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# A Case for Including Prepaid Cell Phones for Hard-to-Survey Latino Populations

The 2024 Community Health Survey

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# Project Overview

## 2024 Community Health Survey



## 2024 Community Health Survey

- Examines the association between mental health and health care access and immigrant policies among Latinos in rural regions
- Part of a multilevel, cross-sectional study of the impact of policy contexts, social climates, and direct encounters with institutions that implement policy known as PIRLH or the Policies Influencing Rural Latino Health Study
- Led by Dr. Maria-Elena De Trinidad Young at the University of California, Merced (UC Merced)
- Funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD)





16

**Counties: 8 in each  
Arizona and California**



23

**Minute survey**



114k<sup>+</sup>

**Sampled households**



3,000<sup>+</sup>

**Completed surveys**

The CHS, conducted May – December 2024, used two sample frames, address based (ABS) and prepaid cell, and two modes, web and phone

## **ABS**

- Sample flags:
  - Likely Hispanic
  - Likely Non-Hispanic
  - Race/Ethnicity unknown
- Households were mailed an invitation including a \$2 prepaid, cash incentive and asked to complete the survey by web or phone
  - A \$10 post-paid incentive was added mid-way through data collection to increase response rates
- Households were sent up to three additional mailings encouraging them to participate

## **Prepaid cell**

- Sample flags:
  - Likely Hispanic
  - Race/Ethnicity unknown
- Numbers were called at least times to try and complete an interview by a bilingual interviewer
- A bilingual message was left when an interviewer reached a voicemail

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# Dual Sample Design

**ABS and prepaid cell**



ABS and push-to-web surveys often are cost-effective, efficient, and versatile options, but have limitations in reaching the CHS target population



**ABS has generally great coverage and allows for a variety of modes, but...**

Rural coverage is a concern



**Push-to-web methods are cost-effective, but...**

Representation is a concern

An ABS-only approach left several concerning gaps for target population for the 2024 Community Health Survey

**1.**

### **Ethnicity**

ABS respondents are less likely to be Latino

**2.**

### **Language**

ABS respondents are less likely to be Spanish-speaking

**3.**

### **Income**

ABS respondents are less likely to be lower income

**4.**

### **Education**

ABS respondents are less likely to have less than a high school education

**5.**

### **Housing**

ABS respondents are less likely to be migratory

Supplementing with prepaid cellphone sample to address the challenges of reaching our target population

### Previous research on prepaid cell samples

- Also known as “burner” or “pay-as-you-go” phones
  - Do not require a billing address
- Migrant and rural populations are more likely to have prepaid cell phones
- More likely to be in our target population



Prepaid cell phone sample is more limited and more expensive than ABS



**Availability**



**Productiveness**



**Cost**

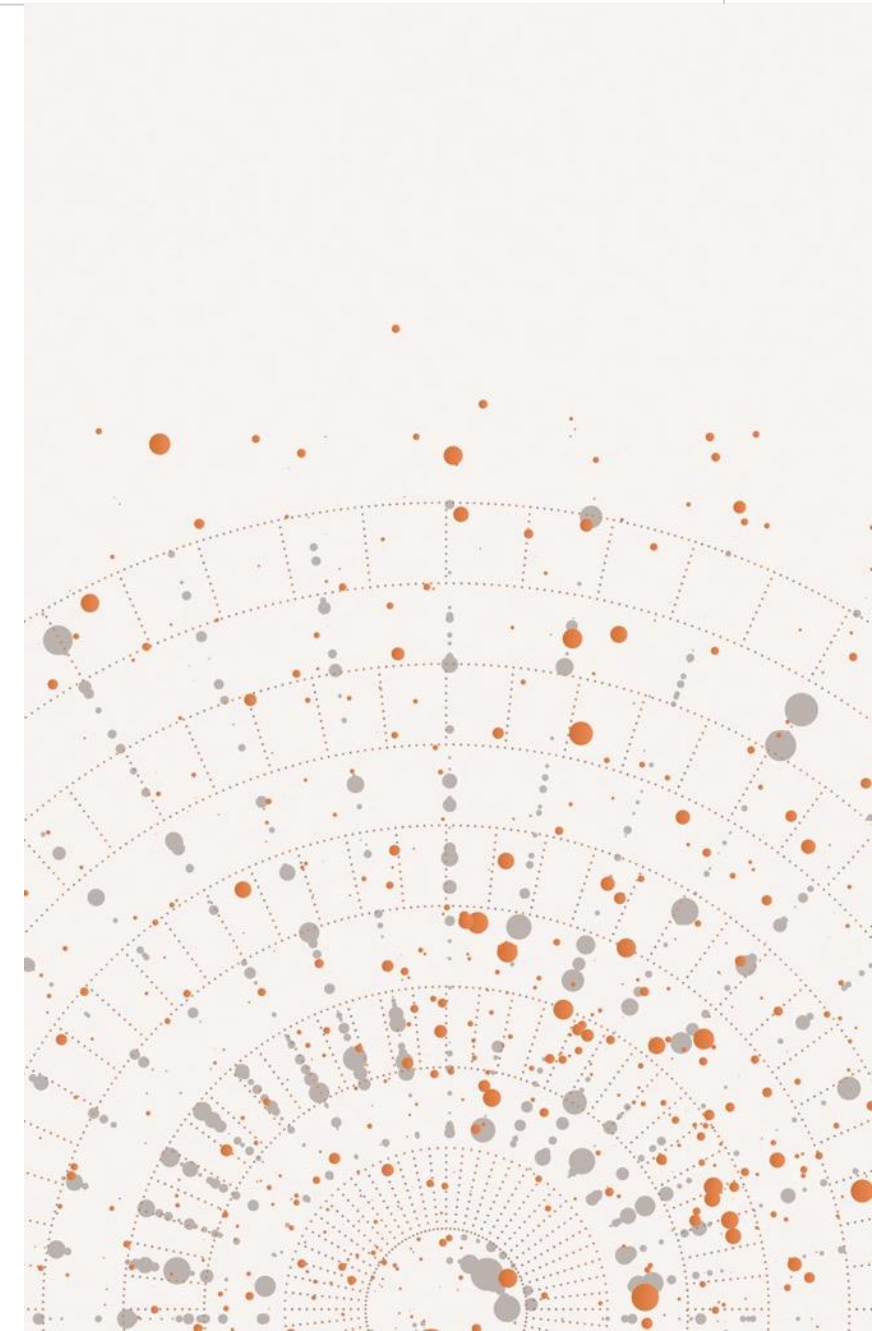
Compare participant demographics for each sample

### **How do participants' demographics differ by sample type?**

- Did the supplemental prepaid cell sample help us reach our target participants?

### **How can these findings inform future research?**

- Should surveys targeting rural Latino participants use a dual sample design?



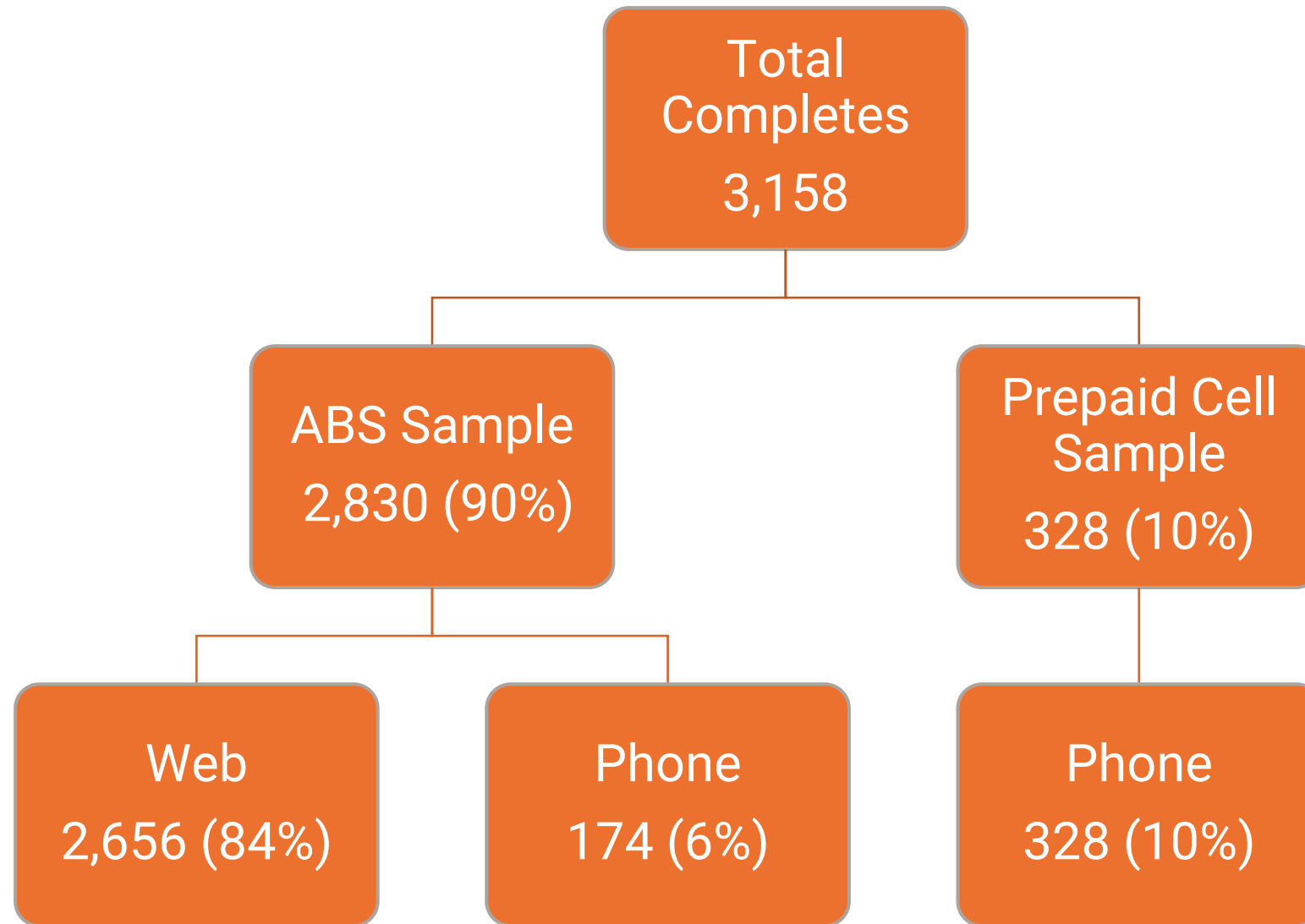
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# Survey Response

**Participant demographics by sample type**



The majority of our completes came from the ABS Sample



Using prepaid cell sample in the 2024 Community Health Survey improved representation across our areas of concern

**1.**

### **Ethnicity**

Prepaid cell respondents were more likely to be Latino

**2.**

### **Language**

Prepaid cell respondents were more likely to be Spanish-speaking

**3.**

### **Income**

Prepaid cell respondents were more likely to be lower income

**4.**

### **Education**

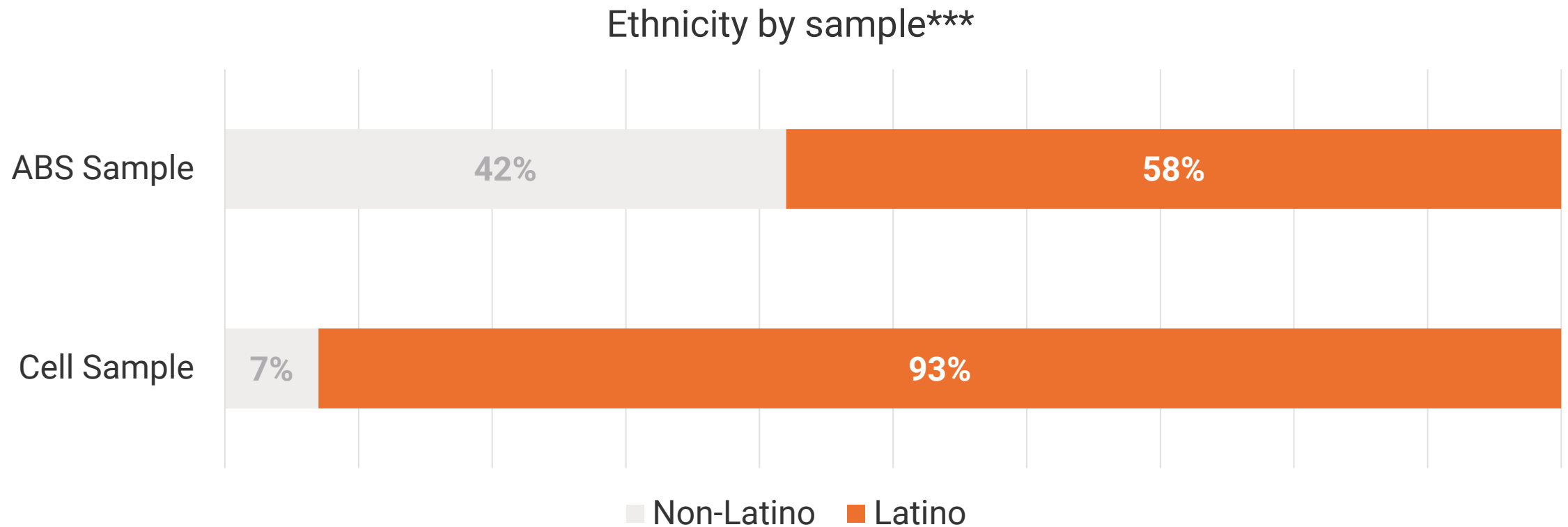
Prepaid cell respondents were more likely to have less than a high school education

**5.**

### **Housing**

Prepaid cell respondents were more likely to be migratory

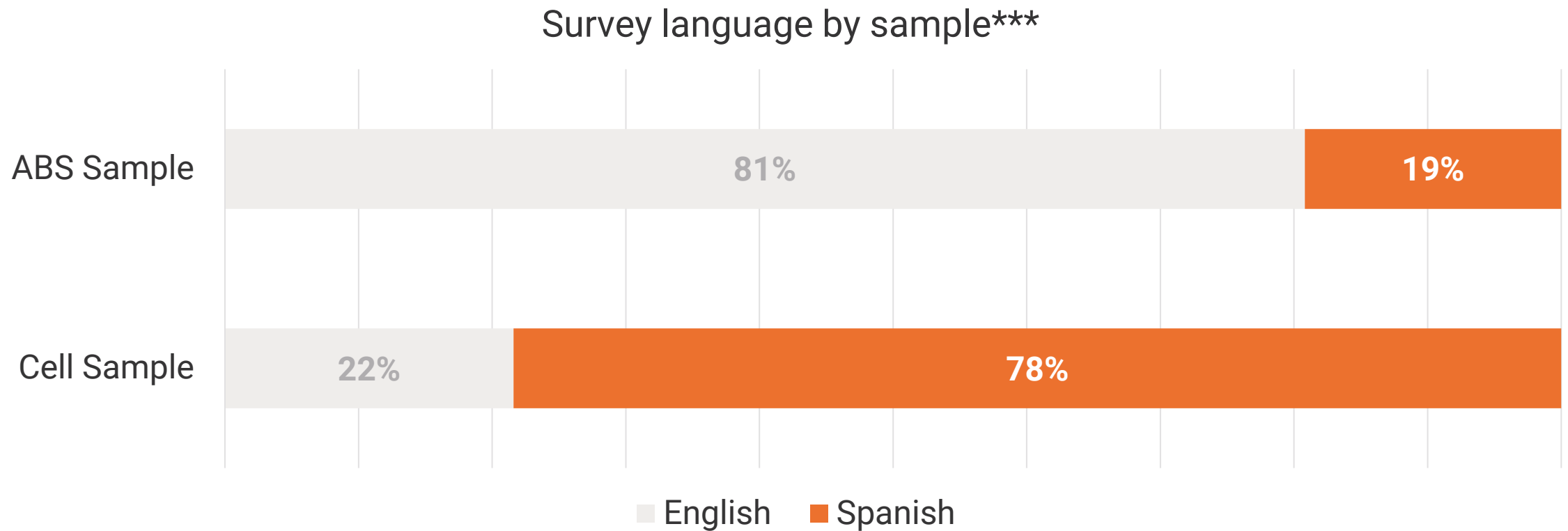
## Prepaid cell sample participants were more to be Latino



\*\*\*  $p < 0.0001$

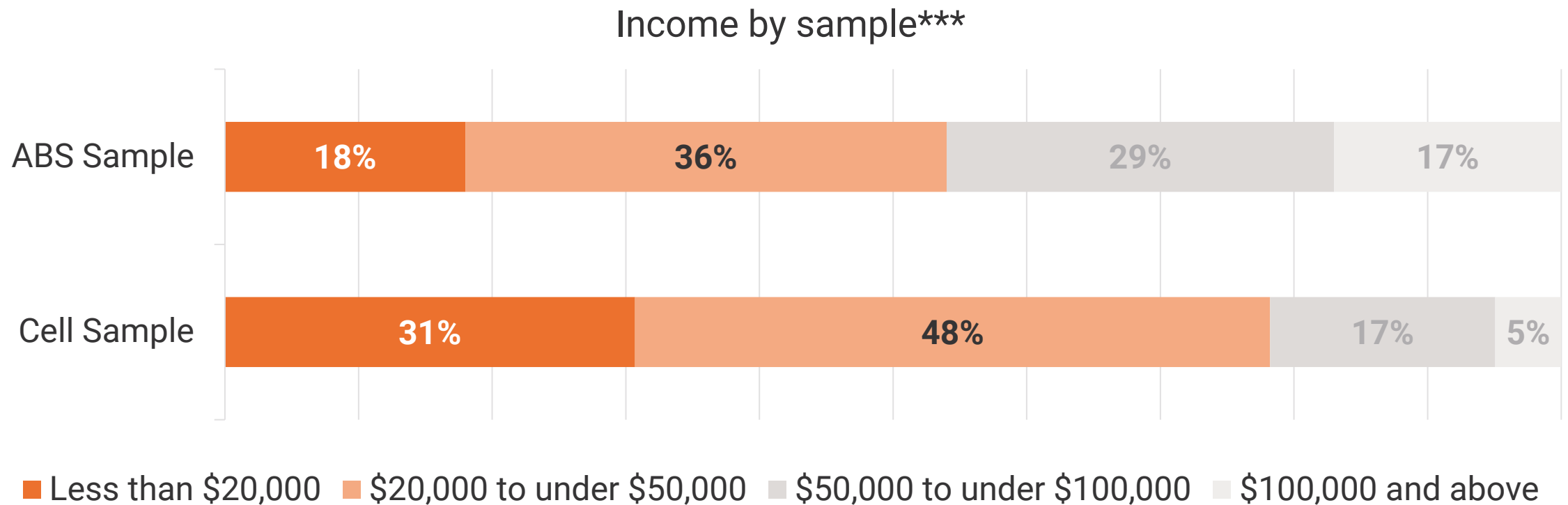
Note: this was a screener question. Participants who did not describe themselves as non-Hispanic or Latino were not eligible for the full survey and therefore are not included in any following counts. Also, the sample we were using was flagged as Likely Hispanic.

Prepaid cell sample participants were more likely to take the survey in Spanish



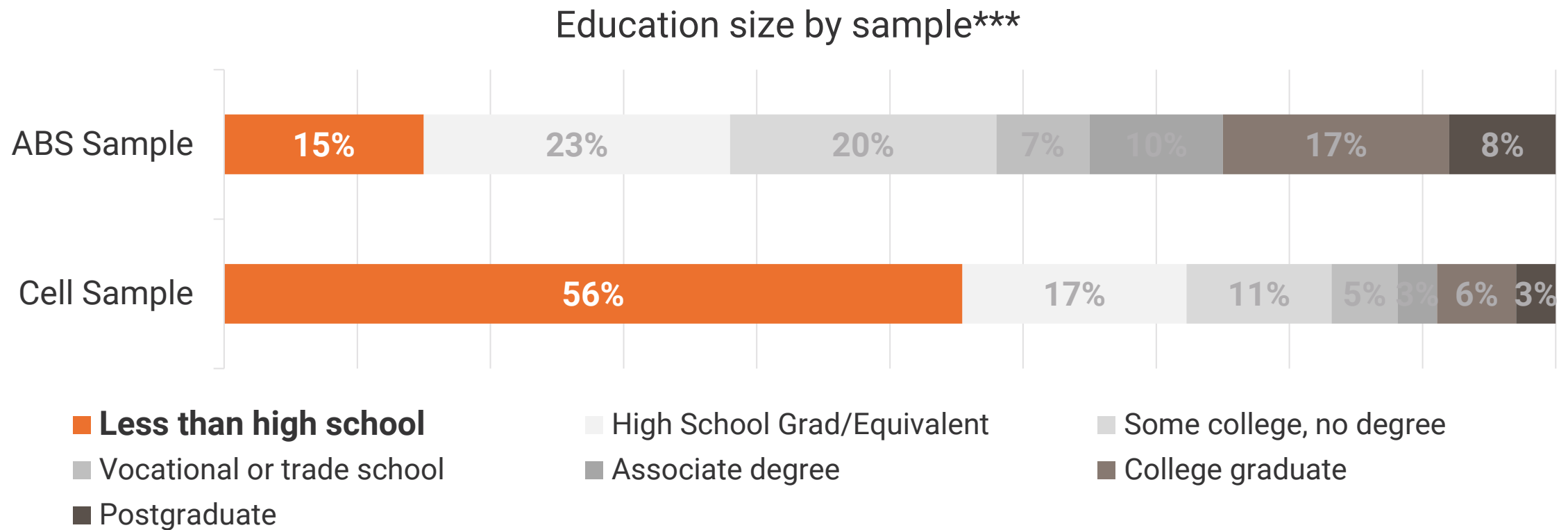
\*\*\* p < 0.0001

## Prepaid cell sample participants were lower income



\*\*\* p < 0.0001

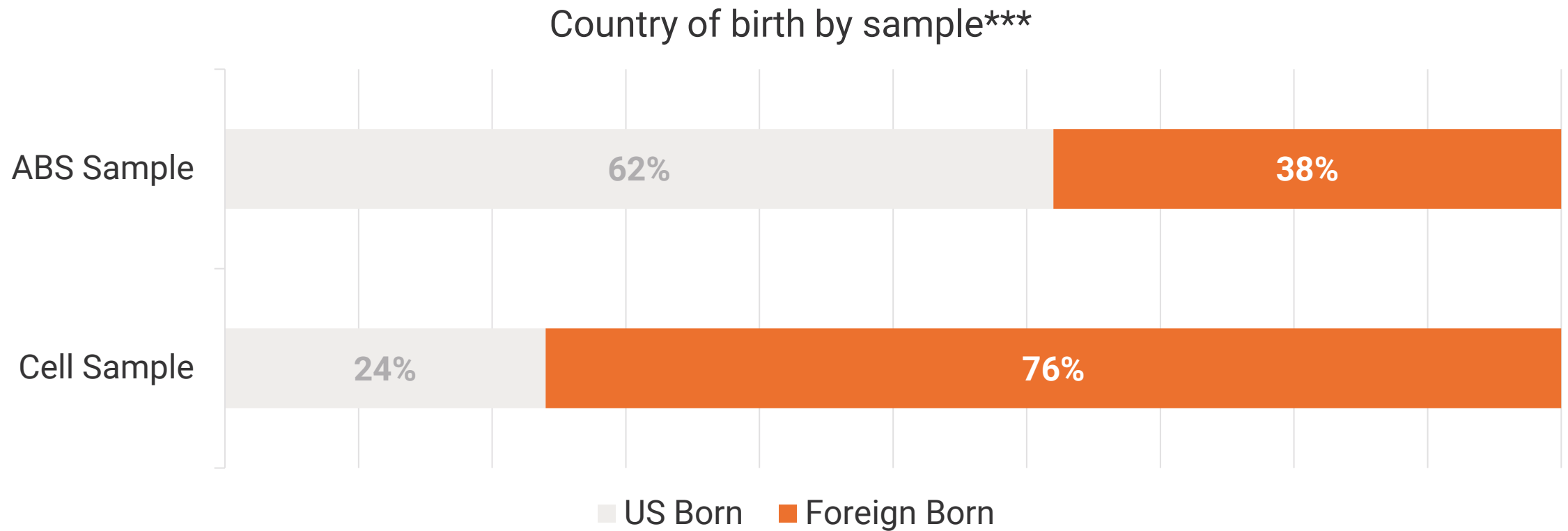
Prepaid cell sample participants were more likely to have less than a high school education



\*\*\* p < 0.0001



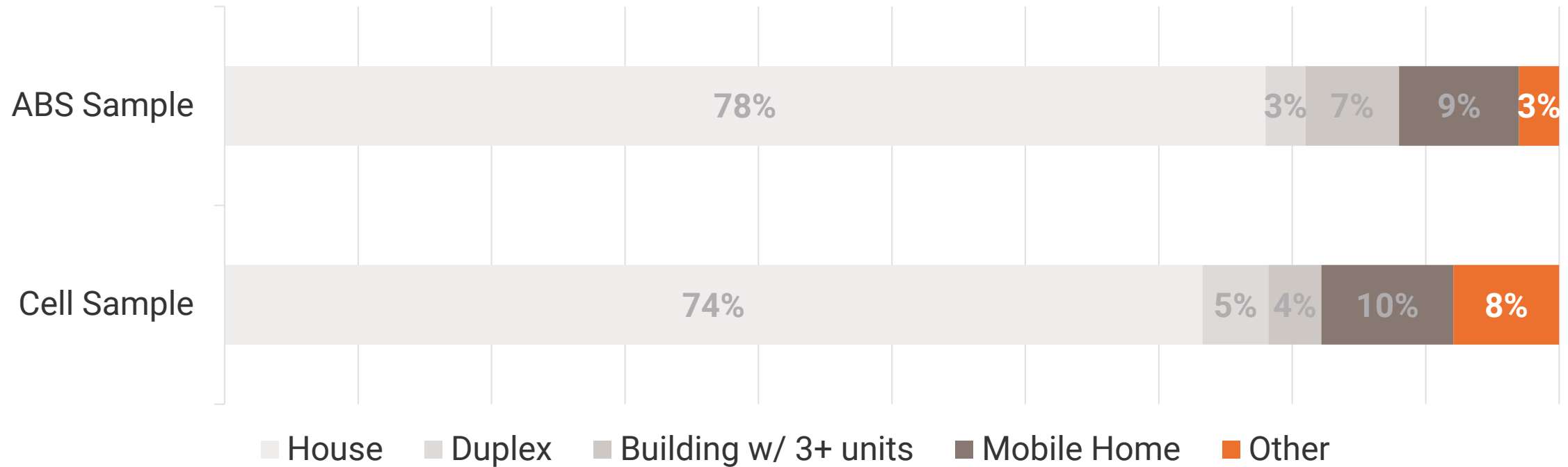
Prepaid cell sample participants were more likely to be foreign-born



\*\*\*  $p < 0.0001$

Prepaid cell sample participants were more likely to live in non-traditional housing that are hard to reach via an ABS frame

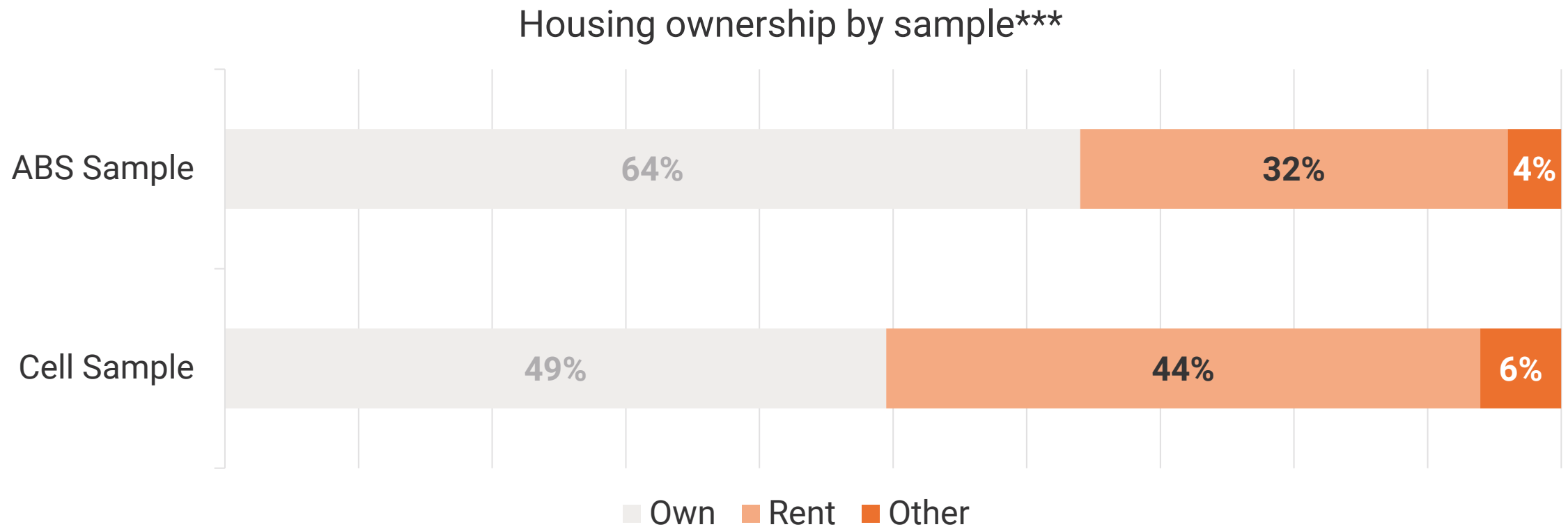
Housing type by sample\*\*



\*\* p < 0.001

"Other" includes, among other things, shelters, transitional housing, and not having a regular place to stay.

Of those in traditional housing, cell sample participants were less likely to own their homes



\*\*\*  $p < 0.0001$

“Other” includes, among other things, living with friends or family without paying.

## Potential mode effects may confound these findings

- ABS respondents were able to complete the survey by phone or web, while cell respondents only had the phone option
- There were demographic differences when we analyzed the data for the ABS sample alone comparing individuals who completed the survey via the web versus phone
- ABS participants who completed the survey via the phone were more likely than their web counterparts to be:
  - Latino
  - Spanish speaking
  - Lower income
  - Less educated
  - Foreign born
  - Live in non-traditional housing
- However, in each of these metrics, the phone ABS participants did not reach the levels of the prepaid cell sample participants

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# Results Overview

**What did we find?**

Adding a prepaid cell sample resulted in higher participation among key hard-to-reach groups than ABS alone

- The demographic trends between sample types were even larger than in past research
- Future studies of rural, Latino populations should consider prepaid cell sampling to improve representation






# Thank you.

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