

From ideas to alignment

What Illinois apprenticeship partners told us

COMPRESSION PLANNING / 2026 RESULTS

3 QUESTIONS · 127 SUBMISSIONS

WHAT THE ROOM REVEALED

01 Friction is real

Clearer information, less administrative work and stronger employer engagement

02 Alignment is possible

Partner coordination dominated the collaboration ideas

03 Action needs focus

Different partners emphasized funding, funding, processes, pathways and support support

A shared willingness to collaborate.

But not one universal answer about what Illinois should fix first.

41%

of collaboration ideas call for stronger
stronger partner coordination

47 of 115 responses to Question 2

THE ONE-YEAR PRIORITIES

19%

Awareness & navigation

21 of 110

17%

Funding & incentives

19 of 110

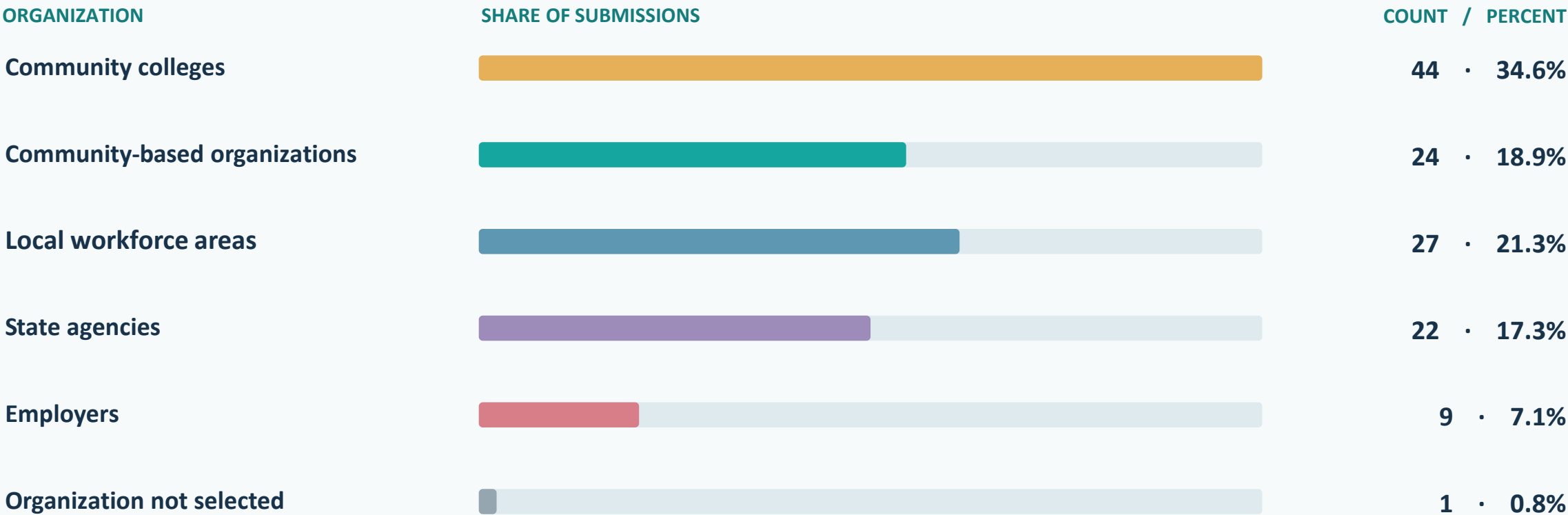
11%

Coordination or simpler process

12 each of 110

Five partner perspectives.

127 Session 3 submissions, with one organization not selected.



Theme charts omit a few empty or placeholder answers; participation includes all submissions.

The conversation changed with the question.

Each question pointed to a different kind of problem or solution.

01 WHAT MAKES IT HARD?

Friction

Awareness & navigation	21
Simpler processes	20
Employer engagement	19

Information, administration and employer employer buy-in compete as barriers.

02 WHERE CAN WE WORK BETTER?

Connection

Partner coordination	47
Employer engagement	11
Youth & pathways	10

Collaboration is the standout opportunity—opportunity—far ahead of other ideas.

03 WHAT SHOULD CHANGE IN A YEAR?

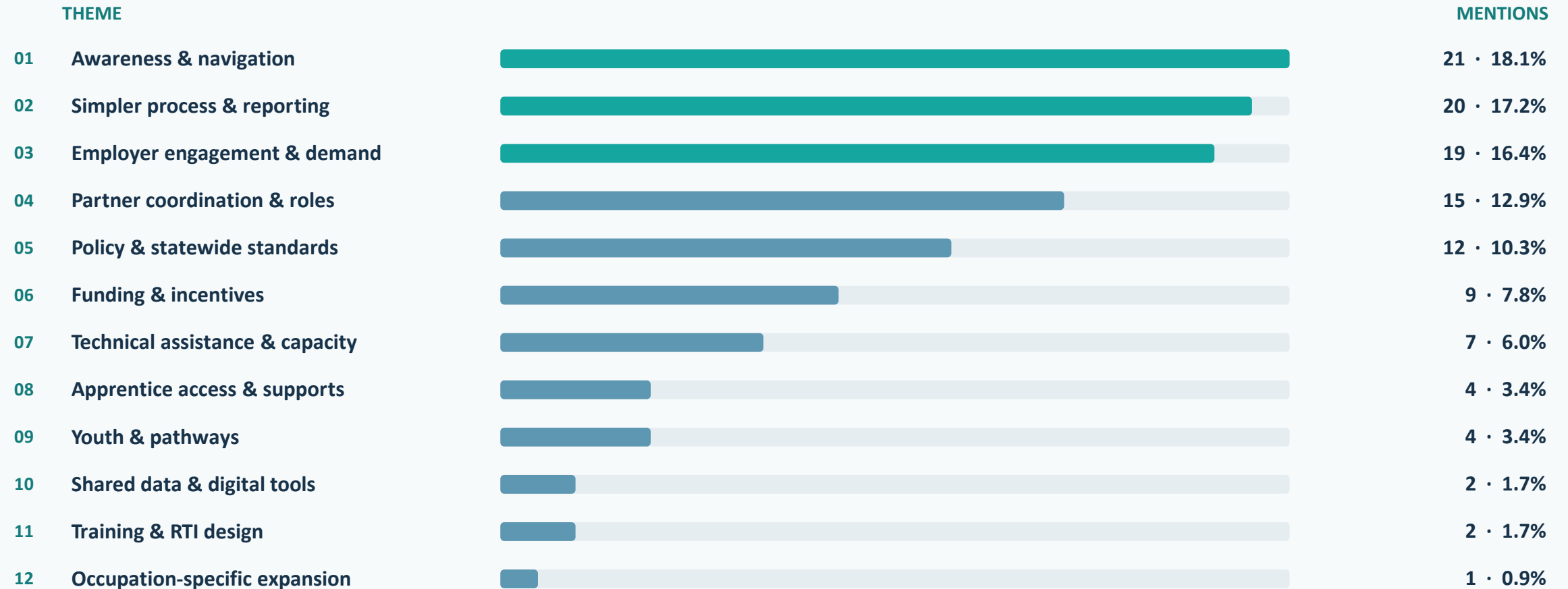
Execution

Awareness & navigation	21
Funding & incentives	19
Coordination / process	12

Coordination and process tie at 12 each, each, behind awareness and funding.

What is making apprenticeship harder?

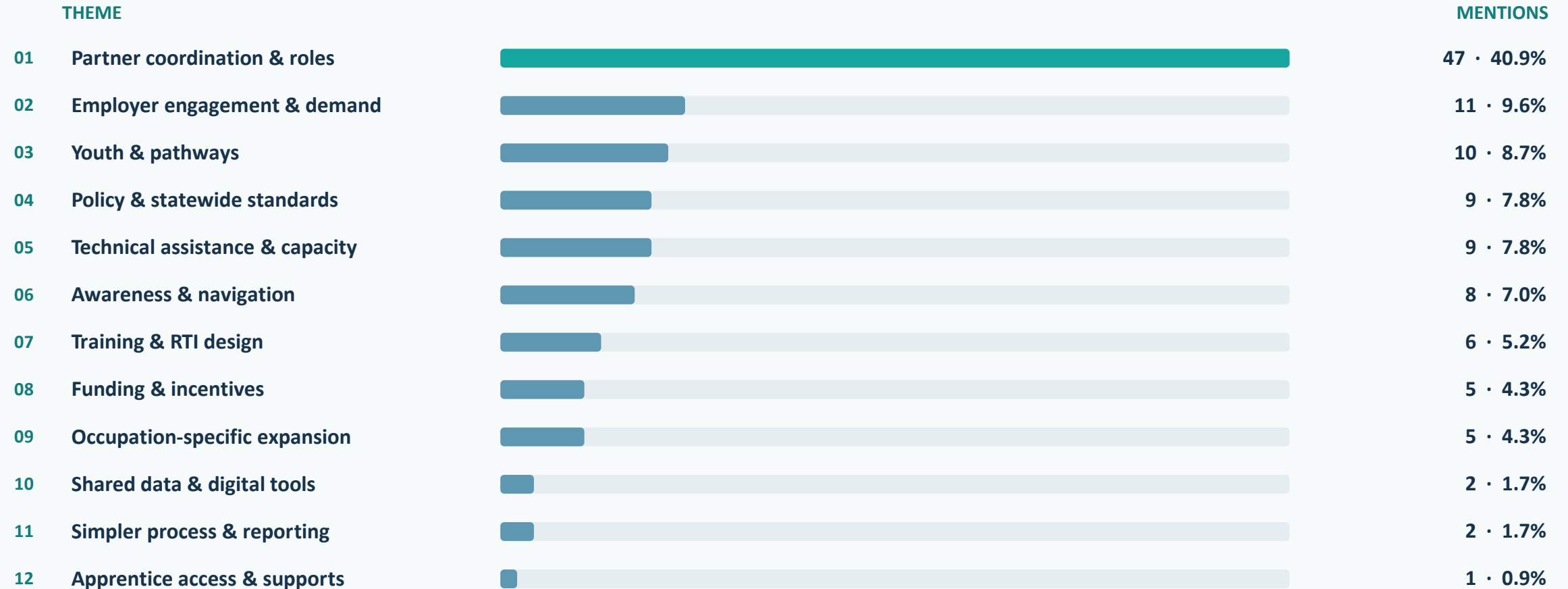
No single obstacle dominates. The top three are separated by just two replies.



n = 116 classifiable barriers; three additional short answers could not be confidently categorized.

The clearest idea is to work together.

47 of 115 collaboration ideas point to partner coordination and clearer shared roles.



n = 115 opportunity responses. "Collaboration" includes regional networks, shared resources, aligned roles and communication.

What should Illinois move on first?

Awareness and funding lead, followed by coordination, process and consistent rules.



n = 110 classifiable priorities; a few blank or placeholder entries are not themed.

Same room. Different vantage points.

Leading within-group theme for each question. Percentages are of that group's coded answers.

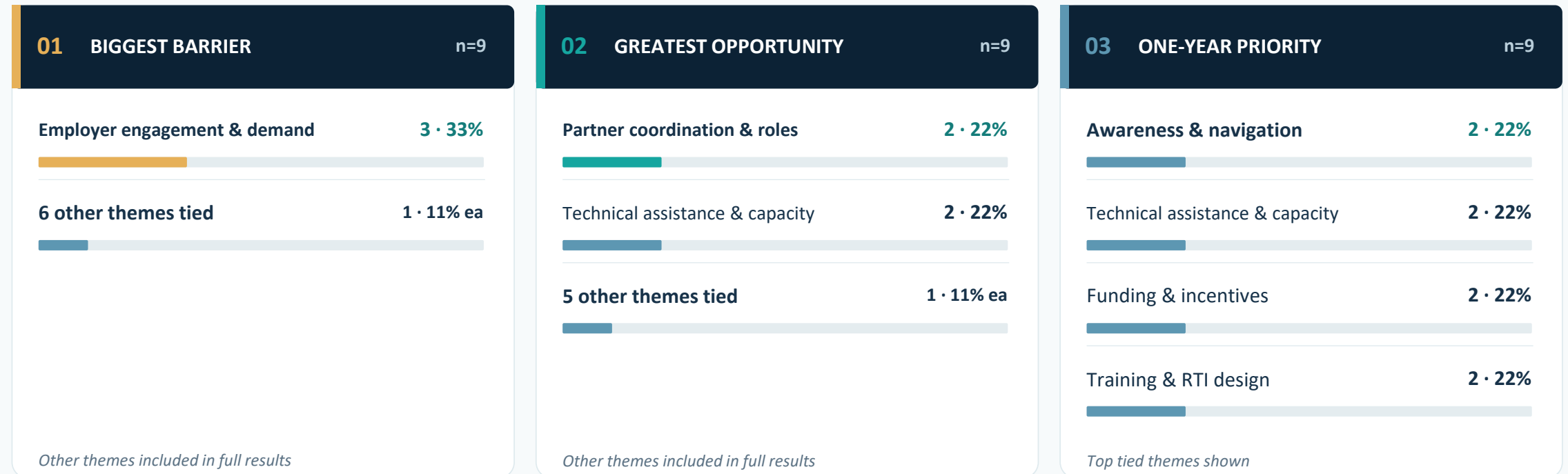
PARTNER	MOST-MENTIONED BARRIER	GREATEST OPPORTUNITY	ONE-YEAR PRIORITY
Community colleges	Awareness / rules · 18% each	Coordination · 45%	Funding · 28%
Local workforce areas	Simpler process · 43%	Coordination · 32%	Simpler process · 29%
Community-based orgs	Employer engagement · 35%	Coordination · 48%	Awareness / sectors · 25% each
State agencies	Awareness · 35%	Coordination · 43%	Employers / standards · 15% each
Employers	Employer engagement · 33%	Coordination / TA · 22% each	Four themes tied · 22% each

READ THIS AS DIRECTIONAL: group sizes vary and employer responses are few (n = 9).

Within-group percentages use separate coded-response bases for each question; ties are shown.

Employers

9 submissions · 9 barrier answers · 9 opportunity answers · 9 priority answers



WHAT STANDS OUT

Management buy-in leads the barriers; one-year priorities are split four split four ways (n = 9).

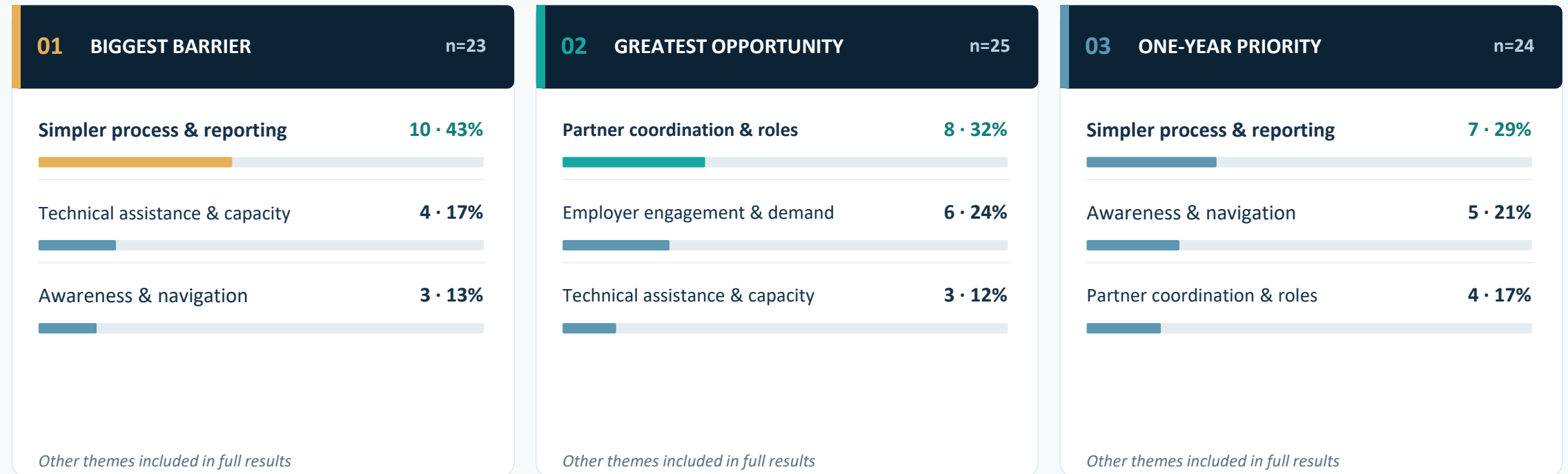
IN THEIR OWN WORDS / BARRIER

“Supervisor buy in (middle management in our case)”

Each percentage uses the coded-answer base for that question; themes count once per answer.

Local workforce areas

27 submissions · 23 barrier answers · 25 opportunity answers · 24 priority answers



WHAT STANDS OUT

Administrative friction is both the biggest barrier and the leading one-year fix.

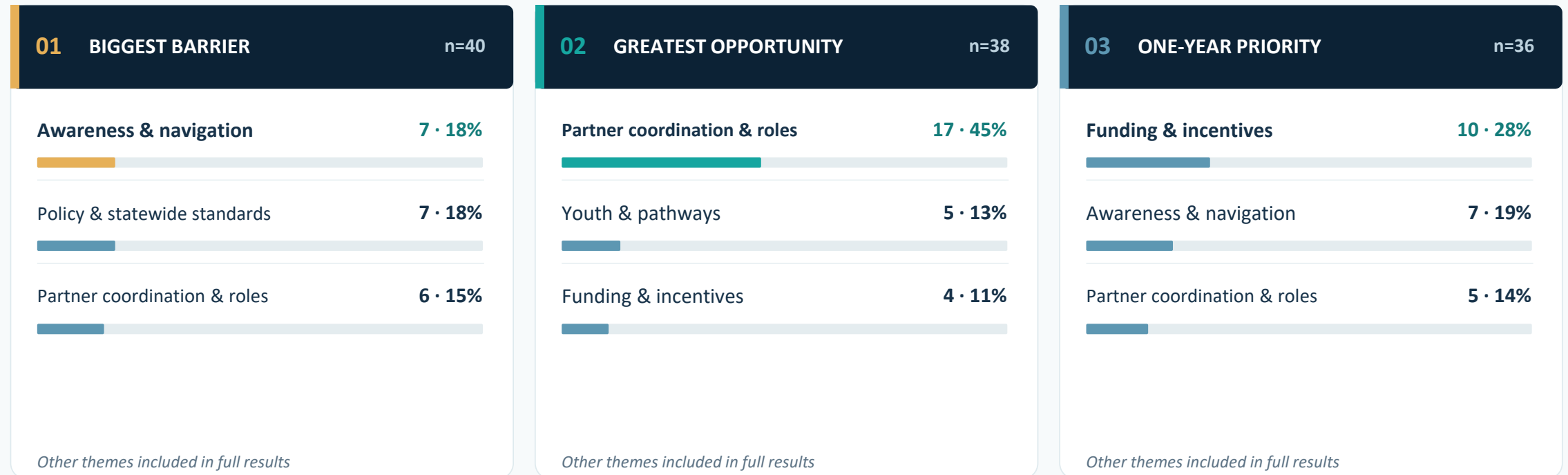
IN THEIR OWN WORDS / ONE-YEAR PRIORITY

“Less paperwork for all of us”

Each percentage uses the coded-answer base for that question; themes count once per answer.

Community colleges

44 submissions · 40 barrier answers · 38 opportunity answers · 36 priority answers



WHAT STANDS OUT

Funding leads the one-year requests; coordination is the clearest opportunity.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS / OPPORTUNITY

“Clear roles and opportunities to connect and share ideas and and successes.”

Each percentage uses the coded-answer base for that question; themes count once per answer.

Community-based organizations

24 submissions · 23 barrier answers · 21 opportunity answers · 20 priority answers



WHAT STANDS OUT

Employer buy-in is the main barrier; awareness and sector expansion tie as priorities.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS / BARRIER

“Employer investment in a long term talent strategy”

Each percentage uses the coded-answer base for that question; themes count once per answer.

State agencies

22 submissions · 20 barrier answers · 21 opportunity answers · 20 priority answers



WHAT STANDS OUT
A clearer front door leads the barriers; one-year priorities are spread across many needs.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS / BARRIER
“No single front door”

Each percentage uses the coded-answer base for that question; themes count once per answer.

What rises to the top inside each group?

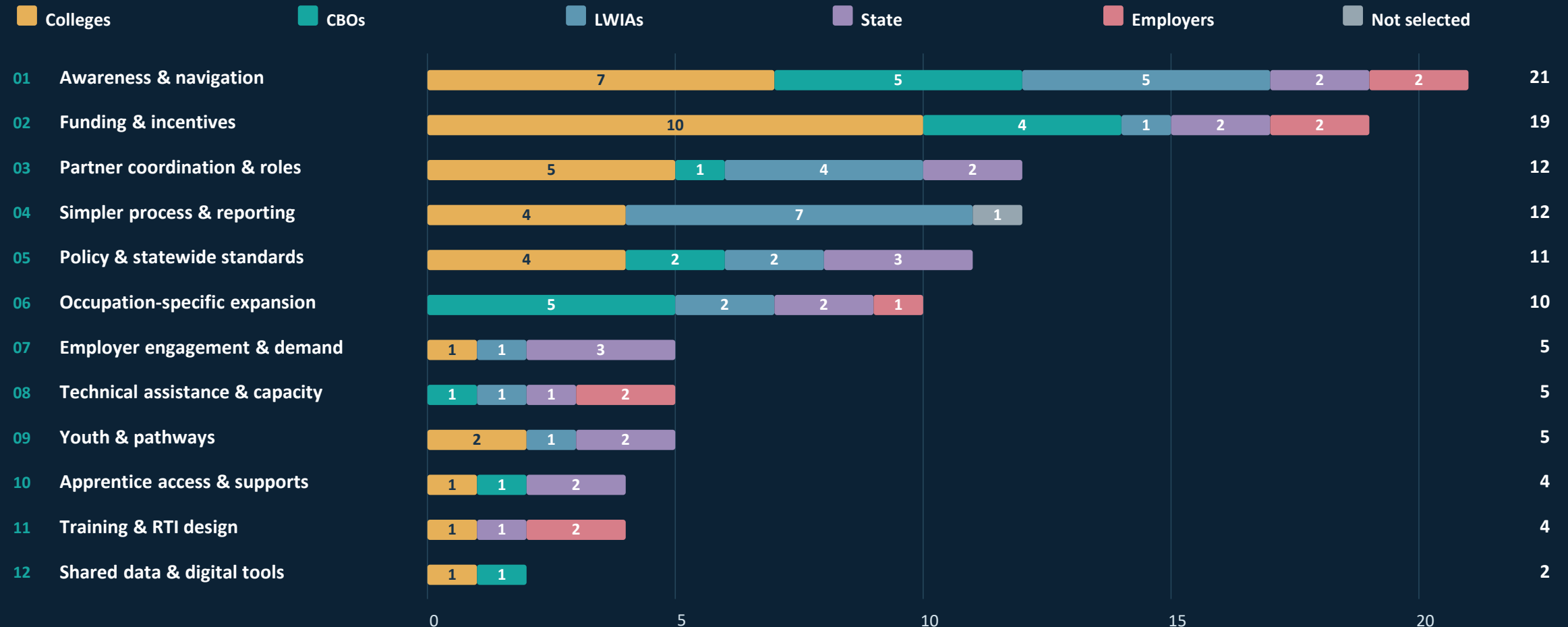
Each cell shows the number of responses and share of that organization's coded priorities.

THEME	COMMUNITY COLLEGE n = 36	COMMUNITY ORGS / CBO n = 20	LOCAL WORKFORCE AREAS n = 24	STATE AGENCIES n = 20	EMPLOYERS n = 9
Awareness & navigation	7 19%	5 25%	5 21%	2 10%	2 22%
Funding & incentives	10 28%	4 20%	1 4%	2 10%	2 22%
Partner coordination & roles	5 14%	1 5%	4 17%	2 10%	—
Simpler process & reporting	4 11%	—	7 29%	—	—
Policy & statewide standards	4 11%	2 10%	2 8%	3 15%	—
Occupation-specific expansion	—	5 25%	2 8%	2 10%	1 11%
Employer engagement & demand	1 3%	—	1 4%	3 15%	—
Technical assistance & capacity	—	1 5%	1 4%	1 5%	2 22%
Youth & pathways	2 6%	—	1 4%	2 10%	—
Apprentice access & supports	1 3%	1 5%	—	2 10%	—
Training & RTI design	1 3%	—	—	1 5%	2 22%
Shared data & digital tools	1 3%	1 5%	—	—	—

Darker shading = higher share within that organization. A dash means no responses assigned to that theme.

Who contributed to each one-year theme?

Stacked bars show raw counts. Use the previous slide for comparisons of within-group priority.



n = 110 coded priorities; one response with no selected organization is shown in gray.

Some priorities have a statewide audience.

A theme appearing in several organizations suggests broad relevance—not agreement on an exact solution.

SHARED ACROSS PARTNER TYPES



A MORE CONCENTRATED NEED

Process & reporting

11 of 12

one-year simplification priorities
priorities came from LWIAs (7) and
and colleges (4).

A common backbone. Different trouble spots.

Design the statewide experience together, then solve the constraints where they actually occur.

COMMON ECOSYSTEM BACKBONE

1 One clear entry point and vocabulary

2 Named roles and regional referral paths

3 Transparent support, funding and measures

SHARED INFRASTRUCTURE

LWIAS

Make reporting workable

43% cited process and reporting as a barrier. Prioritize IL WorkNet, RAPIDS and approvals.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Stabilize program financing

28% chose funding as the one-year priority. RTI and staffing support need continuity.

CBOS / SECTOR PARTNERS

Resolve occupation-level barriers

ECE recognition, tree-care and other sectors need tailored pathways and standards.

EMPLOYERS

Make the employer on-ramp real

With just nine replies, support, RTI quality, quality, funding and awareness tie as priorities.

Three useful questions for November.

Move from a pattern in the room to a design decision—with evidence and responsible partners.

01

COMMON FRONT DOOR

**Can people find and start it?
it?**

Agree on a simple employer/apprentice route in, common terms, and where referrals should land.

02

PROCESS + RESPONSIBILITY

**Can partners run it without
rework?**

Map handoffs, duplicate reporting and funding/approval friction. Choose what can be standardized.

03

FINANCE + FLEXIBLE DELIVERY

**Can it scale by occupation and
place?**

Test stable resource models, regional capacity and sector-specific recognition or RTI needs.

NEXT STEP · Confirm shared priorities, clarify what is local or sector-specific, then identify accountable leads.

Read the figures with confidence—and care.

Transparent denominators, a consistent coding approach, and selected unedited respondent language.

HOW WE SUMMARIZED

QUESTION BASES	Barriers 116 · Opportunities 115 · Priorities 110 110
CODING	One primary theme per answer across 12 12 consistent strategy areas.
INTERPRETATION	Percentages are descriptive, not a representative statewide poll.
PARTICIPATION	127 records, including entries without an an answer to every question.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“No single front door”

STATE AGENCY / BARRIER

“Less paperwork for all of us”

LWIA / ONE-YEAR PRIORITY

**“No coherent state incentive/funding strategy”
strategy”**

COMMUNITY COLLEGE / BARRIER

**“Beside employer sites that offer them, how do workers find
workers find available openings?”**

EMPLOYER / ONE-YEAR PRIORITY

Quotations excerpted from participant responses; theme assignments require interpretation.

Twelve themes across all three questions.

Counts and the percentage of classifiable answers per question.

THEME	BIGGEST BARRIER	GREATEST OPPORTUNITY	ONE-YEAR PRIORITY
Awareness & navigation	21 · 18.1%	8 · 7.0%	21 · 19.1%
Funding & incentives	9 · 7.8%	5 · 4.3%	19 · 17.3%
Partner coordination & roles	15 · 12.9%	47 · 40.9%	12 · 10.9%
Simpler process & reporting	20 · 17.2%	2 · 1.7%	12 · 10.9%
Policy & statewide standards	12 · 10.3%	9 · 7.8%	11 · 10.0%
Occupation-specific expansion	1 · 0.9%	5 · 4.3%	10 · 9.1%
Employer engagement & demand	19 · 16.4%	11 · 9.6%	5 · 4.5%
Technical assistance & capacity	7 · 6.0%	9 · 7.8%	5 · 4.5%
Youth & pathways	4 · 3.4%	10 · 8.7%	5 · 4.5%
Apprentice access & supports	4 · 3.4%	1 · 0.9%	4 · 3.6%
Training & RTI design	2 · 1.7%	6 · 5.2%	4 · 3.6%
Shared data & digital tools	2 · 1.7%	2 · 1.7%	2 · 1.8%

Totals: n = 116 barriers, 115 opportunities and 110 priorities. Each answer counted once within its question.

The work continues!

**Join us for the next stage of Apprenticeship Ecosystem
Compression Planning on Tuesday Nov. 10th from 12-1pm
Register now at the link below!**

