



Who are we? A Profile of the Profession: Insights from the 2025 Survey Update

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Prepared by:



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Your Panel



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Introduction

Survey Methodology

City Size Categories

City Size Categories

SMALL CITY

LESS THAN
OR EQUAL
TO 35,000

MEDIUM CITY

35,001 - 75,000

LARGE CITY

75,001 - 200,000

VERY LARGE CITY

GREATER THAN
200,000

Note: City size is based on July 1, 2024 population estimates from the United States Census Bureau. For cities and towns with populations fewer than 5,000, city size is based on the 2020 Decennial Census.

City Size by Category

Table 6. City Size by Category

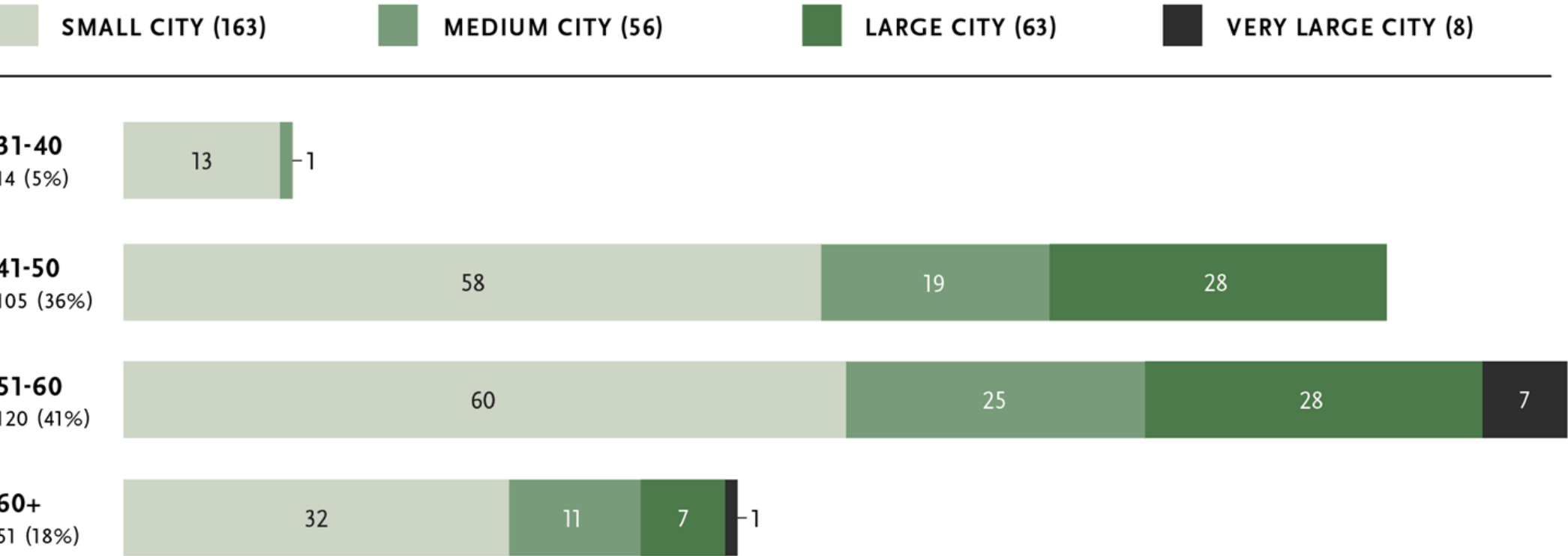
	NUMBER OF CITIES	PERCENT OF CITIES	TOTAL POPULATION
SMALL CITIES (<= 35,000)	261	54%	3,739,881
MEDIUM CITIES (35,001-75,000)	101	21%	5,877,670
LARGE CITIES (75,001-200,000)	99	21%	11,001,801
VERY LARGE CITIES (200,000+)	21	4%	12,250,473
TOTAL	482	100%	

Source: United States Census Bureau Quick Facts, City Population Estimates for 2024.

Demographic Profile

Age and City Size

Figure 1. Age and City Size



Q: What is your age? N=290.
Notes: One respondent (age 51-60) did not include identifying city information and is excluded from this figure. The change from 2023 callout box refers to the percentage point change. For example, city managers age 41-50 were 36% of all city managers in 2025 but only 33% in 2023.

CHANGE FROM 2023

31-40: 0% 41-50: +3% 51-60: -4% 60+: +1%

Gender

Figure 2. Gender



Q: What is your gender?

N=292.

Note: Percentages do not total 100% or 0% due to rounding.

CHANGE FROM 2023

MALE: -2%

FEMALE: +1%

PREFER NOT TO ANSWER: N/A

Race and Ethnicity and Gender

Figure 3. Race or Ethnicity and Gender



Q: What is your gender?
Q: Based on these U.S. Census Bureau categories, with what race and ethnicity do you most identify yourself? (Check all that apply.) N=290.
Note: Fields marked as “NA” were not possible responses in the 2023 survey and are excluded from comparative analysis. Percentage change from 2023 does not balance due to rounding and the addition of new categories.

Education

Figure 4. Education



CHANGE FROM 2023

DOCTORATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE: +1%

MASTER'S DEGREE: -1%

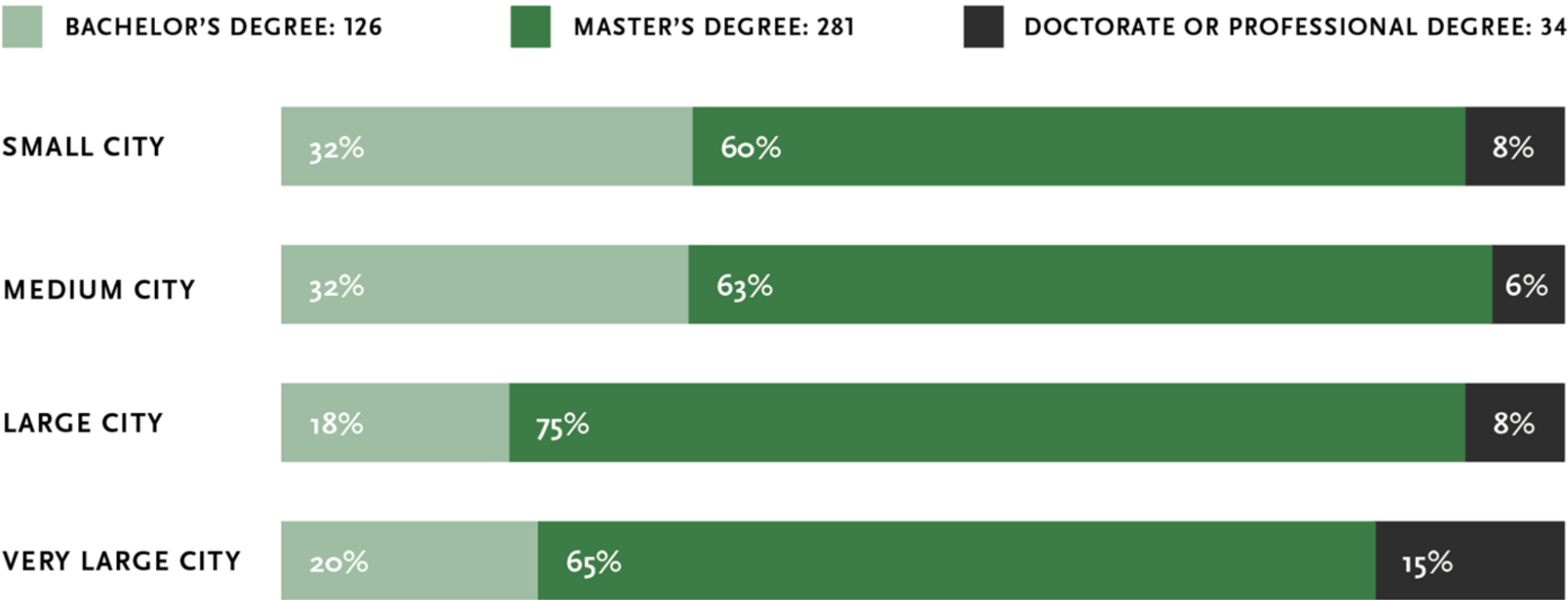
BACHELOR'S DEGREE: +1%

Q: What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? N=441.

Note: 288 responded to this question on the survey. The remaining 153 are taken from publicly available sources such as city websites, newspaper articles, and LinkedIn. Percentage totals may exceed 100% or fail to balance due to rounding.

Education and City Size

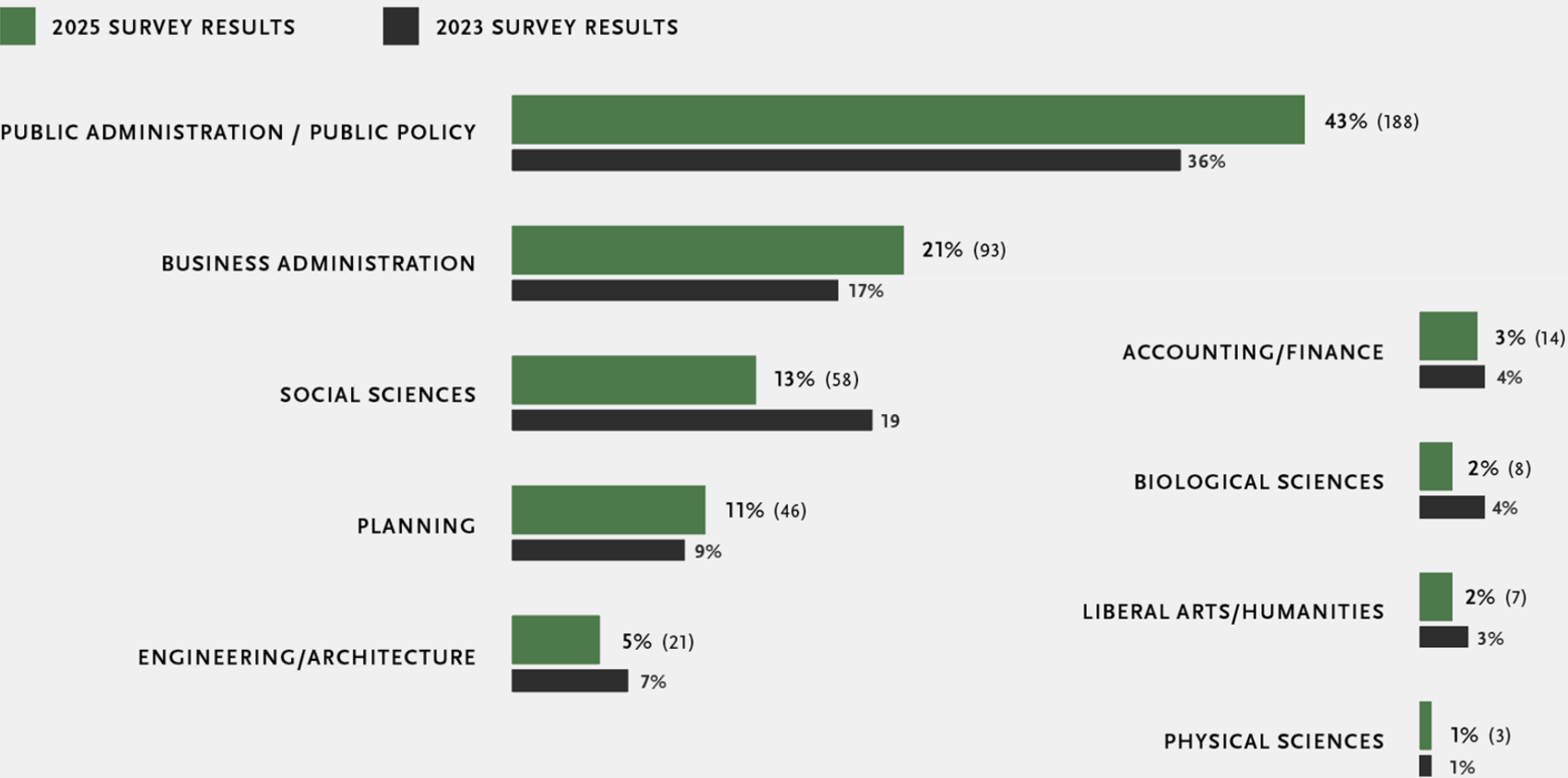
Figure 5. Education and City Size



Q: What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? N=441.
Note: 288 responded to this question on the survey. The remaining 153 are taken from publicly available sources such as city websites, newspaper articles, and LinkedIn. The total percentage exceeds 100% due to rounding. City size is based on July 1, 2024 population estimates from the United States Census Bureau. For cities and towns with populations fewer than 5,000, city size is based on the 2020 Decennial Census.

Major Subject Studied

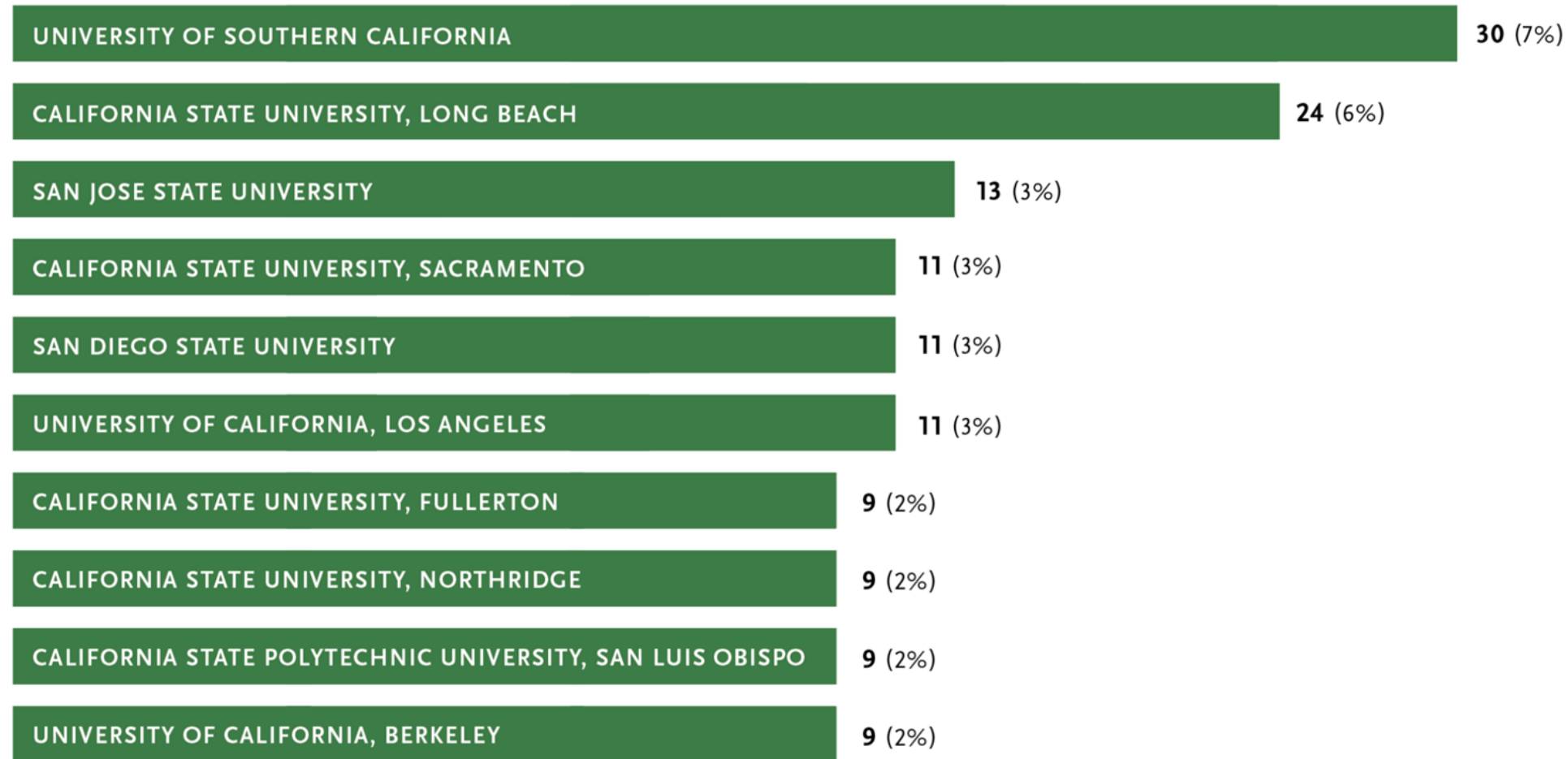
Figure 6. Major Subject Studied



Q: Major subject studied? N=438.
Note: 288 responded to this question on the survey. The remaining 150 are taken from publicly available sources such as city websites, newspaper articles, and LinkedIn. Survey results graphed as percentages. The total exceeds 100% and the 2023 change percentages do not balance due to rounding.

Top Ten Institutions for Highest Degree

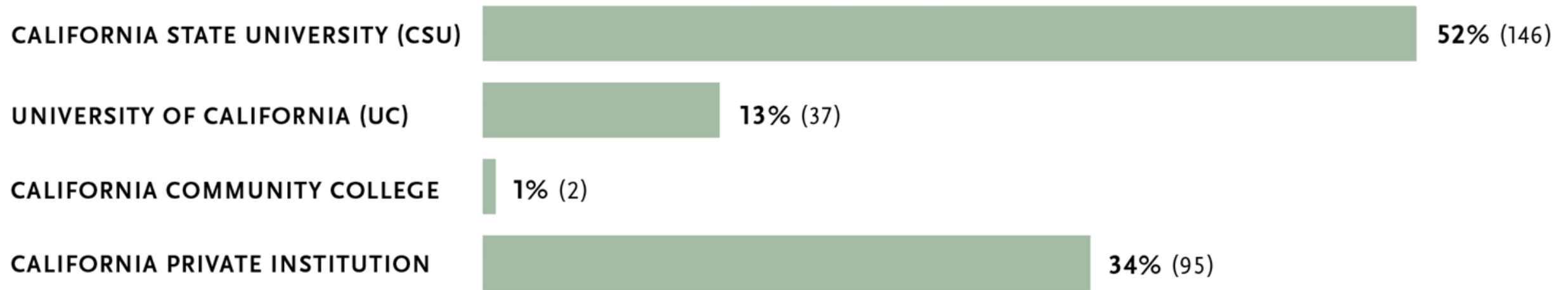
Figure 7. Top Ten Institutions for Highest Degree



Q: What is the name of the institution where you received your highest degree? N=401. Note: 292 responded to this question on the survey. The remaining 109 are taken from publicly available sources such as city websites, newspaper articles, and LinkedIn.

California Schools Granting the Highest Degree

Figure 8. California Schools Granting the Highest Degree



Q: What is the name of the institution where you received your highest degree? N=401. Note: 292 responded to this question on the survey. The remaining 109 are taken from publicly available sources such as city websites, newspaper articles, and LinkedIn.

Figure 9. California Native

■ YES: 185 (64%) ■ NO: 102 (36%)



Q: Are you originally from California?

N=287.

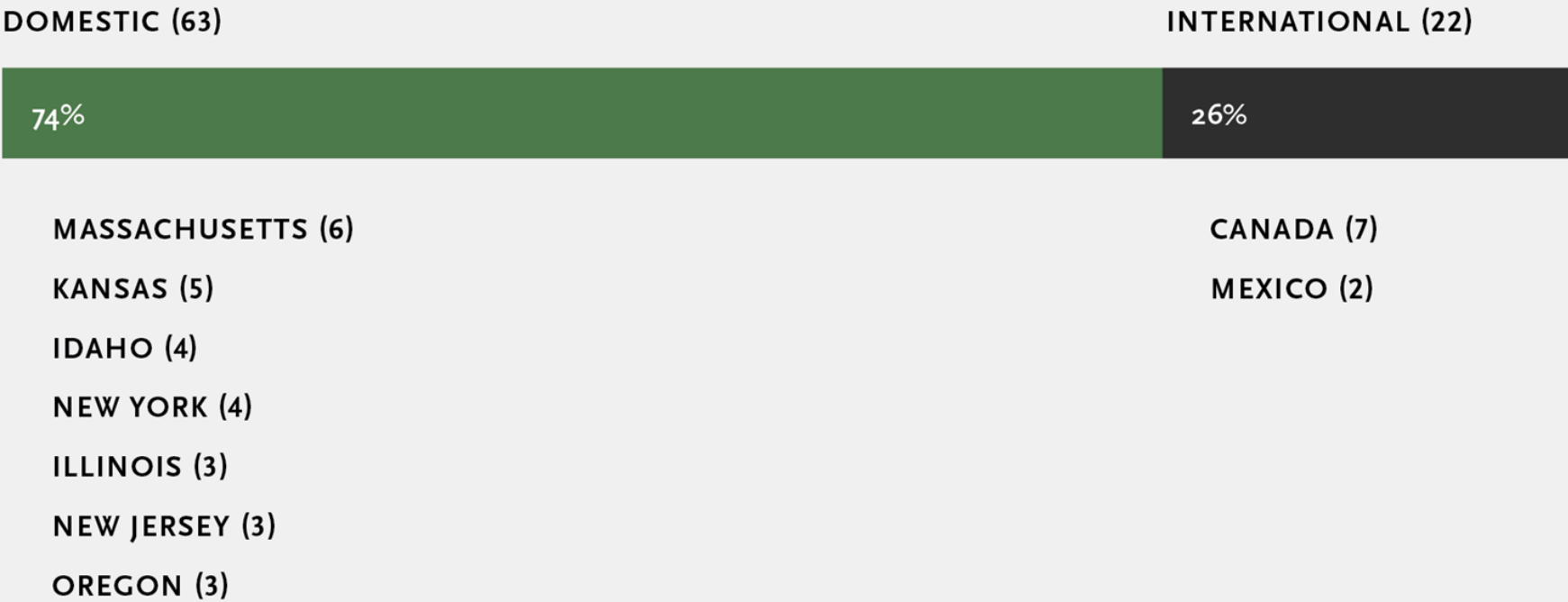
Note: 285 responded to this question in the survey. Biographical information for two city managers was sourced from publicly available newspaper articles.

CHANGE FROM 2023

YES: 0% NO: 0%

California Transplants - Domestic vs. International

Figure 10. California Transplants - Domestic vs. International



Q: Enter state of origin.
N=85.
Note: 84 responded to this question in the survey. Biographical information for one city manager was sourced from a publicly available newspaper article.

Employment Profile

Local Government Career Start in California

Figure 11. Local Government Career Start in California

 **YES: 234 (80%)**  **NO: 57 (20%)**

CHANGE FROM 2023

YES: -3%

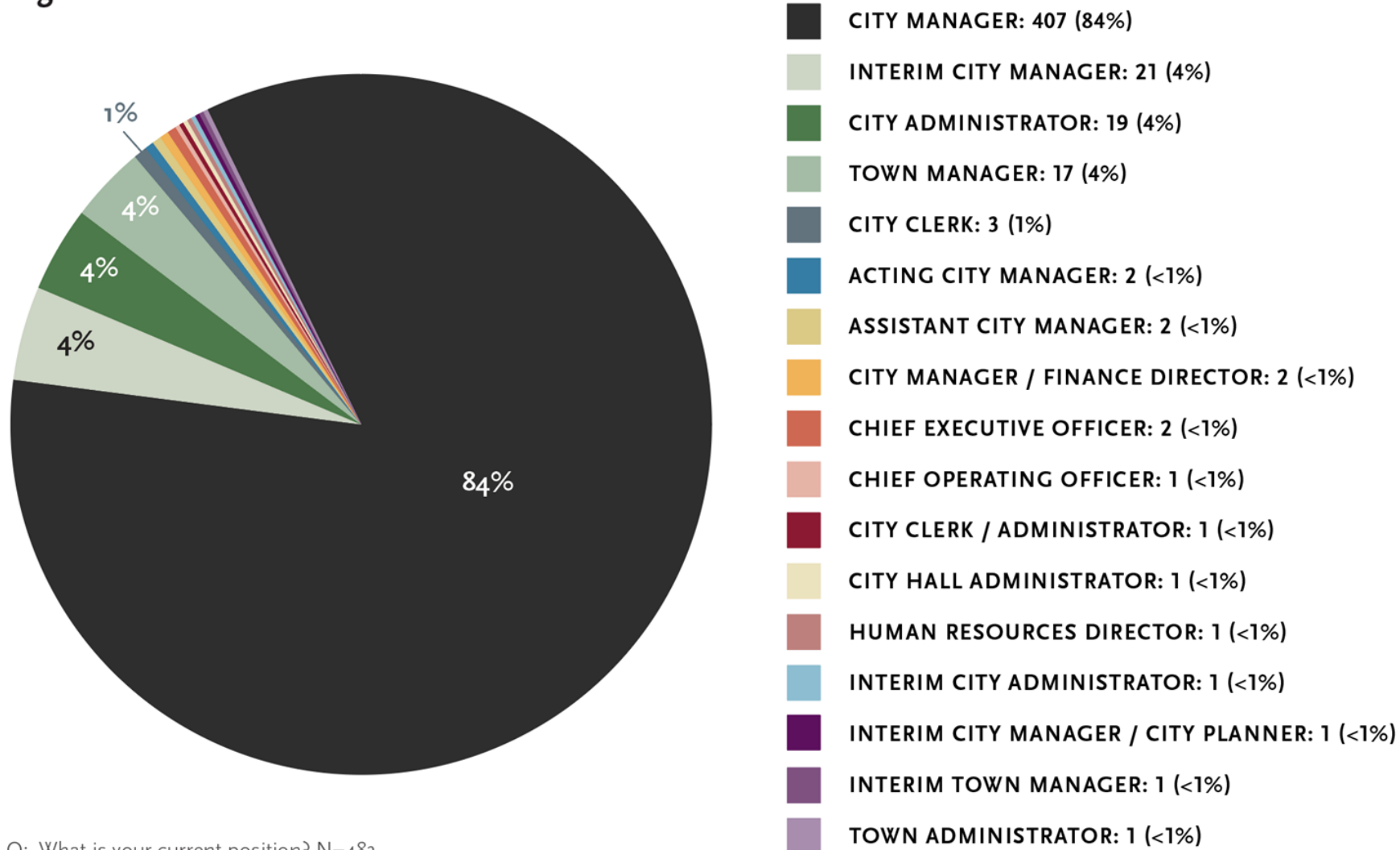
NO: +3%



Q: Did you start your local government career in California? N=291.

Current Position

Figure 12. Current Position



Q: What is your current position? N=483.

Note: 291 responded to this question on the survey. The remaining 188 are taken from city websites.

Time in Current Position

Table 2. Time in Current Position

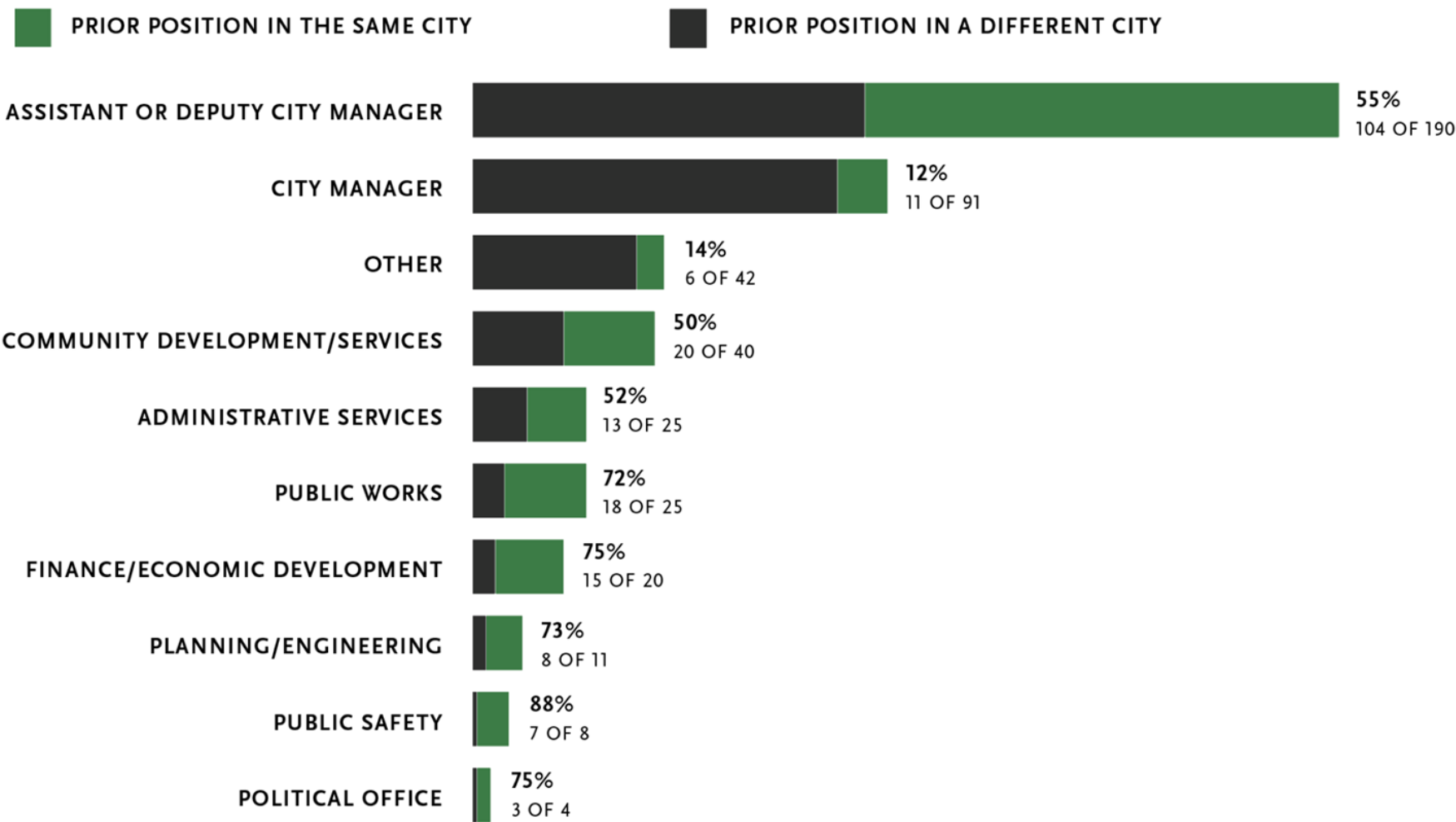
MONTHS IN CURRENT POSITION: AVERAGE	52.5 MONTHS
YEARS IN CURRENT POSITION: AVERAGE	4 YEARS, 4.5 MONTHS

Q: Start date in current position. N=461.

Note: Time in current position is calculated from the start date to May 20, 2025 (the end of the data collection period for this study).

Prior Position - Same or Different City

Figure 13. Prior Position - Same or Different City



Q: What was your position prior to becoming a city manager? N=456.

Prior Local Government Experience

Figure 14. Prior Local Government Experience

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

216

PUBLIC WORKS

73

FINANCE

66

HUMAN RESOURCES

55

ENGINEERING

23

Q: Before becoming a city manager, did you work in local government in any of the following areas? (Check all that apply.) N=271.

Table 3. Total Years as a City Manager in Any City

AVERAGE	8.6
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Q: How long have you worked as a city manager in any city agency (total number of years)?

Table 4. Total Years in Public Sector and Private Sector

	PUBLIC SECTOR	PRIVATE SECTOR
AVERAGE	26.2	5.9

Q: How long have you worked as a city manager in any city agency (total number of years)?

Q: In total, how many years of experience do you have in the private sector?

City Profile

City Population

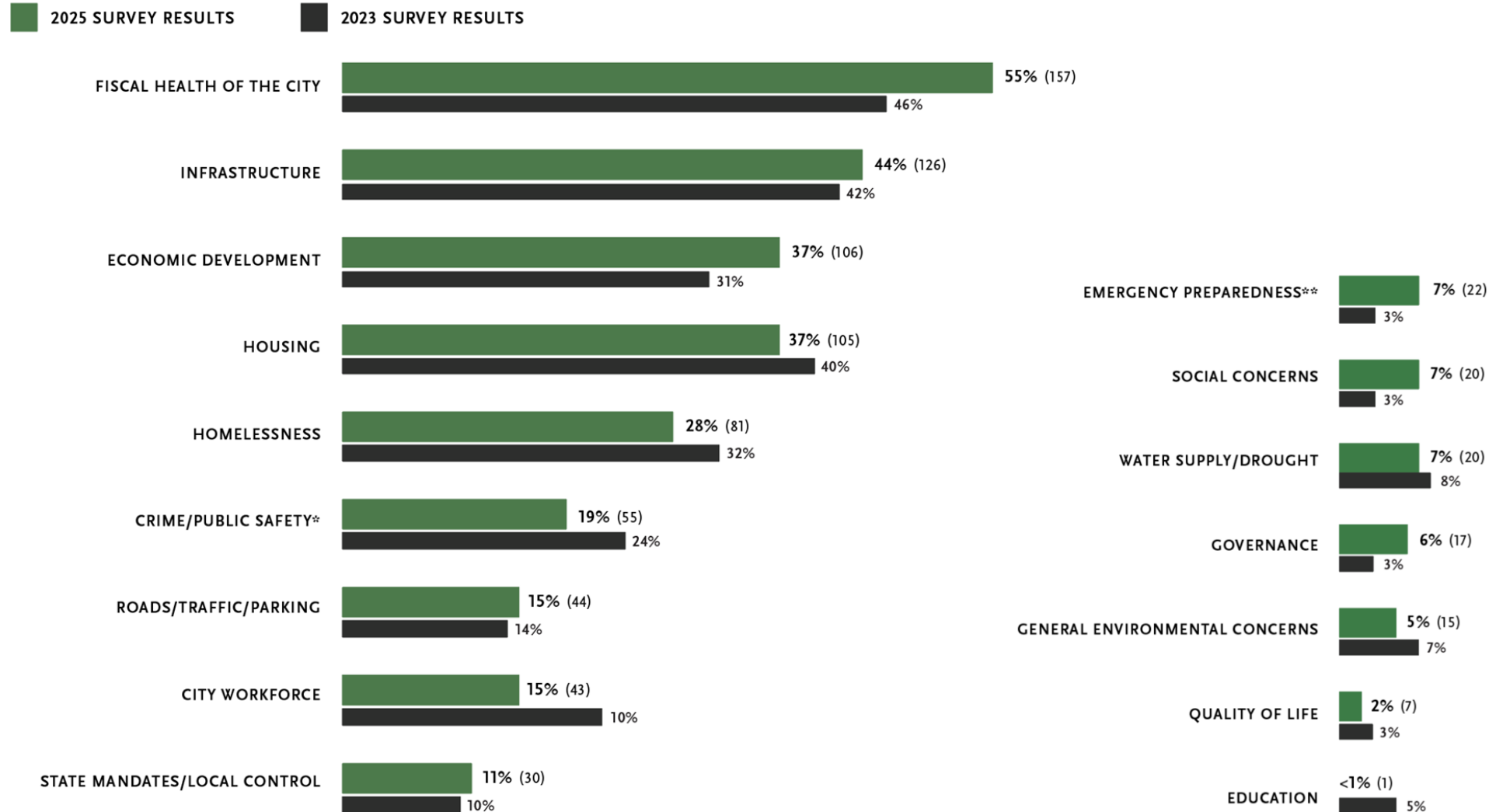
Table 5. City Population

LOW	200
HIGH	3,820,914
AVERAGE	67,361
MEDIAN	29,910

Source: United States Census Bureau Quick Facts, City Population Estimates for 2024.

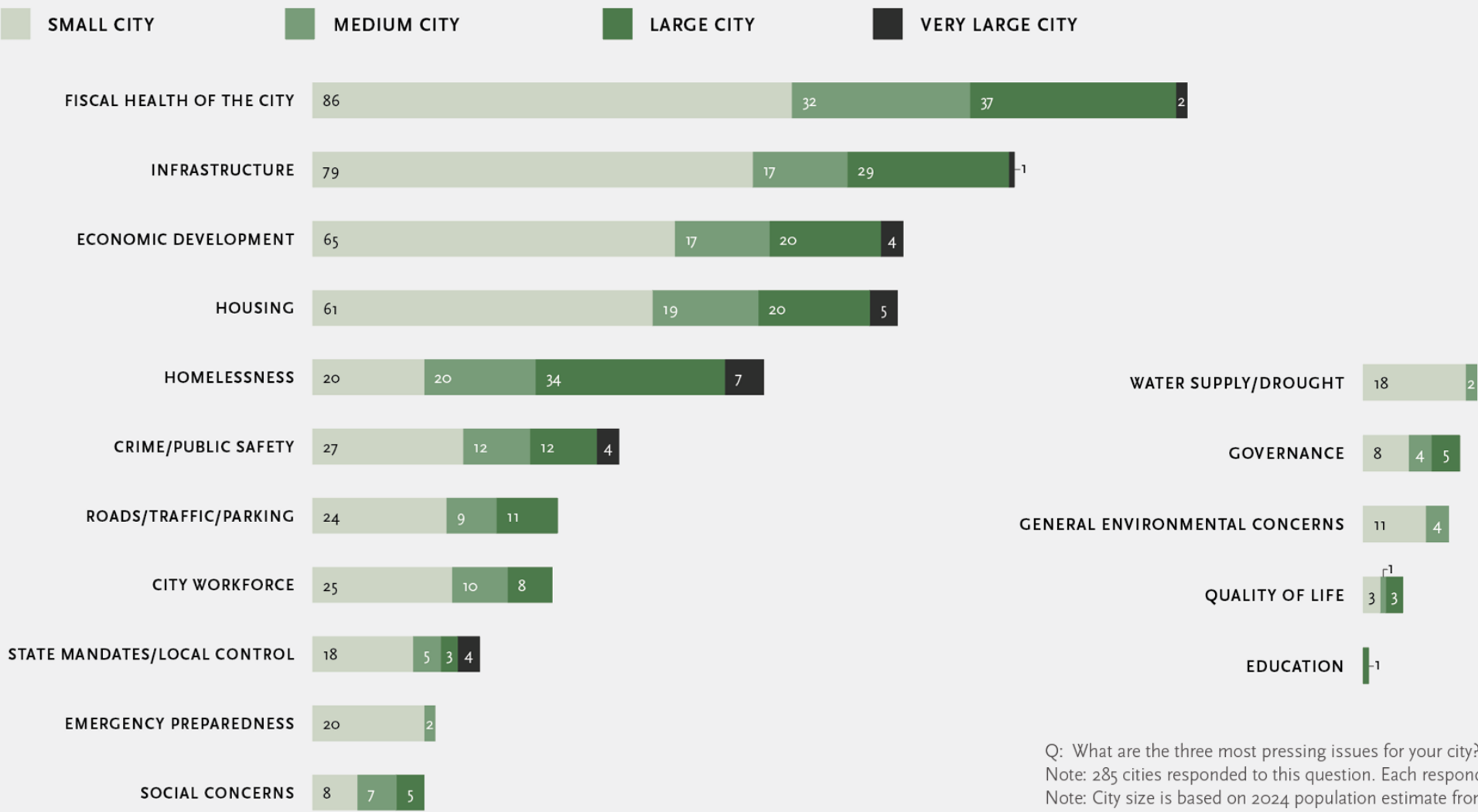
Most Pressing Issues

Figure 16. Most Pressing Issues



Most Pressing Issues and City Size

Figure 17. Most Pressing Issues and City Size



Q: What are the three most pressing issues for your city?
Note: 285 cities responded to this question. Each respondent could enter three issues.
Note: City size is based on 2024 population estimate from the United States Census Bureau.

Conclusion

Q&A with Panelists



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