

# A Study of the Sixty-Month CalWORKs Time Limit

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Welfare Policy Research Project

# Study Questions

- How are counties preparing for and implementing the time limit?
- What do recipients close to the time limit understand about it and how are they preparing for it?
- What are the demographic characteristics of households who hit the time limit and how do they differ from households who don't hit the time limit?
- How do families and children fare when they reach the time limit?
- How does the time limit affect caseload dynamics and individual decisions about welfare use and employment?

# First Report (February 2006)

- Counties implemented the time limit, exemptions and extensions in an inconsistent fashion.
  - Variation in implementation of child support exemption
  - Variation in implementation of exemption for domestic abuse
  - Variation in implementation of other exemptions
- Counties experienced administrative difficulties with counting time on aid, especially with regard to the child support exemption and tracking recipients who move across state or county lines.

# Second Report (November 2006)

- Uses information from a representative survey of recipients within six months of reaching the time limit in six counties (Alameda, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, and Tulare)
- 1,797 individuals surveyed by UC Berkeley's Survey Research Center (SRC) in 3 languages (with simultaneous translation for others)
- First-wave survey questions focused on recipients' understanding of the time limit, and self-reported preparations for the time limit, barriers to employment, and work participation
- After second-wave survey, will closely examine changes in work effort, earnings, and total household income

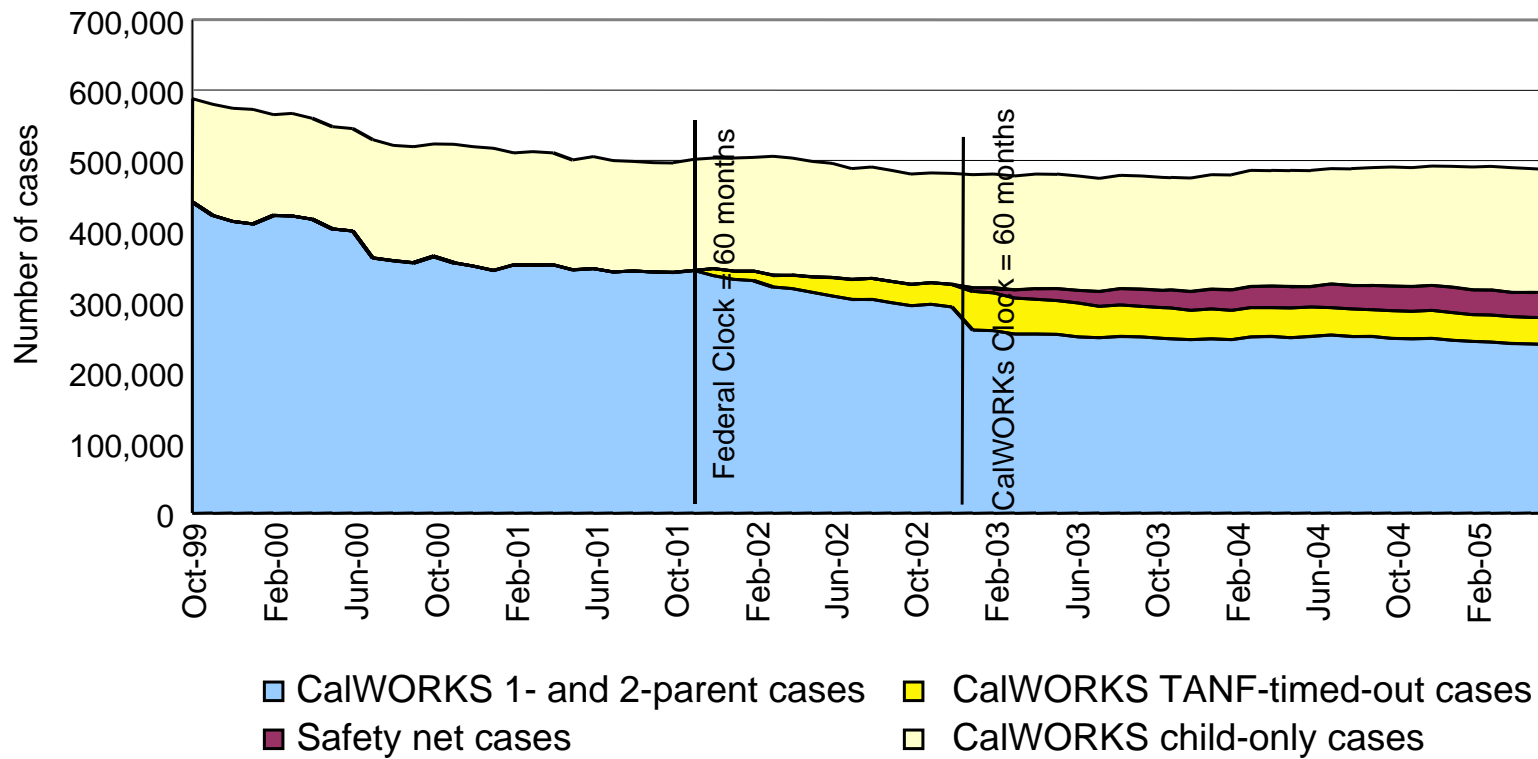
# Second Report Key Findings

- Those nearing the time limit are ethnically and linguistically diverse.
- Recipients close to the time limit focus on employment, but earn little and have few benefits.
- Barriers to employment are pervasive, but few know they may qualify for exemptions or extensions.
- More than half of those nearing the time limit have very young children, many of whom will qualify for Safety Net benefits.

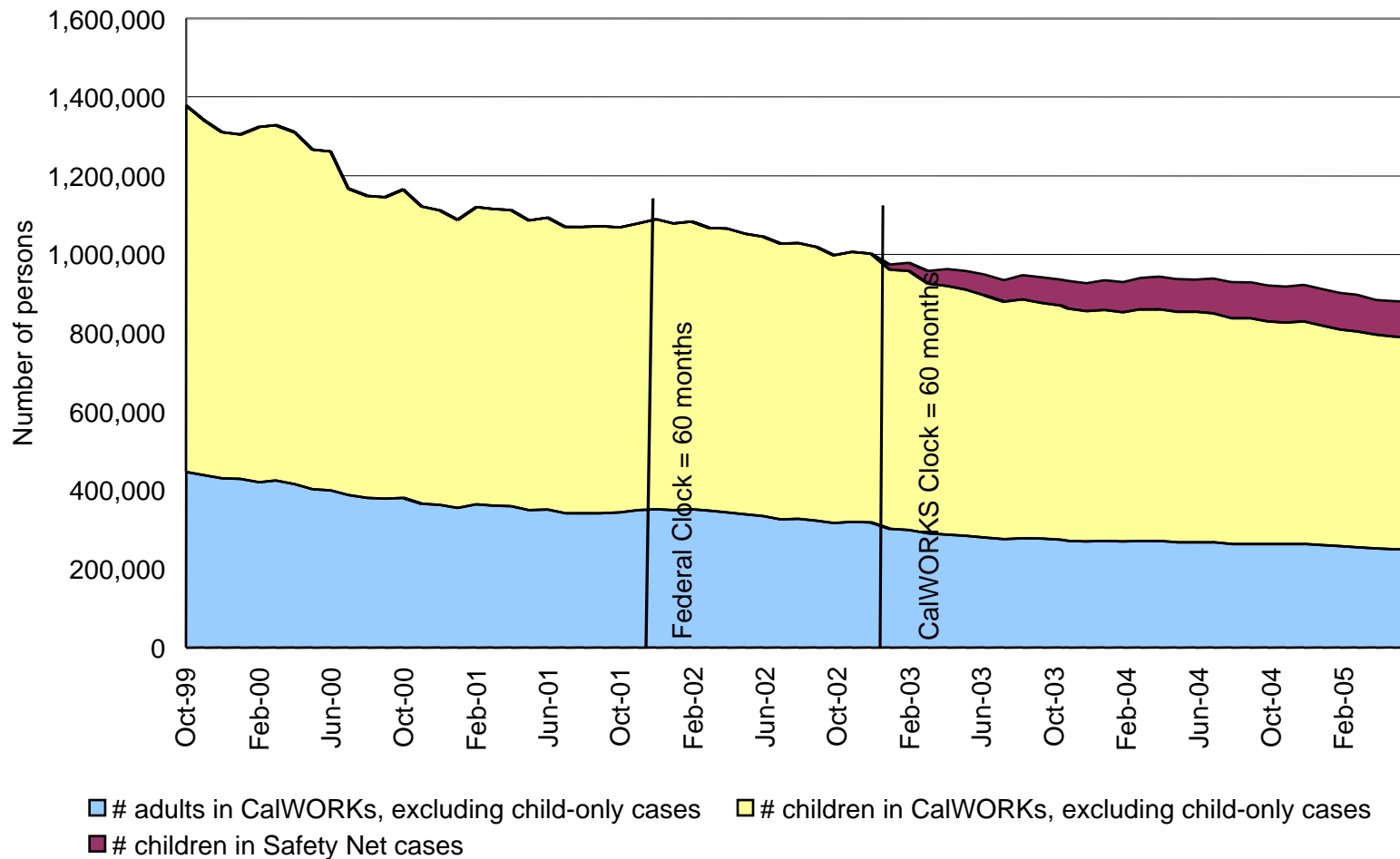
# About the Focus Counties

	Unemployment Rate (2004)	<u>Children on CalWORKs</u> N (Mar05)	% of children in county
Alameda	6.0	29,683	8.0
Los Angeles	6.6	210,290	7.1
Orange	4.3	19,788	2.4
Riverside	5.8	24,909	4.5
Sacramento	5.2	46,709	12.4
Tulare	11.7	19,790	14.4
California	6.2	642,434	6.4

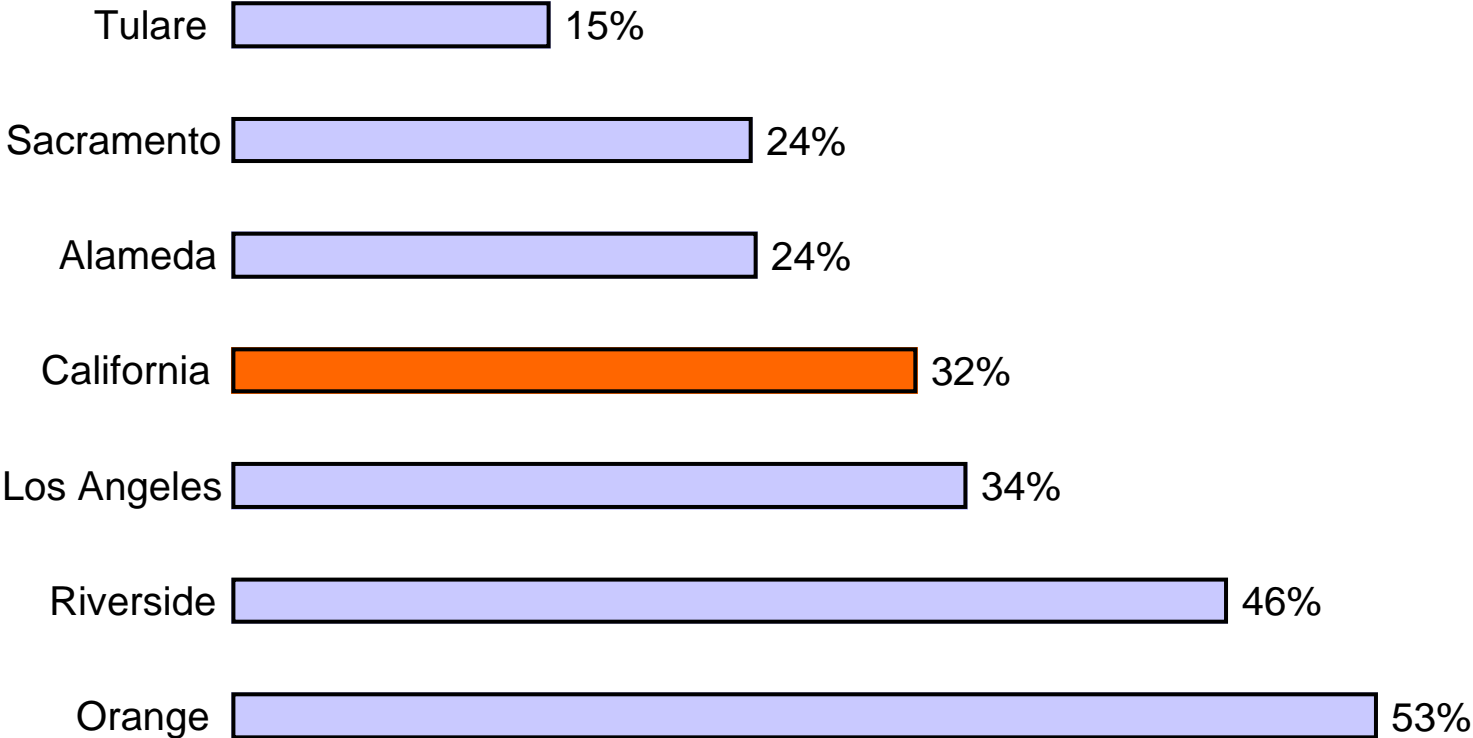
# CalWORKs Caseload Components Over Time



# Number of People Receiving Aid Declines



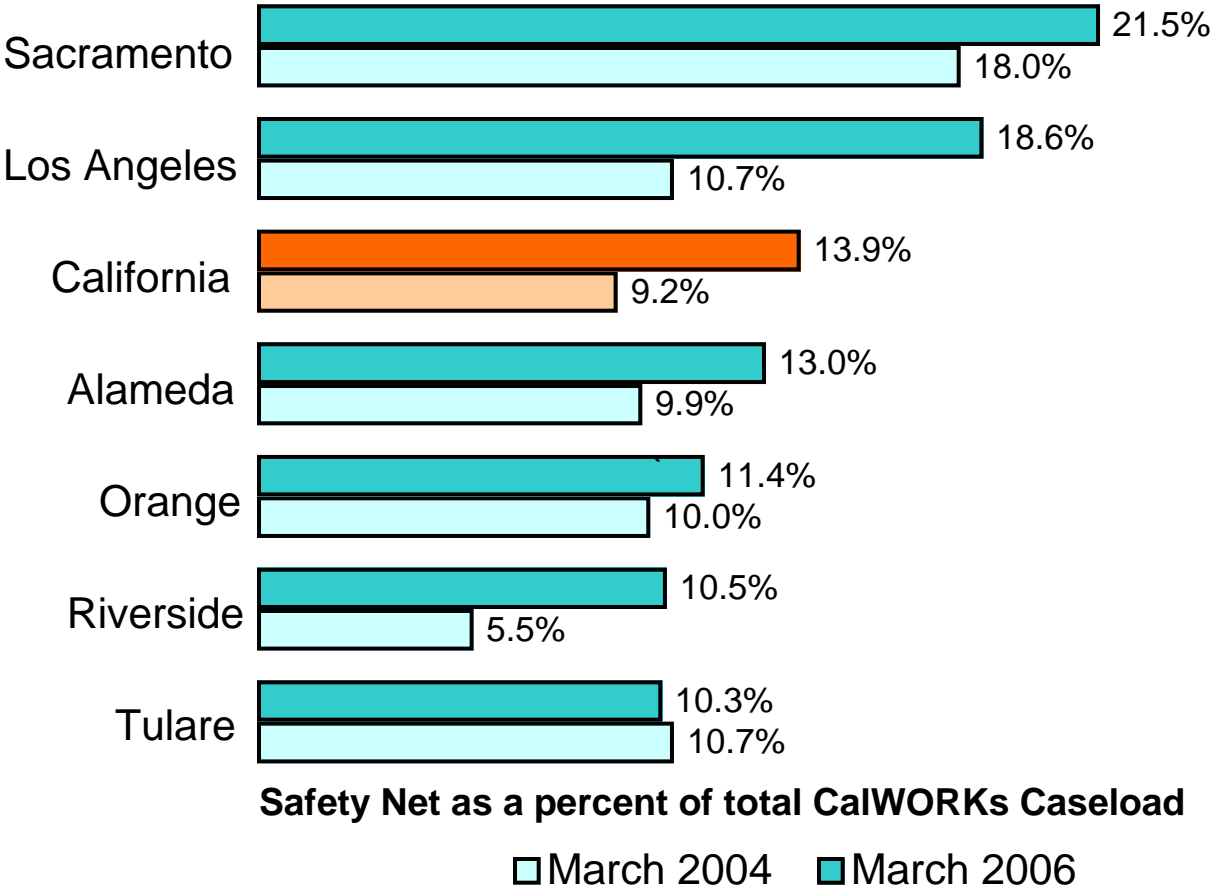
# Declines in One- and Two-Parent Caseload (Excluding Child-Only Cases) Vary by County



**Reduction in CalWORKs Caseload October 1999-March 2006**

Note: Caseload includes one and two-parent families, and Safety Net cases.

# Safety Net Program as a Share of Caseload (Excluding Child-Only Cases) Varies by County



Note: Caseload includes one and two-parent families, and Safety Net cases.

# Who Reaches the Time Limit?

At the first-wave interview, of single parents within 6 months of the time limit:

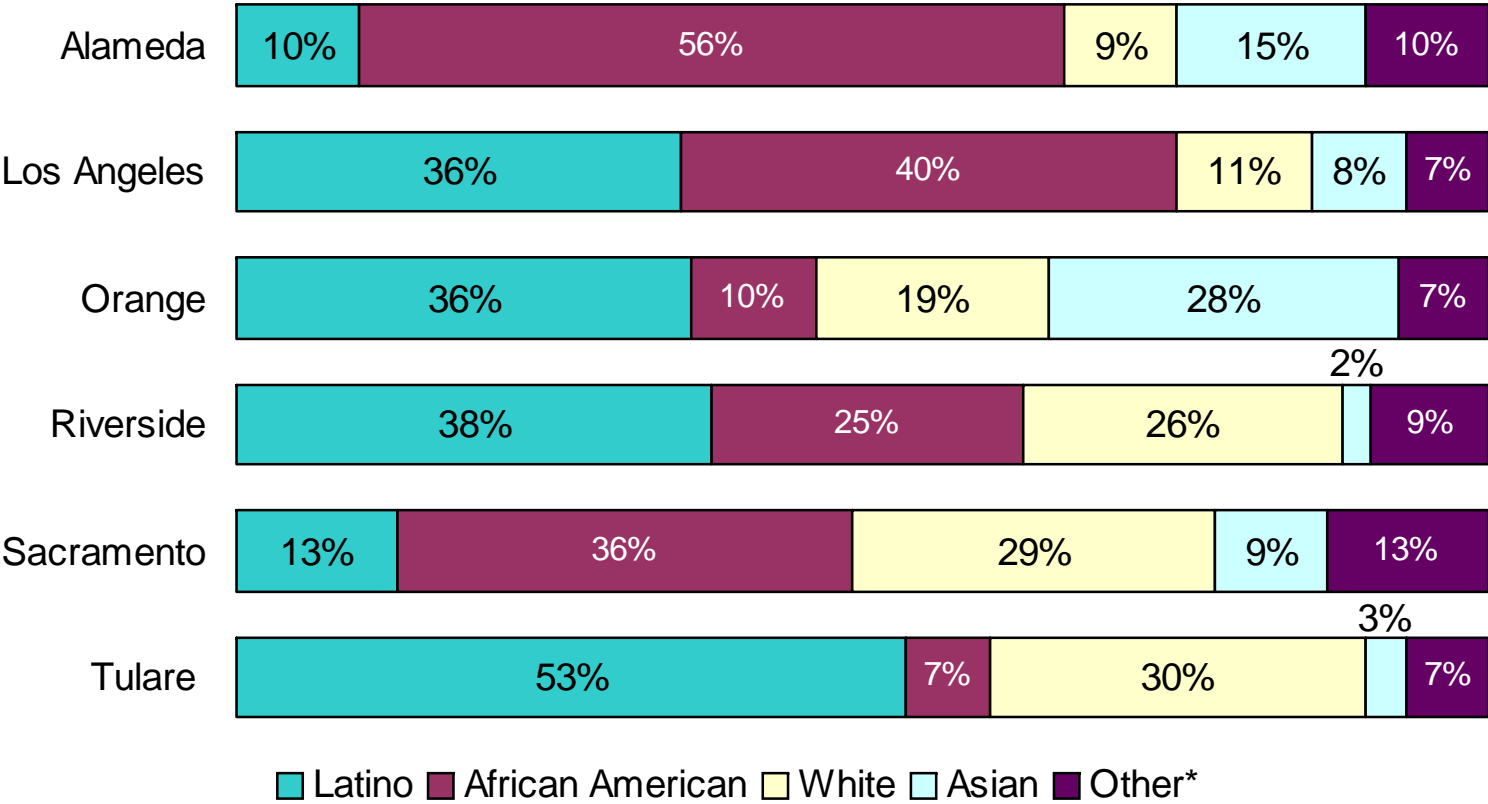
- 31 percent were Latino, 29 percent were African American, 18 percent were white, and 8 percent were Asian
- 30 percent had a child under three
- 56 percent had a child under six
- 46 percent had three or more children
- 40 percent had no high school diploma
- 48 percent have never been married
- 47 percent reported being employed
- 24 percent reported working 30 hours/week or more

# Key Differences Between Those About to Time Out and Other CalWORKs Recipients in the Focus Counties

At first-wave interview, those close to timing out:

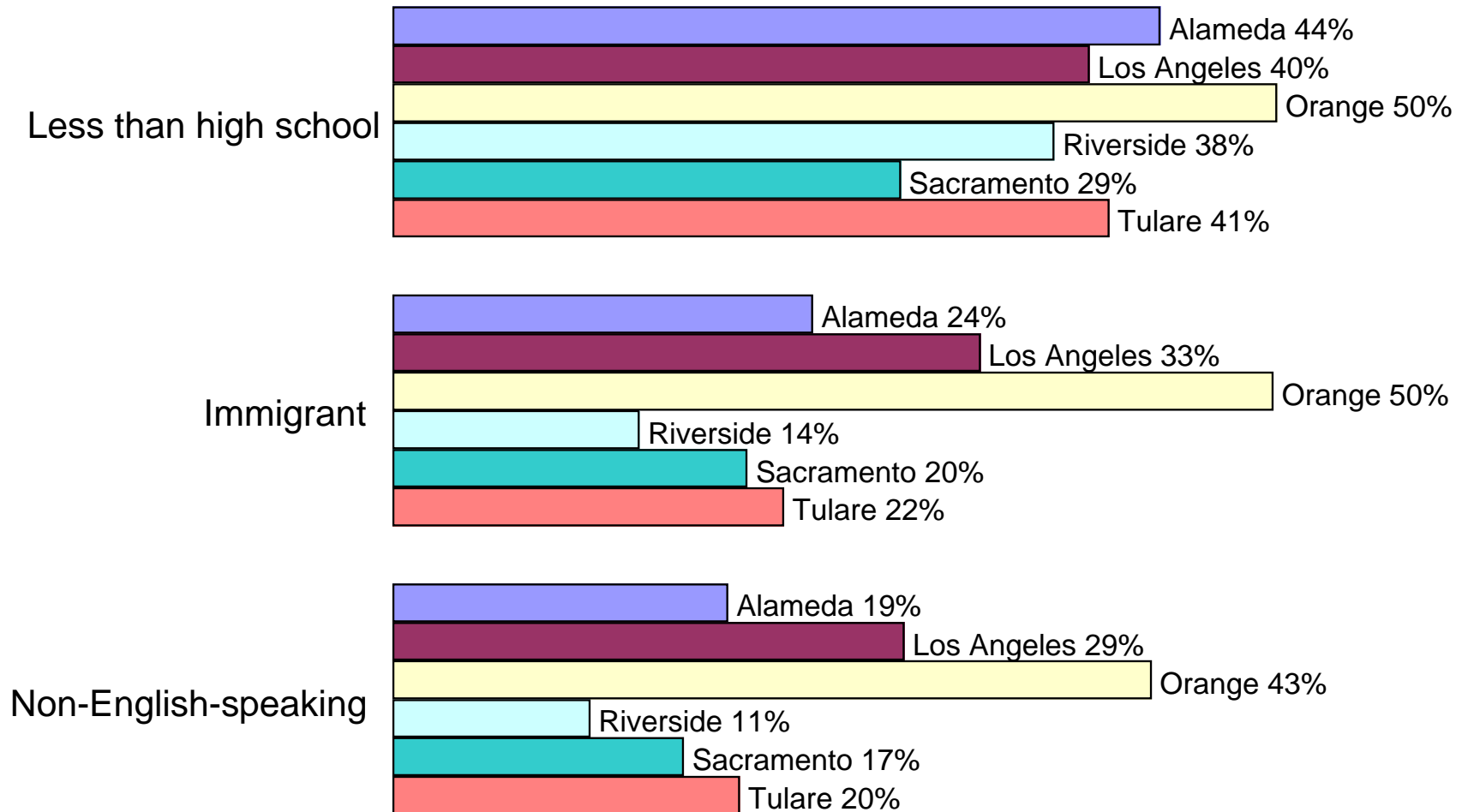
- Are older (more likely to be over age 25)
- Have more and older children
- Have longer work histories
- Are more likely to be African-American

# Ethnicity of Recipients Reaching the Time Limit, by County (At First-Wave Interview)



\*Other includes Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, those identifying as mixed ethnicity, and those who refused to identify their ethnicity.

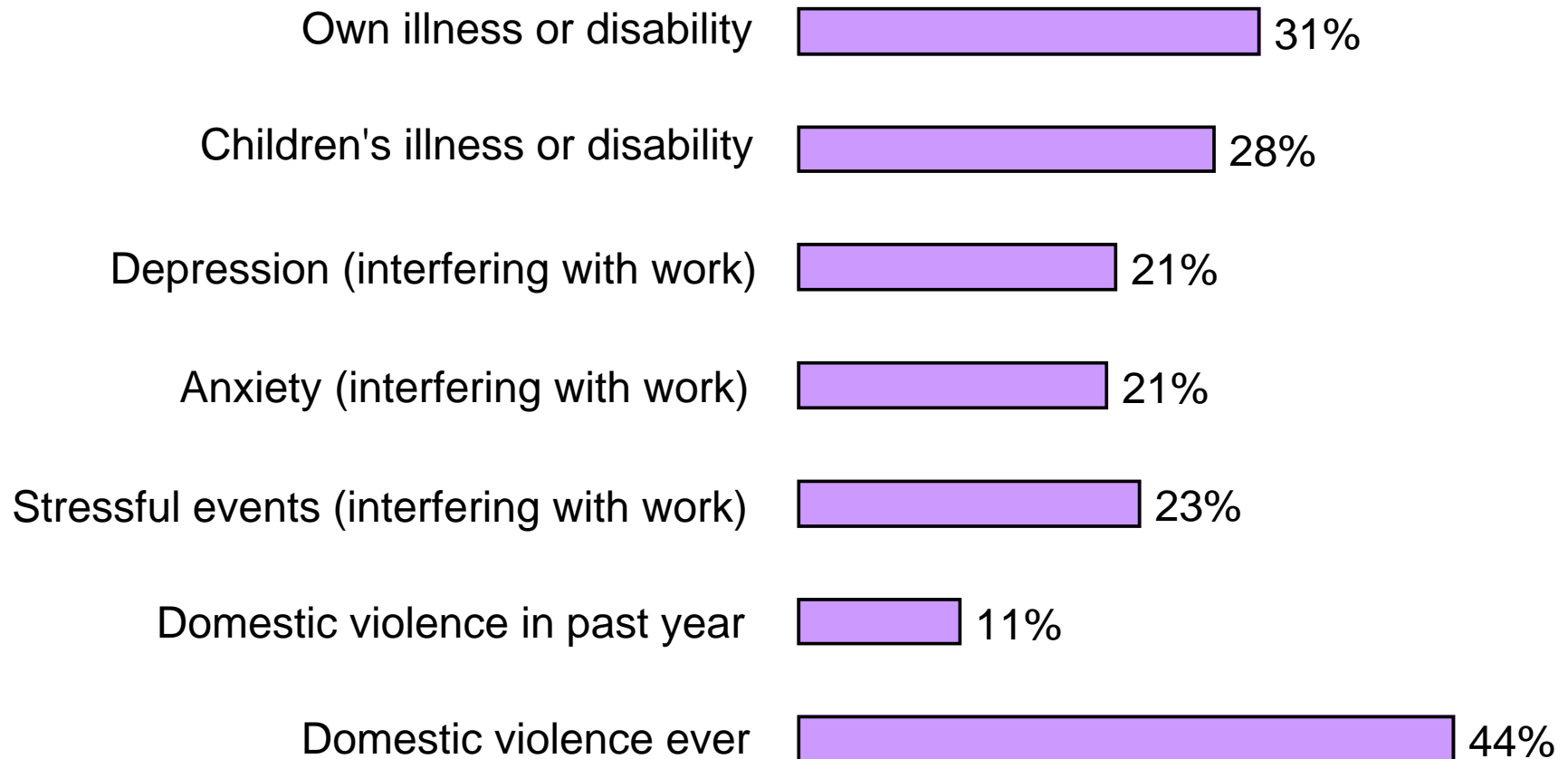
## Personal Characteristics of Recipients Approaching the Time Limit, by County (At First-Wave Interview)



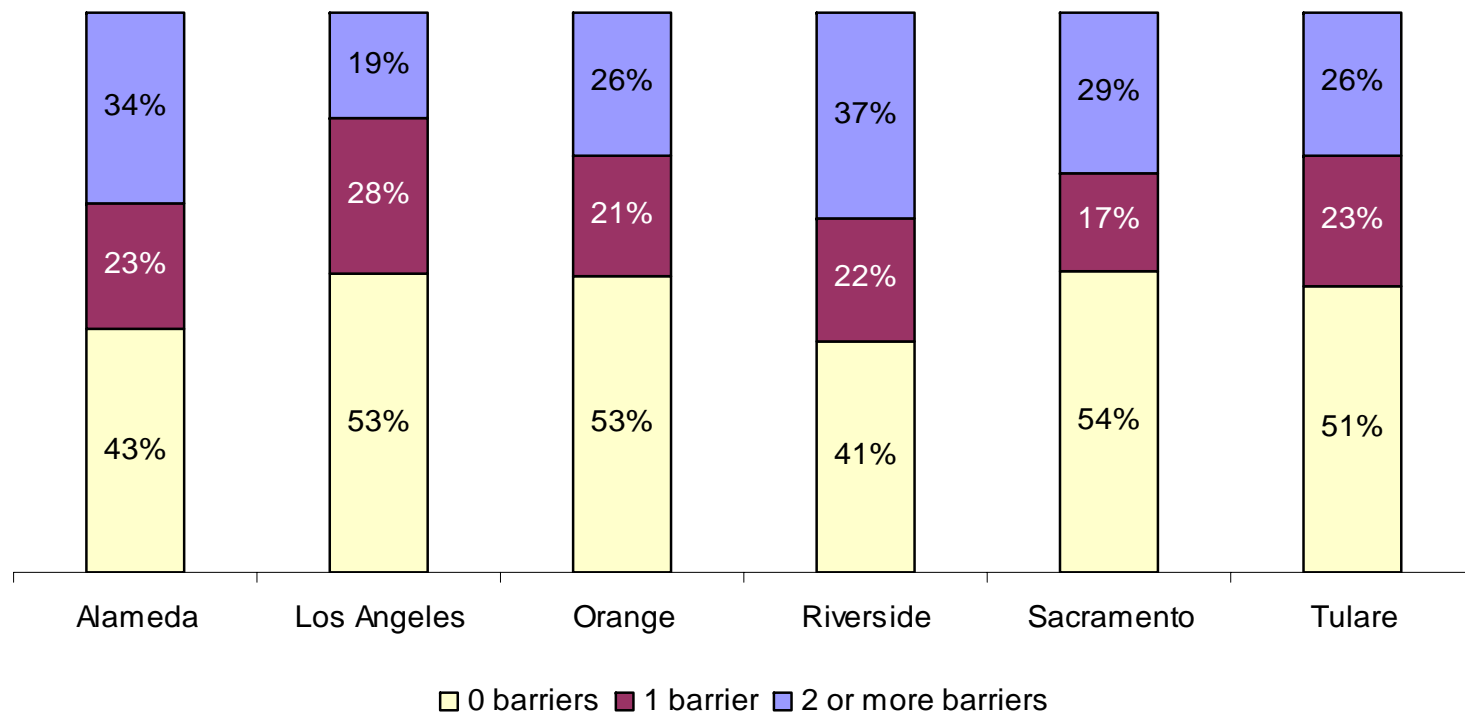
## Family Characteristics of Recipients Approaching the Time Limit, by County (At First-Wave Interview)

	<u>Alameda</u>	<u>Los Angeles</u>	<u>Orange</u>	<u>Riverside</u>	<u>Sacramento</u>	<u>Tulare</u>
Never married	61 %	55 %	37 %	51 %	50 %	34 %
Married or cohabiting	26	30	40	33	39	46
Three or more children	39	39	39	51	52	55
Youngest child under 3	26	26	20	34	32	38

## Self-Reported Potential Barriers to Employment and Self-Sufficiency (At First-Wave Interview)

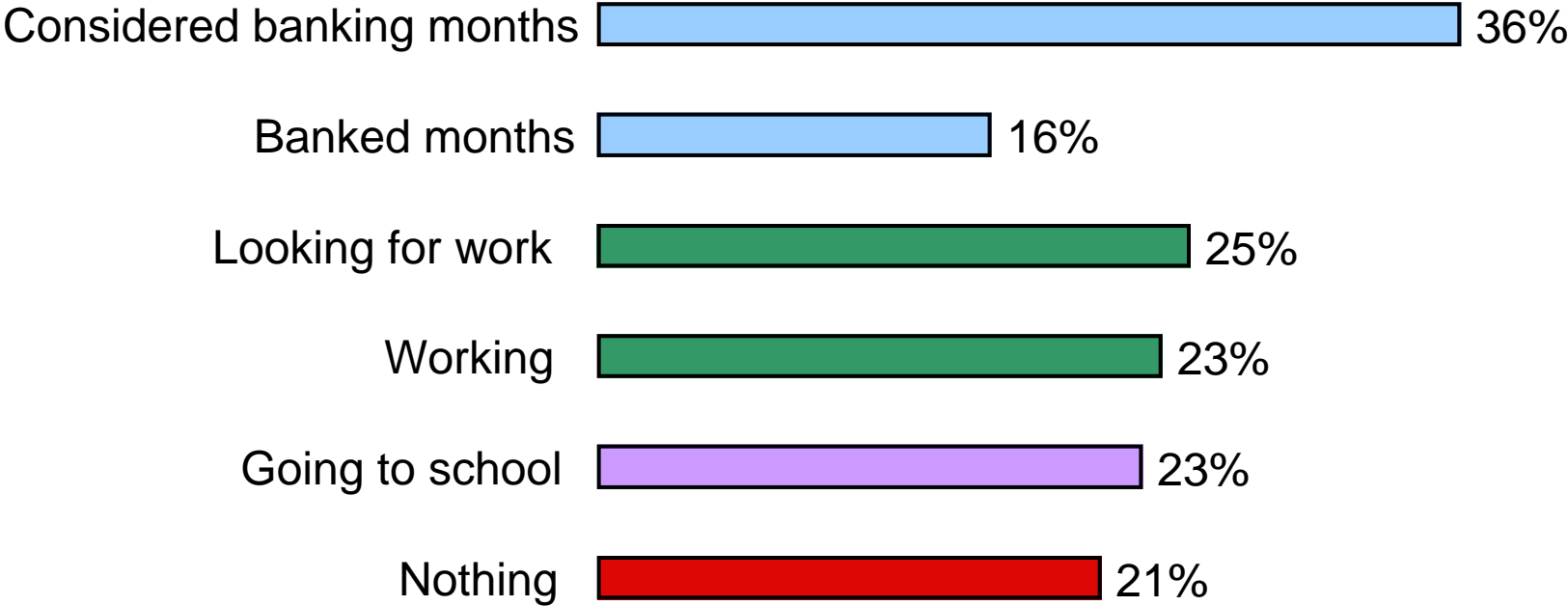


# Self-Reported Potential Barriers to Employment and Self-Sufficiency, by County (At First-Wave Interview)

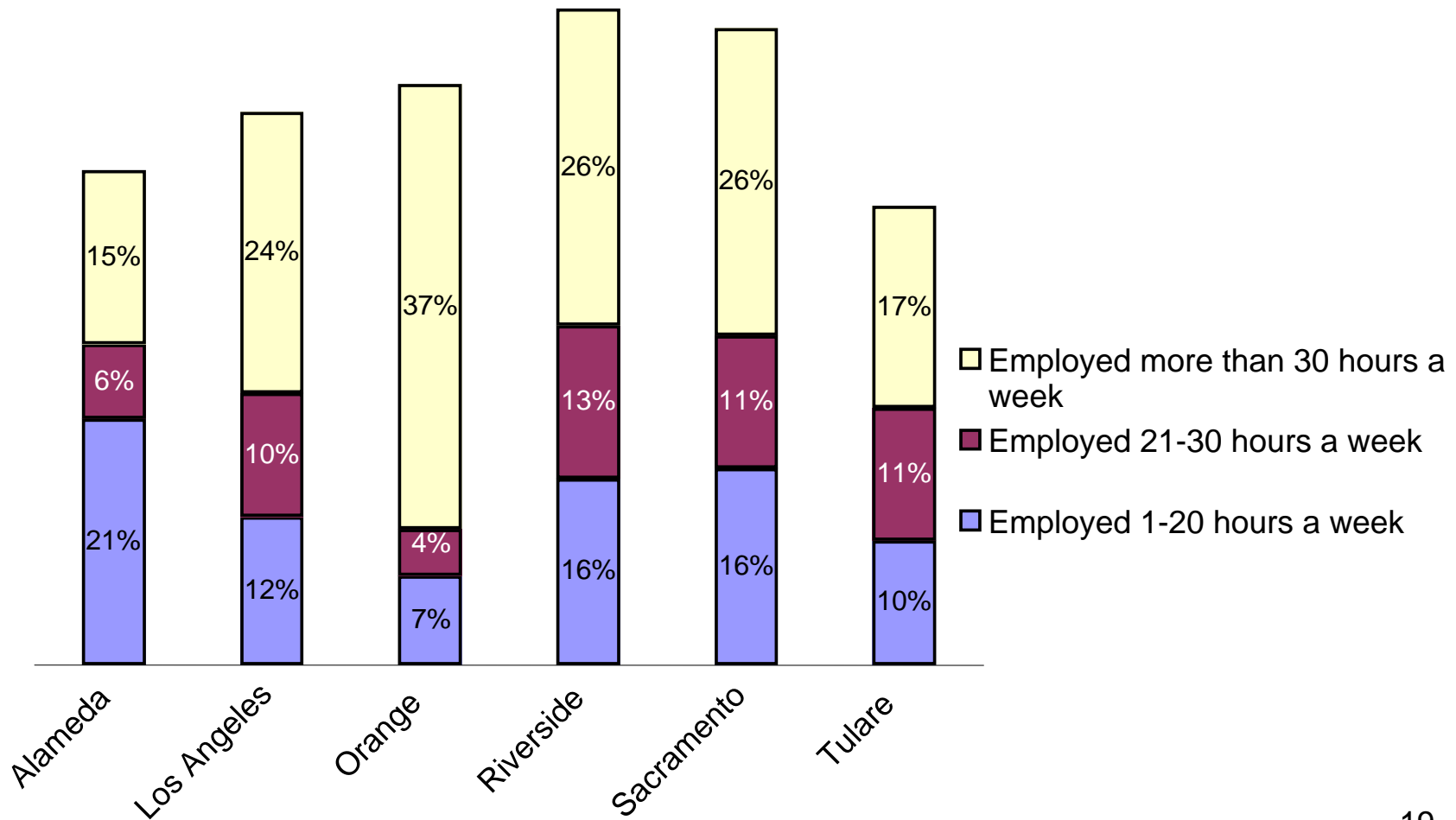


Note: Out of a potential list of 7 barriers, including depression, anxiety, stressful events, alcohol, drugs, domestic violence, and illness or disability.

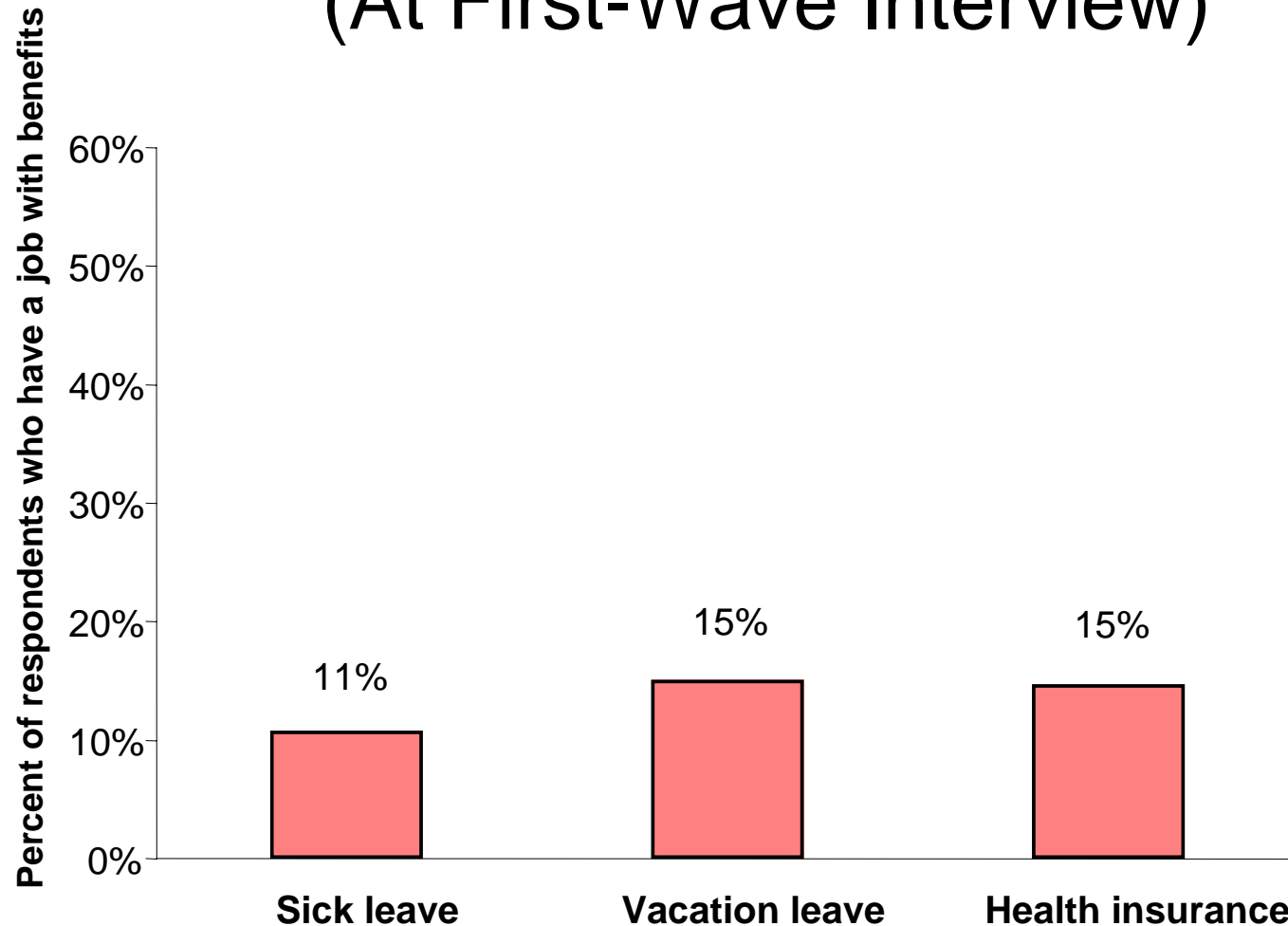
# What Recipients Reported Doing To Prepare for the Sixty-Month Time Limit



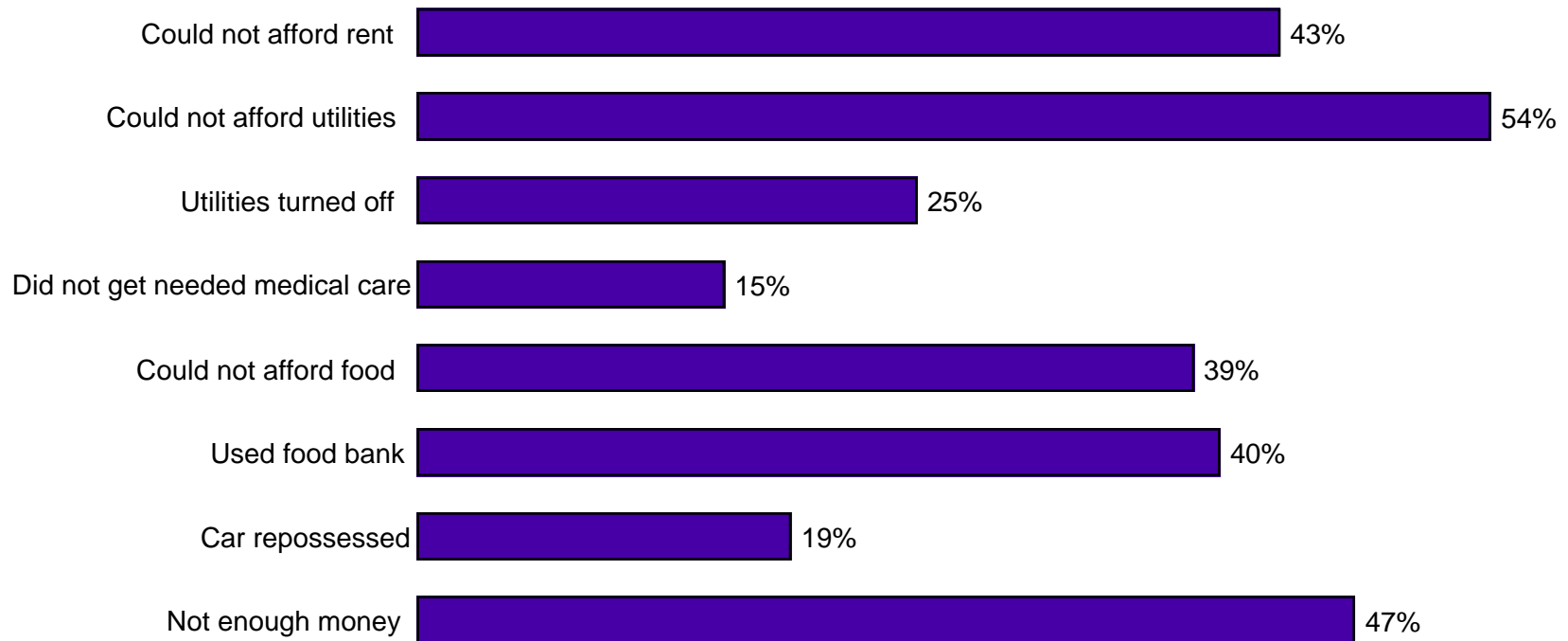
# Self-Reported Employment, by County (At First-Wave Interview)



# Self-Reported Employment Provides Few Job-Related Benefits (At First-Wave Interview)



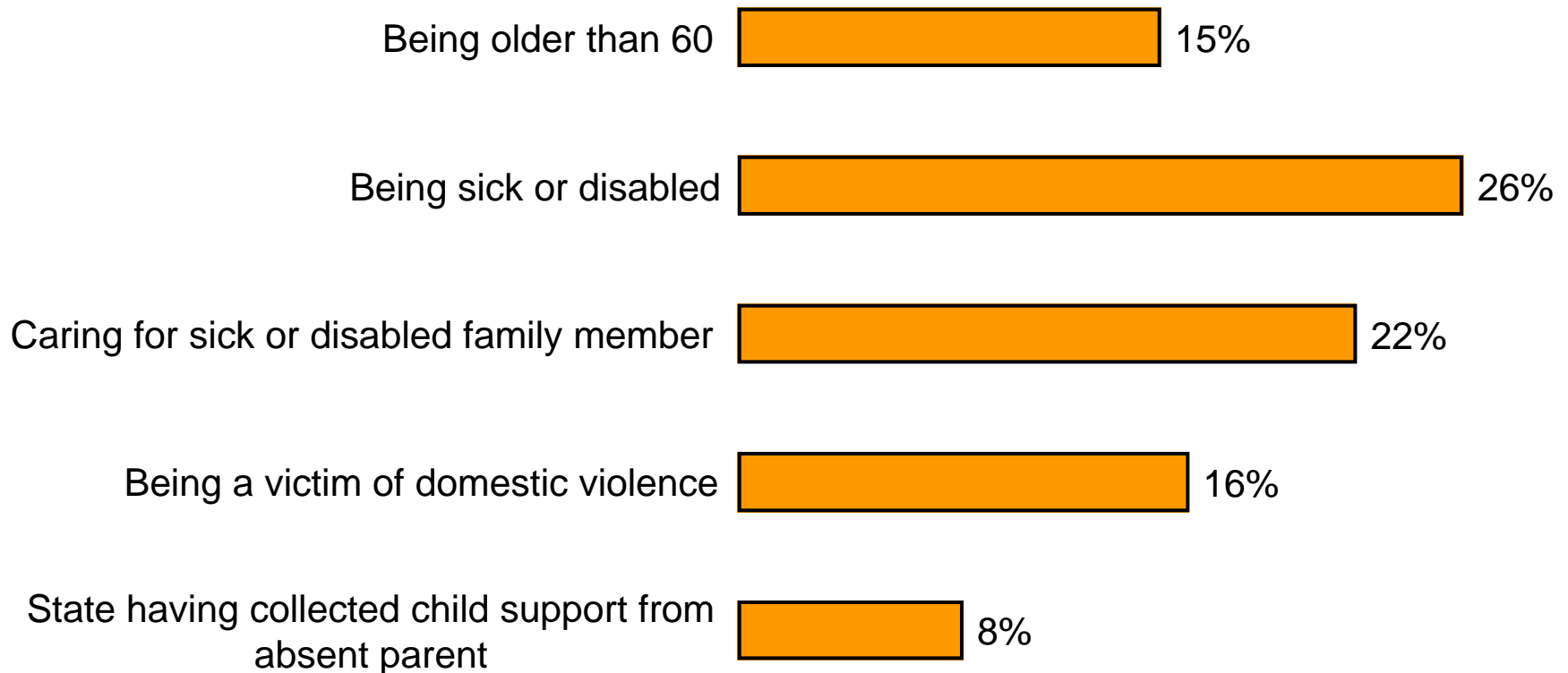
# Self-Reported Material Hardships (At First-Wave Interview)



# Recipients' Self-Reported Knowledge of the Time Limit

- 89 percent of interviewed recipients knew about the sixty-month time limit
- 54 percent of interviewed recipients remembered discussing the time limit with their case workers
  - 30 percent reported remembering this discussion happening two or more years ago
- 53 percent of those who reported knowing about the time limit did not know that the time limit does not apply to children

# Percent of Recipients Who Correctly Identified Reasons for Exemptions or Extensions



# Forthcoming Reports

Additional reports will address the following:

- How state and county time-limit policies and procedures may have changed since initial implementation
- Demographic characteristics of recipients who time out, how these characteristics may have changed over time, and how those who time out differ from those who exit CalWORKs in other ways
- How households subject to the time limit are faring

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