Duration: 1:00 – 2:15 p.m. EST
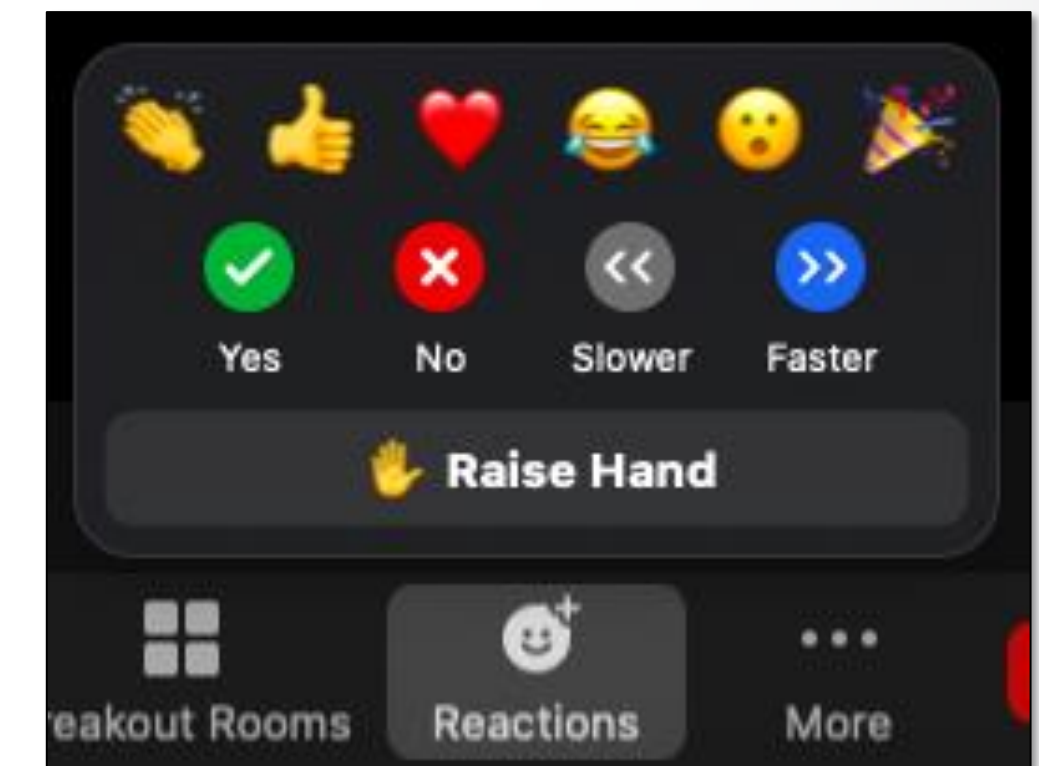
Technical Details

- Please submit questions through the chat box.
- Be sure to mute yourselves.
- If your internet connection is unstable, try turning your video off to improve sound quality.

Event Moderator

Lauren Lowery
Director, Housing and Community Development
National League of Cities
lowery@nlc.org

Agenda

- **Welcome & Introductions**

- **Mayors and America's Homeless Crisis: 2021 Menino Survey Results**

- **Built for Zero**

- **City Spotlight: Abilene, TX**

- **What's Next & Wrap-Up**

Welcome & Introductions

Clarence Anthony
CEO and Executive Director
National League of Cities
anthony@nlc.org

Menino Survey of Mayors

Only nationally representative, scientifically rigorous survey of American mayors

Initiated in 2014 at Boston University under the direction of the late Mayor of Boston, Tom Menino

Continues with the support of Citi and The Rockefeller Foundation

New partnership with Community Solutions in 2021 to field a series of questions on homelessness

Principal investigators: Katherine Levine Einstein, David Glick, and Maxwell Palmer

Homelessness Report Authors: Katherine Levine Einstein (Boston University) and Charley E. Willison (Cornell University)
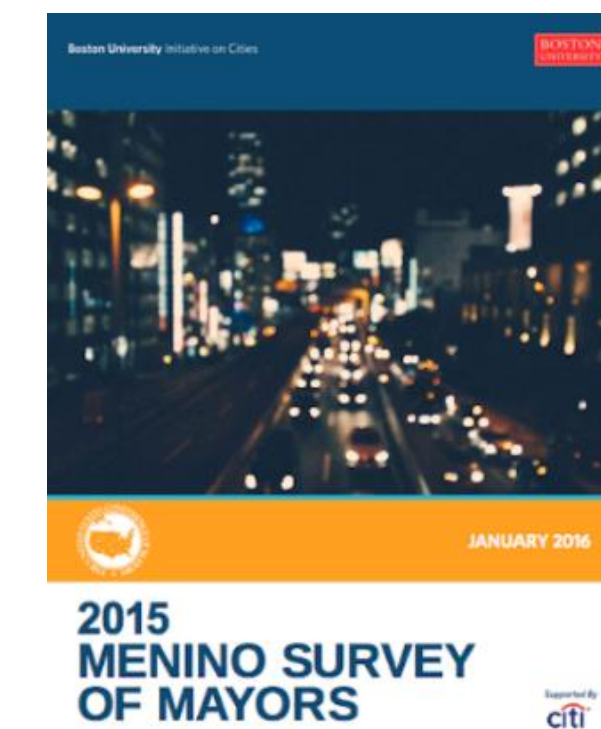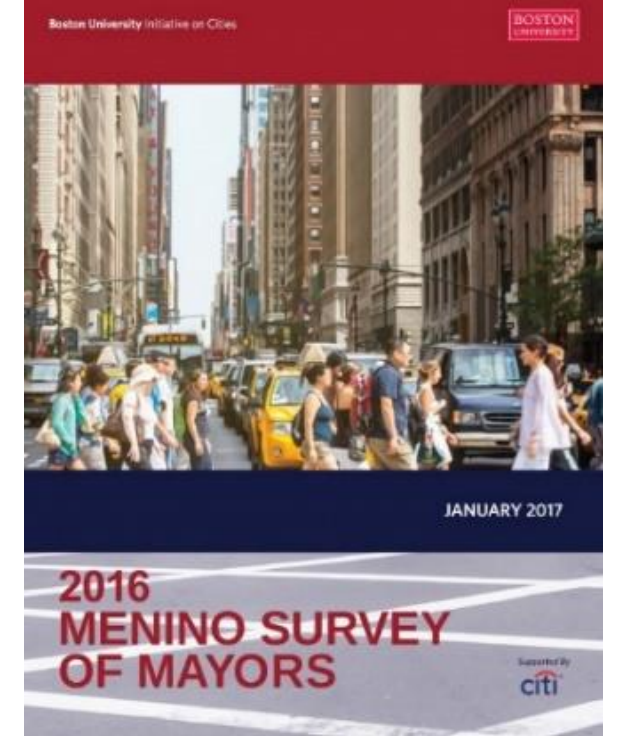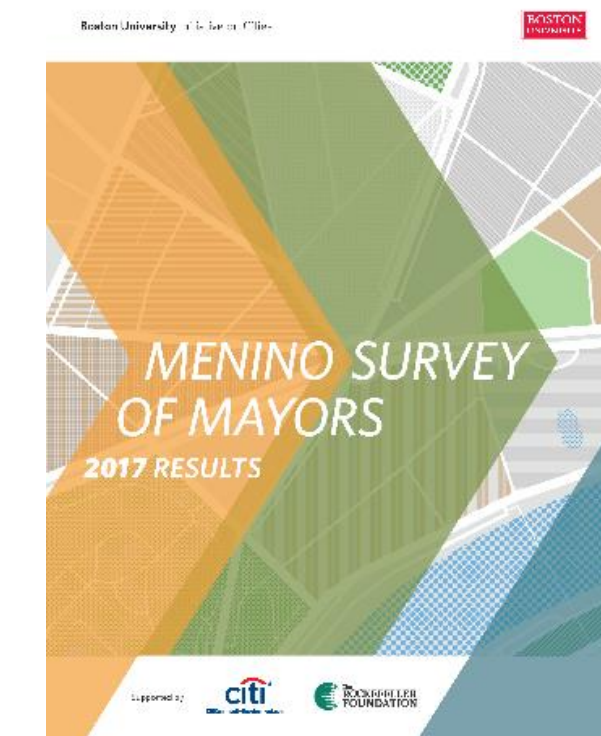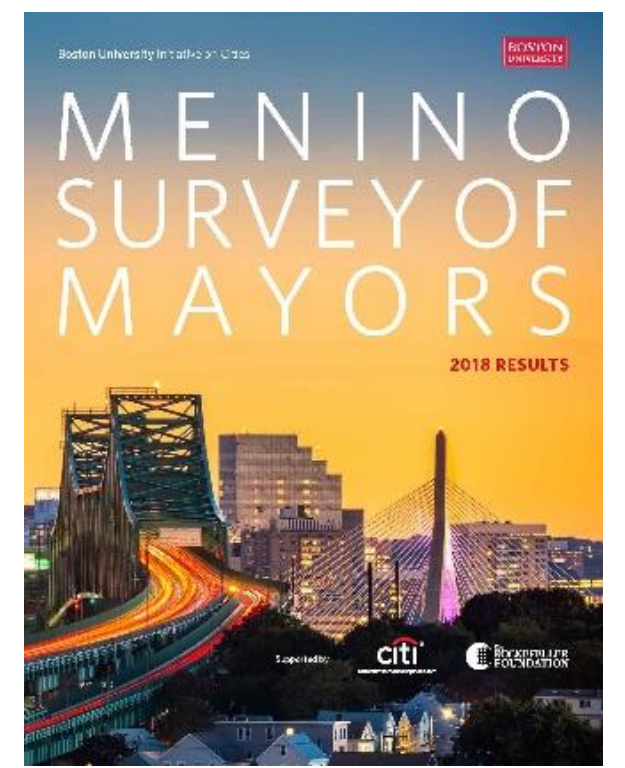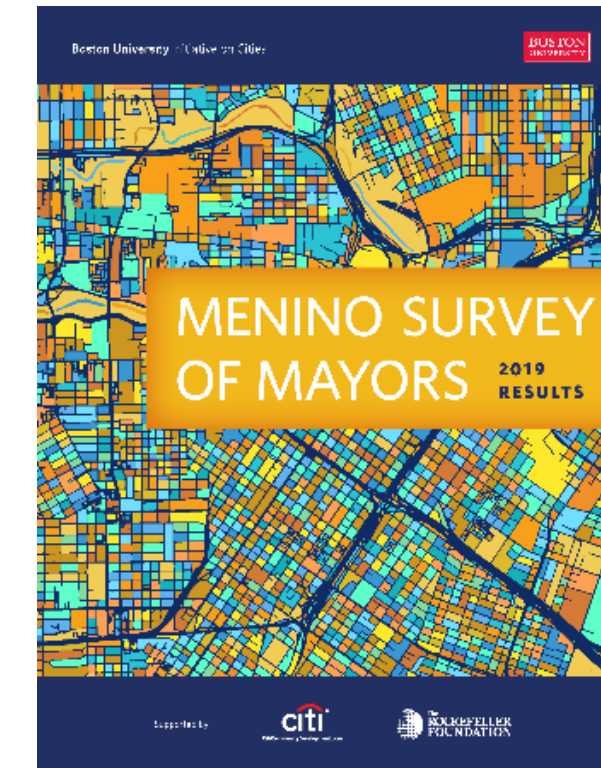
2021 Menino Survey

Interviews with 126 mayors of cities **>** 75,000 residents

Live interviews, conducted by phone (June-August 2021)

Nationally representative sample

Findings available at:

surveyofmayors.com

2021 Menino Survey Topics

Building Back Better

- Released November 2021
- Covid-19 & ARPA
- Federal Data Administration & Racial Equity
- Housing & Small Business

Mayors and America's Homelessness Crisis

- January 2022 Release
- Accountability & Capacity
- Defining Success

Closing the Racial Wealth Gap

- March 2022 Release
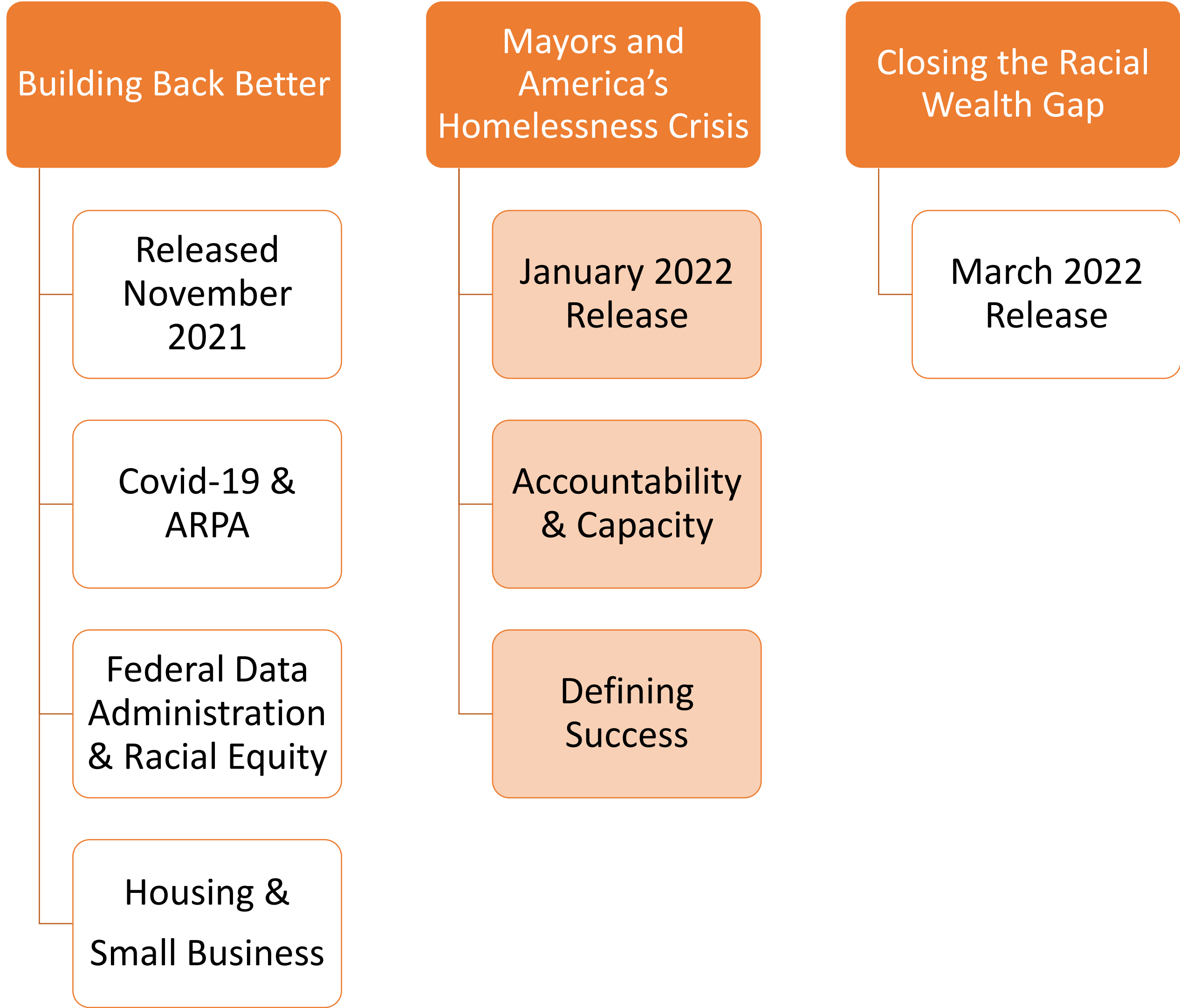
Local Policy and Homelessness

- Impactful homelessness policy made at the local level

- Local leaders make critical decisions about:

- How much new housing gets built and where

- Punitive vs. harm reduction

- How and where homelessness policy gets administered

Accountability & Capacity

Accountability for Homelessness

- Majority of mayors (73%) perceive themselves as being held highly accountable for addressing homelessness in their communities.

- Mayors of high and low housing cost cities hold remarkably similar views: 69% of less expensive cities and 79% of more expensive cities believe they are held responsible by their residents.
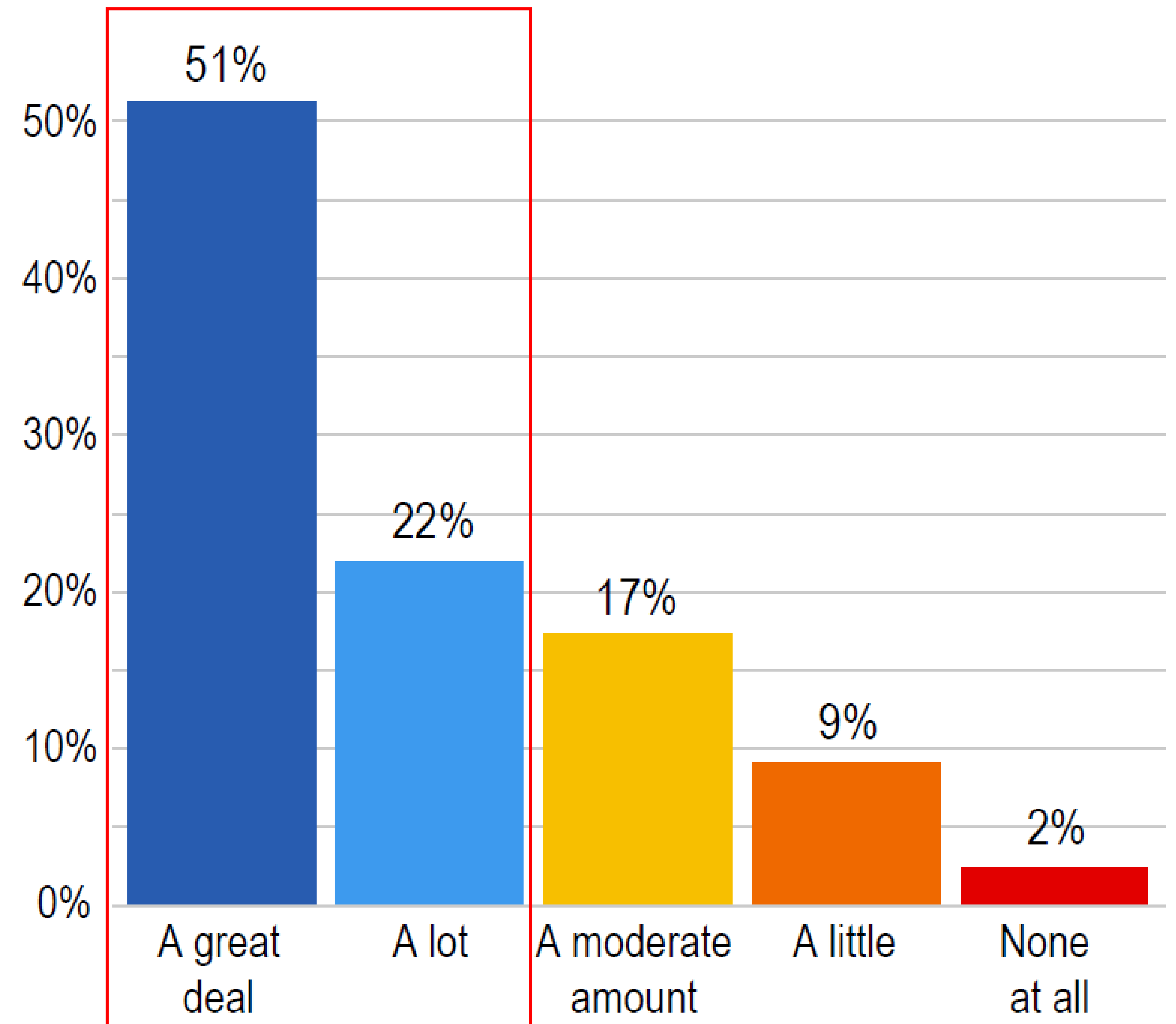
How much do your residents hold you accountable for addressing homelessness in your city?

Control Over Homelessness

- Yet, only 19% of mayors feel they have 'a great deal' or 'a lot' of control over addressing homelessness.

- Mayors in the Northeast are particularly pessimistic: just 7% of them feel they have a lot of control over addressing homelessness, while 29% of their southern counterparts, in contrast, see themselves as having a fair amount of influence over local homelessness.
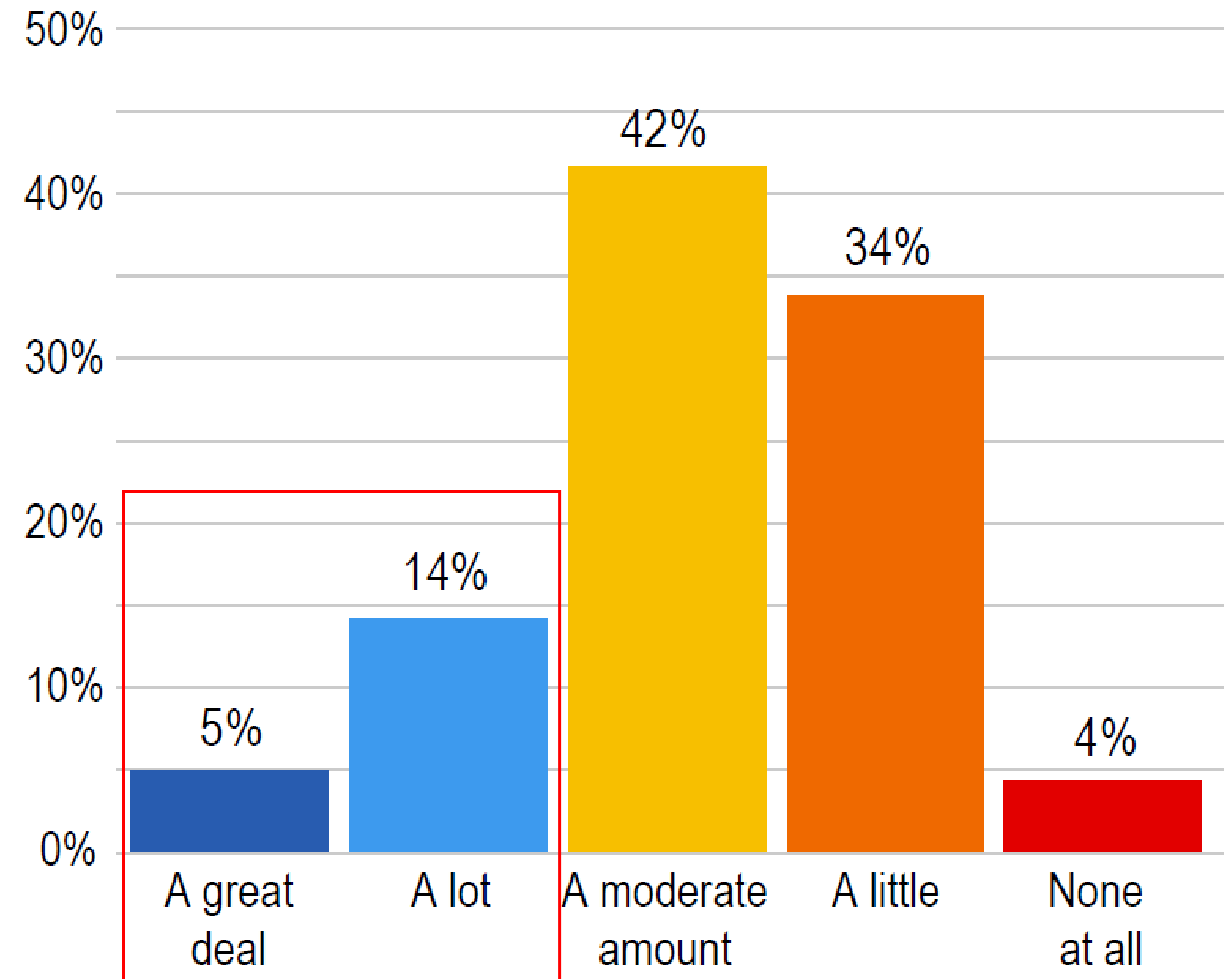
How much control do you have over addressing homelessness in your city?

Barriers to Addressing Homelessness

- Over half of mayors cite limited funding; public opposition to new housing/shelters; limited human and social services; and a lack of coordination between the government and social service agencies as significant obstacles to addressing homelessness.

- Limited funding stood out as a substantial hindrance: over 60% of mayors used the most extreme option to describe the extent to which it hindered their ability to address homelessness.

- Nearly four-in-five (78%) mayors believe that ARPA resources will allow them to accomplish transformative aims—most notably around homelessness (21%), housing (15%) and social services/programs (15%.)

Legend: A lot | Some | A little | None
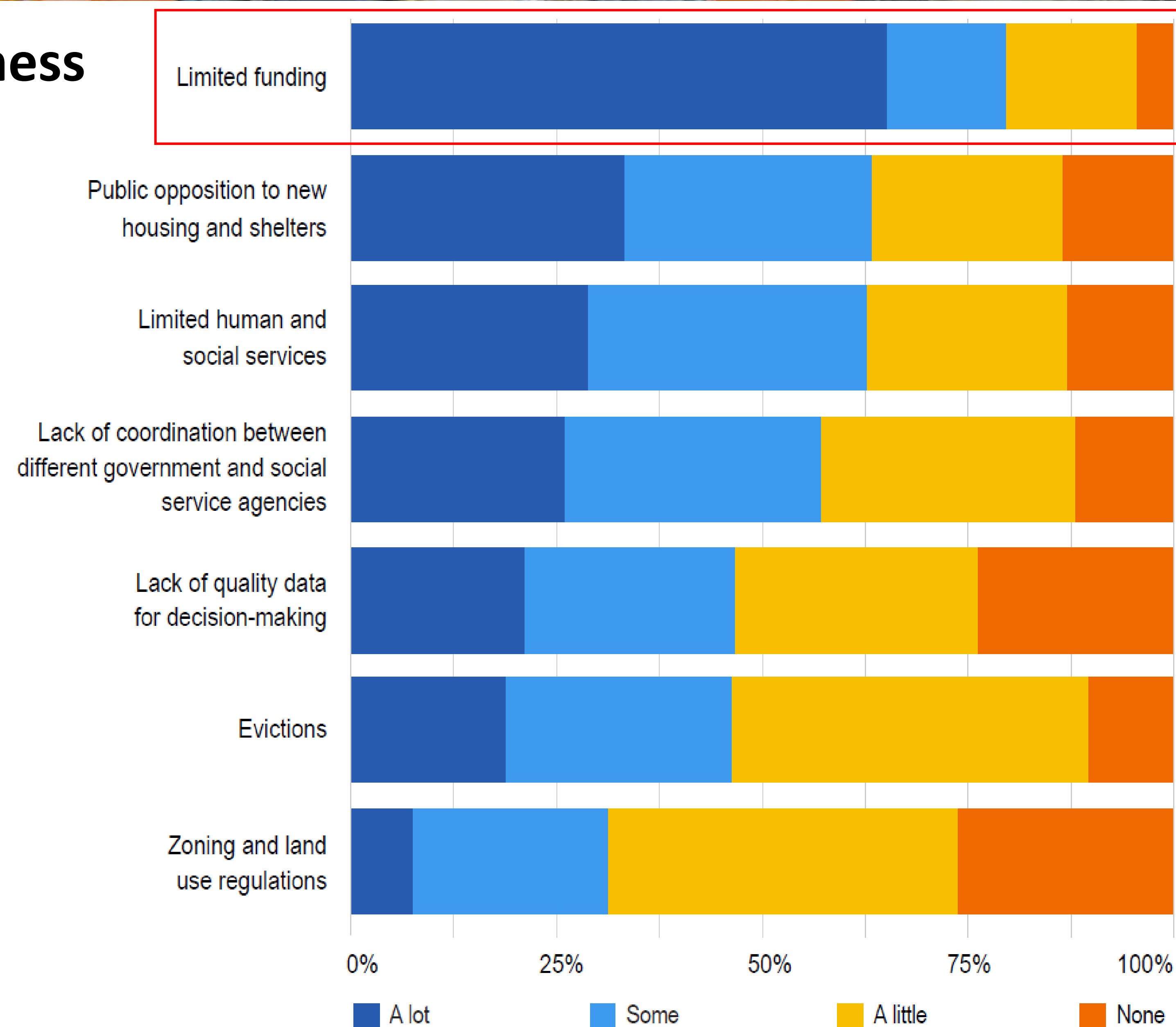
How much do each of the following hinder your ability to address homelessness?

Barriers to Addressing Homelessness, continued

- **There were some differences along partisan lines:**

  - 63% percent of Democratic mayors worry about a lack of coordination between different government and social service agencies, compared with 28% of Republican mayors.

  - 55% of Democratic mayors see evictions as a barrier to reducing homelessness—30 percentage points more than their Republican counterparts.

  - Republican mayors are 19 percentage points more likely to say that public opposition hindered their ability to address homelessness "a lot."

Influences on Homelessness Policies

- Nearly all mayors describe the local nonprofit community as important influencers of local homelessness policy.

- The police play an important role in shaping homelessness policy: 78% of mayors say that police have at least some influence over their city's homelessness policy. Police were the third most influential group listed, just above people experiencing homelessness.
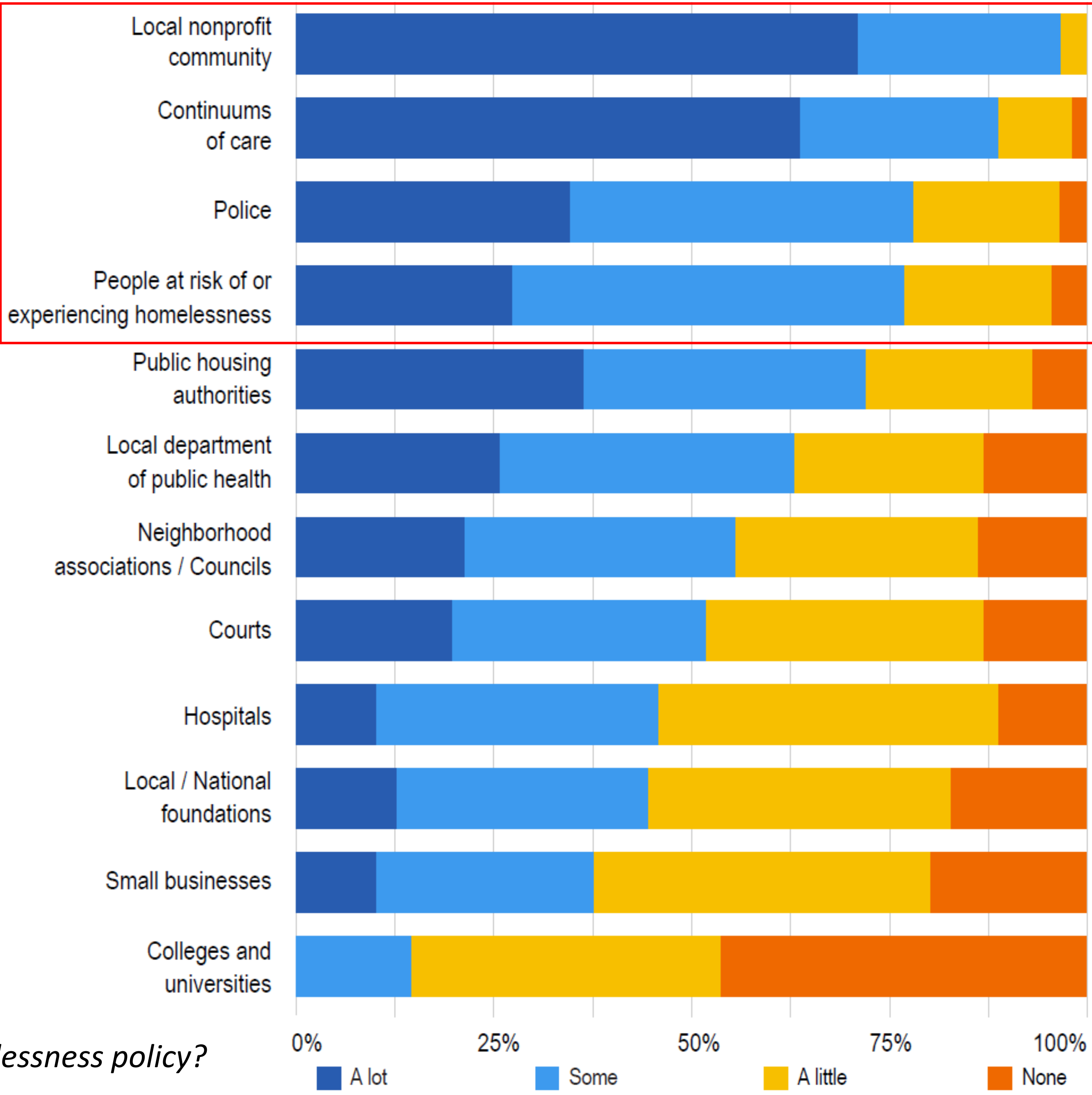
How much do each of the following groups shape your city's homelessness policy?

Chart categories (top to bottom): Local nonprofit community; Continuums of care; Police; People at risk of or experiencing homelessness; Public housing authorities; Local department of public health; Neighborhood associations / Councils; Courts; Hospitals; Local / National foundations; Small businesses; Colleges and universities

Legend: A lot · Some · A little · None

City Staff Dedicated to Homelessness

- 28% of mayors say they have no staff exclusively dedicated to serving people experiencing homelessness.

- 22% of mayors place their homelessness staff in police departments.
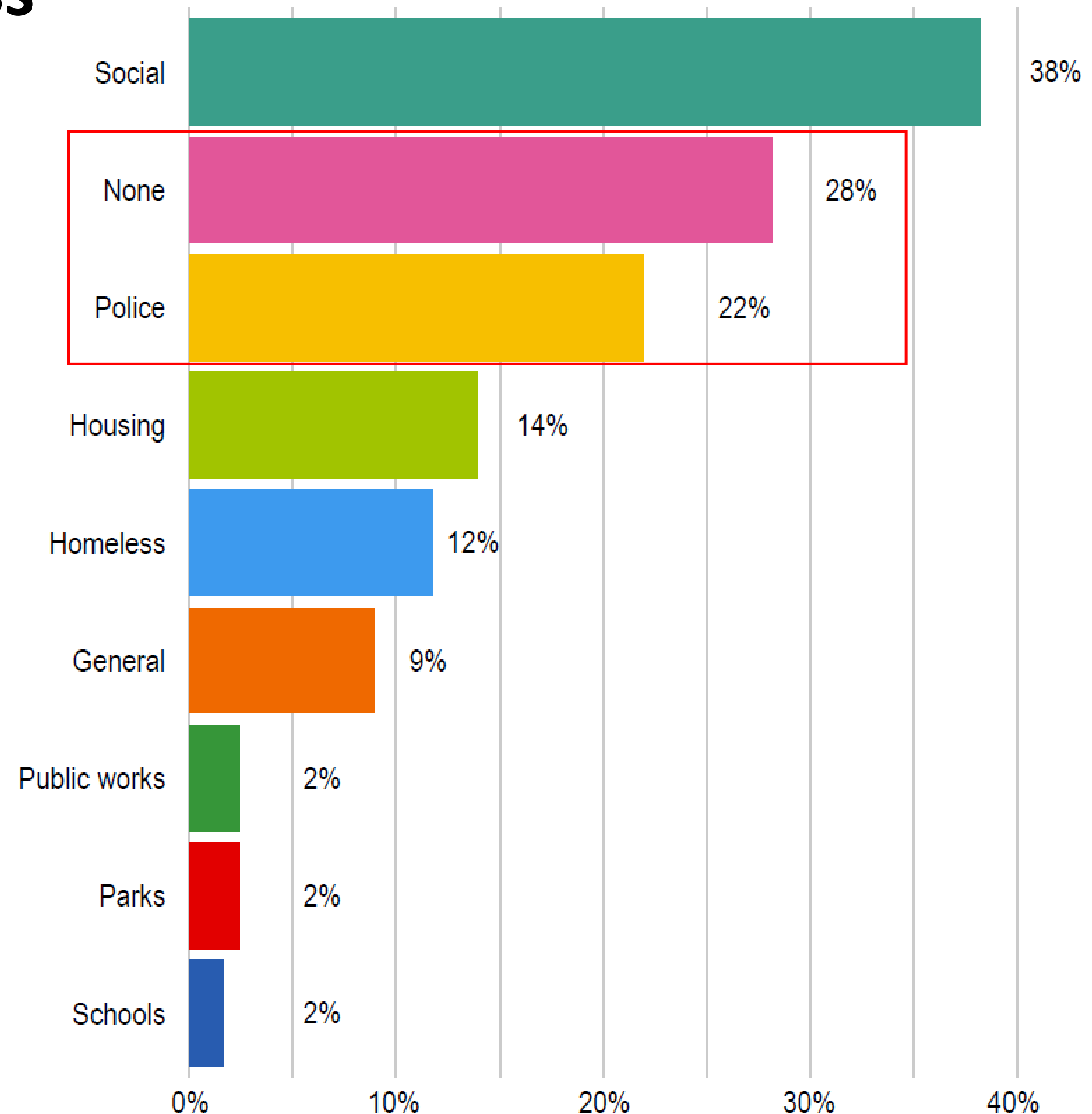
Does your city government have staff dedicated to the needs of persons experiencing homelessness? If so, what is their title/department?

Social — 38%
None — 28%
Police — 22%
Housing — 14%
Homeless — 12%
General — 9%
Public works — 2%
Parks — 2%
Schools — 2%

Data and Coordination Challenges

Mayors also struggle to get the data they need to evaluate homelessness:

 38% say they have access to annual data

 35% collect monthly data

 3% collect daily data

 10% say they have no access to city-level data (8% indicate that they only have county-level data)

We also asked an open-ended question about obstacles to collecting and using high-quality data. Mayors highlighted coordination challenges with their:

 Counties

 Surrounding local governments

 Nonprofits

Counties and Surrounding Local Governments

- **"We waited for the county to do their job, but they never did, so we had to get direct funding from the state and do it ourselves. We didn't want the job from the county."** – Mayor of western city

- **"Biggest obstacle is the county: they have overarching responsibility (and the funding) for tracking and dealing with homelessness, even though the majority of the problem is in city limits. We're trying to take over the annual census where we can (in city limits)."** – Mayor of southern city

NOTE: County-city coordination problems are more generally a huge problem for public health data collection, data reporting, and policymaking.

Nonprofit Sector

- **"We are not where we need to be. Lack of coordination (and disagreement) between the city and the homeless agencies."** – Mayor of midwestern city

- **"One shelter doesn't share their data with the city."** – Mayor of a southern city

- **"We have several shelters and they don't collect a lot of data that we need, or they don't share it with us."** – Mayor of a southern city

Defining Success

Definition of Success, by reduction goal

- In response to an open-ended question on how they "define success" in addressing homelessness, only 40% of mayors explicitly outline a policy goal of reducing homelessness.

- Midwestern (62%) and southern mayors (50%) are significantly more likely to highlight reduction goals than their northeastern (29%) and western counterparts (22%).

- Mayors of lower housing cost cities are 18 percentage points more likely to cite reduction goals (48% of lower housing cost cities vs. 30% of higher housing cost cities).
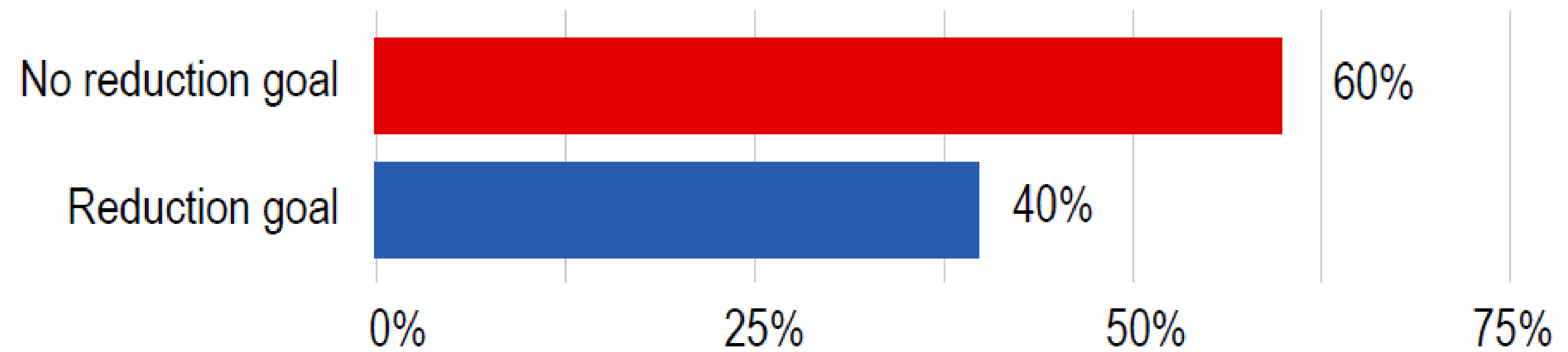
How does your city define success in addressing homelessness?

Definition of Success, by priority area

- Mayors list a variety of different policy goals when asked to define successful homelessness policy: 42% highlight better housing and 16% mention access to better social services.

- 11% of mayors centered the needs of non-homeless residents—defining success in terms of reducing complaints.
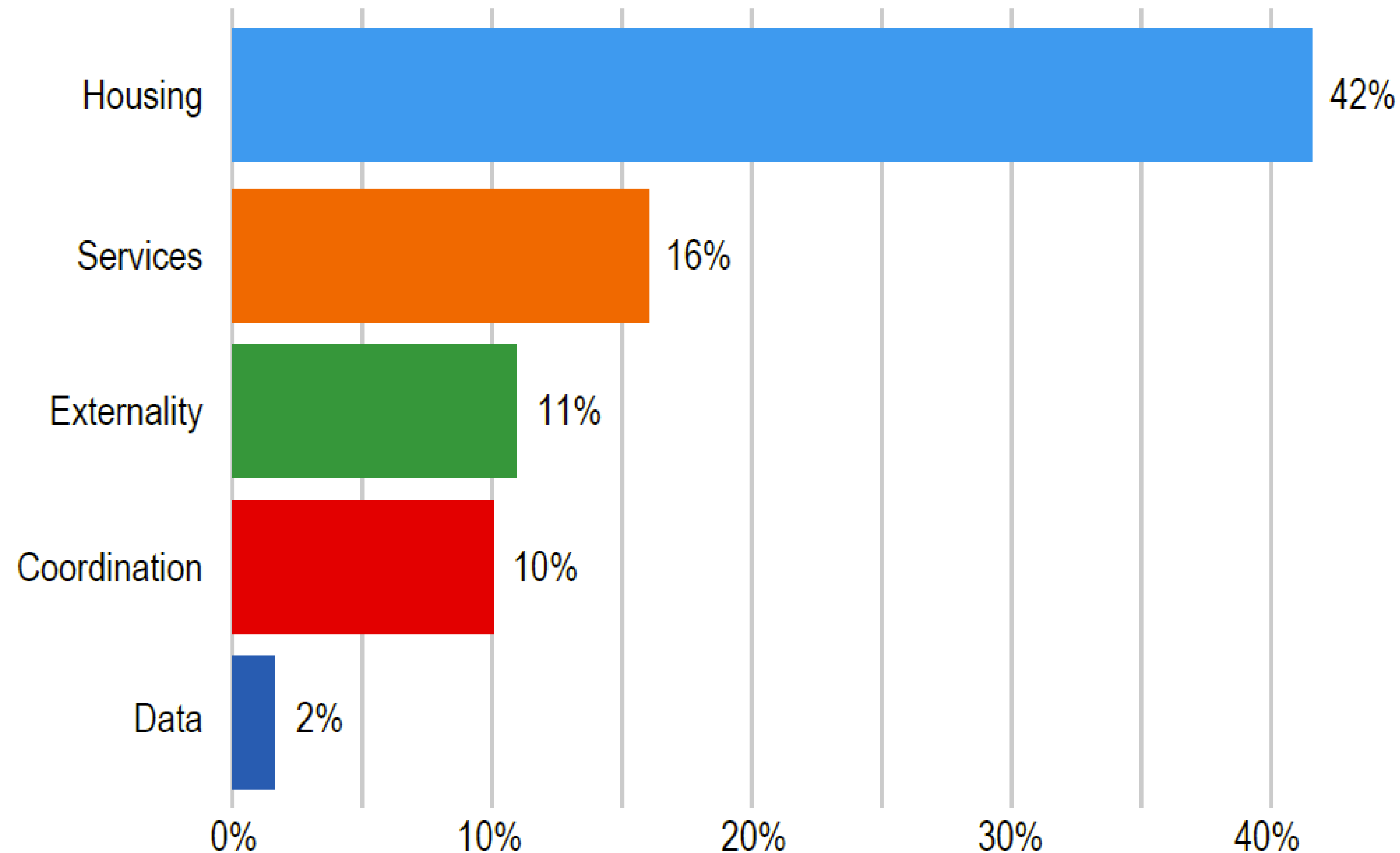
How does your city define success in addressing homelessness?

Definitions of Success

"Moving someone from the street to housing and/or a job." – Mayor of a southern city

"Transition of previously homeless individuals into permanent housing with necessary supportive services." – Mayor of a northeastern city

"The Midwest does not tolerate people being homeless. It cannot be seen; if it is seen, it's not being addressed. Can't have people sleeping on the streets." – Mayor of a midwestern city

"We kind of eyeball the thing. If there's a homeless encampment this week, and it's gone next week, we consider that a success." – Mayor of a western city

"Success to my citizens would be not seeing people camping or wandering the streets in need of mental health or addiction services. Success more for myself and staff [...] is getting to people on the cusp of becoming homeless and keeping them from becoming homeless." – Mayor of a western city

Conclusion

- Local governments are critical partners in reducing homelessness

- Left without staff, data, and financial tools to address key challenges

- Frequently resort to police policy implementers

- Intergovernmental coordination a significant challenge

- Mayors need better data and clear measurement standards for success

Thank you! Questions?

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BOSTON
UNIVERSITY

Jake Maguire
Principal, Community Solutions
and Co-Director, Built for Zero
Community Solutions

Built for Zero

Accountability without Authority

The Unique Challenges of Mayoral Action on Homelessness

An Operating System for Complex Problems

Shared, Measurable Aim

Continuous improvement response discipline

Nimble, integrated team

Rapid + granular feedback loop

Proven technical strategies available

Flexible resources

1. No Shared Aim

Continuum of Care - *Agency overseeing and administering compliance for HUD homelessness dollars*

HUD T.A. Providers - *The industry of firms competing for the nearly $100 million in technical assistance contracts HUD awards each year*

VAMC Homeless Program Manager - *Person overseeing ending veteran homelessness for the medical center as well as VA funded programs.*

HUD-VASH Program Manager - *Person overseeing the HUD-VASH Program for the Medical Center*

Hospitals + Street Medicine Teams - *People providing regular healthcare to individuals experiencing homelessness*

Permanent Supportive Housing Providers - *Organizations that operate portfolios of permanent supportive housing units*

City and County Leaders - *People who can wield the influence of a local government executive's office to generate convening power + political will*

VA Case Managers - *VA staff working directly w/ vets experiencing homelessness*

SSVF/GPD Program Operators - *Organizations overseeing the operation and use of VA SSFV and/or GPD resources for veterans experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness*

Faith Groups - *People who run aid or support programs that may or may not be connected to government dollars or formal system efforts*

Public Housing Authority - *Agency overseeing local VASH + Section 8 Programs*

Local HMIS or Data Administrator- *Agency with data administrator access and the ability to aggregate client- and system-level reports*

Substance Abuse + Behavioral Health Coordinating Entities - *Agencies coordinating state + federal Medicaid, SAMHSA and other dollars*

Homeless Service Providers - *People representing local organizations serving people experiencing homelessness.*

Street Outreach Programs - *Organizations leading outreach and engagement of people experiencing street homelessness*

Re-Entry Programs *- People working to ensure housing stability for those exiting prison who have experienced or face a risk of homelessness*

Emergency Shelters - *Temporary shelter accomodation organizations for people experiencing homelessness outside of transitional programs*

Community Foundations - *Local funders with flexible capital to support non-profit service delivery, pilot innovation and local advocacy*

Legal Aid Groups - *Organizations providing legal services to people experiencing homelessness*

Veteran Service Organizations - *Organizations set up for and by veterans to provide resources, services, supportive networks and an ongoing connection to the veteran community*

2. No Integrated Approach

3.Meaningless Feedback Loop

Actively Homeless Monthly Chronic data with signal indicators for Shifts

100 –

Improvement Median: 88.0

23 % Δ

50 –

0 –

August 2018 · October 2018 · December 2018 · February 2019 · April 2019 · June 2019 · August 2019 · October 2019 · December 2019
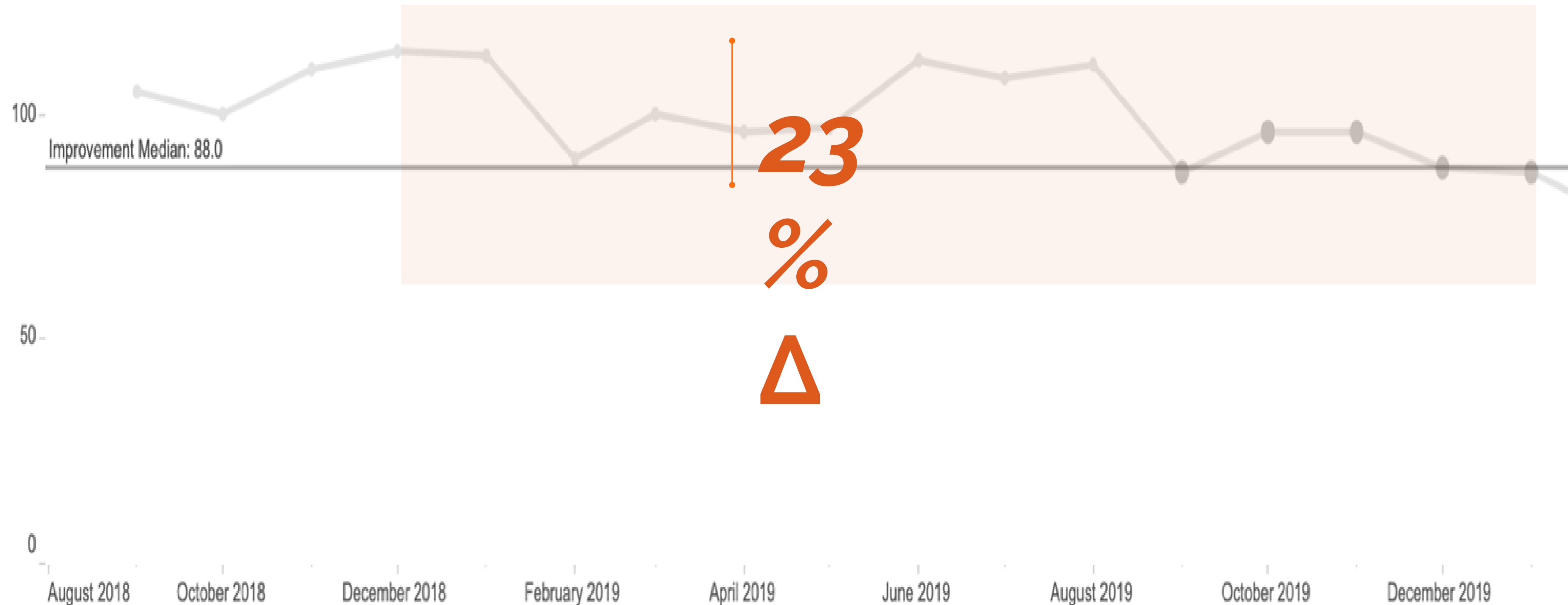
Inflexible Resource Stream

> " While some voters may have thought the aim of Prop HHH was to end homelessness in the city… Garcetti says that was never the goal, and if it were, the measure's grade would be somewhere below an F …

5. Erosion of Support for Solutions

An Operating System for Complex Problems

Shared, Measurable Aim

Continuous improvement response discipline

Nimble, integrated team

Rapid + granular feedback loop

Proven technical strategies available

Flexible resources

1. A Shared Aim: Functional Zero

(Veterans)
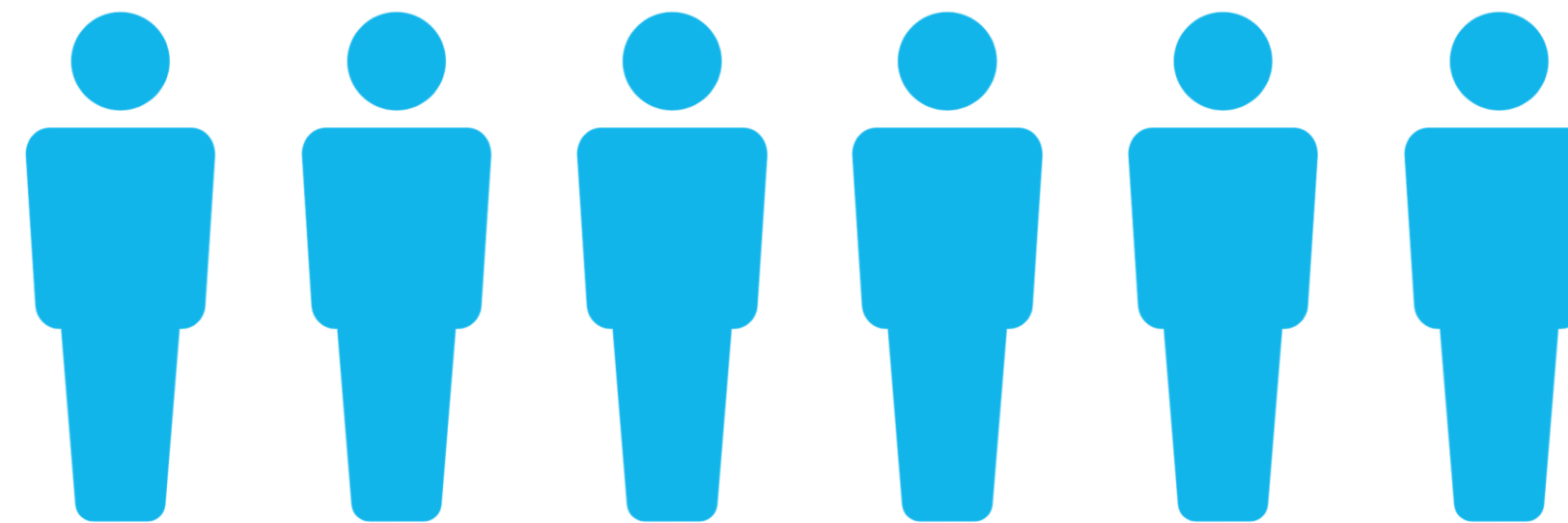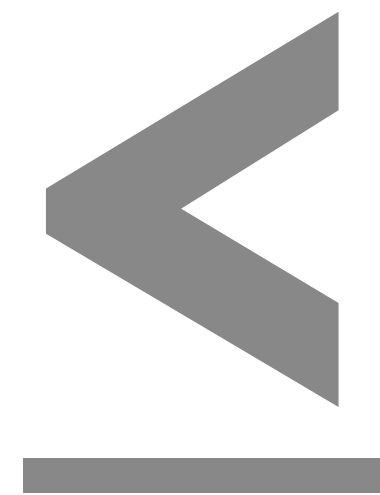
Actively Homeless **<** 6-Mth Avg. Housing Placement Rate

2. A Granular, Monthly Feedback Loop

INFLOW
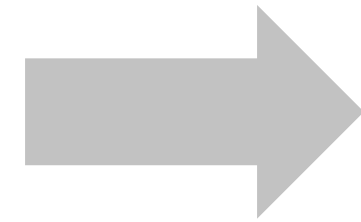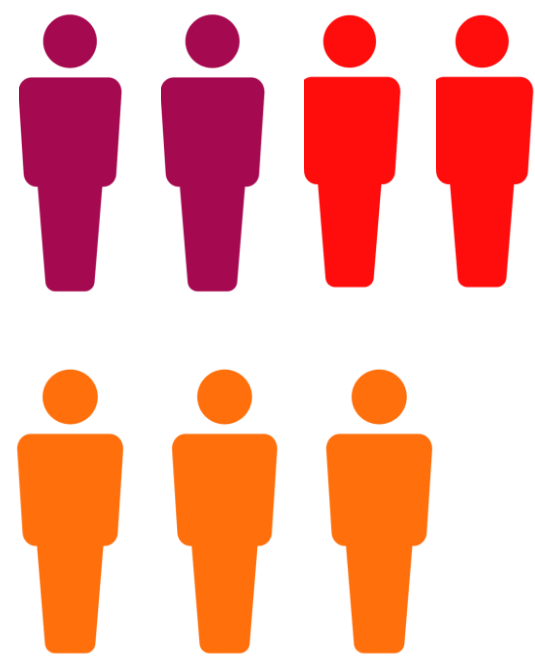
ACTIVELY HOMELESS
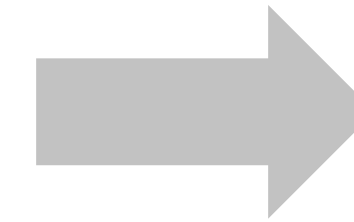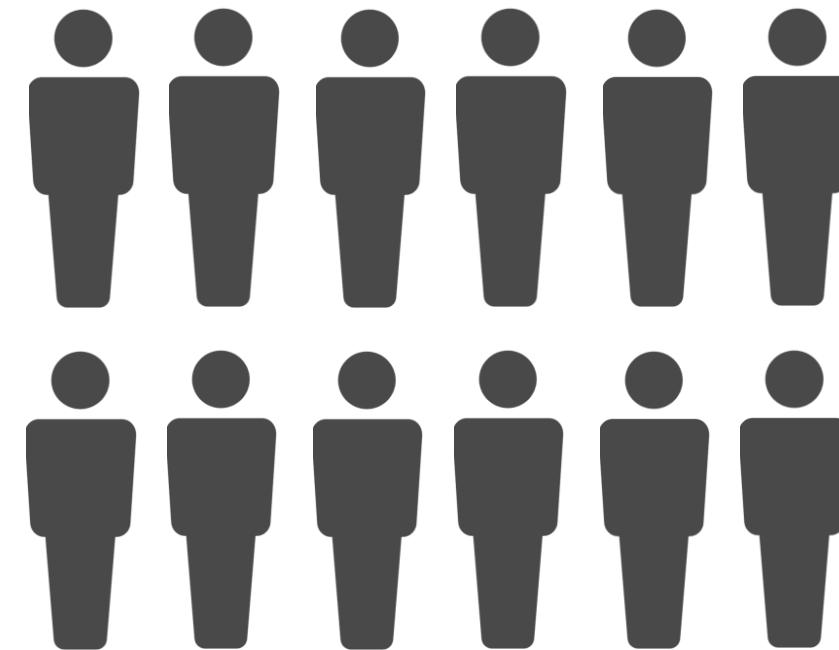
OUTFLOW
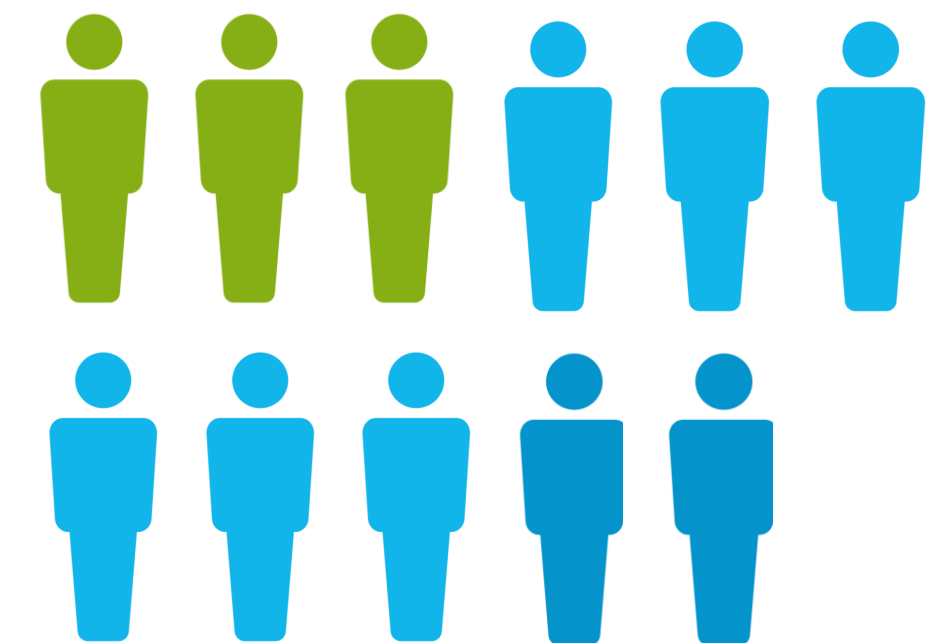
INFLOW: Newly identified

INFLOW: Returned from housing

INFLOW: Returned from inactive

OUTFLOW: Housing placements

OUTFLOW: Moved to inactive

OUTFLOW: No longer meets population criteria

3. An Integrated Problem-Solving Team

Continuum of Care - *Agency overseeing and administering compliance for HUD homelessness dollars*

HUD T.A. Providers - *The industry of firms competing for the nearly $100 million in technical assistance contracts HUD awards each year*

VAMC Homeless Program Manager - *Person overseeing ending veteran homelessness for the medical center as well as VA funded programs.*

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4. Adaptive Resource Planning

Actively Homeless

-Landlord outreach
-Voucher process improvement

-Inflow spike

Improvement Median: 38.5

Chattanooga/Southeast Tennessee CoC

80

60

40

20

0

August 2017   November 2017   February 2018   May 2018   August 2018   November 2018
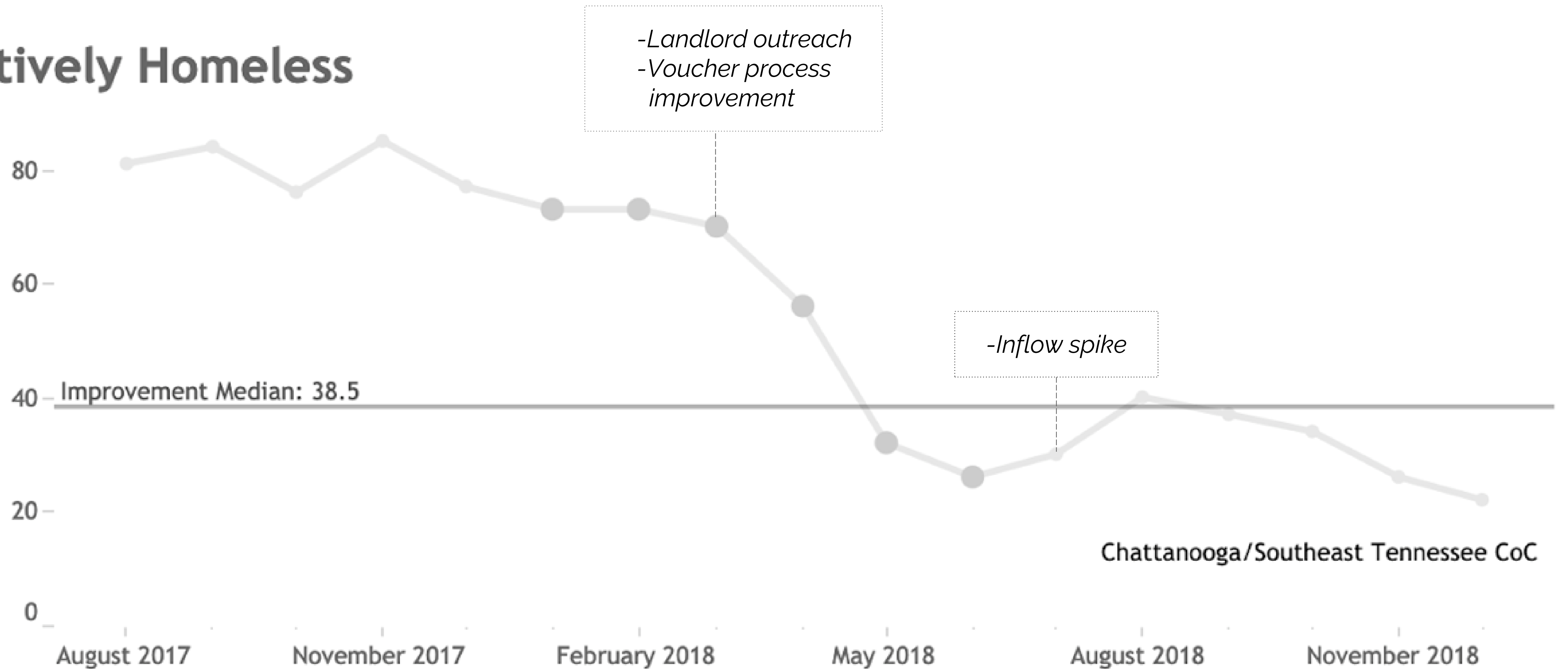
Monthly Inflow & Outflow

Red square at bottom indicates **Inflow** exceeded **Outflow**
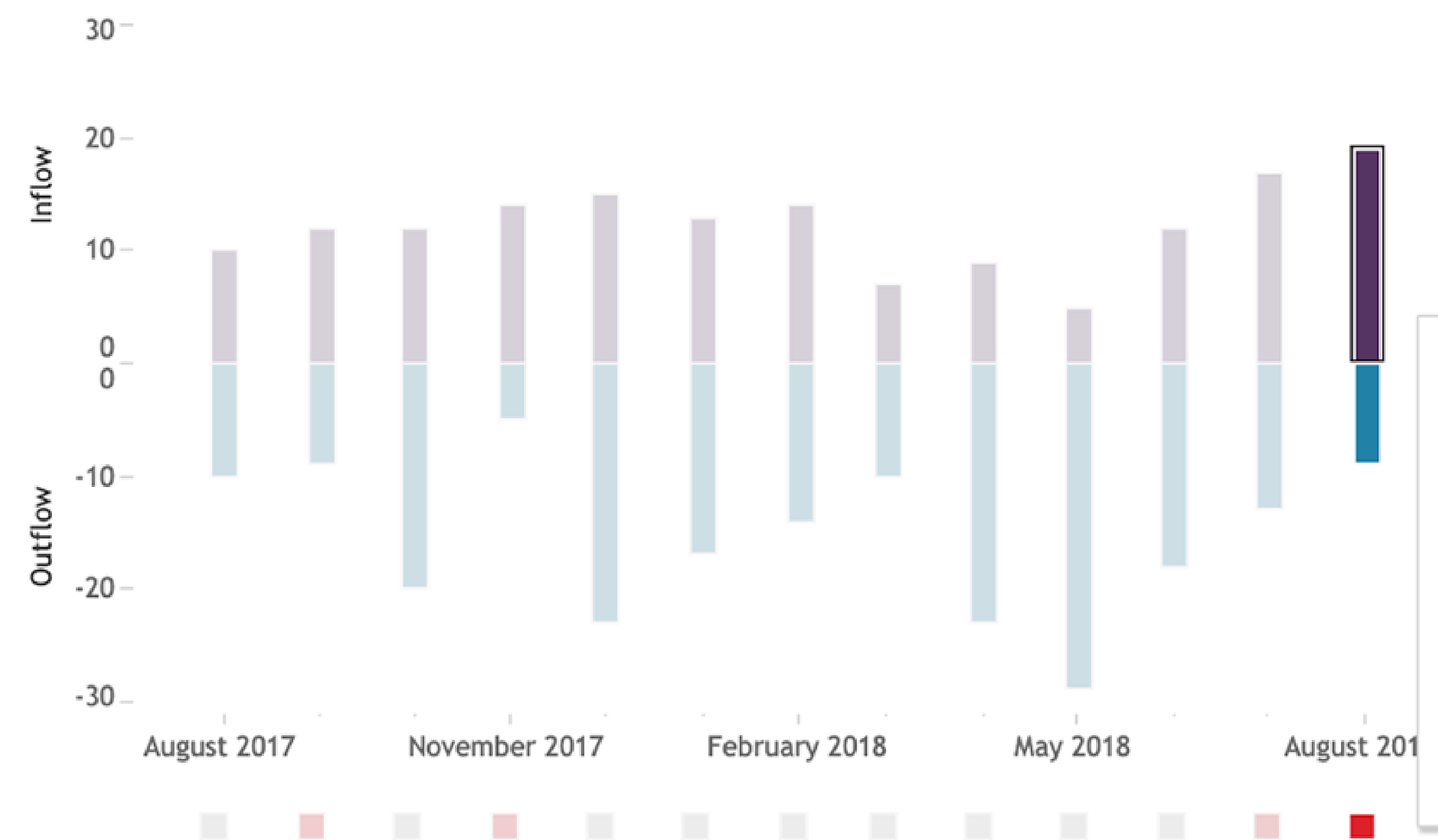
Select your community from the drop-down menu below and use filters to adjust the data. You'll be able to see additional information by hovering over the charts.

NOTE: Numbers reflect self-reported community data (submitted using the form below).

Got questions? Email us at

Chattanooga/Southeast Tennessee CoC | August 2018
Inflow: **19**
Outflow: **9**

Breakdown of Inflow

% Returned to Active from Housing	26.3%
% Returned to Active from Inactive ..	0.0%
% of Total Newly Identified	73.7%

Inflow exceeded Outflow

August 2017   November 2017   February 2018   May 2018   August 201

...utions

...ssee CoC ▼

Select Time Range

August 2017   December 2018

Select Metric to Display

Inflow Total	▼

Understanding Shift Signal

A pink dot will appear when 6 or more consecutive points are above or below the

Inflow Total

Use drop-down at right to adjust metric displayed

Median

6

Actively Homeless Veterans

Functional Zero threshold

JULY 2017	NOV. 2017	MAR. 2018	JULY 2018	NOV. 2018	MAR. 2019	JULY 2019	NOV. 2019
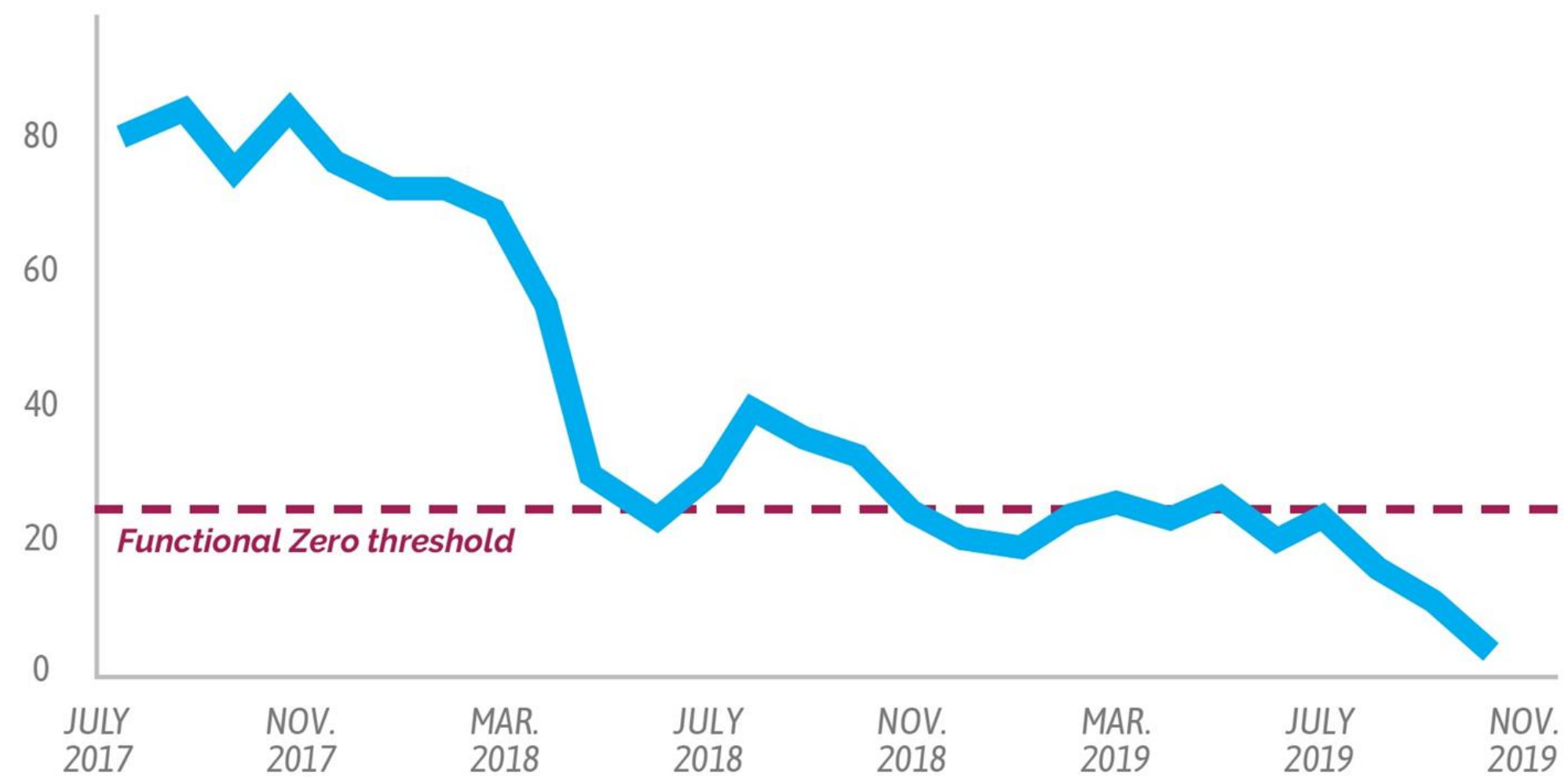
What Can Elected Leaders Do?

Shared, Measurable Aim

- Use your pulpit to set a clear vision + measurable end state for your community

- Use city contracts + licenses to incentivize data sharing and systemwide participation from all providers

Nimble command center team

- Use convening power to get players to a single table
- Insist on a regular briefings
- Build actionable shared authority

Proven technical strategies

- Require evidence-based interventions with all available funding

Rapid, by-name feedback loop

- Demand quality data + release it regularly
- Brief the press on what you're learning + adjusting each month

Flexible housing + service resources

- Incentivize data-targeted housing development
- Remove barriers to repurposing funds in response to data

Thank you!

Jake Maguire

**Co-Director,
Built for Zero**

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Q&A about Built for Zero

Jake Maguire
*Principal, Community Solutions
and Co-Director, Built for Zero*
Community Solutions

Lauren Lowey
*Director, Housing & Community
Development*
National League of Cities
lowery@nlc.org

Q&A with Mayor Anthony Williams

NLC
NATIONAL
LEAGUE
OF CITIES

City Spotlight:
Abilene, TX

Anthony Williams
Mayor
City of Abilene, TX

Lauren Lowery
Director, Housing and Community Development
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Director, Housing & Community Development
National League of Cities
lowery@nlc.org

What's Next & Wrap-Up

NLC NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

Document 1:

NLC NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES — CITIES STRONG TOGETHER

ENDING HOUSING INSTABILITY AND HOMELESSNESS

An Overview of Homeless Encampments for City Leaders

Key Takeaways

Some individuals choose to live in encampments due to a lack of better housing alternatives.

The shelter space available, or shelter system requirements and conditions (e.g., sobriety requirements, entrance fees, separation from partners or pets, strict entry and exit times, or safety concerns), may be incompatible with an individual's current circumstances.

Conducting evictions of encampments, or "sweeps," often displaces individuals rather than reducing the number of individuals experiencing homelessness.

Without referrals to shelters, housing, or additional resources, this approach fails to target the root causes of homelessness and can instead further destabilize established communities.

Criminalization creates and exacerbates barriers to housing and employment, rather than addressing the causes of homelessness.

By making sleeping, camping, sitting or lying down, pan handling, sleeping in cars, loitering, or begging illegal — either in an entire city, or in particular places — it criminalizes individuals for engaging in life-sustaining activities, and disproportionately impacts Black Americans.

Given discrimination by landlords and employers against criminal records, criminalization also perpetuates the harmful cycle between arrest, incarceration, emergency shelters and homelessness.

Dismantling encampments over public health concerns is counterproductive.

Without additional housing capacity and resources, dispersal of individuals experiencing homelessness will increase the potential for the spread of infectious diseases.

Sanctioning encampments is not an alternative to providing services and permanent housing, but can ameliorate the conditions of living on the streets.

By providing individuals experiencing homelessness with connections to services, individuals living in encampments can experience improved access to support services and transitional or permanent housing options. Municipal support and involvement with encampments can also create the opportunity for the relationship and trust-building that is often key to ushering individuals living in encampments into other housing options.
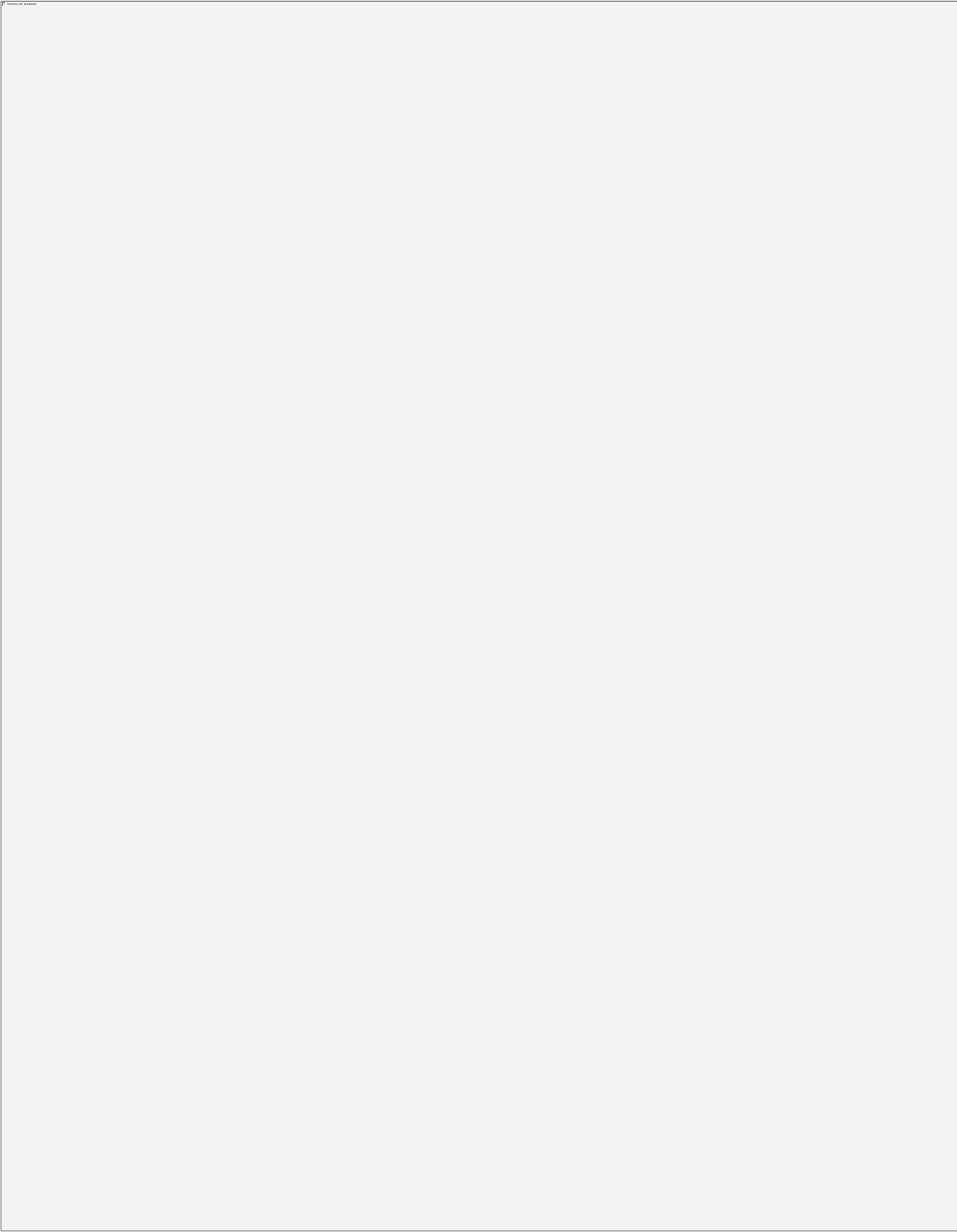
Document 2:

NLC NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES — CITIES STRONG TOGETHER

ENDING HOUSING INSTABILITY AND HOMELESSNESS

An Overview of Homelessness for City Leaders

In keeping with NLC's ongoing effort to support leaders in local government on matters of homelessness and housing insecurity, this overview provides foundational information for use in developing or refining local solutions and for building relevant stakeholder coalitions and community consensus.

Due to data limitations, this resource employs pre-COVID-19 data and does not reflect the significant impact of the pandemic. It charts the historic trends of homelessness in cities nationwide, along with highlighting some of the systemic issues that are at the root of the homelessness crisis. Many of these trends and challenges, however, are expected to be exacerbated by the health crisis and the compounding economic impact of the virus.

Key Takeaways

Homelessness is frequently cited as a top concern by a broad cross-section of mayors and elected officials, from large and small cities.

Homelessness can affect all people. Nearly two thirds (61 percent) of people experiencing homelessness are male while 39 percent are female and 0.8 percent are transgender or gender nonconforming.

The Point-in-Time count estimates severely undercount the homeless population. It does not account for all individuals who access or are in need of emergency shelters and homeless services over the course of a single year, often undercounting or completely missing some individuals — particularly those who are "doubling up" by temporarily living with friends or immediate/extended family, and homeless youth.

Communities of color are overrepresented among the homelessness population. African Americans are significantly overrepresented among the homeless population accounting for 40 percent of people experiencing homelessness but representing only 13 percent of US population and Hispanics/Latinos make up 22 percent of the homeless population but represent 18 percent of the US population.

The determinants of homelessness are many. Determinants include structural and institutional racism; wage stagnation or lack of wages, low supply of affordable housing, physical and mental health and domestic violence.

Homelessness takes a toll on society in broad and diverse ways and is harmful for individuals and costly for communities.

SAVE THE DATE!

NLC NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

CONGRESSIONAL CITY CONFERENCE

March **14–16** 2022

EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AND PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES   MARCH **12–13**, 2022

NLC NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

CITIES STRONG TOGETHER

@LEAGUEOFCITIES