



Results from a Formative Evaluation of Two Employment Programs for Young People Transitioning Out of Foster Care

#LiveAtUrban

Housekeeping

- Event is being recorded and the recording will be posted online afterward.
- Speaker biographies and slides are available online.
- All participants are muted.
- Type your **questions** or **comments** into the Q&A box at any time.





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.



This project is supported by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (Contract #HHSP23320095654WC). The contents of this presentation do not necessarily represent the official views or policies of OPRE, ACF, or HHS.

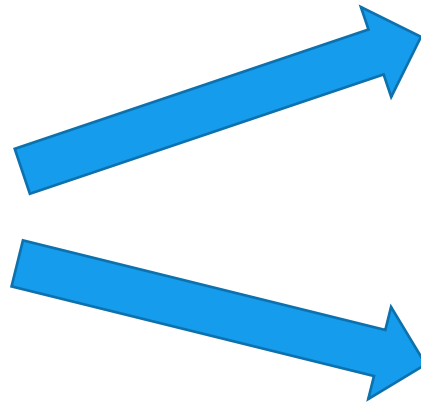


February 2, 2021

Employment Programs for Young People Transitioning Out of Foster Care: Understanding Strategies, Context, and Implications

Why focus on employment for young people
transitioning out of foster care?

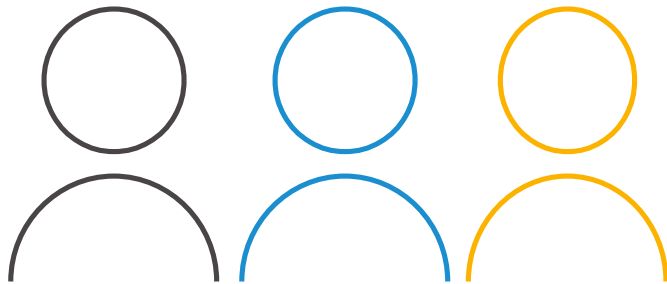
**Work
provides**



Ability to earn income

Opportunity to develop
work and relational skills

Young people who age out of foster care have



- ❖ Less stable employment
- ❖ Lower earnings

Barriers to Employment

Employment Access & Success

- Identifying potential employment opportunities
- Completing applications
- Self-presentation (clothing, communication skills)
- Soft skills (help-seeking, emotion management)
- Work habits (i.e., not using cell phone, calling out sick)
- ID/work papers

Life Obstacles

- Stable housing
- Reliable transportation
- Child care
- Health/mental health

What is our study?

Formative Evaluation Approach

- Review information learned from 2014 convening
- Search for employment programs with a focus on young people transitioning out of foster care
 - Internet searches
 - Networks
- Initial calls to 12 programs that focused on both employment and serving young people transitioning out of foster care
- Identified two programs that fit our criteria

Data and Methods

Thematic Coding and Analysis of Qualitative Data

- Program leadership and staff
- Program participants
- Employer and community partners
- Observations of trainings and interactions

Descriptive Analysis of Program Data

- Participant characteristics
- Program participation
- Employment outcomes

Comparative Analysis across Programs

- Focus populations
- Approaches
- Goals
- Outcomes

Which programs did we select?

iFoster Jobs in Los Angeles, CA

Mentoring Youth to Inspire Meaningful Employment
(MY TIME) in Chicago, IL

Serita Cox

iFoster Jobs
Los Angeles, CA

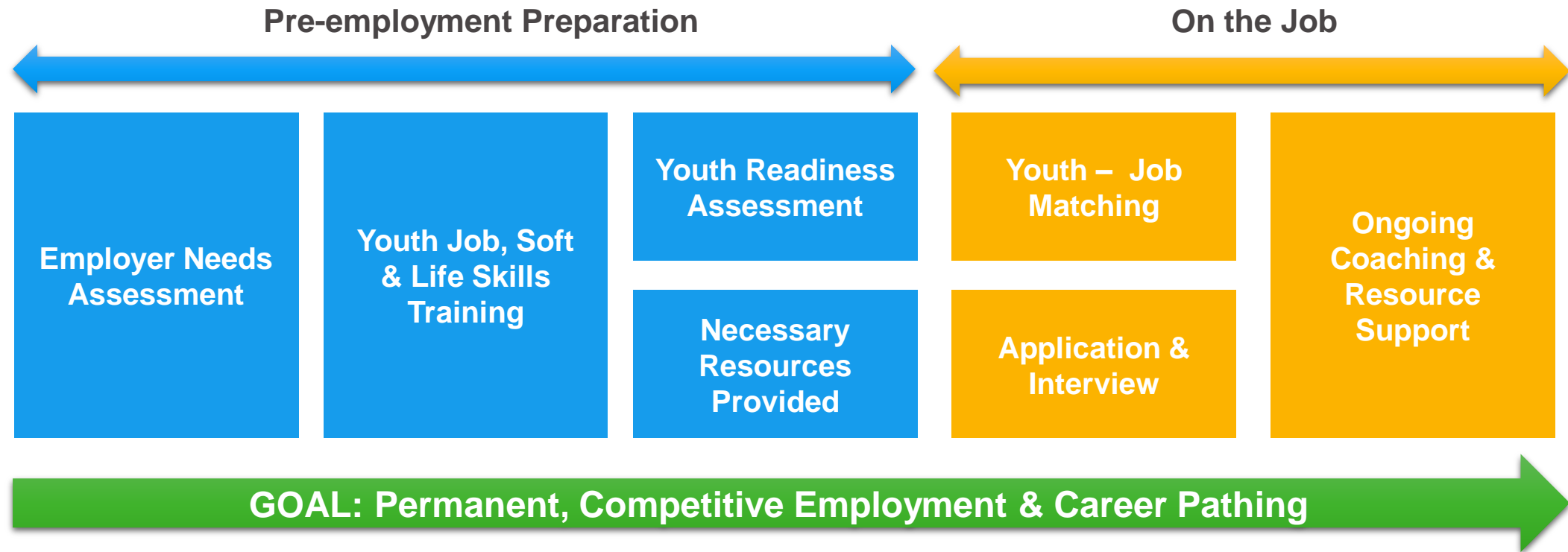


iFoster Jobs

- ❖ Makes the case to employers that youth transitioning out of care, if properly trained and screened, can be excellent employees
- ❖ Started in Placer County, CA with one employer partner in the grocery industry
- ❖ Operating in Bay Area, CA Capitol Region, LA Region and *more rolling out a/c CA State*
- ❖ Sustainable funding from CalFresh (SNAP) Employment & Training program



iFoster Jobs Program Model



iFoster Jobs – Lessons Learned

- Meet youth where they are and scaffold them
- Once may not be enough!
- Resources, resources, resources
- It takes a Village
- Sustainable funding through SNAP E&T

Debbie Reddic
iFoster Jobs Alum

Sean McGinnis

MY TIME
Chicago, IL

MY TIME

(Mentoring Youth to
Inspire Meaningful
Employment)

Chicago, Illinois

- ❖ Mentoring-based, individualized approach
- ❖ Operated through Lawrence Hall, a community-based organization that provides, among other things, foster care, independent and transitional living, residential treatment and a therapeutic day school. services for youth in foster care



MY TIME - Program Goals

Trauma-informed approach and use of **professional mentors** to support youth engagement, job readiness, job placement and job retention.

Career Readiness Training (soft skills) occurs in a group setting. Youth are encouraged to share with and learn from each other.

Restorative or circle based approaches are used to help build teamwork and address harm toward the group.

MY TIME – Program Components

- Mentoring Approach
- Relationship-building and connecting with participants' social networks
- Space (kitchen, socializing spaces, access to computers and clothing)
- Training Components
- Identifying Potential Employers
- Applications
- Transportation and in-person support for interviews and first day or work
- Ongoing interaction after employment (events, check-ins, etc)

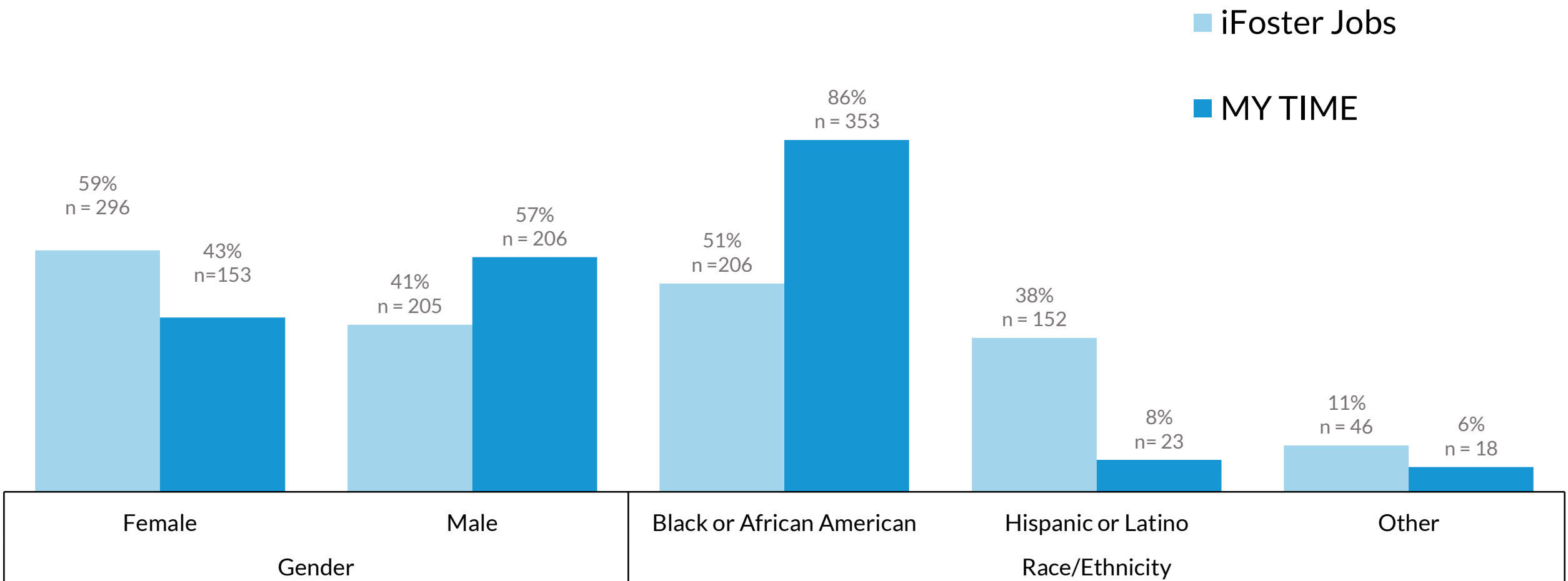
Darren Robinson

MY TIME Alum

Formative Evaluation Findings: Do they do what they say they do?

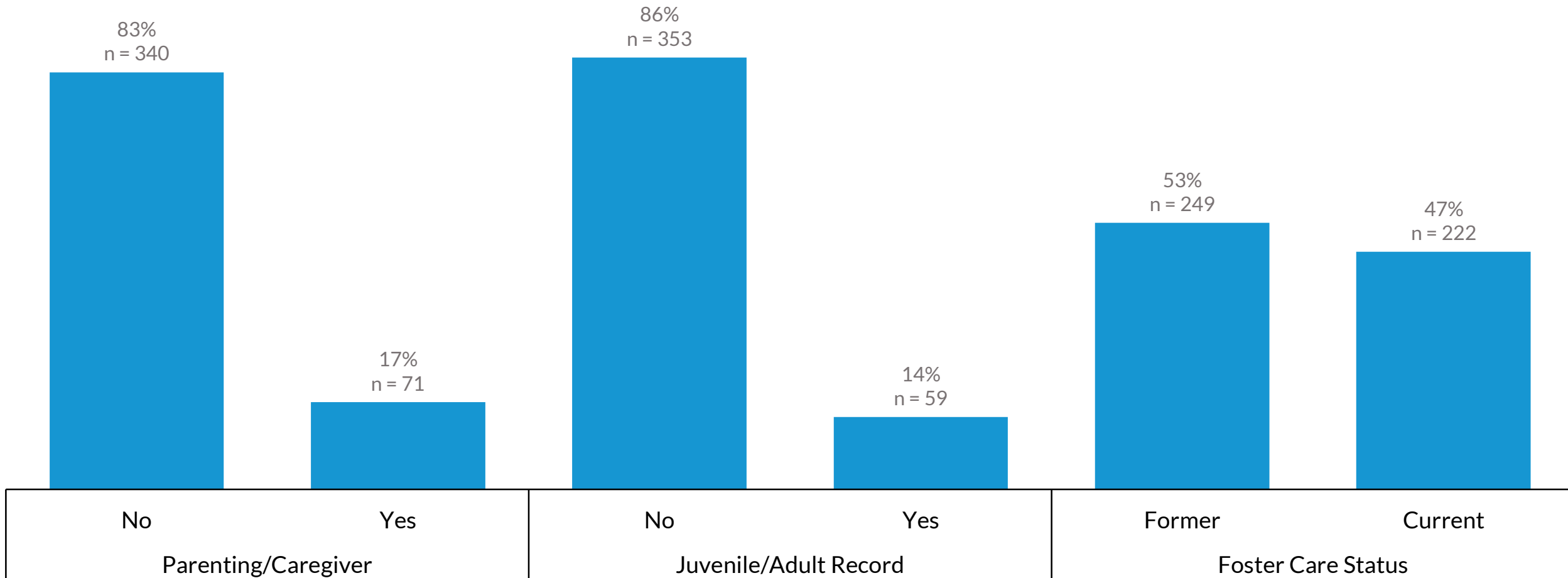
Who do they serve?

Participant Demographics

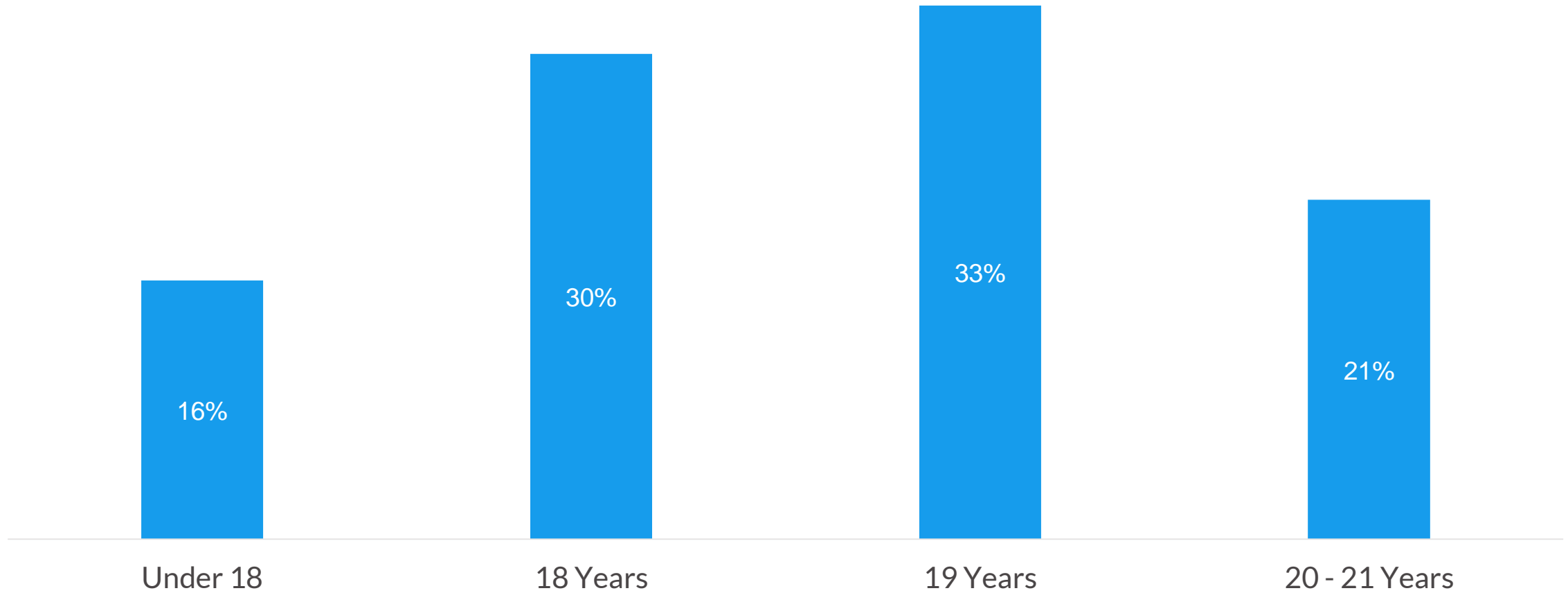


Note: Other for iFoster Jobs includes Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, and White. Other for MY TIME includes White, Two or More Races, Other Race, Other Asian, Other Pacific Islander. For MY TIME, Hispanic is also broken down between Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Other. Both iFoster Jobs and MY TIME record the number of youth who are Transgender, but the sample sizes were small.

Additional iFoster Jobs Participant Characteristics

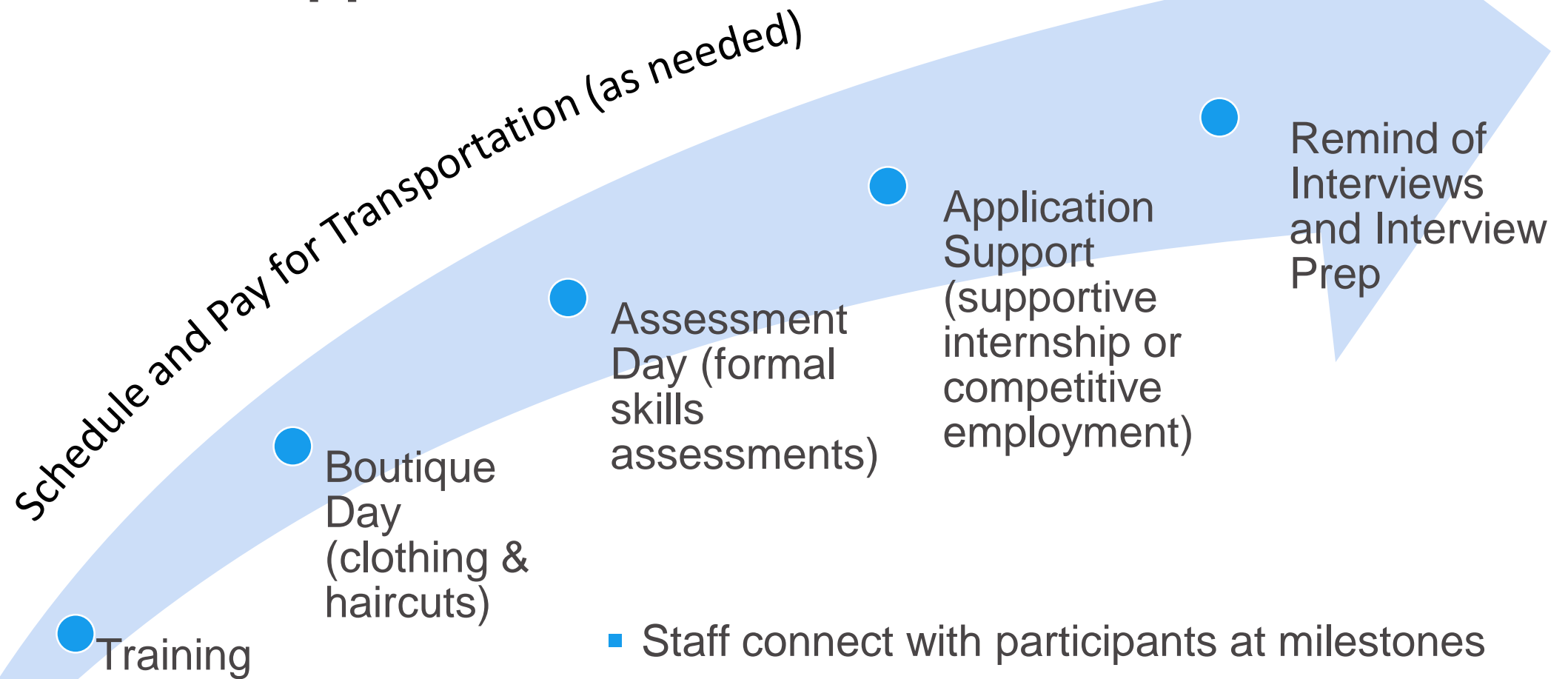


MY TIME Participant Age (n = 359)



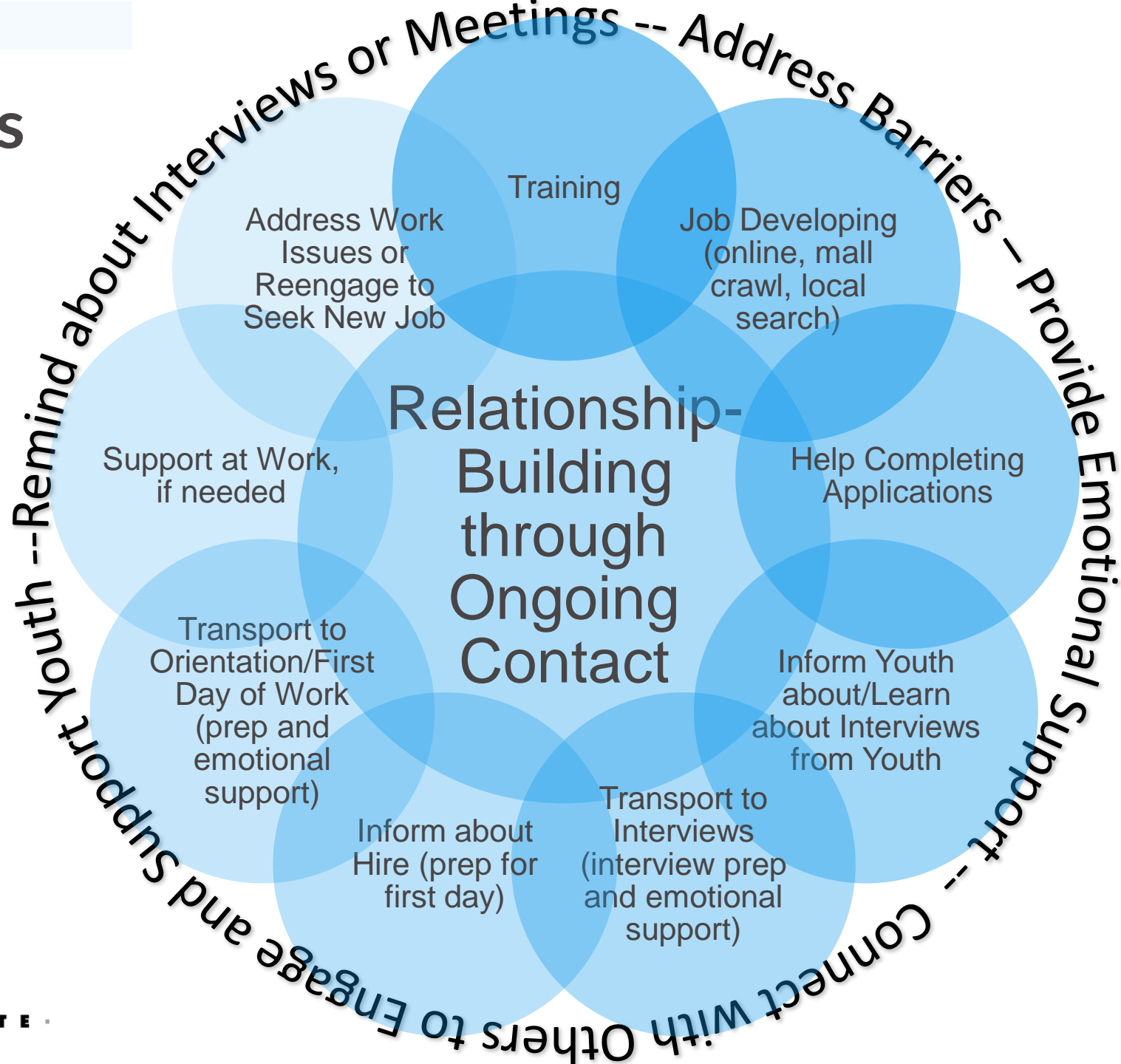
How do they serve them?

iFoster Jobs' Approach



- Staff connect with participants at milestones
- Rely on community partners to provide resources
- Rely on supportive adults to maintain motivation

MY TIME's Approach



Program Participation Data

iFoster Jobs

- Program admittance
- Attendance
- Job or internship match
- Employer or internship provider name

MY TIME

- Date of contact
- Method & Type of contact (includes applications, interviews, and hires)
- Contact content (extensive text fields)

9,651 contact activities
for 412 participants

MY TIME Program Engagement Patterns

Analytic Sample (n = 40)

Number of Contact Activities	Average Number of Days in Program	% of Days with Contact Activity
1 – 8 (n = 10)	39	63%
9 – 21 (n = 10)	122	19%
22 – 39 (n = 10)	223	18%
40 – 110 (n = 10)	343	23%

Participant Experience

iFoster Jobs

- ❖ Learned a lot about interviewing and communication through training that they believed would help them get and keep a job
- ❖ High expectations for immediate work

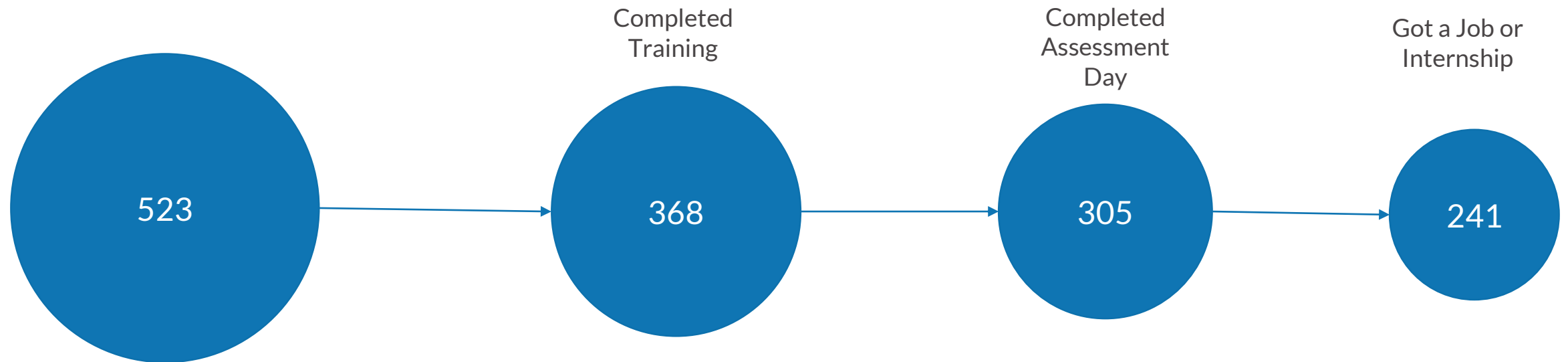
MY TIME

- ❖ Enjoyed and engaged in training even when they initially didn't think they would
- ❖ Close, trusting relationships with their Mentor and other staff



What about employment outcomes?

iFoster Jobs Milestones

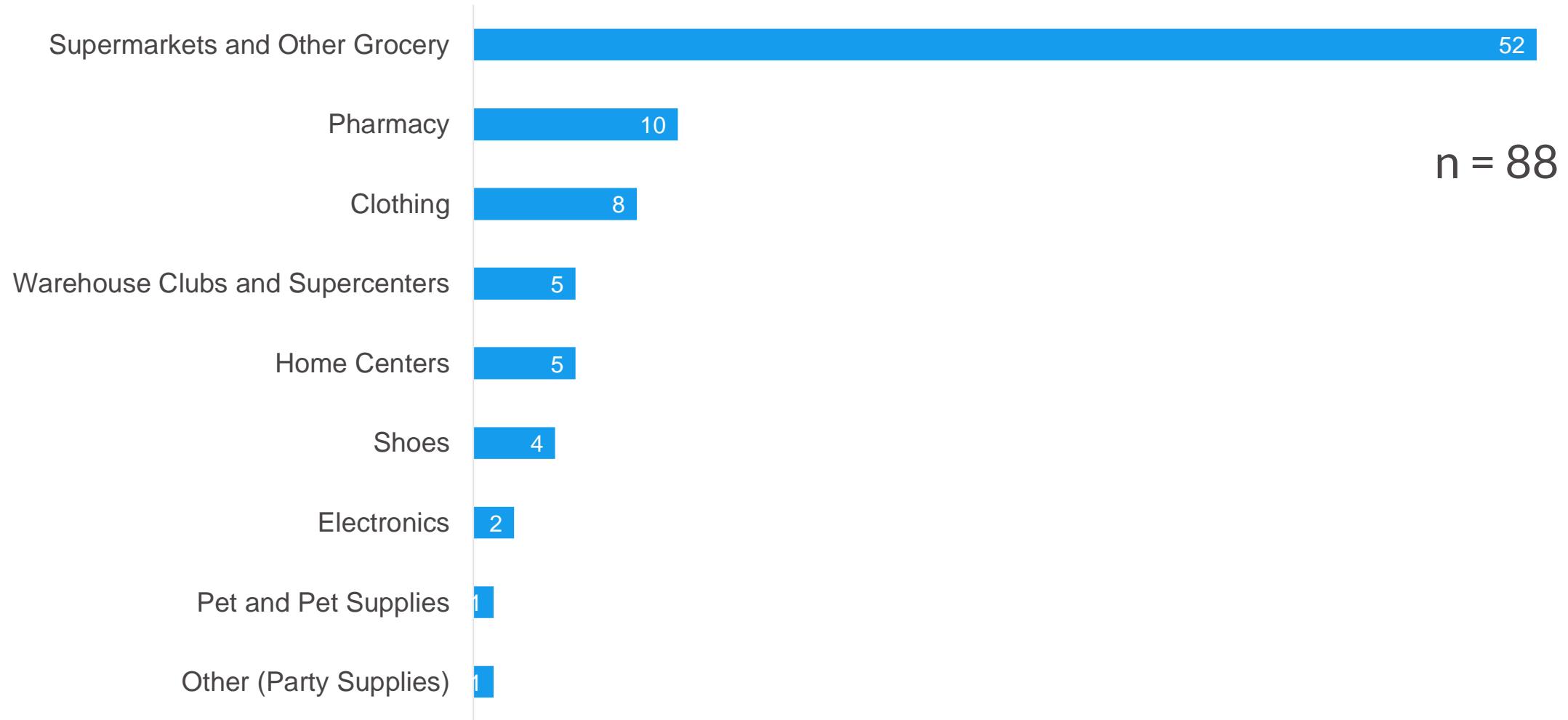


Of total participants (n = 523)
40% Got a job (n = 209)
7% Got a supportive internship (n = 39)
7 participants got an internship and then a job

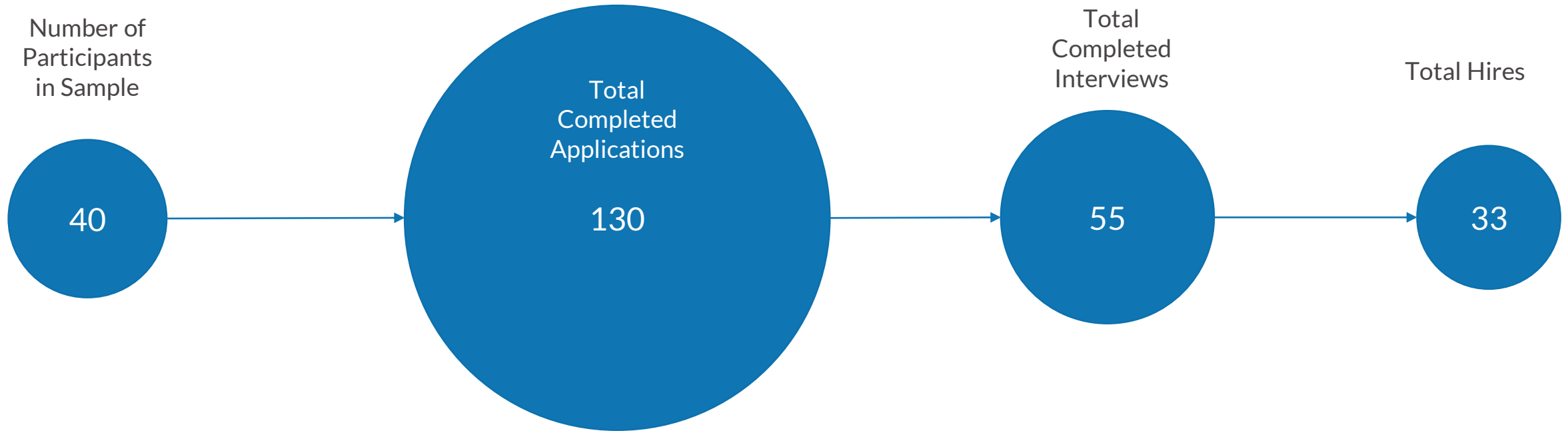
iFoster Jobs Number of Youth Employed, by Industry



iFoster Jobs Number of Youth Employed, Retail Employers

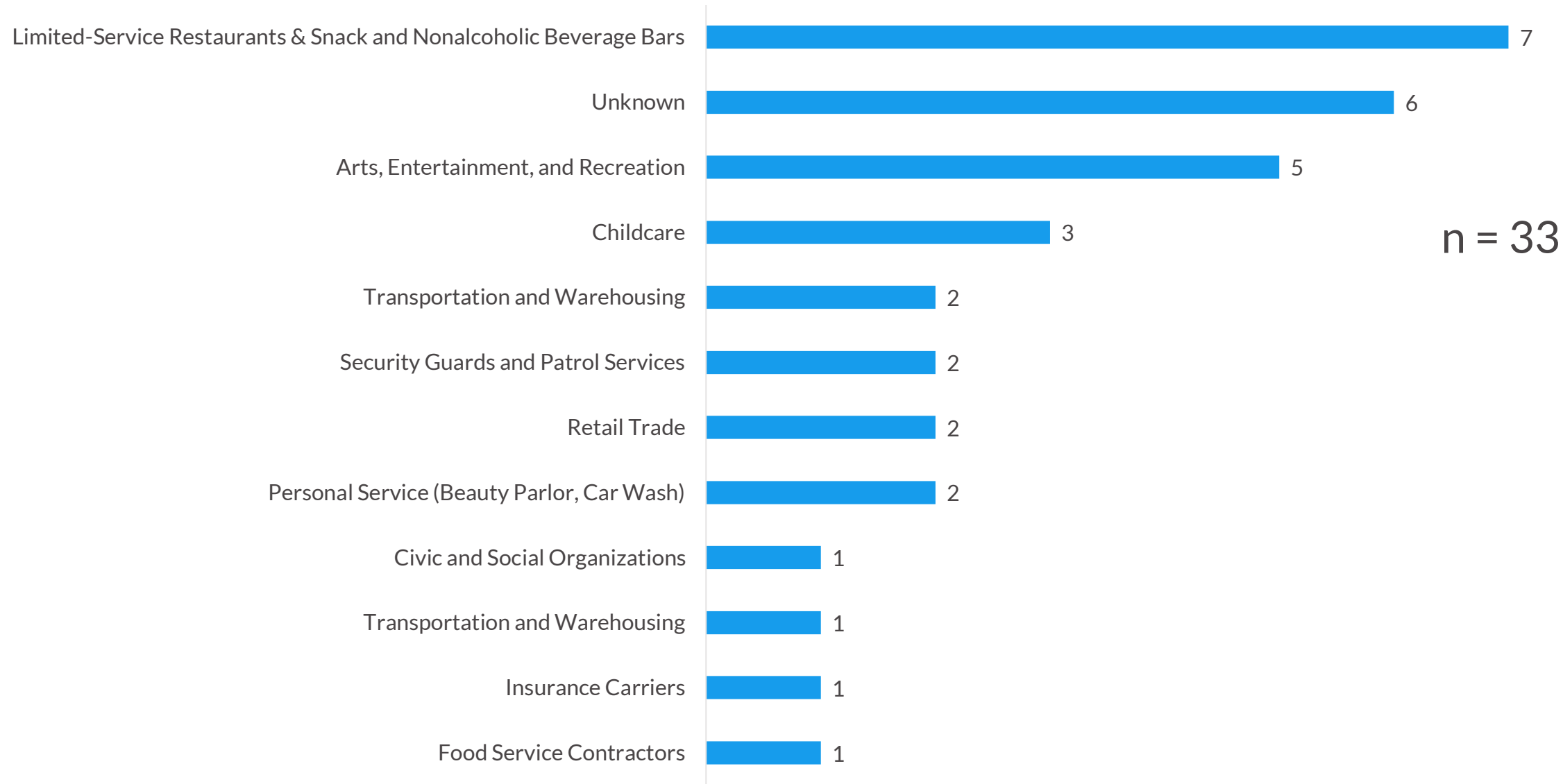


MY TIME Employment Activities



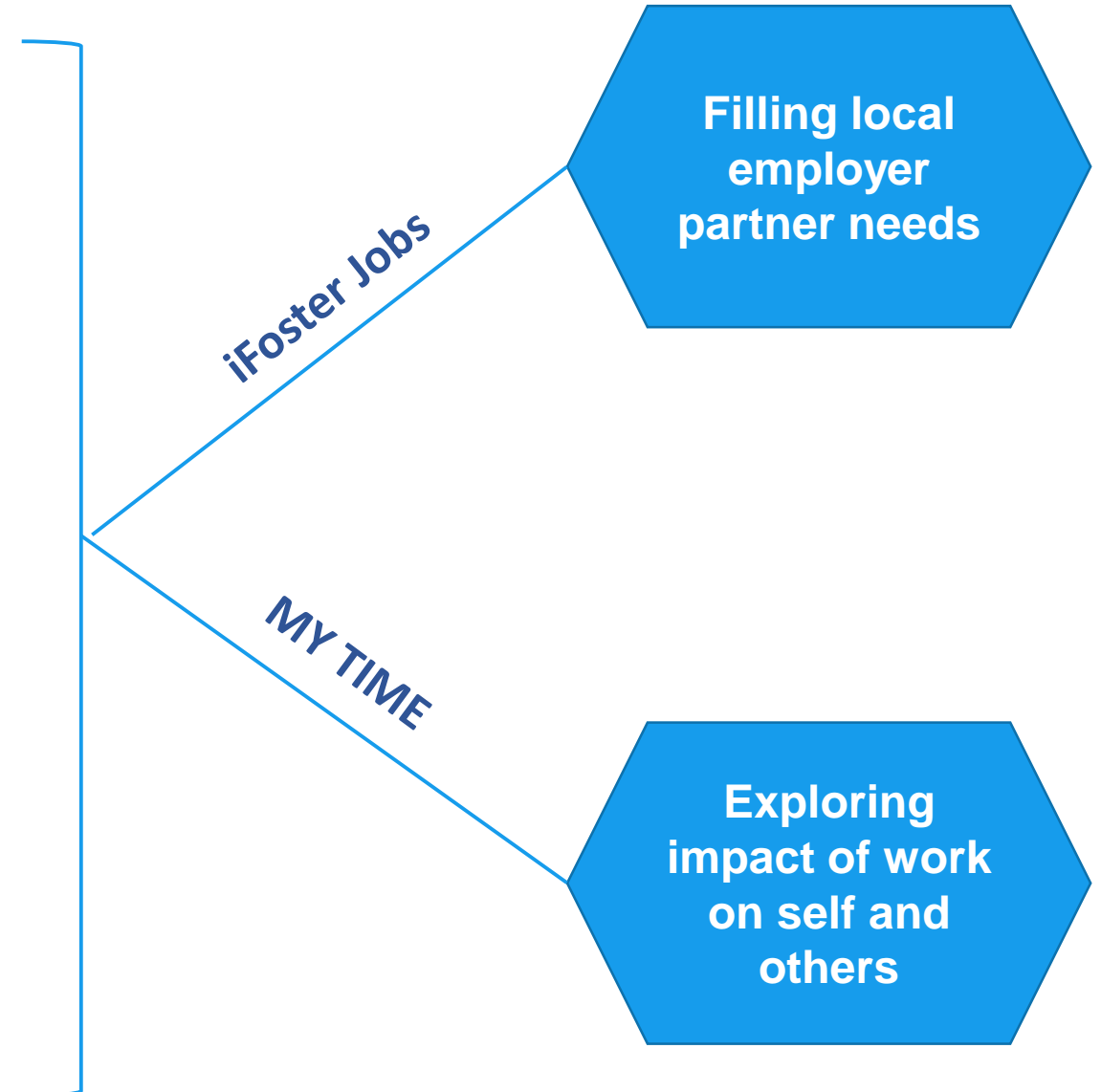
Of total participants in analytic sample (n = 40)
68% had at least one application submitted or one interview completed (n = 27)
58% were hired at least once (n = 23)
25% were employed more than once
6 participants got summer internships

MY TIME – Number of Youth Employed, by Industry



Program Approaches

Training Components



Goals

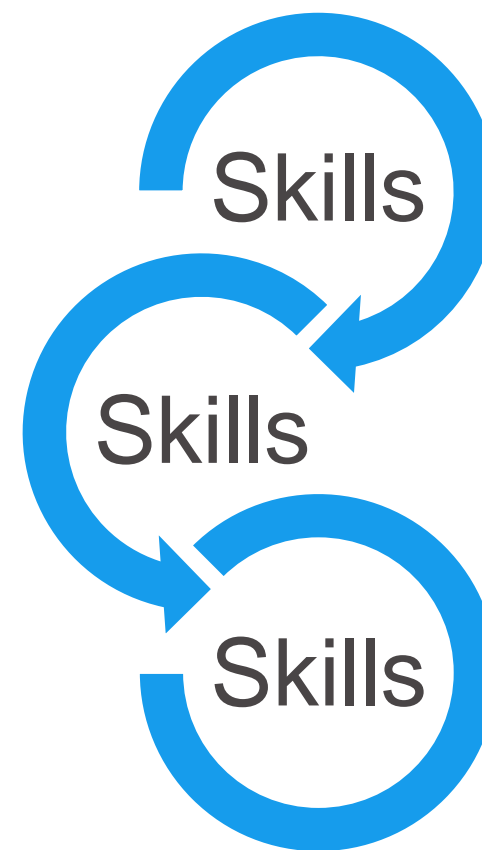
iFoster Jobs

Move along employment pathway,
start career

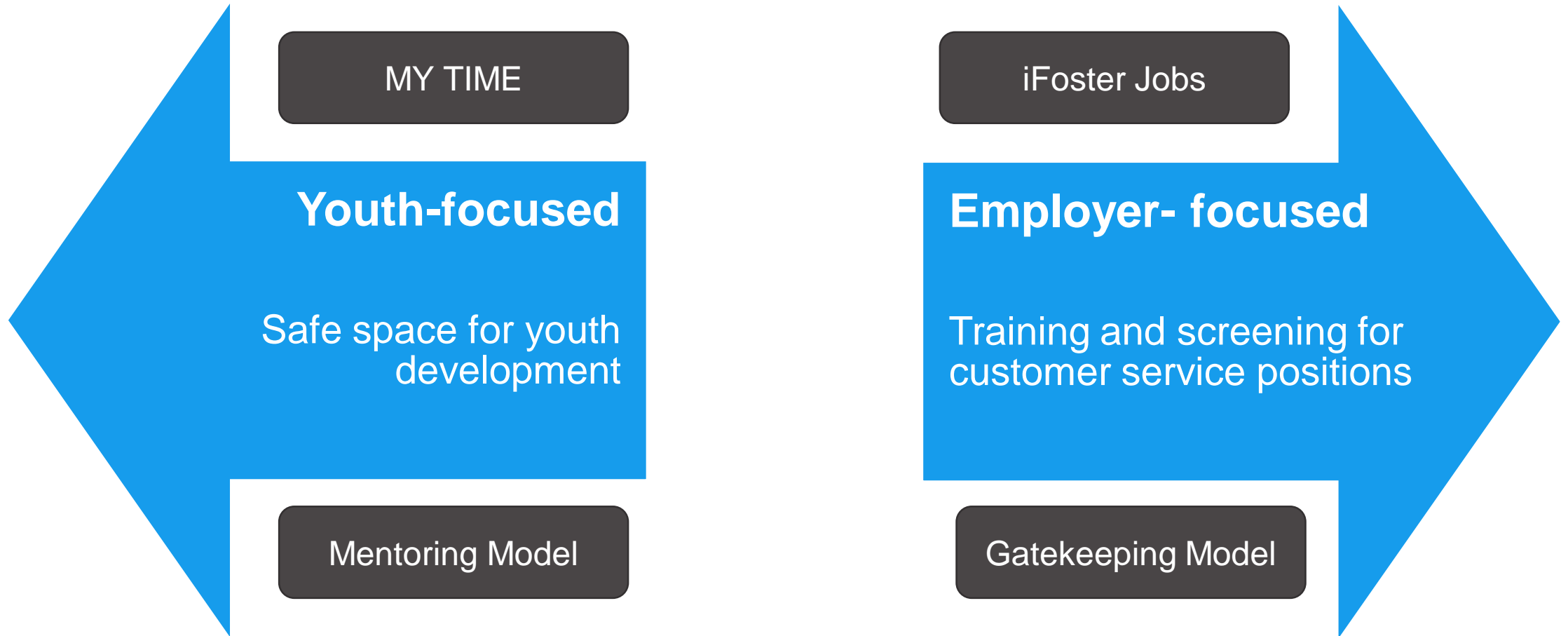


MY TIME

Build skills through early
employment experiences



Program Approach Drives Function



Study Implications

Study Implications

- Challenges to readiness for rigorous impact evaluation
 - Context
 - Program and participant data
 - Employment data lacking – no wages, type of job, or length of employment accurately captured
- Variation in program types yielded important insights about the different ways programs can be designed and implemented for different types of youth
 - "Harder to reach" youth need supportive adult and a number of developmental experiences to build toward success in the workplace
 - Closer to "ready to work" youth can be helped by program connections to employers with career pathways

Questions, Responses, Insights?