Research

Cybersecurity of County Governments

CIO Forum February 2023
NACo & Accenture

NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION
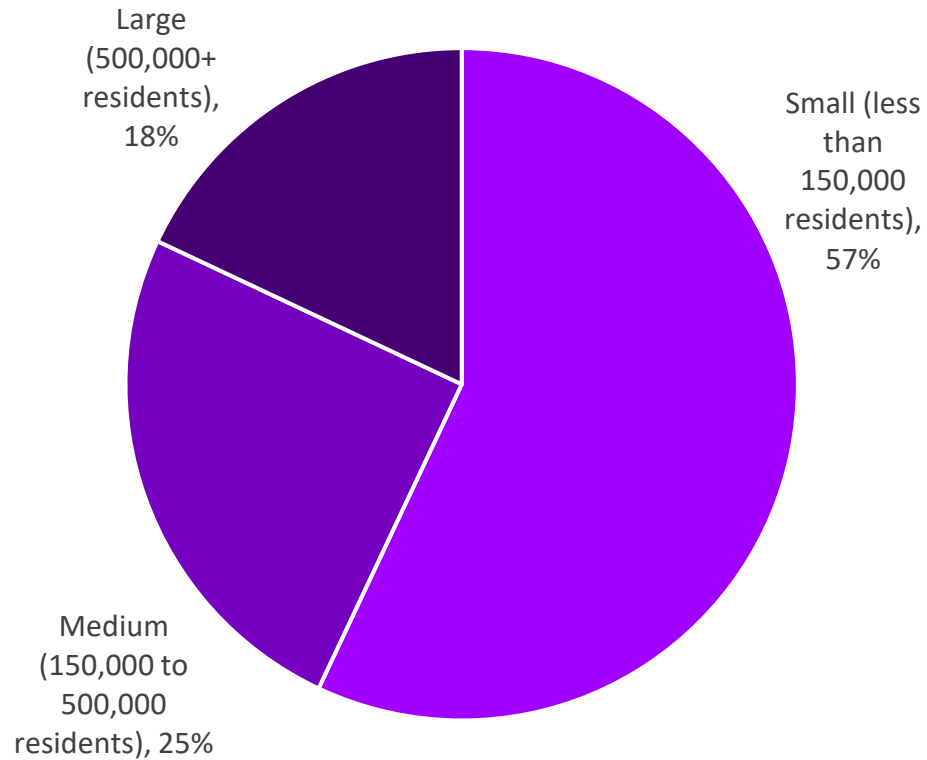of COUNTIES NACo®
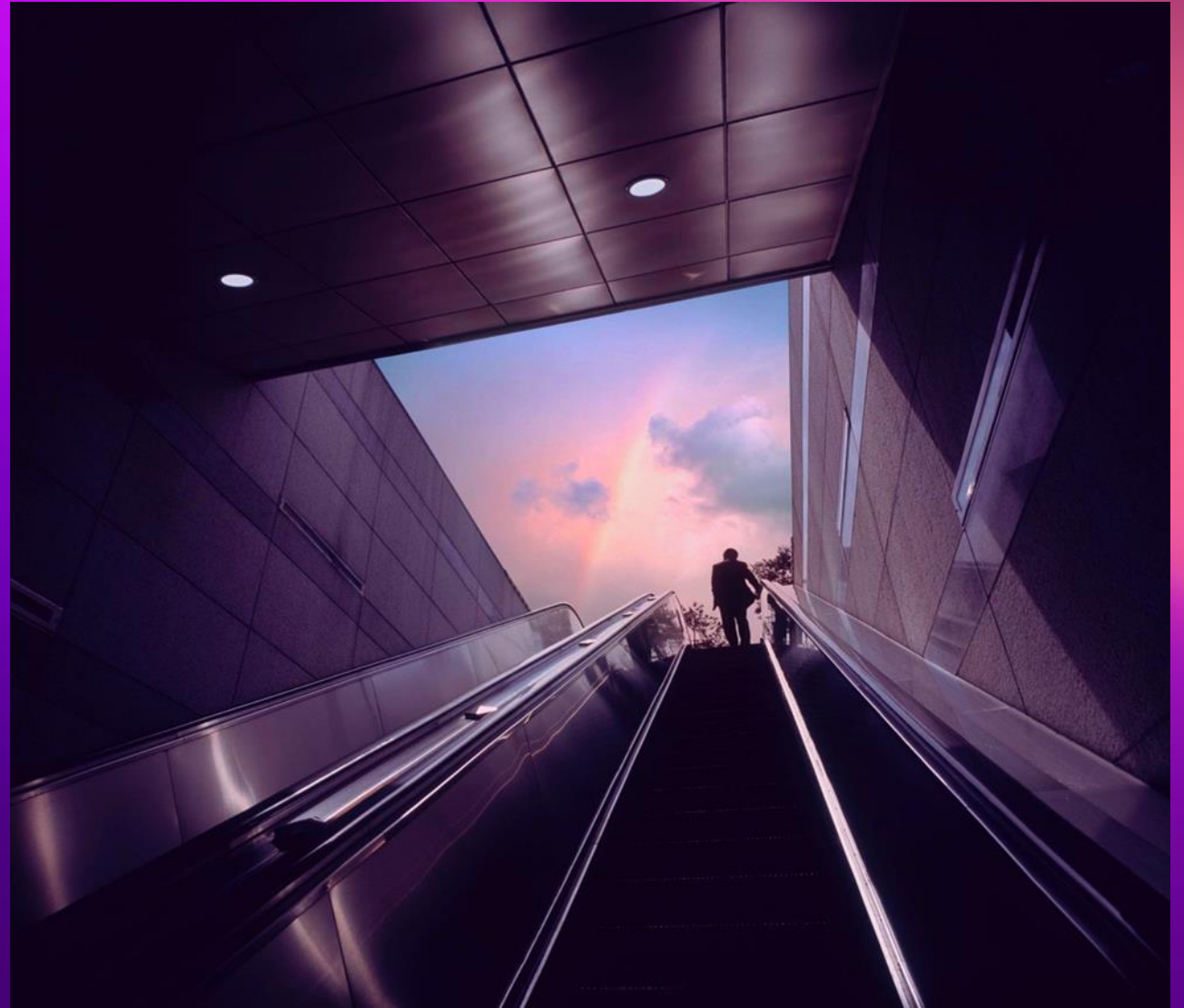
Unique Cyber Challenges for CIOs

"I think technology leadership at the local level is under a lot of pressure these days... And I think local governments are increasingly dependent on that technology leadership to keep them safe, to deliver services, to raise the efficiency and effectiveness of entire organizations."

-Interviewed County CIO
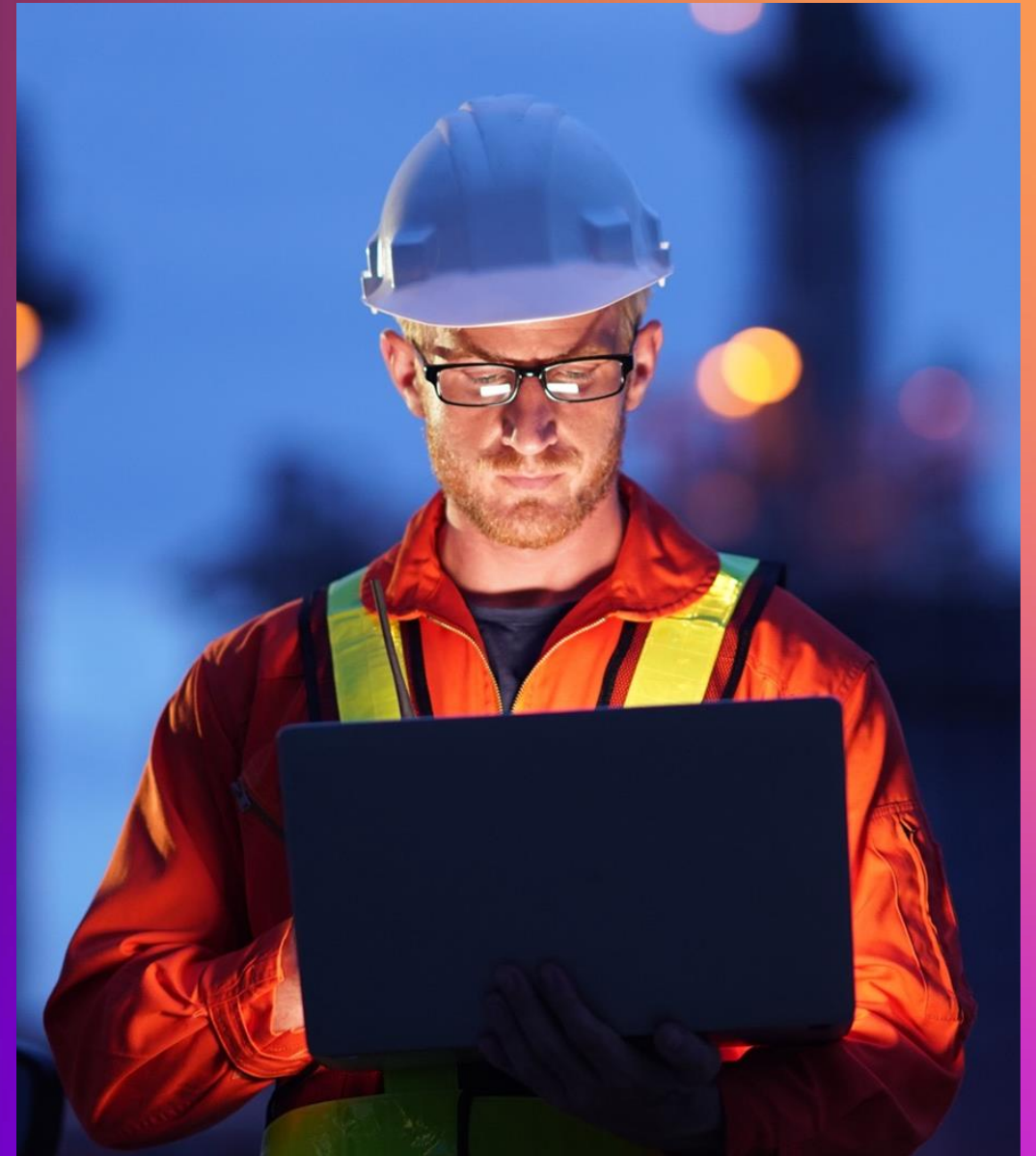
We surveyed 134 IT county officials from around the country and conducted two focus groups.

County Size

- Small (less than 150,000 residents), 57%
- Medium (150,000 to 500,000 residents), 25%
- Large (500,000+ residents), 18%

Role

- CIO, 37%
- CISO, 14%
- CTO, 10%
- Elected County Official, 7%
- County Department Director, 19%
- IT Specialist, 7%
- Other, 6%
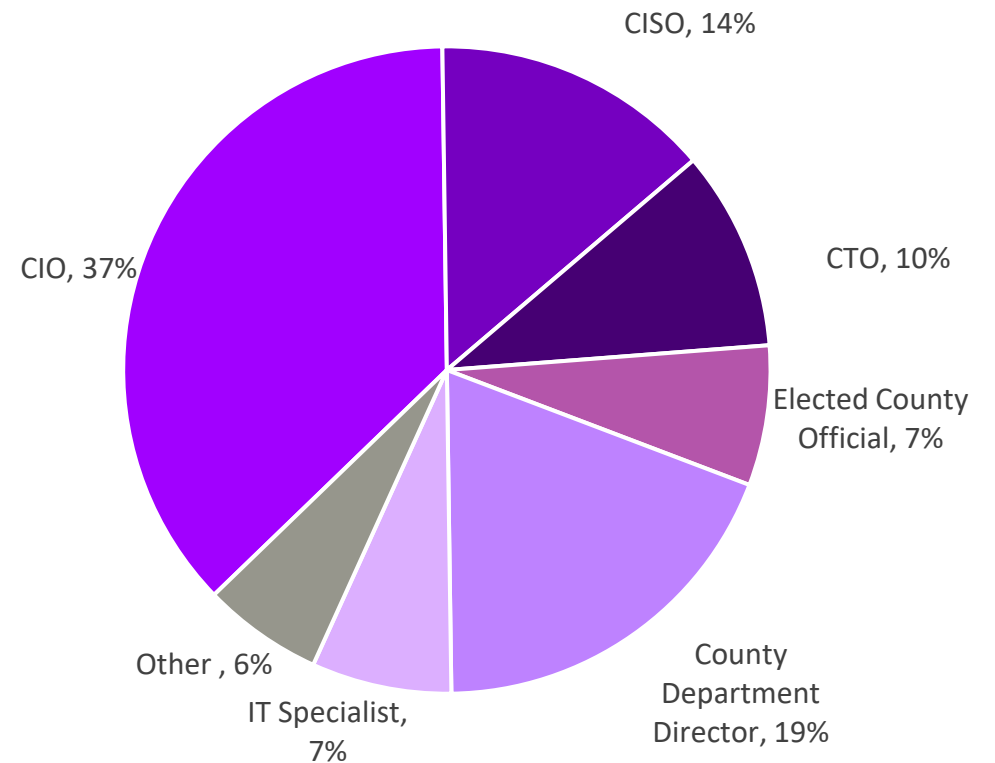
Key Findings Along Four Dimensions

- Cyber Strategy
- Cyber Protection
- Cyber Resilience
- Cyber Ecosystem

Cyber Strategy

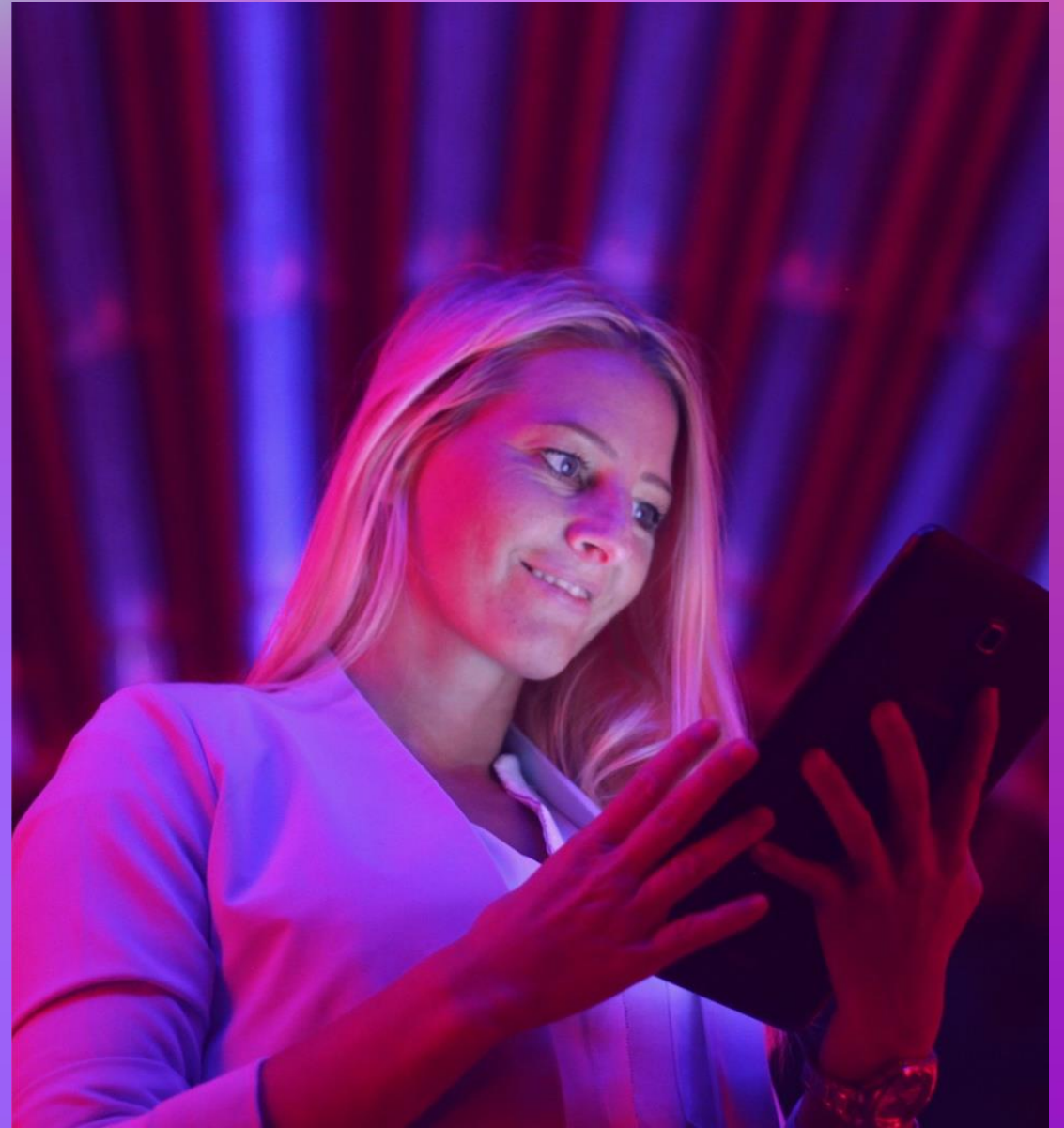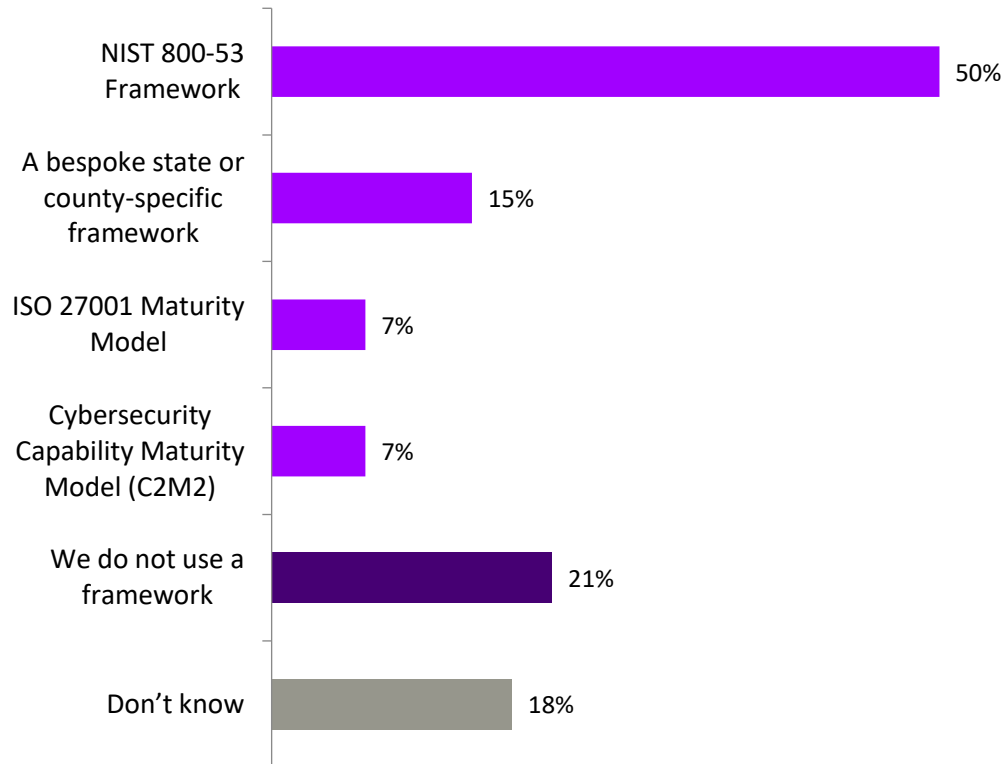# Half of respondents use the NIST 800-53 Framework to measure their cybersecurity effectiveness; half have their cyber risk-based framework at least partially integrated in county wide plans

What frameworks do you use to measure your cybersecurity effectiveness? *Multiple responses*

Framework	%
NIST 800-53 Framework	50%
A bespoke state or county-specific framework	15%
ISO 27001 Maturity Model	7%
Cybersecurity Capability Maturity Model (C2M2)	7%
We do not use a framework	21%
Don't know	18%

To what extent is your cyber risk-based framework integrated into your county-wide enterprise security and resilience plan?

It is not integrated at all, 11%

It is partially integrated, 38%

We do not have a risk-based framework for cybersecurity, 29%

It is completely integrated, 12%

Unsure, 10%

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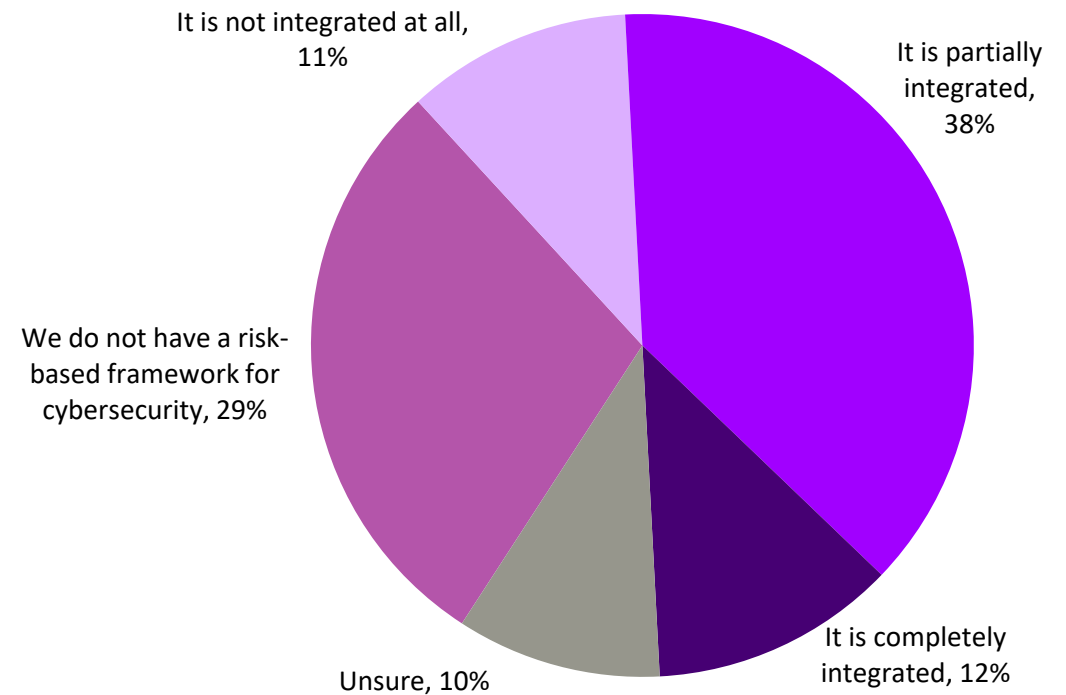
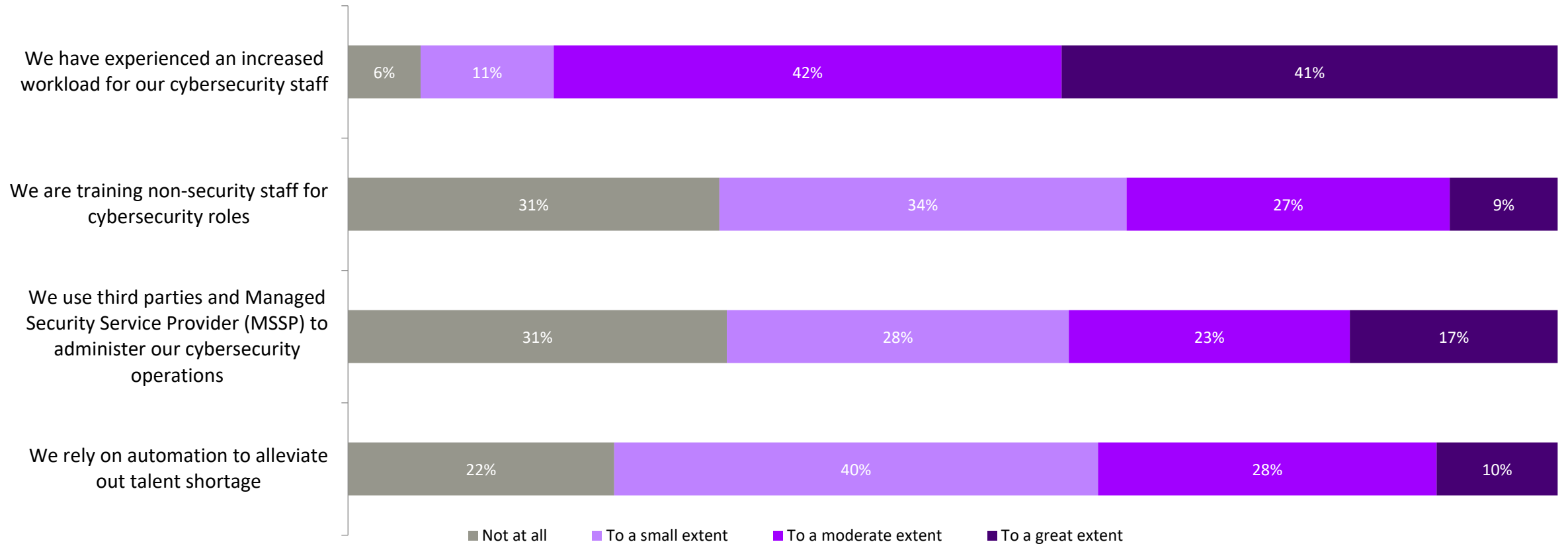Cyber Strategy
41% of respondents feel they have **experienced an increased workload for their staff** due to shortage in cybersecurity talent

To what extent has your organization experienced the following due to a shortage in cybersecurity talent?

	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent
We have experienced an increased workload for our cybersecurity staff	6%	11%	42%	41%
We are training non-security staff for cybersecurity roles	31%	34%	27%	9%
We use third parties and Managed Security Service Provider (MSSP) to administer our cybersecurity operations	31%	28%	23%	17%
We rely on automation to alleviate out talent shortage	22%	40%	28%	10%

■ Not at all ■ To a small extent ■ To a moderate extent ■ To a great extent

Cyber Strategy

Respondents say non-competitive wages (72%) and budgetary constraints (64%) are the top challenges to recruiting cybersecurity professionals

What are the top challenges for your organization in recruiting cybersecurity professionals?
Select up to three

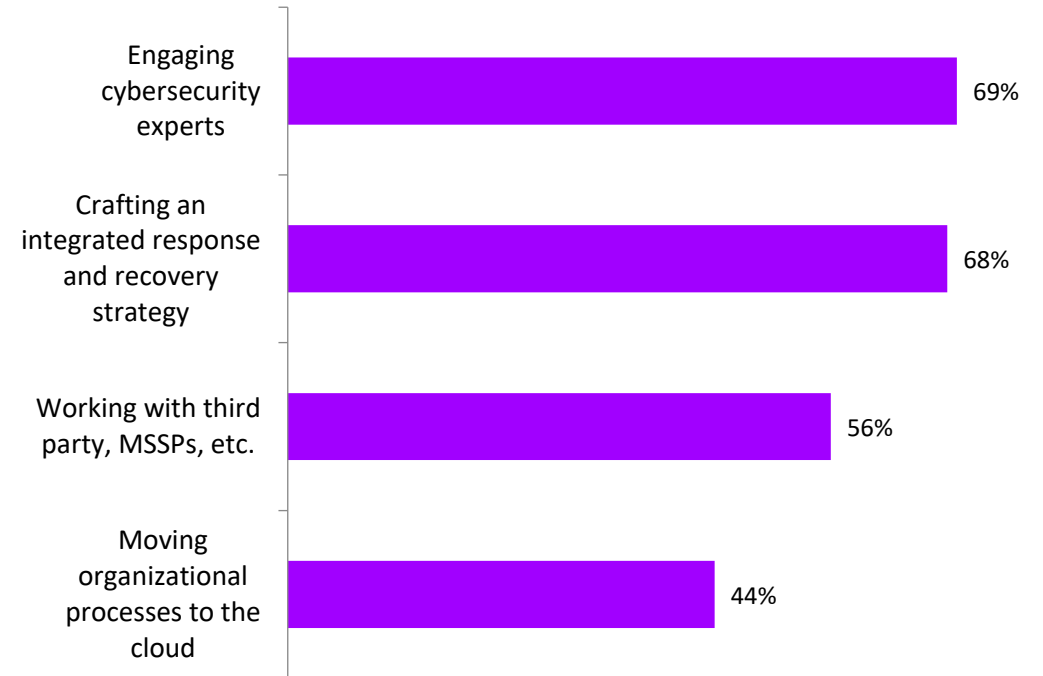| Challenge	Percentage
Non-competitive wages	72%
Budgetary constraints	64%
Lack of qualified cybersecurity experts	34%
Limited or no remote work options	22%
Lengthy public sector hiring processes	9%
We do not have difficulty in recruiting cybersecurity professionals	6%
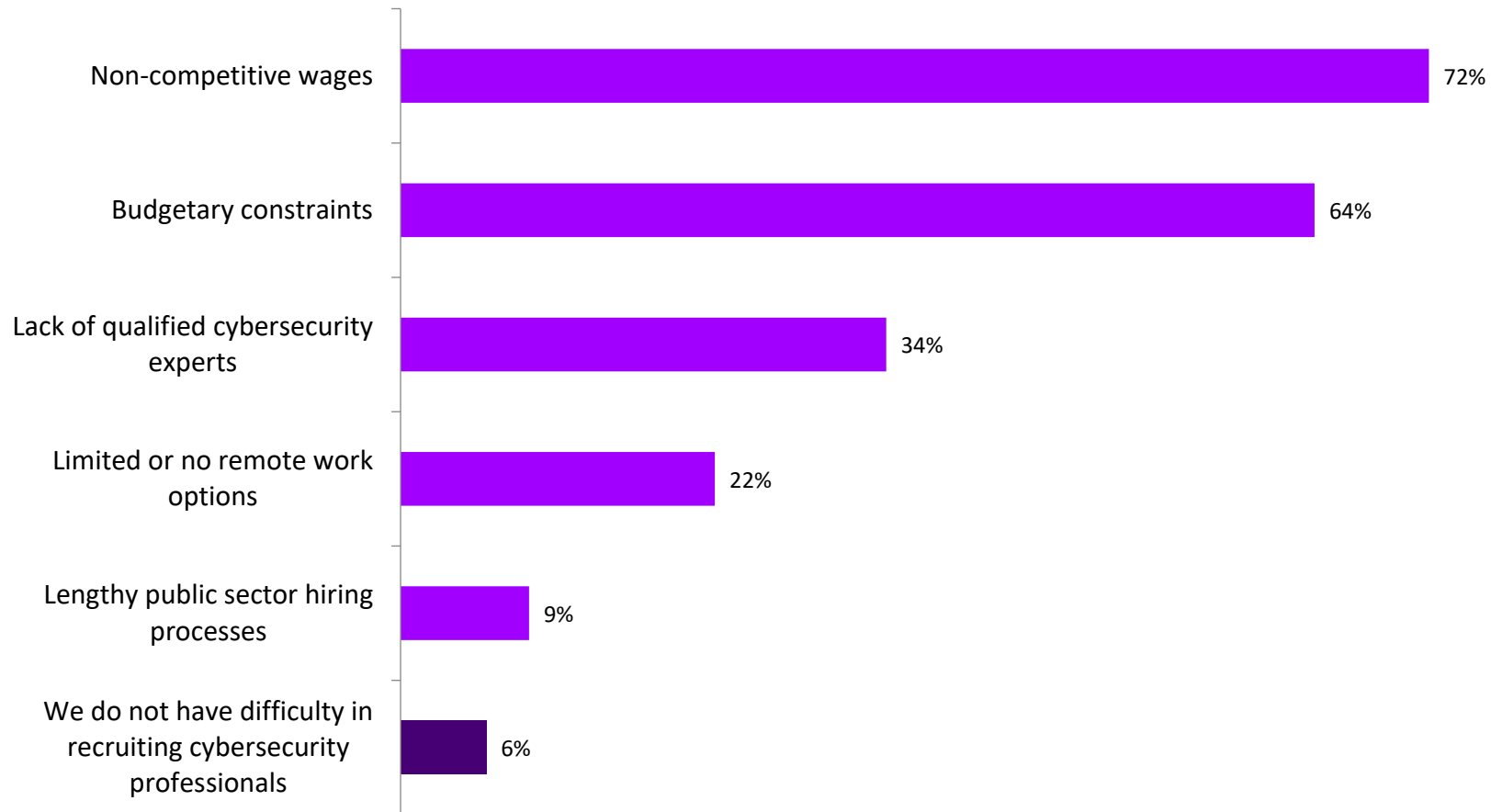
Cyber Protection

Almost two-thirds agree or strongly agree **cybersecurity** is a top priority for county officials and counties are investing in **multiple** ways to increase their cyber protection

"Cybersecurity is a top priority for elected county officials."

Agree, 42%
Neither Agree nor Disagree, 17%
Disagree, 13%
Strongly Agree, 24%
Strongly Disagree, 4%
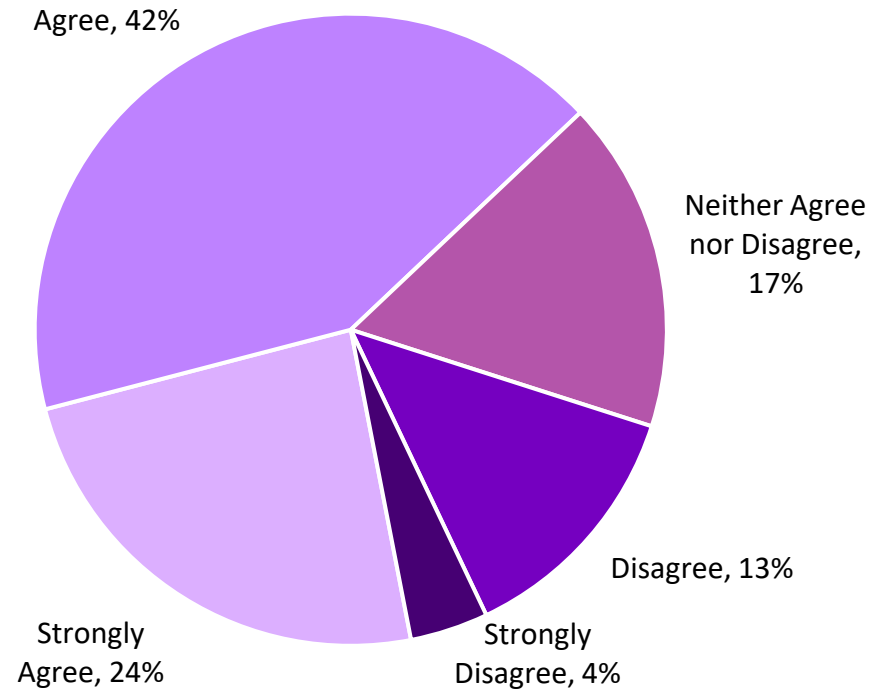
Select which cybersecurity methods your organization is currently utilizing.
Multiple responses

Engaging cybersecurity experts	69%
Crafting an integrated response and recovery strategy	68%
Working with third party, MSSPs, etc.	56%
Moving organizational processes to the cloud	44%

Cyber Resilience
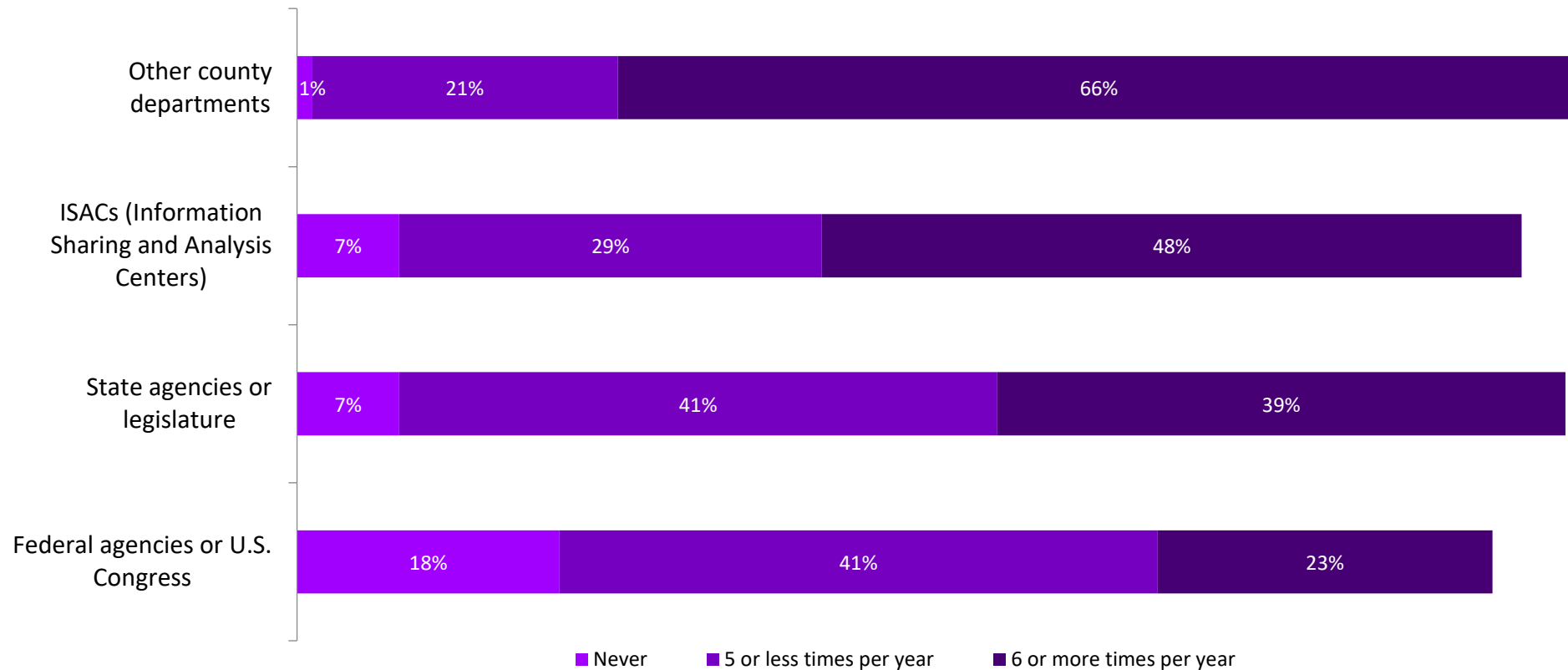# **86%** of counties have an external cyber insurance policy, but only **31%** are happy with their policy.

In the last year, has your cyber insurance changed?

Cost

| 70% | 2% | 28% |

■ Increase ■ Decrease ■ Stay the same

Required more lengthy questionnaires

| 69% | 11% | 20% |

■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure

Reduced coverages

| 33% | 27% | 40% |

■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure

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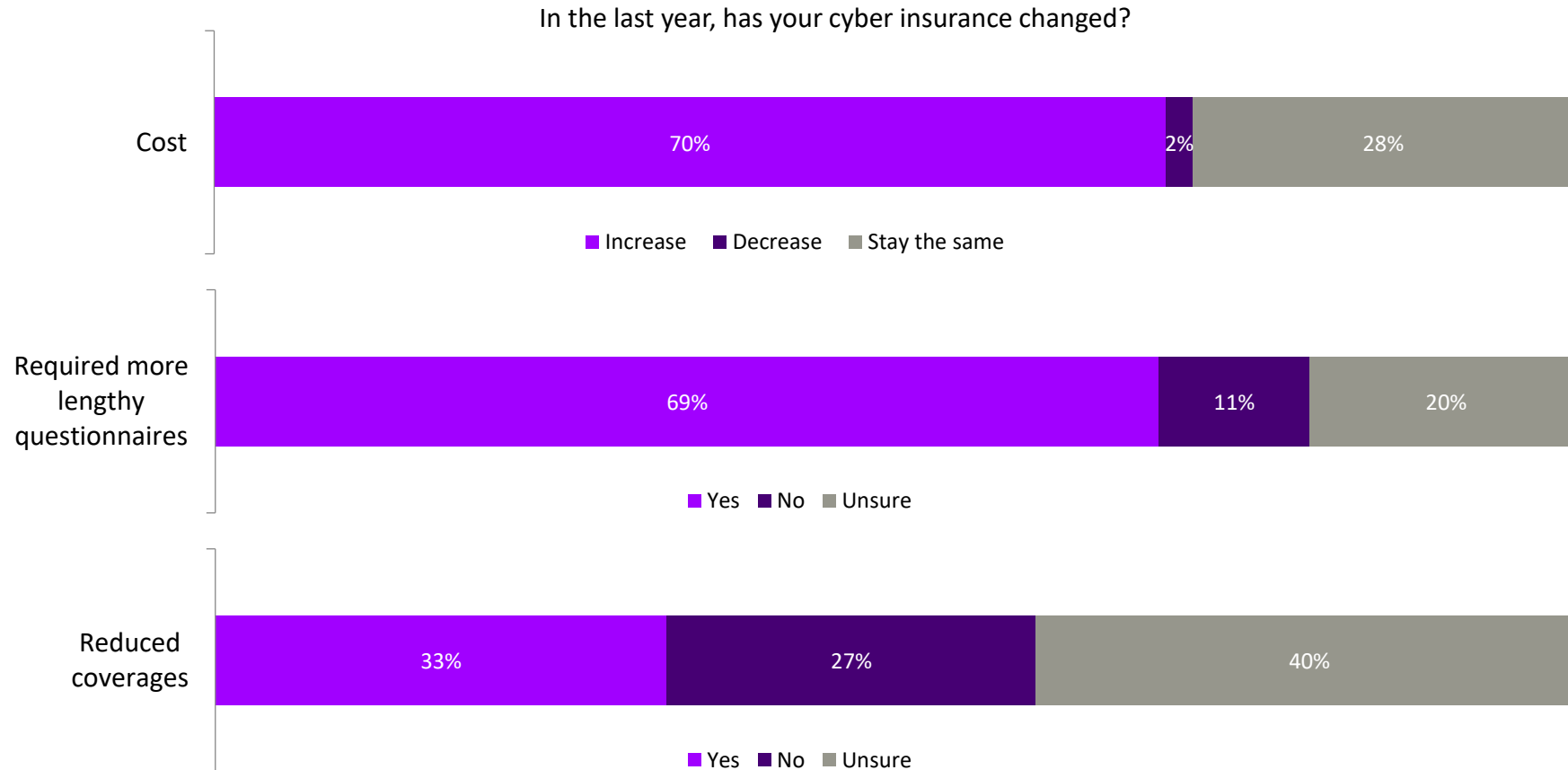
Cyber Ecosystem
Other county departments and **ISACs** are engaged with more frequently than state or federal agencies.

To what extent is your organization currently engaged in information sharing and collaboration with other agencies?

	Never	5 or less times per year	6 or more times per year
Other county departments	1%	21%	66%
ISACs (Information Sharing and Analysis Centers)	7%	29%	48%
State agencies or legislature	7%	41%	39%
Federal agencies or U.S. Congress	18%	41%	23%

■ Never   ■ 5 or less times per year   ■ 6 or more times per year

3 Actions for County CIOs

1. Conduct an **industry assessment** to establish a current state.
2. Develop a **cybersecurity strategy** that includes a focus on workforce.
3. Take advantage of security and automation provided by **cloud** and **software-as-a-service (Saas)** ecosystem partnerships.

Full Report Launch
April 2023

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