



San Mateo County Immigrant Integration and Inclusion Initiative

Briefing

August 2022

create
knowledge.

ignite
change.

john w. gardner
center for youth and their communities

@gardnercenter

Background

San Mateo County (SMC) Office of Community Affairs convened a steering committee and 5 engagement teams as part of a Welcoming America grant:

- Community Connectedness & Engagement
- Economic Development
- Education Opportunities & Outcomes
- Equitable Access to Services
- Safe Communities

Survey Overview

Teams collaborated on a survey instrument to solicit input from immigrants who live, work, or attend school in SMC.

Over 2,700 immigrants, representing all of SMC, responded to a survey administered in 12 languages. The survey instrument included seven sections:

- Demographics
- Educational Opportunities and Outcomes
- Economic Development
- Equitable Access to Services
- Community Connectedness
- Safe Communities
- Outreach

The Gardner Center analyzed survey results.

Demographics of Respondents

- Represented entire county. Largest response rates were from residents of:
 - San Mateo
 - Redwood City
 - North Fair Oaks
- Ranged in age from under 18 to over 71 years old.
- Most have lived in U.S. for multiple years.
- Education level varied.
- 45% reported moving to U.S. to flee hardship
- Nearly 75% speak English and another language.

Educational Opportunities and Outcomes



Educational Opportunities and Outcomes

- More than half (56%) reported having a child or children under age 22.
 - 62% are in grades K-12
- English language support cited as most useful
- English language skills & time conflicts impede seeking support for children @ schools
- Primary areas for support:
 - English language;
 - scholarships/financial;
 - tutoring;
 - social & emotional



Economic Development

Economic Development

- 70% of respondents reported being employed;
- 50% of respondents said they were not overqualified for their current job.
- Factors preventing job searches:
 - needing to pay bills,
 - English language,
 - credential from home was not recognized
- Support needs:
 - skills training;
 - resume, cover letter, interview preparation;
 - leadership training & development.



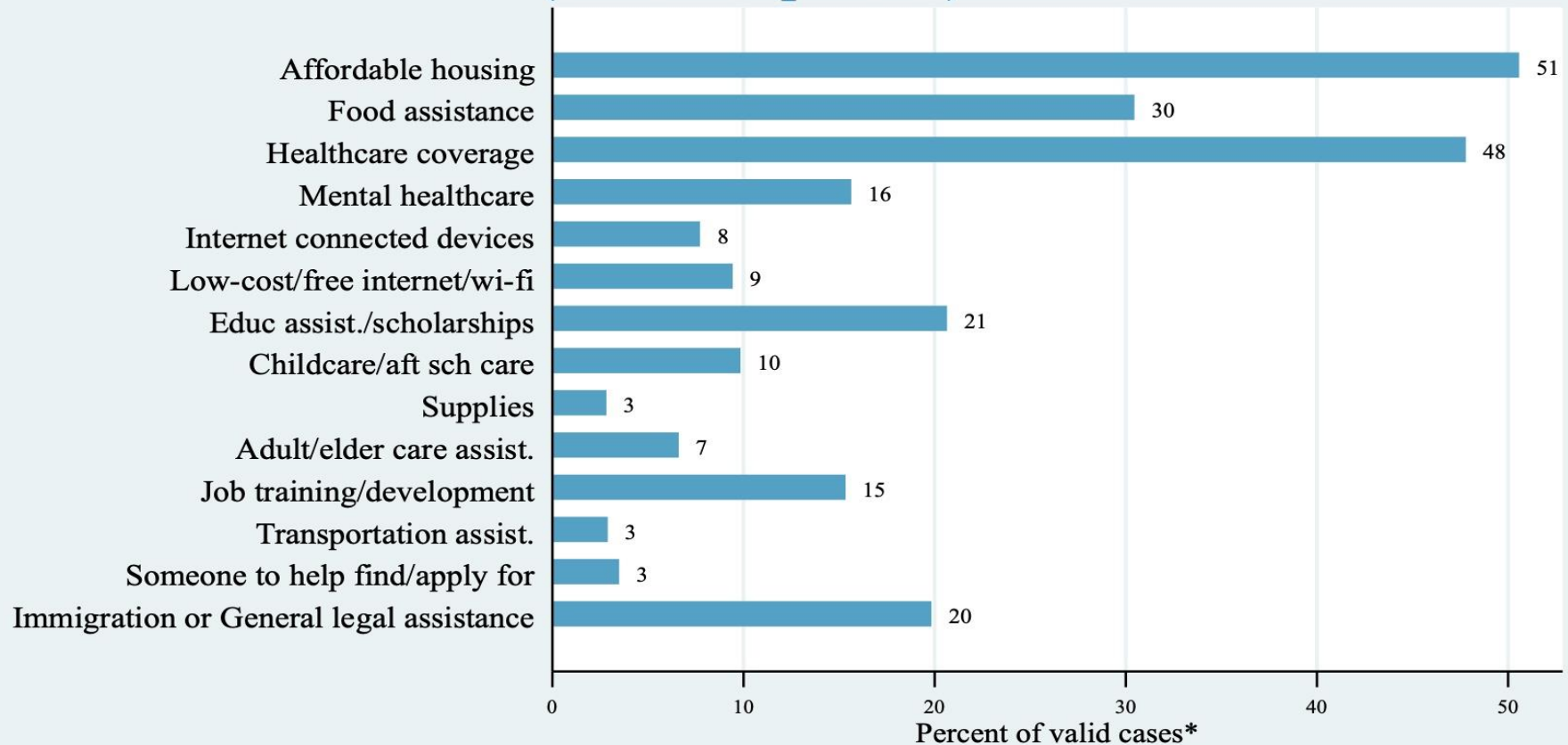
Equitable Access to Services

Services Most Useful

1. Affordable Housing
2. Healthcare Coverage
3. Food Assistance
4. Educational assistance/scholarships
5. Legal assistance (general and immigration)
6. Mental Healthcare

**No significant differences across the various demographic categories.

Which of the following services would you find most useful? (choose top three)



* The number of valid cases used as the base for the percentage calculation is 2,693
The total number of legitimate responses is 2,779.

Filename: serviceshelp_combined_legal.jpg



“Perhaps we can pay [the rent] with the salary that we have, but there’s not enough for the other expenses, so we’re basically just working for our rent.”

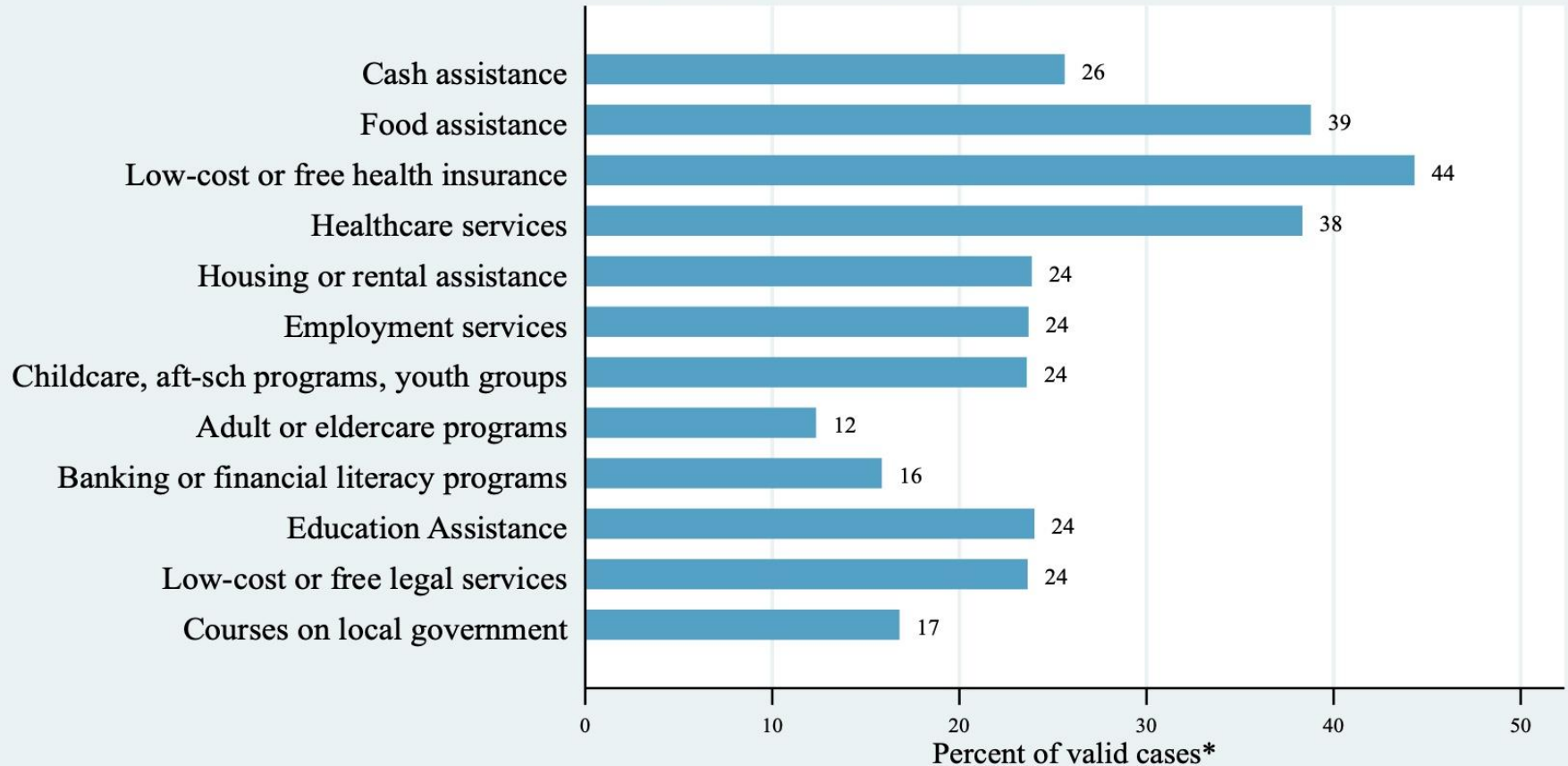
“I’ve also heard people say, ‘I’m sick, but no, it’s better for me to die, because if the illness doesn’t kill me, the bill will.’ Because since the regulations aren’t in that person’s favor, that bill is going to be very high, so what can the person do? It’s better to just live with it. I’ve heard many, many cases like that.”



“Giving them that tool I think would be a great push, since they could be the first or second generation, in order to break that cycle of always returning to the same thing. They have to get out. And I think that giving them scholarships and educational help would be a good step.”

“I think that almost all of us sometimes use some help because sometimes with what we earn it doesn't stretch to cover food shopping...”

Which of the following types of programs are you aware of or have used at least once?

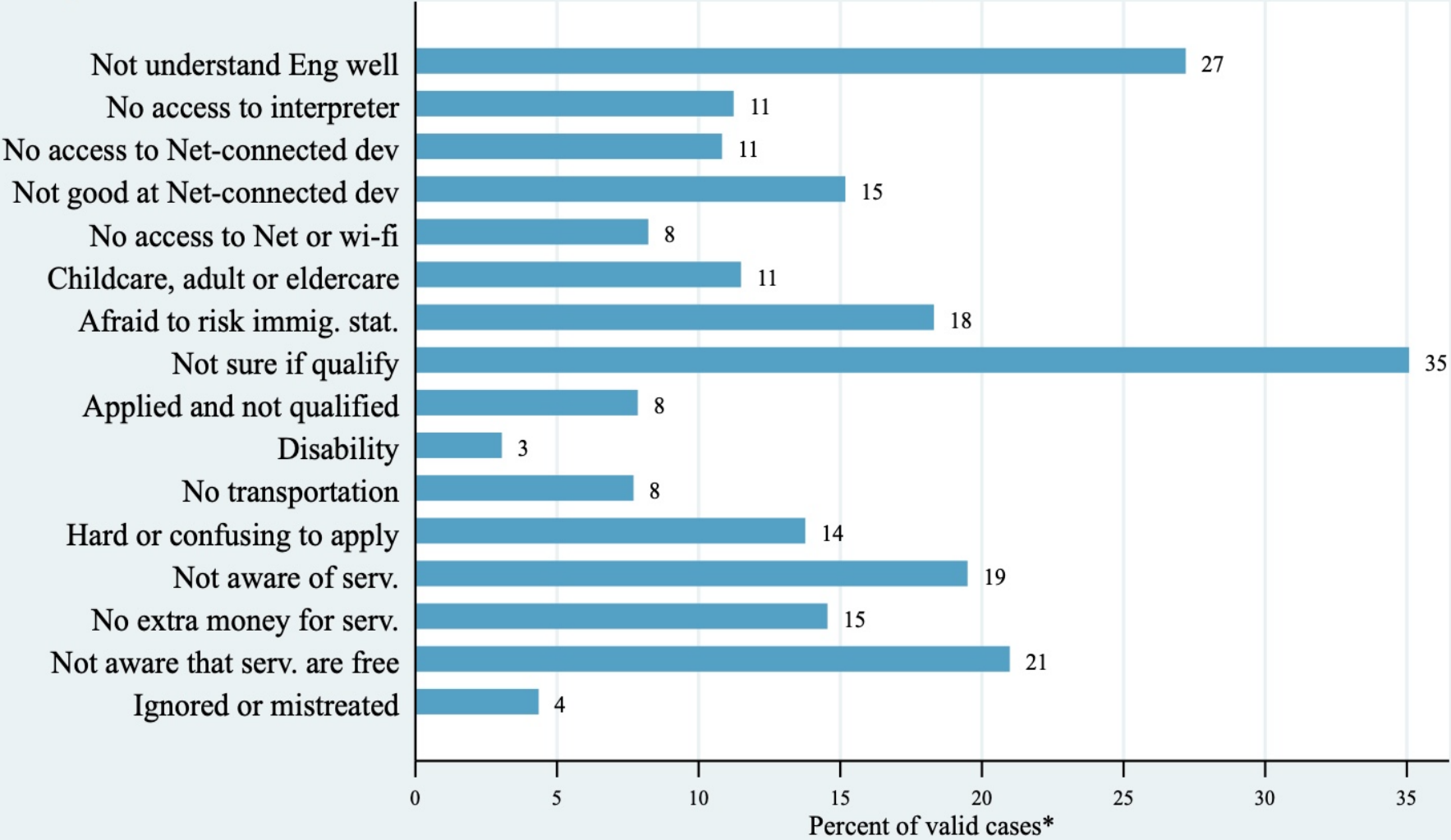


* The number of valid cases used as the base for the percentage calculation is 2,392
The total number of legitimate responses is 2,779.

Barriers to Accessing Services: Most Frequent

1. Not sure if I qualify
2. Do not understand English well
3. Not aware services are free
4. Not aware of services
5. Afraid to risk immigration status

Do any of these reasons make it difficult for you to access services?*



* Respondents can choose more than one answer.
**The number of valid cases used as the base for the percentage calculation is 2,688 whereas the total number of legitimate responses is 2,779.

Barriers to Access: Variation by Subgroup

- Most respondents who cited barriers were most likely fleeing hardship, had no formal education, and were non-English speakers.
- These respondents also had most barriers (4+).
- Little variation based on country of origin, city of residence, gender (women rated some things higher but only slightly).
 - Fewer barriers overall.

Perspectives on Barriers to Access

"...the barriers, well, to tell you, that I have as an immigrant, is the language, not being able to talk or communicate correctly in English. Because our... Maybe we could communicate well, but sometimes the words don't come out like they're supposed to be pronounced."

"If when you go to the doctor, the doctor talks to you in Spanish, you feel more confident...when the doctor sits with you and starts chatting with you in Spanish, you say: oh, yes... But when they put the machine on, then I can't even understand, sometimes you can't even understand what they're saying to you."

"First question when applying for programs: 'Are you a citizen? Are you a resident?' And we don't know what to answer, out of fear... the first thing they ask: 'Are you legal?' And what do you do...You're scared."

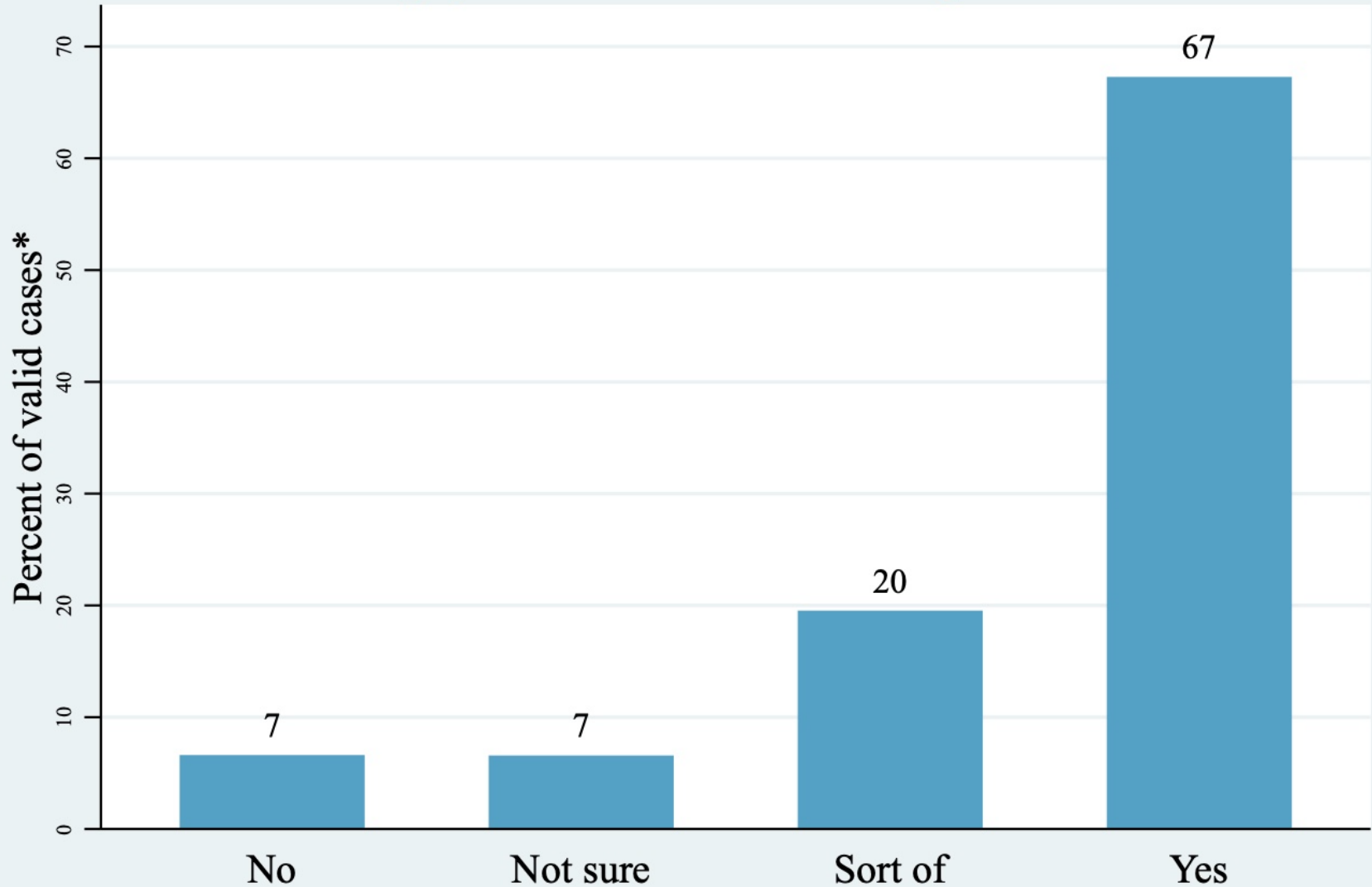


“I think part of being in this community is like we need to be able to express what it is that we need in order to get it whereas I think sometimes we're a little hesitant because you know the whole immigration status or whatnot or some in our community just think like “hey I am undocumented, so I already know that I'm not going to get approved” you know what I mean? Those kind of things can really put a dent on the way you think and how you actually react to your community because one can be so scared and say “I'm not going to go there because they might catch me, and something might happen to me” like those kinds of things. It's almost like you're just kind of guessing and hoping and praying that something new will come up to help you but little do you know that it's available you're just not asking the right questions or you're not talking to the right people.”

Community Connectedness



Is the community you live in welcoming and inclusive?*



*The number of valid cases used as the base for the percentage calculation is 2,616 whereas the total number of legitimate responses is 2,779.

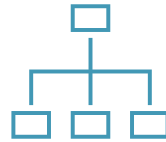
Welcoming Community: Key Factors



Community

66%

Relationships and
friendly interactions



Structural

27%

Government and
organization services



Cultural

26%

Norms and interactions
with immigrants

Civic Participation

- 1/3 of respondents participated in public meetings hosted by a local organization; 20% participated in parent teacher association meetings and/or school board meetings
- Not participating in public meetings:
 - lack of knowledge that they could participate
 - lack of information
- During last 5 years:
 - 37% reported voting
 - 39% reported not voting
 - 24% were not eligible to vote



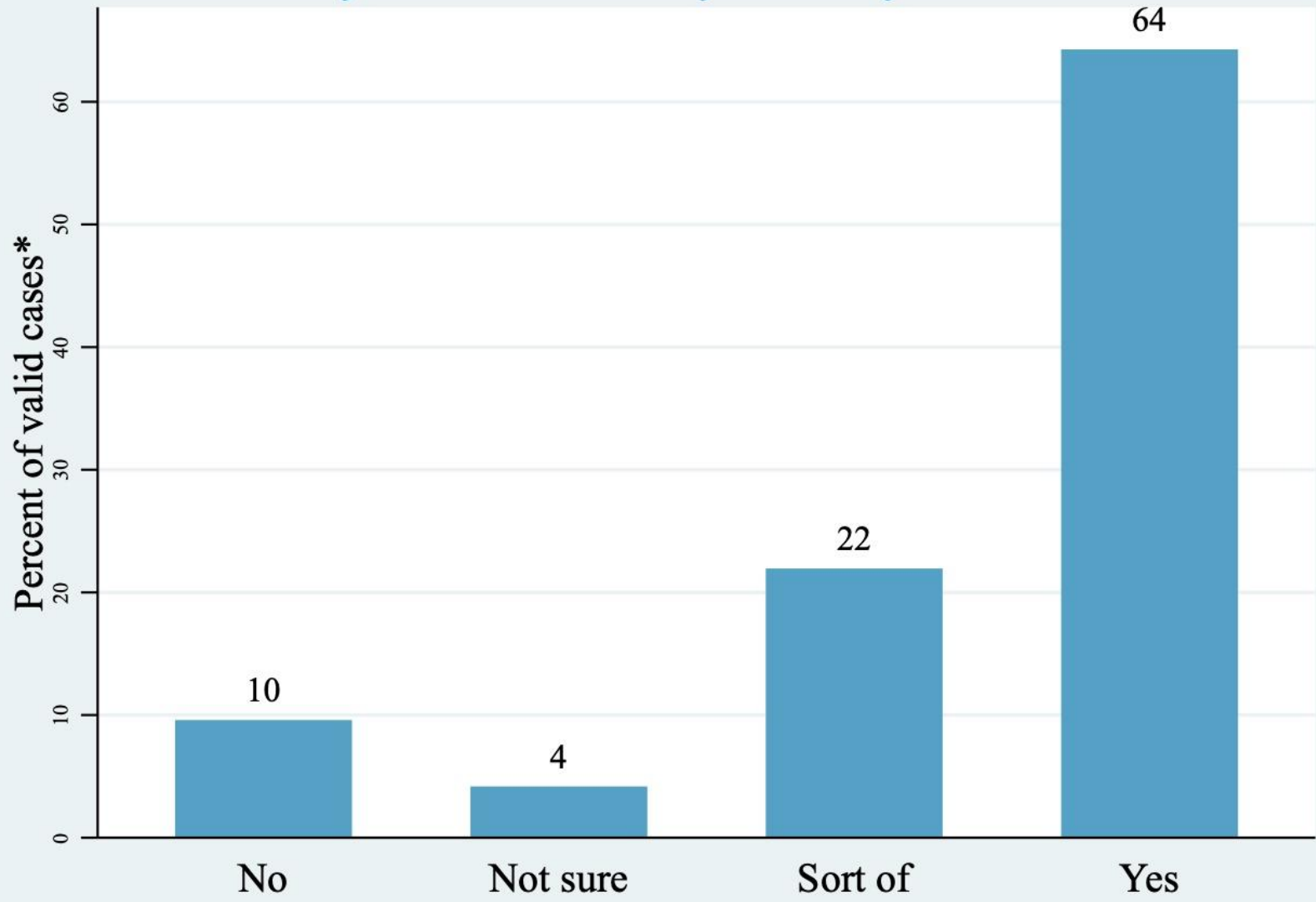
“I’ve come across a lot of very friendly people, and they’ve always helped me when I needed it. And I’ve also learned from those who’ve referred me somewhere else, to other things that I wasn’t aware of, to other programs. So I’ve learned here, from this community.”

“For example, this center being opened up is one of the biggest things that make me feel welcome. You can come here to learn different things and meet new friends. You can also come here to seek all sorts of assistance. As long as you ask, we are all very loving. We’ll help you, as long as you ask for help.”



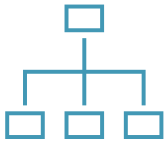
Safe Communities

Do you feel safe in your community when you are outside alone?*



*The number of valid cases used as the base for the percentage calculation is 2,606 whereas the total number of legitimate responses is 2,779.

Community Safety: Key Factors



Structural

66%

Law enforcement and
government
infrastructure



Community

43%

Connected Neighbors



Cultural

12%

Valuing diversity and
living with immigrants

A blurred photograph of a large audience in a conference room. In the foreground, a hand is raised, palm facing forward. The background shows many people seated at tables, looking towards a screen or speaker. The lighting is warm and indoor.

Outreach

Outreach

- Email preferred to learn about local resources and events.
- Community-based organizations as places to seek services and information.

Thanks for joining us today!

The John W. Gardner Center partners with communities, researchers, and practitioners to produce research to improve and strengthen the well-being of youth, inform policy and practice, and emphasize equity and capacity-building in youth-serving organizations.

<https://gardnercenter.stanford.edu>

john w. gardner
center for youth and their communities

@gardnercenter