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BASIC NEEDS SECURITY AT SAN DIEGO CONTINUING EDUCATION

A Report Prepared by the Wisconsin HOPE Lab

March 30, 2018

Overview

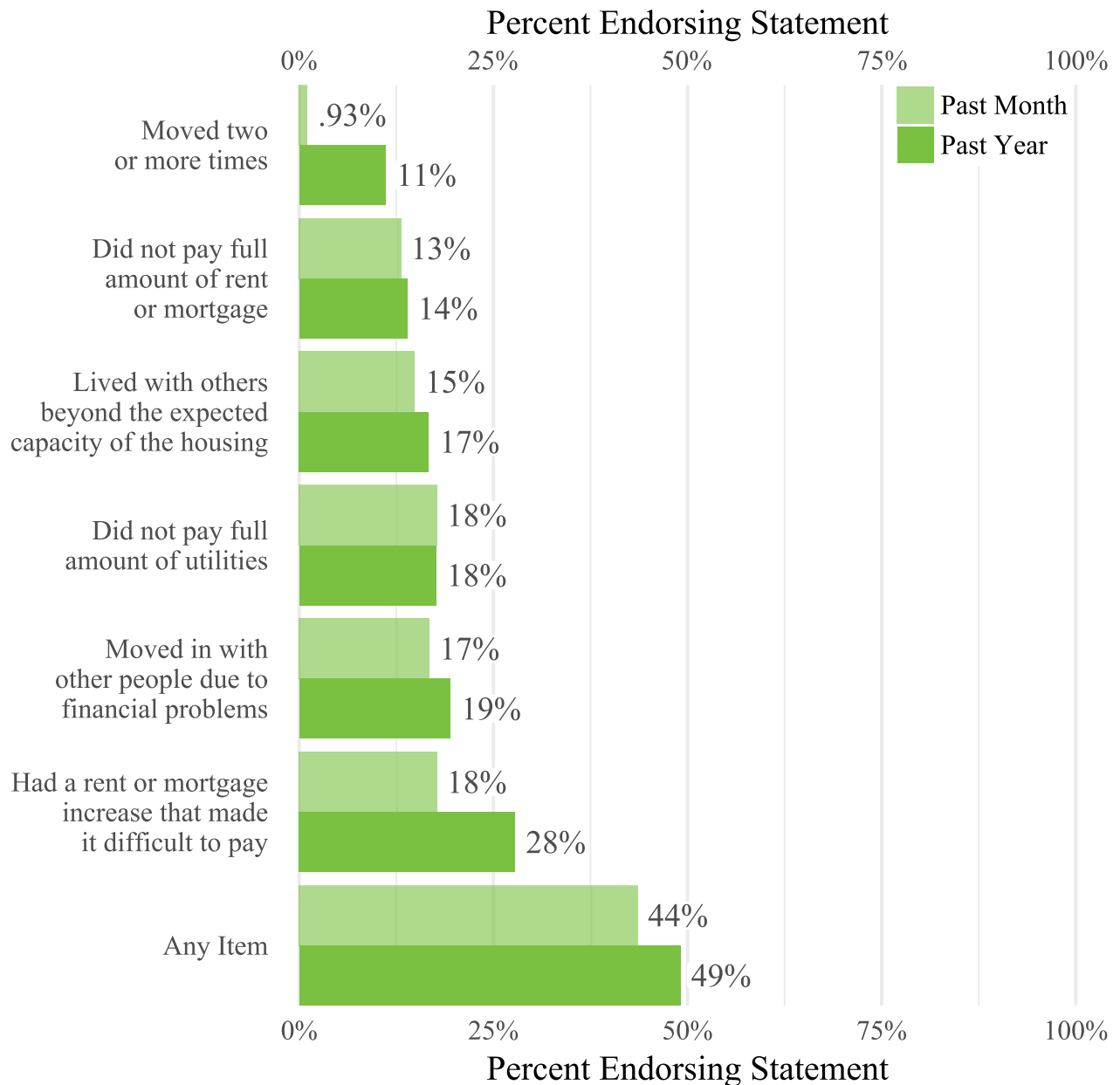
- Invitations to complete the questionnaire were sent by email to 3300 students from San Diego Continuing Education, and 103 students completed it. Thus, the response rate was about 3.1%
- In the last year, about 10% of students experienced some form of homelessness, 49% were housing insecure, and 42% had low or very low food security.
- About 57% of students at San Diego Continuing Education experienced at least one of these forms of basic needs insecurity in the past year. About 5.6% experienced all three forms of basic needs insecurity.
- The prevalence of basic needs insecurity are presented for several demographic subgroups.

Basic Needs for All Students

Housing Insecurity

Housing insecurity can involve unaffordable housing, poor housing quality, crowding, and frequent moves (Cutts et al., 2011 (<https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2011.300139>)). The survey instrument included six items to assess whether a student has experienced housing insecurity in the past thirty days and in the past twelve months. Students are classified as **housing insecure** if they answered affirmatively to at least one of those items for the time period in question.

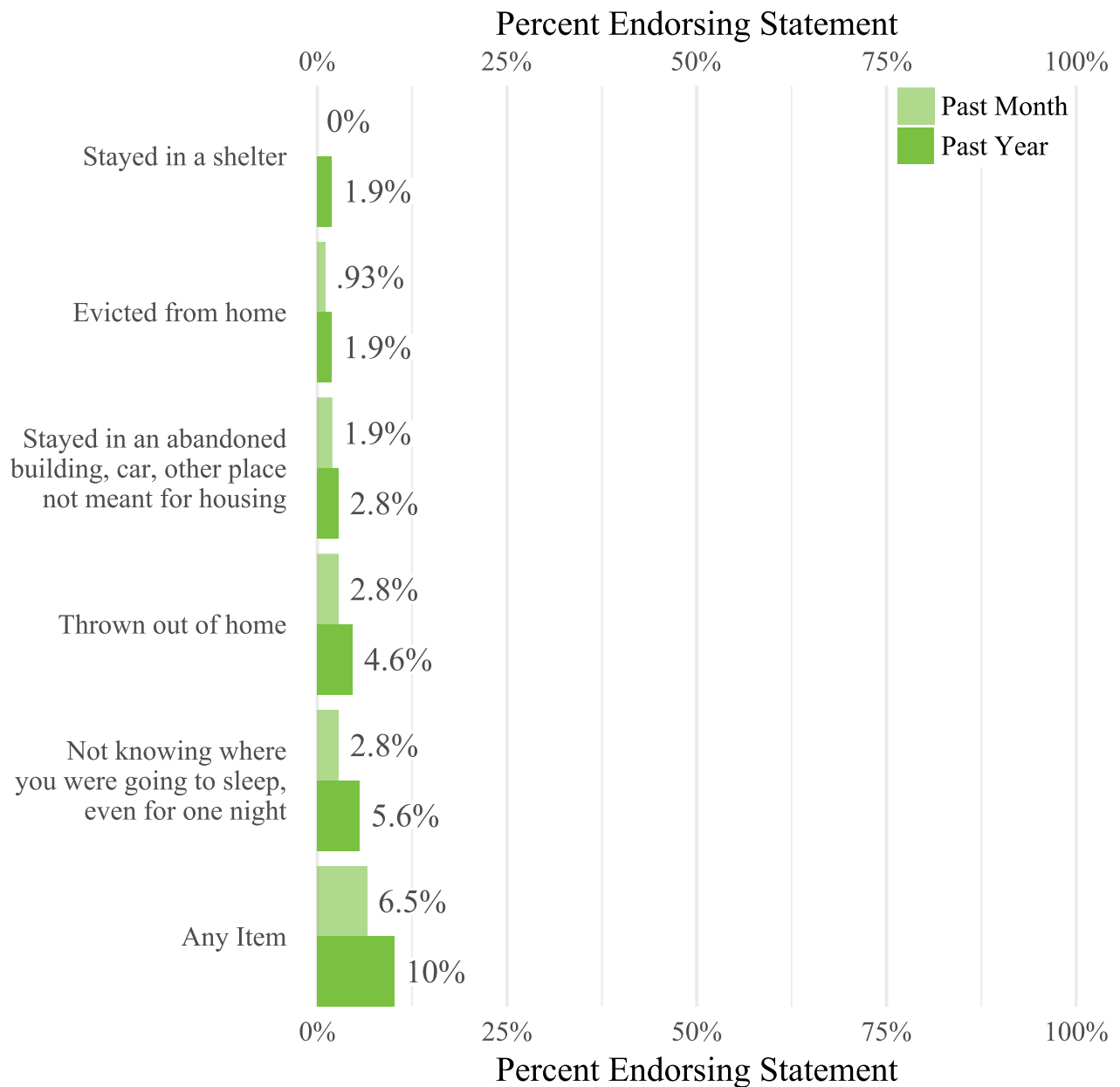
How prevalent is housing insecurity at San Diego Continuing Education? As can be seen in the plot below, 44% were housing insecure in the month they were surveyed and 49% were housing insecure in the previous year.



Homelessness

Homelessness indicates that a person is without a place to live, often residing in a shelter, automobile, an abandoned building, or outside. The survey included five items to determine whether students have been homeless in the past thirty days and in the past twelve months. Students are considered **homeless** if they answered affirmatively to at least one of five items for the time period in question. Note that it is possible for students to have experienced both homelessness and housing insecurity at different times during the previous month or year.

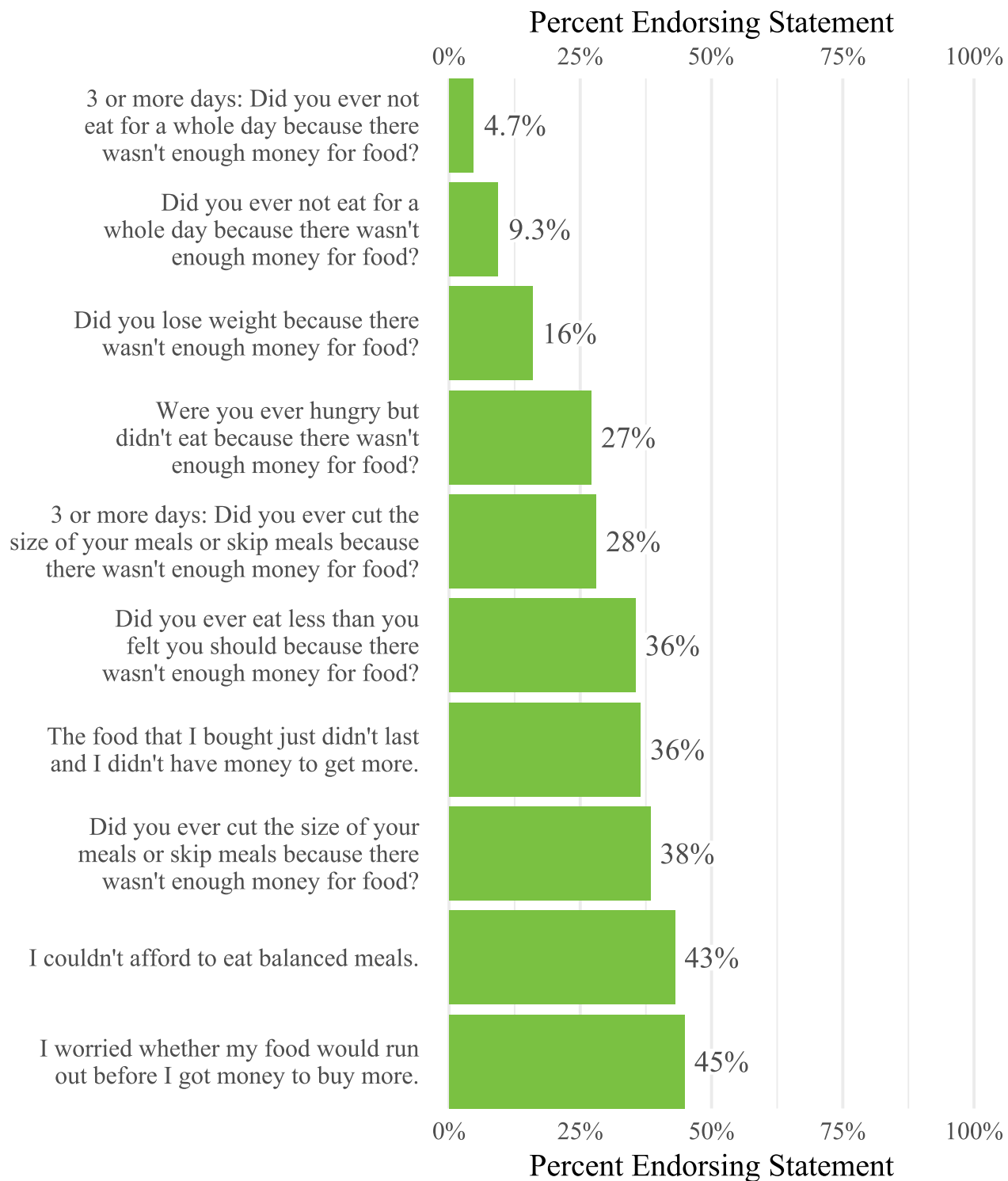
How prevalent is homelessness at San Diego Continuing Education? As can be seen in the plot below, 6.5% were homeless in the month they were surveyed and 10% were homeless at some point in the previous year.



Food Security

Food insecurity is the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or the ability to acquire such foods in a socially acceptable manner (Anderson, 1990 (https://doi.org/10.1093/jn/120.suppl_11.1555)). To assess food insecurity among students, the survey instrument included the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) 10-item U.S. Adult Food Security Survey Module (FSSM) (<https://www.ers.usda.gov/media/8279/ad2012.pdf>). The module asks students about their experiences in the past thirty days.

What percentage of students at San Diego Continuing Education endorsed each food insecurity item?



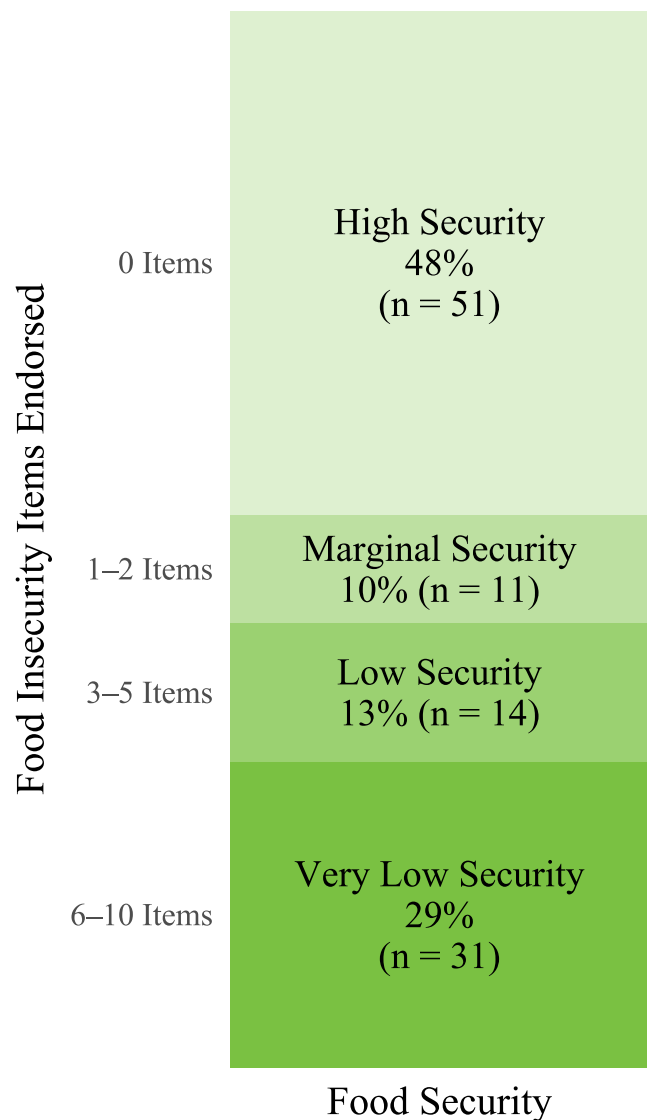
The USDA recommends assigning each respondent a score based on the total number of affirmative answers on the 10-item instrument. That score determines a person's food security status via a four category scale, where a score of zero corresponds to high food security, one to marginal food security, two to four translate to low food security, and scores of five or six indicate very low food security. Taken together, people who report low and very low food security can be referred to as **food insecure**.

Food Security Categories

Items Endorsed Food Security Level Classification

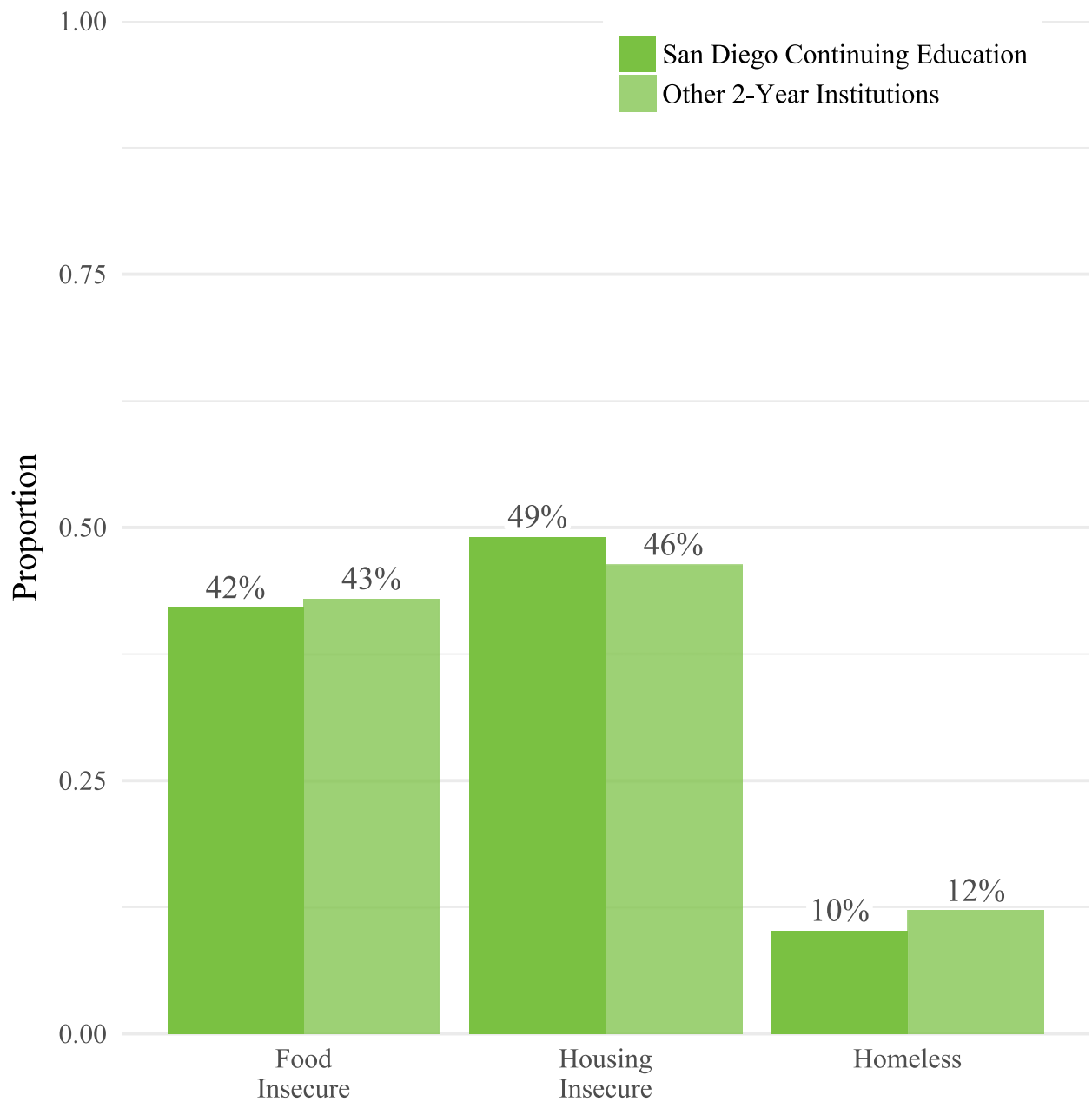
0	High	Food Secure
1–2	Marginal	
3–4	Low	Food Insecure
6–10	Very Low	

How prevalent is food insecurity at San Diego Continuing Education? As seen in the plot below, 42% of students were food insecure (i.e., had low or very low food insecurity).



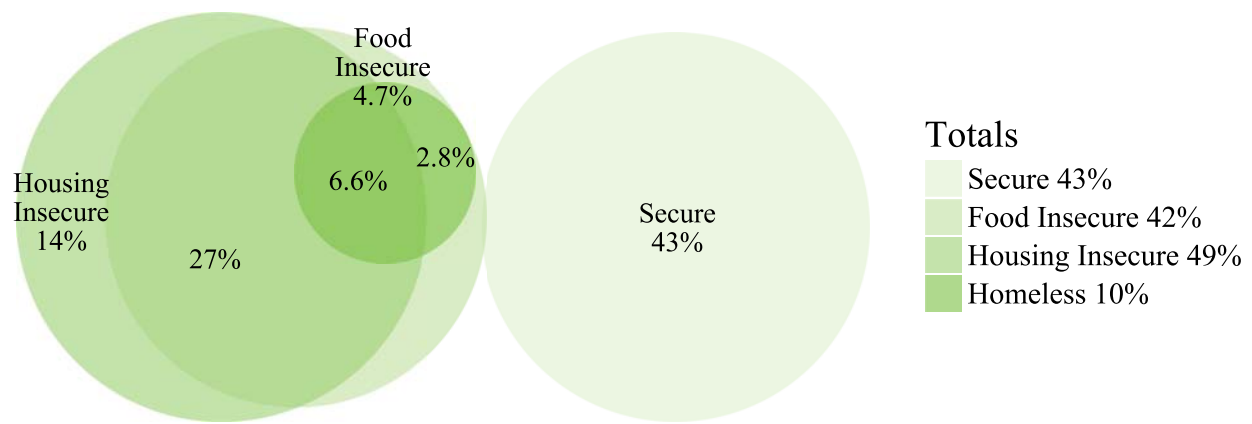
Comparisons with Other Schools

In the fall of 2017, the Wisconsin HOPE Lab collected data from 13,631 students attending 33 different two-year community colleges.



Basic Needs Insecurity Overlap

Homelessness, Housing Insecurity, and Food Insecurity are overlapping concerns, with about 57% of students at San Diego Continuing Education experiencing at least one of these forms of basic needs insecurity in the past year.



Note This plot only used cases in which participants provided complete data for the food insecurity, housing insecurity, and homelessness. Thus, because some participants did not answer all of the questions on the questionnaire, percentages in this plot may differ slightly from other estimates when only one variable was considered at a time.

Basic Needs by Subgroups

The tables and figures in this section present measures of food insecurity, housing insecurity, and homelessness for various demographic groups. In this section, any category with fewer than 25 participants was removed from any plots in which it might otherwise have appeared.

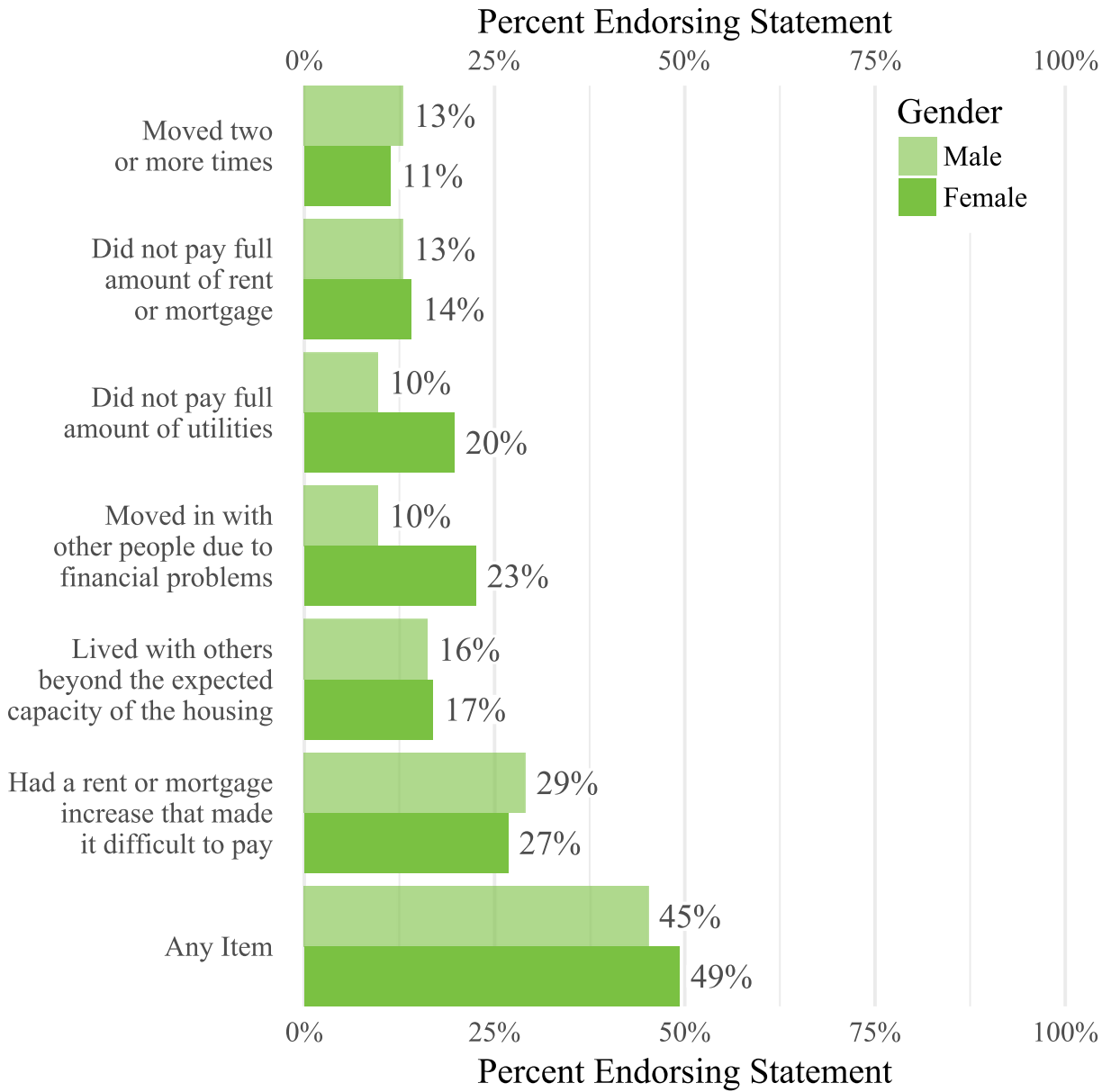
Gender

How does each student self-identify?

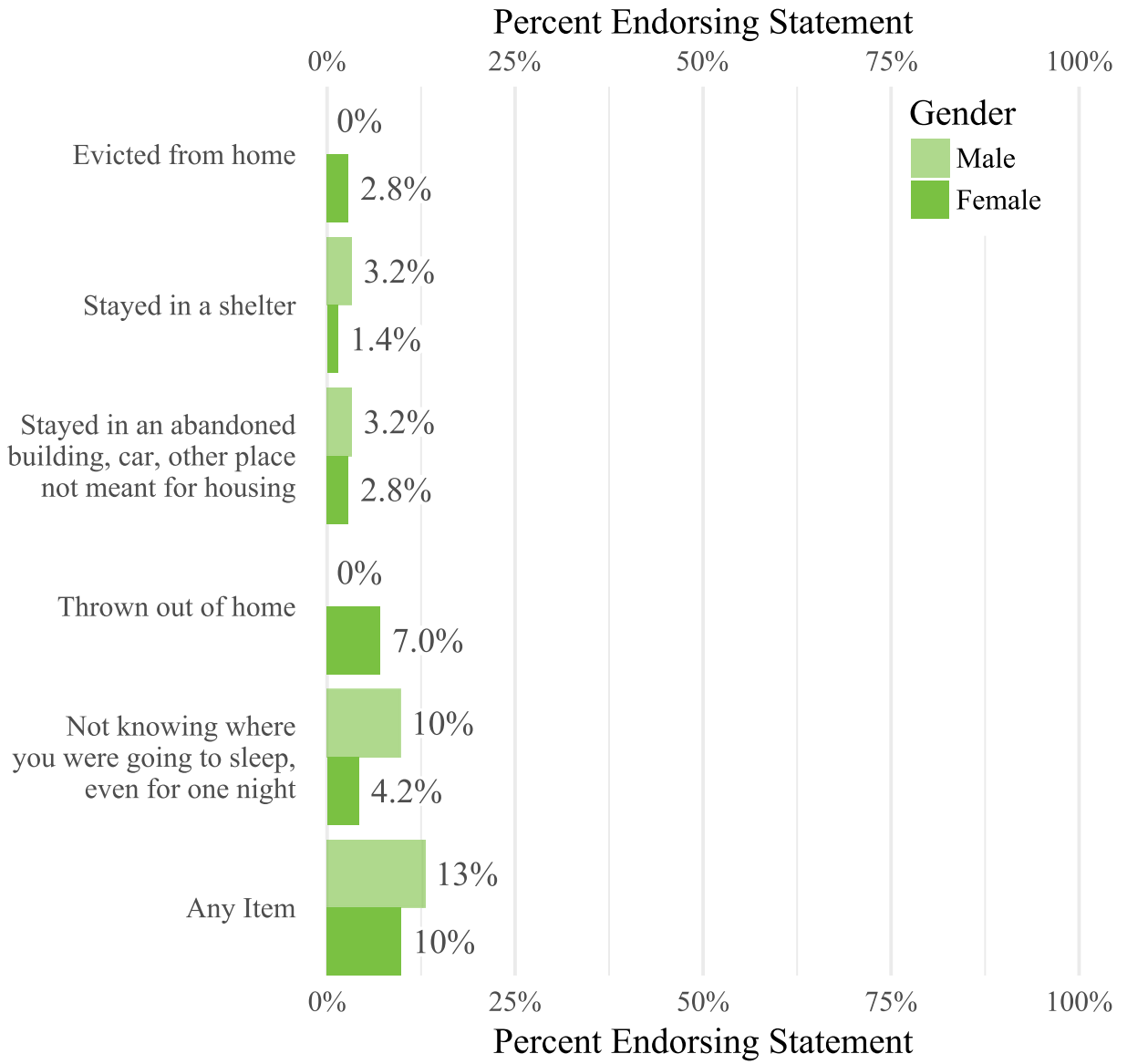
Note: The term *Non-Binary* is used here to refer to a wide range of gender identities including transsexual, gender fluid, third gender, and many others.

Gender	<i>n</i>	Percent
Male	31	30.1%
Female	71	68.9%
Non-Binary	1	1.0%

Housing Insecurity by Gender

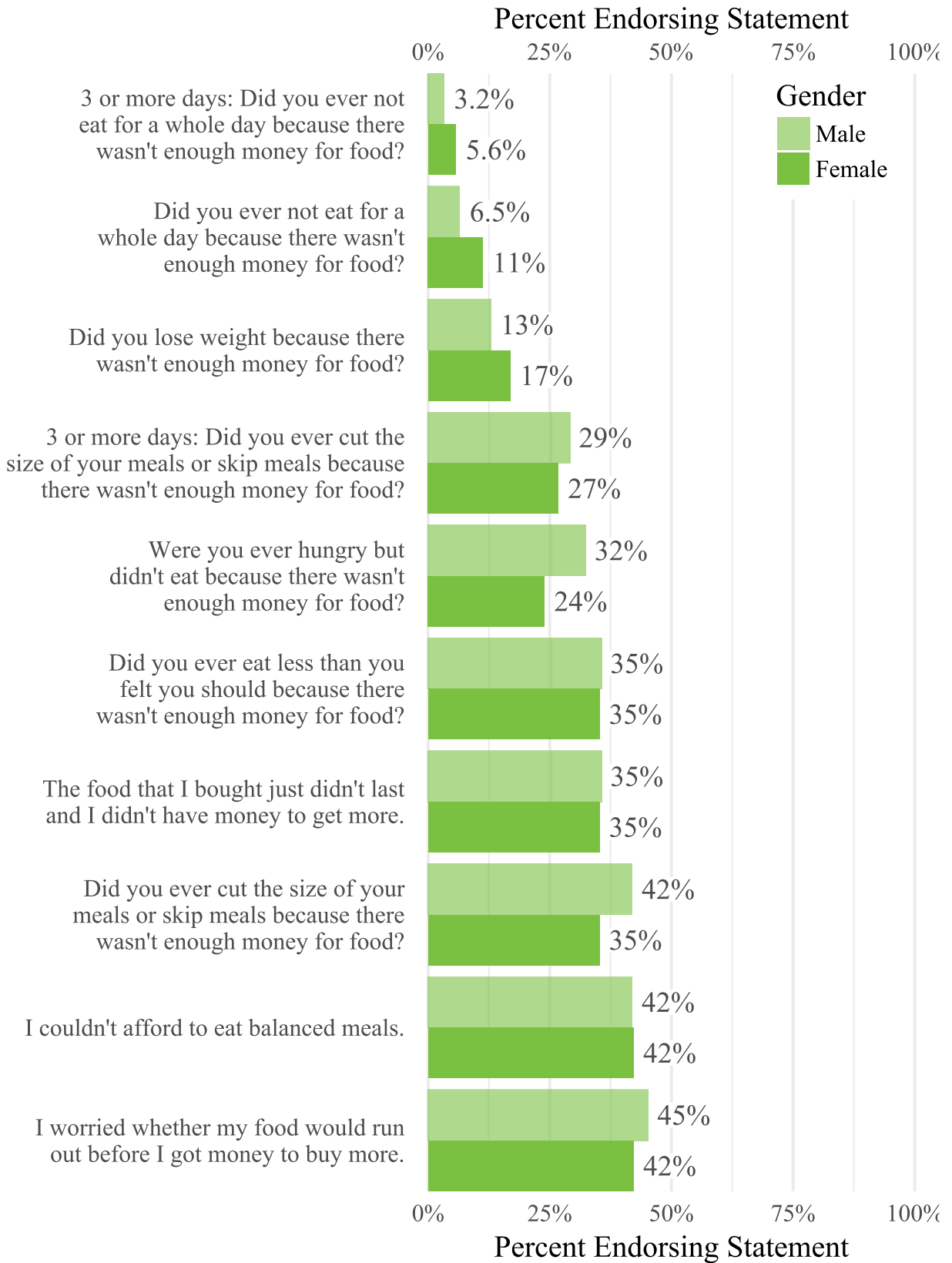


Homelessness by Gender

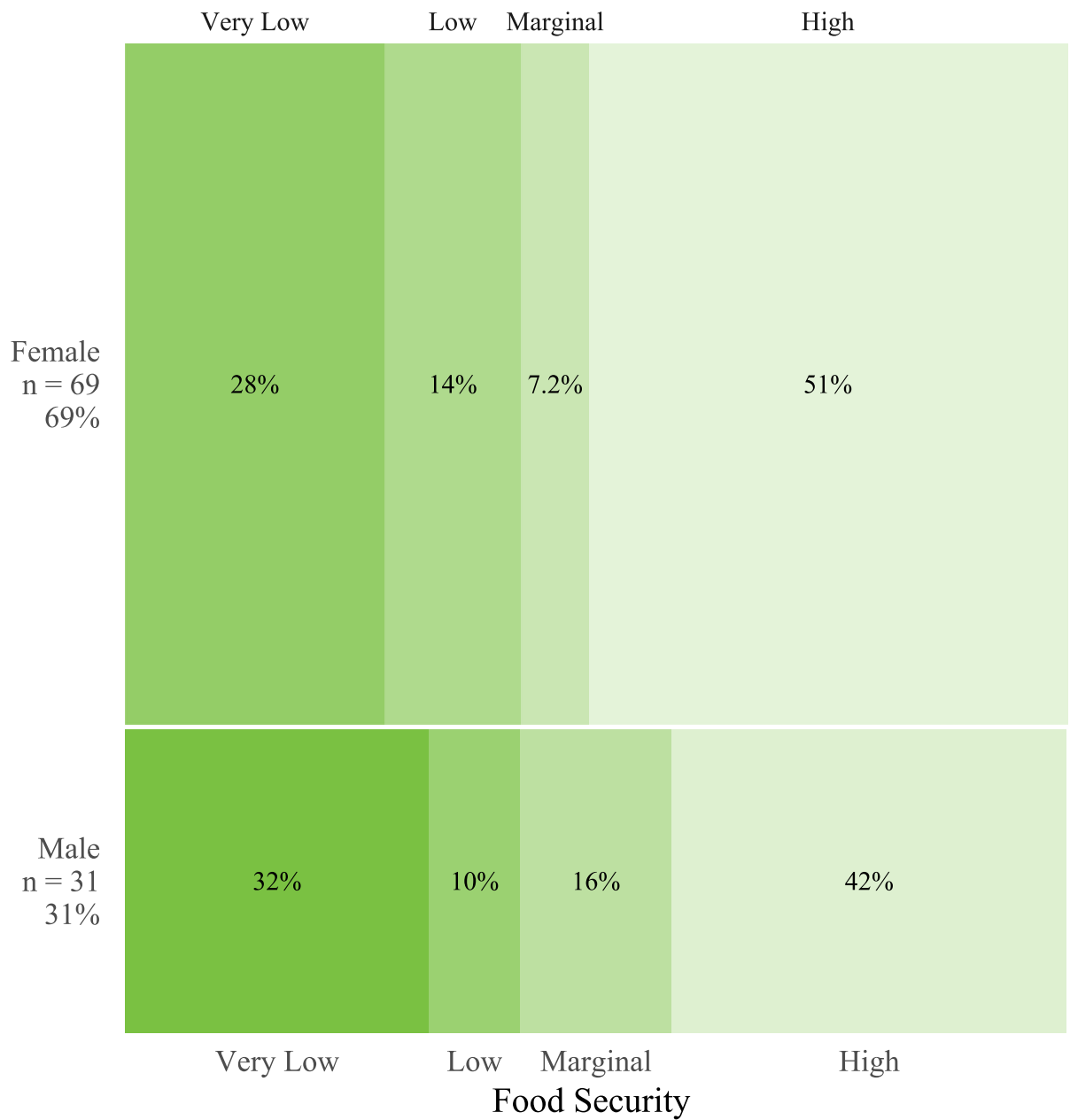


Food Insecurity by Gender

Food Security Questions



Food Insecurity Categories



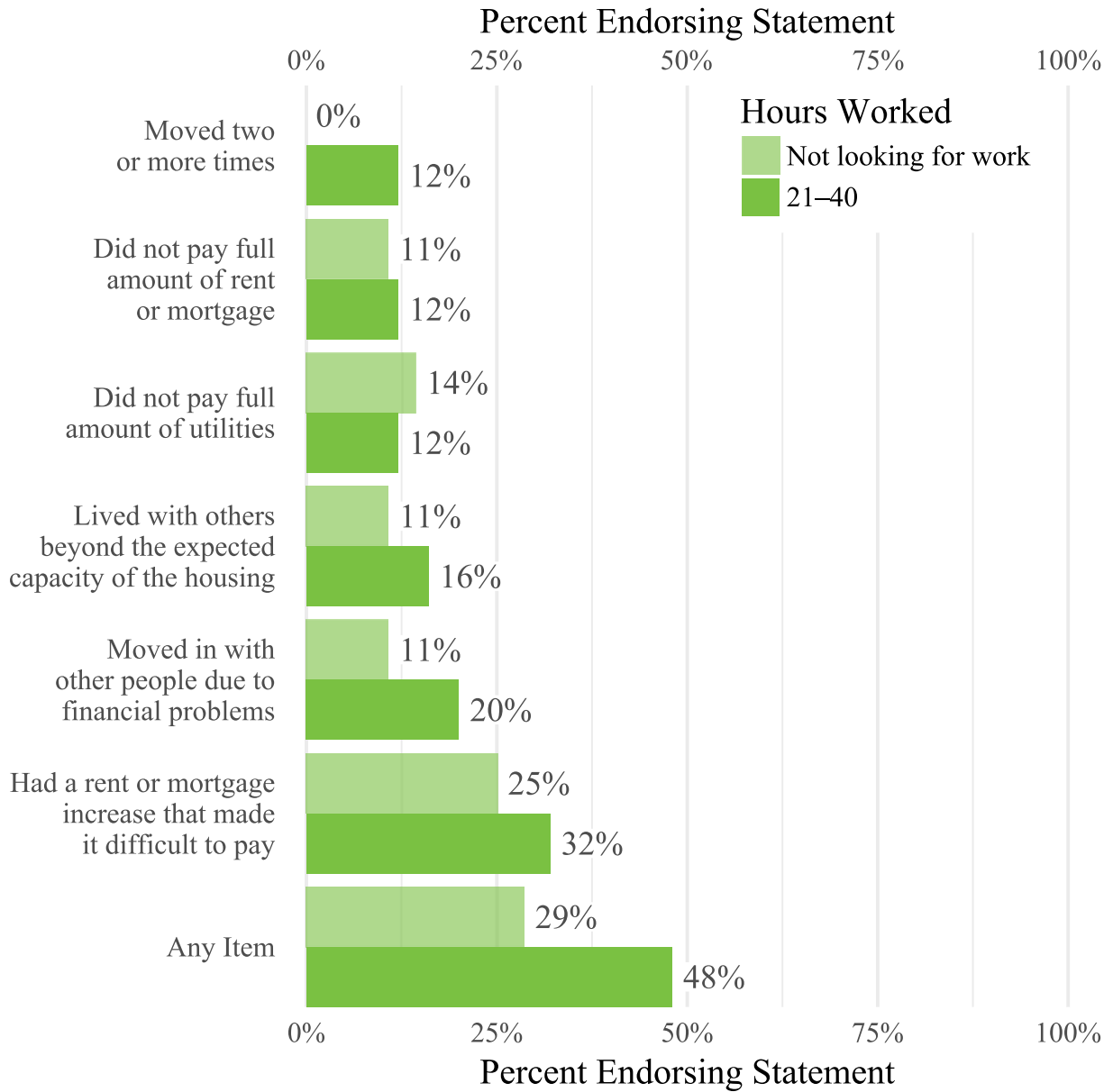
Work

Number of hours worked per week

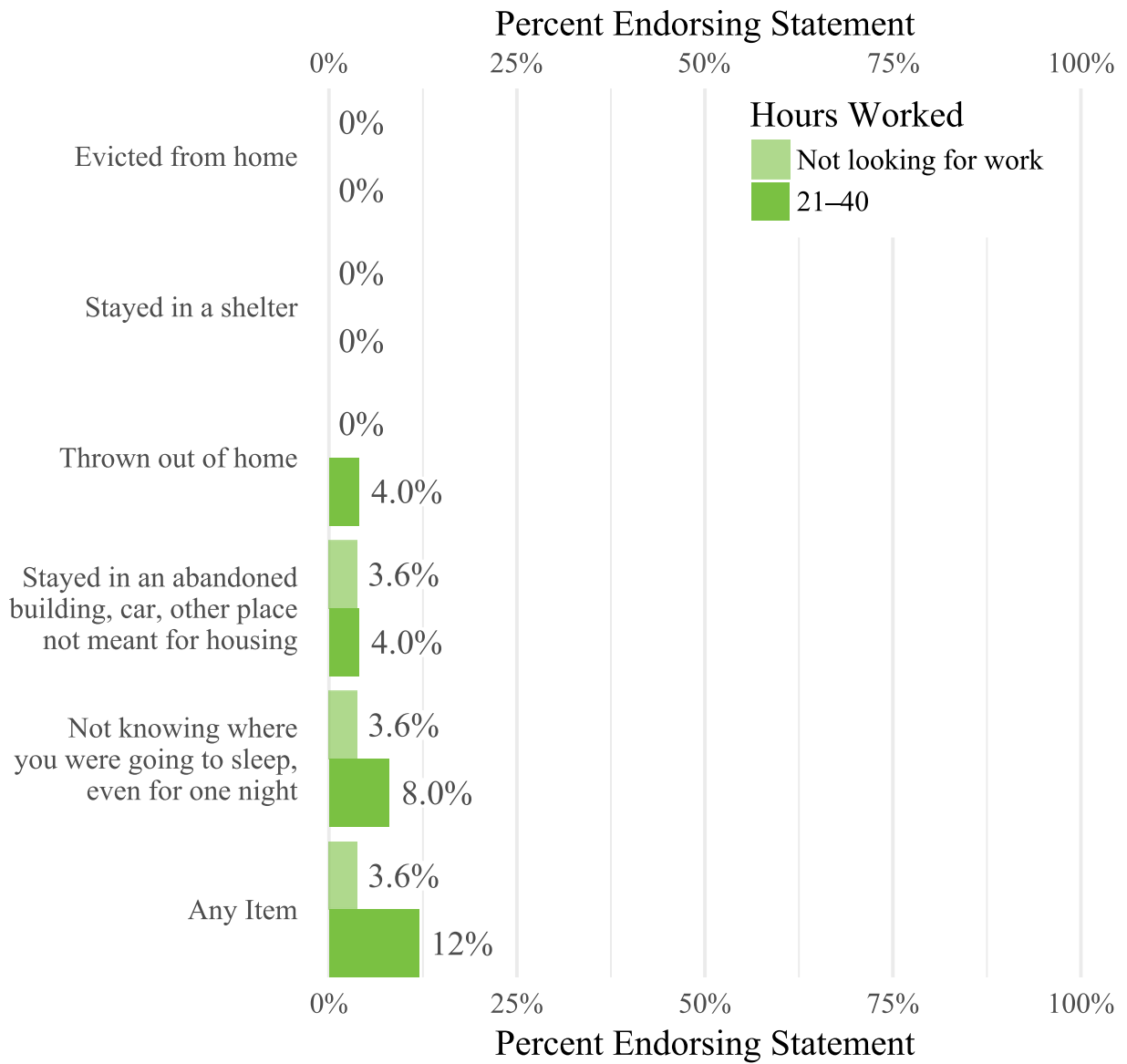
Hours Worked	<i>n</i>	Percent
Not looking for work	31	27.2%
Looking for work	23	20.2%
1-5	4	3.5%
6-20	21	18.4%
21-40	27	23.7%
40+	8	7.0%

On average, students who were employed worked 27.4 hours per week.

Housing Insecurity by Hours Worked

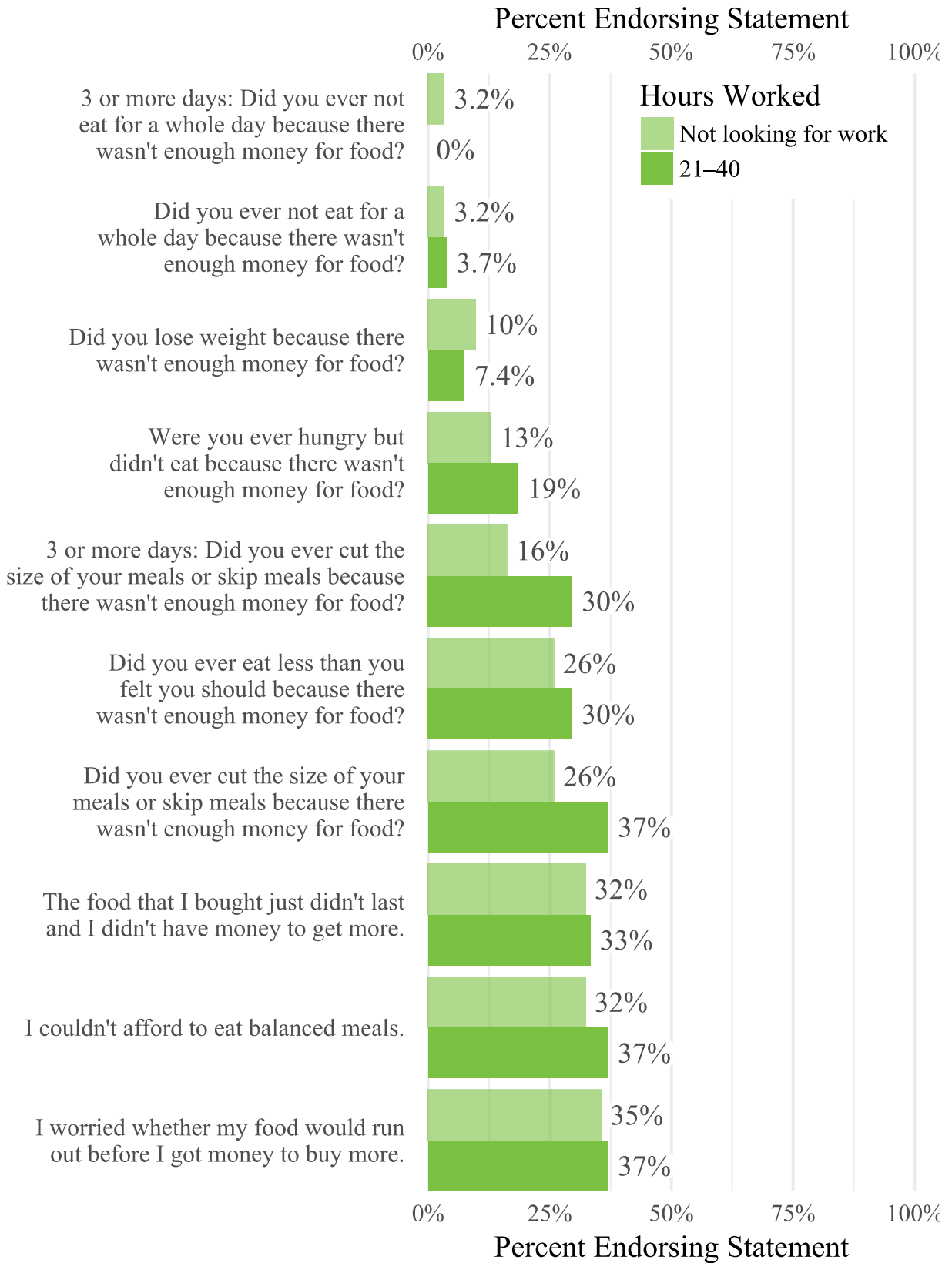


Homelessness by Hours Worked

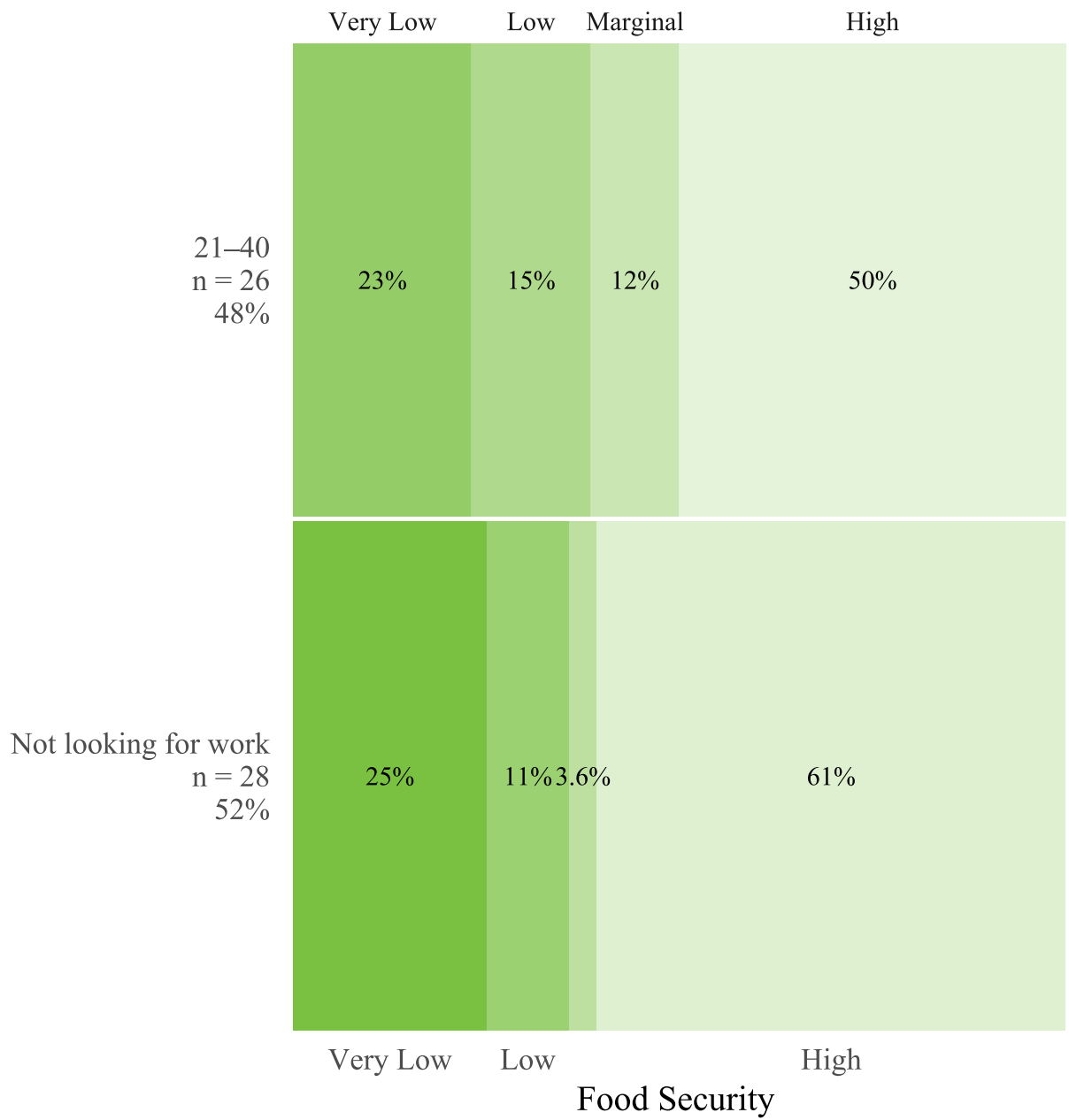


Food Insecurity by Hours Worked

Food Security Questions



Food Insecurity Categories

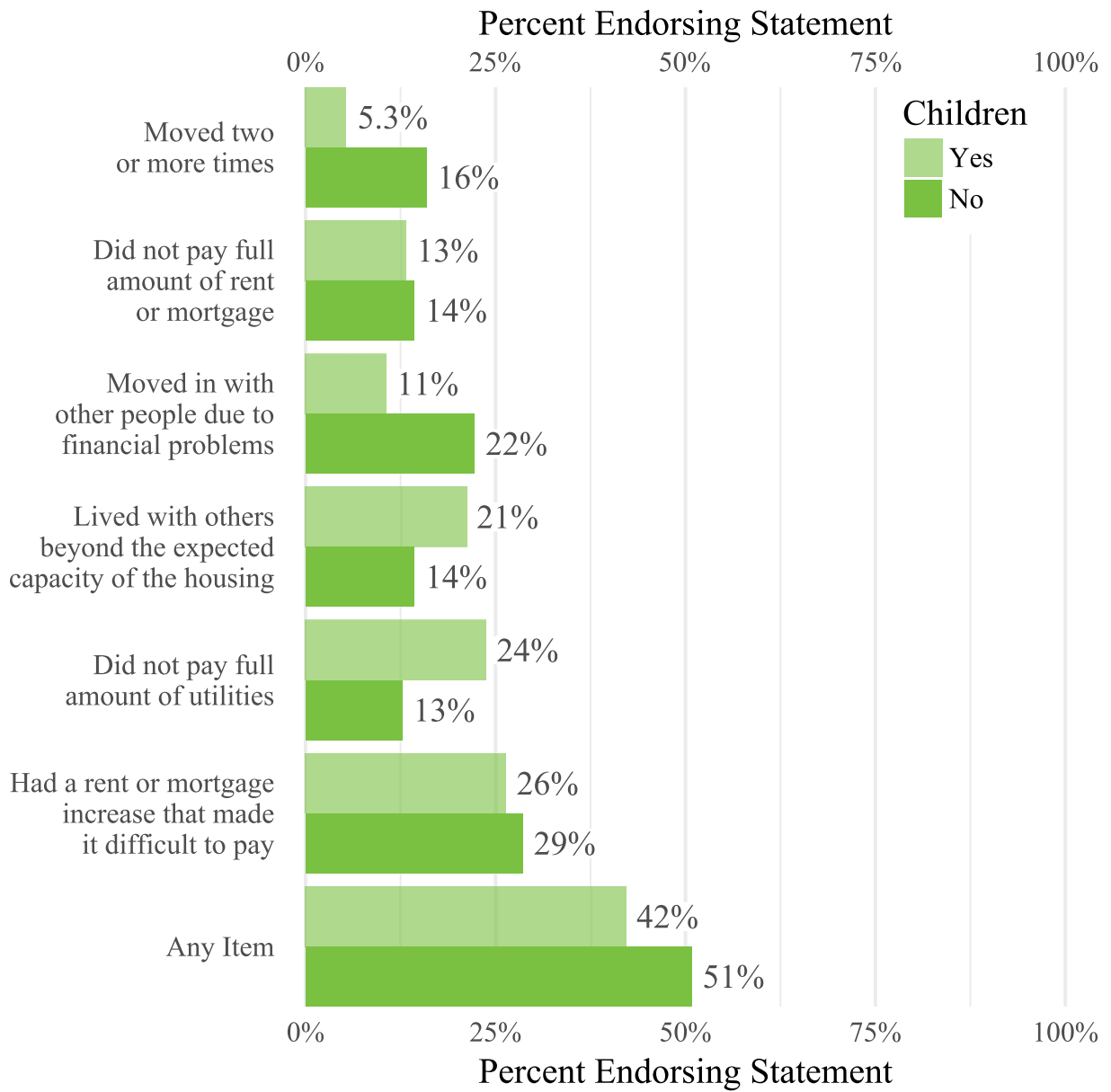


Children

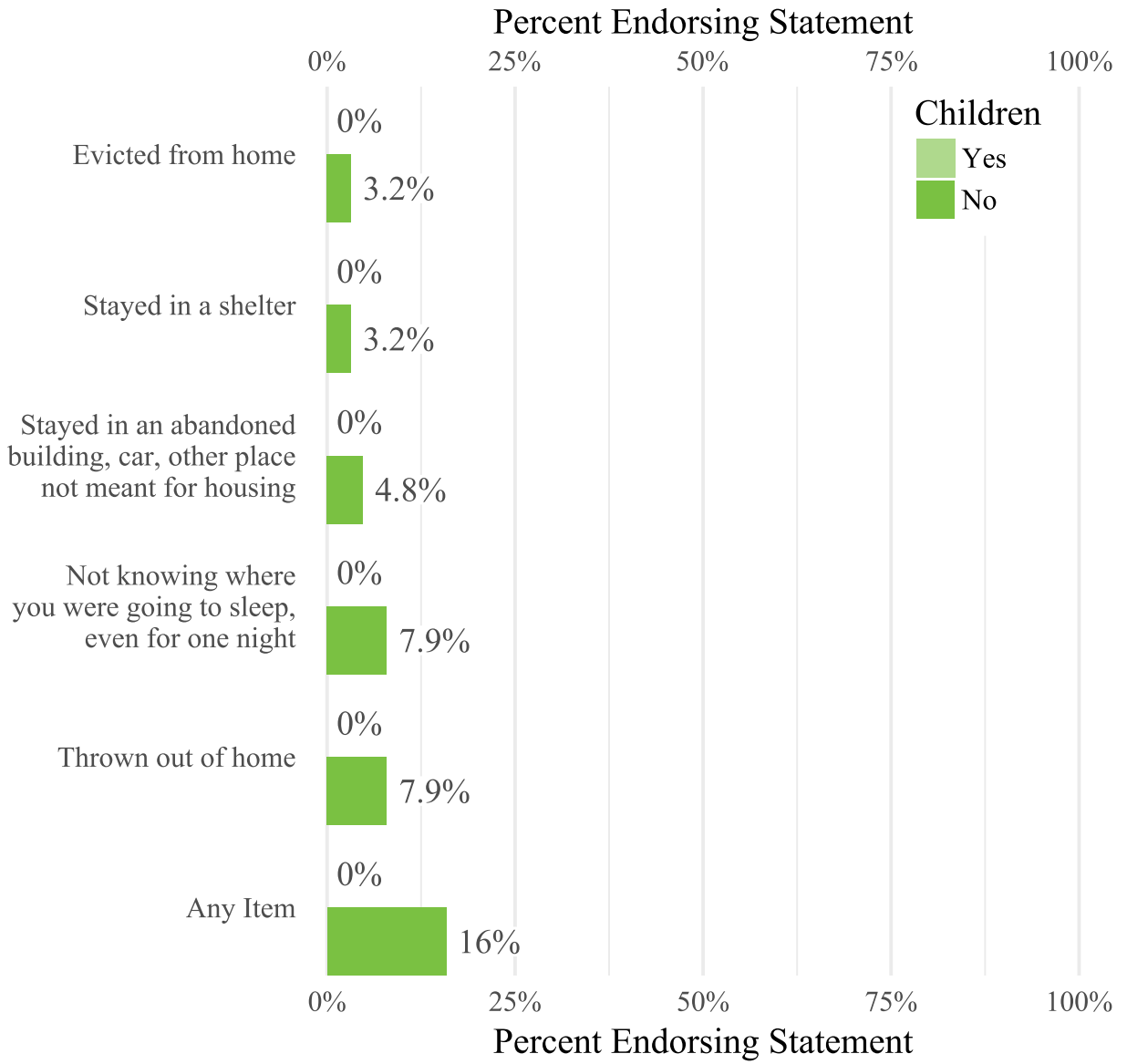
Does the student have children?

Children	<i>n</i>	Percent
Yes	38	37.6%
No	63	62.4%

Housing Insecurity by Children

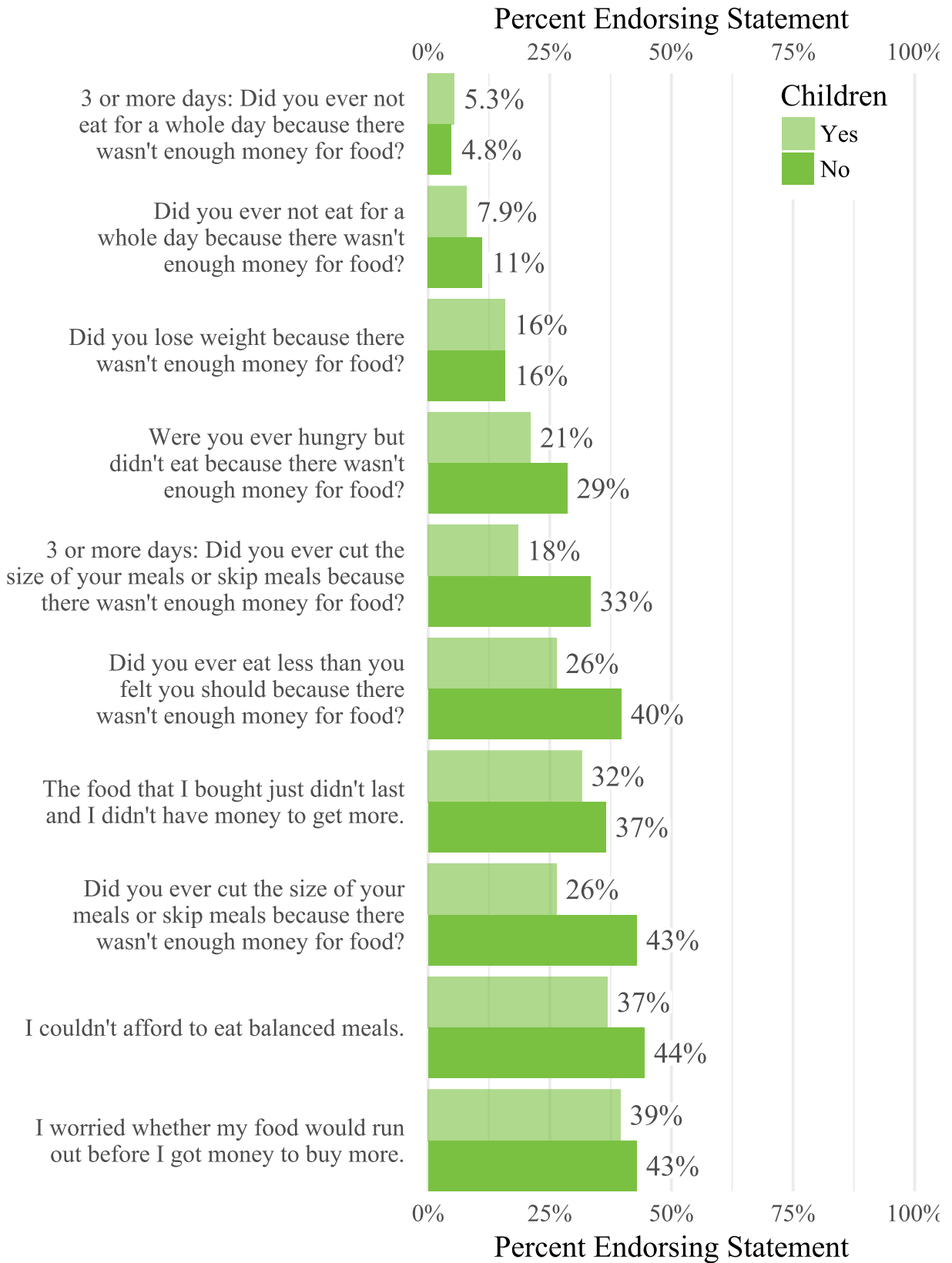


Homelessness by Children

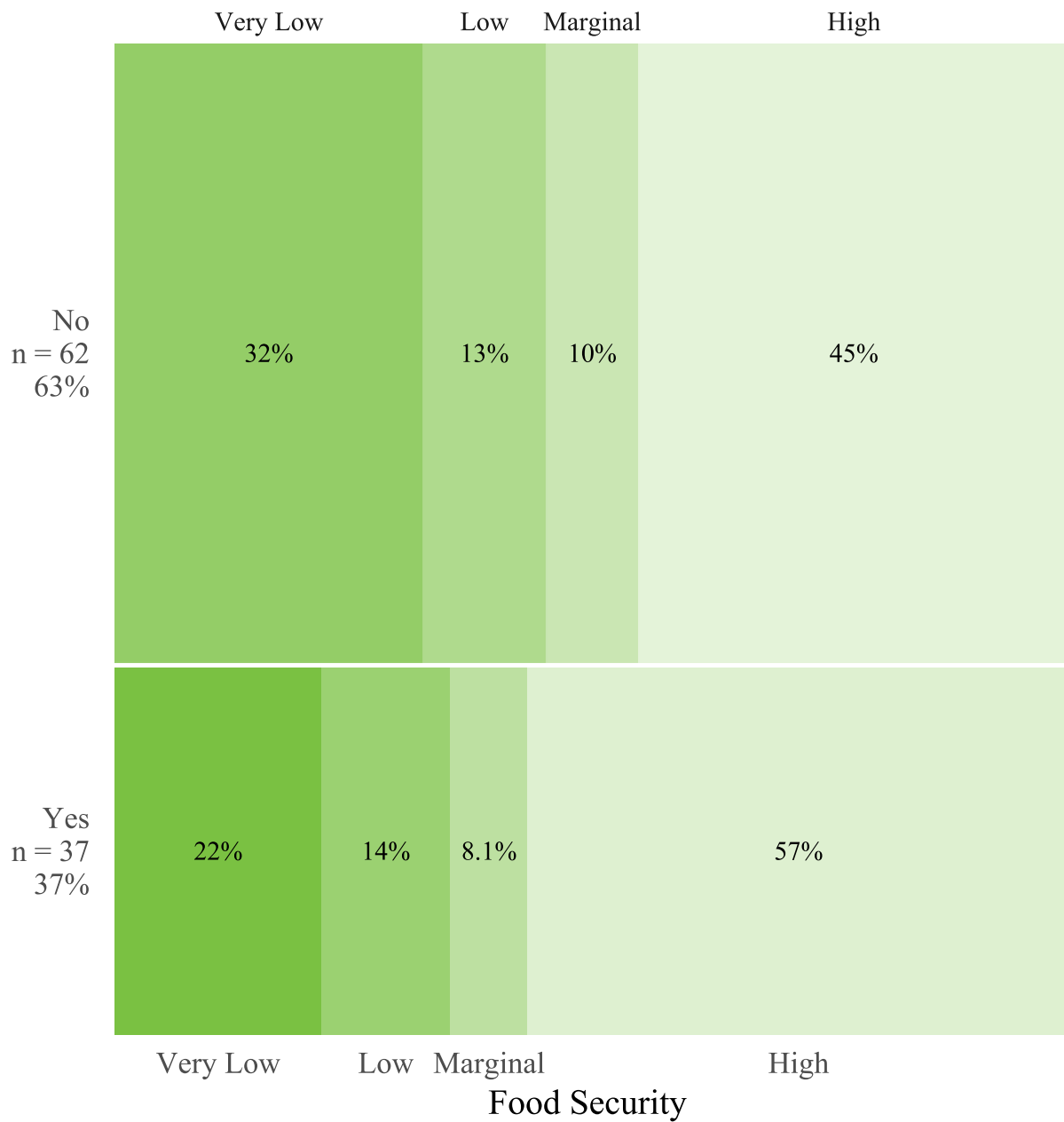


Food Insecurity by Children

Food Security Questions



Food Insecurity Categories

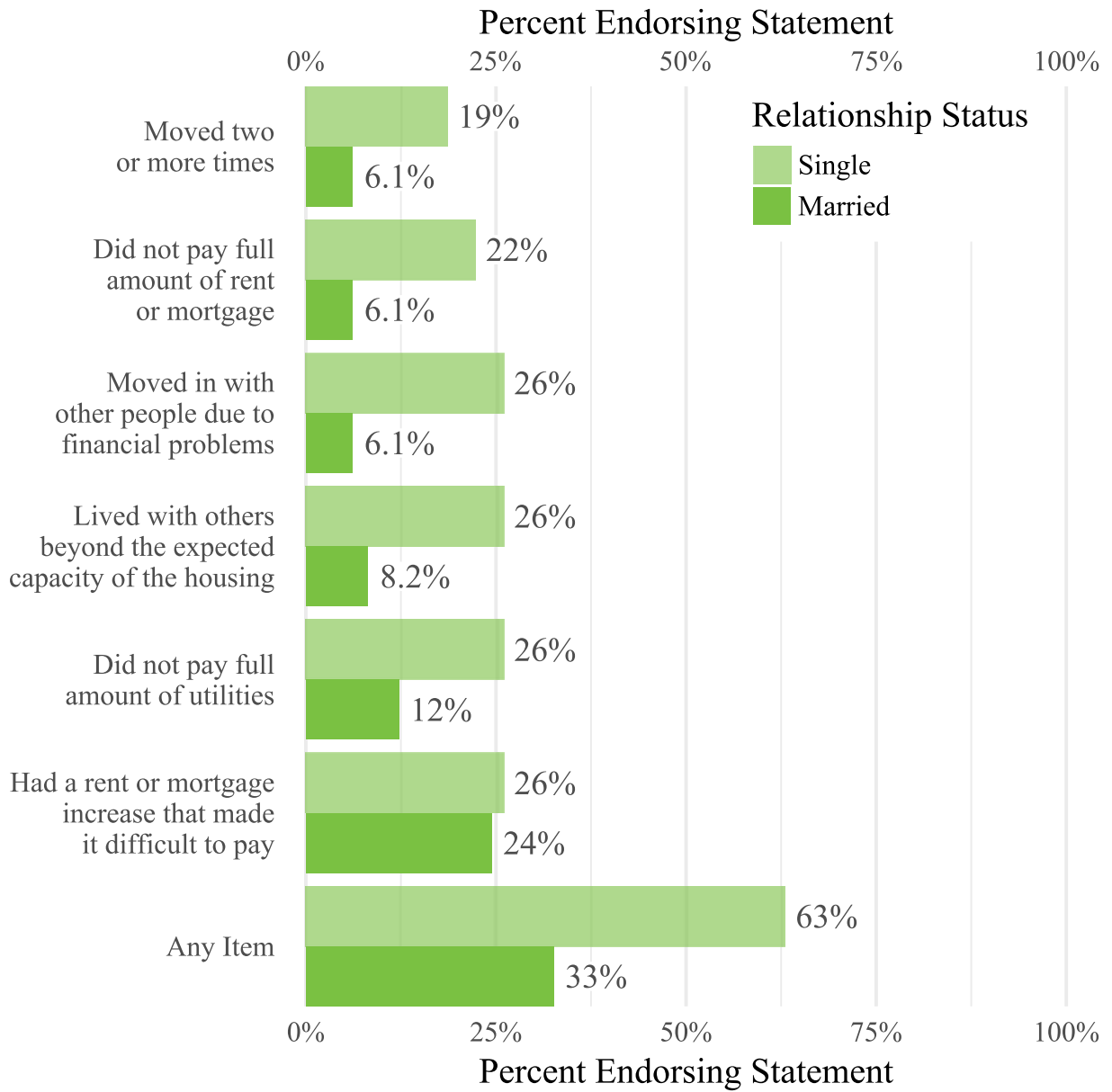


Relationship Status

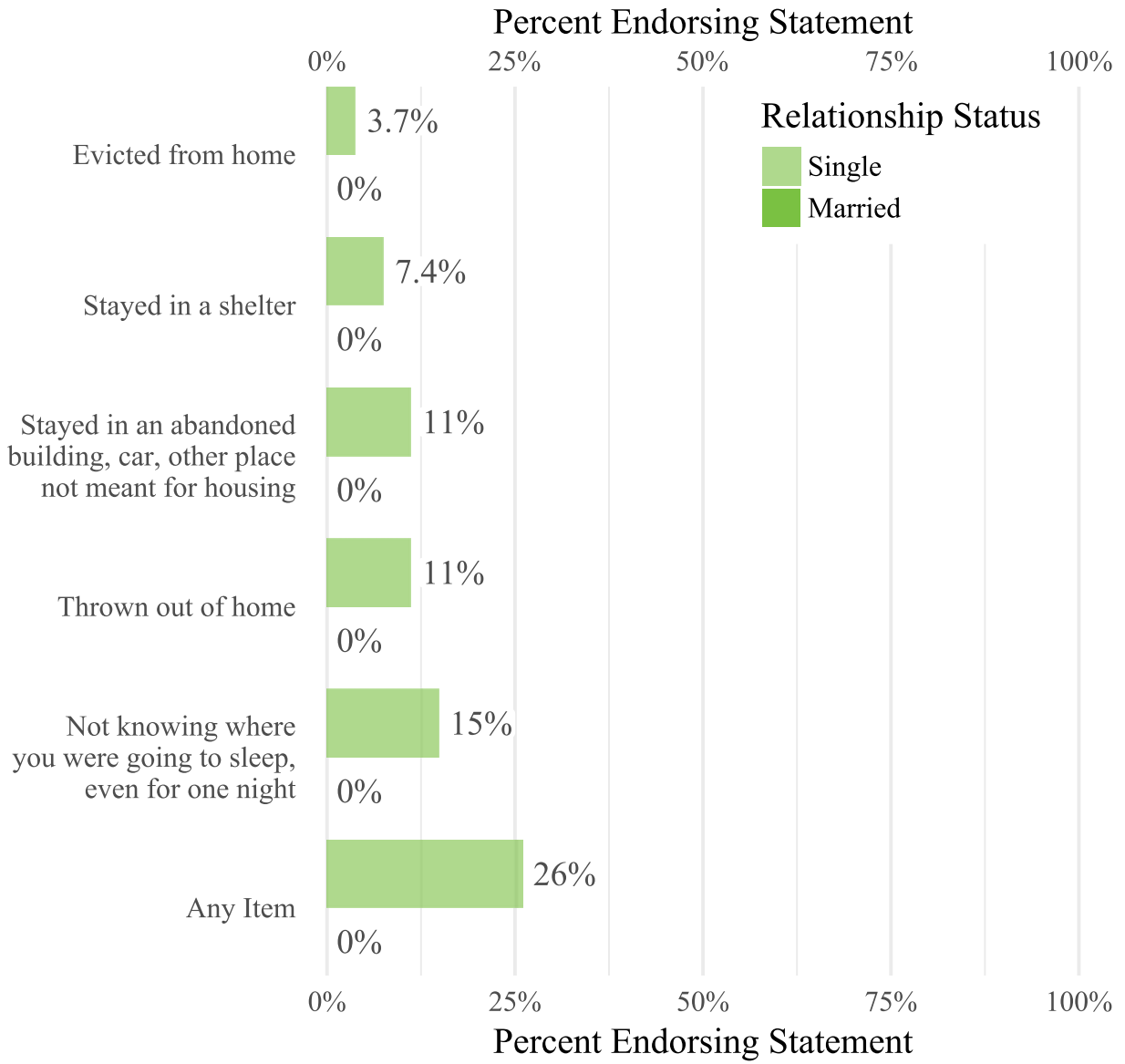
Student's relationship status

Relationship Status	<i>n</i>	Percent
Single	27	26.7%
In a relationship	10	9.9%
Married	49	48.5%
Divorced	8	7.9%
Widowed	7	6.9%

Housing Insecurity by Relationship Status

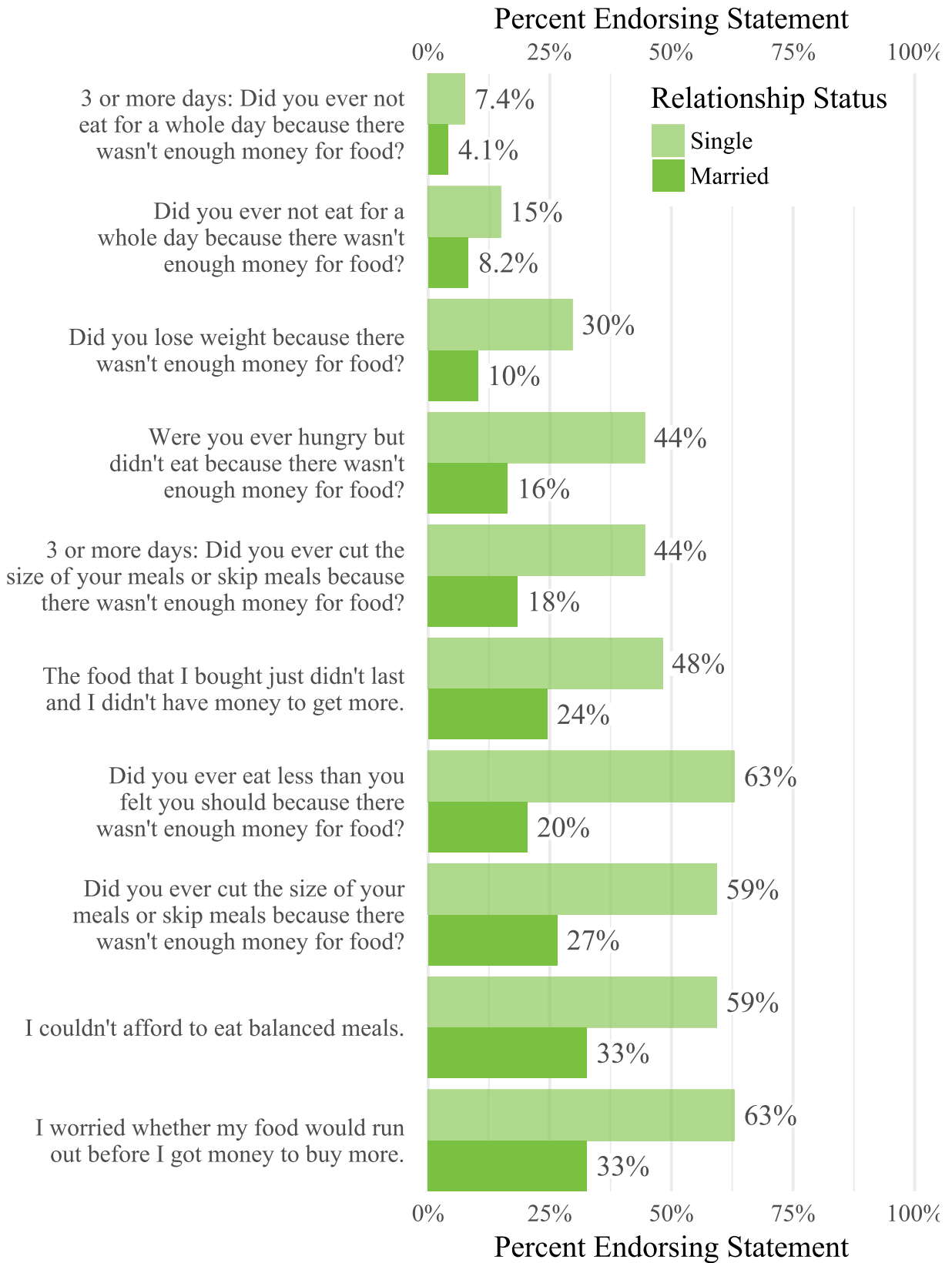


Homelessness by Relationship Status

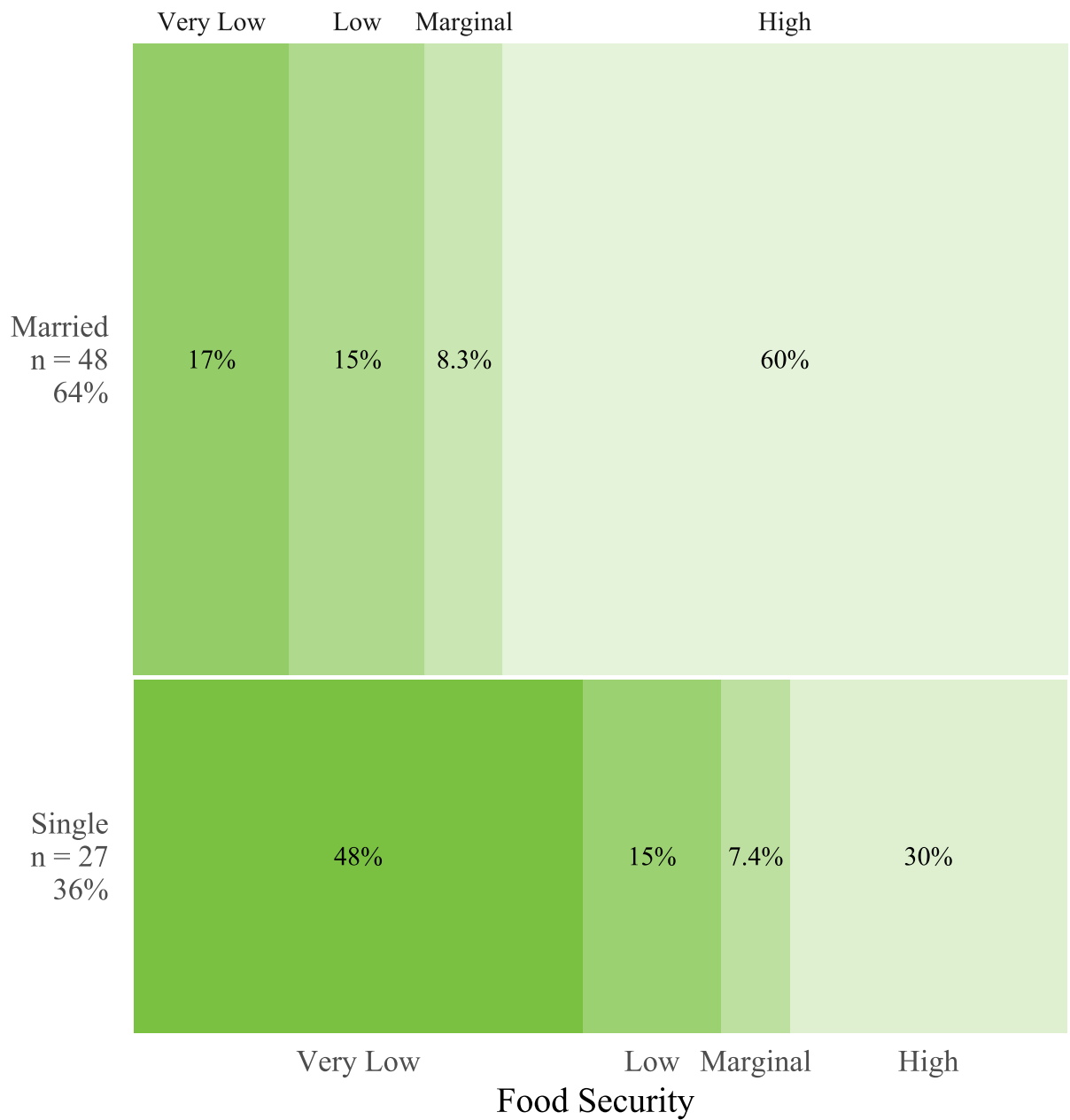


Food Insecurity by Relationship Status

Food Security Questions



Food Insecurity Categories



Subgroups Summary Table

Variable	<i>n</i>	Basic Needs Insecurity		
		Food	Housing	Homelessness
Gender				
Male	31	41.9%	45.2%	12.9%
Female	71	42.0%	49.3%	9.9%
Non-Binary	1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sexual Orientation				

Variable	<i>n</i>	Basic Needs Insecurity		
		Food	Housing	Homelessness
Heterosexual	85	40.5%	44.7%	8.2%
Homosexual	4	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%
Bisexual	2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
None	6	33.3%	66.7%	16.7%
Race/Ethnicity				
Black	11	45.5%	36.4%	27.3%
Hispanic	26	46.2%	57.7%	11.5%
Middle-Eastern/Arab	2	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Asian	15	42.9%	53.3%	0.0%
White	24	43.5%	50.0%	8.3%
Mixed/Other	25	32.0%	40.0%	8.0%
Age				
18 to 20	3	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
21 to 25	15	53.3%	66.7%	26.7%
25 to 30	10	50.0%	50.0%	20.0%
Over 30	73	38.0%	43.8%	6.8%
Pell Grant				
Yes	4	50.0%	50.0%	25.0%
No	97	44.3%	52.9%	11.5%
Hours Worked				
Not looking for work	31	35.7%	28.6%	3.6%
Looking for work	23	52.4%	57.1%	23.8%
1–5	4	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%

Basic Needs Insecurity

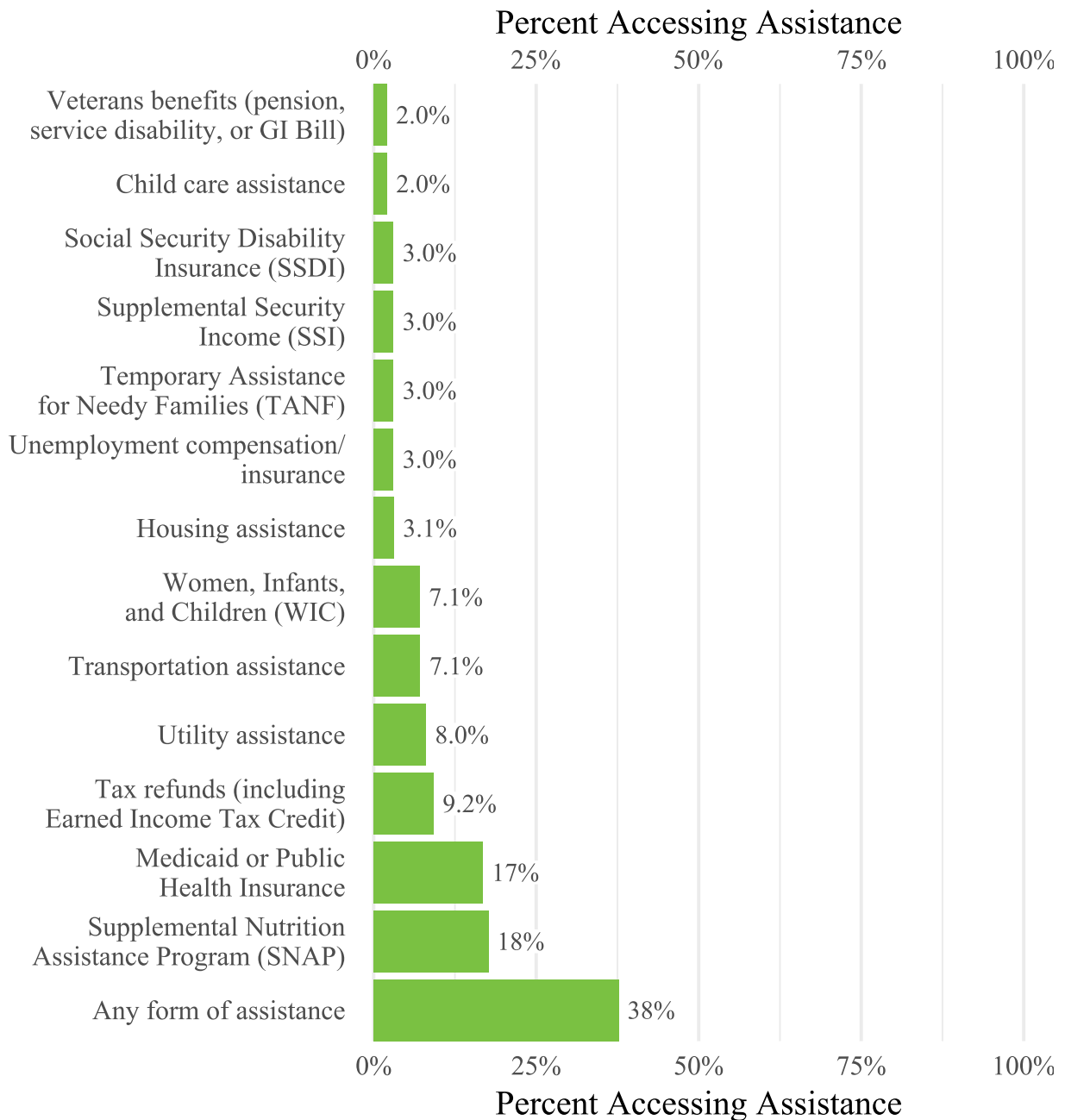
Variable	<i>n</i>	Food	Housing	Homelessness
6–20	21	45.0%	61.9%	0.0%
21–40	27	38.5%	48.0%	12.0%
40+	8	50.0%	62.5%	12.5%
Student Status				
Full-time	18	70.6%	76.5%	23.5%
Part-time	102	34.9%	42.5%	8.0%
Military Service				
Yes	9	22.2%	22.2%	0.0%
No	92	43.3%	50.0%	10.9%
Citizenship Status				
Citizen	90	43.8%	48.9%	10.0%
Non-Citizen	11	20.0%	36.4%	9.1%
Parent Citizenship Status				
Citizen Parent	83	45.1%	47.0%	9.6%
Non-Citizen Parent	18	23.5%	50.0%	11.1%
Dependent Status				
Dependent	6	50.0%	50.0%	16.7%
Independent	95	40.9%	47.4%	9.5%
Foster Care				
Yes	1	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%
No	101	40.4%	46.5%	9.9%
Children				
Yes	38	35.1%	42.1%	0.0%

Variable	n	Basic Needs Insecurity		
		Food	Housing	Homelessness
No	63	45.2%	50.8%	15.9%
Relationship Status				
Single	27	63.0%	63.0%	25.9%
In a relationship	10	50.0%	70.0%	30.0%
Married	49	31.2%	32.7%	0.0%
Divorced	8	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Widowed	7	33.3%	57.1%	0.0%

Note: Students with low or very low food security are considered *food insecure*.

Accessing Public Assistance

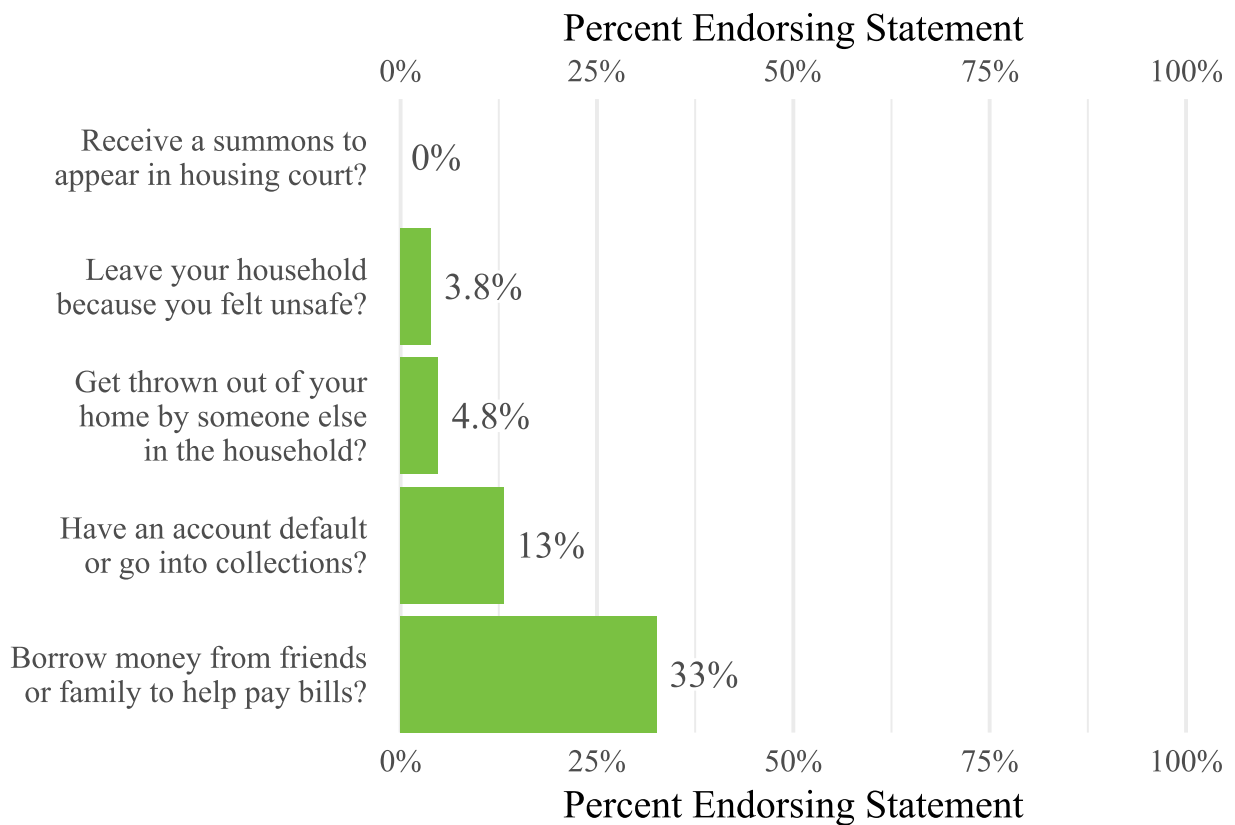
In addition to measuring basic needs insecurity, the survey included multiple items to characterize food insecure and housing insecure students' strategies for addressing the shortfalls they experience. Students were asked whether they had received assistance from a variety of social programs during the past year. Undergraduates may be eligible for multiple social programs to assist with food, housing, child care, transportation, health care, and other expenses. However, program restrictions often prevent students from receiving assistance. For example, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) requires undergraduates without children to work at least twenty hours per week. Due to shortages in subsidized housing, eligibility for housing assistance does not guarantee participation.



Other Concerns

Along with the measures of basic needs security described above, the survey included several related items about students' experiences in the past year. These items included measures of students' legal troubles, home environments, and financial decisions stemming from a lack of resources.

In the past year, did you...



Contact Information

About Us

The Wisconsin HOPE Lab – Food and Housing Resources for Students and Institutions was established in 2013 on the University of Wisconsin–Madison campus to engage in translational research aimed at improving equitable outcomes in postsecondary education. For more information on material need among college students, and for helpful food and housing resources for those seeking to help struggling students, visit the Wisconsin HOPE Lab webpage (<http://www.wihopelab.com/events/realcollege.html>).

Questions

If you have any questions about this report or food and housing resources, please contact Wisconsin HOPE Lab Acting Director Jed Richardson by email at jed.richardson@wisc.edu (<mailto:jed.richardson@wisc.edu>) or by phone at (608) 890-2946.