

Family Services in VTDOC



Family Specific Focus

- ∞ October 2007 – A Summit – Children Impacted by Parental Incarceration – Killington, 500 attendees. Result of the Incarcerated Women’s Initiative (IWI).
- ∞ November 2008 - A report was prepared for the Agency of Human Services by the Vermont Research entitled Literature and Program Review: Best and Promising Practices for Children of Incarcerated Parents.
- ∞ January 2009 - Annual Report to the Corrections Oversight Committee - Vermont State Policies Regarding Children of Incarcerated Parents
- ∞ Fall of 2009 – Father-Child Initiative for Vermont, Northern State Correctional Facility at Newport - Feasibility assessment for establishing a Father-Child program at the Northern State Correctional Facility (NSCF) for men in Newport, VT.
- ∞ January 2011 – Act 157, Sec. 16 - Inmates Who Are Parents; Children, Families and Contact Policies.

Vermont Inmate Family Survey

Collaboration with UVM Sociology Department

December 16, 2013



Purpose

- ∞ To develop a survey tool and method for surveying inmates about their children and families, and the impact of their incarceration on them.
- ∞ To collect and analyze data on inmates, and families/children, contact visitation and cross-tabulate for significant relationships

Why it Matters

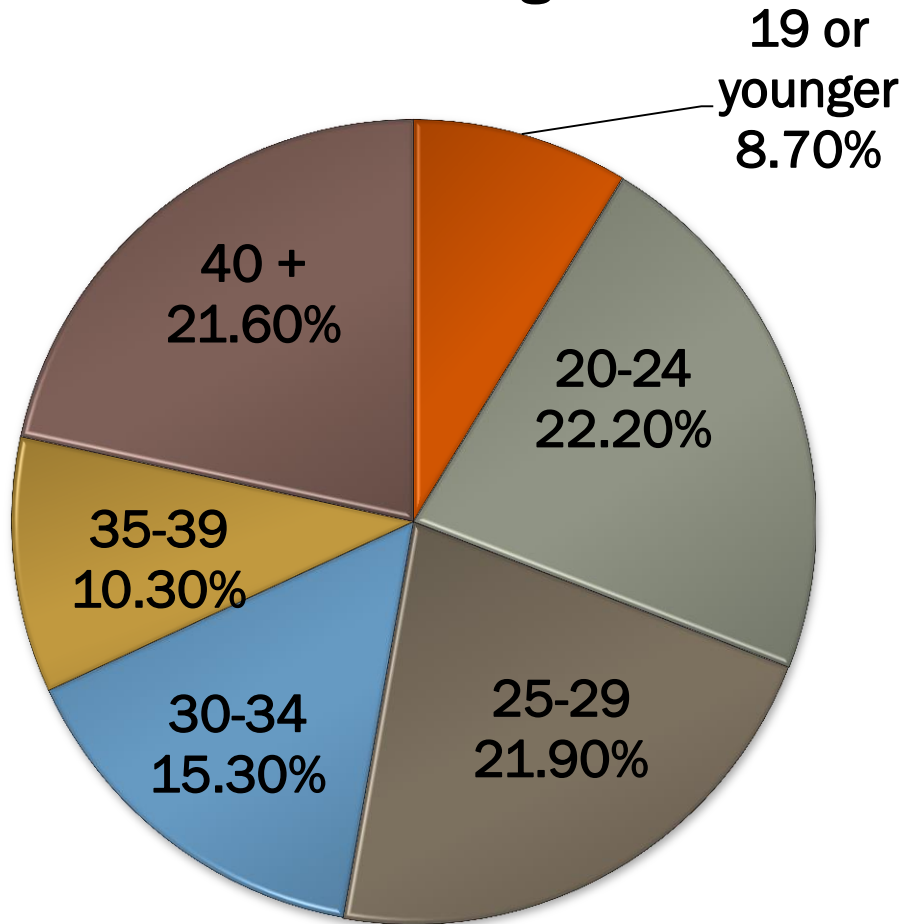
- ∞ Individuals interviewed 4-8 months after their release cited “family support” as the most important factor in helping them stay out of prison
 - *(Source: Family Justice Program, Why Ask About Family)*
- ∞ Outcomes for children of inmates much improved by contact/relationship with parents while incarcerated
 - *(Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation)*

Data on Inmates' Backgrounds

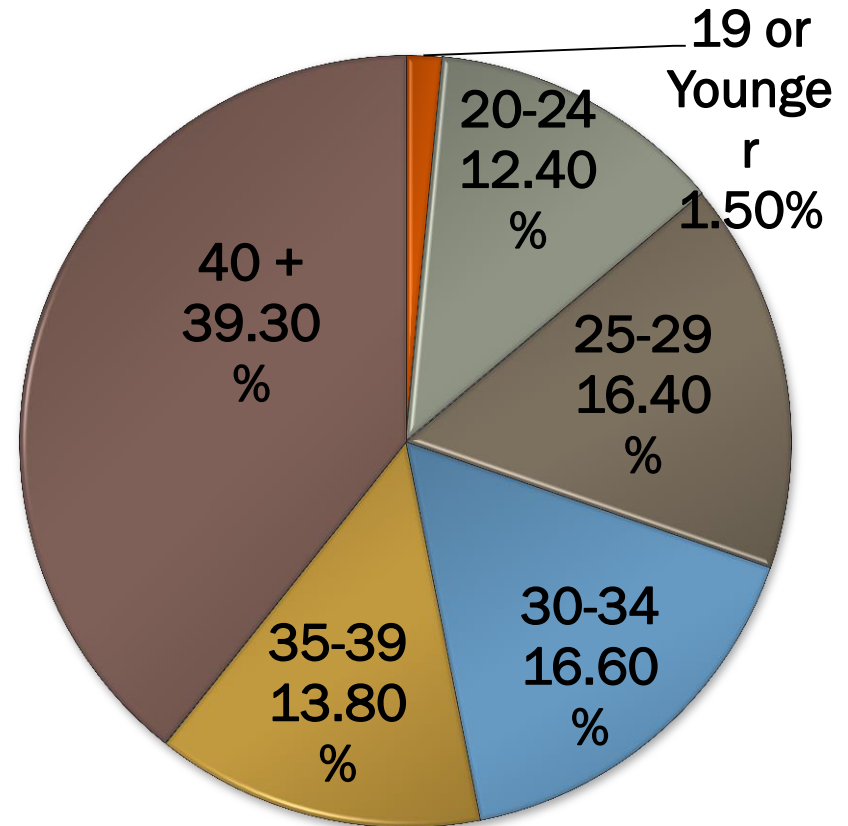


Inmate Age Distribution

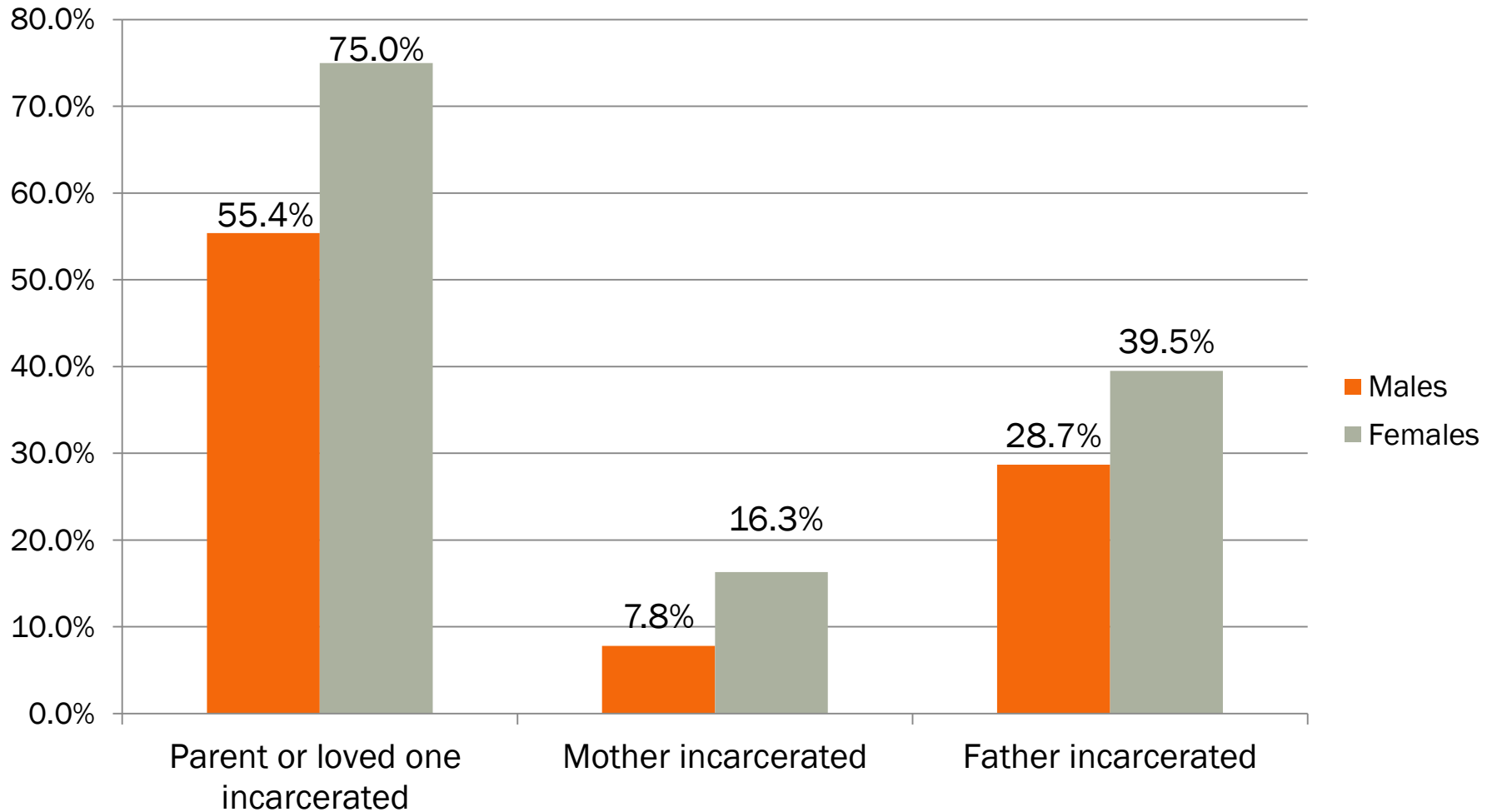
Vermont Age



National Age



Inmates' Loved Ones Incarcerated

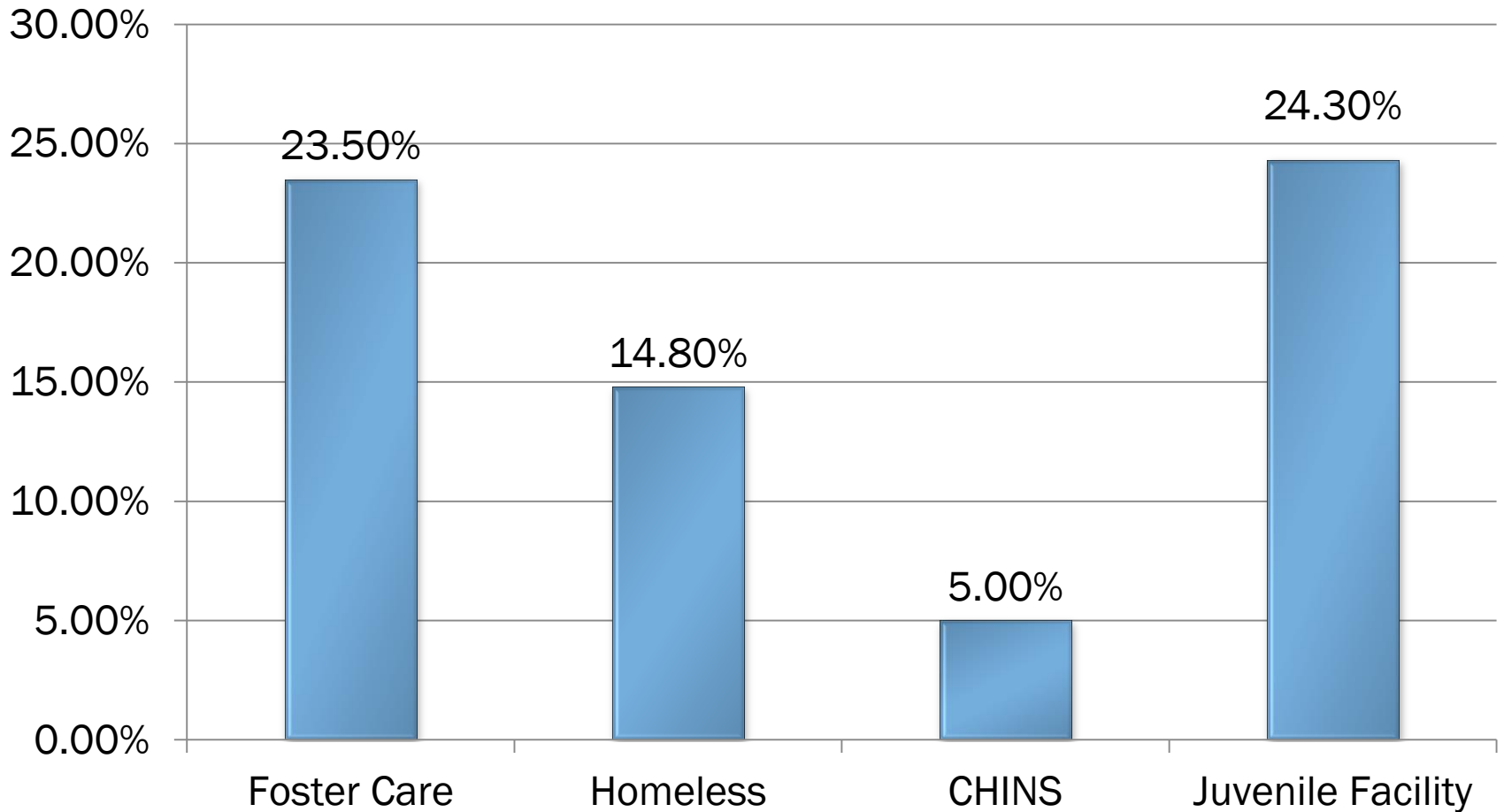


Impact of Parental Incarceration

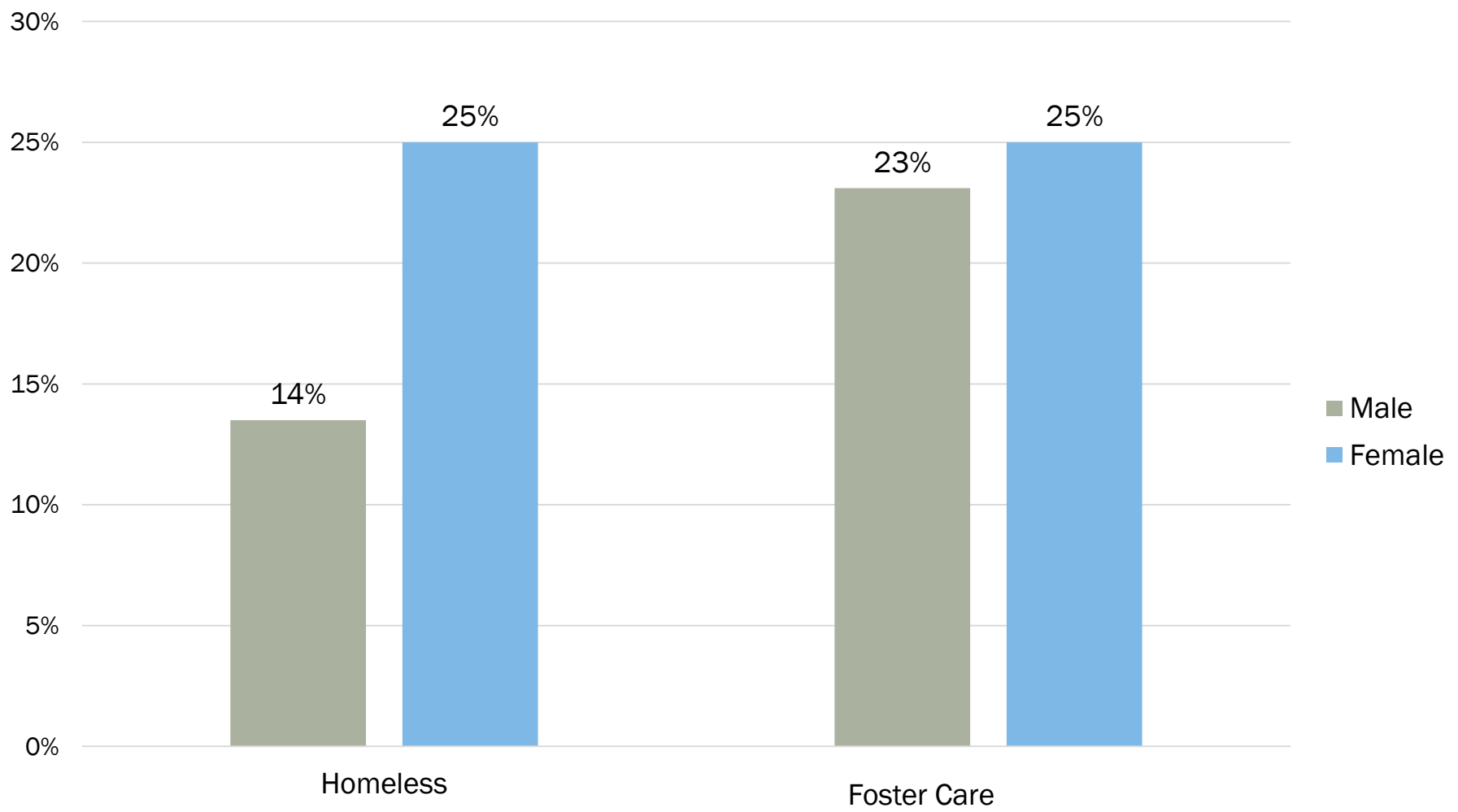
- parent incarcerated as a juvenile leads to significantly earlier entrance into prison
 - In addition, parent incarceration hurts educational attainment

Parent Incarcerated	Avg Age at Inmates' First Incarceration
Yes	21.5
No	26.4

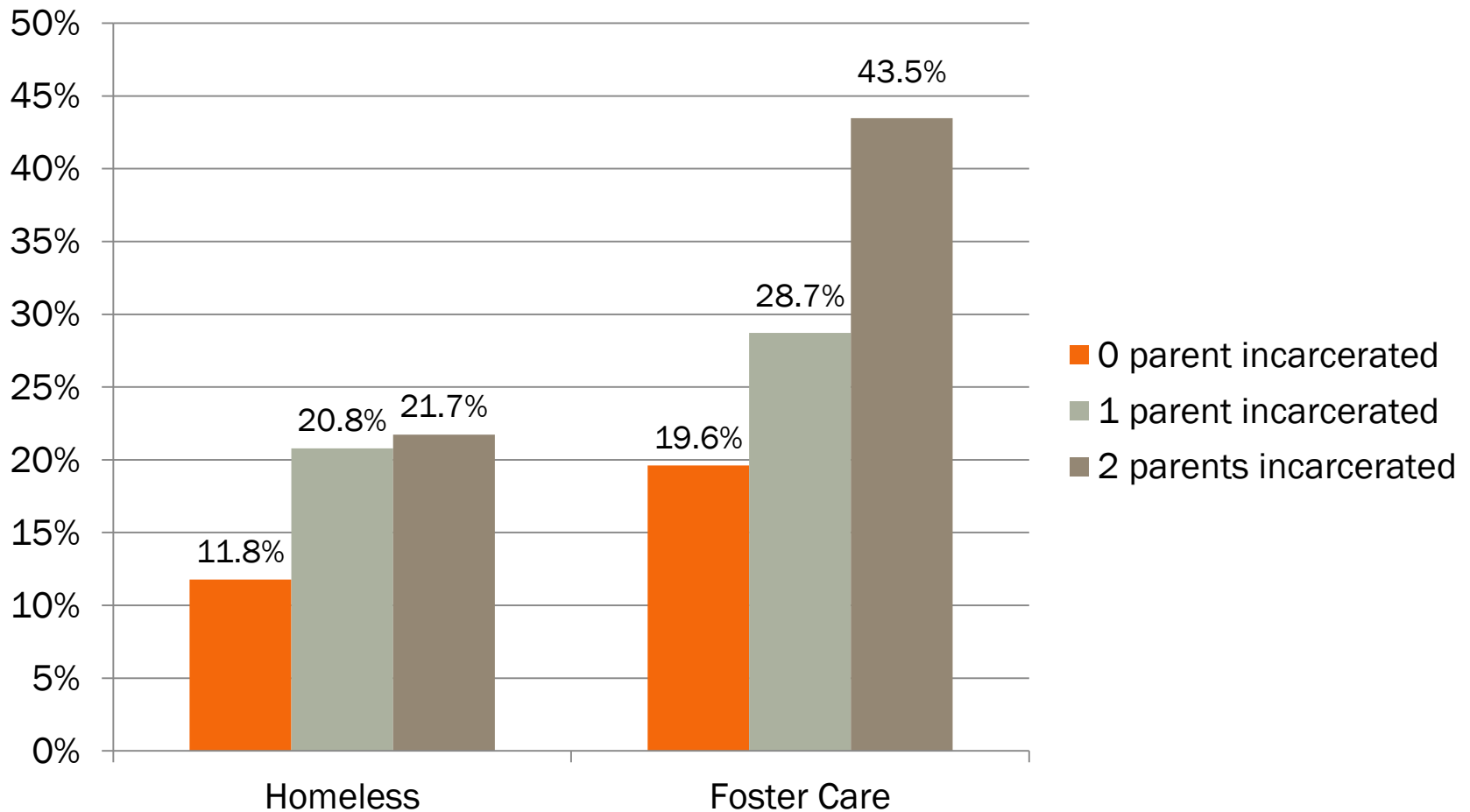
Risk Factors



Risk Factors by Gender



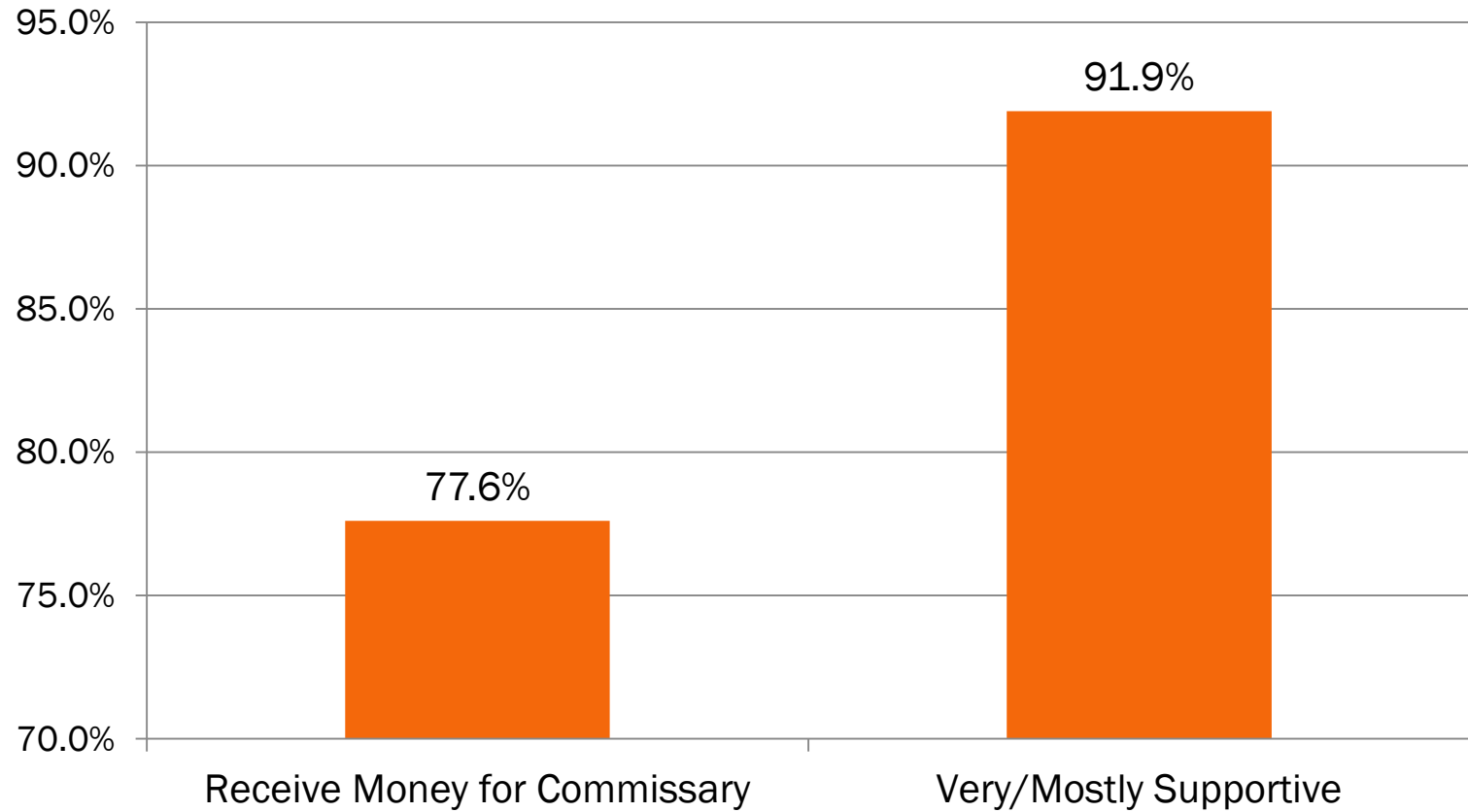
Impact of Inmates' Parents' Incarceration



Children & Families



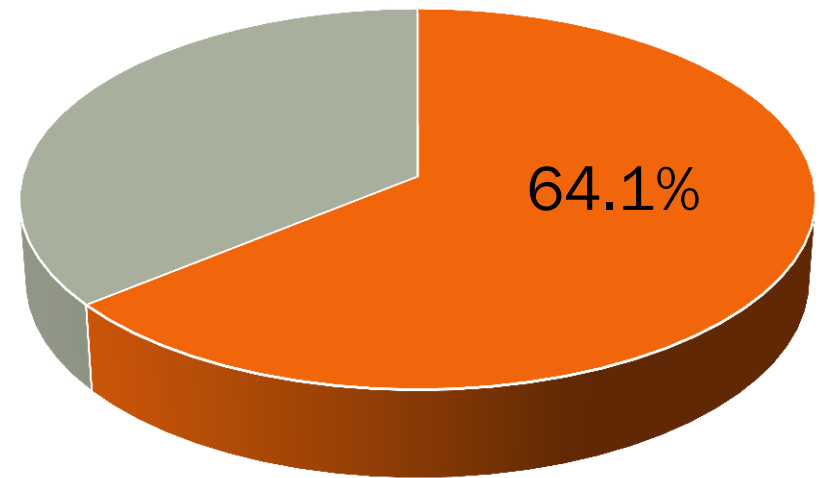
Family Support



Inmates with Children

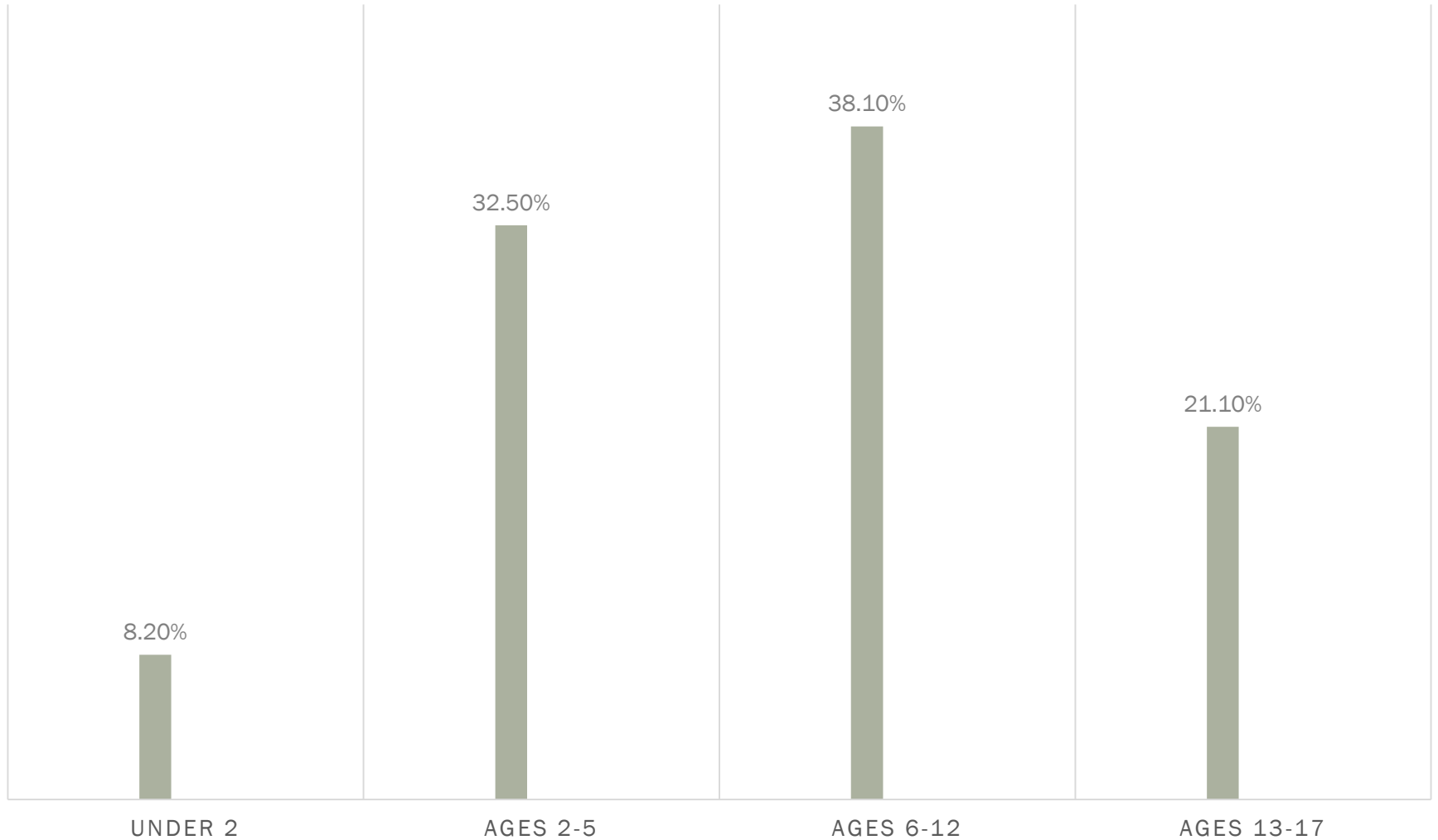
- 64.1% of Vermont inmates interviewed have children under 18
- Estimated 7,767 children had incarcerated parents in 2012 in VT

Inmates



■ With Children ■ Without Children

Age Distribution of Children

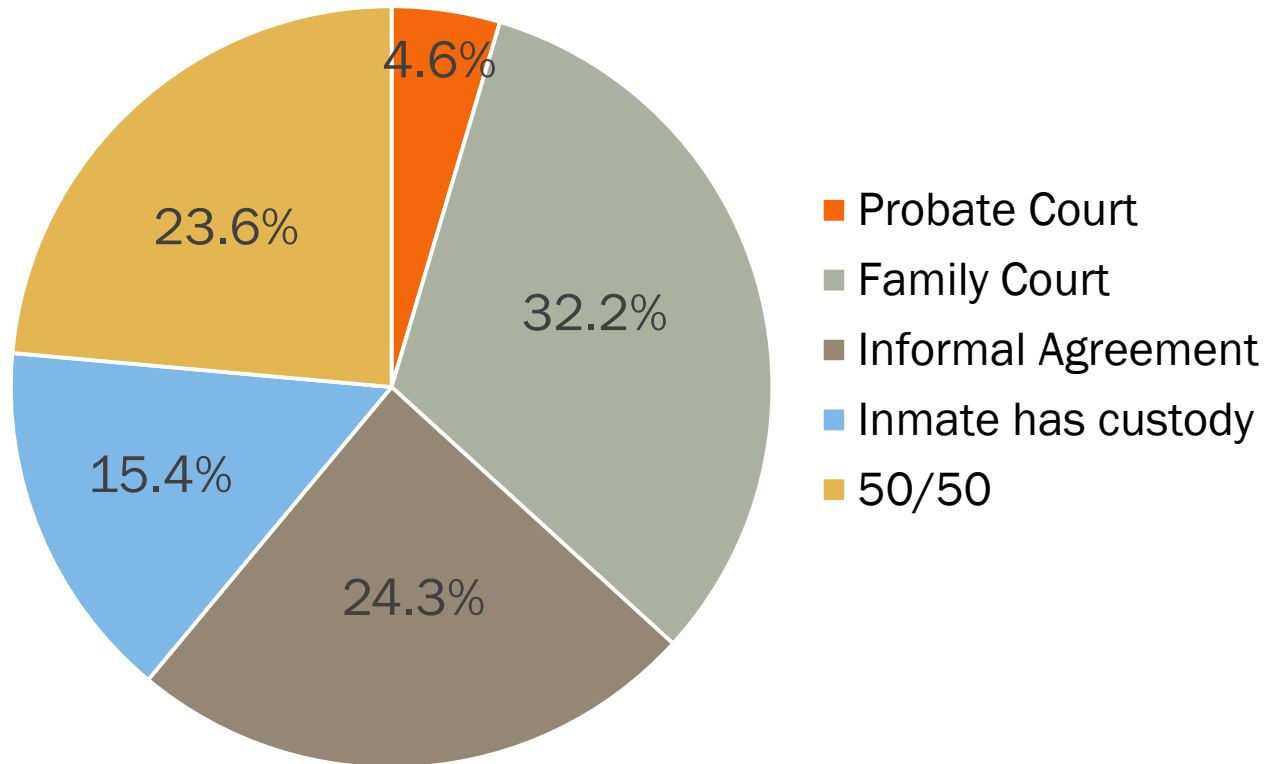


Caregiving Arrangements

Child lives with other parent	VT Avg.	Nat'l Avg.
Male Inmate	83.5%	89.6%
Female Inmate	32%	28%

Source: Christopher J. Mumola, *Incarcerated Parents and Their Children* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 182335, 2000).

Custody Arrangements



Parental Rights

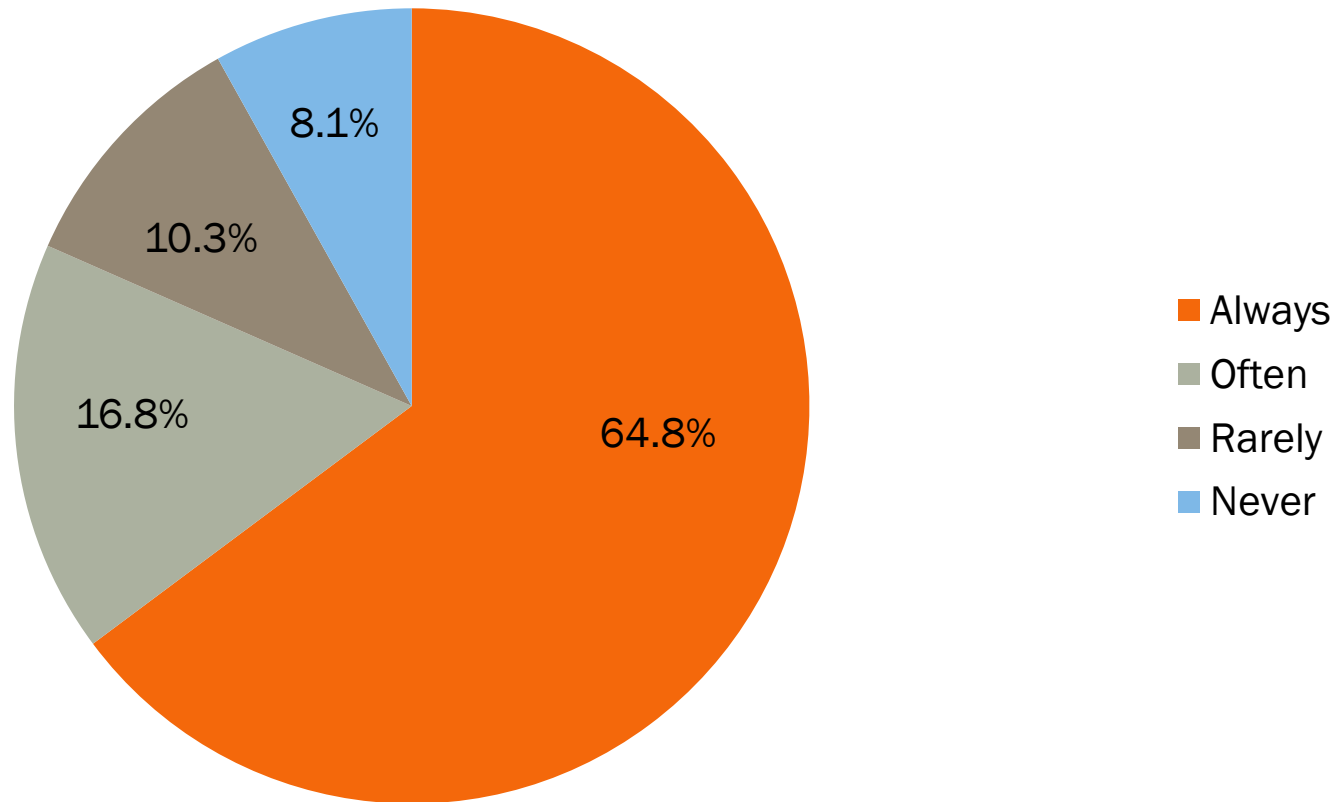
Parental rights terminated	Male Inmates	Female Inmates
Ever	7.5%	13.6%
During Incarceration	3%	6.8%

Family Distance

Family /important people distance from facility	VT Inmates' families
1-2 hrs away	27.7%
2.5-5 hrs away	24.3%
5-10 hrs away	9.2%
>10 hrs away	6.6%

- 67.8% of Vermont Inmates reported their important people live 1 hour or more away from their current facility

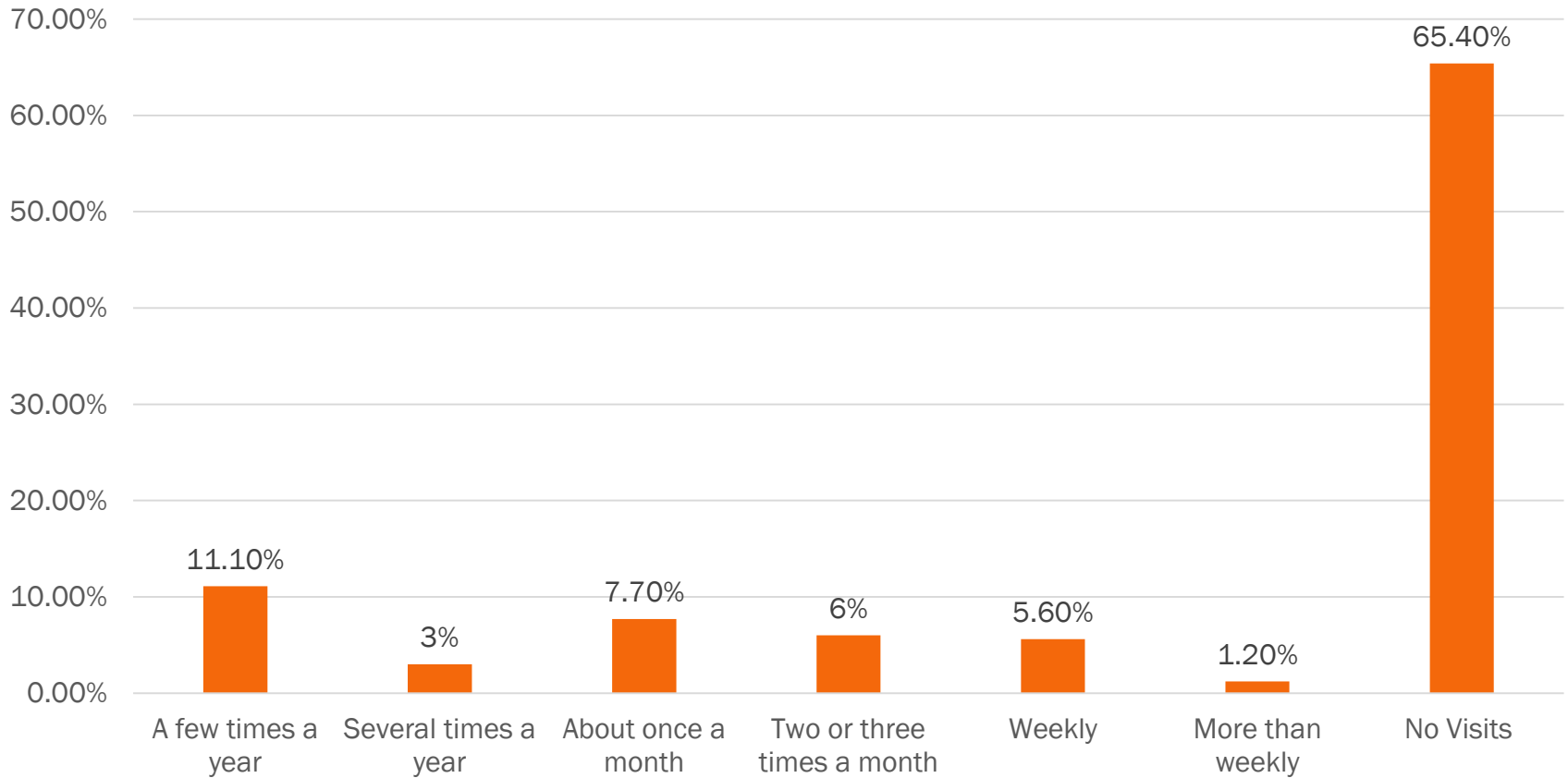
Contact with Children Prior to Current Incarceration



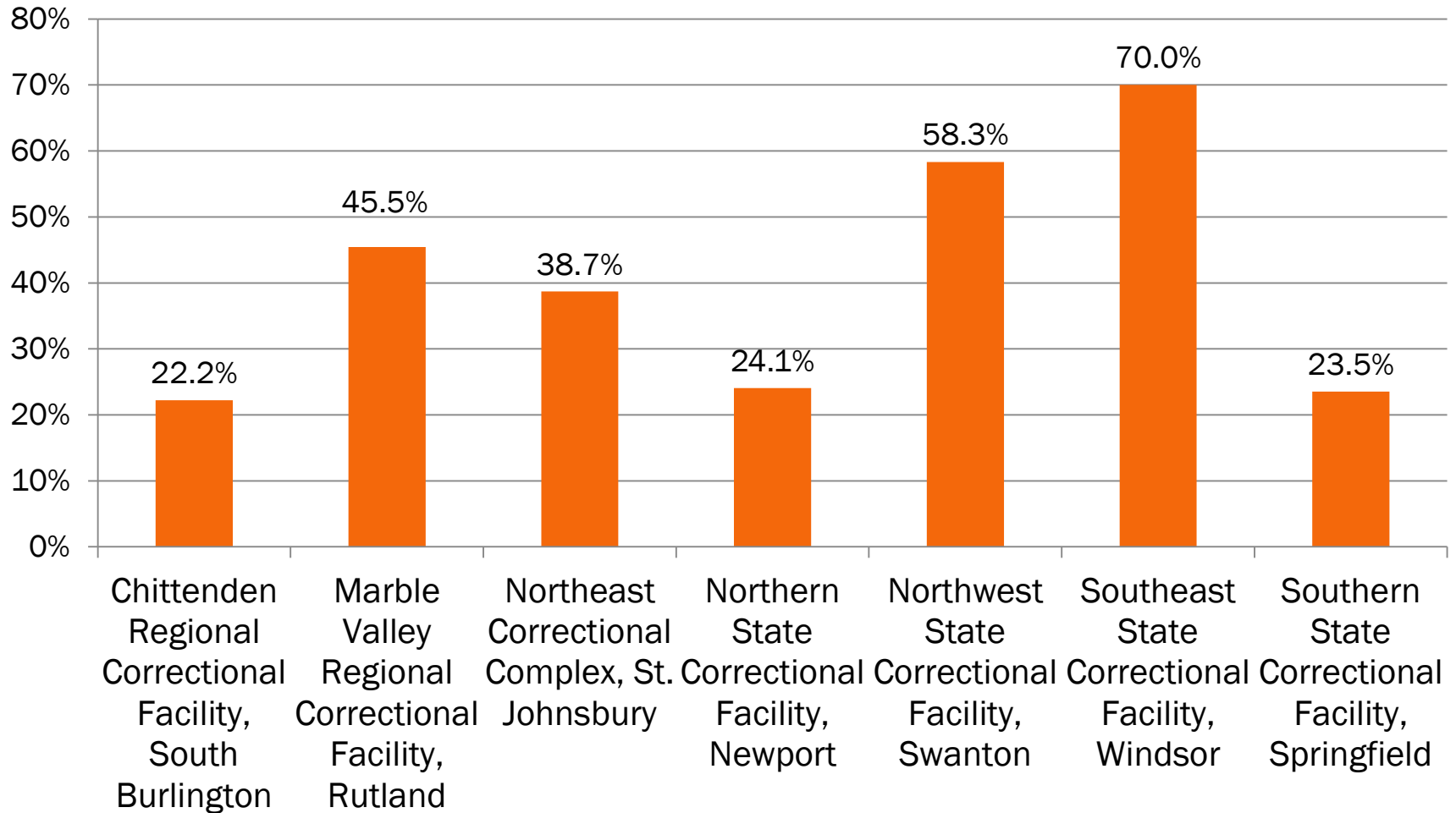
∞ 2/3 of inmates' children do not visit them in prison

Children's Visits with Inmates

Children's Frequency of Visitation with their Parent

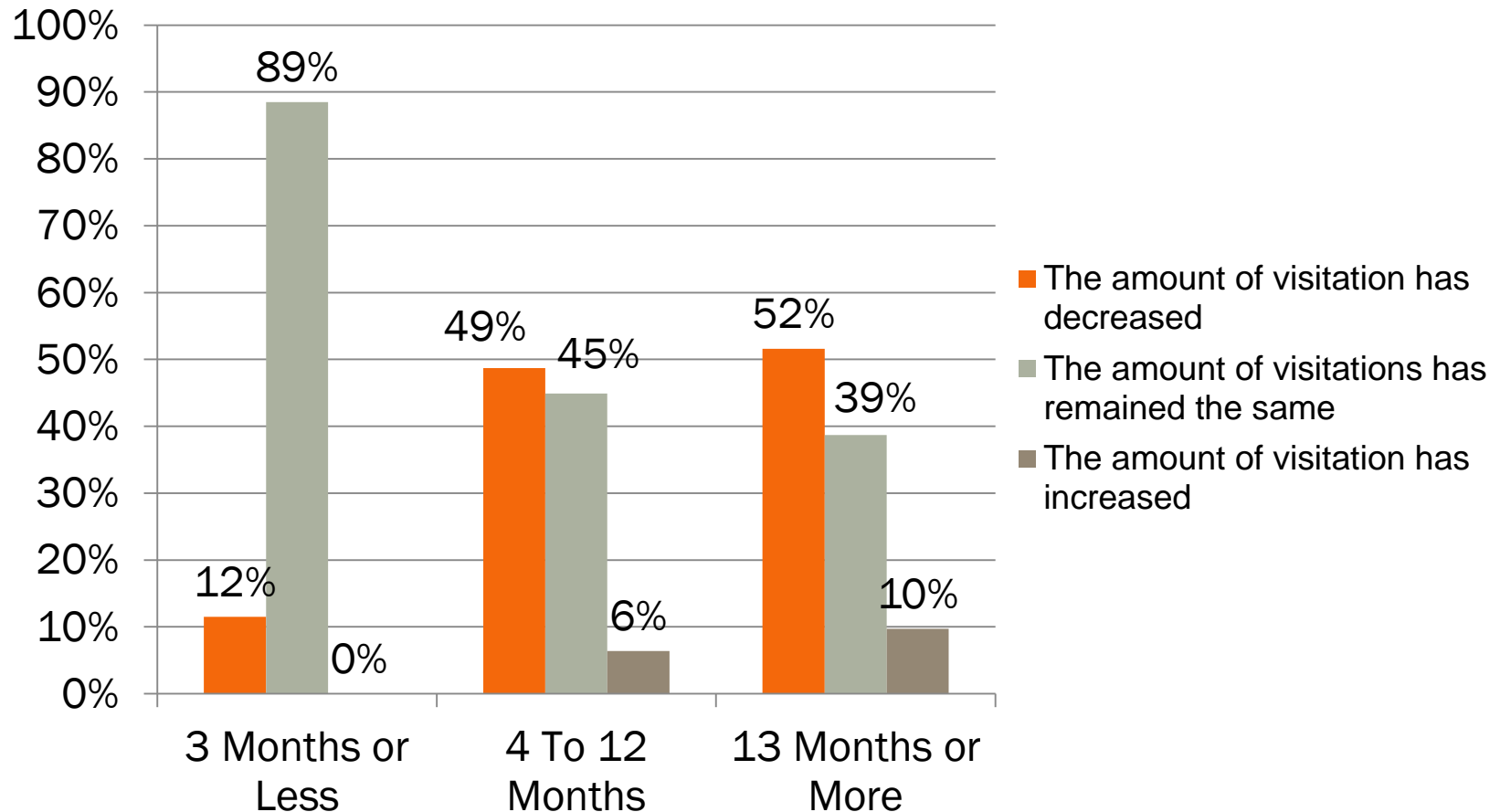


Children's Visits by Facility



Frequency of Visitation with Children

Length of Incarceration So Far



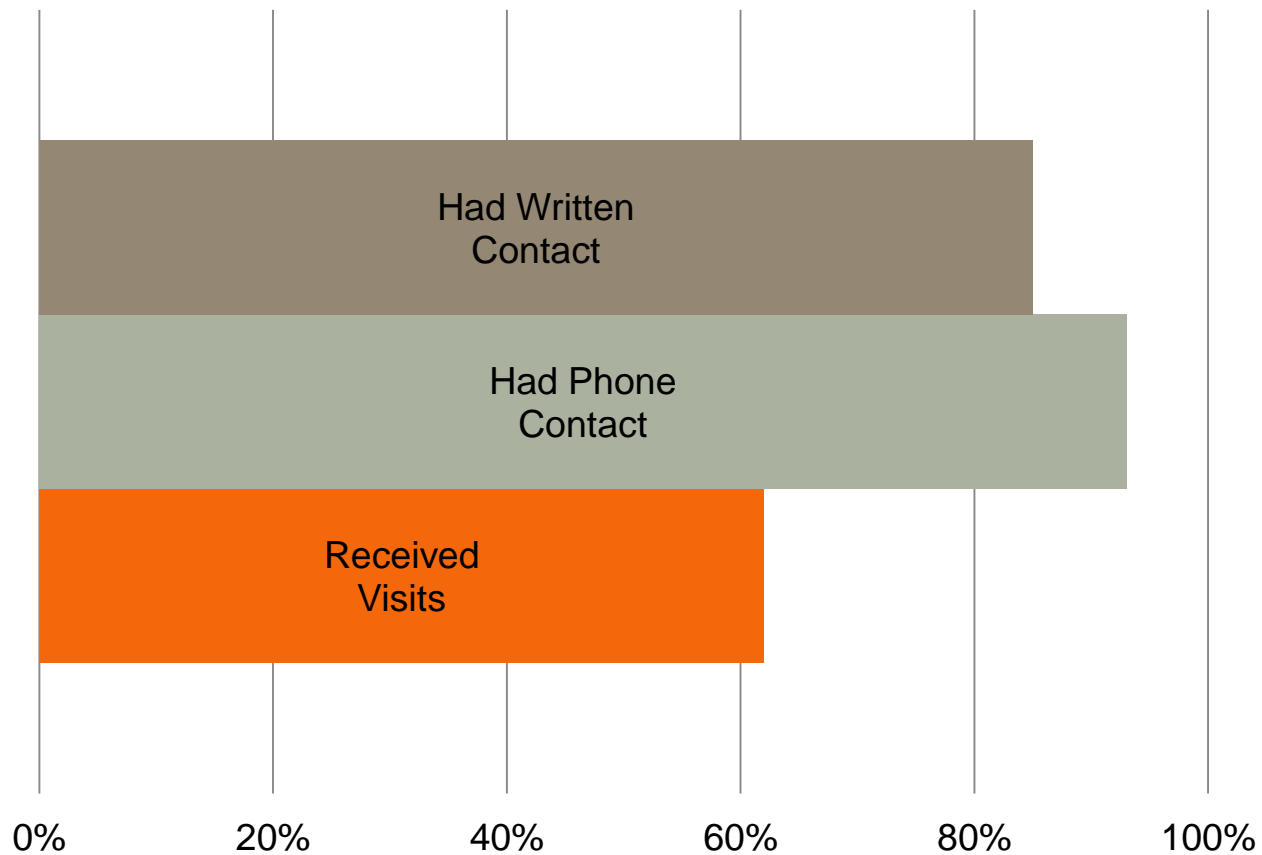
Expectations

- ∞ **97%** of inmates with children expect to have visits with their children when they are released
 - **28.2%** of inmates expect to live with their child or children when they are released
 - But, only **1/3** of children visit their parent while incarcerated

Contact

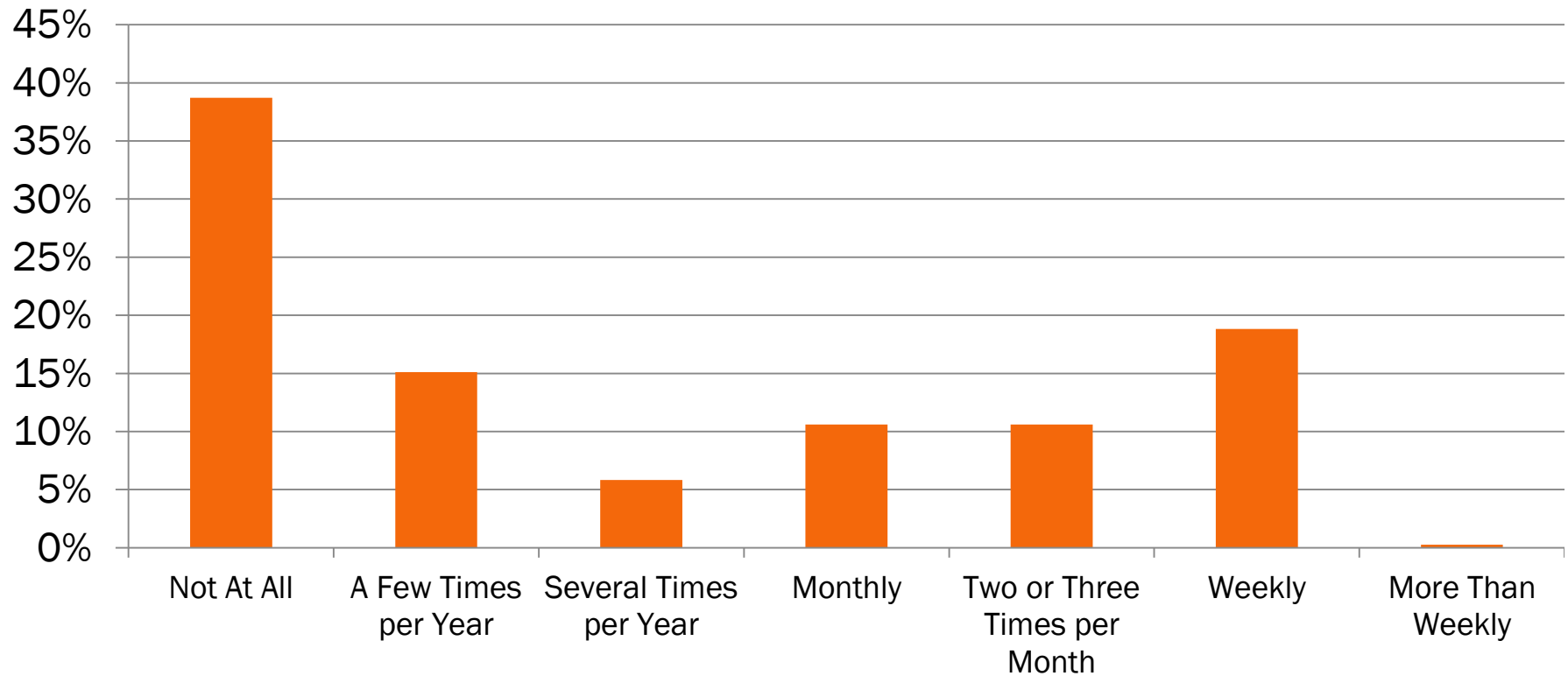


Percent of Inmates Having Contact



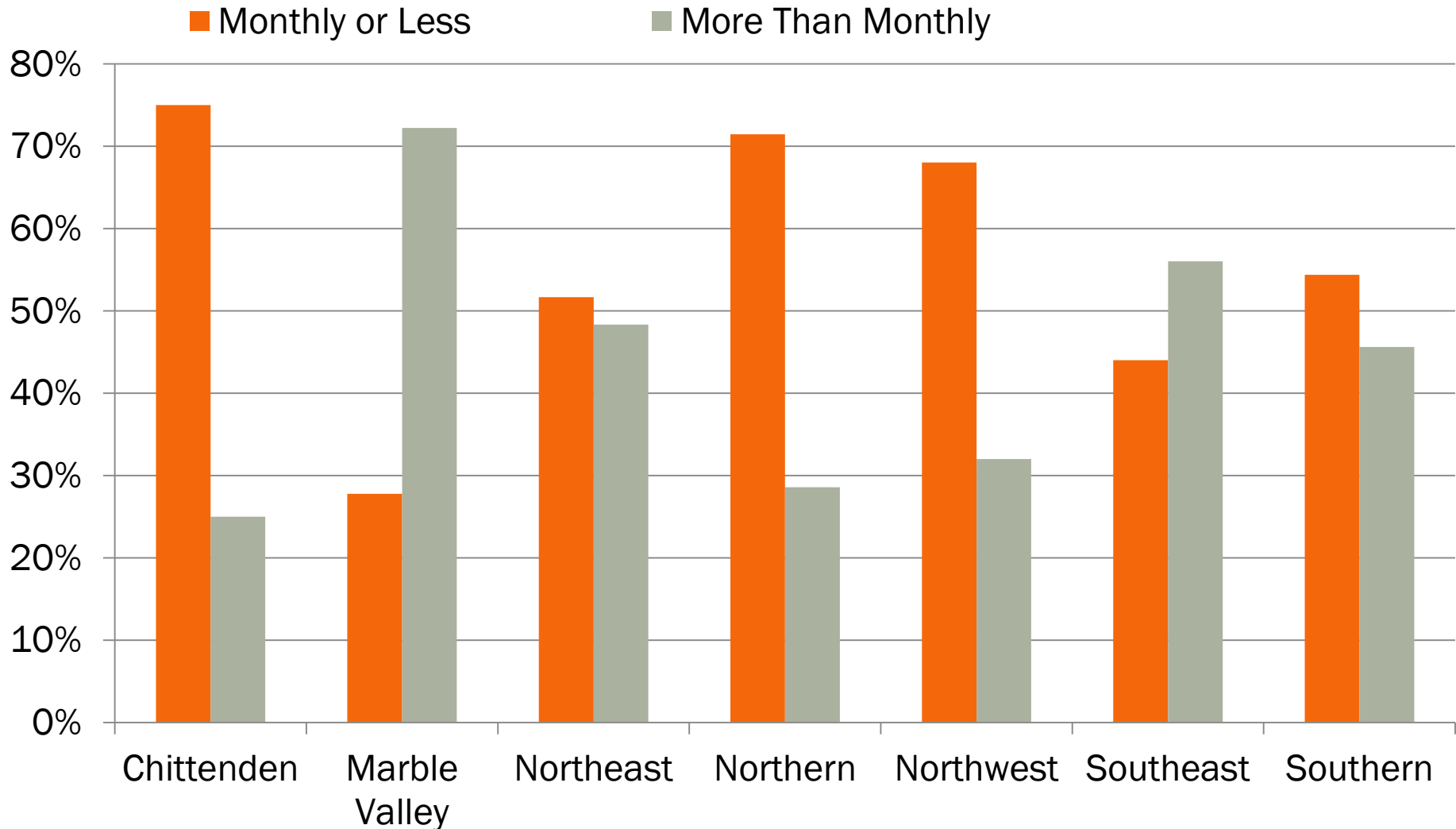
Visitation

Frequency of visits for the entire population



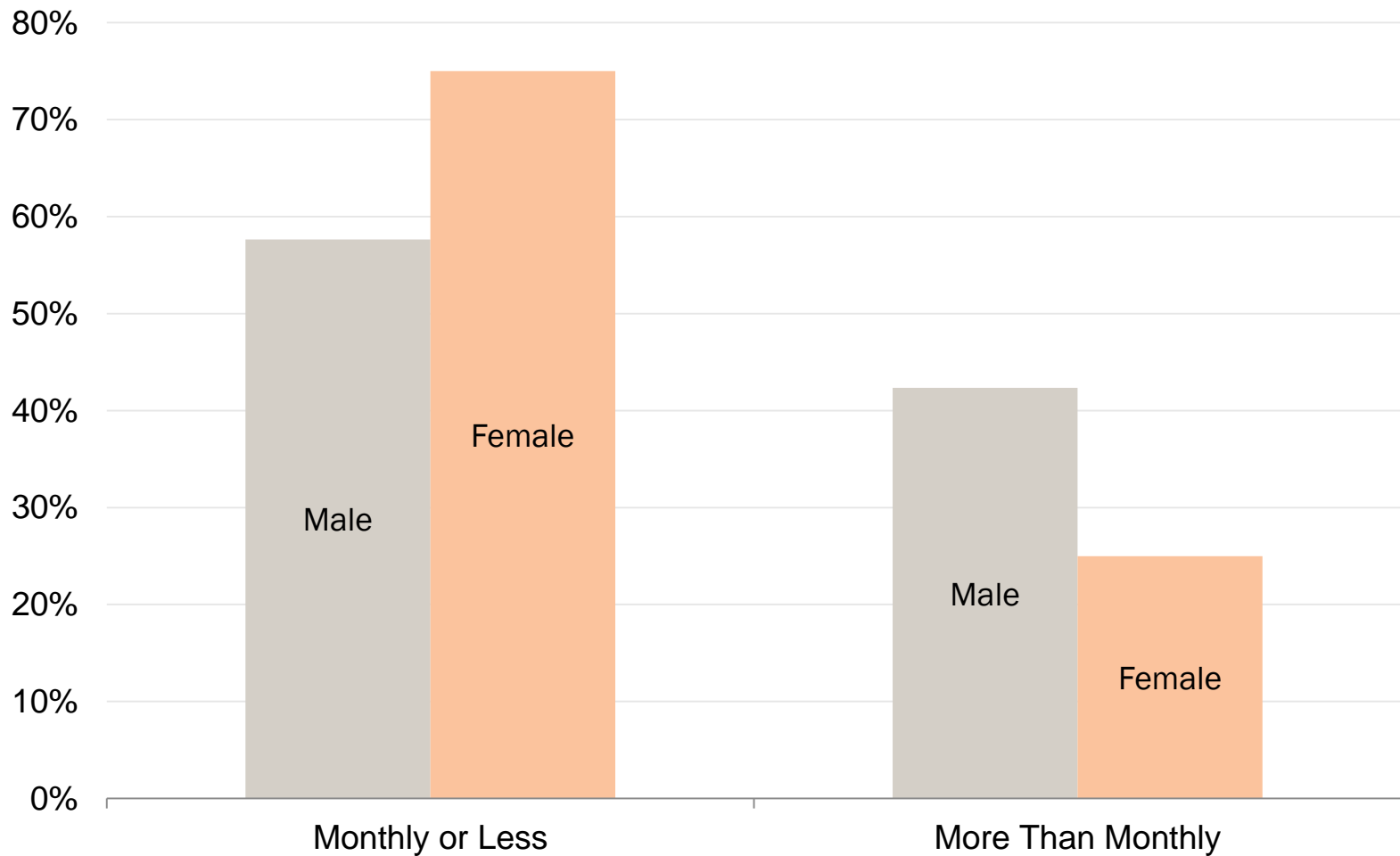
38% of inmates do not receive visitors

Visitation by Facility

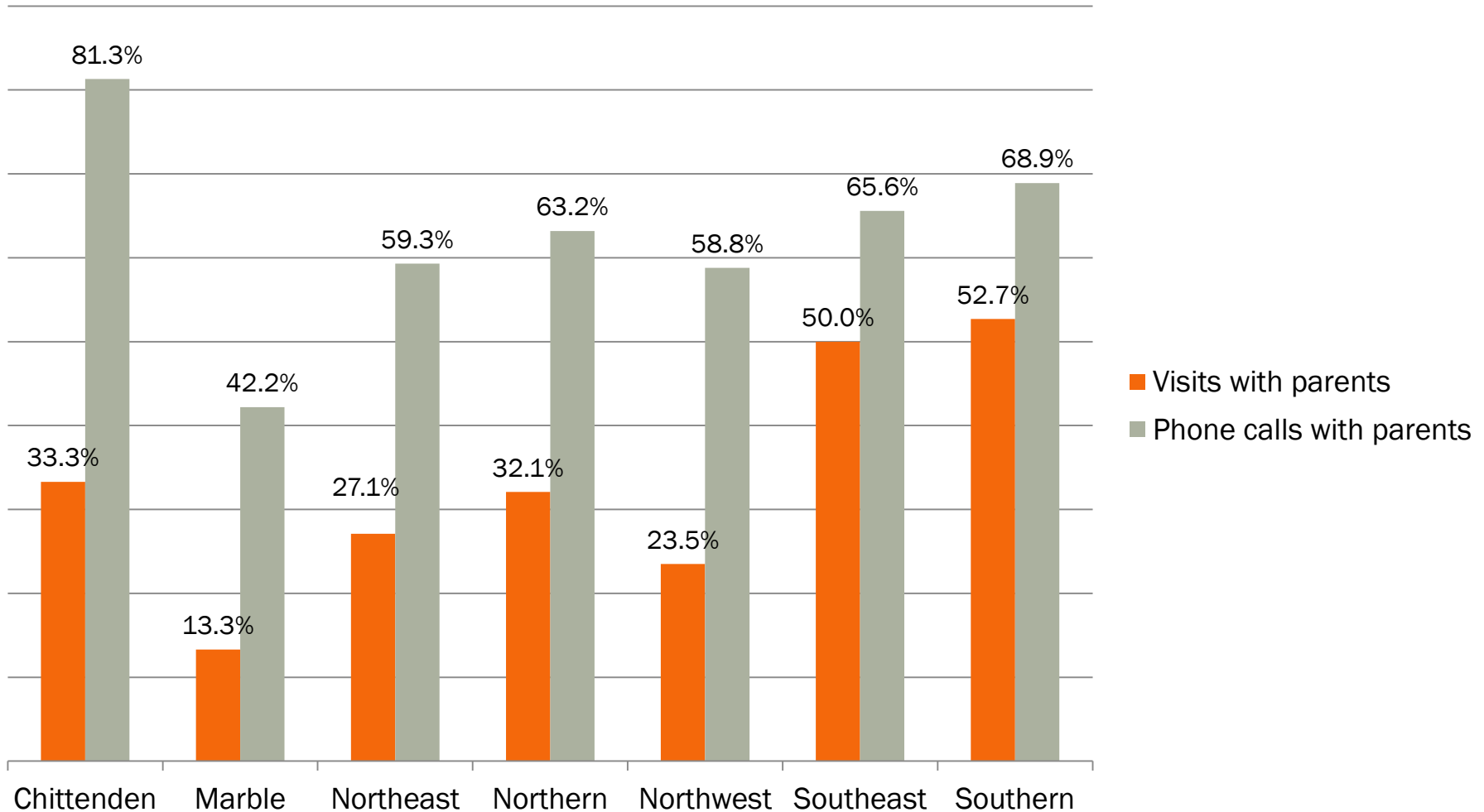


Gender Differences

Frequency of Visits

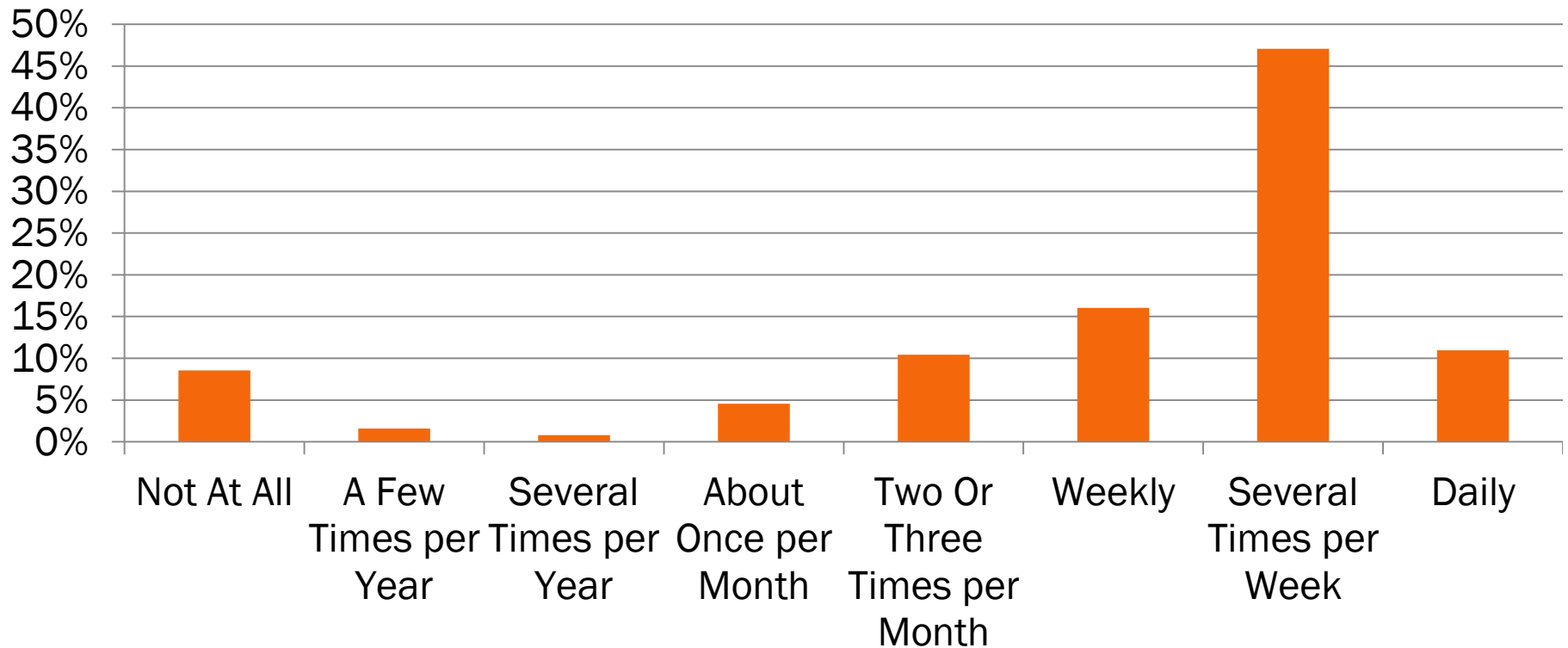


Children's Calls & Visits by Facility

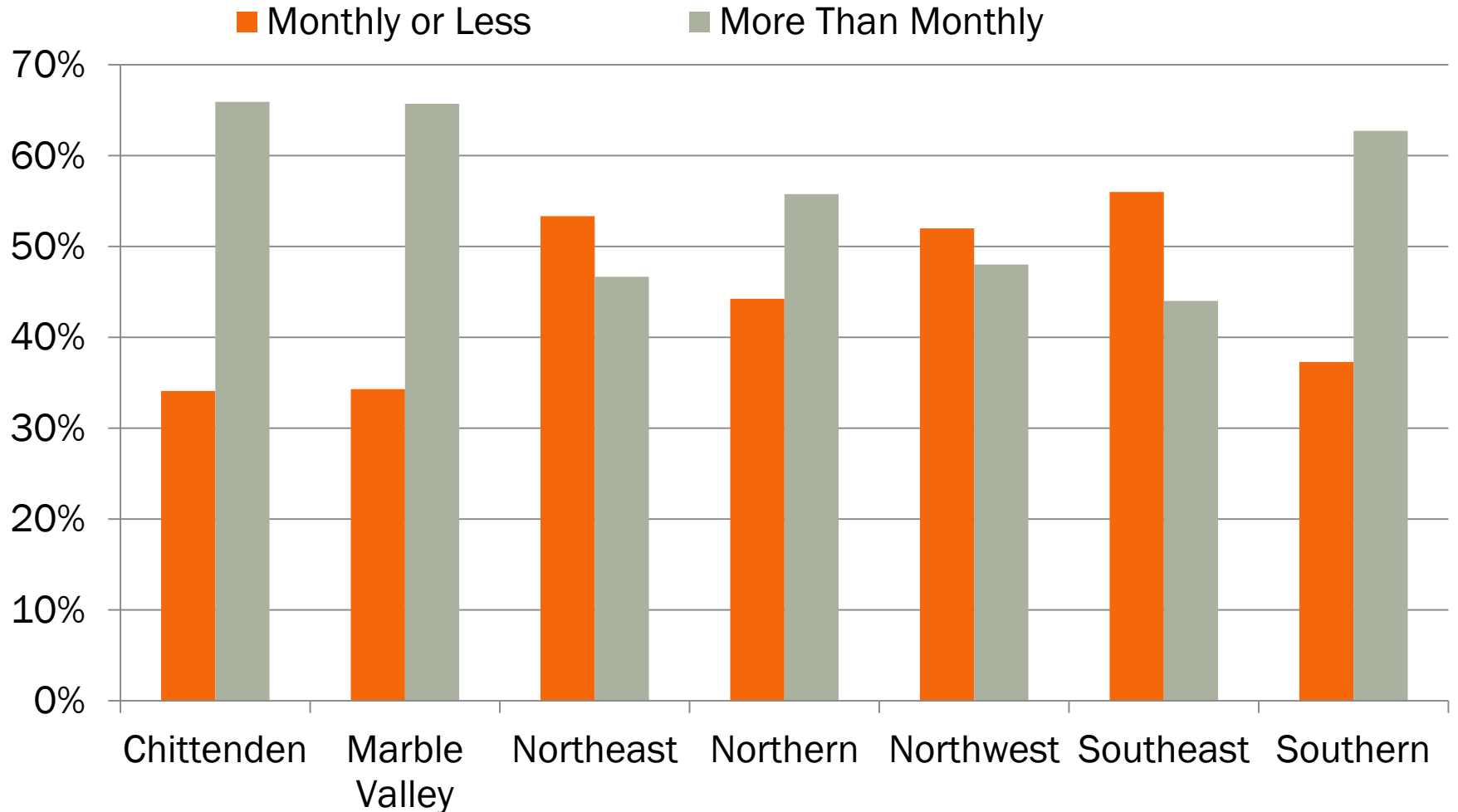


Phone Contact

- 93% of inmates have phone contact with important people
- Frequency of phone contact for the entire population:



Written Contact by Facility

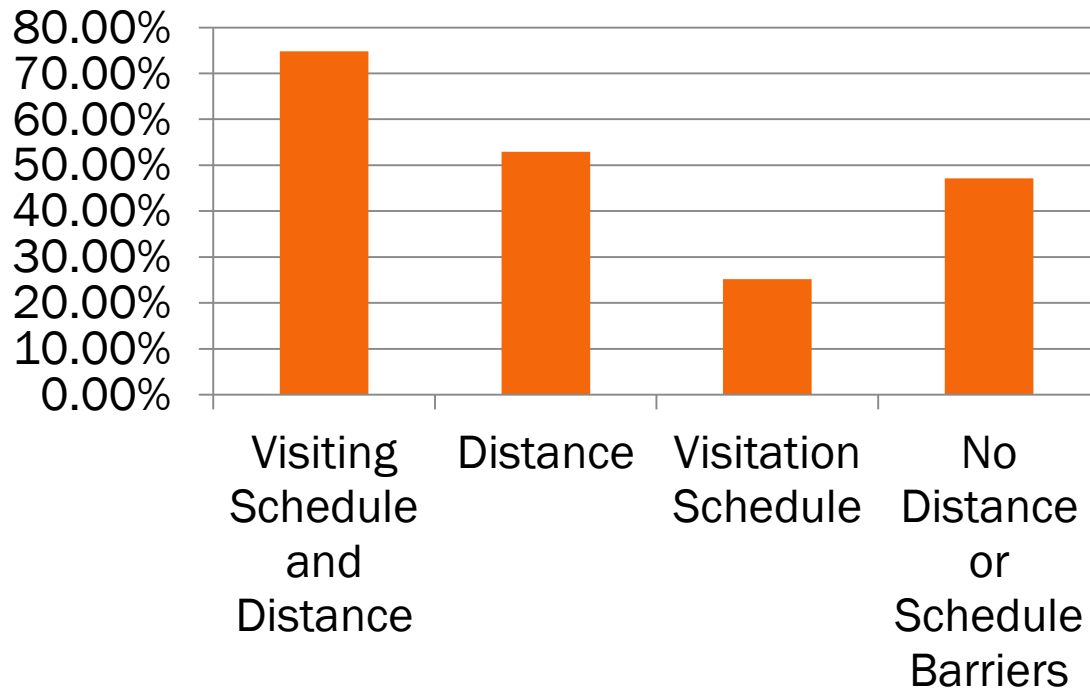


Barriers to Contact



Barriers of Schedule

- 74.8% of inmates claim that the visiting schedules do not work for their important people because they are too far away from their families



Additional Barriers Identified

- ∞ Family Not Notified of Relocation
- ∞ Phone Contact
 - Cost
 - Lack of privacy
- ∞ Visitation Policy
 - Schedule of visits
 - # of visitors allowed
 - Not a good environment for children
 - ID/Dress/Screening process

Why Contact Matters

- ✎ Incarceration affects the entire family

- ✎ Contact with family members:
 - reduces recidivism/parole violations
 - Improves successful reintegration into society
 - increases the chance for successful family reunification
 - reduces the stress of separation
 - encourages positive behaviors in inmates
 - Decreases aggressive behavior

Key Findings

- ∞ 2/3 of inmates' children do not visit them in prison
- ∞ DOC policies are seen as obstacles to visitation and contact
- ∞ Distance is barrier that can be addressed via remote access
- ∞ Family contact is beneficial for:
 - Inmates' behavior & motivation
 - Children's outcomes
 - Successful family reunification
 - Recidivism reduction tool