SECTION 2: THE BIG PICTURE—PARTNER GROUP COMPARISONS

This section presents the big-picture results of the partners' surveys.[19] Partner responses are compared across the eight groups with respect to:

- Overall ratings of HUD's programs, program administration, and performance, including partners' characterization of the nature of their relationship with HUD—whether primarily supportive or regulatory.

- Evaluations of HUD's service quality, focusing on partners' assessments of the quality of service they receive from HUD. Topics covered involve information and guidance, the reasonableness of HUD's rules, and the responsiveness and competence of HUD's personnel.

- Assessments of HUD's recent management reforms, including partners' appraisal of the effects of HUD organizational and management reforms over the last several years. These involve changes to HUD's structure, functions, staffing, and financial management systems.

- Assessments of the extent to which HUD has achieved its main reform objectives, involving partners' judgment of the extent to which HUD's management reform objectives have been met.

Partners' Overall Ratings of HUD's Programs, Program Administration, and Performance

Early in the survey, HUD's partners were asked about both the HUD programs with which they currently deal and the way HUD administers those programs, and to rate both. Were they satisfied or dissatisfied? At the end of the survey, after being asked a series of questions about specific aspects of the Department's service to them, they were asked to rate the Department's overall performance at the present time—taking everything into consideration,. Were they satisfied or dissatisfied? These questions are measures of partners' bottom-line evaluations of HUD.

The partnership between HUD and the organizations it works with takes various forms, inasmuch as the Department has different responsibilities vis-à-vis its partners. HUD both supports and regulates them. Support generally consists of the provision of funding, technical assistance, and information. Regulation involves establishing rules, assuring compliance

[19] In the exhibits, those who answered "don't know" are not shown in the bars, although they are included in the denominator for calculating percentages. Hence, the values on the bars may not add to 100 percent the difference being the proportion of such respondents. Those who did not respond to a question are excluded from the denominator and the bars.

with those rules, and doing assessments. To get a better sense of this relationship, HUD's partners were asked if they mainly receive support from HUD, are mainly regulated by HUD, or are about equally provided support and regulated.[20]

Partners' answers to this question can certainly reflect some mixture of objective reality and subjective perception. With respect to the former, real differences exist in the extent of support versus regulation from program area to program area, as well as possibly from partner to partner within a program area. With respect to the latter, differences may also exist in partners' *sense* of the balance between support and regulation they receive. That is, two partners who are regulated in equivalent ways may see it differently. Whether based on reality or perception, the extent to which partners see themselves as mainly regulated or mainly supported by the Department can have a powerful effect on the way they relate to, and assess HUD.[21]

Below is a brief comparative summary of what HUD's partners had to say about the Department's programs, program administration, and performance. Section 3 provides more detail regarding each partner group's assessments.

Partners' satisfaction with HUD's programs and their administration. With one significant exception—directors and officials of Public Housing Agencies—majorities within each partner group express satisfaction with the Department's programs and the way they are run (see Exhibit 2.1). By far, most of those who are satisfied indicate being "somewhat," as opposed to "very" satisfied but, nonetheless, those who are satisfied outnumber those who are not.

For all partner groups, a somewhat larger percentage say they are satisfied with the Department's programs than with the way they are run, but the differences between the two tend not to be particularly large.

- Partner groups exhibiting the highest degree of satisfaction are Community Development directors, Mayors, Fair Housing Agency directors, and owners of Section 202/811 multifamily properties. In each instance, more than four of every five such entities say they are satisfied with HUD's programs, and about seven of every ten express satisfaction with the way they are run.

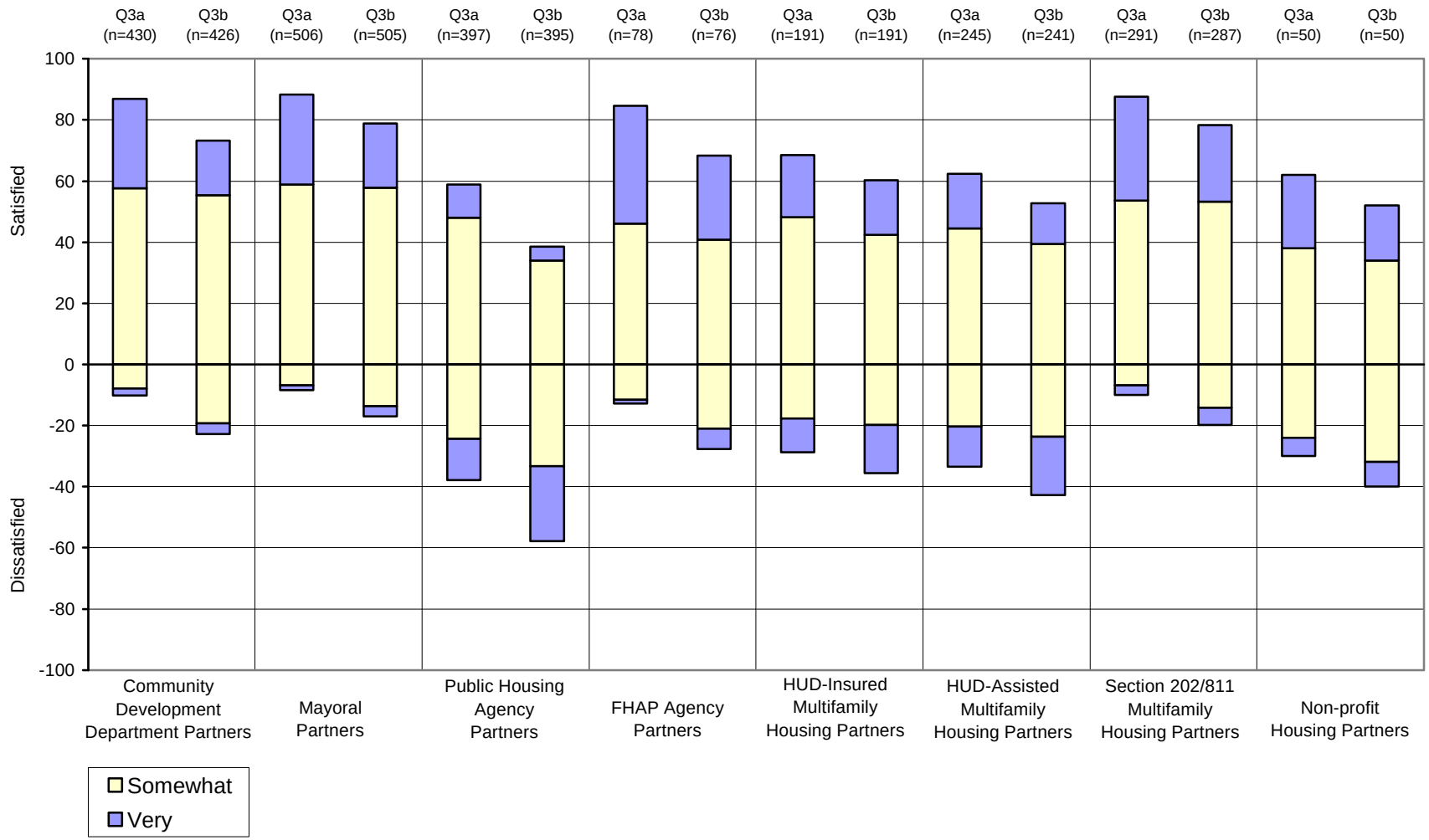
[20] Respondents were asked the following question: "HUD has several different responsibilities. On the one hand, it provides various forms of support (for example, funding, technical assistance, information) and, on the other, it has a regulatory responsibility (that is, it makes rules, assures compliance with those rules, does assessments). In your agency's/business'/organization's/community's relationship with HUD, would you say HUD is (a) mainly providing support to you, (b) mainly regulating you, (c) about equally providing support and regulating you, (d) neither/something other, or (e) don't know? "

[21] The *ACSI Federal Agencies Government-wide Customer Satisfaction* survey reports, ". . .satisfaction is highest among customer segments that receive a direct benefit from an agency and lowest for customer segments subject to regulation by agencies . . . ." (p. 5).

Exhibit 2.1: Thinking separately about the HUD programs with which you currently deal and about how HUD runs those programs, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you, in general, with:

Q3a: The HUD programs you currently deal with

Q3b: The way HUD currently runs those programs



- Somewhat less satisfied are HUD-insured (unsubsidized) multifamily property, HUD-assisted (subsidized) multifamily property, and NAHP-affiliated (non-profit housing) partners—with barely a majority of the latter two groups saying they are satisfied with the way HUD runs its programs.

- Least satisfied with the way that the Department runs its programs are directors of Public Housing Agencies. Only 37 percent of such partners express any degree of satisfaction, and 56 percent say they are dissatisfied. Indeed, 24 percent report being very dissatisfied.

Partners' satisfaction with HUD's overall performance. Asked to evaluate HUD's "overall performance" at the end of the survey—following a series of specific questions about each partner's relationship to the Department, a similar array of opinion is observed to that provided at the beginning—described above (see Exhibit 2.2). This suggests that such opinions were well grounded, not simply influenced by the questionnaire itself. In sum:

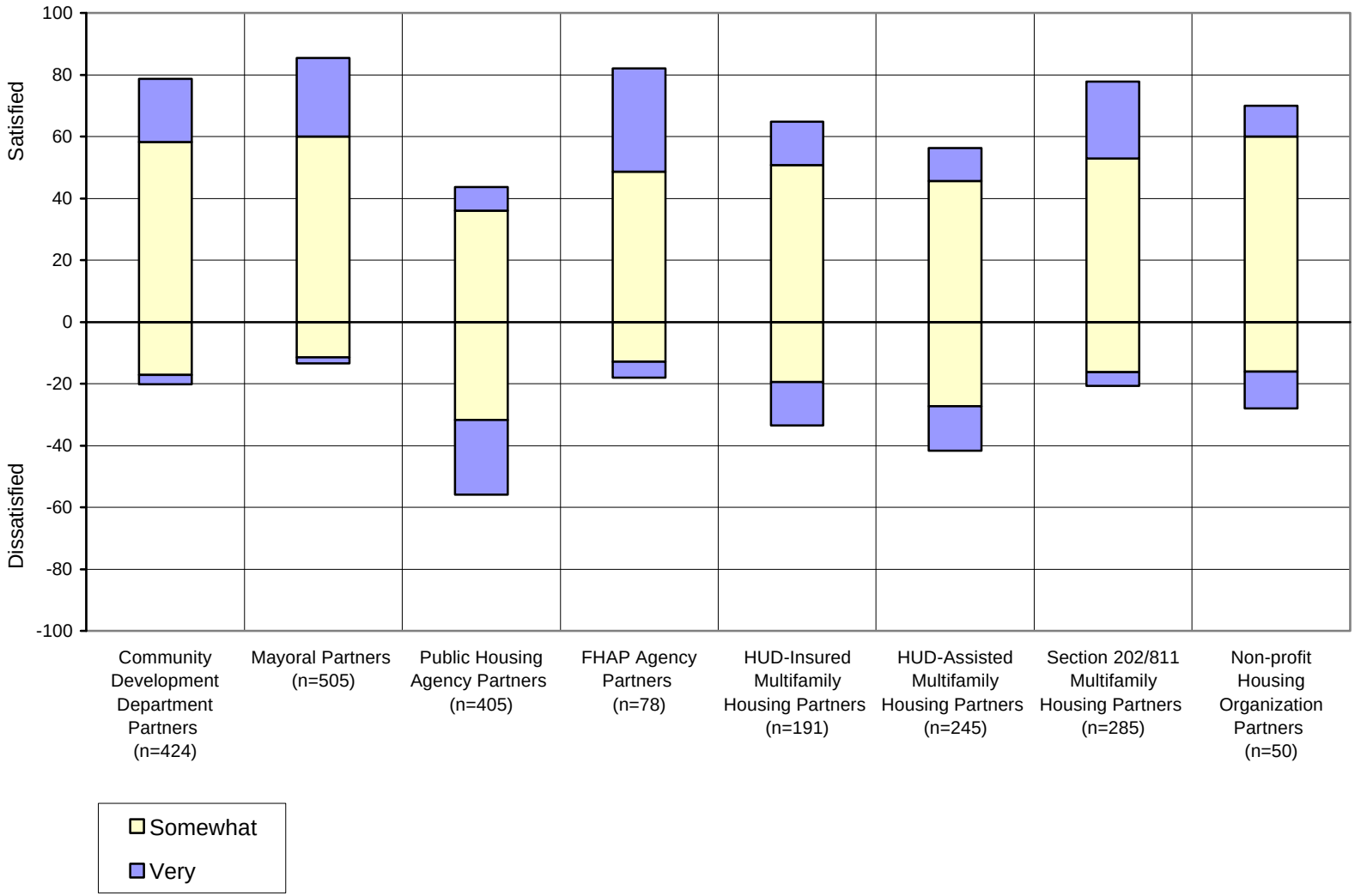
- Three of every four mayoral, FHAP agency, Section 202/811multifamily property, and CD agency partners say they are satisfied with the Department, with many of them being *very* satisfied.

- Somewhat smaller proportions of NAHP-affiliated (non-profit housing) and HUD-insured (unsubsidized) multifamily housing partners are satisfied with the Department's performance, but still three of every five such partners express satisfaction.

- The proportion of satisfied partners is lowest for the HUD-assisted (subsidized) multifamily housing and PHA groups. In the latter case, only 43 percent express satisfaction compared to 56 percent who say they are dissatisfied with HUD's performance. Equally noteworthy, 25 percent of PHA partners say they are *very* dissatisfied—the largest proportion among all partner groups giving the Department such a low rating.

Partners' sense of being supported or regulated. From the perspective of those who work with HUD to carry out its programs, there are significant cross-group and within-group differences regarding the nature of the partnership between the two parties. Some see that relationship as essentially one involving either support by HUD to its partners or, more likely, an equal mixture of support and regulation. Others, however, see the relationship as primarily one involving regulator and the regulated. And, as will be shown in subsequent sections of this report, the reality or sense of primarily being regulated by HUD appears to resonate

Exhibit 2.2: At present, taking everything into consideration, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with HUD's overall performance?



throughout the survey, frequently translating into more negative evaluations of HUD.

Exhibit 2.3 shows considerable variation across partner groups in the extent to which they regard themselves as being regulated or supported. (For ease of comparison in this exhibit as well as in Exhibit 2.4, partner groups are arrayed based on the frequency with which they see themselves as being "mainly regulated."[22])

- Few of HUD's partners believe themselves to be mainly supported by the Department, although almost three of every 10 FHAP agencies and about one-fourth of all Mayors see HUD as providing primarily support.

- Majorities among FHAP and CD agency partners believe themselves to be equally regulated and supported, as do pluralities of Mayors and owners of Section 202/811 multifamily properties. With the exception of HUD-assisted (subsidized) multifamily property partners, at least 40 percent of the members of each group see themselves as being about equally supported and regulated.[23]

- Compared to other groups, more HUD-insured (unsubsidized) multifamily property, HUD-assisted (subsidized) multifamily property, and PHA partners consider themselves to be mainly regulated by HUD.

What, if anything, do these differences signify with respect to the way HUD's partners assess the Agency's performance? Those within each partner group who see their relationship with HUD as primarily involving regulation are significantly less satisfied with and, therefore, complimentary of HUD than those who see at least an equal balance between support and regulation. (See Exhibit 2.4.) This is a theme that will re-appear over and again in the cross-tabular data presented in Section 3.

Partners' Evaluations Of HUD's Service Quality

The survey inquired about various aspects of the Department's *service to its partners* at the present point in

[22] In all subsequent exhibits, partner groups are arrayed, from left to right, as follows: CD partners, mayoral partners, PHA partners, FHAP partners, HUD-insured (unsubsidized) multifamily partners, HUD-assisted (subsidized) multifamily partners, Section 202/811 multifamily partners, and NAHP-affiliated (non-profit housing) partners.

[23] The categories "mainly supported" and "equally supported and regulated" have been combined into one category in the remainder of this report.

Exhibit 2.3: HUD has several different responsibilities. On one hand, it provides various forms of support (for example, funding, technical assistance, information) and, on the other, it has a regulatory responsibility (that is, it makes rules, assures compliance with those rules, does assessments). In your agency's/business's/organization's/community's relationship with HUD, would you say HUD is mainly providing support to you, about equally providing support and regulating you, or mainly regulating you?

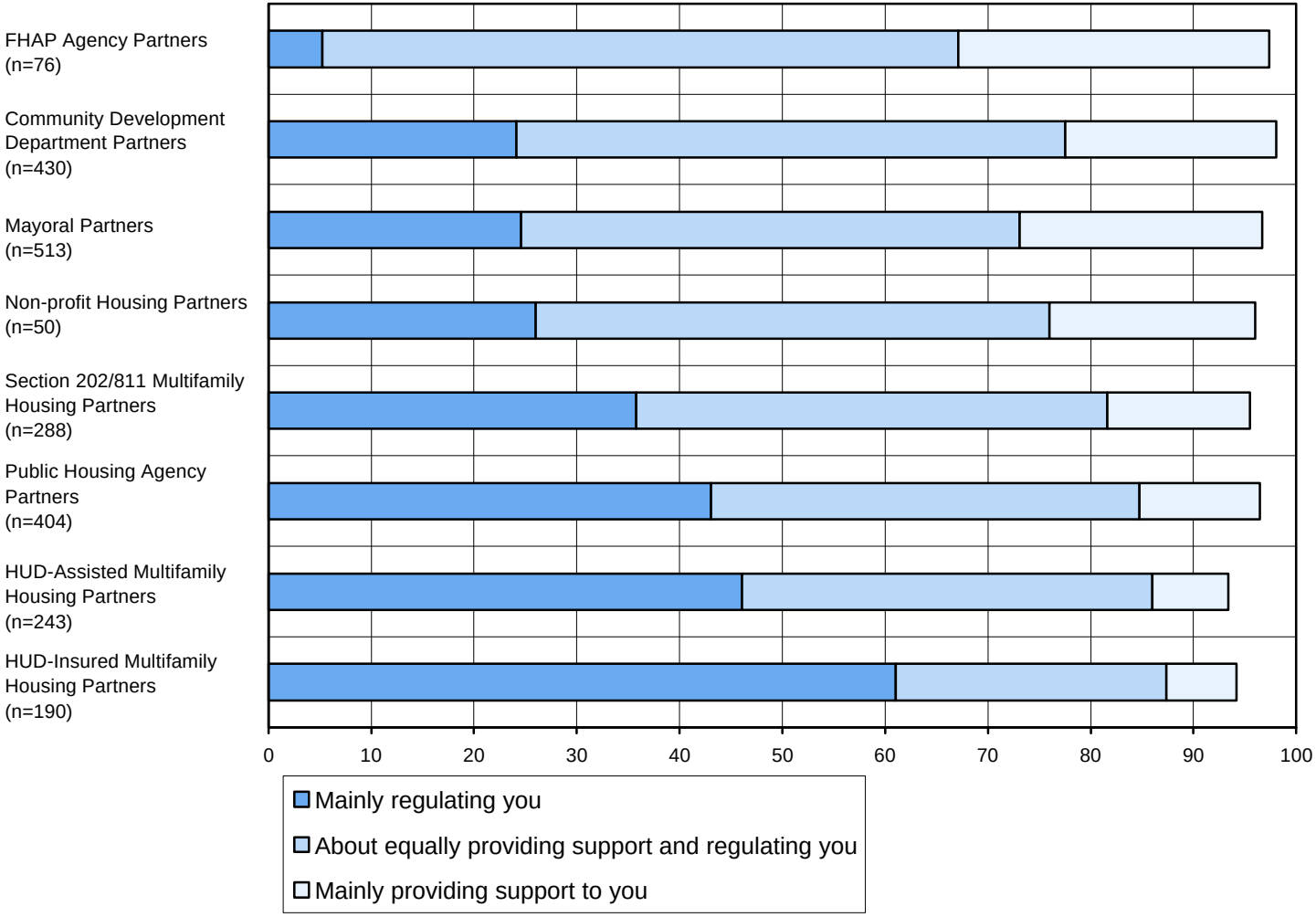
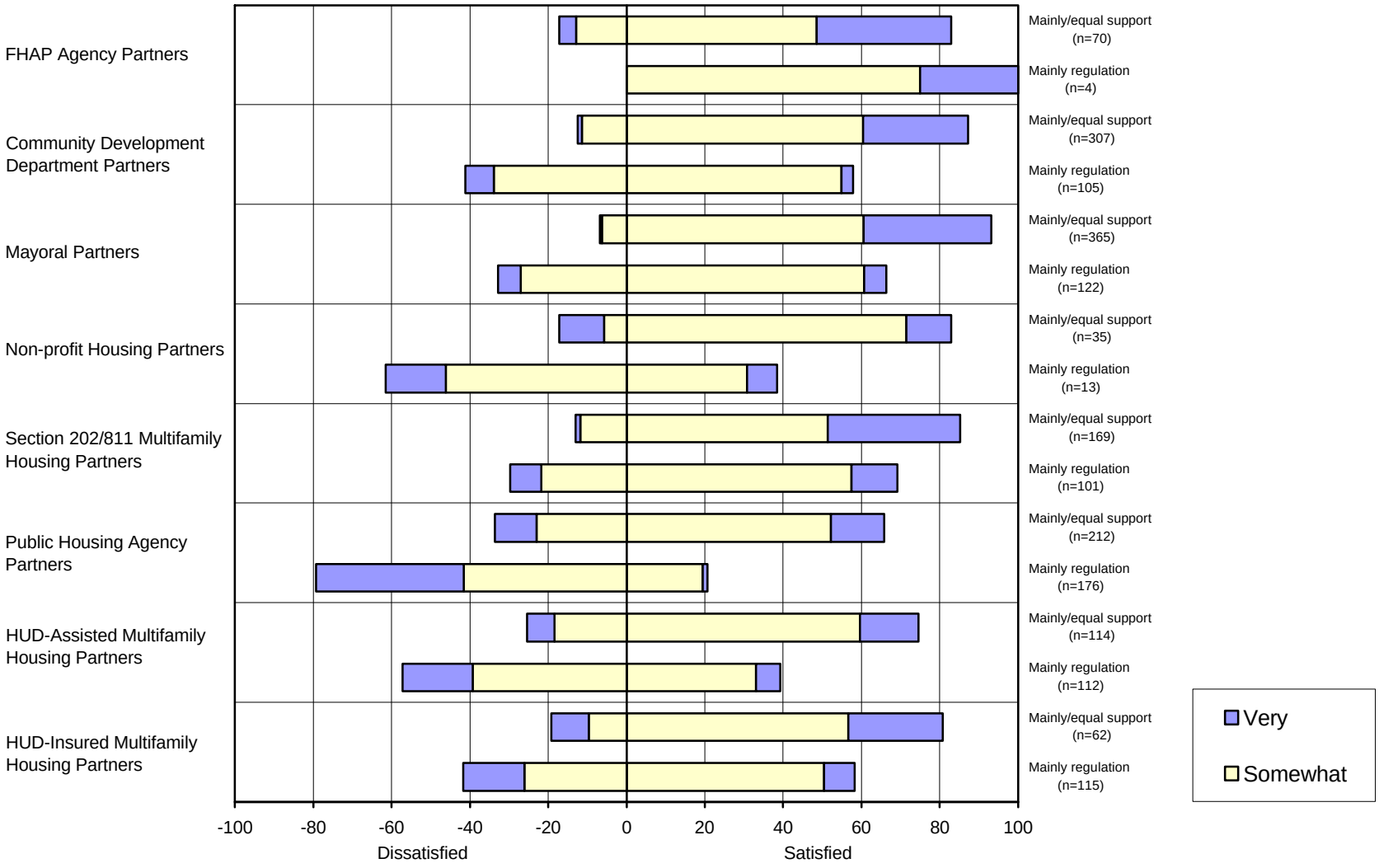


Exhibit 2.4: Satisfaction with HUD's overall performance by whether the partner group perceives itself as mainly regulated by HUD, or as equally or mainly provided support by HUD.



time. HUD's partners were asked to evaluate the *overall* quality of service they receive from HUD today and whether they believe that that service has generally gotten better or worse over the last several years. They were also asked whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the following service aspects of their relationship with HUD:

- The (a) responsiveness and (b) competence of the people at HUD with whom they deal
- The reasonableness of the rules and requirements that apply to them
- The (a) quality and (b) timeliness of the information they receive
- The (a) quality and (b) consistency of the guidance they get

A comparative overview of partners' responses follows. More detailed data are provided in Section 3 of this report.

Overall satisfaction with HUD's service record. Majorities within each partner group express satisfaction with the overall quality of service they receive from HUD, although there is considerable cross-group variation with respect to the size of that majority (see Exhibit 2.5).

- Mayoral as well as CD and FHAP agency partners are the most positive groups in terms of their evaluations of HUD's service to them; four of every five say they are satisfied.
- The levels of satisfaction are somewhat lower for NAHP-affiliated (non-profit housing) and multifamily property partners, but still at least three of every five such partners express satisfaction.
- Approval of HUD's service is lowest among PHA partners, with 53 percent of directors expressing satisfaction and 47 percent indicating dissatisfaction.

There is also variation in the extent to which HUD's partners credit the Department with improving service over the last several years (see Exhibit 2.6). Majorities in some of them—FHAP Agency, mayoral, NAHP-affiliated (non-profit housing), Section 202/811 multifamily property, and CD partners—believe service to them has improved. In stark contrast, however, a majority (56 percent) of Public Housing Agency partners believe service to them has gotten worse, with only 30 percent seeing improved service and the remainder observing no change in service whatsoever.

Satisfaction with the people at HUD. Sizeable majorities of all partner groups are satisfied with the responsiveness and competence of the HUD staff people with whom they deal—generally those who are located in HUD's

Exhibit 2.5: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you at the present point in time, in general, with the overall quality of service you receive from HUD today?

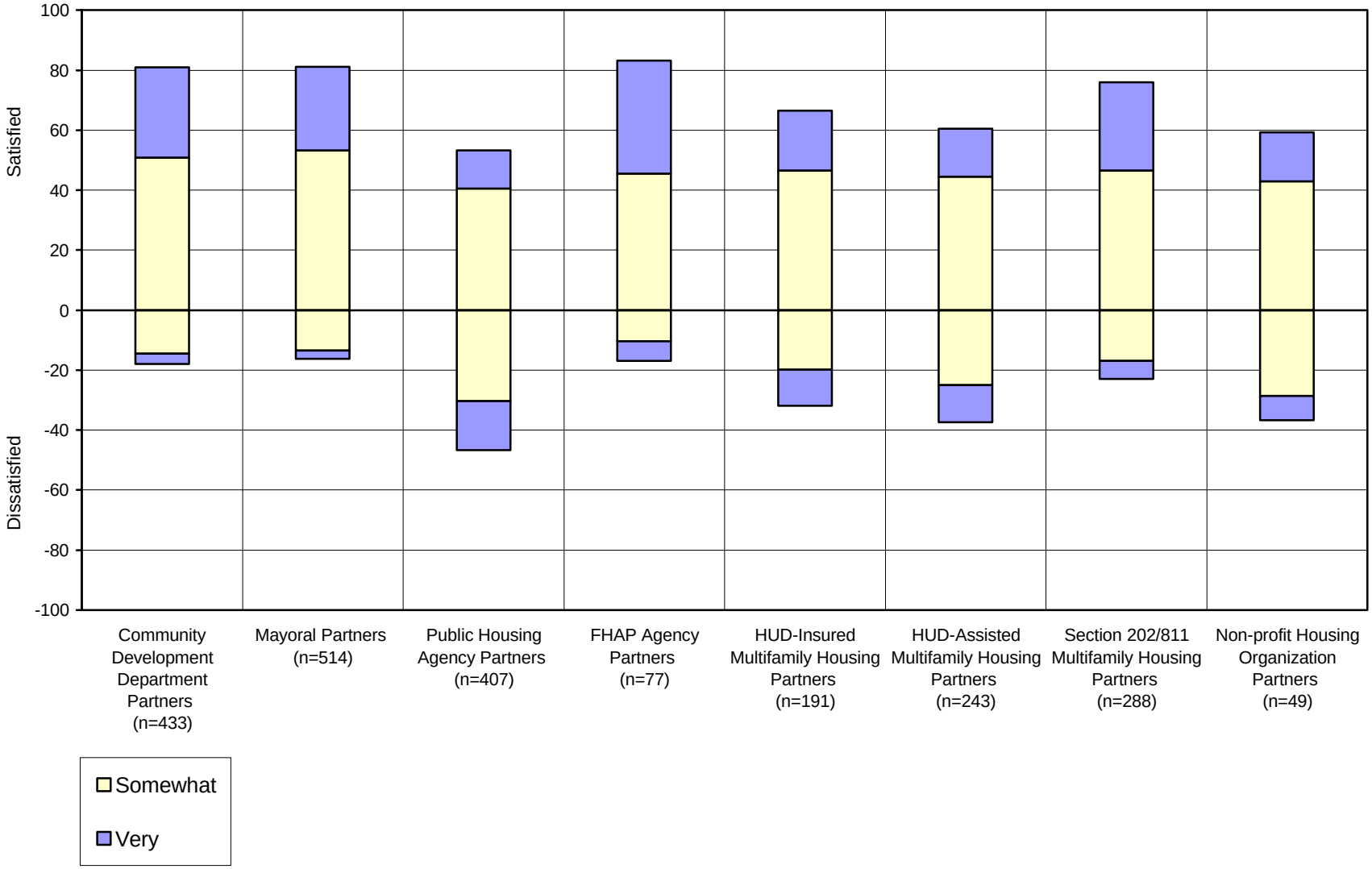
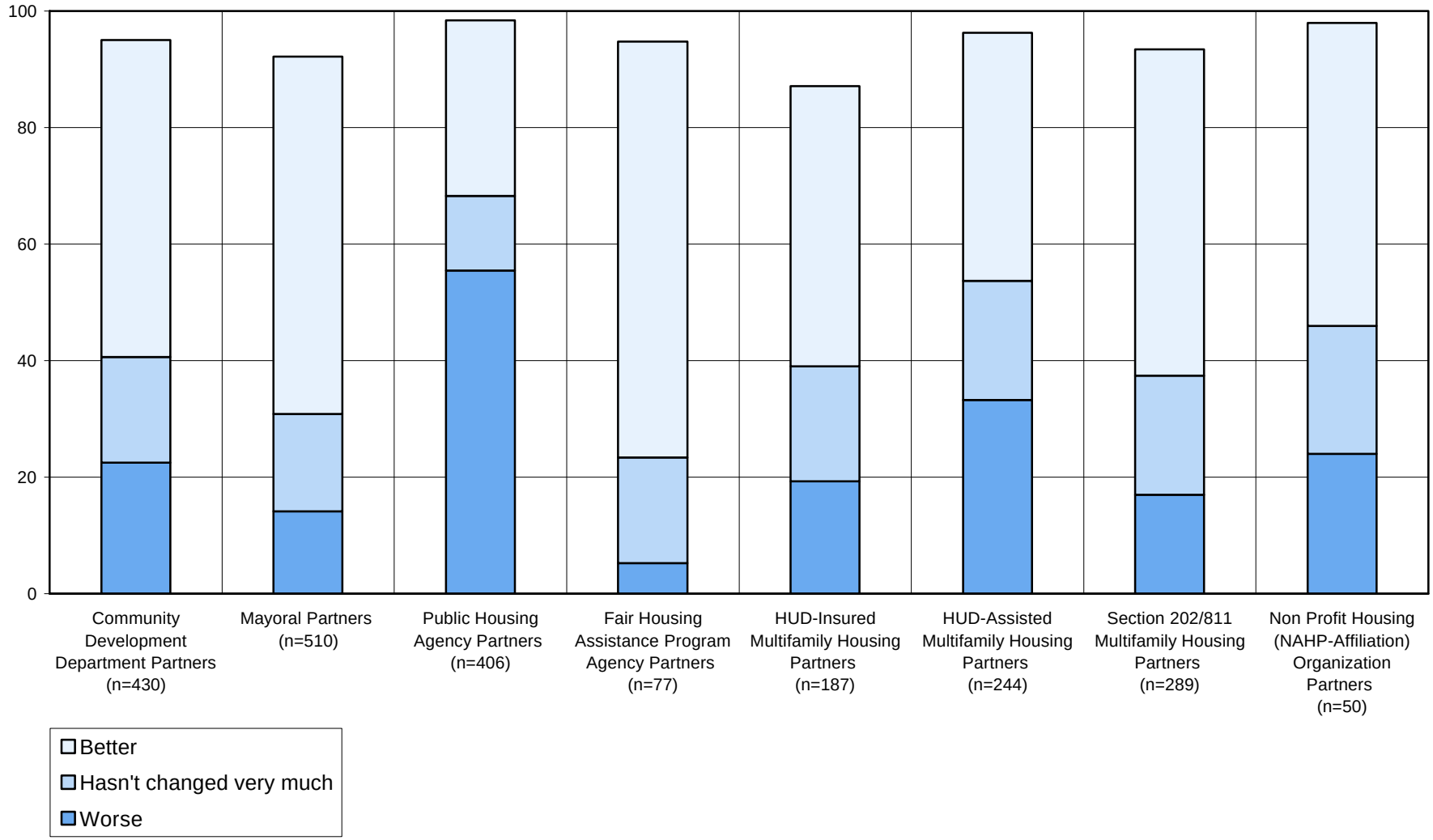


Exhibit 2.6: Over the last several years, would you say the overall quality of service you received from HUD is generally getting much better, somewhat better, somewhat worse, much worse, or hasn't changed much?



field offices (see Exhibit 2.7).[24] It is also the case that, by far, the largest proportion of positive remarks given in open-ended comments at the end of the survey focused on HUD staff; the remarks often emphasized the helpfulness of such people.

These satisfaction levels are high, and certainly noteworthy in the context of some partners' lower levels of satisfaction with other aspects of the Department's service to them. Nonetheless, this should not obscure the fact that between 15 percent to one-third of HUD's partners, depending on the group, are dissatisfied with either the competence or responsiveness of the people with whom they deal. A few respondents were also highly critical of some HUD staff in their open-ended comments at the end of the survey—in a small number of cases pointing to rude or unprofessional behavior. As with other service areas, therefore, the dissatisfaction levels identified here become a baseline against which to measure improvement over time.

Satisfaction with HUD's rules and requirements. In sharp contrast to the uniform high level of approval of HUD staff people, considerable variation occurs in partners' assessments of the reasonableness of Departmental rules and requirements that apply to them (see Exhibit 2.8).

- A sizeable majority of FHAP agencies and owners of Section 202/811 multifamily properties express satisfaction with HUD's rules.
- Smaller proportions (ranging from 50 to 55 percent) of mayoral and CD partners say HUD's rules and regulations are reasonable.
- However, majorities of HUD-insured (unsubsidized), HUD-assisted (subsidized), NAHP-affiliated (non-profit housing), and PHA partners (especially the latter) are dissatisfied with HUD's rules.

The question does not indicate whether dissatisfaction is due to the inherent content of the rules and regulations or to the way they are implemented.

Satisfaction with information provided by HUD. Majorities within each partner group are satisfied with the quality of information they receive from HUD, although the size of the majority ranges from 84 percent for Mayors to 53 percent for Public Housing Agency directors (see Exhibit 2.9). Likewise, with one exception, majorities are satisfied with the timeliness of information received. The exception is Public Housing Agency partners; a substantial 63 percent of them are dissatisfied with this aspect of their relationship with HUD.

[24] Some respondents added notations to their questionnaires, specifically stating they were referring to field office staff when answering questions about the people at HUD with whom they deal; some others added comments at the end of the survey indicating the same.

Exhibit 2.7: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you at the present point in time, in general, with:

Q4f: the responsiveness of the people with whom you currently deal at HUD

Q4g: the competence of the people with whom you currently deal at HUD

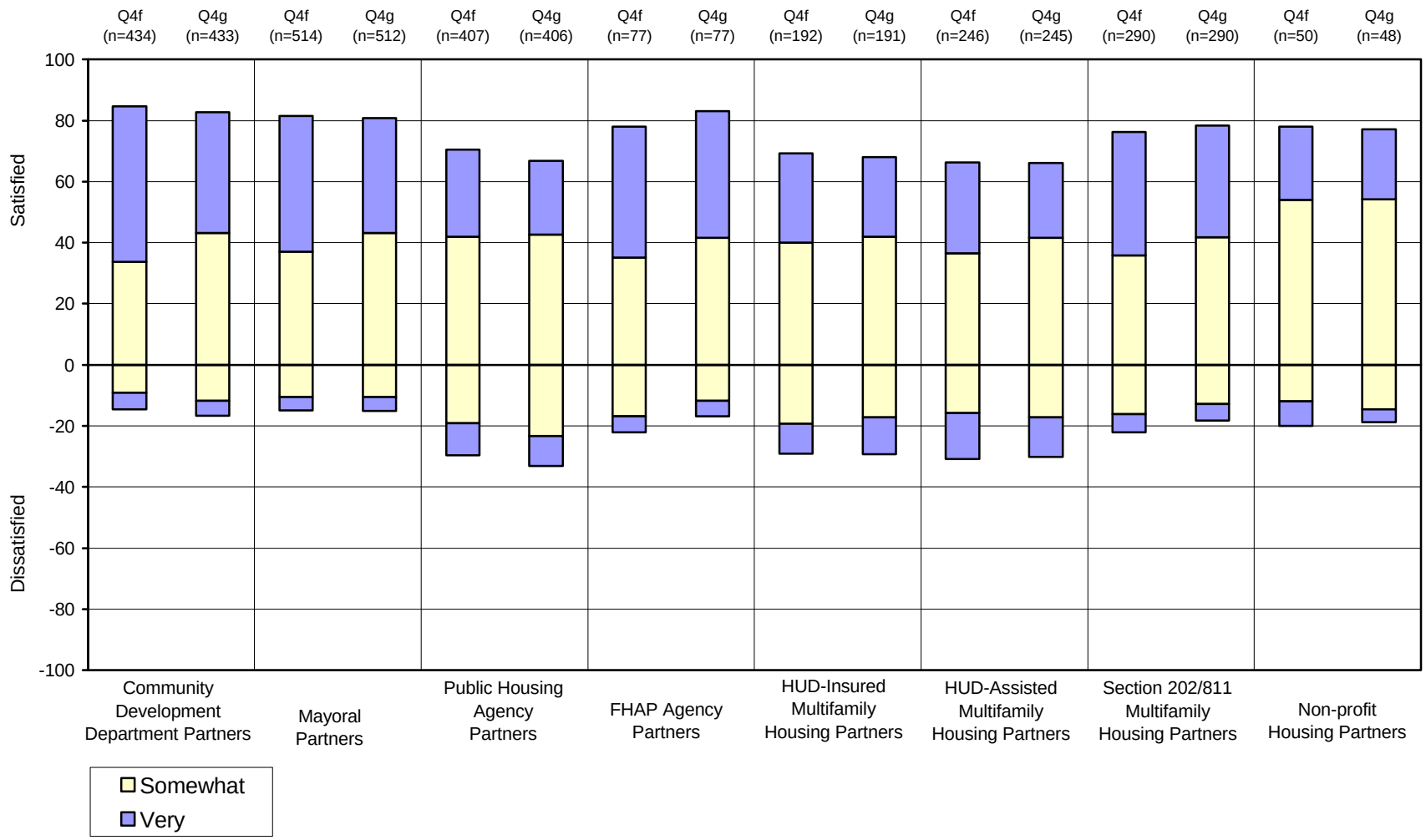


Exhibit 2.8: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you at the present point in time, in general, with the reasonableness of HUD rules and requirements that apply to your agency/business/organization/community?

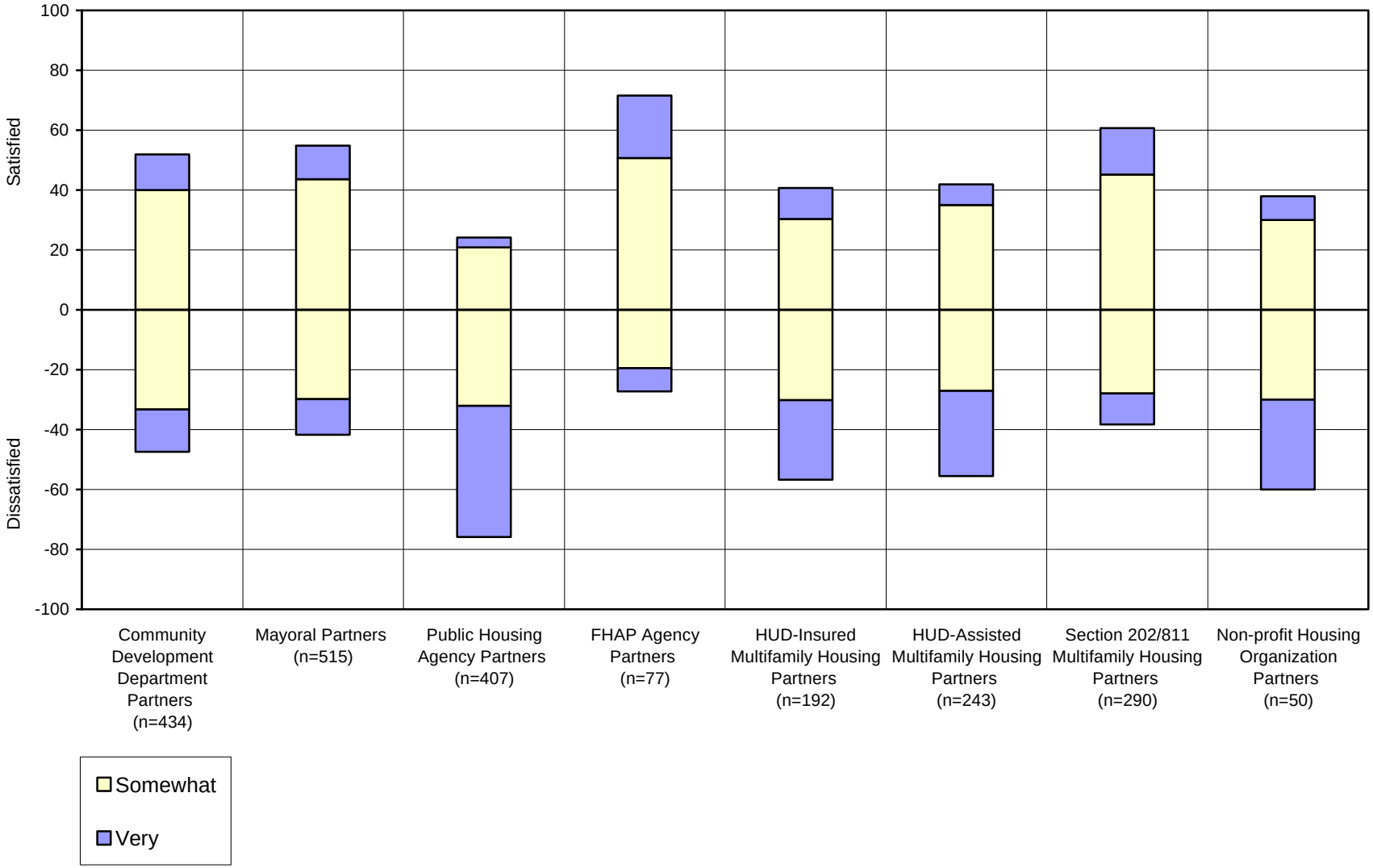
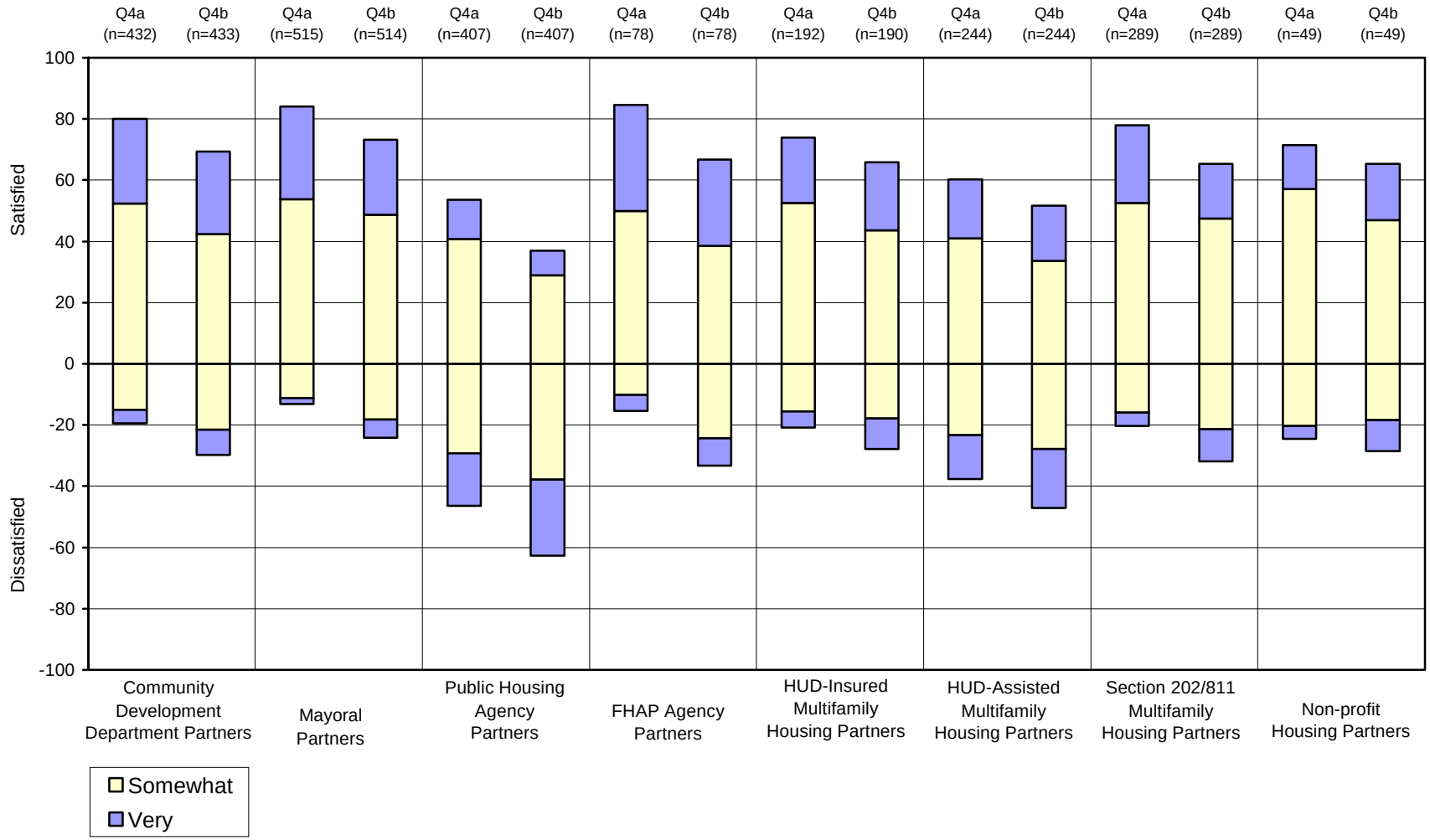


Exhibit 2.9: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you at the present point in time, in general, with:

Q4a: The quality of the information you currently receive from HUD

Q4b: The timeliness of the information you currently receive from HUD



It is noteworthy that, for all partner groups, the frequency of satisfaction with the quality of information is somewhat greater than with its timeliness.

Satisfaction with guidance received from HUD. With two exceptions, majorities within each partner group are satisfied with the quality and consistency of guidance they receive from HUD (see Exhibit 2.10). The exceptions involve NAHP-affiliated (non-profit housing) and PHA partners. Only 46 percent of the former and 41 percent of the latter are satisfied with the consistency of HUD's guidance, and only 42 percent of the latter are satisfied with the quality of that guidance. Indeed, large numbers of PHA partners are "very" dissatisfied with the guidance they receive from HUD.

Partners' Assessments of HUD's Recent Management Reforms

Over the last several years HUD undertook major management reforms or changes to improve the Agency's operations and service. By design or otherwise, many of the changes impacted HUD's partners and the relationship the Department has with them. To begin to assess partners' perception of that impact, they were asked whether, in their opinion, these changes had made HUD better or worse, or had not yet had much effect. They could also respond that they were not aware of the particular HUD reform. Assessments of the following changes were solicited:

- Changes in HUD's organizational structure, such as the establishment of new centers and hubs.
- Changes in HUD functions, such as the establishment of the new Community Builder and Public Trust Officer functions
- Changes in HUD staffing, such as the overall reduction in staff, staffing reassignments, and retraining of HUD staff.
- Changes in HUD's financial management systems, such as the creation of new systems and the consolidation of older ones.

Below is a brief comparative summary of HUD partners' assessments of these changes. Section 3 provides more detailed data regarding each partner group's observations.

Partners' assessments of HUD organizational changes. Most of HUD's partners appeared to be aware that changes had been made to HUD's organizational structure, although about one-third of HUD-insured (unsubsidized) multifamily partners were not (see Exhibit 2.11). Among those who were aware, considerable differences of opinion are

Exhibit 2.10: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you at the present point in time, in general, with:

Q4c: The quality of guidance you currently get from HUD

Q4d: The consistency of guidance you currently get from HUD

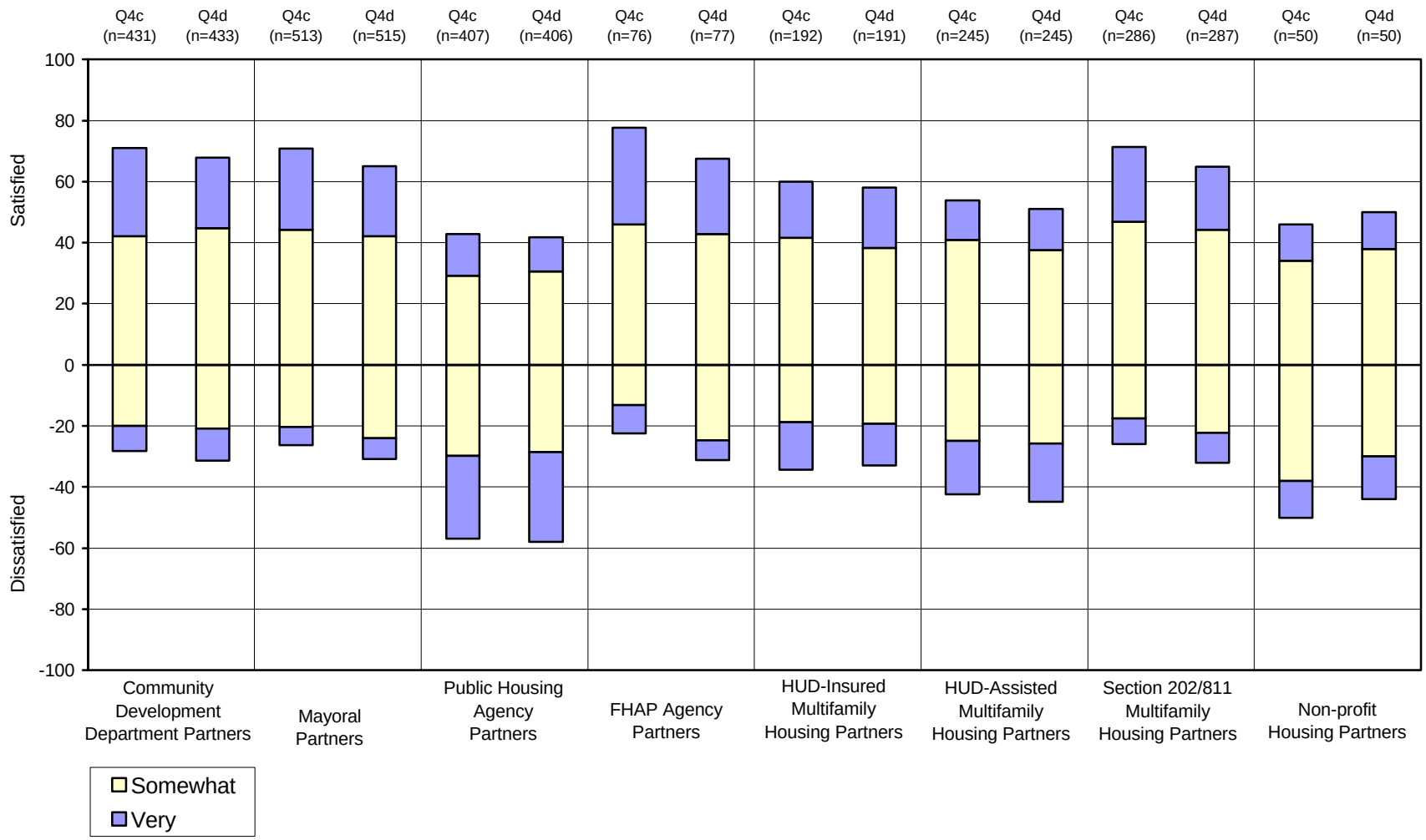
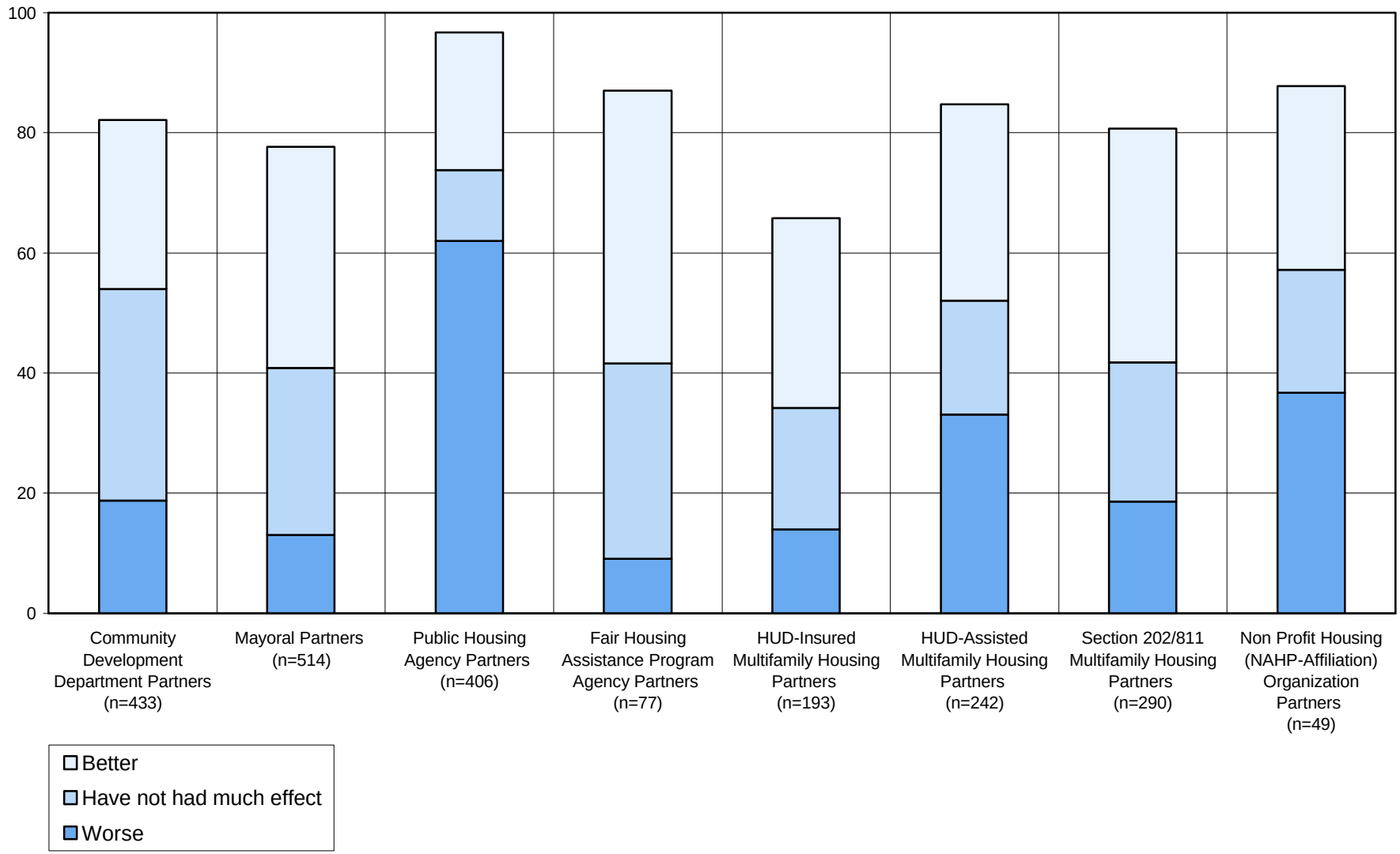


Exhibit 2.11: Would you say that the changes, over the last several years, in HUD's organizational structure, such as the establishment of new centers and hubs, have made HUD much better, somewhat better, somewhat worse, much worse, or have not had much effect?



reported as to whether or not these changes had improved the Department.

- Of the various partner groups, Fair Housing Agency officials are the most likely to see HUD's organizational changes as having had a positive effect.

- Most other partner groups are relatively divided among those concluding the organizational changes were for the better, were for the worse, or did not have much effect.

- Public Housing Agencies were the least equivocal of the partner groups, with 62 percent of such entities concluding that the structural changes to the Department were for the worse.

Partners' assessments of HUD functional changes. Many owners of multifamily properties were simply not aware that changes in HUD functions—like the establishment of Community Builder and Public Trust Officer occupational categories—had occurred or, if they were aware, they did not know whether such changes had had any effect. (See Exhibit 2.12.) Most other partners, however, indicated at least awareness of such changes. While opinion was divided, the groups differ somewhat as to their assessments of them.

- More NAHIP-affiliated (non-profit housing), FHAP agency, and mayoral partners see the functional changes at HUD as having made the Department better than as having made it worse; but, also, substantial proportions see no change resulting from these reforms.

- More CD agency and PHA partners see the functional changes as having made HUID worse than see them as having made it better. In addition, substantial proportions see no change yet resulting from these reforms.

Partners' assessments of HUD staffing changes. Most partner entities seem to be aware of, and are able to evaluate, the staffing changes involved in HUD's reform agenda (see Exhibit 2.13). And, of the four types of management changes asked about in the survey, the highest proportions of partners reporting that HUD was worse off now than before involve staffing changes. Somewhat of an exception is the HUD-insured (unsubsidized) multifamily owner group, where two of every five such owners are unaware of the changes or did not know whether they had had any effect. Among the other groups:

- FHAP agency partners are divided as to whether staffing changes made HUD better or worse, but a

Exhibit 2.12: Would you say that the changes, over the last several years, in HUD functions, such as the establishment of the new Community Builder and Public Trust Officer functions, have made HUD much better, somewhat better, somewhat worse, much worse, or have not had much effect?

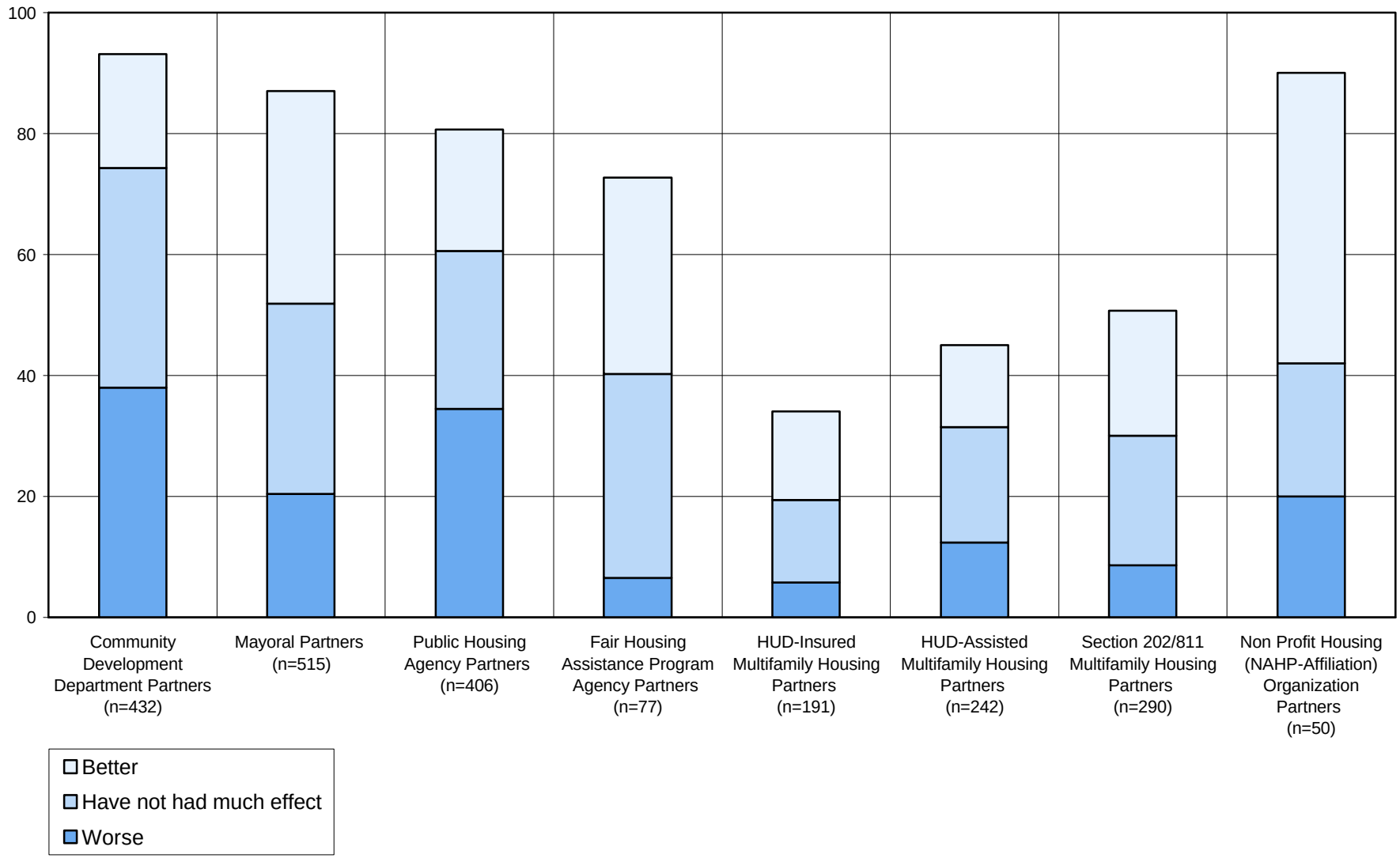
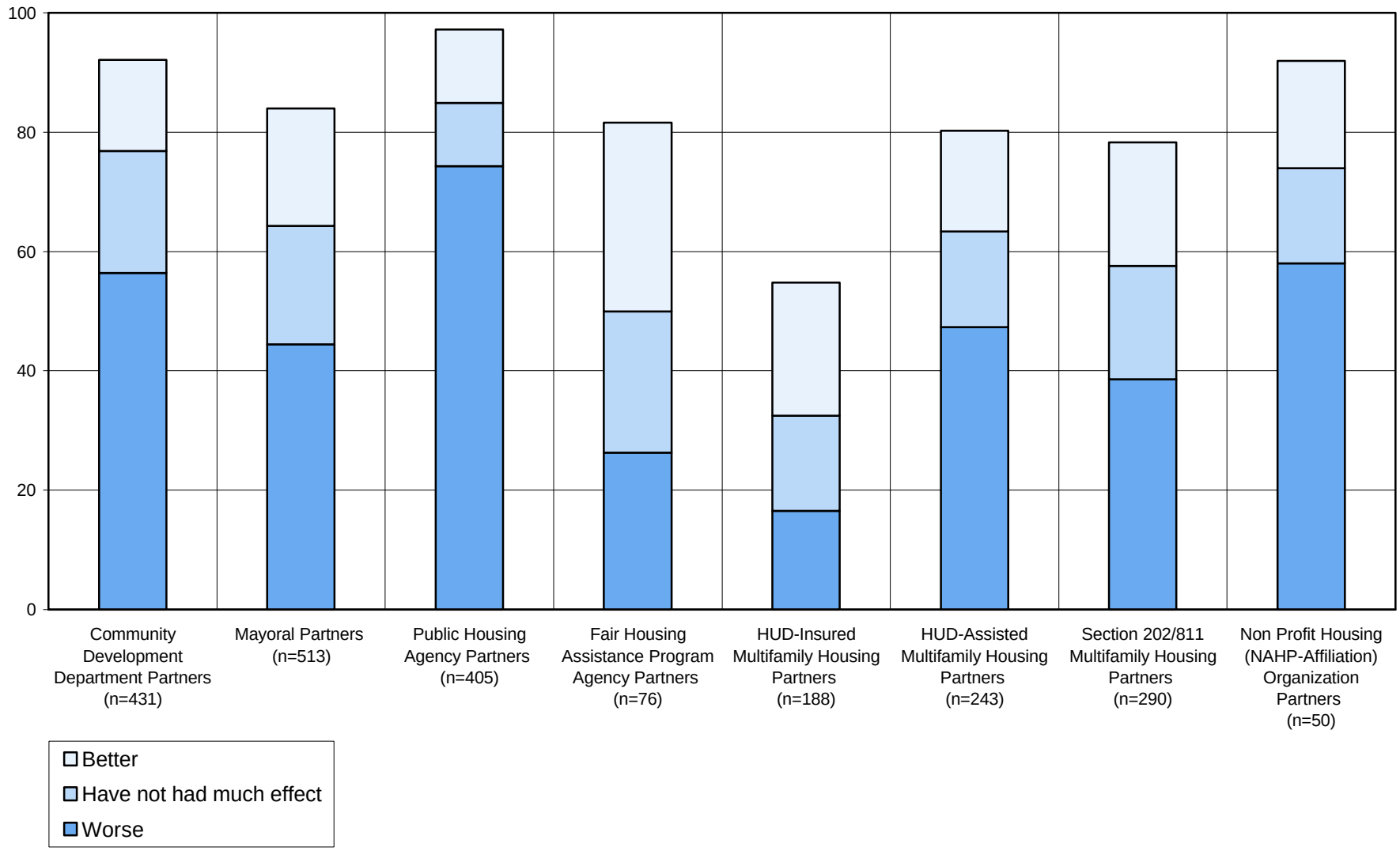


Exhibit 2.13: Would you say that the changes, over the last several years, in HUD's staffing, such as the overall reduction in staff, staffing reassignments, and retraining of HUD staff, have made HUD much better, somewhat better, somewhat worse, much worse, or have not had much effect?



few more assess the impact positively than negatively.

- Considerably more PHA, nonprofit housing organization, CD agency, mayoral, and HUD-assisted (subsidized) multifamily property partners conclude that recent staffing changes at HUD made the Department worse than thought they made it better. And, somewhat more Section 202/811 multifamily property partners also came to this conclusion, as compared to those who thought otherwise.

- At the extreme, three of every four PHA partners see a negative impact to HUD's recent staffing changes, with as many as 41 percent saying they made the Department "much worse." Only 12 percent see a resultant improvement.

Partners' assessments of HUD financial management system changes. Results of HUD's efforts to date to improve its financial management systems received mixed reaction from its partners (see Exhibit 2.14). Many such entities—especially NAHP-affiliated (non-profit housing) and HUD-insured (unsubsidized) multifamily partners—are either unaware of the changes or do not know if they have had an effect. Others, however, seem divided as to whether the changes have been for the better or for the worse. Of those with an opinion:

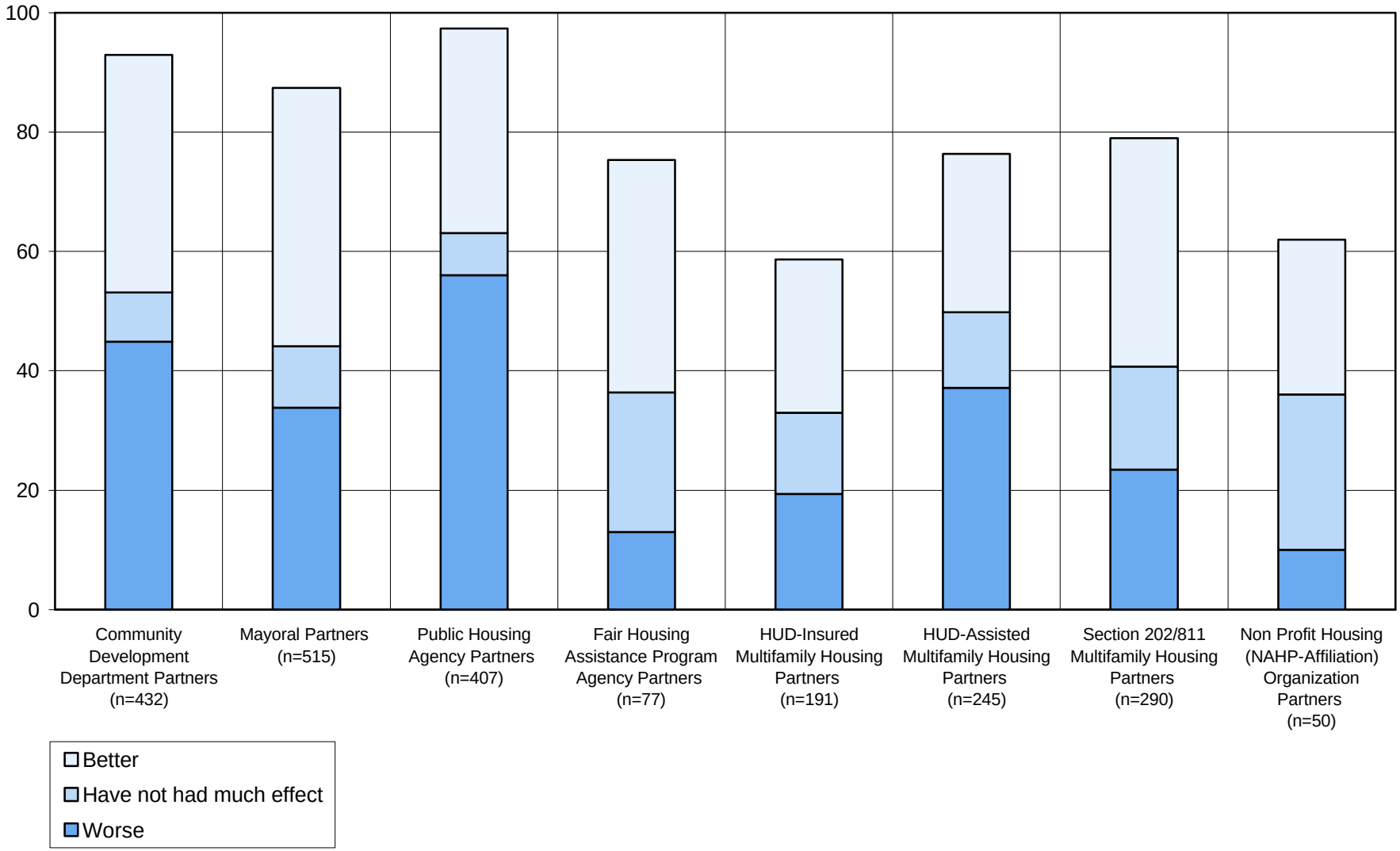
- Somewhat more Section 202/811 multifamily property, FHAP agency, mayoral, NAHP-affiliated (nonprofit housing), and HUD-insured (unsubsidized) multifamily property partners believe financial system changes have improved HUD than believe otherwise.

- CD partners[25] are divided as to whether financial system changes have made HUD better or worse—with a few more of them saying the Department is worse than better.

- More PHA partners and somewhat more HUD-assisted (subsidized) multifamily property partners believe financial system changes have made HUD worse than believe otherwise.

[25] In response to the invitation at the end of the survey to comment on HUD, many CD agency partners spoke negatively about the IDIS system. Whether this is the basis for their assessment of the impact of financial management system changes, however, is not certain.

Exhibit 2.14: Would you say that the changes, over the last several years, in HUD's financial management systems, such as the creation of new systems and the consolidation of older ones, have made HUD much better, somewhat better, somewhat worse, much worse, or have not had much effect?



Partners' Assessments of the Extent to which HUD Has Achieved Its Reform Objectives

HUD's management reform efforts were designed to achieve a number of short- and long-term objectives, explicitly identified in HUD's reform plan as well as other documents.[26] Prominent among the objectives were the following:

- To restore the public trust in HUD.
- For HUD to be "the best in the business."
- To replace a top-down bureaucracy at HUD with a new customer-friendly structure.
- To instill an ethic of competence and excellence at HUD.
- To replace the emphasis on process at HUD with an emphasis on performance.

Partners were asked whether, in their opinion, each of these objectives had been fully achieved, mostly achieved, partially achieved, or not achieved at all as of the time of the survey. Below is a brief comparative summary of these. Section 3 provides more detailed data regarding each partner group's observations.

HUD's partners differ widely as to the extent to which they believed the Department had achieved its management reform objectives as of late-2000/early-2001 (see Exhibits 2.15 to 2.19). When averaged, however, differences across partner groups and across reform objectives are not particularly striking. That having been said, it can be noted that:

- Depending on which partner group or objective is considered, as few as one-third or as many as 90 percent of those with an opinion believe that at least partial progress has been made toward goal achievement.
- PHA, HUD-assisted (subsidized) multifamily property, and NAHP-affiliated (non-profit housing) partners are the most negative in their assessments overall.
- FHAP Agency and Section 202/811 multifamily property partners give the most positive assessments.

With one exception, the differences in each partner's ratings across the five reform objectives are relatively inconsequential. The exception involves the objective of

[26] See, for example, *HUD 2020 Management Reform Plan*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Washington, D.C. (undated).

Exhibit 2.15: Please indicate the extent to which you believe the following HUD reform objective has been fully achieved, mostly achieved, partially achieved, or not achieved at all: To restore the public trust in HUD.

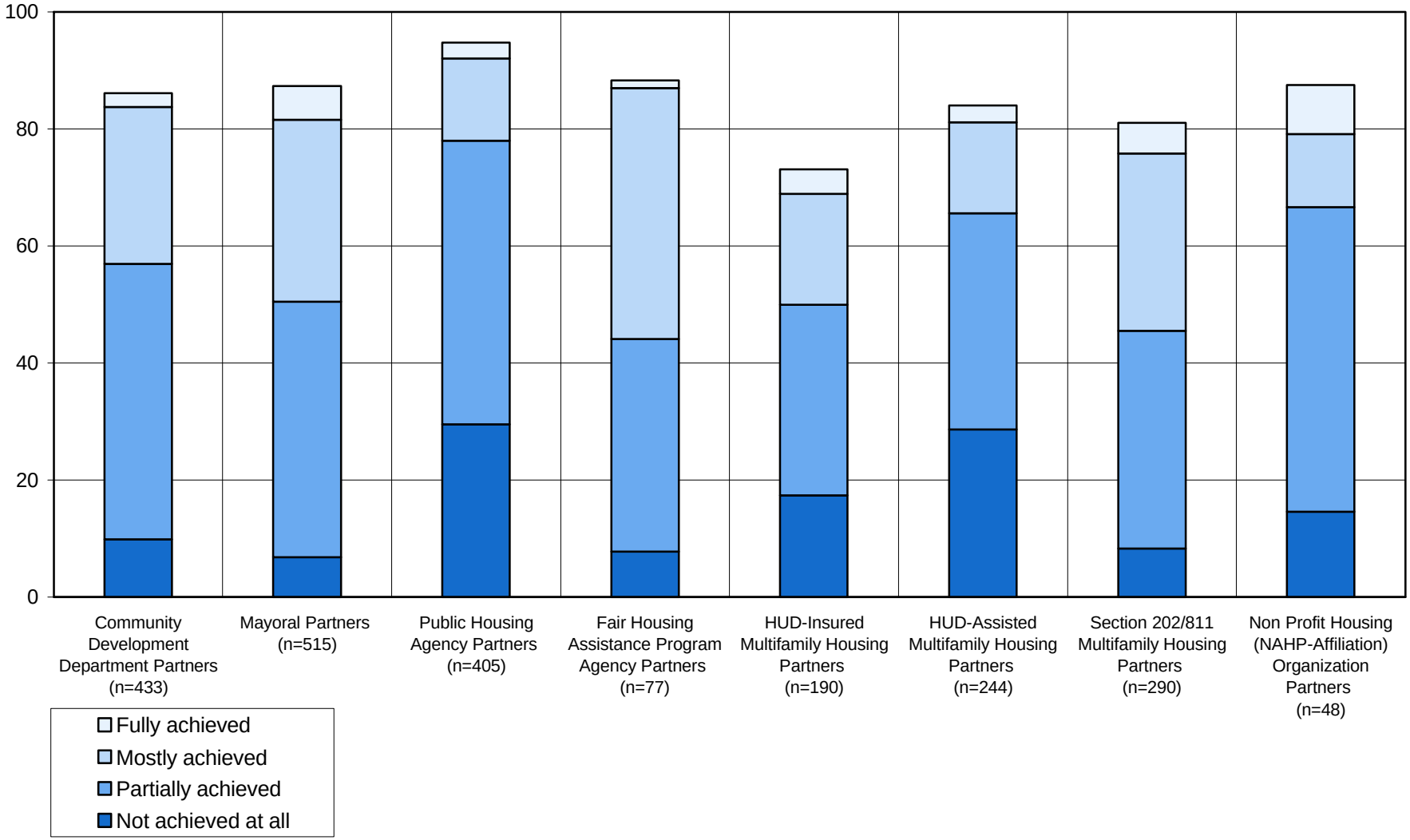


Exhibit 2.16: Please indicate the extent to which you believe the following HUD reform objective has been fully achieved, mostly achieved, partially achieved, or not achieved at all: To be "the best in the business."

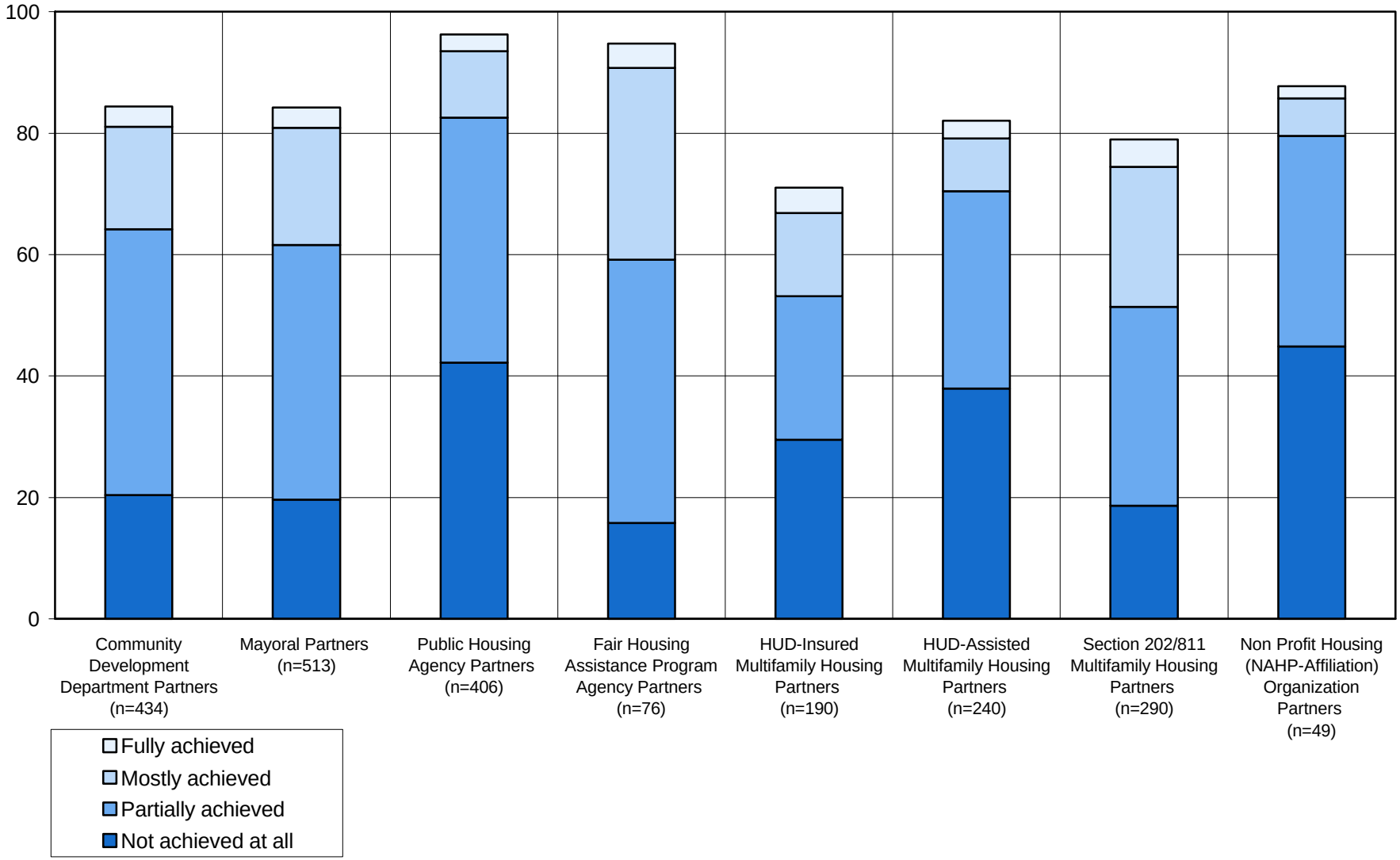


Exhibit 2.17: Please indicate the extent to which you believe the following HUD reform objective has been fully achieved, mostly achieved, partially achieved, or not achieved at all: To replace a top-down bureaucracy with a new customer-friendly structure.

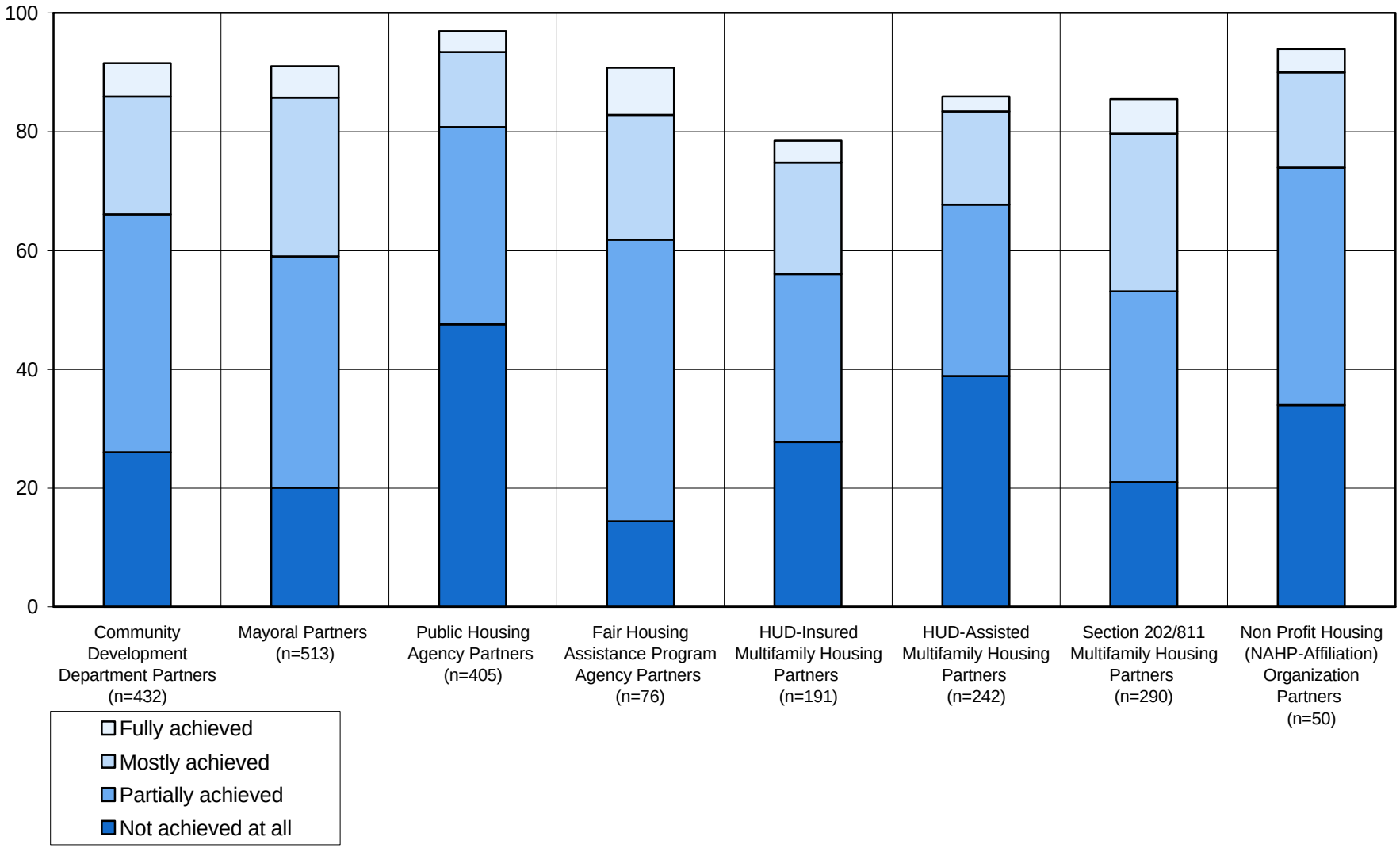


Exhibit 2.18: Please indicate the extent to which you believe the following HUD reform objective has been fully achieved, mostly achieved, partially achieved, or not achieved at all: To instill an ethic of competence and excellence at HUD.

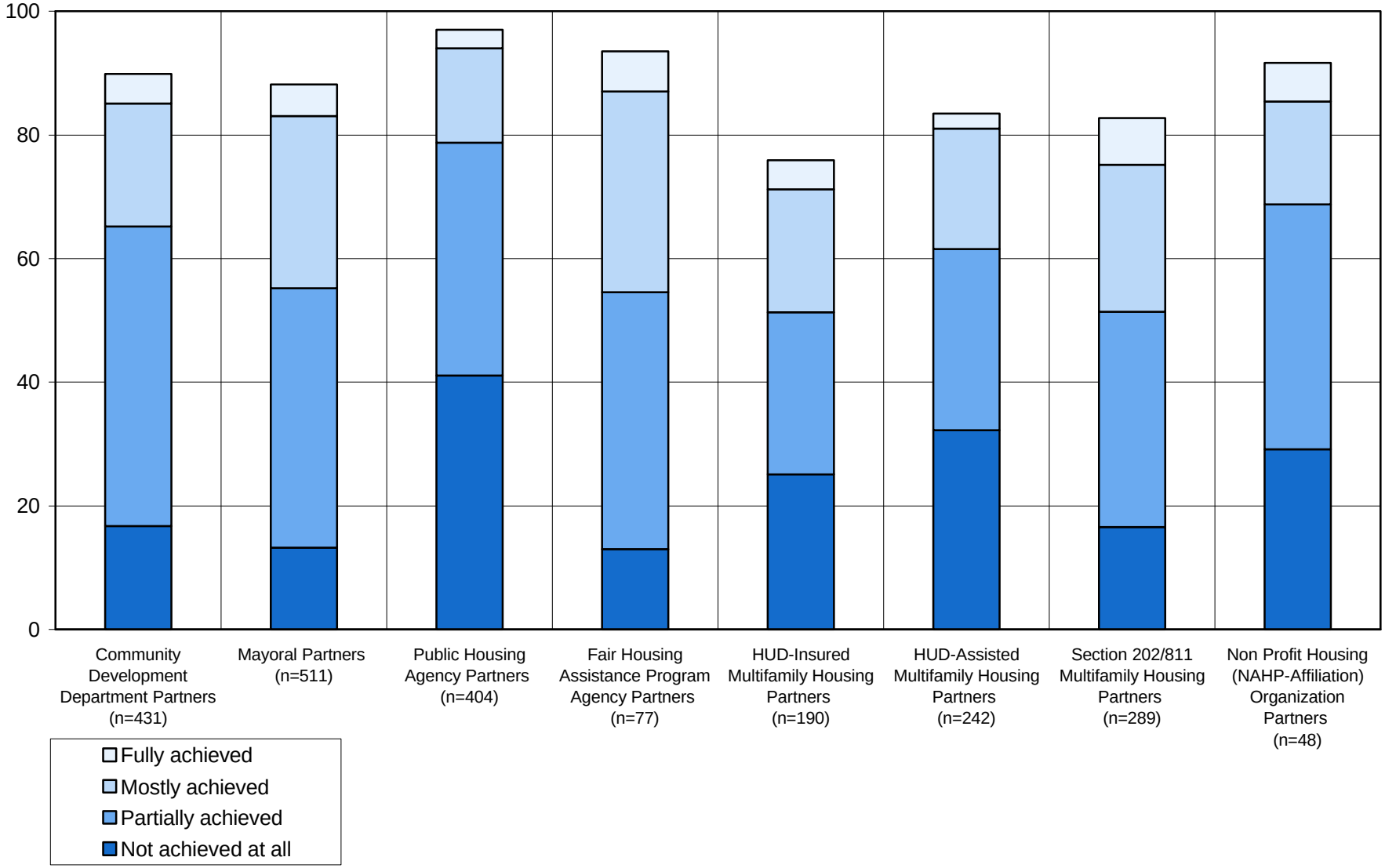
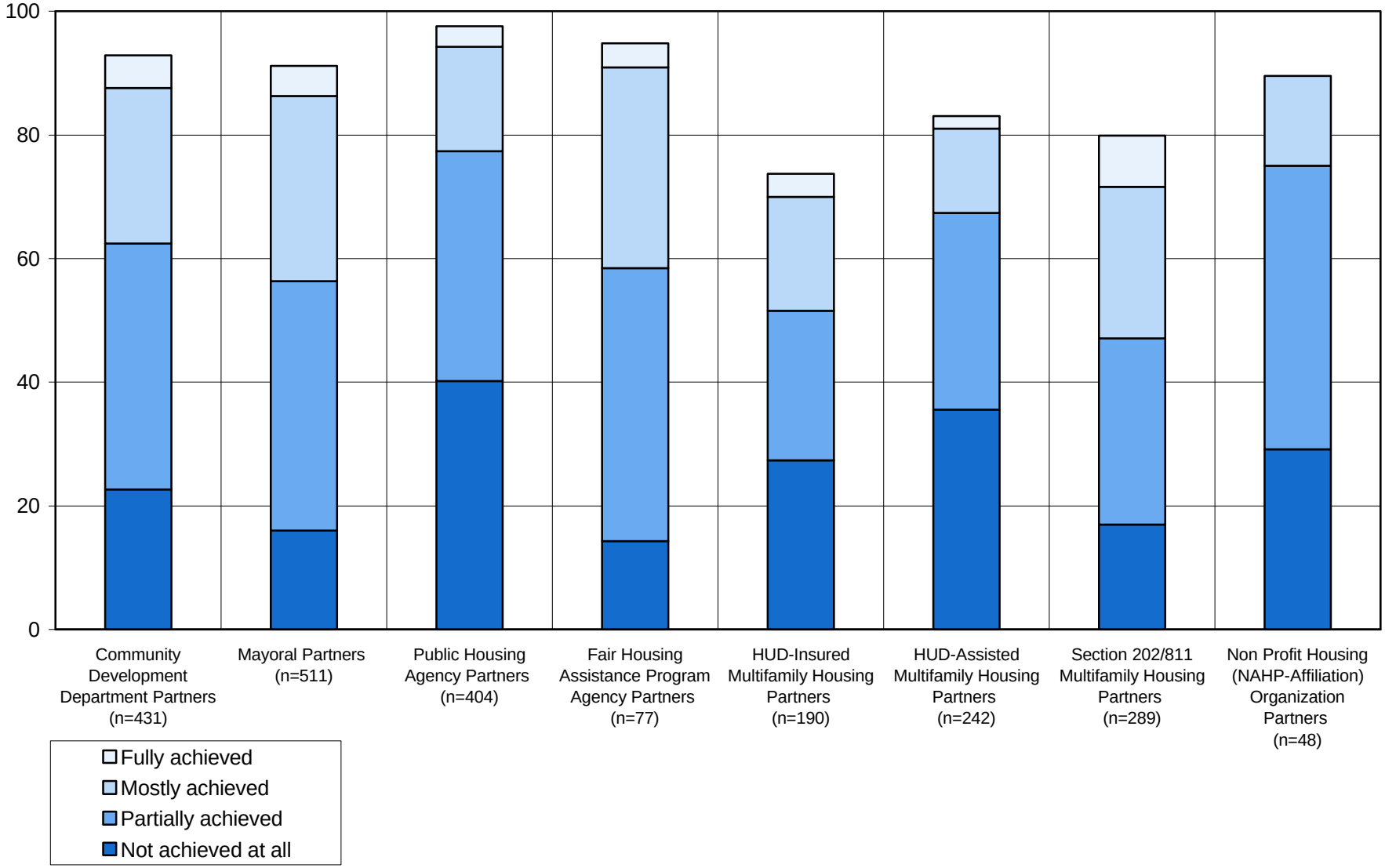


Exhibit 2.19: Please indicate the extent to which you believe the following HUD reform objective has been fully achieved, mostly achieved, partially achieved, or not achieved at all: To replace the emphasis on process with an emphasis on performance.



restoring the public trust in HUD—arguably the core objective the five. It generates the largest proportion of partners believing that at least some progress has been made toward goal achievement; that is, slightly higher ratings are given to this objective than to the others. The minimum proportion of any of the groups believing that public trust had been at least partially achieved is 65 percent (for PHA partners).

It should also be noted that, as of the date of the survey, very few partners believed the Department had fully achieved any of its reform objectives, and many in some groups believed that the objectives had not been achieved at all.

- The highest percentage of any partner group believing an objective had been fully achieved is eight percent. This proportion of directors of NAHP-affiliated (non-profit housing) organizations believed that public trust had been restored in HUD. Likewise, this proportion of owners of Section 202/811 multifamily properties believed that HUD had both fully instilled "an ethic of competence and excellence" and had fully replaced "an emphasis on process with that of performance."

- Many partners in some groups believed that HUD reform objectives had not been achieved at all, especially among PHA directors and owners of HUD-assisted (subsidized) multifamily properties. The highest percentage of any partner group concluding that an objective had not been met at all is 48 percent, by PHA directors regarding the "replacement of a top-down bureaucracy with a new customer-friendly structure."

On a three-point scale, with "0" representing "not achieved at all," and "3" representing "fully achieved," the average score for all partner groups across all five reform objectives is about "1"—meaning that the objectives had been partially achieved. The highest rating given by any group to any reform objective is 1.4, by FHAP agency partners to the objective of "restoring the public trust in HUD." The lowest rating by any group is 0.6, by NAHP-affiliated (non-profit housing) organization partners to the objective of "being the best in the business."