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Testing a New Approach to Serving Noncustodial Parents Behind in Their Child Support Payments: Findings from the Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED)

Leslie Hodges
Institute for Research on Poverty
University of Wisconsin-Madison
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National Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED)

Acknowledgements

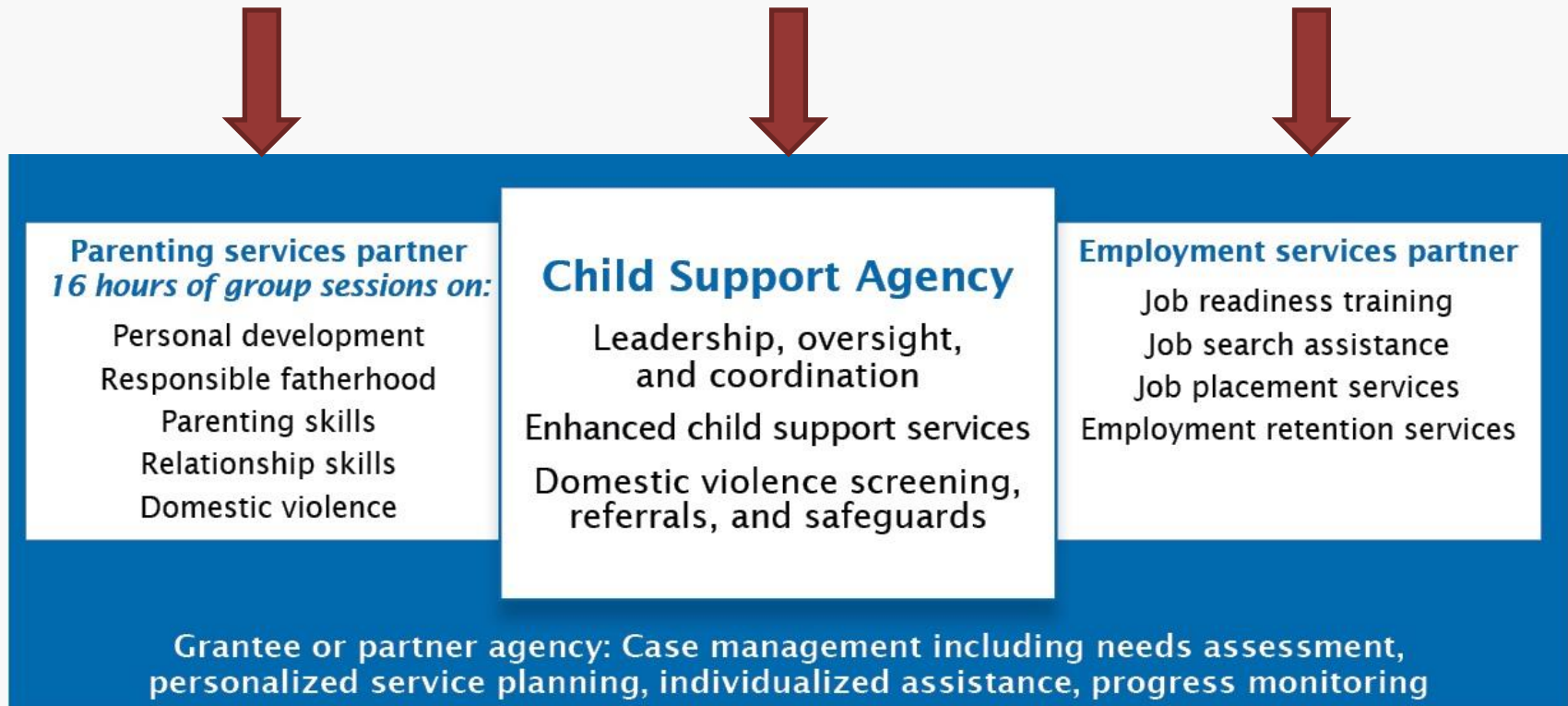
- Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
- Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. and the University of Wisconsin Survey Center
- CSPED grantee and partner staff
- Noncustodial parents participating in the study

Any views expressed here are mine alone and not necessarily those of the sponsoring institutions.

About CSPED

- The purpose of the **Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED)** was to test the effectiveness of a child support-led program combining case management, enhanced child support, employment, and parenting services for noncustodial parents.
- OCSE awarded grants to child support agencies in 8 states to provide NCPs struggling to meet child support obligations with enhanced services
- The Institute for Research on Poverty, along with its partner Mathematica Policy Research, was selected to conduct the evaluation through a cooperative agreement with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
- The demonstration was implemented at 18 county child support agencies within the 8 states and ran from 10/2013 – 9/2017

Program Model: Key Elements



Evaluation Components & Study Goals

- CSPED's goal was to increase the reliable payment of child support among noncustodial parents with barriers to payment.
- All grantees and all sites were part of a rigorous, randomized controlled trial (RCT)
- The CSPED impact evaluation examined key outcomes related to noncustodial parents'
 1. Child support orders, payments, and compliance
 2. Attitudes toward the child support program
 3. Work and earnings
 4. Sense of responsibility for their children

Impact Evaluation Data Sources

- Baseline Survey (administered at enrollment)
- Follow-up Survey (administered ~1 year after enrollment)
- Administrative records (from state child support agencies and NDNH)

Participant Characteristics (N=10,161)

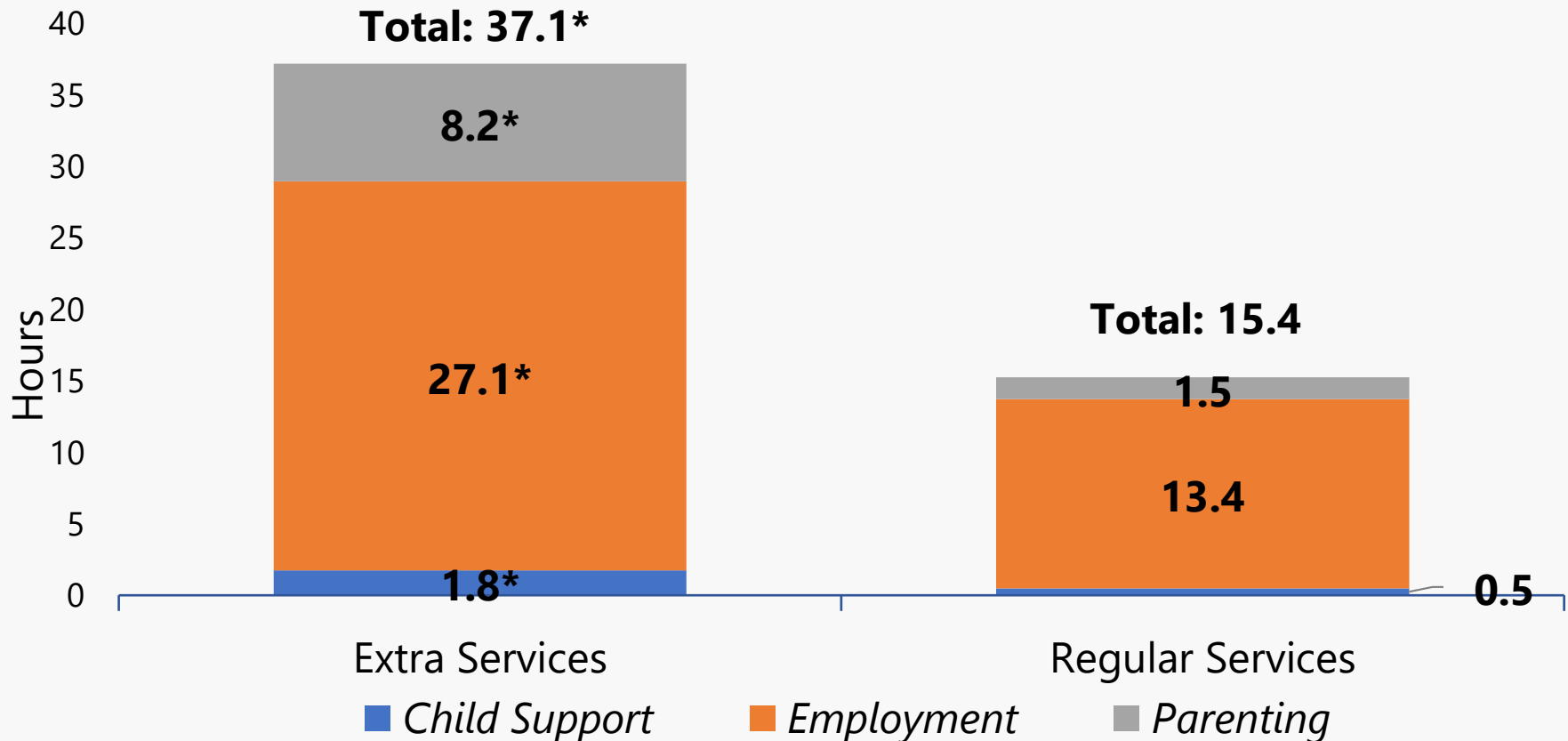
All participants, as required by OCSE:

- Had established paternity for at least one child
- Had one or more IV-D cases
- Had difficulty paying, or expected difficulty paying, child support due to lack of regular employment

- 90% fathers
- Avg. Age = 35
- 53% never-married
- Avg. parenting partners = 1.8 (3+ = 21%)
- Avg. # of minor children* = 2.5 (4+ = 21%)
- 31% had resident minor children*
- 33% White Non-Hispanic; 40% Black Non-Hispanic; 22% Hispanic
- 26% <HS diploma; 43% HS diploma or GED

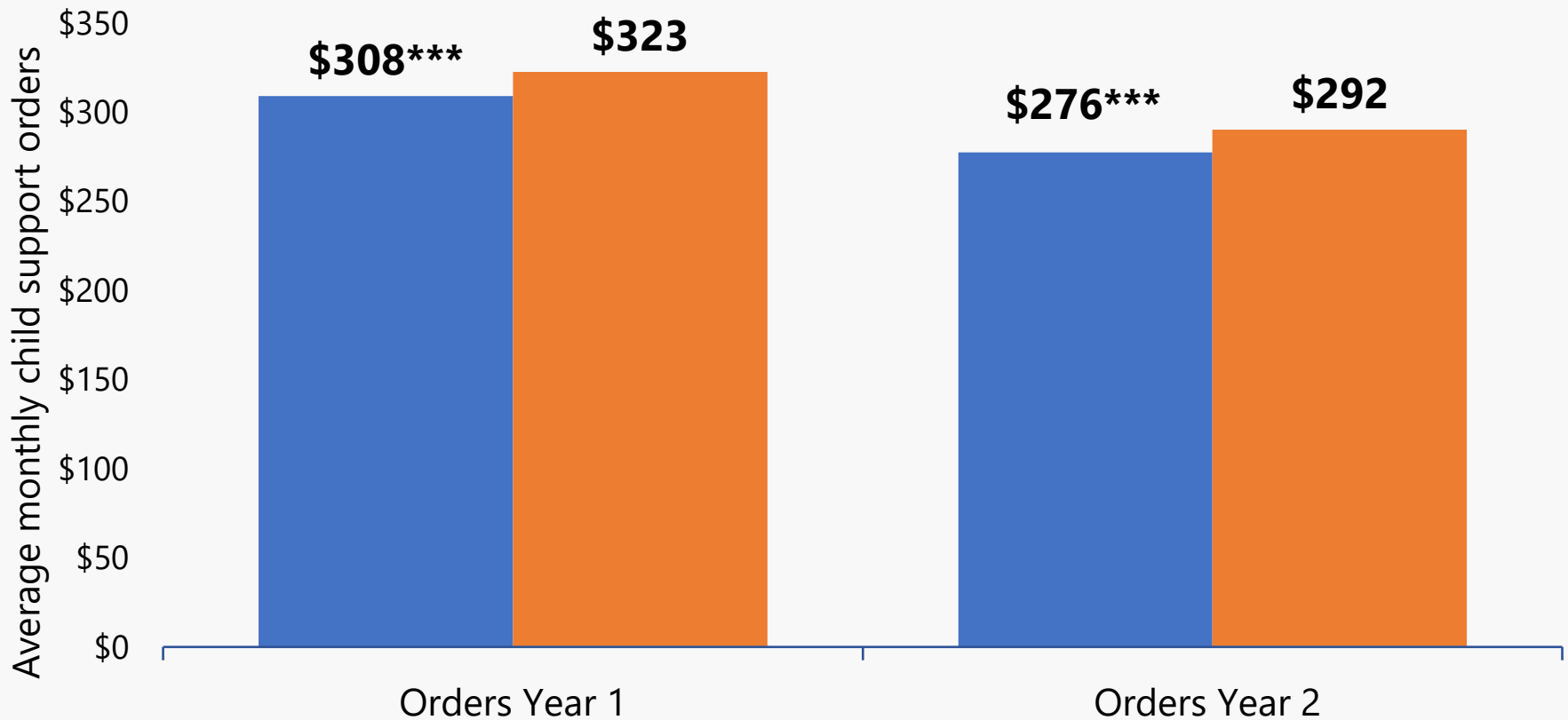
* no data for Texas

The extra-services group received more services than the regular-services group

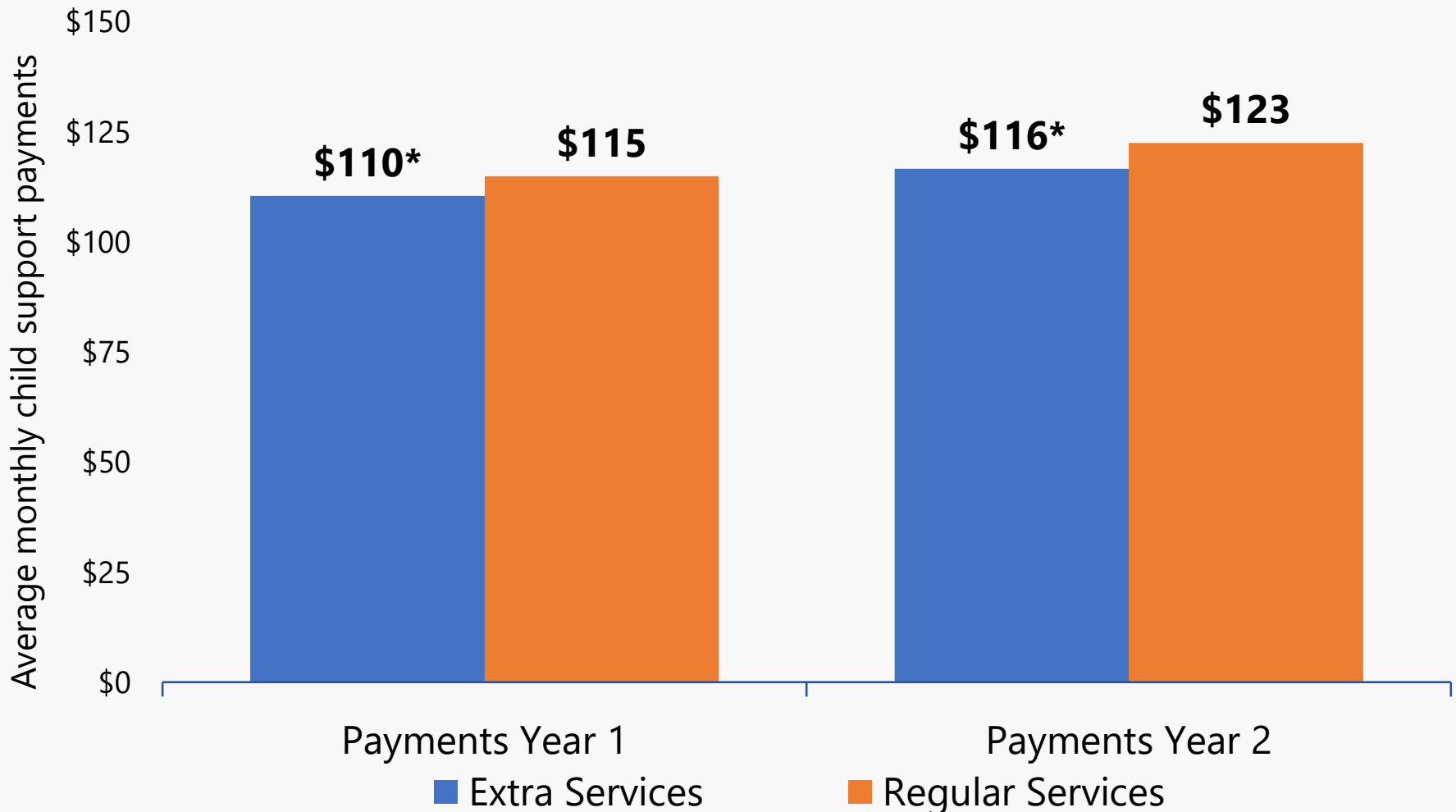


Results from the Impact Evaluation

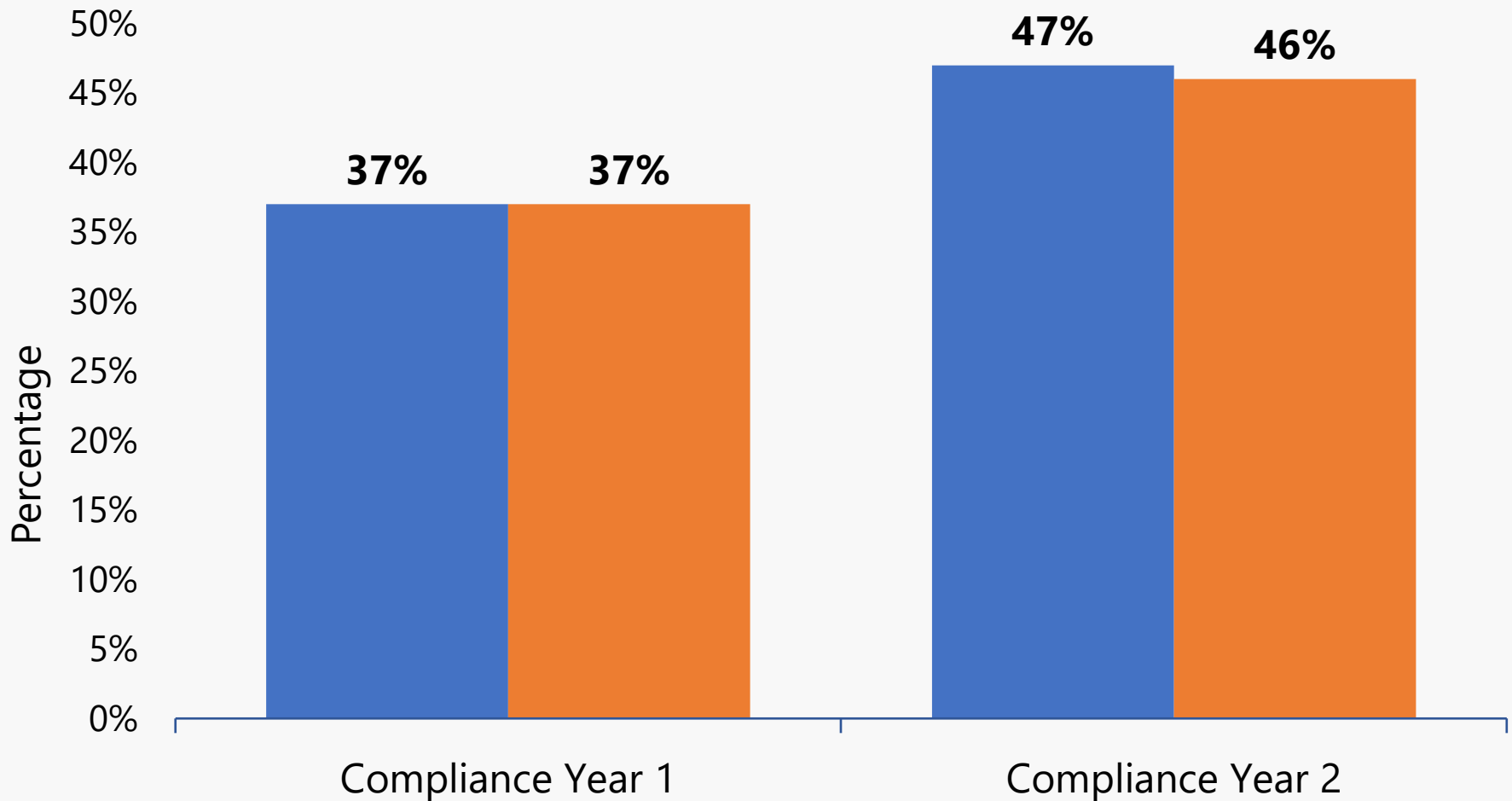
Child support orders, payments, & compliance: Decrease in Monthly Child Support Owed



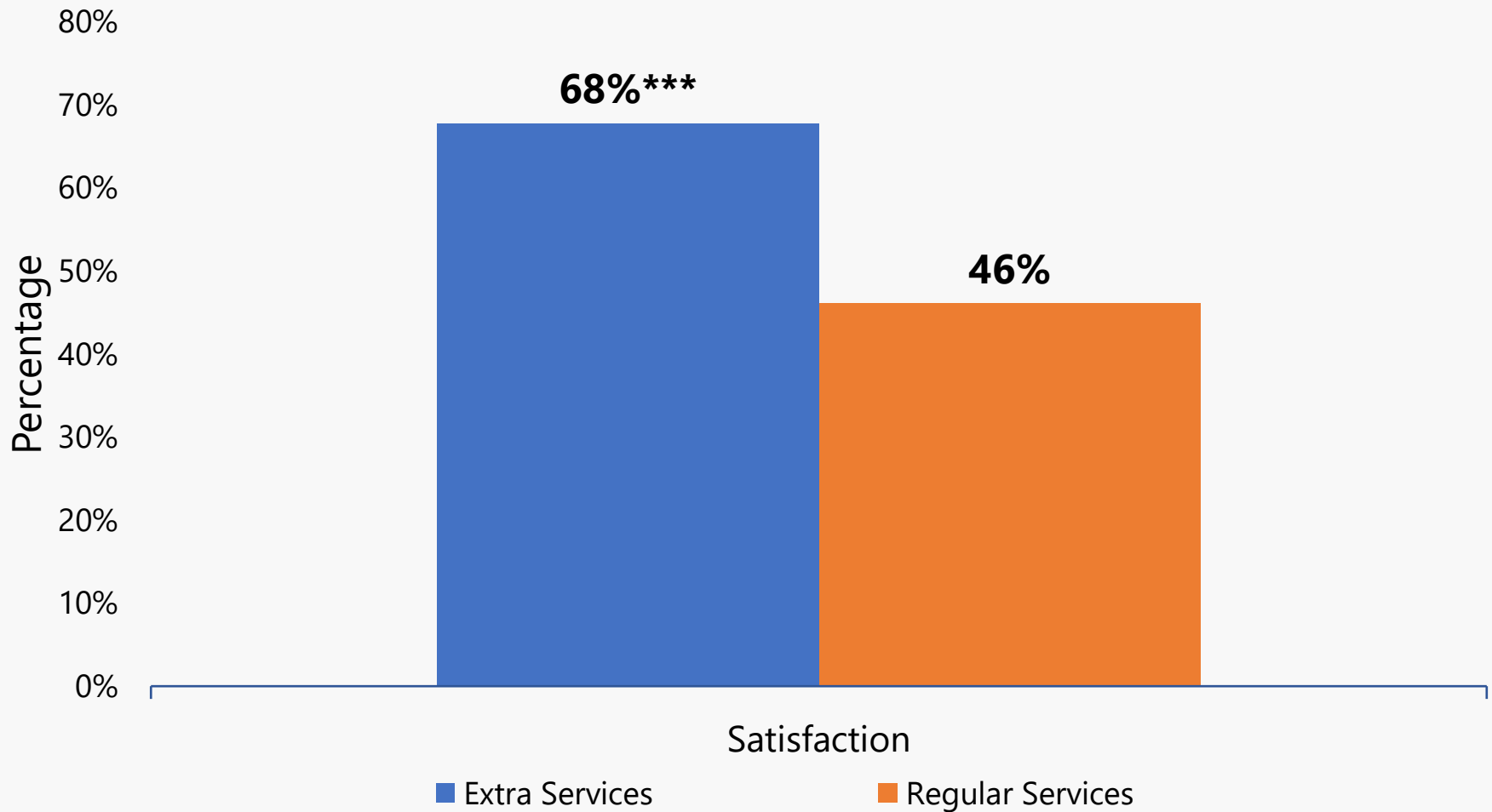
Child support orders, payments, & compliance: Decrease in Monthly Child Support Paid



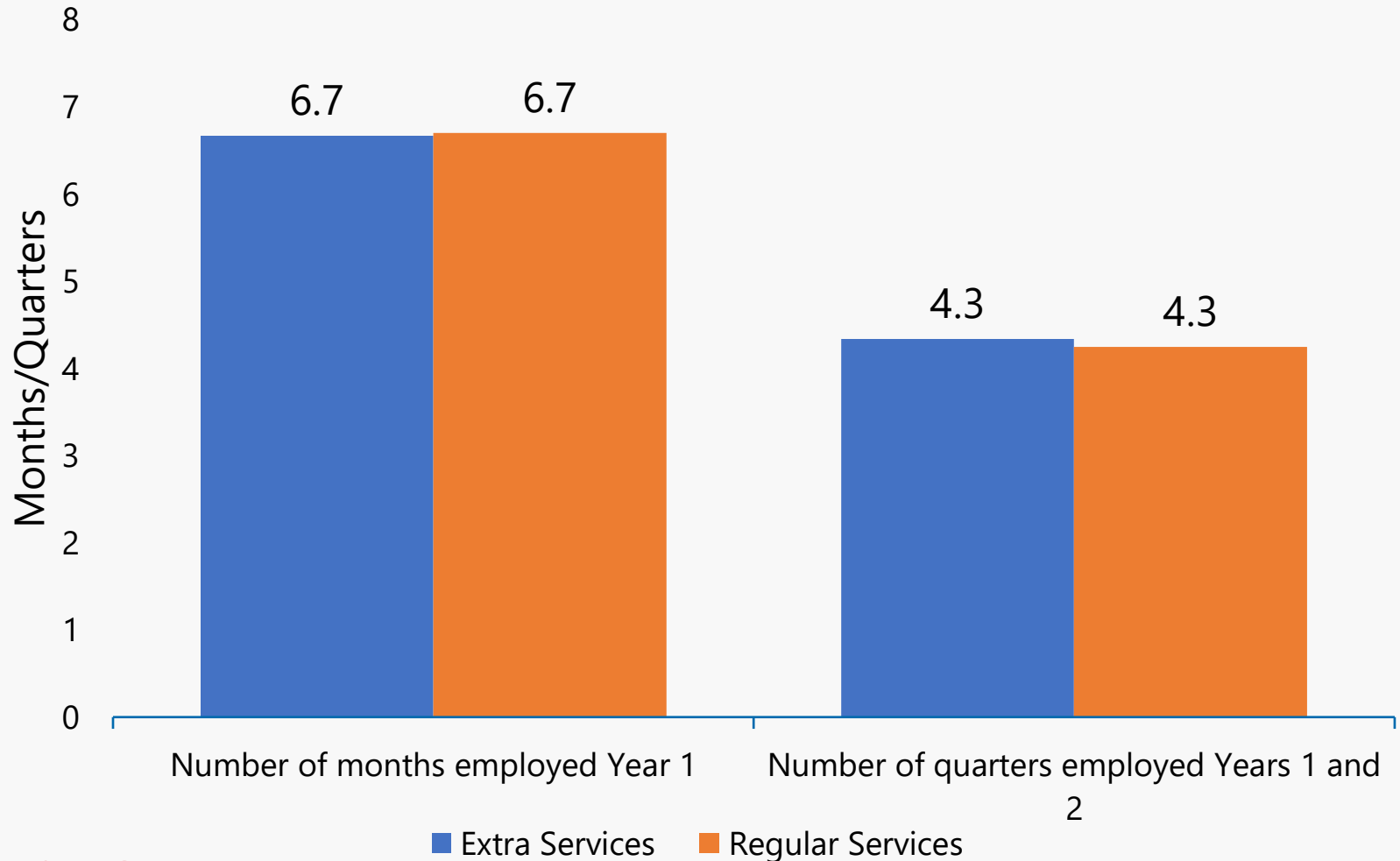
Child support orders, payments, & compliance: No Impact on Child Support Compliance



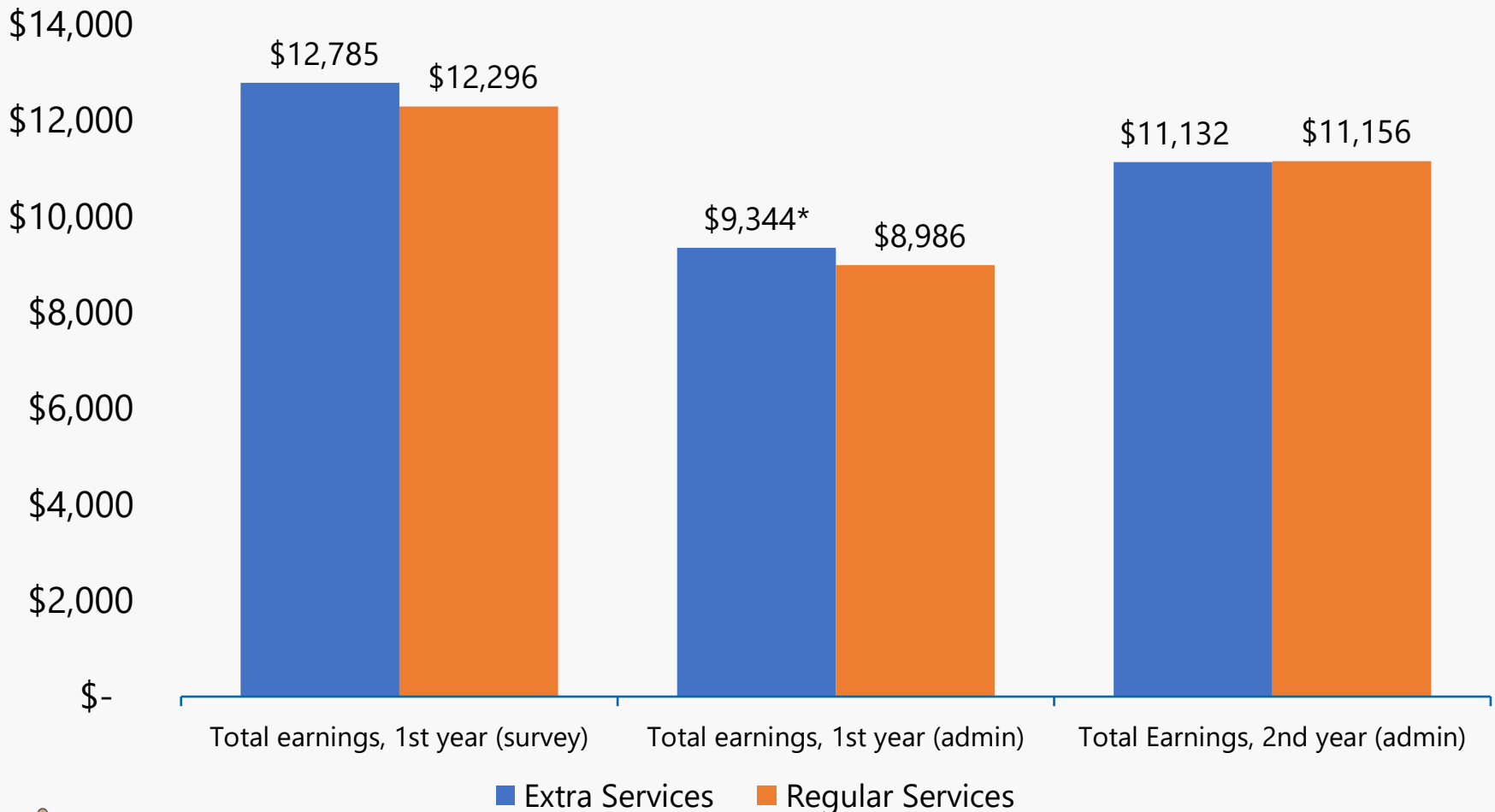
Attitudes toward the child support program: Substantial Increase in Satisfaction



Work and earnings: No Impact on Employment



Work and earnings: Some Increase in Earnings



Sense of Responsibility for Children Increased

- Scale with four questions:
 - Importance of parents who live apart to support their children financially
 - Importance for parents living apart to be involved in children's lives
 - Even if custodial parent has a new partner, NCP should be required to pay child support
 - Even if NCP has a child with a new partner, NCP should still be required to pay child support to previous children
- Average score: 4.27 E** vs. 4.23 C

Bottom Lines (1)

- **Can child support lead an intervention that has integrated case management, employment and parenting components?**
 - Yes
 - The implementation analysis documents many advantages and challenges to this approach, and implications for policy and practice.

Bottom Lines (2)

- **Can the child support program be changed to be less punitive?**
 - Yes
- **Does the new approach change attitudes of NCPs towards the program?**
 - Yes— major improvements
- **Does the new approach substantially increase or decrease CS payments and compliance?**
 - No. Modest declines in payments; no measureable change in compliance

Bottom Lines (3)

- **Why were most impacts modest?**
 - Very disadvantaged population
 - Relatively modest intervention
 - Hard to evaluate programs that change culture of agencies (regular-service groups affected too)
 - New program models may become more effective over time; changes in attitudes about the system and parental responsibility may shape future behavior.

Modest Impacts — What Were the Costs?

- Modest additional costs: \$2,505/participant
- Modest additional benefits: \$1,663/participant to society over the 2 years
 - Benefits to CPs and children \$852, to NCPs \$546, to government \$244
- Costs outweigh benefits in short-term; under most reasonable assumptions, benefits outweigh costs in longer-term

Thank You!

Questions?

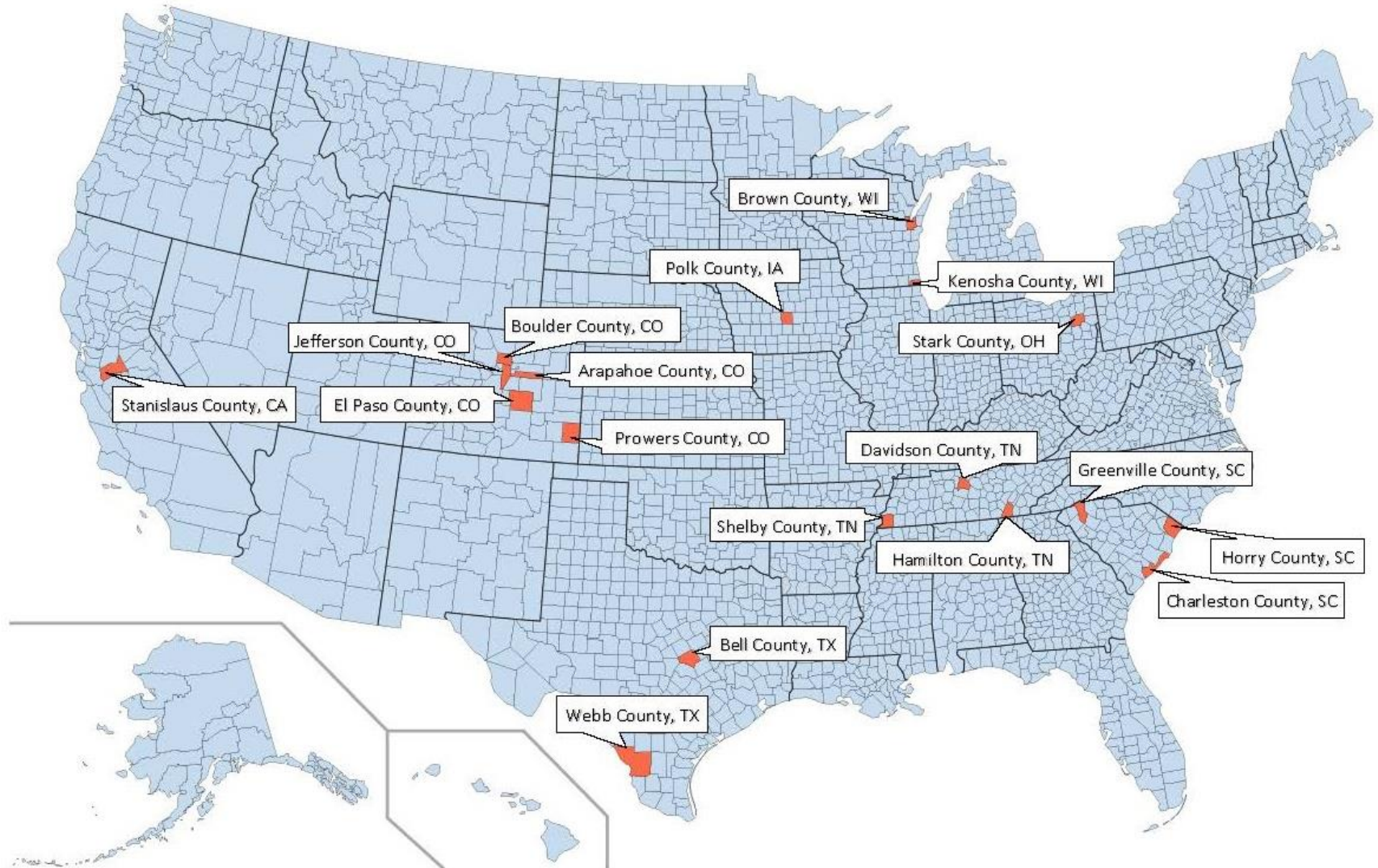
Maria Cancian mcancian@wisc.edu

Lisa Klein Vogel lmklein@wisc.edu

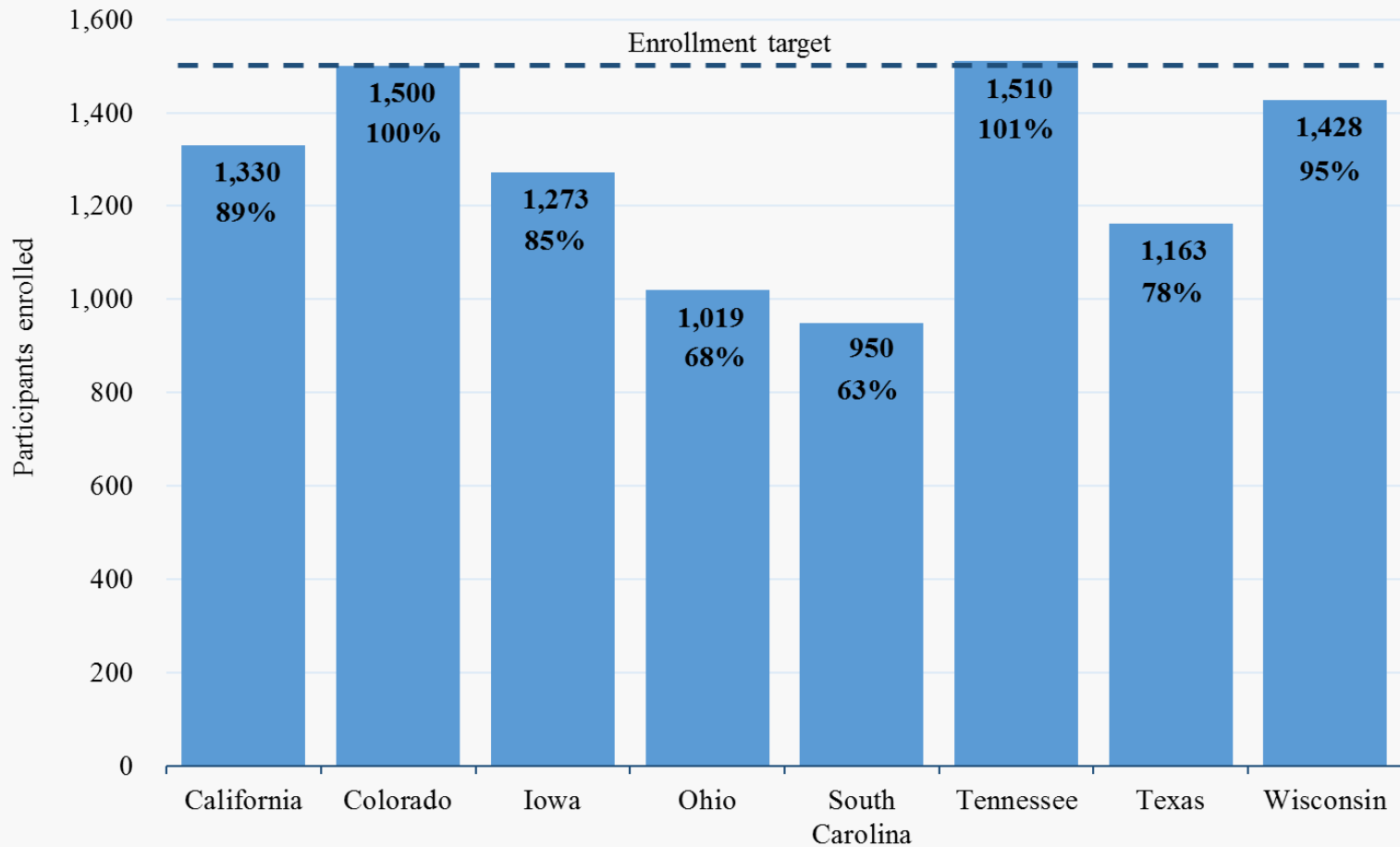
Dan Meyer drmeyer1@wisc.edu

Extra Slides

Implementation Sites



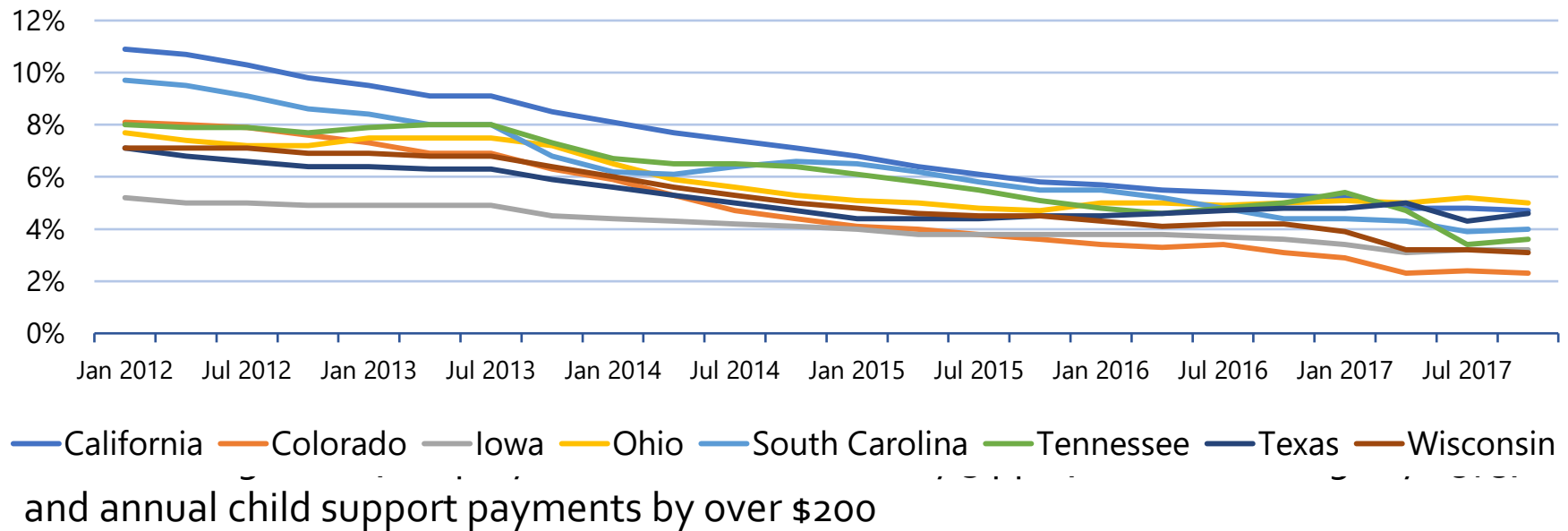
Enrollment Varied across Grantees



Was an RCT necessary?

- **YES**

- Unemployment declined substantially in all states



Did randomization work?

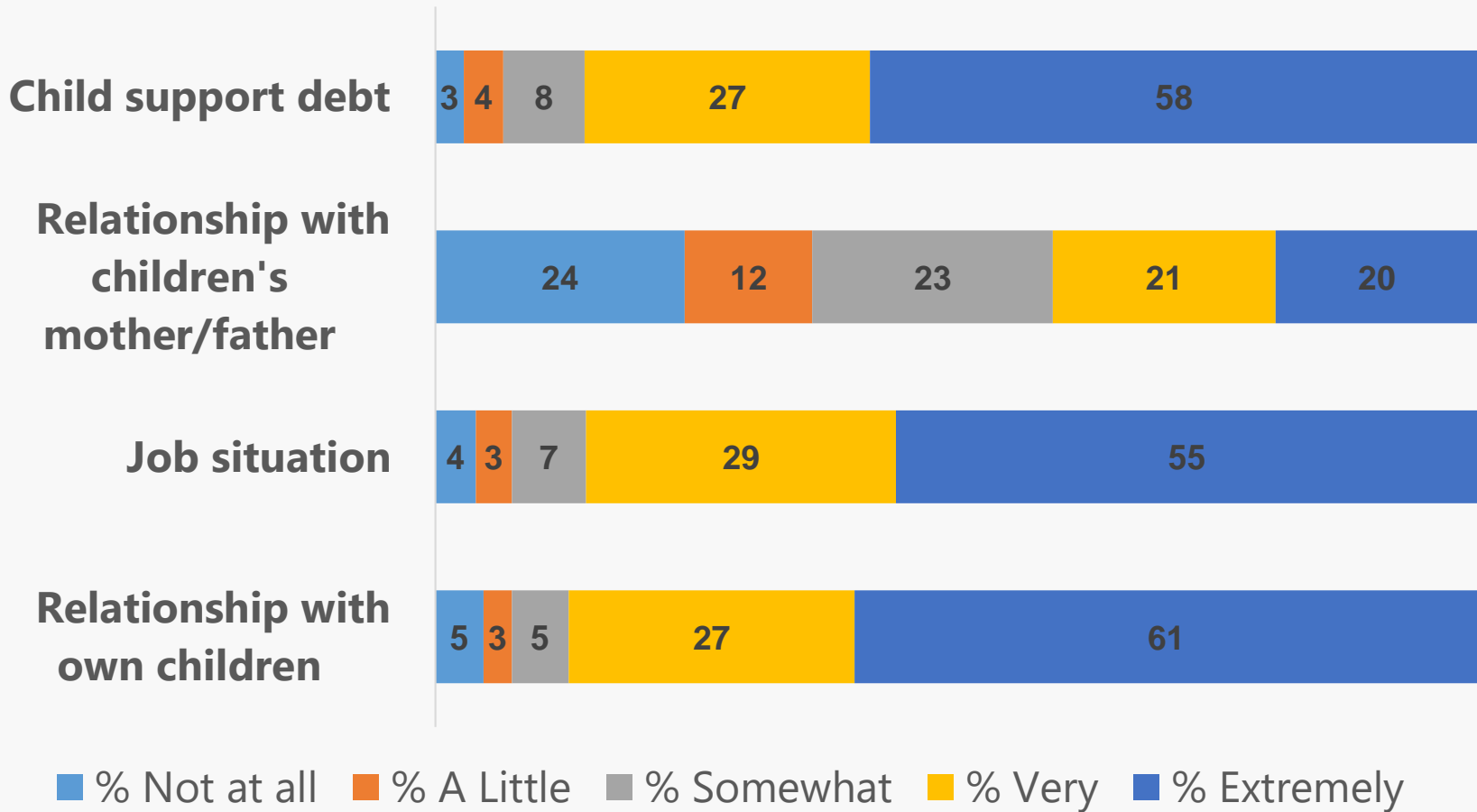
- **YES**

- Comparison of extra-services group (E) and the regular-services group (C) across all confirmatory outcomes measured at baseline, and all control variables found 2 of ~60 variables different at $p < .10$ level (fewer than expected by chance)

Data Sources by CSPED report

Data Source	Implementation Analysis	Impact Analysis	Benefit-Cost Analysis	Participant Demographic Characteristics Analysis
Baseline Survey	✓	✓		✓
12 month follow-up survey		✓		
Administrative records		✓	✓	
Service use data (GMIS)	✓		✓	
Semi-structured staff interviews	✓			
Participant focus groups	✓			
Web-based staff surveys	✓		✓	
Program documentation	✓		✓	

What Was Important in Deciding to Enroll in CSPED?



*No data for Texas

CSPED Participants: Differences by Grantee

	Fathers	Never Married	Worked for pay last 30 days	Average Earnings last 30 days	Using SNAP	Without Health Insurance	Ever Convicted
All	90%	52%	55%	\$769	35%	56%	68%
California	94%	48%	47%	\$841	38%	48%	54%
Colorado	87%	40%	58%	\$894	29%	45%	70%
Iowa	89%	44%	62%	\$974	48%	41%	76%
Ohio	87%	61%	39%	\$498	42%	55%	80%
South Carolina	88%	64%	65%	\$578	22%	78%	69%
Tennessee	94%	56%	57%	\$715	40%	77%	66%
Texas	94%	N/A	61%	N/A	13%	N/A	56%
Wisconsin	86%	64%	52%	\$707	43%	54%	76%

As reported in the baseline survey.

Summary of Child Support Impacts

- Reduced **CS orders** (\$15-16/month)
- Reduced **CS payments** (\$4-6/month, $p < .10$)
- No impact on **compliance with CS orders**
- Substantially increased **satisfaction with CS services** (% agree or strongly agree that satisfied: 68% E vs. 46% C)
- Other impacts: less burdensome orders (1st year); less owed in total arrears (end of 2nd year, $p < .10$) and state-owed arrears (end of 2nd year)

Summary of Labor Market Impacts

- No effect on **employment**
- Mixed results on **earnings**: increase in admin data (about 4% in 1st year, $p < .10$) not survey
- Other impacts:
 - Small impacts on any employment over two-year period and in some quarters

Summary of Parenting Impacts

- **Increased sense of responsibility for children** (scale 4.27 E vs. 4.23 C)
- Increased contact with nonresident children (13 E vs. 12 C days/month)
- Decreased harsh discipline strategies ($p < .10$)
- No impact on any other parenting measure (e.g., parenting skills, quality of parenting or co-parenting, warmth)

Summary of Other Impacts

- No impact on criminal justice involvement, emotional well-being
- Some impacts in economic well-being: less housing instability ($p < .10$), more with bank accounts, higher personal income (1st year only, $p < .10$)
- Impacts in 2/8 measures of public benefit use: increased SNAP benefits and Medicaid months (2nd year only, $p < .10$)
- No impacts on custodial parents
- No differential impacts on subgroups
- No grantee with substantially different impacts across all domains

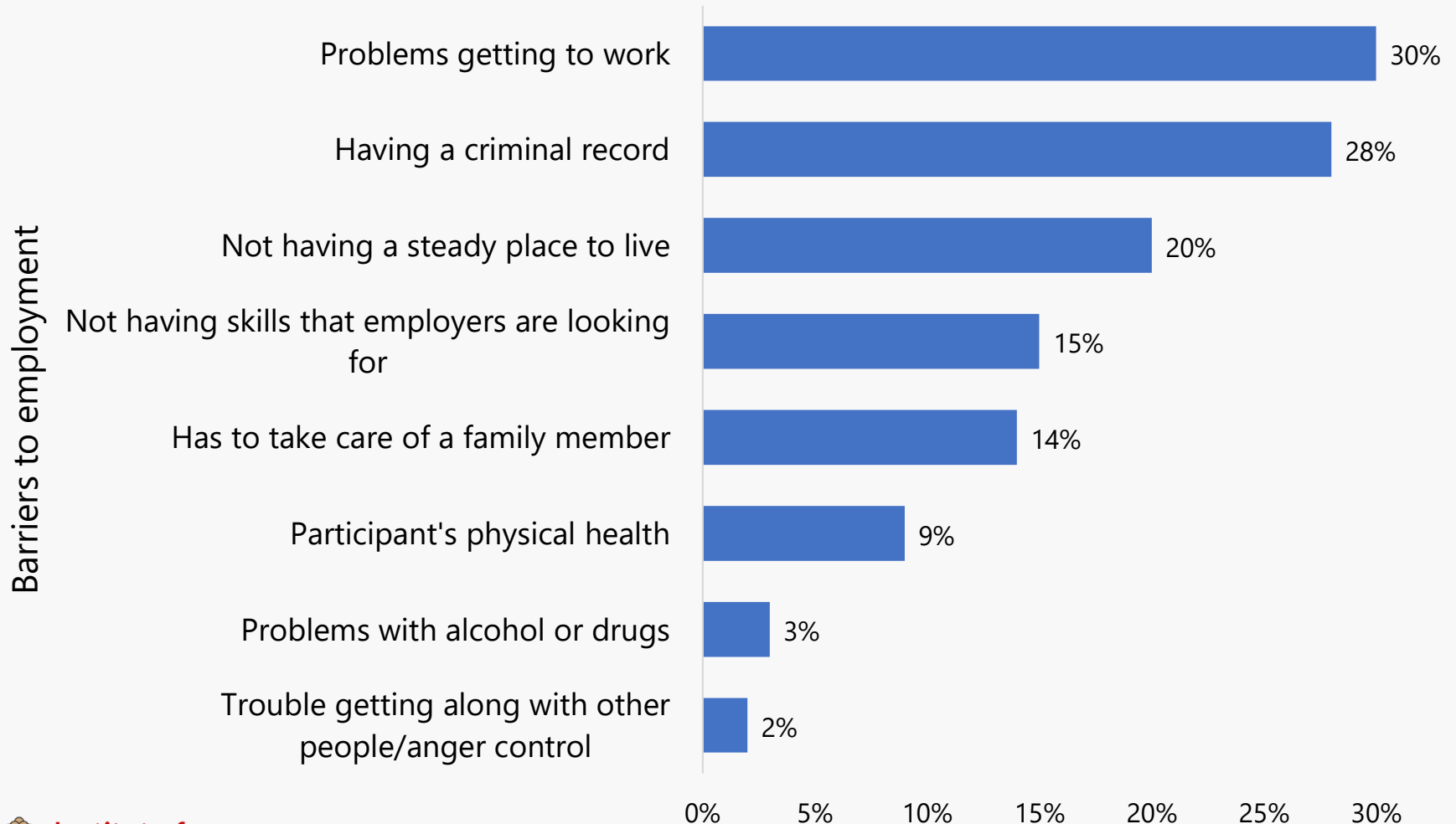
Grantee-Specific Impacts (1)

Outcome	CA	CO	IA	OH	SC	TN	TX	WI
Child support compliance								
First year	1.07	-1.28	-0.81	-1.88	1.11	-0.91	2.93	1.09
Second year	-2.67	2.28	3.72	-2.9	4.13	-2.37	1.09	2.62
Child support orders (average monthly)								
First year	-4.85	-17.08*	-13.82*	-50.89***	-16.47*	-7.12	-7.34	0.56
Second year	-7.07	-22.03*	-12.87	-71.73***	-3.79	2.94	-15.56	2.98
Child support payments (average monthly)								
First year	-5.54	-7.6	-4.9	-13.21***	-4.64	-6.72	1.37	5.91
Second year	-21.16**	-8.81	2.58	-24.62***	-6.11	-6.03	7.66	6.87
NCP satisfaction with child support services								
Reported satisfaction (survey)	26.12***	23.84***	13.89***	25.17***	NA	33.39***	10.22*	17.75***

Grantee-Specific Impacts (2)

Outcome	CA	CO	IA	OH	SC	TN	TX	WI
NCP employment								
Total hours worked, first year (survey)	82.54	-80.05	-115.15	-13.37	NA	133.34	61.57	-103.69
Months employed, first year (survey)	0.36	-0.46	0.17	-0.19	NA	0.70*	0.38	-0.14
Quarters employed, first two years	0.09	0.09	0.52***	0.15	-0.03	0.08	-0.04	0.10
NCP earnings								
First year (survey)	1,987.16	885.90	2,531.78*	-552.10	NA	3,125.79 **	1,116.07	-636.13
First year	251.89	472.83	528.37	365.38	-144.32	478.94	178.84	736.03
Second year	-605.14	977.36	533.66	-880.22	-443.62	-449.52	-20.6	696.61
Sense of responsibility for children								
Parental support and involvement index (survey)	0.10**	0.04	0.04	0.05	NA	0.08	0.01	-0.01

Barriers to Employment



Employment Services for CSPED Participants

- Provided by partner(s), each with an employment case manager (CM; dedicated or shared), and a job developer (same as CM or different)
- Most commonly:
 - Employment assessments and plans
 - Facilitated and self-directed job search
 - Job readiness training; resume and cover letter training
 - Job referrals; job development
 - Job retention services
 - Work supports
- Less often:
 - Vocational training, on-the-job training, subsidized employment, internships, and short-term job skills training
 - ESL classes, GED classes
 - Voluntary drug testing, expungement services

CSPED Employment Service Dosage

- 94% received one or more service contacts (93% individual; 52% group)
- In total, participants received on average 9.7 hours of employment services (8.8 hours in first 12 months)
 - Most time: 38% of employment service hours were spent on group-based job readiness training
 - Highest uptake: job readiness; employment assessments; facilitated and self-directed job search; job development; resume and cover letter training.
- Average employment service dosage varied across grantees, during the first 12 months and in total
 - 4.3 to 20.4 hours of employment services total
 - 1.8 to 8.5 hours of individual employment services
 - .1 to 15.6 hours of group employment services

Incentives and Work Supports

- Incentives for achieving milestones
 - 75% received at least one
 - Of those who received any, participants received an average of 4.9 valued at \$149*
 - Examples: gift cards, planners, parent-child activities
- Work supports for overcoming barriers to work and services
 - 36% received at least one
 - Of those who received any, participants received an average of 5.4 valued at \$336
 - Examples: gas cards, bus passes, work tools, uniforms

*Excludes arrears forgiveness

Conclusions about Employment Service Delivery

- Employment services were a crucial feature of CSPED's design.
- But, addressing participant barriers to work took more than employment services alone:
 - Culture change/innovative approach to facilitating compliance
 - Child support-led partnership model
 - Leveraging of outside resources
 - Staffing, communication, and collaboration