



## SMCCCD FALL 2022 FOOD AND HOUSING INSECURITY STUDENT SURVEY

### COLLEGE OF SAN MATEO REPORT

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Entering Fall 2022, the world was coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic and higher education was beginning to recover from enrollment declines. A national survey conducted during the pandemic, by the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, found that 39% of students at two-year colleges experienced food insecurities, 48% experienced housing insecurities, and 14% had experienced homelessness<sup>1</sup>.

During the pandemic, the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD) established weekly food distributions at each campus; a monthly food grant program for eligible students; and provided direct financial assistance with emergency funds from the state and federal government to students identified with financial need. In addition, California and San Mateo County enacted laws to protect tenants from evictions during the pandemic<sup>2</sup>.

However, as the pandemic transitioned to an endemic, the U.S. inflation rate was on the rise. In summer leading to Fall 2022, food prices had risen 10% and gas prices 60% from the previous year, and the monthly U.S. consumer index was at 9.1%, the highest in 20-years<sup>3</sup>. These circumstances prompted the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD) to take a closer look at food and housing insecurity among the students that attend each of its three colleges.

In order to examine the extent of food and housing insecurity experienced by students, the District conducted an online survey of 15,984 students enrolled at its three campuses in October 2022. This report focuses on the results for College of San Mateo (CSM) specifically. More than twelve hundred (n = 1,218) CSM students completed the survey for a response rate of 20% of 6,100 invitations sent. The survey questionnaire was designed to document the extent of food and housing insecurity experienced by students. A Spanish language version of the survey was also made available. Survey results will be used to inform conversations about SMCCCD students' basic needs and the associated challenges in improving student academic success. In addition, survey results will assist in the development of innovative policy solutions addressing the challenges faced by our students. The complete survey instrument can be found in Appendix C. It is nearly identical to the survey instrument used in the 2018 SMCCCD Food and Housing Insecurity Student Survey<sup>4</sup>; therefore, key changes since the 2018 survey are also highlighted in this report.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://hope.temple.edu/sites/hope/files/media/document/HopeSurveyReport2021.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The California COVID-19 Tenant Relief Act and the COVID-19 Rental Housing Recovery Act protected renters impacted financially as a result of COVID-19.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/charts/consumer-price-index/consumer-price-index-by-category-line-chart.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <https://smccd.edu/drc/DISTRICT%20Food%20Housing%20Report%20FINAL%201%2024%2019.pdf>



Survey results revealed the following experienced by students with regard to their basic food needs due to income limitations.

- About one-half (51%) of CSM respondents indicated that the food they “bought just didn’t last, and I didn’t have money to get more.” 15% of students reported this as “often true” and another 36% reported this as “sometimes true.”
- 40% of CSM students reported “cutting the size of meals or skipping meals” because there wasn’t enough money for food.
- Beyond the literal lack of food, the level of psychological insecurity was high, with 59% of CSM students reporting “I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more.”

Students were also asked about their housing security, including being homeless.

- 1 of 8 CSM students (13%) experienced homelessness in the past 12 months.

Being homeless was defined in the survey as a student being without a place to live and was living in a vehicle, outside, or in a shelter, or couch surfing. Students also experienced housing insecurity, which is a broader set of challenges such as worrying about the ability to pay rent, moving frequently, or feeling unsafe in their living situation.

- 50% of CSM students experienced financial difficulty paying rent during the past 12 months.
- About one-third (34%) of CSM students reported feeling “less than safe” in their current living situation.
- 8% of CSM students reported moving because they “felt unsafe” at home during the past 12 months.

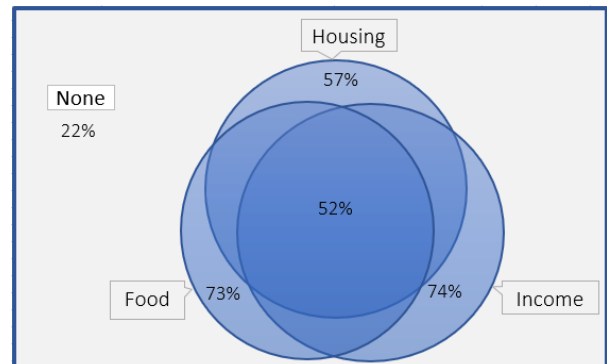
Overall, 3 out of 4 CSM students reported experiencing some form of food or housing insecurity during the past 12 months.

Compared to the 2018 survey results, the following key changes were observed for the 2022 survey:

- 9 percentage-point more CSM students reported that “the food (I/we) bought just didn’t last and (I/we) didn’t have money to get more.”
- 15 percentage-point increase in CSM students reporting “cutting the size of meals or skipping meals” because there wasn’t enough money for food.
- 23 percentage-point additional CSM students reporting “I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more.”
- 13 percentage-point more CSM students having “financial difficulty paying rent during the past 12 months.”

## THE INTERSECTION OF INSECURITIES

Students did not experience housing, food and income insecurity in isolation. Overall, 52% of CSM students experienced all three forms of insecurity<sup>5</sup>, whereas 22% of students reported no insecurity in these areas. (see Figure 1). Food, housing and income insecurity also do not impact CSM students at equal levels across various demographic areas. Black, Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latinx, First-Generation, and low-income students reported higher levels of insecurity. (Appendix B).



**Figure 1: Intersection of Housing, Food and Income Insecurity experienced by C S M students (n = 1,218).**

## METHOD

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions designed to reveal the daily food and housing experiences of SMCCCD students and how they meet their basic needs. The questionnaire was designed to examine the extent to which students' needs for food and safe, affordable housing were being met, and the reasons contributing to their deprivation. Food insecurity is defined as the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the inability to secure food in socially acceptable ways<sup>6</sup>. The most extreme form of food insecurity can be accompanied by physiological sensations of hunger. Homelessness means that a student is without a place to live and may reside outside, in a vehicle, or in a shelter. Housing insecurity encompasses a broader set of challenges such as needing to move frequently, ephemeral living situations, and the inability to pay rent or utilities<sup>7</sup>.

## KEY FINDINGS: FOOD INSECURITY

Survey results revealed the following challenges experienced by students with regard to their basic food needs due to income limitations.

- A little more than one-half (51%) of CSM respondents indicated that “the food (I/we) bought just didn’t last and (I/we) didn’t have money to get more.” 15% of students reported this as “often true” and another 36% reported this as “sometimes true.” (Table 1)

<sup>5</sup> This was an 10% increase from the 42% reported in 2018. However, since we were not able to replicate the exact definition used in 2018 for housing, food and income insecurities, any comparison to 2018 numbers should be interpreted with caution.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/measurement.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> <https://hope.temple.edu/research/publications>

(Q.2) “The food that (I/we) bought just didn’t last, and (I/we) didn’t have money to get more.”

	Cañada	CSM	Skyline	District
Often true	16%	15%	18%	16%
Sometimes true	35%	36%	41%	37%
Never true	50%	49%	41%	47%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 1

- 40% of CSM students reported “cutting the size of meals or skipping meals” because there wasn’t enough money for food. (Table 2)

(Q.4) “Did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?”

	Cañada	CSM	Skyline	District
Yes	38%	40%	44%	41%
No	62%	60%	56%	59%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 2

- Beyond the literal lack of food, the level of psychological insecurity is high: 59% of CSM students report that they often or sometimes “worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more.” (Table 3)

(Q.1) “I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more.”

	Cañada	CSM	Skyline	District
Often true	19%	21%	22%	21%
Sometimes true	41%	38%	44%	41%
Never true	41%	38%	44%	41%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 3

## KEY FINDINGS: HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING INSECURITY

Students were also asked about their housing security, including being homeless. A homelessness indicator was created with the student’s self-report of being homeless or experiencing any temporary housing situations, such as living in a vehicle, in a shelter, or on the streets, or couch surfing.

- 1 of 8 CSM students (13%) experienced homelessness (as defined by the homelessness indicator) in the past 12 months. (Table 4)

	Cañada	CSM	Skyline	District
Yes	13%	13%	15%	13%
No	87%	87%	85%	87%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 4

When asked directly about being homeless, fewer students reported being homeless.

- 1 of 25 CSM students (4%) report being homeless in the past 12 months. (Table 5)

(Q.14) “In the past 12 months, have you ever been homeless?”

	Cañada	CSM	Skyline	District
Yes	4%	4%	4%	4%
No	96%	96%	96%	96%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 5

Students also experience housing insecurity, which is a broader set of challenges such as worrying about the ability to pay rent, moving frequently, or feeling unsafe in their living situation.

- Half of CSM students experienced financial difficulty paying rent during the past 12 months. (Table 6)

(Q.10) “In the past 12 months, did your financial situation make it difficult to pay your rent or mortgage?”

	Cañada	CSM	Skyline	District
Yes	52%	50%	54%	52%
No	48%	50%	46%	48%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 6

- About one-third (34%) of CSM students reported feeling “less than safe” in their current living situation. (Table 7)

(Q.17) “How safe do you feel where you currently live?”

	Cañada	CSM	Skyline	District
Not at all safe	2%	1%	2%	2%
A little bit safe	8%	6%	7%	7%
Somewhat safe	26%	27%	27%	27%
Very safe	42%	45%	47%	45%
Extremely safe	22%	20%	17%	20%

Table 7

- 8% of CSM students report leaving their household because they “felt unsafe” during the past 12 months. (Table 8)

(Q.16) “In the past 12 months, did you leave your household because you felt unsafe?”

	Cañada	CSM	Skyline	District
Yes	8%	8%	9%	8%
No	92%	92%	91%	92%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 8

## KEY FINDINGS: A CLOSER LOOK AT FOOD AND HOUSING INSECURITY CORRELATES

Students were asked to identify specific experiences and daily life responses to food and housing insecurity and accompanying strategies in making ends meet. Survey respondents experiencing food or housing insecurity identified the following experiences, adaptive responses, and supports received associated with their experiences during the past 12 months. Each of the following conditions represent different aspects of the continuum of food and housing insecurity experienced by CSM students. For CSM, these challenges and struggles include the following:

- Received free food or meals—61%
- Borrow money from friends or family to help pay bills—47%
- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) recipient—43%
- Medicaid or Public Health Insurance recipient—39%
- Went hungry because you could not afford more food—31%
- Not pay the full amount of a gas, oil, or electricity bill—23%
- Not pay or underpay your rent or mortgage—20%
- Tax refunds (including EITC)—15%

- Move in with other people because of financial problems—14%
- Live with others beyond the expected capacity of the house or apartment—12%
- Have an account default or go into collections—9%
- Unemployment insurance—9%
- Housing assistance—8%
- WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, & Children)—7%
- Transportation assistance—7%
- Not know where you were going to sleep at night—6%
- Utility assistance (e.g., help paying for heat or water)—5%
- SSI (Supplemental Security Income) recipient—5%
- SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance) recipient—4%
- Child care assistance—3%
- GA (General Assistance or General Relief Program) recipient—3%
- TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) recipient—2%
- Get evicted from your home—1%
- Receive a summons to appear in housing court—1%

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#### KEY FINDINGS: CHANGES FROM 2018 SMCCCD FOOD AND HOUSING INSECURITY STUDENT SURVEY

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Students in Fall 2022 experienced the unprecedented event of the global COVID-19 pandemic and were faced with rising costs for basic necessities (e.g., food and gas). Key changes from the experiences of students in Spring 2018 are reported below. Comparisons are made only when the survey or analysis are exact between the two surveys.

- 9 percentage-point more CSM students reported that “the food (I/we) bought just didn’t last and (I/we) didn’t have money to get more.” (51% in 2022 vs. 42% in 2018).
- 15 percentage-point more CSM students reporting “cutting the size of meals or skipping meals” because there wasn’t enough money for food (40% in 2022 vs. 25% in 2018).
- 23 percentage-point additional CSM students reporting “I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more.” (59% in 2022 vs. 36% in 2018).
- CSM students’ self-report of being homeless remained steady (4% in 2022 vs. 5% in 2018).
- 13 percentage-point increase in CSM students reported having “financial difficulty paying rent during the past 12 months.” (50% in 2022 vs. 37% in 2018).
- 10 percentage-point more CSM students reported feeling “less than safe” in their current living situation. (34% in 2022 vs. 24% in 2018).
- The percentage of CSM students leaving their household because they “felt unsafe” during the past 12 months remained stable. (8% in 2022 vs. 6% in 2018).

## APPENDIX A: CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

With the exception of gender, survey respondents' key demographic characteristics roughly approximate the total population of CSM students. Survey responses were 'weighted' or adjusted to ensure that the statistics computed from the data representative of the total student population enrolled Fall 2022.

Gender	CSM Respondents		District-wide Respondents		CSM Total Population	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Female	59%	721	63%	1,969	49%	3,003
Male	39%	470	34%	1,070	48%	2,935
Not Reported	2%	27	3%	83	3%	162
Total	100%	1,218	100%	3,122	100%	6,100

Age	CSM Respondents		District-wide Respondents		CSM Total Population	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
less than 20	46%	566	39%	1,227	47%	2,843
20-29	33%	400	35%	1,103	34%	2,081
30-39	10%	123	13%	400	9%	548
40-49	5%	64	6%	199	5%	279
50-59	3%	41	4%	125	3%	175
60 and older	2%	24	2%	68	3%	174
Total	100%	1,218	100%	3,122	100%	6,100

Ethnicity	CSM Respondents		District-wide Respondents		CSM Total Population	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
American Indian/Alaskan Native American	<0%	***	<0%	***	<0%	***
Asian	20%	240	18%	555	17%	1,012
Black/African American	2%	21	2%	71	2%	149
Filipino	6%	75	9%	281	7%	400
Hispanic/Latinx	40%	483	42%	1,303	34%	2,092
Multiraces	7%	80	6%	200	8%	476
Pacific Islander	4%	43	2%	74	3%	167
Unknown	3%	39	4%	114	3%	177
White	19%	236	17%	521	27%	1,621
Total	100%	1,218	100%	3,122	100%	6,100

	CSM Respondents		District-wide Respondents		CSM Total Population	
	%	N	%	n	%	n
Low Income Status	37%	456	40%	1,242	23%	1,392
First Generation College	52%	631	54%	1,688	46%	2,805

\*\*\*Responses or count <10





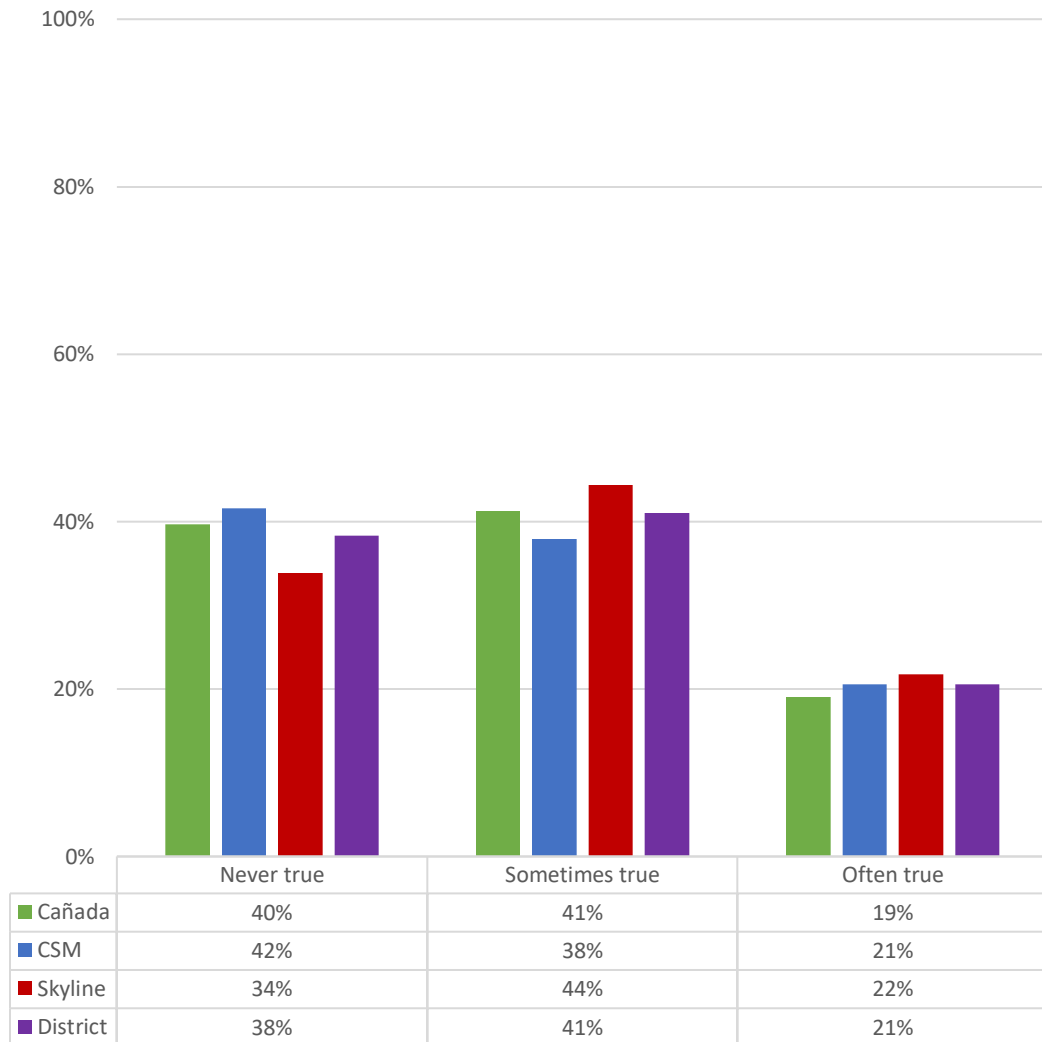
## APPENDIX B: LEVELS OF INSECURITY BY STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

CSM											
Food	Gender	%	Age	%	Ethnicity	%	First Gen	%		Low Income	%
	Female	75%	< 20	68%	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	***	No	52%		No	58%
	Male	72%	20-29	84%	Asian	62%	Yes	86%		Yes	99%
	N/R*	45%	30-39	80%	Black, African American	100%	N/R*	76%		Total	73%
	Total	73%	40-49	73%	Filipino	70%	Total	73%			
			50-59	52%	Hispanic/Latinx	88%					
			60+	42%	Multiraces	59%					
			Total	73%	Pacific Islander	95%					
					Unknown	71%					
					White	55%					
					Total	73%					
Income	Gender	%	Age	%	Ethnicity	%	First Gen	%		Low Income	%
	Female	77%	< 20	67%	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	***	No	51%		No	58%
	Male	71%	20-29	84%	Asian	62%	Yes	87%		Yes	100%
	N/R*	52%	30-39	88%	Black, African American	100%	N/R*	78%		Total	74%
	Total	74%	40-49	83%	Filipino	70%	Total	74%			
			50-59	64%	Hispanic/Latinx	89%					
			60+	40%	Multiraces	57%					
			Total	76%	Pacific Islander	95%					
					Unknown	74%					
					White	55%					
					Total	74%					
Housing	Gender	%	Age	%	Ethnicity	%	First Gen	%		Low Income	%
	Female	61%	< 20	48%	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	***	No	42%		No	45%
	Male	20%	20-29	68%	Asian	50%	Yes	66%		Yes	78%
	N/R*	1%	30-39	68%	Black, African American	82%	N/R*	61%		Total	57%
	Total	57%	40-59	72%	Filipino	54%	Total	57%			
			50-59	40%	Hispanic/Latinx	68%					
			60+	36%	Multiraces	42%					
			Total	57%	Pacific Islander	74%					
					Unknown	61%					
					White	43%					
					Total	57%					

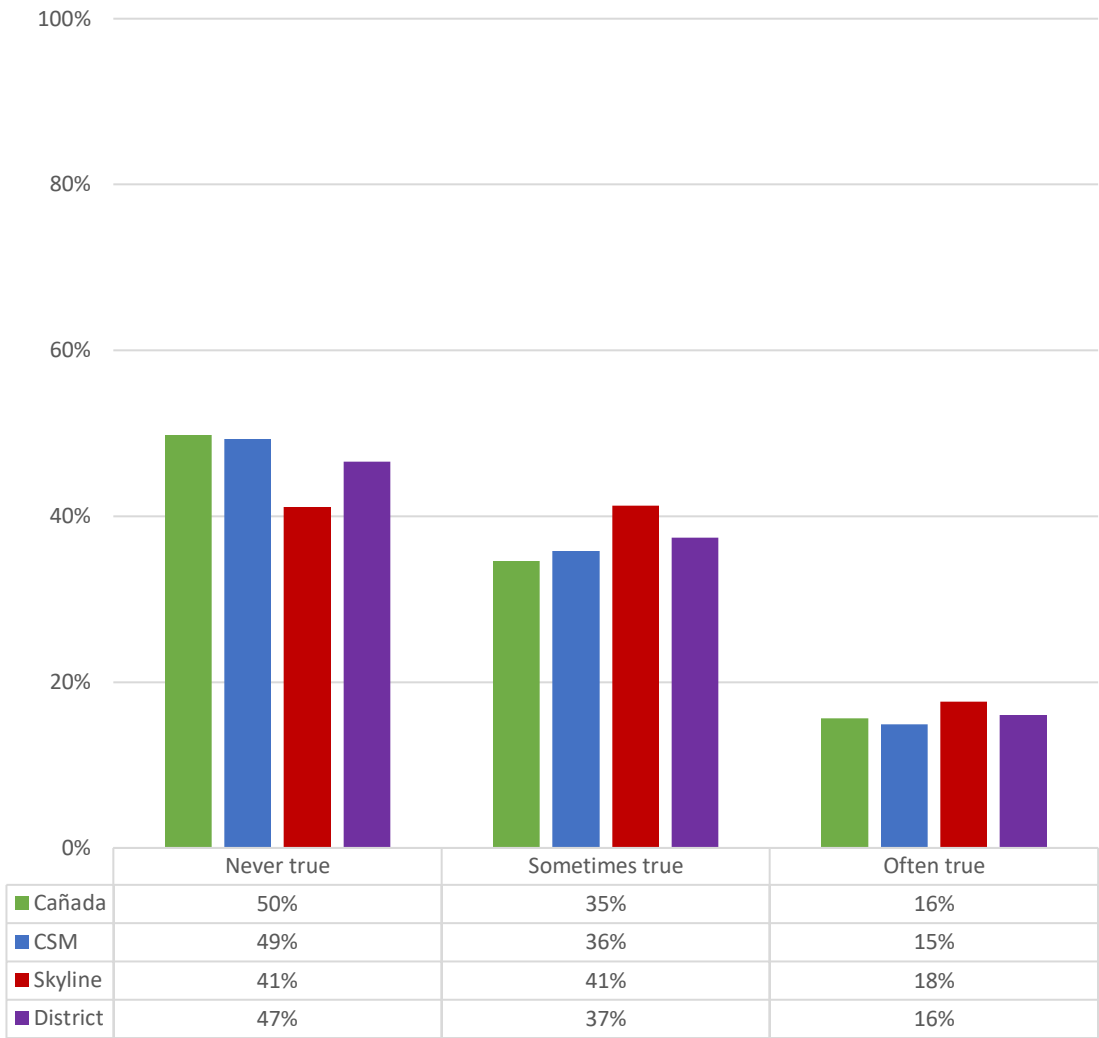
NOTES: \*N/R = Not Reported; \*\*\*Response rate <10

## APPENDIX C: SMCCCD FOOD AND HOUSING INSECURITY SURVEY Fall 2022

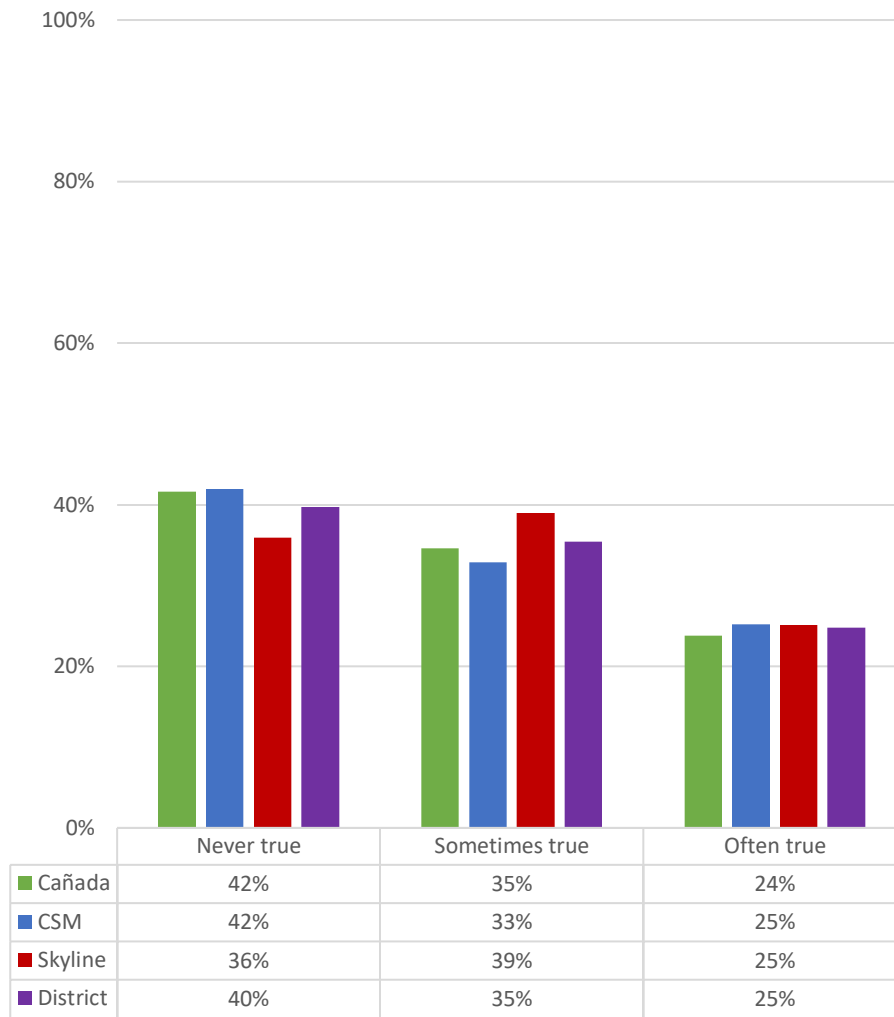
Q.1 I(we) worried whether my(our) food would run out before I(we) got money to buy more.



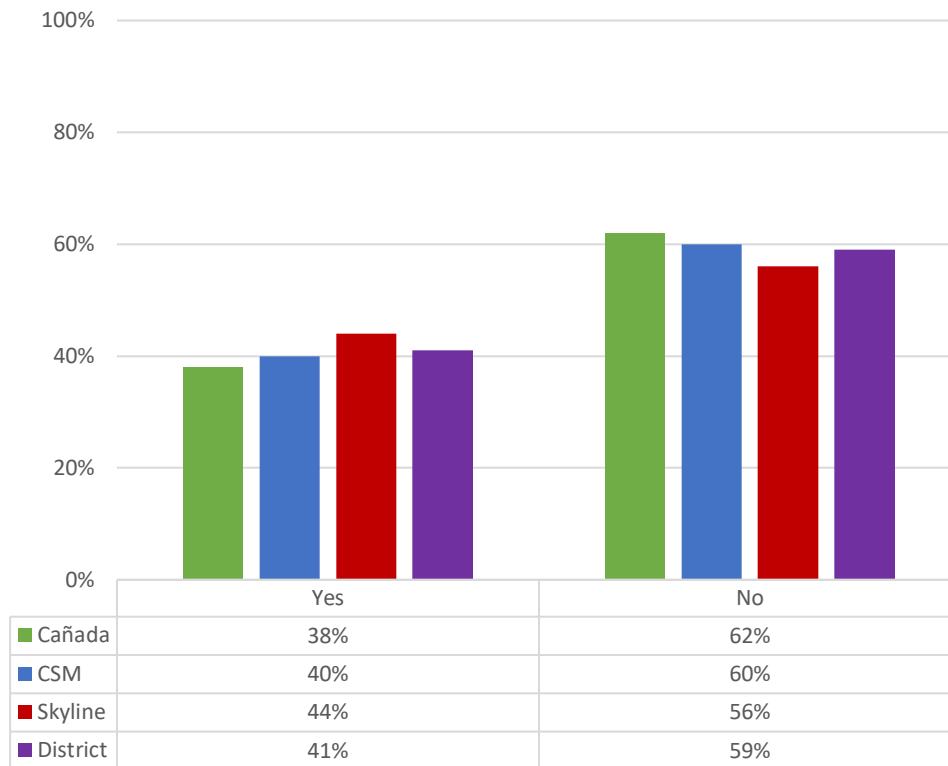
Q.2 The food that I(we) bought just didn't last, and I(we) didn't have money to get more.



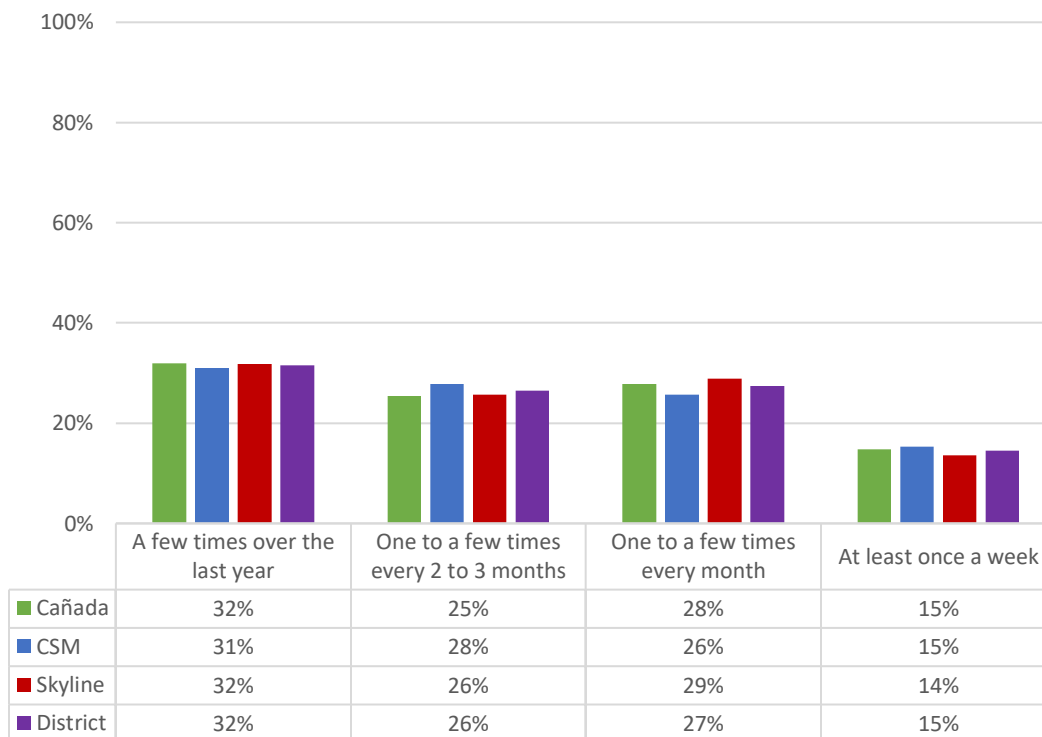
Q.3 (we) couldn't afford to eat balanced meals. (A balanced meal contains whole grains, protein, vegetables and fruit.)



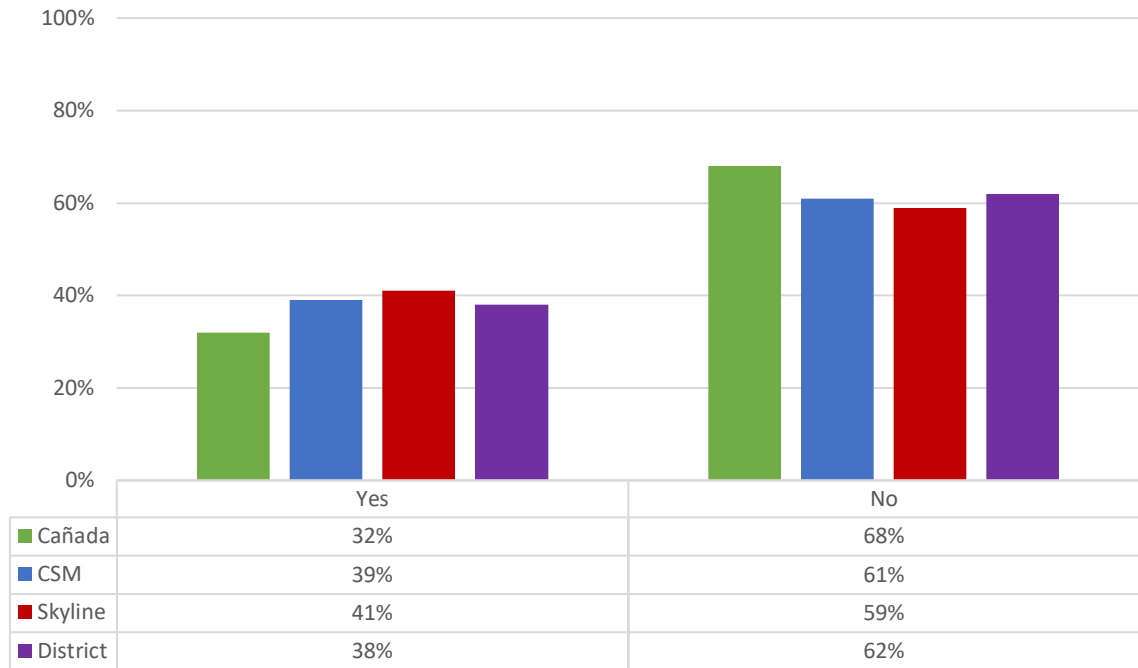
Q.4 In the last 12 months, did you (or other adults in your household) ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?



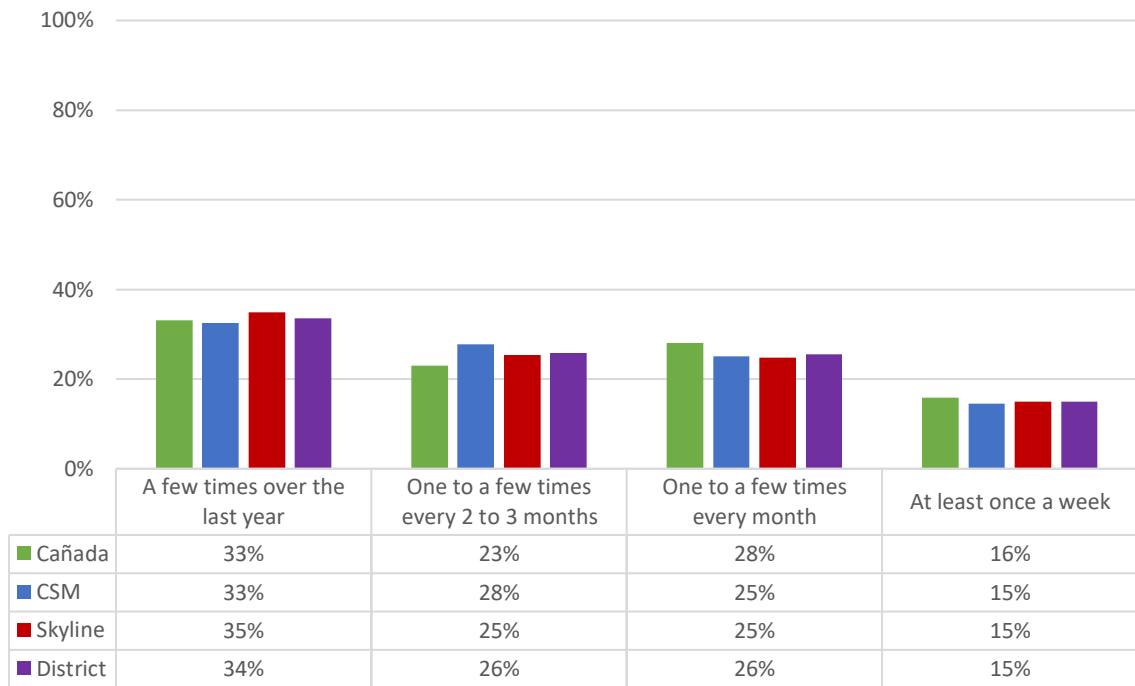
Q.5 How often did this happen?



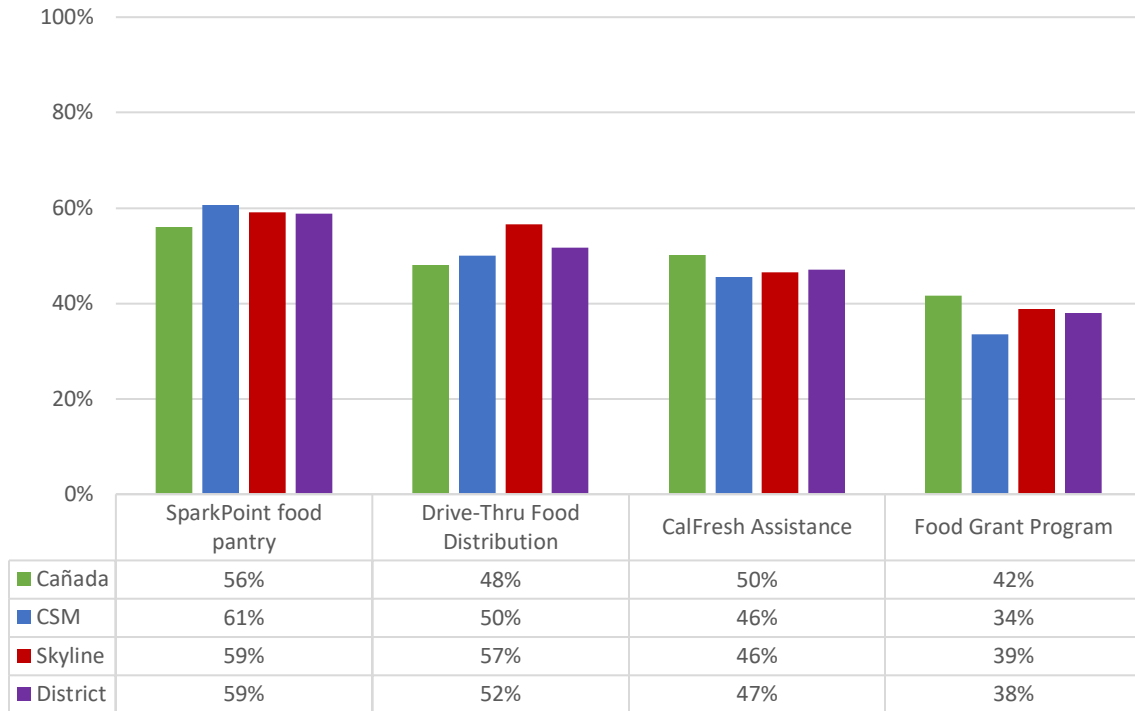
Q.6 In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?



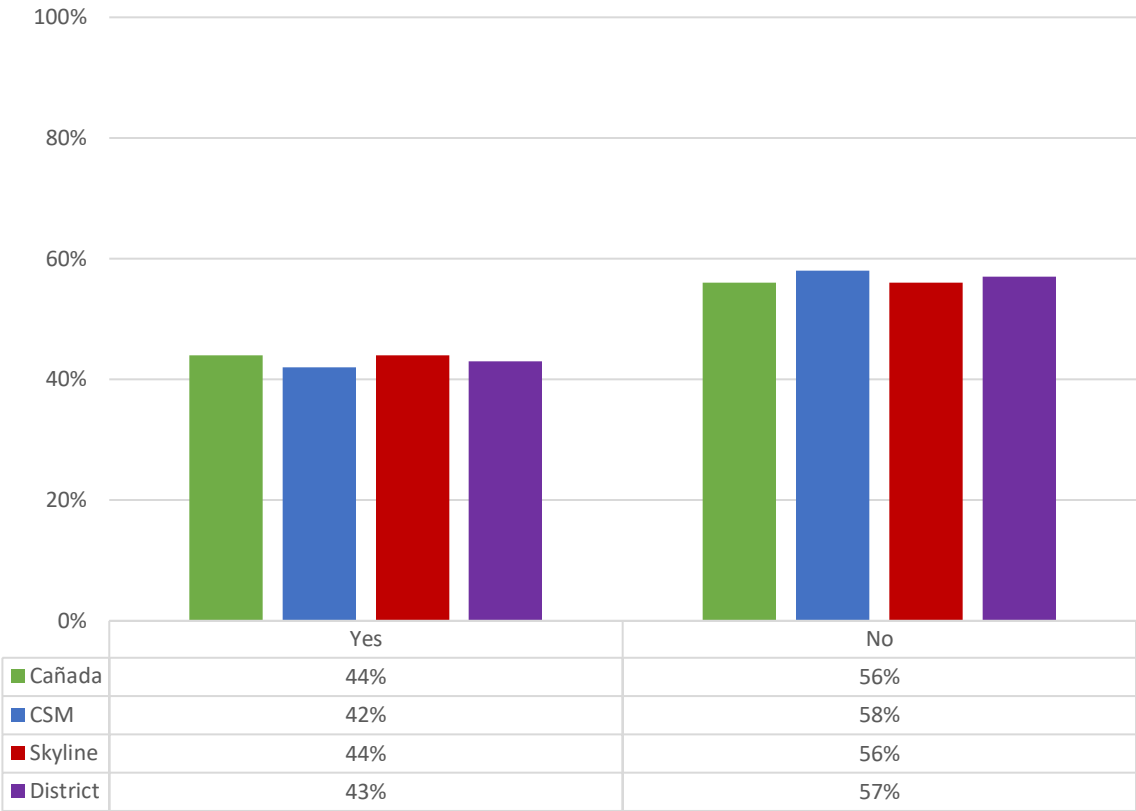
Q.7 How often did this happen?



Q.8 Are you aware of the following resources available across the district? (Check all that apply)

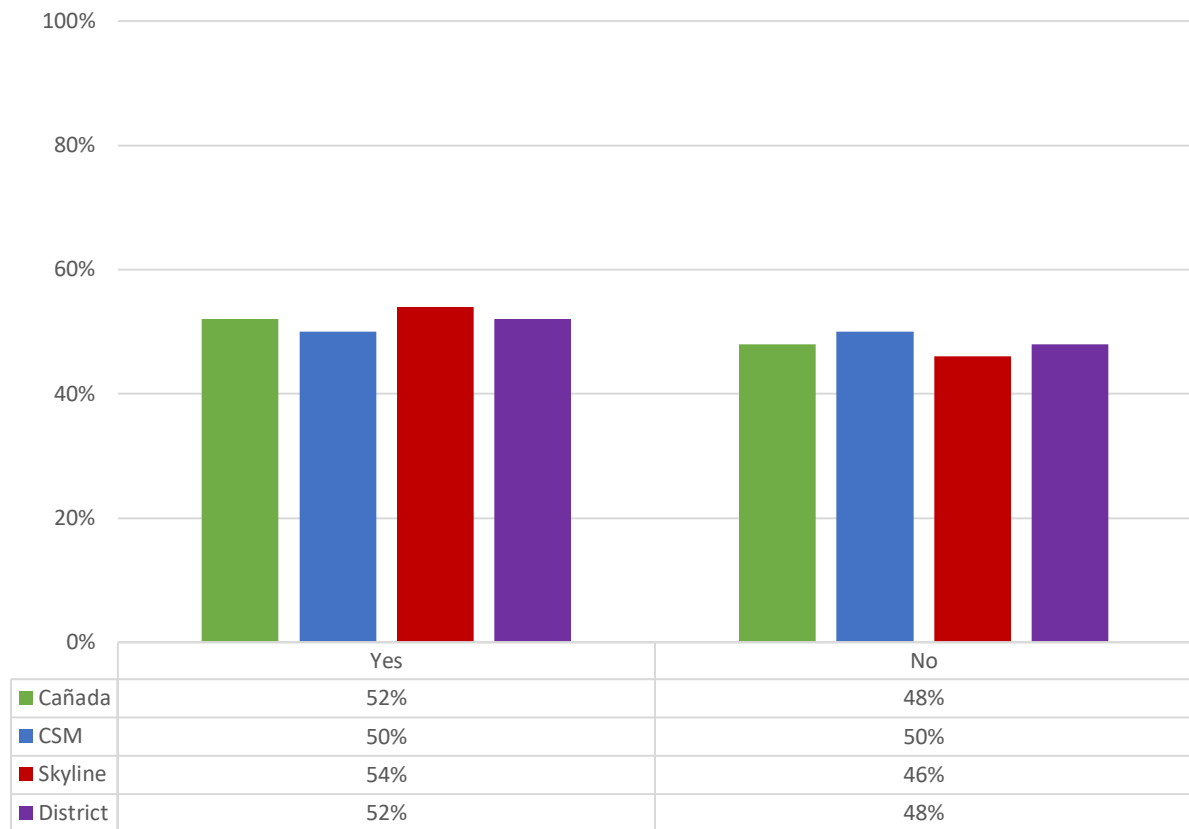


Q.9 In the past 12 months, was there a rent or mortgage increase that made it difficult to pay?

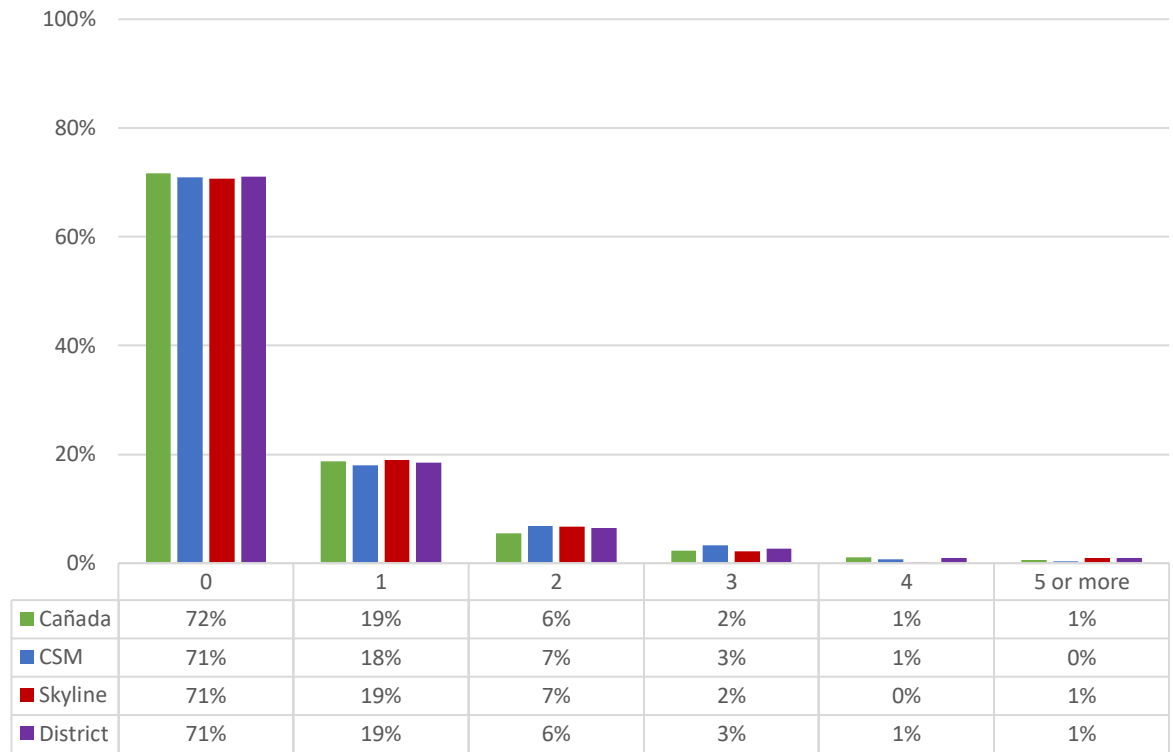




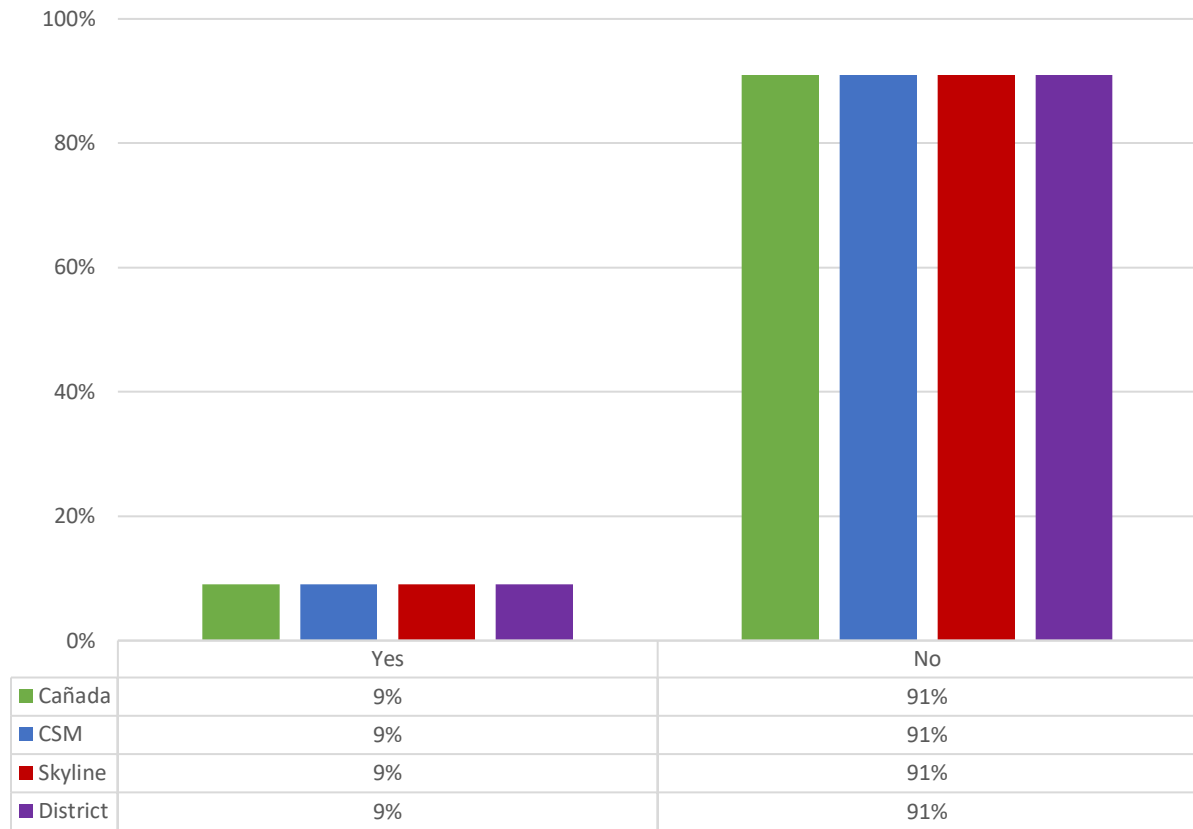
Q.10 In the past 12 months, did your financial situation make it difficult to pay your rent or mortgage?



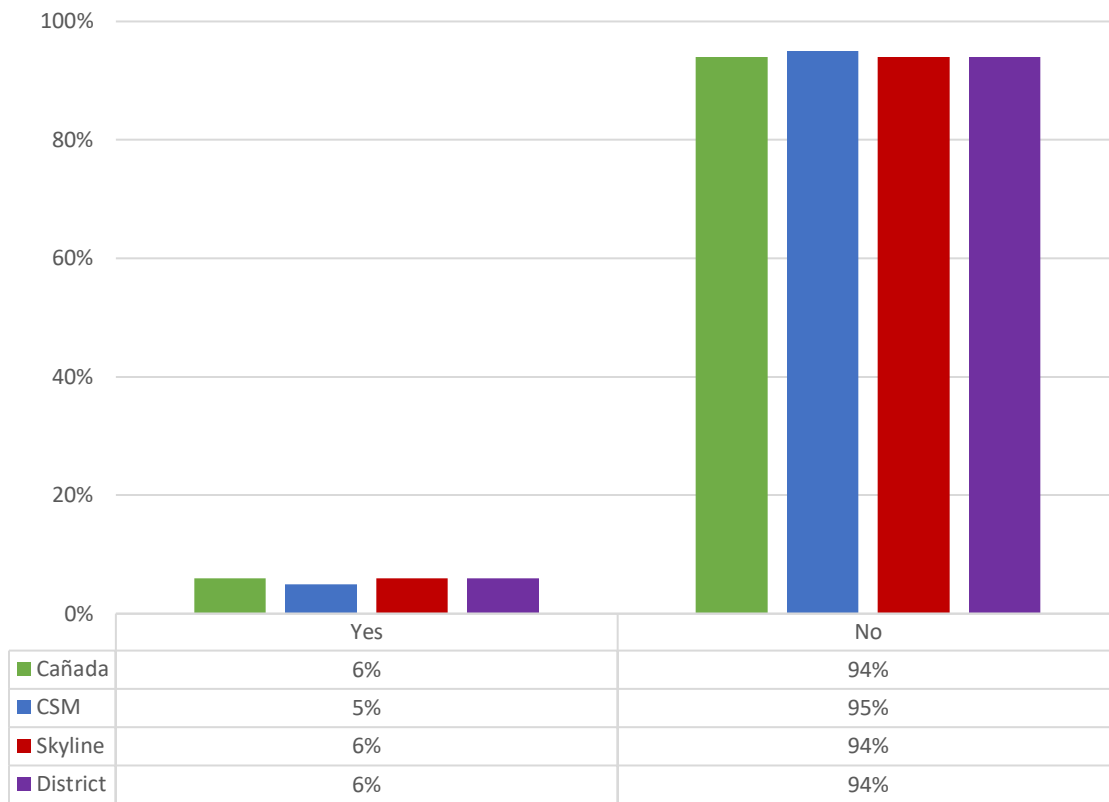
Q.11 In the last 12 months, how many times have you moved?



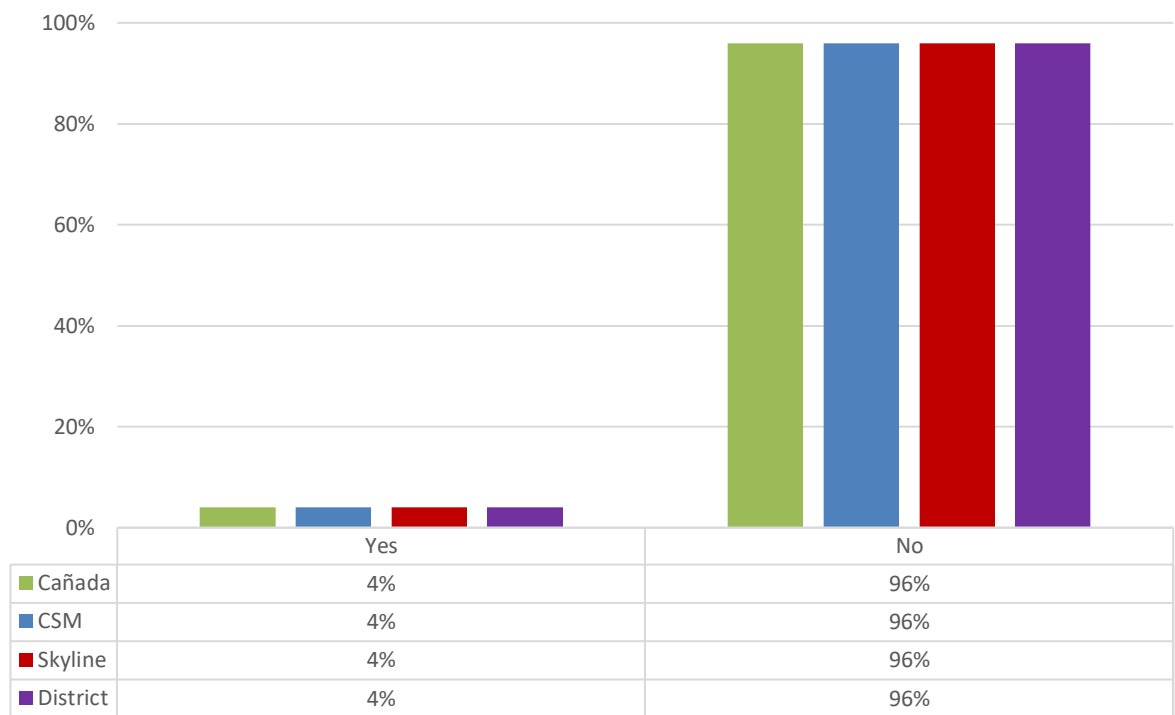
Q.12 Is your home in a public housing project, owned by a local housing authority or other public agency?



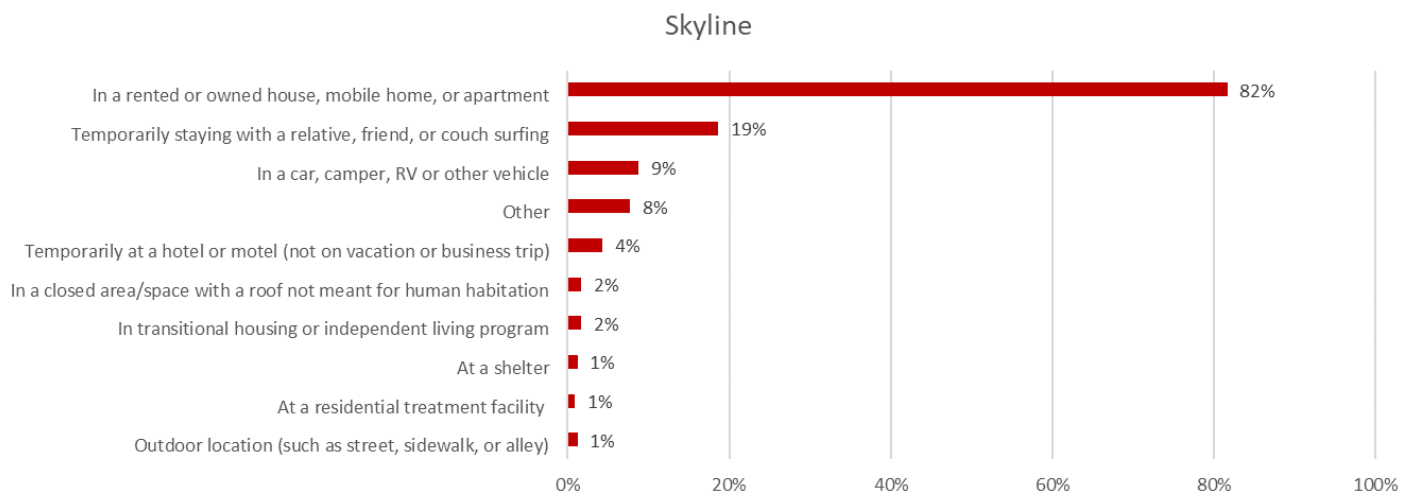
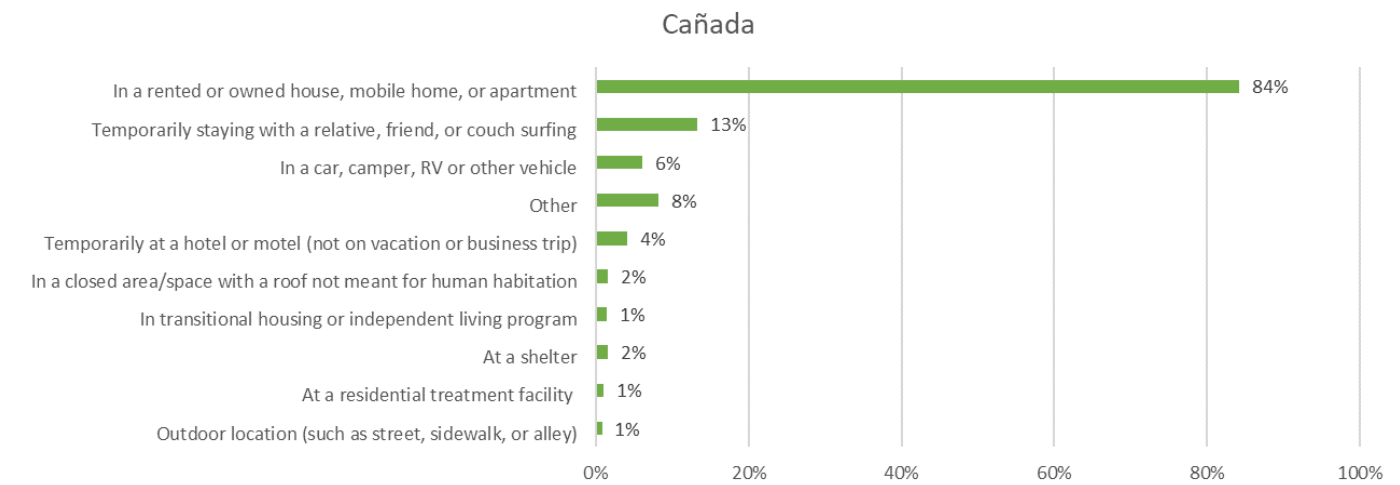
Q.13 Do you receive a public housing voucher, such as Section 8, to subsidize the cost of private housing?



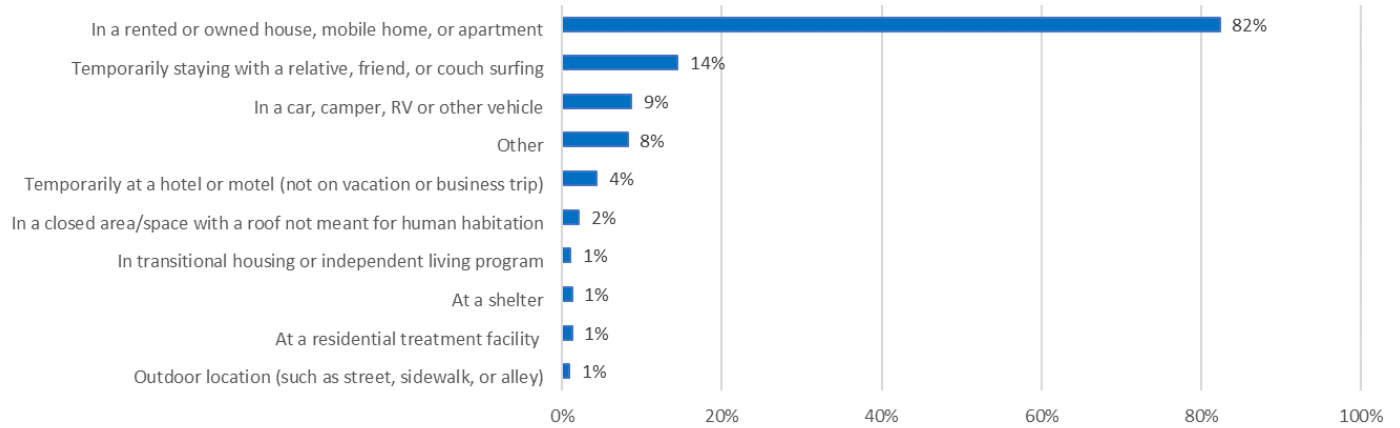
Q.14 In the past 12 months, have you ever been homeless?



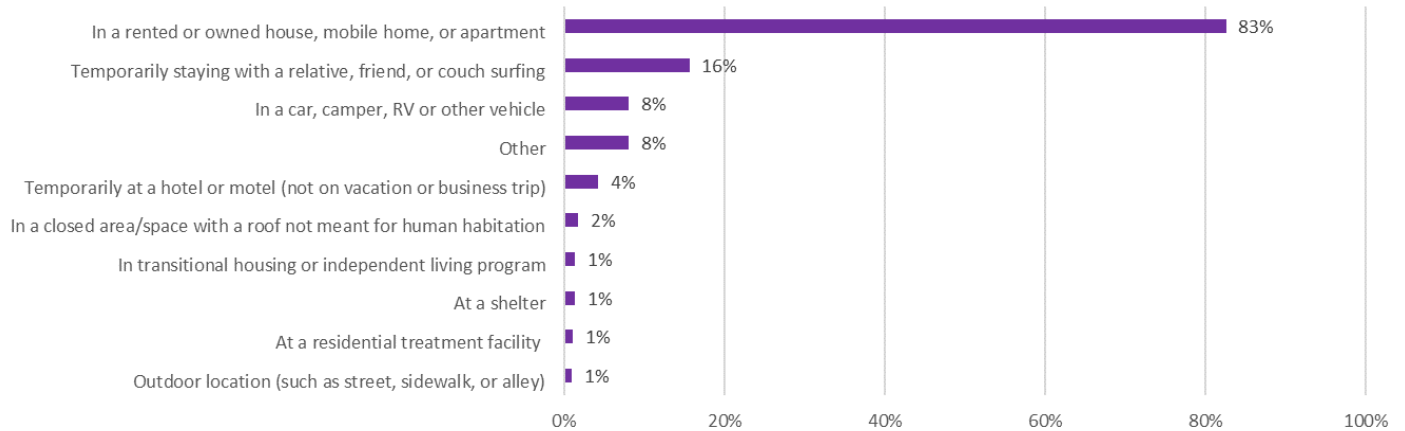
Q.15 In the past 12 months (since September 2021), have you slept in any of the following places?  
(Check all that apply)



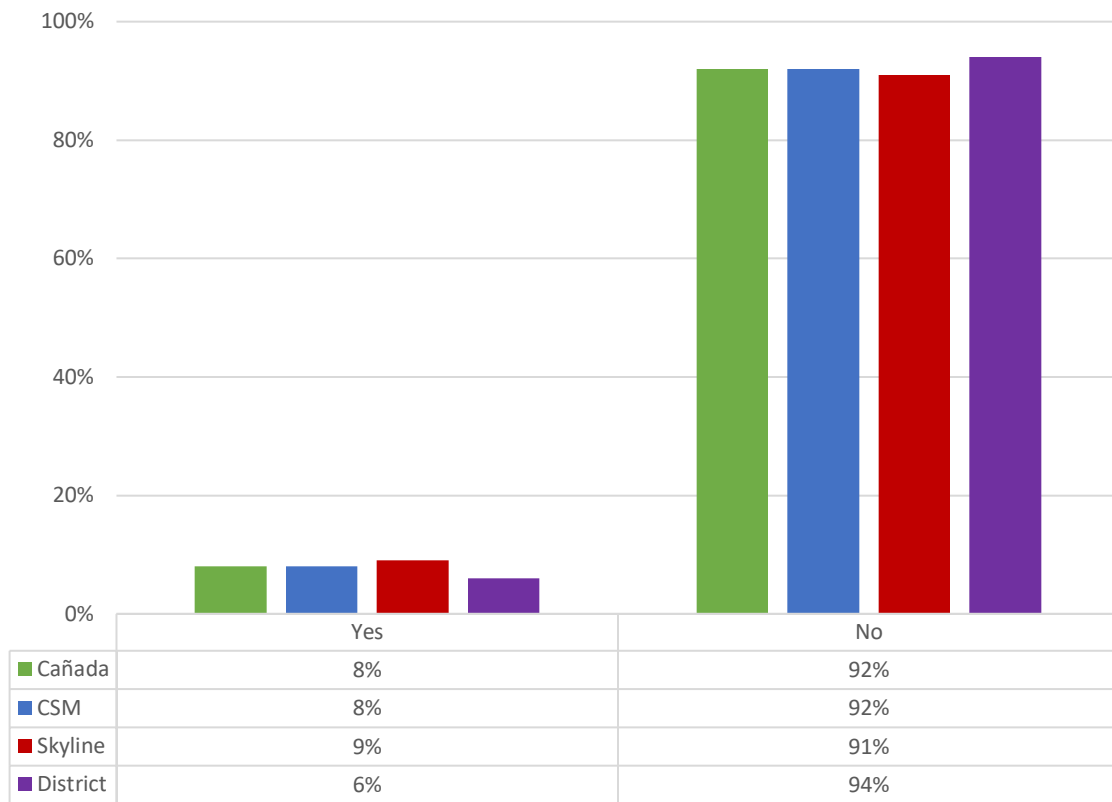
### CSM



### District

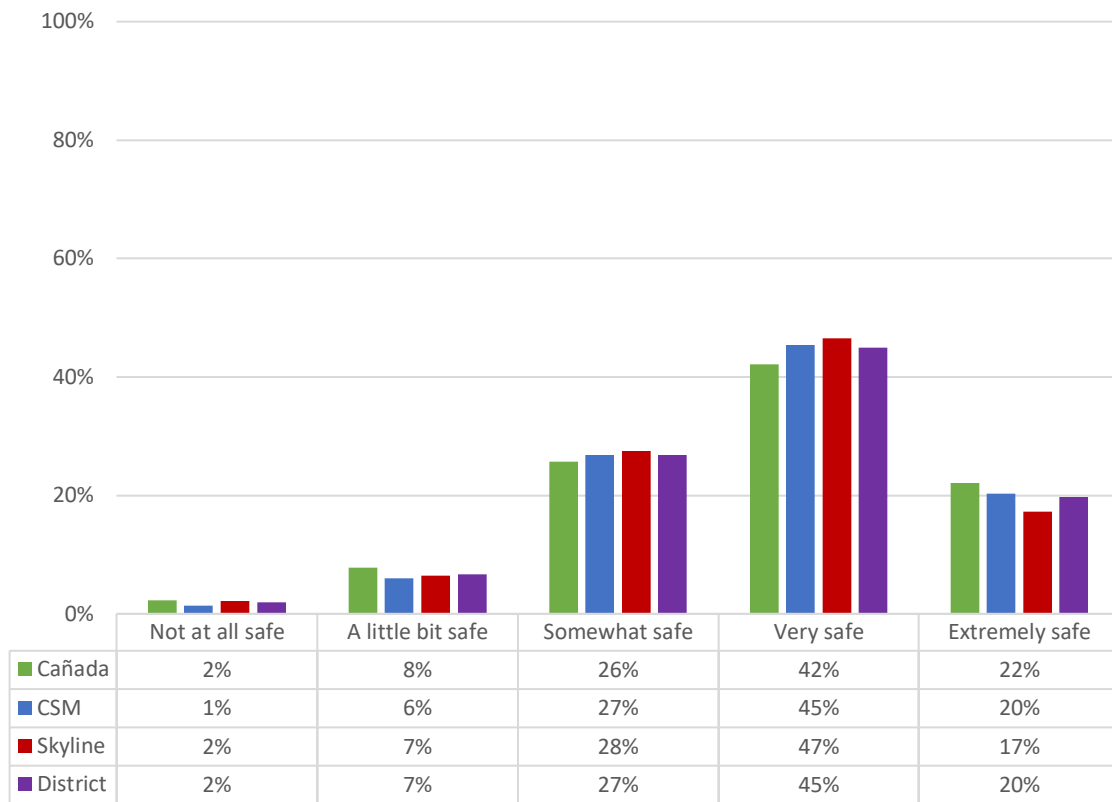


Q.16 In the past 12 months, did you leave your household because you felt unsafe?

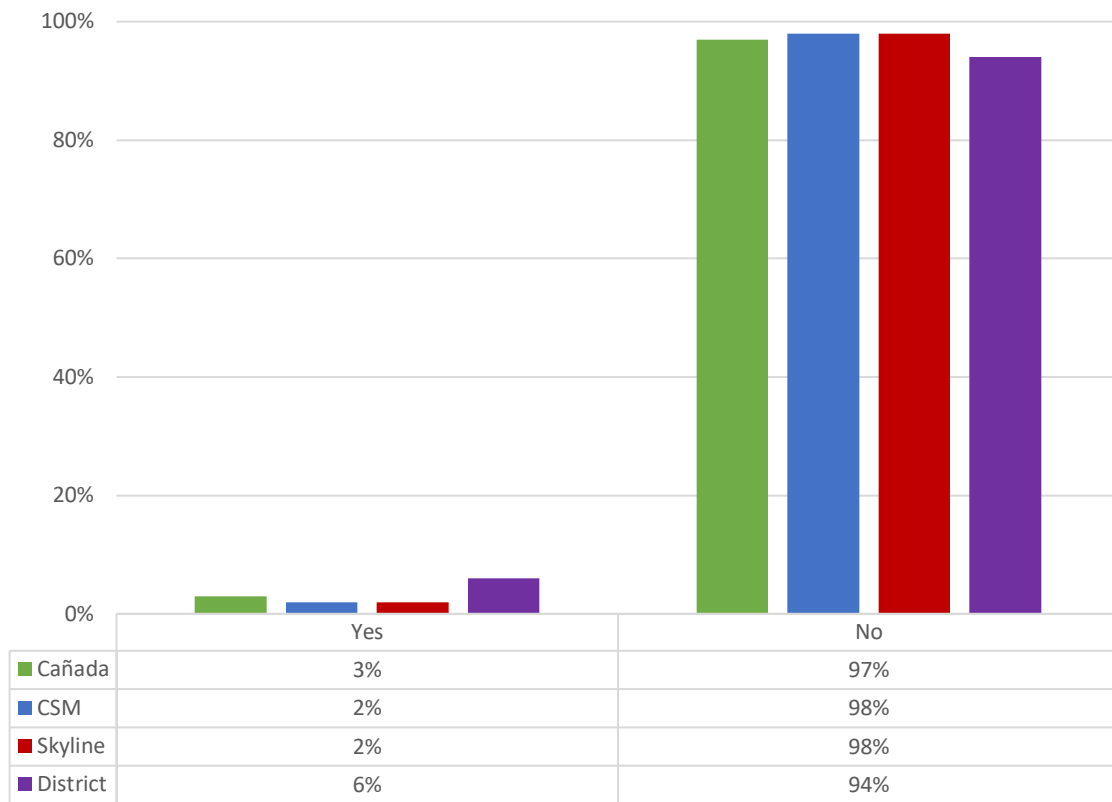




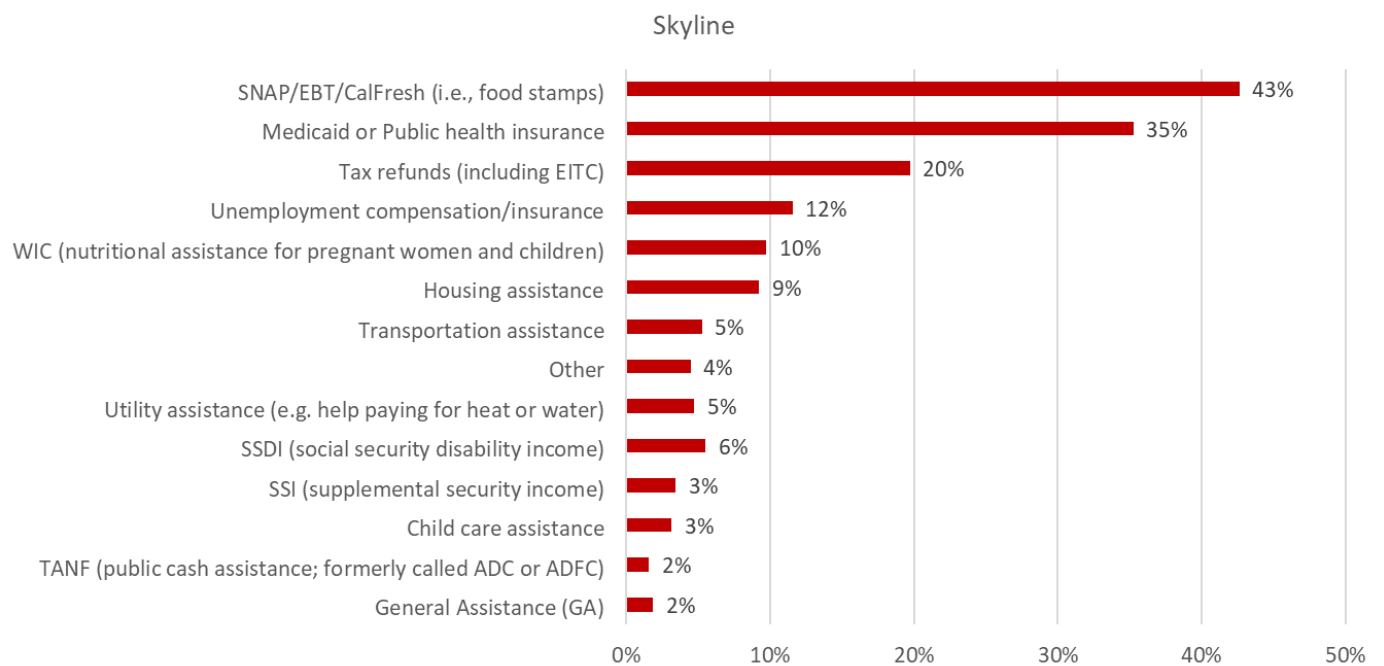
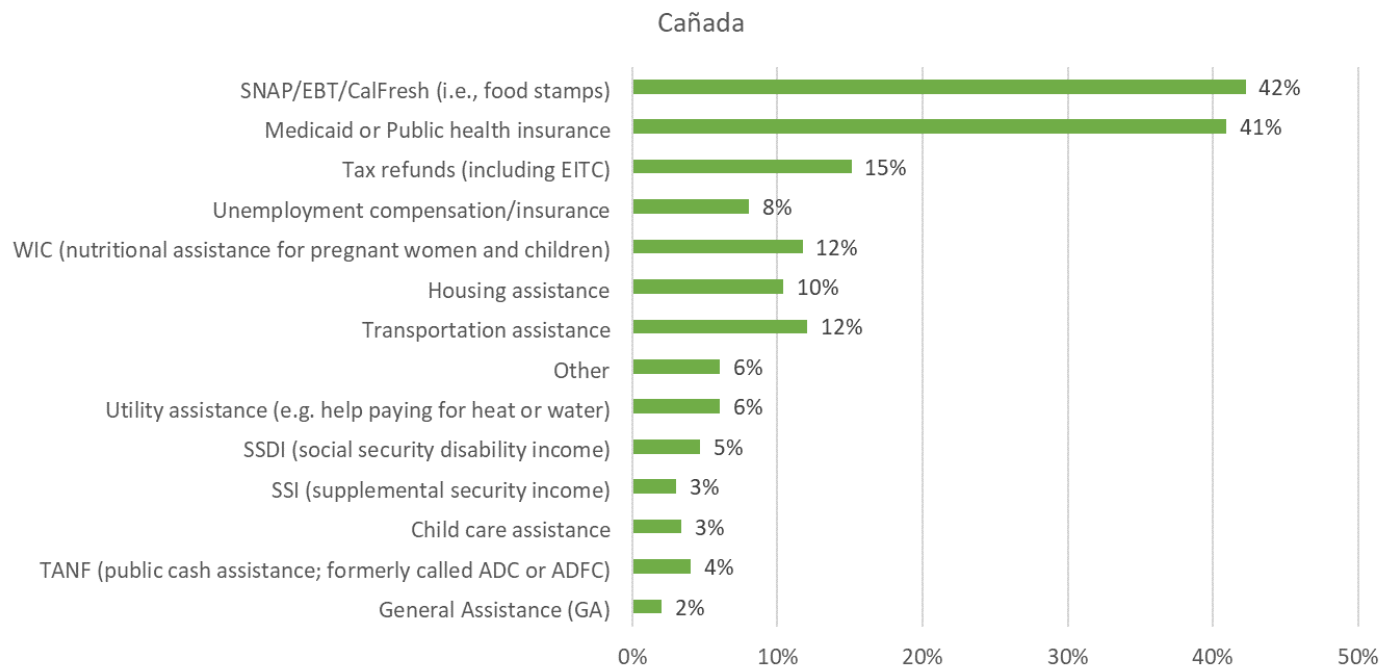
Q.17 How safe do you feel where you currently live?

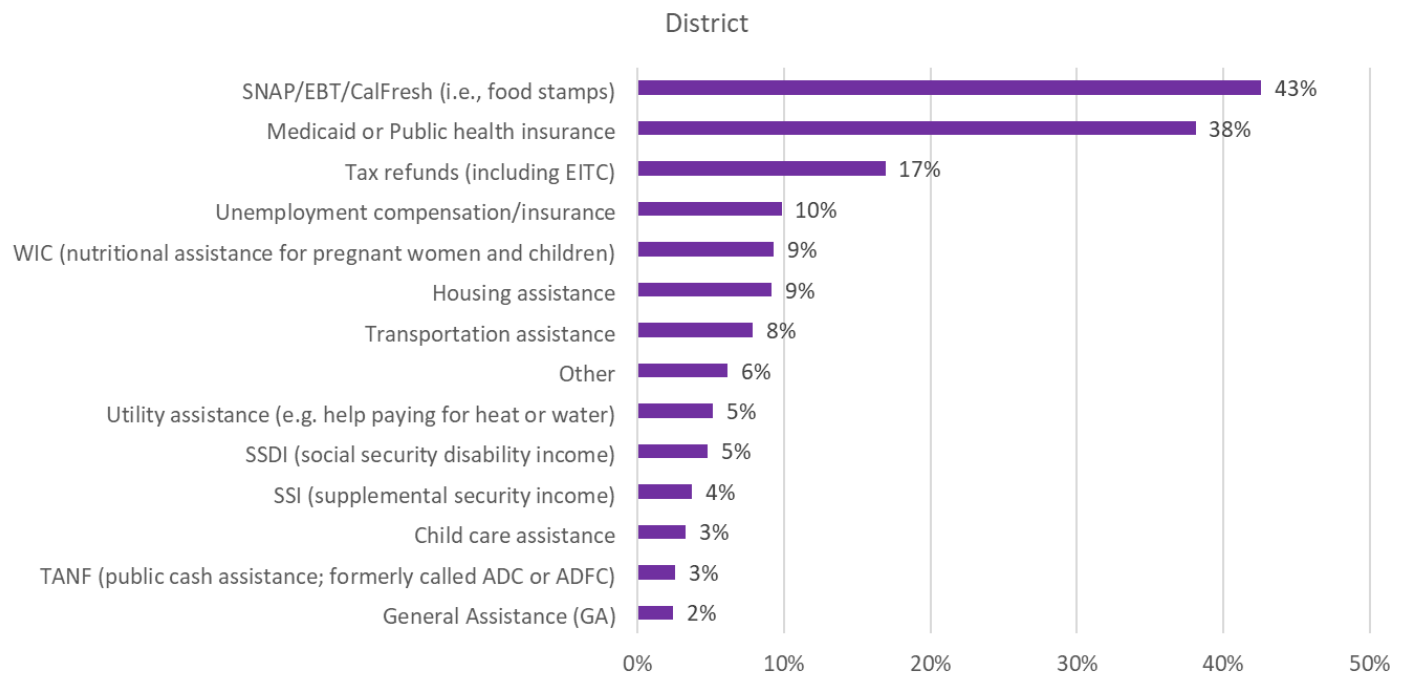
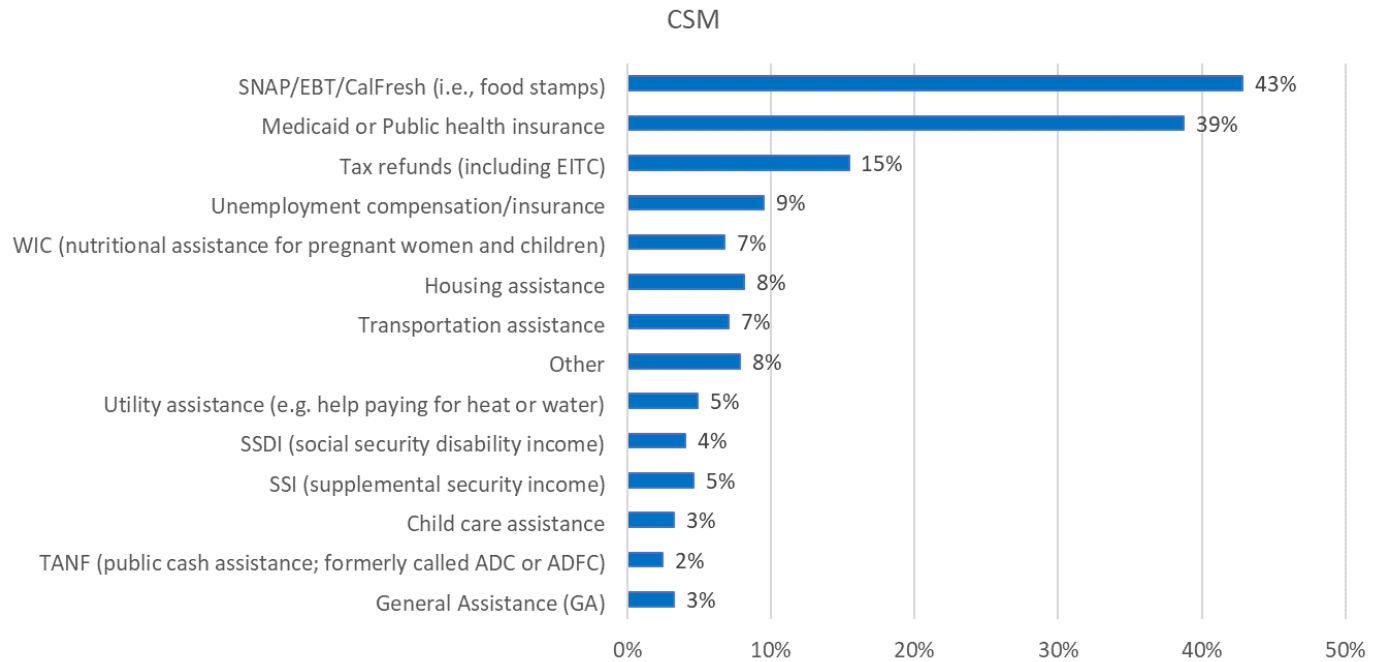


Q.18 In the past 12 months, were you thrown out of your home by someone else in the household?

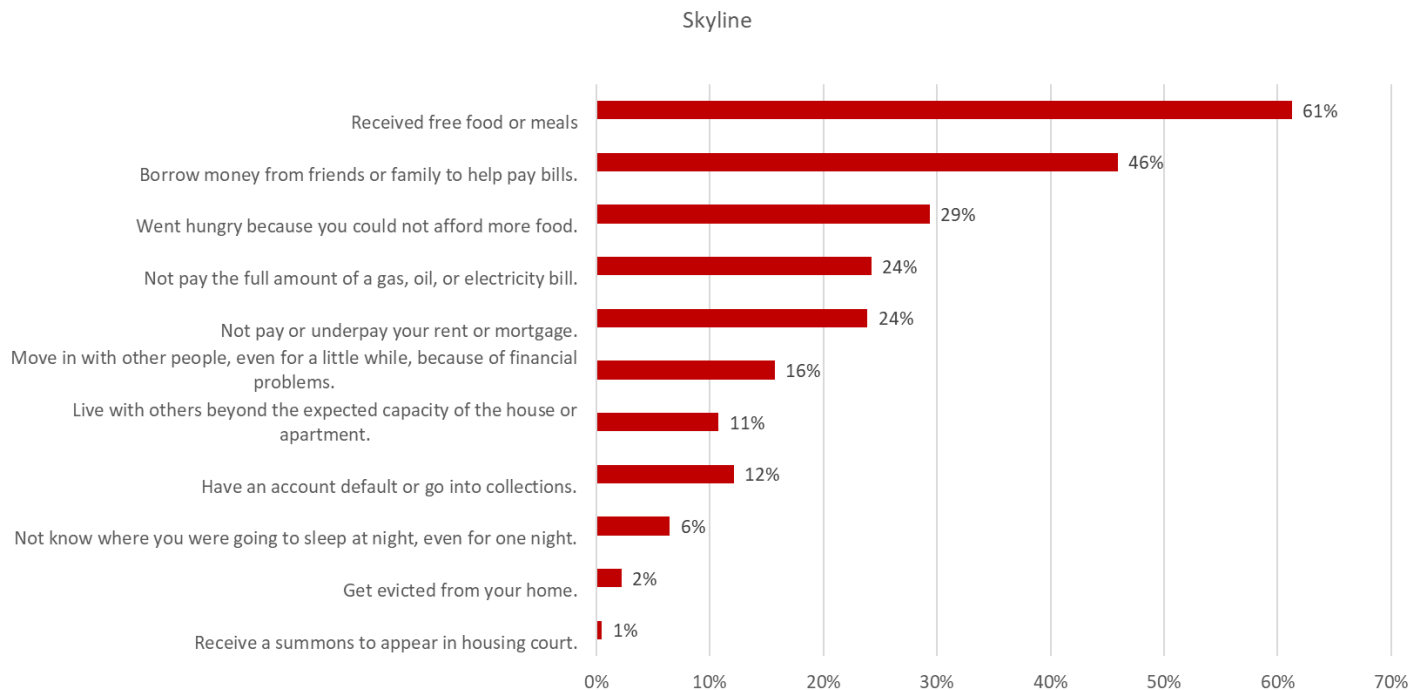
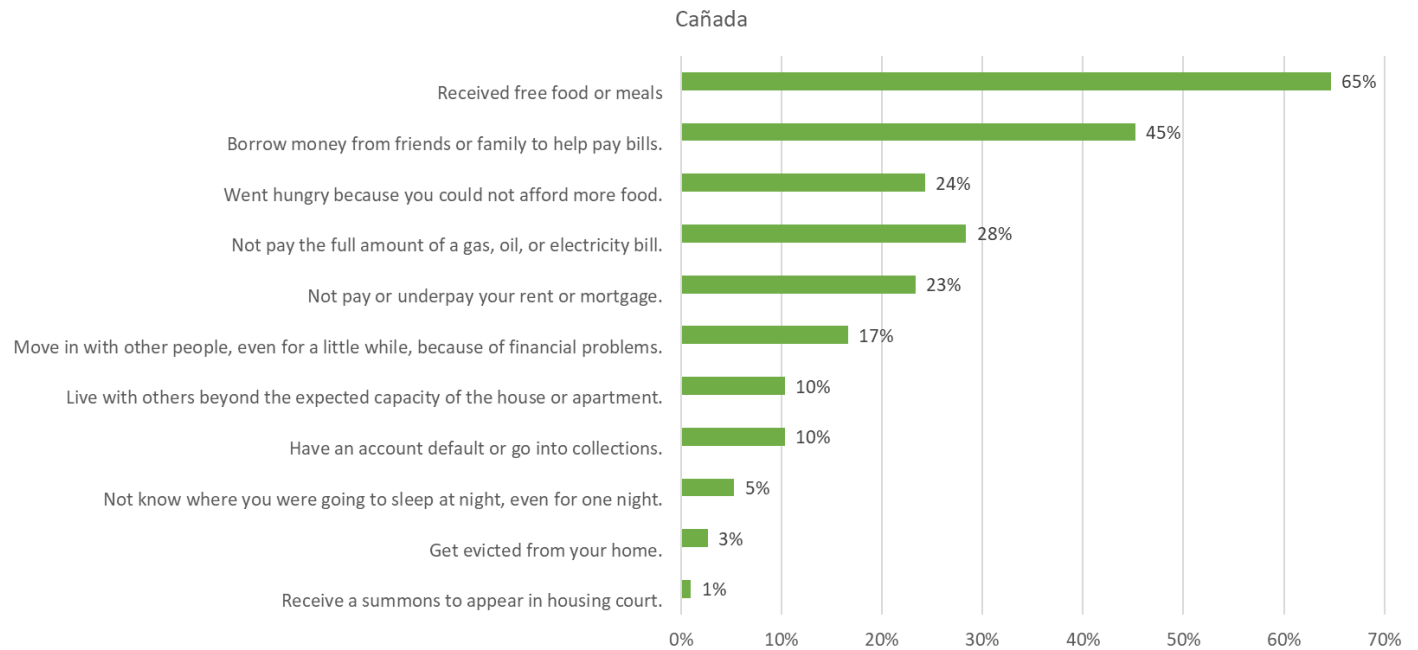


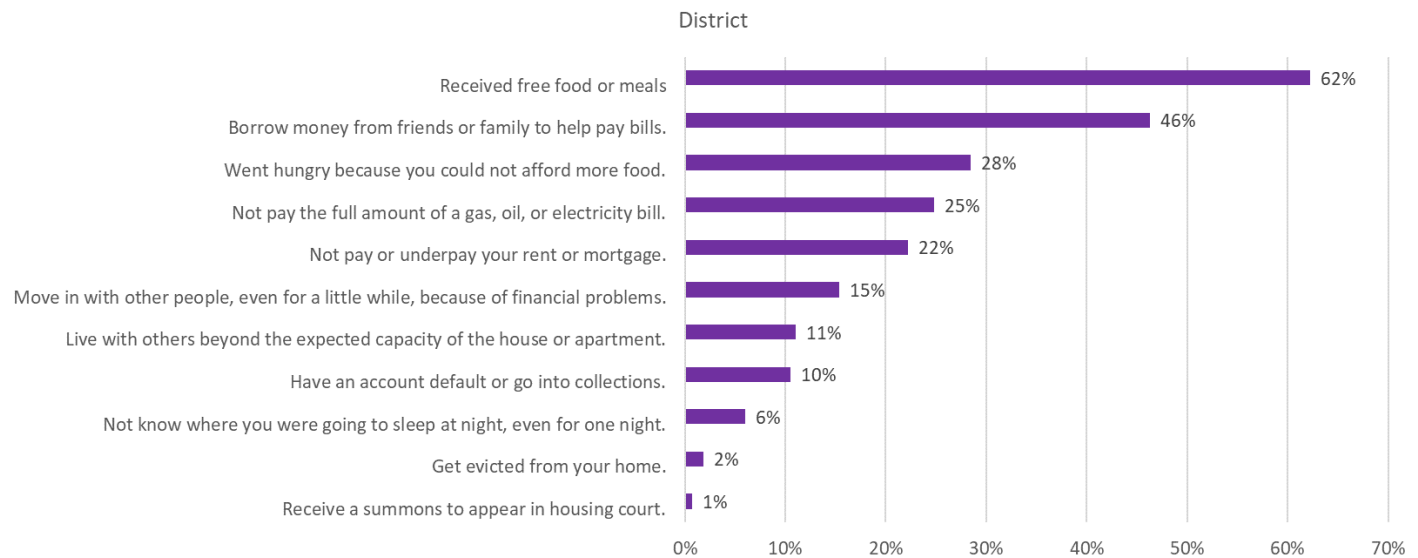
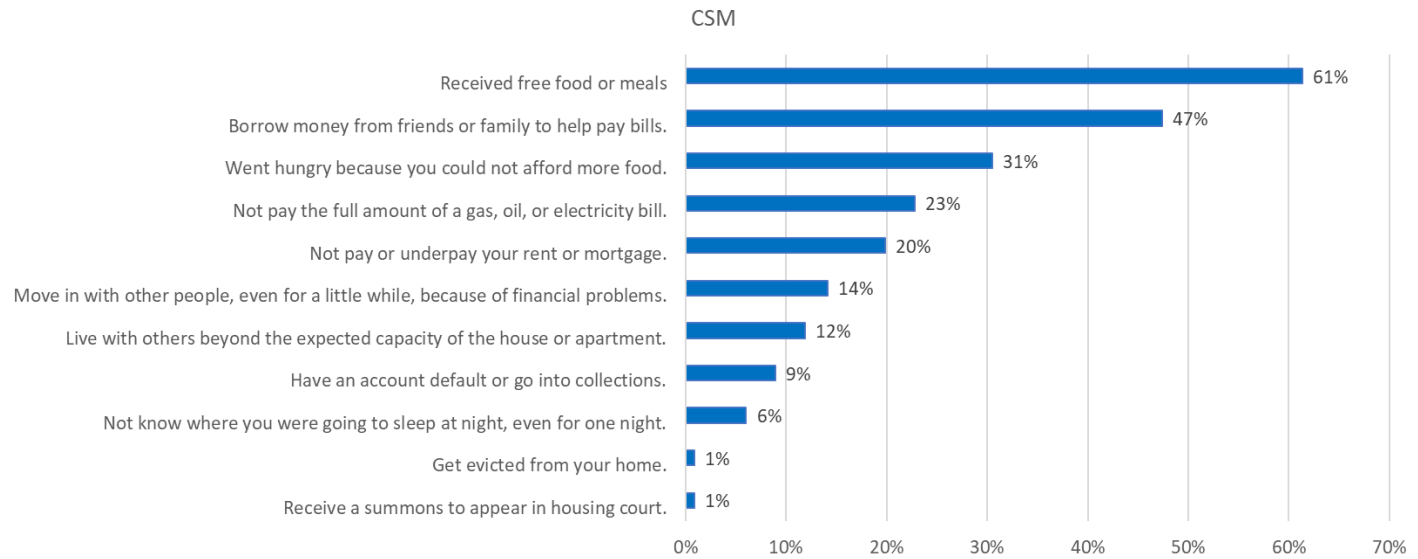
Q.19 In the past 12 months, from which of the following programs did you receive assistance? (Check all that apply)



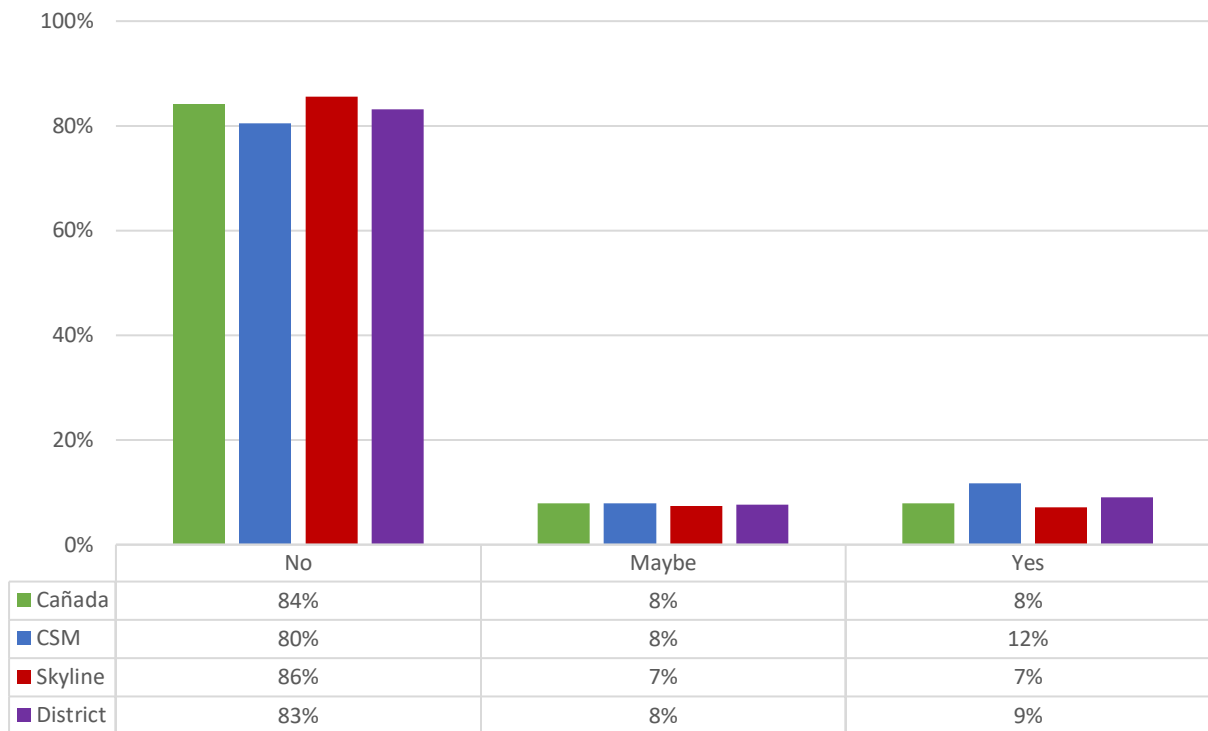


Q.20 In the past 12 months, did you experience any of the following? (Check all that apply)

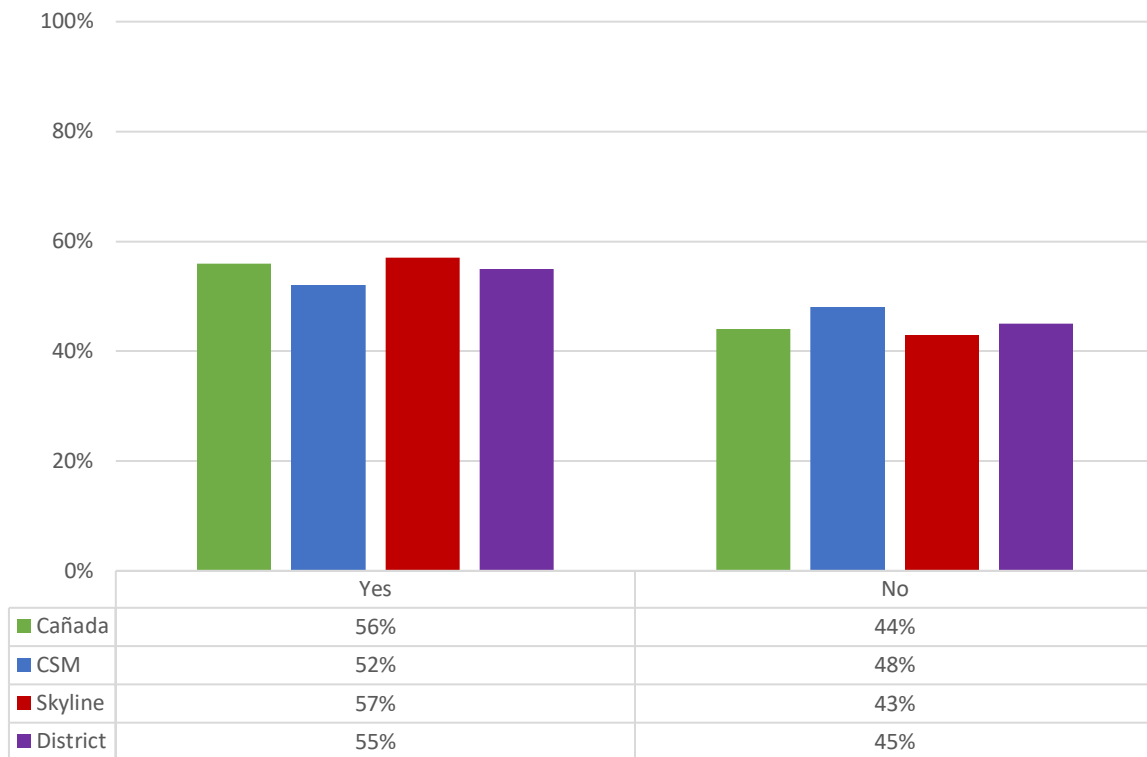




Q.21 Are you aware of the San Mateo County Community College District's Rapid Response Hotel Stay Program?



Q.22 Would you like to learn more about food and housing programs available in the district? (By clicking yes, you will receive an email with links to available resources).

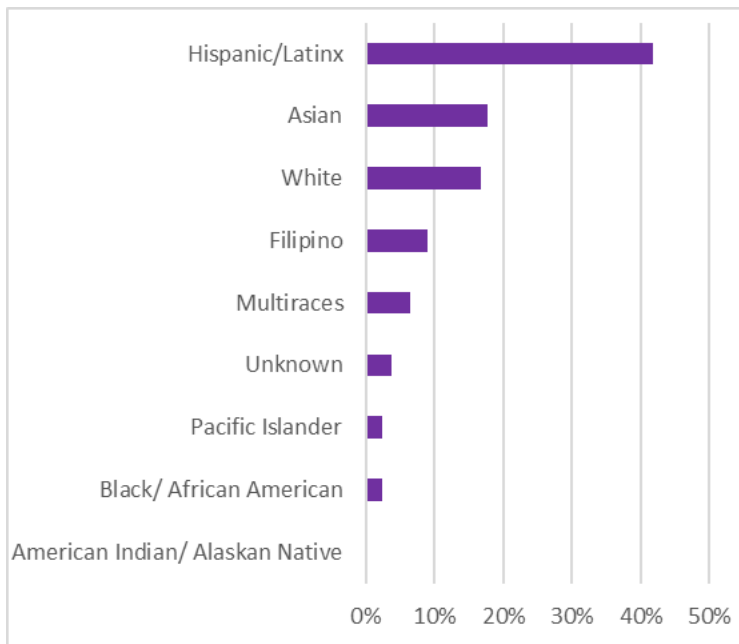




### Survey Population

	Cañada	CSM	Skyline	District
Total survey invitations	3,980	6,100	5,904	15,984
Respondent count	807	1,218	1,097	3,122
Response rate (%)	20%	20%	19%	20%

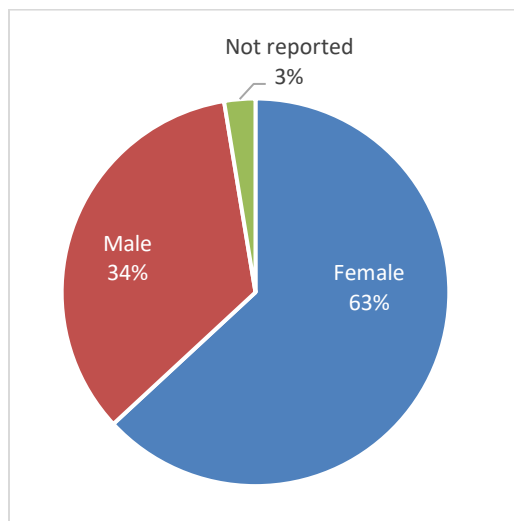
### Characteristics of respondents



Ethnicity

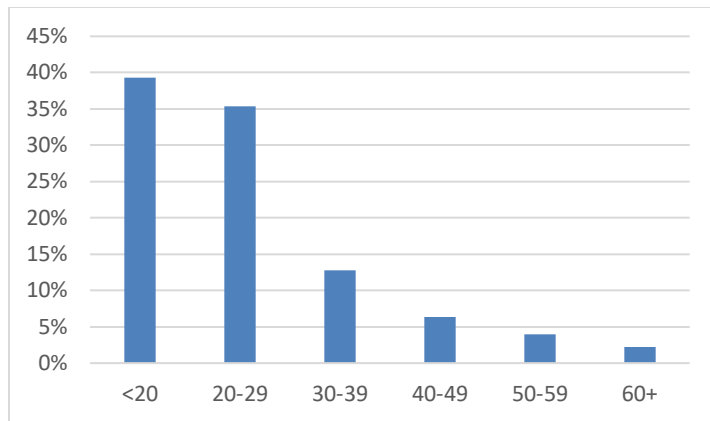
Ethnicity	Count	%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	***	<1%
Asian	555	18%
Black/African American	71	2%
Filipino	281	9%
Hispanic/Latinx	1,303	42%
Multiraces	200	6%
Pacific Islander	74	2%
Unknown	114	4%
White	521	17%

\*\*\*Responses <10



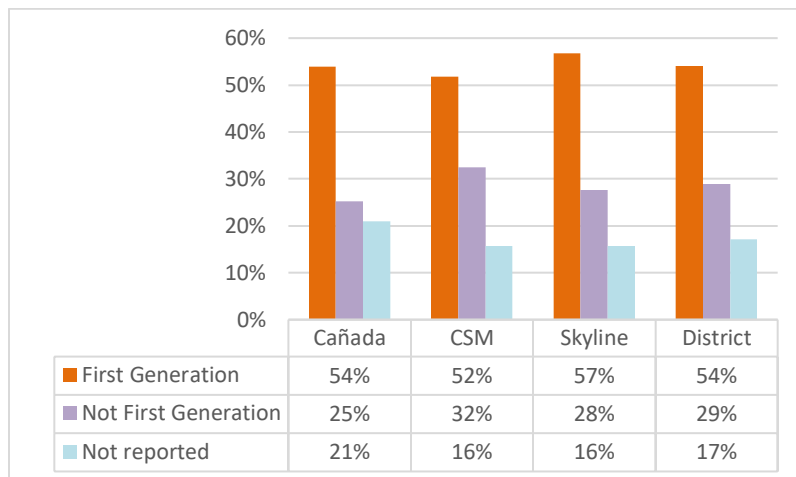
Gender

Gender	Count	%
Female	1,969	63%
Male	1,070	34%
Not reported	83	3%

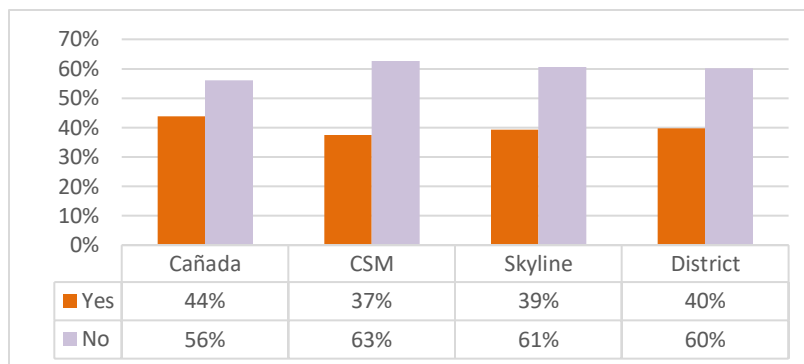


**Age Groups**

Age Groups	Count	%
<20	1,227	39%
20-29	1,103	35%
30-39	400	13%
40-49	199	6%
50-59	125	4%
60+	68	2%



**First Generation Status**



**Low Income Status**

## Survey Language

Number of surveys taken in Spanish: 43

## Survey Response Weighting Methodology

Survey invitees were categorized into four groups based on ethnicity and income status, as demonstrated in the following example table. The percentage of respondents from each group (A, B, C, D) was then compared to the percentage of invitees from the same group. This comparison was completed district-wide and for each campus. The difference from the invitee percentage and the respondent percentage then provided a weighting factor for each group at the district level and for each campus. These weighting factors were then applied to each survey response based on which group that respondent was categorized into.

#### Survey Invitees

	Grp	URM	LowInc	Count	%
District	A			5,710	0.3572
District	B		X	988	0.0618
District	C	X		6,417	0.4015
District	D	X	X	2,869	0.1795

#### Survey Respondents

	Grp	Count	Resp %	Difference (Inv%-Resp%)	District Weight
District	A	897	0.2873	0.0699	0.9301
District	B	296	0.0948	-0.0330	1.0330
District	C	983	0.3149	0.0866	0.9134
District	D	946	0.3030	-0.1235	1.1235

College	Grp	URM	LowInc	Count	%
CAN	A			1,409	0.3540
CAN	B		X	245	0.0616
CAN	C	X		1,519	0.3817
CAN	D	X	X	807	0.2028

College	Grp	Count	Resp %	Difference (Inv%-Resp%)	College Weight
CAN	A	209	0.2590	0.0950	0.9050
CAN	B	76	0.0942	-0.0326	0.0326
CAN	C	244	0.3024	0.0793	0.9207
CAN	D	278	0.3445	-0.1417	1.1417

College	Grp	URM	LowInc	Count	%
CSM	A			2,506	0.4108
CSM	B		X	369	0.0605
CSM	C	X		2,202	0.3610
CSM	D	X	X	1,023	0.1677

College	Grp	Count	Resp %	Difference (Inv%-Resp%)	College Weight
CSM	A	411	0.3374	0.0734	0.9266
CSM	B	106	0.0870	-0.0265	1.0265
CSM	C	351	0.2882	0.0728	0.9272
CSM	D	350	0.2874	-0.1197	1.1197

College	Grp	URM	LowInc	Count	%
SKY	A			1,795	0.3040
SKY	B		X	374	0.0633
SKY	C	X		2,696	0.4566
SKY	D	X	X	1,039	0.1760

College	Grp	Count	Resp %	Difference (Inv%-Resp%)	College Weight
SKY	A	277	0.2525	0.0515	0.9485
SKY	B	114	0.1039	-0.0406	1.0406
SKY	C	388	0.3537	0.1029	0.8971
SKY	D	318	0.2899	-0.1139	1.1139