
Avenues to Self-Sufficiency: The Accessibility and Stability of Faith-Based and Community-Based Service Organizations in Urban and Rural America

from *Out of Reach: Place, Poverty, and the New American Welfare State*
(December 2008, Yale University Press)

Scott W. Allard

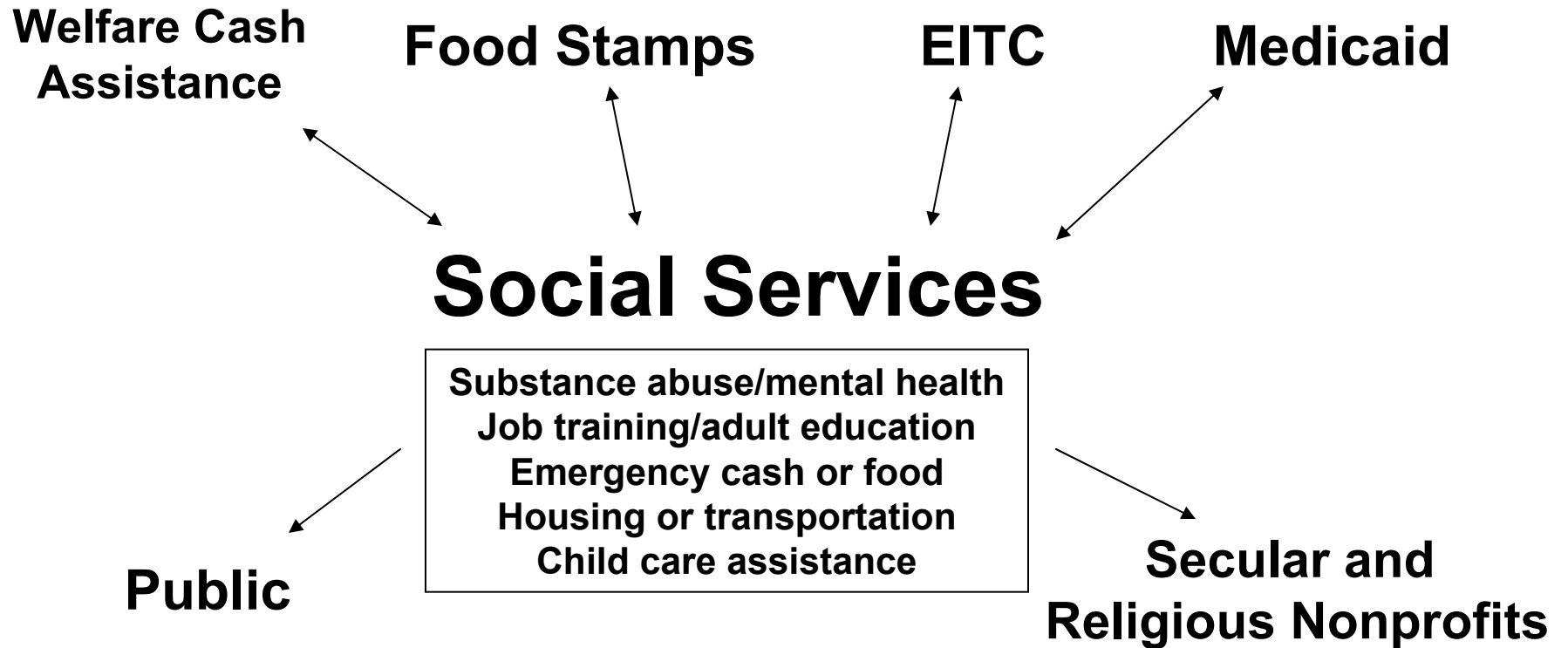
Associate Professor, School of Social Service
Administration - University of Chicago

sallard@uchicago.edu

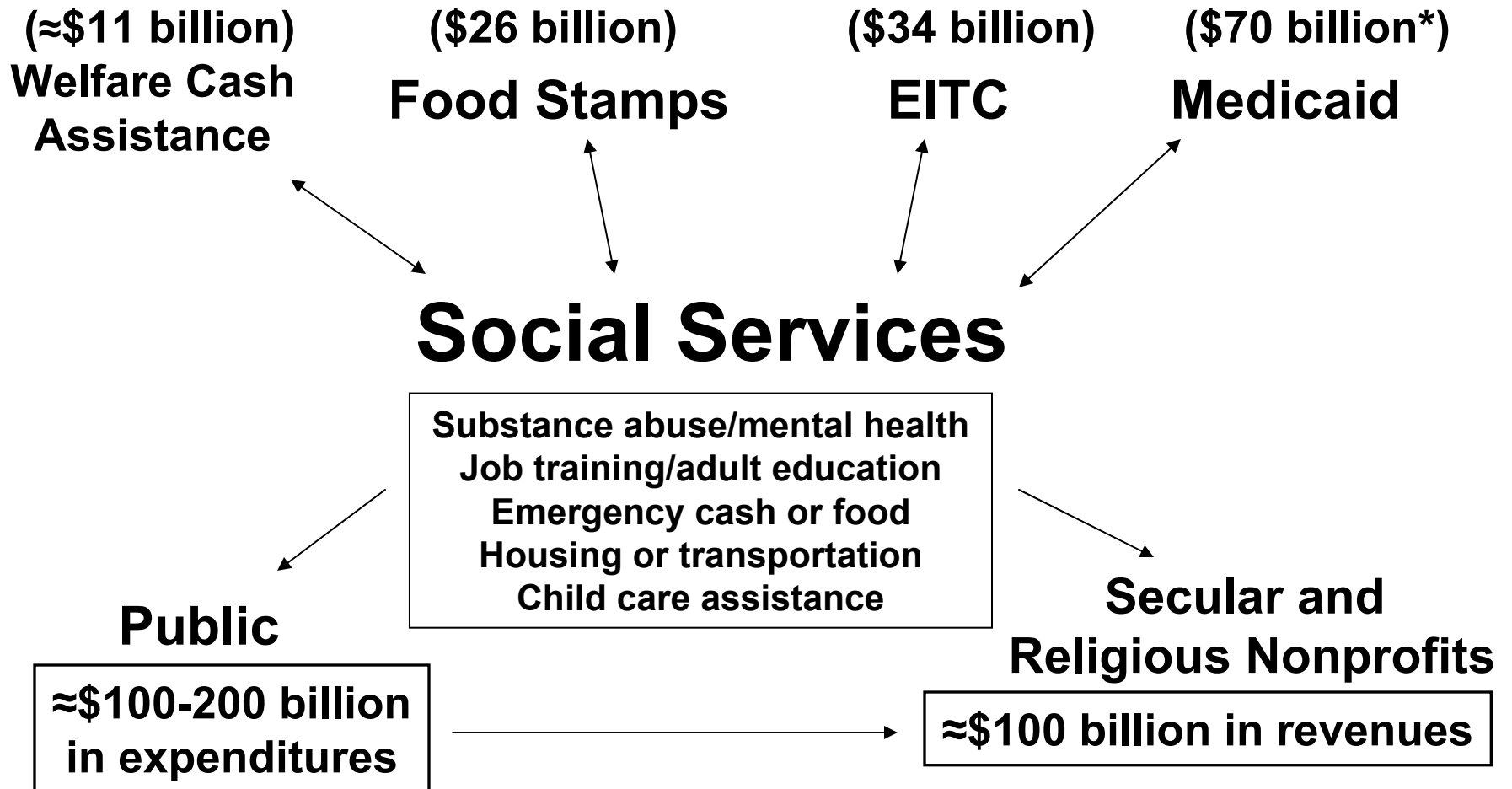
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What is the Safety Net?

(for non-disabled working-age adults)



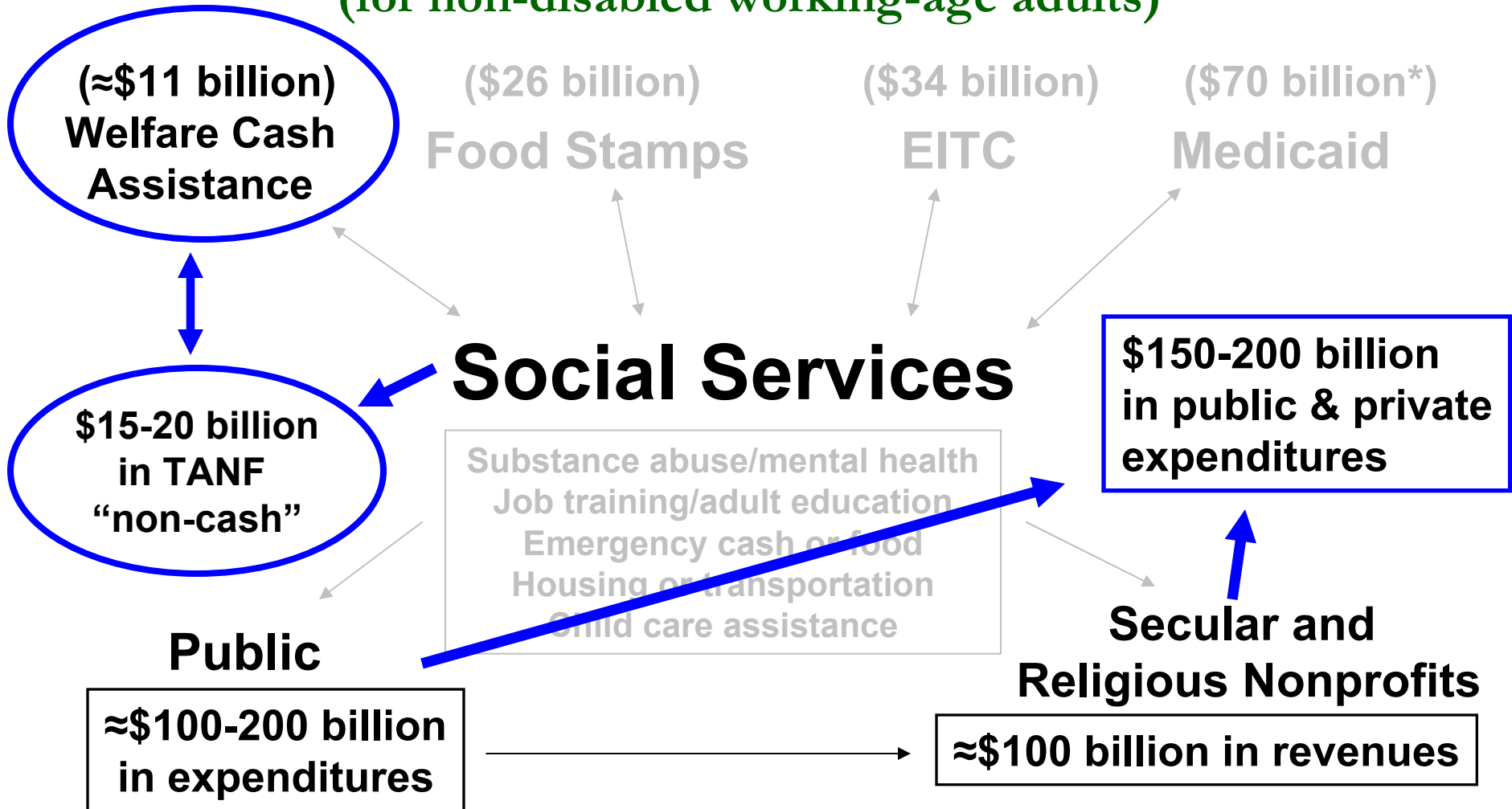
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Figures reported are annual expenditures in current dollars.

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Implications of a Service-based Safety Net

- **Access to services matters**
 - No access = no assistance
 - Service provision varies by neighborhood
 - **Stability and volatility of funding**
 - Social service funding varies from year to year
 - Funding contracts during recessionary periods
 - **Practical policy and research concerns**
 - 60 Million Americans near or below poverty line
 - Effective and efficient use of resources
 - Issues of inequality and social justice
 - **Local safety nets rely upon nonprofit sector**
 - **Role of faith-based versus secular nonprofits**
 - Nonprofits strengthen civic community and neighborhoods
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Comparing Faith-based Service Organizations (FBOs) to Secular Nonprofits

- Do FBOs reach **different populations or neighborhoods** than secular organizations?
 - Do FBOs **draw funding from different sources** than secular agencies?
 - Do FBOs offer **more stable or consistent services** than secular agencies?
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Data

- Telephone surveys of service agencies in 7 sites
 - Conducted between November 2004 to June 2006
 - Offer mental health, substance abuse, employment, adult education, or emergency assistance at no or low cost
 - Response rates over 60%
 - Multi-City Survey of Social Service Providers (n=1,390)
 - Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C.
 - Rural Survey of Social Service Providers (n=470)
 - Southeast Kentucky, Southcentral Georgia, Southeast New Mexico, border counties in Oregon-California
 - 1,172 secular or faith-based nonprofits in two surveys
 - About 60 percent of all agencies interviewed were nonprofits
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Classifying FBOs

- **“How frequently do staff integrate the following faith activities into service provision?”**
 - Prayer with clients
 - Promote particular religious viewpoints to clients
 - Discuss lifestyle or behavioral issues using religious principles
- **Secular nonprofit:** Self-identified as secular nonprofit
 - 67% of nonprofits in MSSSP; 61% of nonprofits in RSSSP
- **Faith-integrated:** Religious nonprofit reporting frequent integration of at least one faith activity into service delivery
 - 10% of nonprofits in MSSSP; 18% of nonprofits in RSSSP
- **Faith-segmented:** Religious nonprofit reporting no or only occasional integration of faith activities into service delivery
 - 23% of nonprofits in MSSSP; 21% of nonprofits in RSSSP

Comparing Types of Nonprofits

Percentage of Service Organizations

	MSSSP			RSSSP		
	Faith-Integrated	Faith-Segmented	Secular Nonprofit	Faith-Integrated	Faith-Segmented	Secular Nonprofit
Emergency Assistance	87.9^{ab}	68.7^{ac}	49.8^{abc}	85.1^a	87.0^b	50.0^{ab}
Mental Health/Substance Abuse	37.8	32.7^a	51.1^a	31.9^a	9.3^{ab}	36.3^b
Employment-related Services	43.3^a	51.2	57.6^a	38.3	33.3^a	56.0^a
Annual Budget >\$1 million[†]	34.2	25.3	50.6	4.7	10.4	33.6
Annual Budget \$1 million–\$200,000	22.4	35.0	33.4	14.0	22.9	25.2
Annual Budget \$200,000–\$50,000	13.2	26.9	11.5	32.6	33.3	22.1
Annual Budget <\$50,000	30.3	12.9	4.5	48.8	33.3	19.1
N	91	211	609	47	54	160

^{a, b, c} Notations identify sets of paired cells within a row associated with a particular survey, where the mean difference in service access between the two cells is significant at the .10 level or below.

[†] Chi-square tests indicate statistically significant variation in this panel at the .10 level or below across faith-integrated, faith-segmented, and secular nonprofit organizations in the MSSSP and in the RSSSP.

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Calculating Service Accessibility Scores

Neighborhood A

Access Score = 1.30

**Access to
30% more service
opportunities than
mean neighborhood**

**85% more
opportunities than
neighborhood B**

$$\text{Access}_i = (\Sigma(\text{Clients}_i) / \Sigma(\# \text{ in Pov}_i)) \div \text{Metro Mean Access Score}$$

Average Neighborhood

**Access Score =
1.00**

**Mean level of
access**

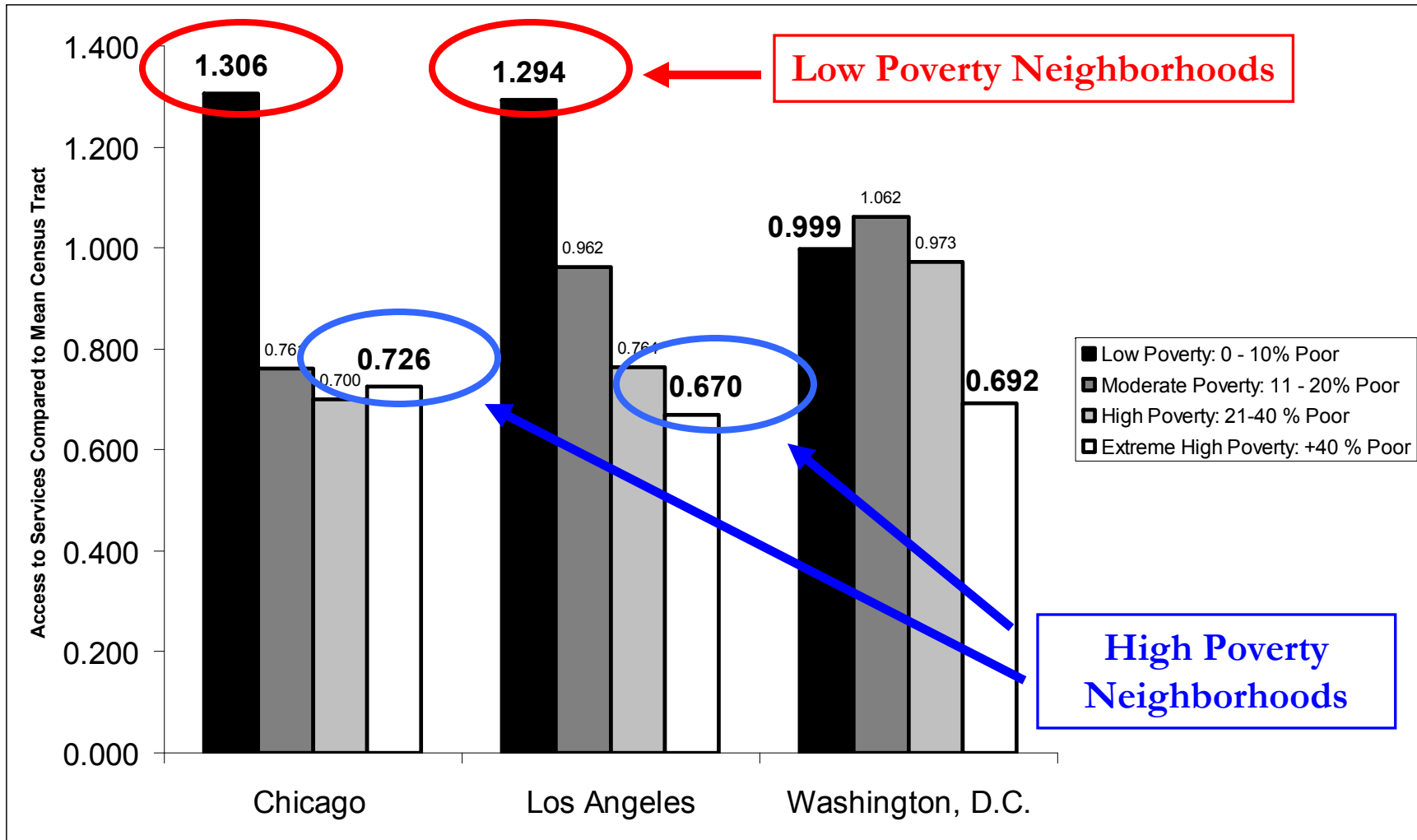
Neighborhood B

Access Score = 0.70

**Access to
30% fewer service
opportunities than
mean neighborhood**

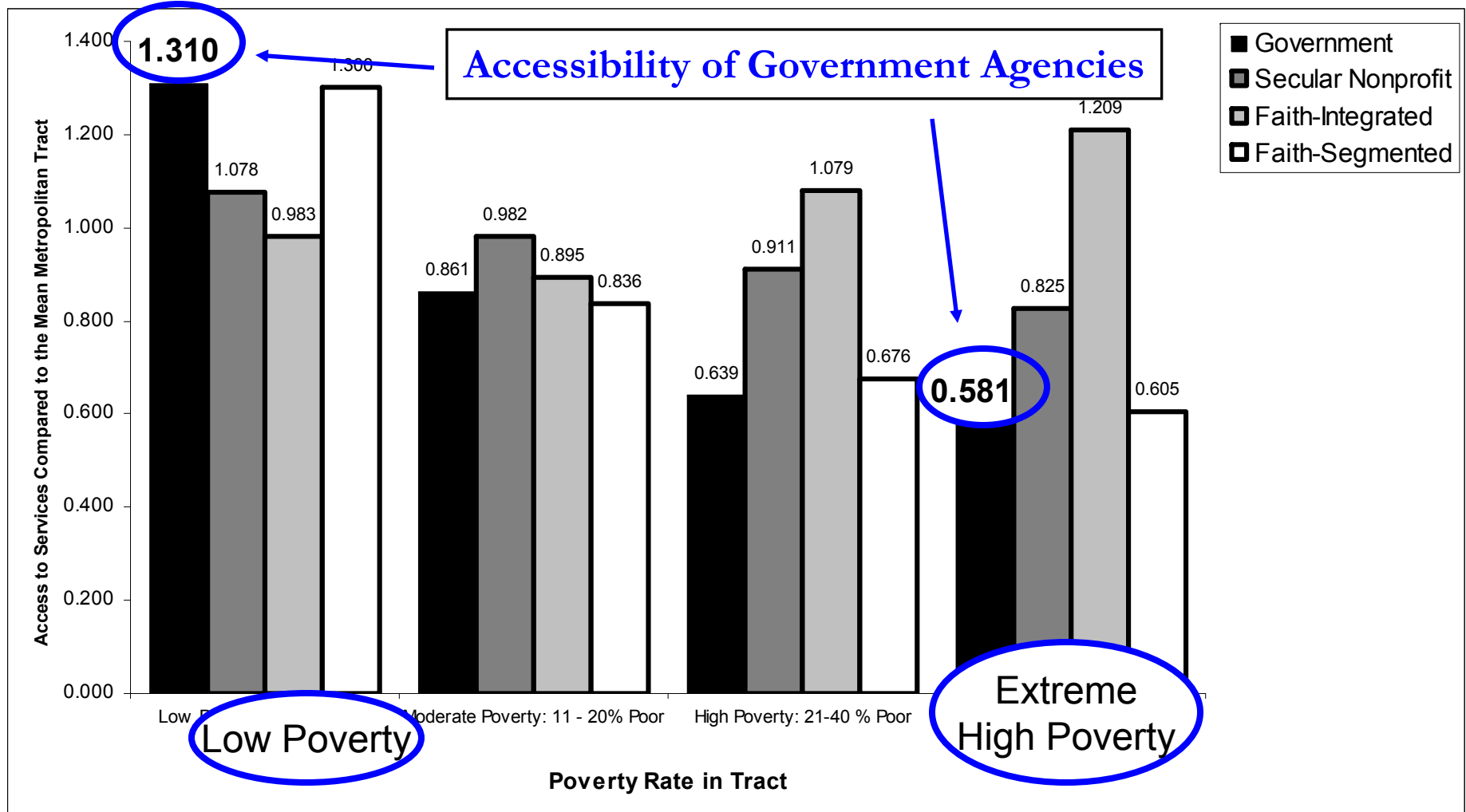
**85% fewer
opportunities than
neighborhood A**

Access to All Social Service Providers in the MSSSP



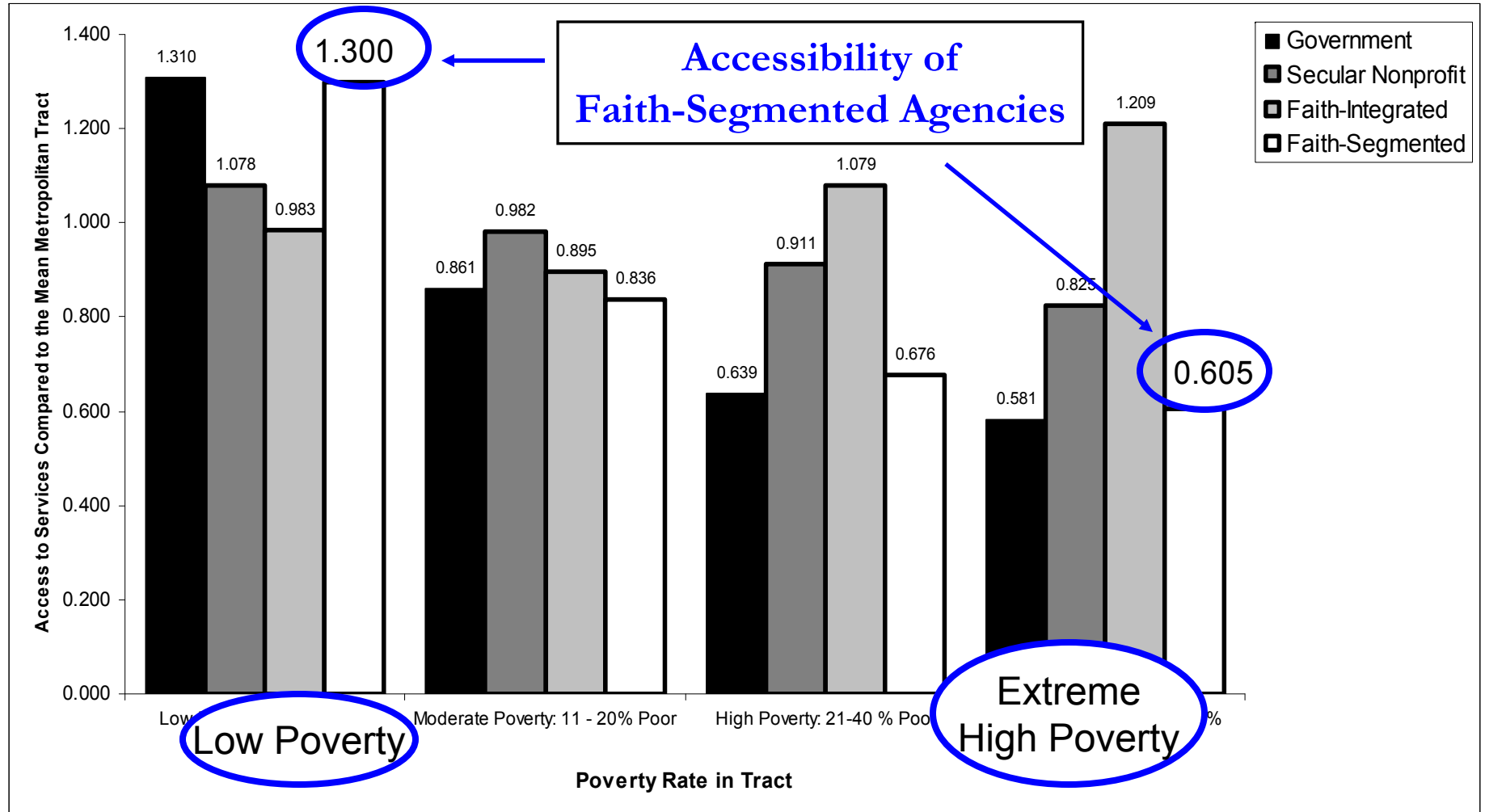
Note: Scores reflect access compared to metropolitan mean and are weighted by potential demand, as well as supply of assistance.

Access to Nonprofit Service Providers in the MSSSP



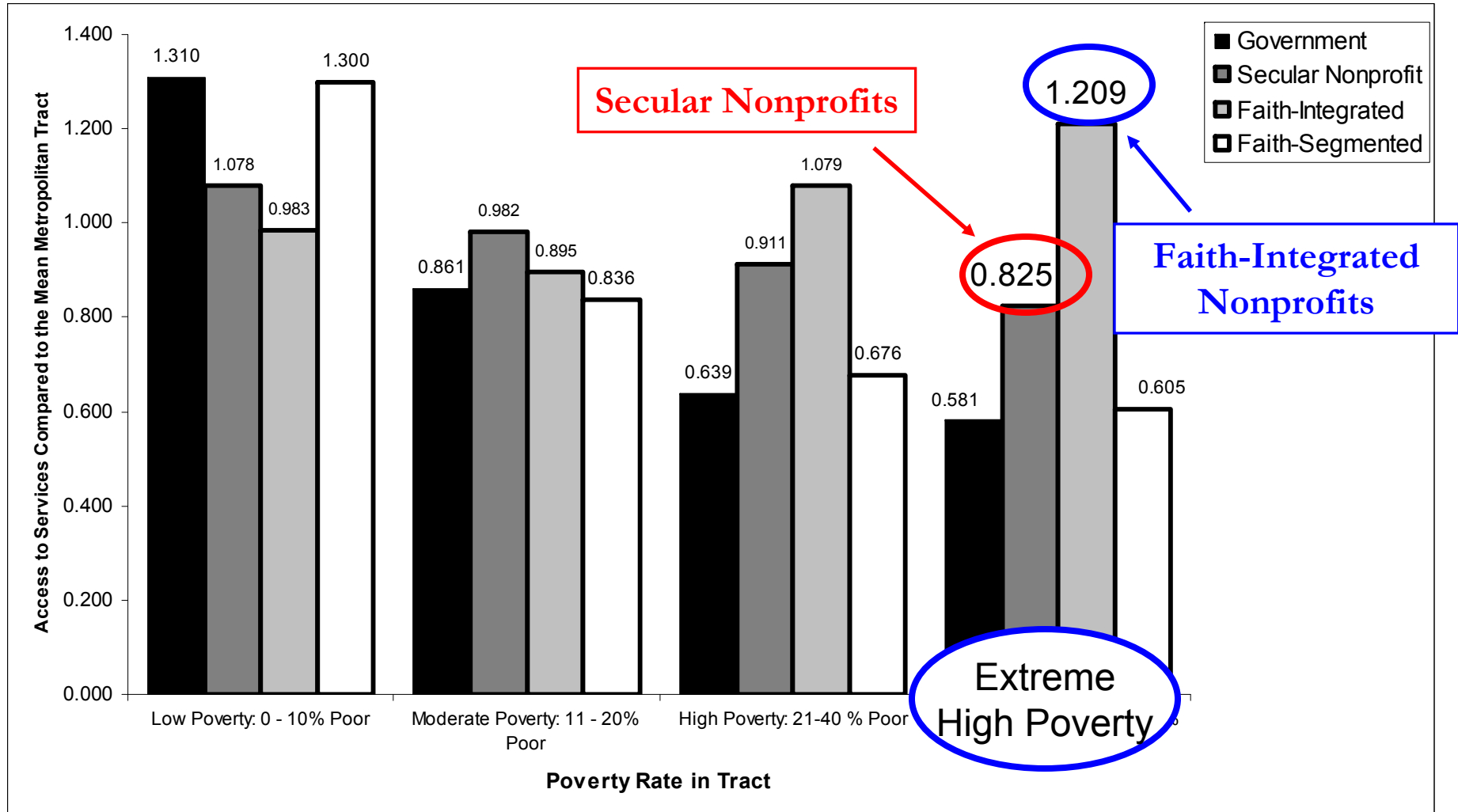
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Why Mismatches Might Exist

- **Demand for help exceeds supply**
 - **Revenue-seeking behavior of providers**
 - **Location of affordable, quality office space**
 - Agencies are less mobile than clients
 - **Agencies balance many stakeholders**
 - One location unlikely to meet multiple needs or missions
 - **Preference for certain locations/client populations**
 - **Presence of collaborators or partners**
 - **Lack of coordination in delivery or provision of services**
-

Funding of Social Service Agencies

- Nearly all secular nonprofits receive government funding ($\approx 85\%$)
 - Many faith-based organizations receive public funding
 - About 50-60% of faith-segmented
 - 1/3 of faith-integrated in cities, 1/8 of faith-integrated in rural areas
 - Secular nonprofits more dependent on government \$
 - Faith-integrated nonprofits highly dependent upon private donations
 - Faith-segmented agencies maintain more balanced revenue portfolios
-

Stability of Service Provision Across Nonprofits

	Percentage of Service Organizations					
	MSSSP			RSSSP		
	Faith-Integrated	Faith-Segmented	Secular Nonprofit	Faith-Integrated	Faith-Segmented	Secular Nonprofit
Report Decrease in Funding from Any Revenue Source in Previous 3 Years	29.7 ^a	39.3 ^b	49.1 ^{ab}	25.5 ^a	44.4	47.5 ^a
Reduced Staff in Previous Year due to Funding Cut	44.4	48.2	61.5	8.3 ^a	29.2 ^b	63.2 ^{ab}
Reduced Services in Previous Year due to Funding Cut	44.4	51.8	44.6	41.7	62.5	48.7
Reduced Clients in Previous Year due to Funding Cut	37.0	40.2	39.3	33.3	50.0	43.4
Temporarily Closed Site in Previous Year due to Funding Cut	11.1	4.9	7.7	16.7	12.5	7.9

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Conclusions

- **Different roles of secular v. faith-based service organizations**
 - Staff-intensive services v. material needs
 - **Certain types of nonprofits more accessible than others**
 - Faith-integrated agencies = anti-poverty focus
 - Secular nonprofits = more accessible than gov'tal or faith-segmented agencies
 - Secular and faith-segmented nonprofits deliver vast share of assistance in urban and rural communities
 - **Volatility in nonprofit service organizations is pervasive**
 - Compromises ability to serve low-income populations and strengthen communities
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Implications for Policy

- **What can federal-state-local government do?**
 - ❑ Improve connections of persons in need to available services
 - ❑ Address changing geography of poverty
 - ❑ Greater incentives for private giving
 - ❑ Maintain public resource commitments
 - **Cultivating capacity of faith-based and community-based organizations**
 - ❑ Non-service roles for faith-based organizations
 - ❑ Trade-offs of capacity-building v. investing in existing organizations
 - **Need for additional empirical research**
 - ❑ Little data on service provision or utilization
 - ❑ Service utilization and dynamics of service accessibility
 - ❑ How does faith matter - service provision or targeting of client populations?
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