

How North Carolina Businesses Are Using AI

Findings from LEAD's New AI Adoption Data Story

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NC DEPARTMENT
of COMMERCE
LABOR & ECONOMIC
ANALYSIS

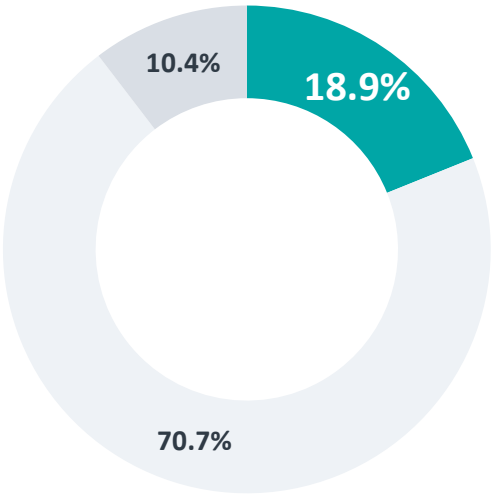
About the Data

Census Bureau Business Trends and Outlook Survey (BTOS)

- Survey of 1.2 million U.S. employer businesses
- Business conditions tracked every two weeks
- Periodic supplements add questions on specific topics
- Latest AI supplement released April 2026

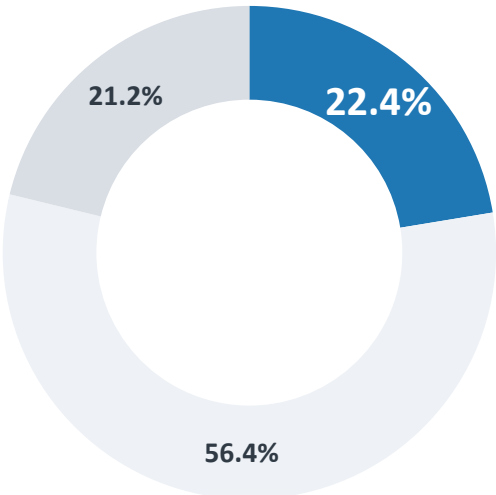
Overall Adoption Among NC Businesses

Current AI Use



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Planned Use (6 mo.)



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

23.2%

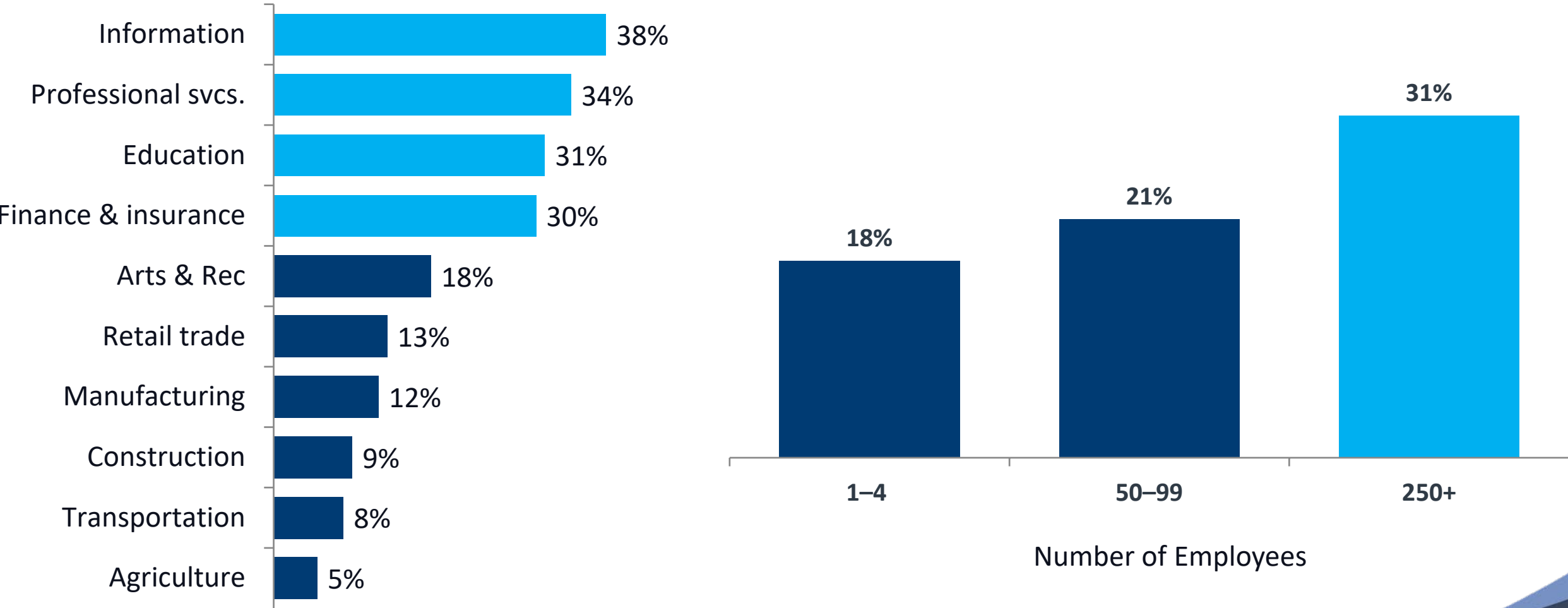
of NC businesses report
employees using AI tools

Employee AI use may be slightly ahead of
formal business adoption



AI Adoption Varies by Industry & Business Size

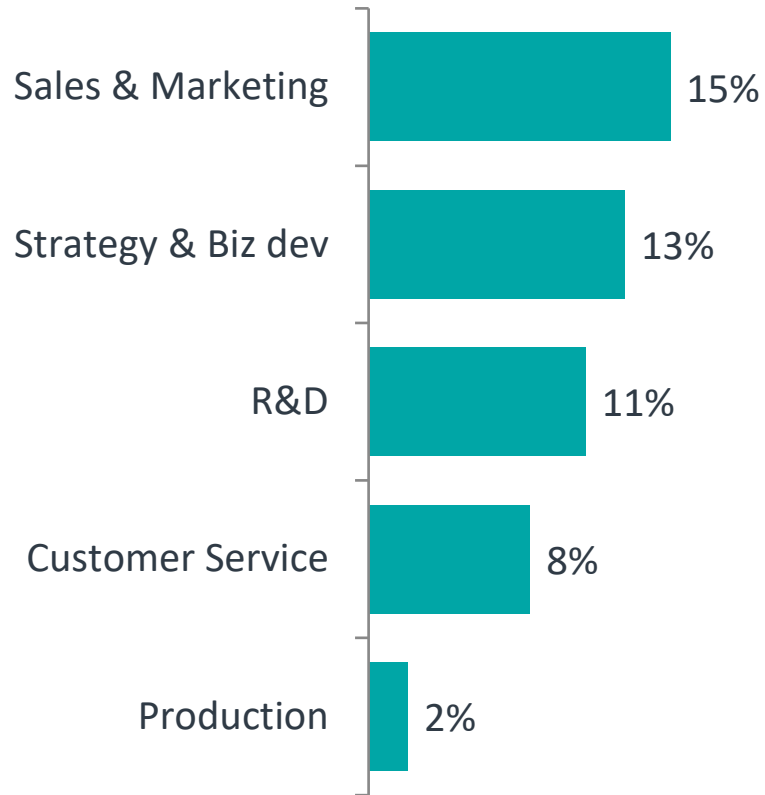
(National Data)



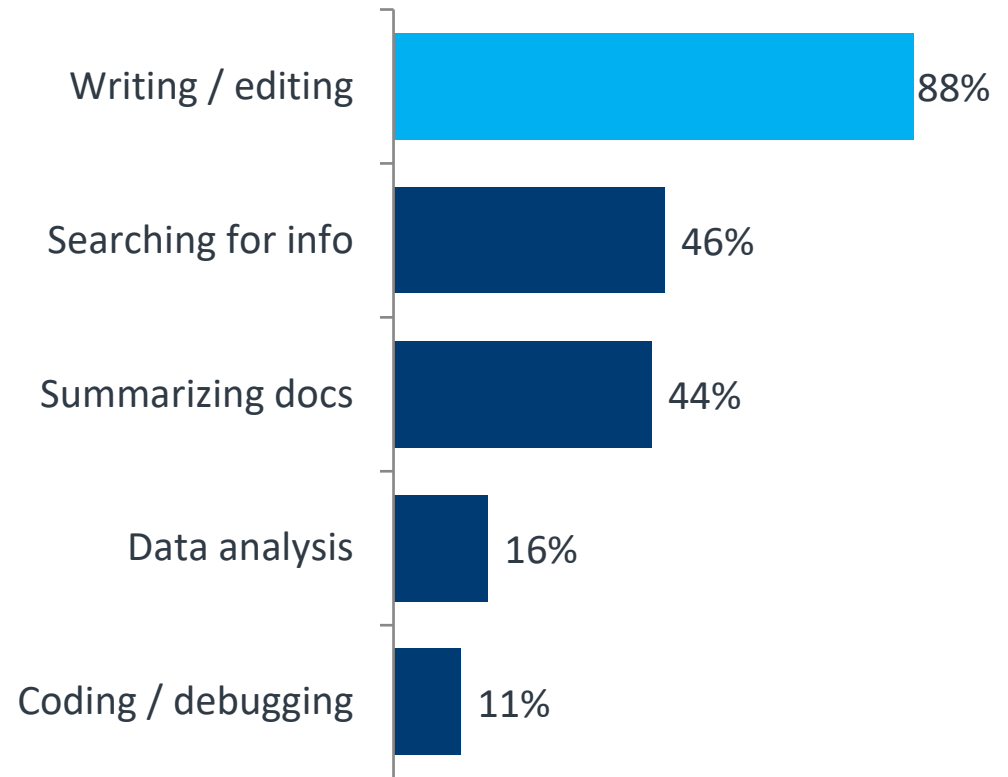
Only select data shown - see data story for full detail

How NC Businesses & Employees Are Using AI

Business functions using AI



Employee Use of Generative AI for work tasks



Only select data shown - see data story for full detail

AI is More Often Used to Supplement Work

1 AI Is Primarily Used to Supplement Work

46%

Report Using AI to Supplement Tasks

(vs replace employee tasks 10% and add new tasks 10%)

2 AI Replaces Tools More Than Employee Tasks

17%

replaced software or equipment

10%

replaced employee task

3 And Only a Few Employee Tasks Are Replaced

73%

replaced only a small number of employee tasks

(vs moderate number 14.6% and a large number 12.5% of tasks)

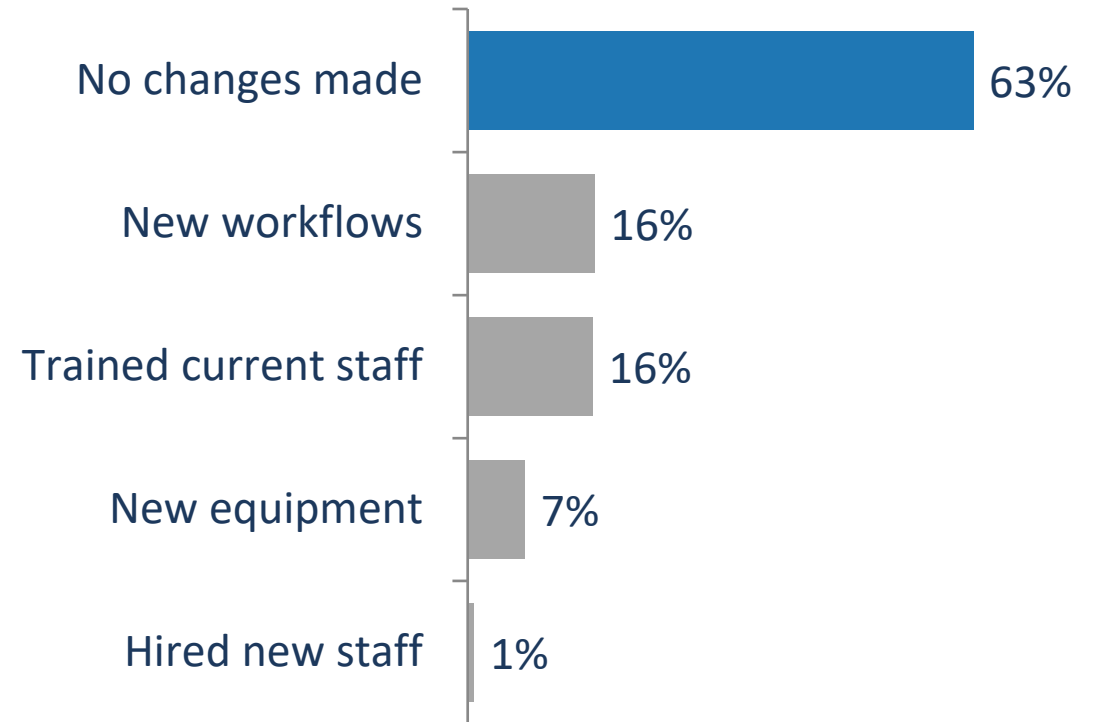


Limited Impact on Employment and Operations

~97%

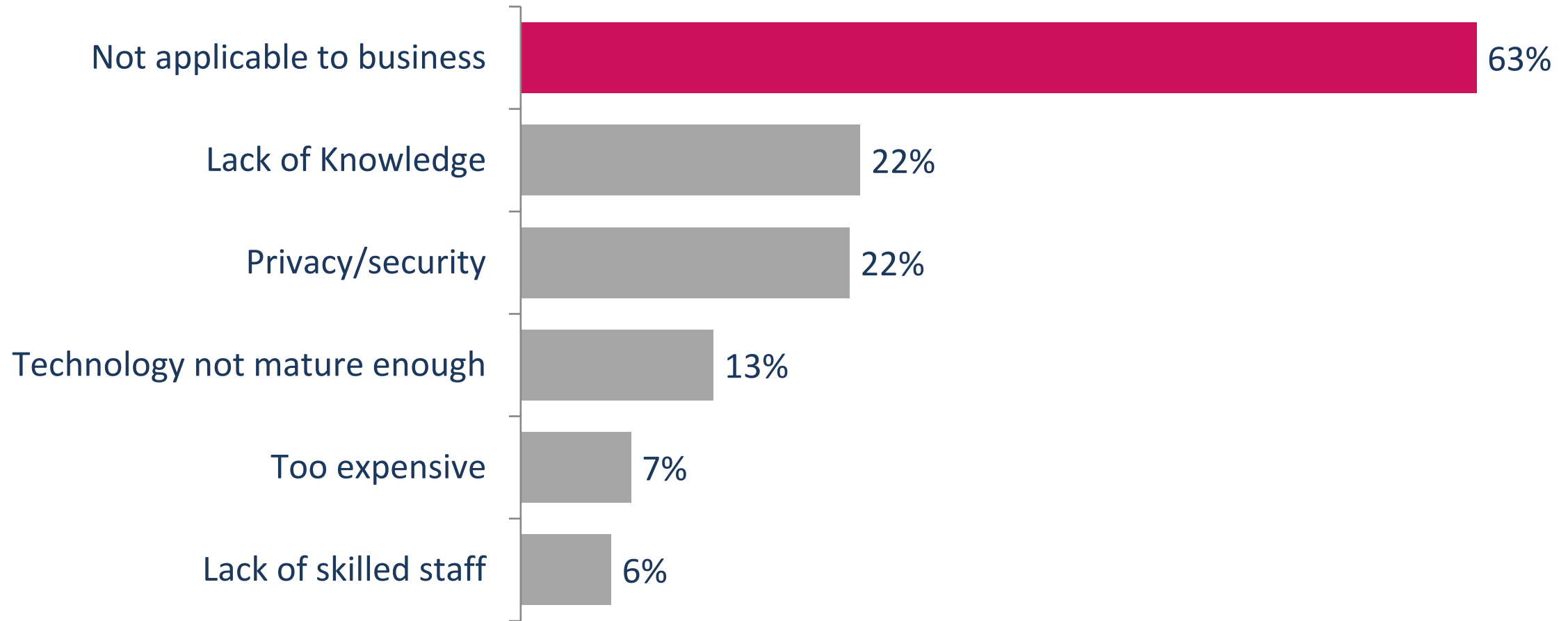
of NC AI-using businesses report no change in total employment

Operational changes to support AI



Only select data shown - see data story for full detail

Most Non-Adopters Say AI Isn't Applicable

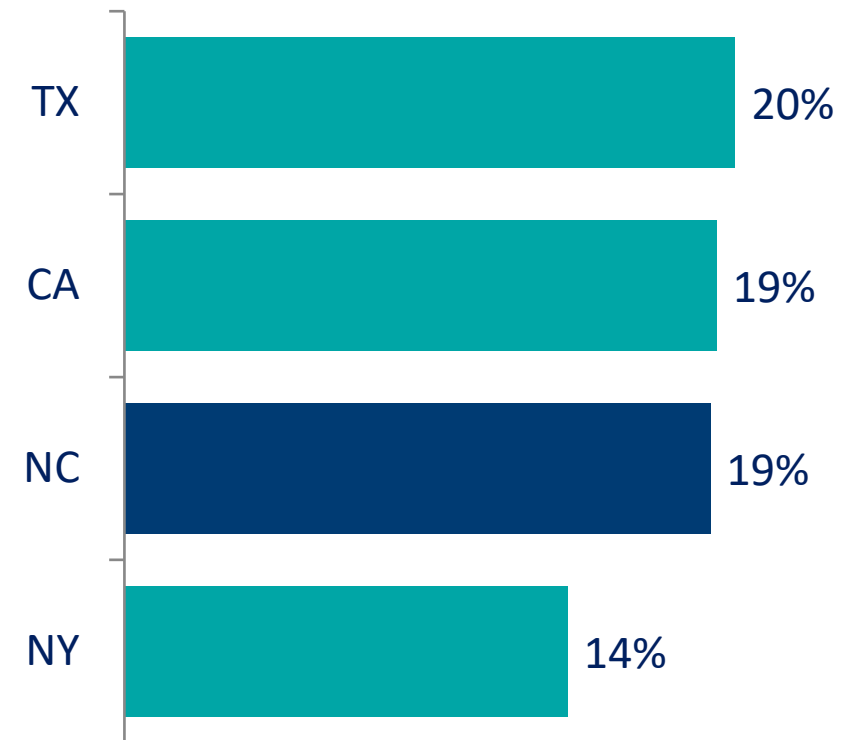


Only select data shown - see data story for full detail

NC Closely Tracks the National Average

Indicator	NC	U.S.	Diff. (pp)
Used AI in any function (last 2 wks)	18.9%	17.9%	+1.0
Employees used GenAI (last 6 mo.)	21.5%	20.8%	+0.7
Employees used any AI (last 6 mo.)	23.2%	22.6%	+0.6
Plan to use AI in next 6 months	22.4%	21.6%	+0.8
Do not plan to use AI (next 6 mo.)	56.4%	56.2%	+0.2
Unsure about future AI use	21.2%	22.2%	-1.0

State Comparison of Current AI Use



Key Takeaways

- AI adoption in North Carolina is still limited – about 1 in 5 businesses use it, and more than half do not plan to adopt it
- The effect on employment is minimal – ~97% of AI-using businesses in NC report no change in employment, and AI is used to supplement work far more than to replace it
- The main barrier to adoption is perceived applicability, not cost
- Adoption remains in the early stages, but monitoring the data for potential shifts is important



Additional Resources to Check Out

- New LEAD Data Story: [AI Adoption Data Story](#)
- New LEAD Feed Blog Article: [Data Show Limited AI Adoption Among NC Businesses](#)

