

# Maine Homeless Initiative

## Gaps and Needs Analysis & Youth Addendum Report

Presentation to the Statewide Homeless  
Council and the Maine Continuum of Care

January 14, 2020



# AGENDA

01

Project  
Background &  
Goals

03

Findings

05

Introductions

02

Data Sources

04

Summary &  
Recommen-  
dations

# INTRODUCTIONS





# Human Services Research Institute

## About HSRI

- Research and consulting projects for 28 federal agencies, 50 states, and over 100 counties and cities
  - Led many national multi-site and local evaluations
  - Conducted needs assessments/gap analyses for several states and counties
- Recently in Maine, led the development and operation of a data warehouse for the Maine Health Data Organization, developed CompareMaine.org, and designed and conducted an evaluation for a Drug-Free Communities grant.

# PROJECT BACKGROUND & GOALS





# Project Background

## **Homeless Initiatives Gaps & Needs Analysis**

- Commissioned by MaineHousing on behalf of the Maine Continuum of Care (MCoC)
- Findings to provide information for the 5-year consolidated planning effort
- Completed between March and October 2019
- HSRI carried out the project in partnership with the Technical Assistance Collaborative



# Project Background (continued)

## **Youth Addendum Report**

- Focused on youth who are homeless
- Findings to provide information for the recently HUD-funded Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program
- Work completed between September and November 2019
- HSRI carried out the work



# Project Goals

- **Comprehensive look at the services, resources, and housing available to and needed by people and families experiencing homelessness in Maine**
- **Better understand issues that contribute to becoming and remaining homeless in Maine**
- **Better understand barriers faced and unmet needs**
- **Provide recommendations for addressing gaps and needs and that could be used for the planning of services and initiatives**

# DATA SOURCES



# Homeless Initiatives Gaps & Needs Analysis

1

Review of documents and reports

2

Focus groups with users of Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Program (ESHAP) funded shelters (18 groups across 3 Homeless Regions; N=140 guests)

3

Telephone interviews with a range of key informants (N=28)

4

Online surveys with ESHAP-funded shelter staff (N=31) and McKinney-Vento Liaisons (N=102)

# Limitations



Projects conducted over a short time period; not all existing data was obtained and examined



Not all stakeholders interviewed



Only conducted surveys with staff from ESHAP-funded shelters



Did not examine homelessness and housing issues within Native American tribes and communities

# Youth Addendum Report

- Entered and analyzed data from the 2018 and 2019 Point-in-Time (PIT) Counts Youth Survey Addendum
- Supplemented the PIT youth survey data with data from first report that pertained to homelessness among youth

# FINDINGS

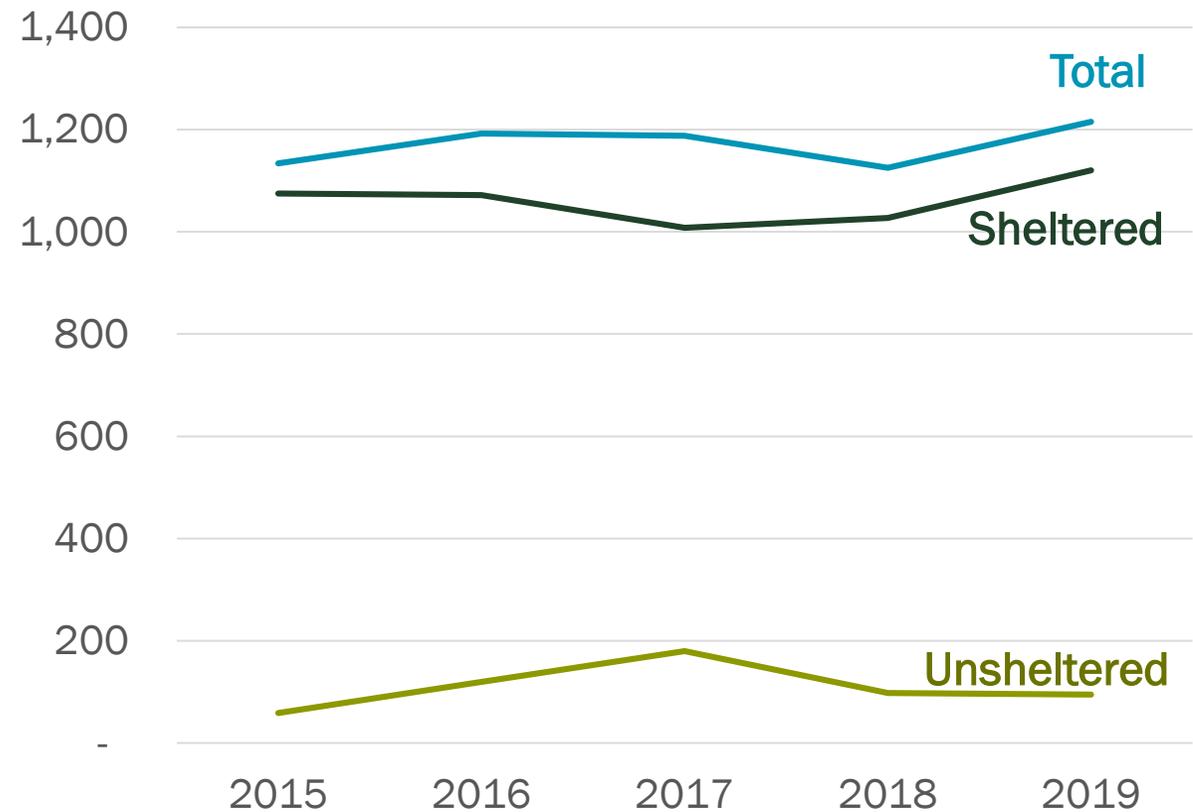


# Homelessness in Maine

On one night in 2019, 1,215 people were experiencing homelessness:

- Majority were in a shelter
- One third were people in families with children
- More likely to be male and non-white compared to Maine's population

Number of Maine People Experiencing Homelessness



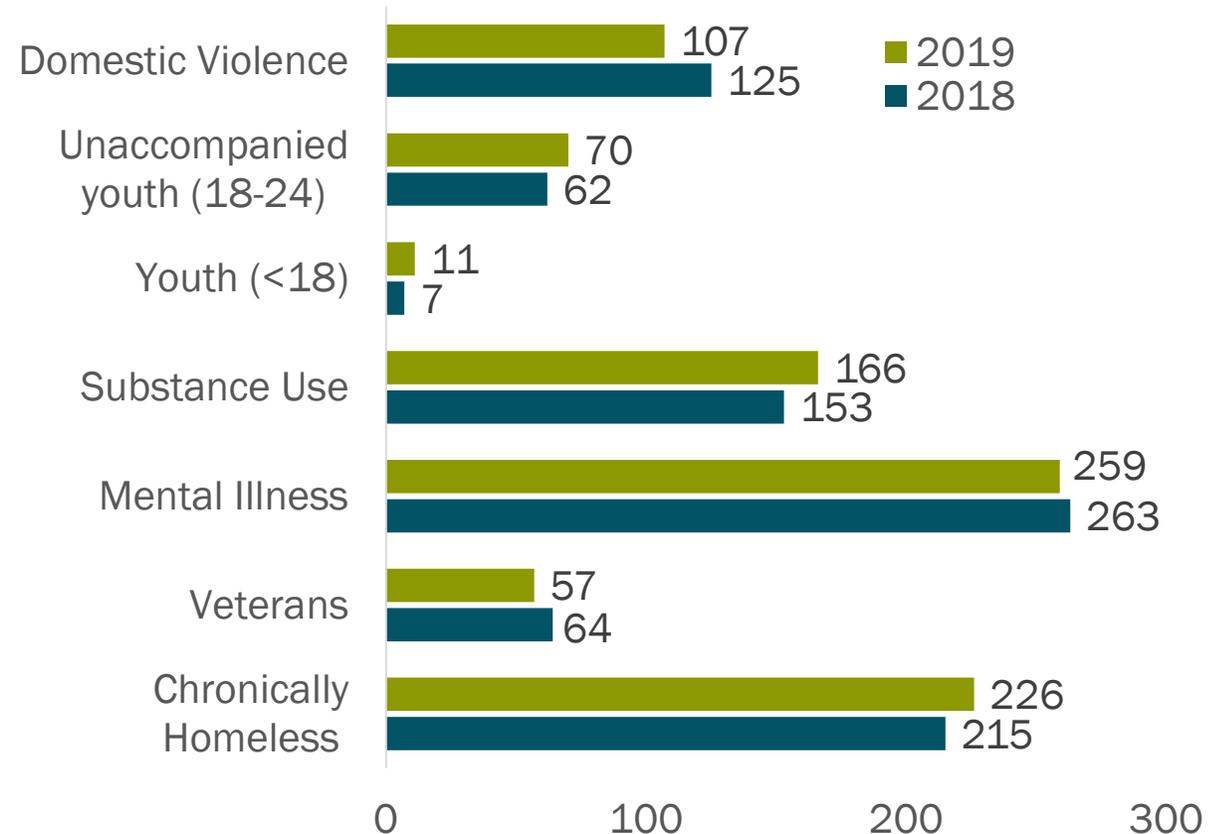
Source: Maine Homelessness Survey: 2019 Point-in-Time Count available at [http://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/housing-reports/2019-point-in-time-survey.pdf?sfvrsn=6d6fb415\\_4](http://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/housing-reports/2019-point-in-time-survey.pdf?sfvrsn=6d6fb415_4)

# Homelessness in Maine (continued)

In 2019, compared to 2018, more people identified as:

- Being a youth or unaccompanied youth
- Having a substance use issue
- Being chronically homeless

Maine Homeless Subpopulations in 2018 and 2019 PIT Count



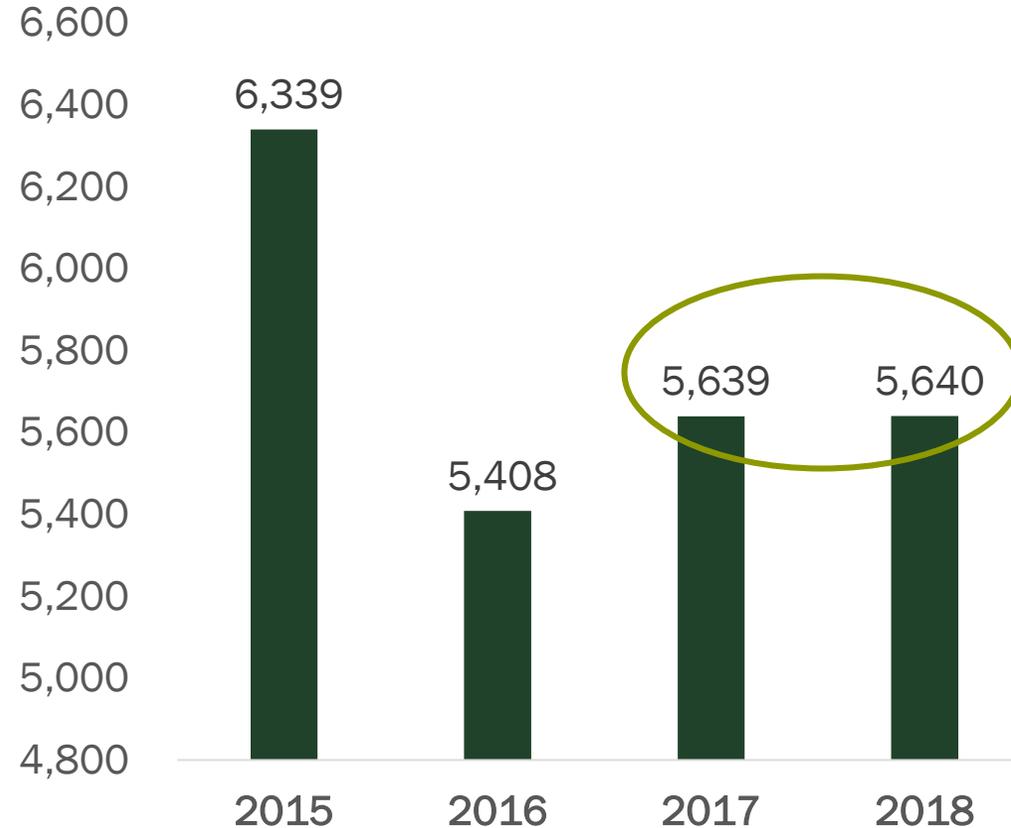
Source: Maine Homelessness Survey: 2019 Point-in-Time Count available at [http://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/housing-reports/2019-point-in-time-survey.pdf?sfvrsn=6d6fb415\\_4](http://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/housing-reports/2019-point-in-time-survey.pdf?sfvrsn=6d6fb415_4)

Note: People could self-identify as belonging to more than one subpopulation

# Homelessness in Maine (continued)

People served in 2018 were more likely to be male, non-white and younger than a typical Maine person

Number of People in Emergency Shelters in Maine, 2015-2018



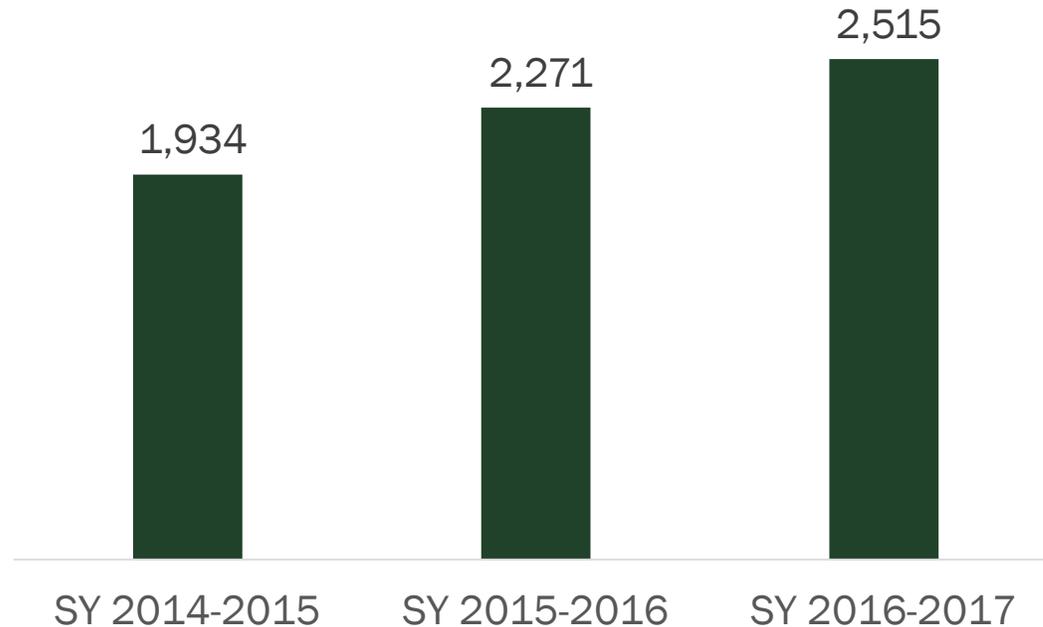
Source: Maine Housing Homeless Initiatives, Data Brief 2018 - DRAFT NOT FOR PUBLICATION, Emergency Shelters (ES): HUD System Performance Measure 3

Note: Data does not include people in Domestic Violence Shelters or other non-HMIS participating emergency shelters.

# Homelessness in Maine (continued)

## Number of Children/Youth Who Were Homeless and Enrolled in Public Schools in Maine

The number of children/youth who were homeless and enrolled in public schools grew between the 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 school year (SY).



Source: Data available from the U.S. Department of Education's EDFacts Initiatives, obtained from <http://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/StateProfile.aspx?StateID=25>;

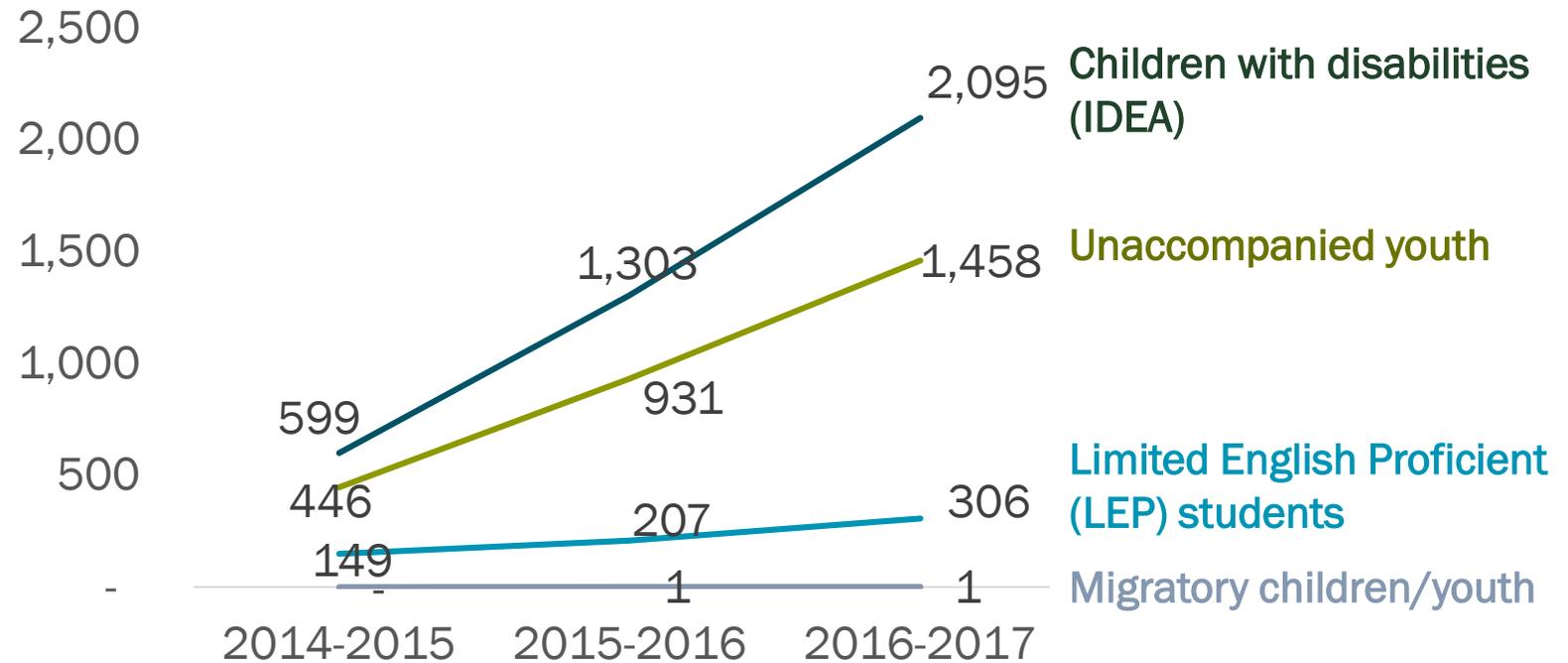
Note: Included are all children and youth in grades Pre-K through 12 who are homeless.

# Homelessness in Maine (continued)

Between the 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 SY there was an increase in the number of children/youth who:

- Had a disability
- Were unaccompanied youth
- Had limited English proficiency

### Subgroups of Children/Youth Who Are Homeless and Enrolled in Public Schools, by School Year



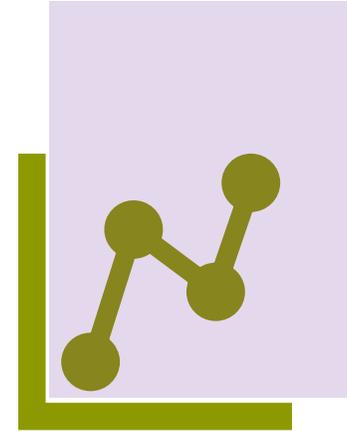
Source: Data available from the U.S. Department of Education's EDFacts Initiatives, obtained from <http://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/StateProfile.aspx?StateID=25>

Note: The subgroups are mutually exclusive; it is possible for students who are homeless to be counted in more than one subgroup.

# Number of people homeless in Maine...

May be an undercount because of challenges counting:

- People in rural areas
- The unsheltered
- Unaccompanied youth



# Characteristics of Youth Who Are Homeless

Source: 2019 Youth Survey Addendum (Slide 1 of 4)

Numbers vary by question

- **Age:** 82% were over 18 years; majority between ages 18-20
- **Gender Identity:** 49% identified as female and 8% as transgender
- **Sexual Identity/Orientation:** 19% identified as Bisexual and 9% as Lesbian or Gay
- **First Time Homeless:** 32% were homeless for the first time



# Characteristics of Youth Who Are Homeless

Source: 2019 Youth Survey Addendum (Slide 2 of 4)

Numbers vary by question

- **Living Situation on Night of Count:** 26% were living in transitional housing, 21% in emergency shelter, 4% in safe haven, and 48% in other situations
- **Living Situation Last 30 Days:** 60% were staying on a friend's or family member's couch, 62% in a house where they could be asked to leave without notice, 10% paid for housing with non-cash resources, and 23% lived in other situations



# Characteristics of Youth Who Are Homeless

Source: 2019 Youth Survey Addendum (Slide 3 of 4)

Numbers vary by question

- **Child Welfare Involvement:** 65% had been in foster care or had stayed in a group home
- **Criminal Justice System Involvement:** 81% had stayed overnight or longer in jail, prison, or a juvenile detention facility
- **Enrollment and Attendance in School:**
  - 36% had graduated high school
  - 46% had 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grade as highest completed grade; 53% reported the 12<sup>th</sup> grade
  - 19% had dropped out of school; most had dropped out more than 6 months prior to the survey
  - 12% attended school irregularly



# Characteristics of Youth Who Are Homeless

Source: 2019 Youth Survey Addendum (Slide 4 of 4)

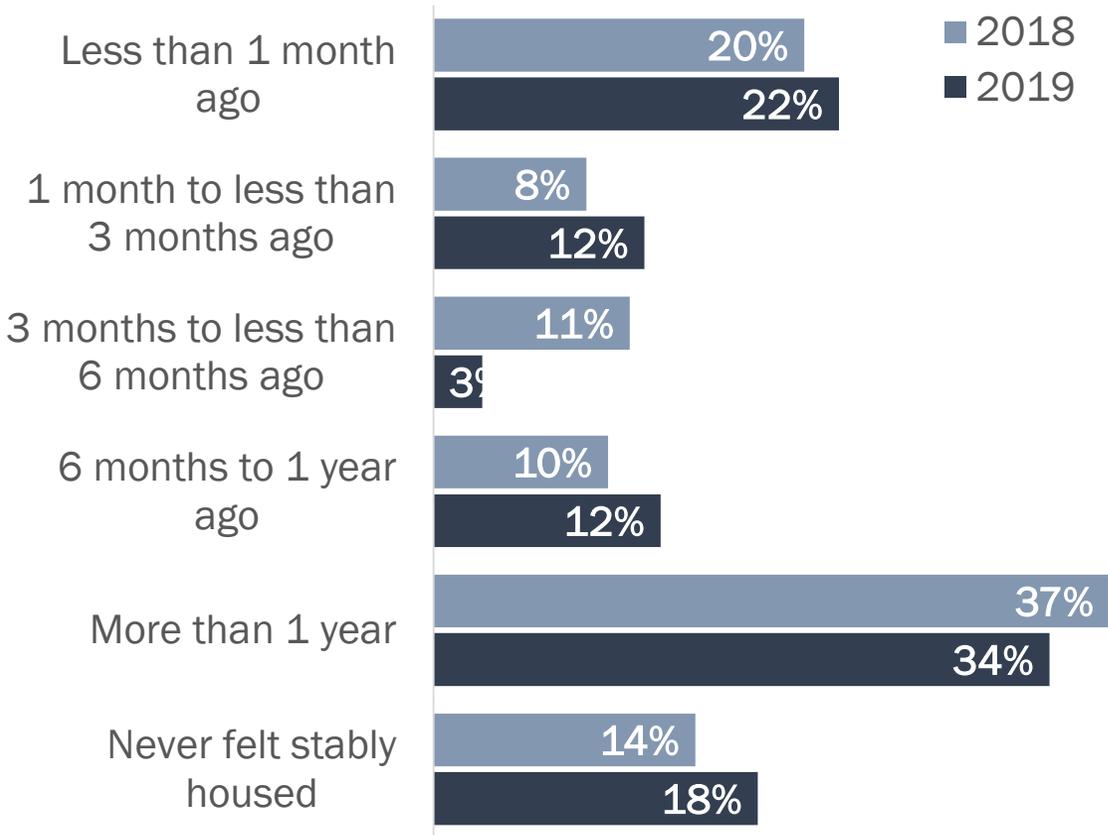
Numbers vary by question

- **Stayed in Treatment or Healthcare Facility:** 47%
- **Mental Health:** 84% received mental health services or felt they needed help with mental health
- **Victims of Abuse:** 70% had experienced physical, emotional or sexual abuse
- **Unprotected Sex:** 57% had unprotected sex in last year
- **Sexually Transmitted Diseases/Infections:** 65% had not been tested for or were concerned about sexually transmitted diseases/infections



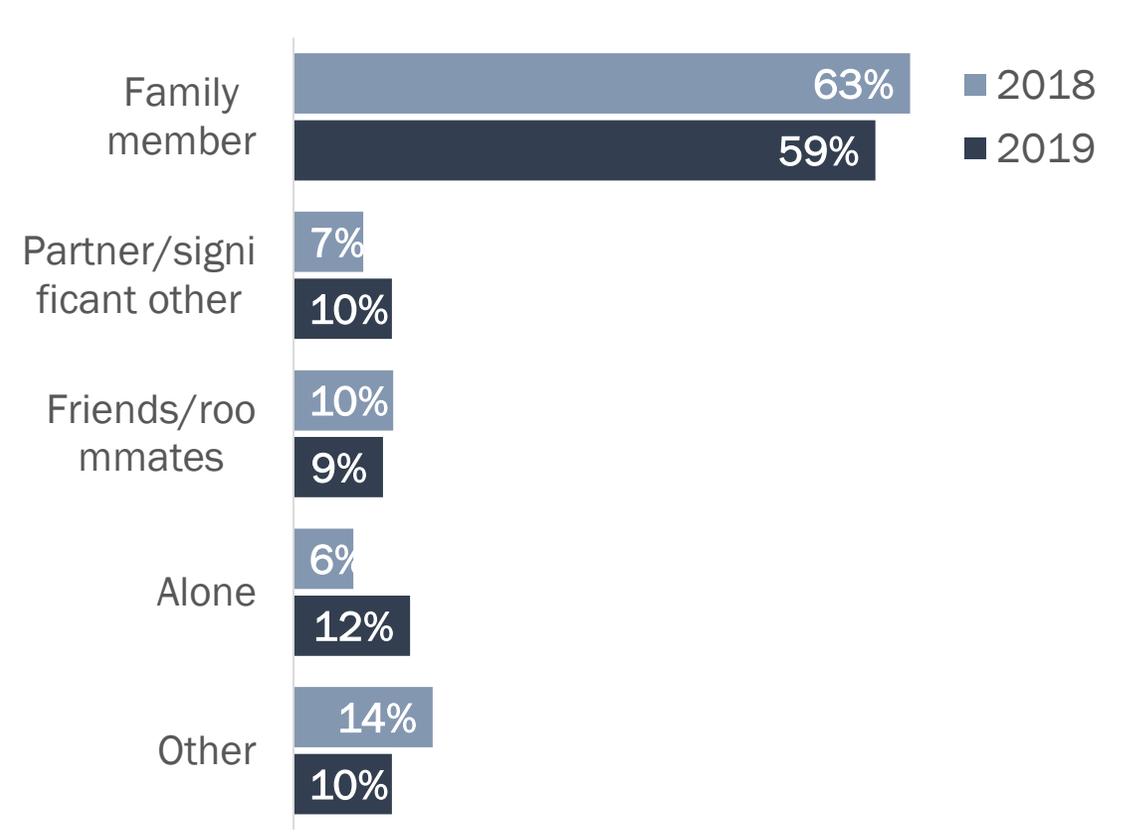
# Stable Housing Among Youth Who Are Homeless

## Length of Time Since Last Felt Stably Housed



Source: 2018 (N= 84) and 2019 (n=113) Youth Survey Addendum

## Who Lived With Last Time Stably Housed

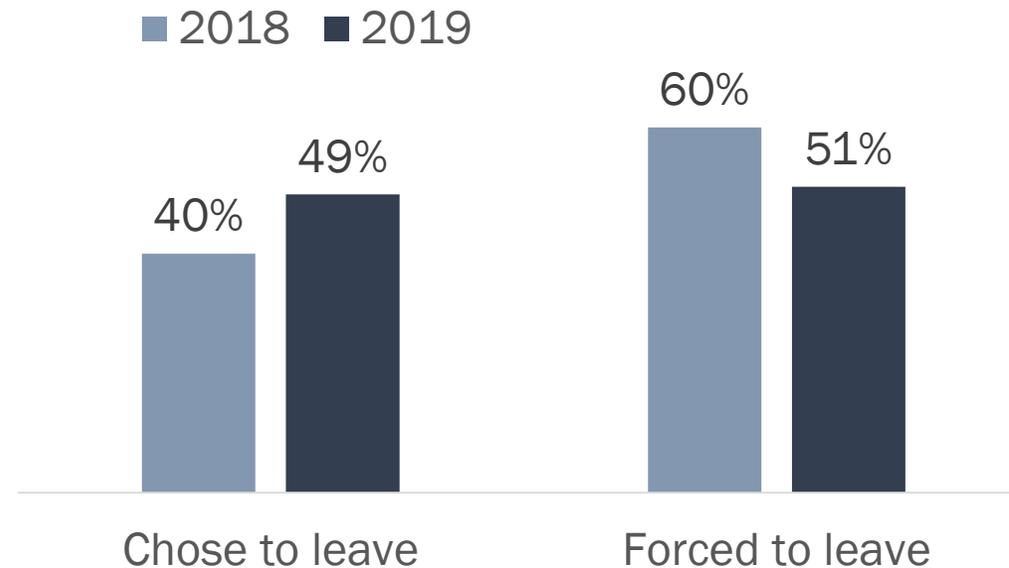


Source: 2018 (N= 99) and 2019 (n=110) Youth Survey Addendum

# Reasons for Youth Leaving Stable Housing

Over half reported they were forced to leave their last stable housing situation

Reason for Leaving Stable Housing

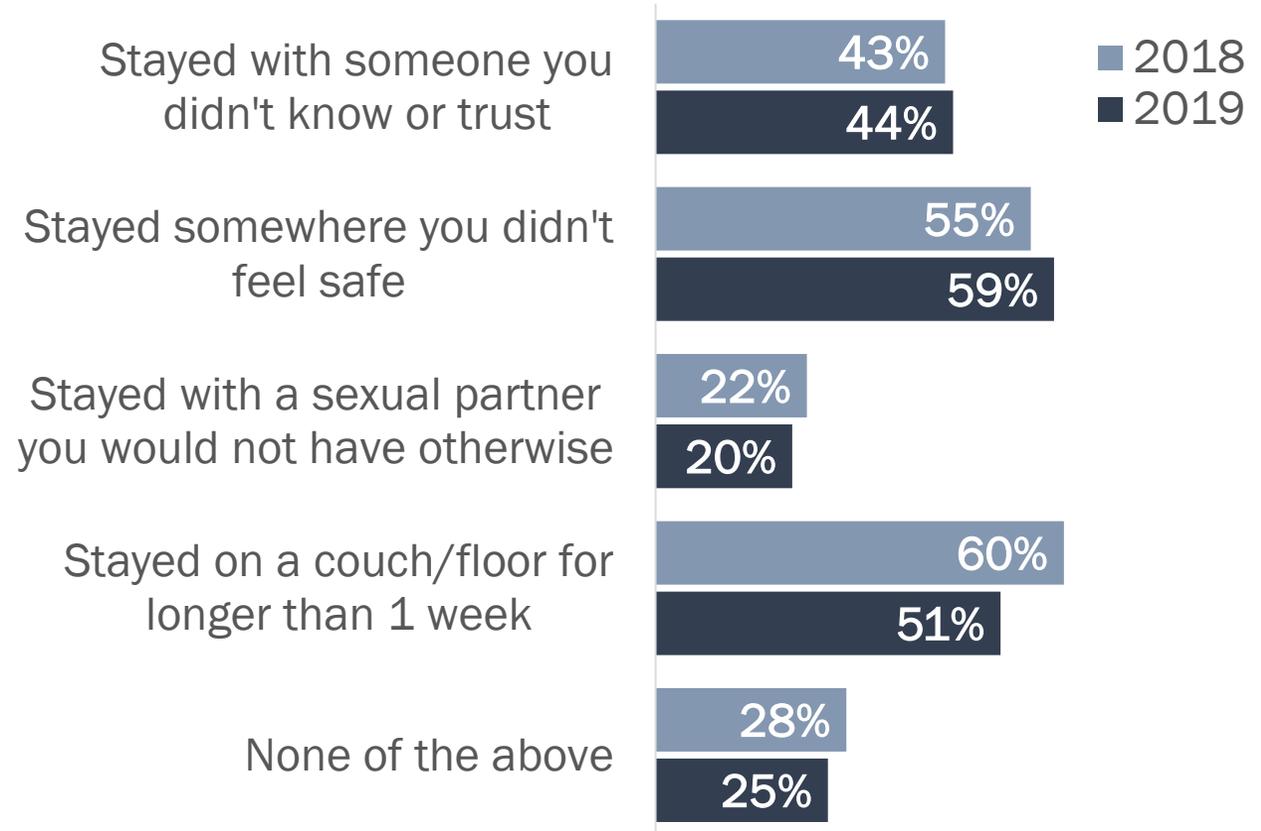


Source: 2018 (N= 91) and 2019 (n=79) Youth Survey Addendum

# Situations Faced by Youth to Stay in Housing

- Over 50% in each year had stayed with someone they did not feel safe with
- Over 40% had stayed in a housing situation with someone they didn't know or trust
- 1 in 5 had stayed with a sexual partner they would not have otherwise stayed with
- Most had stayed on a couch or floor for more than one week

## To Stay in Housing...



Source: 2018 (N= 103) and 2019 (n=114) Youth Survey Addendum

# Factors Contributing to Homelessness

---

Source: Focus Groups with Shelter Users

- Substance use issues
- Mental health crises
- Health issues or accidents
- Escaping domestic violence/abuse or bad relationships
- Employment issues: low wages; only certain jobs or industries available; only part-time or seasonal employment available
- Housing issues: lack of affordable housing; cost of housing; living in unsafe housing; being evicted from housing; or housing being foreclosed or torn down
- Childcare issues: cost of childcare and childcare providers not accepting childcare subsidies

# Factors Contributing to Homelessness Among Unaccompanied Youth

---

Source: Focus Groups with Shelter Users

- Issues with family and roommates
- Mental health issues
- Experiencing trauma (e.g., abuse from parents or other family members or not being taken care of by family)
- Substance use issues
- Being kicked out of the home by the family
- Death of parents
- Being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning (LGBTQ) and not accepted at home
- Aging out of systems
- Violation of lease and losing apartment
- Criminalization of homeless behaviors

# Factors Contributing to Homelessness - Including Among Unaccompanied Youth (Slide 1 of 2)

---

Source: Stakeholder Telephone  
Interviews

Many of the same issues identified by  
Focus Group participants, as well as:

- Economic conditions
- Poverty, including multi-generational cycles of poverty in rural areas
- People being discharged from hospitals and the criminal justice system into homelessness
- State policies that may have pushed more people into poverty: initially not adopting Medicaid expansion; reductions in the availability of intensive case management; work limits for SNAP; relatively low minimum wage

# Factors Contributing to Homelessness - Including Among Unaccompanied Youth (Slide 2 of 2)

---

Source: Stakeholder Telephone  
Interviews

- **Local policies: issues of local control and not enough incentives to develop affordable housing; local zoning restrictions for housing**
- **Shortages in foster care placements**
- **Youth not wanting to be in residential treatment because they are more structured and have more rules than shelters**

# Homeless and Housing Resources

Discussed in the report are some of the homeless and housing resources available in Maine including:

- Vouchers and subsidies
- Beds and units (types and populations served)
- ESHAP shelter resources (numbers and types of shelters and resources and services available)
- Public resources
- General assistance
- Community resources
- 211 Maine
- School resources



# Shelter Barriers, Gaps and Needs (Slide 1 of 2)

Sources: Focus Groups with Shelter Users & Stakeholder Interviews

- **Availability and capacity:** Shelters are typically full or difficult to get in; some areas or counties have only one or no shelters
- **Restriction:** Restricted from shelters because of behavior issues or rule breaking
- **Housing navigators:** Role and availability of housing navigators varies across state with some not assisting with locating and finding housing



# Shelter Barriers, Gaps and Needs (Slide 2 of 2)

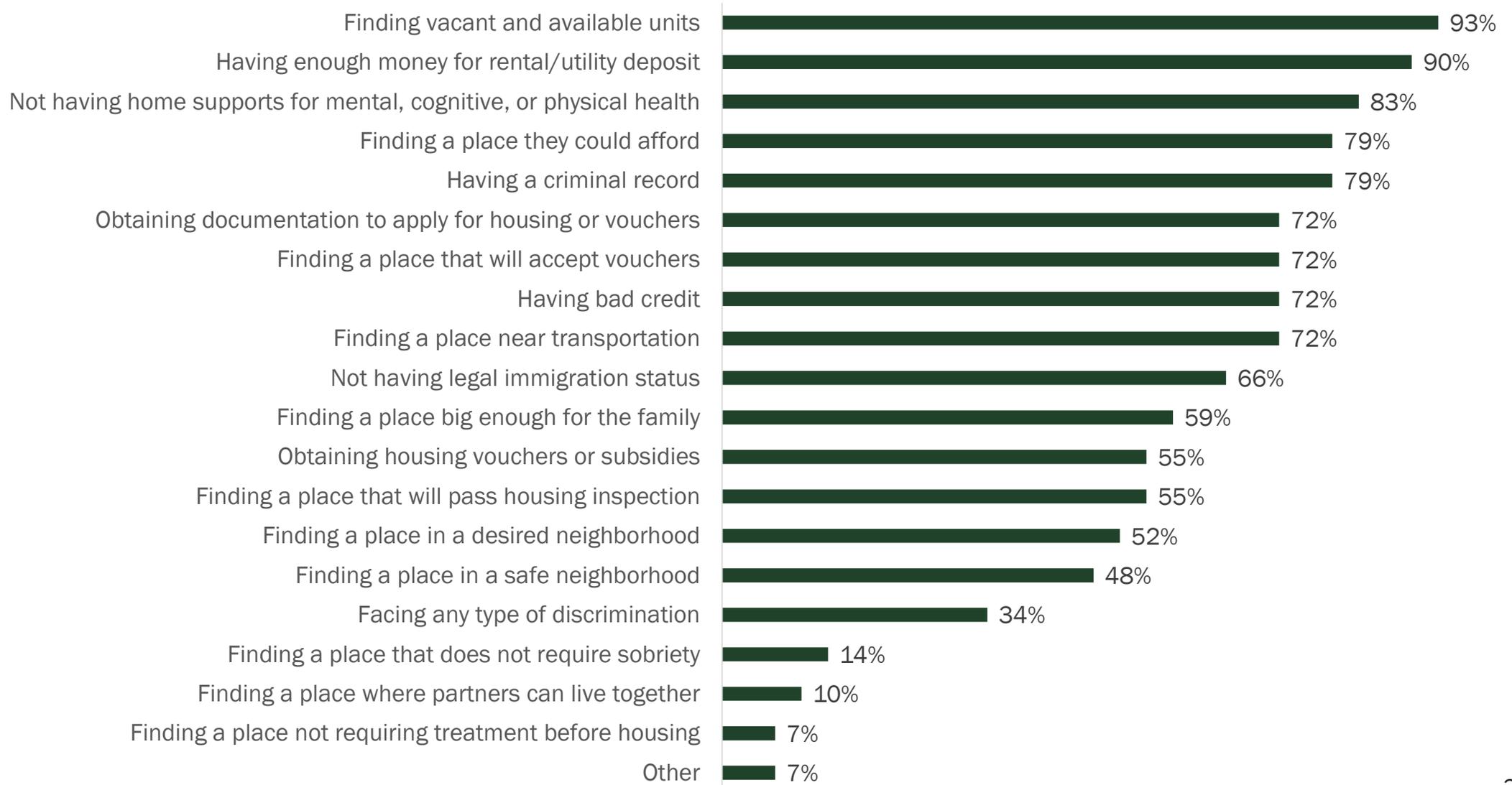
Sources: Focus Groups with Shelter Users & Stakeholder Interviews

- **Information and resources needed** by shelter guests: About vouchers and resources, eligibility for and restrictions of benefits
- **Shelter models:** Some shelters conducting background checks and not having a Housing First mindset — requiring people to prove they are worthy or ready for housing before they can be housed
- **Workforce issues:** Need for peer navigators within shelters and training for staff in areas like responding to mental health crisis



# Housing Barriers: Getting Housing

Source: ESHAP Shelter Survey, n=29





# Housing Barriers: Getting Housing

Sources: Focus Groups with Shelter Users & Stakeholder Interviews

- **Lack of affordable housing**
- **Having bad or no credit or references**
- **Landlords charging application fees**
- **Getting into housing owned by public housing authorities if owe past-due amounts**
- **Arrival of New Americans/Mainers adding burden to the tight housing market**

# Housing Barriers: Getting Housing

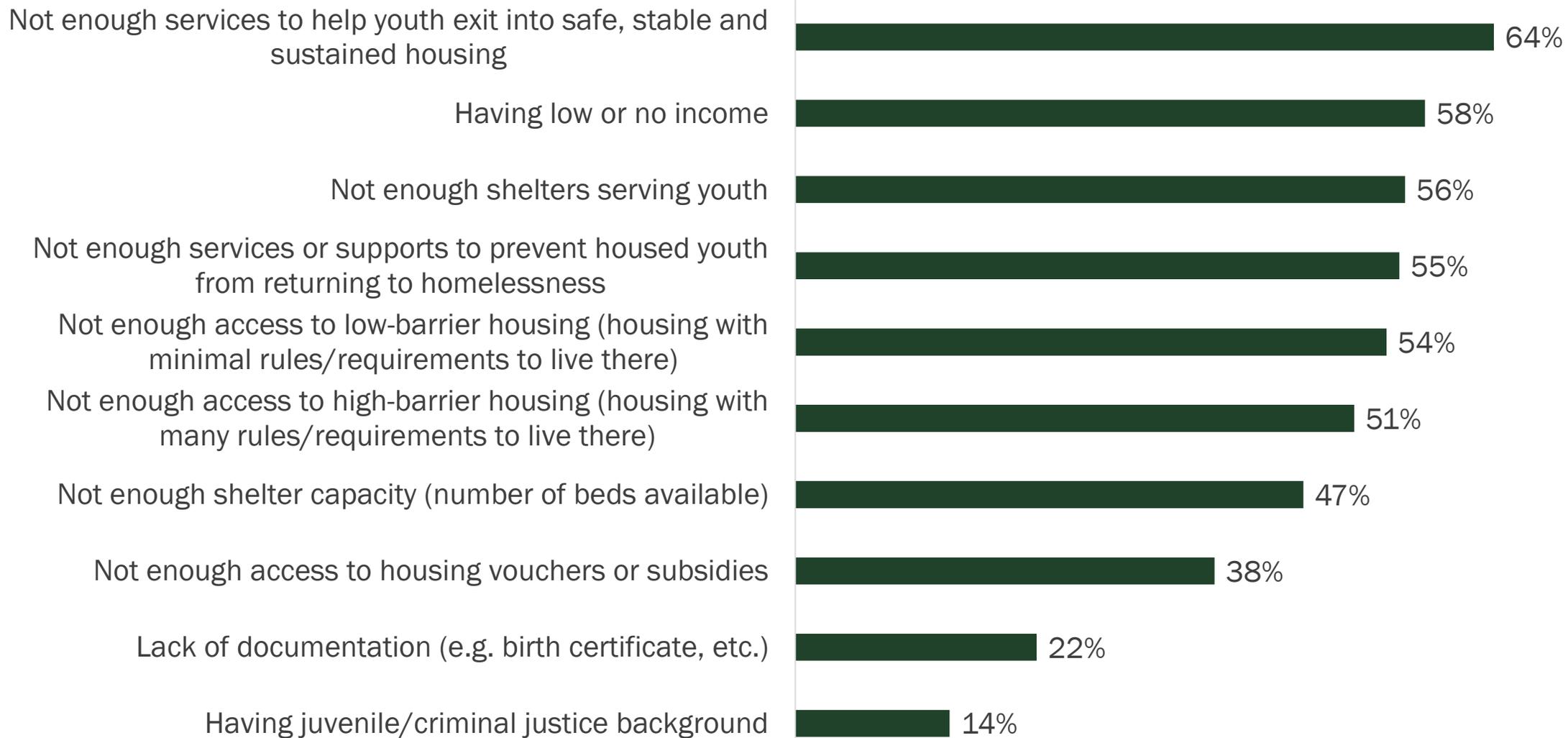
Sources: Focus Groups with Shelter Users & Stakeholder Interviews

## **Housing vouchers or subsidies:**

- Long waitlists or not available
- Insufficient time to locate housing even with extensions
- Insufficient to meet market rents
- Not accepted by landlords
- Housing passing housing inspections
- Need for more long-term vouchers not capped at 12 or 24 months

# Unaccompanied Youth: Housing Barriers, Gaps & Needs

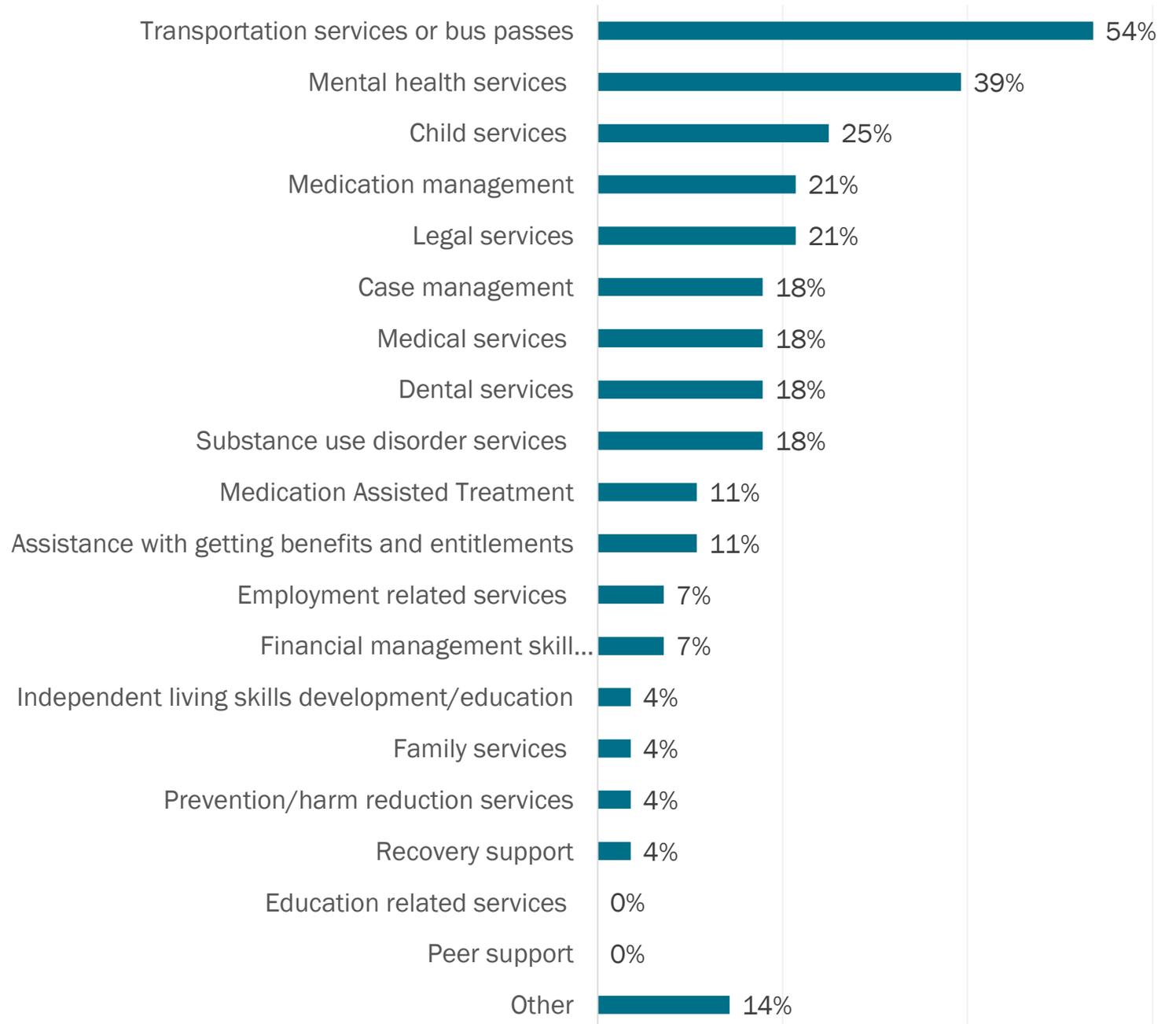
Source: School Survey, n=86



# Supportive Services: Barriers, Gaps & Needs

Source: ESHAP Shelter Survey, n=28

## Most Critical Gaps in Services for Guests of ESHAP- Funded Shelters



# Supportive Services: Barriers, Gaps & Needs

Source: Focus Groups with Shelter Users & Stakeholder Interviews

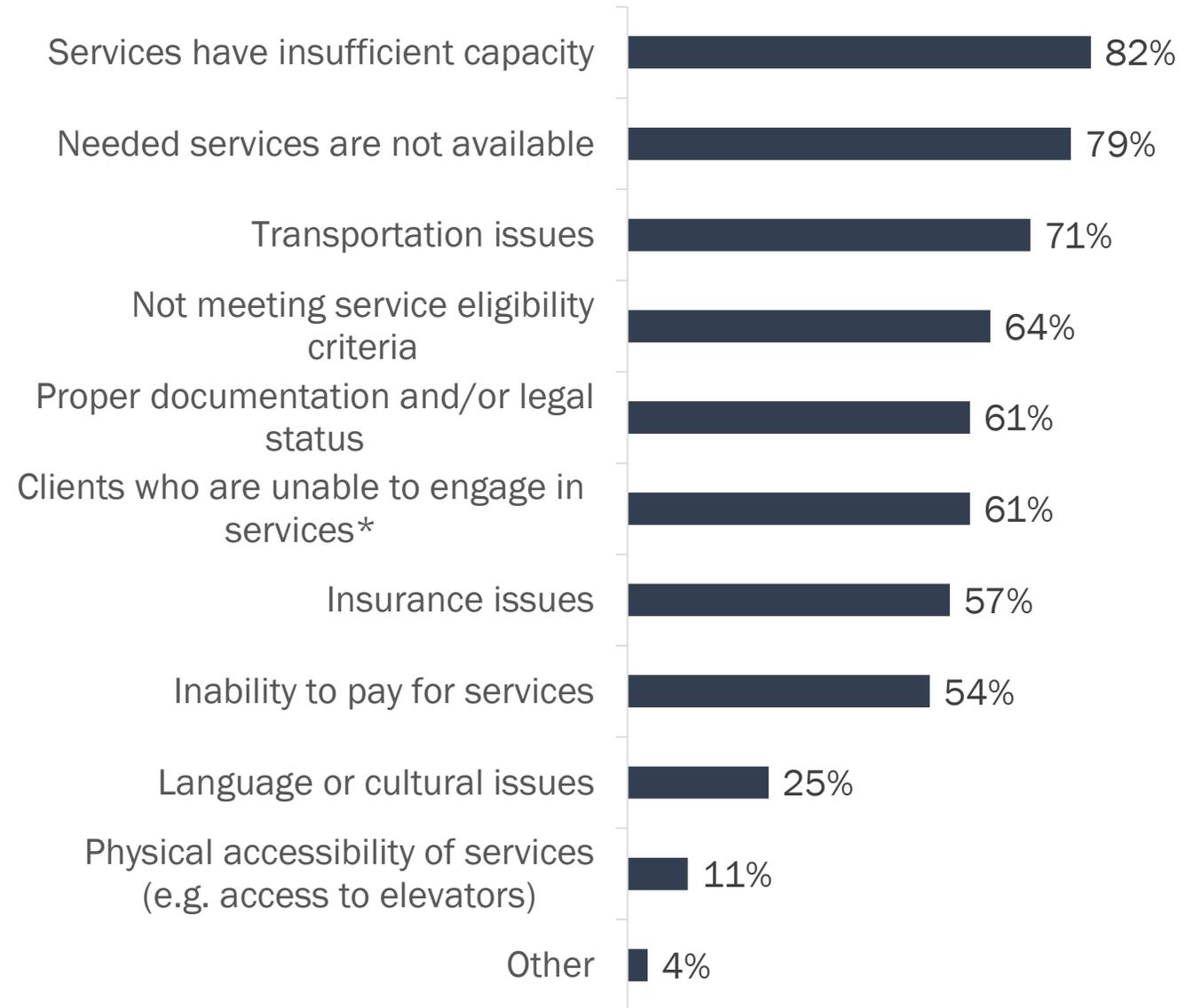
- **Transportation issues throughout state and more challenging in rural areas**
- **Needs for more:**
  - **Supportive services to get and keep housing**
  - **Information about resources and sources available**
  - **Behavioral health services within shelters and in the community**
  - **Support to find physical health and dental services**
  - **Childcare support**
  - **Legal services**

# Supportive Services: Barriers, Gaps & Needs

Source: ESHAP Shelter  
Survey, n=28

---

## Barriers to Obtaining Needed Services Faced by People Experiencing Homelessness



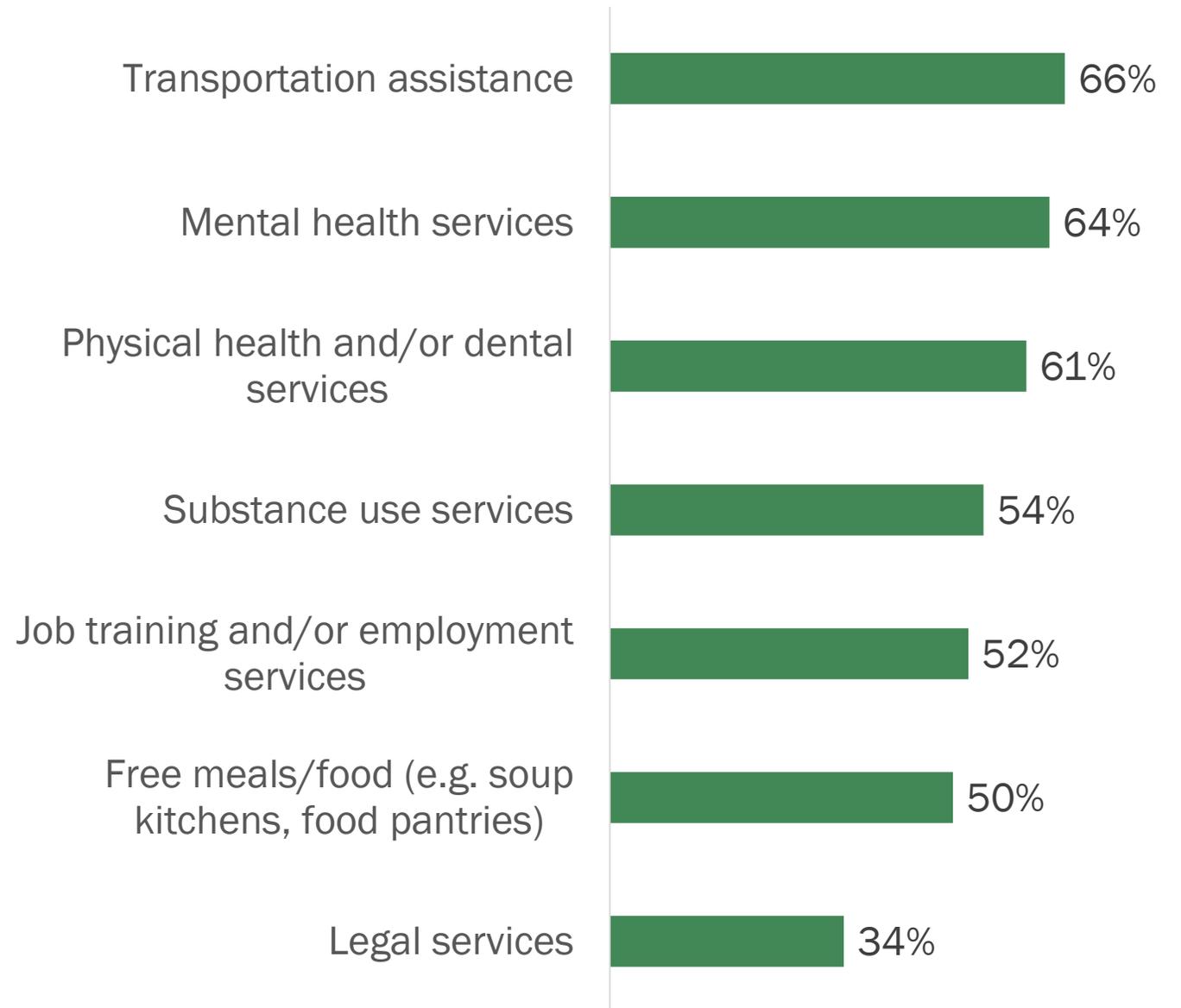
\*Clients unable to engage in services due to cognitive, physical and/or mental health limitations

# Supportive Services: Barriers, Gaps & Needs

Source: School Survey,  
n=90

---

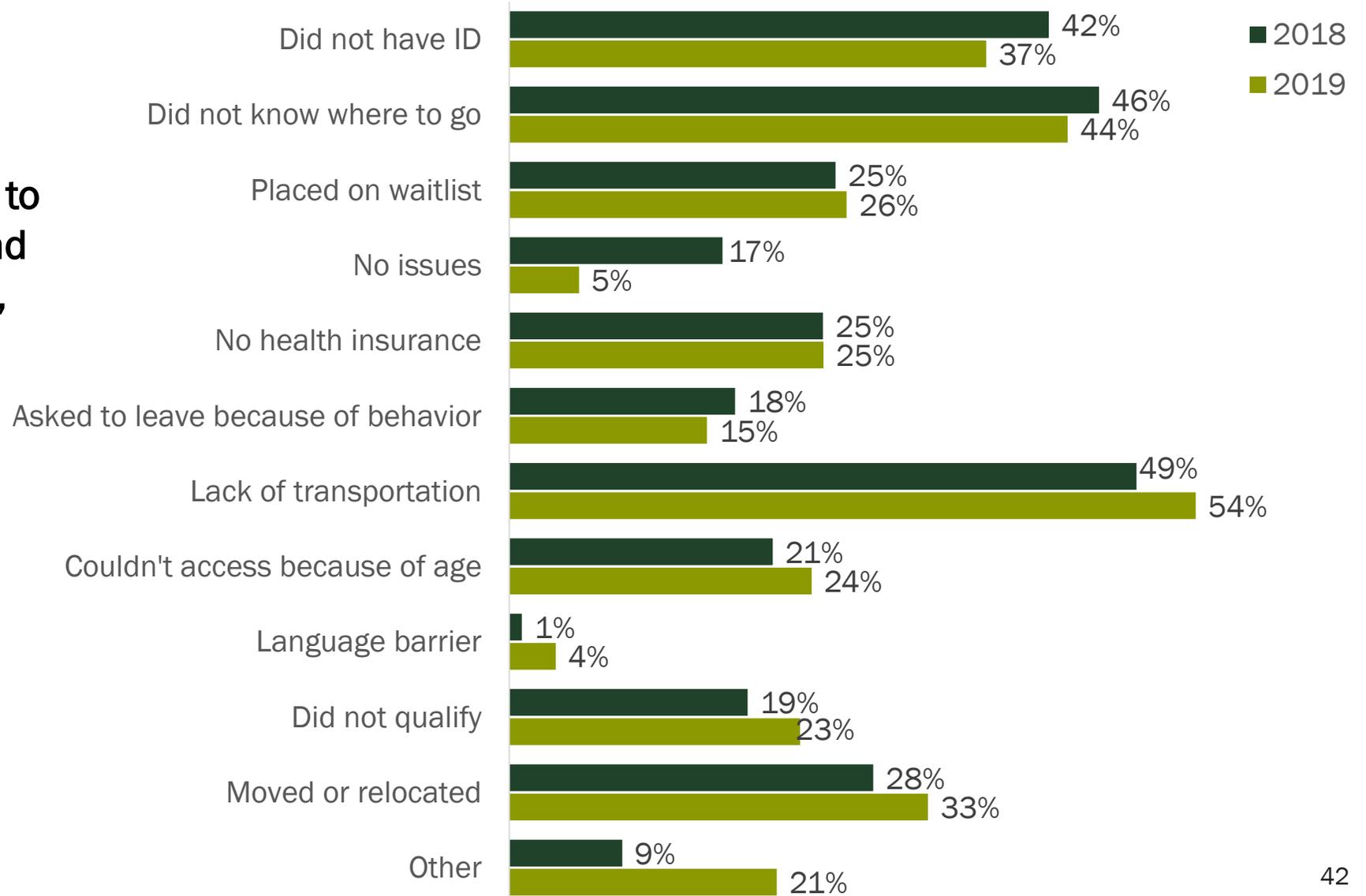
## Non-School-Related Services and Supports Needed by Students and Families Who Are Homeless in Maine



# Supportive Services: Barriers, Gaps & Needs

Source: 2018 (n= 102) and 2019 (n=110) Youth Survey Addendum

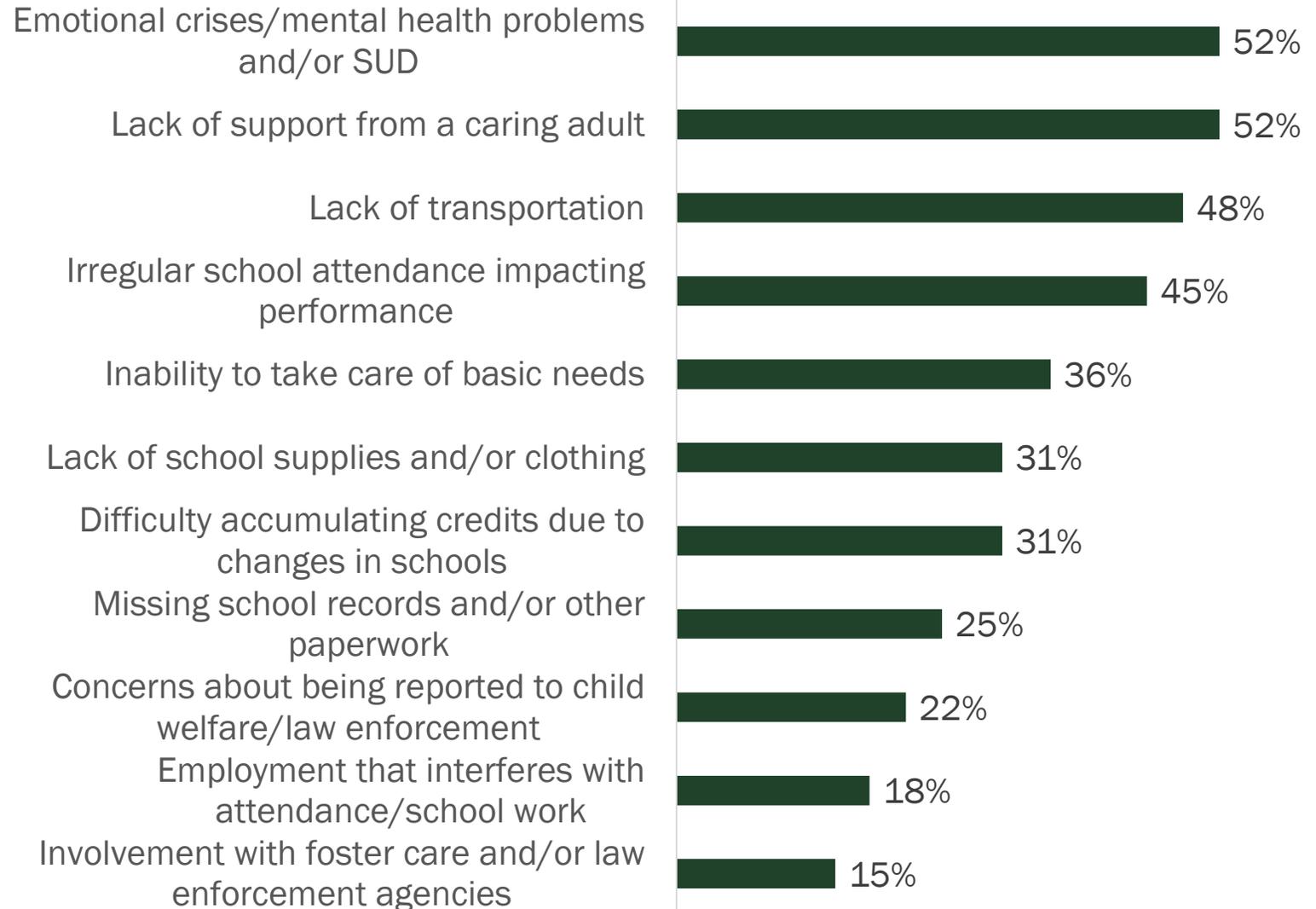
## Percent of Youth Experiencing Barriers to Receiving Services and Supports in Past Year, 2018 and 2019



# Unaccompanied Youth: Barriers, Gaps & Needs

Source: School Survey, n=87

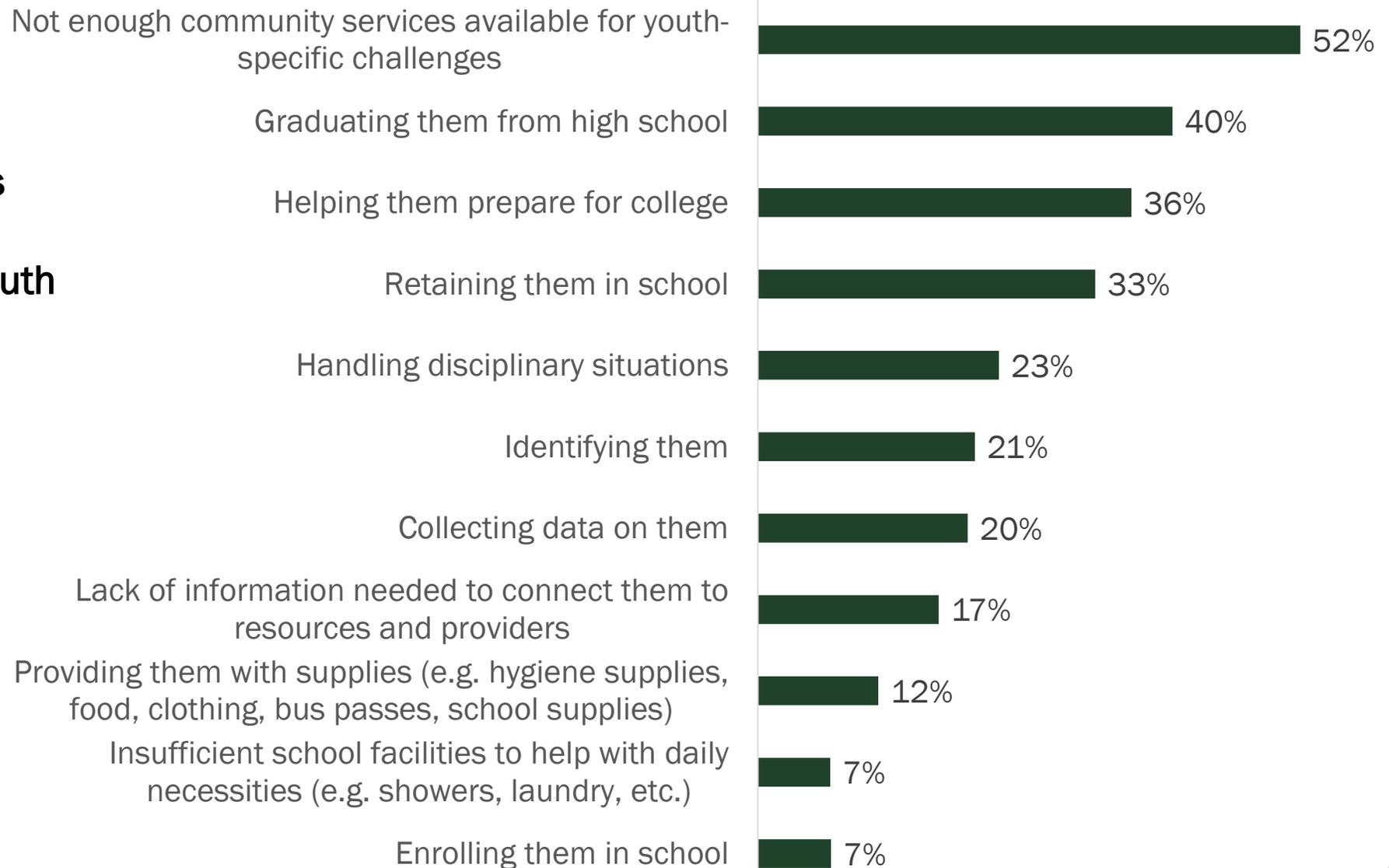
## Barriers Faced by Unaccompanied Youth Who Are Homeless in Enrolling, Attending, and/or Succeeding in School



# Unaccompanied Youth: Barriers, Gaps & Needs

Source: School Survey, n=86

## Challenges Schools Face in Serving Unaccompanied Youth Who Are Homeless



# Barriers to Enrolling, Attending and Succeeding in School

---

Sources: Focus Groups with Shelter Users  
and Stakeholder Interviews

- Not having transportation to school
- Not having classes or GED courses offered within shelters
- Fractured educational histories
- Being behind in school one, two or more years
- Youth not fitting the mold of kids that sit in classrooms; some need shorter and less intensive days
- Challenge of funding out-of-school educational opportunities



# Other Barriers, Gaps & Needs – General (Slide 1 of 3)

Source: Focus Group Participants

- **Criminalization of homeless behaviors which leads to arrest records and fines that further stand in way of people getting jobs or housing**
- **More forums to provide feedback and to engage in advocacy activities**



# Other Barriers, Gaps & Needs – General (Slide 2 of 3)

Source: Stakeholder Interviews & Shelter Survey

- **Large administrative burdens come with some of the funding**
- **Insufficient funding for shelters; they must obtain several funding streams, all with different administrative, reporting and data collection requirements**

# Other Barriers, Gaps & Needs – General (Slide 3 of 3)

Source: Stakeholder Interviews & Shelter Survey

- **Need for improved coordination and collaboration:**
  - Among shelters
  - Between shelters and other systems
  - Within the homeless and housing system by having coordinated entry, by-name lists, case coordination and communication across providers
- **Need more focus on preventing homelessness**
- **Need more long-term supports and services**

# SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS



## Summary of key Findings

Identified barriers, gaps and needs related to:

- Assessing shelters
- Getting and keeping housing
- Getting and obtaining supportive services
- Keeping youth from entering homelessness
- Serving and keeping children/youth in school
- Improving collaboration and coordination

# Homeless Initiatives Recommendations

(Slide 1 of 3)

1

Increase the availability of affordable and safe housing

2

Improve the availability and capacity of shelters

3

Enhance supportive services pre- and post-housing placement

4

Increase the availability of housing vouchers and subsidies

# Homeless Initiatives Recommendations (Slide 2 of 3)

5

Prioritize/develop strategies to address the needs of subpopulations such as unaccompanied youth and people exiting hospitals and criminal justice system

6

Use data to lead planning and program priorities

7

Form a Landlord Engagement working group within the MCoC

8

Work collaboratively with the criminal justice system to identify educational opportunities and housing and resource gaps

# Homeless Initiatives Recommendations (Slide 3 of 3)

9

Create a comprehensive training curriculum for providers and for the community to improve outcomes and to educate and reduce stigma about homelessness, mental health and substance use

# Youth Addendum Recommendations

1

Provide more prevention services to prevent youth homelessness

2

Provide more family reunification and family intervention services to help end youth homelessness

3

Provide more supports to facilitate exits into safe, stable, and sustainable housing and communities

4

Provide more supports to help youth stay in or complete school.

# Youth Addendum Recommendations (continued)

5

Provide more interventions that increase housing stability

6

Provide more interventions that address health and behavioral factors

7

Provide more trauma-informed interventions and services for youth

8

Provide more interventions that provide educational and employment supports

# Questions & Discussion

# CONTACT US WITH QUESTIONS



**Terry Camacho-Gonsalves,  
PhD**

*tcamacho@hsri.org*



**Ben Cichocki,  
ScD**

*bcichocki@hsri.org*

Thank You.

