

The background features a teal upper section and a yellow lower section. On the right, there are large, stylized leaf shapes in brown and teal. On the left, there is a yellow circle with a brown center.

Whatcom County Point in Time Count

Whatcom Homeless Service Center at Opportunity Council

Whatcom County Health and Community Services

Why do we do it?

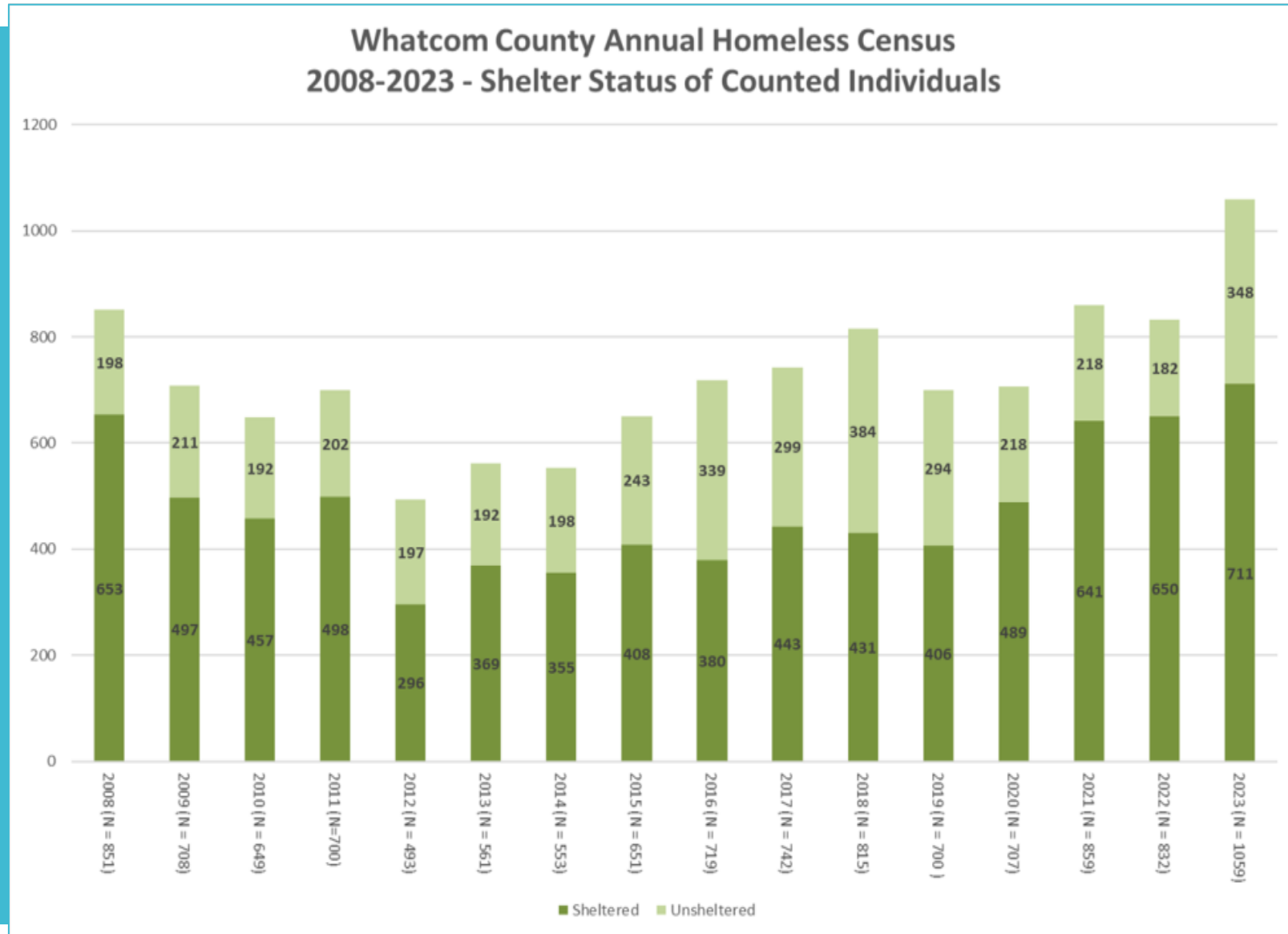
- ☞ HUD requirement of all Continuums of Care
 - ☞ HUD determines date, methodology, definitions
- ☞ This is just one way to evaluate homelessness
 - ☞ “Housing Pool” data (applications for housing programs)
 - ☞ School District Data
 - ☞ DSHS Data
- ☞ 2021 and 2022 were constrained by pandemic guidance and should be considered more of an undercount than usual



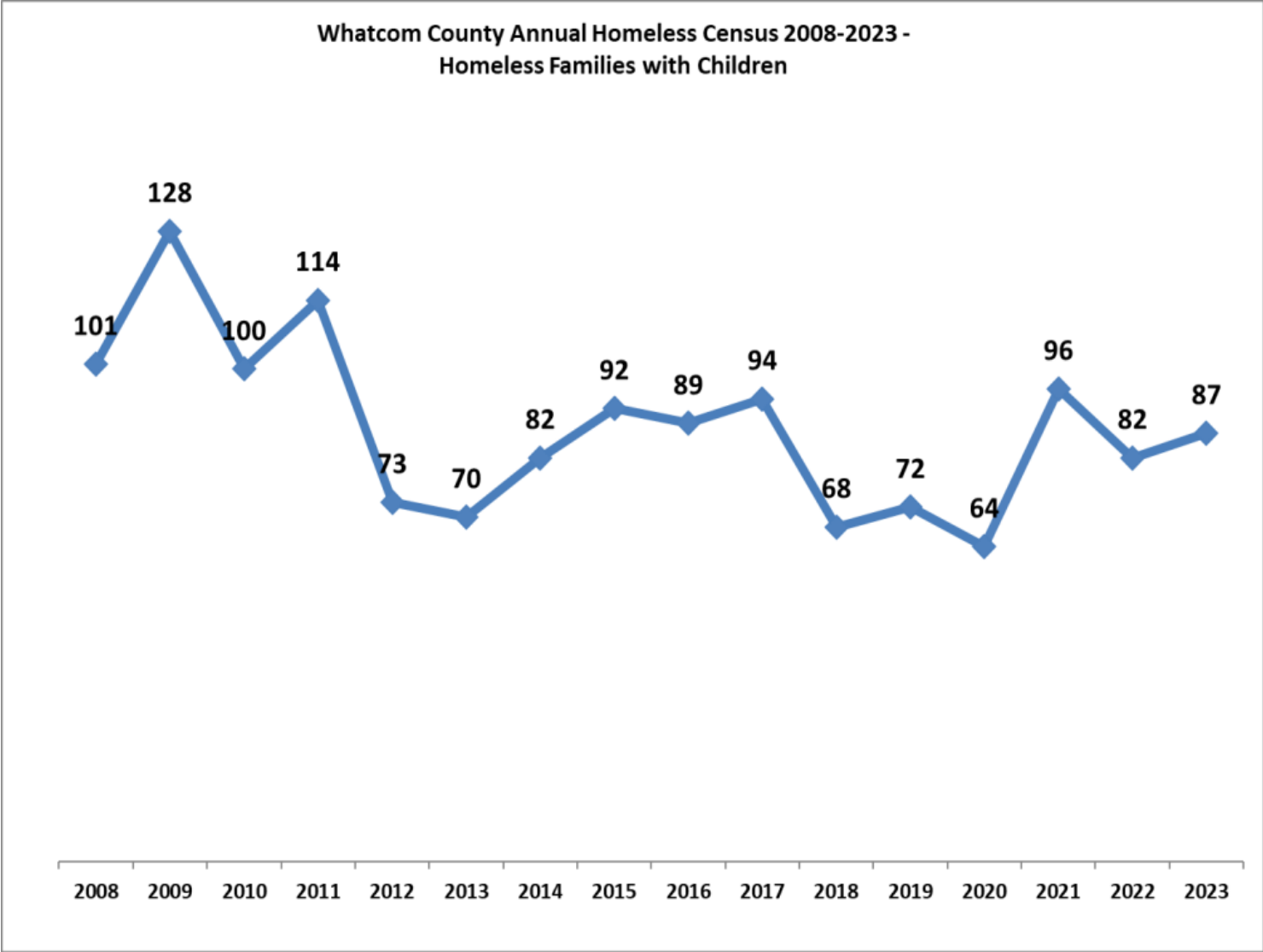
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Point in Time Count Report Demographics

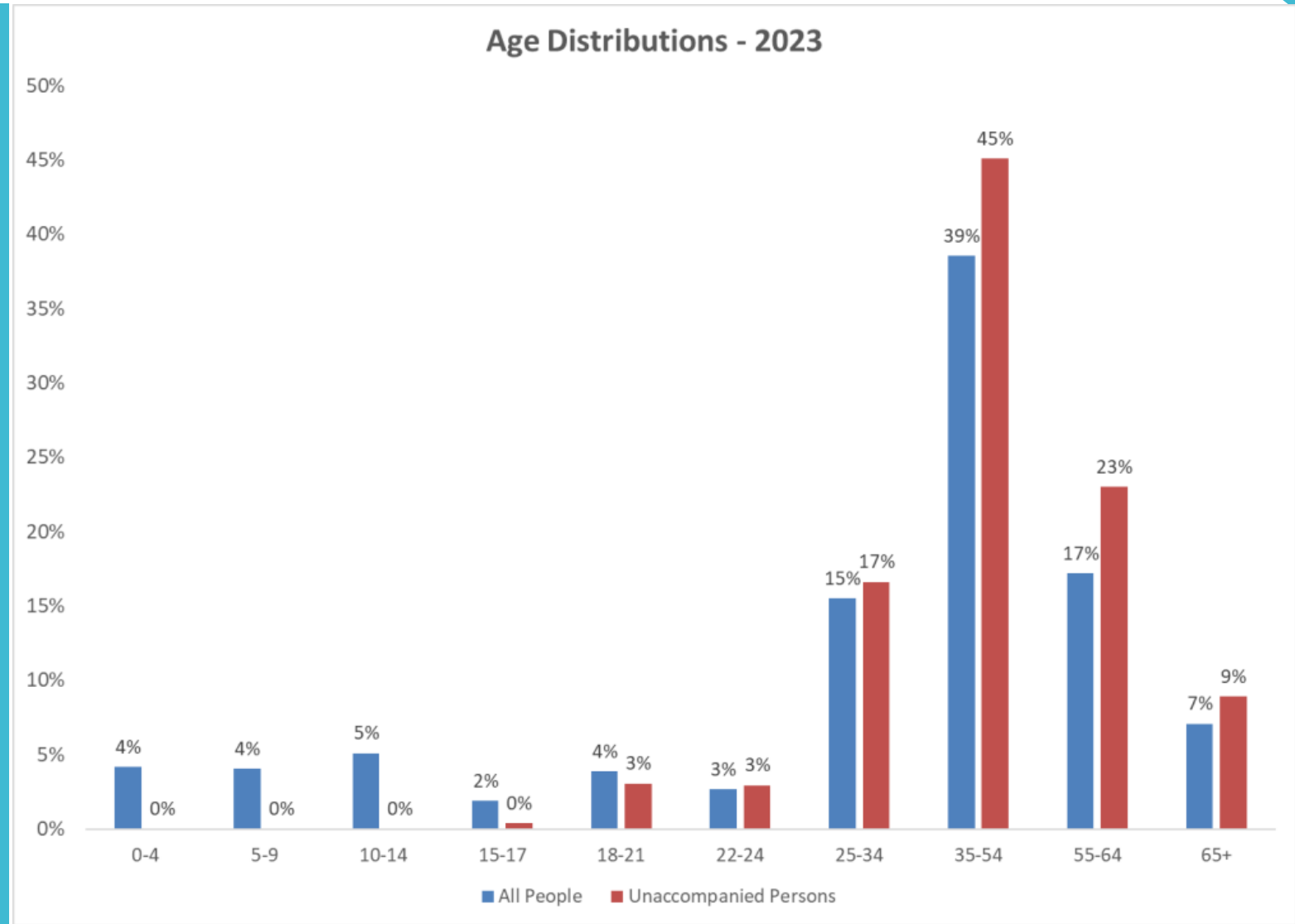
All Counted Individuals



Families with Children

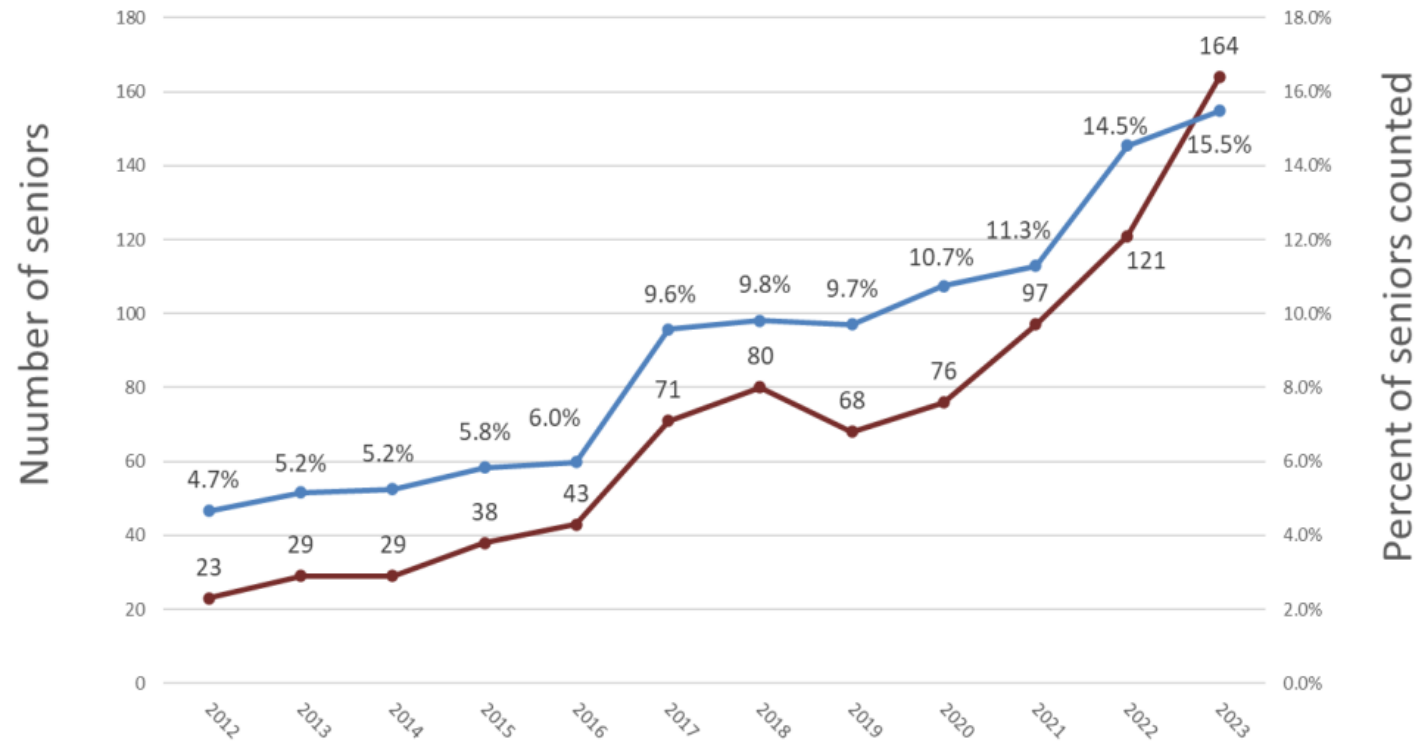


Age Distribution

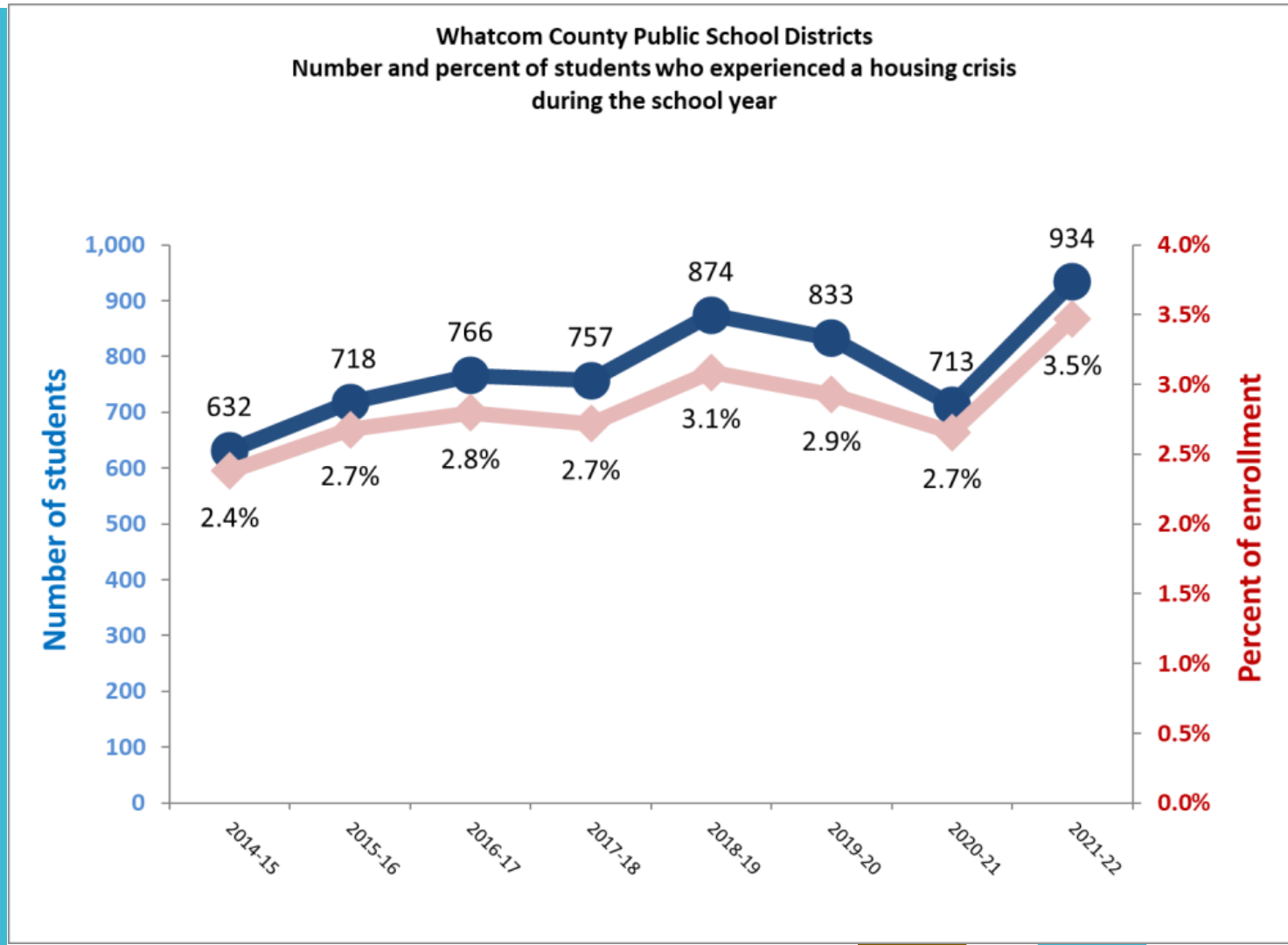


Seniors

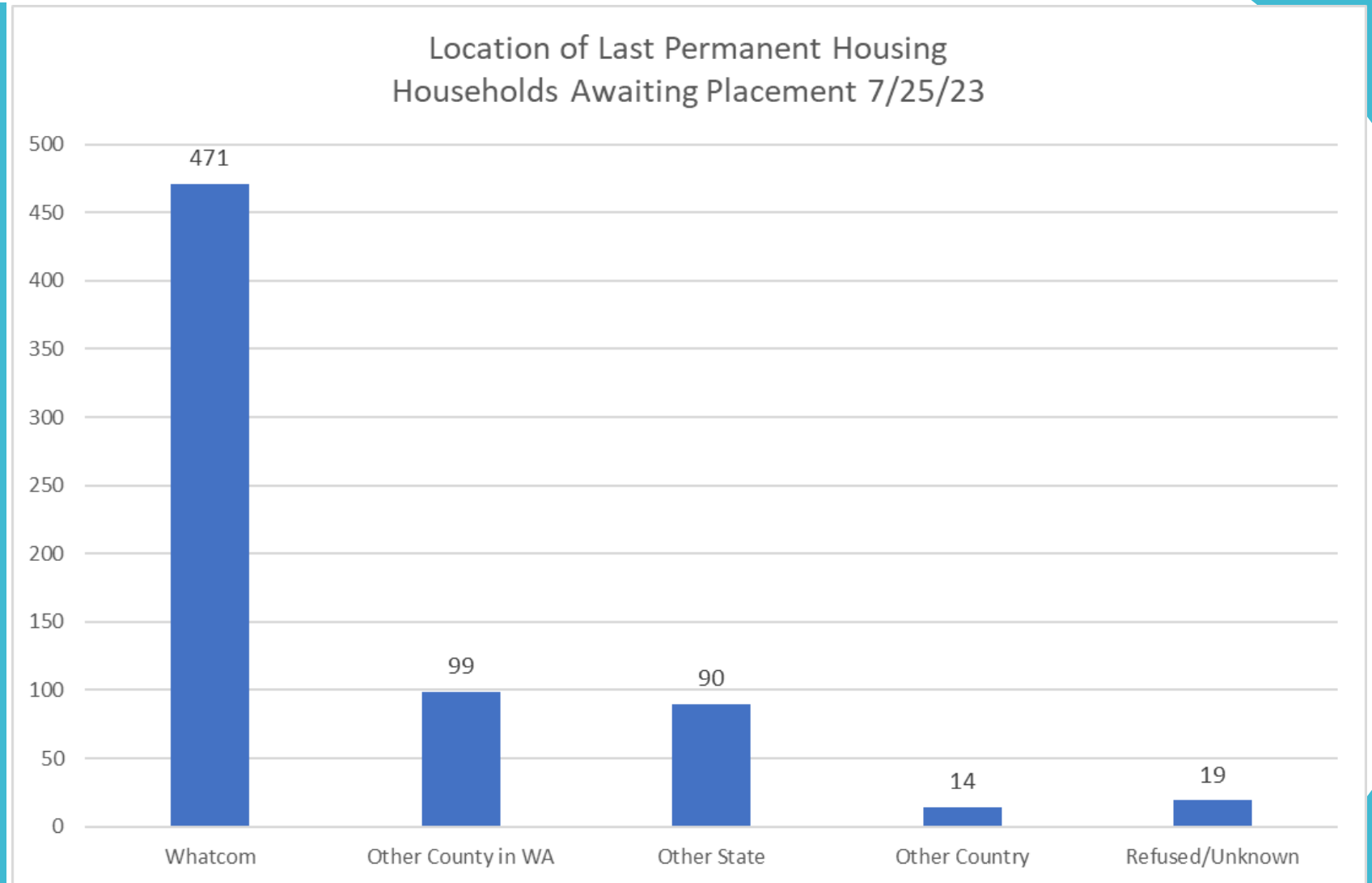
Number and Percent of Seniors age 60+ Counted



Data from Public Schools



Where did
people
become
homeless?



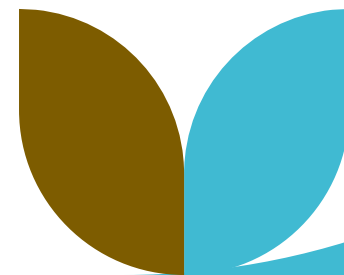
Regional Perspectives

- Washington State Point in Time Data
 - No unsheltered count from King County
 - Excluding King County, Washington State counted a 12% YoY increase in shelter use and 21% increase in unsheltered population
 - Whatcom's ratio of unsheltered-to-sheltered is below state average (34% instead of 41%)
 - Statewide, rate of self-disclosed substance use disorder was approximately twice as high for unsheltered people than for sheltered (31% vs. 17%)



Regional Perspectives

- ☞ HUD data (2022) had Washington State at 7th highest per capita rate of homelessness
- ☞ 40% of Whatcom County is at or below ALICE threshold, higher than state average of 34%
- ☞ Whatcom County saw a 4% increase in number of ALICE households from 2019-2021 – that's nearly 9,000 additional vulnerable households



Logistics and Limitations

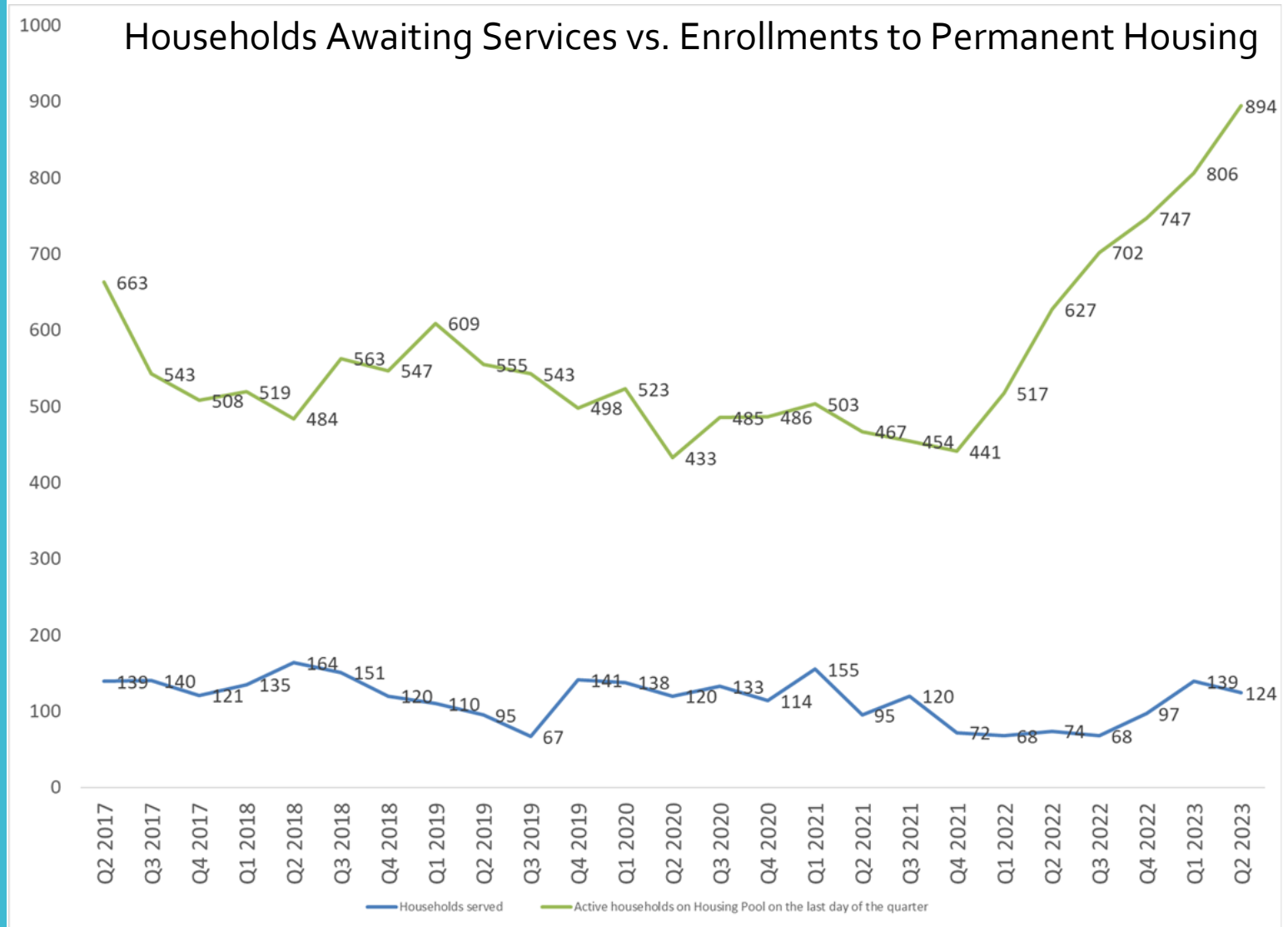
- ☞ January date – poor weather
- ☞ Volunteers and training
- ☞ HMIS/obtaining consent
- ☞ Funding limitations based on geography
- ☞ Homes in the county without water/sewer/electricity/heat are difficult to identify



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Homelessness in the Community

Housing Pool Trends



Local Funding Trends

- ☞ County invested more than \$7.2 million ARPA dollars in affordable housing projects, some of which are not yet online
- ☞ Funding for services has been elevated but unreliable; grants have come and gone with very little notice
- ☞ Generally, funding increased over last several years and looks to be stabilizing just a little below last year's highwater mark, but challenges remain



Housing Market Challenges

- ☞ University of Washington estimates that rents in Whatcom County have gone from \$981 in Spring '20 to \$1,489 in Spring '23 (+50%)
- ☞ Vacancy rates at 2.2% countywide
- ☞ Partners report that high rents cause homelessness and also make it harder to resolve
- ☞ Impact of housing costs amplified by rising cost of goods like food and gas, but especially childcare



Health, Housing and Crisis Response

☞ Waystation

- ☞ 24/7 Medical Respite (Opportunity Council)

- ☞ Business Hours Hygiene and Clinic (Unity Care NW)

☞ Permanent Supportive Housing and Emergency Shelter under strain

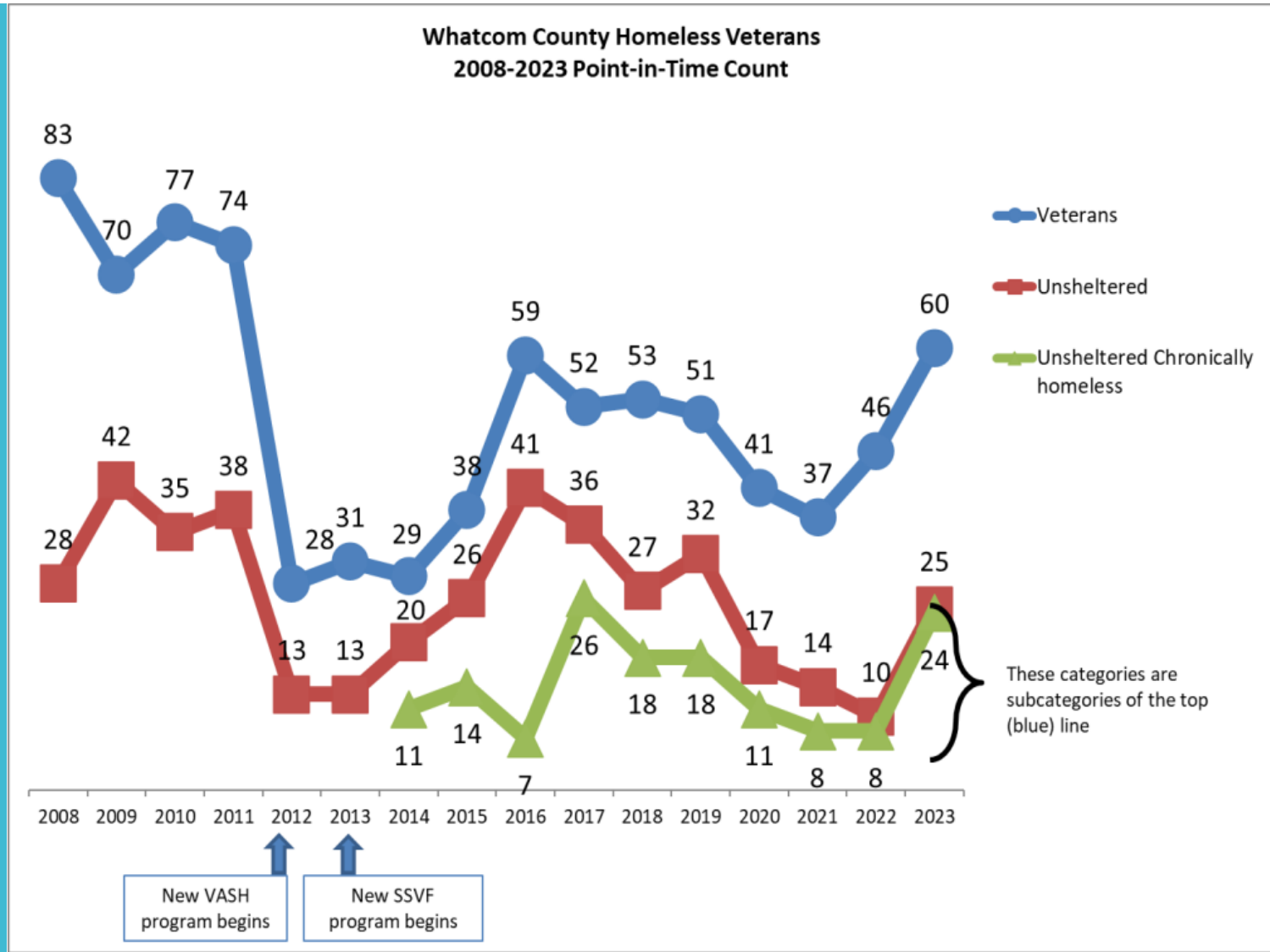
- ☞ There were 23 empty beds at the Mission when PIT was conducted – **why were 348+ individuals not using them?**

- ☞ PSH operators are unequipped to resolve complex issues that require non-housing interventions

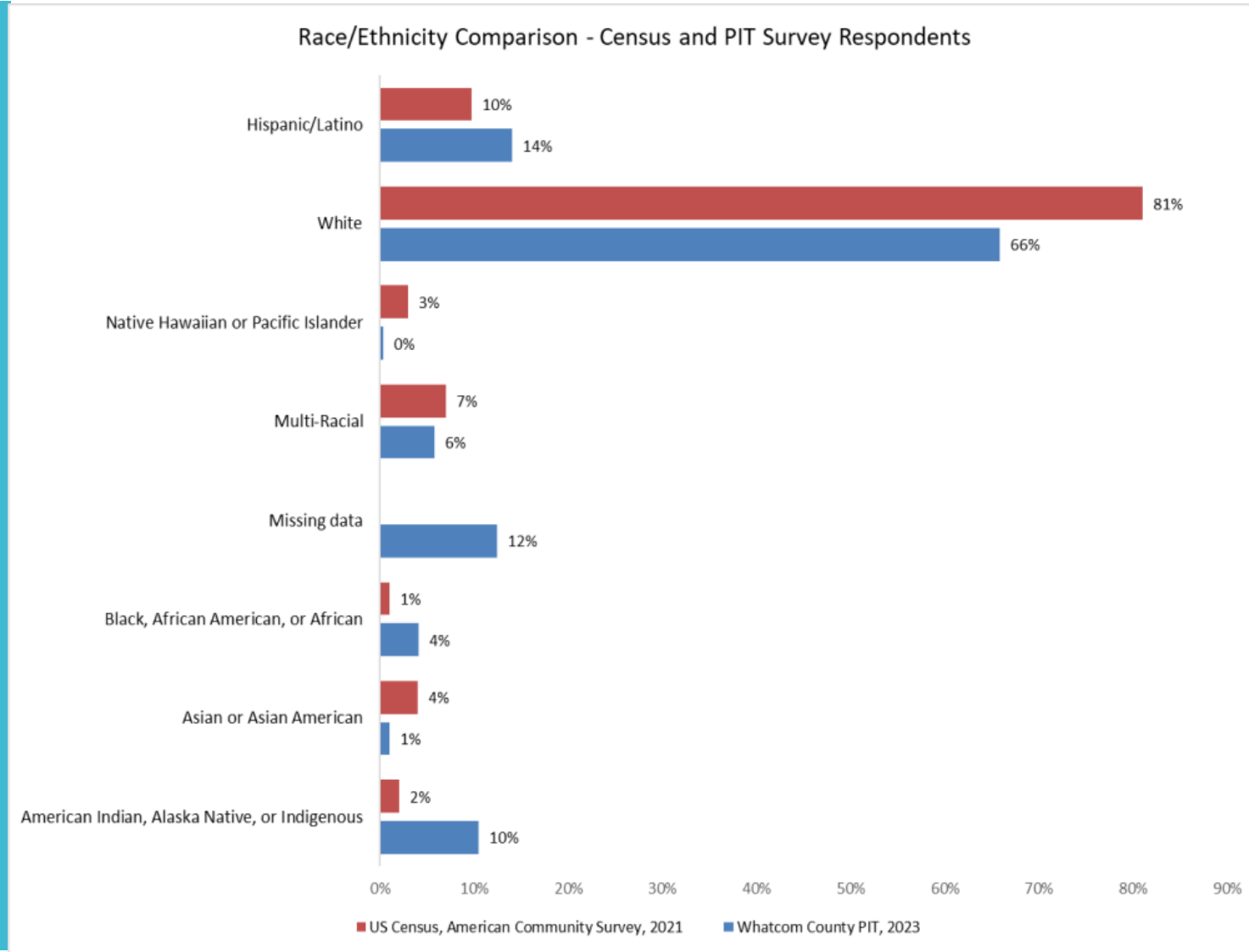
- ☞ Agency partners report more challenging behaviors than at any point in the past



Success with Special Populations



Racial Disparities



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Thank you