

INNOVATING IN A NEW ERA:

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

July 2021

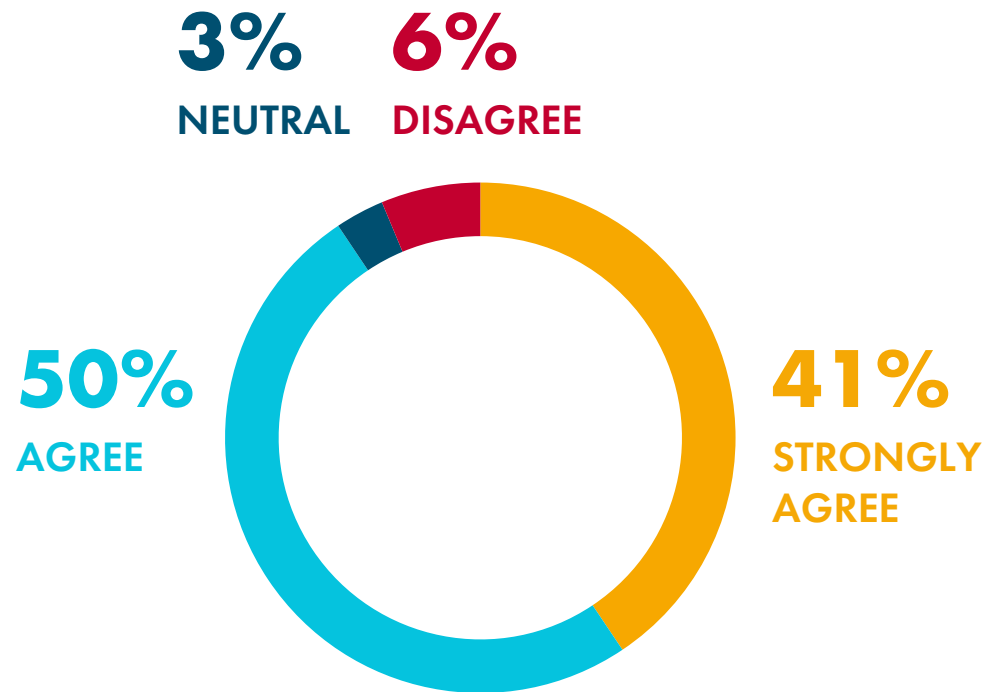


The global health pandemic prompted radical changes in how state governments operate and deliver services. In the face of prolonged shutdowns, states were forced to accelerate digital transformation initiatives. Along the way, they proved what is possible at speed and scale—and the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) has been at the core of this fast-paced innovation.

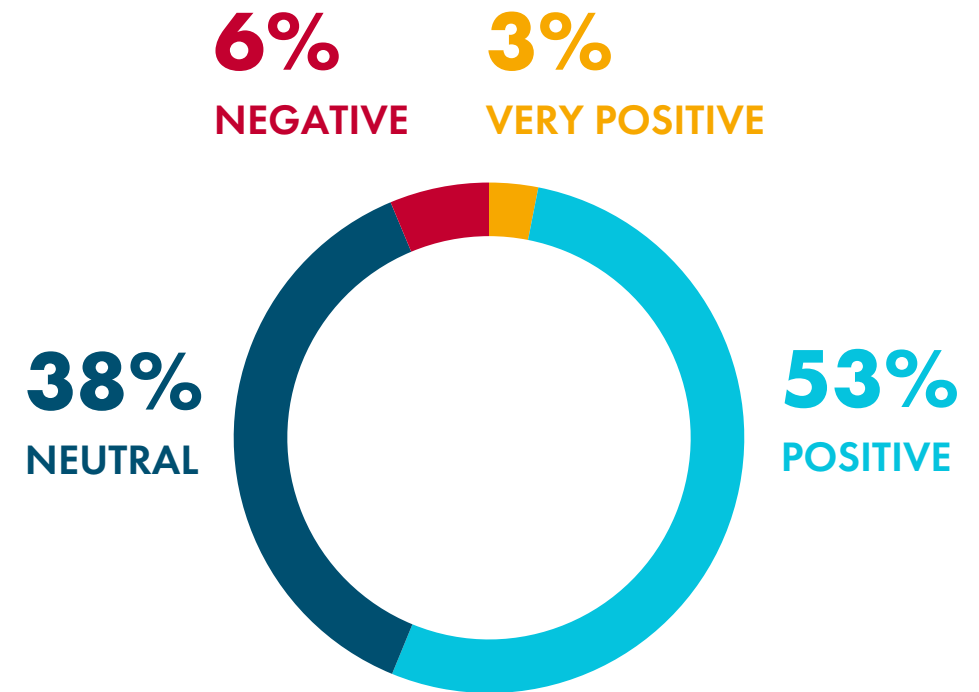
In November 2020, Accenture and the National Association of State Chief Administrators (NASCA) surveyed CAOs in 32 states. We sought to understand how they innovated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and how they plan to continue forging sustainable change within their states.

Will change last? Yes

90% of CAOs agree: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, state government strategy and operations will look very different going forward.



More than half of CAOs believe the pandemic has had a positive impact on the public's trust in state government services.



CAO: at the core of innovation

Formal and informal responsibility

CAOs were highly involved in innovation—including stepping up when asked to help in new areas.

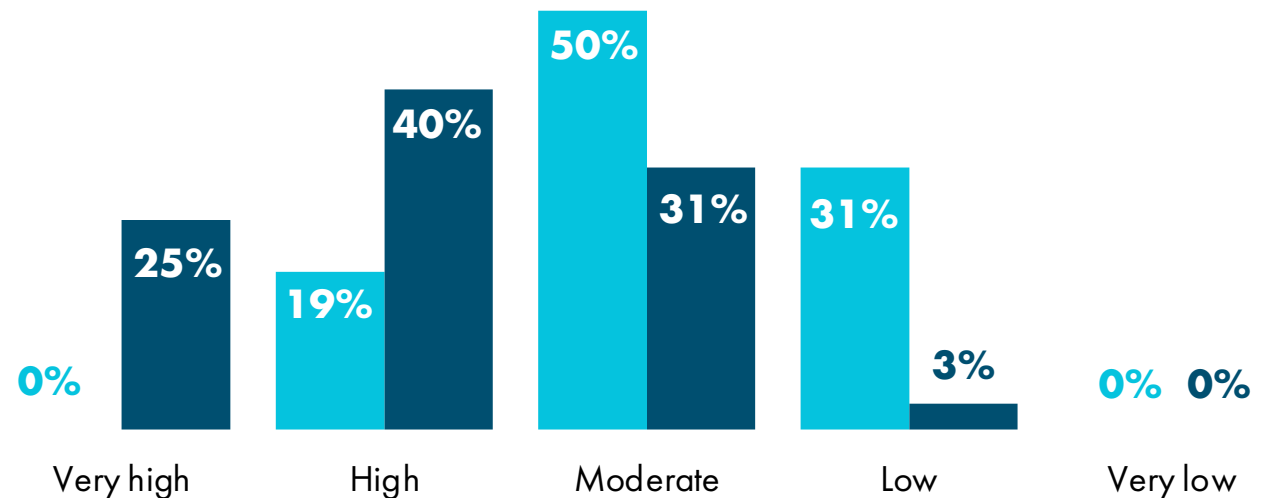
81% CAOs whose office has a role in initiating and driving innovative practices across state government during the pandemic

72% CAOs who were called upon to be innovative in an area outside their typical domain when the pandemic struck during the pandemic

Assessing preparedness

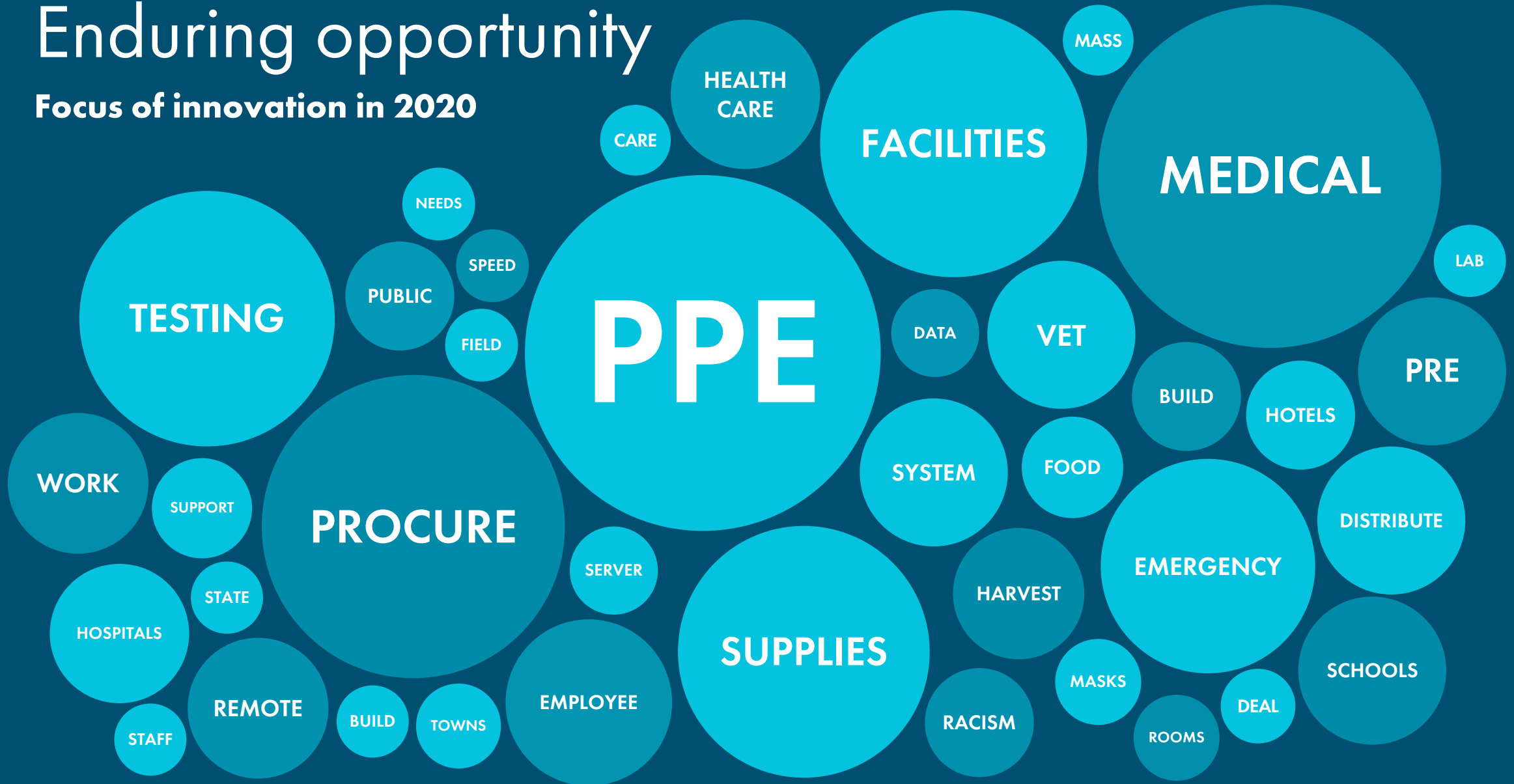
CAOs were more prepared for disruption than they thought. The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted their opinions about their organizations' readiness. COVID-19 likely changed your opinion about your organization's preparedness for disruption? Please complete the two statements below:

- I used to think (prior to COVID-19) that our preparedness for disruption was...
- Now (during COVID-19) I believe that our preparedness for disruption is...



Enduring opportunity

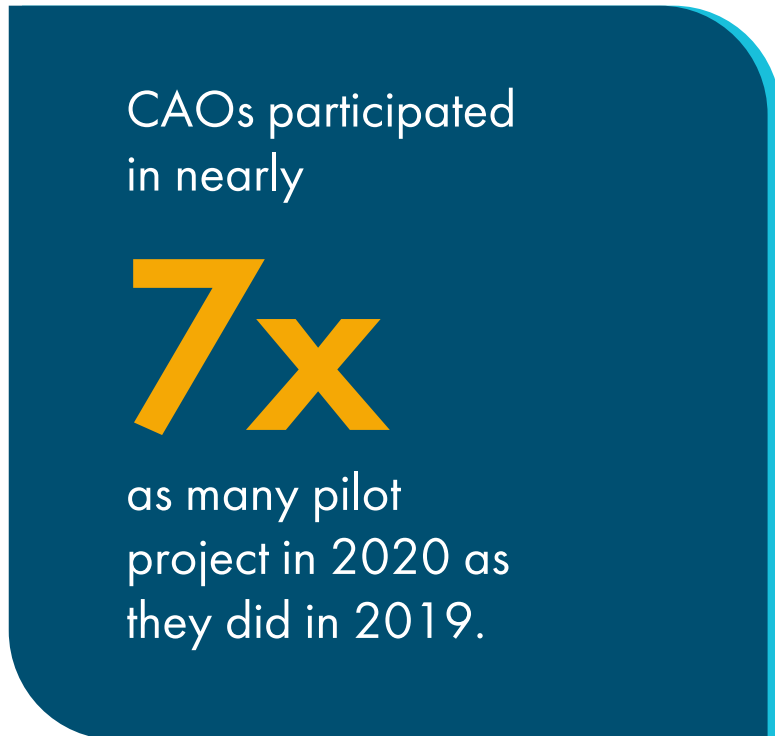
Focus of innovation in 2020



Enduring opportunity

Piloting more information

CAOs led or participated in more pilot programs as a result of the pandemic.



Looking ahead

Almost half of CAOs expect to keep the new responsibilities they took on during the pandemic for the long run.

18%
NOT SURE

35%
NO

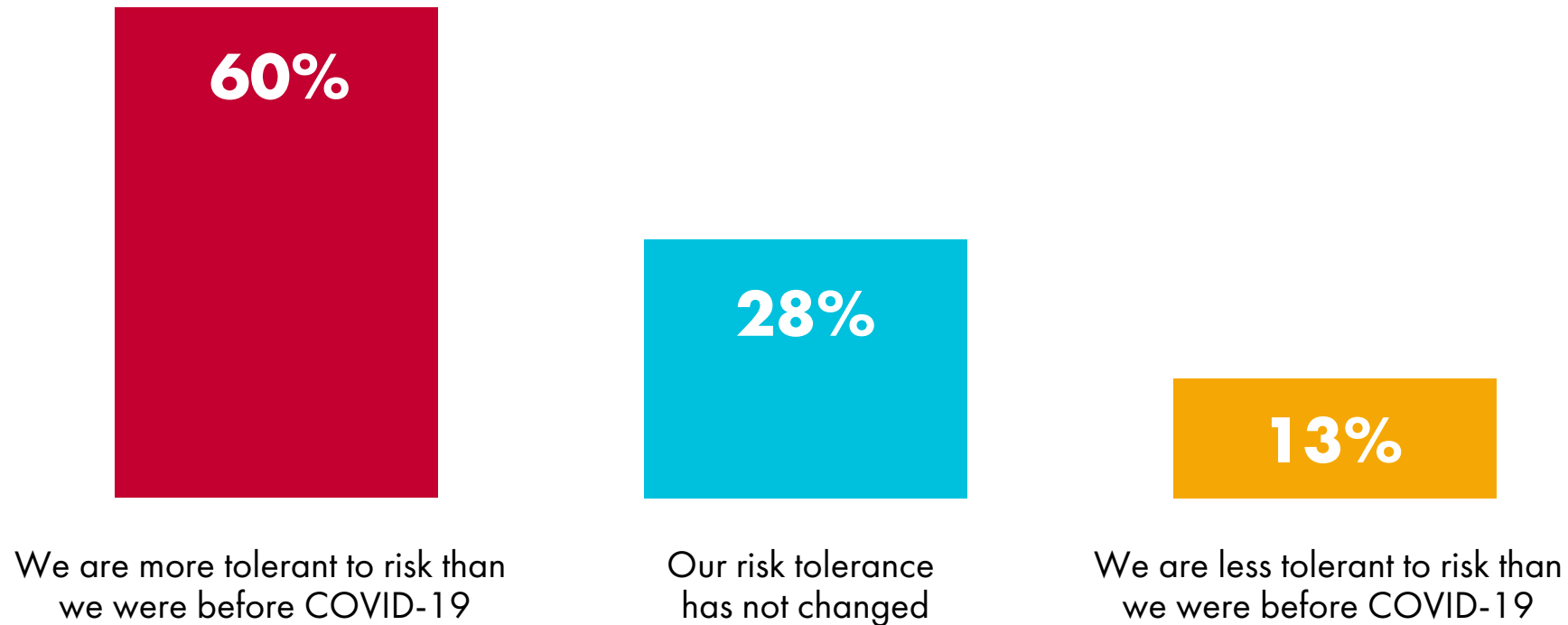


48%
YES

Hungry for innovation

Greater appetite for risk

Thinking about the time before and after COVID-19, when piloting projects and innovations, how has your organization's tolerance to risk changed? Are you more or less likely to launch a project that might be risky?



A focus on people

Human capital remains a major focus of innovation

Top focus of innovation over past 6 months

- 01 Human capital/remote work (95.2%)
- 02 IT (88.2%)
- 03 Procurement (53.6%)
- 04 Elevated digital delivery (50%)
- 05 Real estate (46.4%)

Opportunities to innovate over the next 6 months

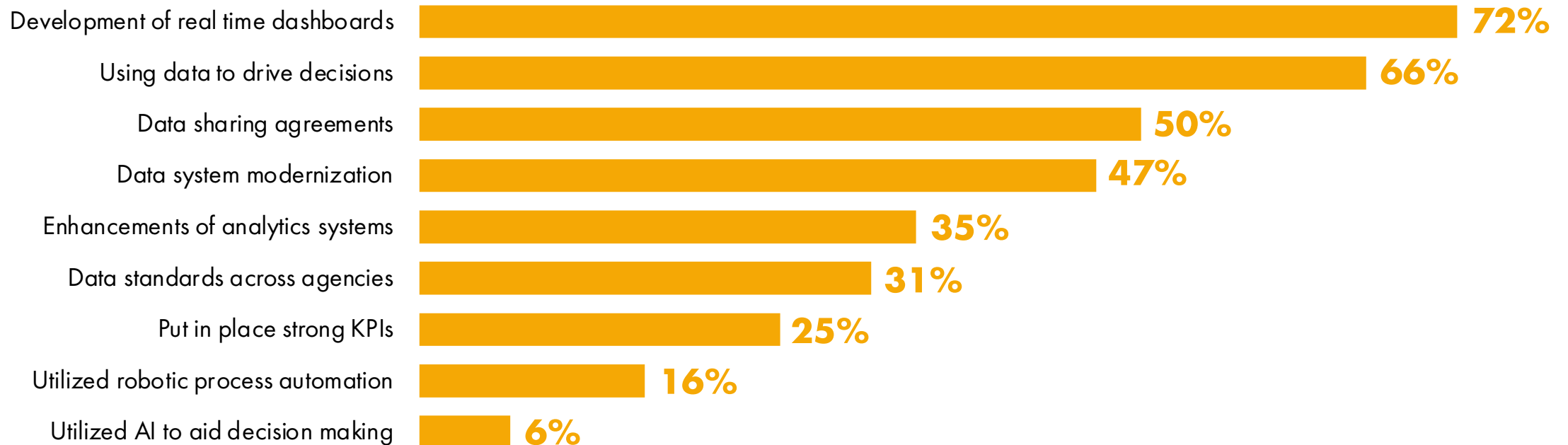
- 01 Human capital/remote work (85.7%)
- 02 IT (58.5%)
- 03 Real estate (57.1%)
- 04 Elevated digital delivery (50%)
- 05 Facilities management (50%)

Accelerating innovation

Data-driven decisions

The COVID-19 pandemic enabled CAOs to accelerate their efforts to implement real-time dashboards and drive decisions with data.

Please consider innovation and transformation efforts related to how your organization uses and interacts with data. As a result of COVID-19, have you been able to accelerate any efforts in this domain?

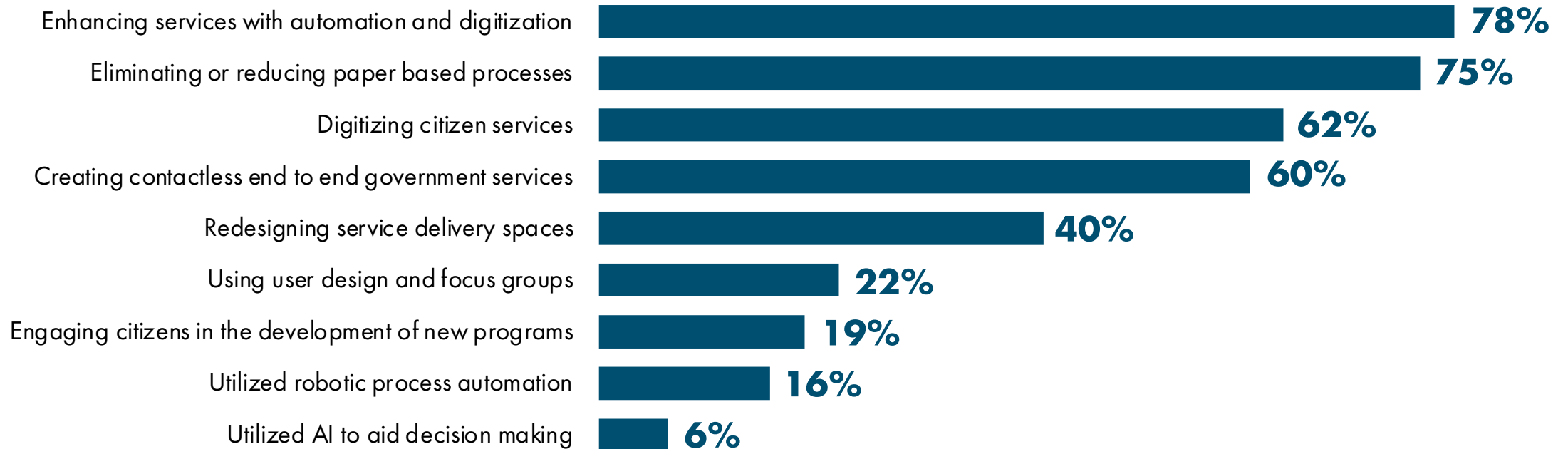


Accelerating innovation

Digitization of services

The pandemic enhanced CAOs focus on automation and eliminating paper-based processes.

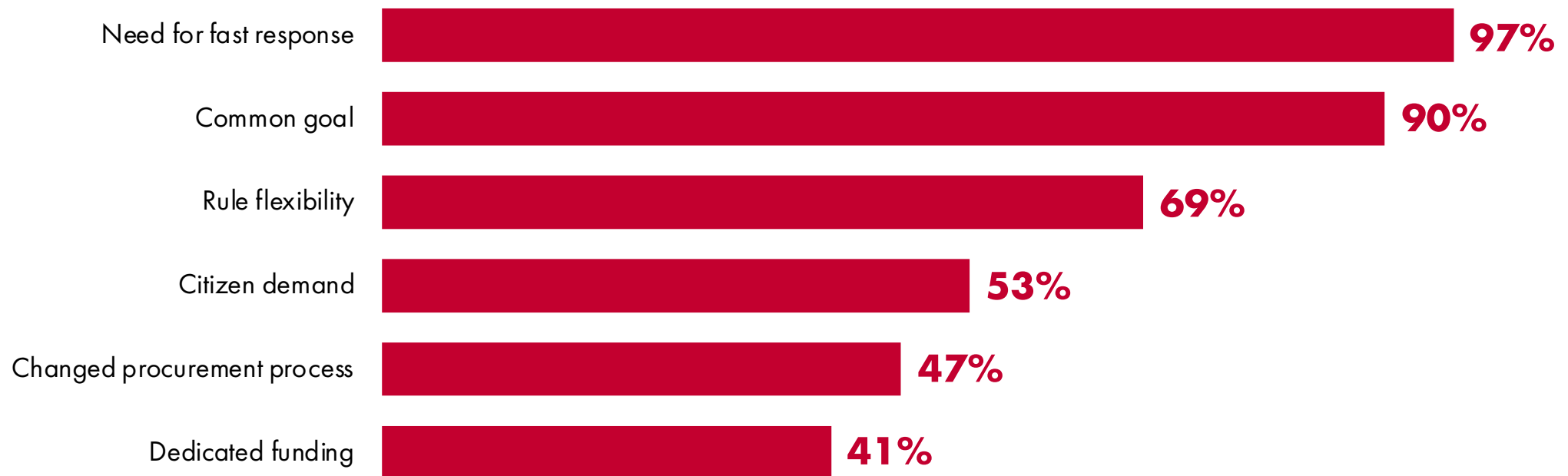
What innovation and transformation efforts related to digital government have you been able to accelerate as a result of COVID-19?



Innovation drivers

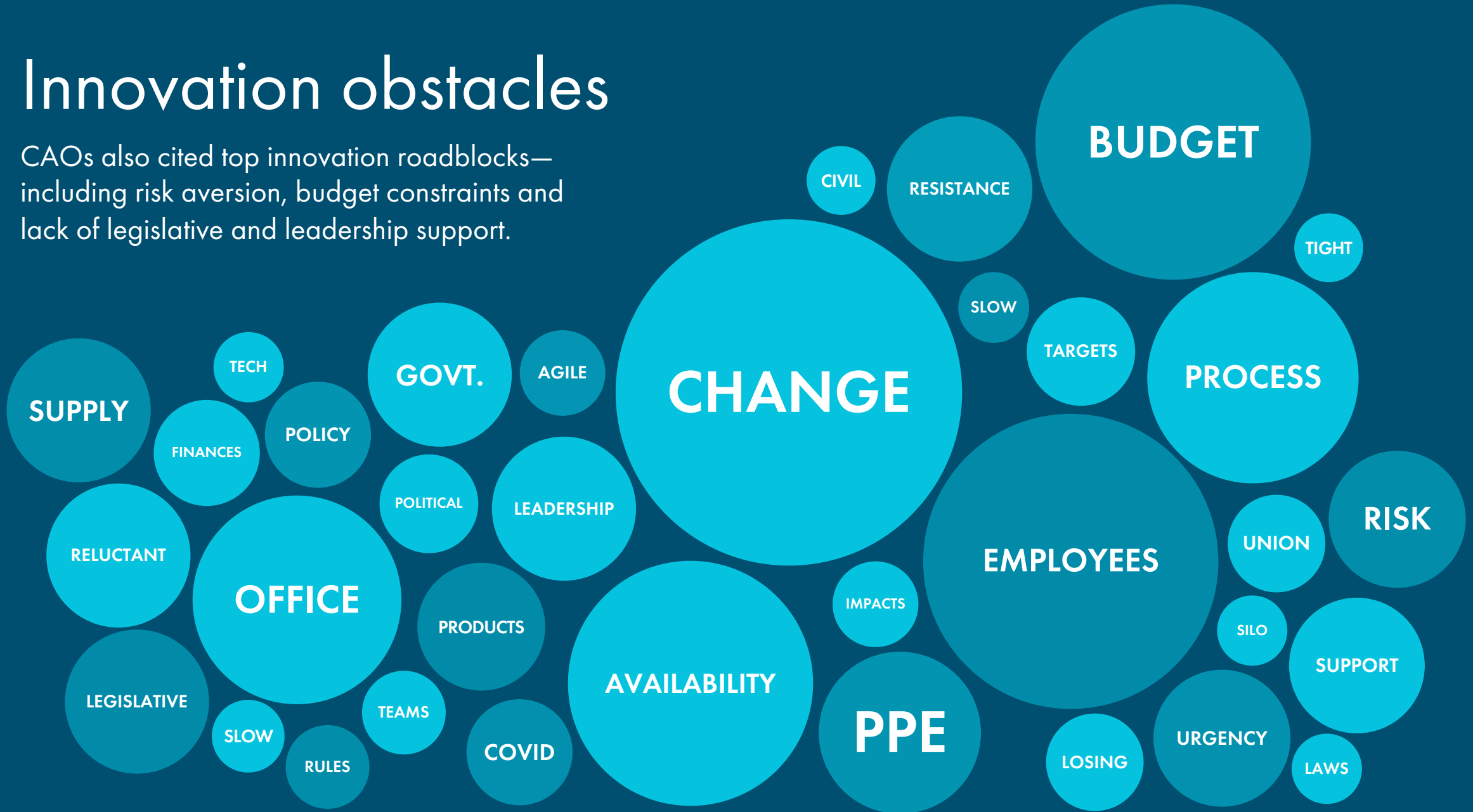
CAOs pointed to speed and a common goal as top drivers of innovation

What enabled innovation during the COVID-19 response



Innovation obstacles

CAOs also cited top innovation roadblocks—including risk aversion, budget constraints and lack of legislative and leadership support.

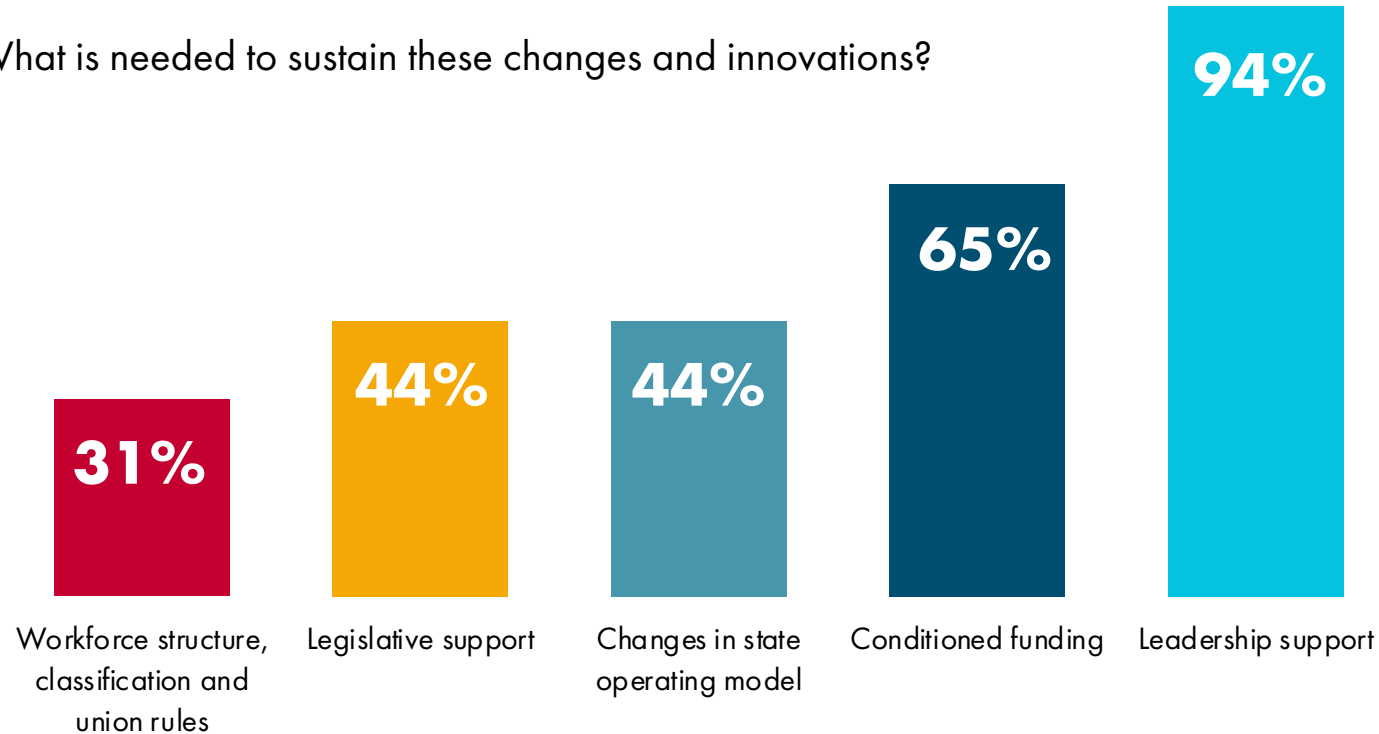


Unlocking future innovation

The need for leadership

When we asked what's needed to sustain changes and innovation, more than 90% cited leadership support.

What is needed to sustain these changes and innovations?

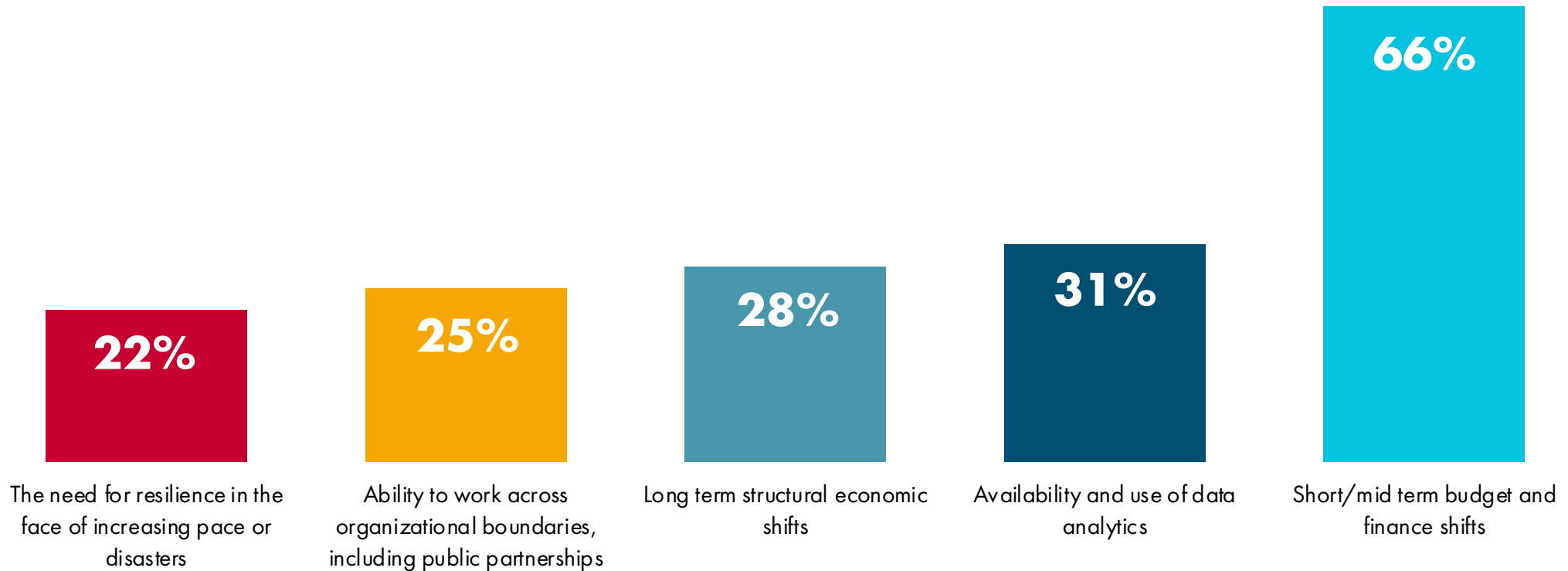


97%
Felt that the changes were not temporary and would need to be sustained.

The importance of investment

CAOs also anticipate budget shifts to drive change in the future.

As you look to the next five years and reflect on the challenges and opportunities on the horizon for state government operations, what do you consider to be the three biggest drivers of change (for good or bad)?



As state governments pivoted to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, CAOs were at the core of their innovative responses. Given their operational expertise and willingness to “pitch in,” CAOs played—and will continue to play—a key role in driving lasting change. Many believe their organizations have now experienced the benefits of taking bold steps

and accepting greater risk to implement new ways of working and delivering services. Accenture and NASCA look forward to exploring and supporting CAOs in bringing even greater innovation to state government strategies and operations.

Things to consider:

01

Expect the Role of the CAO to be expanded as a driver of innovation.

02

Keep human capital a major focus of future innovations.

03

Incorporate more efforts to implement real-time dashboards and drive decisions with data.

04

Focus on automation and eliminating paper-based processes.

05

Gain Leadership and budgets support as critical elements to drive the future.

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ABOUT NASCA

Founded in 1976, the National Association of State Chief Administrators (NASCA), is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 association representing state chief administrators—public officials in charge of departments that provide support services to other state agencies. NASCA provides a forum to exchange information and learn new ideas from each other and private partners. NASCA’s mission is to help state chief administrators and their teams strategically transform state government operations through the power of shared knowledge and thought leadership. For more information, visit www.nasca.org.

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