Schoolhouse
WASHINGTON
a project of BUILDING CHANGES

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Survey on the Needs of Students Experiencing Homelessness in Washington State During the COVID-19 Crisis

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

April 24, 2020

Overview

Schoolhouse Washington, a project of Building Changes, conducted a survey of McKinney-Vento liaisons to learn how students and families experiencing homelessness are being affected by the COVID-19 crisis and to help identify their needs. Responses were collected from April 6 through April 10, 2020. The survey was sent to 459 McKinney-Vento liaisons in all school districts and local education agencies in Washington State using a list downloaded from the state's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) website.

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, every school district is required to have a homeless education liaison who coordinates services that ensures children and youth experiencing homelessness enroll in school and has opportunities to succeed academically. In Washington State, many McKinney-Vento liaisons also serve children and youth in foster care.

Respondents

- 78 respondents worked with students experiencing homelessness.

- Respondents collectively served approximately 16,711 students experiencing homelessness in Washington State.

Staff Role

- Both McKinney-Vento and Foster Care Liaison 55%
- McKinney-Vento Liaison 27%
- Other 18%
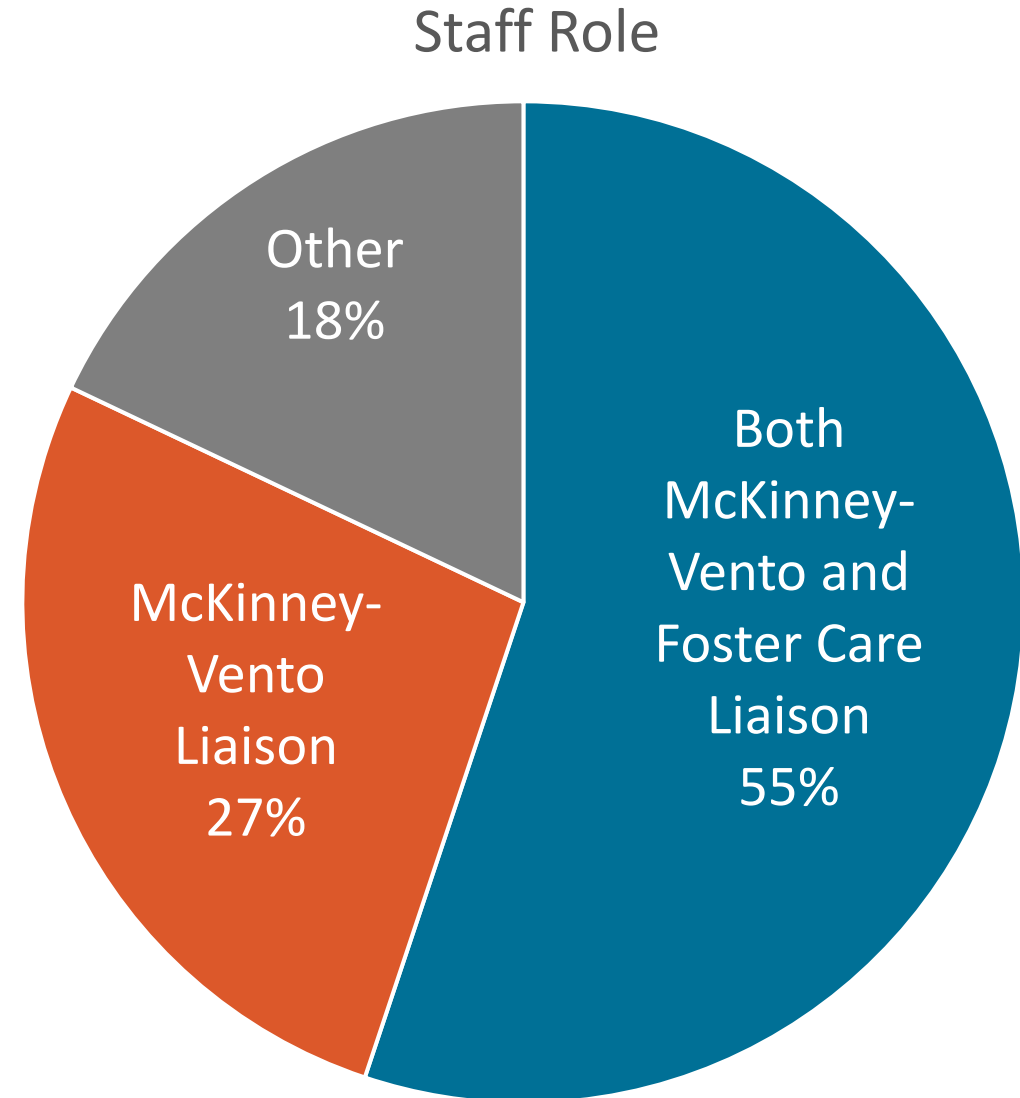
Respondents

- 44% of respondents were from rural districts.

District Location Type

Town 15%

City 19%

Rural 44%

Suburb 22%
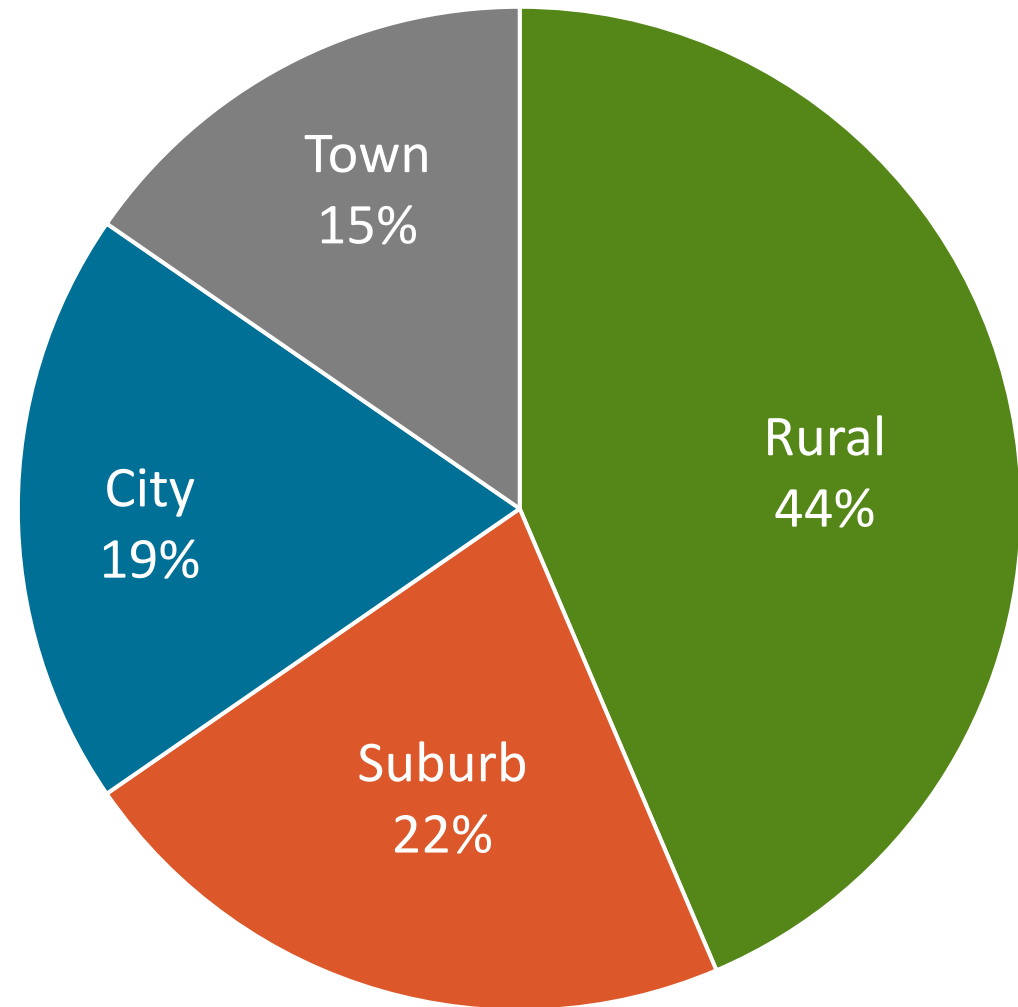
Respondents

- Respondents were from 74 districts in 32 counties across Washington State.

© 2020 Mapbox © OpenStreetMap
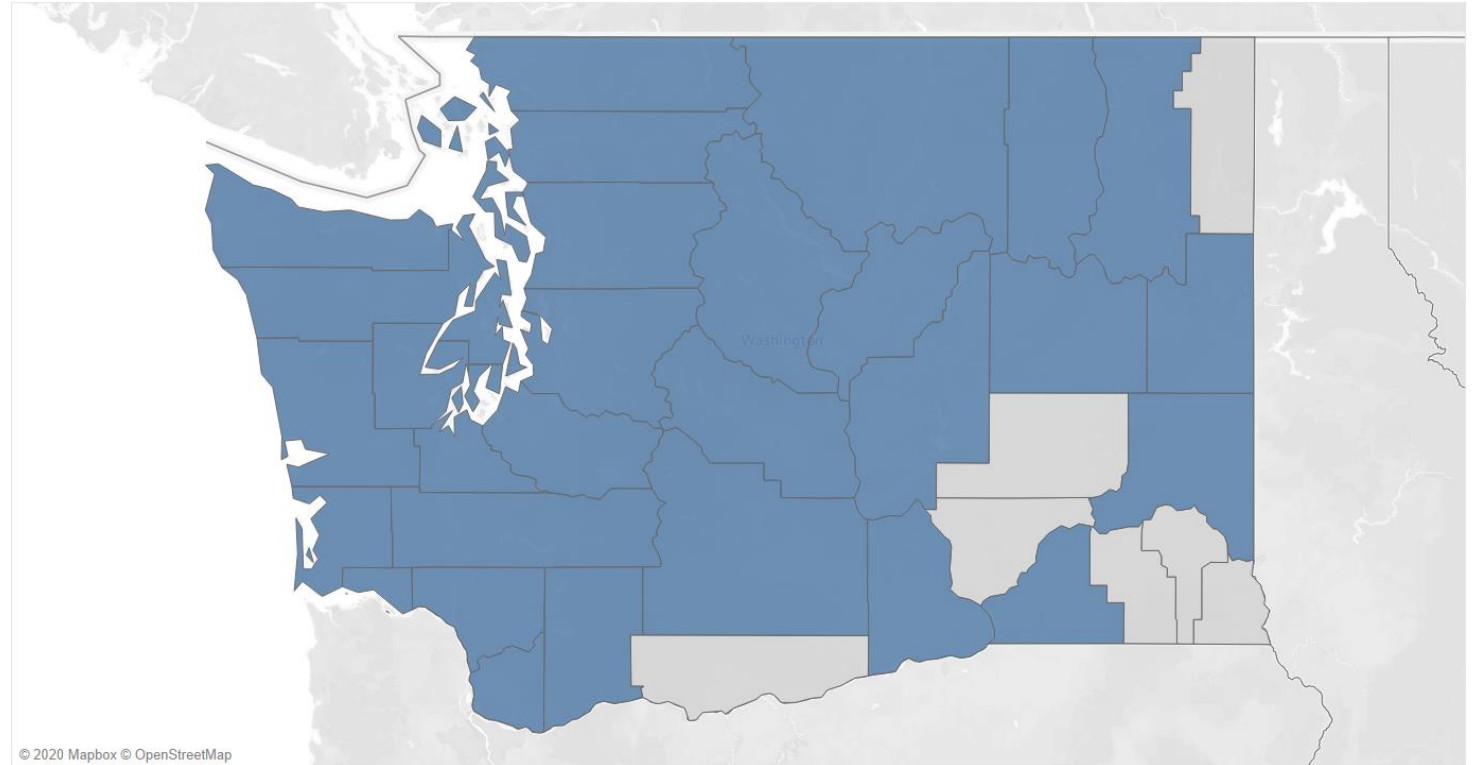
Top Identified Needs

- Across all categories, the top five identified needs were:
  - Food (85%)
  - Mobile hotspots/ internet access (78%)
  - Devices (74%)
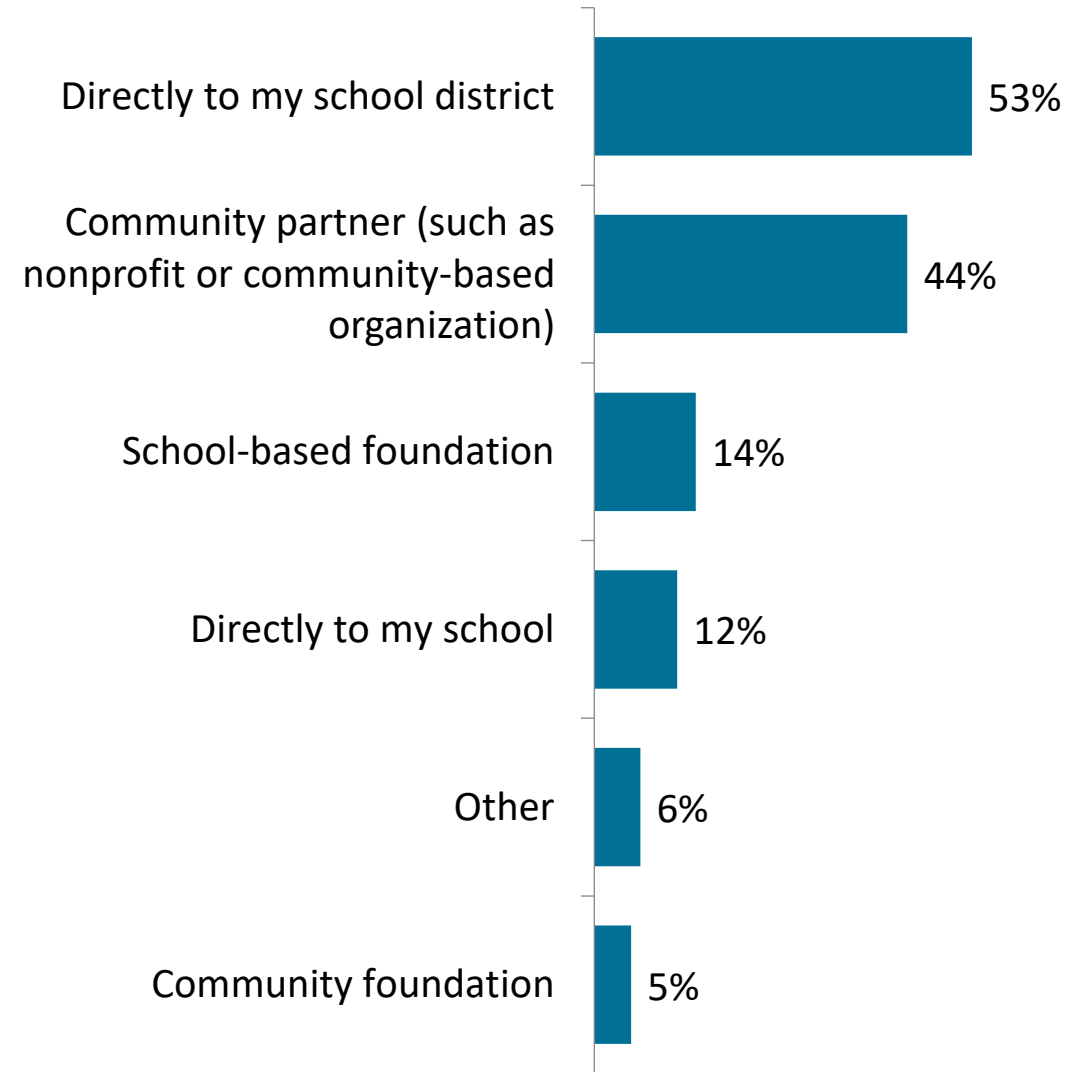 - Hygiene supplies (55%)
  - Rental assistance (49%)

All Identified Needs

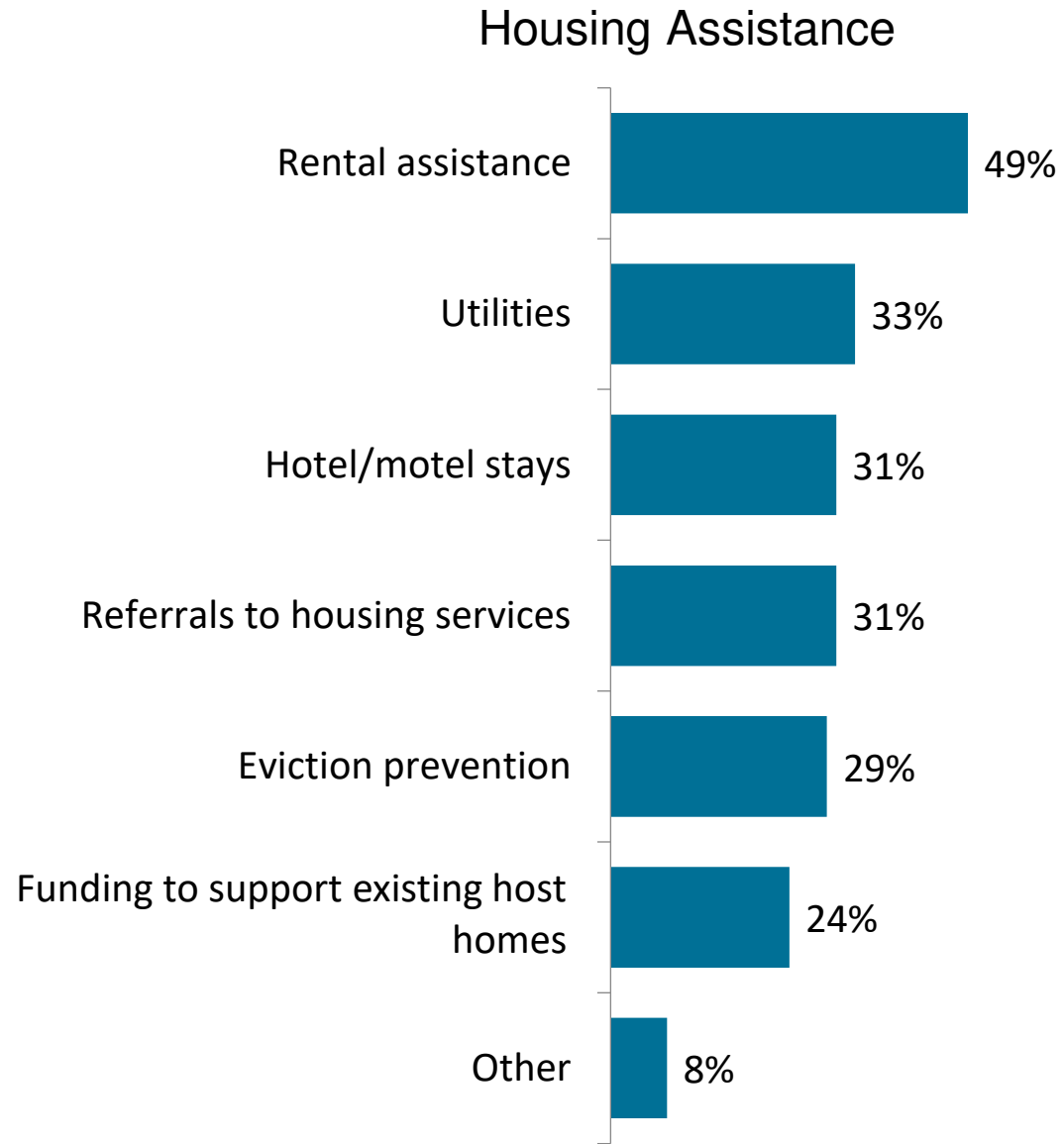| Need	Percentage
Food (including water, formula, and baby food)	85%
Mobile hotspots or internet access	78%
Devices (e.g., laptops, tablets, computers, phones)	74%
Hygiene supplies	55%
Rental assistance	49%
Teaching support/homework/curriculum packets	47%
Gas vouchers	46%
School supplies	38%
Unemployment benefits	38%
Utilities	33%
Special education support services	33%
Clothing	32%
Medical care, medicine, and medical supplies	32%
Hotel/motel stays	31%
Referrals to housing services	31%
Eviction prevention	29%
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program	28%
Laundry facilities	27%
Childcare	27%
Funding to support existing host homes	24%
Showers	23%
English language learner support services	23%
Healthcare coverage	23%
Public transportation (e.g., bus passes)	23%
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	21%
Activity ideas (e.g., enrichment worksheets)	19%
Other - Distance Learning/Education Support	15%
Other - Transportation	14%
Other - Basic Needs	13%
Tutoring	10%
Other - Access to Benefits/Resources	10%
Other - Housing Assistance	8%
Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC)	8%
Rideshare trips	4%

Receiving Funds

- School districts (53%) and community partners (44%) were identified as the best organizations to receive funds.
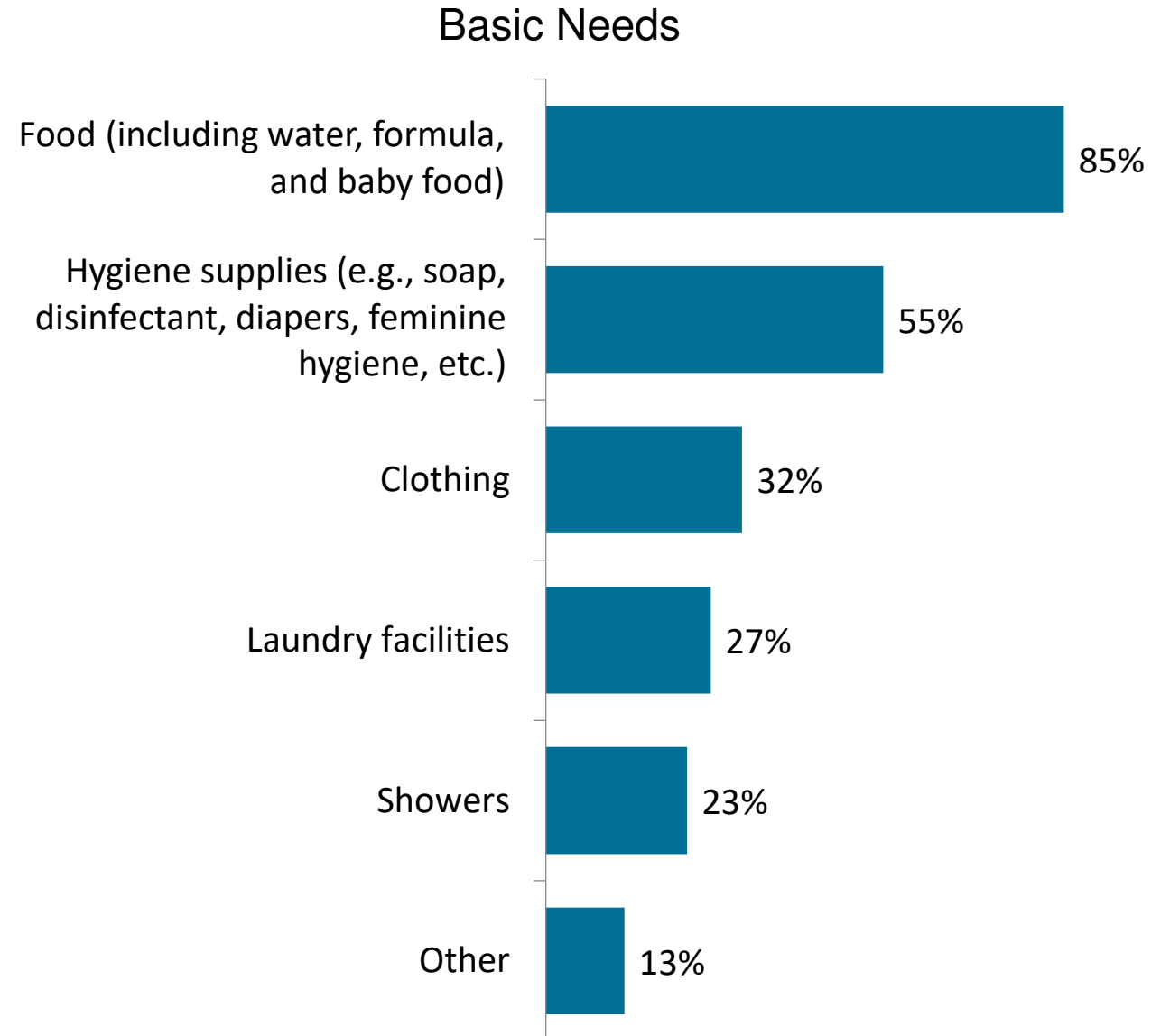
Best Organizations to Receive Funds

Organization	Percentage
Directly to my school district	53%
Community partner (such as nonprofit or community-based organization)	44%
School-based foundation	14%
Directly to my school	12%
Other	6%
Community foundation	5%

Housing Assistance

- Rental assistance (49%) was the most cited housing need.

Housing Assistance

Category	Percentage
Rental assistance	49%
Utilities	33%
Hotel/motel stays	31%
Referrals to housing services	31%
Eviction prevention	29%
Funding to support existing host homes	24%
Other	8%

Basic Needs

- Food (85%) and hygiene supplies (55%) were the most cited basic needs.

Basic Needs

Category	Percentage
Food (including water, formula, and baby food)	85%
Hygiene supplies (e.g., soap, disinfectant, diapers, feminine hygiene, etc.)	55%
Clothing	32%
Laundry facilities	27%
Showers	23%
Other	13%

Distance Learning Access and Education Support

- Mobile hotspots/internet (78%) and devices (74%) were the most cited learning needs.

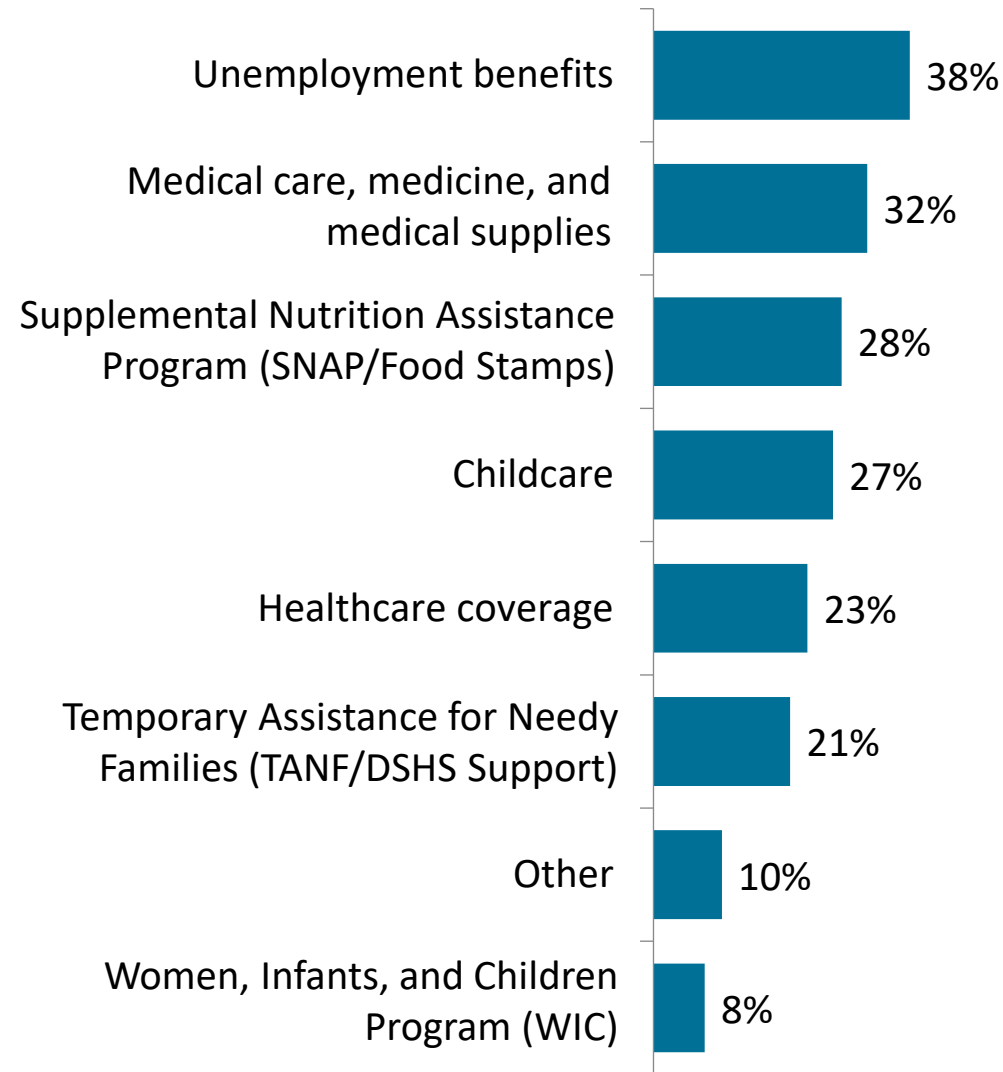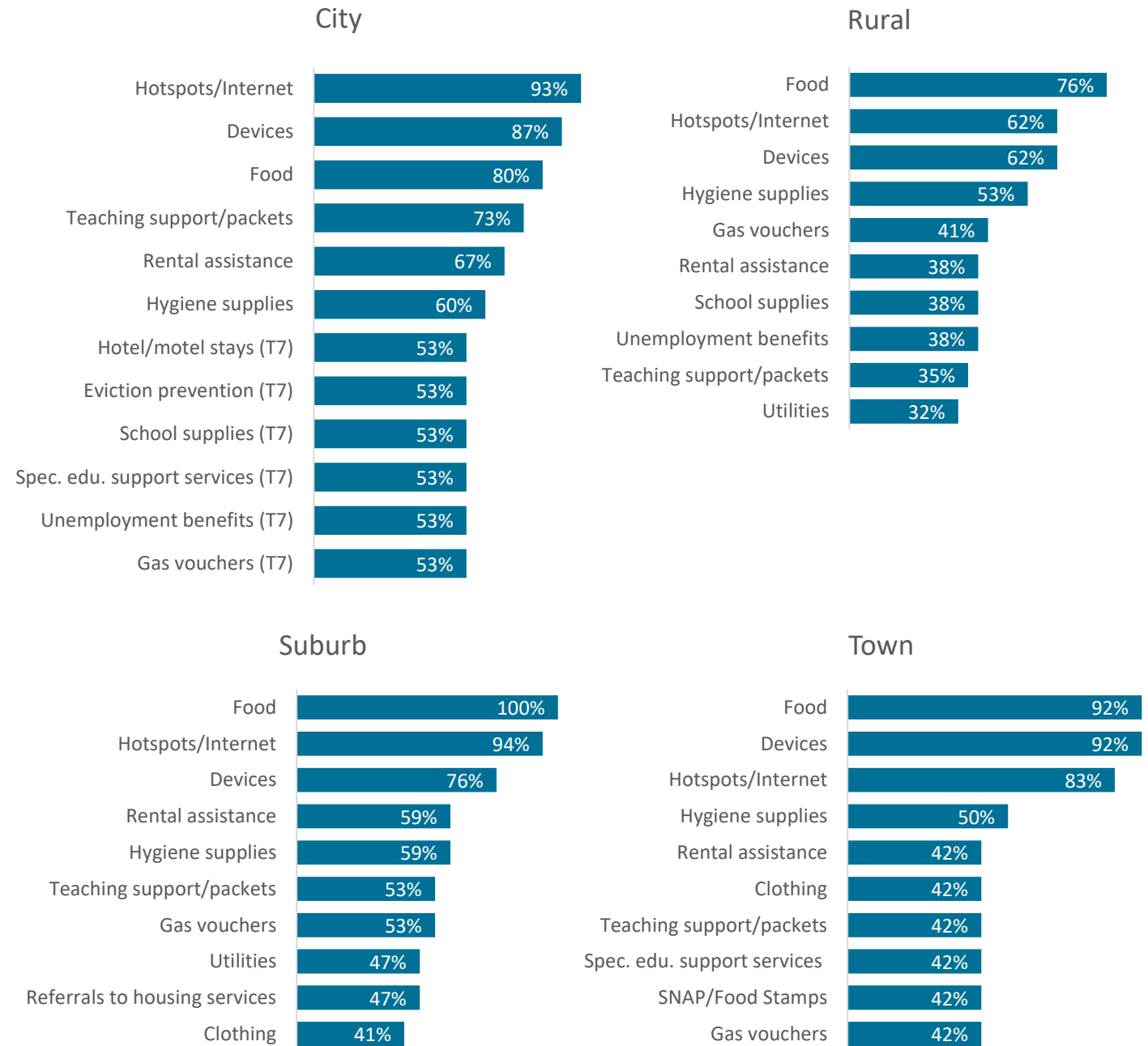## Distance Learning Access and Education Support
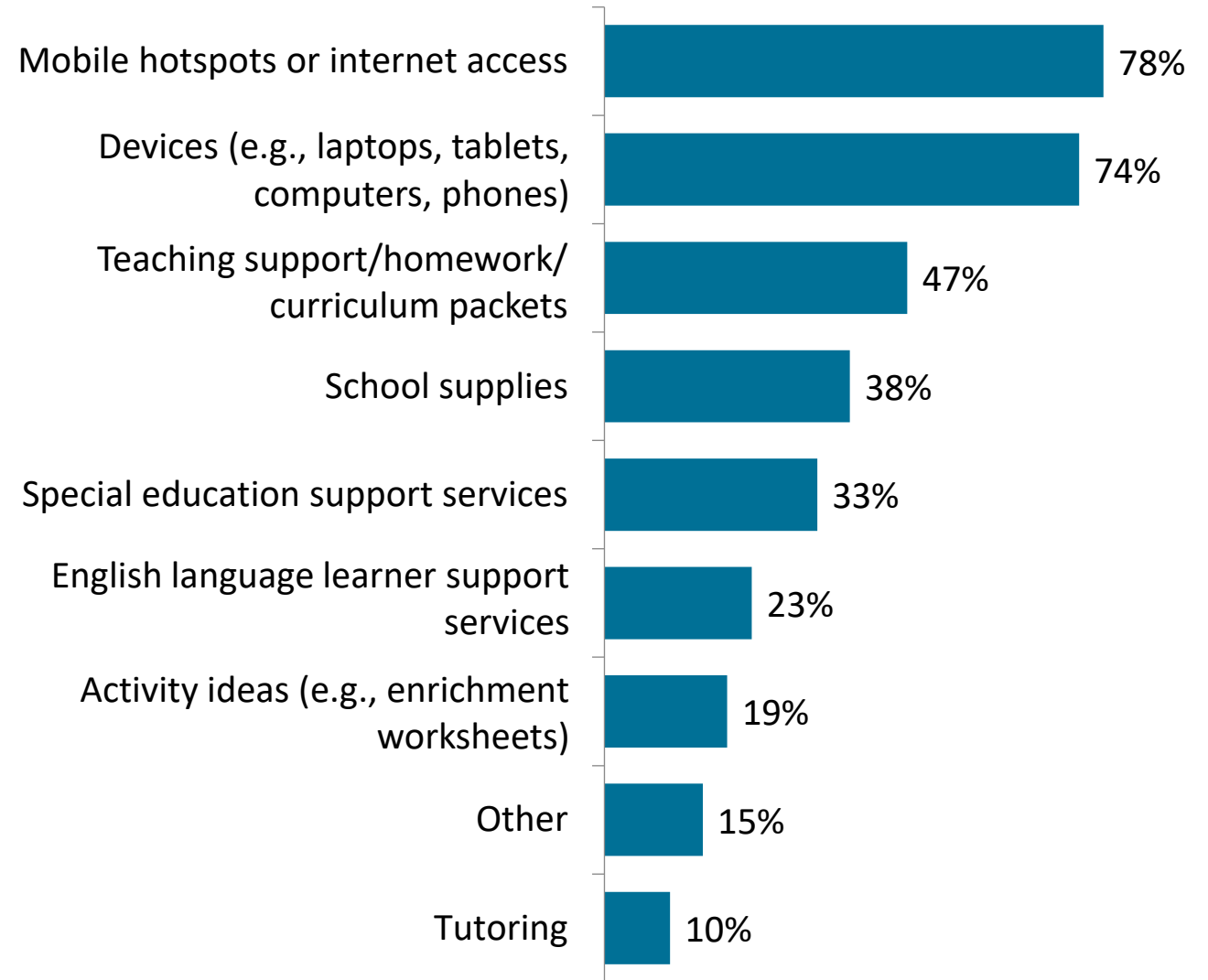
Category	Percentage
Mobile hotspots or internet access	78%
Devices (e.g., laptops, tablets, computers, phones)	74%
Teaching support/homework/curriculum packets	47%
School supplies	38%
Special education support services	33%
English language learner support services	23%
Activity ideas (e.g., enrichment worksheets)	19%
Other	15%
Tutoring	10%

Location Type

- Liaisons in all geographic areas identified food, hotspots/internet access, devices, hygiene supplies, rental assistance, teaching support/ packets, and gas vouchers as their top 10 needs.

- Food, hotspots/internet access, and devices were three most cited needs in each location type.

- The number of needs identified by at least 50% of respondents was higher in cities (12) compared to suburbs (7), rural areas (4), and towns (4).

City

Need	%
Hotspots/Internet	93%
Devices	87%
Food	80%
Teaching support/packets	73%
Rental assistance	67%
Hygiene supplies	60%
Hotel/motel stays (T7)	53%
Eviction prevention (T7)	53%
School supplies (T7)	53%
Spec. edu. support services (T7)	53%
Unemployment benefits (T7)	53%
Gas vouchers (T7)	53%

Rural

Need	%
Food	76%
Hotspots/Internet	62%
Devices	62%
Hygiene supplies	53%
Gas vouchers	41%
Rental assistance	38%
School supplies	38%
Unemployment benefits	38%
Teaching support/packets	35%
Utilities	32%

Suburb

Need	%
Food	100%
Hotspots/Internet	94%
Devices	76%
Rental assistance	59%
Hygiene supplies	59%
Teaching support/packets	53%
Gas vouchers	53%
Utilities	47%
Referrals to housing services	47%
Clothing	41%

Town

Need	%
Food	92%
Devices	92%
Hotspots/Internet	83%
Hygiene supplies	50%
Rental assistance	42%
Clothing	42%
Teaching support/packets	42%
Spec. edu. support services	42%
SNAP/Food Stamps	42%
Gas vouchers	42%

What Districts are Doing: A Qualitative Overview

- 63 respondents provided narrative responses.

- Narratives from respondents reflected similar trends shown in the Identified Needs chart.

Food/Basic Needs: Some districts are delivering meals in-person, distributing food along bus routes, filling backpacks with groceries for the weekend, and collaborating with food banks to increase resources and distribution. They have also been mapping out community centers with available food for students and their families to access.

Educational Access/Technology: Some districts are distributing devices, such as tablets and phones. They are also increasing internet access by creating hot spots, offering Wi-Fi in district parking lots, and mapping out Wi-Fi locations in communities. In addition to technological access, education packets are being paired with food deliveries to encourage academic engagement.

Outreach: Liaisons are connecting with students and their families by phone, text, email, social media, Google Voice, and Zoom. Home visits are still occurring but are very rare. Resources are shared on school and district websites, community list servs, handouts at meal sites, robocalls, and newly established COVID directories.

Partnership: Districts are primarily working with foodbanks while some have also been collaborating with housing partners. Other partnerships that districts have built include those with foster care advocates, health departments, faith communities, and homeless coalitions.

Promising Practices

- We are seeing formation of new and creative community partnerships.

- There is an increased focus to address family needs.

- Districts are reaching out to hear from those most impacted by COVID-19.

- Local motel staff are coordinating with districts' McKinney-Vento staff to help with outreach to families.

- Districts are working with community partners to drop off resources to quarantined households and providing vouchers, such as Amazon credit, for food and basic needs.

- Districts are offering free childcare through partnerships with their local Boys and Girls Clubs.

- Districts surveyed students and families to help identify local needs.

What's Not Showing Up

- Equity is deeply under-represented in districts' narratives.

- We need to redefine what basic needs mean for students and families.

- In the effort to stabilize housing during this crisis, we are tasked with reimagining what partnerships with systems could look like.

Topics <u>not</u> mentioned include:

- English Language Learners

- Students living with disabilities

- Survivors of domestic violence

- Equity

- Clear housing connections resulting in shelter, safe quarantine spaces, and/or permanent housing

For more information about this survey and its findings, contact:

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