JOINT SURVEY RESULTS / 2027 INDUSTRY OUTLOOK

State of AI in Public Safety.



Over 700 ECC directors, supervisors, and telecommunicators weigh in on where the field actually stands with AI.

PRESENTED BY RapidSOS | APCO International

State of AI in Public Safety

October 2026 · RapidSOS × APCO International

42% of ECCs have already deployed or are piloting artificial intelligence in their operations.

RapidSOS and APCO International surveyed more than 700 ECC directors, supervisors, and telecommunicators on where the field actually stands with AI — what's working, what's holding agencies back, and what still has to happen before it's trusted with the calls that matter most.

IN THIS REPORT

01	**Adoption**	Where ECCs actually stand on AI	03
02	**Trust & Accountability**	How ECCs view trust and accountability in AI	05
03	**Risk & Governance**	Where ECCs stand on AI risk and governance	07
04	**Barriers**	What's actually in the way	11
05	**What ECCs want**	What would actually help, and what they want to know first	12
06	**Methodology**	Who we heard from	15
A	**Complete results**	Every question, full breakdown	17

KEY FINDINGS

42%
of ECCs have AI deployed or in a pilot

8%
have completed a formal or informal AI risk assessment

18%
highly trust AI to support judgment in high-stakes calls

75%
rank accuracy and reliability among their top three barriers

All figures in this report reflect all 740 respondents.

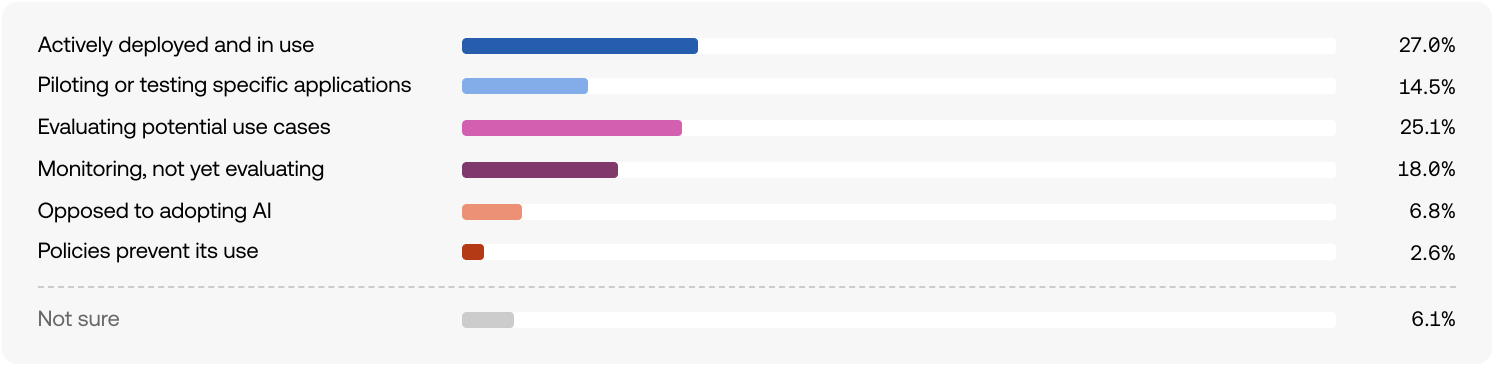
Where ECCs actually stand on AI

How far ECCs have actually gotten with AI — what's deployed, what's being piloted, and how satisfied agencies are with what they've rolled out so far.

58% of ECCs haven't adopted AI yet — but 42% are already live or piloting it.

"Is your ECC currently using any form of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology in your operations?"

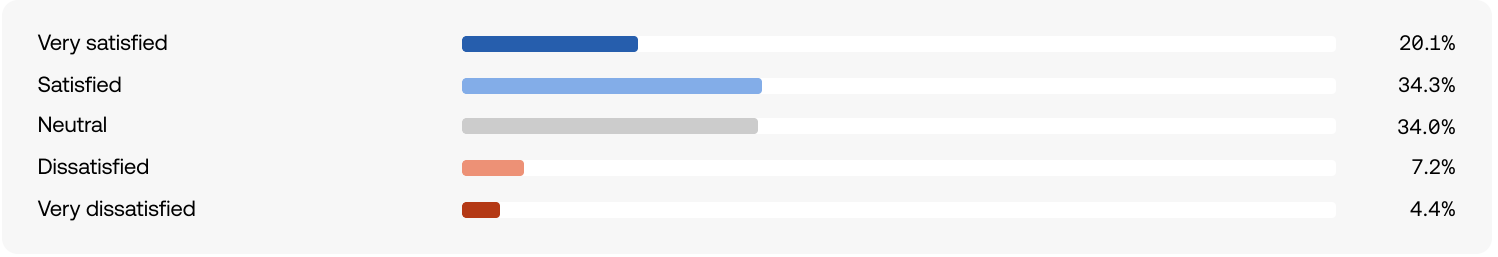
Q4 · n = 740



54% of ECCs using AI report being satisfied with their early AI work.

"Overall, how satisfied are you with the AI solutions your ECC has deployed so far?"

Q8 · n = 432 (opinion given, of 740)

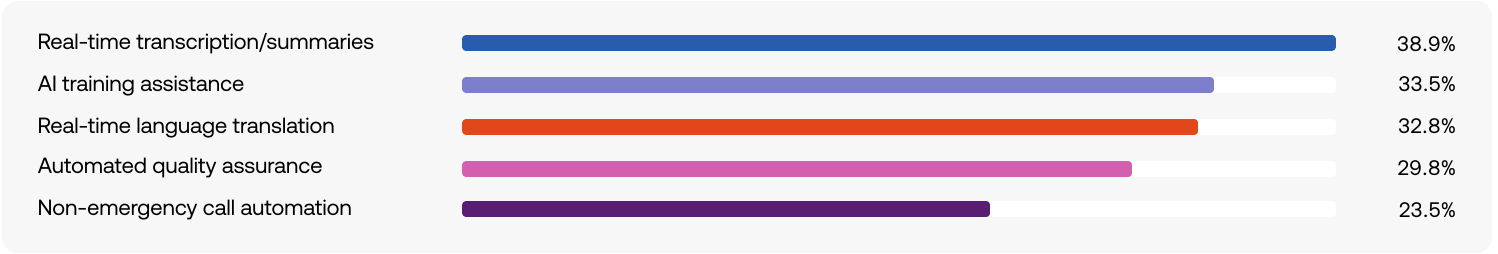


Real-time transcription leads what's actually running — and most of it only started in the last year.

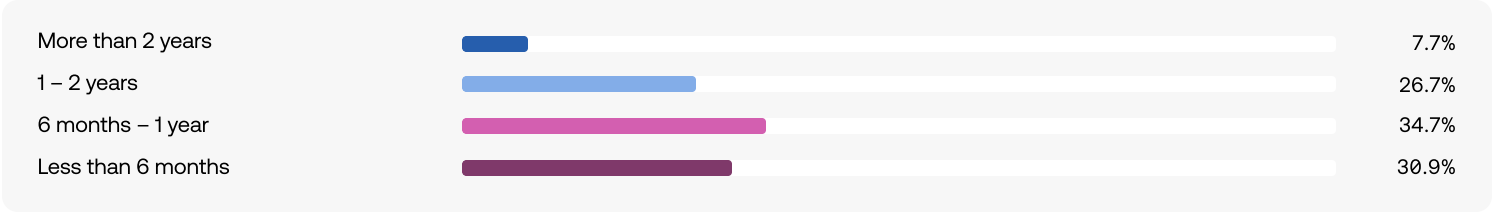
"Which of the following AI capabilities is your ECC currently using or piloting?"

Q6 · Q7 · n = 740

TOP CAPABILITIES IN USE — N = 668



HOW LONG, AMONG ECCS ACTIVELY USING AI — N = 427



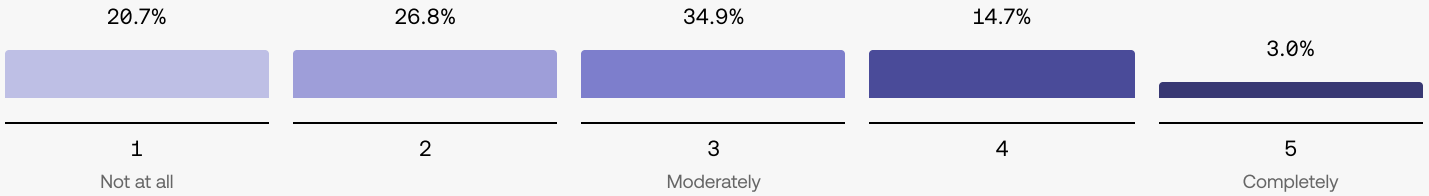
How ECCs view trust and accountability in AI

How much ECCs trust AI with real judgment calls, who they'd hold responsible if it gets one wrong, and how staff, leadership, and the community are actually reacting to it.

Most 911 professionals take a measured view: more than half trust AI at least moderately to support human judgment in high-stakes calls.

"How much do you trust AI to reliably support — not replace — human judgment in high-stakes emergency decisions?" (1 = not at all, 3 = moderately, 5 = completely)

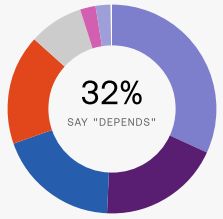
Q29 · n = 740 · mean 2.5/5



Most see accountability as shared or situational, not resting on one party.

"Who do you believe should be held accountable if an AI system contributes to a negative outcome during an emergency response?"

Q30 · n = 740 · single-select

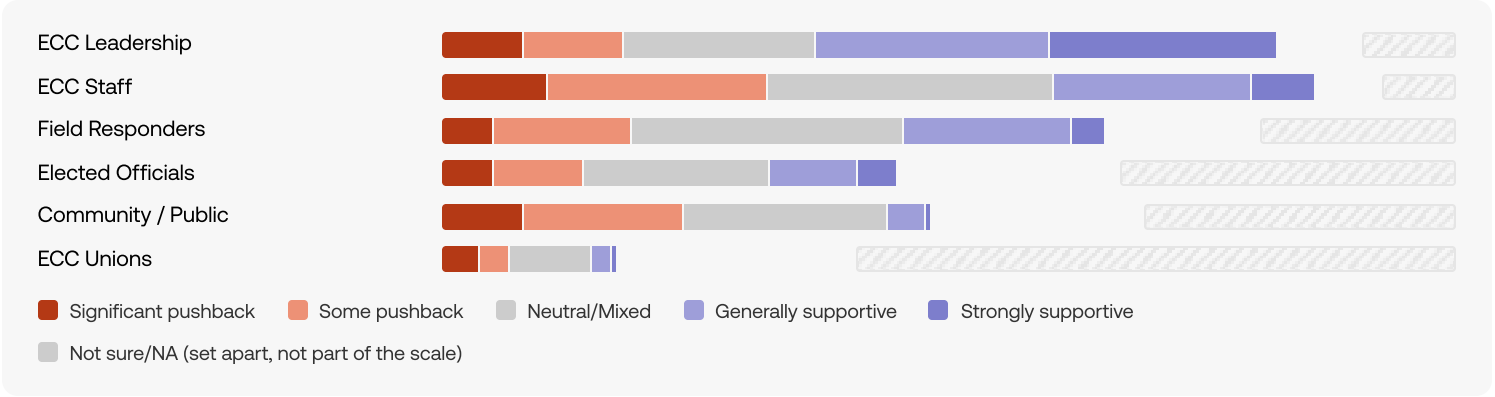


Depends on circumstances	31.8%
The AI vendor	18.9%
Shared, agency + vendor	18.8%
The ECC / agency itself	17.0%
Not sure	8.4%
Individual PST / officer	2.4%
A regulator / standards body	2.3%

Leadership skews supportive.

"How would you describe each group's reaction to AI adoption (or potential adoption) at your ECC?" — rated per stakeholder group, Significant pushback to Strongly supportive

Q10–15 · n = 740 each



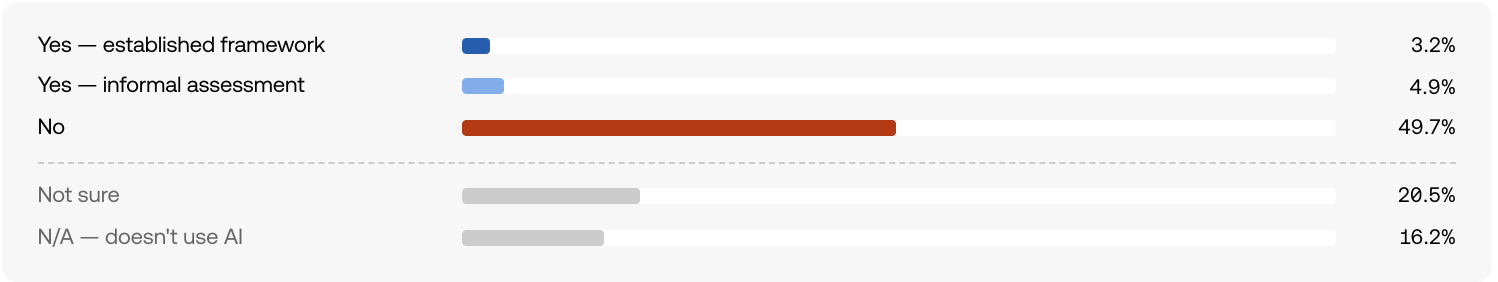
Where ECCs stand on AI risk and governance

Whether ECCs have formally assessed the risks of AI, where their concern actually concentrates, and who's responsible for policy, data, and legal oversight when something goes wrong.

Risk assessment is still in early stages of the adoption curve.

"Has your ECC conducted and documented a formal risk assessment for its use of AI?"

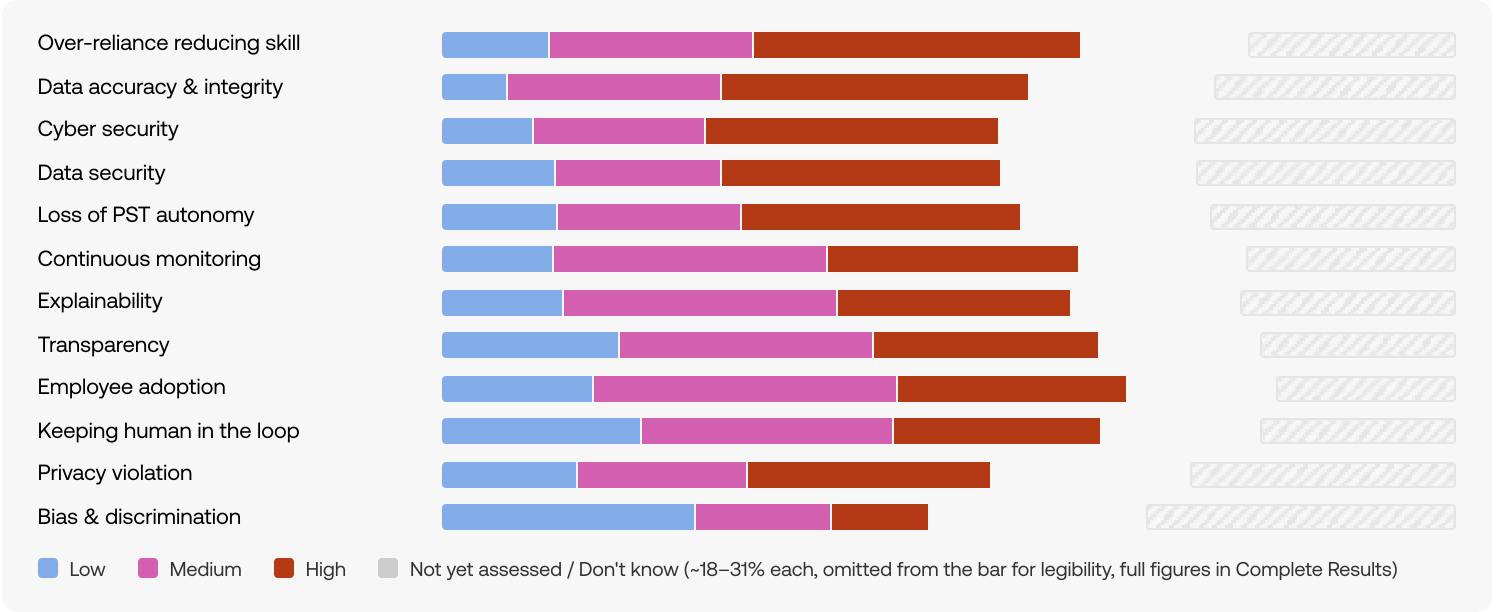
Q16 · n = 740



Over-reliance eroding staff skill worries ECCs more than algorithmic bias does.

"When you consider adopting or using AI at your ECC, how would you rate the risk / level of challenge each of the following presents?" — Low to High, per category

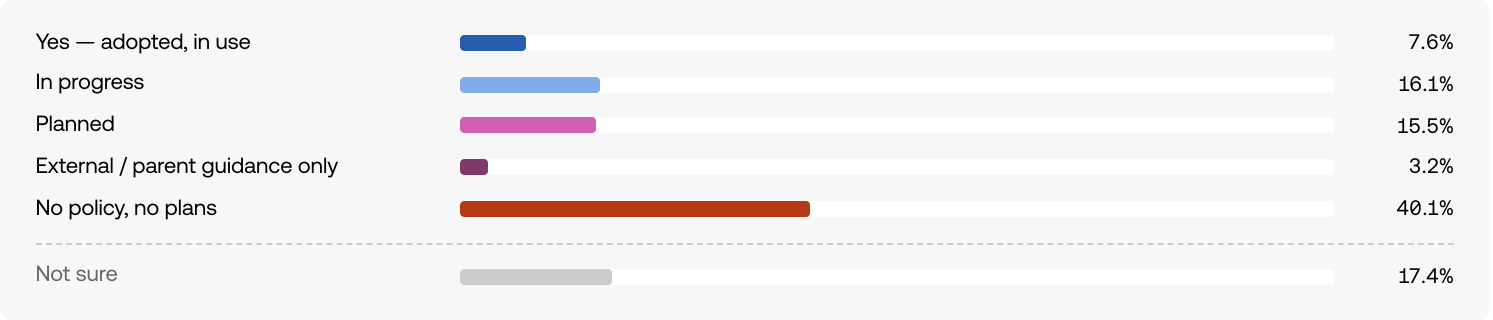
Q17–28 · n = 740 each



Nearly 4 in 10 centers have an AI policy in use, in progress, or planned.

"Does your agency have its own AI governance, policy, or legal guidance in place?"

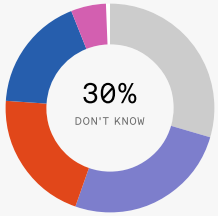
Q31 · n = 740



Nearly half of centers have named who oversees AI legally, and clear ownership is a next step for the rest.

"Who has primary responsibility for legal oversight of AI within your ECC?"

Q35 · Q36 · n = 740



Don't know	29.5%
Executive leadership	25.8%
No responsibility assigned	20.7%
Legal counsel	17.8%
Information technology	5.4%

NEARLY 3 IN 10 CENTERS PUBLISH, ARE DEVELOPING, OR PLAN TO SHARE HOW THEY USE AI.

"Do you share information with your community about how your ECC uses AI?"

Yes, publishes materials	8.4%
In progress	7.9%
No, but plans to	12.7%
No, no current plans	20.4%
N/A — doesn't use AI	34.0%

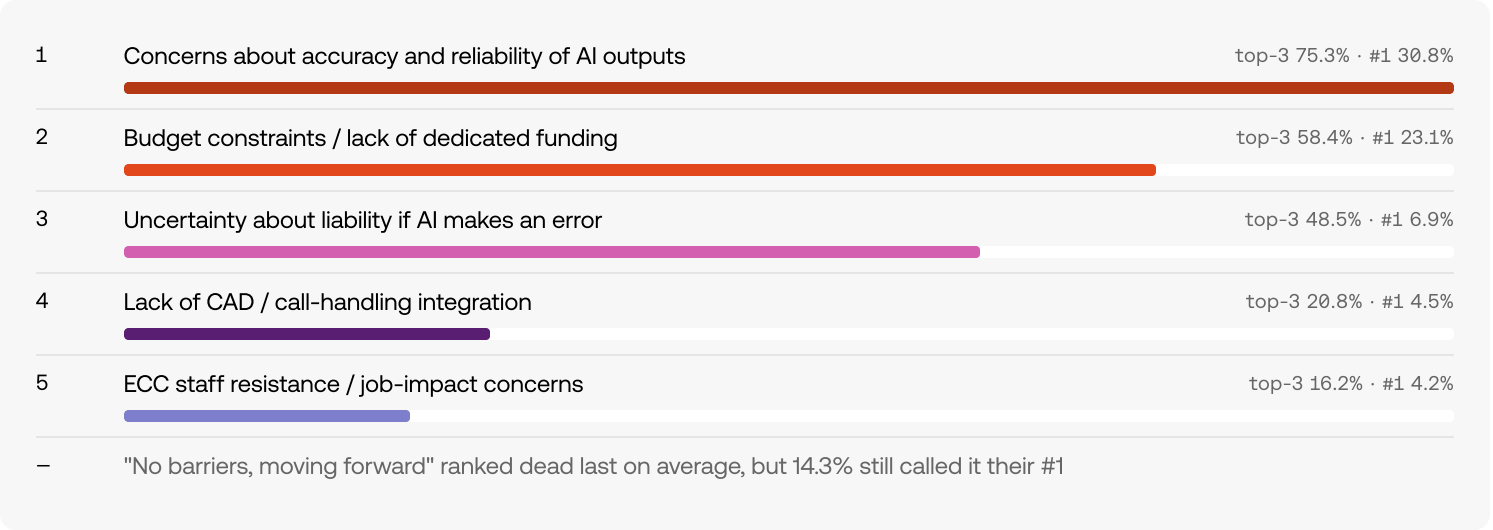
What's actually in the way

What ECCs say is actually standing between them and wider AI adoption, ranked from most to least significant.

Accuracy and reliability concerns outrank budget as the #1 barrier to adoption.

"What are the most significant barriers preventing your ECC from adopting or expanding AI? Please rank your top concerns from the list below."

Q9 · n = 740 · all respondents ranked all 13



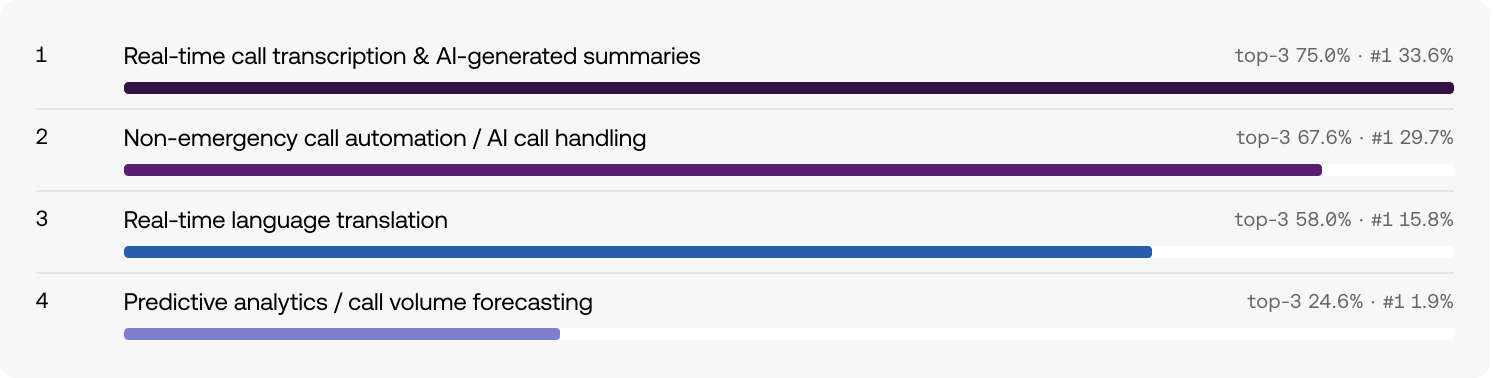
What would actually help, and what they want to know first

Which AI capabilities ECCs think would help most, what they most want to learn, and what makes an AI product hard to evaluate before buying it.

Real-time transcription and call summaries top the list of what would help most.

"Which of the following potential AI capabilities would have the greatest positive impact on your ECC? Please rank from most to least impactful."

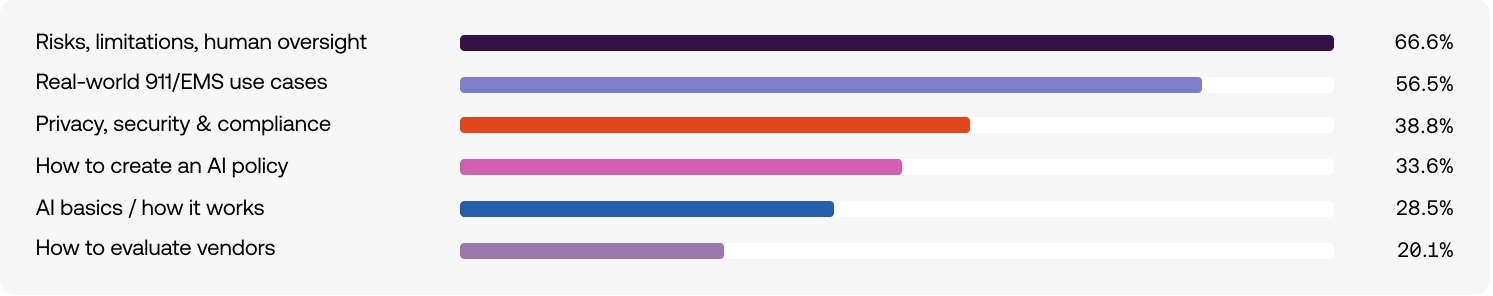
Q37 · n = 740 · all respondents ranked all 15



911 leaders want the full picture, starting with risks and limits.

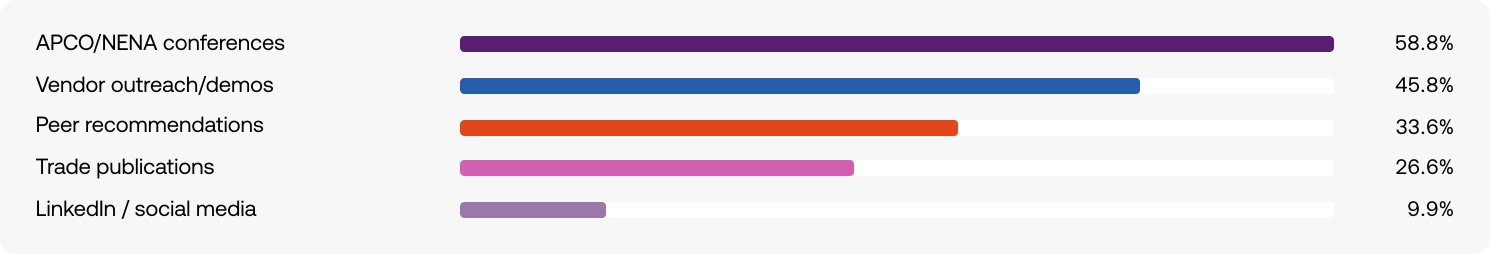
"What would you most like to learn about AI?"

Q38 · Q39 · n = 740 · bars indexed to top answer



WHERE THEY ACTUALLY LEARN ABOUT IT — N = 740, SELECT UP TO 3

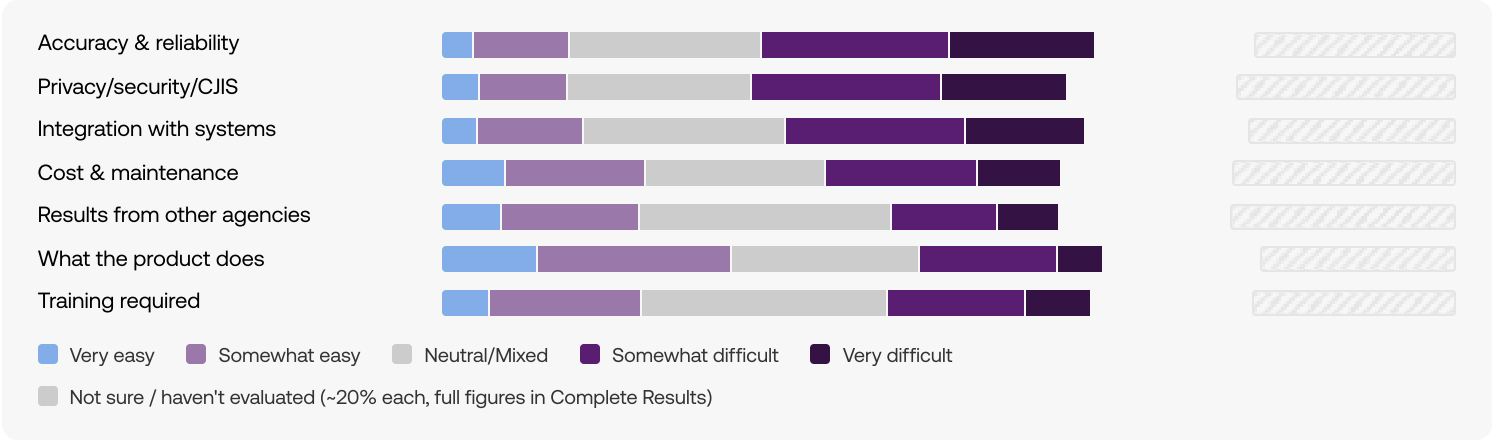
"How do you primarily learn about AI in public safety?"



The thing ECCs most need reassurance on — accuracy — is also the hardest thing to evaluate before buying.

"When considering an AI product for your ECC, how difficult is it to evaluate each of the following?" — Very easy to Very difficult, per criterion

Q40–46 · n = 740 each

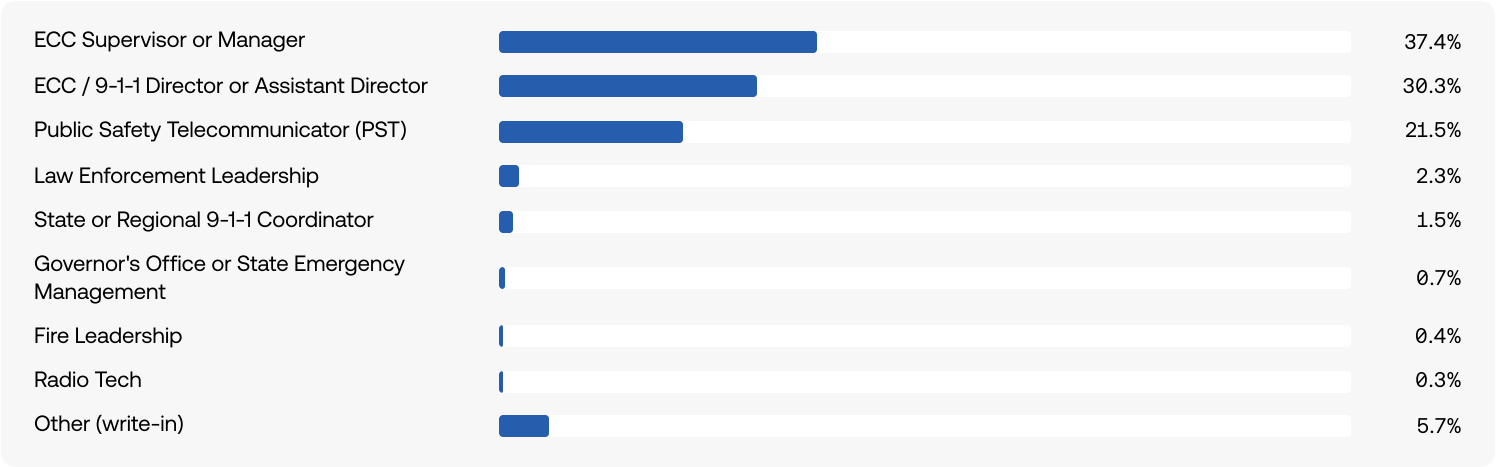


Who we heard from

740 public safety professionals responded between July 31 and September 17, 2026, when the survey closed. Here's who they are by role, agency type, size and region. Unless noted, or filtering is selected for a response, every chart in this report reflects all 740 responses. No incentives were provided in exchange for completing the survey.

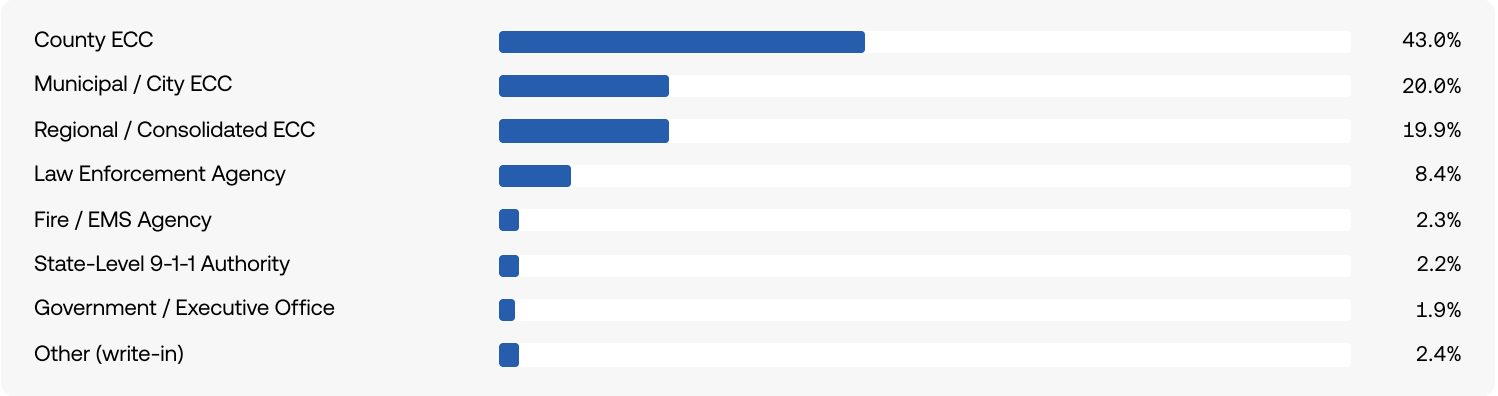
Role

Q0 · n = 740 · all responses



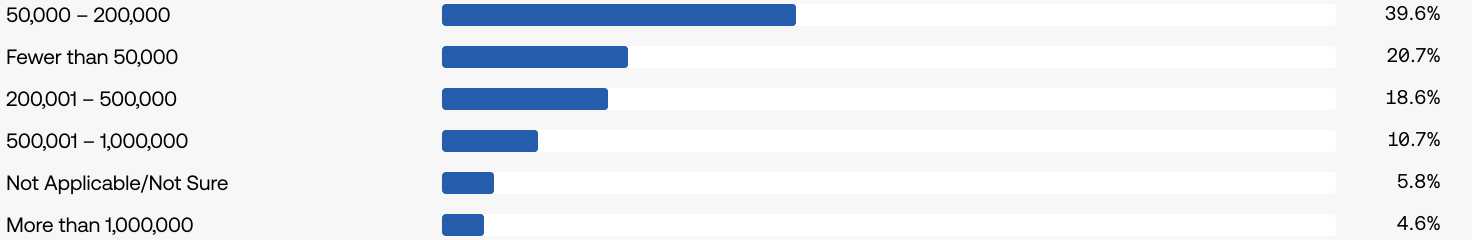
Agency type

Q1 · n = 740 · all responses



Call volume (total calls handled per year)

Q2 · n = 740 · all responses



Geography

All 53 states/regions represented in the final dataset, shown in full right.

Q3 · n = 740 · all responses

Tennessee	5.3%	Georgia	2.2%	Delaware	0.8%
Virginia	4.6%	Kentucky	2.2%	Maine	0.8%
Ohio	4.6%	Louisiana	2.0%	Kansas	0.8%
Florida	4.5%	Michigan	2.0%	District of Columbia	0.8%
Illinois	4.3%	New Jersey	1.9%	New Hampshire	0.7%
North Carolina	4.1%	Maryland	1.9%	Idaho	0.7%
Washington	3.6%	Nebraska	1.5%	West Virginia	0.7%
Texas	3.5%	Oregon	1.5%	New Mexico	0.7%
Missouri	3.2%	Connecticut	1.5%	Nevada	0.5%
Pennsylvania	3.2%	Arkansas	1.5%	Wyoming	0.5%
Mississippi	3.2%	Minnesota	1.5%	Other	0.3%
Indiana	3.1%	Canada	1.5%	Alaska	0.3%
California	3.1%	South Carolina	1.4%	North Dakota	0.3%
Alabama	3.0%	Oklahoma	1.4%	Rhode Island	0.1%
Colorado	2.7%	Arizona	1.4%	Hawaii	0.1%
Massachusetts	2.6%	Iowa	1.4%	United Kingdom	0.1%
New York	2.4%	Utah	0.9%	Vermont	0.1%
Wisconsin	2.2%	Montana	0.9%		

Appendix (Complete Results)

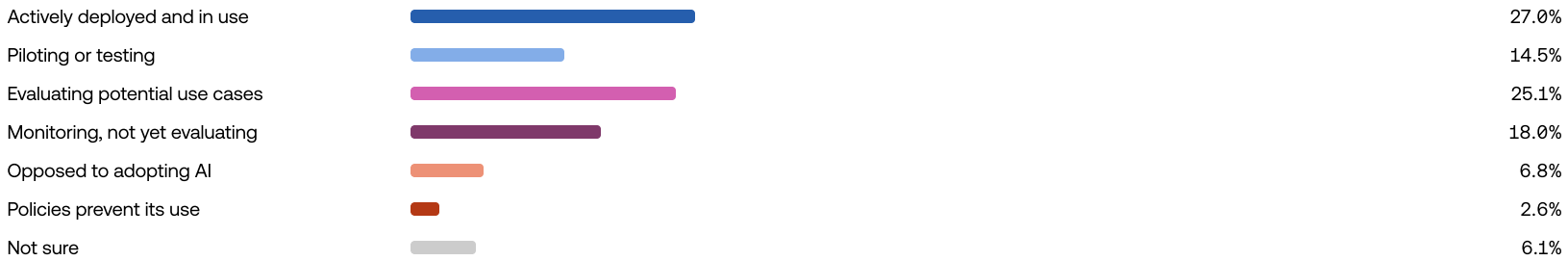
Every question, full breakdown

The transparency commitment: every substantive question gets its own top-line breakdown here, whether or not it made the narrative above.

ADOPTION

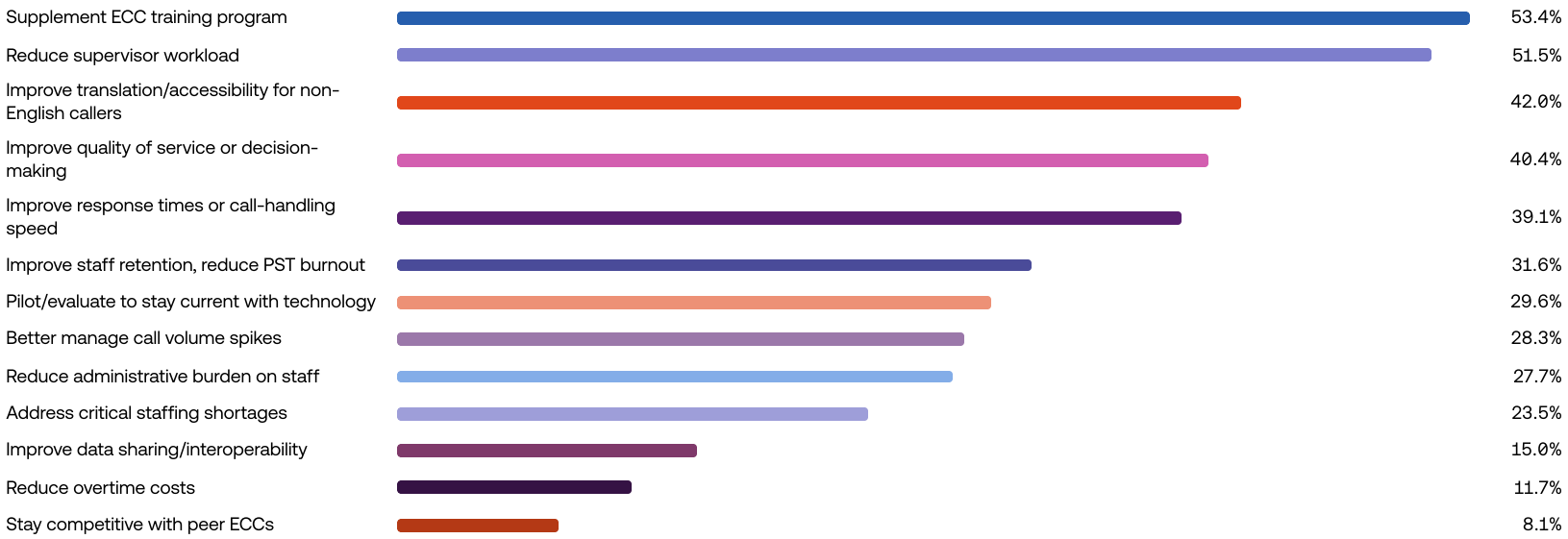
Is your ECC currently using any form of AI technology in your operations?

Q4 · n = 740 · ordered by adoption maturity



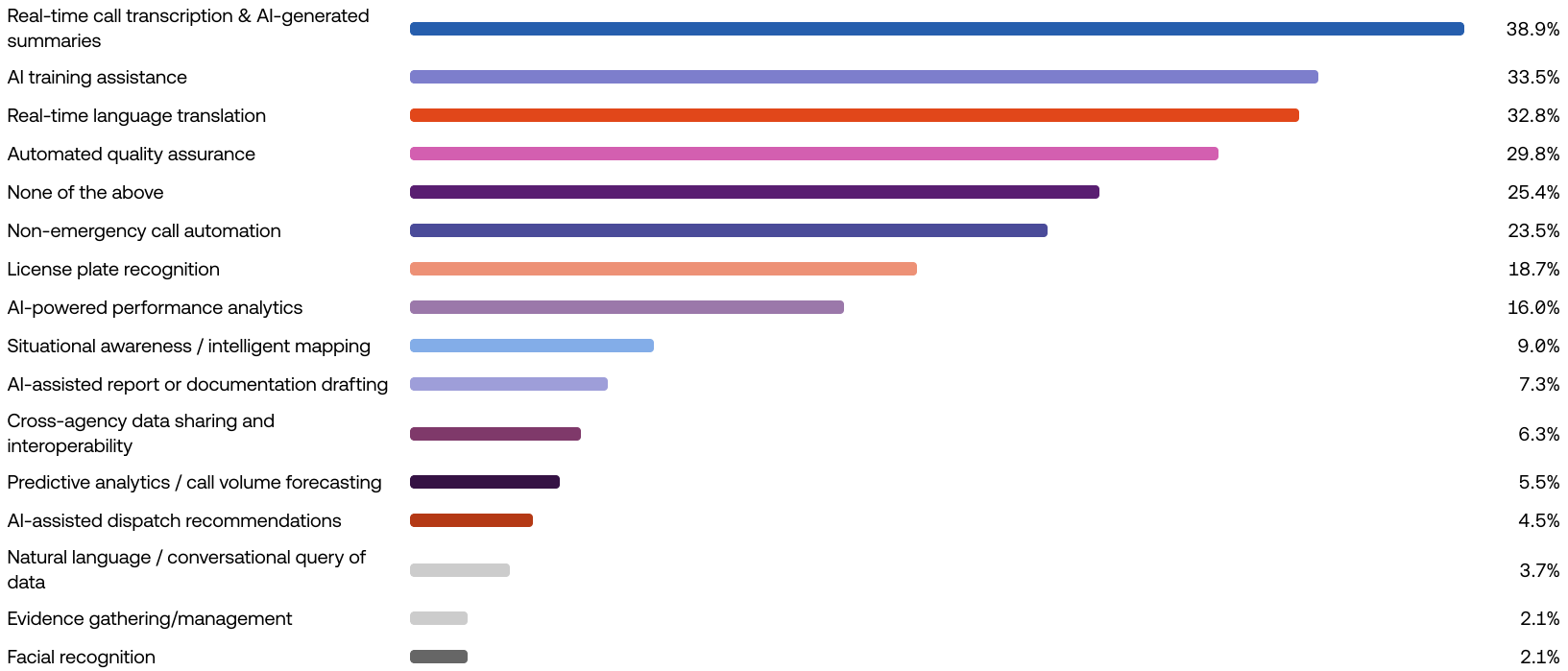
For ECCs that have adopted or are piloting AI: what were the primary reasons?

Q5 · n = 307 respondents (conditional on adoption) · select all that apply · bars indexed to top answer



Which AI capabilities is your ECC currently using or piloting?

Q6 · n = 668 respondents · select all that apply · bars indexed to top answer



How long has your ECC been actively using AI in operations?

Q7 · n = 740 · ordered most- to least-experienced, N/A separate



Overall, how satisfied are you with the AI solutions your ECC has deployed so far?

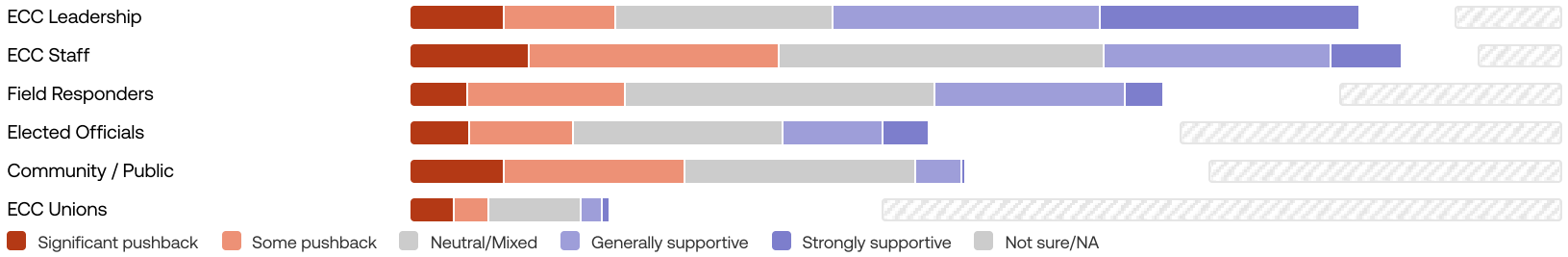
Q8 · n = 740 · ordered best → worst on the survey's 5-point scale, N/A separate



TRUST & ACCOUNTABILITY

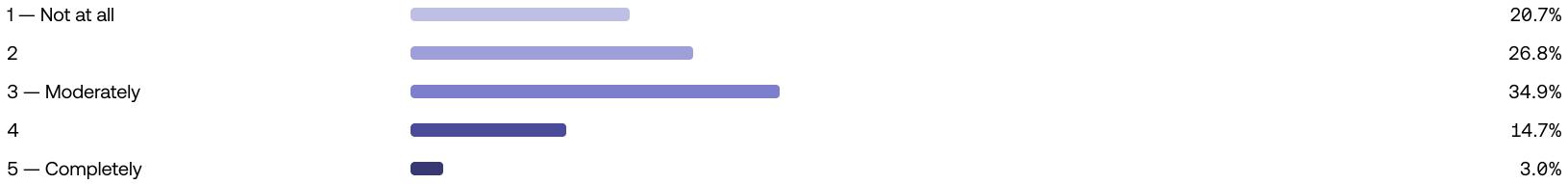
How would you describe each group's reaction to AI adoption at your ECC?

Q10–15 · n = 740 each · matrix, same scale



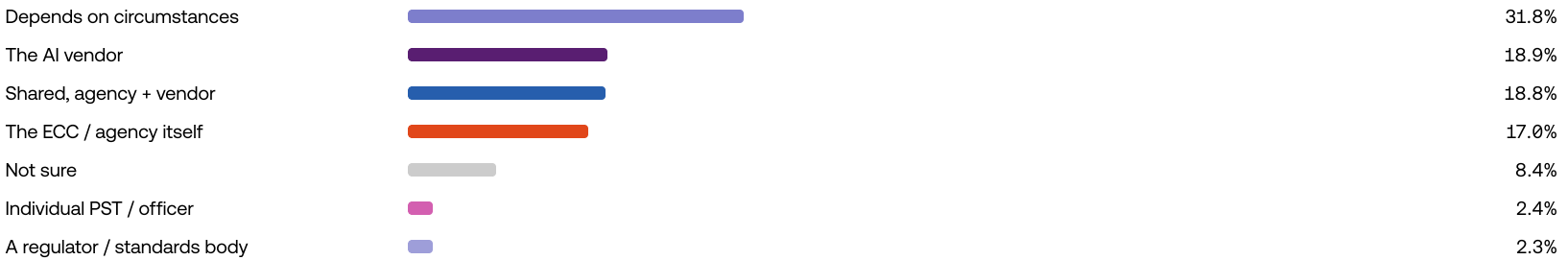
How much do you trust AI to reliably support — not replace — human judgment in high-stakes decisions?

Q29 · n = 740 · mean 2.5/5 · kept in the scale's own numeric order



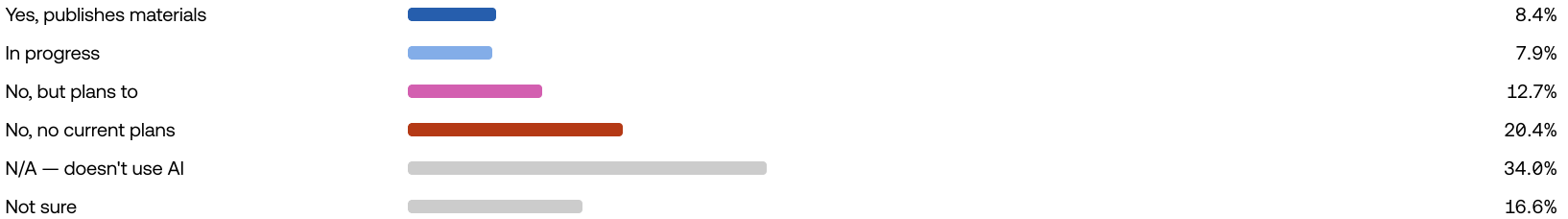
Who should be held accountable if an AI system contributes to a negative outcome?

Q30 · n = 740 · categorical, no inherent order



Do you share information with your community about how your ECC uses AI?

Q36 · n = 700 · ordered publishes → no plans, N/A & not-sure separate



RISK & GOVERNANCE

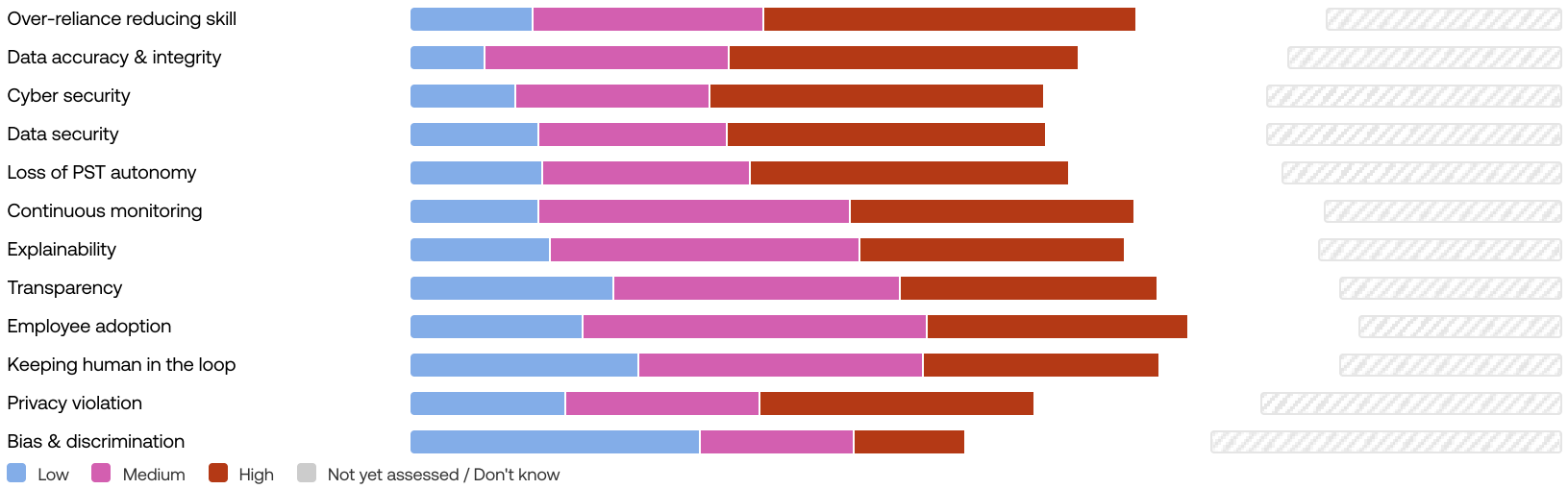
Has your ECC conducted and documented a formal risk assessment for its use of AI?

Q16 · n = 740 · ordered by maturity, established → none



How would you rate the risk / challenge level of each of the following?

Q17–28 · n = 740 each · matrix, same scale



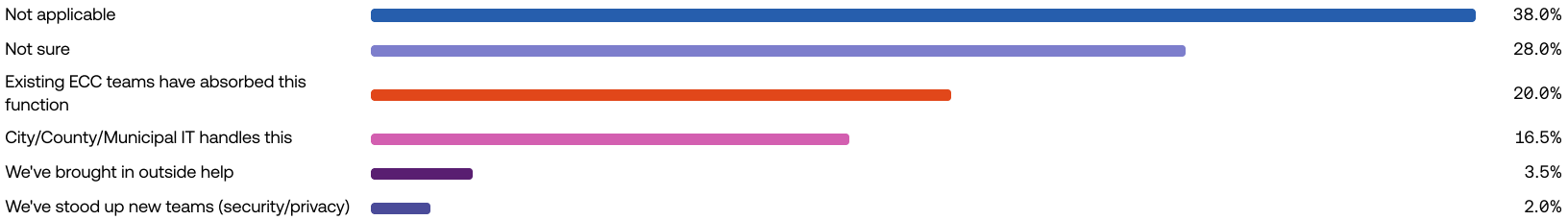
Does your agency have its own AI governance, policy, or legal guidance in place?

Q31 · n = 740 · ordered by policy maturity, adopted → none



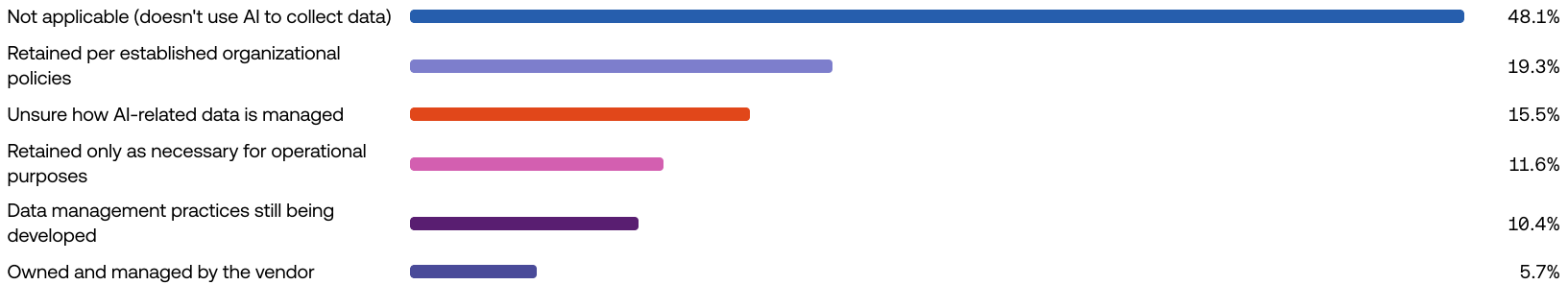
In terms of personnel, how are you managing AI governance?

Q32 · n = 740 · select all that apply · bars indexed to top answer



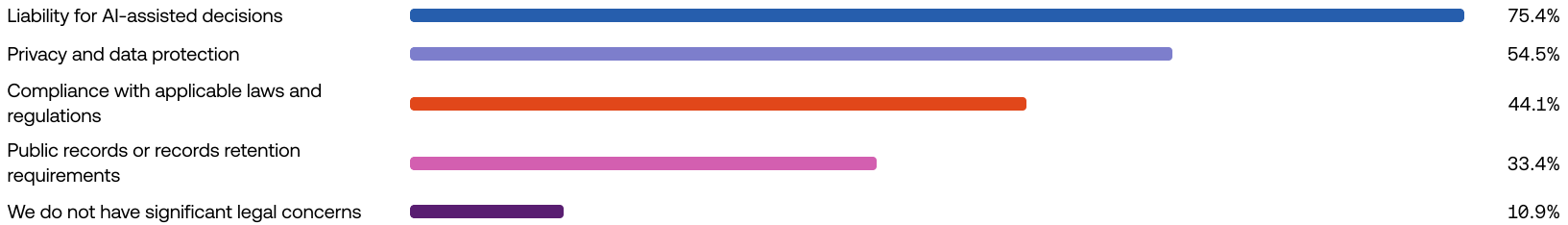
If your organization uses AI, how is data collected or used by AI managed?

Q33 · n = 740 · select all that apply · bars indexed to top answer



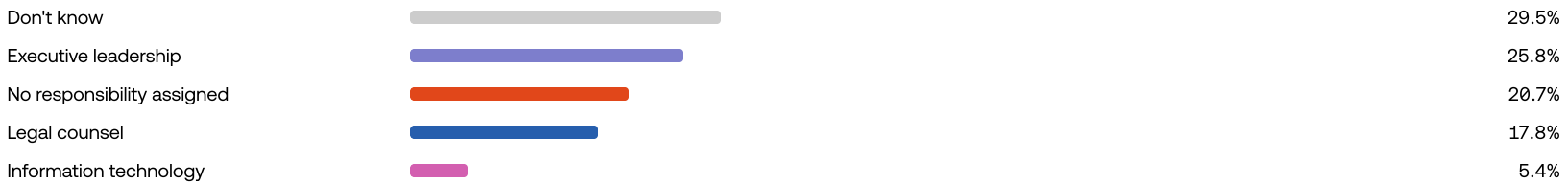
What legal issues associated with AI are you most concerned about?

Q34 · n = 740 · select up to 3 · bars indexed to top answer



Who has primary responsibility for legal oversight of AI within your ECC?

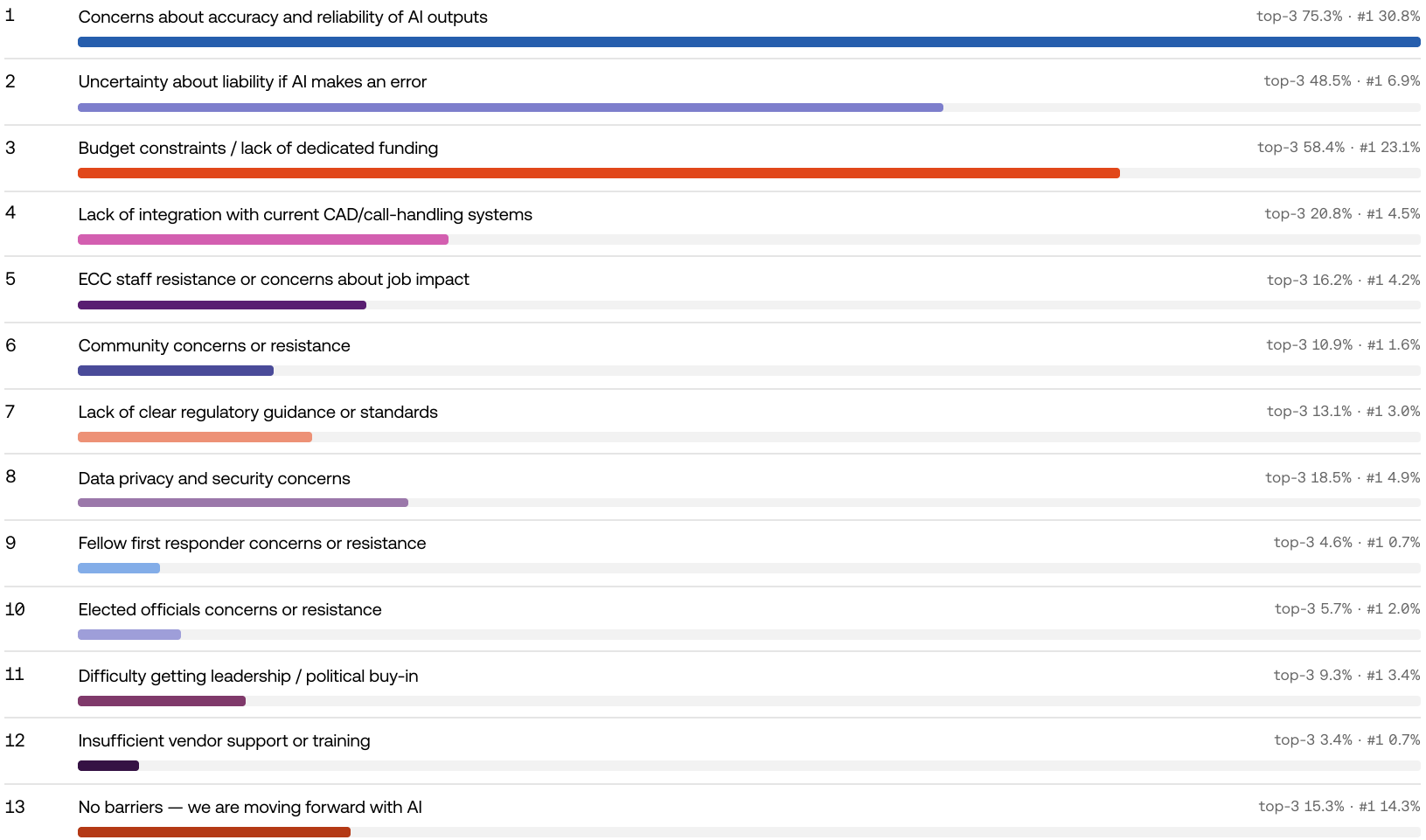
Q35 · n = 740 · categorical, no inherent order



BARRIERS

What are the most significant barriers preventing your ECC from adopting or expanding AI?

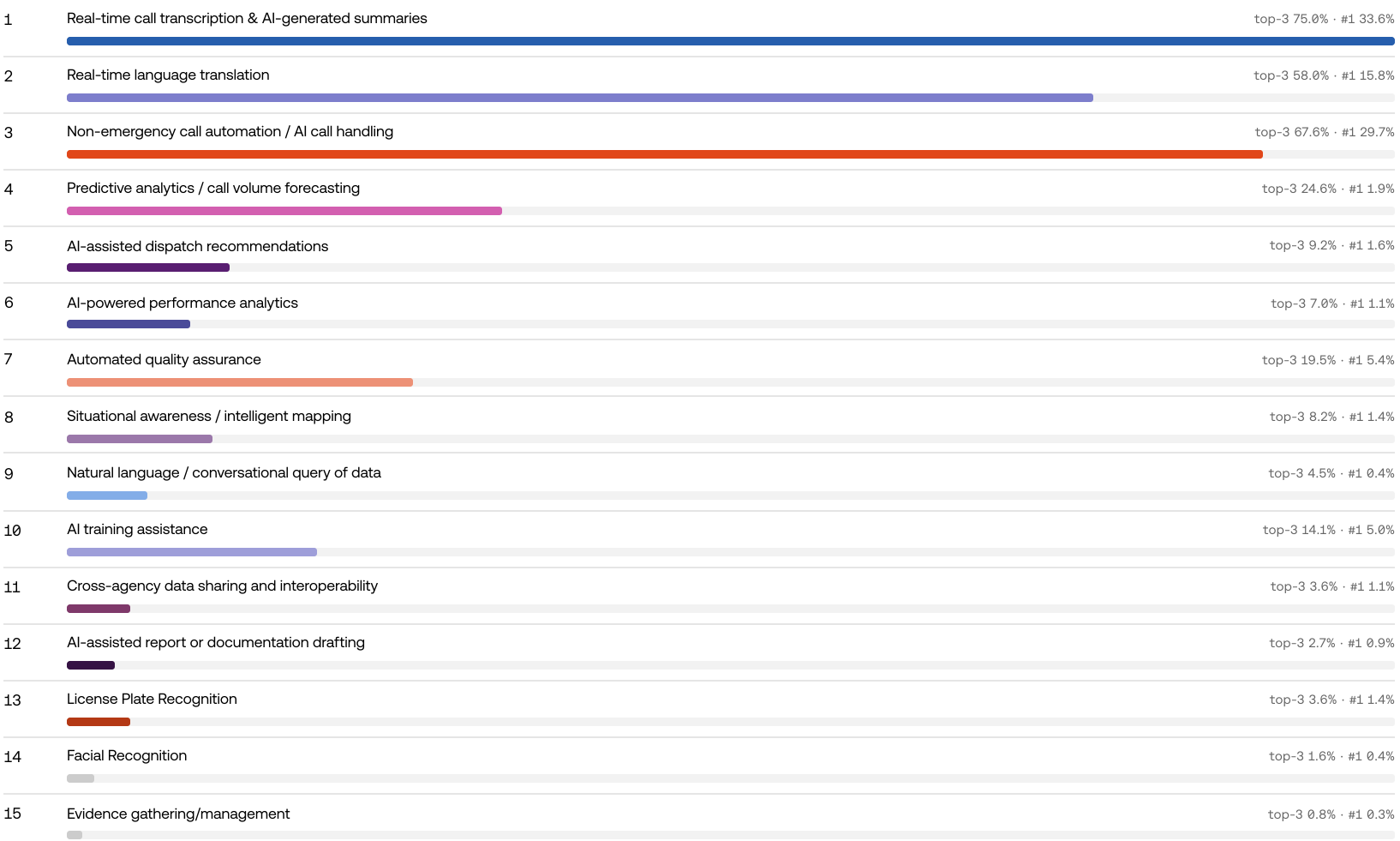
Q9 · n = 740 · all respondents ranked all 13, sorted by average rank



WHAT ECCS WANT

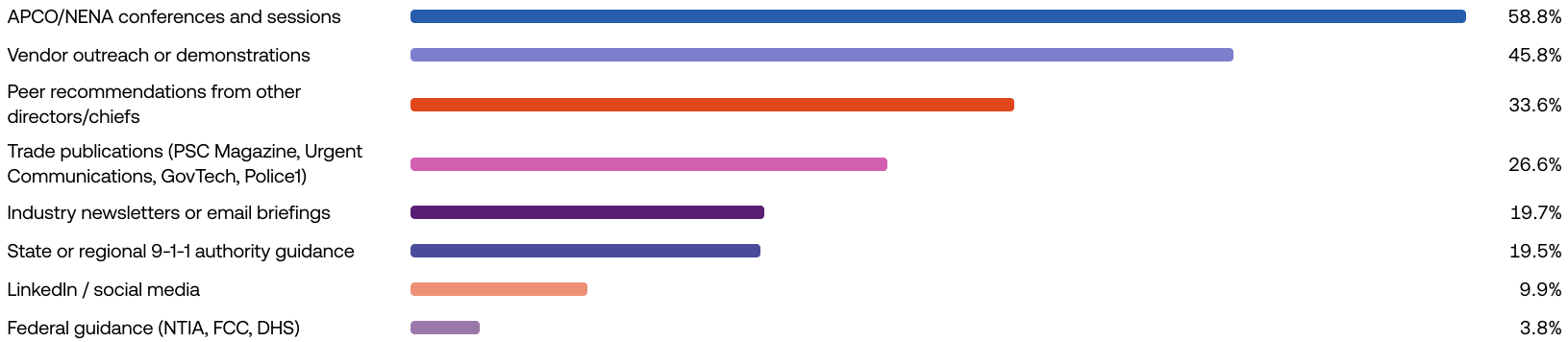
Which AI capabilities would have the greatest positive impact on your ECC?

Q37 · n = 740 · all respondents ranked all 15, sorted by average rank



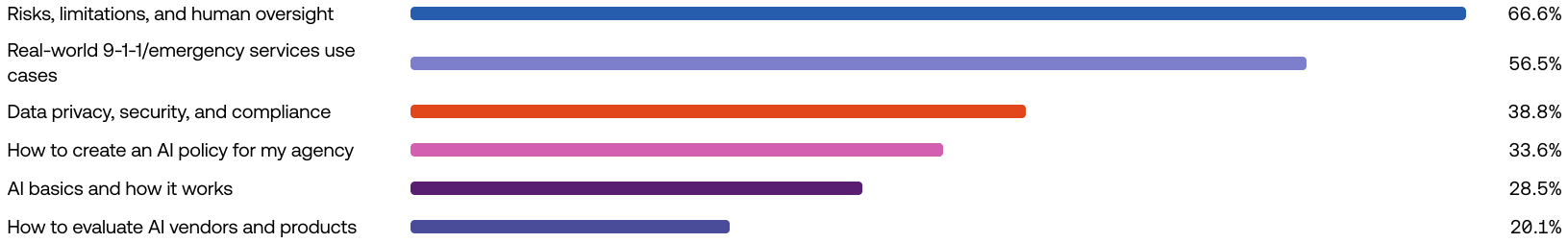
How do you primarily learn about AI in public safety?

Q38 · n = 740 · select up to 3 · bars indexed to top answer



What would you most like to learn about AI?

Q39 · n = 740 · select up to 3 · bars indexed to top answer



When considering an AI product for your ECC, how difficult is it to evaluate each of the following?

Q40–46 · n = 740 each · matrix, same scale

