

**WORK-  
INTEGRATION  
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE  
(WISE) PROJECT  
FOR YOUTH  
(ONTARIO)**



**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
OISE | ONTARIO INSTITUTE  
FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION**

**A FIVE-YEAR WISE LONGITUDINAL RESEARCH PROJECT  
[2017-2022]  
INTERIM FINDINGS**

# OVERVIEW

- Introduction
  - Project's purpose, objective, and intended outcomes
- Methodology
- Preliminary Findings
  - Baseline data
  - 6-month follow-up data
- Next steps

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# THE PROJECT

- The goals of this longitudinal research project are to follow youth over time who are trained for workforce integration by a group of organizations and to obtain information on whether their circumstances are improving economically, socially and psychologically.
- In addition, the project intends to help the partner organizations to assess via social accounting whether the return (economic and social) is commensurate with the investment.
- In this presentation, we will present the preliminary findings from our first look at the baseline and 6-month follow-up data
- Laurie Mook, ASU, will present the social accounting work related to the project

# OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

## Objectives

1. Assess how WISEs training at-risk youth for workplace integration are achieving this goal over time.
2. Compare the impacts of WISEs for training at-risk youth with more conventional government-funded programs.
3. Analyze whether the economic and social return of WISEs are commensurate with the investment.
4. Build capacity in our partner organizations

## Outcomes

1. Understand *the participants of WISE at-risk youth training programs* and their experiences and learning dimensions in the programs.
2. Understand *participants' efforts to integrate into the workforce.*
3. Understand *the impact on organizations and funders* by accounting for social impacts of investments.
4. Facilitate capacity building in the sector via social accounting workshops with organizations, community café's, regular webinars, other knowledge mobilization methods.

# METHODOLOGY

## Approach

- Longitudinal, quantitatively driven, mixed methods study
- In-person baseline survey from Sept 2017 to Dec 2018
- Follow-up online survey after six months, one year, two years and three years (in-process)
- A small portion of participants are being interviewed by phone as well (in-process)

## The survey instrument

- Demographics (i.e., age, gender, marital status)
- Current status on housing, employment, and schooling
- Challenges for securing employment and reasons for entering the training program
- Personal satisfaction on different aspects of life, including financial, family situation and access to services

## The sample

- 619 youth between 17 and 35 yrs old who are in employment or skills training programs in Ontario
- The youth participated in training facilitated by 8 partner organizations
  - 4 SEs, 4 traditional training programs
- Currently we have a 56% retention rate at 6-month follow-up from baseline, and 88% at 1 year from 6-month follow-up
- Current status:
  - 348 6-month and 204 1-year follow-up surveys completed

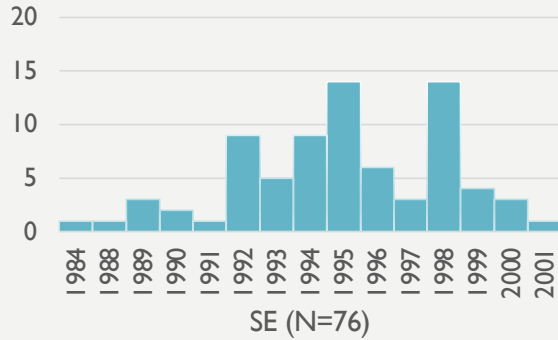


# FIRST LOOK AT BASELINE SURVEY DATA

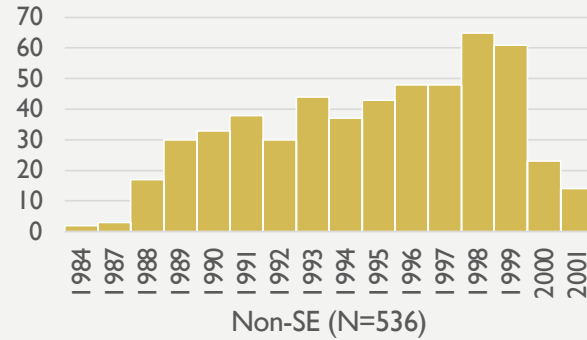
## THE PARTICIPANTS

- 619 participants completed the baseline survey between Sep 2017 and Dec 2018.
- Average age for both the SE and non-SE group is 22/23 years
- A greater proportion of SE participants identified as non-binary, gender fluid or trans

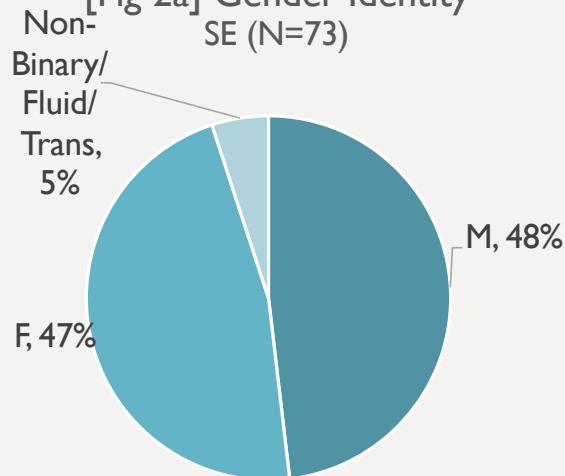
[Fig 1b] Year of Birth



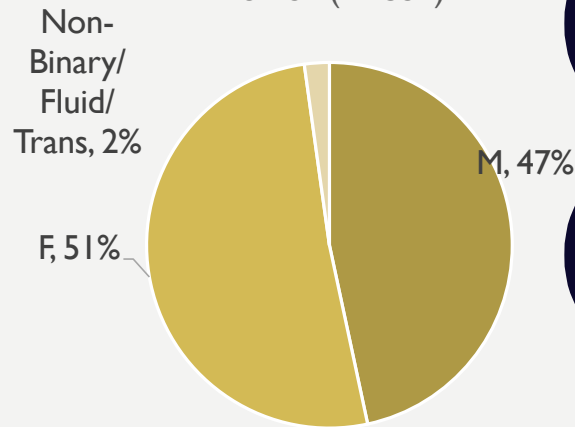
[Fig 1a] Year of Birth



[Fig 2a] Gender Identity SE (N=73)



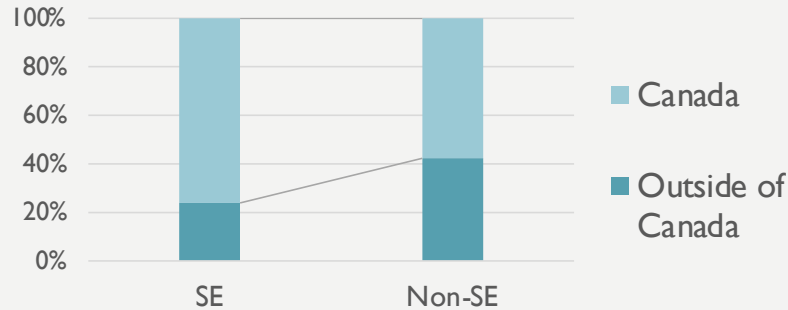
[Fig 2b] Gender Identity Non-SE (N=534)



# THE PARTICIPANTS (CONT'D)

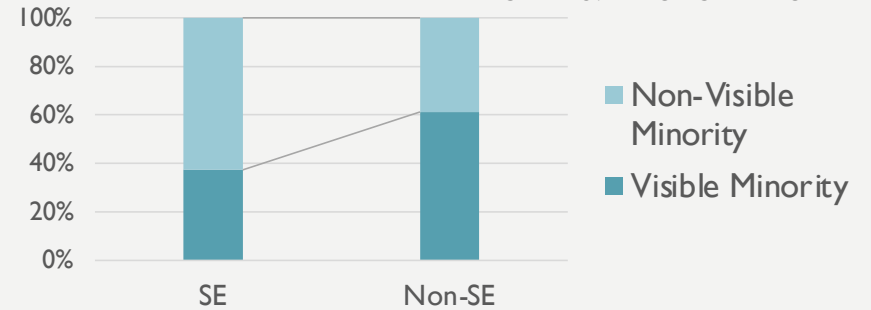
[Fig 3] Country of Birth

Non-SE N=508 SE N=71



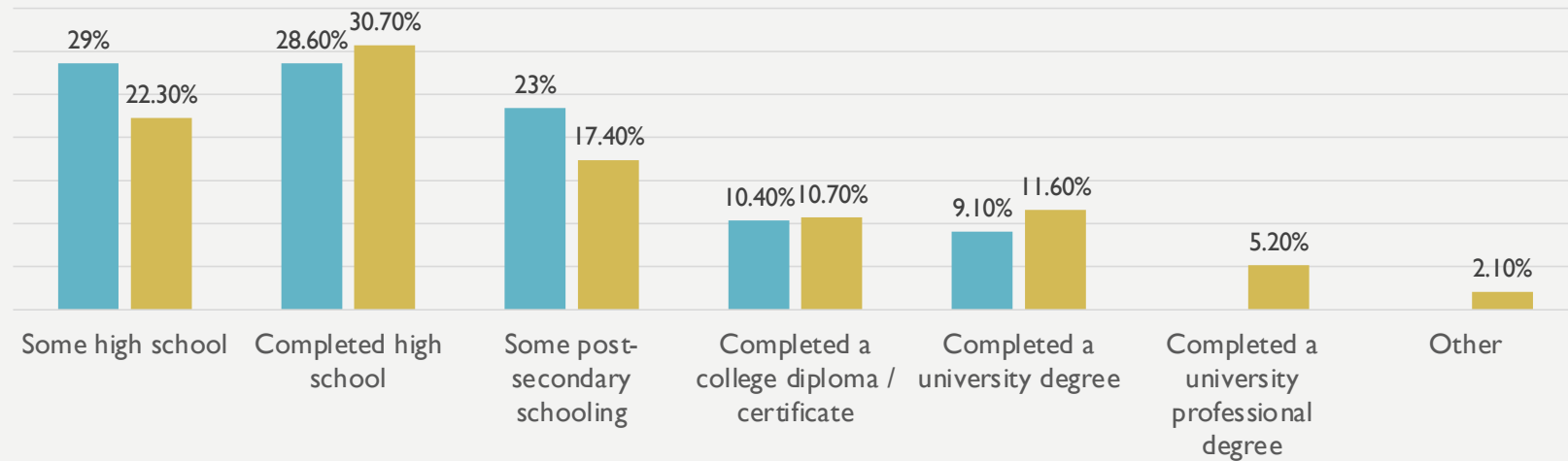
[Fig 4] Visible Minority

SE N=67 Non-SE N=482



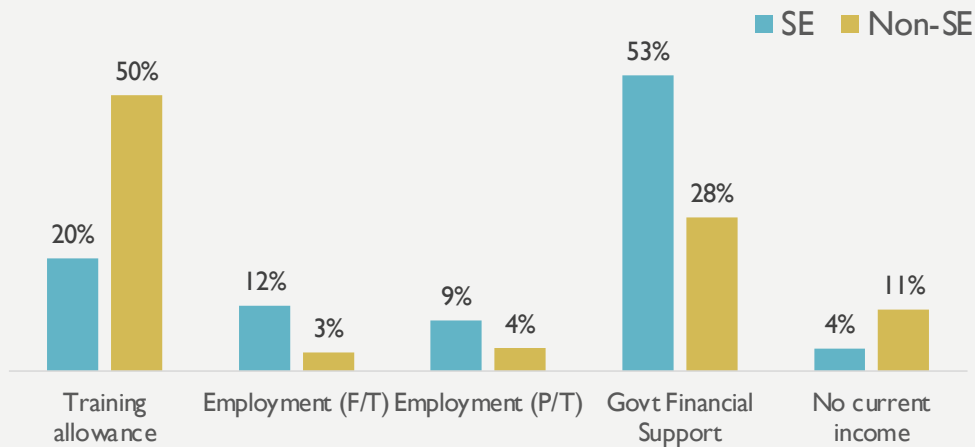
[Fig 5] Highest level of schooling

SE Non-SE

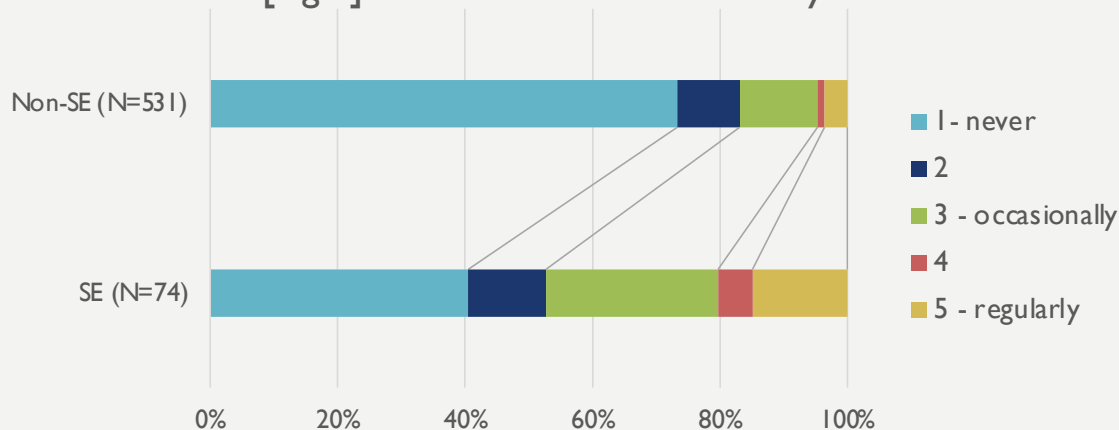




[Fig 6] Income sources\*



[Fig 7] Used food bank in the last year

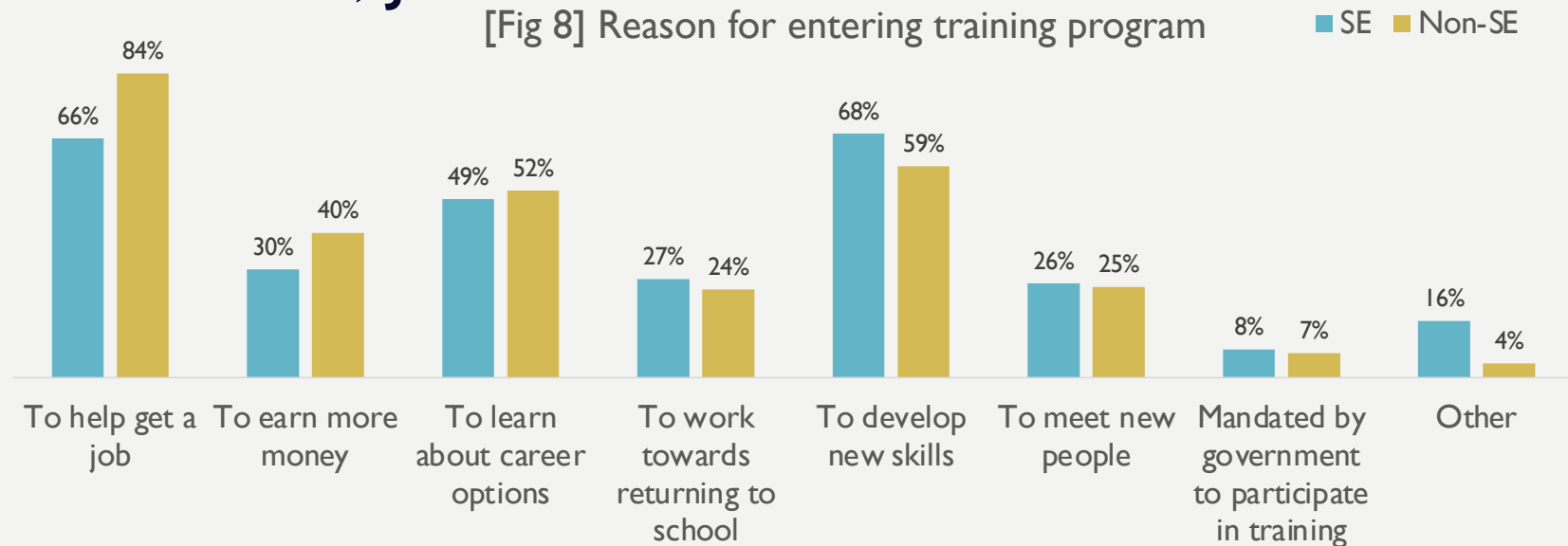


## ECONOMIC SITUATION OF PARTICIPANTS

- A much larger portion of non-SE participants reported receiving training allowance, while a much larger portion of SE participants reported receiving financial assistance; \*note missing data and reliability issue with income question
- Among those who reported their training allowance, the training allowance accounted for the majority of their income.
- The proportion of participants who reported at least an occasional use of food bank or other similar services was much higher for the SE group (47.3%) compared to the non-SE group (16.9%)
- Housing:
  - For Non-SE participants, 38% rent, 49% live with family, 4% couch-surfing/ staying in shelter/ elsewhere rent free
  - For SE participants, 45% rent, 19% live with family, 19% are couch-surfing/ staying in shelter/ elsewhere rent free

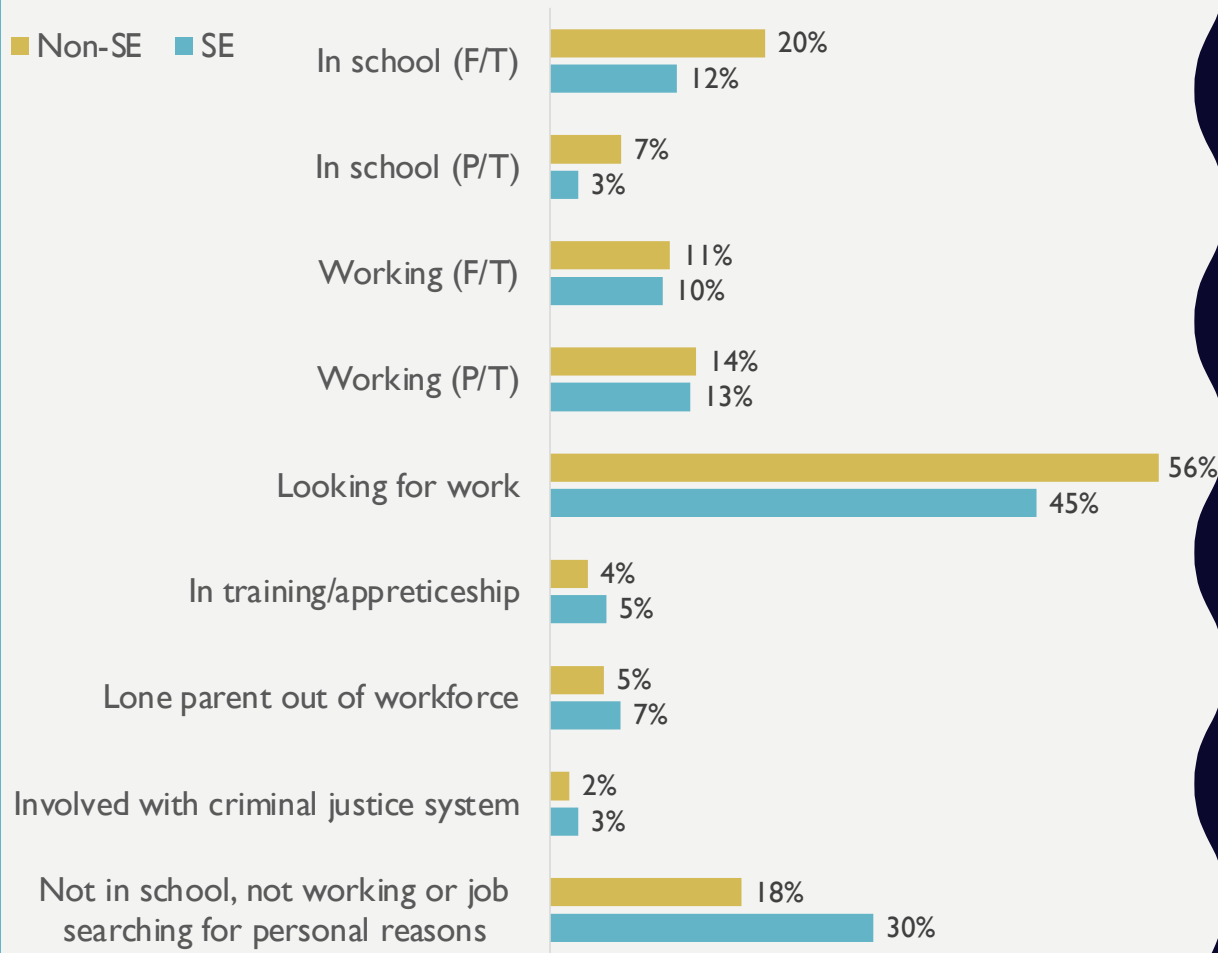
# TRAINING, JOB SEARCH AND THE FUTURE

[Fig 8] Reason for entering training program



- Other reasons for entering program given by SE participants include getting sector-specific experience, getting back into a routine, and personal development; for non-SE participants, reasons include language development & supportive environment
- The participants talked about a wide range of work that they would like to be doing in 3 years' time; the non-SE group would most like to work in business/admin, healthcare, and retail/customer service; the SE group would most like to work in creative arts/entertainment, food service, and skilled trades
- Participants defined success in many different ways, with SE and non-SE participants most frequently reporting financial stability, career satisfaction, and personal happiness
- Income expectations in 3 years average \$23 per hour for the SE group and \$30 per hour for the non-SE group
- After 3 years, many participants would like to complete some level of post-secondary education. 33% of SE and 26% of non-SE hope to complete college; 16% of SE and non-SE want to finish university

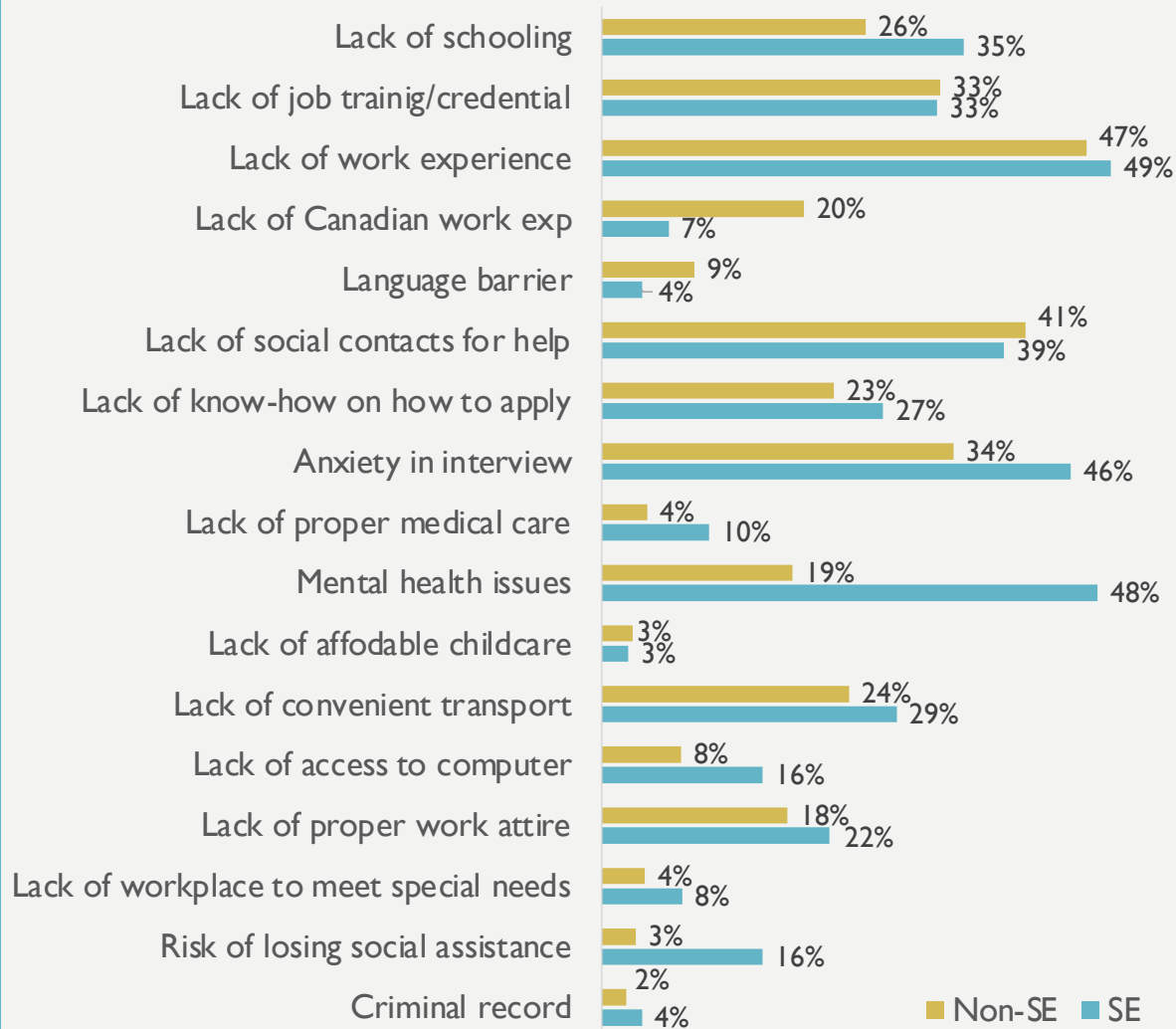
[Fig 9] Prior to entering training program, participants were:



## TRAINING, JOB SEARCH AND THE FUTURE (CONT'D)

- Smaller proportion of SE participants were in school or looking for work prior to entering their training program, compared to non-SE participants
- A greater proportion of SE participants noted they were not in school, not working, and not job-searching for personal reasons prior to starting their training program, as compared to the non-SE participants

[Fig 10] Barriers to employment/job search



## TRAINING, JOB SEARCH AND THE FUTURE (CONT'D)

- The biggest differences between the SE and non-SE groups lie in the much higher proportions of SE participants who indicated they fear losing government financial assistance, mental health challenges, interview anxiety, access to a computer, and lack of schooling as barriers to their employment or job search
- A greater proportion of non-SE participants noted language barrier and lack of Canadian work experience as barriers to employment; this reflects the higher proportion of non-Canadian born in the non-SE group

Table 1

<b>Asset Areas</b>	SE <i>M(SD)</i>	Non-SE <i>M(SD)</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>
Financial Wellbeing	2.25(.83)	2.46(.89)	591	1.91
Personal Wellbeing	3.01(.86)	3.40(.90)	605	3.53*
Access to Services	3.41(.84)	3.65(.82)	600	2.36*
Human Capital	3.33(.81)	3.53(.78)	600	2.12*
Family & Community Relations	3.15(.79)	3.41(.84)	598	2.59*

\*  $p < .05$

### Examples of the items participants rated under different Asset Areas

#### Financial Wellbeing Scale

- Personal income
- Household income
- Savings
- Ability to borrow money
- How much money you owe others
- Ability to pay for food
- Ability to pay for housing
- Enough money to pay bills

#### Personal Wellbeing Scale

- Motivation
- Self-confidence
- Ability to speak out
- Optimism
- Self worth
- Stress level
- Health

## LIFE SATISFACTION

- Using a scale of 1-5, the participants rated their level of satisfaction on a series of items belonging to 5 areas of wellbeing: Financial Wellbeing, Personal Wellbeing, Access to Services, Human Capital, Family & Community Relations
- For each asset area, the item scores were averaged into a scale score for each participant (i.e., each participant had a score for each of the 5 areas of wellbeing)
- Across all 5 asset areas, the SE group had lower ratings (i.e., less satisfied with all 5 asset areas) as compared to the non-SE group
- In independent samples t-tests, the difference between the SE and non-SE groups were statistically significant for the 3 areas: Personal Wellbeing, Access to Services, Family & Community Relations

# BASELINE: PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

- There are marked differences in profile between youth who are supported in social enterprises and youth in more conventional, classroom-based training programs
- The overall picture suggests that participants from SEs as a group were in greater precarity at baseline (i.e., higher proportion of SE participants who had less schooling, accessed food banks at least occasionally, experienced barriers to employment relating to mental health and fear of losing government financial assistance, as compared to participants from non-SE participants; SE participants also expressed lower satisfaction with the different areas of wellbeing examined)
- Non-Canadian born and less-precarious groups tend to part of non-SE programs over SE programs



# SIX-MONTH FOLLOW-UP

MARCH 2018 TO JUNE 2019

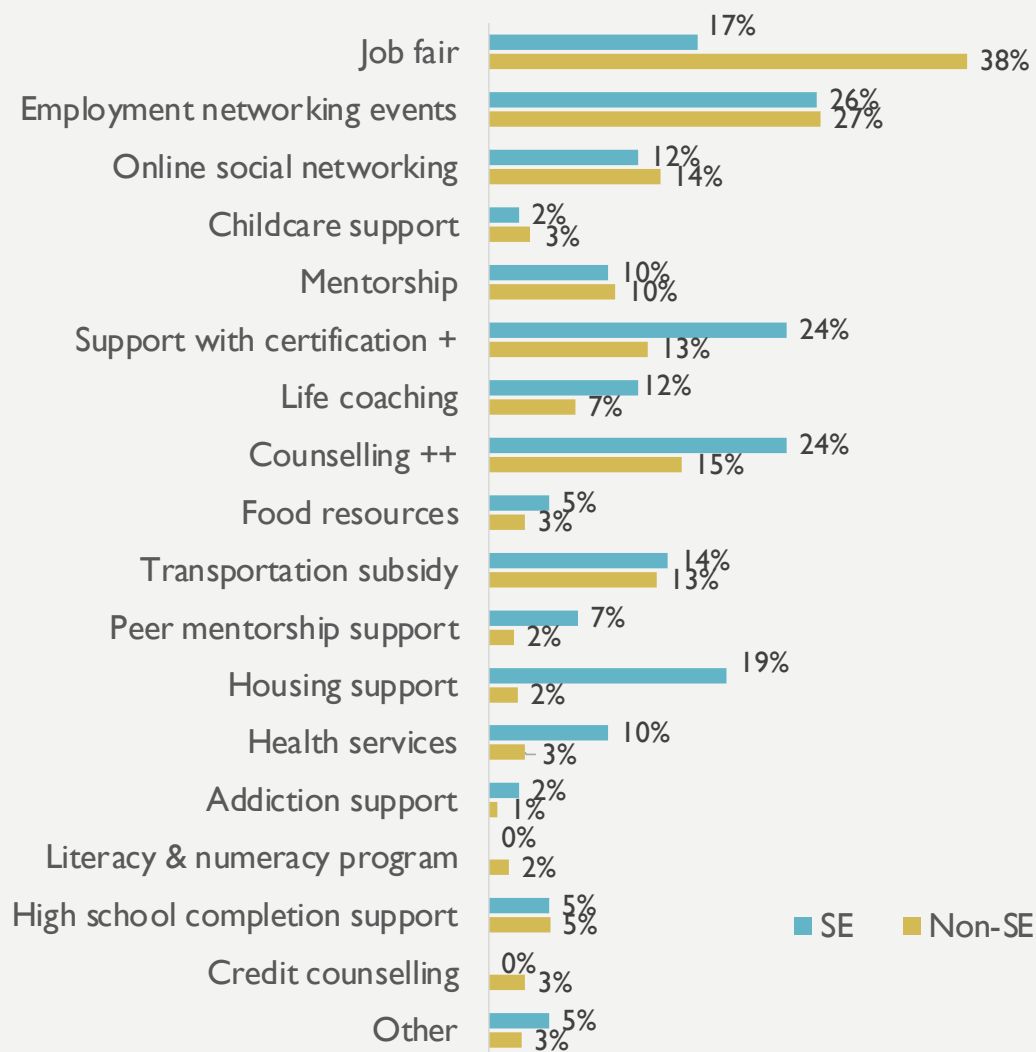
Response rate: 58%(SE), 57%(Non-SE)

# 6-MONTH FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

- Demographics (updates and additional info – e.g., marital status, citizenship)\*
- Post-training relationship with organization
- Overall economic situations over the past 6 months (e.g., updates on foodbank use, housing)\*
- Employment/job search experience over the last 6 months including challenges\*
- Personal satisfaction on 5 areas of wellbeing (asset categories)\*
- Current employment status
- Feedback on training (e.g., helpfulness, relatedness of training to employment)



[Fig 11] Post-Training Support



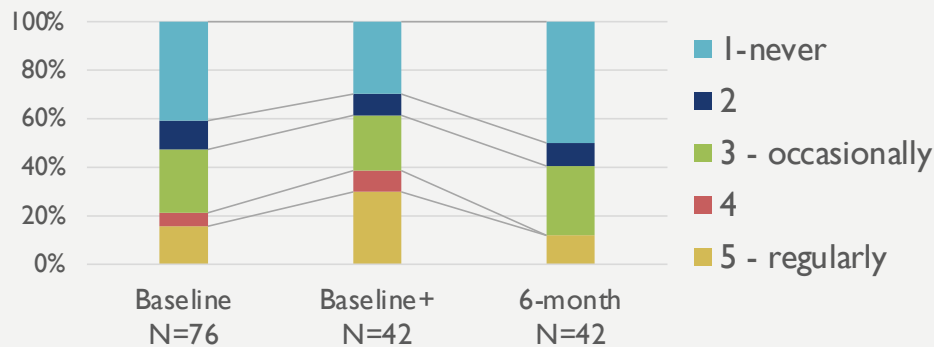
## CONTINUED ACCESS TO SUPPORT SERVICES

- 73.8% of SE and 66% of Non-SE participants remain in touch with organization since leaving training
- Compared to Non-SE group, which has a much larger proportion of participants accessing job fairs post training (more than 2X the percentage of the SE group), SE participants were accessing in greater proportion services that would first help them move towards job readiness (e.g., support with getting certification such as WHMIS and food-handling, housing support, health services, counselling support), as opposed to job search support at 6-month follow-up

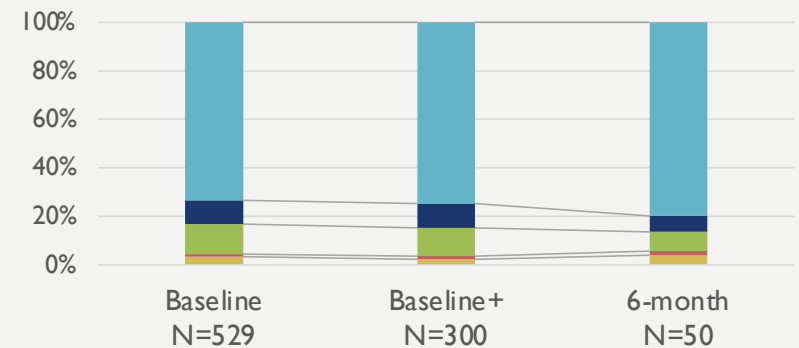
\*The overall sample used for comparison includes only participants we've follow-up with to date (98.9% of baseline participants)  
 + support with certification (e.g., food handling; WHMIS; driver's license)  
 ++ counselling (e.g., employment/personal/mental health)

# CHANGES TO INDICATIONS OF PRECARITY

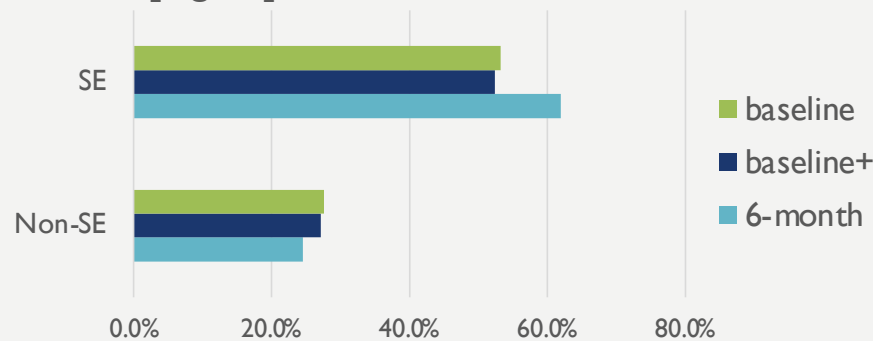
[Fig 12a] Use of food bank (SE)



[Fig 12b] Use of food bank (Non-SE)



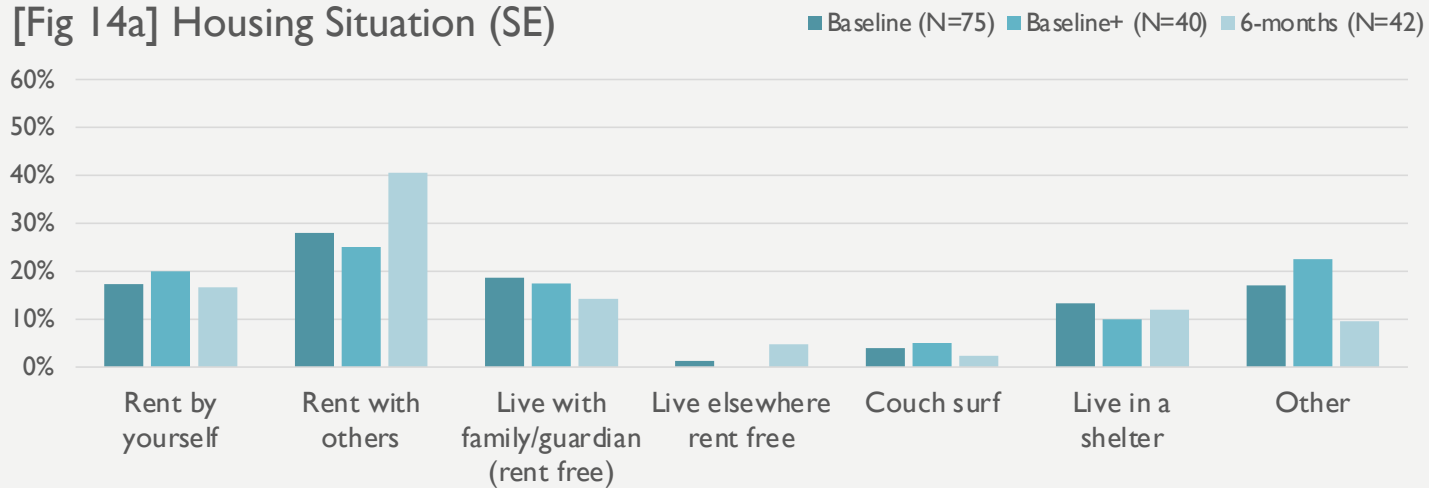
[Fig 13] Government Assistance



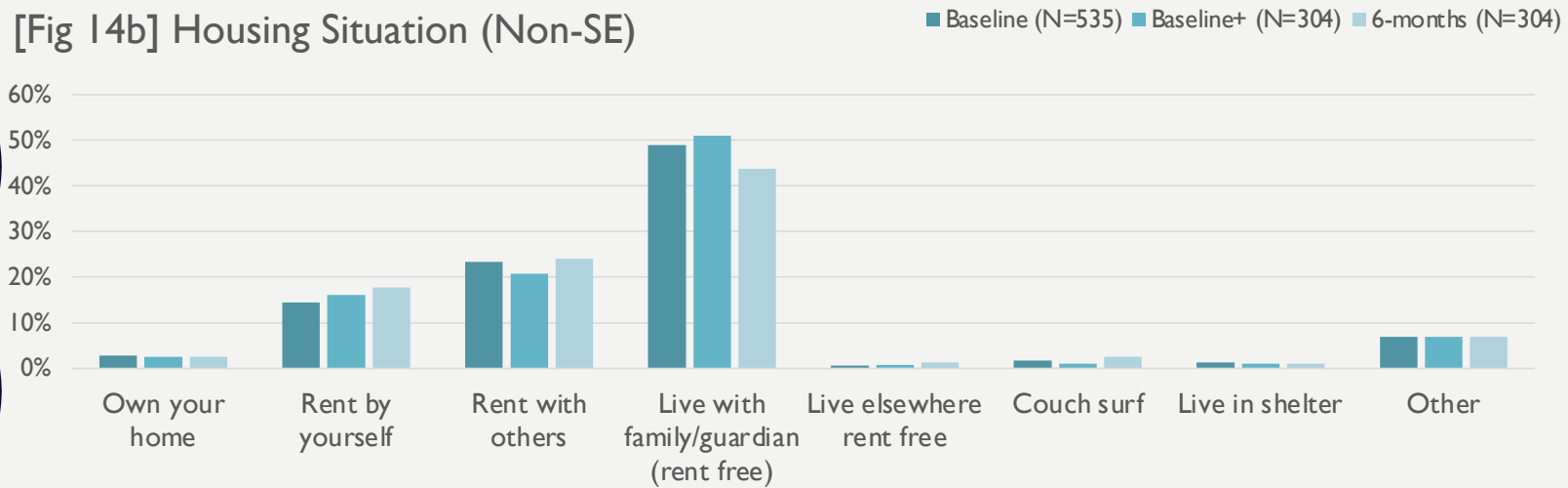
- Repeated measures on food bank usage, government assistance, and housing situation at 6-month allowed for comparisons with baseline; most notable changes are among the SE group
- Overall, proportion of the SE group who used foodbank service decreased from Baseline/Baseline+ to 6-month follow-up
- The access to government assistance increased for the SE group from Baseline/Baseline+ to 6-month, but it could be due to OSAP grants for those returning to school

# CHANGES TO INDICATIONS OF PRECARITY

[Fig 14a] Housing Situation (SE)

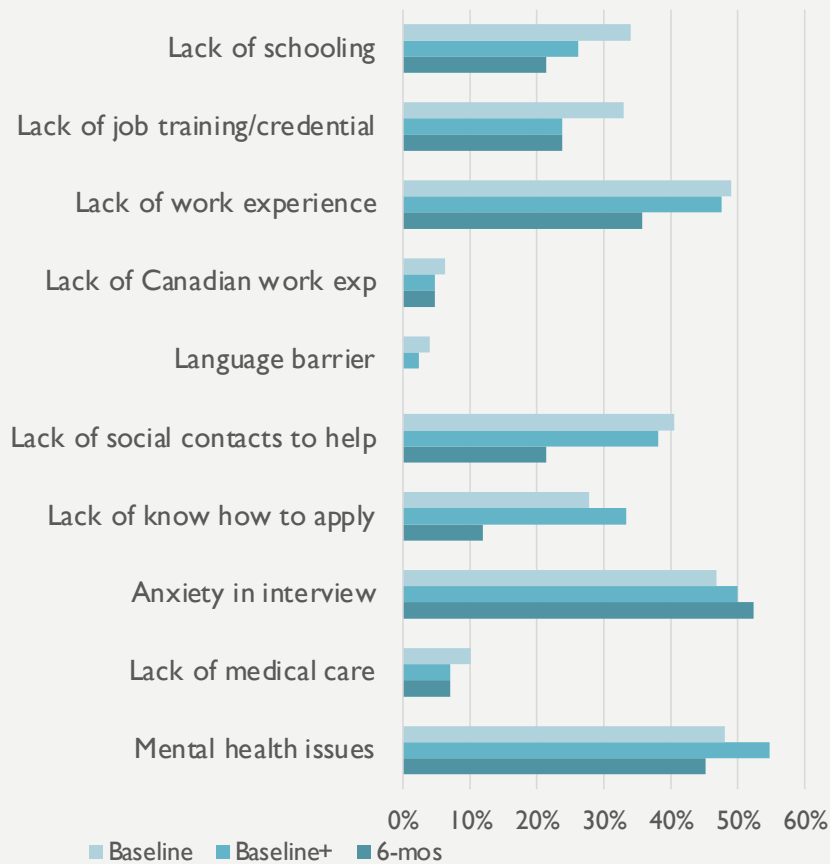


[Fig 14b] Housing Situation (Non-SE)

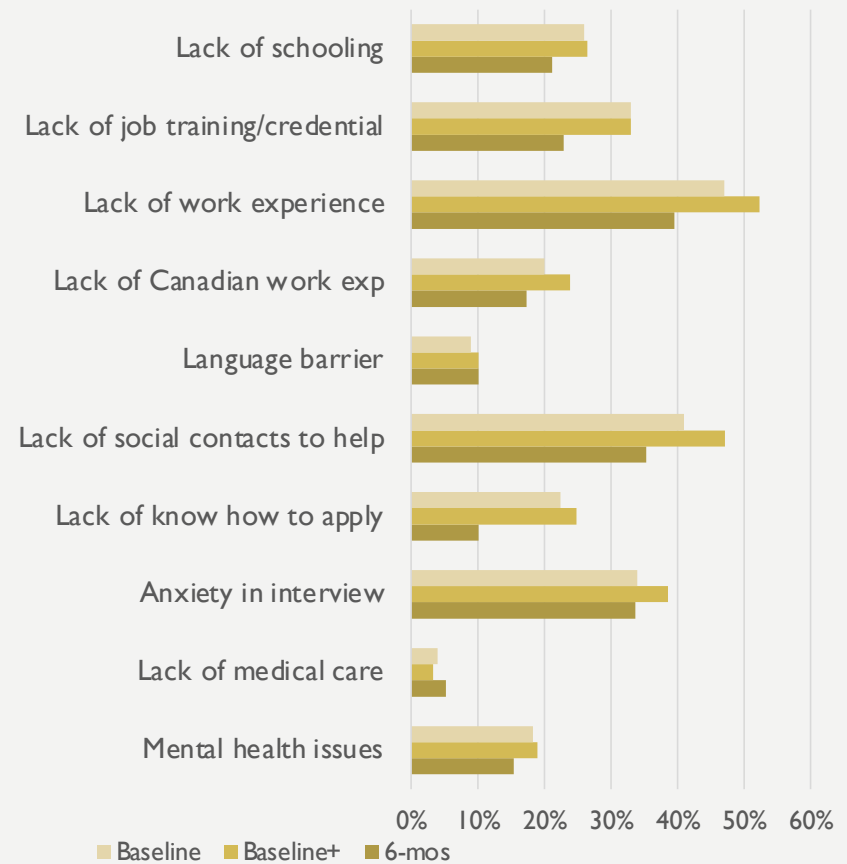


# BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT/JOB SEARCH

[Fig 15a] SE

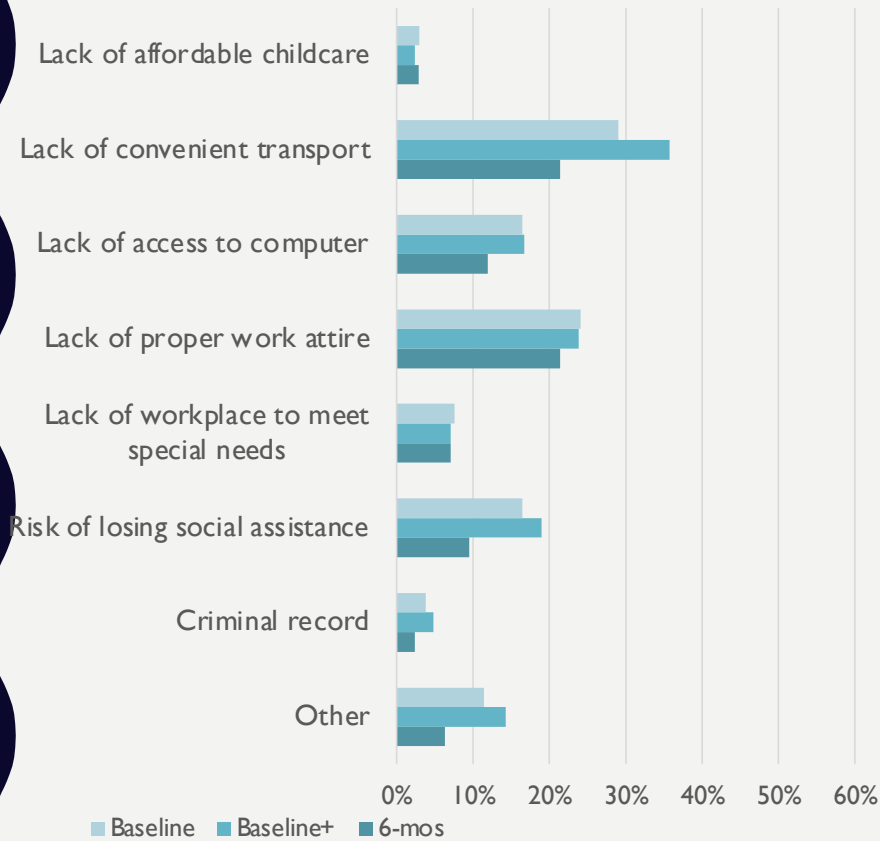


[15b] Non-SE

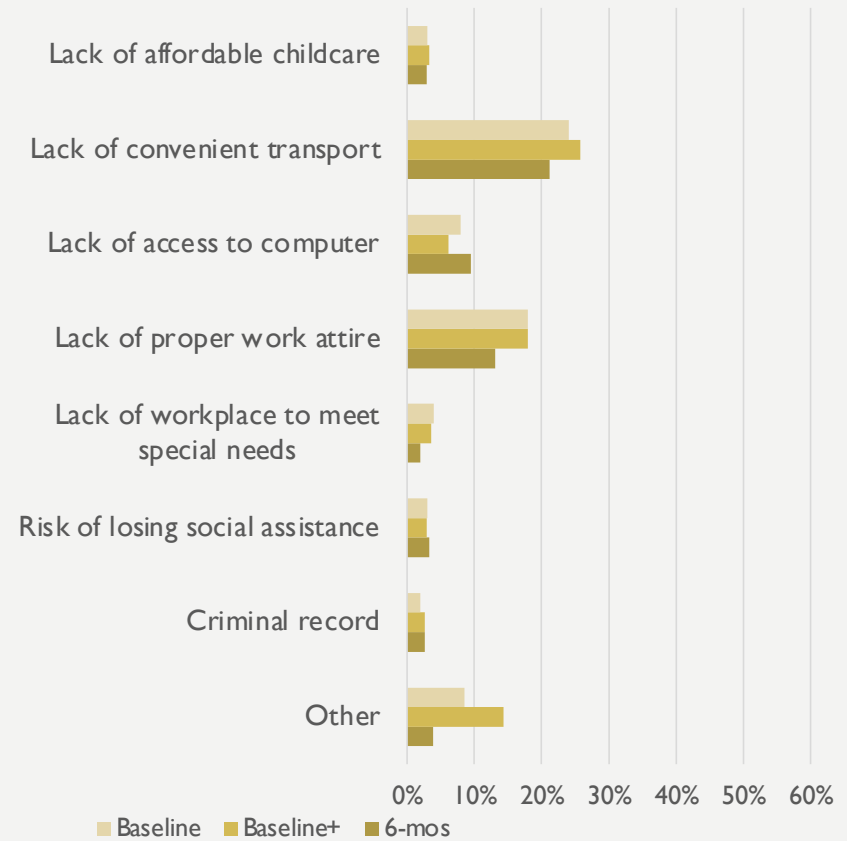


# BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT/JOB SEARCH

[Fig 16a] SE



[Fig 16b] Non-SE



# EMPLOYMENT STATUS: 6-MONTH FOLLOW-UP

Table 2.

	SE	Non-SE
Employment since training	71.40%	74.70%
Employed at 6mo follow-up	45.20%	46.40%
<i>Current Status</i>		
FT	26.2%	26.5%
PT	19.0%	19.9%
In school/trn	21.4%	20.3%
Job search (not emp/sch/trn)	21.4%	27.8%
Not emp/sch/trn/j src	11.9%	5.6%
<i>Ave Hourly wage</i>		
FT	\$16.82	\$16.60
PT	\$13.86	\$15.22
<i>Job Search</i>		
length of search	5.3 mos	4.8 mos

Table 3a

<b>Asset Areas (SE)</b>	Baseline <i>M(SD)</i>	Baseline+ <i>M(SD)</i>	6-month <i>M(SD)</i>
Financial Wellbeing	2.25(.83)	2.29(.84)	2.42(.88)
Personal Wellbeing	3.01(.86)	3.02(.87)	2.83(.96)
Access to Services	3.41(.84)	3.54(.76)	3.61(.85)
Human Capital	3.33(.81)	3.35(.95)	3.49(.79)
Family & Community Relations	3.15(.79)	3.26(.72)	3.32(.87)

Table 3b

<b>Asset Areas (Non-SE)</b>	Baseline <i>M(SD)</i>	Baseline+ <i>M(SD)</i>	6-month <i>M(SD)</i>
Financial Wellbeing	2.46(.89)	2.44(.84)	2.54(.94)
Personal Wellbeing	3.40(.90)	3.32(.90)	3.15(.98)
Access to Services	3.65(.82)	3.70(.79)	3.61(.85)
Human Capital	3.53(.78)	3.52(.74)	3.50(.79)
Family & Community Relations	3.41(.84)	3.40(.83)	3.32(.87)

## CHANGES TO PERCEPTION OF WELLBEING

Looking at the scores descriptively  
(**only** within sample):

- Across the 2 time points, there is a small increase in financial wellbeing for both the SE and Non-SE groups.
- While the SE group sees a decrease in personal wellbeing from baseline/baseline+ to 6-month follow-up, the Non-SE group sees no change/decline in wellbeing in the other 4 areas of wellbeing

# PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT & NEXT STEPS

- Compared to Non-SE participants post training, a higher percentage of SE participants remained in touch with the organizations, and are accessing a variety of employment and non-employment related supports in greater proportions
- Overall, there has been some reduction in barriers to employment for both the SE & Non-SE group; limited change in 5 Asset Areas for both groups
- Once we have the full 6-month follow-up sample, we will test to see if there are significant differences in the way the 5 Asset Areas change for the SE & the Non-SE group from baseline and 6-month follow-up;
  - If there are significant differences, we will also explore whether those differences can be explained by demographic/situational variables
- Currently in the midst of collecting 1 year follow-up data; will begin 2 year follow-up data in Sept 2019; will begin analysis of the interview data over the summer
- Ultimately, with data at 5 time points, we will explore whether the trajectories of the SE & Non-SE groups are different, and whether the SE group can close any gaps in wellbeing over the 3 years post training



The image features a dark blue background with a white-to-blue gradient on the left side. Two wavy, vertical lines, one light blue and one white, separate the gradient from the dark blue area. The text "THANK YOU" is centered in the dark blue area in a white, sans-serif font.

THANK YOU