

Supportive Housing for Families in the Child Welfare System

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Intro: Housing and Well-Being

- Safe, stable housing: determinant of child and family well-being.
- Family instability → consequence of economic insecurity
- Poverty → little control over housing options, quality, stability
- Housing instability & homelessness linked to disparate outcomes
- Housing/homelessness: linked with child welfare involvement
 - Caseworker judgments of risk and well-being; placement and delayed reunification
- Unequal access to housing, education, health – drivers of inequity
- Chapin Hall's Voices of Youth Count: Intergenerational evidence
 - Majority of young people → first homelessness experiences in childhood
 - Risk factors for youth homelessness / disproportionality:
 - No HS diploma; Black & Latinx background; LGBTQ; pregnant and parenting; low income
 - Rural homelessness is as prevalent as urban homelessness

Supportive Housing for Families (SHF)

Connecticut's Statewide Model (began C. 1998): SHF

- Family reunification: Prepare to return from care, reduce length/cost of foster care
- Family preservation: Prevent foster care placement, avert family separation
- Target families with housing risks (homeless; inadequate or unstable housing); most parents have mental health and/or substance abuse challenges, trauma; children have array of risks/needs.

The 15+ Year Partnership

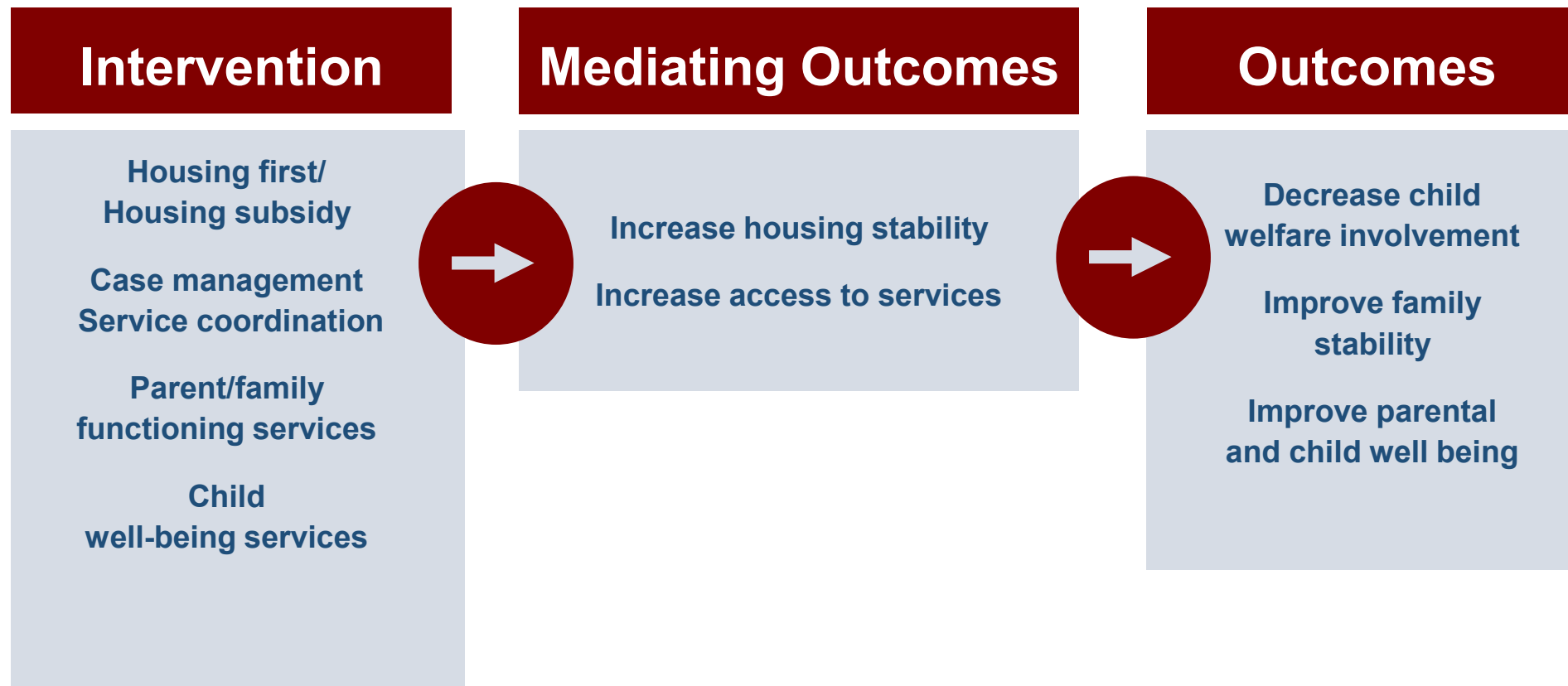
- The Department of Children and Families (DCF) funds the program, refers clients, coordinates with the service provider (hub).
- The Connection, Inc. (TCI): service hub; clinical assessment, housing searches, temporary subsidies; and intensive case management. Scattered site housing model.
- Permanent housing vouchers are dedicated from the CT Department of Housing.
- Evaluators (Chapin Hall, UConn) study program (implementation/process, outcomes, and cost).



SHF – Logic & Questions

- **Logic:** Hierarchy of needs: address basics before higher order needs.
- **Housing as a platform** for other interventions: case management; trauma, substance abuse tx; parenting; ed/vocational support.
- **Promise:** By 2013, CT had a 10+ year history of supportive housing for families in the child welfare system, with research showing promise.
- **Questions:**
 1. Can we fully (experimentally) demonstrate effectiveness? Will success be maintained?
 2. What are the essential components of effectiveness?
 3. Can cost savings accrue within and across systems?

Partnerships to Demonstrate the Effectiveness of Supportive Housing Demonstration



5 Demonstration Sites

CA**San Francisco, CA**

San Francisco Human Services Agency
Families Moving Forward

IA**Cedar Rapids, IA**

Four Oaks Family and Children's Services
Partners United for Supportive Housing

TN**Memphis, TN**

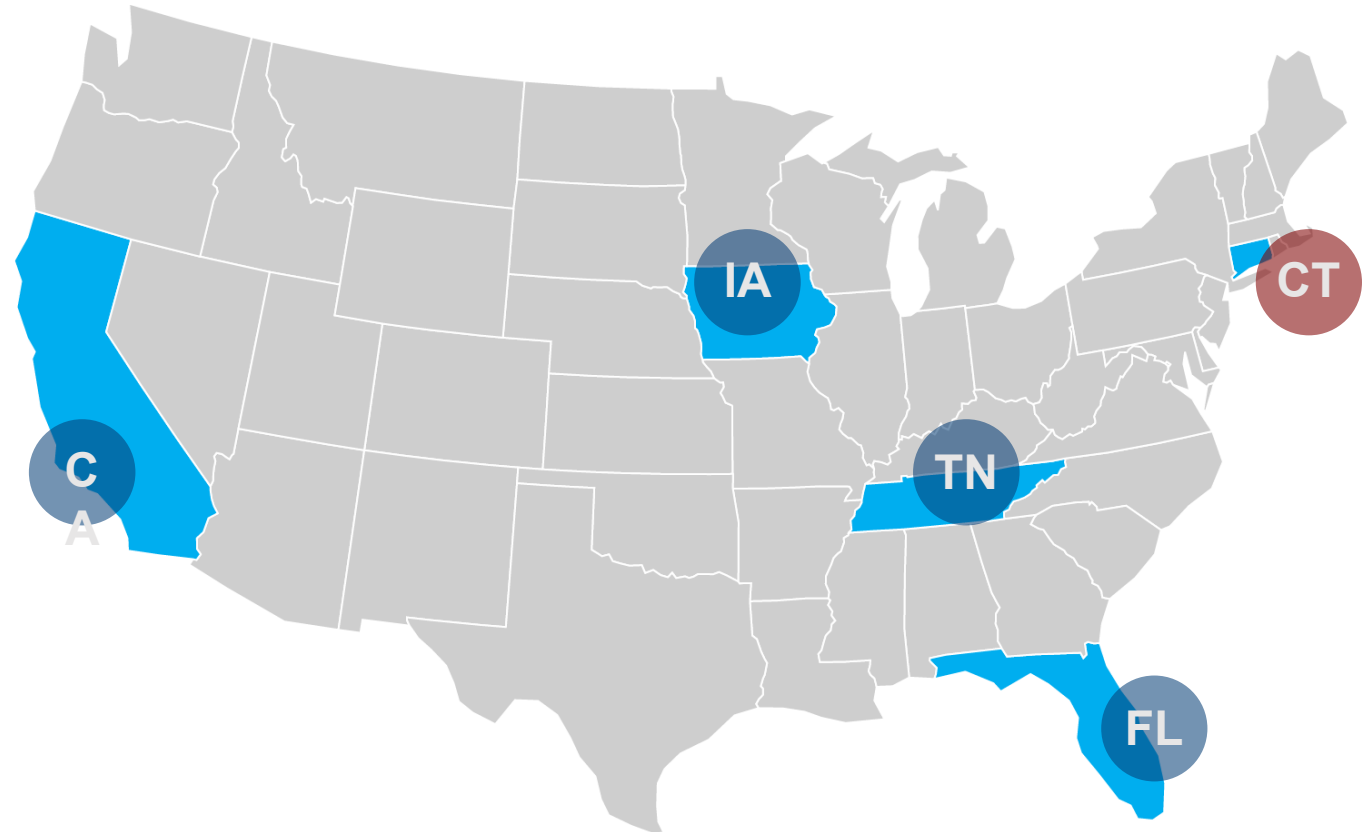
Community Alliance for the Homeless
Memphis Strong Families Initiative

CT**State of Connecticut**

Department of Children and Families
Intensive Supportive Housing for Families

CT**Broward County, FL**

Kids in Distress, Inc.
HEART Alliance



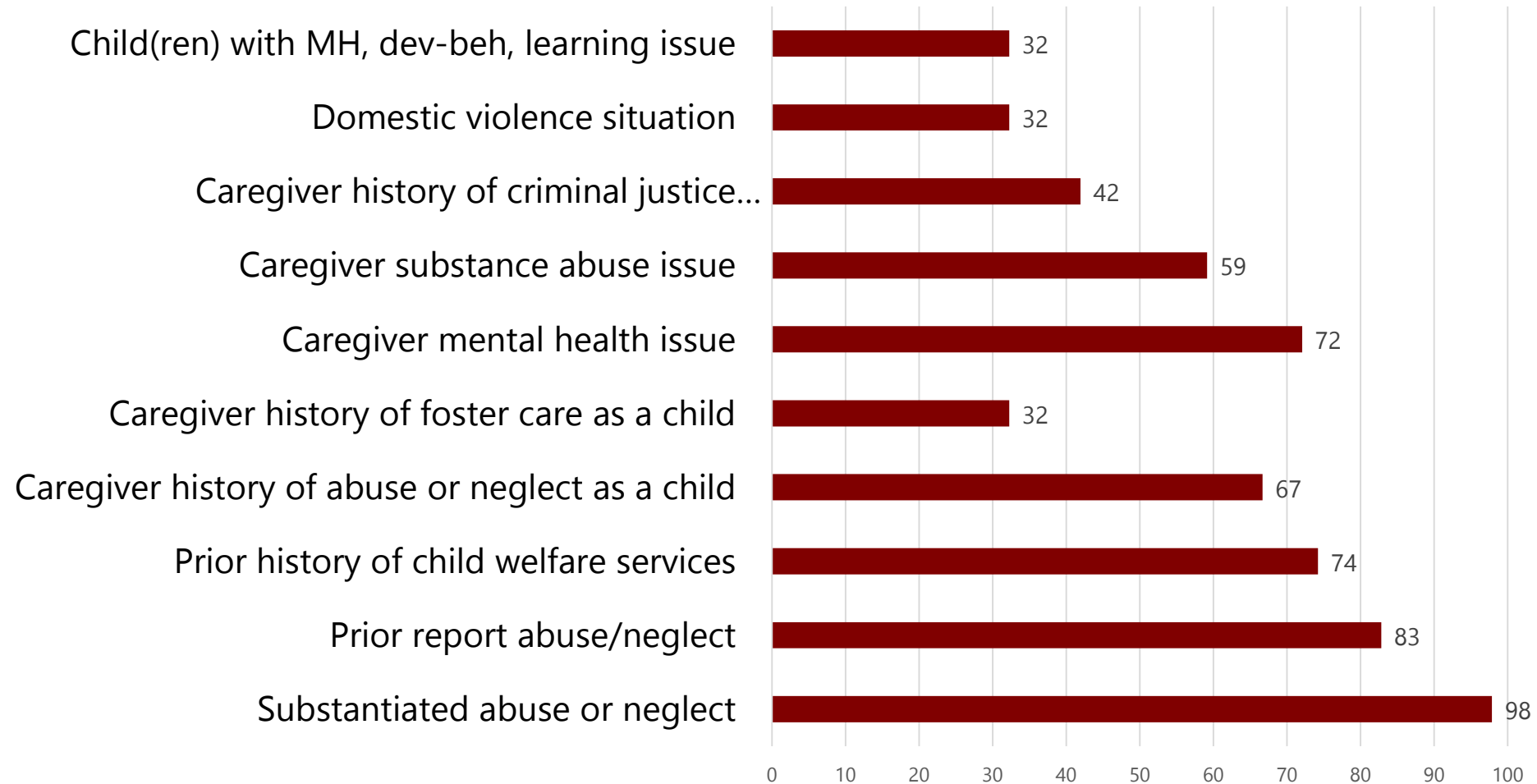
Demonstration Study: Intensive Supportive Housing Evaluation Comparison Groups

DCF Business as Usual (BAU)	Project SHF	Intensive SHF
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Services• Intensive Family Preservation Services• Foster Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing assistance• Case Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing assistance• Intensive case management• Vocational Specialist• Family Teaming

Randomized controlled trial with 3 arms ($n_{Tot}=205$, $n_{children}=418$)

- Business as usual (BAU), $n = 104$
- Supportive Housing for Families (SHF), $n = 50$
- Intensive Supportive Housing for Families (ISHF), $n = 50$

CT Sample (% of families)




CT Findings

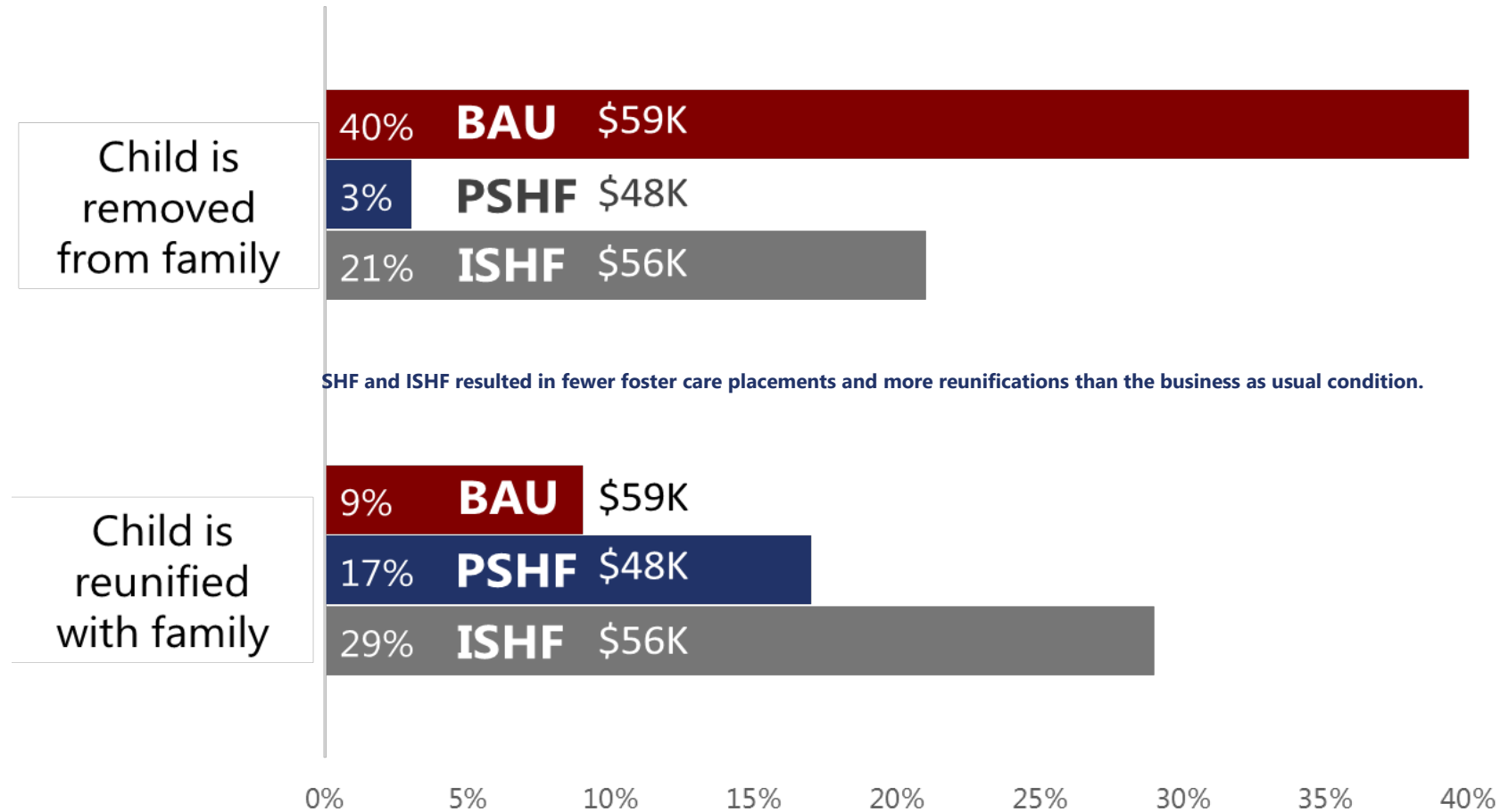
Findings

- Process/implementation study: 4/5 elements of contrast effective.
- Significant differences between treatment and control groups, from 12 months forward (12, 18, 24 months).
- Costs differ, with clear differences in outcome.

Observations

- High rates of prior maltreatment, placement, etc.
 - Targeting was effective – successfully screened for housing at entry to CW
 - We can achieve much better outcomes at lower costs!
 - Context and history matter.
 - Significant implications for prevention/preservation, esp. in light of new federal legislation (*Family First Prevention Services Act*)
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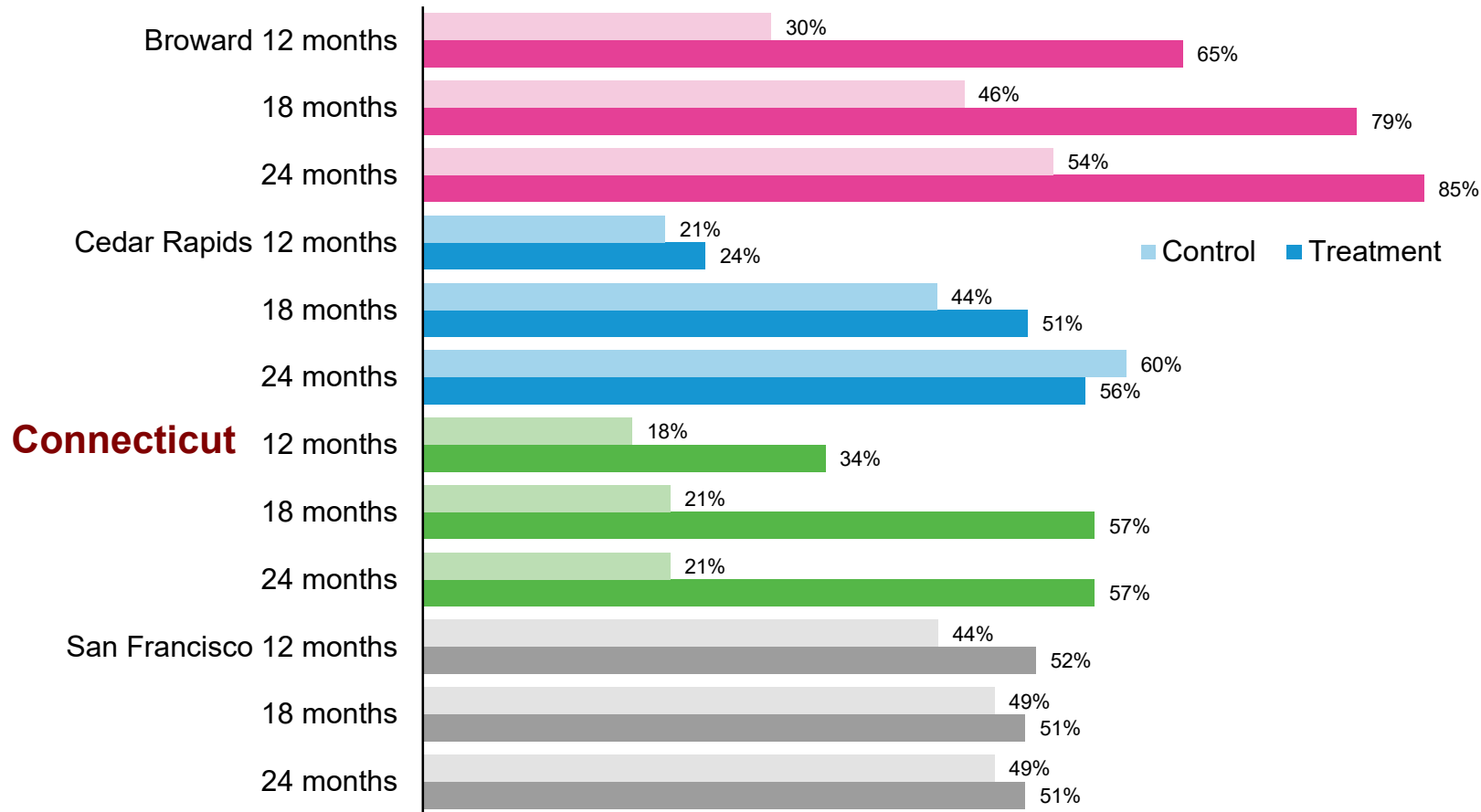
CT Findings



SHF and ISHF resulted in fewer foster care placements and more reunifications than the business as usual condition.

Figure: Percent of child removals and family reunifications by intervention group, with median costs, for 24 months

Differences in Reunification by Site



(Memphis did not serve reunification families)

Impacts

Broward

12 months: 35.0%***

18 months: 33.3%***

24 months: 31.5%***

Cedar Rapids

12 months: 3.4%

18 months: 7.7%

24 months: -3.4%

Connecticut

12 months: 16.3%†

18 months: 36.1%***

24 months: 36.1%***

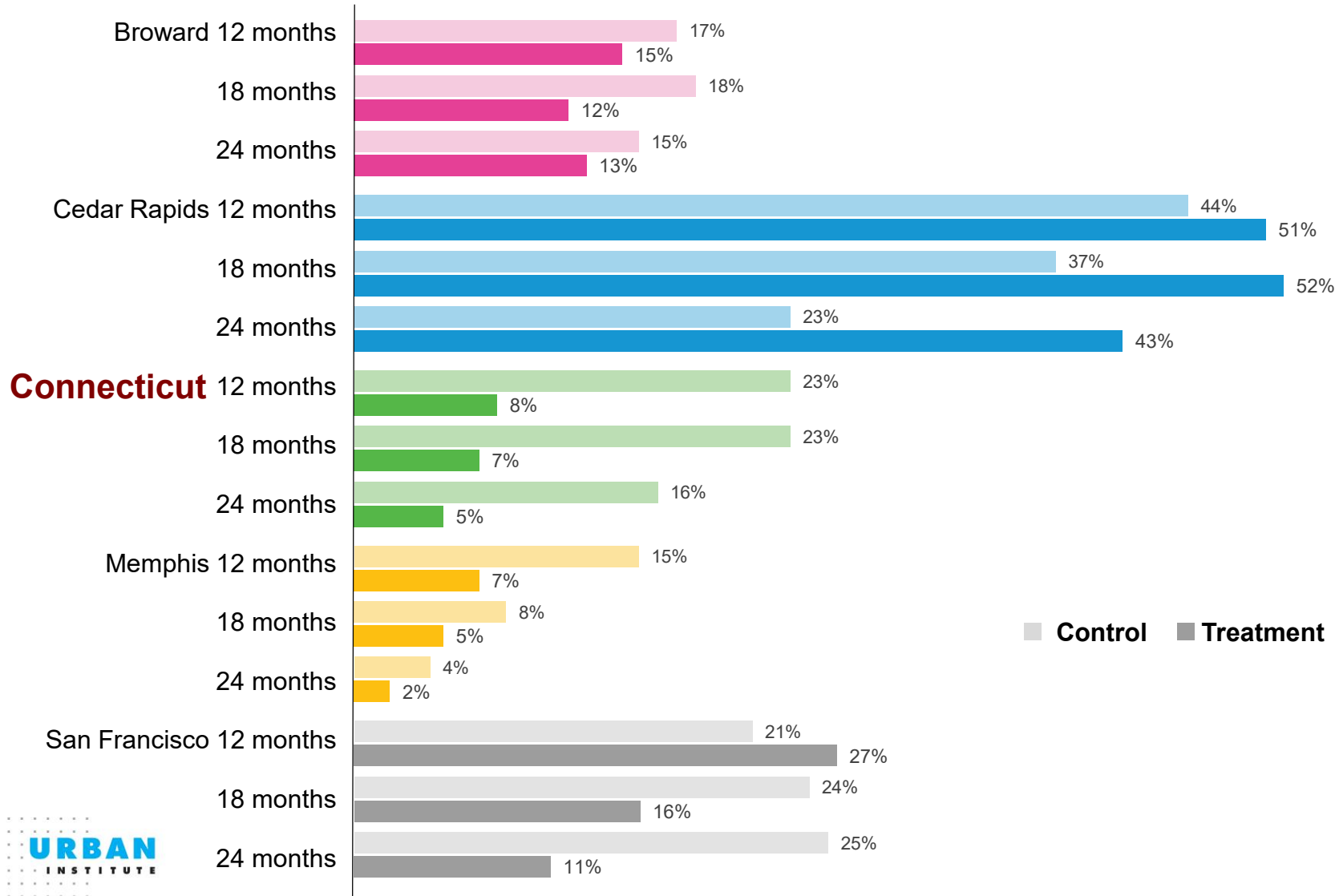
San Francisco

12 months: 8.4%

18 months: 2.7%

24 months: 2.7%

Differences in Removals by Site



Impacts

Broward

12 months: -2.2%
 18 months: -5.9%†
 24 months: -2.0%

Cedar Rapids

12 months: 20.1%**
 18 months: 15.5%†
 24 months: 7.6%

Connecticut

12 months: -10.6%*
 18 months: -16.5%***
 24 months: -15.2%**

Memphis

12 months: -1.6%†
 18 months: -2.2 %
 24 months: -8.3%†

San Francisco

12 months: -14.5%**
 18 months: -7.8%†
 24 months: 5.9%

Conclusions and next steps

- National model from CT, from observational study to RCT
- Clear evidence of effectiveness; superior outcomes, less cost than BAU
- Higher “dosage” of case management produces marginal benefit
- Housing screening tool identifies housing concerns early in child welfare involvement → target resources promptly
- Incorporate lessons into practice: screening, SH model
- Instructive on:
 - Prompt identification (screening) and intervention; practice elements (family empowerment)
 - Importance of housing as platform in families at the “deep end” of services
 - Use of program and administrative data to examine program effectiveness
 - Effective services can *prevent* foster care placement
- Submit to *Families First Clearinghouse*?

Thank you | Questions and Discussion

- Thank you for the opportunity to share this work.
- Questions and Discussion
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 - Preston Britner, UConn; Kate Parr, UConn; Melissa Kull, Chapin Hall
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