



CALIFORNIA FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

OPERATIONS

Research Brief:

Succession Planning for the Next Generation of California
Fire Service Operations Chiefs

May 15th, 2019

Study Background

- Study born from CalChiefs annual conference
Ops Section breakout
- Need data to help guide project

Study Aims

- Identify the readiness and preparedness levels of newly promoted California Fire Chief Officers
- Identify specific areas in need of improvement

Methods

- Self-administered web-based survey
- CalChiefs email distribution list used to identify sampling frame
- Data Collected from Dec 2018 – Jan 2019

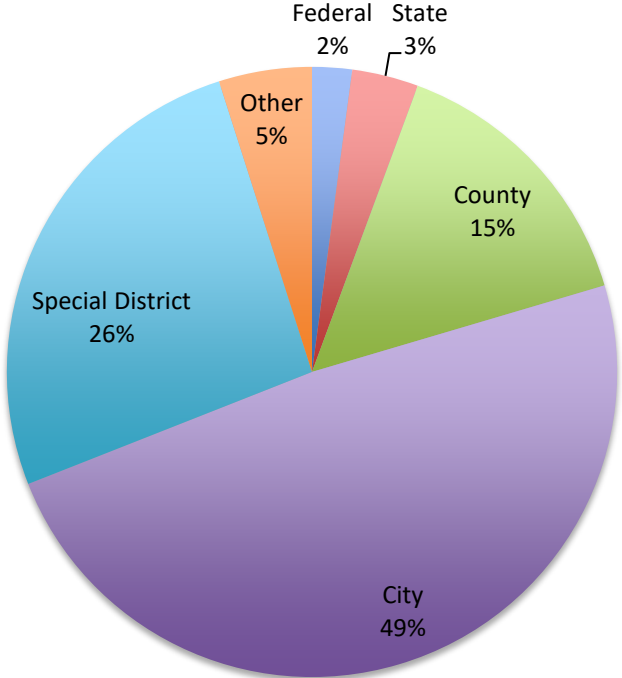
The Survey

- 35 questions
- Open & closed ended questions
- < 10 minutes to take

The Sample: Who Responded

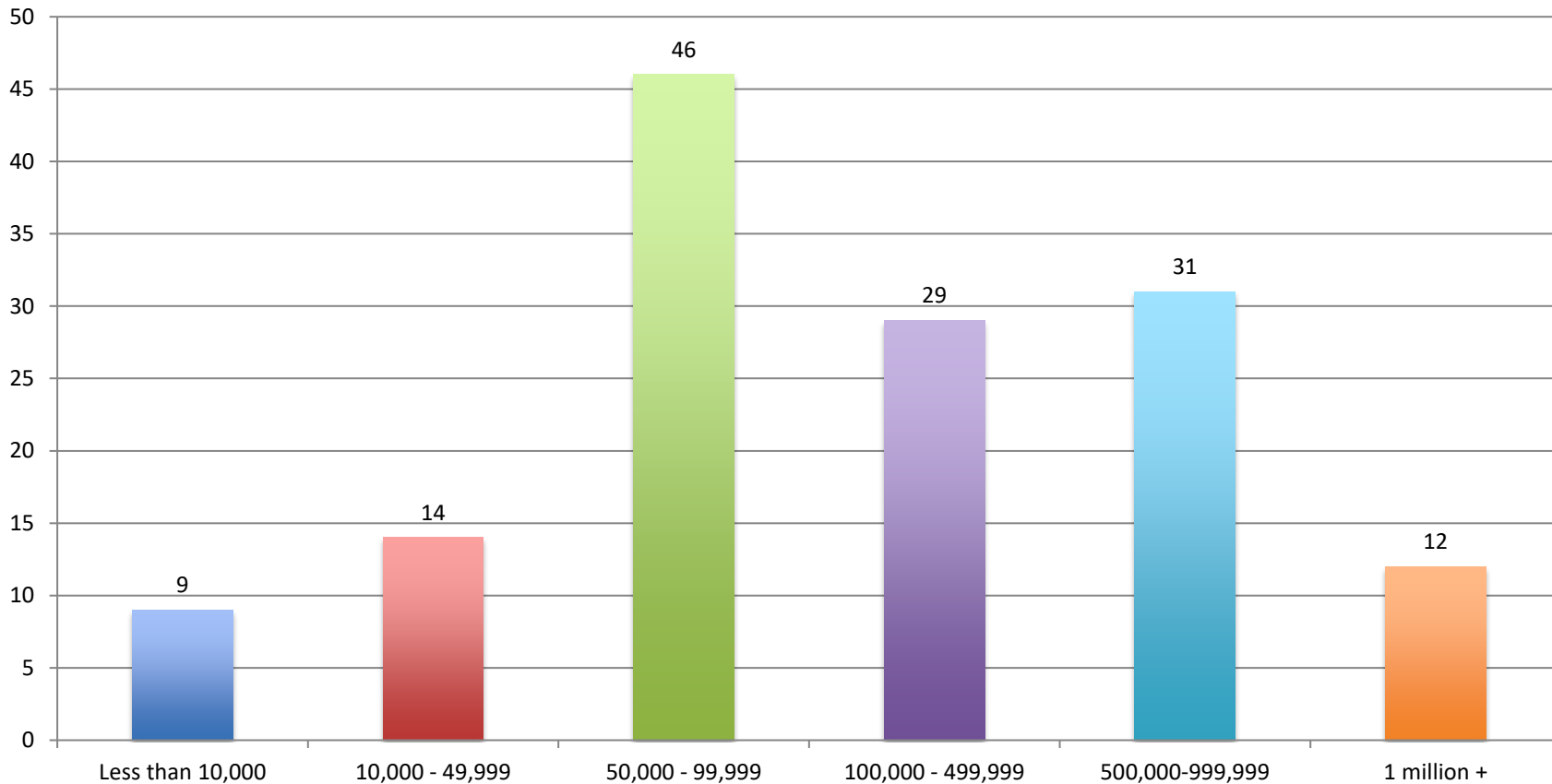
- 177 California Fire Chief Officers received survey
- 145 completed surveys
- Representing 93 California Fire Departments
- Respondents: Average 28 years in fire service, 10 years management level operations

Sample Characteristics: Level of Government



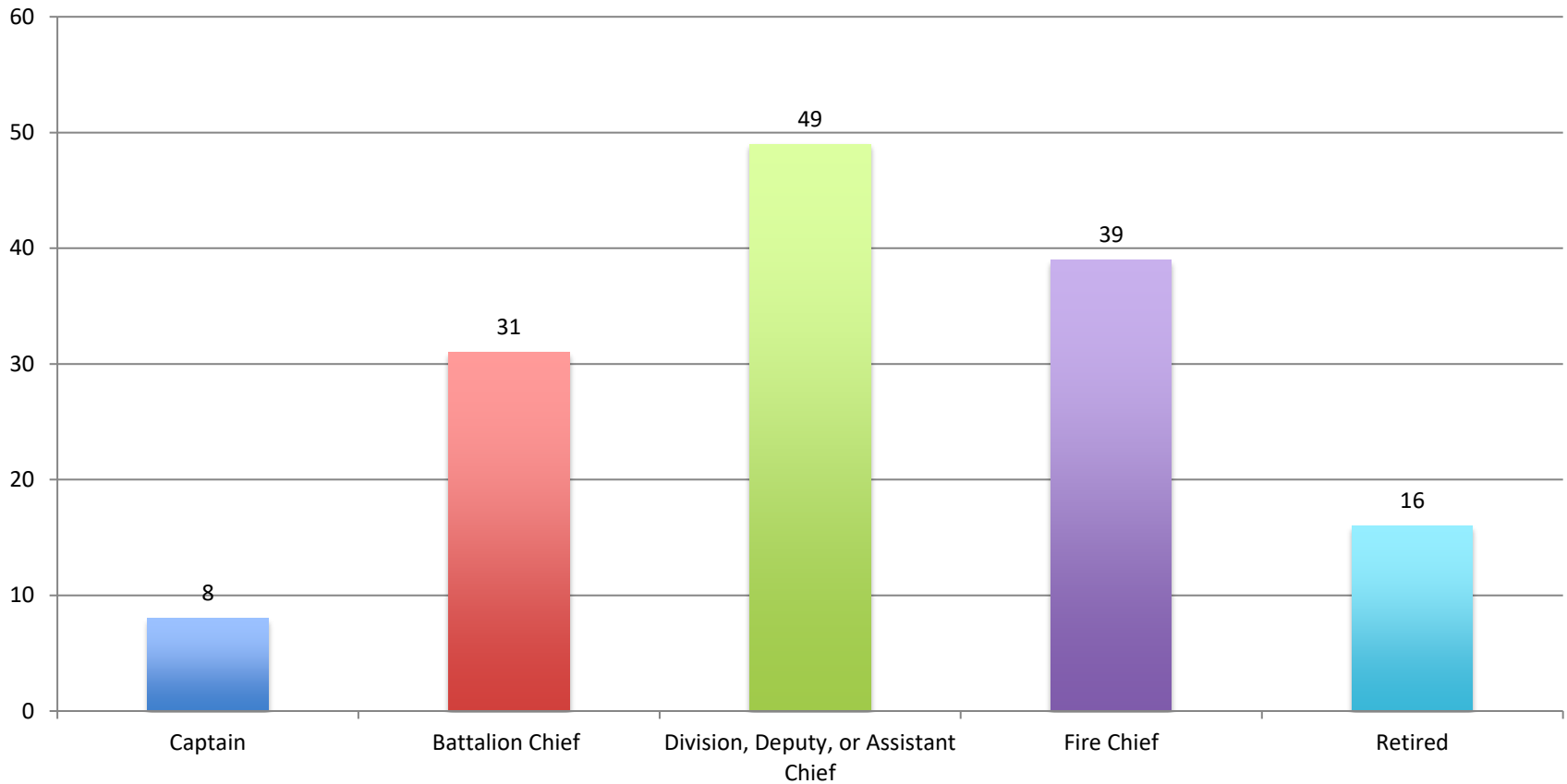
Sample Characteristics: Population Served

Population Served (n=141)



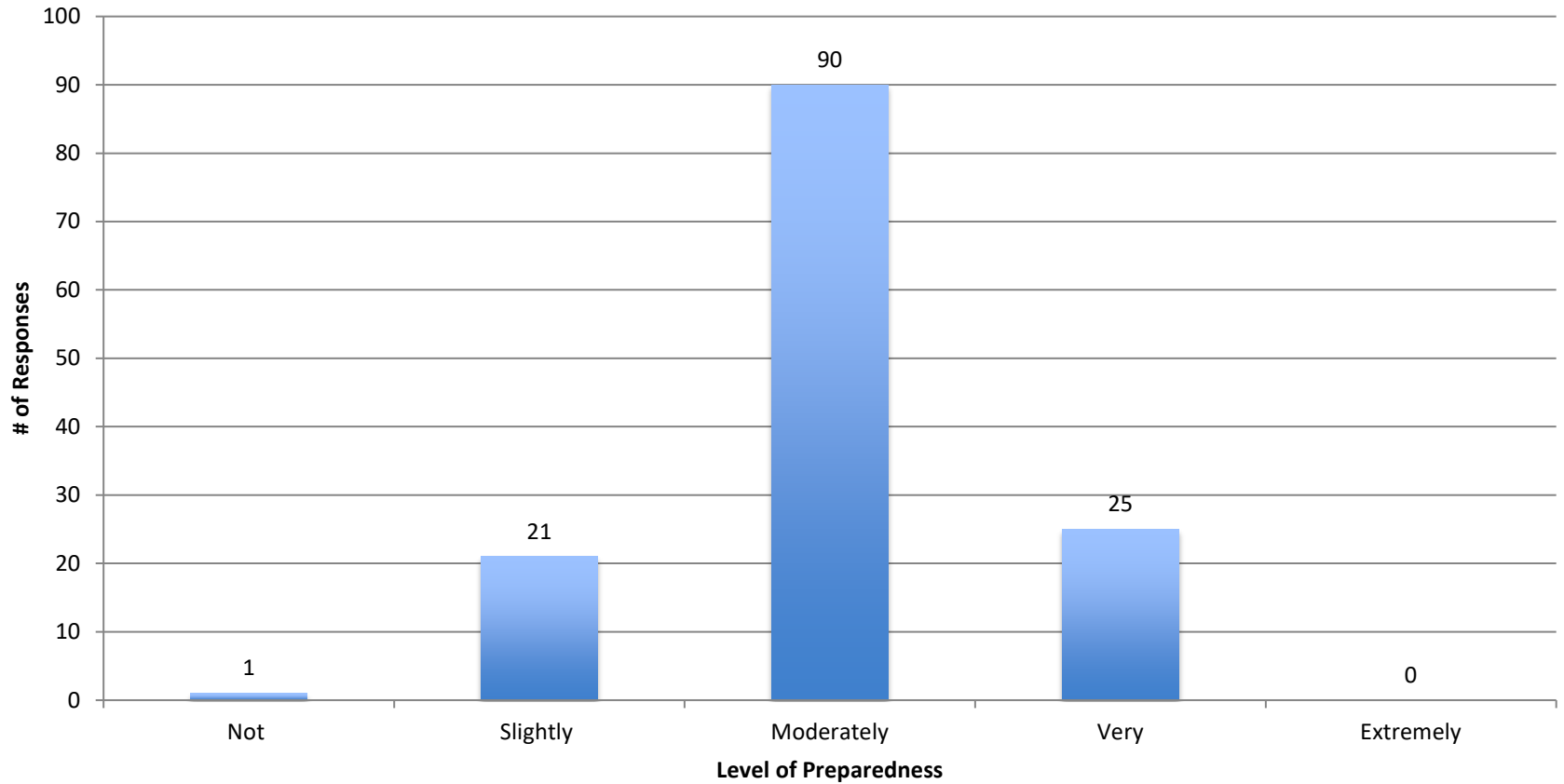
Sample Characteristics: Rank

Current Rank (n=143)



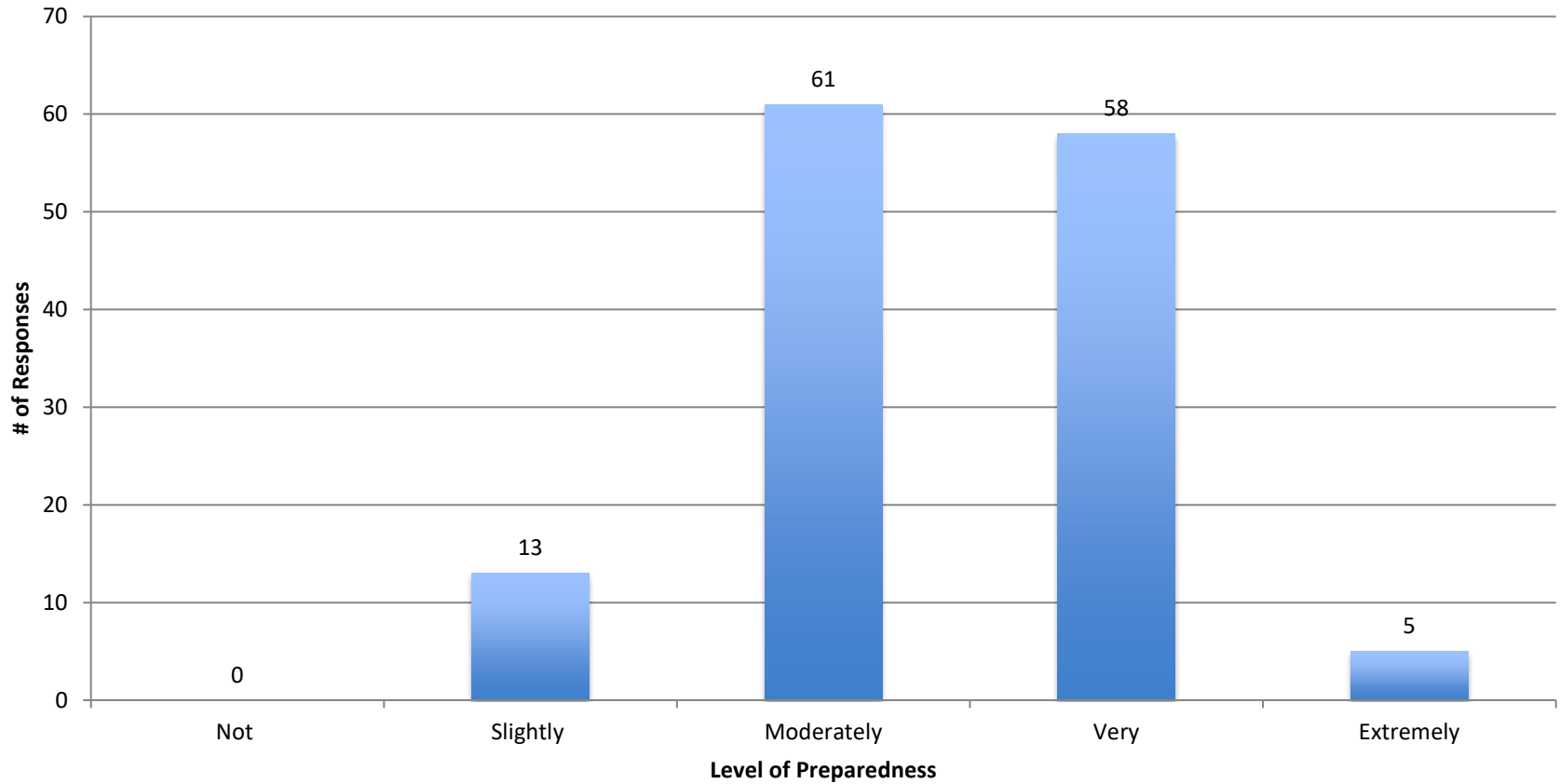
Findings: Overall Preparedness

Respondent Preparedness - Overall (n=137)



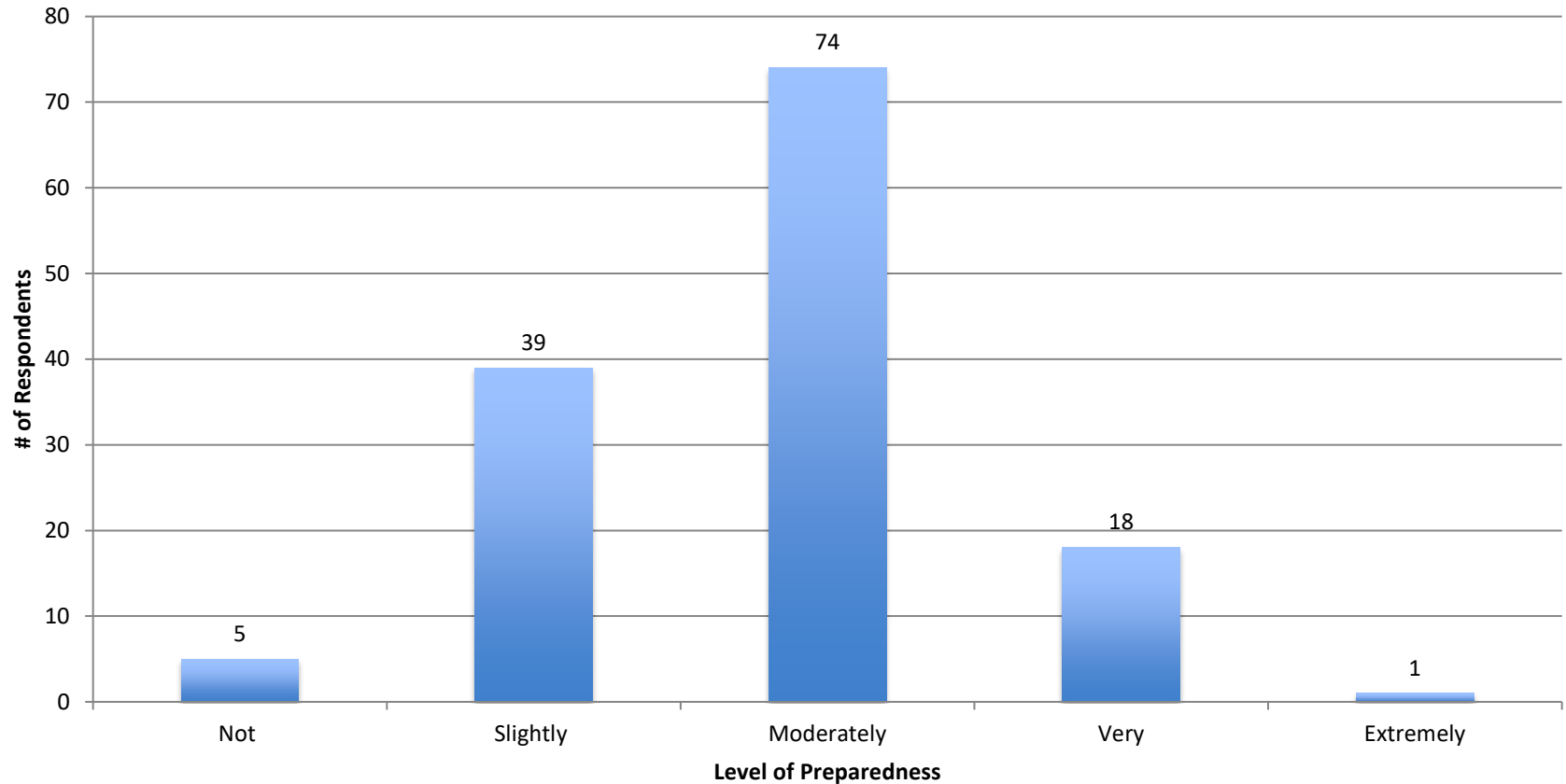
Preparedness: Command Duties

Respondent Preparedness - Command Duties (n=137)



Preparedness: Administrative Duties

Respondent Preparedness - Administrative Duties (n=137)



What is one thing you wish you knew prior to starting in the position?

- 24% - Human resources & legal issues
- 22% - Administrative duties and workload
- 18% - Relationships, politics, interpersonal skills
- 18% - Budget, finance, cooperative agreements
- < 10% - Leadership, planning, operational experience

Human Resources & Legal Issues

- Managing people
 - *“People skills... the fires will go out, the people issues are more difficult”*
 - *“A majority of my hours are not Operations. A majority of my hours are dealing with ‘people issues’”*
- Conflict management
- HR responsibilities
- FBOR, discipline

Administrative Duties and Overall Workload

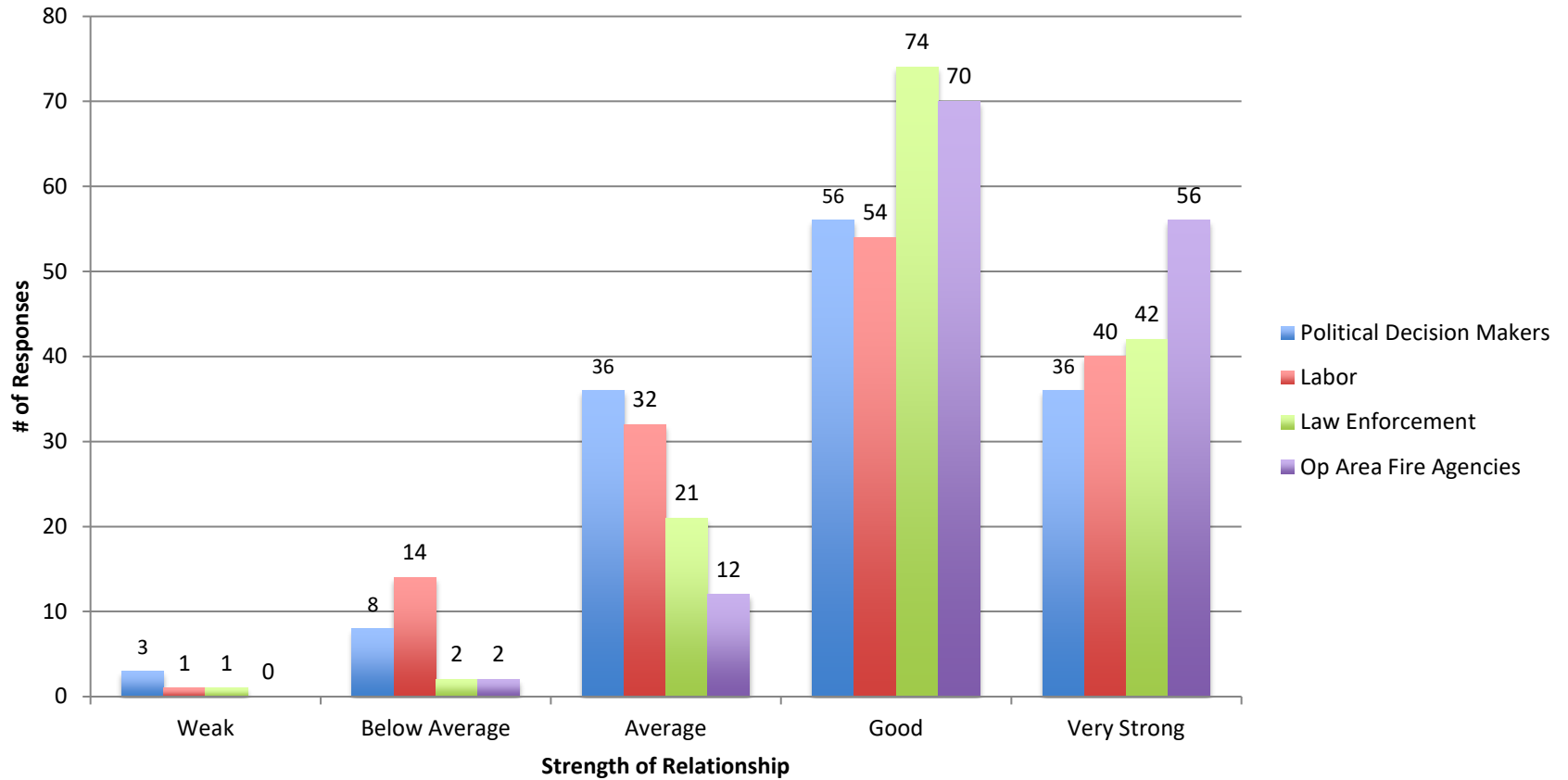
- Workload
 - *“I wish I understood the expectation of being in so many places doing so many different things throughout the day.”*
 - *“You never ‘clock out’ in the admin roles.”*
 - *“The true amount of time commitment that was needed to do the job right!”*

Relationships, Interpersonal Communication, and Politics

- Labor Management relationship
- Navigating the political dynamics
- Communication
 - *“Having greater insight to assertive, authentic communication skills”*
 - *“Effective methods to communicate with staff and others”*

Strength of Relationships

Reporting Agency Relationships with Law, Labor, Op Area Partners and Politicians



Budget, Finance, & Cooperative Agreements

- Budget
 - *“How our funding works”*
 - *“Accounting and payroll”*
 - *“Financial planning”*
 - *“Grants and reimbursements”*
- Cooperative agreements
 - *“Better understanding of mutual aid, automatic aid, FMAG and payment process from other agencies”*

Next Steps

- More analysis needed.
- What questions do we still need to ask?
- Can we answer some of the questions identified in this study?

