



Justice Center

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

SYSTEMS IN CRISIS: REVAMPING THE JUVENILE JUSTICE WORKFORCE AND CORE STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC SAFETY AND YOUTH OUTCOMES

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It's more important to focus on juvenile justice system improvements and effectiveness than anytime in the last 30 years.



Rise in concerns about youth crime and violence not seen since mid-90s leading to increased politicization of and push back on reform and risk aversion/use of incarceration.



Rise in adolescent loneliness, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and in some locales, serious substance use, increasing the need for appropriate and effective services.



Staffing crisis within public agencies and service providers, as well as increasing budget pressures, make it critical to use limited resources efficiently.

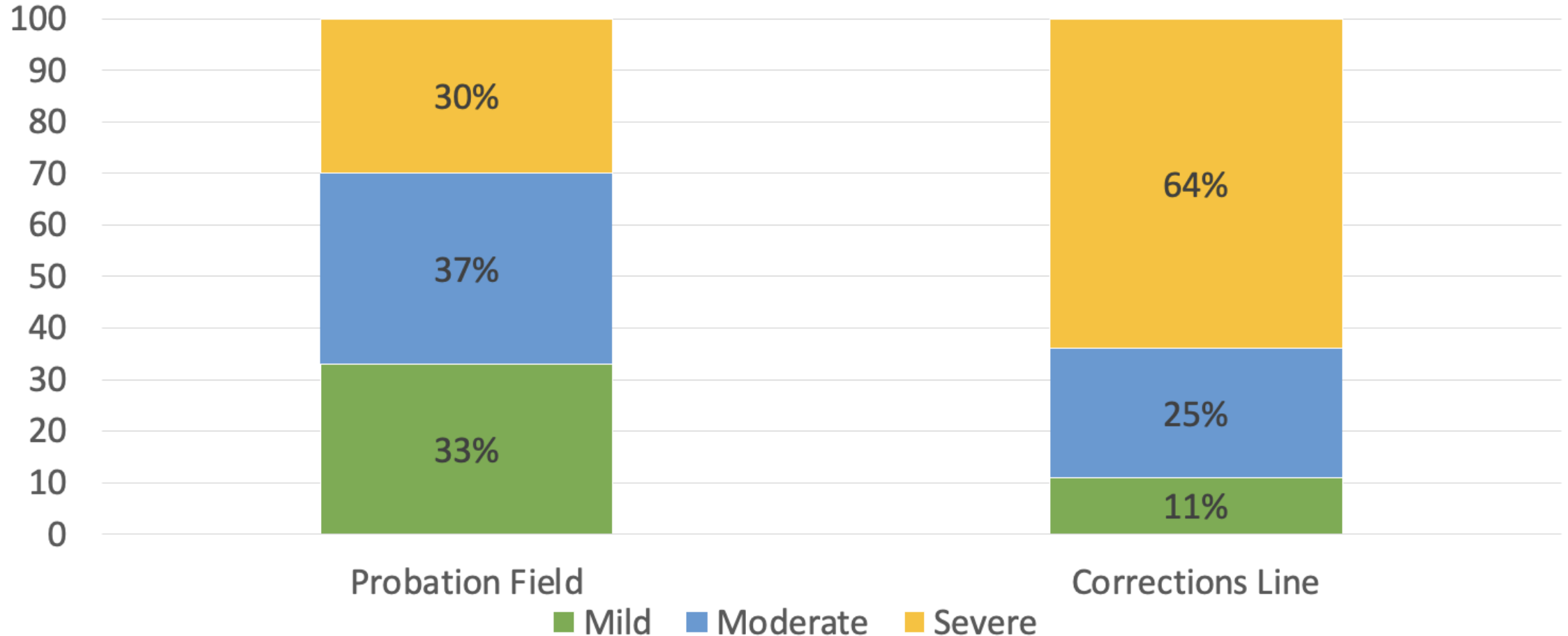


Due to the above, increased tensions among youth and family service systems, justice stakeholders, and families and communities are complicating collaborative, cohesive reforms.

Key Finding 1: Front-line staff hiring and retention challenges are severe and multifaceted nationwide.

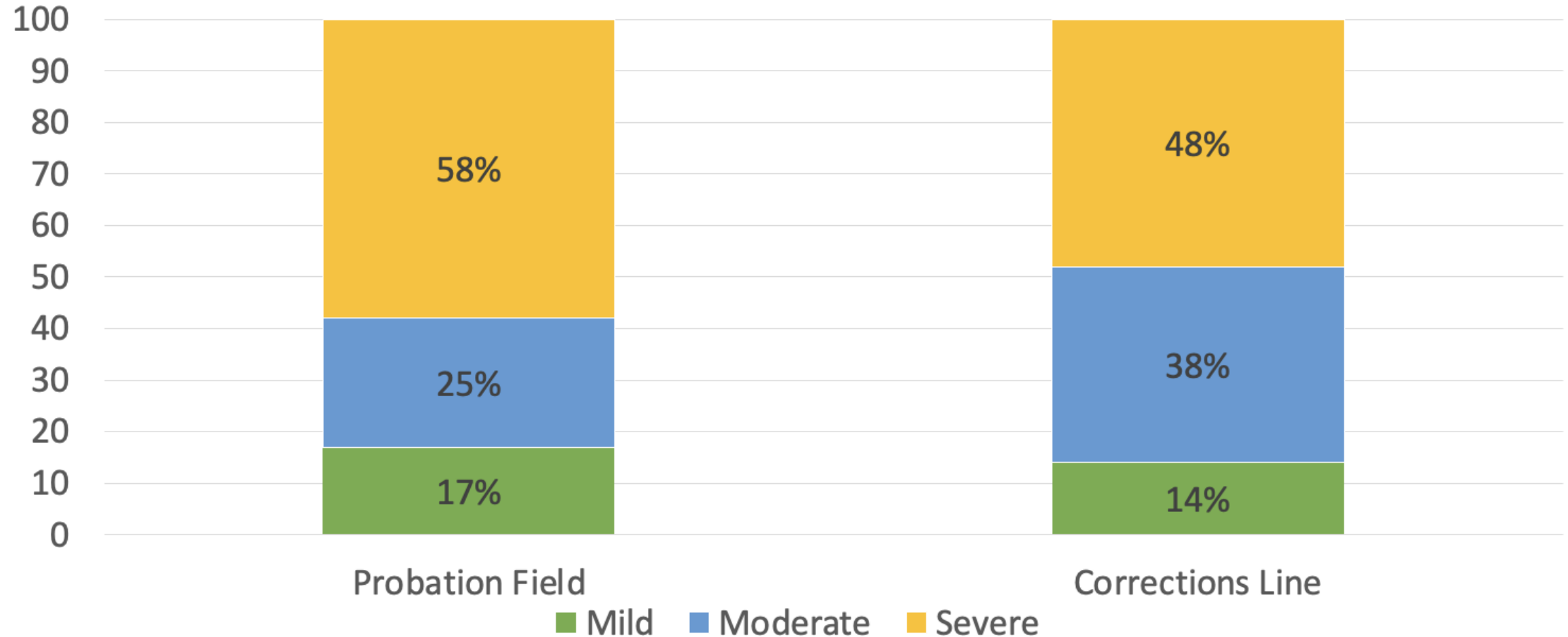
Staffing hiring challenges are severe across agency types, particularly for state and local correctional agencies.

Severity of Staff Hiring Challenges by Agency Type



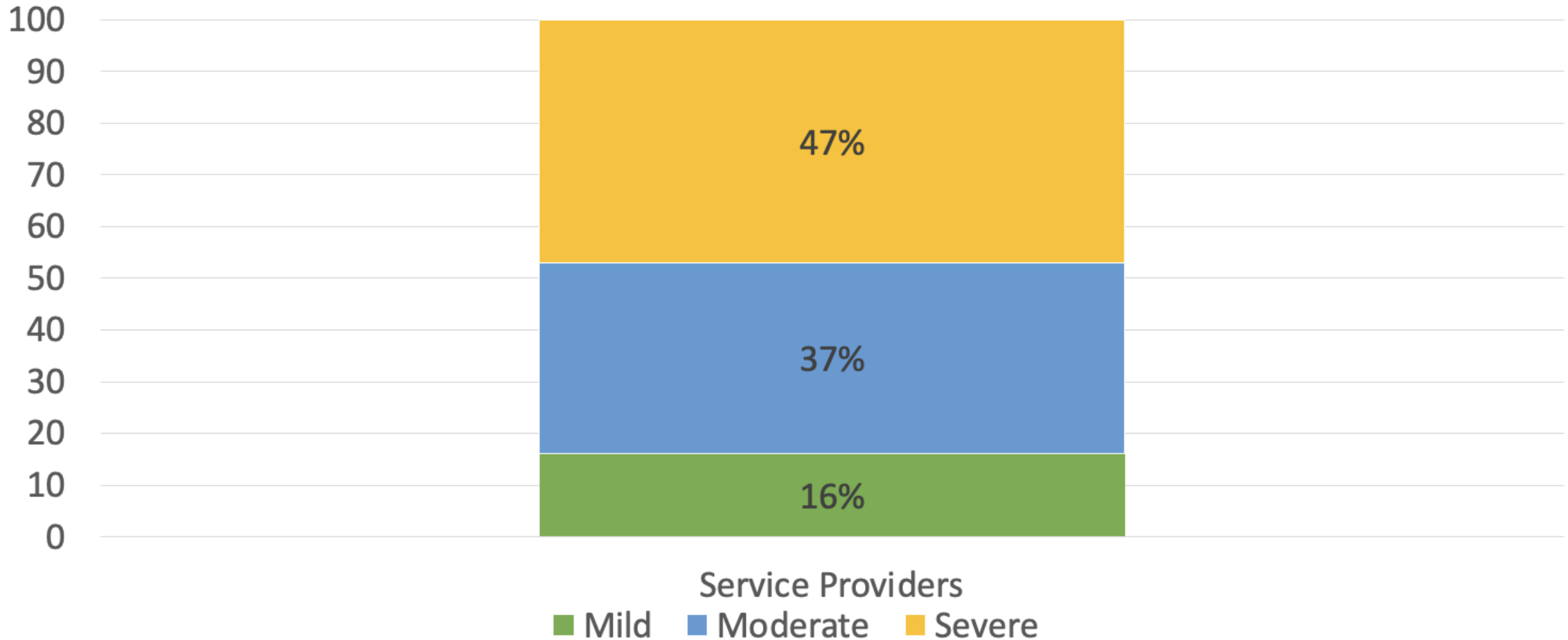
Staffing retention challenges are even more significant across all agency types.

Severity of Staff Retention Challenges by Agency Type

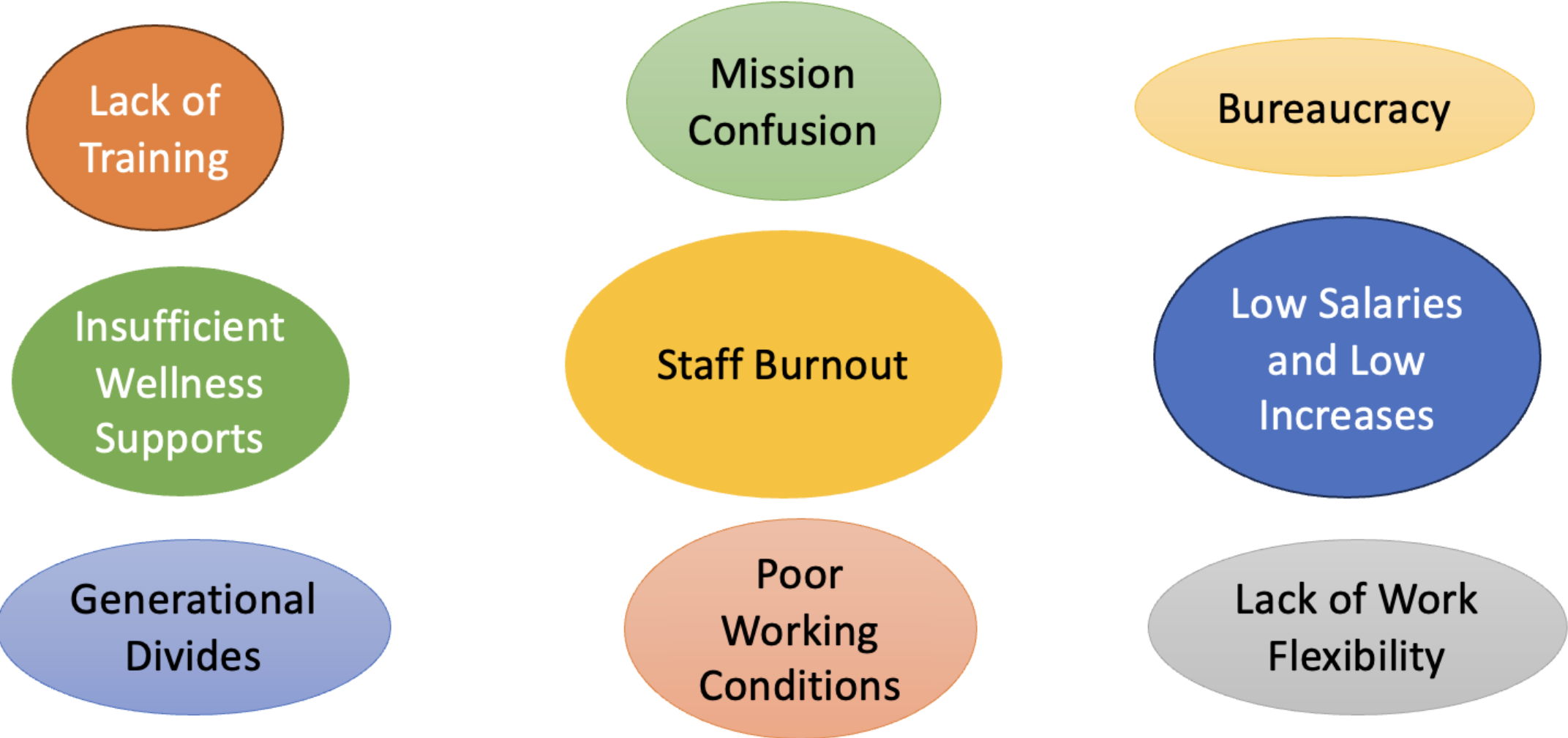


Almost 85 percent of agencies report that their service providers are experiencing moderate or severe staffing challenges as well.

Severity of Service Provider Staffing Challenges, All Agencies



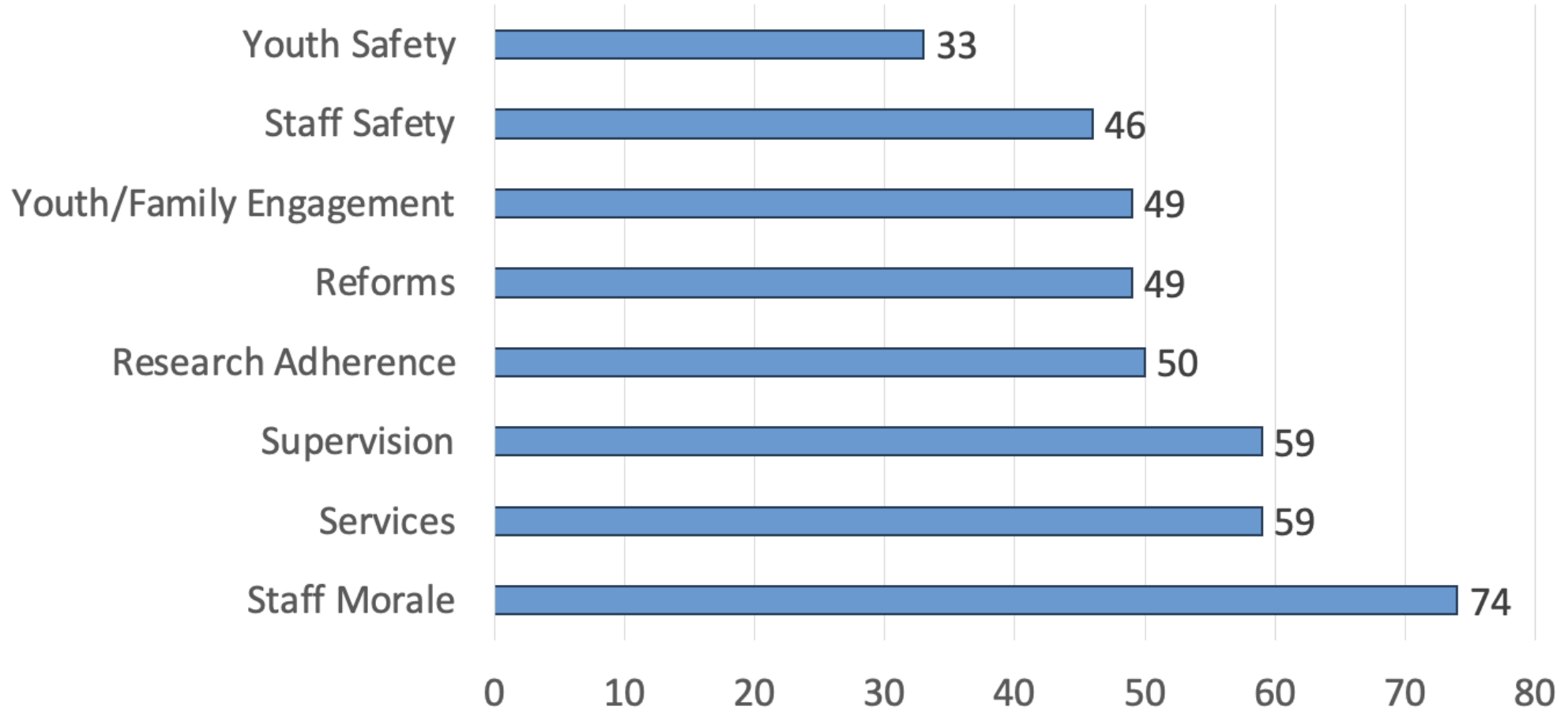
Numerous reasons were cited for staffing challenges related to compensation, working conditions, and staff wellness.



Key Finding 2: The impact of staffing challenges is significant and far-reaching.

Staffing challenges impact all aspects of agency operations, supervision, and service delivery.

Moderate/Severe Impact of Staffing Challenges, All Agencies



Key Finding 3: Jurisdictions don't know what works and don't have a comprehensive plan or strategy to address their staffing challenges.

Jurisdictions lack a comprehensive strategy to address the staffing crisis in either the short or long term.

62% agree or strongly agree that state leaders are aware of their staffing challenges.

<10% agree or strongly agree that “our state has a clear strategy to address these staffing challenges.”

Jurisdictions have not employed a diverse array of strategies and are unsure about their effectiveness.

- ✓ **Shift/Remote Work Flexibility**
- ✓ **Team Building/Morale/Wellness Activities**
- **Annual Salary Increases**
- **Increasing Starting Salaries/Other Financial Incentives**
- **Caseload Reconfiguration**
- **Cohort Hiring**
- **Improving Safety/Working Conditions**
- **Reducing Hiring Barriers/Changing Qualifications/Credible Messengers**
- **Partnerships with Other Systems**
- **Internships/Credentialing Programs**
- **Expanding Professional Development**

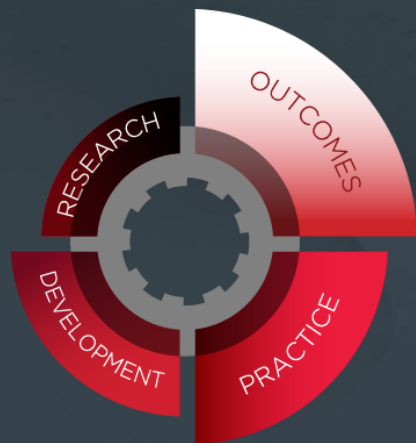
Key Implications of Survey Findings

1. Staffing challenges are not new for juvenile justice agencies, but the current challenges are more severe, widespread, and systemic due to broader workforce changes and changing nature and perceptions of the juvenile justice system.
2. Staffing challenges both reveal and exacerbate the underlying fragility of the supervision, service, and residential system in many locales and highlight the need for workforce and broader system transformation.
3. Jurisdictions need to develop and implement a comprehensive approach to mitigate the current crisis while planning to hire and retain a more effective and sustainable workforce for the future.



UCCI:

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI
CORRECTIONS INSTITUTE



UCCI

University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute (UCCI) translates research into practice by conducting research on correctional interventions, developing evidence-informed and evidence-based tools, and providing training and technical assistance to professionals working with justice-involved populations.

UCCI is housed in the School of Criminal Justice in the College of Education, Criminal Justice, Human Services, and Information Technology (CECH) at the University of Cincinnati (UC).

Background

- Not an entirely new problem
- Exacerbated in the years since the COVID-19 pandemic

Methodology: Listening Sessions

- Held in person and virtually
- Jan–May 2023
- Probation, parole, residential, and institution staff

Methodology: Literature Review

- Reviewed research across multiple fields
- Examined recruitment, hiring, and retention

Key Finding 1: Current Staffing Strategies in Use

Key Finding 2: Research on Best Practices

Key Implications from Listening Sessions and Literature Review

- Engage corrections professionals in the process to determine how to recruit, hire, and retain a more effective and sustainable workforce for the future.
- Rely on research-driven strategies to reinvent juvenile justice and the necessary workforce.