



2020 Best Practice Pillar Award Winner

**Poverty Reduction at JF&CS Toronto:
Sharing Our Understandings
October 29, 2020**

Sustainable Livelihood Framework

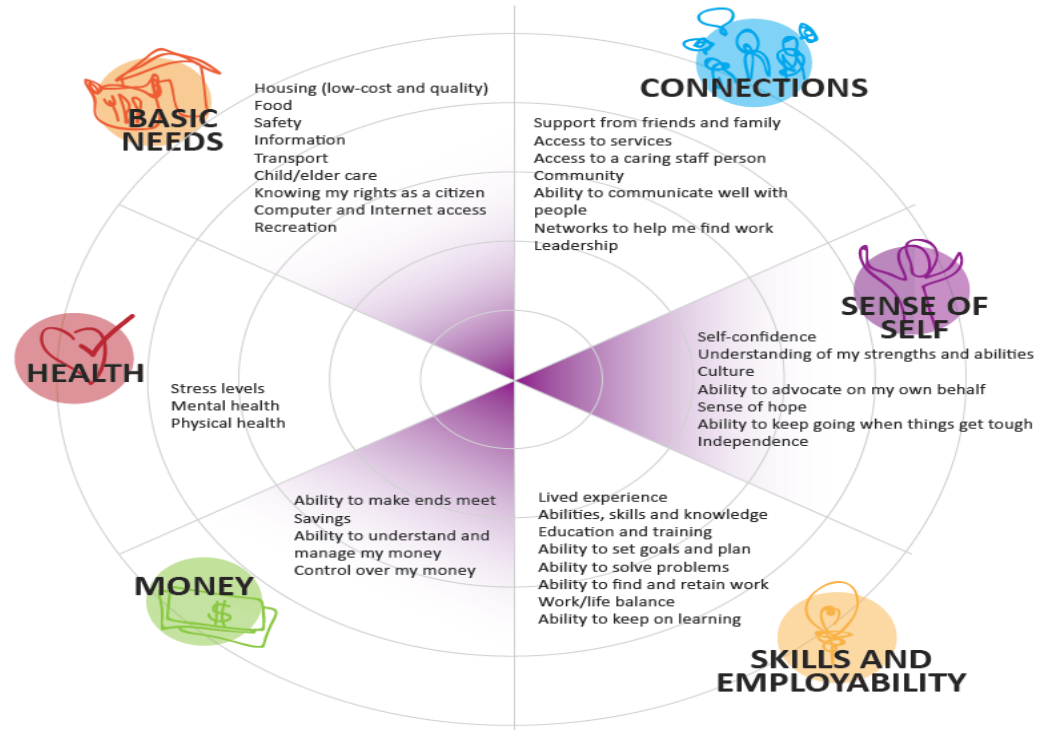
Asset Map Guide

What is an Asset?

Assets are building blocks for your future. We take a positive, well rounded approach to look at all your strengths.

Assets can be:

- What you know
- Your "lived experience"
- Your skills and abilities
- Your learning and training



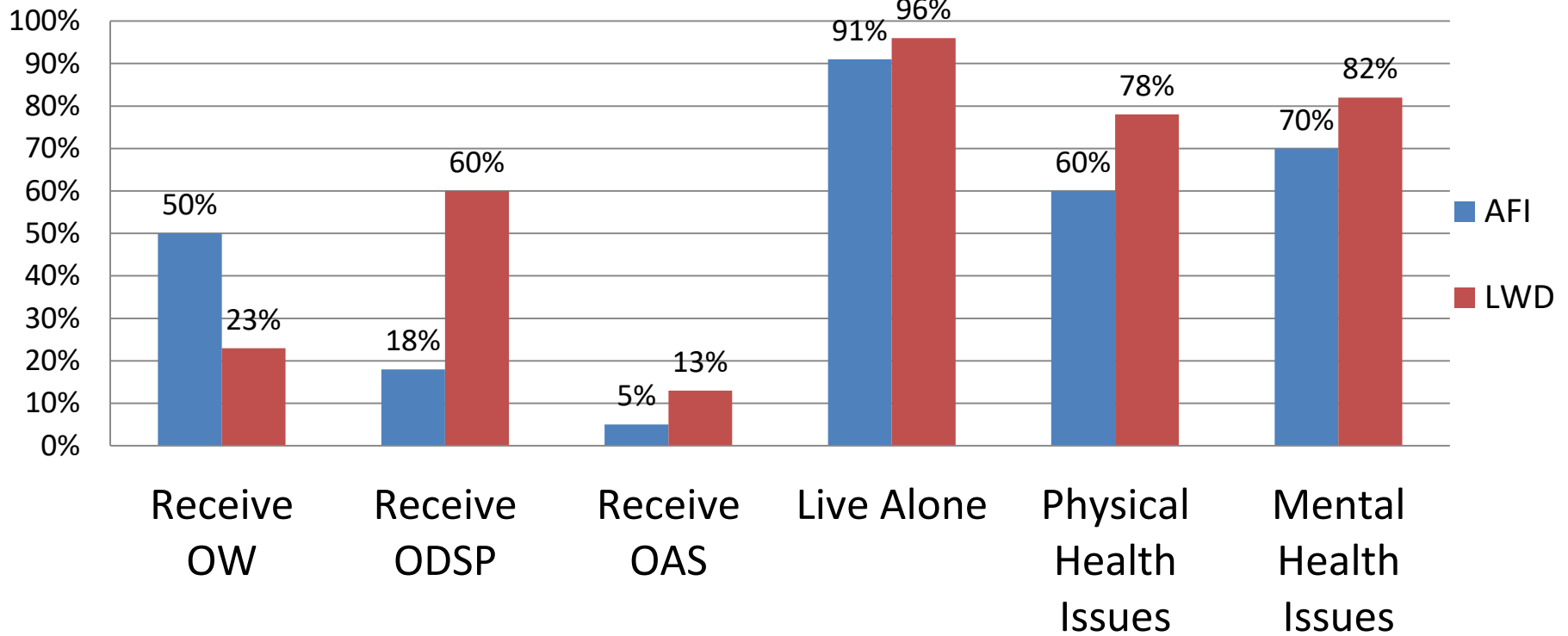
Sustainable Livelihoods Canada ©

SFAP is Unique and Needed

- **100%** of SFAP clients live below LICO
 - \$25,920: LICO 2020 for single individual
<https://www.settler.ca/english/lico-2020-canada/>
 - \$2300: Average Rent for one-bedroom in Toronto
<https://torontostoreys.com/toronto-rent-report-january-2020/>
- **\$733**: Maximum monthly single person amount from OW for 2020 (did not increase from 2019)
- **\$1,169**: Maximum monthly single person amount from ODSP for 2020 (did not increase from 2019)
http://incomesecurity.org/publications/ontario-works/March-2020-OW-and-ODSP-rates-and-OCB-EN_.docx

SFAP is Unique and Needed

Poverty Reduction Clients at Baseline - %



No other program provides this type of case management to clients with complex needs

Understanding our Clients – Two Distinct Streams

Assets for Independence (AFI) stream (compared to LWD)

- Younger
- Shorter length of service within the program
- More likely to successfully exit the program
- More likely to receive financial counselling
- More likely to be a recipient of OW as compared to ODSP
- Service needs involving JVS, Vocation, Finances, Mental Health, Trauma, and Legal involvement

Understanding our Clients – Two Distinct Streams

Livelihoods with Dignity (LWD) stream (compared to AFI)

- Older
- Longer length of service
- Recipient of ODSP, compared to OW
- More likely to receive OAS
- Service needs around Finances, Medical / Physical Health, and Mental Health

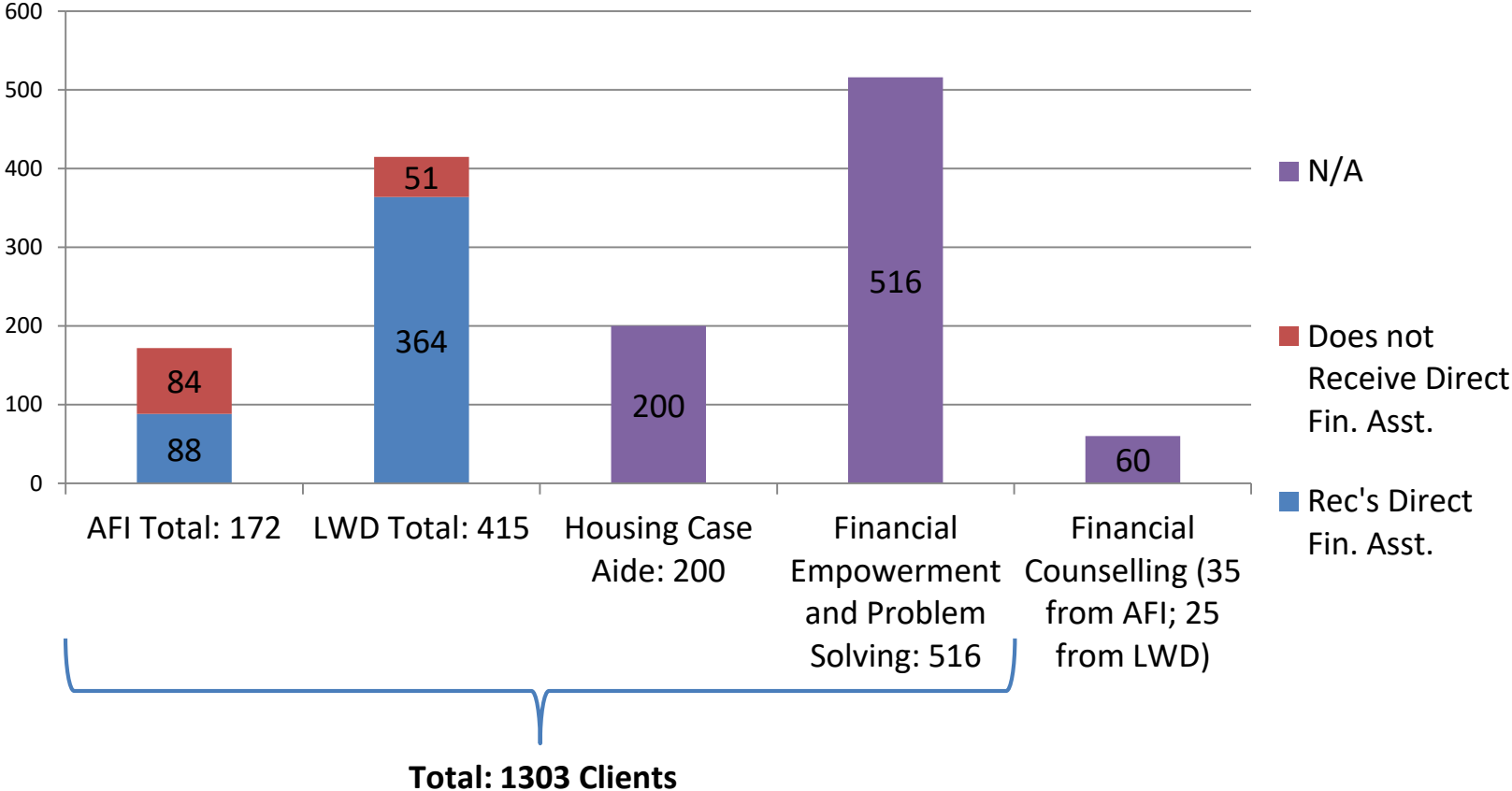
Understanding our Clients – AFI

- Individuals within the AFI stream may experience situational and/or generational barriers affecting poverty due to factors such as un- or underemployment, a lack of skills training, family or relationship breakdown, and issues related to health and mental health.

Understanding our Clients – LWD

- Individuals within the LWD stream are some of the most marginalized individuals in our community who are deeply embedded within the cycle of poverty.
- The majority of clients are single individuals with no dependents who are facing significant barriers at both the individual and systems levels.
- Individual barriers include physical, developmental, medical, and mental health and/or addictions challenges, which become more pronounced from the effects of age and living in poverty for years.
- Systemic barriers include access to affordable housing, the costs of medications and medical devices, transportation, food, and access to appropriate care.

Understanding our Clients – Two Distinct Streams



Program Goals

- Because clients within each stream have unique sets of needs, each stream requires its own set of Program Goals and related Program Activities.

Program Goals - AFI

- The goal of the Assets for Independence stream is to help individuals and families move out of poverty by providing the resources and supports to achieve financial stability.
- Program activities centre on the building of assets along multiple dimensions including basic needs, financial skills, and employment, enabling clients to withstand life's challenges.

Program Goals - LWD

- The goal of the Livelihoods with Dignity stream is to reduce the negative impacts of poverty on the most vulnerable individuals.
- Program activities focus on addressing basic needs, ensuring financial stability, and promoting wellbeing and social inclusion, so that clients may experience fewer and less severe crises, while maintaining longer-term quality of life.

Program Outcomes - AFI

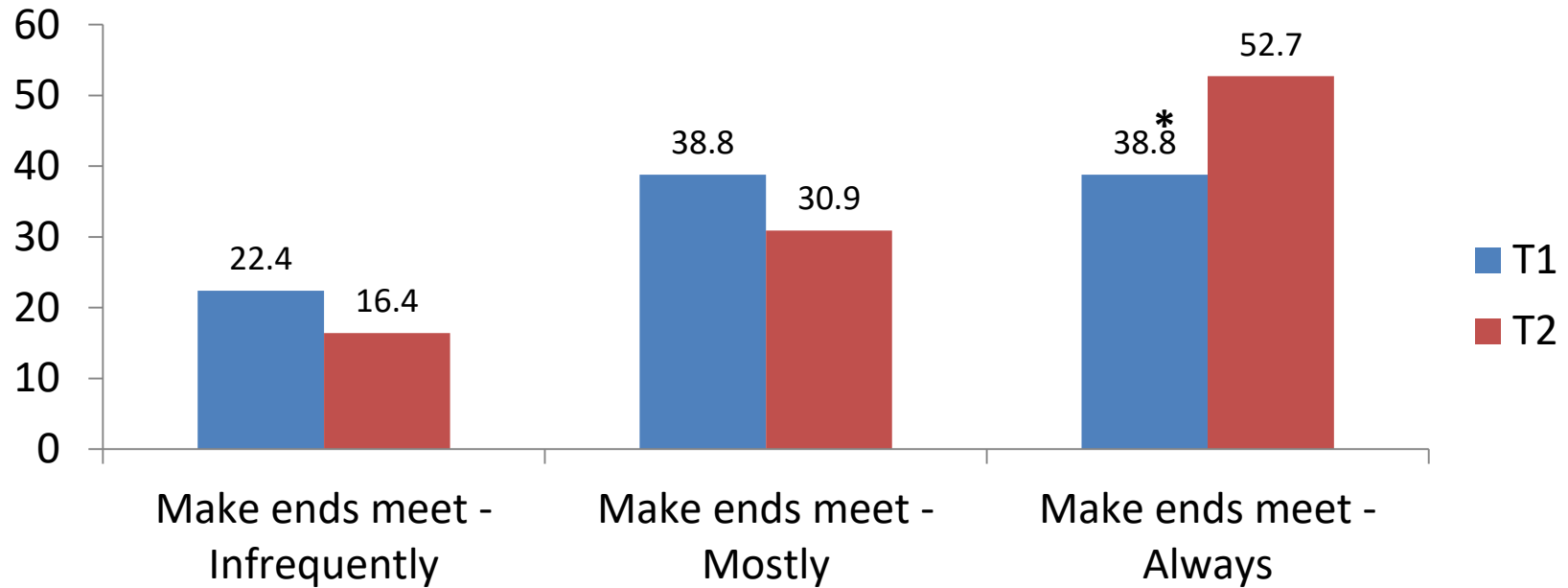
Improvements in:

- Financial situation
- Employment
- Sense of self

Program Outcomes - AFI

Financial Situation:

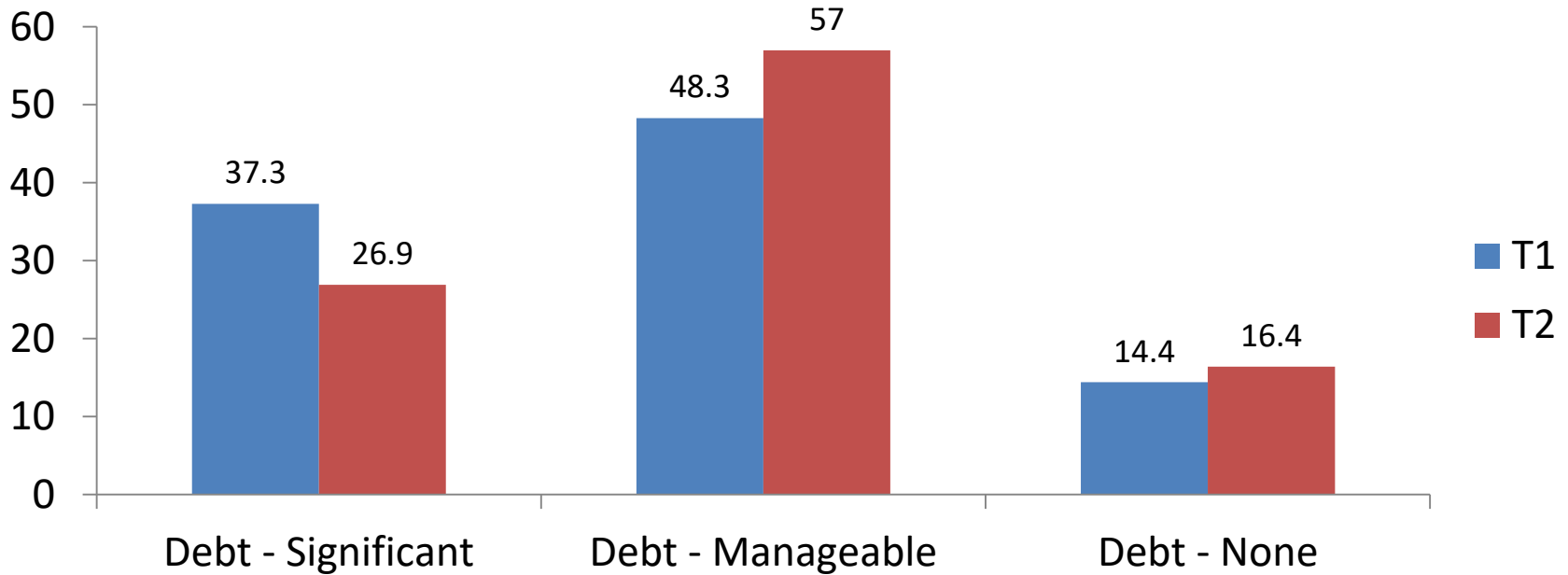
Ability to Make Ends Meet: AFI - %



Program Outcomes - AFI

Financial Situation:

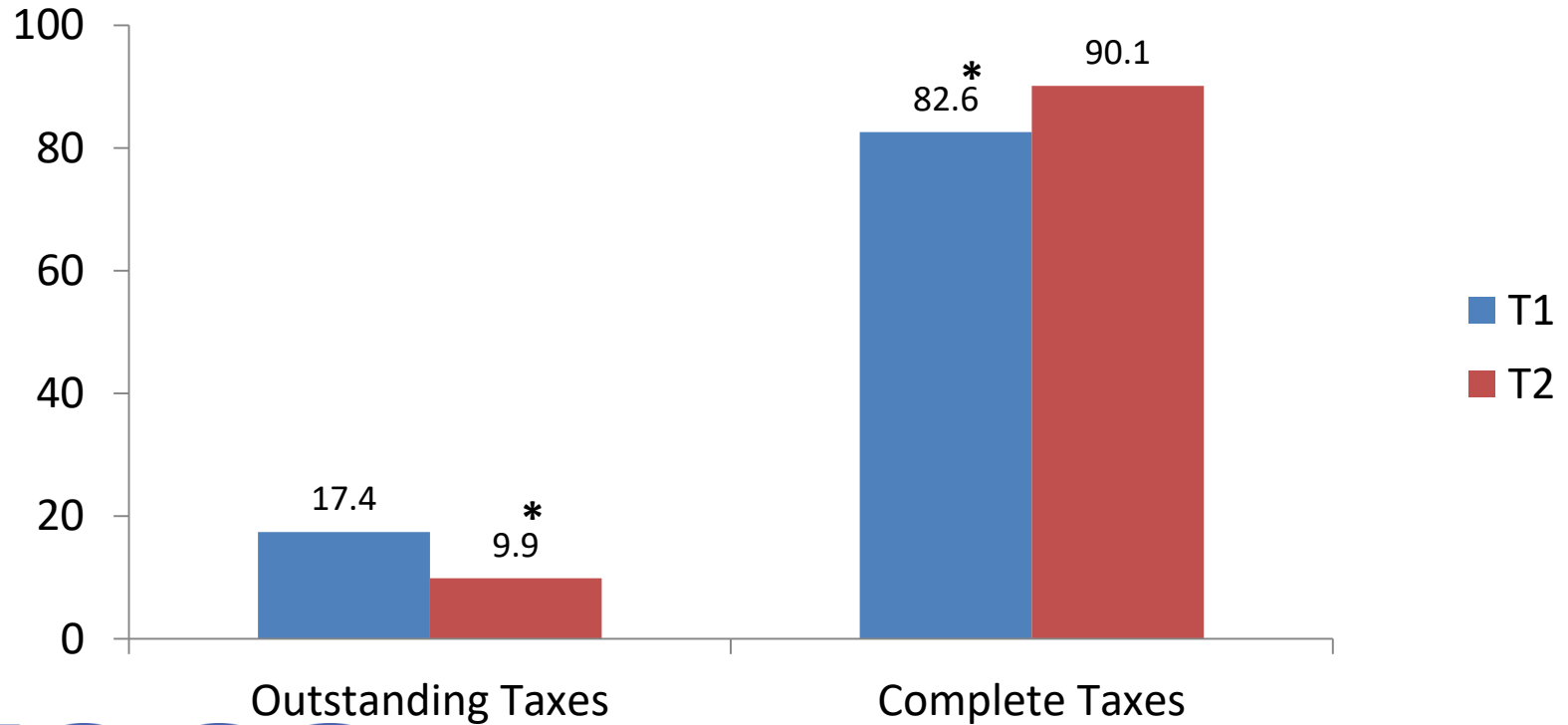
Ability to Manage Debt: AFI - %



Program Outcomes - AFI

Financial Situation:

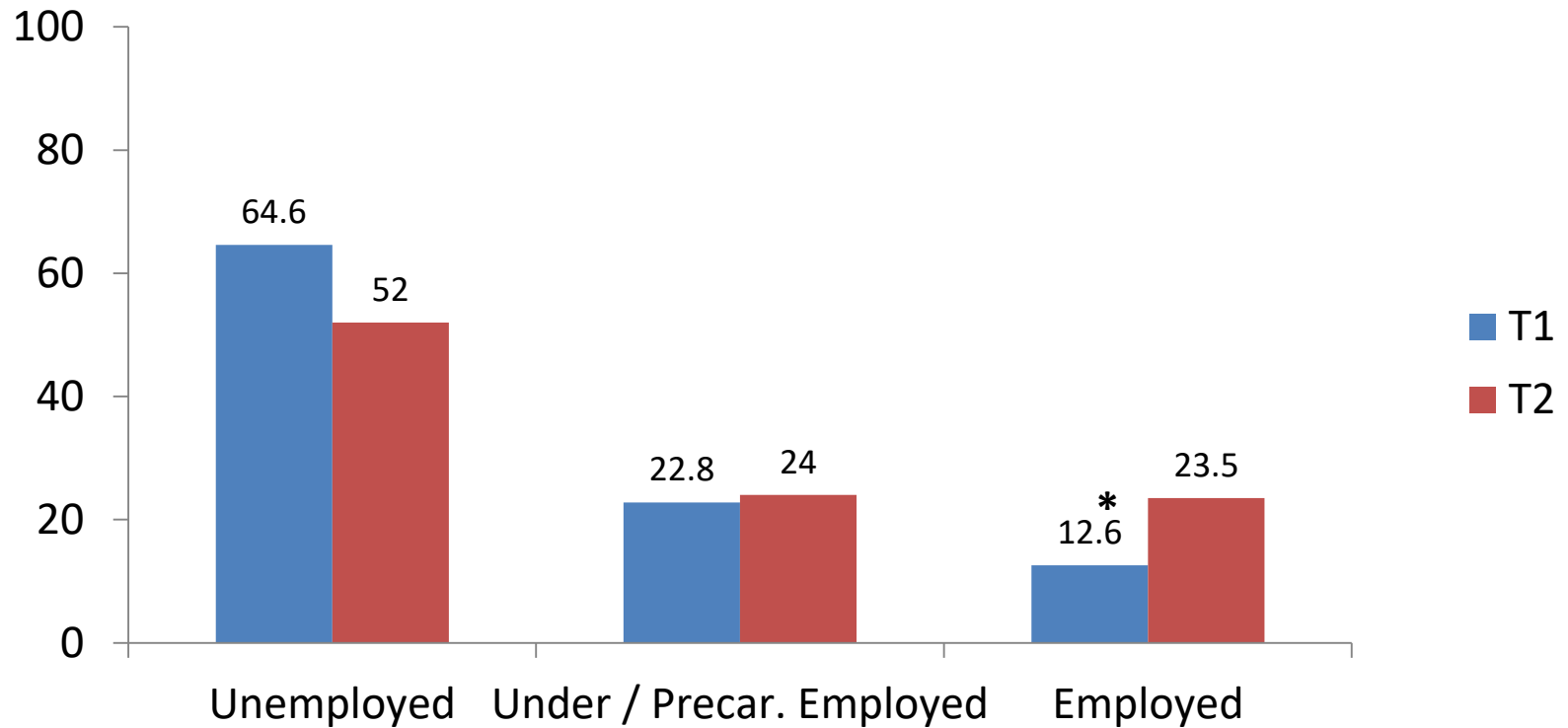
Completes Taxes: AFI - %



Program Outcomes - AFI

Employment:

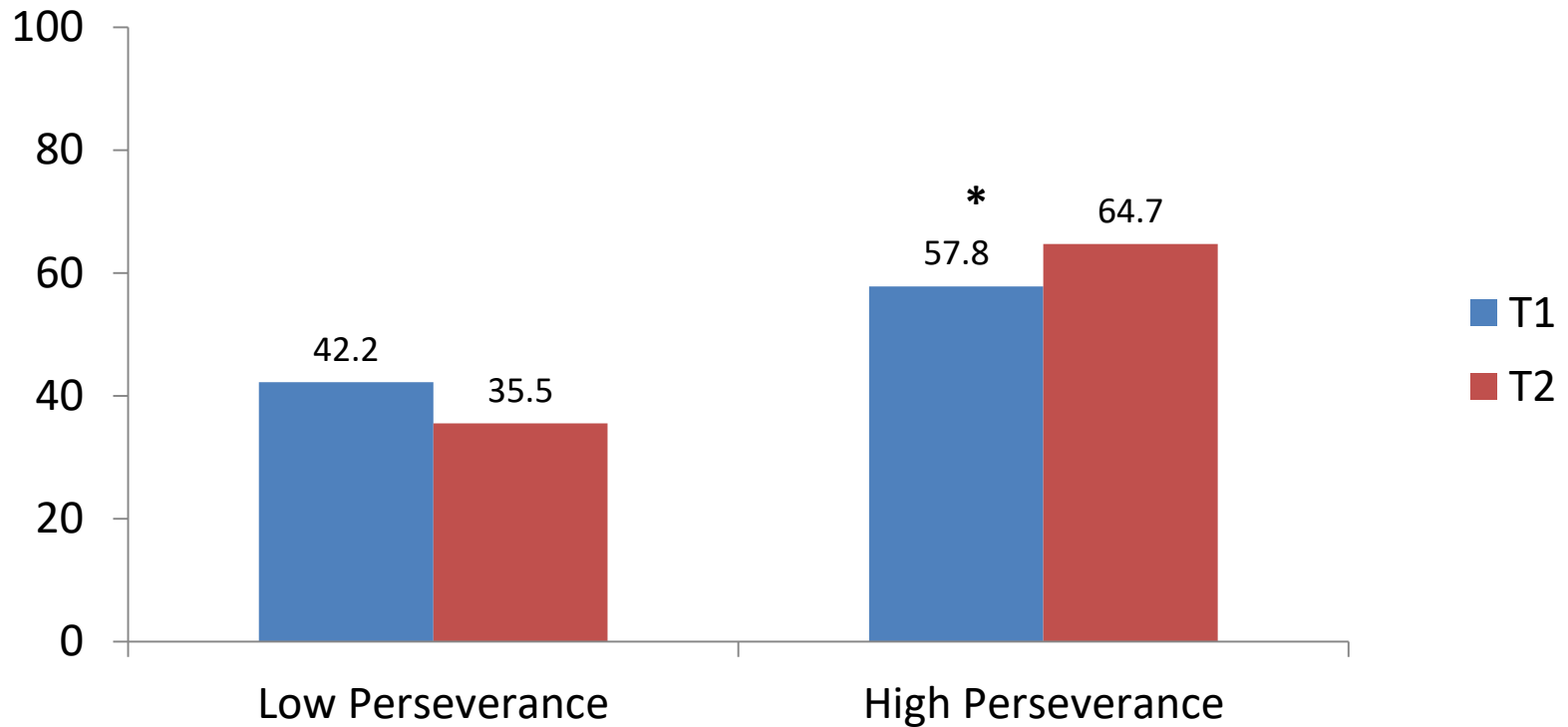
Employment: AFI - %



Program Outcomes - AFI

Sense of Self:

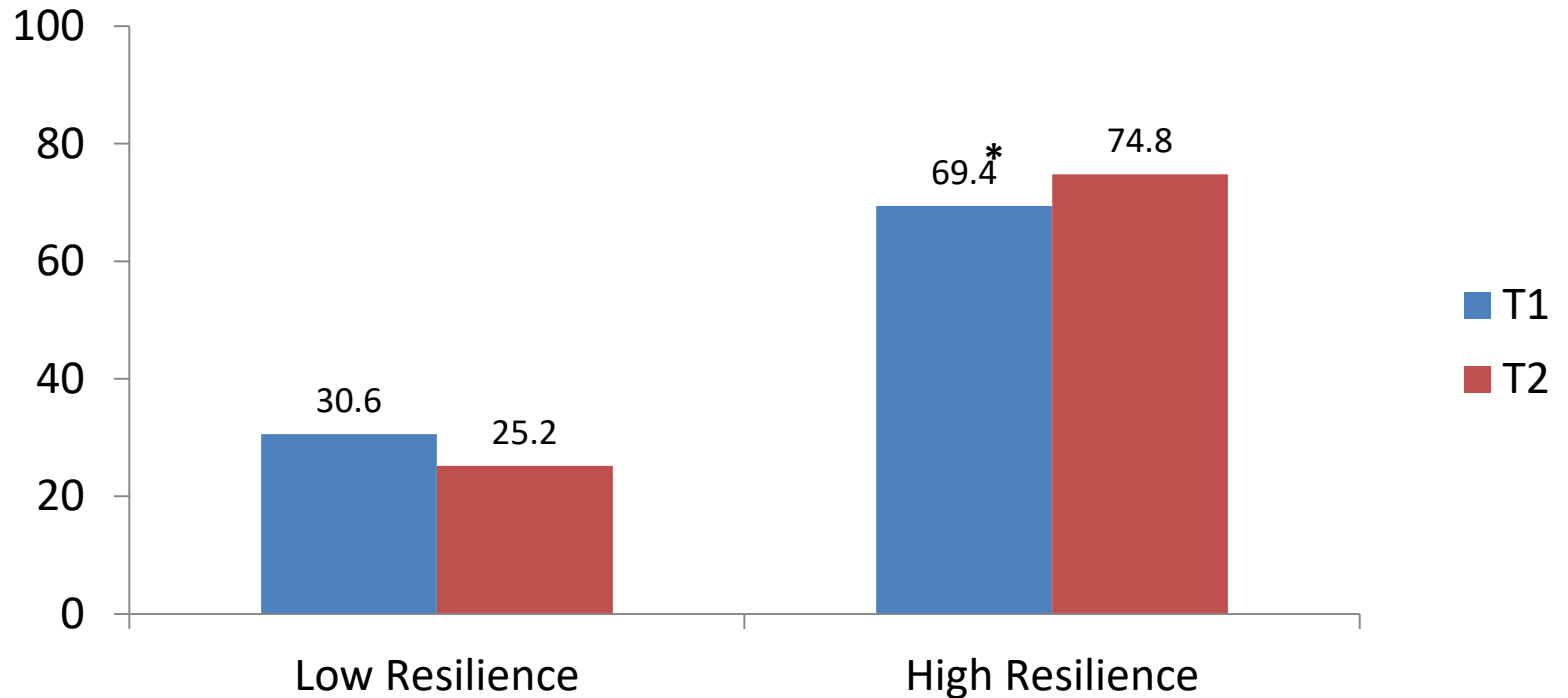
Perseverant: AFI - %



Program Outcomes - AFI

Sense of Self:

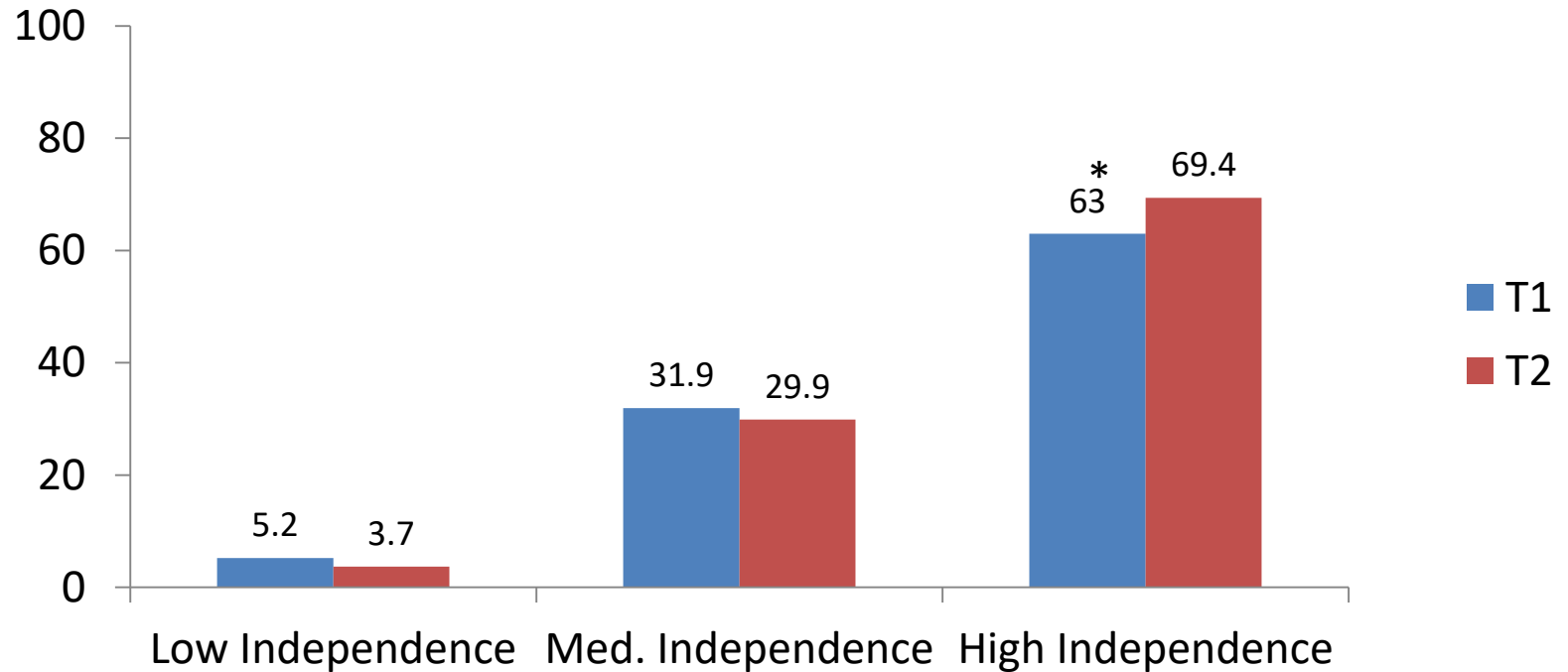
Resilient: AFI - %



Program Outcomes - AFI

Sense of Self:

Independence: AFI - %



Program Outcomes - LWD

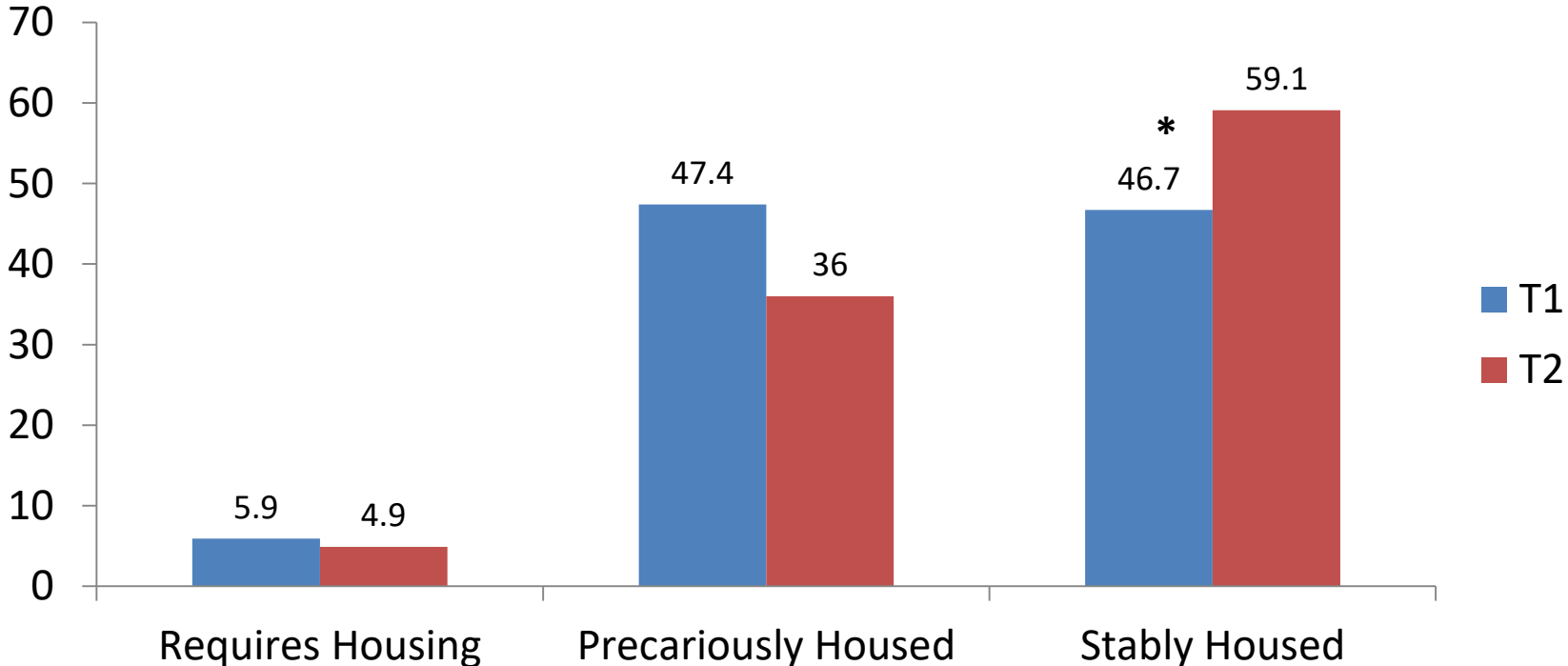
Improvements in:

- Basic needs (housing and food)
- Financial
- Connections to professional services
 - Including increases in ODSP and OAS

Program Outcomes - LWD

Basic Needs:

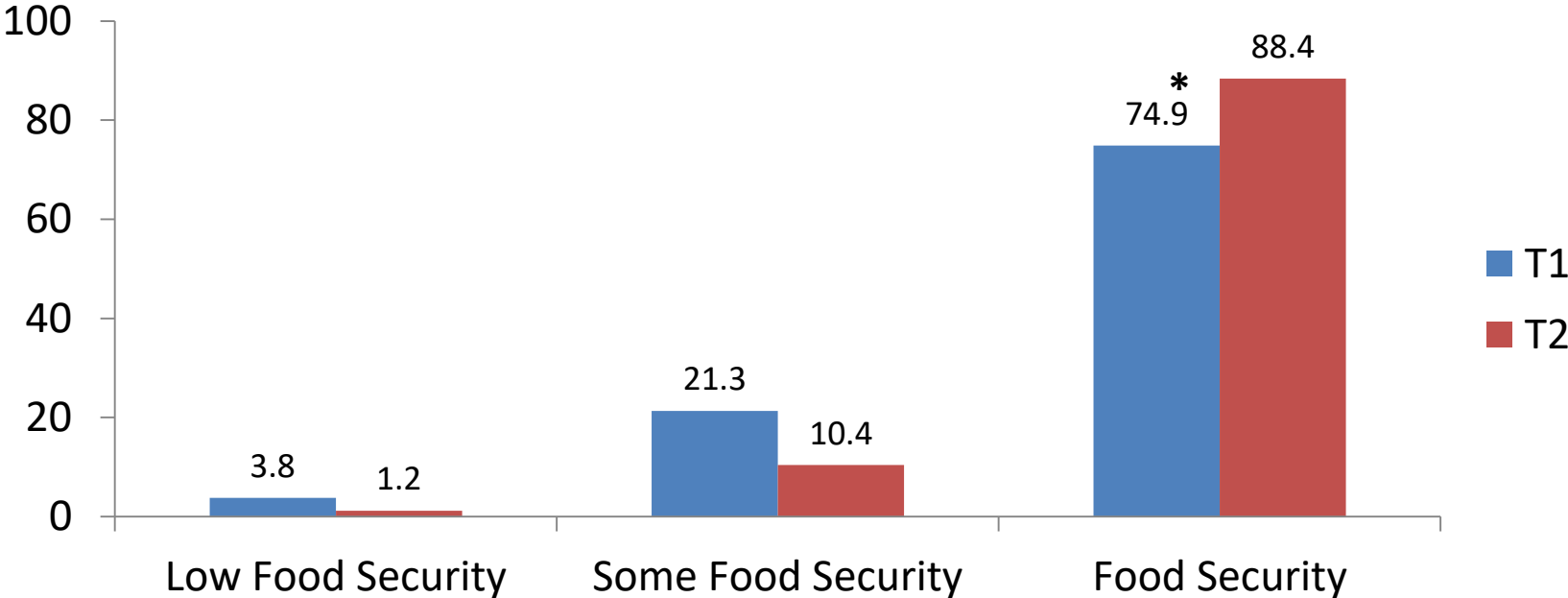
Housing: LWD - %



Program Outcomes - LWD

Basic Needs:

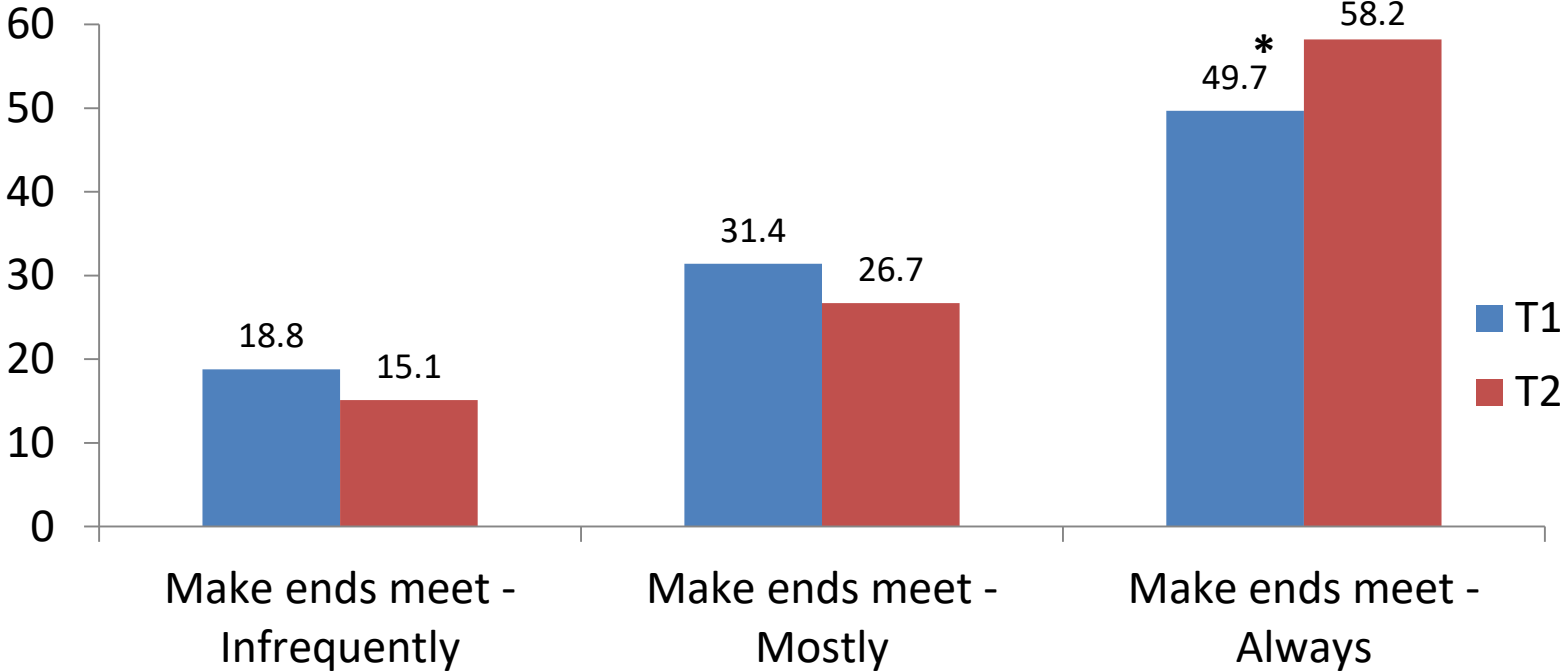
Food Security: LWD - %



Program Outcomes - LWD

Financial:

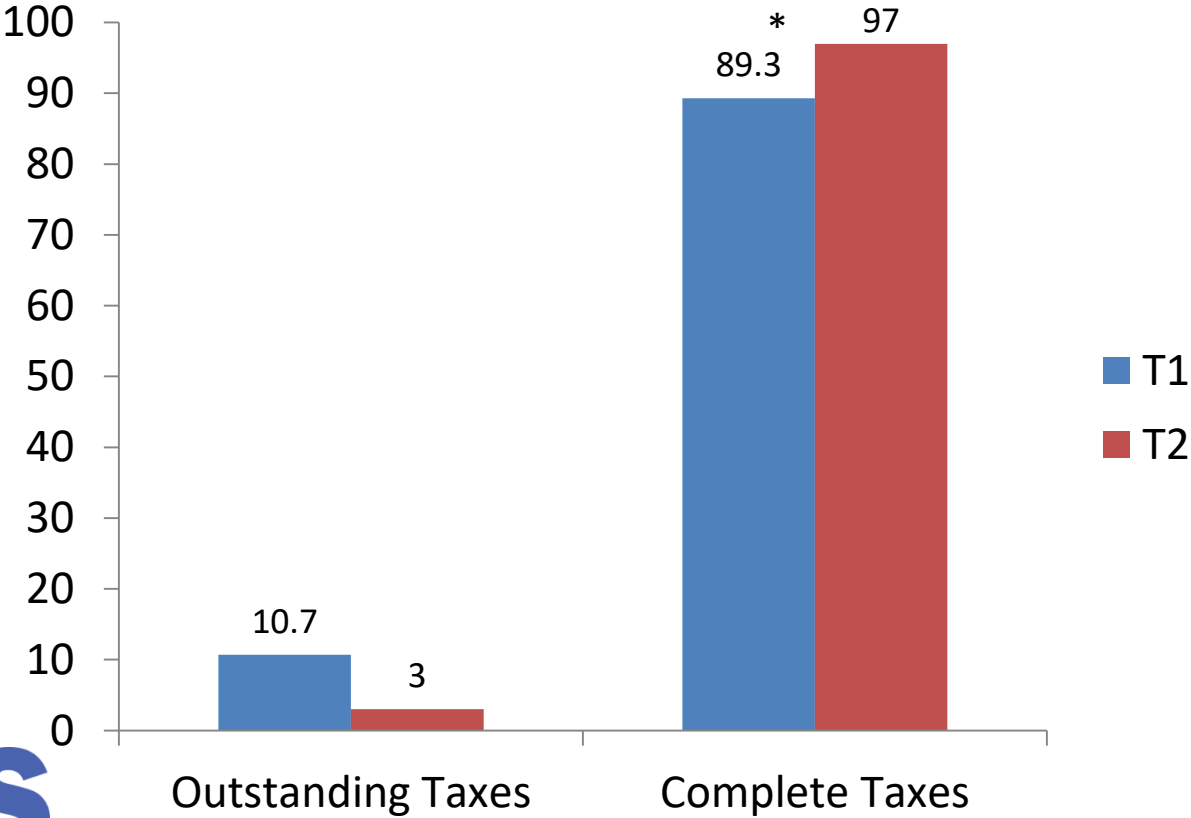
Ability to make Ends Meet: LWD - %



Program Outcomes - LWD

Financial:

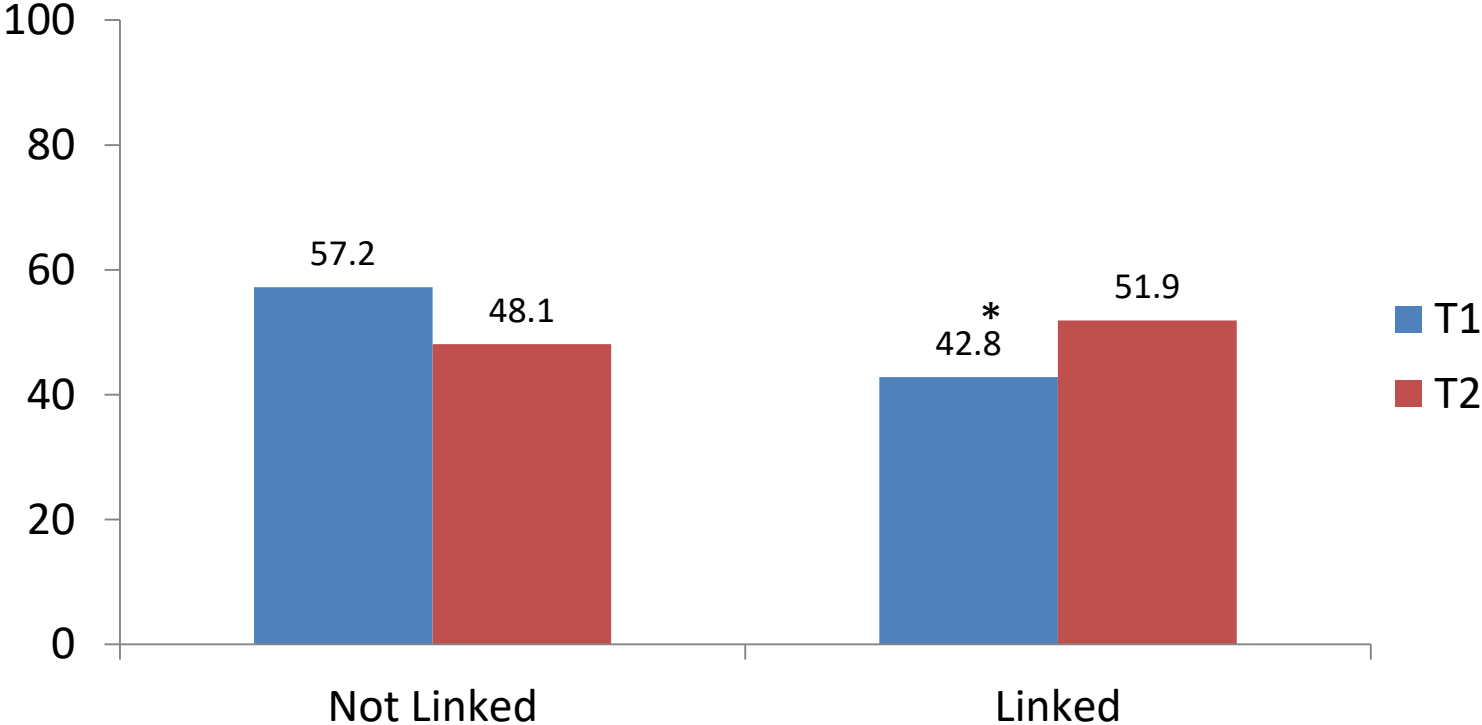
Completes Taxes: LWD - %



Program Outcomes - LWD

Connections:

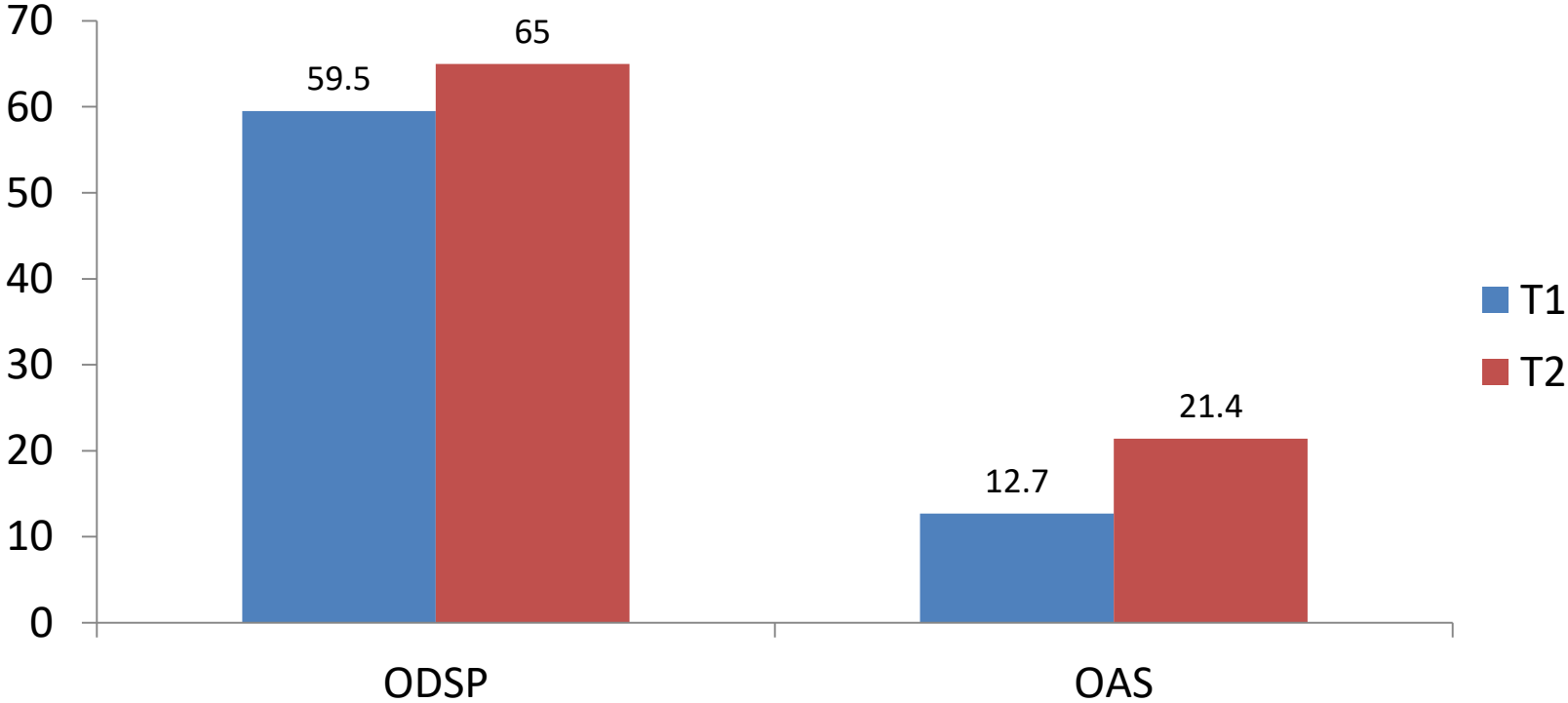
Linked to Additional Professional Supports/Services: LWD - %



Program Outcomes - LWD

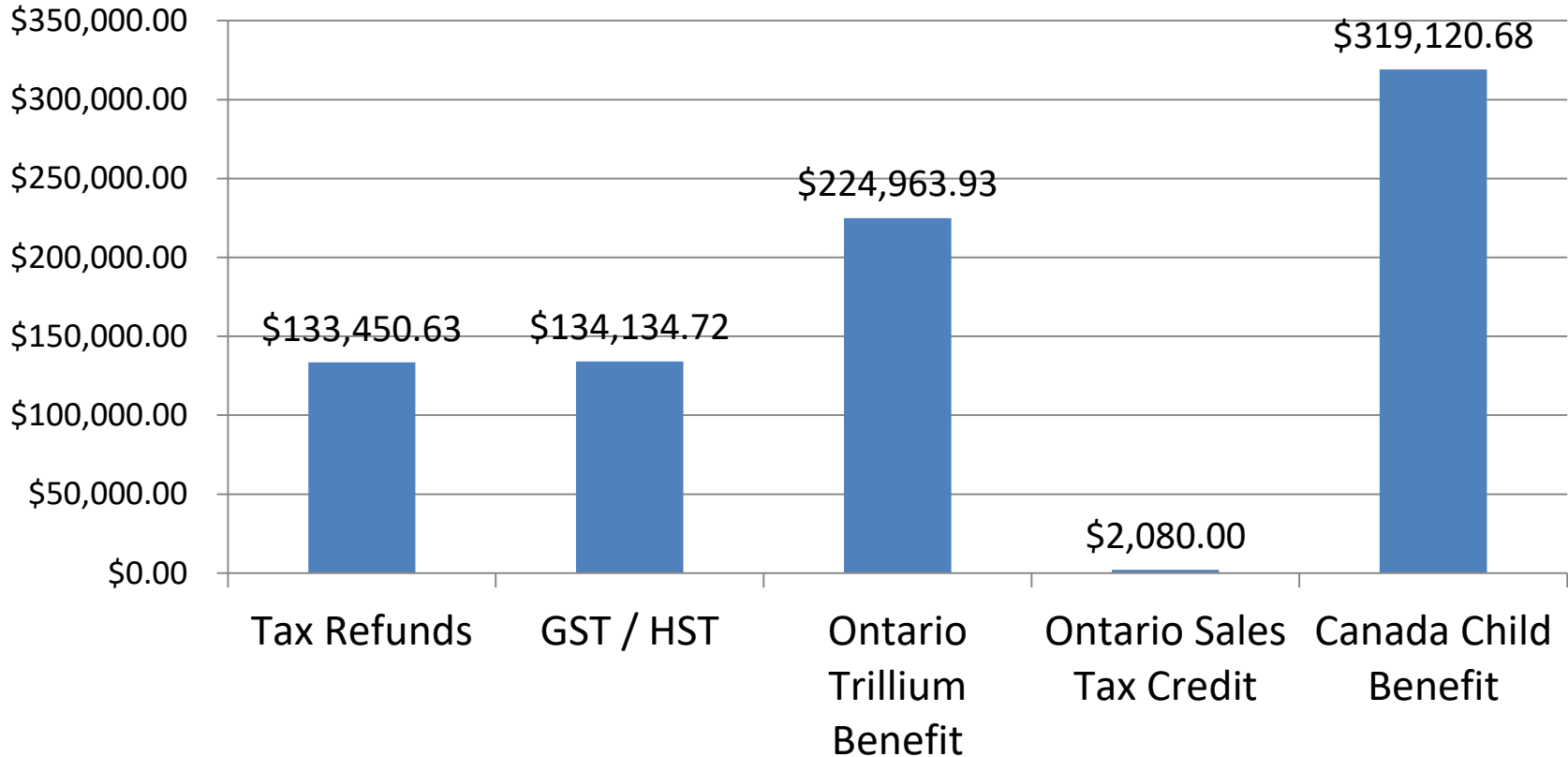
Connections:

Receipt of ODSP and OAS: LWD - %



Return on Investment for FEPS

FEPS 2019: \$813,749.96



The Pandemic and Poverty Reduction

- Without the transformation of our Poverty Reduction Program, we would have started the pandemic with approximately 500K less in funding – that was the amount we saved and were able to reinvest in frontline staffing – again not by serving fewer clients but by serving more clients and serving them differently.
- It also meant something equally invaluable: as an organization, our cultural attributes heading into the pandemic included an openness to doing things differently.

The Pandemic and Poverty Reduction



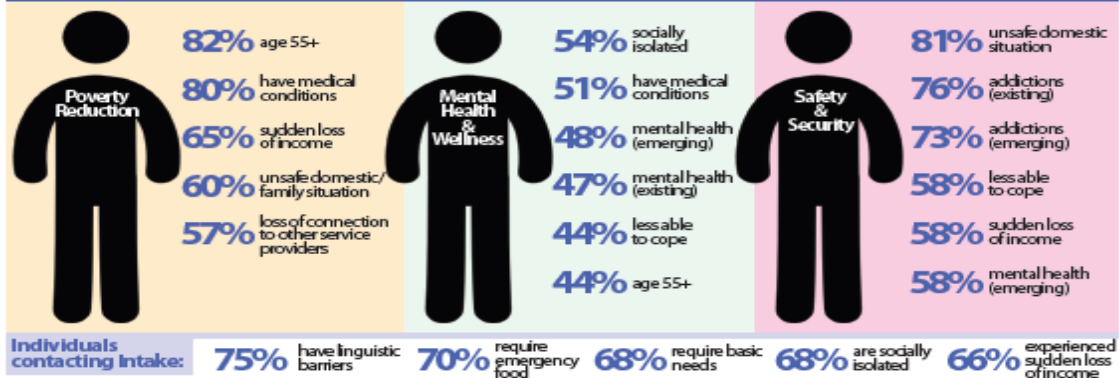
JF&CS Service Delivery Trends in Response to COVID-19: Snapshot #2 March 16, 2019 – July 15, 2020

For over 150 years, JF&CS has been responding to the ever-changing needs of its clients. In light of COVID-19, and especially its associated lockdown, vulnerable clients are facing new and increased vulnerabilities.

On March 16, 2020, JF&CS drastically shifted the way it conducted service as a result of COVID-19. Most of the workforce shifted to a work-from-home model, only conducting face-to-face client visits when it was essential. Most client interactions have taken place over the phone, email or online. When a shelter-in-place order was implemented provincially, all but essential services were shut down and the public found themselves isolating at home, with many people losing their sources of income. For JF&CS clients, some of whom experience a number of factors related to vulnerability, this meant a loss of face-to-face access to many of their supports and further their sense of isolation. This was even more difficult for those who lived alone and for those in unsafe domestic situations.

Many of our more vulnerable clients face a constellation of **stacked and concurrent needs**, that present barriers to positive outcomes and make their living situation more challenging.

JF&CS takes the view that all individuals have experienced increased vulnerability by virtue of going through the pandemic. However, the clients we serve typically have multiple and complex vulnerabilities. Below are the top areas of vulnerability within our three service streams:



Noteworthy results among our three service streams

Reducing the Effects of Poverty



Financial Assistance

The number of Financial Empowerment and Problem Solving cases has increased by **69%** from this time last year.*

The average number and length of interactions (i.e. phone calls, emails, zoom) for the Supplemental Financial Assistance Program are **higher** than this time last year.*

Food requisitions increased by **330%**

Average monthly income supplements have increased by **21%**

Holocaust Emergency Support

Average number of interactions increased by **36%** yet average amount of time spent per contact is still comparable to that spent this time last year.*

81 additional active cases during June/July 2020, compared to the same time in 2019.

Improving Mental Health & Wellness



Counselling

Intake calls have increased on average by **71%** compared to this time last year*, suggesting increased complexities faced by clients.

Increasing Safety & Security



Child Welfare

calls to intake have increased in length by **95%** from an average of: **16 minutes** prior to the pandemic, to **31 minutes** currently.

*The time comparisons are the four-month range of March 16 – July 15, 2019, compared to the four-month range of March 16 – July 15, 2020.

The Pandemic and Poverty Reduction

- So what are we doing?
- Well, first we've been very clear about our priorities. At JF&CS, right from the outset, our time, energy, resources were going to go into ensuring vulnerable people had their basic needs met. We were going to ensure people at risk of neglect, abuse, violence were protected. We were going to ensure our connections were strong to those who were alone, isolated, sick, dying, grieving.
- Vision and Mission critical – *A Resilient Community where Hope, Dignity and Humanity Thrive.*

The Pandemic and Poverty Reduction

- To do this we needed to be agile; to be willing to modify every program, to reallocate staff to where the greatest needs were.
- Nothing was off the table. Programs were modified. For example, we realized that we couldn't put people experiencing real anxiety and uncertainty on waiting lists for counseling so we developed a COVID-related single-session counseling program that had people seen by social workers right away.
- We adapted our group programming to address the Pandemic-related challenges people were facing.

The Pandemic and Poverty Reduction

- New partnerships were quickly developed to address needs we couldn't address alone. Housing partnerships; food preparation and delivery partnerships. In fact, at last count we'd entered into more than a dozen partnerships to address these two issues.
- The important lesson: we didn't get bogged down in the details or in endless committee meetings; we did this with a sense of urgency and a tolerance for some mistakes and redundancies we knew we could correct on the fly – as a senior team, we found ourselves saying, “I guess the worst thing that could happen is that someone who is very poor gets an extra meal.”

The Pandemic and Poverty Reduction

Caring for the Caregivers:

- The burden of responsibility faced by staff is significant as people experiencing the pandemic on two fronts.
- Daily communication – our primary message is that we care for one another.
- Staff surveys on coping; receiving and implementing feedback regarding the needs of staff.
- Regular online forums facilitated by experienced external clinicians; one for frontline staff and one for managers; so both groups would have a safe space to share their feelings, fears, anxieties, problem-solve and support one another.

The Pandemic and Poverty Reduction

- Completed our Strategic Plan in January 2020 and less than a year later the world changed.
- So it was back to the drawing board – time to review, revise, rewrite and re-envision that Plan to help guide us over the next year and a half during the pandemic and, hopefully, recovery.
- Emerging priorities that were never considered before the pandemic needed to be included.
- It may seem counter-intuitive during what is essentially a crisis to engage in this sort of planning – but once the initial frantic part of the pandemic receded, the agency was ready and able to put its collective energy into this
- Armed with the knowledge of, and data from, the past four months, what better way to remind and reinforce for ourselves and our community the guiding principles upon which we'll be making decisions and planning during, and coming out of, the pandemic.

Questions/Comments

