

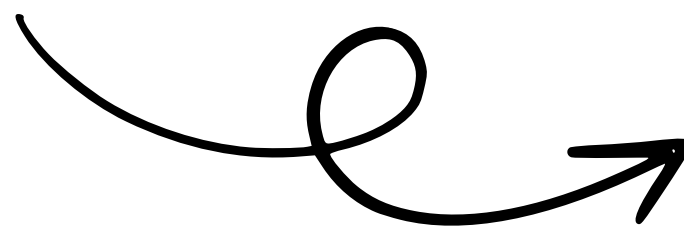
*Statewide Convening 2026*



LINKAGES<sup>2.0</sup>  
*Building Bridges for Families.*

# Vote for Tomorrow's Breakout Topics!

The top 4 will be tomorrow's breakout themes!



# Take A Moment: Merlot Room

- What is Linkages? What problems is Linkages solving?
- How has working with Linkages improved collaboration between CalWORKs and Child Welfare?
- How have you seen Linkages make a difference for families in ways that weren't there before?



# Best Planning Team Ever!

Calaveras: **Margo Ilonummi**

Placer: **Luz Flores & Vanessa Cardenas**

Riverside: **Felix Minares, Erika Pena & Collette**

**Crawford**

Shasta: **Katie Mendenhall**

Tulare: **Allison Hendrix, Lisa Diego, Aleyda**

**Montenegro**

Los Angeles: **Gloria Rojas Jakini, Ariadna**

**Cervantes-Lopez, Rafela Vargas, Alexis Glenn,**

**Charisse Pilar, Daniel Cedas**

Lake: **Aranza Ambriz, Brittny Sutton, Barbara Dwyer**

Orange: **Jacqueline Jiminez**

San Mateo: **Jennifer Valencia**

Santa Clara: **Lolita Castillo**

Marin: **Janet Mercado**

Merced: **Rashanna Johnson**

CalAcademy: **Jenna Nevitt, Anita Sanchez, Kimberly**

**Thompson-Smith**

*With special thanks to the CFP®C Linkages Team!*

*Thank you, Danna!*



# Land Acknowledgement



# Labor Acknowledgement



*Welcome!*

**Juliet Cox**

CEO, CFPIC

**Carlos Marquez III**

Executive Director, CWDA



# California's Commitment to Families:

*A United Path Forward*



## **Lisa Witchey**

Branch Chief, CalWORKs & Family Resilience,  
Family Engagement & Empowerment Division,  
CDSS

## **Kelly Winston**

Bureau Chief, Safety & Early Intervention, CDSS

## **Roshena Duree**

Director, Self-Sufficiency Policy, CWDA

## **Diana Boyer**

Managing Director, Research & Policy Development,  
CWDA

# 3:00 PM: Workshops

**A1: Bridging Gaps: Lessons Learned from our Screening Tool Pilot**  
Brandywine

**A2: Reimagining Family Support: Where Transforming CalWORKs Meets Linkages**  
Folsom

**A3: Bridging Practice Across Systems: Using Vignettes to Support Child Welfare - CalWORKs Collaboration**  
Tahoe

**A4: Communication, Communication, Communication: Keeping Linkages Visible**  
Shasta A/B

**Regional Breakouts begin at 4:30 PM. Reception Tonight @ 5:30!**

*Welcome Back!*



# What does Building Bridges for Families mean to you?



## What is one exciting thing you learned yesterday?

Family voices inform the process

Mandated reporter to community supporter

Support should follow the person.

Focus on connectivity.

Hope

# Prevention

Linkages is spreading

Changes are coming

Collaboration is KEY

New emphasis on family choice in WTW

Linkages makes sense

# CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

## PREVENTION IN ACTION

Jennifer Marcelli

Linkages Program Director



# CERTIFICATE

OF APPRECIATION

BRIDGE BUILDER

Jennifer Marcelli

Linkages Program Director



# CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

## LEADERSHIP IN LINKAGES

Jennifer Marcelli

Linkages Program Director





# Linkages 2.0 Outcome Evaluation



# RDA Consulting

- A mission-driven, employee-owned, majority woman-managed, full-service consulting firm established in 1984 in Oakland, CA
- Works within and across public safety net systems on program design, fund development, planning, implementation, and evaluation
- Supports counties and community-based organizations of all sizes and geographic and demographic complexity
- Practices continuous learning around inclusive, culturally responsive planning, evaluation, and community engagement
- Brings a firm of 22 consultants plus partners who bring necessary subject matter expertise to tailor our work to the local context and to meet the ongoing needs of each engagement





# What We'll Cover

- Why Linkages?
- Evaluation Overview
- Key Findings
- Insights & recommendations



# Why Linkages?





*As you know...*

**Families interact  
with multiple  
systems**

**Fragmented  
services create  
barriers**



**Collaboration  
between service  
providers can  
meet families'  
needs**

## If families receive...

- Child abuse prevention information
- Services to address potential barriers
- Early intervention services
- Coordinated case planning services
- Resources leveraged by both CalWORKs and Child Welfare

***The way we think  
Linkages works***



**Then...**

- Financial and housing stability
- Strengthened parenting skills
- Strengthened family wellbeing & resiliency
- Decreased barriers to employment
- Decreased barriers to completing case plans
- Children remaining or returning to their parents



**So that...**

- Decrease in child welfare referrals for CalWORKs recipients
- Safe, stable, nurturing family relationships and environments
- Decrease in the likelihood of children entering foster care
- Decrease in time to reunification
- Decrease in re-referrals to Child Welfare post-case closure

# Theory of Change

## If families receive...

- Child abuse prevention information
- Services to address potential barriers
- Early intervention services
- Coordinated case planning services
- Resources leveraged by both CalWORKs and Child Welfare

Then...

- Financial and housing stability
- Strengthened parenting skills
- Strengthened family wellbeing & resiliency
- Decreased barriers to employment
- Decreased barriers to completing case plans
- Children remaining or returning to their parents

So that...

- Decrease in child welfare referrals for CalWORKs recipients
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# Evaluation Overview





# Evaluation Participation

*Three counties with distinct attributes and characteristics participated in this evaluation*

County	Region	Linkages Continuum
County A	Southern California	Secondary & Tertiary Prevention
County B	Southern California	Secondary & Tertiary Prevention
County C	Bay Area	Secondary & Tertiary Prevention



# Methodology



## Leadership Interviews & Staff Focus Groups

*Agency structures, team structures, service delivery models, experiences of staff*

## Case Review Tool

*Coordinated case planning activities & consistency*

## CDSS Administrative Data

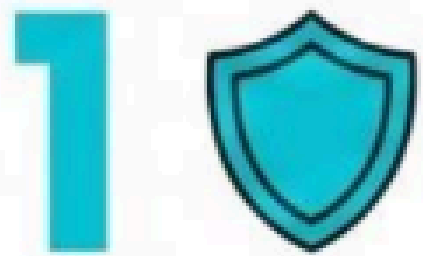
*Family outcomes like allegations, reunification, wages, participation*

## Service Recipient (Family) Survey

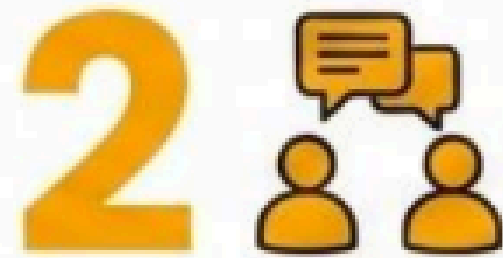
*Family experience, challenges, and benefits*



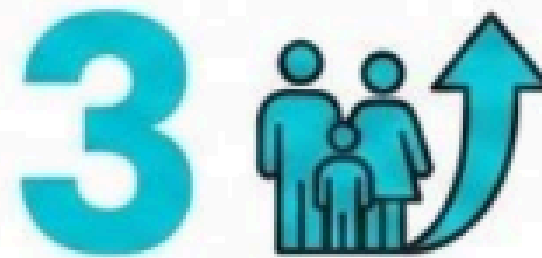
# Key Findings



**1**  
Child  
Maltreatment



**2**  
Sharing Family  
Needs &  
Recommending  
Services



**3**  
CalWORKs  
Participation  
& Family  
Reunification



**4**  
Meeting  
Program  
Requirements



**5**  
Access to  
Resources



# Findings: Linkages Outcomes



# 1

## Child Maltreatment

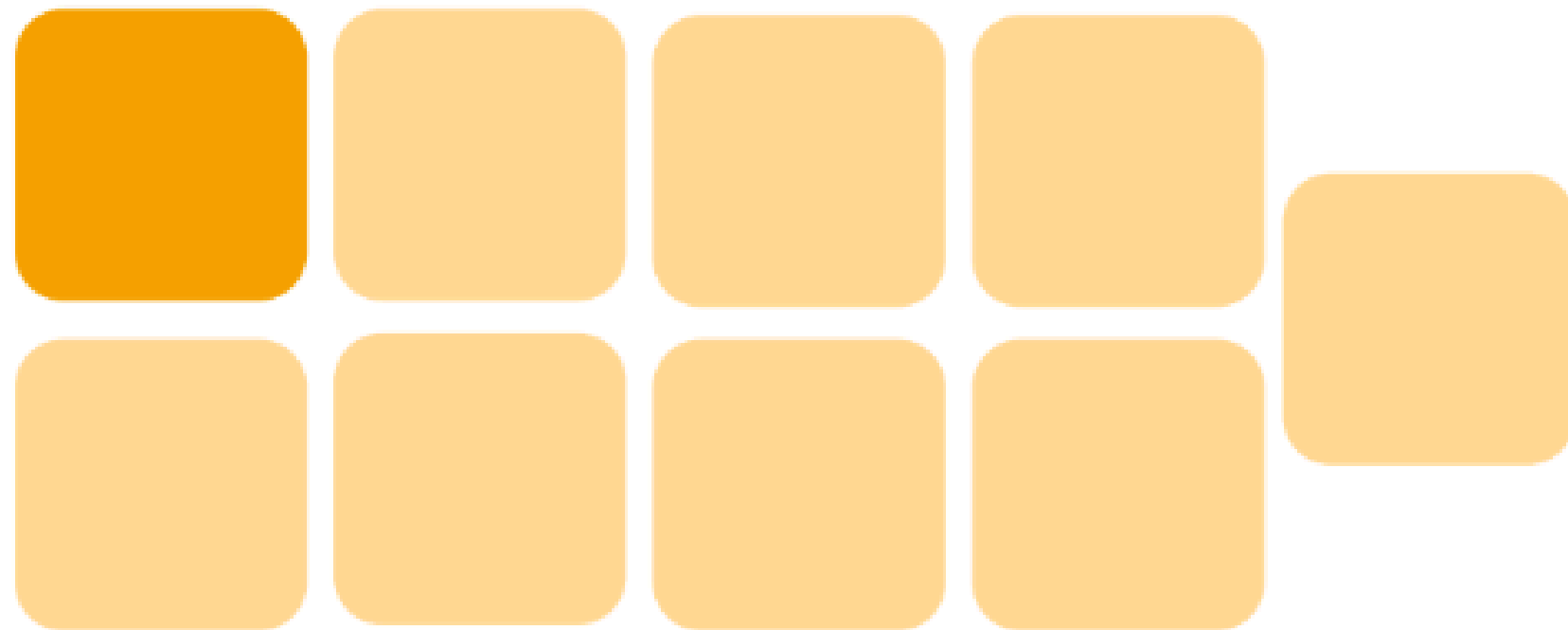
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***Once families started coordinated case planning through the Linkages approach, they had fewer child maltreatment referrals than before for both unfounded and substantiated***

## Prior to being identified for Linkages



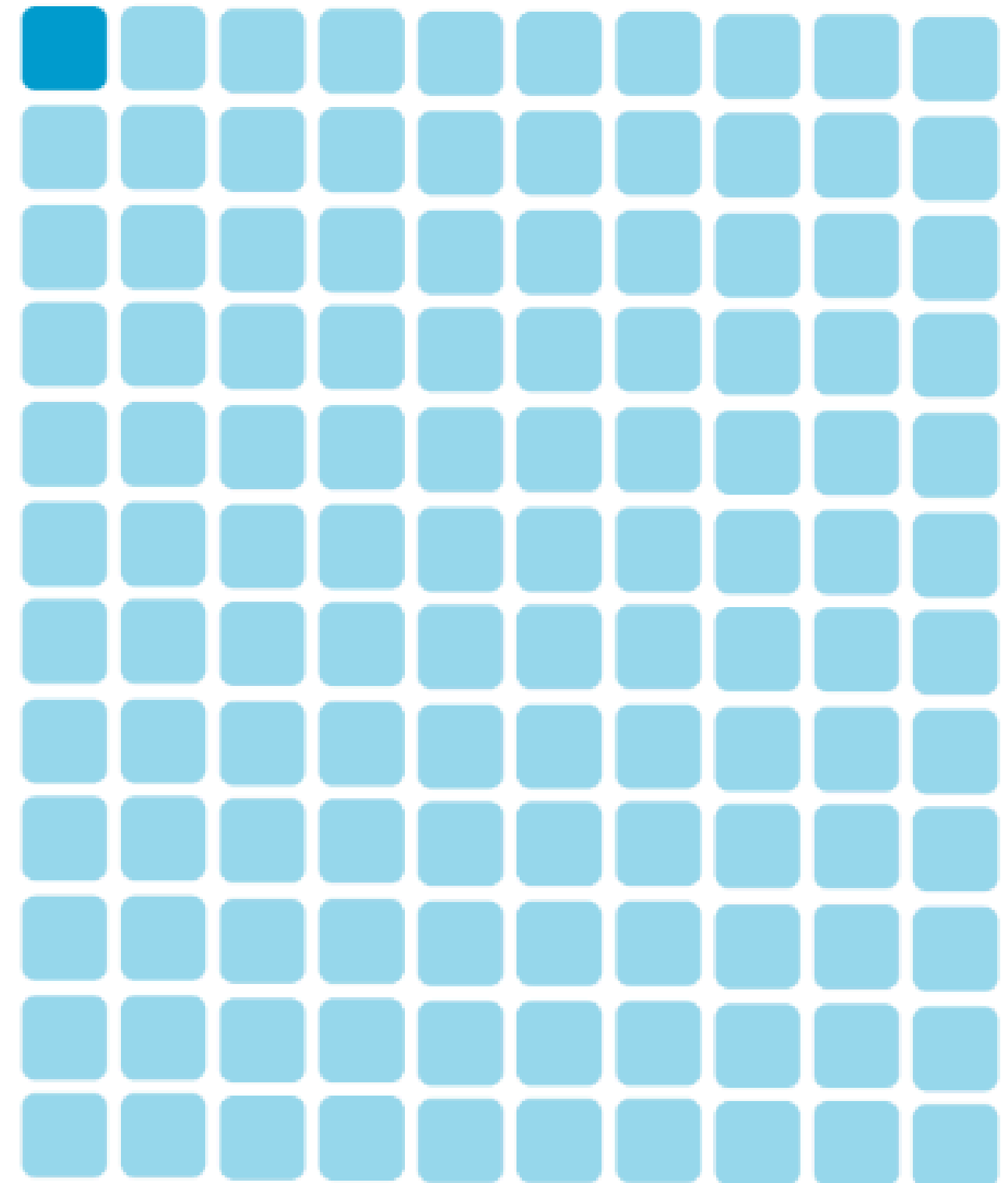
**County A**  
*1 referral every 4 months*



**County B**  
*1 referral every 9 months*

## After being identified for Linkages

**County A & B**  
*1 referral every 120 months*



# 2

## Sharing Family Needs & Recommending Services

***Coordinated case planning most often includes:***



# 3

## CalWORKs Participation & Family Reunification

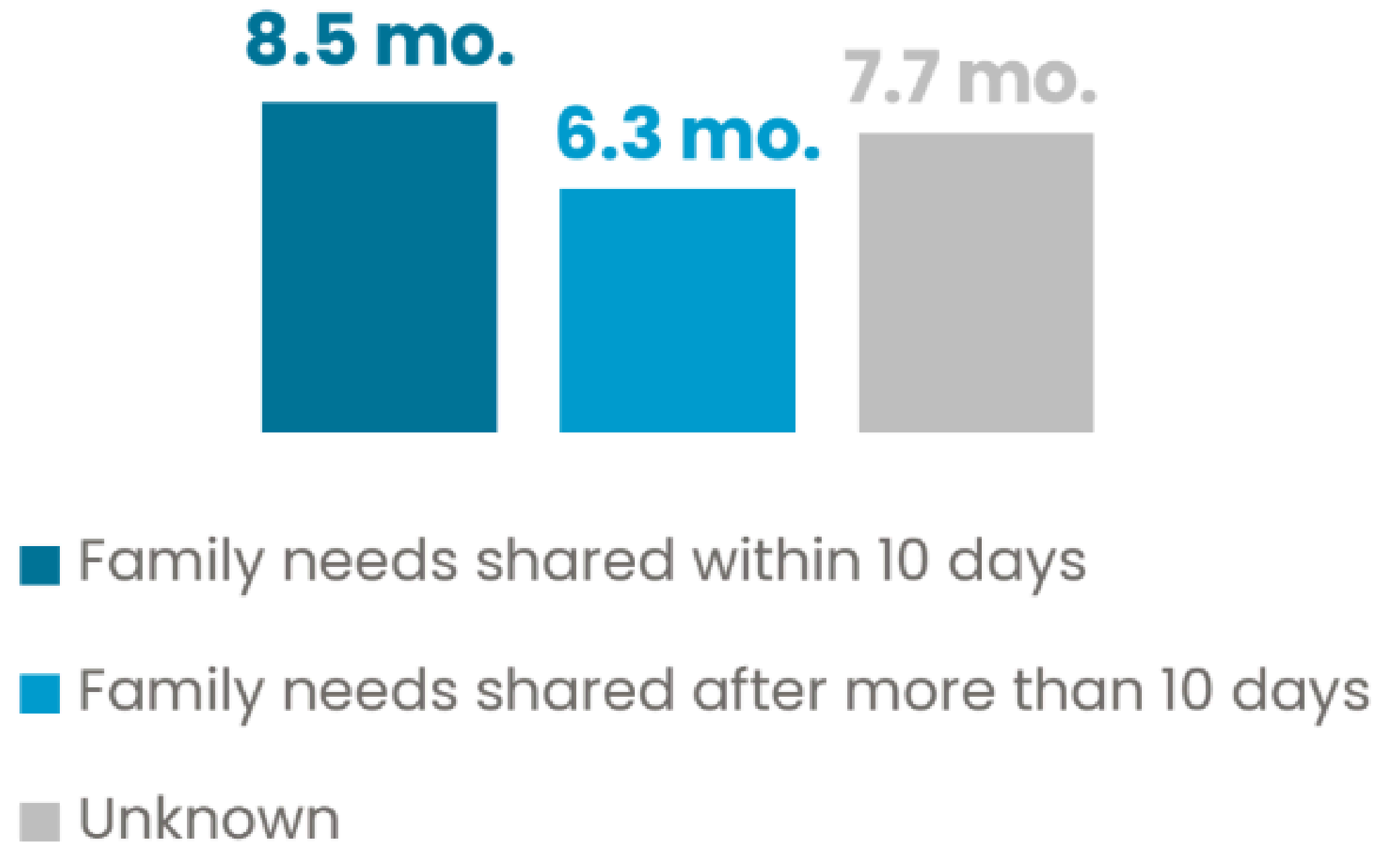
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*Sharing family needs quickly may be most supportive for families' CalWORKs participation*

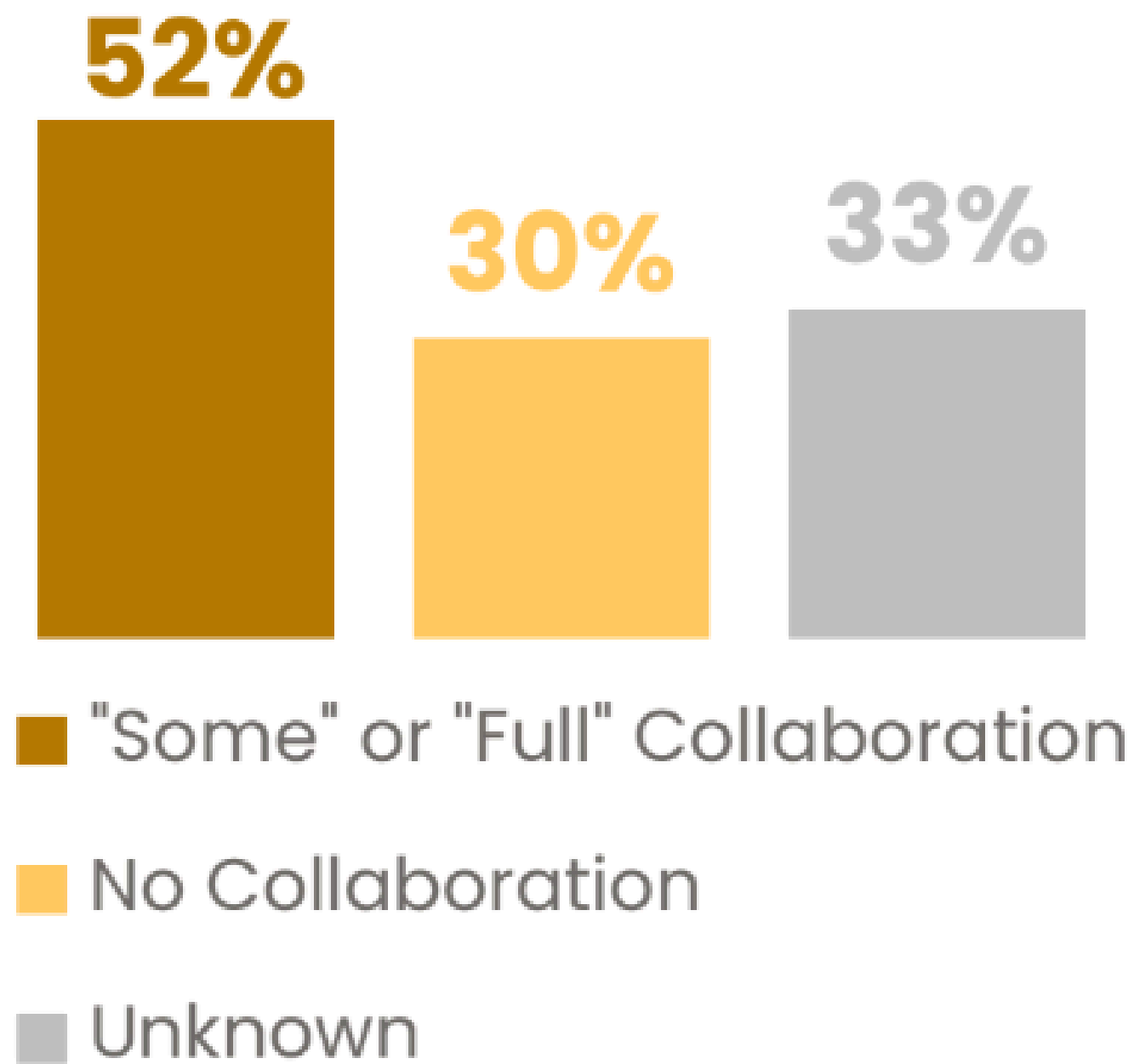
*Collaboration between CalWORKs and CWS may be most helpful for reunifying families.*

*Association of the timeliness of sharing family needs on months of continuous CalWORKs participation for County A*

Sharing family needs **within 10 days** of identifying a client as eligible for coordinated case planning was associated **with longer periods of continuous (uninterrupted) engagement**



*Association of level of joint monitoring on family reunification for County A*



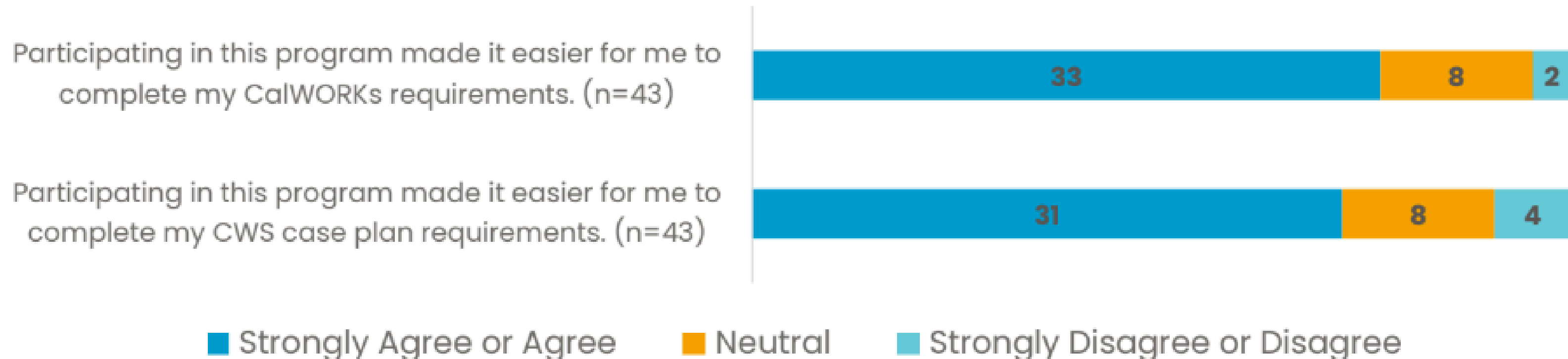
**Collaboration in joint monitoring activities is associated with rates of reunification substantially higher than no collaboration**

## 4

# Meeting Program Requirements

Mutually involved clients perceive that **coordinated case planning** facilitates their **completion of CalWORKs and CWS requirements**

## Survey Respondent Perspectives on Completing Requirements during Linkages Participation



# **5** **Access to Resources**

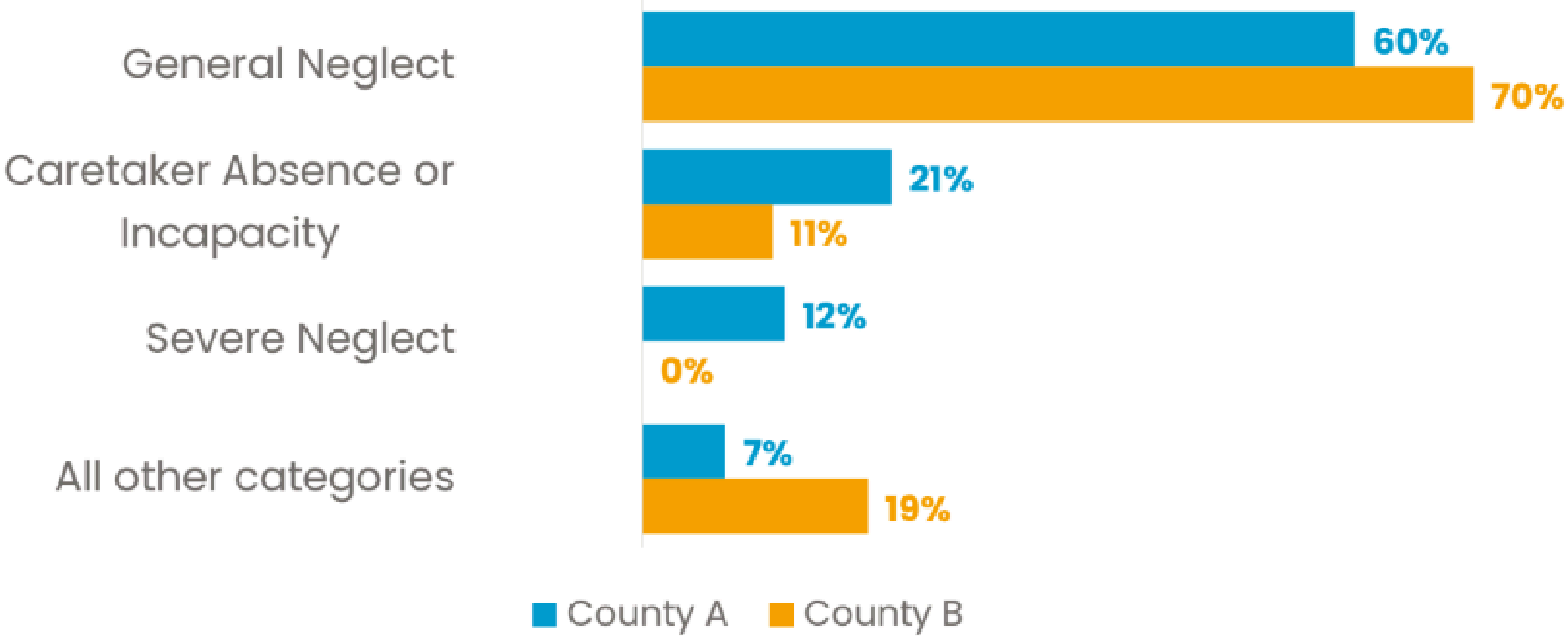
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***Workers consistently provide referrals and promote access to resources***

***Clients consistently access multiple supports for basic needs***

Coordinated case planning promotes resources that **address some of the most common types of substantiated child maltreatment allegations: general or severe neglect**

**Types of Substantiated Child Maltreatment Allegations by County**





“I was able to finish and get my high school diploma, then continue to enroll in college and continue my education. Thanks to the Linkages program, I am able to get food and rent assistance while do so for myself and two babies.”–  
*Survey participant*



# Insights & Recommendations



**Come learn about  
how to utilize the  
*Case Review  
Tool***

**at our BI workshop  
at 10:45 am today!**

# Implementation

Centralized  
Data Access

Designated  
Roles

Co-Location

Venues for  
Coordinated  
Case  
Planning

Leadership  
Prioritization

Generate  
Widespread  
Awareness

Address  
Turnover  
Challenges

## Pillars of Support

# Recommendations

---

**Strengthen Implementation  
of Coordinated Case Planning**

**Embed Continuous Quality  
Improvement (CQI) Exercises**

**Advance Research and  
Evaluation**



**Thank you!**

Reminder: Come learn about how to utilize the novel Case Review Tool at our B1 workshop at 10:45 am today!

# Bridges That Hold: *Lived Experiences of Support, Strength, & What Families Need*

## **Moderator:**

Sophia Jeffe, Prevention Program Associate, CFPIC

## **Panelists:**

Janica Carlson, Raul Aguirre, April McIntosh

# 10:45 AM: Workshops

**B1: Linkages 2.0 Evaluation: Impact on Local Practice**  
Tahoe

**B2: I'm Stuck! How to Get Your Team Going**  
Shasta A/B

**B3: AB 135 Policy Lab**  
Folsom

**B4: Planning a Cross-System Learning Strategy for Linkages**  
Brandywine

**We'll see you back here at noon for lunch!**

# 1:00 PM: Workshops

**C1: Sustaining Linkages in Challenging Times**  
Folsom

**C2: Child-Only: A Potential Linkages**  
Population  
Tahoe

**C3: Building Trust in Linkages: Trauma  
Informed Practice with Tribal Families**  
Brandywine

**C4: Strengthening Linkages Through ICPM,  
CPM & Transforming CalWORKs**  
Shasta AB

**Break at 2:15 PM with Topic-Specific Breakouts at 2:30 PM.**

# 2:30 PM: Breakouts by Topic

**Prevention & Cultural Responsiveness**

**Tahoe**

**AB135 & 429**

**Folsom**

**Challenges for Small Counties**

**Brandywine**

**Budget & Fiscal Challenges**

**Shasta**

**Break at 2:15 PM with Topic-Specific Breakouts at 2:30 PM.**