Career Pathways and Adult Education in Three Cities

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Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy (ISAL) at Penn State
Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition
Houston Center for Literacy
Miami-Dade County Public Schools

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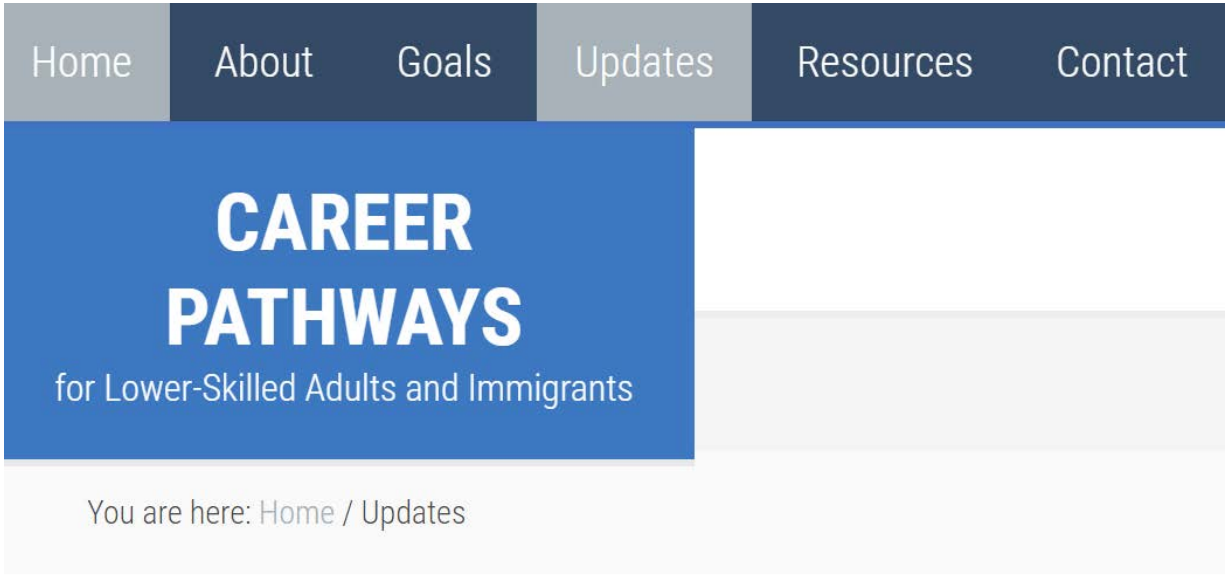

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Who We Are

- Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy at Penn State
  - Dr. Esther Prins (Principal Investigator; Co-Director, ISAL)
  - Dr. Carol Clymer (Co-Director)
  - Dr. Blaire Willson Toso (Associate Director)
- Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition
  - Becky Raymond (Executive Director)
  - Alex Ziskind (Program Associate)
- Houston Center for Literacy
  - Sheri Foreman Elder (President and CEO)
  - Martin Loa (Vice President of Program Services)
- Miami-Dade County Public Schools
  - Mark Needle (Educational Specialist)

Aims, Rationale, & Methods

- What:
  - 2-year U.S. Department of Education researcher-practitioner partnership grant
  - Aims
    - Understand how adult basic education & literacy (ABEL) providers in high-need cities are integrating career pathways (CP) components into their services – especially for low-skilled & immigrant adults.
    - Identify which student outcome measures are most extensively used & any metrics that are used within & across the cities.
    - Understand how successful programs design & implement CP.
  - First study to map the landscape of adult education career pathways in Chicago, Houston, Miami.

Aims, Rationale, & Methods

- What do we mean by career pathways?
  - This approach "connects progressive levels of basic skills & postsecondary education, training, & supportive services
  - in specific sectors or cross-sector occupations
  - in a way that optimizes the progress & success of individuals—including those with limited education, English, skills, and/or work experience—
  - in securing marketable credentials, family-supporting employment, & further education & employment opportunities." (CLASP, 2012)

Aims, Rationale, & Methods

- How:
  - Survey of all ABEL providers in Chicago, Houston, & Miami
  - Focus groups with 18 providers (5-7 per city)
    - Nominated by survey respondents & city partners; reported CP services & successful outcomes
  - Case studies of 6 exemplary programs (2 per city)

Case Studies

- Guiding research question
  - How do adult education program that report the most promising student outcomes design and implement CP, and to what do they credit their success?

- Sampling rationale: diverse occupational sectors, lower education levels

Program	Mfg.	Health	Educ., child care	Transport.	Auto-CADD	Bus.	Construc.	Tech/IT	Office mgmt.	Food
Lindsey Hopkins		Yes	X	Yes	X		X			Yes
Miami Dade College – Hialeah	Yes	X				Yes				
Jane Addams Resource Corp.	Yes									
City Colleges of Chicago – MX		Yes								
Alliance for Multicultural Progress	X	Yes	Yes	Yes	X					
Houston CC	X	Yes	X	X	X			X	Yes	

- Sampling rationale: organizational type, population served, neighborhood

Program	Comm. College	School District	CBO	Immigrants	Refugees	U.S.-Born Minorities
Lindsey Hopkins		X		X	X	X
Miami Dade College – Hialeah	X			X	X	X
Jane Addams Resource Corp.			X	X		X
City Colleges of Chicago – Malcolm X	X			X		X
Alliance for Multicultural Progress			X		X	
Houston Community College (Community-Based Job Training Program)	X			X		X

- Methods
  - Class observations
  - Interviews
    - Career technical & basic skills teachers
    - Administrators
    - Key partners
    - Support staff (e.g., transition specialist, employment coach)
  - Student focus group (n = 3 to 13 students/site)
  - Document analysis

- Chicago
  - Jane Addams Resource Corporation (JARC)
    - Vocational bridge
    - Primary CP components:
      - Careers in manufacturing classes (computer numerical control [CNC], welding, press brake)
      - Math bridge classes (not integrated)
      - Emphasis on women in manufacturing
      - Many instructors = program graduates
    - Support services
      - Transportation, etc.
      - Center for Working Families: wrap-around services (income supports, lifetime financial coaching)
    - Outcomes: industry-recognized credentials (NIMS, National Institute for Metalworking Skills), manufacturing jobs

Chicago Community Colleges – Malcolm X (health)

	Career Foundations Class	Career Bridge Program	Gateway Program
Locations:	DA KK MX OH TR WR	KK MX OH TR WR	DA HW KK MX OH TR WR
Students who could benefit from this would be at:	3-5th grade equivalency	6-8th grade equivalency (TABE Reading score of 6.0+ and TABE Math score of 5.0+)	9th grade equivalency and above (TABE Reading score of 9.0+ and TABE Math score of 8.0+)
Overview	A course that helps Adult Education students identify their skills and interests and learn how they can get on the pathway to college and career success through the City Colleges of Chicago Career Bridge and Gateway programs.	The Bridge program offers students an opportunity to learn about a career of interest, while preparing to take the high school equivalency test/improve English language skills.	The Gateway program offers students the opportunity to take college credit courses at a reduced cost, while preparing to take the high school equivalency test/improve English language skills.
Application process	There is no application.	There is an application process. Students meet with a Transition Specialist to learn more.	There is an application process. Students meet with a Transition Specialist to learn more.

- Education bridge: health-contextualized math and language (GED) classes + credit course (2nd sem.) → transition to credit classes in health
- Support services: same as credit students (tutoring, accommodations, etc.) + others (e.g., transition specialist)
- FY12-17: 78% of career bridge students took credit course at CCC

- Houston
  - Alliance for Multicultural Community Services
    - Refugee resettlement agency
    - Primary CP components
      - ESL (if low TABE)
      - Career/technical class + contextualized basic skills (not integrated)
        - CNA, AutoCAD, computer support specialist, commercial truck driving (CDL), child development associate
    - Support services
      - Financial Opportunity Center (LISC)
        - Employment and career planning assistance (e.g., resume writing, job search skills)
        - Financial education and coaching
        - Access to income support services
      - Dress for Success/Career Gear
    - Outcomes: eligible to take state CNA exam; certificate of CNA completion, AutoCAD professional user certification, CDL license

- Houston Community College
  - Community-Based Job Training Program grant: partnership with CBOs
    - Our focus: CNA (Chinese Community Center) & GOSS (AVANCE)
    - HCC provides teacher & curriculum, CBO recruits, provides site & support services, etc.
  - Key components:
    - Career/technical class + contextualized math & language support class (not integrated)
    - HS/GED and TABE = 6.0 to 11.9 (not "college ready")
  - Support services
    - Through HCC (e.g., job fairs, tutoring)
    - Through CBO
      - Dress for Success/Career Gear; CCC - Financial Opportunity Center; AVANCE - preschool & family strengthening programs, etc.
  - Outcomes: eligible to take state CNA exam (highest pass rate), office skills certificate

- Miami
  - Miami Dade College, Adult Education
    - Primary CP components: Florida Integrated Career & Academic Preparation System (FICAPS)
      - GED course: some career guidance & support services
      - FICAPS Options: (1) TRAMCON (manufactured construction); (2) college credit certificates (accounting, management, finance-banking); (3) health certificate (behavioral health technician, community health worker)
    - Support services:
      - Career readiness advisors: liaisons between adult & postsecondary, case management, job placement support
      - Tutoring
      - Financial aid, some cases books & course materials
      - Integrated as MDC student (support & resources)
      - Workforce development partners
    - Outcomes: employability skills, career portfolio, industry-recognized credentials, TRAMCON job placement, transferrable credits to postsecondary.

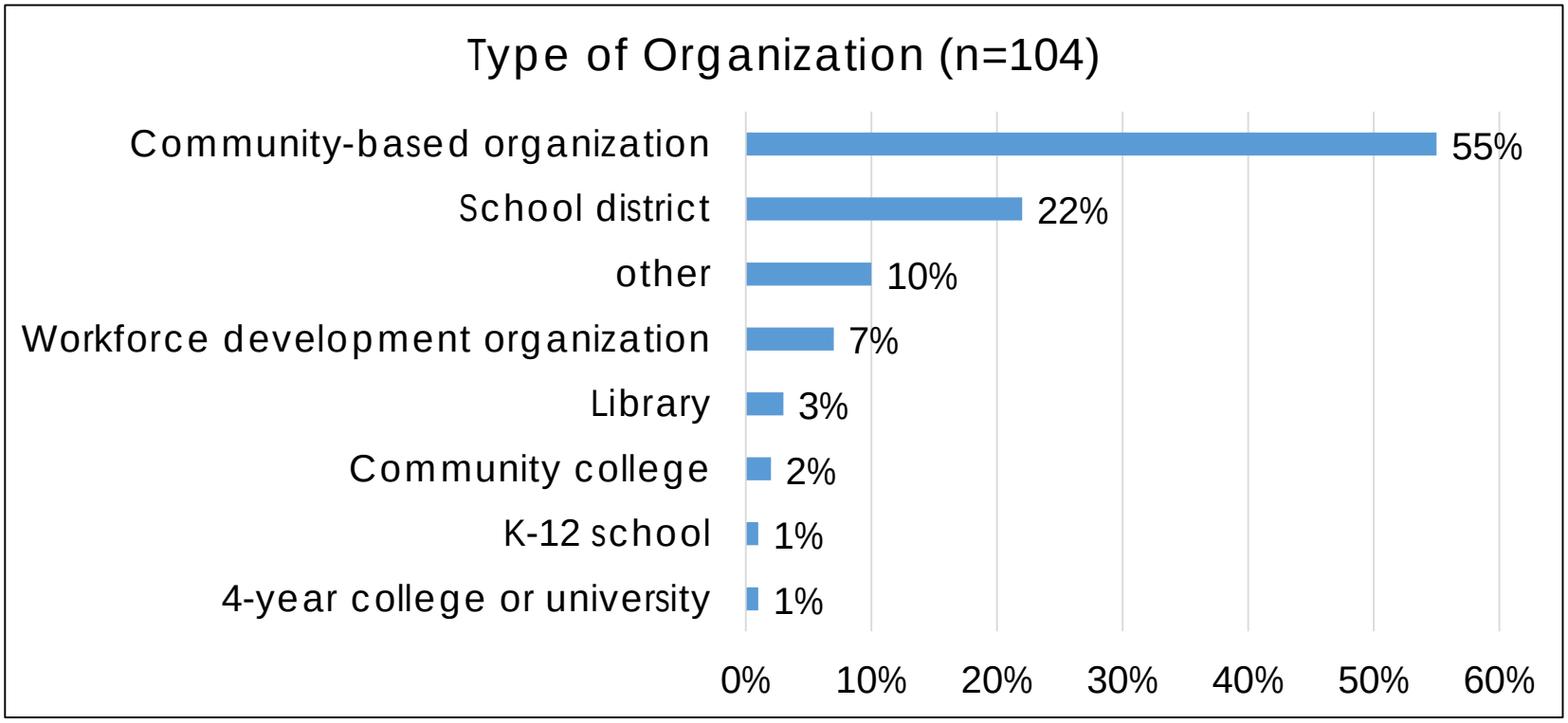
- Lindsey Hopkins Technical College (MDCPS)
  - Primary CP components: Participate if CASAS Level 3+;
    - Automotive Service Technology
    - Must pass 2 industry recognized credential certifications or GED or TABE = 9 (Math) 10(Reading);
    - Dietary Aide (post-test, internship)
    - Dietary Manager (dietary aide class or 2 yrs. experience; national exam)
  - Support services: case management, academic support, onsite child care, job placement, ESL & GED
  - Outcomes: employability skills, stackable industry-recognized credentials, apprenticeships & job placement, transferrable credits to post-secondary

Survey Methods

- Purpose: understand the landscape of adult education career pathways within & across cities
- Sample: all adult education providers in 3 cities (n=184)
  - 102 completed surveys = 72% response rate
- Sections
  - Background information on organization & CP services
  - Student characteristics
  - Program design & delivery
  - Data collection systems & outcomes tracked
  - Aggregate student outcomes
- Student characteristics & outcomes = rough estimates (data inaccuracies)

Survey Findings:
Institutional & Program Characteristics

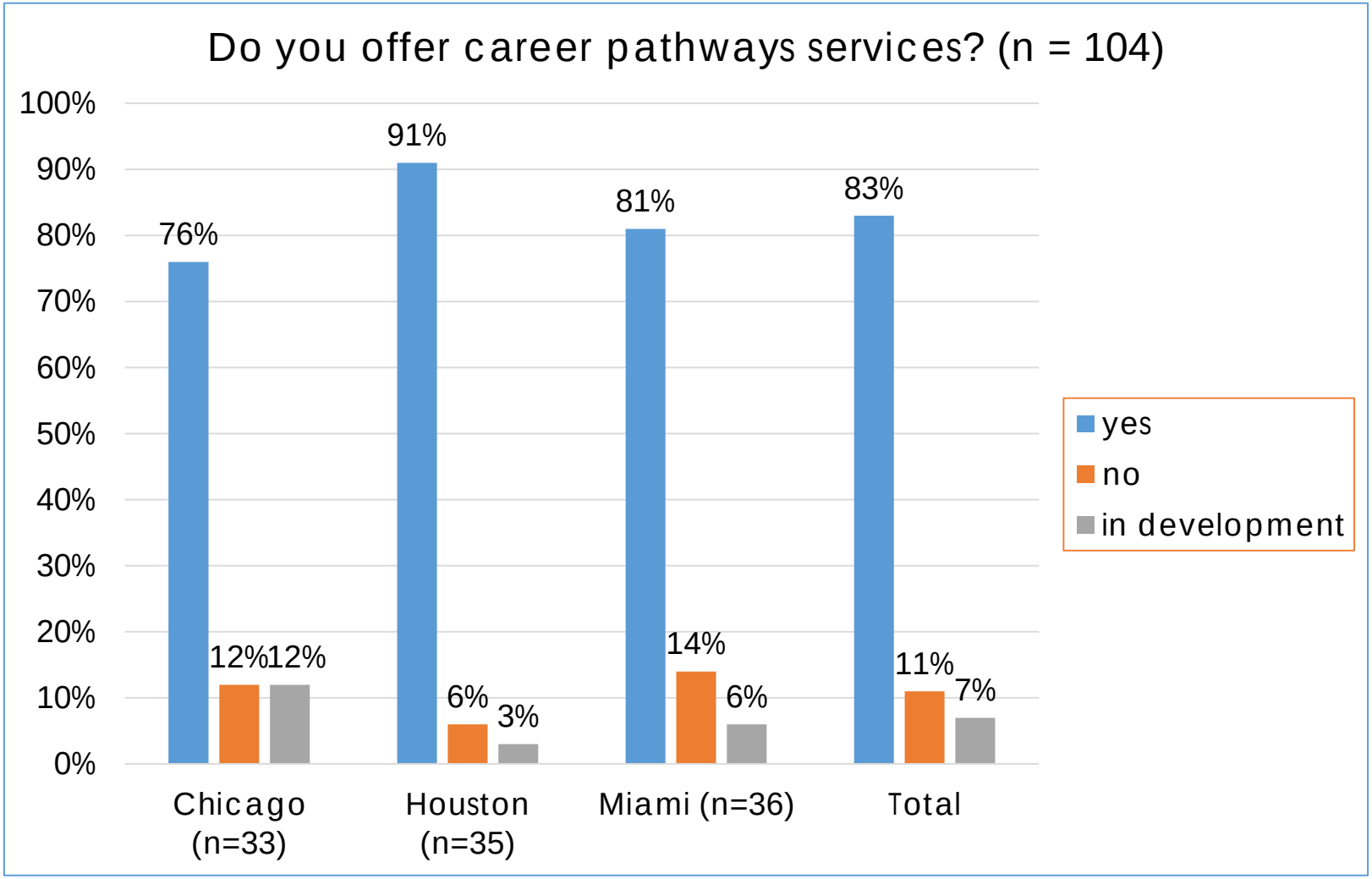
- Most common agency type*: CBO



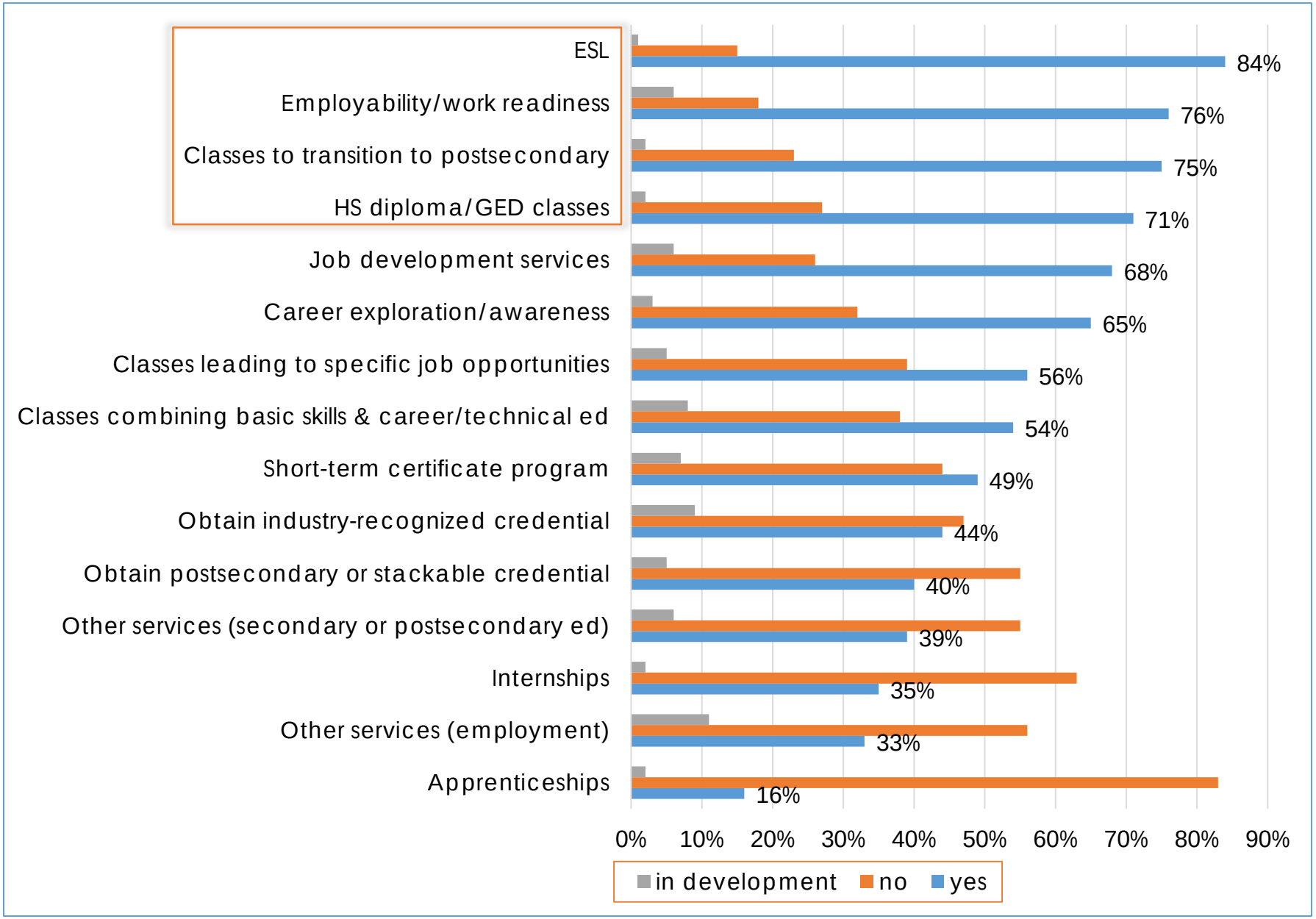
*In some cases 1 community college answered the survey for all the others in the city

- Other: homeless shelters, correctional facilities, etc.
- CBOs disproportionately located in Chicago (49% of CBOs in survey)
- 100% of school districts in survey located in Miami

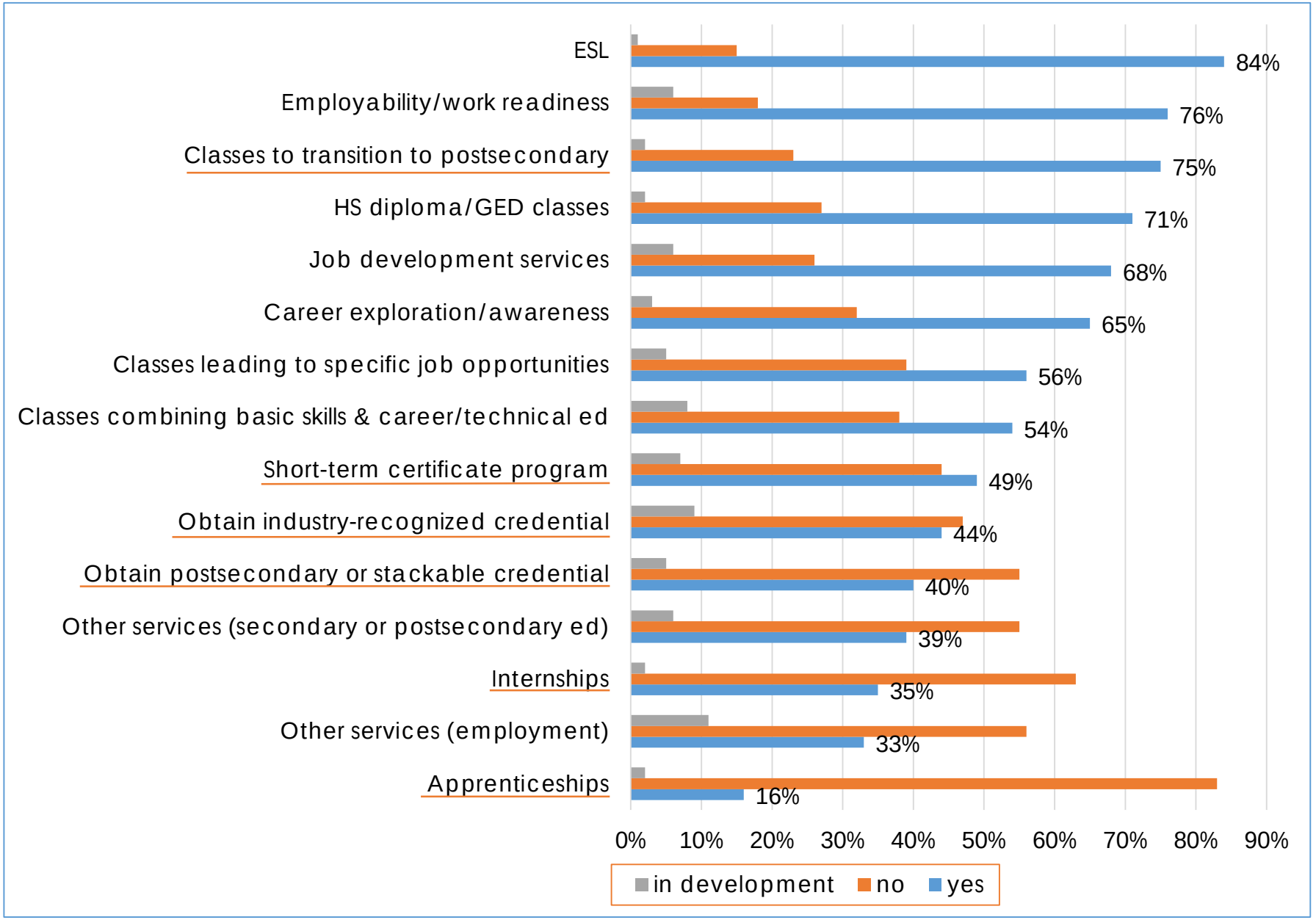
- 83% said they provided CP services, per CLASP definition
- No significant differences by city



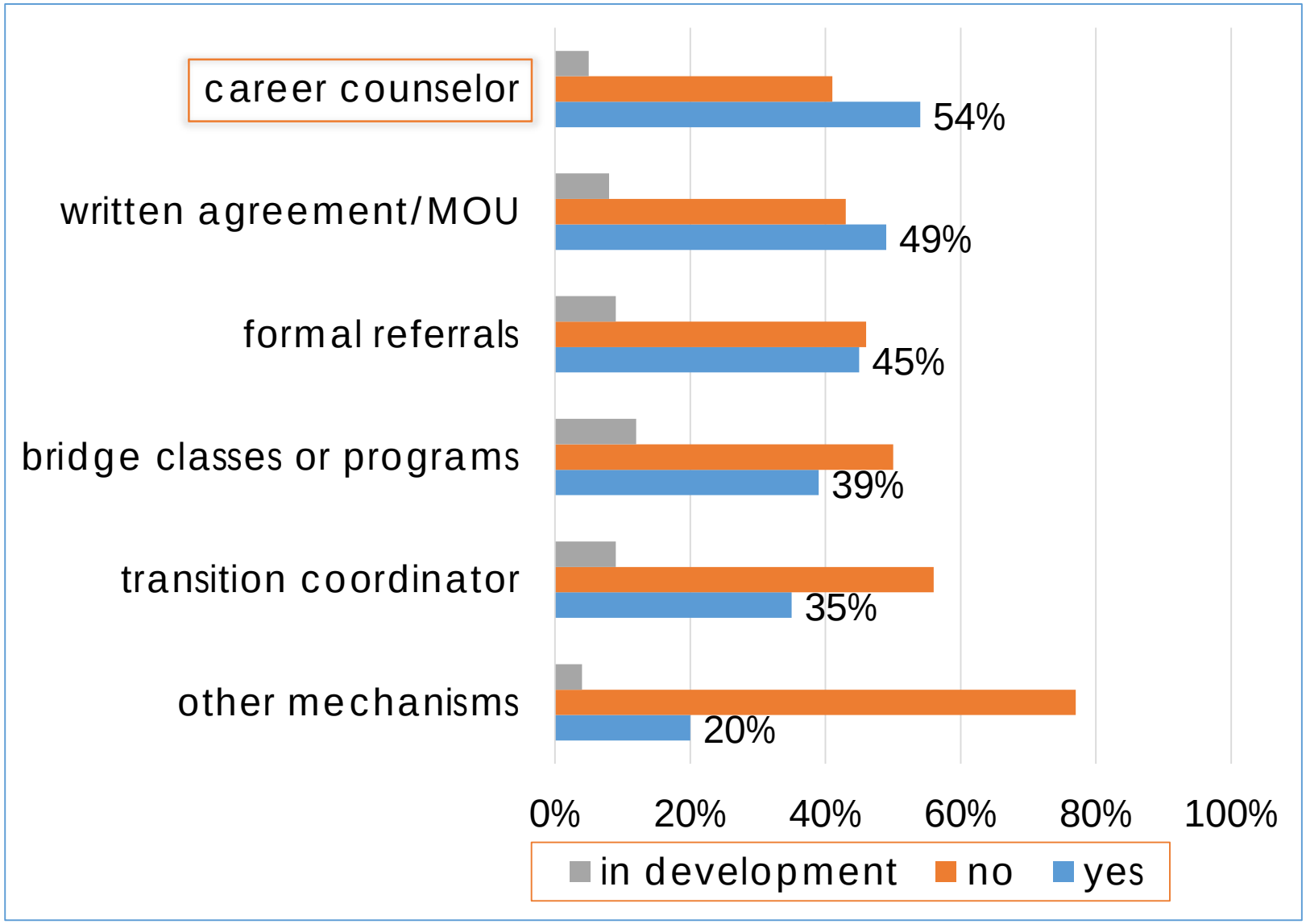
Types of CP classes, services, & activities (n = 80 to 103)



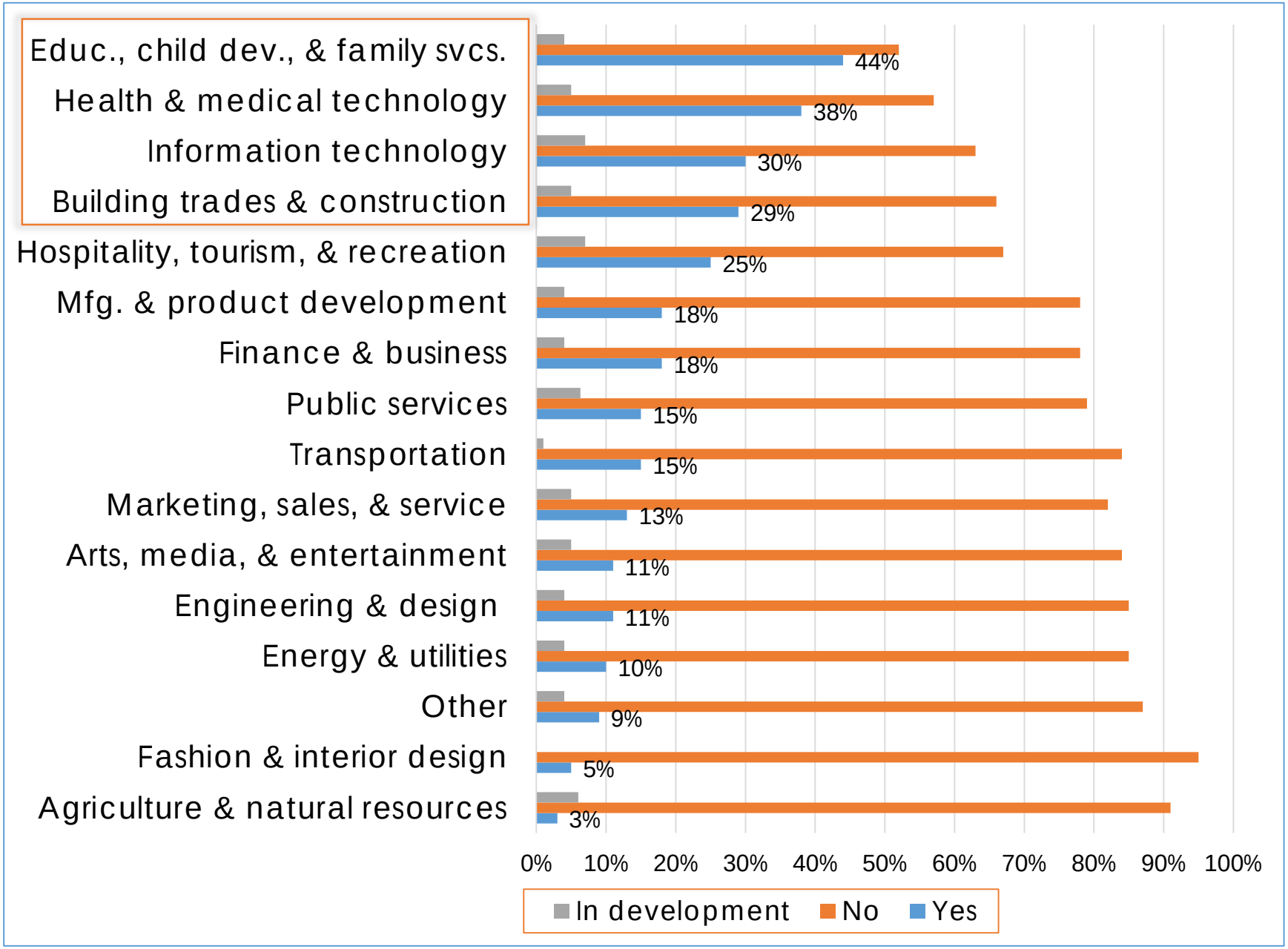
- Overall, "core" CP services were much less common



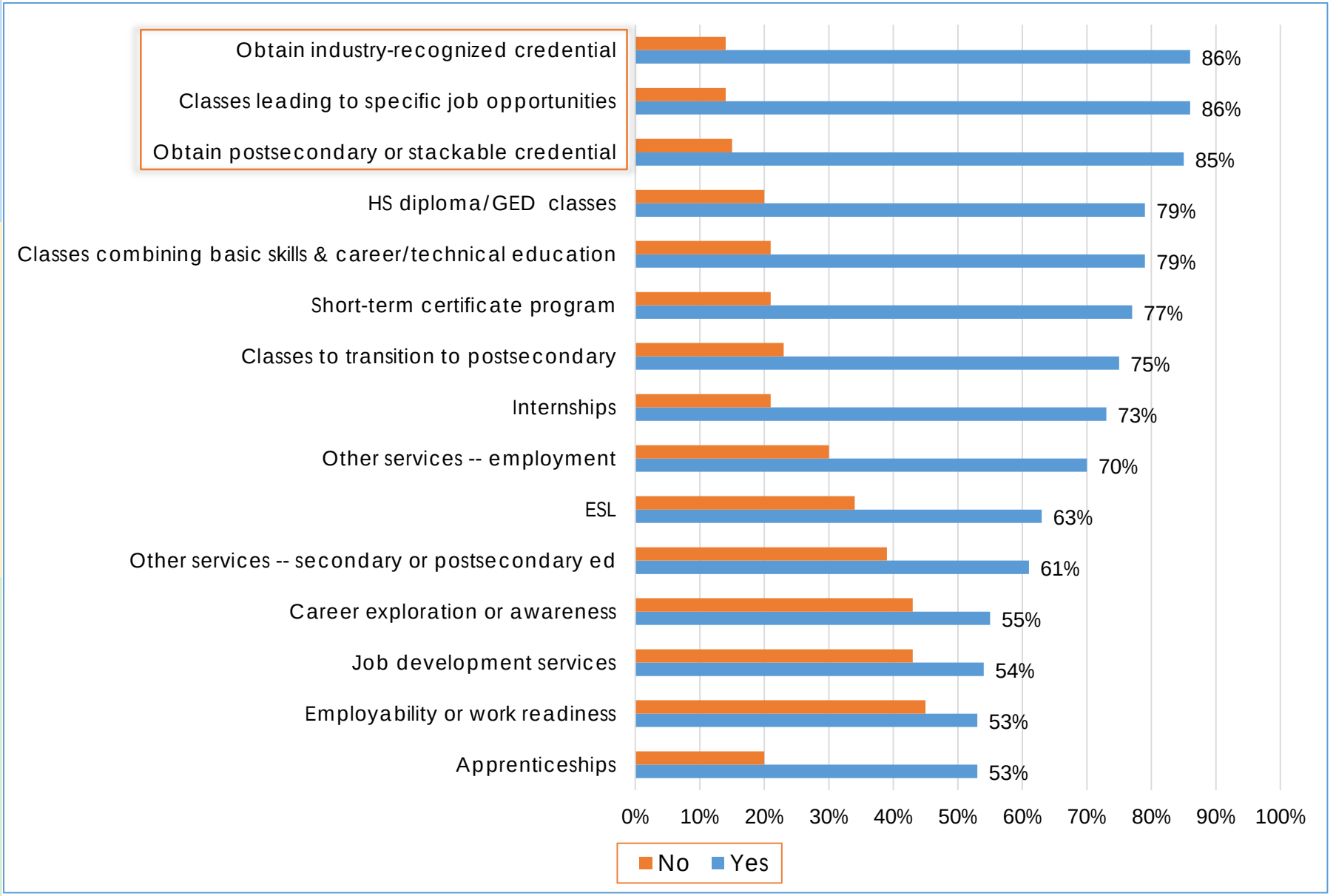
- Mechanisms for transitioning students to next step in their career pathway (n = 51 to 99)



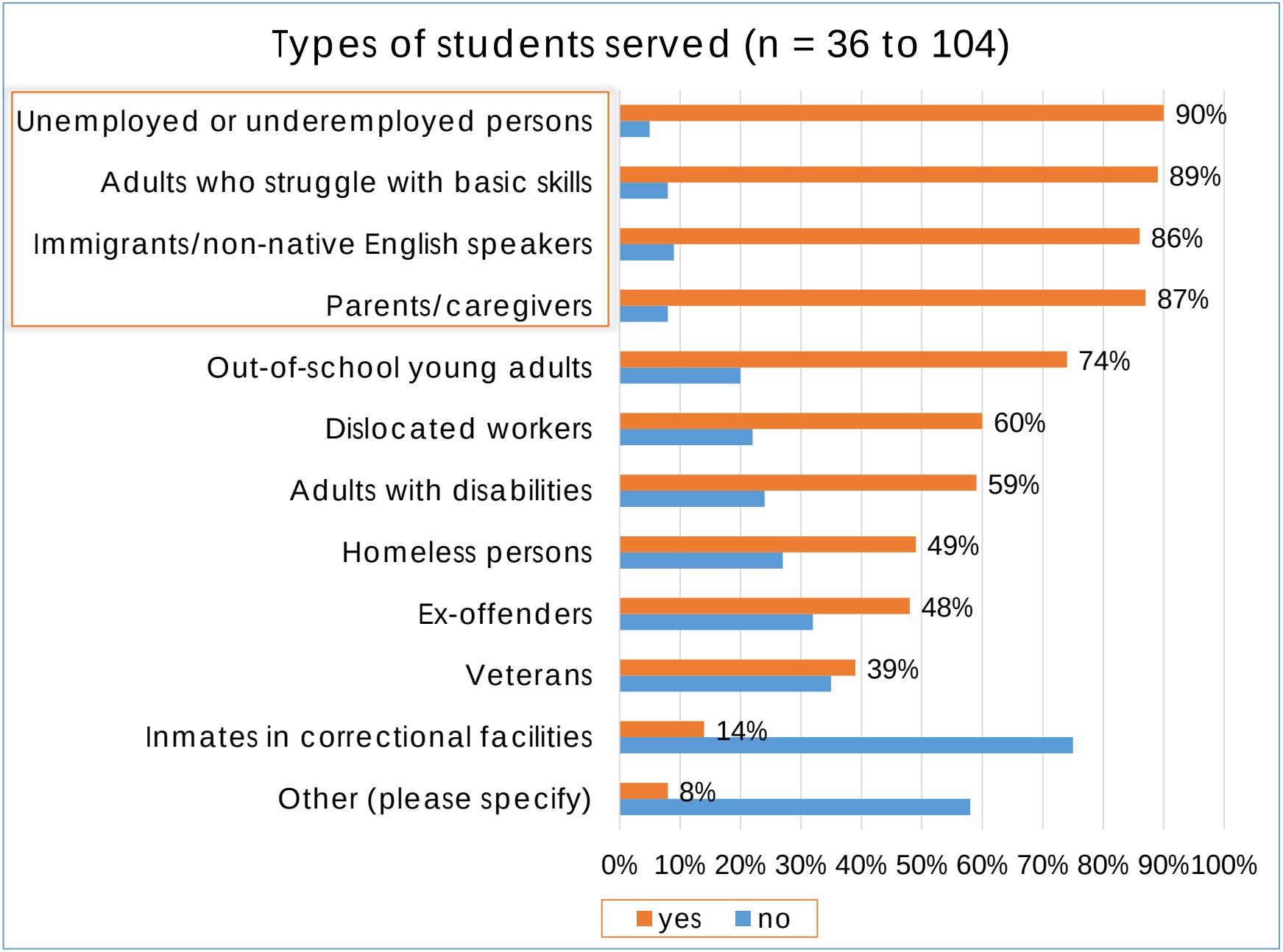
- Targeted employment sectors (n = 47 to 100)

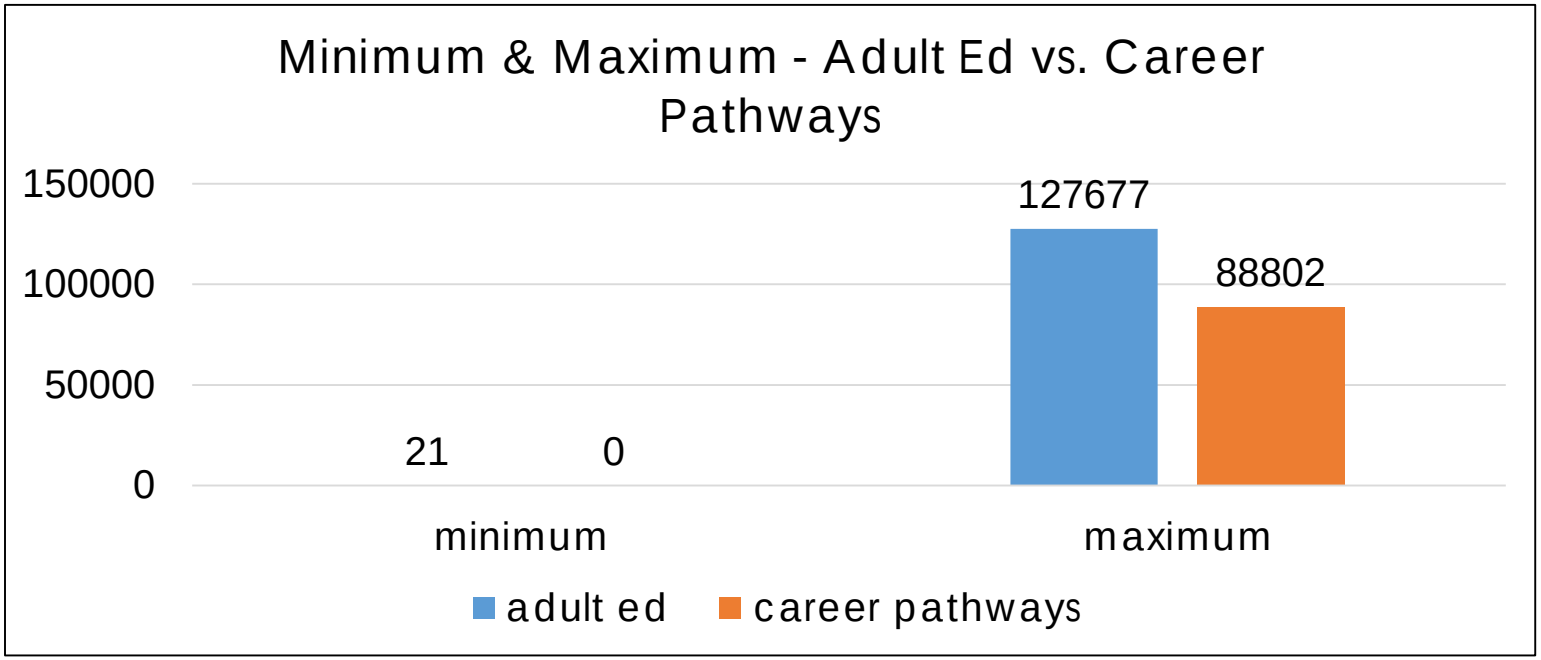


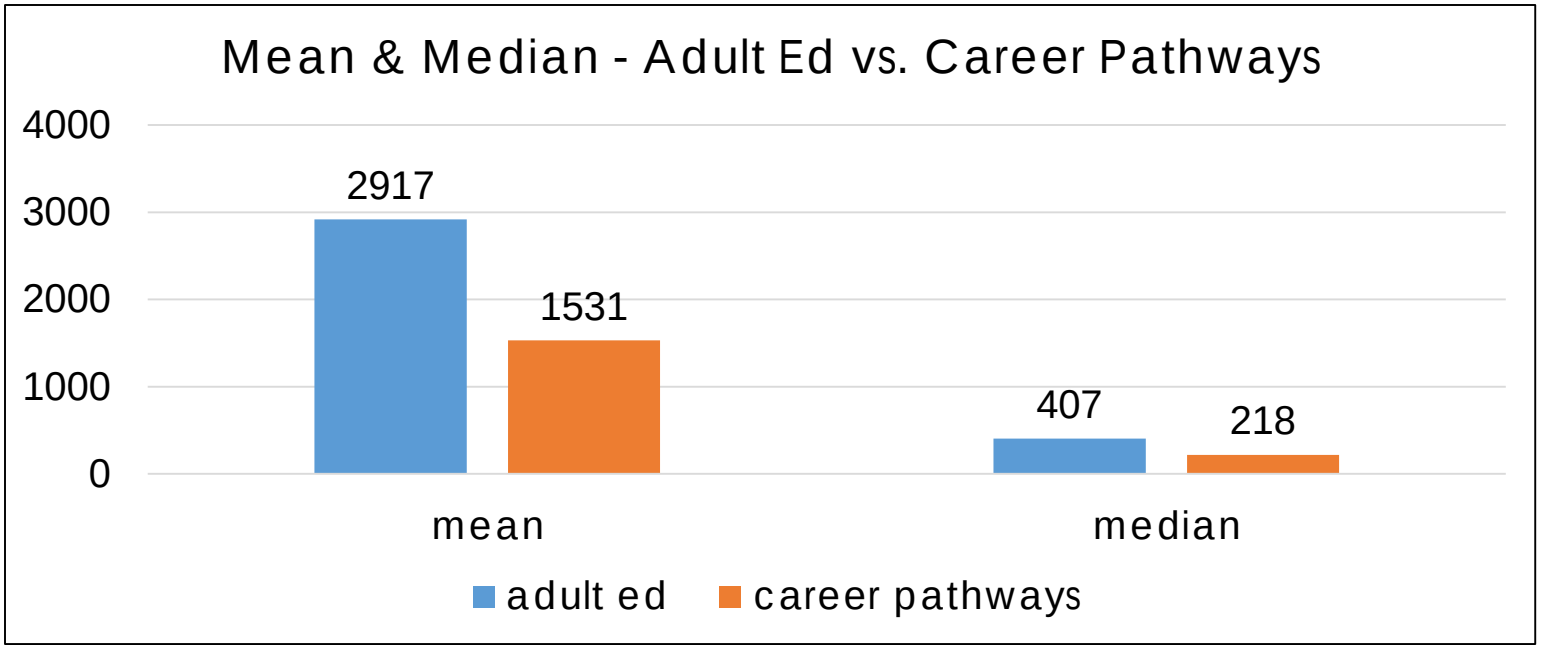
- More than 50% of each service have threshold grade-level, test score, or language requirements (n = 15 to 83)

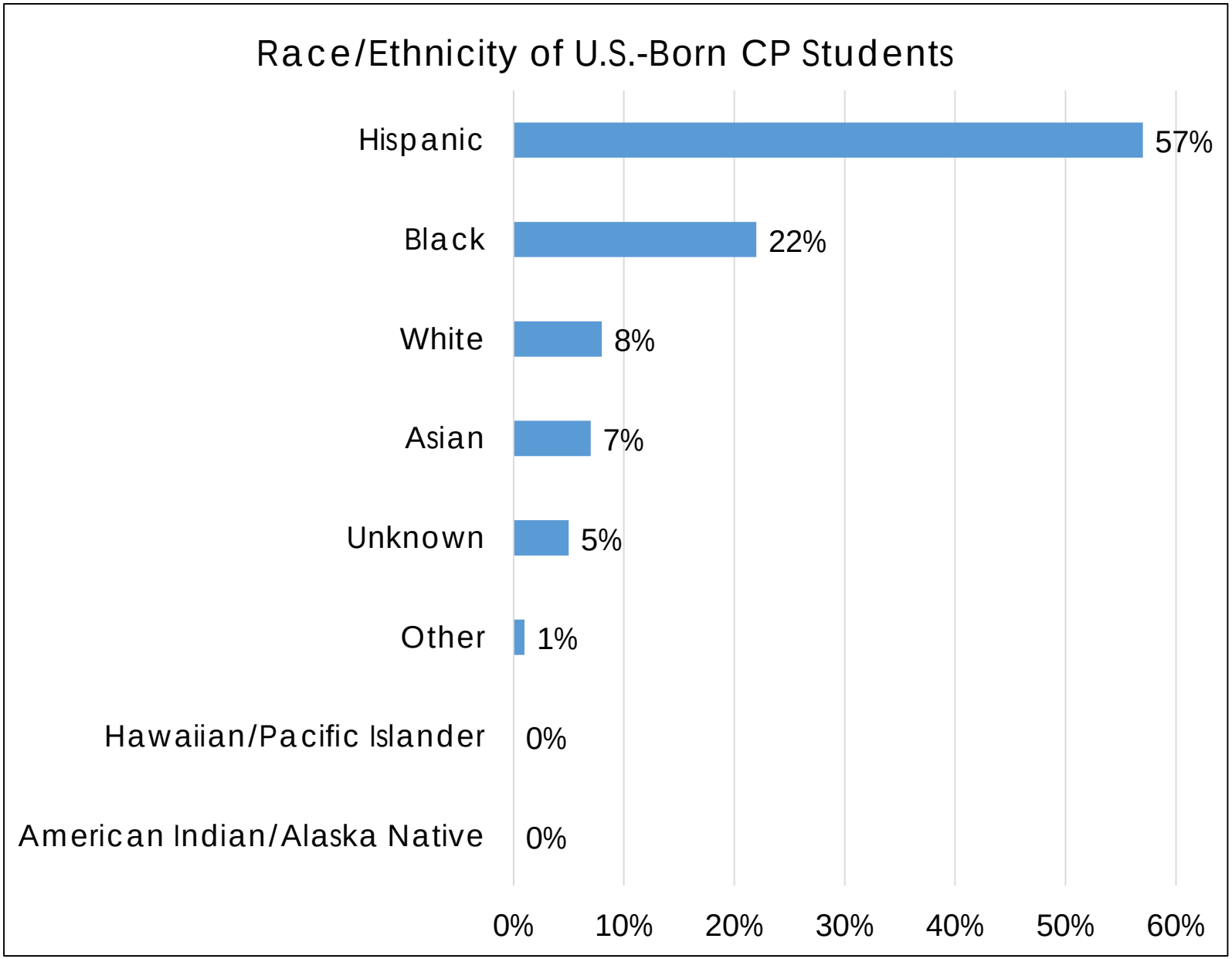


Survey Findings: Student Characteristics


Types of students served (n = 36 to 104)
Unemployed or underemployed persons
Adults who struggle with basic skills
Immigrants/non-native English speakers
Parents/caregivers
Out-of-school young adults
Dislocated workers
Adults with disabilities
Homeless persons
Ex-offenders
Veterans
Inmates in correctional facilities
Other (please specify)
90%
89%
86%
87%
74%
60%
59%
49%
48%
39%
14%
8%
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
yes
no


Minimum & Maximum - Adult Ed vs. Career Pathways
150000
100000
50000
0
21
0
127677
88802
minimum
maximum
adult ed
career pathways

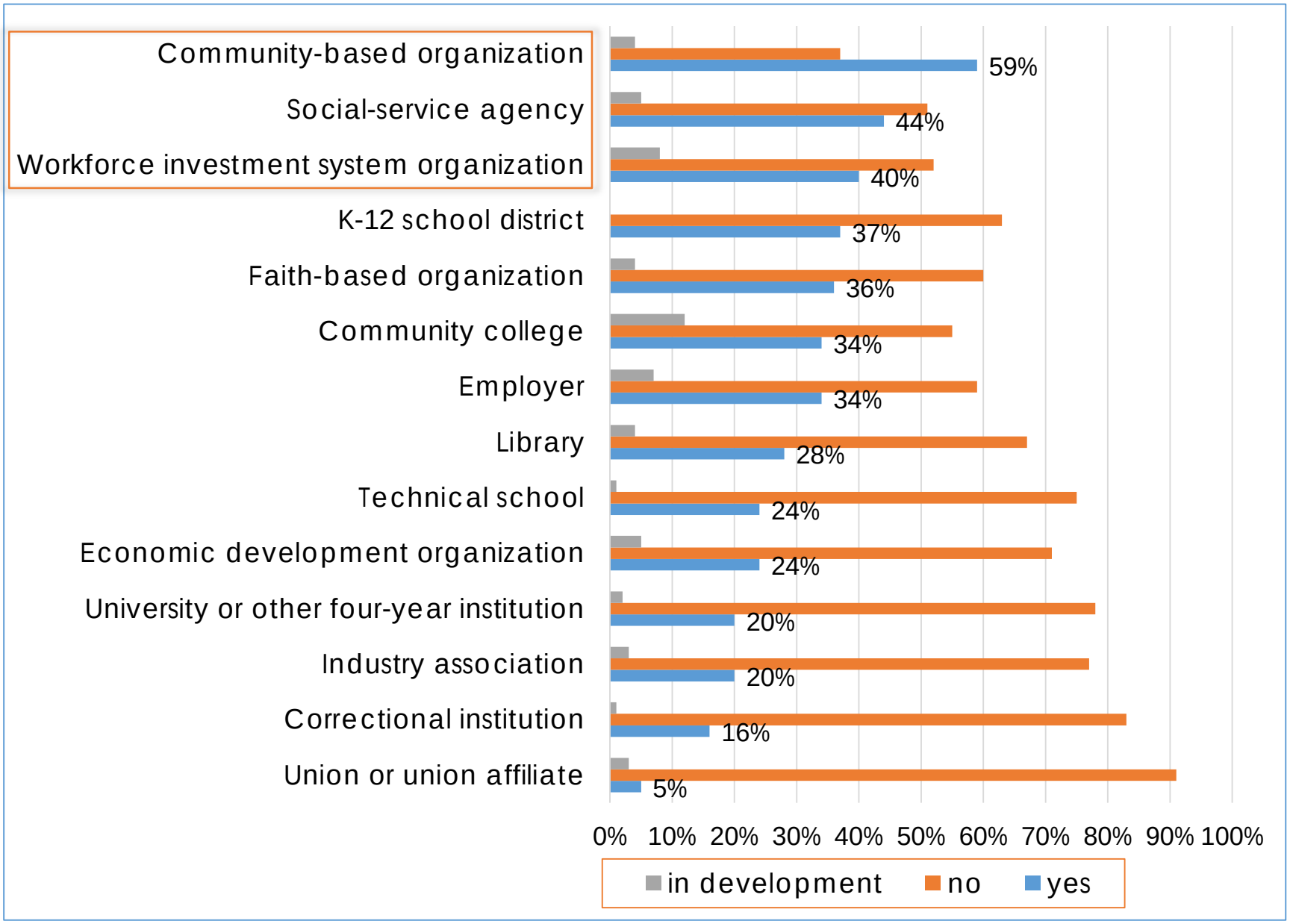

Mean & Median - Adult Ed vs. Career Pathways
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
2917
1531
407
218
mean
median
adult ed
career pathways


Race/Ethnicity of U.S.-Born CP Students
Hispanic
57%
Black
22%
White
8%
Asian
7%
Unknown
5%
Other
1%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
0%
American Indian/Alaska Native
0%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%

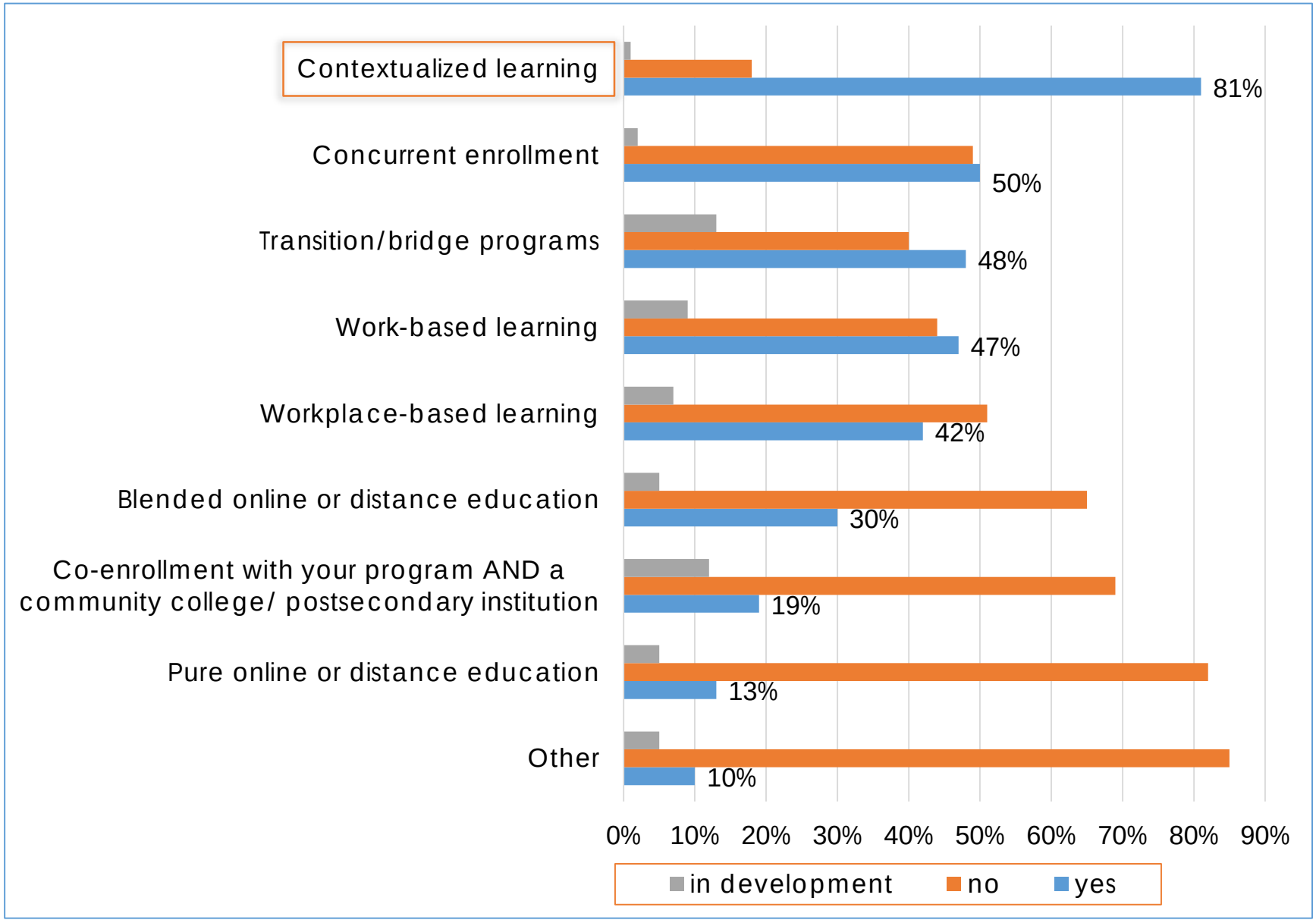
- Over 60% foreign-born
- Approx. 60% women
- Educational attainment: 63% lack HS/GED diploma
- Approx. 45% unemployed

Survey Findings:
Program Design & Delivery

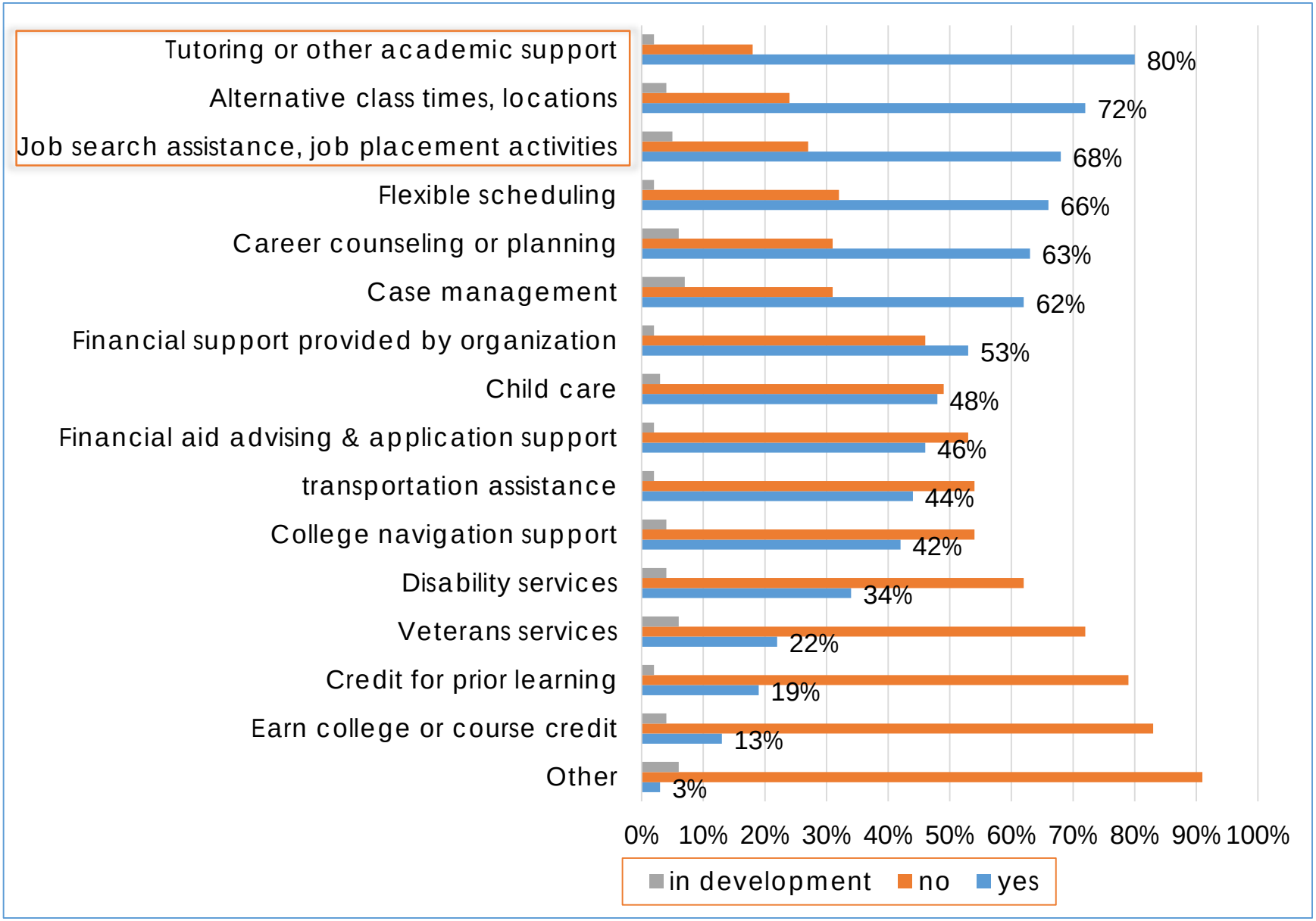
- CP partners (n = 43 to 97)



Instructional approaches (n = 41 to 98)

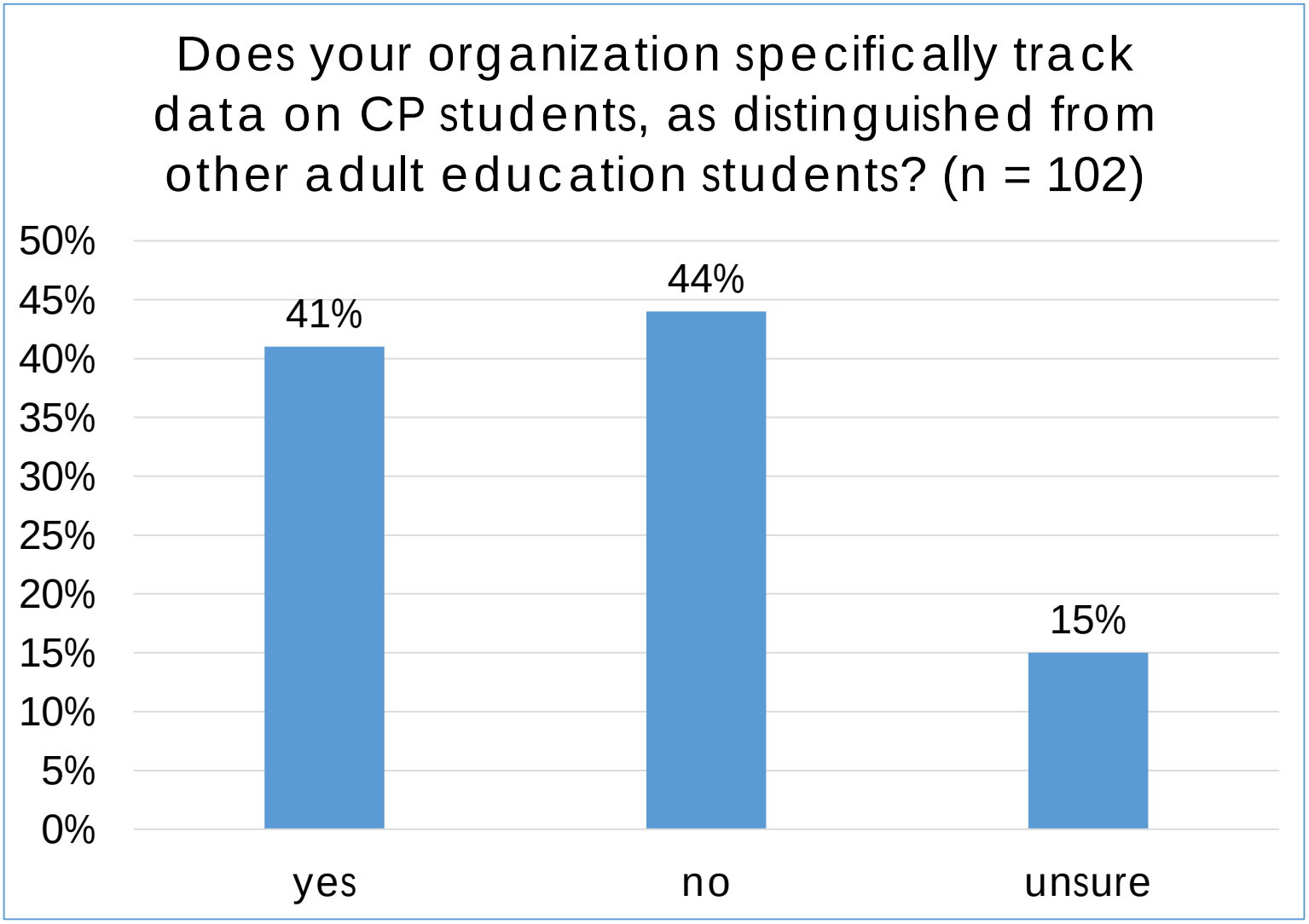


- Support services (n = 33 to 101)

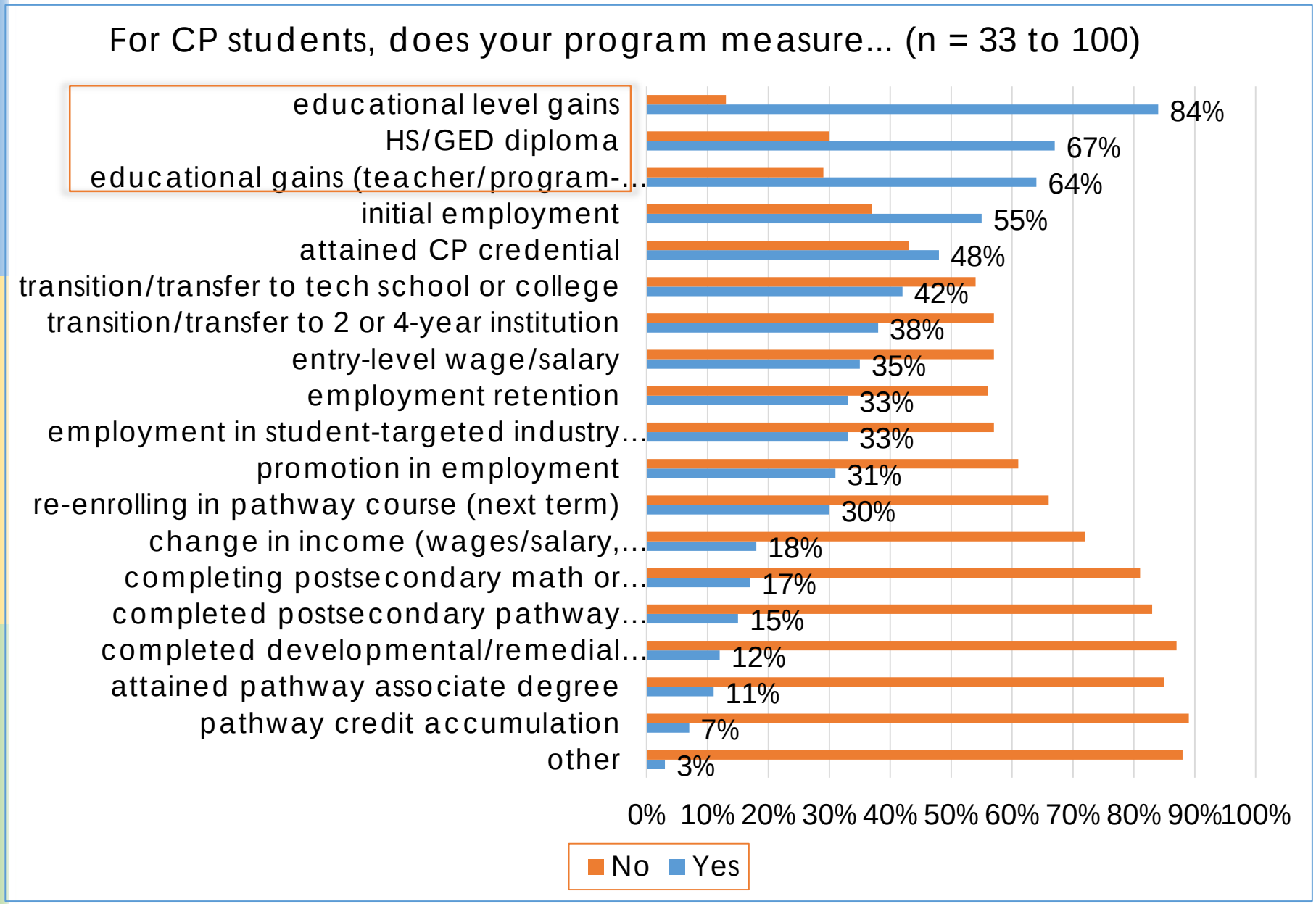


Survey Findings: Data Collection Systems & Outcome Measures

- Less than ½ of agencies track data specifically on CP students

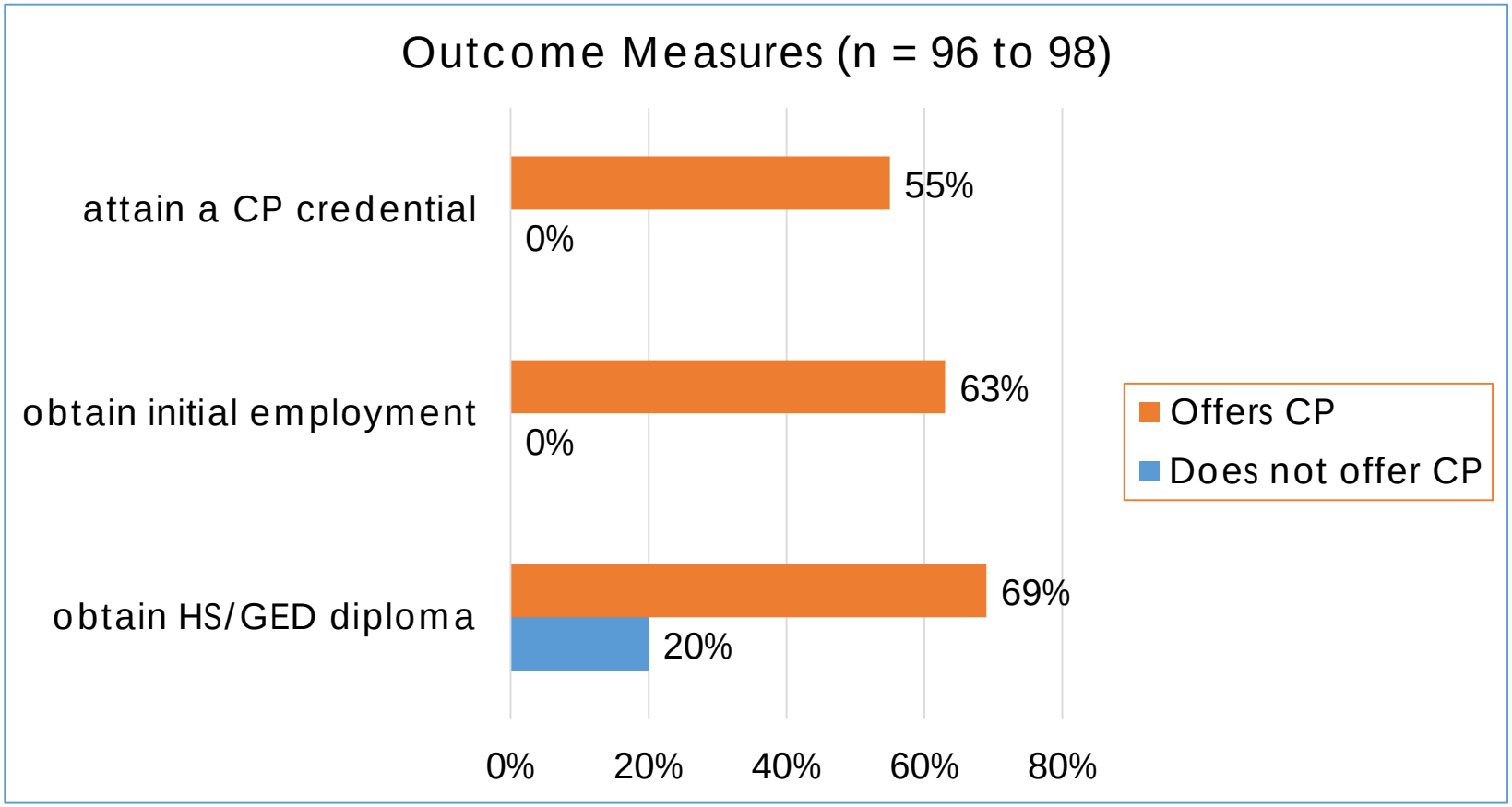


- No single measure was used by all agencies



*excludes “unsure”

- Agencies that say they offer CP (per CLASP) are significantly more likely to track 3 outcomes:



*Excludes agencies that are developing CP programming (n = 5 to 7)

Focus Groups

- Guiding research question
  - Within each city, which policies and practices shape CP programming for under-educated and immigrant adults, and coordination across providers and systems?

- Participants (18 agencies)

Chicago	Houston	Miami
City Colleges of Chicago	Alliance for Multicultural Community Services	American Adult and Community Education Center (school district)
Erie Neighborhood House	Harris County Dept. of Education	D.A. Dorsey Technical College (school district)
Greater West Town Partnership	Houston Center for Literacy	Lindsey Hopkins Technical College (school district)
Heartland Alliance	Memorial Assistance Ministries	Miami Dade College
Instituto del Progreso Latino	Neighborhood Centers	Miami-Dade Department of Corrections
Jane Addams Resource Corp.		OIC of South Florida
		South Dade Technical College (school district)

Insights into Policies

- Dedicated resources for CP have been helpful
  - Funder investment in CP system can generate interest by other funders (Shifting Gears, Joyce Foundation)
  - Florida Integrated Career and Academic Preparation Program (FICAPS) has helped FL adult ed agencies develop CP
  - Texas Innovative Adult Career Education grant

Insights into Policies: Challenges

- Differing funder requirements can complicate cross-program referrals
  - Staff are unsure if individuals will meet the eligibility requirements → reluctant to refer

- Defining CP narrowly or not at all has implications:
  - CP program design differs based on funder: workforce versus academic orientation → drives who can be served

  - IL agencies required to have bridge programs, but wanted clearer definitions and support structures

Insights into Policies: Challenges

- Defining CP narrowly or not at all has implications:
  - In TX, CP were required and aimed at recognized certificates in high-demand occupations
    - ESL students who got other jobs as a first step didn't count toward job growth target
    - Unintended consequence → pressure to recruit higher-level, highly skilled ESL students (hard to find)

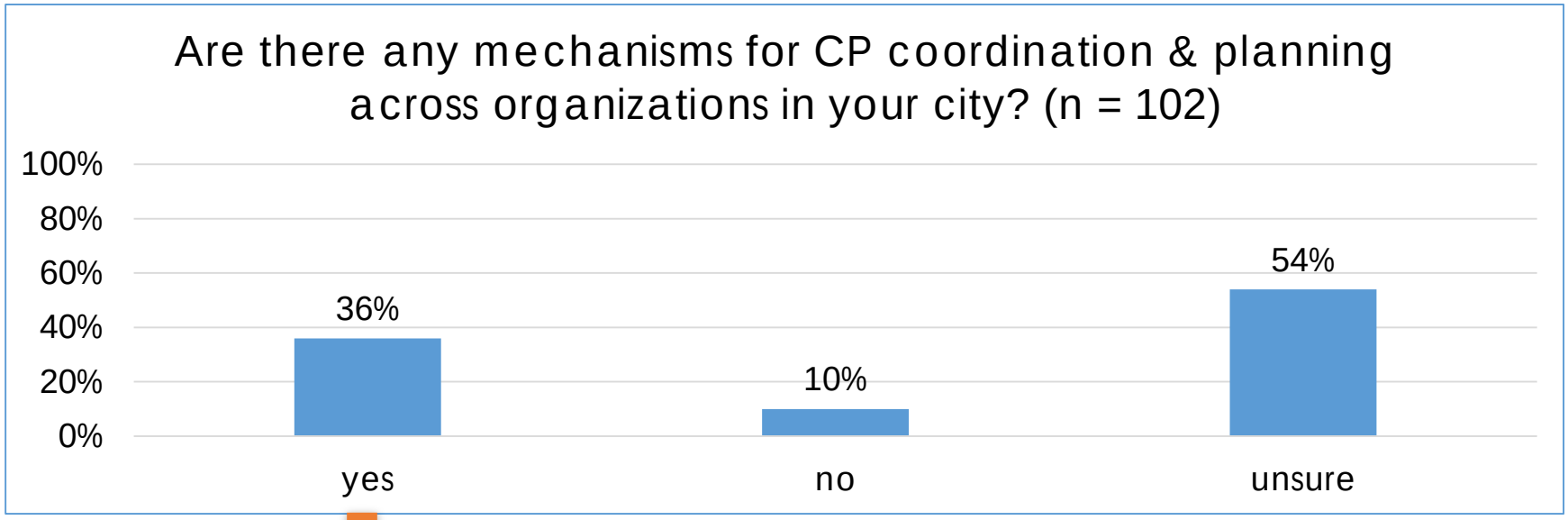
Insights into Policies: Challenges

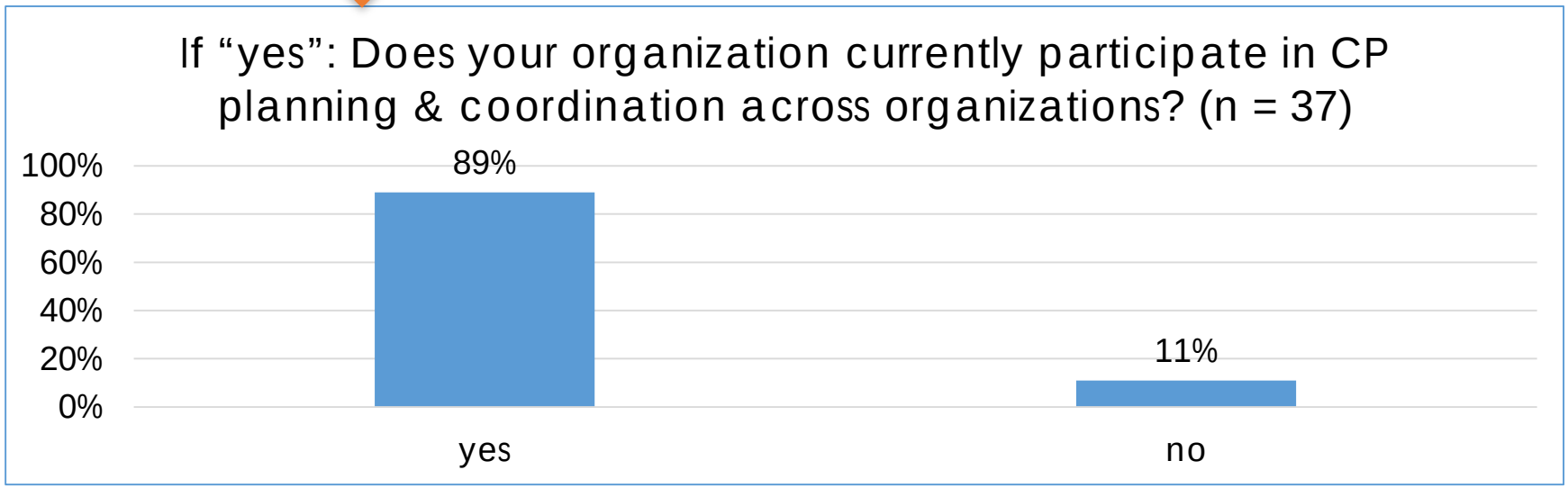
- Issues with enrollment (examples)
  - Rapidly increasing enrollment targets on short notice
  - Choose between meeting enrollment target versus providing CP (time-intensive, expensive)
  - High schools in FL penalized for withdrawing potential dropouts into adult ed programs
- Policy updates from our city partners

Insights into Citywide Coordination

- Agencies are coordinating on CP more at the micro and meso levels than the macro level.
  - Micro: individual relationships across organizations; coordination within some large systems (community college, school district)
    - Coordination is often more personal than institutional
  - Meso: organization-to-organization partnerships and small sub-sets of organizations such as funder networks
    - Some coordination if programs work in a consortium or have the same funder
  - Macro: city-wide mechanisms in which many organizations participate and coordinate across institutions and funding streams – rare

- Career pathways coordination





Insights into Citywide Coordination

- Limited resources for CP cause competition, which may affect coordination across providers
- Coordination within community college CP is emerging
  - E.g., communication & coordination between career/technical teachers and adult ed/support teachers

Discuss

- How do the survey findings compare to your experience with career pathways in your city or community?

- Which findings…
  - are surprising?
  - confirm what you already knew or suspected?
  - are encouraging?
  - are concerning?

- What kinds of topics should we research on adult education career pathways for the future?

For More Information…

- Visit our project website & view the presentation slides:
  - http://adultpathways.psu.edu/ (for slides: click on "updates" tab)
- Visit the Institute of Education Sciences website: https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/details.asp?ID=1642
- Contact the PI, Dr. Esther Prins
  - esp150@psu.edu; 814-865-0597
- These are tentative, preliminary findings. Please do not quote or cite without permission from the PI.
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  - Institute of Education Sciences & Meredith Larson
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