

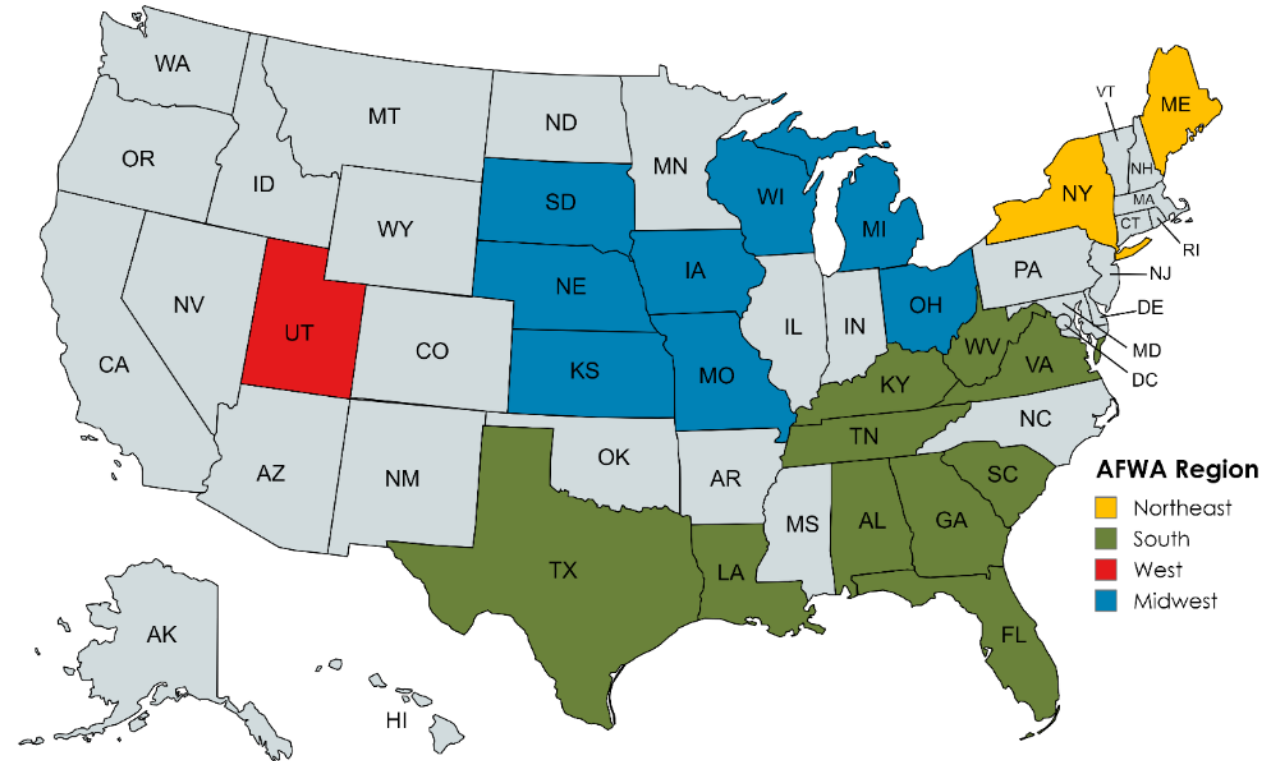
The Factors Hindering Many Hunter Education Graduates From Becoming Independent Hunters And How To Overcome These Hurdles



This Project was funded by a Multistate Conservation Grant (F23AP00565), from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and jointly administered with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

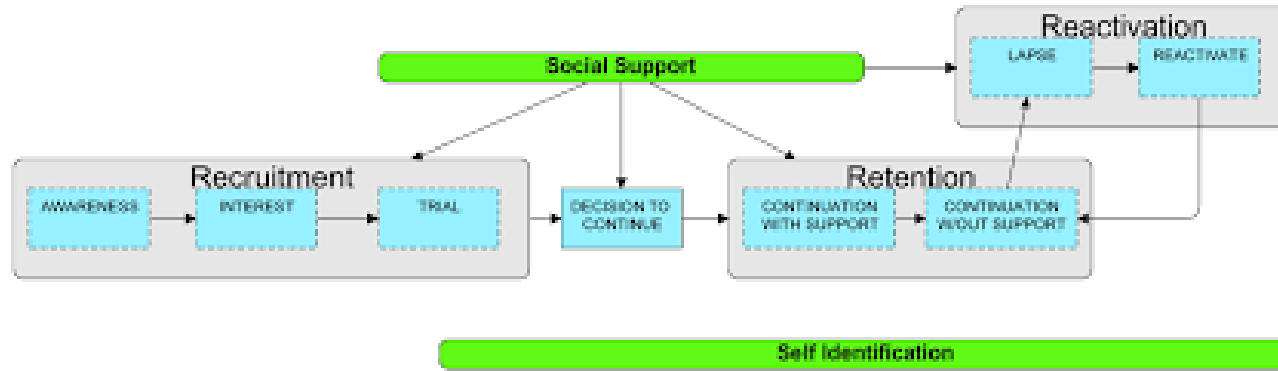
Introduction

- Fact: A significant number of people who take hunter education don't buy a license
- Project Purpose:
 - Find out why!
 - What can we do to help them become independent hunters?
- To find answers, the IHEA received a 2023 Multistate Conservation Grant Project.
- Received data from 21 states
- Interviewed 39 people to help develop survey



The ORAM Model and Hurdles

The Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model (ORAM) suggests that those who do not advance beyond the “interest” stage in hunting lack the confidence in their knowledge or skills, lack social support to continue, or some combination of both.



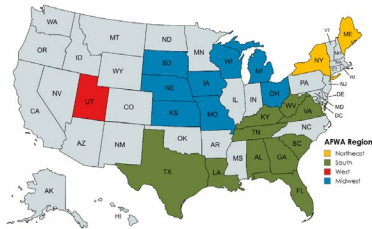
Working within the constructs of the ORAM model, this project focused on helping R3 professionals better understand the factors hindering many hunter education graduates from advancing beyond the “interest” stage and becoming independent hunters and how to overcome these hurdles.



Project Components

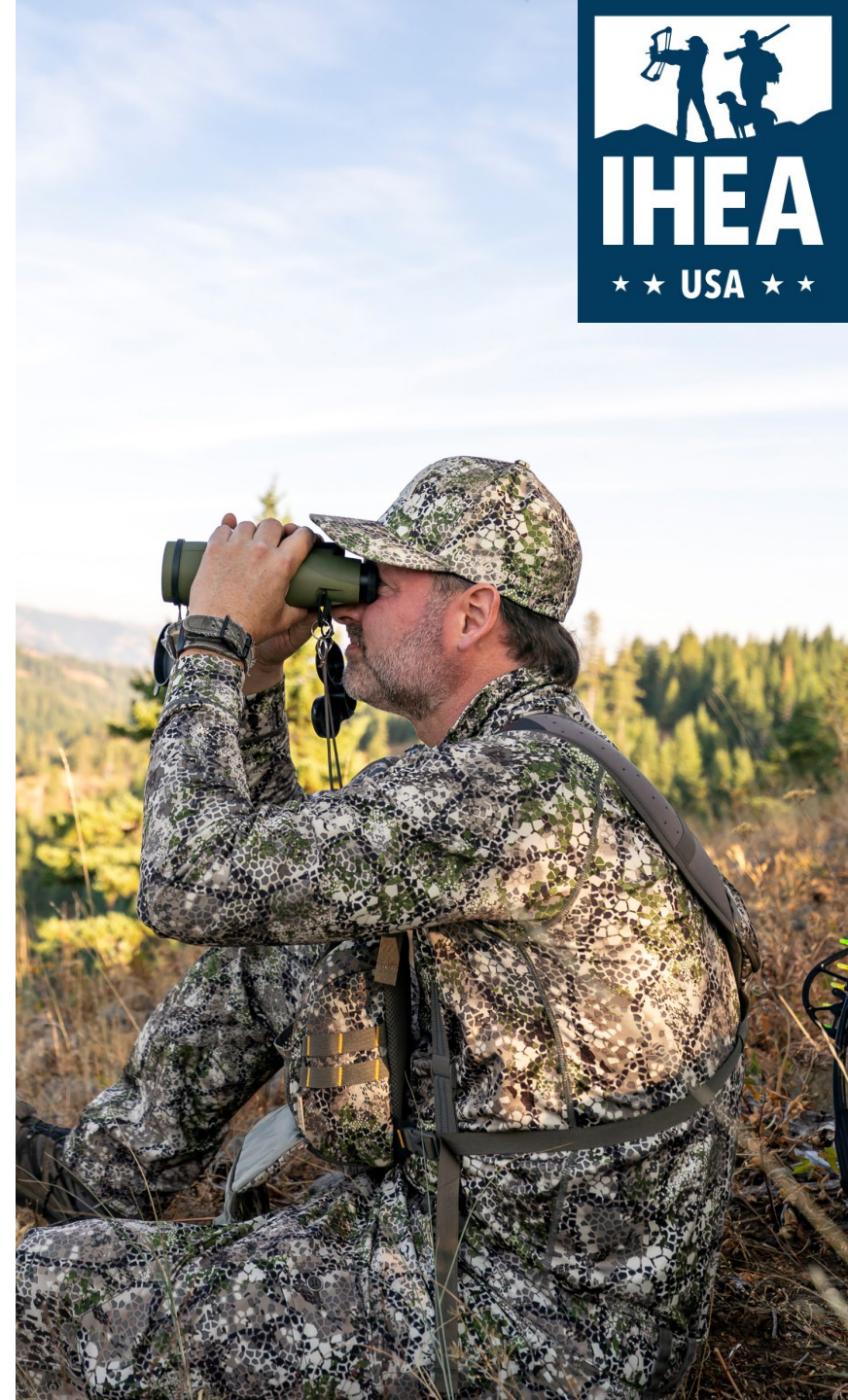
1. Twenty-one states participated by providing data on their recent HE graduates and license sales purchasers.
2. Qualitative – D.J. Case & Associates conducted interviews with 39 people representing those who had and had not purchased a hunting license in their state following recent completion of a HE course. The interviews were designed to elicit a range of possible factors that were influencing individuals' decisions to continue or not.
3. Quantitative – The interview results helped to develop a questionnaire that was administered by Southwick Associates between December 18, 2023 and January 17, 2024. individuals were contacted via email up to 6 times using the online platform Qualtrics®. 12,418 responses were received. Results were analyzed using R® and SPSS®. K-means cluster analysis was used to identify the key “Haves” (58%) and “Have-Nots” segments.

Methodological details are in the technical report (<https://www.ihea-usa.org/our-research/>), as are the full, extensive project results.



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In simplest terms, hunter ed graduates who go on to hunt or not can be classified as “Haves” and “Have-Nots”:

Haves:

- Grew up in hunting families or communities, have people close to them who hunt.
- Generally higher percentage of females.
- Greater motivation to hunt as a way to bond with family/friends
- Doesn't mean they are self-sufficient! Many still depend on those close to them to access land, assist with basic skills, and more.

Have Nots:

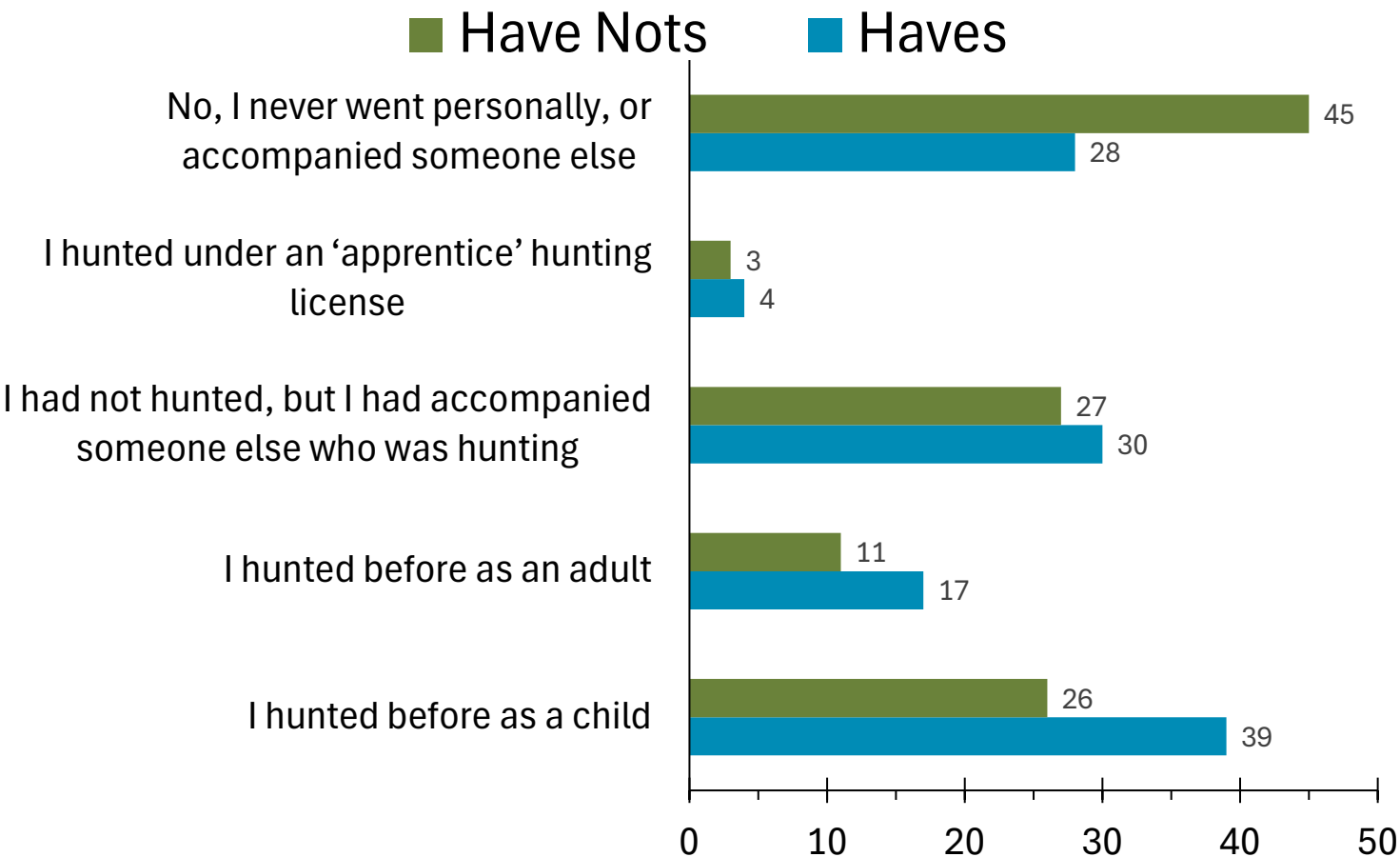
- Get into hunting without that social network & limited or no exposure to hunting in younger years.
- Generally have not purchased their license after taking HE.
- Greater motivation to be closer to nature and learn something new.
- Think ‘adult-onset’ and/or locavores. They have greater challenges accessing huntable land, learning basic skills.



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Hunting Experience Prior to Taking Hunter Education



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Major Findings

- Online hunter education courses are popular and well-liked by those who completed them; however, some graduates acknowledge they would have preferred a hands-on firearm component in retrospect.
- 54% of Have Nots said they took hunter education to learn to hunt.
 - States should consider better explaining the goals and purpose of hunter education when people register or provide more hunting training and information.
- A strong appetite exists for additional hunting and firearm training courses for both Haves and Have Nots after graduation.
- Have Nots are more likely to be open to receiving mentorship from an unknown person, though other additional training options are more preferred.



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How to best reach Haves and Have Nots with additional support and training

- Agency website – be sure its attractive, easy to navigate and interesting! Many states do not provide such web sites.
- YouTube videos are their top preferred source.
- Collaborating with influencers that reach new hunters can be very effective.
- They want more classes to learn more and improve, online or in-person. Each method has its advantages.
- Stay in touch with grads, direct them to resources they need, using custom communication through CRM with the help of partners.
 - States need to standardize & coordinate hunter education and license data bases to be effective at CRM. Collect their email addresses.



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Conclusions & Additional Recommendations

- For most, creating an enduring hunter is more than just a single hunter education course.
- Haves and Have Nots have different support needs to become an independent hunter. Stay in touch with them, especially the Have Nots! Help them find solutions to the barriers they encounter.
- As part of hunter ed classes, promote additional education resources already available from many third-party organizations.

Significantly greater insights on this topic are available in the full report available at:

<https://www.ihea-usa.org/our-research/>



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