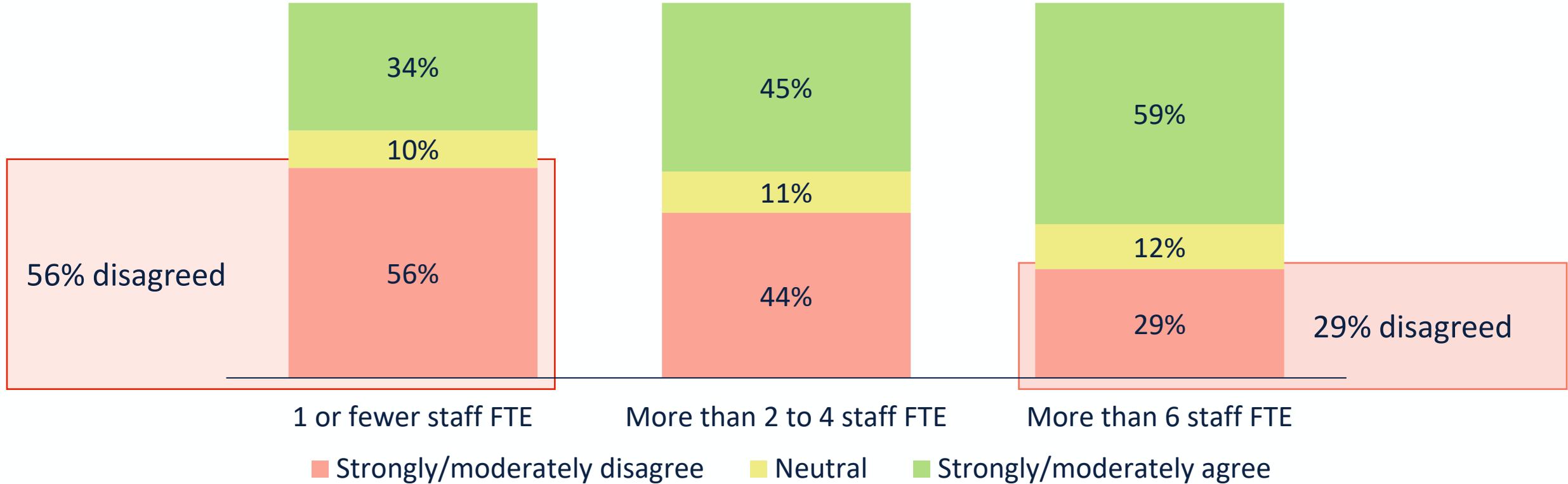
Distribution of IR/IE Office Staff FTE



5-Point Likert-Scaled Questions



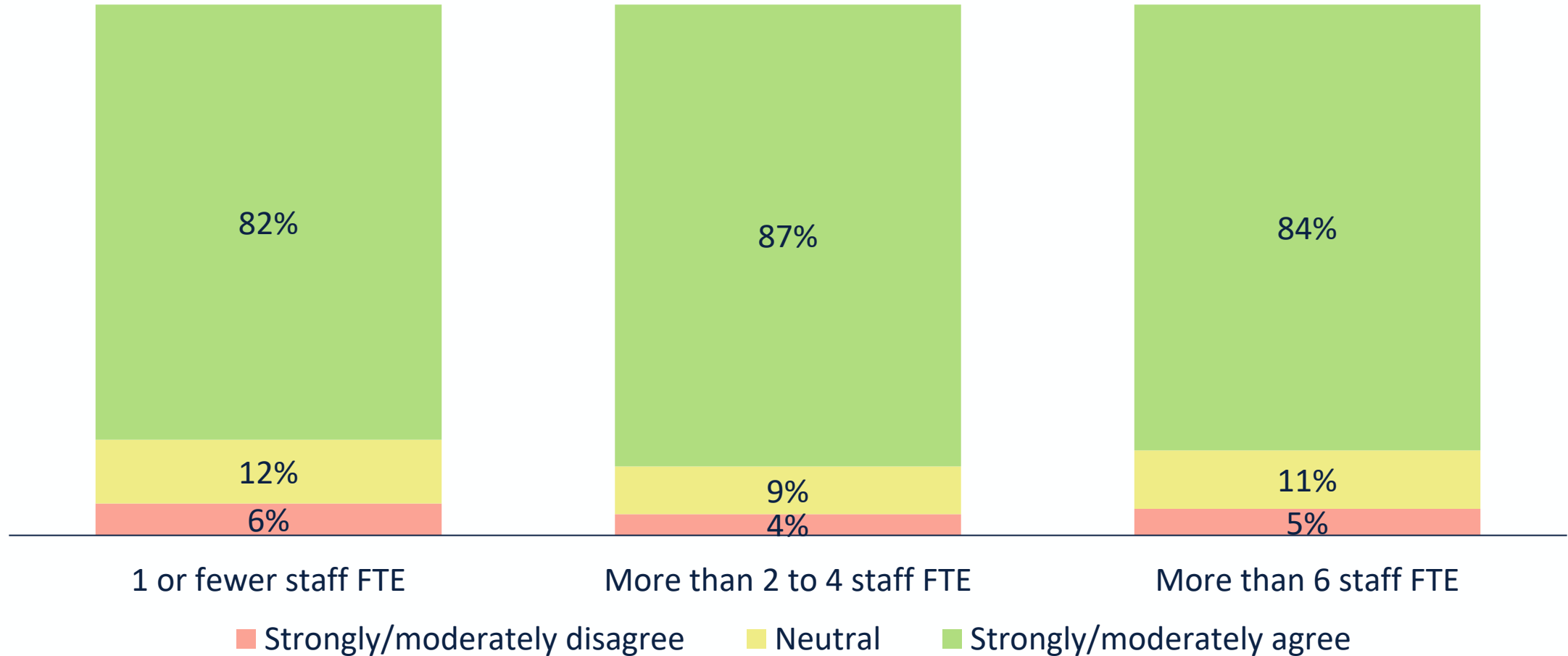
Can Office Achieve Work Without Staff Working Overtime?



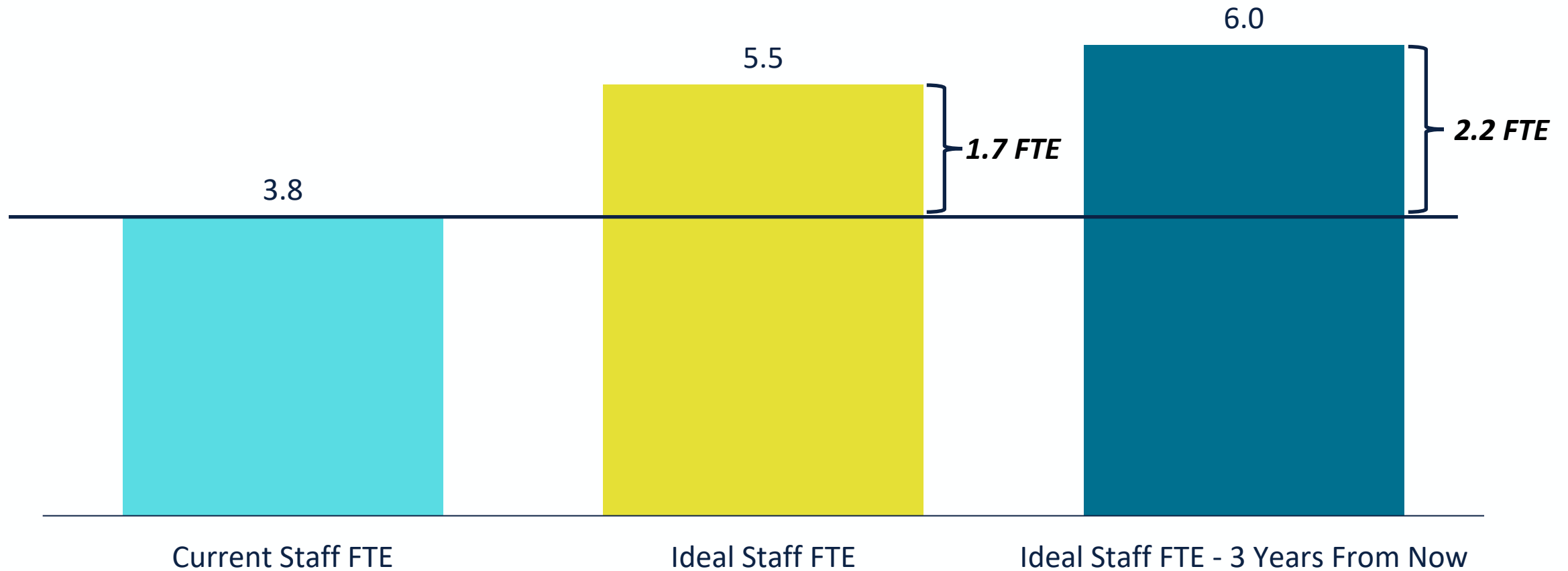
Reference: 2024 AIR National Survey. www.airweb.org/NationalSurvey; mean difference is statistically significant between ≤ 1 staff FTE and 6+ staff FTE, $p < 0.01$

Can Office Better Meet Institutional Expectations with Additional Staff?

~ Everyone says yes regardless of staff size

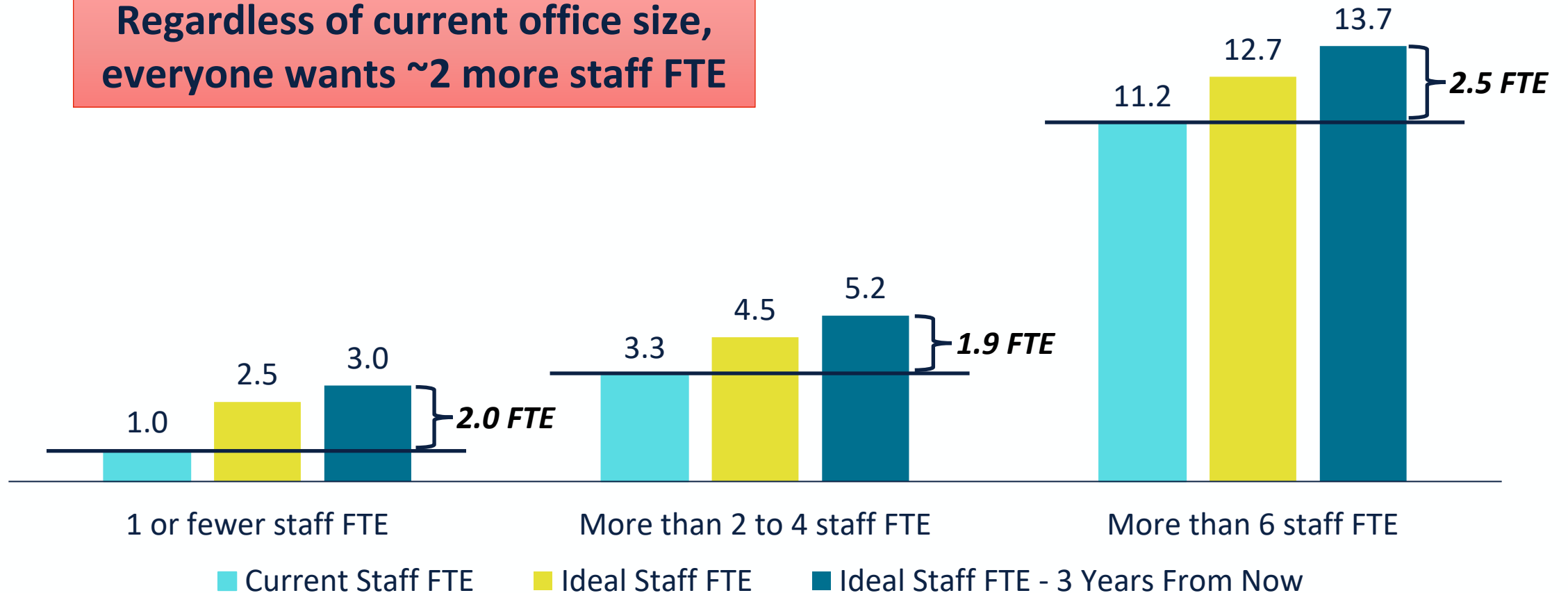


Current vs. Ideal Staff FTE



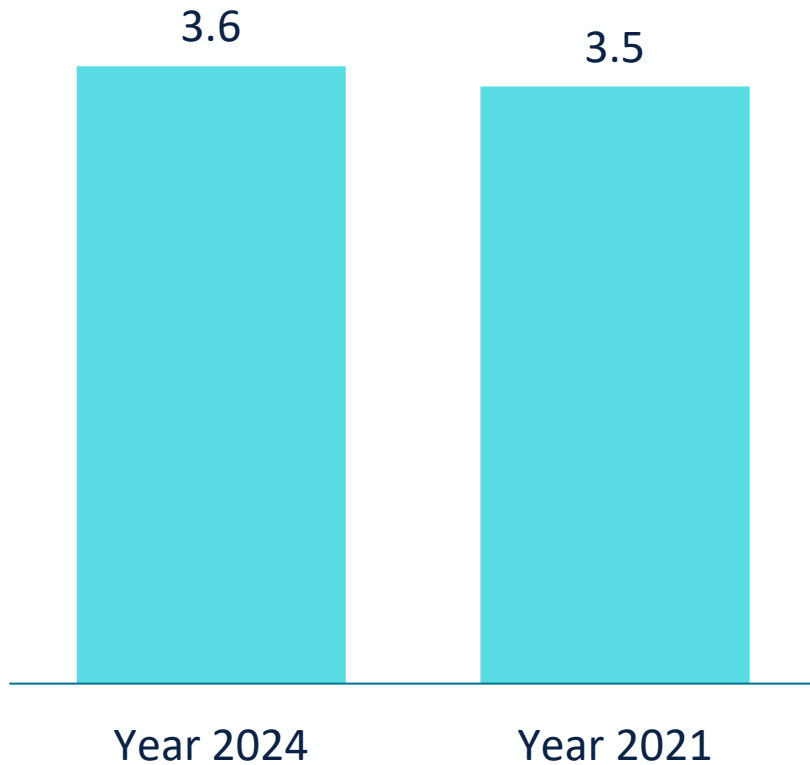
Current vs. Ideal Staff FTE: Small, Average, Large Offices

Regardless of current office size,
everyone wants ~2 more staff FTE

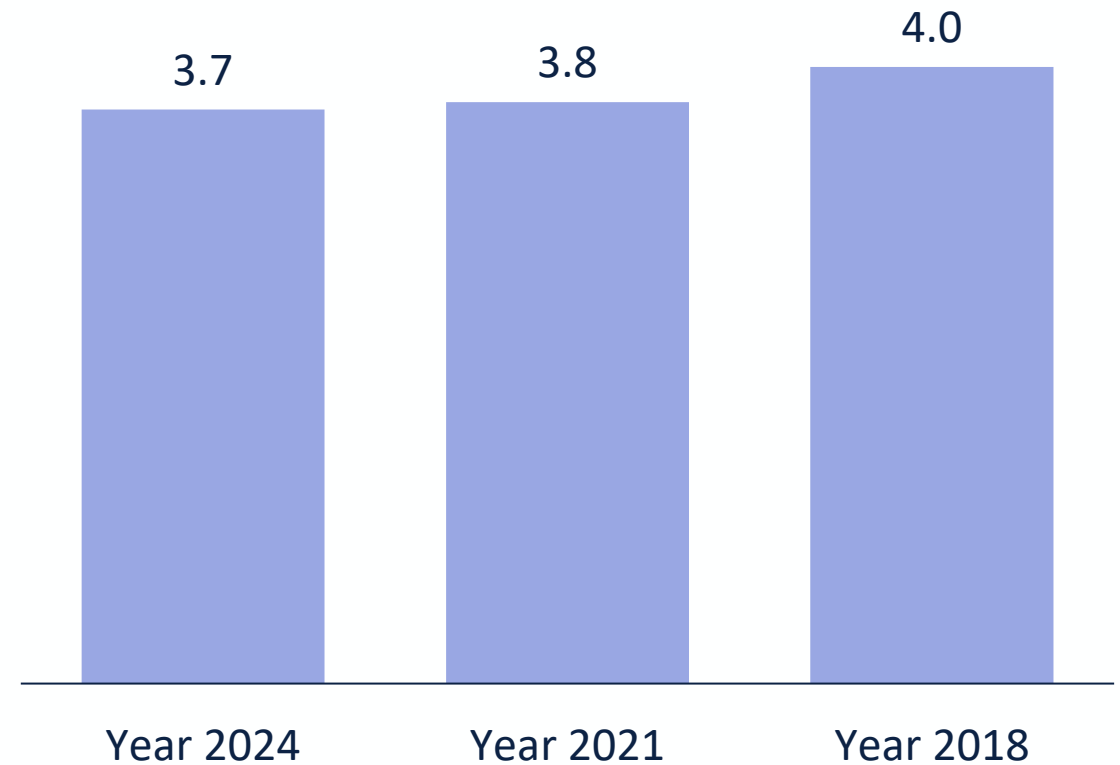


Longitudinal Changes in IR/IE Office Staff FTE

2024 vs. 2021*



2024 vs. 2021 vs. 2018**

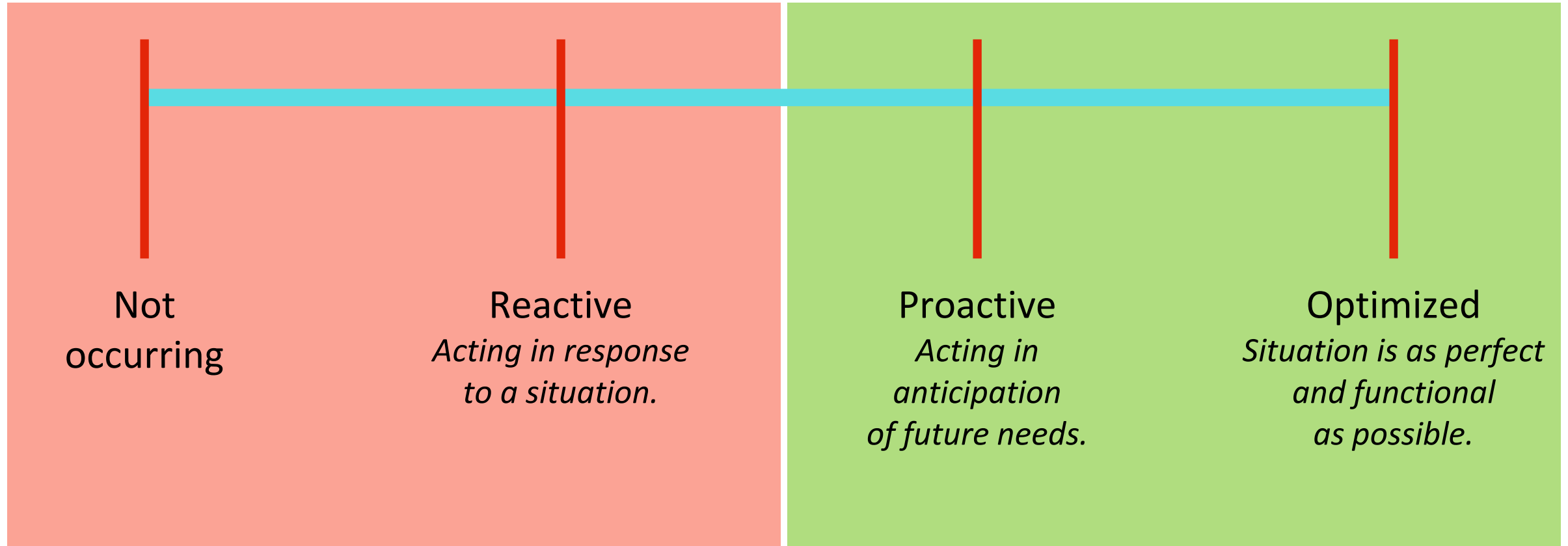


Reference: 2024 AIR National Survey. www.airweb.org/NationalSurvey; *Results based on 253 like participants;

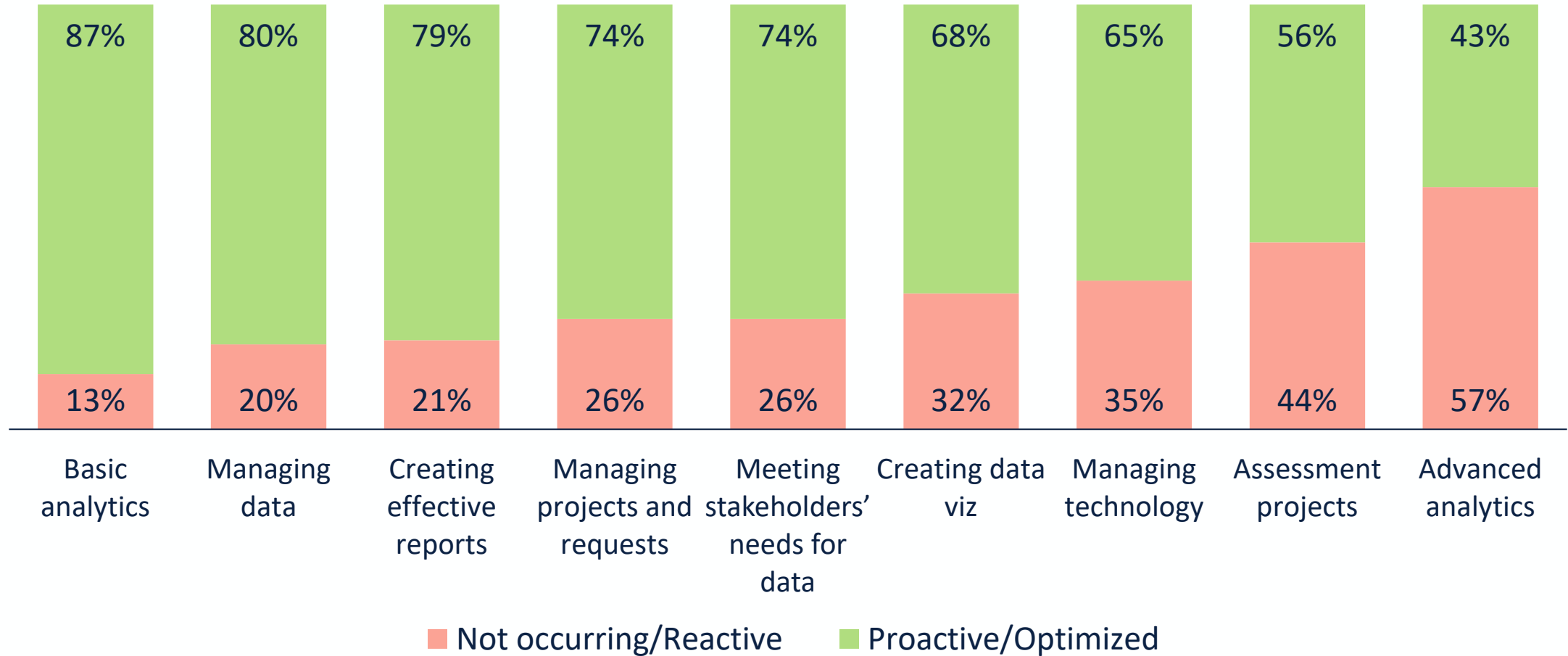
**Results based on 147 like participants.

Data Environment Questions

4-Point Maturity Rating



IR/IE Office Maturity

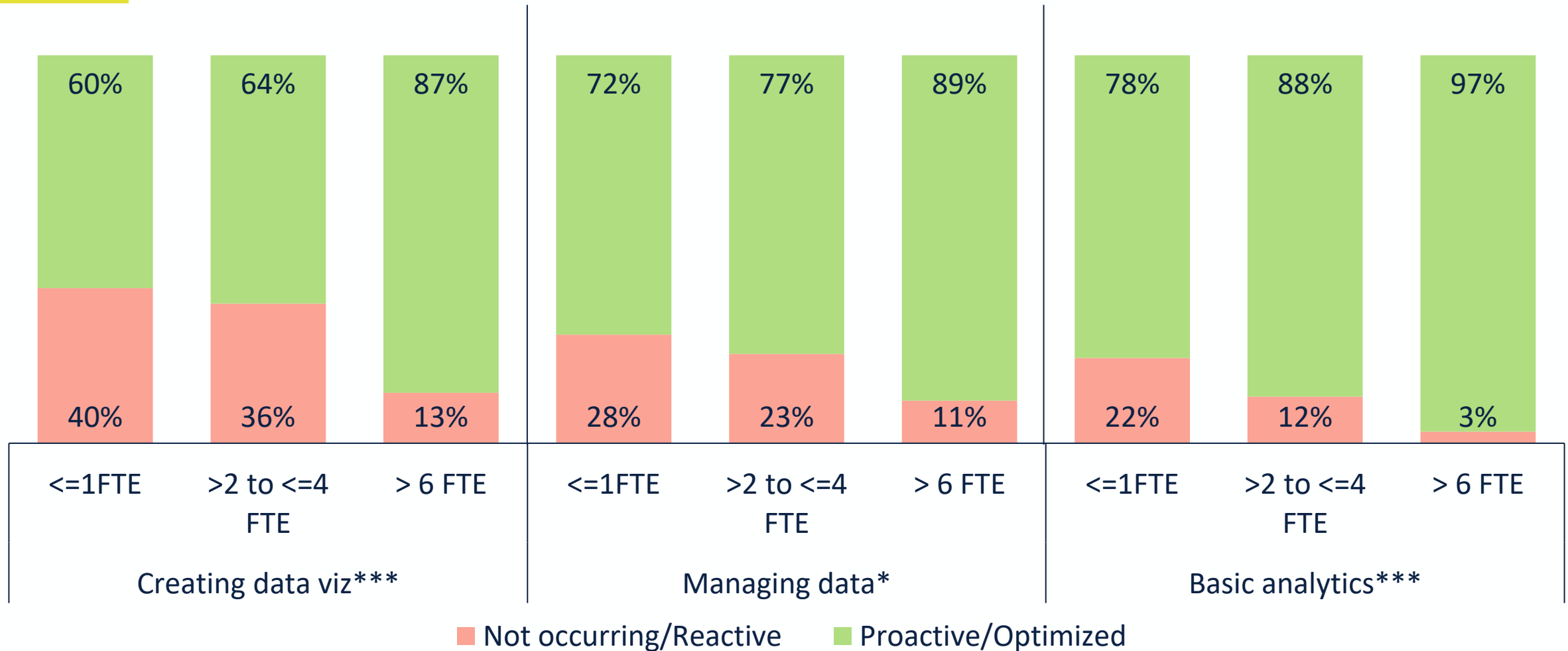


Poll #2

*If we can increase the maturity of our IR/IE Offices,
we can increase its capacity to produce work
efficiently and effectively.*

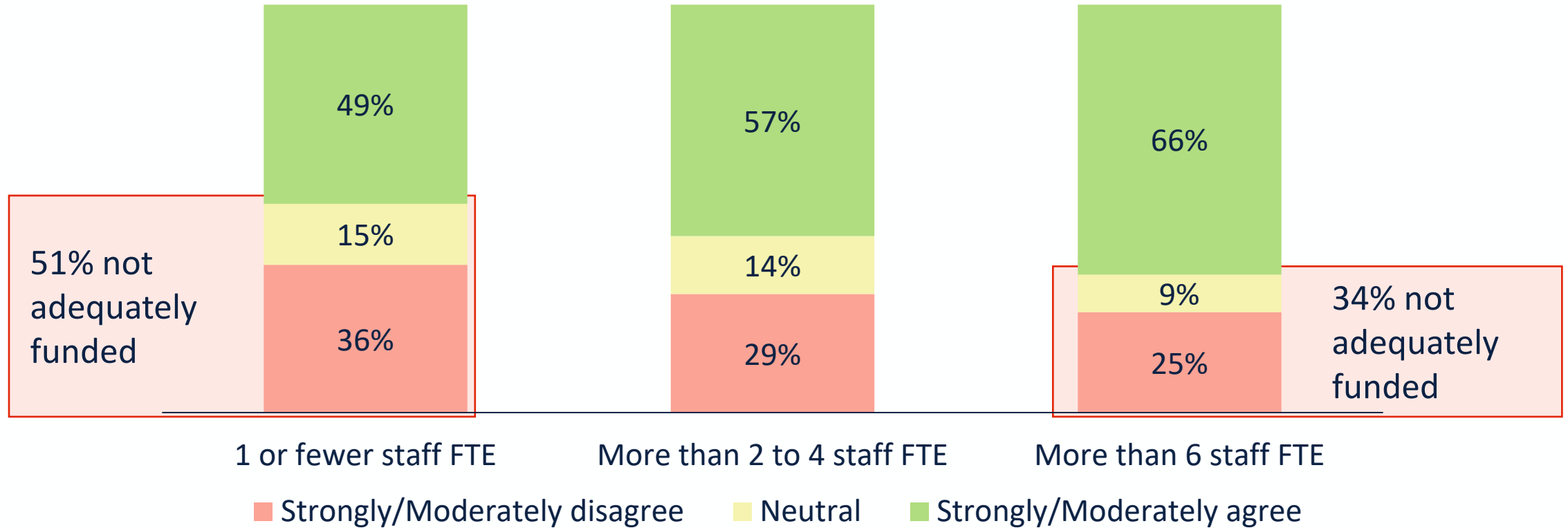
So, how can we do that?

Correlation of Office Maturity and Staff FTE (Select Items)



Reference: 2024 AIR National Survey. www.airweb.org/NationalSurvey; <1 FTE vs. 6+ FTE - *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Office is adequately funded to meet its operational needs.



Increase
data capacity

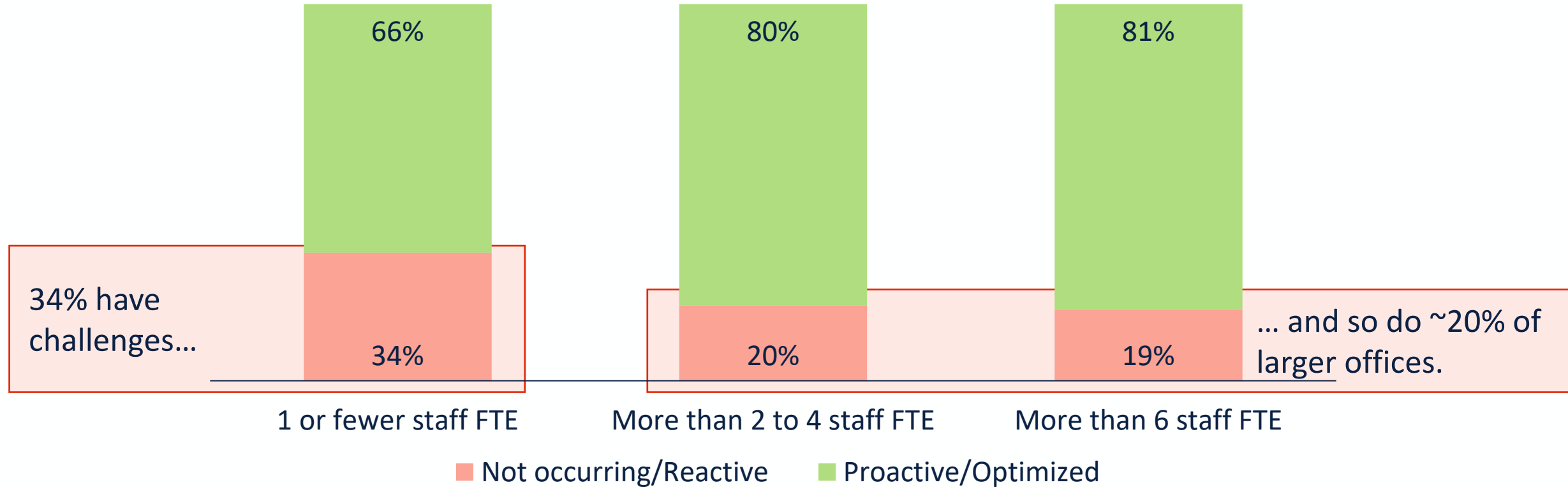
Improve
data access

Improve
data literacy

Improve Data Access

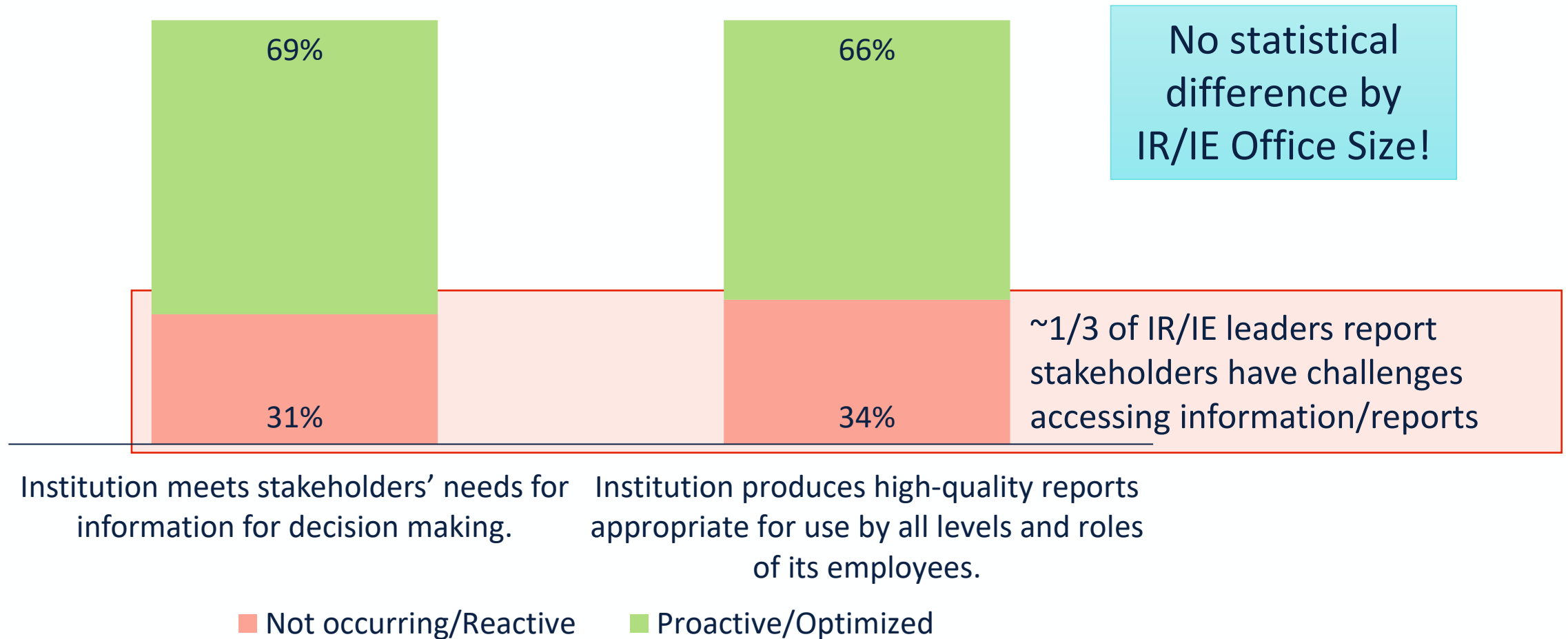
Data access is the ability of authorized individuals or systems to retrieve data/information/reports in a timely, secure, and efficient manner.

Can the IR/IE Office access data necessary to produce its work?



Poll #3

Can institutional employees access information/reports?



Poll #4

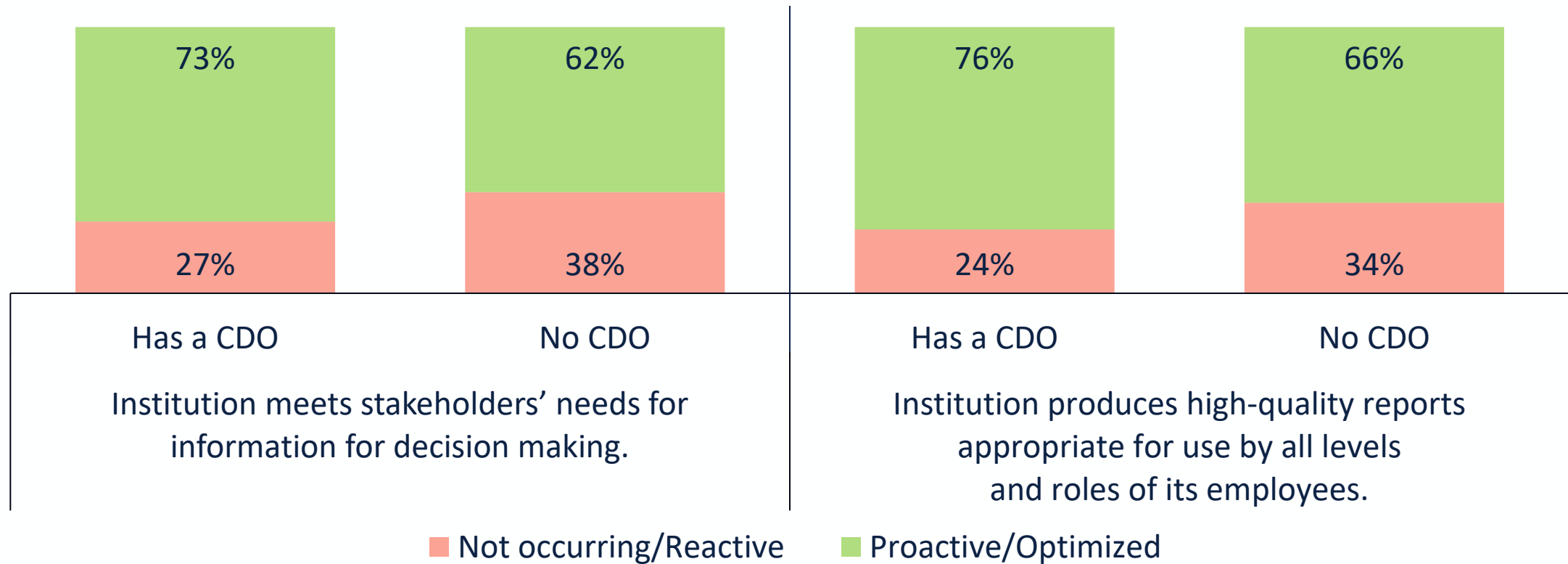
*If we can increase access to student success information,
we could* improve student outcomes.*

So, how can we impact data access?

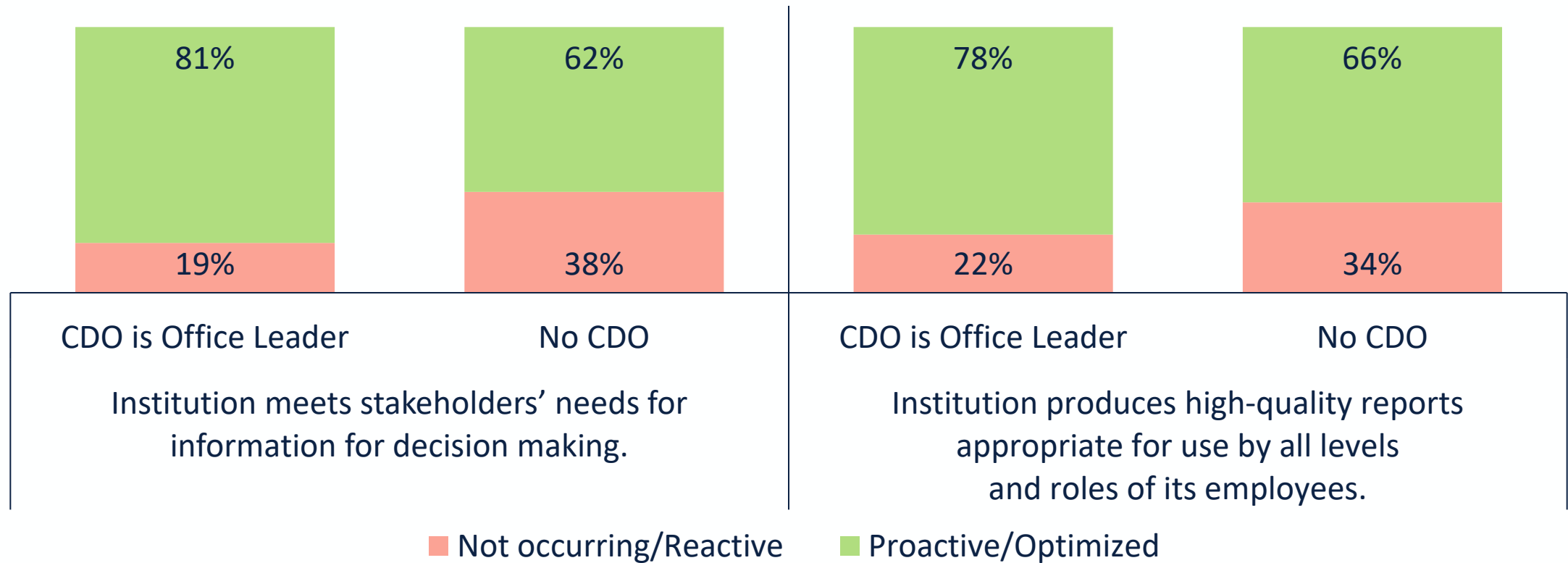
*Caveats include:

- Stakeholders understand and use information (data literacy)
- Commitment by institution to improve
- Necessary resources to implement improvements

Information Access Differs by Chief Data Officer Status



Information Access: Difference Increases if CDO is Office Leader



Poll #5

Increase
data capacity

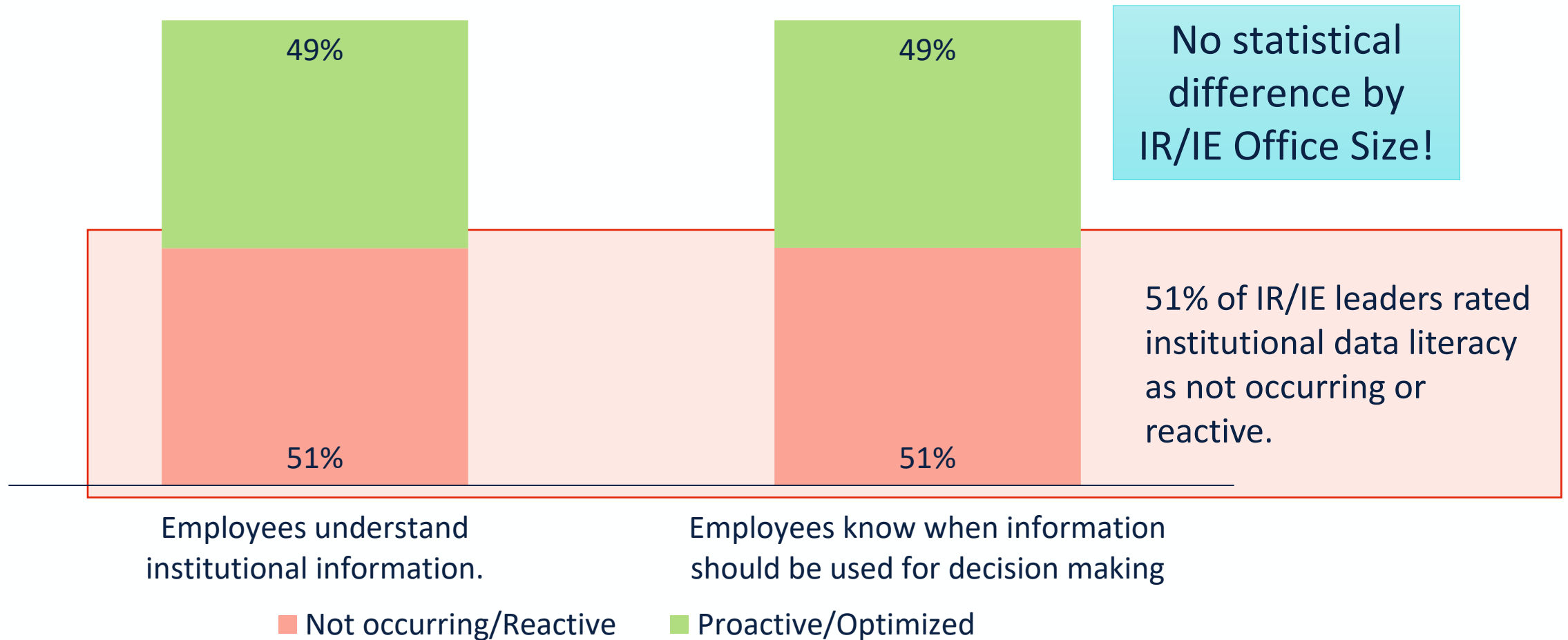
Improve
data access

Improve
data literacy

Improve Data Literacy

Data literacy is the ability to read, interpret, and use data/information effectively to inform decision-making.

Institutional Data Literacy



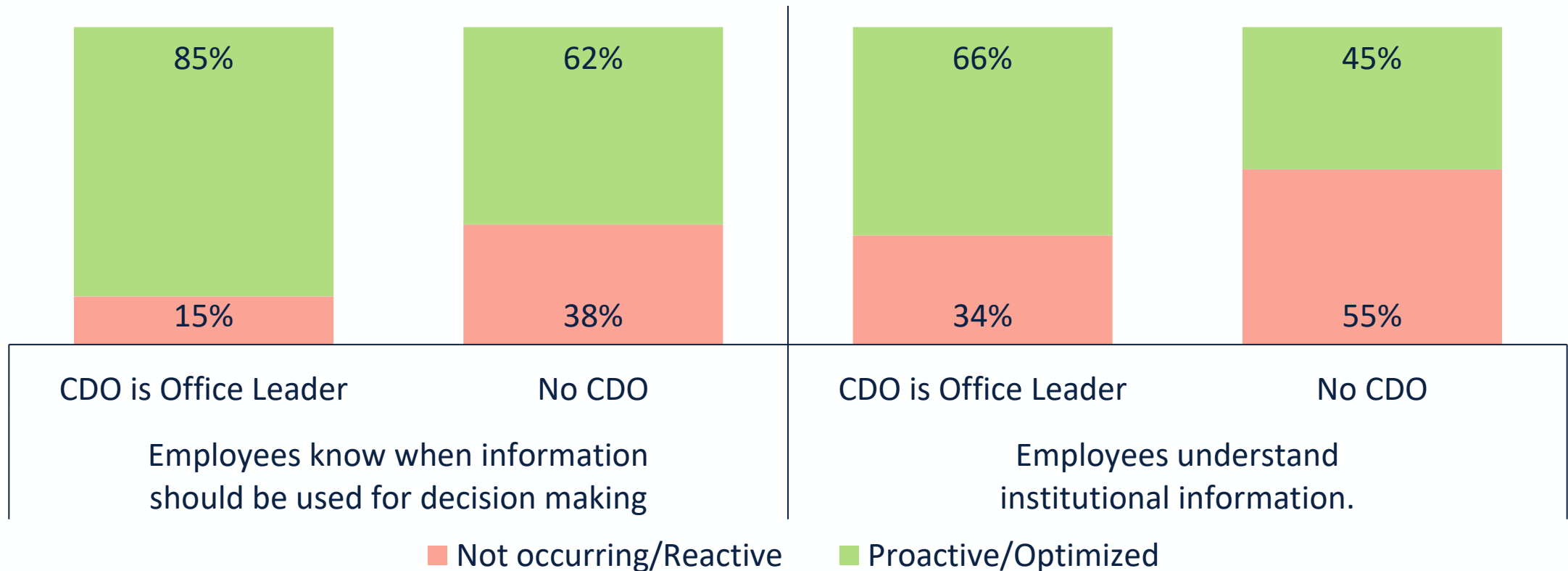
*If we can improve data literacy,
we should* be able improve student outcomes.*

So, how can we impact data literacy?

*Caveats include:

- Access to information/reports/data (data capacity and access)
- Commitment by institution to improve
- Necessary resources to implement improvements

Data Literacy Improved if Chief Data Officer is Office Leader

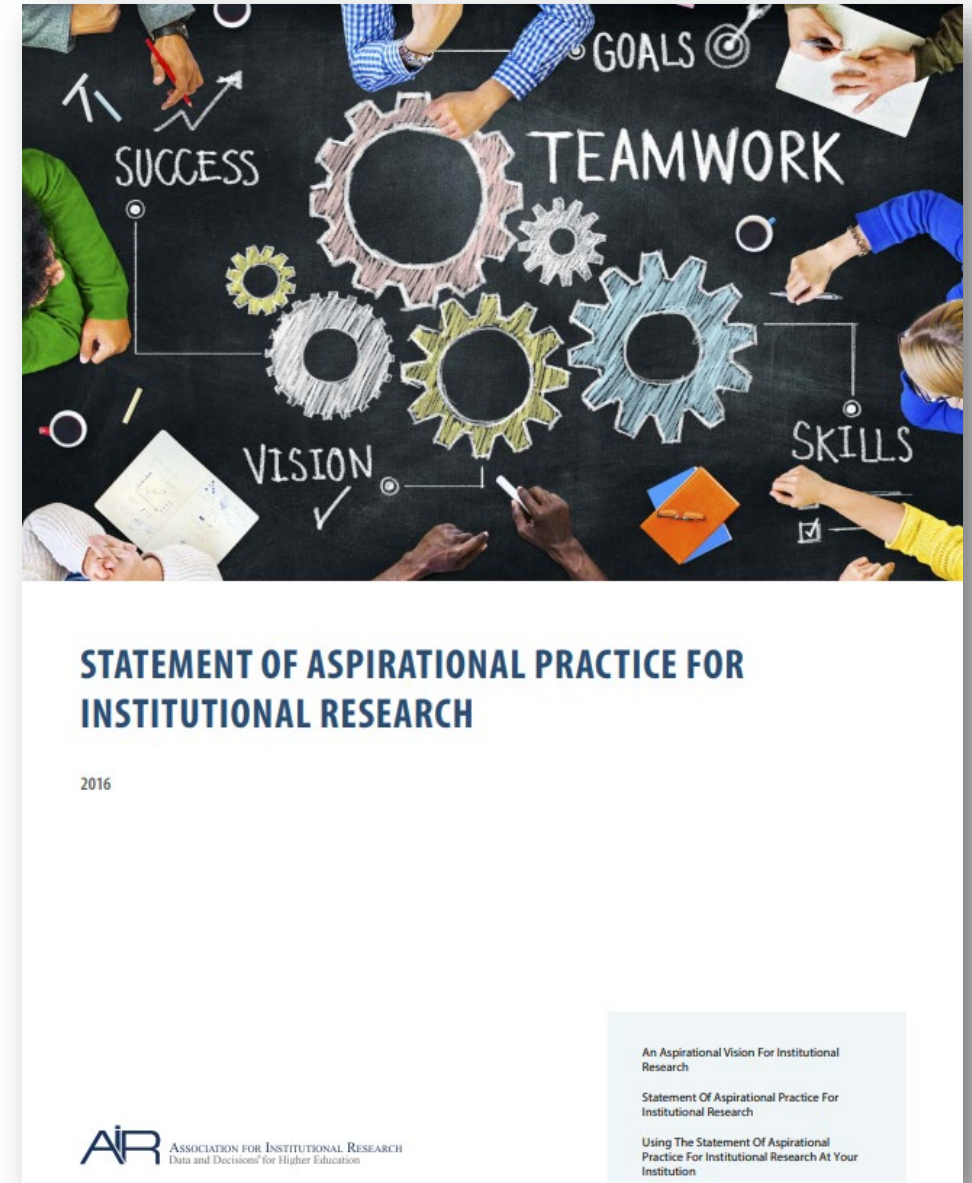


AIR's Statement of Aspirational Practice for Institutional Research

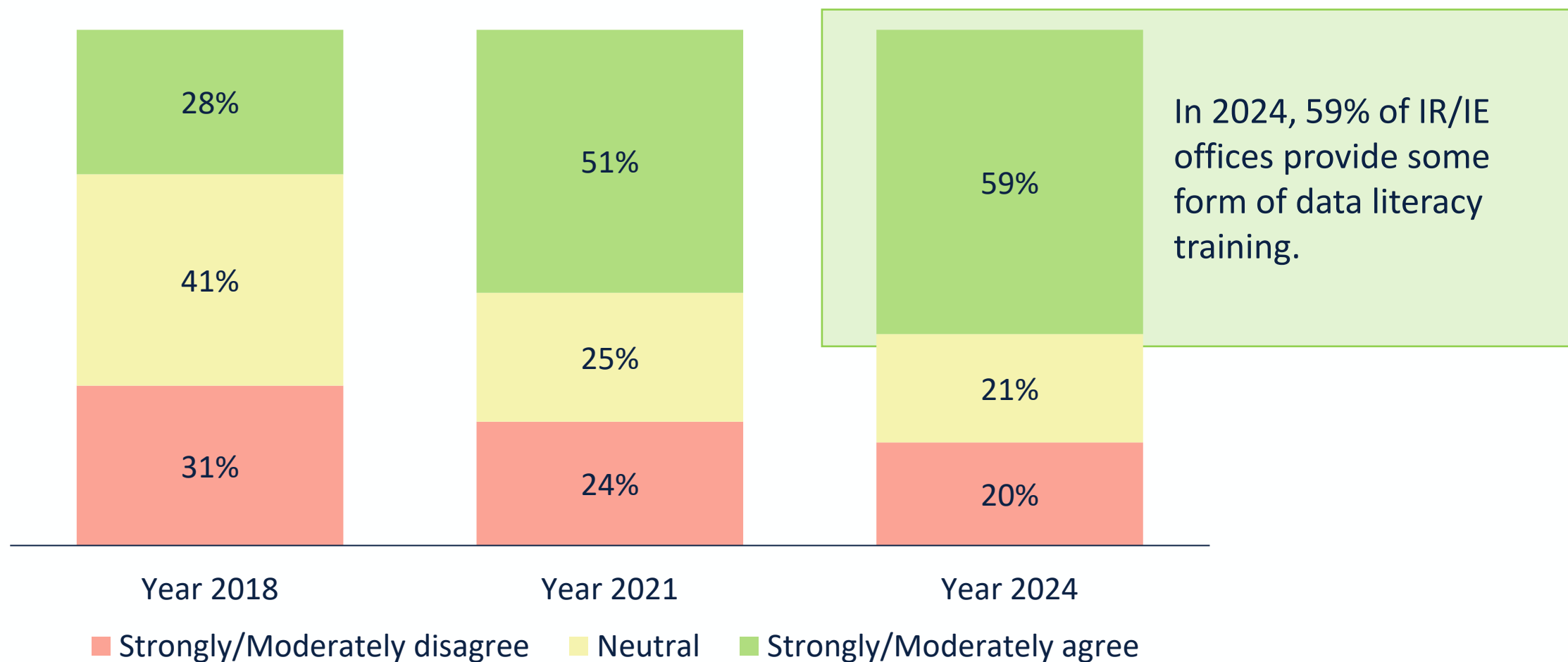
"...the reality is that the new role for institutional research is in coaching a wide array of data consumers..."

"The goal is for data literacy to be as ubiquitous as expectations for writing, speaking, and computer skills."

Reference: <https://www.airweb.org/ir-data-professional-overview/a-statement-of-aspirational-practice-for-institutional-research>

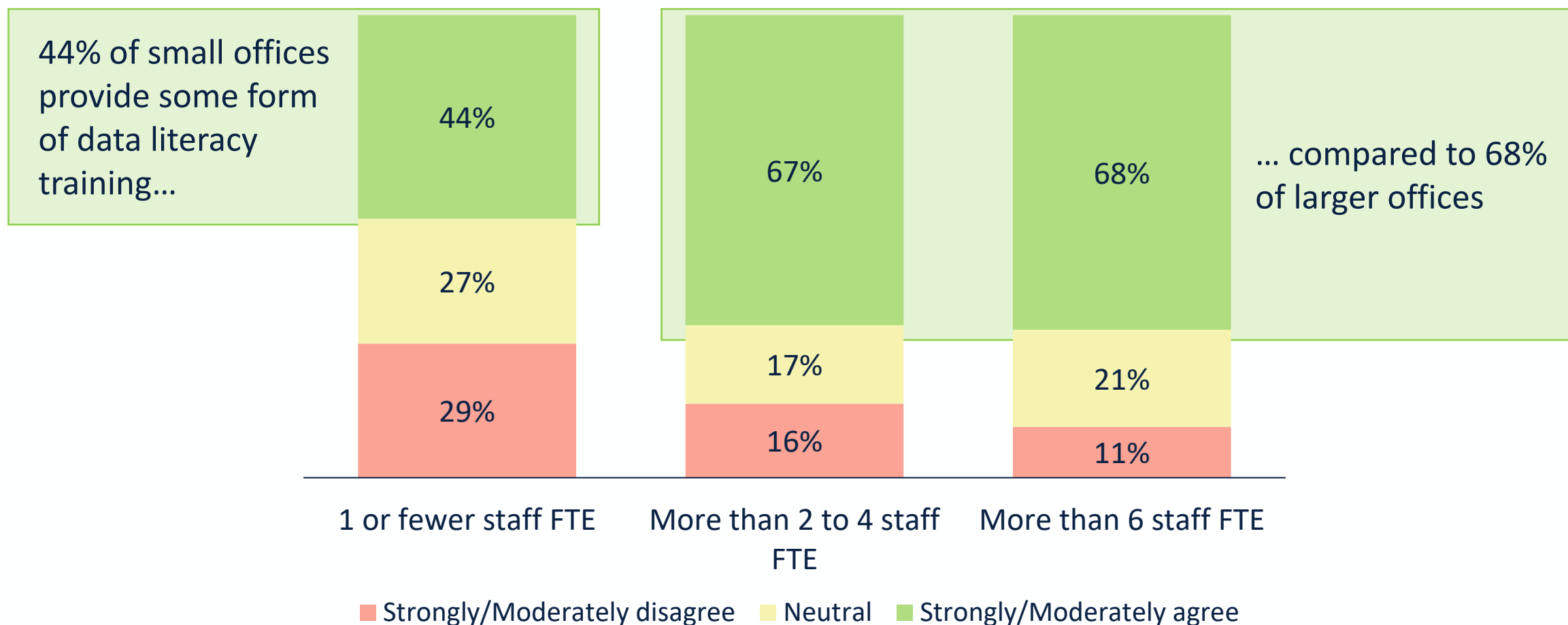


IR/IE Office Provides Educational Opportunities to Enhance Data Literacy of Stakeholders: Longitudinal Changes



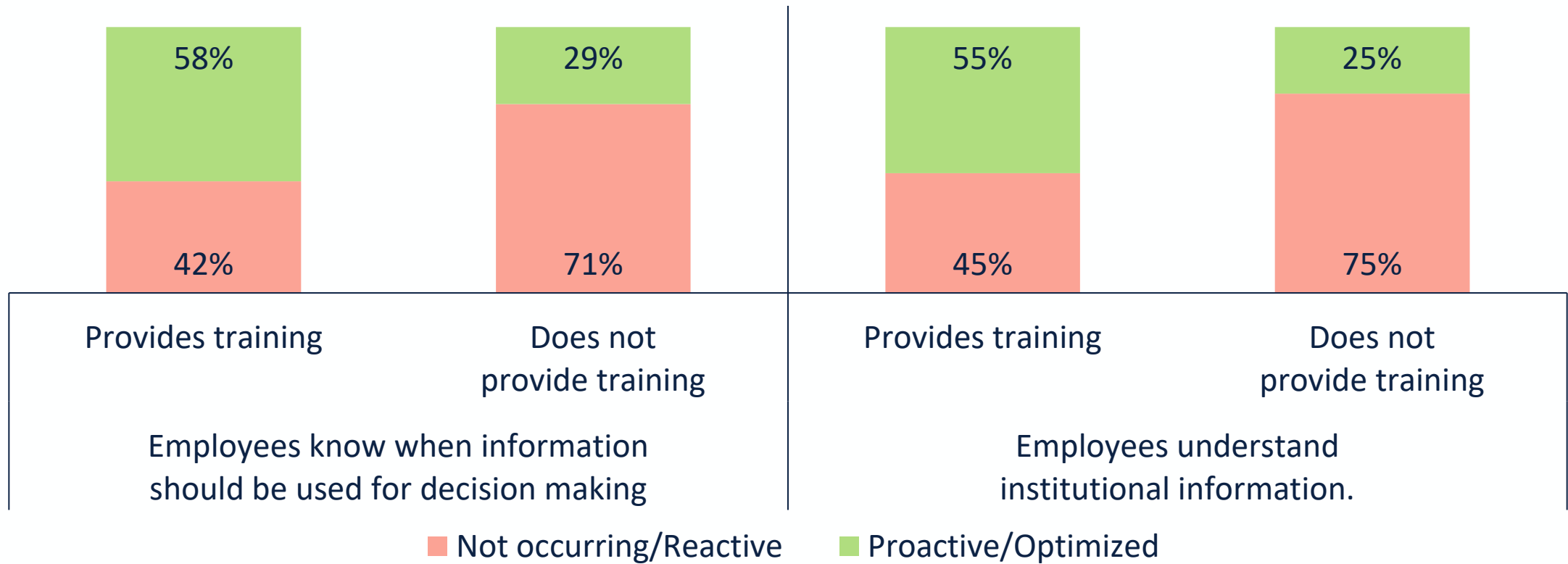
Reference: 2024 AIR National Survey. www.airweb.org/NationalSurvey; Results based on 147 matched participants.

IR/IE Office Provides Educational Opportunities to Enhance Data Literacy of Stakeholders: Small vs. Large Offices



*So, for those who do data literacy training,
is there a difference in outcomes?*

Data Literacy Training Matters



Poll #6

Increase
data capacity

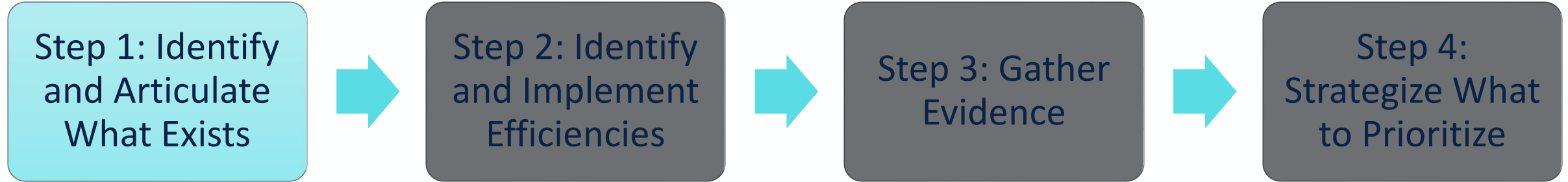
Improve
data access

Improve
data literacy

**How do we impact these areas
moving forward?**

**How do we advocate for what is
needed?**

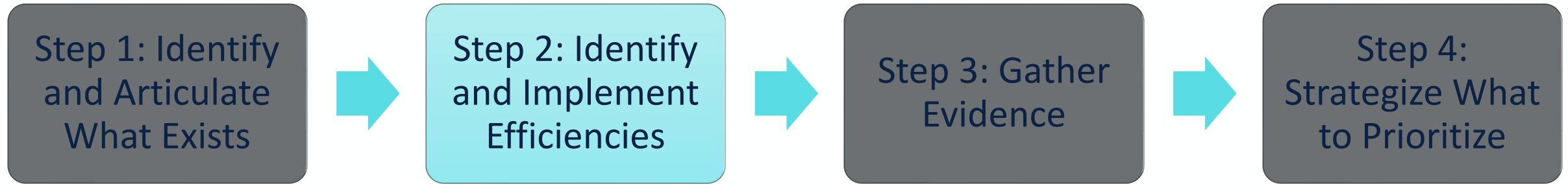
Building a Case – Step 1



We need to know “what is” before we can advocate

- Clarity and goals on expectations of the office/unit
- What we’re supposed to be doing
- What we are doing
 - How many person hours are available?
 - What is needed to complete our tasks?
 - How are workflows tracked and managed, and by whom?

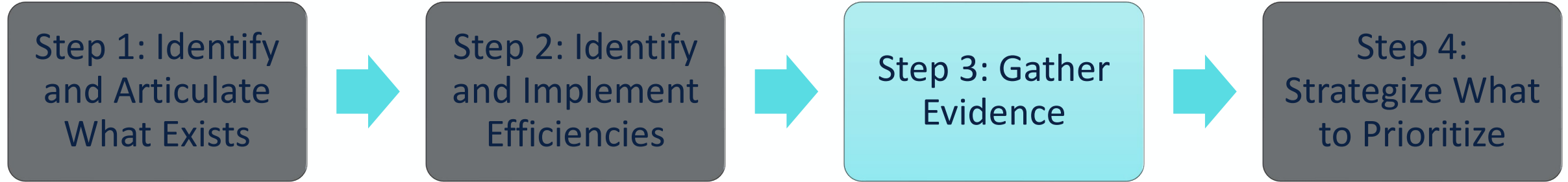
Building a Case – Step 2



Optimize our work as much as possible – find efficiencies

- Understand the allocation of resources (people and budget)
 - Do expenses align with office goals?
- Identify what we can stop doing
- Identify what we can automate
- Learn to say “no” to tasks and requests when appropriate

Building a Case – Step 3



Build a case for needed resources

- Identify resource gaps (capacity, budget, software, etc.)
- Identify options to close the gaps
- Project the financial needs
- Gather supporting data
- Identify the office's ROI (return on investment)
- Gain allies

Building a Case – Step 4

Step 1: Identify
and Articulate
What Exists



Step 2: Identify
and Implement
Efficiencies



Step 3: Gather
Evidence



Step 4:
Strategize What
to Prioritize

- Data capacity
- Data access
- Data literacy
- Other



Approach Options – Strategy 1

Strategy 1: Utilize
Existing Resources
in New or Different
Ways

Strategy 2:
Advocate for
Additional
Resources

- Lean into the efficiencies gained and capacity realized
- Collaborate with colleagues across the institution
- Hire undergraduate or graduate students
- Engage allies in other units
- Partner with faculty associates

Approach Options – Strategy 2

Strategy 1: Utilize
Existing Resources
in New or Different
Ways

Strategy 2:
Advocate for
Additional
Resources

- Additional staff to fill clearly outlined roles (data capacity)
- New or upgraded software or tools to bolster value (data access)
- Implementation of ongoing institution-wide training (data literacy)
- Short-term contractors or consultants can provide valuable assistance for specific project work

Step 1: Identify
and Articulate
What Exists



Step 2: Identify
and Implement
Efficiencies



Step 3: Gather
Evidence



Step 4:
Strategize What
to Prioritize

Strategy 1: Utilize
Existing Resources
in New or Different
Ways

Strategy 2:
Advocate for
Additional
Resources

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Learning from the Community



AIR Hub Online
Community Platform



airweb.org/hub

AIR Monthly Coffee Chats



airweb.org/coffee-chats



Questions
or Discussion

The Role of Chief Data Officers in Advancing Data Access and Literacy

- **Align data strategy with institutional goals**
CDOs help bridge IR, IT, and academic units to ensure data supports mission-critical decisions. (EDUCAUSE, 2020 & 2022)
- **Promote institution-wide data access**
CDOs lead efforts to standardize data definitions, improve access protocols, and support user-specific dashboards. (EDUCAUSE, AIR, NACUBO Joint Statement on Analytics, 2019)
- **Build a culture of data literacy**
Through campus-wide training and outreach, CDOs help demystify data for non-technical staff and faculty. (Arizona State University; University of Wisconsin System case studies)
- **Establish robust data governance**
Governance bodies led or supported by CDOs promote shared understanding, trust, and responsible use of data. (Postsecondary Data Partnership insights; Gates Foundation reports)

Takeaway

A dedicated data leadership role—such as a Chief Data Officer—can accelerate an institution's ability to:

- Democratize access to institutional data
- Build data literacy across all levels
- Strengthen data-informed decision-making culture

What is one professional challenge that's currently weighing on your mind?

Source: 2025 UT System IE Summit Registration Survey Results, 7/2/2025

Very Common

Capacity and time management

Technology transitions (e.g., DASH)

Common

Data governance and data quality

Policy and political shifts

Skills gaps

Occasional

Siloed collaboration

What is one resource, tool, or change that would make your work easier or more effective?

Source: 2025 UT System IE Summit Registration Survey Results, 7/2/2025

Very Common

Data systems and integration

Common

Culture and communications

Governance and standards

Training and skill development

Occasional

Project management tools