

**Survey Results: Judges',  
Attorneys' and CASAs'  
Perspectives on Non-Family  
Placements  
June, 2017**

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION



## Overview

- In the spring of 2017, Child Focus fielded three surveys, all asking for perspectives on non-family placements.
- The survey was sent out online by the ABA, NACC, NCJFCJ and CASA to their respective listserves, memberships and in the case of CASA, their staff and volunteers.
- The three surveys were fielded to:
  - Judges
  - Attorneys
  - CASAs

# Overview on Respondents

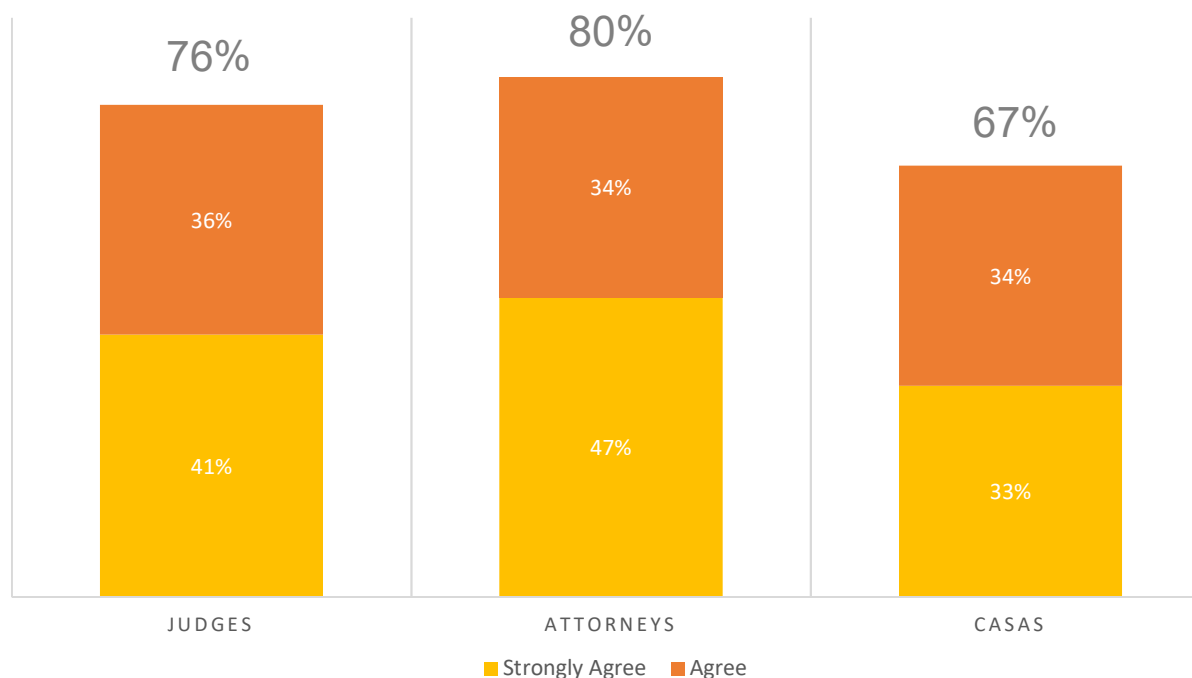
	Judges	Attorneys	CASAs
n=	162	374	691
States	37 states represented, the District of Columbia and one tribe.	45 states were represented.	44 states were represented.
Tenure	Practiced for an average of 12 years. The range was 9 months to 35 years.	Practiced for an average of 14 years. The range was 0-45 years.	Practiced for an average of 7.5 years. The range of 0-50 years.
Community Type	Most were from urban or rural areas.	Most were from urban areas, however many respondents practiced in multiple types of communities.	Most respondents are from rural areas, however many practice in multiple types of communities.
Other		Most respondents were children's or parent's attorneys.	

## Key Findings

- A third of judges, a quarter of attorneys, and half of CASAs believe that children should remain in non-family settings until permanency, if the placement is stable.
- The majority of all respondents believe non-family settings should only be used when therapeutically necessary and a large percentage have becoming increasingly concerned with non-family settings over the past two years.
- Judges with more experience appear to be more accepting of non-family settings when not therapeutically or medically necessary, and if the child has been stable in the placement. Attorneys and CASAs with more experience are less likely to believe this compared to Attorneys and CASAs with less experience.
- Most respondents—from all three categories—do not believe that their states have the capacity to recruit families for children in foster care.
- Under a quarter of all respondents—from all three categories—believe they have very large or a large impact in helping to reduce unnecessary non-family placements.

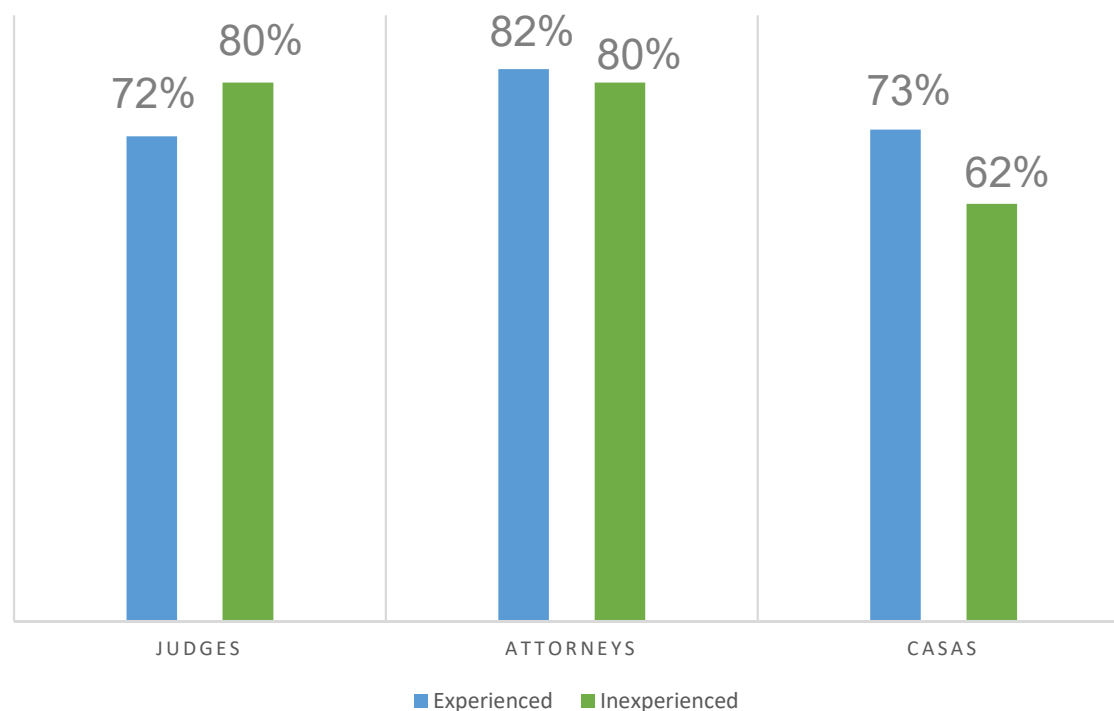
Over two-thirds of Judges, Attorneys, and CASAs believe that children should only be placed in non-family settings when they are appropriate—yet judges and attorneys are more likely to believe that.

Q: Children in foster care should only be placed in non-family settings (shelters, group care, residential treatment) when such placements are therapeutically or medically necessary.



Judges with less experience are more likely to agree that children should only be placed in non-family settings when necessary—while CASAs with more experience are more likely to agree with this statement.

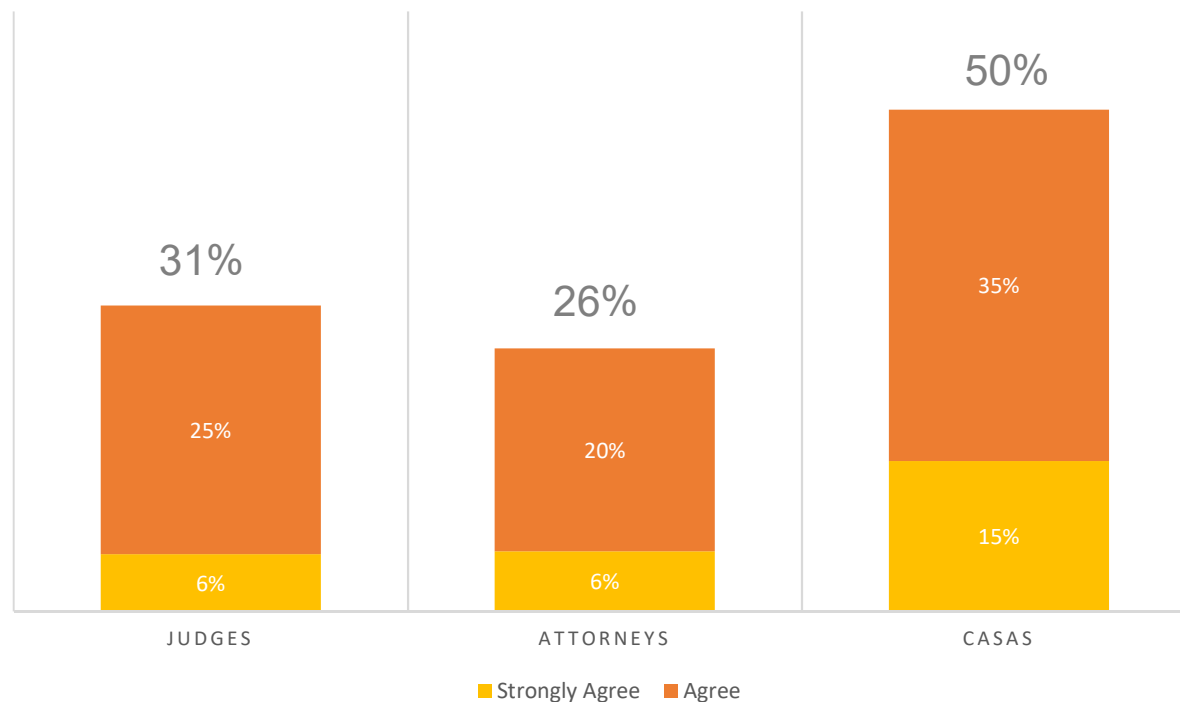
Q: Children in foster care should only be placed in non-family settings (shelters, group care, residential treatment) when such placements are therapeutically or medically necessary.



Note: Experienced for Judges and Attorneys, is defined as more than 10 years of experience and inexperienced as 10 years or less of experience; Experienced for CASAs is defined as more than 5 years of experience and inexperienced as 5 years or less of experience

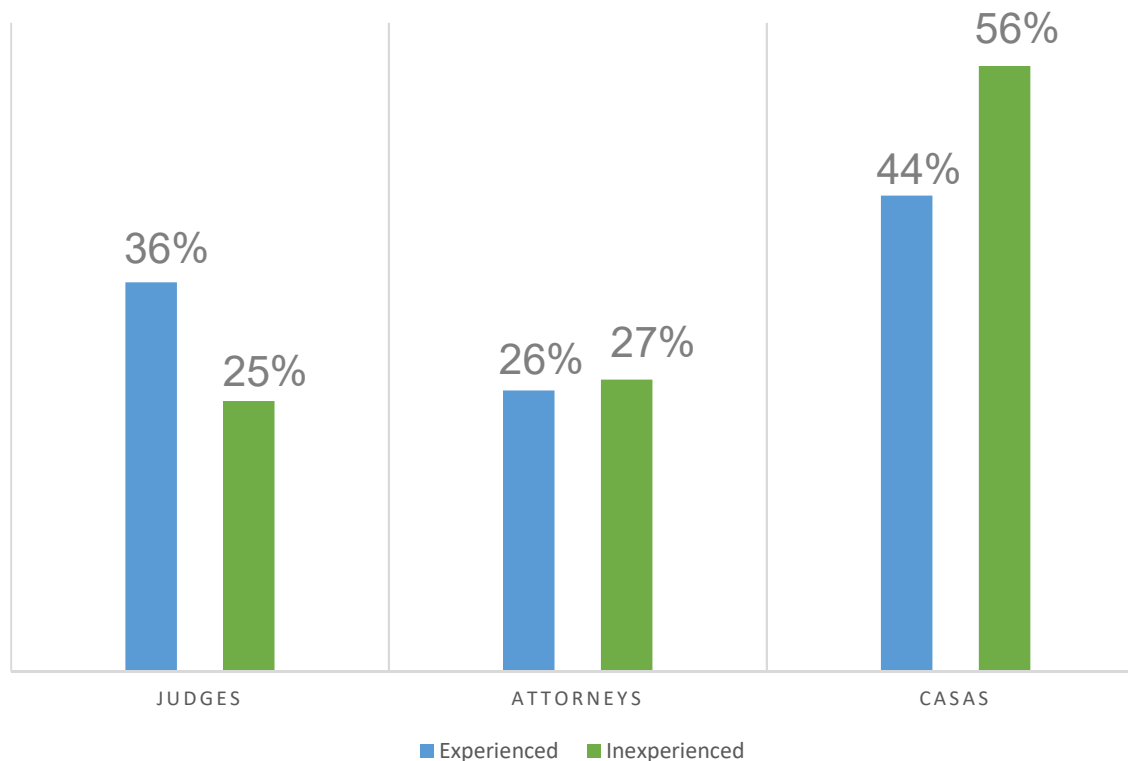
## CASAs are significantly more likely than Judges and Attorneys to favor stability over placing a child in a family-setting.

Q: If a child in foster care is stable in a non-family setting, it's okay for the child to remain in this placement until they achieve permanency.



Judges with more experience are more likely to believe that long-term, stable non-family settings are appropriate. Inexperienced CASAs are more likely to believe this statement.

Q: If a child in foster care is stable in a non-family setting, it's okay for the child to remain in this placement until they achieve permanency.

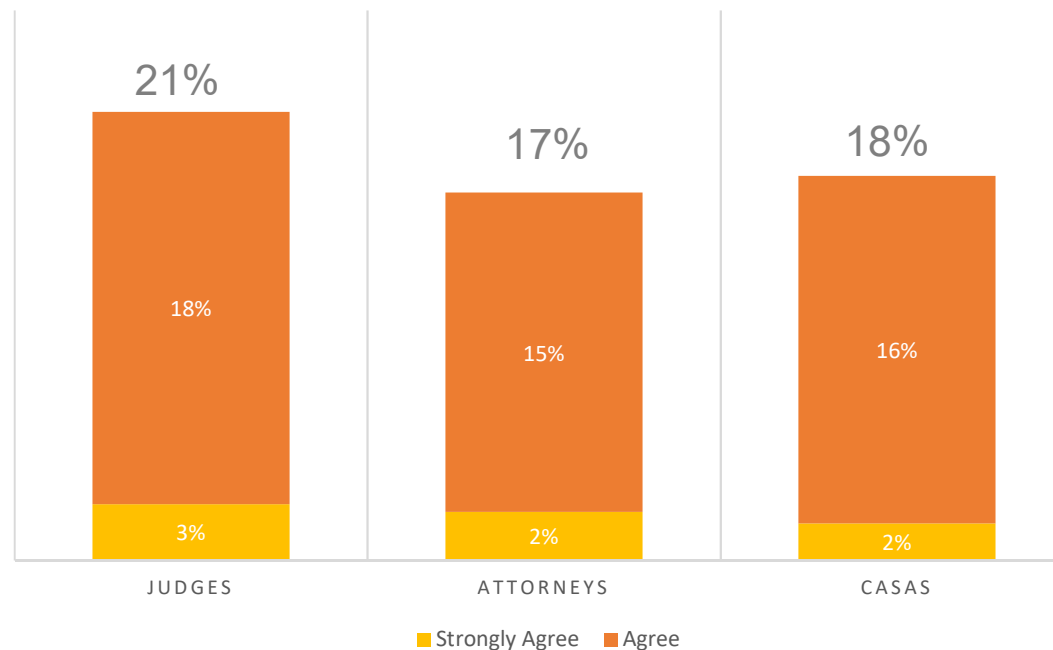


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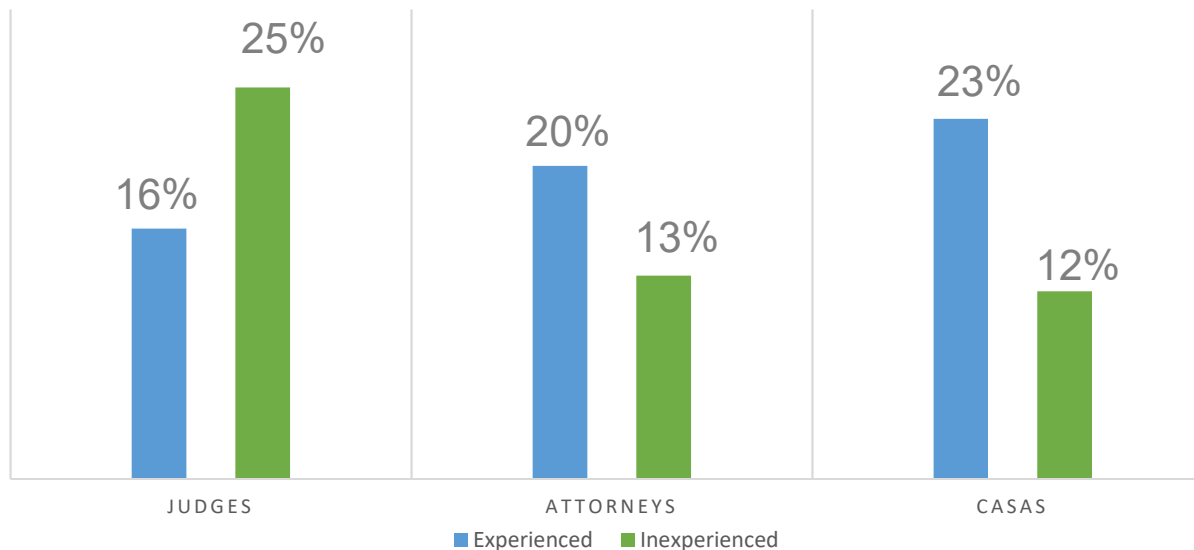
## Judges are slightly more likely to believe group homes provide a higher level of care than Attorneys and CASAs.

Q: Group homes often provide a higher level of care to youth in foster care than they can receive in a family foster home.



## High discrepancies along experience lines in the belief as to whether group homes provide higher level of care.

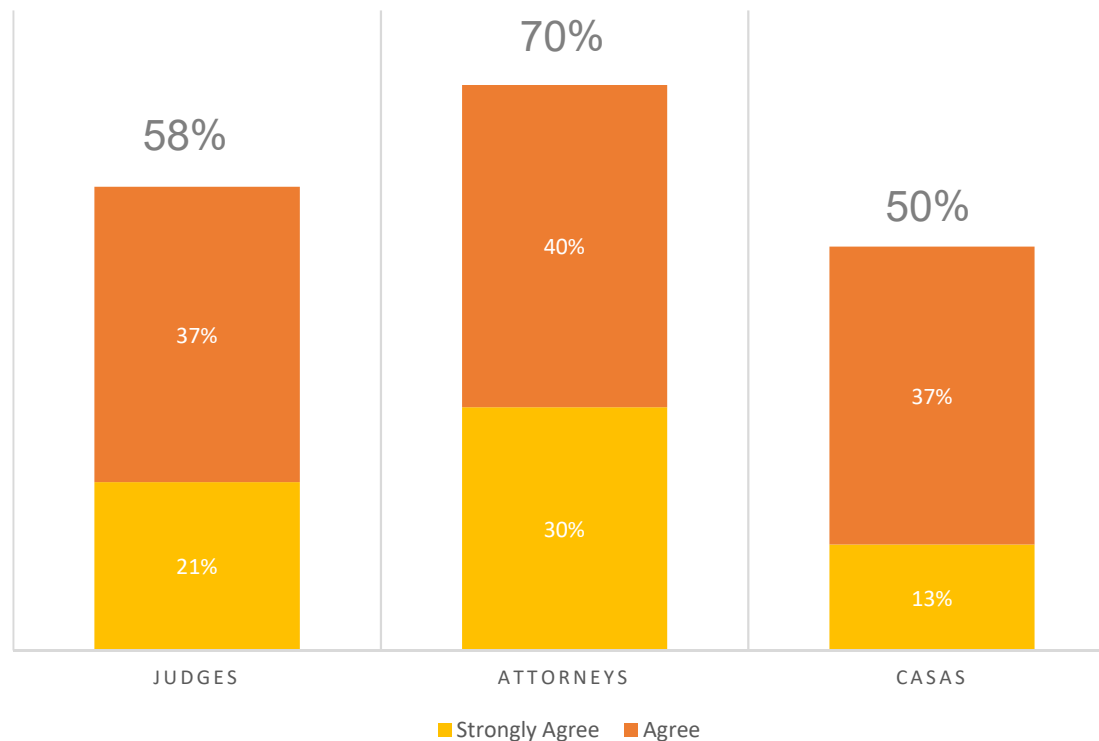
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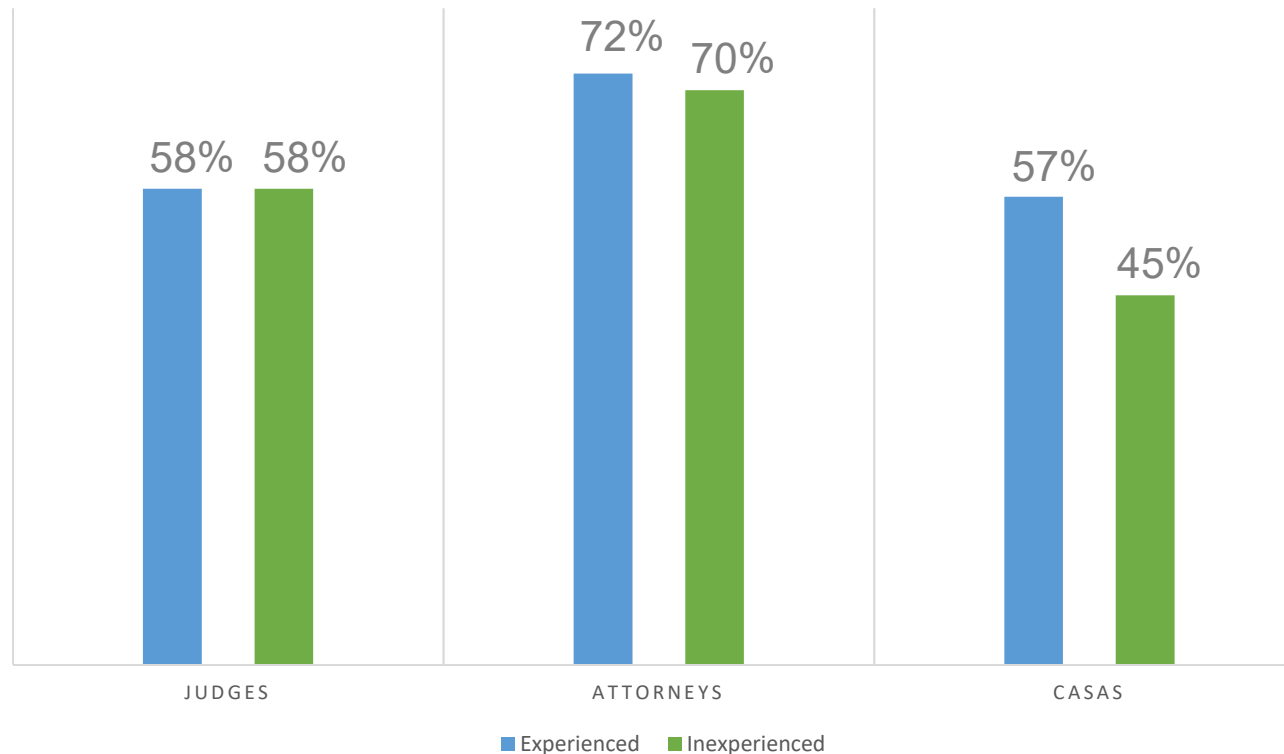
While 50% or more of all respondents believe too many children in foster care are in non-family settings, Attorneys are much more likely to believe this.

Q: Too many children in foster care are in non-family settings.



CASAs with more experience are more likely to agree with the statement that there are too many children in foster care in non-family settings than CASAs with less experience.

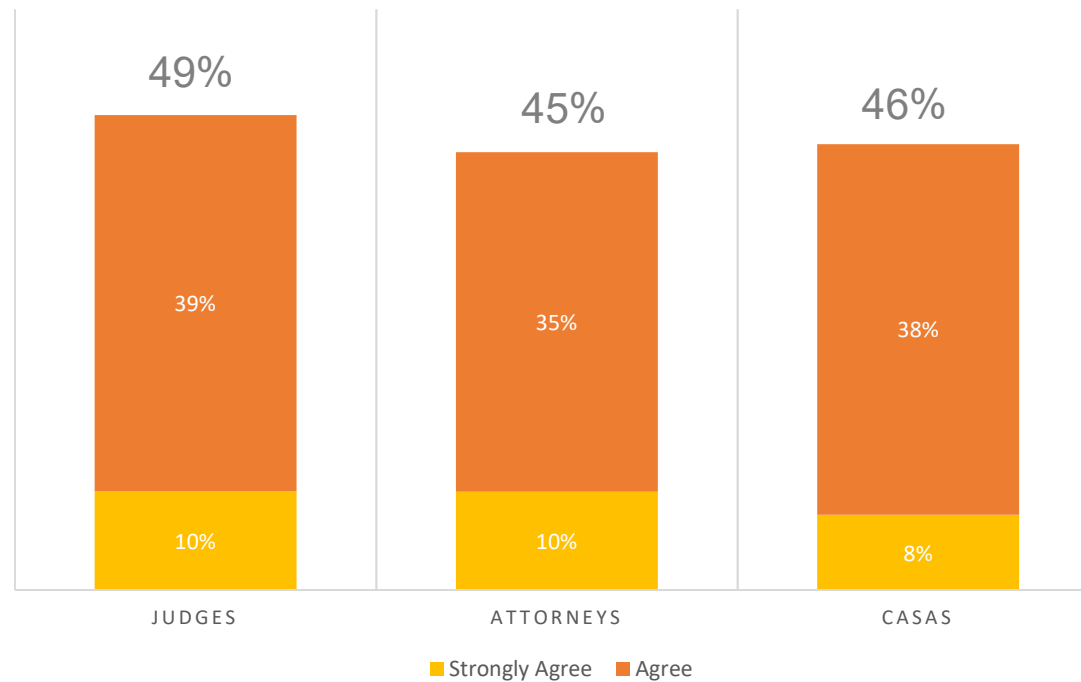
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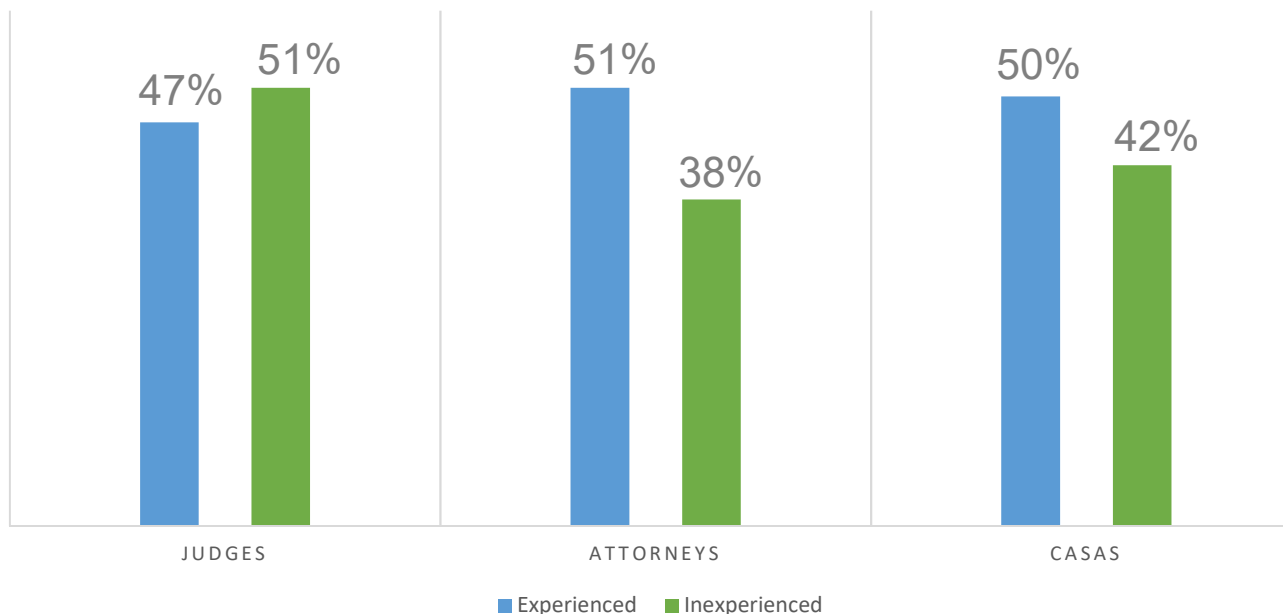
Nearly half of all respondents believe that youth placed in non-family settings have significantly greater needs than those in family settings—while over half are neutral or disagree.

Q: Youth in foster care who are placed in non-family settings have significantly greater needs than children who are cared for in family settings (kin and non-kin family foster homes).



Attorneys and CASAs with less experience are more likely to agree that youth in non-family settings have greater needs; Judges with more experience are more likely to agree with this statement.

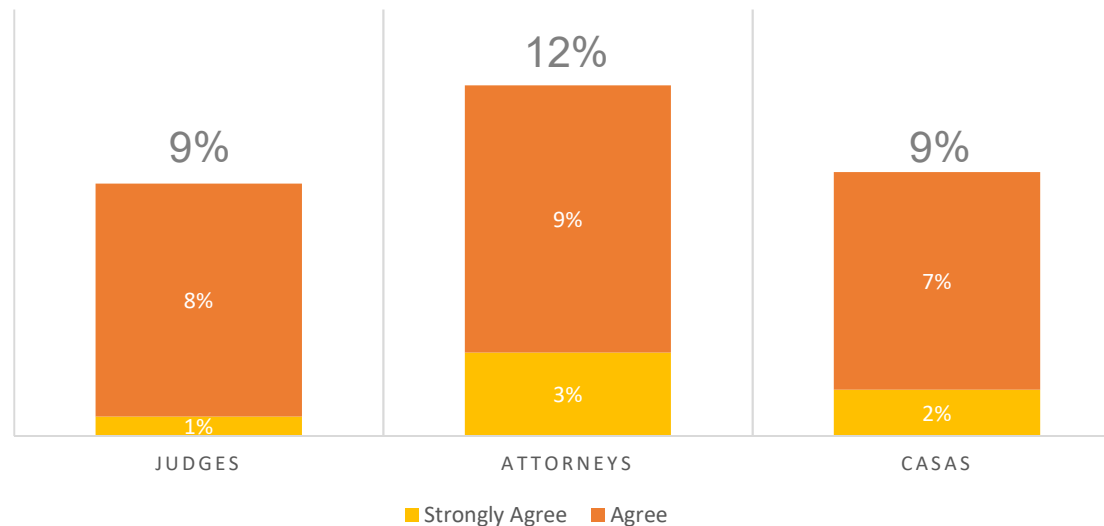
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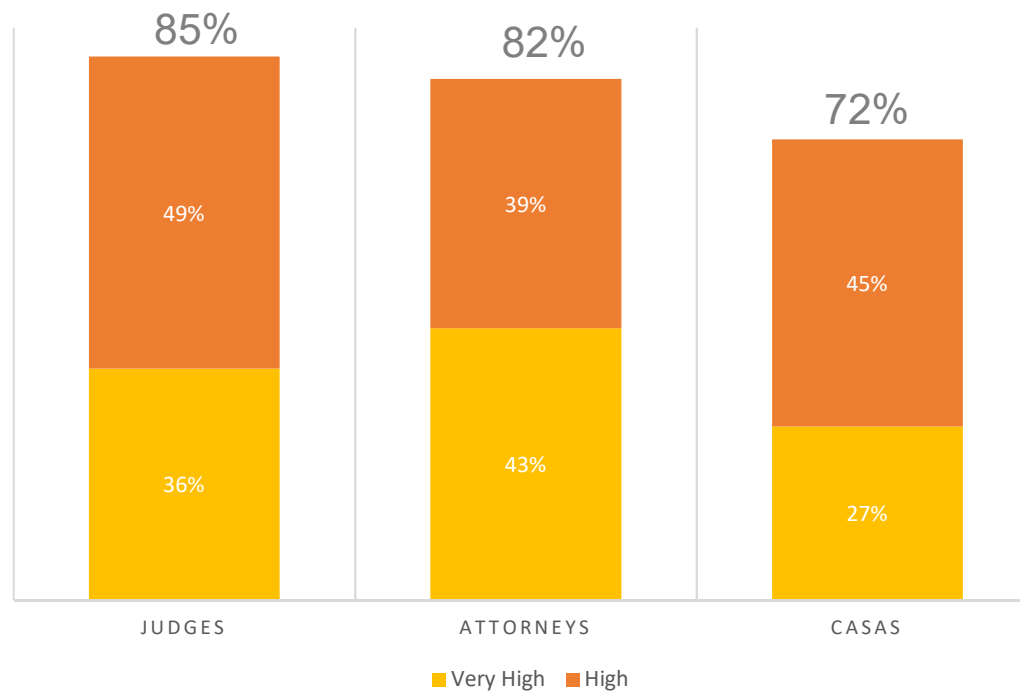
## Most respondents believe that their state can not recruit enough families to eliminate non-family placements.

Q: My state can recruit enough families necessary to eliminate non-family placements.



All three respondent-types say that reducing unnecessary non-family placements should be a high priority, yet CASAs are less likely to believe this than Judges and Attorneys.

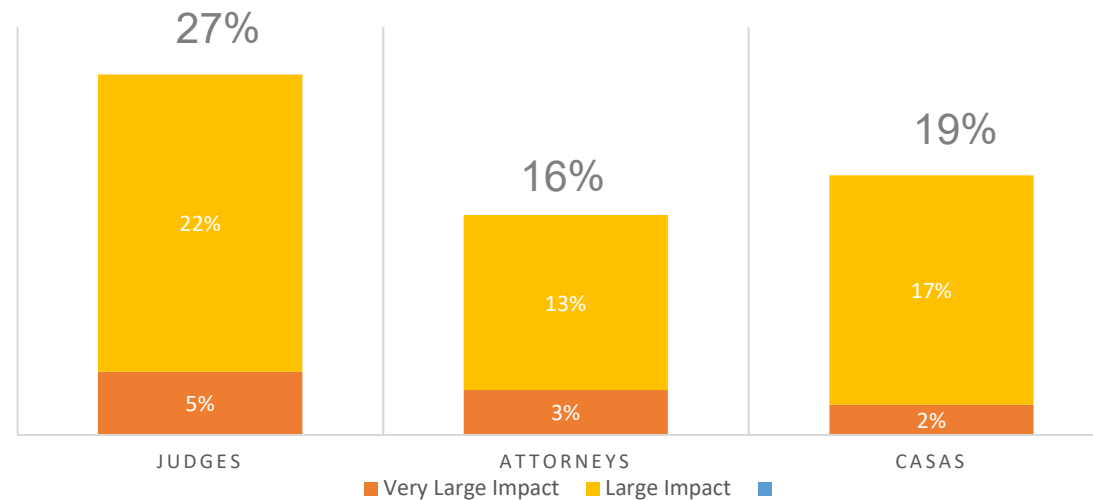
Q: How high of a priority should your state and local child welfare agencies place on reducing unnecessary non-family placements?





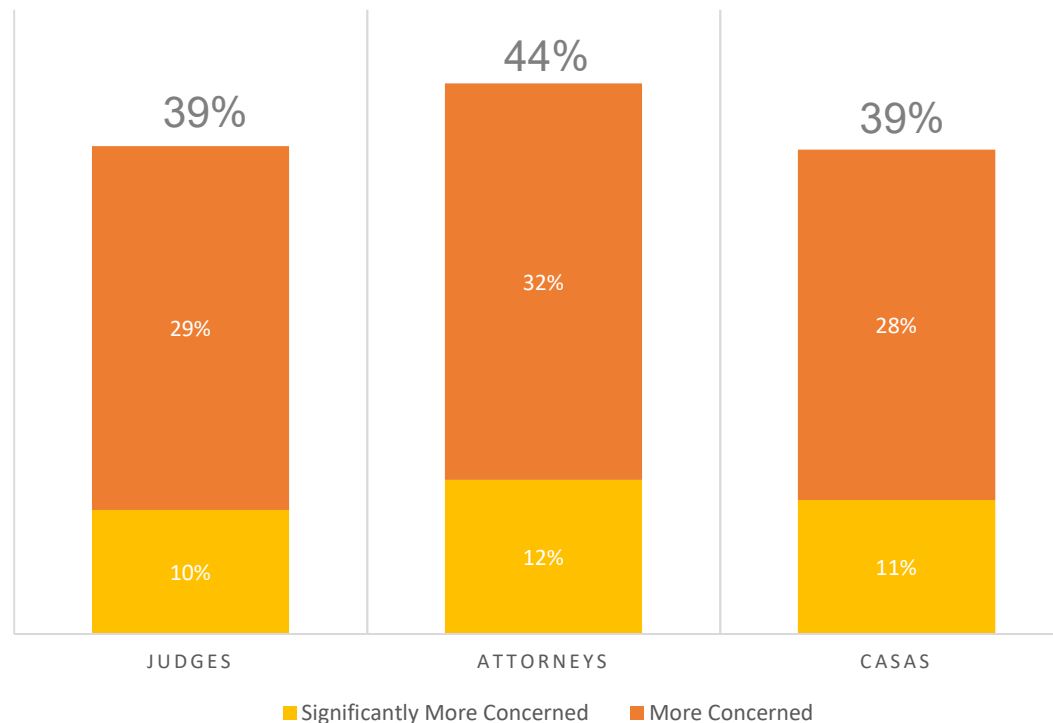
Less than a quarter of all respondents believe they have a large impact on reducing unnecessary non-family placements.

Q: What level of impact do you think you can play in helping to reduce unnecessary non-family placements?



A large percentage (40%) of respondents have become more concerned about non-family settings in the past two years.

Q: Over the past two years, how (if at all) has your perspective changed about the placement of children in foster care in non-family settings?





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