

Chapter 5

Who Returns to TANF Cash Assistance and Why?

The goals of welfare reform have included the expectation that efforts to reduce caseloads will lead to greater self-sufficiency for most of the TANF leavers. Self-sufficiency, in turn, is expected to avoid or delay the need for leavers to return to cash assistance. This chapter reports on the findings of this study to address both the question of what types of cases end up returning to active TANF status and the question of why people return.

Population Analysis with Administrative Data

Recidivism for the 18-month population is analyzed first in terms of all cases in the study period, distinguishing single-parent and two-parent cases and distinguishing the two major administrative regions of the state. These analyses of identified adults are followed by a description of the percent of children who return to TANF after case closure.

We then examine the factors associated with recidivism, beginning with an account of the characteristics of recidivists compared to non-recidivists, and then analyzing differences associated with the administrative reasons for TANF case closings and the differences associated with whether the adult leaver had recorded earnings in the quarter of exit. Trends in recidivism are then examined by comparing those who left TANF in the beginning of the study period with those who left in later calendar quarters. Finally, logistic regression is used to identify the unique influences that are associated with recidivism. As with previous chapters, because of the primary interest in single-parent cases, which predominate the population of TANF leavers, several preliminary analyses will address both single- and two-parent cases, but the majority of analyses focus on single-parent cases.

Recidivism Outcome Measures

This chapter examines recidivism in two ways. The first approach, referred to as **current recidivism**, considers which cases are currently active on TANF cash assistance in a particular month after the first exit in the study period. In that clients were defined as exiting TANF only if they remained off cash assistance for at least two months, all those who exited TANF in July 1997 but returned to cash assistance in September would define “current recidivism” for September 1997. In the next month, October, some of these return cases might again be closed and so they would not be counted for current recidivism for this cohort. On the other hand, additional members of the July 1997 leavers might have returned to cash assistance and so would be included in the October current recidivism measure for the cohort. Information on TANF current recidivism for this study extends from September 1997 to July 1999.

In addition to knowing the percentage of identified TANF leavers who are active in a particular month, it is important to understand the degree to which TANF leavers ever return over an extended period. **Cumulative recidivism** is defined for this study as the percentage of identified adult leavers in a given quarterly cohort who have returned to cash assistance *at any point prior to or during* a particular follow-up month. Thus, cumulative recidivism for six months after exit is the percent of a cohort who have returned to active TANF status at some

point, even if for just one month, during those six months after exit. One implication of this definition of cumulative recidivism is that, unlike current recidivism, the rate for a given cohort cannot decrease as more months go by after exit. As the follow-up period is extended, fewer cases have remained closed continuously since exit. As with current recidivism, information on TANF cumulative recidivism for this study extends from September 1997 to July 1999.

Table 68 represents the data available for analyses of recidivism, using current recidivism for single-parent cases as an example. One important point to note from Table 68 is that the length of follow-up is less for later cohorts of leavers. For example, those who left in December 1998 have follow-up data only to seven months after exit (to July 1999, with no recidivism in January 1999 because of the “two month off” rule for inclusion in the study). Another point is that the rising and falling of the recidivism rates for any month of leavers is related more to the number of months after exit than to the calendar months used to define the columns. This argues for presenting the analyses based on the number of months after exit, an approach used consistently in this chapter.

Table 68: Available Recidivism Data; Current Recidivism by Calendar Month, Single-Parent Cases																								
Monthly Cohorts	9 97	10 97	11 97	12 97	1 98	2 98	3 98	4 98	5 98	6 98	7 98	8 98	9 98	10 98	11 98	12 98	1 99	2 99	3 99	4 99	5 99	6 99	7 99	
July 97	12.1	17.7	20.4	22.3	24.3	24.2	24.0	23.4	22.9	21.4	19.9	19.9	19.7	18.5	18.0	17.4	16.7	16.3	15.7	14.3	13.7	13.2	12.6	
August 97		14.1	18.9	21.5	24.6	24.5	24.5	24.3	24.0	22.2	21.2	21.4	20.8	19.6	19.2	18.2	17.1	16.9	16.3	14.8	14.4	13.8	13.2	
Sept. 97			11.1	14.8	19.2	19.1	19.9	20.4	20.2	18.9	18.0	18.4	18.2	16.6	16.1	15.6	14.6	14.3	13.9	12.6	12.4	11.7	11.0	
Oct. 97				8.7	14.2	14.1	15.3	15.7	15.7	15.3	14.8	15.4	15.1	14.2	14.2	13.6	12.6	12.4	11.8	10.6	10.6	10.2	9.4	
Nov. 97					13.5	13.7	16.5	17.5	17.9	16.9	16.7	17.0	16.7	16.2	15.9	15.5	14.9	14.3	13.4	12.3	12.0	11.3	10.1	
Dec. 97						1.9	5.6	8.0	9.8	10.5	10.9	11.3	11.8	11.4	11.5	11.1	10.9	10.5	10.1	9.2	8.8	8.3	7.7	
Jan. 98							10.4	13.7	15.0	15.3	15.0	16.1	16.2	15.5	15.4	14.8	13.9	13.7	13.3	11.6	11.4	11.1	10.2	
Feb. 98								35.9	40.1	38.1	35.7	36.3	34.4	31.5	30.6	30.4	28.6	27.8	27.0	24.3	23.4	22.6	20.4	
March 98									8.6	11.1	12.3	13.5	14.3	14.4	14.4	13.9	13.8	13.7	13.0	11.8	11.3	11.0	10.7	
April 98										8.5	11.0	12.9	14.1	14.1	14.3	14.3	13.7	13.5	13.1	11.9	11.5	11.3	10.7	
May 98											14.6	20.0	21.7	22.0	22.1	21.7	21.4	21.1	19.9	18.5	18.3	17.6	16.6	
June 98												17.7	22.7	24.4	25.4	25.0	24.4	24.2	23.1	21.4	20.7	20.2	19.3	
July 98													11.5	14.9	16.3	16.7	16.5	16.8	16.3	15.1	14.7	14.5	13.9	
August 98														13.3	16.5	17.6	18.2	18.2	18.3	16.9	16.4	16.4	15.9	
Sept. 98															13.2	16.5	17.2	17.6	17.8	16.9	16.8	16.2	15.6	
Oct. 98																11.7	14.3	14.9	15.3	14.2	14.1	13.8	13.0	
Nov. 98																	14.1	17.9	18.6	18.5	18.6	18.5	18.0	
Dec. 98																		19.4	21.8	22.0	22.6	22.5	21.5	

Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Description of Recidivism in the Population

The description of the recidivism findings begins by presenting an analysis that distinguishes the single- and two-parent cases. We then focus on single-parent cases with an analysis that differentiates Cook County and the rest of the state of Illinois. The last analysis in this section addresses the children on the cases that closed during the 18-month study period.

Analysis by Case Type: Single-Parent and Two-Parent Cases

The distinction was made above between current recidivism and cumulative recidivism. The analyses that follow use these two views of recidivism to describe the recidivism rates for single-parent and two-parent cases.

Current Recidivism by Month after Exit. The top section of Table 69 reports the percentage of single-parent and two-parent cases in that cohort that have reopened and are active in particular months after exit. The most apparent finding is that recidivism rates for single-parent cases are considerably higher than the rates for two-parent cases. For example, whereas over 18 percent (18.6%) of single-parent cases are active six months after their first exit in the study period, less than 9 percent (8.9%) of two-parent cases are active at six months after exit. A second point is that the recidivism rates remain relatively constant over time for both single-parent and two-parent cases.

Cumulative Recidivism by Month after Exit. The patterns of cumulative recidivism in the bottom half of Table 69 complement the findings for the current recidivism rates presented in the top of the table. Again, single-parent cases have higher recidivism rates than two-parent cases. At six months after exit, the cumulative recidivism rate for two-parent cases is ten percentage points lower than for single-parent cases (23.7% for single parents compared to 13.4% for two-parent cases). Another point is that the cumulative rate shows the greatest increases in the months leading up to six months after exit. By six months after exit over one-fifth of all cases that close (22.8%) have become active again at least once. By nine months after exit, this cumulative percentage has increased only a little more than two additional percentage points (25.4%), and by 12 months after exit, the cumulative recidivism rate reaches just under 28 percent. This pattern suggests that the majority of those who will return to TANF during the first year after exit will do so within six months after exit.

Table 69: TANF Recidivism After First Exit, by Case Type												
Current Recidivism	Months After First Exit*											
Case Type	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit	
Single-Parent (n=124,819)	12.5%	16.2%	17.6%	18.5%	18.6%	18.5%	18.1%	17.5%	17.4%	16.9%	16.3%	
Two-Parent (n=12,511)	6.1%	7.8%	8.6%	8.9%	8.9%	8.7%	8.3%	7.8%	7.4%	7.0%	6.5%	
All Cases (n=137,330)	11.9%	15.4%	16.8%	17.6%	17.8%	17.6%	17.2%	16.5%	16.4%	15.9%	15.3%	
Cumulative Recidivism	Months After First Exit*											
Case Type	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit	
Single-Parent (n=124,819)	12.5%	17.2%	20.0%	22.1%	23.7%	24.9%	25.6%	26.4%	27.6%	28.3%	28.9%	
Two-Parent (n=12,511)	6.1%	8.6%	10.6%	12.0%	13.4%	14.3%	15.2%	15.9%	16.7%	17.4%	17.9%	
All Cases (n=137,330)	11.9%	16.5%	19.2%	21.2%	22.8%	24.0%	24.7%	25.4%	26.5%	27.2%	27.8%	

* As delineated by the bold line, all cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses on eight or more months after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Analysis of State Regions: Cook County versus Downstate Counties

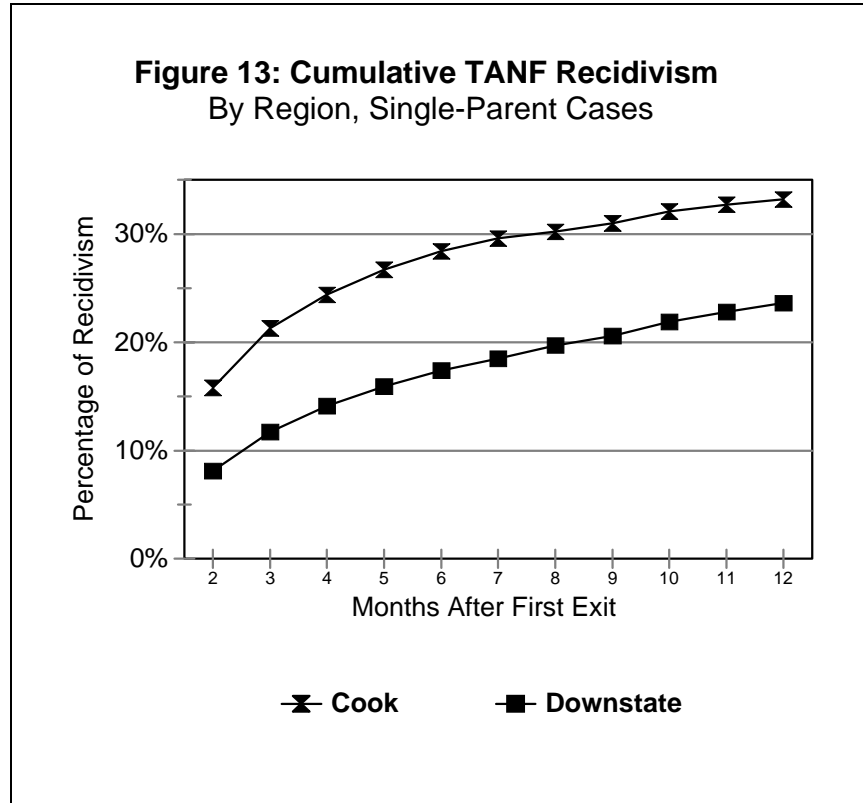
To compare the recidivism rates of Cook County and the downstate counties, the following analyses focus on single-parent cases. This maintains the intended emphasis on single-parent cases and avoids the confounding factor that two-parent cases have lower recidivism rates and they are much more common among the downstate leavers. Keep in mind, however, that single-parent cases and Cook County versus downstate cases are defined by information available at the first exit in the 18-month study period. Some of these “single-parent leavers” may be on two-parent cases when they return to TANF cash assistance, and some of those classified as Cook County cases (or downstate cases) may return to TANF while living downstate (or in Cook County). The proper interpretation, therefore, is that these analyses focus on recidivism for adult leavers who were on single-parent cases and living in the specified state region at their first exit in the study period. As before, we address first current recidivism and then cumulative recidivism.

Current Recidivism. The top half of Table 70 shows substantial differences in the current recidivism rates of Cook County and the rest of the state. Within two months after exit, the current recidivism rate for single-parent cases in Cook County is almost twice that of the downstate counties (15.8% versus 8.1%) and continues at about that ratio for the remainder of the 12-month follow-up period. For example, six months after exit 23 percent of the Cook County single-parent leavers are again active on TANF, whereas less than 13 percent (12.7%) of the downstate leavers are active. Similarly, 12 months after exit over 20 percent (20.5%) of the Cook County single-parent leavers are active, in contrast to only 11 percent of the downstate leavers being active then.

Cumulative Recidivism. Comparing Cook County and downstate counties on cumulative recidivism rates for single-parent cases reveals a pattern similar to that found for current recidivism (see Figure 13). By six months after first exit in the study period, over 28 percent of Cook County single-parent leavers have returned to TANF cash assistance at some point, whereas only 17 percent of downstate single-parent leavers have returned by that time. This difference of 10 percentage points remains stable in the subsequent months. For example, by 12 months after first exit around a third (33.2%) of the Cook County single-parent leavers had returned at one point. In contrast only around 24 percent (23.6%) of the downstate single-parent leavers had returned by 12 months after first exit.

Table 70: TANF Recidivism After First Exit; Single-Parent Cases by Region												
Current Recidivism	Months After First Exit*											
Case Type	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit	
Cook County (n=71,838)	15.8%	20.1%	21.7%	22.7%	23.0%	22.9%	22.3%	21.7%	21.6%	21.1%	20.5%	
Downstate (n=52,981)	8.1%	10.8%	12.1%	12.7%	12.7%	12.6%	12.5%	12.1%	11.9%	11.6%	11.0%	
All Single-Parent Cases (n=124,819)	12.5%	16.2%	17.6%	18.5%	18.6%	18.5%	18.1%	17.5%	17.4%	16.9%	16.3%	
Cumulative Recidivism	Months After First Exit*											
Case Type	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit	
Cook County (n=71,838)	15.8%	21.3%	24.4%	26.7%	28.4%	29.6%	30.2%	31.0%	32.1%	32.7%	33.2%	
Downstate (n=52,981)	8.1%	11.7%	14.1%	15.9%	17.4%	18.5%	19.7%	20.6%	21.9%	22.8%	23.6%	
All Single-Parent Cases (n=124,819)	12.5%	17.2%	20.0%	22.1%	23.7%	24.9%	25.6%	26.4%	27.6%	28.3%	28.9%	

*As delineated by the bold line, all cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses on eight or more months after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)



*All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses on eight or more months after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)*

Analysis of Children Returning to Active TANF Cases

Table 71 changes the population of concern to the children on the TANF cases that closed at least once in the study period. This change of focus is needed because the outcomes children experience are a major concern in policy debates on welfare reform. If the recidivism rates for children were markedly different than those for the identified adult leavers, many of the analyses reported here would be of questionable relevance for children. With this in mind, it is reassuring that the cumulative recidivism rates shown in Table 71 are substantially similar to those presented above in Table 69. For example, whereas the cumulative recidivism rate at six months is about 24 percent (23.7%) for adults on single-parent cases (see Table 69), the corresponding rate for children on single-parent cases is also 24 percent (23.8%; see Table 71). Similarly, the six-month cumulative rate for all adult leavers is about 23 percent (22.8%; see Table 69), and the six-month cumulative rate for all children is also 23 percent (22.6%; see Table 71). Note that some differences in percentages are expected in that the numbers for children represent returns after the adult left TANF. In that some children did not leave TANF when the adult left, the non-leaving children cannot return to TANF and so may affect the recidivism rates somewhat.

Table 71: Cumulative TANF Recidivism for all Children in Study Population					
Case Structure	Cohort Size	3 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
All children	244,939	13.4%	22.6%	26.1%	28.1%
Children on cases with 4 or more children	46,549	18.4%	28.4%	31.3%	32.2%
Children on single-parents cases	218,613	14.1%	23.8%	27.4%	29.4%

All cohorts have data for six months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses on 9 months and 12 months after exit.

Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Factors Associated with Recidivism

The differences in recidivism rates for single and two-parent cases and for Cook County and downstate counties suggest several factors that might influence recidivism. The following analyses examine these indications, first by providing descriptive statistics on those who do and do not return to TANF in the first six month after first exit, then by disaggregating the results by the administrative reason for case closure, by wages in quarter of exit, and by quarterly cohorts, and finally by conducting a logistic regression analysis that allows consideration of the unique impacts that the various factors might have on recidivism.

Characteristics of Those Who Do and Do Not Return to Cash Assistance

Several characteristics distinguish those who return to TANF within six months after their first study exit from those who do not, as shown in Table 72. First, those who return to TANF within six months after their first exit in the study period tend to be younger than those who do not return (median of 27 years and 29 years), more likely to have never married, more likely to have children under six years old (67.5% versus 59.5%) and under thirteen years old (91.5% versus 86.8%), and more likely to be African-American (68.7% versus 50.8%). Furthermore, recidivists are more likely to have no prior work experience (26.2% versus 18.1%), are less likely to have left TANF for earned income reasons (22.7% versus 35.7%), more likely to have left TANF because of non-cooperation (46.5% versus 28.4%). This last point is of particular interest and so will now be investigated separately.

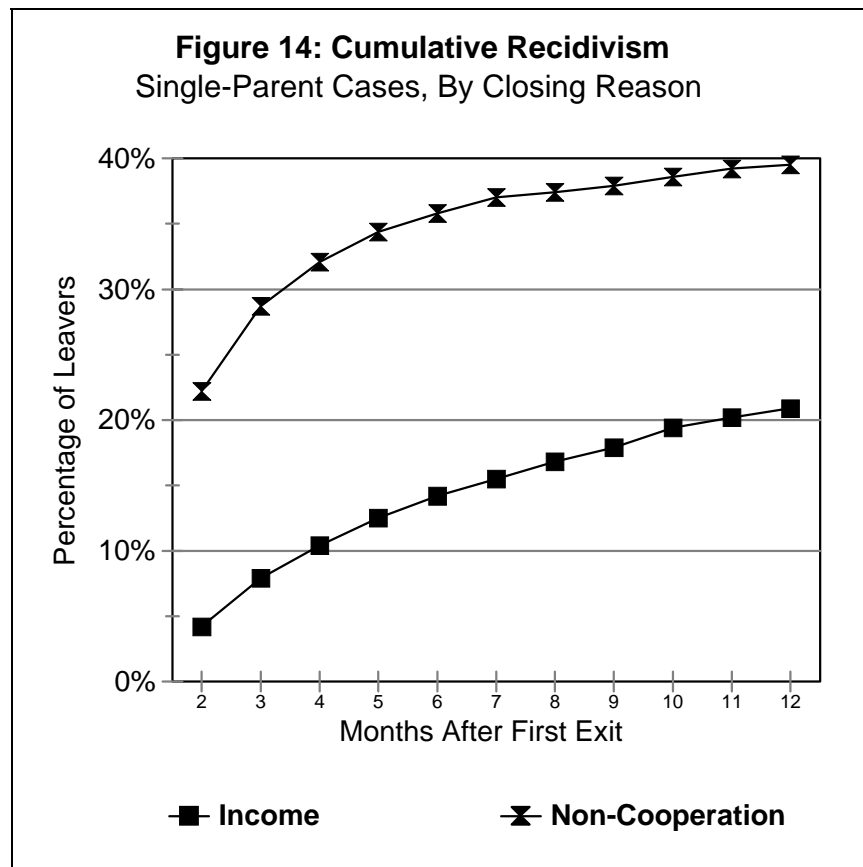
Table 72: Characteristics of Those Who Do and Do Not Return to TANF in Six Months After Exit, Single-Parent Cases			
	No Return to TANF	Return to TANF	All First-Exit Cases
Female Leaver	94.0%	96.6%	94.8%
Median Age of Adult Leaver	29 years old	27 years old	29 years old
Ethnicity			
African-American	50.8%	68.7%	56.1%
White	38.3%	22.9%	33.7%
Hispanic	9.9%	7.8%	9.3%
Other	1.1%	0.6%	0.9%
Children			
Child less than 1 year old	10.3%	10.1%	10.3%
Child less than 6 years old	59.5%	67.5%	61.9%
Child less than 13 years old	86.8%	91.5%	88.2%
Marital Status			
Never Married	61.3%	74.9%	65.3%
Married	9.3%	5.7%	8.2%
Deserted	13.0%	9.5%	12.0%
Divorced	12.3%	7.1%	10.8%
Legally Separated	1.9%	1.3%	1.7%
Widowed	0.7%	0.4%	0.6%
Education			
High School Diploma (or more)	62.7%	51.4%	59.4%
Work Experience			
Service	39.9%	34.8%	37.7%
Laborer	20.0%	18.1%	19.4%
Clerical	10.1%	9.6%	10.0%
Sales	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%
Operator	2.8%	2.5%	2.7%
Manager/Professional	2.8%	1.9%	2.5%
Crafts	0.5%	0.3%	0.4%
No Prior Experience	18.1%	26.2%	20.5%
Reason for Case Closure			
Income	35.7%	22.7%	31.8%
Non-Cooperation	28.4%	46.5%	33.8%

Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Analysis by Administrative Reasons for Case Closing

As expected, those leaving TANF for income reasons were much less likely to return to cash assistance than those whose cases were closed for non-cooperation. Indeed, whereas only four percent of those leaving for income reasons returned two months after first exit in the study period, over one-fifth (22.2%) of cases closed for non-cooperation had become active again two months after exit (see Table 73). This pattern continued such that at six months after exit, 11 percent of those closed for income reasons had returned to TANF cash assistance.

The high rate of recidivism for those who close for non-cooperation is even more apparent when considering cumulative recidivism. As shown in Table 74 and illustrated in Figure 14, over a third (35.8%) of the non-cooperation group had returned at some point during the six months after first exit, and almost 40 percent (39.5%) had returned at some point in the twelve months after first exit. This compares to 14 percent (14.2%) six months after exit and 21 percent (20.9%) at twelve months after exit for those leaving due to earned income reasons.



All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses on eight or more months after exit.

Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Analysis by Wages in Quarter of Exit

Parallel to the analyses by reason for case closing, those with wages in the quarter of exit are expected to be less likely to return to TANF in subsequent months. Table 75 shows that this expectation was confirmed. Around 15 percent (14.9%) of those with wages at exit were active on TANF again six months after their first exit in the study period; in contrast, over 23 percent (23.3%) of those without wages at exit were active again. For cumulative recidivism this pattern shows itself again with almost 20 percent of those with wages in the quarter of exit having returned to TANF at some point to TANF in the six months after first exit and almost 30 percent (29.1%) of those with no wages in the quarter of exit returning to TANF at some point in the first six months after exit.

Table 73: Current Recidivism After First Exit for Single-Parent Cases, by Type Action Reason											
Type Action Reason	Months After First Exit*										
	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Closed for Income Reasons (n=39,738)	4.2%	7.5%	9.2%	10.4%	11.1%	11.5%	11.8%	11.6%	11.8%	11.5%	11.1%
Closed for Non-Cooperation (n=42,128)	22.2%	27.1%	28.4%	28.8%	28.2%	27.5%	26.4%	25.2%	24.4%	23.7%	22.9%
Closed for Other Reasons (n=18,223)	6.4%	9.3%	11.1%	12.3%	13.3%	13.7%	13.6%	13.6%	13.8%	13.7%	13.5%
Closing Reason Unknown (n=24,730)	14.0%	16.6%	17.7%	18.3%	18.3%	18.3%	17.8%	17.2%	17.4%	17.0%	16.2%
All Single-Parent Cases (n=124,819)	12.5%	16.2%	17.6%	18.5%	18.6%	18.5%	18.1%	17.5%	17.4%	16.9%	16.3%

* As delineated by the bold line, all cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses on eight or more months after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Table 74: Cumulative Recidivism After First Exit for Single-Parent Cases, by Type Action Reason											
Type Action Reason	Months After First Exit*										
	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Closed for Income Reasons (n=39,738)	4.2%	7.9%	10.4%	12.5%	14.2%	15.5%	16.8%	17.9%	19.4%	20.2%	20.9%
Closed for Non-Cooperation (n=42,128)	22.2%	28.7%	32.1%	34.4%	35.8%	37.0%	37.4%	37.9%	38.6%	39.2%	39.5%
Case Closed for Other Reasons (n=18,223)	6.4%	9.8%	12.3%	14.3%	16.1%	17.4%	18.4%	19.3%	20.5%	21.5%	22.3%
Closing Reason Unknown (n=24,730)	14.0%	18.1%	20.4%	22.4%	24.1%	25.1%	25.8%	26.9%	28.2%	28.9%	29.9%
All Single-Parent Cases (n=124,819)	12.5%	17.2%	20.0%	22.1%	23.7%	24.9%	25.6%	26.4%	27.6%	28.3%	28.9%

* As delineated by the bold line, all cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses on eight or more months after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Table 75: Recidivism by UI Wages in Quarter of Exit, Single-Parent Cases												
Current Recidivism	Months After First Exit*											
Case Type	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit	
Wages in Quarter of Exit (n=69,054)	9.6%	12.5%	13.8%	14.7%	14.9%	14.9%	14.6%	14.2%	14.2%	13.9%	13.4%	
No Wages in Quarter of Exit (n=55,765)	16.2%	20.7%	22.4%	23.1%	23.3%	23.0%	22.4%	21.6%	21.3%	20.7%	20.0%	
All Cases (n=124,819)	12.5%	16.2%	17.6%	18.5%	18.6%	18.5%	18.1%	17.5%	17.4%	16.9%	16.3%	
Cumulative Recidivism	Months After First Exit*											
Case Type	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit	
Wages in Quarter of Exit (n=69,054)	9.6%	13.5%	15.9%	17.9%	19.4%	20.5%	21.4%	22.4%	23.6%	24.4%	25.1%	
No Wages in Quarter of Exit (n=55,765)	16.2%	21.9%	25.1%	27.4%	29.1%	30.3%	30.9%	31.6%	32.6%	33.2%	33.8%	
All Cases (n=124,819)	12.5%	17.2%	20.0%	22.1%	23.7%	24.9%	25.6%	26.4%	27.6%	28.3%	28.9%	

* As delineated by the bold line, all cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses on eight or more months after exit.
Data Sources: IDHS Client Database (CDB) and IDES Quarterly Wage File

Analysis of Trends Across Quarters in Study

To examine whether there are any trends or other patterns in current recidivism, Table 76 presents an analysis that is structured differently than most of the others in this report. Instead of reporting on first exits in the study period, this trend analysis examines all cases that closed in a given quarter (regardless of whether that case had closed previously in the study period; this approach is referred to as involving all-exit cohorts). As noted in the methodology chapter, it is necessary to switch to this focus on all-exit cohorts when examining trends in order to avoid the bias that might result from excluding from later cohorts those with multiple recent case closings.

Disaggregating by all-exit cohorts suggests that there were two quarters—the third quarter of 1997 and the second quarter of 1998—that had consistently higher recidivism rates than the other quarters. Conversely, the fourth quarter of 1997 has recidivism rates much lower than the others. Other than these three quarters, there does not seem to be any consistent pattern of increase or decrease in current recidivism for later quarterly cohorts. For example, the current recidivism at six months after exit ranges from the high quarters at around 23 percent to the low quarter with a 15 percent recidivism rate. These three quarterly cohorts notwithstanding, the rates for the other three quarters are fairly consistent at around 17 and 18 percent, with the last two quarters—the third and fourth quarters of 1998—having rates quite similar to the overall average.

Examining the individual columns in Table 77 reveals a similar lack of evidence of a lowering or raising of cumulative recidivism rates for the later quarterly cohorts. We see, for example, that six months after exit the cumulative recidivism rate for the third quarter 1997 cohort is over 26 percent (26.3%). This rate drops to under 19 percent (18.7%) for the next cohort, the fourth quarter of 1997, but then rises again for the second quarter of 1998 (27.0%) and then returns to around 24 percent for the last two quarters.

Table 76: Trend Analysis of Current Recidivism for Single-Parent Cases											
Current Recidivism	Months After First Exit										
All-Exit Cohort	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
3 rd Qtr. 97 (n=20,499)	12.5%	17.2%	20.4%	22.0%	23.1%	23.2%	23.0%	22.3%	21.4%	20.5%	19.8%
4 th Qtr. 97 (n=19,225)	8.3%	12.0%	13.2%	14.6%	15.0%	14.9%	14.7%	14.7%	14.8%	14.5%	13.9%
1 st Qtr. 98 (n=19,272)	12.6%	15.8%	16.6%	17.1%	17.3%	17.6%	17.3%	16.6%	16.5%	15.9%	15.1%
2 nd Qtr. 98 (n=26,902)	13.8%	18.2%	19.9%	20.8%	20.8%	20.5%	20.3%	19.6%	18.5%	17.7%	17.1%
3 rd Qtr. 98 (n=25,306)	12.7%	16.0%	17.1%	17.6%	17.6%	17.4%	16.7%	15.9%	15.5%		
4 th Qtr. 98 (n=26,056)	14.9%	17.8%	18.4%	18.6%	18.1%	17.8%					
Average (n=137,260)	12.5%	16.2%	17.6%	18.5%	18.6%	18.5%	18.1%	17.5%	17.4%	16.9%	16.3%

Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Table 77: Trend Analysis of Cumulative Recidivism for Single-Parent Cases												
Cumulative Recidivism	Months After First Exit											
All-Exit Cohort	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit	
3 rd Qtr. 97 (n=20,499)	12.5%	17.9%	21.8%	24.1%	26.3%	27.3%	28.7%	29.9%	30.9%	31.6%	32.3%	
4 th Qtr. 97 (n=19,225)	8.3%	12.7%	14.5%	16.8%	18.7%	20.2%	21.5%	22.6%	23.7%	24.6%	25.4%	
1 st Qtr. 98 (n=19,272)	12.6%	16.8%	19.3%	21.4%	23.1%	24.6%	25.6%	26.6%	27.4%	27.9%	28.3%	
2 nd Qtr. 98 (n=26,902)	13.8%	19.4%	22.8%	25.3%	27.0%	28.3%	29.3%	30.0%	30.5%	31.0%	31.5%	
3 rd Qtr. 98 (n=25,306)	12.7%	17.2%	19.9%	21.8%	23.3%	24.4%	25.2%	25.8%	26.3%			
4 th Qtr. 98 (n=26,056)	14.9%	19.4%	22.0%	23.7%	24.9%	25.8%						
Average (n=137,260)	12.5%	17.2%	20.0%	22.1%	23.7%	24.9%	25.6%	26.4%	27.6%	28.3%	28.9%	

Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Distinguishing Unique Effects of Factors on Recidivism (Female-Headed, Single-Parent Cases)

The analyses reported thus far have suggested several factors that affect recidivism. To examine the relative importance of these factors more closely, logistic regression was used to analyze the factors that affect recidivism within six months after first exit. In an effort to simplify the interpretation of the results, the analysis reported in Table 78 was conducted on a particularly common subset of cases, those single-parent cases headed by a woman. This restricted focus was chosen in order to minimize the problem that emerges when different factors are particularly important for different subgroups. One caution should be emphasized: the results of logistic regression, as with other variants of regression analysis, are dependent on the predictor variables that are included. If important predictor variables are neglected, and these variables are related to the predictor variables that are included, then the results for the included predictor variables may be misleading.

We begin the interpretation by previewing the results of this analysis and then consider the points made in greater detail. First, unlike the analysis of wages after exit, ethnicity is important, with African-American leavers more likely to return to TANF within six months. Second, younger leavers are more likely to return than older ones, and those never married are more likely to return. Cases closed for non-cooperation reasons are particularly likely to return to active TANF status, whereas cases closed for income-related reasons are less likely to return. And, the longer the welfare spell before first exit, the more likely the leaver is to return. Those with a high school diploma or prior work experience are less likely to return to TANF. Finally, whereas leavers in the collar counties that surround Cook County are less likely to return to active TANF status, Cook County and the rural south section of the state are regions in which the recidivism rates are particularly high.

Examining the analysis in greater detail, we note first that predicting recidivism with logistic regression (with recidivism for the identified adult coded so that the analysis is considering the likelihood of returning to TANF cash assistance) allows us, by controlling statistically for the impacts of other variables, to assess the unique relationship between various factors and recidivism. As noted when discussing logistic regression in the previous chapter, the first point to make in interpreting Table 78 is that the overall model is statistically significant, as measured by the chi-square statistic that analyzes whether independent variables improve the fit of the model. This suggests that the predictor variables chosen are related in meaningful ways to recidivism.

The next step is to examine each of the other rows in Table 78 to see which variables, when controlling for the other variables, are particularly related to recidivism. Because of the way that the dependent variable, recidivism, is coded, the ratios found in the column labeled “Odds Ratio” represent the relative probability of returning to TANF assistance. For example, because the odds ratio for the African-American row is greater than 1.00 (it is 1.794), African-Americans are, controlling for other factors in the model, more likely than whites to return to cash assistance. More specifically, the 1.794 odds ratio for the African-American row indicates that whatever the probability is for whites remaining off assistance, adults who are recorded as African-American are, again controlling for other factors, almost 80 percent more likely than whites to return to active status (1.794 being close to 1.80). As mentioned above, this comparison to whites is necessary in that the odds ratios for dummy-coded variables (coded ‘0’ or ‘1’) in logistic

regression always compare the probabilities for those coded with a '1' against the probabilities for those coded as a '0.' In this case, where two dummy variables are used to distinguish three groups, the group not explicitly included—whites—is the implicit comparison group (there are a very small number of recipients coded as Asian-Pacific or as Native Americans; in that variables are not entered for them, they are included with whites). When appropriate, these implicit comparison groups are noted in the table.

As for other family characteristics, those leavers with children between 1 and six and between 6 and 13 were more likely to return to TANF (odds ratios of 1.184 and 1.137), but, interestingly, cases with children under 1 years old were marginally less likely to return to active TANF assistance (not statistically significant). Also, younger leavers were more likely to return to cash assistance than were leavers over 30 years old, with those in the 17 to 19 age range being almost twice as likely as those over 30 to return to assistance in 12 months after exit.

As expected, those cases closed for non-cooperation were more likely to return to active TANF status (odds ratio of 1.919), while those closed for income reasons were less likely to recidivate (odds ratio of .722). Similarly, those with self-reported earned income in the month prior to exit, those with wage income in the first quarter after exit, and those with a high school degree, were all less likely to return to cash assistance.

Prior work experience was, in general, a predictor of lower post-exit recidivism, with the lowest likelihood of returning to cash assistance being associated with experience as a professional or manager (odds ratio of .752) or a clerical worker (odds ratio of .836). Experience in the service sector or as a laborer appears less effective in reducing recidivism (with odds ratios closer to 1.00).

Region makes a difference for recidivism. The highest recidivism rates were in Cook County and the most southern rural region of Illinois, with the lowest recidivism being in the more suburban collar counties that surround Cook County and the implicit comparison group of the northern and central rural areas.

Finally, the time variable, cohort month, indicates that later leavers (such as those leaving for the first time in the study period in the third and fourth quarters of 1998) were slightly less likely than earlier leavers to return to TANF within six months of the first study exit. This may reflect the long-term trend, shown in Figure 1, of decreasing unemployment in Illinois. Alternatively, this lower propensity toward recidivism in later cohorts may be a function of how the population is defined. Recall that, by definition, those coded as leaving in the fourth quarter of 1998 had not left TANF previously in the prior five calendar quarters (if they had, they would have been assigned to an earlier first-exit cohort). As illustrated in Tables 14 and 15, this restriction did not apply to those leaving in the earlier first-exit cohorts, resulting in systematic differences between early and later cohorts, only some of which were accounted for by measured variables. As such, this time variable may contribute by controlling for these differences.

Table 78: Factors Associated with TANF Recidivism After First Study Exit, Single-Parent Cases Headed by a Female

CDB Variable	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	Chi-Square Probability	Odds Ratio
Ethnicity (Compared to white)				
African-American	.58	.021	.0001	1.794
Hispanic	-.03	.031	.3272	0.970
Age of Adult Recipient (Compared to 31 and Older)				
Age: 16 and under	.23	.233	.3306	1.254
Age: 17 to 19	.64	.033	.0001	1.888
Age: 20 to 25	.38	.020	.0001	1.360
Age: 26 to 30	.02	.021	.4517	1.016
Family Variables				
Never married (compared to ever married)	.24	.019	.0001	1.266
Children (compared to those with no child in age range)				
Child under 1 year old	-.02	.026	.4025	0.978
Child over 1 and under 6 years old	.17	.011	.0001	1.184
Child between 6 and 13 years old	.13	.009	.0001	1.137
Welfare Variables				
Case Closed for Non-Cooperation	.65	.018	.0001	1.919
Case Closed for Earned Income	-.33	.021	.0001	0.722
Length of welfare spell (months) before first exit	.002	.0004	.0001	1.002
Education/Employment				
High school diploma (or more)	-.28	.016	.0001	0.759
Reported Earned Income in Month Prior to Exit	-.16	.019	.0001	0.850
Wages in First Quarter after Exit	-.36	.016	.0001	0.697
Work Experience (Compared to Other Work Experience)				
Professional/Managerial experience	-.28	.055	.0001	0.752
Clerical experience	-.18	.028	.0001	0.836
Sales experience	-.11	.041	.0057	0.893
Crafts/Operator experience	-.17	.047	.0004	0.847
Service sector experience	-.09	.020	.0001	0.915
Laborer experience	-.08	.023	.0004	0.922
Geo-Economic Zone (Compared to Central Rural Zones)				
Cook County region	.25	.034	.0001	1.373
Collar county region	-.12	.042	.0049	0.965
Downstate urban region	.10	.035	.0033	1.185
Rural south region	.21	.048	.0001	1.359
Control Variable				
Cohort Month	-.01	.001	.0001	0.989

Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB) and IDES Quarterly Wage Files

Analysis of the December 1998 Cohort

According to reports of leavers in the survey interview, nearly 82 percent (81.5%) of survey respondents had remained off the TANF welfare program continually during the study period, while nearly 19 percent (18.5%) had returned to TANF at least once in the six to eight months between exits and interviews. Only 14 percent were on TANF at the time of the interviews, in part because about one-fourth of those who had returned to TANF during the study period had exited again by the time they were interviewed (Table 79). Return rates were much higher in Cook County than downstate, with 22 percent of Cook County leavers returning during the study period compared to 9 percent of downstate leavers. The following analyses describe the characteristics associated with recidivism in the survey cohort and report the reasons given by respondents for returning to TANF cash assistance.

Table 79: Self-reported Recidivism Since December 1998 Exit			
	Total	Cook County	Downstate
Did not return to welfare since sample month	81.5%	77.8%	90.6%
Off welfare now but have returned since left in sample month	4.8%	5.8%	2.7%
Currently on welfare	13.7%	16.4%	6.7%
<i>weighted n</i>	<i>514</i>	<i>366</i>	<i>148</i>
<i>unweighted n</i>	<i>514</i>	<i>242</i>	<i>272</i>
Total who were off welfare when interviewed	86.3%	83.6%	93.3%
Total who returned to welfare since left in sample month	18.5%	22.2%	9.4%

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Characteristics Associated with Recidivism in the December 1998 Cohort

Selected characteristics of TANF leavers were examined to determine if they are associated with exit stability. Educational level and race appear to be important in this regard. As Table 80 shows, those without a high school degree were about twice as likely to have returned to TANF as those who completed high school or obtained a GED. The higher recidivism rates in Cook County do not result from lower educational levels, as recidivism rates for Cook County leavers were about double those for downstate leavers with comparable educational levels.

Recidivism rates also vary by race/ethnicity, with Hispanic leavers particularly likely to return to TANF—and African-American leavers more likely to do so than white leavers. Thirty-seven (37) percent of Hispanic leavers returned to TANF during the study period, as compared to 18 percent for African-Americans and 12 percent for whites. (The high recidivism rate for Hispanics found in the survey data appears to be related to low educational levels. Respondent Hispanic leavers were about twice as likely as African-American or white leavers to not have completed high school, and those who did not complete high school were much more likely than

their African-American and white counterparts to return to TANF. In comparison, Hispanics with high school degrees or GEDs were less likely to return to TANF than their African-American or white counterparts. Note that the relatively small number of Hispanic respondents makes these conclusions merely suggestive in nature.)

As noted for the administrative data, the higher recidivism rates for African-Americans versus whites results primarily from the concentration of African-Americans in Cook County, where recidivism rates were higher for all race/ethnicity groups. In fact, whites and African-Americans have quite similar recidivism rates in Cook County (with whites actually having a slightly higher rate among the respondents). Downstate, African-Americans were nearly twice as likely to return to TANF as white leavers.

Due to the possibility that those with young children may have more difficulty staying off TANF, the return patterns of those with and without a child under 3 were analyzed. For all respondents, there was virtually no difference in the return rate. This also was the case in Cook County. However, for downstate leavers, those with children less than 3 years old were nearly twice as likely to return to TANF compared to those without such children.

As might be expected, those with selected employment related characteristics experienced lower recidivism rates than those who did not. Results in Table 80 show the following.

- About one-fourth (24.5%) of leavers unemployed at sample month exit returned to TANF during the study period, as compared to 15 percent (14.9%) of those who were employed at exit.
- Nearly 30 percent (28.9%) of those whose TANF case closed for a non-cooperation reason returned to TANF prior to the interview, compared to about half this number (15%) for those whose case was closed for excess earned income.
- Somewhat less than 30 percent (27.8%) of those with no reported income in the fourth quarter of 1998 returned to TANF, compared to just less than half this number for those with reported income (12.8%).
- Only one in twenty (5.3%) of those employed consistently since they left TANF in the sample month returned to welfare during the study period compared to nearly one-quarter (23.8%) for those with inconsistent employment and about one-third (33.8%) who were consistently unemployed during this time period.

The above patterns are generally similar in both Cook County and downstate. However, for every employment (and unemployment) subgroup, the Cook County recidivism rate is greater than that found in downstate.

Table 80: Self-Reported Recidivism Rates for Selected Characteristics						
	Total	wt'd n	Cook County	n*	Downstate	n*
Education						
Less than high school degree	28.0%	157	33.3%	75	15.9%	81
High school degree or more	14.3%	357	17.5%	167	6.7%	191
Race/ethnicity						
White	11.9%	135	23.4%	31	6.7%	170
African-American	18.5%	335	19.9%	187	11.5%	90
Hispanic	37.2%	43	41.7%	24	14.3%	10
Children less than 3 years old						
No children less than 3	18.4%	282	23.0%	135	6.4%	144
Have children less than 3	18.5%	232	21.5%	107	12.7%	128
Employment at exit						
Employed at exit	14.9%	322	18.3%	141	8.3%	197
Unemployed at exit	24.5%	192	27.6%	101	12.9%	75
Type action reason						
Earned income	15.0%	153	20.8%	63	6.8%	106
Non-cooperation	28.9%	201	30.3%	116	19.2%	45
Any income in 4th Qtr, 1998						
No income reported	27.8%	205	31.1%	108	14.3%	79
Income reported	12.8%	298	15.3%	130	6.9%	181
Employed consistency since left						
Employed consistently since left	5.3%	189	7.4%	81	1.5%	121
Inconsistent employment	23.8%	248	26.7%	124	14.8%	111
Unemployed consistently	33.8%	77	41.1%	37	15.0%	40

* To inform the reader about the actual number of respondents upon which these results are based, actual ns for the two regions are reported. The weighted n for Cook County is 1.52 x the actual n. For downstate, the weighted n is just over half the actual number.

Data Sources: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield, IDHS Client Database (CDB), and IDHS Wage File

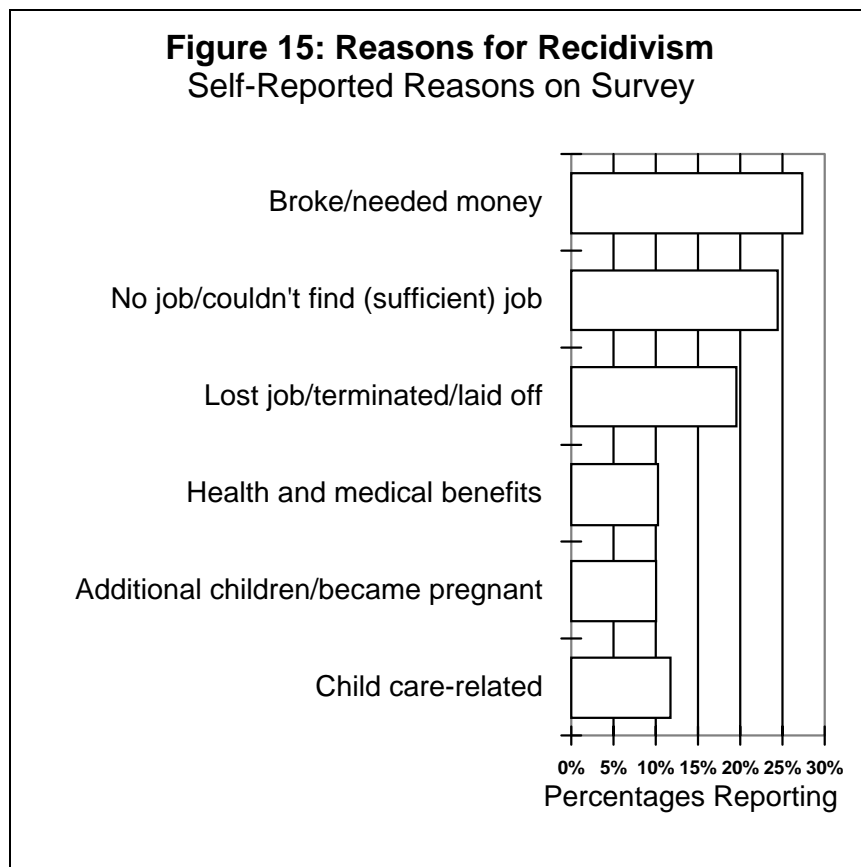
Reasons for Recidivism

Those who had returned to TANF during the study period were asked to describe why they had returned (Table 81). As illustrated in Figure 15, problems associated with employment were easily the most frequently mentioned response. Over 40 percent of the returnees said that they either could not find any or sufficient work (24%) or else had lost a job (19%). In addition, over one-quarter (27%) indicated that they were broke or needed (more) money to support their families, and it is likely that many of these also experienced employment difficulties.

Health and family composition issues also were important in explaining some returns to TANF. About one-tenth of the returnees cited a health or medical benefit problem for themselves or another family member as precipitating a return to TANF, while about the same number either were pregnant or had another child. Child care related problems were mentioned by about 12 percent of the returnees.

Table 81: Reasons Cited for Returning to TANF			
	Total	Cook County	Downstate
Broke/needed money	27.1%	27.8%	22.9%
No job/couldn't find (sufficient) job	24.2%	25.9%	13.7%
Lost job/terminated/laid off	19.4%	20.4%	13.7%
Health and medical benefits	10.1%	9.3%	15.4%
Additional children/became pregnant	9.9%	7.4%	24.6%
Child care-related	11.6%	13.0%	3.2%
Miscellaneous	7.6%	5.6%	20.1%
No answer	1.6%	1.9%	0.0%
<i>weighted n</i>	95	82	14
<i>unweighted n</i>	79	54	25

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield



Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Summary

Approximately 23 percent of the TANF leavers return to cash assistance at some point within the first six months after their first exit in the study period, and around 28 percent return at some point within the first year after exit (though data for 12-month follow-up are available only for some of the exit cohorts). Survey responses suggest the prominence of employment difficulties in explaining returns to TANF. About 40 percent of those who returned to TANF cited not being able to find a job or else losing a job as the primary reason for returning to TANF, and 25 percent said they had been unable to support their families.

In the analysis of administrative data, large differences in recidivism rates were found according to region and reasons for case closing. For example, leavers in Cook County were more likely to return to TANF within six months than were leavers downstate (28% versus 17% for downstate). Also, cases closed for non-cooperation reasons were more likely than those closed for earnings-related reasons to return to active status within 6 months (36% versus 14%). Further, regression results showed that, when holding other factors constant, limited education and work experience as well as region were associated with recidivism. A better understanding of the reasons for these recidivism differences is needed as welfare reform proceeds in Illinois.

Chapter 6

What Services and Supports do TANF Leavers Use and Need?

To understand what happens after clients leave TANF and how recidivism might be avoided or at least delayed, it is important to examine the other public services that are being used after exit. Similarly, it is important to consider the more informal supports that leavers may need and use after exit. This chapter addresses how leavers use public services and informal supports.

Population Analysis of Use of Services Reported in Administrative Data

Analysis of the administrative data is focused primarily on the food stamp and Medicaid programs, two programs used by almost all TANF clients while on cash assistance and believed to provide important support after exit. After we consider the usage levels of these two programs after exit, we examine how TANF leavers use several other services provided by IDHS, as well as information on child abuse services and foster care placements coordinated by the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (IDCFS).

Use of Food Stamps

Eligibility for food stamps is not dependent on TANF status. Indeed, because the income limits and program requirements are stricter for TANF than for food stamps, most former TANF recipients continue to be eligible for the food stamp program. Depending on the reason for TANF cancellation, food stamp enrollment may or may not continue automatically when TANF is canceled. When it does not continue, the family can reapply for food stamps. Families leaving TANF, however, may not know that they can receive food stamps without TANF or may not take the necessary steps to establish their continued eligibility. This raises the concern that many TANF leavers who are eligible for food stamps may not be receiving this support. To the extent that this leads to greater hardships or higher levels of TANF recidivism, it is important to understand this post-exit outcome.

The analyses that follow of this access to food stamps are hampered, however, by the quality of the data available on program participation. Specifically, there are two ways of authorizing food stamps in Illinois, and one of them, referred to as one-month issuances, was not included in the data made available to the UIS evaluation team. Special one-month issuances are made to most TANF leavers who are not continued on the regular food stamp rolls. Notification of this coverage is accompanied by a note that indicates that food stamp receipt will end unless the individual reapplies. In those cases in which the individuals do reapply, special one-month issuances are made until the case can be reactivated on the regular food stamp rolls. As such, the available data, without the one-month issuances, underestimate food stamp participation in the months after exit. There will even be some underestimation in subsequent months after exit, but, as discussed below, the percentages of survey respondents indicating that they were receiving food stamps at interview (6 to 8 months after exit) or at any time since exiting were consistent with the administrative data. This suggests that the problem of missing food stamp payment

data applies most significantly to the month of exit and the first month after exit, and so, in order not to misrepresent the magnitude of those not receiving food stamps, we have chosen not to report food stamp participation data for the month of exit and the first month after exit.

Analysis by Case Type

In representing the use of food stamps after exit, it is important to distinguish different questions and the analyses that address these questions. First, as with recidivism to cash assistance, one needs to distinguish current participation in the program in a given month after the first exit from cumulative participation, receiving food stamps in any of the subsequent months after exit. Current participation in the food stamps program provides an answer to the question of what percent of leavers are covered in any particular month after first exit. Cumulative participation, when compared to current participation, addresses the degree to which TANF leavers rely on this nutrition support service at all after exit.

The second distinction to make is whether the participation in food stamps is to be calculated for all TANF leavers or for only those who are not receiving cash assistance. Calculating food stamp participation for all TANF leavers provides an overall measure of program use. A separate question, however, concerns the ease of access to food stamp participation for those not on cash assistance. In that return to the food stamp program is often initiated when leavers return to cash assistance, this second question is not addressed by overall rates of food stamps usage by those who exit TANF. Instead, this question requires looking at those who are not on TANF cash assistance in the months after exit and reporting the percentages of this non-active group who have received food stamps, either for a current month or cumulatively, in the months after exit. Analyses based on these distinctions are reported below.

Current Use of Food Stamps Before and After Exit. The top half of Table 82 notes a dramatic decrease in food stamp use at point of exit. For single-parent cases, food stamp usage one month prior to exit was about 87 percent, while two months after exiting TANF, food stamp use was under 30 percent. The percentage of those receiving food stamps increased to a high of almost 35 percent in subsequent months, indicating that at least 65 percent of the single-parent case TANF leavers are not receiving food stamps in any given month after exit.

Two-parent cases show a similar decline at exit. Whereas in the month prior to exit food stamp usage was approximately 92 percent, two months after exit the percentage dropped to around 31 percent. This participation rate remained quite stable in subsequent months so that in the following four months after exit around 68 percent of the identified leavers were not receiving food stamps for that month.

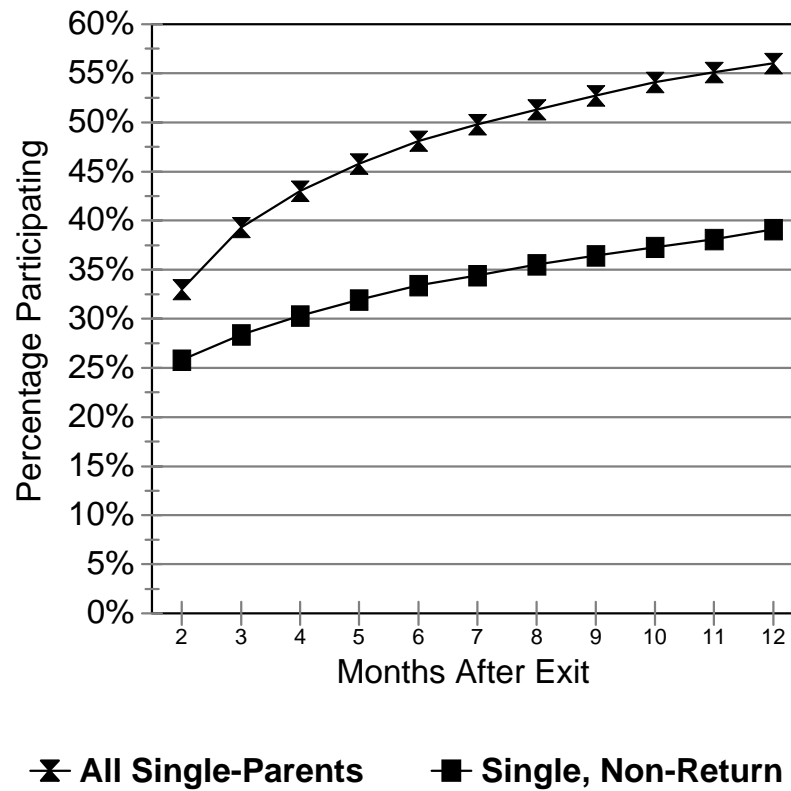
Current Use of Food Stamps in Non-Active Cases. In that some of the food stamp participation reported in top half of Table 82 is the result of cases becoming active again for cash assistance, the percentages reported there do not address whether leavers are managing to return to food stamps as a support without having to return to cash assistance. The alternative explanation for the post-exit use of food stamps is that much of it is just an artifact of some leavers returning to active TANF status. Thus, another perspective in understanding food stamp usage after exit is developed by considering only a subset of leavers, those who are not receiving TANF cash assistance. The bottom half of Table 82 reports the percent by month of use for

those who are not currently receiving cash assistance. Note that for single-parent cases, use of food stamps remains fairly constant after exit at around 22 percent. This suggests that almost all of the post-exit increase in current food stamp usage comes about when clients return to active TANF assistance and are registered for this service as part of this return to active status.

Cumulative Use of Food Stamps After Exit. In addition to examining the use of food stamps for each month after exit, it is useful also to examine the cumulative use of this service after exit. In the same way that cumulative TANF recidivism was examined in the previous chapter, the top half of Table 83 reports the percent of cases that ever used food stamps in the months after exit. Note, for example, that by six months after their first exit in the study period, almost half of the leavers (48.1% of single-parent cases and 47.7% of two-parent cases) have received food stamps at some point since their case was closed. That these percentages are around 13 to 16 percentage points higher than the rates for current participation reported in Table 82 (34.8% for single-parent cases; 31.6% for two-parent cases) indicates that food stamp participation is temporary for many after exiting TANF.

Cumulative Use of Food Stamps After Exit by Non-Recidivists. Just as it was important to examine monthly use of food stamps by those who were not currently receiving TANF cash assistance, so it is in understanding the cumulative use of food stamps after exit. For this purpose a different approach is used in selecting those not on TANF. Rather than consider the subset of leavers not currently on TANF, this analysis examines the subset of TANF leavers whose cases closed but did not reopen in the subsequent 12 months (there were 73,546 total cases that had data for the entire 12 months after exit and did not return to TANF during those 12 months). The bottom half of Table 83 provides the results of this analysis. As illustrated in Figure 16, much of the rise in the cumulative use of food stamps in the months following exit is due to the leavers who return to TANF cash assistance. For example, whereas the increase in cumulative food stamp use for all single-parent cases between the second month after exit and six months after exit was 15 percentage points (33% to 48.1%), the increase for single-parent cases which did not return to TANF for at least 12 months was much less (25.8% to 33.4%, or an increase of 7.6 percentage points).

Figure 16: Cumulative Food Stamp Use
All Single-Parent and Non-Return Cases



All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Table 82: Food Stamp Receipt Before and After First Exit, By Case Type																
Including Current TANF Cases	Months After First Exit* (Percentages)															
	3 Mo. before Exit	2 Mo. before Exit	1 Mo. before Exit	Mo. of Exit	1 Mo. after Exit	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Single-Parent (n=124,819)	85.1%	87.3%	87.2%			29.5%	33.0%	34.1%	34.6%	34.8%	34.8%	34.7%	34.2%	33.9%	33.4%	32.8%
Two-Parent (n=12,511)	83.7%	88.9%	92.3%			30.7%	32.2%	32.4%	32.0%	31.6%	31.3%	30.9%	30.3%	29.6%	28.9%	28.6%
All Cases (n=137,330)	85.0%	87.5%	87.6%			29.6%	32.9%	33.9%	34.4%	34.5%	34.5%	34.3%	33.8%	33.5%	33.0%	32.4%
Excluding Current TANF Cases**	Months After First Exit* (Percentages)															
	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit					
Single-Parent																
Two-Parent																
All Cases																

* All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit.

** When excluding current TANF cases, the sample size changes each month and so is not reported here; Table 69 reports on non-active TANF cases.

Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Table 83: Cumulative Food Stamp Receipt in Months After First Exit, By Case Type											
All Cases		Months After First Exit* (Percentages)									
Case Type	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Single-Parent (n=124,819)	33.0%	39.3%	43.0%	45.8%	48.1%	49.8%	51.3%	52.7%	54.1%	55.1%	56.0%
Two-Parent (n=12,511)	36.3%	40.8%	43.8%	45.9%	47.7%	49.1%	50.7%	51.9%	53.1%	54.2%	55.2%
All Cases (n=137,330)	33.3%	39.4%	43.1%	45.8%	48.0%	49.7%	51.3%	52.6%	54.0%	55.0%	55.9%
Only Cases that Remain Closed for 12 Months		Months After First Exit* (Percentages)									
Case Type	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Single-Parent (n=64,958)	25.8%	28.4%	30.3%	31.9%	33.4%	34.4%	35.5%	36.4%	37.3%	38.1%	39.1%
Two-Parent (n=8,588)	32.8%	35.6%	37.7%	39.0%	40.3%	41.4%	42.4%	43.4%	44.1%	44.9%	45.9%
All Cases (n=73,546)	26.6%	29.3%	31.1%	32.7%	34.2%	35.3%	36.3%	37.3%	38.1%	38.9%	39.9%

* All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Analysis by State Region for Single-Parent Cases

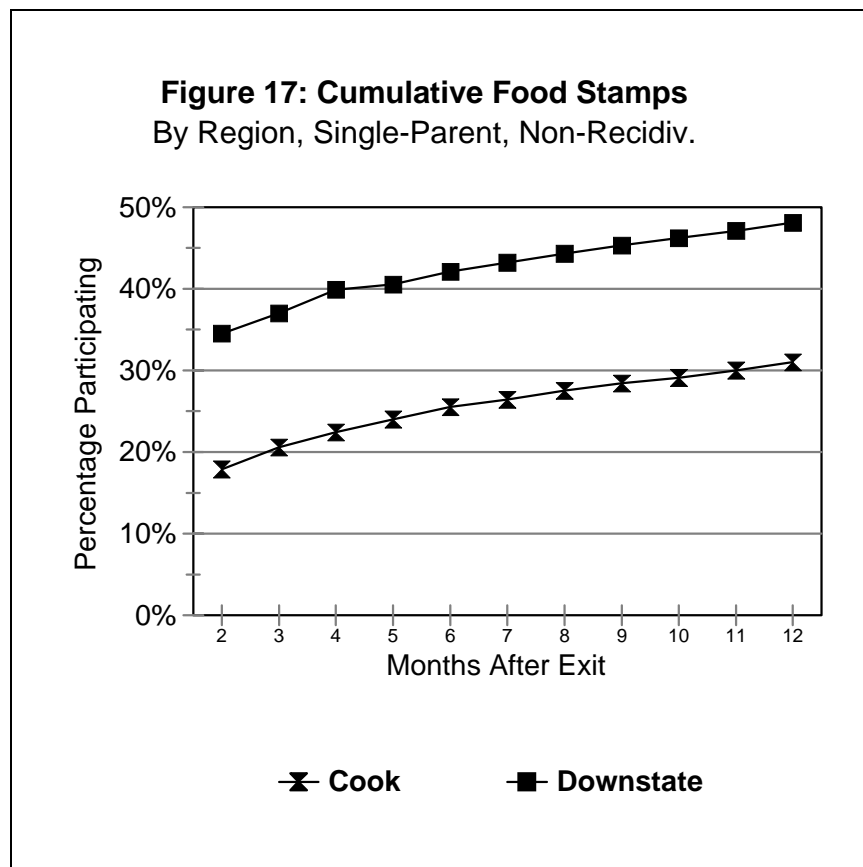
One of the concerns with welfare reform is that particular groups may not be receiving the services that are available to help them remain off TANF cash assistance. Given the challenges that seem to exist for TANF leavers in urban areas, the following analyses describe the differences in use of food stamps between Cook County leavers and downstate leavers. As with the analyses in previous chapters, we now shift our attention to single-parent cases in an effort to maintain clarity when disaggregating by region and to retain the focus on the type of cases that predominate in TANF caseloads.

Current Use for Single-Parent Cases. The percent receiving food stamps while on cash assistance was similar for cases in Cook County and downstate. As Table 84 shows for single-parent cases, however, the drop in receipt of food stamps after exit was much greater in Cook County than downstate. Specifically, the percent of leavers receiving food stamps two months after exit was almost eight percentage points higher downstate (34%) than in Cook County (26.3%). The top half of Table 84 shows that use of food stamps converges for the two regions in later months after exit, to the point where the percentages are equal 12 months after exit. The bottom half of Table 84 considers only those cases that are not active on TANF in a particular month after exit, and, as with the analyses by case type, it shows that much of the increase in participation from two months after exit and beyond is a function of the leavers returning to cash assistance. When cases that are currently active again on TANF are excluded, the differences between the two regions become even more striking. For example, two months after exit the participation rate downstate for those not active on TANF is almost twice that of Cook County (29.1% versus 14.7%). In subsequent months after exit the downstate region maintains a nearly 10 percentage point difference in usage from Cook County.

Cumulative Use After Exit for Single-Parent Cases. Table 85 shows a similar difference between Cook County and downstate counties, here with regard to the cumulative use of food stamps after exit. The top half of Table 85 records the percentage of Cook County and downstate leavers that have ever received food stamps after exit. As with the analysis by case type, downstate leavers are much more likely than Cook County leavers to have ever received food stamps in the first few months after exit, but the gap between the two regions decreases in subsequent months as use in Cook County increases. The bottom half of Table 85 and Figure 17, however, show that most of the increases in cumulative food stamp use after exit are due to a return to TANF assistance. When analyzing only those leavers who did not return to cash assistance in the subsequent 12 months, the gap between Cook County and downstate counties remains around 16 or 17 percentage points.

Analysis by Administrative Reason for Case Closing for Single-Parent Cases

Eligibility for food stamps after leaving TANF is not determined by the administrative reason for case closure (see the discussion below for Medicaid). Nonetheless, there is some concern that those whose TANF cases are closed for non-cooperation reasons may be particularly at risk for not receiving important services for which they are eligible. In what follows, we analyze food stamp participation, both current use and cumulative use, by the administrative reason for case closing. We focus on single-parent cases as this type constitutes over 90 percent of TANF leavers.



All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses on eight or more months after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Current Use for Single-Parent Cases. In trying to understand the difference between Cook County and downstate usage of food stamps, one factor to consider is the administrative reason for case closure. Knowing that cases in Cook County are much more likely to be closed for non-cooperation than downstate cases, one might expect that cases closed for non-cooperation would be less likely to receive food stamps after exit than are cases closed for earned income reasons. As shown in Table 86, there is some difference in the second month after exit

(24.8% for non-cooperation reasons versus 30.7% for earned income reasons), but this gap decreases in subsequent months.

A different view of the problems confronting those whose cases close for non-cooperation is seen in Table 87. When those returning to cash assistance are excluded from the analysis, it is apparent that the rise in food stamp participation for non-cooperation cases is driven by the high rate at which they return to TANF after exit. Excluding those who return to TANF makes the cases closed for non-cooperation reasons stand out in comparison with all others. Whereas around 28 percent of cases closed for income reasons and not currently on TANF were receiving food stamps in the second month after exit, only seven percent of cases closed for non-cooperation reasons and not on TANF received food stamps in that month. This the gap remains, with the rate of food stamp participation for those closing for income reasons being around twice the rate for non-cooperation cases by six months after exit (25.4% versus 12.6%)

Cumulative Use After Exit for Single-Parent Cases. The cumulative levels of receipt of food stamps in any month after exit show similar distinctions between those closed for income reasons and those closed for non-cooperation. Shown in Table 88, the rates for those in the income and non-cooperation categories are similar by seven months after exit (51.7% for those closed for income reasons and 47% of those closed for non-cooperation). But, as before and as shown in Table 89, this growing convergence is largely the result of TANF leavers returning to cash assistance in the time after exit. When excluding those who return to TANF assistance within 12 months after first exit, the food stamp participation of those closed for non-cooperation is less than half that of those closed for income reasons (22.2% versus 49.2%).

Table 84: Food Stamp Receipt Before and After First Exit for Single-Parent Cases, By Region																
Including Current TANF Cases	Months After First Exit* (Percentages)															
Case Type	3 Mo. before Exit	2 Mo. before Exit	1 Mo. before Exit	Mo. of Exit	1 Mo. after Exit	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Cook County (n=71,838)	86.8%	88.1%	86.5%			26.3%	31.3%	32.7%	33.8%	34.1%	34.2%	34.1%	33.6%	33.6%	33.3%	32.8%
Downstate (n=52,981)	82.8%	86.3%	88.1%			34.0%	35.4%	35.9%	35.8%	35.7%	35.6%	35.4%	34.9%	34.3%	33.6%	32.8%
All Single-Parent Cases (n=124,819)	85.1%	87.3%	87.2%			29.5%	33.0%	34.1%	34.6%	34.8%	34.8%	34.7%	34.2%	33.9%	33.4%	32.8%
Excluding Active TANF Cases**	Months After First Exit* (Percentages)															
Case Type	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit					
Cook County																
Downstate																
All Single-Parent Cases																

* All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit

** When excluding active TANF cases, sample size varies from month to month and is not reported here; Table 70 provides this information.

Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

**Table 85: Cumulative Food Stamp Receipt in the Months After First Exit for Single-Parent Cases,
By State Region**

All Cases	Months After First Exit** (Percentages)										
	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Cook County (n=71,838)	27.9%	35.3%	39.5%	42.6%	45.0%	46.8%	48.2%	49.5%	51.1%	52.1%	53.0%
Downstate (n=52,981)	40.0%	44.7%	47.8%	50.2%	52.3%	53.8%	55.5%	56.8%	57.9%	58.8%	59.6%
All Single-Parent Cases (n=124,819)	33.0%	39.3%	43.0%	45.8%	48.1%	49.8%	51.3%	52.7%	54.1%	55.1%	56.0%
Only Cases that Remain Closed for 12 Months	Months After First Exit** (Percentages)										
	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Cook County (n=34,010)	17.9%	20.6%	22.4%	24.0%	25.5%	26.4%	27.5%	28.4%	29.1%	30.0%	31.0%
Downstate (n=30,948)	34.5%	37.0%	39.9%	40.5%	42.1%	43.2%	44.3%	45.3%	46.2%	47.1%	48.1%
Single-Parent Non- Recidivist (n=64,958)	25.8%	28.4%	30.3%	31.9%	33.4%	34.4%	35.5%	36.4%	37.3%	38.1%	39.1%

* All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Table 86: Food Stamps Receipt in Months Before and After First Exit for Single-Parent Cases, by Reason for Case Closure																
Including Current TANF Cases	Months After First Exit* (Percentages)															
	3 Mo. before Exit	2 Mo. before Exit	1 Mo. before Exit	Mo. of Exit	1 Mo. after Exit	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Closing Reason																
Closed for Income Reasons (n=39,738)	87.6%	89.9%	90.3%			30.7%	32.1%	32.4%	32.6%	32.9%	33.4%	33.9%	33.7%	33.3%	32.9%	32.9%
Closed for Non- Cooperation (n=42,128)	83.0%	85.0%	84.5%			24.8%	31.3%	33.2%	34.1%	34.4%	34.2%	33.7%	32.9%	32.5%	31.9%	31.2%
Closed for Other Reasons (n=18,223)	83.7%	86.3%	85.8%			21.9%	25.9%	27.5%	28.6%	29.3%	29.4%	29.2%	29.1%	29.4%	29.2%	28.4%
Closing Reason Unknown (n=24,730)	85.8%	87.8%	87.7%			41.4%	42.6%	43.0%	43.3%	42.6%	42.2%	41.5%	40.5%	40.7%	39.5%	38.2%
All Single- Parent Cases (n=124,819)	85.1%	87.3%	87.2%			29.5%	33.0%	34.1%	34.6%	34.8%	34.8%	34.7%	34.2%	33.9%	33.4%	32.8%

* All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Table 87: Food Stamps Receipt in Months After First Exit for Non-Active, Single-Parent Cases, by Reason for Case Closure											
Excluding Current TANF Cases	Months After First Exit* (Percentages)										
Closing Reason	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Closed for Income Reasons**	27.9%	27.0%	26.2%	25.6%	25.4%	25.6%	25.9%	25.8%	25.3%	25.1%	25.3%
Closed for Non-Cooperation**	7.0%	9.4%	10.8%	11.8%	12.6%	13.1%	13.3%	13.4%	13.5%	13.5%	13.4%
Closed for Other Reasons**	17.1%	19.1%	19.4%	19.7%	19.6%	19.4%	19.2%	19.2%	19.3%	19.1%	18.6%
Closing Reason Unknown	34.0%	33.4%	32.9%	32.6%	31.6%	31.2%	30.5%	29.5%	29.7%	28.8%	27.7%
All Single-Parent Cases**	21.1%	21.8%	21.9%	22.0%	21.9%	22.0%	22.1%	21.9%	21.7%	21.5%	21.3%

* All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit.

** When excluding current TANF cases, sample size changes each month and so is not reported here; see Table 73 for recidivism rates by case closure reasons.

Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Table 88: Cumulative Food Stamps Receipt in Months After First Exit for Single-Parent Cases, by Reason for Case Closure											
Including Current TANF Cases	Months After First Exit* (Percentages)										
Closing Reason	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Closed for Income Reasons (n=39,738)	37.5%	42.4%	45.4%	47.8%	49.9%	51.7%	53.9%	55.6%	57.1%	58.2%	59.4%
Closed for Non- Cooperation (n=42,128)	25.5%	34.2%	39.3%	42.7%	45.2%	47.0%	48.2%	49.3%	50.2%	51.1%	51.7%
Closed for Other Reasons (n=18,223)	23.7%	29.4%	33.2%	36.1%	38.5%	40.2%	41.9%	43.4%	45.0%	46.5%	47.6%
Closing Reason Unknown (n=24,730)	45.5%	50.1%	52.9%	55.3%	57.2%	58.5%	59.3%	60.0%	62.4%	62.8%	63.0%
All Single-Parent Cases (n=124,819)	33.0%	39.3%	43.0%	45.8%	48.1%	49.8%	51.3%	52.7%	54.1%	55.1%	56.0%

* All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Table 89: Cumulative Food Stamps Receipt in Months After First Exit for Non-Recidivist, Single-Parent Cases, by Reason for Case Closure											
Excluding Cases that Return to TANF within 12 Months	Months After First Exit* (Percentages)										
	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Closing Reason											
Closed for Income Reasons (n=23,010)	35.5%	38.2%	39.9%	41.3%	42.8%	44.0%	45.1%	46.1%	47.0%	47.9%	49.2%
Closed for Non-Cooperation (n=17,494)	7.9%	10.6%	12.7%	14.4%	16.1%	17.3%	18.5%	19.4%	20.2%	21.2%	22.2%
Closed for Other Reasons (n=10,817)	19.8%	23.1%	25.2%	26.9%	28.2%	29.2%	30.1%	31.0%	31.7%	32.5%	33.3%
Closing Reason Unknown (n=13,637)	37.1%	39.0%	40.6%	42.2%	43.6%	44.5%	45.5%	46.3%	47.2%	47.9%	48.6%
All Single-Parent Cases (n=64,958)	25.8%	28.4%	30.3%	31.9%	33.4%	34.4%	35.6%	36.4%	37.3%	38.1%	39.1%

* All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Participation in Medicaid

The second major service outcome tracked for this study is the percentage of TANF leavers who continue to receive Medicaid after exit. Most former TANF recipients are potentially eligible for Medicaid or KidCare, the Illinois Child Health Insurance Program. Eligibility for these programs is not dependent solely on TANF status. Families who qualify for Medicaid or KidCare may be enrolled when the TANF case is canceled. When that does not happen, the family can reapply for those programs. However, families leaving TANF may not know that they can receive Medicaid or KidCare without TANF or may not take the necessary steps to establish their eligibility.

Families with new or increased earnings which result in cancellation of TANF automatically receive extended Medicaid (transitional Medicaid) for six months and most can qualify for an additional six months. Most families canceled for failure to cooperate with TANF employment and training requirements are potentially eligible for Medicaid because those requirements do not affect Medicaid eligibility. Those who leave TANF because of unearned income may still qualify for Medicaid, or their children may qualify for KidCare. Some circumstances, such as failure to keep an appointment to verify continued eligibility, may end eligibility for both Medicaid and TANF.

Analysis by Case Type: Single-Parent and Two-Parent Cases

Our analyses of Medicaid participation begin with an overview of all TANF leaver cases, both single- and two-parent cases. As with food stamps, the initial concern is the degree to which TANF leavers are covered by this important support program, both in terms of current (monthly) and cumulative participation after exit.

Current Participation in Medicaid Before and After Exit. The top half of Table 90 reports the monthly participation in Medicaid by case type. Reviewing first the single-parent cases, the table indicates that adult participation in Medicaid is almost universal in the month before exit, around 99 percent (98.7%), but in the month of exit coverage drops to around 42 percent (41.8%). There is some subsequent increase so that by three months after exit 57 percent of the single-parent adult leavers in the study population are participating in this program.

A similar pattern was observed for two-parent cases, though the overall level of after-exit participation is higher. Approximately 100 percent (99.9%) of the identified adult leavers in two-parent cases are covered by Medicaid in the month before exit, and, on average, around 57 percent (56.5%) are covered in the month of exit. This average percentage of coverage increases so that by the third month after exit almost 65 percent are participating in Medicaid.

Current Participation in Medicaid for Non-Active Cases. Given the assumption that access to services like food stamps and Medicaid might help leavers remain off of TANF cash assistance, it is useful to examine the patterns of Medicaid participation by those leavers not on TANF in a given month. It is useful to know, for example, whether the increases in Medicaid coverage after exit represent efforts by caseworkers to alert leavers to their possible eligibility and seek to enroll them. An alternative explanation for this increase is that many of those who

left without Medicaid are returning to active TANF status and so receive Medicaid coverage automatically.

To examine these possibilities, the bottom half of Table 90 presents the participation rates for Medicaid for those who have not returned to TANF assistance in the year following exit. As with food stamps, this subgroup lets us see if there is an increase in participation separate from returning to TANF assistance. We see, for example, in the row for single-parent cases in the bottom half of Table 90 that, while there is an increase of around seven percentage points in the average of Medicaid coverage between the month of exit and third month off assistance (from 41.8% to 48.9%), this increase is about half of the increase for single-parent cases in the top half of the table (41.8% to 57%, or 15.2 percentage points). This suggests that there is some increase in Medicaid coverage after exit even without a return to TANF, but most of the increase is due to returning to active TANF status.

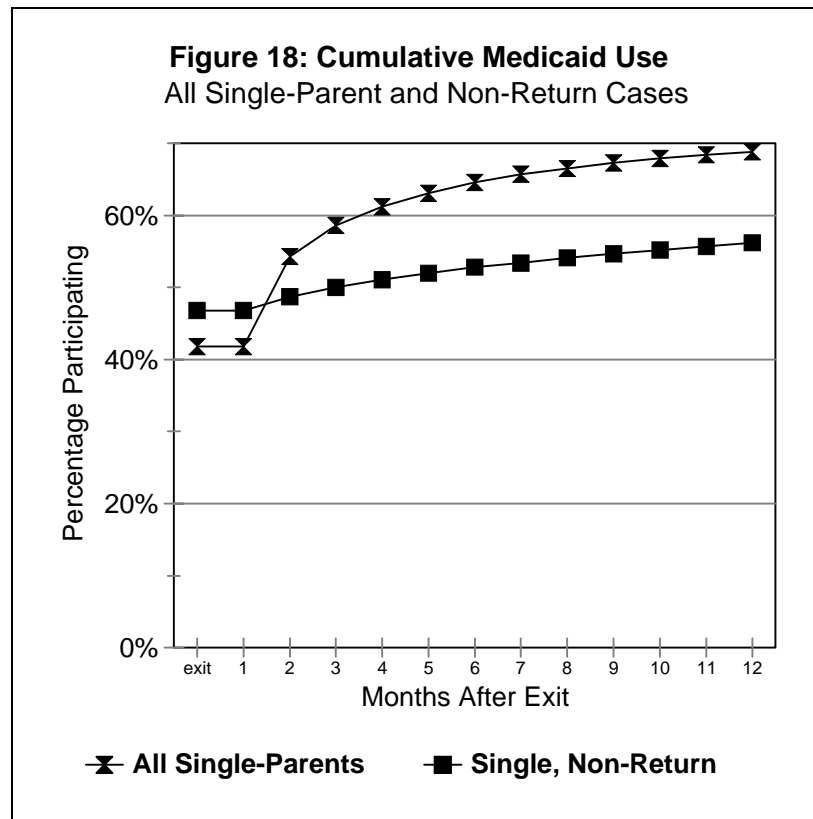
A similar pattern was found with two-parent cases, but, perhaps because a higher percentage receive Medicaid after exit, the contrast is less notable between the top and bottom halves of Table 90. Whereas the increase in Medicaid coverage for all two-parent cases increases around eight percentage points from the month of exit to three months after exit (from 56.5% to 64.7%), when considering only those who are not active on TANF the increase is only around five percentage points from month of exit to three months after exit (56.5% to 61.7%).

Cumulative Participation in Medicaid. To understand the participation in Medicaid by leavers it is useful also to examine the cumulative levels that represent the percentage of leavers that have been covered by Medicaid at any point after their first study exit. The top half of Table 91 presents these cumulative rates and shows, for example, that by three months after first exit around 59 percent (58.6%) of single-parent cases had participated in Medicaid at some point after leaving TANF; by six months after exit another six percent had participated in Medicaid (to 64.6%) and by 12 months after exit the cumulative rate climbed to around 69 percent (68.8%).

Two-parent cases had higher cumulative rates of participation in Medicaid after exit. Around two-thirds (66.3%) had participated in Medicaid by three months after exit. This rises to over 70 percent (70.3%) six months after exit and to over 73 percent (73.5%) within a year after exit.

Cumulative Participation in Medicaid by 12-Month Non-Recidivists. As with the numbers for current use, cumulative participation in Medicaid can be interpreted also in terms of the coverage among those who do not return to active TANF status. The bottom half of Table 91 reports the participation rates for those who do not return to TANF for at least 12 months after first exit. As shown in Figure 18, when excluding those who return to TANF, there is a much smaller increase between exit and three months after exit in the percentage who have participated in Medicaid. The increase in cumulative participation for all single-parent cases in that time period (as shown in the top half of Table 91) was about 17 percentage points (41.8% to 58.6%). But the increase for all non-recidivist single-parent cases (as shown in the bottom half of Table 91) was only about three percentage points (from 46.8% to 50%) between the month of exit and three months after exit. At six months after exit, non-recidivist cumulative participation for single-parent cases had climbed only to 53 percent (52.8%). As with current participation in Medicaid, the two-parent cases revealed a similar pattern as the single-parent cases, but the

participation rates were higher and the contrast was smaller between statistics for all two-parent cases and those not returning to TANF for one year.



All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses on eight or more months after exit.

Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Table 90: Medicaid Participation Before and After First Exit, by Case Type																	
Including Current TANF Cases	Months After First Exit*																
	3 Mo. before Exit	2 Mo. before Exit	1 Mo. before Exit	Mo. of Exit	1 Mo. after Exit	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit	
	Single-Parent (n=124,819)	92.8%	96.0%	98.7%	41.8%	41.5%	53.7%	57.0%	57.6%	55.8%	51.7%	50.0%	47.9%	47.4%	47.1%	44.9%	40.0%
	Two-Parent (n=12,511)	89.4%	95.0%	99.9%	56.5%	55.9%	62.5%	64.7%	65.0%	62.4%	56.4%	54.0%	51.1%	50.3%	49.9%	46.7%	39.2%
	All Cases (n=137,330)	92.5%	95.9%	98.8%	43.1%	42.8%	54.5%	57.7%	58.3%	56.4%	52.1%	50.4%	48.2%	47.6%	57.4%	45.1%	39.9%
Excluding Current TANF Cases**	Months After First Exit*																
Case Type				Mo. of Exit	1 Mo. after Exit	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit	
Single-Parent				41.8%	41.5%	47.2%	48.9%	48.7%	45.9%	40.8%	38.8%	36.6%	36.4%	36.1%	33.9%	28.5%	
Two-Parent				56.5%	55.9%	60.1%	61.7%	61.8%	58.8%	52.2%	49.7%	46.7%	46.1%	45.9%	42.7%	35.0%	
All Cases				43.1%	42.8%	48.4%	50.1%	50.0%	47.2%	42.0%	39.9%	37.6%	37.4%	37.2%	34.9%	29.2%	

* All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit.

** When excluding current TANF cases, sample size changes each month and so is not reported here; see Table 69.

Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Table 91: Cumulative Medicaid Participation in Months After First Exit, by Case Type													
	Months After First Exit*												
Case Type	Month of Exit	1 Mo. after Exit	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Single-Parent (n=124,819)	41.8%	41.8%	54.3%	58.6%	61.2%	63.1%	64.6%	65.7%	66.5%	67.3%	67.9%	68.4%	68.8%
Two-Parent (n=12,511)	56.5%	56.5%	63.4%	66.3%	68.3%	69.5%	70.5%	71.3%	72.0%	72.6%	73.1%	73.2%	73.5%
All Cases (n=137,330)	43.1%	43.1%	55.1%	59.3%	61.9%	63.7%	65.1%	66.2%	67.0%	67.8%	68.4%	68.9%	69.3%
Excluding TANF Recidivism in 12 Months	Months After First Exit* (Percentages)												
Case Type	Month of Exit	1 Mo. after Exit	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Single-Parent (n=64,958)	46.8%	46.8%	48.7%	50.0%	51.1%	52.0%	52.8%	53.4%	54.1%	54.7%	55.2%	55.7%	56.2%
Two-Parent (n=8,588)	58.2%	58.2%	60.8%	62.3%	63.4%	64.1%	64.7%	65.3%	65.8%	66.4%	66.9%	67.4%	67.8%
All Cases (n=73,546)	48.1%	48.1%	50.1%	51.5%	52.5%	53.4%	54.2%	54.8%	55.5%	56.0%	56.6%	57.1%	57.6%

* All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Analysis by State Region

Having presented an overview of Medicaid participation after exit, we now shift to a focus on single-parent cases (which constitute over 90% of all case closures) disaggregated by region. The concern to be addressed in these analyses is whether TANF leavers face greater challenges in being enrolled in Medicaid in Cook County or downstate.

Current Use for Single-Parent Cases. The differences in Medicaid participation rates for Cook County and downstate counties parallel the results found for food stamps. As before, those in Cook County are less likely to receive Medicaid in the first few months after exit, but this gap decreases over the subsequent months (see Table 92). The bottom half of Table 92 presents a somewhat different perspective, wherein those returning to TANF assistance are excluded and only those not active in a particular month are used to note the differences in Medicaid coverage between Cook County leavers and downstate leavers. Seen this way the gap between Cook County and downstate leavers starts at around 18 percentage points (34% to 52.3%) and narrows to about 9 percentage points (24.3% to 33.2%) at 12 months after exit.

Cumulative Use After Exit for Single-Parent Cases. Cumulative participation in Medicaid, presented in Table 93, also highlights the gap between Cook County and downstate, with downstate leavers being more likely to participate in Medicaid after exit. The bottom half of Table 93, and Figure 19, confirms that, when excluding anyone who has returned to cash assistance in 12 months, the gap between Cook County and downstate remains fairly constant, at around 14 percentage points in subsequent months after exit. The administrative data do not provide direct evidence of why this gap exists between Cook County and downstate—there may be differences in IDHS activities in the two regions or it may be that other regional factors are responsible. The persistence of this gap, however, suggests that it reflects a problem that does require further attention for possible policy solutions.

Table 92: Medicaid Participation Before and After First Exit, by Region																
Including Current TANF Cases	Months After First Exit*															
	3 Mo. before Exit	2 Mo. before Exit	1 Mo. before Exit	Mo. of Exit	1 Mo. after Exit	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Cook County (n=71,838)	94.4%	96.9%	98.6%	34.0%	33.8%	49.5%	53.7%	54.6%	53.3%	50.1%	48.8%	46.8%	46.2%	45.8%	43.9%	39.7%
Downstate (n=52,981)	90.7%	94.8%	98.7%	52.3%	51.9%	59.3%	61.4%	61.7%	59.2%	53.9%	51.7%	49.3%	48.9%	48.7%	46.2%	40.4%
All Single-Parent Cases (n=124,819)	92.8%	96.0%	98.7%	41.8%	41.5%	53.7%	57.0%	57.6%	55.8%	51.7%	50.0%	47.9%	47.4%	47.1%	44.9%	40.0%
Excluding Current TANF Cases**	Months After First Exit*															
	3 Mo. before Exit	2 Mo. before Exit	1 Mo. before Exit	Mo. of Exit	1 Mo. after Exit	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Cook County				34.0%	33.8%	40.2%	42.2%	42.1%	39.7%	35.4%	33.7%	31.8%	31.5%	31.1%	29.1%	24.3%
Downstate				52.3%	51.9%	55.8%	56.9%	56.6%	53.4%	47.3%	44.8%	42.2%	42.0%	41.8%	39.3%	33.2%
All Single-Parent Cases				41.8%	41.5%	47.2%	48.9%	48.7%	45.9%	40.8%	38.8%	36.6%	36.4%	36.1%	33.9%	28.5%

*All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit.

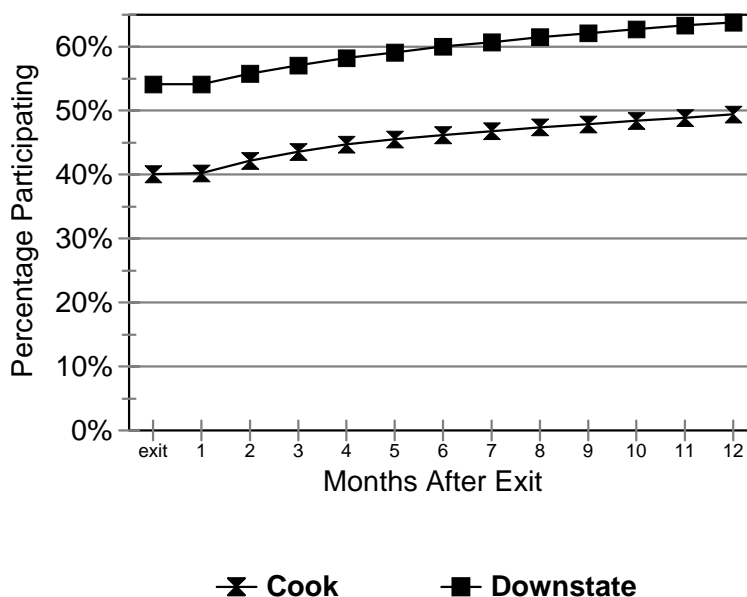
** When excluding current TANF cases, sample size changes each month and so is not reported here; see Table 70 for recidivism rates by region.

Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Table 93: Cumulative Medicaid Participation in Months After First Exit, by Region													
Including TANF Recidivists	Months After First Exit*												
	Month of Exit	1 Mo. after Exit	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Cook County (n=71,838)	34.0%	34.0%	49.9%	55.2%	58.1%	60.3%	61.8%	62.9%	63.6%	64.4%	65.0%	65.6%	66.1%
Downstate (n=52,981)	52.3%	52.4%	60.2%	63.3%	65.4%	67.1%	68.4%	69.4%	70.3%	71.0%	71.4%	71.8%	72.3%
All Single-Parent Cases (n=124,819)	41.8%	41.8%	54.3%	58.6%	61.2%	63.1%	64.6%	65.7%	66.5%	67.3%	67.9%	68.4%	68.8%
Excluding TANF Recidivism in 12 Months	Months After First Exit*												
	Month of Exit	1 Mo. after Exit	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Cook County (n=34,010)	40.1%	40.2%	42.2%	43.6%	44.7%	45.5%	46.2%	46.8%	47.4%	47.9%	48.4%	48.9%	49.4%
Downstate (n=30,948)	54.1%	54.1%	55.8%	57.1%	58.2%	59.1%	60.0%	60.7%	61.5%	62.1%	62.7%	63.3%	63.8%
All Single-Parent Cases (n=64,948)	46.8%	46.8%	48.7%	50.0%	51.1%	52.0%	52.8%	53.4%	54.1%	54.7%	55.2%	55.7%	56.2%

* All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Figure 19: Cumulative Medicaid Use
By Region, Single-Prt., No TANF Return



*All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses on eight or more months after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)*

Analysis by Administrative Reason for Case Closure

Coverage by Medicaid after exiting TANF has a direct relationship with the administrative reason for case closing. The following analyses address the current and cumulative use of this support program by the single-parent cases which predominate the population of TANF leavers.

Current Use for Single-Parent Cases. Those who leave TANF for income-related reasons are eligible to participate in the Medicaid program. Accordingly, as shown in Table 94, almost 100 percent of those leaving for income related reasons are participating in Medicaid in the month of exit (99.1%). In contrast, almost none of those whose cases closed for non-cooperation are participating in Medicaid in the month of exit (3.6%). This large gap is reduced over subsequent months, but it continues when, as shown in Table 95, the analysis excludes those who are active on TANF cash assistance in any particular month.

Cumulative Use After Exit for Single-Parent Cases. Cumulative participation in Medicaid, as shown in Table 96, also highlights that those who are closed for income-related reasons have almost complete participation in Medicaid in some month after exit. This stands in stark contrast to those who leave for non-cooperation reasons, who have less than a fifty percent chance (46.7%) of being involved in Medicaid at some point in the first six months after exit.

Examining those cases that do not re-open for TANF assistance within 12 months after the first exit (see Table 97) reveals an even starker contrast between those cases closed for income reasons and those closed for non-cooperation. Whereas essentially all leavers (99.3%) whose case closed for earned income reasons have been covered by Medicaid at some point in the first three months after exit, only 10 percent (9.9%) of those on cases closed for non-cooperation reasons were covered at any point in those three months. Even by 12 months after exit, only 22 percent (21.9%) of those with non-cooperation case closing reasons had been covered by Medicaid at any point in that year.

Table 94: Medicaid Participation Before and After First Exit, by Reason for Case Closure																
Including Current TANF Cases	Months After First Exit*															
	3 Mo. before Exit	2 Mo. before Exit	1 Mo. before Exit	Mo. of Exit	1 Mo. after Exit	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Closing Reason																
Closed for Income Reasons (n=39,738)	94.5%	97.2%	99.4%	99.1%	98.7%	98.5%	97.9%	95.5%	87.0%	73.7%	68.1%	62.5%	61.4%	60.6%	54.9%	41.4%
Closed for Non-Cooperation (n=42,128)	92.1%	95.5%	98.0%	3.6%	3.5%	27.6%	34.7%	37.8%	39.7%	40.4%	40.7%	40.1%	39.6%	39.3%	39.0%	38.4%
Closed for Other Reasons (n=18,223)	90.7%	94.9%	98.5%	10.3%	10.0%	18.6%	22.4%	22.9%	23.9%	25.5%	26.5%	26.9%	27.2%	27.9%	28.1%	28.0%
Closing Reason Unknown (n=24,730)	92.9%	95.9%	98.6%	37.8%	37.3%	51.8%	54.7%	56.1%	56.6%	54.9%	53.9%	52.7%	52.1%	52.7%	51.4%	48.9%
All Single-Parent Cases (n=124,819)	92.8%	96.0%	98.7%	41.8%	41.5%	53.7%	57.0%	57.6%	55.8%	51.7%	50.0%	47.9%	47.4%	47.1%	44.9%	40.0%

* All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Table 95: Medicaid Participation in Months After First Exit for Non-Active, Single-Parent Cases, by Reason for Case Closure												
Closing Reason**	Months After First Exit*											
	1 Mo. after Exit	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Closed for Income Reasons	98.7%	98.5%	97.8%	95.1%	85.5%	70.4%	64.1%	57.6%	56.4%	55.4%	49.1%	34.2%
Closed for Non-Cooperation	3.5%	7.3%	10.8%	13.5%	15.6%	17.3%	18.6%	19.0%	19.5%	20.1%	20.3%	20.3%
Closed for Other Reasons	10.0%	13.1%	14.5%	13.4%	13.3%	14.2%	15.0%	15.5%	15.9%	16.4%	16.8%	16.9%
Closing Reason Unknown	37.3%	44.1%	45.9%	46.8%	47.0%	44.9%	43.8%	42.7%	42.2%	43.0%	41.6%	39.2%
All Single-Parent Cases	41.5%	47.2%	48.9%	48.7%	45.9%	40.8%	38.8%	36.6%	36.4%	36.1%	33.9%	28.5%

* All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit.

** When excluding current TANF cases, sample size changes each month and so is not reported here; see Table 73 for recidivism rates by case closure reason

Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Table 96: Cumulative Medicaid Participation After First Exit for Single-Parent Cases, by Reason for Case Closure													
Including Current TANF Cases	Months After Exit*												
	Mo. of Exit	1 Mo. after Exit	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Closing Reasons													
Closed for Income Reasons (n=39,738)	99.1%	99.2%	99.2%	99.3%	99.3%	99.4%	99.4%	99.4%	99.5%	99.5%	99.5%	99.5%	99.6%
Closed for Non-Cooperation (n=42,128)	3.6%	3.7%	27.8%	36.2%	40.9%	44.3%	46.7%	48.6%	49.6%	50.1%	51.5%	52.2%	52.6%
Closed for Other Reasons (n=18,223)	10.3%	10.3%	18.9%	23.5%	26.6%	29.0%	31.1%	32.7%	34.0%	35.3%	36.6%	37.9%	38.9%
Closing Reason Unknown (n=24,730)	37.8%	37.9%	53.1%	57.4%	60.1%	62.2%	63.8%	64.9%	65.6%	66.2%	68.2%	68.3%	68.5%
All Single-Parent Cases (n=124,819)	41.8%	41.8%	54.3%	58.6%	61.2%	63.1%	64.6%	65.7%	66.5%	67.3%	67.9%	68.4%	68.8%

* All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Table 97: Cumulative Medicaid Participation After First Exit for 12 Month Non-Recidivists, by Reason for Case Closure													
Excluding 12 Month Recidivists	Months Before and After Exit*												
Closing Reasons	Mo. of Exit	1 Mo. after Exit	2 Mo. after Exit	3 Mo. after Exit	4 Mo. after Exit	5 Mo. after Exit	6 Mo. after Exit	7 Mo. after Exit	8 Mo. after Exit	9 Mo. after Exit	10 Mo. after Exit	11 Mo. after Exit	12 Mo. after Exit
Closed for Income Reasons (n=23,010)	99.2%	99.2%	99.3%	99.3%	99.3%	99.3%	99.4%	99.4%	99.4%	99.4%	99.4%	99.4%	99.4%
Closed for Non- Cooperation (n=17,494)	4.2%	4.3%	7.2%	9.9%	12.0%	13.5%	15.3%	16.6%	17.8%	18.9%	19.9%	21.0%	21.9%
Closed for Other Reasons (n=10,817)	10.9%	10.9%	13.0%	14.4%	15.5%	16.4%	17.1%	17.8%	18.6%	19.3%	19.9%	20.7%	21.3%
Closing Reason Unknown (n=13,637)	41.4%	41.4%	44.9%	46.7%	48.1%	49.7%	50.7%	51.4%	52.4%	53.1%	53.8%	54.5%	55.1%
All Single-Parent Cases (n=64,958)	46.8%	46.8%	48.7%	50.0%	51.1%	52.0%	52.8%	53.4%	54.1%	54.7%	55.2%	55.7%	56.2%

* All cohorts have data for seven months after exit; later cohorts drop out of analyses for eight months or more after exit.
Data Source: IDHS Client Database (CDB)

Use of Other IDHS Services

Other services provided by IDHS are also viewed as important supports for those leaving TANF. Those services include the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Family Case Management services (FCM), Child Care Subsidy, and services for alcohol and substance abusers.

Use of WIC Services Before and After Exit

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) provides health screening, nutrition education and counseling, supplemental foods, and information about other health services. Those eligible to receive the services are: income-eligible pregnant, breast feeding, and postpartum women; and those with infants and children up to five years of age with medical and nutritional risks. Participants receive food packages based on nutritional needs. WIC foods include milk, cheese, eggs, adult and infant cereal, juice, peanut butter, tuna, carrots, beans, and infant formula. Participants obtain food by redeeming the coupons at WIC approved grocery stores and food centers.

The variable measured for WIC participation was whether anyone associated with the case at first exit was enrolled in the WIC program for a given quarter (based on start and end dates for this program) before and after exit. This measure of enrollment does not indicate that supplies were picked up and the other services (e.g., the health screening and nutrition counseling) received in a given month; however, the utilization rate for those enrolled in WIC is quite high (approximately 95% of those enrolled). Thus, enrollment provides a good estimate of the extent to which TANF clients and leavers participated in this important support program.

The top row of Table 98 reports the aggregated level of WIC enrollment for all leavers in the quarters before and after exit. This row indicates that somewhat more than a quarter of all leavers were using WIC in the quarters before exit but that this participation dropped to around one-fifth of the leaver cases being enrolled in the quarters after exit. Before interpreting these results, the second row of this table provides a different perspective of WIC participation by considering the percentage of those leavers with children under six years old who were receiving WIC benefits. Because WIC eligibility applies only to those cases with children under six years old, this is an appropriate comparison, but not one to be made without caution. Because the data for this study only reflect characteristics at the first exit in the study period, it is difficult to be precise about which cases have children under six years old in the quarters after first exit. For example, some leavers will have new children born after exit that will renew eligibility and use WIC even though the other children are no longer under six years old. With this caution in mind, the second row of Table 98 indicates a much higher level of participation in WIC, almost as high as 50 percent in the quarter before exit (46.9%) though dropping by around 13 percentage points (to 33.7%) by the second quarter after exit. These results, for all leavers and for those with children under six years old, are consistent with the small decline in participation that would be expected if some leavers were employed so as to not need this service, but it is also possible that some leavers much in need are not receiving this service.

Use of Family Case Management Services Before and After Exit

Family Case Management (FCM) services are delivered to pregnant women and infants to: provide access to health care, family planning services, and speciality services; identify and resolve access barriers to needed health care and other services; and provide health education. Women are referred to the program through participation in other programs, including WIC and Medicaid, and through community outreach. Once a woman decides to participate in the program, a case manager who has a bachelor's level degree (preferably in a health related field) assesses her needs. The case manager and client talk about the woman's health, social, environmental, and educational needs, as well as any barriers that might prevent receiving services to meet these needs. The case manager and client then develop an individual care plan, focused on the woman's areas of highest need, and case managers refer the clients to and provide them with needed services.

The variable measured for FCM was whether anyone associated with the case at first exit was receiving FCM services for a given month (based on start and end dates for services) which was then collapsed to indicate services received in the quarters before and after exit. These before and after exit levels of service use were used to address the degree to which the level of services received was affected by exiting TANF.

The third row of Table 98 presents the patterns of FCM services in the quarters before and after exit. As with WIC services, there was some decline in participation with FCM in the quarters after exit, but the decline was slight and so it appears that participation in FCM remained stable before and after exit (from somewhat above 15% to somewhat below). This indicates that leaving TANF assistance did not affect coverage by this program designed to coordinate services to families most at risk for problems and most in need of someone assigned to oversee service provision.

Use of Child Care Subsidy Before and After Exit

The Child Care Tracking System (CCTS) was used to identify those leavers who had received a child care subsidy from the Illinois Child Care Program before or after exit. The Illinois Child Care Program, administered by IDHS, provides low-income families with access to quality, affordable child care that allows them to work or participate in an approved education or training activity, and contributes to the healthy emotional and social development of the child.

The program combines state and federal dollars and assesses parent fees to serve all working families whose incomes are below 50 percent of the 1997 state median income. (Gross income from wages and salaries is reduced by 10% when determining eligibility and assessing parent fees.) In addition to helping working families, the child care system serves families who are receiving TANF and participating in education and training in accordance with the responsibility and service plans, as well as teen parents seeking a high school diploma or its equivalent. The program also serves a limited number of families who work, do not receive TANF and are pursuing additional education to improve their job opportunities.

Families can receive a child care subsidy through the use of certificates or contracts. This dual system provides families with the freedom to choose from a variety of care settings to best meet the needs of both parents and children. Families can use licensed and license-exempt child care centers and family homes, licensed group child care homes and in-home and relative care.

Subsidies are available for full- and part-time care, including before and after school care. All families are required to cost-share on a sliding scale based on income, family size and number of children in care. Co-payments may range from \$1 to \$59 per week.

The variable used to track this subsidy was an indicator that records months of child care subsidy paid by the IDHS on behalf of the identified TANF leavers, both before and after exit. As mentioned in the Methodology chapter above, there is often a lag between the months for which the subsidy is applied and the actual payout dates for those months, but this lag is declining (now approximately 45% of the payments are posted within five weeks after the month covered and 90% are posted within 10 weeks of the month covered) and is of little concern for earlier cohorts where there is sufficient time to ensure confidence that the measure is picking up the large majority of cases that are receiving the subsidy. It is important also to note that during the period being studied, this system recorded payments made through the child care certificate system but not those payments made through contracts with child care providers. The certificate system constituted approximately 83 to 85 percent of the total care provided, meaning that around 15 to 17 percent of those cases receiving subsidies are not reported here as such.

With these data considerations in mind, the last two rows of Table 98 provide an overview of the use of this service. The table presents percentages for all leavers and for leavers with children under 13 years old at first exit (the age-related eligibility requirement for this program). Because most cases have at least one child under 13, the percentages in these two rows do not differ dramatically. In particular, in neither row do the percentages of those receiving child care subsidies change much in going from the first quarter before exit to the first quarter after exit. This suggests that child care subsidies are not affected much by TANF exits. The generally low percentages around 20 percent, however, do suggest that many who might benefit from child care subsidies were not receiving them during the study period. Keep in mind, however, that these data do not distinguish those leavers who were employed or were involved in employment-related activities, an additional eligibility requirements for the state child care subsidy program. To understand the extent to which there is insufficient coverage for child care, the analysis of survey responses presented below addresses the degree to which leavers saw the difficulties in obtaining affordable child care as a barrier to employment.

Table 98: Participation in WIC, Family Case Management, and Child Care Services Before and After First Exit (Percentages)					
	2nd Qtr Before Exit	1st Qtr Before Exit	Qtr of Exit	1st Qtr After Exit	2nd Qtr After Exit
WIC					
All Leavers	27.7%	28.8%	26.9%	23.7%	21.0%
Cases with child < 6 at first exit	45.3%	46.9%	43.5%	38.2%	33.7%
Family Case Management					
All Leavers	14.9%	16.2%	15.9%	14.7%	13.4%
Child Care Subsidy					
All Leavers	13.4%	15.7%	18.3%	17.4%	16.5%
Cases with child <13 at first exit	15.6%	18.4%	21.4%	20.3%	19.4%

Data Source: IDHS Cornerstone and Child Care Tracking System (CCTS) databases

Use of Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services Before and After Exit

Services for drug and alcohol abusers are another resource TANF leavers should have available after exit. There are a variety of such services available in Illinois, and their use is recorded in Illinois (on the DARTS database) and reported here in two major categories, outpatient services and residential services. The outpatient category includes two levels of services, basic outpatient services and the more involved “intensive outpatient/partial hospitalization,” while the residential services are even more involved. The two variables used were whether an adult on one of the leaver cases received outpatient (basic or intensive) or residential services in a given quarter before or after exit.

Table 99 provides a summary of the treatment services received before and after first exit. Note that the percentages in the table are both very low and quite stable across quarters. That there is not a large decline in percentages after exit for either outpatient or residential services suggests that leavers are not having less access to these services once they leave cash assistance. On the other hand, that there is not an increase in percentages after exit suggests that TANF case closings do not occasion crises that result in use of these services. This second suggestion, however, is tentative in that the data address use of services, not need for services. There is the very real possibility that alcohol and drug abuse increase for some after exit without their involvement in any abuse program.

Table 99: Receipt of Drug and Alcohol Services Before and After First Exit					
	2nd Qtr Before Exit	1st Qtr. Before Exit	Qtr of Exit	1st Qtr After Exit	2nd Qtr After Exit
DARTS Outpatient	1.8%	1.8%	1.6%	1.4%	1.4%
DARTS Residential	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%

Data Source: IDHS DARTS Database

Involvement with IDCFS Child Welfare Services

The final area to address in this analysis of administrative data on services concerns the possibility that exiting TANF has implications for child well-being. To assess this possibility, data from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) were matched with the children on all of the TANF cases that closed in the 18-month study period. This matching (performed by the Chapin Hall Center for Children, of the University of Chicago) allowed identification at the child level, which was then aggregated to the case level, of events that indicate problems with child well-being. Two indicators of child welfare were chosen for inclusion in this report: (1) confirmed allegations of child abuse and neglect and (2) entry into out-of-home placements (foster care). For the first of these indicators, abuse and neglect, eight allegation types (Sexual Abuse, Physical Abuse, Substance Exposed Infants, Emotional Abuse, Lack of Supervision, Environmental Neglect, Other Neglect, Substantial Risk of Harm) were combined into a single measure of whether a child was the recipient of abuse or neglect in a

particular quarter before or after exit. For out-of-home placements, the indicator of the month of an out-of-home placement was organized to represent the quarter before or after exit in which the placement occurred.

Table 100 presents the percentages of all leaver cases for these two indicators before and after exit. In the first row are percentages of all cases that had a confirmed allegation of abuse or neglect of a child on a given case. The second row presents the percentages of all leaver cases in which there was an out-of-home placement for a child in a particular quarter relative to exit.

The first point to make about the percentages reported here is that, as with services for alcohol and drug abuse, the percentages in the table are low. The second point is that the most notable pattern in both of the rows of Table 100 is that the percentages peak in the quarter before and the quarter of exit. One possible explanation of this is that children on active TANF cases receive attention and their parents are subject to greater scrutiny than they do after exit. This is supported when we recall that not all leavers were on TANF two quarters before exit; indeed, the two quarters with the greatest percentage of leavers being on TANF are the two quarters with the highest rates of confirmed allegations of abuse and neglect—the quarter before exit and the quarter of exit. However, an equally compelling account involves the possibility that the causality is reversed, that it is the out-of-home placement, or perhaps even the confirmed allegation of abuse, in either the quarter before exit or the quarter of exit that results in the case being closed. A more intensive effort to interview adults on these cases might help resolve the proper explanation for the patterns found, but it is at least somewhat reassuring that the rates of the two IDCFS indicators did not rise in the quarters after exit.

Table 100: IDCFS Involvement Before and After First Exit					
	2nd Qtr Before Exit	1st Qtr Before Exit	Qtr of Exit	1st Qtr After Exit	2nd Qtr After Exit
IDCFS Victim of Neglect/Abuse	0.9%	1.2%	1.3%	0.8%	0.7%
IDCFS Out-of-Home Placement	0.1%	0.4%	0.8%	0.3%	0.2%

Data Source: Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

Analysis of Services Reported by the December 1998 Survey Cohort

Both research and public policy experience have demonstrated that support services, such as medical coverage and child care, are often important in allowing low-income persons to maintain self-sufficiency. Survey respondents were asked detailed questions about several of the most important public supports. The survey also contained limited questions about the use of other services and informal supports.

Medical Coverage for Respondents

One of the more important objectives of the survey was to supplement what was known about the medical coverage of leavers and their children. The following analyses address the medical coverage respondents had when they were interviewed and at exit.

Medical coverage when interviewed

Leavers were asked whether they had medical coverage for both themselves and their children, as well as about the sources of medical coverage. As is shown in Table 101, 64 percent of respondents had medical coverage for themselves, while 36 percent had no medical coverage. This coverage is very comparable to the 62 percent coverage found among members of the Illinois general public who are under 66 years of age and in households with incomes up to \$25,000 a year.⁴

For TANF leavers, Medicaid was the most common source of insurance, with 47 percent of respondents receiving Medicaid when interviewed and 42 percent relying exclusively on Medicaid for coverage. Twenty-one percent received private medical coverage, and 17 percent relied exclusively on such coverage. A small number of leavers (4%) were receiving coverage both through Medicaid and through private insurance.

Coverage levels for the children of leavers were slightly higher, with just over 70 percent of the TANF leavers reporting health insurance coverage for their children (Table 101). These higher levels were due to higher percentages of respondents indicating that their children were receiving coverage through the state Medicaid or KidCare programs; 53 percent of the respondents indicated their children were in those programs. Private coverage levels were similar for children and adult respondents.

⁴ This result comes from a statewide omnibus telephone survey conducted with a randomly-selected sample of the Illinois general public by the Survey Research Office of UIS in October, 1999. Seventy-one respondents are in the general public subgroup being compared to TANF leavers here.

Table 101: Current Medical Insurance Coverage for TANF Leavers and Children			
	Total	Cook County	Downstate
Respondent's current medical insurance			
Respondent had some medical coverage	63.8%	61.2%	70.3%
Medicaid	46.9%	45.0%	51.4%
Private insurance	21.4%	20.7%	23.0%
Respondent had no insurance	36.2%	38.8%	29.7%
<i>weighted n</i>	<i>514</i>	<i>366</i>	<i>148</i>
<i>unweighted n</i>	<i>514</i>	<i>243</i>	<i>271</i>
Children's current medical insurance			
Children had some medical coverage	71.1%	68.5%	77.4%
Medicaid/KidCare	52.9%	51.3%	56.9%
Private insurance	22.6%	21.5%	25.3%
Children had no medical coverage	28.9%	31.5%	22.6%
<i>weighted n*</i>	<i>505</i>	<i>359</i>	<i>146</i>
<i>unweighted n</i>	<i>509</i>	<i>239</i>	<i>270</i>

** The n here is less than 514 because of several respondents who indicated having no children at home since they left TANF.*

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Those respondents who did not currently receive Medicaid at the time of the interview, but who had received it at some time since leaving TANF in December of 1998, were asked why they did not currently receive it. The most common responses were that Medicaid had been cut off or canceled (35% with reference to self, and 46% with reference to children) and that they did not need Medicaid (24% for self, and 19% for children, see Table 102.) Other responses mentioned quite frequently were: respondents had applied and were waiting (8% for self, and 11% for children); respondents indicated they did not qualify (11% for self, and 6% for children); respondents had not applied or finished applying (7% for self, and 11% for children); and respondents would be applying (9% for children).

Table 102: Why Respondents Did Not Have Medicaid at Time of Interview, For Those Who Had Received Medicaid at Some Time Since TANF Exit		
	Medicaid For Self	Medicaid For Children
Did not need Medicaid; have insurance	23.5%	19.4%
Did not want Medicaid	3.3%	4.2%
Applied and denied	4.4%	0.0%
Cut off; time expired; sanctioned; canceled	35.3%	45.8%
Did not apply; haven't finished applying	6.9%	11.2%
Did not believe they were eligible	2.1%	0.0%
Too much hassle, time	0.7%	0.0%
Did not qualify	11.2%	5.9%
Have applied and waiting	8.1%	10.6%
Will apply	0.0%	8.6%
Other	5.7%	2.3%
Don't know	4.6%	2.7%
<i>weighted n</i>	58	46
<i>unweighted n</i>	65	53

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Leavers in Cook County were less likely than those in downstate to report medical coverage both for themselves and their children. Nearly 39 percent of Cook County respondents reported no medical coverage for themselves at the time of the interviews compared to about 30 percent for downstate respondents. This difference is primarily attributable to lower Medicaid use in Cook County. For medical coverage of their children at the time of the interview, just under one-third (32%) of Cook County respondents reported no medical coverage compared to 23 percent for downstate respondents. This difference is attributable both to lower Medicaid/KidCare use and to lower private insurance use in Cook County.

Those employed and off TANF when interviewed were about as likely as other leavers not to have medical insurance, with 35 percent having no medical coverage. These people were more likely than other leavers to receive private insurance, but only 38 percent had a Medicaid card. Given that Transitional Medicaid lasts for, at most, one year, the availability of private insurance through employers is particularly important. Yet only 31 percent of leavers who were employed when interviewed were receiving private health insurance. When considered together, the limited coverage available for leavers through Medicaid and the lack of coverage through employers continue to present substantial challenges for working, low-income leavers. As

Transitional Medicaid eligibility is exhausted, these problems will be exacerbated unless private medical coverage correspondingly improves.

Medicaid Coverage Since Leaving TANF in December 1998

Respondents were also asked whether they—or their children—had ever received Medicaid since they left TANF in December 1998. Just under 60 percent (58%) of the respondents reported that they themselves had, and just over 60 percent (62%) said that their children had. Consistent with the results above, more downstate than Cook County respondents reported Medicaid coverage at some time since leaving TANF. About two-thirds (67%) of the downstate respondents reported receiving Medicaid at some time since leaving for themselves compared to 54 percent for Cook County respondents. And, 70 percent of downstate leavers reported having received Medicaid/KidCare at some time for their children since leaving compared to nearly 60 percent for Cook County leavers.

Questions asked of those respondents who had not received Medicaid since they left TANF in December, 1998. These respondents were asked: 1) whether they thought they would be eligible to receive Medicaid after leaving TANF; 2) whether their case worker or someone else from the welfare office told them they might be eligible; and 3) whether they applied for a Medicaid card since they left. Results are presented in Table 103.

Here, the results are very similar regardless of whether the focus of the question is on the respondents or their children. About half of those who did not receive Medicaid believed they were eligible to do so; about one-third indicated that a case worker or someone else at the welfare office told them that they might be eligible; and just over one-quarter reported they had applied for Medicaid since leaving.

For both themselves and their children, Cook County respondents were more likely than downstate respondents to say: 1) they thought they were eligible; 2) their case worker or someone else at the welfare office told them they might be eligible; and 3) they applied for Medicaid/KidCare. The regional difference is the smallest for the second of these items—a case worker or someone else informing the respondent that their children might be eligible for Medicaid/KidCare (32% for Cook County and 28% for downstate).

Table 103: Selected Attitudes and Behaviors of Respondents with No Medicaid Since Left TANF in December, 1998			
	Total	Cook County	Downstate
No Medicaid for Respondent since Left			
Respondent thought he/she was eligible	48.3%	51.8%	36.0%
Case worker/other informed respondent	33.2%	36.1%	22.4%
Whether applied for Medicaid			
Applied for Medicaid	26.3%	28.9%	16.3%
Did not apply for Medicaid	73.0%	69.9%	83.7%
<i>weighted n</i>	<i>215</i>	<i>166</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>unweighted n</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>89</i>
No Medicaid/KidCare for Children since Left			
Respondent thought child was eligible	51.4%	56.5%	34.1%
Case worker/other informed respondent	31.1%	32.0%	27.9%
Whether applied for Medicaid/KidCare			
Applied for Medicaid	27.1%	30.6%	14.0%
Did not apply for Medicaid	72.1%	68.0%	86.0%
<i>weighted n</i>	<i>190</i>	<i>147</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>unweighted n</i>	<i>177</i>	<i>98</i>	<i>79</i>

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Reasons for Not Applying for Medicaid and/or KidCare

Respondents who had never received and never applied for Medicaid since leaving TANF were asked why they had never applied. The question was asked both about Medicaid for the respondent and about Medicaid/KidCare for their children.

With regard to not applying for Medicaid for themselves personally, the most frequent answers were: the respondent did not need Medicaid (45%); the respondent did not believe they were eligible (16.5%); and it was too much hassle or too time-consuming (16%, see Table 104.)

Quite to very similar percentages of Cook County and downstate respondents said they did not need Medicaid (44% to 47%) and also said they did not believe they were eligible (16% to 17%). More downstate than Cook respondents said they were told they did not qualify (10% versus 3%), and more Cook than downstate respondents said it would be too much hassle or take too much time to apply (18% versus 12%).

With regard to not applying for Medicaid/KidCare for their children, the most frequent answers were: the respondents did not need Medicaid (40%); the respondents either did not believe they were eligible (13%) or were told they were not qualified (12%, for a total of 25% indicating either); and the respondents thought it would be too much hassle or too time consuming (13%). In addition, seven percent indicated they were going to apply.

Consistent with the reasons presented above, somewhat more Cook County respondents referred to the hassle or time it takes to apply (14% versus 8%), and somewhat more downstate respondents either did not believe they were eligible or were told so (29% versus 24%). However, caution should be exercised here because of the relatively small number of respondents upon which these findings are based.

Table 104: Why Respondent Did Not Apply for Medicaid			
	Total	Cook County	Downstate
Why Did Not Apply for Self			
Did not need Medicaid; have insurance; not want	44.6%	43.8%	46.9%
Did not believe was eligible; told not qualify	21.1%	19.2%	26.6%
<i>Not believe eligible</i>	<i>16.5%</i>	<i>16.4%</i>	<i>16.8%</i>
<i>Told not qualify</i>	<i>4.5%</i>	<i>2.7%</i>	<i>9.8%</i>
Applied and denied	2.0%	2.7%	0.0%
Cut off; time expired	1.7%	1.4%	2.6%
Did not apply; did not bother	5.1%	4.1%	8.2%
Too much hassle; too time consuming	16.3%	17.8%	11.9%
Applied or reapplied and waiting	1.0%	1.4%	0.0%
Will apply soon	1.4%	1.4%	1.6%
Other	2.1%	1.4%	4.3%
Don't know	5.5%	6.8%	1.6%
<i>weighted n</i>	148	110	38
<i>unweighted n</i>	143	73	70
Why Did Not Apply for Children			
Did not need Medicaid; have insurance; not want	40.2%	39.7%	41.5%
Did not believe was eligible; told not qualify	25.0%	23.8%	28.6%
<i>Not believe eligible</i>	<i>13.3%</i>	<i>12.7%</i>	<i>15.2%</i>
<i>Told not qualify</i>	<i>11.7%</i>	<i>11.1%</i>	<i>13.4%</i>
Cut off; sanctioned; canceled	1.2%	1.6%	0.0%
Too much hassle; not enough time	12.6%	14.3%	8.0%
Applied and waiting	1.7%	1.6%	1.8%
Did not apply; just finished application	4.3%	4.8%	3.0%
Will apply	6.6%	7.9%	3.0%
Other	2.8%	1.6%	6.1%
Don't know	7.4%	6.3%	10.4%
<i>weighted n</i>	129	95	33
<i>unweighted n</i>	124	63	61

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Use of Food Stamps

Due to differences in eligibility standards, many TANF leavers remain eligible for food stamps. Forty-four (44) percent of leavers had received food stamps at some time since leaving TANF in December of 1998, and 33 percent were receiving food stamps when they were interviewed (Table 105). Despite the fact that downstate leavers were less likely to be back on TANF than Cook County leavers, they were more likely to have received food stamps since exit and to be receiving them when interviewed. For example, 38 percent of downstate leavers were receiving food stamps when interviewed, compared to 31 percent of Cook County leavers.

Those who had not received food stamps since leaving were asked if they thought they were eligible for food stamps after leaving TANF. Only 41 percent of these leavers thought they were eligible. When asked whether a caseworker or someone else had told them that they might be eligible for food stamps, 29 percent said they had received such information. About one in five (19%) of those who had not received food stamps indicated they had applied for food stamps since leaving TANF.

Table 105: Receipt of Food Stamps After TANF Exit			
	Total	Cook County	Downstate
Percent of all leavers			
Respondent has received since leaving	44.1%	41.8%	50.0%
Respondent currently receives	32.9%	31.0%	37.6%
<i>weighted n</i>	514	366	148
<i>unweighted n</i>	514	243	271
Percent of those who had not received since exit			
Thought they were eligible	40.9%	44.6%	30.7%
Caseworker/someone told them they might be eligible	29.3%	30.5%	25.7%
Have applied	19.3%	20.7%	16.0%
<i>weighted n</i>	287	213	75
<i>unweighted n</i>	275	142	133

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Respondents who had never received and never applied for food stamps since leaving TANF were asked why they had never applied (see Table 106). The most frequent answers were: they either did not need (24%) or did not want (10%) food stamps; respondents had negative attitudes toward the process of applying—such as believing the process was too much hassle, or too time consuming, or they had negative attitudes toward caseworkers (27%); and they did not believe they would qualify (24%). Fewer indicated they were told they do not qualify or were denied food stamps (9%).

Similar percentages of Cook County and downstate respondents indicated: they did not believe they would qualify (23% and 25%); they did not want food stamps (10% and 12%); and they were told they did not qualify or were denied (8% and 10%). More downstate respondents said they did not need food stamps (38% versus 19% for Cook County) while more Cook County respondents identified a process-related comment (32% versus 13% for downstate).

Table 106: Why Respondent Did Not Apply for Food Stamps			
	Total	Cook County	Downstate
Did not need; working	23.8%	18.9%	37.8%
Did not want; want to be self-sufficient	10.4%	9.9%	11.6%
Told do not qualify; denied; cut off	8.6%	8.1%	9.9%
Too much hassle; no time; caseworkers	27.4%	32.4%	13.0%
Did not apply; did not believe would qualify	23.9%	23.4%	25.1%
Have not applied yet; will apply soon	5.2%	5.4%	4.5%
Have applied and waiting	0.7%	0.9%	0.0%
Other	5.3%	5.4%	4.9%
Don't know	0.9%	0.9%	1.1%
<i>weighted n</i>	<i>226</i>	<i>168</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>unweighted n</i>	<i>216</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>105</i>

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Respondents who were not receiving food stamps at the time of the interview, *but who had received them at some time since leaving TANF in December of 1998*, were asked why they did not currently receive them. The most common reasons were: respondents did not qualify or had been denied or cut off (36%); respondents had not applied or did not believe they would qualify (16%); and respondents did not need food stamps (11%). Other results can be found in Table 107.

Table 107: Why Respondents Did Not Receive Food Stamps at Time of Interview, for Those Who Had Received Them at Some Time Since TANF Exit	
Self-reported reasons	
Did not need food stamps; working	11.3%
Did not want food stamps; want to be self-sufficient	4.4%
Told do not qualify; denied; cut off	35.8%
Too much hassle; no time; caseworkers	6.0%
Did not apply; did not believe would qualify	15.8%
Have not applied yet; will apply soon	4.4%
Have applied and waiting	7.3%
Other	12.8%
Don't know; no answer	8.6%
<i>weighted n</i>	58
<i>unweighted n</i>	60

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Use of Earned Income Tax Credit

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is the primary federal effort to supplement the earnings of low-wage workers. Given recent expansions, low wage workers now can receive EITC refunds of over \$3,000, with the amounts gradually phased out as earnings increase. The EITC is obtained through federal income tax forms, but one can file for it even if she or he owes no federal taxes. While about 85 percent of leavers had worked during the study period, only 41 percent of leavers said they had received the credit. Part of this apparent under use may be attributable to the fact that only 47 percent of leavers had a clear idea of what the EITC was.

Both knowledge about and use of the EITC was greater for downstate leavers than for Cook County leavers. About 62 percent of downstate leavers said that they knew about the EITC, and 56 percent had received it (see Table 108). In comparison, only 41 percent of Cook County leavers knew about the EITC, and only 35 percent had received it. This greater knowledge and use of the EITC by downstate leavers is not solely due to higher employment rates by these leavers, as knowledge and use also was higher for consistently employed downstate leavers than for consistently employed leavers in Cook County.

Table 108: Receipt of the Earned Income Tax Credit			
	Total	Cook County	Downstate
Heard of EITC	75.9%	71.9%	85.9%
Know what EITC is	46.7%	40.5%	62.1%
Have received EITC	40.8%	34.7%	55.9%
<i>weighted n</i>	<i>514</i>	<i>366</i>	<i>148</i>
<i>unweighted n</i>	<i>514</i>	<i>243</i>	<i>271</i>

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Child Support

Leavers with absent parents were asked several questions about their receipt of child support payments. As reported in Table 109, only 31 percent of those with absent parents indicated that they received money from an absent parent either informally or through the child support system. The median amount received in the last month for those who had received payments was \$157. Overall, patterns of child support receipt were similar between Cook County and downstate. Respondents also were asked if they were supposed to be receiving court-ordered child support payments. Nearly half responded that they were supposed to be receiving such payments, but only 43 percent of these said they actually were receiving payments, and only 26 percent of those with a court order said they regularly received the full order amount.

The 53 percent of leavers with absent parents who did not have a court order fared even worse in terms of child support received. Only 20 percent of these leavers indicated that they received any payments from absent parents to help support their children.

Child support payments for leavers thus appear to be inadequate in several respects. Most leavers indicate that they receive no child support, and less than half have court orders for child support. Informal child support payments for those without court orders are uncommon. Even among those with orders, payments often fall short of ordered amounts.

Table 109: Receipt of Child Support Payments by Leavers with Absent Parents*			
	Total	Cook County	Downstate
Received either court-ordered or informal payments	30.8%	30.7%	30.8%
Have court order	46.9%	47.1%	46.7%
Percent of those with court order who			
Received full payment regularly	26.0%	24.8%	27.3%
Receive payments irregularly	16.9%	16.5%	18.2%
Do not receive payments	57.1%	58.7%	54.5%
Do not have court order	52.8%	52.9%	52.5%
Percent of those with no court order who			
Received some payments	20.1%	21.3%	18.8%

* Nearly three-quarters (74%) of the respondents reported having absent parents of their children. This percentage was somewhat greater for downstate (82%) than for Cook County respondents (71%).
Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Other Benefits and Supports

Respondents were asked if they had received a wide array of cash and in-kind supports in the six months before they left TANF and at any time since leaving TANF. The resulting patterns, shown in Table 110, were similar before and after leaving TANF. Only receipt of WIC supplemental nutrition benefits changed by over 5 percentage points, with receipt of WIC declining from 27 percent (26.7%) in the six months prior to leaving to 20 percent (19.5%) after leaving. Use patterns also were similar between Cook County and downstate, with the greatest differences being higher downstate receipt of WIC, rent subsidies or public housing, and meals or food from shelters.

Table 110: Receipt of Other Benefits and Services Before and After Leaving TANF						
	Total		Cook County		Downstate	
	Before Leaving	After Exit	Before Leaving	After Exit	Before Leaving	After Exit
SSI (Supplemental Security Income)	10.5%	11.8%	11.1%	12.4%	8.9%	10.3%
Social Security	5.7%	7.0%	5.8%	6.6%	5.5%	7.9%
Retirement/pension fund	1.8%	1.4%	2.1%	.8%	1.2%	2.9%
Township general assistance	3.1%	1.4%	2.9%	.8%	3.6%	2.9%
WIC supplemental nutritional benefits	26.7%	19.5%	23.9%	16.9%	33.7%	25.7%
School lunch program	42.5%	40.1%	41.7%	39.6%	44.5%	41.5%
Foster care payments	1.6%	1.5%	2.1%	2.1%	.4%	0.0%
Military/veteran's benefits	1.2%	1.1%	1.2%	.8%	1.1%	1.9%
Worker's compensation	0.0%	.4%	0.0%	.4%	0.0%	0.3%
Unemployment benefits	3.6%	4.0%	3.3%	4.1%	4.4%	3.6%
Home heating assistance	13.6%	12.5%	12.4%	12.0%	16.5%	13.7%
Rent subsidy/public housing	16.1%	13.6%	13.6%	10.7%	22.2%	20.7%
Free housing from parent/relative	13.3%	11.8%	13.2%	10.7%	13.6%	14.3%
Help paying bills from family/friends	15.8%	14.3%	17.3%	14.4%	12.1%	13.8%
Gifts of money or food from family/friends	29.6%	26.6%	30.5%	27.7%	27.3%	23.9%
Gifts of money/food from church	8.3%	10.0%	7.0%	9.5%	11.3%	11.4%
Meals/food from shelters, etc.	14.6%	11.5%	13.2%	9.9%	18.1%	15.6%
Other benefits/supports	2.8%	1.9%	2.1%	2.1%	4.5%	1.6%
<i>Weighted n</i>	514	514	366		148	
<i>Unweighted n</i>	514	514	243		271	

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Child Care Needs and Use

The availability, quality, and cost of child care generally are regarded as important in fostering successful work outcomes. Consequently, leavers were asked a series of questions to determine how they cared for their children while they worked and were in training, how dependable this care was, and how much it cost. Because child care needs and eligibility for Illinois Department of Human Services programs differ according to the ages of children, child care questions were asked for children in three different age groups: less than 6 years old, 6 to 12 years old, and greater than 12 years old. About 55 percent of respondents who had worked or been in training since leaving TANF had at least one child under age 6, while 42 percent had a child aged 6 to 12, and 20 percent had a child over age 12 (Table 111).

Table 111: Children of TANF Leavers Who Work or Are in Job-Related Programs, by Age of Children			
Involved in work, job search, education, or training since leaving TANF, and:	Total	Cook County	Downstate
Have at least 1 child <6	55.3%	55.9%	53.7%
Have at least 1 child 6-12	41.8%	43.2%	38.3%
Have at least 1 child >12	20.0%	19.7%	20.8%
<i>weighted n</i>	<i>514</i>	<i>366</i>	<i>148</i>
<i>unweighted n</i>	<i>514</i>	<i>243</i>	<i>271</i>

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Table 112 shows the child care arrangements used for each age group. As would be expected, child care arrangements involving other persons or agencies were much less common for children over age 12 than for younger children. Over half of the children in this age group cared for themselves while the leaver was in work or in training. When these older children did not care for themselves, they typically were cared for by a relative.

Table 112: Child Care Arrangements for TANF Leavers, by Age of Children			
Child care arrangement	Children <6	Children 6-12	Children >12
Spouse/partner	5.2%	7.1%	3.9%
Other children in household	2.6%	6.4%	2.8%
Other children outside household	0.0%	.2%	0.0%
Stay at school; school program	0.0%	2.5%	1.5%
Only work when children in pre-school/school	2.3%	0.0%	.6%
Friends and neighbors	7.9%	11.3%	6.9%
Relative	50.8%	45.9%	17.6%
Babysitter	14.4%	14.3%	0.0%
Child care center	11.1%	4.5%	0.0%
Church	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%
Other	5.9%	7.6%	6.3%
No one	*	*	59.3%
<i>weighted n</i>	284	215	103

* A small percentage (1.6% for “children <6” and 2.9% for “children 6-12”) indicated “no one.” However, further examination of interview responses indicated that these children had an older sibling at home and/or the respondent was not currently working. These percentages were added to the “other” category.

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Care patterns for children in the under 6 and 6 to 12 age groups were fairly similar (Table 112). Adult relatives other than a spouse/partner were the most common caregivers, with 51 percent of children under 6 and 46 percent of children aged 6 to 12 being cared for by such relatives. When care provided by a spouse/partner or other children also is considered, nearly three-fifths of the children in these age groups were cared for by a relative. About one-third of children in these age groups received child care either in a child care center, from a babysitter, or from friends and neighbors. For these children, child care centers were more often used for children under 6 years of age, while friends and neighbors more often cared for children aged 6 to 12.

As Table 113 indicates, some regional differences in child care arrangements emerged. As would be expected given the higher numbers of downstate leavers who were married or lived with a spouse, downstate leavers were much more likely to rely on a partner or spouse for child care. For children in the two younger age groups, downstate leavers more often used child care centers, while Cook County leavers were about three times as likely to rely on babysitters. For children over age 12, downstate leavers were more likely to allow their children to care for themselves, while Cook County leavers were more likely than downstate leavers to rely on friends and neighbors.

Table 113: Child Care Arrangements for TANF Leavers, by Age of Children and Region						
Child care arrangement	Children <6		Children 6-12		Children >12	
	Cook County	Downstate	Cook County	Downstate	Cook County	Downstate
Spouse/partner	4.4%	7.5%	5.1%	14.0%	2.7%	9.7%
Other children in household	2.9%	1.3%	7.0%	5.3%	2.7%	3.2%
Stay at school; school program	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	1.8%	2.7%	0.0%
Only work when children in pre-school/school	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%
Friends and neighbors	8.3%	7.5%	11.4%	10.5%	8.0%	3.2%
Relative	51.0%	50.0%	44.9%	47.4%	18.7%	16.1%
Babysitter	17.6%	6.3%	17.1%	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Child care center	7.4%	20.0%	3.2%	8.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Church	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%
Other	3.9%	6.3%	5.1%	3.5%	8.0%	0.0%
No one	1.5%	1.3%	3.2%	3.5%	54.7%	64.5%
<i>weighted n</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>31</i>

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

All leavers who had some type of child care arrangements other than self care also were asked to rate the dependability of their child care arrangements (Table 114). For each age group, about three fifths of leavers said that they always could count on their child care coverage. For the under age 6 and age 6 to 12 age groups, roughly one-fifth said they could usually count on their child care arrangements, and one-fifth said they could count on their child care arrangements only some of the time. Respondents were less likely to indicate they could usually count on child care for those over age 12, and more likely to refuse to answer or say they did not know. For all three age groups, Cook County leavers were less likely to indicate that they could always count on their child care arrangements. This lower perceived level of child care dependability is not solely due to lower employment levels in Cook County. For all three age groups, employed leavers in Cook County indicated that their child care arrangements were less dependable than did their employed counterparts downstate.

Table 114: Perceived Dependability of Child Care Arrangements, by Region			
	Children <6	Children 6-12	Children >12
Total			
Always count on	60.3%	58.7%	60.6%
Usually count on	19.5%	22.3%	11.9%
Only some of the time	19.1%	18.9%	16.7%
Don't know/refused	1.1%	0.0%	11.0%
<i>weighted n</i>	<i>273</i>	<i>206</i>	<i>41</i>
Cook County			
Always count on	55.2%	56.3%	57.1%
Usually count on	20.1%	23.8%	9.4%
Only some of the time	23.2%	19.9%	18.8%
Don't know/refused	1.5%	0.0%	14.3%
<i>weighted n</i>	<i>195</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>32</i>
Downstate			
Always count on	73.1%	65.5%	71.9%
Usually count on	17.9%	18.2%	19.3%
Only some of the time	9.0%	16.4%	8.8%
Don't know/refused	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<i>weighted n</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>10</i>

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

As might be expected, leavers who were unemployed when interviewed were much less likely than currently employed leavers to indicate that their child care arrangements since leaving TANF had been dependable. Table 115 shows that while about two-thirds of currently employed leavers said that they could always count on child care arrangements for each age group, only about two-fifths of unemployed leavers could always count on such care. Differences in perceptions about child care dependability were most pronounced for those with children under age 6. While only 10 percent of employed leavers with such young children said that they could depend on their child care arrangements only part of the time, 42 percent of unemployed leavers gave this response.

Table 115: Perceived Dependability of Child Care Arrangements, by Current Employment Status			
	Children <6	Children 6-12	Children >12
Employed			
Always count on	66.7%	66.2%	72.4%
Usually count on	22.1%	22.1%	15.9%
Only some of the time	10.3%	11.7%	11.8%
Don't know/refused	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<i>weighted n</i>	<i>195</i>	<i>146</i>	<i>26</i>
Unemployed			
Always count on	43.0%	40.0%	41.2%
Usually count on	12.7%	23.3%	5.2%
Only some of the time	41.8%	36.7%	24.7%
Don't know/refused	2.5%	0.0%	28.9%
<i>weighted n</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>16</i>

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

About 44 percent of all respondents said they paid for child care for at least one child, with the large majority of these paying for child care for children under age 6 and age 6 to 12 (Table 116). The mean weekly out-of-pocket costs paid by such leavers was \$49.03, which equates to about \$211 per month. Payment levels were somewhat higher for Cook County than for downstate leavers.

Leavers who said they paid for care were asked if they received any help with these expenses from the government or a social services agency. Only 40 percent indicated that they received such help, with the percentages the same for Cook County and downstate leavers.

Table 116: Percentage of TANF Leavers Who Pay for Child Care and Average Payment Levels			
	Total	Cook County	Downstate
Pay for at least one child care arrangement	43.5%	43.4%	43.7%
Pay for children < age 6	31.9%	32.3%	30.9%
Pay for child aged 6-12	22.4%	23.6%	19.5%
Pay for children > age 12	2.5%	2.5%	2.7%
<i>weighted n</i>	<i>514</i>	<i>365</i>	<i>148</i>
Average weekly out-of-pocket costs	\$49.03	\$49.37	\$47.58
<i>weighted n for costs</i>	<i>224</i>	<i>159</i>	<i>65</i>

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Finally, respondents were asked about their overall satisfaction with their current arrangements for caring for their children, as well as about their satisfaction with day care quality and day care costs. About 63 percent of respondents said they were very satisfied overall with their current child care arrangements, and 26 percent indicated that they were somewhat satisfied. Similar percentages expressed satisfaction with the quality of child care they received, while satisfaction with the cost of care was slightly lower. Satisfaction levels were slightly lower for Cook County than for downstate respondents, with the greatest differences on the cost of care question.

Unemployed leavers were less satisfied with care arrangements than employed leavers. Only 47 percent of unemployed leavers were very satisfied with their care arrangements, as compared to 69 percent of employed leavers. Interestingly, these differences narrowed on the question about cost of day care, largely because employed leavers also were not particularly satisfied with day care costs.

Summary

TANF leavers use a variety of other services and supports both before and after exit, but use of several important support programs drops off markedly after they leave TANF. Specifically, receipt of food stamps declines from 87 percent of leavers in the month before exit to around 30 percent by the second month after exit. Participation in Medicaid reveals a similar pattern, from almost universal involvement in the month before exit to 43 percent in the month of exit. Both food stamps and Medicaid show signs of increasing involvement in the months after exit, but these increases reflect primarily the cases that return to TANF status being re-registered for these programs. When recidivism to TANF is controlled for, participation in food stamps and Medicaid rises only slightly in the months following exit.

These low rates of participation after exit are cause for concern in that many TANF leavers are still eligible for food stamps and Medicaid after exit. The concern is greater when considering distinctions by region. For example, looking only at those cases that were not active

on TANF in a given month after exit, whereas 29 percent of downstate single-parent cases received food stamps in the second month after exit, only 15 percent of Cook County single-parent cases received food stamps in the second month after exit. Similarly, about 52 percent of downstate single-parent adult leavers were covered by Medicaid in the month of their TANF exit, but only 34 percent of Cook County leavers were covered by Medicaid at that time.

The gap in participation due to reasons for case closure is an even greater concern. Whereas 28 percent of those who left TANF for income-related reasons, and did not return for at least two months, received food stamps in the second month after exit, only seven percent of those who left TANF for non-cooperation reasons and did not return were covered by food stamps in the second month after exit. Medicaid showed a similar pattern where almost 100 percent of cases closed for income-related reasons were covered in the month of exit (this coverage being a deliberate effect of policy) but only around 4 percent of those closed for non-cooperation reasons are covered by Medicaid in the month of exit.

These gaps by region and by reason for case closure call for continued study within the IDHS and by others so that the dynamics that create these gaps can be identified and resolved. The survey respondents indicated, however, that many of those leaving welfare are left uninformed about what support services are available and about whether they might be eligible. For example, surveyed leavers who had never received or applied for Medicaid after exit were asked why they had not applied. Over 20 percent of this group of leavers indicated that they did not know that they were eligible for Medicaid after exit. Although some in this group may not have been eligible, many likely were, suggesting the need for policy actions to enhance access to these important programs.

Chapter 7

What is the Overall Well-Being of Clients after Exiting TANF?

Previous chapters have reported on the post-TANF experiences of leavers as they relate to employment, availability and use of services, and recidivism to cash assistance. This chapter returns to one of the central concerns of this study, the well-being of those who leave TANF. The analyses below begin by describing the well-being of leavers and then address the factors that seem to contribute to the well-being or, conversely, to the hardships of those leaving TANF cash assistance. Because the general well-being and the more specific hardships are difficult to determine from administrative data, this chapter is based on the findings from the survey component of the study.

Hardships Facing TANF Leavers

The study examined selected hardships, including several relating to housing conditions before and after exit for the TANF leavers. Other hardships before and after exit that were asked about included those relating to children living apart, the lack of needed medical treatment, and the insufficiency and lack of ability to buy food. These hardships are described first in terms of the statewide results and then described by region. Then hardships are analyzed to understand the role of employment in moderating these hardships.

Housing Conditions Before and After Exit

The hardships relating to housing that were addressed in the survey include: did respondents get behind in rent or payments for housing; did they have to move because they could not pay; did they have to stay with friends or relatives because they could not afford housing; did they go to a homeless shelter; did they live in a car or on the streets; and did they have to go without utilities. Respondents were asked whether these conditions had occurred both during the six months before leaving TANF and for the period since leaving TANF. In addition, respondents were asked whether they had to move from public housing after leaving TANF because they were no longer eligible. The statewide results, as well as the results for Cook County and downstate, are found in Table 117.

Statewide, nine percent of the respondents indicated that they had to move from their housing after leaving TANF because they were no longer eligible. More than four of ten respondents (45%) said they got behind in rent or housing payments in the six months before they left TANF, compared to a somewhat lower 38 percent for the time after they left TANF, for a decrease of seven percentage points. Just over one-quarter (26.5%) indicated they went without utilities at some point in the six months before leaving TANF, nearly double the number who indicated they went without utilities at some point after leaving TANF (14%, for a decrease of 13%).

Fifteen (15) percent of the respondents indicated they had to move because they could not afford their housing in the six months prior to leaving TANF, and nearly as many (14%) indicated they had to stay with friends and relatives when they could not afford housing. Both

percentages are just slightly higher than the respective numbers who indicated this in the period after leaving TANF (13% had to move, and 11% had to stay with friends or relatives).

A few of the respondents indicated going to a homeless shelter (3.5%) and living in a car or on the streets (2.1%) in the six months prior to leaving TANF. Both percentages are slightly higher than the respective results for the period after leaving TANF (with 3% going to a homeless shelter and 1% living in a car or on the streets).

Most of the Cook County and downstate results for these questions are quite close, with Cook County percentages slightly to somewhat higher than the downstate percentages for most items for both periods of time. The major exception here is going without utilities. For the six months before leaving TANF, nearly three of ten (28.5%) Cook County respondents indicated this occurred compared to just over one-fifth (21.5%) of the downstate respondents. After leaving TANF, the difference between the two areas is not as great (with 14.8% of Cook County respondents and 11.5% of downstate respondents having to go without utilities).

In terms of change, the largest percentage point declines in both areas are found for going without utilities (a decline of 14 percentage points in Cook County and 10 percentage points downstate) and for getting behind in rent or payment for housing (a decline of 6 to 7 percentage points in both areas). For downstate respondents, there is also a decline of nearly 5 percentage points for having to move because of not being able to afford housing. These differences between before and after exit are not definitive, but they do suggest that many people have experienced fewer housing hardships after leaving TANF.

Housing Conditions by Employment Status

Table 118 describes the housing experiences of TANF leavers before and after TANF by employment status at the time of the interview. The housing-related hardship experiences are similar in the six months before leaving TANF for both employed and unemployed respondents. The exception to this is the incidence of going to a homeless shelter, with two percent of the employed indicating such compared to six percent of the unemployed.

However, there are sizeable differences between the employed and unemployed in their experiences after leaving TANF for most of these housing items. For instance, over half of the unemployed (53.7%) had gotten behind in their rent or housing payments compared to less than 30 percent (28.6%) of the employed. About one-fifth of the unemployed had to move because they could not afford their housing (22.3%) and had to live with friends or relatives (19.1%) compared to less than one in ten of employed (8% and 6% for these two conditions, respectively). Seven percent of the unemployed had gone to a homeless shelter after leaving TANF compared to only 1 percent of the employed. After leaving TANF, differences between employed and unemployed respondents for going without utilities (16.5% for the unemployed versus 12% for the employed) and for living in a car or on the streets (2.6% versus 0.3%) are smaller.

A look at the before and after TANF experiences for the employed shows that the incidence of each housing-related hardship decreased. This is particularly true for going without utilities (decrease of 15%) and getting behind in rent or housing payments (decrease of 14%). It is also quite sizeable for having to move because they could not afford housing and having to stay with friends or relatives (decreases of 6 and 7 percentage points).

In contrast, this comparison for unemployed respondents shows a sizeable decrease only for going without utilities (24% before leaving TANF versus 16.5% for after TANF). For getting behind in rent or housing payments and having to move because of not being able to afford housing, the post-TANF incidence is actually higher than the incidence prior to leaving TANF (increases of 6 and 5 percentage points). The same is true for having to stay with friends or relatives, though the increase is smaller (+3 percentage points). For the remaining two items (going to a homeless shelter and living in a car or on the streets), the incidences before leaving TANF and after leaving TANF for the unemployed are very similar.

Housing Conditions by Employment Consistency

Table 119 describes the housing experiences by employment consistency after leaving TANF. In this analysis, respondents are divided into those who had consistent employment since leaving TANF, those who were employed some of this time (inconsistent employment), and those who were consistently unemployed. For the housing-related experiences prior to leaving TANF, one pattern is seen in getting behind in rent or payment for housing, where the incidence for the consistently employed is lower than for the other two groups. However, a more common pattern—seen in having to move because could not afford housing, having to stay with friends or relatives, and going without utilities—is that of the inconsistently employed having a higher incidence of the hardship than either those with consistent employment or unemployment. For going to a homeless shelter and living in a car or on the streets, the incidences are rare for all three groups.

For the experiences after leaving TANF, the patterns change. During this time period, the most common pattern is that in which the lowest incidence of hardships is found for those with consistent employment and the highest incidence is found for those consistently unemployed. This pattern is found for: getting behind in rent or housing payments (25% for those consistently employed to 43% for those with inconsistent employment to 54% for those consistently unemployed); having to move because one could not afford housing (5% to 17% to 23%); and going without utilities (11% to 14% to 22%). Note that the lowest—or among the lowest—incidence during this time period in each case is found for those consistently employed.

The direction and degree of change in the incidence of these hardships from the six month period before leaving TANF to the period after leaving TANF differs across these three groups. For those consistently employed, there are decreases in the incidence of each of these items. For those with inconsistent employment, the decreases almost always are smaller. The exception here is going without utilities, where the decrease for those with inconsistent employment is very sizeable, as is the case for those consistently employed. For those consistently unemployed, three of the items actually show sizeable increases in the incidence from before leaving TANF to after leaving TANF, while there is not much difference for three of the items. The items showing increases are: having to move because could not afford housing (from 13% to 23%); getting behind in rent or housing payments (48% to 54%); and having to stay with friends or relatives (11% to 16%).

Table 117: Housing Conditions, Statewide and by Region										
	Total			Cook County			Downstate			
Housing condition/characteristic	Before	After	Change	Before	After	Change	Before	After	Change	
Have to move because not eligible		8.8%			9.0%			8.1%		
Got behind in rent/pay for housing	44.6%	37.8%	-6.8%	45.1%	38.1%	-7.0%	43.6%	37.2%	-6.4%	
Had to move because could not pay	15.1%	13.4%	-1.7%	15.3%	14.8%	-0.5%	14.8%	10.1%	-4.7%	
Had to stay with friends, relatives	13.9%	11.1%	-2.8%	14.8%	12.3%	-2.5%	11.4%	8.1%	-3.3%	
Went to homeless shelter	3.5%	3.0%	-0.5%	4.1%	3.8%	-0.3%	2.0%	1.4%	-0.6%	
Lived in car or on streets	2.1%	1.0%	-1.1%	1.6%	1.4%	-0.2%	3.4%	0.7%	-2.7%	
Went without utilities	26.5%	13.9%	-12.6%	28.5%	14.8%	-13.7%	21.5%	11.5%	-10.0%	
<i>weighted n</i>	514	514		366	366		149	149		
<i>unweighted n</i>	514	514		242	242		272	272		

Data source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Table 118: Housing Conditions, by Employment Status						
	Currently employed			Currently unemployed		
Housing condition/characteristic	Before	After	Change	Before	After	Change
Have to move because not eligible		5.5%			14.4%	
Got behind in rent/pay for housing	42.9%	28.6%	-14.3%	47.3%	53.7%	6.4%
Had to move because could not pay	14.1%	8.3%	-5.8%	16.9%	22.3%	5.4%
Had to stay with friends, relatives	12.9%	6.2%	-6.7%	15.9%	19.1%	3.2%
Went to homeless shelter	2.1%	0.9%	-1.2%	5.9%	6.9%	1.0%
Lived in car or on streets	2.2%	0.3%	-1.9%	2.1%	2.6%	0.5%
Went without utilities	27.7%	12.3%	-15.4%	24.3%	16.5%	-7.8%
<i>weighted n</i>	325	325		188	188	

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Table 119: Housing Conditions, by Employment Consistency									
Housing condition/characteristic	Consistently employed			Inconsistently employed			Consistently unemployed		
	Before	After	Change	Before	After	Change	Before	After	Change
Have to move because not eligible		4.2%			10.9%			13.2%	
Got behind in rent/pay for housing	40.7%	24.9%	-15.8%	46.6%	42.6%	-4.0%	48.1%	53.9%	5.8%
Had to move because could not pay	11.7%	5.3%	-6.4%	18.1%	16.9%	-1.2%	13.0%	23.4%	10.4%
Had to stay with friends, relatives	9.6%	3.7%	-5.9%	18.1%	15.3%	-2.8%	10.5%	15.6%	5.1%
Went to homeless shelter	2.6%	0.5%	-2.1%	4.0%	4.8%	0.8%	3.9%	3.9%	0.0%
Lived in car or on streets	3.2%	0.0%	-3.2%	1.2%	0.8%	-0.4%	2.6%	3.9%	1.3%
Went without utilities	23.9%	10.6%	-13.3%	29.3%	14.1%	-15.2%	23.4%	22.4%	-1.0%
<i>weighted n</i>	188	188		248	248		76	76	

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Additional Hardships Before and After Exit

Analyses by State Region

The statewide and regional results for additional hardships both before and after leaving TANF are presented in Table 120. About half (51%) of the statewide respondents had experiences where food just didn't last and they couldn't buy anymore in the six months before leaving TANF, a somewhat higher percentage than experienced this after leaving TANF (44%, a decrease of 7 percentage points from before to after TANF). Before leaving TANF, just over one-quarter (26%) had occurrences where somebody in the home did not get the medical treatment they needed, and this incidence actually increased over 4 percentage points for the time period after leaving TANF. Just under one-quarter (24%) indicated that someone in their family had cut the size of meals or skipped meals before they left TANF, about the same percentage as indicated this for after leaving TANF (25%). And, nearly one in ten (9%) of the respondents indicated that, in the six months before leaving TANF, their children had to live apart because they could afford to take care of them. Again, a similar percentage indicated such for the time period after leaving TANF (8%).

For the period before leaving TANF, the incidence of somebody not getting needed medical treatment is somewhat higher for Cook County than for downstate respondents (28% versus 22%), and the incidence of children having to live apart from the family is slightly higher in Cook County than in downstate (10% versus 7%). For the period after leaving TANF, the incidence of somebody cutting the size or skipping meals is greater in downstate than in Cook County (29% versus 23%). For the remaining items in each time period, the incidence in the two areas is similar.

For Cook County respondents, there is a sizeable decrease in the incidence of not being able to buy needed food from before to after leaving TANF (51% to 44%), but there was a small increase in the incidence of someone not getting needed medical treatment (28% to 31%). For downstate respondents, there was also a decrease in the incidence of not being able to buy needed food (51% to 45%). On the other hand, there was a sizeable increase in the incidence of someone not getting needed medical treatment (22% to 29%) and a smaller increase in the incidence of cutting the size of or skipping meals (25% to 29%).

Additional Hardships by Employment Status

Table 121 describes these other hardship experiences before and after TANF by employment status at the time of the interview. In the six months before leaving TANF, the incidence for each of these additional hardships was greater for the unemployed than for the employed respondents. And, this is also the case for the period after leaving TANF. For two of the items—children having to live apart and someone cutting the size of or skipping meals, the differences between the two groups are very similar for the two periods of time. However, for someone in the home not getting needed medical treatment and not being able to buy needed food, the difference between the two groups increased from before leaving TANF to after leaving TANF. For not getting needed medical treatment, the incidence shows a larger increase for those unemployed than for those employed (+8% versus +2%). For not being able to buy needed food, the incidence of this hardship decreased for those employed but remained stable for the unemployed (-11% versus 0%).

Additional Hardships by Employment Consistency

Table 122 describes these additional hardships before and after TANF by employment consistency after leaving TANF. Both in the six month period before leaving TANF and in the period after leaving, the lowest incidence for each of these items is found for those consistently employed after TANF. For this group, there is a sizeable decrease in the incidence of not being able to buy needed food from the period before TANF to the period after TANF (46% to 33%). However, there is a small increase in the incidence in the households where someone did not receive needed medical care (18% to 21%). The other two items are more stable.

Those consistently unemployed after leaving TANF have the highest incidence of children living apart in both periods of time, and there is not much difference in this incidence between the two time periods. The same stability is found between the two periods for those with inconsistent employment.

In the period before leaving TANF, the consistently unemployed group actually has a slightly to somewhat lower incidence for the remaining three items than do those with inconsistent employment. For both the consistently unemployed and those with inconsistent employment there were increases of four to five percentage points in the incidence of not being able to get medical care after leaving TANF.

For cutting the size of or skipping meals, the small increase for the consistently unemployed from the earlier to the later time period brought their post TANF incidence up virtually to the level for those with inconsistent employment. And, for not being able to buy needed food, the increase between the two time periods for the consistently unemployed combined with the decrease for those with inconsistent employment made the post TANF incidence for those consistently unemployed the highest of the three groups.

Generally, aside from children having to live apart from the household, the incidences of these additional hardship experiences for those with inconsistent employment are much closer to those consistently unemployed than they are to those consistently employed.

Table 120: Other Hardships, Statewide and by Region									
Other hardships	Statewide			Cook County			Downstate		
	Before	After	Change	Before	After	Change	Before	After	Change
Children lived apart because could not afford	9.3%	8.2%	-1.1%	10.4%	8.7%	-1.7%	6.8%	7.4%	0.6%
Somebody in home not get medical treatment	26.1%	30.5%	4.4%	28.1%	31.0%	2.9%	21.5%	29.1%	7.6%
Somebody cut size of meals or skipped meals	23.9%	24.8%	0.9%	23.6%	23.2%	-0.4%	24.8%	29.1%	4.3%
Food just didn't last/couldn't buy any more	50.8%	43.9%	-6.9%	50.8%	43.4%	-7.4%	50.7%	45.3%	-5.4%
<i>weighted n</i>	514	514		366	366		149	149	
<i>unweighted n</i>	514	514		242	242		272	272	

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Table 121: Other Hardships, by Employment Status							
Other hardships	Currently employed			Currently unemployed			
	Before	After	Change	Before	After	Change	
Children lived apart because could not afford	5.8%	4.3%	-1.5%	15.3%	14.9%	-0.4%	
Somebody in home not get medical treatment	23.1%	25.2%	2.1%	31.4%	39.4%	8.0%	
Somebody cut size of meals or skipped meals	20.3%	20.9%	0.6%	30.2%	31.7%	1.5%	
Food just didn't last/couldn't buy any more	48.6%	37.7%	-10.9%	54.8%	54.5%	-0.3%	
<i>weighted n</i>	325	325		188	188		

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Table 122: Other Hardships, by Employment Consistency									
Other hardships	Consistently employed			Inconsistently employed			Consistently unemployed		
	Before	After	Change	Before	After	Change	Before	After	Change
Children lived apart because could not afford	4.8%	2.6%	-2.2%	10.0%	9.6%	-0.4%	18.4%	17.1%	-1.3%
Somebody in home not get medical treatment	17.5%	21.2%	3.7%	31.7%	36.9%	5.2%	28.9%	32.9%	4.0%
Somebody cut size of meals or skipped meals	18.5%	19.6%	1.1%	28.1%	28.1%	0.0%	23.7%	27.3%	3.6%
Food just didn't last/couldn't buy anymore	45.5%	32.8%	-12.7%	54.8%	48.8%	-6.0%	51.3%	55.3%	4.0%
weighted n	188	188		248	248		76	76	

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Satisfaction and Comparative Well-being

The focus on hardships addressed above, is balanced with a focus here on the overall satisfaction and well-being of TANF leavers.

Satisfaction with Life After TANF

Making claims about leavers' levels of satisfaction with life is important but difficult. We begin by addressing satisfaction by state region.

Analysis of Satisfaction by State Region

Respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with their life in general as well as with certain aspects of their lives. These included the respondent's current financial situation, their housing condition, the neighborhood as a place for their children to grow up, their relationships with their children, their relationship with their spouse or partner, their personal health and the health of their children, the quality of health care they can afford, how their children are doing in school, and their friendships. In the employment section, respondents were also asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with their current or most recent job since leaving TANF. The statewide results as well as the results for both Cook County and downstate respondents are presented in Table 123.

Statewide, just over three-quarters (76%) indicated they were satisfied (either very or somewhat satisfied) with their life in general, with just over one-quarter (26%) saying very satisfied. There is little difference between Cook County and downstate respondents in their satisfaction with life in general.

The two aspects of life respondents are most satisfied with are the quality of their relationship with their children (86% very satisfied) and the health of their children (81% very satisfied). The next two most satisfying aspects are how their children are doing in school (62% very satisfied) and their relationship with their spouse or partner (60% very satisfied). Next, in order, are: their friendships (54%); their personal health (49%); and their job (44%). About one-third each are very satisfied with the quality of health care they can afford (36%), their housing conditions (34%), and the neighborhood as a place for their children to grow up in (33%). About half this many were very satisfied with their household's financial condition (16%) while just over half (54%) were at least somewhat satisfied with this condition.

Substantially more downstate than Cook County respondents were very satisfied with their relationship with their spouse or partner (69% versus 53%) and with their neighborhood as a place for children to grow up (44% versus 28%). Somewhat more downstate than Cook County respondents were also very satisfied with how their children are doing in school (66% versus 61%), their friendships (59% versus 52%), and their housing conditions (40% versus 32%). More Cook County than downstate respondents were very satisfied with their personal health (52% versus 43%).

Table 123: Satisfaction with Aspects of Life, by State Region									
	Statewide			Cook County			Downstate		
	Very Satisfied	Total of Very and Somewhat Satisfied	Mean	Very Satisfied	Total of Very and Somewhat Satisfied	Mean	Very Satisfied	Total of Very and Somewhat Satisfied	Mean
Quality of relationship with children	85.5%	98.0%	1.17	86.0%	98.1%	1.16	83.7%	97.3%	1.20
Health of children	80.5%	94.6%	1.26	79.7%	94.5%	1.27	82.4%	94.6%	1.23
How children doing in school	62.3%	92.5%	1.49	60.7%	93.7%	1.50	66.0%	89.0%	1.48
Relationship with partner	59.9%	88.4%	1.56	53.3%	86.6%	1.67	68.8%	90.7%	1.42
Friendships	53.8%	93.5%	1.56	51.7%	95.0%	1.56	58.6%	89.6%	1.57
Personal health	49.4%	85.8%	1.69	51.9%	88.4%	1.63	43.2%	79.7%	1.84
Job (current/recent since left TANF)	43.6%	79.9%	1.99	43.3%	80.1%	1.98	44.1%	78.7%	2.02
Life in general	26.5%	76.3%	2.07	27.4%	75.9%	2.06	24.5%	76.9%	2.07
Housing conditions	34.4%	72.4%	2.08	32.3%	69.8%	2.14	39.6%	78.5%	1.92
Quality of health care can afford	35.8%	70.2%	2.12	35.1%	70.5%	2.13	37.8%	69.6%	2.10
Neighborhood - children grow up	32.8%	65.7%	2.21	28.1%	61.2%	2.33	44.2%	76.9%	1.91
Household's financial condition	15.7%	53.7%	2.57	16.3%	53.9%	2.57	14.2%	53.4%	2.57
<i>n most questions (wtd/unwtd)</i>	507-514	507-513		361-364	239-242		146-148	268-271	
<i>n for friendships (wtd/unwtd)</i>	488	491		344	228		144	263	
<i>n for job (wtd/unwtd)</i>	434	434		307	203		127	231	
<i>n - children doing in school (wtd/unwtd)</i>	366	361		266	176		100	185	
<i>n - relationship with partner (wtd/unwtd)</i>	78	94		45	30		32	64	

In order to calculate mean scores, "don't know" responses, refusals, and not applicable responses are omitted from the table. For nearly all questions, the "don't know" and refusal percentages are very small. The "don't know" percentage is more than negligible only for the question on satisfaction with friendships (about 5%).

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Satisfaction by Employment Status

There are marked differences between employed and unemployed respondents for nearly all of these well-being questions (see Table 124). For life in general, nearly one-third (31%) of the employed respondents indicated being very satisfied compared to less than one-fifth (18%) of those unemployed. Respondents who indicated being at all satisfied (either very or somewhat) number just over 80 percent for those employed (82%) and two-thirds (67%) for those unemployed. The satisfaction levels of employed and unemployed respondents are close only for two aspects, the quality of their relationships with their children and how their children are doing in school.

Satisfaction by Employment Consistency

Consistency of employment is also found to make a difference in self-reported well-being (see Table 125). For instance, one-third (33%) of those consistently employed since leaving TANF indicated being very satisfied with their life in general compared to one-quarter (25%) of those with inconsistent employment and 16 percent for those consistently unemployed. Those indicating being at all satisfied with life in general constitute 85 percent for those consistently employed, nearly three-quarters (74%) for those with inconsistent employment, and 61 percent for those unemployed since leaving TANF.

For all of the specific aspects, more of those consistently employed since leaving TANF indicated being very satisfied than did those leavers belonging to the other two groups. For three of these aspects, more of those with inconsistent employment than with consistent unemployment indicated being very satisfied: health of their children (79% versus 68%); their personal health (49% versus 36%); and their friendships (52% versus 41%). For the remaining seven comparable aspects, there is less difference between these two groups. Thus, for many of these specific aspects of subjective well-being, those inconsistently employed are closer to the consistently unemployed than they are to the consistently employed.

Table 124: Satisfaction with Aspects of Life, by Employment Status						
	Employed			Unemployed		
	Very Satisfied	Total of Very and Somewhat Satisfied	Mean	Very Satisfied	Total of Very and Somewhat Satisfied	Mean
Quality of relationship with children	86.4%	98.7%	1.15	84.0%	96.3%	1.21
Health of children	83.8%	94.8%	1.21	74.2%	94.1%	1.34
How children doing in school	63.9%	93.0%	1.48	59.4%	91.3%	1.53
Relationship with partner	66.0%	92.4%	1.43	44.0%	80.0%	1.84
Friendships	60.0%	96.5%	1.44	42.5%	87.9%	1.77
Personal health	53.8%	88.6%	1.59	41.0%	80.4%	1.87
Job (current/recent since left TANF)	45.5%	79.3%	1.97	38.0%	81.5%	2.04
Life in general	31.3%	81.5%	1.95	18.1%	67.0%	2.27
Housing conditions	37.7%	74.2%	2.00	28.7%	69.1%	2.22
Quality of health care can afford	40.4%	76.1%	1.99	28.2%	60.1%	2.34
Neighborhood - children grow up	35.4%	67.7%	2.14	28.5%	62.4%	2.32
Household's financial condition	19.1%	62.6%	2.37	9.7%	38.2%	2.92
<i>wtd n for most questions</i>	<i>321-325</i>			<i>186-188</i>		
<i>n for friendships</i>	<i>315</i>			<i>174</i>		
<i>n for job</i>	<i>325</i>			<i>108</i>		
<i>n for how children doing in school</i>	<i>228</i>			<i>138</i>		
<i>n for relationship with partner</i>	<i>53</i>			<i>25</i>		

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Table 125: Satisfaction with Aspects of Life, by Consistency of Employment									
	Employed consistently			Employed inconsistently			Unemployed consistently		
	Very Satisfied	Total of Very and Somewhat Satisfied	Mean	Very Satisfied	Total of Very and Somewhat Satisfied	Mean	Very Satisfied	Total of Very and Somewhat Satisfied	Mean
Quality of relationship with children	88.9%	98.4%	1.12	83.0%	98.4%	1.20	85.3%	96.0%	1.21
Health of children	86.2%	96.8%	1.17	79.4%	94.7%	1.27	68.4%	88.1%	1.45
How children doing in school	68.2%	94.7%	1.40	59.8%	92.9%	1.55	58.7%	88.9%	1.56
Relationship with partner	71.0%	90.4%	1.42	52.6%	84.2%	1.67	50.0%	90.0%	1.63
Friendships	61.0%	97.4%	1.43	51.7%	92.7%	1.59	41.2%	85.3%	1.82
Personal health	55.0%	91.0%	1.56	49.4%	84.6%	1.71	35.5%	77.6%	1.96
Quality of health care can afford	46.0%	81.4%	1.84	29.4%	62.9%	2.31	31.6%	65.8%	2.20
Housing conditions	43.9%	79.3%	1.87	28.1%	67.9%	2.20	31.6%	69.8%	2.17
Job (current/recent since left TANF)	50.8%	82.0%	1.88	38.0%	78.4%	2.08	n/a	n/a	n/a
Life in general	32.8%	85.2%	1.89	24.8%	74.4%	2.11	15.8%	60.5%	2.38
Neighborhood - children grow up	40.6%	72.7%	2.00	27.0%	60.6%	2.35	31.6%	65.2%	2.25
Household's financial condition	23.3%	69.9%	2.22	10.5%	46.4%	2.73	14.7%	38.7%	2.93
<i>wtd n for most questions</i>	<i>187-189</i>			<i>244-249</i>			<i>75-76</i>		
<i>n for friendships</i>	<i>186</i>			<i>234</i>			<i>68</i>		
<i>n for job</i>	<i>189</i>			<i>245</i>			<i>na</i>		
<i>n for how children doing in school</i>	<i>132</i>			<i>170</i>			<i>63</i>		
<i>n for relationship with partner</i>	<i>31</i>			<i>37</i>			<i>10</i>		

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Comparison of Satisfaction with Illinois General Public

Another approach to understanding the well-being of TANF leavers is to compare them to others in Illinois. We make this comparison first with a sample of the entire population of Illinois and then with a sample of the subset of the general public who have low incomes comparable to those of TANF leavers.

Comparison with Entire General Public

The subjective satisfaction of respondents in the TANF study can be compared with the responses of a random sample of the Illinois general public in a survey conducted only a couple months after the TANF interviews (see Table 126).⁵ For life in general, the satisfaction level of those who left TANF is far below the Illinois public in general, with just over one-quarter (26%) of the TANF respondents saying they were very satisfied compared to almost half (48%) of the Illinois public respondents. And, the percentage expressing at least some satisfaction totals just over three-quarters (76%) for the TANF respondents compared to over 90 percent (92%) for the Illinois general public.

When comparing TANF respondents to the Illinois general public on the specific aspects, generally the same level of satisfaction is found for four aspects: health of children; how children are doing in school; personal health; and respondent's job. For quality of relationship with children, TANF respondents have a larger "very satisfied" percentage than does the Illinois general public (86% versus 76%). For the six other aspects, the number of the Illinois general public very satisfied with the aspect is greater than the number of TANF respondents.

Comparison with Low Income General Public

A more relevant analysis is perhaps that which compares the satisfaction of TANF respondents with a portion of the Illinois general public with relatively low annual incomes. For this purpose, a comparison will be made with the portion of the Illinois general public with annual household incomes up to \$25,000 a year. This portion constituted just under one-fifth (18%) of the respondents in the statewide survey of the Illinois general public.

Table 126 shows that the percentage of those who were very satisfied with their life in general is very similar between the TANF leavers and the sample of low-income people in Illinois (27% versus 28%). Only somewhat more of the low income portion of the general public is at least somewhat satisfied (84% versus 76% for TANF respondents).

In terms of the specific aspects, similar levels of satisfaction are found for three aspects: how children are doing in school; friendships; and the household's financial condition. TANF respondents have higher levels of satisfaction for five aspects: quality of relationship with children (86% very satisfied versus 67%); health of children (80% versus 70%); personal health (49% versus 37%); job (44% versus 33%); and the quality of affordable health care (36% versus 28%). Low income respondents in the general public have higher levels of satisfaction on three aspects: relationship with spouse or partner (70% versus 60%); housing conditions (44% versus 34%); and the neighborhood as a place for children to grow up (46% versus 33%).

⁵ The questions were added to an omnibus statewide telephone survey conducted with a random sample of 633 Illinois households by the UIS Survey Research Office in late September and October, 1999. The sampling error for the statewide results is +/- 4 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

Table 126: Satisfaction with Aspects of Life, comparing TANF Respondents with Illinois General Public									
	Statewide TANF Interviews			Illinois General Public			General public - \$0 to \$25,000		
	Very Satisfied	Total of Very and Somewhat Satisfied	Mean	Very Satisfied	Total of Very and Somewhat Satisfied	Mean	Very Satisfied	Total of Very and Somewhat Satisfied	Mean
Quality of relationship with children	85.5%	98.0%	1.17	76.3%	97.3%	1.27	67.3%	93.8%	1.41
Health of children	80.5%	94.6%	1.26	80.0%	97.3%	1.23	69.9%	97.8%	1.32
How children doing in school	62.3%	92.5%	1.49	63.3%	93.8%	1.44	59.2%	88.2%	1.60
Relationship with partner	59.9%	88.4%	1.56	73.0%	93.8%	1.36	69.9%	93.3%	1.43
Friendships	53.8%	93.5%	1.56	64.4%	93.8%	1.44	54.5%	91.8%	1.58
Personal health	49.4%	85.8%	1.69	44.9%	86.5%	1.72	36.9%	80.7%	1.91
Job	43.6%	79.9%	1.99	47.4%	84.2%	1.76	33.0%	72.1%	2.09
Life in general	26.5%	76.3%	2.07	47.5%	92.2%	1.63	27.6%	84.2%	1.94
Housing conditions	34.4%	72.4%	2.08	56.6%	90.6%	1.54	43.7%	85.8%	1.72
Quality of health care can afford	35.8%	70.2%	2.12	48.8%	81.0%	1.76	27.9%	67.1%	2.21
Neighborhood - children grow up	32.8%	65.7%	2.21	63.6%	88.1%	1.53	46.0%	81.5%	1.80
Household's financial condition	15.7%	53.7%	2.57	30.1%	77.4%	1.99	12.5%	52.4%	2.54
<i>n -- general questions</i>	491-513			591-633			83-98		
<i>n -- question children health</i>	511			441-451			62		
<i>n -- question children in school</i>	361			237			31		
<i>n -- question for partner</i>	94			452			56		
<i>n -- question for job</i>	434			461			54		

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Comparative Well-Being

Respondents were asked questions to determine how their life now compares with their life when they left welfare in December 1998. In addition to a general question about how their family is doing, question topics included: the amount of money they have; their ability to provide for their family; medical care for their children and for her/himself; health of the respondent; housing; and feelings about self-esteem and about working.

Analysis of Comparative Well-Being by State Region

The statewide results of our survey questions on well-being and the results for Cook County and downstate respondents are presented in Table 127. A significant majority (57%) of the statewide respondents said their family was doing better today than when they first left welfare (TANF) during the study period. About 30 percent said their family was doing the same while just over one-tenth (13%) said their family was doing worse. Not much difference is seen when comparing Cook County and downstate respondents on this overall question.

Nearly two-thirds (66%) of the statewide respondents indicated they were doing better regarding their feelings about working, followed by nearly six of ten (58.5%) who were doing better in self-esteem. About half said they were doing better in the amount of money they have (51%), their ability to provide for their family (51%), and how their children feel about them (49%). One-third (34%) said they are better off in their housing and nearly three of ten (28%) said their own health is better. And lastly, between one-fifth and one-quarter said they are better with regard to medical care for their children (24%) and for themselves (23%). The percentage who said they are doing worse is close to or exceeds the percent who said they are doing better for these medical care questions: for children (24% better versus 20% worse) and for self (23% say they are doing better, but 25% say they are doing worse).

In addition to the general question about how their family is doing, there is little difference between Cook County and downstate respondents on seven of the nine specific comparative items. On only two items does the difference near or reach 10 percentage points, and here more Cook County than downstate respondents said they were better off after leaving TANF: feelings about working (68% versus 60%); and how their children feel about them (52% versus 42%).

Analysis of Comparative Well-Being by Employment Status

There are significant differences in the responses of employed and unemployed respondents (see Table 128). For instance, just over 70 percent (72%) of those employed said their family was doing better than was the case when they left TANF compared to just over 30 percent (31%) of those unemployed who said their families were doing better. This is a difference of about 40 percentage points. Nearly the same percentage point difference exists for those who said they felt better about their self-esteem (73% employed versus 34% unemployed), and even larger differences exist in the percentages who said they are better in the amount of money they have (67% employed versus 22% unemployed) and in their ability to provide for their family (67% employed versus 22% unemployed). The smallest difference exists in the percent who said they feel better about how their children feel about them, still nearly a 10 percentage point difference (52% employed versus 42% unemployed). For the remaining items, the differences between the employed and unemployed “better” percentages range from a low of a 14 percentage-point difference to a high of a 22 percentage-point difference.

Analysis of Comparative Well-Being by Employment Consistency

An analysis by consistency of employment since leaving TANF adds some additional insight (see Table 129). Indeed, there are several different patterns. The first pattern is seen in the comparative evaluations of how families are doing, with three-quarters (76%) of those consistently employed saying they were doing better compared to half (50%) of those inconsistently employed and under one-third (31%) of consistently unemployed. The same pattern is seen for self-esteem (81% versus 50% versus 31%), amount of money they have (75% versus 42% versus 21%), and ability to provide for their family (73% versus 42% versus 25%).

A second pattern is seen in feelings about working, where the comparative evaluations of those with any work since TANF are closer than those consistently unemployed. About 70 percent of those with any employment since leaving TANF said they are better off in their feelings about working compared to just over 40 percent (43%) for those consistently unemployed since leaving TANF.

A third pattern is that in which the self-reported well-being of those with any unemployment since leaving TANF is closer to that of those consistently unemployed. This is generally the case for housing (47% of those consistently employed said “better” versus 28% for inconsistently employed and 22% for consistently unemployed). This is more the case for respondent’s health (39% “better” for consistently employed versus 23% for those inconsistently employed and 20% for the consistently unemployed). It also generally holds for how respondents’ children feel about them although the difference here is smaller (53% for those consistently employed vs about 46% for those with any unemployment).

And, a fourth pattern is that which finds the largest “better off” percentages among those consistently employed and by a substantial margin over the other two groups. The pattern continues with the “better off” percentage being higher among those consistently unemployed than among those inconsistently employed. This fourth pattern exists for both of the medical care items, medical care for self and medical care for children.

Table 127: Comparative Well-Being At Interview Compared to When Left TANF									
	Total			Cook County			Downstate		
	Better	Same	Worse	Better	Same	Worse	Better	Same	Worse
Feelings about working	66.1%	28.3%	4.9%	68.4%	25.9%	4.6%	60.1%	33.8%	5.4%
Self-esteem	58.5%	30.4%	10.5%	59.0%	30.1%	9.8%	57.0%	30.9%	12.1%
Overall, how family is doing	56.7%	29.7%	12.6%	56.0%	30.6%	12.0%	57.7%	27.5%	14.1%
Amount of money have	50.8%	30.0%	18.5%	51.1%	30.1%	17.8%	50.0%	29.7%	20.3%
Ability to provide for family	50.6%	32.7%	16.4%	50.4%	32.6%	17.0%	51.0%	32.9%	14.8%
How children feel about you	48.6%	44.5%	3.2%	51.5%	42.7%	2.2%	41.5%	48.3%	6.1%
Housing	33.8%	53.7%	33.8%	33.4%	54.2%	12.3%	35.1%	52.7%	12.2%
Respondent's health	28.3%	58.1%	13.2%	29.8%	56.8%	12.8%	24.8%	60.4%	14.1%
Medical care for children	23.9%	56.0%	19.6%	24.8%	54.6%	20.1%	21.8%	59.2%	18.4%
Medical care for self	22.7%	52.3%	24.8%	23.5%	51.6%	24.9%	20.8%	53.7%	24.8%
<i>weighted n</i>	506-514			359-367			147-149		
<i>unwtd n</i>	507-514			238-242			269-272		

Percentages do not quite add to 100 percent because the “don’t know” responses and refusal percentages have been omitted from this table. In no case are these sizeable.

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Table 128. Comparative Well-Being Compared to When Left TANF, by Employment Status						
	Employed			Unemployed		
	Better	Same	Worse	Better	Same	Worse
Feelings about working	74.2%	24.5%	1.2%	52.1%	34.6%	11.2%
Self-esteem	72.6%	22.2%	5.2%	33.9%	44.4%	19.6%
Overall, how family is doing	71.5%	21.8%	5.8%	31.2%	43.4%	24.3%
Amount of money have	67.4%	24.0%	8.6%	22.2%	40.2%	35.4%
Ability to provide for family	66.8%	25.5%	7.4%	22.3%	45.2%	32.4%
How children feel about you	52.0%	42.7%	2.2%	42.5%	47.8%	4.8%
Housing	41.8%	50.5%	7.7%	20.1%	59.3%	20.6%
Respondent's health	35.9%	55.5%	8.6%	14.9%	62.8%	21.3%
Medical care for children	29.2%	54.0%	16.1%	14.6%	59.5%	25.4%
Medical care for self	28.3%	50.5%	21.2%	13.2%	55.6%	30.7%
<i>weighted n</i>	<i>321-326</i>			<i>185-189</i>		

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Table 129: Comparative Well-Being Compared to When Left TANF, by Consistency of Employment									
	Consistently Employed			Inconsistently Employed			Consistently Unemployed		
	Better	Same	Worse	Better	Same	Worse	Better	Same	Worse
Self-esteem	81.0%	15.9%	3.2%	49.8%	37.8%	12.4%	31.2%	41.6%	22.1%
Overall, how family is doing	75.7%	16.4%	6.9%	50.0%	37.2%	12.0%	31.2%	37.7%	28.6%
Amount of money have	75.0%	17.6%	7.4%	41.8%	36.1%	22.1%	20.8%	40.3%	33.8%
Ability to provide for family	72.9%	19.7%	6.9%	41.5%	41.9%	16.5%	25.0%	35.5%	39.5%
Feelings about working	72.0%	27.0%	1.1%	68.7%	25.7%	5.2%	42.9%	39.0%	13.0%
How children feel about you	53.2%	39.8%	2.7%	46.3%	47.5%	4.1%	45.5%	45.5%	1.3%
Housing	46.6%	48.1%	5.3%	27.7%	56.6%	15.7%	22.4%	59.2%	18.4%
Respondent's health	39.2%	54.5%	6.3%	22.8%	60.4%	16.4%	19.5%	58.4%	19.5%
Medical care for children	38.0%	50.3%	11.8%	13.9%	60.8%	24.5%	21.1%	53.9%	23.7%
Medical care for self	38.3%	44.7%	17.0%	12.4%	58.0%	29.2%	19.5%	51.9%	28.6%
<i>weighted n</i>	186-189			244-250			76-77		

Data Source: Survey Research Office, University of Illinois at Springfield

Summary

One of the critical issues confronting welfare reform is whether the efforts to reduce caseloads and enhance the self-sufficiency of former TANF clients have contributed to or detracted from the overall well-being of the TANF leavers. When looking in the aggregate at specific hardships, there is little to suggest that leaving welfare creates major problems. Indeed, many of the measures of hardships (e.g., housing and paying utilities) indicate slightly greater problems before leaving TANF than afterwards. The major exception to this pattern is health care, where more leavers report an inability to arrange medical coverage after exit than before. This increased problem with health care was particularly noted by downstate leavers, and points to the continued importance of health insurance coverage for low-wage workers.

Looking at general satisfaction with their lives, 76 percent of surveyed leavers were at least somewhat satisfied with life after TANF and 26 percent reported being very satisfied. Likewise, when asked to compare well-being when interviewed to before leaving TANF, leavers were much more likely to consider themselves better off than worse off on most dimensions of well-being. These accounts of general well-being are cause for some optimism in assessing the TANF reforms, but additional follow-up assessments of this study are suggested. In the meantime, it is of some note that the Cook County leavers were particularly likely to report that their feelings about working and their children's feelings about their parents were improving due to their leaving TANF.