
Vulnerabilities & Opportunities: Profiles of Foster & Non-Foster Youth Served by LifeWorks

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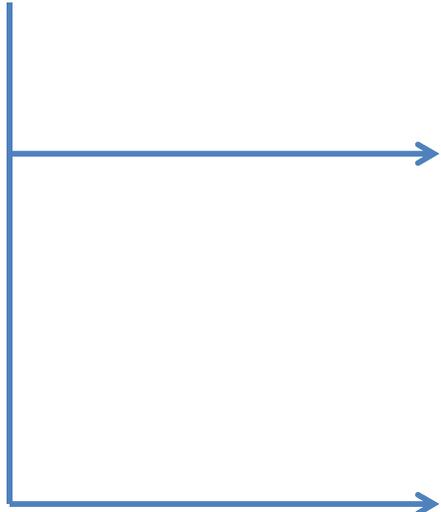
Empowering Self-Sufficiency

We know that foster youth face a **range of barriers** to their self-sufficiency.

but we know far less about how foster youth compare to

- ■ ■ *other at-risk youth across these characteristics.*

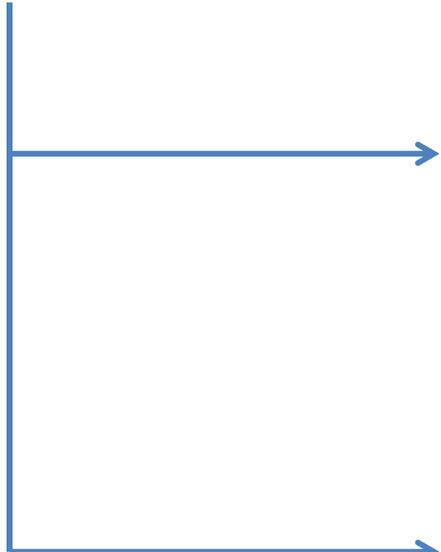
But we know a lot of youth are affected. . .



3,568 youth in care in Region 7 in 2015 (approximately 25.7% between the ages of 14–21)

Approximately 15,140 disconnected youth in Travis County between the ages of 16–24 (10.1% of youth in this age range)

And we know that the problem is expensive . . .



Annual taxpayer burden in Travis County is over \$210 million, and annual social burden is nearly \$567 million

The proposed budget for the City of Austin General Fund is \$906.7 million in 2015–2016

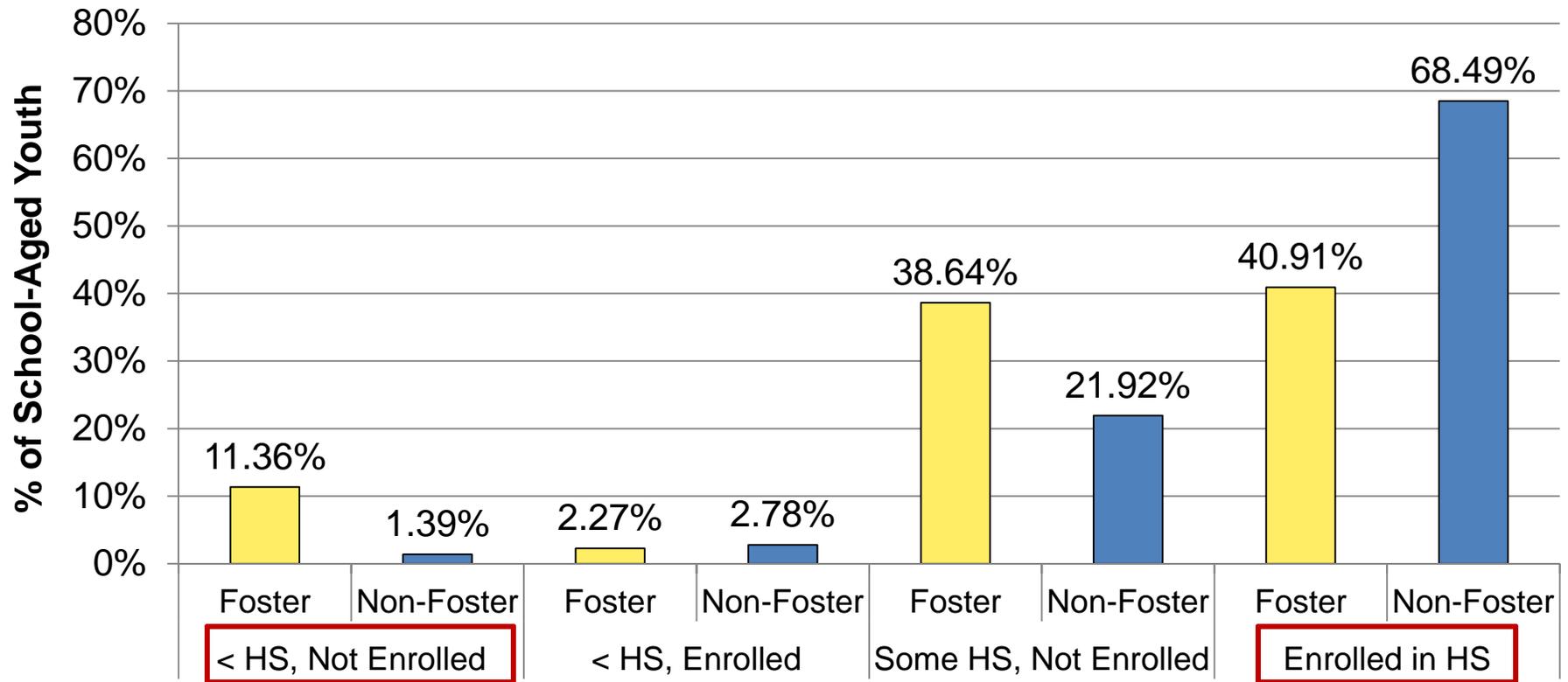
Sample:

- 488 youth aged 16–24, who initiated and enrolled in services during FY2015 and who provided information on their history of foster care involvement.
- 43.65% had a history of foster care involvement
- 27.23% Street Outreach; 23.98% Youth & Adult Counseling; 26.84% After Care Transitional Services

Data Source:

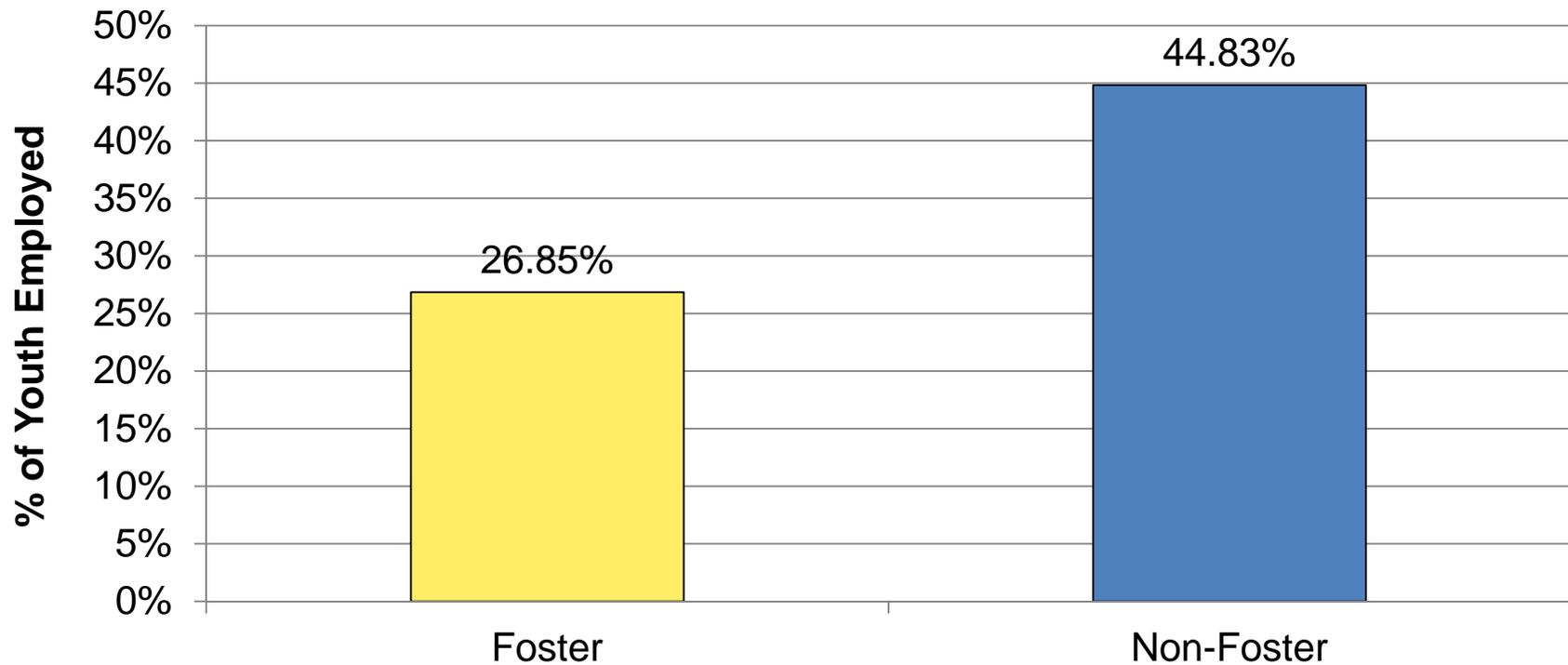
- Data were collected during program intake and thus represent clients' characteristics at baseline

Educational Attainment: School-Aged Youth



- LW foster youth are more disconnected from school systems, relative to other foster youth
- Larger proportion of LW non-foster youth are enrolled in school, compared to other disconnected youth

Employment



- *Larger proportion of LW non-foster youth are employed, compared to other disconnected youth*
- *Smaller proportion of LW non-foster youth are unemployed due to a disability, and a greater proportion were seeking employment, compared to disconnected youth in general*

Household Income

\$209.70

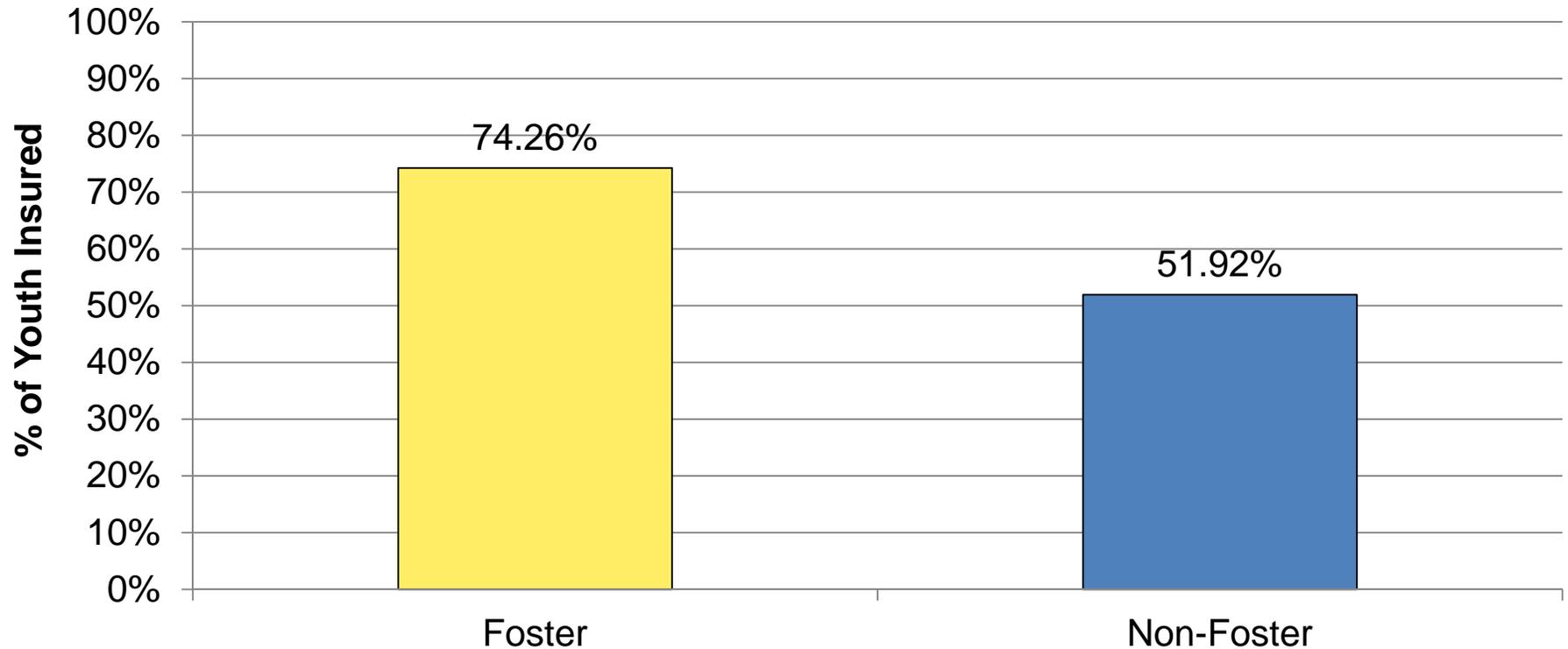
average monthly
household income
reported by foster youth

\$1,006.60

average monthly
household income reported
by non-foster youth

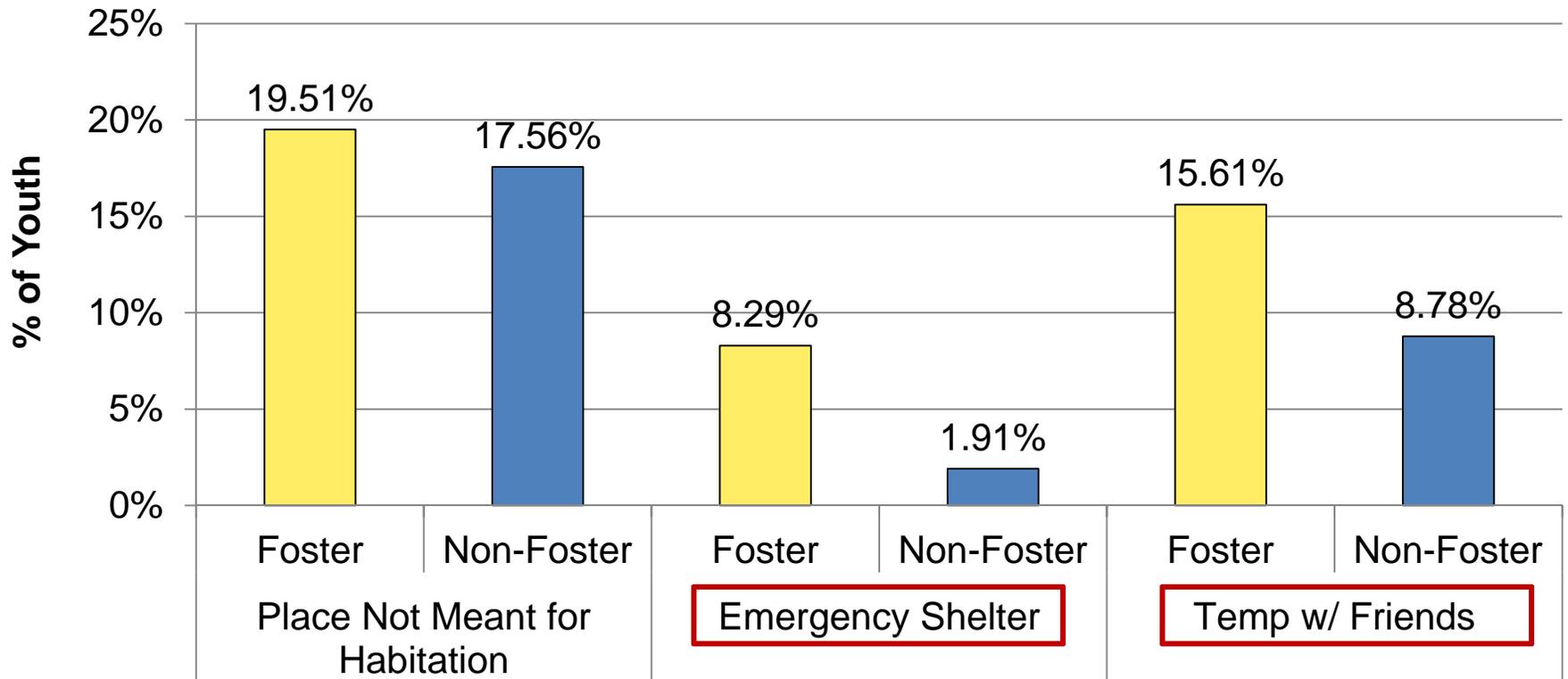
- *Greater proportion of LW aged-out youth lived in poverty, compared to aged-out youth in TX*
- *Greater proportion of LW non-foster youth lived in poverty, compared to disconnected youth in general*
- *Smaller proportion of LW aged-out youth and LW non-foster youth received non-cash benefits, compared to their peers*

Insurance



- *Smaller proportion of LW foster and non-foster youth have health insurance, compared to their peers*

Housing



- *LW foster and non-foster youth had less stable housing situations relative to their peers.*

Custody-Related Transitions

9.96

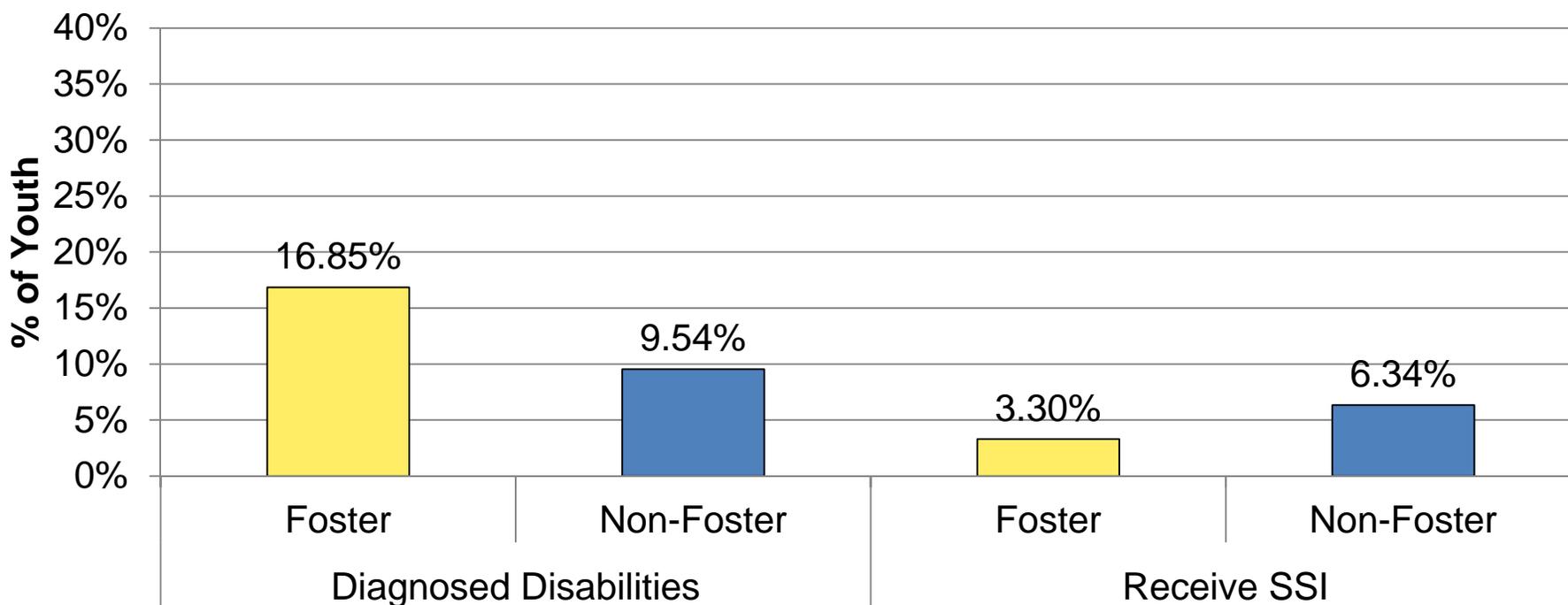
average number of
transitions experienced
by foster youth

1.30

average number of
transitions experienced
by non-foster youth

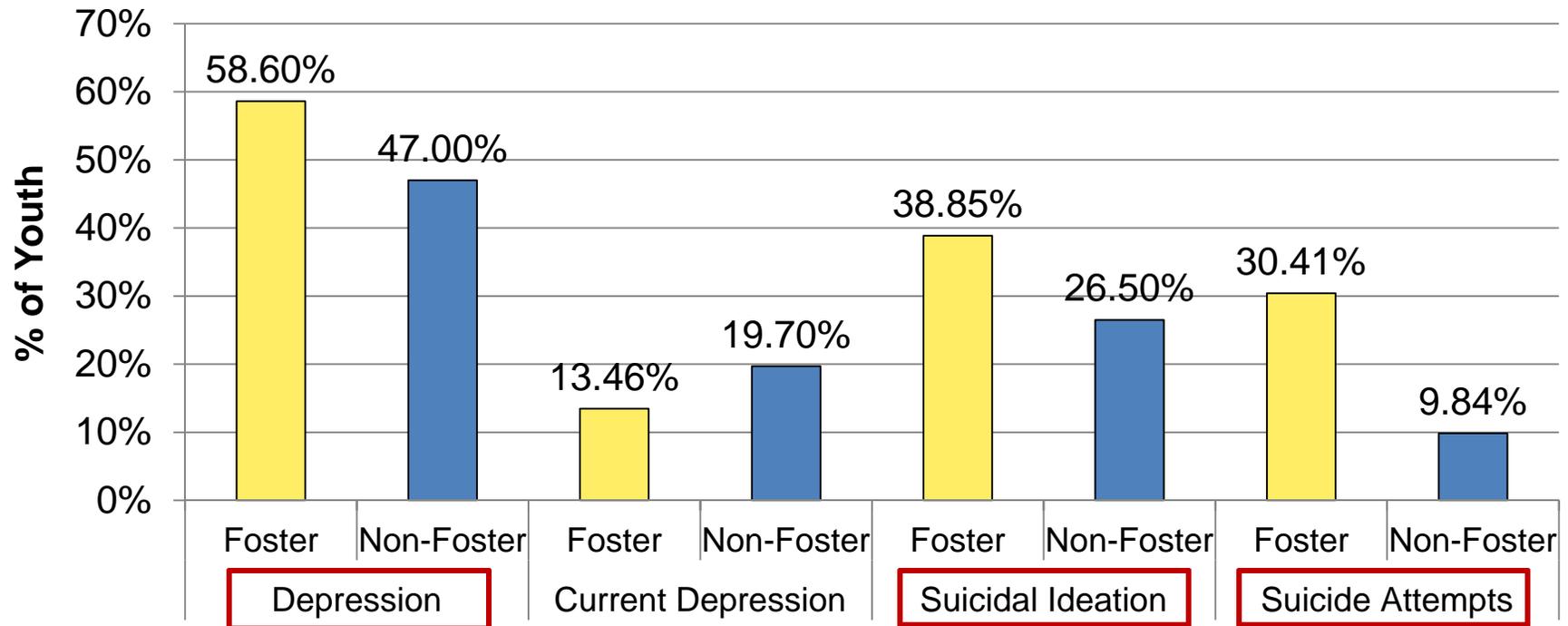
- *LW aged-out foster youth experienced a comparable number of CPS-related transitions as other foster youth in TX*

Diagnosed Disabilities



- *A comparable proportion of LW foster youth had a diagnosed disability, compared to other foster youth in TX – but a smaller proportion of LW foster youth receive SSI benefits, relative to foster youth in general*
- *A smaller proportion of LW non-foster youth had a diagnosed disability, compared to disconnected youth in general*

Mental Health



- A greater proportion of LW foster youth reported a history of depression, compared to other samples of foster youth
- A greater proportion of LW non-foster youth reported a history of depression, current depression, and history of suicidal ideation, compared to youth in general

Recommendations

Our research confirms current DFPS emphasis on the importance of trauma informed care and minimizing transitions.

One size does not fit all – Workforce, Mental Health and housing programs focused on young adults need to recognize the unique needs of youth in foster care.

- Trauma informed care
- Housing First

Build systems of alignment between workforce, housing, higher education, and mental health systems.