

April 2018 Webinar

**Healthy Marriage and Relationship
Education**

Programs for Youth:

An In-Depth Study of Federally Funded Programs

with

Mindy Scott, PhD

*Program Area Director and
Senior Research Scientist with*

Child Trends

Webinar Information

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Resources for Teaching Relationship Skills



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Relationship Skills for Teens and Young Adults

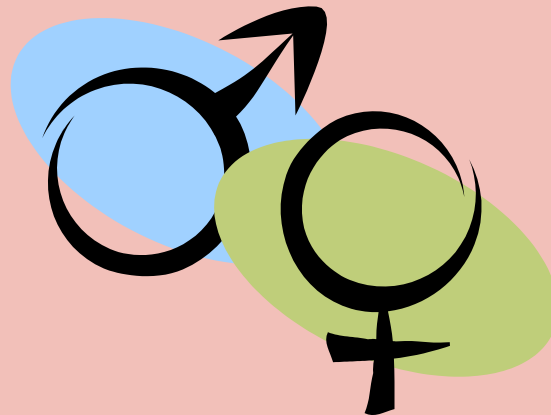
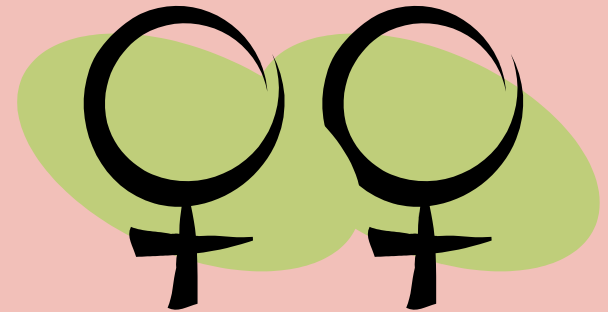
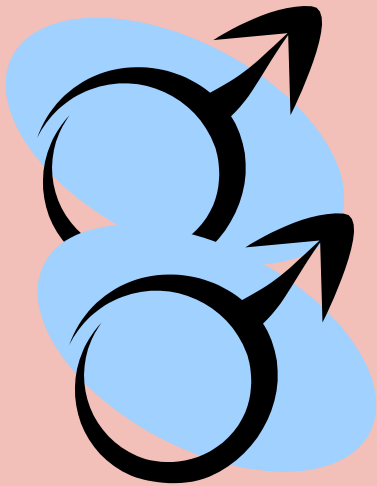
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PRESENTER:



Mindy Scott, PhD
Program Area Director and
Senior Research Scientist
with **Child Trends**

Making the Connection: How Programs Can Promote Healthy Relationships Among Youth

April 11, 2018



Webinar Objectives

- Provide new knowledge about youth served by federally funded Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education (HMRE) programs and the implementation strategies used by programs
- Provide research-based findings on best practices for serving youth in HMRE programs

Background

Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education (HMRE) for Youth

- Romantic relationships during adolescence influence a variety of positive and negative experiences during adolescence and beyond
- HMRE programs for youth can shape these experiences by improving young people's attitudes, knowledge, and expectations concerning romantic relationships and marriage and by helping them develop key skills to form healthy (and avoid unhealthy) relationships

Federally Funded HMRE Programs



- The Claims Resolution Act of 2010 (CRA) provided \$75 million for Healthy Marriage grants and \$75 million for Responsible Fatherhood grants
- Through discretionary grants to communities, ACF has funded 3 cohorts of grantees
 - Cohort 1 (2006 – 2011)
 - Cohort 2 (2011 – 2015)
 - Cohort 3 (2015 – 2020)

Federally Funded HMRE Programs

The HMRE program has eight activities designed to promote family-strengthening through the specified activities authorized by the CRA.

The CRA authorizes eight “healthy marriage promotion” activities:

- Public Advertising Campaigns
- **Education in High Schools**
- **Marriage and Relationship Education/Skills (MRES)**
- Pre-Marital Education
- Marriage Enhancement
- Divorce Reduction
- Marriage Mentoring
- Reduction of Disincentive to Marriage



HMRE Outcomes



Short-Term Outcomes

- Improved healthy marriage and (especially for youth) relationship skills
- Improved parenting and co-parenting skills
- Progress toward greater economic stability for low-income participants, including increased skill in attainment and employment

Long-Term Outcomes

- Improved family functioning and stability, including healthy marriage
- Improved adult and child well-being
- Increased economic stability and mobility
- Reduced poverty
- Successful youth transition to adulthood (where applicable)
- Reduced recidivism (where applicable)

HMRE for High School Youth

Serving Youth in High Schools

- Value of marriage
- Relationship skills
- Budgeting



**Youth in high schools is the largest
population served in HMRE**

Youth Education and Relationship Services (YEARS) Project Overview

- Approximately half of the 60 HMRE programs funded in 2011 by the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) served youth ages 14 to 24
 - This translates to more than 40,000 youth reached between 2011-2015
- Despite the large proportion of youth served, relatively little information about these programs had been systematically documented

YEARS Objectives

1. Describe the organizations implementing federally funded HMRE programs and the youth served by these programs by collecting and analyzing multiple sources of quantitative and qualitative data
2. Assess whether HMRE programming for youth aligns with best practices for serving youth
3. Identify promising approaches used by grantees to better serve youth in HMRE programs

Child Trends' Approach

- Reviewed existing work to identify best practices
 - Logic model for youth-serving HMRE programs developed as part of Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Models and Measures (3M) project
 - Reports on HMRE programs for youth
 - Research and evaluation literature related to adolescent relationships
 - Literature related to positive youth development approaches
- Identified a set of research-informed criteria against which HMRE programs for youth were compared

Select YEARS Assessment Criteria

	Examples of Best Practices Criteria
Curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Content• Cultural competency• Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum content has clear goals• Curriculum content is logically sequenced• Program includes content relevant for the target population
Staff attributes and skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal characteristics• Facilitation skills• HMRE-specific skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitators interact with youth in a respectful manner• Facilitators create a welcoming environment for all participants• Facilitators are trained in curriculum content
Organizational practices <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organizational capacity and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grantee supervises staff adequately• Grantee includes youth in decision-making• Organization uses data to improve programming

YEARS Data Sources

- Pre-existing HMRE Grantee Data
 - Online Data Collection (OLDC) reports from 10/1/2013-9/30/2014
 - 2011 HMRE grantee applications
 - 2011 HMRE performance progress reports
 - 2011 HMRE grantee profiles
- New Data Collection
 - Web-based survey for 2011 HMRE grantee staff (26 directors and 8 facilitators from 28 grantees)
 - 2011/2015 HMRE program observations
 - 2011/2015 Grantee staff interviews

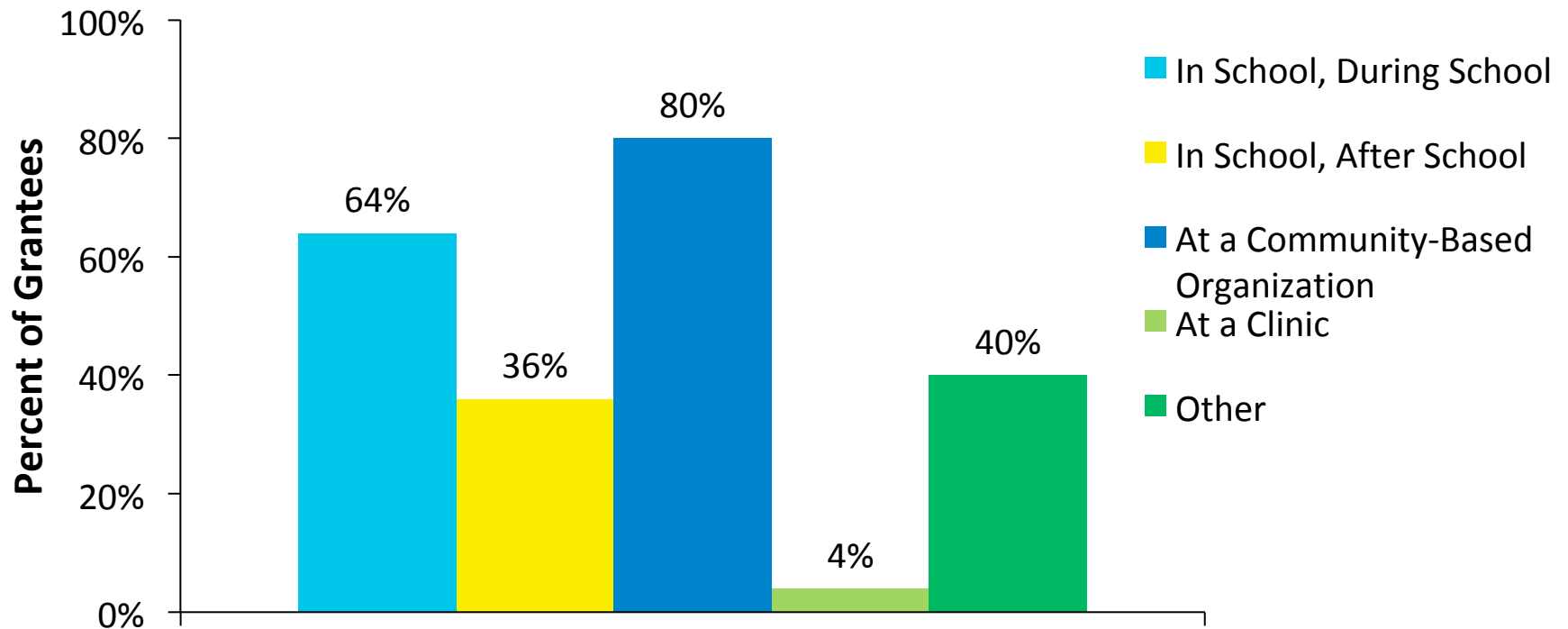
YEARS Findings

Objective 1: Describe the organizations implementing federally funded HMRE programs and the youth served

Objective 1 Key Findings – Program Setting

- HMRE grantees serve youth in diverse settings, and most programming was implemented in more than one setting

HMRE Grantees, by Setting



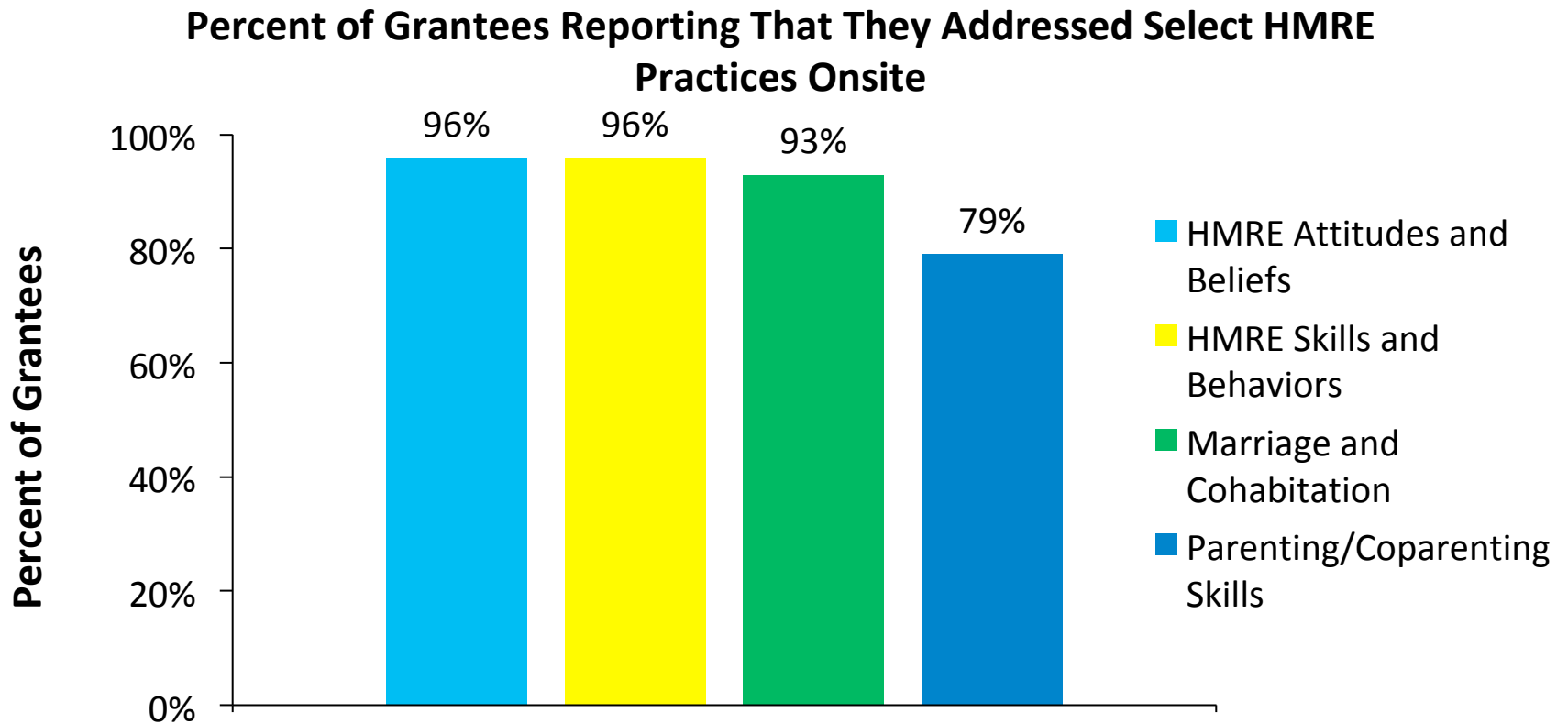
Objective 1 Key Findings – Program Setting

Advantages and Challenges of Implementing Programming in School- and Non-school-based Settings

	<u>Advantages</u>	<u>Challenges</u>
School-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Curricula may help meet core education standards- Direct connection to youth and parents<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Resources and support from guidance counselors and other trusted adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- School and district rules can hinder program implementation- Integrating programming into classes can be a challenge<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Difficulty reaching parenting youth and other vulnerable populations- Inconsistent access to youth across grades- Classroom overcrowding
Non-school-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- More flexibility for scheduling program sessions- Ability to provide incentives- Better chance of reaching at-risk youth populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Community program space sometimes unwelcoming to youth

Objective 1 Key Findings – HMRE Topics

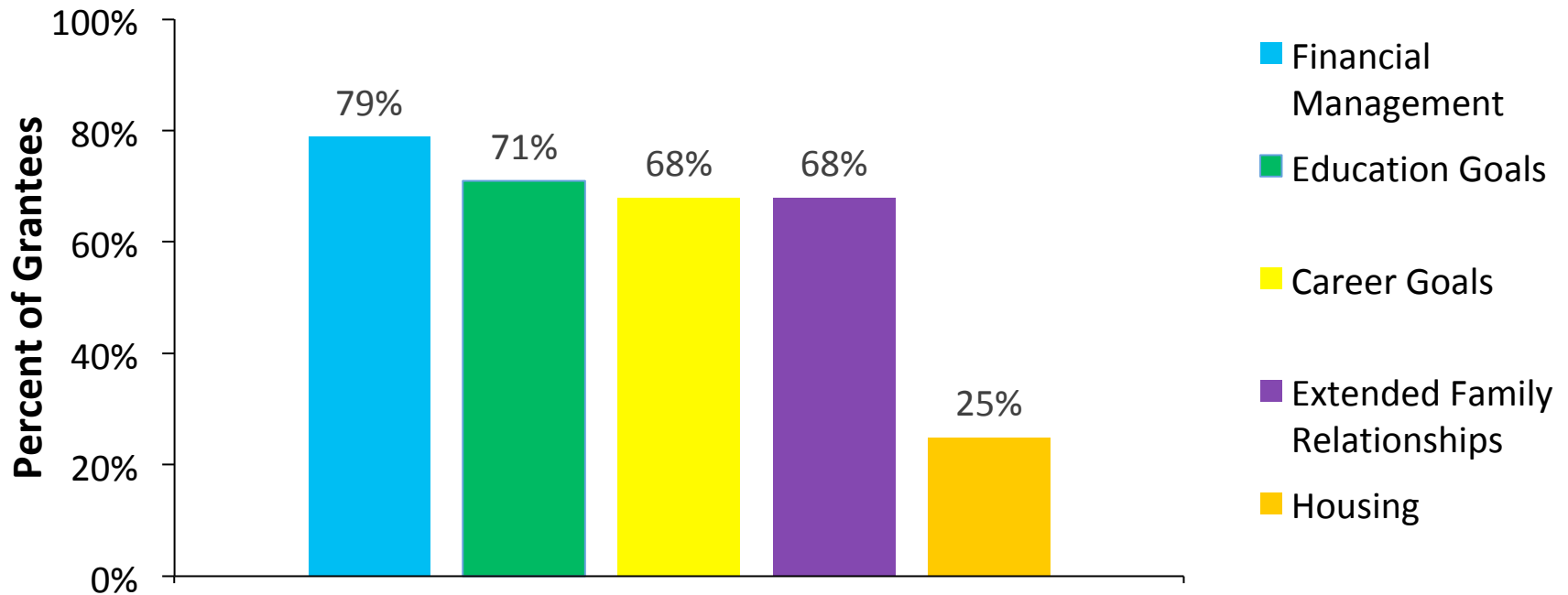
- Most grantees addressed healthy relationship attitudes, behaviors, and skills onsite



Objective 1 Key Findings – HMRE Topics

- Fewer grantees addressed additional topics onsite

Percent of Grantees Reporting That They Addressed Other Practices Onsite



Objective 1 Key Findings – HMRE Curricula

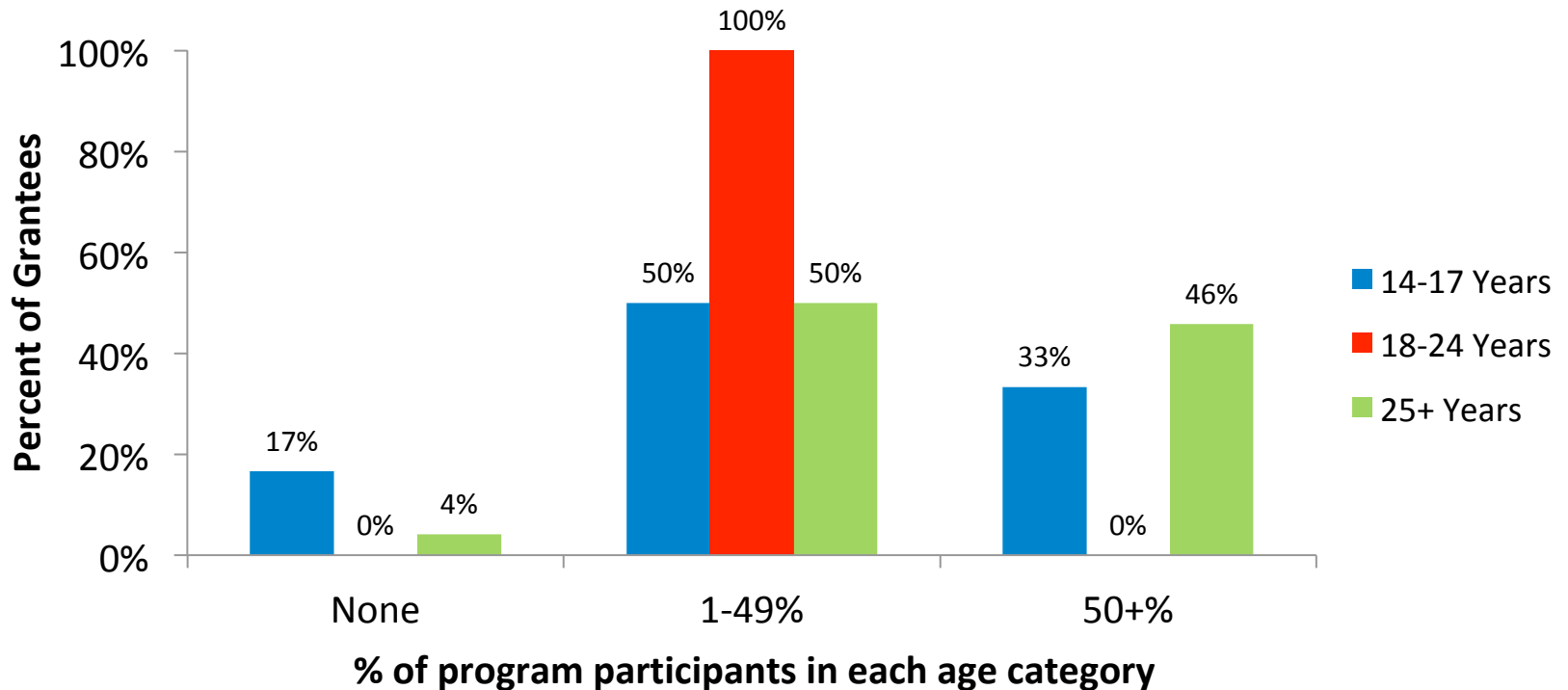
- Most 2011 grantees serving youth indicated that they selected evidence-based curricula, and about half reported that they had selected age-appropriate curricula

Commonly Used Curricula	Number of grantees
PREP Within Our/My Reach	13
How to Avoid Falling For a Jerk/PICK	8
Love U2	7
Connections	7
Love Notes	6
PAIRS	4
Relationship Smarts	4
PREPARE/ENRICH	4
Active Relationships for Young Adults (ARYA)	4
Basic Training	3
Ready for Love	3
Mastering the Mysteries of Love	3
Family Wellness, The Strongest Link	3
Data source: Grantee profiles (n=34)	
Note: Only curricula that were offered by at least 3 grantees are shown in this table	

Objective 1 Key Findings – Youth Characteristics

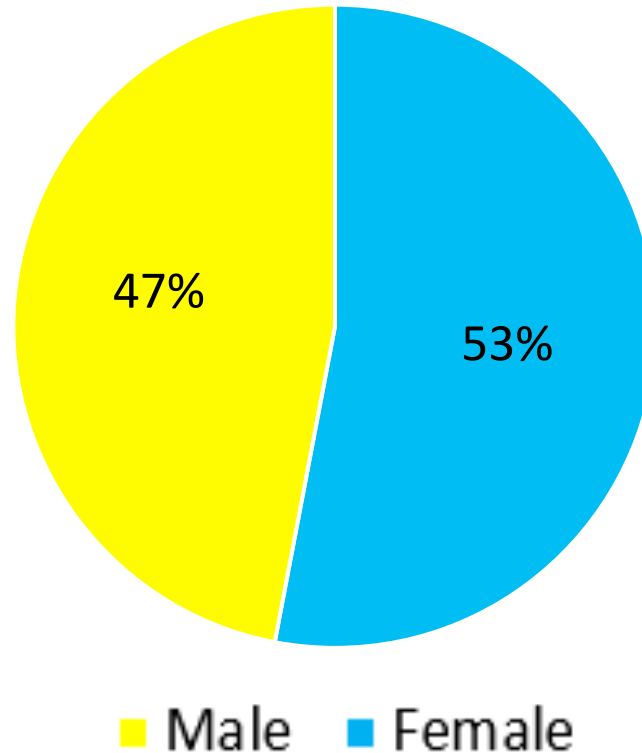
- Older youth (18-24 year-olds) are more likely to be served with younger youth or mixed with adults

Percent of Grantees Serving a Minority Versus Majority of Youth, by Age of HMRE Program Participants



Objective 1 Key Findings – Youth Characteristics

Gender of HMRE Program Participants

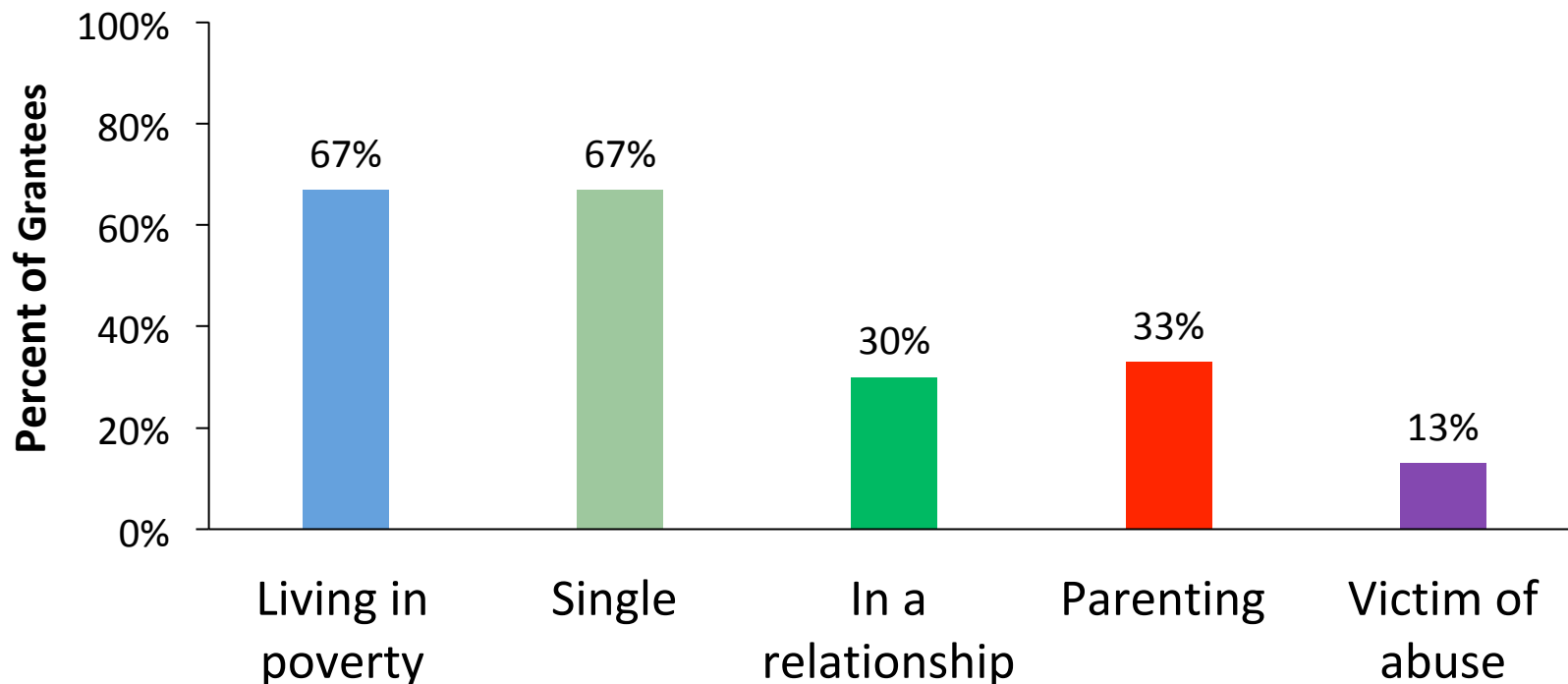


Objective 1 Key Findings - Target Populations

- HMRE grantees target and serve diverse and often disadvantaged populations of youth, including:
 - Youth from single-parent homes
 - Youth whose parents struggle with addiction
 - Youth with incarcerated parents
 - Youth who have been sexually assaulted
 - Impoverished youth
 - Homeless youth
 - Couples
 - Immigrant/minority populations
 - Pregnant or parenting youth

Objective 1 Key Findings – Youth Characteristics

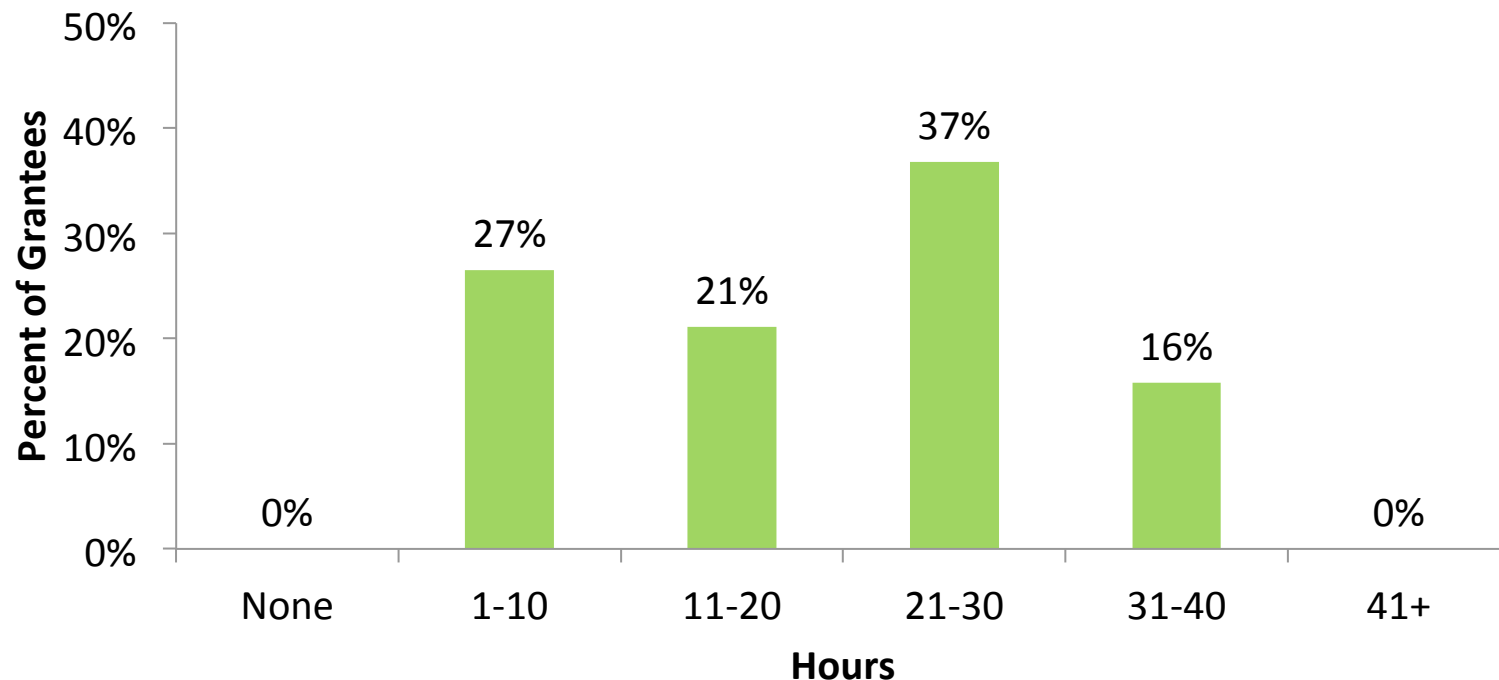
Percent of Grantees Serving a Majority of Youth in Each Group



Objective 1 Key Findings - Training

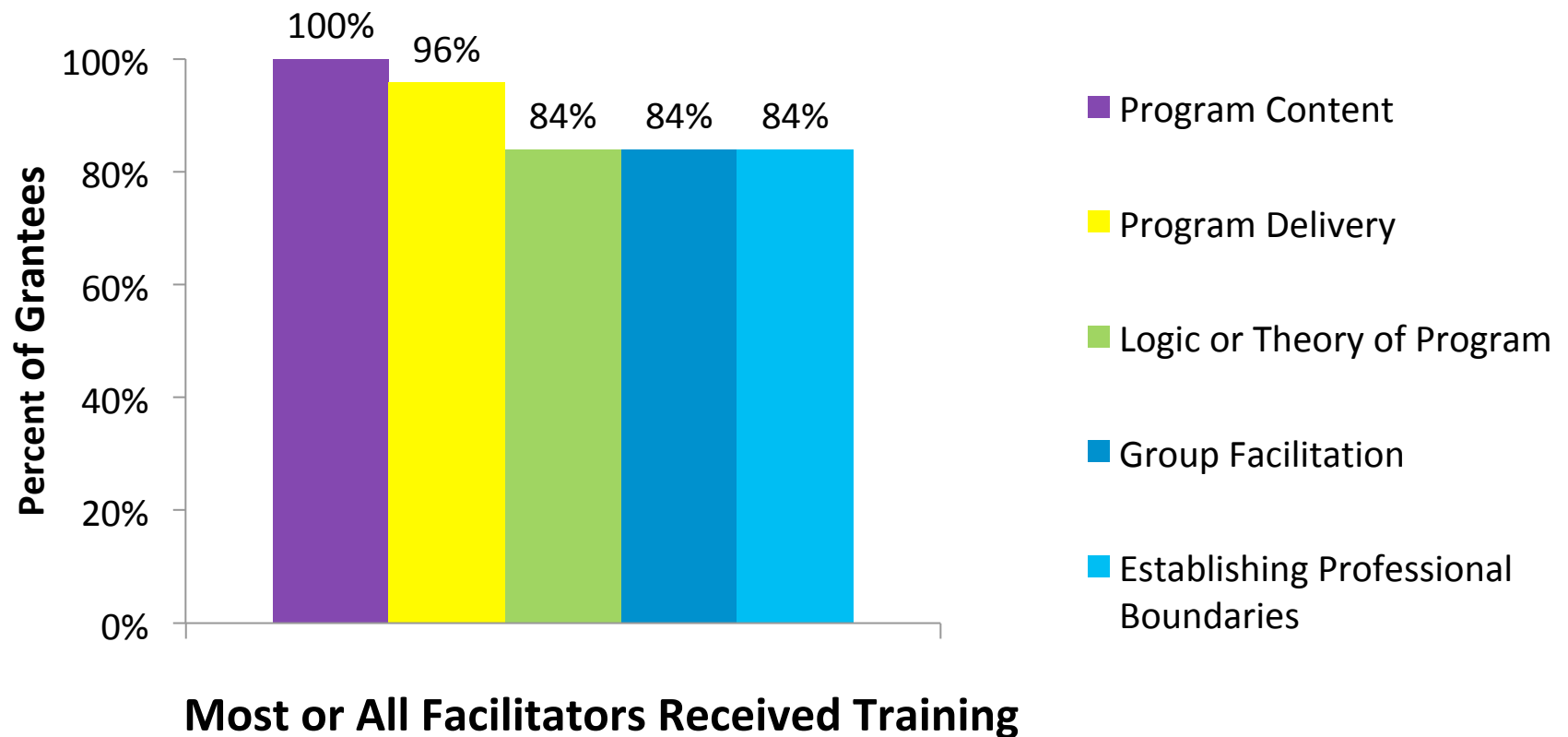
- Staff were well-trained in most areas of implementation and demonstrated positive HMRE-related facilitation skills

Reports of Hours of Program-Specific Training



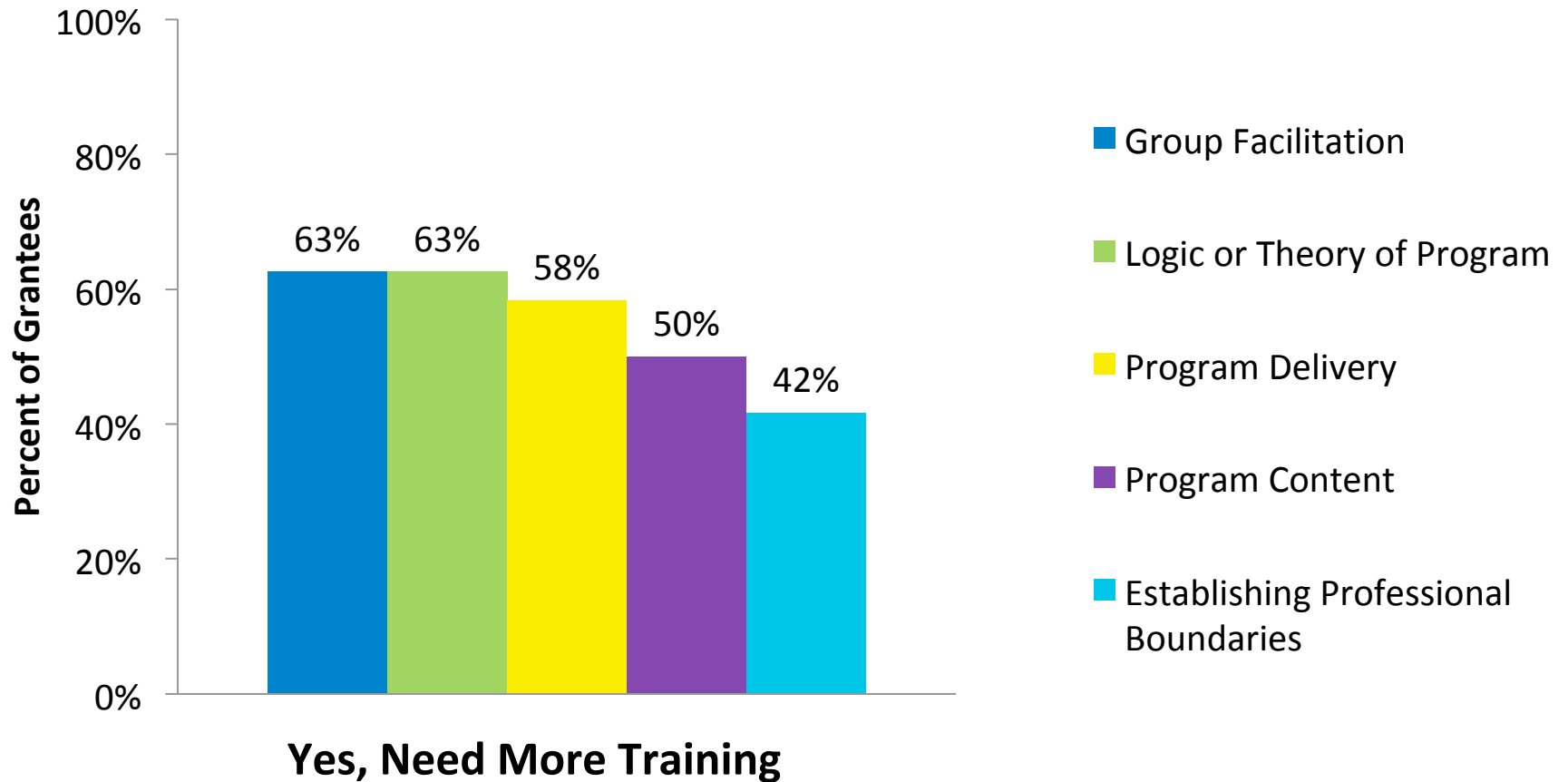
Objective 1 Key Findings - Training

Facilitator Training in Topics Related to Facilitation and Delivery



Objective 1 Key Findings - Training

Facilitators Needing More Training, by Topic



YEARS Findings

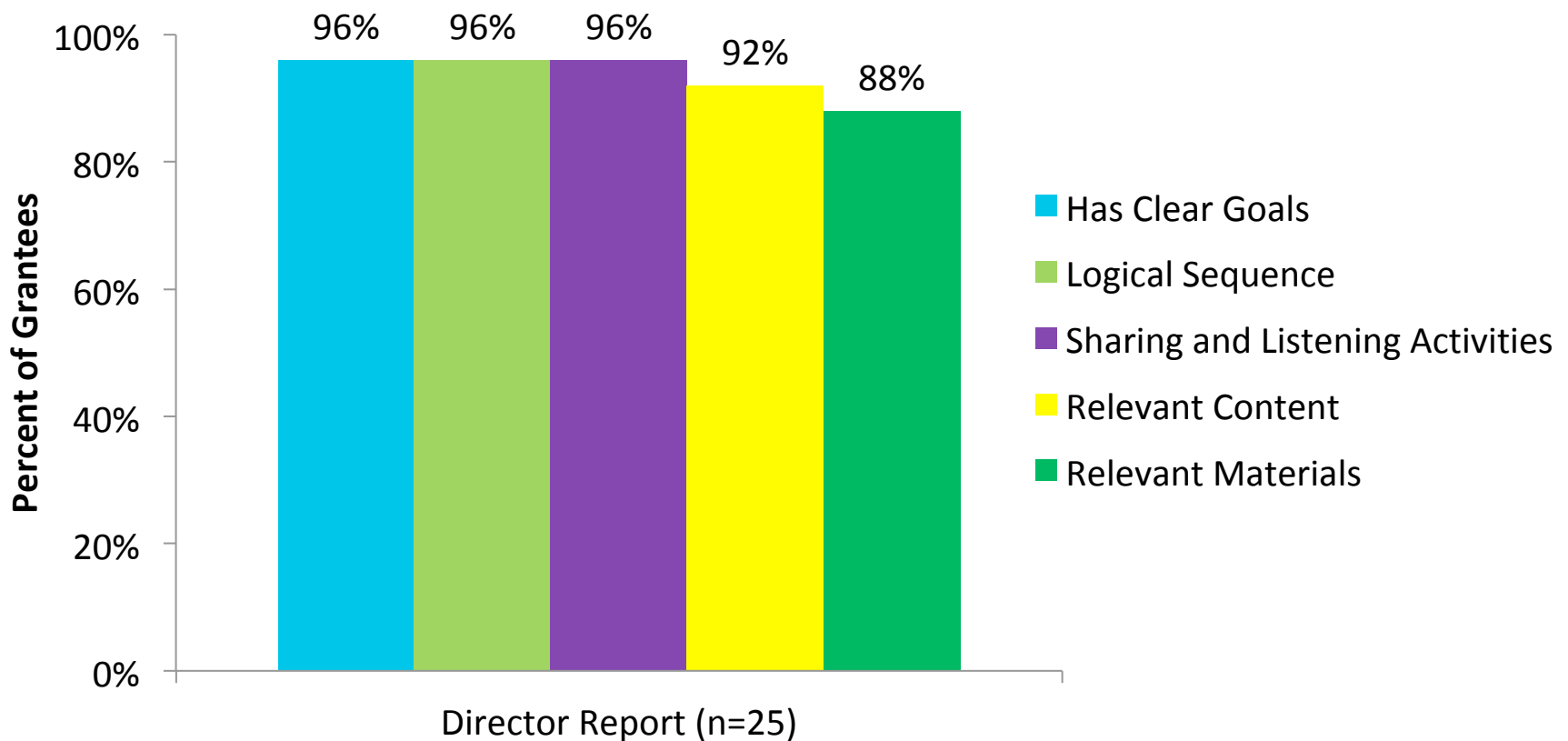
Objective 2: Assess whether HMRE programming for youth aligns with best practices for serving youth

Objective 2 Key Findings

- The vast majority of grantees (over 80 percent for all criteria) agreed that their organizations were implementing best practices for serving youth with consistent reports across directors and facilitators

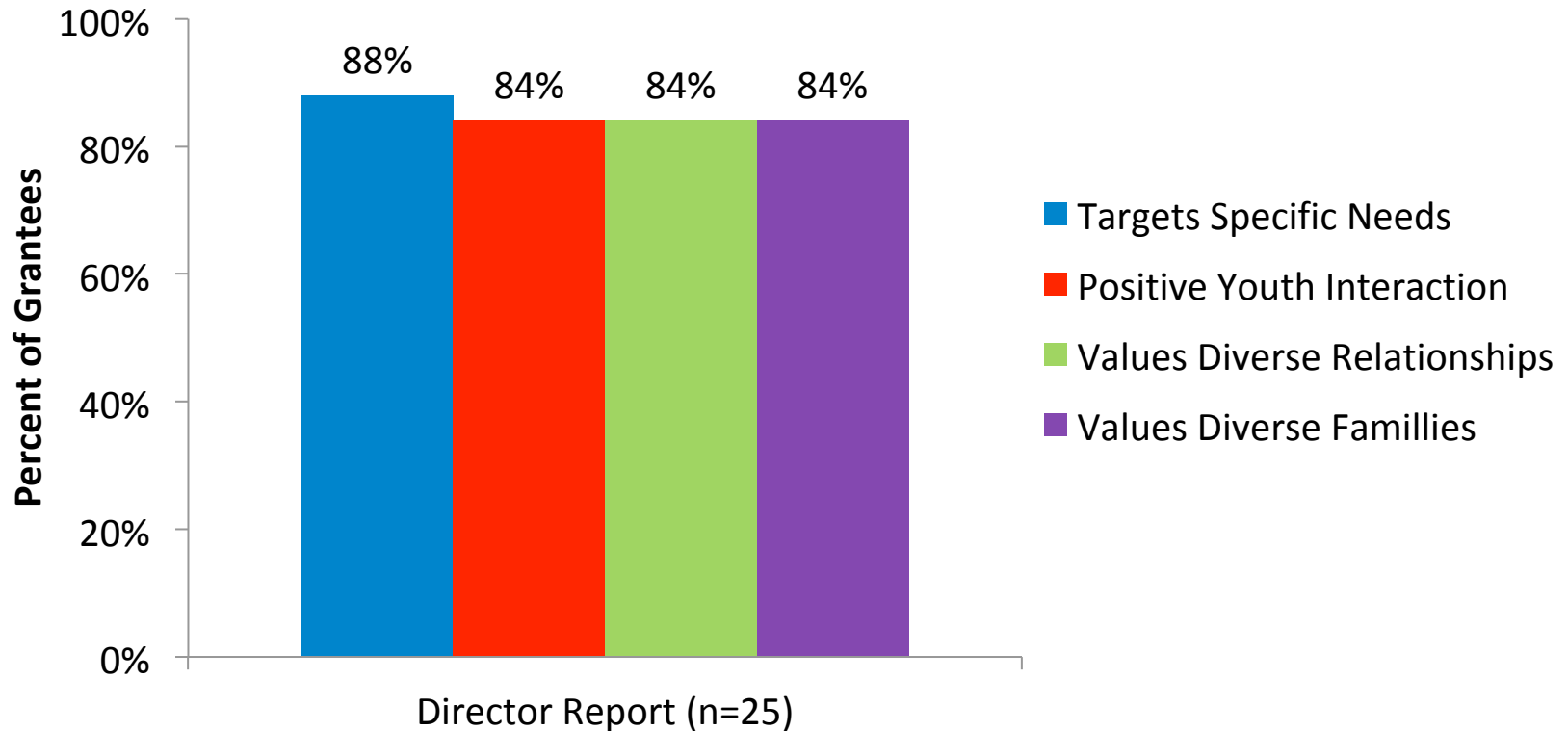
Objective 2 Key Findings – Implementation

Percent of Grantees Reporting They Agree/Strongly Agree That Their Programming Has Each Implementation Practice



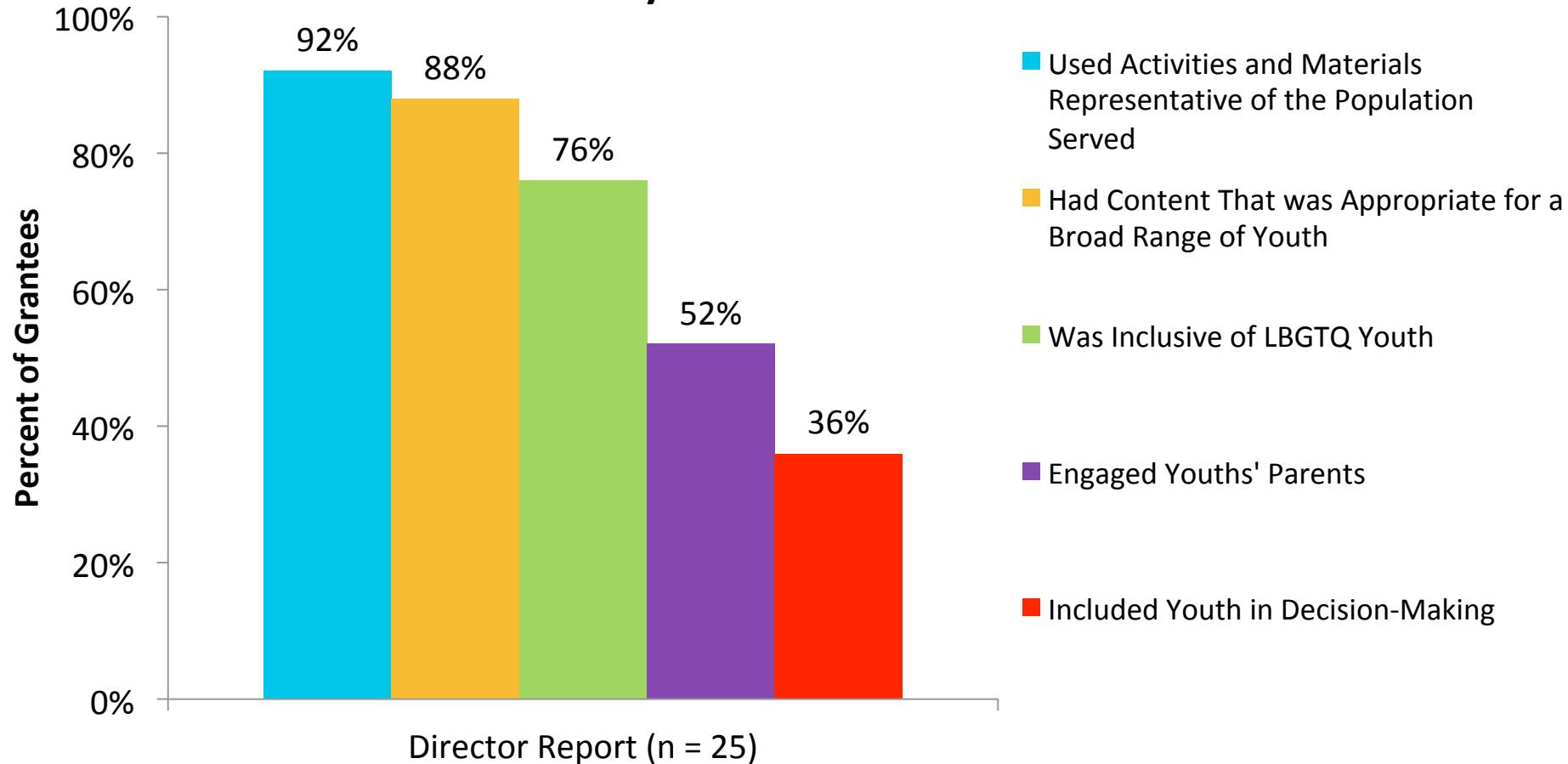
Objective 2 Key Findings – Implementation

Percent of Grantees Reporting They Agree/Strongly Agree That Their Programming Has Each Implementation Practice



Objective 2 Key Findings – Implementation

Percent of Grantees that Agree/Strongly Agree That They Use Inclusive Practices



Objective 2 Key Findings - Inclusivity

- During the interviews, grantee staff described additional approaches to improve cultural appropriateness and align their programs with their populations, such as:
 - hiring staff with similar racial/ethnic backgrounds as the youth served,
 - hiring Spanish-speaking staff when working with Latinos, using inclusive language,
 - focusing on family and peer relationships in addition to romantic relationships,
 - using research-based approaches for serving youth/select populations,
 - using curricula developed specifically for their youth population(s), and
 - incorporating relevant content like discussing co-parenting relationships when working with pregnant and parenting teens

Objective 2 Key Findings – Youth Leadership Opportunities

- Although not as common, some grantees were already providing youth with leadership opportunities:

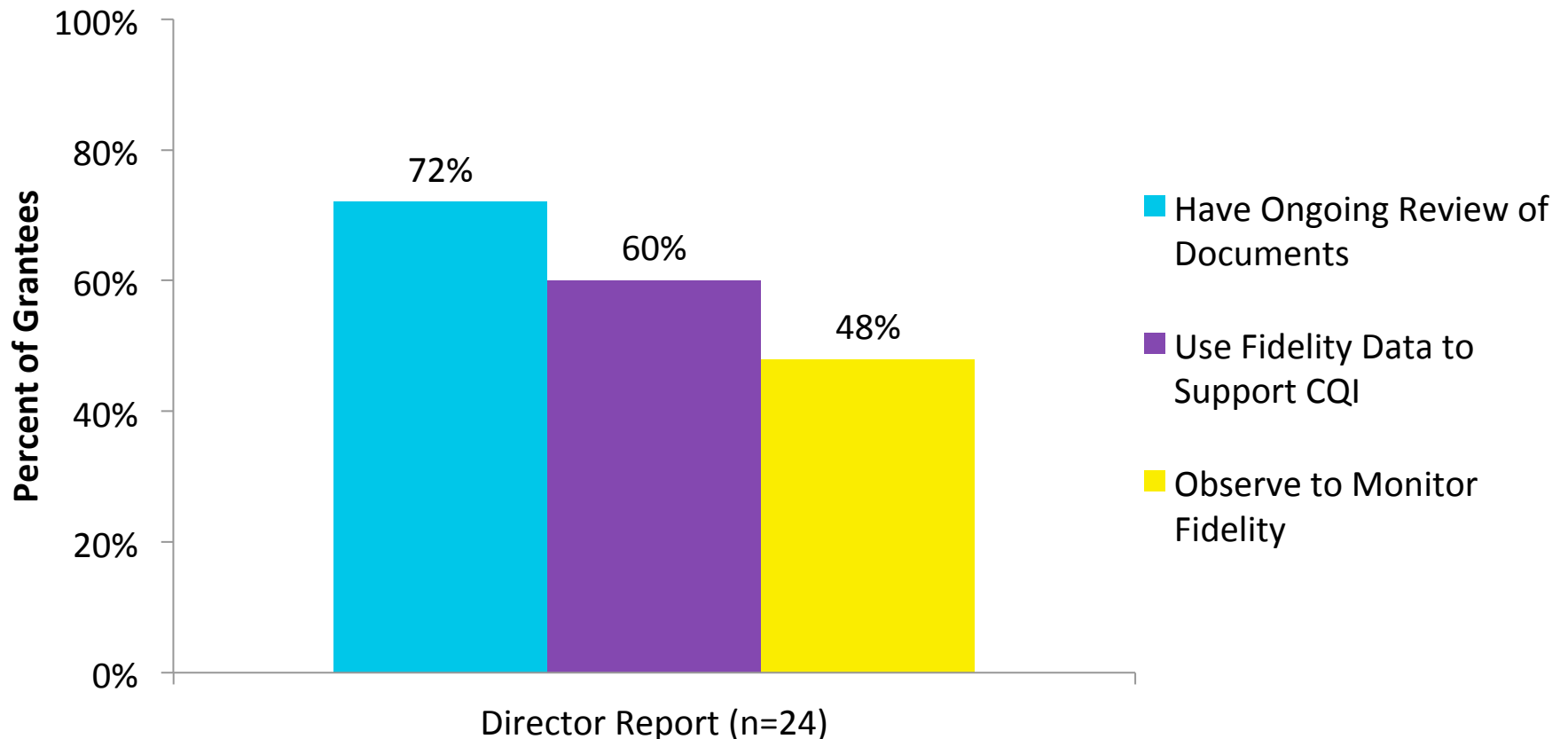
“Youth play a large role in program-related decisions—they play all the role if you think about it. Depending on how they respond to the lessons, we won’t know what they’re thinking, what’s needed, what to do differently, so based on their feedback and how they respond to us is how we approach the situation.”

“I’ve learned a lot of terms... They’ve taught me so much and it helps out because then in my next group I’m able to speak on their level and be able to get the message across.”

“I think youth play a large role. It’s about ownership. I let them play as much of a role as they can in a prescribed set of lessons. They have choices about how to approach the material. I try to show them the end project and let them decide how they want to go about it.”

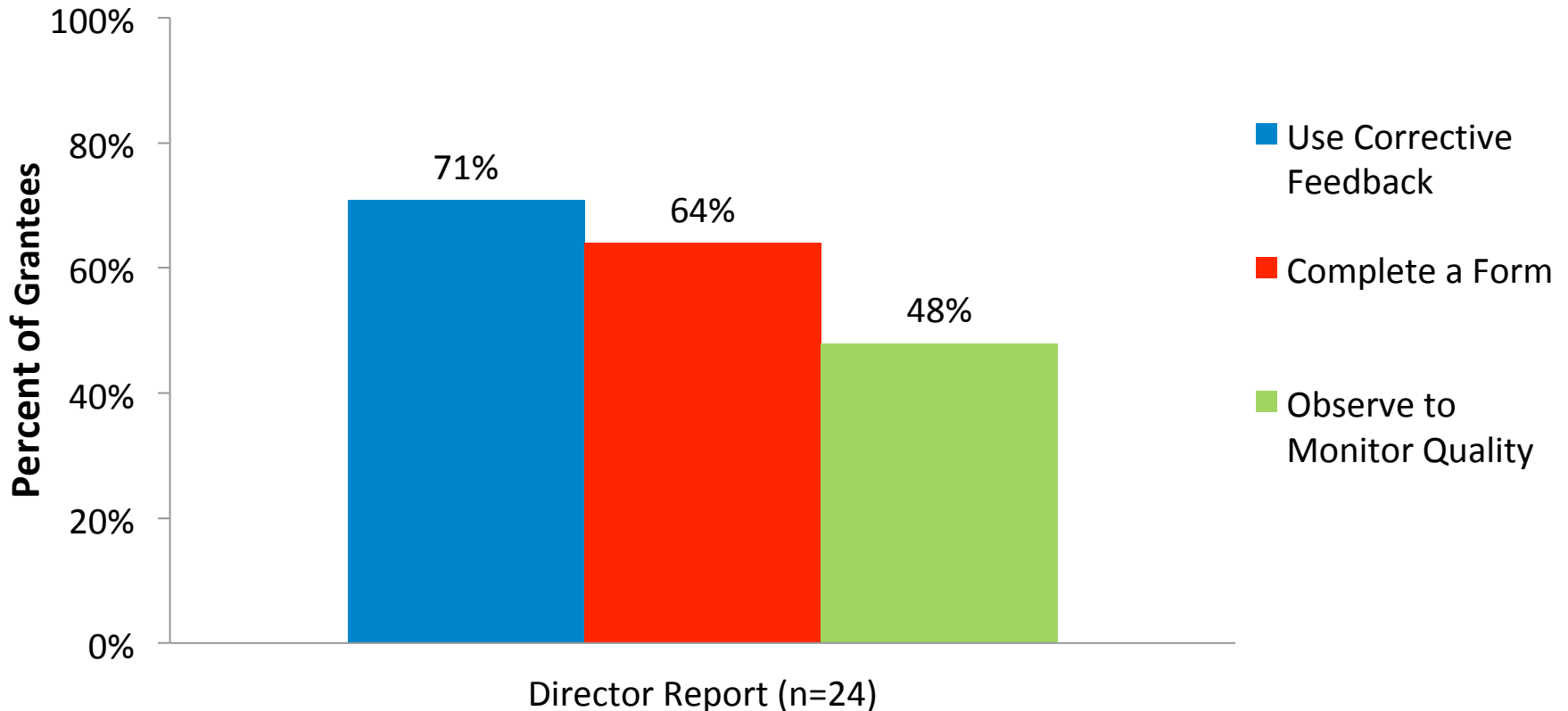
Objective 2 Key Findings – Organizational Capacity for Program Improvement

Percent of Grantees Reporting Monitoring Program Fidelity Most or All of the Time



Objective 2 Key Findings – Organizational Capacity for Program Improvement

Percent of Grantees Reporting Monitoring Program Quality Most or All of the Time



YEARS

Conclusions and Recommendations

Recommendations for supporting the design and implementation of HMRE programs

- Form community partnerships that allow programs to implement in multiple settings
 - Each setting has unique advantages, and partnering together can help address challenges that programs face in each setting
- Support program efforts to reach and serve older youth (ages 18 to 24)

Recommendations for supporting the design and implementation of HMRE programs

- Provide additional information and training related to the unique needs of youth, select curricula that are age- and developmentally-appropriate, and follow best practices for serving youth

Recommendations for supporting the design and implementation of HMRE programs

- Provide additional training in specific program implementation areas, including:
 - Integrating positive youth development approaches, including:
 - providing skill-building opportunities
 - providing youth with leadership opportunities
 - including youth in decision-making
 - Conducting observations on an ongoing basis to monitor program/curriculum fidelity and quality to inform program improvement efforts

Additional Resources and Information

OPRE project webpage:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/youth-education-and-relationship-services-years>

Youth Education and Relationship Services (YEARS), 2015 – 2016



Project Overview

The purpose of the Youth Education and Relationship Services (YEARS) Project, awarded to Child Trends, is to better understand the services that federally-funded Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education (HMRE) programs are providing to youth. The project will describe the organizations implementing HMRE programs, the services they provide, and the youth these programs serve; assess the alignment of HMRE programs with best practices in the field; and identify promising approaches that grantees are using to better serve youth in HMRE programs. The ultimate aim of this project is to inform future efforts to improve HMRE programs serving youth.

The point of contact is Samantha Illangasekare.

Reports (1)

A Snapshot of Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Programs for Youth

Published: November 13, 2015

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Webinar
May 9, 2018

**Sexting, Cyberbullying and Adolescent
Relationships**

With

Jeffrey Temple, PhD

Licensed Psychologist and
Director of Behavioral Health and
Research, OB/GYN, University of Texas Medical Branch

Thank you!

