



Refugee Housing  
SOLUTIONS

# Needs Assessment Survey

# 2023

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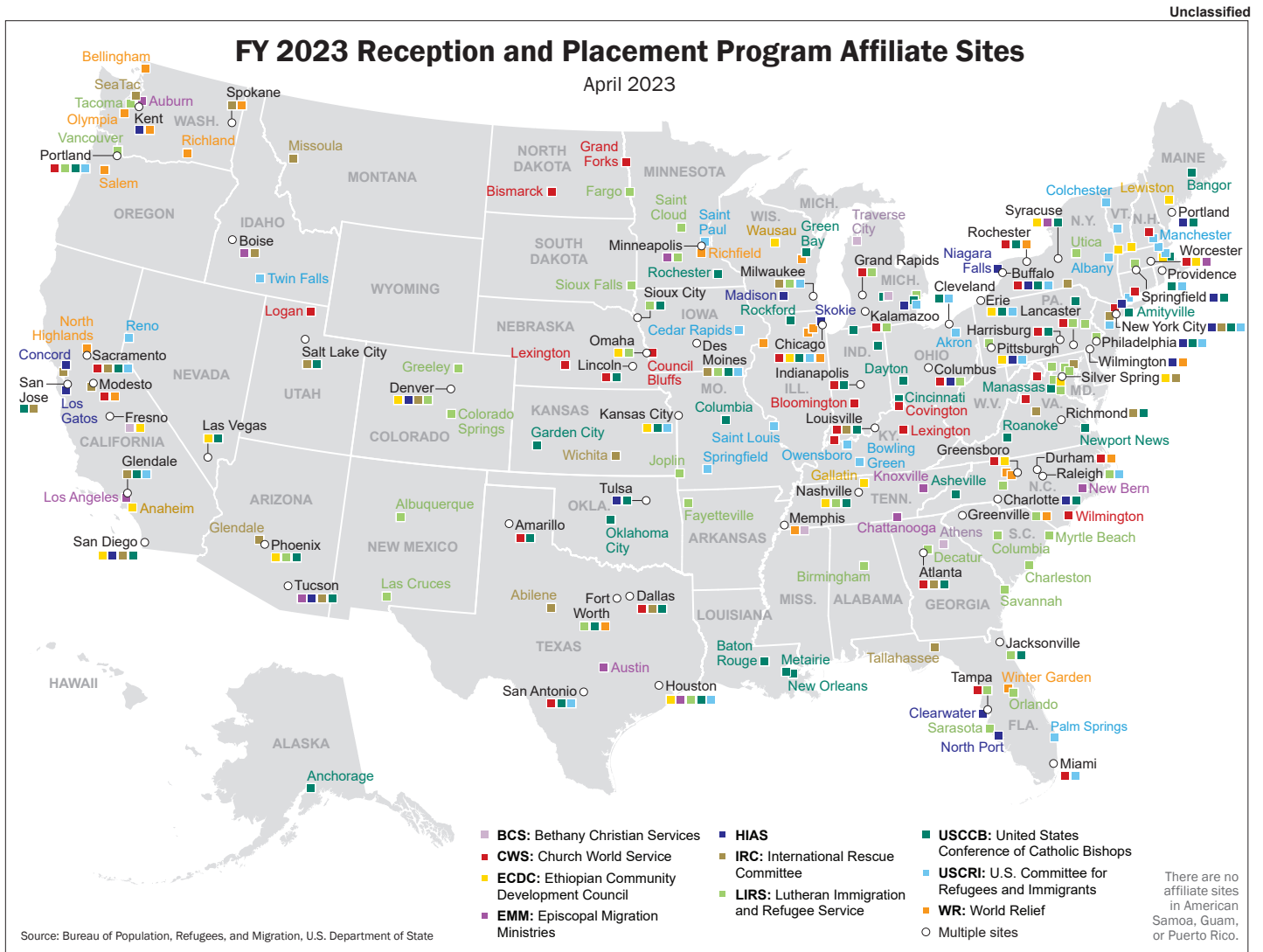
Housing Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees



**Refugee Housing**  
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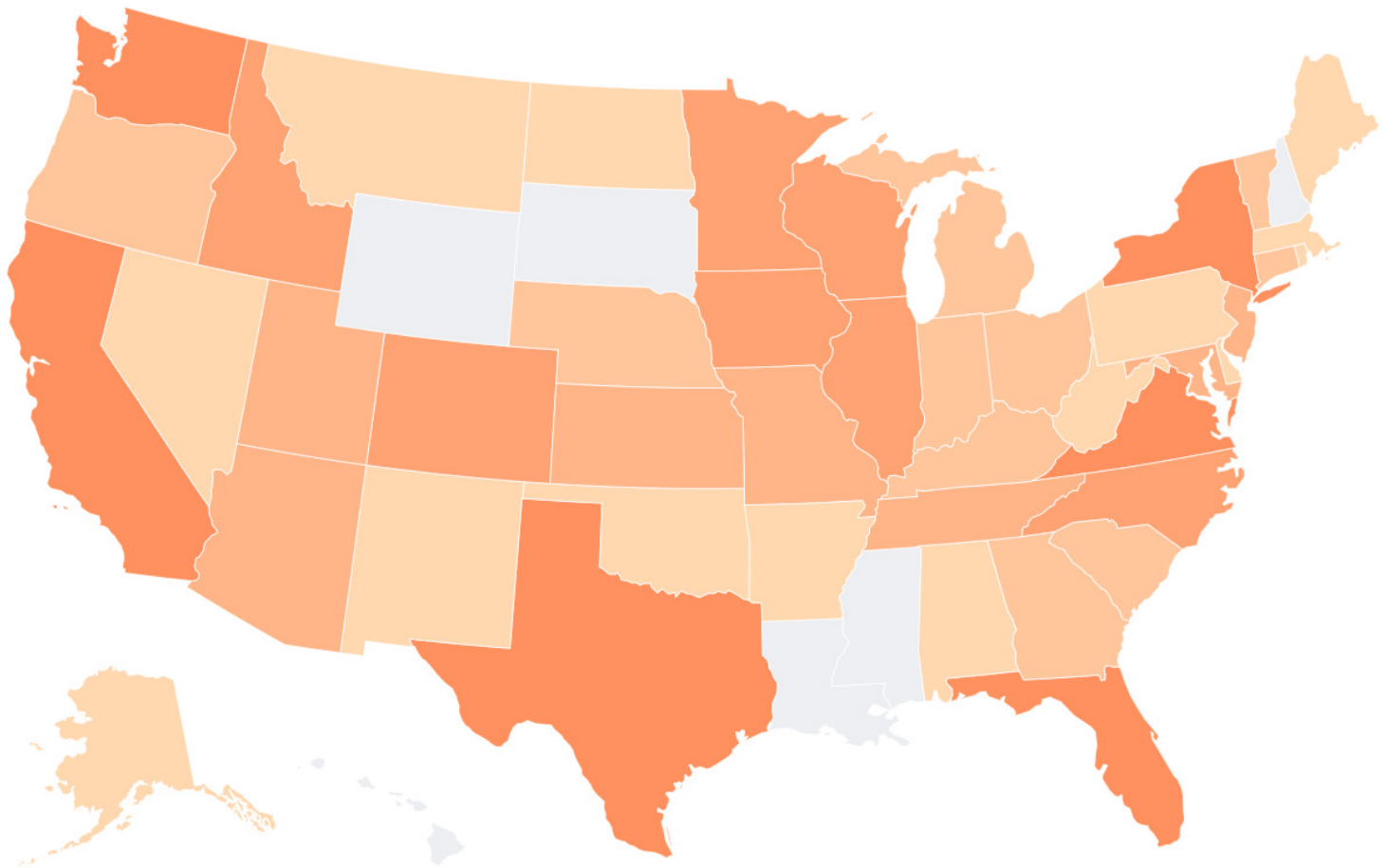
# Map of R&P Sites



# Survey Respondents

## Needs Assessment

Highlighted states on this map have responded to the Housing Needs Assessment Survey. RHS received 214 responses from 45 states.

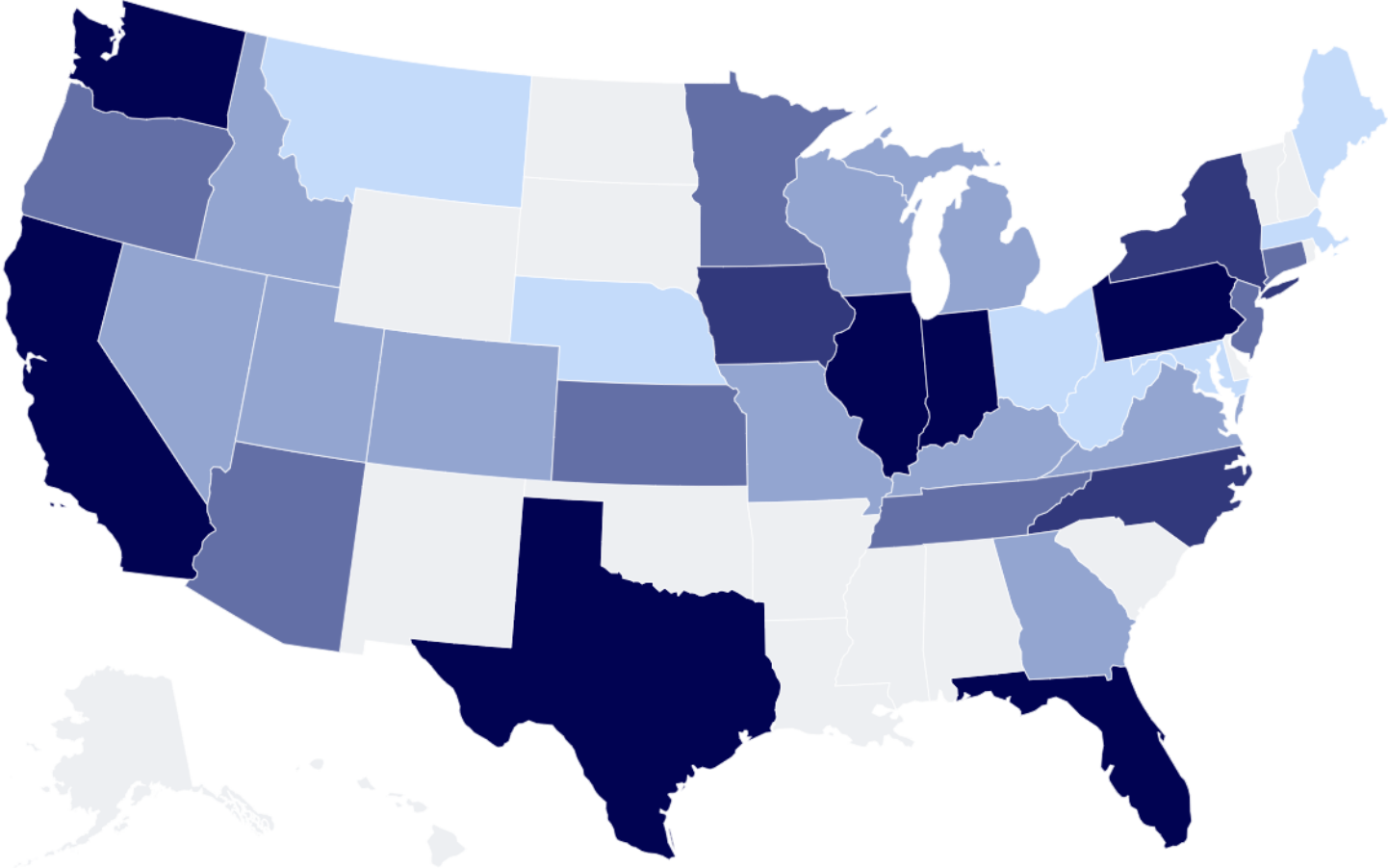


RAs responded



## Direct Housing Assistance

Highlighted states on this map have responded to the Housing Direct Assistance Survey.  
 RHS received 114 responses from 35 states



RAs responded



# Introduction

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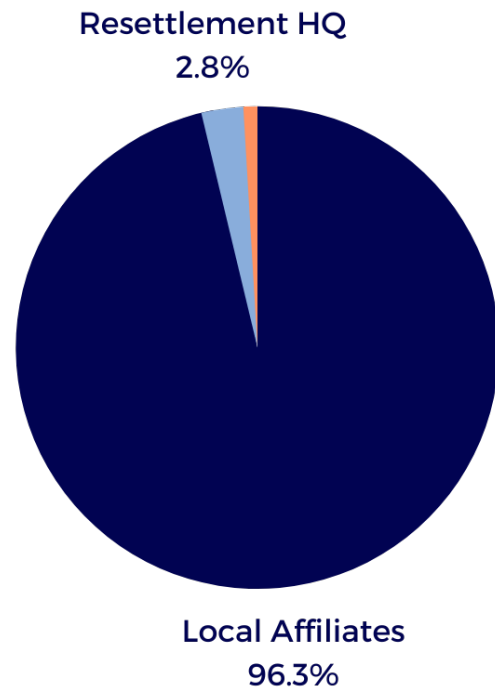
Refugee Housing Solutions (RHS) — a Church World Service (CWS) initiative — comprises housing and refugee resettlement experts dedicated to addressing newcomer housing challenges through innovative, affordable housing solutions on national and local levels.

RHS recently conducted a refugee housing needs assessment to better identify challenges in the sector and learn about innovative solutions taking place among refugee resettlement affiliates. RHS gathered information and data through an email distributed SurveyMonkey to agencies. The results will inform RHS work and partnerships in the coming year.

# Methodology and Demographics

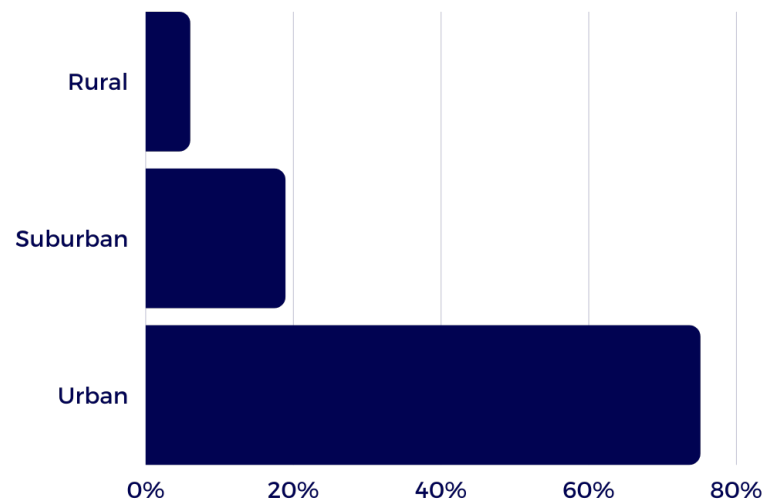
## Email Survey

RHS created a 20-minute survey about the refugee housing landscape. The team sent the survey to approximately 500 stakeholders from the following groups: National Housing Working Group members, State Refugee Coordinators, the State Department's 10 official refugee resettlement agencies, past RHS technical assistance recipients, and regional RHS community of practice participants. The survey was live from **February 13, 2023 to February 27, 2023**, and during that time RHS received **214 responses**.



## Respondent Information

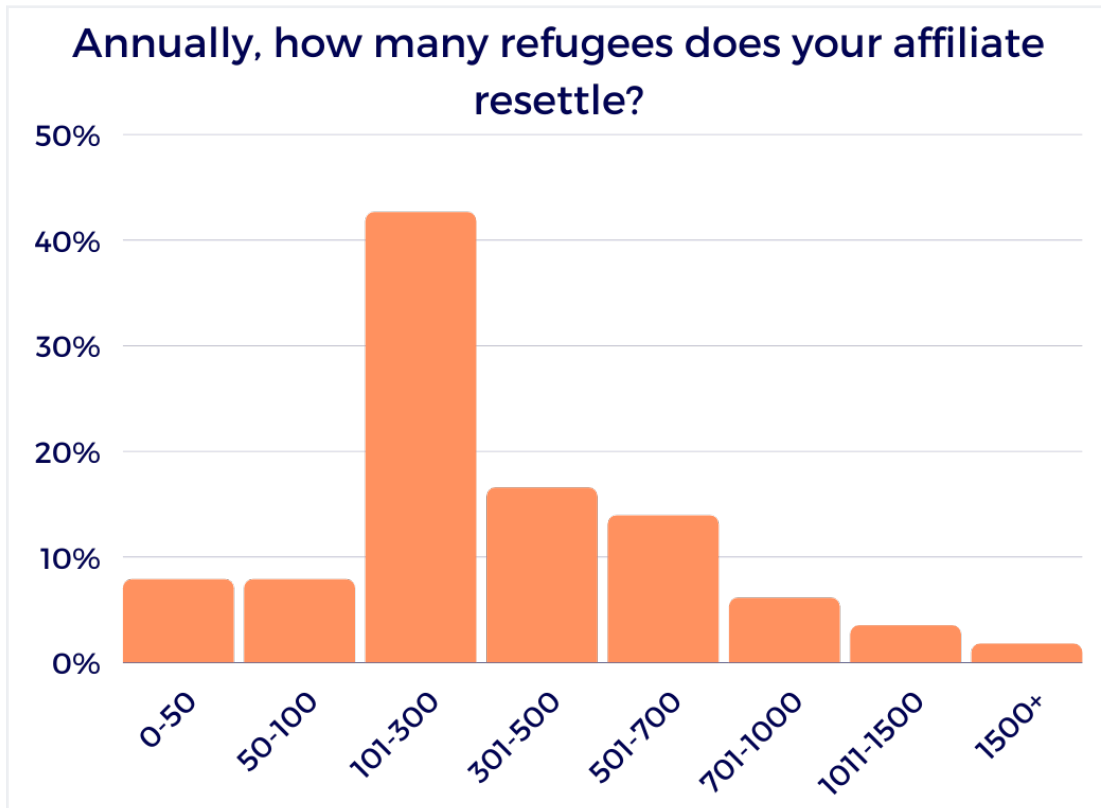
Of approximately 500 survey recipients, 212 respondents, representing 173 local resettlement affiliates in 45 states, completed the survey. About 96 percent of respondents were from local resettlement affiliates. The other 4 percent were from resettlement headquarter staff, and other nonprofit stakeholders. Of the respondents, 83 percent identified that they had staff that is specifically focused on housing. Given the planned geographic diversity of the survey recipients, the RHS team inquired about where respondents resettle newcomers. Most respondents, about 75 percent, characterized their affiliates as urban, while 19 percent resettle in areas characterized as suburban, and 6 percent as rural.



## Follow-Up Survey Information

Based on initial survey results, a two-minute follow up survey about the need for direct housing assistance was live from **April 13, 2023 to April 22, 2023**, with **114 responses**. This survey was distributed to the respondents

of the original needs assessment survey. All respondents were from the ten resettlement agencies, representing 101 offices in 35 states. Most of these offices indicated they resettle between 101-300 refugees a year.



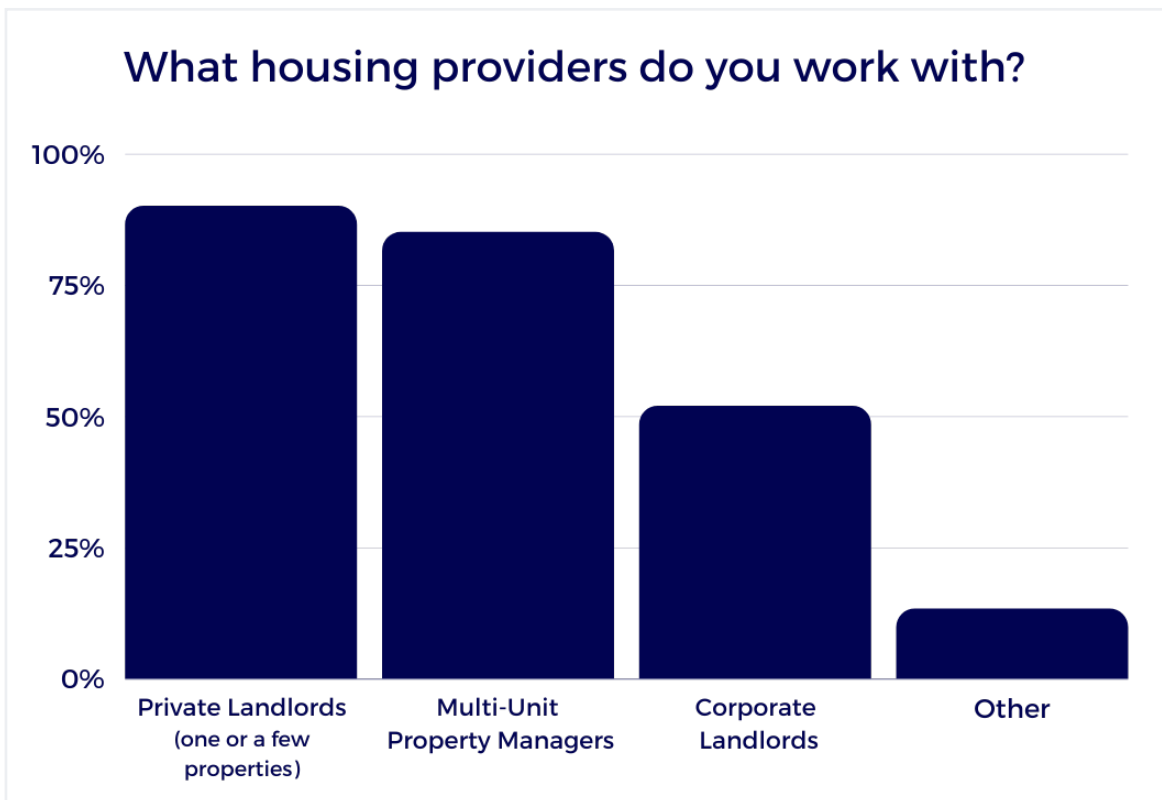


# Results

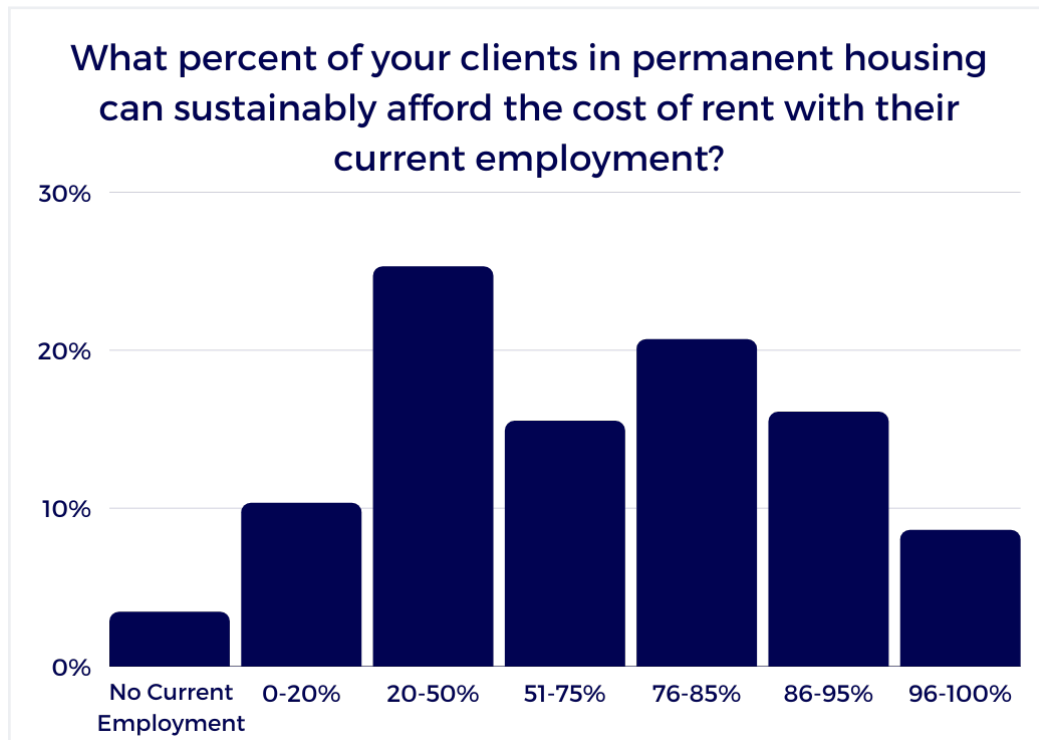
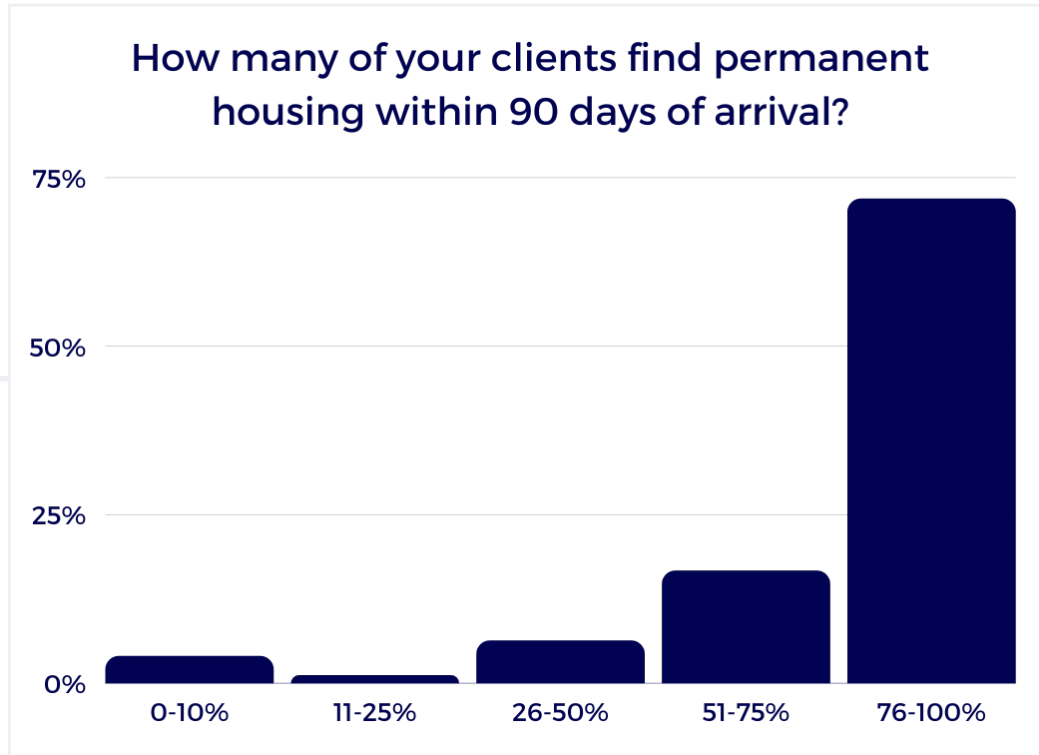
## Newcomer Housing Conditions

To understand the housing conditions of newcomers, RHS asked questions about where newcomers find housing, in what timeframe, and how sustainable their choices are. Most respondents listed that when securing housing for their clients, i.e., refugees and other newcomers, staff primarily work with landlords managing one or few properties, and with multi-unit property managers. Beyond landlord relationships, 64 percent of all respondents cited that community groups, such as churches and ethnic-based community-based organizations, support their agency in securing

housing and providing housing support. Further, 82 percent of respondents noted that they also use temporary housing, 48 percent of those stayed in hotels, with most stays being between one to four weeks. Of those using temporary housing, 52 percent of respondents reported that both newcomer funds and subsidized programs are used to support temporary housing. For long-term housing, 72 percent of respondents noted that between 76 to 100 percent of their clients find permanent housing within the first 90 days of arrival; however, only 9 percent confirmed that between 96 and 100 percent of their clients in permanent housing can sustainably afford the cost of rent with their current employment.



## Newcomer Housing Conditions



# Housing Challenges

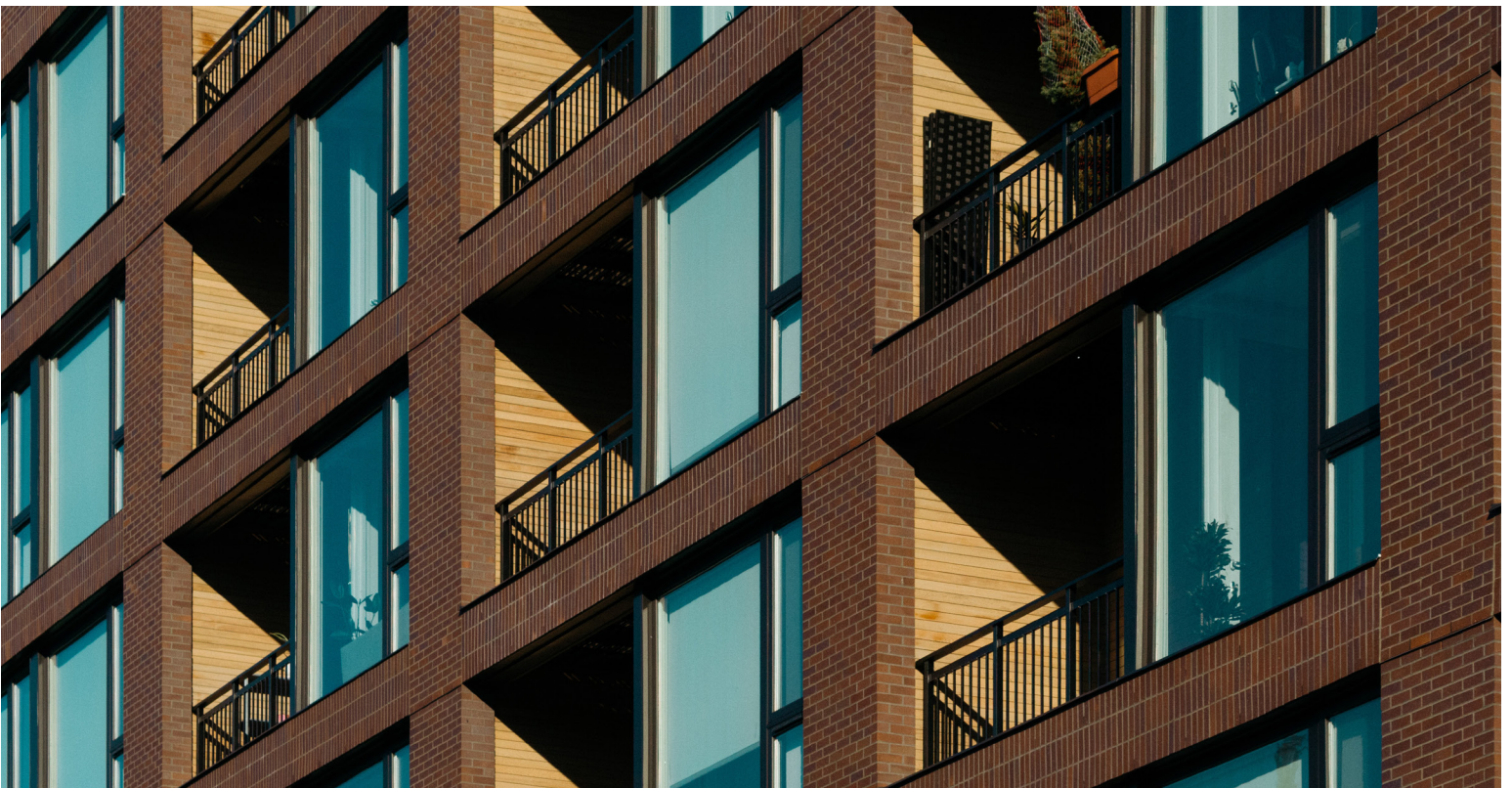
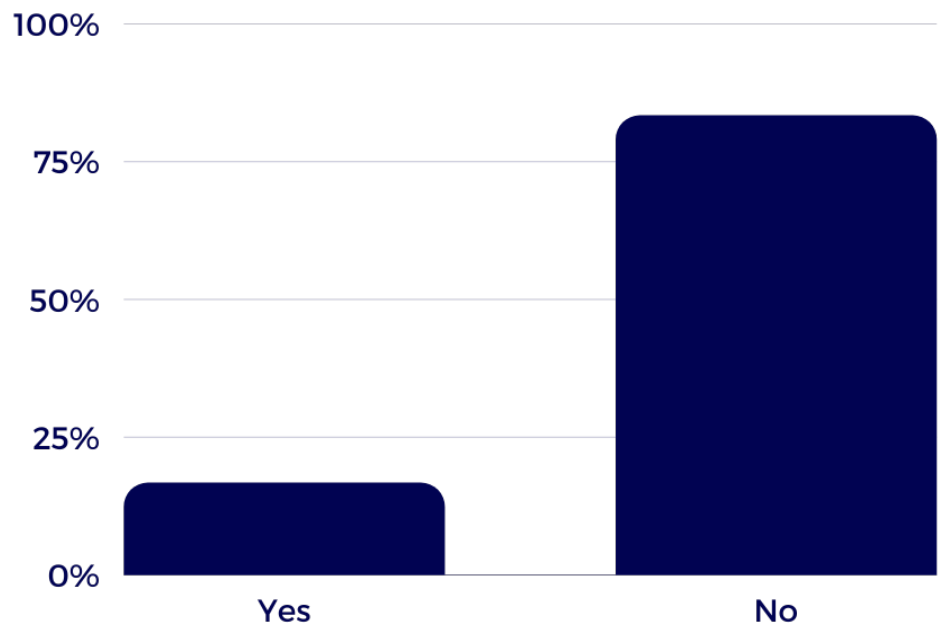
When evaluating housing for newcomers, repeatedly affordability, availability, family size, and landlord unfamiliarity with newcomer tenants were reported as the major challenges. Others cited newcomer’s lack of credit as a barrier. When respondents were asked how these housing challenges are being addressed, the Iowa Finance Authority respondent wrote, “Education for landlords has been key in solving unfamiliarity. Family size has been an issue and we have been trying to identify larger sized units for them. Affordability has been a universal problem which we are trying to work through. Lack of housing has also been an issue but, due to Iowa’s infrastructure, a hard issue to solve.” The Iowa response mirrored and validated most others.

To address the financial barrier of housing newcomers, 64 percent of respondents noted that between 2021 to 2023 their agency had tapped into rental assistance programs, yet **83 percent of respondents noted they do not use public housing**. When asked what barriers resettlement staff faced when seeking to place newcomers in public housing, 70 percent of respondents cited long waitlists as the main deterrent. Some wrote that in their areas wait lists were up to 10 years long. Other responses noted newcomers’ lack of credit history and required documentation as a major barrier, and for others, a lack of existing public housing in their area.



A Bethany Christian Services affiliate in Grand Rapids, Michigan noted, "There is no ability to get newcomers into public housing as typically there is a 6-month plus waiting list and we'd need to know composition of the family and have documentation in order to get them on the waiting list. There is no way we could ever get an opening to public housing with the 2-4-week arrival notice we receive for new arrivals."

## Do you house newcomers in public housing?

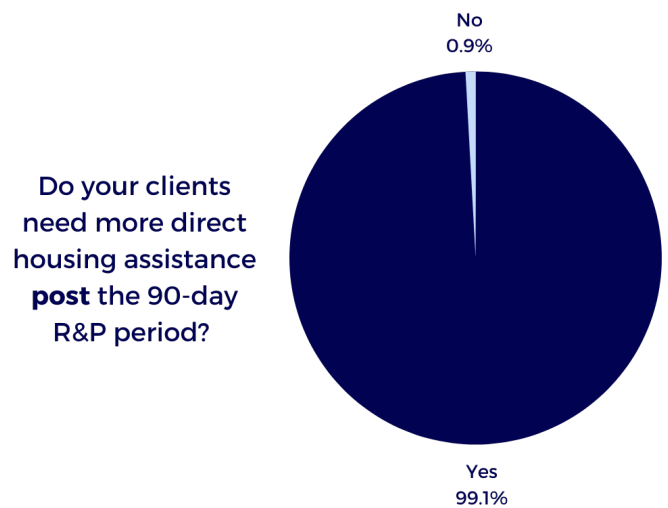
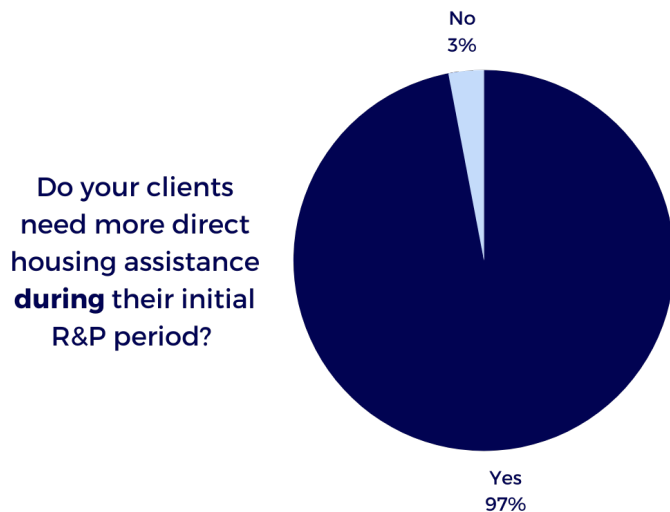
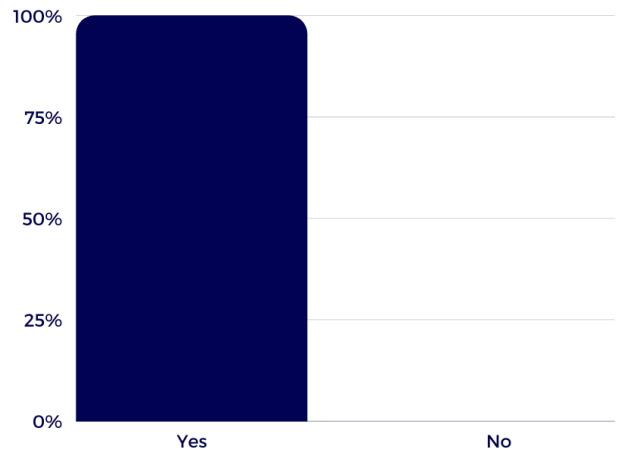


# Direct Housing Assistance

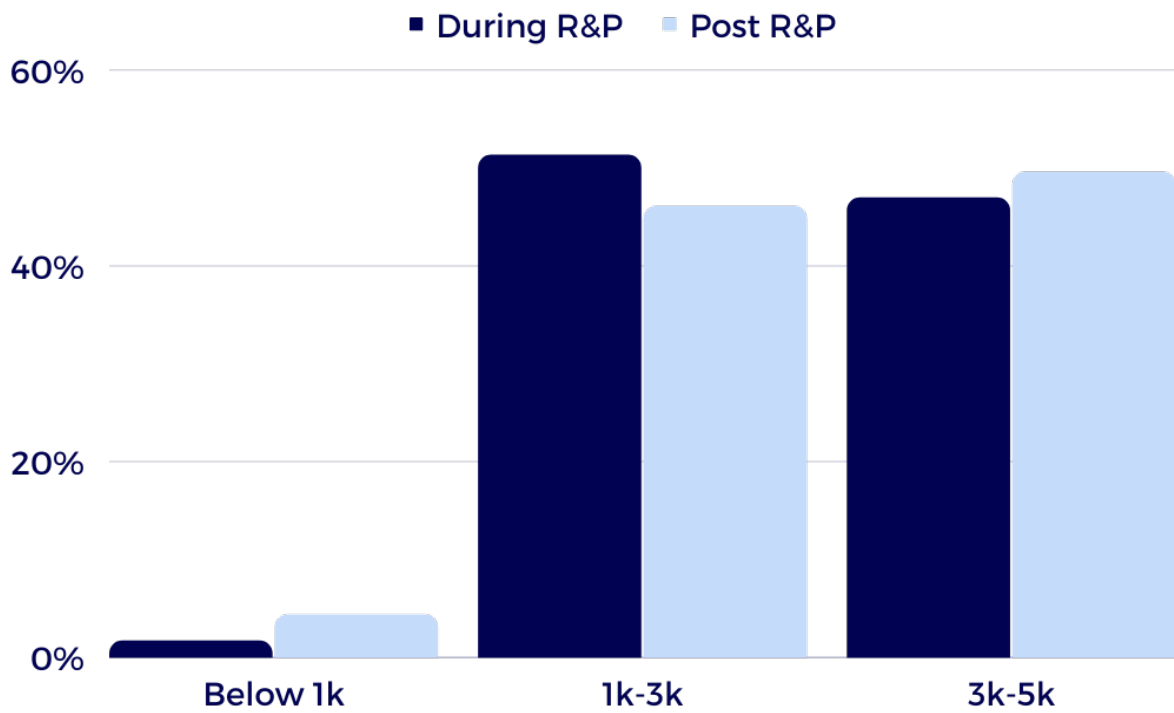
Results of the initial needs assessment led RHS to determine that more information and data was needed to identify affiliate-level direct housing rental assistance needs, and so a 12-question follow-up survey was sent. Of the 114 respondents from all 10 resettlement agencies, **100 percent affirmed that they would use direct assistance if it was available to their clients.**

The survey evaluated the amount and need of direct assistance funds during and post the 90-day Resettlement and Placement (R&P) period. **An overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that their clients would benefit from direct housing assistance after as well as during the 90-day R&P period** (data in chart below).

Would you utilize direct housing assistance if it was available to your clients?



## What amount of direct housing assistance (per household) would be sufficient?



# Housing Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees

Among respondents, 85 percent noted that their affiliate works with Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees (UHP), and 28 percent of those respondents reported that they assist with housing navigation and/or rental assistance. Regarding support provided to privately sponsored newcomers, 55 percent of respondents reported they assist clients with housing navigation. When asked about where UHPs find housing, 66 percent said they had found housing with a sponsor, 47 percent reported that the UHPs they support had found housing on their own, and 19 percent indicated that Ukrainian newcomers found housing with help from a resettlement agency.

Of the respondents working with UHP newcomers, respondents noted that **85 percent of Ukrainian newcomers have expressed interest in seeking permanent residency in the United States.** When asked about the top reasons affiliates are seeing sponsorship breakdown, a CWS affiliate in Connecticut wrote, **“Breakdown happens [when people] don’t get along, there are too many people crammed into a house for too long, or if the sponsor was only providing temporary housing. Half of the UHP folks we see have paid a sponsor to fill out the application and they never meet or have contact after that.”**

