The Hidden Homeless

GREENSBORO, NC

SPARC
Single Parent Alliance & Resource Center

United Way of Greater Atlanta®

Georgia State University

ANDREW YOUNG SCHOOL OF POLICY STUDIES

A story

Janice's story:

Once you're in the hotel you're stuck. There's no way out because you can't save up enough money to get out because the hotel takes all you have. The rent is so high that it leaves you with nothing to live on for the rest of the month because you have to make sure that you're paying your room or you're gonna get kicked out and be homeless on the street. So you have to give them all your money that you get and so once you're in the hotels, it's hard to get out.

Janice
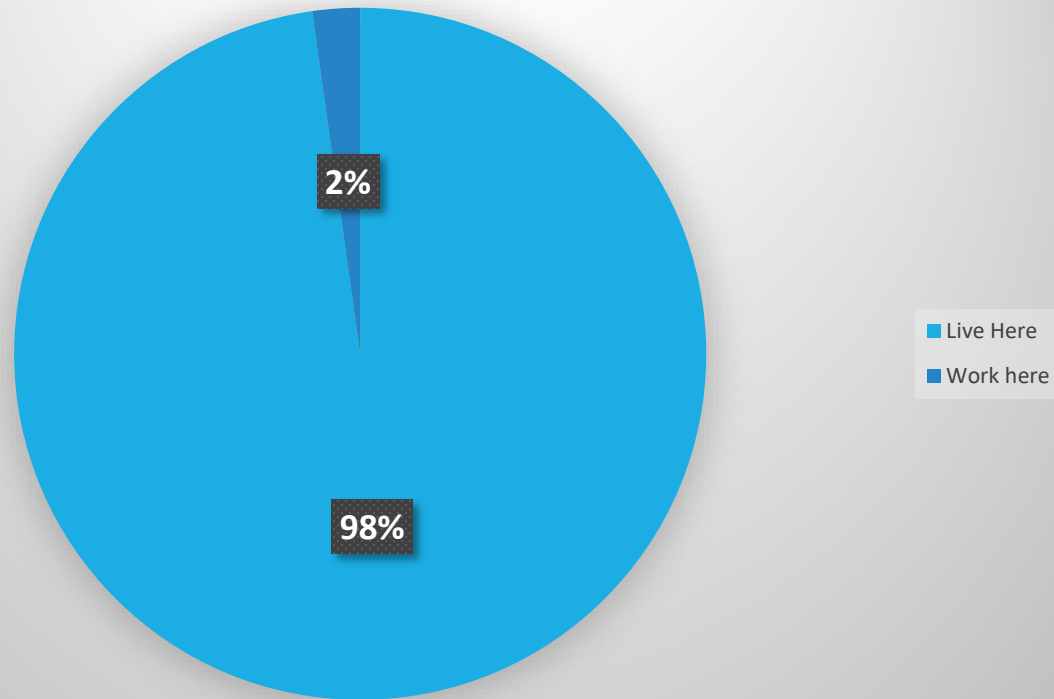
Where are these hotels?

Food deserts

Highways

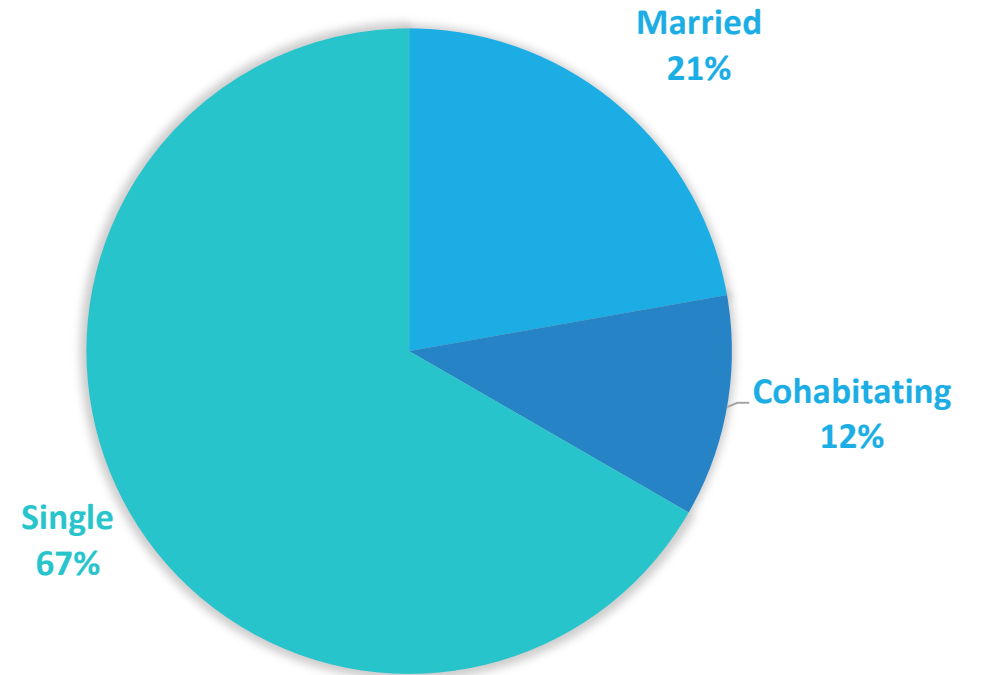Convenience stores

Adult entertainment stores

Who are these families?

Residential Status

- 2%
- 98%

Live Here
Work here

MARITAL STATUS

Married 21%

Cohabitating 12%

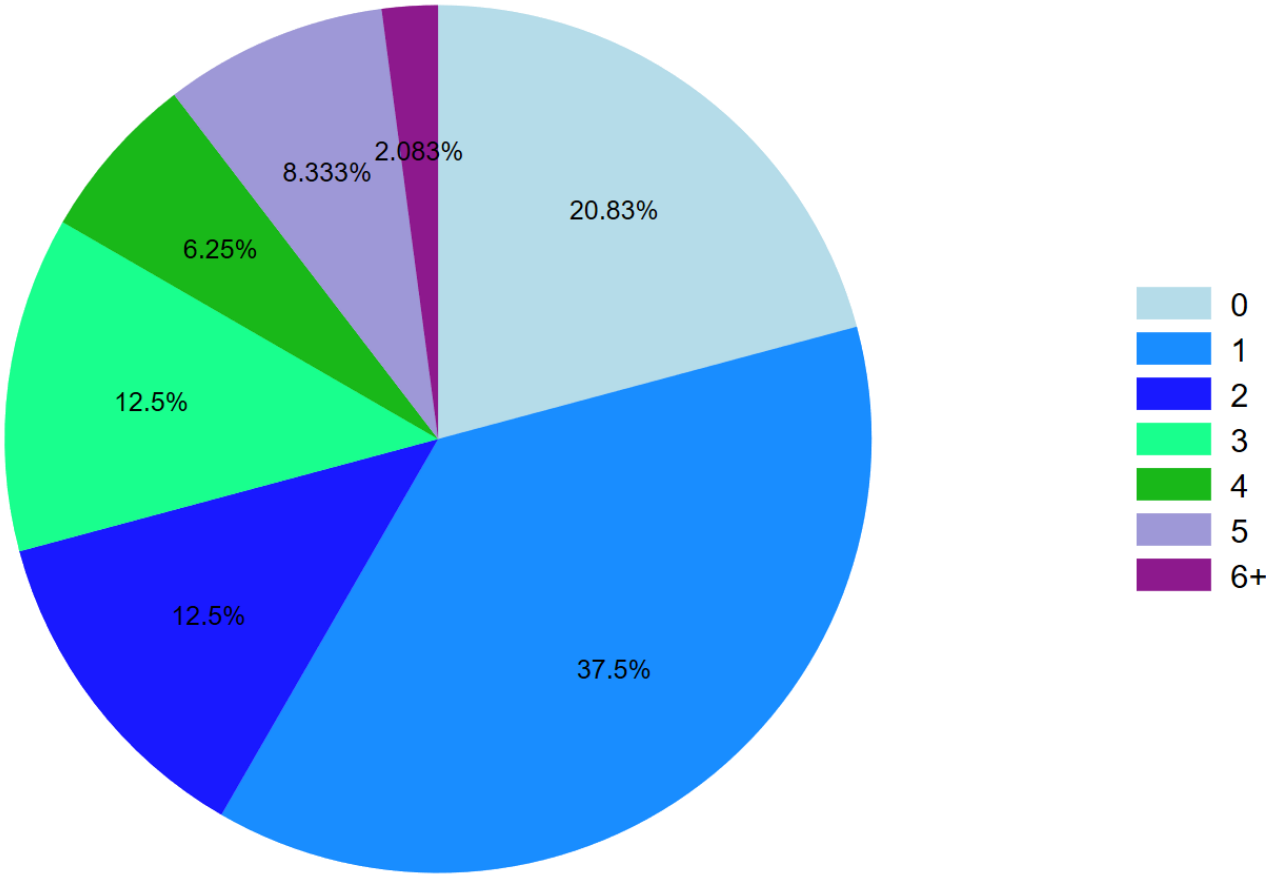Single 67%

Demographics

83% female

73% African American/25% Caucasian/2% Latino

21% are married/79% single

48% are between 25 and 35 years old/27% are between 36 and 50
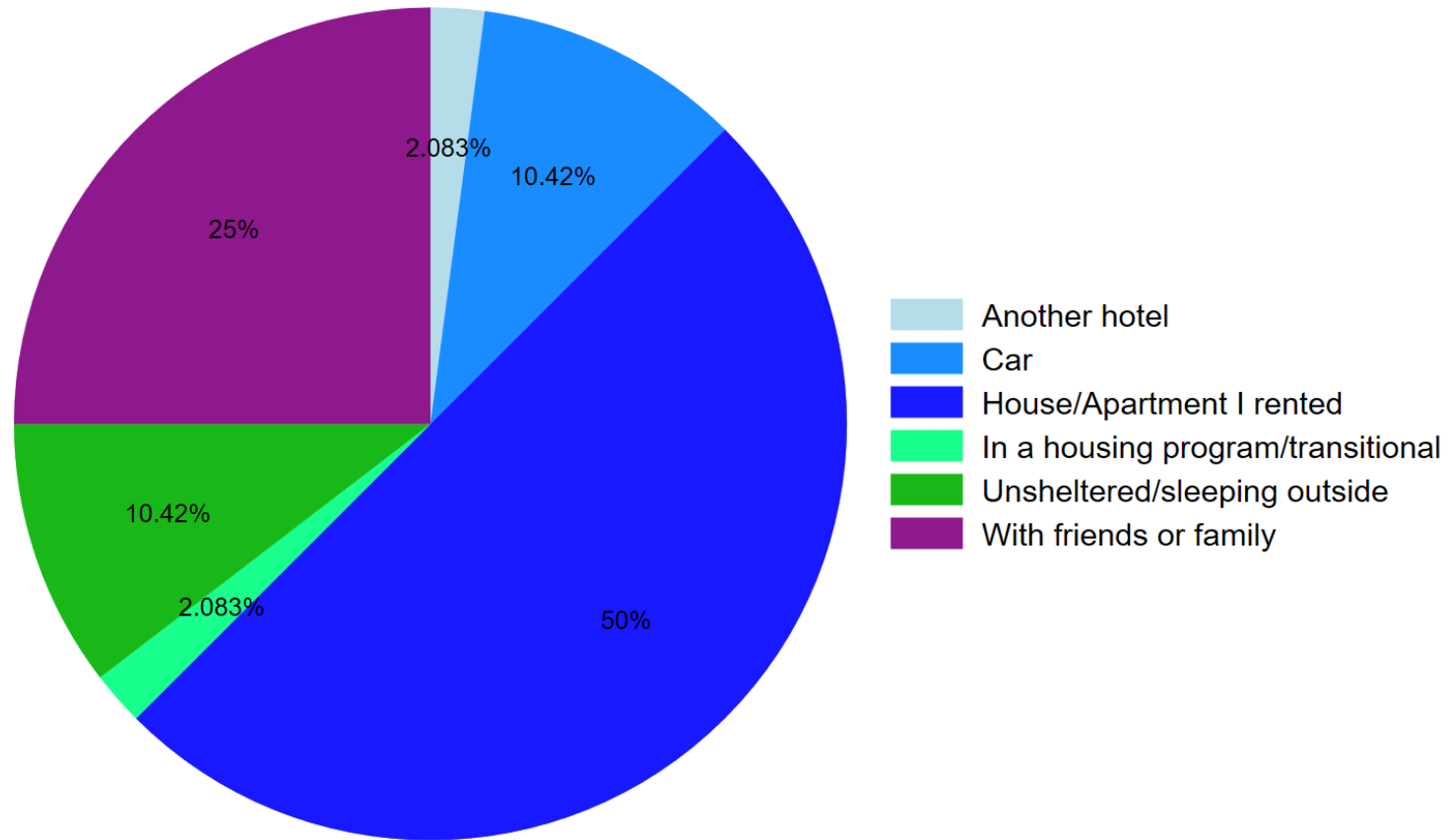
How many children are in these rooms?

In their own words...

Yeah, because this place is pretty bad for us to live in because when I be out here playing around, I find bullet shells, so...   Since it's bad out here, when I grow up, I want to be a police officer so I could like protect her. So she doesn't have to worry about anything. Or a soldier because a soldier has a heavier weapon than a police officer. A police officer has a pistol. They carry bigger weapons.
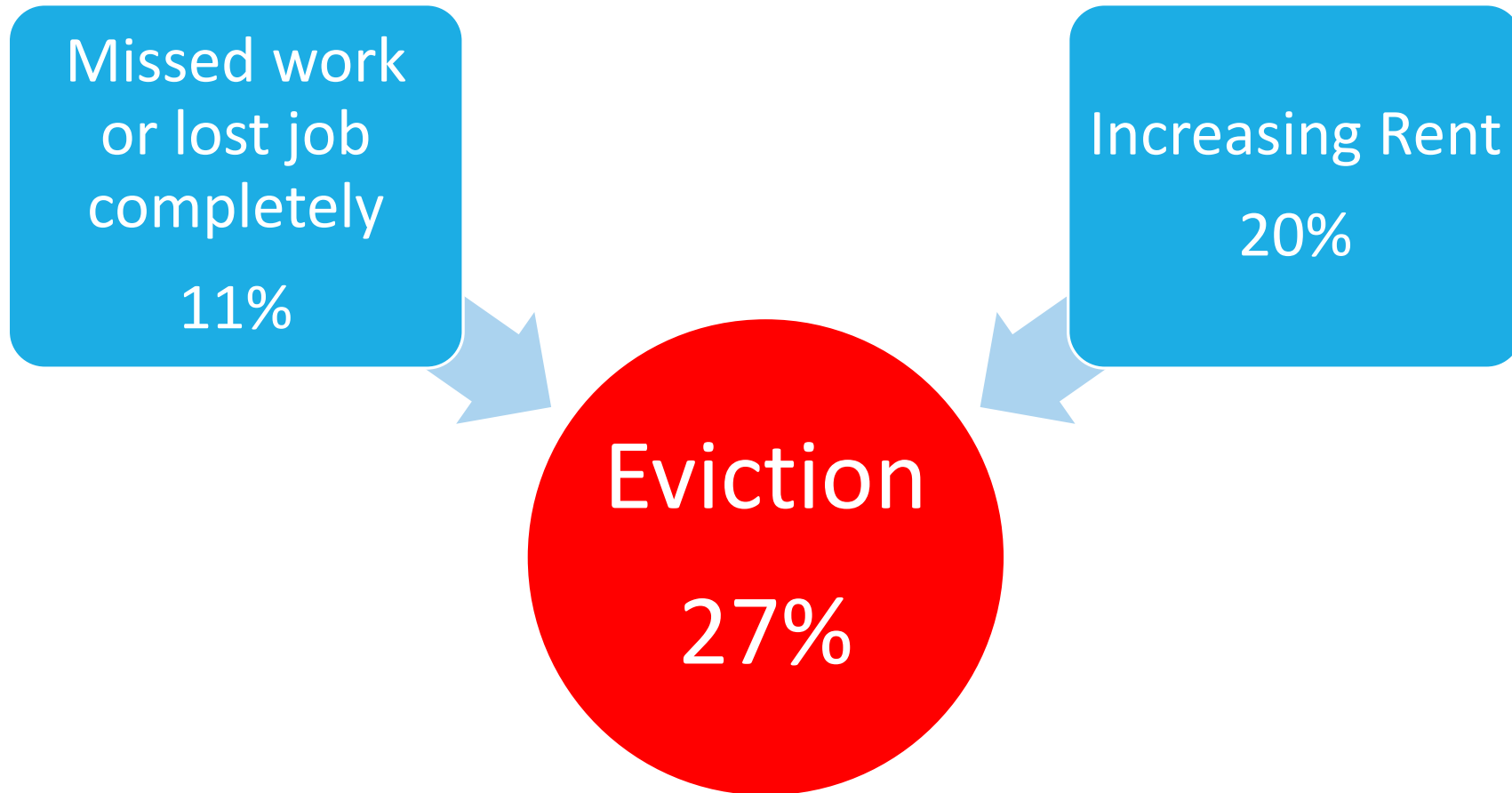
Janice's son: 9 years old

Where did the families come from?

Pie chart legend:
- Another hotel
- Car
- House/Apartment I rented
- In a housing program/transitional
- Unsheltered/sleeping outside
- With friends or family

Chart values: 2.083%, 10.42%, 25%, 50%, 2.083%, 10.42%

Why are they there?

Missed work or lost job completely

11%

Increasing Rent

20%

Eviction

27%

Other Reasons

Domestic violence: 9%

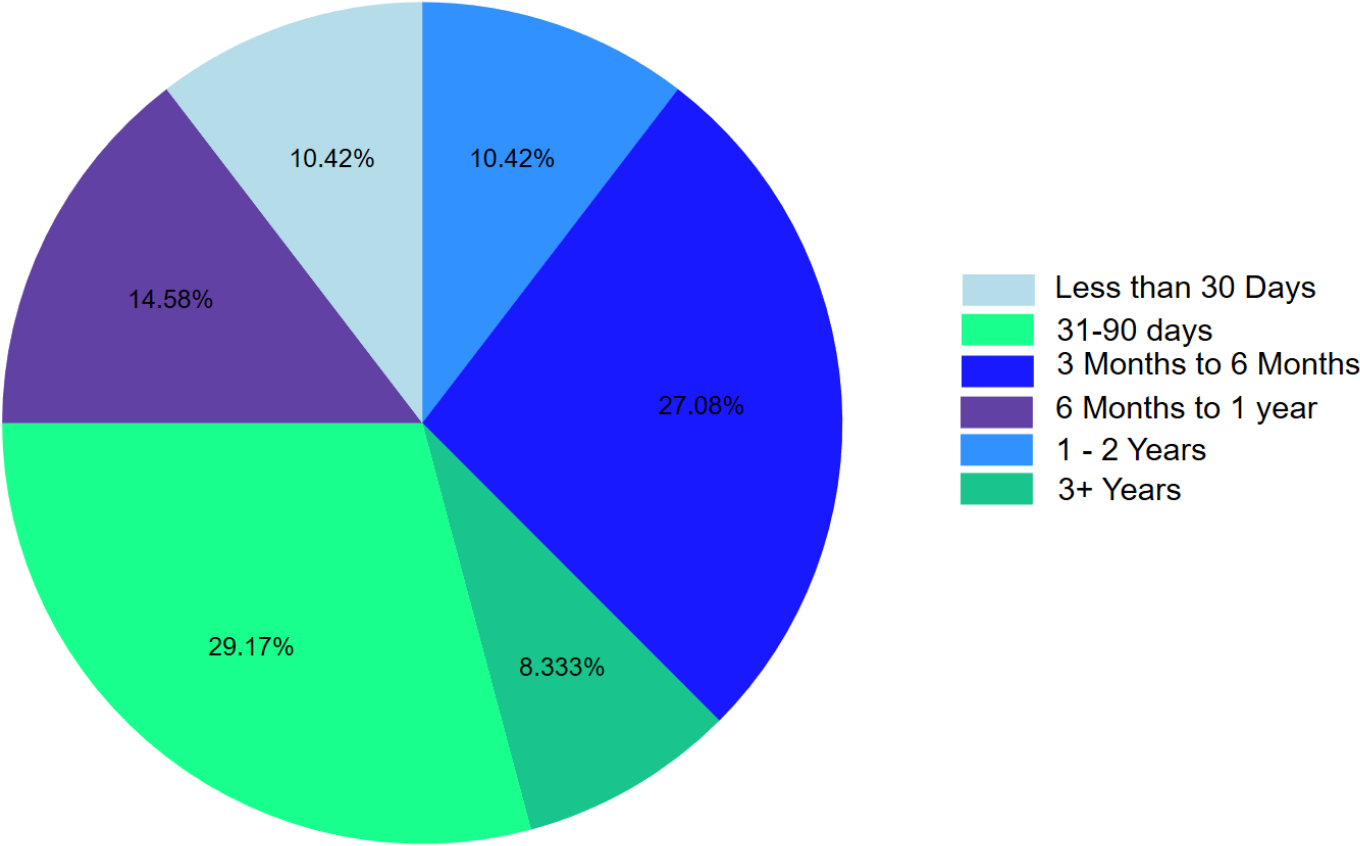Relocated to find work: 9%

Divorce/separation: 4%

Criminal Background: 2%

Landlord lost/sold the house: 4%
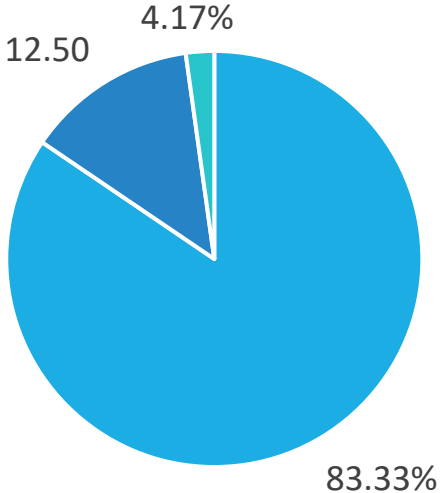
Family issues: 9%

Other: 5%
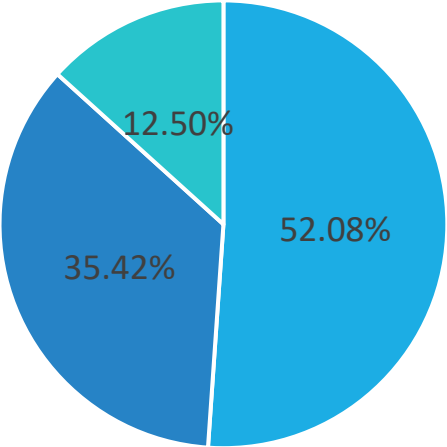
How long have they been there?

How are they doing?

Stress

83.33%

12.50

4.17%

- It has increased
- It has stayed the same
- I have not checked

Physical Health

52.08%

35.42%

12.50%

- it has gotten worse
- It has stayed the same
- I have not checked

How are they doing?

31% of parents report a decline in their child's academics

26% of parents report 1-2 school changes in the last 2 years for their child due to motel transience. 5% report 4 or more school changes in the last 2 years.
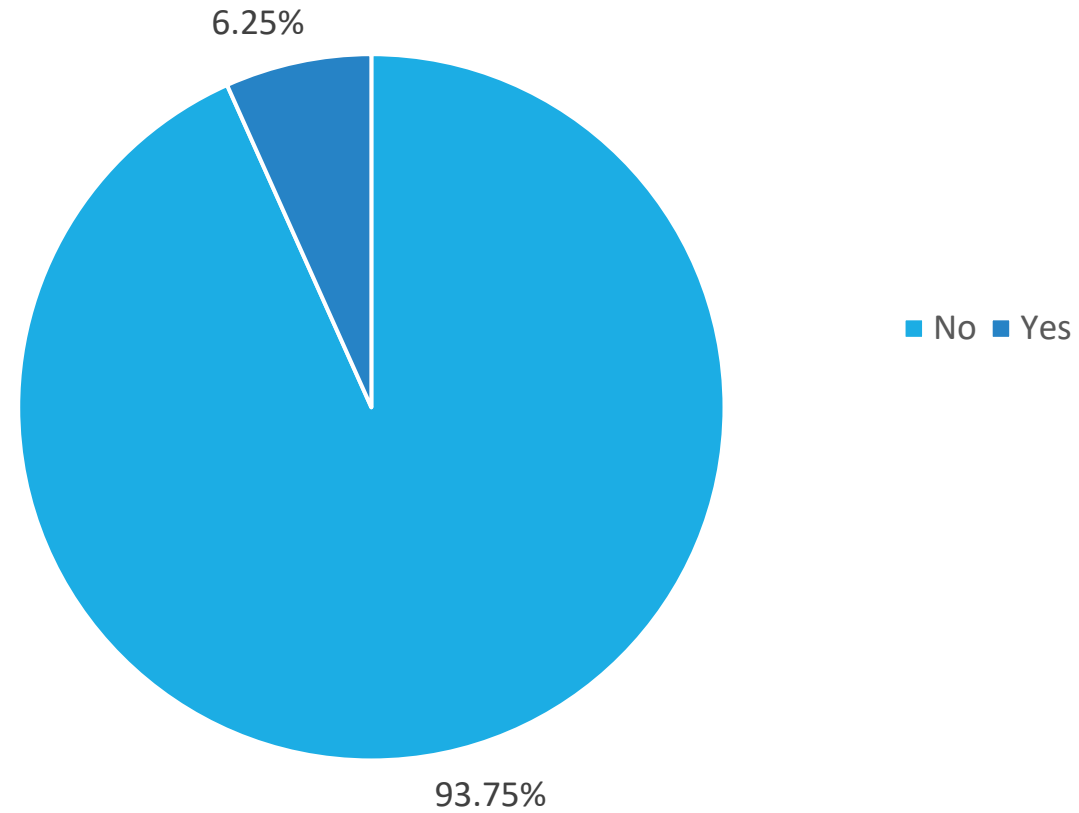
Their Stories

Rayleen is a single mom of 3. She fled a violent and abusive relationship. She has applied for childcare assistance but was told she does not qualify because she does not have a job. She is unable to find a job because she does not have childcare for her 2 year old daughter. She went to a local church for help and they called DFACS because her children are not enrolled in school. She has not enrolled them because she is unsure where she will be from one day to the next. She now has an active DFACS case and fears her children will be taken from her.

She pays $80 per day at the motel she currently lives in. Afraid to ask for help again from an agency, every morning she walks up to the gas station to ask strangers to help her pay for her room. When she is not successful, she and her children sleep in the park.

Outside Financial Assistance?

Can they move?

54% report full time employment

16% report full time and part time employment

13% report 2 full time jobs

20% receive SNAP benefits

Only 16% report they do not have a HS diploma/GED

*NO PARTIAL PAYMENT

*PAYMENTS BY 6PM OR A LATE FEE WILL BE ADDED

*NO VISITORS AFTER 9PM

*NO WEAPONS ALLOWED

*NO ILLEGAL DRUGS

*NO SOLICITING

*ROOM INSPECTIONS ON SUNDAYS AND WEDNESDAY
*ROOMS MUST BE KEPT UP CLEAN

*FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT TO CHECKING OUT

NO EXCEPTION

True Barriers

Low credit score: 39%

52% self report a credit score between 500 and 600

23% report 400-500

2% report 300 or below

Only 14% report a credit score above 600

8% are unsure

True Barriers

Eviction: 27%

Income does not meet 3x rent threshold/not enough income
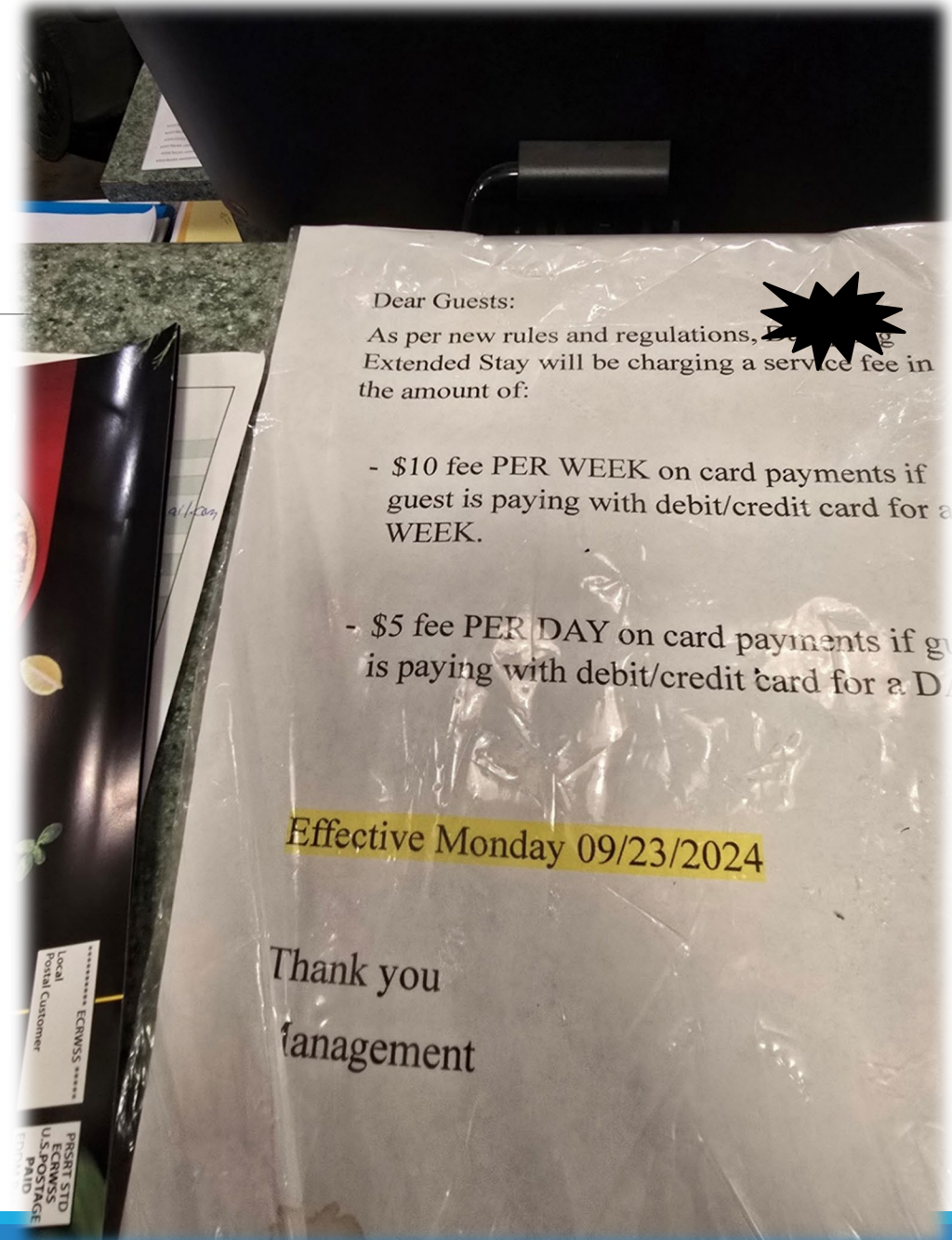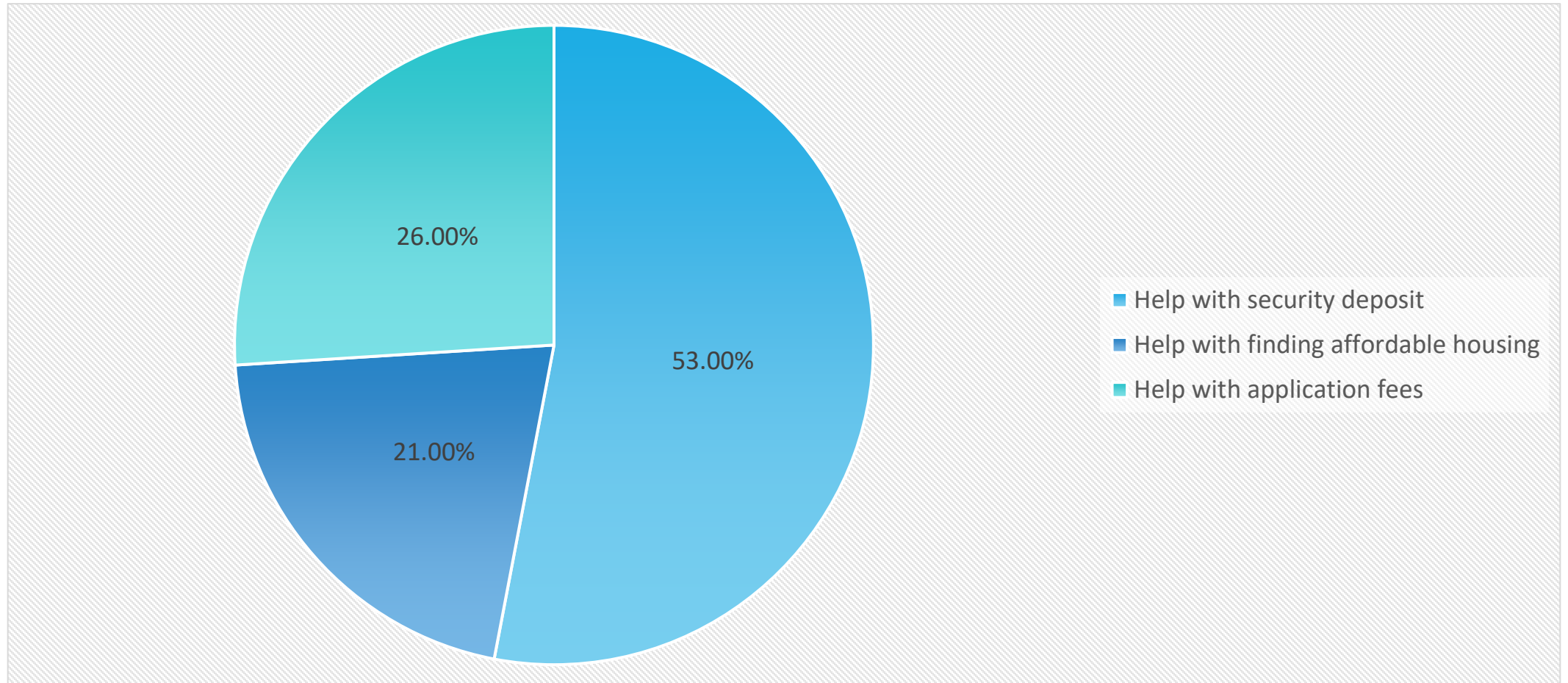
Lack of affordable housing

More Barriers

50% report they do not have reliable transportation

Hotels are too expensive

65% cannot afford child care

What is the need?

- Help with security deposit
- Help with finding affordable housing
- Help with application fees
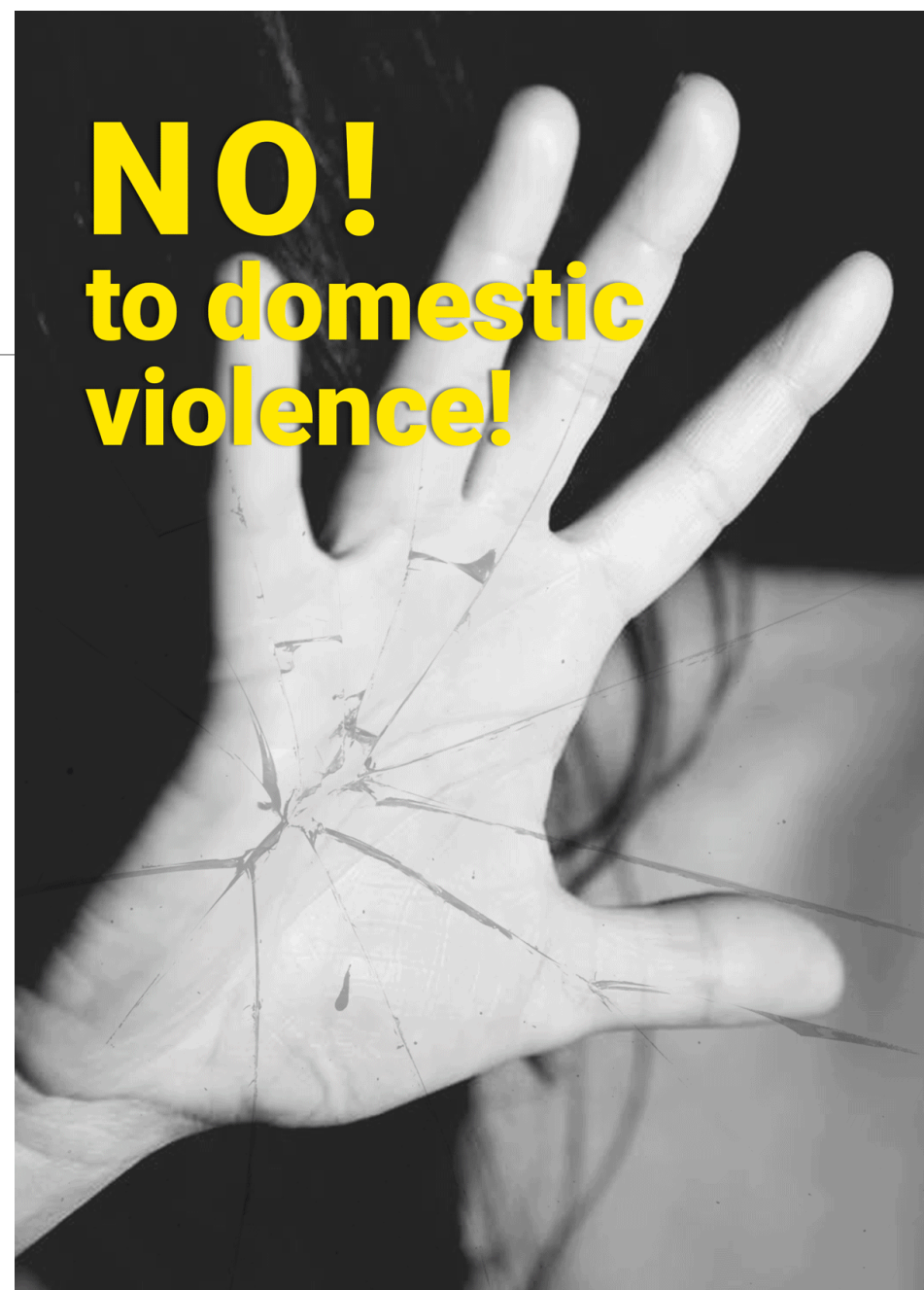
53.00%

21.00%

26.00%

In their own words

There needs to be more resources available especially for domestic violence. Maybe I should have stayed but everyone says leave him. Don't let him beat on you like that. But then what? Me and my kids are just out here now and there's no help. How come the government has the power to take your kids but don't have resources to help you keep them?
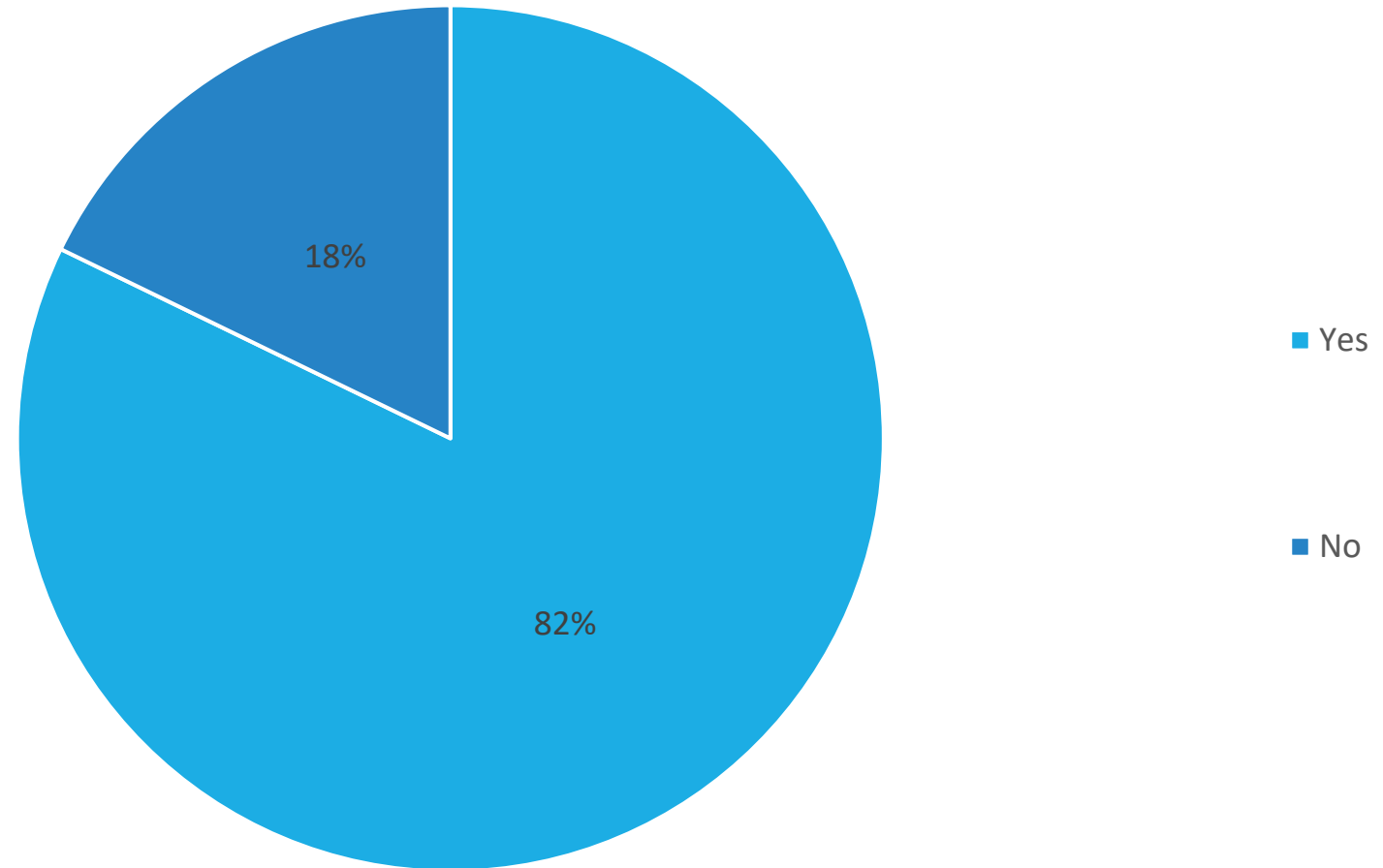
Domestic Violence Survivor

Can they sustain?

If someone paid your security deposit and first month's rent, could you sustain your rent payments going forward without assistance?

82%

18%

- Yes
- No

Hotel Cost/Amenities/Practices

$82/day

$275-$700 per week

Cash only

Junk fees

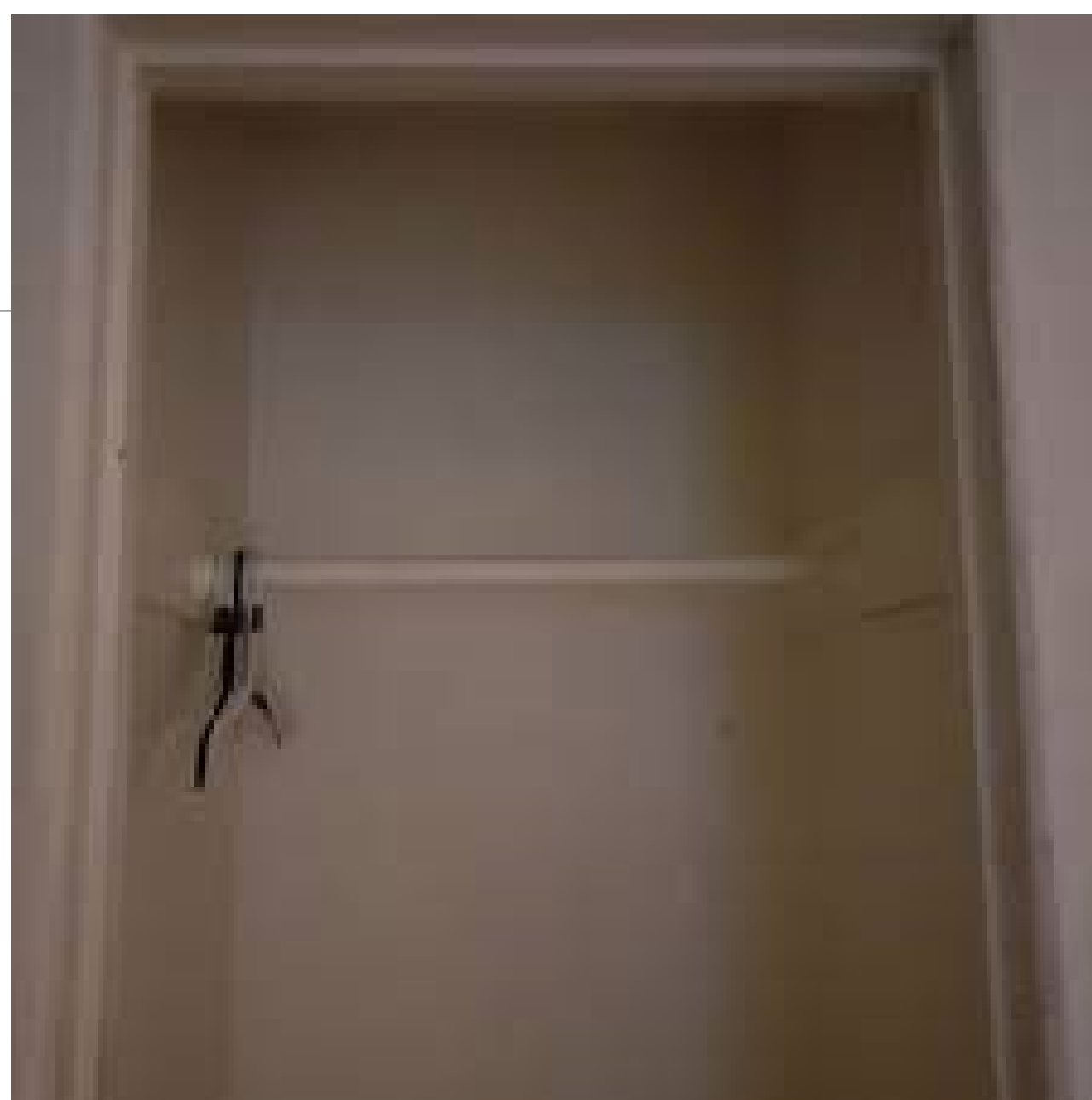Illegal evictions

Unsanitary conditions

Violence

Housing vs Hotel

In their own words

We fight that feeling of defeat every day. Both of us go to work and we still can't come up out of this. Get a job. Go to work. And we do. Every day and we are still failing. Do you know how embarrassing it is that my 9 year old son can't even have friends over? We can't have any company. No one is allowed here unless they live here. My sister can't even come to visit. And the holidays are the worst. I have to put a tree up and try to make it feel like something in here but do you know how it feels to put a Christmas tree up in a closet?
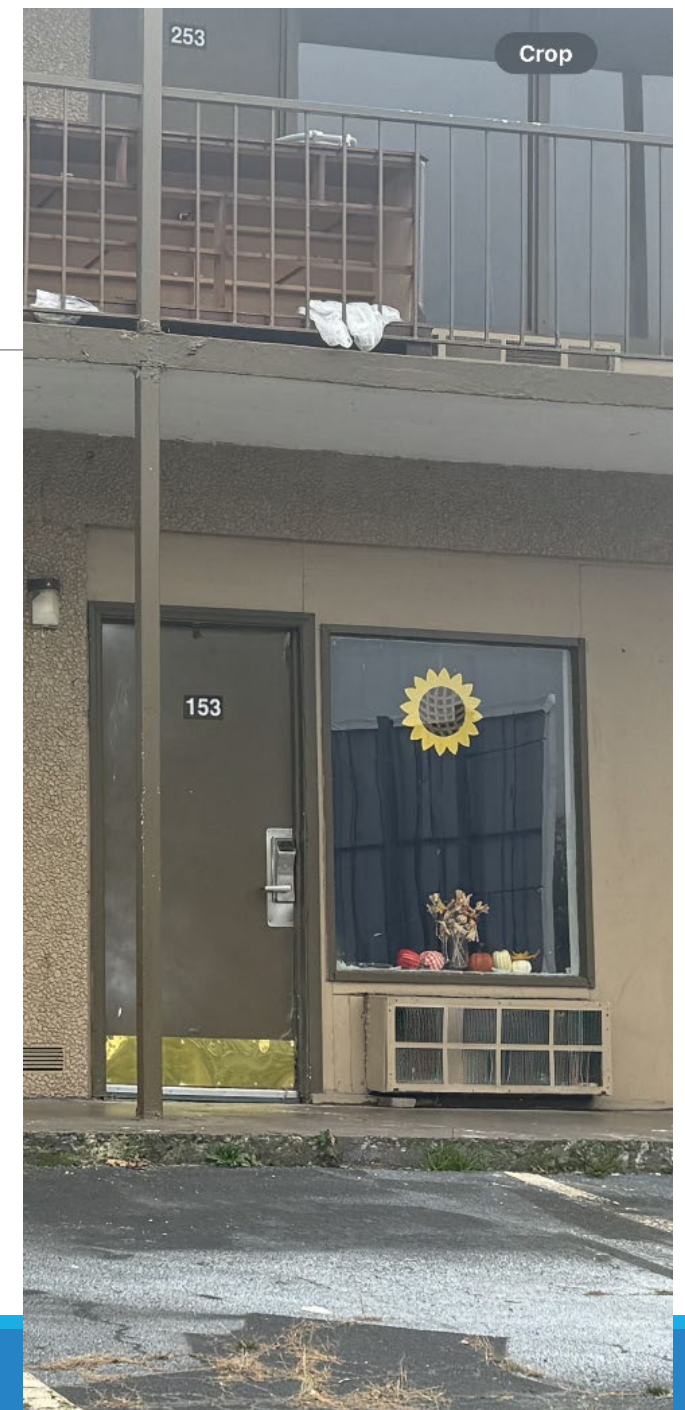
Dohoney

The psychology of hope

Street homeless vs Motel families

The Motel to Home Model and why it works

Beyond the Scope of One Policy

50% report transitioning from housing their either rented or owned external housing

Implies additional 50% are coming from a different transient situation

Respondents coming from permanent housing:
◦ 50% more likely to report their child's academic performance staying the same or worsening

Respondents coming from other transient housing:
◦ 20.8% more likely to report their child's academic performance improving

Respondents coming from different situations are likely to experience living in hotels differently and likely need different policies to support them