Statewide Navigator Analysis

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Scope and Methodology

Question: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current navigator, eligibility and enrollment systems?

- *Conduct a literature review to identify best practices, models, and landscape of initiatives around the country*
- *Conduct key informant interviews to understand barriers, opportunities and considerations for streamlining AZ public benefits*
- *Coded data using Barriers/Facilitators as the main categories*

Background

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
MEL & ENID ZUCKERMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Center for Rural Health

Benefits Data Trust: 2021
$60 Billion in public benefits go unclaimed annually in U.S.

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities 2021:
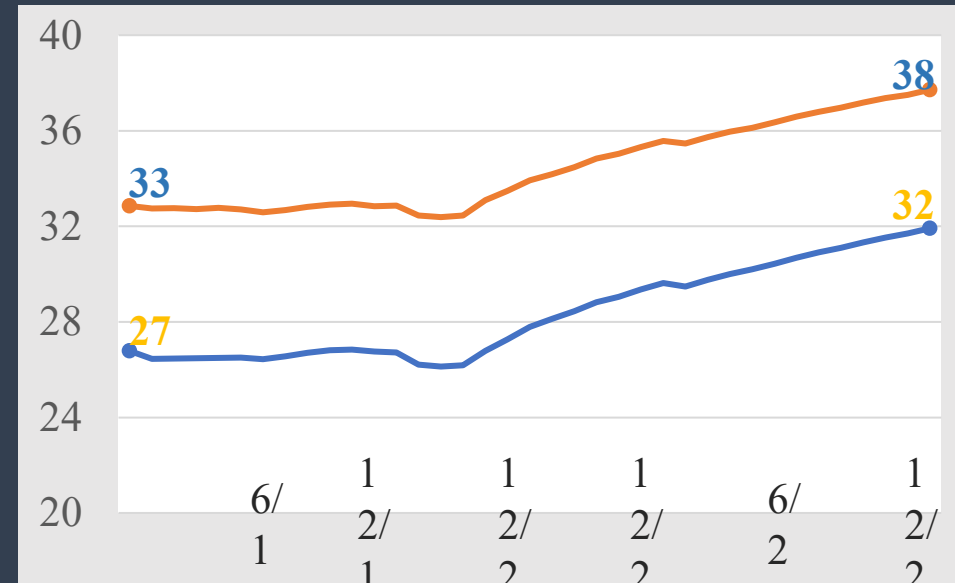*1 in 8 Arizonans participated in SNAP*

Pandemic Impact

SNAP enrollment rose during summer 2020 and 2021 COVID peaks but not winter outbreaks

Key Trends in Benefits Enrollment

Pre-Pandemic
Decreasing Poverty
Stable Medicaid enrollment
Decreasing SNAP enrollment

Pandemic
Rising Medicaid enrollment
Variable SNAP enrollment
Initial pandemic job losses

Rural Arizonans have higher rates of poverty
and more rely on SNAP and Medicaid benefits

How Would a Consolidated Platform Improve Services?

Connects More People to Benefits	**Reduces workload on Case Managers**
Simplifies Outreach	**Potential to improve health, educational, and employment outcomes for applicants**

Populations Interviewed

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
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Academic
UArizona

**Key Informant interviews
28 Completed**

Elderly
Statewide
Independent
Living Council

Navigators

AHCCCS

**State/Partner
Organizations**

Tribal
Banner Health
Native Health
of Phoenix

**Faith-Based
&Non Profits**
Cherish Families
Cornerstone Mission
Wildfire AZ

Homeless
AZ Housing
Coalition & 2-1-1

Women/Children
WIC/MICVEI

**Local
Agencies**
North Country
Regional Center
for Border Health

**Immigrant &
Refugees**
CPLC
International Rescue
Committee

**People
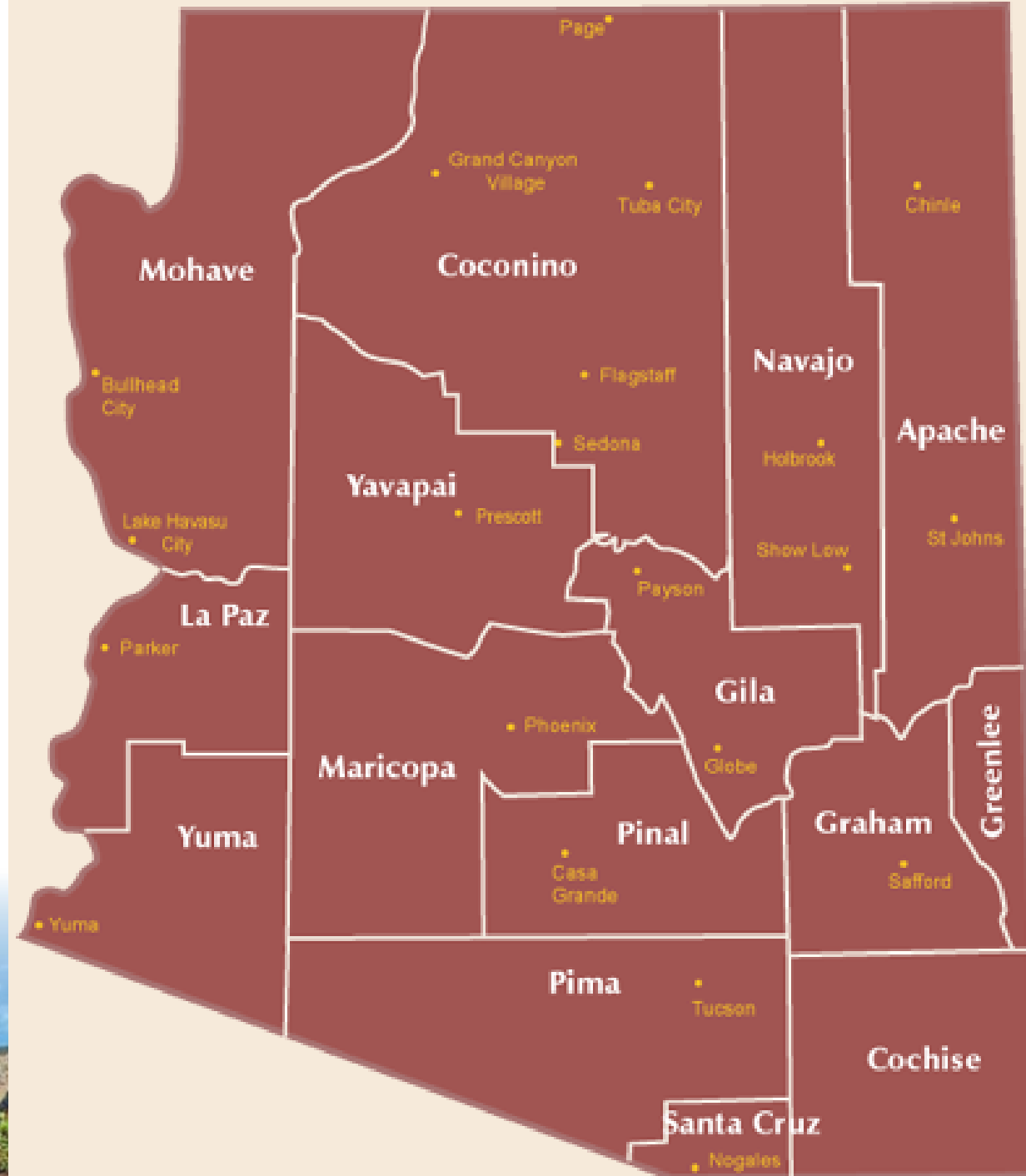w/Disabilities**
AZ Commission for
the Deaf

Regional Navigator Representation

13 of 15 AZ Counties
Apache, Cochise, Coconino, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Maricopa, Mohave, Navajo, Pima, Santa Cruz, Yuma
*Pinal, Yavapai not represented

Stakeholders Interviewed

Navigators/Assistors Interviewed

- AZ Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- AZ Statewide Independent Living Council
- UArizona Center for Rural Health
- Cherish Families
- Chicanos Por La Causa
- Coconino Health Department
- Colorado City FQHC
- Cornerstone Mission
- Golden Valley Health Center
- Solari Crisis and Human Services 2-1-1 Program

Statewide Partners Interviewed

- AZ Department of Health Services
- AZ Department of Economic Security
- Arizona Housing Coalition
- Banner Health, BH AHCCCS Tribal Liaison
- Connections Health Solutions
- Contexture
- International Rescue Committee
- Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program
- Native Health of Phoenix
- North Country HealthCare FQHC
- Pima County Re-entry Program
- Regional Center for Border Health
- UArizona Prevention Research Center
- Wildfire AZ

Theme Frequencies
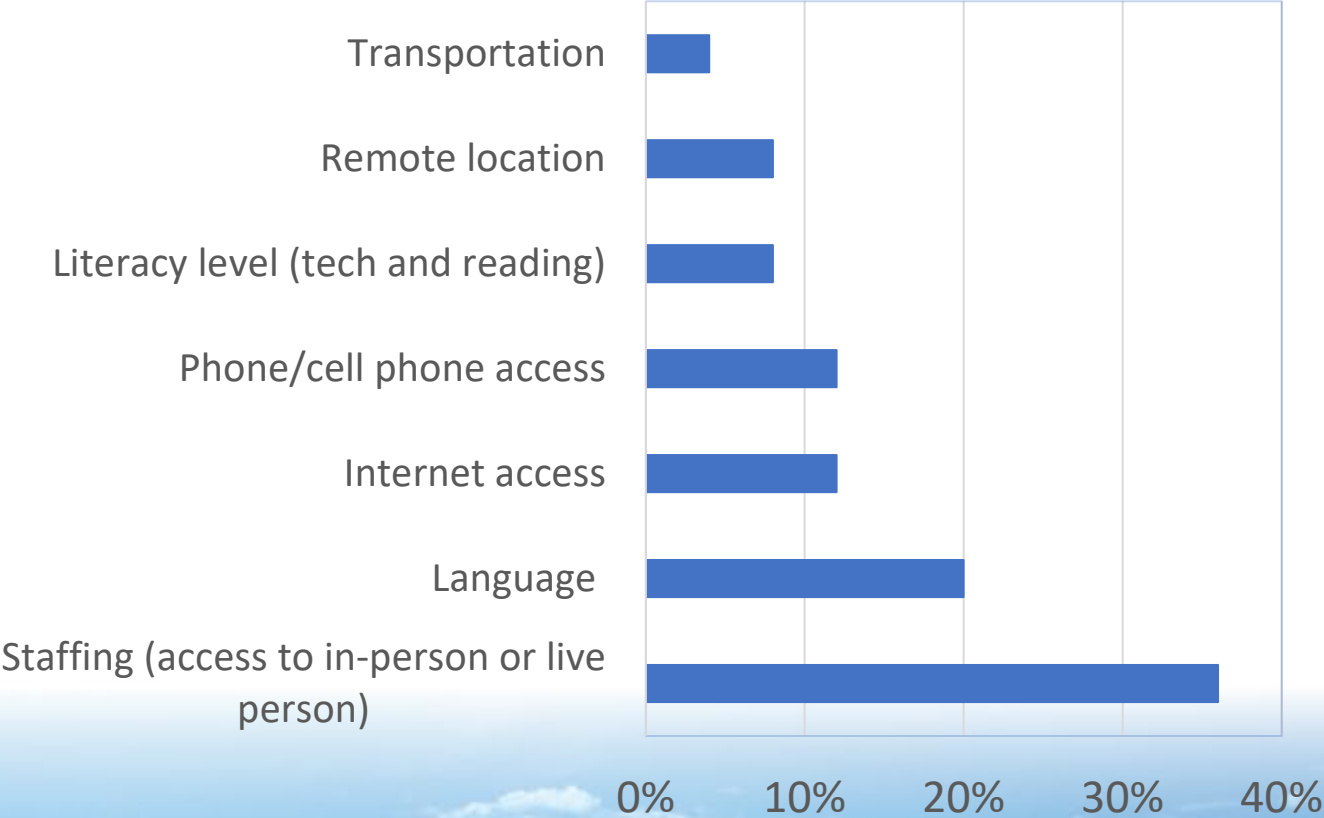
621 Total Coded Themes:

Enabling Factors	**Barriers**
Outreach - 96	Accessibility- 55
Technology - 67	Requirements - 38
Communication - 54	Communication - 32
Human Factors - 46	Technology - 30
Accessibility - 41	Human Factors - 21
Requirements - 15	Outreach - 21
Policy - 5	Policy - 14

Special Populations (tribal, elderly, disability)	46
Attitudes (feeling/emotional statements)	23
Equity (race, age, discrimination, literacy statements)	18

Accessibility

Accessibility Barriers

Transportation
Remote location
Literacy level (tech and reading)
Phone/cell phone access
Internet access
Language
Staffing (access to in-person or live person)

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%

*"It's a dichotomy that those that often **need the most** to connect to help ... **experience the most barriers** in trying to find it."*
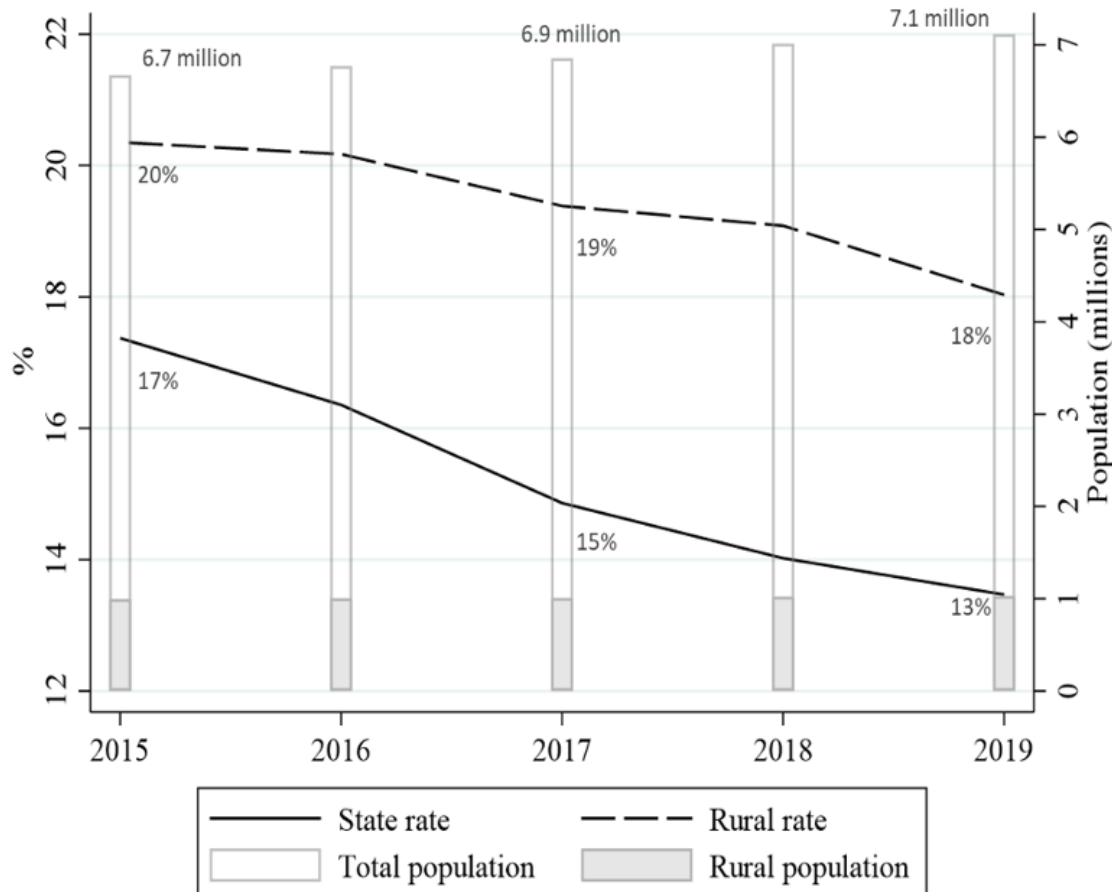
- Interviewee who works for a home visiting program across Arizona
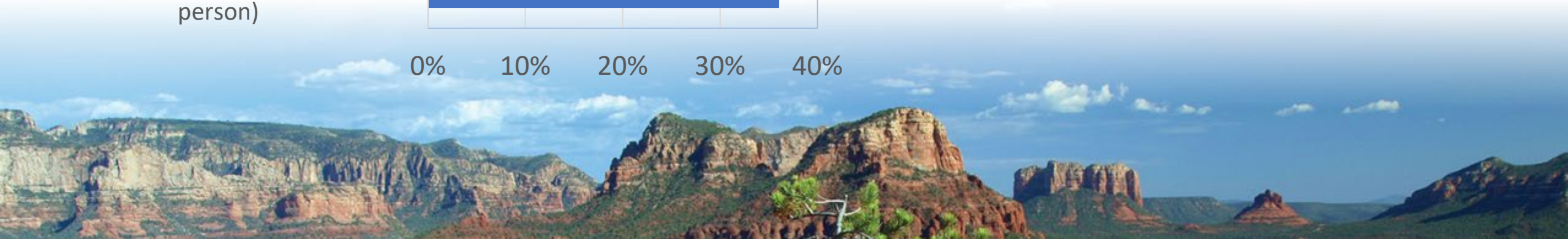
Outreach

Arizona Poverty Rate

*"12 years after its launch there are **still people who don't know** that the marketplaces/social services are available to them"*

- Navigator serving in Santa Cruz, Graham, Greenlee & Cochise counties

Human Factors

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Human Factors-Enabling	22/28	78.6%
Human Factors-Barriers	12/28	42.9%

*"You can't code compassion.
You have to hire good people. And
they **burn out and lose patience** when they
are **overworked**. So design a system
that helps them to do their job better.
A data driven approach is important, but
you **can't lose sight of the human aspect**."*
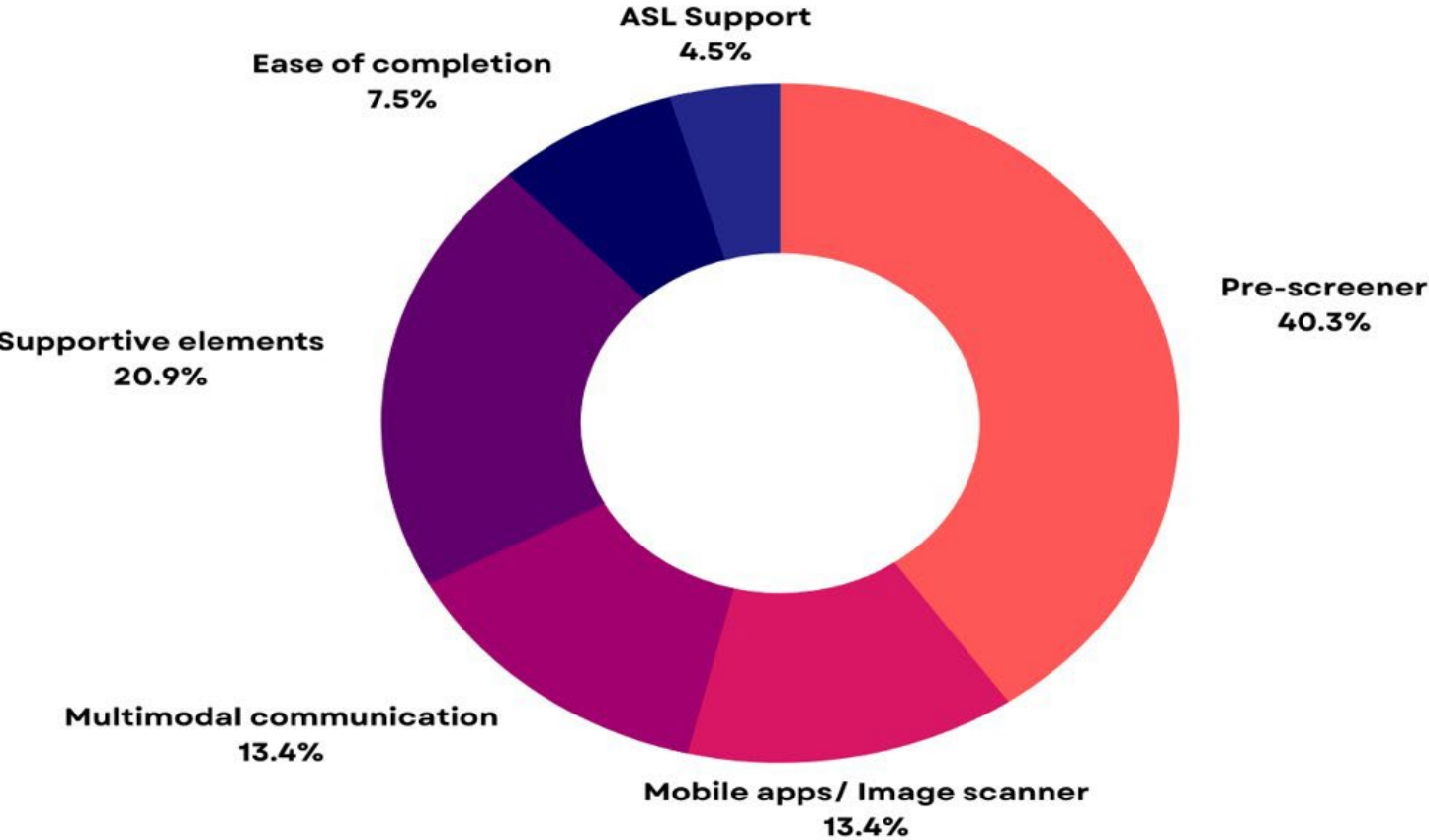
- Interviewee who works with probation populations
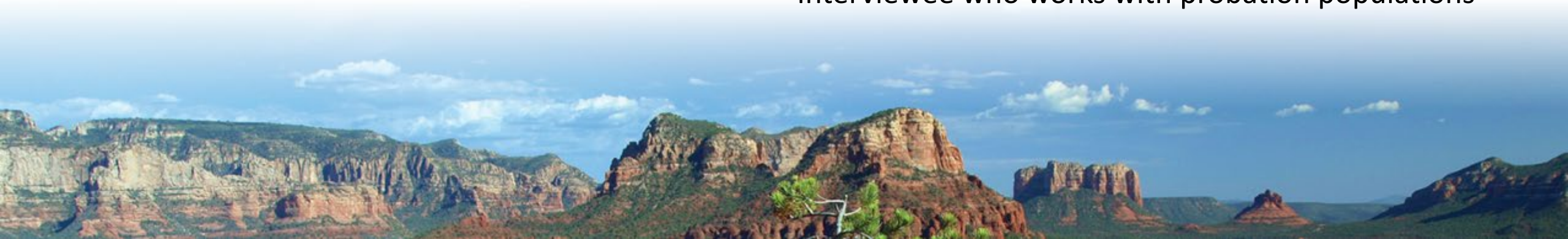
Communication

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Communication-Enabling	22/28	78.6%
Communication-Barrier	12/28	42.9%

*"No matter how intuitive you think you're building a system to be...if you are **not asking the people** who you are going to be applying the questions to, **you're not going to get the right response**"*

- Interviewee who works with a poverty non-profit based in Maricopa County

Technology

ASL Support
4.5%

Ease of completion
7.5%

Pre-screener
40.3%

Supportive elements
20.9%

Multimodal communication
13.4%

Mobile apps/ Image scanner
13.4%

*"A dashboard/website where **both client and Navigator can see all of the benefits** a person might be eligible for would be helpful... empowering"*

- Navigator who works in immigrant and border health

Equity

*"How do you **provide access equitably**, when access still isn't equitable across the board? Redirecting people to local sources is good but some people will have far fewer local resources"*

- Interviewee who works in Maternal and Infant Care
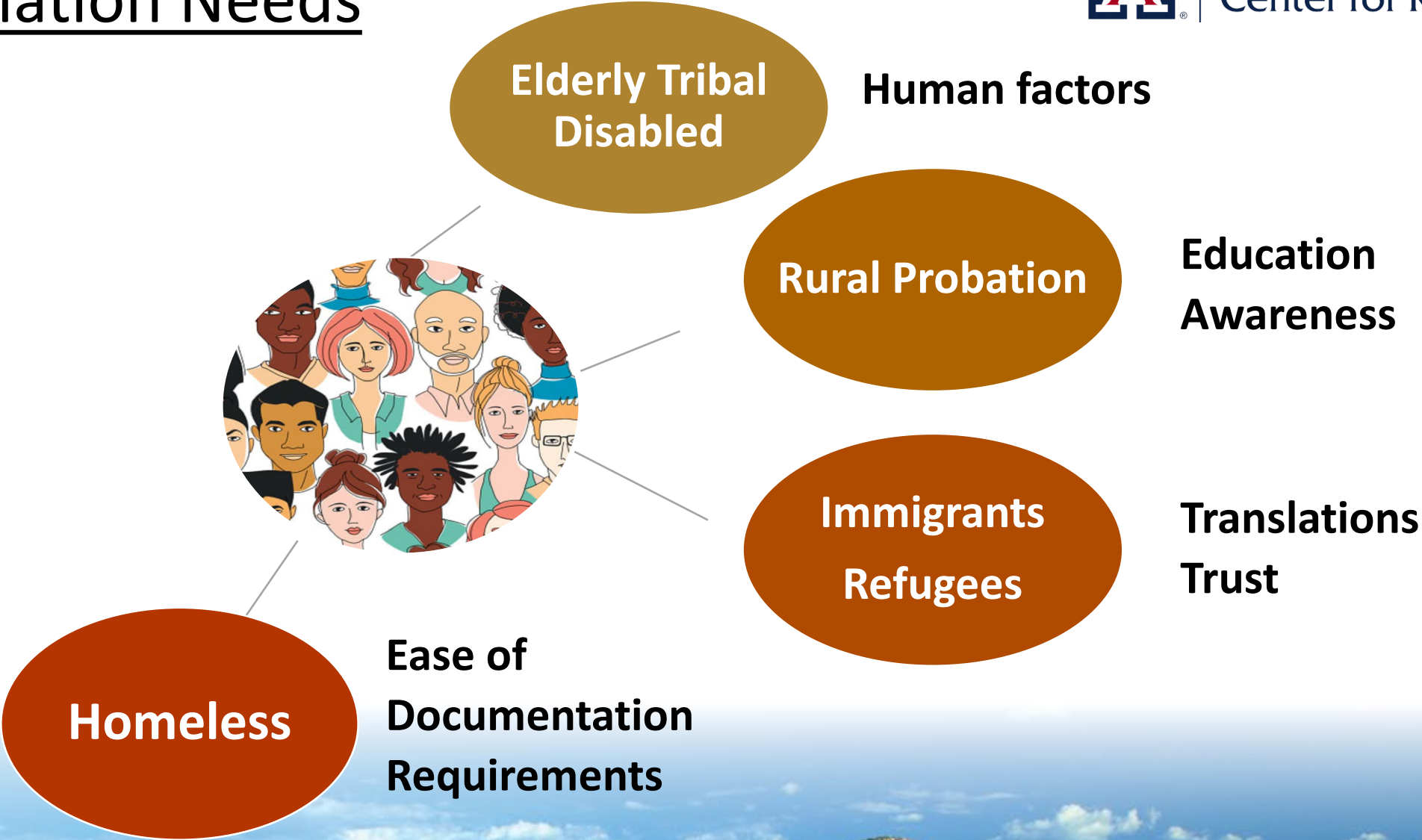
Attitudes

Population Needs

Elderly Tribal Disabled

Human factors

Rural Probation

Education
Awareness

Immigrants Refugees

Translations
Trust

Homeless

Ease of
Documentation
Requirements

Recommendations

Allow local Navigators/Assistors partners greater access to self-submitted applications

Create more accessible communication channels (e.g., text reminders for important deadlines, mobile apps, document capture)

Develop a pre-screener element to increase awareness of available programs

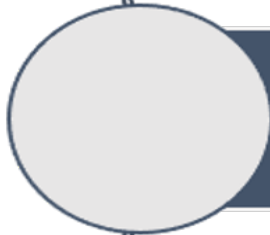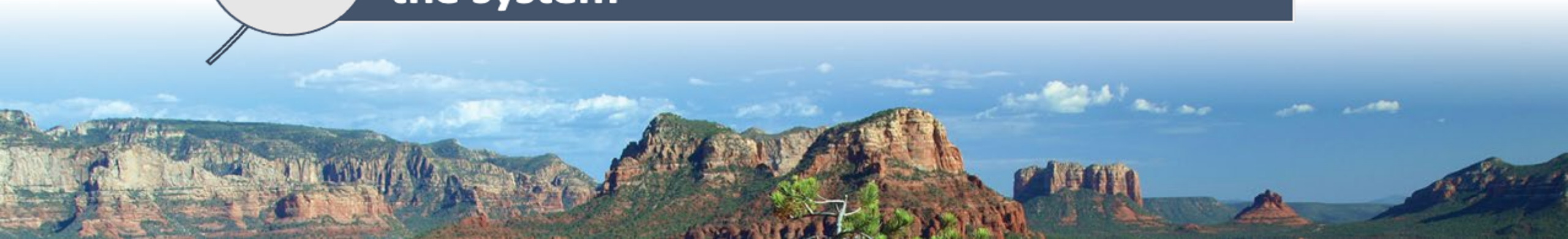Involve key stakeholders and users in development and execution
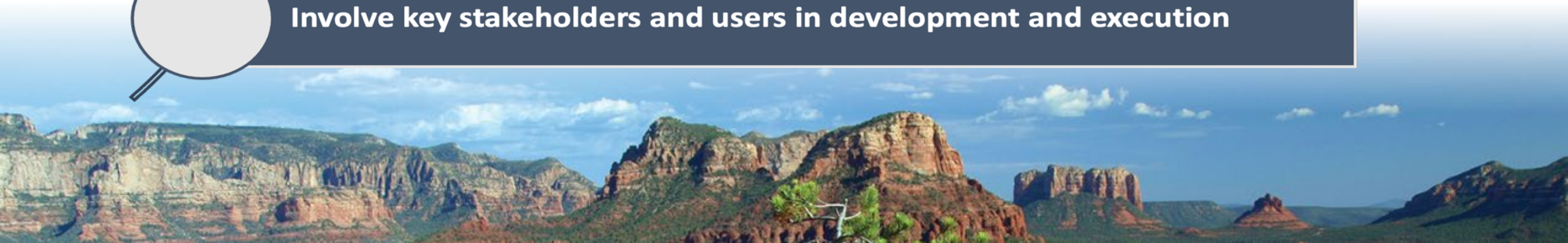
Recommendations
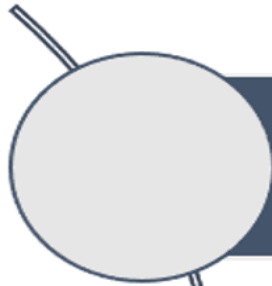
Include more Self-Service Options

Keep flexible options, different groups have different needs

The human element is an integral part of the system

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

11/28 interviewees were **overwhelmingly positive**

9/28 interviews were **slightly positive**

7 interviews were **neutral**

1 interview was **negative**

"Excited about exploring the concept; glad to be part of the discussion and be able to access."

"I think a one-stop shop is a great idea particularly if it can house both state and federal benefits agencies under one website."

"Great opportunity to enhance collaboration across a spectrum of social services."

"Sounds like a really useful platform. Benefits coordination is a huge challenge impacting access to services"

"It is a great idea. It sounds like it has the potential to be easier and more efficient for people...consider building in programs aimed at supporting self-sufficiency and peer support elements too."

"Try to give hope to people who are struggling. There is still a lot of stigma surrounding benefits...it would be beneficial to show success stories to change the narrative – this person was on benefits for months and now has a stable job, housing, and enough to eat."

Acknowledgements