



# Chafee Education and Training Vouchers



## Planning a Next-Generation Evaluation Agenda for the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood

The Urban Institute and its partner Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago have been contracted by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to help develop an evaluation agenda to learn more about the effectiveness of programs for youth in foster care.



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# Background on education and young people in foster care

- Postsecondary education is important to achieving economic self-sufficiency. It is also associated with other positive outcomes.
- Young people in foster care face challenges in pursuing postsecondary education, which can lead to poorer outcomes than peers:
  - less likely to enroll in college;
  - college students less likely to earn a degree.

# Resources for youth vary widely across the country

- Federal and state government and universities are seeking ways to ameliorate the disparity
- Landscape of college resources and supports varies widely across the country
  - State or federal extended foster care
  - Tuition waiver policies
  - Other financial aid sources (e.g. state scholarships)
- The Chafee Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) program.

# Background on the ETV program

- In 2001, Congress created the Chafee Educational and Training Voucher Program. Since 2002, Congress has allocated \$43 million annually to states and tribes to help young adults in foster care attend college through vouchers for young people up to age 23.
- Up to \$5,000 per year for postsecondary education or training
  - can be used for tuition, fees, books, housing and more based on unmet need and cost of attendance.
- Recent changes in the ETV program with the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018:
  - young people are eligible from ages 14 to 26 but for no more than 5 years total.
- Only some basic information is known about who receives ETVs, how they are used, or whether they improve educational outcomes for young people in foster care.

# Today's research questions

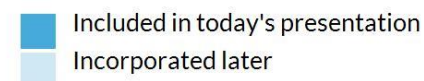
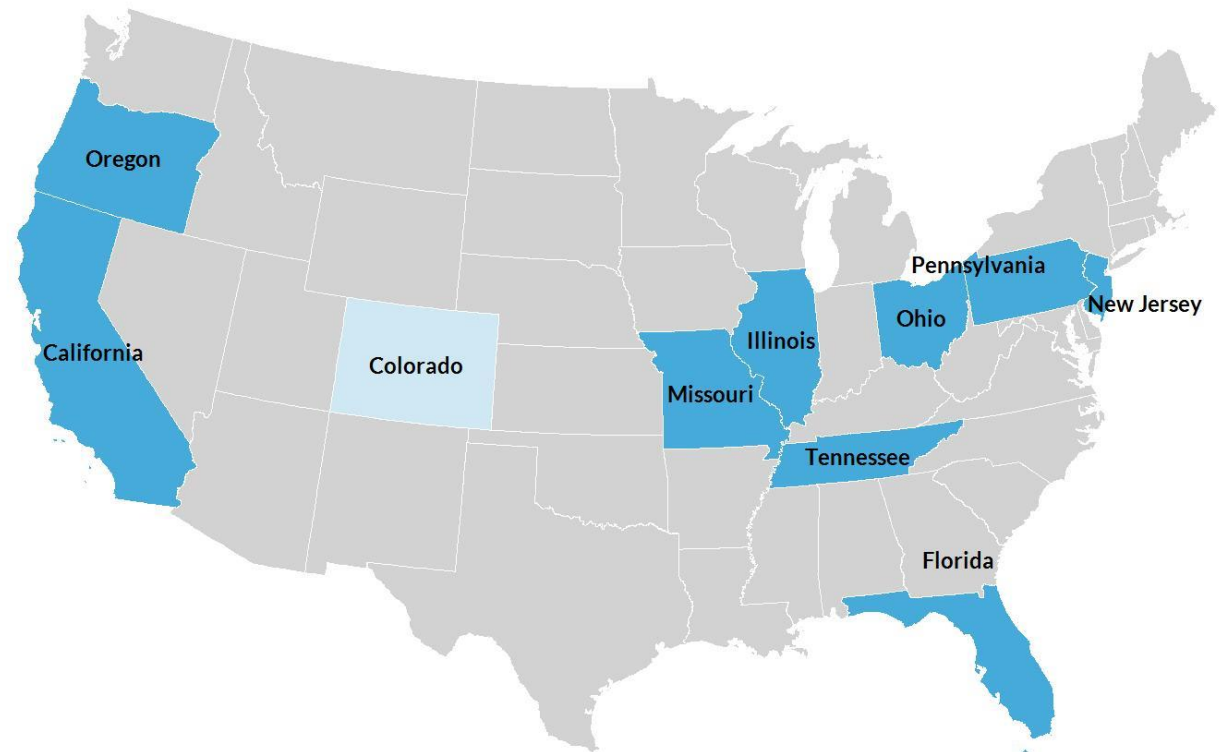
- What are key similarities and differences in how states implement the ETV program?
- Among young people who receive ETVs, how many years do they receive it for? What portion of the total amount awarded is used?
- How does being eligible for an ETV affect college enrollment?
- What type of postsecondary programs do young people who receive ETVs attend? How does this compare to young people who attend college without ETVs?
- Who receives ETV vouchers? What are the characteristics of young people who receive ETV vouchers, compared with young people who attend college without an ETV and young people who do not attend college?
- How do enrollment, persistence, and graduation trends differ between young people who receive ETVs and those who attend college without ETVs?

# Data

- Interviews with state ETV coordinators and administrators
- State child welfare administrative data on placement histories
- State ETV administrative data
- Matched to National Student Clearinghouse data on college enrollment over time and graduation
  - Possibly missing technical colleges and other for-profits

# Sample inclusion

- Young people in foster care at age 16 and observed through age 23
- Years: 2005–17,  $N = 193,000$
- Analyses are preliminary:  
includes 9 of 10 states
- Data predate recent changes in ETV program with the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018





# Methods

- Effect on enrollment:
  - Ran regressions to determine the effect of ETV eligibility on college enrollment by analyzing differences in states with different eligibility criteria
- Predicting ETV award:
  - Ran regressions to determine which demographic characteristics, types of past child welfare involvement, and states of residence make young people most likely to receive an ETV award among students eligible for ETVs
- Persistence:
  - Ran descriptive tabulations to determine how ETV award is associated with educational persistence

# Description of ETV Implementation

# Variation in program administration

- Eligibility criteria varies across states:
  - In all of the ten states, young people who are still in care at age 18 and those who are adopted after age 16 are eligible.
  - In four states, young people who have reunified with their families are also eligible for ETVs.
  - Two states have additional criteria based on length of time in care.
- Strategies for conducting outreach to young people who may be eligible for ETVs also varies:
  - Eight states train Independent Living coordinators to discuss the ETV program with potentially eligible young people.
  - Six states conduct outreach to young people or caseworkers at conferences.
  - Three states conduct direct outreach to young people through mail or email.

# Variation in application and dispersal process

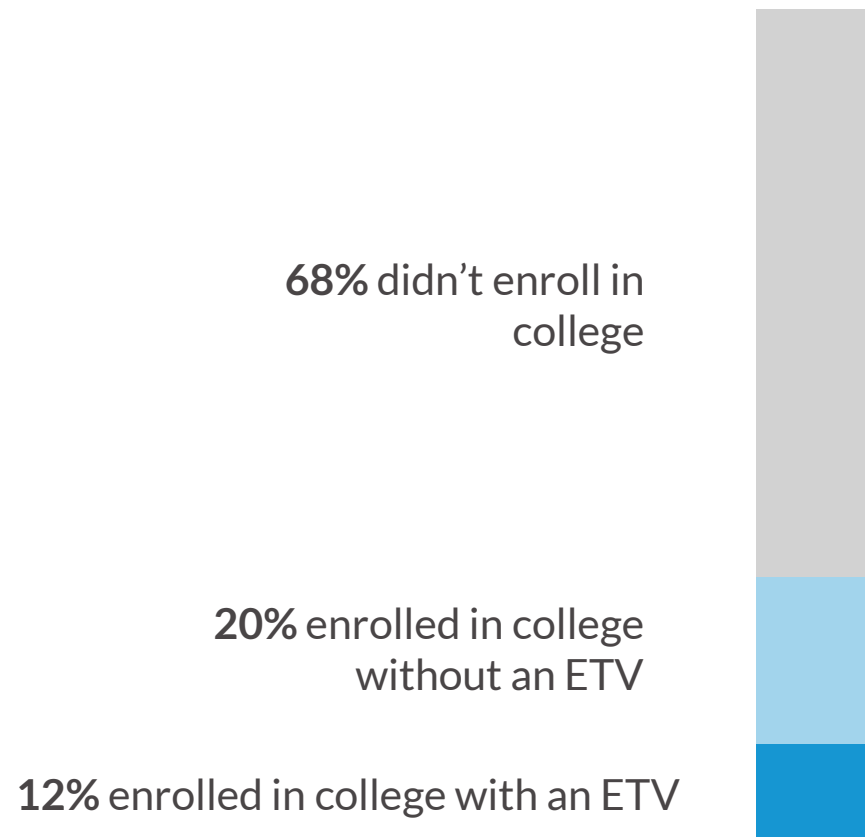
- States took different approaches to the application process:
  - Eight of the ten states had applications fewer than 3 pages long, but some were as long as five pages.
  - Four states only had an online application, four only had a paper application, and two offered both.
  - Five states required additional documents to be submitted with the application (e.g., FAFSA, proof of enrollment, high school transcript).
- Eight states dispersed funding primarily through the school, whereas two states gave money to the young people directly.

# Variation in renewal process

- All states required that young people maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to renew their voucher, although some allowed for an appeal process to continue without maintaining SAP.
- The ETV renewal process varied widely across states as well:
  - Three states did not require any action on young people's part to renew, whereas seven states require that the young people resubmit the initial application or a shortened version.

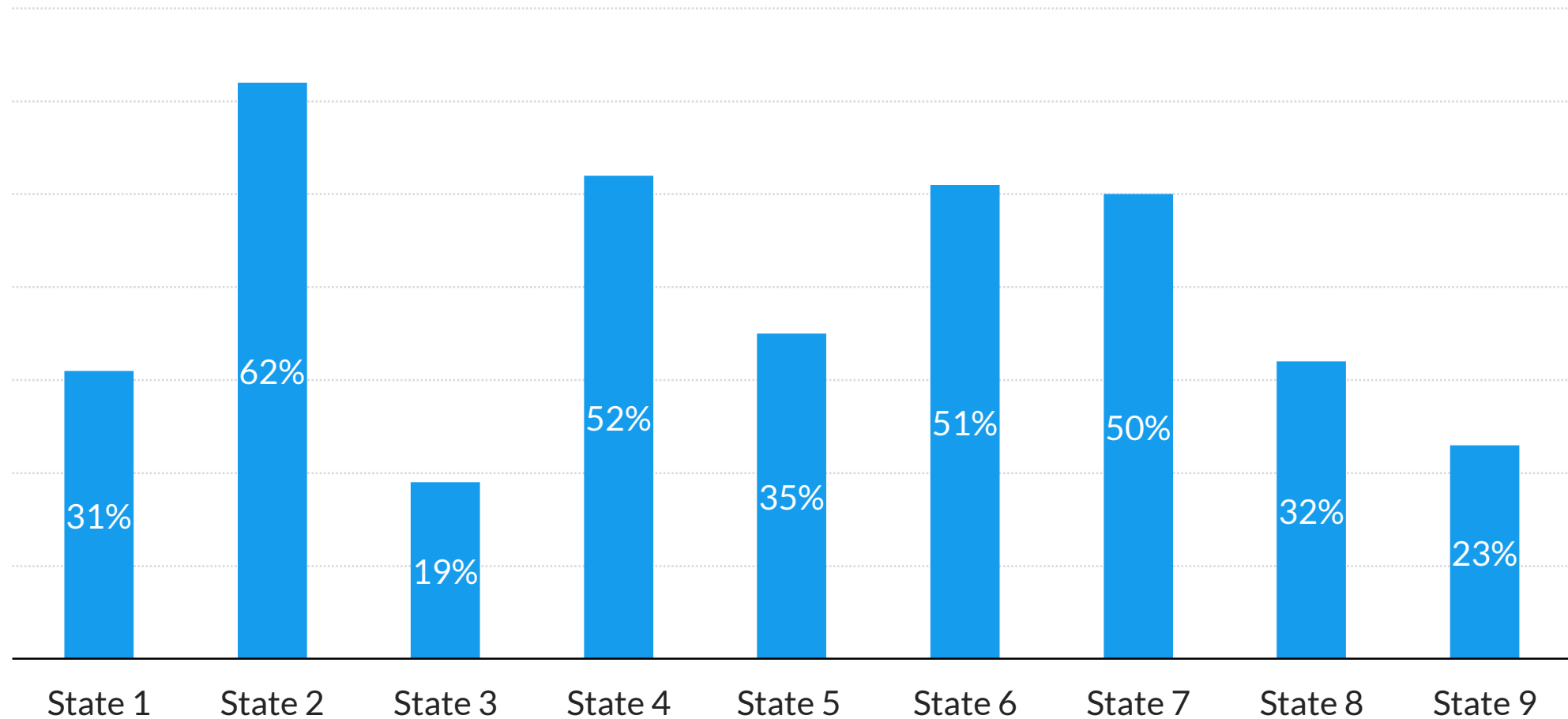
# ETV Take-Up

# Low rates of ETV utilization by age 21



- Possible reasons why young adults would enroll without an ETV:
  - Didn't know about ETVs
  - No need for ETV (e.g., received tuition waiver, other funding)
  - Unavailability of funds

# Probability of enrolling with an ETV among young people enrolled in college varies widely by state





# ETV usage and amount

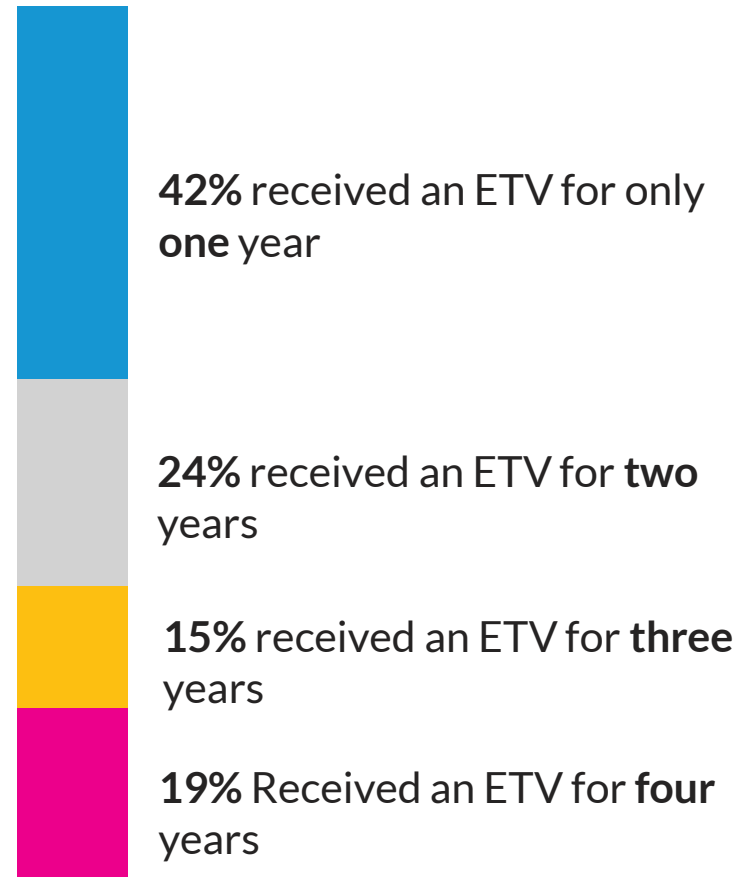
\$3,411

Average amount  
awarded per student  
per year

\$2,310

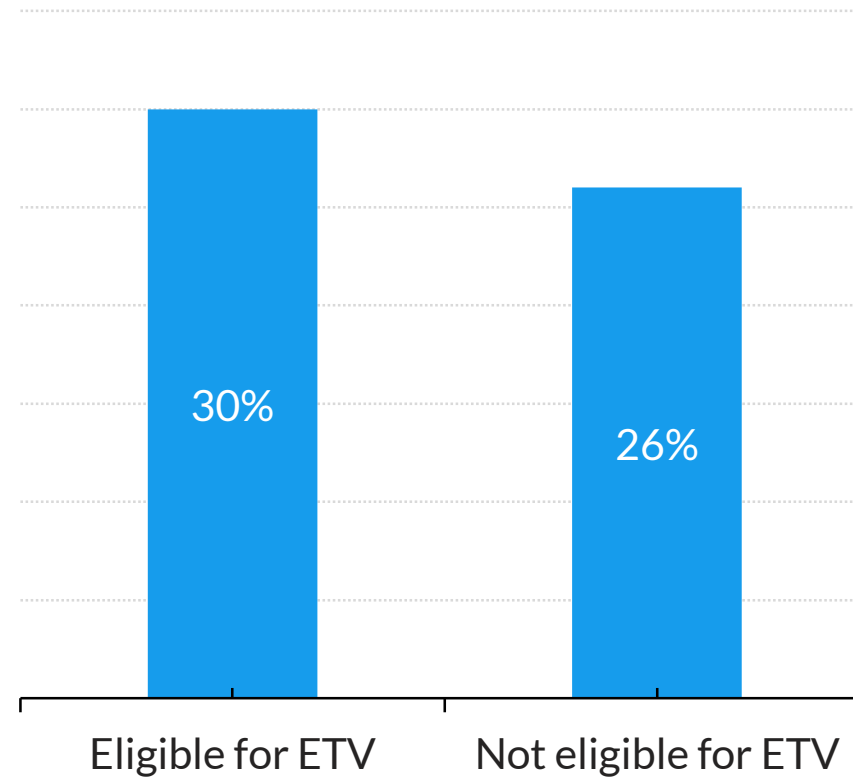
Average ETV amount  
used

## By age 23:

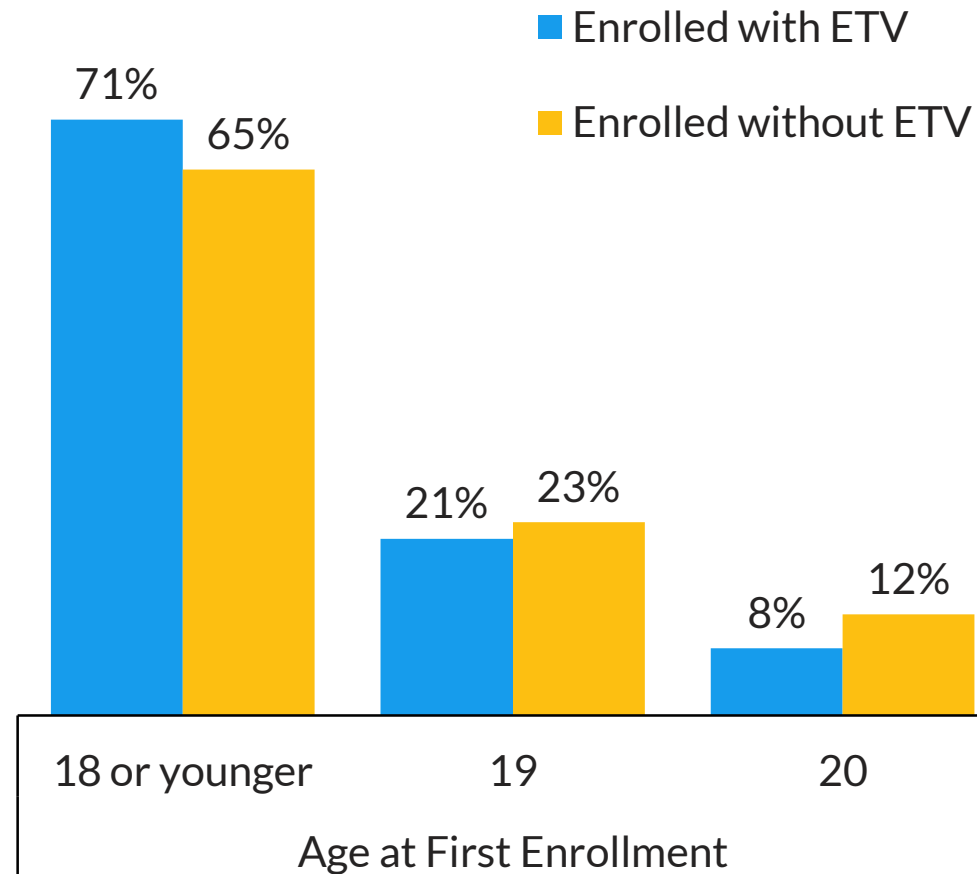


# College Enrollment

# Eligibility for ETVs increases the probability of enrollment

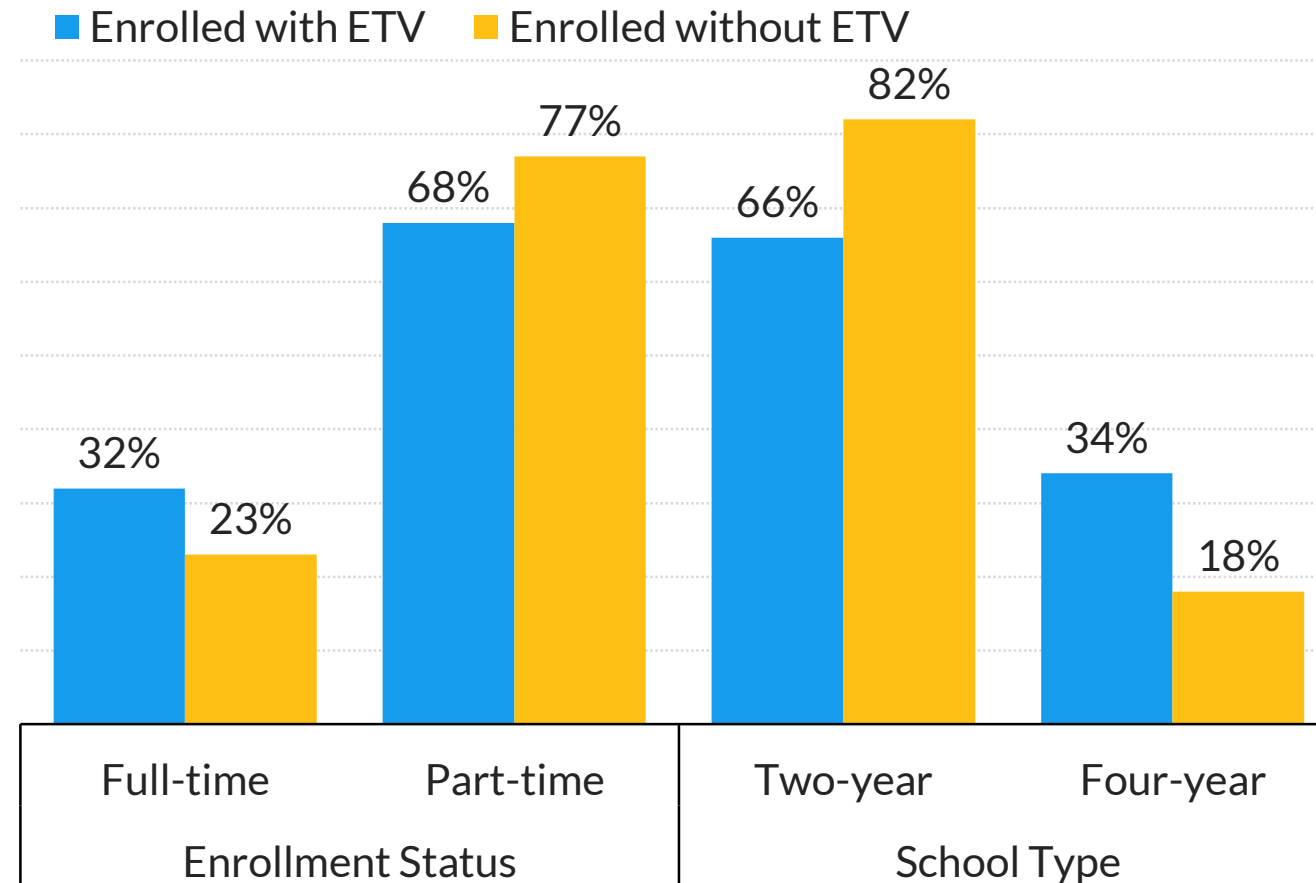


# ETV recipients tend to enroll in college earlier



*Among students enrolled by 21<sup>st</sup> birthday*

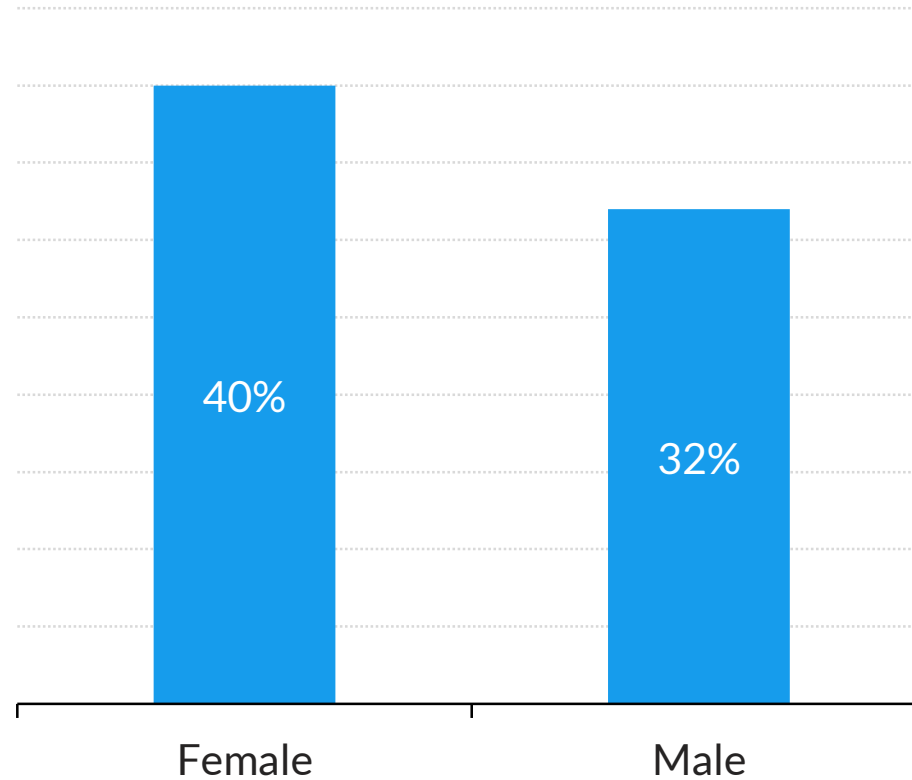
# ETV recipients are more likely to enroll full time and in four-year schools



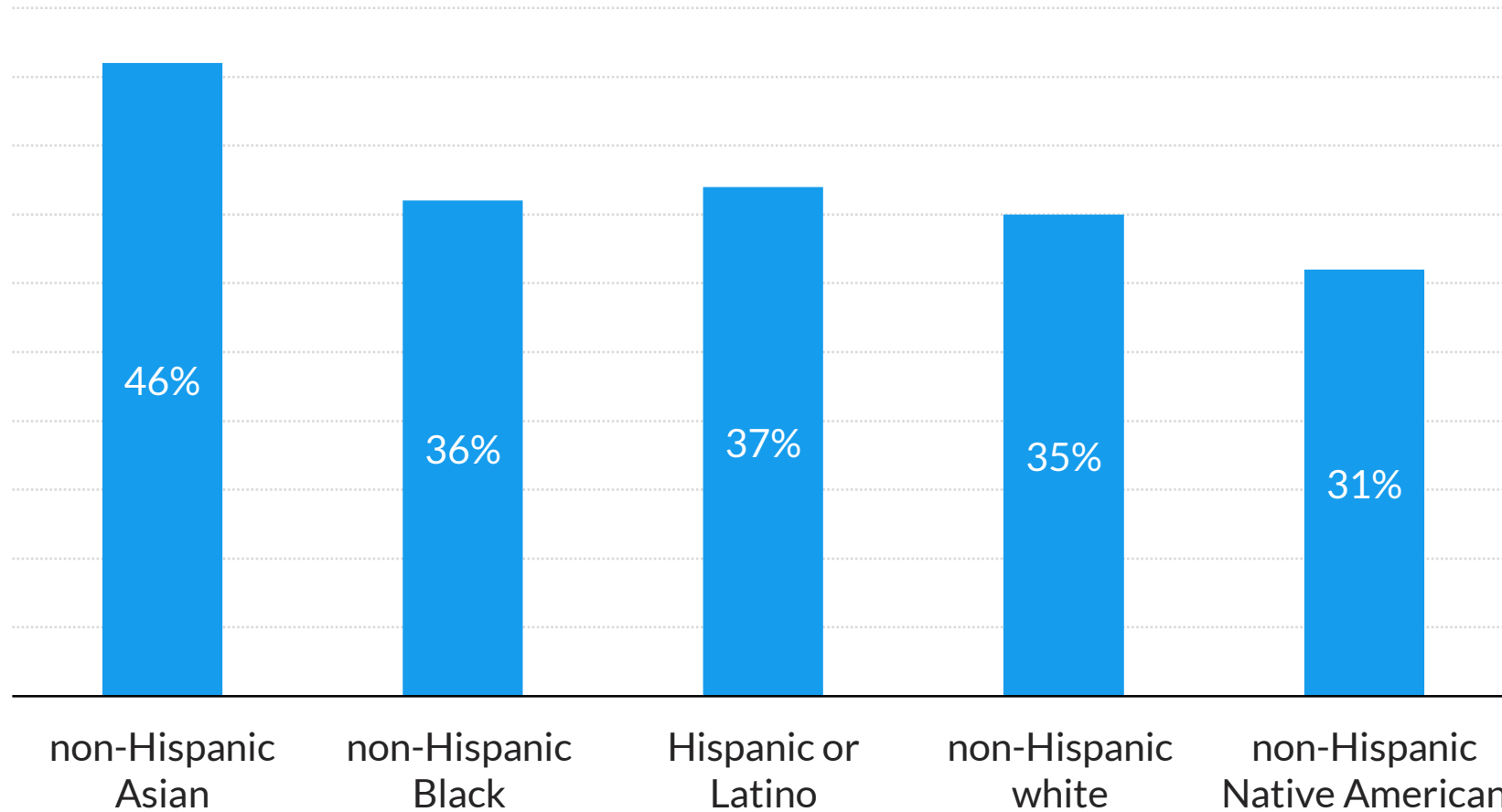
Among students enrolled by 21<sup>st</sup> birthday

# Characteristics of ETV Recipients

# Young women are more likely to receive ETVs than young men

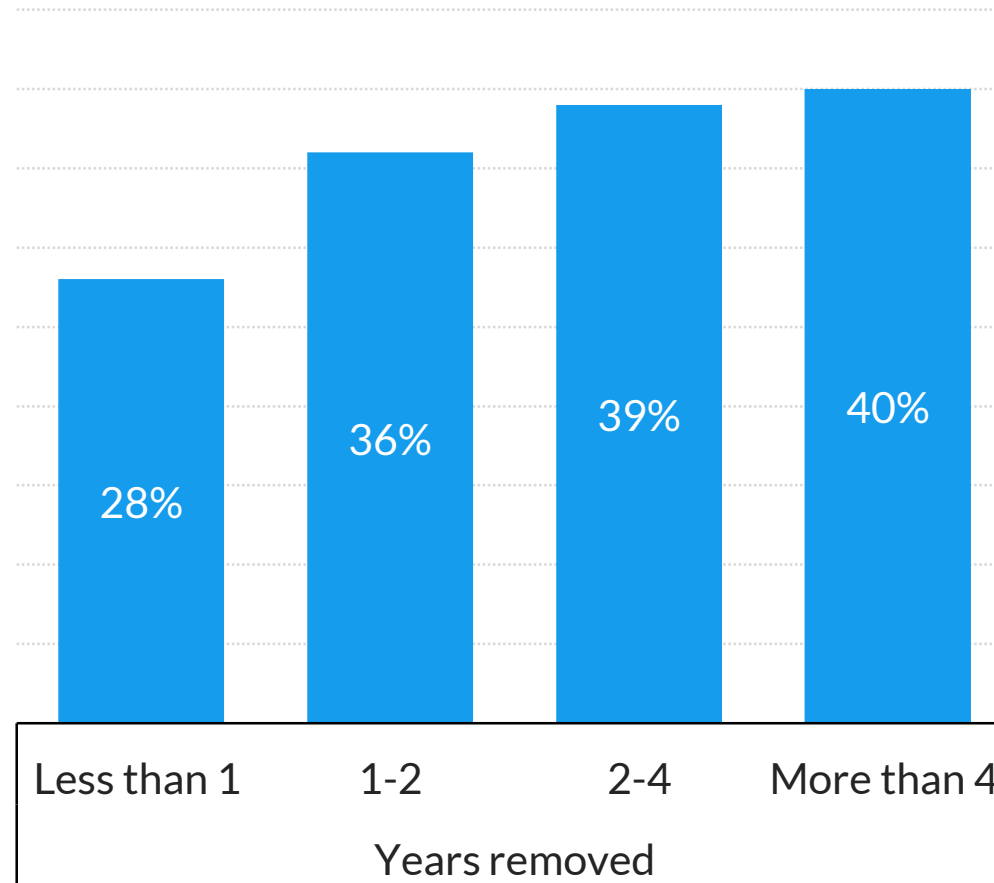


# Asian students are more likely to receive ETVs than students of other races and ethnicities

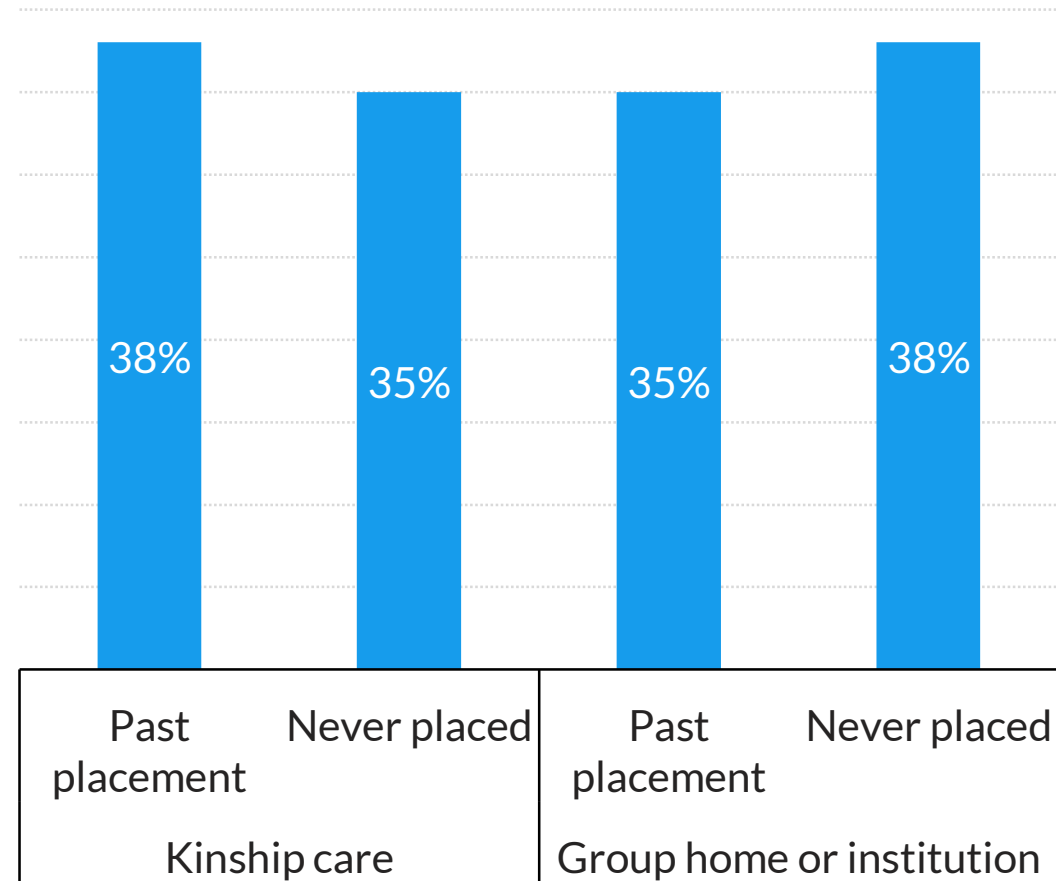




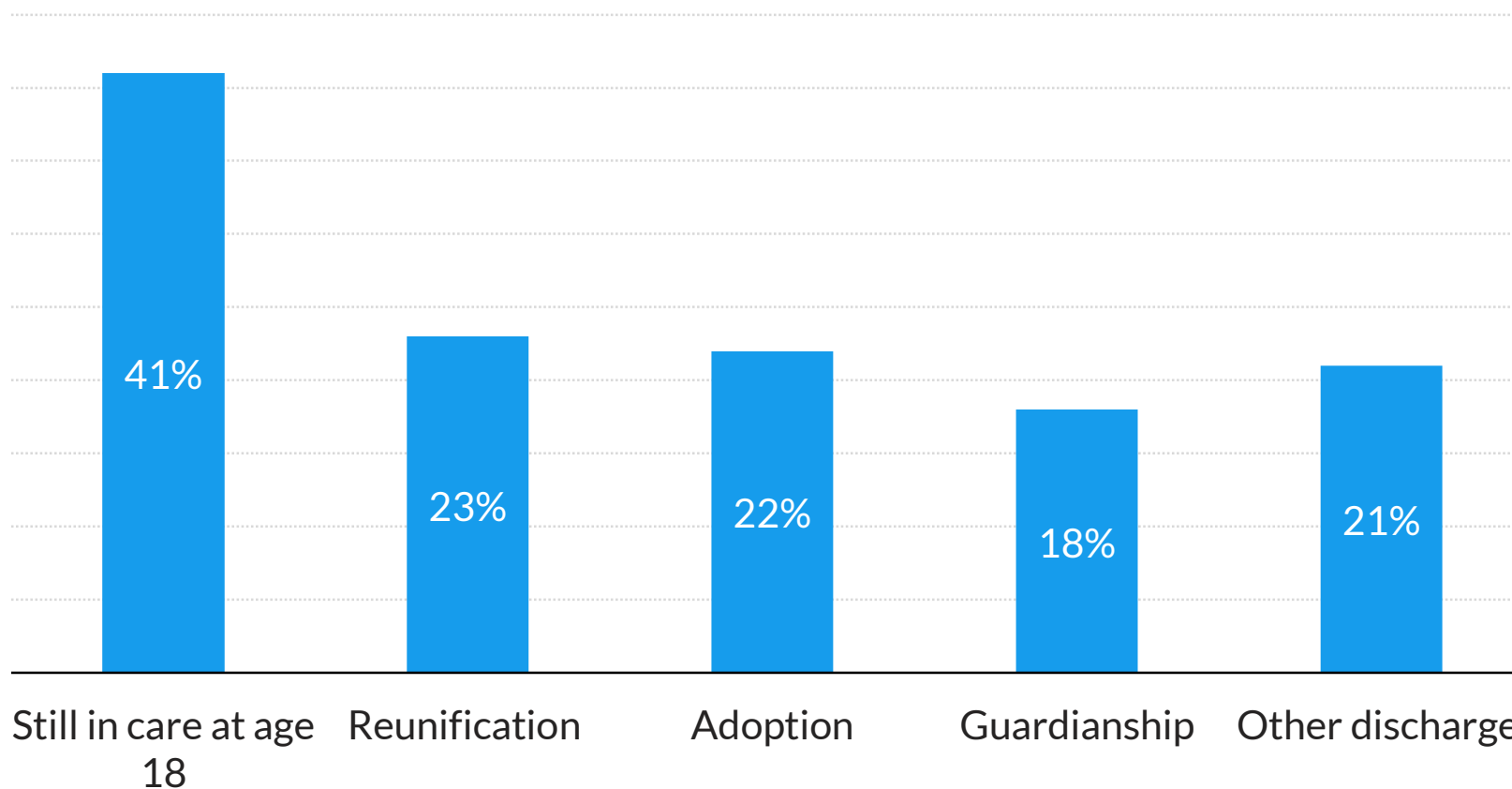
# Students who have spent more time in care are more likely to enroll with an ETV



Students who spent time in kinship care were slightly more likely to enroll with an ETV, while those who spent time in group homes or institutions were slightly less likely to enroll with an ETV



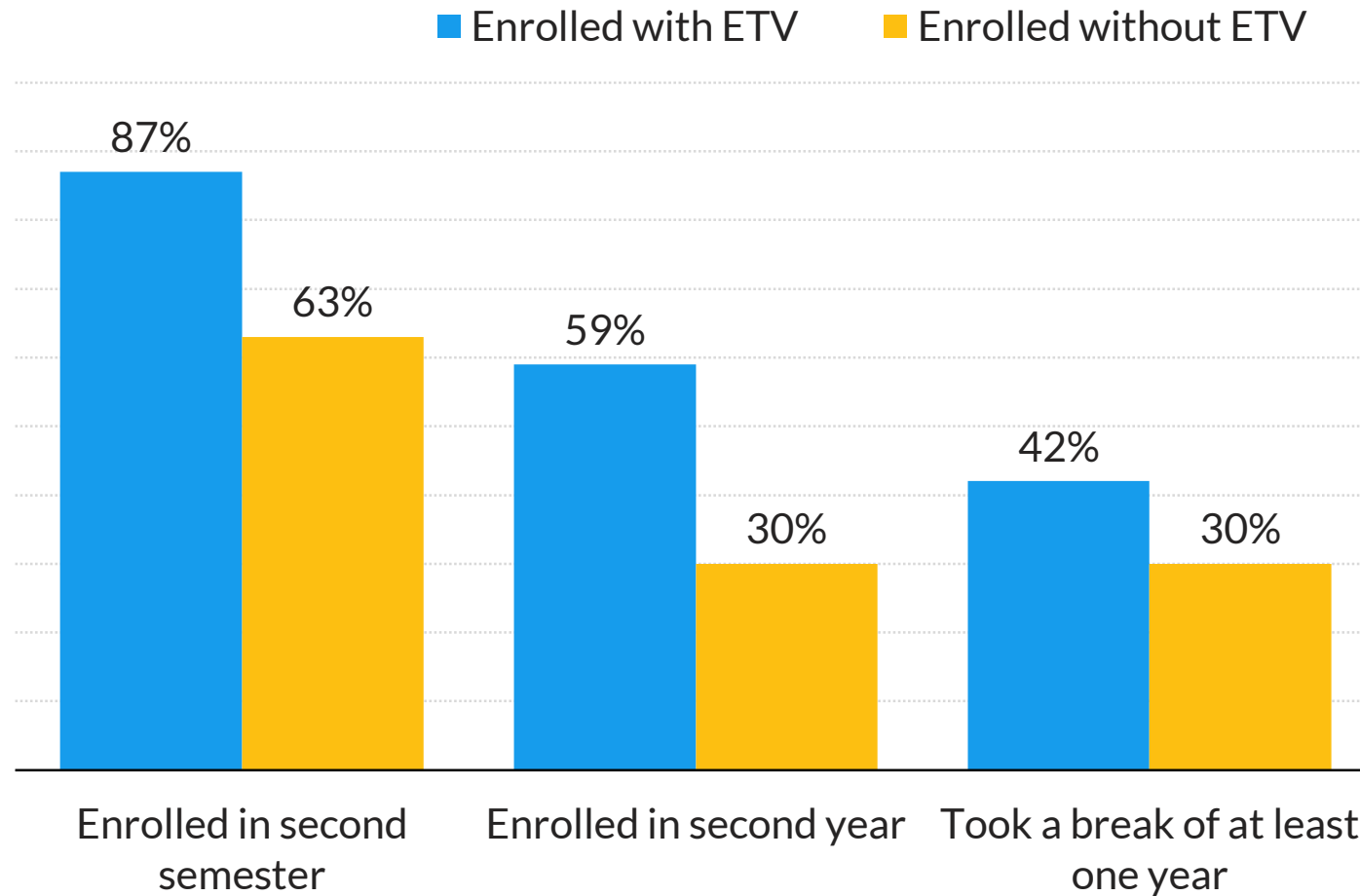
# Young people still in care at age 18 are most likely to receive ETVs



*The other category refers to young people who ran away, were transferred to another agency, or categorized in state child welfare data as “other.”*

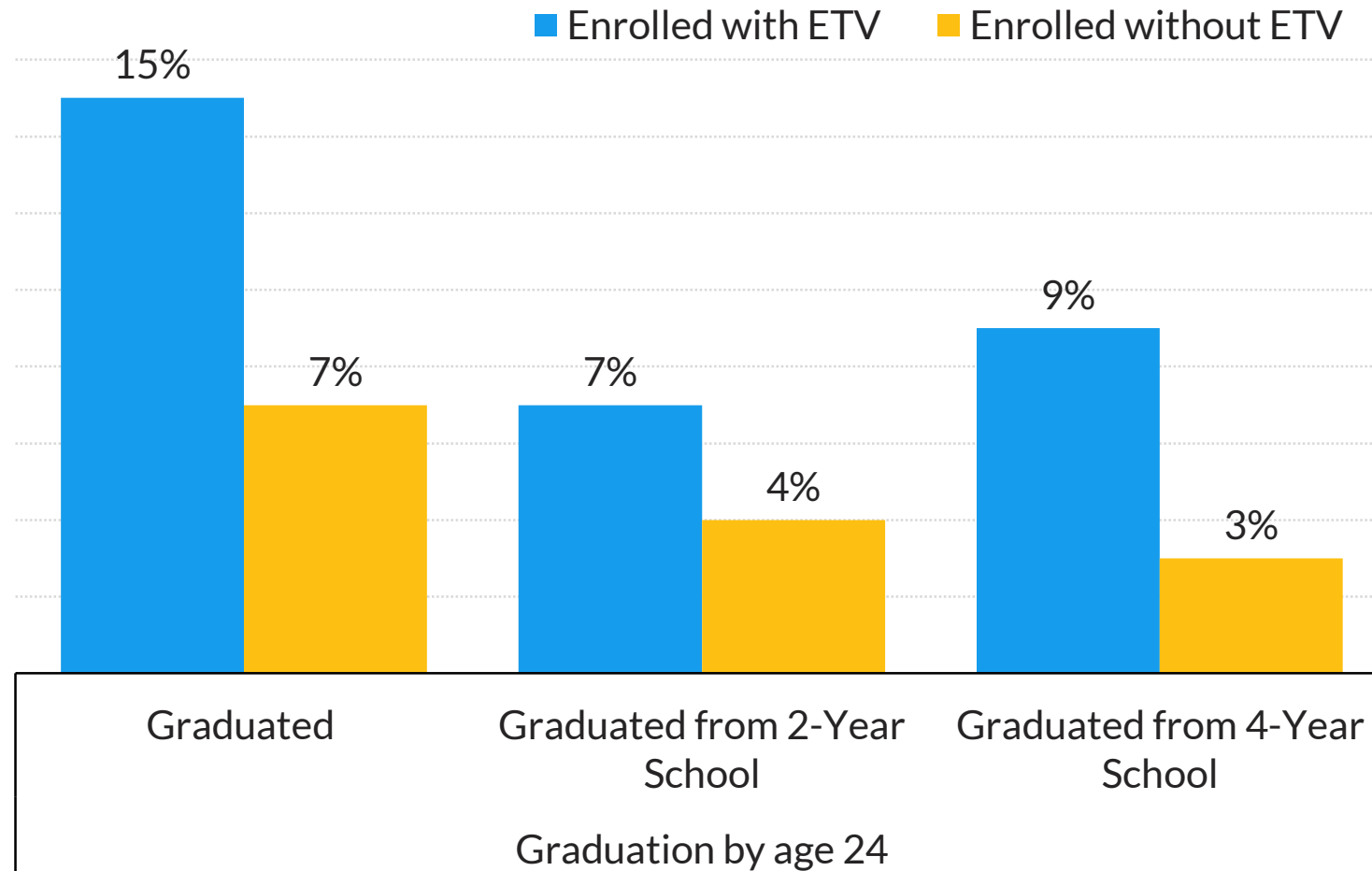
# College Persistence

# ETV recipients more commonly reenroll



*Among students enrolled by 24<sup>rd</sup> birthday*

# ETV recipients graduate at higher rates



# Summary

- Wide variation exists in terms of application, renewal, and disbursement procedures.
- Young people eligible for ETV are 15 percent more likely to enroll in school than those who are not eligible.
- Characteristics of ETV recipients:
  - Females students are more likely to enroll with ETVs than male students.
  - Students with longer foster care involvement are more likely to enroll with ETVs than other students.
- ETV receipt is associated with earlier college enrollment and graduation:
  - Many young adults formerly in foster care enroll in college after age 21 and complete after age 23.
  - Original ETV eligibility criteria required students to enroll by age 21, but newer legislation allows vouchers to be used in five total years until one's 26th birthday.

# Next steps

- Incorporate variation of state-level policies, practices, and context:
  - Extended foster care
  - State ETV outreach, application, and renewal procedures and subsequent burden on young people
  - Other sources of financial support available in each state:
    - Tuition waivers
- Run regressions to determine the effect of ETV award on persistence
- Incorporate perspectives of young people



# Discussion

# Thank you!

- Michael Pergamit, Urban Institute (presenter)
- Devlin Hanson, Urban Institute (presenter)
- Kate Thomas, Urban Institute (presenter)
- Maria Woolverton, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) (Project officer)
- Kelly McKenzie, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) (Project officer)