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# BASIC NEEDS SECURITY AT SAN DIEGO CITY COLLEGE

A Report Prepared by the Wisconsin HOPE Lab

March 30, 2018

## Overview

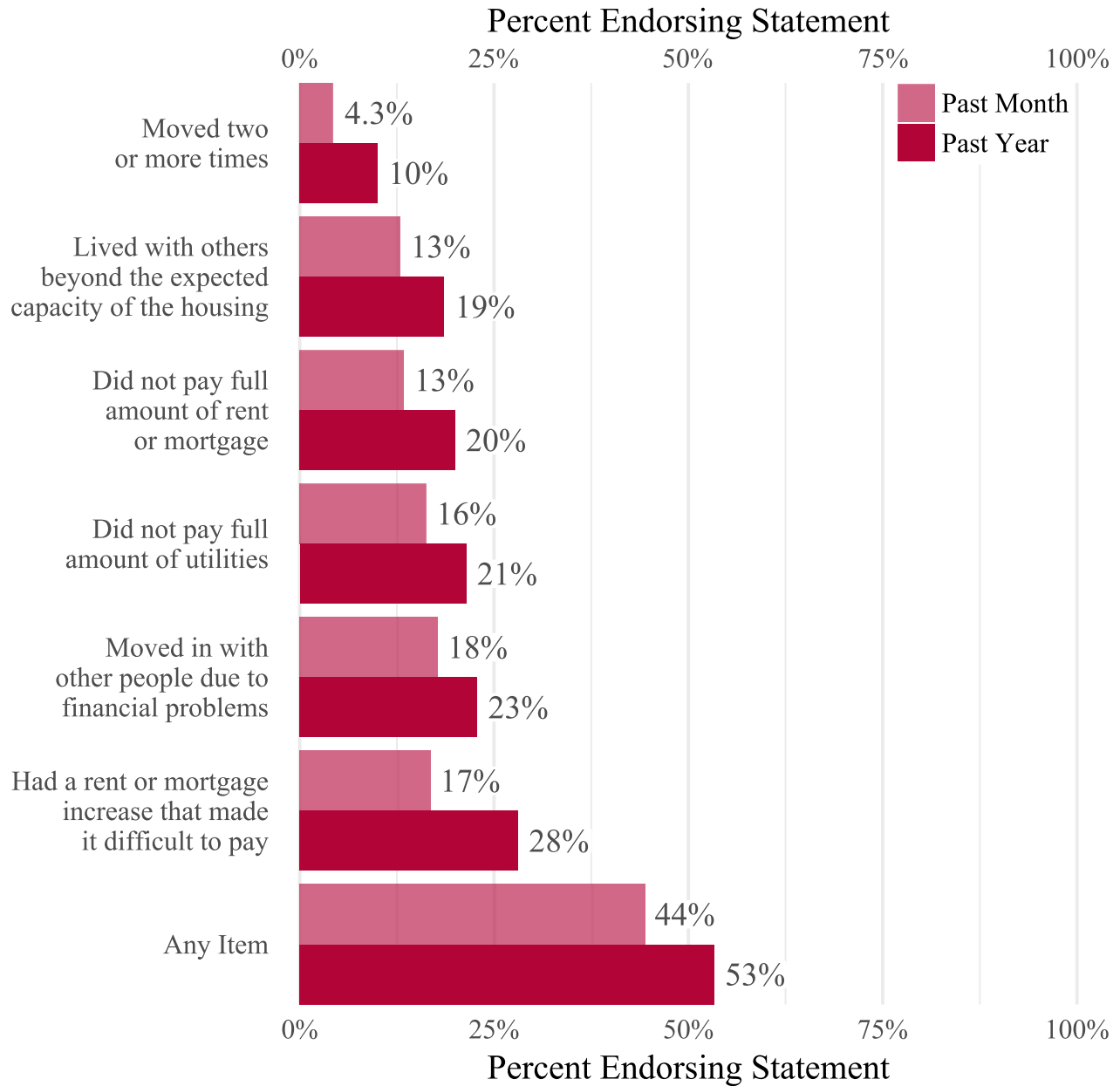
- Invitations to complete the questionnaire were sent by email to 3300 students from San Diego City College, and 201 students completed it. Thus, the response rate was about 6.1%
- In the last year, about 15% of students experienced some form of homelessness, 53% were housing insecure, and 56% had low or very low food security.
- About 70% of students at San Diego City College experienced at least one of these forms of basic needs insecurity in the past year. About 9.1% experienced all three forms of basic needs insecurity.
- The prevalence of basic needs insecurity are presented for several demographic subgroups.

## Basic Needs for All Students

### Housing Insecurity

Housing insecurity can involve unaffordable housing, poor housing quality, crowding, and frequent moves (Cutts et al., 2011 (<https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2011.300139>)). The survey instrument included six items to assess whether a student has experienced housing insecurity in the past thirty days and in the past twelve months. Students are classified as **housing insecure** if they answered affirmatively to at least one of those items for the time period in question.

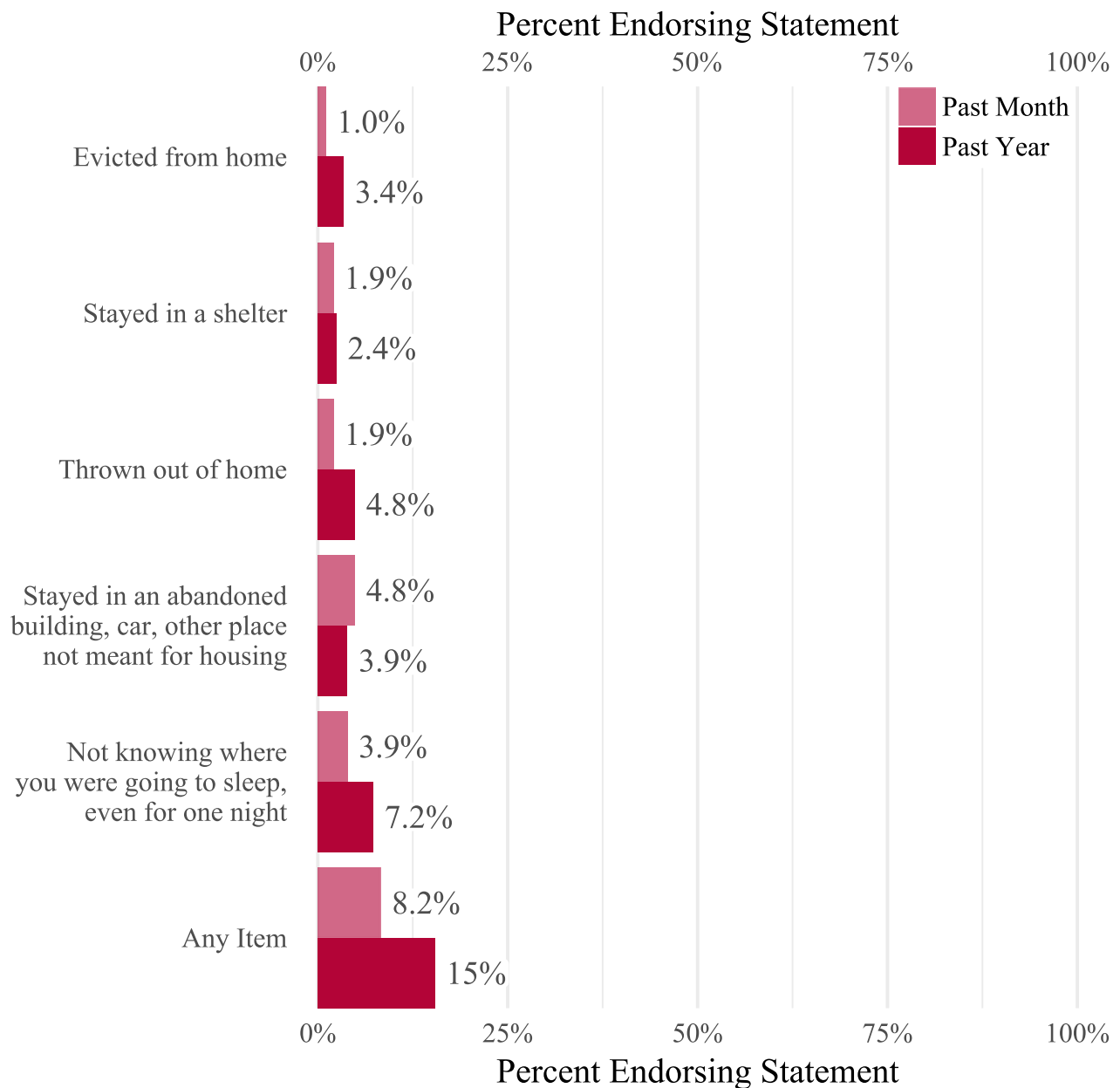
How prevalent is housing insecurity at San Diego City College? As can be seen in the plot below, 44% were housing insecure in the month they were surveyed and 53% were housing insecure in the previous year.



## Homelessness

Homelessness indicates that a person is without a place to live, often residing in a shelter, automobile, an abandoned building, or outside. The survey included five items to determine whether students have been homeless in the past thirty days and in the past twelve months. Students are considered **homeless** if they answered affirmatively to at least one of five items for the time period in question. Note that it is possible for students to have experienced both homelessness and housing insecurity at different times during the previous month or year.

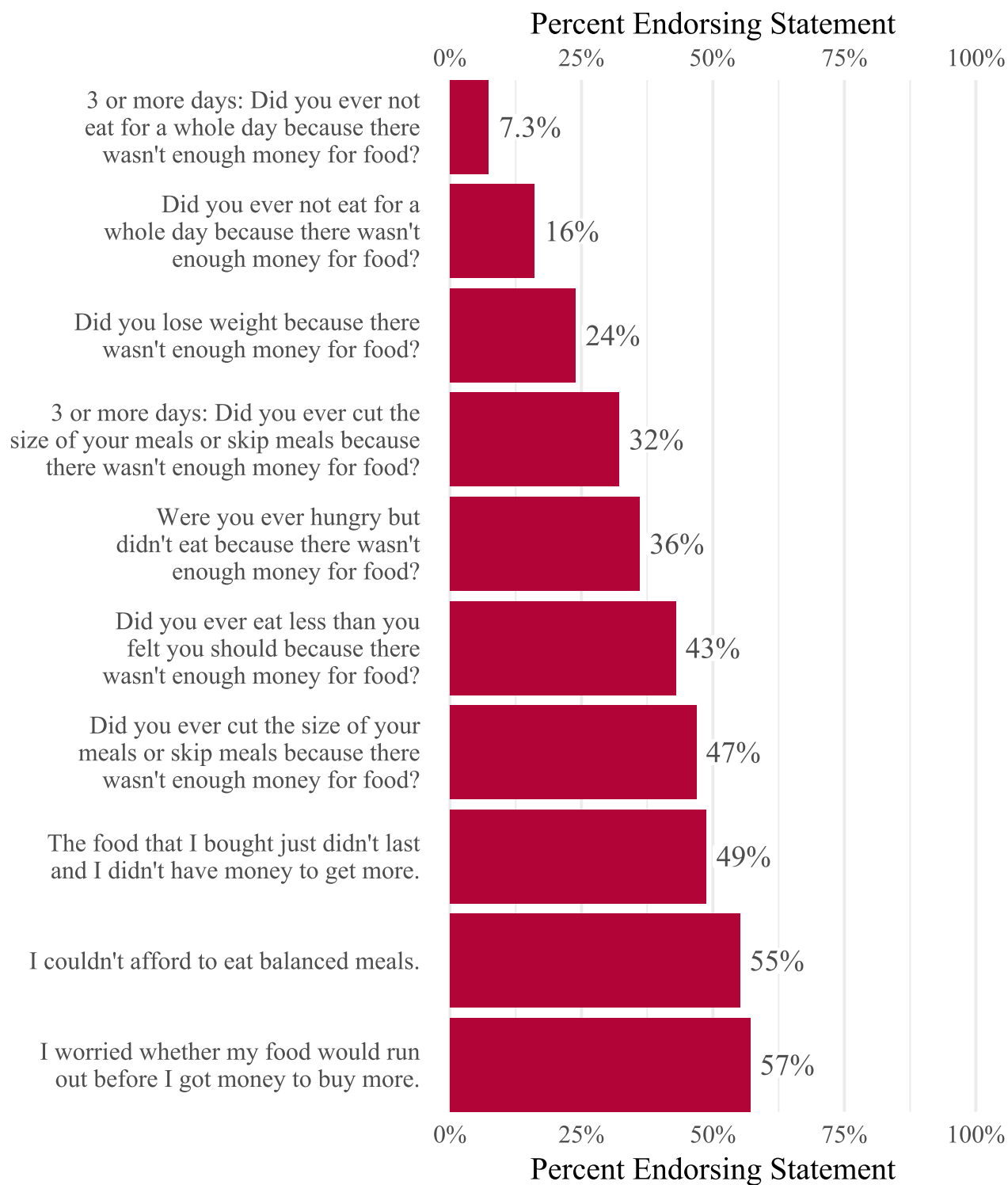
How prevalent is homelessness at San Diego City College? As can be seen in the plot below, 8.2% were homeless in the month they were surveyed and 15% were homeless at some point in the previous year.



## Food Security

Food insecurity is the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or the ability to acquire such foods in a socially acceptable manner (Anderson, 1990 ([https://doi.org/10.1093/jn/120.suppl\\_11.1555](https://doi.org/10.1093/jn/120.suppl_11.1555))). To assess food insecurity among students, the survey instrument included the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) 10-item U.S. Adult Food Security Survey Module (FSSM) (<https://www.ers.usda.gov/media/8279/ad2012.pdf>). The module asks students about their experiences in the past thirty days.

What percentage of students at San Diego City College endorsed each food insecurity item?



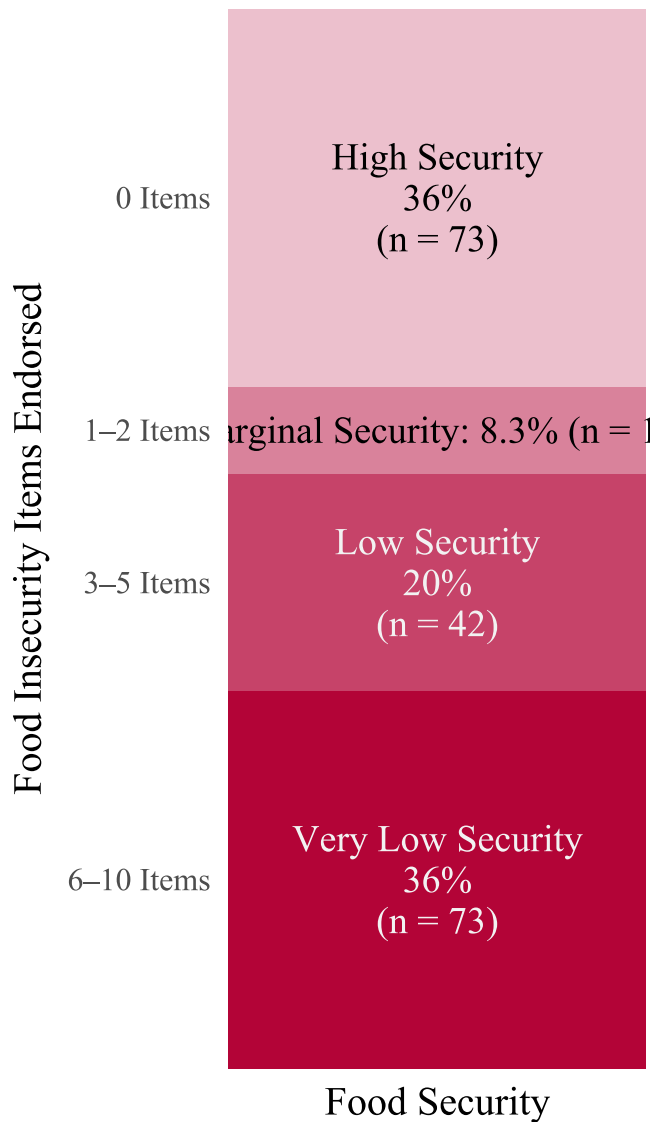
The USDA recommends assigning each respondent a score based on the total number of affirmative answers on the 10-item instrument. That score determines a person's food security status via a four category scale, where a score of zero corresponds to high food security, one to marginal food security, two to four translate to low food security, and scores of five or six indicate very low food security. Taken together, people who report low and very low food security can be referred to as **food insecure**.

### **Food Security Categories**

**Items Endorsed Food Security Level Classification**

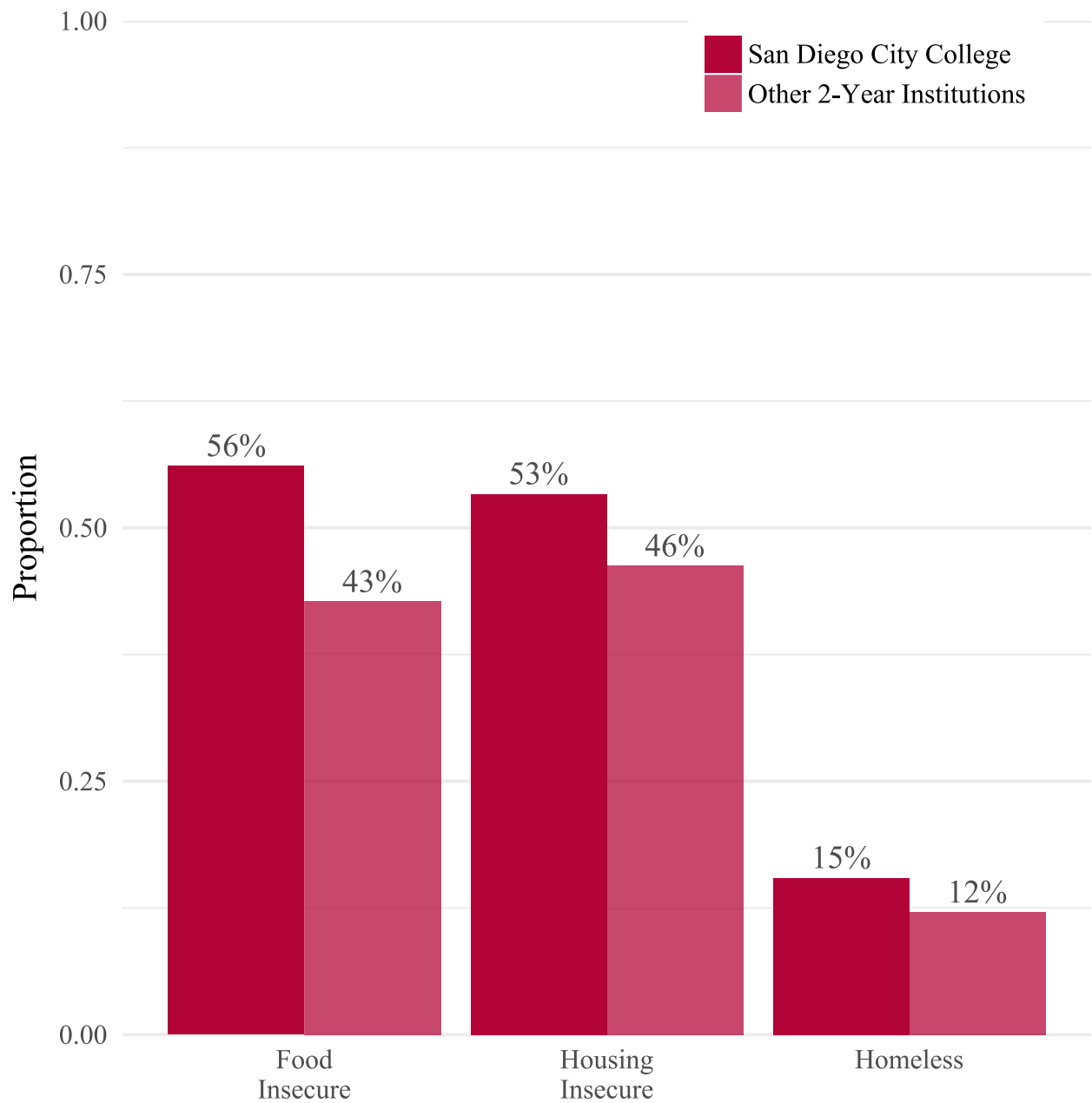
0	High	Food Secure
1-2	Marginal	
3-4	Low	Food Insecure
6-10	Very Low	

How prevalent is food insecurity at San Diego City College? As seen in the plot below, 56% of students were food insecure (i.e., had low or very low food insecurity).



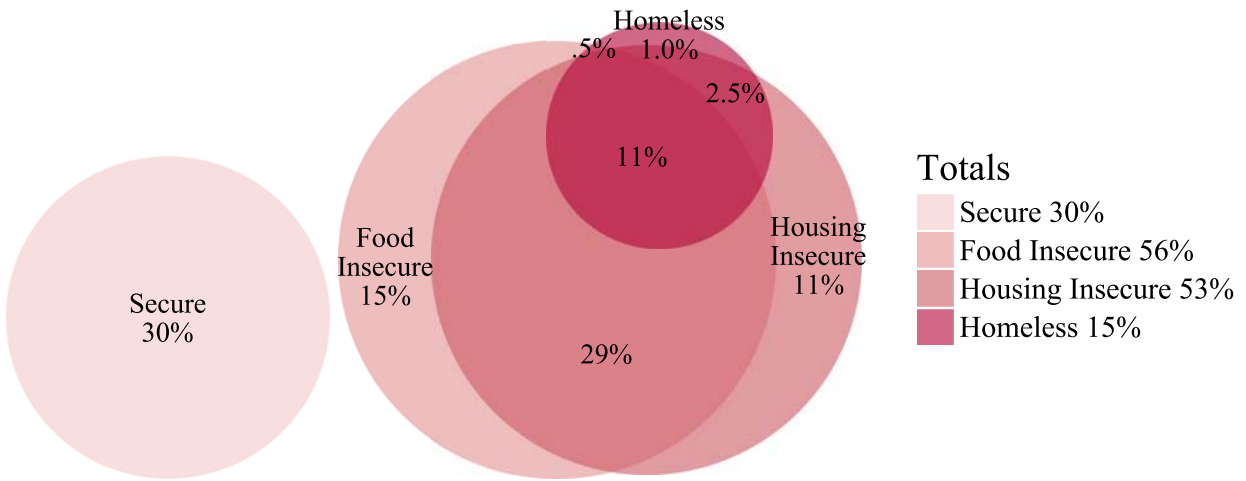
## Comparisons with Other Schools

In the fall of 2017, the Wisconsin HOPE Lab collected data from 13,631 students attending 33 different two-year community colleges.



## Basic Needs Insecurity Overlap

Homelessness, Housing Insecurity, and Food Insecurity are overlapping concerns, with about 70% of students at San Diego City College experiencing at least one of these forms of basic needs insecurity in the past year.



*Note* This plot only used cases in which participants provided complete data for the food insecurity, housing insecurity, and homelessness. Thus, because some participants did not answer all of the questions on the questionnaire, percentages in this plot may differ slightly from other estimates when only one variable was considered at a time.

## Basic Needs by Subgroups

The tables and figures in this section present measures of food insecurity, housing insecurity, and homelessness for various demographic groups. In this section, any category with fewer than 25 participants was removed from any plots in which it might otherwise have appeared.

### Gender

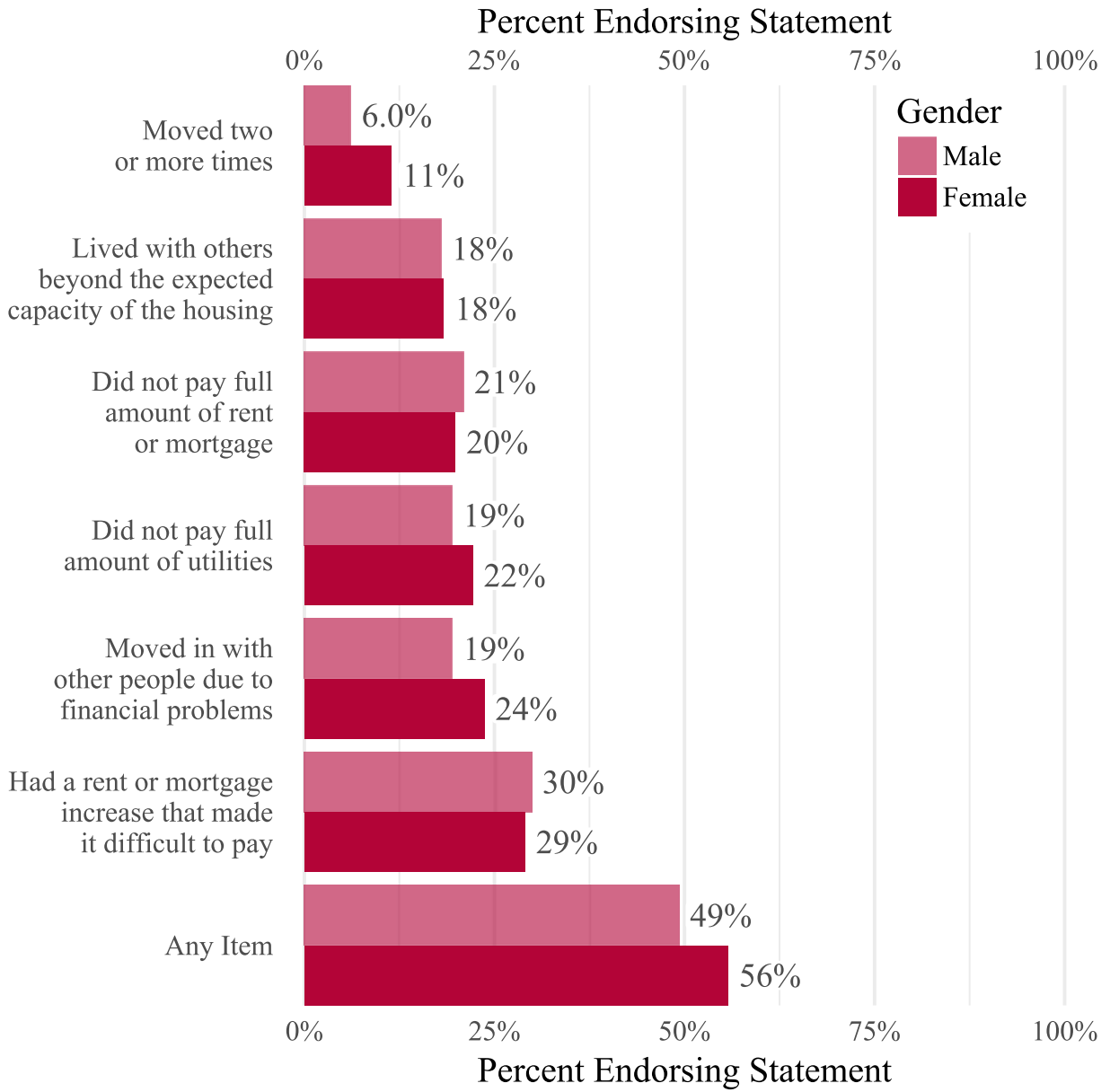
How does each student self-identify?

*Note:* The term *Non-Binary* is used here to refer to a wide range of gender identities including transsexual, gender fluid, third gender, and many others.

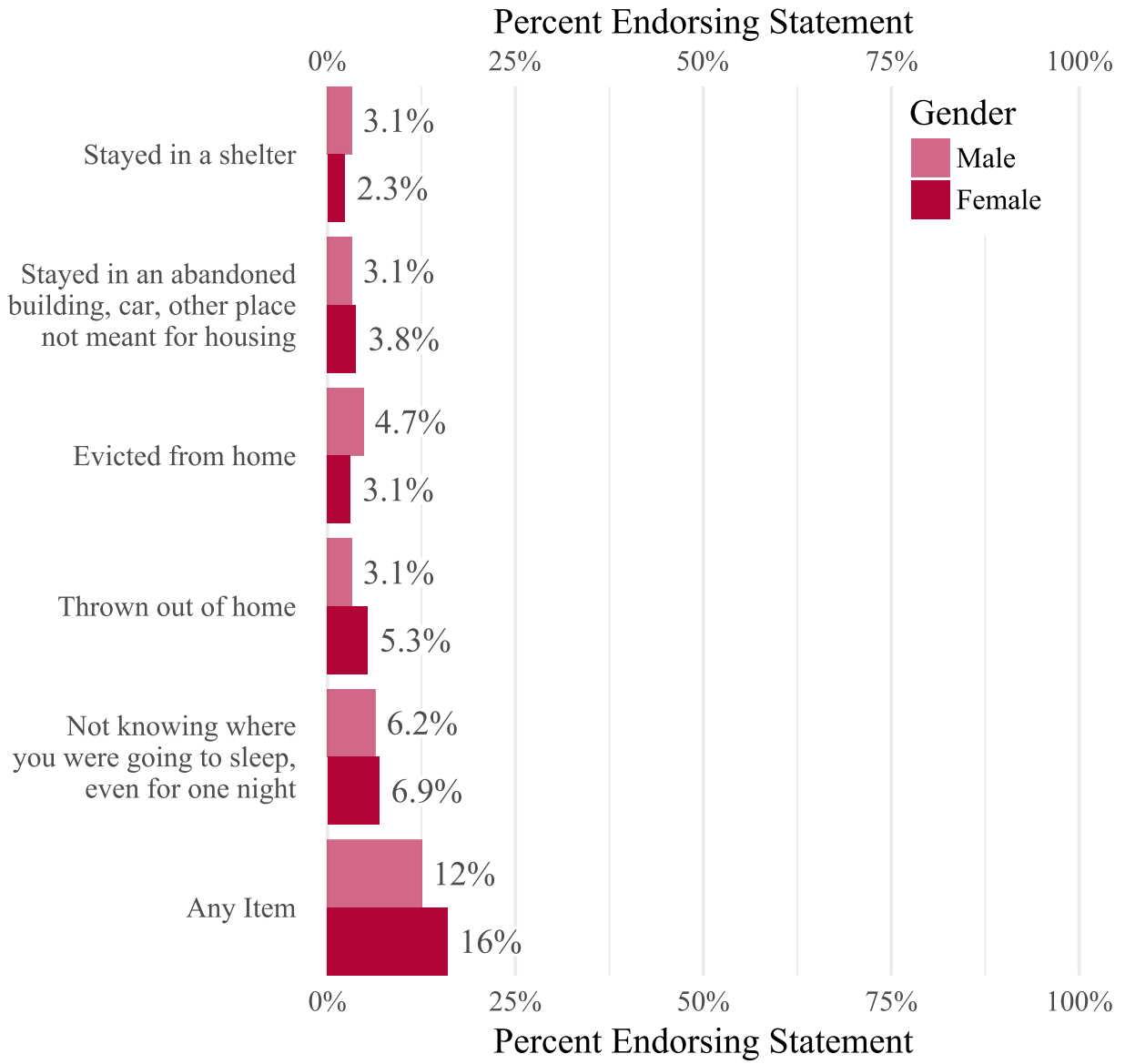
Gender	<i>n</i>	Percent
Male	67	33.3%
Female	131	65.2%
Non-Binary	3	1.5%

### Housing Insecurity by Gender



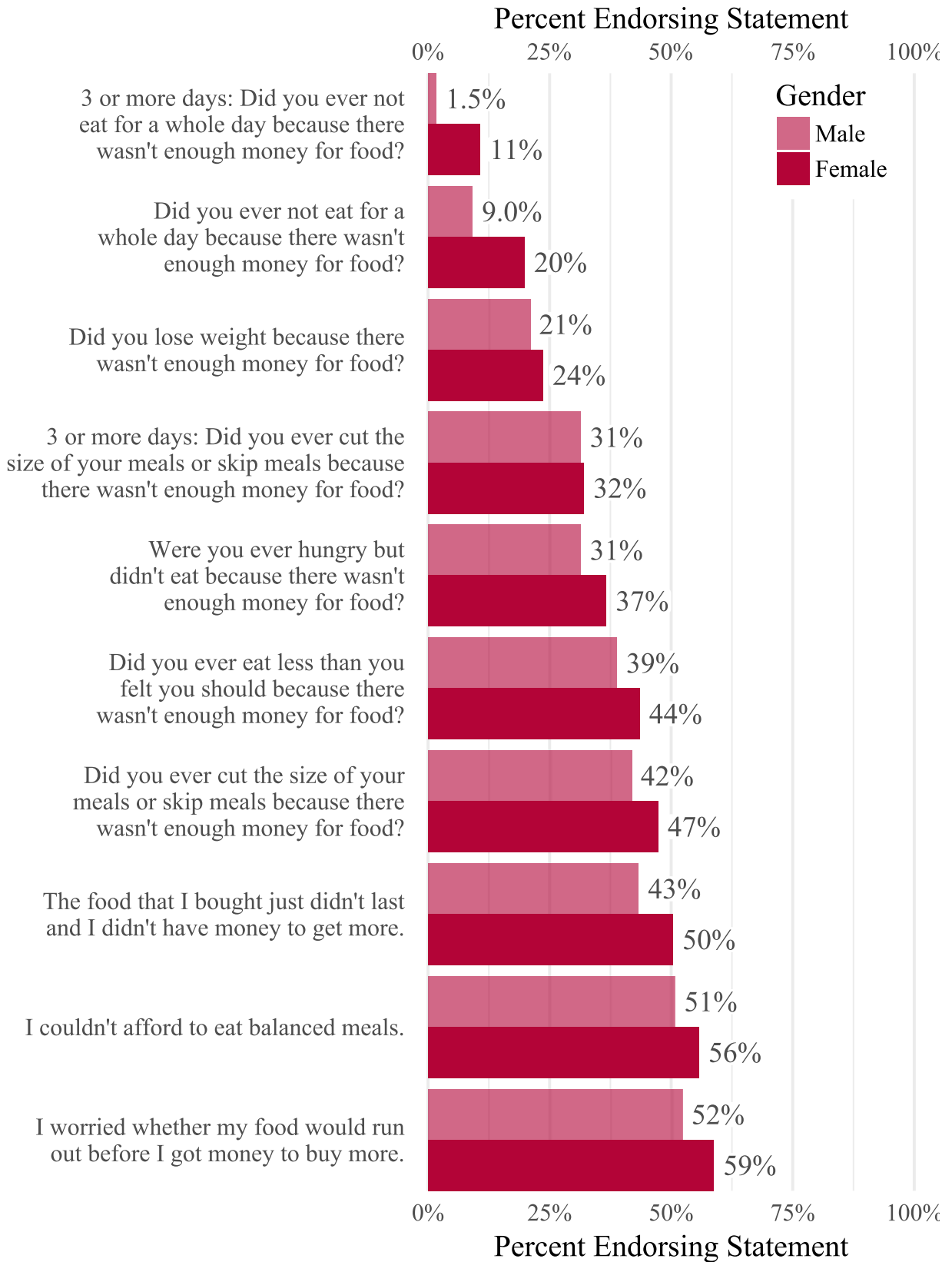


## Homelessness by Gender

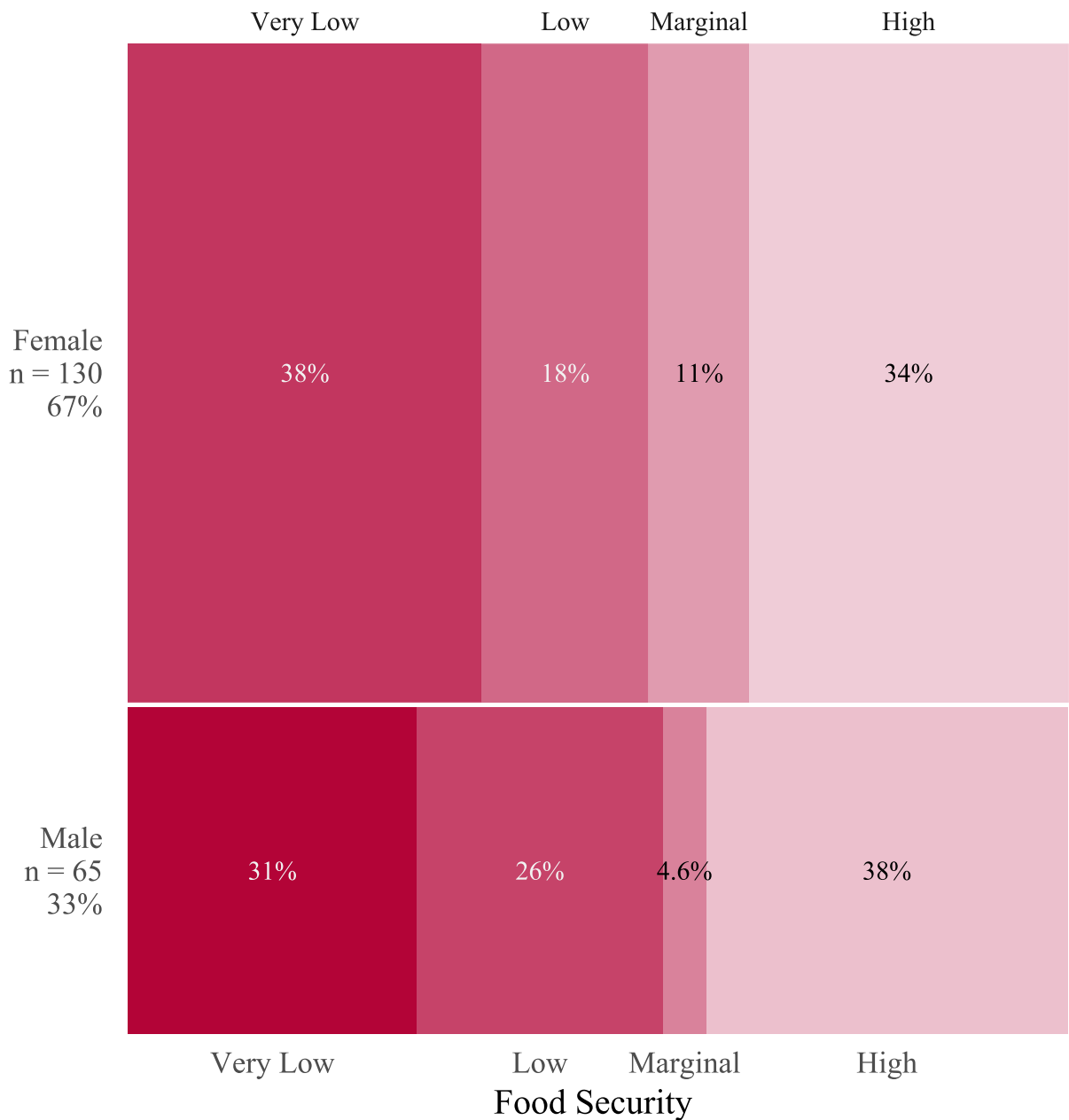


## Food Insecurity by Gender

Food Security Questions



Food Insecurity Categories



## Race/Ethnicity

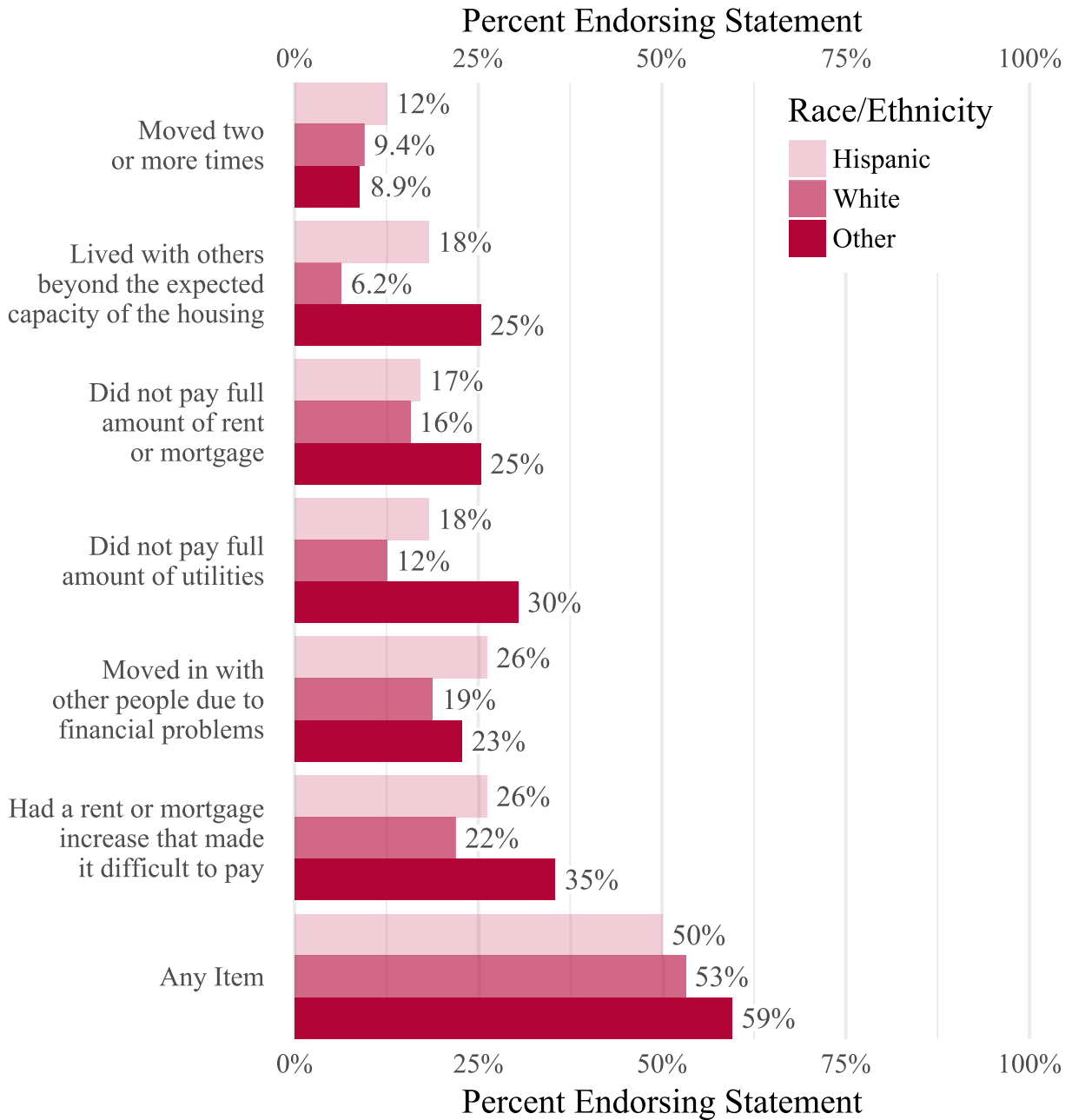
How does each student self-identify?

*Note:* All groups with fewer than 25 participants were combined into the *Other* category, which also includes individuals who identified as belonging to more than one racial/ethnic group.

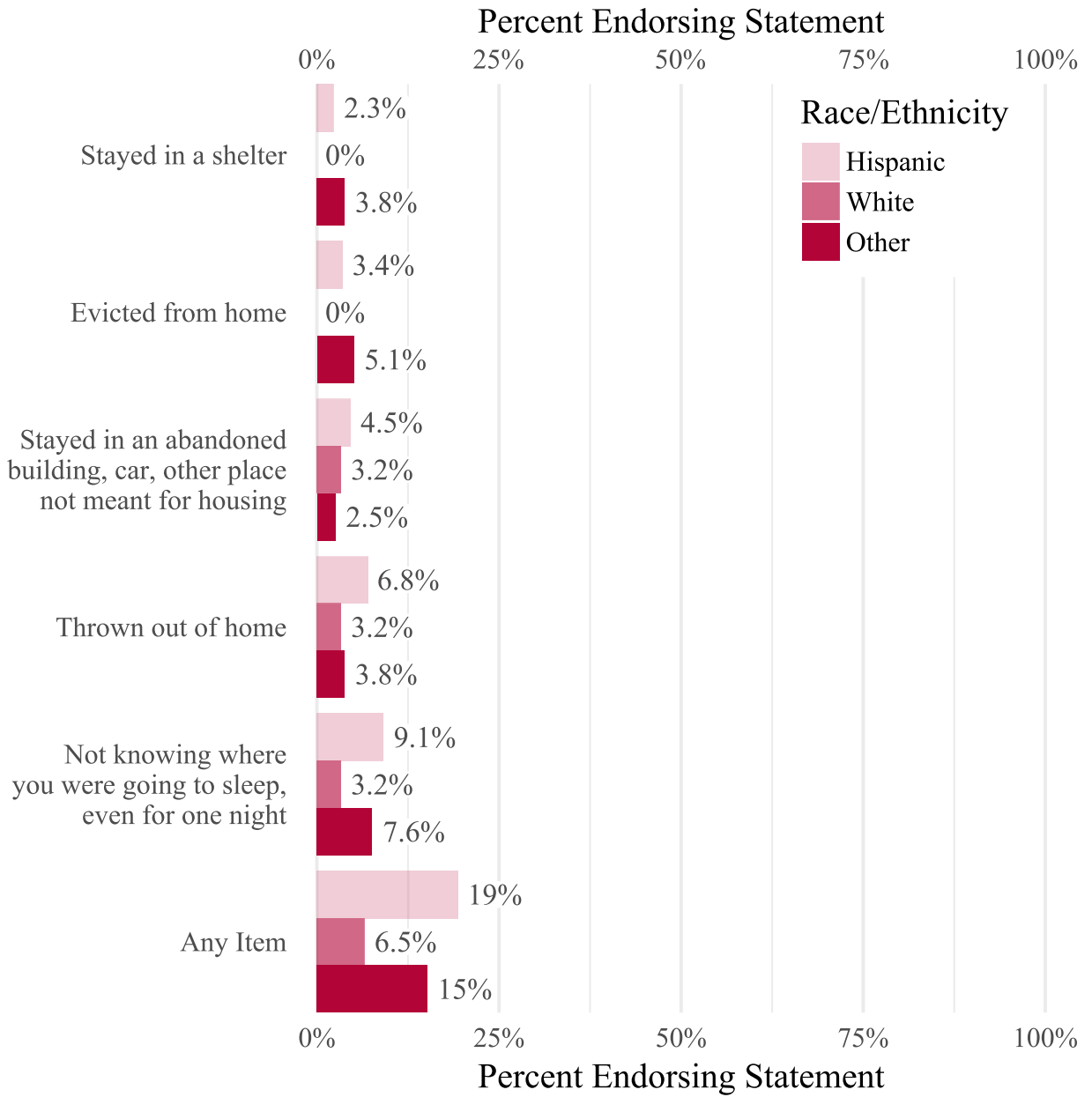
Race/Ethnicity	<i>n</i>	Percent
Black	14	7.0%
Native American	1	0.5%
Hispanic	88	44.2%

Race/Ethnicity	<i>n</i>	Percent
Middle-Eastern/Arab	3	1.5%
Asian	13	6.5%
White	32	16.1%
Mixed/Other	48	24.1%

## Housing Insecurity by Race/Ethnicity

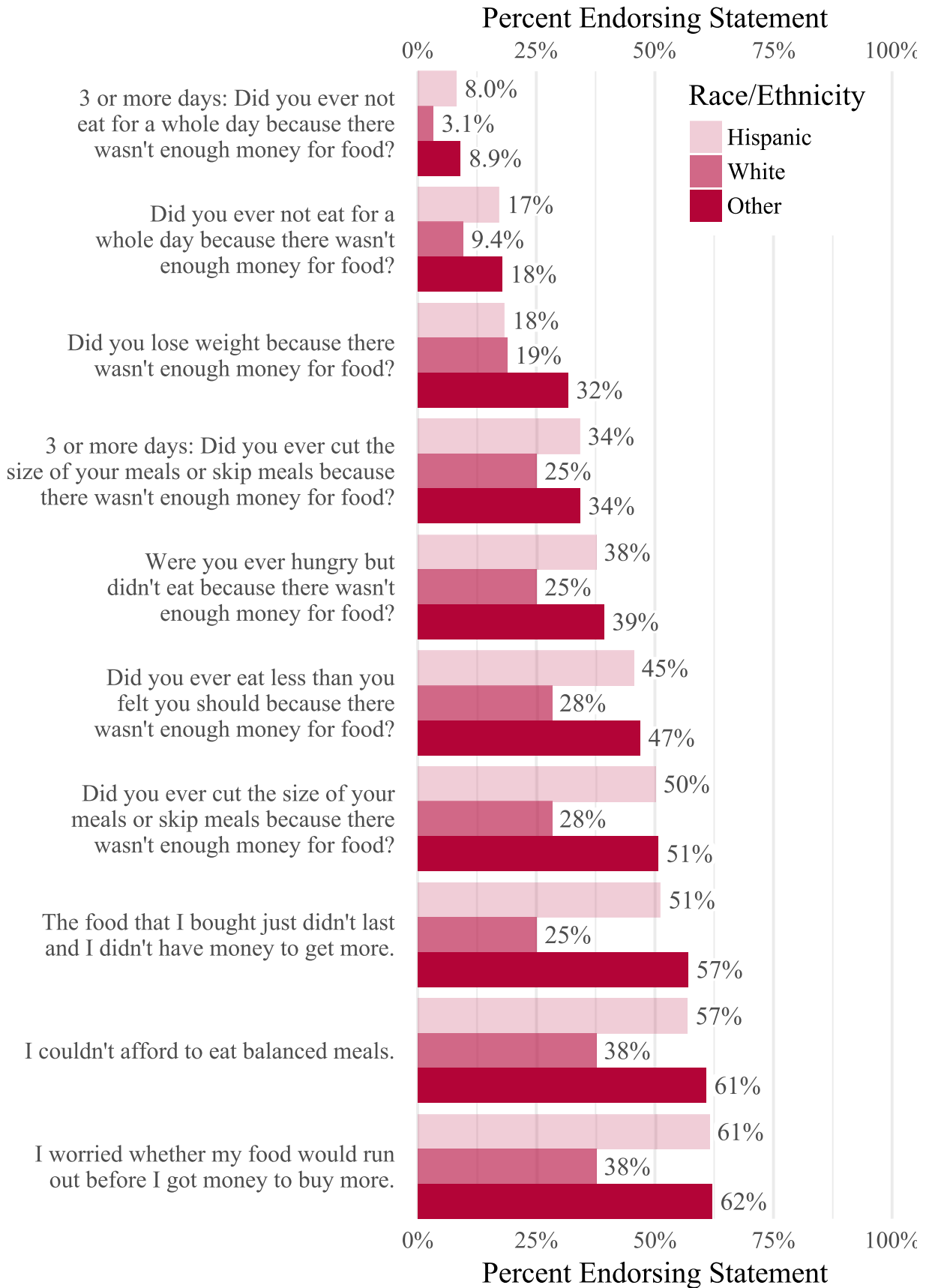


## Homelessness by Race/Ethnicity

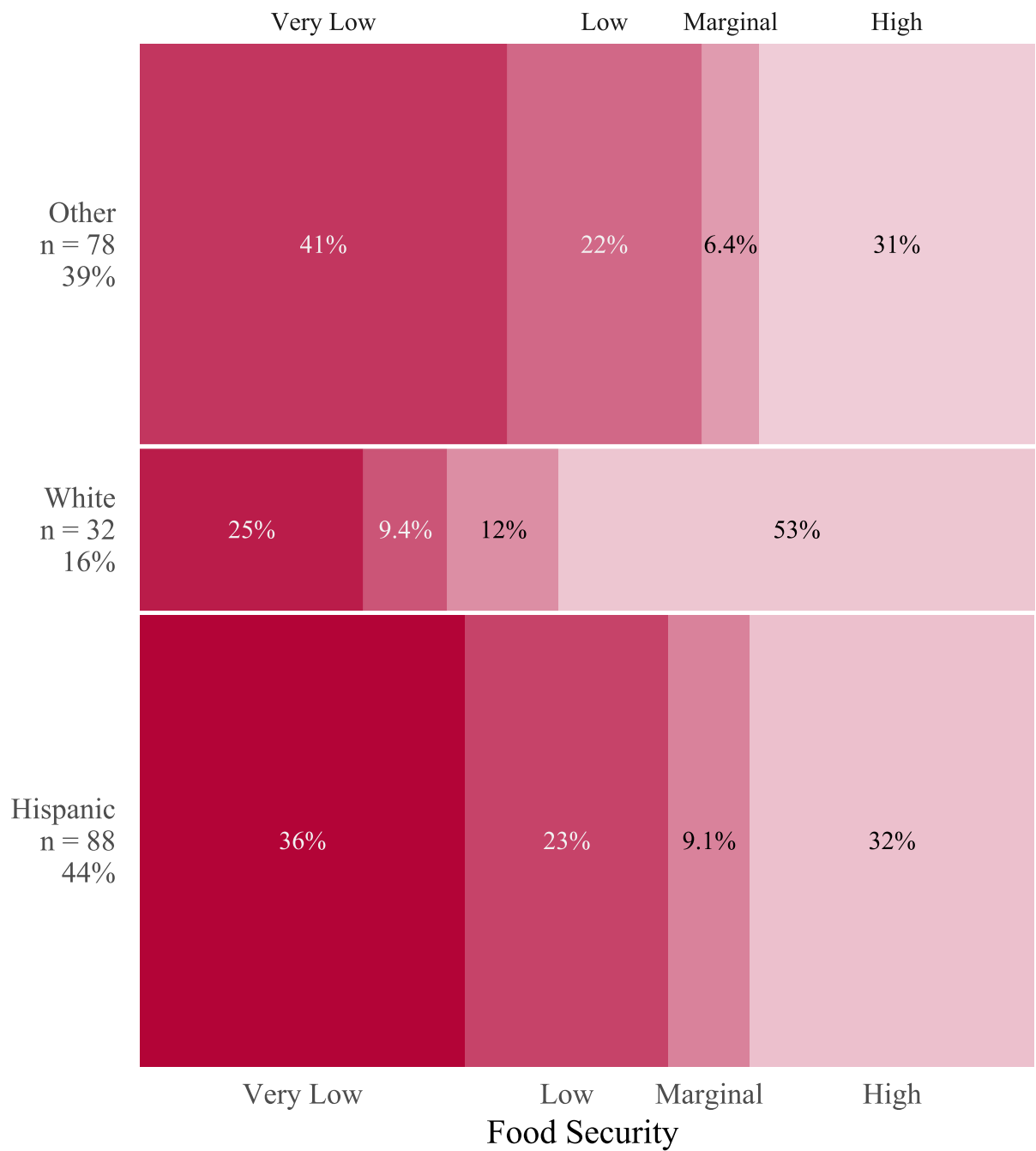


## Food Insecurity by Race/Ethnicity

Food Security Questions



Food Insecurity Categories



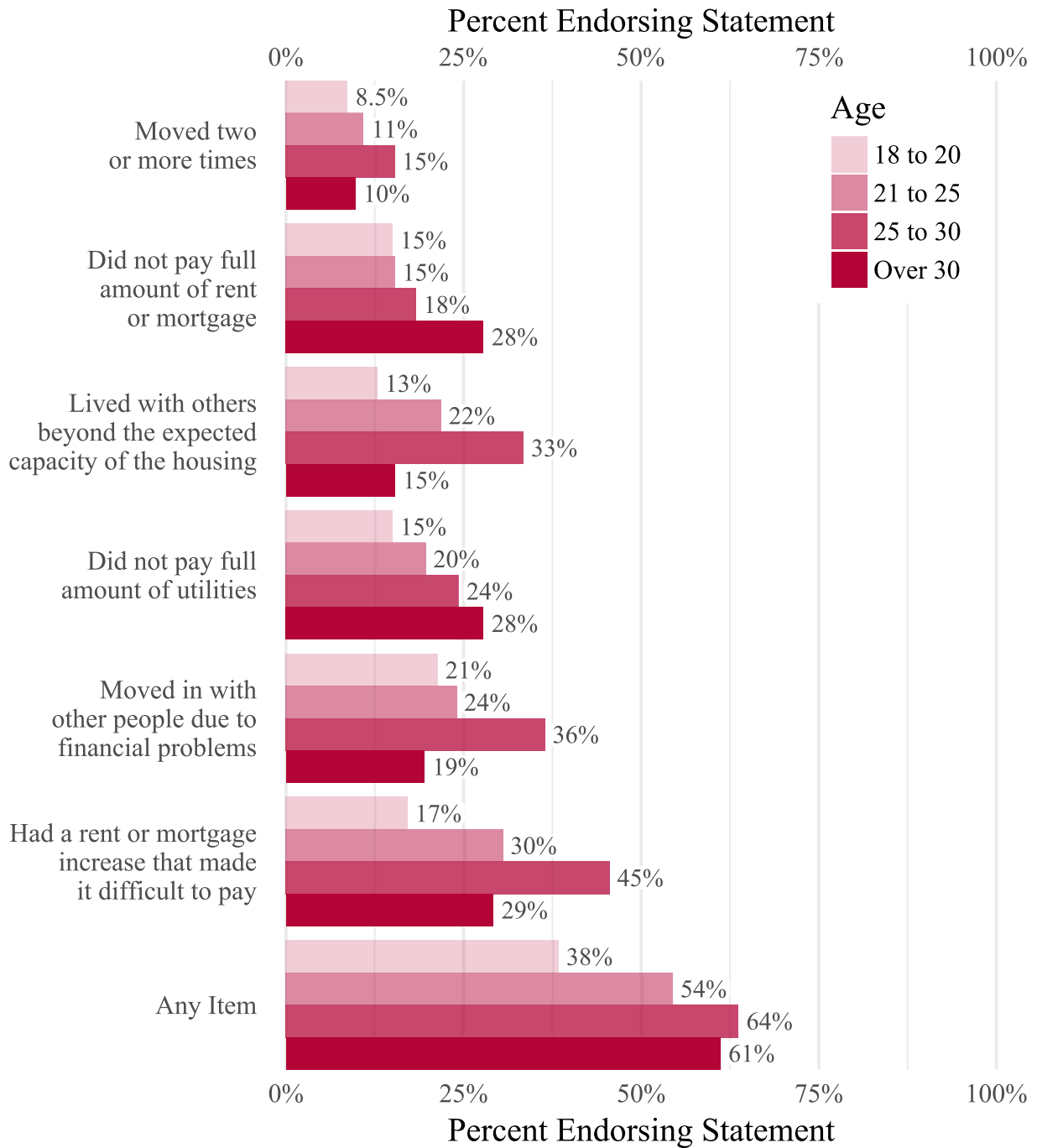
## Age

Age in Fall 2017

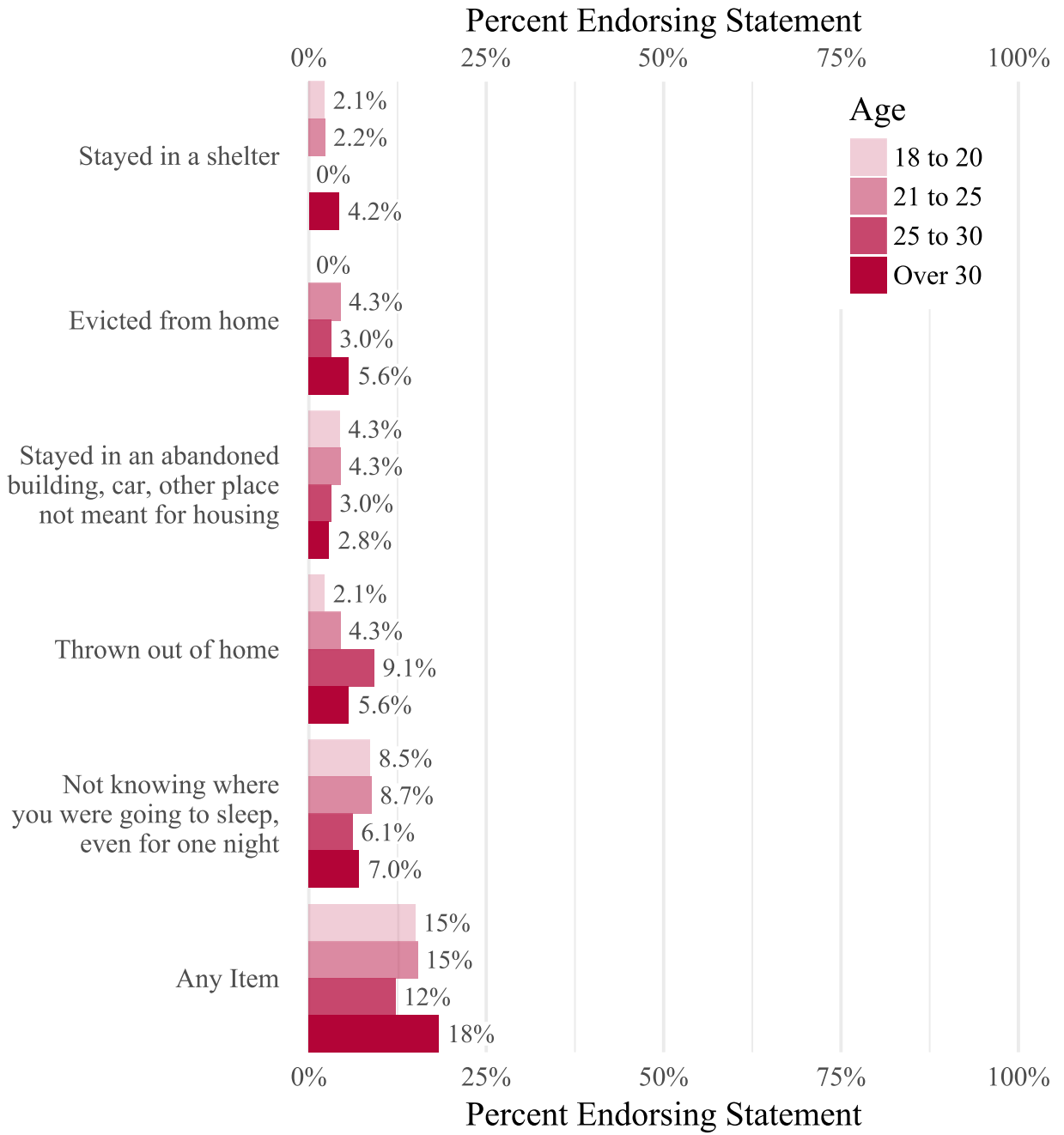
Age	<i>n</i>	Percent
18 to 20	47	23.7%
21 to 25	46	23.2%
25 to 30	33	16.7%
Over 30	72	36.4%



## Housing Insecurity by Age

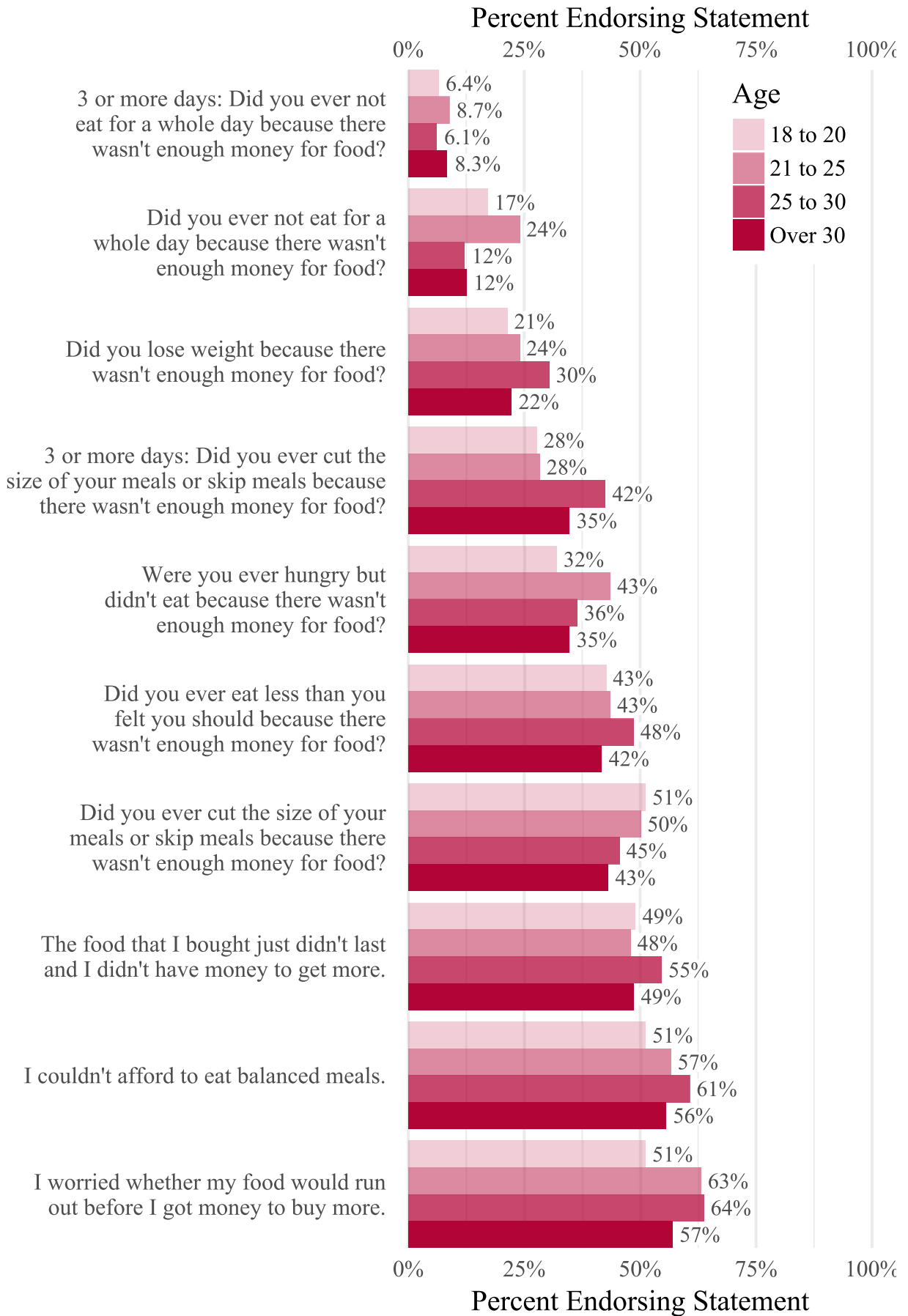


## Homelessness by Age

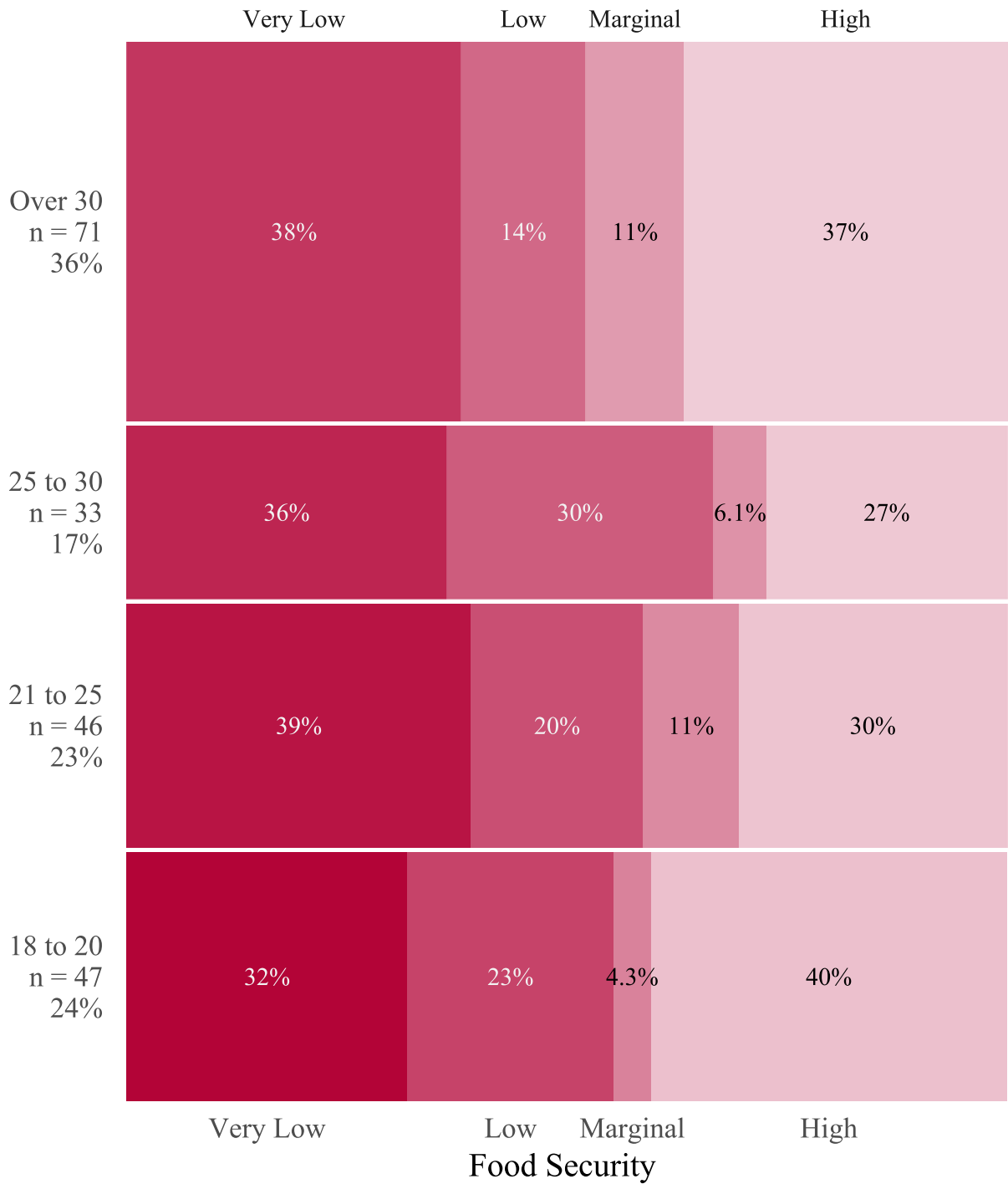


## Food Insecurity by Age

Food Security Questions



Food Insecurity Categories

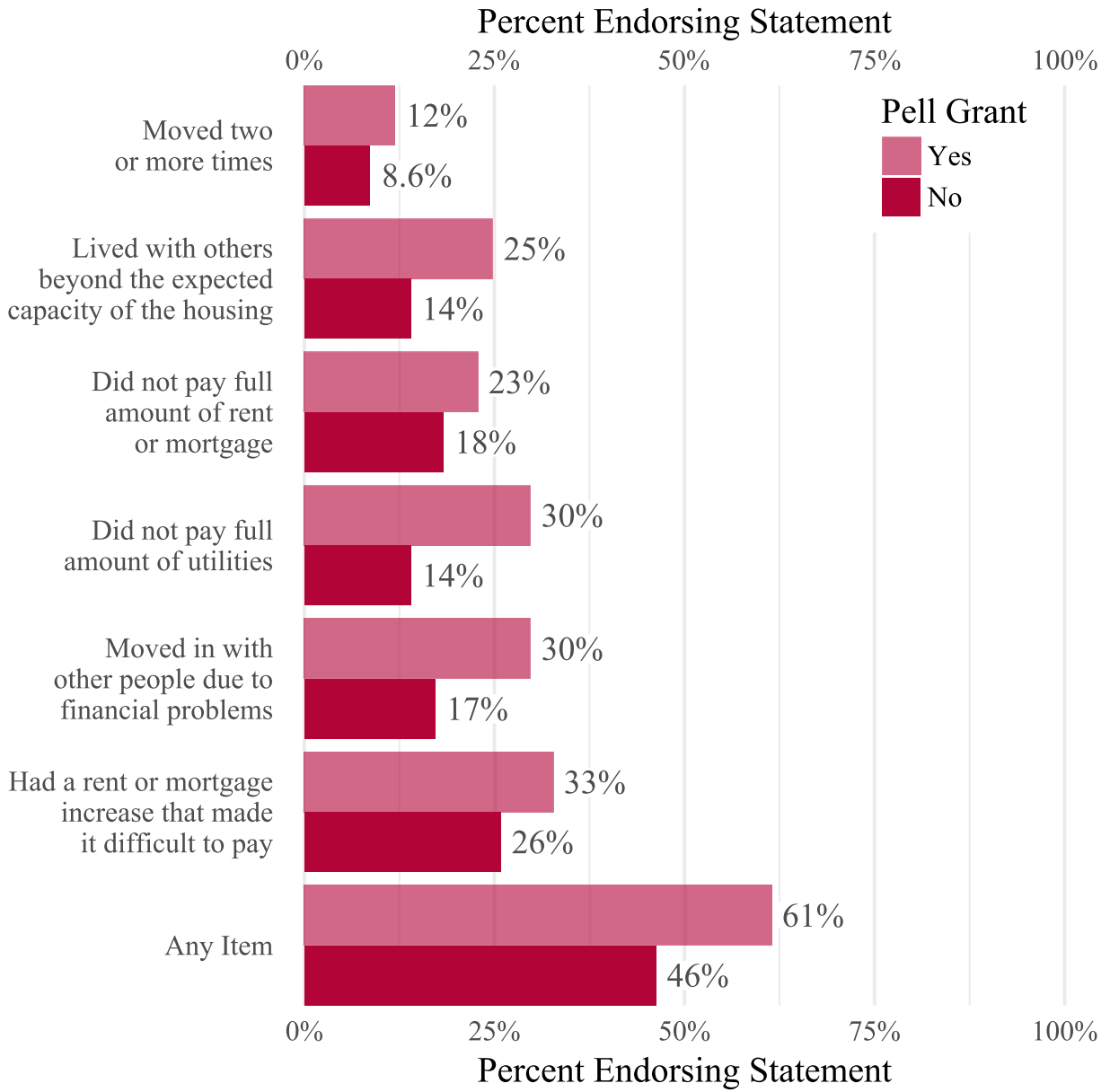


## Pell Grant

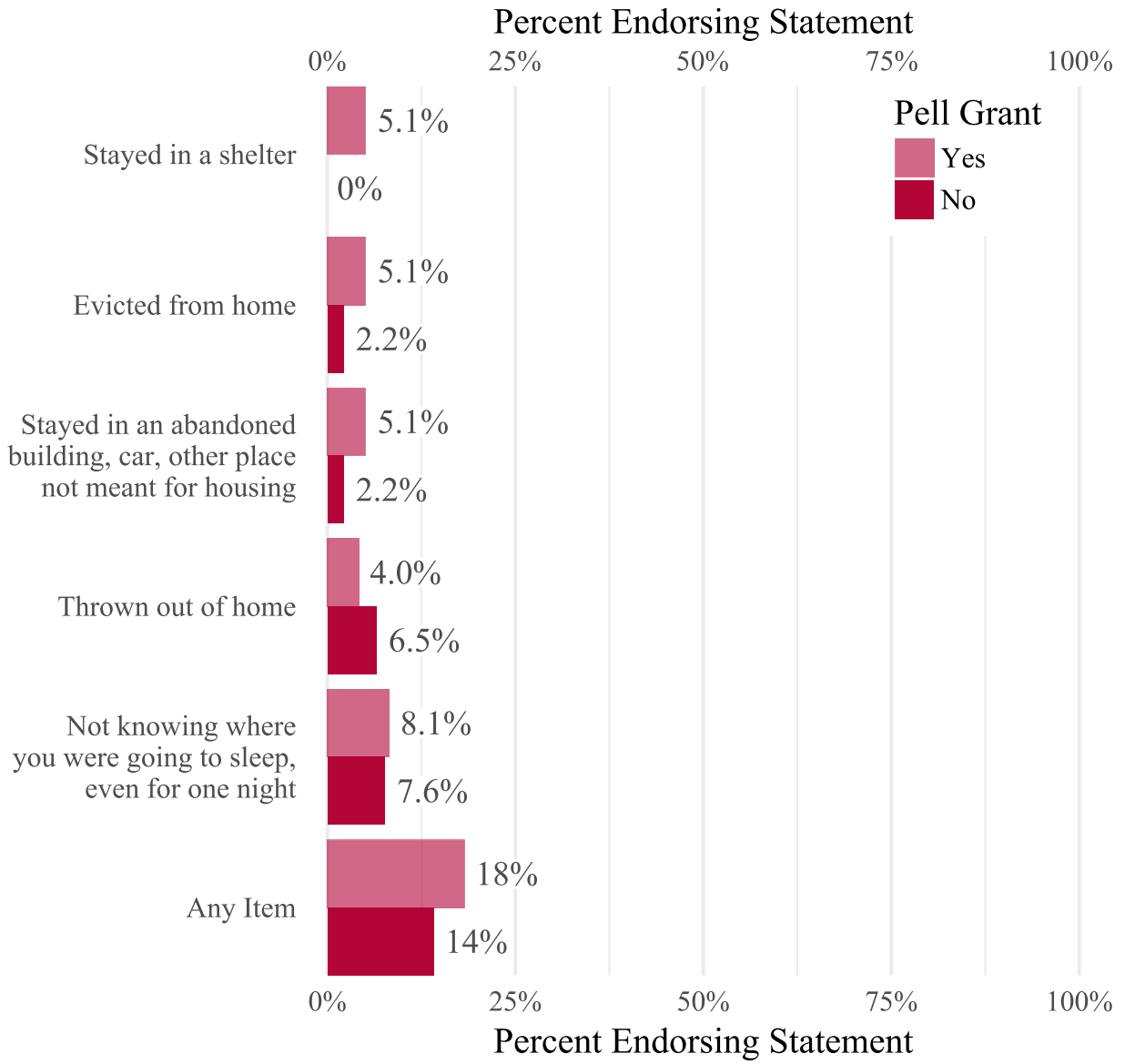
Student reports receiving Pell Grant support.

Pell Grant	<i>n</i>	Percent
Yes	117	51.5%
No	110	48.5%

## Housing Insecurity by Pell Grant

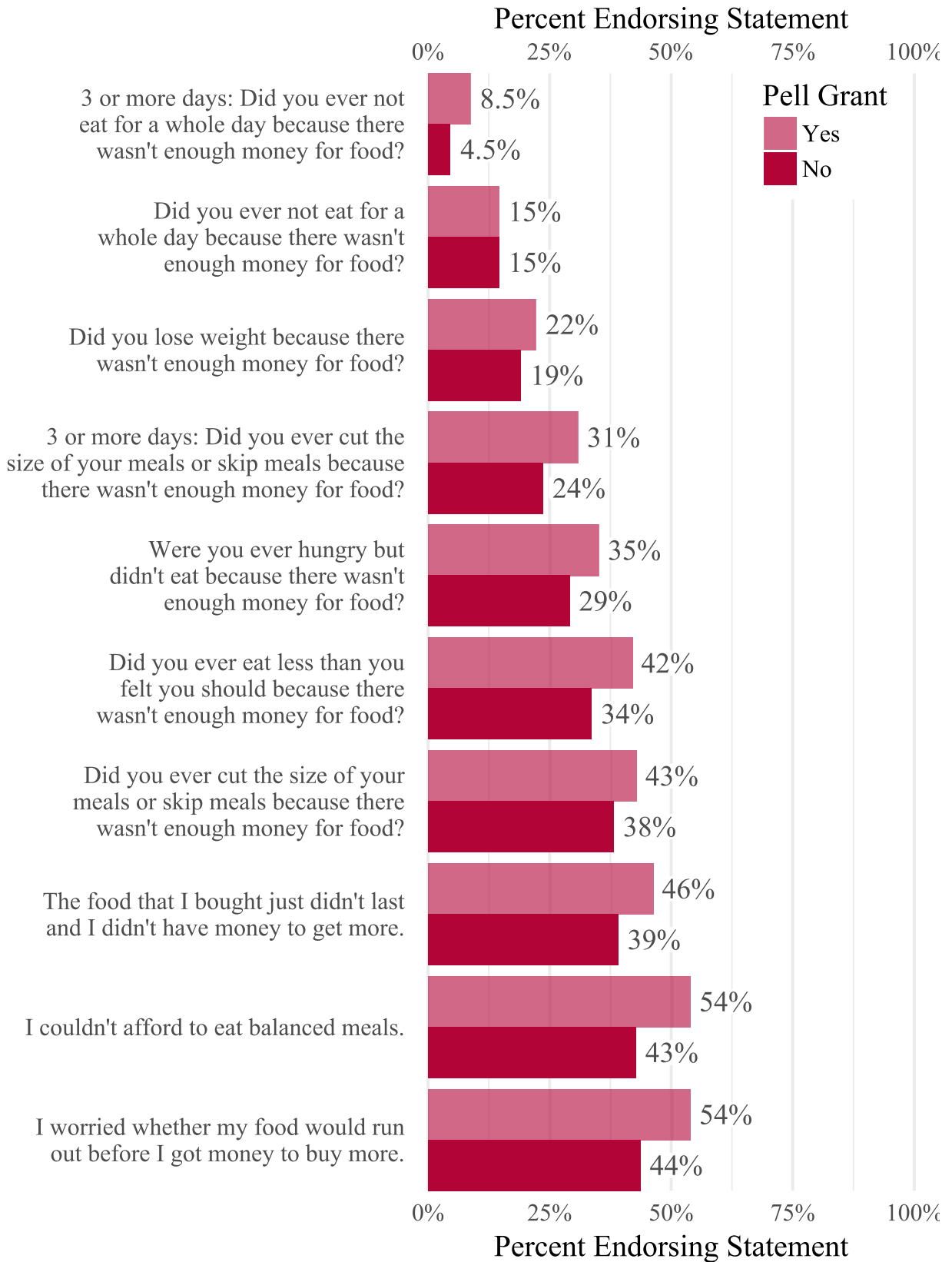


## Homelessness by Pell Grant

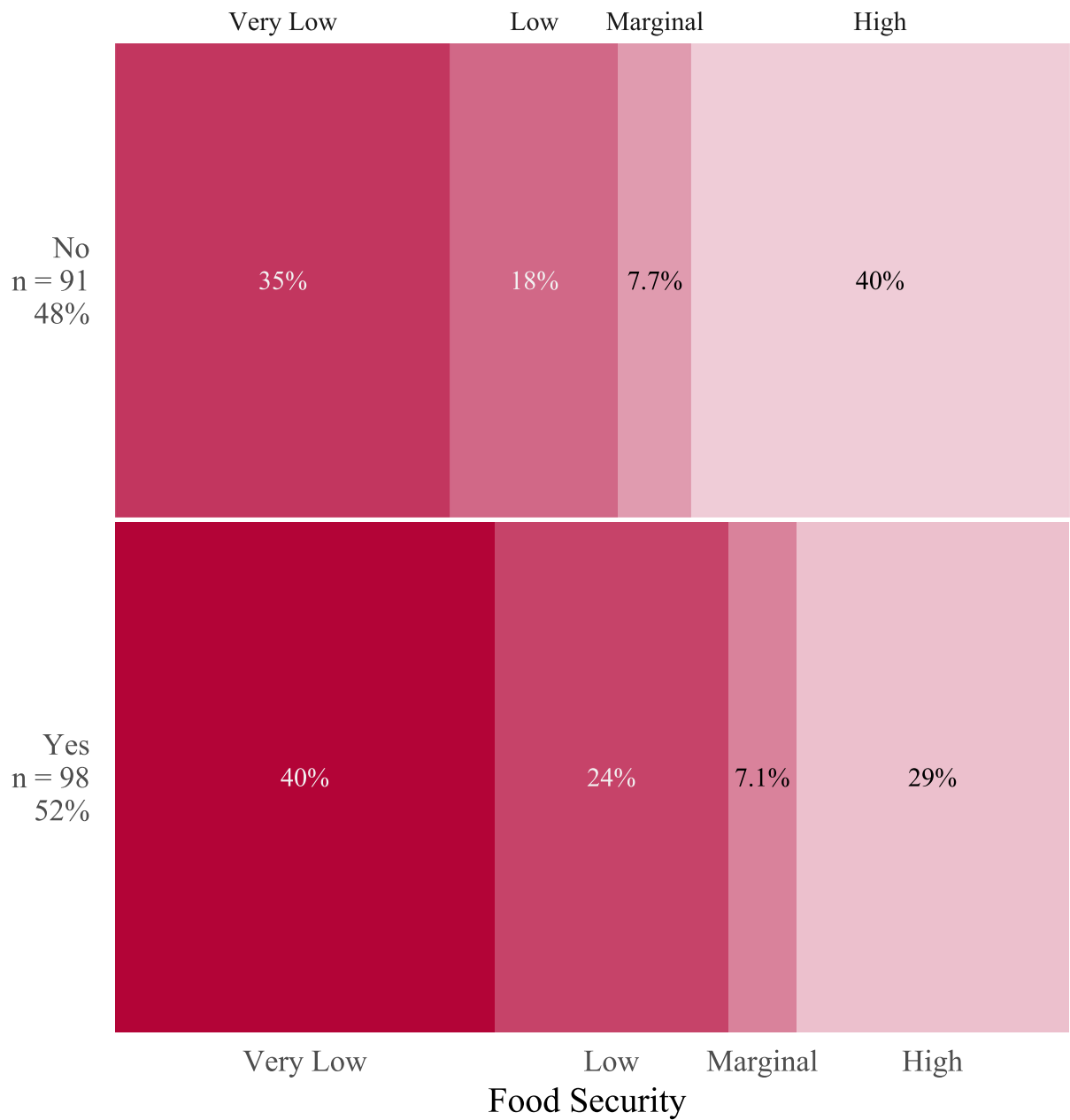


## Food Insecurity by Pell Grant

Food Security Questions



### Food Insecurity Categories



## Work

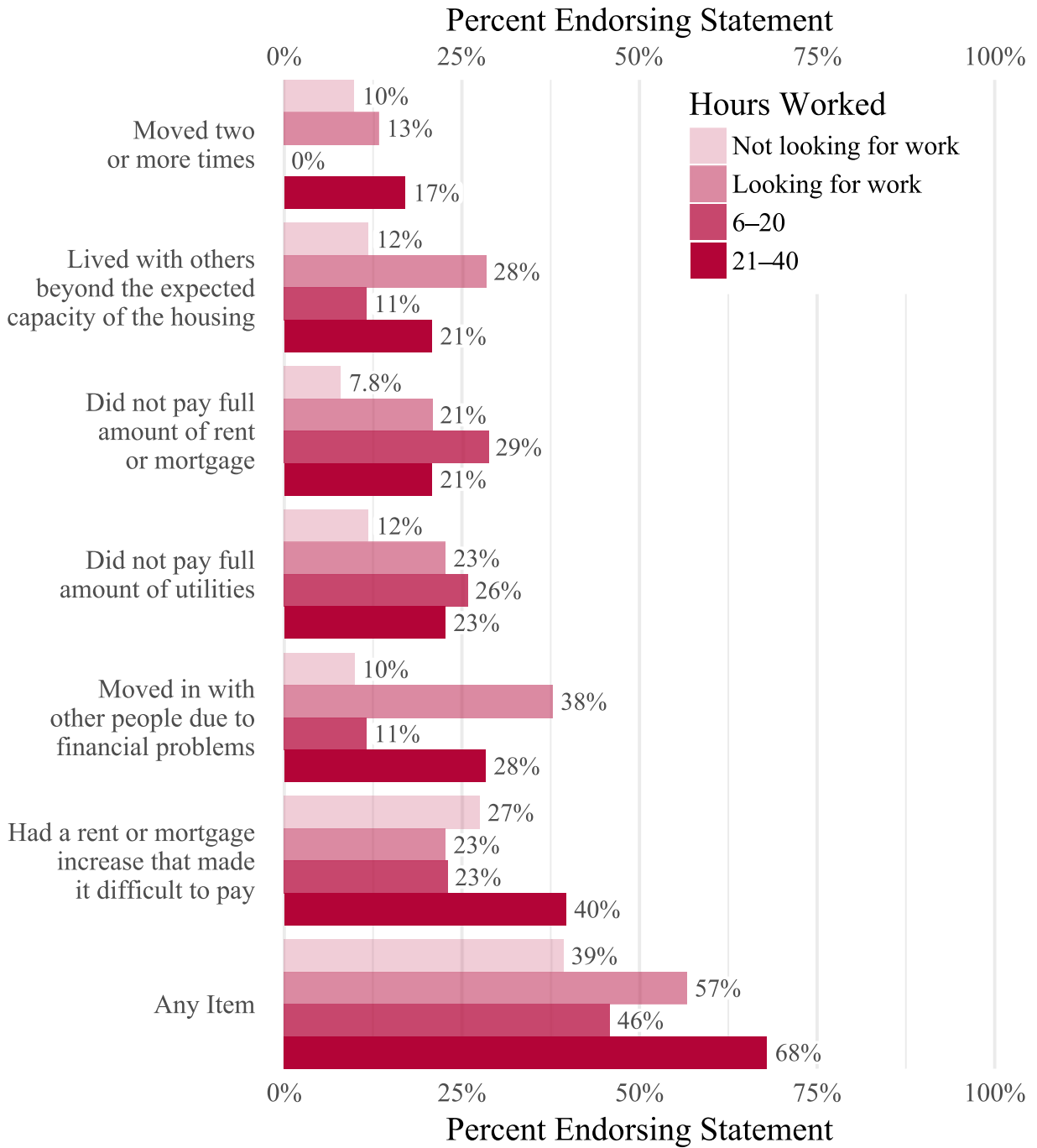
Number of hours worked per week

Hours Worked	<i>n</i>	Percent
Not looking for work	57	23.8%
Looking for work	63	26.4%
1–5	3	1.3%
6–20	39	16.3%
21–40	61	25.5%
40+	16	6.7%

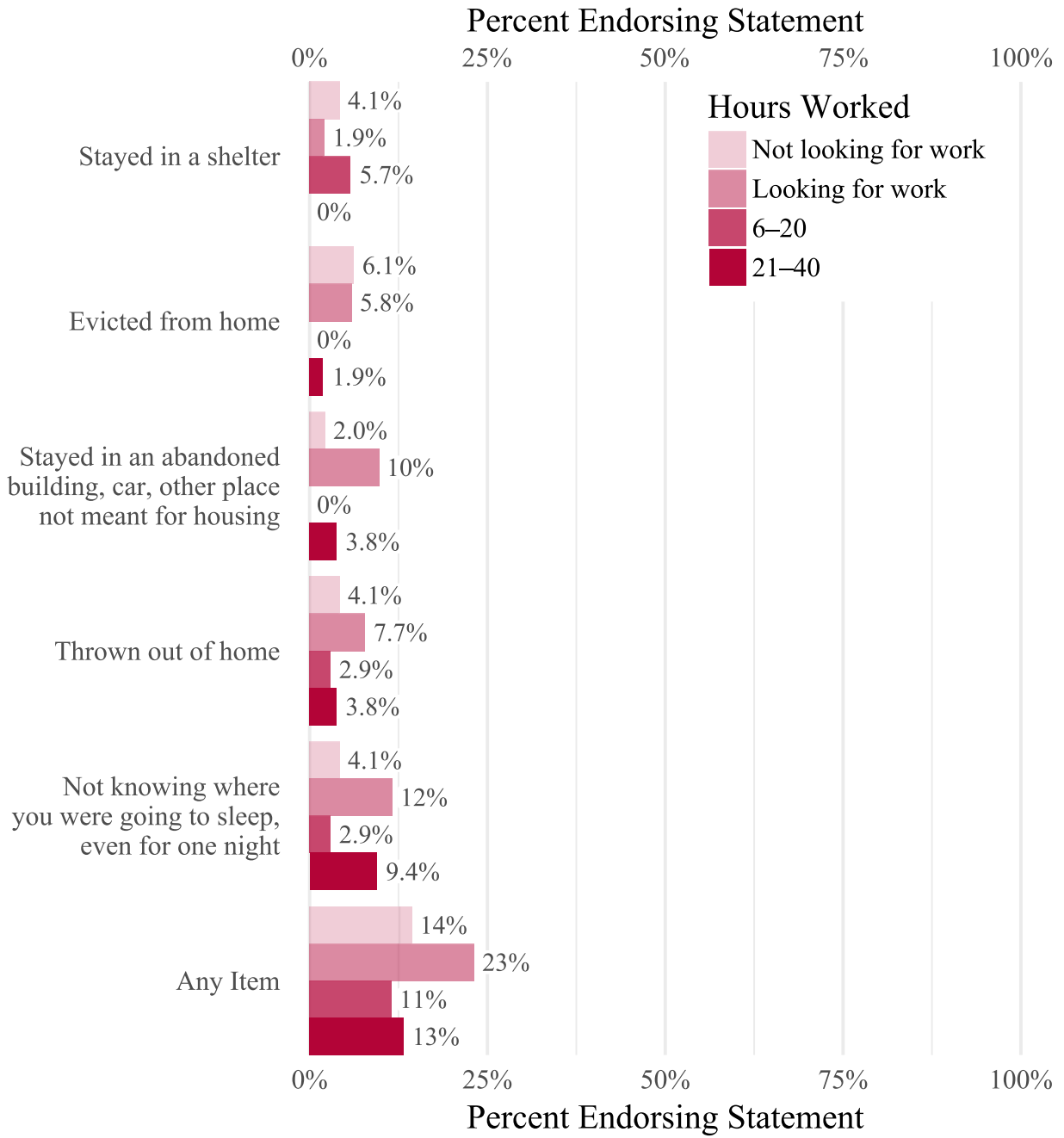


On average, students who were employed worked 28.2 hours per week.

## Housing Insecurity by Hours Worked

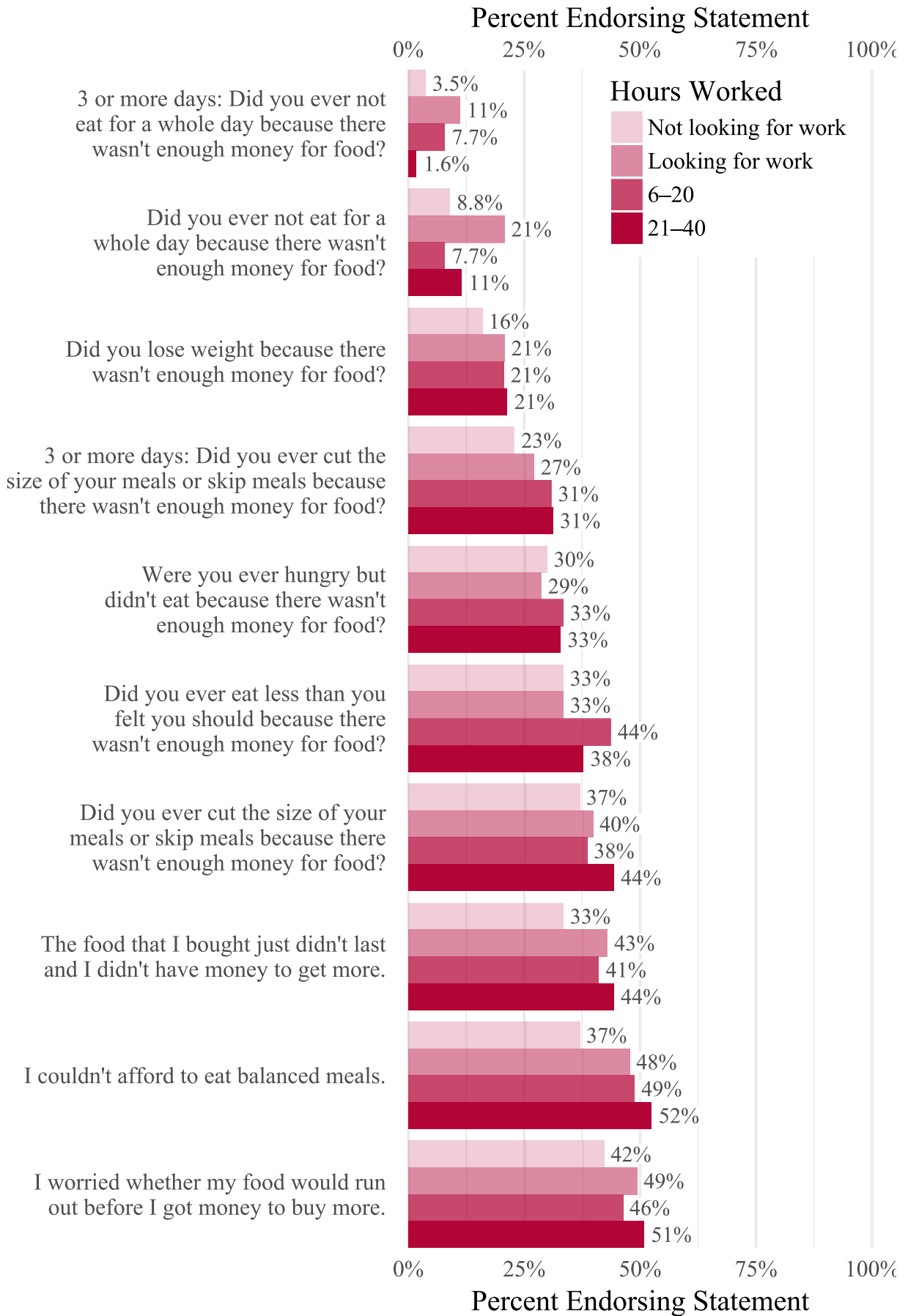


## Homelessness by Hours Worked

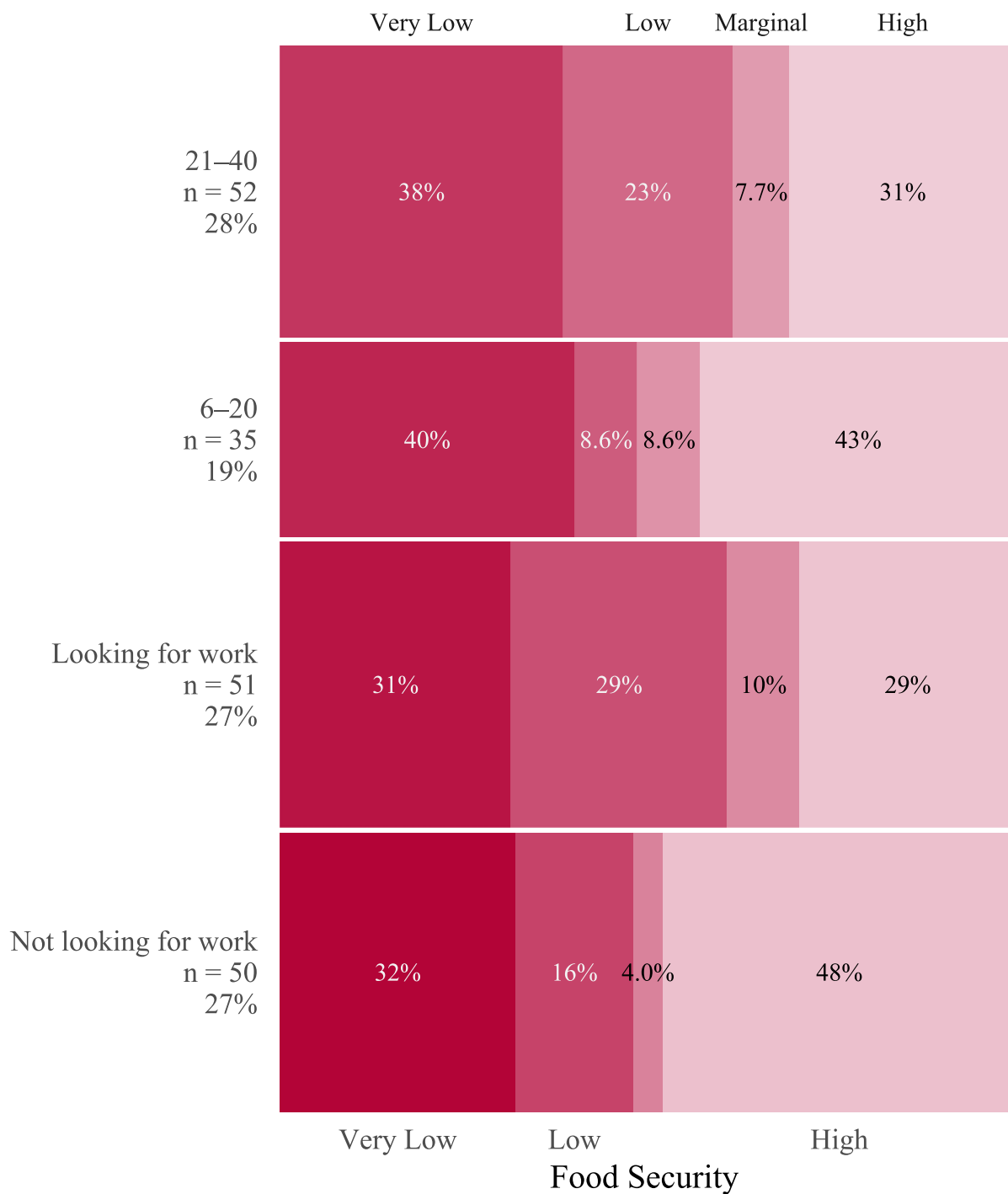


## Food Insecurity by Hours Worked

Food Security Questions



Food Insecurity Categories

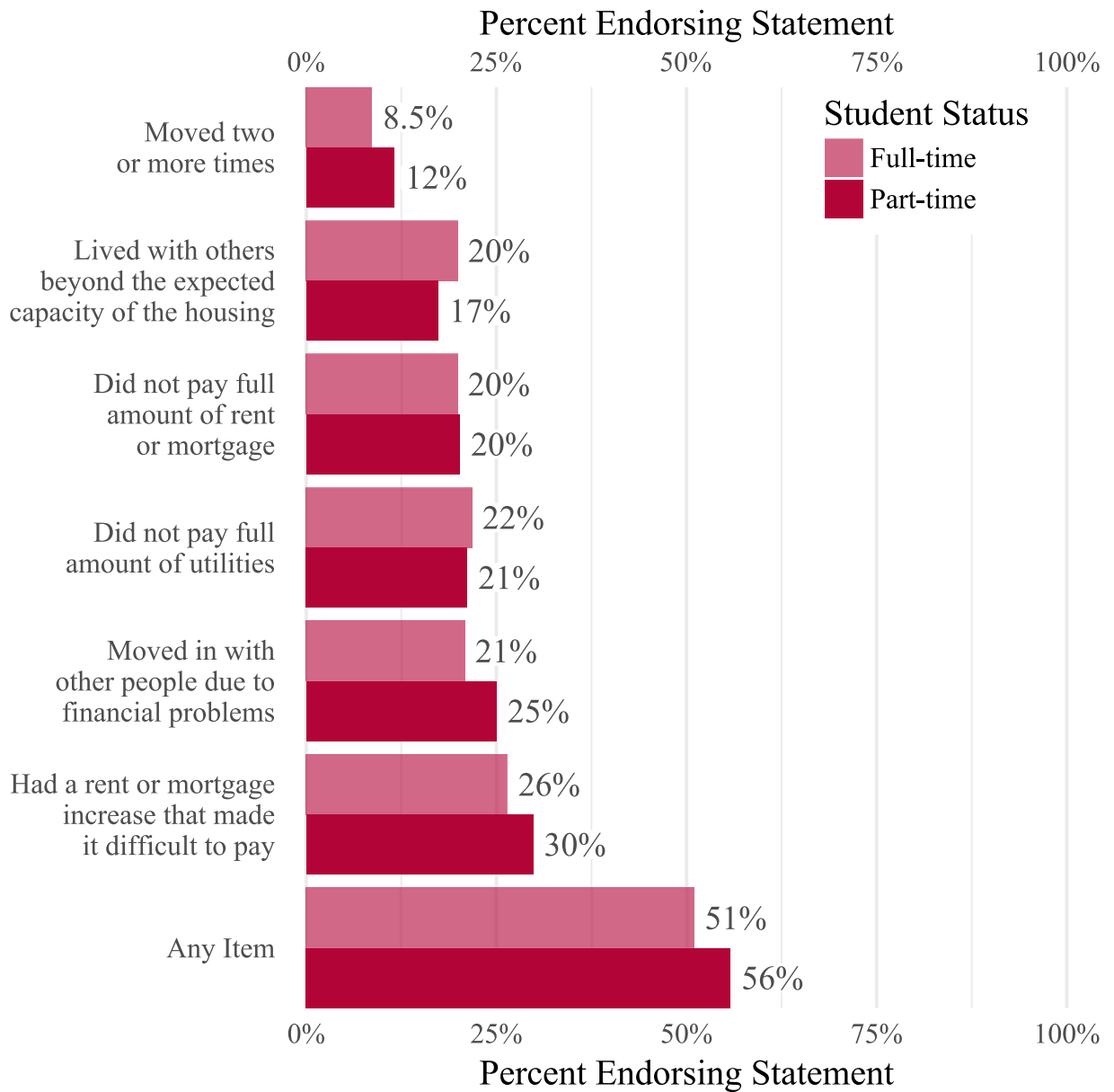


## Full Time/Part Time Status

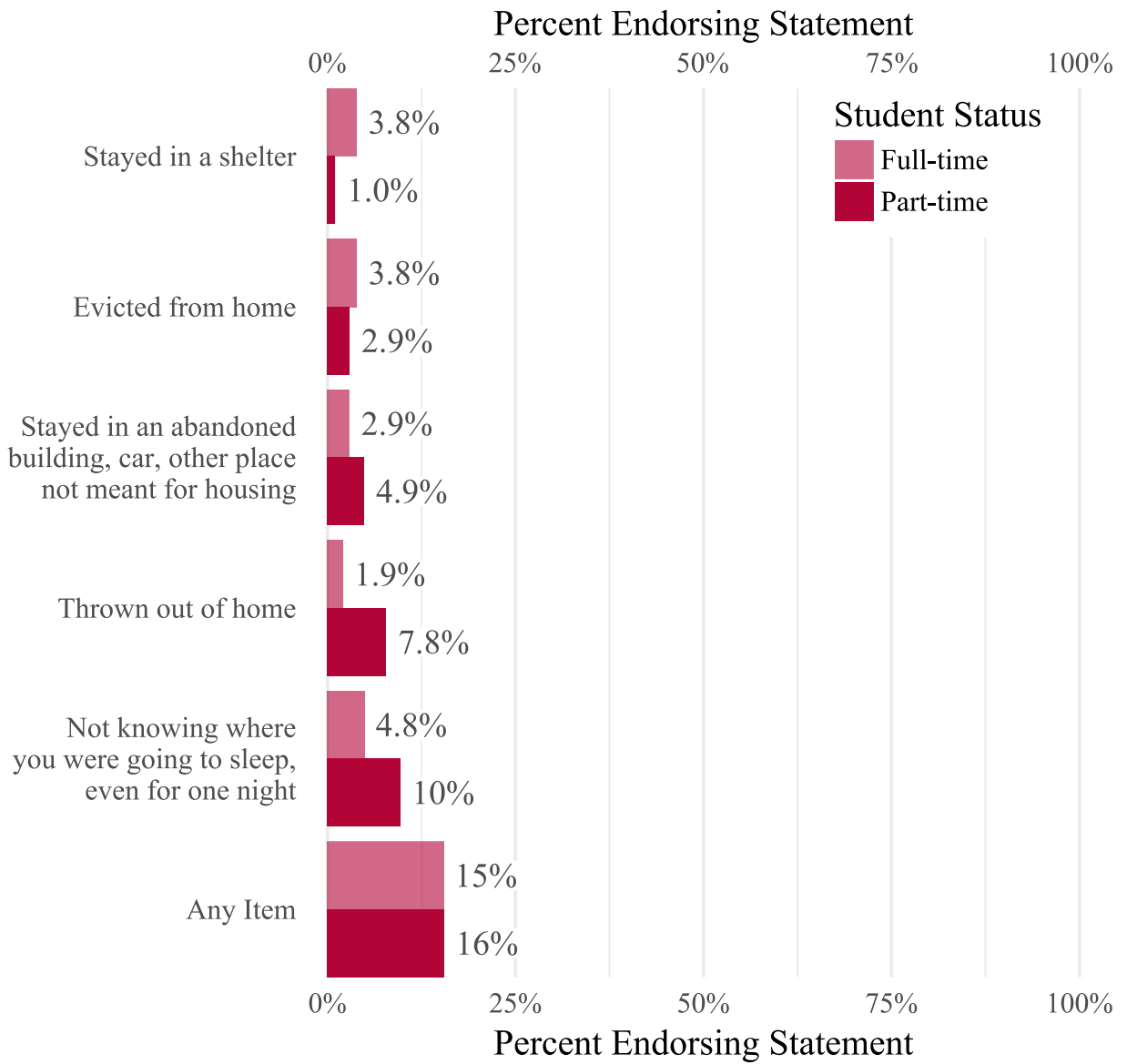
Does the student attend school full time or part time?

Student Status	<i>n</i>	Percent
Full-time	128	50.8%
Part-time	124	49.2%

## Housing Insecurity by Student Status

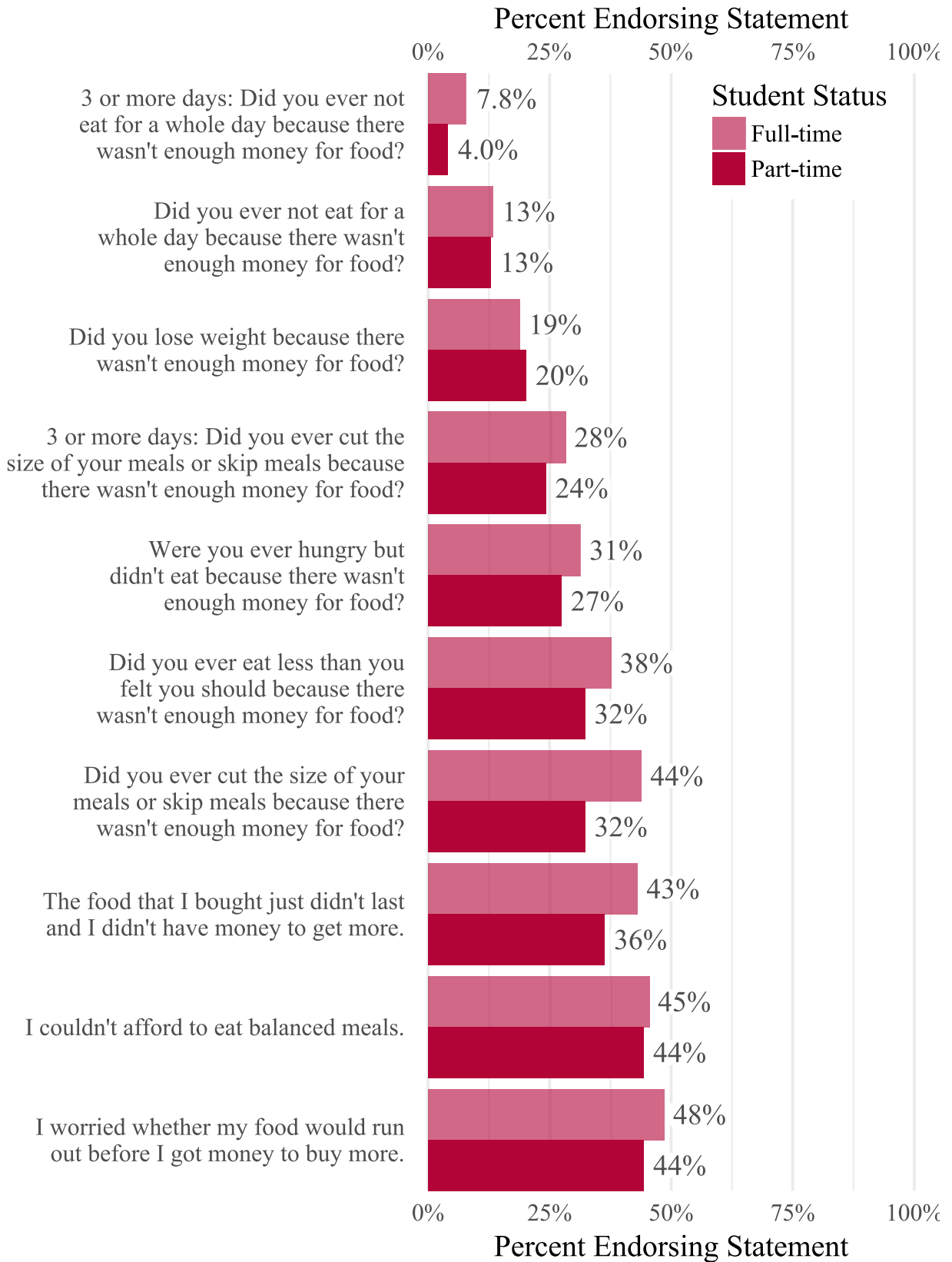


## Homelessness by Student Status

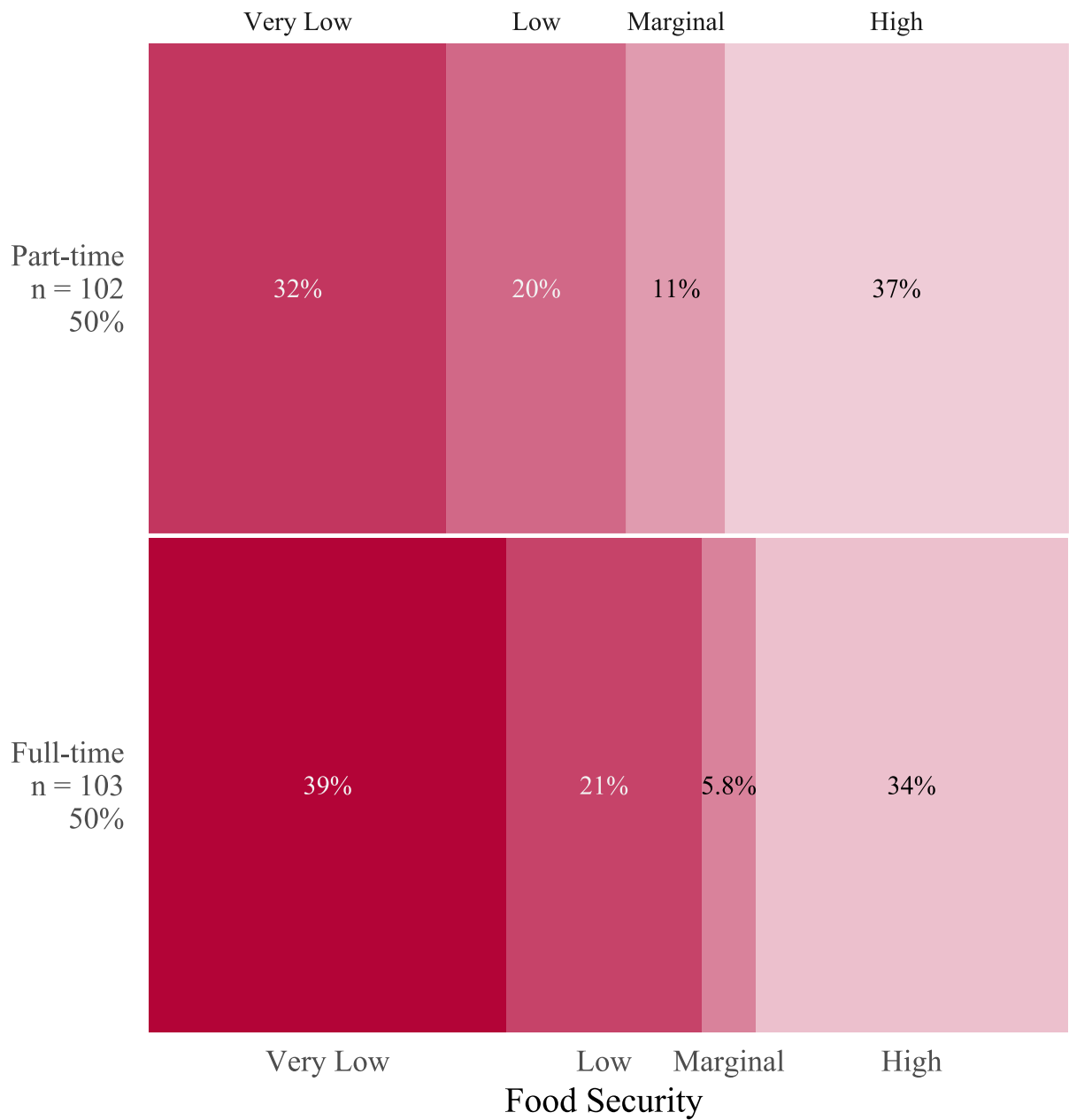


## Food Insecurity by Student Status

Food Security Questions



### Food Insecurity Categories



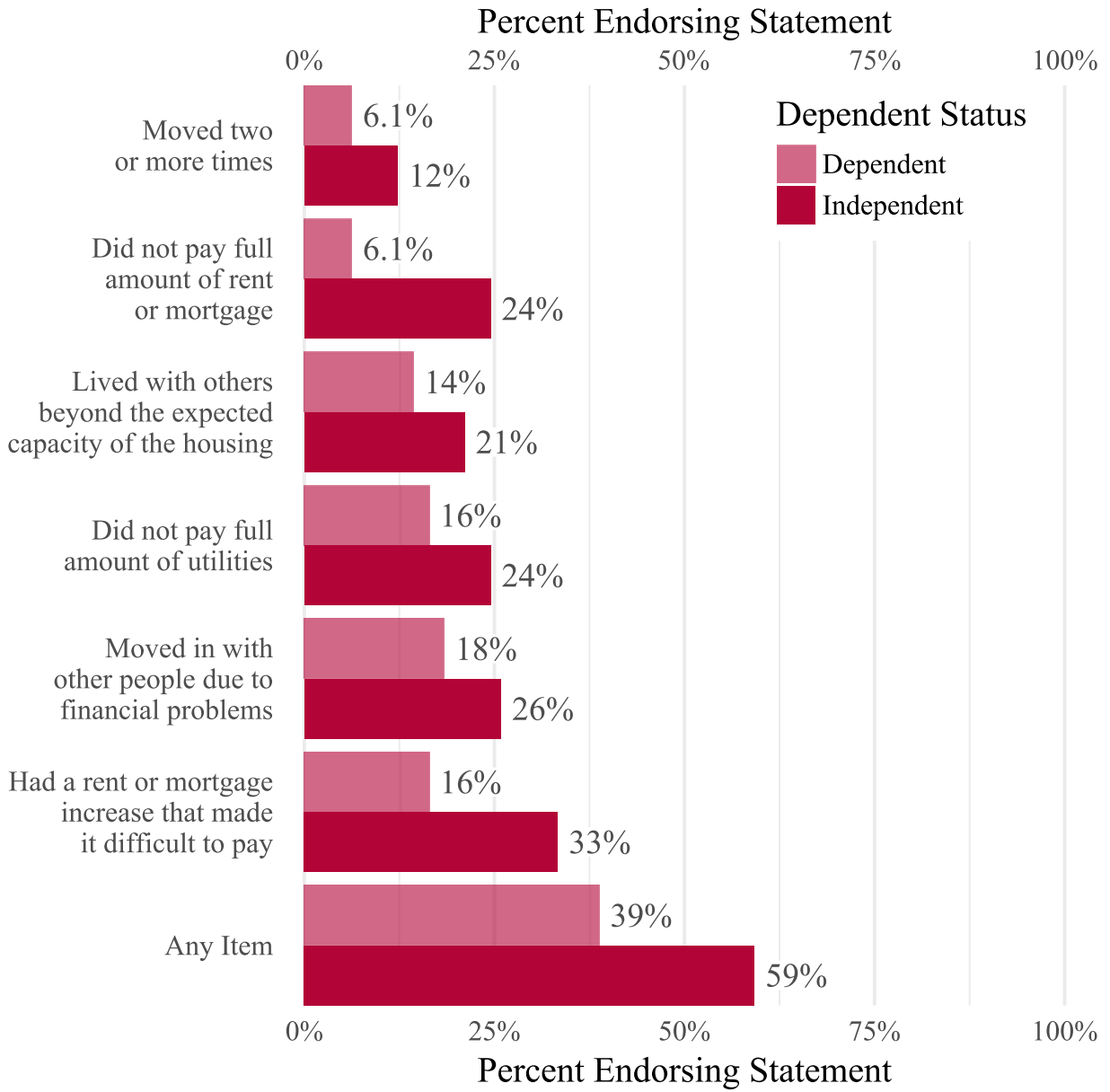
## Dependant Status

For tax purposes, is the student claimed by a parent as a dependent, or is the student independent?

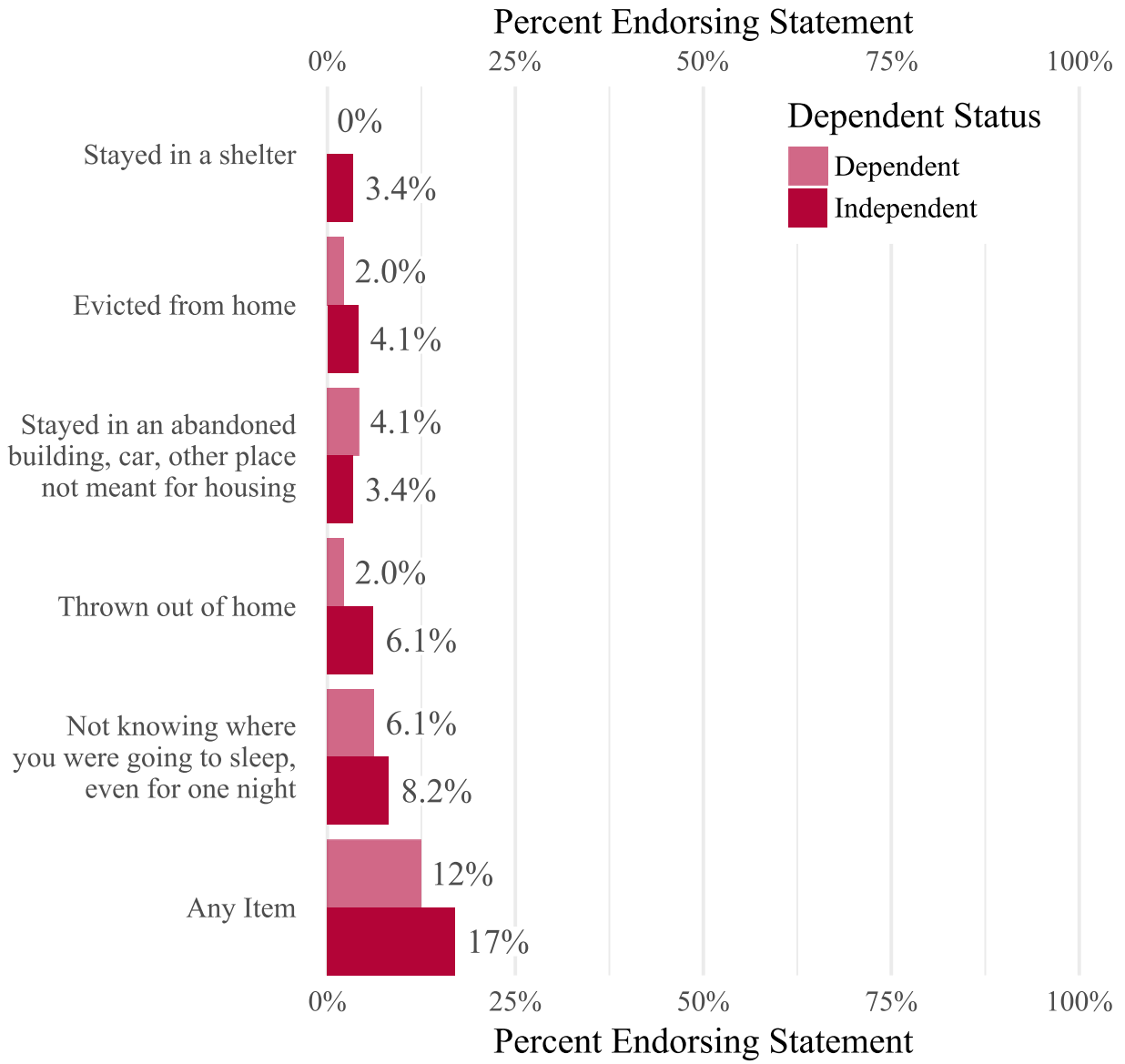
Dependent Status	<i>n</i>	Percent
Dependent	49	25.0%
Independent	147	75.0%

## Housing Insecurity by Dependent Status



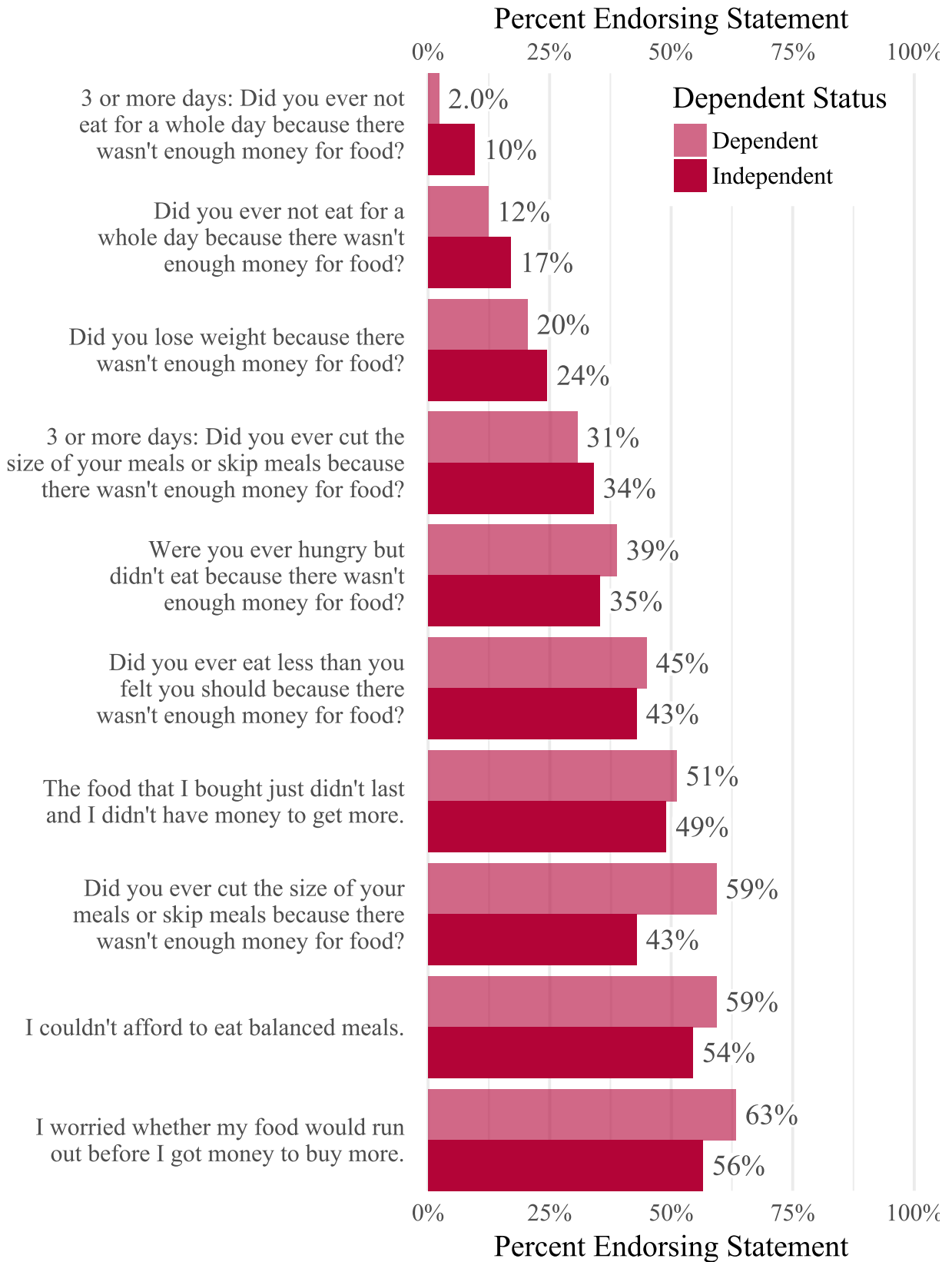


## Homelessness by Dependent Status

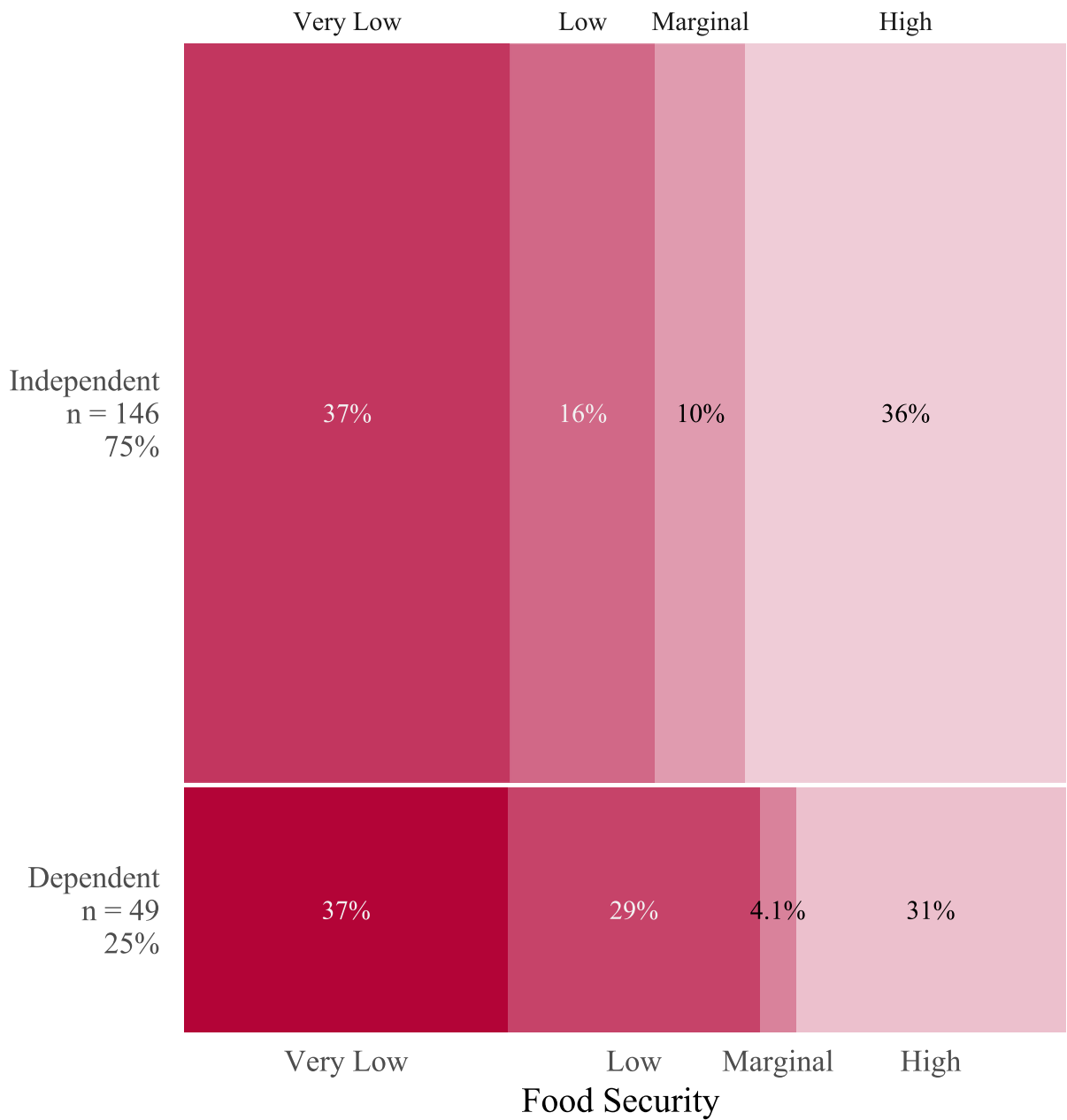


## Food Insecurity by Dependent Status

Food Security Questions



**Food Insecurity Categories**

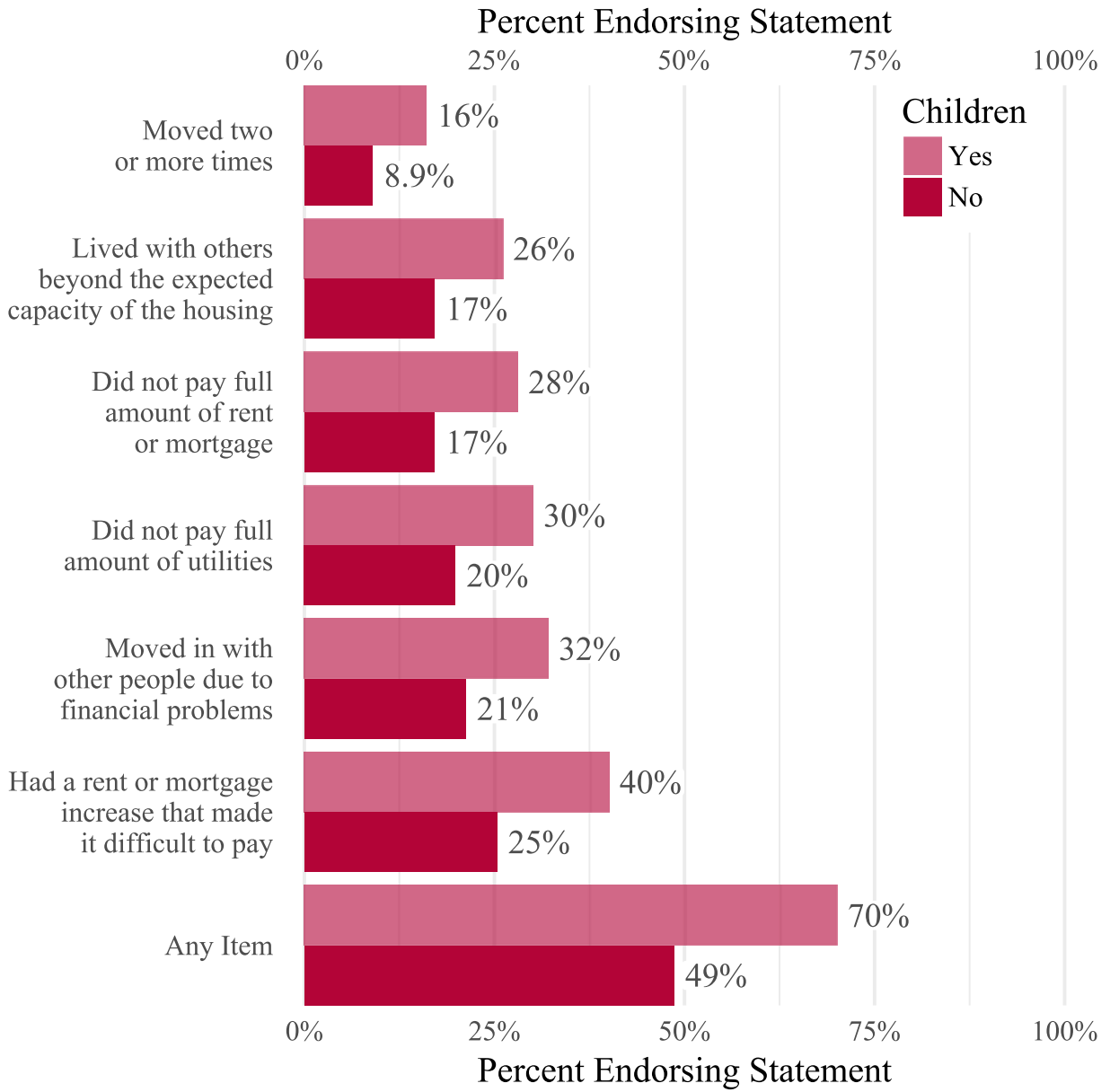


## Children

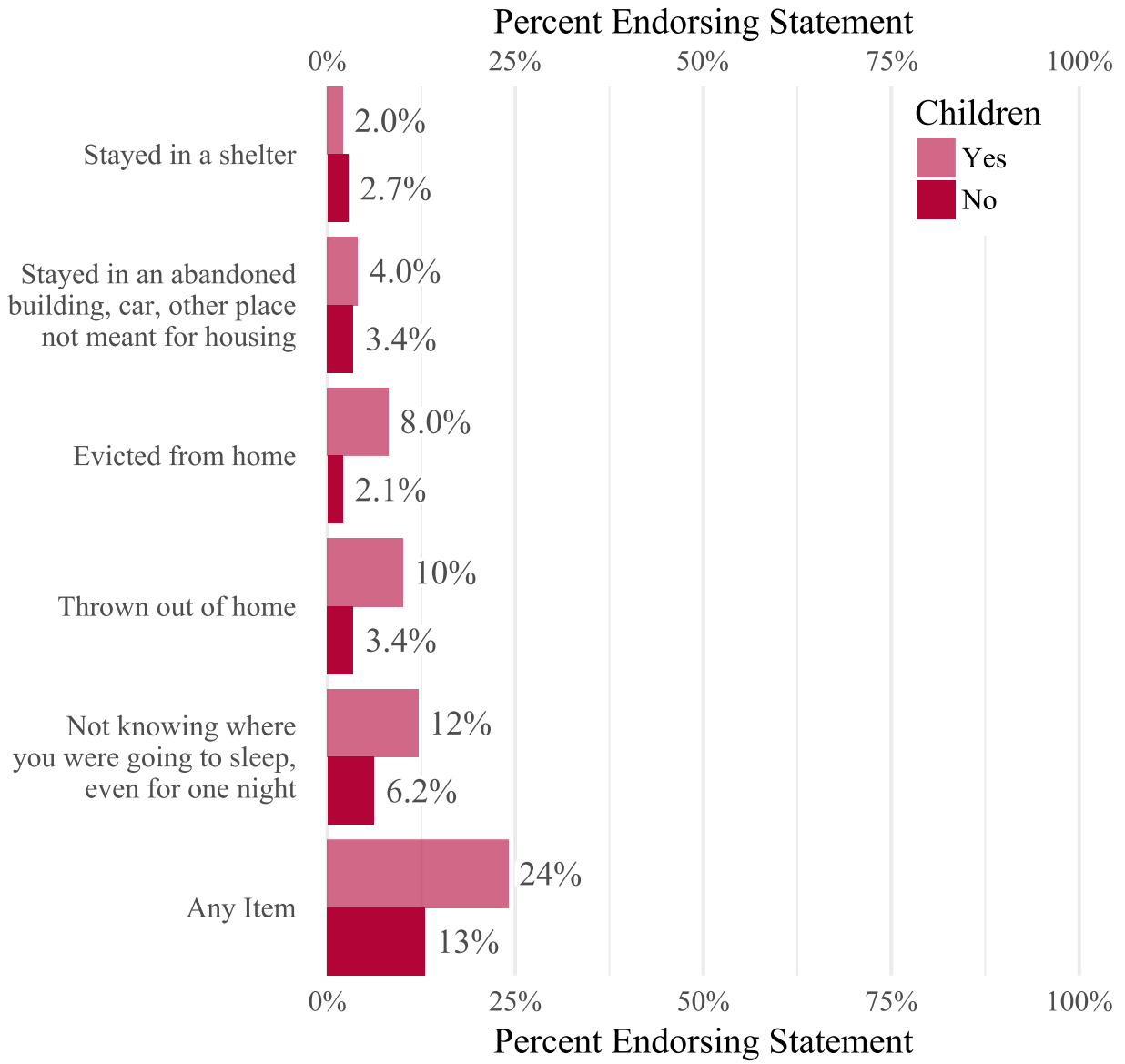
Does the student have children?

Children	<i>n</i>	Percent
Yes	50	25.5%
No	146	74.5%

## Housing Insecurity by Children

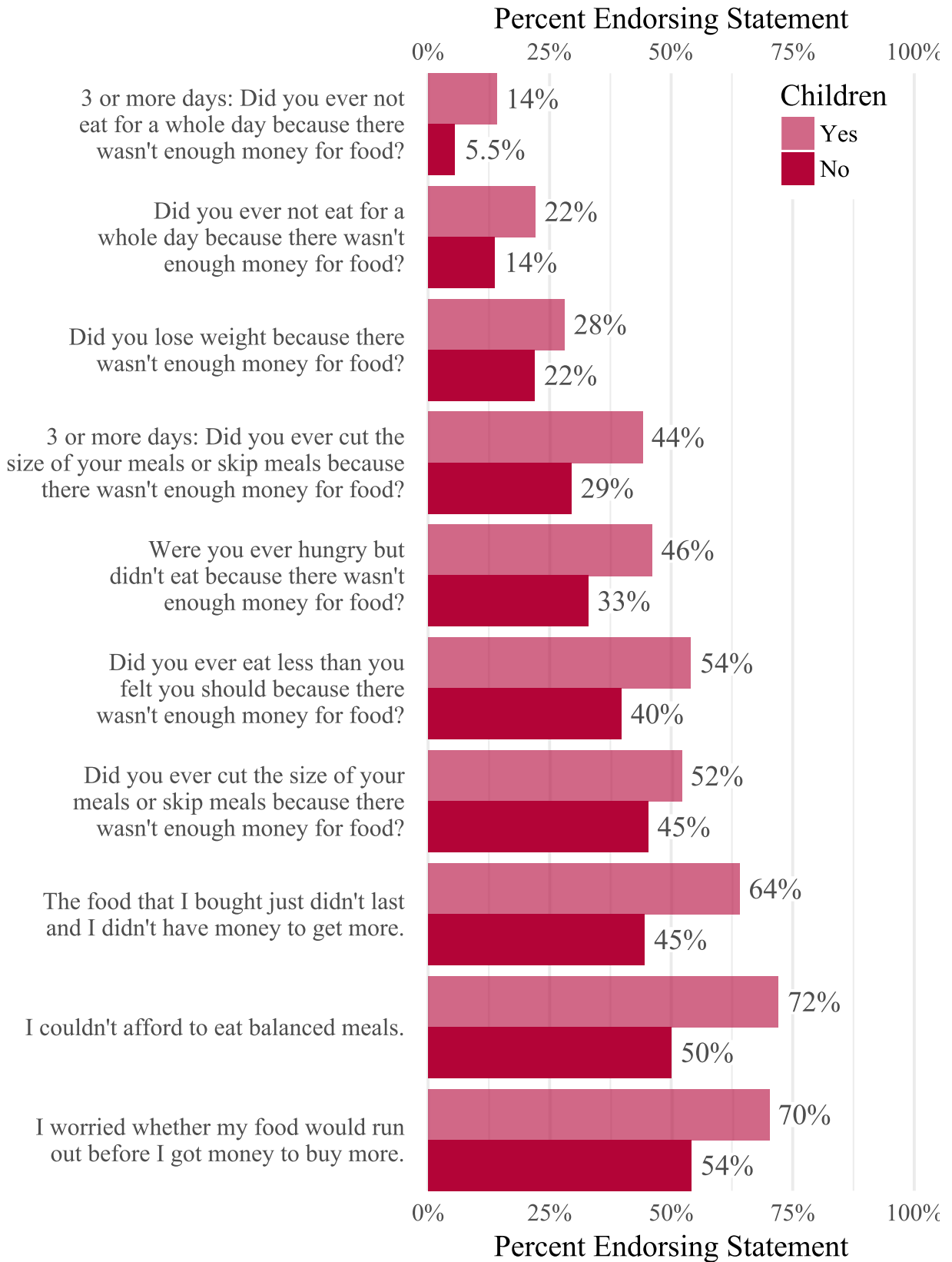


## Homelessness by Children

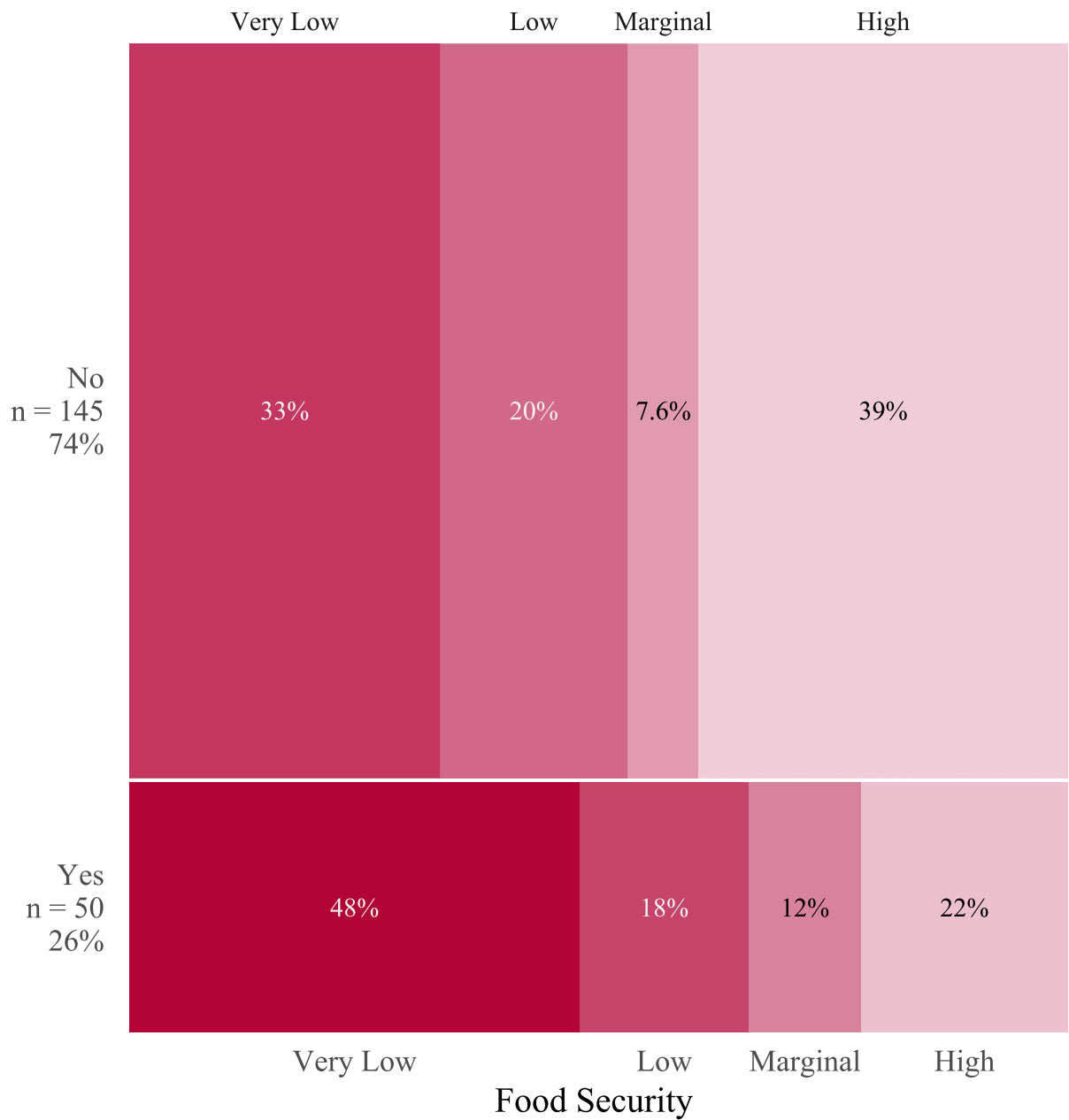


## Food Insecurity by Children

Food Security Questions



**Food Insecurity Categories**



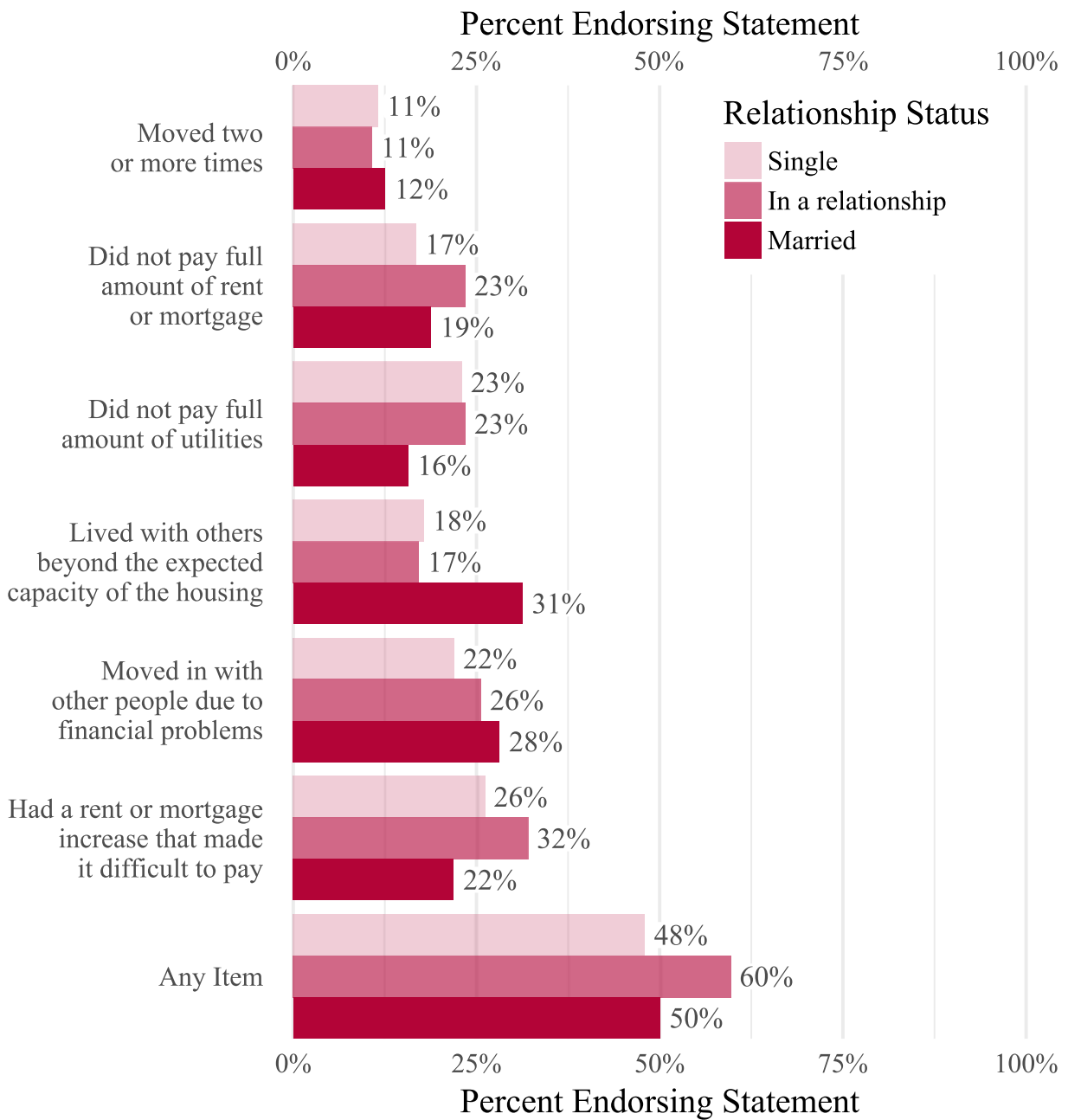
## Relationship Status

Student's relationship status

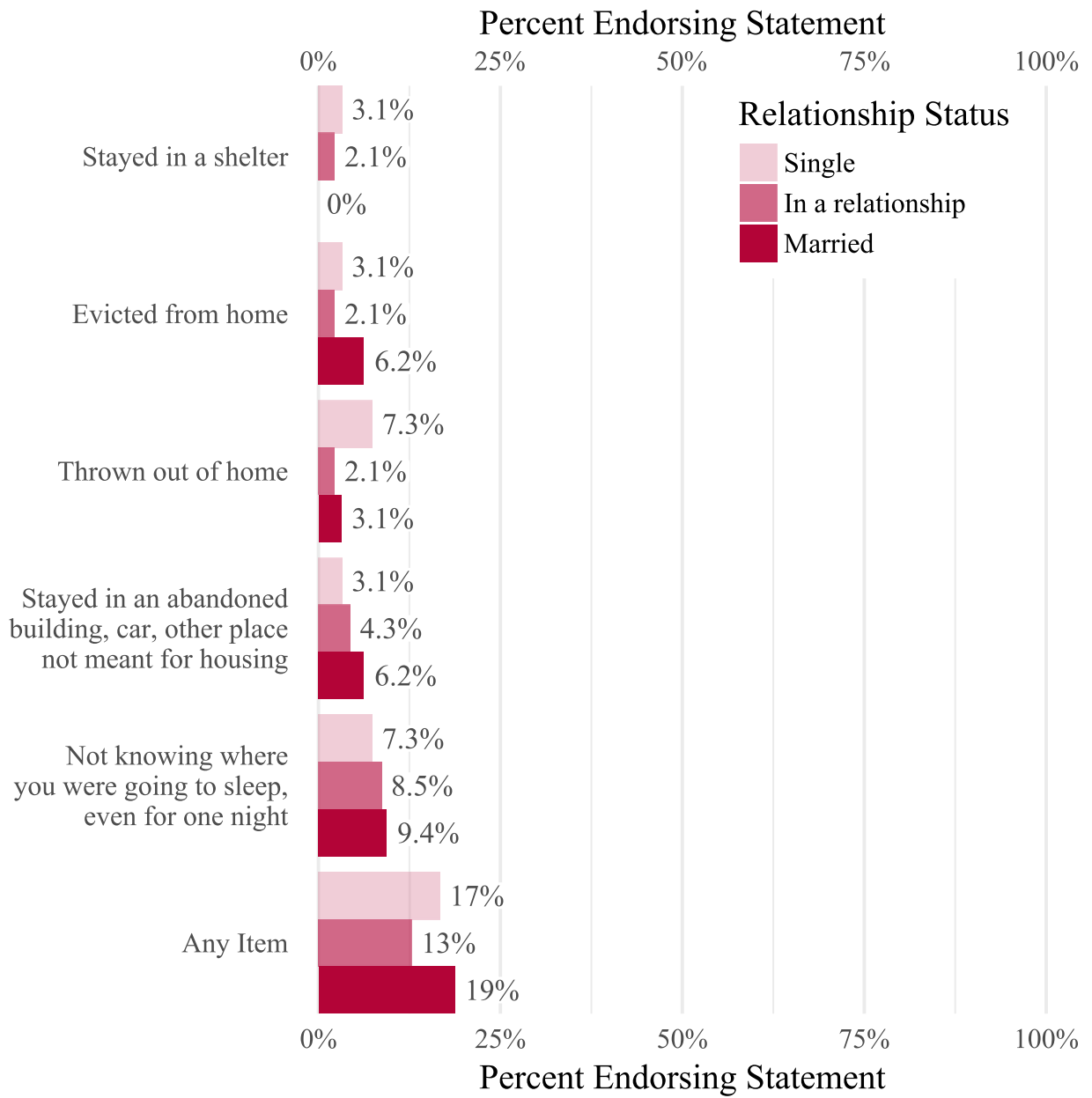
Relationship Status	<i>n</i>	Percent
Single	96	49.0%
In a relationship	47	24.0%
Married	32	16.3%
Divorced	19	9.7%
Widowed	2	1.0%



## Housing Insecurity by Relationship Status

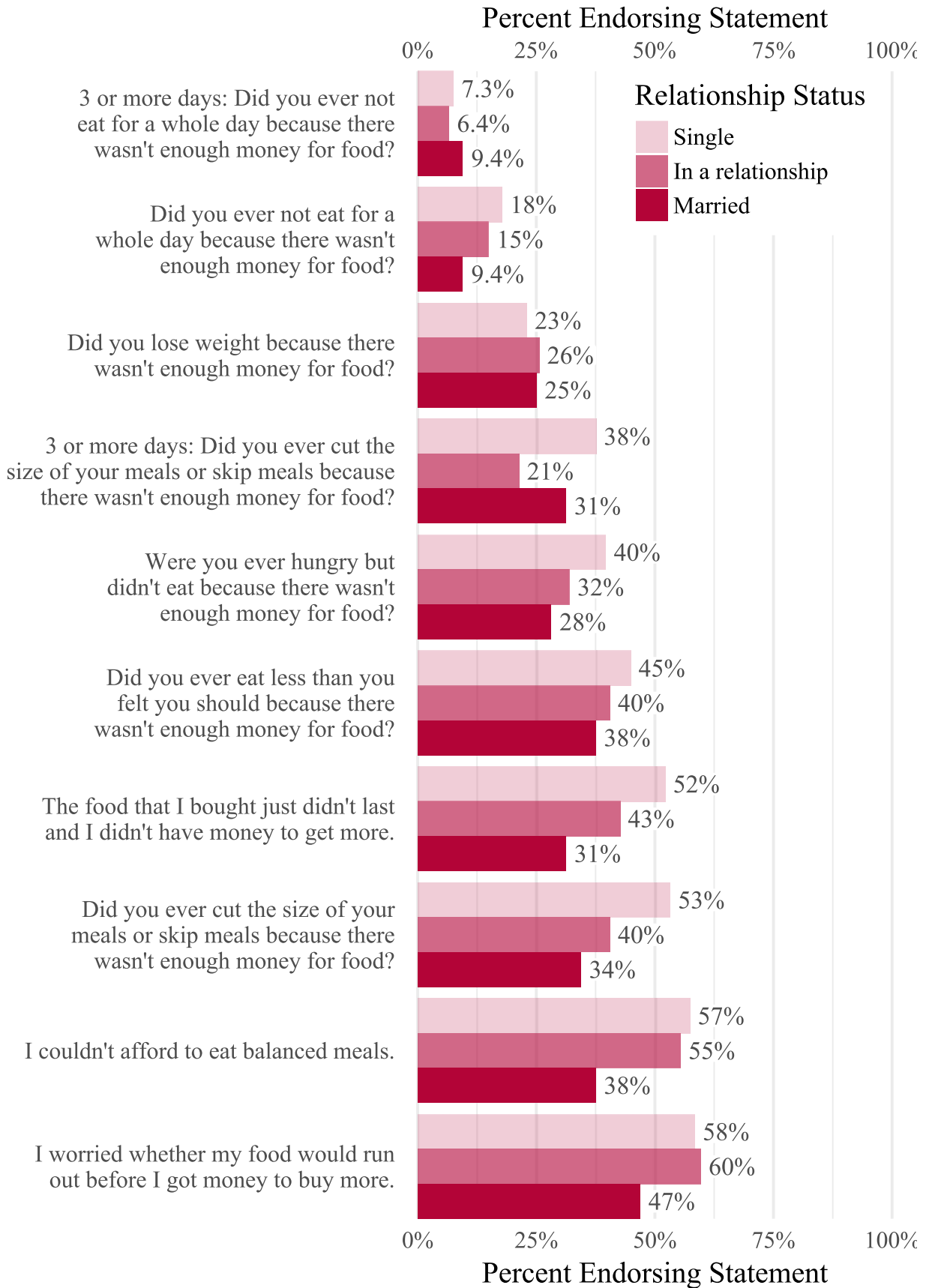


## Homelessness by Relationship Status

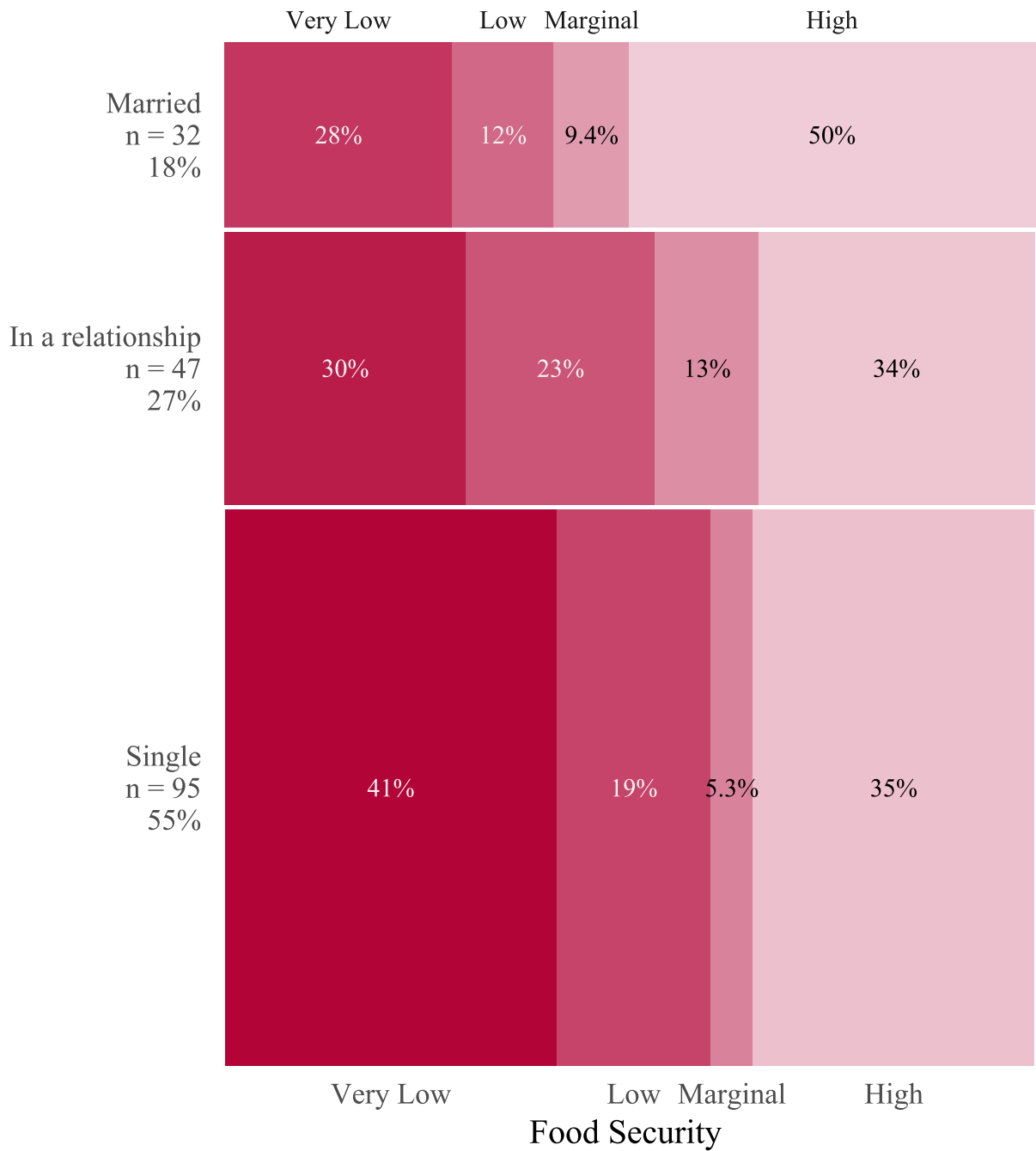


## Food Insecurity by Relationship Status

Food Security Questions



Food Insecurity Categories



## Subgroups Summary Table

Variable	n	Basic Needs Insecurity		
		Food	Housing	Homelessness
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	67	56.9%	49.3%	12.5%
Female	131	55.4%	55.7%	16.0%
Non-Binary	3	100.0%	100.0%	66.7%

Variable	<i>n</i>	Basic Needs Insecurity		
		Food	Housing	Homelessness
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>				
Heterosexual	161	55.3%	52.2%	15.1%
Homosexual	10	70.0%	60.0%	20.0%
Bisexual	18	72.2%	77.8%	27.8%
None	9	44.4%	44.4%	0.0%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
Black	14	61.5%	64.3%	14.3%
Native American	1	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Hispanic	88	59.1%	50.0%	19.3%
Middle-Eastern/Arab	3	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%
Asian	13	53.8%	38.5%	7.7%
White	32	34.4%	53.1%	6.5%
Mixed/Other	48	64.6%	64.6%	16.7%
<b>Age</b>				
18 to 20	47	55.3%	38.3%	14.9%
21 to 25	46	58.7%	54.3%	15.2%
25 to 30	33	66.7%	63.6%	12.1%
Over 30	72	52.1%	61.1%	18.3%
<b>Pell Grant</b>				
Yes	117	64.3%	61.4%	18.2%
No	110	52.7%	46.2%	14.1%
<b>Hours Worked</b>				
Not looking for work	57	48.0%	39.2%	14.3%

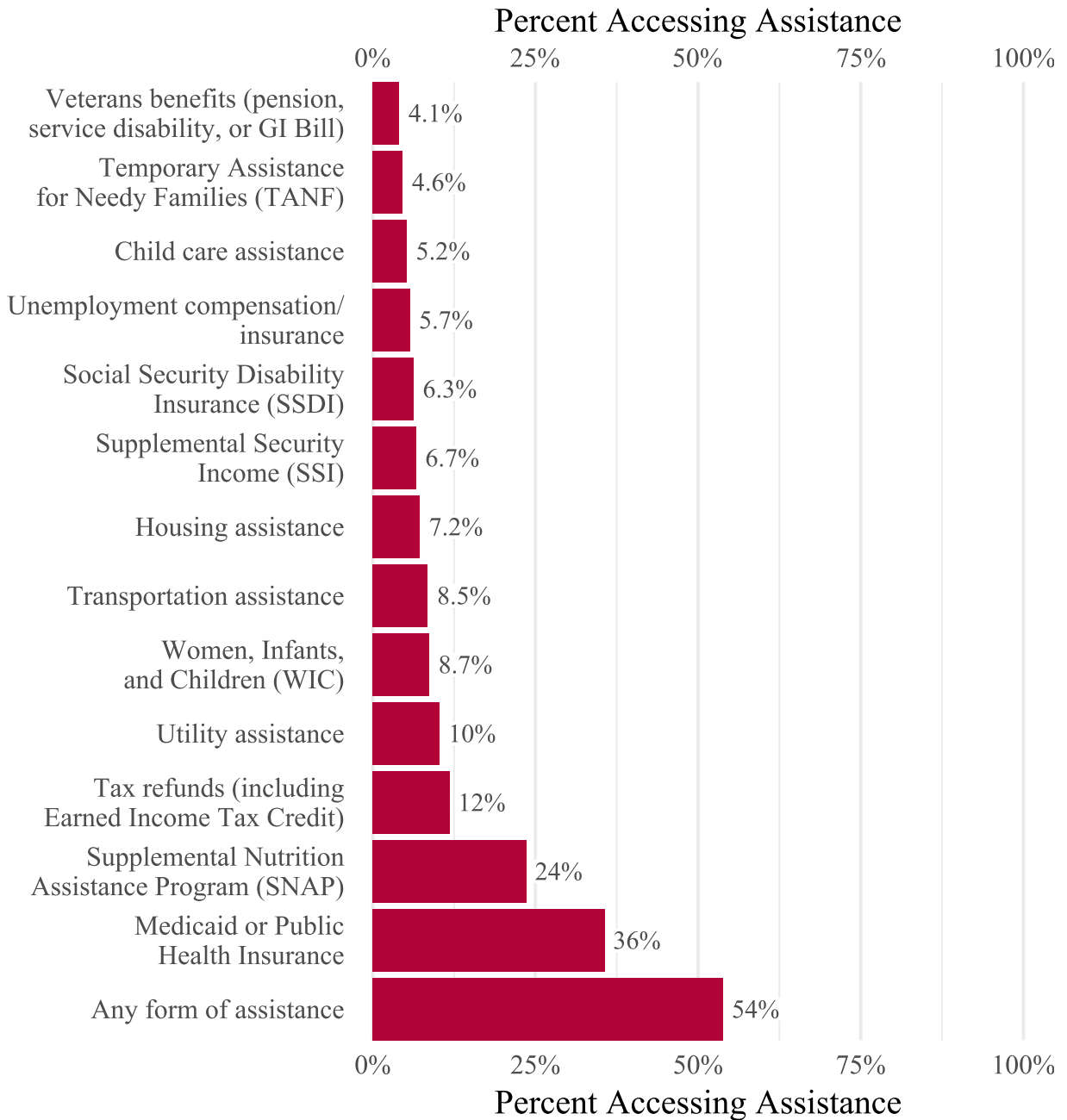
Variable	<i>n</i>	Basic Needs Insecurity		
		Food	Housing	Homelessness
Looking for work	63	60.8%	56.6%	23.1%
1–5	3	50.0%	100.0%	0.0%
6–20	39	48.6%	45.7%	11.4%
21–40	61	61.5%	67.9%	13.2%
40+	16	66.7%	53.3%	13.3%
<b>Student Status</b>				
Full-time	128	60.2%	50.9%	15.4%
Part-time	124	52.0%	55.8%	15.5%
<b>Meal Plan</b>				
Yes	1	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
No	207	55.9%	53.1%	14.7%
<b>Military Service</b>				
Yes	20	70.0%	50.0%	20.0%
No	176	54.9%	54.5%	15.3%
<b>Citizenship Status</b>				
Citizen	187	56.5%	54.5%	15.7%
Non-Citizen	10	60.0%	40.0%	10.0%
<b>Parent Citizenship Status</b>				
Citizen Parent	170	57.4%	54.7%	16.5%
Non-Citizen Parent	24	54.2%	54.2%	12.5%
<b>Dependent Status</b>				
Dependent	49	65.3%	38.8%	12.2%
Independent	147	53.4%	59.2%	17.0%

Variable	<i>n</i>	Basic Needs Insecurity		
		Food	Housing	Homelessness
<b>Foster Care</b>				
Yes	9	77.8%	66.7%	11.1%
No	189	55.4%	53.2%	16.0%
<b>Children</b>				
Yes	50	66.0%	70.0%	24.0%
No	146	53.1%	48.6%	13.0%
<b>Relationship Status</b>				
Single	96	60.0%	47.9%	16.7%
In a relationship	47	53.2%	59.6%	12.8%
Married	32	40.6%	50.0%	18.8%
Divorced	19	68.4%	78.9%	15.8%
Widowed	2	100.0%	50.0%	0.0%

*Note:* Students with low or very low food security are considered *food insecure*.

## Accessing Public Assistance

In addition to measuring basic needs insecurity, the survey included multiple items to characterize food insecure and housing insecure students' strategies for addressing the shortfalls they experience. Students were asked whether they had received assistance from a variety of social programs during the past year. Undergraduates may be eligible for multiple social programs to assist with food, housing, child care, transportation, health care, and other expenses. However, program restrictions often prevent students from receiving assistance. For example, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) requires undergraduates without children to work at least twenty hours per week. Due to shortages in subsidized housing, eligibility for housing assistance does not guarantee participation.

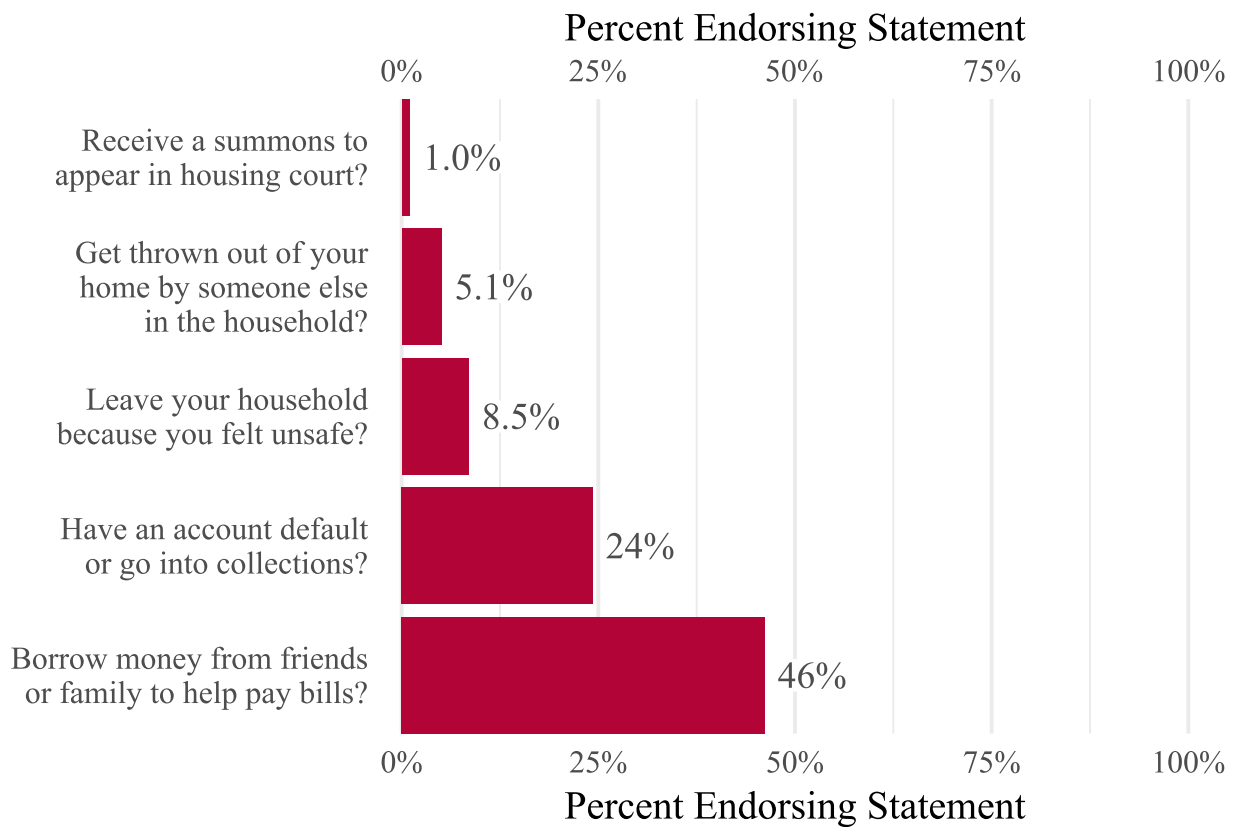


## Other Concerns

Along with the measures of basic needs security described above, the survey included several related items about students' experiences in the past year. These items included measures of students' legal troubles, home environments, and financial decisions stemming from a lack of resources.

In the past year, did you...





## Contact Information

### About Us

**The Wisconsin HOPE Lab – Food and Housing Resources for Students and Institutions** was established in 2013 on the University of Wisconsin–Madison campus to engage in translational research aimed at improving equitable outcomes in postsecondary education. For more information on material need among college students, and for helpful food and housing resources for those seeking to help struggling students, visit the Wisconsin HOPE Lab webpage (<http://www.wihopelab.com/events/realcollege.html>).

### Questions

If you have any questions about this report or food and housing resources, please contact Wisconsin HOPE Lab Acting Director Jed Richardson by email at [jed.richardson@wisc.edu](mailto:jed.richardson@wisc.edu) (<mailto:jed.richardson@wisc.edu>) or by phone at (608) 890-2946.