

CHAPTER 4

HOMELESS HISTORIES

*Highlights: Homeless Clients*¹

- 33 percent of homeless clients lived alone before becoming homeless. Those who lived with one or more other people were most likely to live with their minor children (29 percent), a spouse (18 percent), a boyfriend or girlfriend (15 percent), friends (10 percent), and/or parents (9 percent).
- 77 percent of homeless clients say they were responsible for paying the rent or mortgage for the place where they were living before this episode of homelessness. The other people most frequently mentioned as having rent-paying responsibility are spouse or partner/boyfriend/girlfriend (10 percent each), and parents or friends (9 percent each). Respondents could mention more than one person with rent-paying responsibility.
- 15 percent of clients report that the main reason they left the last place they were living was that they could not pay the rent (or that the rent increased and they couldn't afford to pay it—3 percent). 14 percent report as their main reason that they lost their job or their job ended; 7 percent say it was because they were doing drugs, and 6 percent say their landlord made them leave. No other reason accounted for more than 5 percent of all clients. However, among clients in families, 13 percent say they left because of family violence.
- 30 percent of homeless clients say they have rarely or never used shelters during their current homeless episode. Surveys limited to shelters and other housing programs would miss many of these clients.
- 56 percent of homeless clients are living in the same city where their current episode of homelessness began. The most common reason for leaving a town after becoming homeless was that no jobs were available there (18 percent of those who moved), while the most common reason for moving to a town was having friends or relatives there (25 percent of those who moved).

¹ Unless noted specifically in the text, all comparisons are statistically significant at $p = .10$ or better, and all percentages presented by themselves have a 90 percent confidence interval no larger than ± 4 percentage points. A confidence interval of ± 4 percentage points means that if the reported percent is 60, 60 is the estimate of the value and the probability is 90 percent that the value falls between 56 and 64 percent. Confidence intervals greater than ± 4 percentage points will be noted in a footnote as: 90% C.I. = $\pm X$ percentage points.

- Compared to other homeless clients, those in family households had fewer episodes of homelessness, were homeless for shorter periods, and were less transient than other homeless clients:
 - » Fewer than 4 episodes: 88 versus 76 percent;
 - » Current episode 6 months or shorter: 60 versus 35 percent;
 - » Still in the same town where current homeless episode began: 71 versus 54 percent.

Highlights: Currently and Formerly Homeless Clients Compared

- While currently and formerly homeless clients are strikingly similar in almost all aspects of their history of homelessness, a few differences can be found. For example, formerly compared to currently homeless clients are more likely to have had more than one spell of homelessness (59 percent compared to 51 percent).

INTRODUCTION

It is important for planners and policy makers to understand the living situations of homeless people during the period immediately preceding a homeless episode, since carefully targeted prevention programs focused on this time period might help people avoid homelessness. In addition, if some living situations make people particularly vulnerable to homelessness, it is important that homeless assistance services not place homeless clients in these risky situations. This chapter reports the current living situations of clients and, for all clients who have ever been homeless, describes their situations just before they lost their housing.

One aspect of homeless clients' situation that policy makers and service professionals must take into consideration when planning a service structure is the mix among prospective clients of those with long spells of homelessness, those with short spells, and those in between. This survey collected information about the length of clients' current spells (if they are homeless), and the length of the most recent *completed* spell (for all currently and formerly homeless clients). Comparison of these data can give us an idea about whether current and completed spells are similar.²

² Point-in-time studies such as NSHAPC are not the best sources of data for spell length, because they overrepresent people with long spells and underrepresent people with short spells. Analyses based on shelter tracking databases or on longitudinal studies do a much better job of helping planners understand the true prevalence of spells of different lengths over the course of a given period of time such as a year (see, for example, Burt, 1994; Culhane et al., 1994; Culhane and Metraux, 1997). On the other hand, the NSHAPC methodology is capable of accounting for people who do not use shelters, and thus would be missed by shelter tracking databases.

NSHAPC collected data on the number of times a client has been homeless (as defined by the client) and the proportion of time homeless spent in shelters. Finally, this chapter reports NSHAPC results related to transiency among homeless clients. Among the questions always asked by local planners and policy makers is: “Are the people in our community who need homeless assistance services *our* homeless people?” Many communities express a willingness at some level to help “their own,” but do not want to become a “magnet” for homeless people from somewhere else. Answers to number of survey questions related to this issue are reported in this chapter.

HOMELESS CLIENTS

Where Homeless Clients Were Living at the Time They Were Interviewed for NSHAPC

On the day they were interviewed, 33 percent of homeless clients were living in transitional housing, and another 30 percent were living in emergency shelters (table 4.1). The next most common places where homeless clients said they lived were “nonhousing” locations. Eighteen percent were living in a vehicle, abandoned building, bus station, place of business, park or on the street. Thirteen percent of homeless clients were living in a house, apartment, or room, while the remaining 6 percent were living in hotel/motel/dormitory hotel or other place.³

Examining the living situations of homeless clients during the eight-day period including the day of the interview and the preceding seven days reveals the extreme transiency of many homeless people. During this time period many clients slept in a number of different places, which could include places not meant for human habitation; emergency shelters or transitional housing; or living arrangements such as a house, apartment, or room in which someone is allowed to stay on a temporary basis. Figure 4.1 shows the proportion of homeless clients who lived in each of these venues during the eight-day period in question, and also the proportion who used combinations of such places.

Thirty-two percent of homeless clients slept in places not meant for human habitation (designated “streets” in figure 4.1), including transportation depots, commercial spaces, cars or other vehicles, abandoned buildings, outdoor locations, and other venues of similar type. Thus just under one-third of homeless clients would have been found during a typical week’s time using such places for sleep.

³ Recall that Chapter 2 described the bases for classifying a client as homeless. One criterion was having stayed in a shelter or a place not meant for human habitation during the *week* prior to being interviewed. Thus if someone had stayed in an emergency shelter several nights prior to their interview but was currently staying in a house, room, or apartment, he or she would still be classified as homeless.

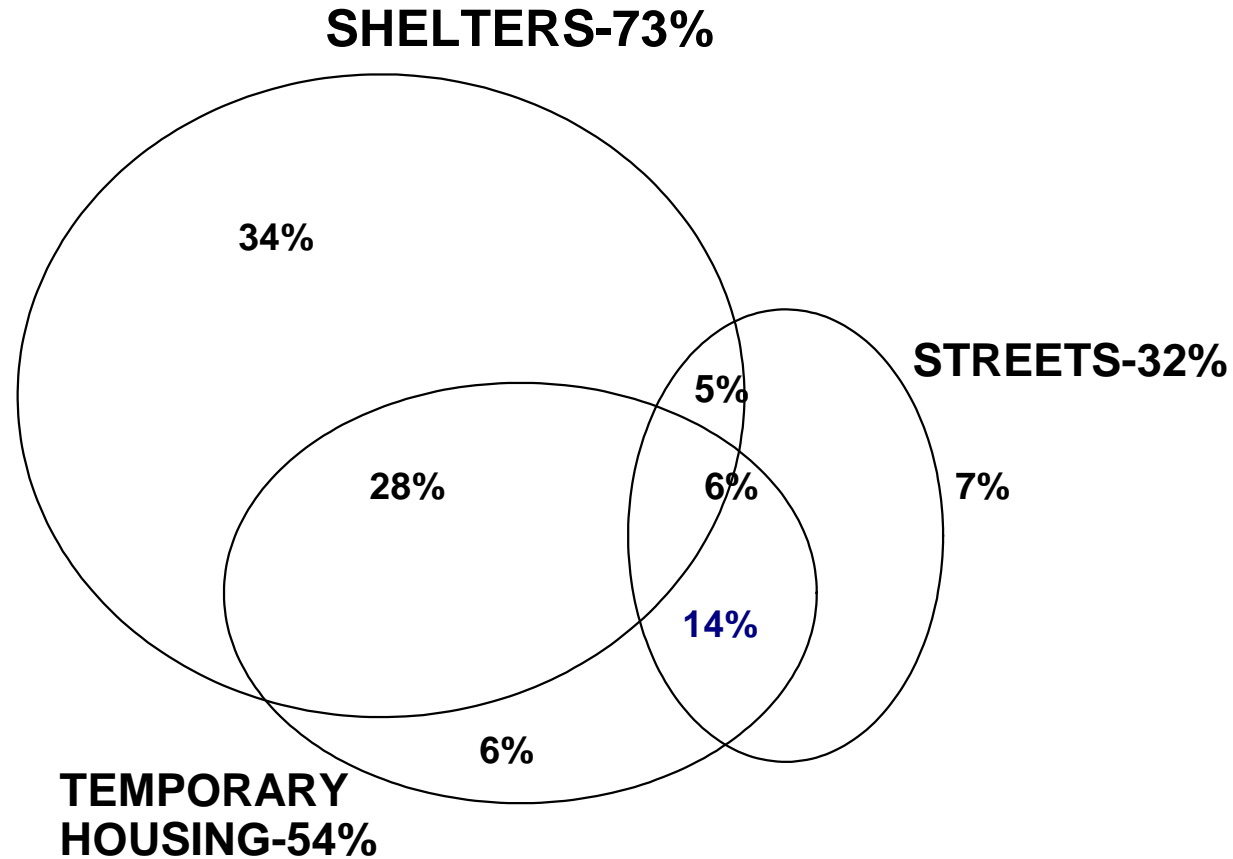
Table 4.1
**Clients' Living Situations at Time of Interview
and Before Becoming Homeless, by Homeless Status**

| | Homeless Status | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Currently Homeless Clients (N=2938) | Formerly Homeless Clients (N=677) |
| Kind of Place Lives Now (Today) | | |
| Non-housing (e.g., vehicle, abandoned building, bus station, place of business, park, street) | 18(%) | 0(%) |
| Emergency shelter | 30 | 0 |
| Transitional shelter/housing | 33 | 0 |
| Welfare or voucher hotel | * | 0 |
| Hotel/motel/dormitory hotel (pay yourself) | 3 | 7 |
| House/apt./room | 13 | 93 |
| Other place | 3 | * |
| Type of Place Living in Just Before This/Last Period of Homelessness Began^a | | |
| House | 35 | 33 |
| Apartment | 47 | 45 |
| Room | 17 | 14 |
| Some other kind of place | 2 | 9 |
| Who Lived with Just Before This/Last Period of Homelessness Began^a | | |
| Lived alone | 33 | 30 |
| Spouse | 18 | 16 |
| Children | 29 | 22 |
| Parents | 9 | 13 |
| Foster family | * | 1 |
| Sisters and/or brothers, sisters- and/or brothers-in-law | 6 | 11 |
| Own adult children (18 years and over) | 2 | 5 |
| Grandparents | 1 | 1 |
| Other relatives | 5 | 4 |
| Partner/boyfriend/girlfriend | 15 | 11 |
| Friends | 10 | 14 |
| Other residents | 3 | 5 |
| Other | 2 | 1 |
| Who Paid the Rent or Mortgage of Place Just Before This/Last Period of Homelessness Began^a | | |
| Self | 77 | 53 |
| Spouse | 10 | 10 |
| Parents | 9 | 13 |
| Foster family | * | 0 |
| Sisters and/or brothers, sisters- and/or brothers-in-law | 3 | 2 |
| Own adult children (18 years and over) | * | 2 |
| Grandparents | 1 | 1 |
| Other relatives | 2 | 1 |
| Partner/boyfriend/girlfriend | 10 | 9 |
| Friends | 9 | 14 |
| Non-profit program or institution | 1 | 4 |
| Government program or institution | 4 | 5 |
| Free rent for working | 3 | 1 |
| Other | 2 | 6 |

Source: Urban Institute analysis of weighted 1996 NSHAPC client data. Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding. * Denotes a value that is greater than 0 but less than .5.

^a"This" time refers to currently homeless clients; "last" time refers to formerly homeless clients.

Figure 4.1
Where Homeless Clients Slept on Day of Interview and Previous Seven Days*



Source: Urban Institute analysis of weighted 1996 NSHAPC client data. * Client used option at least once during the eight days including the day of the interview and the seven previous days, including being sampled at the site. "Shelters" = emergency and transitional shelters and voucher programs; "Streets" = any place not meant for habitation; "Temporary housing" = own or other person's house, apartment, or room, including hotel/motel room that client paid for, but without the possibility of sleeping there for the next month without being asked to leave.

Homeless shelters (including emergency shelters, transitional housing, and vouchers for emergency housing, designated “shelters” in figure 4.1) are the most common type of location where homeless clients may be found. More than twice as many homeless clients (73 percent) slept in one or more of a variety of shelters as slept in places not meant for human habitation during the eight-day period being examined. Some, of course, slept in both types of venue. In addition, figure 4.1 shows that 54 percent of homeless clients slept in one or more temporary housing arrangements, including a friend’s or relative’s place, their own place, a hotel or motel room they paid for themselves, or a permanent housing program for formerly homeless people (designated “temporary housing” in figure 4.1).

To understand how extremely transient homeless clients are, it is important to examine the overlap in these categories. Six percent of homeless clients had slept or rested in all three venues during the eight-day period. At the other extreme, 7 percent had stayed only on the streets, 34 percent had stayed only in shelters, and 6 percent had stayed only in temporary housing.⁴ The overlap is greatest for shelters and temporary housing, with 34 percent of homeless clients using both during the eight-day period. By contrast, the overlap between streets and shelters is quite low, with only 11 percent of homeless clients staying in both.

Where Clients Lived Just Before This Homeless Episode

Clients reported where they had been living just before their current spell of homelessness. Close to half of homeless clients (47 percent) had been living in an apartment, 35 percent in a house, 17 percent in a room, and 2 percent in some other type of place.

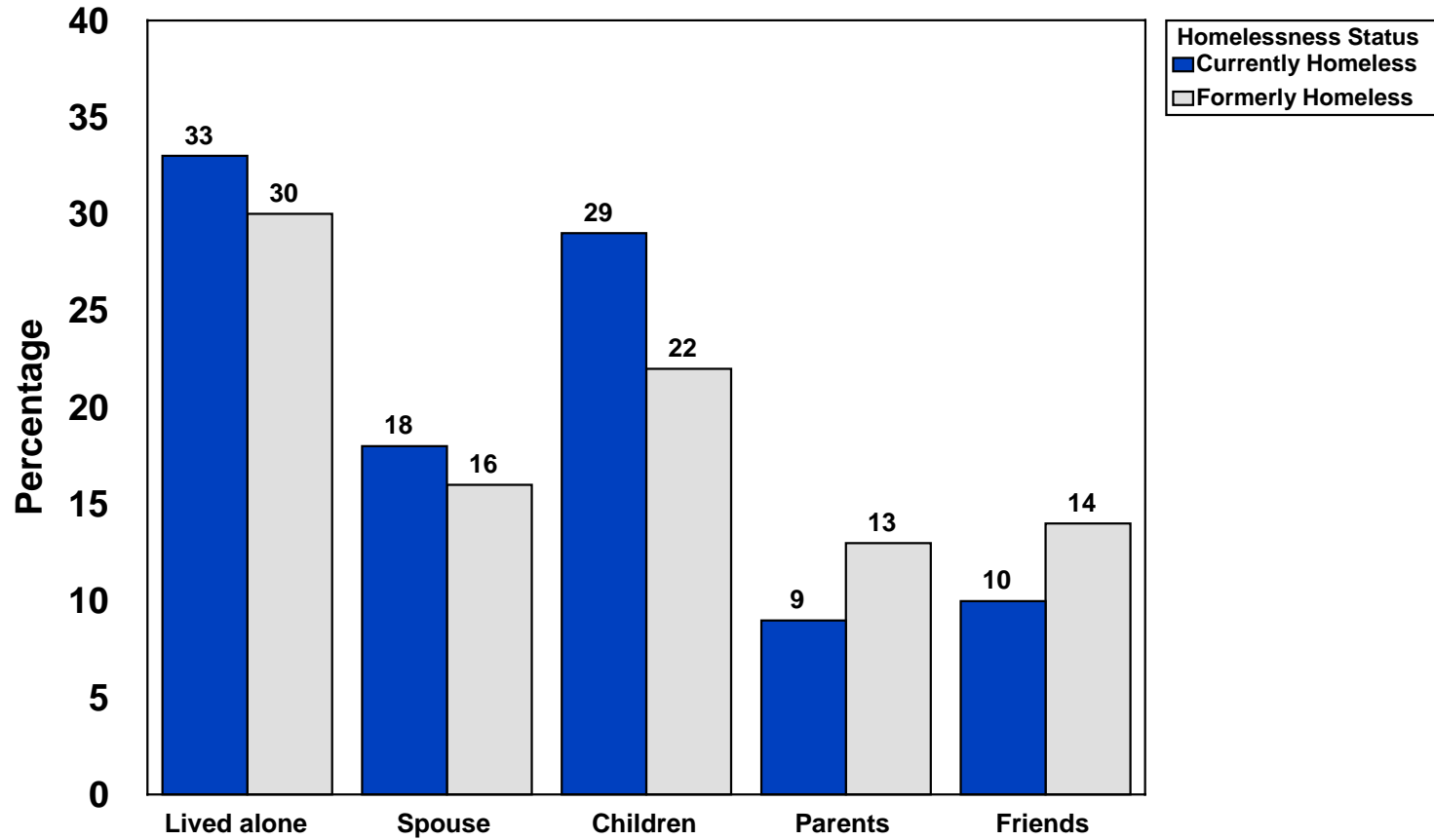
When asked with whom they lived before becoming homeless this time, one-third of homeless clients reported having lived alone, 29 percent with their minor children, 18 percent with a spouse, 15 percent with a boyfriend or girlfriend, 10 percent with friends, and 9 percent with their parents. Other clients had lived with adult children, other relatives, or other residents (table 4.1 and figure 4.2). A number of clients reported living with more than one type of person.

Seventy-seven percent of homeless clients report that they themselves were responsible for paying all or part of the rent or mortgage before they became homeless “this time.” Others responsible for paying for all or part of housing (each accounting for about 10 percent of clients) were: spouses, boyfriends/girlfriends, parents, and friends. Very small shares of clients report that programs or a treatment facility had paid for their housing before they last became homeless.

⁴ Most of the 6 percent reporting stays in temporary housing with no overlap to shelters or streets actually indicate in other ways that they are currently homeless, including having been sampled for the study in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program, saying they got food at the shelter where they lived, or saying in answer to the basic screener question that the last time they had a permanent place to live was more than seven days ago.

Figure 4.2

People With Whom Clients Lived Just Before This Period of Homelessness



Source: Urban Institute analysis of weighted 1996 NSHAPC client data. Note: Clients could name more than one type of person.

The survey asked homeless clients about their reasons for leaving their last residence before their current homeless spell, and were then asked to specify which of their answers was the main (most important/underlying) reason they left. Eighteen percent report that they could not pay the rent (or the rent increased and they couldn't afford to pay it), and 14 percent report they lost their job or their job ended. Sixteen percent of homeless clients report some "other" factor as the main reason they left their last regular place (table 4.2).

Other reasons for becoming homeless this time were given infrequently. These include: the client was doing drugs (7 percent), landlord made them leave (6 percent), or the client didn't get along with the people there (5 percent). The remaining homeless clients report a variety of primary reasons such as: they or their children were abused or beaten, or that there was violence in their household (4 percent), they were pushed or kicked out (4 percent), they were drinking (4 percent), they left town (4 percent), they went into a hospital or treatment program (3 percent), they went to jail or prison (3 percent), people the client was staying with asked him/her to leave (3 percent), they were displaced due to their building being condemned or destroyed (3 percent), they moved out due to a problematic relationship or end of a relationship with a partner or relative (3 percent), or they had a problem with the residence or residence location (3 percent). However, looking specifically at homeless clients in families rather than at all homeless clients, 13 percent say they left their last residence because of family violence.

Homelessness History

Among homeless clients, 49 percent were experiencing their first spell of homelessness, another 17 percent had two homeless spells (including the current one), 12 percent had three, 18 percent had four to ten, and 4 percent had more than ten homeless spells.

Homeless clients also reported the length of their current homeless spell (table 4.3). Five percent have been homeless (in their current spell) for less than a week, and another 8 percent between one week and one month. The distribution of clients over the remaining time periods is as follows: 15 percent have been homeless from 1 to 3 months, 11 percent from 4 to 6 months, 15 percent from 7 months to a year, 16 percent from 1 to 2 years, 10 percent from 2 to 5 years, and 20 percent for 5 or more years. Almost half of all homeless clients have been homeless for a year or longer, but just over a quarter have been homeless for 3 months or less (figure 4.3).

Many studies of homeless populations distinguish between people who are in their first, relatively short, homeless episode (often designated as "crisis" homeless), people who are homeless for long stretches of time (often designated as "chronically" homeless), and people who cycle in and out of homelessness (often designated as "episodically" homeless). As table 4.3 illustrates, 18 percent of homeless clients have been homeless only once and for six months or less. Another 31 percent have been homeless once but for longer than six months. Twenty-one percent have been homeless two or more times with their current homeless spell lasting six months or less, and another 30 percent have been homeless more than once but with a current

Table 4.2
Main Reason Clients Left Their Last Regular Place to Stay, by Homeless Status

| | Homeless Status | |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| | Currently Homeless Clients (N=2938) | Formerly Homeless Clients (N=677) |
| Main Reason Left Last Regular Place to Stay (Just Before This/Last Period of Homelessness) ^a | | |
| Couldn't pay rent | 15(%) | 11(%) |
| Rent increased and couldn't afford to pay it | 3 | 2 |
| Lost job or job ended | 14 | 6 |
| Client or children abused, beaten/violence in the household | 4 | 5 |
| Pushed out, kicked out | 4 | 8 |
| Was drinking | 4 | 2 |
| Was doing drugs | 7 | 4 |
| Went into hospital or treatment program | 3 | 3 |
| Went to jail or prison | 3 | 3 |
| Left town | 4 | 2 |
| Didn't get along with people there | 5 | 6 |
| People client was staying with asked client to leave | 3 | 3 |
| Landlord made client leave | 6 | 7 |
| Displaced because building was condemned, destroyed or urban renewal, fire | 3 | 5 |
| Moved out due to a problematic relationship/end of a relationship with a partner/relative | 3 | 5 |
| Problem with residence or area where residence is located | 3 | 3 |
| Other ^b | 16 | 26 |

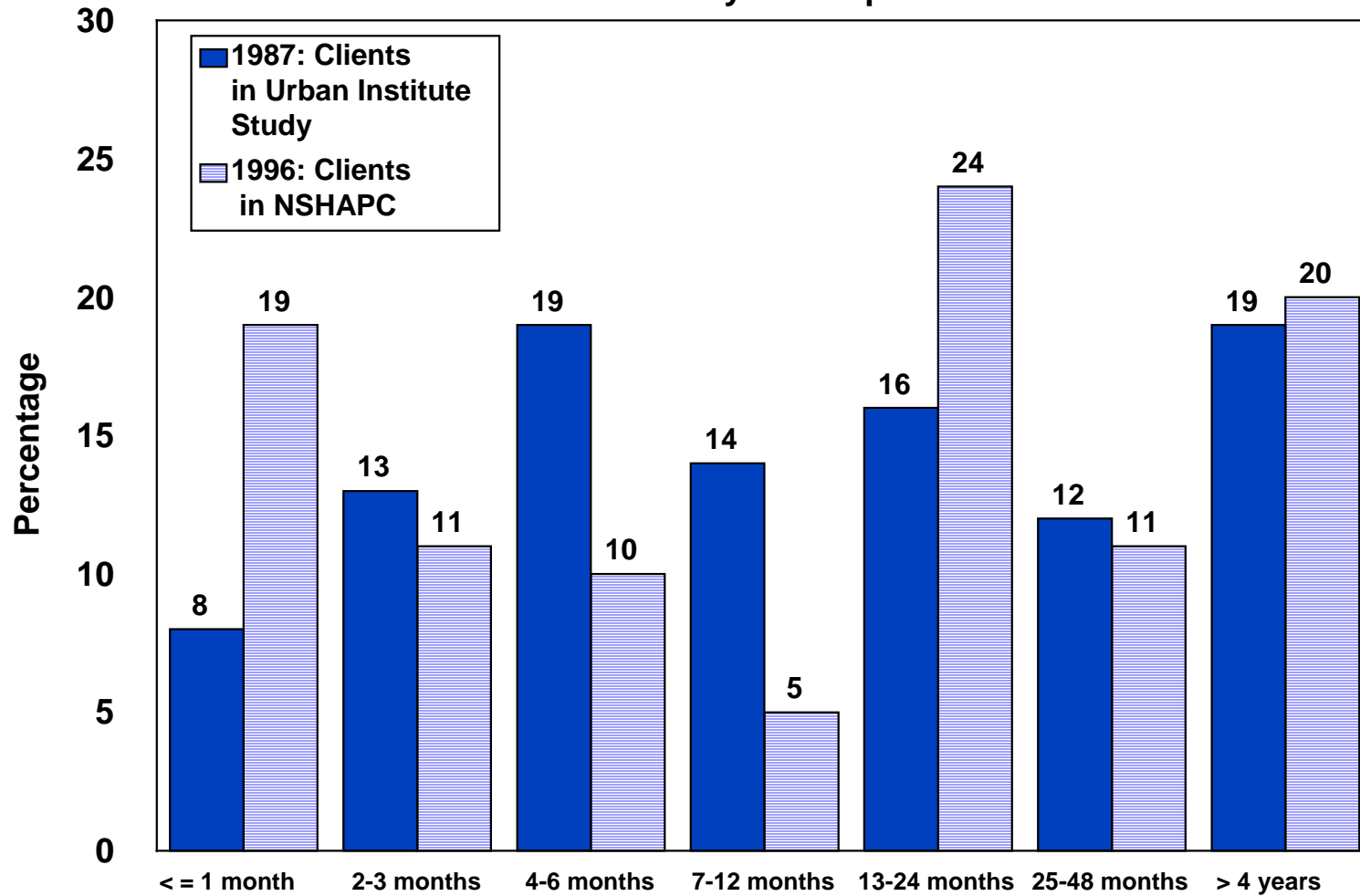
Source: Urban Institute analysis of weighted 1996 NSHAPC client data. * Denotes a value that is greater than 0 but less than .5.

^a"This" time refers to currently homeless clients; "last" time refers to formerly homeless clients.

^bOther includes the following (among currently homeless clients): someone who paid the rent/mortgage stopped paying it (1%), lost welfare or other cash assistance benefit (1%), ARC/AIDS/HIV related (1%), was pregnant/just had baby (*%), became sick or disabled (other than ARC/AIDS related) (2%), went into military (*%), released, dismissed, discharged (1%), moved in with significant other/friend/relative (*%), death or illness in family (@%), roommate or landlord problems (!%), looking for work or forced to relocate to keep present job (1%), needed a change of scenery and/or climate (2%), problems with abiding by rules of current provider residence/program time ran out (*%), lease expired or the building in which you lived was sold (1%), not enough money for habitation (*%), and other (2%).

Figure 4.3

Length of Current Homeless Spell: Comparing Clients from the 1987 Urban Institute Study with Equivalent NSHAPC Clients



Source: Urban Institute analysis of weighted 1996 NSHAPC client data and Burt and Cohen, 1989. Note: Numbers do not sum to 100% Due to rounding.

Table 4.3
History of Homelessness, by Homeless Status

| | Homeless Status | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Currently Homeless Clients (N=2938) | Formerly Homeless Clients (N=677) |
| Number of Times Homeless or Without Regular Housing for 30 Days or More | | |
| 1 | 49(%) | 41(%) |
| 2 | 17 | 27 |
| 3 | 12 | 12 |
| 4-10 | 18 | 16 |
| 11 or more | 4 | 4 |
| <i>Among Currently Homeless Clients</i> | | |
| Length of Current Period of Homelessness | | |
| < 1 week | 5 | Not Applicable |
| >= 1 week and < 1 month | 8 | |
| 1-3 months | 15 | |
| 4-6 months | 11 | |
| 7-12 months | 15 | |
| 13-24 months | 16 | |
| 25-60 months | 10 | |
| Over 5 years | 20 | |
| Spell History and Current Spell Length | | |
| First time homeless | | |
| 6 months or less | 18 | Not Applicable |
| more than 6 months | 31 | |
| Not first time homeless | | |
| current spell 6 months or less | 21 | |
| current spell more than 6 months | 30 | |
| <i>Among Currently or Formerly Homeless Clients With at Least One Completed Homeless Episode</i> | | |
| Amount of Time Spent in Shelters During This/Last Homeless Episode^a | | |
| All of the time | 14 | 18 |
| Most of the time | 10 | 12 |
| About three-quarters of the time | 4 | 4 |
| About half of the time | 9 | 6 |
| About one-quarter of the time | 8 | 5 |
| Almost none of the time | 19 | 10 |
| None of the time | 11 | 6 |
| Length of Last Complete Period of Homelessness | | |
| < 1 week | 5 | 2 |
| >= 1 week and < 1 month | 9 | 9 |
| 1-3 months | 30 | 33 |
| 4-6 months | 15 | 13 |
| 7-12 months | 20 | 21 |
| 13-24 months | 9 | 7 |
| 25-60 months | 5 | 7 |
| Over 5 years | 7 | 8 |

Source: Urban Institute analysis of weighted 1996 NSHAPC client data.

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding, or because clients could not answer the question. ^a"This" time refers to currently homeless clients; "last" time refers to formerly homeless clients.

spell lasting longer than six months. Among those who have been homeless more than once, their last completed spell is likely to be shorter than their current spell. For example, 59 percent of completed spells are 6 months or less, while only 39 percent of current spells are 6 months or less.

Homeless clients were asked to estimate how much time they spend in homeless shelters during this spell of homelessness. Fully 11 percent report that they do not stay in shelters at all (figure 4.4). This percentage is a measure of how many homeless people might be missed by tracking databases that rely exclusively on shelters for their information. Another 19 percent report rare shelter use, saying they spend “almost none of the time” in shelters. By contrast, close to 14 percent report staying all of the time in shelters and another 10 percent report staying in shelters almost all of the time. Note that most clients are at the extremes, using shelters either all or most of the time, or little or none of the time. Only 21 percent report staying in shelters from a quarter to three-quarters of the time.

Transiency While Homeless

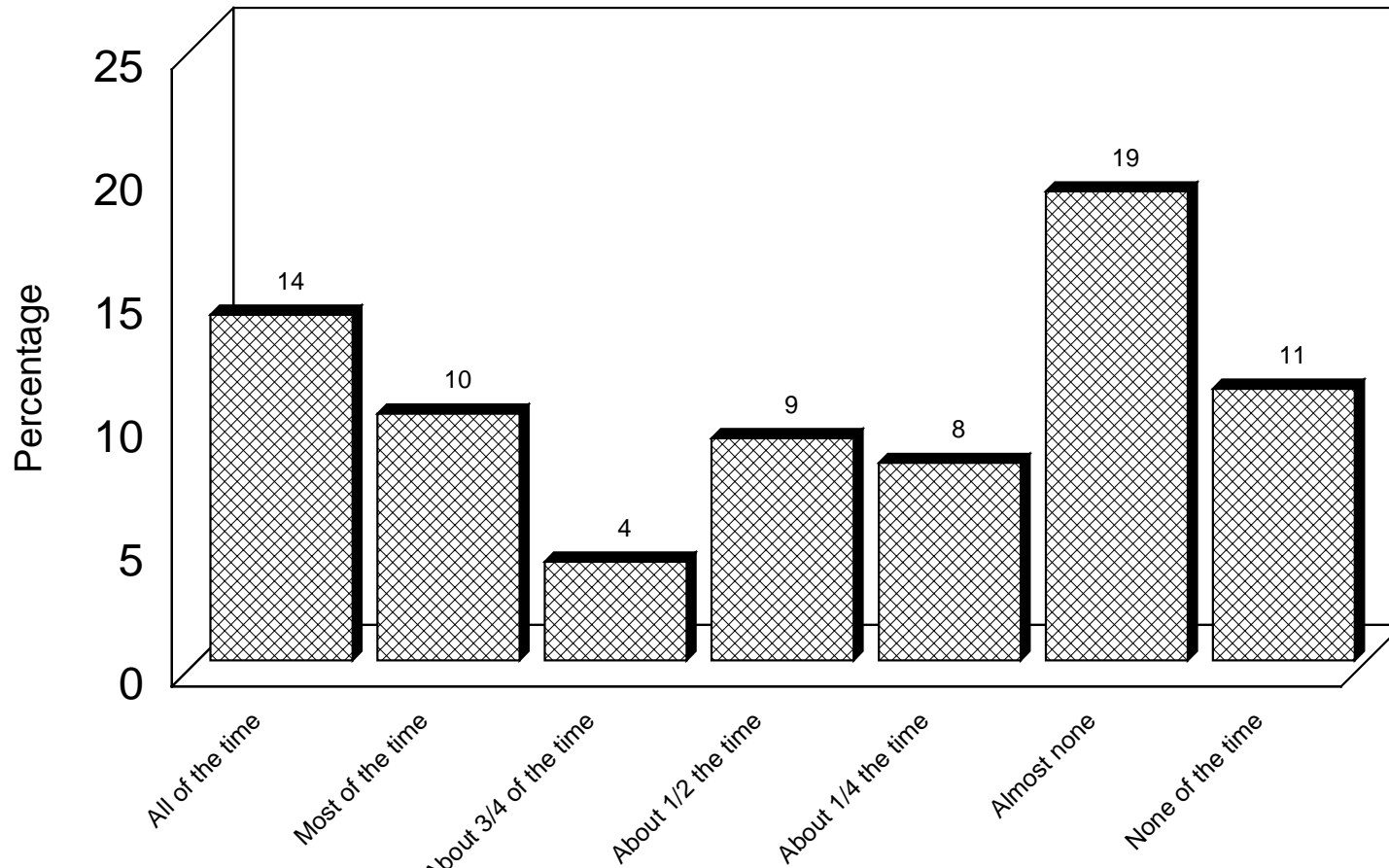
Fifty-six percent of homeless clients report living in the same city where they became homeless this time (table 4.4 and figure 4.5). Another 22 percent, however, have been in two towns/cities, and about 20 percent have been in three or more towns or cities. Of the frequent movers, a very small proportion (5 percent of all homeless clients) have been very transient, staying in 11 or more places during their current homeless spell. Sixty-one percent of homeless clients who reported moving stayed in the same state, while 37 percent moved to a different state and 1 percent moved to another country. The majority of homeless clients who reported moving came from either a large urban area or an urban fringe area located adjacent to a large central city (table 4.5). The basic pattern of moves between community types is for people to move to a place that is larger than the one they came from.

Among homeless clients who moved from one town or city to another (44 percent of all homeless clients), the three most commonly mentioned reasons for leaving (clients could identify more than one) are: no jobs were available (18 percent), no affordable housing was available (13 percent), and being evicted from or asked to leave their last residence (14 percent). Twenty-one percent of clients say there was some “other” reason that led to their leaving the town/city where they first became homeless.

Homeless clients who moved were also asked why they came to the city or town where they were interviewed for this study. Twenty-five percent report that they moved to the present city because they had friends or relatives here, 21 percent because shelters or missions were available, 16 percent to look for work or that they had heard jobs were available, and 19 percent because of good services and programs. “Other” was given as a reason by 15 percent of homeless clients.

Figure 4.4

Homeless Clients' Use of Shelters During Current Homeless Episode



Source: Urban Institute analysis of weighted 1996 NSHAPC client data. Note: Many clients were unable to answer this question.

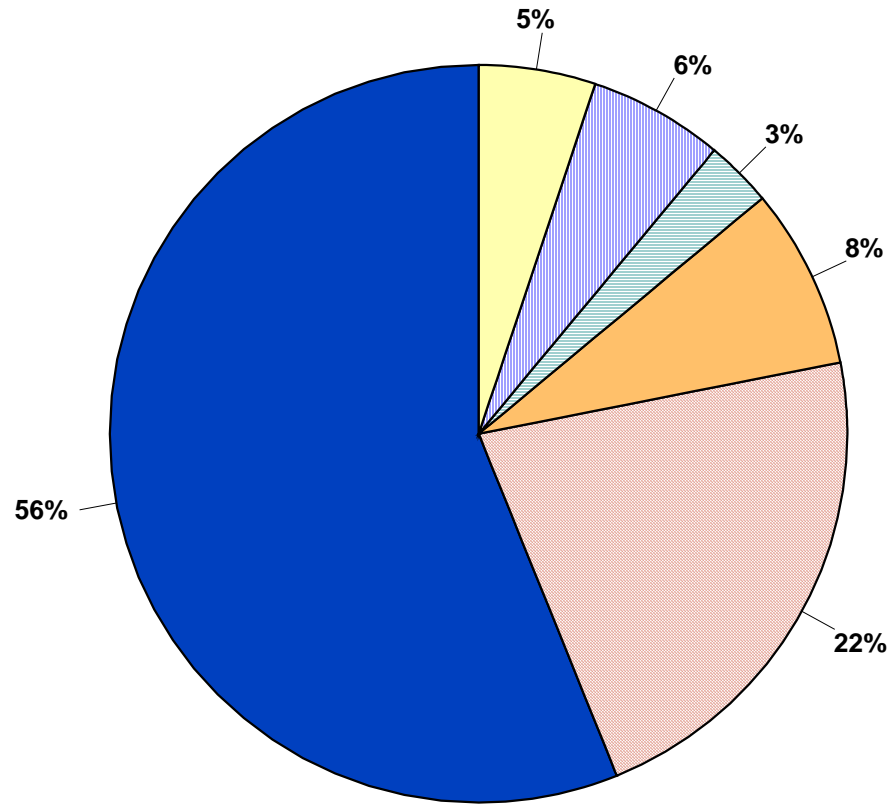
Table 4.4
Inter-City Moves While Homeless, by Homeless Status

| | Homeless Status | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Currently Homeless Clients (N=2938) | Formerly Homeless Clients (N=677) |
| When Homeless This/Last Time, Number of Towns/Cities Where Stayed 2 or More Days^a | | |
| 1 | 56(%) | 58(%) |
| 2 | 22 | 25 |
| 3 | 8 | 7 |
| 4 | 3 | 6 |
| 5 to 10 | 6 | 3 |
| 11 or more | 5 | 3 |
| Where Living Compared to When Became Homeless This/Last Time | | |
| In same state | 61 | 80 |
| In different state | 37 | 18 |
| In different country | 1 | 1 |
| Living in Different City/Town than Where Became Homeless This Time | | |
| Among Movers, Reasons Left Last City/Town | | |
| No affordable housing available | 13 | 15 |
| No jobs available | 18 | 10 |
| No help available from family | 5 | 7 |
| Used available services until exceeded time limit | 3 | 9 |
| Entered institution in another city | 8 | 2 |
| No services in that place | 5 | 4 |
| Made to leave (given bus fare to leave town, driven to county line, etc.) | 2 | 1 |
| Close to agricultural season | * | * |
| Evicted from or asked to leave last residence | 14 | 19 |
| No particular reason | 7 | 13 |
| Domestic violence | 2 | 0 |
| Weather too harsh/wanted a change of scenery/bad environment | 11 | 17 |
| Health reasons | 1 | 4 |
| Alcohol/Drug issues | 7 | * |
| Lost housing/Could not afford rent | 2 | 1 |
| Problems with roommate/Problems with landlord | 2 | 2.2 |
| Problems or changes with family, friends or significant others | 11 | 9 |
| Lease expired/Program over | 1 | 0 |
| Criminal justice related | 3 | 0 |
| Moved in search of better programs | 1 | 2 |
| Lost job/Relocated for work/Looking for work/No income | 4 | 2 |
| House in disrepair or is being worked on | 2 | 2 |
| Other ^b | 11 | 10 |
| Other ^c | 21 | - |
| Other ^d | - | 19 |
| Among Movers, Reasons Came to Present City/Town: | | |
| To look for work, heard jobs were here | 16 | 18 |
| Cheap housing | 7 | 9 |
| Had friends and/or relatives here | 25 | 31 |
| Availability of shelters/missions | 21 | 18 |
| Good services/programs | 19 | 15 |
| Climate | 5 | 2 |
| Following crops | 0 | * |
| On the way to where I am going, just passing through | 5 | 2 |
| No particular reason | 7 | 4 |
| Hometown/Previously lived in area | 7 | 8 |
| Liked the area/Wanted to start over in a new place | 7 | 5 |
| Environment in previous place of residence was bad | 2 | 4 |
| Convenience (affordability, access to transportation) | 1 | 1 |
| For school (self or other relative/friend) | 1 | 1 |
| Travel mishap/Ran out of money/Had nowhere else to go | 1 | * |
| God-related | 1 | 0 |
| Criminal justice related | 1 | 2 |
| Advised to move by case worker or other service provider | 2 | 5 |
| To deal with death or illness within family | 0 | 1 |
| To get food | 1 | * |
| To be near spouse/Significant other | 0 | 2 |
| Other | 6 | 5 |
| Other ^e | 15 | - |
| Other ^f | - | 12 |

Source: Urban Institute analysis of weighted 1996 NSHAPC client data. Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding. * Denotes a value that is greater than 0 but less than .5.

^aThis time refers to currently homeless clients; "last" time refers to formerly homeless clients. ^bOther includes the following categories (percent of currently homeless): domestic violence (2%), health reasons (1%), lost housing/could not afford rent (2%), problems with roommate/landlord (2%), lease expired/program over (1%), moved in search of better programs (1%), house in disrepair or is being worked on (2%), and other (11%). ^cOther includes the following categories (percent of formerly homeless): alcohol/drug issues (*%), lost housing/could not afford rent (1%), problems with roommate/landlord (1%), moved in search of better programs (2%), lost job/relocated for work/no income (2%), house in disrepair or is being worked on (2%), and other (10%). ^dOther includes the following categories (percent of currently homeless): environment in previous place of residence was bad (2%), convenience (1%), for school (1%), travel mishap/ran out of money/had nowhere else to go (1%), god related (1%), criminal justice related (1%), advised to move by case worker or other service provider (2%), to deal with death or illness within family (*%), to get food (1%), to be near spouse/significant other (*%), and other (6%). ^eOther includes the following categories (percent of formerly homeless): convenience (1%), for school (1%), travel mishap/ran out of money/had nowhere else to go (*%), criminal justice related (2%), to deal with death or illness in family (1%), to get food (*%), to be near spouse/significant other (2%), and other (5%).

Figure 4.5
Transiency While Homeless: Number of Towns/Cities In Which Clients Stayed Two or More Days During Current Homeless



Number of Towns/Cities
■ One (did not move) ■ Two ■ Three ■ Four ■ Five to Ten ■ Eleven of more

Source: Urban Institute analysis of weighted 1996 NSHAPC client data.

Table 4.5
**Among Homeless Clients Who Moved, Type of Community Where They Became Homeless
for Current Episode, and Type of Community Where They Were Interviewed**

| | Type of Community Where Client Became Homeless This Time ^a | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| | Large Central City (28%) | Medium Central City (14%) | Urban Fringe of a Large Central City (31%) | Urban Fringe of a Medium Central City (10%) | Large Town (3%) | Small Town (7%) | Rural (5%) | Another Country (1%) |
| Moved Within Same Type of Community | 66 | 49 | 50 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Moved to Different Type of Community | 34 | 51 | 50 | 73 | 100 | 100 | 99 | 100 |
| What Type of Community Did They Move To? | | | | | | | | |
| Large central city | NA | 40 | 34 | 25 | 44 | 22 | 27 | Insufficient |
| Medium-sized central city | 20 | NA | 14 | 47 | 55 | 38 | 60 | N |
| Urban fringe of large central city | 14 | 8 | NA | 1 | * | 41 | 3 | |
| Urban fringe of medium-sized central city | * | 4 | 1 | NA | 1 | 0 | 10 | |
| Large town, small town, or rural location | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

Source: Urban Institute analysis of weighted 1996 NSHAPC Client data. Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% or other total due to rounding.

* Denotes values that are less than .5 percent but greater than 0. Unweighted N of movers with usable answers=1,337. ^a Percentages in parentheses denote

Differences by Family Status

Homeless clients in families report fewer spells of homelessness than single homeless clients, and these spells are shorter. Compared to single homeless clients, more homeless clients in families spend all of their time in shelters (29 versus 11 percent) (figure 4.6). They are less likely to have left the city or town where they became homeless (29 versus 46 percent) but, when they have done so, their reasons for coming to a new town are more likely to include the availability of shelters/missions in the destination town (41 versus 18 percent). On the day of the NSHAPC interview, homeless clients in families were more likely than single homeless clients to be staying in transitional shelter/housing (48 versus 31 percent), and less likely to be staying in vehicles, on the streets, or in other non-housing venues (2 versus 20 percent) (Appendix tables 4.A1, 4.A2, and 4.A3).

Where Living Just Before This Homeless Episode. Homeless clients in families are much less likely than single homeless clients to have lived alone before their current homeless spell began (7 versus 38 percent). Instead, they were more likely to have lived with their spouse (29 versus 16 percent) and/or children (88 versus 18 percent).

Homelessness History. Relatively fewer homeless clients in families report more than three spells of homelessness (12 versus 25 percent of single homeless clients). In addition, current homeless spells tend to be shorter for clients in families than for single homeless clients. Sixty percent of homeless clients in families report that their current spell has lasted six months or less, while only 35 percent of single homeless clients have spells this short.

Transiency While Homeless. Homeless clients in families are less transient than single homeless clients: 71 percent of homeless clients in families stayed in one town, compared to only 54 percent of other homeless clients (figure 4.7). Among those who moved, homeless clients in families are more likely than single homeless clients to move within a state (74 percent compared to 59 percent).

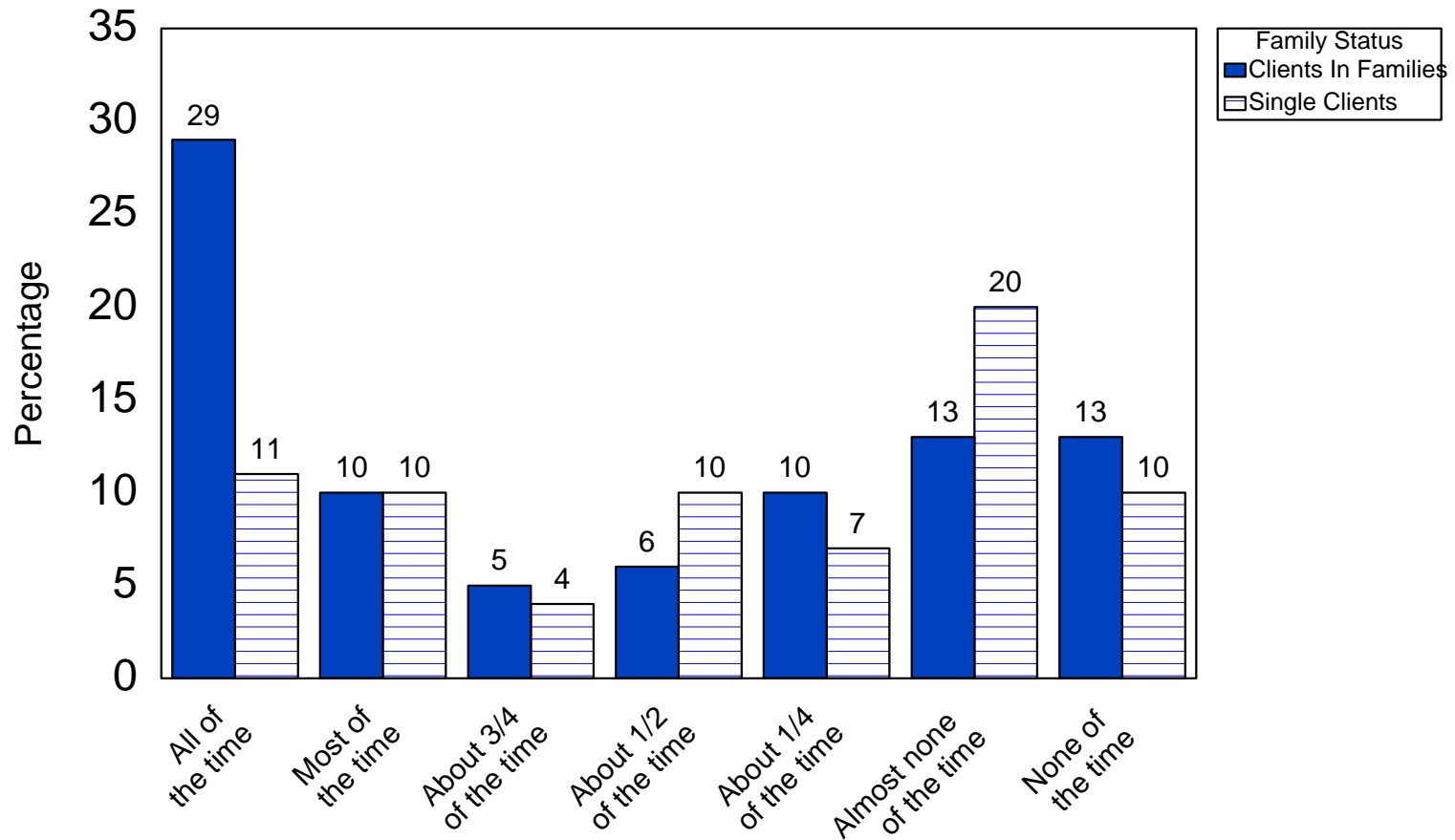
Differences by Alcohol, Drug, or Mental Health Problems

Where Living Just Before This Homeless Episode. Reports by homeless clients with and without alcohol, drug, or mental health (ADM) problems in the past month reveal differences in where they were living just before their current homeless episode began. At the time of the survey, those with ADM problems report a lower likelihood than those without such problems of living in an emergency shelter (25 versus 39 percent), and fewer report that they were living with their own children before their current homeless spell (24 versus 40 percent).

Homelessness History. Homeless clients with past month ADM problems report relatively more homeless episodes: 39 percent say they have been homeless 3 or more times, compared to 23 percent of homeless clients without such problems. In addition their current

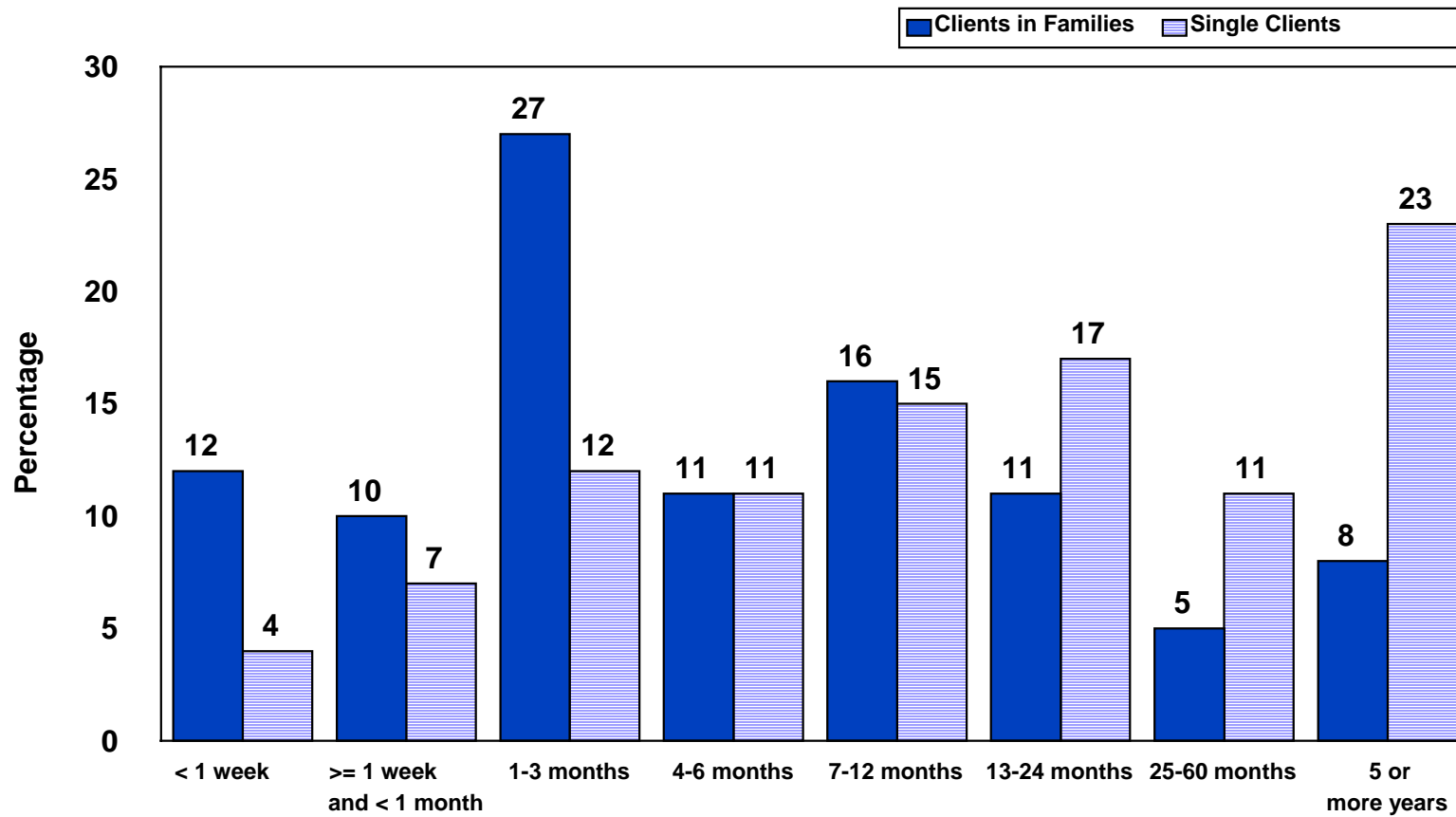
Figure 4.6

Homeless Clients' Use of Shelters During Current Homeless Episode, by Family Status



Source: Urban Institute analysis of weighted 1996 NSHAPC client data. Note: Many clients could not answer this question.

Figure 4.7
Length of Current Period of Homelessness, by Family Status



Source: Urban Institute analysis of weighted 1996 NSHAPC client data.

spell of homelessness is longer: 35 percent of clients with ADM problems report spells longer than 24 months, compared to 22 percent of homeless clients without past month ADM problems.

Transiency While Homeless. Homeless clients with ADM problems in the past month move from one town or city to another more frequently than homeless clients without ADM problems (46 percent compared to 39 percent). Among movers, 65 percent of homeless clients with ADM problems stayed within the same state when they moved while 54 percent of homeless clients without ADM problems reported moving to another location in the same state. Reasons for moving are fairly similar across the two groups, with a few significant differences. Of the homeless clients with ADM problems who moved, 15 percent left because there were no jobs available and 10 percent left to enter an institution in another city. The corresponding numbers for movers without ADM problems are 23 percent and 3 percent, respectively. When asked why they came to the city or town they now reside in, 13 percent of homeless clients with ADM problems and 23 percent of homeless clients without ADM problems said they came to look for work, or because they heard that jobs were available. Not surprisingly a higher percentage of those with ADM problems moved because they heard there were good services and/or programs in the town they moved to (22 percent compared to 11 percent of homeless movers without ADM problems).

Differences by Race/Ethnicity⁵

Where Living Just Before This Homeless Episode. Fewer homeless Native American and Hispanic clients report living alone before their current spell of homelessness began: 18 and 22 percent respectively, compared to 35 and 37 percent of homeless black and white non-Hispanic clients. Homeless Native American clients are more likely to report living with a partner/boyfriend/girlfriend (43 percent) than homeless members of other racial/ethnic groups (at 10 to 16 percent).

Differences by race/ethnicity in who paid the rent or mortgage at the client's last residence parallel differences in household composition. Homeless Native American clients are more likely than homeless members of other racial/ethnic groups to report that the rent/mortgage was paid by other relatives (13 versus 1 to 5 percent) or a partner/boyfriend/ girlfriend (31 versus 7 to 11 percent). Homeless black non-Hispanic clients indicate more frequently than white non-Hispanics that the main reason they left their last regular place is that they couldn't pay the rent (22 versus 13 percent).

Homelessness History. The only significant difference among racial/ethnic groups with respect to number of homeless spells is the difference between Hispanic and white non-Hispanic

⁵ The marked differences between homeless Native American clients and homeless clients from other racial/ethnic groups stem from several clients who have very high weights. Extreme caution should be used in generalizing from these results.

clients. The former are more likely than the latter to be in their first homeless episode (58 versus 45 percent). Reported spell lengths do not differ among the three racial/ethnic groups with a large enough representation in the sample to support analysis (white and black non-Hispanics and Hispanics).

Homeless Hispanic clients also vary from white non-Hispanic and black non-Hispanic clients in the proportion who report spending none or almost none of their time while homeless in shelters (38 percent compared to 26). Instead, 58 percent of homeless Native American clients report spending none or almost none of their time in shelters, compared to 26 to 38 percent of clients in other racial/ethnic groups. In addition, Hispanic clients (at 38 percent) differ from both white and black non-Hispanic clients (at 26 percent each) in the proportion who spend none or almost none of their time homeless in shelters.

Transiency While Homeless. Two-thirds of homeless black clients say they have stayed in only one town or city when homeless (compared to 56 percent of the whole homeless sample). Among clients who moved from one town or city to another, 73 percent of black non-Hispanic clients stayed in the same state compared to less than 50 percent of Hispanic and Native American movers. When asked about their reasons for leaving their last town or city, a relatively higher proportion of homeless Hispanic and Native American clients mention problems or changes with family, friends, or significant others. Homeless Hispanic clients were also more likely than homeless clients as a group to indicate that no jobs were available in their last city or town (33 percent compared to 18 percent).

Homeless white non-Hispanic clients report the availability of shelters/missions as a reason to move to a town more frequently than other homeless clients (26 percent, compared to 10 to 17 percent). Twenty-two percent of homeless Hispanic clients say they came to the present town for no particular reason, compared to 3 to 7 percent of other groups who say this.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CURRENTLY AND FORMERLY HOMELESS CLIENTS

There are a number of differences in the histories and current living situations of currently and formerly homeless clients, but for the most part these two groups are remarkably similar (tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4). Differences include more currently than formerly homeless clients who: lived with their children before their most recent homeless episode (29 versus 22 percent); report that they themselves paid the rent/mortgage of their last regular residence before becoming homeless most recently (77 versus 53 percent); and to have had only one spell of homelessness (49 versus 41 percent).

Appendix Table 4.A1
Clients' Living Situations at Time of Interview and Before Becoming Homeless, by Standard Groupings

| | All Homeless Clients (N=2938) | Family Status | | ADM, Past Month@ | | Race/Ethnicity | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--|
| | | Clients in Families (N=465) | Single Clients (N=2473) | With ADM (N=1826) | Without ADM (N=1112) | White Non-Hispanic (N=1176) | Black Non-Hispanic (N=1275) | Hispanic (N=335) | Native American (N=106) | |
| Kind of Place Lives Now (Today) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Non-housing (e.g., vehicle, abandoned building, bus station, place of business, park, street) | 18(%) | 2(%) | 20(%) | 20(%) | 12(%) | 17(%) | 18(%) | 19(%) | 20(%) | |
| Emergency shelter | 30 | 33 | 29 | 25 | 39 | 34 | 27 | 32 | 20 | |
| Transitional shelter/housing | 33 | 48 | 31 | 36 | 28 | 31 | 37 | 34 | 26 | |
| Welfare or voucher hotel | * | * | 1 | 1 | * | * | 1 | 1 | * | |
| Hotel/motel/dormitory hotel (pay yourself) | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 4 | * | 0 | |
| House/apt./room | 13 | 17 | 12 | 13 | 13 | 12 | 9 | 13 | 34 | |
| Other place | 3 | * | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 0 | |
| Type of Place Living in Just Before This Period of Homelessness Began | | | | | | | | | | |
| House | 35 | 39 | 34 | 36 | 32 | 37 | 32 | 37 | 31 | |
| Apartment | 47 | 51 | 46 | 46 | 48 | 45 | 47 | 50 | 52 | |
| Room | 17 | 9 | 19 | 17 | 18 | 16 | 21 | 10 | 15 | |
| Some other kind of place | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | |
| Who Lived with Just Before This Period of Homelessness Began | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lived alone | 33 | 7 | 38 | 34 | 33 | 37 | 35 | 22 | 18 | |
| Spouse | 18 | 29 | 16 | 16 | 22 | 21 | 12 | 24 | 23 | |
| Children | 29 | 88 | 18 | 24 | 40 | 27 | 29 | 32 | 33 | |
| Parents | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 10 | 2 | |
| Foster family | * | 0 | * | * | * | * | * | 0 | 0 | |
| Sisters and/or brothers, sisters- and/or brothers-in-law | 6 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 1 | |
| Own adult children (18 years and over) | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | |
| Grandparents | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | |
| Other relatives | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 18 | |
| Partner/boyfriend/girlfriend | 15 | 16 | 14 | 16 | 11 | 10 | 16 | 10 | 43 | |
| Friends | 10 | 8 | 11 | 9 | 12 | 12 | 7 | 15 | 9 | |
| Other residents | 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | |
| Other | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 | |
| Who Paid the Rent or Mortgage of Place Just Before This Period of Homelessness Began | | | | | | | | | | |
| Self | 77 | 82 | 76 | 77 | 77 | 78 | 77 | 70 | 84 | |
| Spouse | 10 | 18 | 9 | 9 | 14 | 13 | 6 | 18 | 6 | |
| Parents | 9 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 12 | 2 | |
| Foster family | * | 0 | * | * | 0 | * | * | 0 | 0 | |
| Sisters and/or brothers, sisters- and/or brothers-in-law | 6 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 1 | |
| Own adult children (18 years and over) | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 0 | |
| Grandparents | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | * | 1 | |
| Other relatives | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 13 | |
| Partner/boyfriend/girlfriend | 10 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 7 | 7 | 11 | 9 | 31 | |
| Friends | 9 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 8 | 9 | 9 | |
| Non-profit program or institution | 1 | 1 | * | 1 | 1 | * | * | 1 | 0 | |
| Government program or institution | 4 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 6 | |
| Free rent for working | 3 | * | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 4 | * | |
| Other | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 5 | |

Source: Urban Institute analysis of weighted 1996 NSHAPC client data. Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding. * Denotes a value that is greater than 0 but less than .5. @ADM = Alcohol, drug, or mental health problem in the past month.

Appendix Table 4.A2

Main Reason Homeless Clients Left Their Last Regular Place to Stay, by Standard Groupings

| | All Homeless Clients (N=2938) | Family Status | | ADM, Past Month@ | | Race/Ethnicity | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| | | Clients in Families (N=465) | Single Clients (N=2473) | With ADM (N=1826) | Without ADM (N=1112) | White Non-Hispanic (N=1176) | Black Non-Hispanic (N=1275) | Hispanic (N=335) | Native American (N=106) |
| Main Reason Left Last Regular Place to Stay (Just Before This Period of Homelessness) | | | | | | | | | |
| Couldn't pay rent | 15(%) | 22(%) | 14(%) | 16(%) | 14(%) | 13(%) | 22(%) | Insufficient N | Insufficient N |
| Rent increased and couldn't afford to pay it | 3 | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | | |
| Lost job or job ended | 14 | 2 | 16 | 14 | 15 | 15 | 12 | | |
| Client or children abused, beaten/violence in the household | 4 | 13 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | | |
| Pushed out, kicked out | 4 | | 4 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 4 | | |
| Was drinking | 4 | | 5 | 6 | * | 4 | 1 | | |
| Was doing drugs | 7 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 9 | | |
| Went into hospital or treatment program | 3 | | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | | |
| Went to jail or prison | 3 | | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | | |
| Left town | 4 | | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | | |
| Didn't get along with people there | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | | |
| People client was staying with asked client to leave | 3 | | 3 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 2 | | |
| Landlord made client leave | 6 | 12 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 6 | | |
| Displaced because building was condemned, destroyed or urban renewal, fire | 3 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 2 | | |
| Moved out due to a problematic relationship/end of a relationship with a partner/relative | 3 | | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | | |
| Problem with residence or area where residence is located | 3 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 5 | | |
| Other ^a | 16 | | 14 | 13 | 21 | 17 | 16 | | |
| Other ^b | | 33 | | | | | | | |

Source: Urban Institute analysis of weighted 1996 NSHAPC client data. Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding. * Denotes a value that is greater than 0 but less than .5. ^aOther includes the following (among currently homeless clients): someone who paid the rent/mortgage stopped paying it (1%), lost welfare or other cash assistance benefit (1%), pushed out, kicked out (2%), went into hospital or treatment program (2%), went into military (*%), displaced because building was condemned, destroyed, or urban renewal, fire (2%), released, dismissed, discharged (1%), moved in with significant other/friend/relative (1%), death or illness in family (1%), roommate or landlord problems (1%), problem with residence or area where residence is located (2%), looking for work or forced to relocate to keep present job (2%), needed a change of scenery and/or climate (2%), problems with abiding by rules of current provider residence/program time ran out (*%), lease expired or the building in which you lived was sold (1%), not enough money for habitation (*%), and other (2%). ^bDue to a small sample size, the column for clients with children was collapsed to 5 possible responses. The sum of the rest of the responses for this column are included in other ^b. Insufficient N signifies that sample size was too small for data to be reported. @ADM = Alcohol, drug, or mental health problem in the past month.

Appendix Table 4.A3
History of Homelessness of Clients, by Standard Groupings

| | All Homeless Clients (N=2938) | Family Status | | ADM, Past Month@ | | Race/Ethnicity | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|--|
| | | Clients in Families (N=465) | Single Clients (N=2473) | With ADM (N=1826) | Without ADM (N=1112) | White Non-Hispanic (N=1176) | Black Non-Hispanic (N=1275) | Hispanic (N=335) | Native American (N=106) | |
| Number of Times Homeless or Without Regular Housing for 30 Days or More | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 49(%) | 50(%) | 49(%) | 45(%) | 59(%) | 45(%) | 51(%) | 58(%) | 50(%) | |
| 2 | 17 | 27 | 15 | 16 | 18 | 18 | 15 | 15 | 24 | |
| 3 | 12 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 8 | 13 | 12 | 7 | 8 | |
| 4-10 | 18 | 11 | 20 | 22 | 11 | 17 | 20 | 19 | 13 | |
| 11 or more | 4 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 4 | |
| <i>Among Currently Homeless Clients</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Length of Current Period of Homelessness | | | | | | | | | | |
| < 1 week | 5 | 12 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 5 | Insufficient N | |
| >= 1 week and < 1 month | 8 | 10 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 16 | | |
| 1-3 months | 15 | 27 | 12 | 13 | 18 | 17 | 12 | 12 | | |
| 4-6 months | 11 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 15 | 12 | 11 | 13 | | |
| 7-12 months | 15 | 16 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 14 | 15 | | |
| 13-24 months | 16 | 11 | 17 | 17 | 14 | 15 | 18 | 14 | | |
| 25-60 months | 10 | 5 | 11 | 12 | 6 | 8 | 14 | 9 | | |
| Over 5 years | 20 | 8 | 23 | 23 | 16 | 18 | 23 | 18 | | |
| Spell History and Current Spell Length | | | | | | | | | | |
| First time homeless | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 months or less | 18 | 34 | 15 | 15 | 25 | 18 | 14 | 22 | 31 | |
| more than 6 months | 31 | 16 | 35 | 31 | 32 | 27 | 36 | 34 | 22 | |
| Not first time homeless | | | | | | | | | | |
| current spell 6 months or less | 21 | 26 | 20 | 20 | 22 | 23 | 18 | 22 | 19 | |
| current spell more than 6 months | 30 | 25 | 32 | 34 | 21 | 31 | 32 | 22 | 29 | |
| <i>Among Homeless Clients With at Least One Completed Homeless Episode</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Length of Last Complete Period of Homelessness | | | | | | | | | | |
| < 1 week | 5 | Insufficient N | 4 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 4 | Insufficient N | Insufficient N | |
| >= 1 week and < 1 month | 9 | | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 10 | | | |
| 1-3 months | 30 | | 28 | 31 | 29 | 31 | 31 | | | |
| 4-6 months | 15 | | 16 | 15 | 16 | 12 | 18 | | | |
| 7-12 months | 20 | | 19 | 20 | 20 | 18 | 24 | | | |
| 13-24 months | 9 | | 10 | 10 | 7 | 11 | 5 | | | |
| 25-60 months | 5 | | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | | | |
| Over 5 years | 7 | | 8 | 5 | 12 | 12 | 3 | | | |
| Amount of Time Spent in Shelters During This Homeless Episode | | | | | | | | | | |
| All of the time | 14 | 29 | 11 | 11 | 19 | 14 | 15 | 11 | Insufficient N | |
| Most of the time | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 13 | 11 | | |
| About three-quarters of the time | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 2 | | |
| About half of the time | 9 | 6 | 10 | 8 | 12 | 9 | 9 | 11 | | |
| About one-quarter of the time | 8 | 10 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 6 | 7 | | |
| Almost none of the time | 19 | 13 | 20 | 20 | 15 | 16 | 14 | 28 | | |
| None of the time | 11 | 13 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 10 | 12 | 10 | | |

Source: Urban Institute analysis of weighted 1996 NSHAPC client data. Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding. * Denotes a value that is greater than 0 but less than .5. Insufficient N signifies that sample size was too small for data to be reported.

@ADM = Alcohol, drug, or mental health problem in the past month.

Appendix Table 4.A4
Inter-City Moves While Homeless, by Standard Groupings

| | All Homeless Clients (N=2938) | Family Status | | ADM, Past Month@ | | Race/Ethnicity | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| | | Clients in Families (N=465) | Single Clients (N=2473) | With ADM (N=1826) | Without ADM (N=1112) | White Non-Hispanic (N=1176) | Black Non-Hispanic (N=1275) | Hispanic (N=335) | Native American (N=106) |
| When Homeless, Number of Towns/Cities Stayed 2 or More Days | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 (did not move) | 56(%) | 71(%) | 54(%) | 54(%) | 61(%) | 48(%) | 66(%) | 56(%) | Insufficient N |
| 2 | 22 | 16 | 23 | 22 | 22 | 24 | 21 | 22 | |
| 3 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 6 | 13 | |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| 5 to 10 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 5 | |
| 11 or more | 5 | * | 6 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 1 | 1 | |
| Where Living Compared to When Became Homeless This Time | | | | | | | | | |
| In same state | 61 | 74 | 59 | 65 | 54 | 61 | 73 | 43 | 48 |
| In different state | 37 | 26 | 39 | 35 | 44 | 39 | 28 | 47 | 52 |
| In different country | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | * | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| Living in Different City/Town than Where Became Homeless This Time | | | | | | | | | |
| Among Movers, Reasons Left Last City/Town | 44 | 29 | 46 | 46 | 39 | 52 | 34 | 44 | 55 |
| No affordable housing available | 13 | 18 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 16 | 12 | 7 | 4 |
| No jobs available | 18 | 10 | 19 | 15 | 23 | 19 | 13 | 33 | 7 |
| No help available from family | 5 | 12 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| Used available services until exceeded time limit | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Entered institution in another city | 8 | 1 | 9 | 10 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 16 | * |
| No services in that place | 5 | 13 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Made to leave (given bus fare to leave town, driven to county line etc.) | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| Close to agricultural season | * | 0 | * | * | * | 0 | * | * | 0 |
| Evicted from or asked to leave last residence | 14 | 20 | 13 | 15 | 13 | 15 | 13 | 19 | 4 |
| No particular reason | 7 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 14 | 19 |
| Weather too harsh/wanted a change of scenery/bad environment | 11 | 11 | 11 | 8 | 17 | 11 | 14 | 9 | 1 |
| Alcohol/drug issues | 7 | * | 8 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 8 |
| Problems or changes with family, friends or significant others | 11 | 8 | 11 | 12 | 7 | 5 | 10 | 23 | 30 |
| Criminal justice related | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 11 |
| Lost job/relocated for work/looking for work/no income | 4 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Other ^a | 21 | 36 | 19 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 24 | 7 | 18 |
| Among Movers, Reasons Came to Present City/Town | | | | | | | | | |
| To look for work, heard jobs were here | 16 | 16 | 16 | 13 | 23 | 14 | 16 | 26 | 12 |
| Cheap housing | 7 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 14 | * | 3 |
| Had friends and/or relatives here | 25 | 29 | 24 | 26 | 22 | 17 | 34 | 23 | 46 |
| Availability of shelters/missions | 21 | 41 | 18 | 22 | 18 | 26 | 17 | 14 | 10 |
| Good services/programs | 19 | 27 | 17 | 22 | 11 | 20 | 23 | 8 | 12 |
| Climate | 5 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 11 | 4 |
| Following crops | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | * | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| On the way to where I am going, just passing through | 5 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 11 |
| No particular reason | 7 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 22 | 7 |
| Hometown/previously lived in area | 7 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 12 | 10 | 1 | 11 | 3 |
| Liked the area/wanted to start over in a new place | 7 | 2 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 2 | 1 |
| Other ^b | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 14 | 17 | 15 | 6 | 12 |

Source: Urban Institute analysis of weighted 1996 NSHAPC client data. Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding. * Denotes a value that is greater than 0 but less than .5. ^aOther includes the following categories (percent of currently homeless): domestic violence (2%), health reasons (1%), lost housing/could not afford rent (2%), problems with roommate/landlord (2%), lease expired/program over (1%), moved in search of better programs (1%), house in disrepair or is being worked on (2%), and other (11%). ^bOther includes the following categories (percent of currently homeless): environment in previous place of residence was bad (2%), convenience (1%), for school (1%), travel mishap/ran out of money/had nowhere else to go (1%), god related (1%), criminal justice related (1%), advised to move by case worker or other service provider (2%), to deal with death or illness within family (*%), to get food (1%), to be near spouse/significant other (*%), and other (6%). Insufficient N signifies that sample size was too small for data to be reported. @ADM = Alcohol, drug, or mental health problem in the past month.