

The State of Hunger in Massachusetts

Massachusetts Trends & East Boston Community Snapshot

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Children's HealthWatch

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in Massachusetts**

MASSACHUSETTS TRENDS &
EAST BOSTON COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

MAY 2020

SPECIAL THANKS

- ▶ *This research was made possible thanks to generous support from:*
 - ▶ *Project Bread*
 - ▶ *Funds from the organization's 50th Walk for Hunger*
 - ▶ *The Boston Foundation*



Methodology

May-July 2019

▶ Domains of the Children's HealthWatch Community Data Collection and Analysis Tool :

- ▶ Health and well-being
- ▶ Economic hardships
- ▶ Family and community strengths

▪ Validated Questions:

- Core Survey: 33 questions
- Extra Module: Experiences of Discrimination
- Available in English and Spanish

▪ Administration:

- 296 participants (families with children)
- Incentive (\$10 gift card)
- East Boston Neighborhood Center staff or on their own

December 2019

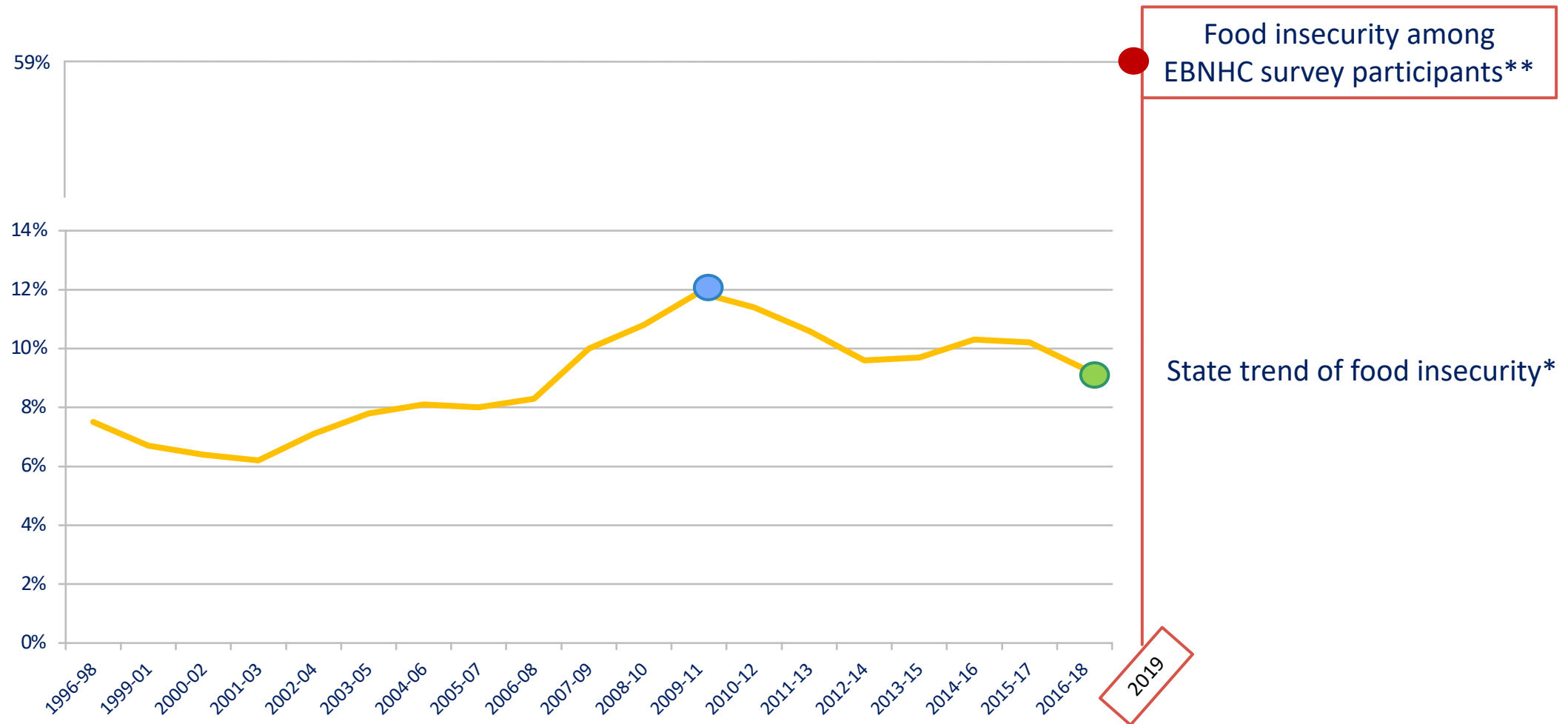
○ Focus Groups:

- Two sessions at the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center

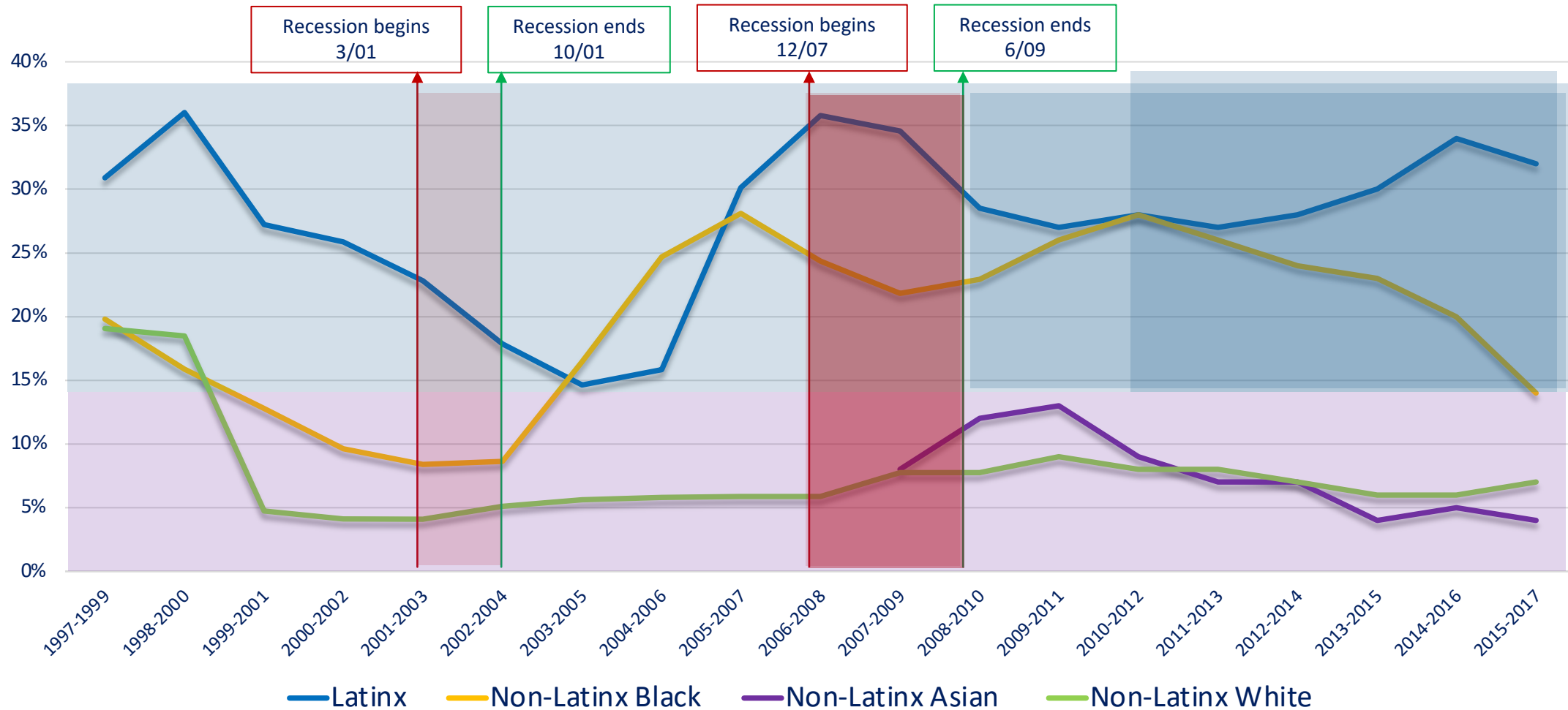
○ Advisory Committee:

- Catalina López-Ospina (City of Boston Office of Food Initiatives)
- Jessica del Rosario (Massachusetts Department of Public Health)
- Kathryn Audette (Dana-Farber Cancer Institute)
- Maria Infante (TerraCorps)
- Yuri Orellana (Boston Public Health Commission)

Food Insecurity in Massachusetts and in East Boston



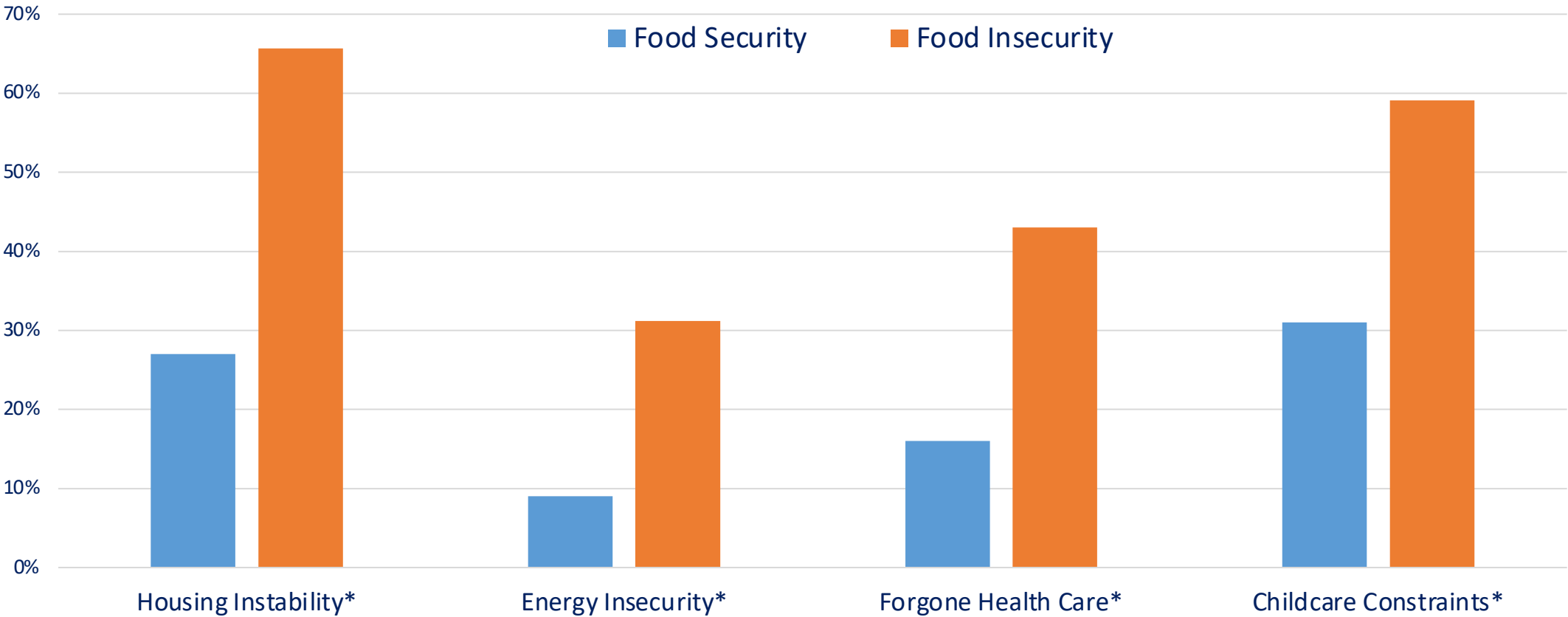
Trends in Food Insecurity by Race/Ethnicity in Massachusetts



Children's HealthWatch analyses of the Current Population Survey data. Data not available for Non-Latinx Asian prior to 2007.

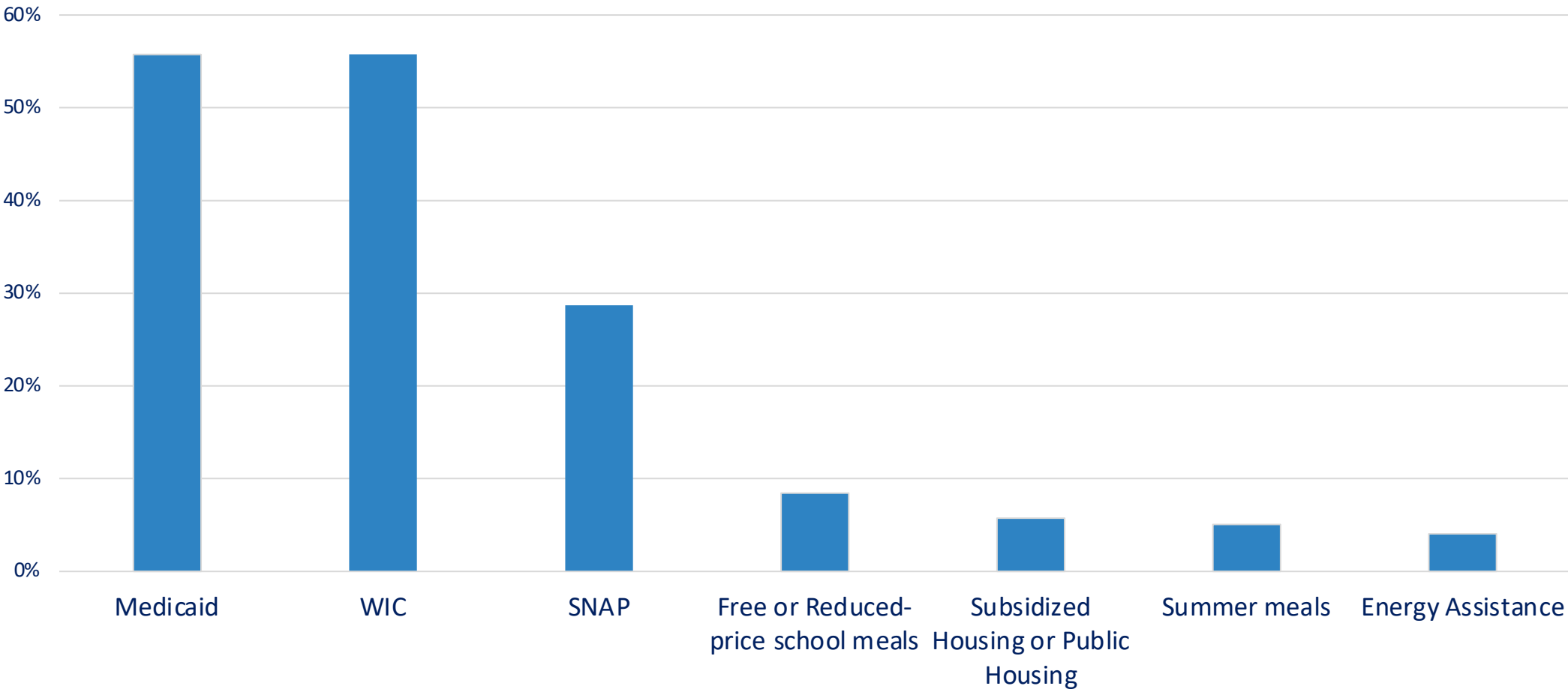


Economic Hardships and Food Insecurity



* Asterisks indicate statistical differences between food secure and food insecure participants - significant at p < 0.01.

Differences in program participation between WIC and SNAP



Why weren't participation rates similar?

One puzzle piece: Immigration status

SNAP

- Ineligible if a person is:
 - Undocumented immigrant
 - Documented immigrant with certain status who has been in the US for less than 5 years
- Eligible if child is:
 - US-born regardless of the parent's immigration status, if the household meets other income/expense eligibility criteria

WIC

- Neither requires proof of citizenship nor immigration documentation

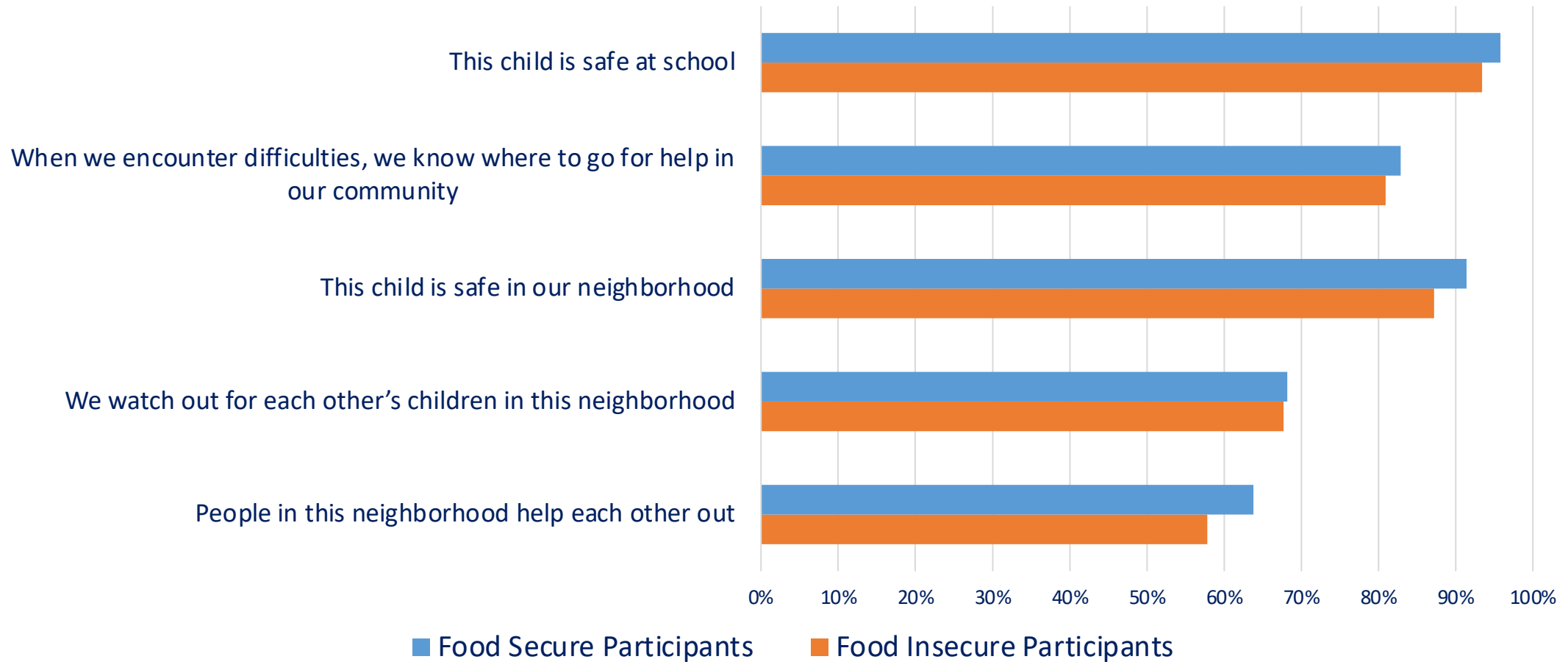
Public Charge

- Those deemed likely to be primarily dependent on the government for subsistence in the future; may be denied adjustment to legal permanent residency

“I want to apply, but I am told they will deport me easily if I do”

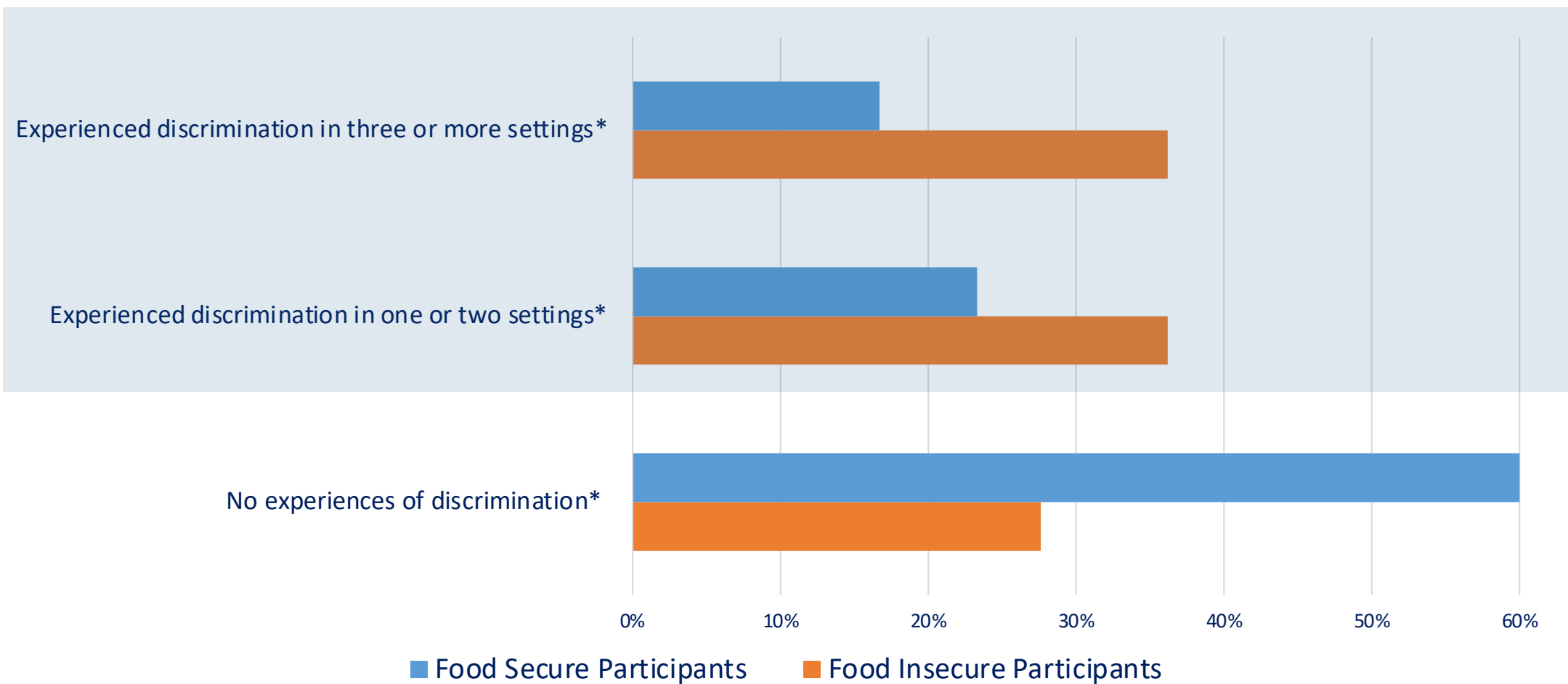
(Focus Group Participant)

Welcoming neighborhoods: an invaluable support



Note that no significant differences between food secure and food insecure participants were found in the Figure above.

Experiences of Discrimination: a toxic connection to food insecurity



* Asterisks indicate statistical differences between food secure and food insecure participants - significant at $p < 0.01$.

Conclusion



Food insecurity, along with several other hardships are rooted in poverty, which in turn are deeply entrenched in systemic and structural racism, ethnic and gender inequity, and disproportional distribution of income and wealth built into the political economy of the Commonwealth - a reflection of the country's dynamics.

Massachusetts is a state that leads the way nationally in many regards, and still we have a long distance to travel in order to achieve a more just society in which every individual, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or country of origin can succeed.

THANK YOU !

LEARN MORE: CHILDRENSHEALTHWATCH.ORG/PUBLICATION/STATEOFHUNGEREASTBOSTON
PROJECTBREAD.ORG/STATEOFHUNGEREASTBOSTON

Further questions, contact me:
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