

WorkFirst:

Specialized Employment Services for Barriers Free Engagement

CSH Eastern Region Supportive Housing Conference
Philadelphia, PA March 27 & 28, 2014

Presented by IMPACT/WorkFirst of Pine Street Inn

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Pine Street Inn
Ending Homelessness

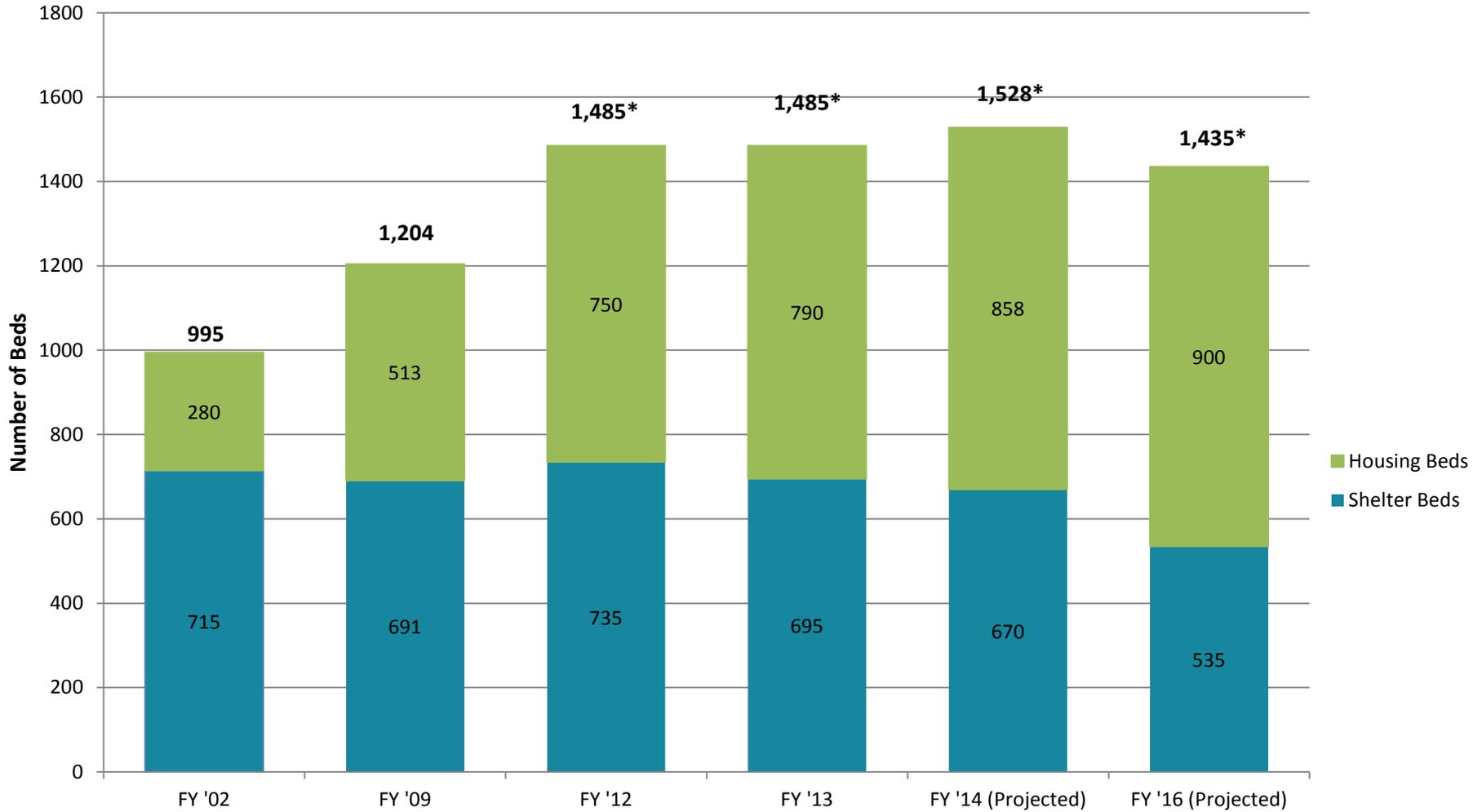
Overview of Pine Street Inn

Our Mission: To be a community of respect and hope for each guest we serve; to be a resource through which neighbors and friends can help to meet the basic needs of others; and to serve as a national leader in the fight to end homelessness.

- Serve men and women who are **homeless or formerly homeless** through street outreach, emergency shelter, substance abuse treatment, job training and job placement and permanent supportive housing
- Serve **1,600+ men and women each day and 11,000+ annually**



Shift from Shelter Beds to Permanent Housing



% Permanent Housing	28%	43%	51%	53%	56%	63%
% Shelter Beds	72%	57%	49%	47%	44%	37%

PSI's Workforce Development Programs

IMPACT Employment Services Programs:

- **Impact Services** – employment services for homeless clients
- **WorkFirst** – employment services for formerly homeless clients residing in supported permanent housing
- **IMPACT Retention** – post placement services for employed clients

Training Programs:

- Cafeteria Operations
- Food Preparation
- Building Maintenance and Woodworking
- Housekeeping

Social Enterprises:

- *iCater*
- *Boston HandyWorks*

WorkFirst Demonstration Grant

WorkFirst was a 3-year demonstration project launched in November, 2009 to increase housing retention and income among 140 formerly homeless clients using a Vocational Stages of Change model and Individualized Placement Support principles.

WorkFirst Was Created to:

- Evaluate the impact of early access to specialized employment services on employment placement and housing retention rates

Project Goal:

- Promote self-sufficiency and housing stability for formerly homeless adults through the early introduction of employment services
- Promote the integration of employment services within housing first models regionally and nationally

WorkFirst Approach:

- Parallel to the “Housing First” model



WorkFirst Demonstration Grant

Background Research

- Given the opportunity, homeless people can and want to work, including those who are chronically homeless.
- Quickly finding a job helps homeless people afford housing, and helps them to stay housed.
- Providing rapid access to jobs is more effective than requiring participation in pre-employment readiness services.
- Employment offered at the earliest stages of engagement helps people who are homeless develop trust, motivation and hope.

-- Recognizing Work as a Priority in Preventing or Ending Homelessness, Gary Shaheen and John Rio, "Journal of Primary Prevention," June 2007



WorkFirst Core Principles

1. Competitive employment is the goal
2. “Job readiness” not required
3. Job search starts after a client expresses interest in work
4. Degree of participation is defined by clients
5. Barriers and resource needs as opportunities for engagement
6. *Assessing clients and their motivation to work is not done to screen individuals out, or to look for highly motivated clients as a condition for enrollment or services, but to understand what the next step for the individual should be.*

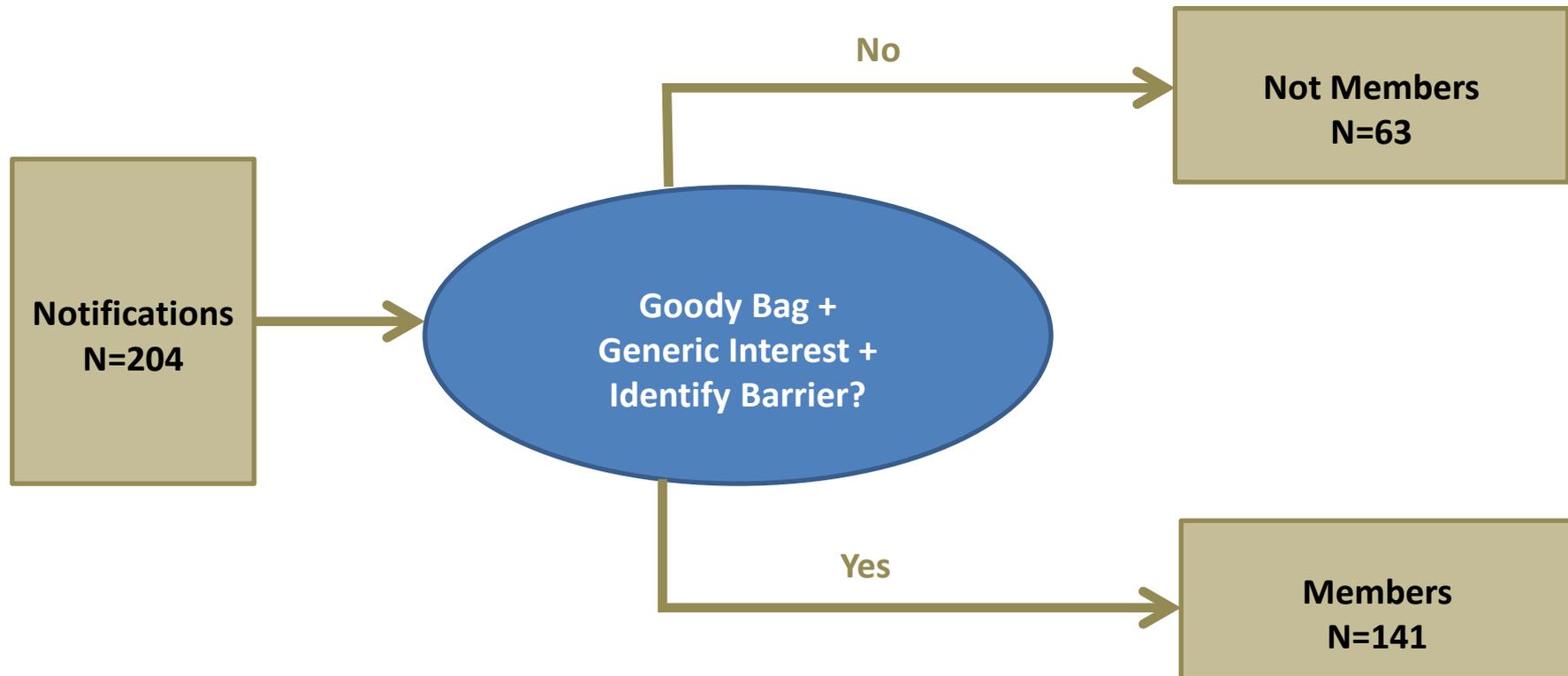


WorkFirst Services Model and Vocational Stages of Change

Ongoing Assessment of Vocational Stages of Change

PRE-CONTEMPLATION	Resistant to work discussions; getting job not on the radar; anxious about employment; projects unemployment as necessary for working on recovery-does not see benefits of working to improved health; may state they can work whenever they want to.
CONTEMPLATION	Considers employment as a possibility; will talk with staff about working, may ask about implications of employment.
PREPARATION	Taking stock of oneself to plan for pursuing a job; makes vocational plan; gathers information; expresses concerns; seeks solutions to potential problems; enters training or educational programs to prepare for employment; considers risks of substance use linked to working and develops response plan.
ACTION	Exits training to enter employment; working competitively for an employer.
MAINTENANCE & RELAPSE PREVENTION	Uses available supportive services to stay employed; considers next job as career move; considers additional training needed to get more satisfying job; uses earned income legitimately; learns skills to respond to trigger events or moments.

Access and Engagement

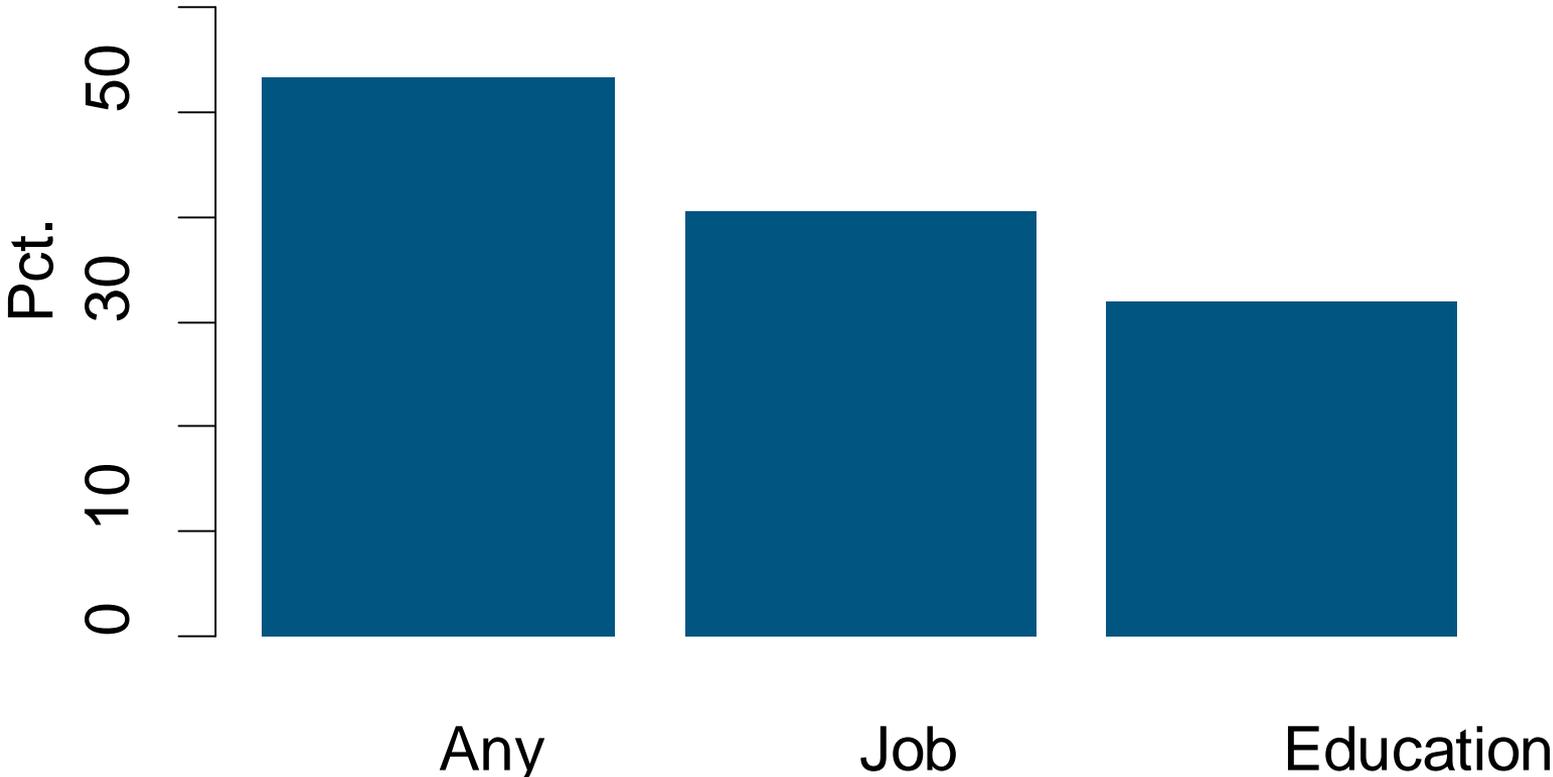


Population Served

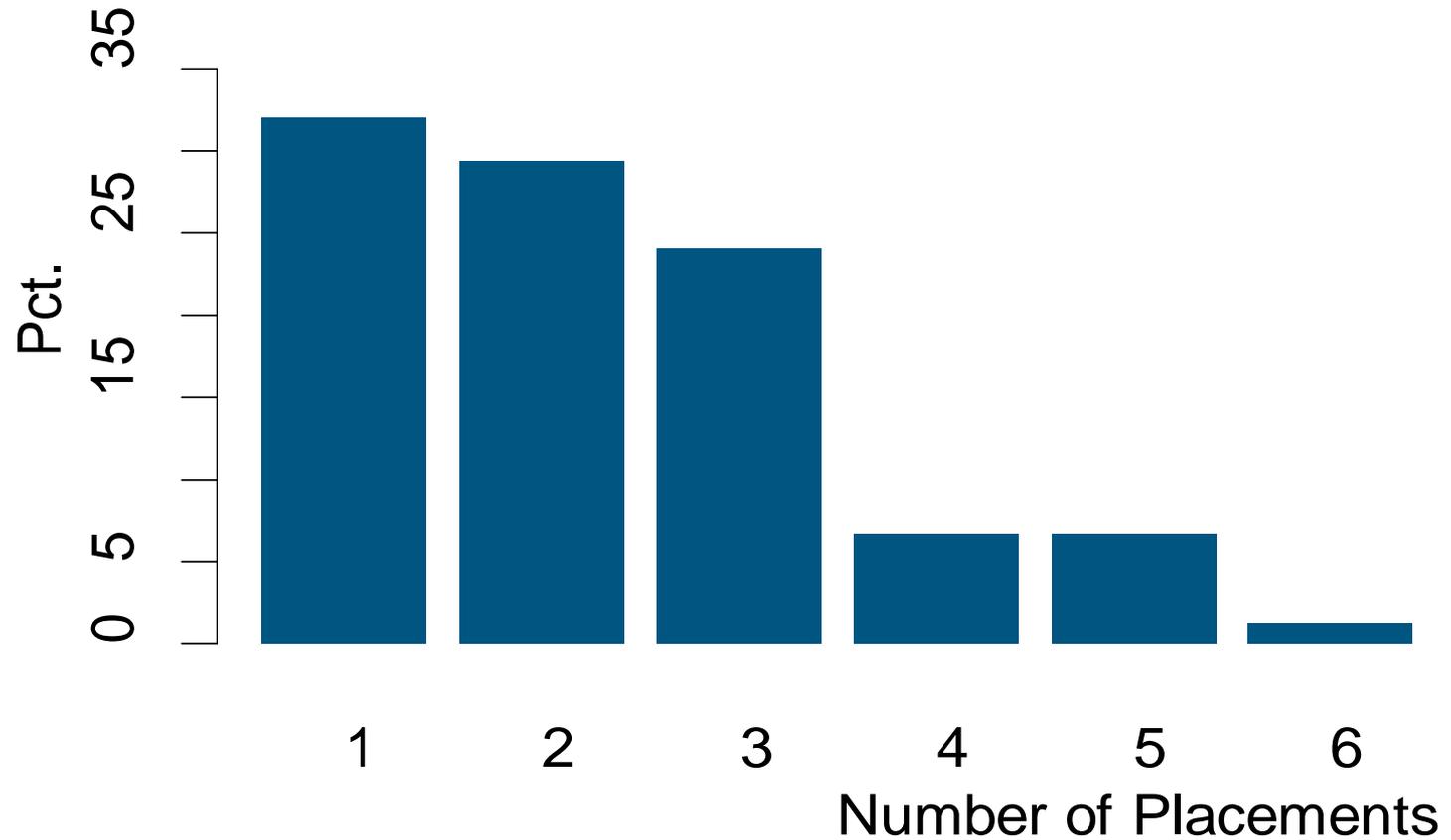
- Predominantly male (75%)
- Middle-aged (median 46, range 20-66)
- Racially/ethnically diverse
- Significant homeless histories
 - 75% 2 years +, 43% 5 years +
- 55% report mental health problem
- 49% report substance abuse problem
- 25% had no High School Diploma
- 25% had some Post Secondary Education



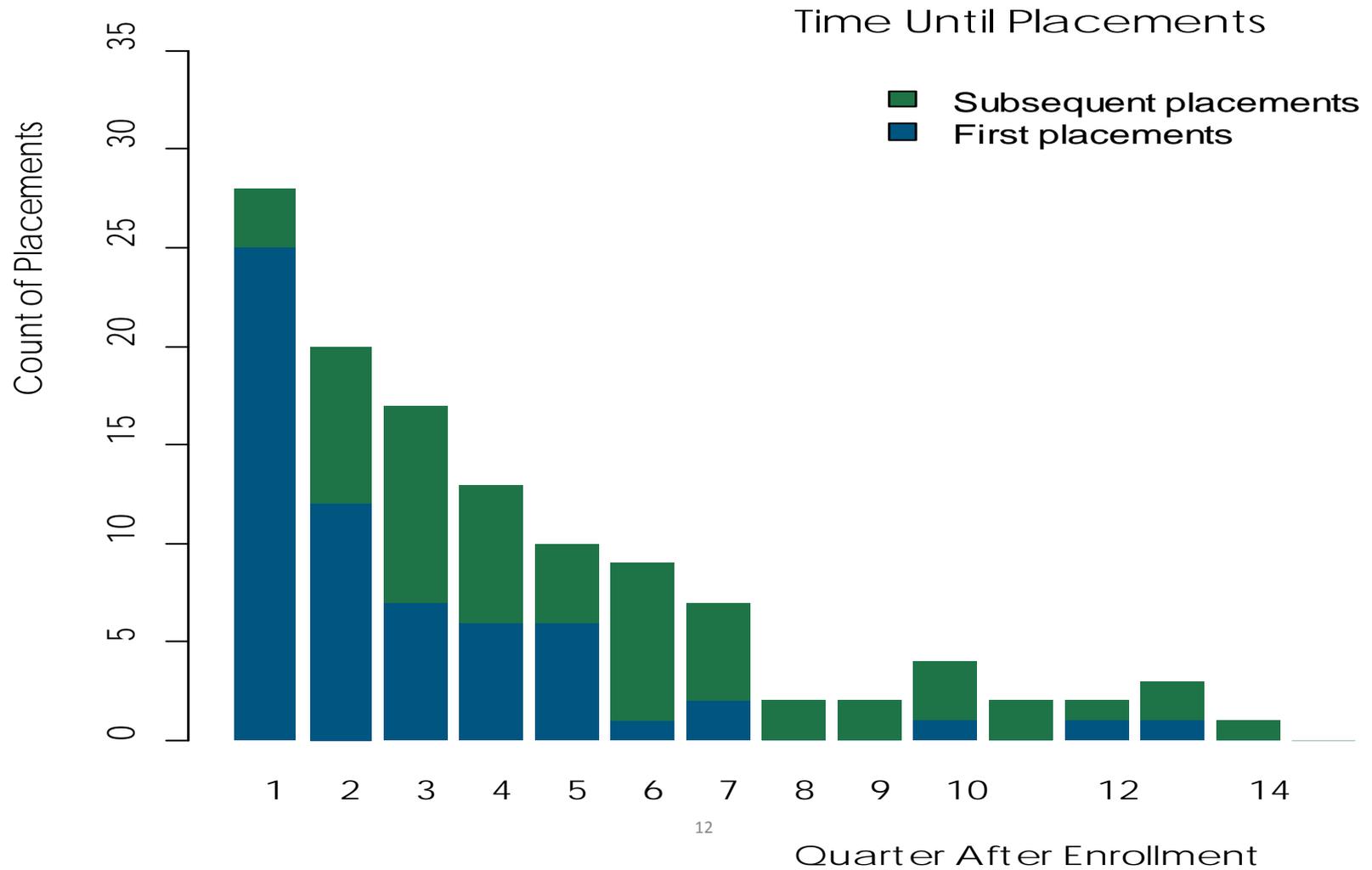
Pct. of Participants with Placements



Number of Placements (for those with Placements)

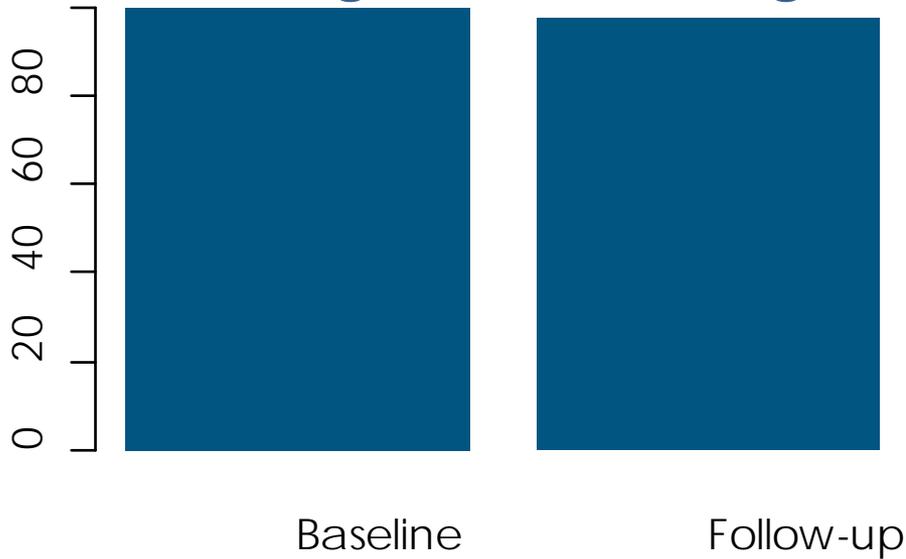


Job Placements Over Time



Housing Stability & Rent

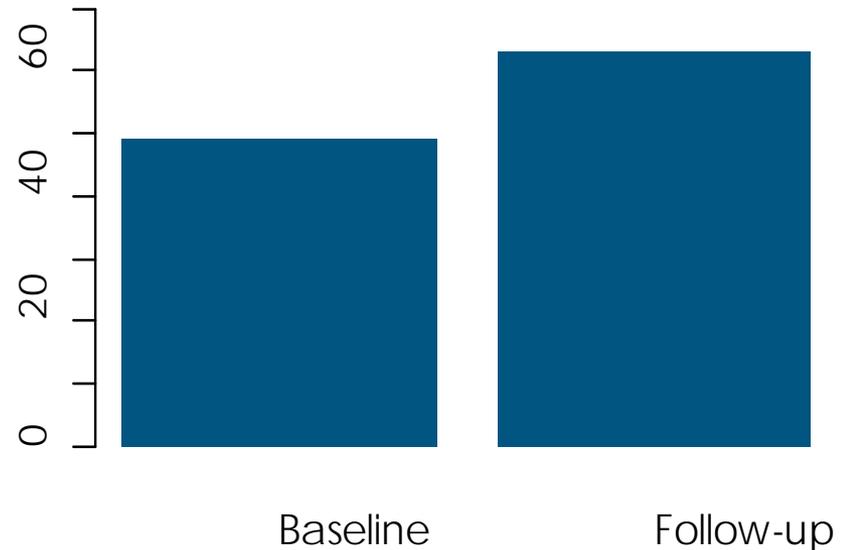
Living in Own Housing



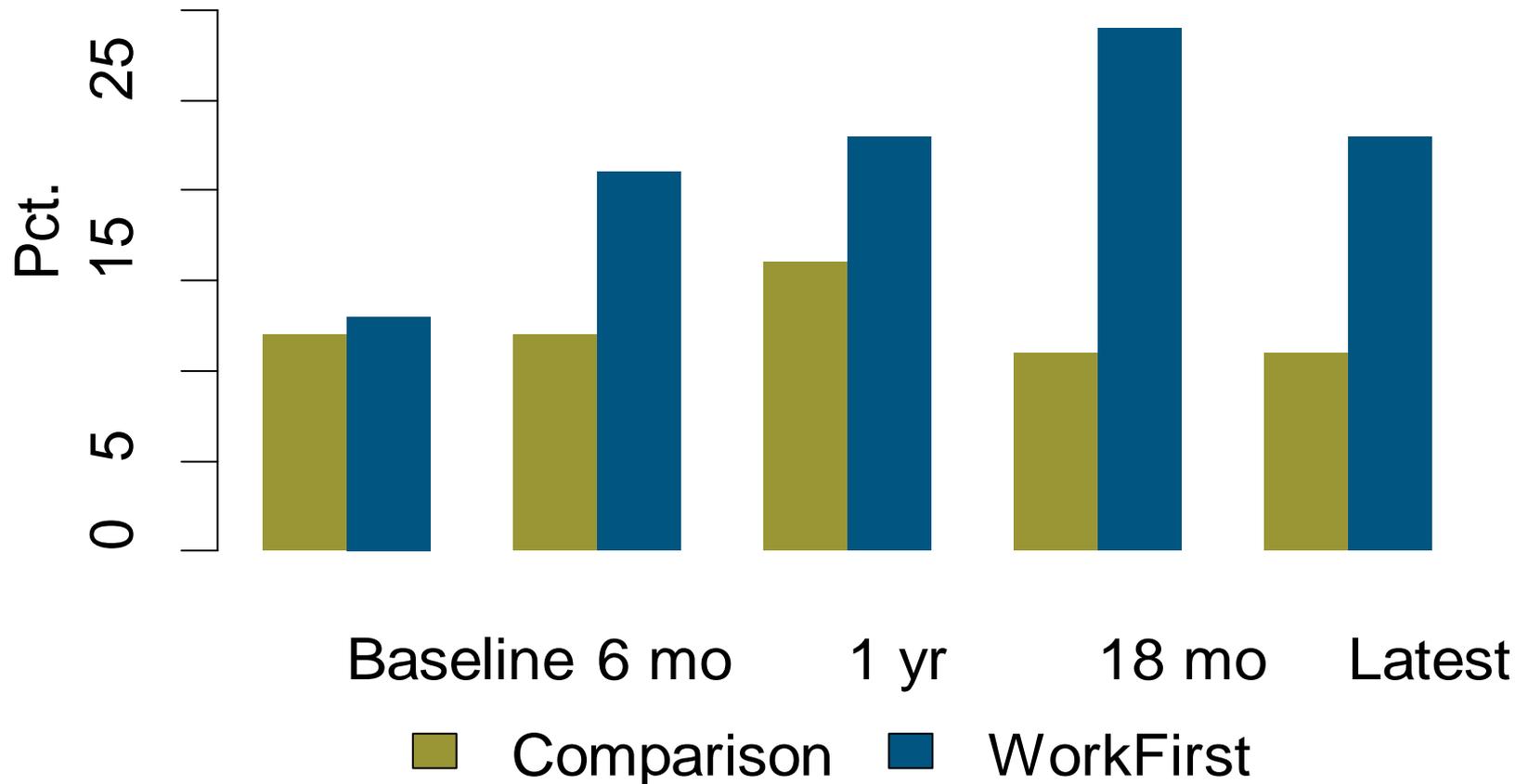
97% housed at latest follow-up.

Percent contributing to rent increased from 49% to 63%.

Contributing to Rent



Employment in WF & Comparison Group



Note: Samples different at different time points.

Program participants feedback

Clients' views of the program were overwhelmingly positive. They appreciated the attitude and flexibility of both the counselors and the program.

- **Strengths:**

- *Counselors treated clients with respect*
- *Flexibility and availability of the staff*
- *Provision of employment and supportive services that clients felt were effective*

- **Challenges:**

- *Physical space felt noisy and hectic on occasion*
- *Resources for the program were limited (only 2 staff members, limitations on transportation passes)*
- *One clients wished for more structure in the program's services*



Our Conclusions

- Providing employment services immediately to clients at the time they are housed is an effective strategy.
- Contextualizing the employment services within Housing First model calls for disregard of the traditional “job readiness” concepts.
- No evidence that focusing on employment was harmful to housing stability.
- Multiple placements are the rule and not the exception
- To be successful, this model requires flexibility, a non-judgmental attitude, and tangible resources.
- *And, importantly, collaboration with Housing Staff is essential in providing employment services*



Today...

- We continue to provide employment services to housed clients, regardless of their length of stay in housing.
- As a result of the demonstration grant learnings we use the same approach in working with sheltered and street homeless.
- There is an ongoing interest among providers about the WorkFirst model; we are getting inquiries from other agencies.
- We work very closely with housing case workers to support job placement and job and housing retention.





WorkFirst
Toolkit

Specialized Employment Services for
Providers Helping Men and Women
Successfully Transition from Homelessness

Contact Information

For more information and to receive a free copy of the WorkFirst Toolkit please contact

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