

# **Results of the 2018 FDP FACULTY WORKLOAD SURVEY: Input for Optimizing Time on Active Research**

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**University of South Florida**

Thursday, Jan 24, 2019  
Plenary Session



**FDP**  
**Federal  
Demonstration  
Partnership**

# Overview

- **Brief Summary of Survey Development and Implementation**
- **Overview of Key Findings from Survey Sections**
- **The Meaning of 44.3%.**

# 2018 Faculty Workload Survey (FWS)

## Thanks to:

- FWS Faculty Working Group
- David Wright
- Claudette Baylor-Fleming
- SoundRocket (Scott Crawford, Julie Smith, Jillian Hunsanger, Robert Young)
- FDP Administrative, Faculty, and Tech Representatives
- USF Graduate Student Team (Andrea Ranieri, Elizabeth Fuller, Sandra Kauffman, Alaina Talboy, Jessica Jordan, Joanna Lawler)
- FDP Executive Committee and FDP Foundation

# 2018 FWS Purpose

Re-assess and update estimates of federally-funded researchers' administrative workload, following 2012 and 2005 surveys.


Provide empirical input toward a better understanding of focus areas for

- streamlining research administrative workload,
- making federally-funded research processes more efficient, and
- allowing greater focus on the topic of the research.

## Changes to the 2018 FWS

- Compares **time required** for administrative workload type to **priorities for change**,
- Increases focus on **institution** and **funding agency** variables,
- Elaborates information on writing **proposals**,
- Increases attention to perceived **research climate** and support within the **institution**,
- Provides pilot data to compare **% time estimates** with **hour-based estimates**.

# Survey Content Overview

Background	
Your Work & Research	
Your Institution	Elaborated
Federal Agency Requirements	New
Research Responsibilities	Improved
General Research Administration	
Compliance	
Safety and Security	
Open-Ended Items (Suggestions; +/- Helpful)	

# 2018 FWS Timeline and Process

- Throughout 2017: Survey developed and finalized;
- Oct/Nov 2017: Institution Commitments with Lists
- Nov 2017: University of South Florida IRB approved study protocol (Pro00032832)
  - **111 of 154 (72%) FDP non-federal member organizations** participated (with a total of 149 individual institutions)
  - **PIs** on U.S. Federally Funded Research Projects (including both Contracts and Grants) that were active at any point during the **2016-2017 Academic Year**
- Feb 12, 2018: Survey launched
- Apr 2, 2018: Survey closed
- Sep, 2018: Preliminary results were presented

# Comparison of FWS Response Rates

A series of 3 surveys of Principal Investigators (PIs) on federally-funded projects asked about time taken away from research by administrative and related requirements.

Period Assessed	FDP Organizations	PIs Invited	Participants	Response Rate
AY2004-2005	74% (73 of 99)	23,325	6,081	26%
AY2010-2011	83% (99 of 119)	53,428	12,816	24%
AY2016-2017	72% (111 of 154)	56,869	11,167	20%

# Background

# Demographics: 2018 Modal Participant

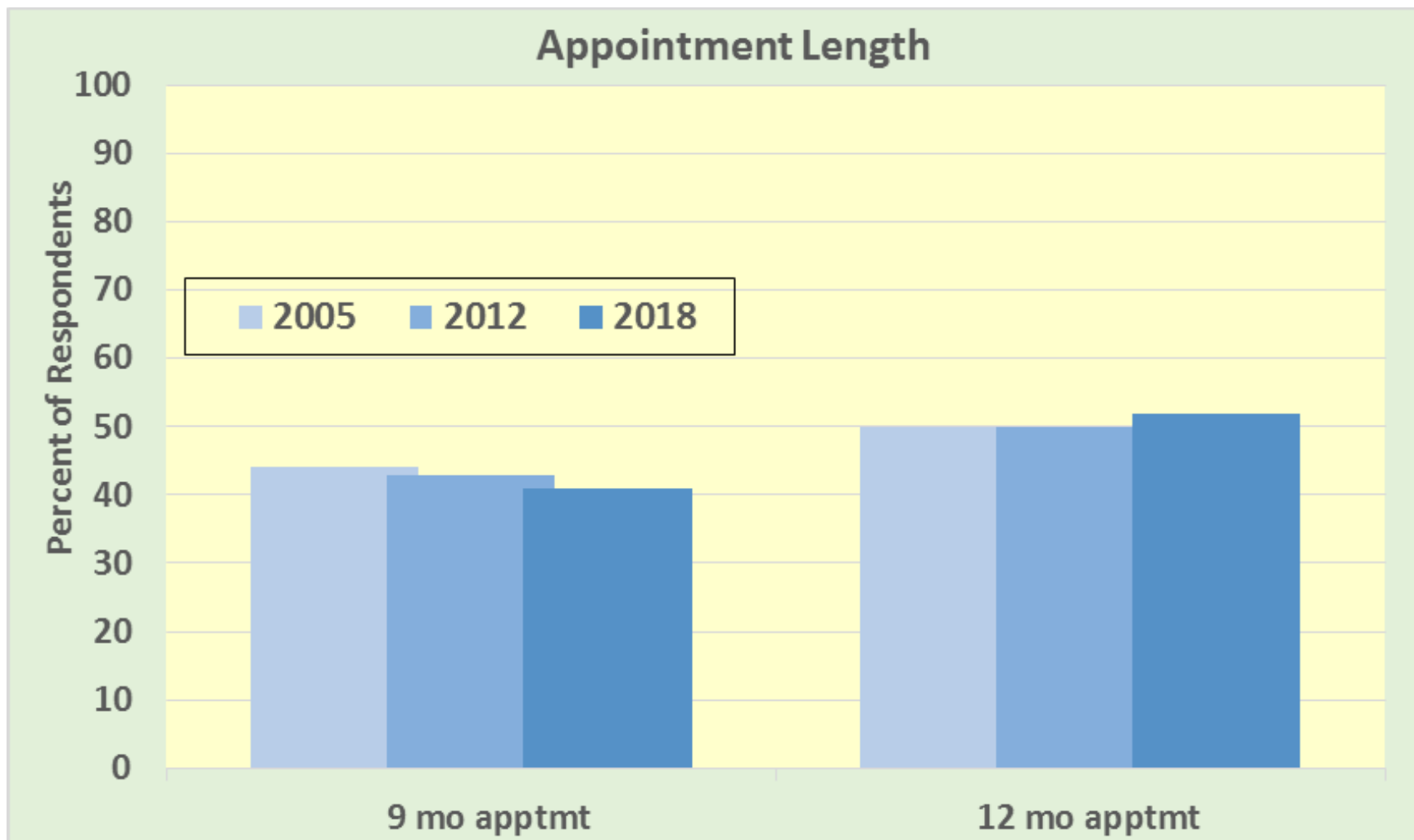
- **Institution**

- Public University (70%)
- Very High Research (VHR) Institution (84%)
- >\$500M Research Expenditures, w/ Medical School (31%)

- **Participant**

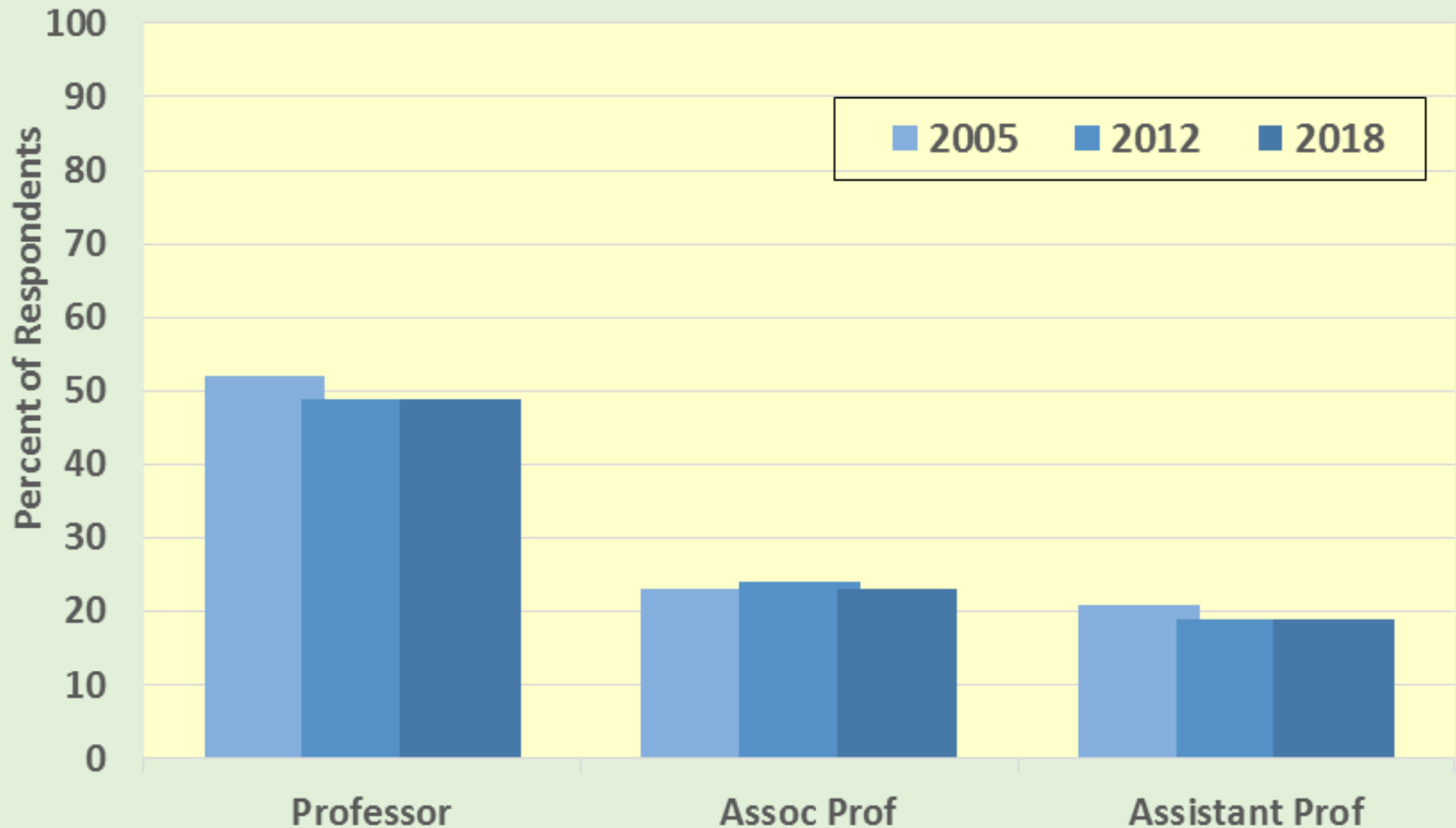
- White, Male, Full Professor, average = 52 years old
- 1-3 federal grants with <\$500K in annual direct costs
- Funding from NIH (47%) and/or NSF (33%)
- In Bio/Biomed/Clin Sciences (40%) [or Phys/Math/Engin (28%)]

# Professional Characteristics

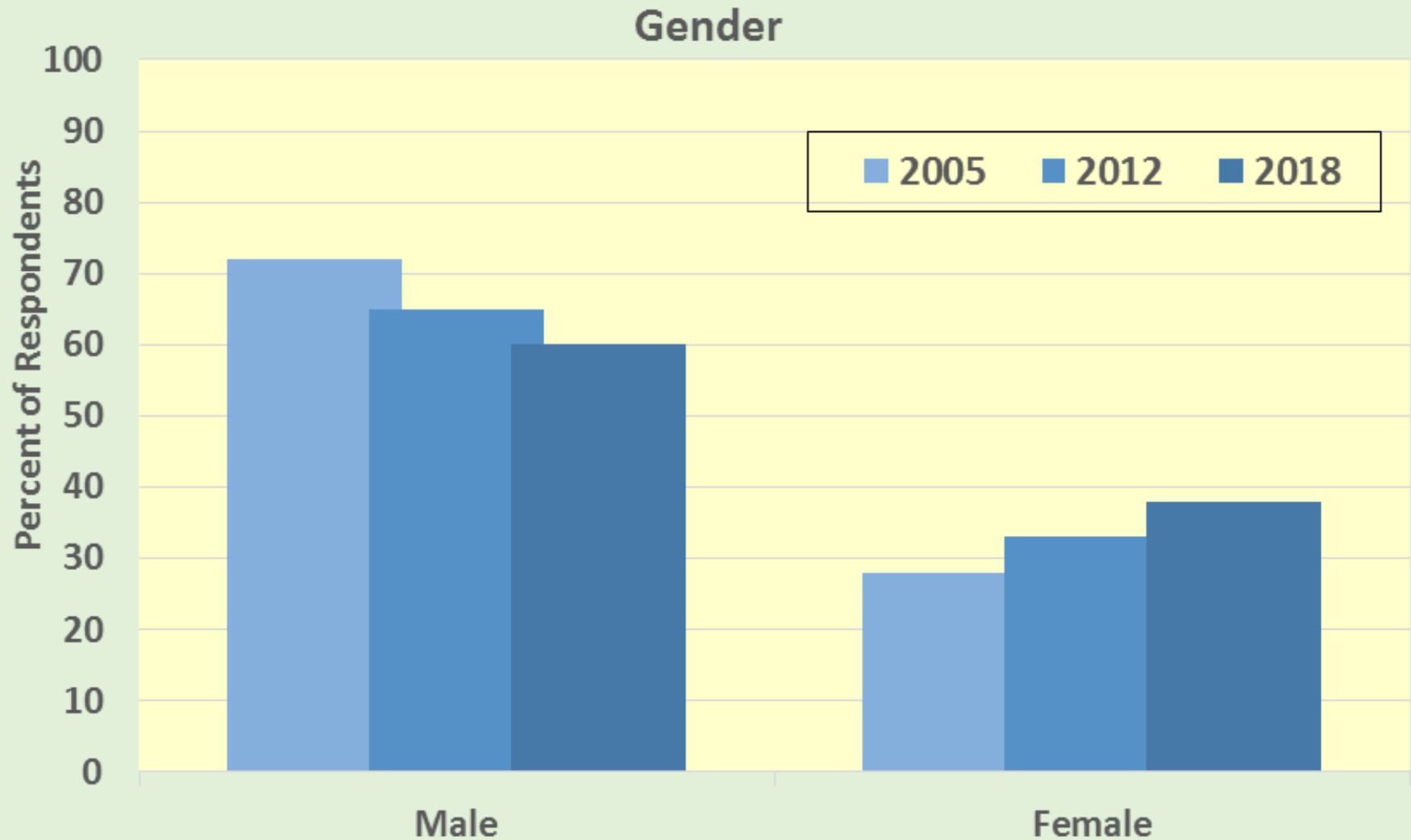


# Professional Characteristics

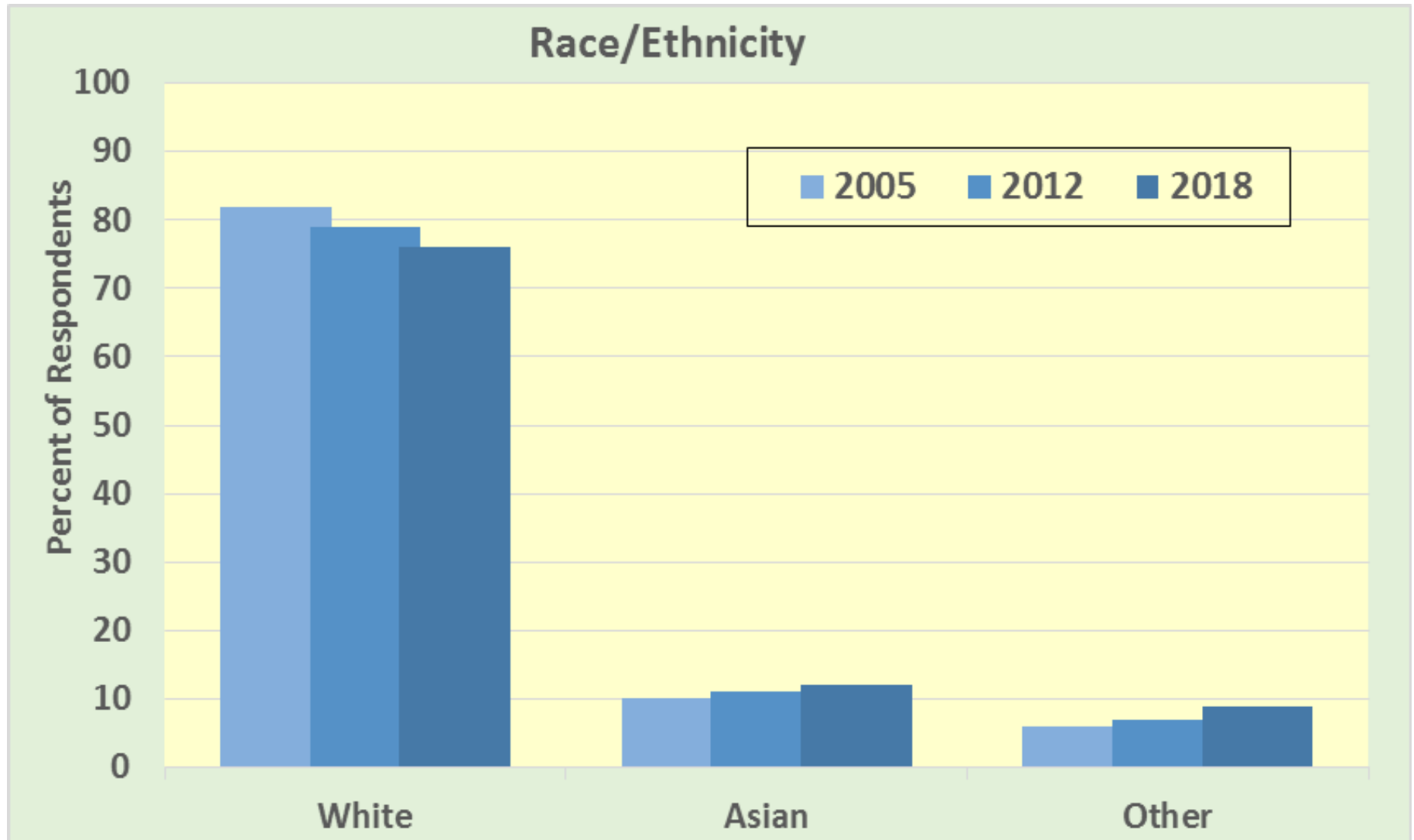
Academic Rank



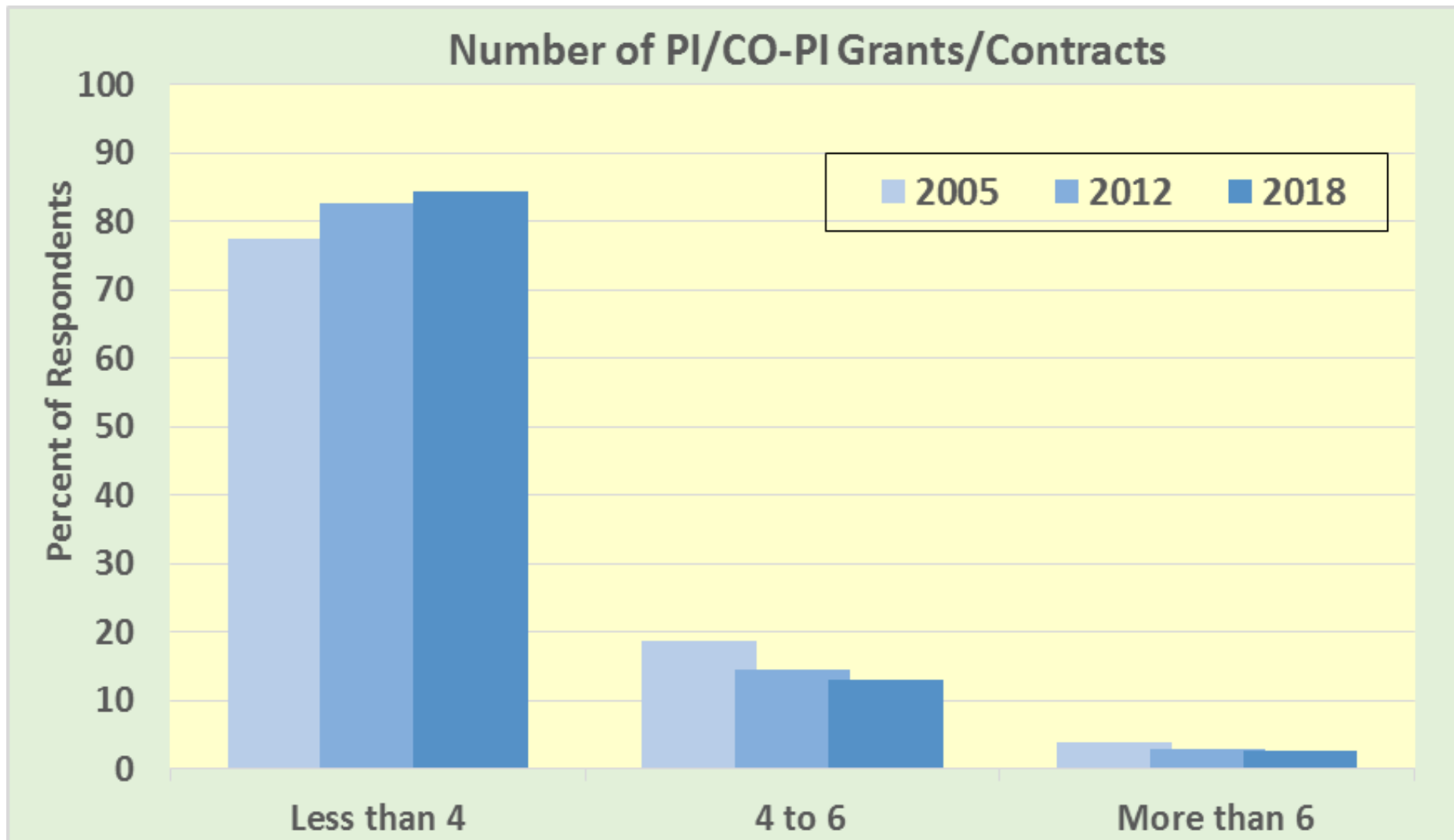
# Demographic Characteristics



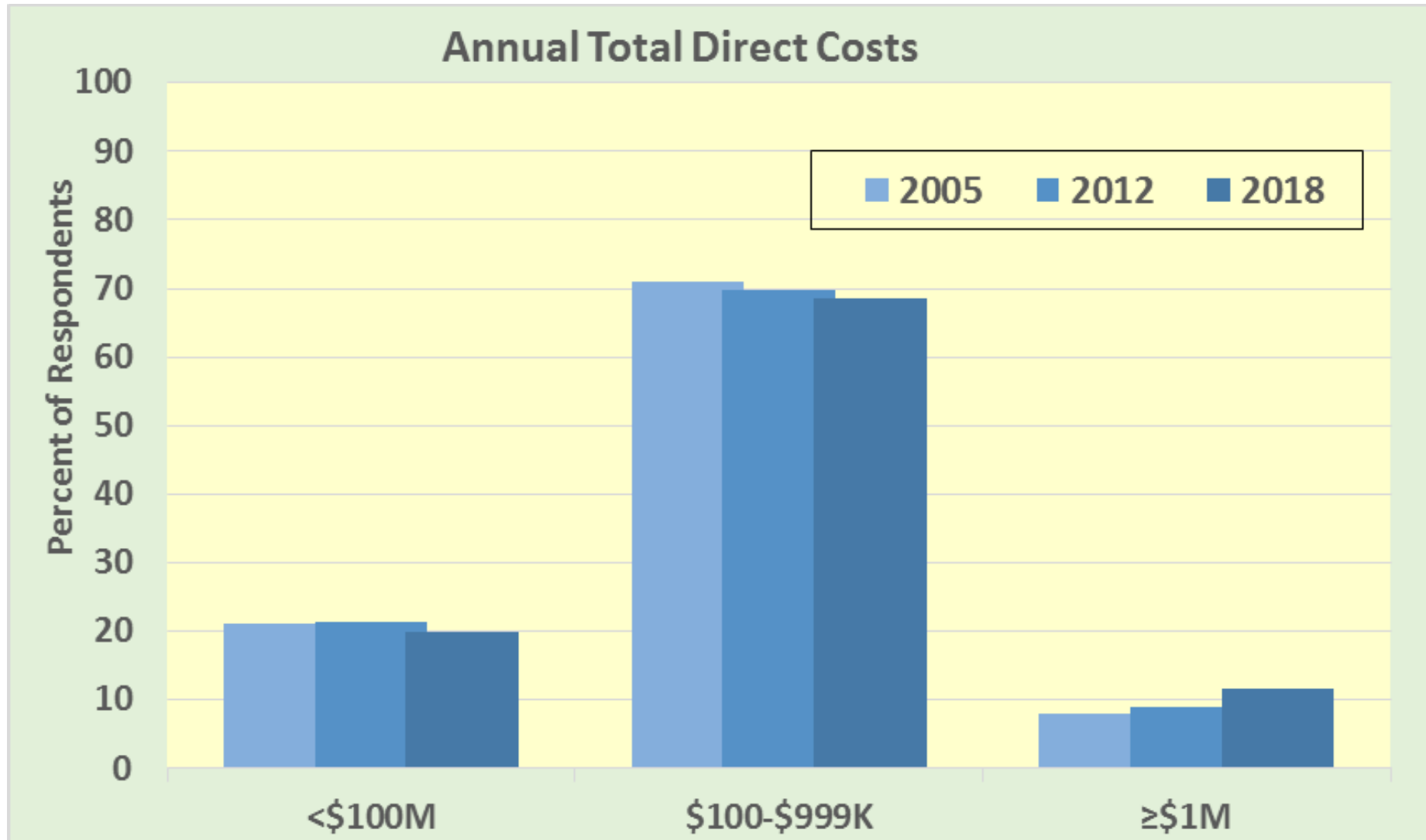
# Demographic Characteristics



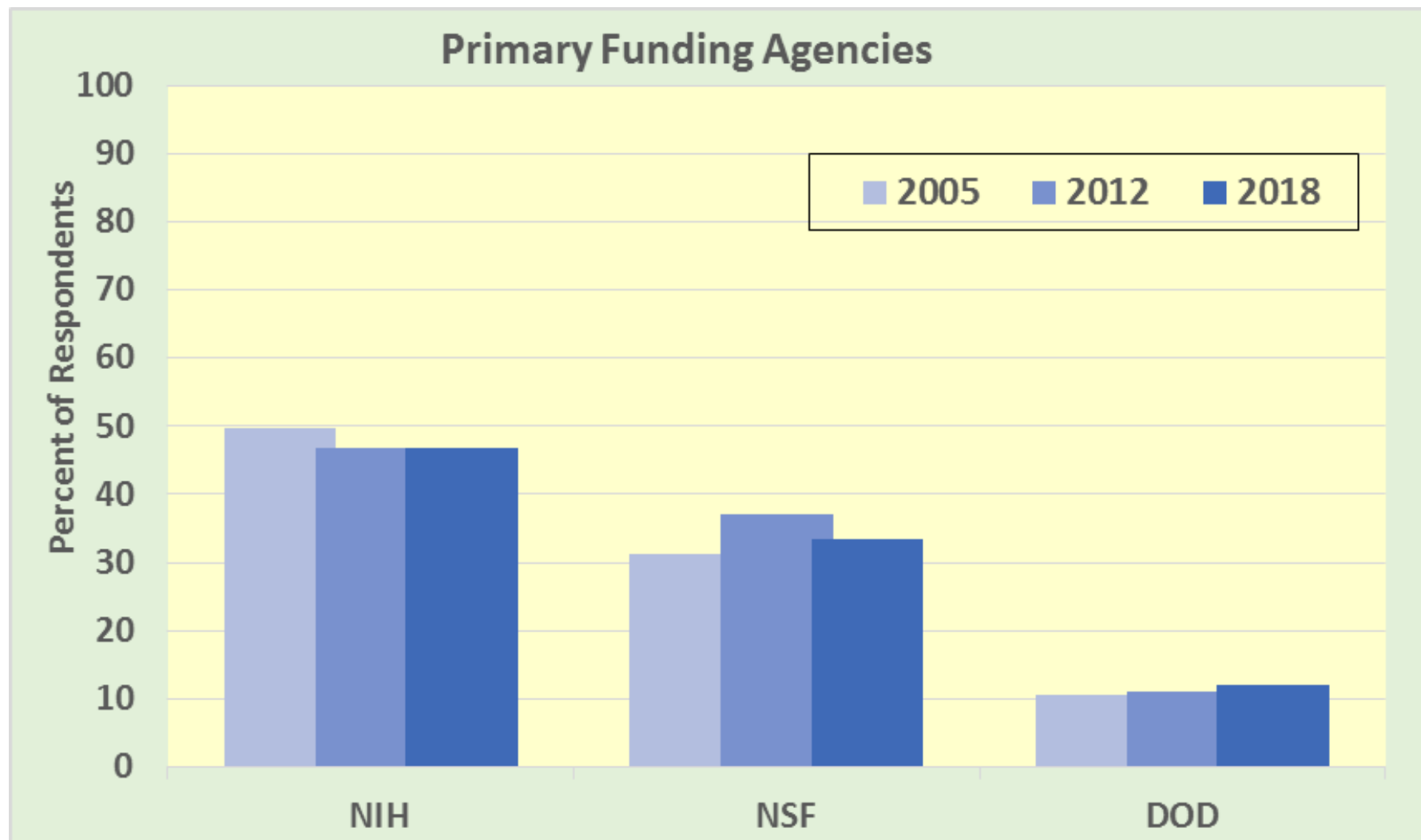
# Funding Characteristics



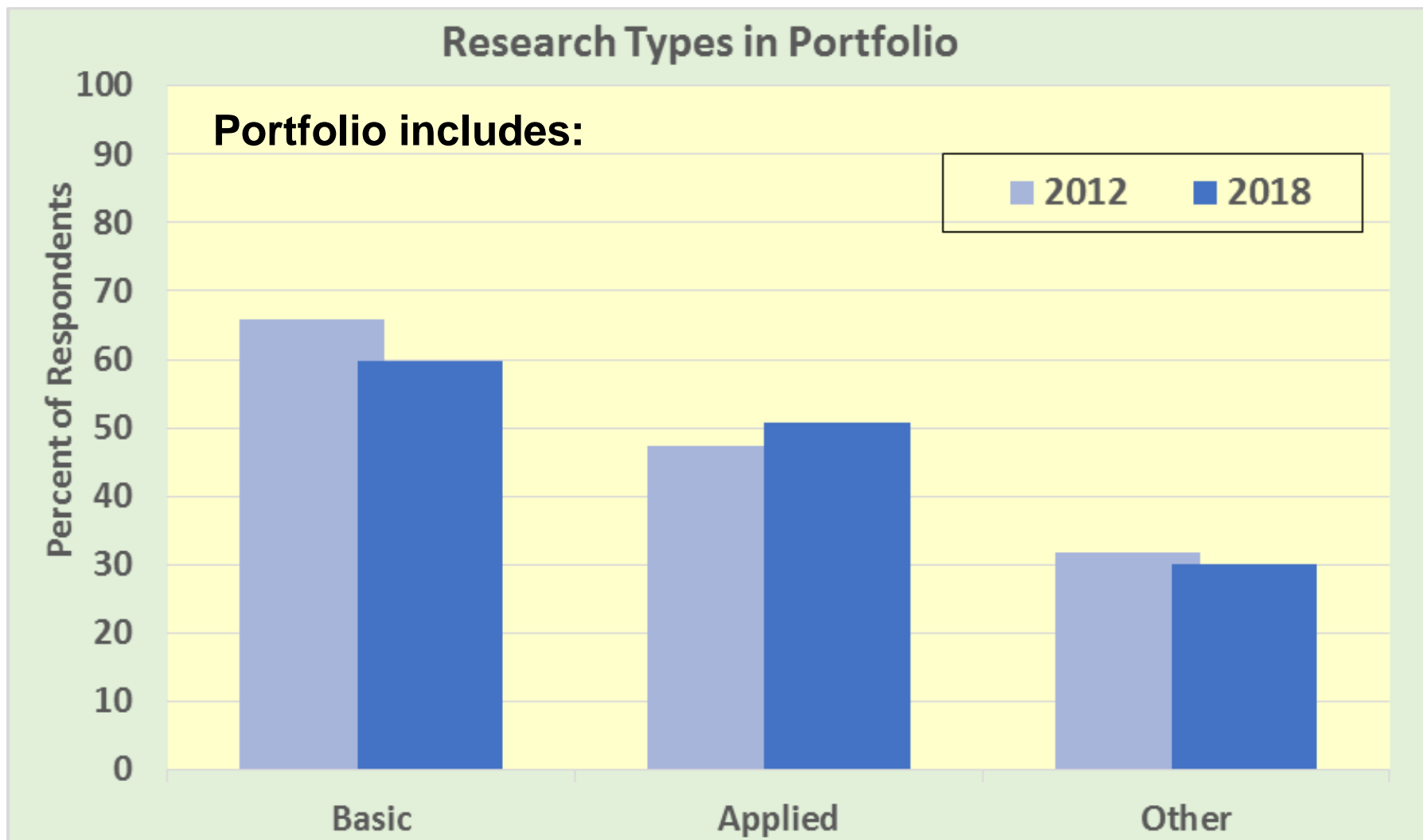
# Funding Characteristics



# Funding Characteristics

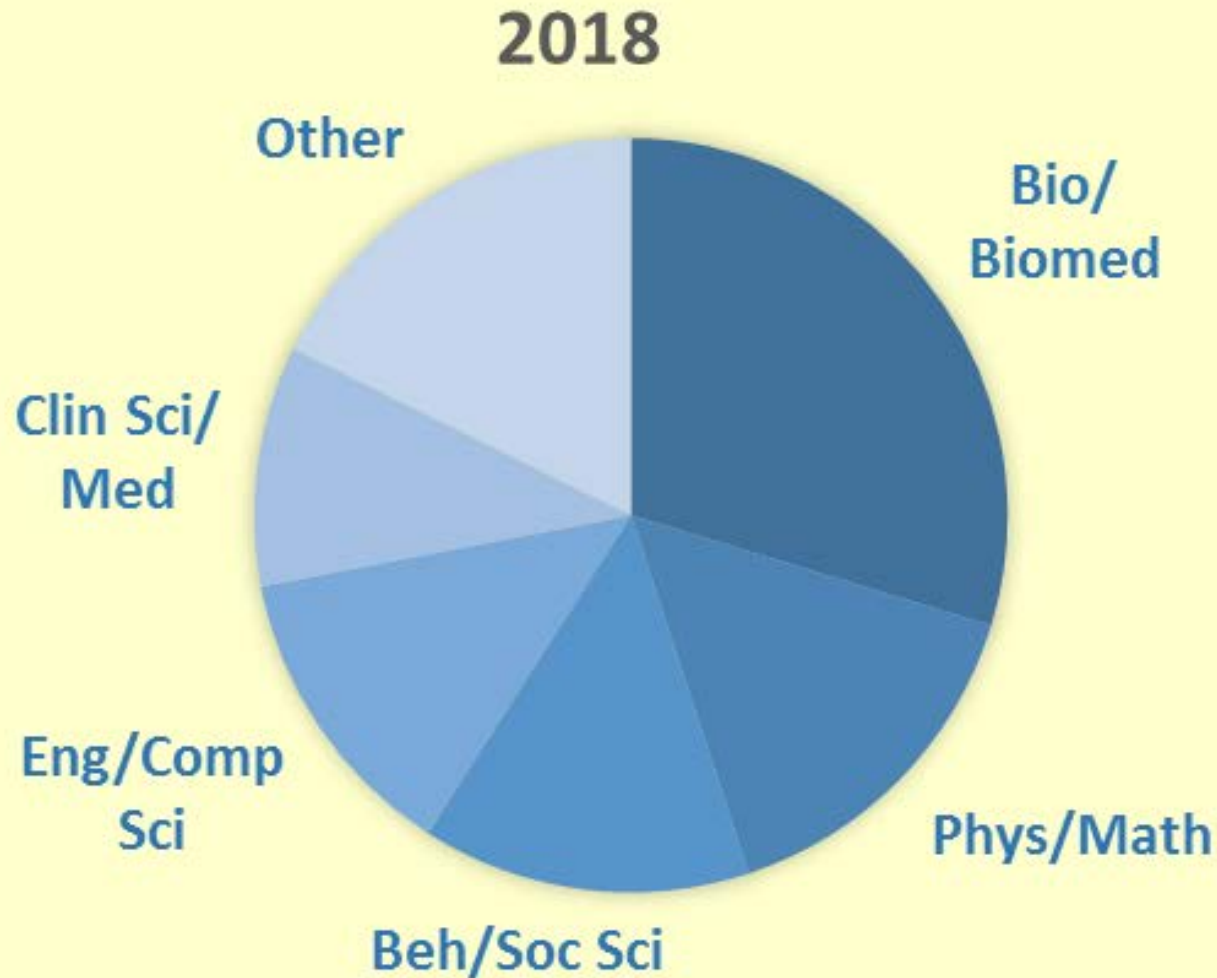


# Funding Characteristics

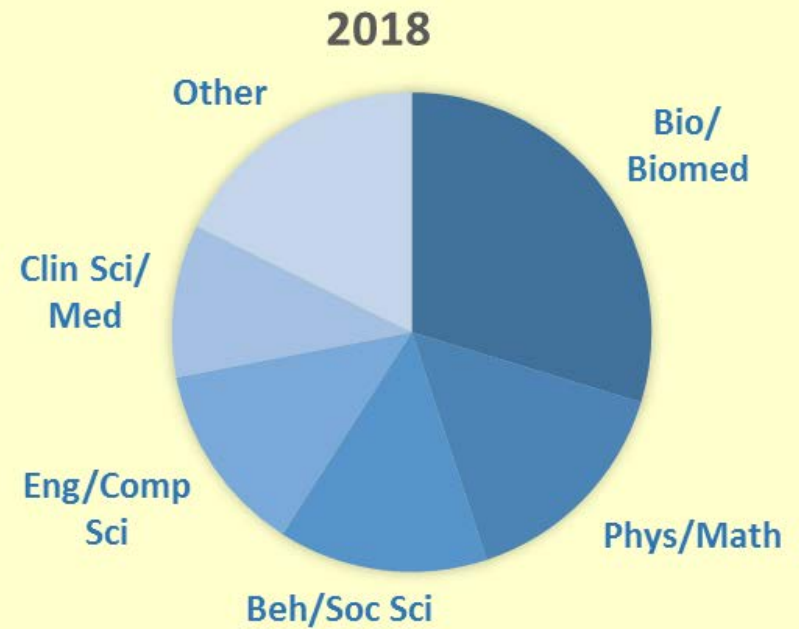
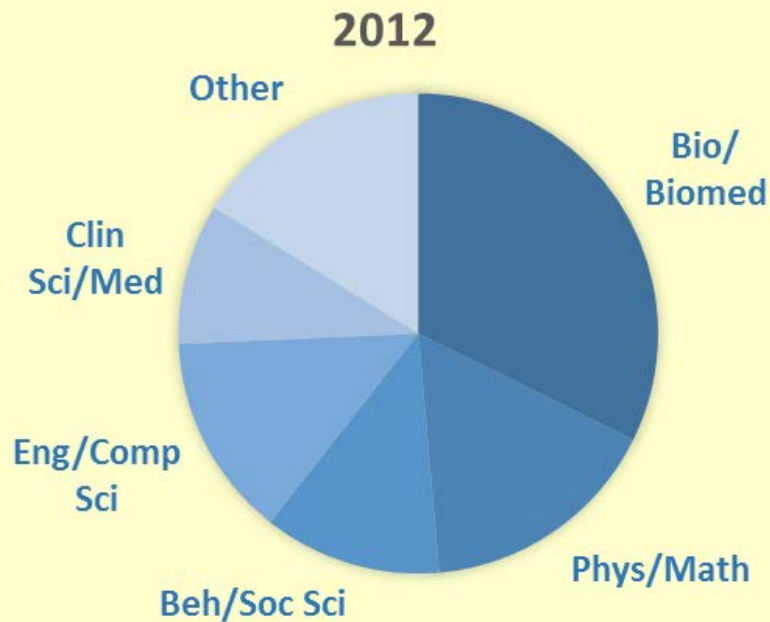


Other = Training, Curriculum Development, Service, and/or “Other”

# Principal Fields of Study



# Principal Fields of Study



## Background: Summary

- **The large number of respondents provides a rich set of data, though the 20% response rate suggests some views may not be represented.**
- **Participant profiles are largely similar across surveys from 6 and 12 years ago.**
- **The diversity of the sample has been increasing with each cohort (though only minimally).**

# **Your Work and Research**

# 2018 FWS Primary Results

“Of the total time you spent on work related to **federally funded research** during AY2016-2017, what **percentage of that time** did you devote to each of the following **activities**?

- **ACTIVE RESEARCH**
- **PRE-AWARD PROPOSAL PREPARATION ACTIVITIES**
- **PRE-AWARD ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES**
- **POST-AWARD ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES**
- **POST-AWARD REPORT PREPARATION ACTIVITIES**

**Caution:** Responses are rough estimates only—but hold internally consistent, good measurement properties, and reliable information about general perceptions.

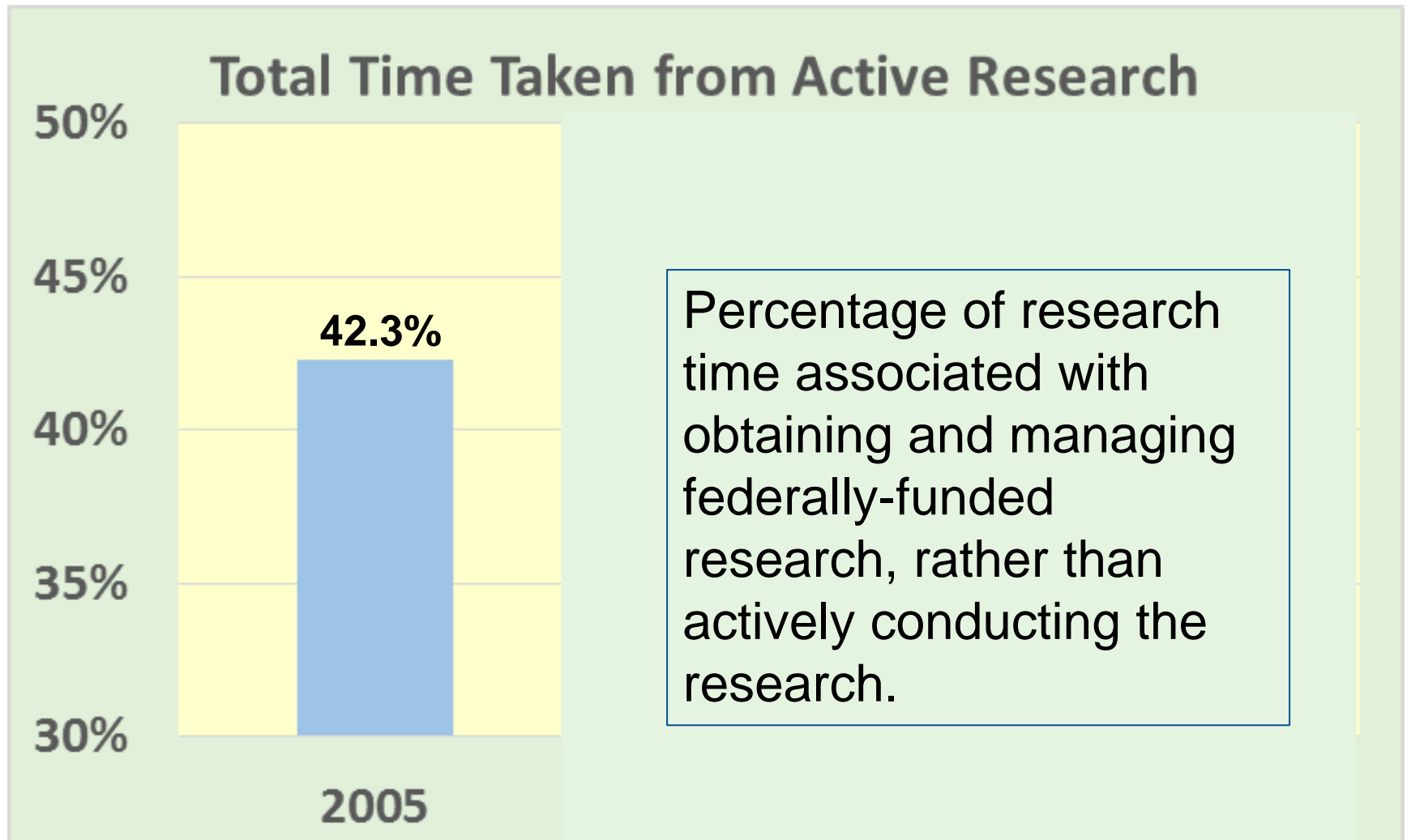
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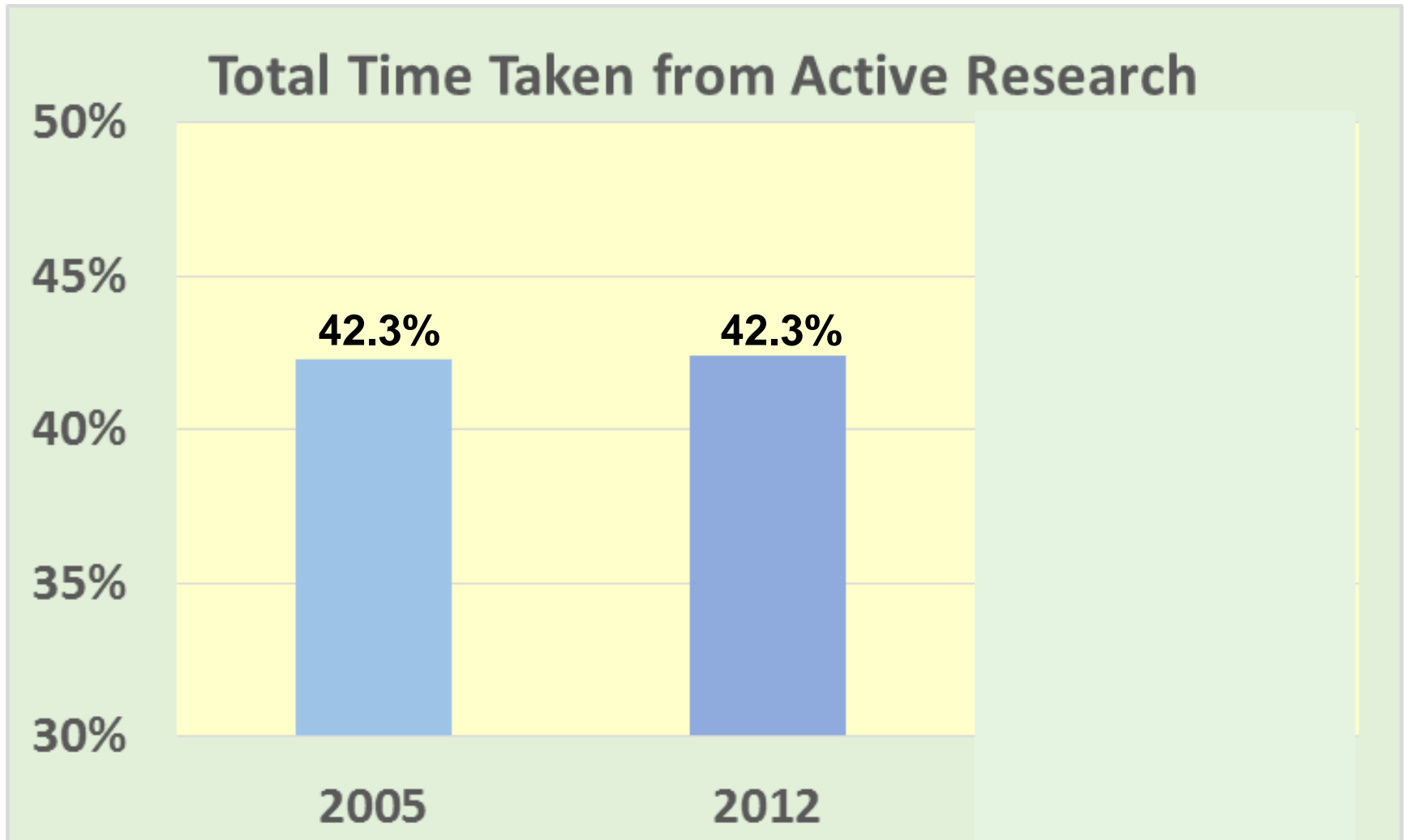
- **ACTIVE RESEARCH**
- **PRE-AWARD PROPOSAL PREPARATION ACTIVITIES**
- **PRE-AWARD ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES**
- **POST-AWARD ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES**
- **POST-AWARD REPORT PREPARATION ACTIVITIES:**

**Time Away from Active Research**

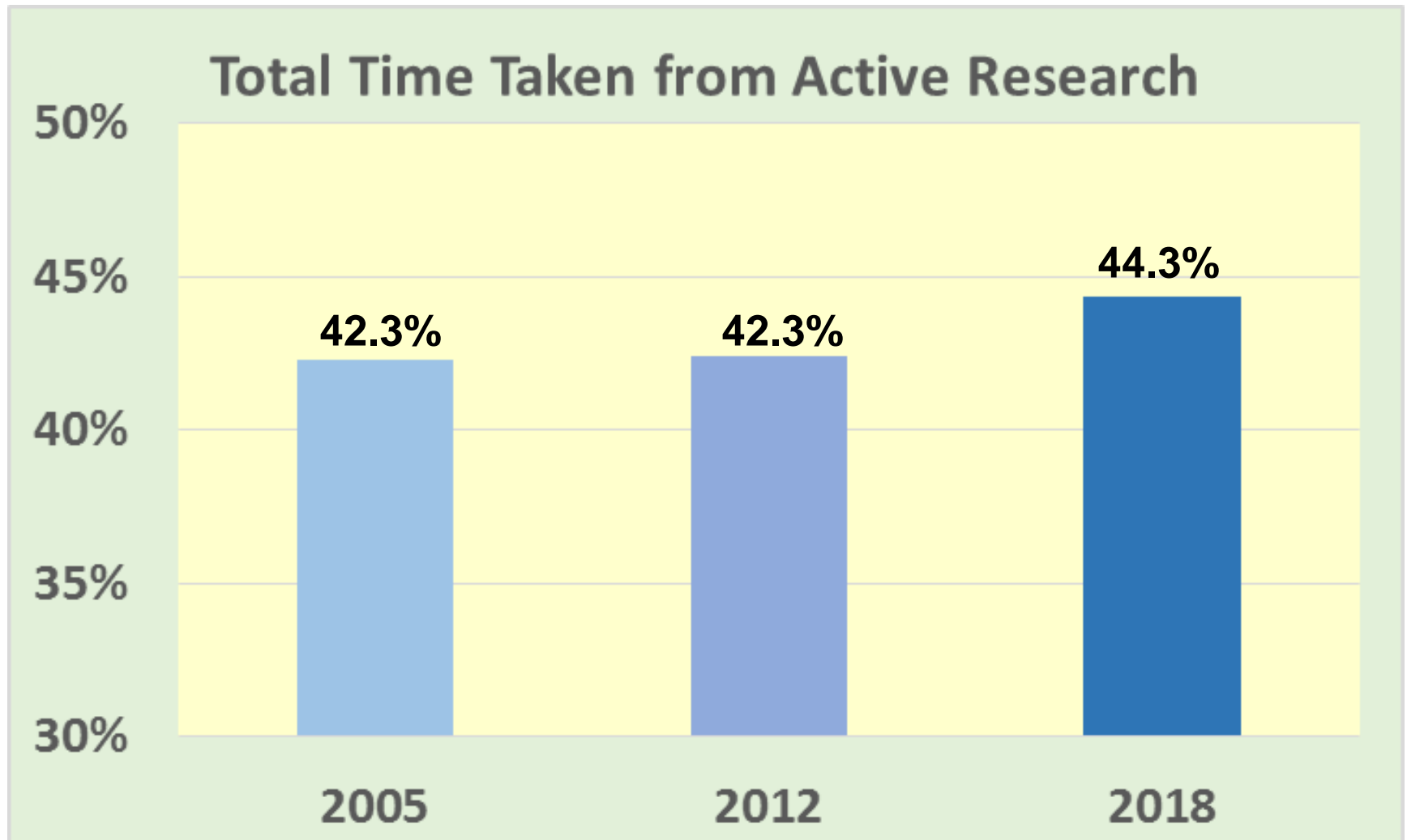
# Time Taken Away from Research



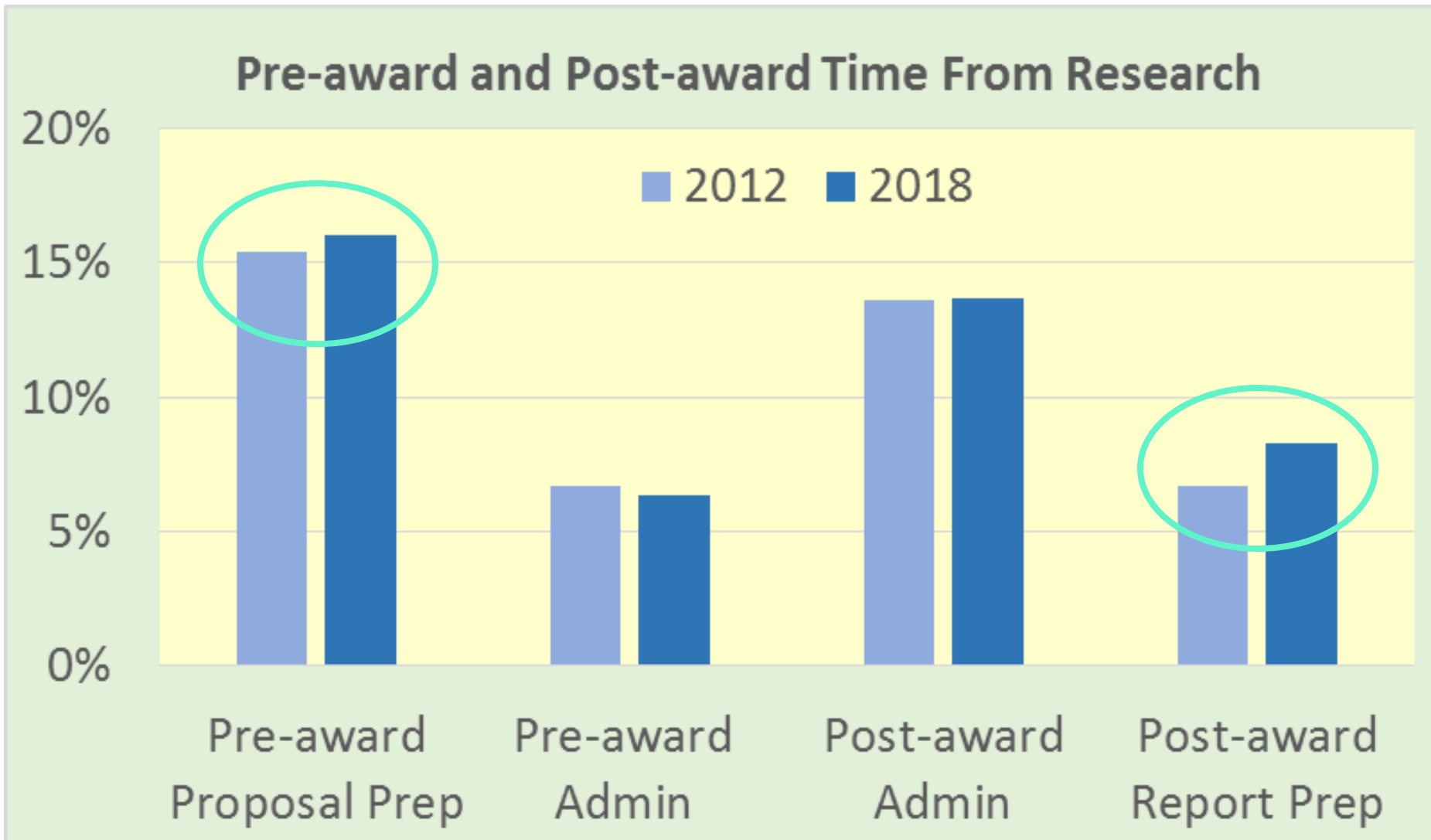
# Time Taken Away from Research



# Time Taken Away from Research



# Time Taken Away from Research



# Proposal Preparation Time (~16%)

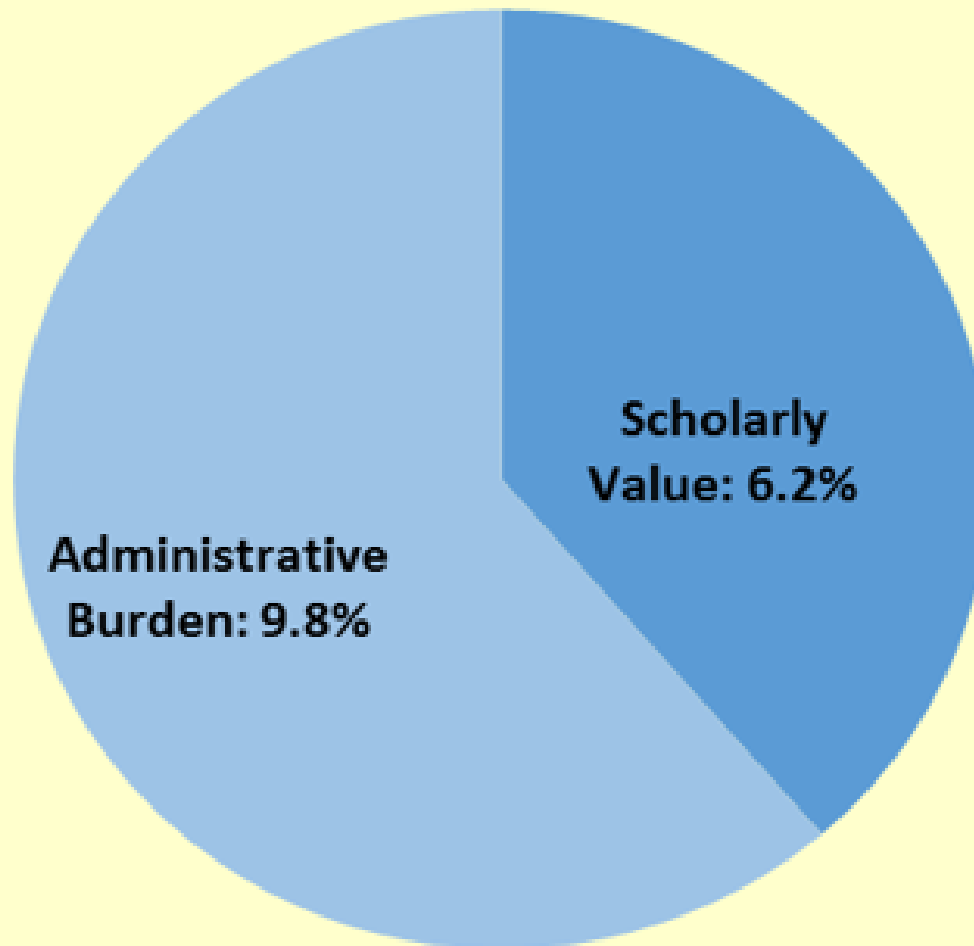
**% proposal preparation time that  
contributes to research and  
scholarship:**

**Mean = 38.7%**

**(of the 16% =  
6.2% of total time  
away value)**

# 16% Time Taken Away from Research

## 16%: Proposal Preparation Time



# Proposal Preparation Time (~16%)

**Number of proposals  
submitted in last 3 years:**

**Median = 4 (Mean = 6.0)**

**Funded = 1** (prereq. for being in study)

**Not funded = 2**

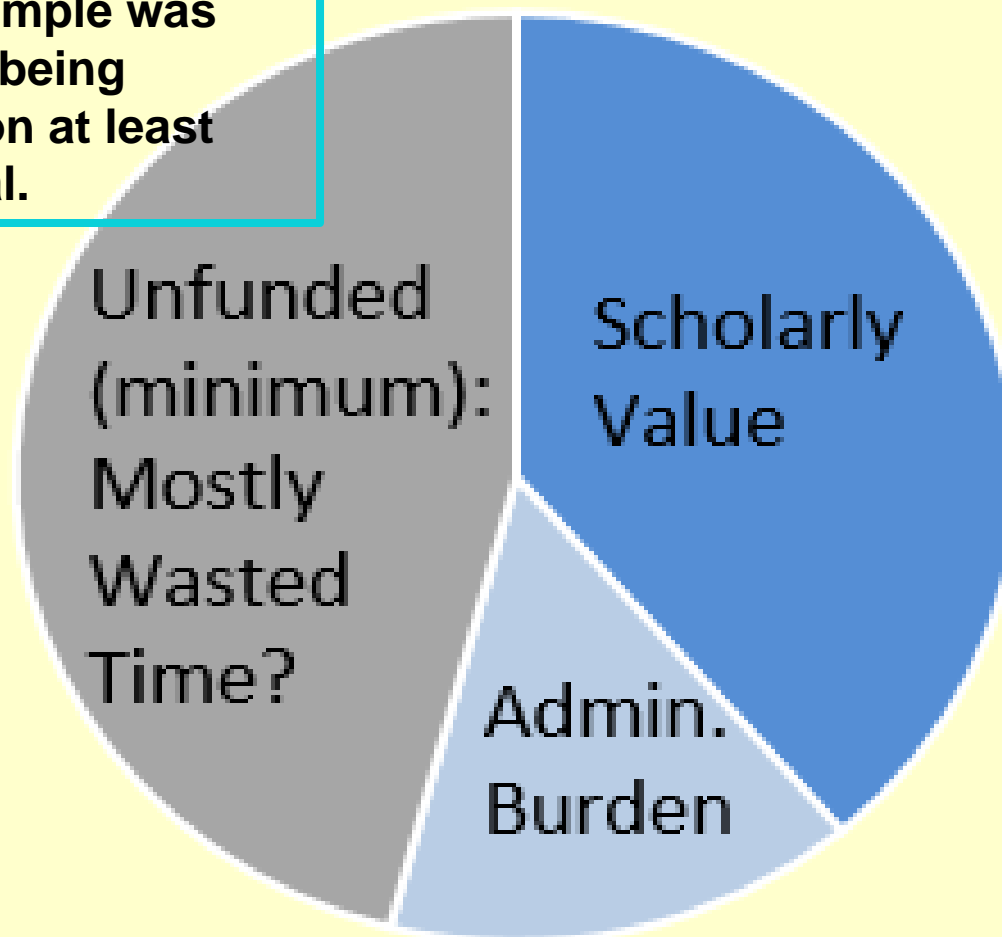
**Pending = 1**

**Note.** Given participant inclusion criteria requiring at least 1 funded project, these values do not reflect outcomes for those who were not successful in obtaining federal funding (who would have more unfunded). Thus, the values should not be used to infer funding rates.

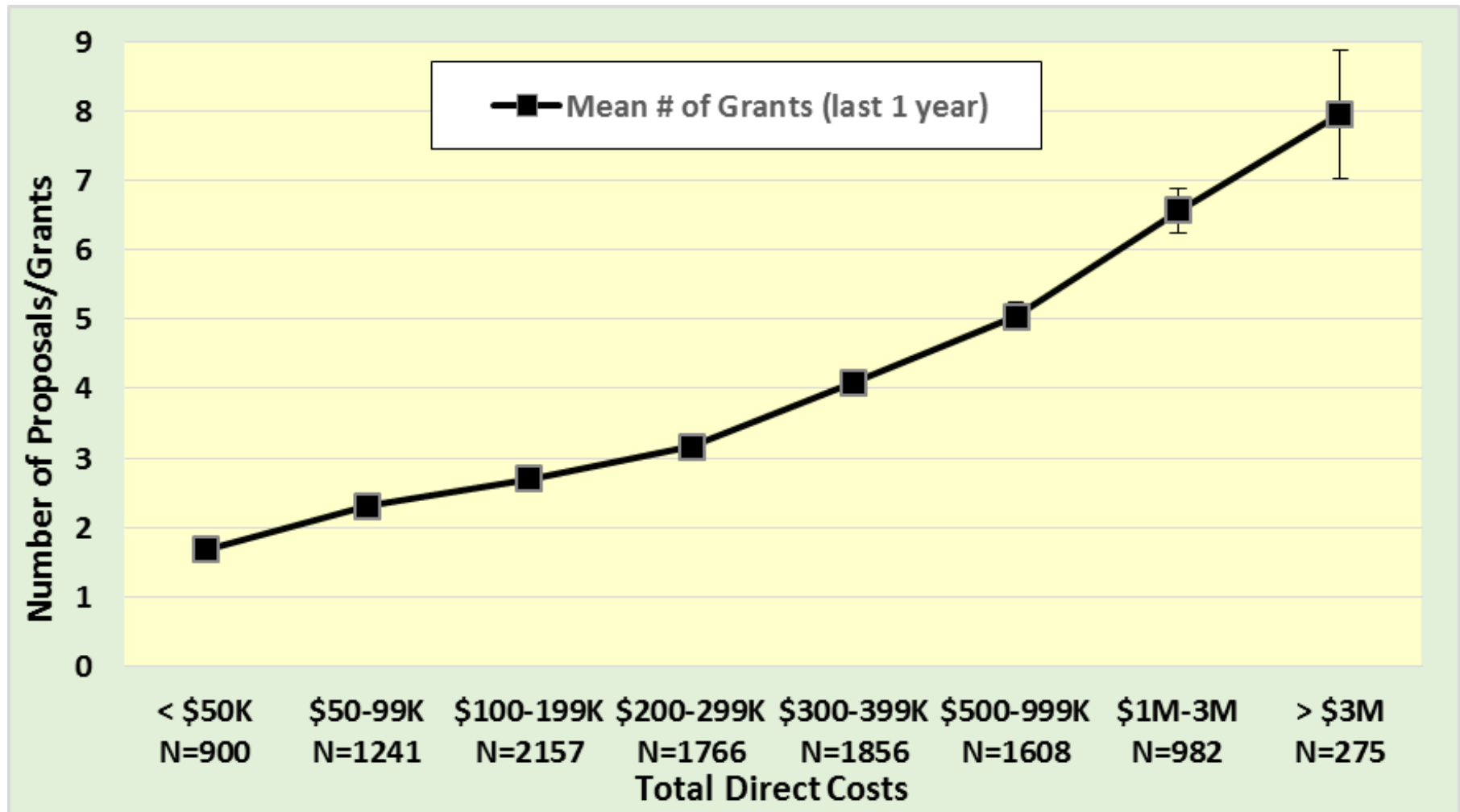
# 16% Time Taken Away from Research

## 16% Proposal Preparation Time

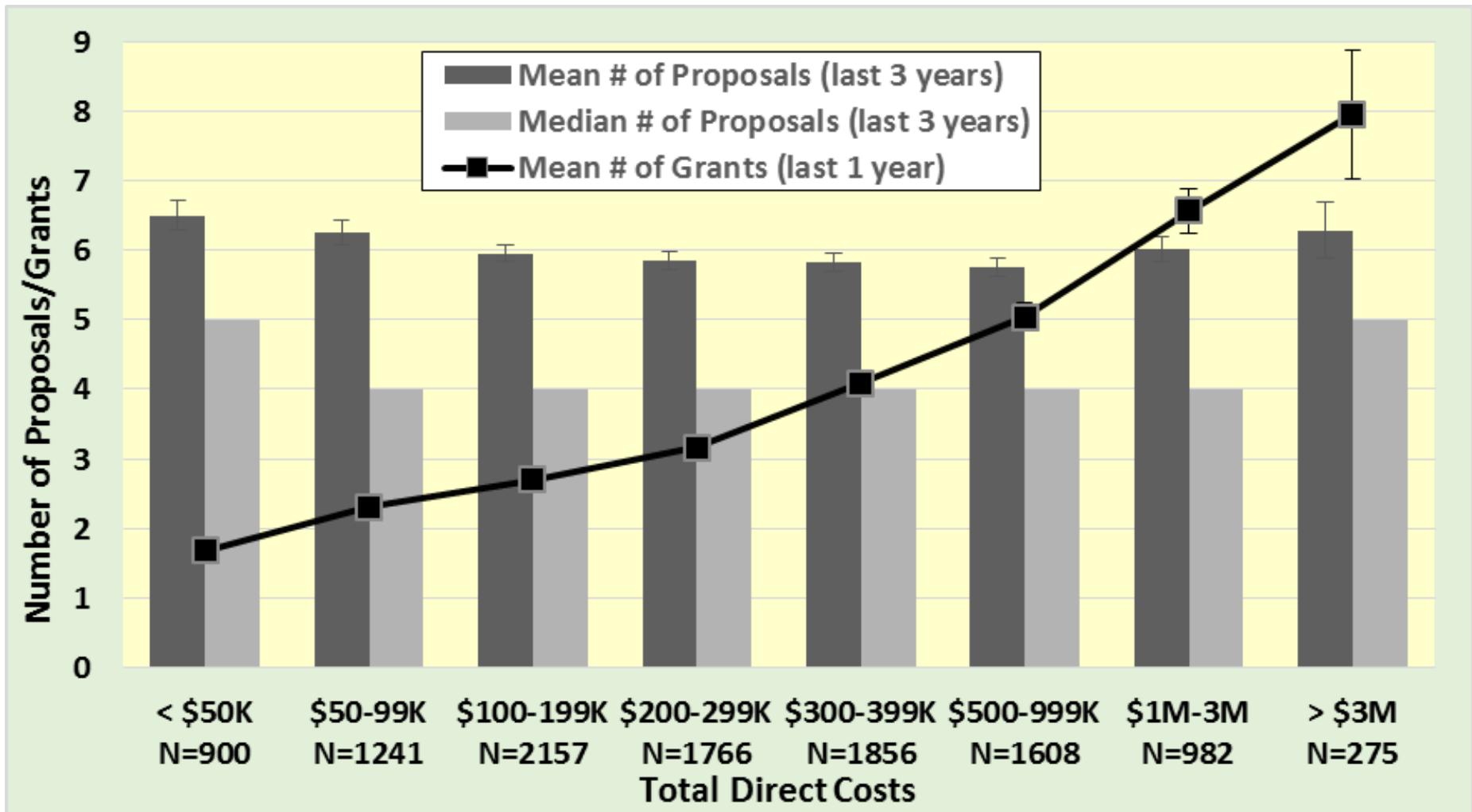
Given the sample was selected for being successful on at least one proposal.



# # Grants versus Funding



# # Proposals versus Funding



## **Your Work and Research: Summary**

- **Since 2012, the average estimated time taken away from research by pre-award and post-award requirements related to federally-funded research has increased from 42.3% to 44.3%.**
- **The increase appears to predominantly affect the amount of time spent preparing proposals and interim/final research reports.**
- **Although an estimated 39% of the time spent on proposal preparation may contribute to a PI's scholarship, 50% or more of proposal preparation time may be largely a waste due to rejections.**

# **Federal Agency Requirements**

# Questions about Agency Requirements

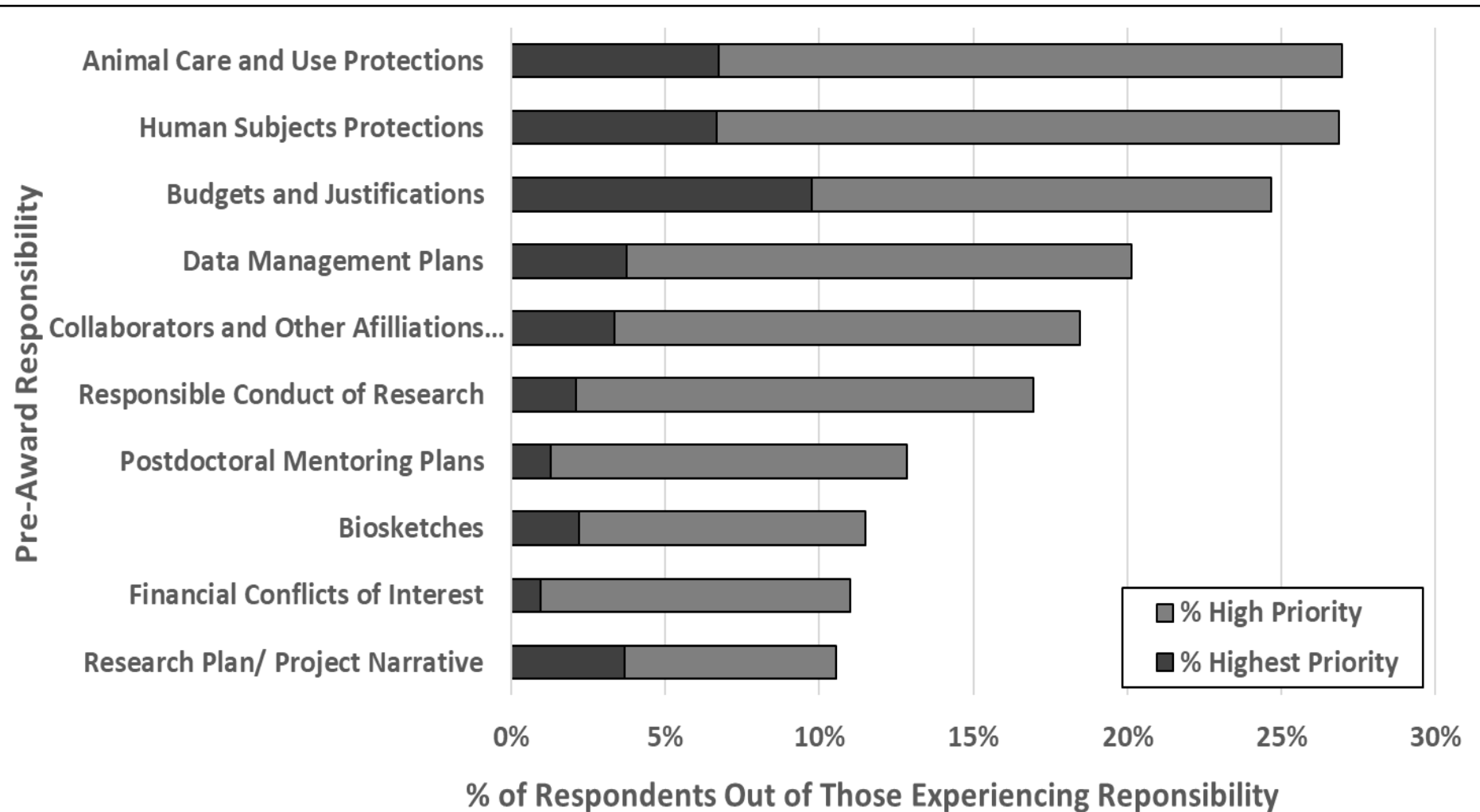
Participants indicated which of their funding agencies had most burdensome administrative requirements (if >1 funding agency).

Then they were asked which Preaward and Post-award requirements they experienced at that agency.

**Of those, participants were asked the priority for reducing administrative burden of each requirement at that agency.**

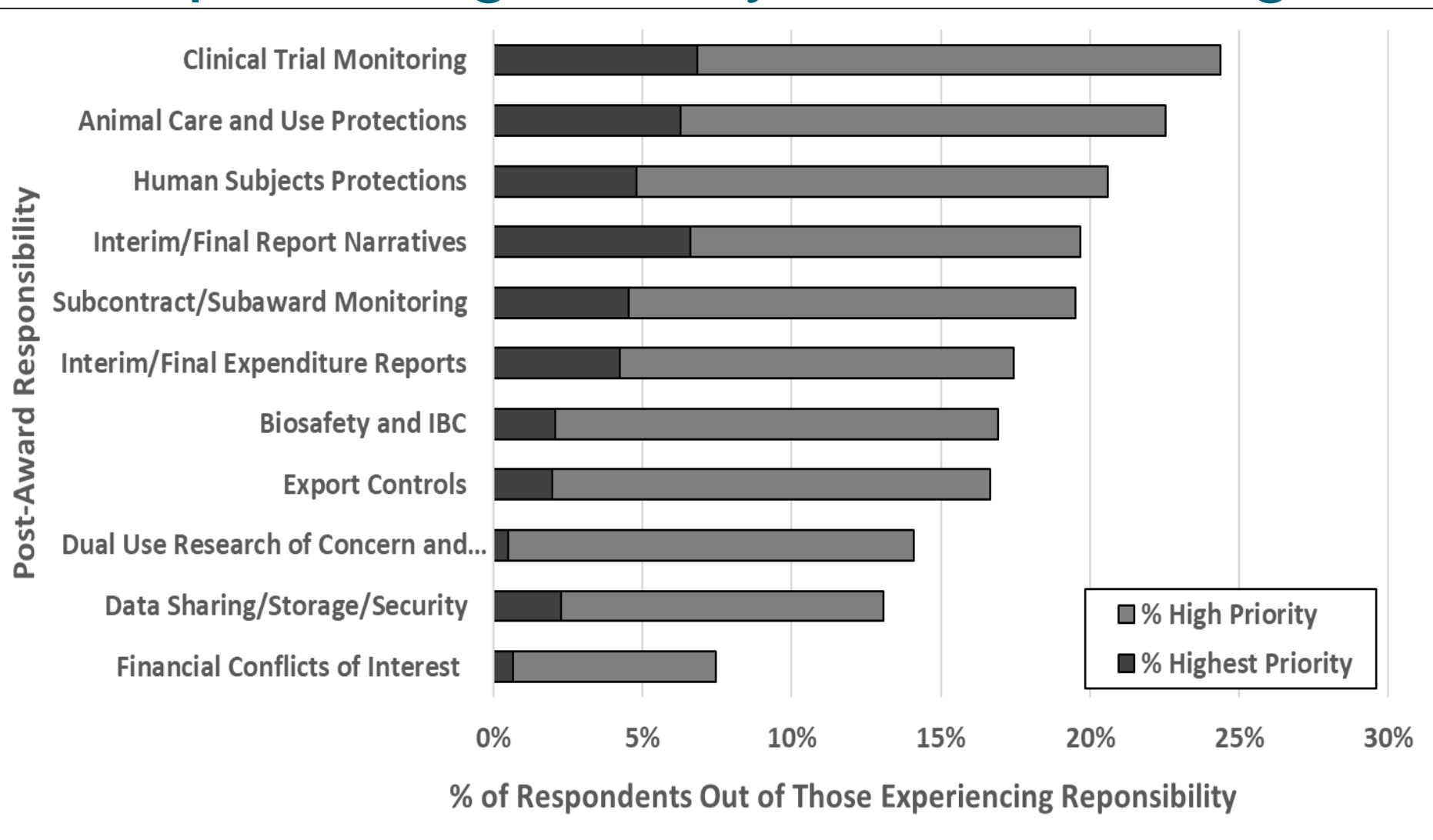
# Agency: Pre-award

## Rated High Priority Need for Change



# Agency: Post-award

## Reported High Priority Need for Change



## Federal Agency Requirements: Summary

- **Generally, fewer than 30% of respondents rated any agency requirement as a high priority need for change.**
- **Pre-award: Highest priority areas are requirements for animal and human subject protections (beyond institution IRB and IACUC), budgets/budget justifications, and data management plans.**
- **Post-award: The #1 highest priority area is clinical trials monitoring, closely followed by animal and human subject protections (beyond IRB and IACUC), interim/final reports, and subcontracts.**

# **Your Institution**

# Ratings about “Your Institution”

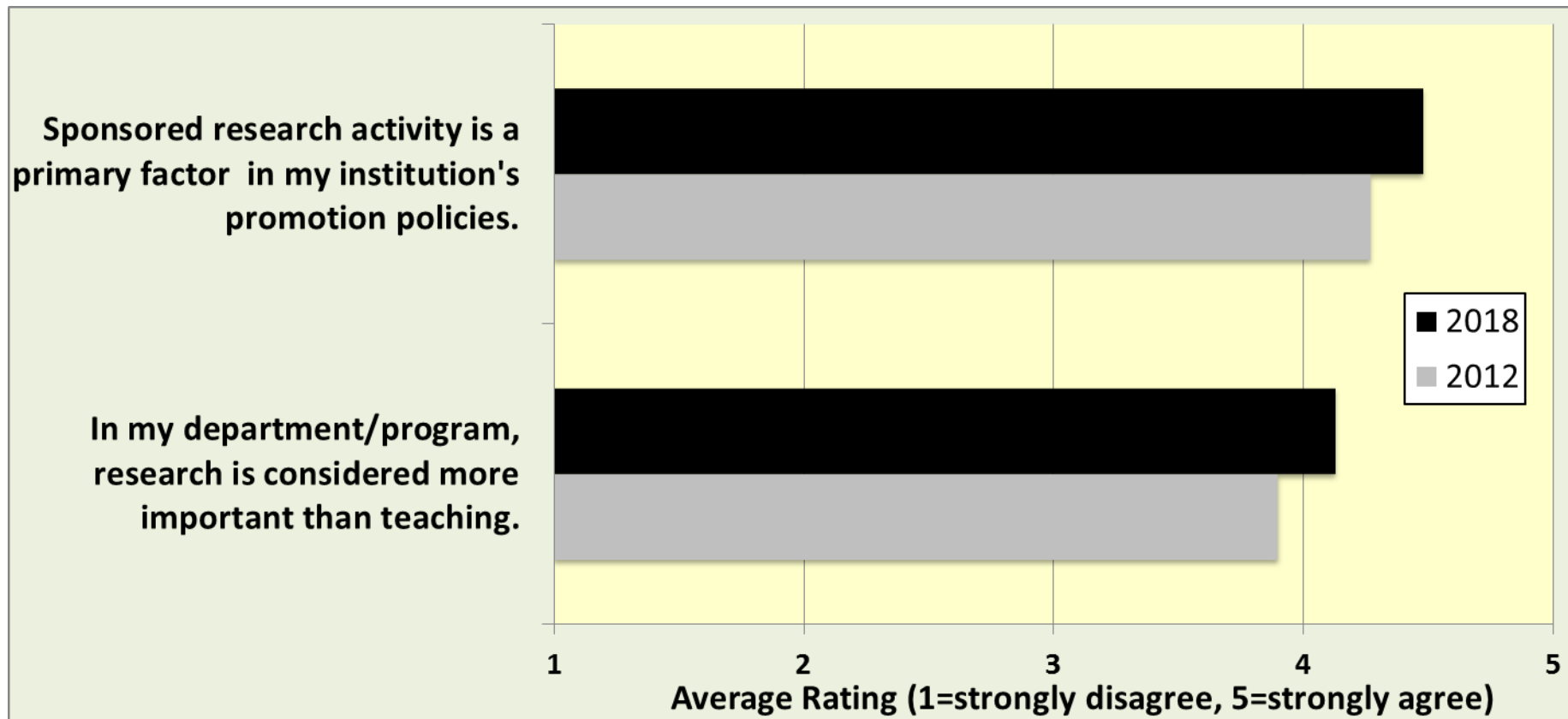
Participants viewed

- (1) a **series of statements about the research climate at their institution** (repeated from 2012), and
- (2) a **series of statements about their institution’s research administration.**

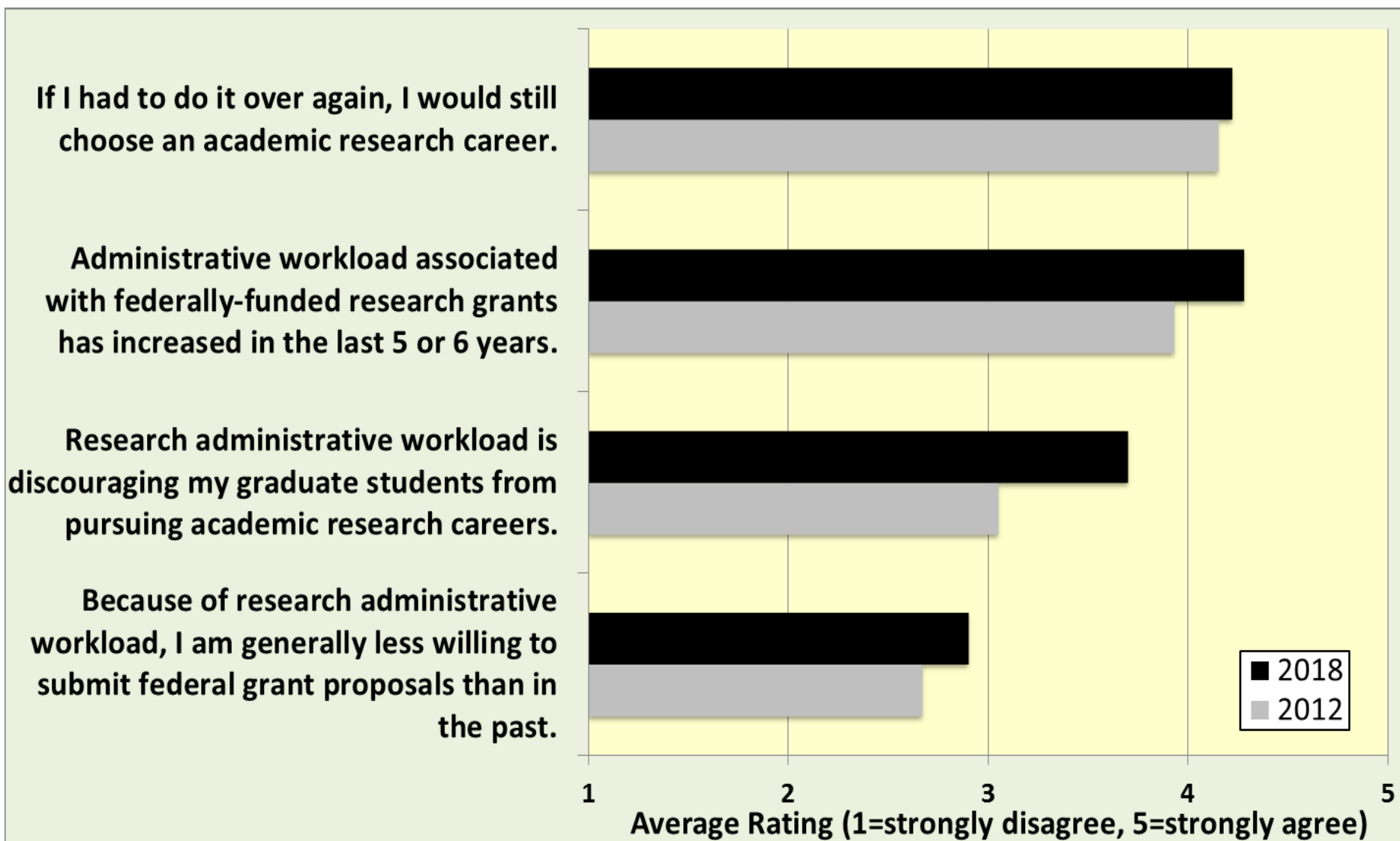
They rated each statement on a 5-point scale from

**Strongly Disagree** to **Strongly Agree**.

# Perceived Research Climate

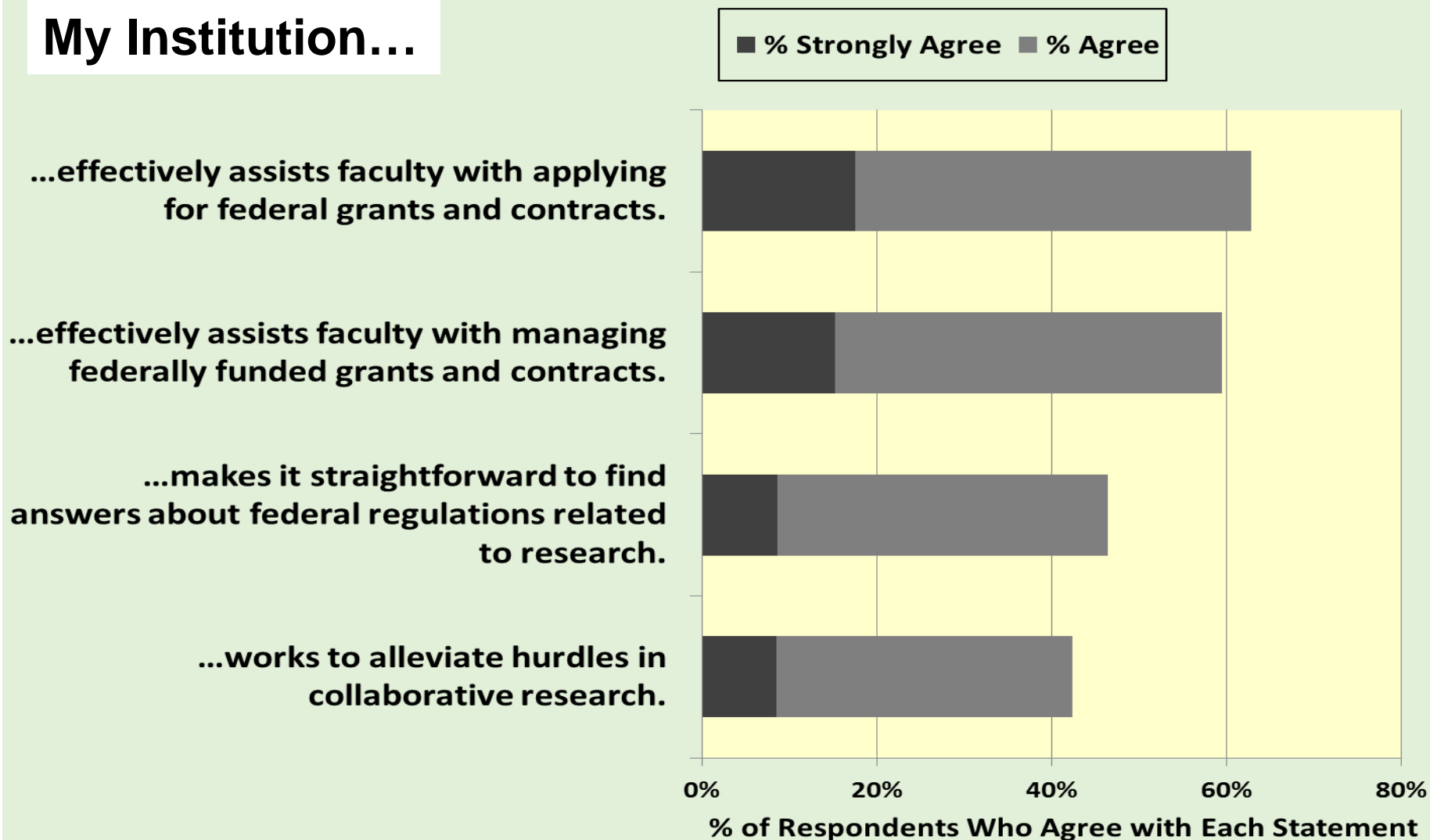


# Perceived Research Climate



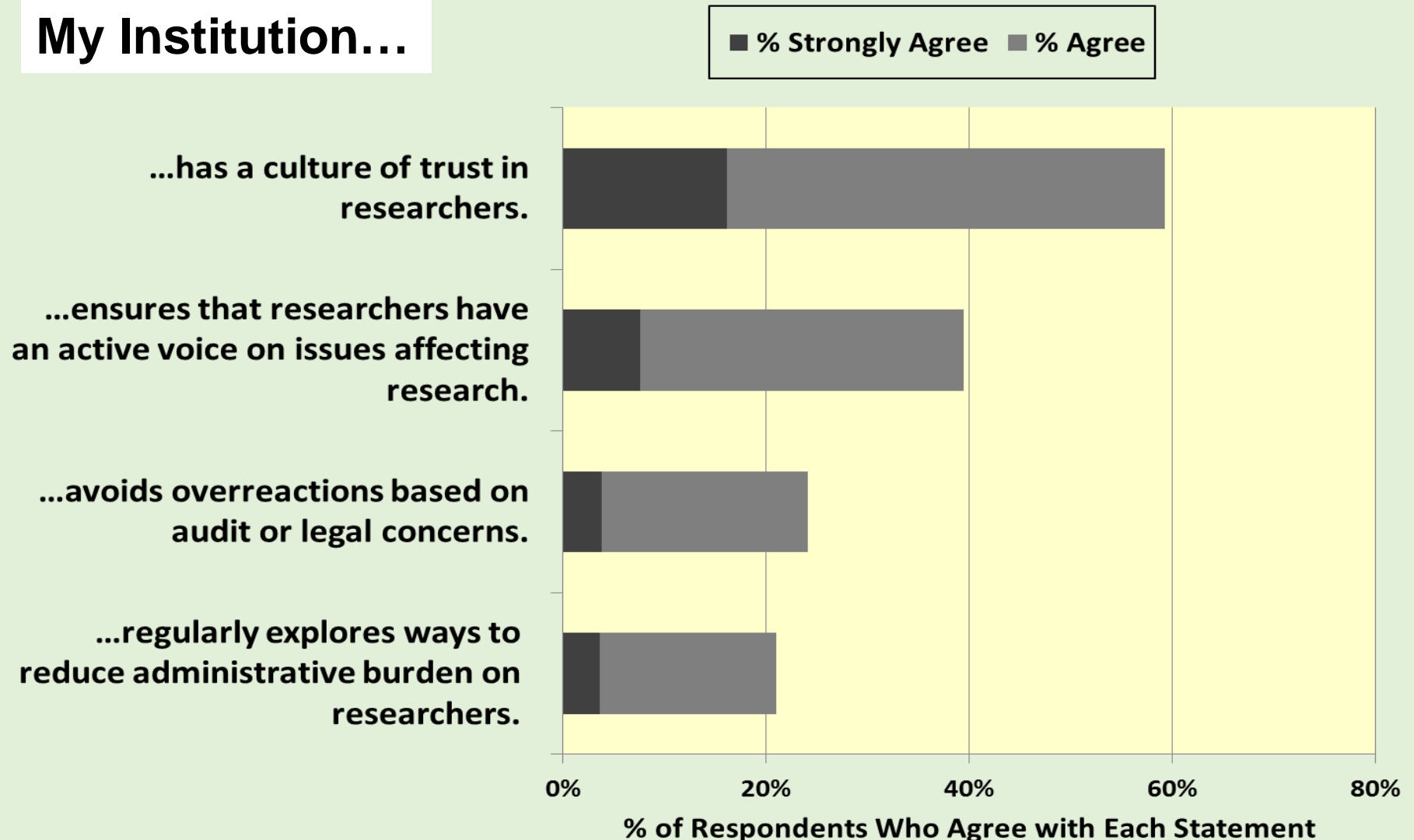
# Institution's Research Administration

## My Institution...



# Institution's Research Administration

## My Institution...



## **Your Institution: Summary**

- **Although optimism remains, researchers increasingly agree that administrative workload is increasing and concern continues to grow that this workload threatens academic career paths for graduate students.**
- **While there is perceived room for improvement, most respondents agree that their institution's research management is generally effective.**
- **Most respondents do not feel that reducing administrative burden on researchers is a priority at their institution.**

# **Research Responsibilities**

# Ratings of Specific Responsibilities

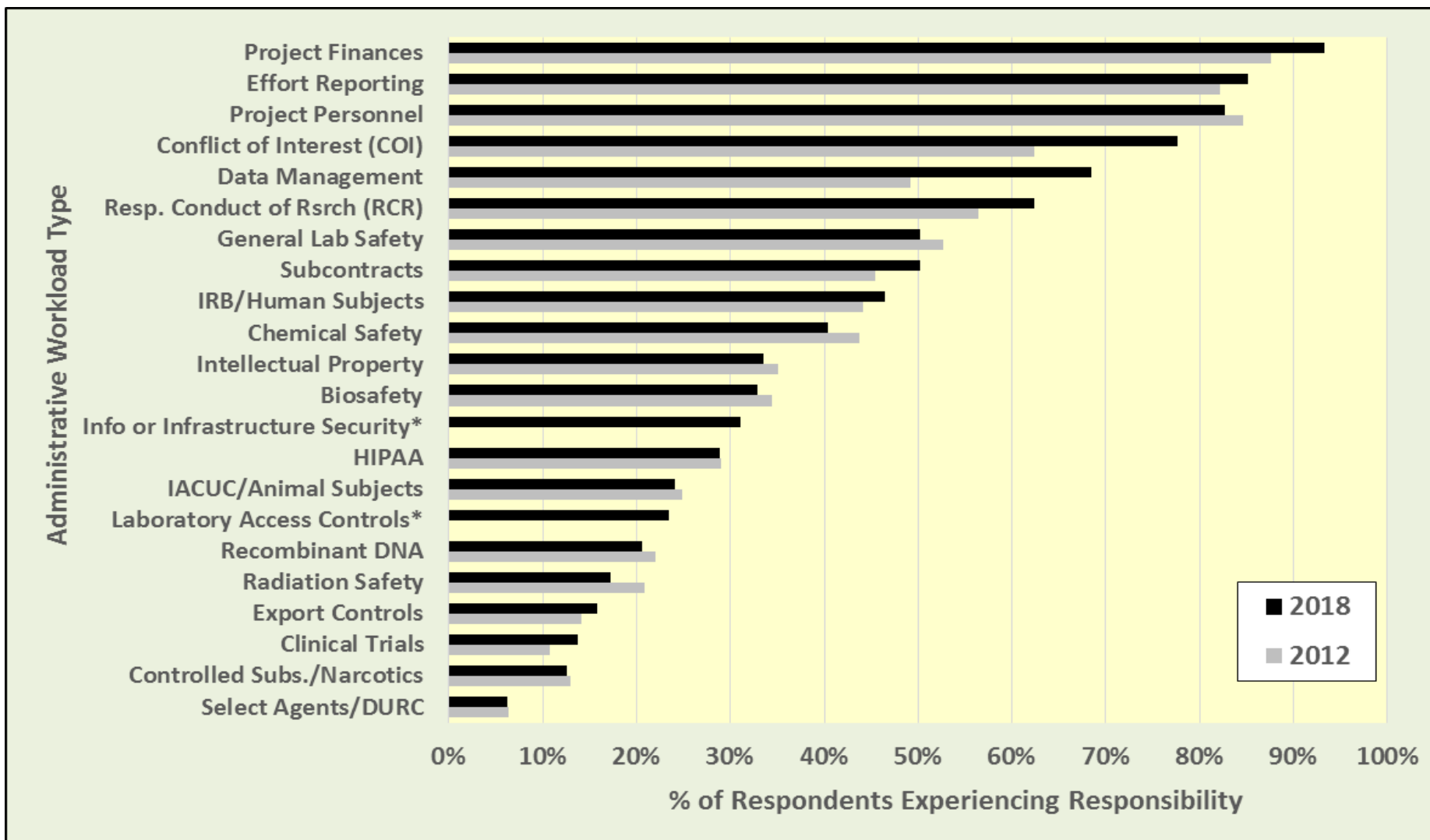
Participants indicated which of several **administrative responsibilities** they **experienced**.

For those experienced, respondents then rated how much each responsibility **took time away** from their active research from **None at all** to **Very Much**.

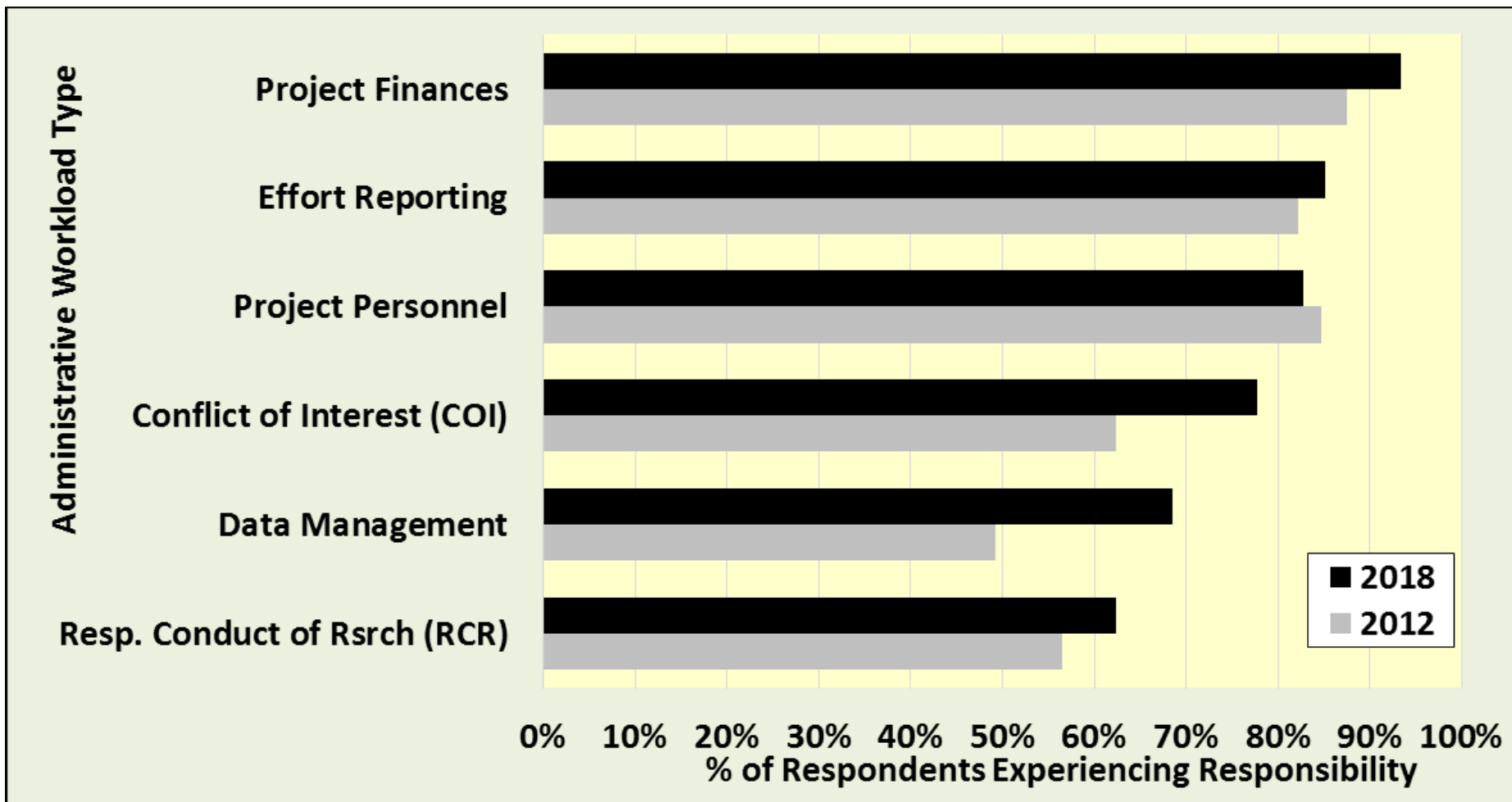
They then rated **priority for reducing administrative burden** from **No need to change** to **High priority**.

For those rated high, “**drilldown**” components were then rated on the same **priority** scale.

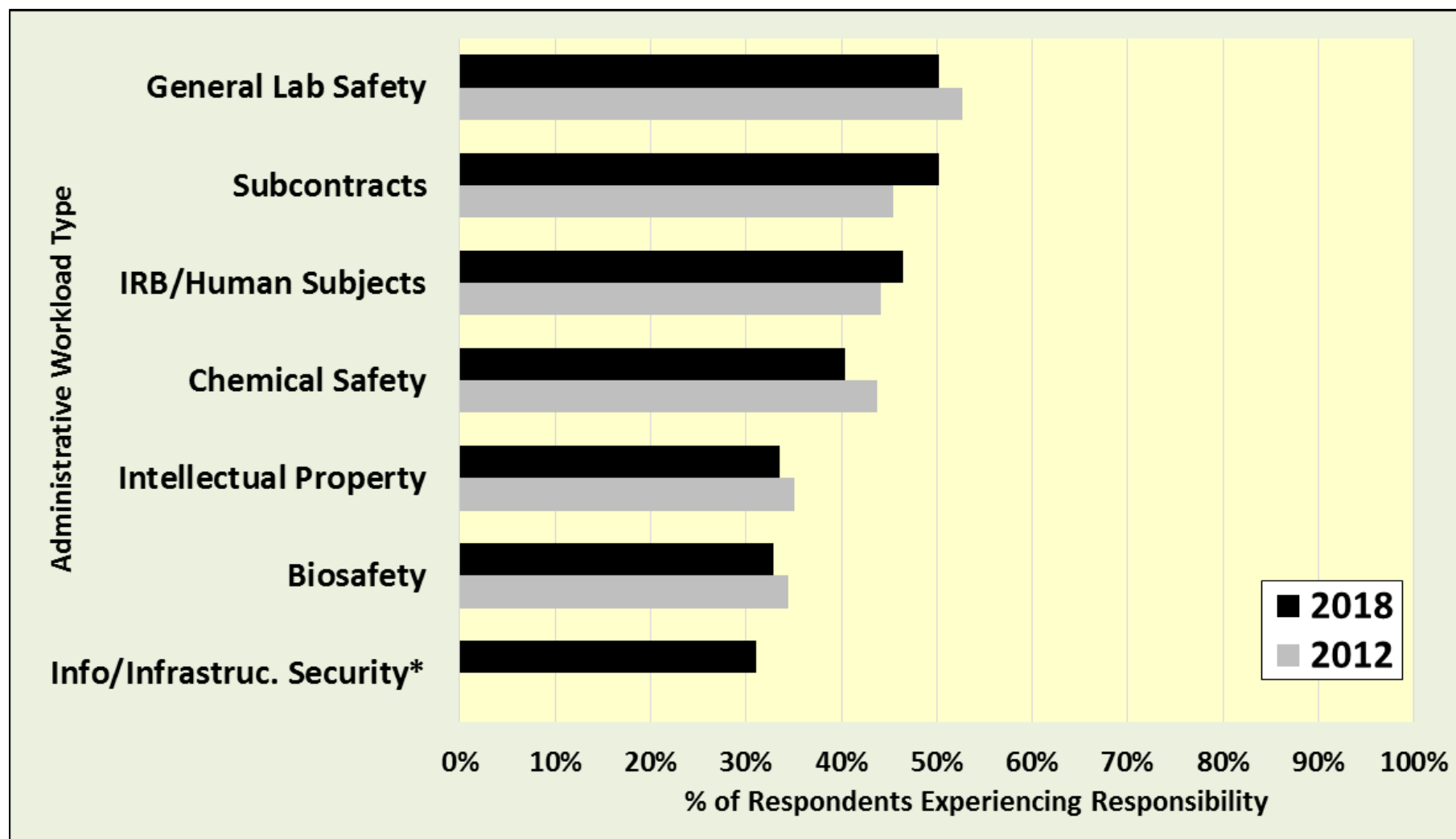
# Specific Responsibilities: Prevalence 2018 and 2012



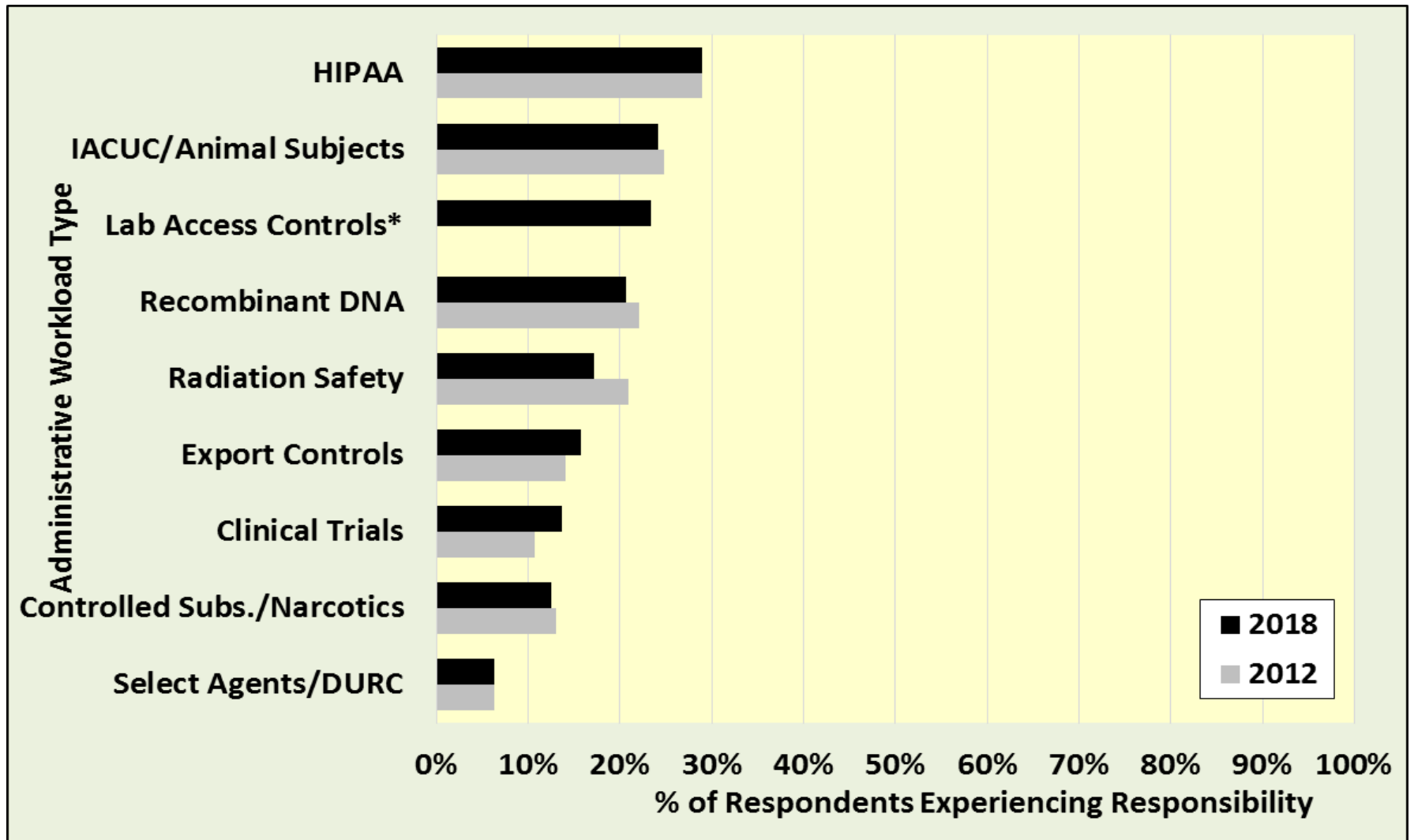
# Specific Responsibilities: Highest Prevalence 2018 and 2012



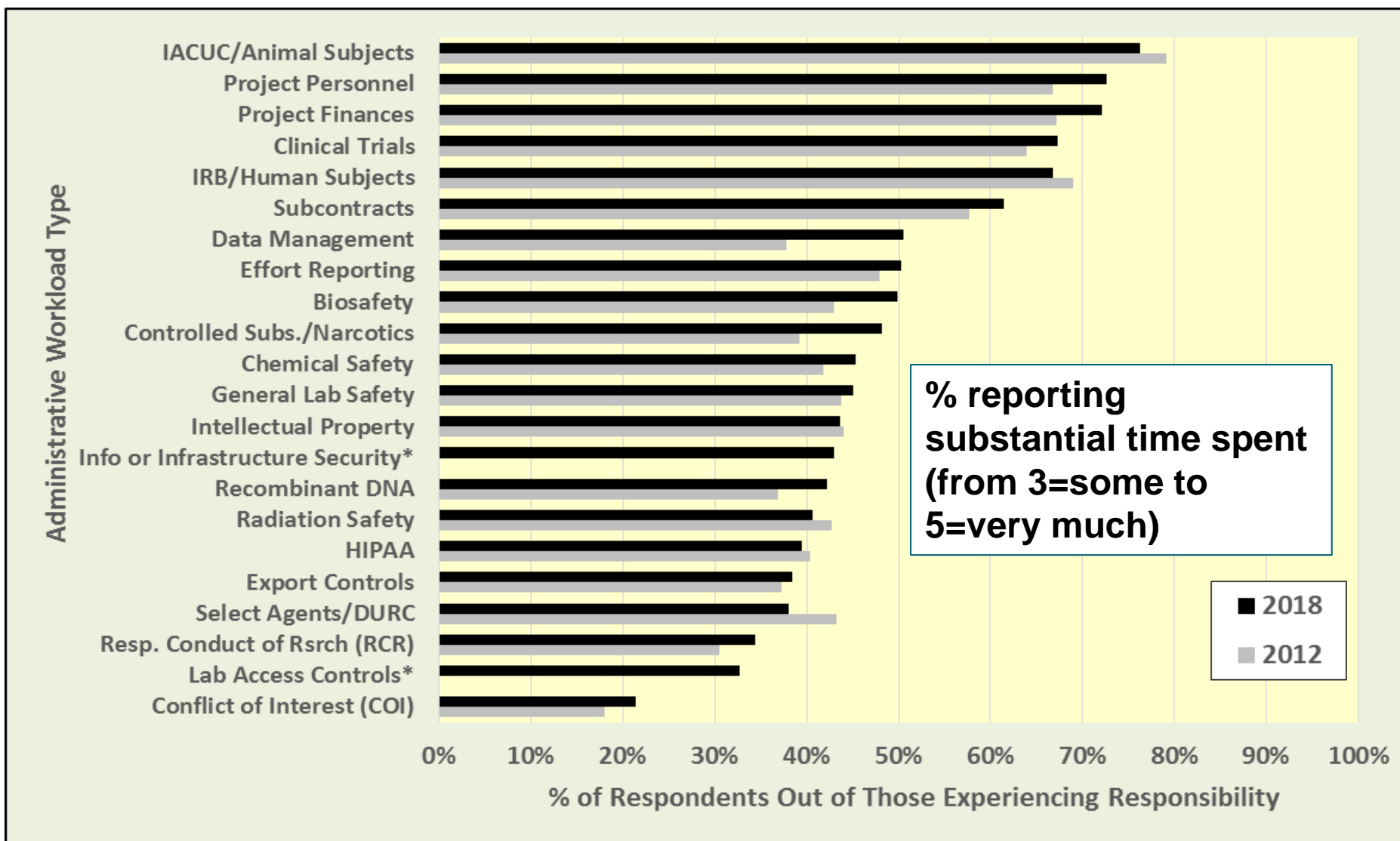
# Specific Responsibilities: Medium Prevalence 2018 and 2012



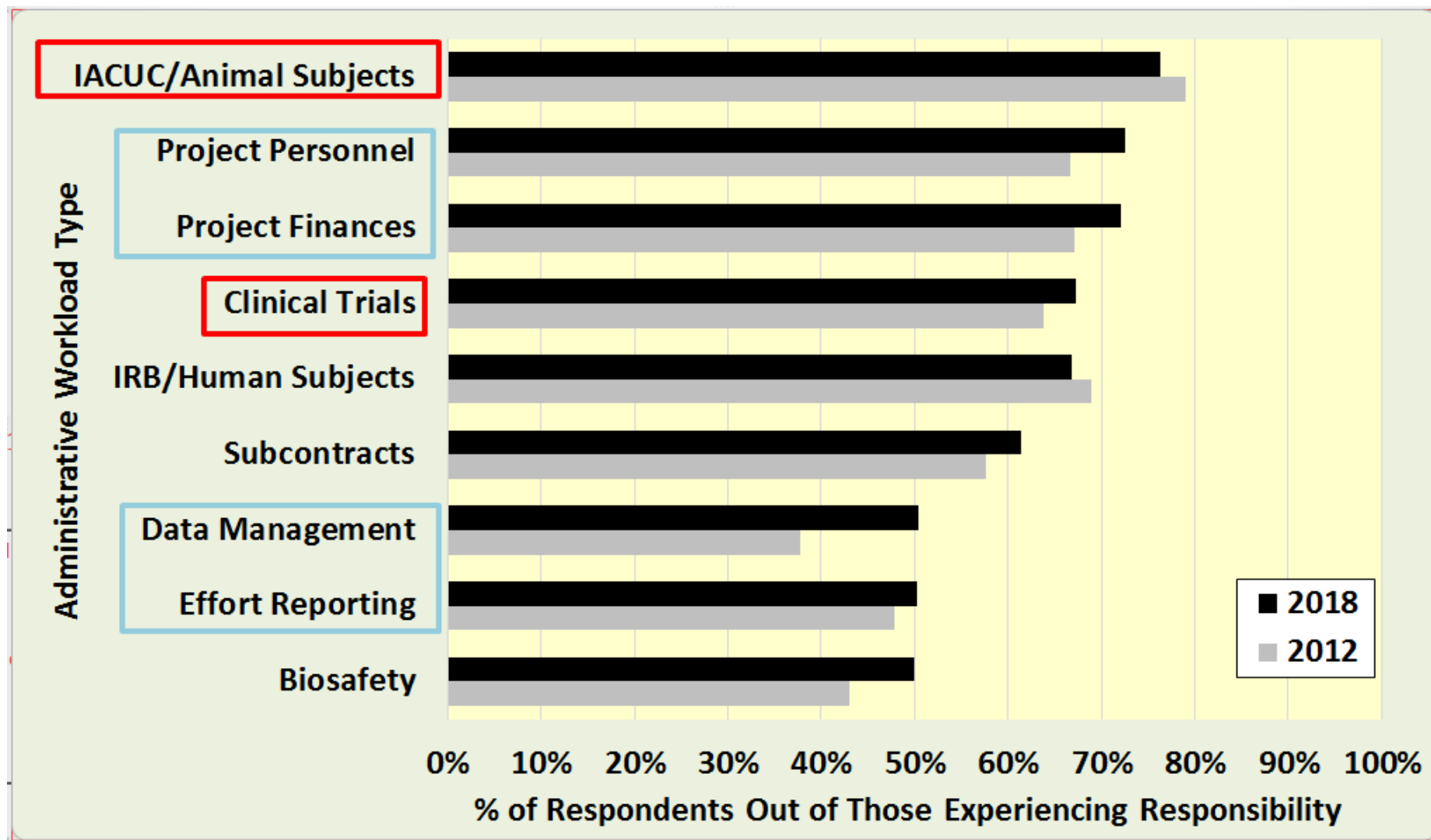
# Specific Responsibilities: Low Prevalence 2018 and 2012



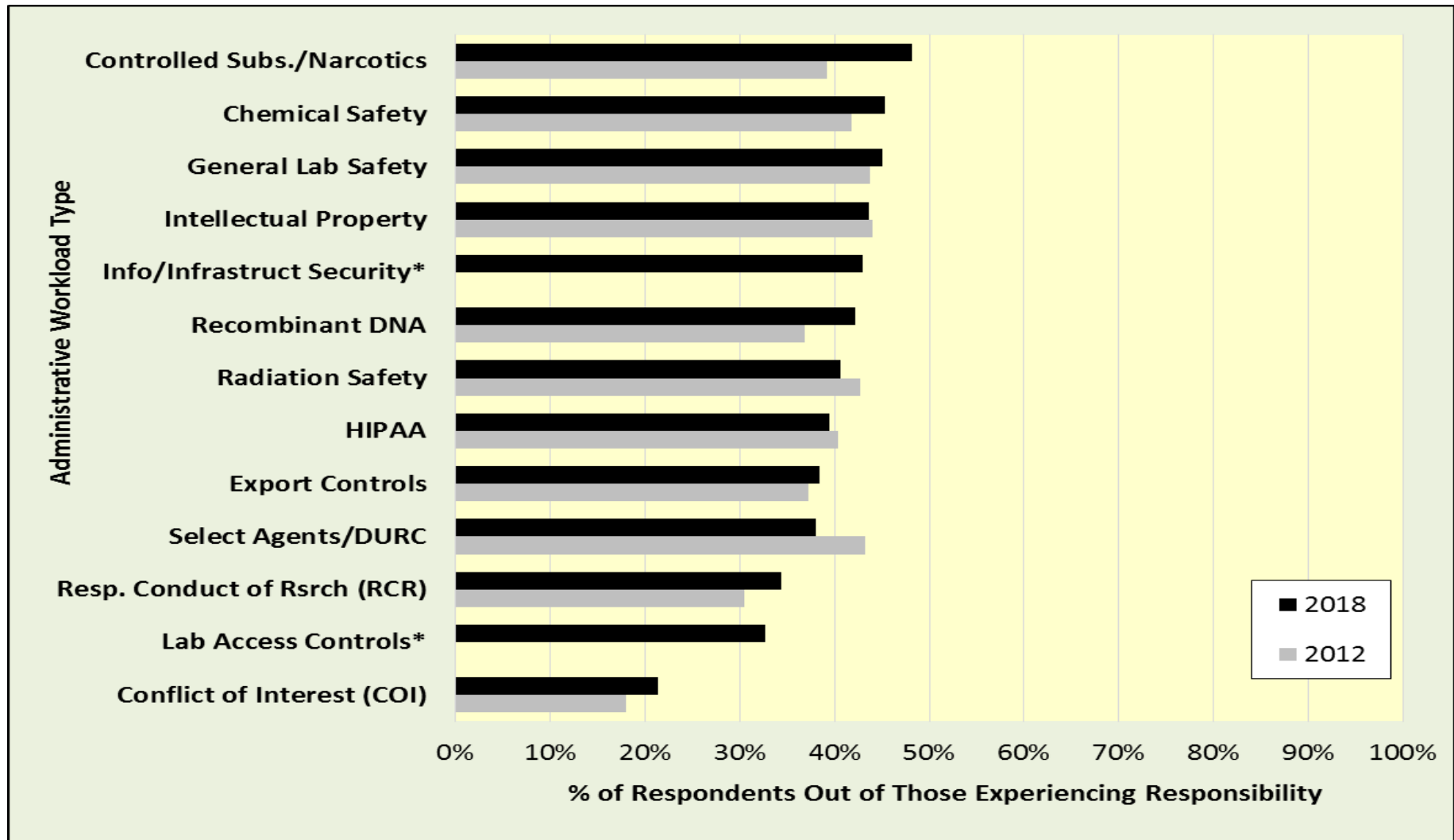
# Specific Responsibilities:



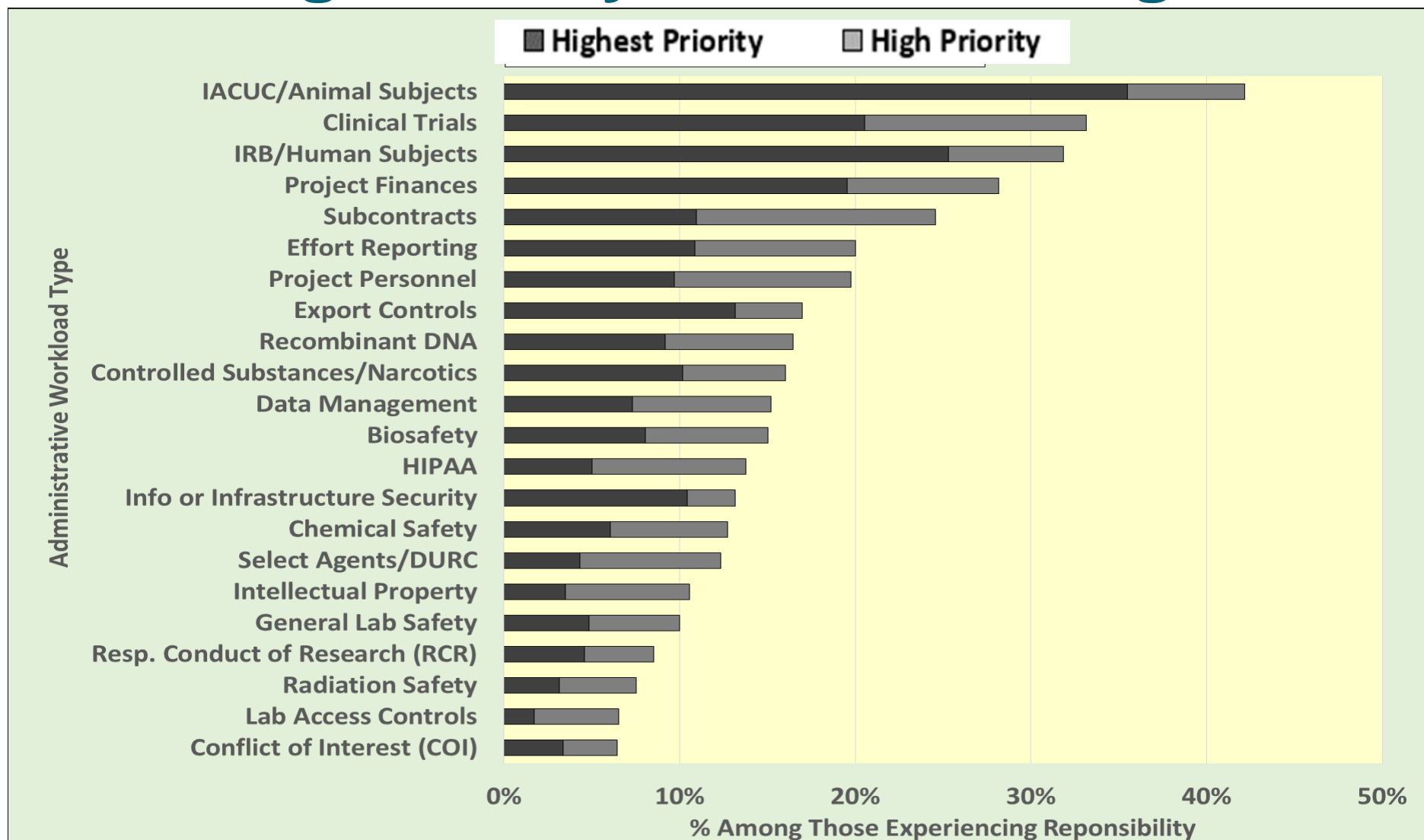
# Specific Responsibilities: Higher Intensity 2018 and 2012



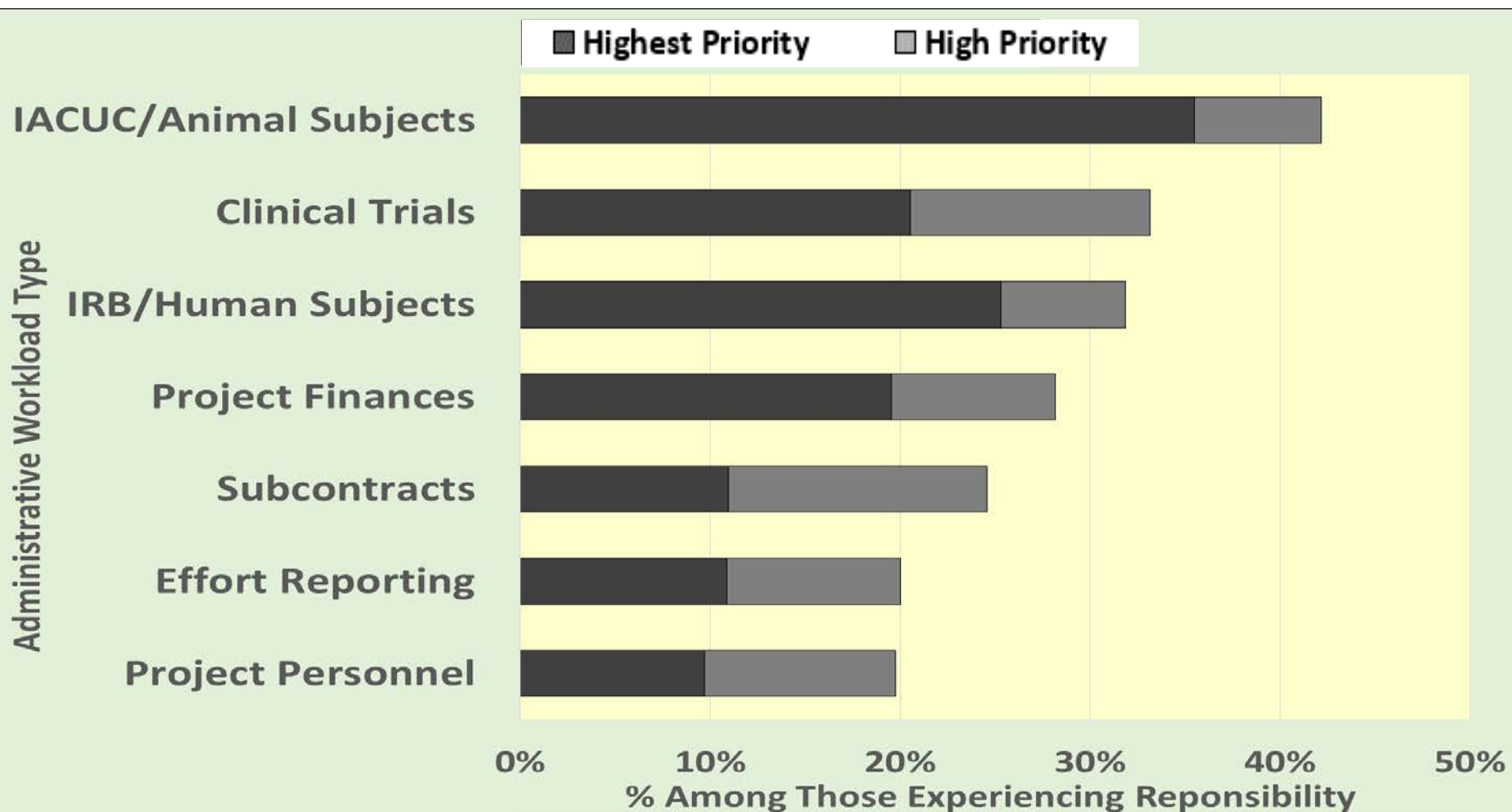
# Specific Responsibilities: Mid/Lower Intensity 2018 and 2012



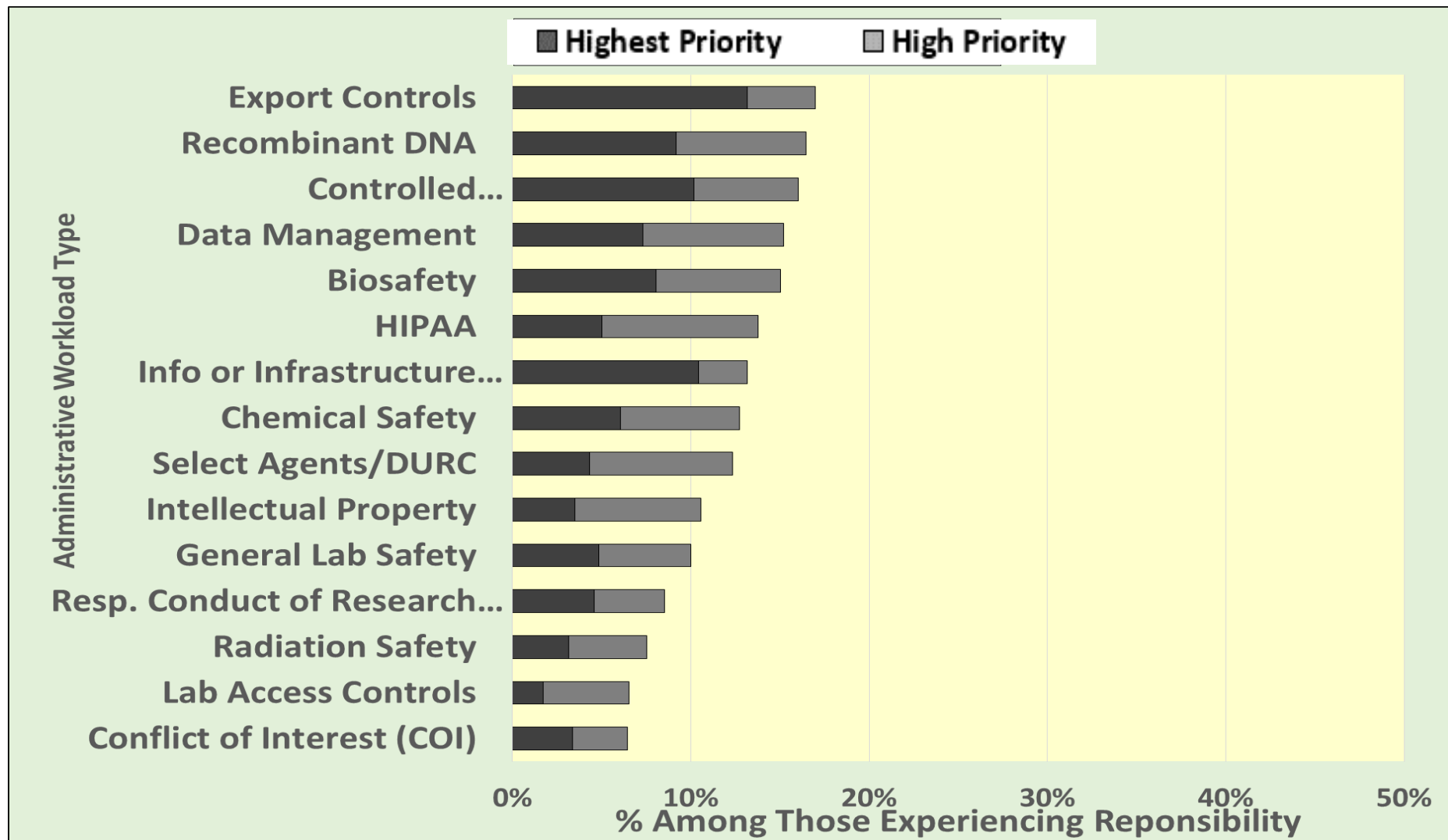
# Specific Responsibilities: High Priority Need for Change



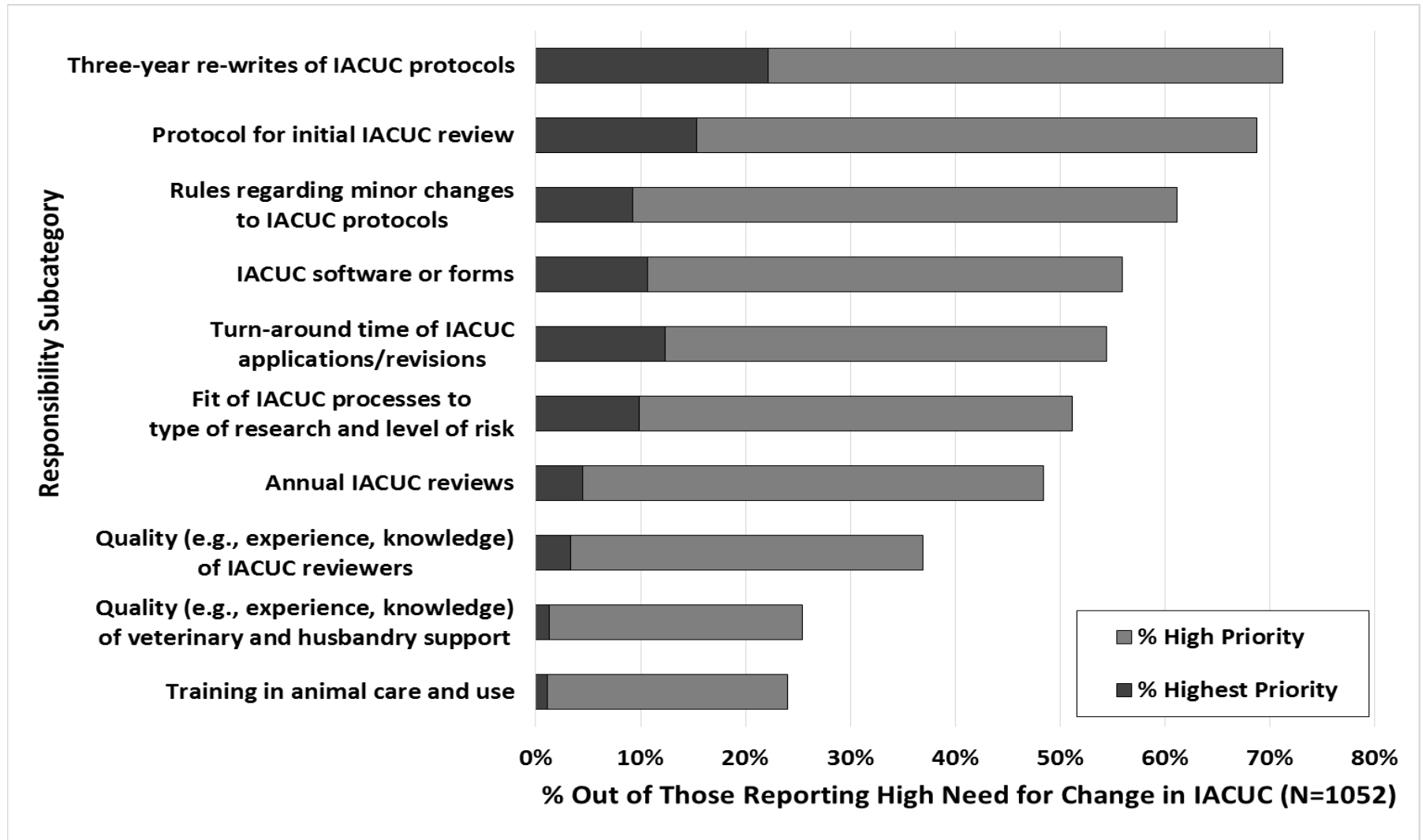
# Specific Responsibilities: Top in High Priority Need for Change



# Specific Responsibilities: Other High Priority Need for Change



# Specific Responsibilities: IACUC Drilldown



# Specific Responsibilities: IACUC Drilldown

Three-year re-writes of IACUC protocols

Protocol for initial IACUC review

Rules regarding minor changes  
to IACUC protocols

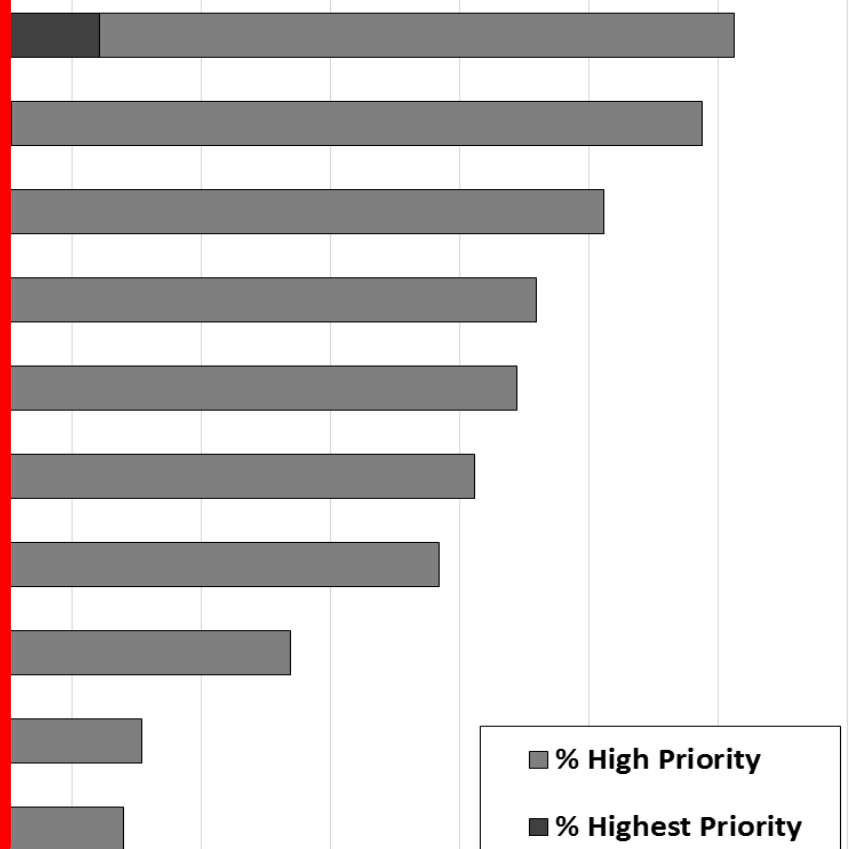
IACUC software or forms

Turn-around time of IACUC  
applications/revisions

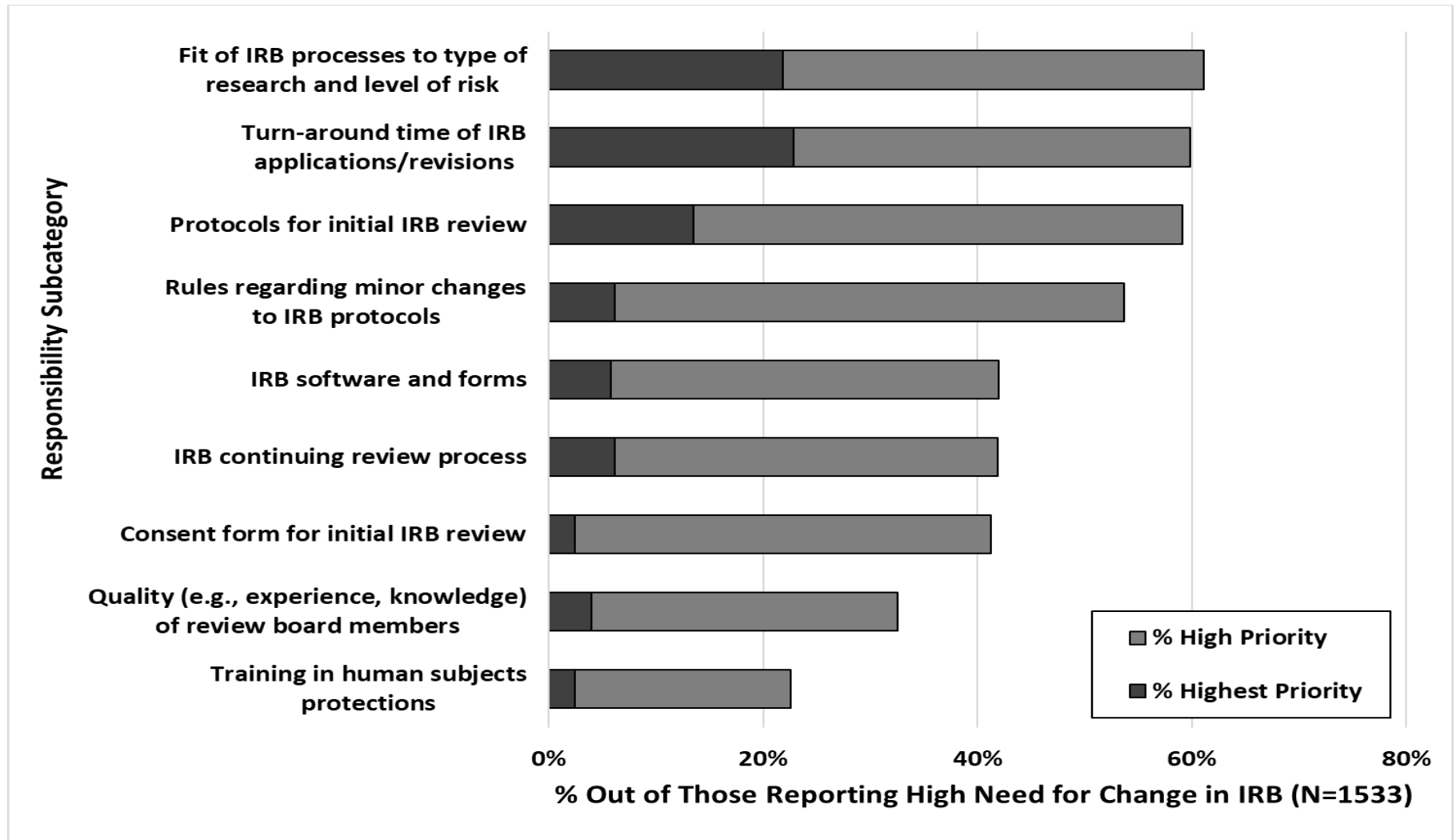
Fit of IACUC processes to  
type of research and level of risk

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80%  
% Out of Those Reporting High Need for Change in IACUC (N=1052)

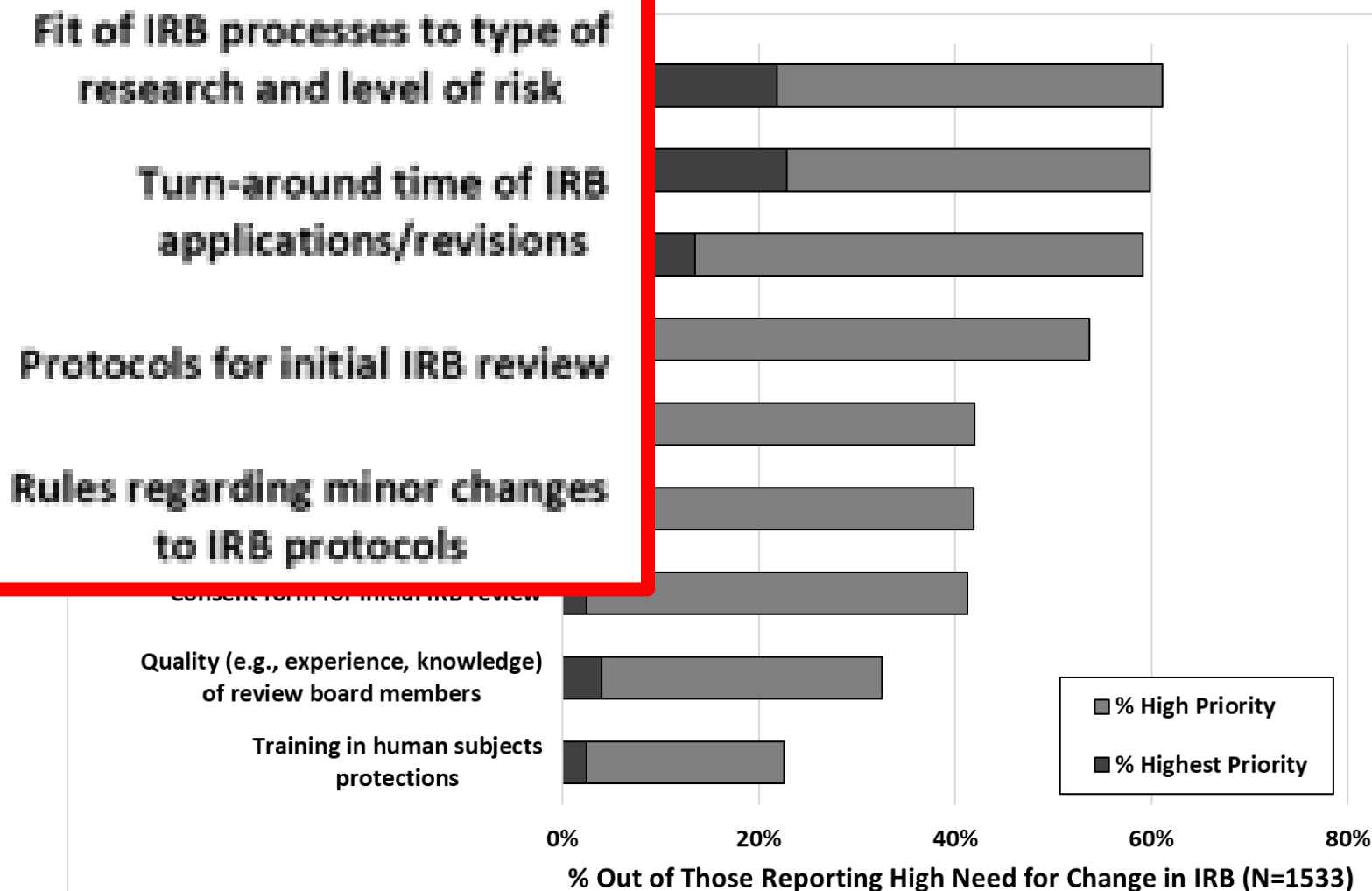
■ % High Priority  
■ % Highest Priority



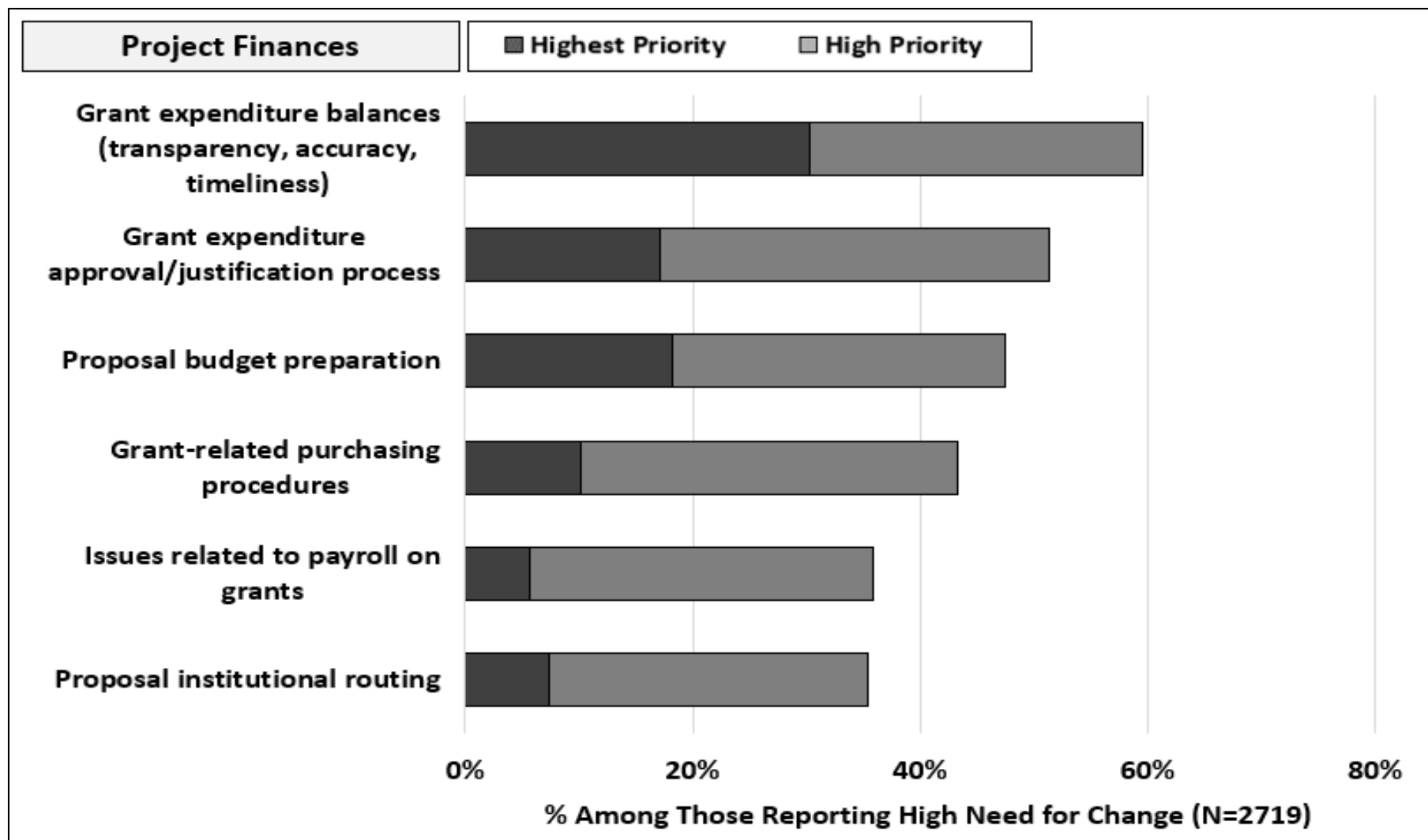
# Specific Responsibilities: IRB Drilldowns



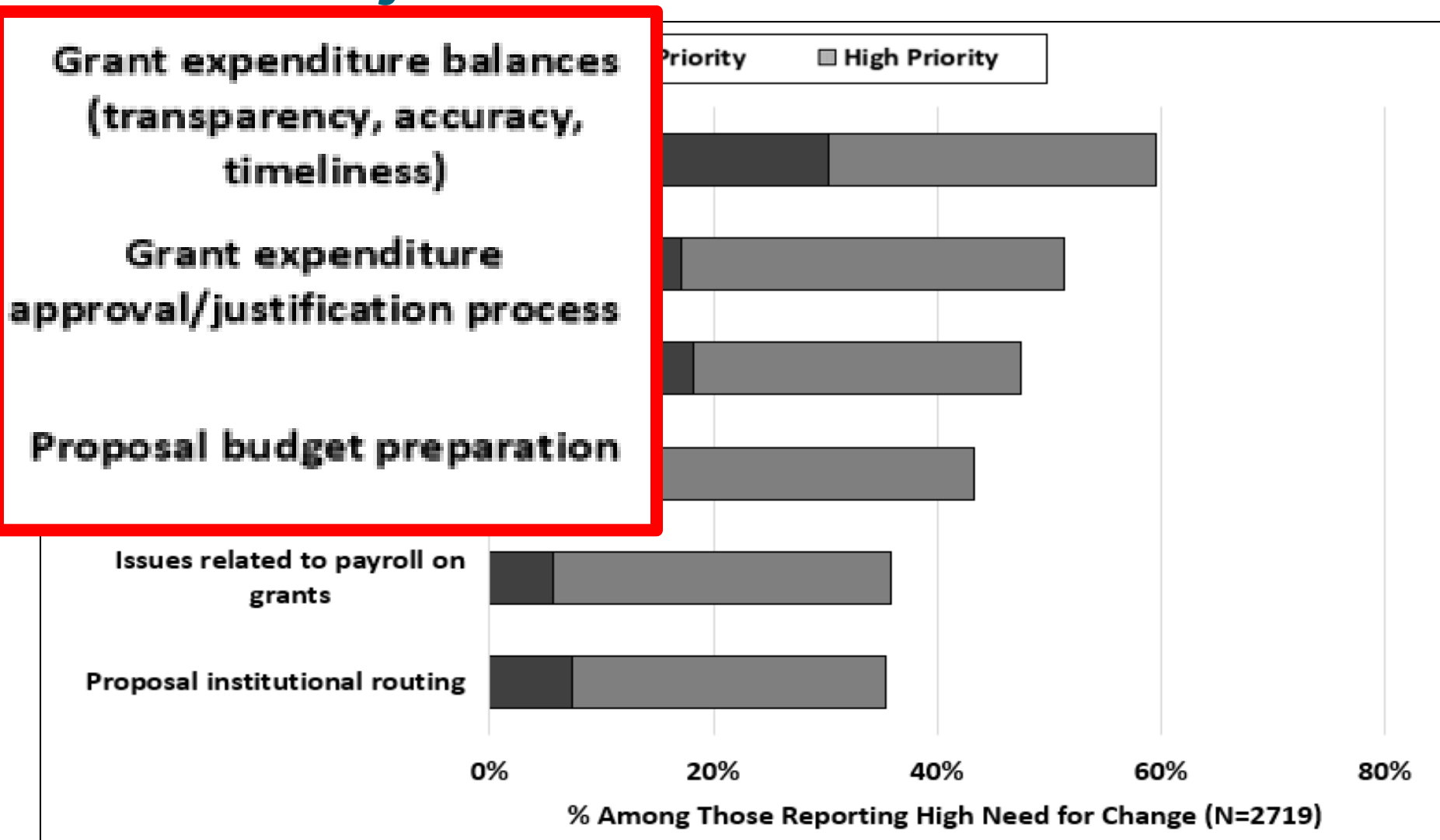
# Specific Responsibilities: IRB Drilldowns



# Specific Responsibilities: Project Finances Drilldowns



# Specific Responsibilities: Project Finances Drilldowns



# Specific Responsibilities: Subcontracts Drilldowns

**Getting subcontract agreements in place**

**Overseeing subcontract financial matters  
(e.g., budgets, expenditures, etc.)**

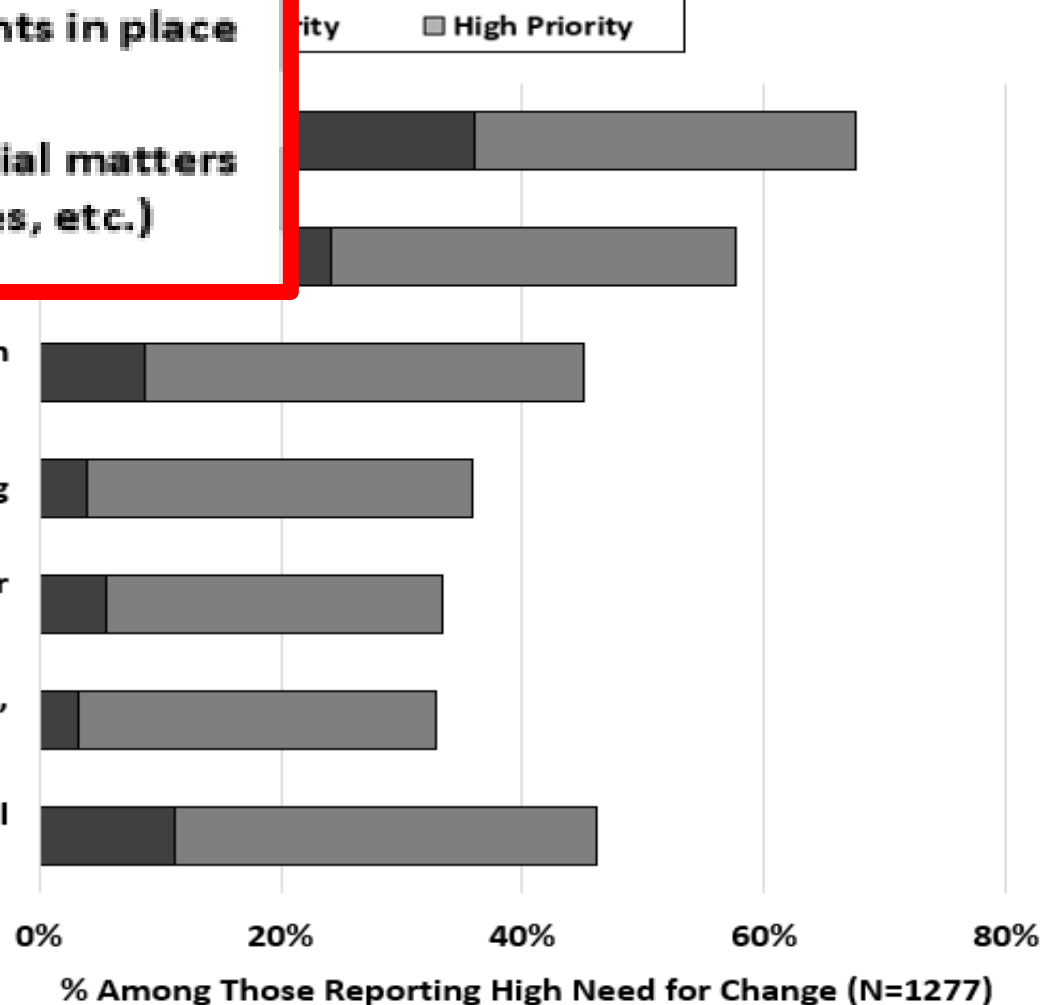
**Including subcontract documentation in  
proposals**

**Documenting subcontractor monitoring**

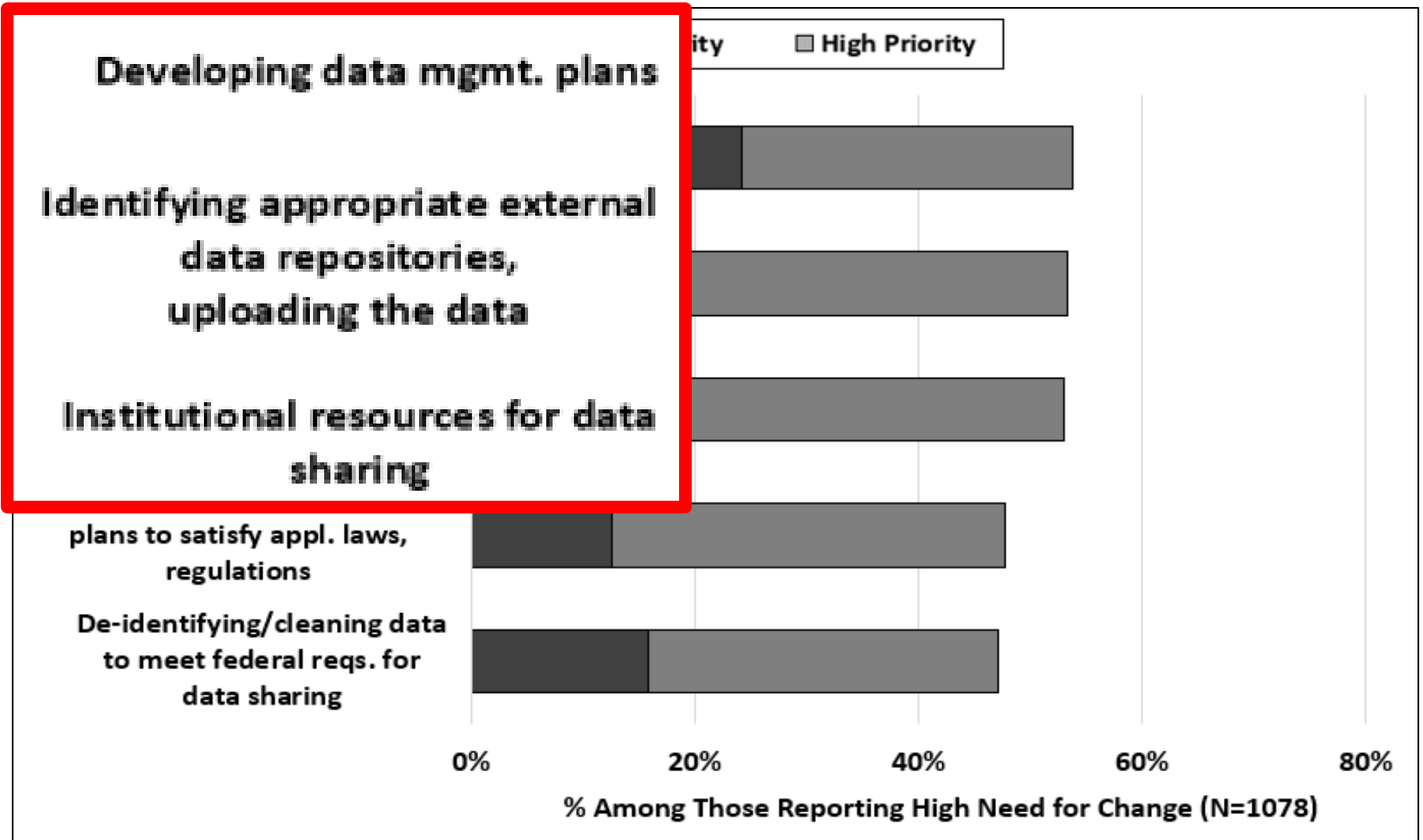
**Overseeing, reporting subcontractor  
performance**

**Overseeing subcontract compliance,  
safety/security issues**

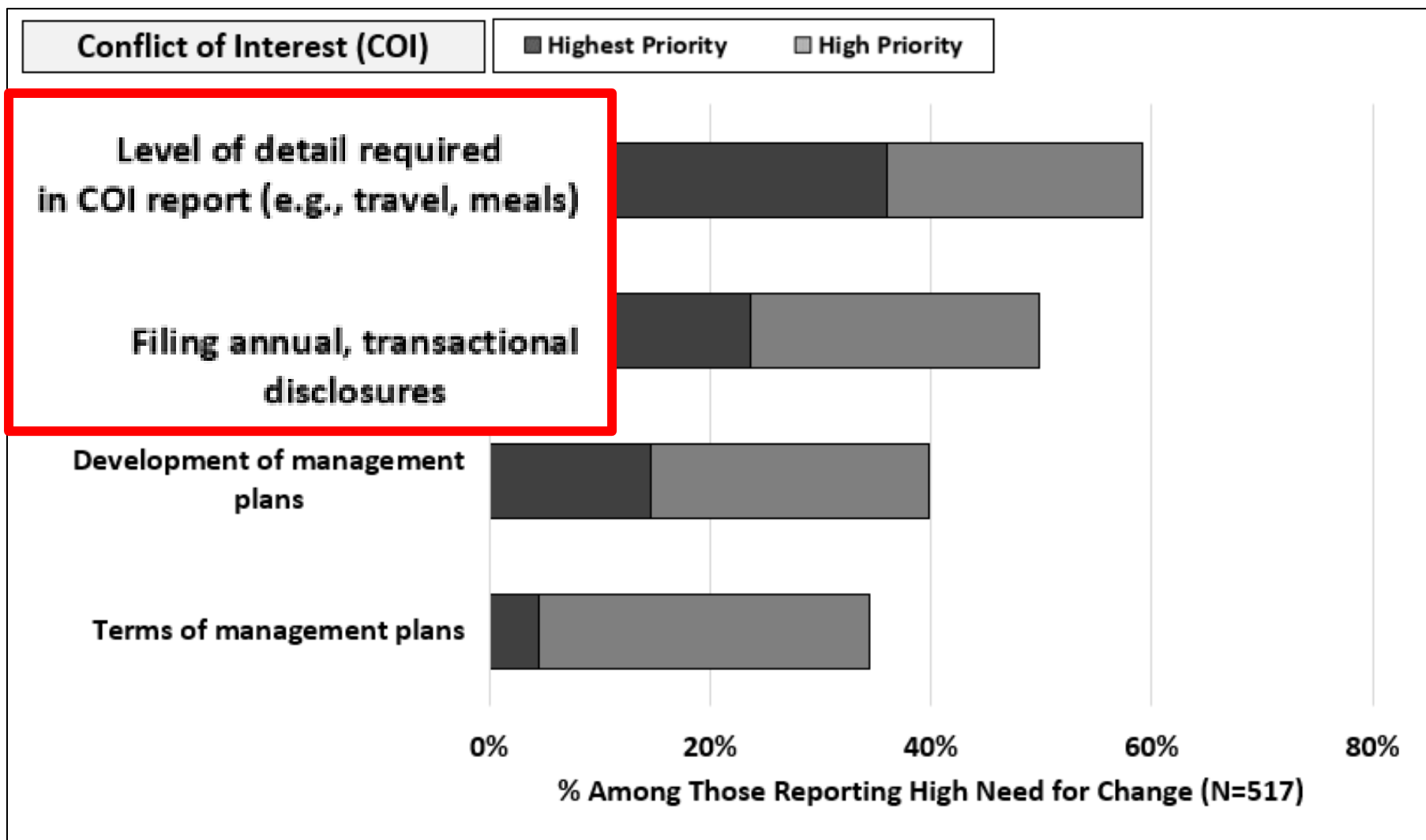
**Managing issues specific to international  
subcontracts**



# Specific Responsibilities: Data Management Drilldowns



# Specific Responsibilities: COI Drilldowns



## Specific Responsibilities: Summary

- The patterns of **prevalence** of responsibilities is similar to 2012, although **data management** and **COI** responsibilities were experienced **more often** in 2018.
- **Intensity** patterns were also similar to 2012 with exceptions. Intensity values were **higher** in 2018 for **data management, controlled substances, and biosafety**, and **lower** in 2018 for **select agents**.
- **High priority for change** generally mirrored **intensity** patterns.
- **Specific drilldown patterns** were **similar to 2012**.

# Open-ended Items

# Open-ended Feedback: Suggestion Themes

<b>Major Categories: Suggestions</b>	<b>N</b>
Agency	1192
Institution	1175
Proposal	737
Report Writing	533
Admin Personnel	423
IRB	344
Finances	274
IACUC	197
Project Personnel	132

<b>Minor Categories: Suggestions</b>	<b>N</b>
Data Management	79
Conflict of Interest (COI)	70
Safety	56
Effort Reporting	54
Export Control	22

# Open-ended Feedback (Example): **Proposal** Suggestion Themes

Theme	N
Reduce or Improve Required Proposal Components	219
Agency Guidelines, Instructions, and Requirements	194
Complaints about Proposals	173
General Burden Associated with Proposals	145
Administrative Support	105
Electronic System	68
Improved Process	46
Training/Resources	39
RFP	19
<i>Total</i>	<i>737</i>

# Open-ended Feedback (Example): Proposal Most Helpful Themes

Theme	N
Administrative Support	665
Reduced Burden Associated with Proposals	102
Complaints	98
Electronic System	42
Training/Resources	18
<i>Total</i>	825

# Open-ended Feedback (Example): Proposal Least Helpful Themes

Theme	N
Administrative Support	256
Internal Barriers	90
Internal Lead Time	45
General Burden Associated with Proposals	40
Routing of Proposals	35
Agency/Federal Submission Issues	32
<i>Total</i>	<i>441</i>

## Open-ended Feedback: Summary

- Respondents offered **thousands of open-ended comments** aimed at both **agencies** and **institutions**.
- **Proposals** and **Report Writing** were the topics of more open-ended **suggestions** than any of the individual administrative responsibilities.
- The **availability and quality of administrative support** is one of the most prevalent themes in all three sets of open-ended feedback.
- Open-ended feedback on **most and least helpful institutional practices** can be summarized on an **individualized** institution basis.

# What's in a Number?

# How Much Requirement-related Workload on Federally-Funded Research Is Reasonable?

**Time Taken From Active Research:**

**~~44.3%~~**

# How Much Requirement-related Workload on Federally-Funded Research Is Reasonable?

**Time Taken From Active Research:**

**33%?**

**30%?**

**25%?**

~~**44.3%**~~

**Maybe a different percentage for different cases?**

# **How Much Requirement-Related Workload on Federally-Funded Research Is Reasonable?**

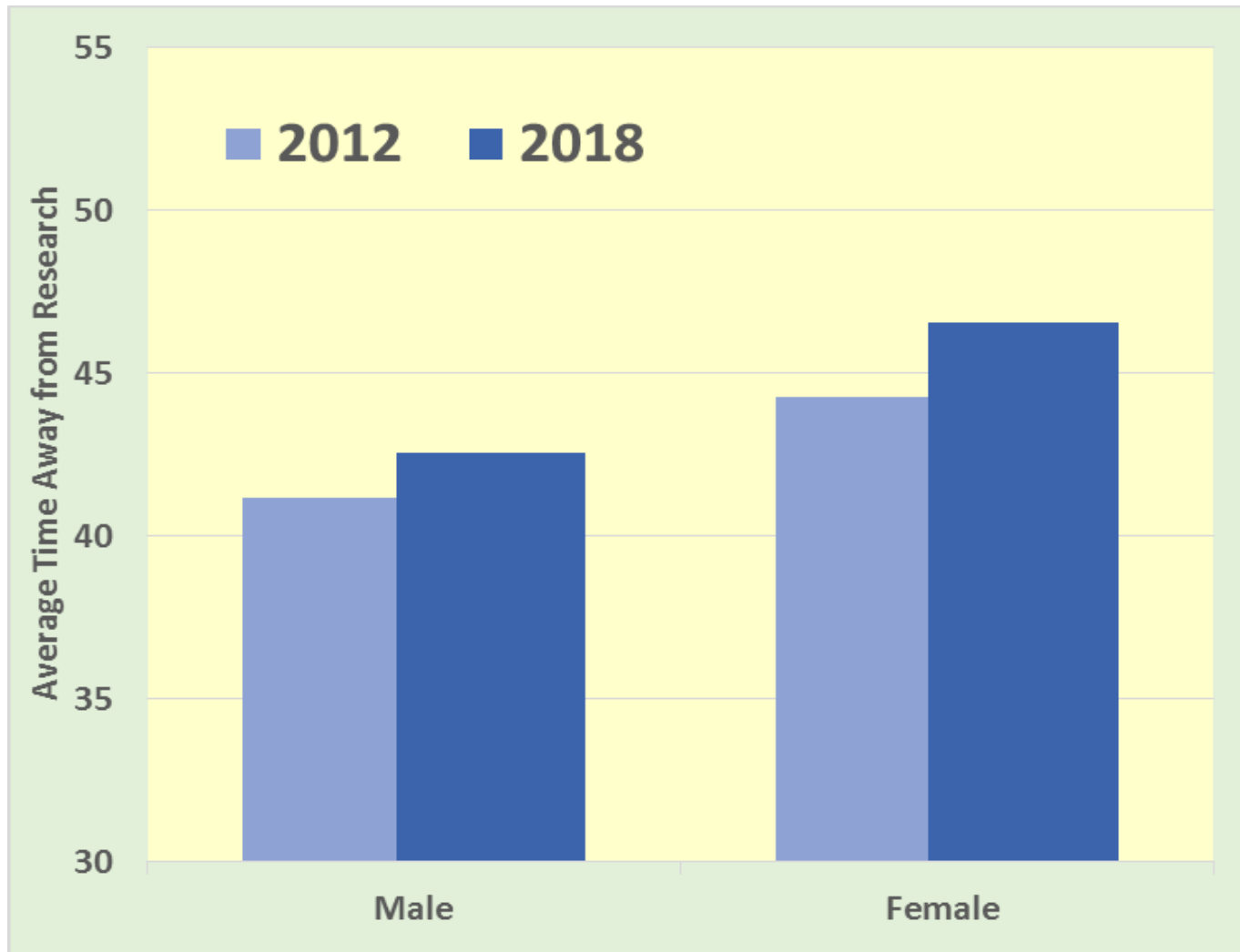
**The lowest based on what can be gleaned from the survey:**

**~30% time away from  
active research**

# How to Have the Lowest Workload:

- **Basic Research**
- **Physics or Math**
- **DOE, NASA or NSF (w/ only 1 funding agency)**
- **Neither IRB nor IACUC**
- **One project with <\$100K Annual Expenditures**
- **Private University or Health Research Institute**
- **VHR University \$900M Annual Expenditures**
- **White and Male**
- **Full Professor with no administrative role**

# Time Taken Away: Demographic Characteristics



# How to Have the Lowest Workload?

**Chasing an administrative workload number can be troublesome.**

**The primary value of these data may be in the details...thoughtfully evaluating where and how we can reduce the workload pushing the numbers.**

**Thank goodness FDP is here to provide a venue to make that possible.**



**FDP**  
Federal  
Demonstration  
Partnership

**Thank you.**



This research was made possible by funding from the FDP Foundation. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this presentation are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the view of the FDP or related organizations.

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