





## A Letter From the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation

We believe that when a community can draw on the potential, strength, ingenuity and grace of every person in it, that community will be healthier, happier, more prosperous and a better place to live for all. We believe New Hampshire can be that community. But we have some shared work to do to get there.

For far too long, too many of us have faced barriers to belonging, basic rights and the ability to thrive based on race, socioeconomic background, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, and other factors. Black, indigenous and other people of color, in particular, face disproportionate barriers. Recent crises — a global pandemic, economic and social upheaval, polarization, threats to democracy, accelerating climate change — have further exacerbated inequity and injustice.

As the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation undertook a strategic planning process to set priorities for the coming years, we first set out to listen closely to people who have faced those barriers.

Through a process called Participatory Action Research, we recruited and hired people closest to the issues our communities are facing to define the problems, do the research and recommend actions. What we wanted to know most was this: What are the obstacles that people are facing in New Hampshire communities and what more can be done to lower those obstacles?

The Community Listening Team is composed of people from every region of the state who themselves have faced barriers (their bios begin on page four of this report.) Together, they spoke with and surveyed more than 600 residents, making surveys available in 10 languages.

The design and execution of the research, the results and recommendation and format of this report were left entirely to the Community Listening Team. A consultant facilitated the process and three of our staff served in an advisory role as needed.

This report is a critical piece of input to guide the Charitable Foundation's work in the coming years. We are immensely grateful to the team of people who did this research and created this important piece of work. We consider ourselves accountable to them and to the hundreds of people whose voices and experiences are represented in the findings of this report.

The Community Listening Team has given us great insight and inspiration into how the Charitable Foundation can help New Hampshire be a community where we can all feel deep belonging, and where we all can thrive, together.

Richard Ober  
President and CEO  
New Hampshire Charitable Foundation

# Why We Did This



On March 10th, 2021 an email came across my desktop titled “Foundation seeks NH residents for community listening and research project.” With a “You would be so perfect for this with your passion on the barriers to success,” I sat and thought on this for a while. Eventually, I applied. I did because so many people I see every single day face barriers to success, myself included: lack of transportation, special education, housing, facing judgement when reaching out for help.

*Fay Pierce, on behalf of the entire  
Community Listening Team*

As much as I love this state, the few systems in place to help are lacking either due to bias, insufficient funds, or access. So many of us start to feel defeated, start to feel like the systems are failing us, thus making us feel like we’re failing ourselves, and our families. I’ve felt that, I have seen that, which is why this work is so important. Due to this, this project became my passion, working alongside each other, hearing one another’s stories, triumphs. Every single one of us is passionate about different barriers, bringing something different, making us the perfect team.

So why did we do this research project? Honestly it’s simple, you take a group of people that are well connected in their communities, that have faced obstacles, to better understand the obstacles they, and their community face. It takes connection, to make a connection.

This work impacted us all in different ways because each of us put our hearts into the work we were doing. With each interview brought about a better understanding of just how much this work is needed. Seeing the patterns in survey data revealed more — like how over two-thirds of people surveyed said access to resources to meet their basic needs like housing and transportation was a top challenge for them and their community.

Seeing all of this data, hearing all of these stories, brought on a lot of conversations and recommendations for the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation to consider — such as supporting greater access to resources and knowledge of rights for families around special education and other resources, especially for New Americans and in multiple languages.

We hope that you take the data we’ve gathered, and the recommendations here, to make a difference in the lives of many around the state, to bridge a gap that families all across the state suffer from. This data alone could be used to offer a better understanding of the people within each community, statewide and the barriers to success we all face.

*Our approach was guided by Participatory Action Research principles and facilitated by Walter Howell and Sandra Moore of [Community Wealth Partners](#), using COLIBERATE: Community-Driven Planning, A Participatory Action Research Curriculum developed by [Partners for Collaborative Change](#).*

# Who We Are



Amy

## How I Identify

I am white, transgender (they/them/theirs), pansexual, feminist, and have generalized anxiety disorder as well as depression, a graduate student in the clinical mental health counseling program at Plymouth State University, and the student representative on the board of the New Hampshire Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors Association. I own my own massage therapy business in Wolfeboro, NH and work primarily in anxiety/stress relief, pain management, and oncology. I am also an abstract oil painter and enjoy showing my work around the state of New Hampshire. I also deeply identify with nature and find myself in the mountains and lakes soaking in the beauty of our state. I am married to a wonderful human, Lars, and have an orange tiger cat named Wicket.

## Where I live

Laconia, New Hampshire

## Barriers to opportunity me and my community have faced:

It is difficult to exist in a society where there are people who do not want you to be alive, or to have the basic rights and freedoms that every human deserves. In coming out as trans and being my authentic self, I have lost people in my life and faced workplace discrimination. As someone who presents as female, I have experienced significant gender discrimination as well. I have days where I struggle to do the basics to make it through the day, and other days when I can fight and hold my head high. I believe that most people are supportive, and those who are not have amplified microphones to make their voices loud. The visible support for the LGBTQ+ community in response to the wave of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation has been such a show of love. The courage and persistence of the younger generation makes me so hopeful for the future. As someone who also has mental health challenges, I have lost relationships, career opportunities, money, and time. It was only through years of counseling that I was able to see myself as a valued, capable person, who needs strategies to care for myself while engaging in life. Additionally, it has been challenging to break the socioeconomic barrier into advanced higher education. Today, you might see me as someone who is successful without knowing how much work and struggle it has taken for me to get to this point. I have had to build a system of people and resources as well as doing the psychological work to get me here, in spite of those people and systems that would hold me back.

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## How I Identify

A disabled mother of two beautiful kids, a wife to a U.S. Air Force veteran, a grateful recovering addict, a crafter and writer.

## Where I live

Bradford, NH, Merrimack County

## Barriers to opportunity me and my community have faced:

Coming from a low-income family, without running water, heat, electricity — life has always been a bit of a struggle when the odds were never in your favor. We had a wood stove, but no heat or running water. I was the first person in almost 80 years to take a shower in my parents' house. My parents and whole family worked really hard but it seemed we were always stuck. In the area we're in, if you didn't have a dollar sign by your name, you fell



Brande

through the cracks. I turned inward and fell to drugs when I was 19, I was in active addiction for nearly 12 years, I've been in recovery for seven years. I've had health care problems — I couldn't get health care even though I am fully disabled through the government. It was awful just to get to my doctor or even to the dentist. My parents had to rescue me again, and help me with a loan just to get my teeth out because Medicare kept denying my claim for insurance. I almost died because of my teeth, no one cared. I finally got my dentures and unfortunately they don't fit and the dentist said his job was done. My family also makes too much to qualify for Medicaid (we make \$3 dollars too much for the allotted cap) so there is no outlet for those who exceed the limit. The biggest barrier that my family has faced is with housing, there's nothing. We're trying to stay where we've been for the last decade almost, but house rentals are \$3,000 a month, have a zero pet policy or are simply weekly rentals for out of staters. I'm scared of passing this onto my kids. I'm scared of them being where we are...homeless with two kids, three animals and no outlet to turn to because half the state is going through the same thing. Campgrounds, storage units, campers, tents, most are gone or have ballooned in price. New Hampshire is our home, it's our heart. We love our community and the people within it. I will continue to be, the kindness within the chaos. Thankfully, in August 2021 my husband and I were approved for a Veterans home loan. We finally have our forever home — a place to have our children grow up and to have an adventure of a lifetime!



Clement

#### **How I Identify**

I identify myself as a New American, from Rwanda but I grew up in the Democratic Republic of Congo, I came to the USA as an immigrant, I am now a U.S. citizen. I am a father of six children, three girls and three boys and two grandchildren. I am Executive Director of Overcomers Refugee Services and Senior Pastor of Overcomers Church of God.

#### **Where I live**

I have been here for 15 years, I live in Concord and I feel like New Hampshire is my home.

#### **Barriers to opportunity me and my community have faced:**

I came to the U.S. with my college degree with eight years of work experience in nonprofit organizations. My expectation was to use my degree and my experience. When I arrived, English was the only language used in the workplace and Spanish in some places. I did not know any of these languages. I started learning English at Second Start. Due to language barriers, I was not able to access the resources I needed. I did work a job that was not my preference for many years, because I did not have other choices. This affected my psychology and emotions. Managing life in the USA is not easy, I was working two jobs that paid minimum wage, because one job could not cover all bills. In addition to two jobs, I had to take care of the kids and also go to school to learn English. This is the kind of life many New Americans have in this country. When they arrive here from overseas they get assistance from the U.S. government but the government expects them to be independent in 6 months while they speak very little English, are ignorant of American lifestyle and still suffering past traumas. Schools want them to be involved in their children's education, kids want their parents to accompany them to their game and practice, landlords want them to pay rent on time while one job that pays minimum wage can not cover the rent. They don't have any other choices than to look for another job to be able to pay bills and leave other activities behind.



Fay

### How I Identify

I am a disabled, mother of two, well connected in my communities, recovering seven-year sober addict.

### Where I live

I currently reside in Coös County (Berlin) however I'm from Carroll County (North Conway).

### Barriers to opportunity me and my community have faced:

While living in Carroll County we went an entire summer without electricity, my family faced judgement and threats when seeking help from places that were created to help us. The lack of long-term rentals led to us moving to Coös County. As soon as we got here I struggled getting my daughter help with her education, she has a speech IEP, and has ADHD, ODD, and generalized anxiety disorder. It's taken getting an advocate to finally be heard, yet I'm still waiting for progress there due to her IEP and no support at the school. We lack transportation and walk carrying our kids and groceries to feed them every time I need to shop. It took me years to finally get granted disability. Then when I started this project my monthly payment in SSI was cut in half, the benefits cliff is no joke. I spent May through July trying to get it fixed. Making \$60 caused me to lose \$300. This project also opened many doors I never saw possible for employment. The building we call home went up for sale and due to repairs the new owner is requiring everyone to relocate. There is absolutely nothing here for rent, leaving me between a rock and a hard place. I can't pursue the career I've been offered if, like many others, I have to leave the state. My family has faced many barriers, yet we overcome them. I don't want future families to feel the judgments that I have, or to feel the fear for their child's education, to pack up and leave their homes, as well as everything they know.



Glory

### How I Identify

I am originally from Central Africa (DR Congo) I moved to the USA particularly in New Hampshire in 2003. I have my associate degree in general studies from the University of New Hampshire and a bachelor's degree in business/finance from Southern New Hampshire University. I am married and the mother of two toddlers and I am the administrative assistant for Victory Women of Vision, a nonprofit organization in Manchester that works with refugees and immigrants.

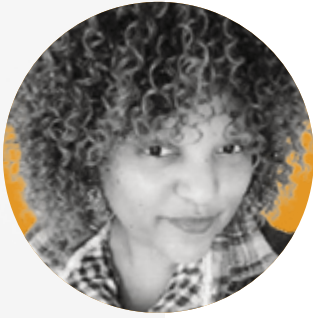
### Where I live

When I had my second son in 2019 I came to Manchester, NH during my maternity leave from work. Then the pandemic hit and I got laid off. I then decided to stay in Manchester near my family.

### Barriers to opportunity me and my community have faced:

Language barriers were very big when I first moved to the USA. Everything was just a long and difficult process such as job application, transportation, housing...you had to know someone who has been here and knows their way around and be willing to help you.

As an African parent with English being my second language and raising a child with disability, it is hard to have access to resources needed to help advocate for my child's education. In fact, I didn't even know I could advocate for him. I didn't know that there were resources out there that will help me get more help for him. I didn't know that my son had rights that he was entitled to. I was clueless in all of those IEP meetings and felt like I had no choice but to agree even when I wasn't seeing much progress. Coming from a country where you don't have all those resources, you don't even think of it.



Joede

### **How I Identify**

Woman, Black, four generations removed from slavery, mother of a married son and teenage daughter, two-time cancer survivor, Christian, Harvard graduate.

### **Where I live**

Work and live in Manchester, New Hampshire

### **Barriers to opportunity me and my community have faced:**

What story do you want me to tell of the barriers that I have encountered as an educated Black mother living in New Hampshire? From my children being ignored to employment to housing, I have encountered many of the barriers mentioned in our report. There are too many stories and I am still angry that my family has been subjected to these behaviors by individuals and New Hampshire society as a whole. Because of someone else, our lives took turns that should not have occurred.

My daughter did not get the services she needed until 4th grade because her teachers didn't care when I said there was something wrong (starting in kindergarten).

My son got into trouble with his friends in 7th grade and was the only one punished. His childhood mistake affected him 5 years later when the Marine Patrol brought it up during his application process. A mistake at the age of 13 was grounds for a grown man to not land his dream job. I am pretty sure many have been allowed to move on from a mistake at 13 years of age.

I walked into a temporary work assignment and was told, "there is no way the resume I saw belongs to you"? At the end of my assignment, she told me that she never knew Black people could be smart.

I applied for a home 20 years ago and had to "interview" with 3 different men. The last one said, "You're denied because you're a single mother with no one to take care of your son when he's sick." My son was 7 at the time. I had a decent paying job with sick leave and benefits but I was denied because I was a Black single mother. I've never recovered and I do not trust any bankers or realtors in New Hampshire.

These actions from people who had power over our lives caused harm. These systemic behaviors must be addressed *and* fixed!



Jules

**How I Identify**

I am caucasian. I am a multiply disabled nonbinary person. I am 21 years old. I have a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Master of Public Policy. I come from a middle-class background.

**Where I live**

Somersworth, NH

**Barriers to opportunity me and my community have faced:**

As a deaf person with multiple chronic illnesses, I have accessibility needs that are rarely met without a lot of back-and-forth. And yet, as a white person who has been lucky enough to complete graduate school and find a stable job, I recognize that countless other disabled people in New Hampshire without such privileges fight even harder to have their basic needs met. The disabled community has spent so long trying to secure the basics that we are rarely thought of as people who can achieve something greater. Information about funding for initiatives and competitive grants are rarely made accessible to our community. Applications need to be logistically accessible, with plain language, large print, American Sign Language, and screen-reader-friendly versions. Additionally, we need support through better policy, infrastructure, and treatment by our community leaders and peers. I am tired of watching my people struggle to find work because employers think accommodating their disabilities is too difficult, tired of accessible housing being prohibitively expensive rather than the societal norm, tired of being underestimated because I communicate and live and think differently from the average person. The Americans with Disabilities Act was passed 31 years ago, but that is just the beginning of a long road toward equity and justice for the disabled community. We need equal access to opportunity.



Lidia

**How I Identify**

Former South Sudanese Refugee, U.S. citizen, caretaker, daughter, mentor, leader, B.S. in Healthcare Administration, equity advocate, person with ADHD, lifelong learner.

**Where I live**

Merrimack County, NH

**Barriers to opportunity me and my community have faced:**

My biggest barrier is health care due to losing my Medicaid from attaining my independence. When I lost my Medicaid, I had to apply for private health insurance. Now that I have private health insurance, out-of-pocket expense is an issue. My mother also faces issues with healthcare because of her language barrier. She gets assigned a new doctor every two years when her doctor graduates or leaves the program at her facility. As a result, her doctors can't form a meaningful relationship with her. She gets frustrated all the time because she doesn't know who's taking care of her and they don't always make the effort to ensure that she fully understands what is going on. My mother has also faced barriers in the workforce. When she was working (she's disabled now) her opportunities were limited due to not being able to read and write English fluently. She was stuck doing manual labor and eventually became physically disabled because of the beat down on her body from manual labor. Housing is another barrier for my family and I. Last year when I finally decided to move out of my crowded family apartment, I ended up settling for an apartment that cost significantly more than it should. I was also looking for an apartment (3+ years of searching) for my family, one with more rooms or space, but it was futile. They're just too expensive and many landlords don't accept vouchers.





**Maria**

**How I Identify**

Immigrant from El Salvador, domestic and sexual abuse survivor.

**Where I live**

Milford, NH

**Barriers to opportunity me and my community have faced:**

The inequality of opportunity and in the workforce. I’ve been in a position training people to do what I have been doing. I am training people to make more money than I was making. Because I’m a female, there’s a pay gap and at end of day, you are training to have someone take your job and you get laid off. As a state representative, I still struggle with discrimination against woman and people of color. I’ve been told “you need to sit down, listen, and stay quiet.” I’m grateful to be elected — and if I have a seat at the table, I’m raising my voice for my community and so those that look like me have a voice.



**Patti**

**How I Identify**

She/her/hers/herself.

**Where I live**

Seacoast

**Barriers to opportunity me and my community have faced:**

The personal stories gathered from individual voices were strong and powerful narratives from experiences resulting in a resounding silence when conveyed and reflected on as a group. In those emotional moments was a cacophony, a history of struggles; angst, anxiety, strife, hurt, denial, heartbreak, rejection, stress, loss and tears. Through the silence could be heard by us the joint appeals and urgency for compelling change and improvements from voices longing to be heard after being long pent up with a sense of not belonging. In others voices we heard our own. Sharing those stories with others is important. Being heard is vital.

Together, these stories reflect an orchestra of unique instruments; strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion with different rhythms and beats and chords played passionately before a crowded concert hall. Collectively, we, together, are not unlike a symphony that can perform together best to maximum advantage. We can leverage our differences to create a synergy, an energy flow as an ongoing continuum that lifts others up when they are down, when we can and they cannot...when we cannot and they can...like musical notes. It is not “or” based — it is “and” based — “and” together, we can! Let’s do it...together!



**Somayeh**

### **How I Identify**

A Middle-Eastern Woman, first generation American, mother of two, artist, teacher, wife, raised Muslim (non-practicing), educated (master's).

### **Where I live**

Merrimack County (Concord)

### **Barriers to opportunity me and my community have faced:**

As a first-generation American, my parents came here during the late 70's and were cut off from family in Iran due to the Iran-Iraq war and the U.S.'s interference causing a huge rift between the two countries. Long story short, my family with their limited English had to rely a great deal on government subsidies to be able to survive. My father was able to pursue his dream of getting his Ph.D. and my mother has two master's degrees. I have a master's in education and became a public school teacher here in Concord, NH. As someone of color in a predominantly white state, not every town has been welcoming. Out of all of the cities in New Hampshire that we have lived in the last 15 years, Concord has felt the most welcoming and safest. However as an educator in my place of work, I am only one of two classroom teachers of color in the entire district of 4,000+ students. In many situations, I have not felt safe. Everyday I am faced with the responsibility of being the only face that resembles some of my students at school. I constantly have to pick myself up and tolerate the ignorant and sometimes hateful comments in order to be there for my students. Most of these situations are instigated by other adults and those in positions of power. I knew teaching would be hard, I just never expected that my race would be a factor in its difficulty.



**Stacie**

### **How I Identify**

I am a mom of three, I was born and raised in the State of New Hampshire. I have studied business administration at the University of Phoenix, I am a trained recovery coach and currently training to become a peer support specialist. I have participated in Nami NH walks and the "Life Interrupted" speaker training. I have also attended webinars and earned credits in performance domains for my Certified Recovery Support Worker through NAADAC (the Association for Addiction Professionals) and NHADAC (New Hampshire Alcohol & Drug Abuse Counselors Association).

### **Where I live**

I live in Jaffrey, NH, the home of Mt. Monadnock

### **Barriers to opportunity me and my community have faced:**

I have personally experienced barriers to opportunity in my community here in Cheshire County. These obstacles include mental health, substance use, homelessness, and post incarceration struggles. I am also a sister that has lost two brothers to death by suicide. It has taken years of meaningful learning experiences to become the strong woman I am today. So, what helped? Finding recovery was my first step, staying active in my recovery through the tools provided to me by Reality Check in Jaffrey, NH was the second. The "Shelter From the Storm," a homeless shelter that provides eight months transitional living, was the first step to rebuilding my family. Thanks to this program and their resources I now am a homeowner of a 3-family apartment building, and am able to provide housing to others and I found my forever home too.

Barriers to opportunity in my community are easily identified as not much has changed here. There is very little access to public transportation, no grocery stores, people without transportation are stuck shopping at convenience stores, Dollar Generals, etc. Childcare costs are \$250 a week for a child to hold a “spot” and this price is set regardless of one day a week or five. This system of spot holding at this price is creating inequality, lack of wellness for overworked moms, and financial hardship. The mental health crisis is real, and people are given psychiatric medication through primary care providers rather than psychiatrists. Wait lists are still never ending and I fear the death and destruction this will have on our state, for both clinicians and those seeking help. To receive help is a process in itself and many that need it have felt judged, brushed off, ignored and a lack of acceptance and belonging. There is certainly work to be done in our state. Through the darkest times of my life I held HOPE, and found my way. I believe New Hampshire holds HOPE too, and together we can strengthen our communities.



Suraj

### **How I Identify**

Former Bhutanese refugee and community advocate supporting New Americans in New Hampshire and beyond. I’m working on peacebuilding and reconciliation to address the intractable Bhutanese refugee problem, including family separation and visiting our birth country since my resettlement in 2009.

### **Where I live**

Manchester, New Hampshire

### **Barriers to opportunity me and my community have faced:**

I have been working with New Americans, including Nepali and Bhutanese communities since 2009. When our parents and grandparents were in refugee camps, they didn’t get English lessons and didn’t get the opportunity to take ESL classes in the U.S. Not speaking English prevented them from navigating the services that are available in New Hampshire. There’s also a generation gap between those who came as refugees and their children born in the U.S. The parents/grandparents don’t speak English while their children speak only English. There’s very little understanding and communication, so the parents/grandparents feel neglected and not respected. Mental health is another challenge facing my community. Research done by the CDC showed that resettled Bhutanese in America had the highest suicide rate nationally and globally, and one of the reasons cited is family separation. Our families were separated twice: first when people went to refugee camps in Nepal, then when some of them came to the US as refugees. We need to reconnect those who are here, those who are in refugee camps in Nepal and those who are in Bhutan. Jobs are also a challenge. Members of my family have moved to other states because New Hampshire doesn’t have large manufacturing companies where you don’t need to speak English to get a job. These problems are not just issues for Bhutanese and Nepali immigrants; refugees from other countries also face the same kinds of problems.



Tamara

### How I Identify

Single, caucasian, cisgendered woman, early 50s, mother, and grandmother, of Jewish heritage (nonpracticing), ceramic and studio artist, homeowner. Co-owner of the Community Clay Center in Plymouth, NH. BFA/MAT K-12 Art Education. Entrepreneur many times over, practitioner of many trades, master of few. Seeker of social justice.

### Where I live

Campton, NH

### Barriers to opportunity me and my community have faced:

There is so much. I am a survivor of a very difficult childhood filled with parental addiction, violence and sexual abuse. I am a cancer survivor, ex-wife (23 years of marriage) of a severely mentally ill spouse who is diagnosed with rapid fire bipolar disorder and paranoid schizophrenia. I am the mother of an autism spectrum, transgendered woman who is 32, lives at home and is on SSI. My daughter suffers from extreme social anxiety disorders, PTSD from her father and from the school system and how it handled her “special education.” I am the co-owner of a women-owned and run business of nine years.

I have experienced first hand the shame and stigma that comes with low income. I have faced the fear, despair and deep pain that comes with not being able to seek and obtain help with a mentally ill spouse. I have faced the frustration and guilt of not being able to adequately provide educational and vocational support for your developmentally disabled, and increasingly stressed out child who was “high functioning” enough to be denied services from your local area agency, but who was eligible for SSI for life. I continue to face barriers to helping her as she is now anti-establishment assistance for fear of discrimination and shaming, so I cannot get her to even try to seek vocational support, counseling, job training.

I faced housing barriers up until two years ago that were daunting and I had nowhere to go if my rental fell through. Rents were too high, there were no available apartments. I was fortunate enough to have a family member who was able to help me obtain a mortgage for a home in Campton, where my mortgage is less than my rent was.



Yusi

### How I Identify

Collision of old and new New Hampshire. My father immigrated to the U.S. from China, while my maternal great-grandfather taught math to over 10,000 freshmen at Dartmouth College. Biracial, mom of two boys with mental health needs, school board member, Ph.D. candidate, institutional changemaker.

### Where I live

Durham, NH

### Barriers to opportunity me and my community have faced:

I am the first person of color to serve on our school board — “the first person whose name you don’t immediately know how to pronounce after reading it.” Asian Americans in my area have been targets of both overt racism and microaggressions. Recently, feelings of fear and alienation have increased, particularly among immigrants and refugees. K-12 education is where we can start to build tolerance and understanding. We are working to become more visible in the K-12 curriculum, and to support teachers in more diverse, inclusive instruction that lifts up ALL students. However, powerful forces in our state sow fear and threaten retribution in the mistaken belief of a ‘zero sum game’ — that lifting me up means pushing you down. How can we change New Hampshire’s systems to enable all to contribute and all to be treated with dignity?

# What We Asked








What are the barriers to opportunity in NH and what can be done to address them?

# What We Did



**From April through August of 2021, our 15-person community listening team came together to do the following:**

-  Surveyed 478 people in NH across 10 counties, available in 10 languages.\*
-  Interviewed and gathered quotes from 135+ people.
-  Drew on our own experiences and knowledge.
-  Focused outreach on groups we know face barriers to opportunities: people of color, immigrants, people with disabilities, people with low-income, LGBTQ+ people etc.
-  Focused questions on five top areas based on data trends and listening team application process: access to basic resources (housing, transportation, childcare), mental health, discrimination, education and jobs.

**As you read the following report and findings, there are some important items to be aware of and limitations to consider:**

Our survey respondents and interviewees are not representative of the mainstream, white, middle-class New Hampshire population at large. In order to shed light on barriers to opportunity in New Hampshire, we intentionally focused outreach on groups we know face these barriers, such as people of color, immigrants, people with disabilities, and people with low income. Our team of 15 researchers were selected because of our personal experiences and our networks, which means we were able to quickly access credible input from people who trust us or our affiliations.

Our survey asked respondents to identify their three biggest challenges and then asked follow-up questions only about the three issue areas chosen by the survey taker. This format enabled us to understand respondents' priorities and to shorten the time each person spent answering the survey. As a result, in each section below, the percentage results that we share are based on feedback from respondents who self-identified as concerned about that issue (not based on all survey respondents).

In each section, we report two kinds of findings — what all respondents said, and what those who are most impacted (i.e., most likely to be excluded or pushed to the margins) said.

Throughout the report we have used pseudonyms and changed identifying details to protect the identities and privacy of the people who were interviewed or took the survey.

We have offered recommendations in many areas, but we know the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation can't do everything. We have prioritized key recommendations and offered suggestions on the Foundation's role in making these changes.

*\*Respondents were not randomly selected but rather our listening team reached out to our networks.*

# What We Heard:

## Findings and Recommendations



**Our team looked at the following sources to determine the key focus areas and questions to ask in surveys and interviews:**

Data collected from the 80 applications for the Community Listening Project.  
NH data from the U.S. Census regarding people living below poverty.  
Stories from our own experiences.

**This led the team to focus on the following five main barriers in New Hampshire:**

1. Access to Basic Resources
2. Mental Health
3. Discrimination and Racism
4. Jobs
5. Education

Through analyzing all survey and interview data, our team arrived at the following top overall findings and recommendations.

## Top Overall Findings

### 1 Mental Health

Mental health was a top 3 challenge for the highest number of survey takers (73%) and for many subpopulations.

### 2 Housing and Basic Resources

Access to resources, especially housing, is a crisis-level challenge across New Hampshire. Over two-thirds of people surveyed said access to resources to meet their basic needs like housing and transportation was a top 3 challenge for them and their community. Even multiple members of this 15-person listening team experienced evictions or threats of evictions within the few months of this process.

### 3 Discrimination

Discrimination and racism across New Hampshire is very high for specific groups — over 84% of people of color, immigrants and those with disabilities said they were discriminated against most or some of the time. Language/translation barriers and discrimination (on various levels) also deepened barriers to access for these groups especially in healthcare, jobs and mental health.

“Our community struggles with lack of adequate mental health/substance use programs, with laws currently overwhelming our local critical access ER due to insufficient beds for behavioral patients. Those who are accepted to our sparse outpatient programs can’t get there. Those who have lost driving privileges due to substance abuse can’t access outpatient treatment programs, and inpatient just don’t exist.”

survey respondent, female, white, Grafton County

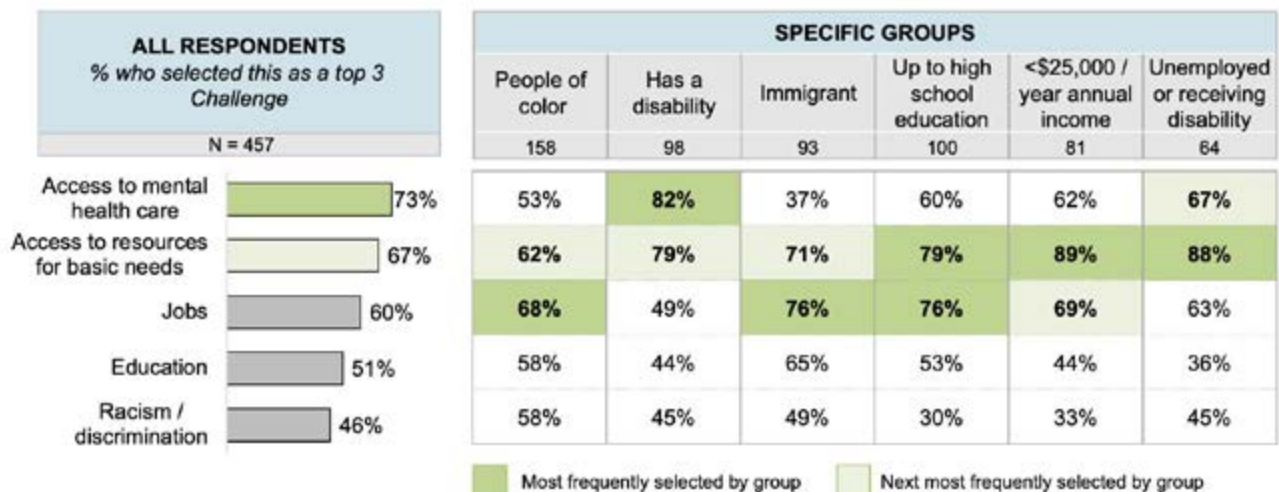
“There’s a huge lack of housing resources. My daughter-in-law recently lost her place to live. So the first place that she had rented was a year round rental on the [Maine] line. The people during COVID needed the apartment for relatives to come here from someplace else, older relatives. So they asked [her] to move. She found another place but it was only [available part of the year]. And then when it was time for her to find a place she couldn’t find a place. Then she found a place that was for a few months. So she’s currently actually staying in a hotel.”

female, white, unemployed, Carroll County

“As a person of color in New Hampshire with advanced degrees, I find the compensation in New Hampshire to be very low, the current employment opportunities don’t align well with my skills and I believe implicit bias and overt racism has impacted my job search and ultimately my long-term financial security.”

survey respondent, male, African American/Black, Hillsborough County

Figure 1: Please select the top 3 most serious challenges facing you and your community





The recommendations proposed to address our findings are based on a number of factors. We analyzed the survey’s multiple choice and short response questions — including questions like “*what could be done to address these barriers?*” In addition to the survey, we interviewed and collected quotes from over 135 residents on their stories and ideas for change. We looked at all of this data

using a set of criteria (e.g, themes repeated in multiple data points, specific, actionable steps with a clear role for the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation). Based on this analysis, we determined a number of recommendations — and have prioritized the following top recommendations — for the Foundation to consider:

Top Recommendations	Potential Role for the Foundation
<p><b>Increase access to mental health providers who can provide clinically and culturally appropriate services, especially for youth.</b> This could include expanding crisis teams and training in rural areas, expanding high-quality services, addressing the provider pipeline, and expanding services and facilities for children.</p>	<p><b>Fund crisis intervention trainings.</b></p> <p><b>Fund organizations providing culturally appropriate mental health support in multiple languages.</b></p> <p><b>Provide grants to schools</b> to bolster mental health programs.</p> <p><b>Offer scholarships</b> to those pursuing a psychology or related degree.</p>
<p><b>Increase access to housing.</b> This could include: publicizing resources, increasing affordable housing/requiring a percentage of new construction to be affordable, supporting public officials leading on affordable housing, or creating shelters that unhoused people are willing to use.</p>	<p><b>Take a strong stand</b> on the basic right to housing.</p> <p><b>Advocate for legislation</b> to address the crisis.</p> <p><b>Support organizations addressing immediate housing needs</b> — creating permanent and transition units.</p>
<p><b>Anti-oppression/anti-bias training for all organizations:</b> “The only way to reduce the harassment and discrimination that marginalized people face...is anti oppression training” (survey respondent).</p>	<p><b>Mandate and fund</b> diversity/anti-bias training for grantees.</p>

*The following sections of the report describe more detailed findings, survey data, quotes and recommendations tied to each of the our key focus areas of listening — access to resources, mental health, discrimination/racism, jobs and education.*

## 1. Access to Resources

The team analyzed responses from questions in the survey and interviews to determine key findings for barriers in accessing resources. The survey asked questions regarding access to the following resources: adult educational support (e.g, ESL classes, job or career training), assistance programs (e.g., food banks, government programs), assistive technology (devices that allow people to live and communicate independently, such as screen readers, wheelchairs, braille tools, interpretation

etc.), childcare, community programs/activities, children’s educational support (e.g., after school programs, mentoring), healthcare (e.g., doctor’s offices, clinics, hospitals), internet, public transportation, public housing, rental housing or housing available to buy, substance use disorder programs. Experiences regarding lack of access to essential resources were broad ranging and high in number across all groups, reflected in both survey results and interviews

# Findings for All Respondents/Overall

**Lack of high-quality rental housing and housing available for purchase** is the highest barrier overall and across many subgroups, as over half of respondents say they face barriers or don't have access. This is due to **affordability (78%)** and/or limited **availability (55%)**.

**Transportation availability** is a top barrier overall and especially for **disabled persons (66% face barriers)** and **rural respondents (63%)**.

“Living in that small apartment as a large family felt very crowded and we felt like we needed more oxygen in the house. It is an apartment that was not comfortable for our family so it is very difficult to find a place that is comfortable for people you, people who come here as a refugee with a lot of children.”

female, refugee

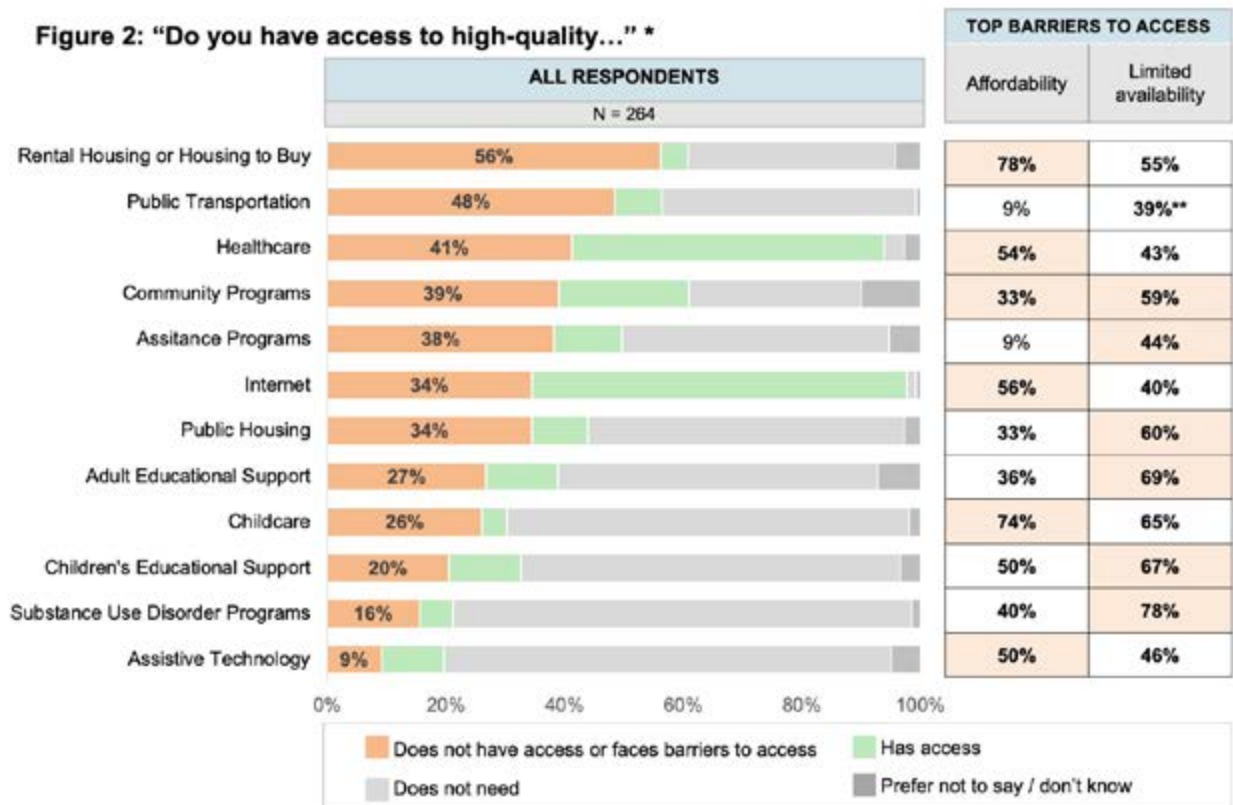
“Plus, there’s a huge lack of transportation. If you need to go grocery shopping you have to call transit days in advance and they require you to pay \$2 per person, plus bring car seats with you, even into the stores. Which is impossible with two small children.”

male, Native, Coös County

“I also looked into applying for housing assistance, and that application was like 32 pages, totally overwhelming and processing time for those applications is huge. It just, everything takes time. So, it’s like, you need help right now. But none of those resources are available to you immediately. There’s like a waiting list and wait times and callback times in the meantime. So, I lived in my friend’s house, you know, for a couple months while I was looking for housing, and then settling on temporary seasonal housing, moving back and forth.”

Carroll County

Figure 2: “Do you have access to high-quality...” \*



\*Based on respondents who identified access to resources to meet basic needs as a top 3 challenge  
 \*\*Top barrier for public transportation was "not available in my community"

# Findings for Specific Groups Facing Barriers

Availability of community programs, assistance programs and adult education support is an issue for **most subgroups and especially for Black respondents.**

**People of color, immigrants, people making below \$25K and those unemployed** indicate not knowing where to find for resources as a top two barrier to access for them — especially for assistance programs and community programs.

**For disabled persons,** only 37% say they have access to quality healthcare. All other groups had over 50% of respondents with access to quality healthcare.

**Respondents said childcare was the second most needed resource for their community,** as they know many people in their community where this is a gap that blocks a multitude of other opportunities, especially being a barrier to working. (see figure 4).

<p>“Living in New Hampshire is nothing different than living in [my home country] — no job, no resources, cannot get to any community gatherings. My expectation of coming to the U.S. is not met.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>former refugee</b></p>	<p>“I have tried to access a psychiatrist throughout the state as I’m on disability for mental health, yet I just got blown off on emails or continually referred elsewhere — all for nothing.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>survey respondent, female, white, disabled, Cheshire County</b></p>
<p>The language and new culture is being the most difficult thing to deal with, the challenges that come with being a stranger to a new community, country and language. Many [are] still having trouble getting help even after living in this country for many years. We need a Latino community center in New Hampshire, where people can go and get any information need in their own language.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>female, New American</b></p>	<p>“Childcare is the big issue. We were kind of on the fence with it right now, as we’ve had in home childcare for a bit, but she has to find different housing. So if she doesn’t find different housing in the area. We’re up a creek, because there is no other open childcare with even two spots, let alone three, that is even close to affordable.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>female, Grafton County</b></p>

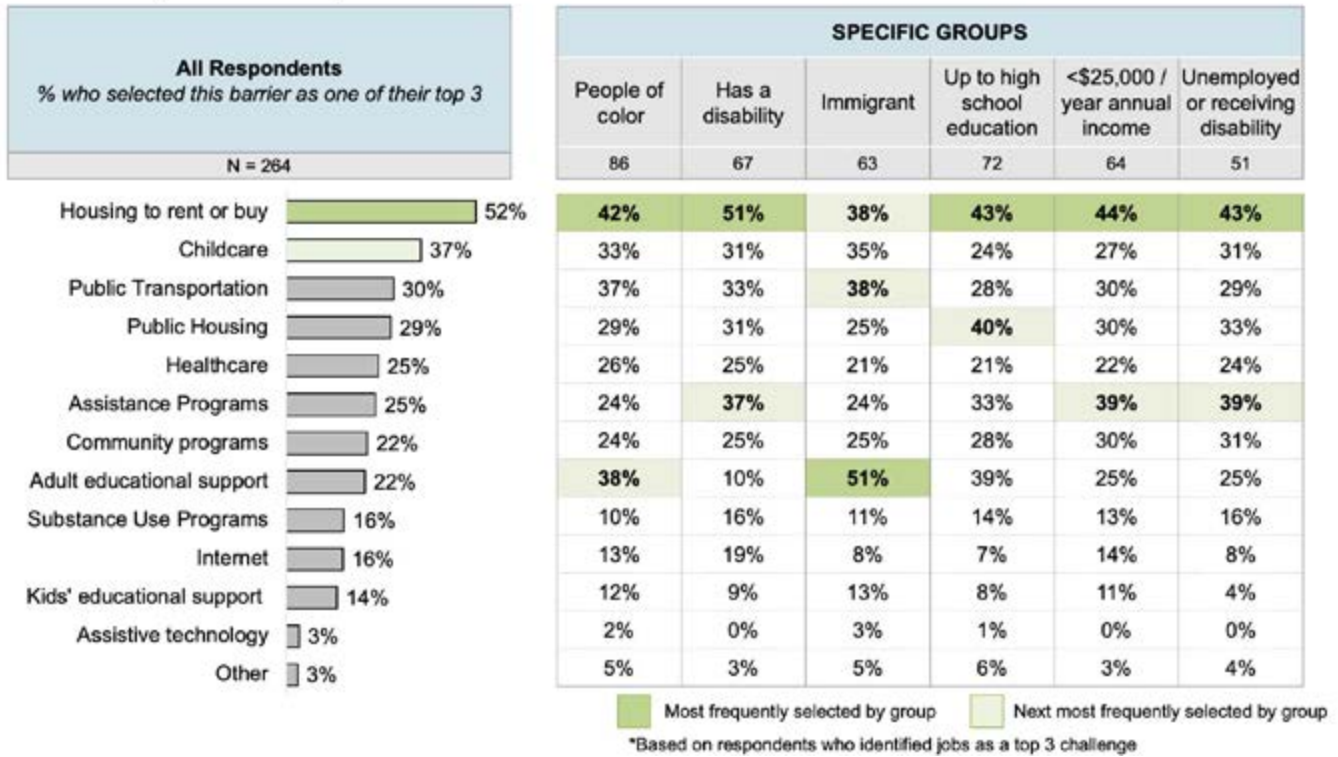
**Figure 3: Most difficult resources to access by group with top two reasons why\***

	ALL GROUPS	SPECIFIC GROUPS					
	All Respondents	People of color	Has a disability	Immigrant	Up to high school education	<\$25,000 / year annual income	Unemployed or receiving disability
	N = 264	86	67	63	72	64	51
Rental Housing or Housing to Buy	\$ 🌐	\$ 🌐	\$ 🌐	\$ 📄	\$ 🌐	\$ 🌐	\$ 🌐
Public Transportation	✕ 🌐		✕ 🌐				
Healthcare	\$ 🌐						
Community Programs		📖 🌐		📖 🌐		🚗 🌐	📖 🚗
Assistance Programs		📖 🚗	🌐 🚗	📖 🚗	📖 🚗	🚗 📖	🌐 📖
Public Housing					🌐 \$		

<p><b>Difficulty of access</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #e67e22; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Most difficult resource to access</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #f1c40f; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 2nd most difficult resource to access</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #fff9c4; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 3rd most difficult resource to access</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reasons for lack of access</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="font-size: 1.2em;">\$</span> Affordability</li> <li><span style="font-size: 1.2em;">🚗</span> Transportation</li> <li><span style="font-size: 1.2em;">🌐</span> Limited availability (e.g., few programs, limited hours etc)</li> <li><span style="font-size: 1.2em;">✕</span> Not available in my community</li> <li><span style="font-size: 1.2em;">📖</span> I don't know where to find these resources</li> <li><span style="font-size: 1.2em;">📄</span> I don't qualify for these resources</li> </ul>
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\*Based on respondents who identified access to resources to meet basic needs as a top 3 challenge

**Figure 4: Of the resources that you don't have full access to, select the top 3 that you believe are most needed in your community.\***



## Recommendations on Access to Resources

Top Recommendations	Potential Role for the Foundation
<p>Increase access to <b>affordable housing</b>.</p> <p>Provide greater unrestricted support to organizations that <b>offer language training, translation and cultural context to New American communities</b> in accessing basic resources (emphasizing cultural competency and being deep in the community they serve beyond just translation).</p> <p><b>Build up and publicize light-touch transportation options</b> (e.g., nonprofit networks that offer rides to members or expanding small buses that connect Manchester, Nashua, Concord today) to connect rural areas with resources.</p> <p><b>Increase availability of and access to affordable childcare</b>, making day care accessible for low-income persons.</p>	<p><b>Fund organizations offering language support/translation</b> of government and public resources (e.g., rent money available, but people unaware of it).</p> <p><b>Fund organizations that advocate for government policies</b> related to increased housing availability, childcare subsidies for more income brackets, and transportation options.</p> <p>Provide seed funding for <b>new light-touch transportation</b> options.</p> <p>Provide direct funding to <b>affordable, quality early childhood centers</b> to open up more spaces.</p>

## Additional Quotes on Access to Resources

### Survey Quotes

“I’m sick and I have kids in the house who need food, all the time, sometimes they cut my food stamps so I need neighbors to bring me food, and I don’t see how I can get to food because I don’t have a car. In addition, I find foods that I am unfamiliar with...and where I live there is no bus where I live [to get to stores].”

**translated survey response, female,  
African American/Black**

“The rental market in New Hampshire is pricing everyone out. With the cost of rent in my community. I have to spend nearly 45% of my income on housing, which leaves me with very little resources to save. As a result, the possibility of ever owning a home feels completely out of reach because I would never be able to afford to put down a down payment.”

**survey respondent, female, white, Rockingham County**

“In my area a lot of landlords are turning their rentals into Airbnb weekly rentals, therefore finding it hard to find affordable regular yearly housing and there’s not enough low income housing units.”

**survey respondent, white, female, Carroll County**

“There is zero public transportation that brings you to the center of the state.”

**survey respondent, white, Rockingham County**

### Interview Quotes

“It’s harder for immigrants also, even to apply for an apartment because we don’t have a rental history, or credit history, we are easily denied even if we have a job to afford it.”

**refugee**

“I came to [the] USA with my college degree, I was [a] professor. Now I work at [a fast food restaurant]. I make minimum wage and can not to go to college and do not have information where I can be certified to become teacher.”

**refugee**

## 2. Mental Health

The team analyzed responses around mental health through surveys and interviews. Questions focused on mental health issues, whether or not people sought help, ability to access mental health resources, and specific barriers to getting mental health resources.

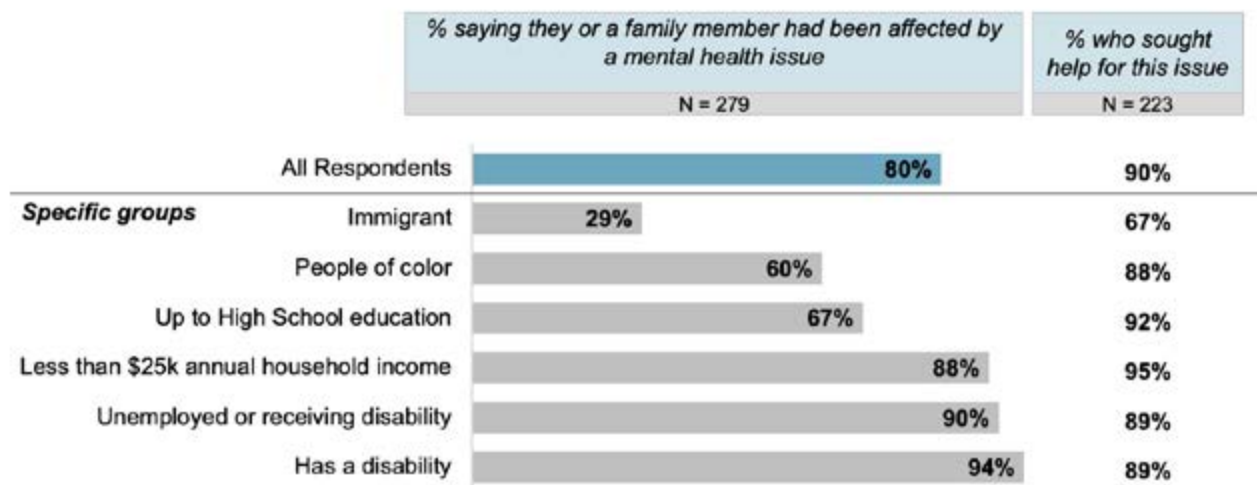
### Findings for All Respondents/Overall

**The majority of survey respondents (80%) said they or a family member had been affected by a mental health issue.**

**Ease of access was the most frequently named barrier (53%) to actually getting the help.**

<p>“So, you know, so you’re, you’re in the most vulnerable position of your life wanting to die, and everything we know about mental health, you are not being provided. There’s no stimulation, there’s no connection, there’s no counseling, there’s no movement, like, everything we know that makes you better. You’re robbed from. And then even just the follow up in this past time because [my son] was [an adult]. He was discharged within 12 hours of being admitted, and there was no follow up. Nobody called to see how he was doing. Nobody offered services or connections to services, he was just sent out.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>female, Grafton County</b></p>	<p>“So, me myself. I have had a hard time finding a local therapist in this area specifically, I’ve not been able to find anybody that’s taking new clients, or that is doing therapy in a way that feels resonant, to me, and I think the closest I can get is maybe Manchester or closer to the seacoast.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>female, white, Belknap County</b></p>
<p>“Everyone tells me to get my head right but how can I do that with no insurance? Then I think that finding a place to call home is more important, but my inability to hold a job as an untreated schizophrenic keeps me in a cycle of not having anything.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>male, disabled, white, homeless</b></p>	

**Figure 5: Have you or a family member ever been affected by a mental health issue?\***



*\*Based on respondents who identified mental health as a top 3 challenge*

# Findings for Specific Groups Facing Barriers

**Linguistic and cultural appropriateness** of resources was the biggest barrier for:

- Black/African American people (55%).
- Immigrants (48%).
- People of color (43%).

In addition to ease of access, **affordability** was a major barrier for people who were:

- Unemployed or receiving disability (56%).
- Those with a disability (63%).
- Those with some college or high school education (50%).

Among **immigrants**, only 37% rated access to mental health care as one of the top 3 challenges facing their community. This is consistent with interview and survey observations that there is a stigma in even talking about this barrier.

“I want to learn how to drive but I am scared, I have fear of being on the road I don’t know why. I know I need help but there is no Black therapist that I can go to and relate to.”

**low-income mother**

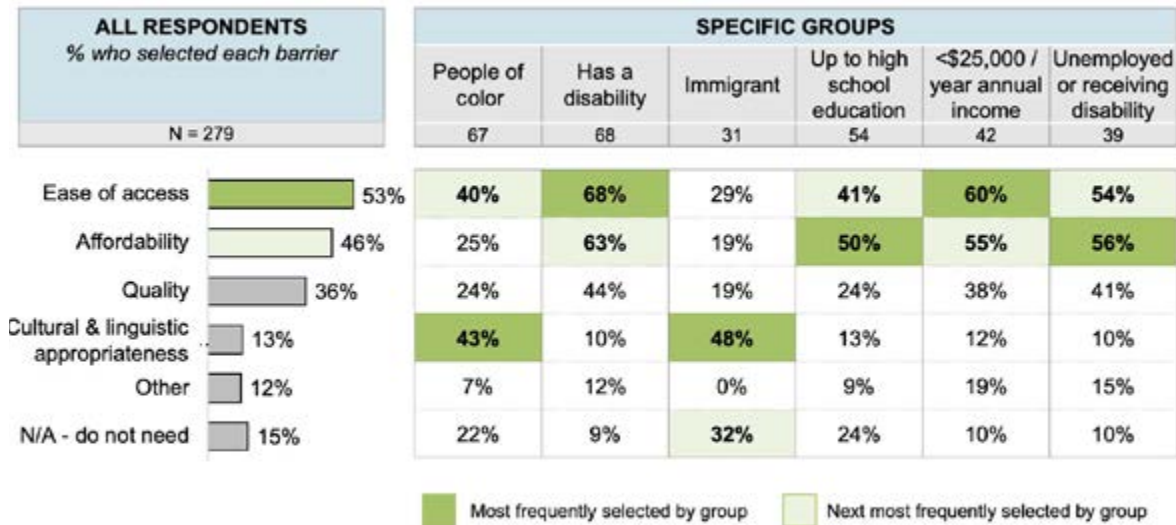
“Resources are 30+ miles away.”

**white, female, disabled, Coös County**

“[With respect to mental health] there is an issue within the African community. They do have many cases but can[not] admit it.”

**survey respondent, male, African American, immigrant**

**Figure 6: What are the biggest barriers you or your family members have faced to getting mental health resources?\***



“It has been a challenge for me to get the right help for my mental diagnoses, especially because I’m stuck with my primary care provider prescribing my medication. Gave up contacting psychiatrists, they always tell me that either they do not accept Medicaid or the ones that do have waiting lists miles long. I never seem to get a callback while on waiting list. So frustrating feeling like you’re suffering alone, with nobody that really understands what it’s like.”

**inmate, female, Hispanic**

## Recommendations on Mental Health

Top Recommendations	Potential Role for the Foundation
<p><b>Increase access to mental health providers</b>, especially those serving youth and providing culturally appropriate services.</p> <p><b>Support education about mental health and access to mental health services for New Americans</b>, and culturally relevant services for people of color.</p>	<p><b>Fund organizations that provide mental health support</b>, especially for those offering services that are linguistically and culturally appropriate for immigrants and people of color.</p> <p><b>Fund credentialing classes/training programs/college programs offering mental health classes</b> and scholarships to students in psychology/counseling to increase the number of providers.</p> <p><b>Fund crisis intervention trainings/resources.</b></p>

## Additional Quotes on Mental Health

### Survey Quotes

<p>“...[I didn’t seek help] because of the stigma of mental health, long wait lists or mental health private places not even returning the calls.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>survey respondent, female, white, Rockingham County</b></p>	<p>“The process is hard and it takes a long time to find a provider. I’ve tried and given up several times and now have several untreated mental health issues.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>survey respondent, female, white, disabled, Strafford County</b></p>
<p>“Stigmatism, affordability, knowledge of potential positive implications of seeking help.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>survey respondent, female, white, disabled, Hillsborough County</b></p>	<p>“No where to go, every bed taken and every place booked solid and also so far away.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>survey respondent, female, white, Carroll County</b></p>

### Interview Quotes

<p>“Finding available therapists is impossible. Finding high-quality, available therapists is about as likely as finding a rainbow-colored unicorn that pukes gold. It is so hard. We are very fortunate because we had personal connections who helped bump us up on a provider’s waitlist, [or] else it would have taken us months to be seen. I know that’s a privilege others don’t have.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>white, Jewish, female, upper middle class</b></p>	<p>“I do have mental health issue and never feel treated like other client, one day is female interpreter other day is a male interpreter , other time I go home without getting services because they did not have interpreter.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>single mom</b></p>
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### 3. Discrimination

The team analyzed survey and interview responses to questions regarding discrimination, racism, and belonging. Survey respondents rated the inclusivity of community centers, government offices and elected leaders, gyms, health institutions, places of worship, restaurants, schools, transportation and workplaces. Questions regarding being treated differently due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or other parts of identity were asked.

#### Findings for All Respondents/Overall

**Intersectionality matters — 70% of respondents who identified as disabled, a person of color, AND as a immigrant or child of an immigrant (n=10)** noted discrimination as a top 3 challenge, compared to:

52% of respondents with one or two of these identities (n=190).

34% of respondents who are able-bodied white people without direct immigration experience (n=166).

“I have faced incivility from community members of the white community. Rudeness, name calling, misrepresentation of me as a professional. Attack on my family via social media with threats. Comments made, to return to where I come from. Memes of hanging, guns and negative comments.”

**survey respondent, female, African American/Black**

“After the Atlanta shootings, my friends said they don’t feel safe because we feel like we are immigrants, because of our skin color, because of our English and the way we speak, we have accents, especially those who do not speak English or speak it badly, they don’t feel like they belong here...They feel the white people who know their immigration status could easily call ICE. They have to say, yes, to do whatever their white friends ask them to do, especially if those people know their immigration status.”

**immigrant**

#### Findings for Specific Groups Facing Barriers

**African Americans (88%) and people of color (87%)** say they are discriminated against most or some of the time vs. 48% of white people who are discriminated against most or some of the time. Government spaces were generally seen as less inclusive, but those making over \$100k (43%) and white people (32%) were more likely to find them very or moderately inclusive, compared to African Americans (19%), people of color (21%) and those making less than \$25k (19%).

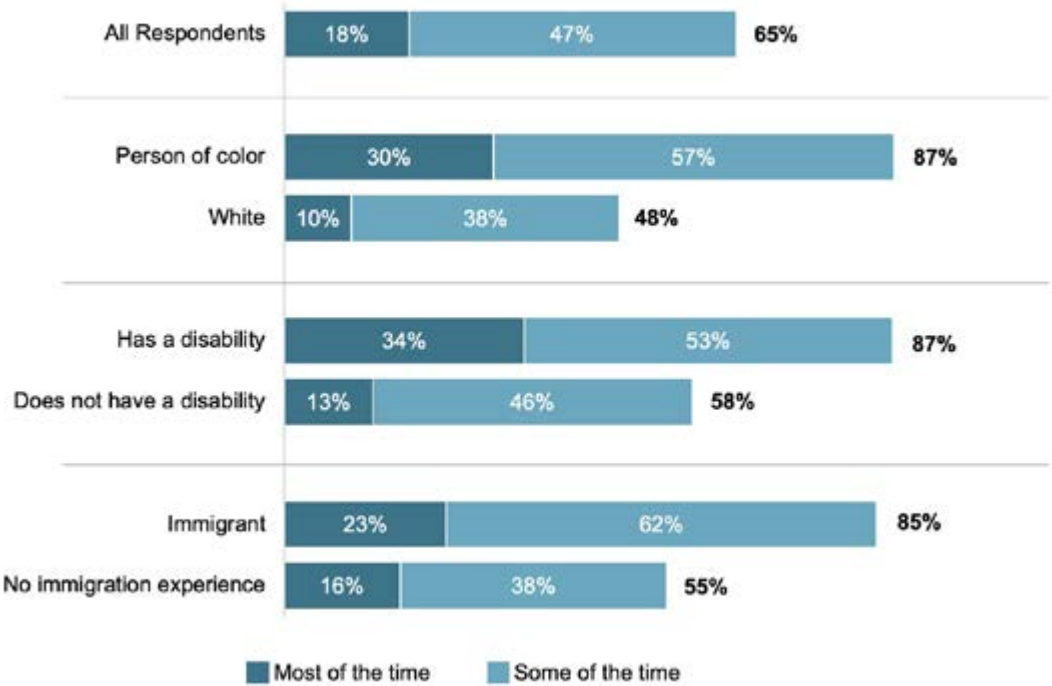
**People in urban areas (71%)** say they are discriminated against most or some of the time, vs. **people in suburban (66%)** or **rural areas (55%)**.

**People with a disability (87%) and immigrants (85%)** reported being discriminated against most or some of the time.

**New Americans (immigrants) and their children** have strikingly different perceptions of the barriers they face. Children of immigrants name “discrimination” (71%) as a top 3 challenge (compared to 49% of immigrants). Conversely, immigrants name “jobs” (76%) as a “top 3 challenge” (compared to 39% for children of immigrants).

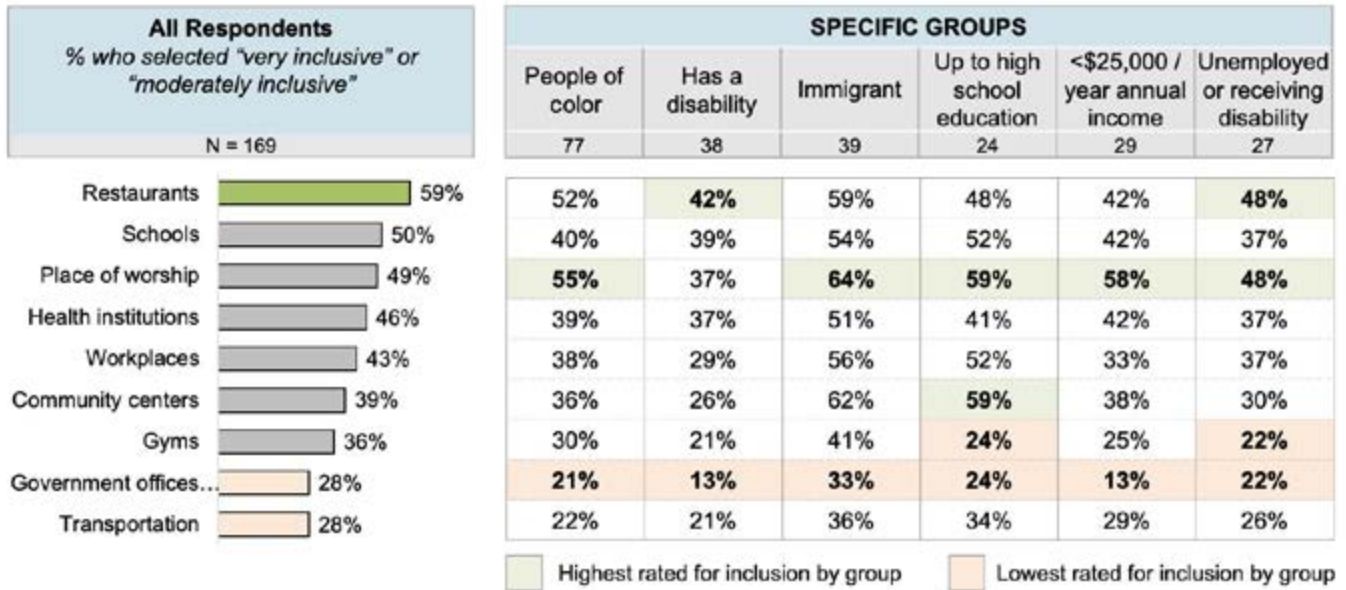
<p>“One day my landlord came knocking at my door and start yelling me telling me that ‘where do you think you are? This is not the ghetto, you need to fix the window.’”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>female, refugee</b></p>	<p>“I want my kids to be able to go to school around black teachers, all my kids see is white teachers.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>low-income single mother</b></p>
<p>“A principal told me that their town/school board only hires white males and I didn’t qualify, with a smile. I was informed by a superintendent of a public school...that my references from a prestigious school...were obviously overrated, ‘you couldn’t possibly as good as the reference letter states.’”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>survey respondent, African American/Black</b></p>	<p>“I worked with a woman from [Africa]...they didn’t give her the training that she needed 100 percent and then they berated her for not doing the job correctly even though she wasn’t given the training. Not long after that, before her 30 days, they terminated her...they should have given her more training, and have more understanding, she did try, from what I could see. She tried as hard as she possibly could. The woman has children and this job offered health insurance, union membership with job security, and contractual raises after the 30 days, and this greatly impacted her family.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>male, white</b></p>

**Figure 7: How often are you treated differently because of your race, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or other part of your identity?\***



\*Based on respondents who identified discrimination as a top 3 challenge

**Figure 8: How inclusive are the following parts of your community?\*** ("Inclusive" is defined as "open, welcoming and accessible to all people")\* Percentages represent those identifying this space as "very" or "moderately" inclusive



\*Based on respondents who identified discrimination as a top 3 challenge. Government offices include elected leaders (e.g., legislature, school board, town councils)

## Recommendations on Discrimination/Racism

Top Recommendations	Potential Role for the Foundation
<p><b>Anti-oppression/anti-bias training</b> for all organizations (e.g., from our team’s experience, “If you don’t speak fluent English and aren’t white — there is an assumption of less[er] intelligence”).</p> <p><b>Support initiatives to reduce racism in New Hampshire</b>, recognizing that the lack of diversity in all professions is a broader issue.</p> <p><b>Increase BIPOC leadership</b> across institutions, legislature, nonprofits, and foundations (i.e., BIPOC leaders now are tokenized, and not paid for/valued in their roles and face high barriers for promotions across industries).</p> <p>Create more <b>shared cultural learning opportunities</b> (e.g., from survey responses: “Make extra efforts to focus on multicultural lessons, educational experiences; maybe partner with schools in more diverse areas for crossover events or shared learning experiences.”)</p>	<p><b>Fund organizations</b> that fight racism, provide safe spaces, and/or offer cultural learning.</p> <p><b>Model cultural competency</b> in your own communications and how you show up and encourage nonprofits to do the same.</p> <p><b>Increase BIPOC representation and decision-making power of those experiencing barriers on your own team/</b> initiatives and provide guidance/training resources to your partners on how to do this without tokenization.</p> <p><b>Pay community leaders</b> for their time in different participatory groups.</p>

# Additional Quotes on Discrimination/Racism

## Survey Quotes

<p>“Treated differently at retail stores when making regular purchases, often have to display receipts upon leaving the store. Difficulty in purchasing a car because I did not look like I could afford [it].”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>survey respondent, male, African American/Black</b></p>	<p>“Dismissed or not taken seriously for being gay.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>survey respondent, male, white</b></p>
<p>“Microaggressions, assumptions that I’m not American, told to go back to my own country.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>survey respondent, female, Asian or Asian American</b></p>	<p>“It gets ignored to the point of detriment. Impacts mental health, physical health and ability to connect when that part of my identity is minimized.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>survey respondent, female, African American/Black</b></p>
<p>“Some people don’t respect my preferred pronouns.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>survey respondent, male, white</b></p>	<p>“When I am not on Native land, people look at me ‘funny’ because I look ‘different.’ Also sometimes people have said comments (‘people dressing like Indians.’ or ‘where’s your bow and arrow?’ or making certain sounds that mock Native Americans. I don’t think they have meant to come across as mean or offensive, it just seems to come from a place of ignorance and white privilege and intolerance.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>survey respondent, female, Indigenous or Native American</b></p>
<p>“I have been treated [as a] lesser [person] for being a young person in mostly older communities. I have had a harder time than most men in advancing my career. I have felt unsafe as a woman.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>survey respondent, female, white</b></p>	<p>“My professional experiences have generally been quite poor across multiple employers here, despite my earned education, multiple credentials, and work/ life experiences. ... The common denominator was always that I didn’t have support systems, particularly leadership those who had shared similar experiences and/or similar identities to advocate for me.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>survey respondent, female, African American/Black</b></p>
<p>“I have not been allowed to use my vacation time due to suspicions that I was sick more often than other employees, even though I maintained the usual sick leave balance. I have been told that I am not enough of a team player despite my warm and friendly interactions due to difficulty getting around the office kitchen and walking around the office to ‘bump into’ my colleagues. I have not been informed of office trainings and other office events. I have not been given office business cards nor an account to receive scans necessitating using my equipment at home.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>survey respondent, female, Indigenous or Native American, disabled</b></p>	

# Additional Quotes on Discrimination/Racism

## Interview Quotes

<p>“When I was driving, for example, in January and it was snowing...another driver pulled up and looked at me, and she yelled at me. I couldn’t hear her. I rolled down my window and I said, “What is it?” She gave me the middle finger. What happened?? I didn’t see you, you just arrived, I didn’t do anything to you. Then, another driver arrived behind her. She looked at both of us and also gave me the middle finger! I smiled, what should I do, I smiled and drove my own way. I analyzed it, I don’t belong here: I am an immigrant.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>immigrant</b></p>	<p>“New Hampshire is a very white, Christian state. There is very little acknowledgement that there is religious diversity and people who don’t celebrate Christian holidays on a regular basis. My daughter was a sophomore the first time that her teacher wished her a happy Rosh Hashanah; it made her cry to finally be seen in this way.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>white, Jewish, female</b></p>
<p>“We reached out to the town’s welfare office to only be faced with harsh judgements.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Native, disabled, Coös County</b></p>	<p>“[F]inding employment for someone who is mentally unwell, as well as someone who is transgender, proves to be difficult at times, since there is a lot of prejudice against being transgender.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>transgender woman, Grafton County</b></p>
<p>“Five year ago I received a [restaurant] gift card. I went with my two kids. I was still new in this country. They showed us a place to eat, then one white man came and told me that no kids are allowed to eat in this restaurant, [that] the police will come to arrest us. So, the kids ran away and I went out with them. I asked why they are running out. They told me what happened...I asked the person who gave me the gift card. He was so very disappointed.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>female</b></p>	<p>“I had my job where I worked many years, all the time my colleagues were telling me that I smell like African and some asked supervisor to ask me to shower while I was confident that I take shower every morning before I go to work.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>female</b></p> <p>“With Medicaid, there’s a stigma. I know what it’s like to be looked down on, simply because of the card you’re handing in. They automatically assume you’re having a hardship. Emotionally, it is degrading. Our society has significant socioeconomic stigma.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>white, insured mother whose children are covered through Medicaid</b></p>

# 4. Jobs

The team analyzed responses from surveys and interviews to questions regarding jobs. Questions regarding specific barriers to employment such as compensation, discrimination, limited opportunities for skills, opportunities in the community, and advancement as well as the impact of these barriers were asked.

## Findings for All Respondents/Overall

Overall and across most subgroups, the barriers were::

- “**Compensation is too low**” (53%) was the #1 barrier.
- “**Employment opportunities in my community are limited**” (40%) was the #2 barrier — and respondents named discrimination, language barriers and transportation as the main barriers for these opportunities in interviews and open responses.
- “**Advancement opportunities are limited in my workplace**” (31%) was the #3 barrier.

In survey responses and interviews, many named the “**benefits cliff**” as a main challenge with no clear solution in sight.

**NOTE:** 37% of **white respondents** said they had not faced barriers in jobs. No other identifying subgroups had such a high percentage of people who had not faced barriers to employment.

“At work, they had to be more qualified than the white people to be hired. If the supervisor asks them to stay for overtime, [most like to stay in order to pay lawyers and everything] — sometimes they feel that they have to in order to not lose their job. If someone yells at them or harasses them, they did not do anything, did not want to do anything about it, because they want to keep this job.”

**immigrant**

“This area has very little medical positions that my two degrees would allow me to do”

**female, under \$30K income**

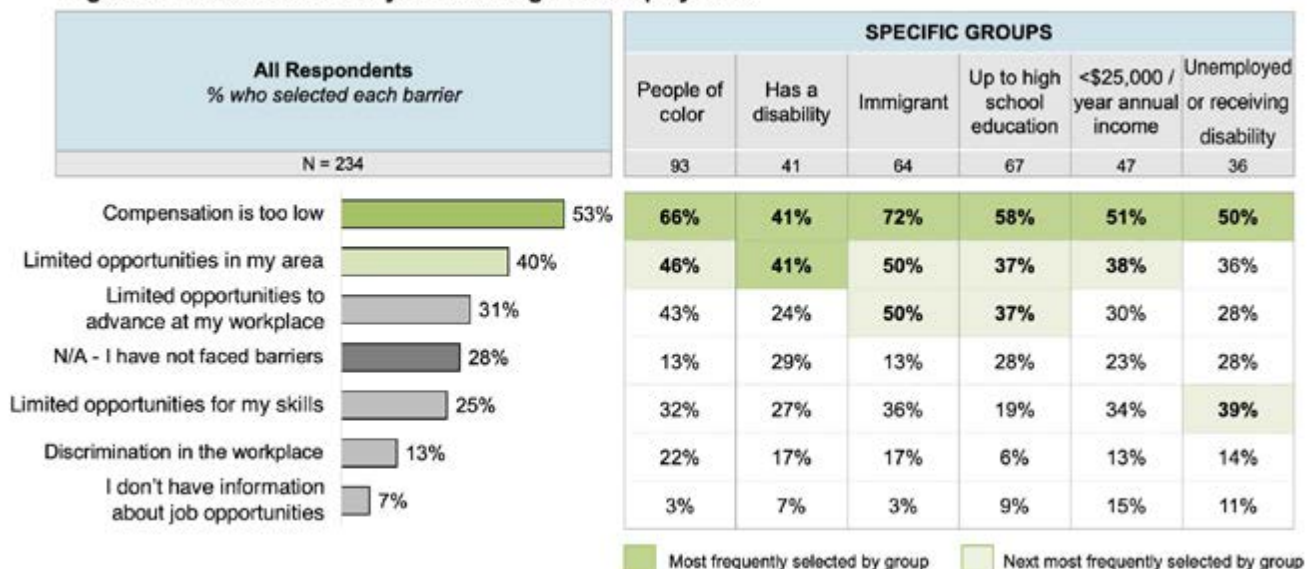
“I would say the biggest barrier [to job training and advancement] is people wanting experienced workers, but not willing to train workers to get the experience. I feel like training, the cost of training has skyrocketed, even for someone in the field, and companies are less willing to reimburse that substantial amount of money.”

**female, white, clinical mental health counselor**

“I have to work two to three jobs just to make ends meet because of low wages.”

**survey respondent, female, African American/Black, Hillsborough County**

**Figure 9: What barriers have you faced to gainful employment?\***



\*Based on respondents who identified employment as a top 3 challenge

## Recommendations on Jobs

Top Recommendations	Potential Role for the Foundation
<p><b>Support a living wage.</b></p> <p><b>Employer trainings on discrimination/promotion of BIPOC employees and leaders:</b> “If employers were made to have trainings on diversity and zero tolerance for discrimination in the workplace, there would be healthier work environments, dependable employees, and promote healthy communications between peers” (survey respondent).</p> <p><b>Fund trainings/accreditation for high priority jobs for those facing barriers</b> — especially in community outreach/ communication, mental health/counseling, work with immigrants, and paraprofessionals.</p>	<p><b>Use your voice</b> to uplift the need for living wage.</p> <p>Use your voice to shed light on the <b>“benefits cliff”/ support programs that “bridge the gap”</b> into jobs to get off benefits.</p> <p><b>Fund diversity officers</b> in HR departments for major institutions that can lead diversity and anti-discrimination efforts.</p> <p><b>Fund organizations that are providing job training</b> and accreditation in key job areas for those experiencing barriers (esp. paraprofessionals, mental health care workers and people who want to work with new Americans).</p> <p><b>Provide guidance/training for employers</b> on best practices in promoting and developing talents of BIPOC leaders.</p>

## Additional Quotes on Jobs

### Survey Quotes

Low Compensation	Benefits Cliff
<p>“My earnings are low and I cannot afford to pay all bills. I don’t have the opportunity to grow and I don’t know why I cannot get a higher position. I have my diploma from back home.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>survey respondent, male, African American/Black, Hillsborough County</b></p>	<p>“When you are trying to work and come off benefits...I lost almost all SSI when getting a job. I can only make \$60 a month — then [benefits] cut off.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>translated survey response, person with disability</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>“People with disability or people who have a dependant with disability have limited job opportunities.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>translated survey response, person with disability</b></p>	<p>“The benefits cliff is real. If a family tells you they don’t want to work because they will lose benefits — that’s often the reality. We’ve seen way too many families that we supported getting back into the workforce, only having to pay more rent, lose essentials such as funds for food and health insurance. Parents should be rewarded for working and not penalized and until that’s fixed the existing system will keep people in poverty, in poverty.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>nonprofit staff, Coös County</b></p>
<p>“No opportunity for jobs in close areas. [You] may find jobs at a longer distance, but you can’t find or have difficulty with transportation.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>translated survey response</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Promotions</b></p> <p>“No promotions and no opportunity to grow. People been in a same job for 15, 20 years with no opportunity for advancement.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>translated survey response</b></p>

# 5. Education

The team analyzed responses from surveys and interviews to questions regarding education. Respondents selected their top 3 barriers to education from: access to funding, language support, mental health/behavioral health/social work services, special education, outside play or recreational activities, advocating for child’s needs, discrimination in schools, insufficient training for teachers and school staff, unhealthy food, and unsafe facilities. Questions were also asked about how these barriers impacted the respondent and their children.

## Findings for All Respondents/Overall

**Lack of access to mental/behavioral health/social work staff** is the top education barrier overall and **lack of access to special education was the top education barrier for many subgroups** — including immigrants and those making less than \$25,000.

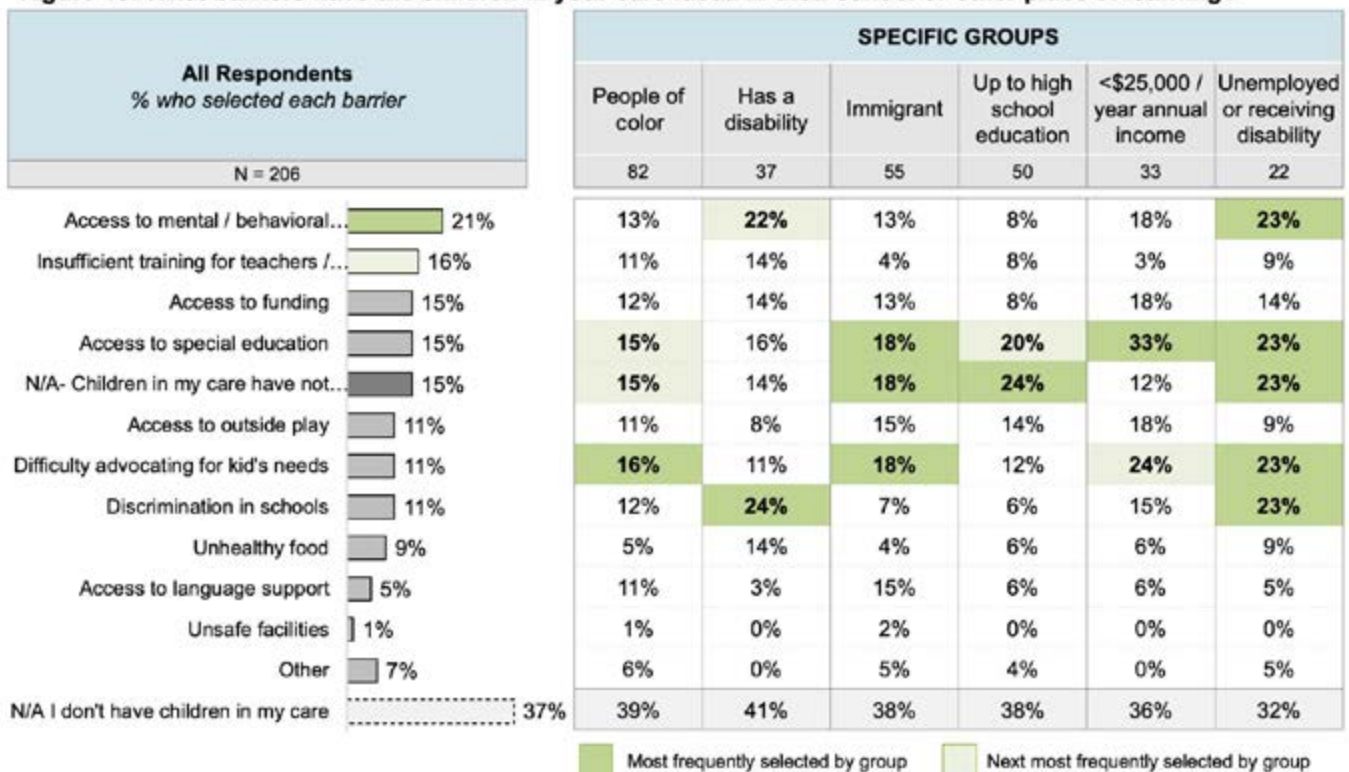
“They need to make sure their para [aide] are well educated about the child’s condition that is under their care and if they don’t have the patience for it they need to find a better match right away...His para had no idea how to work with a child on the spectrum and the principal treated Fred like a behavior problem instead of a child with sensory issues in a new environment.”

female, white, Coös County

“My child operates in invisibility. They are becoming aware that they don’t see themselves reflected in the school. Although they don’t speak about it, I can see the impact in their faces and how they carry themselves in and out of school.”

survey respondent, female, African American/Black

**Figure 10: What barriers have the children in your care faced in their school or other place of learning?\***





## Findings for Specific Groups Facing Barriers

“Advocating for my child’s needs” is also a top barrier for **people of color (16%), immigrants (18%),** and those **unemployed or receiving disability (23%) or making less than \$25,000 (24%).** In interviews, these groups especially named barriers in advocating for additional language and behavioral/mental health support.

“It’s very distressing to advocate because everyone operates according to the guidelines of the traditional and profitable while marginalizing people of color. There’s no mental health care in schools, there’s no advocates, there is a significant lack of follow through, there is no cultural awareness, there are a multitude of biases.”

**survey respondent, female,  
child of an immigrant, Hillsborough County**

## Recommendations on Education

Top Recommendations	Potential Role for the Foundation
<p><b>Support greater access to resources and knowledge of rights for families around special education</b> — especially for New Americans and offer in multiple languages.</p> <p><b>Use voice to promote more resources for students with disabilities</b> (e.g., <i>Americans with Disabilities Act</i>) — get more accessible evaluations for IEPs, increase funding for paras/aides, increase in-school special education support.</p>	<p>Fund organizations/statewide entities that <b>help caregivers understand their children’s rights in special education.</b></p> <p><b>Ensure resources are accessible</b> in multiple languages and cultural appropriate.</p> <p><b>Use Foundation’s voice</b> to advocate for more school funding for special education and support legislation like <i>Americans with Disability Act</i> (including how best to use CARES Act funding).</p>

### Survey Quotes

“My family had to pull my son from a public school and pay for a private school placement [safest choice] and not one organization was willing to assist.”

**survey respondent, female,  
person of color**

“My son now has an IEP and is very behind. These were concerns at the beginning of the school year but due to school being online, my concerns were pushed out and pushed out and finally at the end of the year he was evaluated so he struggled all school year and then finally got evaluated.”

**survey respondent, female, white, Merrimack County**

“I have [an adult] son that always struggled through high school, he always had some problems with concentration, [and] never received the help he needed.”

**survey respondent, male,  
Latino/Hispanic, Hillsborough County**

“My grandson doesn’t understand English and asks for special help to find out and learn.”

**translated survey response, female, person of color**

## Interview Quotes

“My daughter has an IEP and due to lack of funding they refused to acknowledge she may need an aide until the end of the school year. Now It’ll be more of a fight again just to get her the help she needs. Teachers here just are not educated on mental health issues like ADHD, OCD, etc”

**male, Native, disabled father**

“My son has been labeled as “trouble” and has ADHD and severe anxiety. The school calls me regularly throughout the school year to make sure I am aware of his behavior instead of offering me an IEP. I feel frustrated as a mom because I feel like the school is unfair to my son instead of working with him or us as a family.”

**female, white, Cheshire County**

“Only those with privilege know how to navigate the system. In order to qualify for IEP services, I asked a friend, ‘I just need you to tell me the three-word phrase that’s going to make the whole conversation change. I put that three-word phrase in an email and it’s dramatic how quickly the conversation changed.”

**white, Jewish, female, upper middle class**

## Conclusion and Next Steps

It is so important to set up community spaces for folks experiencing barriers to share and uplift concerns and recommendations. Thank you for creating a space like this with our listening team. We highly recommend and desire that you stay connected to our team and other community leaders experiencing barriers — so we can check in on progress and you can be accountable to us going forward.

Specifically, we recommend the following steps:

### **1 Create a standing community council (starting with these 15 team members):**

Email us quarterly to update us on what the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation is doing around the barriers in report.

Bring this listening group together regularly in meetings to keep accountable to the work and to see if this work/strategic plan has lessened barriers. Members can opt in to participate as they have time.

Ensure the council has a formal status and clear role in the Foundation’s engagement/partners/network.

### **2 Repeat this process each year or every other year with a new ‘fellowship’ of 15 to bring in fresh ideas:**

Improve upon the survey and administer it more widely.

Have a regular fellowship focused on interviews, survey outreach (including past listening teams) and making meaning of survey results.

Potentially dive more deeply into county level.

### **3 Support an annual social event and learning meeting or conference with all “graduates” of the community listening teams, with food and transportation provided**

### **4 Consider adding community members, especially those who have faced barriers to opportunity, to your board**