EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Preliminary Findings

8-17-23

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OVERVIEW

- Evaluation Focus and Time Frame
- Research Questions
- Preliminary Finding
- Plans for further analyses
- Q&A

EVALUATION FOCUS AND TIME FRAME

- Examine reach and impacts of child care scholarships

- FY18 through FY22

CONTEXT

- SCDSS receives federal block grant funding for child care scholarships
- First Steps local partnerships support and facilitate access to scholarships
- Two types of scholarships
    - purchased from SCDSS
    - “in house” via local resources
- Most families also engaged in other First Steps programs/services

CONTEXT

- First Steps scholarships unique
  - Focus on child developmental and academic outcomes
  - Funding does not supplant other programs/services
  - Use of scholarships with other evidence-based (EB) programs
- As of FY22, First Steps partnered with SCDSS directly to administer the scholarships
  - for families also enrolled in other First Steps EB programs

EVALUATION RESEARCH QUESTIONS

During the evaluation time frame:

- What is the reach of the First Steps Scholarship program?
  - Children
  - Counties
  - Childcare providers
- What are the key characteristics of children and families receiving scholarships?
  - Risk factors
  - Developmental status
  - Involvement in other First Steps programs

EVALUATION RESEARCH QUESTIONS (CONT'D)

- What are the impacts of receiving a scholarship on KRA performance and on chronic absenteeism in kindergarten?

ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIPS

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PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: REACH AND CATEGORY OF SCHOLARSHIPS FY18-FY22

Across the five-year evaluation period, there were 2,131 scholarships provided

Scholarship Program	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Total
Scholarship Initiatives (Public)	256	261	171	158	118	**964**
Scholarship Initiatives (In-House)	328	314	190	175	110	**1117**
Child Care Scholarships not connected to an EB program (In-House)	1	47	0	0	1	**49**
Total	**585**	**622**	**362**	**333**	**229**	**2131**

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SCHOLARSHIPS BY FISCAL YEAR AND TYPE

Scholarship Type	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Full-time	472	564	295	293	208
Part-time	69	42	67	34	21
Wrap-around	3	0	0	6	9
Total	403	470	258	246	221

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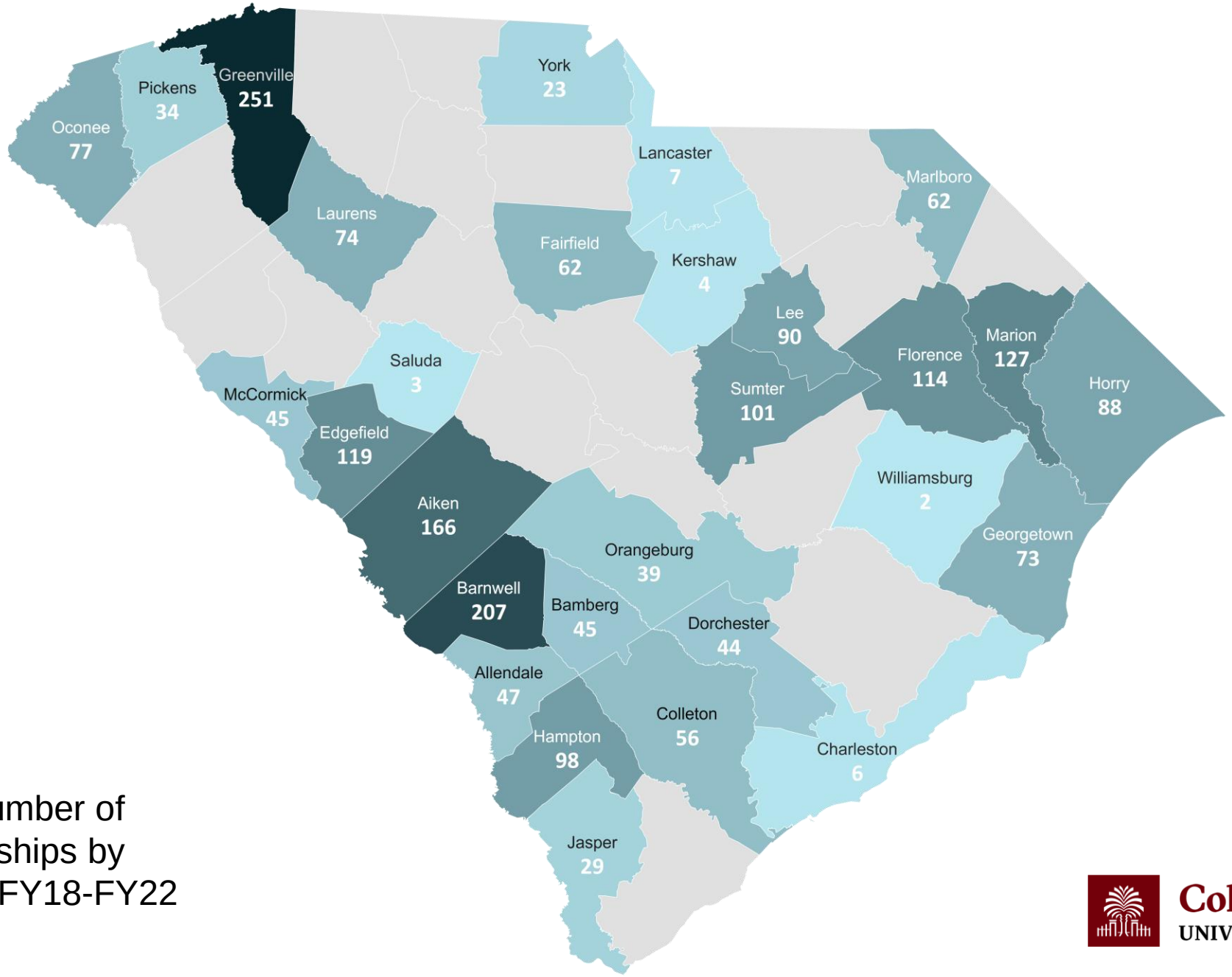

Total Number of Scholarships by County FY18-FY22

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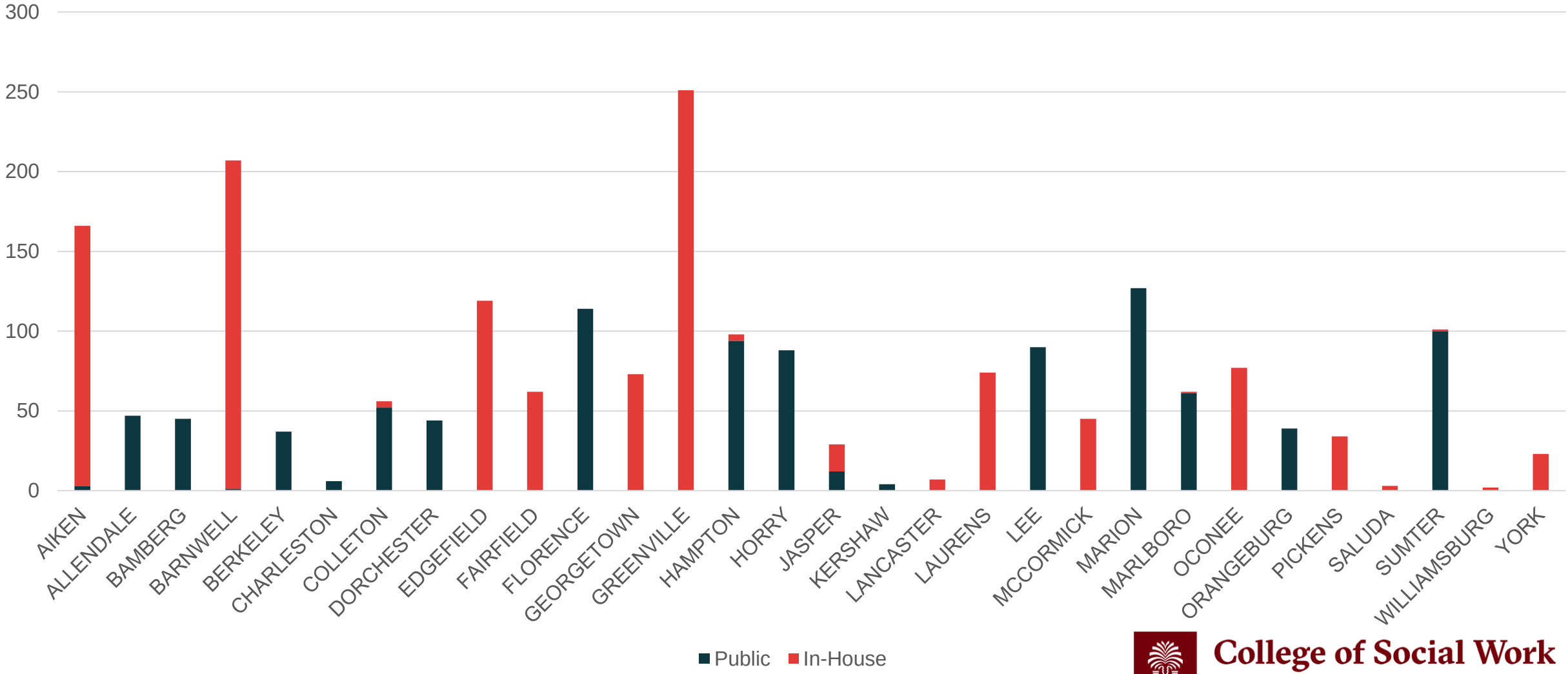
SCHOLARSHIP TYPE BY COUNTY FY18-FY22



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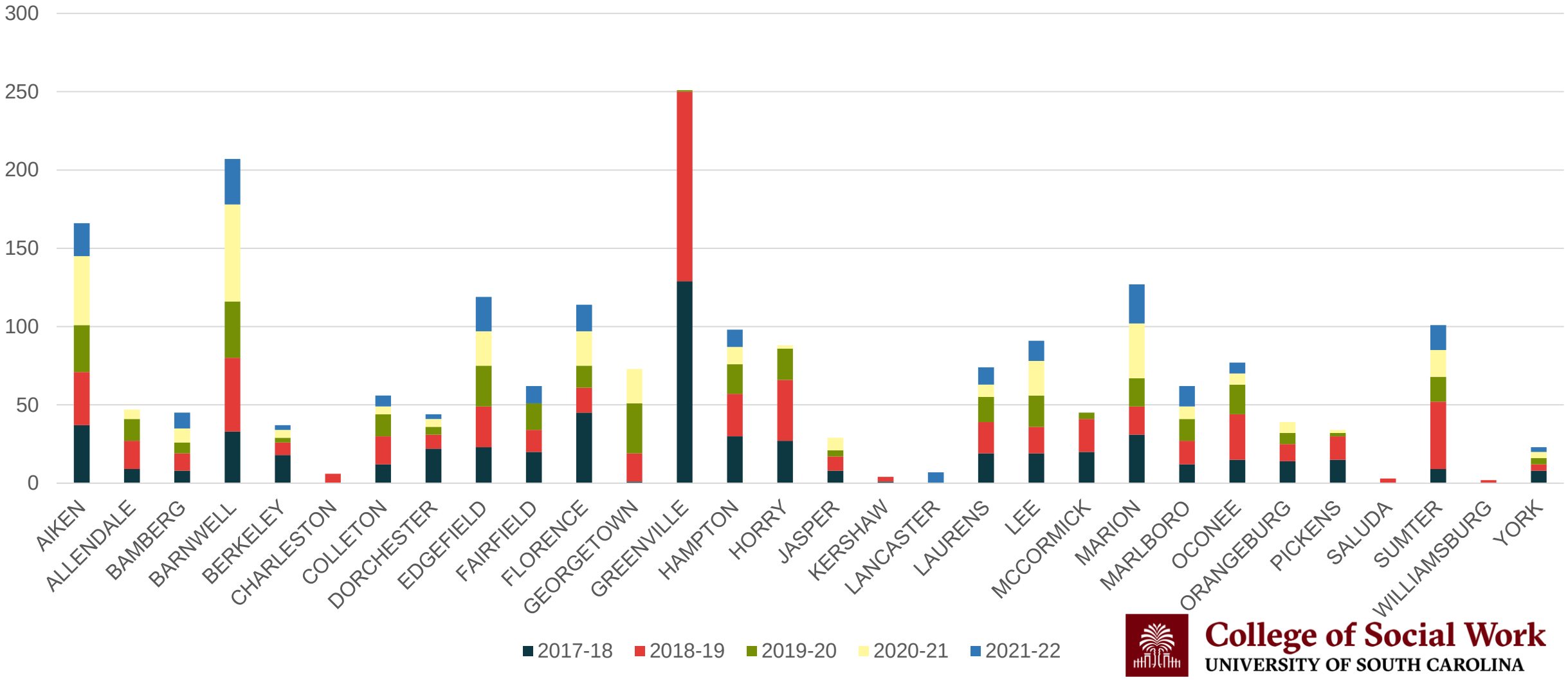
SCHOLARSHIPS BY FY AND COUNTY



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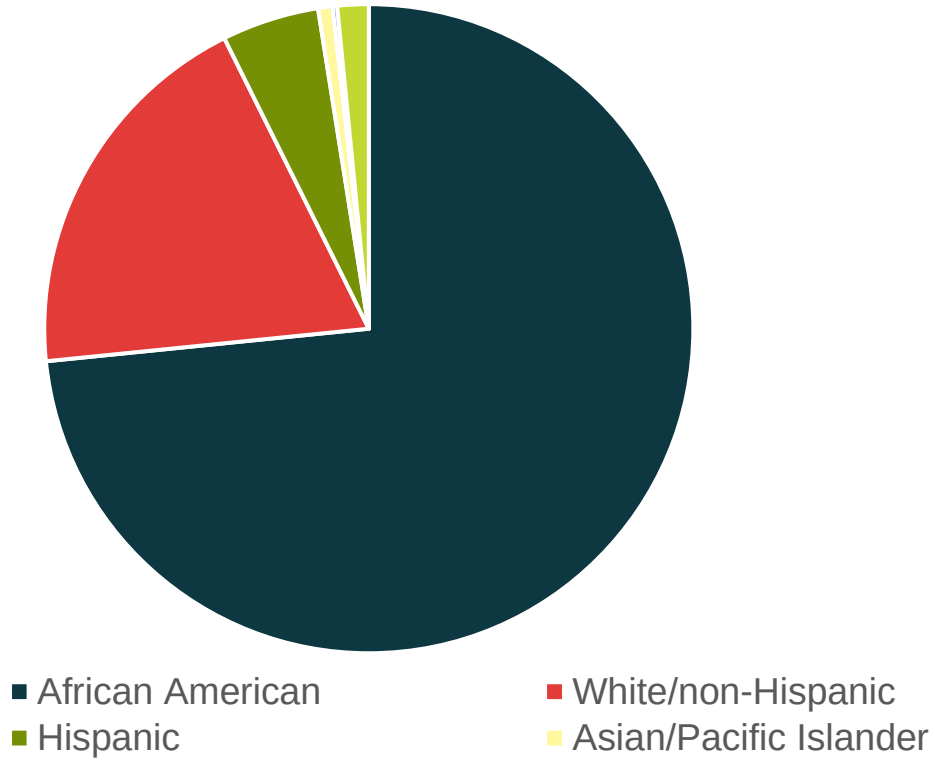
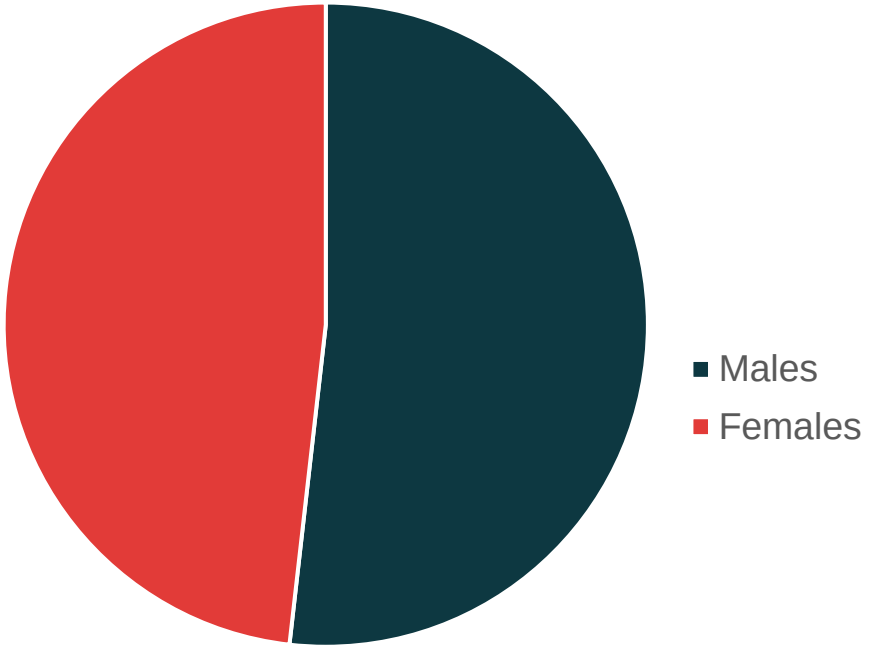
ABOUT THE CHILDREN





ABOUT THE CHILDREN (N=1,598)

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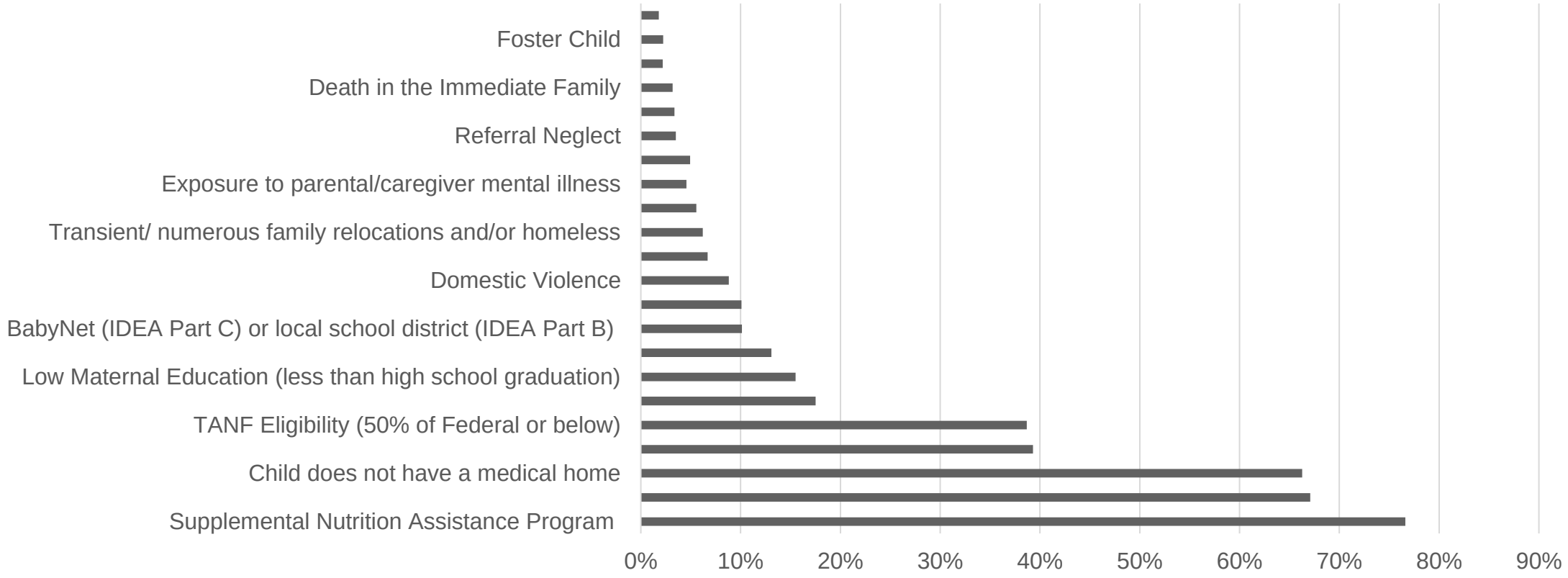
RISK FACTORS FOR POOR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE



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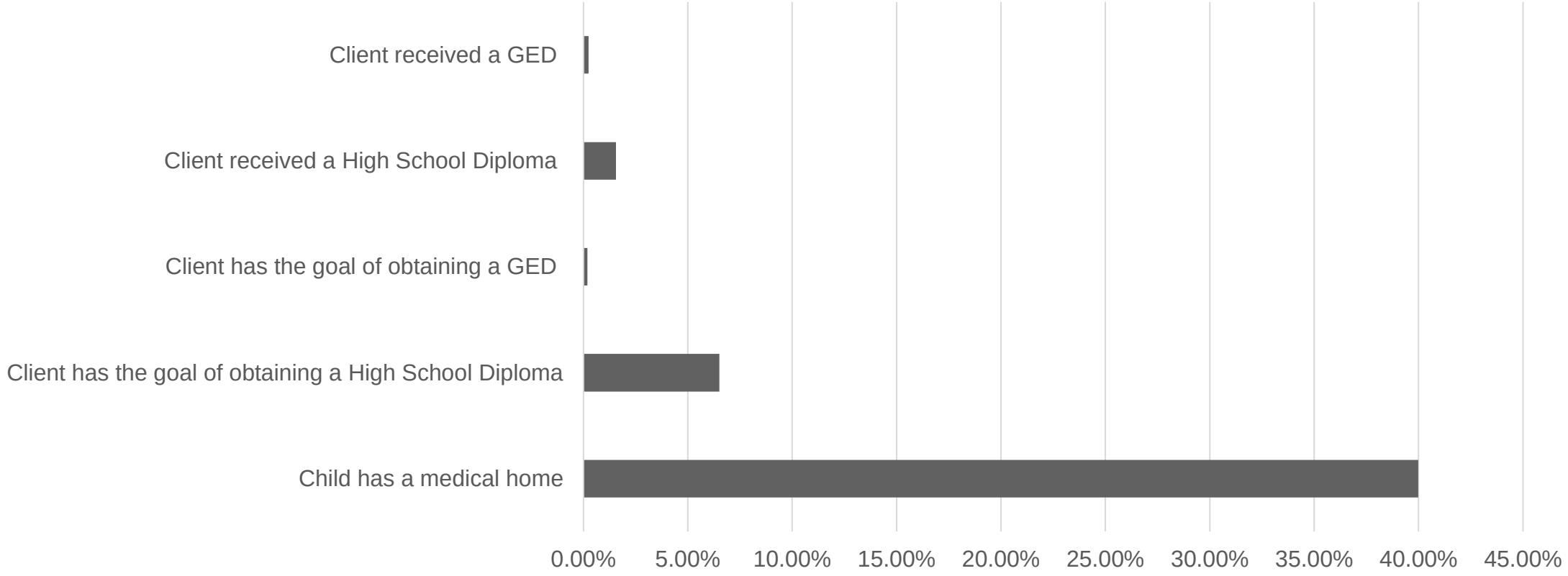
PROTECTIVE FACTORS AGAINST POOR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE



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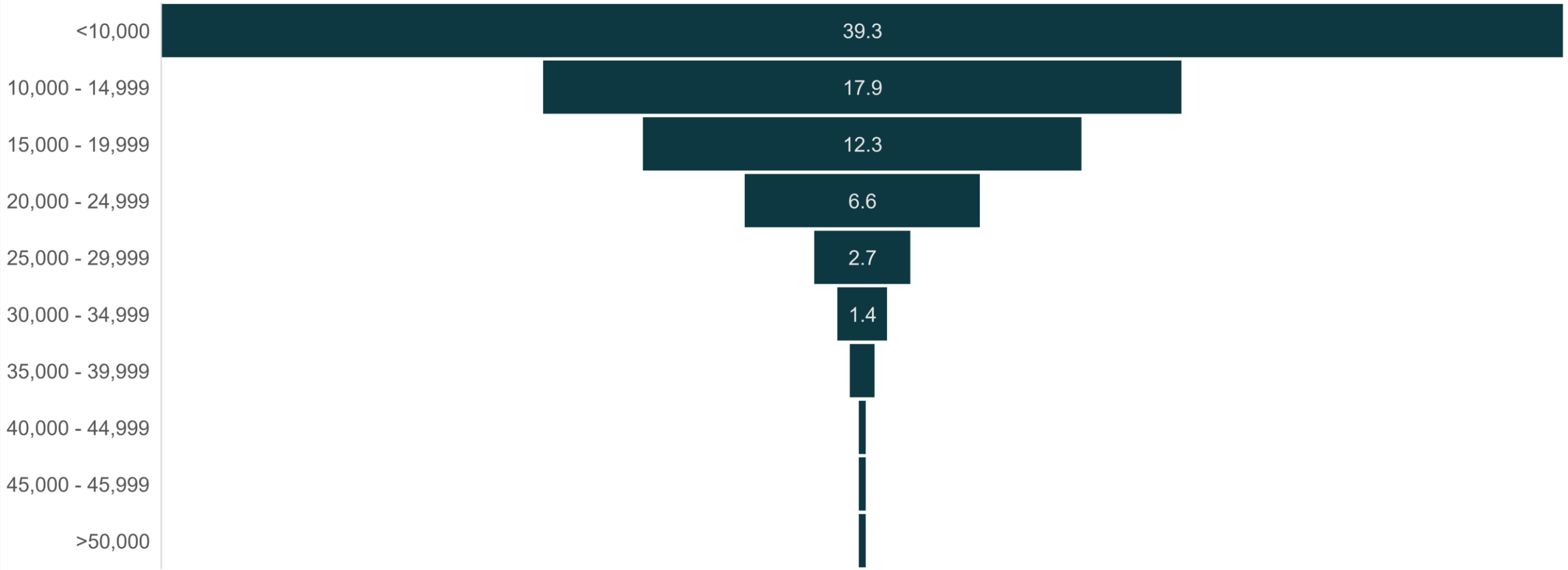

40% of children receiving child care scholarships had a total family income of less than $10,000

FAMILY INCOME

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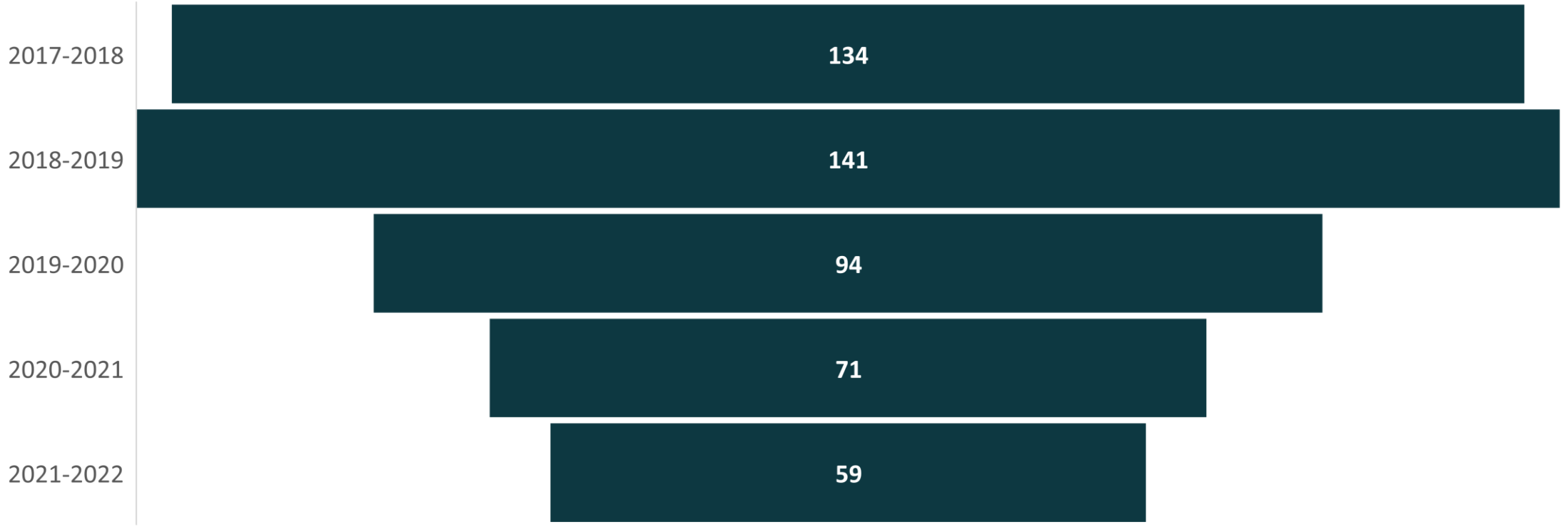
ABOUT THE PROVIDERS

PROVIDER BY FISCAL YEAR



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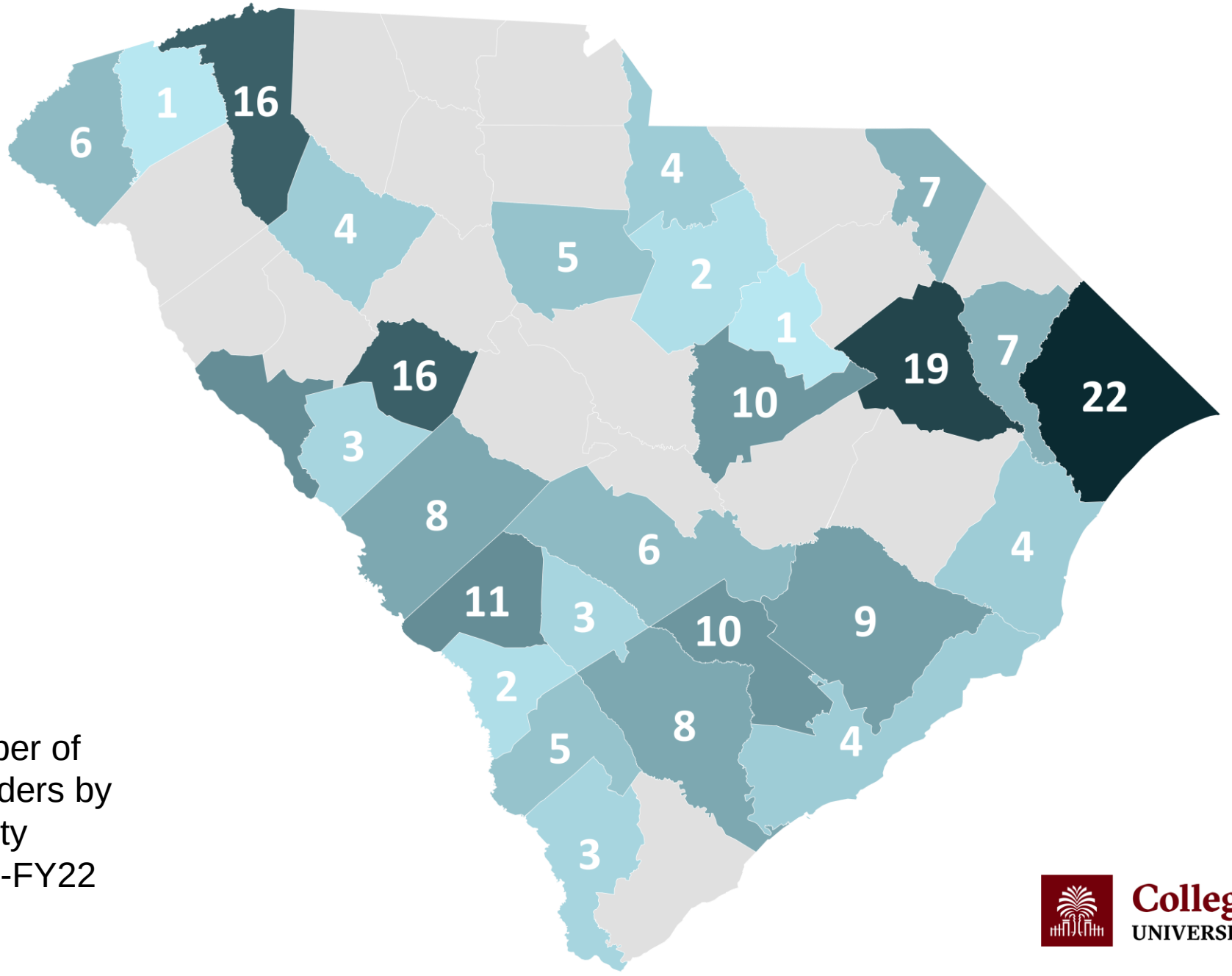

Number of Providers by County FY18-FY22

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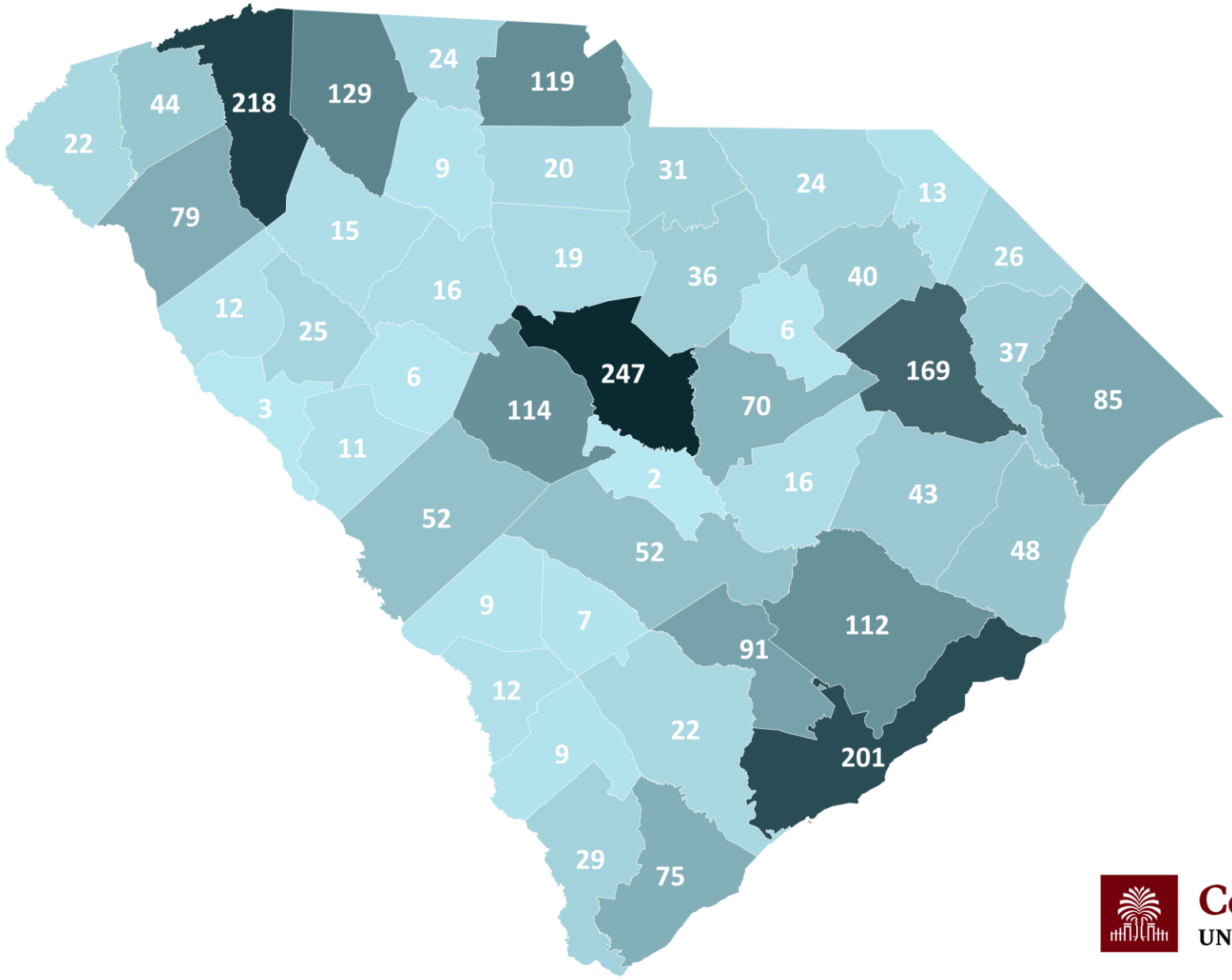
Number of Licensed Child Care Facilities



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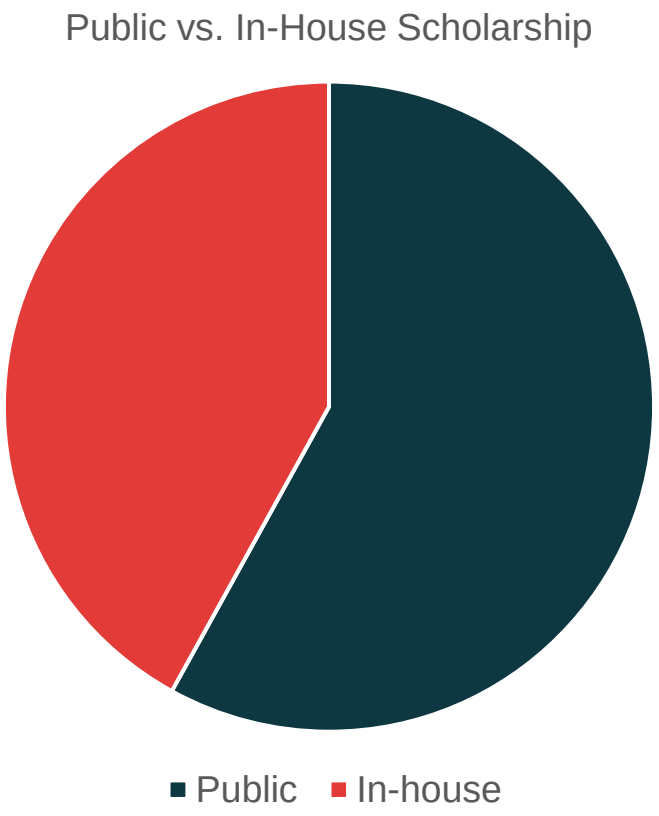
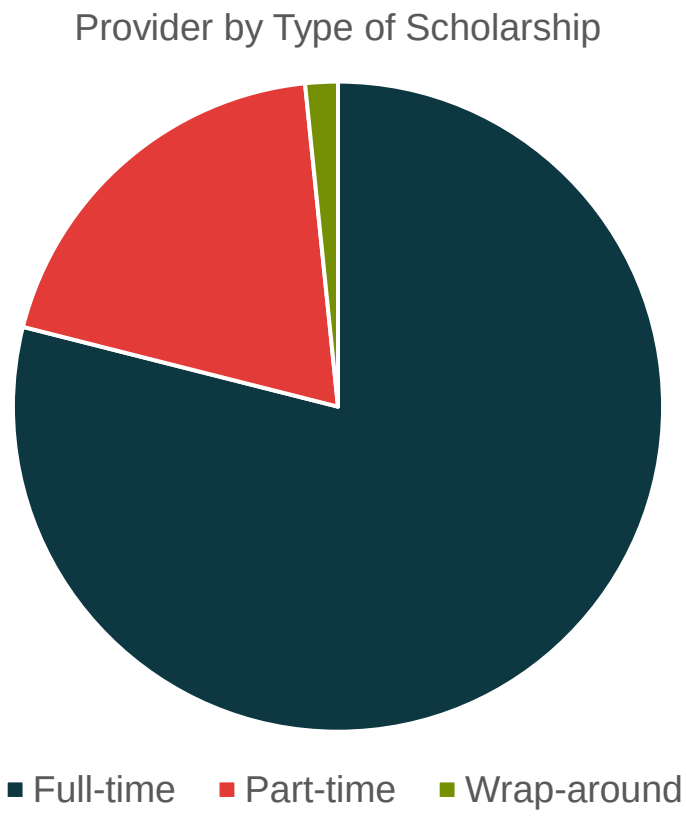
SCHOLARSHIP TYPE BY PROVIDER





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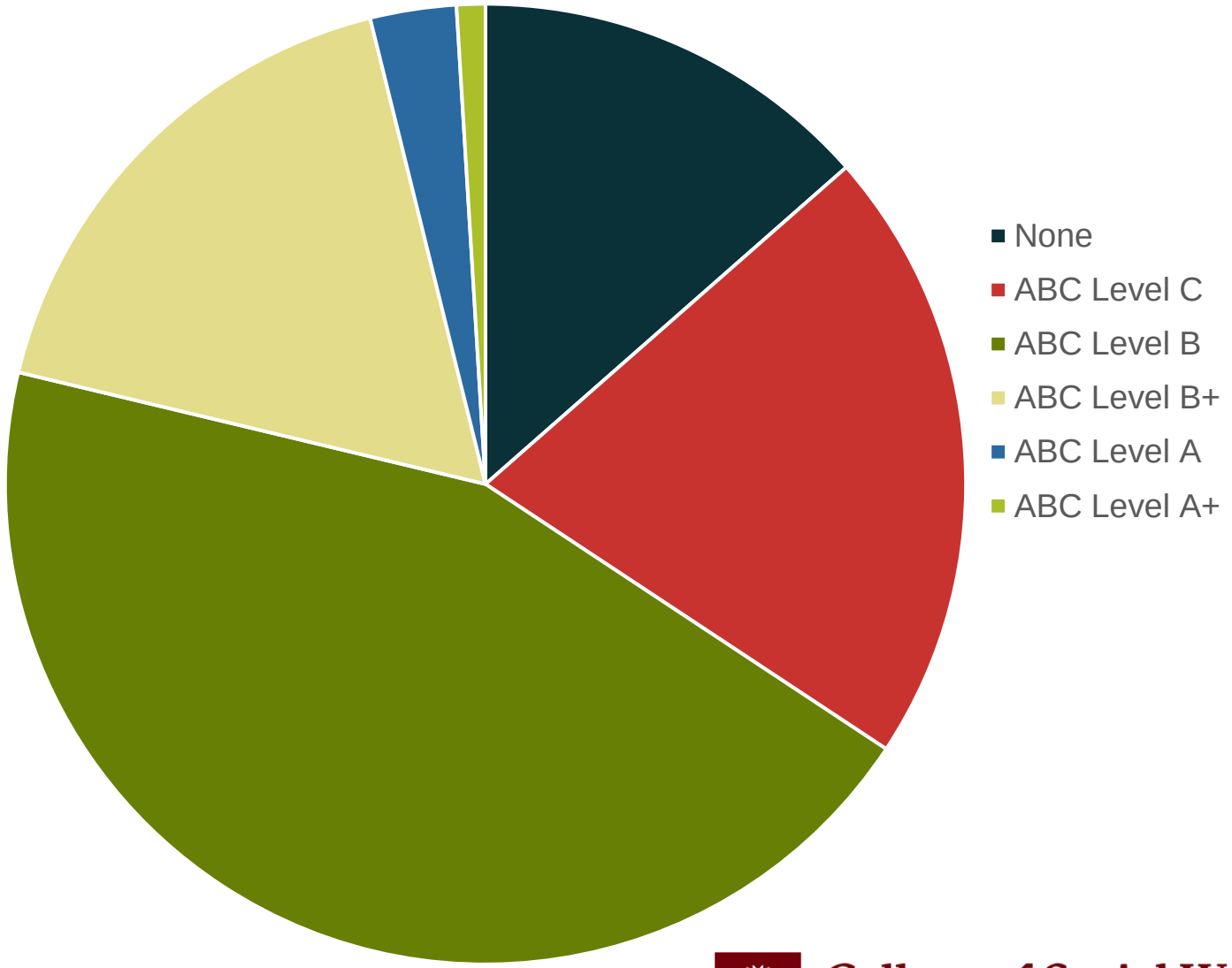
OVERALL ABC QUALITY LEVEL OF PROVIDERS



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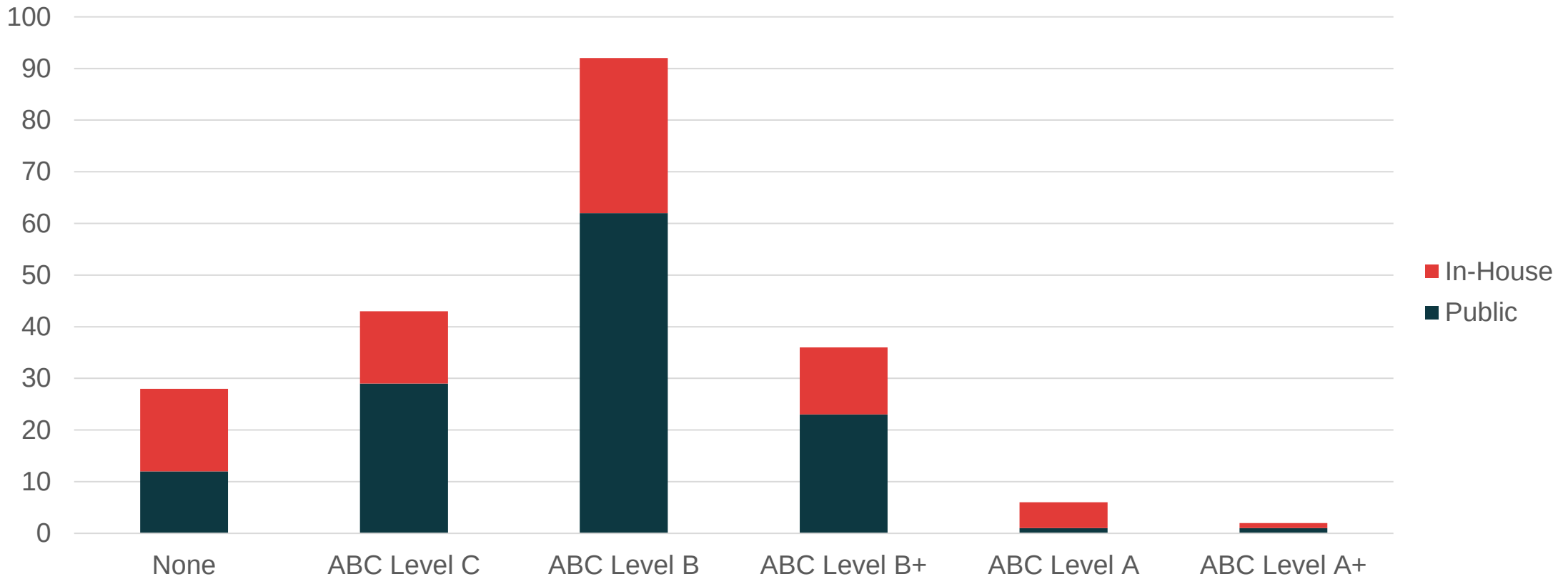
OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVIDERS BY TYPE OF SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



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IMPACT DATA UPDATE

- Permissions obtained for SCDOE data on KRA and Chronic Absenteeism in Kindergarten
- Data Files in Preparation
- Propensity Score Matching Approach

OTHER INFORMATION AND ANALYSES

- School District information
- Inferential analyses
- Moderator/mediator analyses
- Eye toward practical recommendations

IN CLOSING....

Q&A

Thank you!

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