
Portland Children's Levy Community Engagement 2024 Key Findings Report

The Portland Children's Levy

What is the Portland Children's Levy?

The Portland Children's Levy (PCL) was created to help children arrive at school ready to learn, provide safe and constructive afterschool activities for children and youth, prevent child abuse and neglect, support vulnerable families, support the well-being and development of children and youth in foster care, connect children and youth with caring adult role models, and relieve childhood hunger.

The Portland Children's Levy

Project Overview

In March 2023, the Community Council set goals for the community engagement process, recommended topics for community input, and identified priority communities to engage. The PCL Allocation Committee adopted the recommendations in June 2023, which informed our community engagement process.

Since October 2023, our team has designed and implemented a mixed-methods community engagement research process that enabled us to listen deeply to priority populations across Portland and amplify their voices.

The findings from our research endeavors will assist the Community Council in creating funding priorities recommendations for the Allocation Committee to consider in the next funding round.

The Portland Children's Levy

Project Goals

- **Learn** from diverse stakeholders about the most effective and needed services for children, especially children most affected by historical inequities and disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.
- **Identify** community solutions to improve outcomes for children and families, including culturally informed emerging grassroots strategies and pandemic recovery practices in PCL's program areas.
- **Build** positive relationships with historically marginalized communities by incorporating the city's core values.
- **Promote** community understanding and awareness of Portland Children's Levy's work, including the funding processes, services funded, and demographics of children and families served.
- **Improve** transparency in the community engagement process and ensure that community members who engage in the process receive ongoing communication about PCL and how it uses community feedback.

About Camille E. Trummer Consulting

Founded in 2020, Camille E. Trummer Consulting (CETC) is a boutique social impact consultancy specializing in social impact strategy, strategic communications, and community engagement.

CETC has partnered with local and national organizations to design inclusive, culturally resonant, and community-driven social impact projects focused on community economic development, environmental sustainability, and public health. Learn more at camilletrummer.com

Project Team:

- Camille E. Trummer, Account Director + Engagement Lead
- Melissa Burgess, Project Manager
- Tanisha Tate Woodson, Research Lead
- Annie Ozols, Research Analyst

About Community Engagement Liaisons (CELs)

- The Portland Children's Levy also contracted with PKS International. PKS is a local firm which holds an existing contract with the City of Portland and works to increase public engagement of marginalized communities.
- PKS operates the Community Engagement Liaison Program. Community Engagement Liaisons (CELs) are leaders in their culturally specific communities who specialize in community outreach and engagement activities.
- CELs worked with communities with over 20 preferred languages.
- Written surveys were transcreated and distributed in English, Spanish, Russian, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Nepali, and Arabic.
- Additionally, CELs verbally interpreted English surveys into additional languages where their community members may not read and write fluently in their preferred language. Those languages include: Somali/MaayMaay, Swahili, Burmese, Karen, Chuukese, Tongan, Laotian/Hmong, Mien, Cambodian, and indigenous West African languages.

Structure of this report

Starting in October 2023, Camille E. Trummer Consulting, engaged community members and providers across the city of Portland to understand their perspectives and amplify their voices. We used a culturally responsive, mixed-methods approach to gather insights from the community, which included collecting more than 600 responses on the community-wide resident and service provider survey, ten virtual and in-person focus groups with community members, and ten in-depth interviews with leaders of nonprofit organizations. Please see the Appendix for a detailed description of our methods for collecting information from communities.

The first section of this report provides demographic characteristics of the individuals who participated in our community engagement efforts. Following, the report is organized based on the findings elevated in the data from each of the six Portland Children's Levy programming areas: (1) early childhood, (2) mentoring and adult role models, (3) after-school programs, (4) foster care, (5) hunger relief, and (6) child abuse prevention & intervention. Each section highlights key findings and recommendations.

The report concludes with reflections on service providers' experience supporting children and families and the community's recommendations for increasing awareness of PCL programs.

Demographic Characteristics

We engaged 760 community members and providers across Portland

760

Individuals participated in the process

509

Community members completed the survey

153

Service providers complete the survey

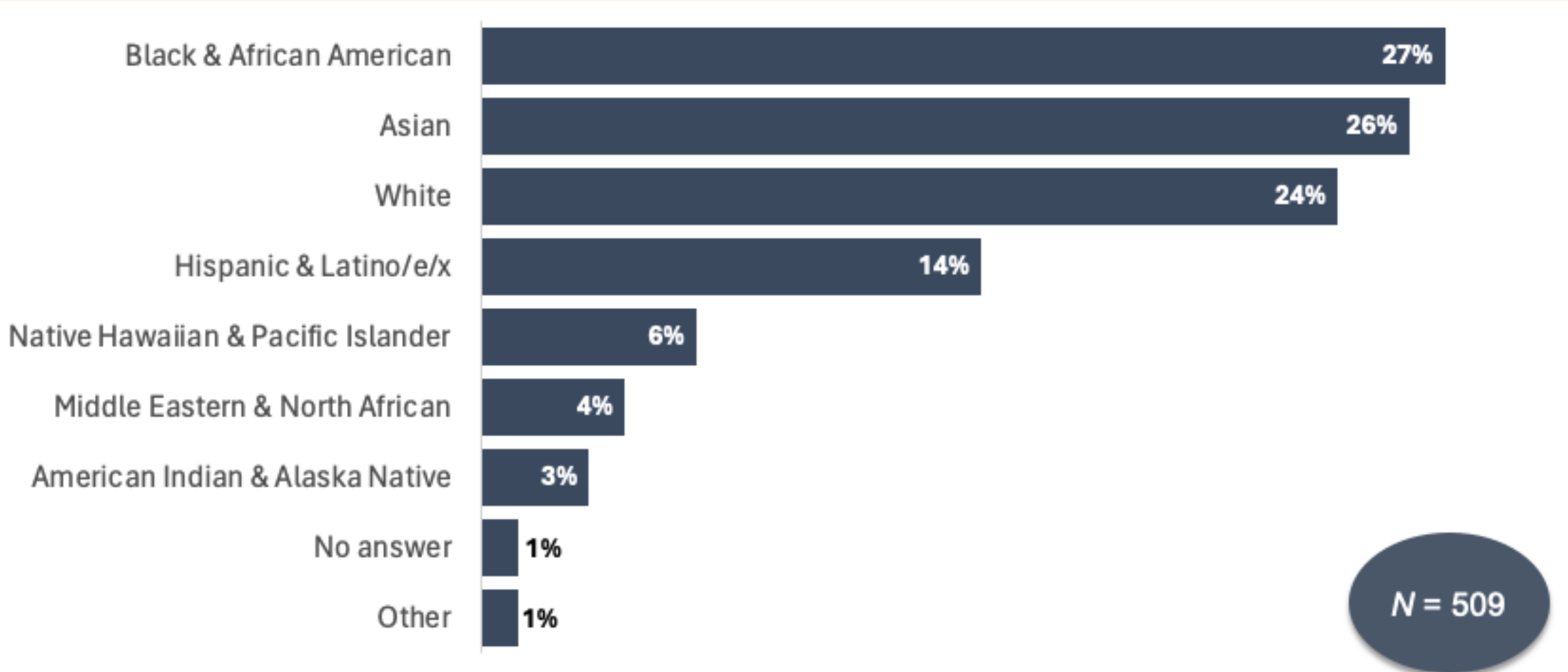
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Children, parents, and caregivers participated in focus groups

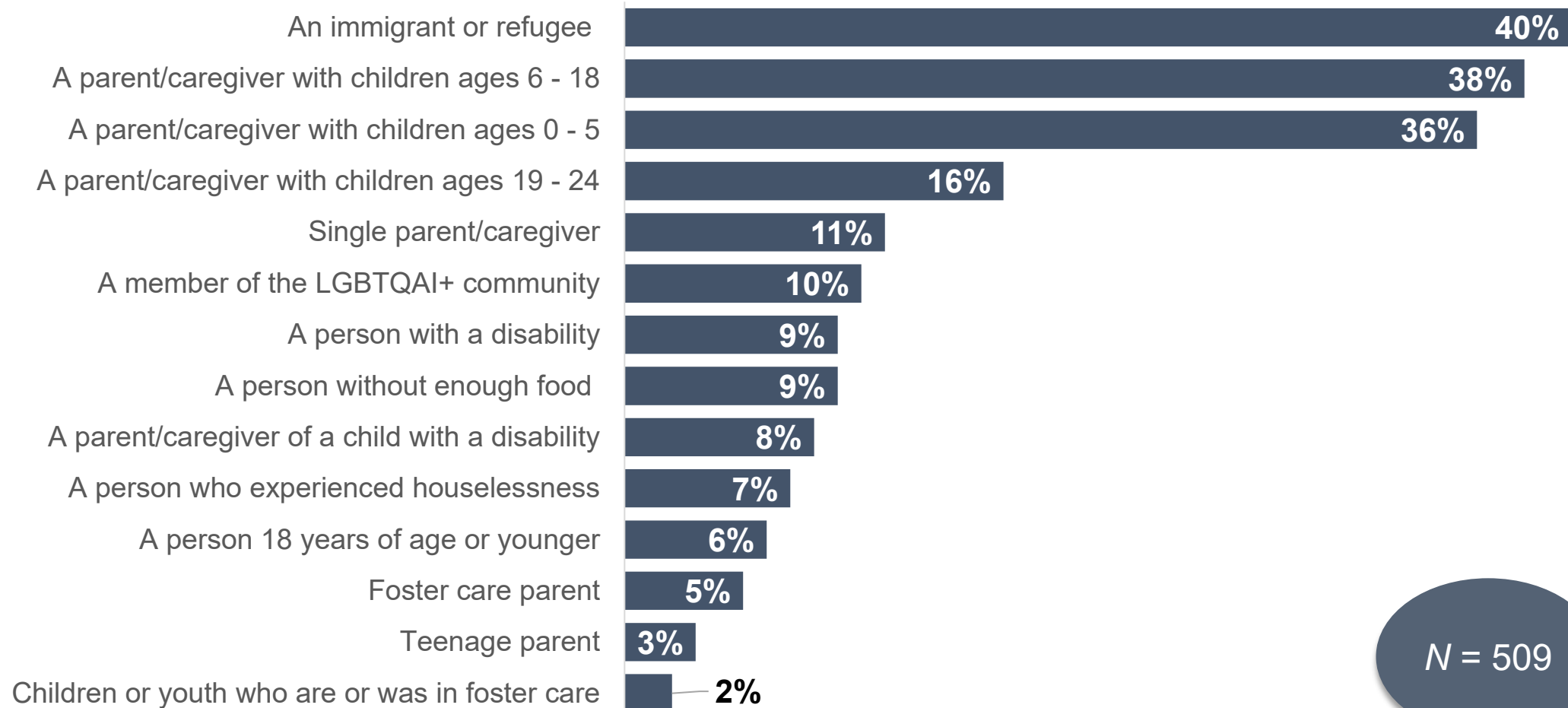
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Service providers participated in in-depth interviews

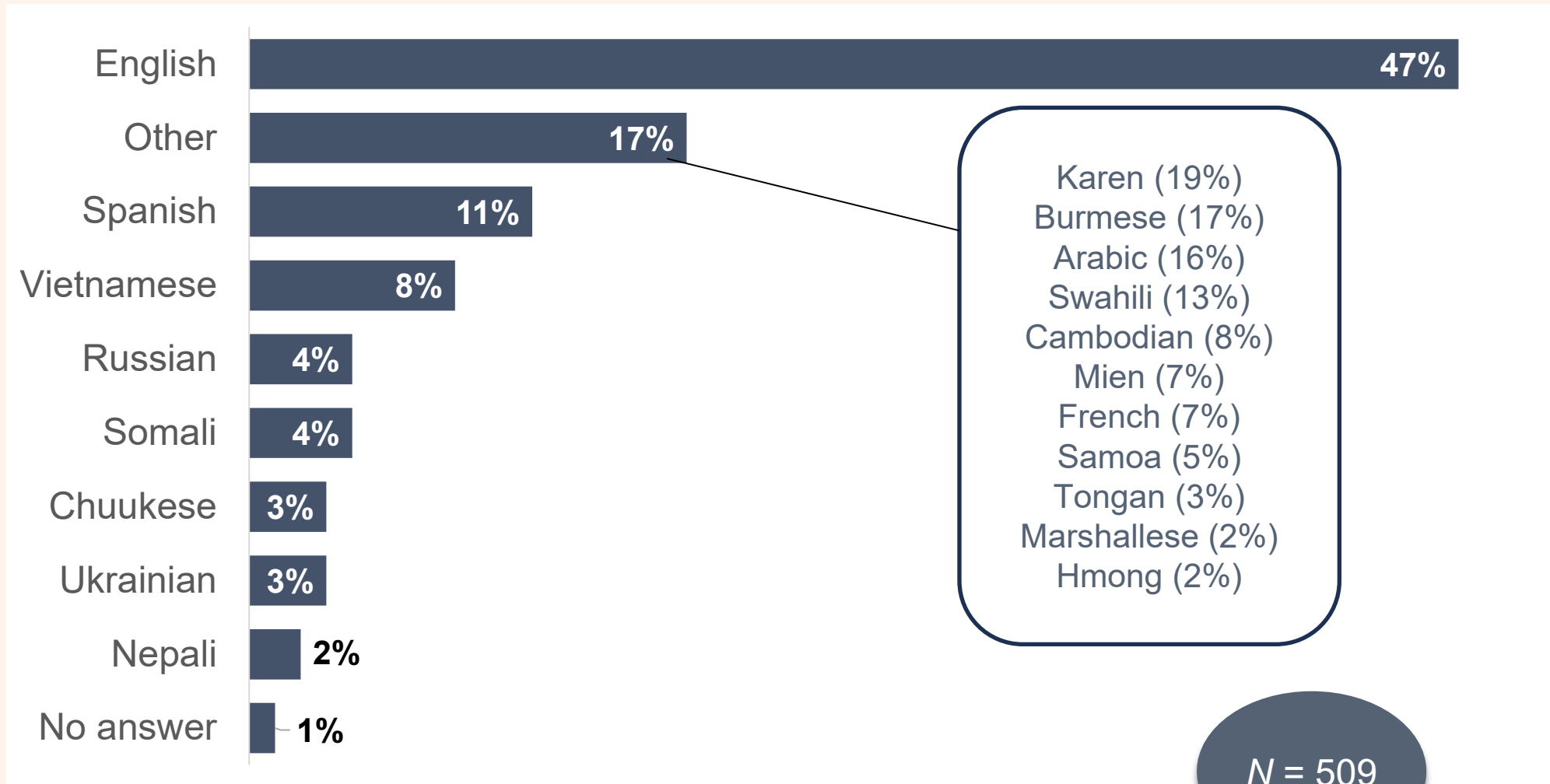
Community survey respondents: Race and Ethnicity



Community survey respondents: Representation of priority populations

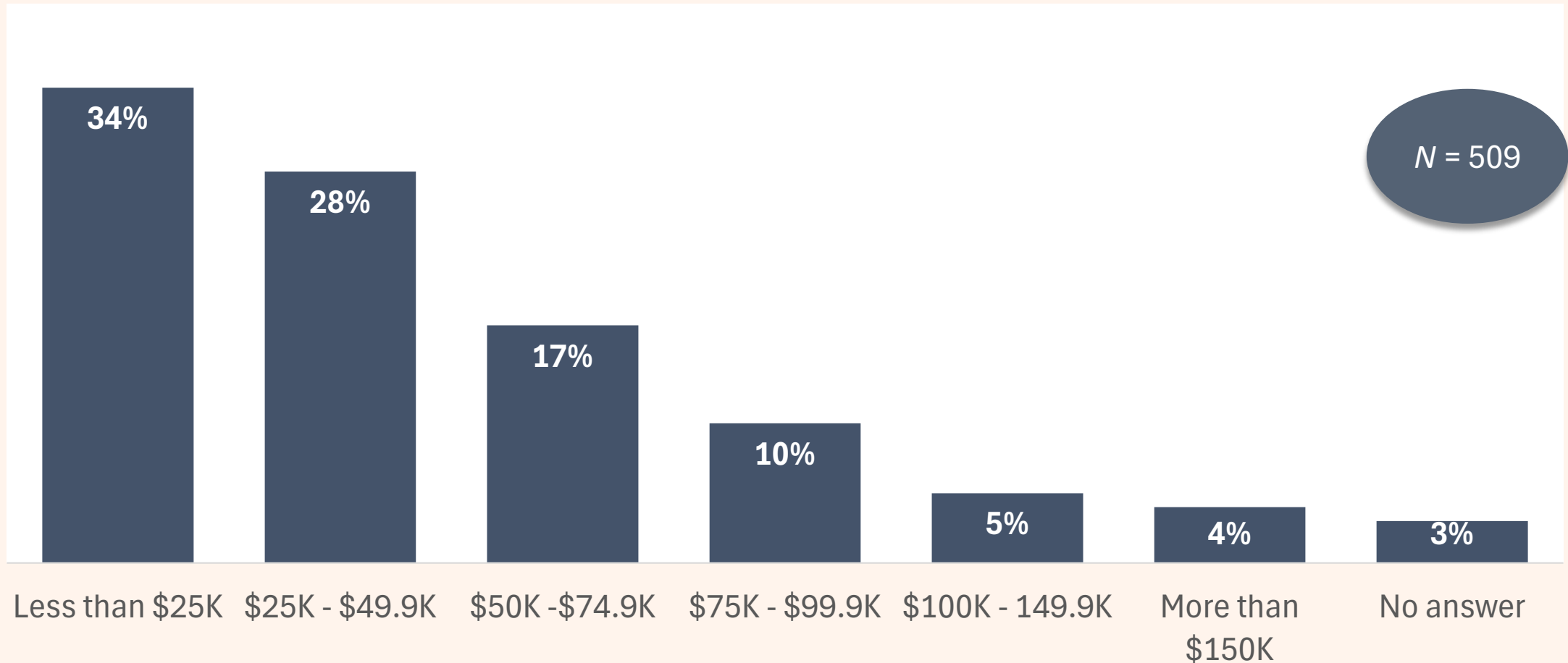


Community survey respondents: Preferred Language



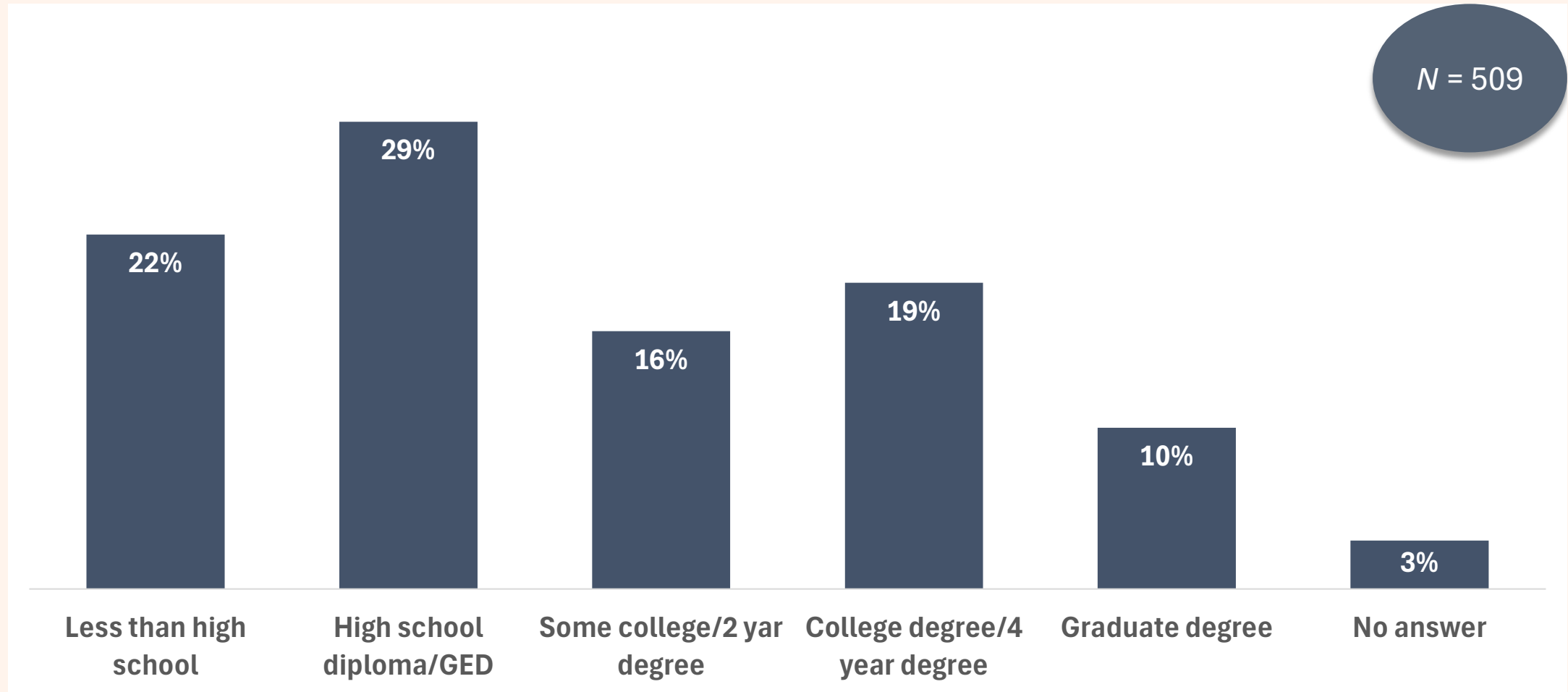
Community survey respondents: Household income

More than half of the community survey respondents lived in household earning less than \$50K per year.



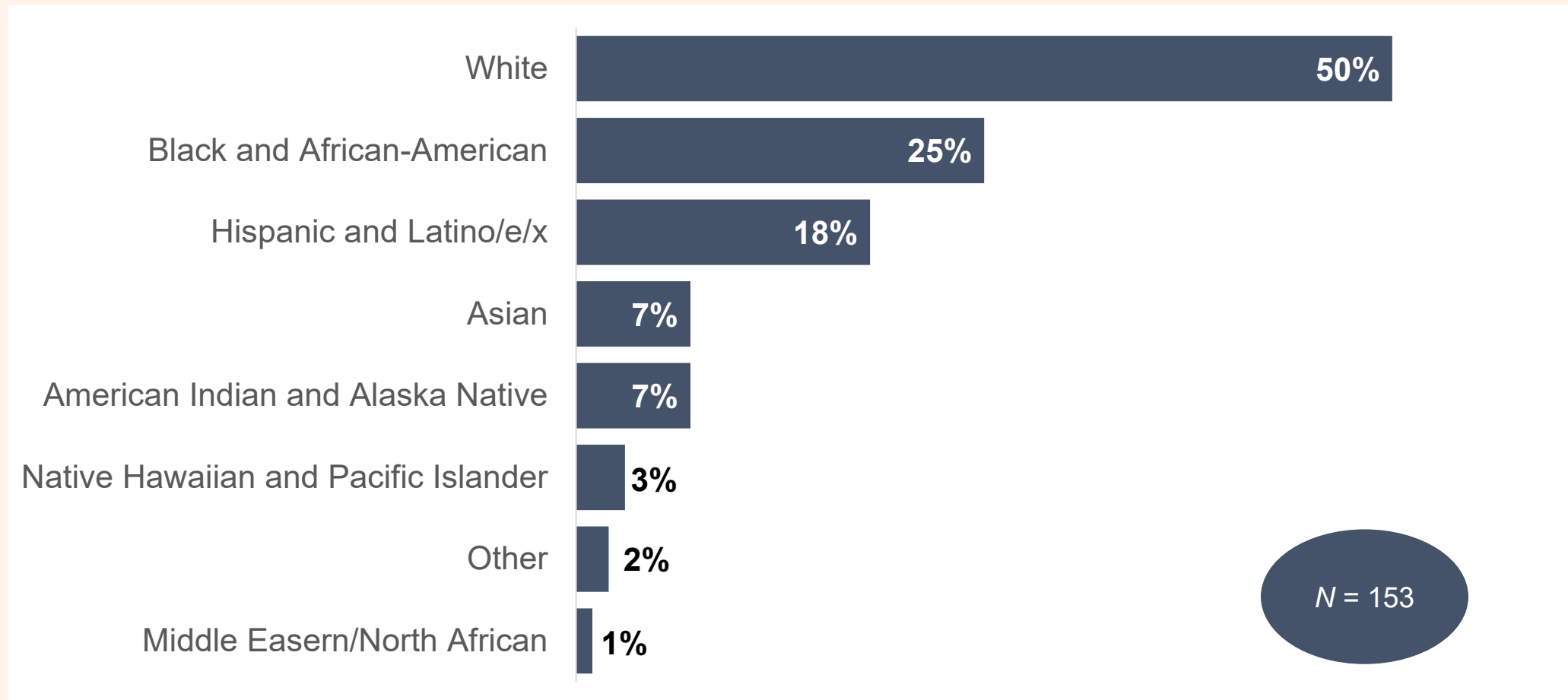
Community Respondents: Education Level

More than half of the community respondents received a high school diploma or less schooling.



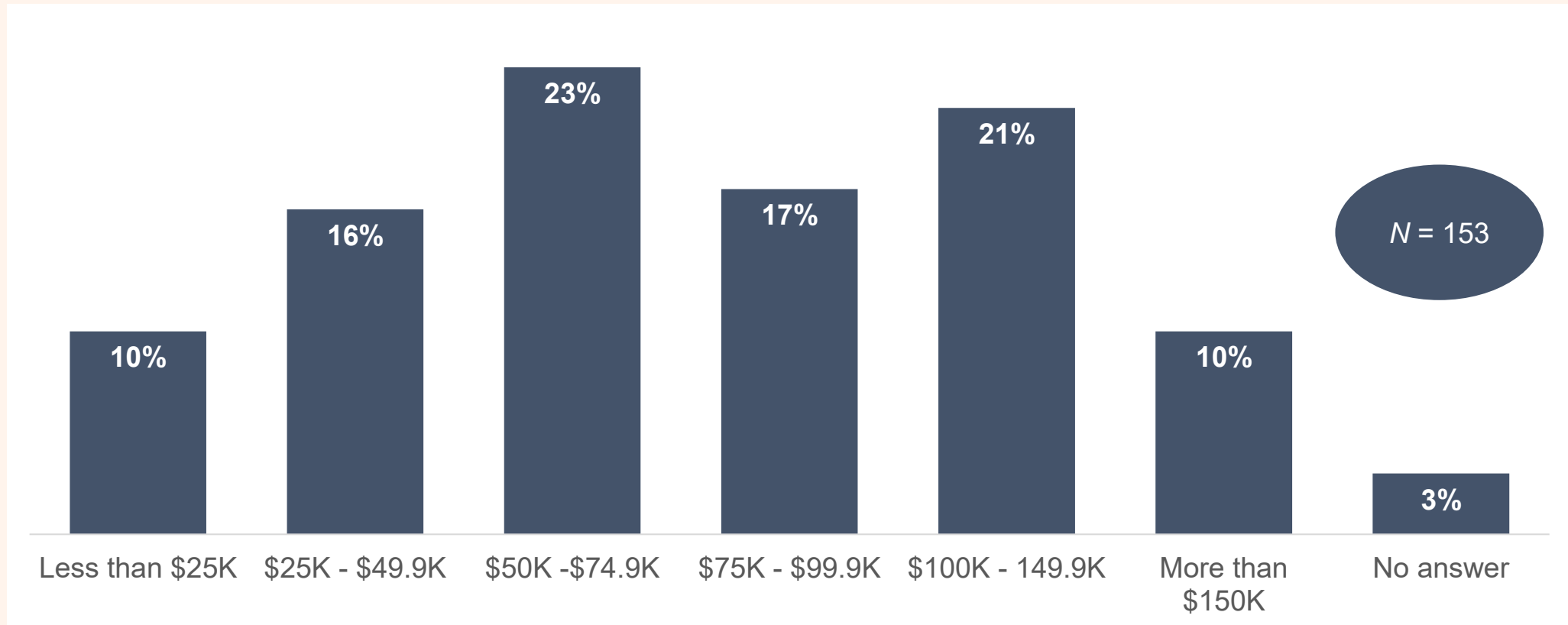
Provider survey Respondents: Race and Ethnicity

Half of the provider respondents identified as White (50%) and a quarter identified as Black and African American (25%).



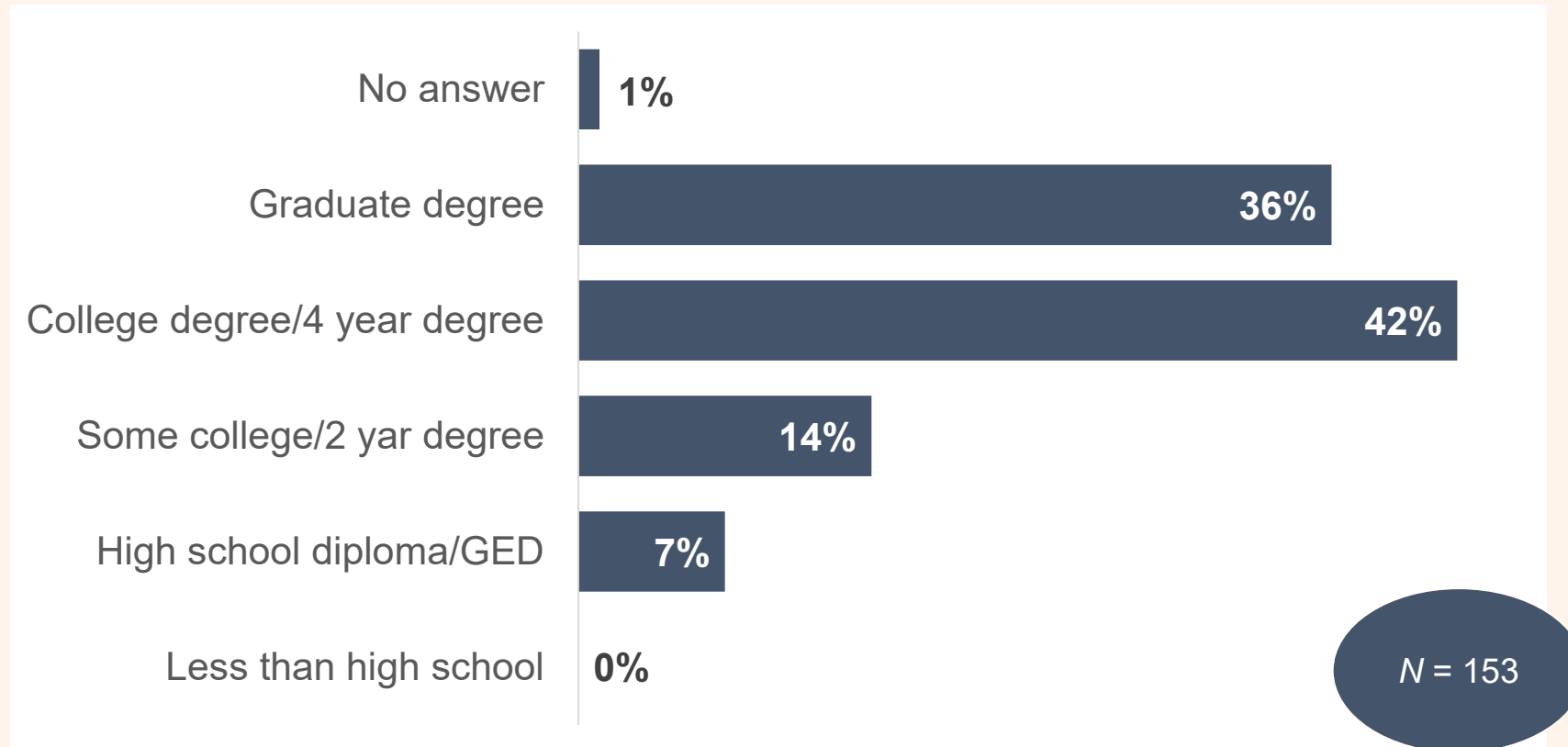
Provider survey Respondents: Household Income

Close to half of the provider respondents resided in households with an annual income of \$75K or more.



Provider Survey Respondents: Education Level

More than three-quarters of the respondents earned either a college degree (42%) or a graduate/post-graduate degree (36%).



87 residents participated in 10 focus groups

Focus group priority population	# Participants*
Spanish-speaking parents and children	15
Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Slavic and Middle Eastern youth and parents/caregivers	13
Portland students in grades 6 through 12	12
Houseless parents, caregivers, and youth	12
Low-income children and families	8
Youth with a disability and parents/caregivers of youth with a disability	7
Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) youth and parents/caregivers	6
Foster care youth and parents/caregivers	5
Teen and single teen parents	5
LGBTQAI+ youth	4

*Participants had intersecting identities.



11 interviews were conducted with service providers from the following organizations

- Higher Elevations Learning Place
- KAIROS
- New Avenues for Youth – SMYRC Program
- Oregon Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Needs (OCCYSHN) at OHSU
- Our Children Oregon
- Samoa Pacific Development Corporation
- Seeding Justice
- S.E.E.D. Portland
- Transgender Health Program at OHSU
- Unicorn Solutions
- Youth Unlimited

Early Childhood

Understanding the needs of families with children ages 5 and younger



Programs for families with children ages 5 and younger

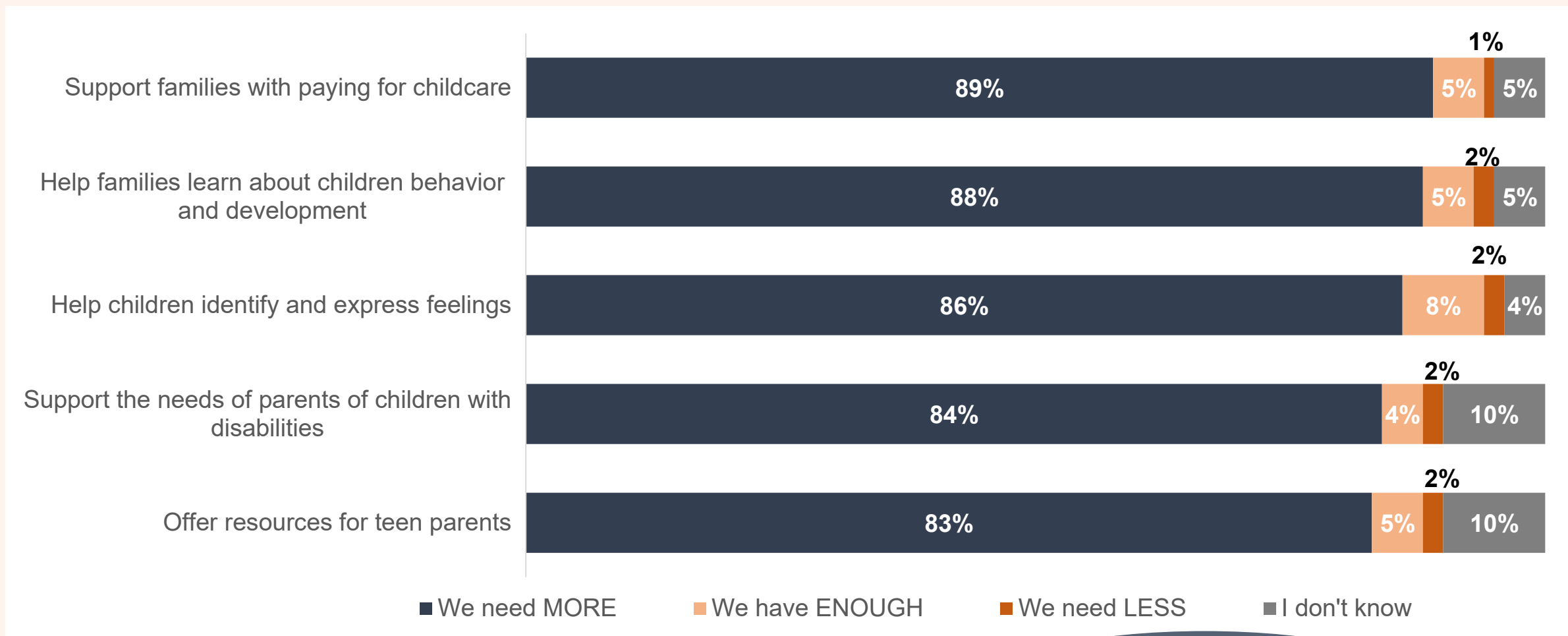
Community members and providers were surveyed and asked how much their community needs the following programs to support families with children ages five and younger.

Question: In my community, families with children ages 5 and younger need...

1. Programs that help **parents and caregivers learn about children's behavior and development** (e.g., managing difficult behavior)
2. Programs that help children learn **how to identify and express their feelings**
3. Programs that help **parents and caregivers of children with disabilities with their parenting needs**
4. Programs that **support families with paying for childcare**
5. Programs that **offer teen parents resources like childcare and parenting support**



In my community, families with children ages 5 and young need programs that...



N* = 662
*Includes community members and providers



Programs for families with children ages 5 and younger

- Community members and providers were asked how much, if any, their community and the community they serve need more programs to better support families with children ages five and younger.
- 36% of community members consisted of individuals with young children (ages five and younger)
- 69% of providers offer programs to these families

Comparing Provider and Community Perspectives on Programs for Families with Young Children

- Compared to providers, significantly more community members acknowledge the need for programs to help parents and caregivers learn about children's behavior and development, including how to manage difficult behavior (Community 90% vs. Providers 81%).
- For all of the options listed in the survey, providers were significantly more likely than community members to indicate they “do not know” regarding the level of need for these programs.



Comparing perspectives among community members

Programs to help families learn about children's behavior and development, including how to manage difficult behavior:

- Respondents whose preferred language was Russian were more likely to indicate that they have enough programs and their community did not need more
- 44% of Hispanic/Latinx respondents indicated they needed a lot more, whereas more than 60% of other racial subgroups indicated they needed a lot more.
- Respondents with children ages 5 and younger were significantly more likely than respondents with children between the ages of 6 and 18 to indicate that they need a lot more programs (73% vs. 65%)
- 100% of teenage parents indicated that they needed a lot more programs to learn about their child's behavior and development.



Comparing perspectives among community members

Programs to help children learn how to identify and express their feelings:

- Interestingly, there was a significant difference in the perceived need for more programs among different racial and ethnic groups. **Hispanic/Latinx** (89%), **American Indian** (100%), **Black** (92%), and **Asian** (90%) respondents were notably more likely to express the need for a lot more programs compared to **White** respondents.
- Teenage-parent respondents (92%), single-parent respondents (69%), respondents with a disability (73%), and respondents caring for foster care youth (90%) were all significantly more likely than LGBTQAI+ respondents (51%) to indicate they needed a lot more programs to support their children with identifying and expressing their feelings.
- Respondents with income between \$25K and \$50K (92%) were significantly more likely to indicate that they needed more programs than other income groups.
- Respondents whose preferred language was Russian or Ukrainian were significantly more likely than respondents with other preferred languages to indicate that their community had enough of these programs.



Comparing perspectives among community members

Programs to help parents and caregivers of children with disabilities with their parenting needs:

- 93% of respondents with a disability and 95% of respondents caring for a child with a disability indicated they need either a lot more or a little more programs.
- Compared to Hispanic/Latinx and White respondents, Black and Middle Eastern/North African respondents were significantly more likely to indicate they need a lot more programs to help families with children with disabilities.
- English-speaking (72%), Somali-speaking (85%), and Vietnamese-speaking (76%) respondents were more likely than other respondents to indicate they need significantly more programs.

Programs that support families with paying for childcare

- Black (73%) and Asian (76%) respondents were significantly more likely than White (60%) and Hispanic/Latinx (59%) respondents to indicate their communities need a lot more programs to support families with paying for childcare.
- 92% of respondents with children younger than 5 indicated they need more programs to support families with paying for childcare.



Comparing perspectives among community members

Programs that offer teen parents resources like childcare and parenting support

- Black respondents (87%) were significantly more likely than White respondents (77%) to indicate that there is a need for more programs that offer teen parents resources like childcare and parenting support
- Respondents with income less than \$50K were significantly more likely than respondents making \$75K to \$100K to indicate that they need a lot more programs to support teen parents
- Middle Eastern/North African (83%), American Indian/Alaskan Native (80%), and Black (69%) respondents were significantly more likely than Hispanic/Latinx (51%) and White (52%) to indicate they need a lot more programs
- Nepali respondents were significantly less likely than any other respondents to indicate their community needs more programs to support teen parents
- Respondents with a high school diploma were significantly more likely than respondents with a college degree to indicate their community need more programs to support teen parents with childcare and other forms of support



Families also need support with accessing healthcare and culturally responsive resources for their children

Interviews and open-ended survey responses illustrated the need for support in the following areas:

- Increase access to and awareness of physical therapy and occupational therapy in early learning settings to diagnose and address developmental delays as early as possible.
- Increasing awareness of affordable preschool slots that are available to families.
- Increasing support for community-based childcare providers, in-home and informal childcare providers who are already supporting their communities.
- Increase support for maternal health care for the mother's pre- and post-natal.

"It's harder for our community to trust outsiders just because we know how we all operate and how the culture is."
– Community Member

"We need more support for organizations that support doula care and maternal health. This is foundational for a good start."
– Provider

"The families we work with are in need of assistance during their prenatal and first postnatal year. They often are not yet aware of the level of support they need before they are in crisis during or after birth. Early intervention and support is key for these vulnerable new families, particularly new mothers."
– Provider

Access to culturally responsive care is important for health care and for education. Getting connected to culturally responsive education early in a child's life is important for many families, especially Spanish-speaking families.

Spanish-speaking communities face linguistic barriers to being engaged and advocating for their children in the education system.

In addition to language barriers, Spanish-speaking parents unfamiliar with the American education system feel powerless and often viewed as outsiders.

*“As a parent, I feel like the least supported person in the education system. Our kids receive instruction, teachers receive information and training, **but parents are alone and unsupported.**” - Parent*

*“We need to connect with the schools, so us [parents] understand it. **And parents learn what students are learning and experiencing.**” - Parent*

Getting connected to culturally responsive, high-quality, trustworthy childcare is important for many families.

While affordability remains a barrier for many, most parents/caregivers are more concerned about the safety of their children while in childcare.

*“As a parent, I feel like the **least supported person in the education system**. Our kids receive instruction, teachers receive information and training, **but parents are alone and unsupported.**” – Parent*

*“The childcare system is scary to me because **you see so many reports of kiddos who get hurt in those environments**. At the root of it, it’s not about being affordable, **it’s a matter of being trustworthy.**” - Parent*

Recommendations: Early childhood

- **Financial assistance:** Families and providers alike expressed the need for assistance with paying for childcare.
- **Culturally responsive, flexible care:** Families want to receive childcare services from providers who reflect their same cultural identity and can support families who do not work a typical 9AM-5PM work shift. Supporting in-home childcare providers is an avenue for supporting culturally responsive childcare providers.
- **Support education and awareness of neurodiversity among children five and younger:** Support and train childcare providers and educate caregivers on best practices for the healthy development of neurodiverse youth. Also, support families with learning about child behavior and development.
- **Fund early intervention and treatment programs:** Support families with accessing physical, occupational, and speech therapy.
- **Support more translation and interpretation services:** Having access to culturally specific, language-specific mentors and advocates in schools to support parents as they navigate systems could help with increasing opportunities for parent engagement and assist the parent with feeling more involved in their child's education.

Recommendations: Early childhood

- **Support families with children with disabilities:** Fund programs that support kids with disabilities and co-create learning environments where all children thrive - programs that cater to children with various levels of ability.
- **Support children with expressing their feelings:** Support programs that create a learning environment for children to identify and express their feelings. Support families by increasing their education and awareness of behavioral milestones and resources they can utilize to support their children's development.
- **Support access to culturally responsive healthcare:** Support programs that expand access to doula care and maternal healthcare to support families pre-and post-natal. Support programs that train clinicians in trauma-informed, culturally responsive care.

Mentoring & Adult Role Models

Understanding the important role of adult role models in supporting the growth and development of youth and young adults in the community



What are the best ways adult role models (outside of the family) can meet the needs of children/youth in your community?

Survey respondents were asked about the most important ways adult role models can support the needs of children in the community.

Question: What are the best ways adult role models (outside of the family) can meet the needs of children/youth in your community? *Select only three (3) answers.*

1. Connect youth to each other for positive development and reduce feelings of isolation.
2. Support youth's cultural, racial, gender, and sexual identity
3. Prevent youth from joining gangs
4. Support the healing of children and youth involved with violence or harmed by violence
5. Help youth develop leadership skills
6. Help youth ages 14-24 prepare and plan for college and careers

Role of adult role models

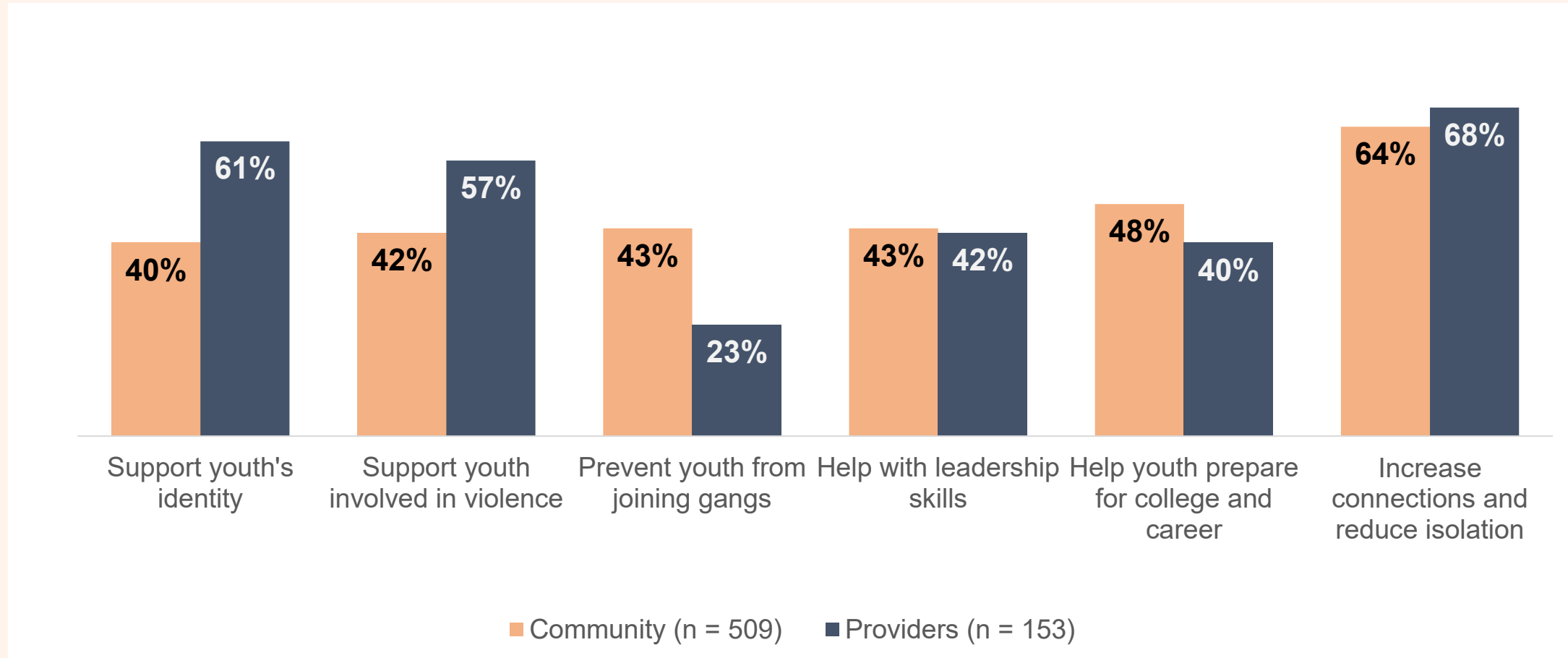
Among all survey respondents, community, and providers, the top priorities were:

- **Priority #1:** Connect youth to each other for positive development and reduce feelings of isolation (65%)
- **Priority #2:** Help youth ages 14-24 prepare and plan for college and career (46%)
- **Priority #3:** Support the healing of children and youth involved with violence or harmed by violence (45%) and support youth's cultural, racial, gender and sexual identity (45%)

Comparing community and provider perspectives:

- Providers and community members agree that connecting youth to each other for positive development and reducing feelings of isolation is a top priority for the community.
- Providers emphasize supporting the healing of children involved with violence or harmed by violence (57%) and supporting their gender and sexual identity (61%) significantly more than community members.
- Community members prioritize preventing youth from joining gangs significantly more than providers.
- Community members prefer programs that focus on prevention, while providers focus on programs with an emphasis on intervention.

What are the best ways adult role models (outside of the family) can meet the needs of children/youth in your community?





Comparing community perspectives

Connect youth to each other for positive development and reduce feelings of isolation:

- Immigrant and refugee respondents (67%), parents caring for children under the age of five (69%), and parents caring for a child with a disability (75%) were significantly more likely than other groups to identify this as a priority.
- Compared to Hispanic and Latinx respondents, Middle Eastern (78%), Asian (70%), Black (66%), and White (66%) respondents were significantly more likely to identify this as a priority area for the families in their community.
- Somali-speaking (90%) and Vietnamese-speaking respondents (73%) were more likely than others to indicate this as a priority.

Support youth's cultural, racial, gender, and sexual identity:

- LGBTQAI+ respondents (63%) and youth ages 18 and younger (57%) are significantly more likely than other groups to identify this as a priority area.
- Middle Eastern/North African (83%), Asian (50%), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders (53%) are significantly more likely to indicate this is a priority for their community.

Focus group discussions with Spanish-speaking families highlight the need for support with cultural and linguistic preservation.

Spanish-speaking parents highlighted the tension of preserving their culture and language while supporting their kids with adjusting to the American education system.

*“We have to teach our children about our values, culture, and language. They don’t speak Spanish at school and then stop speaking at home. **It becomes a fight for preservation.**”*
- Parent

*We need everything to be culturally-specific from after-school programs to mentors—**otherwise, our kids are confused about their identity.**”* - Parent



Comparing community perspectives

Prevent youth from joining gangs:

- Households with annual earnings less than \$75K were significantly more likely than other income-earning households to identify this as a priority.
- Respondents with a high school diploma or less education experience (48%) are significantly more likely than respondents who earned a college degree to identify this as a priority need for their community.
- Somali-speaking respondents were more likely than others to consider this to be a priority for their community (85%).
- 45% of parents/caregivers of a child ages 6 to 18 indicated this was a priority area for their family.
- Youth were significantly less likely than other groups to indicate this as a priority area (17%).

Support the healing of children and youth involved with violence or harmed by violence:

- Asian respondents were significantly less likely than other respondents to indicate this as a priority programming area.
- 52% of North Portland residents indicated this to be a priority area, which was significantly more than East Portland residents, where only 36% indicated this as a priority.
- Immigrant respondents were significantly less likely to indicate this as a priority area compared to others.

Comparing community perspectives

Help youth develop leadership skills:

- Youth were significantly less likely to indicate this as a priority.
- Respondents with a college degree (51%) were significantly more likely to indicate this as a priority than respondents with a high school diploma.
- Respondents earning \$25K or less are more likely to indicate this as a priority than higher-earning households.

Help youth ages 14-24 prepare and plan for college and career:

- Respondents earning an annual income of \$75K to \$100K were significantly more likely than others earning less to find this as a priority.
- 67% of youth indicated preparing and planning for college and careers were their top priority.

Youth need peer and adult role models to support them in navigating life and various transitions

Survey respondents and focus group participants mentioned the need for the following types of mentorship programs:

- Programs offering long-term, reliable, and culturally diverse mentor services
- Programs offering adult mentors who can provide personal and professional support, especially for single and teen parents
- Providing social connection activities for youth to feel connected
- Flexibility of mentors to be available on evenings and weekends
- Addressing turnover of professional mentors to ensure stability for youth
- Offering mentors that share the identity and experiences of the youth they serve
- Building skills of older youth to become mentors themselves
- Building basic life skills (e.g., budgeting)

Traditional program design is no longer meeting the needs of youth and their families

Youth explained how conventional mentoring programs have created more barriers to participation.

“I can’t go to mentor programs because it’s hard for me to get around without a car and public transportation isn’t safe anymore. I need a program where mentors show up during homeroom or advisory. You can’t rely on the student to show up first or ask for help.” - Youth

“[Mentoring] programs should be at school, and even better if the mentors are already involved with other school programs.” - Youth



Community members emphasize the need for consistent, accessible and affordable mentoring services

To bridge the gap between where youth currently are at in life and where they would like to go, they need strong, consistent mentors who help empower them, especially starting at a young age.

“Children need committed, consistent mentors/supportive people in their lives” – Provider

“Children need a safe community space where they can be with supportive people and access resources for free.” – Community Member

“More education and guidance are needed on self-esteem and self-expression for children.” – Community Member

“Some type of mentoring starting young, so maybe they don’t develop any of the other social-emotional problems that we’d have to give them support in later on some of the other things.” – Community Member

*“Counselor-in-training programs for other children to learn leadership skills and mentor younger peers.”
– Community Member*

“Mentors shouldn’t give up or stop services too soon. Or start when a kid is in their senior year. They should start from the beginning and stay right until the end, following up with students every week and/or every month. That way, students can see: OK, this person really cares about me and my progress. Back where I’m from [New Zealand] we made it a goal to have every student with a mentor and their goal was to make sure that kid graduated.”

– Parent

The need for youth mentors is clear—but beyond that parents/caregivers advocated for mentors that can serve them too, as a more holistic approach.

The need for mentors who can support adults is equally as important as those who can guide youth.

“I feel like for foster parents, it would be great for them to also have mentors, just to help. Foster care parents could go to the mentor for advice on how to learn about how their foster kid is feeling, especially if the kid doesn’t want to communicate with them.” - Parent

“If I were to design a program, I would have one that offers one-on-one and group mentoring so parents could choose based on their needs and comfort level.” - Parent

“Parents also need support and mentorship. There needs to be a way to provide easy access and communication with children and their families. We need to find more ways to help parents access stable employment.” – Provider

“More programs are needed for young parents to support and educate them.” – Parent

Youth and parents/caregivers seek mentors that have similar lived experience, enabling them to mentor from a place of experience versus sympathy

A key theme of relatability and lived experience surfaced across all conversations with youth and parents about their ideal mentor, especially those with a family member who has a disability.

“If I have a mentor, I’d want them to have the same cultural background as me, so that it’s easier to share things that they immediately understand.” - Youth

*“My daughter identifies as lesbian, so it was helpful that her skills builder was also a lesbian. She felt more comfortable sharing things and going through being a teenager and coming out...it’s someone that’s on their level.”
-Parent*

*“Mentoring programs should **prioritize culturally responsive, empowering, and strengths-based approaches.**”
- Provider*

“We need mentors who we can relate to. Sure, you can relate to me because we are both women, but do you have kids? If not, you can’t relate or help me, you can only sympathize with my situation.” - Parent

“The specific intersectionality of identities I think is probably one of the most important parts. I have a mentor who also has ADHD, and we can absolutely connect on that level, but she cannot connect with me in my queer identity and my queer experience.”

– Youth

**Youth and young adults
desire harm reduction
education and tools to
help prevent teen
overdoses.**

As teen overdose rates increase, more youth are interested in harm reduction education to prevent injury and unintended deaths.

“We need wider use and knowledge of how to use Narcan and other stuff like that, because it’s needed, especially for teenagers. Many are scared to call the police.” - Youth

“If they’re at a party or something and someone overdoses, they’ll just panic and leave them because they are too scared to call the police and don’t know how to use Narcan or other harm reduction supplies.” - Youth

“There is rampant drug use and addiction in our communities and we need the knowledge to address it.” - Youth

Youth from immigrant, refugee, and ESL families experience added pressure to make hard decisions on behalf of their families

Youth from immigrant, refugee, and ESL families often feel the impacts of adultification—forcing them to act as the “head of household” and make decisions for their entire family

“There needs to be more translation services for ESL families. I’ve had to leave school and call off work to translate for my parents and grandparents so they can make decisions during their medical visits.” – Youth

“My dad needed to be in recovery for alcoholism but it was hard for my mom to find services in our language, so I had to do research and make calls.” – Youth

“There are a lot of [immigrant/refugee/ESL] students that go to school late or couldn’t be at school. They had to take care of their little siblings or take them to school first. Many teachers saw them as kids who didn’t want to be at school, but really they just had to take care of their family and work and provide for them.”

– Youth

“If it were up to me, I would design a mentoring program that has a central hub at each school. Each site would have plenty of full-time mentors that have the same capacity as our school counselors. [Each mentor] could honor drop-in appointments, or you would be automatically scheduled for visits a few times a year, so no matter what you’re not left behind.”

- Youth

To support the health of youth, providers offer some creative solutions for increasing youth social connection and reducing feelings of isolation.

Emerging Strategies:

- Hosting casual social activities.
- Offering group therapy to help fill the gap while on wait lists.
- Bring therapists where youth and children are (school, community centers, etc.)
- Offering training in gender-affirming care—from mental health to primary care—so there is no wrong door.

“What can we do in the meantime of them waiting for services? What group could we put them in to give them a little bit of clarity or keep them stable?” - Provider

“Just showing up where youth already are really reduces those barriers.” - Provider

Recommendations: Mentoring

- **Support the sustainability of programs:** Youth and families are seeking sustainable mentorship programs to help their youth build strong, nurturing relationships with a role model.
- **Strengthen the field of professionals that provide mentoring programs:** Support programs that hire culturally responsive and professionally paid mentors that are committed to establishing long-term mentoring relationships.
- **Support programs that provide mentorship for youth and their parents/caregivers.** Parents and their youth are seeking peer mentors, particularly mentors with similar lived experiences and cultural identities. Parents are seeking mentors who can provide support in financial literacy and developing other life skills.

Recommendations: Mentoring

- **Increase accessibility and awareness:** Families and youth desire mentorship programs and mentoring small groups that are available in centralized hubs where parents and students naturally gather (e.g., schools, community centers, etc.).
- **Support youth who experience violence, grief, and loss.** Families and youth seek culturally-responsive support to help youth and young adults learn coping skills.
- **Support families with increasing connections and reducing feelings of isolation:** Families and youth look for opportunities to gather and be in community with each other, especially with people who share similar gender, cultural and racial identity. Provide opportunities for individuals with shared experiences to gather and learn from each other.
- **Increase access to mental health support:** Youth seek programs that enable them to express their feelings and support their mental health and well-being. Getting connected to culturally responsive providers with shared lived experiences is important.

After-School Programs

Understanding the type of programs and resources needed to support youth when they are out of school (e.g., after school, summertime, etc.)



What are the three most important things children and teenagers need when they are not in school?

Survey respondents were asked about the most important needs of children and teenagers when they are out of school.

Question: What are the most important things children and teenagers need when they are not in school.
Select only three (3) answers.

1. Help with tutoring and homework
2. Access to programs that affirm gender identity and sexual orientation
3. Learn how to handle conflicts without violence
4. Access to programs that offer arts, sports, recreation, and/or science and technology activities
5. Access to paid internships and work experiences for older youth
6. Access to programs to learn how to identify and manage stress and develop relationships
7. Access to activities for children/youth with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities



What are the three most important things children and teenagers need when they are not in school?

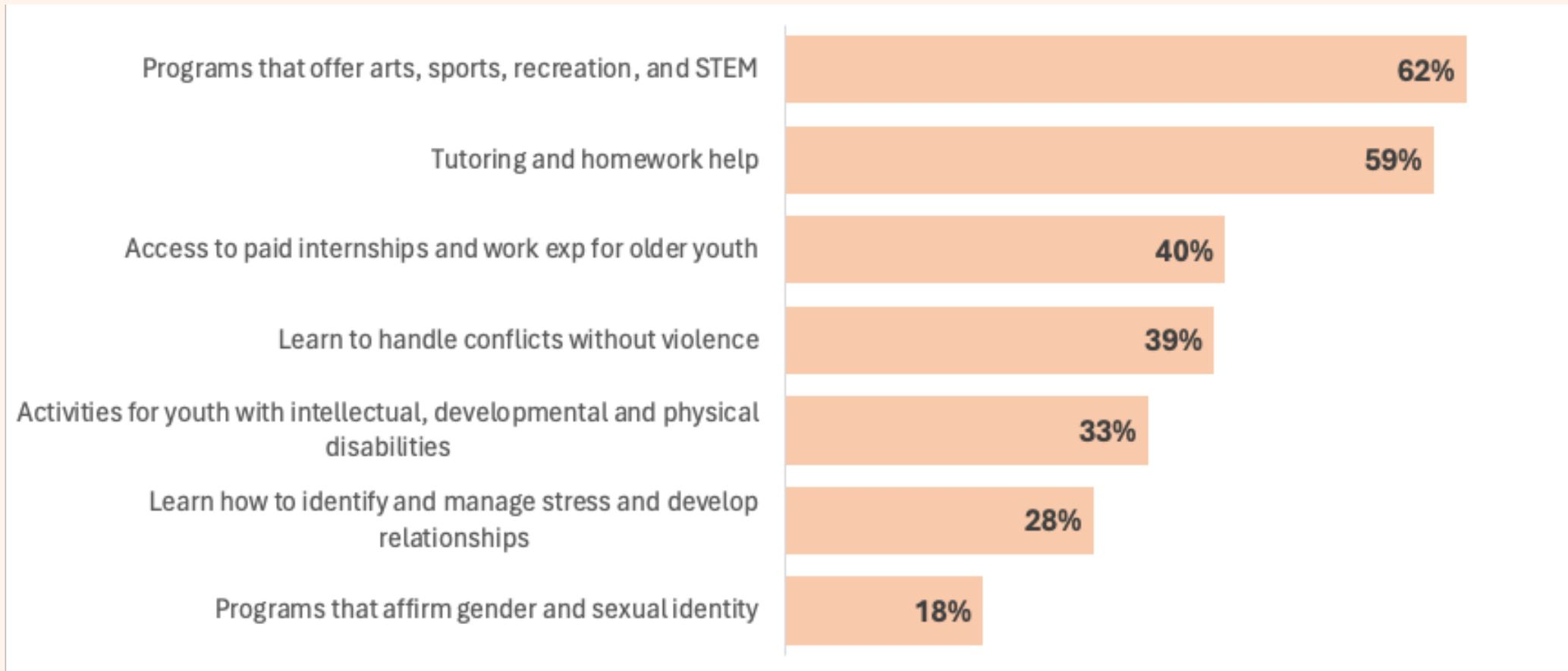
Among community members and providers, the top three important areas or priorities that children need when they are not in school are the following:

- **Priority #1:** Access to programs that offer arts, sports, recreation, and/or science and technology (65%)
- **Priority #2:** Help with tutoring and homework (53%)
- **Priority #3:** Access to paid internships and work experiences for older youth (41%)

Community Members and Provider Members ' Perspectives

- Community members and providers agreed that access to art, sports, recreation, and/or science and technology programs is a top priority for their communities.
- However, community members' and providers' responses were not congruent with their second and third priorities. Community members are significantly more likely than providers to express needing programs to help children with tutoring and homework (59%) and access to paid internships and work experience for older youth (40%)
- Providers emphasize a need for more programs for youth to learn how to identify and manage stress and develop relationships (48%) and learn how to handle conflicts without violence (44%).

Community members were asked “What are the three most important things children and teenagers need when they are not in school?”



N = 509

Comparing community perspectives

Help with tutoring and homework:

- Black (63%) and Asian (73%) respondents were significantly more likely than white respondents to express wanting more programs focused on tutoring and homework support.
- 43% of youth and 63% of parents/caregivers of children ages 6 -18 indicated they would like to have tutoring and homework support programs.
- Respondents earning less than \$50K annually, having a high school diploma, and living in East Portland indicated that having programs that support their children academically was a top priority.

Access to programs that affirm gender identity and sexual orientation:

- LGBTQAI+ respondents (37%) were significantly more likely than other groups to indicate having access to gender-affirming programs was important.

Learn how to handle conflict without violence:

- Respondents with children ages 5 and younger (42%) and respondents who experienced homelessness (51%) and without enough food (49%) were significantly more likely than individuals with children between the ages of 6 and 18 to prioritize this as a programmatic area.
- Respondents with annual household incomes of \$75K and less were significantly more likely than other households to express a strong desire for programs to help youth learn how to handle conflicts without violence



Comparing community perspectives

Access to programs that offer arts, sports, recreation, and/or science and technology activities:

- Survey respondents earning more than \$100K annually (88%) and respondents with a college degree (74%) are significantly more likely than less-earning respondents and people with less than a college degree to indicate a need for programs that focus on arts, sport, recreation, and STEM.
- 63% of youth and 65% of parents/caregivers with children 6 to 18, indicated this was an area in which they would like to see additional programs.

Access to paid internships and work experiences for older youth:

- 67% of youth who completed the survey and 60% of caregivers with children connected to foster care are more likely to indicate a strong need for these programs.
- This was the top priority area for youth 18 years of age and younger.
- Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander respondents are significantly less likely than other respondents to indicate this as a top priority (19%).

Access to programs to learn how to identify and manage stress and develop relationships:

- Respondents experiencing homelessness (49%), not having enough food (45%), or a person with a disability (45%) were significantly more likely than other groups to indicate access to these programs was a priority.



Comparing community perspectives

Access to activities for children/youth with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities:

- Survey respondents with children with a disability (50%) and parents with foster care children (50%) were more likely than others to indicate access to activities for children/youth with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities was important for them.
- This programming area was also the top priority for families with children with disabilities.

Children and youth with disabilities and special health needs are not effectively being served in school and afterschool settings

Children and youth with disabilities and special health needs are experiencing barriers to participation in programs:

- Some families opt for homeschooling which can be further isolating
- Not enough training for programs and organizations to learn how to adapt
- Need for more awareness about targeted universalist strategies that support youth with disabilities and those who are neurotypical (e.g. structured literacy)
- Transition from youth to adult disability support services is confusing and cumbersome

“Very few afterschool programs seem to have the ability to offer adaptive services in a meaningful way for folks who have sensory issues or language communication difficulties all the way up through more visible physical disabilities.” - Parent

Community members and providers want to experience a coordinated care approach to assisting youth and children with disabilities.

Increasing awareness and ability to assess and support youth and children with disabilities is important.

Community members and providers offer the following strategies:

- Build service providers' and teachers' skills to create more inclusive settings for children
- Invest in personal service workers and resource coordinators that can directly help families navigate services and resources
- Create awareness and connections so professionals can talk to each other and empower families across the care system.

“We refer to this as cross systems care coordination... having organizations think through how they can be inclusive to children with disabilities and special health needs in their particular setting and how they can support families in getting the resources that allow their children to be included in particular settings.” - Provider


Families want affordable opportunities for their youth to engage in meaningful experiences when they are not in school

Open-ended survey responses and interviews with community leaders suggested that youth need more of the following programs when they are out of school:

- More resources to support working caregivers to provide affordable care during after-school and summer hours
- Creating a sense of belonging for LGBTQ2SIA+ youth by supporting Gay Student Associations (GSAs) and Queer Student Associations (QSAs) in school —especially for 9-13 year-olds
- Providing tutoring and academic support to help kids catch up


“More programs around sports, arts, etc., to support youth in having more opportunities to engage in their sparks, learn new things, be engaged in positive and community building activities.” – Provider

“We need more resources and programs that are age-appropriate. This will help us keep our kids off screens at home and help children process emotions and communicate their feelings.” – Community Member



Recommendations: After-school programs

- **Consistent, affordable, and sustainable:** Families expressed the desire to have access to after-school programs that were offered year-round and for youth as young as preschoolers. Families also want to see the programs exist in the community for long periods of time.
- **Support a variety of programs that support youth's varying abilities:** Families would like to see options for after-school programs that include sports and recreation but also creative arts, STEM, tutoring, and homework support. Create programs that support the diverse needs of youth, especially those experiencing intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities.
- **Programs that support skill development :**
 - Career and skills building to prepare for the workforce
 - Tutoring and academic support to help kids catch up



Recommendations: After-school programs

- **Cultural preservation programs:** Programs offered in various languages (e.g., Spanish, Russian, etc.) should be created and implemented by culturally specific community based-organizations. This would create spaces for youth to express their cultural and linguistic identities.
- **Support cultural identity:** Programs that help preserve cultural identity and help youth identity and express their cultural and racial background are important.
- **Support QSAs (queer student associations) and GSAs (gay student associations).** These programs are at low capacity and need additional support to continue providing youth safe spaces.

Foster Care

Understanding the needs of families with foster care youth and youth who are currently or were formerly in foster care



Programs for children and youth who are or were in foster care systems

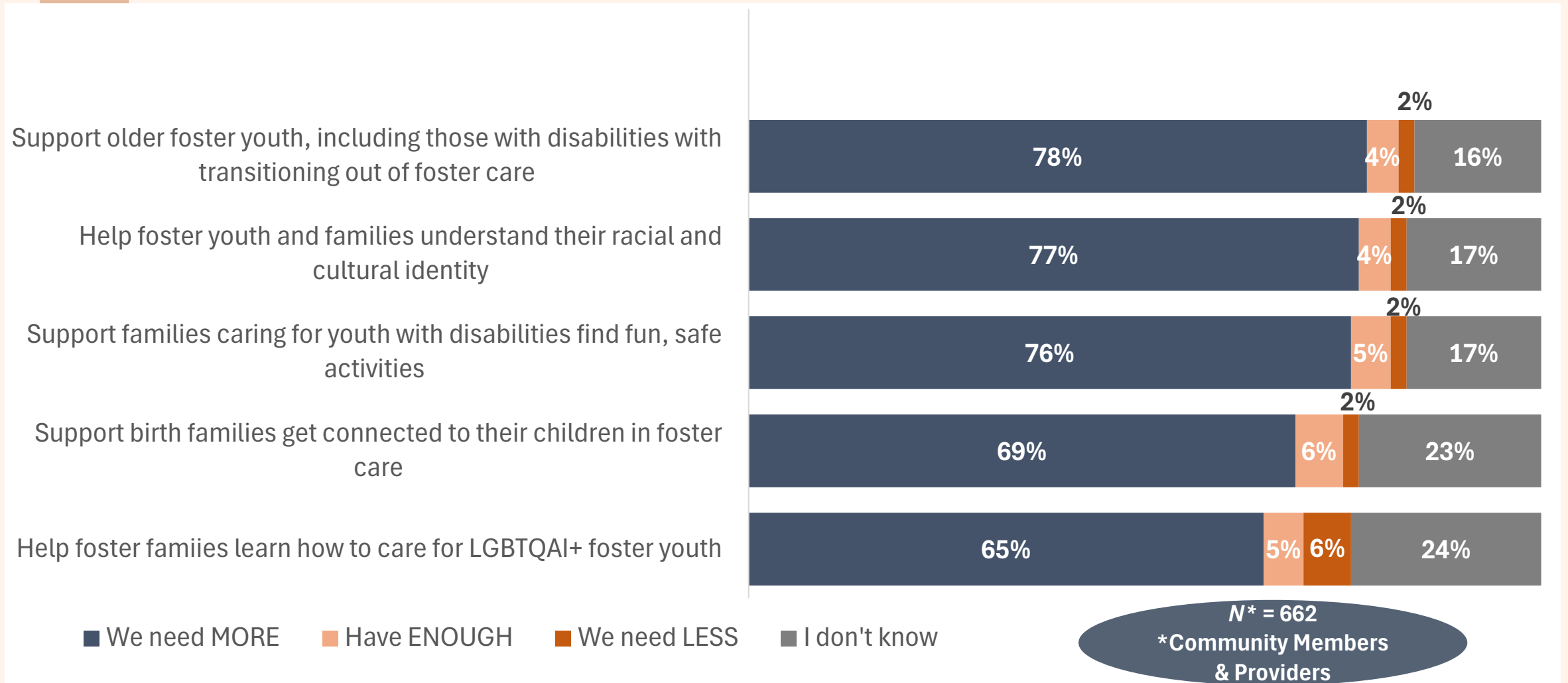
Survey respondents were asked how much their community needs the following programs to support foster care youth and families.

Question: My community needs programs for children and youth who are or were in foster care systems that...

1. Help foster youth and families understand their racial and cultural identity, especially when foster parents and youth are from different races and cultures
2. Support birth families with getting connected to their children in foster care
3. Support older foster youth, including youth with disabilities, to find housing and employment, enter college, and live on their own
4. Support foster families caring for children/youth with disabilities and find fun, safe activities to do with their children/youth
5. Help foster families learn how to care for, support and create a comfortable home for LGBTQAI+ foster youth



My community needs programs for children and youth who are or were in foster care systems that...





Community and Provider Perspectives

- Community members and providers shared perspectives regarding the top three areas for families with foster youth:
 - **Priority #1:** Support older foster youth, including youth with disabilities, to find housing and employment, enter college, and live on their own
 - **Priority #2:** Help foster youth and families understand their racial and cultural identity, especially when foster parents and youth are from different races and cultures
 - **Priority #3:** Support foster families caring for children/youth with disabilities and find fun, safe activities to do with their children/youth
- Many respondents indicated they “do not know” in response to the questions in this area. Since only 5% of community respondents are foster care parents/caregivers, 2% are current or former foster care youth, and nearly 50% of providers either work with foster care youth or caregivers, it is not surprising that programs related to foster care youth and families received these responses given that the majority of respondents are not closely affiliated with this population.



Comparing community perspectives

Help foster youth and families understand their racial and cultural identity, especially when foster parents and youth are from different races and cultures.

- 92% of foster care parents/caregivers and 80% of foster care youth indicated that their communities need A LOT MORE programs in this area to help support foster youth.
- **86% of LGTBQAI+ youth** indicated their community **needs more programs** in this area as well.
- Black (87%), Middle Eastern/North African (100%) and Hispanic/Latinx (82%) respondents were significantly more likely than White (69%) and Asian (68%) respondents to indicate their communities need more programs to support foster youth with understanding their racial and cultural identity.
- Respondents whose preferred language is Russian (45%) were significantly less likely than other respondents to indicate there is a need for this within their community.



Comparing community perspectives

Support birth families with getting connected to their children in foster care:

- 83% of foster care parents and 90% of foster care youth indicated this as a programmatic area where their community needs more support
- Black (79%) and Hispanic/Latinx (77%) respondents were significantly more likely than White respondents to emphasize the need for more programs in this area.
- Respondents whose preferred language is Russian were significantly less likely than other respondents to indicate their communities need more programs to support the reunification of birth families with their children in foster care.



Comparing community perspectives

Support older foster youth, including youth with disabilities, to find housing and employment, enter college, and live on their own:

- 78% of community members indicated this is an area where they needed more programming support.
- **Asian** respondents (61%) and respondents whose preferred language is **Russian** (59%) were significantly **less likely than other respondents to indicate these programs as an important area** for their communities.
- 88% of foster care parents, 91% of respondents with disabilities, and 100% of foster care youth emphasize this as an area where their communities need more support.



Comparing community perspectives

Support foster families caring for children/youth with disabilities and find fun, safe activities to do with their children/youth:

- 77% of the community members indicate that their community needs more programs to support foster families caring for children with disabilities and finding fun, safe activities to do with children.
- 92% of foster care parents and caregivers, 93% of respondents with a disability, and 100% of foster care youth indicate that their communities need more programs.
- Asian respondents (63%) were significantly less likely than respondents of other racial/ethnic groups to indicate their community needs more programs.

Children and families experiencing a disability face unique barriers to accessing timely mental health care.

Children and families navigating life after a diagnosis find it challenging to find integrated physical and mental health care.

“For families, there’s not much support for those of us caretaking for children with a new diagnosis that requires integrated care.” - Parent

“It’s not just about my child’s autism, but what about her autoimmune disorder? There’s no support for families to help you navigate multiple diagnoses or the transition to life after diagnosis.” - Parent

“I have to explain our situation over and over again and that’s traumatizing.” - Parent



Comparing community perspectives

Help foster families learn how to care for, support and create a comfortable home for LGBTQAI+ foster youth:

- 63% of community members indicated their communities need more programs to support foster care families in creating a comfortable home for LGBTQAI+ foster youth.
- 84% of LGBTQAI+ youth, 80% of respondents with a disability, 75% of foster care parents and 90% of foster care youth indicate this as an area where they need more programs.
- Respondents whose preferred language is Russian (41%) and Ukrainian (20%) were significantly more likely than respondents who speak other languages to indicate that their community needs fewer programs.

LGBTQ2SIA+ youth are experiencing destabilizing rejection at home, in school, and in healthcare settings

Focus group discussions with youth and families mentioned there is ample concern about a nationwide trend of declining acceptance for LGBTQ2SIA+ youth:

- Youth and families are moving to Portland from other states passing bans on gender-affirming care.
- Very few therapists share LGBTQ2SIA+ identities. And those that do have long wait lists.
- Adult allies of queer and trans youth are less likely to step up and support because of fears (i.e. in school settings and in foster families)

“They're having an entirely reasonable response to not experiencing affirming, supportive, stable lives...when the focus is we got to get them their degree or we got to get them through school. It's like, yeah, but also it doesn't matter if I'm not alive or if I'm on the street, it feels like.” - Youth

Foster care youth and families need additional financial compensation and supportive parenting services

Open-ended survey responses and interviews with community leaders revealed that foster care youth and families need supportive programs to help them in the following areas:

- Building care plans for foster youth that give caregivers practical approaches to foster youth's support social-emotional development and academic success.
- Focusing on building skills and access to resources for their transition to adulthood.
- Additional financial support to cover basic care for their youth

"The foster parents we support could use more financial compensation to provide for the needs of the children they are caring for." – Providers

"There is a need for foster parents to be able to access care for young children. As a foster parent, there was a laughable reimbursement from the state for \$375 a MONTH for childcare. Our foster child's daycare costs were \$1900/month. WE must prioritize caring for these children at all costs- and not put the burden back onto community to "figure it out" when we're already taking in children from the system." – Community member

"Foster care children who are well-served and supported have more favorable outcomes as adults helping to prevent the cycle of trauma." – Providers

Families supported by the foster care system need better access to mental and behavioral health services and treatment.

Foster care children and youth need providers for themselves and their loved ones—especially older youth with parents experiencing a substance use disorder.

“My seven-year-old foster child is starting to shut down more. We’ve had her since she was two, but we’ve noticed new behavior and have had a hard time finding a mental health therapist that supports young children.”

“I need to figure out how to get my mother into treatment. She’s homeless and addicted to drugs and it’s hard to help her when I am in foster care.”

Children and youth in foster care experience a regulated environment with limited resources, and a challenging transition to adulthood.

Children and youth in foster care are often facing more challenges than their peers, including:

- higher regulation of normal activities like playdates and driving
- urgent mental health needs and long waits to access therapists
- not enough academic support and tutoring to be successful in school
- diminished services after the age of 18
- Foster parents who are not adequately supported (and case managers who are overloaded, delaying services)

“We had a really good therapist that left—a replacement therapist didn't happen for another three to four months. When you're seeing that inconsistency, that's when you really start to see issues in kids' as well as parents' mental health.”

– Parent

Foster care youth desire to have mentors committed to supporting them and their parents long-term

Youth, particularly those in foster care, reported a need for long-term mentors that can withstand their many transitions in the foster care system.

“As a foster kid who has been using housing vouchers through DHS and what not, it’s been hard to find a mentor who can stick with me as I transition to different homes and families.” – Youth

“I’ve had a lot of experiences, been in a few different foster homes and haven’t been able to keep a mentor.” – Youth

“My son had a mentor and a therapist, but they both transitioned out of the program and system during COVID. It’s been hard finding mentors that are committed to supporting our kids long-term.” – Parent

Foster care youth seek support with getting their [biological] parents connected to behavioral health treatment.

Many foster care youth revealed the need for drug treatment for their parents—but face barriers to advocating on their parents' behalf.

“I need more resources for drug treatment—I’m having some rough complicated stuff going on with my parents.” - Youth

“My mom needs someone who can push her. She won’t go and get drug treatment by herself.” – Youth

“Resources for drug rehab. That’s what my family needs.” - Youth

Service providers see the need for more programs and supportive services dedicated to supporting youth while they are in foster care. Equally important, foster youth need assistance when transitioning out of the system.

*We need more support for youth entering or already in the child welfare system. Too much is slipping through the cracks for these young people and they have the least amount of eyes on them. **There is nobody in their lives solely dedicated to serving their needs and representing their best interests.** They need and deserve advocates who have the bandwidth to provide them the attention they deserve. – Provider*

*Housing for teens aging out of foster care is a critical need. Housing needs to be in safe areas and allow for basic freedoms like having pets. **These key changes could have a major impact on the ability for youth to thrive as they exit care.** – Provider*



Recommendations: Foster Care

Support when transitioning out of the system:

- **Transition out of foster care:** Need more support when transitioning out of foster care and preparing for college and careers. Expand access to housing assistance, job training programs, mental health services, and education opportunities for youth aging out of care.
- **Strengthen systems-level partnership:** Strengthen the partnership between child welfare agencies, schools, employers, and community organizations to provide comprehensive, wraparound, system-level support for transitioning youth.

Support while in the system:

- **Advocating and seeking resources for biological parents:** Foster care youth expressed the desire to receive services (e.g., financial, basic needs, mental health, healthcare, etc.), harm reduction resources and support for themselves and their biological parents.
- **System navigators:** Families advocated for an assigned social worker to provide resource navigation (e.g., drug treatment, college readiness, mental health). They are looking for support when navigating systems and using their insurance.



Recommendations: Foster Care

Support while in the system:

- **Peer mentorship:** Youth want mentors that share their lived experiences. Families also expressed the need for peer mentors for parents and caregivers. Need more programs that offer 1:1 or group mentorship.
- **Support reunification:** Families have expressed a priority of reuniting foster care youth with their biological parents. Relatives taking care of young family members have expressed the need for reunification programs
- **Understand racial and cultural identity:** Families need supportive programs to help foster youth understand their racial and cultural identity, especially when the caregiver and youth do not share the same cultural identity.
- **Support foster care children with disabilities:** Families are looking for support and resources to support the development of youth with intellectual, physical and developmental disabilities.

Hunger Relief

Understanding the needs of families who do not have enough food

What are the three biggest needs of families and children who do not have enough food?

Survey respondents were asked to identify the three most important needs of families and children who do not have enough food.

Questions: What are the biggest needs of families and children who don't have enough food in your community? *Select only three (3) answers.*

1. Access to free groceries and cooked meals delivered to their home
2. Access to food pantries at school
3. Access to food pantries at organizations that serve your community (e.g., community centers, churches, recreation centers)
4. Teach children and families about nutrition, cooking and/or gardening
5. Access to land to grow food
6. Access to food grown and sold by people of the same culture as the family

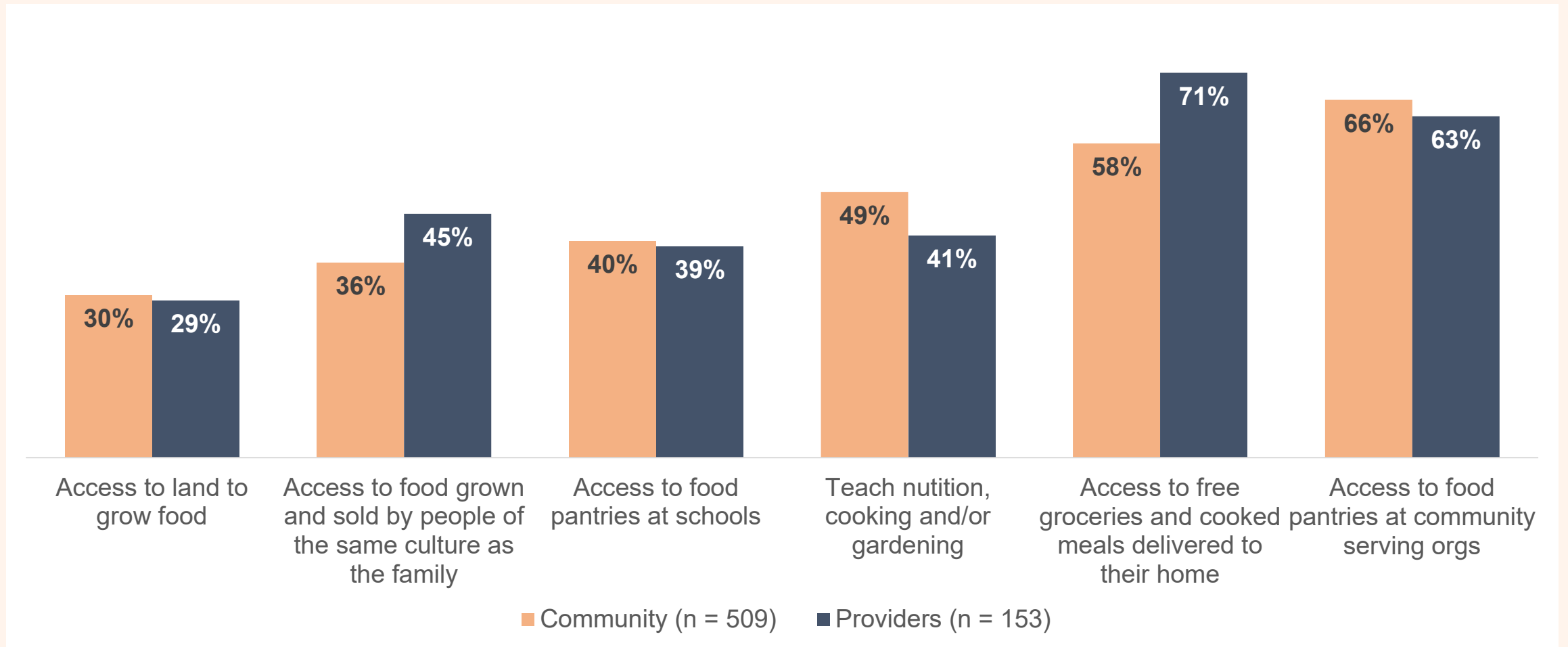
What are the three biggest needs of families and children who do not have enough food?

The top three important areas of priorities to address hunger and access to nutritious resources are the following:

- **Priority #1:** Access to food pantries at organizations that serve your community (e.g., community centers, churches, recreation, etc..)(66%)
 - **Priority #2:** Access to free groceries and cooked meals to be delivered to their home (61%)
 - **Priority #3:** Teach children and families about nutrition, cooking, and/or gardening (47%)
-
- Providers prioritize delivery of free groceries and cooked meals to homes (71%) and access to culturally specific food grown and sold by different cultural groups (45%) significantly more than community members.



What are the three biggest needs of families and children who do not have enough food?





Comparing community perspectives

Access to free groceries and cooked meals delivered to their home:

- Black (74%) and American Indian/Alaskan Native (93%) respondents were significantly more likely than any other racial/ethnic group to indicate having access to free groceries and cooked meals delivered to their homes as a priority.
- Immigrant and refugee respondents (47%) indicate this as a priority area significantly less often than other respondents.
- 68% of respondents without enough food indicate this as a priority area.

Access to food pantries at school:

- Respondents whose preferred language is Vietnamese (68%) were significantly more likely than other respondents to indicate that they would like food pantries in the school.
- Black (28%) and American Indian (13%) respondents were less likely than other respondents to indicate their families need food pantries in their schools.



Comparing community perspectives

Access to food pantries at organizations that serve your community (e.g., community centers, churches, recreation centers):

- 66% of community members indicated they needed food pantries at organizations that serve the community. This was the highest-rated program area emphasized by the community.
- Low-income respondents (76%), respondents with children between the ages of 19 and 24 (81%), and single-parent/caregiver respondents (78%) mentioned this as a priority area more than other types of respondents.
- 70% of respondents without enough food indicated this as a priority area.

Teach children and families about nutrition, cooking, and/or gardening:

- Respondents whose preferred language is Vietnamese (29%) and Middle Eastern/Northern African respondents (6%) are significantly less likely than other respondents to indicate this as a priority.
- 55% of respondents without enough food indicated this as a priority.



Comparing community perspectives

Access to land to grow food:

- Respondents with an annual household income of less than \$75K were significantly more likely than respondents from higher-earning households to indicate this as a priority need for families in their community.
- Respondents whose preferred language was either Somali (50%) or Russian (50%) were significantly more likely to indicate this was an important need for their community compared to other respondents.
- 23% of respondents without enough food indicated this as a priority area, the lowest ranking priority area for respondents without enough food.

Access to food grown and sold by people of the same culture as the family:

- While 36% of community members identified this as an important issue, having access to food grown and sold by people of the same culture was one of the lowest priority areas.
- Foster care respondents (54%), immigrant and refugee respondents (44%), and LGBTQAI+ respondents (49%) listed this as a priority significantly more often than other respondents.
- Hispanic/Latinx (21%) and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (22%) respondents listed this as a priority significantly less frequently than other respondents.

Families without enough food also need direct cash assistance and community leaders to address the root causes of poverty

Interviews with community leaders and open-ended survey responses suggest that families experiencing hunger also need the following additional resources:

- Direct cash assistance and other wraparound services are needed to address immediate stressors families are experiencing.
- Offering immediate, community-based solutions like tax filing support to ensure families take advantage of tax credits.
- Advocate for longer-term system changes to address the root causes of poverty (e.g., housing prices, unequal access to quality education, etc.).

*"Families could benefit from getting to choose things they need (e.g., groceries) instead of getting a random box of things given to them."
– Provider*

"Increase funding for rental and energy assistance programs to alleviate financial strain on families." – Providers

*"Strengthen partnerships with job training programs to address systemic barriers to economic stability and food security for vulnerable families."
– Provider*

*"Many children in my community rely on school meals and I feel there should be more options for them and their families."
– Community Member*

For most parents and caregivers, basic needs seem more out of reach than ever before.

From nutritious food to menstrual care products—every day items are harder to access and more expensive in post-COVID times.

“We need better housing support. Even the affordable housing isn’t an option for some of us. We need truly low-income housing for our families.” – Community Member

*“Food pantries are a big help—I go to a small one, but we need more so that all low-income families can get food. ”
– Community Member*

“I just wish there was more connections for affordable transportation. Even with a bus pass, I can’t easily access the things or places I need, like making it to my doctor appointments.” – Community Member

“System navigators” are needed to help families find resources that meet their needs—especially those with a disabled family member.

Caregivers named “system navigators” — someone who works within or adjacent to health and social systems — as a reliable and accessible tool that could connect families to resources.

“We need someone who can connect families with resources. Especially when you have a family member with developmental needs—we have been waitlisted for an autism screening. We need someone who can get us help now.” – Community Member

*“Yes, we need navigators, but we also need folks who have experience working with families with disabilities and parents/caregivers that are neurodivergent.”
– Community Member*

“This is obviously a part of a larger problem, but just the cost of basic needs that’s doubled in the past year, but doesn’t seem to be going back down. So we need better access and more options for food banks and places where we can get our basic needs met more affordably.”

- Community Member

Recommendations: Hunger relief

- **Increase access to food relief programs:** Community members expressed the need for food pantries to be supported by their schools and local community-based organizations. Food pantries should provide **culturally specific** foods and options for residents to select their own items as opposed to receiving a set box of random items.
- **Increase access and awareness of financial assistance programs:** Communities recognize the increased cost of food and need access to cash assistance programs to help cover their food and other basic needs.
- **Nutrition education and training:** Community members would like to see more opportunities to learn how to prepare and make healthier food options for their families.

Child abuse prevention and intervention

Understanding the needs of families who experience stress, trauma, and abuse

Programs for families experiencing high levels of stress and/or trauma in my community

Community members and providers were surveyed on how much their community needs the following programs for families who experience trauma and high stress.

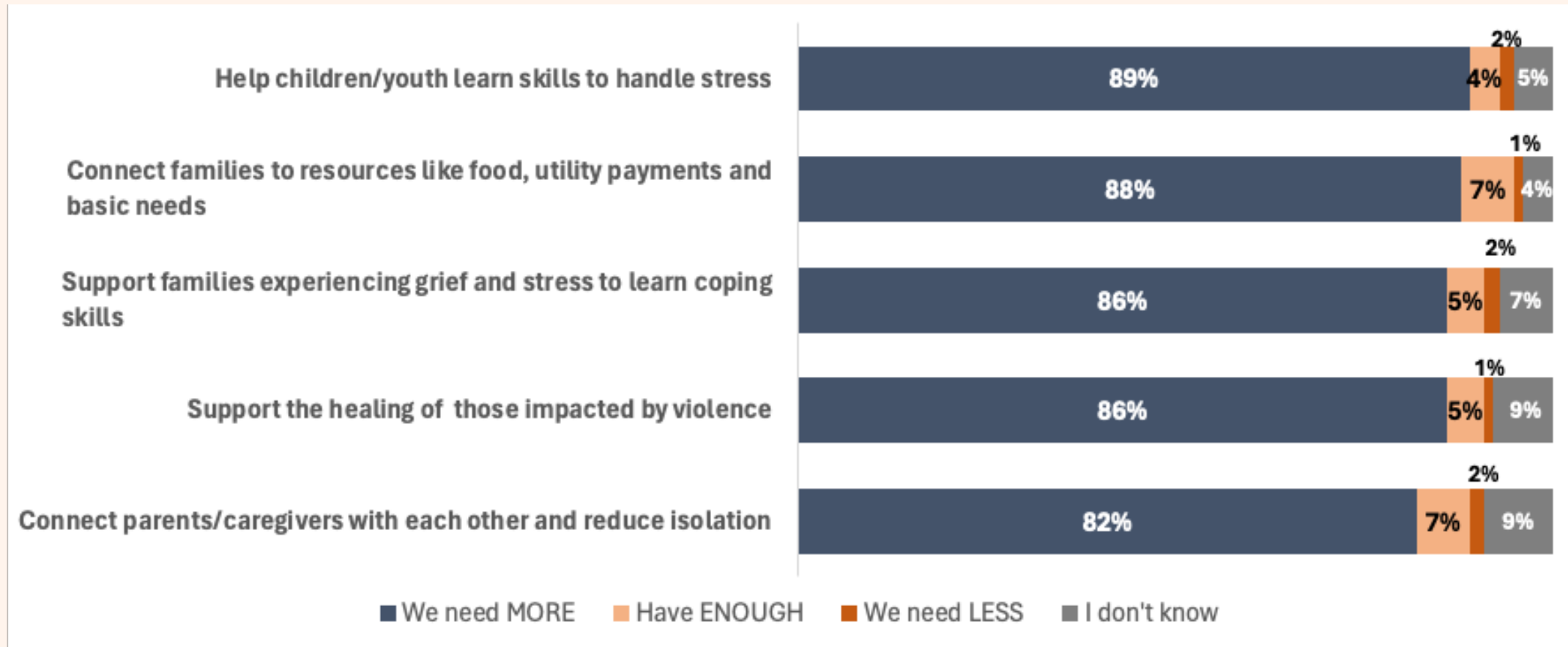
Question: Families experiencing high levels of stress and/or trauma in my community need...

1. Programs that help children/youth learn skills to handle stress
2. Programs that connect families to resources like food, utility payments, housing assistance, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits
3. Programs that support the healing of children and youth who have been affected by violence in their homes, such as domestic violence or gang violence
4. Programs that connect parents/caregivers and families with each other and reduce isolation
5. Programs that support children, youth, and families experiencing grief and stress to learn skills to cope

Community vs Provider Perspectives

- Providers and community members shared similar perspectives regarding their top two priority areas:
 - Priority #1: Programs that help children/youth learn skills to handle stress (89%)
 - Priority #2: Programs that connect families to resources like food, utility payments, housing assistance and other supplemental benefits (e.g., WIC and SNAP) (88%)
- All the programs listed were equally important to community members and providers. However, programs that connect parents/caregivers and families with each other and reduce isolation ranked fifth and sixth among community members and providers.

Families experiencing high levels of stress and/or trauma in my community need programs that...



N* = 662
*Community members & providers

Community Perspectives

Programs that help children and youth learn skills to handle stress:

- 88% of the community members indicated they wanted more programs to help youth learn skills to handle stress.
- Black (90%), Middle Eastern/Northern African (100%), Asian (92%), and Hispanic/Latinx (92%) respondents were significantly more likely than White (80%) and Native Hawaiian (72%) respondents to indicate this as a program area where their communities need more support.
- Among the respondents indicating the need for more programs, respondents with a disability (84%) and respondents with teenage parents (100%) were significantly more likely than other respondents to indicate their communities need a LOT MORE programs in this area.
- In addition, low-income respondents (92%) and respondents without enough food (98%) were significantly more likely to indicate the need for more programs.

Community Perspectives

Programs that connect families to resources like food, utility payments, housing assistance, WIC and SNAP benefits:

- 88% of the community members indicated that this is an area where their communities need more programming support.
- Having more supportive programs that provide assistance for basic needs were very important and considered a major need for single parent respondents (97%), respondents without enough food (98%), respondents experiencing homelessness (97%), respondents with a disability (98%) and immigrant and refugee respondents (90%).
- Black (93%) and Asian (91%) respondents were significantly more likely than White respondents (81%) to indicate their communities need more programming support in this area.

Community Perspectives

Programs that support the healing of children and youth who have been affected by violence in their homes, such as domestic violence or gang violence:

- 85% of the community members indicated that this is an area where their communities need more support.
- Middle Eastern (89%), American Indian (80%), Black (74%), and Asian (66%) respondents are significantly more likely than White respondents (51%) to indicate their communities need a LOT MORE supportive programs to assist their children who have been affected by violence.
- This was an important program area for respondents with children between the ages of 19 and 24 (93%), respondents with foster care youth (100%), respondents without enough food (98%), respondents experiencing houselessness (97%), and single-parent households (91%).
- Respondents who preferred language is either Russian (59%) or Ukrainian (60) were significantly less likely than other respondents to indicate this as a programming need for their community.
- Respondents with an annual household income of \$50K or less are significantly more likely than respondents earning \$75-100K to indicate their communities need a LOT MORE programs in this area.

Community Perspectives

Programs that connect parents and caregivers and families with each other and reduce isolation:

- 82% of the community members indicated that this is an area where their communities need more support.
- Black (88%), Hispanic/ Latinx (86%) and Asian (85%) respondents were significantly more likely than White respondents (72%) to indicate programs that reduce isolation as an important need for their communities.
- Respondents who preferred language is Russian (55%) were significantly less likely than other respondents to indicate this was an area of need for their communities.
- Respondents earning \$50K or less annually (85%), respondents with some college experience (94%), and respondents living in North Portland (92%), are significantly more likely to indicate their communities need more programs.
- Respondents caring for foster care youth (96%), respondents experiencing houselessness (97%) and respondents without enough food (96%) are significantly more likely than other respondents to indicate families in their community need more program support in this area.

Focus groups with parents/caregivers reported an increased sense of loneliness and named community-building as a potential remedy

For many youth and parents, loneliness stemming from the pandemic continues to impact their mental health.

*“I feel alone and want to be a part of a community where I can **connect with people**, especially women, to **strengthen my mental health**. Sometimes it is hard to go about life alone.” - Parent*

*“I wish there were more community-building spaces that also connect people with resources. It is **hard to find resources on your own**.” – Youth*

*“It would be nice to have a network that can **help support single parents**.” - Parent*

Comparing perspectives

Programs that support children, youth, and families experiencing grief and stress to learn skills to cope:

- 87% of community members indicated this was an area where the communities needed more support.
- Respondents who preferred language are Spanish (38%) and Russian (36%) are significantly less likely than other respondents to indicate that their community needs a LOT MORE programs.
- Black (93%), Asian (89%), and Middle Eastern/Northern African (100%) respondents are significantly more likely than White (77%) and Native Hawaiian (72%) respondents to indicate that their community needs more programs in this area.
- Teenage parent respondents (92%), respondents caring for foster care youth (83%), respondents with a disability (82%), and respondents experiencing houselessness (77%) are significantly more likely than other respondents to indicate their community needs a LOT MORE programs in this area.



Families experiencing stress and trauma need parenting education resources and mental health care

Interviews and open-ended survey responses illustrated the need for support in the following areas:

- Design abuse prevention initiatives that center on trauma-informed approaches
- Provide parenting education and support to help families incorporate positive parenting and disciplinary practices in their approach to parenting .
- Increase access to mental health services for children and families who experience and are harmed by violence

What's are some emerging strategies?

"Prioritize trauma-informed approaches in child abuse prevention initiatives." - Provider

"Need more education on domestic violence and conflict resolution." – community member

"Addressing domestic violence are crucial steps in preventing child abuse and supporting vulnerable families." – Provider

"Educating families on modern styles of raising children is important." – Community Member

"Emotional support and parenting classes are needed;" – Community member

"There should be more access to mental health services for children and families affected by trauma." – Community Member

BIPOC youth have few therapists that look like them that they feel they can trust.

Trust is at the center of effective mental health support and BIPOC youth and families want to talk with therapists who understand their cultural context.

- Trust exists in the community.
- Past traumas contribute to distrust—especially of White providers and educators.
- Stigma of mental health issues in Black and Pacific Islander communities keeps people from seeking support.
- Provider turnover and affordability is also a big challenge.

“Mental health is one that I feel like my community shy away from. Also the lack of therapists that look like them now...or just a lack of therapists in general, but also people of color.” - Community Member

Youth experience challenges finding mental health care services committed to maintaining their privacy.

Second-generation youth are open to learning about and receiving mental health services as long as their privacy is protected.

“I’ve done mental health counseling through my school, because they offered it to students, the only issue is that it wasn’t completely confidential. I’d set up an appointment myself and then they’d call my dad about it.” – Youth

“We have a school social worker—she’s amazing and confidential, but she’s responsible for over 300 kids, so I can barely get into to see her when I need it the most.” – Youth

“Our school has a new health center with therapists and doctors on site. I tried it but wasn’t able to get the help that I needed and by the time of my appointment, the issue was kind of forgotten.” – Youth

Parents and caregivers desire better access to affordable physical and mental health care and culturally-specific providers.

Parents and caregivers already burdened by our complex health systems face additional barriers to finding affordable care from culturally-specific providers.

“It would be nice if we had more [Black] health care providers that we could go to, and of course, more providers of color for other populations, too.” - Parent

“Because of my income, I don’t qualify for a lot of programs like Medicaid, but I still have financial strain and I’m racking up medical bills that I have to pay.” - Parent

*“I’m trying to get therapy right now. They’ve been unresponsive. I filled out the form and it’s been weeks. No one has contacted me and **it’s getting hard to stay motivated to find a therapist.**” - Parent*

Finding and accessing culturally-specific providers is challenging due to month/year-long waitlists and cost prohibitive services.

For families open to accessing mental health care, many are burdened by complex systems, the lack of culturally-specific/linguistically accessible providers, high out-of-pocket costs or co-pays, and long waitlists.

“In the state of Oregon, let alone Portland, it’s so hard to find Black mental health providers. And I know about the Avel Gordel Center—that’s not always a good fit for everyone.” - Parent

“It is hard to find a therapist. I’ve been searching websites and it’s hard to find one that takes my insurance and is available right now.” - Parent

The term and concept of “mental health” doesn’t translate well within immigrant and refugee families and communities who speak languages other than English.

For many families, “mental health” is a foreign [and westernized] concept that lacks credibility—making access to education and support challenging.

“The only time I’ve heard or learned about mental health was in school, and it was only one unit that lasted 1-2 days.” – Youth

*“[What’s mental health?] In the Asian community, if you go to therapy, **then there’s some inherently wrong with you.** They just don’t believe the concept of mental health exists.” – Youth*

“Mental health is still a taboo subject. During freshman year when COVID-19 hit, I talked to my mom about getting a therapist, just to help me out during a difficult time. Every time, she’d say, why do you need a therapist? You’re a teenager - you’re just sad. Why do I need to pay for a therapist? I also told my dad about my mental health and he said: that’s not real.”

- Youth

Houseless parents are suspicious and distrustful of government systems and services—even agencies designed to support them.

Houseless communities are overburdened with navigating complex government systems that often cause more harm than positive impact.

“I can’t tell my social worker that I’m a victim of domestic violence because she’ll tell CPS and my kids will be taken away.” – Parent

“If I push back against my abuser, CPS will say I put my children in harm's way and will take them away from me. It happens all the time.” - Parent

“I can’t use multiple benefits together. I can’t use WIC and other resources because it’s not allowed. The system isn’t designed for us.”- Parent

“So when you’re working with systems, you know—government agencies, medical (as in hospitals and clinics), if they know you’re on government assistance, they attack you harder. For example, my baby needed a leg splint, but I wanted a second opinion. The provider called CPS and said that I didn’t care about my child’s needs. Then I had CPS banging at my door at 7:00 a.m. threatening to take my kids away.”

– Parent

“And sometimes they [systems] feel like depression isn’t real due to societal norms and things are set up to prevent certain forms of situational depression. So, it’s much easier for us [immigrants] to get depression here [in America] than it is for us back home.”

– Community Member

“In addition to myself, I think about our [disability] community and the fact that you have to be able to navigate getting insurance, trying to figure out what kind of insurance you have, and then figuring out who you can see. That’s horrendous for youth, caretakers, and families that have limited skills, reading abilities, and comprehension—and no help to do any of that.”

– Community Member

Community members and service providers want to see more programs that rooted in restorative justice practices and are culturally responsive.

Emerging Strategies:

- Providing access to confidential advocates for youth who are not mandatory reporters but can serve as their confidant.
- Using a restorative justice approach in behavioral intervention.
- Honoring culture as a protective factor.

“There are confidential advocates out there that really help because not all the time being super responsive is going to help that child. Them [a child] being able to talk to someone about their problems and get the help and support they need before it's a reaction has slowed down the process of more abuse and them also being violent.” - Provider

Recommendations: Child abuse prevention and intervention

- **Confidential advocates for youth:** Youth want a confidant who is able to advocate for them. They would like to have an ally they could turn to for support and advice.
- **More support from legal aid to navigate government benefits and mitigate the negative impacts of government assistance.**
- **Mental and behavioral health support for the whole family:** Families expressed the need for mental health support for the whole family, especially for families with relatives in foster care who desire to heal and unite as a family.

Recommendations: Child abuse prevention and intervention

- **Support programs that provide access to services for families, especially after 5 pm during the week and during the weekend:** Lack of access to basic needs and social services (e.g., counseling, shelter) during the weekends and outside regular business hours is a challenge for families experiencing trauma and housing instability.
- **Families desire programs that provide culturally responsive mental health services:** Youth acknowledged the generational disconnect they experience when discussing mood disorders and mental health with their parents. To mitigate the effects of mental health silencing, families seek a holistic approach to family therapy that includes providing education to parents about trauma and mental health, especially for families that speak languages other than English.

Exploring the perspectives of service providers and leaders of community-based orgs

This section highlight the findings from the provider survey and in-depth interviews with leaders from community-based organizations.

Understanding service providers' experience with engaging children and their families

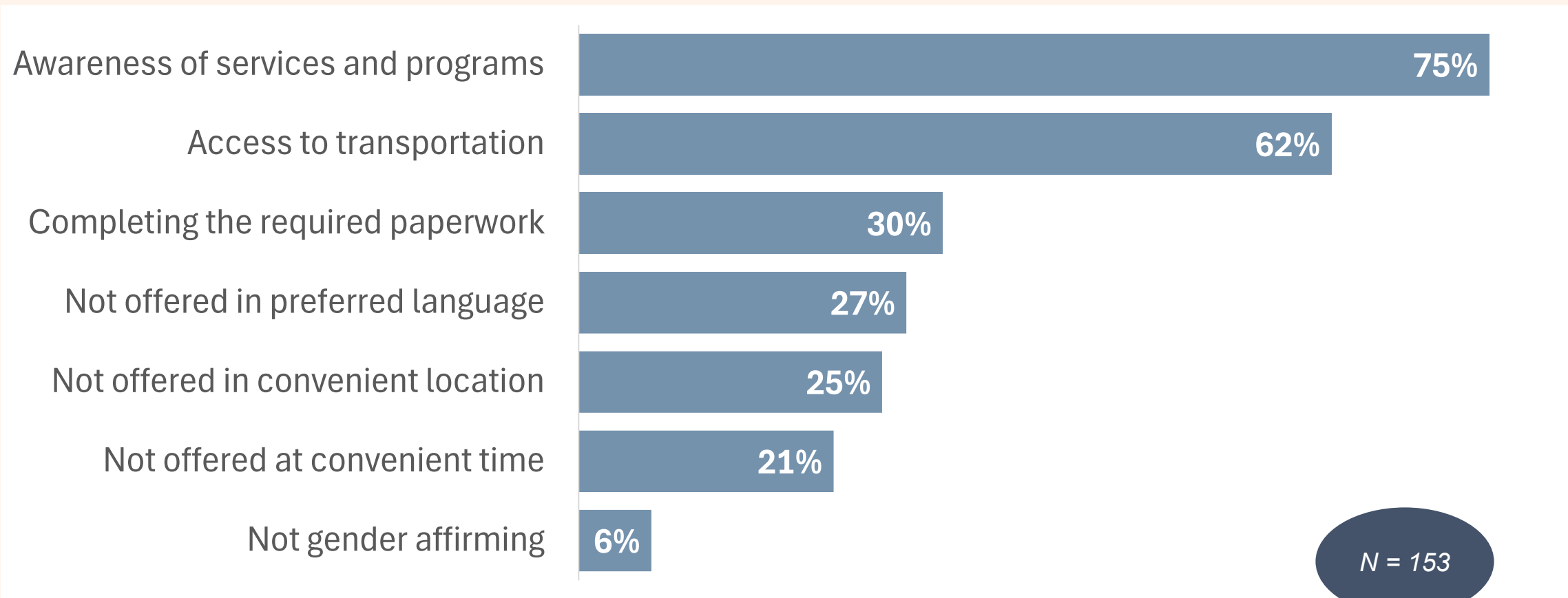
Service providers were asked to answer questions based on their experience with engaging with families and trying to connect them to the services they offer.

Question: **Based on your experience as a provider of services for children, youth, and families, what are the biggest barriers families face when trying to access your services? *Select up to three (3) answers.***

1. Access to **transportation**
2. **Awareness** of services and programs
3. Services are **not offered at a convenient time**
4. Services are **not offered in a convenient location**
5. Services are **not offered in their language**
6. Services are **not gender affirming**
7. Completing the **required enrollment paperwork**



What are the biggest barriers families face when trying to access your services?





Barriers families may experience when accessing programs

- Awareness of services (75%), access to transportation (62%), and completing required paperwork (30%) are the top three barriers providers see community members face when trying to access services.
- Providers believe that once community members are aware of the program and have a method for getting to the place where services are offered, they are then able to take full advantage of the programs.
- Providers found offering services in preferred languages and at a convenient time and location to be less of a barrier.

“Transportation is a big barrier for families. Taking multiple children on the bus is very stressful and not very practical.” – Provider

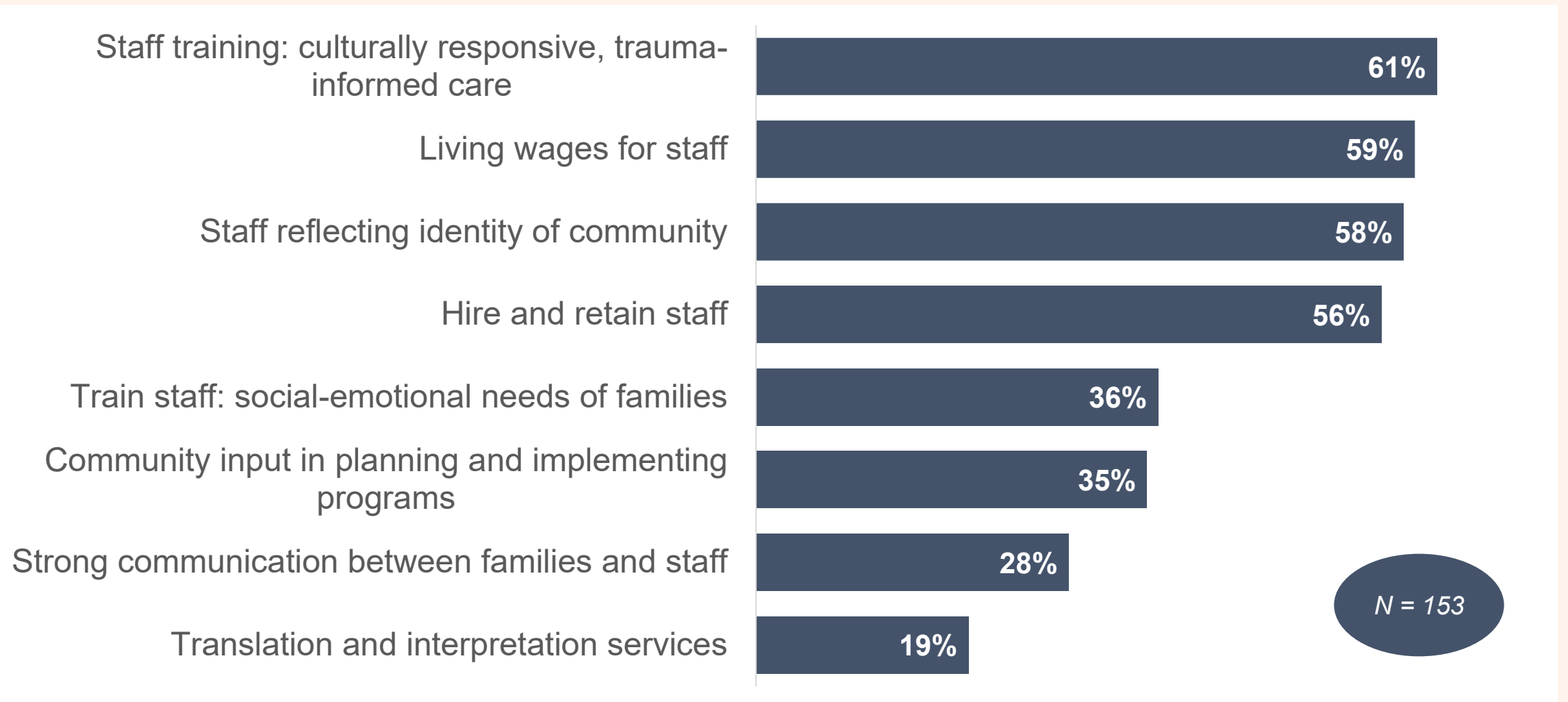
Service providers need additional support from PCL to sustain practices that help them to best support children and families.

Service providers were asked about ways the PCL can further support their ongoing best practices.

Questions: **To support the growing needs of children, families, and youth in our community, what are your organization's best practices that the Levy should support? *Select up to four (4) answers.***

1. **Hiring and retaining staff** to meet the needs of our community
2. **Training staff in how to support the social-emotional needs** of families
3. **Training staff in providing culturally inclusive, racially equitable, and trauma-informed care**
4. **Strong communication** practices between families and program staff
5. **Staff who reflect the cultural, racial, and ethnic identity** of the children and families we serve
6. **Providing translation and interpretation** services
7. **Consistent, ongoing community input** in planning, designing, and implementing programs
8. **Living wages for staff**

To support the growing needs of children, families, and youth in our community, what are your organization's best practices that the Levy should support?





Strategies services providers use to support staff

- Provider survey respondents recognize the need to help staff who are trained in culturally responsive, trauma-informed care (61%), who earn a livable wage (59%), who reflect the identity of the community (58%), and who are able to stay in their role over time (56%).
- Providers expressed wanting funding support and guidance to continue to implement these practices in order to keep a committed and happy staff.
- Compared to the other service options listed in the survey, less than a fifth (19%) of the providers mentioned supporting the offering of translation and interpretation services. This, in part, could be due to the fact that translational services are embedded in their practices of hiring staff that reflect the identities (e.g., language, culture, racial identities) and training staff culturally responsive, trauma-informed care practices.



Providers need more funding in order to be able to support the number of families that are in need.

*"Retention is very important in the relationship-building portion of service. **Recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff is a significant part of us meeting our outcomes.** There needs to be enough funding, consistency and programs to support the high needs of the community. We don't want to invest into the perfect program and then - not enough funds, staff not compensated or the program ends - a new vision." – Provider*

*"As much as we love what we do to help the kids, it's not enough and enough kids out there still need our help **but we don't have enough supplies to help them all.**" – Provider*

"There are not enough financial resources to support families struggling in poverty, single parent large families, families suffering from drug addiction, families bombarded with grief. This burden gets put on staff/ direct service workers who can only offer emotional support and not tangible financial resources that can help families cope/ work through poverty-induced trauma." - Provider

*"The biggest thing our families need is for providers to have access to increased funding **so we can provide more services and financial assistance to families when they cannot find that assistance anywhere else.** It would be great to have access to enough funding to hire more staff to serve more community members." – Provider*

"Please address the barrier to funding grassroots who serve these populations. We are grossly underfunded and it impacts our reach and overall work." - Provider

It is an ongoing challenge to recruit, retain and support a strong, diverse workforce.

Interviewees said they see social service and education professionals reevaluating their careers in recent years. Financial hardship due to low wages, trauma exposure, and more limited emotional capacity since the pandemic are all contributing factors. They said **high turnover rates have eroded the essential trust and relationship building that children, youth and families need.**

“It's hard with staffing turnover and lack of staffing. It feels like there's never enough adult support for what the youth are needing. Especially the entry level jobs in this work, there's always a lot of turnover and I don't know what could really help with that, but it just always so deeply affects our target populations. Any kind of turnover is just so difficult for them.”

Families are witnessing and experiencing operation gaps across service providers who intend to support the houseless populations. These gaps create vulnerable conditions for youth and parents.

Day and night shelters offer limited service hours and close during the weekend—putting houseless families in a vulnerable position, especially at night. Providers need support in coordinating services to help fill gaps when resources are direly needed.

“Although I love this place [direct service provider], it closes in the evenings and on the weekends, so me and my children have no where else to go.” – Parent

“There are no shelters that are open on the weekends. We need places that are open 24/7.” – Community Member

“My neighborhood gets really dangerous at night, so me and my partner take turns staying awake to watch our children when we are out on the street.” – Parent

Children, youth and families are experiencing many lingering effects of the ongoing pandemic, political reckoning, and a shifting economy.

The impacts of these challenges are showing up in many different ways:

- Awareness of problems, but little awareness of what to do to help
- Persistent social isolation
- Developmental and social delays
- Increased dysregulation
- Academic learning loss
- A divisive social and political climate
- Limited access to mental health supports for youth and adults

“People are worn down in a way that, prior to the pandemic, folks were like, ‘I’m going to go volunteer at the shelter, go run a food pantry’ or whatever. It just seems like there’s a lot less capacity for folks to just dive in and do that.”

Community Vision for Portland Children's Levy and their community

Perception of PCL

What do people know about PCL?

- Those primarily doing direct service or community-based work knew less about PCL than those who were doing at least some systems-level work.
- The Community Council stood out as an essential part the PCL process and ensuring community has a voice.

Those primarily doing direct service knew less about PCL than those who were doing at least some systems-level work.

Interviewee participants' knowledge about PCL varied, but most (8 out of 11) were familiar with PCL and knew that it provided funding to support programming for children and families in Portland. Interviewees who had at least some systems or policy perspective were more likely to be familiar with PCL and its role. Those who worked in direct service knew less about PCL and what it funds.

“It’s a way of directing money to kids in the city in a strategic way.”

“I’ve heard those words before, but I’m not familiar with any of the details.”

The Community Council stood out as an essential part the PCL process and ensuring community has a voice.

Several interview participants mentioned that the **Community Council stood out to them as an essential part of PCL's work**—yet many didn't know about the Council before the interview.

They saw it as an important and valuable way to ensure those facing the highest barriers have a voice in the decision making process.

“It's usually the loudest yellers get what they want.”

“If they're experts in the community that are bringing it to bear for the City and doing this leadership, pay them for that. You need that community expertise in order to really do well.”

“Does the Children’s Levy fund new organizations and programs or the usual suspects? Some of them aren’t making an impact in the community like they should be.”

– Provider

“How does the Portland Children’s Levy grant program work? How does one apply? I know so many micro organizations that would be perfect for funding, but I’m not sure how to encourage them to apply.”

– Provider

“I’ve never heard of the Portland Children’s Levy. I want to learn more about what they do with our tax dollars and how families can get connected to resources.”

– Community Member

“Does Portland Children’s Levy advocate for children and families? We need more organizations to advocate on our behalf.”

- Provider

Additional Advice

What additional advice do interview participants have for PCL?

- Build relationships with people doing the work.
- Consider climate resilience as a key priority.
- Act both upstream and downstream.
- Consider creative ways to show kids we care about them.
- Ensure that Community Council reflects the community. And pay them.
- Be part of the collaborative conversation happening at a system level.
- Show how the community can get involved.
- Consider more collaborative efforts that benefit multiple organizations.

Community members and providers want to see PCL play a role in increasing awareness of programs and assist organizations of various sizes with accessing funding.

- The Portland Children’s Levy could play an instrumental role in raising awareness of various organizations and programs. This would help amplify and increase awareness of programs that can be beneficial for all families.
- Increase access to the grant application process by making the process a lot easier and provide technical assistance to small businesses and other organizations that need grant writing support (e.g., Portland Prosper’s Reimagine Oregon Grant cycle can serve as a model for this practice).
- Increasing access to funding by simplifying application process and using clear, human-centered design.

“It seems like there are a lot of requirements to be eligible for and to receive the \$500 grants. Perhaps having those same requirements for larger grants, but offering simpler to access grants at the smaller levels would make an organization like ours (Minds Matter Portland) more eager to take part. Thank you” – Provider

Five Year Vision

What change would you like to see in the community after the next five years of the Levy?

- A declining poverty rate for families with children.
- A next generation of Portlanders with more skills and tools to thrive—academically, behaviorally and emotionally.
- More spaces where children and youth feel a sense of belonging.
- More awareness and training for adults in children's lives.
- More engagement of communities to solve the problem collectively.
- More funding flexibility and imagination.
- Sustainability beyond just the next five years.

What does it look like for the next generation of Portlanders to have more skills and tools to thrive?

Providers mentioned these potential metrics as indicators of progress:

- 80% of students reading at grade level.
- Timely (within 2 weeks) mental health supports for children and youth.
- Increased access to health care for BIPOC families.
- More Black and Brown kids ready for college and staying in their communities.

“Being able to stabilize the home and help families with their traumas and structures, bills and food. Being able to give these youth tools to survive and know that it's okay to seek mental health... I think it would change things tremendously.”

Interviewer: What does it look like for the next generation of Portlanders to have more skills and tools to thrive?

“Being able to stabilize the home and help families with their traumas and structures, bills and food. Being able to give these youth tools to survive and know that it's okay to seek mental health... I think it would change things tremendously.”

- Community Member

Thank You

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Appendix: Methodological Approach

This section describes the approach we utilized to gather insights from the community. Using a community-based approach, we conducted a community-wide survey to gather community and provider perspectives, focus groups with youth and families that represent the priority populations, and interviews with service providers and community leaders.

Methodology

We used a multi-prong approach to gathering community perspectives. Using a combination of a community-wide survey for community members and service providers, focus groups with youth and adults, and interviews with service providers, we gathered multiple perspectives.

This section describes the methods used to gather insights from the community. Our approach centers on the culture and community.

By the end of our engagement in the community, members expressed feeling empowered, respected, and appreciated for being part of the process. They were excited to have an opportunity to have their voices heard. The next slide highlights some quotes from community members.

“I really liked how everyone shared their feedback about the community; it was just a safe place to be in!” – Community Member

“I really loved sharing a space with like-minded youths, would love to experience it again!” – Youth

“I love the way you guys get the community involved in stuff like this. Cause our voice matters too.” - Community member

“I'm so happy for the opportunity to be part of this great moment.” - Youth

“This was very positive and good to hear other woman in the group felt the same way I did. I hope this can help the community” – Community Member

“I really enjoyed hearing everyone speak. It also helped me feel like I am not alone.” – Youth

“I appreciate the opportunity to have a say in the decision-making process for the betterment of our community.” - Youth

“I hope that the results of this survey will lead to tangible actions and improvements for our community.” – Youth

“I really enjoyed the youth focus group I participated in. It was really amazing to engage with other youth in the community who want to inspire change as well.” – Youth



“I appreciate this group, but we shouldn’t lump Black people with everyone else — we have unique needs and deserve our own research group; every community should have their own research group.” – Community Member

Community and Provider Survey

Community Member & Provider Survey

Survey overview

- From November 2023 to February 2024, we conducted two surveys: a community member service survey and a provider survey.
- The survey was designed to gather insights from the community to understand their values and prioritize programming and funding preferences.
- With support from the Community Engagement Liaisons (CELs) and affiliated community partners, the survey was transcribed into seven languages and verbally translated into more than twenty languages.
- Electronic gift cards were offered as incentives to encourage participation and to show appreciation for their contribution to the research.



Community Member & Provider Survey

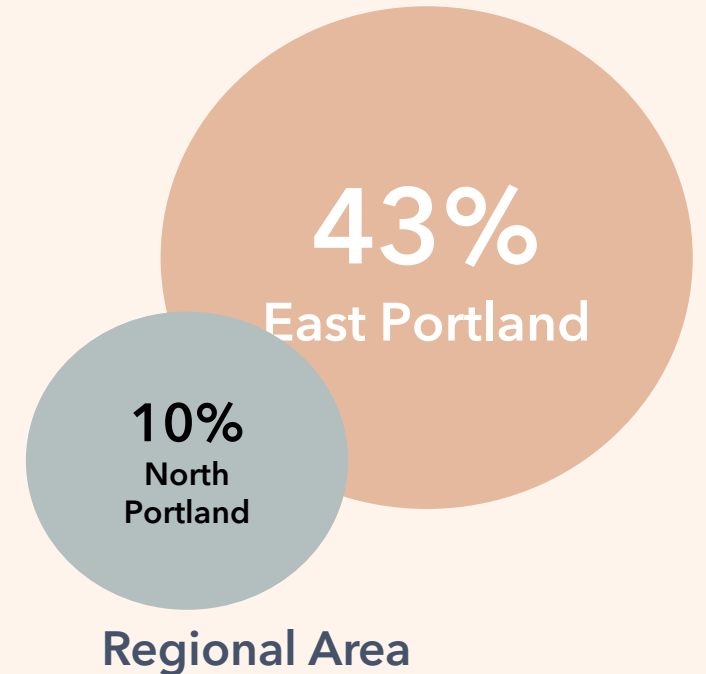
- To gather insights from the community we designed two surveys - the community member survey and a service provider survey.
 - Portland residents were asked to complete the community member survey.
 - Individuals who worked for an organization in Portland that helps children, youth and families with programs or services such as early childhood or childcare, family support and parenting, hunger relief, after school or youth mentoring, or other programming were invited to complete the service provider survey.
- A total of **662** metro Portland residents completed the survey:
 - **153** Service providers
 - **509** Community members
- The community survey was developed and distributed in seven languages: English, Arabic, Nepali, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian and Vietnamese.
- The provider survey was administered only in English.

Representation of priority populations

- The survey was designed to gather input from community members representing the 16 priority groups identified by the Portland Children's Levy Community Council.
- Immigrant or refugee respondents and BIPOC respondents represent a significant portion of the community surveyed.
- More than a quarter of the respondents identified as Black/African American (27%), Asian (26%), or White (24%).
- More than one-third of the respondents identified as either immigrant or refugee (40%), parent/caregiver with children between the ages of 6 and 18 (38%), parent/caregiver with children under the age of 5 (36%), and low-income families (34%).

Community Survey Respondents: Neighborhood

- More than half of the respondents (53%) lived in either East Portland (43%) or North Portland (10%) neighborhoods.
- Among the respondents living in East Portland, more than half identified as immigrants or refugees (54%), and 40% were parents/caregivers with children ages five and younger.
- Survey respondents who earned an annual household income of \$100K or greater lived in communities outside of North and East Portland (84%).
- More than two-thirds of the respondents living in East Portland earned an annual income of less than \$50K (67%)

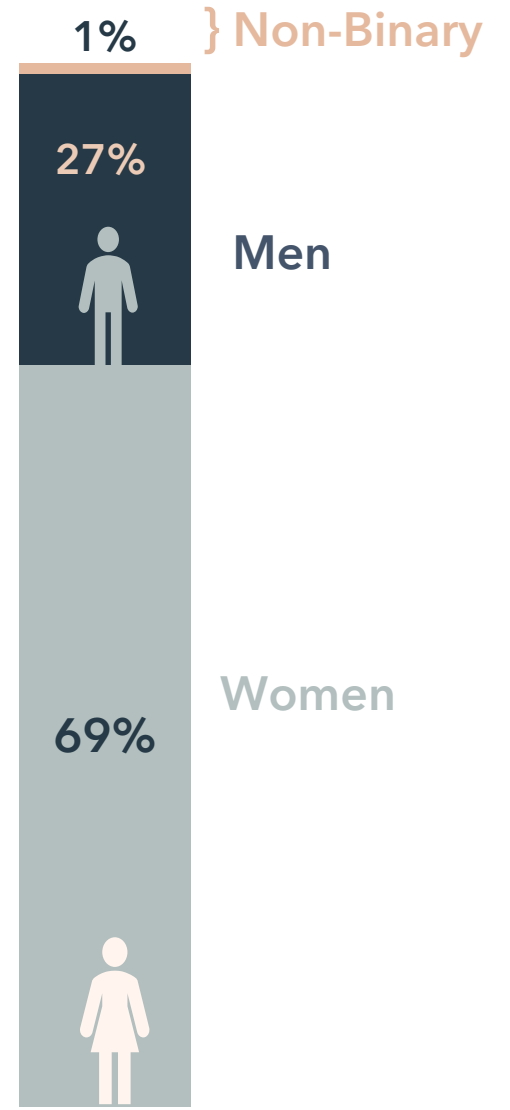




Community Respondents: Gender I

- Among the 509 community members, the majority (69%) identify as women, followed by men (27%), and a small percentage identify as non-binary (1%), and the rest remarked they didn't know or refused to answer.

Gender

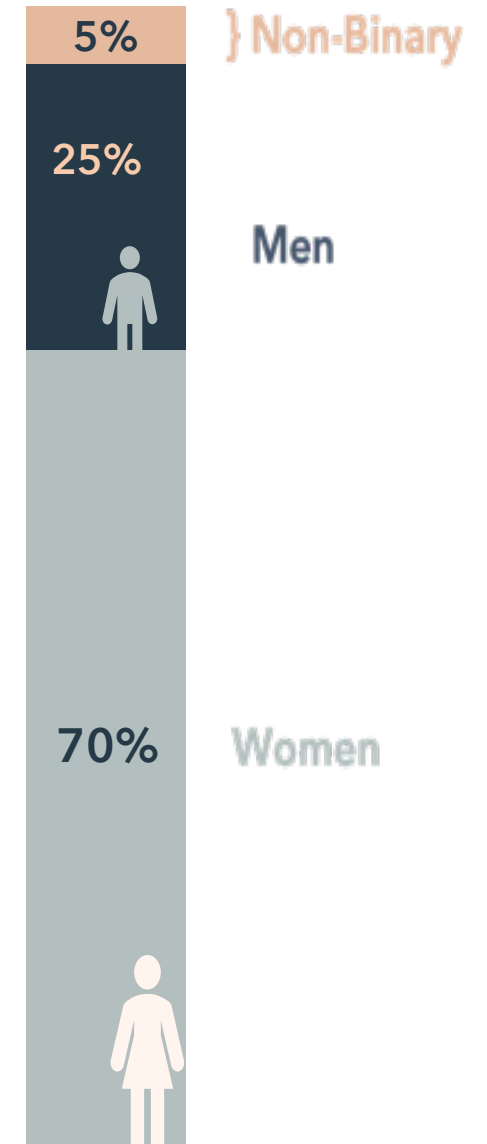




Provider Survey Respondents

- Similar to community members, a quarter of the providers identified as man (25%), and 70% identified as woman. Less than 5% identified as either non-binary (4%) or agender/no gender (1%).
- Providers have a significantly higher proportion of White individuals compared to community members. Approximately half of the providers identified as White (50%), and about a quarter (24%) identified as Black and African-American.

Gender



Focus Group Methodology

Focus Groups Overview + Purpose

Why Focus Groups?

Focus groups are an inquiry-based qualitative strategy—designed to listen to and study the reactions of a small number of demographically similar participants.

Using tailored researcher-posed questions, focus groups helped us thoroughly understand community needs and priorities to be responsive to children, youth, and families in Portland.

Primary Audiences for Recruitment

Focus Groups were designed to reach:

- Youth aged 6th-12th grade
- Parents/Caregivers
- Spanish-speaking youth, parents/caregivers

With intersectional perspectives, insights, and lived experience related to:

- Low-income
- Disabilities
- Teen Parenting
- LGBTQ2SIA+
- Foster Care
- Black, Native American, Pacific Islander, Slavic, and Middle Eastern identities
- Houselessness

Focus Group Research Questions

Although tailored for each focus group, Discussion Guides were designed to answer six primary questions:

1. Is there a need for mentoring programs for youth, parents/caregivers? If so, what kind of mentors and programs are needed?
2. What does access to mental health care look like for your family/community?
3. What issue is the highest priority for your family/community right now?
4. How would you instruct PCL to address that issue within the next five years?
5. How would you know if strategies designed to address that issue have been impactful?



Focus Group Recruitment + Format

Focus group participants were recruited starting in January 2024:

- PCL and CET Consulting co-created an outreach matrix of 222 CBOs and community leaders.
- CET Consulting outreached to 30 priority contacts in two tiers of outreach (via email and 1:1 meetings) from January to March 2024
- Participants had the option to receive a \$100 honorarium for active participation*
- CET Consulting conducted 10 total focus groups from January 22 - March 20, 2024

Each focus group followed a similar format:

- 8-10+ demographically similar participants
- Conducted virtually (via ZOOM) or in-person at Las Adelitas, REAP, and Rose Haven
- 90 minutes each
- 16 questions
- Recorded and transcribed for thematic analysis

**Active participation is defined as contributing (verbally) twice during a focus group.*

Interviews Overview + Purpose

Why interviews?

In-depth interviews are a qualitative strategy to listen deeply and more thoroughly understand community priorities and emerging efforts to support children, youth and families in Portland.

Primary Audiences for Recruitment

Interviews were designed to reach:

- Community leaders
- CBO leaders
- Providers

**With intersectional perspectives,
insights, and lived experience related to:**

- Disabilities
- LGBTQ2SIA+
- Foster care
- Southeast Asian, Black/African
American, Pacific Islander, Native
American and Alaska Native identities

Interview Research Questions

Interviews were designed to answer six primary questions:

1. What do people know about PCL?
2. What's going well for children and families in Portland?
3. What are top concerns and needs for children and families in Portland?
4. What's working to address these top concerns and needs?
5. What change would you like to see in the community after the next five years of the Levy?
6. What additional advice do you have for PCL?



Interview Recruitment + Format

Interview participants were recruited starting in December 2024:

- PCL and CET Consulting collaboratively developed a list of 34 potential contacts
- CET Consulting reached out directly to 22 priority contacts in two tiers of outreach (via email and phone) from December 2024 to February 2025
- Participants had the option to receive a \$50 honorarium for participation
- CET Consulting conducted 11 total interviews from January 10 - February 8, 2024

Each interview followed a similar format:

- One-on-one
- Conducted virtually (via ZOOM)
- 45-60 minutes each
- 16 questions
- Recorded and transcribed for close analysis

— Interview Participants

By experience:* (*both professional and personal)

- Foster care – 3
- Youth experiencing homelessness – 2
- Low-income families – 5
- Single and teen parents – 2
- Early childhood – 3
- Trauma/violence – 5
- Youth mentoring – 2
- Policy/systems – 6
- Disabilities – 2

By role:

- Direct service – 8
- Systems, policy + programs – 6
- Organizational leader – 7
- Community leader – 5

By identity:

- Black – 2
- LGBTQ2SIA+ – 4
- Native American – 1
- Pacific Islander – 1